



# Neighborhood Court Frequently Asked Questions

## Neighborhood Court Participant Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is Neighborhood Court?

Neighborhood Court is an alternative to the traditional Criminal Justice system. Instead of prosecuting the case in Criminal Court in Woodland, the District Attorney's Office refers appropriate low level misdemeanor and infraction cases to Neighborhood Court. At Neighborhood Court, Panelists, who are residents that live and work in the community where the incident occurred, hear the cases in a Conference. This Conference is managed by a trained Facilitator. There are no judges, defense attorneys, or prosecutors. Conferences are held at various community locations within Davis and the UC Davis Campus. The panel uses restorative justice to problem-solve and address any harm caused to the community by the crime. All Neighborhood Court Conferences are voluntary and confidential.

### 2. How do cases get referred to Neighborhood Court?

Law enforcement issues a yellow Neighborhood Court information card notifying the offender that they have two weeks to contact the District Attorney's Office and request to participate in Neighborhood Court diversion program. This card provides contact information. If you have received a yellow information card stating that you may be eligible for Neighborhood Court, please email the address or call the number on the card to get more information, determine your eligibility, and schedule a hearing date. Neighborhood Court is a voluntary program about repairing any harm caused to the community by the crime. If you decline to participate, or you would like to dispute the incident in question, or you do not make contact, your case will proceed to the criminal court system in Woodland.

### 3. What is a Neighborhood Court Facilitator?

The Facilitator is a neutral third party volunteer mediator with training in Restorative Justice. The primary role of the Facilitator is insuring that the process is safe for all participants in the Conference. This is accomplished through agreed upon and enforced ground rules for the Conference. The Facilitator, acting as a neutral party third, facilitates the Conference between the Panelists and the Offender to enable the parties face-to-face to name the harms caused by the offense and develop a mutual agreement about what should be done to make things as right as possible.

4. What happens when I go to Neighborhood Court?

Prior to your Neighborhood Court Conference you will be contacted by the Facilitator who will manage your Conference. At the Conference Panels of two to five residents will meet with you, read you the police report and discuss the incident with you. The goal of the conference is for the Panel and the Offender to reach a mutual agreement to make things right. The agreement can include, but is not limited to: community service, restitution, a letter of apology, an educational project or treatment program. To be successful in Neighborhood Court, and get your case closed, you must complete the agreement.

5. Do I need to go to Criminal Court too?

If you attend Neighborhood Court, you do not need to go to Criminal Court in Woodland. Neighborhood Court is an opportunity to resolve your case without going to Criminal Court. If you successfully complete Neighborhood Court, you will not be charged with a crime and you will not have a criminal conviction on your record. In Neighborhood Court you cannot be sent to jail or fined.

6. Why am I being offered the opportunity to participate in Neighborhood Court?

The District Attorney's office has determined that you are eligible to resolve your case through the Neighborhood Court diversion program. Participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, or if you fail to comply with the Neighborhood Court agreement, the case is referred back to the District Attorney's Office for a filing decision. If you participate and successfully complete the agreement, the District Attorney's Office will not charge the case and it will be closed.