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VOP Night Court

Recognized with National Achievement Award



District Attorney Jan Scully announced today that the Sacramento County Violation of Probation (VOP) Night Court program was honored with a 2011 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award. The NACo award recognizes county initiatives that improve government service delivery AND achieve cost efficiency, among other achievements.

In 2007, Sacramento County's criminal justice system was facing significant challenges, including congested settlement courts, clogged jury trial calendars causing an increase in cases delayed until the last possible day for trial assignment (or possible dismissal), diminished accountability for probationers, and jail overcrowding. In response to these challenges, the District Attorney's Office led a collaborative effort to create a VOP Court in January 2008. Working as part of the Sacramento County Criminal Justice Cabinet, stakeholders that usually have differing goals, and who sometimes are adversaries, formed a special project team consisting of the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Superior Court, Conflict Criminal Defenders, the Probation Department and the Sheriff's Department to collaborate in developing the VOP Court.

By design the VOP Court redirects cases where a defendant has committed a new crime which is non-violent or non-serious, and is already on probation for a non-violent or non-serious offense. The new case is resolved through a violation of probation instead of filing new charges. In addition, technical violations of probation (that do not involve a new crime) are filed in VOP Court. This dedicated court processes provides a quicker resolution, resulting in fewer court appearances, less congested court calendars, consistent practices and more immediate accountability for offenders. In addition, VOP Court is held at night, reducing the overcrowding of defendants being scheduled in courtrooms during the day, and making more efficient use of courtroom space.

The program's success has resulted in an 89% rate of all cases being resolved within three court appearances and a \$12.6 million cost savings to Sacramento County and Sacramento Superior Court over a two year period.

DA Scully states, "I am extremely proud of the program's success and the unique collaboration between my criminal justice partners. VOP Court not only benefits the criminal justice system, it benefits the entire county with cost savings while upholding the protection of individual rights and public safety."

For more information, [click here to view the VOP Court Nomination Submission](#)