

Community Based Restorative Justice: \$2,000,000 (One-time) and \$100,000 (On-going)

Restorative justice is an approach that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by delinquent or criminal behavior, acknowledging that these actions hurt everyone — victims, perpetrators, and community. Restorative justice is a collaborative process that requires individuals take responsibility for their actions. This process not only focuses on repairing the harm that has been caused but on creating fundamental transformation within individuals and community.

Recognized as a trauma-responsive practice, the philosophy and principles of restorative justice have been successfully adopted and implemented in various programs and settings, including throughout the continuum of the criminal and juvenile legal systems, as well as in schools across the United States and beyond.

The foundational principles of restorative justice include:

1. **Inclusivity.** Give voice to those involved in and affected by a given incident of harm, and invite dialogue among them where appropriate. Outcomes decided upon must feel fair and reasonable to all those participating.
2. **Work toward healing what has been broken.** A restorative response seeks to address the harms – both tangible and intangible – resulting from an incident, and to do what is possible to help meet the needs of those affected.
3. **Seek direct accountability.** People causing harm should be held accountable for their actions to the people whom they have hurt.
4. **Repair and reintegrate.** Harmful actions often create distrust in the community. Where possible, restorative justice will help with reintegration and the repair of relationships.
5. **Strengthening the community will prevent further harm.**

Currently the District Attorney’s office has a grant-funded juvenile diversion effort underway that includes a restorative justice component, however, restorative practices have broad application potential within Contra Costa County. Demonstrated consensus exists among community and system stakeholders supporting the importance of investing in community-based programs and services. Furthermore, adopting a restorative framework supports the desired shift from criminal and juvenile legal systems that emphasize “confinement” and “compliance” to those that prioritize and foster hope, healing, rehabilitation, and resiliency.

Components of adopting this framework would initially include contracting with a community-based provider who has an established expertise in restorative justice to facilitate robust training and technical assistance for public safety partners, including but not limited to staff from Probation, the Sheriff’s Department, and municipal law enforcement agencies. In addition, training would also be offered to local schools and community-based partners that serve our juvenile and adult reentry populations on application and implementation of restorative practices. This would allow restorative principles to be consistently applied throughout Contra Costa County.

In addition to the training and initial technical assistance, as the Probation Department begins to explore the development of a scope and design for the proposed multi-use youth campus, a consultant could be hired to advise on how to best create spaces that are aligned with restorative principles and practices.

The estimated initial cost to fund this effort, including staff support to coordinate and oversee the training and technical assistance contract is \$2,000,000 with anticipated on-going annual expenses not to exceed \$100,000.

Recommendation:

The County Administrator's recommendation is that the program be funded with a one-time allocation of \$2,000,000. The annual on-going expense of \$100,000 will be absorbed by the Probation Department.