



ORANGE COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NACo Federal Fellowship Visits OC Probation

Santa Ana, Calif. (February 26, 2024) – On February 22, 2024, the Orange County Probation Department had the honor of hosting 28 participants of the NACo Federal Fellowship Initiative, a program designed to expose federal workers to the work of counties nationwide. The Fellowship delegation, comprised of staff from the White House, congressional and state department offices, was received by Chief Daniel Hernandez and Chief Deputy Probation Officer Jessica Johnson, along with managers and staff.

Chief Daniel Hernandez presented the delegation with information about the role of the Probation Department in the justice system and how Orange County Probation serves to change the lives of its clients. Chief Hernandez highlighted the efforts and trauma-informed approach to ensuring services rooted in best practices are delivered to those who come under the department's care and supervision.

Steven Kim, Director of Project Kinship shared the importance of collaboration between community-based organizations in providing the right resources to meet the goals of the clients and how they employ former system-involved individuals to assist clients. Steven Kim spoke of how effective partnerships with the Orange County Probation Department is helping his staff to meet the youths and adults where they are, and work effectively through their barriers to positive change.

The delegation also heard directly from youth housed in Juvenile Hall who represented the Youth Council Program. These youth are selected following an application process to serve as leaders and role models to other youth within the juvenile facilities. The members elect Youth Council leadership, make recommendations to Probation administration for youths' needs and the administration also seeks input from the Council on proposed changes in the facilities.

The participants also toured the new Juvenile Hall Multipurpose Rehabilitation Center (MRC) which has been carefully designed to provide dedicated space for developing educational and vocational skills for youth, along with partnerships with local colleges to provide older youth with opportunities to attend college while in custody. Further, the visitors were given the opportunity to see the new visiting center that facilitates ongoing family connections between the youth in custody and those supporting their success.

The Orange County Probation Department was honored to host the NACo delegation and proud to share the work done by its staff and partners to serve the community and effect positive change in those that come under its care. Chief Hernandez said, "I am so proud that our department has been recognized in this way for the innovative work we do with youth. We couldn't do it without the wonderful staff that care so much for the success of these youth. One of the NACo participants referred to us as the 'gold standard' for working with youth in custody and during the tour, one of our youth received a standing ovation when it was announced he was receiving a full scholarship to Cal State Long Beach. Chief Hernandez added, "That moment just made my day."

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About the Orange County Probation Department

As a public safety agency, the Orange County Probation Department serves the community using effective, research supported rehabilitation practices and collaborative partnerships to successfully reintegrate justice involved individuals into society as responsible citizens.

The Probation Department is proud to serve the Orange County community. It is dedicated to continuous improvement, searching out and applying "effective and research supported practices" to assist justice involved youth, their families, and adults to successfully navigate and successfully complete probation. Additionally, the Probation Department assists the

criminal court system through investigations, probation reports and community supervision of thousands of adult and juvenile clients on court-ordered probation or in diversion programs. The Department also operates the Orange County Juvenile Hall, and two camps for youth. In addition, we operate two Youth Reporting Centers serving North and Central Orange County.