



# ALAMEDA COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **ALAMEDA COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT RECEIVES A \$400,000 GRANT From Sierra Health Foundation through the Positive Youth Justice Initiative**

**Sept. 22, 2014 (Oakland, CA)** – The Alameda County Probation Department will host a “Public Affirmation” of a recently awarded \$400,000 grant to implement an innovative, promising new approach to juvenile justice reform known as the Positive Youth Justice Initiative, which will run through 2015. Managed through the Center for Health Program Management, the Positive Youth Justice Initiative is being funded by three California health foundations, Sierra Health Foundation, The California Endowment and The California Wellness Foundation. Alameda County’s Probation Department was one of only four counties selected to receive the highly competitive grant award.

The Public Affirmation will take place on Sept. 24 at the Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center from 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. During the event, the Alameda County Probation Department will reveal the County’s Positive Youth Justice Initiative implementation plan, which supports reform efforts led by the Probation Department to improve the lives of youth involved in the local juvenile justice system.

“This award is meaningful on many fronts. It is an example of leading health foundations believing in our approach of seeing youth as resources, and another example of Alameda County’s national leadership in leveraging public sector support with private investment to address our unique needs,” said Chief LaDonna Harris.

Children in the juvenile justice system often face a number of unique challenges that remain unaddressed. Research shows that 75% to 93% of youth entering the system have experienced traumatic victimization, but there is little support that addresses exposure to that trauma. Once system-involved children reach adulthood, many lack education, are disconnected from family and social networks, face poverty, and without any support often remain in the criminal justice system.

The Positive Youth Justice Initiative is a comprehensive, data-driven approach that combines the best models for change and targets the highest-risk youth. By focusing on the population of *crossover youth* (youth who have a history in the child welfare system, have experienced trauma and are now engaged in the juvenile justice system), successful interventions will have a broader impact on all youth in either system. The initiative’s approach made up of four elements: ***Investment in Youth, Treatment of Trauma, Systems Changes and Wraparound Services.***

“We are thrilled to partner with the Alameda County Probation Department as they work to reform juvenile justice in California. Their willingness to focus on the healthy development of system-engaged youth will enhance their individual prospects for a healthy, productive life while improving public safety for us all,” said Chet P. Hewitt, President and CEO of Sierra Health Foundation and the Center for Health Program Management.

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### **About the Alameda County Probation Department**

The mission of the Alameda County Probation Department is to protect the public safety by providing supervision, services, support and opportunities to our clients on behalf of the people of Alameda County through quality supervision, leadership, services and effective partnerships. <http://www.acgov.org/probation/>