



PROBATION DEPARTMENT



Jeff Kettering
Chief Probation Officer

Modifications to Fiscal Year 2018-19 Strategies

Repurpose of “Courtroom 11”

Earlier this year the Merced County Superior Court vacated “Courtroom 11,” property owned by the county. There is a need to create more space for Probation and Sheriff. Probation intends to use this space for pre-trial staff. The Courtroom is attached to the Merced County Jail, so access to inmates upon arrest will be beneficial and timely. The county is committed to increasing pre-trial services notwithstanding any new legislative mandates.

The Sheriff needs additional space for video arraignments. This space will provide the Sheriff with space attached to the County Jail which will assist for security and transportation issues associated with moving inmates to another location for arraignment.

It is requested that this project be approved, at a cost not to exceed \$750,000.

Sheriff’s Community Service Technician

The Sheriff’s Office currently employs two full time community services technicians to process all evidence brought into the agency. In 2012, the Sheriff’s Office took in 13,941 pieces of evidence. Through the years those numbers increased to a high of 19,002 items in 2016. The number dropped in 2017 to 16,629; however, this is still a considerable increase since 2012. In addition, with the use of body cameras and more technical issues, the expectations and workload of this classification have increased.

The addition of this position is projected to cost \$96,500.

Jail Utilization Study

The Merced County Jail has historically been overcrowded, which has resulted with the Sheriff’s Office having to dedicate additional resources to population management in order to comply with state and federal mandates. Recently, data revealed that the Merced County Jail had one of the highest pre-trial populations of county inmates in the State of California. Although many agencies impacted by the population have formed opinions regarding the jail population, there has not been an intensive research project to indicate how county policies and processes may be contributing to the jail population.

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