



## Steve Gunnels District Attorney

1164 NW Bond Street • Bend, Oregon 97703  
(541) 388-6520 • Fax: (541) 330-4691  
[www.dcda.us](http://www.dcda.us)

### MEDIA RELEASE

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### MEDIA CONTACT

Kathleen Meehan Coop  
541-317-3175, [Kathleen.meehancoop@dcda.us](mailto:Kathleen.meehancoop@dcda.us)

### DISTRICT ATTORNEY RECRUITS VOLUNTEERS FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAM

Since 2021, the Deschutes County District Attorney's Office has been offering the **Emerging Adult Program (EAP)**. The pre-charge restorative justice initiative. This program allows young adult offenders to take accountability for their actions and redirect their lives, while prioritizing the healing and justice for those harmed by their behavior.

The Emerging Adult Program is redefining how we engage with young adults involved in the criminal justice system having committed certain low-level crimes. Traditional prosecution is not always the best solution, especially for those aged 18 to 25 who are in the midst of making critical life decisions and transitioning into adulthood. This combination often leads to poor choices, but rather than resorting to the conventional criminal justice system, the Emerging Adult Program offers a restorative justice model. This approach allows young adults to take responsibility for their actions, make amends, and potentially earn a dismissal of their case—thus avoiding the long-term consequences of an arrest.

The Emerging Adult Program is a collaborative initiative involving the Deschutes County District Attorney's Office, Community Solutions of Central Oregon, Thrive Central Oregon, Deschutes Defenders, the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council, and volunteer community members who serve as restorative justice facilitators.

### **EAP Volunteer Recruitment**

The Emerging Adult Program is recruiting additional volunteers to serve as trained restorative justice facilitators (i.e. community facilitators) or as victim surrogates. Volunteers will engage in conversation with these young adults about their charge and current life situation, and will work with them to establish an approved personalized accountability plan.

The EAP team is seeking passionate community members who are eager to make a difference by supporting young adults and working with both offenders and victims. No Prior experience is needed.

### Community facilitators will be:

- Paid for their time,
- Trained in restorative justice and facilitation techniques, and
- Helping both the harmed and responsible parties

To be a community facilitator you must be:

- At least 18 years old,
- Open to criminal justice reform measures,
- Able to commit to at least a half-day once a month between January-June 2025, and
- Available to participate in a multi-day training starting in November 2024.

**Individuals with lived-experience in the criminal justice system are encouraged to apply for this opportunity.**

An informational meeting will be held at **1:30pm on Tuesday, October 8, 2024 at COCC-Bend Campus** at the Health Careers Center in Room 190.

**To register for the informational meeting please visit the link below or scan the QR code:**

<https://www.cognitoforms.com/DeschutesCounty2/RegistrationForTheEAPVolunteerInformationalMeeting>

