



Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County

Contact:

Timothy Tait, Communications Director

Timothy.Tait@jbazmc.maricopa.gov

Office: 602.506.7570

Probation Week Recognizes Officers' Role in Public Safety *Probation officers strive for behavioral change, protection of public*

PHOENIX (July 19, 2021) – During the week of July 18, agencies across the United States will recognize National Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week. Within the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County, that means honoring the contributions made by hundreds of probation and surveillance officers dedicated to protecting public safety while striving to encourage behavioral change on the part of community members under supervision.

In Maricopa County, the role of the probation officer has evolved. Today, probation officers – including those with the adult and juvenile probation departments – work hand-in-hand with those under supervision to change behaviors that lead to criminal activity. Through supervision and engagement with probation staff, individuals are held accountable for their conduct and adherence to the court's orders.

“Working to bring about positive change in our communities while safeguarding public safety. That’s the hallmark of our staff members with the adult and juvenile probation departments. It’s a role within our justice system that has changed and evolved over the years based continuous research and science – as agents of change they serve as guardians, social workers and resource allocators for the community, the Court and those under supervision,” said Maricopa County Superior Court Presiding Judge Joseph C. Welty. “Public safety is among the pillars of the Judicial Branch and our probation staff members take that responsibility seriously through efforts focused on behavioral change among those under supervision.”

Probation officers provide pretrial supervision for those with pending charges, complete presentence reports for judges for those convicted of a crime, engage in supervision for those assigned to probation following the disposition of charges, and coordinate with service providers to deliver resources to support individuals under supervision.

“Probation is a transformative force that enhances public safety. I’m proud to have been a probation officer here and of the 1,200 staff who serve the residents of Maricopa County and our Superior Court with honor and distinction,” said Michael Cimino, chief of the Adult Probation Department. “They are a national standard of how to address the root causes of criminal conduct, intervene effectively, address risk, serve victims, and they provide timely actionable information to the court for its decision making. Over the years, thousands have been diverted from prison, changing the trajectory of their life for them but also their families and communities. At the same time, probation officers have taken action to hold

people accountability, which also enhances public safety. They literally change lives every day and I couldn't be prouder of their work."

Across Maricopa County, the Judicial Branch employs more than 1,800 adult and juvenile probation and surveillance officers and staff supervising residents who are on unsupervised, standard or intensive probation supervision and who operate the juvenile detention center.

"Working with juveniles is like having free refills on hope. There is not a single child that I've ever looked at and thought, 'There's no hope for this one,'" said Tamzin Shaw, a surveillance officer with Juvenile Probation. "I'm excited to see youth go forward in life, even with the smallest of steps."

In Maricopa County, the adult and juvenile probation departments are committed to being learning organizations and providing services that adhere to national standards of evidence-based practices. For the Maricopa County Adult Probation Department, this commitment, along with a commitment to public safety, was solidified in 2008. Since that time, the department has tracked key results related to the successful completion of probation and revocations to the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry.

"As probation and surveillance officers, we work in a profession in which we have the very unique opportunity to truly make an impact in the lives of justice-involved-individuals, and the community as a whole," said Adult Probation Officer Scott Gibson. "This impact is exceptional, and by focusing on behavior change, we can even help shape a person's legacy. Though we may not always get to see it, we are making a difference each and every day."

As the Judicial Branch celebrates National Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week, we recognize the significant improvements the Adult Probation Department has made from 66% of individuals successfully completing probation supervision in 2008 to 80% of individuals successful completing probation supervision in 2020. In addition, revocations to the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry have declined from 28% in 2008 to 18% in 2020. These changes have occurred while the number of individuals actively supervised in the community has increased from 23,876 to 25,382.

"Despite our recent health pandemic, our men and women continued to provide uninterrupted public safety services including 24/7 safe and secure detention services when necessary to responsibly and safely hold youth accountable," said Juvenile Probation Chief Eric Meaux. "We provide meaningful accountability to our youth while also providing relevant opportunities for growth and learning. These challenges are met daily by those serving in the probation field."

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