

# CHRONICLE

ISSUE: APRIL - JUNE 2026

MARICOPA COUNTY ADULT PROBATION DEPARTMENT



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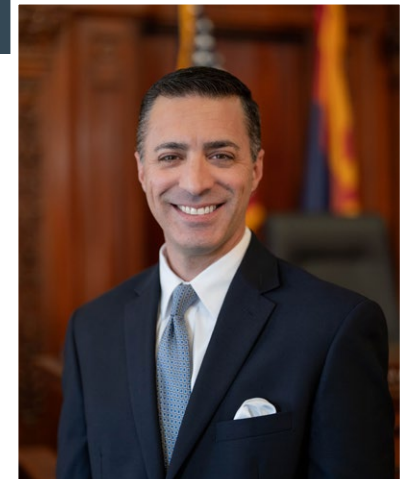
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# CHIEF'S CORNER



Happy new year! Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 has come to an end for the state of Arizona and Maricopa County as of June 30<sup>th</sup>. During this time of year, performance measures, budgets, and other important functions close in June before the new year begins in July. It provides a natural time to evaluate and set goals for the coming year. Since Maricopa County's Adult Probation Department (APD) has plenty of both evaluation and department goal setting, I would like to use this edition of the *Chronicle* to provide important context of those goals before we publish FY2026 performance measures results in the next edition.

One of the most significant changes I have seen in the Department since I started as a probation officer 27 years ago is the growth of research in community corrections. Much of APD's approach is grounded in well-established research. These practices, along with the State's statutory requirements, form the basis of the requirements of the Arizona Supreme Court, which regulates our work through the Arizona Code of Judicial Administration. At its core, the purpose of every probation department is to enhance community safety. This is reflected in the Department's mission statement to enhance community safety through service, accountability, and influencing change, as we engage with individuals in the criminal courts. It is a broad mission that supports serving our courts, victims of crime, stakeholders, and the public. As a branch of government, the Court, including probation as a department of the Court, is committed to excellence in its service to victims and the community.

Across the populations we serve, whether at initial appearance court, during pretrial supervision, at presentence, or throughout probation supervision, our work centers on five primary areas:

1. Service, support, and professionalism in our approach. First and foremost, a key component to enhancing public safety is doing work, grounded in research, that helps individuals move away from criminal behavior altogether. This starts with staff embracing their role as active partners in the change process, providing guidance, accountability, and support needed to promote long-term success.
2. Engaging interactions and communication approaches. This commitment is demonstrated in the way we interact and communicate with victims, community stakeholders, and individuals throughout the criminal justice system. It involves actively listening to understand barriers that may prevent someone from successfully completing the requirements of the Court.
3. Community corrections assessments drive supervision planning. The principal goal is to use a research-based instrument to guide decision-making and case management. These tools help identify underlying factors that contribute to criminal behavior so they can be effectively addressed. Assessments factor an individual's risk of future criminal activity, identify needs, and provide the foundation for tailoring supervision strategies.
4. Graduated responses are tailored to an individual's behavior and performance while under supervision. Progress, even when incremental, is affirmed and reinforced with consistency. When setbacks occur, they are addressed through accountability and appropriate resources, and when the risk cannot be safely managed, the matter is returned to the Court for further review.
5. Accountability is a core value that guides our work and reflects the trust placed in us by Judicial Leadership, the courts, and the community we serve. We honor that trust through integrity, transparency, adherence to professional standards, and a commitment to continuous improvement in ourselves and those we lead.

These represent some of the foundational building blocks of work that are both challenging and complex. Understanding this context is important before reviewing the Department's performance measures, which will be updated with year-end results and used to set goals for the upcoming fiscal year.

I am especially grateful for the staff who never settle for past achievements and continue to ask what more can be done to better serve our community. I am equally appreciative of the leaders and partners across the country who work alongside us to advance best practices in community corrections. Through these collaborations, we strengthen public safety. Effective community corrections lead to safer neighborhoods, support victims and victim services by helping prevent future harm, and create opportunities for individuals under supervision to permanently exit the justice system. When our efforts succeed, there are potential victims of crime who never experience victimization, families that remain intact, and children who benefit from having positive and responsible role models at home and in their communities.

I am excited for what the coming fiscal year will bring as we continue to advance a profession that provides a vital service to the community we all share.

*Michael P. Cimino*

Michael P. Cimino

Chief for the Maricopa County Adult Probation Department





# NEWS & INFORMATION

## NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK 2026

By Dawn Lewallen

On April 21, 2026, APD proudly hosted its annual National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) Staff Recognition Event. This event honors employees who have gone above and beyond in their commitment to serving victims. This year's national theme, "Listen. Act. Advocate. Protect victims, serve communities.," served as a powerful reminder of the important role probation staff play in supporting victims with compassion, empathy, and respect.



The event recognized staff members who were nominated by their peers and leadership. These employees showed exceptional dedication to victim services and advocacy. Each nominee received a certificate of recognition for their outstanding efforts and their commitment to the Department's mission. Additionally, Adult Probation Supervisor Michelle Holbrook, who supervises a Presentence Investigations (PSI) Unit and Victim Services, gave each recognized employee a handmade planter and succulent as a special token of appreciation for their service and dedication.

A highlight of the event was the inspiring presentation by guest speaker Lisa Lopez, Senior Program Coordinator for the Arizona Human Trafficking Hotline with Arizona State University. Lisa courageously shared her personal journey with attendees. She spoke openly about the difficult circumstances she faced during her childhood that ultimately led her into the criminal justice system and onto probation.

Lisa reflected on the positive impact her probation officer had on her life during a challenging time, emphasizing how guidance, support, and genuine care helped shape her future. Her story served as a reminder that many individuals involved in the criminal justice system have experienced significant trauma and adversity. These experiences have often contributed to the paths they took in life. Lisa's journey is a powerful example of resilience, illustrating how a trauma-informed, supportive approach from a probation officer can help someone overcome both victimization and



Adult Probation Chief Michael Cimino (far left) joins Michelle Holbrook and Dawn Lewallen (far right) as they present an award to Tania Newman-Juarez (center) at the NCVRW celebration.

criminalization. She now channels those experiences into advocacy, helping survivors of human trafficking reclaim their lives across Arizona.

Her message resonated strongly with staff, reinforcing the importance of treating every individual with dignity, kindness, and respect. Through dedication, empathy, and supportive services, staff can make a lasting, positive difference in the lives of those they encounter, strengthen trust within the community, and ensure victims feel heard and supported.

The event concluded with congratulations and appreciation extended to all staff members who were nominated and recognized by Department leadership and Adult Probation Chief Michael Cimino. Their efforts, compassion, and advocacy continue to make a meaningful impact and are deeply valued. APD remains committed to upholding the values of NCVRW by continuing to listen, act, and advocate for victims and the community it serves.

## 2026 APD STAFF HONORED FOR NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS’ RIGHTS WEEK

|                   |                           |                       |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Brandi Anderson   | Azra Haseljic             | Haani Penafiel        |
| Jade Anderson     | Amanda Hastings           | Samantha Roberts      |
| Daniel Atkinson   | Elizabeth Hernandez Solis | David Rojas           |
| Daniel Burgess    | Michelle Holbrook         | Juan Saavedra Jimenez |
| Vanessa Chavez    | Carrie Igondjo            | Ileana Salvatierra    |
| Karlie Colbert    | Jeanett Istratie          | Valerie Serpico       |
| Lisseth DeBartolo | Cherynne Lara             | Matthew Schmitz       |
| Martina Downing   | Abby Lee                  | Tianna Schwartz       |
| Christine Frey    | Dawn Lewallen             | Rebecca Sifuentes     |
| Casey Frith       | Kaylyn Miller             | Ash Street            |
| Brandi Goodwin    | Tania Newman-Juarez       | Tish Sykes            |
| Becca Gustafson   | Ryan Nilsen               | Jocelyn Symonds       |
| Christina Hannon  | Madison Officer           | Walter Todd           |
| Carlee Hanratty   | Jazmin Padilla            | Carrie Ward           |

## CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

By Britani Ellithorp & Lizette Gallardo

Throughout the month of April 2026, the Sex Offender Divisions participated in community outreach and professional development activities in recognition of National Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Divisions’ efforts focused on strengthening partnerships, enhancing staff training, and supporting organizations that serve children and families across Arizona.

To support professional growth, the Divisions hosted the Professional Growth for Sex Offender Supervision Specialists (PROGRESS) training on April 6 and 20. Supervisors within the Sex Offender Divisions and officers developed the training to ensure staff receive ongoing education in this specialized area of supervision. The training sessions featured presentations from contracted



APD Sex Offender Divisions attending the PROGRESS training in April 2026.

treatment providers and community partners who shared their expertise on topics related to the treatment and supervision of individuals convicted of sexual offenses. Presenters also facilitated discussions on challenges and best practices within the field. Training topics included the reunification process and victimology, sex offender assessments, and polygraph examinations.

This training marked the Divisions’ first collaboration with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) staff to welcome approximately 20 officers from Arizona’s other 14 counties who specialize in this field of supervision. The two-

day training offered officers opportunities to learn from one another, network, and collaborate on strategies to enhance supervision practices statewide. The Sex Offender Divisions look forward to continuing its partnership with AOC and expanding training opportunities that support officers who supervise individuals convicted of sexual offenses throughout Arizona.

In recognition of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Sex Offender Divisions also partnered with [Childhelp](#), a Phoenix-based organization that serves an average of 400 children experiencing abuse and neglect each month. Childhelp provides treatment, intervention, and investigative services in a safe, child-friendly, and child-centered environment.

To support Childhelp's mission, APD placed donation boxes in several Department buildings to collect new and gently used toys, clothing, and food items. The Sex Offender Divisions also participated in "Dollars for Hope," a friendly fundraising competition between units. To encourage participation, supervisors in the Sex Offender Divisions offered a free lunch to the unit that raised the most funds. Together, staff raised more than \$2,200! These donations were used to purchase food and toiletries, which were donated along with collected toys and clothing. APD extends its appreciation to everyone who contributed. These generous efforts make a meaningful difference and reflect the Department's ongoing commitment to supporting the community.



## NATIONAL TREATMENT COURT MONTH CELEBRATES LIVES TRANSFORMED

By Clara Colmenero

For more than 30 years, treatment courts have helped reshape lives, yet many people remain unfamiliar with their impact. These courts provide structure and accountability for individuals in the justice system facing substance use, mental health, and trauma-related challenges while also recognizing and supporting their progress toward recovery.

"We understand addiction is an illness, it's difficult to overcome, and we're here to help uplift people," said Commissioner Travis Marderosian. "Initially, Drug Court and DUI Court participants need acute stabilization. Resources for residential treatment, transitional housing, and sober living programs are critical to achieving foundational stability. From there, our participants can begin to focus on substance abuse treatment, cognitive interventions, and medication-assisted treatment."

At the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County, individuals entering Drug Court and DUI Court programs gain opportunities to build new skills, connect with treatment resources, and receive support from a multidisciplinary team that includes judicial officers, probation officers, defense attorneys, and counselors. To be eligible for Drug and DUI Court, justice-involved individuals must have a Drug or DUI-related offense and reside within specific supervision areas.

"When I started this program, I was homeless, jobless, my family wasn't speaking to me, and I had no purpose or direction for the future," said Drug Court graduate Allison Brisky. "Thirteen months later and I have my own place, a career in behavioral health, I'm in college working towards my degree, and I am the type of mother, daughter, sister, and friend that I was always meant to be. Drug Court has not only changed my life, but it has also given me a life that is too good to lose. I may have put in the work, but Drug Court provided me with the structure, accountability, and discipline I never knew I was even capable of having."

Participants progress through five phases of the program, each lasting approximately 30 to 90 days. In the first phase, participants must have 14 consecutive days of substance testing, obtain temporary or transitional housing, get screened for treatment, and develop a case plan. At the beginning of 2026, the program phase requirements were updated to align with best practices informed by decades of research.

Each Treatment Court graduation is a celebration that encapsulates not only the participant's struggles but also their dedication to sobriety.



“I like to recognize the individual journey that the participant has been on. Our graduates face individual hardships and accomplishments that are unique to their journey,” said Commissioner Christina Henderson. “I believe sharing the experience is inspirational to others working through their own journeys. I also give every team member an opportunity to congratulate the participants. Their success is all our successes!”

## SUPPORTING STABILITY: MENTAL HEALTH UNIT BUILDS EMERGENCY KITS THROUGH GRANT

By Samantha Gravett

The Department’s Mental Health (MH) Units received a generous grant from [Friends of the Court](#), a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the work of treatment and problem solving courts throughout Maricopa County. This funding created an important opportunity to address a critical need: helping individuals who are experiencing housing and resource instability. With the grant, the MH Unit purchased universal hygiene products, feminine hygiene supplies, male and female undergarments, hats, sunscreen, sleeping bags, backpacks, and food.

In April 2026, members of the MH Unit worked together to assemble more than 100 emergency kits, filled with the items obtained from the grant. These kits allow officers to provide meaningful, immediate support during field and office contacts, helping bridge the gap between critical needs and day to day survival. Beyond addressing basic necessities, this effort plays an important role in building rapport and trust between probation officers and the individuals they supervise.

When officers can offer practical help in real time, especially during moments of instability, it demonstrates genuine care and reinforces that supervision is grounded in support, not punishment. Providing essential resources helps break down barriers, encourages open communication, and fosters stronger working relationships. By meeting supervised individuals’ immediate needs, the MH Unit creates opportunities for deeper engagement. By combining community partnership, targeted resources, and hands-on involvement, the MH Unit continues to advance its mission of supporting participants with compassion and advocacy. This initiative reflects the ongoing commitment to meeting individuals where they are and connecting them with tools that promote health, safety, and stability.



## APD COMPLETES ITS FIRST LEAD CLASS

By Sean McMillen

As the first Learn, Engage, Aspire, Develop (LEAD) class concludes, APD is proud to reflect on the impact of this 12-month leadership development experience that occurred from June 2025 to May 2026. Designed specifically for employees who successfully navigated the supervisor assessment center, the program focused on supporting and preparing this group for the next step in their leadership journey. Throughout the year, it reinforced the Department’s commitment to investing in professional development, strengthening leadership capacity, and helping employees confidently step into new roles across the organization.

Over the course of the year-long leadership development program, participants engaged in a mix of hands-on learning, open conversations, and real-world practice to prepare them for future leadership roles. Through quarterly workshops, they engaged in interactive discussions and activities focused on building practical skills like time management, task prioritization, and working through role-play scenarios. They also had the chance to hear directly from recently promoted leaders during Q&A sessions, gaining honest insight into what that transition looks like, and also sharing their own experiences, successes, and challenges.



along the way.

Beyond the workshops, participants strengthened their knowledge through branch-wide training like Essential Managerial Basics and Resources Kit (EMBARK) and Crucial Conversations. They were also given access to new supervisor training earlier than usual, helping them feel more prepared and confident before stepping into a leadership role.

Many participants went a step further by taking advantage of additional opportunities throughout the program, such as connecting with supervisor mentors and volunteering to mentor new officers across different area offices. What really stood out was the level of engagement and openness of the group. Their willingness to participate, share, and be vulnerable helped create a supportive environment and made the experience meaningful for everyone involved. On May 12, 2026, all participants received their completion certificates to signify the conclusion of the first APD LEAD class.



LEAD graduates and staff at the graduation. Left to right: Nathan Chaplin, David Taylor, Casey Martinez, Andrew Mount, Francisca Salazar, Danielle Golden, Angel Camacho, Brian Mahoney, Ivana Budimirovic, Kathryn Skelton, Samantha Duggins, Casey Frith, Doris Tucker, Janet Acuna, Katelyn Walden, Jennifer Borgen, Dawn Underwood, Sandra Tom, Sean McMillen, Heather Redmond, and Marie Long.

## RECRUIT FOR APD!

Do you know someone outside APD who would be a strong candidate to join the team? Refer a friend or colleague to join APD!

There are many ways to contribute to the Department, from providing community supervision or counseling to individuals on probation, to monitoring field activity or administering caseloads. There is something for everyone! Explore career opportunities on the [Judicial Branch of Arizona's Maricopa County Careers website](#).

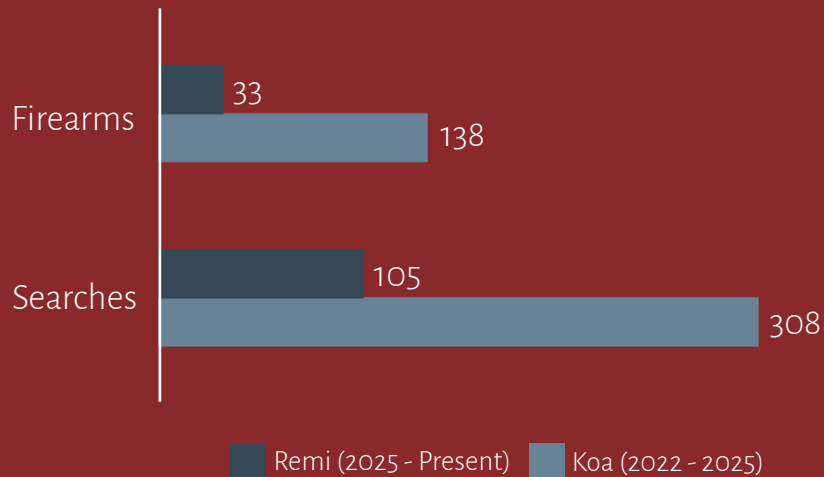


Learn more about the Department by watching the video. The video can also be found on the [APD website homepage](#).

Email [apdrecruitment@jbazmc.maricopa.gov](mailto:apdrecruitment@jbazmc.maricopa.gov) for more information.

The APD's canine (K9) program was implemented in 2022 with K9 Koa, a German Shepherd, owned and handled by Probation Officer Kate Southards. Koa was only the second firearm-detection dog for a probation department in the entire state of Arizona when the program began. She retired from APD's K9 program in November 2025, following the swearing in of Remi, the next K9 to follow in Koa's footsteps. During Koa's career, she conducted 308 searches and helped seize 138 firearms before retiring. Since Remi started in 2025, she has conducted 105 searches and helped seize 33 firearms. In addition, she has located numerous firearm accessories and hundreds of rounds of ammunition. She not only conducts searches for APD, but also for the Juvenile Probation Department (JPD) when needed.

## K9 FIREARM SEIZURES AND SEARCHES



Probation Officer Kate Southards, Chief Michael Cimino, and the Hon. Jennifer Green with Remi (left) and Koa (right) at Remi's swearing-in.



# ACHIEVEMENTS & CELEBRATIONS

## 2025 “OF THE YEAR” CELEBRATION

By Anna O'Geen

APD is pleased to have honored the 2025 “Of the Year” award winners during an in-person awards celebration on April 14, 2026, at the Black Canyon Building (BCB) in Phoenix. Winners were nominated by fellow employees and selected by APD’s People Recognizing Individual Deeds of Excellence (PRIDE) Committee for their exceptional contributions to the Department’s mission and goals. The following leadership principles were considered in the award nominations: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart.

### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 “OF THE YEAR” AWARD WINNERS!

Brandon Shimizu – Probation Officer  
Joe Lopez – Surveillance Officer  
Donna Swan – Employee  
Jackie Browning – Supervisor



2025 “Of the Year” winners pictured left to right: Donna Swan, Joe Lopez, Jackie Browning, and Brandon Shimizu.



## PROBATION OFFICER OF THE YEAR – BRANDON SHIMIZU

Nominated by Adult Probation Supervisor Ricardo Mendez and Adult Probation Officers Kemberly Holguin and Kayla King



Supervisor Ricardo Mendez and Adult Probation Officer Brandon Shimizu.

*"This nomination for Probation Officer of the Year recognizes a professional whose dedication, integrity, and compassion exemplify the highest standards of community supervision. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to public safety while never losing sight of the humanity of those he serves. By collaborating with local service providers, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations, he has helped connect individuals to employment opportunities, housing resources, and treatment programs that support long-term rehabilitation.*

*One of his most distinguishing qualities is his commitment to giving back to the community. He regularly volunteers his time and encourages others to participate in community outreach initiatives such as the Maricopa Animal Safe Haven (MASH) program. He understands that serving the community is not limited to individuals in the criminal justice system but includes the community at large. At any event the Department hosts, Brandon is there to show support and volunteer.*

*Within his unit, he has been instrumental in building trust and fostering strong alliances among colleagues. He leads by example, maintaining open communication, offering guidance to newer officers, and stepping in to assist teammates when challenges arise. His collaborative approach promotes morale and cohesion, ensuring that officers work together effectively while maintaining consistent standards of supervision. He goes out of his way to bring something that makes everyone smile and laugh. From his witty stories to his TV show references, one thing is always guaranteed when Brandon is around: alliance. Brandon regularly brings homemade brownies throughout the year for his unit, the building, and even across the Department, further strengthening relationships and morale. He ensures that no birthday goes unnoticed, no life event goes unrecognized and consistently shares his knowledge with his unit members.*

*He balances accountability with empathy, earning compliance through respect rather than authority alone. By setting clear expectations and providing consistent support, he has helped numerous individuals successfully complete probation and avoid recidivism. His case outcomes reflect not only enforcement of conditions but meaningful progress toward rehabilitation and stability.*

*His work embodies the spirit of excellence deserving of recognition as Probation Officer of the Year."*

## SURVEILLANCE OFFICER OF THE YEAR - JOE LOPEZ

Nominated by Adult Probation Officer Supervisor Barbara Rubio



Supervisor Barbara Rubio and Surveillance Officer Joe Lopez.

*"Since joining APD in 2012, Joe Lopez has consistently demonstrated exceptional dedication and professionalism, leaving a lasting impact on colleagues and the community alike. Whether assisting with challenging individuals under supervision, locating local resources, or helping with unexpected situations in the field, Joe is always ready to step in and provide support. While known for his sharp wit, his commitment and kindness set him apart as one of the most dependable officers on the team.*

*Drawing on his prior law enforcement experience, Joe has cultivated strong relationships with agencies across the state. However, it is his genuine care for others that makes him a trusted resource and a connector—someone willing to go the extra mile to ensure others succeed. Rather than seeking assistance for himself, Joe serves as a conduit, leveraging his network to help colleagues and community partners achieve positive outcomes. Through his efforts, APD has strengthened ties with law enforcement, local businesses, and community organizations, making Joe the go-to source for everything from search operations to outreach initiatives.*



*In October 2025, Joe coordinated and facilitated the Domestic Violence (DV) Round-Up and supported a local shelter's Halloween event. The DV Round-Up is designed to hold individuals accountable and execute arrest warrants for DV and child support cases, while sending a clear message of support to victims. Joe not only developed the plan of action but also organized APD and police department teams and streamlined research efforts to expedite the process—a responsibility he has successfully managed for nearly a decade. Later that month, he again utilized his connections to collect candy donations and partnered with a local restaurant to host a small but meaningful trunk-or-treat event for children at the shelter. These examples reflect Joe's unwavering commitment to community engagement and his ability to turn APD initiatives into impactful experiences.*

*Joe is an invaluable asset to the Department, exemplifying selflessness, and a genuine desire to make a difference. Though he would never admit it, he embodies the perfect balance of strength and generosity, making him a cornerstone of APD's mission and values."*

## EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR - DONNA SWAN

Nominated by Case Administrator Brenda Aldaco



Case Administrator Brenda Aldaco and Clinician Donna Swan.

*"I am honored to nominate Donna Swan for Employee of the Year. Donna is a Drug Court Counselor who previously served in other roles within the Department, including a surveillance officer. Her professional adaptability, combined with her deep compassion for others, makes her an extraordinary asset to the Department.*

*Donna is the kind of person who leaves an impression without ever trying to. She is consistently warm, kind-hearted, and genuinely passionate about helping people succeed. She greets everyone with a smile and carries herself with a calm steadiness that puts others at ease. Whether interacting with coworkers, individuals in Drug Court, or community partners, she brings empathy, patience, and respect into every space she enters.*

*I have had the privilege of getting to know Donna through our work on the Peer Support Committee, where she also serves in a leadership role. During that time, I have seen firsthand how naturally she shows up for others during difficult moments. This past summer, when I was facing a breast cancer diagnosis, Donna exemplified what it truly means to go above and beyond. On the day I was awaiting test results, she took time after a long meeting to lend an ear and acknowledge my fears with genuine care. She later followed up to check on me, and when my diagnosis changed from non-invasive to invasive cancer, she continued to offer steady encouragement and support.*

*Donna even participated in a breast cancer walk and wrote my name on the survivor wall. She continues to check in regularly by email, phone, and text, always offering support—not only regarding my health, but also the anxieties I have faced as a single mother.*

*What makes Donna truly exceptional is that this care is not reserved for one person. She treats everyone with the same sincerity and concern. Individuals in Drug Court are incredibly fortunate to have someone so dedicated guiding them. The Department is stronger because of her."*

## SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR - JACKIE BROWNING

Nominated by Adult Probation Officer JW Dunbar



Supervisor Jackie Browning  
and Adult Probation Officer  
JW Dunbar.

*"Jackie Browning consistently exemplifies exceptional leadership, compassion, and selfless service, making a profound impact on both staff and departmental operations. One incident that highlights her dedication occurred during an emergency situation involving an individual on probation on her scheduled day off. Although she was not on duty, Jackie made herself immediately available, eager to assist in resolving the matter swiftly and effectively. She provided clear guidance, ensured all necessary court documents were completed promptly, and remained engaged until the situation was fully resolved. Her responsiveness and professionalism relieved significant stress and ensured the matter was handled with urgency and care."*

*In addition, Jackie demonstrated extraordinary leadership while supervising her own unit and simultaneously providing coverage for two additional units. Despite the overwhelming workload, she remained calm, accessible, and supportive, offering hands-on guidance, assisting with case questions, and completing time-sensitive documentation with exceptional efficiency. Even under*

*intense pressure, she maintained a positive attitude, consistently encouraging staff and leading by example.*

*Jackie's compassion extends beyond professional responsibilities. During a particularly difficult family situation, she offered genuine condolences, emotional support, and guidance, making staff feel valued and understood. She encouraged taking any necessary time to focus on personal well-being while providing motivation and reassurance. Her empathy and kindness fostered a sense of trust, loyalty, and emotional resilience within the team.*

*Jackie is always available, often setting aside her own responsibilities to support others. Her leadership style emphasizes mentorship, allowing staff to learn through experience while providing thoughtful instruction and guidance. She also works tirelessly to promote a positive work environment, organizing office events, supporting team initiatives, and ensuring the workplace remains welcoming and supportive.*

*Jackie Browning's integrity, dedication, and compassion reflect the highest standards of public service. Her leadership strengthens departmental operations, builds confident professionals, and creates a united, motivated team. For these reasons, she is exceptionally deserving of recognition as Supervisor of the Year."*

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 "OF THE YEAR" NOMINEES!

### PROBATION OFFICER SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

Heather Redmond – Runner Up  
Marlene Garcia  
Samantha Gravett  
Ivy Kinney  
Fedra Malaquias  
Luiz Marquez Ontiveros  
Ricardo Mendez  
Ryan Price

### SURVEILLANCE OFFICER OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

Sean Steill – Runner Up  
Michel Bridget  
Jackie Chagolla  
Roy Gonzales  
Kristina Martinez

### EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

Cristina Eichner – Runner Up  
Matthew Estes

### PROBATION OFFICER OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

Casey Frith – Runner Up  
Alexandria Battest  
Marshall Biddinger  
Samantha Duggins  
JW Dunbar  
Roxann Ellison  
Christine Frey  
Dylan Hess  
Selena Manzano  
Diana Martinez  
Christian Mays  
Nathaniel Petrov  
Julicua Singleton

# 2026 SUPERVISOR LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CLASS GRADUATES!

By Heather Preston

In January 2026, 30 leaders from across Arizona came together in downtown Phoenix to begin the six-month 2026 APD Supervisor Leadership Academy (SLA). The class brought together eight APD supervisors and 22 supervisors and managers from adult and juvenile probation departments throughout the state, including Cochise, Mohave, Pinal, Yavapai, and Yuma counties. Each month, participants met in Phoenix for two full days of leadership development, collaboration, and growth.

Throughout the academy, they explored topics such as Leading Change, Crucial Conversations, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and Cultural Competency, while also developing individualized leadership plans. Participants received 360-degree assessments, which provided meaningful feedback from supervisors, peers, and direct reports to help identify both leadership strengths and opportunities for growth.

The academy also gave participants the opportunity to build connections beyond their own departments through peer mentorship. Working alongside their mentors and classmates, each participant collaborated on a 20-minute presentation delivered at the conclusion of the program.

Over the course of six months, these leaders challenged themselves, expanded their skills, and built tools they can take back to their teams, units, and departments. Their hard work and commitment were celebrated during a graduation ceremony held on June 25, 2026, at the Downtown Justice Center (DJTC). Congratulations to all 2026 APD SLA graduates!

## PARTICIPANTS KEY TAKEAWAYS

"To be an effective leader, it is important to learn and acknowledge what you know about yourself (positive and negatives). This can be difficult, but to be truly effective, it is an important part of the journey. The SLA gives you a safe environment to do this in."

**Kat Caswell, Data Management Analyst**

"My experience at SLA helped me do a lot of self-discoveries regarding my personality and leadership style. It forced me out of my comfort zone and has helped me learn how to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. I was able to drive into the areas of leadership that feel difficult or heavy and gain new skills and understanding their importance."

**Britani Ellithorp, Adult Probation Supervisor**



June 2026 SLA graduates in alphabetical order: Danielle Abbott, Dalia Alspaugh, Kevin Bacchus, Joe Bell, Ryan Burgin, Kayla Carter, Kat Caswell, Kyle Cox, Britani Ellithorp, Sarah Embury, Ethan Erickson, Jayson Ewald, Kevin Farrell, Thelma Fowler, Matthew Fox, Danielle Golden, Carlos Crijalva, Yvette Hawthorne, George Lazar, David Leckington, Susan Malarchik, Kaitlyn Mattila, Greg Moreno, Tiffany Rankin, Mia Rivera, Jason Roorda, Jared Ross, Francisca Salazar, Susan Scott, and Bri Webb.

# INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS WIN SIX NATIONAL AWARDS!

By APD Data Integrity & Analytics Team

APD has developed and maintained a reputation for being at the forefront of innovation in community corrections. In the last nine years, the National Association of Counties (NACo), which recognizes innovative county government programs, has awarded 47 achievement awards to APD programs. This year, six APD programs were recognized with a 2026 NACo Achievement Award. These awards honor innovative and effective county government programs. The APD staff involved in developing and implementing these award-winning programs deserve recognition for their contributions that benefit the Department and the community it serves. Below are summaries of the winning programs, and the core team that contributed to the implementation.

## EVIDENCE ROOM TRACKING PROGRAM

APD's Continuous Improvement (CI) team developed a new program to improve the evidence room tracking processes for nine locations across the Department. The Evidence Room Tracking Program refines how information is collected on new evidence and items, improves chain of custody tracking, and supports more accurate and reliable recordkeeping. It also increases the accessibility of items throughout the process. To support these functions, a digital solution built with Microsoft Forms and Microsoft Lists tracks the movement of items in and out of the evidence rooms for forensic exams, transfers, releases, and destructions. Overall, the program has increased accuracy, transparency, consistency, security, and efficiency in how items are tracked. With the digitized forms, it is easier to search for evidence, the submission process is more reliable and consistent, and employee productivity has improved due to time saved during both submittal and retrieval of evidence. Its digital accessibility and automated format enhance the user experience, providing a modern and efficient alternative to previous methods. The program brings efficiency to the impactful work of officers resulting in enhanced community safety, administration of justice, and appropriate stewardship of property.

Staff integral to the project: Kimberly Bryant, Kayla Cathcart, Luis Cisneros, Drew Day, Zach Nothwehr, Jared Ross, Barbara Rubio, Carlo Seara, and David Taylor

## IPS ALIGNMENT PROGRAM

The Department reviewed its screening processes and implemented the Intensive Probation Supervision (IPS) Alignment Program to strengthen how individuals are identified for IPS. Through this program, eligibility and appropriateness criteria were refined to ensure consistent and accurate screening. This strategic approach helps ensure that individuals placed on IPS are not only eligible, but also truly appropriate for the level of intensive supervision the program provides.

APD's IPS staff worked within statutory and judicial guidelines to create the alignment criteria. They collaborated creatively with the PSI unit and the Court Liaison Unit (CLU) to gather feedback with minimal disruption to operations. Through the IPS Alignment Program, APD continues to focus IPS resources where they will have the greatest impact.

Staff integral to the project: Diana Barela-Rue, Jessica Ethington, Amy Ganz, David Taylor, Dana Shepherd, Mark Smalley, Sandra Tom, Jason Walker, and Reggi Williams (retired)

## LEAP PROGRAM

The Learning Executive & Administrative Practices (LEAP) program is a year-long curriculum designed to prepare APD supervisors interested in promoting to the complex role of a division manager. Through one-on-one mentorship with senior leadership, seminars, and opportunities to participate in special projects, supervisors in the LEAP Program gain the foundation needed to step into higher levels of leadership.

The LEAP Program prepares future Department leaders for the role of division manager by offering current supervisors the unique opportunity to participate in real-time, intensive training alongside experienced division managers. The program's yearlong emphasis on individualized, one-on-one development has strengthened participants' leadership abilities and produced a well-prepared, proven, and confident class of emerging managers.



So far, 26 supervisors have graduated from LEAP, and five graduates have been successfully promoted to division manager, affirming LEAP's positive impact on readiness for their new roles.

Staff integral to the project: Rebecca Britt, Darlene Charnick, Michael Cimino, Sharlene Francis, Lauren Guida, Brandelyn Jackson, Marie Long, Casey Martinez, Sean McMillen, Delma Navarro, Adelita Nunez, April Powell, Heather Preston, Amy Taylor, David Taylor, Ryan Valley, and Jason Walker

## **PV CASE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

Within APD, the CLU manages the daily flow of probation violation (PV) cases, ensuring that accurate information reaches judges, attorneys, and probation officers on time.

The PV Case Assessment Program modernizes how PV cases are prepared for court. Previously, officers and caseload administrators relied on paper packets and manual data collection that could cause delays and inconsistencies. Caseload administrators would spend 12-14 hours per court date compiling information from multiple databases, and officers often duplicated effort by recalculating the probation expiration date each time a PV case was continued. Now, the new program consolidates essential case information into a single automated report available immediately after initial appearances. This improves accuracy, quickens case review, and strengthens communication between CLU officers and administrative staff, which reduces overtime, and ensures timely, consistent preparation of court-ready materials.

In addition to saving time and reducing costs, the PV Case Assessment Program eliminated the printing of over 100,000 pages annually, supporting sustainability and reducing environmental impact. The program sets a new standard for operational excellence.

Staff integral to the project: Irene Ayala, Clint Bell, Nicole Branham, Vanessa Bremerman, Viridiana Campos Rodriguez, Kari Celaya, Dan DeRusso, David Gonzalez, Aundrea Green, Lauren Guida, Lucio Herrera-Herrera, Howard Holmes, Kimberly Roberson, Barbara Rubio, and Yadhira Vicencio

## **RESTORATION OF RIGHTS POSTCARDS PROGRAM**

Individuals sentenced to probation for a felony in Arizona have certain rights suspended (such as the right to vote), which may be restored upon successful completion. The APD discovered that many of those who successfully completed their probation term were unaware of the loss of rights, and/or were unsure of how to navigate the legal process to restore them. The Department identified this issue and created the Restoration of Rights Postcard Program. Through this program, upon successful completion of their probation grant, postcards are mailed to the individual. Each postcard provides information and helpful resources for rights restoration, including direct links to the [Judicial Branch Law Library Resource Center](#) for additional guidance.

The Restoration of Rights Postcard Program stands out for its simplicity, impact, and ability to address a civic gap while promoting an individual's dignity and long-term prosocial engagement in the community. The program introduced a low-cost, high-impact solution that provides individuals who successfully completed probation with clear information and direct links to resources that help bridge potential barriers to their rights. This approach empowers individuals to take the next steps independently, while promoting equity, accessibility, and reintegration, aligning with the Department's mission.

Staff integral to the project: Richelle Bordine, Matthew Estes, Marlene Garcia, Emily Strock, and Barbara Rubio

## **STREAMLINED PRETRIAL INTAKE PROGRAM**

Promptly connecting individuals with needed services, information, and supervision at the Pretrial stage is essential to supporting court compliance and encouraging prosocial behavior while awaiting a disposition. APD's CI team, along with Pretrial staff, transformed its manual Pretrial intake process by developing a digital solution, using Microsoft Forms, that supports efficient completion of intake forms by Pretrial individuals. The Streamlined Pretrial Intake Program securely captures essential case-related information and automatically stores it in a shared dataset for organized access and analysis.

The shared dataset increases employee productivity due to its fluidity and ease of access. Since the implementation of the program, probation officers are saving, on average, 15 minutes per intake, estimating nearly 35 hours saved per month. Overall, the program's automation reduces manual and redundant data entry, improves customer service, and produces reliable, consistent data to support effective supervision of Pretrial individuals. The program brings efficiency to the impactful work of probation officers resulting in enhanced community safety.

Staff integral to the project: Perla C. Acosta, Sonia Aguirre, Joseph Coppola, Matthew Estes, Alissa Frazier, Erica Miller, Sean McMillen, and Jason Vasquez

#### About NACo:

NACo serves nearly 40,000 county elected officials and 3.6 million county employees. Since 1935, NACo has united county officials from across the country to represent the interests of America's counties through its powerful voice in federal policymaking. At the heart of NACo's mission is a commitment to promoting exemplary county policies and practices, nurturing leadership skills, and expanding knowledge networks. Through committees and task forces, NACo empowers counties to optimize resources, participate in cost-saving practices, and continue to enhance public understanding of county government.

NACo is dedicated to shaping national policies and creating opportunities for counties to lead, learn, and advocate to build a stronger America. NACo ensures that American counties remain strong to meet the needs of their citizens. Learn more at

[www.NACo.org](http://www.NACo.org).



## APD EMPLOYEES WIN PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE AWARDS

By Anna O'Geen

Each quarter, employees of the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County, which includes APD, JPD, and the Superior Court, can nominate a coworker who has demonstrated outstanding performance in one of the following areas: teamwork, leadership, customer service, innovation, or group collaboration. Each department submits numerous nominations each quarter, and the Branch's Employee Recognition and Rewards Committee carefully selects the winners. The winners of each category for the quarter are then entered into the annual Judicial Branch Performance Excellence Awards. The Department proudly announces the following winners and runners-up:

- Adult Surveillance Officers Luis Cisneros & Carlo Seara – Group Collaboration
- Adult Probation Officer Casey Lee – Runner-Up for Teamwork
- Adult Probation Officer Kyle Miller – Runner-Up for Leadership
- Adult Probation Officer Supervisor Veronica Gunnison, Adult Probation Officer Megan Merker & Case Administrator Noelia Monge – Runner-Up for Group Collaboration

Congratulations to all the winners and runners-up!

### JUDICIAL BRANCH PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE AWARD: GROUP COLLABORATION – ADULT SURVEILLANCE OFFICERS LUIS CISNEROS & CARLO SEARA

Submitted by Adult Probation Officer Kayla Cathcart

*"Adult Probation Surveillance Officers Luis Cisneros and Carlo Seara have gone above and beyond in multiple ways over the last year. Despite being assigned to the Sex Offender Division, both Luis and Carlo have conducted hundreds of field contacts for the standard field division, specifically when a caseload is vacant or an officer is out on leave. They treat these contacts as if they were their own. They reach out to collateral contacts and review APD's case management system notes to ensure they have a correct address and have not missed an important detail. Their notes are detailed, so anyone reviewing the case knows what occurred during their interaction. In addition, if a concern arises, they communicate with the unit supervisor."*

No matter what they face, they do it with enthusiasm and a depth of thoroughness that is difficult to describe. Their work ethic is inspiring. They have both received several accolades from supervisors in standard field due to their dedication and communication.

Furthermore, in 2022, they submitted an idea to the CI Team. Unbeknownst to them, this submission would morph into a complete overhaul of all evidence rooms within APD. This project has taken years to bring full circle. However, in 2025, multiple upgrades and changes to improve the entire process were rolled out to the Department. Their involvement was crucial to the project's success. During this last year, they assisted multiple buildings in cleaning out their evidence rooms and bringing them into alignment with the updated improvements. The project also involved technology improvements that made the process easier for everyone involved. In addition, they assisted with policy and protocol review. They worked with officers to educate them on the evidence room process and attended unit meetings to present information on the policy and improvements. They have taken officers, and even supervisors, down to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) to educate them on the process beyond logging items into APD's evidence room. Their actions demonstrate a dedication to making the evidence room and evidence/property seizure process more efficient, while not compromising chain of custody. The above demonstrates that Luis and Carlo have embraced and acted upon the APD values of: Model the Way, Encourage the Heart, Challenge the Process, Inspire a Shared Vision, and Enable Others to Act."

### **JUDICIAL BRANCH PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE AWARD RUNNER-UP: TEAMWORK – ADULT PROBATION OFFICER CASEY LEE**

Submitted by Adult Probation Officer Luz Villa

*"Casey Lee is an exceptional probation officer who consistently demonstrates dedication to both the individuals he supervises and the colleagues he works alongside. His professionalism, knowledge, and willingness to help others set him apart within the Department. Casey approaches his work with a strong sense of responsibility and a genuine commitment to helping individuals on probation succeed while maintaining accountability.*

*One of Casey's notable contributions is the support he provides to fellow officers. He regularly assists coworkers by providing coverage when needed and helping peers work through difficult situations and questions. His knowledge of procedures and resources makes him a dependable resource. When I encounter challenging situations, Casey is often willing to step in and help find solutions.*

*Casey has also demonstrated leadership by becoming a defensive tactics instructor. In this role, he clearly explains concepts and procedures while helping other officers build confidence in their work. I had the opportunity to observe his teaching and was impressed with his ability to communicate information in a clear and effective way.*

*As Casey's field partner, I have seen how he encourages individuals on probation to improve their lives while still holding them accountable. He treats individuals with respect and professionalism while challenging them to meet expectations and take responsibility for their progress.*

*A clear example of Casey going beyond his regular duties occurred during a field visit to the Central Arizona Shelter Services (CASS) shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness. Several individuals approached us with questions about resources, and Casey quickly provided guidance. One individual on probation shared that he had been trying to reach his assigned officer to report. Casey took down the individual's information, contacted the officer, and located and provided the correct contact number so the individual could follow up directly. This moment demonstrated Casey's commitment to helping individuals stay compliant while also supporting the mission of the Department."*

### **JUDICIAL BRANCH PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE AWARD RUNNER-UP: LEADERSHIP – ADULT PROBATION OFFICER KYLE MILLER**

Submitted by Adult Probation Officer Natasa Pavlina

*"I respectfully nominate Adult Probation Officer Kyle Miller for outstanding performance and exemplary leadership. He consistently demonstrates an unwavering commitment to the success, safety, and well-being of his officers and recruits.*

*His leadership is defined not only by operational excellence but also by his genuine investment in developing confident, capable, and ethical law enforcement professionals.*

*Officer Miller approaches training and supervision with patience, respect, and professionalism. He does not scrutinize, embarrass, or discourage officers when they lack knowledge or experience in a particular area. Instead, he views these moments as opportunities for growth and learning. He takes the time to explain, demonstrate, and guide officers through unfamiliar tasks, ensuring they fully understand expectations and procedures. His ability to teach without judgment fosters trust, open communication, and a culture where officers feel safe asking questions and seeking clarification.*

*When officers demonstrate a need for additional training, he is proactive and solution-oriented. Officer Miller personally coordinates and schedules his team to work directly with officers on identified areas of improvement, providing hands-on instruction and practical reinforcement. He ensures training is meaningful, tailored, and focused on building competence rather than assigning blame. Through this approach, officers not only improve their performance but also gain confidence and accountability in their roles.*

*Beyond technical skills, he places a strong emphasis on officer well-being. His leadership reflects an understanding that caring for officers as individuals strengthens the entire Department. He leads by example, demonstrating empathy, integrity, and professionalism at all times.*

*His dedication to additional training, often initiated without being required, has resulted in stronger teamwork, improved operational readiness, and a more supportive work environment overall. Officers under his leadership feel valued, respected, and motivated to perform at their highest level.*

*Through his mentorship, commitment to excellence, and genuine care for others, Kyle Miller exemplifies what it means to be an outstanding leader. He is highly deserving of recognition for his exceptional performance, selfless service, and lasting impact on the officers he leads and the Department he serves.”*

#### **JUDICIAL BRANCH PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE AWARD RUNNER-UP: GROUP COLLABORATION – ADULT PROBATION OFFICER SUPERVISOR VERONICA GUNNISON, ADULT PROBATION OFFICER MEGAN MERKER, AND CASE ADMINISTRATOR NOELIA MONGE**

Submitted by Adult Probation Officer Christine Frey

*“Adult Probation Officer Supervisor Veronica Gunnison, Adult Probation Officer Megan Merker, and Case Administrator Noelia Monge all work in the Community Reintegration Unit (CRU) within APD. CRU works with justice-involved individuals incarcerated as part of their probation grants to reduce barriers and help transition them into the community. Beyond their work within the unit, they serve as the liaisons between the CRU and MCSO’s Recovering, Enduring, Dignity, Education, Empowerment, Mindfulness (REDEEM) Program. REDEEM is an intense eight-week program including substance abuse treatment, Thinking for a Change, anger management, resiliency, and many other classes. There are approximately 60 participants in each cycle, with six cycles per year. Megan completes an orientation with both the women and men REDEEM groups prior to the start of classes to outline the connection between the program and probation. She serves as a liaison between the program participants and their individual probation officers. Veronica, Megan, and Noelia meet each cycle to determine whether the language in each participant’s court order would allow for an early release upon completion of the program. Noelia tracks the progress of each participant and prepares all the documentation for CRU, including the court modification for early release, probation-wide invitations to the graduation ceremony, and removal notifications. Megan and Veronica staff all problems that arise, attend graduations, and ensure that the modification sent to the Court is accurate. Veronica also works directly with the Court to answer any questions and ensure the modification is submitted. Veronica, Megan, and Noelia have worked together for several years, from program inception to now, working out issues and challenges along the way. The program is about as well-oiled as it can be, all thanks to them. They are so deserving of recognition for their inspiring teamwork and a job well-done.”*



# PROMOTIONS

Congratulations on  
your new position!



**SAMANTHA DUGGINS**

Adult Probation Supervisor

Samantha joined the Department in 2017 as a standard field officer in the Eastern Division. In July 2021, she transferred to the Sex Offender Division, where she has supervised a caseload and continued to expand her leadership experience.

During her time with APD, Samantha has served as a Morale Committee member, Adult Probation Enterprise Tracking System (APETS)/Communications Agent, Evidence Room Custodian, field coach, and mentor. In addition, she completed the Exploring Leadership and Management (ELM) program. Samantha is known for her quiet, yet approachable leadership style. Whether she's mentoring a new officer, assisting a peer, advancing work processes, or contributing her time and energy in workgroups and projects, Samantha has genuine care for her colleagues and the work of the Department.

Samantha will lead a Standard Unit in the Northern Division out of BCB. Her dedication to service, collaboration, and professional development will serve her well in her new role.



# APD WELCOMES A NEW NOTES GRADUATION CLASS!

By Donald Cole

The Staff Development and Safety Unit is pleased to welcome 12 new probation officers, three surveillance officers, four new supervisors, and two division managers to the Department. Officers completed six weeks of New Officer Training, Education, and Skill-building (NOTES) classes, including the Defensive Tactics Academy and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Probation Officer Certification Academy. Additionally, there is a three-week transition phase that allows Staff Development trainers the opportunity to work with officers on their newfound cases and apply real-life knowledge they acquired from their training. Officers worked in cohorts to create petitions to revoke probation, criminal history documents, and orders of discharge. They also had the opportunity to review early terminations, earned time credit, and other documents that officers generate regularly within their caseload.

The officers completed the academy with a swearing-in ceremony on May 22, 2026, at the Supreme Court in downtown Phoenix, led by APD Chief Michael Cimino and the Hon. William Wingard, Presiding Criminal Department Judge.

In addition to the officers, seven newly promoted staff were sworn in. Darlene Charnick was promoted to division manager of the Eastern Division, Lauren Guida was promoted to division manager of the Sex Offender Western Division, Janet Acuna was promoted to supervisor of a Standard Unit at Western Regional Center (WRC), Samantha Duggins was promoted to supervisor of a Standard Unit at BCB, Casey Frith was promoted to supervisor of a Sex Offender Unit at WRC, and Brian Mahoney was promoted to supervisor of a Standard Unit at WRC, and Andrew Mount was promoted to supervisor of a Standard Unit at Southport.

## NEW OFFICER ASSIGNMENTS

### Black Canyon Building (BCB)

- Sex Offender Surveillance Officer Sara Fierro
- Domestic Violence Surveillance Officer Jasmine Tossing

### Scottsdale

- Standard Probation Officers Deondra Bacchus, Monica Zaragoza

### Southeast Justice Center (SEJC)

- Standard Probation Officer Victoria Felix
- Mental Health Probation Officer Madelyn Banks

### Southport

- Standard Probation Officers Emily McCoy, Gabriela Reyes, Miguel Posada

### Sunnyslope

- Standard Probation Officers Ashley Donald, Kimora Bishop, Tyler Mattice

### Western Regional Court Center (WRC)

- Standard Probation Officers Chob Ajak, Jacob Hapner



May 2026 NOTES class and new leaders

# PRIDE

## 2nd Quarter Awards - 2026

### PEOPLE RECOGNIZING INDIVIDUAL DEEDS OF EXCELLENCE



## WHAT ARE PRIDE AWARDS?

The APD allows employees to recognize their peers by submitting a nomination for a PRIDE award. The PRIDE Committee reviews awards for appropriateness. There are six categories to choose from for each award submitted which aligns with the Department's Mission, Vision, and Values.

- Model the Way
- Encourage the Heart
- Challenge the Process
- Inspire a Shared Vision
- Enable Others to Act
- Thank You

**APD COMMUNICATIONS CENTER:** Aaron Carlos

**BLACK CANYON BUILDING (BCB):** Sonia Cruz, Jammie Dilley, Lee Harlock, Jeanett Istratie, Eric Mia, Cassie Riley, Samantha Roberts, Amy Taylor

**CENTRAL COURT BUILDING (CCB):** Viridiana Campas Rodriguez

**DOWNTOWN JUSTICE CENTER (DTJC):** Efrain Colin, Chanine Moore, Jessa Moore, Tae Yi

**DURANGO CUSTODY SERVICE CENTER (CSC):** Adrianna Valadez

**DURANGO/WESTPORT:** Jennifer Blaisdell, Dan Fox

**INTAKE, TRANSFER, AND RELEASE (ITR):** Kimberly McConaughey

**LUHRS:** Louris Karmi, Mark Landolfi

**SCOTTSDALE:** Shelbi Bottoms, Kora Witthun

**SOUTHEAST JUSTICE CENTER (SEJC):** Ana Aguirre, Teresa Castaneda, Karina Chavez Pec, David Gallardo, McKenzie Holt-Synk, Sean Lockhart, Gregory Moreno, Tianna Schwartz, Luz Smith

**SOUTH COURT TOWER:** Katrina Clark, Mae'auny Iguel Quichocho

**SOUTHPORT:** Javier Cano Vega, Verania Villela

**SUNNYSLOPE:** Robert Brouse, Jordan Conner

**SOUTHWEST REGIONAL COURT CENTER (SWRCC):** Wendy Arias, Casey Lee

**WEST COURT BUILDING (WCB):** Erika Balcazar, Isaac Castaneda, Yvette Martinez, Hannah Mercier, Anthony Rodriguez, Eloisa Rodriguez, Amy Strock

**WESTERN REGIONAL COURT CENTER (WRCC):** Denisse Delgado, Dennis Hawkins, Heni He, Carrie Lemoine, Joanna Ramirez, Emily Styner, Mariza Vargas, Ashley Vega



# VOICE

## APPA ARTICLES

The American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) held their biannual training institute in Atlanta on March 1 – 4, 2026. Many APD staff had the pleasure of attending the workshops provided and have written articles on an array of topics to share what they learned with fellow employees. Due to the high volume of articles submitted by participants, this is a continuation of last quarter's issue. See the January - March 2026 issue of the *Chronicle* to review five more APPA articles submitted by various APD employees. You can find the Chronicle archive [here](#).



### ***FROM VANISHED TO VERIFIED***

By Kevin Bacchus

During the APPA 2026 Winter Training Institute held in Atlanta, I had the opportunity to attend a workshop titled *From Vanished to Verified*, presented by Suzanne Brooks, Education and Implementation Manager for the Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision, and Jeremy Vukich, Regional Manager of Programming for Field Services/Compact Commissioner, Wyoming Department of Corrections.

The concept “From Vanished to Verified” focuses on redefining individuals who abscond from probation (meaning they stop reporting and lose contact with probation). The goal is to work with justice-involved individuals and support them in getting back on track, rather than simply closing out a person's supervision case. Although technical violations often warrant additional consequences implemented by the Court, supervision adjustments can also be effective in addressing concerning behavior. It requires officers to utilize a different approach to get the individual on probation to buy into behavioral change. A petition to revoke probation is not always the best resolution, and without a complete understanding of why the negative behavior exists, an opportunity to create lasting change could be missed. By conducting a thorough investigation before recommending a petition to revoke probation, a reengagement opportunity is created.

The investigation needs to include attempts to locate at different times (AM and PM). Officers should also exhaust all contact options with family members, friends, treatment providers, and the last known employer. Reengaging the individual can also prevent the significant costs associated with extradition, reduce the financial hardship of time spent in custody, and avoid the disruption caused by the probation violation process. These consequences can include losing stable housing and employment. Furthermore, requiring individuals on probation to return to states where they may have limited resources and no family can potentially hinder positive behavioral change.



Interstate Compact rule changes taking effect in April 2026 will require states to conduct a 30-day investigation before requesting closure of interest. Closure of interest indicates that the supervising agency was unable to locate the individual and is returning primary supervision to the original county.

The Department revised its efforts-to-locate policy in 2024 to require these steps prior to submitting a petition to revoke probation. This change has reduced the total number of petitions filed and created new opportunities for individuals on probation to successfully complete probation. This APD approach aligns closely with the concepts described in *From Vanished to Verified*.

## ***NOTHING FOR US OR ABOUT US WITHOUT US: THE EXECUTION OF TWO-GEN STRATEGIES AND PRINCIPLES WITH JUSTICE-IMPACTED FAMILIES***

By Tiffany Butler & Jessica Saenz

The landscape of probation and community supervision practice has shifted from a punitive model toward one focused on rehabilitation, stability, and long-term public safety. Within that shift, the Two-Generation (2Gen) approach offers a practical framework for addressing a reality long observed in probation: individual success is closely tied to family well-being. As emphasized in *Nothing For Us or About Us Without Us: The Execution of Two-Gen Strategies and Principles with Justice-Impacted Families* by Tamara Barber, Dr. Fern Clarke, and Cathy Smith-Curry of the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, meaningful change requires intentional inclusion of families in the process. Children and adults do not succeed separately; their progress is deeply interconnected. When someone is justice-involved, it is not just an individual issue, but a family issue.

Probation supervision operates at the intersection of accountability and support. Traditional models emphasize compliance with court-ordered conditions. While these expectations remain essential, the 2Gen approach strengthens supervision by aligning expectations with the realities families face. When requirements from different systems are uncoordinated, violations can increase, not because of resistance, but because families are managing competing responsibilities with limited resources.

A 2Gen approach intentionally works with both caregivers and children, addressing immediate needs while promoting long-term stability. This includes economic stability, education, health and well-being, and social capital (the relationships that contribute to long-term success). At its core, this is person-centered care that extends to the entire family.

Central to this model is the inclusion of the family voice in case planning. Historically, plans have been system-driven with limited input from families. The 2Gen framework shifts this dynamic by positioning families as active partners. Their lived experience is treated as expertise, resulting in more realistic plans, stronger engagement, and shared accountability.

In practice, this means considering parenting schedules when setting reporting requirements, connecting individuals to family-based services, and recognizing how employment instability affects the entire household. It also includes addressing trauma and relational dynamics that influence actions or choices. These strategies do not reduce accountability; they make it achievable.

This approach is especially critical in cases involving families and youth. Caregivers often navigate multiple systems at once, including probation, school, treatment, and employment. Barriers such as transportation, childcare, conflicting appointments, and communication gaps between agencies can make compliance difficult for families already balancing multiple responsibilities. Without coordination, these challenges lead to increased violations. With coordination, they can be reduced.

A 2Gen lens also strengthens engagement. Open-ended, nonjudgmental communication, validation of lived experience, and recognition of progress improve trust and follow-through. Collaboration across agencies further supports this work by reducing duplication, improving coordination, and connecting families to comprehensive family supports.

Integrating a 2Gen approach does not replace accountability; it strengthens it by addressing the broader context in which behavior occurs. When families have access to resources, consistent support, and coordinated systems, they are better positioned to succeed. By aligning supervision with family realities, probation can move beyond compliance and toward lasting, sustainable change.

## ***THE HARD WORK OF HAPPINESS: FINDING HOPE, MEANING, AND JOY IN SERVICE***

By Francisca Salazar

In this keynote, Anthony Poponi, Founder and CEO of [Focus on the 40](#) (an organization specializing in positive psychology and workplace well-being), invited us to explore workplace happiness through themes of hope, resilience, relationships, meaning, service, and support. Working in community corrections means holding space for others' experiences while striving to serve with fairness, compassion, and consistency.

In the session, Poponi emphasized that happiness at work is not automatic or effortless. Instead, it requires intentional effort, supportive relationships, and a strong sense of purpose, especially when the work involves helping others through difficult circumstances. Drawing from positive psychology and real-world stories, this session highlighted how teams can sustain purpose and connection even during burnout and change.

Participants were encouraged to reconnect with the purpose behind their career and remember why they entered service-based work in the first place. This sense of purpose can protect against fatigue and disengagement.

Poponi discussed research in positive psychology that suggests about 40% of our long-term happiness is influenced by intentional activities and choices. He explained that research suggests that roughly 50% of happiness is shaped by genetics, 10% by life circumstances, and 40% by behaviors, mindset, and daily practices within our control. The book *Focus on the 40* teaches that lasting happiness is shaped less by circumstances and more by intentional choices, positive relationships, meaningful work, and personal growth. By concentrating on the part of happiness we can control, people can create more fulfilling lives and more productive workplaces.

Both Focus on the 40 and Poponi's session *The Hard Work of Happiness: Finding Hope, Meaning, and Joy in Service* share a foundation in positive psychology and emphasize improving team dynamics, communication, and productivity. The overall take away from the session was that happiness is not something we chase outside of our work; it's something we create together, one relationship, one act of service, and one moment of hope at a time.

## ***FROM INCARCERATION 2 IMPACT***

By Danielle Golden

I had the privilege of attending a session titled *From Incarceration 2 Impact*, led by Baron Warren, President and Founder of [Cuts & Coaching LLC](#), a reentry-focused personal development organization dedicated to helping men transition successfully from incarceration to community life. His message centered on a five-step framework designed to help justice-involved individuals break cycles of recidivism. The framework also challenged those of us working in community supervision to examine our own habits, attitudes, and leadership practices, because our behavior directly shapes the environment individuals on probation experience.

1. **Live a Life of Integrity** - Warren emphasized that integrity is modeled through small, consistent actions. The people we supervise learn not only from what we say, but from what we demonstrate daily. When we make choices rooted in honesty and moral principles, we show the people we supervise what integrity looks like. This step encouraged us to reflect on our own habits, attitudes, and professional conduct. How do we model the behaviors we expect?
2. **Discover Your Calling** - Many individuals reentering the community struggle to identify their purpose, especially after incarceration. Warren stressed the importance of helping individuals discover their strengths and align them with meaningful opportunities. He emphasized that employment remains a critical factor in reducing recidivism. He noted that within the first 30, 60, and 90 days after release, the likelihood of returning to jail or prison significantly increases without stable work.
3. **Be a Lifelong Learner** - Warren challenged us to cultivate a culture of growth within our teams and with those we supervise. A mindset of lifelong learning prevents stagnation and fosters adaptability. When individuals on probation embrace curiosity, develop new skills, and experience small wins, their confidence grows.
4. **Delight in Responsibility** - Responsibility should be carried out with respect, professionalism, and willingness. For staff, this means arriving with the right attitude and treating individuals on probation with dignity. For justice-involved individuals, it means owning their choices and behaviors. He encouraged us to "be delighted to be responsible" and to model that mindset consistently.

- 5. Commit to Mentorship** - The final step centers on the power of mentorship. Guiding, motivating, and lifting others toward success is essential. Warren highlighted that mentorship does not require perfection, only presence. By showing up, offering guidance, and sharing our knowledge, we help the people we serve see possibilities beyond their past.

This session reminded me that the work we do in probation and community supervision is shaped not only by policy and practice, but by the example we set every day. Warren's framework challenged me to look inward, strengthen my own habits, and stay intentional about the way I show up for others. The impact we have begins with who we choose to be.

## REFLECTIONS ON THE 2026 LEAP PROGRAM

By Darlene Charnick

The Learning Executive & Administrative Practices (LEAP) program is an annual development opportunity for APD supervisors who are seeking a hands-on experience with the responsibilities of the division manager position. Participants work with members of the executive team to create individualized growth plans that encourage candid reflection on strengths and areas for improvement. Each supervisor is paired up with current division managers for regular meetings and job shadowing experiences. This mentorship provides an in-depth look at strategic decision-making, operational responsibilities, and the daily leadership required at the division level. APD leadership is dedicated to supporting participants by providing meaningful and actionable feedback.

While the program strengthens participants' understanding of executive and administrative practices within APD, its impact extends well beyond that. The LEAP program is thoughtfully structured to challenge supervisors in practical ways. The mandatory meetings and added responsibilities pushed me to manage my time and priorities more intentionally, which is an essential skill for anyone considering a future leadership role. Equally important, the program helps participants assess whether pursuing a promotion is the right path for them. Even for those who choose not to apply for the division manager position, LEAP offers valuable insight into departmental operations and the leadership team guiding the work.

For me, the most valuable part of the program was the direct, one-on-one time with members of the executive team. Those conversations offered a deeper understanding of their perspectives, the passion they bring to their roles, and the humility with which they lead. When I began the LEAP program, I was uncertain about applying for the division manager position. However, seeing firsthand how the team collaborates, supports one another, and leads as a cohesive unit made it clear that this was a team I wanted to join. Participating in LEAP ultimately guided my decision to take the next step in my leadership journey, and I am grateful for the program and those who invested in me. I encourage supervisors interested in exploring the division manager position to consider participating in LEAP, as it provided significant insight into the path ahead.

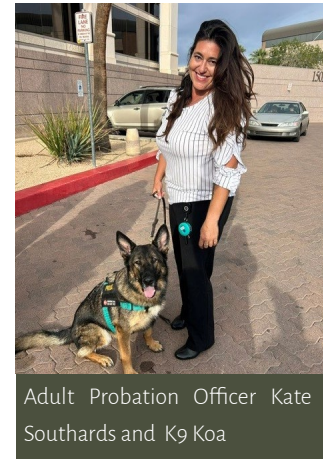


Congratulations to the 2026 LEAP participants! Left to right: Jonelle Acosta, Julie Wise, Darlene Charnick, Luis Marquez Ontiveros, Cassandra Dobbs, Christian Popovici, and Jessica Ethington.

# A DAY IN THE LIFE - APD'S K9 UNIT

Adult Probation Officer Kate Southards joined the Department in 2017, supervising an IPS caseload. When she began her career, she had a passion for starting a K9 program. Although others had attempted to start a K9 program before her, none had been successful. Kate was determined to change that story and submitted a proposal for review that was eventually approved by the Department's management team. After its first year, the program was adopted long-term and later expanded with a second badged K9. Since the implementation of the program, several other probation departments across the state have started their own K9 programs as well.

While maintaining supervision of an active IPS caseload, she is also the only K9 handler in the Department. Kate has four German Shepherd dogs: Steel, Koa, Remi, and Pygo, who are at various stages of service — trained, badged, currently working, or still in training. Koa was trained in firearms detection and Steel in narcotics detection.



Adult Probation Officer Kate Southards and K9 Koa

In 2023, the Chronicle published a K9 article on the Department's two service canines, Koa and Remi. Their full history was featured in the *Chronicle's* October - December 2023 issue. You can find the Chronicle archive [here](#).

## WHAT IS YOUR MAIN RESPONSIBILITY?

**KOA:** *After working for the Department for four years, Koa took early retirement in November 2025 just after turning eight-years-old due to arthritis in her spine.*

**REMI:** *In October 2023, at eight-weeks-old, Remi started training. A year later, she became certified and officially started with the Department in January 2025. Remi's primary responsibility is firearms detection, and she is one of the only dogs in the state of Arizona trained exclusively for firearm-related searches. Remi primarily performs searches for APD; however, she will also perform searches for JPD as well.*

**PYGO:** *He was brought home in August 2025 with the intention of eventually running two dogs at once. Pygo's future with the Department is unknown. Currently, he is between electronics and firearms; however, he is not fully with the Department yet.*

## WHAT DOES YOUR TYPICAL DAY LOOK LIKE?

**KOA:** *Since retiring, Koa's spends her days living her best life on the couch or in bed. Weather permitting, she loves being in the pool- one of her favorite things to do- and chasing her ball. Kate often brings her into an office once a week where she will get spoiled with love and attention by her old co-workers who miss working with her.*

**REMI:** *A typical day for Remi fluctuates throughout the week. Typically, she will have one day of longer training consisting of eight to 10 hours getting exposed to various venues with the trainer. She will also get two or three short training sessions a week which include obedience or detection training. Additionally, she will have a few non-training sessions throughout the week where she gets to play with her ball and spend time with Pygo. Overall, Remi spends much of her week in the car with Kate, averaging two to five searches.*

## WHAT IS SOMETHING UNIQUE ABOUT YOUR ROLE THAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT?

**KATE:** *I manage an active IPS caseload while also training and running the dogs. I also chair the search committee at BCB and help teach the search class. I have also taught Decision Points and Thinking for a Change classes and continue to look for training that helps me grow as an officer. I recertify my dogs annually through the International Working Dog Association for firearms detection certification. I also participate in ongoing training by attending two to three seminars a year.*

**REMI:** *Remi is young, loves to work, and is a great asset for the Department. However, although she was born in Florida, she is not a fan of the heat. Fortunately, since she spends a lot of time in the car, she has frequent access to air conditioning and wears protective footwear while on duty. The Department also provides Kate with a temperature reader to monitor her exhaustion levels as needed to keep her safe.*



## IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU INTERACT WITH OTHER AREAS OF THE DEPARTMENT?

**KOA:** *Although retired, Koa loves attending unit meetings and running around the offices. While at the office she receives lots of love, treats, and gets to play with her ball. Koa is great for morale and loves to bring a smile to your face. Even though she no longer searches, she loves to be present for the Department.*

**REMI:** *Remi was slower to warm up to people than Koa, but she now enjoys the office and lets her personality shine. Kate continues to work with Remi by training her in odor recognition and searching various venues.*

## IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT?

**KATE:** *Having four German Shepherds can be a handful, but I get a break when they play together. The foursome typically breaks up into pairs when they play: Koa with Steel and Remi with Pygo.*

**KOA:** *Koa continues to bring her cheerfulness into the office even though she is retired. While everyone loves Remi, Koa brings a softer side to the job because of her personality.*

**REMI:** *Remi loves to work and perform for the Department. In February 2025, she discovered 10 firearms in one week. Additionally, the dogs can detect contraband much earlier, faster, and more accurately than humans can. Remi often locates firearms that officers may initially miss, and without her detection skills, some firearms could go unnoticed. With her young age, Kate hopes to keep Remi active until she is around age 10. Typically, dogs will retire between the ages of seven and nine, but Kate is hopeful of running Remi longer. Outside of firearm searches, Remi attends school and Department events, such as TurkeyFeast. She is great with kids and has a big, fun, and loving personality.*



K9 Remi.

## DAN DERUSSO

BUSINESS SYSTEMS ANALYST SENIOR LEAD

Judicial Branch employee since 2023.

### FAVORITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

Automation is a big part of my job. I love it when something I develop gives people more time for the stuff that actually matters.

### WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING/READING?

I have a couple seasons of The Boys that I'm trying to catch up on, and I'm reading Wings of Fire with my kids.

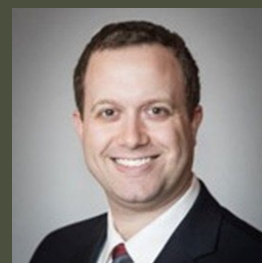
### FUN FACT:

I've lived in six different states, and this is the fourth time that I've lived in Arizona.

### FAVORITE QUOTE:

"I'm not superstitious...but I am a little stitious."

- Michael Scott, *The Office*



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