

CHRONICLE

ISSUE: JULY -SEPTEMBER 2026

MARICOPA COUNTY ADULT PROBATION DEPARTMENT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHIEF'S CORNER

NEWS & INFORMATION

- 5 Building Bridges Beyond the Courtroom: The Vital Role of Pretrial, Probation, and Parole Supervision
- 6 Recruit for APD!
- 7 Data Corner

ACHIEVEMENTS & CELEBRATIONS

- 8 APD Employees Win Performance Excellence Awards
- 11 APD welcomes a New NOTES Graduation Class!
- 12 Promotions
- 14 3rd Quarter PRIDE Award Winners

VOICE

- 15 APPA Articles
 - *Officer Safety in Community Corrections: Are We Doing Enough?*
 - *APD's JIW Initiative Returns to APPA*
 - *Supporting Autistic and Neurodivergent Individuals in the Courtroom and in the Community*
 - *Managing Justice-Involved Individuals with Mental Illness: Practical Strategies for Supervision*
- 18 Reflections on the Human Trafficking Summit
 - *Beyond the Behavior*
 - *Medical Safe Haven*
 - *Ethical Interviewing*
- 21 A Day In the Life - Background Investigator
- 22 Employee Spotlight

EDITORIAL STAFF & POLICY

- 23 Chronicle Editors & Staff
- 23 Chronicle Policy

CHIEF'S CORNER



I use my article in this edition of the *Chronicle* each year to highlight key performance measures that we monitor quarterly and assess annually at fiscal year (FY) end on June 30th. The measures tell only a portion, but an important one, of the story of our work in the last year. We celebrate the achievement of most of the measures detailed here, as well as the work that has begun in areas where the goal was not met. Before providing the measures, I think it is important to understand how they fit within the context of the Department's mission, vision, and values.

The Department's mission is to enhance community safety through service, accountability, and influencing change. It provides broad direction for the work of the agency, with each word carrying particular meaning. We enhance community safety in how we serve the Court by providing timely, actionable information so decisions can be made, and through the variety of services we provide to those coming before the Court and the individuals we serve on pretrial and probation supervision. Accountability reflects the high standard set for our staff by the Arizona Supreme Court in its code of conduct for judicial employees, as well as how we support progress for those on supervision. Finally, influencing change reflects our commitment to approach each interaction, from initial appearance to pretrial services, to presentence, to probation, in ways that are transformative and contribute to an individual permanently leaving the criminal justice system and thriving in Maricopa County. Our vision and values describe how that work is accomplished. Our vision statement is an agency of diverse professionals delivering proven resources for change, supporting those impacted by crime, and engaging in the development and support of all staff. Our values - fairness, respect, integrity, innovation, and safety - are shared across the Judicial Branch in Maricopa County, including the Superior Court and the Adult and Juvenile Probation Departments.

The annual measures are how we determine where we are succeeding and where we need further development. Our focus on these measures is rooted in the lives impacted by our work. Whether we prevent people from becoming victims of crime, serve our Court and those who appear before it, or support individuals on supervision, these measures matter because of the lives reflected by them.

The measures are in three primary areas: community safety, service excellence, and organizational health. This FY's community safety and service excellence results are presented on the next page. I am proud of the work done by our staff, who get the vast majority of the credit for our success. Their efforts are directly led by the supervisors across the Department and guided by the executive team, and I am proud of their efforts as well.

Michael P. Cimino

Michael P. Cimino

Chief for the Maricopa County Adult Probation Department

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	GOAL	FY2026
Community Safety		
Successful Completion of Pretrial Supervision	>75%	83%
Successful Completion of Probation	>70%	78%
Revocations to Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, & Re-Entry (ADCRR)	<25%	21%
New Felony Sentencings	<8%	10%
Service Excellence		
Pretrial Initial Appearance (IA) packets submitted to the Court within 24 hours	>98%	100%
Presentence Reports Submitted Without a Continuance	>98%	99%
Individuals on Pretrial Satisfaction ¹	>85%	68%
Treatment Provider and Community Partner Satisfaction	>85%	70%

¹ In FY2024, a neutral option was introduced to the survey. Overall, in FY2026 68% were satisfied, 30% were neutral, and 2% were dissatisfied.





NEWS & INFORMATION

BUILDING BRIDGES BEYOND THE COURTROOM: THE VITAL ROLE OF PRETRIAL, PROBATION, AND PAROLE SUPERVISION

By Clara Colmenero and Maura Isom

As the nation observes Pretrial, Probation, and Parole Supervision (PPPS) Week, the third week of July, the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County proudly recognizes the dedicated professionals whose work is transforming lives, strengthening accountability, and helping build safer communities.

This year's theme, "Building Connections," derived from the national American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) theme, reflects the vital role probation professionals play every day by building meaningful connections that inspire growth, encourage positive behavior change, and support long-term success. From pretrial supervision, probation, detention, and surveillance officers to screeners, presentence specialists, detention program and facility staff, support staff, analysts, probation dispatchers, and victims' rights coordinators, these professionals work together to enhance public safety. Their commitment and expertise are essential to the success of APD and the communities they serve.

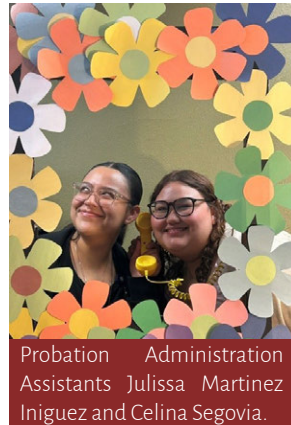
"My probation officer helped me get through the hardest time in my life and never stopped encouraging me to grow and change for the better. Being able to trust her with everything while she always held me accountable was huge. Being able to get as far as I have with her in my corner has really changed my life."

-An Individual Previously on Probation

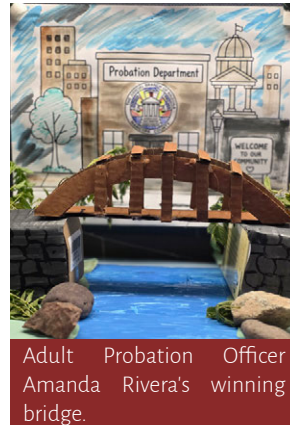
The Department supervises approximately 29,000 individuals on active probation and more than 2,200 individuals on pretrial supervision. Through a balanced approach of accountability, victim services, and individualized support, probation professionals help people address challenges, access resources, and make positive life changes. By applying evidence-based practices and proven risk-reduction strategies, the Department met its goal in FY2026, with more than 75% of individuals successfully completing their probation grants and 83% of individuals successfully completing pretrial supervision.

To celebrate PPPS week, many APD offices held events, contests, and games. West Court Building (WCB), for example, hosted a week filled with food events, virtual games, contests, and prizes. In line with the theme, employees were encouraged to build bridges using the provided popsicle sticks and glue. Presentence investigation (PSI) writers were tasked with building a bridge from household items, and the winner was Adult Probation Officer Amanda Rivera. Probation Administration Assistant Julissa Martinez Iniguez won for the best decorated puzzle piece.

Employees were also making connections by posing for pictures using a vintage phone to make calls in a photo frame. They also challenged each other to games of Connect Four. Throughout the week, they built breakfast parfaits, baked potatoes, and ramen bowls. Probation Administration Assistant Yadi Vicencio Delgado won the virtual scavenger hunt, while Adult Probation Supervisor Rod Rego won virtual Scattergories. The week concluded with an annual BINGO game, and winners Presentence Screener William Grimes, Adult Probation Supervisor Erika Balcazar, and Case Administrator Melissa Nunez walked away with prizes.



Probation Administration Assistants Julissa Martinez Iniguez and Celina Segovia.



Adult Probation Officer Amanda Rivera's winning bridge.

The Downtown Justice Center (DTJC) staff had a quiz game day that tested how well staff knew each other. Additionally, the Department provided employees with complimentary meals, tote bags with the APD badge, and bento boxes as a gesture of appreciation.

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](#).

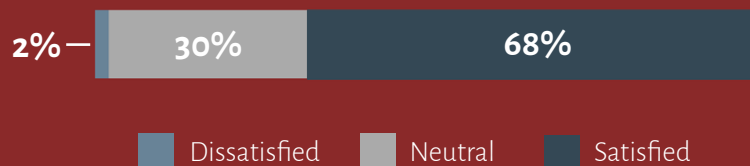


Learn more about the Department by watching the video. The video can also be found on the [APD website homepage](#).

Email apdrecruitment@jbazmc.maricopa.gov for more information.

In FY2026, APD conducted the biennial Pretrial Services Division survey, which assesses satisfaction and collects feedback from individuals on pretrial supervision regarding their experience with Pretrial Services Division staff. The survey was distributed both electronically and in person. Participation was voluntary, and the survey was open from February 17 until March 3, 2026. A total of 147 responses were received, providing valuable insights into employee experiences and helping the Department identify opportunities to strengthen its organizational effectiveness.

OVERALL SATISFACTION OF EXPERIENCE WITH PRETRIAL SERVICES DIVISION STAFF



Results showed that two-thirds of respondents, or approximately 68%, reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their experience with Pretrial Services Division staff. About 30% expressed a neutral view, and 2% indicated dissatisfaction. While the overall results highlight mostly positive experiences, some comments received in the survey also provide suggestions for improvement. The survey remains an essential part of APD's Continuous Improvement (CI) efforts, ensuring that the Pretrial Services Division addresses the needs, experiences, and voices of the individuals it supports.



ACHIEVEMENTS & CELEBRATIONS

APD EMPLOYEES WIN PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE AWARDS

By Alex Coppess

Each quarter, employees of the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County, which includes APD, the Juvenile Probation Department, 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 Probation Officer Alexa Hearn – Innovation
- Adult Probation Officer Jacob Ellithorp – Customer Service
- Adult Probation Officer Dylan Hess – Runner-Up for Leadership

Congratulations to all the winners and runners-up!

JUDICIAL BRANCH PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE AWARD: INNOVATION - ADULT PROBATION OFFICER ALEXA HEARN

Nominated by Special Projects Managers Savanna Hopp and Elizabeth Medina and Adult Probation Officer Supervisor Carolyn Arteaga

"Alexa Hearn, a dedicated Veterans Court probation officer with APD, is truly deserving of an innovation award. Her commitment to the caseloads in the Veterans Court Unit is unwavering, and she constantly strives to inspire and motivate those around her. During FY2026, she identified key areas for improvement and initiated impactful changes in her unit.

For example, Alexa proposed a CI initiative to identify Veterans on probation early in their terms. This proactive approach enables timely screenings to assess eligibility, allowing Veterans to request placement on the Veterans Court calendar, where their specific needs can be addressed in close collaboration with the Veterans Administration. Moreover, she is working creatively to raise awareness of the Veterans Court program among APD, the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, the Courts, and individuals on probation, ensuring that their unique needs are better met.

Her innovative spirit is evident in her unit's promotional efforts. Alexa has taken the initiative to post informative flyers throughout APD facilities, educating other probation officers on identifying Veterans on probation and encouraging them

to undergo screening for possible transfer to the Veterans Court Unit.

In addition to her grassroots efforts, Alexa has actively sought to enhance access to vital information regarding Veterans Court. She reached out to the Veterans Court commissioner to arrange a presentation for the Superior Court commissioners and staff, effectively sharing insights about the Veterans Court Program. She has also taken it upon herself to enhance resources on a judicial officer SharePoint page and volunteered to update the APD policy concerning Veterans Court. Her contributions include writing articles for the APD Chronicle and supporting APD at the annual Veterans Standdown event in Phoenix.

Demonstrating her remarkable motivation, Alexa has successfully approached APD leadership and received approval to present at the APPA Conference in August 2026. Her session, titled "Changing the Trajectory," will focus on the critical early identification of in-custody Veterans for the Veteran Treatment Court program. This foundational step ensures that Veterans are recognized before their release and can immediately start engaging with the Veteran Treatment Court Program, gaining timely access to essential resources and Veterans Administration support.

In summary, Alexa Hearn is an inspiring innovator who sparks enthusiasm and growth in others regarding the Veterans Court Unit within APD. She tirelessly provides Veterans-specific resources to those on probation, extending her support beyond her immediate caseload. Her efforts exemplify the best qualities of a probation officer dedicated to making a meaningful impact on the lives of Veterans."

JUDICIAL BRANCH PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE AWARD: CUSTOMER SERVICE - ADULT PROBATION OFFICER JACOB ELLITHORP

Nominated by Adult Probation Officer Kristin Epperson

"I nominated my coworker and partner, Jacob, for this recognition because he is truly deserving of it. I had a hard time choosing one category as he consistently goes above and beyond in many areas as a probation officer. Ultimately, I nominated him for customer service.

Before Jacob joined Drug Court, I spoke with him on the phone about an individual on probation I was transferring to standard supervision. In that 15-minute call, I knew he was the perfect fit for Drug Court, and I was right. You cannot train someone to be compassionate and empathetic to the population we serve, yet he is one of the most compassionate people I know. His dedication to helping individuals recover from a substance use disorder is inspiring, even to those who share the same passion. I strive to be my best every day because I admire his compassion. Not only does Jacob go above and beyond for his caseload, but he is also the most reliable coworker you could ask for. I know without a doubt that I can count on him for anything. Even though there is a large gap between our years of service with the Department, I heavily rely on staffing tough cases and having conversations with him because I respect his values and input.

Where Jacob really shines is in his relationships with community stakeholders and the individuals he supervises. It can be challenging for an individual on probation to build trust when they first come to Drug Court. We ask them to be honest about things that may feel foreign to them, like admitting to substance use, and he builds rapport beautifully. One of the main reasons I am submitting this is because we recently had an individual graduate from our program in June 2026, whose graduation moved everyone in the courtroom to tears. This individual came to our program with almost nothing. The first time Jacob saw him in treatment, he had one shoe. Jacob brought him a pair of HIS shoes while he was in treatment. This moment meant the world to this person. This is the type of customer service Jacob provides to our population, ensuring individuals feel heard, seen, and believed in. While he still holds people accountable, compliance often follows more easily when individuals are respected as human beings and treated like they matter. No one is a number to him. Jacob has a beautiful way of fostering positive outcomes simply because of who he is as a person. If anyone deserves a paid day off, it is Jacob. In my opinion, he is not only an asset to APD, but also to the Judicial Branch as a whole."

JUDICIAL BRANCH PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE AWARD RUNNER-UP: LEADERSHIP – ADULT PROBATION OFFICER DYLAN HESS

Nominated by Adult Probation Officer Joshua Ryker

"I nominated Dylan for a leadership award because he consistently demonstrates the behaviors, mindset, and impact of a true leader, even without holding a formal supervisory title. His influence on the team is unmistakable. Day after day, he steps into situations that require clarity, direction, and calm problem solving, and he does so naturally, without being asked and without expecting recognition. His peers rely on him because he has earned their trust through his actions, his consistency, and his genuine investment in their success.

One of Dylan's greatest strengths is his ability to guide others with patience and respect. When teammates are struggling, he takes the time to explain the "why" behind processes, helping them build confidence and independence. He has a talent for breaking down complex tasks into understandable steps, and he never makes anyone feel rushed or inadequate. This kind of mentorship is rare and has had a measurable impact on the team's overall performance and morale.

Dylan also leads by example in the way he handles challenges. When unexpected issues arise, he is often the first to step forward, assess the situation, and help the team find a solution. He remains calm under pressure, which helps others stay grounded as well. His ability to anticipate problems before they escalate shows a level of awareness and responsibility that goes far beyond his job description. He doesn't wait for someone else to take charge, he simply does what needs to be done, and he does it with professionalism and integrity.

Another defining quality of Dylan's leadership is the positive environment he creates. He encourages collaboration, celebrates others' successes, and helps maintain a sense of unity within the team. His peers feel comfortable approaching him with questions, concerns, or ideas because they know he will listen without judgment. He has a way of making people feel supported, valued, and capable, which strengthens the team from the inside out.

Even though he is not a supervisor, Dylan consistently takes on responsibilities that mirror those of one. He helps onboard new team members, provides informal coaching, and often acts as a point of contact when others need guidance. He does all of this while still excelling in his own role, demonstrating exceptional time management and dedication. His willingness to go above and beyond not only shows his commitment to the team but also his readiness for future leadership opportunities.

Dylan's actions have improved team performance, strengthened workplace culture, and created a more supportive environment for everyone around him. I credit him heavily for my understanding of my role and policy. For these reasons, he is not only deserving of recognition but stands out as an ideal candidate for a leadership award."



APD WELCOMES A NEW NOTES GRADUATION CLASS!

By Ada Chavez

Please join the Staff Development and Safety Unit in welcoming 11 new probation officers and four new supervisors 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, a three-week transition phase is implemented to allow Staff Development trainers the opportunity to work with officers and their newfound cases, as well as facilitate the real-life application of the knowledge they acquired from their training. Officers worked in cohorts to create petitions to revoke, 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 finished their academy with a swearing-in ceremony led by APD Chief Michael Cimino and Hon. William Wingard, Presiding Criminal Department Judge, on August 28, 2026, at the Arizona Supreme Court Auditorium in downtown Phoenix.

In addition to the officers, four newly promoted staff were sworn in. Jennifer Borgen was promoted to supervisor of a re-entry unit at Western Regional Center (WRC), Ivana Budimirovic and Dan Kimbrough were promoted to supervisor of standard units at Sunnyslope, and Amanda Hanson was promoted to supervisor of a standard unit at Scottsdale.

NEW OFFICER ASSIGNMENTS

Black Canyon Building (BCB)

- Standard Probation Officer Emily Jones
- Sex Offender Probation Officers Aundrea Castillo and Marelly Santiago

Scottsdale

- Standard Probation Officer Matthew Barnes

Southeast Justice Center (SEJC)

- Standard Probation Officer Tae Yi

Southport

- Standard Probation Officers Madilyn Cook and Gabriela Reyes

Southwest Regional Court Center (SWRCC)

- Standard Probation Officer Jason Heras

Sunnyslope

- Standard Probation Officer D'Angelo Bacchus

Western Regional Court Center (WRC)

- Standard Probation Officers Lily Hassell and Chanine Moore



August 2026 NOTES class and new leaders

PROMOTIONS

Congratulations on
your new positions!



DAWN UNDERWOOD

Adult Probation Supervisor

Dawn began her professional journey with APD in September 2014, bringing with her a commitment to public service and community safety. She began her career as a probation officer supervising standard caseloads at the Southport and Northport facilities, where she honed her case management skills and built strong rapport with individuals on probation. In April 2017, she embraced a more specialized role, transitioning to a sex offender Intensive Probation Supervision (IPS) caseload at Durango. This position allowed her to formalize herself with the complexities of sex offender rehabilitation. In December 2020, Dawn further elevated her career by moving to a standard sex offender caseload at WRC, where she continued to apply her expertise to manage cases effectively. By December 2022, she pivoted to PSI, where her analytical skills and attention to detail proved invaluable in assessing offenders' backgrounds and recommending appropriate sentences. In May 2026, she progressed to oversee a Juvenile Transition Offender Program caseload at WRC, demonstrating her adaptability and commitment to serving vulnerable populations.

Throughout her career, Dawn has made profound contributions to the Department and the community. She has been an active participant in various committees, including the Promoting Equity & Advocating Change for Everyone (PEACE) team, Criminal History & Dispositions Steering Committee, Saving Trees by Reinventing Electronically Paperless Committee, and the Probation Violation Workgroup, showcasing her dedication to organizational improvement and collaborative initiatives. In 2022, she became an Effective Practices in Correctional Settings coach and facilitates vital programs such as Thinking for a Change (T4C), Decision Points, and Budget Class. Dawn also completed the Department's inaugural LEAD Program. In addition, she has generously mentored numerous new officers, sharing her wealth of knowledge and experience. As she looks ahead as a supervisor, Dawn is enthusiastic about the opportunity to lead a standard field unit at BCB, where she aims to inspire and guide her team toward achieving their goals in public safety and rehabilitation.



IVANA BUDIMIROVIC

Adult Probation Supervisor

Ivana Budimirovic started her career with the Department in October 2010 as a standard field officer in the Scottsdale office. In July 2018, she transferred to the Domestic Violence Unit in Scottsdale, later returning to a standard caseload in March 2025. In May 2026, Ivana assumed her current assignment in the Pretrial Services Division. Throughout her career, Ivana has distinguished herself through her focus on leadership, training, and professional development.

She has served as a mentor to new hires, an integral member and team leader for AOC and a field coach trainer. Additionally, she has facilitated several NOTES academy classes, including Graduated Responses, Court Reports, and Behavior Agreements. From 2014 to 2017, Ivana facilitated T4C, followed by Risk Reduction from 2017 to 2025. In addition to her training and mentoring responsibilities, Ivana completed the LEAD Program in June 2026 and is currently participating in the Social Services Collaboration Forum with the Judicial Branch. Ivana's willingness to embrace new challenges, foster strong professional relationships, and invest in the development of others has prepared her well for a leadership role. Ivana will begin her leadership career in the Sunnyslope office, where she will supervise a standard unit. She is excited to continue growing professionally while supporting and empowering her team to achieve their goals.



JENNIFER BORGEN

Adult Probation Supervisor

Jennifer Borgen began her career with APD in February 2012. She initially supervised sex offender and standard caseloads before transitioning to the Pretrial Services Division, where she supervised pending intake and electronic monitoring caseloads. In March 2026, Jennifer broadened her experience by transitioning to the Court Liaison Unit, collaborating closely with Commissioners, court staff, attorneys, and field probation officers. Throughout her career, Jennifer has graciously contributed to many department initiatives. She served as a subject matter expert during the Integrated Court Information System (iCIS) blue migration project, earned her Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt certification, and submitted several CI proposals to improve department processes. Jennifer also completed the Exploring Leadership and Management (ELM) program and the Department's inaugural LEAD leadership development program. Jennifer's dedication to professional growth, commitment to CI, and passion for supporting others will serve her well as she begins her new role supervising the Re-Entry West Unit at WRC.



DAN KIMBROUGH

Adult Probation Supervisor

Dan began his career with APD in 2022 as an officer assigned to a standard caseload at WRC. In 2024, he transferred to another standard unit at WRC, serving both Maryvale and South Glendale. Throughout his career, Dan has served as a mentor, Financial Compliance Unit representative, communications agent for his unit, and completed the ELM program. Prior to joining the Department, Dan honorably served in the United States Marine Corps before embarking on a 15-year career with the Grass Valley Police Department in Northern California, where he served as both a police officer and supervisor. Dan earned a Master's Degree in Emergency Management, further strengthening his leadership and public service skills. Dan's experience in the Department, his willingness to support others, and ability to build strong professional relationships have made him a valued member. Strong support surrounds Dan's continued leadership, mentorship, and service in this new role. This leadership assignment will take place at the Sunnyslope office, supervising a standard unit.



AMANDA HANSON

Adult Probation Supervisor

Amanda Hanson began her career with APD in 2015, supervising a standard field caseload at the Mesa Probation Service Center. In 2019, she transitioned to a Veterans caseload. She joined her current caseload in 2023, supervising a justice-involved women's (JIW) IPS caseload at SEJC, further expanding her expertise in serving specialized populations. Throughout her career, Amanda has been an active contributor to departmental committees and initiatives, demonstrating her commitment to supporting peers and enhancing overall departmental culture. She has consistently invested in guiding new employees through ride alongs, field coaching, and peer mentoring. Throughout her time in the Department, she has served on the Morale Committee. She has facilitated budget classes, contributed to the PEACE Committee as part of the Culture Workgroup, and participated in the JIW Committee. She is trained in administering the Women's Risk Needs Assessment and in utilizing effective practices in correctional settings, reinforcing her focus on promoting behavior change among justice-involved individuals. Amanda is dedicated to her own professional growth, having completed the ELM program, which further equips her for the responsibilities of leadership and supports her transition into supervisory roles. Amanda will begin her role as a supervisor leading a standard unit at the Scottsdale office.

PRIDE

3rd 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: Danielle Sanderson

BLACK CANYON BUILDING (BCB): Anjela Crudup, Carlos Diaz, Christine Macy, Dawn Underwood, Fatimah Ebadi, Luis Cisneros, Luisa Rodriguez, Miguel Landeros

CENTRAL COURT BUILDING (CCB): Kate Bishop

DOWNTOWN JUSTICE CENTER (DTJC): Ashley Webb, Holly Slater, Mercedes Obora, Ta'shel Robinson

DURANGO CUSTODY SERVICE CENTER (CSC): Christine Frey

DURANGO/WESTPORT: Amanda Hanover, Leah Lara

INTAKE, TRANSFER, AND RELEASE (ITR): Sarah Dorantes

LUHRS: Cindy Tholl

SCOTTSDALE: Christian Ramirez, Joseph Coppola

SOUTHEAST JUSTICE CENTER (SEJC): Amy Pina, Briana Martin, Christopher Dvorovy, Cinthya Silva-Rojas, Cuong Nhan, Erin Calles, Fallon Metzinger, Franchesca Aguirre, Karlie Jackson

SOUTH COURT TOWER: Kenneth Walker, Perla Cazares-Acosta

SOUTHPORT: Ashley Adams, Cheryl Zambriski, Jasmine Chavers

SUNNYSLOPE: Lauren Nelson Doyle, Regina Ruiz

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL COURT CENTER (SWRCC): Ashly Martinez, Cristina Eichner

WEST COURT BUILDING (WCB): Ashlea Williams, Catherine Swalwell, Dawn Lewallen, Kacie McLeod, Karla Molina, Michelle Mayer, Roy Turner

WESTERN REGIONAL COURT CENTER (WRCC): Breanna Gonzalez, Darcy McLeod, Ian McClure, Maria Bustos, Nayeli Quiroz Palma, Becca Hudson, Richelle Bordine, Roy Gonzales



VOICE

APPA ARTICLES

APPA held their 51st Annual Training Institute in Chicago, Illinois from August 16 to August 19, 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.



OFFICER SAFETY IN COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS: ARE WE DOING ENOUGH?

By Kate Skelton

A session on officer safety in community corrections emphasized the importance of viewing safety through both physical and psychological lenses. Traditionally, officer safety has been approached reactively, with a focus on overt physical risks encountered in the field. However, presenters highlighted that psychological stress, burnout, and a perceived lack of support have become equally significant threats to staff well being and retention across the community corrections field.

Through a facilitated panel and interactive discussion, agency leaders explored gaps in current safety practices and the barriers that often prevent agencies from implementing meaningful changes. A key takeaway was the role of organizational culture. Leadership decisions, communication, and access to appropriate tools all have a profound impact on how officers feel safe and supported. Peer perspectives and real world examples demonstrated practical strategies that agencies can adopt without substantial monetary cost. These examples emphasized that improving safety does not always require new resources; sometimes it requires a shift in priorities and processes.

This topic is highly relevant to APD because officers regularly balance complex supervision responsibilities, heavy workloads, and high-risk environments. The discussion reinforced the importance of assessing both the physical procedures and psychological climate of the workplace. From my own experience as a full time safety instructor and now as a supervisor for a standard probation unit, I firmly believe that APD excels in this area. The Department continues to be a leader in welfare within the field of community corrections by providing relevant officer safety training, access to quality safety equipment, and a comprehensive approach to safety within supervision strategies. This session strengthened my appreciation for the thoughtful and proactive safety culture that has long been a priority within our organization.

The workshop underscored what we have long understood: enhancing safety is not a one time initiative but an ongoing commitment. By continuing to evaluate our practices and safety equipment, APD will further advance a culture where officers feel protected, valued, and equipped to perform their duties effectively.

APD'S JIW INITIATIVE RETURNS TO APPA

By Angel Camacho, Darcy McLeod, and Karla Rahn

Last year we had the privilege to present our session *Rethinking How We Supervise Women on Probation* at the APPA 50th Annual Training Institute in Las Vegas, NV and New York City, NY. This year, we had the honor of being invited back to the conference by The Women's Justice Institute, founded by Alyssa Benedict and Deanne Benos, who remain committed to improving community supervision and ending mass incarceration for women in the justice system.

In the 90-minute session titled *Rethinking Responses to Technical Violations Among Women*, we presented data, collected by APD's JIW & Girls Committee, examining the impact of technical violations on women in the justice system. Approximately 150 community corrections professionals were surveyed with about 90 percent agreeing that gender-responsive approaches improve outcomes for women, and that women's pathways into the justice system differ from men's. The survey results also reveal there are mixed views on whether reincarceration of women for technical violations is appropriate. In addition to our data analysis, the presentation allowed us to serve as panelists alongside women who were formerly supervised and are now working in peer-coordination work for JIW. During our panel, we were able to share APD Chief Michael Cimino's JIW Initiative and how he was inspired to adopt this by attending a presentation by Alyssa Benedict and her team at APPA several years ago. We were also able to highlight the evolution of APD's caseloads for JIW, which started as a pilot program and have since expanded to more than 20 caseloads governed by official departmental policy.

"It was a huge honor, personally and professionally, to be considered and included in the work of the Women's Justice Institute as they are renowned in the field of JIW, in addition to being able to represent the Department and how far we've come in our own practices of gender-responsivity."

-Adult Probation Officer Darcy McLeod



Angel Camacho, Darcy McLeod, and Karla Rahn at the 2026 APPA Training Institute in Chicago, IL.

Lastly, we were able to speak on our experience as probation officers who have been part of the APD JIW initiative for the last several years and answer questions from attendees who have been inspired to bring a JIW initiative to their respective departments. It is our hope the importance of gender responsivity reaches more agencies, and we can continue to strengthen the work we are doing in our own Department to better serve women on probation.

SUPPORTING AUTISTIC AND NEURODIVERGENT INDIVIDUALS IN THE COURTROOM AND IN THE COMMUNITY

By Melissa Monahan

I attended the APPA workshop titled *Supporting Autistic and Neurodivergent Individuals in the Courtroom and in the Community*, presented by Kate and Ryan Hooven. Kate works with the Autism Services, Education, Research, and Training Collaborative and her son, Ryan, participated as a co-presenter, sharing his lived experience as an autistic individual.

Kate emphasized that diagnoses of neurodevelopmental and related conditions associated with neurodiversity¹ are increasing, making it essential for justice-system professionals to understand the perspectives and challenges experienced by neurodivergent individuals. She outlined several situations commonly encountered within the criminal justice system that may be difficult for neurodivergent individuals to navigate, such as attending court for the first time without knowing what to expect, receiving multiple instructions at once, and functioning in loud or overstimulating environments such as jails or probation lobbies.

Ryan provided valuable insight by describing how he personally responds in such situations. He explained that unfamiliar settings or excessive stimuli may cause him to “shut down,” become overwhelmed, or struggle to complete a sequence of tasks while still processing the initial directive. He noted that a series of rapid instructions — such as “empty your pockets, sit down, put your hands on the table, and face me” — can quickly become unmanageable and may be misinterpreted as noncompliance, even when the individual is genuinely trying to follow directions.

To support individuals facing these challenges, Kate and Ryan developed several “social stories.” These illustrated guides outline what a person can expect in justice-related settings, such as court hearings, attorney meetings, or probation appointments. These resources, along with additional tools, are available on the Autism Services, Education, Research, and Training Collaborative website under the Justice Resource Collection at PAAutism.org.

Overall, the workshop was highly informative. It underscored the importance of recognizing the diverse needs of the individuals we serve and offered practical resources to enhance participant understanding. Hearing Ryan’s perspective added meaningful depth to the presentation by providing an authentic lived experience.

¹Neurodiversity is not a diagnosis itself but encompasses a range of developmental, neurological, and cognitive variations, including conditions like autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and others.

MANAGING JUSTICE-INVOLVED INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS: PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR SUPERVISION

By Alexa Hearn

At the APPA 2026 Summer Institute, I attended a session titled *Managing Justice-Involved Individuals with Mental Illness: Practical Strategies for Supervision*, presented by Catherine Fliszar. Fliszar, an accomplished forensic mental health professional, discussed analyzing behavior to make informed and justifiable supervision decisions. Her expertise is particularly relevant to our daily work as probation officers, especially in my experience with individuals in the Mental Health and Veterans Courts.

The session emphasized diagnoses frequently overrepresented among justice-involved individuals, including post-traumatic stress disorder/complex trauma, substance use disorders, mood disorders, psychotic disorders, and antisocial traits/antisocial personality disorders. It also addressed the prevalence of co-occurring disorders and the challenges related to misdiagnosis.

One key concept that stood out to me was the need to differentiate between mental health symptoms and willful non-compliance. For example, symptoms of depression can present as missed appointments, low motivation, poor follow-through, social withdrawal, and feelings of hopelessness. When faced with non-compliant behaviors, the presenter recommended considering the following factors:

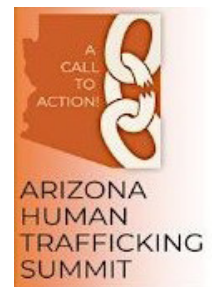
- **Change:** Is the behavior new or worsening?
- **Capacity:** Does the individual's current level of functioning match what is being asked of them?
- **Context:** Have stressors, symptoms, or barriers changed?
- **Pattern:** Is this an isolated incident or part of a larger pattern?
- **Response:** Has the individual's behavior improved when support or interventions were provided?

While no single behavior definitively indicates whether non-compliance is willful or symptom driven, the session provided a useful supervisory framework. It encourages probation officers to pause and carefully evaluate the circumstances surrounding the behavior, considering whether mental health symptoms or other barriers may be influencing the individual's actions, before deciding on the appropriate response.

REFLECTIONS ON THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING SUMMIT

By Anna O'Geen

The fourth annual *A Call to Action: Arizona Human Trafficking Summit* was held in Mesa from August 31-September 2, 2026. The event brought together professionals from across the nation in healthcare, social services, law enforcement, and community organizations to share best practices, strengthen partnerships, and advance strategies for supporting individuals who have experienced human trafficking. The summit featured keynote presentations, panel discussions, and specialized workshops designed to improve responses to human trafficking. Several members of the APD Sex Trafficking Survivors Workgroup had the opportunity to attend various sessions, and three of their takeaways are highlighted in the articles that follow.



BEYOND THE BEHAVIOR

By Kora Witthun

Stacey Gagnon, Assistant Director for Yavapai County Public Health, presented the session *Beyond the Behavior: Understanding the Traumatized Brain in the Fight Against Exploitation* at the *Arizona Human Trafficking Summit*. This session focused on the underlying effects of trauma and how we can better understand the maladaptive behaviors supervised individuals may present. It is imperative to understand the deep impact trauma has on biology, especially when working with individuals who have experienced sex trafficking and other forms of exploitation.

Gagnon first discussed the “invisible backpack” that every person carries. Our invisible backpack contains our core beliefs, survival strategies, attachments, resiliency, self-worth, abuse, and emotional regulation or dysregulation formed in childhood. A heavy backpack full of abuse and trauma forces the development of certain survival skills. This is especially relevant considering that, according to the presenters, 84% of trafficking survivors have experienced significant emotional, sexual, and physical abuse during childhood. Survivors are often forced to carry their heavy backpacks alone. Traffickers and predators exploit a victim's need for safety and target any vulnerabilities that victims may have. Children are especially vulnerable to exploitation. When children grow up with heavy backpacks without support, they often lack a healthy understanding of what they deserve. If this deficit is not addressed, it can lead to self-sabotage, violence, addiction, and/or promiscuity.

Gagnon then highlighted several key trauma impacts often seen in trafficking survivors. First, children who experience neglect, abandonment, or abuse by primary caregivers may internalize the belief that love is conditional and tied to harm. Second, traffickers often mimic a secure attachment style by providing immediate affection and validation. Third, early abuse normalizes mistreatment. When traffickers inflict abuse on victims, it mirrors a familiar childhood trauma cycle. Lastly, chronic trauma alters the prefrontal cortex, which can lead to ineffective impulse control and an inability to see long-term consequences.

When working with individuals who have endured severe trauma, such as trafficking survivors, Gagnon emphasized the practice of trauma-informed care. Every person deserves to feel safe and in control. Probation officers should affirm a person's worth through consistent, non-transactional support. Support should not be tied only to extrinsic rewards or positive behavior. Offering choices, even small ones, provides a

sense of agency. Do not take setbacks personally. The road to recovery is often long and rarely linear. Instead, consider what is in the person's backpack that may be driving their behavior. While past trauma and abuse is not an excuse for antisocial behavior, it can provide context that helps guide effective intervention.

MEDICAL SAFE HAVEN

By Anna O'Geen

At the fourth annual *A Call to Action: Arizona Human Trafficking Summit*, Program Director Dr. Benjamin Ihms and System Director Eric Barkyoumb presented a specialized healthcare initiative called Medical Safe Haven (MSH). The MSH program was originally created and launched in 2016 by Dignity Health at the Mercy Family Health Center in Sacramento, California. Three years later in 2019, CommonSpirit Health was formed by the combination of two large Catholic health systems: Dignity Health and Catholic Health Initiative. Following the merger, CommonSpirit Health began replicating the MSH model across its larger national network and continues to be one of the largest nonprofit health systems in the United States.

WHAT IS MSH?

The MSH program is a safe, barrier-free, and trauma-informed primary medical care environment, led by understanding physicians, specifically tailored for individuals who have experienced human trafficking. Dignity Health embedded the program into its family medicine residency training facilities, including the Dignity Health Medical Group Family Medicine location in Gilbert, Arizona. MSH consists of two main components: 1) extensive training and 2) barrier-free judgment-free primary care for individuals identified as victims or survivors of human trafficking. MSH is reliant upon referrals to and from agencies that are already engaged with this population. To ensure the medical professionals are properly trained, CommonSpirit Health developed the Human Trafficking Response Program. This program equips physicians, advanced practice providers, and staff with the appropriate training to identify and assist individuals who may be experiencing human trafficking. According to the presenters, 88% of individuals who have experienced human trafficking seek and access healthcare during their trafficking experience, and most often in emergency departments. It is crucial for residents, faculty, clinical staff, and other healthcare professionals to receive extensive training on trauma-informed care to be better equipped to identify and assist individuals who may be experiencing human trafficking.

SERVICES & ELIGIBILITY

Listed below is a list of various services provided by MSH:

- Full spectrum, barrier-free, and judgment-free primary care
- Specialized services for mental health, obstetrics and gynecology, and pediatrics
- Medication, labs, and imaging
- Longer appointment times (up to 80 minutes)
- Trauma-informed care
- Community resource connections
- Transportation as needed
- Laser tattoo removal (coming soon)

MSH provides these services in the Greater Phoenix area and beyond. To be eligible for these services you must be an identified individual who has experienced human trafficking. However, MSH also treats patients who are "in the life", referring to individuals still within trafficking situations. MSH treats those who are insured, uninsured, documented, and undocumented. Children of individuals receiving care can be treated as well.

IMPACT OF MSH

There are three groups that MSH makes a positive impact on: physicians, patients, and the community.

Physicians are more educated, compassionate, comfortable, experienced, and transformed.

Patients feel seen and heard, are receiving the care they deserve, have a renewed perception of healthcare, continue to heal, and are 437% more likely to successfully complete programs offered by external partner agencies, according to the presenters. These programs include case management, behavioral health treatment, housing support, and victim advocacy services provided by community organizations such as Catholic Charities, Phoenix Dream Center, The Salvation Army, A New Leaf, and more. With each month of care, the presenters explained, their odds of program completion increase by 11%, and with each appointment their odds increase by 6%. When individuals who have experienced human trafficking complete their external programs, it reduces their likelihood of going back to their trafficker.

The impact of MSH goes beyond physicians and patients, but into the *community* as well. MSH expands compassion to all physicians, reduces emergency room visits, and provides additional resources for community agencies.

For more information on MSH, please visit <https://www.commonspirit.org/physician-enterprise/medical-safe-haven>.

ETHICAL INTERVIEWING

By Diana Martinez

During the 2026 *Arizona Human Trafficking Summit*, I had the privilege of attending a presentation titled *Ethical Interviewing with Survivors of Human Trafficking* by Tanya Alegria, former Senior Program Coordinator of the Arizona Human Trafficking Hotline. Tanya believes there is strength that resides within each of us, waiting to be awakened and shared with the world.

The presentation focused on the importance of using trauma-informed, respectful, and survivor-centered approaches when communicating with individuals who have experienced exploitation. The presentation emphasized that survivors may have experienced significant trauma, manipulation, coercion, and loss of control. As a result, the way professionals ask questions and respond to disclosures can have a meaningful impact on a survivor's sense of safety and willingness to engage with services and the justice system.

A key takeaway from the workshop was the importance of building trust and providing survivors with as much choice and control as possible during an interview. Interviewers should explain their role and the purpose of the interview, use clear and nonjudgmental language, avoid unnecessary or repetitive questioning, and recognize that trauma can affect memory, communication, and emotional responses. Ethical interviewing also requires maintaining appropriate confidentiality, respecting personal boundaries, and avoiding assumptions about how a survivor "should" respond to their experiences.

This presentation was particularly relevant to the work that we do as probation officers in JIW caseloads, because as probation officers, we may encounter individuals who have experienced trafficking or other forms of exploitation. A trauma-informed approach can help officers communicate more effectively, identify potential needs or vulnerabilities, and connect individuals with appropriate resources while still fulfilling the responsibilities of their conditions. Understanding the effects of trauma can also help reduce the risk of unintentionally causing additional distress during routine interactions and assessments.

Personally, this workshop reinforced the importance of not only the questions being asked, but also the way they are asked. It was a reminder that professional interactions can either contribute to a person feeling respected and heard or create additional barriers to communication. Approaching survivors with patience, empathy, and professionalism can support more meaningful engagement while maintaining the boundaries and responsibilities of a probation officer role.

A DAY IN THE LIFE - BACKGROUND INVESTIGATOR

Jericka Hector began her career with APD in January 2016, advancing through key roles including surveillance officer, case administrator, and background investigator. Over the past four years, she has served within the Background Investigations Unit, playing a critical role in the Department's hiring process. In this capacity, she conducts comprehensive background investigations on employment candidates. Her responsibilities focus on gathering, compiling, and analyzing complex data to rigorously evaluate and verify an applicant's suitability for agency employment.



Background Investigator Jericka Hector.

WHAT IS YOUR MAIN RESPONSIBILITY?

JERICKA: *The primary mandate of our unit is to execute comprehensive, confidential background vetting for prospective employment candidates. This process involves careful integration of data derived from interviews and references to generate detailed evaluative reports for executive review. Successfully fulfilling these responsibilities requires strict adherence to confidentiality protocols, sharp attention to detail, and a high standard of professional documentation.*

WHAT DOES YOUR TYPICAL DAY LOOK LIKE?

JERICKA: *A typical day for a background investigator in the Department balances meticulous computer-based research with active external interviewing to vet potential hires. This includes reviewing the electronic applications submitted by applicants, querying national criminal databases, local police records, credit bureaus, and Department of Motor Vehicles databases to spot clues. We conduct interviews with applicants to gather additional background information and identify discrepancies. It involves calling past employers, coworkers, and personal references to assess the candidate's character, integrity, and temperament. We travel locally to conduct file review checks on applicants who work within the county and/or law enforcement. Lastly, we compile all findings into a highly structured, objective summary package for Deputy Chiefs to review and decide who is disqualified or permitted to advance to the polygraph exam (for officer positions).*

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

JERICKA: *Something unique about our role that many people may not be aware of is we frequently assist with several additional tasks. These include running background checks for ride-along participants, interns, contracted providers, and officers who request authorization to carry a firearm. We also stay up to date on code that outlines hiring standards and related guidelines.*

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

JERICKA: *We frequently interact with line staff, supervisors, and Judicial Branch Human Resources regarding internal applicants. We also work closely with the Deputy Chiefs throughout the process when concerning issues arise or when additional information about an applicant is needed.*

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT?

JERICKA: *Working as a background investigator requires significant organization, attention to detail, and good communication skills. Our work ensures that we have a qualified work force of professionals that can serve and protect our community.*

MICHAEL COLEMAN

ADULT PROBATION SURVEILLANCE OFFICER

Judicial Branch employee since 2025

FAVORITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

My favorite part of my job, I think, is connecting with so many different types of individuals on my caseload and getting to know their backgrounds.

WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING/READING?

Currently, I have been binge watching the series *Homeland*.

FUN FACT:

I have been a voting member of the Country Music Association for over 20 years. As an independent artist, I have written and produced nine songs that have hit number one on various independent music charts around the world and have won numerous awards for my songwriting.



FAVORITE QUOTES:

"Success is nothing without someone you love to share it with."
- Billy Dee Williams to Diana Ross in *Mahogany* (1975)

"Where you come from does not dictate where you end up."
- Anonymous

EDITORIAL STAFF & POLICY

CHRONICLE EDITORS & STAFF

Clara Beuoy
Kat Caswell

Robert Celaya
Alex Coppess

Dan DeRusso
Candace Hallberg

Anna O'Geen
Allison Taylor

SUBMIT AN ARTICLE

Interested in submitting articles, announcements, or success stories to the *Chronicle*? Please email submissions to APDChronicle@jbazmc.maricopa.gov.

ACCESS THE CHRONICLE

Online: [Click here](#).

Email: Join the *Chronicle* email list and receive each publication automatically - email request to APDChronicle@jbazmc.maricopa.gov.

CHRONICLE POLICY

- All articles and pictures submitted for publication in the *Chronicle* must have an identified author and are subject to acceptance and editing. If an article receives significant edits, changes, additions, or deletions it will be returned to the writer for review before publication.
- High quality photos focusing upon the subject of the article may be submitted. All people in photos must be identified. All non-employees in pictures must have a signed Transfer of Rights and Release form which can be obtained by emailing APDChronicle@jbazmc.maricopa.gov.
- Articles submitted for the *Chronicle* may be reproduced in other publications.