

ANNUAL REPORT FY2023

JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2023



JUDICIAL BRANCH OF ARIZONA IN MARICOPA COUNTY



EXCELLENCE... EVERY PERSON. EVERY DAY. EVERY TIME.



Pictured: the Central Court Building at the Downtown Court Complex in Phoenix.



**JUDICIAL BRANCH OF ARIZONA
IN MARICOPA COUNTY**

FISCAL YEAR 2023

JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2023

ANNUAL REPORT OF OPERATIONS

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ADVANCING OUR MISSION



As we reflect on the 2023 fiscal year, one of our greatest accomplishments is not documented in this report: Planning for the future.

In 2023, we launched our strategic planning process to look ahead, to forecast where we are headed as a court and as an organization of 3,200 employees, and to chart our path forward as the fourth-largest trial court system in the nation. It is this legacy of strategic planning for the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County that has led to this organization being viewed as among the most innovative and forward-thinking in the nation.

That reputation is well deserved, but it didn't develop by happenstance. It is an intentional and focused effort to continually improve, to build on previous successes, and to work to better the future of this organization and, by extension, our community. That reputation is also a credit to our partnerships — with the Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts and Maricopa County, among others — that provide the support and perspective we need to operate effectively.

As documented in the pages that follow, our accomplishments in the 2023 fiscal year reach across all court departments and the adult and juvenile probation departments. From expanding access to Mental Health courtrooms in the community, better onboarding of new Family Court judicial officers, reviewing capital cases in the Criminal Department and improving access to protective orders for community members, we've accomplished much in this past year.

The foundation from which all of our successes are built, however, starts with the dedicated employees of the Judicial Branch in Maricopa County, including judicial officers, front-and-center customer support staff, officers with the adult and juvenile probation departments, or the behind-the-scenes team members like those in Court Technology Services. Each member of the team, regardless of position or tenure, contributes to ensure that we uphold the principles of justice for every person, every day, every time.

The administration of justice is more than a process for us – it is a deeply held belief that everyone deserves to be treated with respect, fairness and integrity. It's a belief that propels this organization forward, and a principle that underscores the dedication of the judicial officers and staff members who choose to serve their community with this organization. It's a principle that is our North Star.

As we reflect on the past year, we now begin to look forward. The past is history, as this report documents, but our future story has yet to be written. Let's write it together. ■



HON. JOSEPH C. WELTY
PRESIDING JUDGE



RAYMOND BILLOTTE
JUDICIAL BRANCH
ADMINISTRATOR



OUR ORGANIZATION

OUR MISSION

We are dedicated to providing a safe, fair and impartial forum for resolving disputes, enhancing access to our services, and providing innovative, evidenced-based practices that improve the safety of our community and ensure the public's trust and confidence in the Judicial Branch.

OUR VISION

We are committed to excellence and the principles inherent in the Rule of Law ... every person, every day, every time.



OUR VALUES



FAIRNESS



RESPECT



INTEGRITY



INNOVATION



SAFETY

EQUAL ACCESS FOR ALL



EARLY DISPOSITION COURT CONSOLIDATED

In the past year, the Southeast divisions of the Early Disposition Court moved downtown and joined the five divisions located in the South Court Tower. This move involved a number of logistics, including combining the two EDC-SEF divisions into one (for a new total of six Early Disposition Court divisions), moving the Not Guilty Arraignment division to the Central Court Building Lower Level and transferring Criminal Administration staff downtown to new duties. The Maricopa County Attorney's Office, Clerk of the Court, Adult Probation and the Office of Public Defense Services, including the Public Defender's Office also needed to make changes to adjust to this move. This was a big change for the Court as well as our justice partners since ECD was the last Criminal Department presence at the Southeast Facility in Mesa. ■

CAPITAL CASES REMAIN CRIMINAL DEPARTMENT FOCUS

The Criminal Department currently has 40 capital cases pending, as well as seven cases that were recently remanded by the U.S. Supreme Court. Ruling in *Cruz v. Arizona*, capital defendants were not fairly sentenced to death if they were not allowed to tell jurors that if they were given a life sentence, it would be without parole. The criminal bench continues to dedicate focus and resources to capital cases, including facilitating training for

judges who manage and try these cases. In addition to managing these 40 capital cases, the criminal bench has resolved nine capital cases during this last year by way of trial or settlement conference. ■

SEALING OF CRIMINAL RECORDS HELPS NEW STARTS

The start of 2023 ushered in plenty of new legislation and changes to the Rules of Criminal Procedure, which the Criminal Department was responsible for implementing. One of the most significant new laws was SB 1294, which allows some defendants and individuals the opportunity to apply to have their criminal case or arrest record sealed by petitioning the Court.

After considering the petition, along with additional information from the State and the Arizona Department of Public Safety, the Court may grant or deny the request. Presiding Criminal Commissioner (now Judge) William Wingard developed training and resources for the criminal bench, and Criminal Administration worked with the Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts, Adult Probation and the Arizona Department of Public Safety to develop the processes our court uses to manage these petitions and facilitate their consideration.

The Criminal Department has processed more than 1,500 petitions to seal. While this new law does not go so far as to expunge a criminal record, it is an important step in helping justice-involved individuals put their past behind them. Sealing criminal records or arrest histories combined with restoring an individual's civil rights could give many people the opportunity to turn a new leaf and get a new start. ■

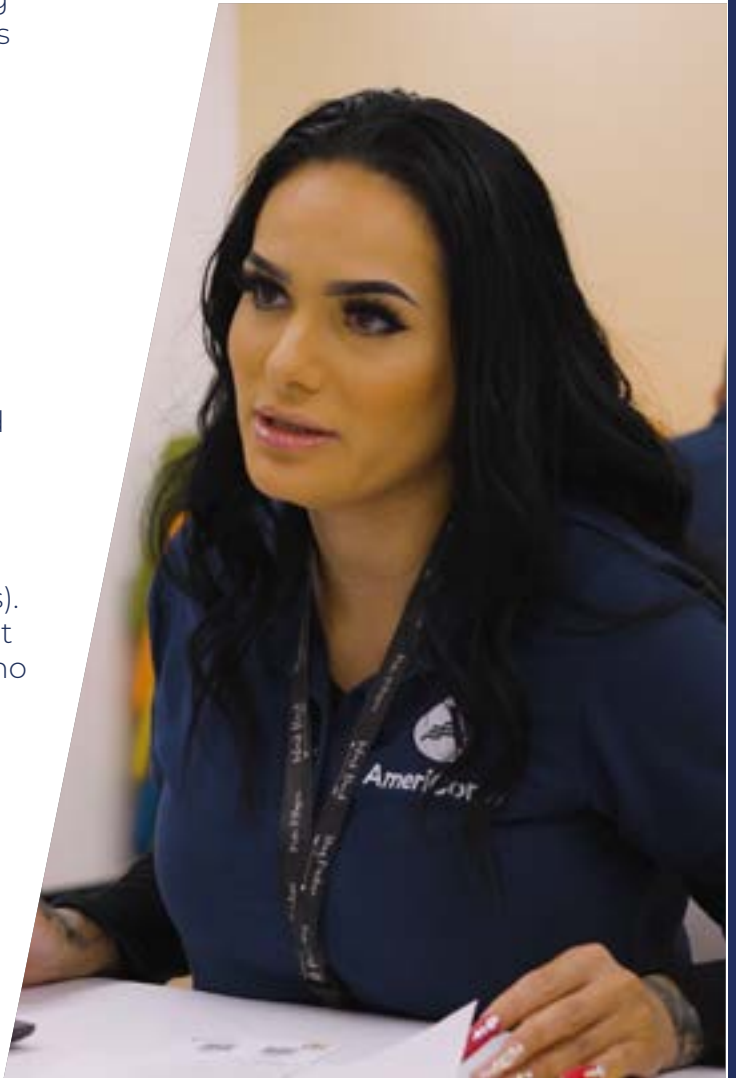
AMERICORPS MEMBERS SERVE PUBLIC

The Providing Access to Court Services AmeriCorps program has a total of 22 interns who are assisting the public. Within this grant cycle, three members graduated around the time they completed the program, one of whom has since been hired as a staff member in the Law Library Resource Center.

The most common majors of members still in college are Criminal Psychology and Criminal Justice and/or Law. Out of 22 members this year, there are a number of different colleges represented. Currently, two members attend Arizona State University, seven members attend Grand Canyon University and two have graduated (University of Arizona and Grand Canyon University).

Two AmeriCorps Members are fluent in Spanish, and one speaks Assyrian (their family are refugees). A handful of members go to school in Phoenix but live in other towns and states such as Tucson, Idaho and California.

The Law Library Resource Center has been on numerous Telemundo and Univision television and radio interviews to reach out to the Spanish-language community to describe the resources available we have in the Law Library Resource Center. ■



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LAW LIBRARY RESOURCE CENTER'S LINC PROGRAM RETURNS TO COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

For many Maricopa County residents, accessing the services of the Law Library Resource Center is not an easy task. Finding transportation, taking time off work and a lack of reliable internet are often serious obstacles to justice. To address these issues, the LLRC created the Legal Information and Navigation Clinic (LINC) in 2019.

LINC is a partnership between the LLRC and public libraries to provide in-person court navigation and forms assistance in under-served areas. As an established community resource, public libraries offer locations that are quickly and easily accessible as well as providing



free internet, computer and printing services. The LLRC brings knowledgeable staff and AmeriCorps service members who provide assistance in both English and Spanish. Events are typically held during lunch hours or on weekends, giving members of the community quick and local access to court services when and where it is more convenient.

After a long pause due to the pandemic, LINC resumed in the summer of 2022 and has since served more than 150 patrons at six public libraries. As we move into the new fiscal year, the LLRC is looking forward to expanding LINC and providing greater access to justice across Maricopa County. ■

PROTECTIVE ORDERS AREA RELOCATES IN MESA

In May, the Law Library Resource Center debuted its new protective orders area in the new Southeast Justice Center. In collaboration with the East Mesa, North Mesa, West Mesa and Highland Justice Courts, the protective orders center has assisted more than 740 community members seeking Orders of Protection and Injunction Against Harassment. Having both the Superior Court and Justice Court in the same building allows members of the community to have easier access to both courts in one convenient location.

Separating the Law Library Resource Center and the protective order area provided privacy to customers going through a difficult time. Customers are now able to focus on filing their Orders of Protection and Injunction Against Harassment without distractions. Additionally, having an advocate in the protective orders office provides a resource for customers who need assistance beyond an Order of Protection or Injunction Against Harassment.

The relocation and opening of the new protective order area also allowed for four new computer stations to better assist customers, which streamlines processes. Being in the center of Superior Court, Justice Court, and Clerk of Court makes it easier for customers to navigate and find the courtroom for their hearing. ■



COMPLETED 21 TENANT
IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS
VALUED AT

\$711,000

In conjunction with the
County Facilities
Management Department



ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE OF VOLUNTEERING AS A JUDGE PRO TEMPORE

Being a lawyer is a profession that allows one to pursue a variety of avenues. Opportunities abound: civil, probate, criminal, family, to name a few. Many lawyers find a comfortable niche, establishing a familiar and sometimes monotonous work routine.

This brings to mind a recent article by columnist Harvey McKay. He wrote, “For some reason, the goal for many people is to get to that comfort level in our everyday lives. And that is fine for many. But playing it safe is not how to get ahead. Comfort zones need to be exploited. Put pressure on yourself. We should not seek comfort, but rather success.... Life is full of opportunities to get outside your comfort zone.” He further encourages individuals “Be open minded and flexible. Expose yourself to new experiences.”

There are lawyers who have accepted the challenge and opened themselves up to new experiences, and by doing so have gained valuable insight into the other avenues and aspects of legal profession.

In the November 2022 issue of the Maricopa Lawyer (official publication of Maricopa County Bar Association), a few of the lawyers who saw

opportunity to grow by becoming a Judge Pro Tempore summarized their experiences in the article “What I Have Gained Being a Judge Pro Tempore.” All are positive and illustrate the value of taking that road less traveled.

Being a Judge Pro Tempore (JPT) allowed Echo Reynolds to “gain insight into the judicial process...working with the Court and the parties towards resolving matters before trial.” For David Sandweiss, the experience exposed him to legal issues outside of his normal practice. Other JPTs expressed similar perceptions and experiences: developing relationships with other attorneys and the community; having skills in alternative dispute resolution; observing other attorneys in action; improving advocacy and negotiation; assisting in problem solving; and giving back to the profession.

The common intertwining threads are “exposure” and “expanding knowledge.” It’s clear that lawyers who step outside their comfort zone gain perspective that is immeasurable and arguably contribute to innovative thinking, which, when all is said and done, improves the justice system. ■

ICWA SPECIALTY COURT LAUNCHED IN JUVENILE DEPARTMENT

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Court in the Juvenile Department is a specialty court with a dedicated docket of child dependency hearings involving American Indian children as confirmed or presumed by the definitions outlined in the ICWA. The ICWA Court in Maricopa County began serving families in August 2022 as the result of efforts by Juvenile Department Presiding Judge Lori Bustamante, Judge Todd Lang and local tribes to apply the law to protect American Indian children and their families.

The goal of the ICWA court is to address the concern that American Indian children are more likely to be in care and more likely to have parental rights terminated. Statistics from other ICWA courts demonstrate that they are effective in ensuring that ICWA requirements and findings are made, earlier and more robust engagement from tribes and parents, and reducing the time in care and more success in reunited families. The court serves 20 tribes.

Along with the implementation of the specialty court, the ICWA Collaborative Stakeholder group began in late 2022 and guides the development of improved ICWA practices to better serve American Indian children and families. These meetings include representatives from across the child welfare spectrum in Maricopa County and provide a forum where collaboration, shared understanding and training can occur in a supportive environment. Other highlights include the creation of an ICWA-specific resource guide, a film screening and live panel discussion of the “Daughter of a Lost Bird” documentary and a presentation by Judge Lang at the 2023 Judicial Conference. ■

ACCESS TO JUSTICE BEYOND INTERNATIONAL BORDERS

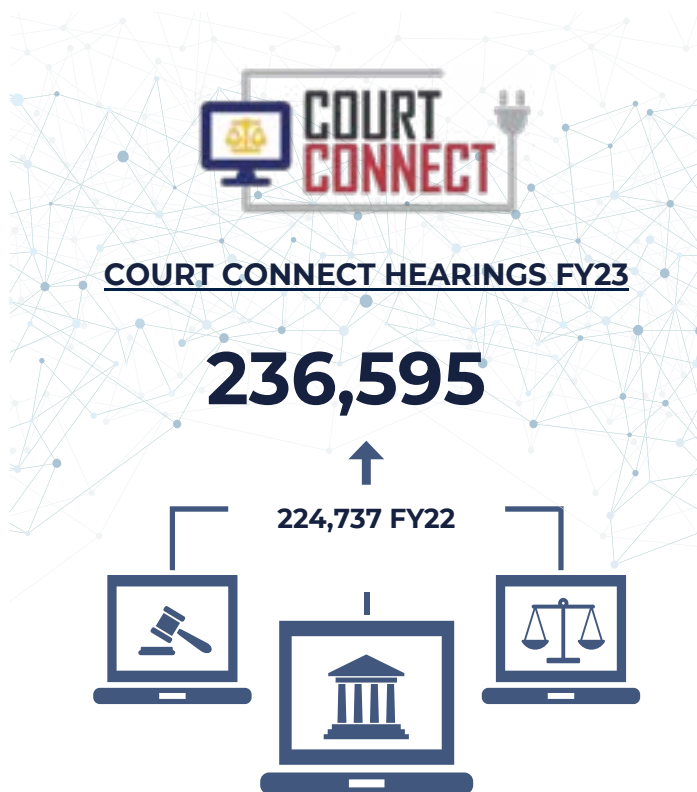
In a recent three-month-long criminal trial, the use of multiple smart devices allowed next of kin adequate access to justice beyond international borders.

Court interpreters signed-on to Court Connect to be able to see and hear the proceedings remotely. At the same time, the interpreters connected via telephone to next of kin who live in a foreign country. This allowed next of kin to participate in the trial without having to travel to the United States, which would have been costly and time-consuming.

The proceedings occurred with minimal interruptions and delays thanks to the seamless use of the Court Connect platform and international calling plans on the interpreters' cell phones. The use of simultaneous interpretation on a separate channel for limited English parties appearing remotely also helped to ensure that everyone involved in the trial could participate fully.

In addition to providing access to justice for next of kin, the use of smart devices in this case also helped to improve the efficiency of the trial. Cloud-connected tablets allowed interpreters to condense thousands of pages of technical, highly specialized information into searchable, digital files shared among and updated by each assigned interpreter in real time. This made the interpreters' rendition smoother and more uniform throughout the proceedings, and it also reduced the number of interpreter-requested recesses to consult reference material and with each other.

The use of smart devices in this case is a positive example of how technology can be used to improve access to justice. By making it possible for next of kin to participate in trials remotely, and by helping to improve the efficiency of the judicial process, smart devices can help to ensure that everyone has a fair chance to be heard. ■





AMENDED ARIZONA SUPREME COURT RULE CHANGES COURT REPORTING LANDSCAPE

The amended Arizona Supreme Court Rule 30, which took effect in December 2022, has had a significant impact on the court reporting landscape in the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County.

Prior to the amendment, court reporters were required to be present at all criminal hearings and trials, all civil trials when requested, and certain family, juvenile and probate proceedings. However, the amendment changed this, requiring court reporters only to be present at certain types of proceedings, such as grand jury, capital cases, all first-degree murder cases and specific proceedings in Probate/Mental Health Court.

Through attrition, the Court Reporting Department has gone from 50 court reporters five years ago, to the present day of 19 full-time court reporters and seven per diem court reporters. ■

INFORMAL TRIAL FORMAT ASSISTS SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS IN FAMILY CASES

People without a lawyer may now choose an easier, less overwhelming way to litigate their Family Court case. The Family Department of the Maricopa County Superior Court, along with the Superior Court in Pima and Graham Counties, recently launched an Informal Family Law Trial pilot project to help Family Court litigants who do not have a lawyer navigate the court system. By condensing the trial format and allowing judges to guide individuals through the trial process, the Court expects to lessen the burden on self-represented litigants and resolve cases in a timelier manner.

As many as 70% or more of all litigants in Family Court proceedings are self-represented, by far the highest number among all departments in the Court.

“These individuals not only have to grapple with the challenges they are encountering in their lives, but they must also navigate what is a complicated litigation process,” Family Department Presiding Judge Bruce R. Cohen said. “Without being law trained, it’s incredibly challenging for people to represent themselves. Yet under the law, self-represented litigants are held to the same legal standard in presenting their cases as attorneys. The Informal Trial process reduces the complexity by having the assigned judge solicit from each party the evidence and information needed for the judge to properly rule on the case. This will eliminate the additional stress that self-represented litigants experience as a result of not knowing how to present the evidence to support the claims in their case.”

Under Arizona Supreme Court Rule 77.1, both parties in the case must agree to an Informal Trial instead of a traditional trial. In an Informal Trial, the judge guides the entire process. The party who initiated the case is questioned first, with the judge asking the relevant questions. Then the other party is given the same opportunity. There is no cross-examination and only minimal need for legal objections.

“Litigants will not have to understand rules of evidence in order to present their case,” Judge Cohen said. “Exhibits that the judge is to consider are admitted into evidence with greater ease.”

Ultimately, the judge decides the importance of what each person says, and the evidence provided. Most often, the parties are the only witnesses. If the judge agrees that other witnesses are needed to provide additional information, the additional witnesses may be called.

“Our court system has as a core value – the need for there to be true access to justice. We believe that this new Informal Trial process furthers that goal for those who are addressing family-related legal issues by simplifying the process for them,” Judge Cohen said. ■

ADULT EDUCATION CENTER MOVES TO NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART BUILDING

A larger space and updated technology are just two of the many benefits students will enjoy when visiting the Adult Education Center's new location in Mesa. The Frank X. Gordon Adult Education Center, which is supported by the Maricopa County Adult Probation Department and receives grant funding from the Arizona Department of Education, moved to the Southeast Justice Center in March and is now open to any member of the community.

"We offer Adult Basic Education, GED test preparation and English as a Second Language classes as part of our services. We also have a workforce coordinator at that location and people can make appointments to work on their resume and their interviewing skills," said Adult Education Program Manager Kristi Wimmer. "We also have a digital literacy program for people who need to build computer and internet skills, including courses on how to be safe on the internet, how to not be a victim of a scam online. It's a free program available for all students."

The Adult Education Center was previously located inside the Mesa Adult Probation office but recently moved to the new Southeast Justice Center facility along with four Justice Courts.

"We went from having one large, one-size-fits-all classroom with computers and all the students were in one room classroom, which was challenging. Now we have two separate spaces, we have a classroom space and we have a computer lab/tutoring space," said Wimmer.

Wimmer hopes that the new and more public-facing location will translate to more students not only being aware of the program but also registering for their classes. The Frank X. Gordon Adult Education Program offers in-person classes on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. to make it convenient for any student who wishes to further their education.

"It was hard to find us before, and it wasn't that easy for people to seek out, especially people from the community, sometimes even the justice-involved individuals themselves. But in this new building, we are in the public area of the courthouse. So, anyone going to Family Court, anyone going to the Justice Courts or any of the other areas, they will be walking by our classrooms and seeing our signs and knowing that our resources are available," said Wimmer.

On their first visit, students ages 16 and older are typically given an education assessment to help teachers obtain a better understanding of the student's needs and identify possible areas of improvement. The program's state-certified teachers provide students with the support and guidance they need to move forward with their life goals.

The Adult Education Program services are connected to workforce and/or college and career training through an established seven-year partnership with the Smart Justice Program from ARIZONA@WORK, Maricopa County. The ARIZONA@WORK Smart Justice Program is a specialized team of career and workforce advisors who support and work specifically with justice-involved individuals to address specific obstacles individuals face when job searching.

During the last year, 337 individuals began the program registration process, with 172 of those completing registration testing/orientation and attending at least 12 hours of instruction. ■

ORDERS OF PROTECTION EXTENDED TO TWO YEARS UNDER NEW LAW

Domestic violence victims will soon have additional time to take safety measures as orders of protection will be extended from one year to two years. House Bill 2604 doubles the duration of an order of protection.

Anyone needing to file an order of protection can visit any of the four Maricopa County Superior Court Law Library Resource Centers located across the Valley to obtain assistance in person. Protective orders can also be obtained by visiting any Justice of the Peace or city court.

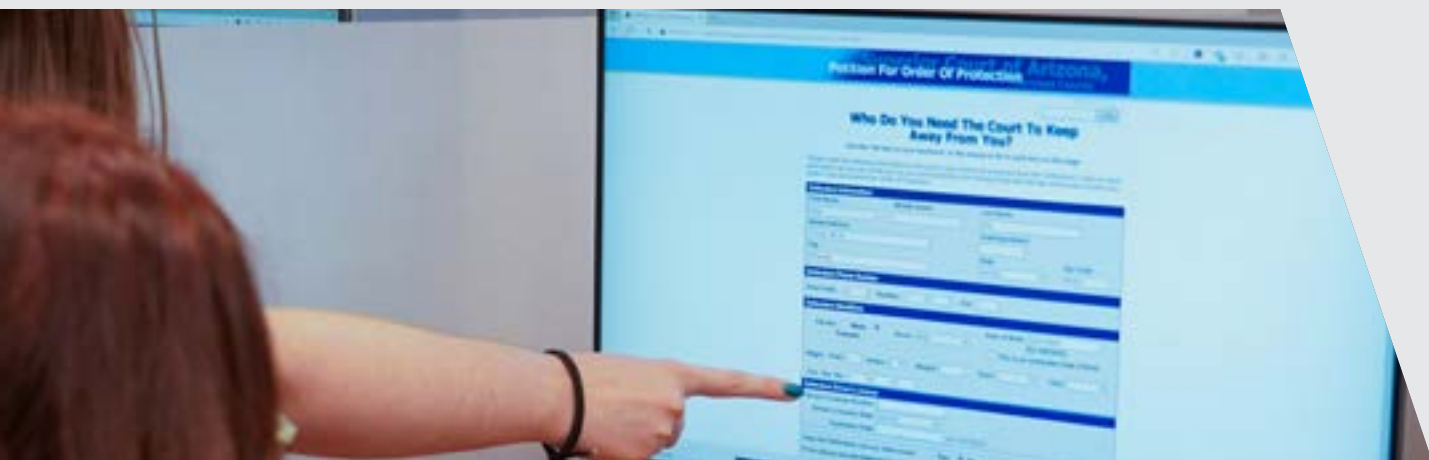
Those wanting to start the process online can utilize the Arizona Protective Order Initiation and Notification Tool by visiting AZPoint.azcourts.gov. The website will guide the person to fill out the forms needed. The forms are available at no cost to the public.

Once the forms are complete, the person would be required to file their petition at an Arizona court and have a hearing.

“Those wanting to start the process of a protective order in person will need to locate a court to file the protective order,” said Court Administration Supervisor Lorri Behunin. “If there is an open Family Court case, you can go to one of the four Maricopa County Superior Court locations in the protective order areas. Once at the court, paperwork will be completed, and a case number will be issued. After filing, an ex-parte hearing will be held with a commissioner to determine if the protective order can be granted.”

There are three different types of protective orders, including Injunction Against Harassment, Order of Protection and Injunction Against Workplace Harassment. A person’s relationship with the other party will determine which protective order to file. The only protective order with a fee is the Petition for Injunction Against Workplace Harassment, which is \$301.

Victims of domestic violence are encouraged to talk to a victim advocate before filing their petitions. The victim advocate is co-located in the Law Library Resource Center and can provide additional resources such as information about emergency shelters, crisis intervention and hotlines, and counseling services. ■



VALLEY'S REGIONAL HOMELESS COURT CELEBRATES 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Individuals experiencing homelessness are receiving support to change their situation by participating in the Maricopa County Regional Homeless Court, part of the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County. This problem-solving court helps eligible members of the public resolve minor misdemeanor offenses and quash warrants that have served as barriers to securing housing, employment and reinstating their driver license.

Homeless Court was initially developed in 2006 but expanded into the Regional Homeless Court in 2012 in partnership with the Limited Jurisdiction Courts. Since then, more than 1,700 individuals have completed 660,000 hours in community restitution to help resolve their cases. Those who voluntarily participate in the program work with their case manager to complete community restitution hours, which can include self-improvement, education and job training. Currently, one hour of community restitution resolves \$13 in fines.

At the Regional Homeless Court, cases are combined and heard at the same time. To participate, members of the public must demonstrate a commitment to changing their living situation and seek a referral from a participating community service provider. Their cases must be non-violent and victimless offenses. Examples of eligible cases are parking, traffic, loitering, trespassing and other "quality of life" offenses.



"Many of the people who are in this program have tickets or unpaid fines from different courts around the Valley and they may not be near each other," said the Hon. James Hernandez, a Phoenix Municipal Court judge and Maricopa County Regional Homeless Court chair. "So, we needed collaboration from courts all around the Valley to help these people."

In Maricopa County, more than 9,000 people are experiencing homelessness. According to the Maricopa Association of Government's 2022 point-in-time count, the number of people experiencing homelessness has increased 22% in the last two years. The homeless population includes people who are in transitional housing, an emergency shelter or safe haven program.

"Former Superior Court Presiding Judge Norm Davis brought these city and justice courts together and we talked a lot about the opportunity to share the authority so we can trust another judge to resolve those other matters and they came to those agreements, and I think it's a huge example of genuine collaboration," said Marcus Reinkensmeyer, deputy director of the Arizona



warrants became part of the Regional Homeless Court,” said Will Gonzalez, the Phoenix Municipal Court’s executive administrator, who assisted in the development of the Maricopa County Regional Homeless Court. “It’s stabilizing people and giving them that opportunity to move forward. For those who graduate from the Regional Homeless Court, to get there they have restored themselves, but they had to use initiative of their own. It’s an opportunity of dignity of really restoring people, it’s that dignity and respect we all want.” ■

Administrative Office of the Courts and part of the initial project team.

Regional Homeless Court is held every third Tuesday of the month at the Lodestar Day Resource Center at the Human Services Campus in Phoenix.

“The Human Services Campus provides this space, this classroom for the Homeless Court to convene once a month. It’s a big deal to have a space for people to be and we have a lot of clients who access services here that benefit from Homeless Court which makes it more convenient,” said Amy Schwabenlender, executive director of the Human Services Campus. “Being where the people are who need this service is a tremendous value to everybody.”

During the last two years, Regional Homeless Court hearings were conducted virtually. But since July 2022, hearings have returned to in-person with an option of appearing virtually for those who prefer it.

“A warrant for a failure to pay can prevent you from getting into housing and quashing



The Maricopa County Regional Homeless Court has expanded to allow participation by all 26 Justice Courts and all 23 Municipal Courts in Maricopa County

NEW PARTNERSHIP MAKES TUTORING PROGRAM POSSIBLE IN JUVENILE DETENTION

A new tutoring program is being offered in Juvenile Detention to provide youth with additional support as they work to accomplish their GED and earn high school credits.

The Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Department partnered with Arizona State University's Youth Education Program and the Maricopa County Regional School District to offer high-quality, volunteer tutoring. To start the program, four ASU student tutors started visiting various classrooms and living units within Juvenile Detention to help youth with topics such as math, science, social studies and language arts.

"I'm proud of the education we provide to our students at ASU. We have great instructors who have experience as officers or detention staff. We have great textbooks and multimedia opportunities, but nothing is the same as being inside a juvenile detention facility and working one-on-one with youth," said Adam Fine, an assistant professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Arizona State University. "It's providing students with this opportunity to get to know some of the youth who are experiencing detention, to feel what it feels like to walk into a juvenile detention facility, to understand a bit more deeply the challenges that kids face and to help work with them and support them in their educational journeys."

The tutors follow a block schedule, two students cover the morning block and two more tutors aid in the afternoon block. Youth who will be testing soon for the GED become a priority for tutors.

"Tutors will come twice a week to the detention facility and be paired up with a Maricopa County Regional School District Reach Associate during their blocks to provide tutoring support either in the classroom or on the living unit in detention," said Judicial Branch Volunteer Coordinator Courtni Tran. "ASU students work closely with our teachers from Maricopa County Regional School District to help provide one-on-one tutoring support for our justice-involved youths for GED prep, credit recovery and overall subject mentorship. Math support is a huge need; therefore, our ASU students will be providing extra support to those youths experiencing challenges with math, specifically with the GED."

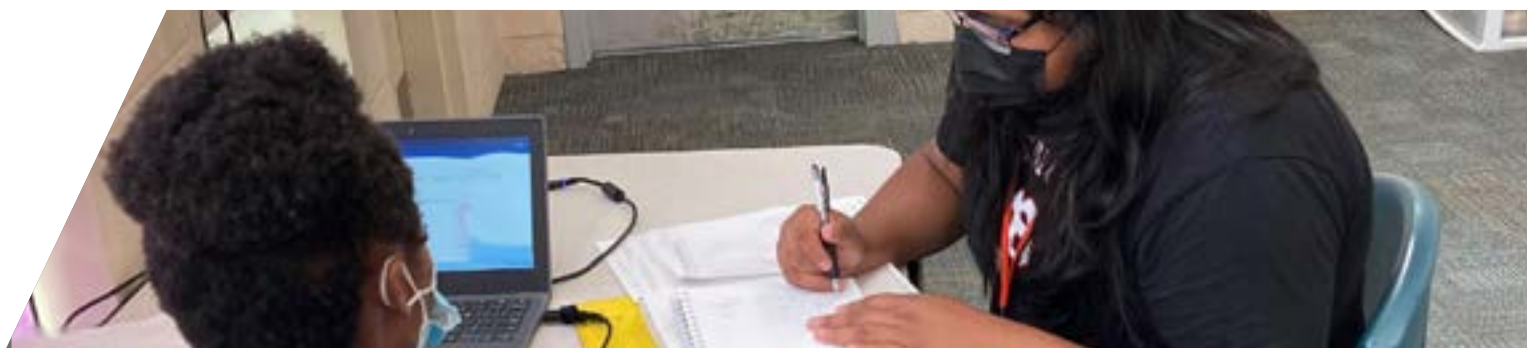
Before visiting Juvenile Detention, tutors undergo special training to help prepare them for their upcoming tutoring sessions. ASU students receive training in trauma-informed care, the mechanics of a tutoring session, reading intervention, communicating with youth, safety and risk, and more.

The tutoring program has already achieved great results in the short time it has been offered in Juvenile Detention.

Recently, the Juvenile Probation Department expanded the program by partnering with Benedictine University in Mesa and allowing more students to receive tutoring in detention.

■

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A photograph of two women in a professional setting, looking at a document together. The woman on the right is wearing glasses and a blue polo shirt, smiling as she points at the document. The woman on the left is also wearing glasses and a dark top, looking intently at the document. The background is slightly blurred, showing an office environment. A large red diagonal graphic element is on the right side of the image, containing the text.

BRANCH EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION



WATER JUDGE, SPECIAL MASTER TO OVERSEE KEY ARIZONA WATER CASES

The Hon. Scott Blaney, Judge of the Superior Court in Maricopa County and recently appointed by the Arizona Supreme Court to oversee the state's principal water claims, appointed Sherri Zendri as the water master for general stream adjudication.

Judge Blaney, in addition to continuing to hear cases as part of the Superior Court's Civil Department, is now also presiding over the state's two major stream adjudication claims involving the Gila River and the Little Colorado River systems. The appointment of Special Master Zendri provides additional support for general stream adjudications, serving as the day-to-day arbiter of the cases.

General stream adjudications are judicial proceedings to determine the extent and priority of all water rights in an entire river system. Arizona is undertaking a general stream adjudication of both the Gila River and the Little Colorado River systems. Priority is important in Arizona, especially during times of drought.

Judge Blaney, who was appointed to the Bench in 2018, previously served in the Family and Civil departments at Superior Court. Before joining the Court, he practiced in the area of complex commercial and business litigation, as well as employment law. He's a graduate of the University of Arizona College of Law and served more than 30 years as military lawyer, including combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Special Master Zendri, who assumed her role March 20, 2023, has experience as administrative counsel for the Arizona State Lottery and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. Before becoming the administrative counsel at ADEQ, she worked at the agency as a hydrologist, project manager and unit manager in the Waste Programs Division, the Air Quality Division and the Regional Compliance Program. She is a graduate of the University of Arizona College of Law and earned a master's degree in public administration from Arizona State University.

Thousands of claimants and water users participate in these cases before the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County and in Apache County. The Superior Court will issue decrees determining the water rights in the Gila River and Little Colorado River systems. State law, Indian, and federal non-Indian water rights will be adjudicated. ■

JURY OFFICE STREAMLINES SUMMONING PROCESS

The Superior Court in Maricopa County's Jury Office made a change to the summoning process for both county and state grand juries. The old process required two summonses be sent out for each panel. The first was to garner qualified jurors. The second summons had a specific date of service and were addressed to those who were qualified in step one.

The new process consolidates the summoning process into one step and includes the date of service. Jurors respond online, like a petit jury panel. They can postpone themselves or request a hardship excusal online as well. The summons itself was rewritten to simplify the process and expectations and it was all done on one sheet versus two with a return envelope. That weight change significantly saves on postage along with the need to only mail one time versus two. Additionally, the staff time devoted to scanning, processing mail, etc. has been greatly reduced and our yield (show rate) has increased by more than 6% consistently. ■

AUTOMATION HELPS SUPERIOR COURT RESOLVE ARBITRATION CASES MORE EFFICIENTLY

A technological advancement is helping Maricopa County Superior Court resolve arbitration cases faster and more efficiently. The Maricopa County Superior Court partnered with the State Bar of Arizona to launch its new Automated Arbitrator Feed project.

“The State Bar is honored to have partnered with the courts to continue to advance innovations that promote access to justice,” said Jessica Sanchez, State Bar of Arizona’s Board of Governors president.

Under the new program, Superior Court is able to cast a wider, more accurate net to identify eligible attorneys appointed as arbitrators. The automated process populates updated attorney information from the State Bar of Arizona’s database to the Court’s case management system.

“We are proud that this project is able to increase the number of attorneys appointed as arbitrators. This will significantly reduce the caseloads of those attorneys who have been appointed in the past,” Superior Court Civil Department Administrator Luke Emerson said. “This project is improving the justice system in Maricopa County by increasing access to justice for litigants because cases are now being processed more expeditiously. The information from the new feed is also more accurate.”

Under Arizona court rules, if a civil case involves damages under \$50,000 it proceeds to arbitration. A court-appointed arbitrator then reviews the case to decide a just resolution and award. Arbitration is intended to lower court costs for litigants and allows the court to utilize judicial resources more effectively.

The Automated Arbitrator Feed project won a 2022 National Association of Counties Achievement Award because it increased the number of attorneys appointed as arbitrators from 3,000 to 9,000.

“The Civil Department is honored that the Automated Arbitrator Feed project received a NACo Achievement Award. We would like to give a special thank you to the court’s Business Services Department, our frontline staff for their involvement and feedback and the State Bar for providing the data to make this successful,” Emerson said. ■

The number of attorneys appointed as arbitrators as a result of the Automated Arbitrator Feed project.



3,000



9,000



NEW, UPDATED LAWS REQUIRE UPDATES TO HUNDREDS OF COURT FORMS

September is a busy time of year for new rules, legislation and the people responsible for keeping approximately 3,000 legal forms at the Law Library Resource Center up to date. From the time the Arizona Legislative Session ends to the General Effective Date of newly enacted laws 90 days later, a four-person team at Superior Court's Law Library Resource Center is busy creating, updating and managing legal forms to reflect Arizona's new rules and laws.

"We are very busy right now but I'm grateful to have such a highly skilled team so focused on helping self-represented litigants navigate the justice system," LLRC Form Supervisor Jon Confer said. "We are well prepared because we get a head start on the process. Our team proactively reviews all bills introduced at the state legislature, as well as rule petitions, and evaluates whether the proposed changes will impact our documents."

Confer, a licensed attorney, supervises two employees with law degrees and a third who has a master's degree in legal studies. The team oversees an inventory of approximately 3,000 legal forms both in English and Spanish.

"We field hundreds and hundreds of changes to legal forms each year. We are usually juggling around 100 projects at a time," Confer said. "Each legal change involving Family, Probate, Civil or Criminal Department's content likely impacts some aspect of a corresponding form. Many

updates impact dozens of documents. This creates an exponential webbing effect, which we must tackle strategically."

Aside from making changes and updates, the legal form team is continually looking to improve processes by generating new forms when needed.

"Departmental presiding judges and administrators help us examine the significance of a new legal form and how often assistance is needed in that area. They also let us know when users are struggling with forms or processes, and we try to design solutions to address those challenges," Confer said.

The Law Library Resource Center team creates a vast majority of these forms in-house at Superior Court; while other forms are developed by the Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts and enacted through administrative directive.

As of now, the legal form team makes changes to most of the forms manually. Language is changed in Word documents and approved by the presiding judge of each respective department. The final work product is then translated to Spanish, converted into a fillable PDF document, inserted into packets and finally uploaded to the appropriate pages on the Court's website.

"Legal forms are great tools that self-represented people can leverage to engage effectively with the justice system. It's a pleasure working with this team," Confer said. ■



CROSS-TRAINING: FOSTERING A CULTURE OF SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION IN THE CIVIL DEPARTMENT

The Civil Department's cross-training program is an example of the Branch's dedication to efficiency and adaptability. Building upon the established Civil Department training programs, the cross-training program ensures that each staff member is well-versed in the roles in the Department, creating a more agile and resilient team. Cross-training enables team members to easily cover responsibilities due to absence or increased workload. The cross-training initiative fills service gaps and provides each team member with additional skill sets, enhancing their professional development.

The program also bolsters morale and fosters collaboration. Each member can step into the shoes of their colleagues, creating more empathy and understanding. The shared experience creates a positive atmosphere that motivates individuals to contribute, acting as 'one team' to provide excellent service to the community.

With this program, the Civil Department can respond more quickly and efficiently to changes, ensuring that future challenges and opportunities can be addressed proactively. Cross-training leads to more innovation and continuous improvement for the Judicial Branch as it moves forward.



TEEN COURT PROGRAM RECOGNIZES LAW DAY

In partnership with the Safe Schools Focus on Excellence Youth Program, the Judicial Branch in Maricopa County celebrated Law Day by hosting a Teen Court session. Law Day is observed nationally on May 1 to celebrate the rule of law.

During the celebration, 50 high school students participated in Teen Court to present real-life cases involving youth while several Superior Court judges observed. Teen Court volunteers were given courtroom roles such as judge, prosecuting attorney, defense attorney, jury, courtroom assistant, clerk and victim advocate.

“My understanding is that several of the participants have an interest in pursuing a career within the court system to include probation officers as well as attorneys,” said Commissioner Genee Dyer. “Judges observing a Teen Court case can provide feedback to participants in various roles which often furthers a participant’s interest in pursuing a career in law.”

Teen Court is a diversion program that offers youth an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and serves as a pathway toward offense resolution without a formal court process. Teen Court youth volunteers do not determine guilt or innocence but learn about the court process by assigning restorative justice consequences to hold peers accountable using established guidelines. Examples of constructive consequences include Teen Court jury service, community service hours, essays, restitution, letters of apology, counseling and skill-building classes.

“Teen Court is a labor of love and a collaborative effort with our various community partners to train children and youth ages 8-17 to serve as leaders within their school and their community. Our Law Day Theme is Rebuilding Trust, Respect for Others, Restorative Justice,” said Pamela Neal, the Safe Schools Focus on Excellence Youth Program founder and a former Maricopa County juvenile probation officer.

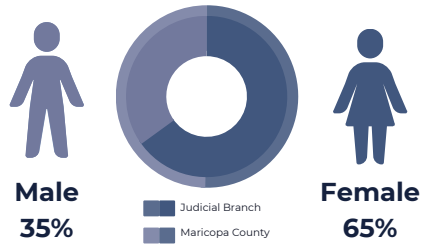
Teen Court may be used as an alternative to suspension from school or utilized as an alternative to a formal police complaint for theft or other misdemeanors.

“The importance of seeing real Teen Court cases allow for judges to first learn about the program, see how the cases are conducting and ultimately be a voice in supporting the value of Teen Court i.e., resolving matters outside of a formal court proceeding,” said Commissioner Dyer. ■

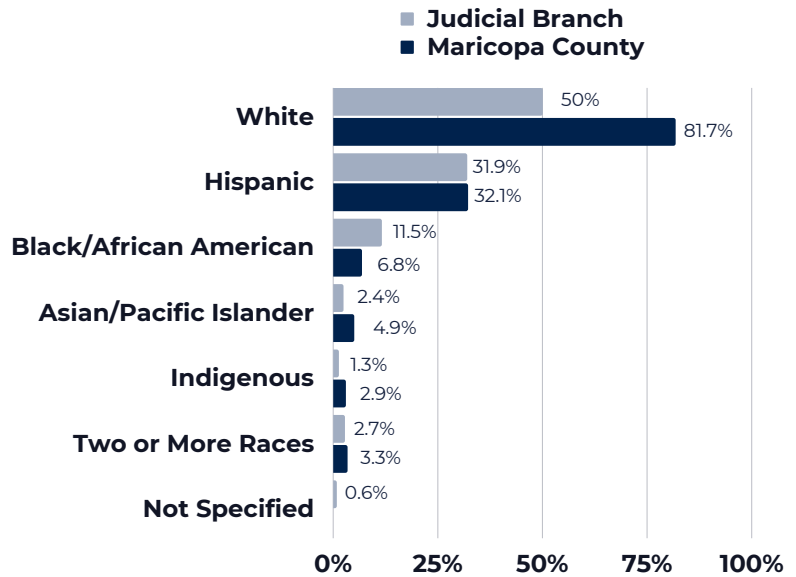
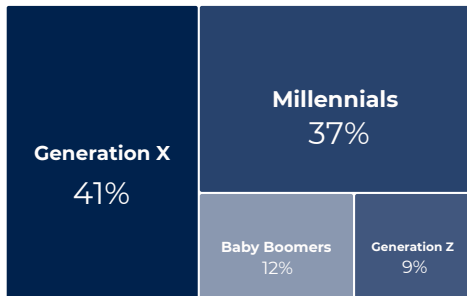
WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE



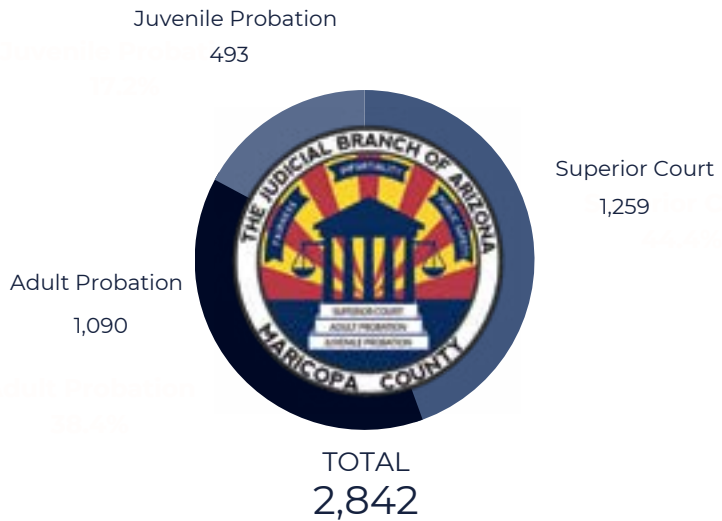
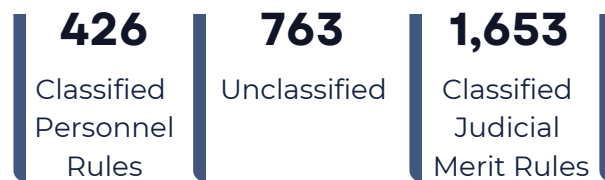
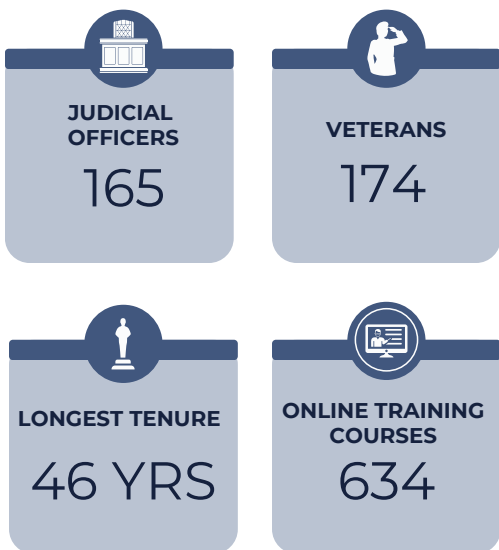
A CLOSER LOOK



Generations:



Employee Class Trends





CIVIL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM LAUNCHED TO SUPPORT FUTURE WORKFORCE

The Civil Department began its internship program in the fall of 2022. The team heavily promoted the program to the honors colleges at universities around Metro Phoenix, which resulted in a quality pool of candidates.

Since the start of the internship program, 10 interns have completed 2,000 working hours in the Civil Department, with 400 of those hours consisting of training and court observation. Four interns requested to extend their internship, citing their happiness with the program. One intern, Beth Belangee, was hired to become a full-time court employee. Two others, Anusha Raman and Erick Favela, became externs with Superior Court judges. All the interns are surveyed upon their exit from the program and have expressed their interest in applying to the Judicial Branch for future job opportunities.

“I feel grateful to be afforded an opportunity to work with passionate young folks who demonstrate a passion and commitment to serving their community,” said Melanie Simmons, deputy Civil Department administrator. “The utilization of interns has freed up staff to focus on more skilled, job-specific tasks. This has allowed the department to continue to function without major concerns related to productivity, despite the staffing issues which have impacted the overall Judicial Branch.”

Interns in the program are required to complete at least 180 hours of work. They assume such duties as performing customer service functions, setting court hearings, and assisting with court calendar preparation.

“It’s so rewarding to watch the interns grow both personally and professionally over the course of their internship. Our interns are extremely professional and devoted, often working many more hours than what is required of them. They complete every task they are given without hesitation, and to them, every task is an opportunity for growth,” Intern Peer Mentor Chloe Peck said.

Intern Kaylee Garcia, a senior at Arizona State University, would like to apply for full-time employment at Superior Court after she graduates.

“I knew I wanted to be a court employee after visiting the Court for the first time. To be surrounded by people all working with a commitment to justice made me want to get involved,” she said.

“This internship program has helped with so much. I highly recommend this internship to anyone who is curious about the court system or if they are thinking about a career in the Judicial Branch,” Belangee said. ■



ESSENTIAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING OPENS DOORS

The Judicial Branch in Maricopa County developed an innovative new training program to equip managers and supervisors with the introductory and foundational tools needed to navigate the challenges of day-to-day personnel supervision. EMBARK (Essential Managerial Basics and Resource Kit) does this through educational and skill development in employment laws, human resources policies and best practices in management that are critical to successful supervision unique to the Judicial Branch.

This program provides education in areas that may present significant risk to the organization, and having trained supervisors is likely to result in improved employee engagement and productivity. First-time supervisors learn managerial basics, and more seasoned supervisors receive a refresher on critical topics. The program includes specific coursework on various supervisory topics including hiring, leave management, payroll, discrimination and harassment, understanding federal employment laws (such as FMLA and ADA), mentoring and coaching, progressive discipline and performance feedback/evaluation.

Education occurs through a combination of learning modes. The program begins with several self-paced, interactive, computer-based courses that include a gamified approach to learning and activities with periodic knowledge checks to reinforce key topics. Once the computer-based training is complete, participants attend an in-person capstone course where they can apply what



they've learned to real-life scenarios, engaging in discussions with peers and Judicial Branch Human Resources experts and leaders. These scenarios are designed to help supervisors apply knowledge gained and skills developed during the computer-based courses with the opportunity to collaborate, problem solve and build relationships with other supervisors in the organization.

The EMBARK program, through the topics covered, supports fair treatment and equality among all employees. Additionally, it provides the opportunity to “train up” future leaders, creating an inclusive, equitable career path and the potential to reduce barriers to access to leadership roles.

The program has been met with great success. More than 200 attendees have participated in the program since November 2022 with exceptionally positive feedback. Post-program surveys from the first cohorts of the program indicate that the program was overwhelmingly well-received in content and structure. According to participants, one of the favorite parts of the capstone was the mix of employees from different departments in the small groups, as this aspect of the experience allowed them to form professional connections with individuals with whom they may not have otherwise had a chance to collaborate. Further, the ability to share experiences and recognize that other colleagues experienced similar personnel issues was identified as another benefit of the course. ■



CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAM EXPANDS EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

In March 2023, the Judicial Branch rolled out the Career Exploration Resource and Tools (CERT) Program driven by a strategic initiative to develop a competent and engaged workforce. A strategic planning committee was formed and from that committee's work, the CERT program was born. The goal of this program is to help current employees better understand the options available for internal career growth, to provide resources and tools about career opportunities that exist within the Branch, to promote internal career growth and development, and to empower employees to take charge of their career with the support they need to succeed.

CERT also provides information on the knowledge, skills, abilities and tasks associated with the various positions in the Branch, as well as experience and/or educational requirements for the positions. An interest inventory helps employees identify their interests and learn how they align to various careers in the Branch.

Further, the CERT Program sponsors job information sessions that allow employees learn more about specific positions and the path to achieve those job titles directly from incumbents in those roles. Additional job exploration opportunities are arranged to allow employees to gain insight into various positions by shadowing a colleague and observing firsthand what the job entails. ■



FROM AMERICORPS TO PROBATION OFFICER: A JOURNEY OF SERVICE AND GROWTH

Marilyn Castro was sworn in with the Adult Probation Department's recent class of graduates and reflects on her journey over the past several years. While attending university, Marilyn came across information about the new AmeriCorps program at the Law Library Resource Center, sparking her journey that would eventually lead her to join the Adult Probation Department.

"I was 18 years old and was scared I would be told 'no' due to my lack of experience and because the program was intended for juniors and seniors interested in attending law school. Despite this, I still applied and a few weeks later I got the call that I was selected to interview for the position. Shortly after, I was hired," she said. "I enjoyed the opportunity to help litigants during some of the toughest moments in their life and learn about different court forms and processes. Through this program, I learned I would love a career in public service, and I enjoyed working for the Judicial Branch. This is why I eventually applied for Adult Probation; I aspire to use my court knowledge to help justice-involved Individuals and support them as they work to better their circumstances."

When asked to give advice for those looking into the AmeriCorps program, Marilyn stressed just how important it is to, "Take a chance even if you think you may not get it. An opportunity like the AmeriCorps program can lead to a fulfilling career and provide invaluable experience." ■

INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE FUTURE





COURT LOCATIONS

DT **Downtown**
201 W. Jefferson Street, Phoenix, AZ 85003

DUR **Durango**
3131 W. Durango Street, Phoenix, AZ 85009

NE **Northeast**
18380 N. 40th Street, Phoenix, AZ 85210

NW **Northwest**
14264 W. Tierra Buena Lane, Surprise, AZ 85374

SE **Southeast Justice Center**
222 E. Javelina Drive, Mesa, AZ 85210

**SE
JUV** **Southeast Juvenile**
1810 S. Lewis Drive, Mesa, AZ 85210



MARICOPA COUNTY

BLUETOOTH ADAPTERS IMPROVE SAFETY IN MENTAL HEALTH DIVISIONS

The use of Bluetooth adapters for interpreter equipment in the Mental Health Divisions of the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County has improved the safety of court staff and patients. Prior to the use of Bluetooth adapters, interpreters used headsets that were connected to interpretation equipment by wires. This created a safety hazard, as patients in the Mental Health Divisions are often in an unstable mental state.

The use of Bluetooth adapters is a simple, but effective way to improve safety in the Mental Health Divisions. It is a cost-effective solution that has the potential to save lives. Bluetooth adapters are a relatively new technology, but they are quickly becoming the standard for interpreter equipment. They are a safe, convenient, and cost-effective way to improve the delivery of interpretation services in the courtrooms. ■



JUDICIAL BRANCH SAVES TAXPAYER FUNDS WITH REMOTE INTERPRETATION

The Judicial Branch in Maricopa County (Superior Court and Justice Courts) is saving taxpayer money and time by using remote interpretation services. Thanks to the combined use of Court Connect (the virtual platform for court hearings) and mobile telephonic lines, the Court Interpretation and Translation Services (CITS) department has been able to assist remotely and in simultaneous mode with a monthly average of 52% of all court events.

This is made possible by interpreters adopting the use of cell phones and computers in virtual hearing settings. This allows an interpreter to assist with multiple back-to-back hearings taking place at different court locations on a given day. This saves on human and financial resources, as the court does not need to hire as many interpreters or spend as much money on contractor fees. Moreover, CITS is better able to utilize its best resource, staff interpreters, to the fullest.

In addition to saving money, remote interpretation also saves time. Interpreters do not need to travel to and from court locations, which can save them hours of travel time each day. This frees up interpreters to focus on providing high-quality interpretation services. The use of remote interpretation is a win-win for the Judicial Branch and the community it serves. It saves money, time and resources, while also ensuring that everyone who comes before the court has access to justice through quality interpretation services.

Remote interpretation is a growing trend in the judicial system. As technology continues to evolve, we can expect to see even more innovative uses of remote interpretation in the years to come. ■



JUDICIAL BRANCH SECURITY

With a commitment for a unified vision and shared sense of purpose, Judicial Branch Security management staff utilizes their significant expertise acquired through extensive law enforcement background and education to continually monitor and critically evaluate standards and procedures. Their aim is to ensure that all measures established and carried out by the security officers are as up to date as possible and appropriate to current and prevailing threats.

Ensuring the safety and welfare of Judicial Branch staff employees, visitors, as well as the building structure, our management staff has formulated a planned response of law enforcement and emergency personnel to duress alarms, threats, assaults, emergency evacuations, and many other situations that require security or medical attention. ■





JUDICIAL BRANCH WAREHOUSE

INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE FUTURE



GENERAL PACKAGE
DELIVERIES

1,613



WAREHOUSE
REAMS OF PAPER
DELIVERED

27,505



ON-CONTRACT SUPPLY
DELIVERIES

5,971



PROCESSED INVENTORY
ORDERS

1,062



PRINT SHOP
PROCESSED REQUESTS

251



MENTAL HEALTH COURTROOM EXPANSION SERVES CRITICAL POPULATION, GROWTH IN CASES

In partnership with Valleywise Health, the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County opened a second mental health courtroom in 2022 in the Phoenix community of Maryvale.

The new courtroom was built to accommodate the growing number of court-ordered mental health evaluation and treatment cases filed in Maricopa County. Over the past 10 years, the number of mental health cases has grown by 169%, and they are projected to keep rising.

In addition to the new courtroom, the Judicial Branch is piloting a new program to expand court-ordered evaluation and court-ordered treatment services with Connections Health Solutions. With this pilot program, providers are completing more court-ordered evaluations and treatments to ensure the needs of the community are met.

“The goal of this program is to ensure

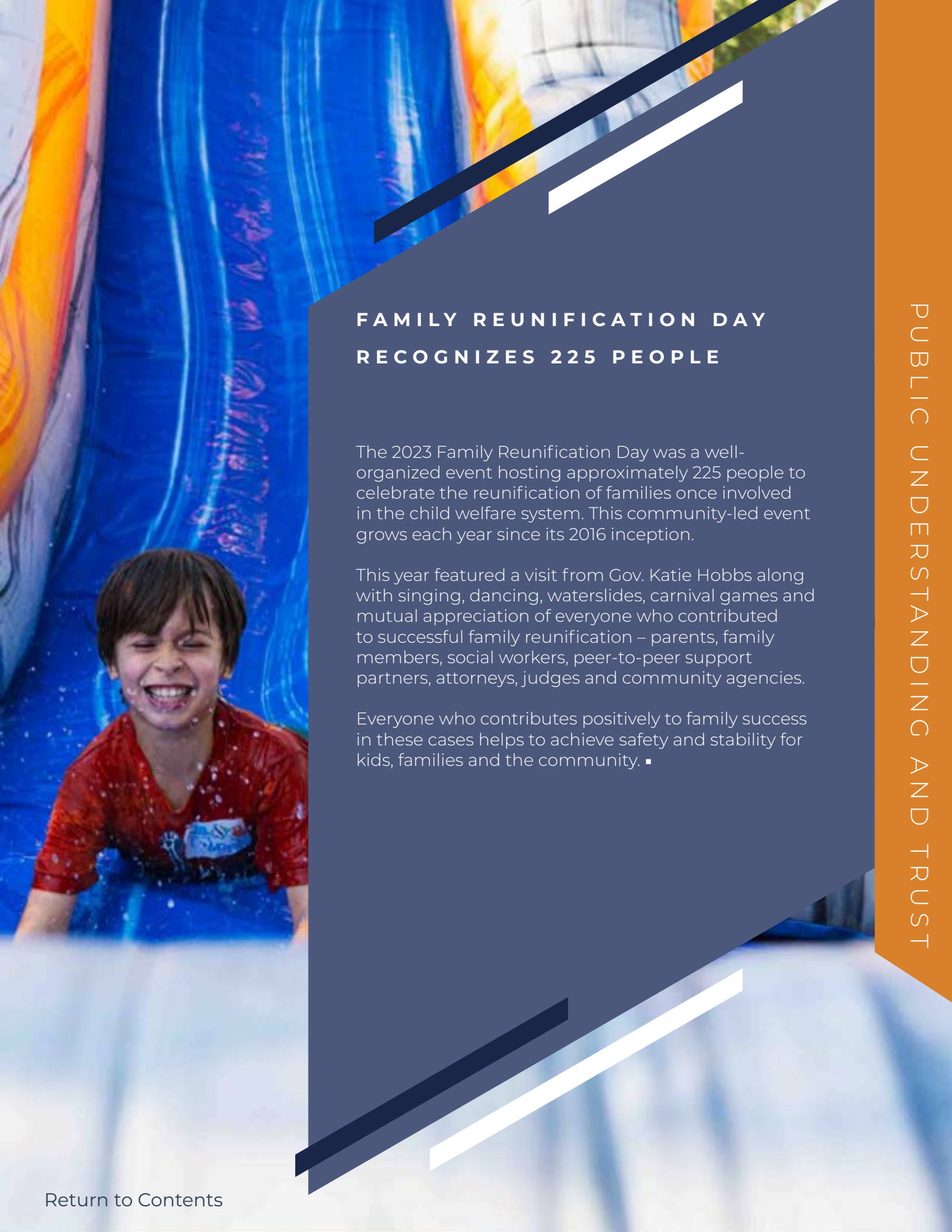
Maricopa County can meet the growing mental health needs of individuals who are a danger to self or others, have a persistent or acute disability or a grave disability and are unwilling or unable to undergo voluntary evaluation,” said Keith Kaplan, Probate and Mental Health Department administrator.

Commissioner Jeffrey Altieri, who is presiding over the pilot program hearings, indicated, “The program has been a success. We are implementing additional means to meet the needs of patients who need court-ordered evaluations and treatments.”

Maricopa County Mental Health Courts will continue to work with stakeholders to identify new, innovative solutions to meet the county’s growing need for additional court-ordered treatment pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 36. ■

PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND TRUST





FAMILY REUNIFICATION DAY RECOGNIZES 225 PEOPLE

The 2023 Family Reunification Day was a well-organized event hosting approximately 225 people to celebrate the reunification of families once involved in the child welfare system. This community-led event grows each year since its 2016 inception.

This year featured a visit from Gov. Katie Hobbs along with singing, dancing, waterslides, carnival games and mutual appreciation of everyone who contributed to successful family reunification – parents, family members, social workers, peer-to-peer support partners, attorneys, judges and community agencies.

Everyone who contributes positively to family success in these cases helps to achieve safety and stability for kids, families and the community. ■



INAUGURAL ‘STAND UP’ EXPO DRAWS 350 ATTENDEES

The inaugural “Stand Up 2023 Behavioral Health Expo” was held during Mental Health Awareness Month on May 6 at Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church in Phoenix. The Maricopa County Mental Health Task Force partnered with Valleywise Behavioral Health and the Arizona Peer and Family Coalition to host this event. The purpose was to connect individuals to services that meet the needs of vulnerable populations and their families. The goal was to reach traditionally underserved populations, such as communities of color and the LGBTQIA+ community.

This event brought the community and service providers together to gain awareness and increase connections to resources. More than 30 vendors were present at the event, and provided information on mental health services, physical wellness, justice services and more. Speaker presentations were held during the day on topics including Narcan training, 988 and the Crisis System, Health Equity and Advocacy, Crisis Intervention Team Officers, and a panel presentation including the Office of the Public Fiduciary, Office of the Public Advocate, Maricopa County Attorney’s Office, Correctional Health Services and the Superior Court of Maricopa County. The event brought in nearly 350 attendees.

Donations from Arizona State University supplied “You Matter Bags” for those in need, and included free hygiene products, notebooks, yoga mats, among other items. A raffle was held between presentation sessions and included baskets, gift cards, and a grand prize of a big screen TV. Free refreshments were available to attendees and vendors during the event. Hope Inc. and Recovery Empowerment Network supplied the event with peer volunteers. Peers provided support to attendees and committee members through facilitating speaker presentations, hosting the raffle, monitoring refreshments and engaging community members in the nearby neighborhood.

Efforts are underway to make this an annual event. ■

104 ADOPTIONS COMPLETED ON NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY 2022



Due to the pandemic, celebration of the annual National Adoption Day could not occur in-person for two years. The Juvenile Department was thrilled to be able to celebrate an in-person event again in 2022. More than 75 hearings were held before 30 volunteer judicial officers in November 2022 to complete the adoption for 104 children.

“National Adoption is the best day of the year in our court system. It’s arguably the only day where everyone, including judges, leave court with smiles on their faces,” Presiding Juvenile Department Judge Lori Bustamante said. “If you walk around the courthouse, you feel a whole community coming together for the benefit of our children.” ■

OVER 500 HOLIDAY MEALS SERVED AT ADULT PROBATION'S 27TH ANNUAL TURKEY FEAST

It's the time of the year children look forward to the most, when Santa makes his annual visit. But for struggling families, this may be one of the toughest financial times of the year.

To help keep the holiday spirit alive, the Adult Probation Department partnered with Valley organizations including the Frank X. Gordon Education Center, Terros Health, St. Mary's Community Kitchen, Phoenix Police and Fire Departments and the Arizona Probation Officers Association to host its 27th Annual Turkey Feast celebration.

"The event is the heart of our mission as an agency. Providing a Thanksgiving meal and holiday gifts for the children continues to strengthen the partnership between the surrounding community, law enforcement and probation. We value the opportunity to give back to the community we serve," said Tiffany Grissom, Adult Probation Division Director for Community Transition and Support. "This year, we served more than 500 meals and distributed over 300 gift bags filled with books, toys and stuffed animals."

During the last five years, St. Mary's Community Kitchen has helped prepare and cook more than 500 meals for the event. This culinary program provides job training to individuals who are having a difficult time finding or keeping work because of barriers they have faced in their lives. Community Kitchen is a division of the St. Mary's Skill Center.

Families who stopped by received a holiday meal in to-go boxes and had the option to stay and enjoy their meal while listening to music. Children participated in face-painting activities, visited with Santa and received a special gift bag. Every year, dozens of Adult Probation staff members volunteer at the event by not only packaging gifts for kids but also donating toys and other items to be placed in the gift bags.

Adult Probation Supervisor Nathan Chaplin has volunteered at the event for the last three years and says it's a rewarding experience.

"Seeing the smiles in kids' faces is why I like to volunteer at the event," Chaplin said. "Especially when they may or may not have a full Christmas every single year because of the situation their families are in. Seeing them light up when they see Mr. and Mrs. Claus or get a stuffed animal, that makes all the work that goes into the event so much worth it."

More than 70 volunteers from various organizations including the Adult and Juvenile Probation Departments, the Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts, the Maricopa County Human Service Department and Maricopa County Workforce partners helped make this year's Turkey Feast a successful event. ■

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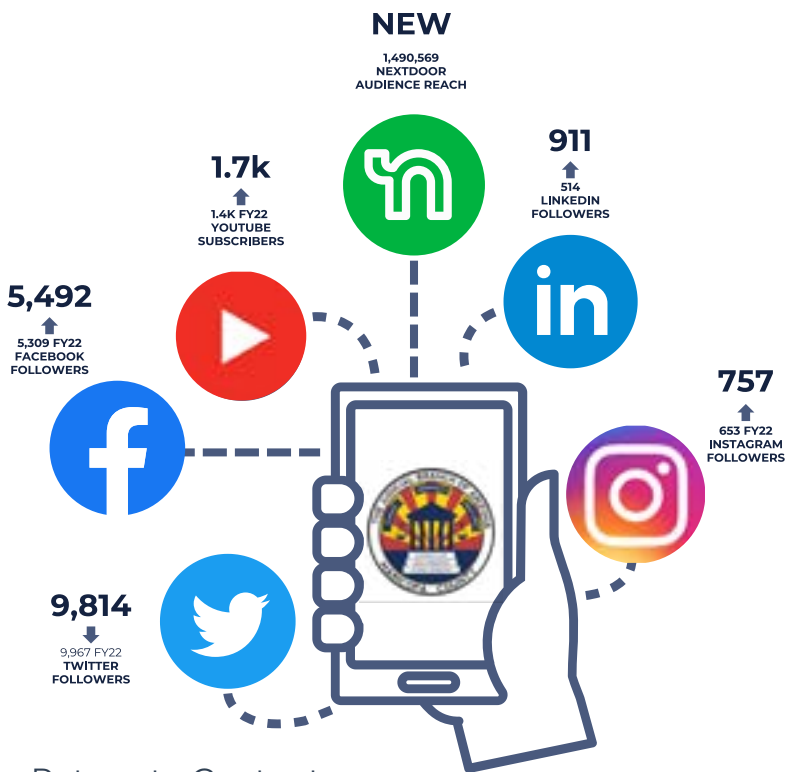
JUDICIAL BRANCH COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

The Communications Office is responsible for the public communication from the Branch to the public, news media, community groups and other stakeholders. The office provides initial case information to news organizations, coordinates news cameras in the courtroom, updates the public on significant and high-profile cases, facilitates court tours for hundreds of local students each year, and maintains the Branch's social media presence online.



Judge Welty appears on the PBS program "Arizona Horizons" to discuss the Stand Up 2023 Behavioral Health Expo.

SOCIAL MEDIA DATA



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JUVENILE PROBATION HANDBOOK PROVIDES GUIDANCE TO YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Being placed on probation can lead to youth and their families feeling confused and overwhelmed about the process, including attending court hearings and how to communicate with their assigned probation officers.

The Juvenile Probation Department recently introduced the Juvenile Probation Handbook for Youth and Family, which provides valuable information and explains the differences between Probation, Diversion and Detention.

“One significant challenge prior to the handbook’s creation was ensuring that youth and their family and/or guardians received all the necessary and helpful information while navigating the Juvenile Justice System,” said Juvenile Probation’s Project Lead, Megan Wing. “Our officers work with a variety of youth, so it can be very difficult to find the time to collect and compile answers, resources and explanations for each component of probation or detention. Additionally, some youth might not know what questions to ask, or they might feel overwhelmed during the probation process.”

The Juvenile Probation Handbook for Youth and Family was developed to help youth and their families gain a clear understanding of the Maricopa County juvenile justice system in easy-to-understand terminology. This removes the anxiety and confusion that can come from an abundance of technical and legal jargon. It includes general explanations and definitions of the probation department’s programs and systems, including what to expect. The handbook also covers information about who youth and their families will interact with and what role they play in their case.

“The court hearing information is extremely helpful for youth to understand what to expect during any type of hearing or exposure to court they might have,” said Wing. “We were supported in authoring this section with the Maricopa County Office of the Public Advocate as well, who gave excellent guidance for content and definitions suitable for youth.”

A section of the handbook was created with parents and guardians in mind, providing ways they can help support their child through this process. Tips for parents such as staying informed, researching their rights and realizing their importance in their child’s success are outlined in the handbook and can play an important role in a kid’s ability to complete probation.

A list of community resources such as housing, education and family services are provided within the handbook for families who may need some assistance. Youth and their families are also given information about the Hope Closet, which provides clothes, hygiene products, bags and backpacks to kids leaving Juvenile Detention.

The Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Department’s goal is to empower youth by continuing to provide valuable resources, such as the newly created handbook, and help them in their transition into the community. In Maricopa County, 80% of juveniles placed on probation have not received another referral.

A group of interns from Arizona State University’s Maricopa County Leadership Education Advancing Public Service Program assisted in the creation of the Juvenile Probation handbook and helped to oversee the Hope Closet program. ■

JURY SERVICE OFFERS A REWARDING EXPERIENCE – JUST ASK A FORMER JUROR

No need to stress or be anxious about your jury summons, just ask friends and family who have recently served on a jury in Maricopa County about their experience. Their response will motivate you into action.

Based on research conducted by the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County, those who have served on a jury can't wait to be called again. It's the highest praise and most powerful statement about jury service. So, when a summons is received in the mail follow three simple steps: respond, call, navigate.

"We encourage people to talk to their most trusted sources who have served to find out the truth about jury service. The experience of serving on a jury is unmatched. For many people, it's the one time in their life they get to be directly involved in the judicial process," Jury Administrator Matthew Martin said.

A study conducted by the Jury Office in the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County concluded that 86% of people reporting for jury service completed the pre-arrival steps.

"It's critical for every person who receives a summons to complete the preliminary steps before reporting for jury service. Because of the importance of jury duty and the continued positive feedback we receive from jurors, the Court feels, in time, that number will be closer to 100%." Martin said. "We

recognize that jury service pulls people out of their daily routine and may inconvenience some; however, it's worth it. So, when you get a summons in the mail: respond, call, navigate and enjoy your experience."

Recently, Pepper Groat, who just completed her jury service, gave a glowing review of her experience.

"On the day to report, it was easy to find my way to the parking garage. So grateful for the awesome directions someone put on the card and on the webpage. When I arrived at the courthouse, I was greeted by security, and they were very helpful too. Also, the greater Jury Assembly room was very impressive," Groat said. "I was assigned to Judge Ronee Korbin Steiner's courtroom for Jury Duty. Everyone in the courtroom were so nice and respectful. Judge Korbin Steiner ran an outstanding, efficient court, and I do appreciate her helping us understand each step in clear and concise details. I am so thankful to all her personnel who helped her run the courtroom."

Jurors, like Pepper Groat, are a vital part of American democracy, and all citizens must fulfill their duty and respond to their summons. The United States Constitution and the Arizona State Constitution guarantee the right to trial by jury. All Maricopa County residents are obligated by state law to serve as a juror unless they are under the age of 18, not a citizen and/or have been convicted of a felony and their civil rights have not been restored. ■

AWARDS





PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE 2022 WINNERS

The Judicial Branch Performance Excellence Awards is a quarterly awards program that rolls-up into an employee of the year program. Nominations are gathered in categories of Teamwork, Customer Service, Innovation, Leadership and Group Collaboration and are reviewed on a quarterly basis. Quarterly winners are selected in each category and recognized in front of the Bench, featured in the monthly newsletter, issued eight hours of recognition leave, receive a one-time monetary award, and are evaluated for recognition as employee of the year in the category in which they were nominated. Annual winners are recognized in a ceremony including Branch leadership from all departments.



TEAMWORK: FRANCISCA SALAZAR

Francisca Salazar is exceptional in the teamwork category (all categories, really, but I can only pick one) because she never fails to help other co-workers, she stops what she is doing when she can to lend a hand or answer any questions. She is not only passionate about helping her co-workers, but she is also very concerned about the well-being of her clients and their progress in treatment and day-to-day life. She is always the first person to volunteer to assist anyone. She goes above and beyond to make sure other Probation Officers and Surveillance Officers understand the why or the purpose behind decision making. She comes to work with a positive attitude every day. She remains up to date on policy and asks for clarification that others might not think to ask, she thinks outside the box.

While I was conducting residence visits, my county car stopped working and wouldn't move. The tow company stated it would take two hours at minimum to get to my location, she stopped what she was doing to come help me out and pick me up from outside a client's house, then continued to conduct residence visits. Francisca goes above and beyond to answer

my phone calls to help me with JWJ. Francisca has helped other Probation Officers numerous times with searches, PTRs, CHDs, warrants, and pre-bookings. She provides extensive knowledge and is thorough when providing information or feedback. She also volunteers for tasks outside of her workload, such as the Booster Club, Morale Club and Fincom meetings/updates. She has volunteered to talk about and discuss policy at various unit meetings to help other members of our unit understand everything included, so that everyone can be on the same page. Francisca spends time to make meaningful connections with everyone she meets, she stays humble and kind, but also can be stern, fair, and impartial.

Francisca makes positive relationships with everyone she encounters, from treatment providers, to polygraphers, to client's family members, to community resources and housing. She is a very well-rounded Probation Officer. She excels at conflict resolution, graduated responses, and constructive criticism. Francisca has provided many officers with input and resources in order to better our community outreach, she has taught me skills and tools to use when dealing with diverse situations both on the job and in my personal time off. Her personal experience and perspective on certain situations that surround the Sex Offender community have helped other officers in our unit make decisions.

In all she does, she realizes that not only does she represent herself through her work, but also her co-workers and the Adult Probation Department as a whole, and in doing so, she wants to develop partners and officers who embody the same discipline and character traits that she possesses, which will make the department better and stronger in order to help protect our community and keep our officers safe, now and in the future. ■

Submitted by Jennifer Handschumacher

CUSTOMER SERVICE: VERONICA LEDESMA



Veronica Ledesma is the Judicial Assistant for Commissioner Christine Mulleneaux, who is assigned a Family Court calendar. Each day, there are those who seek Orders of Protection to fend off domestic violence. Many of these petitioning parties arrive at court late in the day to begin a process that can take an hour or more to complete, which takes them beyond the 5:00 p.m. closing time of the court. Daily, Veronica ensures that everything that can be done there and then for these individuals is attended to so that they can be afforded necessary legal protections without delay. She stays beyond the scheduled end of her workday to meet this goal.

I would like to provide you with one example that I believe illustrates my point. This past week, after her division was informed that there were no petitioning parties at the court needing to have an Order of Protection addressed, she discovered (after 5:10 p.m.) that contrary to the information provided, there was an Order of Protection petitioner who was navigating through the process of securing an Order of Protection.

Since it was well past the end of the court day, the petitioning party would ordinarily have to wait until the next day to seek her relief. But this was not acceptable to her. She was informed that the petitioner had been sent to the Clerk of Court but she was “moving” slow because she was wearing a neck brace and appeared to have been severely beaten. Not only did Veronica stay to ensure that this person’s needs were met, she also secured another judicial officer to be available to hear the case since Commissioner Mulleneaux was not available. In the end and of her own accord, she remained until about 6 p.m. to ensure that no one was turned away.

Again, this is just an example of a pattern of behavior Veronica offers on a daily basis, always willing to do all of the extra things necessary to meet the needs of the community we serve. ■

Submitted by Judge Bruce R. Cohen

INNOVATION: JAMILA LOFTIS



I am pleased to nominate Jamila Loftis for an innovation award for her work in developing financial dashboards. Jamila participated in just one formal training in how to use Microsoft PowerBI. In reality, most of what she was able to learn came from online research and from trial-and-error efforts. As a result of her hard work, Jamila managed to produce tremendous tools for leadership and grant managers. The dashboards translate what is typically difficult-to-understand financial activity into something that works for non-financial staff using the information. The dashboards include 15 different pages of interactive information and graphics. The dashboards include high-level data, as well as detailed drill-in options. The availability of the dashboards also eliminated the need for creation and distribution of individual Excel reports to different people. Instead, the settings on the dashboards allow users to access their respective information, without the noise of extraneous information. Jamila has consistently and uncomplainingly added/adjusted the dashboards for a variety of improvements. Jamila's efforts have been appreciated by all of us in Financial Operations. More importantly, many of the users outside of Finance have initiated communications about their appreciation for the dashboards. Jamila's persistence and technical skills have greatly benefited the Branch, and I think is highly deserving of this award. ■

Submitted by Frances Dairman

LEADERSHIP: LUKE EMERSON



If you look up the definition of leadership in the dictionary, there should be a picture of Luke Emerson, an employee who has devoted his life to service and strives to be the best leader he can be every day. He motivates his team by spreading positivity and kindness, encouraging them to be the best version of themselves, and by lifting them up through trust and understanding. A typical response to an email I would send him in response to a work request is, "This is great work! You are a special person, and I appreciate you!" It's things like this that motivate staff to continue their hard work and dedication, and that make coming to work a positive, joyful experience. Mistakes are never a bad thing to Luke; they are learning and growth opportunities, and he makes sure that staff understand how they can improve, never focusing on the problem. At every one-on-one meeting with staff, he asks what he can do to improve as a leader, what he can do to supply his staff with the tools they need to be successful and asks for honest feedback. I've never seen a leader so interested in personal and professional growth, and so interested in, and appreciative of, feedback. He empowers his staff to grow by encouraging personal development and by supporting career moves and personal goals. Moreover, he's a good listener, easy to talk to, and knows how to lift someone up when they're down. There isn't another person I can think of more deserving of this recognition than Luke. ■

Submitted by Sharlene Davis

HON. JAY POLK NAMED JUDGE OF THE YEAR

The 2022 Judicial Officer of the Year, as recognized by the Maricopa County Bar Association, was the Hon. Jay Polk, Presiding Judge of the Probate and Mental Health Department. Judge Polk was honored for his “countless hours serving the probate and mental health communities,” and his “outstanding commitment to public service,” according to two of the nominations for the award.

“Every day I go to work, I am honored and privileged not only to serve the residents of Maricopa County but also to work with my fellow judicial officers, administrators and support personnel. Without a doubt, I have the best job ever, and I am proud and honored to be part of such a distinguished organization,” Judge Polk said. “It takes a village to raise a judge, and that certainly has been true in my case. I am where I am today thanks to the influence and support of countless people whom I have met along my journey.”

One nomination praised his commitment to the Maricopa County Bar Association and those who practice in the areas of probate and mental health law.

“Judge Polk is a tireless supporter of the MCBA, committed to professionalism, education and improving the delivery of legal services to our community. He continuously participates in committees (most recently, revamping the Arizona Rules of Probate Procedure) and presents education seminars, all while maintaining a busy calendar.” ■



THE EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AND REWARDS COMMITTEE



The Employee Recognition and Rewards Committee was created in 2019 to recognize the service and commitment of Branch employees. Since then, the Committee helped implement the Judicial Branch Service Awards, PROPS, PRIDE, AND PRAISE electronic certificate program, and Judicial Branch Performance Excellence Awards.

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MARICOPA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT RECOGNIZED WITH STRATEGIC AGENDA AWARDS

The Maricopa County Superior Court led all counties by winning two Strategic Agenda Awards from the Arizona Supreme Court. Maricopa County Superior Court's Family Court Kingdom Quest program received the Promoting Judicial Branch Excellence & Innovation Award. The Mental Health Outreach Program won in the category of Enhancing Professionalism within Arizona's Courts.

Family Court Kingdom Quest, a computer-based, interactive program modeled loosely after the television show "Game of Thrones," was created during the pandemic and designed as a more effective approach to train judicial officers and staff members who are new to the Family Department. The program is an informative way to learn about Family Court. The program also won the national 2022 Irwin Cantor Innovation Award at the Annual Conference of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts.

"For many new judicial officers, family law is outside their prior professional experience. As they prepare for their new assignment, there are volumes of information they are expected to absorb over a very abbreviated period of time," Family Department Presiding Judge Bruce Cohen said. "To help them retain all of this information, we needed a different approach that allowed for self-paced learning through an entertaining and interactive platform."

Maricopa County Superior Court was also recognized for its exemplary Mental Health Outreach Program that enhances several Court-ordered evaluation and treatment initiatives. These initiatives include:

- To increase training efforts throughout Arizona, the Superior Court's Mental Health Court Bench created a free, virtual training series for medical professionals and judicial officers. They also created a list of Court Ordered Evaluation and Treatment medical professionals, the first of its kind, to enhance communication between the legal and mental health community.
- Mental Health Court judicial officers developed a digital bench book for judicial officers statewide who handle mental health cases.
- Mental Health Court judicial officers developed continuing education presentations for community groups.
- Mental Health Court initiated bi-monthly, virtual Court Ordered Evaluation and Treatment Bench Bar meetings. These meetings continue to provide a forum for improved operations and collaboration.

"On behalf of Commissioners Bell, Donnadieu, Selzer and Van Wie, who collectively developed these initiatives, I am honored to have our Mental Health Bench receive a Strategic Agenda Award. As the Court Ordered Evaluation and Treatment caseload continues to grow, these initiatives have and will increase the professionalism of current practitioners and ensure that future lawyers and judicial officers can maintain that heightened level of practice," Presiding Probate and Mental Health Department Judge Jay Polk said. ■

CASA OF MARICOPA COUNTY RECOGNIZES SIX VOLUNTEERS FOR SERVICE

When a child is removed from the only home they've known and placed in foster care, they are in dire need of someone who can not only be consistent in their life but also advocate for their best interests.

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers make a commitment to advocate for children in court and provide insight to the judge who can make determinations that affect the child's life in the long term. Currently, hundreds of children in Arizona are on a waitlist for a CASA volunteer.

"My entire adult life I've always worked with children and when I retired, I was looking for something to fill the void and to somehow pay it forward. After looking into what a CASA volunteer does and what it entailed, it seemed like a perfect fit," said CASA volunteer and Rookie of the Year award recipient Shannon Karazuba. "I feel good that I'm part of a team like CASA of Maricopa County, who is always wanting the best for kids. I'm not only there to support the child but to be the judge's eyes and ears to make sure the child is placed in the appropriate home. I think it's very rewarding."

During Child Abuse Prevention Month, which is observed in April every year, VOICES for CASA Children and CASA of Maricopa County recognized six CASA volunteers who have dedicated their time and effort to making a difference for abused and neglected children. The program has been hosting annual events for over 10 years for the CASA volunteers.



In Maricopa County, there are currently 650 CASA volunteers who make a time commitment of approximately 15 hours per month to visit with their assigned child and attend court hearings. Children in foster care tend to move placements and have multiple case managers but the CASA volunteer follows them throughout the case. CASA volunteers are expected to write a court report and update the court during hearings about anything that is happening in the case involving the child.





The following list includes this year's CASA volunteer award recipients:

Rookie of the Year Awards

Shannon Karazuba - Shannon shows much dedication and passion in her advocacy efforts for the children she is assigned. Since becoming certified at the end of 2021, Shannon has worked four cases, advocating for a total of eight children and has helped guide some of those cases to successful closures. Shannon often takes advantage of the ongoing training offered to CASA volunteers and shows a deep desire to do what is in the best interest of each child.

Erin Paradis - Certified in 2022, Erin exemplifies all the positive attributes the CASA program strives to emphasize. She serves on two cases, advocating for two youth. Erin has dedicated over 110 hours to her cases in less than a year, finding a balance

between being a consistent mentor and determined advocate.

Outstanding CASA of the Year Award

Jeffrey Brown - Jeffrey has been a CASA volunteer for three years and has proven to be one who does not shy away from a challenge. He has remained consistent for the children he serves through placement changes, transitions with new professionals on the team, and continues to follow the children and their cases to provide best-interest advocacy.

Cathryn (Tina) Pernik - Tina has been a CASA for over two years. Her work as a CASA has been remarkable as she has been an involved CASA volunteer, making lasting impressions on the children she serves. Tina works tremendously well with other team members and legal parties assigned to the case. The program has received positive feedback from those working with her in her CASA role.

Lifetime Achievement Awards

Eileen Mitchell - Eileen has been a CASA for over 10 years, serving thousands of hours as a volunteer advocate. She has worked with many of the program's Coordinators throughout the years, helping guide and support them. Eileen has served several children, dedicating almost four years to just one of those cases during her time with CASA and following the children no matter where they may be moved to throughout the Valley.

Elizabeth (Betty) Miller - Betty has been a CASA since 2012 and has spent thousands of hours advocating for more than 20 children during her time with the program. Betty not only advocates for her assigned CASA children, but she also works closely with attorney groups to make positive improvements in the child welfare system. Betty is not afraid to stand up for what is best for the children she serves and has shown to be a great asset to the CASA of Maricopa County program. ■

JUDICIAL BRANCH IN MARICOPA COUNTY RECOGNIZED WITH NATIONAL AWARDS

The fourth-largest trial court system in the nation was recently recognized with eight National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards. The recognitions demonstrate how innovative ideas often translate to the development of new programs and improved practices to better serve the public.

Juvenile Expedited Permanency Process

Category: Children and Youth

This year, the Maricopa County Juvenile Court won an award for its expedited permanency process, which is helping children be connected to a permanent family that can provide the support system they need to succeed. The Expedited Permanency Process is a targeted approach that intensifies urgency and accountability for children in out-of-home foster care for an extended period due to prolonged child welfare cases. The goal of the Expedited Permanency Process is to safely expedite permanency for these children.

Growth Journey Platform – Where Learning Science, Technology and Juvenile Justice Intersect

Category: Children and Youth

Maricopa County Juvenile Probation has partnered with the Arizona State University Center for Games and Impact/Life Labs Studios to advance meaningful opportunities for learning and growth through an innovative, dynamic and mobile platform (Journey.do). Journey.do is an interactive growth platform designed to give youth a voice, identify areas of struggle, support case management, enhance protective factors, and promote positive change toward recidivism reduction.

Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Department Detention Collaborative Tutoring Program

Category: Children and Youth

The Detention Tutoring Program provides supplemental academic support to youth who are working towards earning high school credits and obtaining their GED during their time in secure care with Maricopa County Juvenile Probation. The Tutoring Program is made possible through the partnership Juvenile Probation has fostered with Arizona State University's Youth Justice Lab and the Maricopa County Regional School District. Twice a week, volunteer students from ASU come to Juvenile Detention at the Durango facility and work with youth to deliver high-quality tutoring in a supportive learning environment.

Strength Supervision Unit

Category: Children and Youth

Youth coming before the Court are initially assessed by Probation Officers and identified as victims of sex trafficking using the Sex Trafficking Screening Tool. The acronym STRENGTH stands for Succeed Through Resilience Empower New Growth Through Hope. In April 2021, the Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Department created a specialized Strength Probation Officer position to support youth who are suspected/identified victims of sex trafficking. In August 2022, due to the increasing number of identified trafficking victims, a specialized probation supervision unit was formed. The Strength Unit supervises the identified youth throughout their probation term, regardless of their placement within the state of Arizona.

Continuous Improvement Program

Category: County Administration and Management

The Maricopa County Adult Probation Department's employees provided survey feedback that offered recommendations for improvement and suggested the department can improve in the areas of innovation, influence and transparency of changes occurring within the agency. In December 2020, Adult Probation leadership authorized the creation of the Continuous Improvement Program. The CI team who led the program and trained in CI best practices developed a formal mechanism for staff to submit ideas for process improvement within the department. The program also established time standards, assignments and standard procedures for investigating, exploring and implementing improvements. The CI Program has successfully resulted in cost savings, increased efficiencies, and has fostered a culture that encourages feedback and recognizes the value of staff in leading the organization in becoming more adaptive, collaborative and innovative in its service.

Interstate Compact and Out-of-County Sex Offender Caseloads

Category: Criminal Justice and Public Safety

The Maricopa County Adult Probation Department's Interstate Compact Unit tracks and processes transfers for individuals sentenced to probation in Maricopa County but request to transfer or have transferred their probation grant and conditions out of county or to another jurisdiction for supervision. In November 2020, the MCAPD established the Interstate Compact and Out-of-County Sex Offender Program. This new program combines the access and resources of the Interstate Compact Unit with the expertise of the department's Sex

Offender Division, to assume overview of the approximately 400 outgoing probation cases with sex offenses. The program improved the processing of outgoing cases, developed standards for obtaining progress reports, and addresses high-risk behaviors with other jurisdictions.

Jail Transports and Booking Program

Category: County Administration and Management

The Maricopa County Adult Probation Department's Fugitive Apprehension Unit created a specialized Jail Transports and Booking Program that assigned teams of probation and surveillance officers to handle all jail transports and bookings for the entire department. As the Fugitive Apprehension Unit is a specialized team with extensive expertise and knowledge in the arrest and booking process, these officers were best equipped to take on this new program. The unit created the secure and efficient Jail Transports and Booking Program to handle arrests, transports and bookings, relieving the 800 field probation officers of this duty, allowing them to instead focus on supervision and recidivism reduction.

EMBARK: Essential Managerial Basics and Resources Kit

Category: Personnel Management, Employment and Training

The Maricopa County Judicial Branch developed a new supervisor training program to equip managers and supervisors with the introductory and foundational tools needed to navigate the challenges of day-to-day personnel supervision. The program includes specific coursework on various supervisory topics including hiring, leave management, payroll, discrimination and harassment, understanding federal employment laws (such as FMLA and ADA), mentoring and coaching, progressive discipline, and performance feedback/evaluation. ■

OUR LEADERSHIP



DEPARTMENT PRESIDING JUDGES

[Back] Hon. Pamela Gates, Juvenile Department/Associate Presiding Judge; Hon. Bruce Cohen, Family Department; Hon. Jennifer Green, Criminal Department.

[Middle] Hon. Lori Bustamante, Juvenile Department; Hon. Jay Polk, Probate and Mental Health Department.

[Front] Hon. Joseph Welty, Presiding Judge; Hon. Barbara Spencer, Criminal Department/Presiding Commissioner; Hon. Danielle Viola, Civil Department; Hon. Sara Agne, Tax Department.



JUDICIAL BRANCH EXECUTIVE TEAM

(Back) Sean Gibbs, Security Director; Bob James, Deputy Court Administrator; Frances Dairman, Budget and Finance Director; Dennis Carpenter, General Counsel.

(Middle) Cheri Clark, Deputy Court Administrator; Charisse Richards, Chief Information Officer; Jennifer Fish, Human Resources Director; Shawn Friend, Deputy Court Administrator.

(Front) Eric Meaux, Chief Probation Officer, Juvenile Probation Department; Raymond L. Billotte, Judicial Branch Administrator; Michael Cimino, Chief Probation Officer, Adult Probation Department.



OUR JUDGES AND COMMISSIONERS



MERIT SELECTION

The 98 Superior Court judges in Maricopa County do not run for office in partisan elections. The judges are appointed to the Bench by the Governor through the merit selection process, and remain accountable to the public through retention elections, occurring every four years. Every two years, the Judicial Performance Commission, a 32-member panel consisting of mostly public members, surveys attorneys, litigants, and members of the public concerning each judge's skills, judicial temperament and administrative performance. These results are made available to the public and allow voters to make informed decisions before casting their ballot.

SUPERIOR COURT COMMISSIONERS

At the end of the 2023 Fiscal Year, the Superior Court in Maricopa County had 66 commissioners who performed a variety of judicial duties and responsibilities, and were vital to the success of the Court. Commissioner candidates must submit an extensive application. The minimum qualifications for application include being a United States citizen, a resident of Maricopa County at the time of appointment, of good moral character, a licensed member of the State Bar of Arizona, and having been a resident of the State of Arizona for at least the five years preceding appointment. All qualified applications are reviewed by the Superior Court's Commissioner Nomination Committee, chaired by the Court's Associate Presiding Judge. Following initial Committee due diligence review, candidates may be invited to interview before the Nomination Committee. A second level of due diligence review is completed, and then a list of potential candidates is forwarded to the Presiding Judge for consideration of appointment as a Superior Court Commissioner.

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APPENDICES



DISCLAIMER

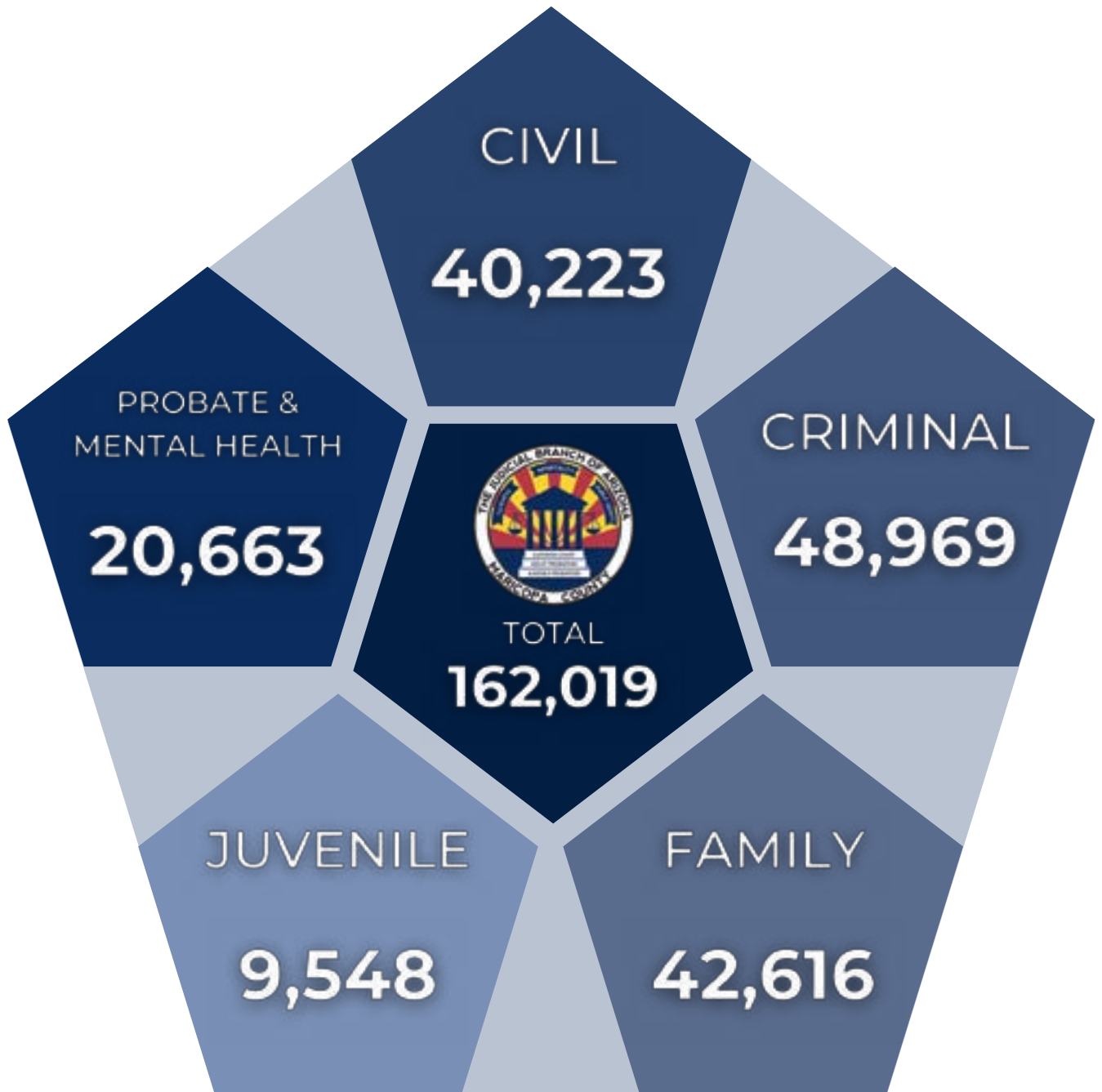
The data used for this Annual Report was taken from the Court's case management system. As such, this data relies on hundreds of Judicial Branch employees and partners entering data into the system, 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. We are confident that the numbers presented in this report accurately reflect the data available at the time of the Annual Report preparation. However, because data entry is sometimes delayed or corrected, there may be slight differences from numbers reported in prior or subsequent publications.

MEASUREMENTS

Appendix A through Appendix E detail the filings, terminations, clearance rates and median age of active pending cases for the five court departments: Civil, Criminal, Family, Juvenile, and Probate and Mental Health. Filings refers to the number of cases that were initiated within this Fiscal Year. Terminations refers to the number of cases that received a final decision within this Fiscal Year, so that no further court oversight is necessary, unless a post-judgment or post-decree petition or motion is filed by one of the parties. Clearance rate refers to the comparison of filings to the number of terminations, such that a clearance rate over 100% shows that more cases were terminated than filed, and a clearance rate under 100% shows that more cases were filed than terminated.

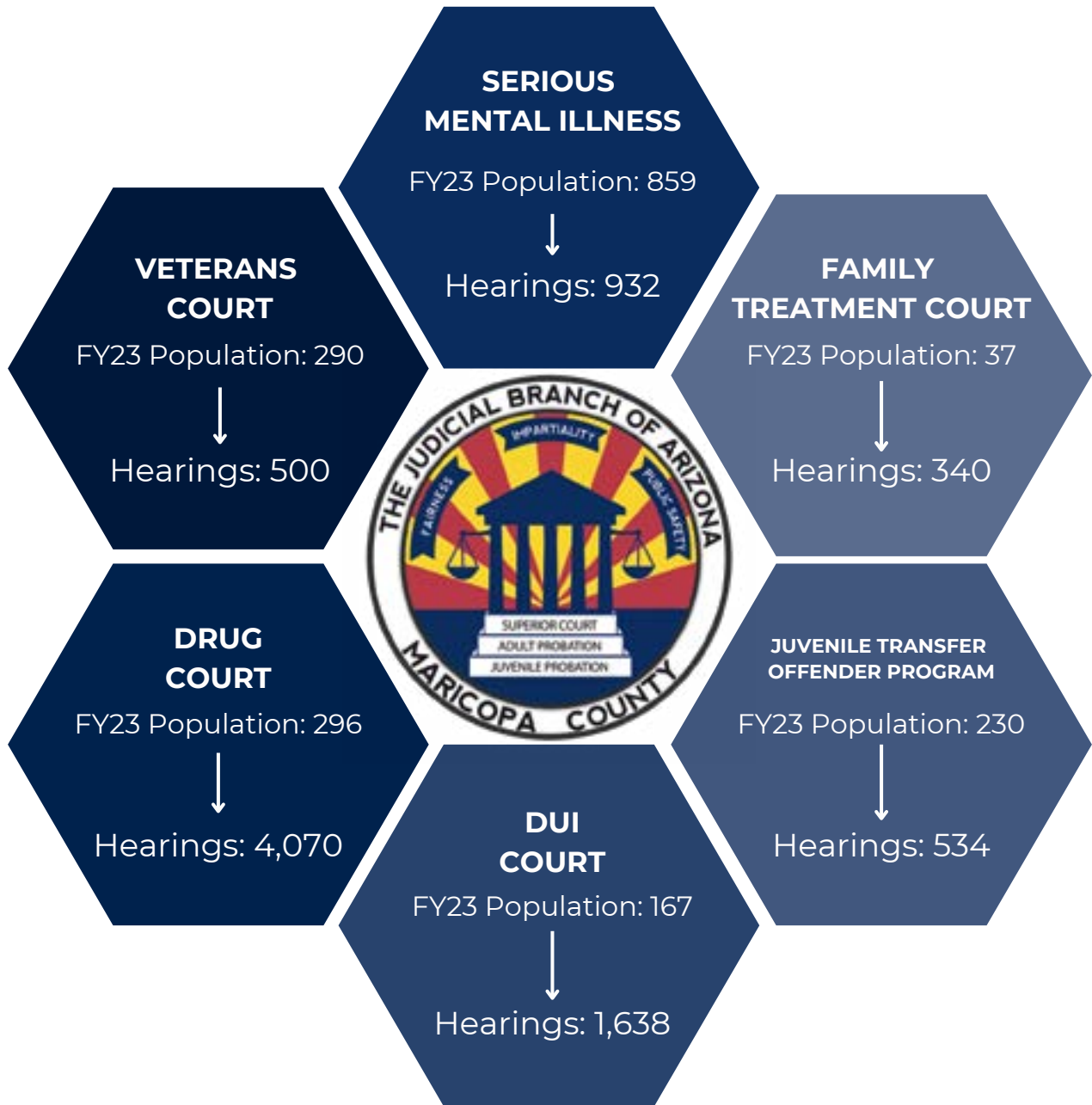


Total Number of Department Filings





Specialty Court Population/Filings





APPENDIX A - CIVIL DEPARTMENT

	Filings	Terminations	Clearance Rate	Ending Pending	FY22-FY23 Filings % Change
Civil Court	40,223	31,145	*-	19,492	-1.6%
Pre-Decree	28,667	28,767	100.3%	19,267	3.8%
Tort Non-Motor Vehicle	1,792	1,779	99.3%	2,409	7.8%
Tort Motor Vehicle	5,534	5,394	97.5%	5,234	8.0%
Medical Malpractice	233	256	109.9%	472	7.9%
Contract	11,779	11,184	94.9%	7,356	12.5%
Tax	1	2	200.0%	0	0.0%
Eminent Domain	49	84	171.4%	84	-43.0%
Unclassified Civil	9,279	10,068	108.5%	3,712	-7.8%
Lower Court Appeals	466	432	92.7%	152	15.1%
Post Judgment Filings	8,727	N/A	N/A	N/A	-14.5%
Garnishment	8,139	N/A	N/A	N/A	-15.1%
Judgment Debtor Exams	383	N/A	N/A	N/A	-7.3%
Supplemental Proceedings	205	N/A	N/A	N/A	-3.8%
Injunction Against Harassment	1,964	1,946	99.1%	73	-1.4%
Tax	399	503	126.1%	389	-36.5%
Cases of Record	374	485	129.7%	378	-34.6%
Property	145	155	106.9%	262	-15.7%
Other	229	330	144.1%	116	-42.8%
Small Claims	25	18	72.0%	11	-55.4%
Property	25	18	72.0%	11	-55.4%
Other	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
Arbitration	11,642	10,401	89.3%	7,052	8.4%

* An overall clearance rate across all civil court filings is not provided as terminations are not captured across all filing types.



APPENDIX B - CRIMINAL DEPARTMENT

	Filings	Terminations	Clearance Rate	Ending Pending	FY22-FY23 Filings % Change
Criminal Court	48,969	50,099	102.3%	N/A	26%
New Criminal Cases	28,601	29,809	104.2%	14,164	24.7%
Person - Homicide	341	390	114.4%	596	21.8%
Person - Sex Offenses	507	602	118.7%	544	8.3%
Person - Kidnapping	242	309	127.7%	230	-5.8%
Person - Robbery	452	514	113.7%	317	-1.1%
Person - Aggravated Assault	2,087	2,304	110.4%	1,265	5.1%
Person - Other Assaults	136	179	131.6%	108	7.1%
Property - Burglary	813	1,060	130.4%	400	-8.3%
Property - Auto Theft	862	1,157	134.2%	435	-12.0%
Property - Other	2,686	3,034	113.0%	1,626	14.9%
Drug - Possession/Paraphernalia	12,368	12,548	101.5%	4,378	28.2%
Drug - Sales/Other	1,280	1,565	122.3%	834	11.3%
Weapons	1,323	1,452	109.8%	753	16.8%
Public Order	467	461	98.7%	245	39.4%
Motor Vehicle - DWI / DUI	3,139	2,348	74.8%	1,358	117.1%
Motor Vehicle - Serious Violations	62	69	111.3%	56	10.7%
Motor Vehicle - Other	566	476	84.1%	264	53.4%
Other Felony / Unclassified	1,268	1,339	105.6%	755	23.6%
Misdemeanor	2	2	100.0%	0	100.0%
Post-Conviction Relief Petitions*	51	139	272.5%	N/A	-93.0%
Probation Violation Petitions	20,317	20,151	99.2%	N/A	33.8%
Rule 11 - Mental Competency	1,120	1,127	100.6%	492	-3.8%
Superior Court	930	N/A	N/A	N/A	-3.2%
Limited Jurisdiction	190	N/A	N/A	N/A	-6.4%

Prior to FY2023 the number reported here was the number of Post-Conviction Relief Notices, rather than Petitions. The current data reflect PCR Petitions.



APPENDIX C - FAMILY DEPARTMENT

	Filings	Terminations	Clearance Rate	Ending Pending	FY22-FY23 Filings % Change
Family Court	42,616	44,032	103%	18,690	-4.1%
Pre-Decree Cases	29,590	30,029	101%	11,953	-1.2%
Dissolution	15,313	15,717	103%	8,594	-2.8%
Dissolution with Children	6,482	6,611	102%	4,354	-2.6%
Dissolution without Children	8,831	9,106	103%	4,240	-2.9%
Paternity	1,799	1,931	107%	1,112	-10.9%
Annulment	231	213	92%	125	6.5%
Establish Support	1,206	1,232	102%	334	-6.7%
Legal Decision - Making	2,354	2,365	100%	1,251	-0.1%
Legal Separation	414	363	88%	269	2.7%
Orders of Protection	7,528	7,442	99.9%	152	4.0%
Subsequent Proceedings	9	9	100.0%	2	-18.2%
Other Categories	736	756	103%	114	11.3%
Post-Decree	13,026	14,003	108%	6,737	-10.1%
Family Court Orders of Protection	7,528	7,442	99.9%	152	4.0%



APPENDIX D - JUVENILE DEPARTMENT

	Filings	Terminations	Clearance Rate	Ending Pending	FY22-FY23 Filings % Change
Juvenile - Petitions and Citations					
Petitions	9,548	10,665	111.7%	5,906	0.3%
Delinquency	2,692	2,761	102.6%	1,045	22.1%
Delinquency - Citations	92	96	104.3%	22	-7.1%
Delinquency - Violations of Probation	481	470	97.7%	111	23.0%
Dependency	2,435	3,062	125.7%	3,968	-11.8%
Guardianship	971	1,054	108.5%	168	-0.7%
Adoption	1,703	1,743	102.3%	344	-6.3%
Adoption Certifications	371	551	148.5%	19	-2.4%
Severance	720	844	117.2%	222	-13.5%
Emancipation	29	29	100%	6	45.0%
Relinquishments	1	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
ICWA Relinquishments	0	1	0.0%	0	-100.0%
Injunctions Against Harassment	53	54	101.9%	0	60.6%
Juvenile - Children Counts	9,812	11,247	114.6%	7,536	-10.1%
Delinquency	1,996	1,971	98.7%	829	19.8%
Delinquency- Citations	72	73	101.4%	16	-6.5%
Delinquency - Violations of Probation	252	229	90.9%	105	12.0%
Dependency	3,264	4,382	134.3%	5,637	-22.6%
Guardianship	1,206	1,314	109.0%	214	-7.6%
Adoption	2,095	2,185	104.3%	446	-10.7%
Severance	857	1,023	119.4%	282	-17.7%
Emancipation	28	27	96.4%	6	40.0%
Relinquishments	1	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
ICWA Relinquishments	0	1	0.0%	0	-100%
Injunctions Against Harassment	41	42	102.4%	0	64.0%
Existing Guardianships				14,390	-7.9%



APPENDIX E - PROBATE AND MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

	Filings	Terminations	Clearance Rate	Ending Pending	FY22-FY23 Filings % Change
Probate Court	9,539	7,400	77.6%	37,329	-6.5%
Estate Probates and Trust Administrations	6,148	5,140	83.6%	15,336	-12.0%
Guardianships & Conservatorships	3,199	2,064	64.5%	21,945	6.7%
Adult Adoptions	192	196	102.1%	48	-12.7%
Mental Health	11,124	12,723	114.4%	4,572	6.1%
Petitions for Court Ordered Evaluation	11,050	N/A	N/A	N/A	5.9%
Petitions for Court Ordered Treatment	3,828	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.5%



APPENDIX F - JURY DEPARTMENT

	FY22 Totals	FY23 Totals	FY22-FY23 Filings % Change
Courtroom Services Data			
Summoned Jurors	465,125	468,798	0.8%
Superior Court	332,988	330,120	-0.9%
City Court	93,807	93,788	0.0%
Justice Courts	24,652	30,767	24.8%
County Grand Jury	12,182	12,923	6.1%
State Grand Jury	1,496	1,200	-19.8%
Juror Pay	\$1,299,239.30	\$2,163,655.58	66.5%
Juror Pay	\$303,204.00	\$436,425.04	43.9%
Juror Mileage	\$725,968.55	\$1,197,300.09	64.9%
Lengthy Trial Fund	\$270,066.75	\$529,930.45	96.2%



APPENDIX G - COURT INTERPRETATION & TRANSLATION (CITS)

	FY22 Totals	FY23 Totals	FY22-FY23 Filings % Change
Court Interpretation & Translation (CITS)	23,177	26,792	15.6%
Spanish Interpretation Events	20,093	23,060	14.8%
Lesser Used Language Interpretation Events	2,619	3,222	23.0%
American Sign Language Interpretation Events	465	510	9.7%



APPENDIX H - FINANCE - EXPENDITURES



FY23 SUPERIOR COURT EXPENDITURES

Fund Name	Fund #	FY22 Actual Expense	FY23 Actual Expense	Expense Increase/Decrease	FY22-FY23 % Change
General	100	\$106,936,111	\$124,415,833	\$17,479,722	16.3%
Detention Operations	255			-	N/A
Superior Court Judicial Enhancement	208	\$425,536	\$478,784	\$53,248	12.5%
Probate Fees	256	\$391,980	\$391,980	(\$2,500)	-0.6%
Conciliation Court Fees	257	\$1,658,520	\$1,565,837	(\$92,683)	-5.6%
Superior Court Special Revenue	259	\$4,809,522	\$4,971,344	\$161,822	3.4%
Law Library Fees	261	\$1,314,024	\$2,021,288	\$707,263	53.8%
Superior Court Fill the Gap	264	\$1,875,400	\$1,820,463	(\$54,938)	-2.9%
Expedited Child Support	271	\$506,787	\$449,820	(\$56,967)	-11.2%
Spousal Maintenance Enforcement Enhancement	276			-	N/A
Superior Court Building Repair	280	\$1,350,541	\$541,229	(\$809,312)	-59.9%
Children's Issues Education	281			-	N/A
Domestic Relations Mediation Education	282	\$129,024	\$129,024	-	0.0%
Adult Probation Grants	211			-	N/A
Superior Court Grants	238	\$4,322,804	\$5,010,225	\$687,421	15.9%
Coronavirus Relief Fund	200			-	N/A
Coronavirus Relief	200			-	N/A
Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery	296	\$533,827	\$207,046	\$324,781	-60.8%
Superior Court Total		\$124,254,078	\$142,002,373	\$17,748,295	14.3%



APPENDIX H - FINANCE - EXPENDITURES (Cont'd)



FY23 ADULT PROBATION EXPENDITURES

Fund Name	Fund #	FY22 Actual Expense	FY23 Actual Expense	Expense Increase/Decrease	FY22-FY23 % Change
General	100	\$68,802,682	\$79,363,163	\$12,560,481	18.8%
Detention Operations	255	\$42,145,400	\$46,891,392	\$4,745,992	11.3%
Adult Probation Fees	201	\$9,132,809	\$8,159,362	(\$973,447)	-10.7%
Adult Probation Grants	211	\$2,228,955	\$2,115,733	(\$113,222)	-5.1%
Conciliation Court Fees	257	\$1,658,520	\$1,565,837	(92,683)	-5.6%
Coronavirus Relief Fund	200			-	N/A
Coronavirus Relief	200			-	N/A
Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery	296	\$313,531	\$230,717	(\$82,815)	-26.4%
Adult Probation Total		\$120,623,377	\$136,760,367	\$16,136,990	13.4%



FY23 JUVENILE PROBATION EXPENDITURES

Fund Name	Fund #	FY22 Actual Expense	FY23 Actual Expense	Expense Increase/Decrease	FY22-FY23 % Change
General	100	\$21,873,491	\$24,942,667	\$16,136,990	14.0%
Detention Operations	255	\$39,151,854	\$39,704,319	\$522,465	1.4%
Juvenile Probation Special Fee	228	\$1,811,232	\$1,811,232	-	0.0%
Juvenile Restitution	229		\$8,382	\$8,382	N/A
Juvenile Probation Diversion	275	\$63,968	\$62,500	(\$1,468)	-2.3%
Juvenile Probation Grants	227	\$2,929,166	\$3,603,783	\$674,617	23.0%
Coronavirus Relief Fund	200			-	N/A
Coronavirus Relief	200			-	N/A
Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery	296	\$466,594		(\$466,594)	-100.0%
Juvenile Probation Total		\$66,296,305	\$70,132,883	\$3,836,578	5.8%

Grand Total:

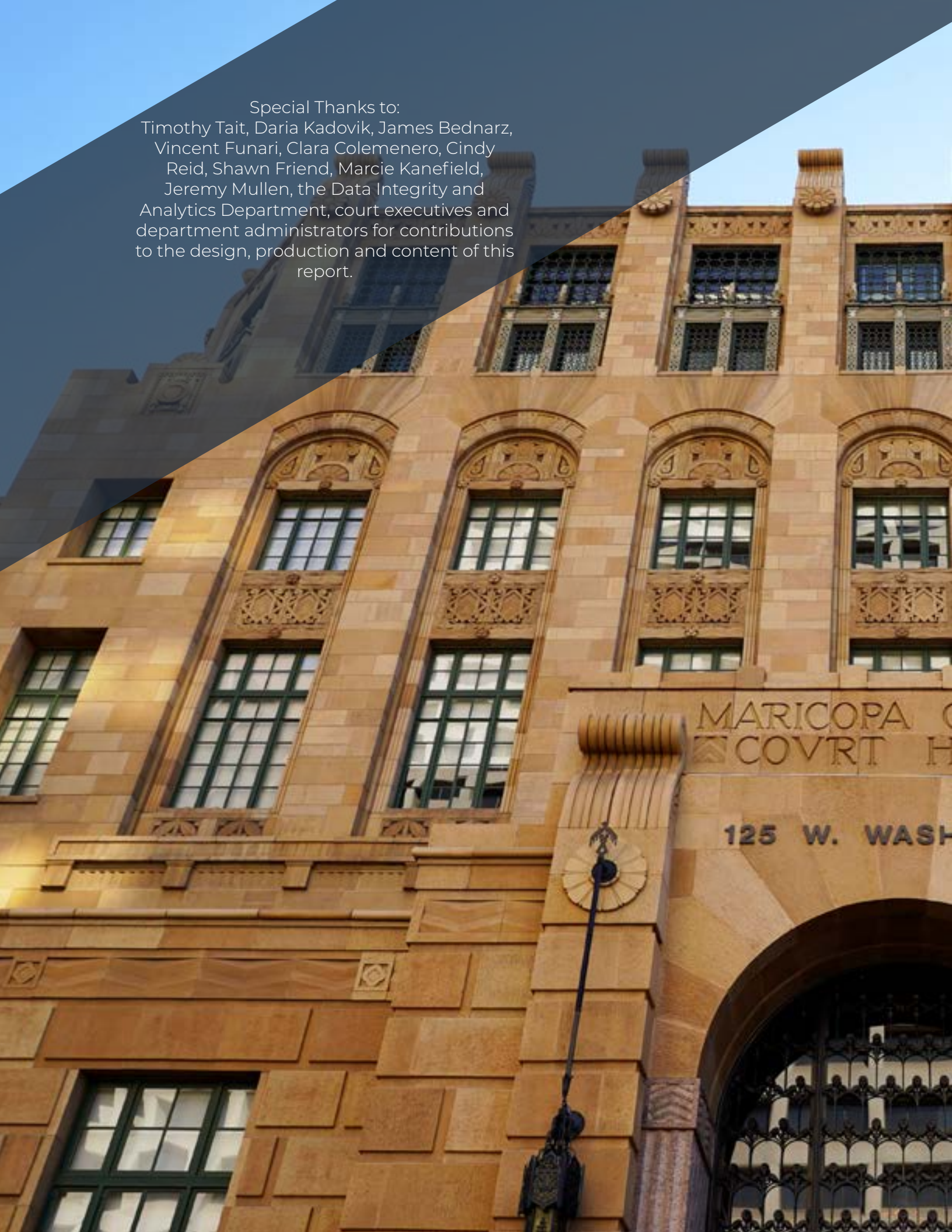
\$311,173,760

\$348,895,623

\$37,721,863

12.1%

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Pictured: the Old Courthouse, located in Downtown Phoenix, AZ

