



# News Release

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For immediate release:  
July 14, 2014

## Judiciary Celebrates Probation Week

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner today praised the work of probation professionals who not only rehabilitate offenders but also help to maintain community safety, assist the resolution of family and criminal cases and ensure the prompt payment of fines, restitution and child support.

“July 13 through 17 is National Parole, Probation and Community Supervision Week, and there is no better time to recognize the contributions of the dedicated professionals who serve in this area every day,” said Chief Justice Rabner. “Probation officers help improve our society by rehabilitating offenders, strengthening families and maintaining safe communities, and we are grateful for their efforts.”

“We are proud of the work performed by our probation officers, who work in our towns and cities, often outside of business hours, giving their best to help others,” said Elizabeth Domingo, assistant director of probation services.

The Judiciary’s 1,800 probation officers fill a number of vital roles throughout the Judiciary.

Probation officers who supervise adult and juvenile offenders ensure that offenders meet court-ordered obligations such as finding or keeping a job, performing community service, paying fines and restitution, attending school and substance abuse treatment programs, and adhering to curfews.

Offenders with mental health issues that might affect their ability to comply successfully with court orders are supervised by a unique group of probation officers trained in counseling and psychology. Those offenders assigned to the mental health program benefit from smaller caseloads, more individualized attention and the special training of their probation officers.

New Jersey’s statewide drug court program relies on probation officers to help non-violent, drug-dependent offenders break the cycle of drug abuse and crimes. With intensive treatment, close supervision and a system of rewards and sanctions to encourage compliance, the drug court program has become a national model for therapeutic justice.

Probation officers also assist the criminal courts by conducting detailed investigations and producing comprehensive sentencing reports that help judges decide on appropriate sentences. In the family courts, probation officers research domestic violence cases and perform risk assessments of alleged batterers. They also conduct investigations in child custody disputes and develop and implement rehabilitation plans for juvenile offenders.

Probation services helps children and their families by collecting \$1.3 billion annually in court-ordered child support payments. In addition, about \$30 million in restitution, fines, fees and penalties are collected. Through the efforts of probation officers, 1.4 million community service hours are enforced each year, with an estimated value of \$10 million in services back to communities.

Probation officers maintain close ties to their clients and to the community, helping clients obtain job training, counseling, addiction treatment and mental health treatment. They often work evenings and weekends to follow up with clients and make sure they are obeying court orders. To their clients, they offer discipline, guidance, expertise and compassion. To the community, they offer the assurance that court orders are enforced fairly and conscientiously to maintain the rule of law.

“Probation work is both challenging and rewarding,” said Chief Justice Rabner. “I encourage anyone looking to make a real difference in their communities to explore a career in probation. To our colleagues in Probation, we say thank you for your ongoing, exemplary work.”

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