



News Release

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Judiciary Celebrates Probation Week

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner today recognized the critical role probation professionals play to help the courts serve the public.

“During National Probation Week, and throughout the year, it is important to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of probation professionals in the Judiciary,” he said. “Probation staff is integral to the rehabilitation of offenders, but their work extends well beyond that. Each day, probation officers help maintain community safety, strengthen families, resolve criminal and family court cases, and work with at-risk youth in need of guidance to get their lives moving in the right direction. We are grateful for all of those and other ongoing, vital contributions.”

Elizabeth Domingo, assistant director for Probation Services, said, “We take great pride in the work of our probation officers, whose primary goal is to help others. Every day, in every community, probation officers are hard at work to help individuals and communities realize a brighter future.”

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 crime. 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 the 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 to 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.

“Not everyone has the skill or aptitude for the sensitive and difficult work performed by probation officers,” said Chief Justice Rabner. “To those who have dedicated their careers to help others in this unique role, we are deeply indebted.”

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