

News Release



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Judiciary Celebrates Probation and Pretrial Services Week

In recognition of Probation and Pretrial Services Week, Chief Justice Stuart Rabner today praised probation and pretrial services professionals throughout the state for their efforts in rehabilitating adult and juvenile offenders and protecting the safety of the community.

“Probation and pretrial services officers perform vital services throughout our court system to enhance the safety of the community,” Rabner said. “We are grateful for their dedication and professionalism throughout the year, and we especially express that gratitude during Probation and Pretrial Services Week.”

The office of pretrial services was created when Criminal Justice Reform went into effect Jan. 1, 2017. The staff of more than 200 pretrial services officers manage the caseloads of individuals arrested on criminal warrants and conduct public safety assessments used to measure the risk that a defendant will fail to appear in court or engage in criminal activity while on pretrial release.

The Judiciary’s division of probation services provides guidance and oversight to probation officers across the state and includes critical programs such as the Intensive Supervision Program and child support collections.

“Probation officers make a difference in the lives of individuals, families, and communities every day,” said Rashad Shabaka-Burns, director of probation services. “We appreciate and commend their hard work and recognize their efforts and contributions.”

The Judiciary’s 1,909 probation officers perform a number of vital roles, including supervising adult and juvenile offenders and ensuring compliance with court-ordered obligations such as finding and maintaining a job, performing community service, paying fines and restitutions, 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 group of probation officers with specialized training.

New Jersey’s statewide drug court program relies on probation officers to help non-violent drug offenders break the cycle of drug abuse and crime.

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. They also conduct investigations into child custody disputes and help develop and implement rehabilitation plans for juvenile offenders.

The Office of Probation Services collects \$1.3 billion annually in court-ordered child support payments. In addition, about \$28 million in restitution, fines, fees and penalties are collected.

Through the efforts of probation officers, more than 767,745 community service hours were enforced in fiscal year 2018, with an estimated value of \$6.5 million in services given back to communities.

Pretrial services operates 24 hours, seven days a week to ensure that defendants have their first appearance before a judge within 48 hours of their incarceration. Staff have conducted more than 18,500 public safety assessments since Jan. 1, 2018.

The staff also monitor defendants who are released on conditions imposed by the court, keep contact with pretrial defendants and remind them of future court appearances.

“Criminal Justice Reform could not be successful without the dedication of our pretrial services staff,” said Jennifer Perez, director of Trial Court Services. “Their daily efforts provide defendants on pretrial release with the best possible chance for success. We commend them for their efforts and the key role they play in creating a fairer justice system in our state.”

Probation and Pretrial Services Week runs from July 15 to July 21.

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