

News Release



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For immediate release: July 22, 2019

Judiciary Celebrates Probation and Pretrial Services Week

The New Jersey Judiciary is recognizing Probation and Pretrial Services Week by celebrating the work of professionals whose efforts to rehabilitate adult and juvenile offenders also protect the safety of the community.

The theme of this year's celebration, which runs July 21-27, is "Restoring Trust, Creating Hope."

These community supervision professionals assist with rehabilitating adult and juvenile clients by connecting them to services such as job training, counseling, addiction treatment, mental health treatment, and housing assistance.

"Probation and pretrial services officers play an essential role in the justice system," said Chief Justice Stuart Rabner. "We appreciate their hard work and dedication to make our communities safer and value the positive changes they have brought about in the lives of countless people."

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.

The Judiciary's 1,938 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.

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.

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 clients.

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.

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.

“Probation staff play a unique role in our organization and in our society. I thank them for their ongoing, outstanding work,” said Rashad Shabaka-Burns, director of Probation Services. “They work hard every day to achieve the ultimate goal of providing clients with the assistance they need to become law-abiding citizens who contribute to society.”

The office of pretrial services was created in 2017 to support the operation of Criminal Justice Reform. Its staff of more than 200 pretrial services officers manage the caseloads of individuals arrested on criminal warrants, conduct public safety assessments and monitor defendants who are released on conditions imposed by the court. Pretrial services operates 24 hours, seven days a week.

“Pretrial services staff are at the heart of the success of Criminal Justice Reform,” said Jennifer Perez, director of Trial Court Services. “On a daily basis, our staff prepare the risk assessments that judges use in making pretrial release decisions and they monitor those defendants who are released until their trial. We thank them for their efforts in creating a fairer justice system in our state.”

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