



# News Release

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For more information:  
Winnie Comfort  
Pete McAleer  
609-815-2910

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## Judiciary Celebrates National Probation Week

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

“Throughout our court system, probation officers perform exemplary work that benefits our society,” said Rabner. “During Probation Week, and throughout the year, we are grateful for their dedication in providing such vital services.”

Probation Week starts Sunday, July 16.

The Administrative Office of the Courts recently recognized the growing importance of probation services by restructuring its management to create a new director-level position that reports directly to the administrative director. Rashad Shabaka-Burns started work as the initial director of probation services on July 1. The office 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 great work of our probation officers deserves to be recognized and celebrated,” Shabaka-Burns said. “Probation officers help ensure that direct services are provided in the most impactful situations, involving children and families and the society at large. I want to thank all of our probation officers for their passion and commitment to those that we serve.”

The Judiciary’s 1,909 probation officers perform a number of vital roles.

Probation officers supervise adult and juvenile offenders, 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. 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 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 846,852 community service hours were enforced in fiscal year 2017, with an estimated value of \$7.1 million in services given back to communities.

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