

News Release



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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.

For this year's celebration, which runs July 18-24, the Judiciary continues to recognize probation and pretrial services staff for their diligence during the COVID-19 pandemic, maintaining safe contact with defendants while helping them meet their court obligations.

In fiscal year 2020, probation officers supervised 48,083 adults and 5,487 juveniles. They conducted 19,132 inspections and 63,347 visits to clients' homes. Probation clients performed 436,700 hours of community service.

The Judiciary's more than 1,900 probation officers perform a number of vital roles, including supervising adult and juvenile offenders and ensuring compliance with court-ordered obligations. Those obligations can include finding and maintaining a job, performing community service, paying fines and restitutions, attending school and substance abuse treatment programs, and adhering to curfews.

During fiscal year 2020, probation officers in New Jersey distributed \$1.198 billion in child support to families, an increase from \$1.175 billion pre-pandemic in 2018.

"Throughout the pandemic, our child support and supervision units have continued to work collaboratively to address the needs of the clients and to make sure child support obligations are being met," said Rashad Shabaka-Burns, director of Probation Services.

Jennifer Perez, director of Trial Court Services, said pretrial services staff maintained contact with nearly 40,000 defendants on pretrial monitoring in 2020.

Pretrial services, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, conducts public safety assessments and monitors defendants who are released on conditions imposed by the court. If not for their efforts, more defendants who are presumed innocent would await their trial in jail, with potential exposure to health risks during the pandemic.

The office of pretrial services was created in 2017 to support the operation of Criminal Justice Reform. Its staff of more than 300 pretrial services officers and supervisors keep in contact with defendants awaiting trial in their community rather than in jail. They provide information on local services, check in with defendants regularly, and remind them of upcoming court dates and the requirements to follow during their pretrial release.

“Throughout the pandemic, staff have continued to meet with defendants who have adapted well to the new model of reporting remotely. Their efforts allow these defendants to continue to work or care for family, particularly during these trying times,” Perez said. “We appreciate their commitment toward building a fairer justice system.”

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