

NEWS RELEASE

Arizona Supreme Court
Administrative Office of the Courts



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Arizona's Access to Justice Month

PHOENIX – For many years, Arizona has recognized April as Access to Justice Month. The yearly tribute is a reminder to recognize and thank the volunteers, institutions, nonprofit agencies, judges, court staff, attorneys, legal support staff, and others who support justice for all. Governor Doug Ducey signed a [proclamation](#) for 2021 recognizing the contributions of legal aid services and particularly the efforts made for those with limited financial resources and encouraging all citizens to help achieve the goals of equal access to justice for all.

Promoting Access to Justice is the first goal of Chief Justice Robert Brutinel's five-year strategic agenda, *Justice for the Future, Planning for Excellence*. The Arizona Supreme Court's Commission on Access to Justice, established in 2014, develops and promotes opportunities for individuals to ensure their voices are heard in Arizona's courts. Co-chaired by Arizona Court of Appeals, Division One Judges Lawrence Winthrop and Samuel Thumma, the Commission recently released its annual report of accomplishments at <https://tinyurl.com/4k24228r>.

The Court has several working groups dedicated to promoting access to justice. One example is the Commission on Minorities in the Judiciary, intended to remove barriers to achieving racial equality and equal justice and to increase the number of qualified minority applicants available to serve as judicial officers and as court professionals. On April 1, the Arizona Judicial Council approved the Commission moving forward with a name change to the Commission on Diversity, Equity, and Justice to better reflect the Commission's directives.

In 2020 the Court moved forward with its legal services reforms, intended to improve the delivery of legal services to consumers, particularly those with limited financial resources. The

first Alternative Business Structures were approved in 2021 and an exam will be available in 2021 as part of the new tier of legal providers called Legal Paraprofessionals. More recently, the Court added to its access to justice initiatives by creating a Task Force on Jury Data Collection, Practices, and Procedures. For details on these initiatives and others, see <https://www.azcourts.gov/committeescommissions/>.

All individuals are encouraged to learn more about Arizona's courts this month, to offer support or volunteer where possible, and to direct those in need to the many resources available throughout Arizona. While special recognition is made this month, the work and innovations supporting access to justice for all continue.

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