



*Advancing Justice Together: Courts and
Communities*

*2019
Update*



This update highlights some of the many accomplishments last year by Arizona’s judiciary. As we enter the final year of the 2014-19 Strategic Agenda, our judges and court personnel continue to make substantial progress on each of the Agenda’s five goals. Our courts are national models for their innovation and responsiveness. I have been greatly privileged to work with you in advancing justice together.

Chief Justice Scott Bales



Goal 1

Promoting ACCESS to Justice

- ❖ Created a Task Force on the Delivery of Legal Services to consider regulatory changes to expand access to legal services provided by lawyers and others, such as licensed document preparers.
- ❖ Continued improving the statewide virtual legal resource center, www.azcourthelp.org. More than 137,000 new users accessed this online resource for law-related information.
- ❖ Authorized an Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) pilot project for Family Court litigants in the Superior Court in Pinal and Yuma Counties to resolve disputes more quickly and less expensively.
- ❖ The Yuma County Superior Court redesigned the County Law Library to better serve self-represented litigants.
- ❖ The Santa Cruz County Superior Court introduced a new “Self-Help Program” for self-represented litigants in Family Court.
- ❖ Individuals seeking information at the Maricopa County Superior Court were assisted by 54 undergraduate students serving as court navigators for the Law Library Resource Center. This AmeriCorps program has helped more than 269,000 people over the last two years.

Access to Justice Commission Initiatives

- ❖ Worked with the Phoenix Municipal Court and the Department of Corrections’ employment centers to establish a Compliance Assistance Program, which allows inmates to reinstate their driver licenses before their release by completing a skills-based employment program.
- ❖ Created an online Legal Info Hub, serving as a central repository for legal information podcasts, videos, and FAQs, all available in English and in Spanish.
- ❖ To encourage pro bono service by Arizona attorneys, the [Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education](#) created an online portal identifying pro bono opportunities statewide.
- ❖ In May 2018, the State Bar of Arizona implemented an online Find-a-Lawyer program to help prospective clients identify lawyers, including those willing to work for reduced fees or to provide limited scope representation.



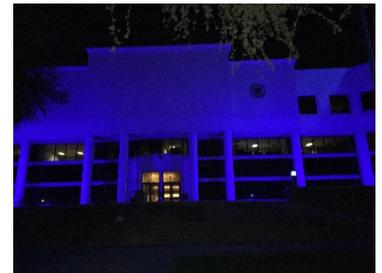
Protecting Children, Families, and Communities

Children and Families

- ❖ New legislation was implemented for issuance of temporary custody orders when the State seeks to remove children from their homes based on abuse or neglect. The Maricopa County Superior Court is hosting an online process that allows requests for such orders to be filed 24-hours every day. From July through November 2018, more than 1,400 requests were processed.
- ❖ The Crossover Youth Initiative, which helps children involved in both dependency and delinquency proceedings, was expanded to all 15 Arizona counties. To advance the Initiative, more than 95 participants attended a statewide meeting among courts and other government agencies dealing with children.
- ❖ As part of on-going efforts to address minor victims of sex trafficking, the judiciary continued to participate in the Governor's Human Trafficking Council, collaborate with interagency coalitions and county-level human trafficking specialists, and support training and information sharing to promote awareness and more effective responses.

Crime Victims

- ❖ In October 2018, the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education received a \$1.1 million federal grant to implement technology to expand access to civil legal information and resources for Arizona crime victims, including victims of domestic violence, elder abuse, and consumer fraud.
- ❖ Through September 2018, the Domestic Violence Legal Assistance Project provided legal assistance and lay legal advocacy to 6,043 victims of domestic violence and their families. Volunteer lawyers donated 2,268 hours of time to victims.



Fair Justice

- ❖ Arizona courts continued to implement the Fair Justice Initiative to more effectively identify when defendants should be jailed pending the resolution of criminal cases and to ensure that fines and other sanctions fairly promote compliance with the law and economic self-sufficiency. Steps taken in 2018 include:
 - Court rules were revised to require bail eligibility hearings within 7 days of arrest, to eliminate bond schedules, and to require the use of the least onerous release conditions that will ensure appearance and protect public safety.
 - The risk assessment tool used to help judicial officers make release decisions is being automated with the goal of expanding its use in the limited jurisdiction courts.
- ❖ The Arizona legislature enacted a package of Fair Justice bills that, among other things, allow persons owing court fines or restitution to drive with restricted licenses (HB 2169); identify how people can seek to set aside felony convictions (HB 2312); expand sentencing options for mitigated fines or community service in lieu of fines (HB 2313); and allow courts to sentence misdemeanor offenders to community service or treatment without placing them on probation (HB 2314).

Improving Court Processes to Better Serve the Public

- ❖ Established the Attorney Ethics Advisory Committee to issue ethics advisory opinions, subject to review by the Arizona Supreme Court, to guide attorneys in their practice.
- ❖ Established the Committee on Mental Health and the Justice System to recommend evidence-based practices and interagency protocols to improve the administration of justice for persons with mental illness.
- ❖ The Commercial Court, first established in 2015 as a pilot in the Maricopa County Superior Court, was approved on a permanent basis. In the Pima County Superior Court, the FASTAR pilot is experimenting with streamlined jury trials as an alternative to arbitration in civil cases.
- ❖ Expanded, with support by the Maricopa County Superior Court, the statewide online search warrant application program. This program allows law enforcement agencies across Arizona to remotely apply for warrants authorizing blood draws or other tests of suspected impaired drivers.
- ❖ Reflecting its leadership in addressing domestic violence, the Tucson City Court received a \$549,000 federal grant to support its specialized Domestic Violence Court calendar, which provides access to services for victims and more accountability for domestic violence offenders.
- ❖ In November, Coconino County voters decided to adopt the merit-selection system for superior court judges, reflecting the first time a county has done so before reaching the 250,000-person population threshold under Arizona's constitution.

Rules Revisions

- ❖ New rules implementing recommendations of the Civil Justice Reform Task Force became effective in July 2018. Arizona thus continues its tradition of innovation in procedural matters, adopting tiered case management, new procedures for quickly resolving discovery disputes, and more efficient practices for the preservation and discovery of electronically stored information.
- ❖ Revised Rules of Criminal Procedure, reflecting the first comprehensive review since 1973, became effective in January 2018. Since then, a Task Force on Rule 32 has been reviewing substantive changes to the rules for post-conviction relief; it will submit a rule petition for consideration by the Supreme Court in 2019.
- ❖ As part of the on-going review of other Arizona procedural rules, new Family Court rules became effective in January 2019. Over the past year, a Probate Rules Restyling Task Force developed proposed revisions for the probate and guardianship rules; these proposals will also be the subject of a 2019 rule petition.



Goal 4

Enhancing Professionalism within Arizona's Courts

Workforce Development

- ❖ To address workplace discrimination and harassment, judicial branch policies were updated, and training was offered statewide for all court employees.
- ❖ To improve the handling of small claims cases, more than 40 volunteers received three days specialized training to serve as hearing officers.
- ❖ The Education Services Division provided 2,398 hours of training programs for Arizona's judges, probation staff, court and non-court staff.



Judicial Excellence and Training

- ❖ As part of the Court's Fair Justice Initiative, judicial education programs addressed pretrial release conditions and alternatives to monetary bail. Guidelines and training were presented on mitigating fines and other court-imposed financial obligations.
- ❖ Developed a guide for Presiding Judges to convene meetings with county partners to help courts better address the needs of persons with mental illness. An implementation summit is planned for March 2019.
- ❖ Arizona judges will receive enhanced training on traffic laws and DUI case management with the support of a grant from the Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety.

Recognition of Court Achievements

- ❖ Kathy Waters, Director of Adult Probation Services, received the Susan M. Hunter Award from the Association of Women Executives in Corrections (AWEC).
- ❖ Arizona Supreme Court Clerk Janet Johnson received the President's Award for Outstanding Service from the National Conference of Appellate Court Clerks.
- ❖ Chief Justice Scott Bales received the Ernest C. Friesen Award of Excellence from the Justice Management Institute and the 2018 Chief Justice Richard W. Holmes Award of Merit from the American Judges Association.
- ❖ The Maricopa County Superior Court received the Court Technology Solutions Award for its juvenile court case management system (JAX) from the National Association for Court Management (NACM). The Administrative Office of the Courts earned honorable mention from NACM for the e-Courts Text Notification system and two programs that help public safety officials obtain court orders electronically.
- ❖ The Arizona Asian American Bar Association inducted the Honorable Roxanne K. Song Ong into its Hall of Fame for her years of dedicated leadership in the justice system.



Community Outreach

- ❖ The Arizona Supreme Court held oral arguments and question-and-answer sessions at the law schools at Arizona State University and the University of Arizona and at Payson High School in Gila County and Vista Grande High School in Pinal County.
- ❖ The Arizona Court of Appeals, Division One, continued its Connecting with the Community Program by holding oral arguments at Northern Arizona University in Coconino County and at Western Arizona College in Yuma County.
- ❖ The Arizona Court of Appeals, Division Two, held oral arguments at Mountain View High School and the University of Arizona as part of its outreach program.
- ❖ Arizona Supreme Court Justices participated in more than 50 speaking engagements across the state.
- ❖ The Arizona Supreme Court hosted a six-member delegation from Kazakhstan, including members of its parliament, to discuss the judicial and legislative branches.



Legal Futures: Why Diversity and Inclusion Matter



- ❖ To promote interest in law-related careers among students from diverse backgrounds, the Arizona Supreme Court Commission on Minorities in the Courts hosted a program allowing 38 undergraduate students from the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, and Grand Canyon University to meet with a diverse group of judges from Arizona’s state and federal courts. A second Legal Futures event is planned for 2019.

Volunteers Supporting the Courts

- ❖ More than 2,000 volunteers across the state helped advance justice by serving on judicial selection boards, on various court committees, and as court appointed special advocates (CASAs) or on Foster Care Review Boards.

Committees,
Commissions, and
Boards

527 Volunteers

Court Appointed
Special Advocates

1177 Volunteers

Foster Care Review
Boards

741 Volunteers



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