

NEWS RELEASE

Arizona Supreme Court
Administrative Office of the Courts



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Judicial Branch Celebrates 40 Years of Continuing Education and Expands Training Facility

PHOENIX – In 1978, Arizona’s legislature directed that judges obtain continuing education. Arizona Revised Statute § 12-112 states "The supreme court shall establish a program of continuing education for justices of the peace and magistrates. The program shall include such courses of study as the supreme court deems necessary or desirable." Arizona Revised Statute § 1-215 defines a magistrate as "an officer having power to issue a warrant for the arrest of a person charged with a public offense and includes the chief justice and justices of the supreme court, judges of the superior court, judges of the court of appeals, justices of the peace and judges of a municipal court." In the 40 years that have passed since the statute took effect, Arizona has earned a national reputation for the success of its innovative training programs not only for judges, but for all judicial branch employees.

What started as a means for promoting a competent and qualified bench of judges has become a culture of developing public servants into knowledgeable court professionals. The education and training of judges, court staff, and probation officers is a now critical administrative function in ensuring judicial excellence and access to swift, fair justice. The Division’s 25 full-time employees provided nearly 2,500 hours of training in 2018 to nearly 5,000 participants, using more than 1,000 faculty instructors from within and outside the judicial branch. Judicial branch employees must obtain 16 hours of accredited continuing education each year. Due to repurposing of the space the Division called home for many years in downtown Phoenix, the Division recently moved into space in midtown Phoenix. The new Judicial Education Center provides ample training space, a production studio, and technology that promotes computer-based training in courts across the state.

The Supreme Court’s Education Services Division provides training that includes orientation for new judges; a certification academy for new probation officers; and required programs for judicial staff, including programs on ethics and cyber security. The Division administers a statewide system of judicial education reaching all of Arizona’s more than 150 courts by managing compliance with judicial education standards; facilitating comprehensive curriculum and program development committees; supporting local training coordinators who accredit and monitor local training; developing faculty for statewide judicial education; and conducting conferences, workshops, seminars, videos, and broadcasts for judges and non-judge court staff. The Division also implements directives from the Committee on Judicial Education and Training and its standing committees: The Judicial College of Arizona, the Committee on Probation Education, Judicial Staff Education Committee, and the Court Leadership Institute of Arizona.

In addition to training and education developed and accredited locally, Arizona offers nationally-certified court management training in partnership with the National Center for State Court's Institute for Court Management (ICM). More than 400 court professionals have received leadership certification, with 46 judicial branch leaders completing the ICM Fellowship, a nationally-recognized certification that requires candidates to prepare a comprehensive research paper evaluating a court improvement initiative undertaken in the candidate's jurisdiction.

The education and training standards for the Arizona Judicial Branch are found in the Arizona Code of Judicial Administration (ACJA). The ACJA states its purpose this way: "The education and training of judicial officers and court employees is necessary to maintain judicial independence and carry out the judicial branch's obligation to administer justice impartially and competently. The following standards shall ensure that judges and judicial branch employees continually receive education and training necessary to achieve the highest standard of competence, ethical conduct, integrity, professionalism, and accountability."

The Arizona Supreme Court and Administrative Office of the Courts congratulate the Education Services Division for more than 40 years of developing court professionals and strengthening the administration of justice in Arizona.

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