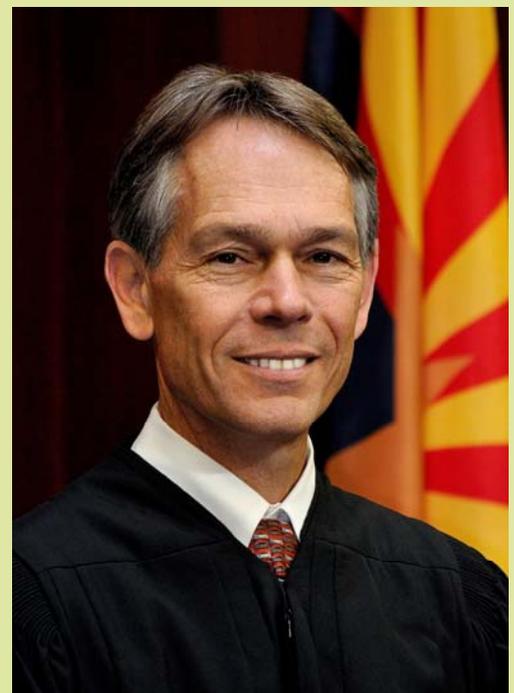


2016 Update

Nearly eighteen months ago, the Arizona State Courts adopted an ambitious five-year strategic agenda. The start of 2016 is a good time to assess our progress. As described in this update, we have made great strides through the efforts of judicial officers, other court personnel, and volunteers throughout Arizona. Thank you for your continued efforts in advancing justice together.

— *Scott Bales*
Chief Justice



Goal 1

Promoting

ACCESS

to Justice

The *Arizona Commission on Access to Justice* identified several initiatives that were approved by the Arizona Judicial Council in March 2015. Highlights include:

- ◆ The Maricopa County Superior Court won an AmeriCorps grant to create a ‘court navigator’ program for family court that began in January 2016. Through this program, the court hires and trains college students to work as navigators to help self-represented litigants through workshops and hands-on assistance.
- ◆ The Coconino County Superior Court is creating a new legal resource center at its law library and will host workshops and training webinars. The next phase will be the launch of a website that will benefit the entire state by providing instructional videos, law clinics, and tutorials. An AmeriCorps Vista grant is being used to support this statewide effort.
- ◆ Courts in Maricopa, Coconino, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, and Yuma Counties are piloting another innovative program to create legal resource centers in community libraries. With the assistance of Arizona’s legal aid organizations, the centers will offer library-based legal clinics.
- ◆ The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is working on updating the handbook used by court personnel in responding to questions commonly asked by self-represented litigants.
- ◆ The Commission is assessing how to encourage the use of the Arizona State Tax Credit to support legal aid providers.



Language Access Initiatives

- ◆ The Arizona Judicial Council approved an interpreter credentialing program for Arizona courts. This program will promote the quality of court interpreter services and provide court access to those with limited English proficiency.
- ◆ The AOC hosted a language access “train-the-trainer” session at the Judicial Education Center and a “Summit on Interpreter Issues” for court interpreter supervisors and administrators.
- ◆ The AOC has collected and reviewed Language Access Plans from courts throughout the state.
- ◆ The AOC has continued to add Spanish language versions of various forms to the website.
- ◆ The Strategic Agenda was published and made available on-line in both Spanish and English.



E-Filing

- ◆ E-filing was expanded in Maricopa County Superior Court to include tax cases.
- ◆ Mandatory e-filing by lawyers in civil cases was implemented in Pima County Superior Court.



PROTECTING

Children, Families, and Communities

Pre-Trial Initiative

- ◆ A pilot project implementing an empirically validated risk assessment tool – the PSA-Court – was completed in Gila, Mohave, Pinal, and Yuma Counties and the Mesa Municipal Court with assistance from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation. The PSA-Court risk assessment tool helps judges to assess the risk of flight or criminal conduct when a suspect is on pretrial release.
- ◆ The AOC provided statewide training on the PSA-Court for pretrial services personnel and other stakeholders.
- ◆ With approval by the Arizona Judicial Council, the PSA-Court will be implemented statewide this year.



Problem-Solving Courts

- ◆ New Veterans Courts have opened in Tempe, Chandler, and Mesa. In January 2016, a regional Veterans Court began operating in La Paz County.
- ◆ The Tucson Municipal Court received a nearly \$500,000 grant to support its specialty court handling domestic violence cases.



Human Trafficking

- ◆ The Judicial Education Center has held training programs for judges.
- ◆ The AOC has hosted a Human Trafficking Symposium for various stakeholders in the justice system.
- ◆ A course on issues related to human trafficking has been added to the Intensive Probation Supervision Academy.

Juvenile Detention

- ◆ In an effort to reduce the number of children detained in court facilities, the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) has been implemented in seven counties that comprise more than 80% of the state's juveniles. In JDAI sites, there were 3,145 fewer admissions to detention in 2014 as compared to 2011, and efforts to expand the JDAI are under review.



Goal 3

Improving Court

PROCESSES

to Better Serve the Public

Civil Justice Reforms

- ◆ A Commercial Court Pilot Program has been implemented in Maricopa County Superior Court to explore better ways to handle certain commercial disputes.
- ◆ A Task Force on the Arizona Rules of Civil Procedure completed a more than year-long effort to simplify and modernize the rules; the task force proposals for rule amendments will be considered later this year by the Supreme Court for possible implementation in 2017.
- ◆ The Chief Justice created a Committee on Civil Justice Reform to examine ways to reduce the time and expense of civil litigation. This committee is expected to present its recommendations for possible rule changes or pilot projects to the Arizona Judicial Council in October 2016.



Other Rule Initiatives

- ◆ The Court adopted revised and restyled Rules of Protective Order Procedure, largely aimed at simplifying the rules for self-represented parties.
- ◆ The Chief Justice established a Task Force on the Arizona Rules of Criminal Procedure to propose amendments to restyle and modernize the criminal rules. The Task Force is to submit recommended changes in January 2017 for possible implementation the next year.



Technology

- ◆ Some 3,500 work station computers in 190 locations throughout Arizona were replaced and upgraded to Windows 8.1.
- ◆ The Juvenile Online Tracking System, or JOLTSaz, was rolled out to Pima and Yuma Juvenile courts, greatly enhancing probation officers' access to information about juveniles under their supervision.

Court Facilities

- ◆ A Consolidated Justice Courts Facility recently opened in Tucson, affording improved public access and more efficient court operations.



Goal 4

Enhancing

PROFESSIONALISM

within Arizona's Courts

Ensuring Fairness

- ◆ Education programs at the Judicial Conference, the Court Leadership Conference, and in new judge orientation focused on recognizing and addressing implicit bias.



Regulation of Legal Services

- ◆ The Supreme Court approved revisions to the Arizona Rules of Professional Conduct to reflect changes in the legal profession due to technology and our increasingly global economy.
- ◆ The Supreme Court is considering recommendations made by the Task Force on the Review of the Role and Governance Structure of the State Bar of Arizona for possible implementation in 2017. Public comments are now being received on the Court's on-line "Rules Forum."

Recognition of Court Achievements

- ◆ The Commission on Victims in the Courts (COVIC) earned the 2015 Distinguished Service Award for Public Policy from Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich, recognizing the Commission's work in ensuring the courts properly recognize the interests of crime victims.
- ◆ Justice Ann Scott Timmer received a Judicial Excellence Award from the Arizona Association of Defense Counsel in December 2015.
- ◆ Court of Appeals Judge John Gemmill, retired Judge Ron Reinstein, and Judge Elizabeth Finn from Glendale City Court were inducted into the Maricopa County Bar Association's Hall of Fame in October 2015.
- ◆ Chief Judge Peter Eckerstrom of the Court of Appeals, Division Two, earned the James E. Rogers College of Law outstanding faculty of the year award, as voted by the Student Bar Association.
- ◆ The Arizona Black Bar Association honored Court of Appeals Judge Maurice Portley with the Cecil B. Patterson, Jr. Community Service Award in October 2015.
- ◆ Vice Chief Justice John Pelander was elected to the American Law Institute in October 2015.
- ◆ Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Andrew Klein earned the William W. Treat Award from the National College of Probate Judges for his work in probate and mediation.
- ◆ The Arizona Justice of the Peace Association named Sherry Geisler of the Round Valley Justice Court the Justice of the Peace of the Year for 2015.
- ◆ William J. O'Neil, the Arizona Supreme Court Presiding Disciplinary Judge, received the Justice Michael D. Ryan Award for Judicial Excellence from the Arizona State Bar's Public Lawyers Section.
- ◆ The Arizona State Bar honored Court of Appeals Judge Lawrence Winthrop with the 2015 James A. Walsh Outstanding Jurist Award.
- ◆ The Arizona State Bar's Juvenile Law Section awarded Gila County Judge Peter Cahill (now retired) the 2015 Terry L. Chandler Award for Excellence in the Field of Juvenile Law.
- ◆ In April 2015, Justice Rebecca White Berch became the 14th woman to receive the Arizona Foundation for Women's Founder's Award. The organization selected Justice Berch for "offering a model for ethical and human leadership, keeping priorities and values in order and serving as a role model for Arizona's women and children."



