

Goal 3: Improving Court Processes to Better Serve the Public

Phoenix Municipal Court's Veterans Court

Creating and sustaining the Veterans Court in Phoenix has been a collaborative effort between the Phoenix Municipal Court, the prosecutors' office, defense counsel, the Veterans Administration, and many other social service providers. Currently, there are more than 600 veterans participating in the Phoenix Veterans Court.

More than 200 veterans have successfully completed their programs: 230 veterans have participated in substance abuse treatment; 120 have addressed post-traumatic stress disorder; 100 have received mental health treatment, and 30 have completed in-patient treatment for an underlying issue.

The Phoenix Municipal Court's Veterans Court is believed to be the largest limited jurisdiction veterans court in the United States.

Goal 4: Enhancing Professionalism within Arizona's Courts

eBench Pilot Project at the Superior Court in Pima County

Over a 12-month period, a multi-disciplinary team representing court management, judges, IT personnel, and AOC staff have worked to identify and resolve numerous issues that led to the launch of eBench in the latter half of August. EBench is a real-time judicial dashboard that consolidates case documents and data onto a single PC screen.

The pilot program successfully launched in Pima's Criminal, Civil, and Family courts with the help of Judges Rash, Harrington, and Bergin. The ability to access case documents immediately and not have to delay court proceedings to shuffle through papers on the bench is critical to the public's perception that the judicial process is efficient and credible.

Since the pilot was launched on August 25, all three judges now complete their courtroom preparation using eBench, and two are going into the courtroom with only electronic documents as their primary source of case information.

Goal 5: Improving Communications and Community Participation

Mr. Tim Hardy, Yuma County Juvenile Justice Center, Individual Achievement

As director of Yuma Juvenile Court, Tim has been the key to a countywide kickoff of the *Kids at Hope* philosophy. His new Hope Center at the Juvenile Detention Center opened October 6.

Tim coordinated a countywide kickoff to the Kids at Hope project with founder, Rick Miller, and Antwone Fisher at Gila Ridge High School with more than 1000 people in attendance. Now the program is taking root in San Luis and Somerton also.

Tim is also behind a total restructuring effort in the Juvenile Justice Program. Staff has been trained in motivational interviewing, team building, and evidence-based practices as well as methods to transition children back into the community. The Long Term Stay Program takes students who have been detained for more than six months and allows them to attend Aztec High School or job training opportunities while being detained. This gives knowledge and opportunity to the students to allow them to reintegrate upon release.



2014 Strategic Agenda Awards

Presented
Tuesday, October 21

Phoenix Marriott Mesa
200 North Centennial Way
Mesa, Arizona

Strategic Agenda Awards for 2014

Presented by
Chief Justice
Scott Bales and
Presiding Judge Peter
J. Cahill of the
Superior Court in
Gila County

Awards Committee:

The Honorable Peter
Cahill, Chairman

The Honorable
Rachel Carrillo

The Honorable
Peter Eckerstrom

The Honorable
Roxanne Song Ong

Gary Krcmarik

Janet Regner

Jim Bruner

Goal 1: Promoting Access to Justice

Simpla Phi Lex Project at the Superior Court in Pima County

Pima County Court Commissioner Dean Christoffel brought 30 years of family law experience to his current role as Commissioner. He certainly knew of the anger, frustration, and confusion that self-represented litigants experienced when faced with the daunting task of figuring out what forms to file and how.

Commissioner Christoffel teamed up with Professor Emerita Barbara Atwood and students from the James E. Rogers College of Law and the University of Arizona English Department to create a new set of forms for family law proceedings. They dubbed the project “Simpla Phi Lex.”

Using graphics and plain language text and by better organizing the forms for ease of use, the new forms are available in English and Spanish. There are more than 25 separate packets of forms covering dissolution, paternity, temporary orders, post-decree matters, and various other forms. The packets represent a total of more than 150 different forms with instructions.

Goal 2: Protecting Children, Families, and Communities

A. Award for Limited Jurisdiction Courts

Tucson City Court for Regional Municipalities Veteran Treatment Court & Dedicated Domestic Violence Court

Tucson’s City Court earns this award for two programs — the Regional Municipalities Veterans Treatment Court and the Dedicated Domestic Violence Court. In January 2013, the Tucson City Court Veterans court expanded and became the Regional Municipalities Veterans Treatment Court. This is a problem-solving, specialty treatment court coordinated through the municipalities of Tucson, Oro Valley, Marana, South Tucson, and Sahuarita. The court works in tandem with service providers including the Pima Prevention Partnership, Old Pueblo Community Services, the Veterans Administration, substance abuse treatment providers, and the University of Arizona law school.

Since January 2013, the Regional Municipalities Veterans Treatment Court has accepted 186 veterans out of a total of more than 400 referrals. Out of the 186, 93 have successfully completed the program, 62 veterans are actively participating in the program, 30 were discharged from the program, and one participant passed away before completing the program.

By diverting veterans from the jails, the court estimates that it has saved more than \$53,000 in jail day costs. Perhaps most important is the life-changing pathway out of the justice system and into successful everyday life for these veterans.

The Tucson City Court also established a *Dedicated Domestic Violence Court*. To address an extremely high caseload of domestic violence cases and protective order applications, Judge Wendy Million worked to establish a dedicated Domestic Violence Court. She also identified specific needs within the deaf and hard of hearing communities for victims and for interpreters. Grants were used to establish the courts and provide training for sign language interpreters, an education program for the deaf community, and collaboration with the Emerge! Center Against Domestic Violence and Community Outreach Program for the Deaf.

During the 16 months the Domestic Violence Court has been operating, it has processed 1,659 eligible cases and served 572 victims. Starting with arraignment through compliance with sentencing orders, advocates are available for every victim. New court procedures have made victims safer and offenders more accountable.

B. Award for General Jurisdiction Court

Dependency Program Office at the Superior Court in Yavapai County

This office oversees three vital programs: CASA – The Court Appointed Special Advocate Program; the Dependency Court Improvement Program, and the Family Treatment Court Program (formerly the Family Drug Court Program).

A team of fewer than five full-time equivalent personnel oversee these programs that protect children, families, and communities. Specifically:

- The Dependency Program Office has used advertising, newspaper articles, vehicle magnets, print ads, and recruiting to certify more than 50 new CASA volunteers in the last fiscal year. They plan to surpass that goal this year. Additionally, the Office oversees more than 85 active CASA volunteers.
- Established a community dependency coordinator to oversee the provision of services to families in crisis.
- Improved the Family Treatment Court Program to provide more support, reduce stigma and barriers to accessing community services, and provided outreach and support to enrolled participants as well as their family members. The Dependency Program Office hosts training and outreach opportunities related to substance abuse and parenting.
- Partnered with faith-based and professional organizations to support foster parenting, adoption, volunteering, substance abuse treatment, initiatives to support very young children in care as well as teens who will ‘age out’ of foster care, and the Cross-Over Youth Initiative.
- The Dependency Program Office also uses alternative dispute resolution to resolve disputes in dependency cases.