

## Tioga County Probation Summary for 2023 Annual Report

The Tioga County Probation Department works with Tioga County Court, Drug Treatment Court, Family Court, Surrogates Court and 14 separate Town or Village Justice Courts in the County. The Department prepares time sensitive documents to assist those courts in making sentencing decisions for the citizens before them.

Much of the Department's work is prescribed by New York State laws, such as what information must be included in an investigation submitted to the courts and how frequently Probation Officers meet with individuals sentenced to probation supervision. Over the years, New York State has moved from an equal partnership with counties regarding Probation funding to the current state of only funding 9% of the Probation budget. This makes Probation, a mandated service in counties, one of the top ten departments that affect county budgets. Currently, 90% of the Probation budget is covered by Tioga County taxpayers.

Tioga County Probation runs Alternative to Detention programs to reduce or eliminate the use of expensive detention placement for youth in the juvenile justice system. Evidenced based programs and techniques such as Decision Points, Interactive Journaling, and Motivational Interviewing are a few examples.

Tioga County Probation operates three Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) programs to reduce reliance on the Tioga County Jail. The presence of an approved ATI program also assists the County by allowing the Jail to follow a reduced classification system within the facility, reducing its costs. The Department operates Pre-Trial Release, (an opportunity to be released from jail and monitored, without paying bail) Community Service, (perform community service hours at government or not for profit agencies in lieu of incarceration) and Electronic Monitoring (wearing an ankle unit or downloading an app on one's phone that tracks GPS location in lieu of incarceration). However, due in large part to the implementation of bail reform, the ability to operate the Pre-Trial Release and Community Service programs was significantly impacted.

2023 was a year of initiatives, collaboration, community focus, and progress at Probation including:

- Continued and more focused Collaboration with other agencies (Veterans Services, Schools, DSS, Employment Center, Law Enforcement, District Attorney, Alcohol/Drug Agencies)
- Completion of the Probation Vehicle upgrade plan
- Staffing/Training (retirement of Supervisor, promotions and first officers to attend newly State mandated training)
- Initiation of plan to equip all officers with iPads to allow for more effective service provision to Justice Courts

- Completion of updates to all Probation Policies and Procedures
- Emphasis on Employee wellness (recognition, updated equipment and services)
- Community focus agency mentality (volunteering, Decision Points in school, multi-agency collaboration)
- Significant progress regarding destruction of files in compliance with records retention schedule
- Completion of Memorandum of Understanding with IPPC Technologies for monitoring of devices used by those convicted of a sex offense
- Enlargement of Buddi contract to provide alcohol monitoring via GPS enabled electronic monitoring unit that also monitors alcohol consumption
- Focus on incentivizing youth
- Embedded Probation Officers in Justice Courts to enhance Pre-Trial services

Probation placed an even greater emphasis on working with other county agencies in 2023 in order to achieve our collaborative goals to enhance community safety, improve services and make them more accessible throughout the County. Our partnership with Veterans Services, the District Attorney's Office, the Department of Social Services, the Employment Center, as well as the schools and law enforcement agencies throughout Tioga County have enabled us to enhance community safety and provide the most robust services possible to county residents.

While Probation's external focus in 2023 revolved around community safety and provision of services, the focus internally was on the Officers themselves as well as expanding the number of tools available to assist with the supervision of individuals under supervision. In 2023, Probation entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with IPPC Technologies to monitor devices that can access the internet which are used by individuals under supervision after being convicted of a sex offense. Probation also enlarged its contract with our electronic monitoring provider, Buddi, to include units which can monitor alcohol consumption in addition to providing real time GPS location. In addition, the upgrade of the Probation vehicle fleet was completed with the addition of a 2023 Dodge Durango all-wheel drive vehicle and replacement of bullet resistant vests were made as needed.

Probation continued with its records retention program in 2023, destroying several hundred old probation files per the Records Retention Schedule. This process includes the scanning and digital storage of important documents prior to destruction.

The close of 2023 also saw the passage of the Clean Slate Act. The new law which goes into effect in November of 2024 will seal convictions of offenders which meet

the criteria and theoretically make it easier for those who were convicted of a crime to obtain employment.

As we enter 2024, Probation looks forward to numerous changes and accomplishing many goals including:

- Expansion of Pre-Trial Services available to the courts
- Fully staffing Probation
- Meeting new training requirements for new Probation Officers
- Enrolling individuals under supervision for a sex offense with IPPC Technologies
- Continue with plan to arm Probation Officers with non-lethal defensive capability
- Implementation of Probation Services in the schools (Decision Points)
- Upgrade to Probation satellite office in Waverly
- Implementation of the Clean Slate Act
- Establishment of a Quality Assurance Program

Probation expanded its presence in the courts during 2023 by embedding officers in the courts on days when the District Attorney and Public Defender are present. This allows officers to track cases through the criminal justice process which may end up at the Department and it also allows officers to assist the court, the People, or the public defender as needed. Probation looks to continue its push to be a more effective presence in the courts by equipping all officers with iPads allowing them access to data systems to provide more comprehensive information when requested.

In addition to an increased presence in the courts, probation officers also attended and participated in numerous community events including the county wide spring clean-up day, a drug drop off program, food giveaways, overdose vigil, backpack giveaway, career day presentations in the schools, a family day for military reservists prior to deployment, in addition to numerous other events throughout Tioga County. This community presence will continue in 2024 with Probation working to improve its public presentation materials including informational pamphlets, referral materials, etc.

2024 will also see the enhanced monitoring of those individuals under supervision convicted of a sex offense. The anticipated use of IPPC Technologies will begin in 2024 and see the monitoring of all internet activity of those convicted of a sexual offense. In addition to the sex offender treatment classes and polygraph exams already being utilized for this population, it will be another tool to assist offenders in remaining compliant with their conditions of probation.

Finally, to ensure Probation continues to provide exceptional service to the citizens of Tioga County, the Department will develop and implement a Quality Assurance Program within the Department. The audit process will involve the random selection of cases to be audited by Supervisory staff to assure all State mandated regulations are being followed and Best Practice guidelines defined by the Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives and Department of Criminal Justice Services are being utilized.

The Tioga County Probation Department is committed to meeting the challenges and achieving the goals established for 2024 to enhance the services it provides to the citizens of Tioga County.