

Tioga County Probation Summary for 2022 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 proscribed 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 in regards to 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.

In the juvenile part of our system, 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 and Motivational Interviewing are a few examples.

In the adult part of our system, Tioga County Probation runs three Alternatives to Incarceration 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.

2022 was a year of changes, challenges, and progress at Probation including:

- Collaboration with other agencies (Veterans Services, Schools, DSS, Employment Center, Law Enforcement)
- Probation Vehicle Replacement plan
- Staffing/Training (filled Accounting Associate III vacancy, new officers completed State mandated training)
- Transition to Automon hosting Probation's Caseload Explorer program
- Updating and focus on Equity/Accountability in regard to Probation's policies and procedures
- Employee focus (employee recognition and better tools to do their work)
- Pushing Probation into community (volunteering, Decision Points in school, multi-agency collaboration)
- Continuation of records retention program
- Plans for advancement in sex offender supervision
- Planning and implementation of Raise the Lower Age
- Focus on incentivizing youth

Probation placed an emphasis on working with other county agencies in 2022 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 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 2022 revolved around community safety and provision of services, the focus internally at Probation was on the Officers themselves as well as policies and procedures. In 2022 the Administrative Team at Probation worked to improve the tools the Officers use in their day-to-day work. This included the creation of a Probation Vehicle Replacement plan. The plan will equip Officers with reliable all-wheel drive vehicles assuring they can travel to necessary locations throughout Tioga County and return safely regardless of the weather. This multi-year plan started with the ordering of a 2022 AWD SUV in 2022 and will continue in 2023 with the purchase of a second AWD SUV. As the Probation Officer's vehicle is their most important piece of safety equipment in the field, this was essential for Officer safety. In addition to vehicles, bullet resistant vests were replaced per their replacement schedule, and new handheld lights were ordered. Also in 2022, all Officers completed a refresher NARCAN training.

Probation continued with its records retention program in 2022, destroying hundreds of old probation files per the Records Retention Schedule. This process will continue throughout 2023 until all qualifying files are destroyed.

The end of 2022 also saw a change to the laws governing the age range of a Juvenile Delinquent. Known as Raise the Lower Age, the change raised the lower age at which a young person could be charged with a Juvenile Delinquency offense from the age of seven to 12 years of age. This change took effect on December 29, 2022. Parents and guardians of those seven to 11-year-olds who previously could be considered Juvenile Delinquents can now seek services from the Tioga County Department of Social Services.

As we enter 2023, Probation looks forward to numerous changes and accomplishing many goals including:

- New Judge
- Expansion of Pre-Trial Services
- Completion of Policies and Procedures updates
- Meeting new training requirements for new Probation Officers
- Complete the Probation Vehicle Replacement plan
- Implement the MOU for the monitoring of Sex Offender technology
- Continue with plan to arm Probation Officers
- Implementation of Probation Services in the schools (Decision Points)
- Upgrade to Probation satellite office in Waverly
- Supervisor retirement and promotions
- Adjustment to "Raise the Lower Age" implementation

A new County Court Judge assumed the bench on January 1, 2023. The Honorable Adam R. Schumacher is now the Tioga County Court Judge as well as sitting as Tioga County Family Court and Supreme Court Judge.

In addition to a new Judge, Probation will look to expand the Pre-Trial Services it provides to the various Justice Courts throughout Tioga County. Probation Officers will be physically present during arraignment days and provide a validated risk assessment to the Justices if they request it on bail eligible offenses.

In an effort to provide more comprehensive monitoring of sex offenders placed under probation supervision, Probation will finalize a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with IPPC Technologies for the purpose of monitoring the technology (any device that can connect to the

internet) of sex offenders with a corresponding condition of probation. In addition to the sex offender treatment classes and polygraph exams already being utilized for this population, it will be yet another tool to assist offenders in remaining compliant with their conditions of probation.

Finally, perhaps one of the most significant goals for 2023 is for Probation Officers to provide the Decision Points curriculum in Tioga County schools. Decision Points is an Evidence Based curriculum which teaches the decision-making process and specifically focuses on the many issues facing our young people today. Probation is currently attempting to coordinate with Tioga County schools to offer this program to at risk students before they enter the Juvenile Justice or Criminal Justice systems.

The Tioga County Probation Department is committed to meeting the challenges and achieve the goals established for 2023 to enhance the services it provides to the citizens of Tioga County.