



News Release

FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 Waukegan, Illinois

19TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT RECEIVES NACo AWARDS

Chief Judge Fred Foreman is pleased to announce that the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit is being nationally recognized by the National Association of Counties (NACo) for two award winning programs developed and implemented in the Circuit. “We are extremely proud of our staff who continue to strategize and blueprint state-of-the-art programs that help to improve services and benefit the community,” said Judge Foreman. “We congratulate staff for their leadership and outstanding efforts.”

The descriptions of the programs receiving the NACo Awards include:

The Youthful Offender Job Readiness Program. Many juvenile probationers are in need of interventions to secure and maintain employment. The program provides education and training to build skills, provide employment opportunities, support gainful employment to allow probationers to meet some of their court ordered obligations, and encourage a positive activity to improve the probationer’s social, educational, and developmental functioning, thus reducing the likelihood of recidivism.

There are two phases to the program. Phase One consists of an 8-week classroom setting using a workbook “Introduction to the Employment World from Searching to Working” which was developed by staff. Each session is two hours in duration and is focused on preparing, searching and applying for a job; job interview; tools and assessments; on the job and achieving in the job field; financial responsibilities; and job change. Upon completion of Phase One, participants are assessed for transition into Phase Two, Job Placement.

The program curriculum has been presented 25 times at various sites throughout Lake County, serving a total of 149 participants. One hundred four youth successfully completed the curriculum, and of this number, 72 gained employment.

The Youthful Offender Job Readiness Program has allowed youth not only to positively engage with program staff, but has also afforded them the opportunity to enter into shared relationships with community business leaders and other adult role models, creating positive experiences in the areas of job seeking and security and maintaining employment.

Research Activity Policy. The purpose of the program is to provide a standardized procedure to conduct research within the Circuit Court of Lake County. The policy would apply to all external research proposals submitted for consideration. Prior to this policy, no program existed in any circuit within the State of Illinois. The policy allows for uniformity and puts in place guidelines and responsibilities regarding the process between the Circuit, the independent student researcher, academic institutions and/or organizations when conducting research.

The development and the implementation of the Research Activity Policy have resulted in multiple benefits to the court organization. The policy has provided the basis for effective collaboration with multiple external community partners. During the development process, collaborative relationships were developed or enhanced with the following organizations:

- ❖ Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC),
- ❖ American Probation and Parole Association (APPA),
- ❖ Iowa Department of Corrections,
- ❖ National Center for State Courts (NCSC),
- ❖ National Institute of Corrections (NIC),
- ❖ Maricopa County (AZ) Adult Probation Department,
- ❖ Pennsylvania Department of Corrections,
- ❖ Pennsylvania State University, and
- ❖ Rhode Island Department of Corrections.

This program allows for enhanced communications with internal and external partners and justice stakeholders. It integrates evidence-based practices through the independent evaluation of programs and services provided by the court organization. The program improves data and information sharing, clarifies the issues of data ownership, and promotes professional growth. The results of independent research assist with enhanced delivery of services within the justice system and allows for improved public awareness and access to justice.

The presentation of NACo's 2013 awards for the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit's programs "**Youthful Offender Job Readiness Program**" and "**Research Activity Policy**" increases the Circuit's total number of awards to 58. The Circuit received its first award for the "Adult Volunteers in Probation" program in 1973. The remaining awards were presented in the following timeframe: 2 additional awards in the 1970's; 20 awards in the '80's; 13 in the '90's; 18 in the 2000's; and 4 to date in the 2010's. (See attached for program entitlements.)

Founded in 1935, NACo is the only national organization that represents county governments in the U.S. and provides cost-saving services to the nation's 3,068 counties. Started in 1970, NACo's Achievement Award Program seeks to recognize innovative county government programs that meet specific program criteria and measurable results. NACo is headquartered on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. with a professional staff of 68 led by Executive Director Matthew D. Chase.

NACo will host its 17th annual awards ceremony on July 21, 2013, during its Annual Conference in Tarrant County, Texas.

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Attachment