

NEWS RELEASE

Arizona Supreme Court
Administrative Office of the Courts



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Arizona Lawyer Apprentice Program Helps Expand Access to Justice in Rural Communities and Fill Empty Positions in Public Law Firms Across Our State

PHOENIX – The Arizona Supreme Court today announced the creation of the Arizona Lawyer Apprentice Program (ALAP) to help expand the number of lawyers available to serve the public in rural communities as well as in public law offices—like prosecution and defense agencies.

Arizona’s rural communities and public law offices have been adversely affected by a decline in the number of lawyers. The problem is especially acute in rural communities. The ALAP serves as a partial solution by expanding lawyer licensure while continuing to ensure lawyer competence.

“Arizona is not only a real desert, but also a ‘legal desert,’” said Chief Justice Ann A. Scott Timmer. “Arizona ranks 49th among the states in the number of lawyers per capita. This will be one of several steps we are taking to provide more legal services for Arizonans, particularly those living in rural communities.” she added.

The ALAP will provide a pathway to licensure for legal professionals who score between 260 and 269 on the Uniform Bar Exam (UBE)—not quite meeting Arizona’s 270 minimum score for full admission to the practice of law. While the UBE passing score is not being lowered, the apprentice program will allow aspiring attorneys to practice law for a two-year period while under direct supervision of a lawyer with at least five years’ experience. ALAP participants must be employed by a public or private law office located in a rural Arizona community or in a public law office located anywhere in the state. As with all Arizona lawyers, ALAP participants must meet the Court’s character and fitness requirements.

Neighboring states New Mexico and Utah have a minimum passing score of 260 for the UBE, which negatively impacts our lawyer population. “After every exam we have aspiring lawyers who score in the 260 to 269 range and leave Arizona for those states.” said Chief Justice Timmer. “We want to keep them in Arizona.” The Arizona Supreme Court anticipates that the ALAP will help keep lawyers in our state—growing the number of lawyers per capita, closing the access to justice gap, filling empty positions in public law offices, and increasing economic growth.

Administrative Order 2024-148, issued on July 17, 2024, establishes the Arizona Lawyer Apprentice Program, and outlines the purpose, priorities, and qualifications of the new initiative.

Individuals who achieved a UBE score between 260 and 269 on the July 2023 examination or more recently may qualify. Candidates meeting the apprentice program’s qualifications may apply for the program through the Administrative Office of the Courts beginning Sept. 1, 2024. More information, including application forms, will be posted at azcourts.gov/cld/Attorney-Admissions.

View the Administrative Order [here](#).

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