

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER
MARICOPA COUNTY

Gary M. Kula
Public Defender

April 30th, 2021

The Maricopa County Public Defender's Office ("Public Defender") supports the Petition to Amend Rule 45(a)2 of the Arizona Rules of the Supreme Court. Diversity and inclusion education furthers the Public Defender's mission of providing high-quality, client-centered representation by broadening our understanding of diverse perspectives, experiences, backgrounds, and talents so we can advocate more effectively.

The Public Defender is the largest indigent defense agency in Arizona, representing thousands of individuals yearly, and providing defense attorneys throughout the state with substantial training and continuing legal education opportunities each year. The population we serve includes the most vulnerable and disenfranchised members of our community. Defender attorneys play a critical role in challenging bias and racial inequity in all areas of the criminal justice system. We must continue to work individually, and as a community, to understand different backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives so we can strengthen our representation and the equity we require from our justice system.

Diversity and inclusion education is essential to effective representation. Every accused must feel confident that his or her voice will be heard, regardless of background or charge. Recognizing and appreciating every voice empowers defender attorneys to advocate for equal justice in

and outside the courtroom. By investing in diversity and inclusion education, the legal community promotes equal and fair access to the criminal justice system.

The Public Defender believes that providing high-quality, client-centered representation requires a continued effort in diversity and inclusion initiatives. Consistent with this commitment, the Public Defender has created a Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Respect committee, and adopted a Diversity and Inclusion Mission Statement reaffirming our core values. *See* Appendix A. In support of this Petition, the Public Defender commits to providing at least 1 hour of free diversity and inclusion education to the criminal bar each year.

MARICOPA COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

By: /s/ Gary Kula .

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Delivering America's Promise of Justice for All

Appendix A

The Office of the Public Defender Mission Statement and Core Values

Representing Everyone.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Respect Mission Statement:

The Maricopa County Public Defender's Office is committed to providing high-quality, client-centered legal representation. To protect the constitutional rights of our clients, we pledge to fight every injustice facing our clients and the communities we serve.

These core values guide our work and hold us accountable:

- The client is the most important member of the defense team. We commit to listening to, working with, and communicating regularly with, our clients.
- Every client deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of background or charge.
- We believe in inclusion and that every voice matters. Having, working with, and learning from diverse perspectives, experiences, backgrounds, and talents allow us to provide the best representation for our clients.