

News Release

Michael K. Jeanes,
Clerk of the Superior Court
Maricopa County, AZ

CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT'S OFFICE, MARICOPA COUNTY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Combined efforts result in quick success for restitution program

- \$1 million mark reached in release of funds to victims of crime

Clerk of the Superior Court Michael Jeanes and Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery announced today the Victim Locate Program that the Office's launched in partnership two years ago, has reached the \$1 million mark in disbursement of funds to the victims of crime. The released funds were previously on hold with the Clerk of the Court's Office due to addresses becoming invalid after a person moved, or other status change occurred, and no notification was provided.

"This is a remarkable accomplishment in a relatively short amount of time since beginning the program," Jeanes said. "However, what is most pleasing is the fact that this restitution, which we had been holding, is now in the hands of those it belongs to -- the victims of crime. I am grateful to the Clerk of the Superior Court staff and to the Maricopa County Attorney and his staff for their efforts and teamwork to make this such a successful and gratifying program."

"We are extremely pleased to have partnered with the Clerk's Office to create this program to help find the victims who are due restitution," Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery said. "It is remarkable to see, rather quickly, the \$1 million mark reached in the disbursement of these funds to the rightful people. This success shows the spirit of teamwork and innovation at its best within county government. I commend our investigators on the excellent job they have done using their expertise and resources to find those who are owed restitution. I also congratulate Michael Jeanes and his staff for all of their outstanding work, which helped make this accomplishment possible."

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The Victim Locate Program began in 2010 when Clerk of the Court Michael Jeanes contacted the County Attorney's Office to ask for help in locating victims who were owed restitution. The Clerk's Office was holding pending restitution for these victims that it was unable to disburse due to the incorrect mailing addresses. Utilizing the County Attorney's internal investigative resources and additional databases to locate current addresses, in the first week of the joint program, the Office's located 76 victims who had funds on hold. A little more than two years later, the program has now reached \$1 million mark in restitution, which represents 3,175 cashed checks from 5,325 victims who were located. Last year, the Victim Locate Program was awarded an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties in recognition of it being an innovative program.

The Clerk's Office cannot hold restitution money indefinitely. If unclaimed and the rightful owner is not found, the funds are sent to the State Department of Revenue as unclaimed property, according to statutory timelines.

In addition to the Victim Locate program, the Clerk's Office has a link on its website called "Finding Funds" that allows individuals and businesses to enter their name, or the name of their business, to search for court-ordered restitution monies or assets owing to them. If funds exist, forms can be printed and completed and either faxed or mailed to the Clerk's Criminal Financial Obligations Unit. To find funds online, use the Clerk's Unclaimed Property Search at http://www.clerkofcourt.maricopa.gov/Unclaimed/default_new.asp

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