



# BRANDEN C. MEYER FAIRFIELD COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS ANNUAL REPORT

## FISCAL YEAR 2017

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## FAIRFIELD COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS ANNUAL REPORT- FY2017

### **Dear Fairfield County Citizens and The Public We Serve:**

I am extremely proud to present you with the 2017 Annual Report of the Fairfield County Clerk of Courts Office.

In this report you will read about the various departments within the Fairfield County Clerk of Courts Office and the productive ways we are assisting the public we serve. Through the many statistical charts and analysis, you will notice examples of how we are increasing productivity, listening to our customers, advancing technological efforts and finding creative solutions for meeting the needs of the public. And finally, you will find strong examples of how our dedicated employees continuously strive to improve the quality of our services.

With all the achievements highlighted in this report, we constantly recognize that there is always work to be done to ensure that:

- All the records for the Common Pleas Court and the 5<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals are properly maintained and prudently secured;
- All motor vehicle and watercraft titles in Fairfield County are issued in the most efficient, lawful manner and preserved according to current provisions of the Ohio Revised Code;
- All financial functions and statutory fiduciary duties of the office are performed in the most transparent, ethical and respectable manner; and
- All legal matters, including but not limited to civil, criminal and domestic relations issues, are discreetly processed in order to form a foundation of trust, security and alliance with the customers we serve.

Because the employees of the Fairfield County Clerk of Courts office live in the same community as the people they serve, you will find a sense of tremendous pride and enormous commitment in every aspect of their work.

I trust that, through this year's report, you will find that we take a serious approach to our commitment to transparency, fiscal responsibility and vision for the future.

Sincerely,  
Branden C. Meyer  
Fairfield County Clerk of Courts

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**Historical Look at the Clerk's Office** - In Ohio, the Clerk of the Common Pleas Court, which was established by State Constitution in 1802, serves the citizens, the legal community, and the Common Pleas Court. The office was created by the state's founders to be responsive to the public, mindful of the taxpayers, and independent of the court itself.



In 1851, under the State Constitution, the position became an elected position for a three year term and was extended to a four year term in 1936. William Henry Harrison, ninth President of the United States was the Hamilton County Clerk of Courts when he was elected President in 1840. The first Fairfield County Clerk of Common Pleas Court was Hugh Boyle who was appointed in 1803. The Clerk serves as the official record keeper of the court and acts as a safeguard and processor of all monies collected.

**The Present** - Today, Branden Meyer and his staff serves one of the fastest growing counties in the state. The office is committed to quality customer service, technological improvements for more efficient service and being fiscally responsible. The office has three locations to serve the public throughout the county; the legal offices are located in the Hall of Justice in downtown Lancaster and two title offices, one in Lancaster and one in Pickerington.



**Functions of the Clerk's Office** - The function of the Clerk of the Common Pleas Court is to satisfy more than 250 state statutes and court rules. Among the responsibilities of the office are to: Provide public access to the records of the Common Pleas Court and the 5<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals; be the first stop in initiating any court action in civil, criminal or domestic relations court matters; collect and disburse court-ordered fees, fines, victim restitution in an expedient manner; receive, distribute and preserve official court documents; and be responsible for issuing and maintaining all motor vehicle and watercraft titles in Fairfield County. The Clerk of Courts office is made up of the following three departments: Administrative and Fiscal, Legal and Title.



**Mission** - The Fairfield County Clerk of Courts Office is honored with the responsibility of serving the public by maintaining the records for the Common Pleas Court, the 5<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals and issuing/preserving all motor vehicle and watercraft titles in Fairfield County. Through our continuous quality improvement efforts, our team is dedicated to providing efficient, courteous and professional customer service.

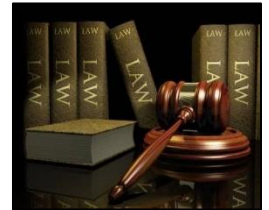
**Vision** - The vision of the Clerk is to anticipate, meet and exceed the expectations of our customers. We vow to remain compliant with the law, promise to hold our fiduciary responsibility to the highest possible standard and pledge to honor the trust bestowed upon this office with the utmost integrity, pride and respect.

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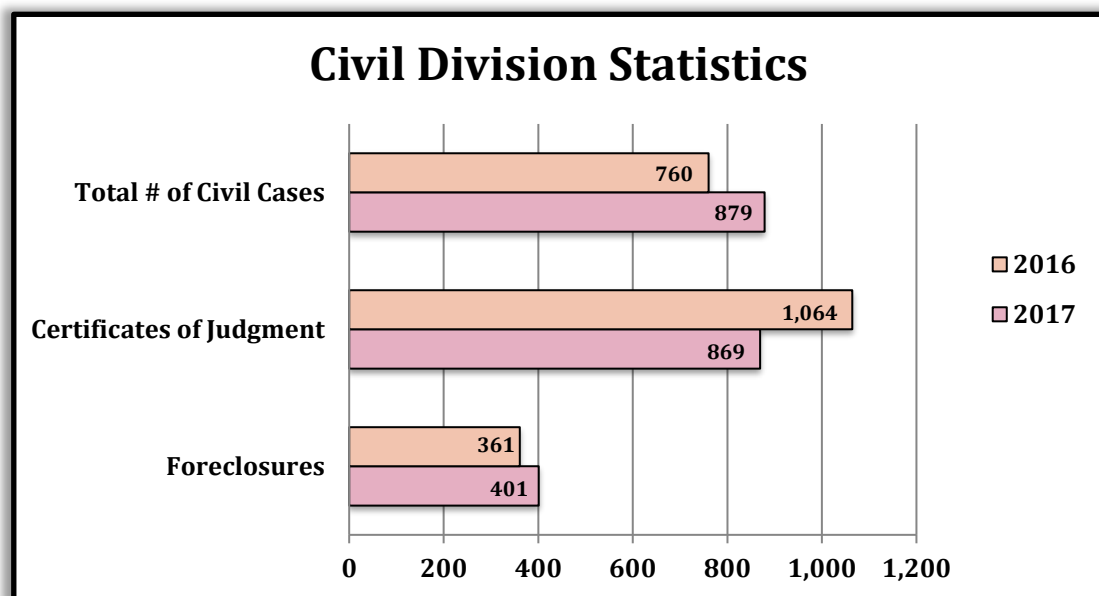
**Administrative and Fiscal Department** - The Clerk of Courts' Administrative and Fiscal Department provides integral support to both the Legal and Title Departments by overseeing all budgetary matters and performing the statutory fiduciary duties of the office by allocating funds, disbursing payments, and issuing bond, restitution, garnishment and refund checks. The office performs all financial functions and administrative related duties, including the processing of bills and payroll.

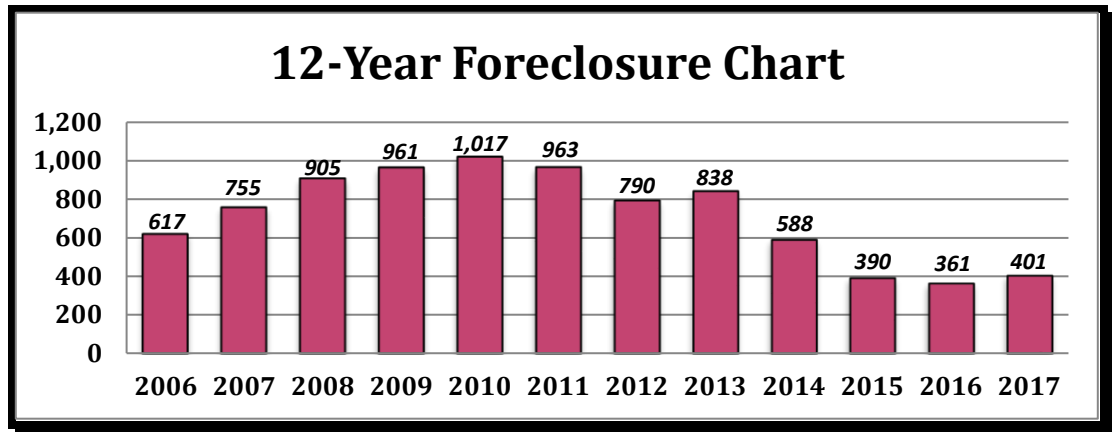


**Legal Department** - The Clerk of Courts' Legal Department handles documents or filings for five separate areas: the Civil Division, the Criminal Division, the Domestic Relations Division, the Court of Appeals Division and the Records Division. The Court of Common Pleas serves as a trial court for all civil, criminal, and domestic relations cases that occur within Fairfield County.

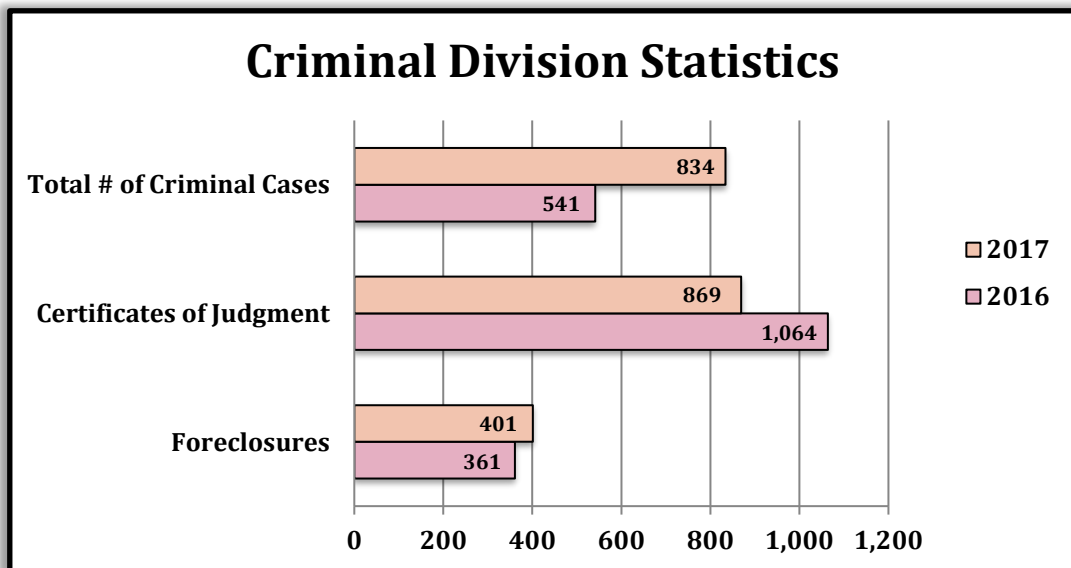


**Civil Division** - The Civil Division docketed all pleadings in foreclosures, money judgments, garnishments and other miscellaneous civil actions. The Civil Division also issues and files summonses, subpoenas, writs, Certificates of Judgment and all other related service in civil cases. The Civil Division also records all Notary Public Commissions.





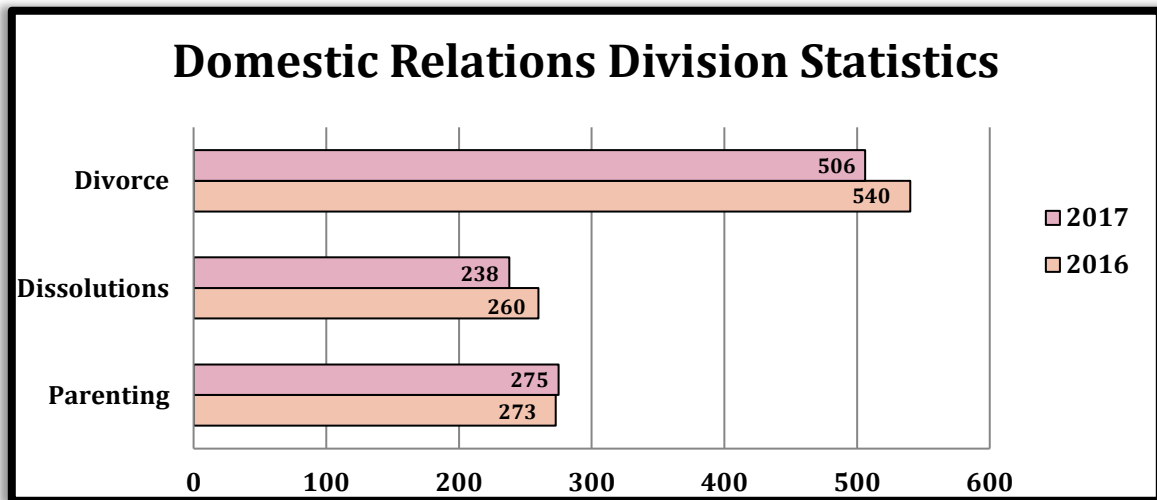
**Criminal Division** - The Criminal Division files and docket all pleadings in felony criminal cases bound over to the grand jury and all grand jury indictments. The Criminal Division also issues summonses, subpoenas, warrants, capias and all other related service in criminal cases.



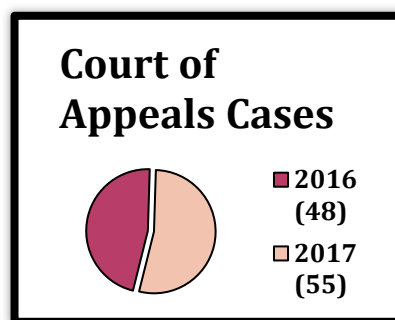


## FAIRFIELD COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS ANNUAL REPORT- FY2017

**Domestic Relations Division** - The Domestic Relations Division files and docket all pleadings in divorce, dissolution, parenting and other miscellaneous domestic actions. The Domestic Relations Division also issues and files summonses, subpoenas, capiases, and all other related service in domestic cases.



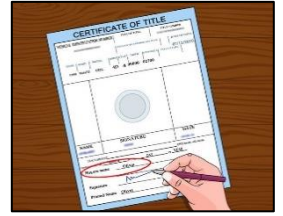
**Court of Appeals Division** - The Court of Appeals Division receives all filings and manages all paperwork relating to cases which have been appealed to the 5<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals. This includes any appeals from the Common Pleas Court, Juvenile/Probate Court, and the Municipal Court in Fairfield County. As indicated in the chart below, there were 48 Court of Appeals cases filed in 2016 and 55 Court of Appeals cases filed in 2017.



**Records Division** - The Records Division of the Clerk's office is responsible for protecting, preserving, and disseminating official records in accordance with the records retention schedule according to state archival standards and state and federal law. The Records Division also provides public access to records for the Common Pleas Court manages public records requests and maintains over 22 million pages of documents for both the Legal and Title Departments.

## FAIRFIELD COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS ANNUAL REPORT- FY2017

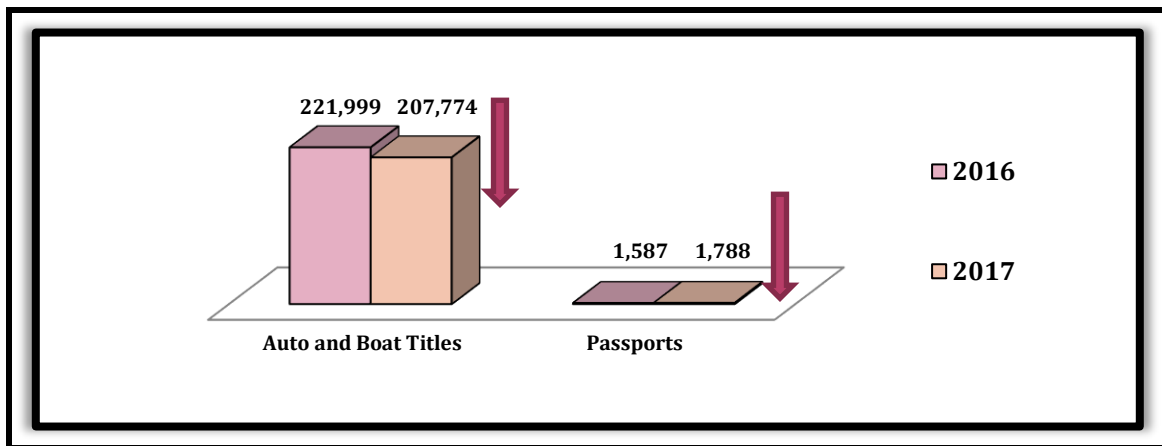
**Title Department** - The Title Department is responsible for issuing and maintaining all motor vehicle and watercraft titles in Fairfield County. This includes handling trailers, campers, motor homes, boats, and boat motors, all-terrain vehicles (ATV), off-highway motorcycles, wave runners, and jet skis. The Title Department also issues duplicate titles when the original has been lost or stolen, titles for new Ohio residents, and mobile home titles as well.



The Title Department processed 207,774 auto titles in 2017 compared to 221,999 in 2016 and processed 1,788 watercraft titles in 2017 compared to 1,587 in 2016. There were 209,562 total titles processed in 2017, compared to 223,586 in 2016, a decrease of 14,024 titles.

The Fairfield County Clerk of Courts has been designated as an authorized passport acceptance facility by the U.S. Department of State. A total of 1,678 passports were processed within the title offices in 2017, compared to 1,721 passports in 2016. The Pickerington Title office received a 100% passport inspection grade from the U.S. State Department (the Lancaster Title office will be inspected during 2018).

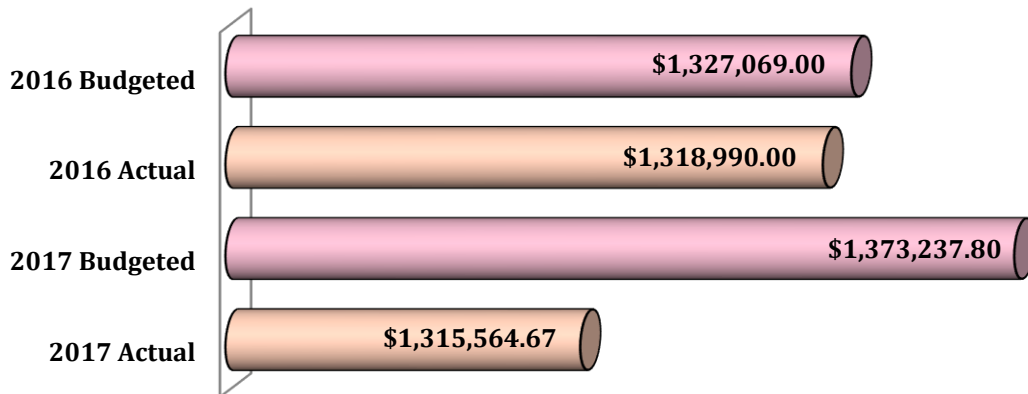
### **Title and Passport Statistics**



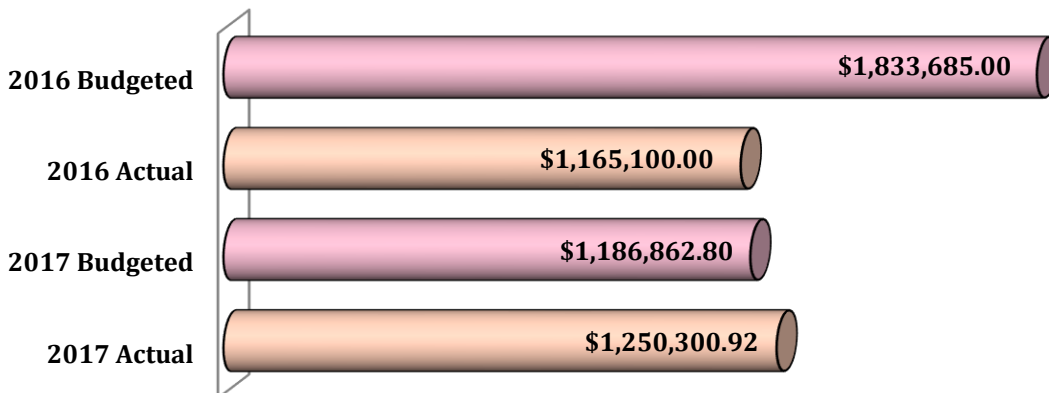


## 2017 BUDGET ANALYSIS

### Clerk of Courts - Legal (General Fund)



### Clerk of Courts - Title (Certificate of Title Fund)



The Clerk of Courts office takes seriously its responsibility to be faithful and committed custodians of public funds. The legal operation is funded by a General Fund appropriation and the title operation is funded by the Certificate of Title Administration (CTA) Fund. The CTA Fund (See O.R.C. 4505) is generated from title fees and not included in the General Fund budget. Due to a surplus in 2017 and in order to provide the County with a solid base for achieving future goals including the purchase and renovation of the County Records Center, Clerk Branden Meyer elected to transfer \$1,000,000 from the Clerk of Courts' CTA Fund to the Fairfield County General Fund.

# FAIRFIELD COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS ANNUAL REPORT- FY2017

## Monies Collected: General Fund and Certificate of Title Fund

### Account Distribution- General Fund

	2016	2017
Fees Collected	\$319,585.88	\$356,960.92
Computer Fund	\$49,434.18	\$89,575.07
Garnishment Deposit Received	\$512,134.94	\$576,168.70
Deposit Money Received	\$2,150,119.45	\$3,473,505.48
Bond Money Collected	\$166,256.25	\$147,350.00
Probation Fees Collected	\$83,881.58	\$75,491.34
Other Misc. Fees and Fines Collected	\$553,749.80	\$644,313.10
<b>Total Monies Collected and Distributed</b>	<b>\$3,835,162.08</b>	<b>\$5,363,364.61</b>

### County Remittance Summary- Certificate of Title Fund

	Amount collected and remitted to County	Amount collected and remitted to State	Total amount collected and remitted
Total Vehicle Fees:	\$1,915,142.25	\$602,903.75	\$2,518,046.00
Total Vehicle Taxes:	\$856,531.46	\$84,982,523.05	\$85,839,054.51
<b>Total Vehicle Fees and Taxes:</b>	<b>\$2,771,673.71</b>	<b>\$85,585,426.80</b>	<b>\$88,357,100.51</b>
Total Watercraft Fees:	\$22,793.50	\$6,226.50	\$29,020.00
Total Watercraft Taxes:	\$8,448.75	\$828,060.59	\$836,509.34
<b>Total Watercraft Fees and Taxes:</b>	<b>\$31,242.25</b>	<b>\$834,287.09</b>	<b>\$865,529.34</b>
Grand Total Fees:	\$1,937,935.75	\$609,130.25	\$2,547,066.00
Grand Total Taxes:	\$864,980.21	\$84,441,538.24	\$85,306,518.45
<b>Grand Total Fees and Taxes:</b>	<b>\$2,802,915.96</b>	<b>\$85,810,583.64</b>	<b>\$87,535,584.45</b>

## **2017 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**As of January 2017, all court exhibits formerly in the custody of the Common Pleas Court were transferred to the Clerk of Courts office.**

**Implementation of the new statewide Auto Title Processing System, ATPS Blue in January 2017.**

**Beginning in June 2017, all felony cases began being filed with the Common Pleas Court instead of Municipal Court.**

**One bail bondsmen registration list is shared between all courts within Fairfield County and bail bondsmen are now required to register only with the Common Pleas Court Clerk.**

**Identical bond forms have been implemented between all courts within Fairfield County.**

**Collected \$27,919.30 in delinquent debt collection through the continued partnership with the Ohio Attorney General's office to handle delinquent debt collection.**

**Continued to implement staff training for more efficient court services, heightened productivity and procedural accountability (i.e. annual mandatory ethics training, Workplace Harassment, Computer Security Basics, Preventing Accidents in the Workplace, Supervisor 101, Certified Public Records Training, CREST, and FMLA).**

**Continued to update and create new public information guides and forms.**

**Continued to image non-financial and non-court documents in MAPSYS system for organization and safe record keeping in preparing for the future move to the County Records Center.**

**Continued to participate in various workgroups initiated by the Fairfield County Commissioners and the Clerk of Courts Office (i.e. Records Center Initiative and the Chestnut Street workgroup).**

**Multiple staff members participated in Community Care Day and the Clerk of Courts office organized the annual silent auction to benefit United Way of Fairfield County.**

**Due to a surplus in 2017 and in order to provide the County with a solid base for achieving future goals \$1,000,000 has been transferred from the Clerk of Courts' Certificate of Title Fund to the General Fund. Over the past five years \$4.15 million has been transferred to the General Fund.**

# FAIRFIELD COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS ANNUAL REPORT- FY2017

## Fairfield County Clerk of Courts Office Directory

[www.FairfieldCountyClerk.com](http://www.FairfieldCountyClerk.com)

[ClerkofCourts@FairfieldCountyOhio.gov](mailto:ClerkofCourts@FairfieldCountyOhio.gov)

**Branden C. Meyer, Clerk of Courts**

## Administrative and Fiscal Department

Hall of Justice, 224 E. Main Street, Lancaster, Ohio 43130

Main Line: 740-652-7356/Fax: 740-681-4770

	<b>Kelly Turben</b> <i>Manager</i>	740-652-7391	
Jessica Murphy <i>Administrative Asst.</i>	740-652-7396	Ashley Arter (Domestic)	740-652-7381
Britney Lee (Civil)	740-652-7389	Heather Winchell (Criminal and Payroll)	740-652-7367

## Legal Department

Hall of Justice, 224 E. Main Street, Lancaster, Ohio 43130

	<b>Cathie Warner</b> <i>Manager</i>	740-652-7392	
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### Civil, Criminal, Court of Appeals Divisions- Hall of Justice (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)

Main Line: 740-652-7360/Fax: 740-687-0158

<b>Jodie Duffee</b> <i>Supervisor (Criminal)</i>	740-652-7366	Kitty Kotora (Civil)	740-652-7365
Michelle Carper (Criminal)	740-652-7362	Jon Morgan (Civil)	740-652-7501
Jan Webb (Civil, Criminal)	740-652-7393	Wendy Tharp (Civil)	740-652-7390
Betsy Thompson (Court of Appeals)	740-652-7383		

### Domestic Relations Division- Hall of Justice (4<sup>th</sup> Floor)

Main Line: 740-652-7357/Fax: 740-652-7399

Ashley Brevard	740-652-7384	Tonya Sheets	740-652-7387
Traci Less	740-652-7380	Jeanie Wears	740-652-7379

### Records Division- Hall of Justice (4<sup>th</sup> Floor)

Main Line: 740-652-7358/Fax: 740-652-7399

Carie Fragoso	740-652-7382	Christy Barker	740-652-7502
Debbie Pitts	740-652-7386	Helen Berens	740-652-7503
Jess Bowlen	740-652-7385		

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Title Department			
<b>Lancaster Title Office</b> 982 Liberty Drive, Lancaster, Ohio 43130 Main Line: 740-652-7540/Fax: 740-681-4735			
<b>Bethany Ankrom</b> <i>Supervisor</i>	740-652-7548	Tina Childers	740-652-7553
Kourtney Enyart	740-652-7552	Debbie Hall	740-652-7542
Sue Hildinger	740-652-7555	Angel Horn	740-652-7556
Angela Kempton	740-652-7546	Maritta Walker	740-652-7547
<b>Pickerington Title Office</b> 485 Hill Road, Pickerington, Ohio 43147 Main Line: 614-835-2610/Fax: 614-833-5850			
<b>Ashley Cichon</b> <i>Supervisor</i>	614-835-2611		
Kristi Arter	614-835-2607	Karen Butcher	614-835-2604
Angela Blackburn	614-835-2605	Lisa Cain	614-835-2602
Heidi Culver	614-835-2603	Valli Delaney	614-835-2608
Robin Mathias	614-835-2609	Jamie Payton	614-835-2616
Sandy Warner	614-835-2617	Katie Wilkerson	614-835-2606



**Branden C. Meyer, Clerk of Courts**  
**740-652-7356**  
[ClerkofCourts@FairfieldCountyOhio.gov](mailto:ClerkofCourts@FairfieldCountyOhio.gov)