



BRANDEN C. MEYER
FAIRFIELD COUNTY CLERK OF
COURTS ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2021

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Clerk's Introduction	2
History of the Fairfield County Clerk of Courts Office	3
• Mission and Vision Statements	3
Departments within the Clerk's Office	4
• Administrative and Fiscal Department	4
• Legal Department	4
▶ Civil Division	4
-13 Year Foreclosure Statistics	5
▶ Criminal Division	5
▶ Domestic Relations Division	6
▶ Court of Appeals Division	6
▶ Records Division	7
• Title Department	7
▶ Title Statistics	8
▶ Passports	9
2021 Budget Analysis: Budgeted vs. Actual	10
Certificate of Title Transfers	11
2021 Expenses: General Fund and Certificate of Title Fund	12
Monies Collected: General Fund and Certificate of Title Fund	14
2021 Accomplishments	16
Fairfield County Records Center	17
Staff Announcements and Accomplishments	17
Fun Facts	18
Clerk of Courts Office Locations	19
Office Staff Organizational Chart	20

Dear Fairfield County Citizens and The Public We Serve:

I am extremely proud to present you with the 2021 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:

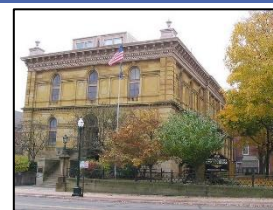
- All the records for the Common Pleas Court and the 5th District Court of Appeals are properly maintained and prudently secured;
- All motor vehicle and watercraft titles in Fairfield County are issued in the most efficient, lawful manner and preserved according to current provisions of the Ohio Revised 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

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, Clerk of Courts 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 four locations to serve the public throughout the county; the legal offices are located in the Hall of Justice in downtown Lancaster, the Fairfield County Records Center also located 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 5th 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 5th 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.

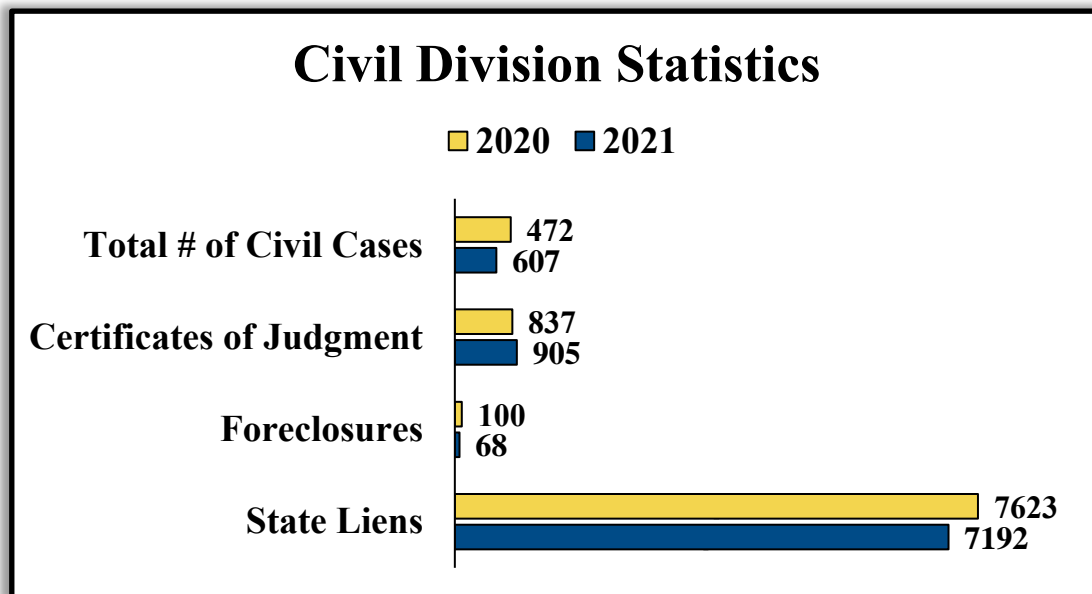
Administrative and Fiscal Department - The Clerk of Courts' Administrative and Fiscal Department provides integral support to both the Legal and Title Departments by overseeing all budgetary matters and performing the statutory fiduciary duties of the office by allocating funds, disbursing payments, 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.

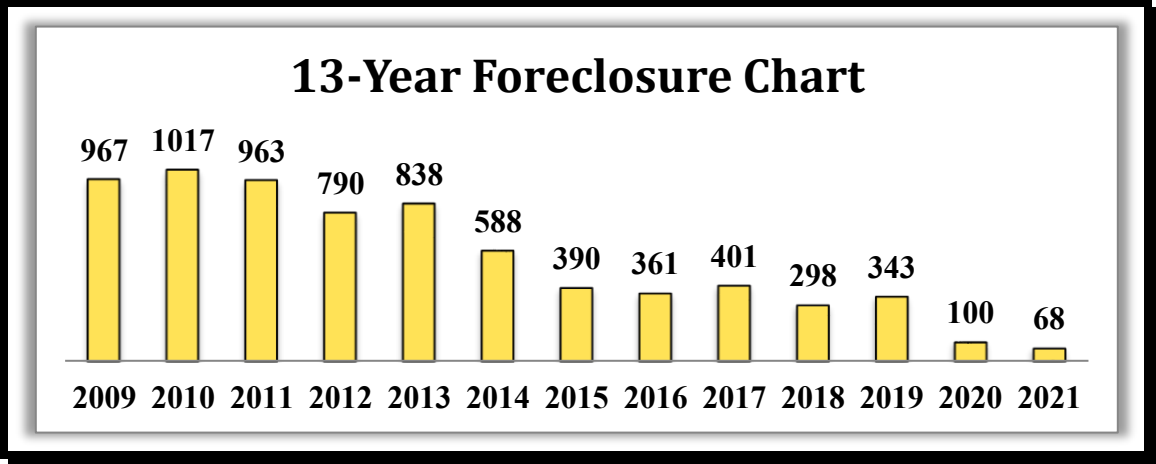


Legal Department - The Clerk of Courts' Legal Department handles documents or filings for five separate areas: the Civil Division, the Criminal Division, the Domestic Relations Division, the Court of Appeals Division and the Records Division. The Court of Common Pleas serves as a trial court for all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

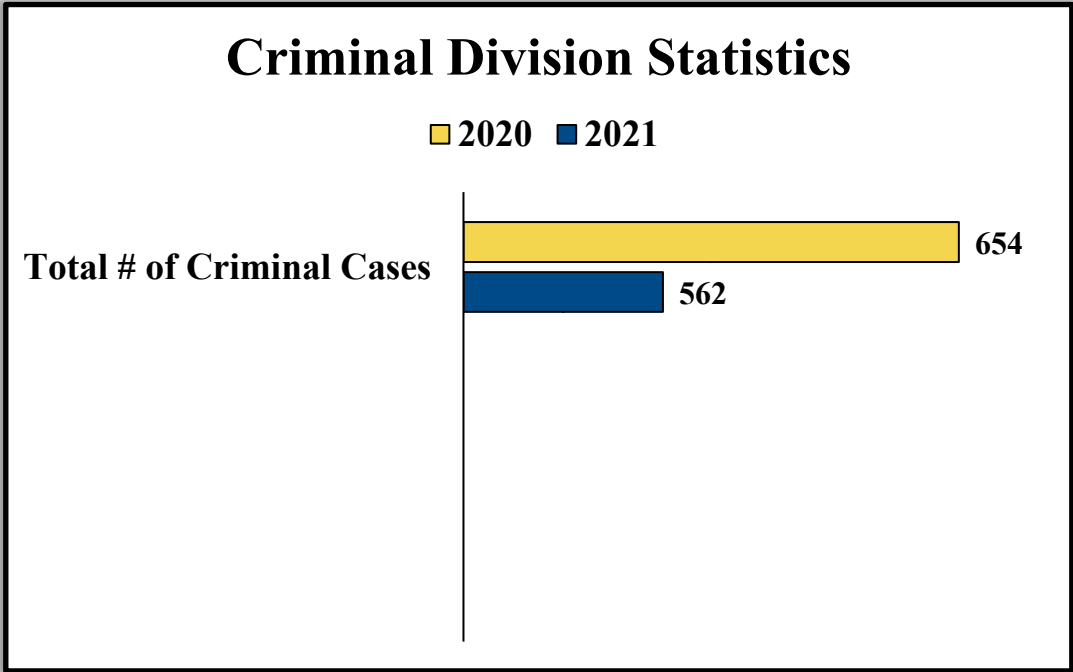


Civil Division - The Civil Division docket all pleadings in foreclosures, money judgments, garnishments, and other miscellaneous civil actions. The Civil Division also issues and files summonses, subpoenas, writs, Certificates of Judgment, and all other related service in civil cases.

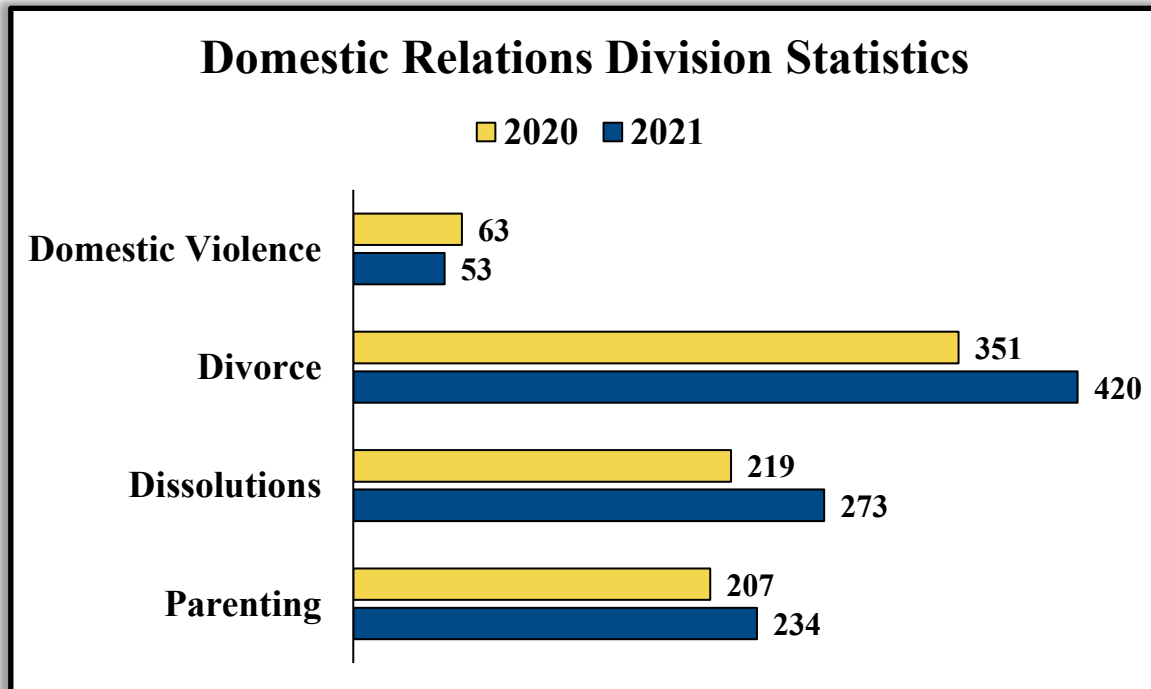




Criminal Division - The Criminal Division files and docket all pleadings in felony criminal cases bound over to the grand jury and all grand jury indictments. The Criminal Division also issues summonses, subpoenas, warrants, capiases and all other related service in criminal cases.

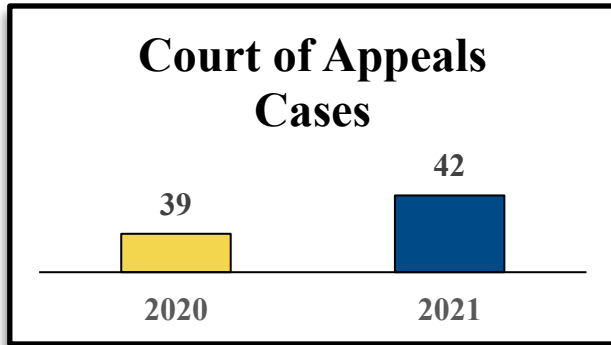


Domestic Relations Division - The Domestic Relations Division files and docket all pleadings in divorce, dissolution, parenting, and other miscellaneous domestic actions. The Domestic Relations Division also issues and files summonses, subpoenas, capias, and all other related service in domestic cases.

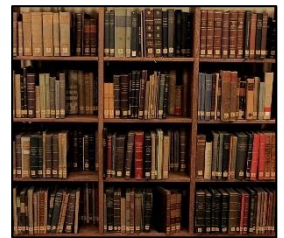


Court of Appeals Division - The Court of Appeals Division receives all filings and manages all paperwork relating to cases which have been appealed to the 5th District Court of Appeals. This includes any appeals from the Common Pleas Court, Juvenile/Probate Court, and the Municipal Court in Fairfield County. As indicated in the chart below, there were 56 Court of Appeals cases filed in 2019 and 39 Court of Appeals cases filed in 2020.





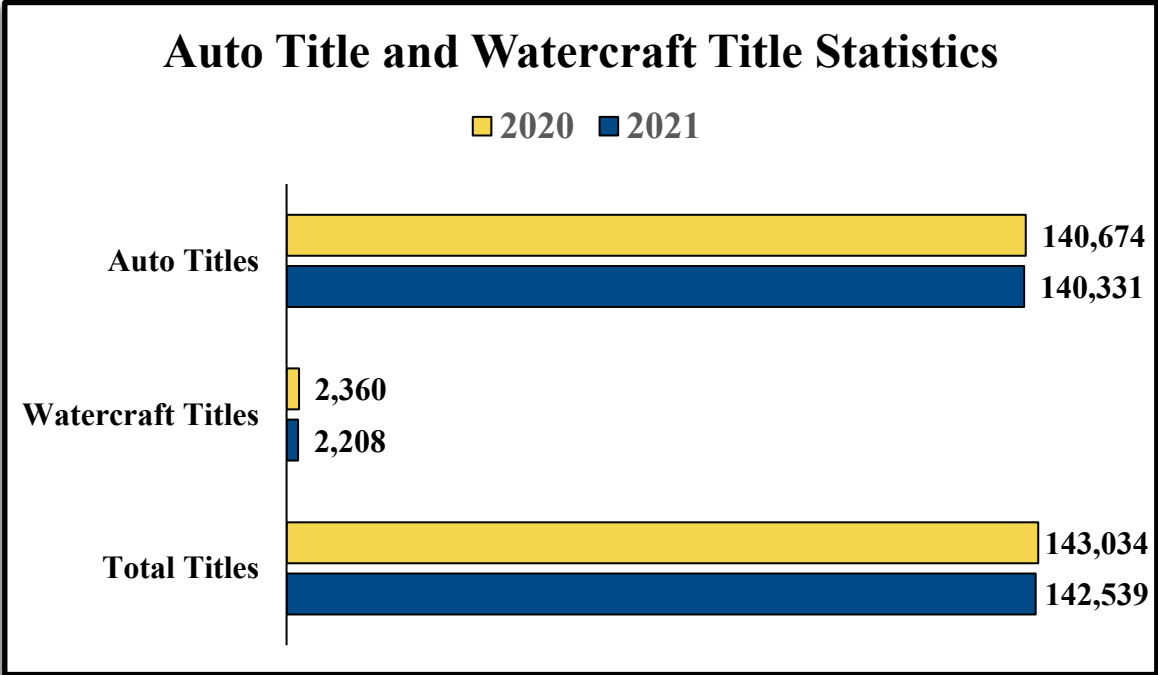
Records Division - The Records Division of the Clerk's office is responsible for protecting, preserving, and disseminating official records in accordance with the records retention schedule according to state archival standards and state and federal law. The Records Division also provides public access 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. Records staff work in both the Hall of Justice and also at the Fairfield County Records Center.



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.

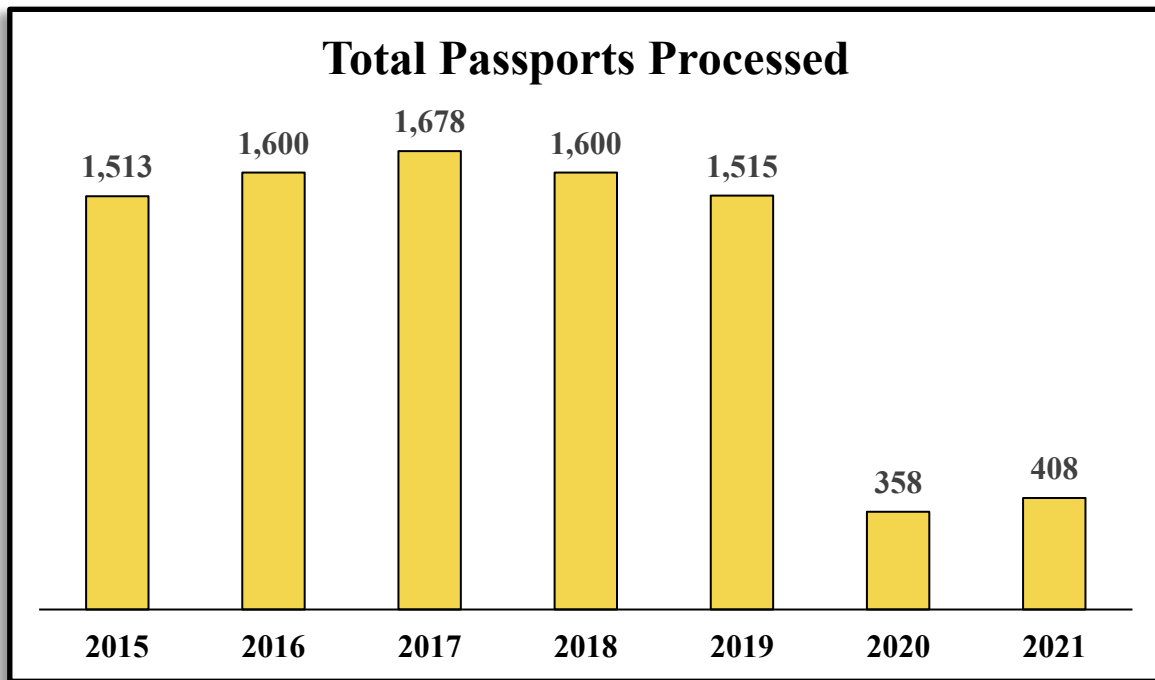
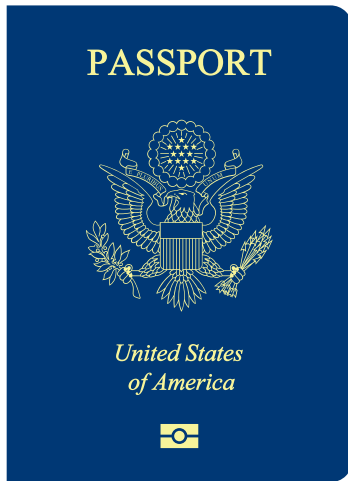


The Title Department processed 140,331 auto titles in 2021 compared to 140,674 in 2020 and processed 2,208 watercraft titles in 2021 compared to 2,360 in 2020. There were 142,539 total titles processed in 2021, compared to 143,034 in 2020, a decrease of 495 titles.

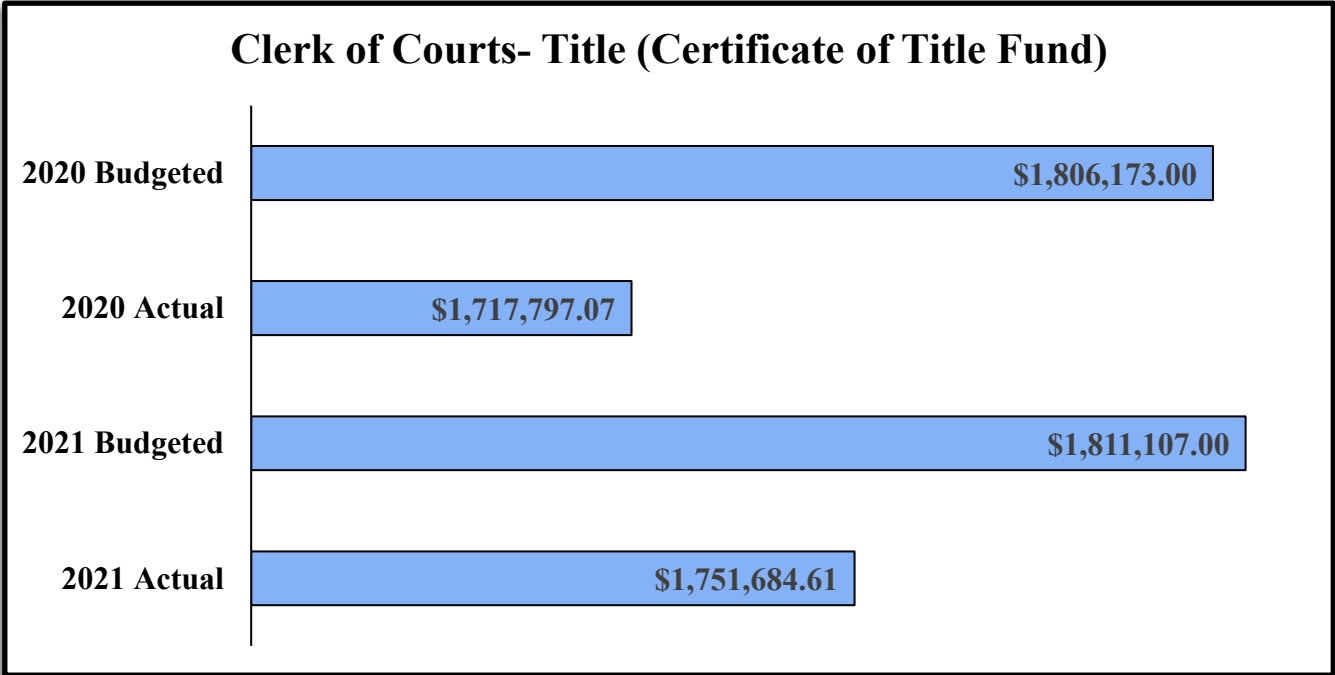
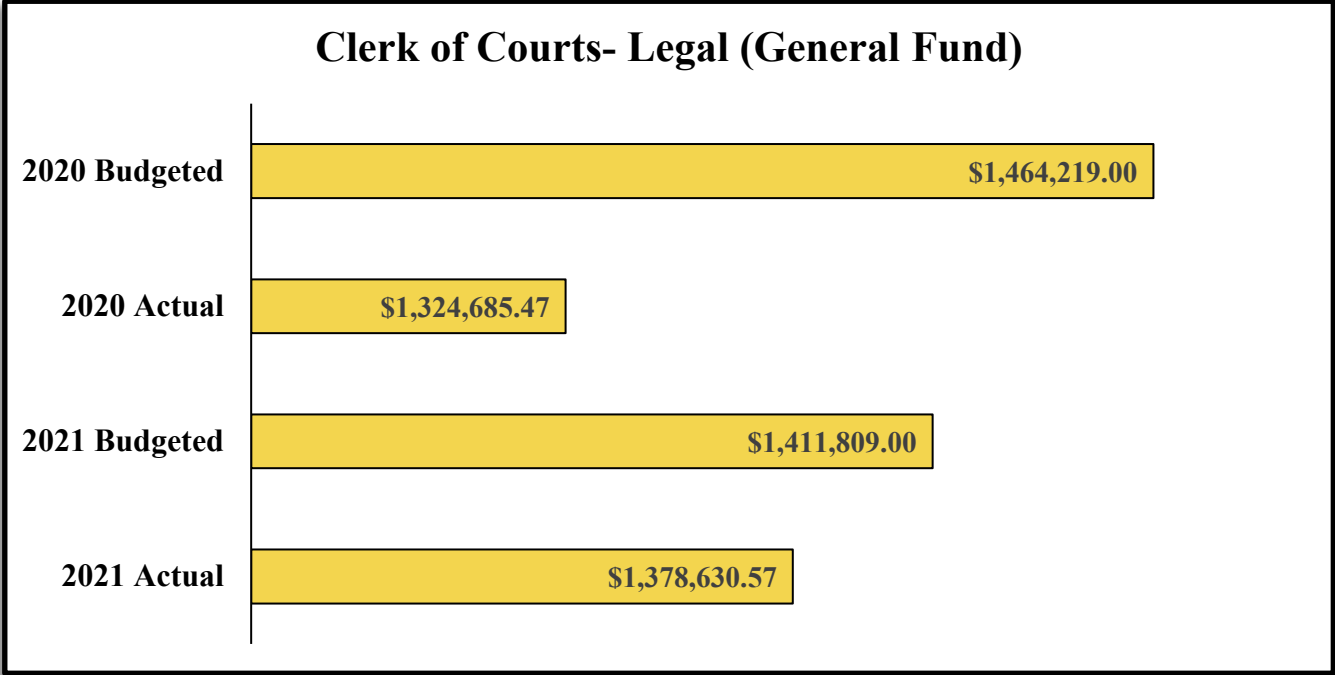


Passports

The Fairfield County Clerk of Courts has been designated as an authorized passport acceptance facility by the U.S. Department of State. Passport processing was temporarily suspended by the U.S. Department of State due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 408 passports were processed within the title offices in 2021, compared to 358 passports in 2020. The Pickerington title office received a 100% passport inspection grade from the U.S. State Department (the Lancaster title office received a 100% grade in 2018).

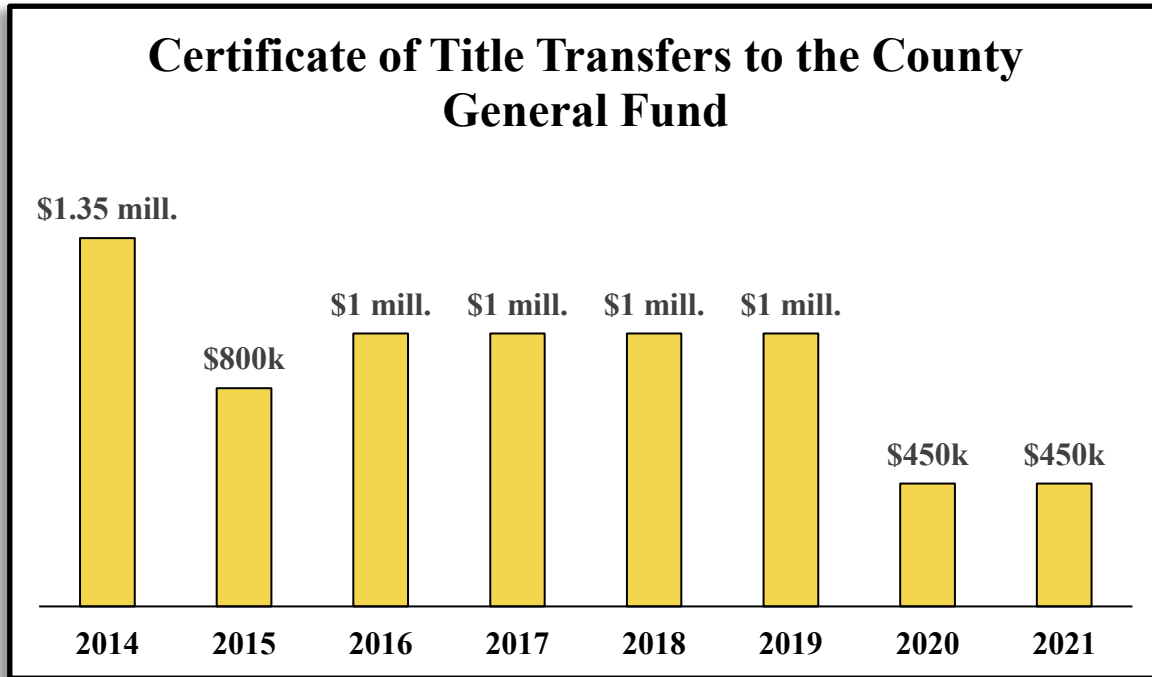


2020 Budget Analysis: Budgeted vs. Actual



Certificate of Title Fund Transfers

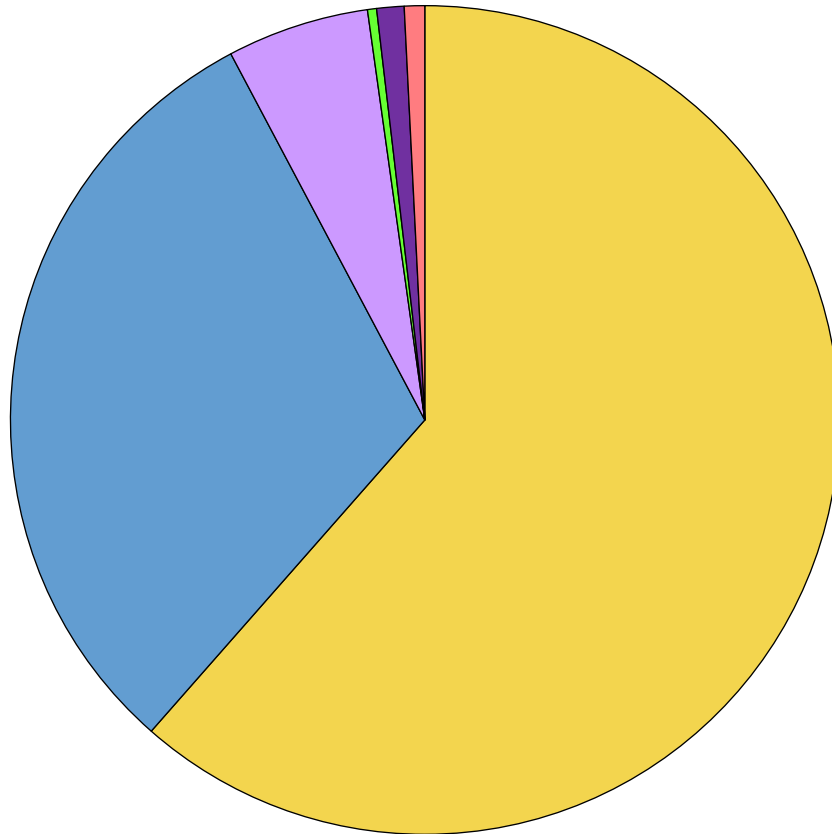
The Clerk of Courts office takes seriously its responsibility to be faithful and committed custodians of public funds. The legal operation is funded by a General Fund appropriation and the title operation is funded by the Certificate of Title Administration (CTA) Fund. The CTA Fund (See O.R.C. 4505) is generated from title fees and not included in the General Fund budget.



Due to a surplus in 2021 and to provide the County with a solid base for achieving future goals \$450,000 has been transferred from the Clerk of Courts’ Certificate of Title Fund to the General Fund. Since 2014 \$7,050,000 has been transferred to the General Fund.

2021 Expenses: Legal (General Fund)

Clerk of Courts- Legal (General Fund)

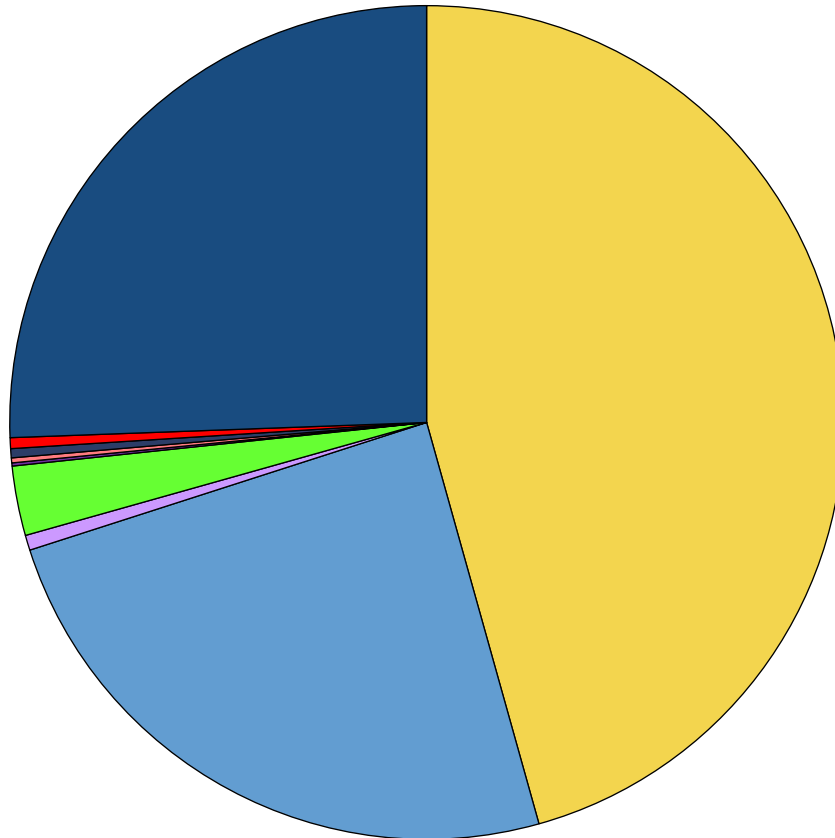


- Employee Salaries- \$846,071.88
- Employee Benefits- \$423,459.20
- Contract Services- \$76,257.31
- Training/Workshops/Travel/Fuel- \$4,896.84
- General Office- \$14,660.46
- Vacation/Sick Payout- \$10,908.49

**Line items under \$2,500 are not included on the chart above.*

2021 Expenses: Title (Certificate of Title Fund)

Clerk of Courts- Title (Certificate of Title Fund)



- Employee Salaries- \$803,098.37
- Employee Benefits- \$429,068.53
- Vacation/Sick Payout- \$10,291.42
- Contract Services- \$47,470.20
- Repairs & Maintenance- \$2,146.20
- Training/Workshops/Travel/Fuel- \$3,374.39
- General Office- \$6,235.50
- Equipment & Software- \$7,381.10
- Transfer to General Fund- \$450,000.00

**Line items under \$2,500 are not included on the chart above.*

Monies Collected: General Fund and Certificate of Title Fund

Clerk of Courts- Legal (General Fund)

Account Distribution	
Clerk Fees Collected	\$533,935.98
Computer Fund	\$149,017.80
Garnishment Deposit Received	\$602,422.98
Deposit Money Received	\$2,758,324.32
Bond Money Collected	\$262,300.00
Probation Fees Collected	\$228,483.71
Other Misc. Fees and Fines Collected	\$690,091.29
Total Monies Collected and Distributed	\$5,224,576.08

Clerk of Courts- Title (Certificate of Title Fund)

County Remittance Summary			
	Amount collected and remitted to County	Amount collected and remitted to State	Total amount collected and remitted
Total Vehicle Fees:	\$1,342,473.75	\$421,041.25	\$1,763,515.00
Total Vehicle Taxes:	\$799,486.02	\$79,913,182.57	\$80,712,668.59
Total Vehicle Fees and Taxes:	\$2,141,959.77	\$80,334,223.82	\$82,476,183.59
Total Watercraft Fees:	\$25,844.50	\$6,766.50	\$32,611.00
Total Watercraft Taxes:	\$13,851.18	\$1,357,553.08	\$1,371,404.26
Total Watercraft Fees and Taxes:	\$39,695.68	\$1,364,319.58	\$1,404,015.26
Grand Total Fees:	\$1,383,378.25	\$424,197.00	\$1,755,762.35
Grand Total Taxes:	\$813,337.20	\$71,381,544.40	\$72,097,946.75
Grand Total Fees and Taxes:	\$2,047,967.70	\$71,805,741.40	\$73,853,709.10

Clerk of Courts- Legal (Computer Fund)

Account Distribution	
Computer Fund	\$146,860.57

Clerk of Courts- Monies Collected

Monies Collected by Payment Type	
Total ACH Payments	\$41,257,235.52
Total ADA Payments	\$595.92
Total Cash Payments	\$1,300,598.09
Total Check Payments	\$33,617,000.00
Total Credit Card Payments	\$1,095,262.39
Total EFT Payments	\$20,970.00
Total Monies Collected by Payment Type	\$77,291,661.92

2021 Accomplishments



Total 2021 collections received from partnership with the Ohio Attorney General's Office Debt Collection Program is \$33,873.43 as of October 21, 2019 (Domestic, Civil, and Criminal). Total collected amount since participation in the program began is \$105,401.11. Collections began at the end of calendar year 2015.



In working with the Ohio Clerk of Courts Association (OCCA) we assisted with the development of www.OhioLegalHelp.org, a free online resource for legal aid.

All documents filed in January 2018 to present date, except for documents in Domestic Relations cases, are viewable online. Staff members are continuously working on redacting confidential information from images to expand and increase the number of documents that are available online.

Continued to require mandatory staff training for more efficient services, heightened productivity, and procedural accountability (Ethical Behavior for Local Government, Ethics for Court Employees, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, Legal Advice vs. Legal Information, Computer Security Basics, Preventing Accidents in the Workplace, Customer Service for Court Employees, FLMA, Certified Public Records Training, and Supervisor 101).

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 (Records Center Committee, Recruitment and Retention Committee and the Environmental Stewardship Committee).

Continued Saturday hours at the Lancaster and Pickerington Title Offices with no salary increase due to flextime.

Continued accepting online and over the phone credit card payment capabilities through LexisNexis VitalChek so that paying court costs is more convenient for our customers and to increase collections.

Continued to serve as custodian for all exhibits formerly in the custody of the Common Pleas Court (transferred to the Clerk of Courts on January 20, 2017).

The Clerk of Courts office received a \$10,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to purchase a live scan fingerprint machine. The machine will be housed at the Hall of Justice to fingerprint individuals on site rather than at the Sheriff's Office.

Fairfield County Records Center

In 2019, the move of the Clerk of Courts records which consisted of 3,456 boxes and 3,736 journals to the new Records Center was completed. Clerk of Courts staff re-boxed all files and assisted the other county departments on their individual moves to the new facility that included 6,658 boxes and 8,710 journals. The 16,320 square foot facility houses the records for nearly all county departments. In addition to records storage, the building county office space including the offices for the human resources department and a training room that is used for trainings and meetings.

Staff Announcements and Accomplishments



Fairfield County's Annual Employee Recognition Event: Cathie Warner (30 years) and Jan Webb (30 years) along with Clerk of Courts Branden Meyer.



Fairfield County's Annual Employee Recognition Event: Robin Mathias (25 years) along with Clerk of Courts Branden Meyer.



Fairfield County's Annual Employee Recognition Event: Michelle Carper (15 years) along with Clerk of Courts Branden Meyer.

- Administrative & Fiscal Manager Kelly Turben retired after 27 years of service with Fairfield County.
- Legal & Title Manager Cathie Warner has been named Chief Deputy.
- Fiscal Specialist Britney Lee has transitioned into the Administrative & Fiscal Manager position.
- Legal Supervisor Michelle Carper has transitioned into the Legal Manager position.
- After leaving to work for the County HR Department, Cassie Strickler has returned to the office to serve in the role of Special Projects Director/Executive Assistant.

Fun Facts

1,971=
most titles processed
in one day
(June 6, 2016).

22,007=
most titles processed
in one month
(March 2016).

1780=
the oldest document in our
historical archives is a land
document from Thomas
Jefferson (July 12, 1780).

223,586=
most titles processed
in one year (2016).

1803= the year the
first Fairfield County
Clerk of Courts was
appointed
(Hugh Boyle).

2,786,750=
website hits in 2021.
www.FairfieldCountyClerk.com

\$6,600,000=
Total amount transferred
(2014-2021) from the
Certificate of Title Fund to
the county General Fund.

43= the number of
employees in the
Clerk of Courts
office.

Clerk of Courts Office Locations



**Administrative & Fiscal Department
Legal Department**
Hall of Justice
224 E. Main Street
Lancaster, OH 43130



Records Division
Fairfield County Records Center
138 W. Chestnut Street
Lancaster, OH 43130



Title Department
Lancaster Title Office
982 Liberty Drive
Lancaster, OH 43130



Title Department
Pickerington Title Office
485 Hill Road
Pickerington, OH 43147

www.FairfieldCountyClerk.com

INSERT OFFICE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART HERE