

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Fairfield County Clerk of Courts

BRANDEN C. MEYER
CLERK OF COURTS



THE CLERK'S OFFICE

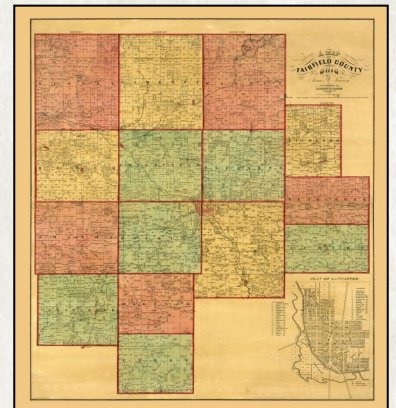
The function of the Clerk of the Common Pleas Court is to satisfy more than 250 state statutes and court rules. Among the responsibilities of the office are to: Provide public access to the records of the Common Pleas Court and the 5th District Court of Appeals; be the first stop in initiating any court 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.



A 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.





Branden C. Meyer
FAIRFIELD COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS

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

Dear Fairfield County Citizens and The Public We Serve:

I am extremely proud to present you with the 2023 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 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 many of 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

2023 STATISTICS

Administrative & 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

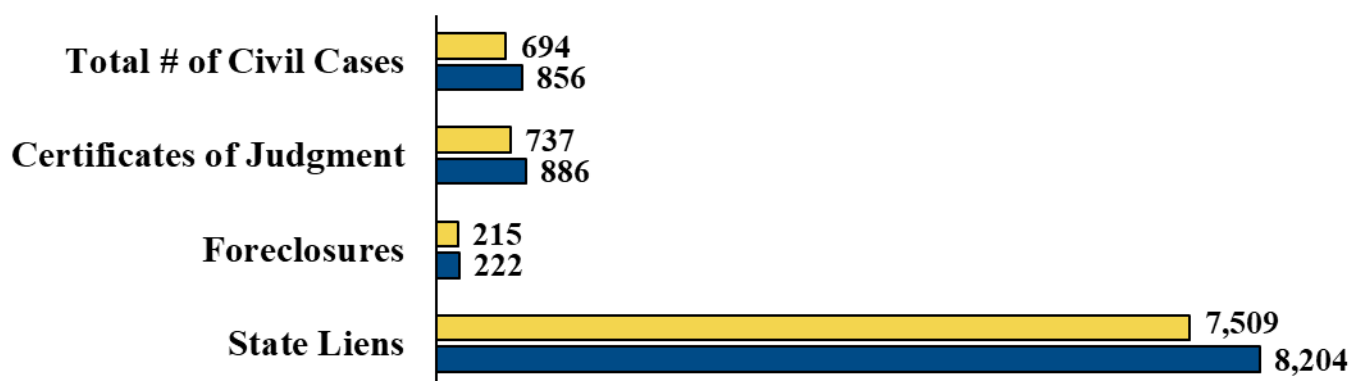
The Clerk of Courts' Legal Department handles documents or filings for five separate areas: the Civil Division, the Criminal Division, the Domestic Relations Division, the Court of Appeals Division and the Records Division. The Court of Common Pleas serves as a trial court for all civil, criminal, and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

Civil Division Statistics

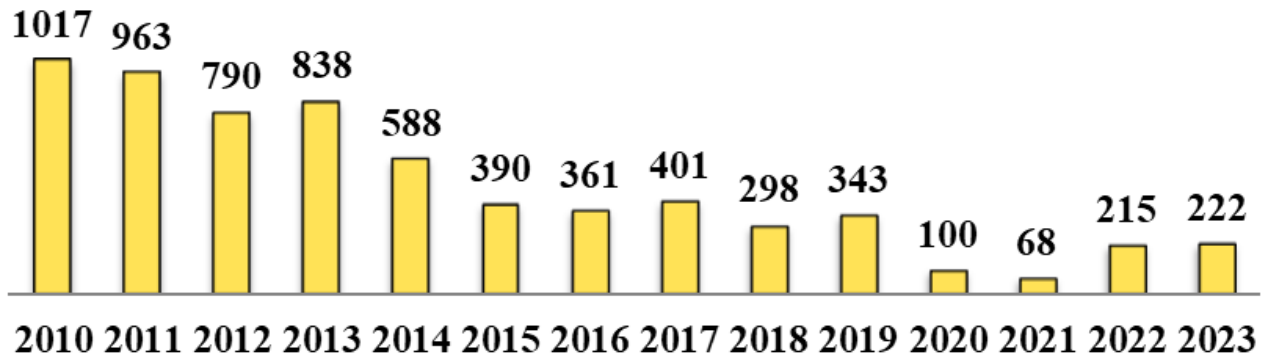
■ 2022 ■ 2023



2023 STATISTICS

continued

14-Year Foreclosure Chart

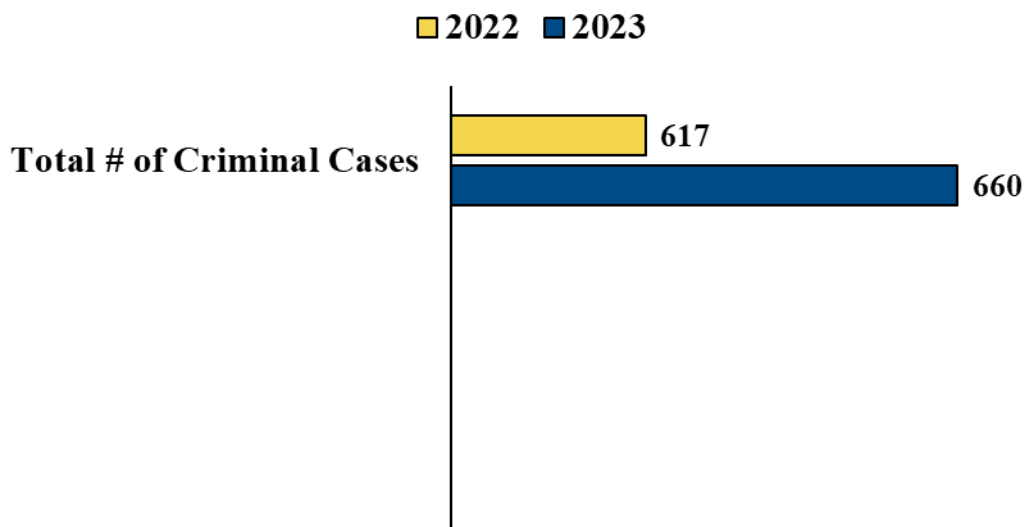


Criminal Division

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.



Criminal Division Statistics



2023 STATISTICS

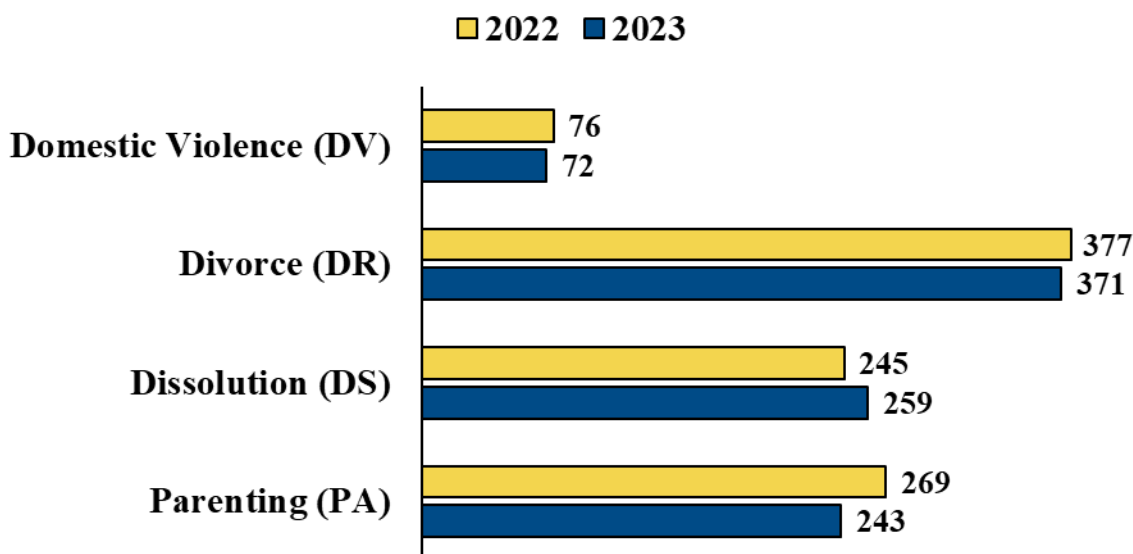
continued

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.



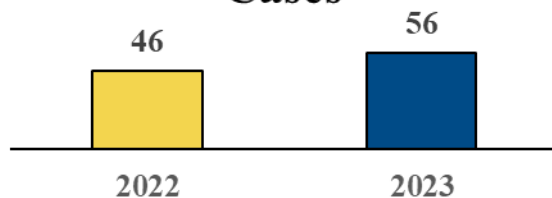
Domestic Relations Division Statistics



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 46 Court of Appeals cases filed in 2022 and 56 Court of Appeals cases filed in 2023.

Court of Appeals Cases



2023 STATISTICS

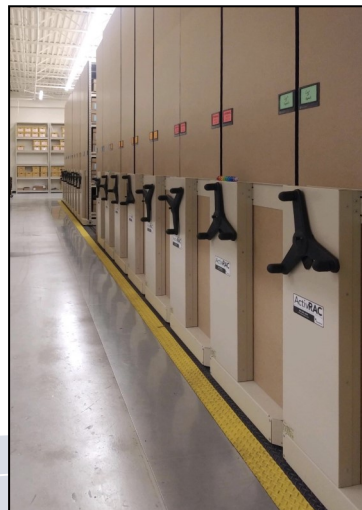
continued

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.

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 houses offices for county departments and a training room that is used for trainings and meetings.



2023 STATISTICS

continued

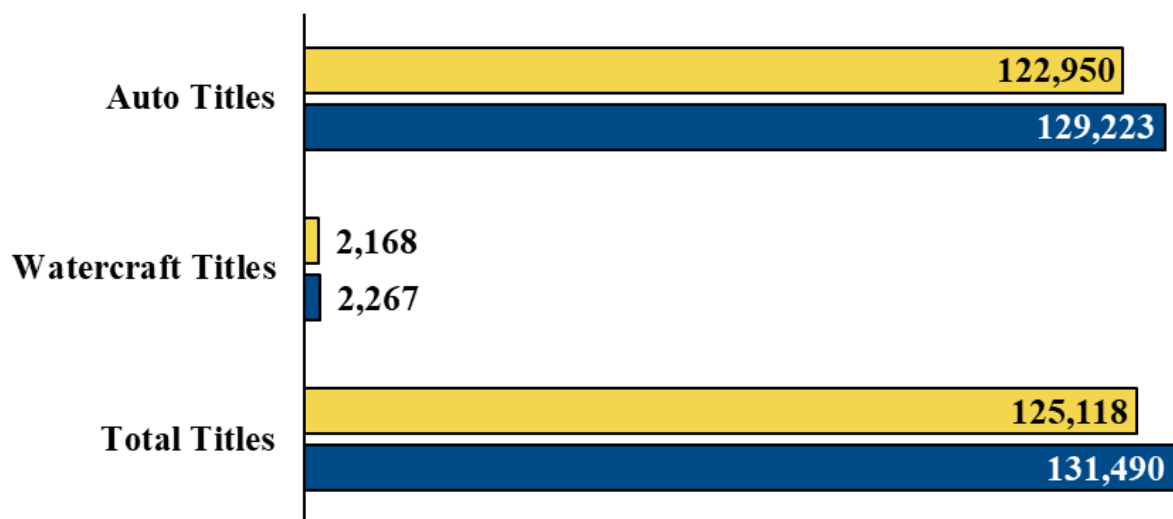
Title Department

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 129,223 auto titles in 2023 compared to 122,950 in 2022 and processed 2,267 watercraft titles in 2023 compared to 2,168 in 2022. There were 131,490 total titles processed in 2023, compared to 125,118 in 2022, a increase of 6,372 titles.

Auto Title and Watercraft Title Statistics

■ 2022 ■ 2023



2023 STATISTICS

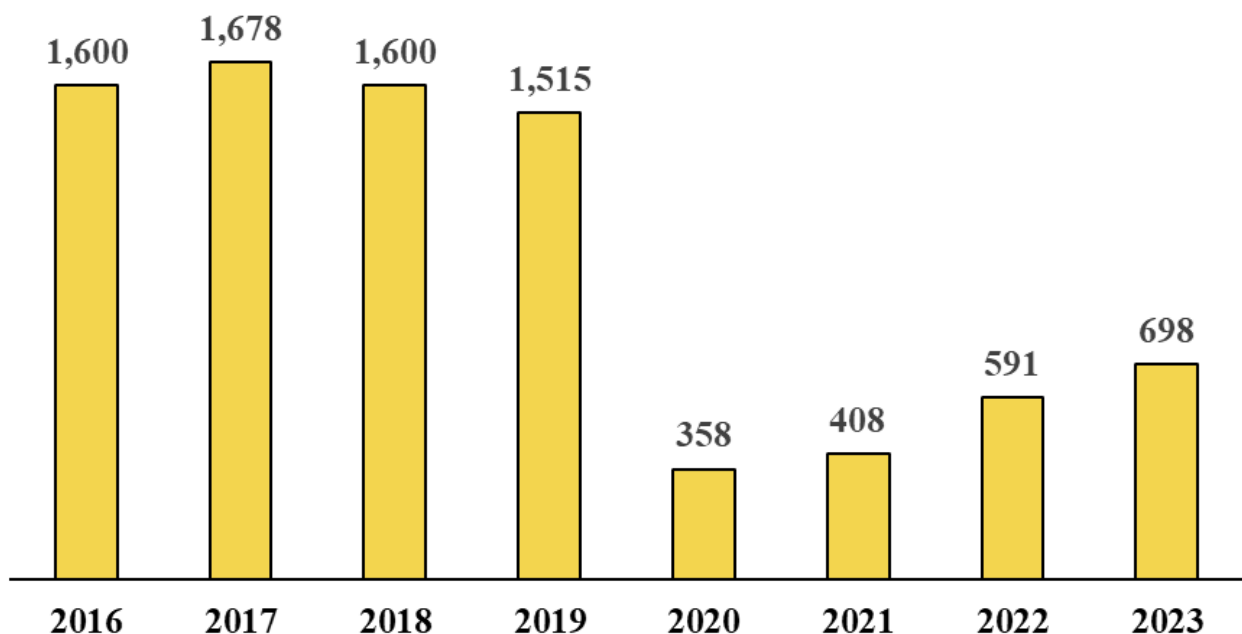
continued

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 698 passports were processed within the title offices in 2023, compared to 591 passports in 2022. 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).



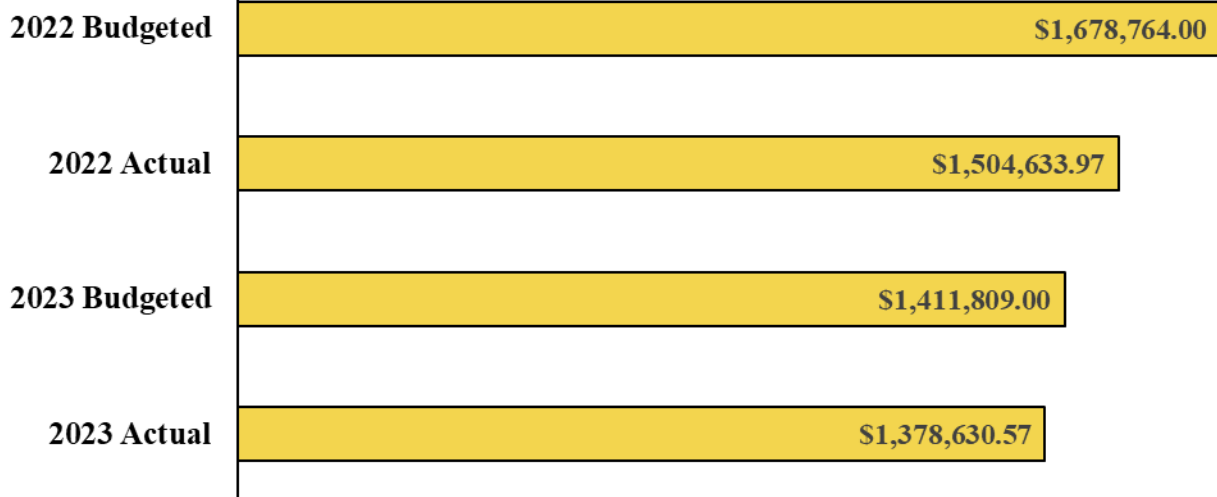
Total Passports Processed



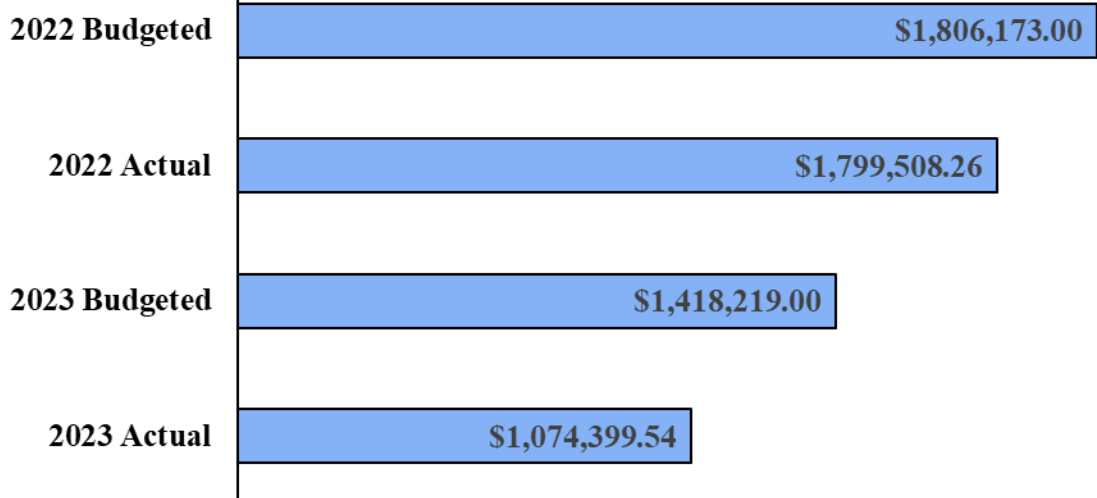
2023 BUDGET ANALYSIS



Clerk of Courts- Legal (General Fund)



Clerk of Courts- Title (Certificate of Title Fund)

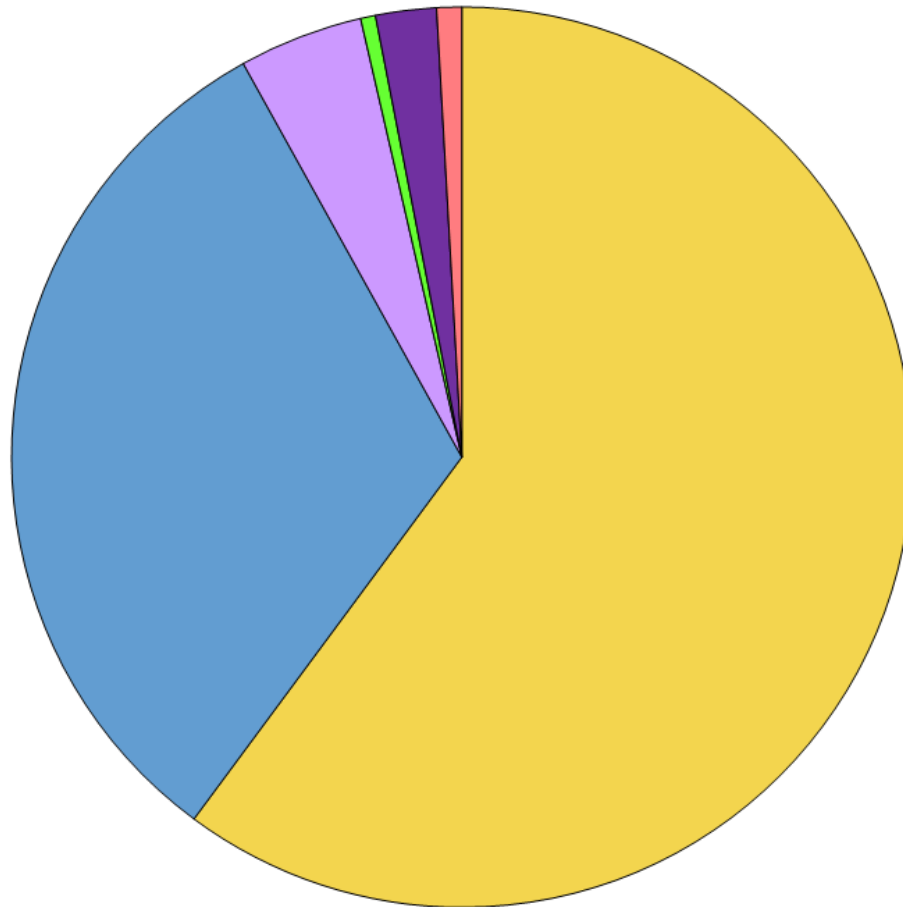


The legal operation is funded by a General Fund appropriation and the title operation is funded by the Certificate of Title Administration (CTA) Fund. The CTA Fund (See O.R.C. 4505) is generated from title fees and not included in the General Fund budget.

2023 EXPENSES:

Legal Department (General Fund)

Clerk of Courts- Legal (General Fund)



Employee Salaries- \$904,899.20

Employee Benefits- \$478,311.01

Contract Services- \$67,040.27

Training/Workshops/Travel/Fuel- \$8,081.23

General Office- \$32,829.32

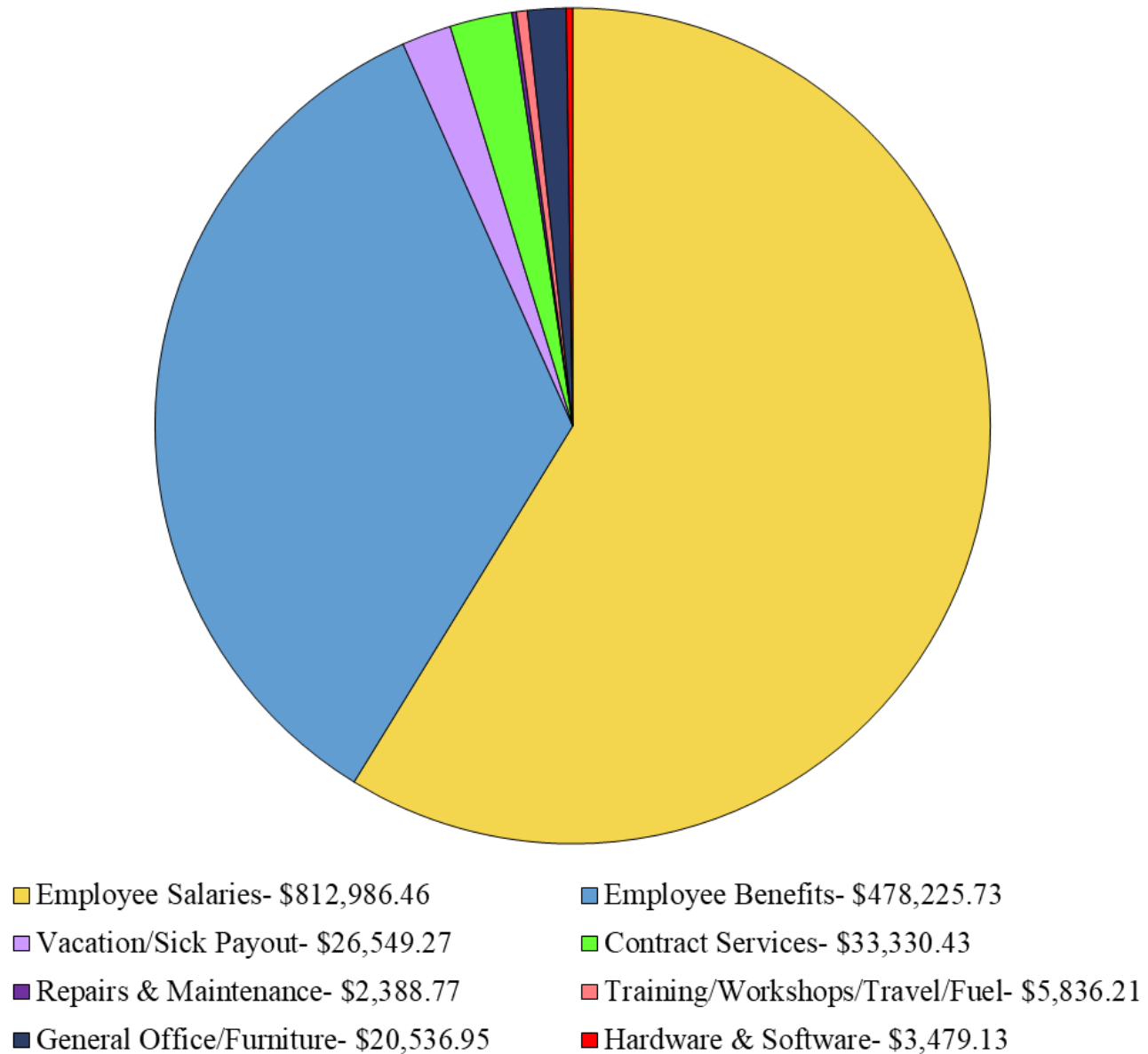
Vacation/Sick Payout- \$13,440.30

(Line items totaling less than \$2,500 omitted from chart)

2023 EXPENSES:

Title Department (Certificate of Title Fund)

Clerk of Courts- Title (Certificate of Title Fund)



(Line items totaling less than \$2,500 omitted from chart)

MONIES COLLECTED: GENERAL FUND AND CERTIFICATE OF TITLE

LEGAL: GENERAL FUND

Account Distribution	
Clerk Fees Collected	\$519,288.55
Computer Fund	\$149,408.89
Garnishment Deposit Received	\$632,077.70
Deposit Money Received	\$3,463,583.27
Bond Money Collected	\$272,858.00
Probation Fees Collected	\$160,966.41
Other Misc. Fees and Fines Collected	\$655,083.61
Total Monies Collected and Distributed	\$5,853,266.43

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:	\$1,226,695.50	\$387,197.00	\$1,613,892.50
Total Vehicle Taxes:	\$806,574.06	\$80,901,807.89	\$81,708,381.95
Total Vehicle Fees and Taxes:	\$2,033,269.56	\$81,289,004.89	\$83,708,381.95
Total Watercraft Fees:	\$26,253.00	\$7,236.00	\$33,489.00
Total Watercraft Taxes:	\$15,514.04	\$1,520,530.63	\$1,536,044.67
Total Watercraft Fees and Taxes:	\$41,767.04	\$1,527,766.63	\$1,569,533.67
Grand Total Fees:	\$1,278,303.50	\$394,520.00	\$1,672,823.50
Grand Total Taxes:	\$822,088.10	\$82,422,338.52	\$83,244,426.62
Grand Total Fees and Taxes:	\$2,100,391.60	\$82,816,858.52	\$82,917,250.12

MONIES COLLECTED: COMPUTER FUND

LEGAL: COMPUTER FUND

Account Distribution	
Computer Fund	\$152,130.88

MONIES COLLECTED

Monies Collected by Payment Type	
Total ACH Payments	\$60,818,112.49
Total ADA Payments	\$3,651.18
Total Cash Payments	\$1,260,076.55
Total Check Payments	\$22,225,339.38
Total Credit Card Payments	\$1,679,194.23
Total EFT Payments	\$19,380.00
Total Monies Collected by Payment Type	\$86,005,753.83



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).

5,210,311=
website hits in
2023.

www.FairfieldCountyClerk.com

\$7,800,0000=
Total amount
transferred (2014-2023)
from the Certificate of
Title Fund to the county
General Fund.

41=
the number of
employees in the
Clerk of Courts
office.

STAFF RECOGNITION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



Fairfield County's Annual Employee Recognition Event: Angel Miller (5 years), Erin Robinson (5 years), Ashley Bevard (10 years), Angela Blackburn (10 years), Dolly Jones (10 years), Sandy Warner (10 years), Jeanie Wears (10 years), Blue Jones (15 years), Debbie Hall (20 years), Angela Kempton (20 years)
with Clerk of Courts Branden Meyer, Chief Deputy Michelle Carper and
Title Supervisor Kristi Arter

RETIREMENT NEWS:

Chief Deputy Cathie Warner
retired after 32 years of service.

Title Deputy Clerk Lisa Campbell
retired after 26 years of service.

Title Deputy Clerk Robin Mathias
retired after 27 years of service.

EMPLOYEE NEWS:

Legal Manager Michelle Carper
was promoted to Chief Deputy.

Erin Robinson was promoted to
Legal Manager.

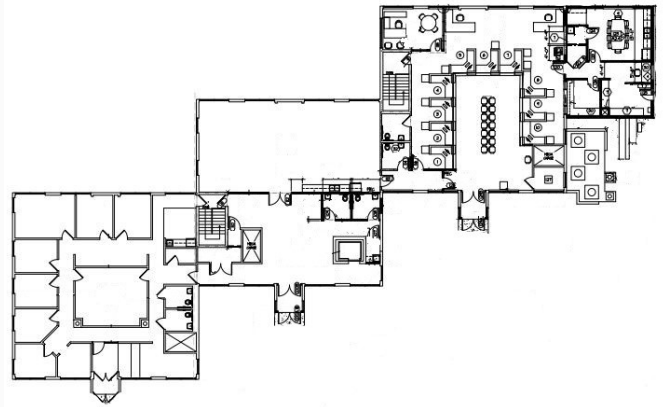
Betsy Thompson was promoted
to Floor Supervisor.

*"A company's employees are its greatest asset
and your people are your product."*
- Richard Branson

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

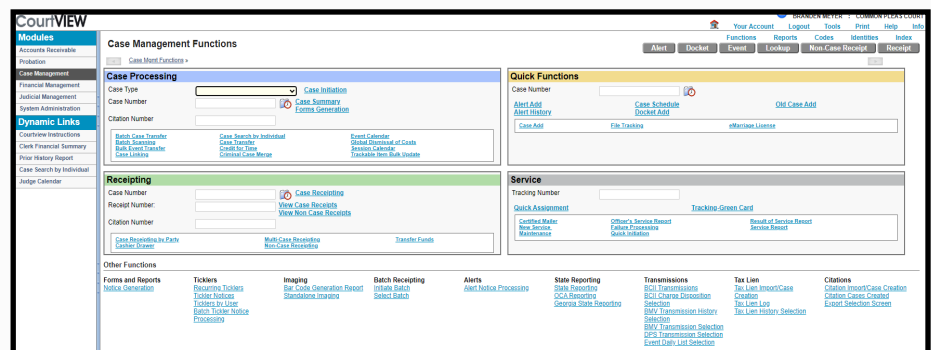
Fairfield Center

Fairfield County purchased the former Ohio University Pickerington Campus to relocate the Sheriff's Violet Township Substation and the Clerk of Courts Title Office. A few other county agencies will relocate to space within this complex. The existing Pickerington BMV will relocate to this complex in Summer of 2024. The site also includes the District Office for Congressman Troy Balderson.



Case Management System Conversion

The Clerk of Courts Office went through a conversion of the current case management system to the newest, updated web-based system CourtView 3. Other users of this system include the Common Pleas Court- General Division and Domestic Relations Division, Adult Probation, Prosecutor's Office, Sheriff's Office, and some sections within Job & Family Services.



AG Debt Collection Program

The total 2023 collections received from partnership with the Ohio Attorney General's Office Debt Collection Program is \$78,840.80 as of December 31, 2023 (Domestic, Civil, and Criminal). Total collected amount since participation in the program began is \$366,653.42. Collections began at the end of calendar year 2015.

OFFICE LOCATIONS



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



Records Division
Hall of Justice and
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
12945 Stonecreek Drive
Pickerington, OH 43147

STAFF DIRECTORY

Clerk of Courts

Branden Meyer

Chief Deputy

Michelle Carper

Court Deputy/Bailiff

Deputy Jerry Seipel

Administrative/Fiscal Department

740-652-7356

Britney Lee, Manager

Ashley Arter, Fiscal Specialist

Jessica Murphy, Fiscal Specialist

Cassie Strickler, Exec. Asst./Special Projects

Legal Department

Erin Robinson, Manager (CV- Berens/CA)

Civil/Criminal/Court of Appeals Divisions

740-652-7360

Betsy Thompson, Supervisor (CA/CR/CV)

Amanda McCrady (CR- Trimmer)

Angel Miller (CV)

Wendy Tharp (CR- Berens)

Colyn Weaver (CR/CV)

Jan Webb (CV- Trimmer)

Domestic Relations Division

740-652-7357

Ashley Bevard (DR/DS/DV)

Carie Fragoso (PA)

Traci Less (DR/DS/DV)

Regina Long (PA)

Records Division

740-652-7358

Christy Barker

Helen Berens

Jessie Bowlen

Brandy Brooks

Jennifer Hanes

Jeanie Wears

Title Department

Lancaster Title Office

740-652-7540

Kourtney Enyart, Supervisor

Tina Childers

Debbie Hall

Angela Kempton

Robin Mathias

Skyler McRae

Steve Sessler

Sandy Warner

Pickerington Title Office

614-835-2610

Kristi Arter, Supervisor

Frank Abrams

Angela Blackburn

Karen Butcher

Valli Delaney

Dolly Jones

Patience Martin

Consuelo Michael

Katie Wilkerson

General inquiries may be sent to
ClerkofCourts@FairfieldCountyOhio.gov

www.FairfieldCountyClerk.com

