

# 2024 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 1,000 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.

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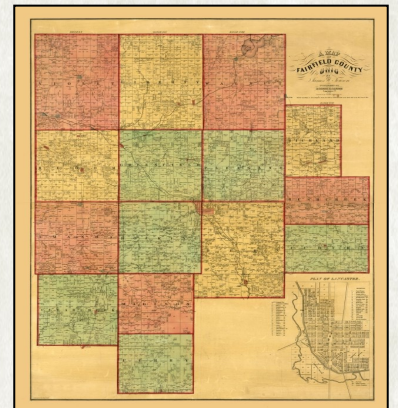
## MISSION

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.

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## 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.

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## 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 2024 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 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

# 2024 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

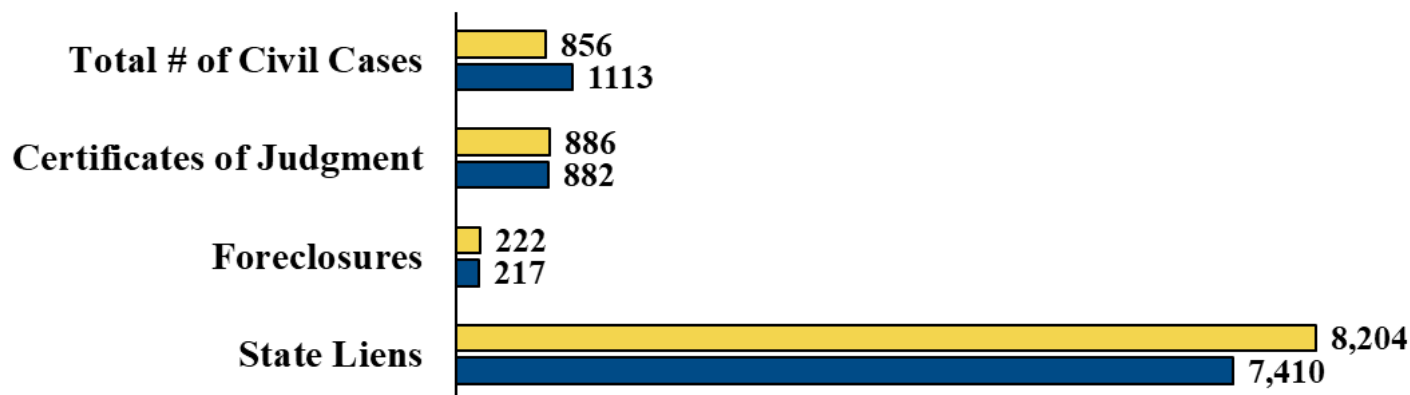
The Clerk of Courts' Legal Department handles documents or filings for five separate areas: the Civil Division, the Criminal Division, the Domestic Relations Division, the Court of Appeals Division and the Records Division. The Court of Common Pleas serves as a trial court for all civil, criminal, and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

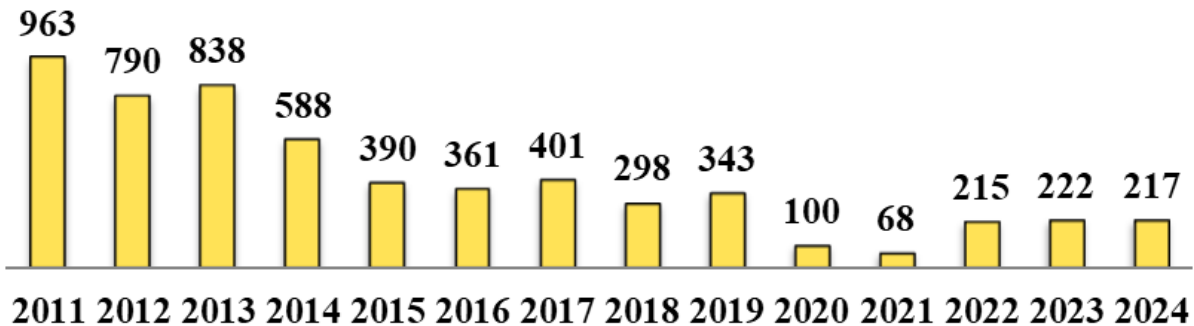
■ 2023 ■ 2024



# 2024 STATISTICS

## *continued*

### 14-Year Foreclosure Chart

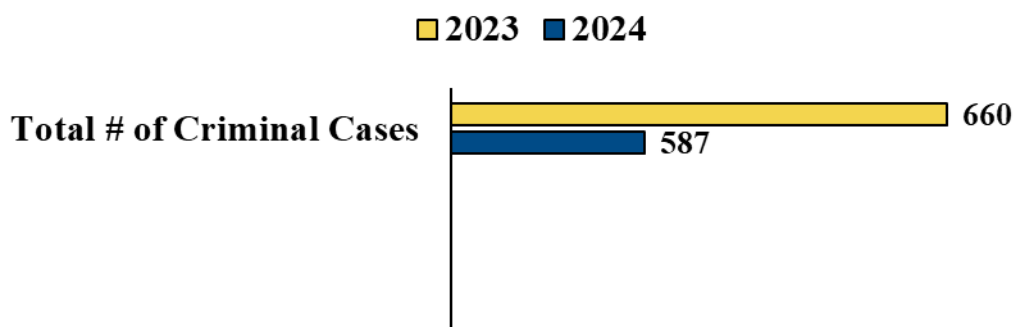


### Criminal Division

The Criminal Division files and docketed 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





# 2024 STATISTICS

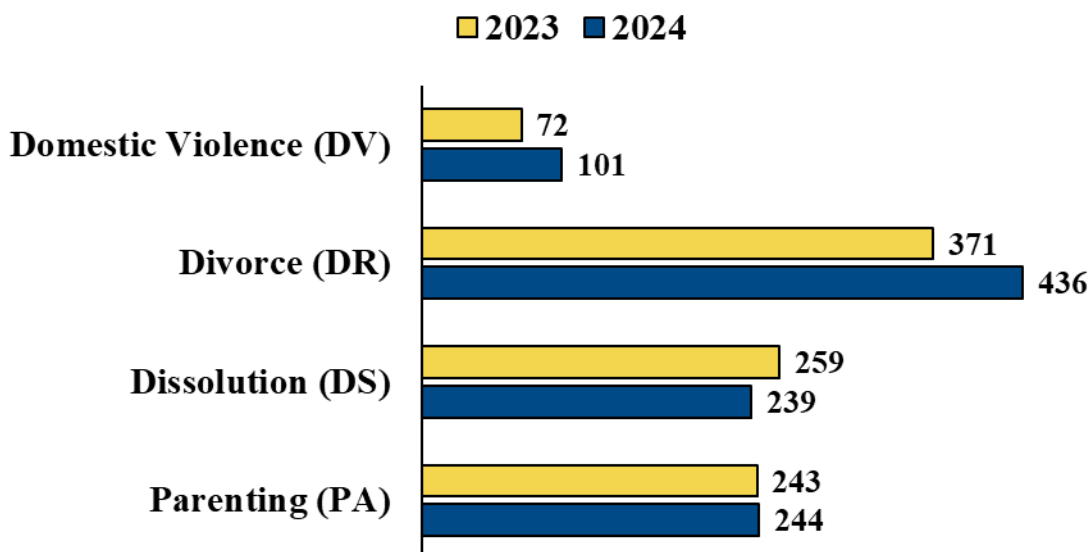
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### Domestic Relations Division

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 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 50 Court of Appeals cases filed in 2023 and 51 Court of Appeals cases filed in 2024.

### Court of Appeals Cases



# 2024 STATISTICS

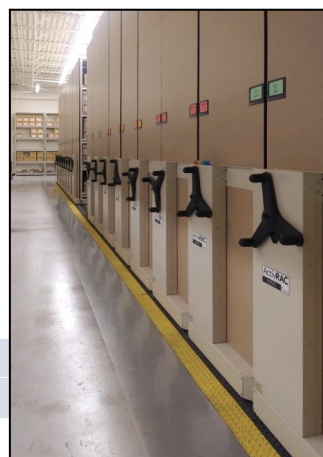
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### Records Division

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.





# 2024 STATISTICS

## *continued*

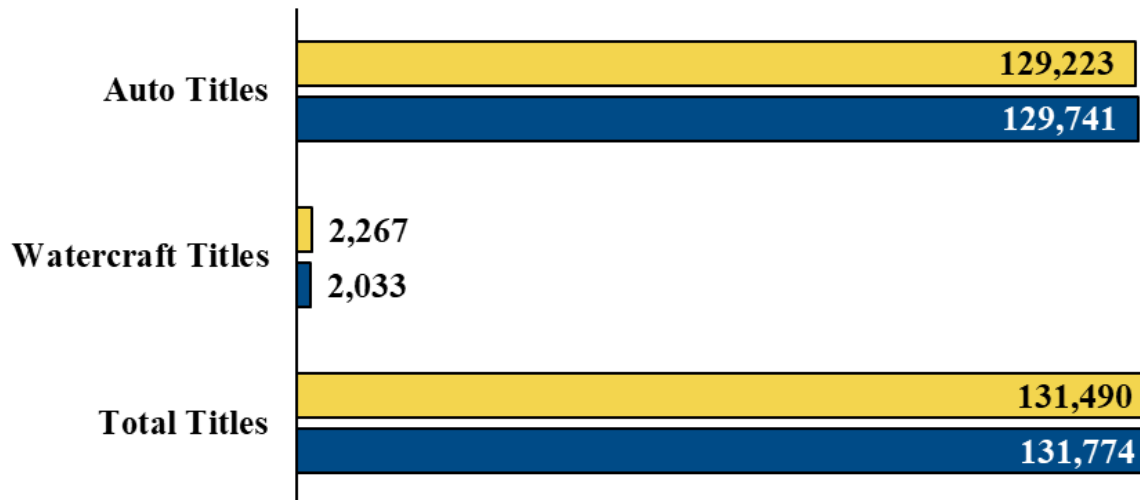
### Title Department

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 129,741 auto titles in 2024 compared to 122,223 in 2023 and processed 2,033 watercraft titles in 2024 compared to 2,267 in 2023. There were 131,774 total titles processed in 2024, compared to 131,490 in 2023, a increase of 284 titles.

### Auto Title and Watercraft Title Statistics

■ 2023 ■ 2024



# 2024 STATISTICS

## *continued*

### Passports

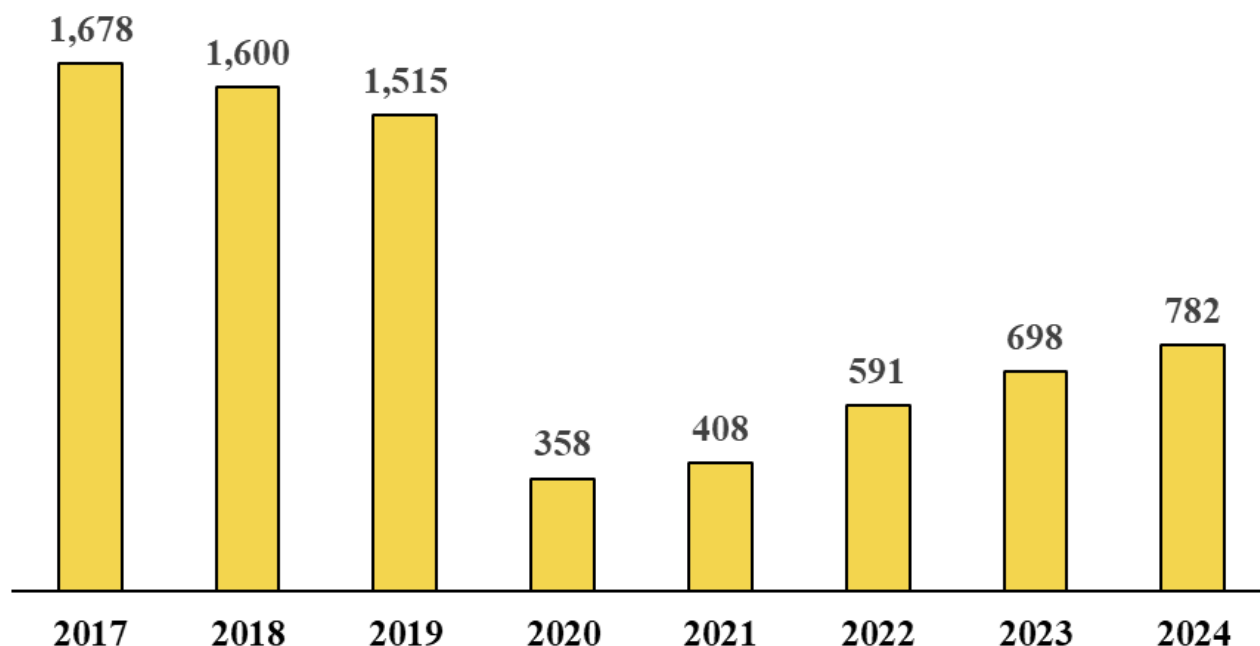
The Fairfield County Clerk of Courts has been designated as an authorized passport acceptance facility by the U.S. Department of State. Passport processing was temporarily suspended by the U.S. Department of State during 2020-2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 782 passports were processed within the title offices in 2024, compared to 698 passports in 2023. Both title offices received a 100% passport inspection grade from the U.S. State Department during their inspections in 2024.



### Passport Fees Collected

Passport Applications	\$27,061.00
Passport Photos	\$1,775.00
<i>*Started August 2024</i>	

### Total Passports Processed

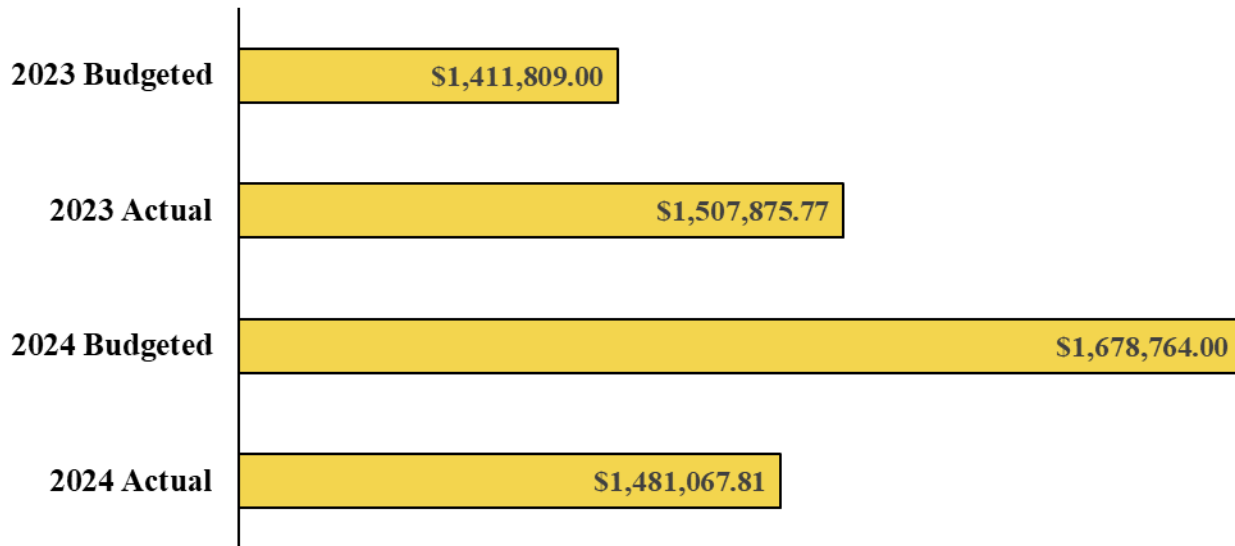




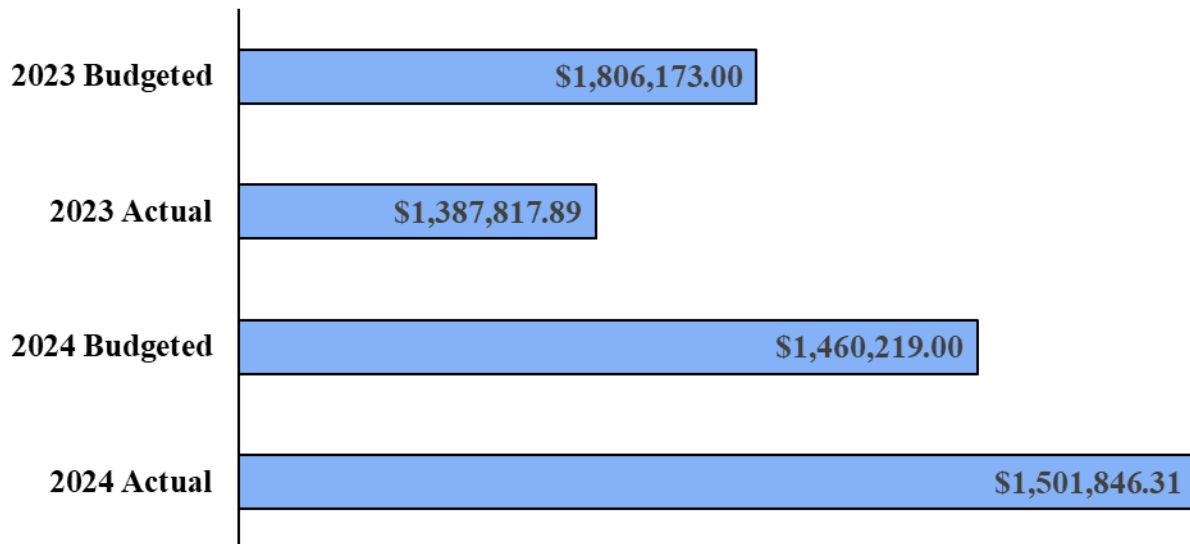
# 2024 BUDGET ANALYSIS



## Clerk of Courts- Legal (General Fund)



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

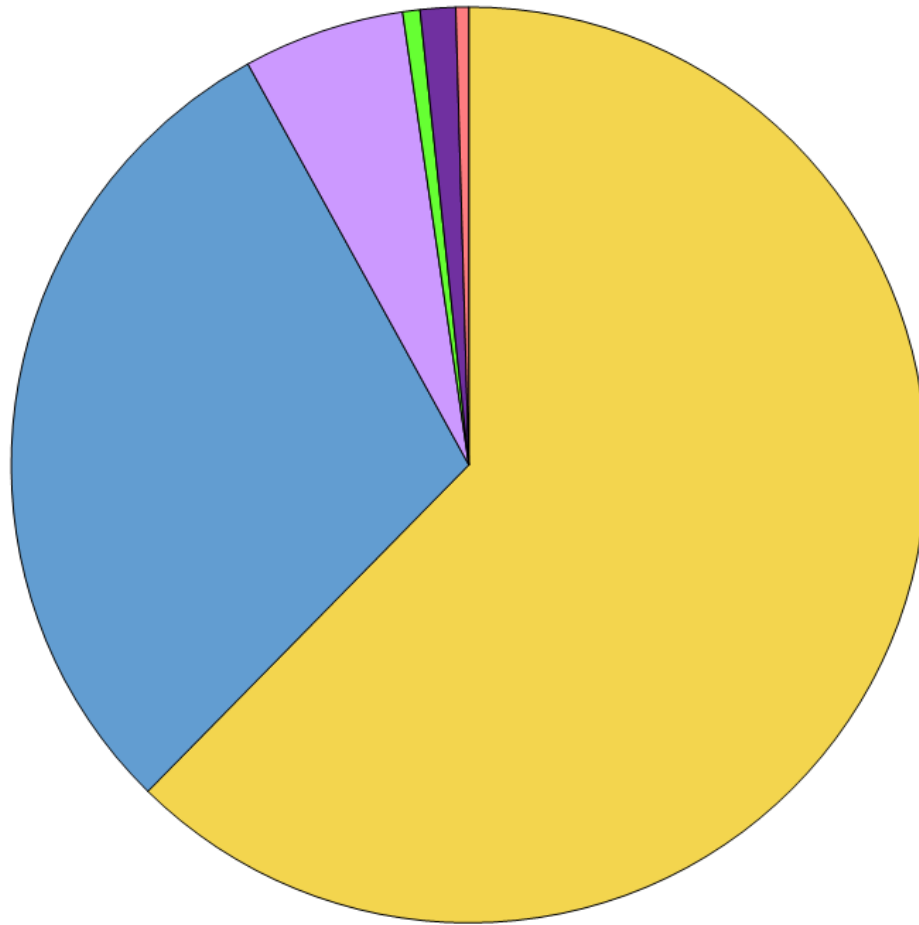


The legal operation is funded by a General Fund appropriation and the title operation is funded by the Certificate of Title Administration (CTA) Fund. The CTA Fund (See O.R.C. 4505) is generated from title fees and not included in the General Fund budget.

# 2024 EXPENSES:

## Legal Department (General Fund)

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



Employee Salaries- \$923,211.77

Employee Benefits- \$438,232.28

Contract Services- \$84,463.81

Training/Workshops/Travel/Fuel- \$9,064.95

General Office- \$18,87.10

Vacation/Sick Payout- \$6,719.90

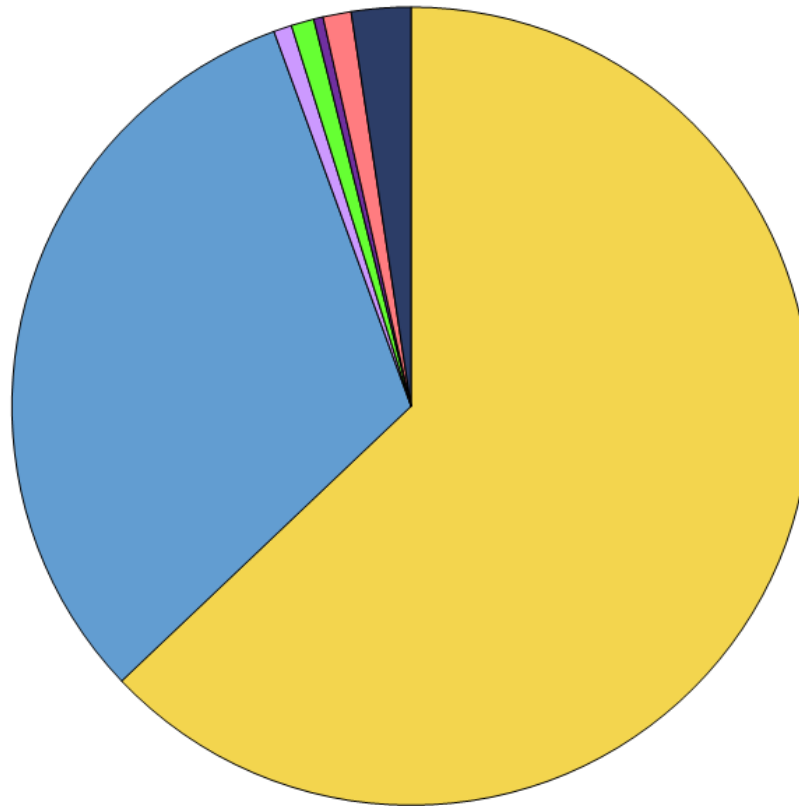
(Line items totaling less than \$2,500 omitted from chart)



# 2024 EXPENSES:

## Title Department (Certificate of Title Fund)

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



- Employee Salaries- \$941,103.66
- Employee Benefits- \$471,243.53
- Vacation/Sick Payout- \$11,028.98
- Contract Services- \$13,833.75
- Training/Workshops/Travel/Fuel- \$5,703.09
- General Office/Furniture- \$16,982.71
- Computers/Hardware & Software- \$35,988.42

(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	\$532,243.93
Computer Fund	\$150,334.03
Garnishment Deposit Received	\$827,276.54
Deposit Money Received	\$4,000,181.19
Bond Money Collected	\$435,850.00
Probation Fees Collected	\$190,350.74
Other Misc. Fees and Fines Collected	\$1,015,017.94
<b>Total Monies Collected and Distributed</b>	<b>\$6,850,589.31</b>

## TITLE: CERTIFICATE OF TITLE FUND MISC. FEES COLLECTED

Account Distribution	
Passport Application	\$27,061.00
Driver's Exam (March 2024 -December 2024)	\$42,265.00
Passport Photo (August 2024 -December 2024)	\$1,775.00
<b>Total Monies Collected</b>	<b>\$71,101.00</b>



# MONIES COLLECTED: CERTIFICATE OF TITLE FUND

## 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:	\$1,274,758.50	\$387,577.00	\$1,662,362.50
Total Vehicle Taxes:	\$815,757.11	\$81,806,332.83	\$82,622,089.94
<b>Total Vehicle Fees and Taxes:</b>	<b>\$2,090,542.61</b>	<b>\$82,193,909.83</b>	<b>\$84,284,452.44</b>
Total Watercraft Fees:	\$23,704.50	\$6,523.50	\$30,228.00
Total Watercraft Taxes:	\$13,769.08	\$1,349,506.78	\$1,363,275.86
<b>Total Watercraft Fees and Taxes:</b>	<b>\$37,473.58</b>	<b>\$1,356,030.28</b>	<b>\$1,393,503.86</b>
Grand Total Fees:	\$1,402,125.95	\$394,160.50	\$1,796,286.45
Grand Total Taxes:	\$829,526.19	\$83,155,839.61	\$83,985,365.80
<b>Grand Total Fees and Taxes:</b>	<b>\$2,231,652.14</b>	<b>\$83,550,000.00</b>	<b>\$85,781,652.72</b>

## TITLE: MONIES COLLECTED

Monies Collected by Payment Type	
Total ACH Payments	\$69,851,752.72
Total ADA Payments	\$9,116.93
Total Cash Payments	\$1,226,390.21
Total Check Payments	\$15,162,445.99
Total Credit Card Payments	\$1,818,976.36
Total EFT Payments	\$29,085.00
<b>Total Monies Collected by Payment Type</b>	<b>\$88,097,767.21</b>

# 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).

6,777,676=  
total website hits  
in 2024.

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

38=  
the number of  
employees in the  
Clerk of Courts  
office.

# STAFF RECOGNITION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Clerk of Courts Branden Meyer received his Certified Court Manager (CCM) certification from the Institute of Court Management of the National Center for State Courts in September 2024.**

**Fairfield County's Annual Employee Recognition Event: Ashley Arter (15 years) and Kristi Arter (20 years) are pictured with Clerk of Courts Branden Meyer. Not pictured is Steve Sessler (5 years).**



**RETIREMENT NEWS:**  
**Title Deputy Clerk Debbie Hall retired after 21 years of service.**

**Title Supervisor Kristi Arter retired after 20 years of service.**

**EMPLOYEE NEWS:**  
**Eugene McCollough was hired as Clerk/Court IT Director.**

**Deputy Clerk Katie Wilkerson was promoted to Title Office Supervisor.**

**John Dickey and Kevin Mapes were hired as Driver's Examiners.**



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



# 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Opening of Driver's Exam Station

The Fairfield County Clerk of Courts in partnership with the Ohio BMV has opened a Driver's Exam Station at the Pickerington Title Office as part of the Ohio BMV's Third Party Class D Program. Both the Driver's Skills Test and Maneuverability began being offered in March 2024. One or both of these tests may be scheduled online. Due to high demand, we hired a second Driver's Examiner and are now offering the exams Monday-Saturday. The office conducted 1,999 drivers exams in 2024.

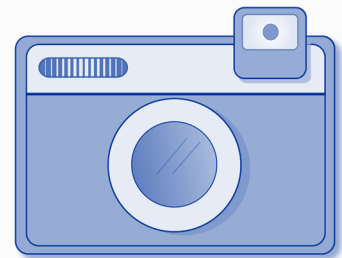


**Bureau of  
Motor Vehicles**



## Passport Photos

The Fairfield County Clerk of Courts Title offices are a one-stop Passport shop. In addition to being Passport Acceptance Facilities, both title offices began taking Passport photos in August 2024.



## Continuation of the AG Debt Collection Program

The total 2024 collections received from partnership with the Ohio Attorney General's Office Debt Collection Program is \$78,840.80 as of December 31, 2024 (Domestic, Civil, and Criminal). Total collected amount since participation in the program began is \$474,741.11. Collections began at the end of calendar year 2015.



# DRIVER'S EXAM STATION

## (PICKERINGTON TITLE OFFICE)

### DRIVER'S EXAM STATISTICS

<b>2024</b>	<b>Total Tests</b>	<b>Road Test- Pass</b>	<b>Road Test- Fail</b>	<b>Maneuver- Pass</b>	<b>Maneuver- Fail</b>	<b>Full Test</b>	<b>Partial Test</b>	<b>Total Pass</b>	<b>Total Fail</b>	<b>Equip Failure</b>
<b>March</b>	170	128	28	119	26	132	38	127	43	0
<b>April</b>	229	195	16	182	33	197	32	187	42	0
<b>May</b>	254	212	23	202	29	214	40	207	46	1
<b>June</b>	208	173	19	166	28	179	29	172	36	0
<b>July</b>	198	162	20	161	28	171	27	161	38	0
<b>August</b>	226	194	13	186	32	192	33	195	31	0
<b>September</b>	194	160	21	153	25	164	30	158	36	0
<b>October</b>	170	140	15	138	20	143	26	142	28	0
<b>November</b>	181	154	17	142	27	158	23	145	36	0
<b>December</b>	169	113	37	108	48	140	29	103	64	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,999</b>	<b>1,631</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>1,557</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>1,690</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>1,597</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>3</b>

#### Driver's Exam Fees Collected

**\$42,265.00**

*\*Started March 2024*

# 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**

Clerk/Court IT Director  
**Eugene McCollough**

Administrative/Fiscal Department  
**740-652-7356**

**Britney Lee, Fiscal Manager**  
Ashley Arter, Fiscal Specialist  
Jessica Murphy, Fiscal Specialist  
Cassie Strickler, Special Projects Director

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

Brandy Brooks

Jeanie Wears

Title Department

Lancaster Title Office  
**740-652-7540**

**Kourtney Enyart, Supervisor**

Tina Childers

Angela Kempton

Skyler McRae

Steve Sessler

Sandy Warner

Pickerington Title Office  
**614-835-2610**

**Katie Wilkerson, Supervisor**

Angela Blackburn

Karen Butcher

Valli Delaney

Patience Martin

Emma Martinez

Consuelo Michael

John Dickey, Drivers Examiner

Kevin Mapes, Drivers Examiner

General inquiries may be sent to  
**ClerkofCourts@FairfieldCountyOhio.gov**

**www.FairfieldCountyClerk.com**

