

# ANNUAL REPORT

For the Citizens of Clay County, Florida

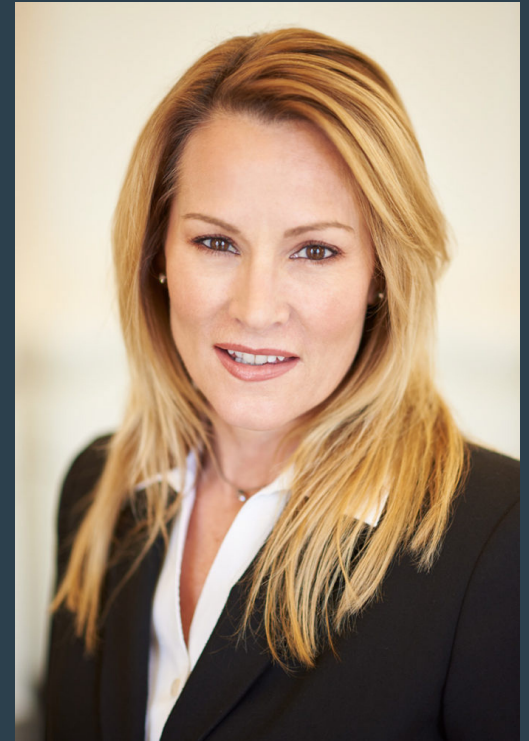
Fiscal Year 2020 / 2021

Provided by Clay County Clerk of Court  
and Comptroller Tara S. Green



# Mission

We are the guardians of Clay County's records and trustworthy fiscal stewards; we proudly support the judiciary, facilitating justice system access for our community through efficient service; we are accountable custodians of all county funds and financial reports, Clerk to the Board, and leaders in fraud and waste prevention; we leverage our expertise to provide reliable, helpful service to citizens.



# Vision

To be the most trustworthy, efficient, accountable and helpful Clerk of Court and Comptroller's Office in the State of Florida.

# CORE VALUES

TRUSTWORTHY

EFFICIENT

ACCOUNTABLE

HELPFUL

## **A MESSAGE FROM CLERK OF COURT AND COMPTROLLER GREEN**

As your elected Clerk of Court and Comptroller, I am committed to serving our community with my team of nearly one hundred highly trustworthy, efficient, helpful, and accountable clerks. You'll meet many of them on the pages of this report, plus, learn more about our mission to guard records and funds, support the judiciary, assist citizens and ensure the quality of accounting and county financial reporting. The valuable services and programs we provide to you locally mirror those provided statewide by our state's Clerks and Comptrollers across Florida. I am proud to serve you and to partner with my fellow constitutional officers.

It goes without saying, but any year impacted by COVID-19 will likely produce unique data when compared to "normal" years in the past or future. During the 2020/2021 Fiscal Year, despite the challenges, we united to protect the public trust while leading the drive for excellence in Clay County and in our state.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tara Green". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Clay County Clerk of Court and Comptroller

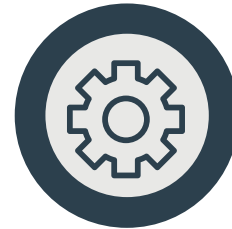
# Serving Citizens

BY THE NUMBERS



261,266  
ONLINE USERS

\*50% on desktop computers versus 50% on mobile devices, per Google Analytics; 23% returning website visitors, 77% new (1.5M page views).



161

TAX DEED SALES  
PROCESSED



80,246

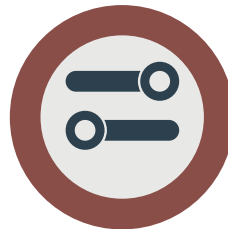
DOCUMENTS  
RECORDED

\* 85% of recorded documents were submitted through online portal.



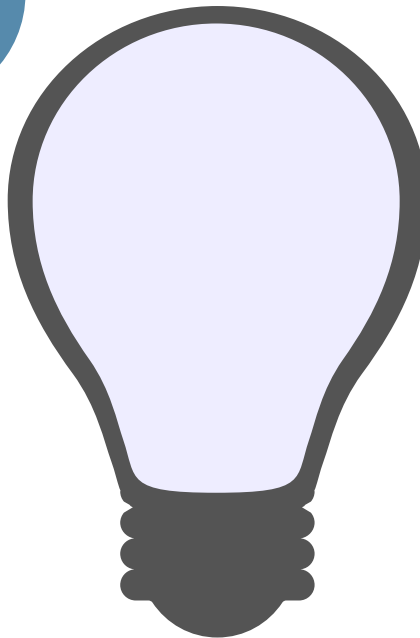
105,405  
CALLERS

\*New Call Center established in 2021.



107,757  
PAYMENTS  
RECEIPTED

\* 52% Recording, 48% Court



# Serving Citizens

## ON THE RECORD

The Clerk's Office Recording Department, located inside the Clay County Courthouse in Green Cove Springs, is home to millions of official records and court records. Our personnel assisted citizens, both in-person and online, with many requests and services last year, including:

- 13,583 Mortgages Recorded
- 11,309 Deeds Recorded
- 927 Claims of Liens Recorded

Recording Department Manager Debbie Thacker worked with Executive Team members to make official thousands of development plat maps over the course of her stellar 34-year career. Now retired, Thacker turned over the managerial reins in '21 to long-time Recording Clerk Jewel Baskin. Congrats to them both.



# Serving Citizens

## LIFE'S MAJOR MILESTONES

Most people don't give their local Clerk of Court and Comptroller's Office a second thought—not until our services are really needed. That's understandable. Clerks provide services during some of the hardest and happiest times in peoples' lives. That is why being helpful is one of our four core values—we are here to help—in good times and during very challenging times, too.



72

Adoptions Filed



972

Divorce Filings

1,530

Marriage Licenses  
Issued

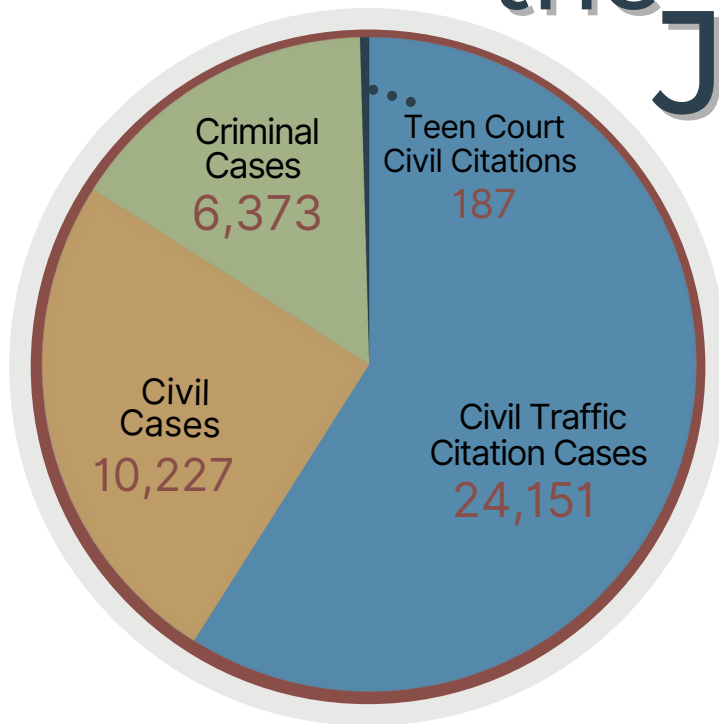


3,862

Passports Processed



# Serving the Judiciary



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## COURT RELATED ACTIVITY



The Clay County Courthouse is home to two county judges, four circuit judges and two magistrates. We work hand-in-hand with the judiciary, judicial assistants, local law enforcement, attorneys and diversionary program staff to ensure access to the justice system. We are part of Florida's 4th Judicial Circuit which includes Duval, Clay and Nassau counties.

A statewide awareness campaign is ongoing, educating court system case filers about new responsibilities regarding protection of confidential information. There were 151,040 documents processed by court staff (Civil and Criminal combined) last year and more than 635,000 docket entries made by our departmental personnel.

COVID-19 drastically impacted our ability to facilitate in-person court proceedings, including trials and sentencing hearings. Eight (8) jury trials were conducted last year. 8,700 citizens were summoned as potential jurors, including those involved in our county's first-ever online, remote jury selection process. Our Teen Court program was able to conduct both online and in-person proceedings. Statewide, traffic citation cases are down about 22%, most likely also due to COVID-19.

# Serving the Judiciary

Court Services Adapt



Many innovations put in place by our staff benefitted both the judiciary and also citizens. Adapting to the unforeseen circumstances of FY 20/21 was a given and technology played a major role in keeping our system up and running.

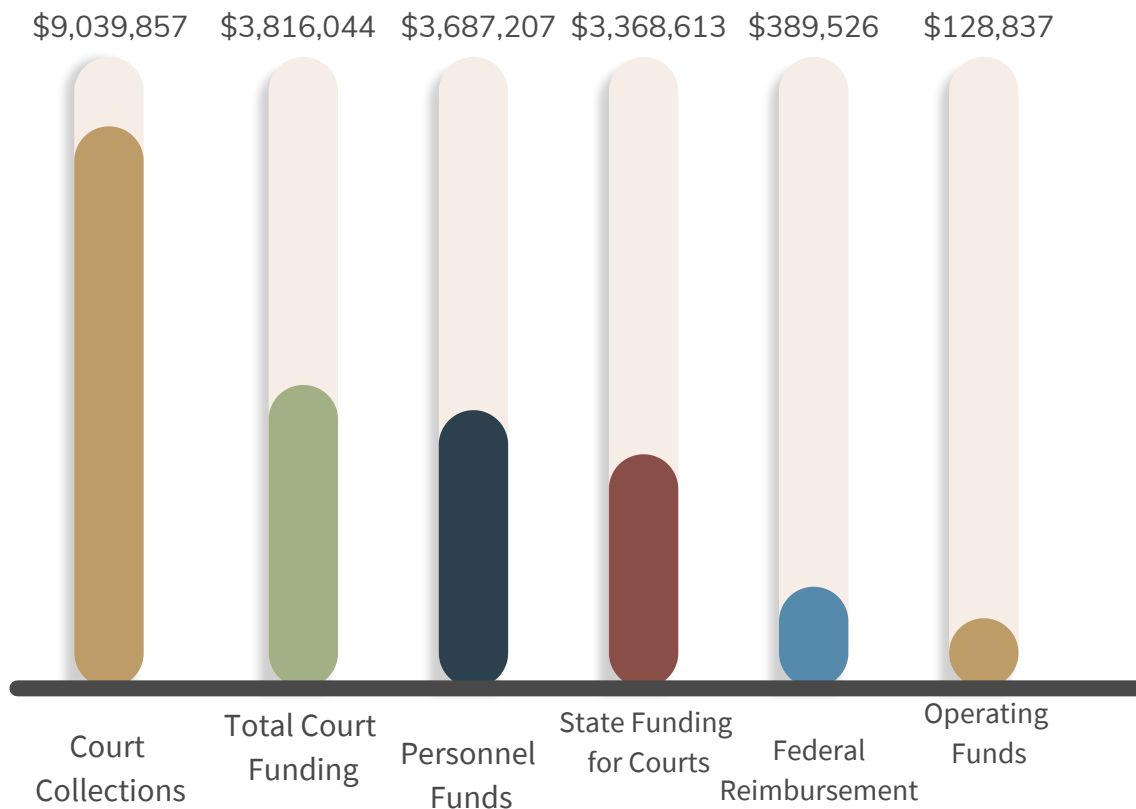
## HOW DID WE DO IT?



Within a week of peak COVID-related, in-person access closures we switched nearly all processes to virtual/remote. We Zoomed, conference-called, Face Timed, drop-boxed and more...whatever it took to get the job done while protecting our hard-working personnel and the public, too. This emphasis on a safe transition to online versus in-person services was historic.



# Serving the Judiciary



The Office of the Court Administrator for Florida, Fourth Judicial Circuit, provides critical support to the judicial system in Duval, Clay and Nassau Counties, including some physical facilities as well as personnel, financial, and information resources to the judges, judicial staff, attorneys and the public.

The administrative staff of the Court Administrator's Office, located in Jacksonville, is responsible for communicating the Fourth Circuit Chief Judge's administrative plans and procedures to all the other judges, constitutional officers and court staff as required. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a much higher number of interactions and administrative orders last year. This involved everything from health screening to mask wearing, online versus in-person hearings/trials, and much more.

# PLANS FOR FUTURE SERVICES

## On the Move: Renovation

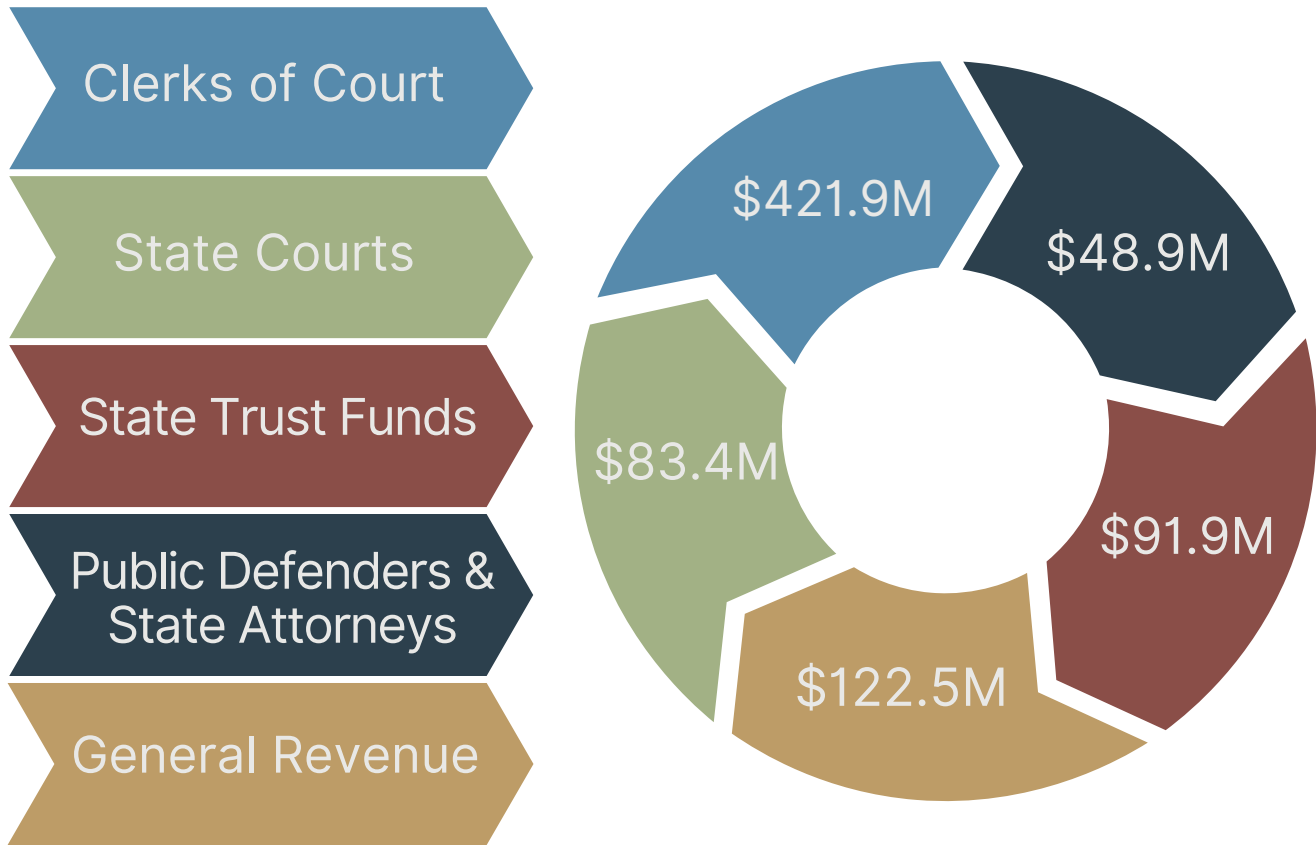
The floorplan for our courthouse was designed for future growth. Our services must keep up with the population, now 220,00+ citizens. Build-out of a new 2nd Floor Criminal Department is complete along with Finance and Traffic Department moves. Chief Operations Officer Tracie McRae is in regular contact with county officials about projects impacting Teen Court and Orange Park branch staff as well. These moves are done successfully thanks in large part to our Information Systems (IS) personnel. They share our goal of providing clerks work spaces that feature up-to-date equipment and the latest technology.

## On the Move: Innovation

We converted TIF files to PDF files, a project mandated by the Florida Supreme Court. This innovation results in a more secure storage format. An evidence related project now underway will convert evidence documents from hard-copy to electronic formats. The CJDT Data Dictionary project allows greater access to data, an innovation requested by the Florida Legislature but benefitting all system users.



# PLANS FOR FUTURE SERVICES



## Funding Options

Last year, 45% of revenues collected by Clerks of Court statewide were distributed elsewhere (other agencies). 55% of collected revenues were retained by Clerk's Office operations to provide services to Floridians. We continue to work with our legislative partners to identify statewide sustainable funding options.

\*Data provided by the Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation.



# Serving Each Other & Our Community



Our organization has a decades-long reputation for caring about our community—after all, we live and work here, too. Clerk of Court and Comptroller Green is proud of the many ways personnel rose to the occasion last year, despite their own hardships due to COVID-19. Pictured here are just a handful of examples of ways our personnel proved that Clay Clerks Care—for each other and for our fellow citizens. Through awareness, fundraising, donation drives and education, our members were there for you.

# Serving Each Other & Our Community

All-Stars Shine

Nominated by their peers and recognized by Clerk Green and her Executive Team, these All-Star Award winners are the employees who set the standard in FY 20/21. Adapting to get through tough times was Job 1.



Pictured Above (L-R)

Law Berdecia-Ledesma, Holly Casterline, Susie Hamilton



Pictured (L-R):

Information Services Department:  
Robert Mikeska, Ken Ray, Manager  
Paul Campanale, Chief Deputy Clerk  
Rick Dingle, Eddy Richards, Jordan  
Joest



# Serving Each Other & Our Community

## Educational Outreach

A source of great pride for our organization is our partnership with local school system leaders, amazing students, families and excellent teachers. Several events each year highlight our commitment to our county's educational community at every level, but especially those programs featuring history, social studies, civics, state and local government functions and art. From safety awareness to school supply donations, from Teen Court mock trial competitions to tours for teachers and students - even online/remote guest speakers — we were here to help regardless the required format.



# A Look Ahead

At the Clay County Clerk of Court and Comptroller's Office the current fiscal year is under way and already filled with its own challenges and achievements. In the 2021/2022 Annual Report we look forward to sharing more information about our office's new and fully-transitioned Comptroller's Office. We'll also have details on innovation, efficiencies and new program launches taking place across our organization as we speak. Your interest in our many services and caring personnel is appreciated. Please reach out to us via our public website at [clayclerk.com](http://clayclerk.com) or call (904) 269-6302 for more information.

Thank you.





From our Clerk of Court and Comptroller's Office family,  
thank you for your interest in our organization and the many  
services we provide our community.



**TARA S. GREEN**  
**CLERK OF COURT  
AND COMPTROLLER**  
CLAY COUNTY

Visit [ClayClerk.com](http://ClayClerk.com) any time for more information.