

CLAY COUNTY

Clerk of Court and Comptroller's Office

TARA S. GREEN



ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2023/2024

**TOP
WORK
PLACES**
2024-2025

THANK YOU

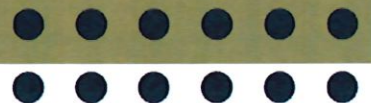
This annual report serves as a giant “thank you” card written by me and my executive team to our employees, our governmental partners, and to our many friends in the community who work with us each day. Through this comprehensive report, you’ll get a snapshot of our activities that occurred throughout the preceding year plus a glimpse into projects we have planned in the future. For example, did you know that our clerks made 664,320 docket entries on cases last year? It’s been another busy year!

We are truly thankful for the privilege of working in and serving Clay County and it remains our goal to be the most trustworthy, efficient, accountable, and helpful Clerk of Court and Comptroller’s Office in the State of Florida. I am proud, once again, to announce that we obtained a Top Workplace designation for the second year in a row, so we are already on our way to accomplishing that best-in-the-state goal.

Major conversations are taking place about how best to house our growing judiciary, clerk’s office departments, historical archives, and more. As our county grows so too does our operation on all fronts as we meet the needs of an expanding population. I look forward to my fourth term in office and facing these challenges head-on with our many community partners. Thank you for this ongoing opportunity to serve Clay County as your Clerk of Court and Comptroller.



Tara S. Giza



EXECUTIVE TEAM



Our Executive Team helps Clerk of Court and Comptroller Green oversee a staff of more than one hundred employees, their hundreds of functions, and the many partnerships that keep our justice system and county responsibilities operating smoothly. They love leading this “Top Workplace”.

The key leaders pictured above with Clerk of Court and Comptroller Green are:

- Chief Administrative Officer Rick Dingle
- Chief Operations Officer Tracie McRae
- Chief of Human Resources Deena Faulkner
- Public Information Officer Mary Justino
- Chief Technology Officer Justin Horan
- General Counsel Brian Byrd
- Chief Audit Executive/ Inspector General Nick Miller (Not pictured)

The Executive Team members appreciate the high level of professional support they receive from Senior Executive Assistant to the Clerk Victoria Marquart, Executive Administrative Assistant Angela Haggard, and HR Generalist Cara McCoy.





ALL-STARS

2024 was a year filled with great work and employee achievements. We proudly recognized these all-stars who by definition exemplify the very best of our organization. Congratulations to them and to their "teams" for jobs well done!



Tessa Pena

Criminal Department Supervisor Tessa Pena is a true example of our four core values in action. She exhibits a high level of trustworthiness in all aspects of Compliance and Probation tasks. She upholds high ethical standards and maintains confidentiality. She is highly regarded for her helpful nature and willingness to support colleagues and to assist the public.



Michelle Thrasher

Recording Department Manager Michelle Thrasher embodies the mission, vision, and core values of our office. She uses her keen eye for detail to identify errors and suspicious activity that can unearth scams. She is viewed as a pillar of trustworthiness and is respected by her peers due to her aptitude for customer service and her ability to maintain operational stability, even when short-staffed.



Brandy Taylor

Criminal Department Clerk Brandy Taylor stops in her tracks to help others. She arrives with a positive tone and a kind word, making her department a better place. Her ability to communicate with customers professionally and with compassion gained her the respect of her coworkers. One customer's note went so far as to say, "I wish all government offices handled calls the way she does!"



Jennifer Brosky

Civil Department Clerk Jennifer Brosky is a breath of fresh air and a surprising source of comic relief. Her manager says she has a wonderful work ethic and strong teamwork skills. Often the first face that greets the public, she provides the best possible service to customers to ensure they leave with questions answered and issues resolved. She maintains a calm manner, consistently exceeds expectations, and is willing to take on additional responsibilities.

MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

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 services 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

Citizens can trust us to take our duties seriously, performing them ethically and with integrity.

ACCOUNTABLE

We ensure the accuracy of financial reports, monitor budgets, implement financial controls, and publish results.

EFFICIENT

We improve, streamline processes, innovate, and expand knowledge through training. We increase efficiency through technology while protecting the public trust.

HELPFUL

We serve others in a professional, empathetic, and courteous manner. We apply our expertise and interact with care for the sake of our colleagues, judicial partners, and customers.

WE
ARE

CRIMINAL DEPARTMENT

This department, led by Manager Stephanie Wright, is our largest both in the number of employees and also in the scope of duties. They serve a total of eight (8) members of the judiciary (6 judges and 2 magistrates) and regularly partner with judicial assistants to make sure all court proceedings go smoothly. The types of court cases managed by this team varies, but new in FY 23/24 is the addition of Adult Mental Health Court, a diversion program led by Judge Mobley. Referrals come from private attorneys, State Attorney's Office, and Public Defender's Office. A similar program has been available in Duval County for some time and we strive to mirror that success, providing aid to those in our community who are eligible.

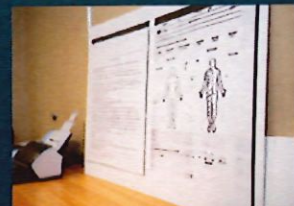
These employees also play a major role in setting up and managing payment plans for citizens. Last year there were 2,467 payment plans established office wide.

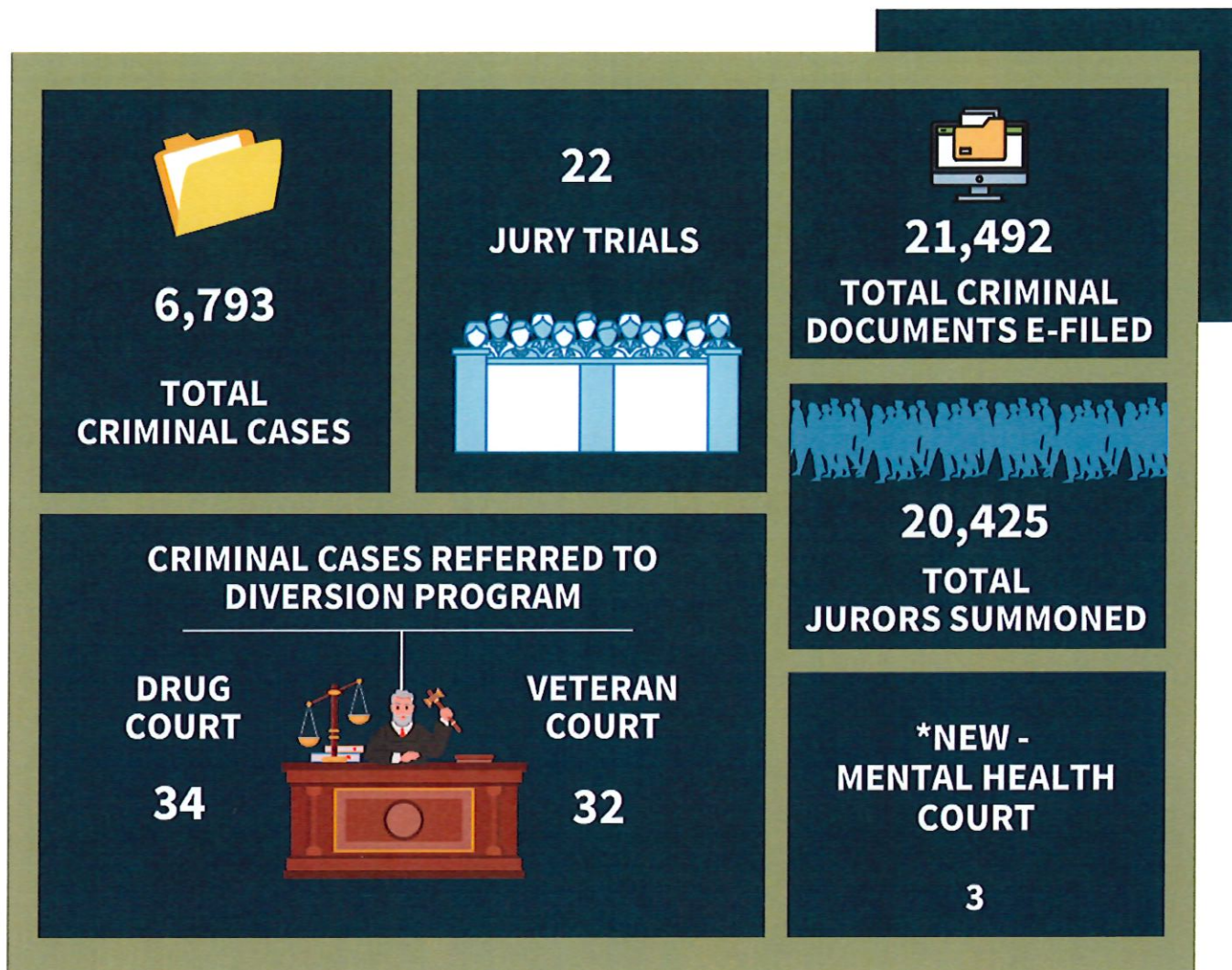
These members are also well known for making heart-felt contributions to our office's charitable efforts, for their participation in awareness initiatives, and for reliable involvement in anything fun we do office wide.



Criminal Dept Manager
Stephanie Wright

Clerks wear pink for breast cancer awareness in October.





The Circuit Court has jurisdiction over defendants accused of committing crimes designated by the legislature as felonies. The County Court has jurisdiction over defendants charged with committing crimes designated as misdemeanors. County Court also has jurisdiction over criminal traffic cases. Criminal Traffic laws are defined as a violation that may subject a defendant to incarceration upon conviction.

Manager Wright and her team are not only responsible for criminal court services but also for payment plan program compliance, misdemeanor probation services, and the jury duty process. Each of these functions are major undertakings.

CIVIL DEPARTMENT

Civil law encompasses many types of cases and filings from small claims to evictions, from family law to guardianship, from foreclosure sales to mental health, probate, child support and more.

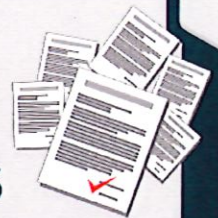
The Circuit Civil Division handles civil actions in which the damages being sought or the matter in controversy exceeds \$50,000. Once the case is filed, it must be served by either the Sheriff's Office or, with the appropriate order of the court, by a private process server.

The County Civil Division handles civil actions in which the damages being sought or the matter in controversy exceeds \$8,000 but is less than \$50,000. Matters in controversy \$8,000 and under are handled in Small Claims Court.

11,266
CIVIL CASES
FILED



169,370
DOCUMENTS
E-FILED THROUGH
CIVIL DEPARTMENT



paykidz
POWERED BY CIVITEK
formerly MyFloridaCounty.com

Child Support / Depository is our centralized office for child support and alimony payments. Our clerks process payments for Clay County cases only. PayKidz is the leading payment management system in Florida because it provides safe and secure child support payment portals. Our Civil Department regularly assists families with much-needed information and guidance.



Civil Department Manager
Amie Herrera



General Counsel
Brian Byrd

When discussing the events of FY 23/24, Civil Department Manager Amie Herrera notes that a major milestone our office reached is the relaunch of our Low Bono Program which involves Family Law (divorce, child custody, dependency) and Probate case types (wills, elder law).

This very popular service had new life breathed into it in 2024 by our General Counsel Brian Byrd who was the catalyst for improving how Low Bono appointments are made. Through a partnership with our very skilled Information Systems Department, Byrd prompted creation of a totally unique online appointment platform for Low Bono that streamlined the program for clients and attorneys alike.

The new online appointment platform is a big time-saver for the Civil Department clerks. Kudos to IS Specialist II Mitchell MacKoul and CTO Justin Horan for overseeing the success of the appointment technology component of this relaunched program.

Any Clay County resident can benefit from our Low Bono Program. Simply visit clayclerk.com, click on the Low Bono button, and make an appointment. Civil Department clerks and General Counsel Byrd are available to answer questions about this program any time.



TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT

Our Traffic Department personnel are supervised by Manager Wendy Rodriguez. Her team guides citizens through the process of paying traffic tickets, making court elections, establishing payment plans, and filing driver school election certificates. and more.

- Introduction of body camera footage in Civil Traffic cases
- Implementation of text message and email reminders on civil traffic payment plans

Rodriguez views FY 23/24 as a time of improvement and solid work effort by her staff. Due to our new phone system, RingCentral, we now have phone call data. It shows that our office received nearly 104,000 phone calls last year. Of those, 23% were answered by clerks in the Civil Traffic Department alone.

Civil Traffic Court is now overseen by Geraldine Hardin, a Traffic Court Hearing Officer in the 4th Judicial Circuit. Judge Ray Forbess continues to hear certain Civil Traffic case types, however, the increasing number of cases was a driving factor in utilizing a Traffic Court Hearing Officer.

Traffic Documents E-Filed

6,344

Civil Traffic Citations

28,254

Payments Receipted

34,947



Civil Traffic
Department Manager
Wendy Rodriguez

RECORDING DEPARTMENT & ORANGE PARK BRANCH

The Recording Department and Orange Park Branch have personnel whose duties and services closely mirror each other. Both receive a tremendous amount of foot traffic so these clerks have refined their customer service skills and receive regular commendations from the public and leadership. Their annual stats speak to the workload handled by these two groups of veteran clerks whose years of experience greatly benefit our operation.



Both locations also had renovations made this past year. In Recording, the updated and reorganized Jewel Baskin Vault was dedicated in memory of our long-time manager. In Orange Park, the platforms and chairs used by our clerks were improved.



CLERK FINANCE

This department includes personnel who operate behind the scenes, but without whom our office could not function, as the financial figures below demonstrate.

They provide a snapshot of the volume of transactions and fiscal responsibilities these specialists manage week in and week out guided by Finance Director Amber Leininger.



Finance Director
Amber Leininger

CLAY COUNTY CLERK OF COURT & COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE
FY 23/24 **TOTAL BUDGET**

\$8,034,975

COURT RELATED STATE BUDGET

COURT COLLECTIONS		\$4,880,022
STATE FUNDING FOR COURTS		\$3,982,762
FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT		\$348,565
STATE FUNDING FOR JURY COSTS		\$65,073
TOTAL COURT FUNDING FOR FY 23/24		\$4,396,400

RMLO

Short for Record Management Liaison Officer, Taylor takes on this refined RMLO duty with enthusiasm and has a lengthy to-do list ready for the current fiscal year. Taylor leaves our Teen Court Program in great shape and in good hands for continued success.

A RMLO ensures that an organization's records management practices align with legal, regulatory, and organizational requirements.



RMLO
Michelle Taylor

COMPTROLLER



Comptroller's Office personnel ensure that county financial assets are safeguarded against unauthorized use and all transactions are properly recorded for preparation of financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Also referred to as the County Finance Office, this group was managed in FY 23/24 by Finance Officer Amy Bramlitt in combination with Finance Director David Caudill. We wish Bramlitt an enjoyable retirement and applaud Caudill for hitting the ground running as the new Finance Officer of the Comptroller team.



Finance Officer
David Caudill

Fiscal Year 23/24 Highlights

- Issued \$65 million in bonds for public safety
- Responsible for more than \$400 million in investments
- Processed more than 20,000 invoices for more than \$300 million
- Recorded more than \$300 million in revenue not related to bonds



Finance Officer (Ret)
Amy Bramlitt

Bramlitt was key to the success of Comptroller duties and related personnel transitioning to the Clerk of Court beginning in 2020. She spent many hours preparing for her new team and ensured a smooth transition. Her expertise in financial management, capital projects, auditing, strategic planning, team building, and business processes were invaluable.

CLERK TO THE BOARD & VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARD

Established by the Florida constitution, the Clerk of Court and Comptroller is an elected public trustee at the county level as part of a system of checks and balances. The functions of the Clerk to the Board and of the staff who facilitate the Value Adjustment Board (VAB) fall under this area of responsibility.



Our clerks attend meetings and workshops of the BCC where they are responsible for keeping the official record. We also provide public access to these records through our convenient public website.



Search Records and Reports

To view board meeting minutes, and many other records, simply visit clayclerk.com and follow instructions found on our site's Search Records & Reports page.

23

BCC MEETINGS ATTENDED

3

VAB MEETINGS ATTENDED

4

SPECIAL MEETINGS OR WORKSHOPS

1,907

VAB PETITIONS PROCESSED

2

VAB HEARINGS

23

BOARD DOCUMENTS PROCESSED

The Value Adjustment Board (VAB), as part of this constitutionally established system, serves as the decision-maker when there is disagreement between a property owner and the Property Appraiser concerning exemptions, valuations, portability decisions, change of property ownership or of property classifications. Petition filing and scheduled hearings are handled by the VAB to settle such disputes.

DIVISION OF **INSPECTOR GENERAL**



Led by Inspector General / Chief Audit Executive Nick Miller, the mission of the Division of Inspector General (IG) is to promote accountability and integrity. These duties encompass prevention and detection of fraud, waste, and abuse. Our efforts promote efficient public resource use and preserve the public's trust in government operations.



**IG / Chief Audit Exec.
Nick Miller**

One of the many roles Clay County Clerk of Court and Comptroller serves as the county auditor. The IG fulfills audit and investigative responsibilities, functions that serve as a check and balance. The Inspector General reports to the Clerk of Court and Comptroller who is independent of the Board of County Commissioners and County Manager.



BUSINESS ANALYTICS

Manager Emily Horan leads a team that maintains and analyzes the accuracy of our business processes and data. This includes data for the Comprehensive Case Information System (CCIS), Offender Based Tracking System (OBTS), Supervisor of Elections, Office of State Court



**Business Analytics
Manager Emily Horan**

Administrators (OSCA), the Florida Supreme Court, and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). Business Analysts look for ways to improve our many processes and case management system use. This work is evident in new best practices and in the standard operating procedures that are established. These Business Analysts also play a role in the maintenance, tracking, and auditing of evidence received from trials and court hearings.

TEEN COURT

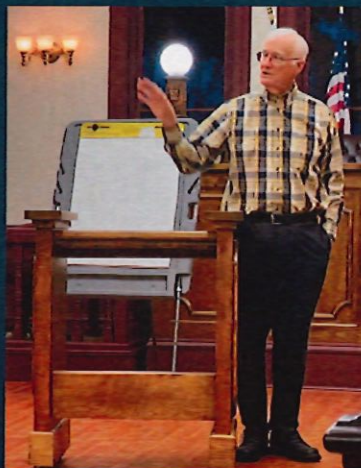
8,042

VOLUNTEER HOURS
DEDICATED TO TEEN COURT BY 117
YOUTH AND ADULTS

Teen Court - where teens are the solution, not the problem. This program diverts juvenile offenders away from formal court proceedings. Their 2024 efforts, led at that time by Manager Michelle Taylor and Supervisor Stacey Smith, based on 260 civil citations, are proof positive of the effectiveness of civil/delinquency citation programs. Department of Juvenile Justice stats revealed our program had a 1% recidivism rate in 2024 - the lowest rate for programs with caseloads of more than 88 cases in the state. Here is why:

- ▶ Online Peer Counseling for Young Men: 1-hour, bi-Monthly sessions led by a substance abuse prevention specialist.
- ▶ School District Collaboration: Now receive weekly school updates for Teen Court youth. This improves grades, behavior, and reduces truancy.
- ▶ Hearings, Prevention Classes, Virtual Peer Counseling: It is about accountability. We held 22 regular Teen Court sessions (139 hearings) and 15 Hearing Officer sessions (98 hearings). Monthly in-person prevention classes were also hosted by the Hanley Foundation. Bi-monthly virtual peer counseling sessions for girls hosted by the Delores Barr Weaver Foundation were also provided and were well received. Weekly virtual classes for young men were hosted by Fresh Ministries, Inc.

Teen Court was successful this year thanks in large part to volunteer, Jim Thies, pictured below, who served as a hearing officer biweekly and has been an integral part of Teen Court for more than thirty (30) years. Kudos!



Jim Thies
Volunteer



Teen Court Manager
Stacey Smith

In early 2025, Manager Taylor became our office's new Record Management Liaison Officer (RMLO) and Stacey Smith was promoted to Teen Court Manager. Congrats!

ARCHIVES

A visit to the Clay County Archives Center is truly eye-opening for those interested in Clay County history and commemoration of people, places, and events that shaped us. Records dating back to the 1850s, physical artifacts, memorabilia from founding families, important court case files, military records and historic photos are carefully maintained and shared regularly with members of the public. Archives personnel produce monthly articles for local publications and regularly speak to civic and school groups - a great resource!



Archives Supervisor Vishi Garig and Archives Specialist Amelia Dixon (above) help visitors verify family stories through generations. We challenge ourselves to broaden Archives' community outreach efforts so citizens, especially youth, gain greater appreciation for Clay County history. This unique work is publicly recognized through awards and grants.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Archives is just one example of the many ways our office conducts community outreach through helpful services, events, and public presentations. Throughout the year events like Operation Green Light, Passport Day, Teacher Training Day, Tales from the Clink, Lunch & Learn, Clay County Fair display, Chamber of Commerce and Clay Bar speaking engagements, and more, inform and educate residents and visitors of all ages. Staff in our various departments are always ready to get involved.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Chief Technology Officer (CTO) Justin Horan understands that every function our office has and each service we provide is impacted by technology and the related databases that tech requires, plus by the equipment and connections involved. In combination with Horan, Supervisor Eddy Richard oversees areas of responsibility that include Application Support and Network Security & Administration. This team keeps our busy office of one hundred colleagues up and running, plus they keep us connected to the judiciary and to many partner agencies and county partners, too.



Upgraded digital signage was deployed throughout the courthouse, in department lobbies, and at the OP Branch. The screens share court dockets, promote our services, and help citizens find their way around.

Their Help Desk ticket system continued to work seamlessly last year with 270 total “tickets”, 251 of those resolved, leaving just 19 open issues currently under review.



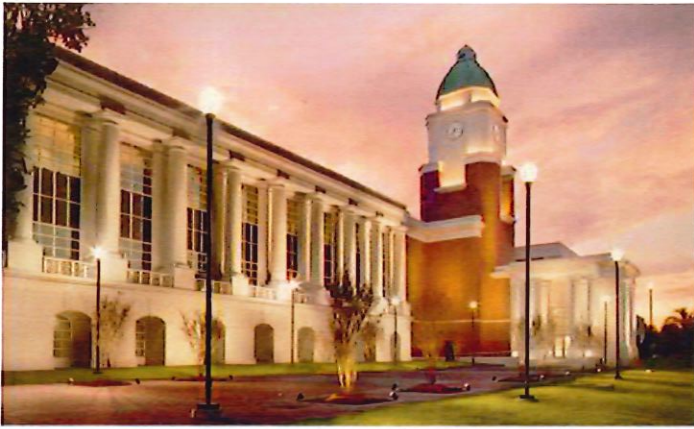
Chief Technology Officer
Justin Horan

93% SUCCESSFUL
RESOLUTION RATE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Clerk/Comptroller Green strongly emphasizes our role in the community and as partners with local charities. Our personnel truly love to help people and to be of service to the community.





CLAY COUNTY COURTHOUSE

**JUDGE WILLIAM A. WILKES
JUDICIAL COMPLEX**

825 NORTH ORANGE AVENUE /
P.O. BOX 698
GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FL 32043

(904)284-6302

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES & OLD COUNTY JAIL

21 GRATIO PLACE
GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FL 32043

(904)371-0027



ORANGE PARK BRANCH OFFICE

1590 PARK AVENUE
ORANGE PARK, FL 32073

(904)541-2784

TEEN COURT PROGRAM OFFICE & 1890 HISTORIC COURTHOUSE

915 WALNUT STREET
GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FL 32043

(904)278-3602



(904) 284-6302



INFO@CLAYCLERK.COM