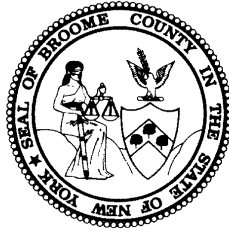




# Broome County Clerk



**Joseph A. Mihalko**  
*Broome County Clerk*

Honorable Jason Garnar  
Broome County Executive

Honorable Members of the  
Broome County Legislature

Honorable Colleagues:

I hereby submit the 2023 Annual Report of the Broome County Clerk. The duties of the County Clerk are mandated by the New York State Constitution and by federal, state, and local law. These duties are carried out by a dedicated staff that works diligently to serve the public.

The work of the Clerk's office impacts the lives of residents and businesses throughout the county. Each deed, mortgage, court record, judgement, and business certification or incorporation is filed and recorded in the Office of the Broome County Clerk.

The Clerk's Office collected \$29,490,586.53 in revenue in 2023, of which \$927,062.40 was retained by Broome County to be used by the General Fund. More than 85% of the revenue our office collects in fees is passed on to numerous state and federal agencies.

I am confident that the County Executive and the County Legislature will continue to provide support to allow the Clerk's Office to meet our mandates and fulfill our fiduciary responsibilities on behalf of the residents of Broome County.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph A. Mihalko  
Broome County Clerk

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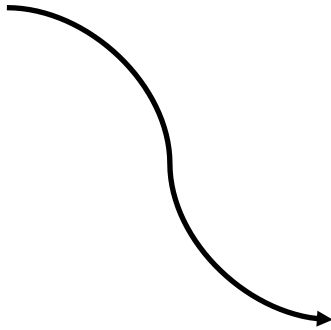
# 2023 By The Numbers

400	Cubic Feet of Records Stored
33	Departments that utilize the free storage of documents
48,741	Pounds of paper destroyed
119,829	DMV Transactions
632	Passports Issued
1,026	DBA, Partnerships and Corporations filed
268	E-ZPasses Sold
22	New Organ Donors during April (Donate Life Month)

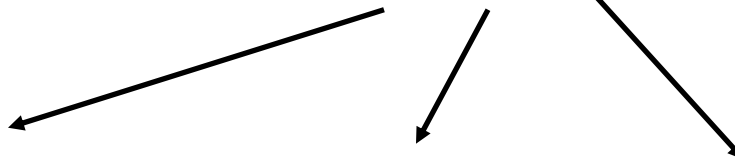
# County Clerk Organization Chart



**Voters of Broome County**



**County Clerk**



**Clerk's Office**

- Recordings
- Civil & Criminal Filings
- Naturalizations
- Passports



**Motor Vehicles**

- Licenses
- Registrations
- Enforcement



**Records Management**

- Records Retention & Destruction
- Supervision of Scanning Projects

# Clerk's Office

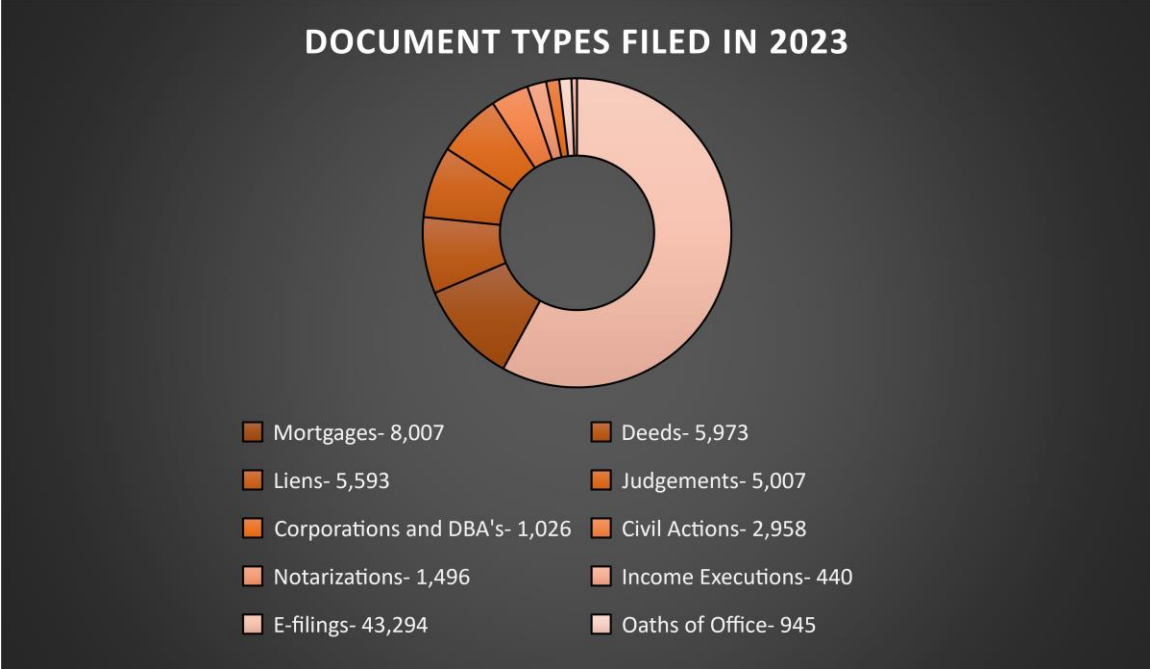
The Clerk's Office oversees the processing, filing, scanning, and storing of thousands of vital property, business and court documents every year. These documents must be maintained for the statutorily mandated length of time. Depending on the type of document this could range from six years to permanent. The County Clerk is responsible for safeguarding the vital historical records of the County, as well as the records of other county departments, stored in our Records Center at the former Ramp Industries building in Binghamton.

In 2016, our office moved to a mandatory E-filing for certain civil actions and a consensual E-recording of other documents, such as Deeds and Mortgages. This process has continued to be successful, while cutting down on the number of paper documents we physically store on-site. NYS legislation now authorizes the electronic submissions of survey and subdivision maps.

All public record documents that are stored digitally by the Clerk's Office are available to the public online through a contract with Info Quick Solutions (IQS). These documents can be downloaded, for a fee, from the County Clerk's website. As outlined in our contract, IQS retains 20% of the revenue from these downloads as their fee for service. These documents can be downloaded for a fee of \$1.90 per document or by subscription for \$250 per month for unlimited downloads.

In addition to the variety of services that produce revenue for the County, the Clerk's Office also provides several no fee services to members of the public. This includes Notarizations, Oaths of Office, Veterans Discount Cards, and Naturalization Ceremonies.

While a large focus of the office has been to move towards digital documents, there are still thousands of volumes of documents located in Clerk's Office on the third floor of the County Office Building. In addition to processing new documents, our staff works to assist people searching for documents in-house. Members of the legal community and title searchers access the documents in our office throughout the week while working on various projects. Some firms have taken advantage of our option to rent a booth within the office, which allows them to have a personal workspace.



With the goals of digitization, preservation and access of older records and documents in mind, the Broome County Clerk’s Office is working on a set of Capital Projects:

First, to continue the digitization of permanent inactive departmental records that are currently housed at the Records Center (the former Ramp Industries Building at 1 North Floral Avenue). The plan is to continue to scan and digitize all permanent paper records. Previous capital projects from 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2019 have started this process. In 2023, we were approved for a Capital Project with Secure Scan to continue to digitize records. However, we have thousands more documents that require scanning.

Second, with the plan to expand our mobile DMV services, we have purchased a second mobile DMV unit. Besides our two DMV offices in Binghamton and Endicott, we currently have a “mobile DMV” unit which is dispatched to underserved rural communities 5 days a week. We are looking at two new locations and expanding additional days at our current locations with the second “mobile DMV” unit. We have already begun discussions with possible host sites, including the Greater Binghamton Airport staff, to gauge their interest in hosting such the “mobile DMV” unit in 2024.





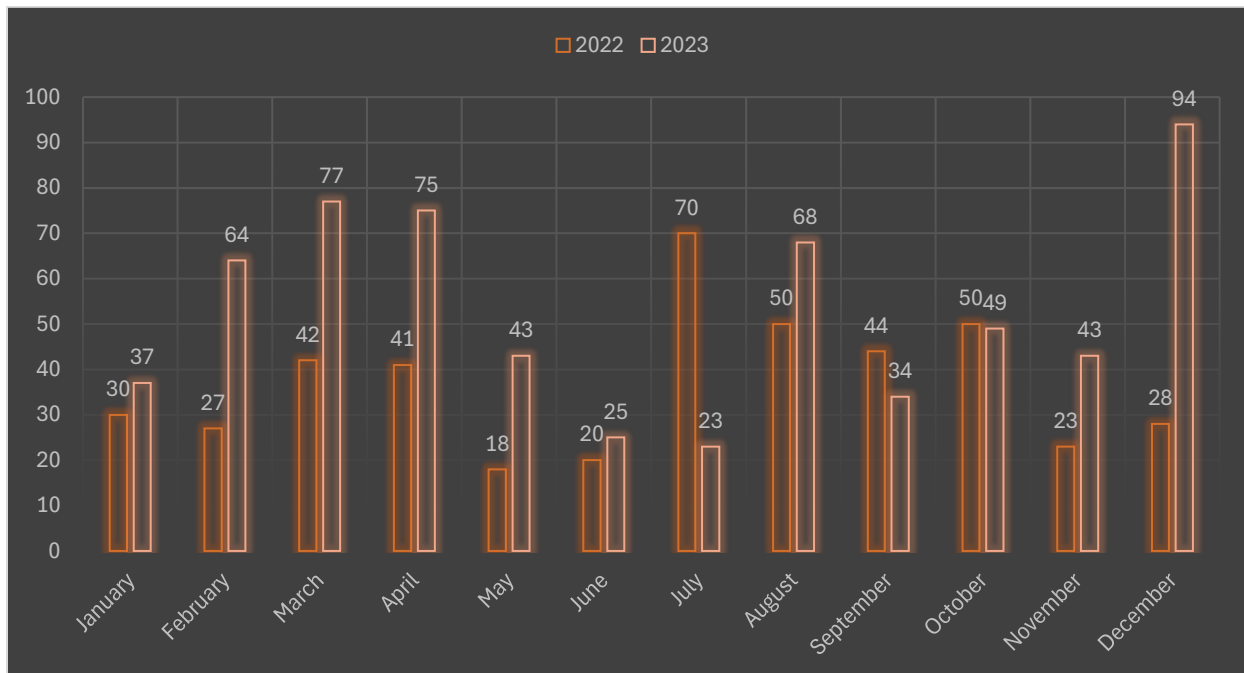
# Passports

The County Clerk's Office acts as a Passport Acceptance Agent for the Federal Government. All fees and requirements are set by Federal Law. Each Acceptance Agent within the Clerk's Office is required to be certified their certifications must be renewed annually. The entire Clerk's Office staff, including County Clerk Mihalko, are certified Passport Acceptance Agents.

The Clerk's Office offers several optional services when processing a passport. Only about half of the County Clerk's Offices statewide offer Passport Photo Services. Broome County offers this service for the price of \$10. This makes the Broome County Clerk's Office a great resource for its residents.

**2023 was the highest year for Passports in the County Clerk's Office!! We were able to process 632 Passports, which is almost 200 MORE THAN last year!!**

Number of Passports by Month for 2022 and 2023



In 2023, The Clerk’s Office hosted seven Passport Fair’s. Apart from having two Fair’s in office after hours, we traveled to the Fenton Town Hall, Town of Union Hall, Vestal High School, Union Endicott High School, and Windsor High School. We provide after-hours services for the convenience of residents who need passports but are unable to visit our Binghamton office during normal business hours. Between those seven fairs, the Clerk’s office helped **153** people obtain their passports. We plan to continue to work with local schools, towns, and groups in the community to provide more Passport Fairs in the future as the Public Health guidelines allow.

We have had a large interest from local schools that have upcoming trips planned for different clubs or school groups this past year. Since we travel to the school’s location, it helps the parents and students alike.

### 2023 Passport Revenue

		Fee	Count	Revenue
Federal Fees	Expedited Fee	\$60.00	130	\$7,800
	Overnight Return Fee	\$19.53	145	\$2,824.59
	Passport Book- Adult	\$130.00	491	\$63,830
	Passport Book- Minor	\$100.00	126	\$12,600
	Passport Card- Adult	\$30.00	57	\$1,710
	Passport Card- Minor	\$15.00	13	\$195
				\$88,960
Clerk Retained Fees	Acceptance Fee	\$35.00	632	\$22,120
	Passport Photo Fee	\$10.00	556	\$5,560
				\$27,680

In 2023, The Broome County Clerk’s Office processed \$88,960 in Federal Passport Fees. The County received \$27,680 in acceptance and photo fees.

# Naturalization Ceremonies

Many people do not realize that one of the County Clerk's duties is to welcome newly Naturalized Citizens through a Naturalization Ceremony. This ceremony is a deeply patriotic and meaningful occasion where the Clerk welcomes those seeking the American Dream. **In 2020, the Broome County Clerk's Office participated in the only public Naturalization Ceremony for 45 new citizens from 28 different countries.** The County Clerk has the honor of administering the *Naturalization Oath of Allegiance to the United States of America* to all new citizens as part of the Ceremony.

These citizens undergo testing and background checks performed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Citizenship, and Immigration Services Division. Homeland Security, in conjunction with a New York State Supreme Court Judge, lead the ceremonies and present each new Citizen with their official documentation and credentials.

Unfortunately, due to the Courts being closed in 2021 to the Public, there were no public Naturalization Ceremonies performed since that point. We have been scheduled for ceremonies in 2024 and look forward to celebrating with those that take the time to follow their dreams of becoming a United States Citizen.



# E-ZPasses

We sell E-ZPass tags for private passenger vehicles in our Binghamton and Endicott DMV Offices, as well as the Clerk's Office for \$25. We accept cash, checks or credit cards. Upon purchase, \$25 is credited to the customer's online account. We offer this service to make the tags more accessible to Broome County residents.

On November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, all traditional toll booths throughout New York State were replaced with large electronic overhangs equipped with cameras and scanners. Vehicles without E-ZPass tags that pass through these cashless tolling facilities are photographed and a bill for the non-discounted toll is mailed to the vehicle's registered owner. Drivers using E-ZPass typically save 30–50% on every toll.



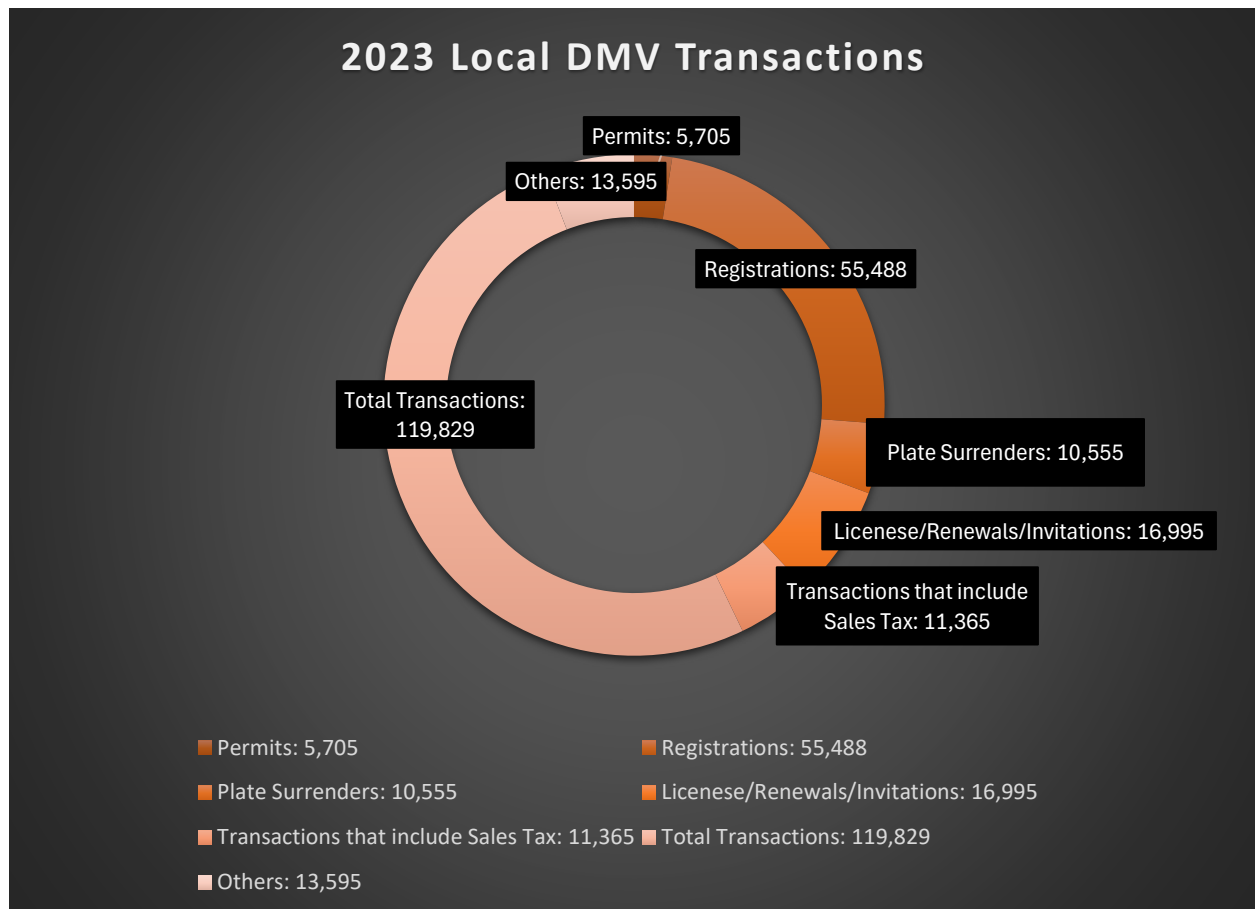
Last year, between our DMV Offices and the Broome County Clerk's Office, 268 E-ZPass tags were sold. The Clerk's office alone sold 99 tags, while the two DMV offices collectively sold 169 tags. We sell E-ZPass tags at our Passport Fairs as well.

The county retains \$4 for every tag sold, for a total of \$1,072.00 in new revenue to Broome County in 2023.

# Department of Motor Vehicles

Broome County offers two local Department of Motor Vehicles Offices, operating in Binghamton and Endicott. The Endicott DMV offers both weekday and Saturday hours, while the Binghamton office is open Monday - Friday. The Endicott Office cannot process Enforcement transactions, including the issuance of Conditional or Restricted Licenses on Saturdays due to the State being closed on the weekends.

Additionally, each weekday there is a Mobile Office that is rotated throughout the rural areas of the county. While the Mobile Office provides most of the same services as our physical DMVs, the Mobile Offices are not able to offer E-ZPass tags, Enhanced Driver's Licenses, CDL Exams or process Enforcement transactions, including the issuance of Conditional or Restricted Licenses, along with permit testing.



\*\* Other includes Abstracts, Boats, Duplicate Titles, Enforcement, Financial Security and Non-Drivers ID

In 2023, 45% of the DMV transactions were processed through the Endicott DMV. The Binghamton DMV processed 45% of the transactions, and 10% was done at the Mobile Offices.

	Location	Hours
Binghamton DMV Office	81 Chenango Street, Binghamton	Monday - Friday 8am - 4:30pm
Endicott DMV Office	137 Washington Avenue, Endicott	Monday - Friday 8am - 4:30pm Saturday 8am - 1pm
Mobile DMV Offices	Northern Broome Senior Center, Whitney Point	Monday & Friday 9am - 1pm
	Conklin Town Hall, Conklin	Tuesday 9am - 1pm
	Eastern Broome Senior Center, Harpursville	Wednesday 9am - 1pm
	Windsor Town Hall, Windsor	Thursday 9am - 1pm

In 2018, the Broome County Clerk’s Office initiated a variety of outreach efforts to encourage the use of our local DMVs, especially those in rural and suburban areas. For starters, we installed DMV “Drop Boxes” in 6 different locations throughout the county:

- Broome West Senior Center: 2801 Wayne Street in Endwell
- Eastern Broome Senior Center: 27 Golden Lane in Harpursville
- Northern Broome Senior Center: 12 Strongs Place in Whitney Point
- Johnson City Senior Center: 30 Brocton Street in Johnson City
- First Ward Senior Center: 226 Clinton Street in Binghamton
- Broome County Office Building: 60 Hawley Street in Binghamton

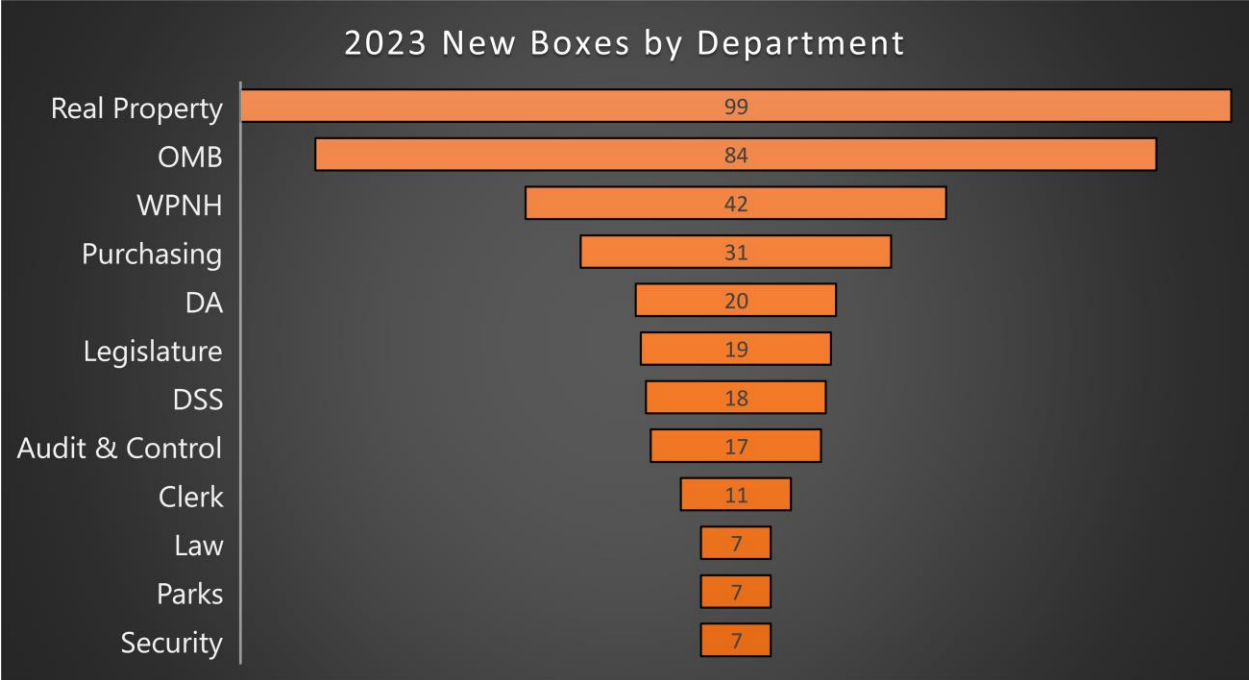
These Drop Boxes are real time savers for residents who want to renew their license and vehicle registrations locally but are unable to visit our Offices during normal business hours. In 2023, 42 renewals were collected in our Drop Boxes. We strongly encourage residents to save their stamps and skip the lines by utilizing this convenient service.

# Records Management

The County Clerk is responsible for safeguarding the vital historical records of the County, as well as the records of other county departments. These records are stored at the County Records Center at the former Ramp Industries building in Binghamton. The records were moved to this location in 2016 and the space is shared with the Board of Elections and the District Attorney's Office; however, the County Clerk is responsible for the building utilities and facilities charges. The Board of Elections stores the county's voting machines and conducts training of poll workers at the facility, while the District Attorney's Office utilizes the space for evidence storage.

While the number of boxes being stored through our Records Management department continues to grow, the Clerk's Office has been exploring the viability of remaining at the Ramp Building. Several issues have been brought to our attention including the presence of moisture and mold in the document storage area. With the preservation of documents being the Records Management Division's primary role for the county, our office needs to be sure that these documents will remain unharmed from environmental threats.

The Clerk's Office oversees the storage of over **12,875 boxes of records for the county from 33 different county departments**. In 2023, 364 new boxes were moved into storage from 13 departments. In addition to the storage of these boxes, our Records Management Staff responded to 350 requests for document retrieval from boxes stored at the records center.



In October 2017, The Clerk’s Office began a scanning contract with Datrose Inc for scanning services. The contract allowed for in-house services for paper records to be scanned, indexed, proofed and destroyed. All the documents are scanned into the county’s OnBase system. This project has freed up much storage space in the Records Center. Through the contract, the Records Management division has had 3 full- time scanners on staff working out of the County Office Building. This project was approved to continue through 2024 through the County Capital Projects Budget. In 2023, the scanners worked on scanning 1969-1990 Legislative proceeding books for the Legislature. Two scanning projects were done for the Health Department, which included 100 boxes of MCHD records and 77 boxes for the Clinic records.

In addition to the Datrose team, there has been in-house QC’ing of old Civil Actions by the clerk’s staff. This has freed up over 100 boxes from Records Storage.

An Off-Site Scanning project was started by Secure Scan in Albany, NY company which contained Naturalization Records and older Civil Action’s. This project freed up 330 boxes from Record Storage.



# Exciting News

2023 had some exciting things happen in the Clerk's Office!

Early in the year, we were able to update our furniture and make everything ADA and Covid compliant.

We are working towards having a majority our records being available on line for both our staff and the public. In the past, any time there has been a request for a Naturalization record older than the past few years, the Records Management staff would need to go to the Records Storage building, find the Naturalization record, scan and email the document if possible or transport the entire book back to the office. Each book can weigh upwards of 20 pounds. Now, with the digitization of said records, our staff can access these documents on OnBase and get the information to the customer much faster.

In the 1950's, it became law to record Military Discharge Documents. Military Discharge papers are officially known as DD-214s. All veterans receive this Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty once they out of the military; the DD-214 is proof of military service. It provides information such as the character of service (Honorable, Dishonorable, General Under Honorable Conditions, etc.) This information can greatly effect veteran benefits and can have long-term reputational impacts. A DD-214 is also generally required by funeral directors for immediate proof of eligibility for interment in a VA cemetery, to obtain a grave marker, or to provide military honors to a deceased veteran. As with our Naturalizations books, any time a Military Discharge record is requested, our staff would need to search for said record. We were able to get all of the back DD-214s scanned, QC'd and entered into IQS. We had over 22,000 DD-214s in the office. This again is allowing our staff to perform searches faster and more efficiently for them and our customers.

There are other documents that we have been working on as in-house projects that the staff is working on putting into IQS. Putting these documents onto IQS is helping us reduce the amount of paper documents being stored in our offices and in our Records Storage facility. While these documents are being digitized, they are only able to be accessed by the staff and are not available for public searching.

# Budget

The Clerk's Office collects several taxes and fees on behalf of other Federal, State, and local Departments and Agencies. While the office may retain a portion of some of the fees, for the most part the office acts as a collection or pass-through department for these fees collected.

## *Real Estate Transfer Tax*

In accordance with Article 31 of the New York State Tax Law, this tax is collected on Deeds filed with the Clerk's Office. The tax rate is based on the transaction price on the deed and is \$5 per \$1,000 of the transaction price. This tax is split with 80% going to NYS and is dedicated to the Environmental Protection Fund with the remaining 20% going to the Broome County Veteran's Services Department.

## *Mortgage Recording Tax*

In accordance with Article 11 of the New York State Tax Law, this tax is assessed on mortgages for single and multi-family dwellings, commercial property and vacant land through private lenders, individuals, or Federal Credit Unions. The overall 1% mortgage tax rate is based on the amount of the mortgage debt or obligation secured and is broken down as follows:

- "Basic Tax" = \$0.50 per \$100 borrowed or 0.5% – the revenue from the Basic Tax is passed to the Town where the property is located.
- "Special Additional Tax" = \$0.25 per \$100 borrowed or 0.25% – the revenue is mostly passed to New York State; however, the County does retain a small portion to cover the costs of administering this tax
- "Local Tax" = \$0.25 per \$100 borrowed or 0.25% – the revenue is dedicated to the Broome County Office for Aging

## *Equalization and Assessment*

In accordance with §333(3) and §574 of the New York State Real Property Law, a fee of \$250 or \$125 is assessed on each RP-5217 form filed with the Clerk's Office. This fee is then passed to the State General Fund.

## *Notary Licensing*

The Clerk's Office processes Notary Public Commissions on behalf of the New York State Department of State. All notary fees are collected by the Clerk's Office and then sent to the Department of State.

## *Passports*

The Clerk's Office is a certified passport acceptance agency. The office collects all passport fees and passes them along to the Federal government. The Clerk can collect an acceptance fee, for 2023, this fee was \$35 per application. The revenue from the acceptance fee is deposited in the County General Fund.

<b>2023 Funds Collected and Distributed</b>	
County Clerk Fees	
County General Fund	\$927,062.40
Mortgage Tax	\$6,264,128.68
Towns	\$3,874,170.43
Broome County Office for Aging	\$1,313,469.61
New York State	\$1,076,488.64
Real Estate Transfer Tax	\$7,460,392.00
New York State	\$5,786,048.00
Broome County Veterans Services	\$1,674,344.00
Court Fees	
New York State	\$685,967.18
Commission for Education	
NYS Records Management Improvement Fund	\$325,926.00
Passport Fees	
Federal	\$90,789.59
Notary	
New York State	\$11,800.00
<b>Total Funds Collected</b>	<b>\$29,490,586.53</b>
Funds retained in the County General Fund	\$927,062.40
<b>Total Funds passed to other entities</b>	<b>\$28,563,524.13</b>