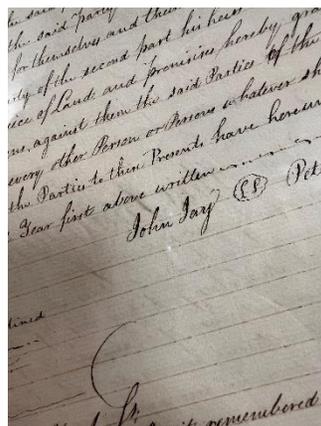




Broome County Clerk

2024 Annual Report





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 2024 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 \$20,459,061 in revenue in 2024, of which \$1,061,838 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

Table of Contents

Letter from Broome County Clerk, Joseph A. Mihalko	2
Table of Contents	3
2024 By the Numbers	4
County Clerk Organization Chart	5
Clerk's Office	6
Boston Purchase Map	8
Passports	9
Naturalization Ceremonies	11
E-ZPass	12
Department of Motor Vehicles	13
Records Management	15
News	17
Budget	18

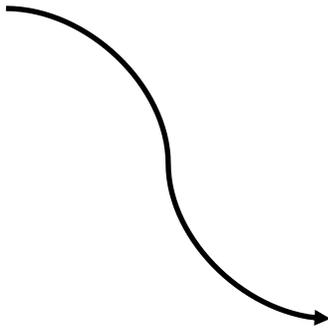
2024 By The Numbers

12,720	Cubic Feet of Records Stored
33	Departments that utilize the free storage of documents
47,734	Pounds of paper destroyed
109,484	DMV Transactions
675	Passports Issued
818	DBA, Partnerships and Corporations filed
181	E-ZPasses Sold
200	New Organ Donors during April (Donate Life Month)

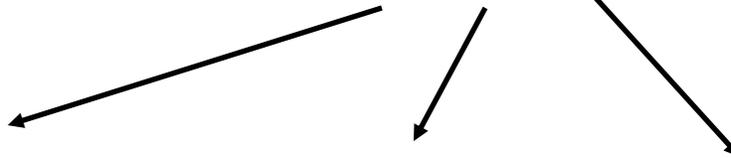
County Clerk Organization Chart



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, some documents can be held for as short as six years, while other documents require permanent retention. The County Clerk is responsible for safeguarding the vital historical records of the County, as well as the records of other county departments, many of which are stored in our Records Center at the former Ramp Industries building in Binghamton.

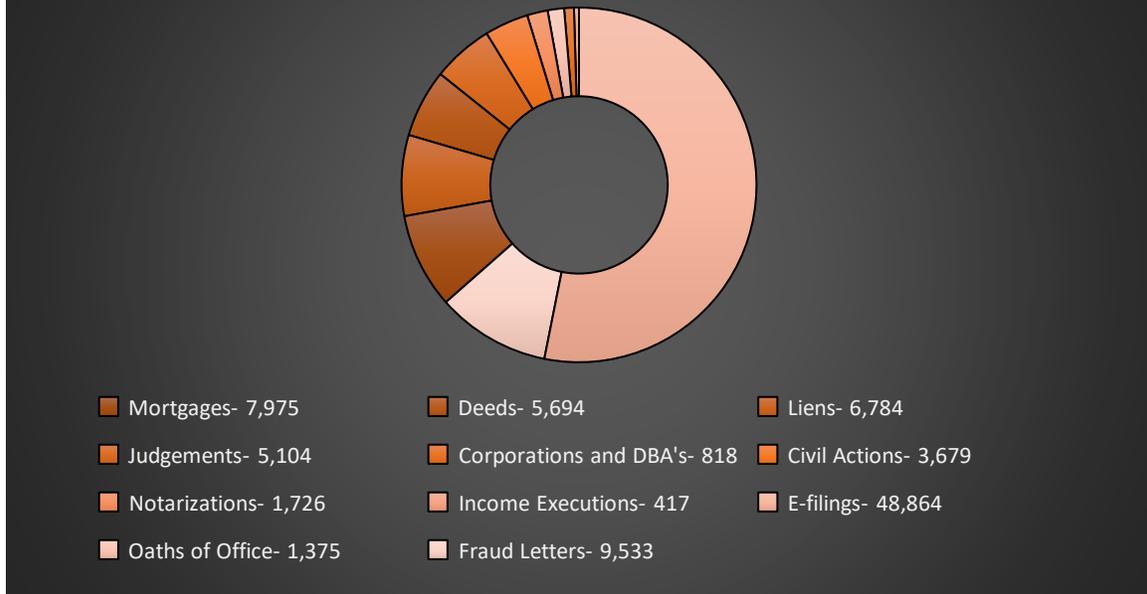
In 2016, our office moved to a mandatory E-filing for certain civil actions and a consensual E-recording of other documents, such as Deeds and Mortgages. This process has continued to be successful, while cutting down on the number of paper documents we physically store on-site. NYS legislation now authorizes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

All public records that are stored digitally by the Clerk's Office are available to the public online. 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.

DOCUMENT TYPES FILED IN 2024



**Fraud Letters: A letter is immediately generated upon the recording of a deed. These letters are printed, and our staff mails them out to each seller alerting them that their property has been sold/transferred.

A Fraud Alert Website is offered to Broome County residents as a free service to alert them when a document has been filed under their name at the Broome County Clerk's Office. An email alert is provided through our software vendor. You can sign up at: <https://searchiqs.com/fraudalert/?CC=NYBRO>.

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:

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 longer-term 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 and 2024, we were approved for a Capital Project with Secure Scan to continue to digitize records. However, we have thousands more documents that require scanning.

Boston Purchase Map

In October 2019, the Broome County Clerk's Office re-discovered the *Boston Purchase Map*, a map from 1793 which depicts an agreement between New York State and 60 proprietors from the Boston, MA area for the settlement of what is now Broome and Tioga Counties. This map is a founding document of Broome County history and had been missing for 35 years. The map, unfortunately, was found in a warehouse with no temperature, humidity or light controls placed between plastic and two pieces of cardboard.

The Map was sent out in 2024 to a specialized vendor. *Kofile* took the Boston Purchase Map, restored it, and preserved it, and digitized it. We plan on printing the map by requests for educational and historical research purposes.

Since the map had been missing for 35 years, we are unsure the level of demand. We know that historians and members of the public have inquired from time to time if the map had been found. Now located, we look forward to fulfilling viewing requests. Our recently retired County Historian described the map as "priceless", and the Clerk's Office agrees. This is the sole copy of the map that granted our area to the proprietors who settled the land and made Broome County their home. They established many of the communities that are still here today.



ALL THAT TRACT OR PARCEL OF LAND, situate in the Town of Menticoke, in the County of Broome and State of New York, and being a part of Great Lot No. 247 of the Grand Division of the Boston Purchase, bounded and described

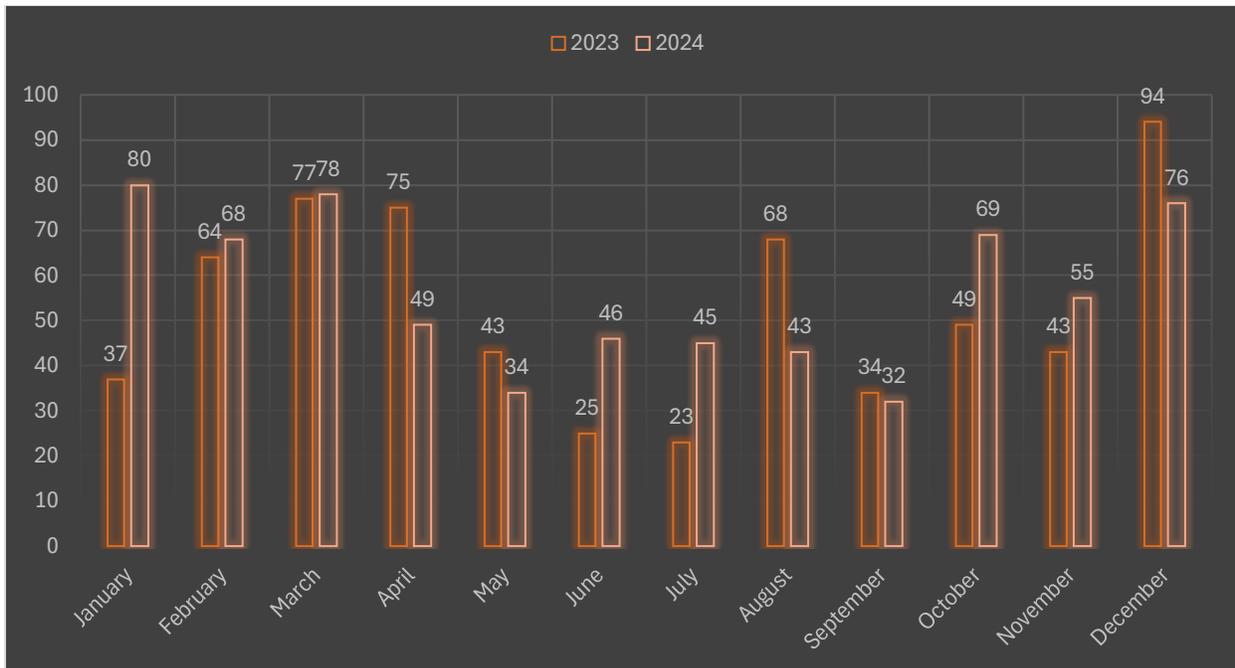
Passports

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. 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.

While in 2023 we had our highest year for Passports in the County Clerk’s Office with processing 632 Passports. In 2024 we surpassed that number, ending 2024 with 675 Passports completed!

Number of Passports by Month for 2023 and 2024



In 2024, The Clerk’s Office hosted six Passport Fair’s. Apart from having two Fair’s in office after hours, we traveled to Harpursville High School, Chenango Valley High School, Union Endicott High School, and Vestal 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 six fairs, the Clerk’s office helped **151** 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.

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.

2024 Passport Revenue

		Fee	Count	Revenue
Federal Fees	Expedited Fee	\$60.00	122	\$7,320
	Overnight Return Fee	\$21.36	118	\$2,304.54
	Passport Book- Adult	\$130.00	538	\$69,940
	Passport Book- Minor	\$100.00	133	\$13,300
	Passport Card- Adult	\$30.00	63	\$1,890
	Passport Card- Minor	\$15.00	22	\$330
				\$95,084.54
Clerk Retained Fees	Acceptance Fee	\$35.00	667	\$23,345
	Passport Photo Fee	\$10.00	593	\$5,930
				\$29,275

*The Overnight Return Fee changed through out the year causing the Fee and Count to not match the Revenue we have collected.

In 2024, The Broome County Clerk’s Office processed \$95,085 in Federal Passport Fees. The County received \$29,275 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 2024, County Clerk Mihalko had the pleasure of welcoming new citizens on March 28th and July 31, 2024. Between the two ceremonies, 65 new citizens were Naturalized from 33 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.

Bangladesh	3	Nepal	1
Brazil	1	Nigeria	1
Canada	3	Pakistan	2
China	4	Philippines	2
Dominican Republic	3	Russia	1
Ecuador	2	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1
Egypt	1	South Korea	3
Guatemala	1	Sudan	1
Haiti	3	Taiwan	1
India	3	Trinidad and Tobago	1
Iraq	4	Turkey	2
Italy	1	Ukraine	1
Jamaica	3	United Kingdom	2
Laos	5	Vietnam	2
Lebanon	1	Yemen	3
Mexico	2	Zimbabwe	1
Morocco	1		

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 1st, 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.



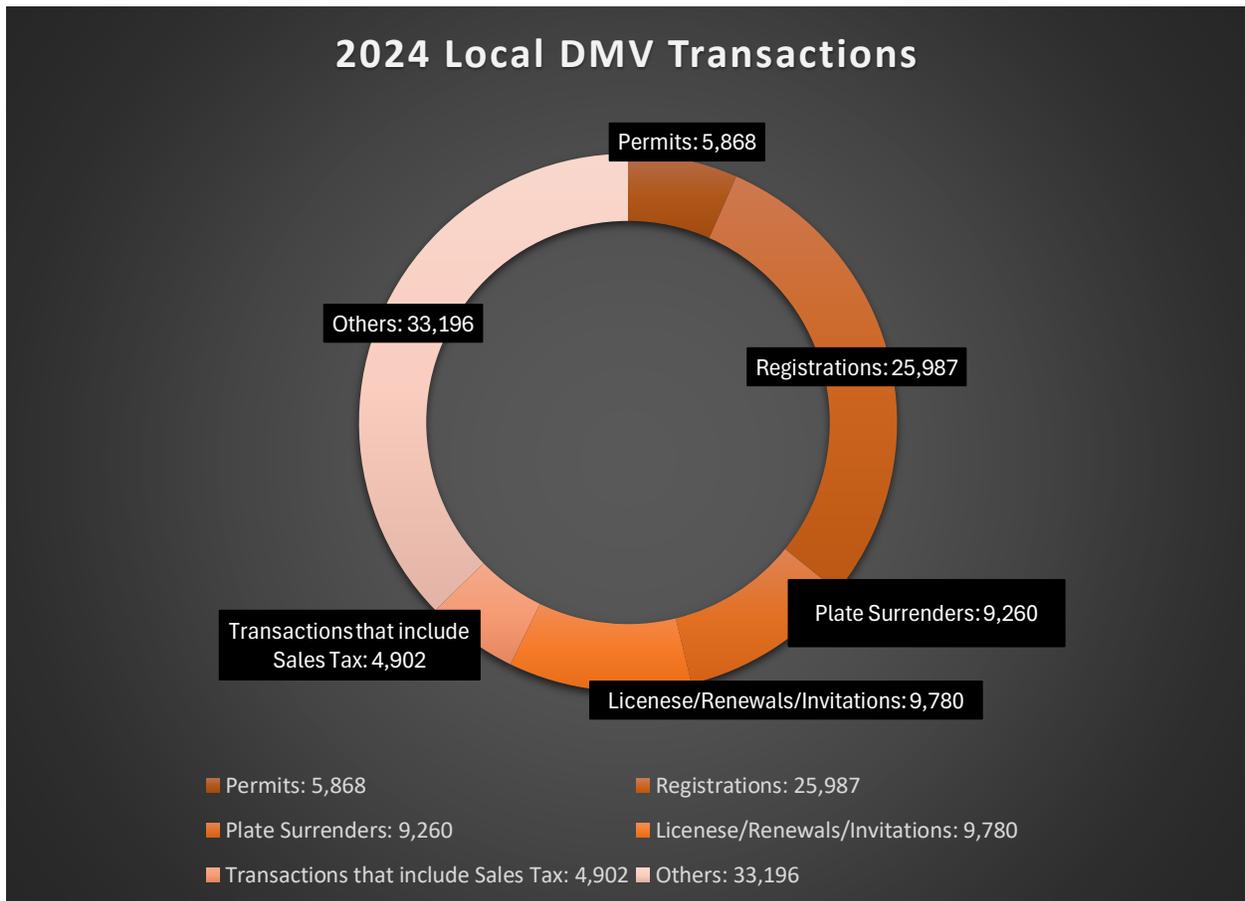
Last year, between our DMV Offices and the Broome County Clerk's Office, 241 E-ZPass tags were sold. The Clerk's office alone sold 75 tags, while the two DMV offices collectively sold 166 tags. We sell E-ZPass tags at our Passport Fairs as well.

The county retains \$4 for every tag sold, for a total of \$964.00 in new revenue to Broome County in 2024.

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 underserved, 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 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 2024, 45% of the DMV transactions were processed through the Endicott DMV. The Binghamton DMV processed 52% of the transactions, and 3% 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 2024, 66 renewals were collected in our Drop Boxes. We strongly encourage residents to save their stamps and skip the lines by utilizing this convenient service.

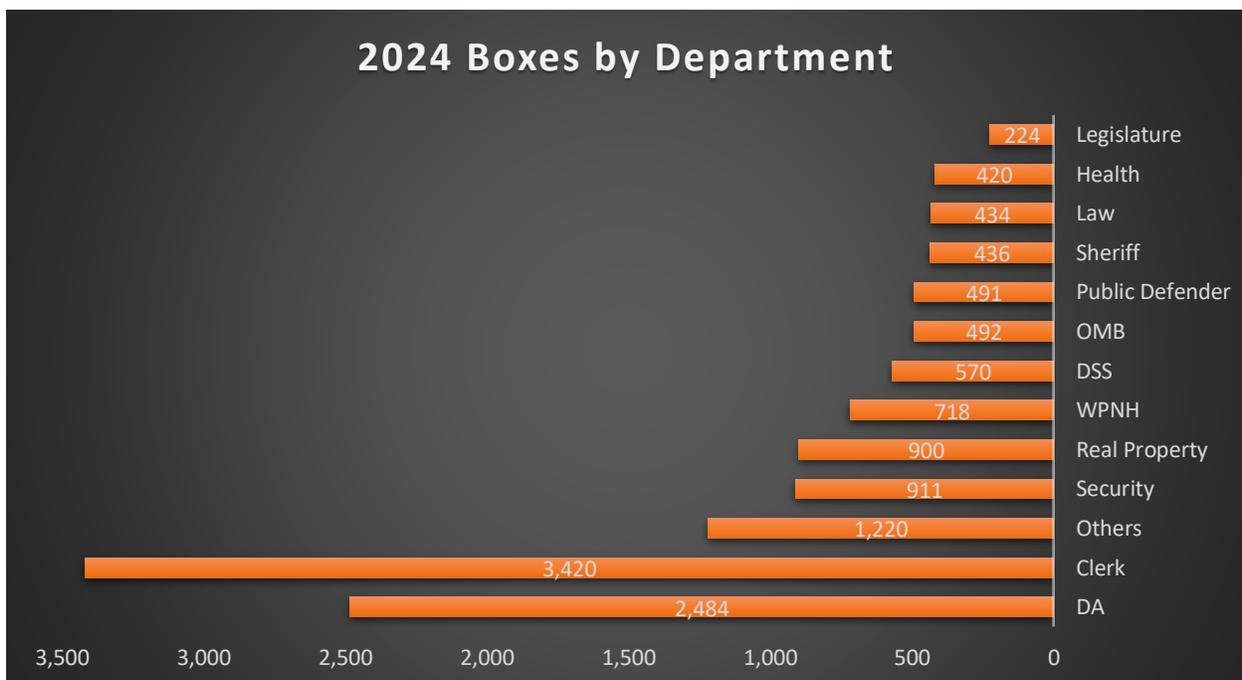
April is Donate Life Month! Each year, our DMV staff encourages customers coming in to sign to become an Organ Donor! In 2023, we signed up 22 new customers as donors. In 2024, we signed up 200 new donors!!!

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 **12,720 boxes of records for the county from 33 different county departments**. In 2024, 600 new boxes were moved into storage from 13 departments. In addition to the storage of these boxes, our Records Management Staff responded to multiple requests for document retrieval from boxes stored at the records center.



*Others include Audit, BCC, County Executive, DPW, Elections, Emergency Services, Finance, IT, Mental Health, OET, OFA, Parks, Personnel, Planning, Probation, Purchasing, and Risk.

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.

In late 2023 through 2024, an Off-Site Scanning project was completed 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.

News

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 existing 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 ditigized, 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.

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 2024, this fee was \$35 per application. The revenue from the acceptance fee is deposited in the County General Fund.

2024 Funds Collected and Distributed	
County Clerk Fees	
County General Fund	\$1,056,564
Mortgage Tax	\$5,939,261
Towns	\$3,075,539
Broome County Office for Aging	\$1,538,948
New York State	\$1,324,774
Real Estate Transfer Tax	\$3,158,827
New York State	\$2,474,760
Broome County Veterans Services	\$669,067
Mansion Tax	\$15,000
Court Fees	
New York State	\$780,655
Commission for Education	
NYS Records Management Improvement Fund	\$330,581
Passport Fees	
Federal	\$95,084.54
Total Funds Collected	\$20,459,061
Funds retained in the County General Fund	\$1,056,564
Total Funds passed to other entities	\$19,402,497