





Jefferson County Clerk

Honorable Members of the Jefferson County Legislature  
195 Arsenal Street  
Watertown, NY 13601

Honorable Colleagues:

I'm pleased to submit the 2025 Annual Report of the Jefferson County Clerk. The County Clerk's duties are mandated by the New York State Constitution and federal, state, and local law. Our dedicated staff diligently carries out these duties and serves the public.

The County Clerk's Office is a state constitutional office that serves as the primary depository for records created within the County. The County Clerk serves as the Clerk of the Corporation of Jefferson County and as the registrar of mortgages, deeds, and all real property records in Jefferson County. The County Clerk also serves as Clerk of the Supreme and County Courts and is commissioned to collect all court fees, produce court records upon request, and preserve them. Under the Vehicle and Traffic Law, the County Clerk acts as an agent for the Commissioner of the New York State Motor Vehicles Department. In addition, the County Clerk serves as the Jefferson County Record Management Officer (RMO) and as an agent of the U.S. Dept of State Passport Agency.

The Jefferson County Clerk's Office collects and distributes funds for various state agencies. The County's share of these collections is submitted monthly to the County Treasurer, along with a report detailing the collections. The following pages detail the funds collected by the Jefferson County Clerk's Office and the Department of Motor Vehicles, paid to the County Treasurer, and disbursed to various agencies throughout the state.

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I'm excited to share that we continue to deliver outstanding services while continually seeking ways to improve. We remain committed to serving Jefferson County residents by finding new revenue opportunities and enhancing our services. I'm proud to announce a better-than-expected fund balance of \$215,085 for fiscal year 2025, reflecting increased wages and fringe benefits. This reflects our ongoing commitment to smart management, growing revenue while keeping expenses in check.

Looking ahead to 2026, we're investing in a major upgrade: converting our document management system through Tyler Technologies. While this transition will affect our 2026 fund balance due to startup costs, it's an exciting step forward. Beginning in 2027, this enhanced system will operate at no cost to taxpayers, thanks to 100% revenue retention from online record subscriptions. This investment will pay dividends for years to come.

I appreciate your support and collaboration over the past year, and I look forward to continuing our work together serving the people of Jefferson County.

I welcome any questions or thoughts you have.

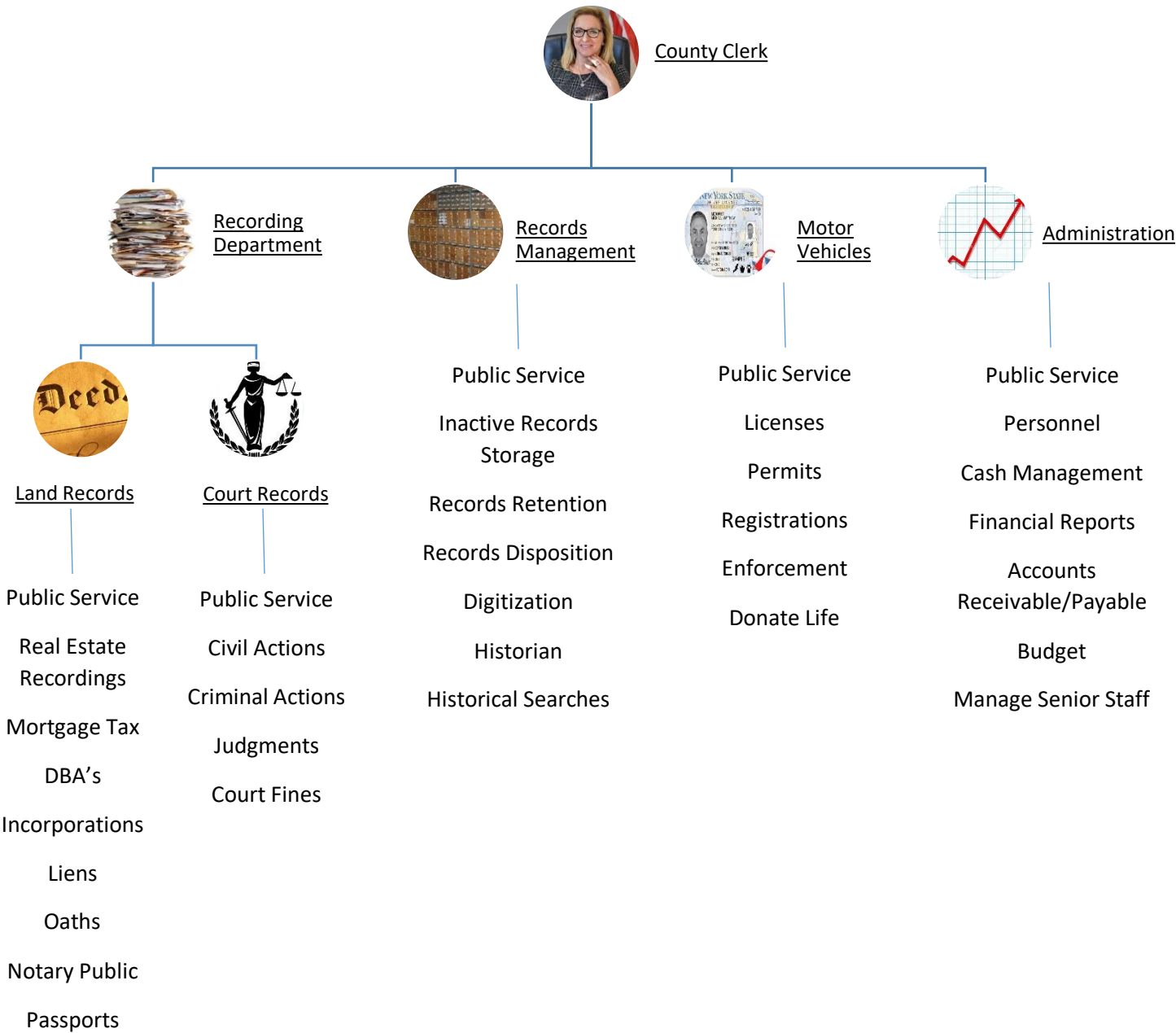
Respectfully Submitted,

Hon. Gizelle J. Meeks  
Jefferson County Clerk

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# Jefferson County Clerk Organizational Chart



# Statement of All Funds Collected and Disbursed

	<b>Jefferson County</b>	<b>Towns</b>	<b>NYS</b>	<b>Total Rec'd</b>
Mortgage Tax	\$ 424,830.63	\$ 2,060,151.96	\$ 842,651.62	\$ 3,327,634.21
Real Estate Transfer Tax	\$ 4,714.00	\$ -	\$ 2,024,623.81	\$ 2,029,337.81
NYS ORPS	\$ 32,931.00	\$ -	\$ 514,069.00	\$ 547,000.00
Court Fees	\$ 72,764.25	\$ -	\$ 781,688.68	\$ 854,452.93
DWI Fines (Probation)	\$ 19,705.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 19,705.00
Cul Ed./Records Management	\$ 13,859.00	\$ -	\$ 263,473.69	\$ 277,332.69
Notary <sup>1</sup>	\$ 4,305.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,305.00
County Clerk Fees <sup>2</sup>	\$ 910,181.26	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 910,181.26
Department of Motor Vehicles <sup>3</sup>	\$ 854,086.62	\$ -	\$ 2,674,525.06	\$ 3,528,611.68
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>\$ 2,337,376.76</b>	<b>\$ 2,060,151.96</b>	<b>\$ 7,101,031.86</b>	<b>\$ 11,498,560.58</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes \$400.00 for December notaries, payment received January 2026

<sup>2</sup> Includes \$434.00 for December incorporations, payment received January 2026

<sup>3</sup> Includes \$28,060.20 - November and \$ 29,701.45 - December in DMV online revenue that was received January 2026

## County Clerk Fees Breakdown

Copy Fees	\$ 39,478.92
E-Commerce Subscriptions	\$ 84,269.50
Cover Page Fees	\$ 56,865.00
Filing Fees	\$ 34,212.00
Recording Fees	\$ 637,620.24
Miscellaneous	\$ 3,712.00
Overages	\$ 2,955.61
Passport Fees	\$ 16,940.00
Photo Fee	\$ 8,730.00
UCCs	\$ 16,440.00
Bank Account Interest	\$ 8,957.99
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$ 910,181.26</b>

# Expenses by Sub-Department

## 1410 - County Clerk Expenses

Personal Services	\$	388,741.38
Office Expenses *	\$	135,175.47
Retirement/Insurance/SS/Workers Comp	\$	225,270.03
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>749,186.88</b>

\* This includes our document management system of \$114,000.00

## 1415 - DMV Expenses

Personal Services	\$	635,827.34
Office Expenses	\$	5,881.21
Retirement/Insurance/SS/Workers Comp	\$	445,769.18
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,087,477.73</b>

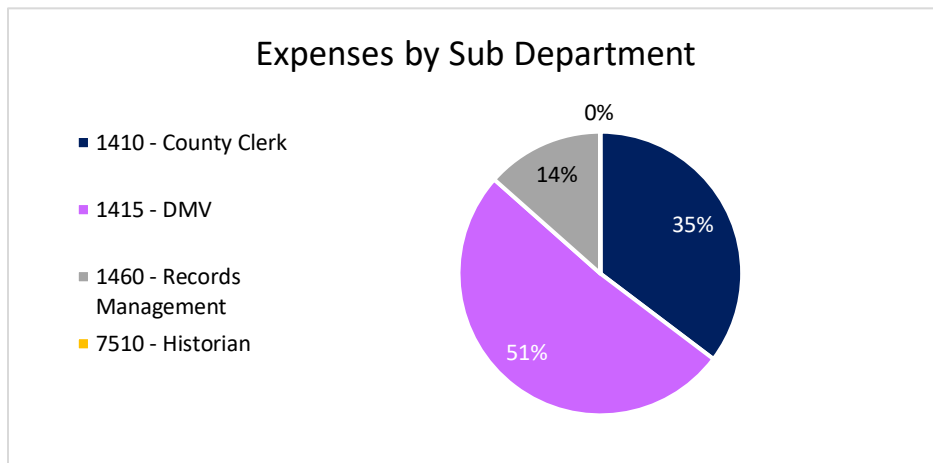
## 1460 - Records Management Expenses

Personal Services	\$	182,322.93
Office Expenses	\$	8,672.59
Retirement/Insurance/SS/Workers Comp	\$	94,349.48
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>285,345.00</b>

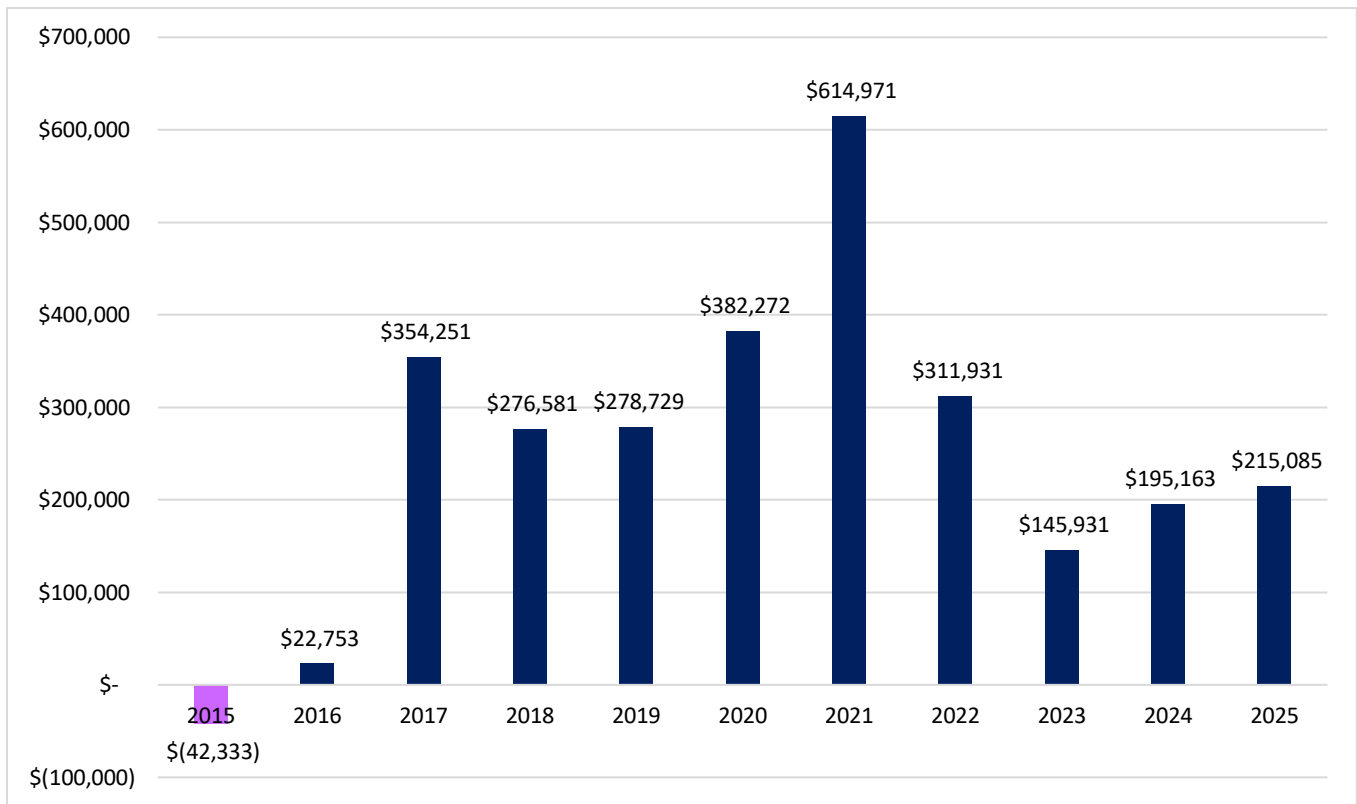
## 7510 - Historian Expenses

Personal Services	\$	38.65
Office Expenses	\$	-
Retirement/Insurance/SS/Workers Comp	\$	243.17
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>281.82</b>

<b>Total County Clerk Expenses 2025:</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,122,291.43</b>
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## End of Year Fund Balance 2015-2025



### Fund Balance – General Information

The graph above shows that the Jefferson County Clerk's Office contributed \$215,085 to the 2025 fund balance. Although the County Clerk's Office was negatively affected by new matrimonial legislation, which reduced court revenue by \$73,317, we exceeded revenue expectations and kept expenses minimal despite a 4.5% increase in employee wages and higher fringe benefits. This reflects our commitment to fiscal management by maximizing revenue opportunities while maintaining consistent expense controls.

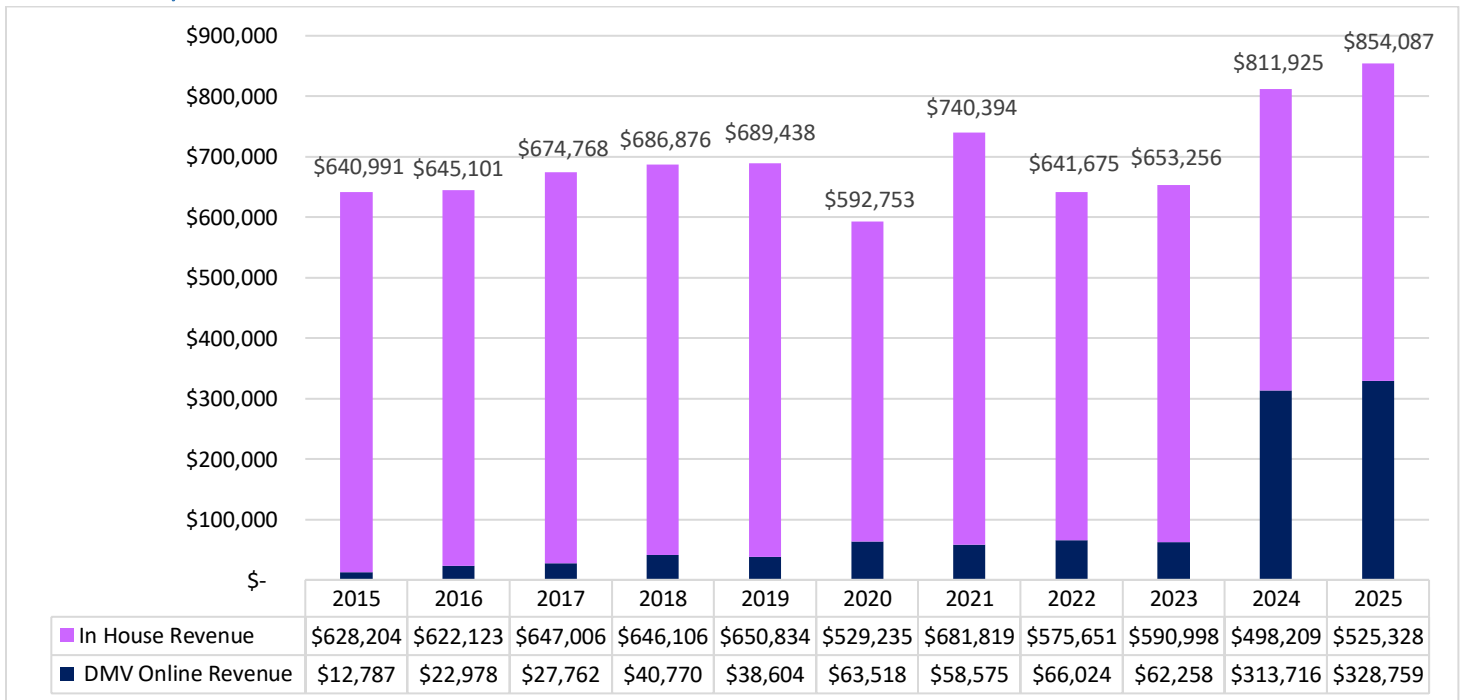
# Department of Motor Vehicles

In 2025, DMV county revenue increased due to Federal REAL ID regulations, which increased In-House license transactions. Expenses increased slightly due to overtime offered to DMV employees during the REAL ID mad-rush.

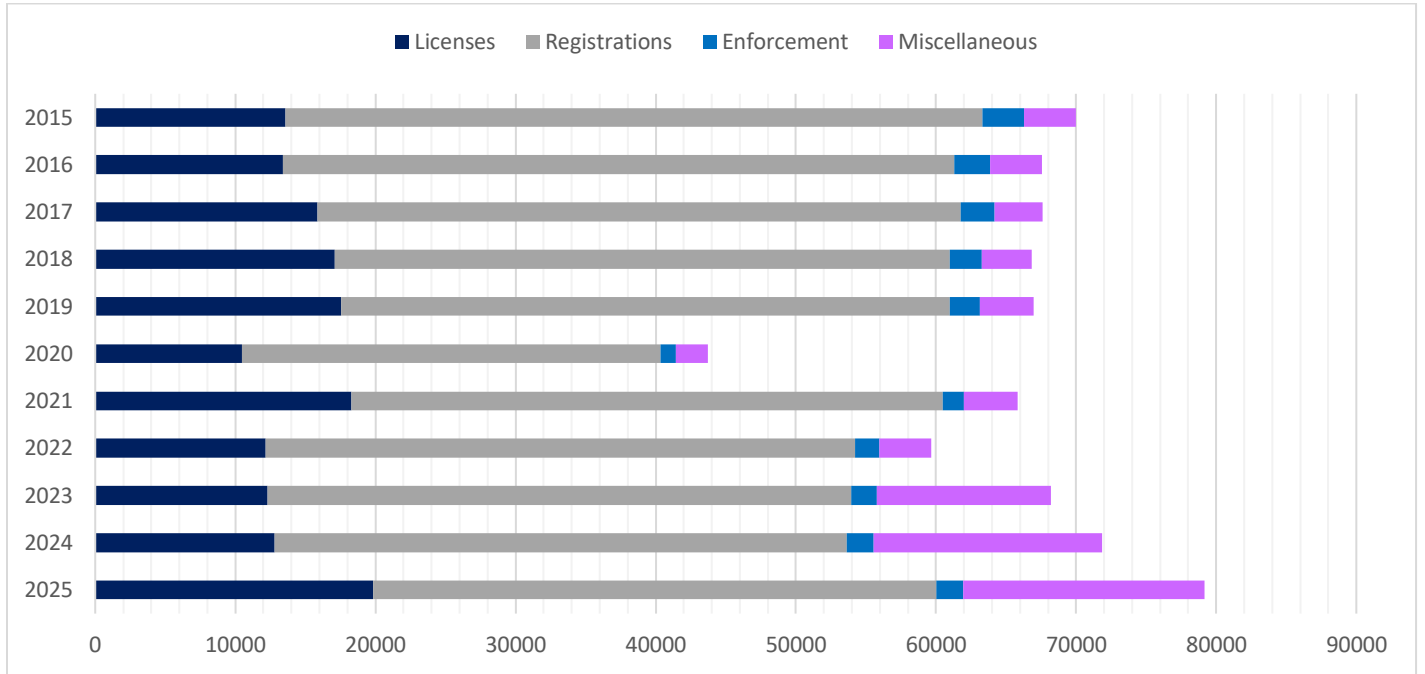
## Overall Revenues and Expenses 2015-2025:



## DMV County Revenue Breakdown – Online Revenue vs. In-House:



## Total Number of DMV Transactions 2015-2025

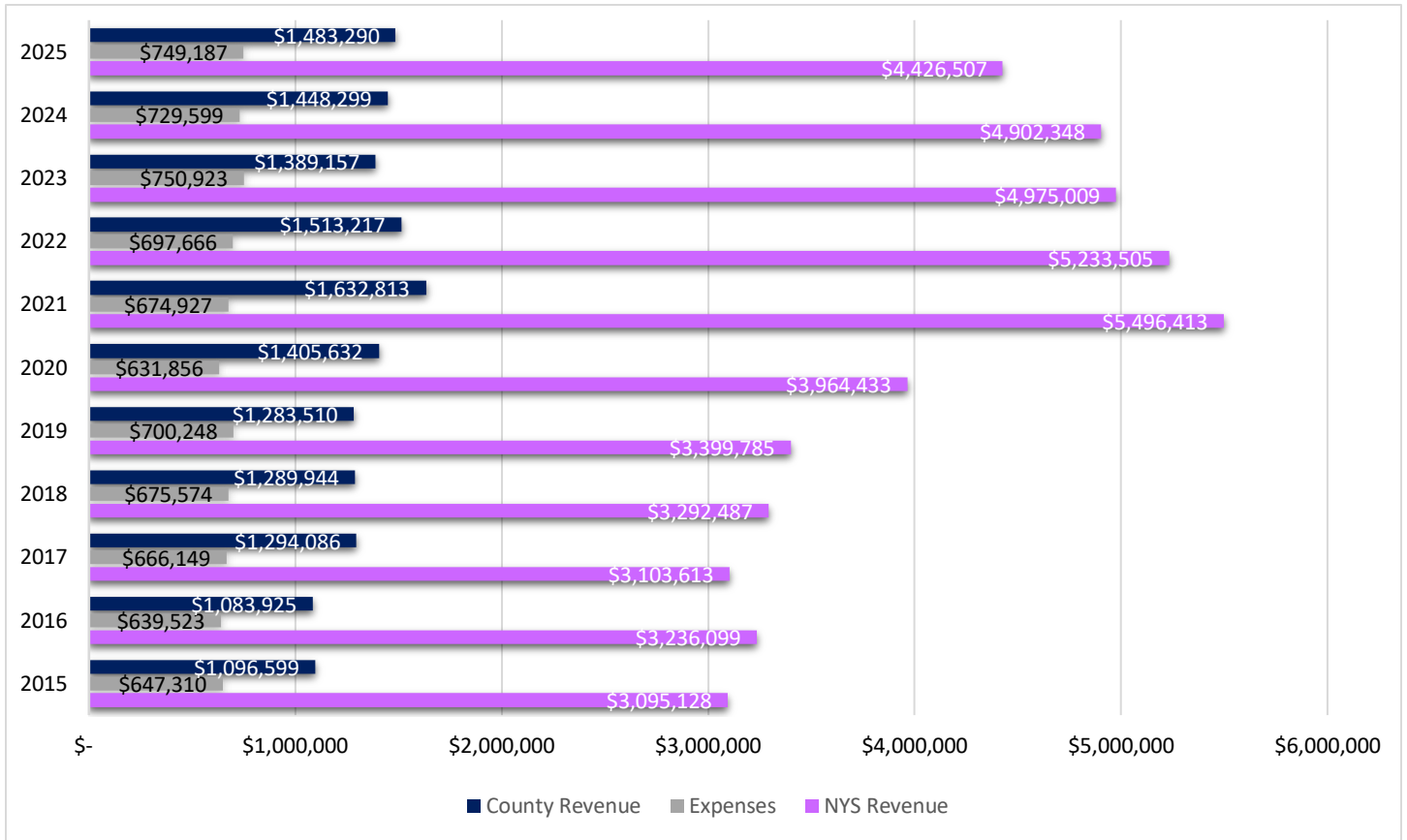


## DMV – 2025 Highlights

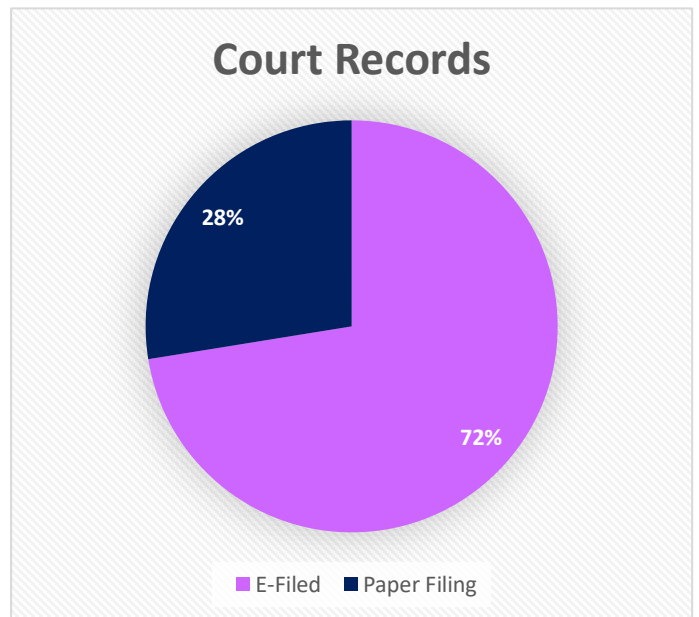
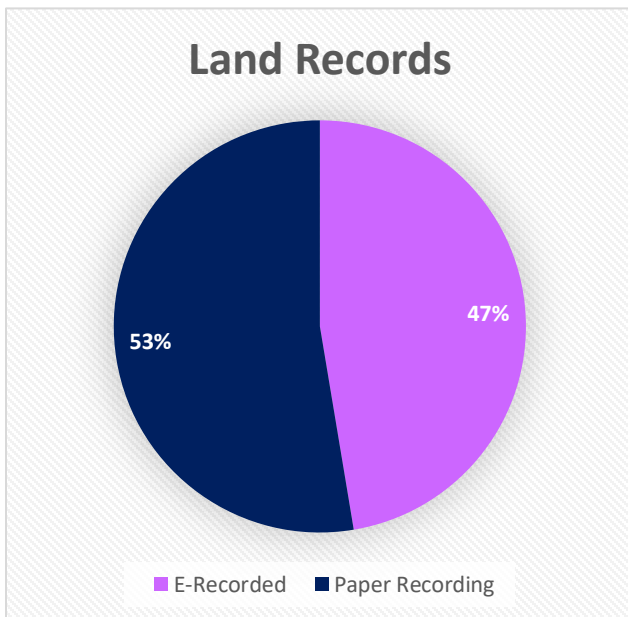
- A 10.25% retention applies to all Jefferson County DMV transactions, whether online or in-house.
- Revenue is up by 10.52% over FY 2024.
- Revenue is \$54,086 higher than originally estimated.
- Revenue from online transactions increased by \$15,043 from last year.
- The total number of transactions processed increased by 7,294 from last year.
- Expenses rose due to a 4.5% wage increase from the CSEA contract settlement and higher Fringe Benefits.

# Recording Department

## Overall Revenues and Expenses 2015-2025

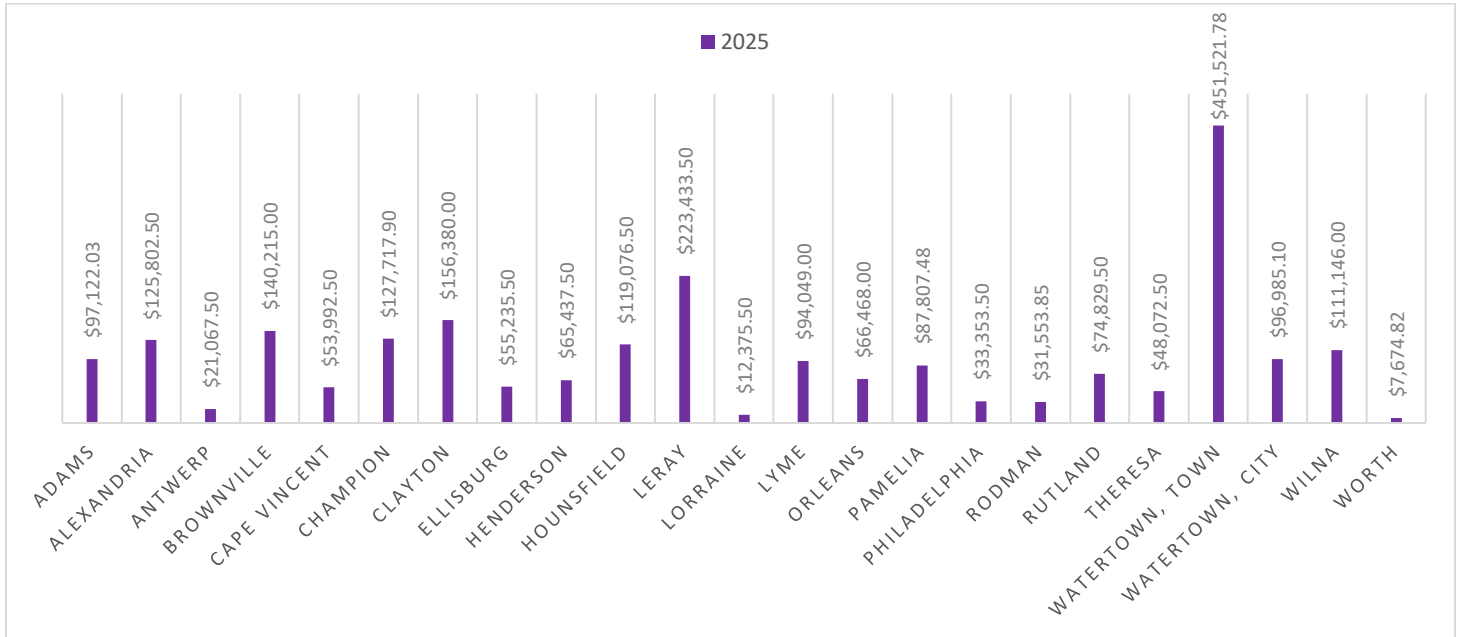


## Percentage of Total Documents Recorded or Filed Electronically

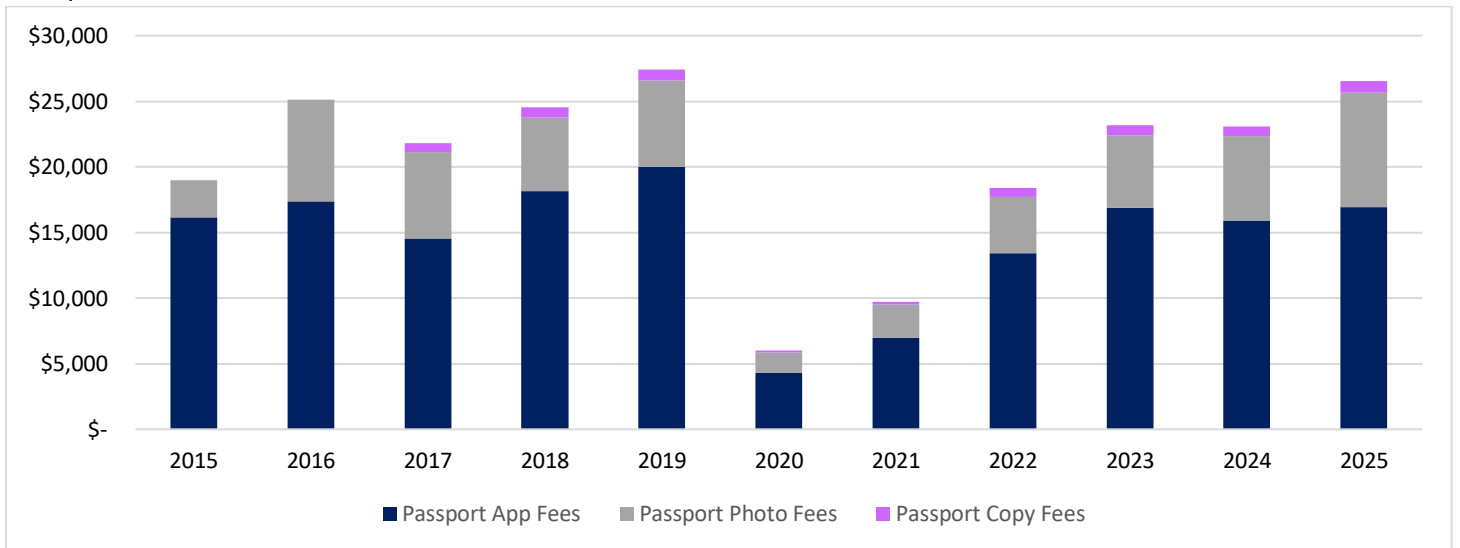


- E-Recording is the electronic submission of land recordings, including all mortgage-related recordings, and is not required by the submitter. Our 2026 goal is to increase e-recordings to at least 50%.
- E-Filing is the electronic submission of supreme and county court filings and is mandated for all case types.

## Basic Mortgage Tax Collected for Each Town - 2025



## Passport Revenue 2015-2025



## Recording Department – 2025 Highlights

- Revenue increased \$34,991.00 over last year – an increase of 2.39%
- The County Clerk's Office purchased a new digital passport camera and printer. This new technology will allow us to email customers their passport photos so they can process their passport renewals online, resulting in increased revenue.
- Revenue is 4.94% higher than original estimates.
- Total Mortgage Tax collected is up \$34,314 from last year – an increase of 8.42%.
  - .75% is collected on the amount of each mortgage.
    - .25% is paid to New York State
    - .50% is paid to the Towns of Jefferson County
- Expenses rose due to a 4.5% wage increase from the CSEA contract settlement and higher Fringe Benefits.

## Records Management - Totals by Department

### Records Management Annual Report - 2025

Requests		Transfers		Destruction	
Administration	0.00	Administration	6.00	Administration	0.00
Auditing	0.00	Auditing	0.00	Auditing	37.00
Board of Elections	0.00	Board of Elections	0.00	Board of Elections	155.00
Buildings & Grounds	0.00	Buildings & Grounds	0.00	Buildings & Grounds	0.00
Code Enforcement	22.00	Code Enforcement	0.00	Code Enforcement	0.00
Community Services	1.00	Community Services	0.00	Community Services	21.00
County Attorney	6.00	County Attorney	2.00	County Attorney	155.00
County Clerk	112.00	County Clerk	19.00	County Clerk	68.00
District Attorney	8.00	District Attorney	0.00	District Attorney	0.00
DSS/County Home	0.00	DSS/County Home	0.00	DSS/County Home	0.00
Dog Control	0.00	Dog Control	0.00	Dog Control	5.00
Employment & Training	0.00	Employment & Training	0.00	Employment & Training	7.00
General Public	265.00	General Public	0.00	General Public	0.00
Highway	0.00	Highway	0.00	Highway	9.00
Human Resources	0.00	Human Resources	1.00	Human Resources	4.00
Information Services	0.00	Information Services	0.00	Information Services	0.00
Insurance	0.00	Insurance	59.00	Insurance	9.00
Medical Examiner	10.00	Medical Examiner	4.00	Medical Examiner	0.00
Office for the Aging	0.00	Office for the Aging	0.00	Office for the Aging	0.00
Planning	0.00	Planning	0.00	Planning	0.00
Probation	39.00	Probation	0.00	Probation	3.00
Public Defender	65.00	Public Defender	33.00	Public Defender	0.00
Public Health	0.00	Public Health	18.00	Public Health	182.00
Purchasing	21.00	Purchasing	32.00	Purchasing	0.00
Real Property	0.00	Real Property	0.00	Real Property	2.00
Sheriff	18.00	Sheriff	0.00	Sheriff	75.00
Treasurer	1.00	Treasurer	9.00	Treasurer	12.00
Veterans Services	1.00	Veterans Services	0.00	Veterans Services	0.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>569.00</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>183.00</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>744.00</b>

### Records Management – General Information

- The County Clerk serves as the Records Management Officer for Jefferson County.
- Records Management manages records for all County departments in accordance with the New York State Archives retention schedule.
- The 2026 Goal is to finalize our digitization projects, begin outreach to all County departments to assist with their digitization projects, and ensure compliance with the NYS Archives retention schedule.
- Increased digitization is leading to fewer requests, fewer transfers, and more destruction across all departments. However, greater digitization is driving higher revenue from online record subscriptions.
- Since 2014, the County Clerk's Office has destroyed 1,678 boxes of records due to digitization, freeing valuable space in our inactive records center for historical and permanent records.
- Our goal is to apply for the LGRMIF grant for 2027 to support digitization needs. Grants are becoming scarce and difficult to secure because of a large applicant pool; therefore, I plan to use revenue from online subscriptions to fund countywide digitization.

## Potential Revenue Sources

Revenue Source	Potential Annual Revenue
*Imposition of Local Mortgage Tax	\$842,652.00
*Increase in Real Estate Transfer Tax	\$959,241.00
**Imposition of County Passenger Vehicle Use Tax	\$426,274.00

*\*Potential Revenue based on 2025 Actual Revenues*

*\*\*Potential Revenue based on Current Registration Information available at data.ny.gov*

### Local Mortgage Tax

**What Would Change:** Currently, 0.75% is collected on the mortgage amount. This would increase to 1%.

**Who Does It Affect:** New mortgages. Affects taxpayers maybe 1-2 times in a lifetime. Most borrowers are unaware of this fee because it is often included in closing costs. Does not affect Seniors on a fixed income.

**Counties with Local Mortgage Tax:** 29 (Only 6 Counties, which include Jefferson County, are left at .75%)

**Note:** The allocation of this additional revenue is decided by the Board of Legislators.

Mortgage Amount	Current Tax .75%	New Tax 1.0%	Difference
\$100,000.00	\$750.00	\$1,000.00	\$250.00
\$250,000.00	\$1,875.00	\$2,500.00	\$625.00

### Local Real Estate Transfer Tax

**What Would Change:** Currently, \$4 is collected for every \$1,000 in sales consideration. This would increase by \$2.00, bringing the total retained by Jefferson County to \$3.00.

**Who Does It Affect:** Purchaser(s) of new property only. Affects taxpayers maybe 1-2 times in a lifetime. Most borrowers are unaware of this fee because it is often included in closing costs. No burden to seniors on fixed income.

**Counties with Local Real Estate Transfer Tax:** (Not all are the same rate) – (Columbia, Essex, Broome, Madison, Tompkins)

Sale Price	Current Tax	New Tax	Difference
\$100,000.00	\$400.00	\$600.00	\$200.00
\$250,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,500.00	\$500.00

### Passenger Vehicle Use Tax

<https://dmv.ny.gov/registration/registration-fees-use-taxes-and-supplemental-fees-passenger-vehicles>

**What Would Change:**

Passenger Vehicle ≤ 3500 lbs. = \$10.00 per two-year registration.

Passenger Vehicle > 3500 lbs. = \$20.00 per two-year registration.

**Who Does it Affect:** All registrations of **passenger** vehicles with a Jefferson County Address. (All other classes, including Commercial, are exempt from this additional fee.)

**How Many Other Counties Have it** – 39 Counties

**Note:** We receive this amount regardless of where they register (Online or at another DMV Office).

Vehicle	Current 2yr Reg.	New 2yr Reg.	Difference
2020 Hyundai (3126 lbs.)	\$50.00	\$60.00	\$10.00
2017 Chevy 1500 (5276 lbs.)	\$79.00	\$99.00	\$20.00

