

2020 Budget Presentation

WESTCHESTER COUNTY CLERK



Timothy C. Idoni
Westchester County Clerk



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County Clerk

November 14, 2019

Dear Honorable Budget Committee Members:

The Office of the Westchester County Clerk is proud to present a lean 2020 budget. The budget once again reduces expenses while maintaining all critical services. The budget includes conservative revenue estimates that are based on current market indicators. Our spending estimates reflect an effort to hold flat or cut spending within our control to offset increasing salary costs and interdepartmental charges. Some highlights include:

- Our 2020 revenue is projected at \$8,247,425 while 2020 expenses are projected at \$6,876,000 resulting in a departmental tax levy of - \$1,371,425.
- Our staffing remains lean as our overall staffing has been reduced since I took office. One position cut is proposed for 2020, resulting in a cumulative thirty-nine percent (39%) reduction in staffing.
- Our 2020 budget will provide a high level of service to our customers including the continuation of electronic filing in our Legal Division where approximately eighty-five percent (85%) of our cases are commenced electronically, as well as the expansion of electronic recording in our Land Records Division where voluntary participation reached approximately seventy-eight percent (78%) in 2019.

The Office of the Westchester County Clerk will continue to face the financial challenges all governments face head on. We remain committed to improving service while reducing costs to our residents.

Respectfully,

Timothy C. Idoni

Services Provided by the Office of the County Clerk

Land Records Division

- Recording land records, including deeds, mortgages, assignments, and satisfactions
- Collection and processing of New York State mortgage and transfer taxes
- Filing of maps, UCC statements, Federal tax liens, Notices of Common Charges, and other federal liens

Legal Division

- Fee collection and filing of court records for Supreme and Westchester County courts
- Administration of Notary Public and Commissioner of Deeds licenses
- Administration of the Domestic Partnership Registry
- Filing of Business Certificates and Incorporation records from New York State
- Filing of Small Claims Assessment Review petitions
- Filing of Veterans Military Discharge papers

Licensing Division

- Processing of United States Passport applications
- Administration of Pistol Licenses
- Issuance of Westchester County Identification Cards
- Host and Administration of Oath of Allegiance to newly naturalized United States citizens
- Operation of Mobile Passport Office to bring services to municipalities and events throughout the County

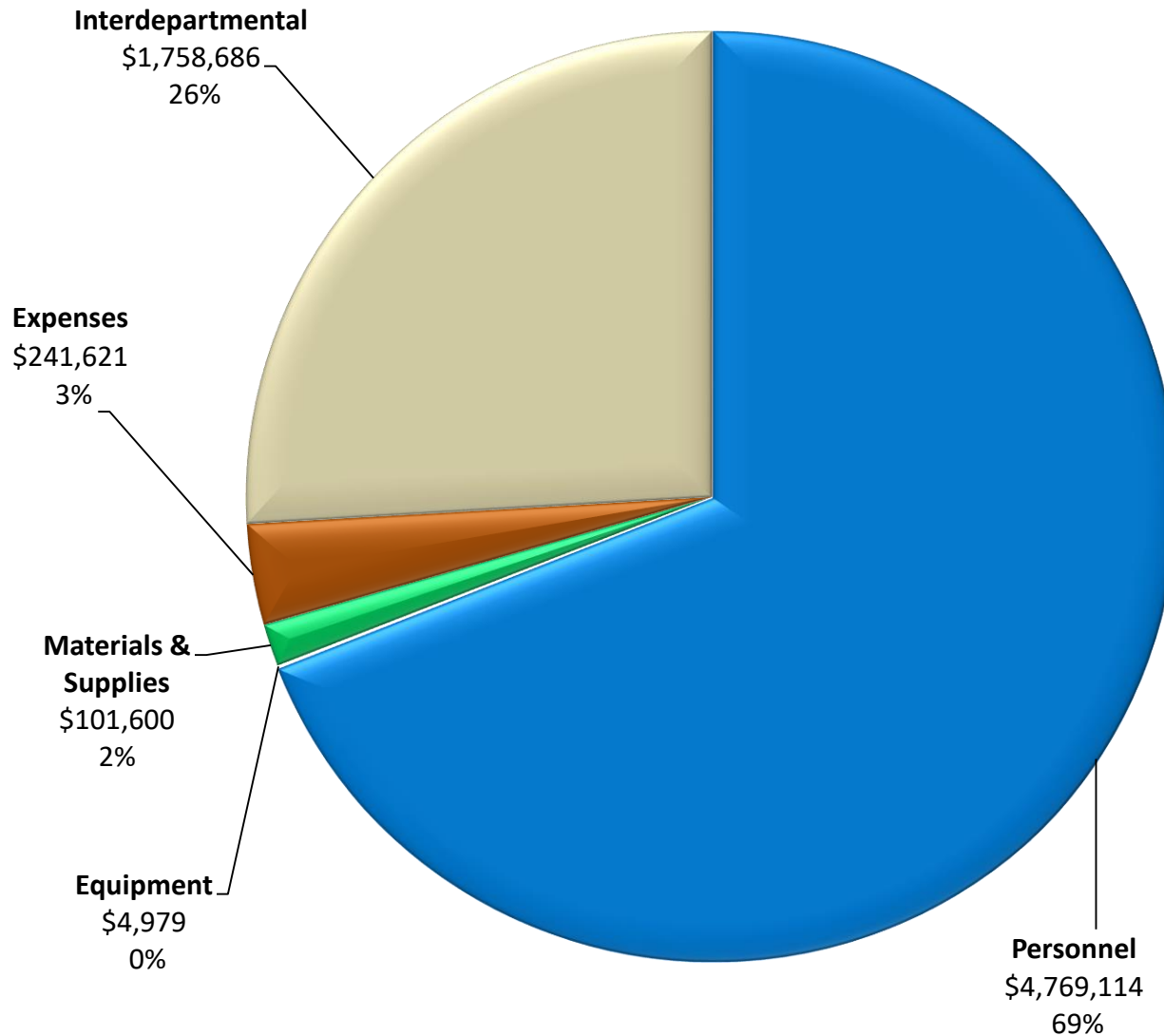
Administration

- Subscription Service for WRO access to land and legal records, foreclosure lists, judgments, and other records
- Financial Reporting to partners in federal, state and county government
- Administering and Filing of Oaths of Office
- Provision of certified copies of all recordings and filings

Highlights and Initiatives

- **E-Filing and E-recording:** Approximately 85% of civil actions are commenced electronically through the NYS electronic filing system and approximately 78% of the land record documents are currently e-recorded. Electronic recording has been a tremendous success, significantly increasing the efficiency of the filing and recording and reducing manual labor. Programs and procedures are now being developed in coordination with the DA's Office and the courts to allow for e-filing of criminal cases which could lead to an additional estimated 5% reduction in paper. It is anticipated that e-filing of election law cases will be authorized by the Chief Administrative Judge in 2020 which will result in a further reduction in paper.
- **Renovation in Office Space:** Plans are being redeveloped under the leadership of the County Executive and DPWTR for the complete renovation of the 32,000 square feet of office space currently occupied by the Clerk's office. With the automation of department functions and the resultant reduction in staffing needs, space may be opened up for adaptive reuse by another County department. This will bring about efficiency in dealing with the daily visitors to the office and also generate savings in rental costs for the County.
- **Language Assistance Services:** In 2017, the County Clerk installed the Google Translate module to enable the translation of the text of the County Clerk's website in over 100 languages. Language assistance is provided by the NYS court system in the provision of court-related services rendered by the County Clerk. In furtherance of the County Clerk's commitment to providing services to individuals of limited English proficiency, the County Clerk has expanded the language assistance services to include interpretation services to meet the needs of individuals utilizing the County Clerk's *non-court* related services in the Clerk's legal, licensing, and land records divisions.
- **Notary Test Sites:** In an effort to accommodate the residents of Westchester County, the County Clerk requested the expansion of the notary examination test sites to include a location within Westchester County. The Secretary of State agreed, and the notary examination was administered in 2019 at the WCC campus to approximately 250-300 applicants at each of the 4 annual sessions. The County Emergency Services Department has agreed to host the exam in 2020 at the fire training center.
- **Mobile Community Outreach Vehicle:** The County Clerk's office has been running a very successful Community Outreach program featuring a custom built truck throughout Westchester since 2002. The program features 35-40 stops per year to every town and city in the county. Over 1,000 passport applications and photos are processed through the mobile office on an annual basis. Due to a significant increase in public usage of the mobile office services, the County Clerk increased the number of passport agents working in the outreach unit from 2 in 2018 to 4 in 2019, serving an average of 40 residents per visit. The state of disrepair of the current mobile outreach vehicle necessitated the County Clerk's request for an amendment to the 2019 Capital Budget to purchase a new more efficient, ADA compliant vehicle which should be in operation for the 2020 mobile office community outreach cycle.
- **Access to the County Clerk's Land and Legal Public Viewer - Westchester Records Online ("WRO"):** In an effort to assist the municipalities in meeting the needs of their constituents and in preventing neighborhood blight, the County Clerk requested and received approval to enter into no cost license agreements with local municipalities, on an as needed basis, for remote access to *WRO*. The municipalities will have free remote online access to weekly foreclosure reports in the *WRO* that contain data from recently commenced actions including the mortgagor, mortgagee, property location, and a reference to the pending court action.

2020 Projected Expenses at \$6,876,000



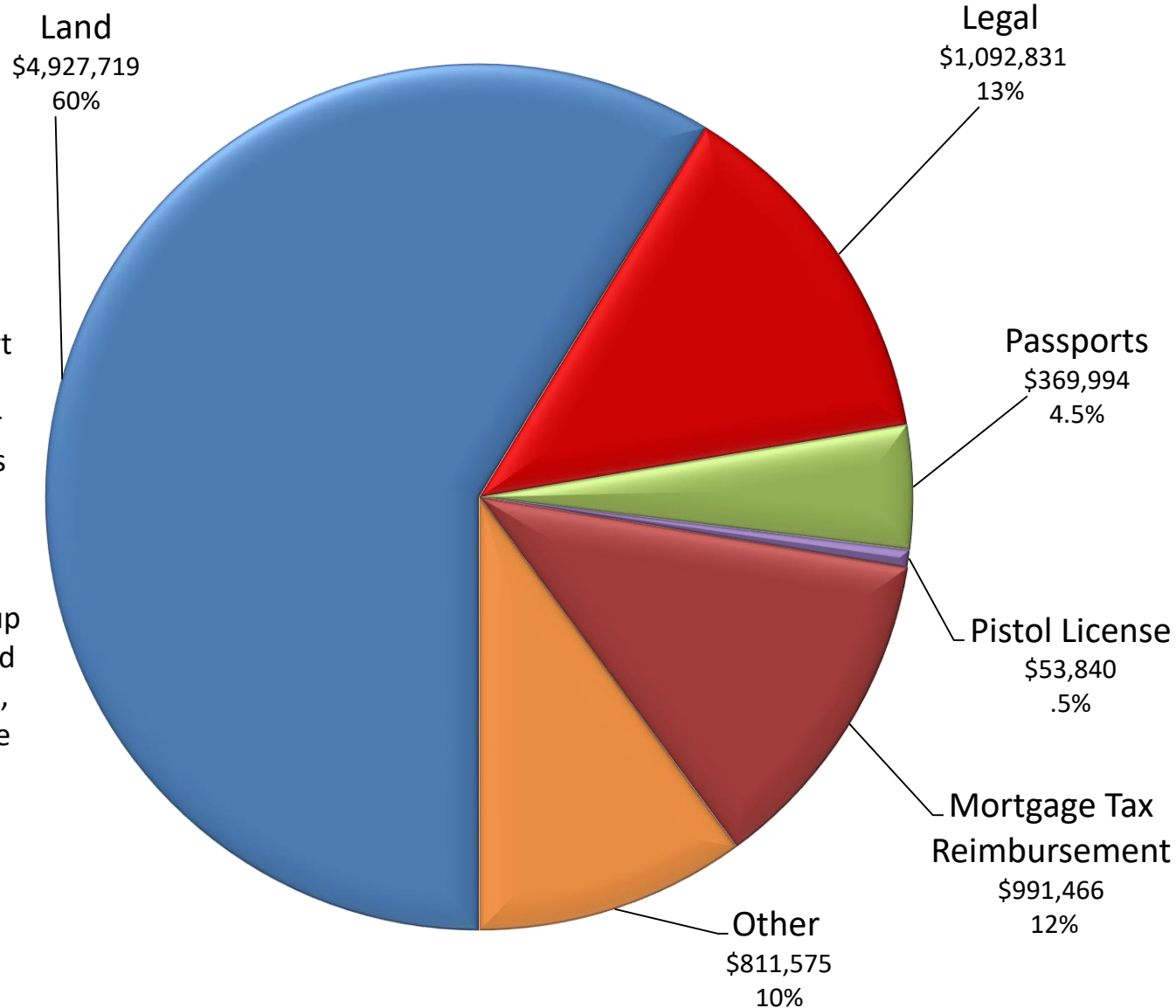
2020 Expenses

Our largest expenses, by far, are our personnel costs which represent 69% of our proposed expenses for 2020 and include salaries and overtime. Interdepartmental charges represent the next largest portion of our expense budget, with 26% of our budget funding items such as our DoIT support team, the Archives, DPWTR and the Law Department. Our general expenses, which make up 3% of our expense budget, include items such as scanning and equipment rental. Our materials and supplies budget continues to remain modest as our e-initiatives expand, coming in at 2% of our budget. Additional and replacement equipment continue to make up less than 1% of our budgeted expenses.

2020 Revenue Projected at \$8,247,425

2020 Revenue

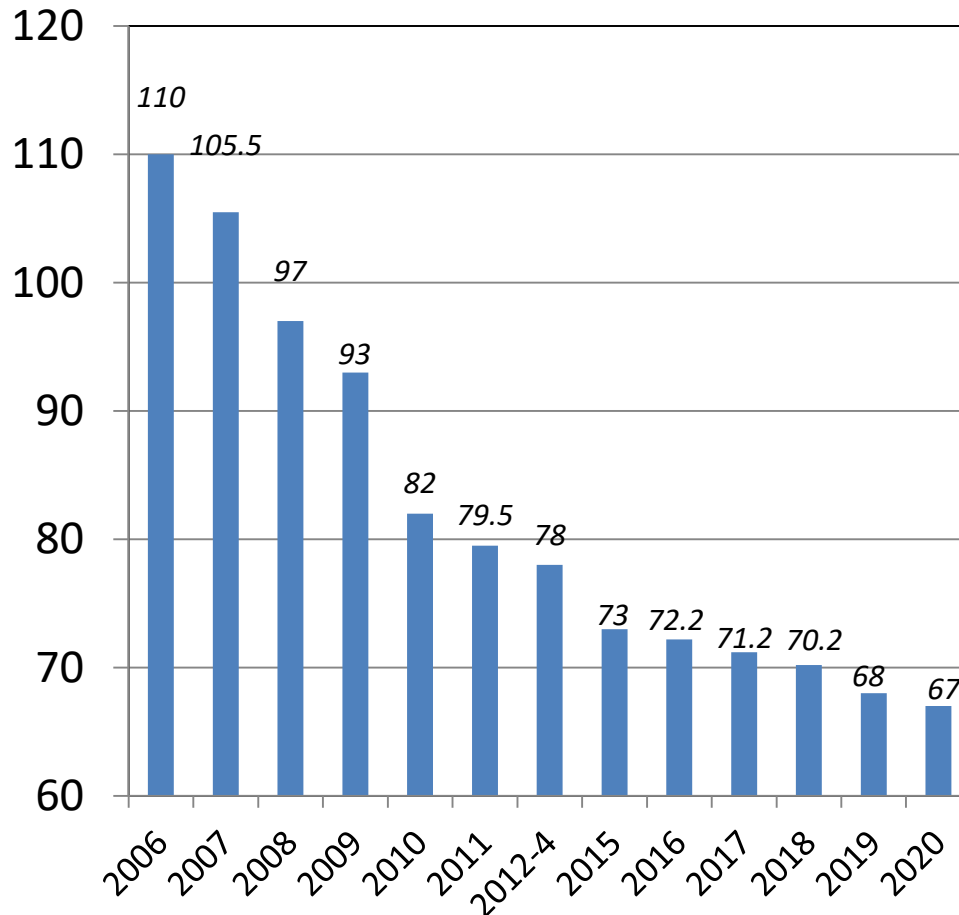
Fees paid in connection with the recording of land records such as deeds and mortgages make up the majority (60%) of our revenue. Court and legal fees provide an additional 13% of the revenue collected by our office. New York State reimburses us for expenses in connection with the processing of mortgage tax and this accounts for 12% of our revenue. Passports and pistol licenses make up 5%. The remaining 10% is comprised of equalization and assessment fees, interest income, table rentals, online access to records, transfer tax revenue, public copier and overpayment of fees.



Reductions in Staffing

Overall Staffing Reduced by 39% since 2006

Number of Employees*



**Chart includes operating, grant, temporary and hourly employees*

Positions Eliminated:

23 Operating Positions Eliminated:

Assistant Deputy County Clerk
Chief Deputy County Clerk
Budget Specialist III/Services Supervisor
3 Staff Assistants
8 Clerks (County Clerk)
3 Senior Clerk (County Clerk)
Secretary I
2 Senior Messengers
Director Program Development II (Trades Licensing)
2 Second Deputy County Clerk

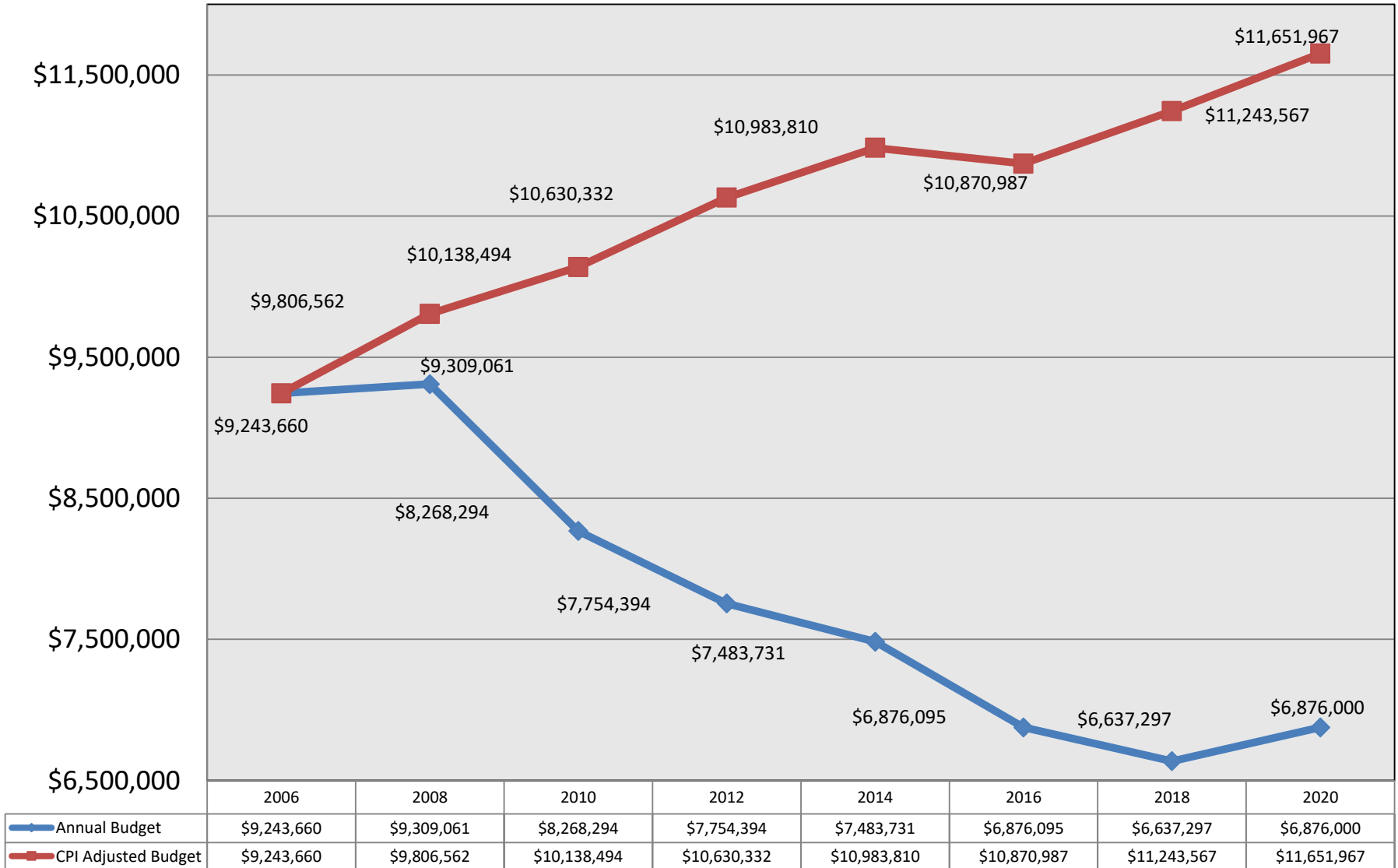
2 Grant Positions Eliminated:

Senior Messenger
Messenger

18 Full-Time Temporary Positions Eliminated

Expense Reduction

Annual Budget vs. Budget Adjusted for Consumer Price Index (CPI)

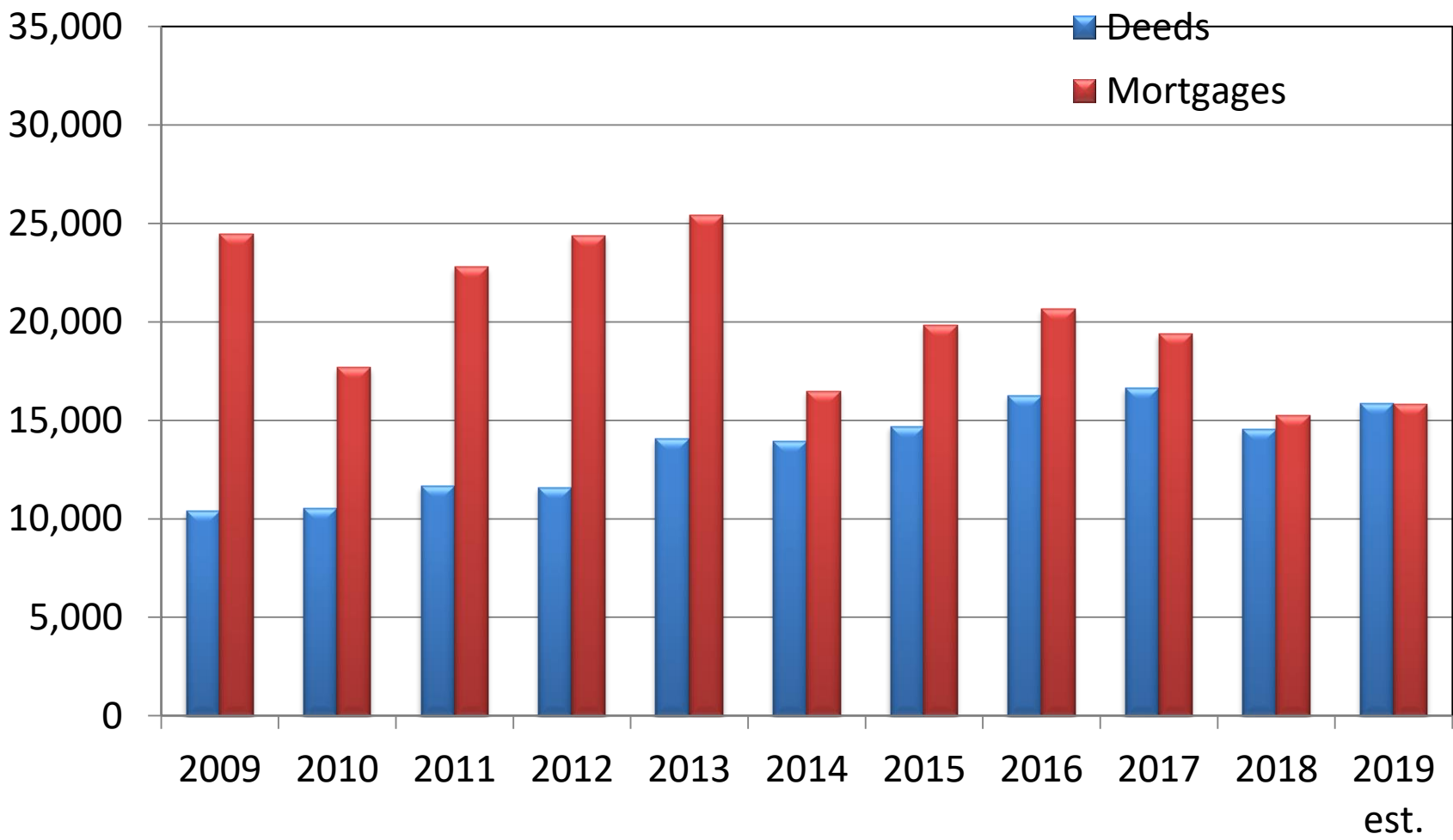


*CPI Adjusted Budget for 2019 was adjusted through September 30, 2019.

Statistics of Interest

Indicators from our Land Records Division

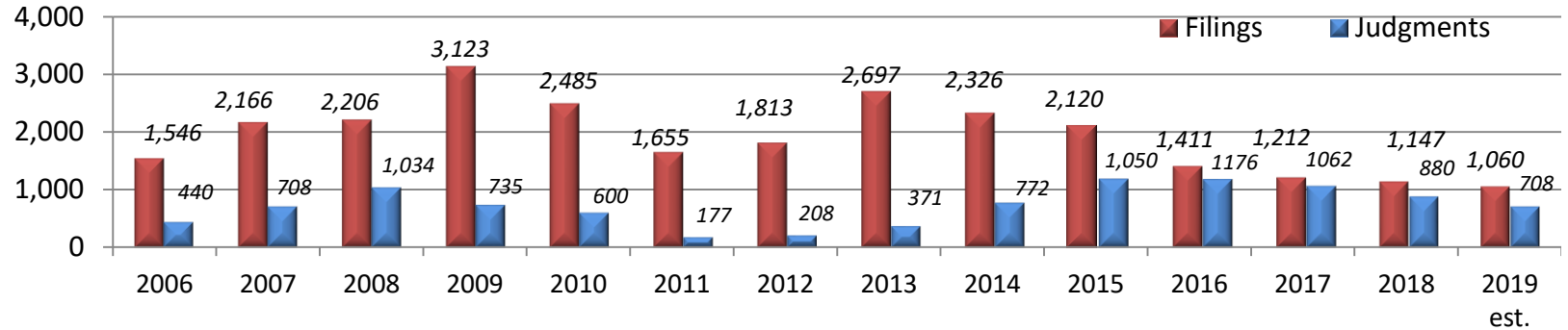
Deeds and Mortgages Recorded



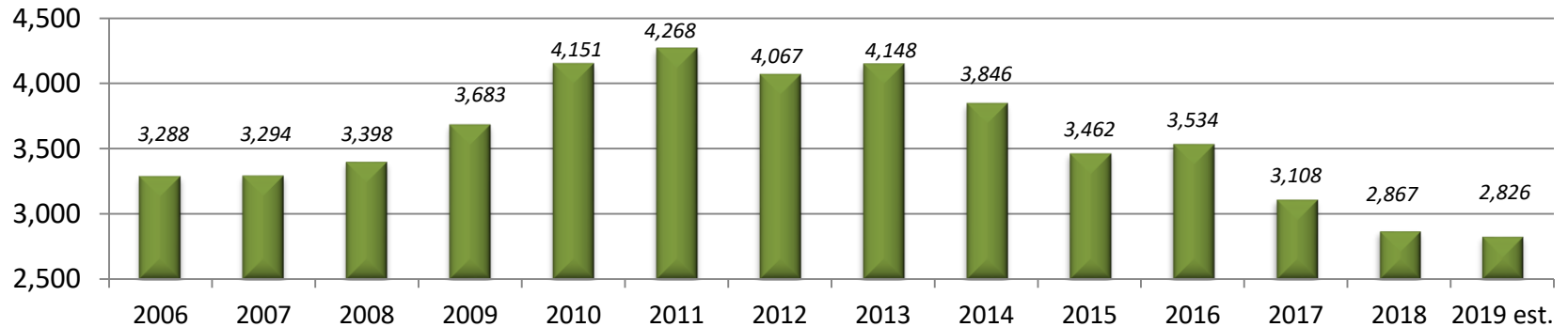
Statistics of Interest

Indicators from our Legal Division

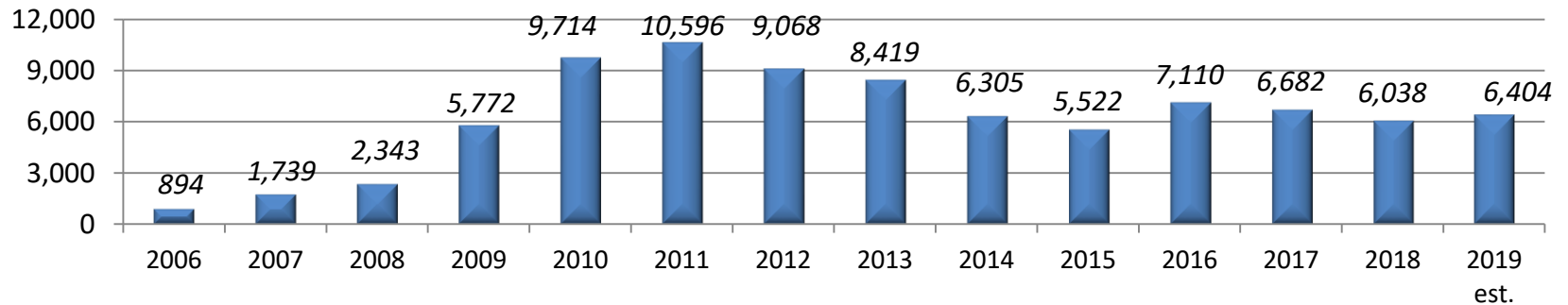
Foreclosure Filings and Judgments



Tax Certiorari Proceedings Commenced

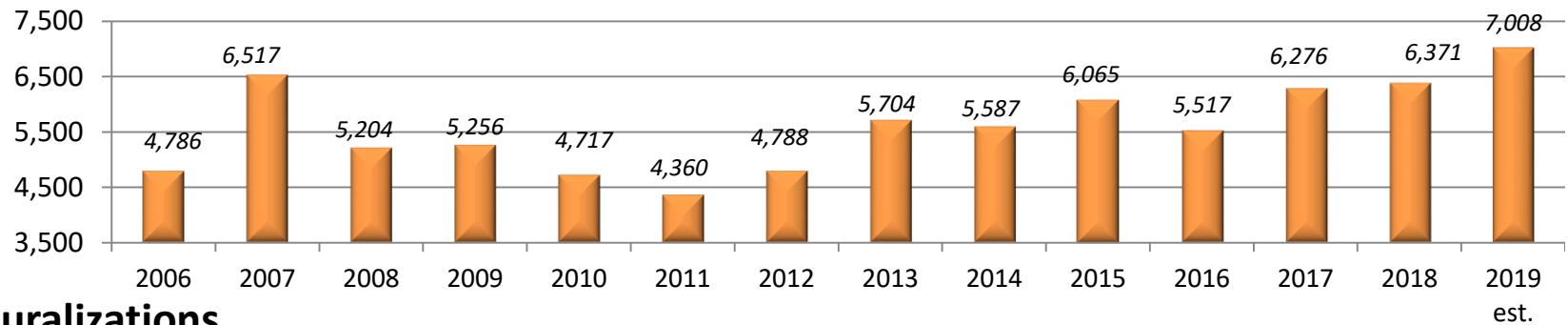


Small Claims Assessment Review Petitions Filed

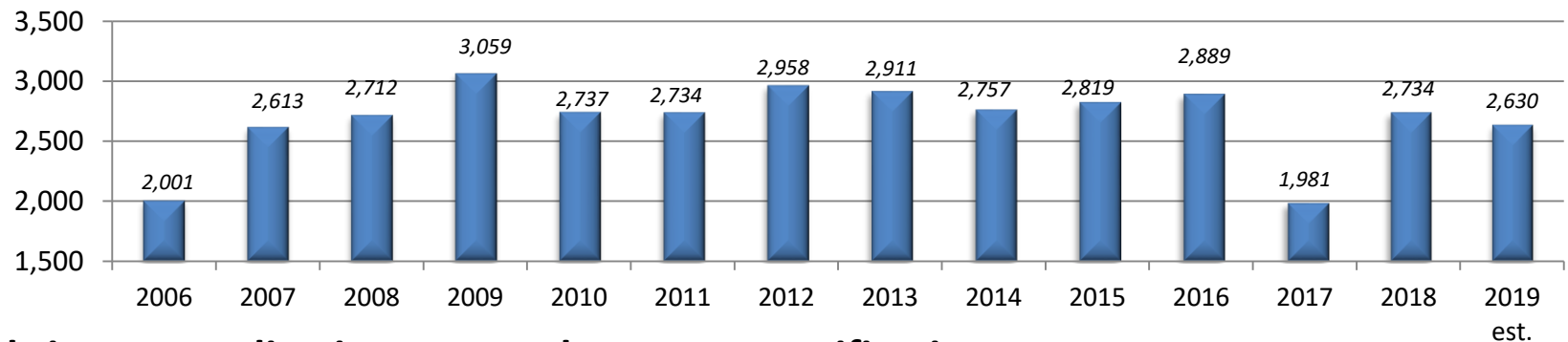


Statistics of Interest *Indicators from our Licensing Division*

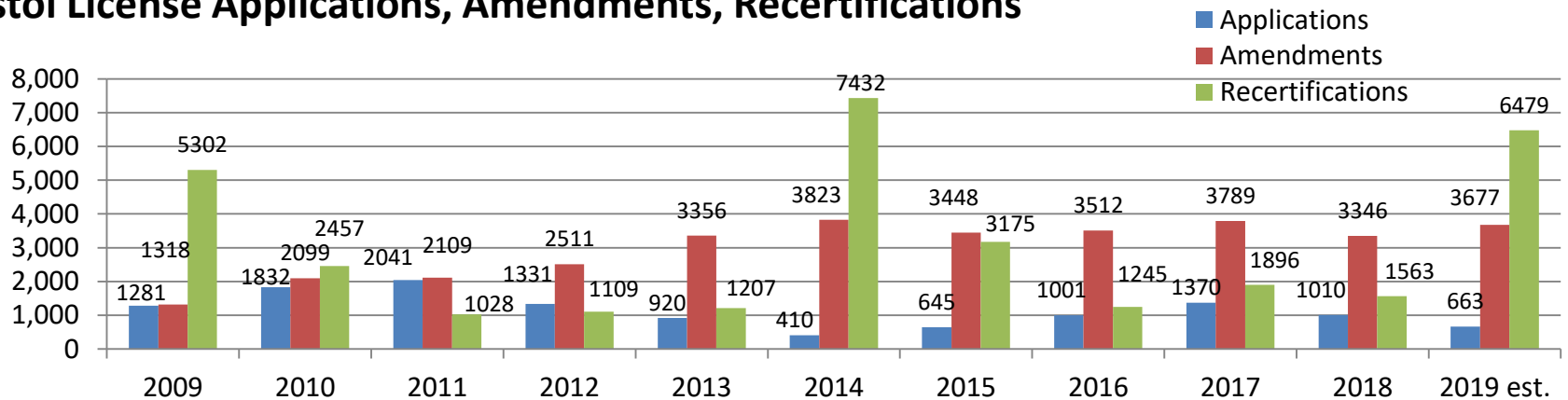
Passport Applications



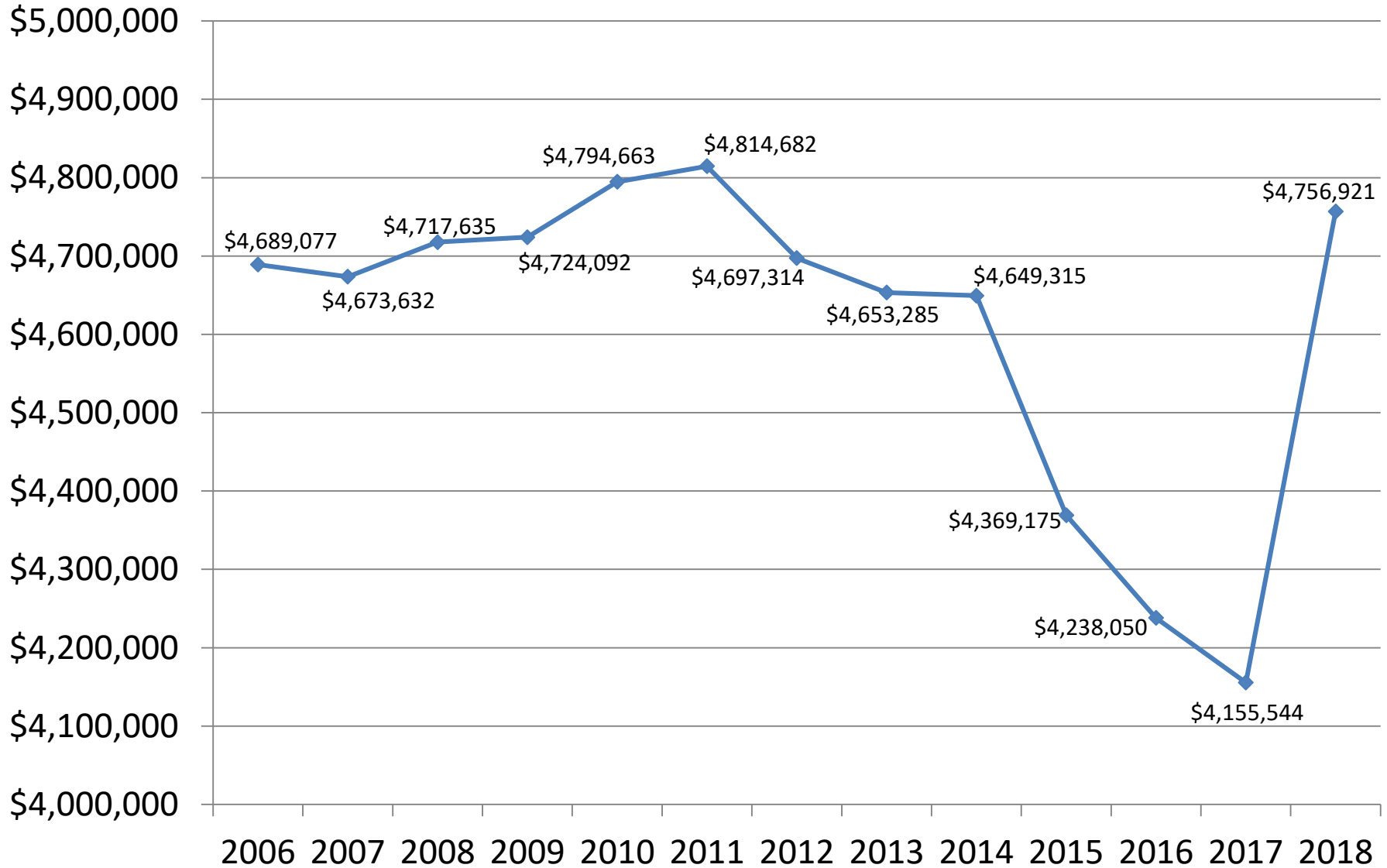
Naturalizations



Pistol License Applications, Amendments, Recertifications

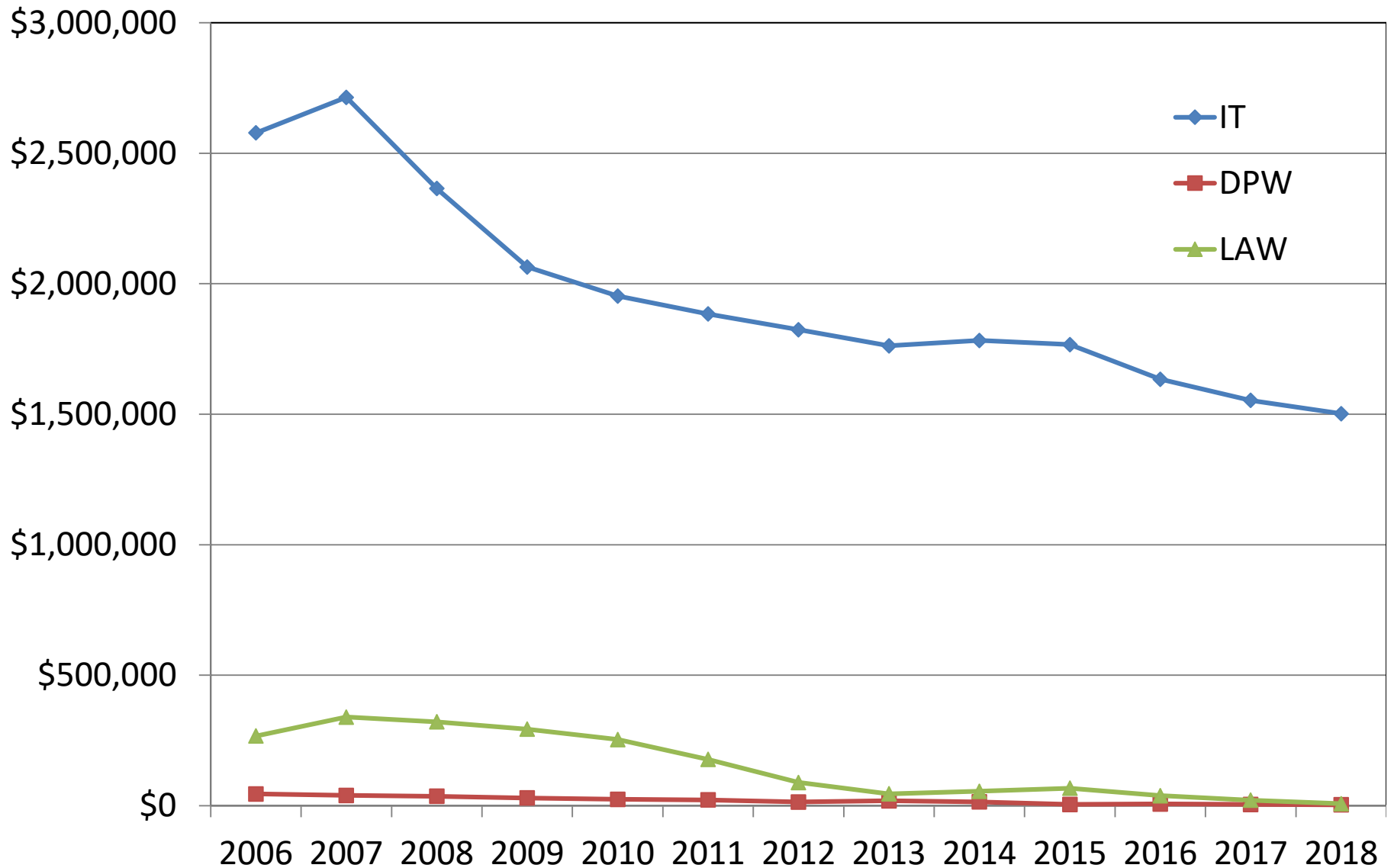


Salaries & Personal Services



*In accordance with the terms of the 2018 CSEA Contract, the salary expense increased to cover retroactive payments and the negotiated increase in salary.

Inter-Departmental Charges

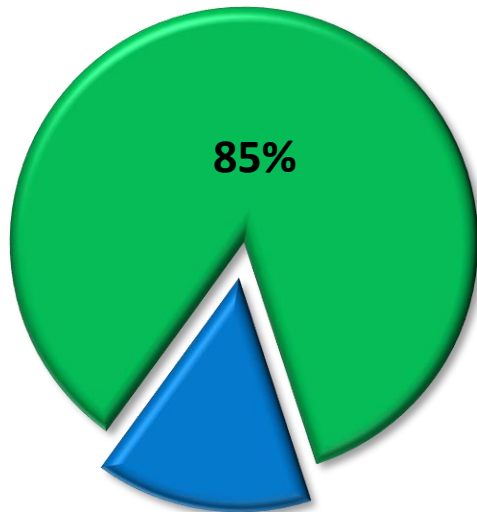


* IT charges include information systems support, telecommunications, data processing, and the records center

Electronic Filing and Recording

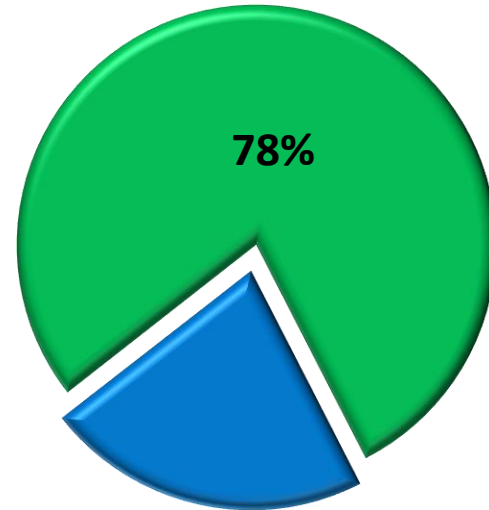
Civil Actions

Approximately **85%** of our civil actions are commenced electronically through the NYS Courts electronic filing system.



Land Records

Approximately **78%** of the documents submitted to the Land Records Division are submitted electronically as part of a **voluntary** eRecording program.



County Clerk's Westchester Records Online Program ("WRO").

For the period of 1/1/19 to 10/31/19, **2,909,985** searches were conducted in WRO. Online reports of foreclosure filings and judgments have been made available to local municipalities as a "shared service" to assist in preventing zombie homes.

State Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund ("LGRMIF") Grant.

The County Clerk was awarded an LGRMIF grant of **\$47,600** to further digitally image court record books, oaths of office and oath cards of notaries and commissioners of deeds in WRO, which was completed June 30, 2019.

2019 Community Outreach

