

2025 Budget Presentation

WESTCHESTER COUNTY CLERK



Timothy C. Idoni
Westchester County Clerk



WESTCHESTER COUNTY CLERK

Timothy C. Idoni
County Clerk

November 12, 2024

Dear Honorable Budget Committee Members:

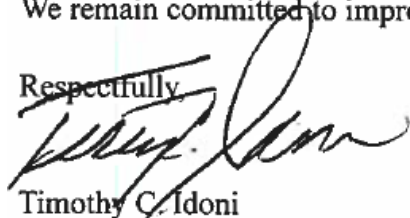
The Office of the Westchester County Clerk is proud to present a lean 2025 budget. The high mortgage interest rates continue to adversely impact the revenue collected by this Office. The Office's projected expenses reflect our efforts to hold flat or cut spending within our control to offset the increasing salary costs and interdepartmental charges and the decrease in revenue in our land division. The budget includes cautiously optimistic revenue projections based on current market indicators, particularly in the real estate market.

Overall highlights

- Our 2025 revenue is projected at \$6,904,001 while 2025 expenses are projected at \$6,932,929 resulting in a minimal departmental tax levy of \$28,928.
- Our staffing remains lean as our overall staffing has been reduced. With the abolishment of one vacant position, the cumulative reduction in staffing is 45.5%.
- Our 2025 budget will provide a high level of service to our customers including the continuation of electronic filing in our Legal Division where approximately 92% of our cases are started electronically, as well as the expansion of electronic recording in our Land Records Division where voluntary participation is approximately 71% in 2024.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy C. Idoni", written over the word "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

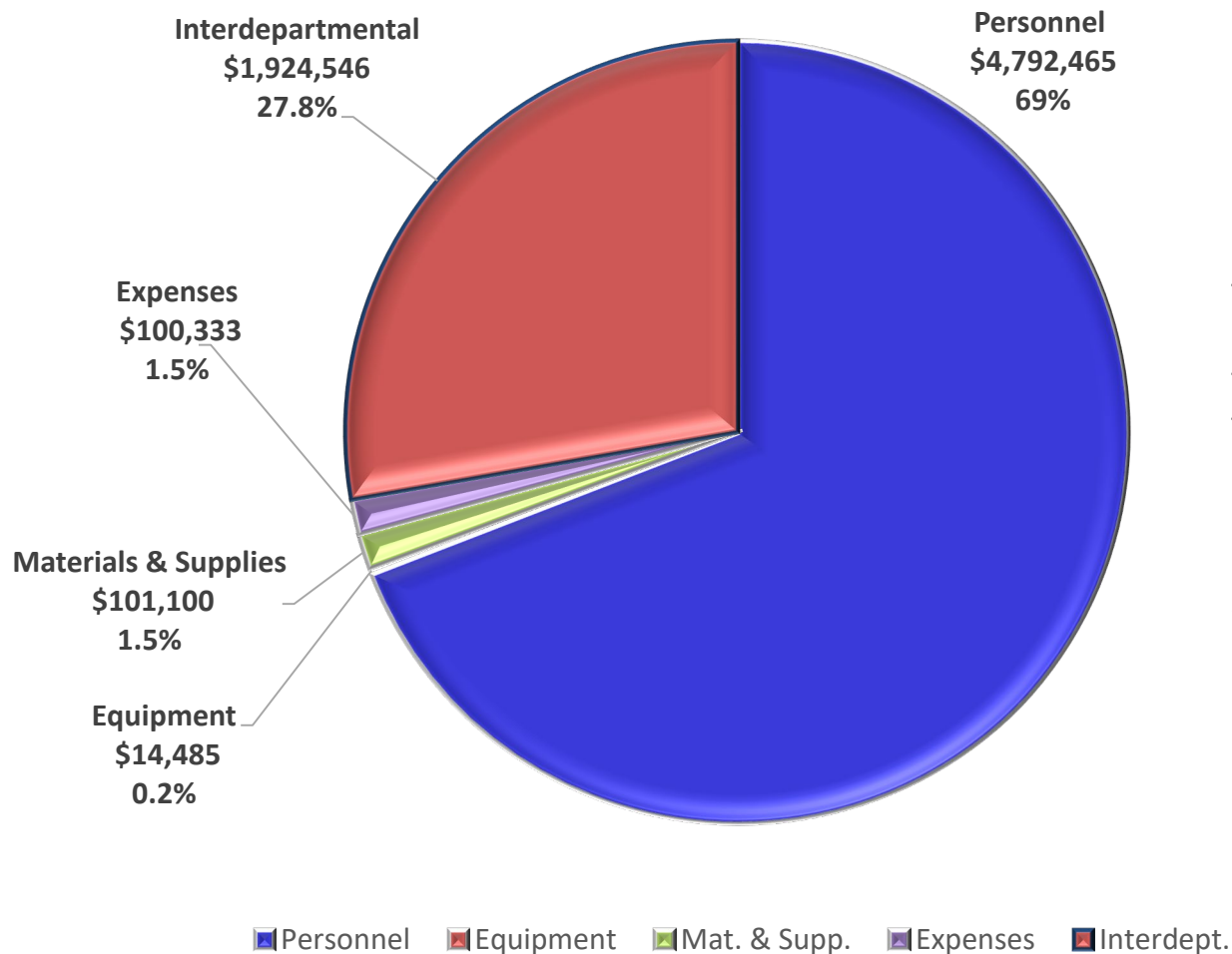
Licensing Division

- 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 Westchester Records Online (“WRO”)44 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

2025 EXPENSES PROJECTED AT \$6,932,929



2025 Expenses

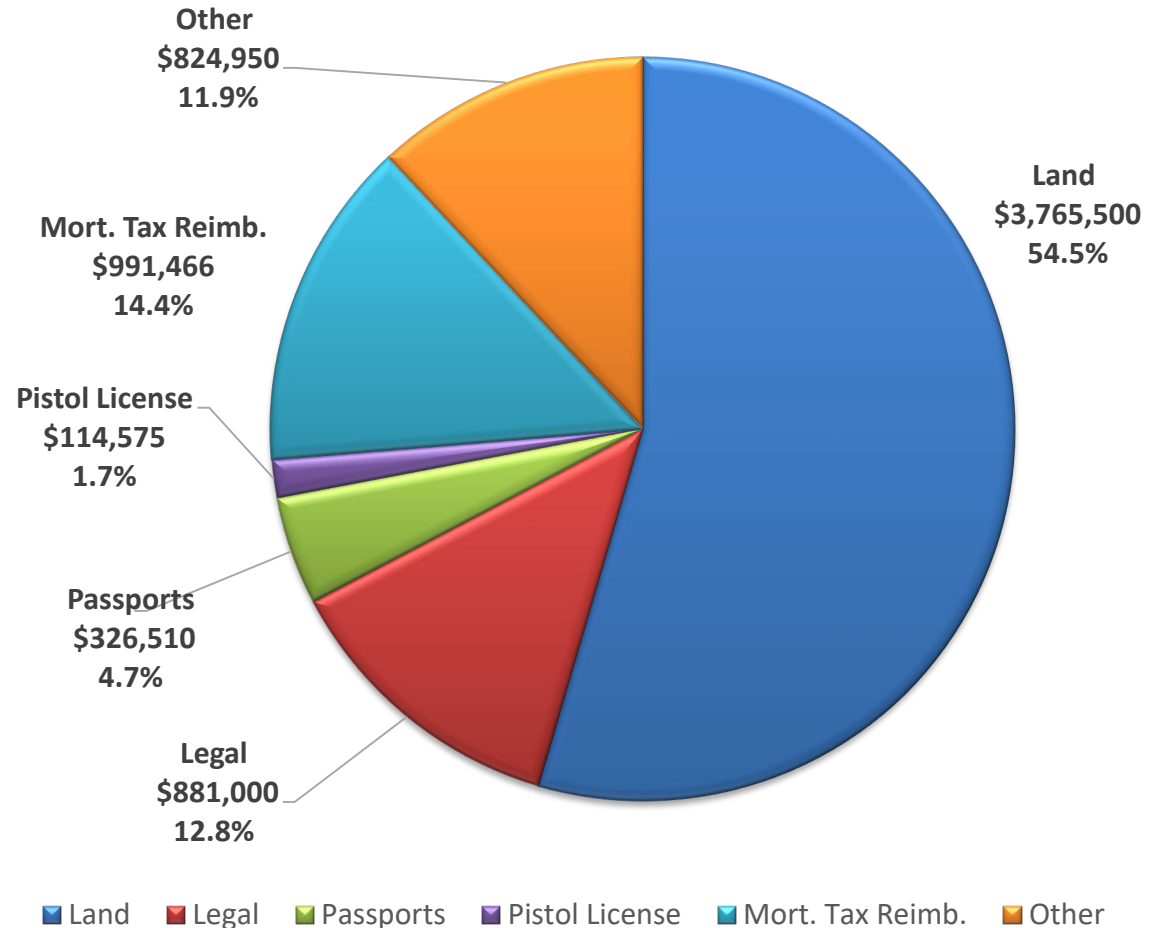
Our largest expenses, by far, are our personnel costs which represent 69% of our proposed expenses for 2025 and include salaries and overtime.

Interdepartmental charges represent the next largest portion of our expense budget, with 27.8% of our budget funding items such as our DoIT support team, the Archives, DPWTR and the Law Department. Our general expenses, which make up 1.5% 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 1.5% of our budget. Additional and replacement equipment continue to make up approximately .2% of our budgeted expenses.

2025 REVENUE PROJECTED AT \$6,904,001

2025 Revenue

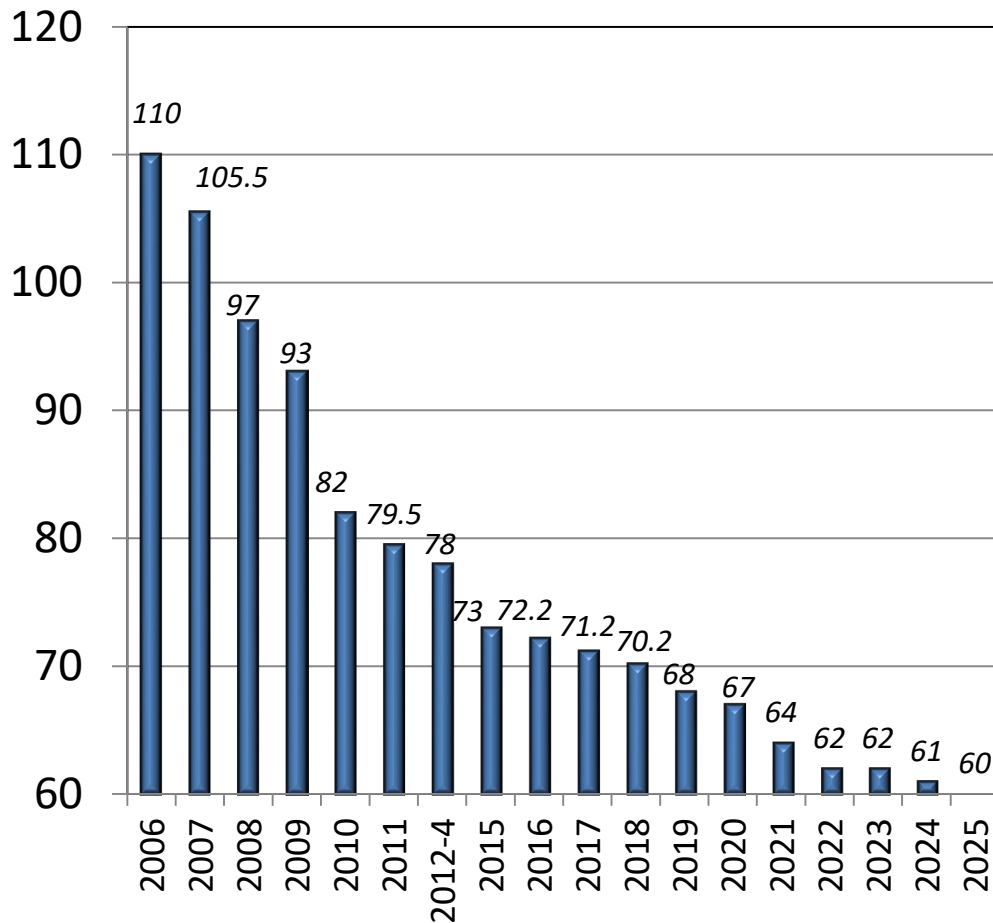
Fees paid in connection with the recording of land records such as deeds and mortgages make up the majority (54.5%) of our revenue. Court and legal fees provide an additional 12.8% of the revenue collected by our office. New York State reimburses us for expenses in connection with the processing of mortgage tax and this accounts for 14.4% of our revenue. Passports and pistol licenses make up 6.4%. The remaining 11.9% is comprised of equalization and assessment fees, interest income, online access to records, transfer tax revenue, public copier and administrative fees.



REDUCTIONS IN STAFFING

Overall Staffing Reduced by 45.5% since 2006

Number of Employees*



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

Positions Eliminated:

30 Operating Positions Eliminated:

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

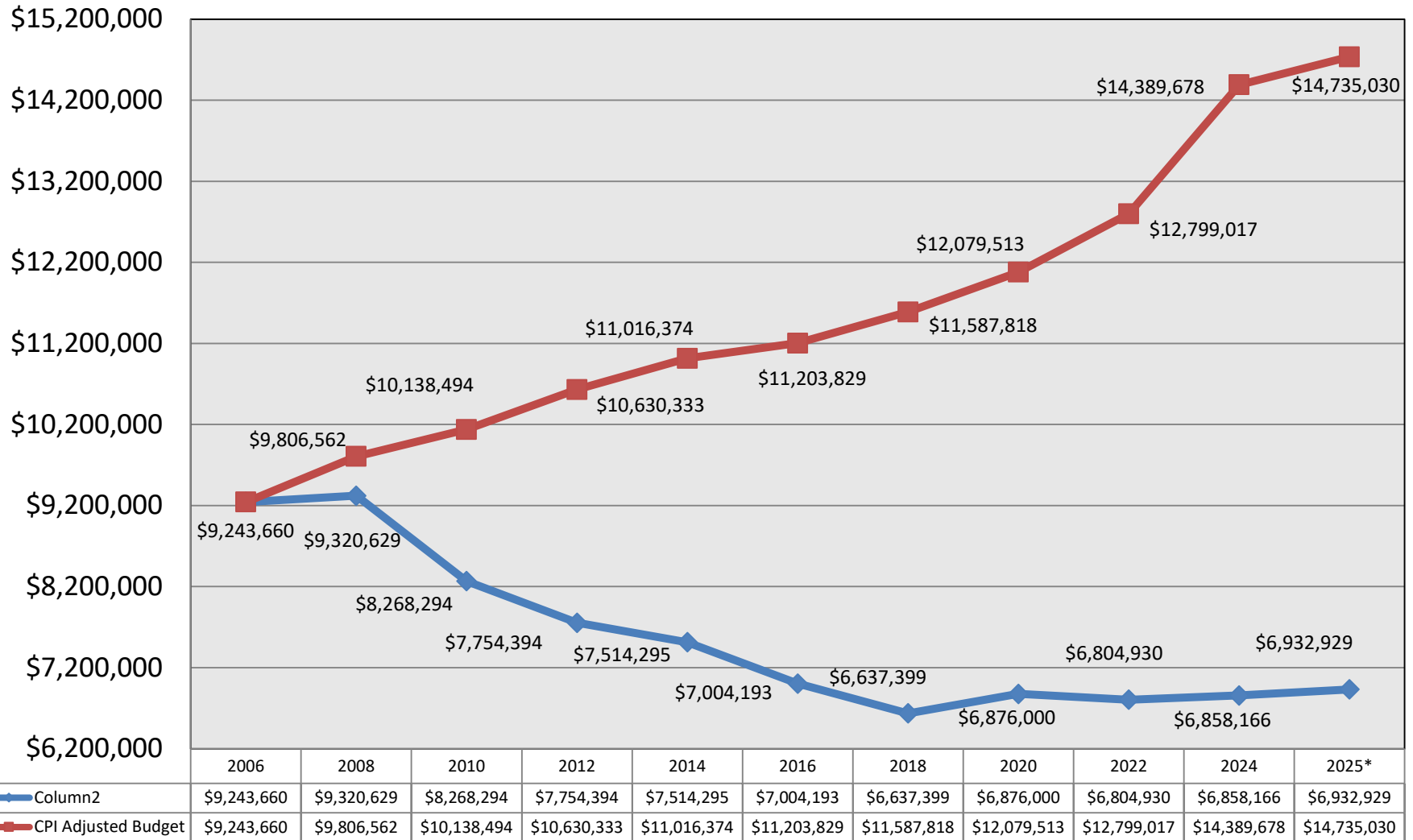
2 Grant Positions Eliminated:

Senior Messenger
Messenger

18 Full-Time Temporary Positions Eliminated

Expense Reduction

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

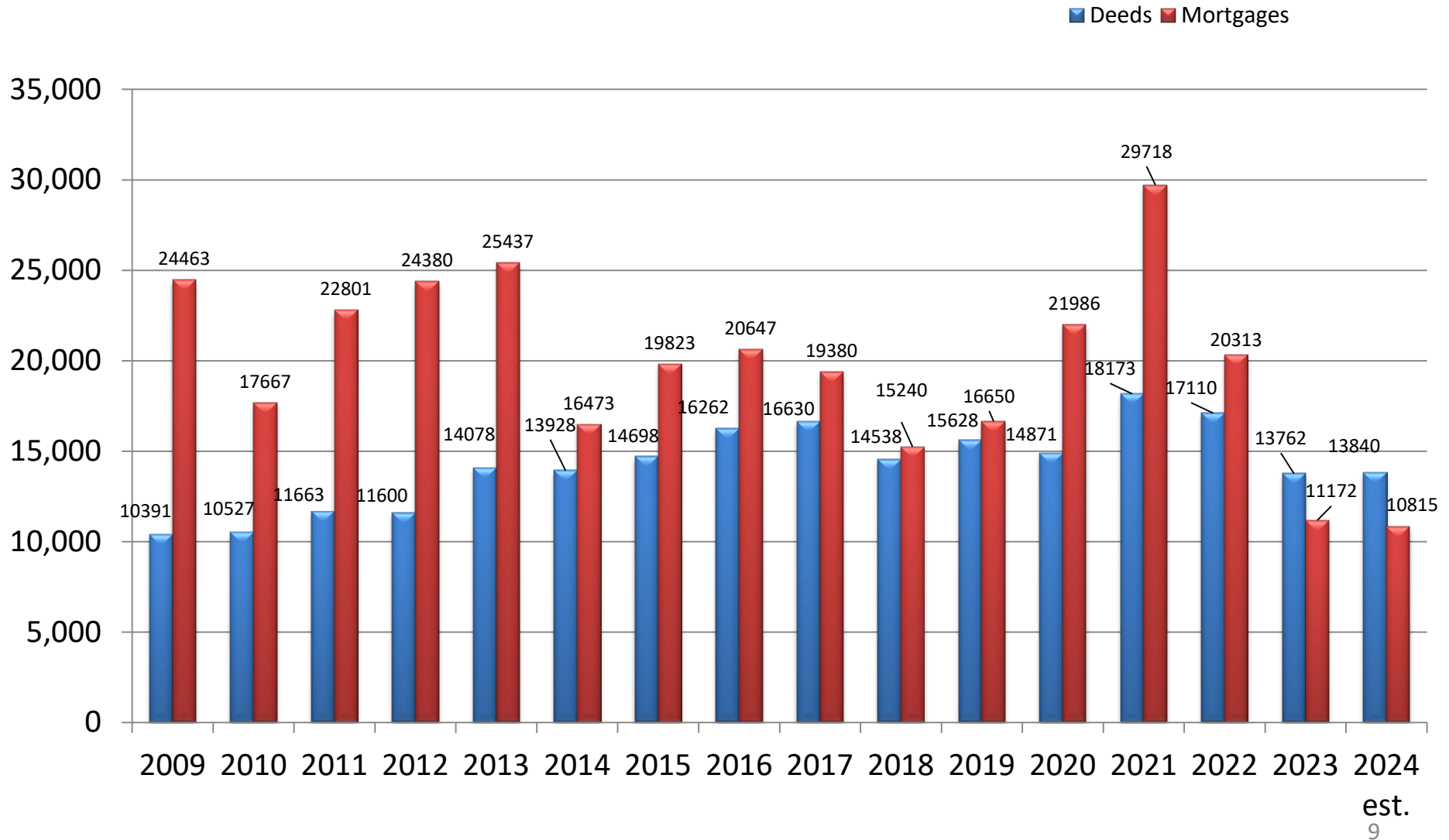


*CPI Adjusted Budget for 2025 is adjusted through September 30, 2024.

STATISTICS OF INTEREST

Indicators from our Land Records Division

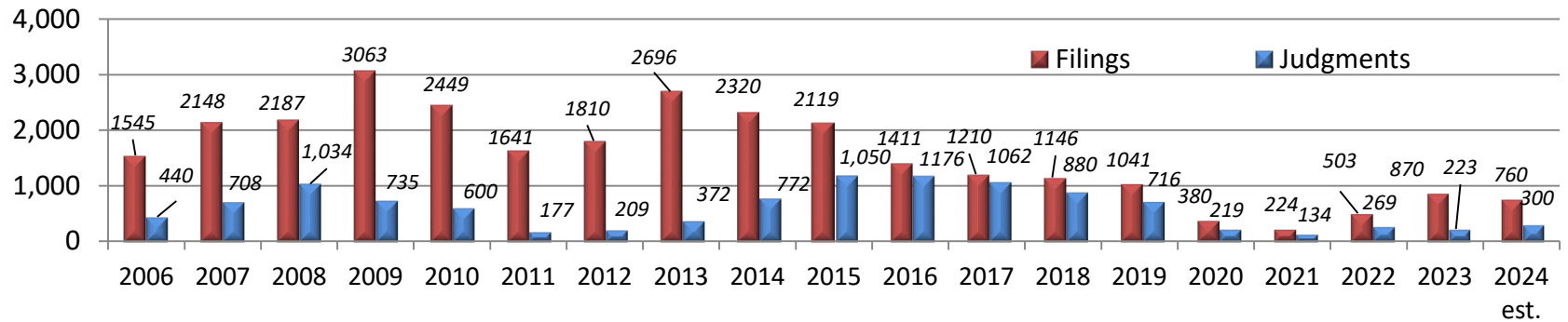
Deeds and Mortgages



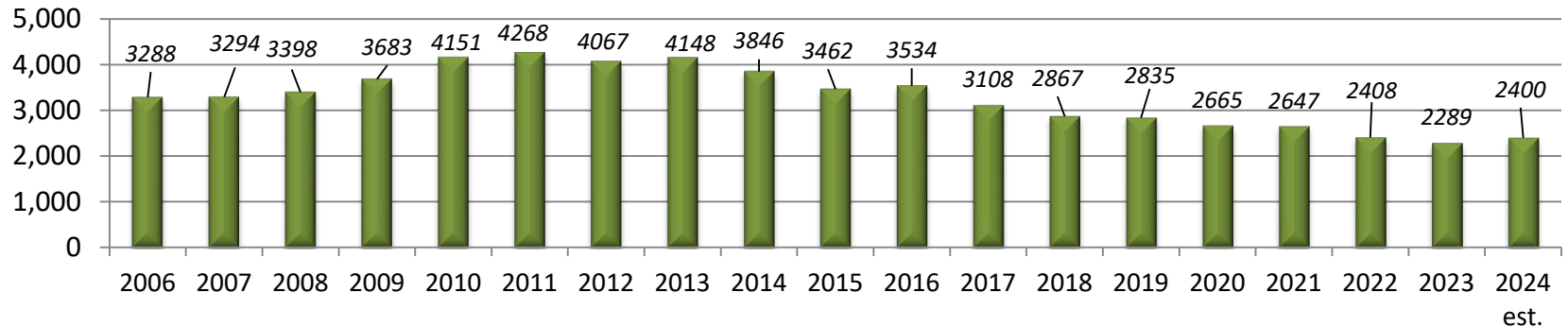
STATISTICS OF INTEREST

Indicators from our Legal Division

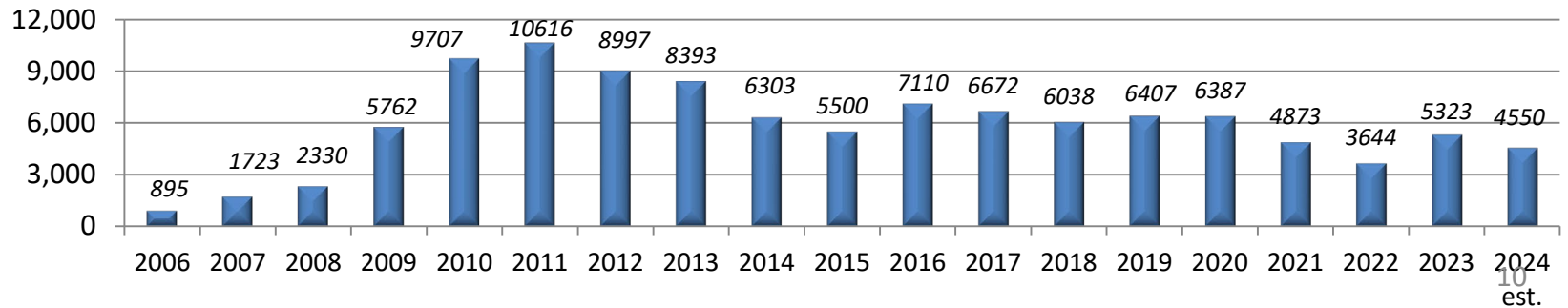
Foreclosure Filings and Judgments



Tax Certiorari Proceedings Commenced



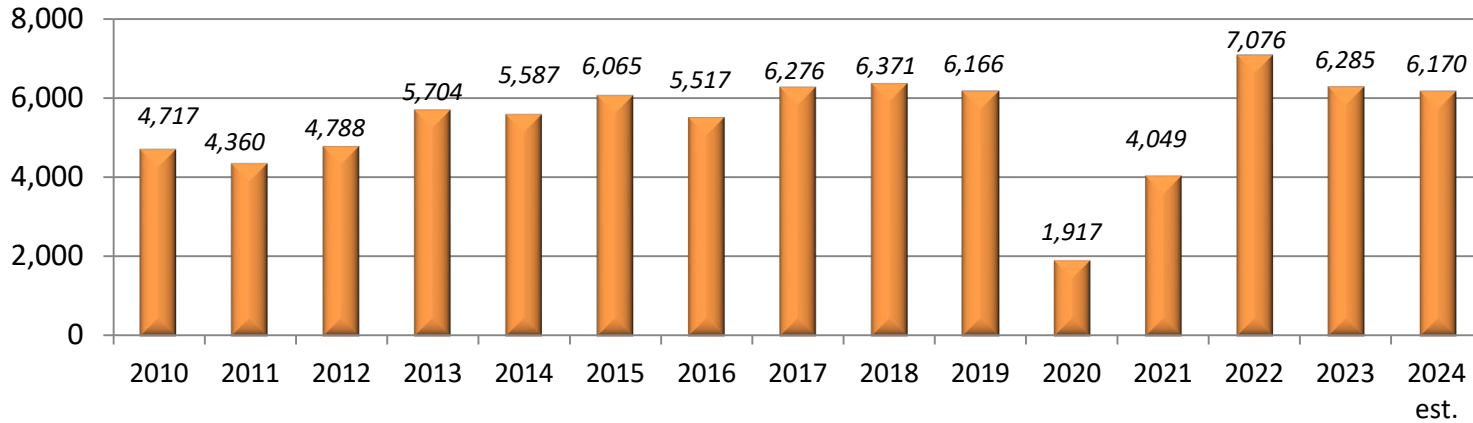
Small Claims Assessment Review Petitions Filed



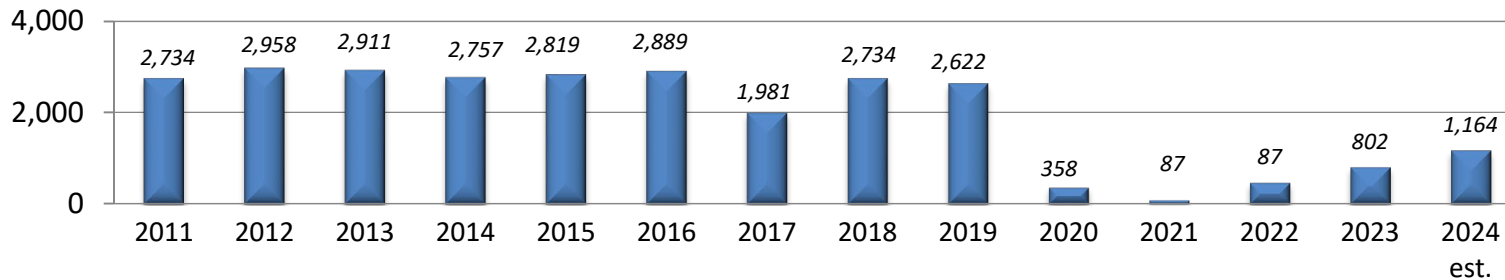
STATISTICS OF INTEREST

Indicators from our Licensing Division

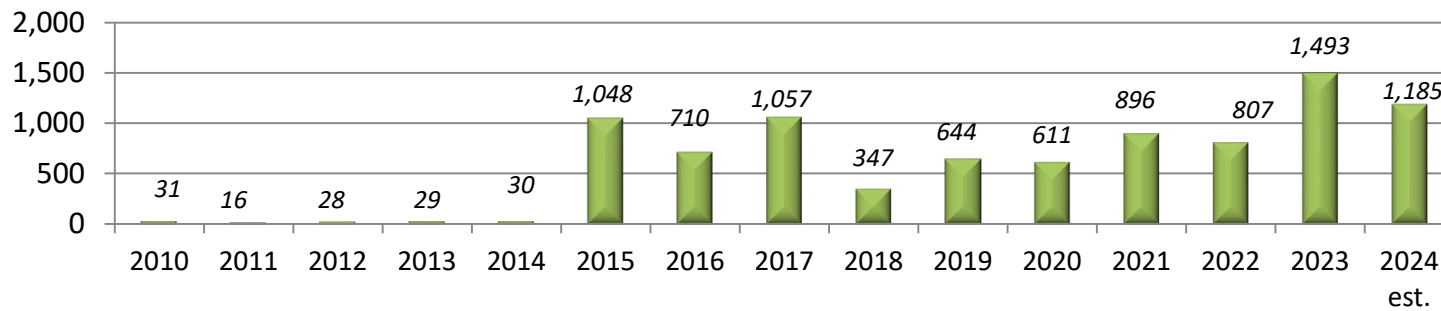
Passport Applications



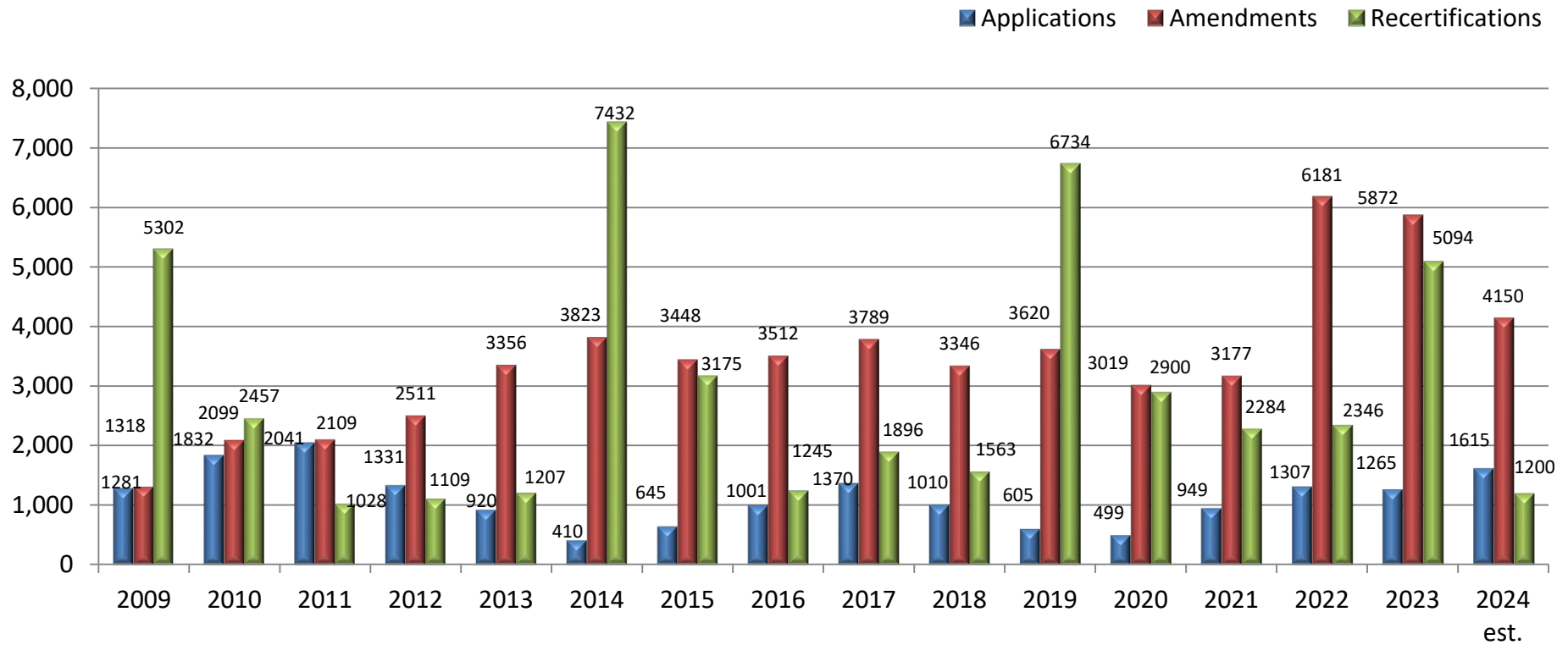
Naturalizations



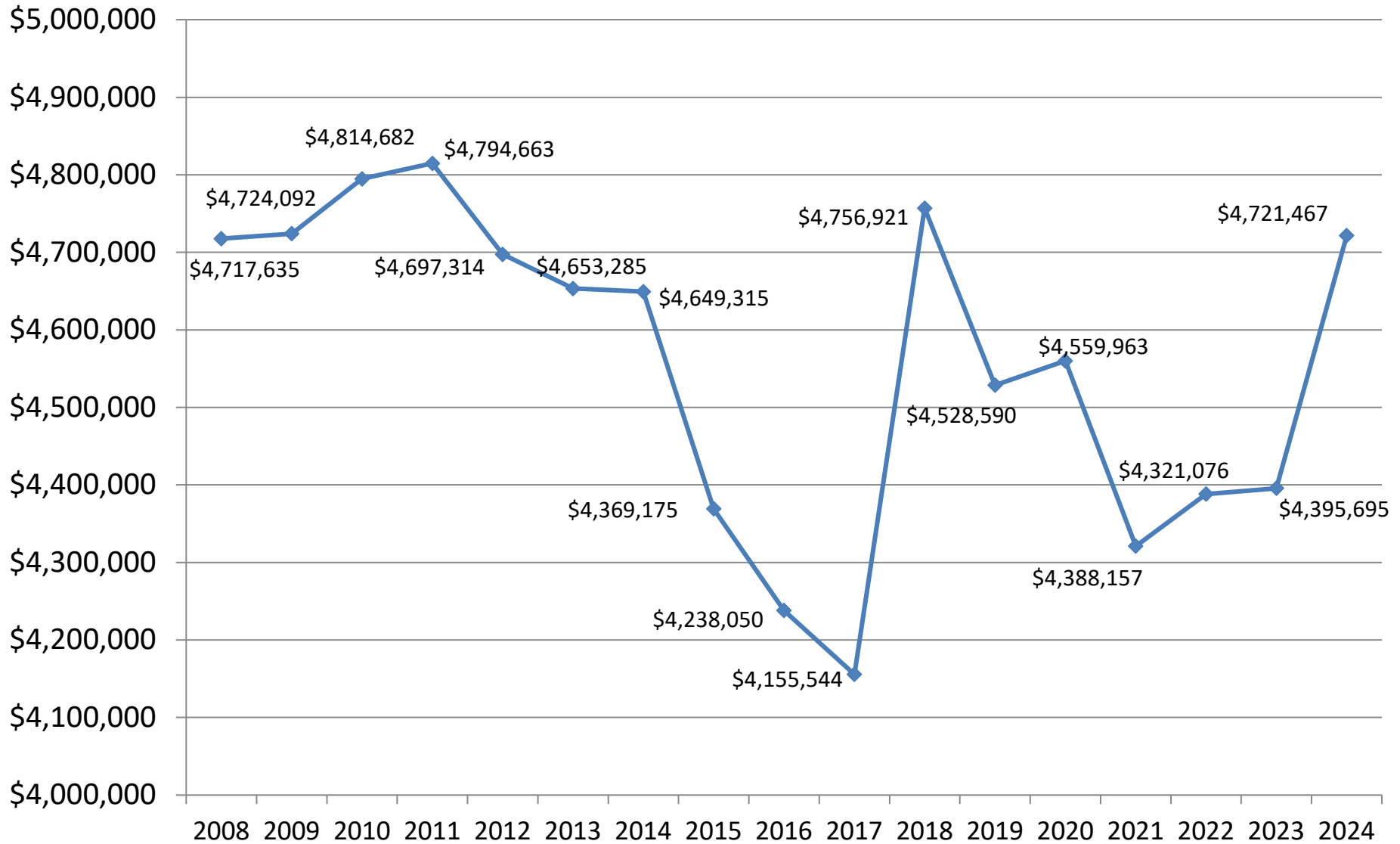
County Residence Personal IDs



Pistol License Applications, Amendments, Recertifications

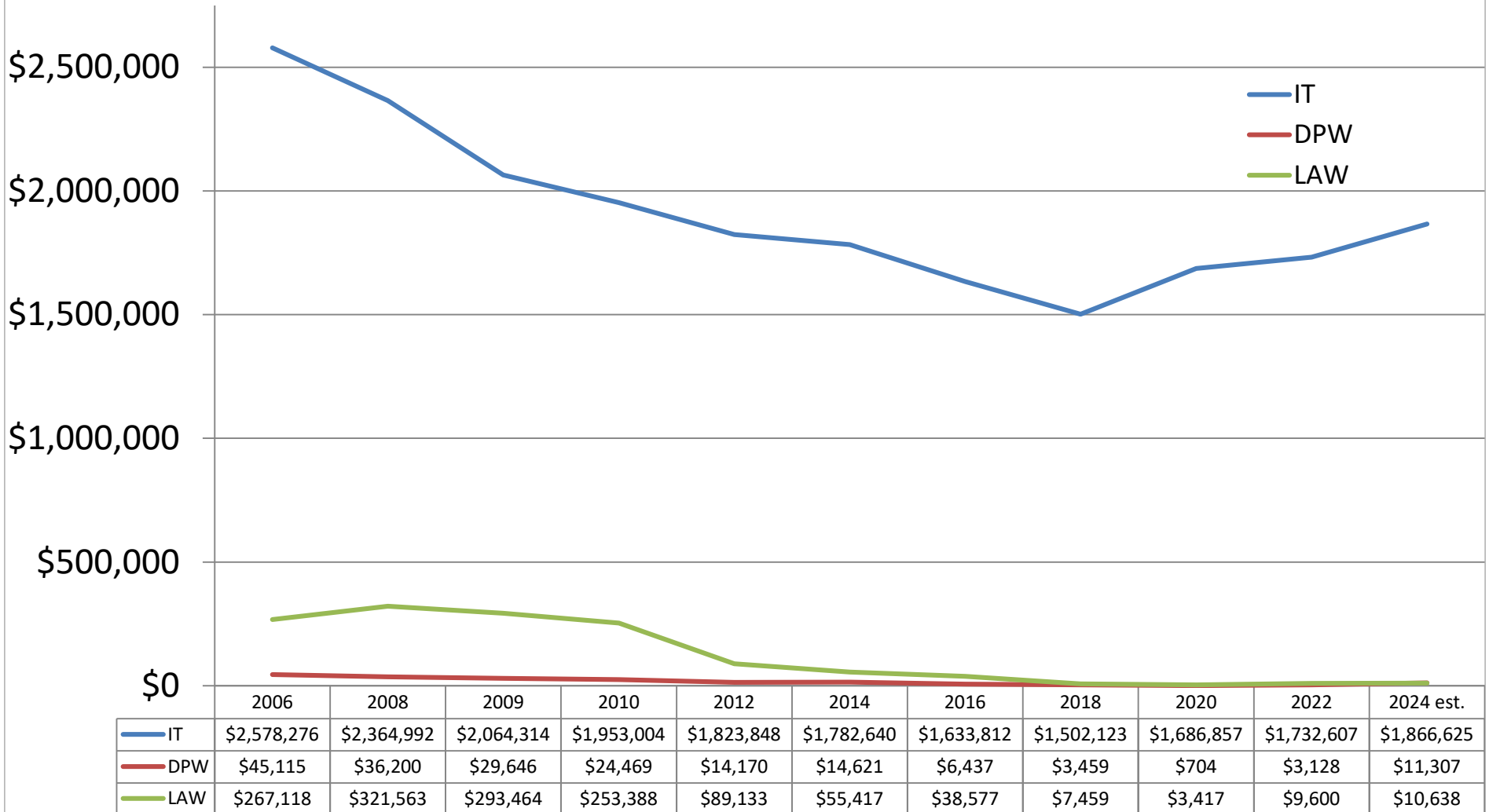


SALARIES & PERSONAL SERVICES



In accordance with the terms of the 2018 CSEA Contract, the salary expense increased in 2018 and thereafter to cover retroactive payments and the negotiated increase in salary of 2% in 2018 and 2019, 2.25% in 2020 and 2021, and 2% in 2022. The CSEA 2023 Memorandum of Agreement calls for a 2.75 % increase in 2023, 2024, 2025 and 3% in 2026 and 2027.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CHARGES

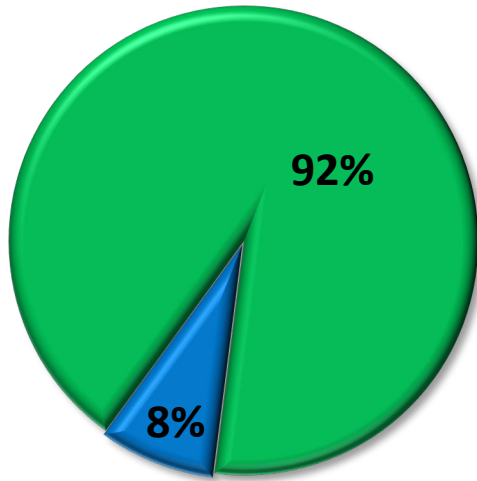


* IT charges include information systems support, telecommunications, data processing, and the records center

ELECTRONIC FILING AND RECORDING

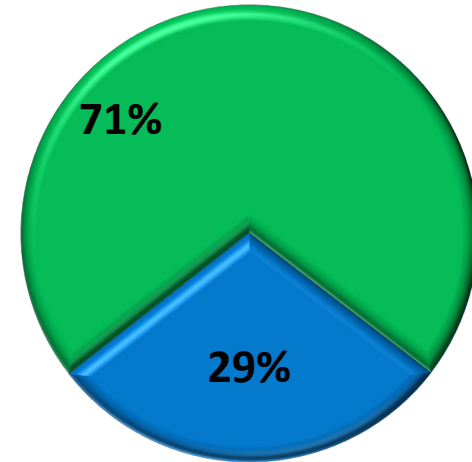
Civil Actions

Approximately **92%** of our civil actions are commenced electronically through the NYS Courts electronic filing system.



Land Records

Approximately **71%** of the documents submitted to the Land Records Division are submitted electronically as part of a **voluntary** eRecording program.



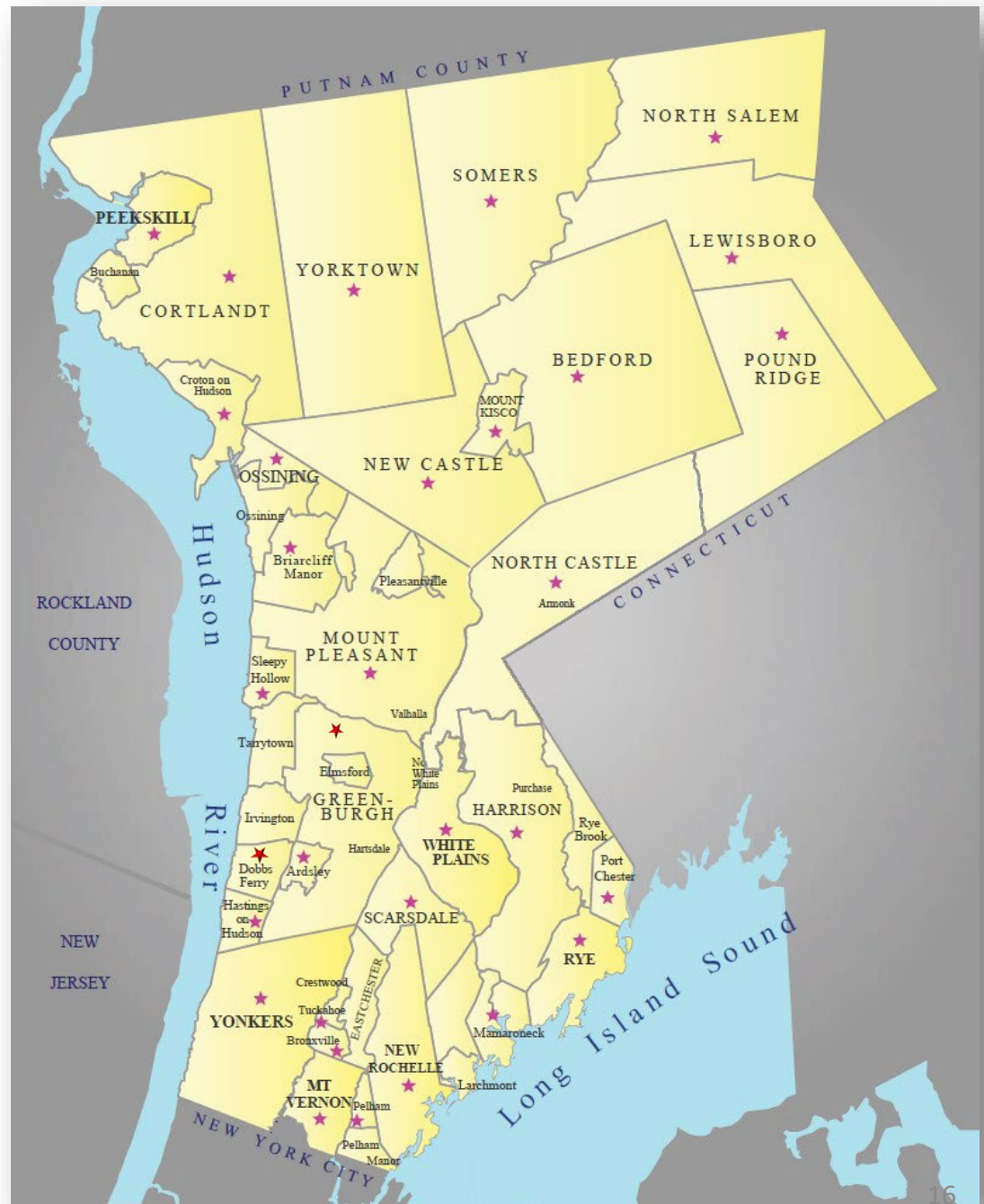
County Clerk's Westchester Records Online Program ("WRO").

For the period of 1/1/24 to 10/31/24, **2,833,086** 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.



2024 COMMUNITY OUTREACH VISITS

Date	Location
4/9	Briarcliff
4/13	Yonkers
4/16	Bedford
4/23	Mamaroneck
4/30	Tuckahoe
5/4	Pelham
5/7	Mount Kisco
5/14	Port Chester
5/21	Yorktown
5/29	Peekskill
6/12	Lewisboro
6/12	White Plains (evening)
6/18	Bronxville
6/25	Rye
7/10	North Salem
7/17	Ossining
7/20	Greenburgh
7/23	Mount Vernon
7/25	West Harrison
7/31	Dobbs Ferry
8/7	Cortlandt
8/19	Scarsdale
8/28	North Castle
9/10	Croton on Hudson
9/14	New Castle
9/16	Pound Ridge
9/21	Sleepy Hollow
9/24	Ardsley
10/2	New Rochelle
10/8	Somers
10/23	Mount Pleasant
10/26	Hastings
10/29	Yonkers



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

2025 Executive Proposed Budget

Core Programs & Functions

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
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Administration

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- Financial Reporting to partners in federal, state and county government
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Office of the Westchester County Clerk

Total Funds Collected and Distributed for Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2024 (as of September 30, 2024)

County Clerk Fees Collected		
Land Records Division		
Recording Fees	\$2,813,662	
Real Property Transfer Report Fee	\$93,087	
Administrative Fee, Refund Processing	\$2,025	
Legal Division		
Filing Fees	\$663,448	
DWI Surcharges	\$49,447	
Criminal Fines	\$39,988	
Licensing Division		
Filing Fees	\$276,626	
Other (online access, copiers, workstation/phone, unclaimed funds)	\$425,480	
Interest	\$4,580	\$4,368,343
Mortgage Tax Collected		
Paid to Westchester County		
Westchester County Mortgage Tax	\$11,364,078	
Local Mortgage Tax	\$22,659,476	
Yonkers Mortgage Tax	\$2,408,493	
Reimbursement for Processing Costs	\$743,599	
Interest, County Portion	\$20,823	
Paid to Metropolitan Transit Authority	\$23,303,922	
Paid to State of New York Mortgage Agency	\$1,581,606	\$62,081,996
New York State Real Estate Transfer Tax		
Paid to Westchester County		
Recording Officer's Fee	\$8,820	
Interest, County Portion	\$40,276	
Paid to the Department of Taxation and Finance	\$60,016,852	\$60,065,948
Court Revenue Paid to NYS Unified Court System	\$4,302,647	\$4,302,647
Records Management Improvement Fund	\$252,714	\$252,714
Cultural Education Fund	\$758,129	\$758,129
Equalization and Assessment Paid to NYS Office of Real Property Services	\$1,302,038	\$1,302,038
Total Collected and Disbursed:		\$133,131,815

Budget Summary

ITEM	2024	2025
Operating Positions	61	60
Trust Positions	0	0
TOTAL POSITIONS	61	60
Personal Service	\$4,721,467	\$4,792,465
Equipment	\$27,275	\$14,485
Materials & Supplies	\$121,600	\$101,100
Contractual Expenses	\$99,254	\$100,333
Inter-Departmental Charges	\$1,888,570	\$1,924,546
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$6,858,166	\$6,932,929

Budget Summary

ITEM	2024	2025
Inter-Departmental Revenue	\$0	\$0
Departmental Revenue	\$6,905,397	\$6,904,001
State & Federal Aid	\$0	\$0
TOTAL REVENUE	\$6,905,397	\$6,904,001
DEPARTMENT TAX LEVY	(\$47,231)	\$28,928

Initiatives & Highlights

- **Facilitating E-filing in New York State:** As a member of the New York State Association of County Clerks' Court Committee and its Legislative Committee, and first ever Chair of the Supreme Court Steering Committee for Supreme Court E-filing, the County Clerk remains committed to advance automation throughout the State. The committees coordinate responses from the county clerks and legal community leaders and make recommendations to the State Chief Administrative Judge on the creation or expansion of mandatory electronic filing programs. The committees' initiatives have resulted in 61 of the 62 counties in the State now providing e-filing. Working with dedicated and diverse legal community leaders has enhanced the ability of the Clerk's Office to serve pro se litigants and attorneys.
- **E-Filing and E-recording:** Approximately 92% of civil actions are commenced electronically through the NYS electronic filing system and approximately 71% of the land record documents are currently e-recorded. Electronic recording has significantly increased the efficiency of the filing and recording and reducing manual labor. Further reduction in paper filings is anticipated with the recent authorization of e-filing of election law cases, special proceedings under the Mental Hygiene Law, and name change applications.
- **Recording enactments:** In 2024, NYS enacted the Transfer on Death law permitting the recording of a revocable deed used to hold property that automatically transfers ownership of real property to the named beneficiary upon the death of the transferor; and the Judicial Security Act restricting public access to certain personal information of judges and certain family members from recorded and filed documents. The Office, in conjunction with the IT staff, is prepared to comply with both enactments.
- **Renovation in Office Space:** The renovation of the 32,000 square feet of space occupied by the Clerk's office is near completion. With the automation of department functions and the resultant reduction in staffing needs, space has been opened up for adaptive reuse by the County Public Safety department and the District Attorney. The renovation enhances the efficiency and the environment for an improved staff and visitor experience.
- **Westchester County Personal Identification Card:** Over the years, the number of cards issued rose from 31 when first permitted in 2010 to 889 for the nine-month period of January through September 2024. Obtaining "a certified copy of a birth certificate" as required by Laws of Westchester County §265.181(2) had been a major obstacle in qualifying for the ID card. This Office proposed an amendment to permit other proofs of birth and identity in lieu of or in addition to the birth certificate. In March 2022, the amendment was adopted by the Board of Legislators and approved by the County Executive. To further assist in providing this service, the County ID application and guidelines have been translated into Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Italian, Chinese, French, Arabic, Tagalog, Japanese, and Albanian.
- **Naturalization:** The County Clerk requested and received approval from the Court and USCIS to increase the number of naturalization candidates to 100 at its monthly session. The County Clerk administered the oath of allegiance to 970 naturalized citizens from January 1 through October 31, 2024.
- **Foreclosure Data Captured and Shared:** The Clerk's Office continues to capture information from foreclosure cases to provide County residents with the data needed to secure funds to assist municipalities and individuals impacted by the foreclosure crisis. From January 1 through October 31, 2024, 634 new foreclosure actions were filed and 250 foreclosure judgments were entered.
- **Mobile Community Outreach Vehicle:** The County Clerk's Community Outreach truck stops in every County town and city from April through November. The mobile office staff is authorized to accept passport applications and answer questions about passport applications and renewals, and take passport photos. Notary, veterans, and business licensing services are also available.
- **Pistol Licensing:** In June 2022, the US Supreme Court struck down that portion of the NYS firearm licensing law requiring the showing of "proper cause" or a special need to carry a concealed handgun outside of the home. To address the consequences of the ruling, NYS enacted revisions to the firearm licensing laws, effective 9/1/2022. As a result of the ruling, which will vastly increase the number of pistols legally on the street, there has been a significant increase in initial applications for full carry concealed licenses and applications to amend and delete restrictions on current licenses. The number of amendment applications doubled in 2022 to 6,181. As full carry concealed licenses have a 3-year term, the Office anticipates a significant increase in recertifications in 2025.