



CLERK'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020



The Honorable
ROGER D. EATON
Clerk of the Circuit Court & County Comptroller


CharlotteClerk.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS



MESSAGE FROM YOUR CLERK AND COUNTY COMPTROLLER	3	FORECLOSURE	17
THE CLERK'S ROLE AS A PUBLIC TRUSTEE	4	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	18
CLERK OFFICE LOCATIONS	5	PROBATE, GUARDIANSHIP AND MENTAL HEALTH	19
JUSTICE CENTER	5	JURY	19
MURDOCK	5	APPEALS	21
ONLINE SERVICES & E-FILING PORTALS	6	HIGHLIGHT OF COURT OPERATIONS	22
WHY WE EXIST	7	2020 OPERATION GREEN LIGHT	22
CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY	8	OFFICIAL RECORDS	23
TOP 10 SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS FROM 2020	9	MARRIAGE	24
CRIMINAL COURT	10	PASSPORT	25
MISDEMEANOR AND FELONY	11	TAX DEED	26
TRAFFIC	12	RECORDS MANAGEMENT	27
JUVENILE	13	COMPTROLLER	28
CIVIL COURT	14	MINUTES	30
SMALL CLAIMS	15	VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARD	31
TENANT EVICTIONS	15	INTERNAL AUDIT	32
CIRCUIT CIVIL	15	CLERK INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	35
CHILD SUPPORT	16	EMPLOYEE RELATIONS	36
		COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	38



MESSAGE FROM YOUR CLERK AND COUNTY COMPTROLLER

2020 was trying, difficult, and stressful for our entire community, including your Clerk's office. COVID tested our office in ways we could have only imagined. Despite these unprecedented challenges, the Clerk's office staff met them with flying colors by immediately instituting safety precautions and tech-savvy solutions which remain in place to this day. These safety precautions and technology solutions allowed our office to not skip a beat in 2020 despite every challenge thrown at us by COVID.

While COVID dominated 2020, I continued honoring my long-standing promise to constantly innovate your Clerk's office so that it provides better services at less cost to our taxpayers. We focused on bringing self-help and easy to use online legal forms to our citizens. Visitors to our website can now complete and file legal forms for new and existing cases, right from the comfort of their own home.

We started accepting wireless transfers of both deposits and payments for Foreclosure and Tax Deed online auctions. Our technology staff specialists worked with our court partners to implement the E-Notify program, which sends electronic and text notifications court reminders to all parties in a litigated court case.

We opened customer satisfaction survey kiosks in 2019, to monitor the level of our service and learn how we could improve. For the year 2020, we achieved an overall satisfaction rate of 98.98%. We also instituted some thoughtful citizen suggestions!

For the fourth straight year your Clerk's office reduced its budget, this year by 4.35%. As a result, your Clerk's office returned \$434,032 in budget funds to the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners, despite staff health care costs rising by 5% and rising Florida Retirement System (FRS) rates.

Since I took office in 2017, your Clerk's office has returned over \$1.5 million to the Board of County Commissioners in taxpayer

funds. Excellent staff and cutting-edge technology systems bring about efficiency, which in turn saves taxpayer funds.

The Comptroller Division of your Clerk's office manages all investments for Charlotte County funds. Our financial team ensures the safety, liquidity, and profitability of all county investments. This past fiscal year, at its highest point we managed a Charlotte County investment portfolio of \$627 million, which earned \$5.9 million for the year. Since I took office in 2017, over \$29.2 million has been earned on investments controlled by your Clerk's office.

For my fourth consecutive year, your Clerk's office was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment for our Comptroller's office and staff.

Not only does your Clerk's Office serve the citizens of Charlotte County, but we also actively support our local community. Despite COVID, we raised funds and donations for the Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies, the United Way of Charlotte County, the Boys and Girls Club of Charlotte County and created new programs with the Animal Welfare League such as Roger's Rescue and Eaton's Eats, which help adopt animals by waiving adoption costs. Our office and staff also provided holiday season gifts through the Guardian Ad Litem program to over 40 Charlotte County families in need.

For more information about our office and to access all of our new features, please visit us at CharlotteClerk.com.

Sincerely,

HONORABLE, ROGER D. EATON
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND COUNTY COMPTROLLER

THE CLERK'S ROLE AS A PUBLIC TRUSTEE

Provisions of the Florida Constitutions of 1838, established the Clerk of the Circuit Court as an elected public trustee and set in place at the county level a system of “checks and balances” which has been proven to serve the public for over 175 years.

The role as Public Trustee is evidenced as follows:

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

- Accountant and Auditor for the Board of County Commissioners
- Collector and Distributor of Statutory Assessments
- Guardian of the Public Records, Public Funds and Public Property

COURTS

- Ensures that the Court's Orders, Judgments or Directives are carried out within the parameters allowed by Law.
- Maintains the Court's Records.
- Collects and disburses the Court Fines, Fees and Assessments.
- Collects and disburses Court Ordered Child Support and Alimony Payments.

STATE GOVERNMENT

- Collects and disburses Documentary Fees and Intangible Taxes for the Department of Revenue.
- Collects and disburses numerous fees and assessments for the Benefit of State Trust Funds.
- Provides informational, financial, and statistical data to the State Legislature, Supreme Court, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Auditor General, Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, and Other State Agencies.

CITIZENS' PROTECTION

- As Custodian of County funds, the Clerk ensures that the taxpayer's money is managed according to Law.
- Provides Internal Audits of County government to assure compliance and internal controls.
- Provides Access to Public Records.
- Audits reports of guardians in Guardianship cases.
- Provides assistance to citizens in accessing the courts.
- Processes, maintains, and preserves court documents to ensure that litigant's court cases are handled in a timely manner.

ACCOUNTABILITY AS A PUBLIC TRUSTEE

- The Office of the Clerk is a complex organization that performs a wide range of record keeping, information management and financial management in the judicial system and county government.
- In a study conducted by the Joint Select Committee on Judicial Personnel of the Legislature, it was calculated that the Clerk's office performs over 1,000 constitutional and statutory functions or duties.
- With the magnitude of the impact that the Clerk's duties has on the peoples' rights and property, it is essential that the Clerk be accountable for his/her actions.

Thus, the constitution and statutes decree that:

- The Clerk is governed by statutory authority in carrying out the duties and functions of the office.
- As auditor and custodian of all county funds, the Clerk is subject to State Auditor general rules and regulations.
- The Clerk is subject to annual audits by an independent audit firm.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

“A public office is a public trust. The people have the right to secure and sustain that trust.” ARTICLE I, SECTION 8

“There shall be in each county a Clerk of the Circuit Court who shall be selected pursuant to the provisions of Article VII, Section I.” ARTICLE V, SECTION 16

“The Clerk of the Circuit Court shall be Ex-Officio Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, Auditor, Recorded and Custodian of all County funds” ARTICLE VII, SECTION 1(d)

CLERK OFFICE LOCATIONS



The State of Florida is divided into twenty (20) Judicial Circuits. Each circuit is comprised of a circuit court and one or more county courts.

Charlotte County is in the 20th circuit that also includes Collier, Glades, Hendry, & Lee counties. Three County Judges, four Circuit Court Judges and one Magistrate presides over Charlotte County.

The Clerk is responsible for the clerical business of the courts, including maintaining court records and case files, issuing summons, warrant and violation of probation or injunction orders, entering judgments and managing court related fees and fines, just to name a few of the over 1000 other statutory requirements.

JUSTICE CENTER



The Charlotte County Justice Center is located in Punta Gorda, the county seat. This is the main courthouse for all of Charlotte County. The department house at the Justice Center include:

- Administrative Office of the Clerk
- Criminal Court Services
- Civil Court Services
- Employee Relations
- Information Technology
- Jury Services
- Marriage Licenses and Wedding Ceremonies
- Official Records
- Passport Services and Passport Photos

Charlotte County Justice Center
350 E. Marion Ave. Punta Gorda, FL 33950
(941) 505-4716

MURDOCK



The Charlotte County Murdock Administration Center brings "service to the people" by offering convenience to residents in different neighborhoods of Charlotte County, and serves as a branch office. Most services available at the Charlotte County Justice Center are also available at the Murdock Administration Center. Departments housed in the Murdock Administration Center are:

- Administrative Office of the Clerk
- Comptroller/Finance
- Internal Audit
- Minutes
- Official Records
- Marriage License and Passport Services

Charlotte County Murdock Administrative Offices
18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL 33948
(941) 743-1537

ONLINE SERVICES & E-FILING PORTALS



Criminal and Civil Court Records can be viewed on our website:

[CharlotteClerk.com](https://www.charlotteclerk.com) - Court Records - Search.

Searches can be made by name, case number, citation number.



Attorneys can file cases and documents via our e-file portal at:

[MyFLCourtAccess.com](https://www.myflcourtagency.com)

This service is another cost savings measure as we strive to go paperless.



Official Records can be viewed on our website:

[CharlotteClerk.com](https://www.charlotteclerk.com) - Official Records - Search.



Marriage License Application and wedding ceremony requests are available online at:

[Marriage.CharlotteClerk.com](https://www.marriage.charlotteclerk.com)



Tax Deed Sales can be viewed, and bids made at:

[Charlotte.RealForeclose.com](https://www.charlotte.realforeclose.com)

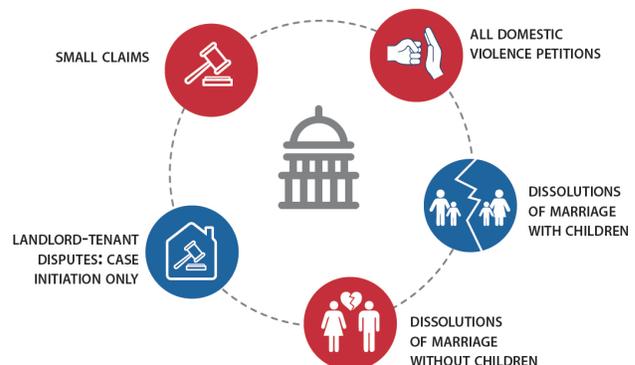
With the COVID Pandemic in 2020, many changes were made, including, how a case could be filed to court hearings. In order to safely serve the citizens of Charlotte County and our office staff, Clerk Eaton made great strides to ensure all services were easily assessable. We started with providing citizens direct email addresses to each department, creating quick and easy ways to access the appropriate Clerk for answers to general or case related questions. Forms that were once only available for pickup are now available online and FREE of charge. These forms can be completed manually and submitted in-person at our office for filing, at one of our 5 drop box locations

throughout Charlotte County or submitted electronically through the Florida Court e-filing portal.

In addition, the Clerk has partnered with TurboCourt, the only Florida-certified vendor specializing in automated filing assistance for non-lawyers. Users are now able to answer a series of questions through TurboCourt's advanced technology. Once completed these answers are put into the appropriate legal form. For a minimal vendor fee, the form(s) can be printed for in-person filing with our office or submitted electronically through the Florida Court e-filing Portal. Electronic filing can be completed anytime, anywhere and from any device.

The following list of TurboCourt services are available for a nominal vendor fee. Note, this fee does not include the case filing:

- All Domestic Violence Petitions
- Dissolutions of Marriage with Children
- Dissolutions of Marriage without Children
- Landlord-Tenant Disputes: Case Initiation Only
- Small Claims



WHY WE EXIST



MISSION

- To preserve the public trust as guardians of the people's records and assets

VISION

- Serving with compassion, expertise, and efficiency in support of our community

CORE VALUES

- Working together to achieve shared success
- Providing exceptional service with a smile
- Continuous innovation and improvement
- Dedication to principled practice

CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

Our goal is to keep you in the know. In 2020, we leveraged online communication tools to maintain transparency and to clearly define current priorities and advancements that help Charlotte County citizens and our community by sending emails.

TOTAL EMAILS SENT: 13

OUR FIVE MOST POPULAR E-MAILS



Valentine's Wedding



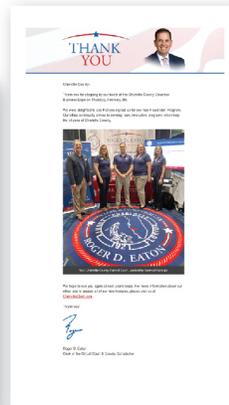
Serving You Safely



Payment Solutions



Domestic Violence Awareness

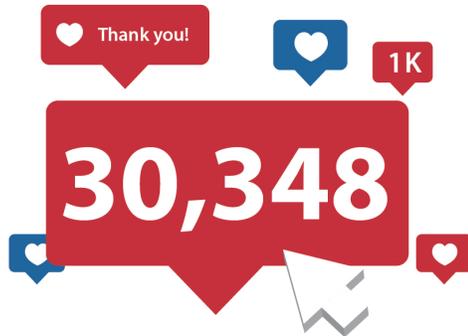


Business Expo

- ◆ 2019 Clerk Year In Review
- ◆ Back To The Future
- ◆ COVID-19 Update
- ◆ Jury Proceedings Update

- ◆ Clerk Update, Online Marriages & Turbo Court
- ◆ Open For Business
- ◆ Eaton's Eats
- ◆ Another New Website!

TOTAL SUBSCRIBERS



OPEN RATE

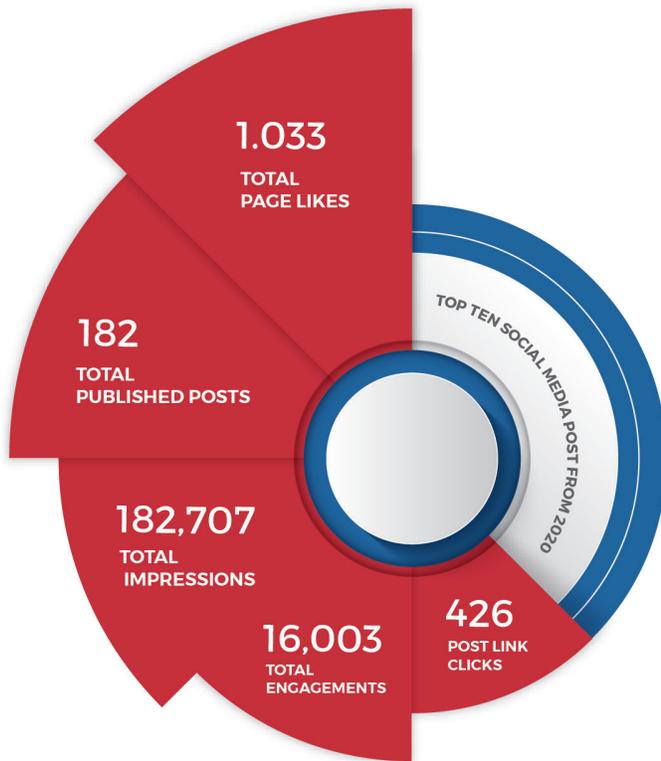




TOP 10 SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS FROM 2020

In March 2020, Roger D. Eaton and the Charlotte County Clerk's office launched their social media presence through Facebook. Our goal is to keep our community informed by sharing information and updates regularly, including photos, announcements, Clerk news and more!

If you haven't already, please take a moment and visit our Facebook page. Once there, please click "Like" or Follow". We encourage you to comment and share our posts! Feel free to ask us any questions. We look forward to connecting with you!



<p>Eaton's Eat</p> <p>769</p>	<p>Adopt A Pet</p> <p>601</p>	<p>Zoom Weddings</p> <p>469</p>
<p>Breast Cancer Awareness Month</p> <p>410</p>	<p>Guardianship</p> <p>359</p>	<p>Jury Duty Update</p> <p>301</p>
<p>Official Records Strives</p> <p>292</p>	<p>National Donut Day</p> <p>281</p>	<p>Online Self-Help</p> <p>137</p>

CRIMINAL COURT

The Criminal Courts Division processes felony, juvenile, misdemeanor, county, and municipal ordinance and criminal traffic cases, as well as civil infractions.

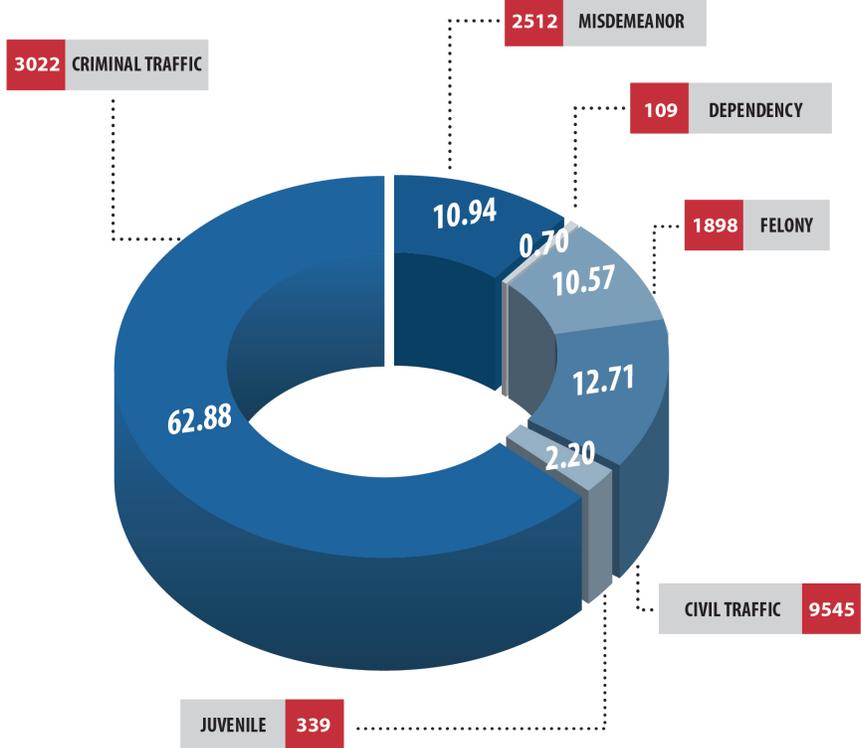
The Clerks' duties involve coordinating with other agencies including Sheriff, Public Defender, State Attorney, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Pre-Trial Services, Department of Corrections, and County Probation as well as the judiciary, defendants and private attorneys.

Clerks attend Criminal and Civil Court where the duties include accurately capturing all sentencing sanctions, swearing in witnesses, marking and controlling evidence, and the reading of verdicts. All court records are maintained electronically and can be viewed online at CharlotteClerk.com. Court case information and docket searches can be made using a number of different factors, such as by last name, followed by first name or by case number, among other options as noted on our website; CharlotteClerk.com.

Payments for all case types can be made in person in our Punta Gorda and Murdock offices, or as an added



CRIMINAL DIVISION CASES FILED IN 2020



convenience, payments for applicable fines and court costs can be made online at CharlotteCourtPay.com through our partnership with n-Court. Payments can also be made over the phone by calling the toll-free payment line (855) 796-5772. Communication is available in both English and Spanish.

Payments



Payments for all case types can be made in person in our Punta Gorda and Murdock offices



Payments for applicable fines and court costs can be made online at CharlotteCourtPay.com through our partnership with n-Court.



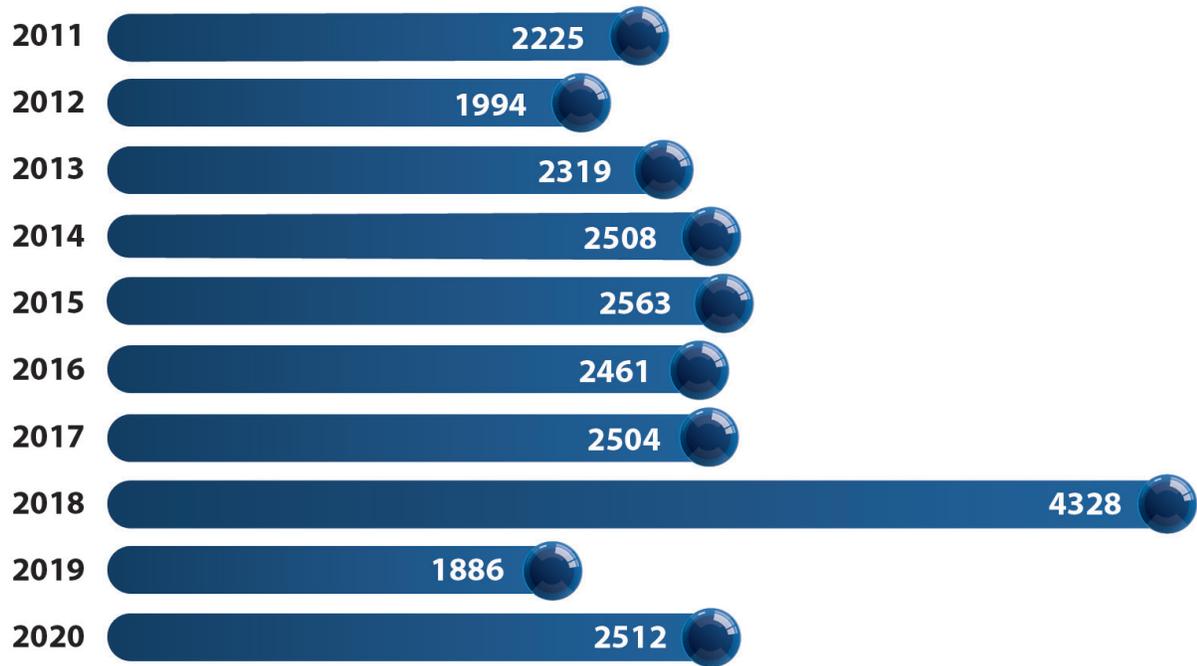
Payments can also be made over the phone by calling the toll-free payment line (855) 796-5772.

Communication is available in both English and Spanish.

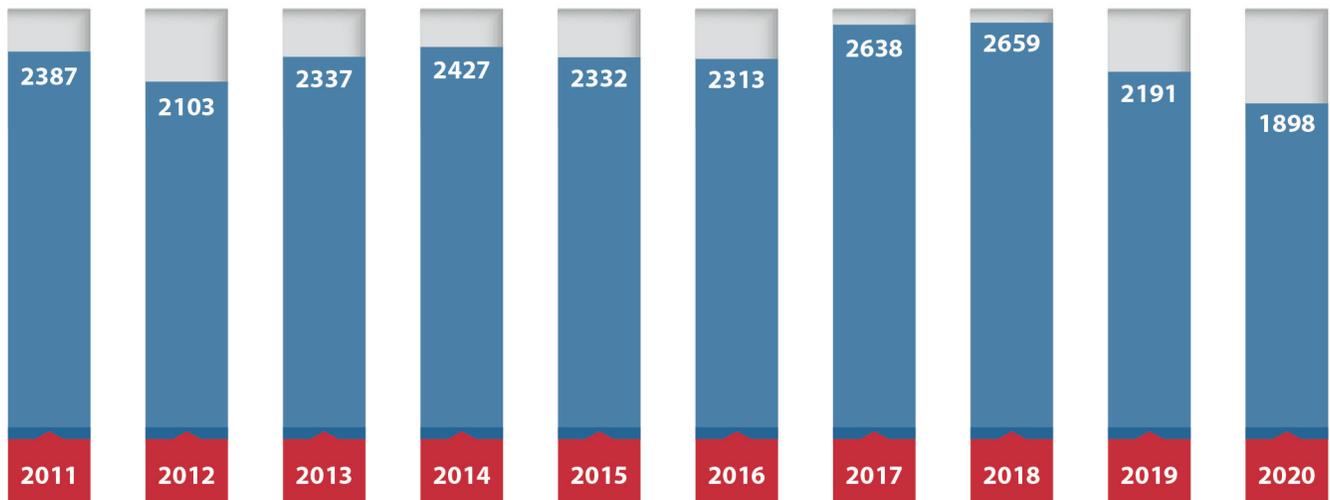
MISDEMEANOR AND FELONY



MISDEMEANOR CASES FILED



FELONY CASES FILED

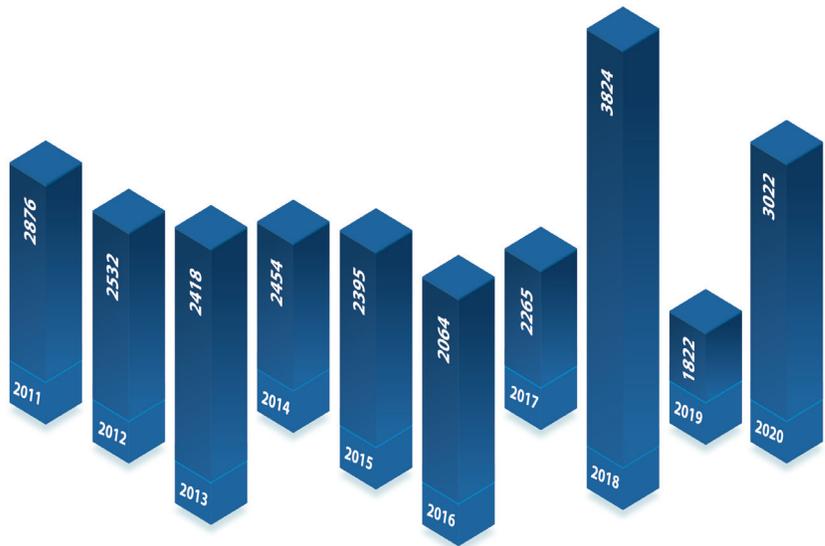


TRAFFIC

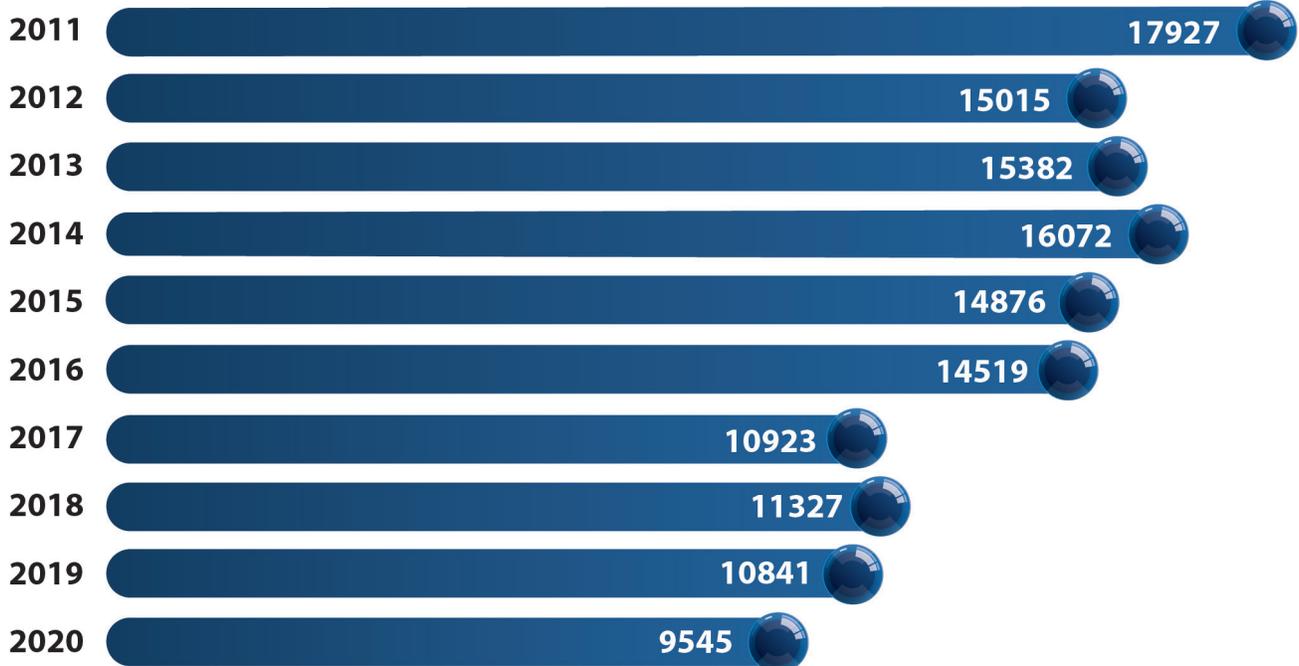


CRIMINAL TRAFFIC CASES FILED

Uniform Traffic Citations are electronically filed through e-Citations and hard copy format. Information is submitted from the following agencies: Florida Highway Patrol, Charlotte County Sheriff, and Punta Gorda Police Department. Citations for parking tickets, animal control violations, code enforcement, alarm violations, boating citations, and some Department of Transportation (DOT) citations, are processed in hard copy format. Payments for citations can be made in person, by mail, over the phone at (855) 796-5772, with cash utilizing our Scan, Pay & Go service and via the internet through our portal at CharlotteCourtPay.com.



CIVIL TRAFFIC CASES FILED

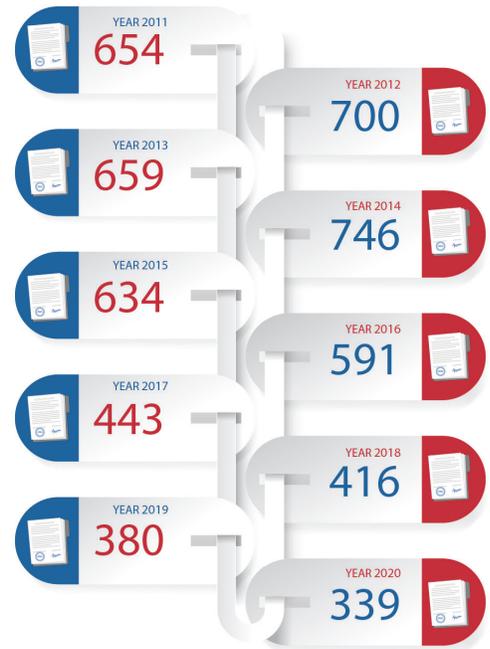


JUVENILE

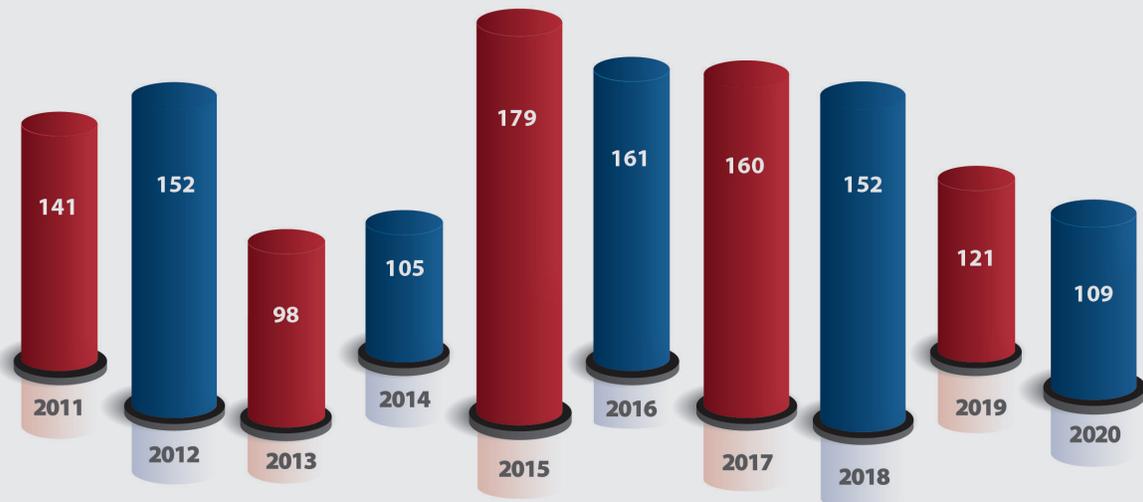
Juvenile cases are similar in processing requirements to felony and misdemeanor cases. However, these cases are considered to be confidential and are not available to the public. Dependency cases are also processed by this department and are kept confidential.

The State Attorney may choose to directly charge a juvenile offender as an adult. Such cases are closed in the juvenile case and a felony adult case would then be opened. Some juvenile cases are transferred for disposition to the County where the offender resides. Dispositions are electronically reported to the State through software that requires special security access to ensure the mandated confidentiality is not compromised.

JUVENILE CASES FILED

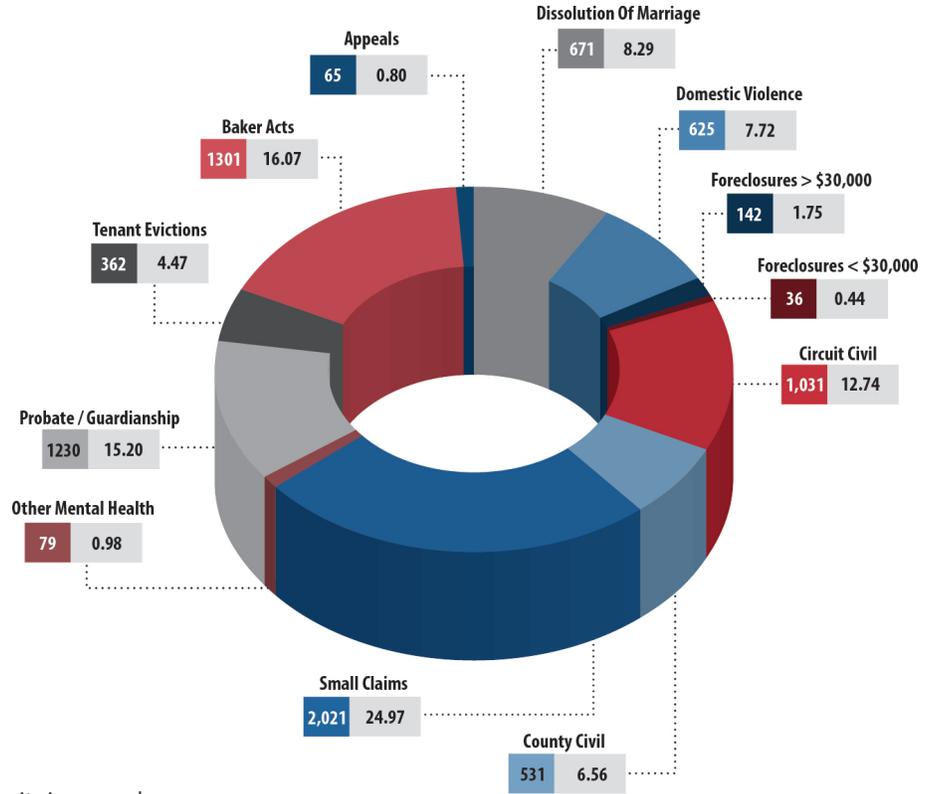


DEPENDENCY CASES FILED



CIVIL COURT

The Civil Courts Division is responsible for processing Small Claims, County Civil, Family Law, Domestic Violence, Probate, Guardianship and Mental Health cases.



Effective January 1, 2020 Jurisdictional limits increased for filing Small Claims, County Civil and Circuit Court Cases.

Small Claims increased from \$5,000 to \$8,000



County Civil increased from \$5,000 to \$30,000



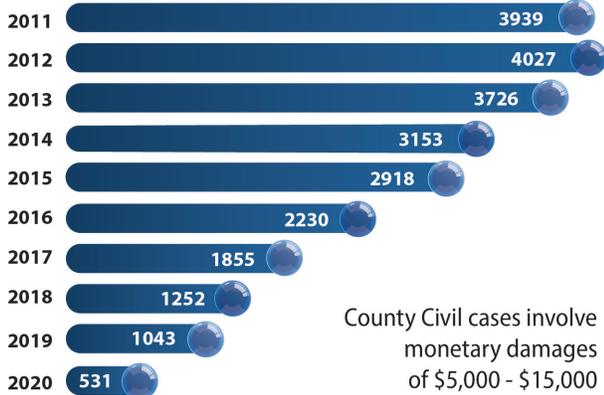
Circuit Civil increased from \$15,001 to over \$30,000



Although the jurisdictional amounts increased, the filing fees remain the same.

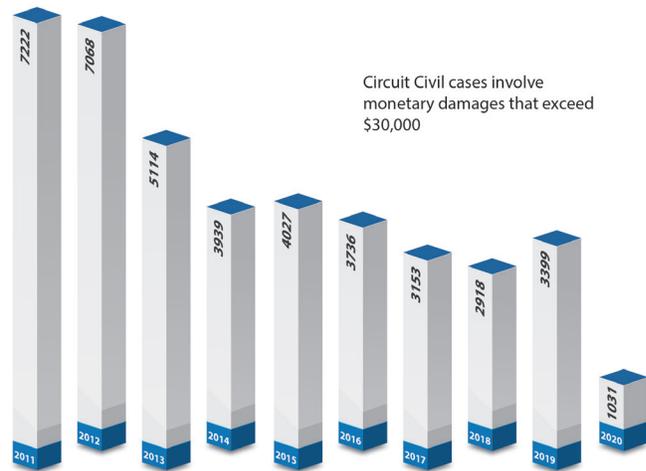


COUNTY CIVIL CASES FILED



County Civil cases involve monetary damages of \$5,000 - \$15,000

CIRCUIT CIVIL CASES FILED

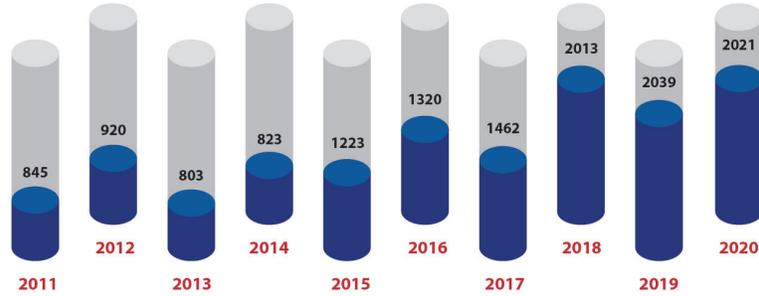


Circuit Civil cases involve monetary damages that exceed \$30,000

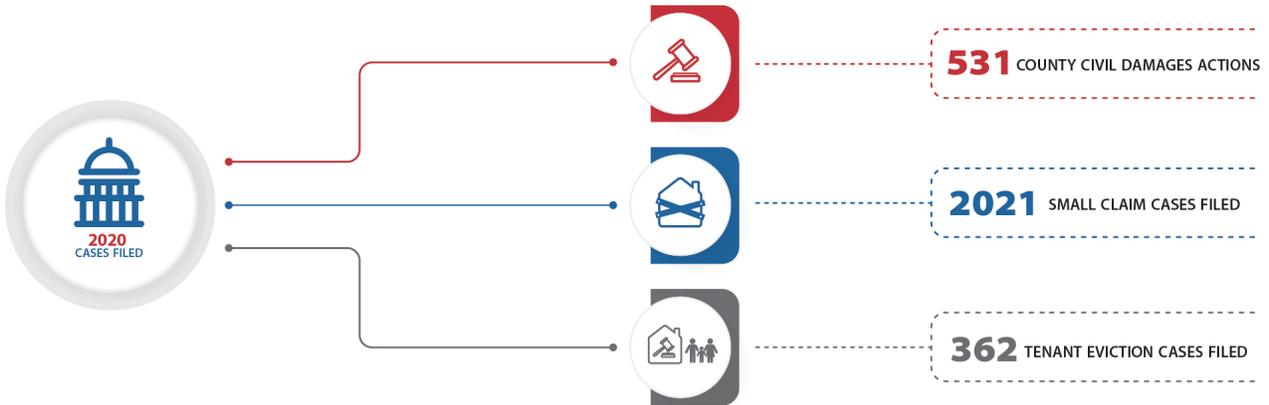
SMALL CLAIMS

Small Claims court now involves damages less than \$8,000. A person may file a case without representation by an attorney. The Clerk's staff provides the necessary forms and explains the process, but they cannot pursuant to Florida Law, provide legal advice.

SMALL CLAIM CASES FILED



There were 2021 new small claims cases filed in 2020. Due to COVID, cases were held via Zoom conference.



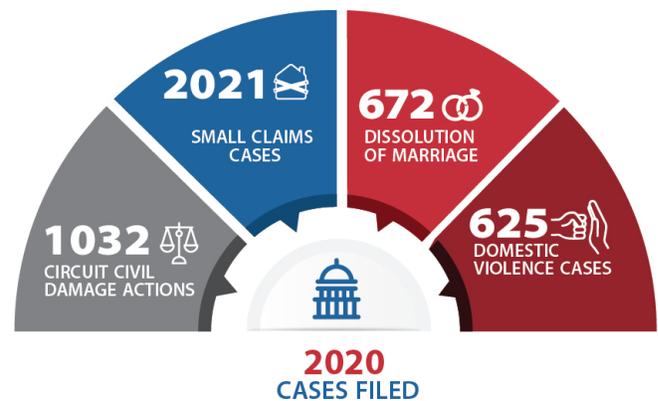
TENANT EVICTIONS

In March 2020, the Florida Supreme Court halted the issuance of Writ of Possessions by the Clerk in Tenant Eviction cases. Cases could continue to be filed; however, the final step of possession of the home or business was halted until August 2020. The Clerk resumed the issuance of the writ of possession unrelated to COVID-19 financial trouble. However, the Center for Disease Control

and Prevention (CDC) issued protections for certain renters impacted by the virus. The judge presiding over a case must first issue an order directing the Clerk to issue the writ of possession. There were 362 Tenant Eviction cases filed in 2020. In October 2020, Tenant Evictions were categorized for filing as Residential or Non-Residential. Prior to October cases were categorized simply as Tenant Eviction cases.

CIRCUIT CIVIL

Circuit Civil filings include action with damages that exceed \$30,000, Foreclosures exceeding \$30,000, Dissolution of Marriage, Adoption, Name Change, Child Support and Domestic Violence cases.



CHILD SUPPORT

The Federal Welfare Reform Act of 1996 passed by Congress mandated that every state create a centralized child support system. Charlotte County was chosen to be a test site for this new system. Our participation laid the framework for the processing center where all support payments throughout Florida are sent to the Florida's State Disbursement Unit (FLSDU) located in Tallahassee. This center processes the remittances and distributes checks to the receiving families. Normal processing time is 48 hours, barring any delays in mail delivery. However, with an e-card, the funds are loaded directly onto the card which saves on mailing time.

The Department of Revenue is authorized to assist the custodial parent in the collection of any unpaid child support by using its authority to intercept IRS funds, garnish unemployment and Workers' Compensation funds, freeze bank accounts and track delinquent payers who leave the state without notice. This program is committed to the goal of collecting support

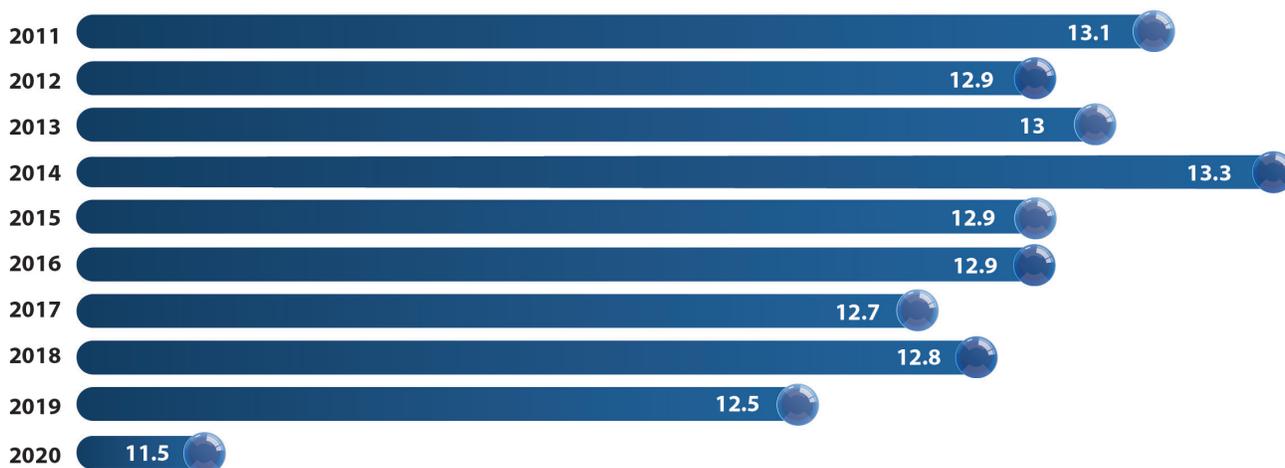
on behalf of the many children in our County who are unable to speak for themselves.

PAY CHILD SUPPORT ONLINE

The Charlotte County Clerk of Court has teamed with the State Disbursement Unit (SDU), Florida Department of Revenue, and other Florida Clerks to offer online Child Support Services through MyFloridaCounty.com; the official website for local government services and information. This service enables non-custodial parents to pay child support using a debit or credit card. It also allows for non-custodial parents to set up an account for recurring payments. This enables parents to obtain details on the five most recent child support payments.

In response to COVID-19, the Florida Department of Revenue, Child Support Enforcement, went virtual with live web chats in place of in person office visits. Customers are able to live chat with a representative, or email the office.

CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS



For Charlotte County, there are 14,205 current cases in the Child Support System for the year 2020. With payments collected for Charlotte County totaling over \$11.5 million dollars.

FORECLOSURE

Foreclosure is the proceeding by a creditor to regain property or other collateral following a default on mortgage payments. The Clerk's office processes foreclosure case files and provides a new certified title upon the conclusion of a sale via Real Auction portal. Charlotte County was the first county in the State of Florida to offer both online sales for foreclosure and tax deeds.

These online auctions services offer greater access to records for the public and has improved efficiency in the processing of foreclosure and tax deed sales and new titles. **All foreclosure sales are held online at Charlotte.RealForeclosure.com on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday at 11:00am as set by judicial order.**

Bidders are now able to deposit funds through ACH wire transfer from any place in the world, never having to visit the office in person and make the foreclosure process completely electronic.

2019
ONLINE SALES
200

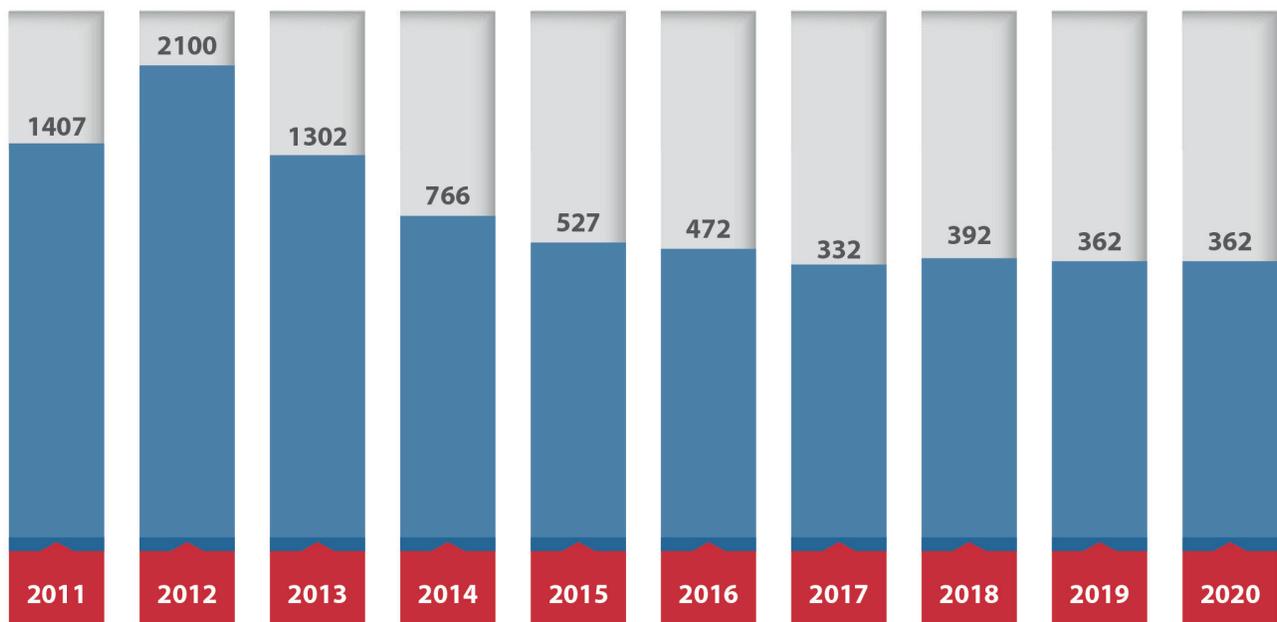


2020
ONLINE SALES
82



FORECLOSURE CASES FILED

 REAL AUCTION



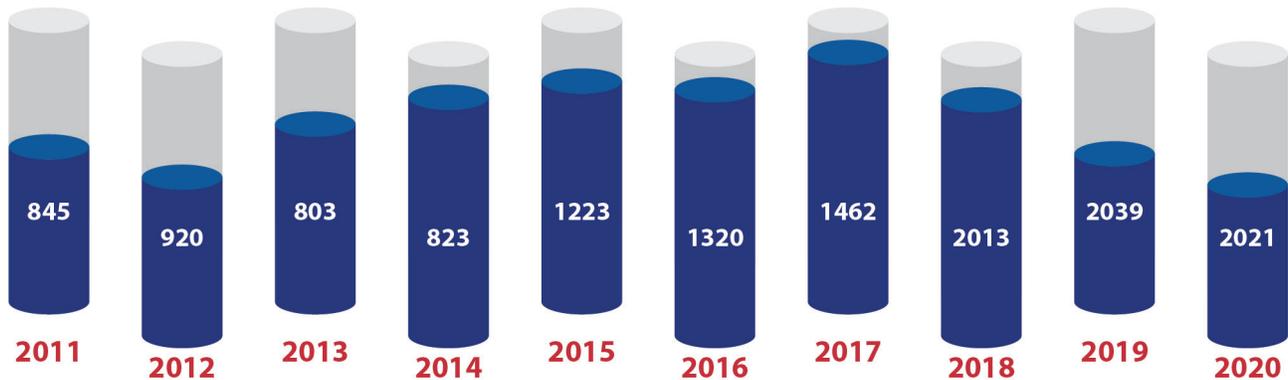
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Victims are also able to utilize TurboCourt for the completion of forms. By answering a series of questions, TurboCourt advanced technology inputs this information on the correct form. The form can then be printed and mailed or dropped off at the office for filing. There is no vendor fee for these forms.



In 2020 there were 625 domestic violence cases filed.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES FILED



Our staff assists victims of abuse in filing for an Injunction for Protection and provides privacy to petitioners.

An informational brochure is provided to law enforcement officers for distribution on domestic violence calls. The brochure provides the victim with information on how to file an Injunction for Protection and outlines documents that the individuals need to bring with them to the Clerk's Office. This information is also available on the Clerk's website at CharlotteClerk.com.

Should you or someone you know be experiencing domestic violence, we urge you to reach out to our office at the Charlotte County Justice Center, 350 East Marion Avenue, Punta Gorda, FL. For more information contact the office at 941-637-2162 or go to CharlotteClerk.com. Our office works hand-in-hand with the C.A.R.E. Crisis Center. If you require their assistance, they can be reached at 941-637-6000. If you are in imminent danger, please call 911.



PROBATE, GUARDIANSHIP AND MENTAL HEALTH

The Probate/Guardianship section processes all probate, guardianship, and mental health (Baker Act, Marchman Act and Risk Protection Cases).

The Clerk is responsible for auditing all guardianship cases. This requires close scrutiny of all reports filed by the guardian of an incapacitated citizen. This is an essential element for safeguarding the individual, as well as their property and assets.

Risk Protection cases were created in 2018 with the intent to address gun violence by providing law enforcement and the Courts with tools to enhance public safety by temporarily restricting firearm possession by an individual who is

undergoing a mental health crisis and when there is evidence of a threat of violence. Since its inception 45 Risk Protection cases have been filed in Charlotte County.

In 2019, new legislation passed for the prevention of the Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults. This allows an individual that is concerned that a third party is taking advantage of an elderly or incapacitated adult to file a petition and have a hearing before a judge. Since this legislation became law in 2019, 3 cases have been filed.

2020 Cases Filed



1,230
PROBATE CASES



1,301
BAKER
ACT CASES



508
WILL ON
DEPOSIT CASES



1,380
MENTAL
HEALTH CASES

JURY

In March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Supreme Court of Florida suspended all jury trials. Jury trials remained suspended until September 1, 2020. On September 14, 2020 Charlotte County jury trials resumed with extra precautions in place. The Clerk took necessary steps to serve potential jurors safely. A socially distanced check-in process with touchless check-in for jurors was created and hand sanitizing stations were added. Jurors are socially distanced in the jury assembly room until the judge is ready for them in the courtroom.

It's been almost four years since our automated jury process with our state-of-the-art jury management self-check-in system was deployed and we are continually making upgrades for a seamless experience for jurors.

Our jury system allows jurors to check in ahead of time online or by downloading our jury app to check in by phone or other mobile devices. Our app allows the juror to receive text notifications when the juror is required to report for jury service, much like many

restaurants that text a patron when their table is ready. When registering online, the juror will receive an email notification when their juror number is required to report for jury service.

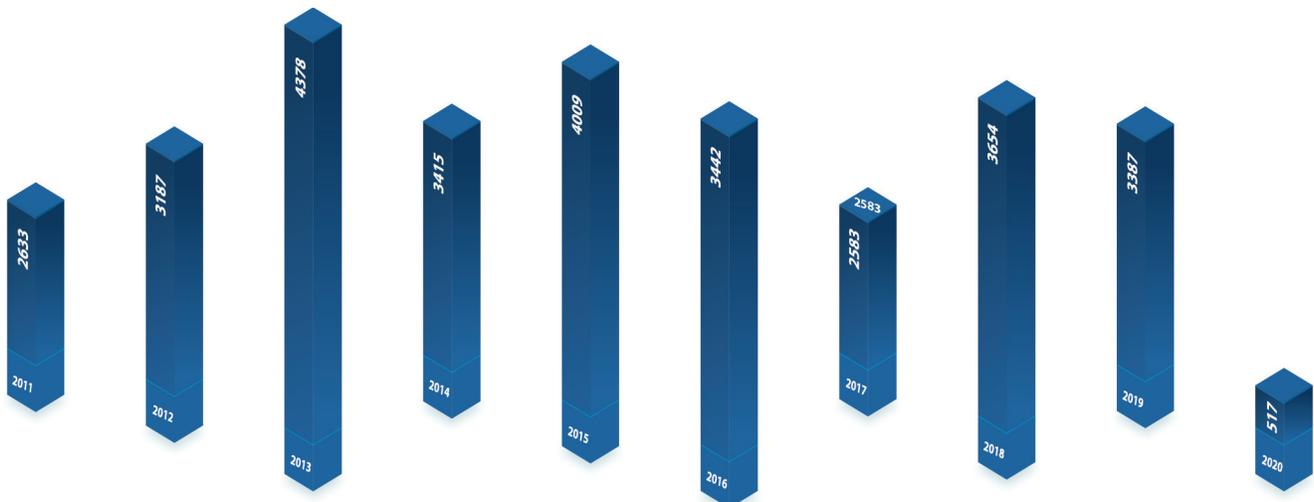
Upon arriving at the Justice Center, check-in is required to account for the juror reporting, much like early check-in at the airport. While using the app, a link with a QR code is provided for quick check-in. The QR code from a mobile device or the barcode from the summons will be scanned at one of the check-in kiosks in the jury assembly area.

Florida statute allows jurors whose employer does not pay them for jury service, that are self or unemployed, or retired to be paid \$15 for each day they serve as a juror. We implemented "Same Day Pay" which allows eligible jurors to receive their pay in cash. Not only is this a great benefit for the juror, but there is a direct cost savings benefit for the Clerk's office by reducing the number of checks needed to be processed and uncashed checks to reconcile.

Starting in September 2020, jurors can choose to donate their statutory jury duty pay to the Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies (C.A.R.E.). Since this option has been available, 151 jurors have opted to donate their pay to C.A.R.E. and \$2,265 has been donated.



JURORS REPORTED



| APPEALS

Appeals are cases presented to a higher court for review of the decision rendered by the lower court. Effective January 1, 2021, all cases will be appealed to the District Court of Appeals with the exception of the County Ordinances, Civil Traffic citations and some boating citations.

The appeal process is completely electronic, from the submission of the initial Notice of Appeal to the District Court, subsequent pleadings and all orders.

There was a total of

65

appeals filed in

2020



HIGHLIGHT OF COURT OPERATIONS

This year has been challenging for the Clerk's office, but we came through and continue to serve our citizens and staff safely.

Some of the ways we provided a safe environment is equipping our office with hand sanitizer stations for customers and staff as well as 6-foot spacing guides on the floor to keep people at CDC recommended distances. Plexiglass Shields were installed in all customer service areas, along with social distancing reminder signs. Our deputy Clerks and facilities maintenance staff are routinely sanitizing their workstations and public areas for everyone's safety.

We continue to offer citizens a robust, safe, and secure online resource to make online payments, pay fines and fees, search for court case information, court search, and electronically filed court documents, Florida courts e-filing portal.

All our online services were designed to respect our customers time and expense by reducing or eliminating the need to make a trip to the Justice Center or Murdock Administration Building. Our online services can be used at a time and place that is most convenient for you.

This year we implemented contactless payments at the front counter with mobile phones through Apple Pay, Google or Android pay.

Our Clerk, Roger Eaton, understands this is a difficult time, as a result, we offer payment options and are sending reminder notices to our customers as part of our compliance initiative to assist our customers, so their driver's license remains in effect. In November, our office held Operation Green Light, assisting 28 customers reinstate their driver's license and get back on the road.

We will continue to develop new and innovative ways to provide the ultimate customer service experience for local citizens.



2020 OPERATION GREEN LIGHT



Roger D. Eaton and the Charlotte County Clerk of Court's office held their second Operation Green Light event on November 9 - November 20, 2020. This event gave Charlotte County customers with suspended driver licenses an opportunity to pay overdue court obligations, including traffic tickets, while saving up to 40% in additional fees to get their license back.

OFFICIAL RECORDS

The Clerk is the recorder of all instruments required or authorized to be recorded in one general series of “Official Records” books. Upon payment of the statutory fees, the Clerk records and indexes a variety of important documents; including deeds, mortgages, judgments, military discharges, domiciles and other authorized documents. Once recorded, a document remains a permanent record, available for public viewing.

Access to the County’s Official Records is available to the public via the Internet.

Since 2019, when the Clerk made all deed books and Official Records available online dating back from the inception of Charlotte County, the Official Records team has been working diligently to provide additional books for online viewing. These books will include the Marriage License Records, Mortgage & Satisfaction Books. The process of indexing is expected to be completed in 2021.

The Clerk provides resources to help the citizen safeguard their property. The Property Fraud Alert is a FREE service that helps protect an individual’s property from fraud by monitoring documents such as liens, deeds and mortgages that are recorded in Charlotte County.

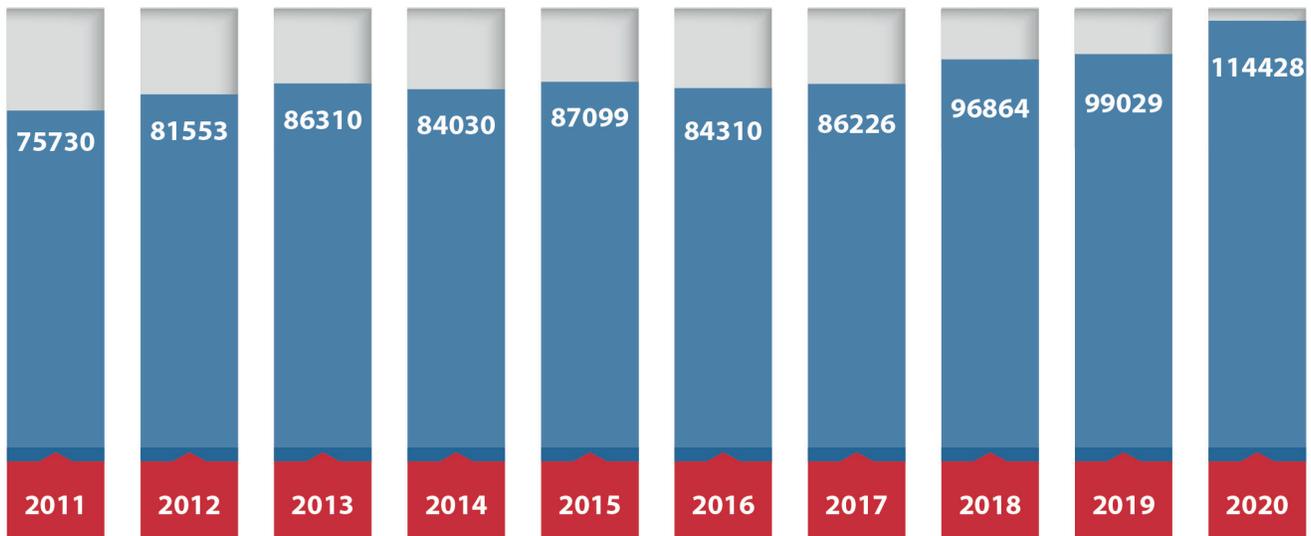
2020



The Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller recorded, indexed, verified and redacted (if needed) 114,428 documents into Official Records.

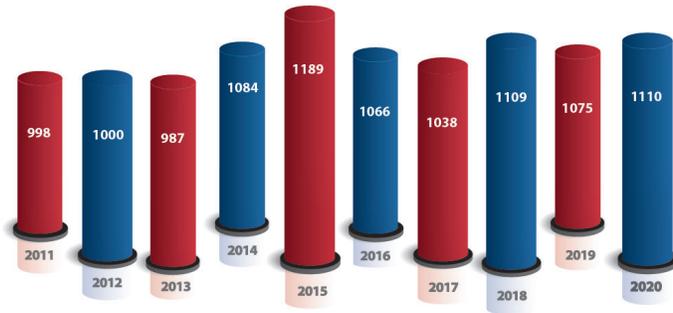
114,428

DOCUMENTS RECORDED

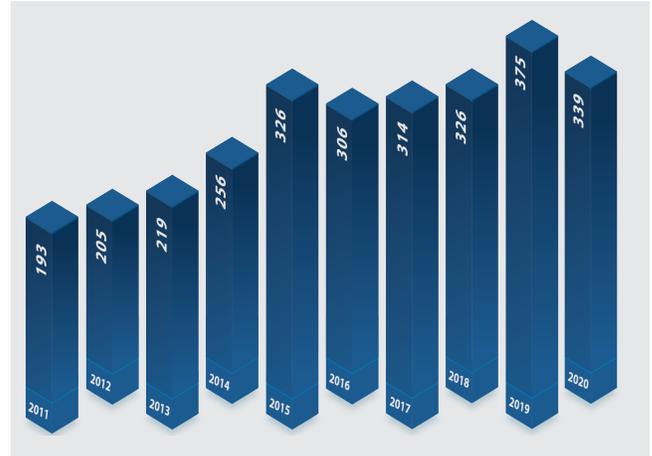


MARRIAGE

MARRIAGE LICENSES



MARRIAGE CEREMONIES



Marriage licenses can be issued at either of our two office locations. The Punta Gorda Official Records division performs marriage ceremonies upon request.

2020 | **1,110** MARRIAGE LICENSES PROCESSED 
339 MARRIAGE CEREMONIES PERFORMED

VALENTINE'S GROUP WEDDING

Love is in the air! The Charlotte County Clerk of the Circuit Court hosted the first Valentine's group wedding in 2020 at Laishley Park. This was a beautiful occasion, with a perfect backdrop of the Harbor. This prime location was a cost-effective way for our couples to say I Do!



REMOTE MARRIAGE LICENSES

In 2020, the Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller established a Remote Marriage License process to assist the residents of Florida during the COVID-19 pandemic. This process included the ability to issue the Marriage License application via the Internet, as well as perform the ceremonies online.

PASSPORT

New passport applications may be processed at either one of our two office locations. The applications are forwarded to the U.S. Passport Agency for processing for your convenience. Passport photos are available to be taken and purchased at our Punta Gorda location. The color photograph of the applicant, two inches wide by two inches long, must occupy every application. We also provide photo services for renewal applications.

A passport issued to an adult is valid for ten years and may be renewed within five years after the date of the expiration. A child's passport, ages 15 or younger, which is valid for five years, is not renewable.

NEW PASSPORT APPLICATIONS

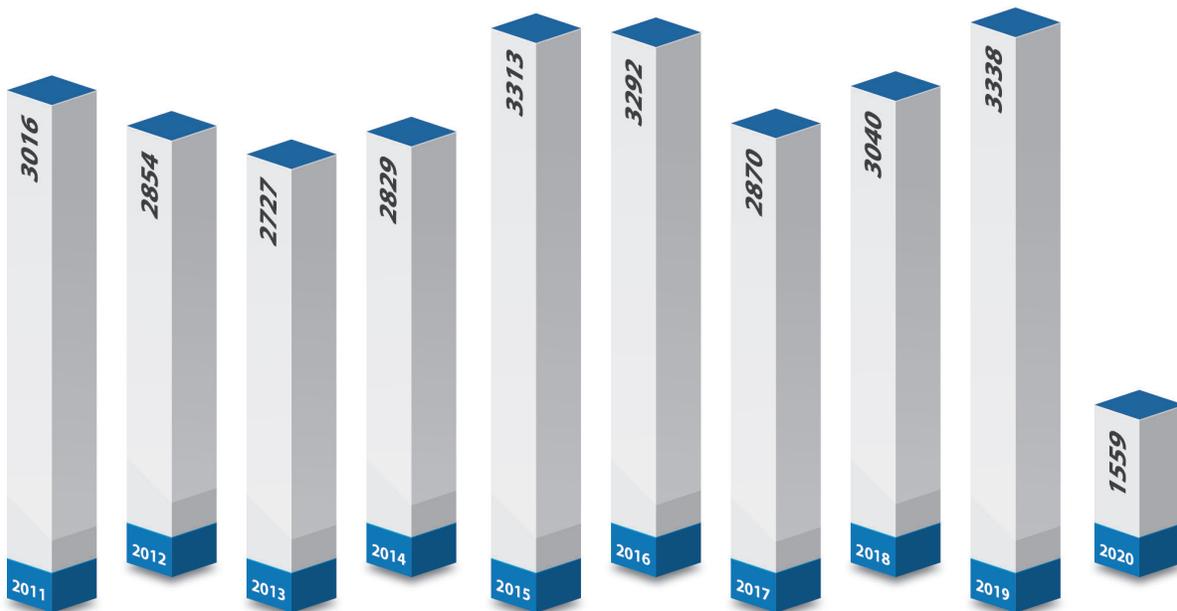
We are happy to announce that once the U.S. Department of State started accepting applications again during the pandemic, your Charlotte County Clerk's office was able to provide these services to citizens of Charlotte County as well as surrounding counties.



THERE WERE
1,559
PASSPORT
APPLICATIONS SENT IN 2020
BY THIS OFFICE.



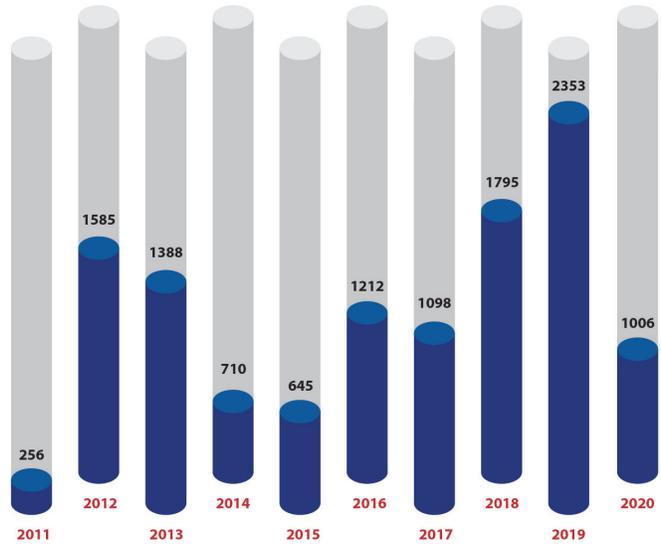
NEW PASSPORT APPLICATIONS



TAX DEED

The Charlotte County Clerk's Office processed 1,006 tax deed applications in 2020. During the pandemic, the mailing out of country services were suspended causing numerous tax deed applications to be canceled. As different countries start accepting mailing, we will be able to continue the sale process.

The owner can redeem the property with the Tax Collector's office, up until the Clerk's Office receives final payment from the successful bidder. Once final payment has been received, the Clerk's Office prepares and records the Tax Deed into Official Records.



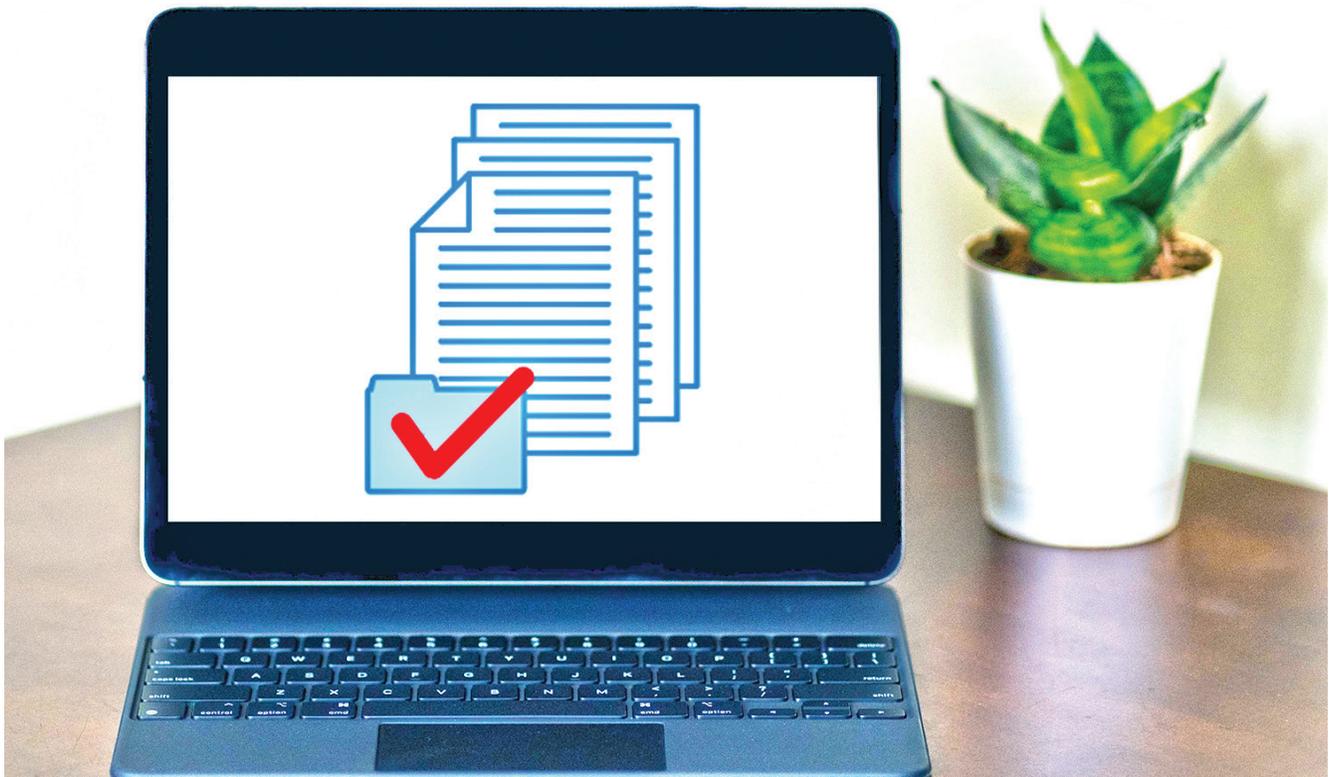
RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The Records Management Division maintains the paper files until they are digitized using approved record keeping systems or have met their retention periods for disposal in accordance with rules promulgated by the Florida Department of State, State Library and Archives of Florida, and the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration. A review of our electronic records policy by the Bureau of Archives and Records Management at the Division of Library and Information Services noted our policies are “very impressive” and can be a “model for other counties”.

This division stores files for the Board of County Commissioners Human Resources, County Training and Community Development, County Risk Management

Department, Permitting, Environmental Services and all Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller records.

The Clerk’s Office has been entrusted with the responsibility of housing, storing, and processing records of the Community Development Department, specifically the Building Construction Services, and Permitting Division. The Clerk’s Office designed an imaging system to meet Florida Law requirements to process, retrieve, and maintain the documents in permanent record format. The program was designed to provide the Community Development Department with immediate access to these images from their desktops and is utilized by their permitting section, as well as other departments throughout the County.



COMPTROLLER

Florida statutes established the Clerk of the Circuit Court as Ex Officio Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), custodian of all County funds, and Accountant to the Board. The Comptroller Division provides all business-related services in accordance with Florida statutes, County Ordinances and Resolutions.

Roger D. Eaton has established his Comptroller Division with appropriate checks and balances assuring internal audit controls. He also developed a sound Investment Policy, assuring growth and diversification with regard to County assets.

The Comptroller Division took on additional duties this year serving the public and our staff safely through the Coronavirus pandemic. The staff followed safe practices such as mask wearing, hand washing, social distancing and increased cleaning and sanitizing of public areas as well as the accounting functions related to the CARES act.

The **TREASURY MANAGEMENT** team works with cash flow analysis, bank reconciliations and investments of surplus County funds and administers the banking relationship for the Board. As custodian of all County funds, responsibility for the investments of these funds rests with the Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller. Funds are invested to provide safety, liquidity, and yield, in that order, with minimization of risk consistent with chapter 218 Florida Statutes.

The Clerk's office currently manages an investment portfolio of \$627 million consisting of treasuries, agencies, local government investment pools and the Florida State Board of Administration as authorized by F.S. 163.01 and 218.415.

Funds are invested for longer terms in U.S. Government Agency obligations, authorized under Statute 218. The



County's investment policy outlines individual investment transaction limits as well as length to maturity.

The **ENTERPRISE ACCOUNTING** staff is responsible for recording payments, transactions, and financial reports for the business type activities of the County (including Charlotte County Utilities, various water and sewer districts, landfill, and a sanitation district). These business activities are primarily funded through external user fees and charges. The staff also accounts for Internal Service funds for vehicle maintenance, casualty, fleet, workers' compensation, general liability self-insurance, and health and disability insurance.

The **PAYROLL** team produces bi-weekly payroll for the Board of County Commissioners, the Supervisor of Elections, and the Clerk of the Circuit Court. The payroll team is responsible for paying all wages, overseeing voluntary and involuntary deductions for all employees. The team also fulfills all reporting requirements to the State of Florida and the IRS for wage reporting and reporting under the Affordable Care Act. As well as managing the Florida Retirement System reporting and payment of the monthly retirement expenses.

The **ACCOUNTS PAYABLE** team is responsible for reviewing all payment requests for goods and services made by vendors, travel reimbursements as well as materials, construction payment and professional services. The team takes pride in prompt payment to vendors and processes payments well below the state requirement of 45 days. The accounts payable team has processed approximately 13,000 invoices this fiscal



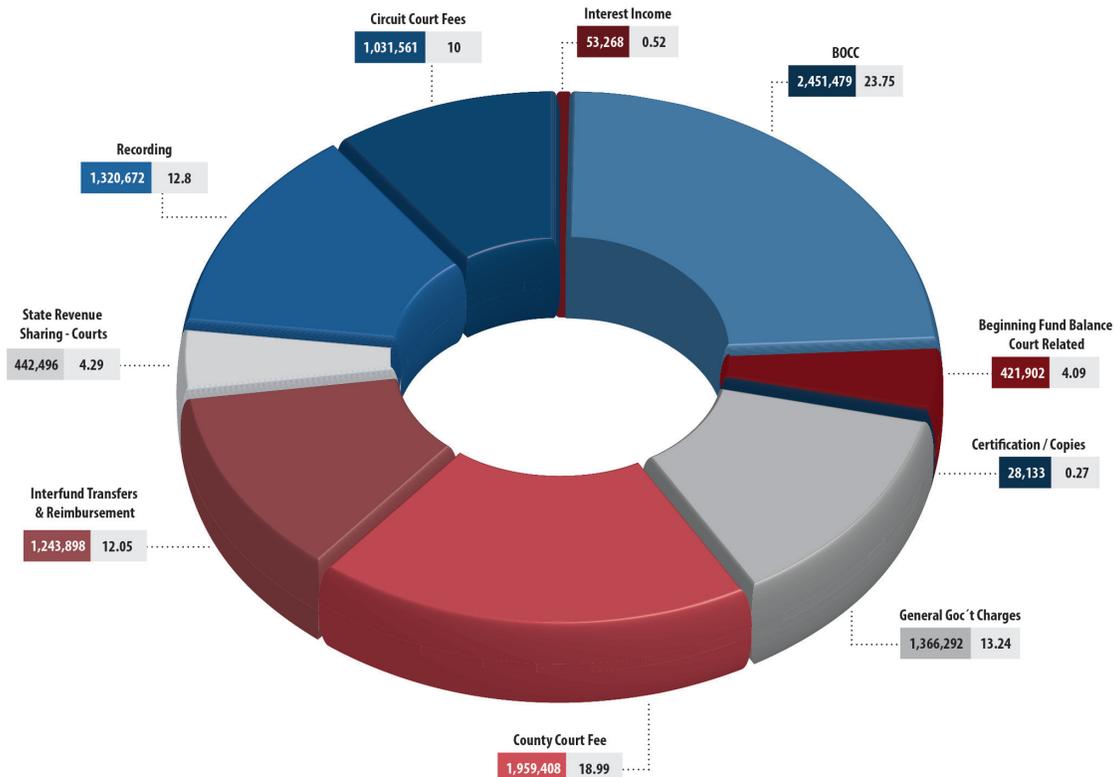
year in excess of \$352 million. The accounts payable team took on additional responsibility for processing payments to citizens and businesses impacted by the Coronavirus through CARES Act funds in the excess of \$23 million.

GENERAL ACCOUNTING functions are provided by the Comptroller Division to record governmental activities provided such as fire and rescue, emergency management and disaster preparedness as well as road maintenance, libraries, parks and recreation and various court related activities. These activities are typically funded by property, sales and use taxes, grants and intergovernmental revenues.

In addition, the Comptroller Division is responsible for **Financial Reporting** functions by providing the final check of the financial information for the Clerk, Board and other agencies in accordance with the generally accepted accounting

principles. The Comptroller Division records and tracks fixed assets inventory of approximately \$1.2 billion. The Clerk's staff performs all accounting functions for over 150 funds and is responsible for grant analysis and reconciliation of an excess of 100 grants. The department also manages obtaining new debt proceeds, monitoring debt payments as well as debt compliance. The financial reporting also includes reporting for bond compliance via Arbitrage reporting; debt covenant compliance and reporting to noteholders; grant reporting; state financial reports as well as audited financial statements.

While some governmental entities rely upon their external auditors for preparation of their Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), in Charlotte County, the Clerk's office prepares the entire document. The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting reporting to Charlotte County for the Clerk's comprehensive annual financial report for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2019. This is the 34th consecutive year that this prestigious award has been received by Charlotte County.



MINUTES

The Minutes Division fulfills the Clerk's constitutional responsibility as Ex-Officio Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

Among its many responsibilities, Minutes staff attends and records all Board regular and land use meetings, workshops, public hearings, and special meetings when more than two Commissioners will be present. Staff indexes and processes related official documents adopted by the BOCC. During each BOCC meeting, staff creates preliminary minutes by means of specialized web-based software and recording medias to capture a verbatim of the meeting. Minutes are a summary of each meeting and highlight essential information in a concise manner. All motions and votes are verified and accurately documented.

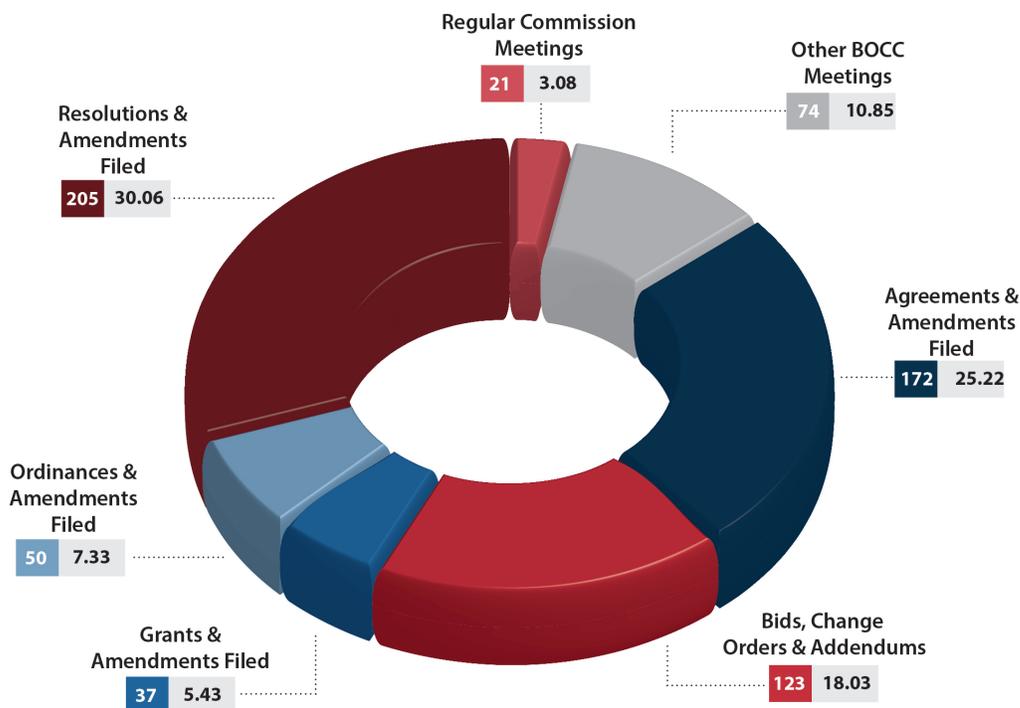
Regular meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month with the Land Use Public Hearing Agenda being heard generally at the second Tuesday meeting at 2:00 p.m. Meeting lengths vary and are dependent on the size of the agenda to be followed.

Once the minutes are finalized and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners at a regular meeting, the official

minutes are published to the County website for viewing in conjunction with the video stream, agenda, and any supporting documentation.

The Minutes Division adheres to the State of Florida, General Records Schedule GS11 for Clerk of Court requirements. All meeting related documents are preserved electronically. Documents requiring hard copy retention are indexed and filed in the department. Certified copies are available to the Public and County staff upon request. All original verbatim compact discs (CD's) and digital versatile/video discs (DVD's) are forwarded to a climate-controlled, permanent underground storage facility with duplicates preserved in Commission Minutes Division for a period of two (2) years.

This year we are proud to unveil our brand-new Charlotte County records search on our website (Minutes.CharlotteClerk.com). This robust and easy to use online system allows you to search the following documents from 1921 to present: Agreements, BCC Agendas and Minutes, Grants, Ordinances, Resolutions, Street Vacations, Charter Review Commission Meetings, Bids and Contracts.



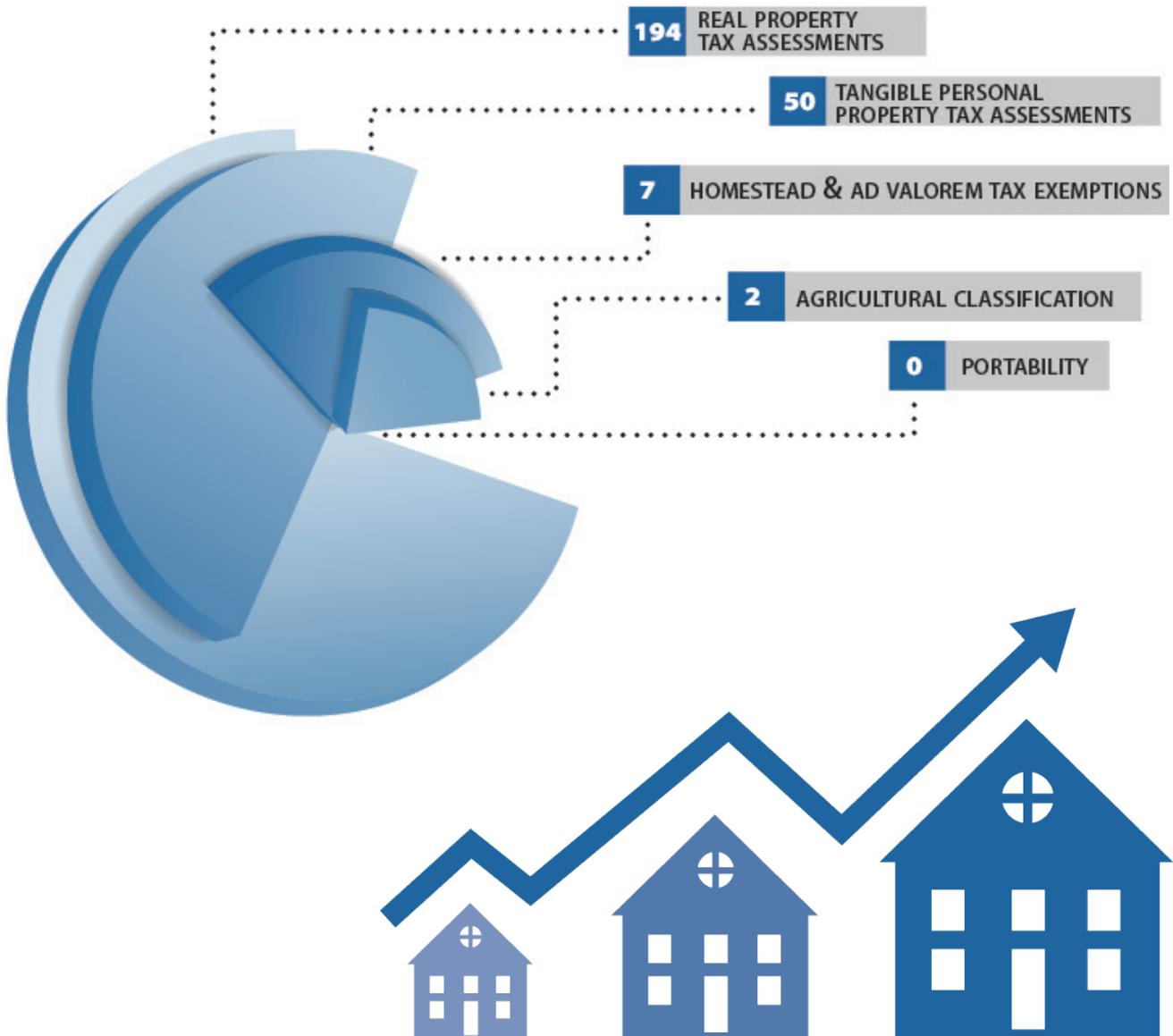
VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARD

Our Clerk team is responsible for the overall VAB process which includes petition and document processing, record retention and scheduling through AXIA. Special magistrates are appointed by the VAB to hear Real Property, Tangible Personal Property Tax Assessments, Homestead and Ad Valorem Tax Exemptions and Agricultural Classification Appeals.

Special Magistrate recommendations are later presented to the VAB for adoption at their final meeting. Documentation and recordings are retained for minimum of four years.

With greater organization and proficiencies, staff has reduced the VAB session length by several months.

VAB PETITIONS FILED IN 2020



INTERNAL AUDIT

The Internal Audit Division is established to assume the duties and responsibilities of the Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller as auditor and custodian of all county funds as established by Article V, Section 16, Florida Constitution. The internal audit activity's responsibilities are defined by the Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller as part of their oversight role.

The Internal Audit Division is staffed by a Director, a Senior Auditor, and an Internal Auditor with a combined experience of over 17 years in the department. The second Internal Auditor, charged with performing guardianship and follow up audits, resigned in July 2020. This position was not replaced due to the economic downturn, and cross-training has ensured operation continue in a fiscally responsible manner. The Division performs their responsibilities in accordance with generally accepting accounting principles and generally accepted auditing standards.

The Division monitors the operations of the Board of County Commissioners and the Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller's Office. The primary purpose of the Division is to conduct internal post audits to render independent analysis and appraisal of the Board and the Clerk's operations and to ensure that those operations are performed in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, established policies and procedures, and sound management processes.

The Internal Audit staff assists the County's external auditors during the annual audit of the County's financial statements. The external auditors also receive a benefit from the internal audit reports generated during the fiscal year as a planning tool for their audit of the County departments and agencies.

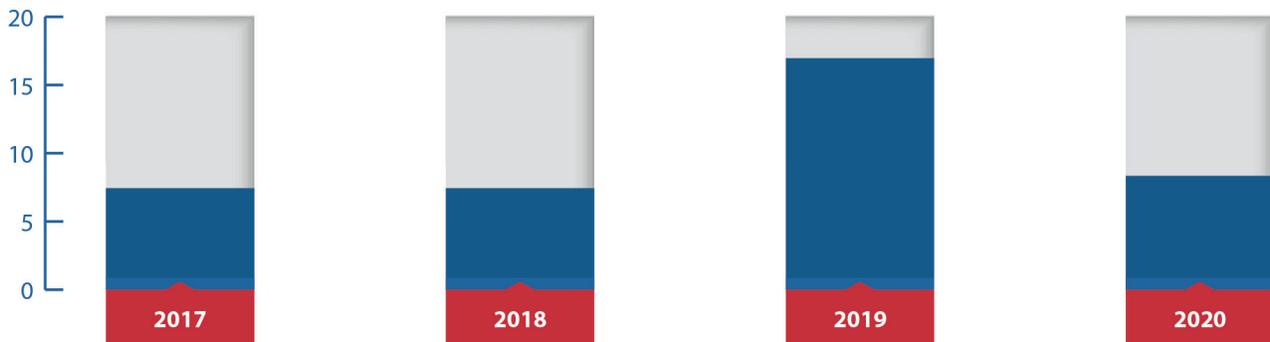
Through association memberships, networking and roundtables, the Division has kept current on industry practices, public concerns, and current trends. These all provide significant benefit at minimal cost. Division members also attend Conferences when appropriate. The Division also uses AutoAudit® for workpaper filing and recording audit evidence, and IDEA®, a powerful user-friendly data analysis tool designed to quickly improve audits and identify data trends and irregularities.

2020 CALENDAR YEAR IN REVIEW

The calendar year 2020 presented challenges to internal audit which were met with efficient planning and communication by the Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller and the Leadership team. During the second quarter of 2020, the division transitioned to a remote work policy for the safety of our team members and department contacts. Our primary objectives during the second quarter were guardianship audits, follow-up internal audits, upkeep on divisional documentation, including policies and procedures, and online training. The Division was prepared for remote work, with the issuance of laptops, remote workstations, and Proficiency in AutoAudit® audit management software and IDEA® a data analysis software. Still, internal audits were delayed due to an understanding that County departments needed to concentrate their resources on other priorities. The Division's concentration on guardianship audits kept us compliant with statutory obligations, while follow-up audits and documentation updates kept the Division prepared for a safe return to the office environment.

Understandably, these factors (reduced staff, shifting priorities) resulted in less internal audits performed in 2020, although performance still exceeded historical trends.

INTERNAL AUDITS PERFORMED AND REPORTS ISSUED DURING 2020



While audit reports issued in 2020 were significantly less than 2019, they were more than either 2018 and 2017, showing productivity is consistent even though priorities were adjusted throughout the year.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CODE COMPLIANCE

As a result of this review, we determined Code Compliance officers were making excessive site visits, taking time and resources away from the County, and were inconsistent in enforcement, evidence and case details. Inconsistent practices weaken internal controls and hinder the County’s ability to enforce code compliance.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCIES (CRAS)

As a result of this review, we identified weaknesses in Community Redevelopment Agency financial reporting, and determined an advisory committee was exceeding its authority. Financial Reporting weaknesses may hinder the timeliness and confidence of financial statements. Advisory Committees should only advise the CRA on what actions to take and not take actions themselves.

RISK MANAGEMENT WORKERS’ COMPENSATION

As a result of this review, weaknesses were identified in the Third Party Administrator’s agreement and responsibilities, which may have resulted from the agreement being consistently renewed since 2013. Our review prompted a new solicitation with increased internal controls. These increased internal controls will facilitate our follow up and further reviews of this program.

PROCUREMENT CARD PROGRAM

As a result of this review, we identified employees violating the procurement card program, resulting in Purchasing addressing those employees and revising internal controls.

FOLLOW-UP INTERNAL AUDITS PERFORMED AND REPORTS ISSUED DURING 2020

- Follow-Up Emergency Generators
- Follow-Up Vehicle Replacement Program

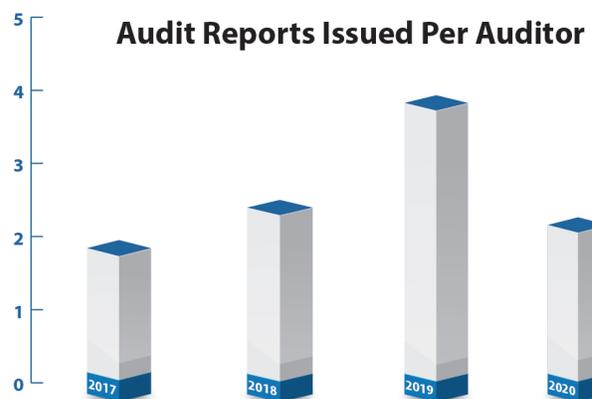
- Follow-Up District 22 Medical Examiner
- 2nd Follow-Up Fire EMS Controlled Substances

Follow-up internal audits have been largely successful as evidenced by implemented corrective action in most cases. The main outstanding issues related to Fire EMS Controlled Substances, where there have either been issues implementing corrective action, or subsequent concerns have arisen following changes in practice. The Internal Audit Division will continue to monitor corrective action.

RESULTS OF FOLLOW-UP AUDITS

Calendar Year	Open	Open, but Partially Completed	Closed
2019	28.6%	25%	46.4%
2020	4.4%	21.7%	73.9%

INTERNAL AUDITS PERFORMED PER AUDITOR



Audit reports issued per auditor is a productivity gauge for the Division, adjusted for staffing levels. The Director is included in this calculation as, while an administrative position, the Director completes audits and guardianship reviews as well.

In 2020, the Division completed 2.29 audits per auditor. This is in part due to the audits of Community Development Code Compliance, Community Redevelopment Agencies, and Risk Management – Workers’ Compensation, which all hadn’t been performed in years, ranking them high on the annual risk assessment and warranting a significant amount of work.

Audit reports from 2017 through the present can be found online at CharlotteClerk.com in the “Departments” menu under Internal Audit, in the reports section

During the year, 4 audit reports were issued, and 4 follow-up audit reports were issued. The Division completed 2.29 audits per auditor. Internal Audit reported 22 comments and recommendations to management for response and corrective action.

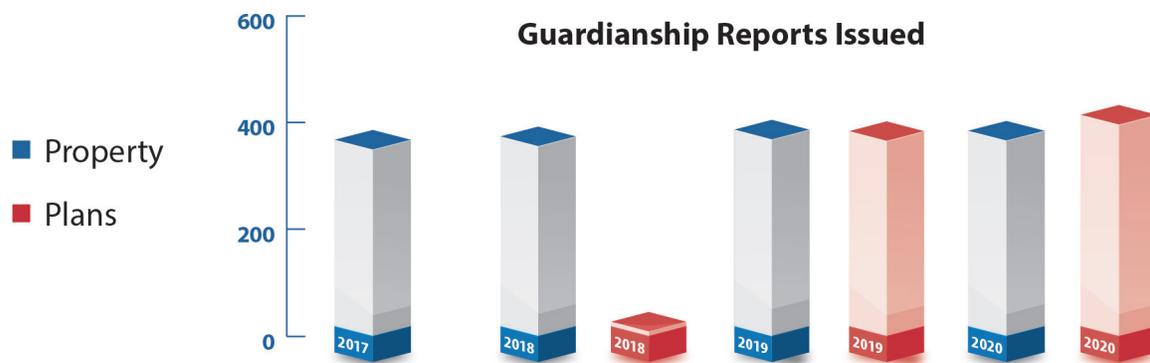
GUARDIANSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to internal audits, the Division conducts varying levels of audits/financial investigations related to guardianship reports and activities. The results of audited case files were communicated to the appropriate court in compliance with Florida Statutes. The Division reviews inventories and

accountings (Property) of the guardian to ensure reports are timely filed, assets are recorded, receipts/disbursements are tracked, and activity is appropriate and only for the benefit of the ward, not the guardian and/or attorney. The Division reviews guardianship plans to ensure guardians attend to the ward’s (1) physical and mental health care, (2) personal and social services, (3) residential setting, (4) insurance, private and governmental benefits, (5) physical and mental health examinations, and (6) the completeness and timely filing of reports and plans. The process is operating effectively, efficiently, and timely. These reports and plans were all communicated with the court in compliance with Florida Statutes.

If we report guardianship inventories, accountings, or plans have deficiencies, the deficiencies will be addressed, and these documents will be resubmitted for our acceptance. This process ensures the integrity of the guardianship program.

GUARDIANSHIP REVIEWS, AUDITS AND REPORTS ISSUED DURING 2020



PROPERTY

In the calendar year 2020, 308 original property filings were audited. Of these, 38 or 12.3% of original filings did not pass the audit requirement on the review. This resulted in 43 amended inventories or accountings filed which were subsequently cleared the same fiscal year.

60 or 19.5% of original filings were not timely filed and were subsequently reported as past due.

There was a total of \$13,100 in audit fees collected in calendar year 2020 for an average of \$42.53 per original filing. A ny Guardian unable to pay the audit fee may petition the Court for a waiver of the fee. Fees are governed by the Florida Statutes.

PLANS

In the calendar year 2020, 372 original plans of the person were reviewed. Reviews provide no opinion other than to report on the completeness of the plan. As a result of our reviews, 36 amended plans were filed, and found to be complete. No audit fees are charged for the plans.

76 or 20.4% of original plans were not timely filed and were subsequently reported as past due.

Further Internal Audit Division information can be found on the website CharlotteClerk.com, in addition to related links, reports and contact information.

During the year, 415 Guardianship Case Files of the Property were audited, and 486 guardianship case files of the person were reviewed. Results of those procedures were communicated to the appropriate court in compliance with the florida statutes.



CLERK INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Clerk's Information Technology (IT) Division is a critical component of the Clerk's office as this department leverages both information and technology to move the Clerk's business unit forward. The IT division delivers a robust and secure infrastructure to support our core systems, employees, connecting governmental agencies and the public.

The IT Division supports the many diverse operations of the Clerk's office to include those functions provided by the Clerk in his capacity as Chief Financial Officer, County Auditor and Ex-Officio Clerk for the Board of County Commissioners. IT department is responsible for development and maintenance of applications, production and operations, user support and training, hardware and software, network operations, and maintenance and security for the Finance, Internal Audit, Commission Minutes and Administrative Divisions.

The major systems and applications provided and supported include the Eden Financial System which is an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) suite with modules for accounts payable, fixed assets, general ledger, project accounting, accounts, receivable, purchasing and receiving for maximum interdepartmental efficiency. Additionally, this system supports both the human resources and payroll systems for the Board of County Commissions, Supervisor of Elections and the Clerk of the Circuit Court.

The IT Division supporting the Commission Minutes Division leverages a text search and retrieval systems along with Granicus Minutes Maker and Mobile Encoder for documenting Board of County Commissioners meeting. Additionally, supporting the Value Adjustment Board with an integrated solution connecting the Charlotte County Community, Property Appraiser, Board of County

Commissioners and the Clerk for the filing of petitions for value adjustment, scheduling of hearings, document management all the through process until final decisions.

As the County Recorder the Clerk's Information Technology department maintains the application, databases, image repository and citizen web interface for all recorded documents within the county.

This past year brought many new challenges and opportunities for providing services as we managed our response to the pandemic of 2020. The information technology team was quick to respond to both the needs of the community we serve and our office. Their response included developing new and innovative processes and systems. A few of these included On-Line Marriage License and Ceremonies, electronic forms for our new Self Help Center along with new methods of electronic payments for both our Tax Deeds and Foreclosure auctions. In lieu of handling cash or credit cards the IT team was successful with enabling contactless payments for those customers who needed to come into our offices.

Partnering with the Florida State Courts we began an E-Notify program. This program allows customers to be notified electronically by either text or emails of upcoming court data or other appearances. This new program will save both the citizens and courts time by reducing missed appointments.

During 2020 the IT team introduced a new County Records website enabling you to use our robust search engine to view county documents from 1921-present. You can search across many different categories of documents like Board of County Commissioners' agendas and finalized minutes, agreements, ordinances and resolutions to name a few.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

The Employee Relations department is responsible for all aspects of human capital management for this office.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT / INTERPRETATION

New Federal or State legislation affecting policy compliance in human resource management is monitored and policies are updated accordingly. Each employee receives a copy of the Employee Handbook containing personnel policy and all updates and revisions.

Each year, Clerk Eaton works to enhance employee engagement by introducing new benefits and/or educational resources designed to attract and retain his staff, as his mission is to be the employer of choice within Charlotte County. As such, this office continues to provide a competitive benefits package.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/LABOR LAW COMPLIANCE

All personnel actions and policies are reviewed for compliance with equal employment opportunity laws as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act, Family and Medical Leave Act, Fair Labor Standards Act, and all other State and Federal employment laws/regulations prior to implementation as changes to labor laws occur.

In the first quarter of 2020, Clerk Eaton quickly pivoted his work priorities, and took the lead in Charlotte County by implementing best practice procedures as an “essential services” provider, as his goal was to remain open, while also providing safe and sanitized offices for both the public and his employees.

CLASSIFICATION AND PAY

All classification and pay actions are reviewed for consistency and equity as well as maintaining appropriate

records. Employees also contribute to their medical and FRS benefits.

SAFETY/WORKERS’ COMPENSATION

Employees are made aware of all safety procedures and workers’ compensation compliance policies during their new hire orientation and throughout the year. Safety equipment is made available to all staff requiring lifting and/or the delivery of supplies and equipment.

Additionally, our SendWordNow Software, allows us to deliver real time notifications in order to update our employees during critical events. This was utilized for Tropical Storm Eta to notify all staff regarding our emergency preparedness preparations.

Annual walk-through safety inspections are also conducted at all Clerk locations by the Charlotte County Facilities and Fire Department staff.



STAFFING AND RECRUITMENT

All recruitment activities, new hire orientation, personnel records, benefits administration, and performance measurement programs are also managed by this division. Employee Relations prepares and coordinates job position descriptions, announcements, advertising, testing and interviews as a part of the recruitment process following all applicable Federal and State laws and Clerk & Comptroller policy and procedures.

TRAINING

Employees are provided training in the areas of Florida Statute Laws, county and civil fines, fees, and procedural processes, customer service, employee development,

supervision, word processing and spreadsheet skills. Additional training resources are available to assist employees when implementing new software programs and/or in meeting professional development requirements. Training programs are also provided through the Florida Association of Court Clerks and Comptrollers for management staff.

In 2020, we continued to conduct “Lunch-n-Learn” programs designed to help educate the employee on personal finance, retirement options, work-life balance and wellness education. Attendance is voluntary and employees have expressed their appreciation in being able to learn important health, financial and insurance information during their lunch hour. These programs have been well received and are a value added benefit for participating staff.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Charlotte County Clerk of the Circuit Court's Office prides itself in actively supporting important community causes.



In 2020, Clerk Eaton and his staff helped the Animal Welfare League by waiving adoption fees for pets and providing free food to pet owners who lost jobs due to COVID-19.



Each year, for the past six years, in recognition of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Roger D. Eaton and his staff have promoted DV awareness to the community by conducting fundraiser events and raising money for the local Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies Shelter.

In October 2020, we raised \$1,436 and were able to donate monies raised to the shelter to help those who are affected by domestic violence.



HEART WALK



The Clerk's Office participates in the Annual Charlotte County Heart Walk to support the mission of the American Heart Association by raising funds to fight heart disease in our community

PINK OUT DAY



The Virginia B. Andes Volunteer Community Clinic offers early detection breast screening for uninsured and under-insured adults in Charlotte County. The Clerk's Office had a Pink Out Day in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness; raising and donating \$844.00 to the program

THE CLERK'S OFFICE DEDICATES MANY VOLUNTEER
HOURS FOR THESE COMMUNITY EVENTS TO PROMOTE
AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR THEIR CAUSES.





OFFICE LOCATIONS

Charlotte County Justice Center

350 E. Marion Avenue
Punta Gorda, Florida 33950

Charlotte County Murdock Administration Center

18500 Murdock Circle
Port Charlotte, Florida 33948

OFFICE HOURS

Office Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00am - 5:00pm


CharlotteClerk.com

