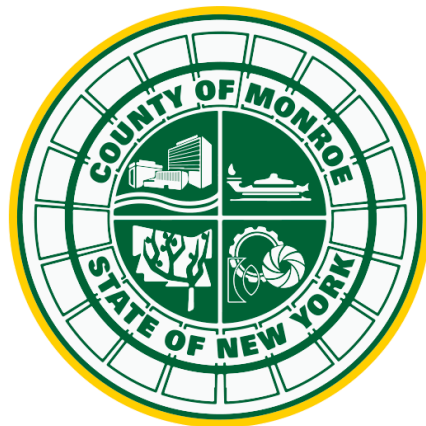

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Monroe County Clerk
JAMIE ROMEO

DMV • PASSPORTS • PISTOL PERMITS

MONROE COUNTY CLERK
Ms. Jamie Romeo

DEPUTY COUNTY CLERK
Mr. Tad Mack

39 West Main Street Room 101 Rochester, New York 14614
www.MonroeCounty.gov/Clerk



Monroe County Clerk
JAMIE ROMEO
DMV • PASSPORTS • PISTOL PERMITS

December 2023

Dear Neighbor:

I am proud to present to you our second Annual Report to the Community for the Monroe County Clerk's Office. Our Office serves Monroe County residents through the administration of many county, state, and federal public services. Together, our team acts as the County Registrar and Clerk of the Supreme and County Courts. We are responsible for filing, recording, and storing official documents and act as an agent for state and federal government for passports, pistol permits, sporting licenses, and motor vehicle-related transactions.

Over the past year, the Monroe County Clerk's Office has made significant strides towards a new vision of the services we provide. While it is always imperative to invest in strategies to improve efficiencies and the experience of our customers, we must begin to take steps to eliminate barriers and meet those we serve where they are. In 2023, our Office began to establish the foundation to do just that.

We are excited to share the new programs established in 2023 and our vision for 2024. We thank you for taking the time to review our report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jamie Romeo".

Ms. Jamie Romeo
Monroe County Clerk

Meet the County Clerk Executive Team



Jamie Romeo, Monroe County Clerk

Serving in the Monroe County Clerk's Office since February 2020.

2023 Fun Fact: *Over the past year, Clerk Romeo and her son Dominic attended 2 Lego Conventions when they visited Rochester.*

Tad Mack, Deputy County Clerk

Serving in the Monroe County Clerk's Office since March 2021.

2023 Fun Fact: *Tad scored 4th row floor seats to Tylor Swift's Eras Tour.*

Jackie Consol

Serving in the Monroe County Clerk's Office since September 2016.

2023 Fun Fact: *Jackie traveled to Amsterdam where she saw Blink-182, Florida where she saw Taylor Swift perform on her Eras Tour, and NYC where she saw the Jonas Brothers.*

Shawn Brown

Serving in the Monroe County Clerk's Office since May 2021.

2023 Fun Fact: *Shawn traveled to Copenhagen where he saw Nas and Wu Tang Clan. He is also proud of his ever growing sneaker collection.*

Katelyn Plonczynski-Cruz

Serving in the Monroe County Clerk's Office since February 2022.

2023 Fun Fact: *Katelyn successfully completed her 8th season as VP to the Rochester Hispanic Youth Baseball League, Inc. She also bought a new house located in Northeast Rochester*

Patrick Chase

Serving in the Monroe County Clerk's Office since February 2022.

2023 Fun Fact: *Patrick traveled to NYC to co-host a meet and greet for leaders across the New York space sector.*

Our Mission:

The Office of the County Clerk provides access to vital government services and records to the residents of Monroe County. The Clerk’s Office must follow all federal, state, and county laws, providing accurate and timely processing of transactions. We are also responsible for providing records to the public while adapting to new technology and the needs of the community by enhancing accessibility. The County Clerk’s Office is also responsible for the preservation and integrity of our database systems. Our team is comprised of the Downtown Operations Division, located in the County Office Building, and the Auto License Bureau with four branches strategically located throughout the County.



Our Impact: Supporting Taxpayers

The Monroe County Clerk’s Office is one of the few revenue generating entities in County Government that does not rely on the Property Tax Levy to fund our operations. Every year, we return our surplus revenue to the County’s General Fund, an effort to help mitigate the burden on local taxpayers.

In the proposed 2024 County Budget, the Clerk’s Office is again projected to contribute surplus revenue to the County General Fund, mitigating the taxpayer burden to the deficit. In 2022, the County Clerk’s Office returned \$1,438,044 in surplus revenue.

Serving our Community - Who We Are

Administration

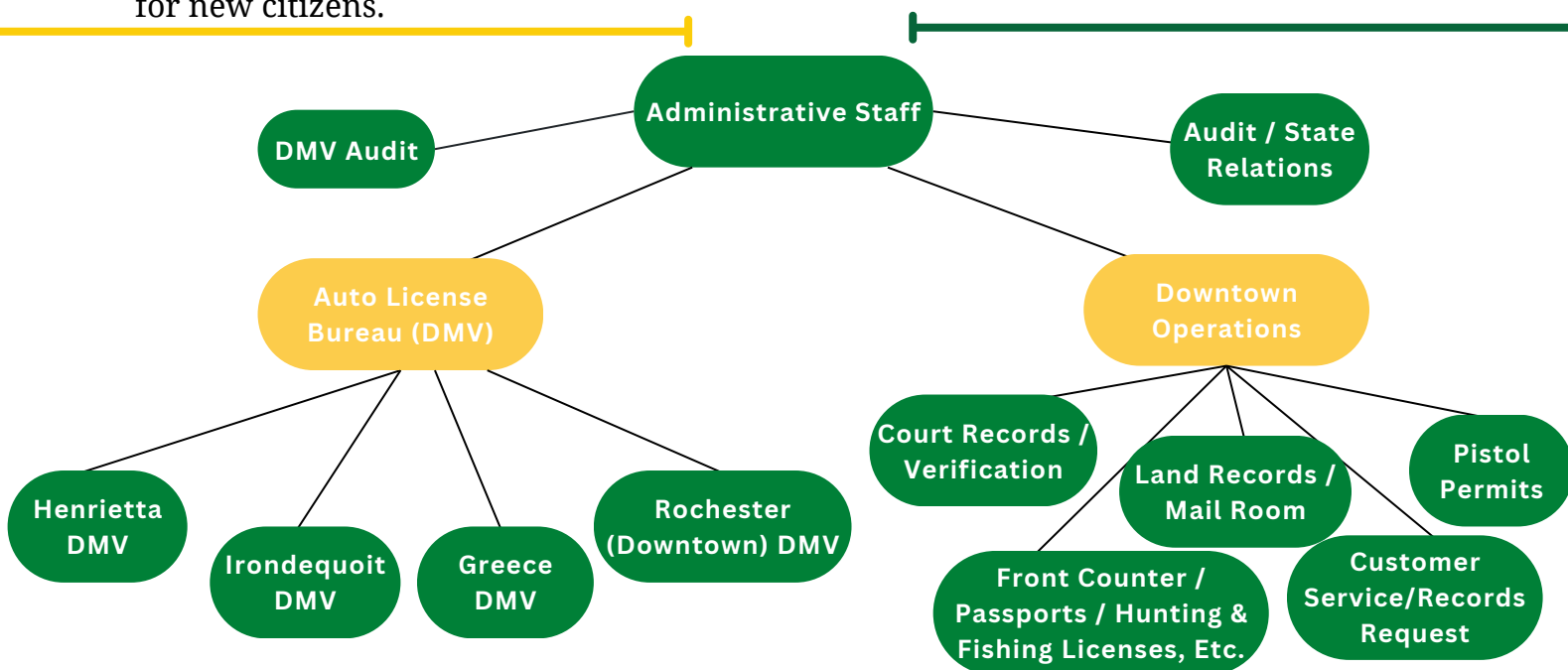
The Administration Team is responsible for the oversight and management of all County Clerk functions and staff. This includes our Communications Officer and Office Clerk I that manages procurement. In 2023, a new position of Cash Management Analyst was added and all financial management and audit oversight was brought directly under the County Clerk for both the DMV and Filing Office.

Auto License Bureau (Department of Motor Vehicles-DMV)

The Auto License Bureau has four branch offices: Henrietta, Greece, Irondequoit, and Downtown Rochester. Each office provides public counter service for license transactions, vehicle registrations, and other motor vehicle transactions primarily serving residents and commercial automobile dealer work throughout Monroe County. In the 2024 Proposed County Budget, we are asking to create a new DMV supervisory position to oversee the Mobile DMV unit and equipment, given the growing number of potential community partners.

Downtown Operations (Downtown Filing Office)

The Downtown Operations Division is responsible for the administration, recording, filing, and storing of official documents. This division's responsibilities include intake, indexing, preservation, and retrieval of official documents as required by law. Items processed, recorded, and filed by this section include mortgages, deeds, civil, criminal, and divorce actions. The County Clerk additionally acts as an agent for the state and federal government for issuance of passports, pistol permits, and conservation licenses. The County Clerk also administers the Oath of Allegiance at naturalization ceremonies for new citizens.



Our Impact: Breaking Down Barriers to ID Services

Since the COVID-19 Pandemic, conversations across Monroe County have shed light on the obstacles many face when trying to obtain a government-issued ID.

The Monroe County Clerk's Office acts as an agent of New York State for all DMV services and the U.S. Department of State for U.S. Passport services, unable to change the rules and procedures of those processes. However, local control over the administration of those services allows us to find innovative ways to meet people where they are.

Through the new mission of our Mobile DMV, additional U.S. Passport events and increased outreach and community engagement efforts, the Monroe County Clerk's Office continues to expand our footprint of access throughout the community.

Jail ID Partnership with Monroe County Sheriff's Office

In December 2022, the Jail-ID program in the Monroe County Jail successfully relaunched into a standard monthly effort. First established by County Executive Adam Bello under his tenure as County Clerk, this program helps individuals currently incarcerated access DMV services prior to release. The program's ambition is to ensure that prior to release, individuals have a valid NYS-issued ID. The Monroe County Sheriff's Office covers the associated fees for participants.

To date, this program has processed 177 successful transactions, the vast majority issuing IDs.

U.S. Passport Outreach

In 2023, the Monroe County Clerk's Office held 7 Passport outreach events, processing applications onsite.

We encourage anyone interested in hosting a U.S. Passport outreach event to reach out to us at mcclerk@monroecounty.gov.



Our Impact: Breaking Down Barriers to ID Services

Mobile DMV: A New Mission

In February 2023, the County Clerk's Office launched two Westside Mobile DMV locations, in the Village of Brockport and Town of Ogden. The Village of East Rochester Mobile DMV location was initiated in September 2023.

As of October 31, 2023, these Mobile DMV sites have processed 690 transactions. By comparison, our 4 DMV branches serve on average 957 a day. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, customers continue to gravitate towards processing simpler transactions through the State DMV website.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the value of local government, and also highlighted the significant deficiencies in how services can be accessed and implemented. A recurring theme, and request, the Monroe County Clerk's Office has witnessed is the request to help navigate the NYSDMV regulations to help individuals obtain a government issued-ID. Lack of this ID can prevent individuals from accessing programs and services, regardless of how vital they are to help lift a family out of dire circumstances. ***More often than not, the largest barrier to access NYSDMV services is not a physical distance or financial, but a helplessness felt by an intimidating government bureaucracy.***

While the Monroe County Clerk's Office cannot alter the cumbersome rules and regulations of the DMV point system, our new model of partnering with community agencies helps to mitigate the barriers.

We are proud to have run successful events with: AutismUp, Arc of Monroe, Compeer Rochester, EastHouse of NY, Project Homeless, Trillium Health, tenants of the Keeler Park Apartment Community, tenants of the James Dobson Apartments community (with the assistance of NYS Senator Jeremy Cooney's Office).

Schedule of Recurring Mobile DMV sites:

Project Homeless, 1st Tuesday of every month, Rundell Public Library

Village of Brockport, 1st Wednesday of every month, Brockport Courthouse

Village of East Rochester, 2nd Wednesday of every month, Eyer Building

Town of Ogden, 3rd Wednesday of every month, Ogden Town Hall

Our Impact: Community Engagement & Outreach 2023 Events & Programs

RochesterWorks Partnership

In February 2023, RochesterWork's Community Outreach Program announced that they will now hold regular hours at local DMVs, expanding opportunities for residents to learn more about free employment and workforce development programs & services. Every first and third Wednesday of the month, representatives from RochesterWorks are on hand at the Henrietta and Greece DMV respectively, helping to empower our local workforce.

Food Drives with Uniting Hope & Healing of Monroe County

Monroe County DMVs have been proud to partner with Clay Harris at Uniting Hope & Healing of Monroe County for several food drive events. During the Easter and Holiday Season, all 4 DMV locations host donation receptacles to help provide the public with another opportunity to support others in our community.



County Clerk Romeo Presenting at the
2023 NYSACC Winter Conference



Easter Food Drive Announcement with
TOPS Friendly Markets

New York Association of County Clerks (NYSACC) Legislative Wins

Over the past year, Monroe County Clerk Romeo has served as the co-chair of both the Legislative and Pistol Permit committees to the New York State Association of County Clerks, a bipartisan organization that brings together County Clerk's across the State. After close to 30-years, the 2024-2025 NYS Adopted Budget included an increase to the revenue sharing formula for all DMV transactions.

Starting on January 1, 2024, counties who provide State DMV services will retain 10.75% of fees from all DMV transactions conducted by their residents, both in-person and online transactions. This means Monroe County residents will have the ability to utilize online DMV transactions and financially support the County at the same rate of bringing their business into a branch. By encouraging residents to utilize online DMV services it is the hope to further reduce wait times within DMV branches by minimizing the foot traffic of simple transactions such as renewals.

***Our Impact: Community Engagement & Outreach
2023 Events & Programs Cont'd***



County Clerk Romeo with First Graders from School #33 for World Read Aloud Day 2023



Erik from the Downtown Filing Office attending a DBA/Small Business Outreach



Assistant Deputy County Clerk Shawn Brown at a packed RochesterWorks Job Fair in January 2023



NYS Senator Jeremy Cooney and County Clerk Jamie Romeo visit the Mobile DMV site at the VanAuker Apartment Community in the Summer of 2023

Our Impact: 2023 Ongoing Projects

The State of the County Clerk's Records

Significant steps were taken in the organization and management of court records maintained by the Clerk's Office. In 2023, basement space in the County Office Building was remodeled and modernized to accommodate multiple years of County and Supreme Court records. Additional construction work continues in the basement space that will facilitate the return of 46 pallets of historical records from offsite storage for review, digitization, and preparation for long-term secured storage.



Records Management System RFP

In 2023, the County Clerk's Office released a request for proposal for a new records management system. This system not only acts as a database for all digital versions of court, land, and other records maintained by the County Clerk's Office; but also serves as the main cashiering and accounting tool for all transactions processed in the Downtown Filing Office. This can vary from the purchase of certified copies, recording of deeds, and mortgages to the proper transfer and distribution of mortgage tax.

A new records management system will not only provide for several opportunities to improve greater efficiencies for over-the-counter customers, but serve as a much-needed hardware refresh for the County Clerk's hardware and other IT systems. With the anticipated award of a new contract, it is projected the new records management system will be live in June 2024.

Irondequoit DMV Relocation

After much negotiation, a new location for the Irondequoit DMV has been selected. When the final executed lease contract is complete, the project of relocation will begin with a goal to complete in April 2024. This DMV relocation will again allow for a much-needed upgrade in NYSDMV hardware, County security system, and the installation of County fiber to the Irondequoit Branch. In addition, the improved open lobby design will boost the customer's experience, as we have seen in the new Henrietta DMV on Jefferson Road.

Our Impact: Opportunities for 2024

Subdivision Map Digitization & Storage Project

The County Clerk's Office has approximately 157 subdivision map liber books that are routinely requested for review. The physical state of these books have made their preservation a timely need, which is why the next anticipated grant submission for the County Clerk's Office will be to aid in their digitization. This will not only preserve the records, but also allow for their greater public access on the County Clerk's online database. In addition, the 2024 Budget Proposal requests \$40,000 towards the purchase of EasiFile map storage units to allow for better management of all maps possessed by the County Clerk's Office.

Reframing 'Renew Monroe' - Broadening Access to Online DMV Services

Starting January 1, 2024, counties who provide State DMV services will receive 10.75% of fees from all DMV transactions conducted by their residents, including online transactions. The County Clerk's team will be undertaking a public awareness campaign to let residents know they can fully utilize all methods of accessing State DMV services to best suit their needs. An increase in online NYSDMV transactions will not only allow for a greater increase in DMV revenues, but also reduce the foot traffic and wait times in the 4 existing DMV branches.

Long-Term Records Management Plan

Through several grants awarded by NYS Archives, the County Clerk's Office has successfully imaged a little over 4 million documents, approximately 2 TB of data. In addition, the continued daily use of grantor and grantee index books for mortgages, deeds, and court records, has presented several simultaneous needs in records management. In 2024 the County Clerk's Office will continue it's review of inventory and prioritizing needs, with the objective of a wholistic long-term plan identifying the needs, both in physical and financial resources.

Growing Our Impact - Expanding Our Reach on ID Services

A recurring need expressed to the County Clerk's Office continues to be helping provide better access to NYSDMV services to vulnerable populations. However, while a Mobile DMV can be set up at any location in Monroe County, it is the navigation of the NYSDMV rules and regulations that also presents the most significant barrier. The County Clerk's team has been ambitious by using the successful model of the Jail ID Program and replicating it with many community partners. Currently Cameron Ministries, the YCWA, Monroe County Youth Court, and Danforth Towers Apartment community are a few additional agencies with outreach events currently underway.

Our Impact: 2024 Legislative Priorities & Advocacy

New York State Association of County Clerk's (NYSACC) Legislative Agenda

1. Support legislation amending Article 81 of Mental Hygiene Law to prevent the disclosure of personal identifying information

County Clerks, as the Clerk of Supreme and County Courts, are under a duty to provide the public with access to case records unless restricted by law. Unfortunately, there is a great deal of personal information in those records which, if in the wrong hands, could spell financial disaster for many whom the Courts are trying to aid. Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in America. Individuals who are disabled and who cannot manage their own affairs are among the most vulnerable to this epidemic. These individuals are also often the subject of Court proceedings instituted to appoint someone to manage their personal needs and property. It is for their protection that NYSACC supports legislation to impose greater safeguards on personal information.

Article 81 of the Mental Hygiene Law, which also governs the proceedings under former Articles 77 and 78 of the same law, are available for public inspection. Unlike most court records, the files in these cases are replete with personal and account information, a treasure trove for identity thieves. Adopted in 1993, this legislation has not adapted to changing realities.

NYSACC supports and encourages legislation amending § 81.14 of the Mental Hygiene Law to limit disclosure of court records to the parties and their counsel, which would include the duly appointed guardians, the court evaluators, and court examiners. Such a restriction would be like that imposed in the case of matrimonial actions and will not impair the “interest of the public” or “the orderly and sound administration of justice.” Application of the restriction should be imposed on all records regardless of when filed.

2. Supporting Pistol Permit Recertification Continuity

Recertification is a process established under the SAFE Act where active permit holders are required to self-certify with the New York State Police (NYSP) that the information on their permits remains true. Currently, the Carry Conceal Improvement Act has established several different recertification processes for a singular permit:

- a Carry Concealed Pistol Permit is required to be recertified with NYSP every 3 years.
- a Possess on Premise or Possess During Employment Pistol Permit is required to be recertified with NYSP every 5 years.
- a Semi-Automatic Rifle Permit is required to be recertified by the local licensing officer (the issuing County Court Judge) every 5 years.

Semi-Automatic Rifle Permits are a newly established permit that went into effect on September 4th 2022, that can be issued either as a stand-alone permit or as an endorsement onto a valid Carry Concealed, Possess on Premise, or Possess During Employment Pistol Permit. The current system will result in a single pistol permit that will potentially have two different recertification schedules and two different agencies to report to. **The Monroe County Clerk's Office and NYSACC urge the State Legislature to streamline the pistol permit recertification process**, at a minimum, to realign to a single reporting agency, the New York State Police. This will allow for greater compliance and better understanding for all current pistol permit holders and eliminate an unnecessary and undue burden on both pistol permit holders and local governments.

Our Impact: 2023 Legislative Priorities & Advocacy Cont'd

3. Providing Financial Support for the Implementation of Clean Slate

In 2023, Governor Hochul signed the Clean Slate Law which seals certain criminal records. As County Clerks one of our main functions statewide is as Clerk of the Supreme and County Courts for our respective Counties. As Clerk of the Court it is our duty to maintain the continuity and access to all files kept for said Court. The requirement to automatically seal eligible criminal records will ultimately bring a new set of responsibilities onto County Clerks. In addition to the physical work to seal a record, Clerk's office's will now be responsible for implementing a new set of rules for limited access to these records, work that will require extensive training and resources.

As with other criminal justice reforms, the New York Association of Counties recognize that successful implementation requires additional financial resources. Therefore, NYSACC respectfully urges the state Legislature to consider the financial impacts the new unfunded mandate that Clean Slate will require of local governments, including the large new burden it will have on County Clerks.

Monroe County Clerk Legislative Priorities

Reducing Barriers to Accessing State-Issued IDs

One of the lessons we learned from the COVID-19 pandemic was the number of residents in our community who do not have any current form of state-issued ID, whether that be a Non-Drivers ID, Learners' Permit, or Driver's License. The Monroe County Clerk's Office remains in conversation with Project Homeless Connect, the Monroe County Department of Human Services, the Probation Department, and many other local agencies and community groups to help us better identify and understand the current needs.

Currently, the point system required to issue a state-issued ID can become cumbersome for individuals struggling with poverty or lack of access to original documents. **The Monroe County Clerk's Office encourages New York State DMV and the State Legislature to consider developing additional pathways for residents to obtain a state-issued ID**, including but not limited to the expansion of the MV45b "Statement of Identity" currently available only for applicants who can be considered a disenfranchised, homeless youth. Finding additional opportunities to help residents meet the standards of the State's point system is essential to help all New Yorkers gain access to a state-issued ID.

Breaking Down Language Barriers to DMV Testing

In order to take a permit test for a passenger, motorcycle, or commercial learner's permit, the applicant must take the exam on a State-issued workstation. Currently, Monroe County DMVs can only provide these exams in 16 languages, including Arabic, Bengali, Bosnian, and Nepali. **The Monroe County Clerk's Office encourages New York State DMV and the State Legislature to take action to ensure more testing materials are provided in additional languages, specifically Ukrainian and Dari.** Both these languages are common amongst a recent influx of refugees and immigrants from both Ukraine and Afghanistan whom are settling in many parts of New York State, including Monroe County.



Monroe County Clerk's Office

Downtown Filing Office

39 West Main Street, Rooms 101 & 105
Rochester, New York 14614
Open Monday - Friday, 9 AM - 5 PM

Henrietta DMV

Frontier Commons
1225 Jefferson Road Suite A26A
Rochester, NY 14623
Open Monday - Friday, Hours: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Open Late Thursdays Until 6:30 PM

Irondequoit DMV

545 Titus Ave.
Rochester, NY 14617
Open Monday - Friday, Hours: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Open Late Wednesdays Until 6:30 PM

Greece DMV

The Mall at Greece Ridge
Use entrance #2 near Ruby Gordon
Rochester, New York 14626
Open Monday - Friday, Hours: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Open Late Tuesdays Until 6:30 PM
Last Saturday of the month (except November & December)
Open 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Rochester (Downtown) DMV

200 E. Main St., Ste. 101
Rochester, NY 14604
Open Monday - Friday, Hours: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Open Late Mondays Until 6:30 PM

Monroe County Clerk
JAMIE ROMEO

DMV • PASSPORTS • PISTOL PERMITS