



OFFICE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT CLERK

2020 ADDRESS TO THE COMMUNITY

FROM THE CIRCUIT COURT CLERK

Dear Fellow Citizens:

I am pleased to present this Address to the Community, which provides key data points and information regarding the core business activities of the Office of the Circuit Court Clerk (OCCC) in 2020, a year like no other.

The OCCC plays an integral role in the administration of justice in Jefferson County and is a constitutional office with a two-fold duty: to serve as the custodian of all records of the Circuit, Family and District courts in Jefferson County, and to process Kentucky driver's licenses, in partnership with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and the Kentucky State Police. Our office is part of the Kentucky Court of Justice (KCOJ), operating around the clock every day of the year in the Commonwealth's only true urban court system.



COVID Strikes

As we all know, the novel coronavirus has had an overwhelming impact on nearly every facet of American life, and the Circuit Court Clerk's Office has been no exception.

Last year, the unprecedented pandemic – coupled with the historic civil unrest that began sweeping across our nation and our community last spring – significantly affected our operations.

Through it all, however, our Deputy Clerk TEAM never stopped performing their essential work providing services to the public and supporting the local judiciary so that the administration of justice could continue each and every day in Jefferson County.

OCCC Delivers Strong Results

I am happy to report that our TEAM performed with great agility, dedication and professionalism in 2020.

Even during this unparalleled public health crisis, our office



“Even during this unparalleled public health crisis, our office ... (processed) 90,666 new Circuit, Family and District court cases ... and 141,155 driver's licenses ... in 2020.”

delivered strong results, processing 90,666 new Circuit, Family and District court cases last year, an average of approximately 250 new cases every single day. As the largest Circuit Court Clerk's Office in Kentucky, our total number of new filings represented approximately 13% of the statewide total from 120 counties.

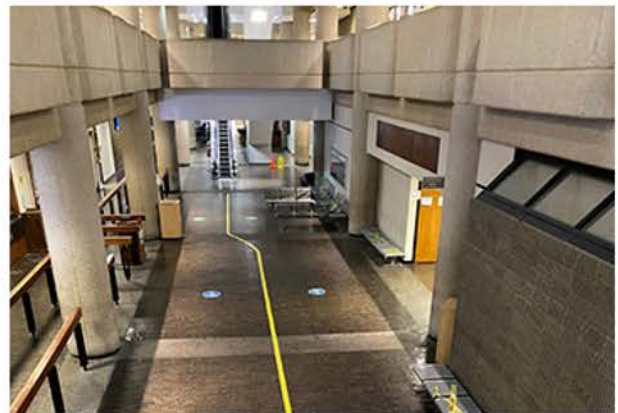
Our total revenue in 2020 was \$25.9 million. In addition, we collected \$1.1 million in restitution and garnishment for victims, and our office receipted bail bonds totaling \$10.8 million.

Agile, Proactive & Creative

Since our administration began in 2007, one of the hallmarks of this office has been our ability to be agile, pivoting to adapt to changes whether strategically designed or necessitated due to unforeseen circumstances.

In addition, we have sought continual improvement, proactively monitoring and calibrating our operations in order to operate in the most efficient manner possible. Another strength has been our ongoing commitment to collaboration and open dialogue with our judicial partners and key stakeholders as a means to create solutions to challenges that arise.

During 2020, these attributes proved critical to our success.



Pandemic Guidelines

At the onset of the pandemic in March, the Supreme Court of Kentucky ordered courthouses and driver's licenses branches across the Commonwealth to close to the public until safety guidelines and protocols could be put in place. During the public closures, court activities continued each day as the OCCC had to adapt to the rapid changes. Gradually, offices were allowed to reopen to the public and expand services over the subsequent weeks and months.

In 2020, the Supreme Court issued 84 orders in all, approx-



imately three times the number issued during a routine year. The majority of them dealt with the pandemic, providing guidance and protocols on how to conduct business and provide services in the safest and most efficient manner possible during COVID-19.

Among its many directives, the Supreme Court ordered a 50/50 staffing model effective March 19, mandating that only half of the staff could be onsite working in the office at any given time, then alternating with the other half on a scheduled rotation. The practice continued through the balance of year.

One of the most notable virus-necessitated changes was the use of “remote” (or virtual/online) court proceedings to replace the regular in-person proceedings in the courtroom to stem the rate of infection. In addition and not surprising, the virus caused frequent docket adjustments, staffing challenges and workflow pauses to overcome.

In order to offer a safe alternative and for those unable to utilize the KCOJ’s eFiling (electronic filing) platform, our TEAM quickly created a drop box option, beginning the week of March 23, providing a way for attorneys and individuals to drop off filings and other court-related documents in pending cases in Jefferson Circuit, Family or District courts. These secure drop boxes, which are still available, are located inside the Louis D. Brandeis Hall of Justice and Jefferson County Judicial Center and are checked every hour.



COOP at Bowman Field

Out of an abundance of caution and in the interest of the safety and security for all, we successfully planned and transitioned to a Continuity of Operations (COOP) facility for our second- and third-shift TEAM members.

While our first-shift Deputy Clerks continued to report to work downtown, the other two shifts reported to our Bowman Field Driver’s License Branch to seamlessly continue providing key services to the public such as the processing of bail bonds,

criminal and mental health-related warrants, and domestic violence petitions. Our COOP operated from June 18 to Oct. 11.

Driver’s License Results

Despite a statewide, state-mandated 10-week closure of all driver’s license operations in the spring due to the virus, our Deputy Clerks processed 208,613 transactions and issued 141,155 driver’s licenses, receipting \$3.2 million during the balance of 2020.

In addition, our TEAM collected \$98,516 for the Kentucky Circuit Court Clerks’ Trust For Life, the nonprofit organization created in 1992 to boost awareness of the vitally important mission of organ and tissue donation to save and heal lives.

Alongside their financial support in 2020, more than 11,600 Jefferson County residents said “yes” to joining the Kentucky Organ Donor Registry when renewing their driver’s license.

Currently, more than 75% of Jefferson County residents are registered as organ donors, and there are approximately 1,000 Kentuckians waiting on an organ transplant.



Driver’s License Renewal by Mail

To reduce the volume of customers visiting driver’s license branches across the state during the pandemic, the Governor issued an Executive Order temporarily allowing for the processing of expired standard driver’s license renewals and replacement requests to be fulfilled remotely by mail for the first time ever.

The new process, which was launched on June 1, proved popular for many in Jefferson County, as we processed 23,923 driver’s license renewals via this method in 2020. This process has been extended into 2021.

Moving Forward

Although 2020 presented numerous challenges, our office’s ability to adapt and move forward was successful and commendable, and I am grateful to the women and men who comprise our TEAM for their service and hard work.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that I consider it an honor and privilege to serve as Circuit Court Clerk as our TEAM remains ever focused on our mission to deliver the highest level of service to the citizens of Jefferson County. ♣

David L. Nicholson, Jefferson County Circuit Court Clerk



COMMITMENT. COOPERATION. COMPASSION.

**COMMITMENT TO SERVICE.
COOPERATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS.
COMPASSION FOR THOSE WE SERVE.**

MISSION

The Jefferson County Office of the Circuit Court Clerk will provide the highest quality service through a professionally trained and diverse customer-focused staff, utilizing accessible, automated and integrated technology.

VISION

The Mission of the Jefferson County Office of the Circuit Court Clerk is to accurately and efficiently process, provide, and maintain judicial information and records as well as process Kentucky driver's licenses and identification cards.

VALUES

At the Jefferson County Office of the Circuit Court Clerk, we will:

- Operate a transparent organization with integrity and accountability
- Demonstrate professionalism, courtesy, and compassion with every person
- Seek continuous improvement by driving creativity in everything we do
- Execute with quality by understanding and measuring our performance



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