

JUDICIAL SERVICES AND RECORDS

The Division is made up of 8 departments: Coroner, Recorder of Deeds, Register of Wills, Clerk of Orphans' Court, Clerk of Courts, Prothonotary, Sheriff and Records Storage.

The Administrative Code merged the Recorder of Deeds, Register of Wills and Clerk of Orphans' Court into one department. Prothonotary and Clerk of Courts were also merged into one department.

In 2015 the County purchased it's own Records Facility and the Records Storage Department was added to the Division.

103 positions are budgeted for the Division, although we struggle to fill Sheriff Deputy positions. We are hopeful the new contract will help with recruiting and retention.

The Coroner office struggles daily due to not having sufficient staffing and funding. The two full time field staff work on average 10-15 hours extra per week, with no compensation.

Increased mandates have at times caused backlogs in Deeds/Wills and Proth/COC.

Customer Service successes:

- License to Carry (gun permits) – new process practically eliminated wait times.
- Digitization of records in Prothonotary, Recorder of Deeds and Register of Wills/Clerk to Orphans' Court – Lien Indexes, Naturalization records, Deeds back to 1786, Deed Indexes, Marriage Licenses back to 1885 are available to search remotely free of charge.
- Added additional remote options for obtaining a Marriage License.
- Returned Passport services.

State Auditor General Audits – Recorder of Deeds, Register of Wills/Clerk of Orphans' Court, Clerk of Courts, Prothonotary and Sheriff are audited every 4 years by the PA Auditor General's Office.

The offices are audited individually at different time frames. All state money is accounted for and the practices of the offices are thoroughly reviewed.

This year we have reached our goal of “no finding” audits in all offices.

This was a work in progress since 2014, with many struggles in Prothonotary and Sheriff, due to past practices. New accounting practices were put in place. Those practices ensure that Judicial Services and Records are doing the absolute best to protect taxpayer dollars. This is an achievement the team is quite proud of.

Quick Facts and Figures:

- The Division collected and disbursed 76.8 million dollars in 2021. Of that amount \$6.4 million was county revenue
- Deeds/Wills processed 76,243 documents in 2021
- Prothonotary processed 12,765 new cases in 2021
- Total death incidents in the Coroner Office - 2,222 in 2021, an increase of almost 1,000 from 2019 (Covid deaths excluded)
- Records Storage provided retrieval services for 3,476 department requests, 1,448 email requests, 152 fax requests and 108 walk-ins in 2021, with one full time staff member who is also the Department Head
- Clerk of Courts processed 6,217 new criminal cases and 919 new juvenile delinquency/dependency cases in 2021