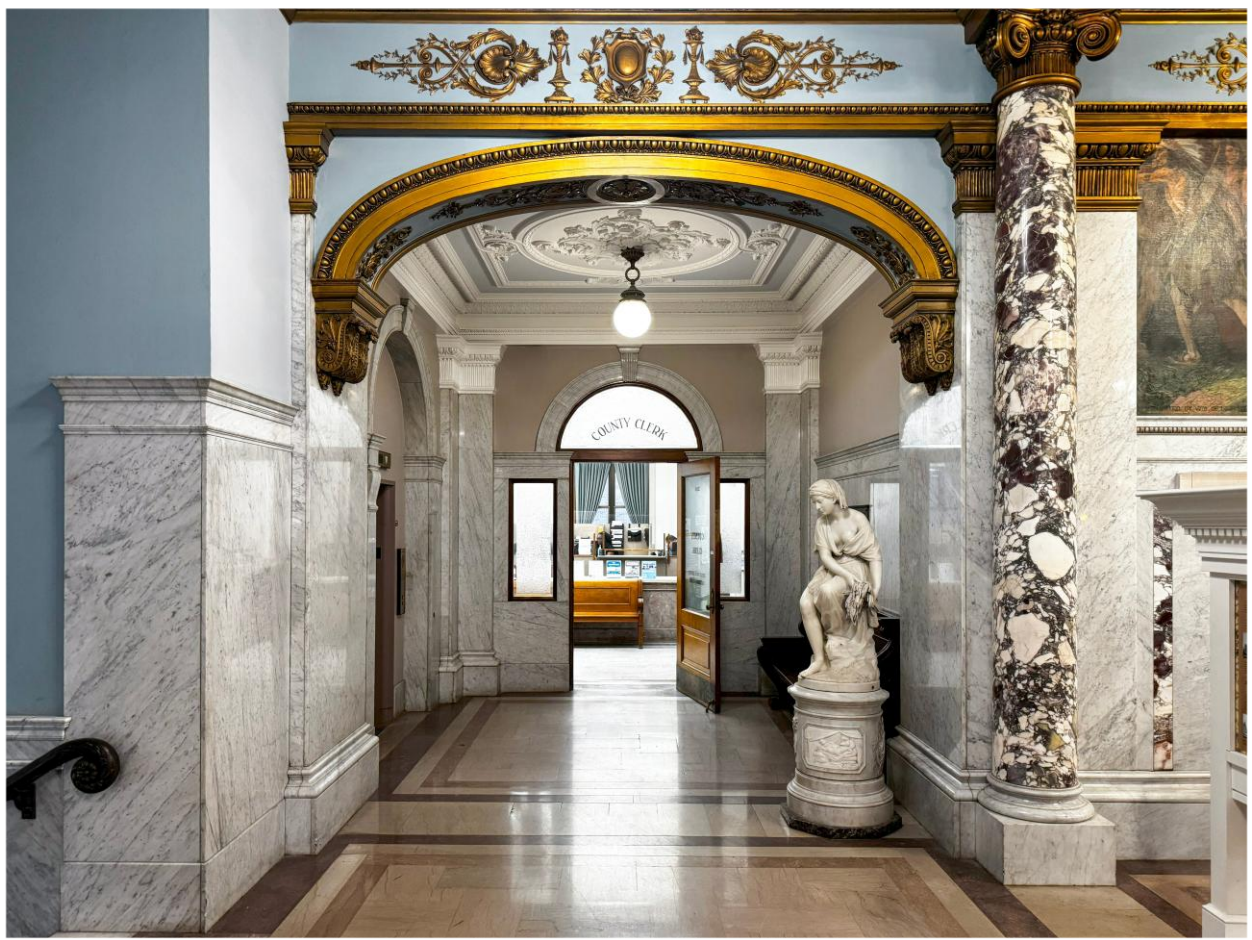




Office of the Onondaga County Clerk

2025 Annual Report



Emily Essi Bersani
Onondaga County Clerk

Dear members of the county legislature and residents of Onondaga County:

It is my honor to present the 2025 Annual Report of the Office of the Onondaga County Clerk. This report highlights the accomplishments, ongoing initiatives, and community-focused services provided by our office throughout the past year.

In 2025, the Onondaga County Clerk's Office continued its commitment to our constituents through efficiency and accessibility. As the official record keeper for the County, the Clerk's Office safeguards and preserves millions of documents that protect property rights, support the court system, and ensure transparency in government operations.

Over the course of the year, the office completed **129,741 transactions across all divisions** and collectively processed **\$41,496,932.89**. These transactions reflect the breadth of responsibilities handled daily by our dedicated staff, including maintaining land records, recording court filings, issuing business certificates, and managing a wide range of public services.

Through responsible stewardship of public funds and records, the County Clerk's Office remains a vital and trusted resource for the community, supporting both the legal infrastructure and the economic activity of Onondaga County.

This report is a testament to the dedication of our talented team, the support of our partners across county government, and the trust that the community places in our office. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve the residents of Onondaga County and look forward to continuing our work with the same integrity and purpose in the year ahead.

Sincerely,



Emily E. Bersani
County Clerk



"Public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people and to the nation."

-Margaret Chase Smith

The Year in Numbers

Mortgage Tax and Beyond

In 2025 the Onondaga County Clerk's Office collected \$22,388,740.56 in NYS mortgage recording tax revenue. This reflects the total amount of taxes paid when mortgages are recorded on real property in the county. Under New York State Tax Law, the mortgage recording tax is calculated as a percentage of the mortgage amount and collected at the time the document is recorded in our office. It is a meaningful source of funding for local municipalities, regional transit, and state housing efforts. The tax consists of a basic tax, an additional tax, and a special additional tax that together make up the total tax rate. The "basic" tax portion is distributed back to the towns and villages where the property is located. The "additional" tax is distributed to The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority (Centro), and the "special additional" tax is used to finance housing initiatives through the State of New York Mortgage Agency (SONYMA), which promotes adorable homeownership across the state.

In 2025, the County Clerk's office distributed \$11.8 million to local municipalities, over \$4.4 million to Centro, and \$6.2 million to SONYMA.

Mortgage recording tax is often viewed as a strong indicator of local real estate activity. The tax is calculated as a percentage of the mortgage amount, so collections rise and fall based on both the number of property transactions and the size of the loans being issued. When home sales increase, when property values rise, or when buyers finance larger mortgage amounts, total mortgage tax revenue correspondingly increases. Conversely, during periods of higher interest rates, reduced home sales, or declining property values, fewer mortgages are recorded and collections decline. Mortgage tax revenue is critical to the County's fiscal health, but represents only one piece of the County Clerk's Office. The true measure of our impact is reflected in the volume, efficiency, and growth across every aspect of our operations.

In 2025 the County Clerk's office:

- Handled 637 passport applications, a 145% increase from 2024
- Filed 1,406 business certificates (DBA filings) - increased 15.4% from 1,218 in 2024
- Recorded 11,533 deeds and 12,154 mortgages
- Filed over 11,000 mortgage satisfactions
- Issued 11,475 index numbers to commence a case (Criminal & Supreme Courts)
- Filed over 8,000 judgments
- Entered 311,738 pages of land records into our digital records database
- Fielded more than 10,000 phone calls
- Served more than 5,000 customers at our office!

Together, these figures showcase a year defined not only by revenue generation, but by exceptional services.

Community Focused Initiatives

2025 Highlights

In 2025, our office was committed to improving customer service, strengthening operational efficiency, and increasing accessibility and transparency in government.

Supported Veterans

We strengthened services for local veterans by purchasing a photo ID printer for FAVOR cards and launching the free CENTRO bus pass program, serving as the application intake agency to ensure veterans can easily access transportation. Our team also participated in Assemblyman Magnarelli's Veterans Expo at the NYS Fair, bringing resources and direct assistance to those who have served.



Legislative Leadership

In 2025, County Clerk Bersani spearheaded a legislative change by advocating for a Domestic Partnership Registry in Onondaga County, successfully working with legislators to pass the local law. At the state level, the County Clerk's office collaborated with lawmakers and the New York State Association of County Clerks to gain support for Bill No. A6804 regarding protecting the privacy of individuals by restricting who can access court records in proceedings held under Articles 77, 78, and 81 of the mental

hygiene law. The office also engaged with its Land Records Advisory Committee, bringing together abstract companies, attorneys, and housing organization representatives to discuss statutory updates and best practices in land records management.



Mobile Office Hours

We continued our commitment to accessibility by meeting residents where they are. Our office tabled at the Zoo and launched Mobile Office Hours at local libraries, with the goal of visiting every library in the county by the end of 2026. In 2025, we visited Solvay Library, Community Library of Jamesville DeWitt, Maxwell Memorial



Library, North Onondaga Public Library (NOPL) North Syracuse, Tully Library, and Salina Library. Mobile office hours allow us to connect directly with residents and expand awareness of our services.

Empowered Women & Families

The County Clerk was proud to launch the office's first annual Women's Resource Fair at the Salt City Market. The event was a celebration of networking, empowerment, and women supporting women. Local organizations, service providers, and advocates came together to offer everything

from career support and health information to educational tools and community programs. Attendees enjoyed meaningful conversations, made new connections, and took home free professional workwear from the donated clothing closet.

Celebrated New Americans

In partnership with USCIS and the NYS Supreme Court, our office proudly hosted four Naturalization Ceremonies, swearing in more than 100 new Americans. These ceremonies remain among the most meaningful responsibilities of our office, as we welcome new citizens and celebrate their commitment to our country.

Operational Excellence

In June of 2025, the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) conducted a Court and Trust review of Onondaga County. Court and Trust deposits are funds paid into the custody of the County Clerk in connection with court proceedings, and the money is ordered into the Chief Financial Officer's custody. At the conclusion of the review, the OSC determined that the records maintained by the County Clerk were complete, with no material discrepancies, which affirmed our strong internal controls and accurate stewardship of funds.

Furthermore, our passport division was audited by the Department of State and earned a perfect score with accuracy rates in line with national statistics (5% error rate). Passport applications submitted through our office increased by 100% from 2024 to 2025, and because of the increased demand we launched extended office hours twice a month to increase accessibility.

As we reflect on 2025, it is clear that it was a year defined not only by operational strength, but by a steadfast commitment to serving every resident of Onondaga County. In looking ahead at 2026, the office remains focused on efficiency, accessibility, and meeting the needs of our community. We will continue to build on last year's progress by exploring opportunities to continue modernizing our office. Our goal is to ensure that the County Clerk's Office remains responsive to the evolving needs of the public while upholding the highest standards of integrity and public service. We appreciate the continued trust placed in our office and look forward to serving our community in the year ahead.

