

2023 Budget Presentation

WESTCHESTER COUNTY CLERK



Timothy C. Idoni
Westchester County Clerk



WESTCHESTER COUNTY CLERK

Timothy C. Idoni
County Clerk

November 16, 2022

Dear Honorable Budget Committee Members:

The Office of the Westchester County Clerk is proud to present a lean 2023 budget. The budget once again reduces expenses while maintaining all critical services. The budget presents conservative revenue projections which rely on current market indicators. Our spending estimates reflect an effort to cut or hold flat spending within our control.

Overall highlights

- Our 2023 revenue is projected at \$10,110,262 while 2023 expenses are projected at \$6,877,937 resulting in a departmental tax levy of *negative* \$3,232,325.
- Our staffing remains lean as our overall staffing has been reduced. With the abolishment of two vacant positions, the cumulative reduction in staffing is approximately 44%.
- Our 2023 budget will provide a high level of service to our customers including the continuation of electronic filing in our Legal Division where approximately 85% of our cases are started electronically, as well as the expansion of electronic recording in our Land Records Division where voluntary participation reached approximately 84% in 2022.

The Office of the Westchester County Clerk will continue to face the financial challenges all governments face head on. We remain committed to improving service while reducing costs to our residents.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Timothy C. Itoni', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned to the right of the word 'Respectfully,' and above the printed name 'Timothy C. Itoni'.

Timothy C. Itoni

Land Records Division

- Recording land records, including deeds, mortgages, assignments, and satisfactions
- Collection and processing of New York State mortgage and transfer taxes
- Filing of maps, UCC statements, Federal tax liens, Notices of Common Charges, and other federal liens

Legal Division

- Fee collection and filing of court records for Supreme and Westchester County courts
- Administration of Notary Public and Commissioner of Deeds licenses
- Administration of the Domestic Partnership Registry
- Filing of Business Certificates and Incorporation records from New York State
- Filing of Small Claims Assessment Review petitions
- Filing of Veterans Military Discharge papers

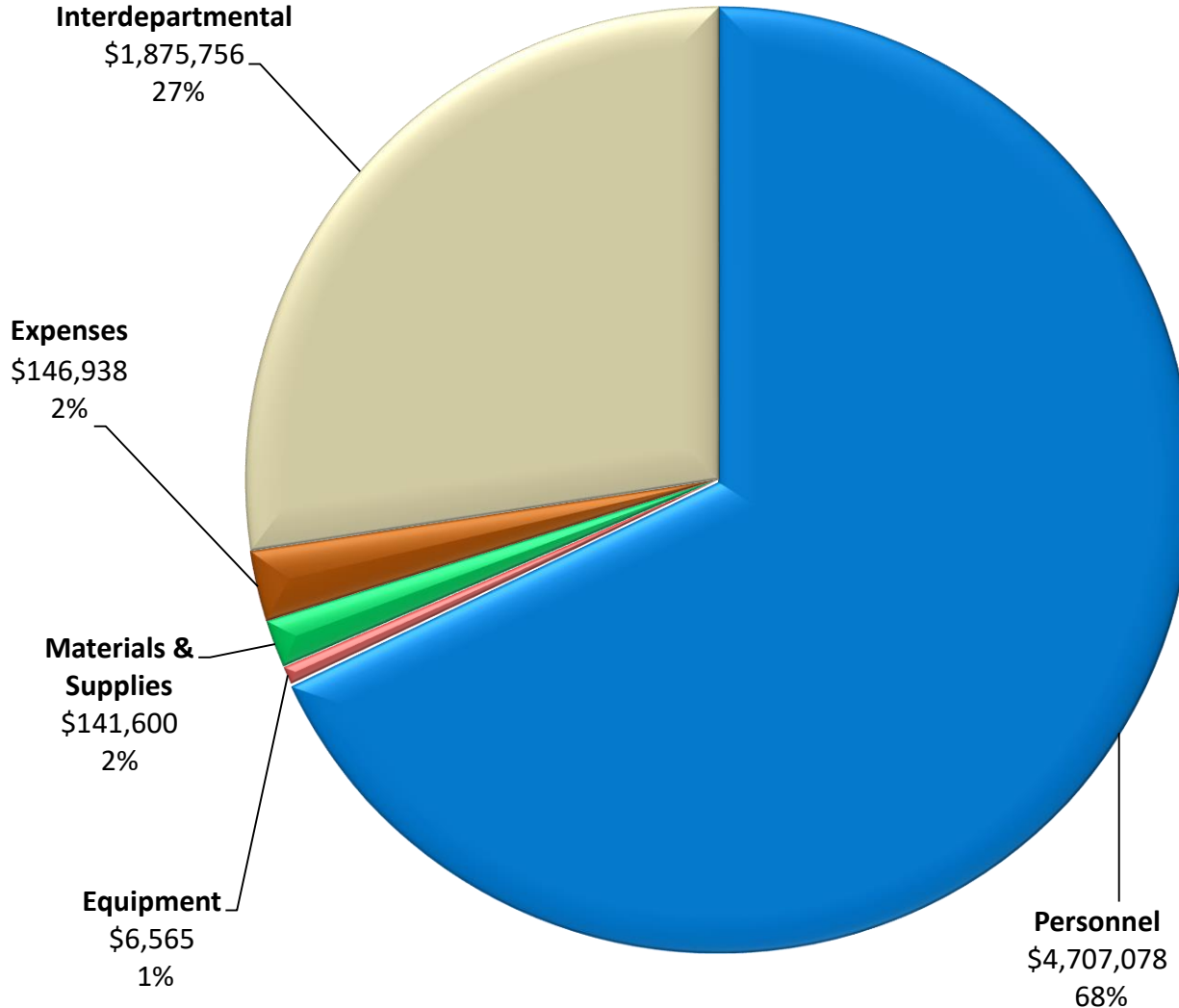
Licensing Division

- Processing of United States Passport applications
- Administration of Pistol Licenses
- Issuance of Westchester County Identification Cards
- Host and Administration of Oath of Allegiance to newly naturalized United States citizens
- Operation of Mobile Passport Office to bring services to municipalities and events throughout the County

Administration

- Subscription Service for WRO access to land and legal records, foreclosure lists, judgments, and other records
- Financial Reporting to partners in federal, state and county government
- Administering and Filing of Oaths of Office
- Provision of certified copies of all recordings and filings

2023 PROJECTED EXPENSES AT \$6,877,937



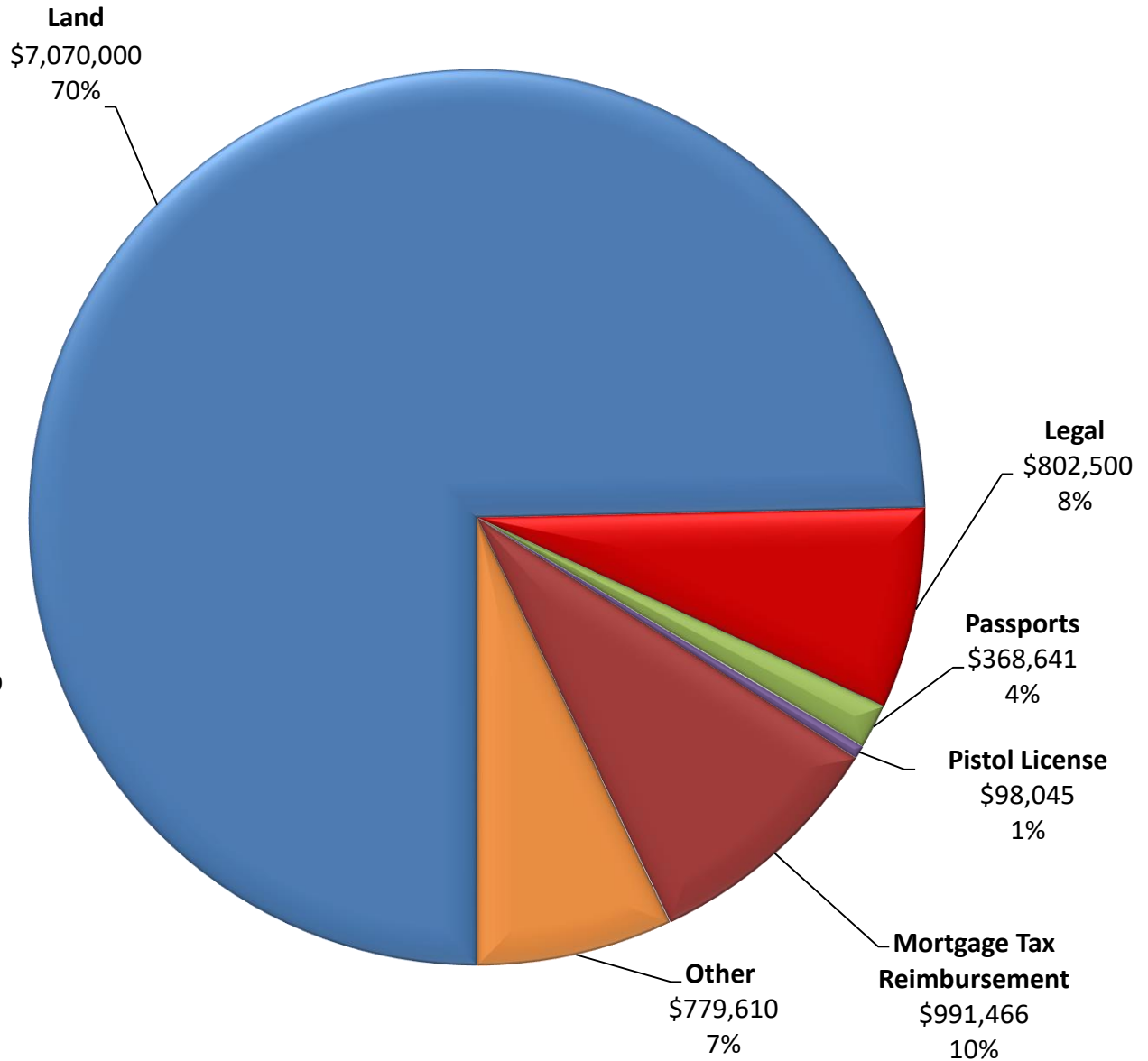
2023 Expenses

Our largest expenses, by far, are our personnel costs which represent 68% of our proposed expenses for 2023 and include salaries and overtime. Interdepartmental charges represent the next largest portion of our expense budget, with 27% of our budget funding items such as our DoIT support team, the Archives, DPWTR and the Law Department. Our general expenses, which make up 2% of our expense budget, include items such as scanning and equipment rental. Our materials and supplies budget continues to remain modest as our e-initiatives expand, coming in at 2% of our budget. Additional and replacement equipment continue to make up less than 1% of our budgeted expenses.

2023 REVENUE PROJECTED AT \$10,110,262

2023 Revenue

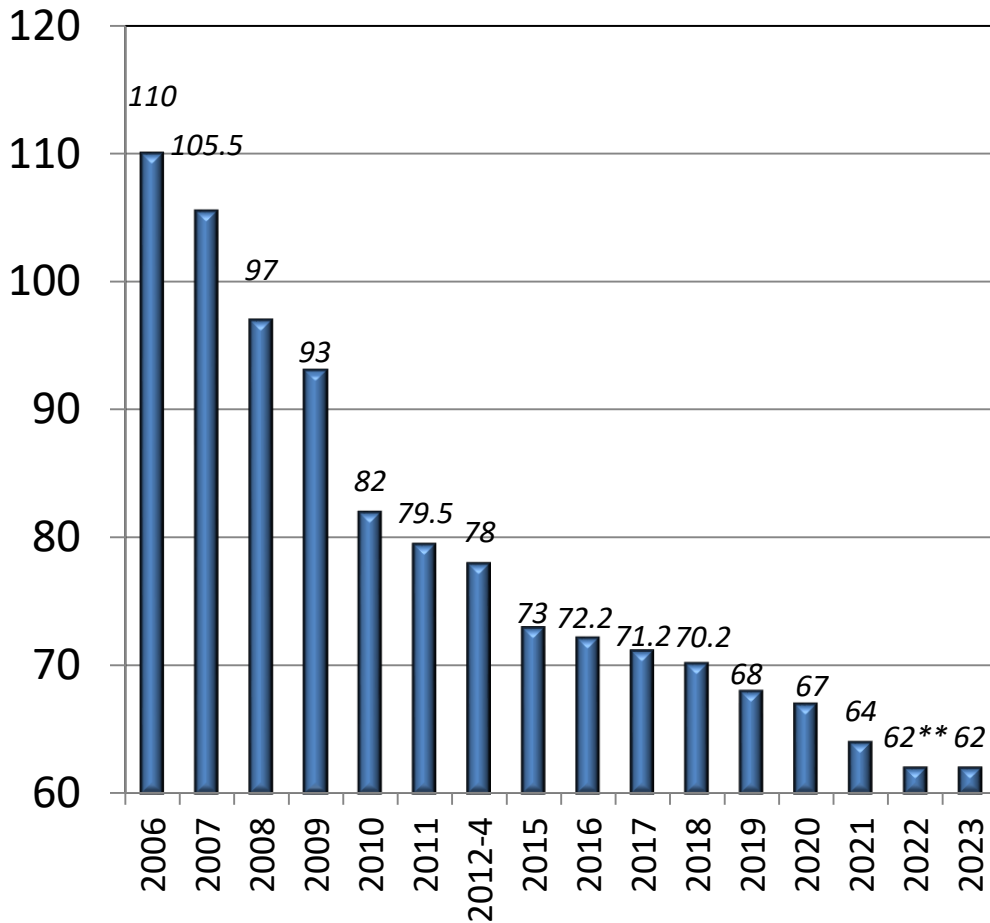
Fees paid in connection with the recording of land records such as deeds and mortgages make up the majority (70%) of our revenue. Court and legal fees provide an additional 8% of the revenue collected by our office. New York State reimburses us for expenses in connection with the processing of mortgage tax and this accounts for 10% of our revenue. Passports and pistol licenses make up 5%. The remaining 7% is comprised of equalization and assessment fees, interest income, table rentals, online access to records, transfer tax revenue, public copier and overpayment of fees.



REDUCTIONS IN STAFFING

Overall Staffing Reduced by approximately 44% since 2006

Number of Employees*



Positions Eliminated:

28 Operating Positions Eliminated:

- Assistant Deputy County Clerk
- Chief Deputy County Clerk
- Budget Specialist III/Services Supervisor
- 3 Staff Assistants
- 9 Clerks (County Clerk)
- 7 Senior Clerk (County Clerk)
- Secretary I
- 2 Senior Messengers
- Director Program Development II (Trades Licensing)
- 2 Second Deputy County Clerk

2 Grant Positions Eliminated:

- Senior Messenger
- Messenger

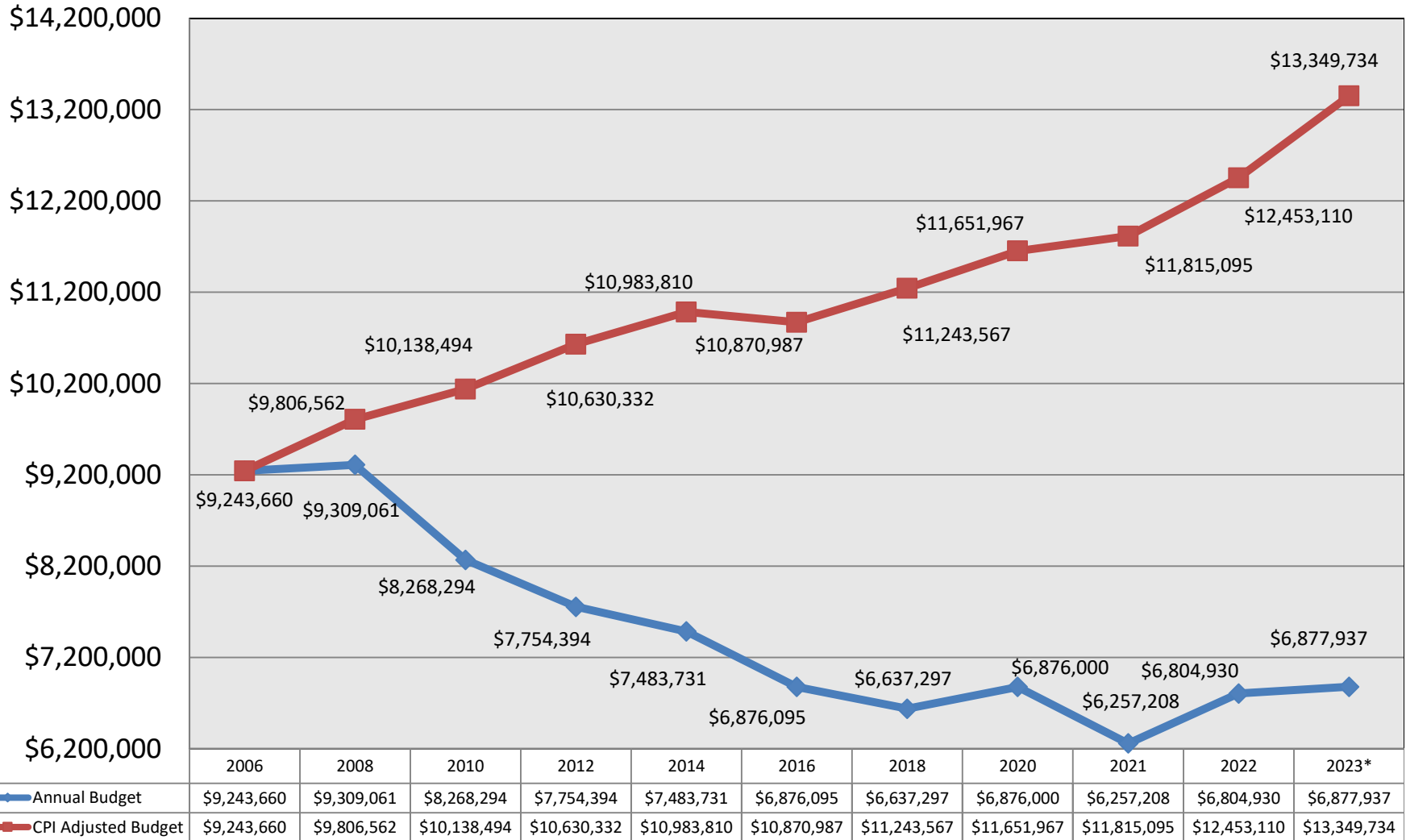
18 Full-Time Temporary Positions Eliminated

*Chart includes operating, grant, temporary and hourly employees.

**2 full-time positions were unfunded in 2022 due to promotions pending permanency

Expense Reduction

Annual Budget vs. Budget Adjusted for Consumer Price Index (CPI)



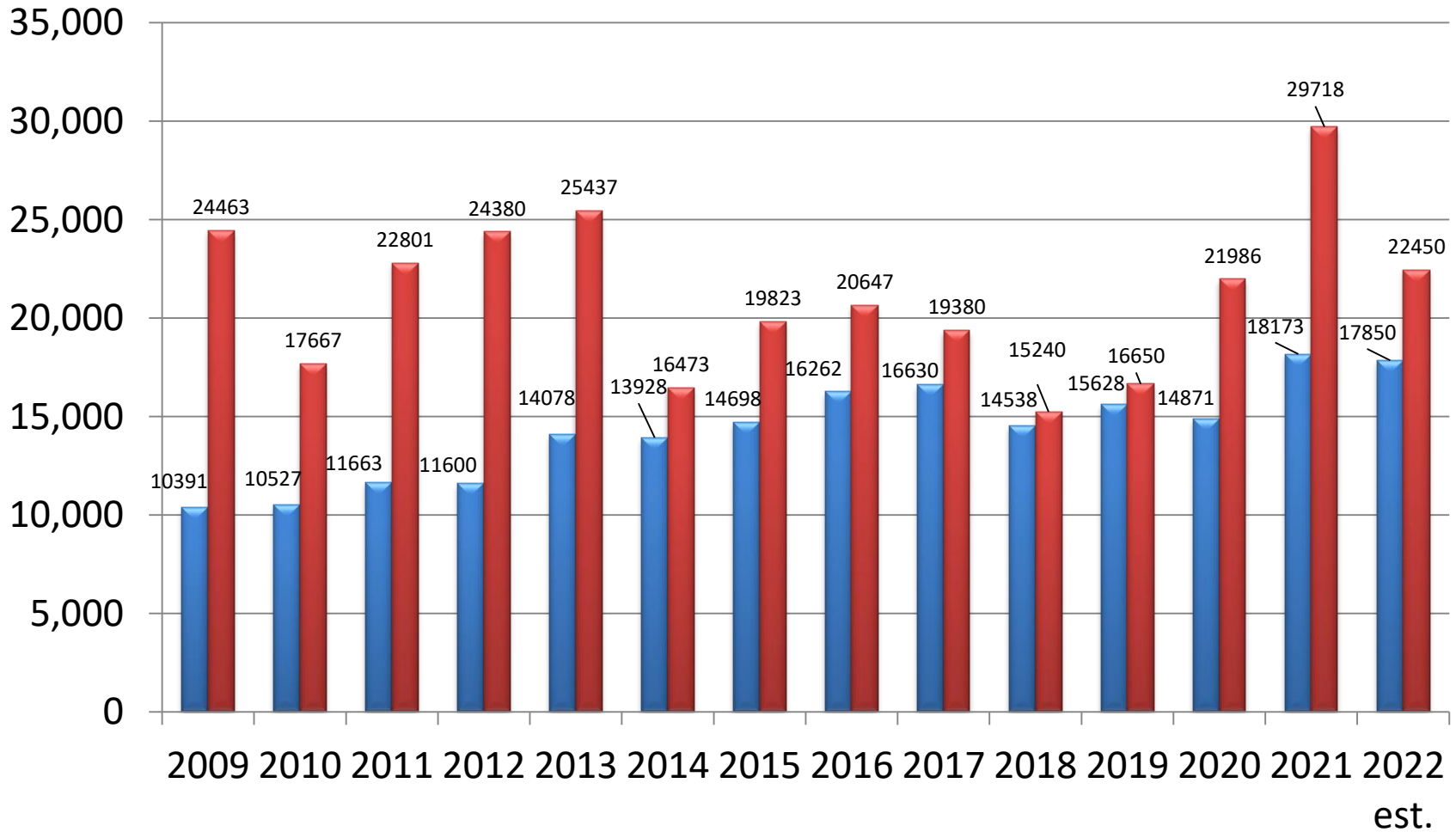
*CPI Adjusted Budget for 2023 Proposed Expenses was adjusted through September 30, 2022.

STATISTICS OF INTEREST

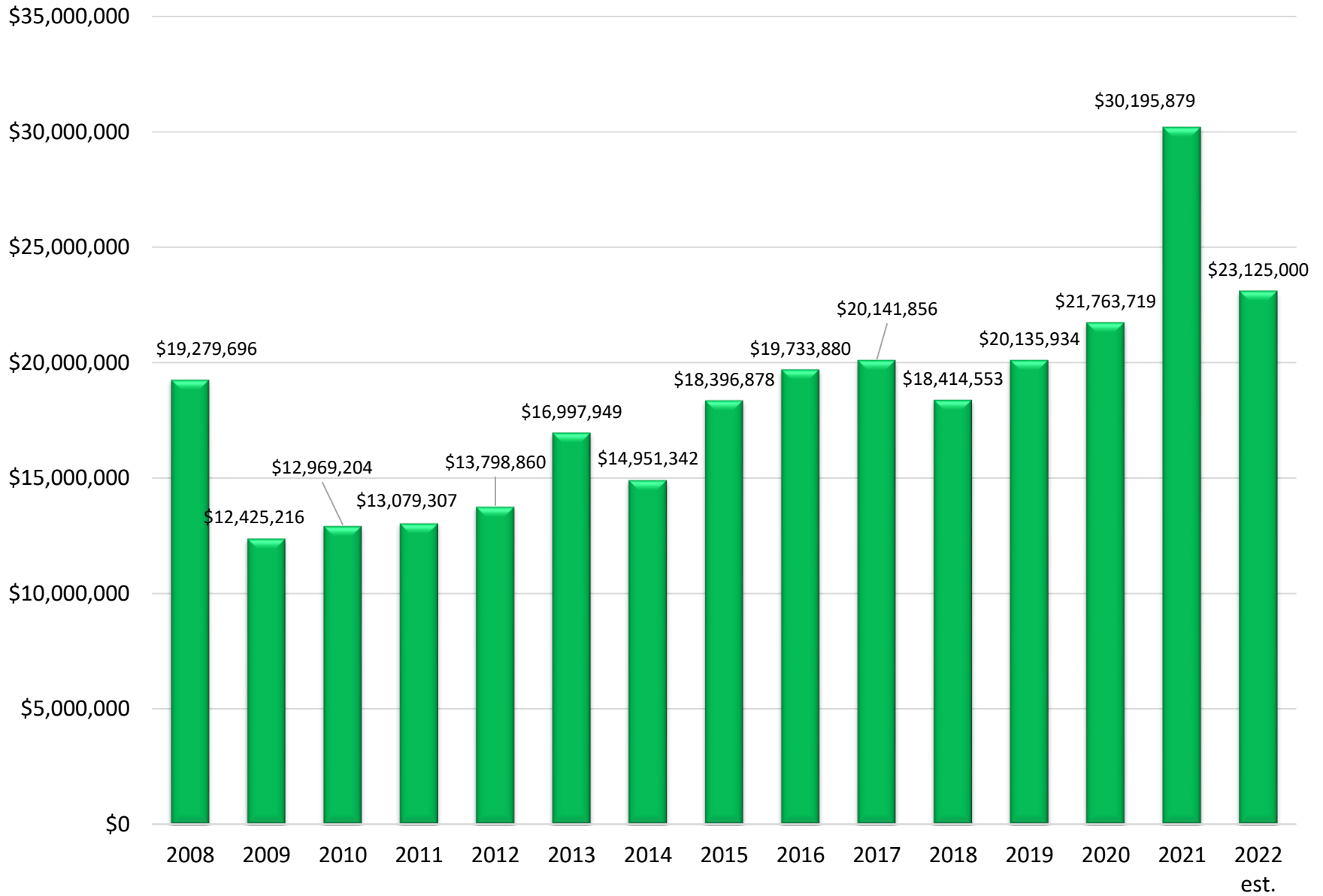
Indicators from our Land Records Division

DEEDS AND MORTGAGES

■ Deeds
■ Mortgages



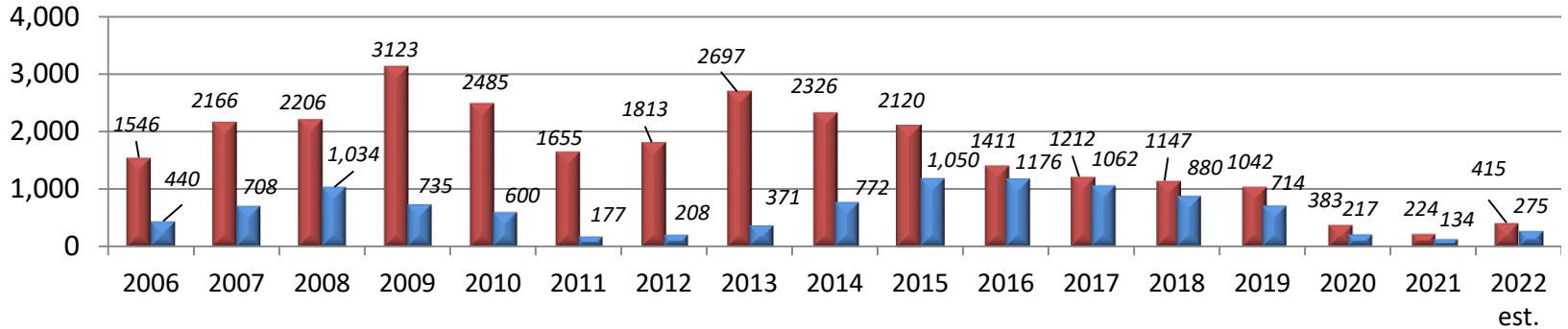
COUNTY MORTGAGE TAXES COLLECTED



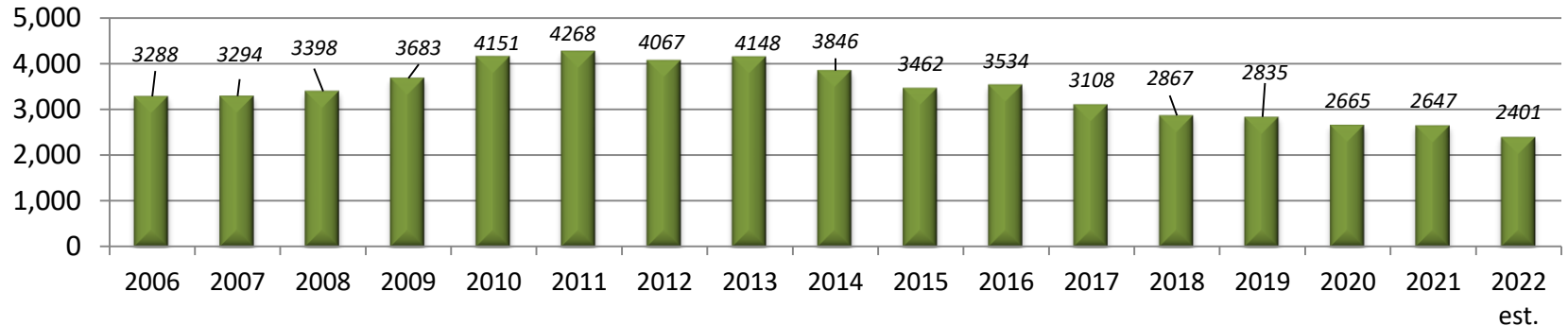
STATISTICS OF INTEREST

Indicators from our Legal Division

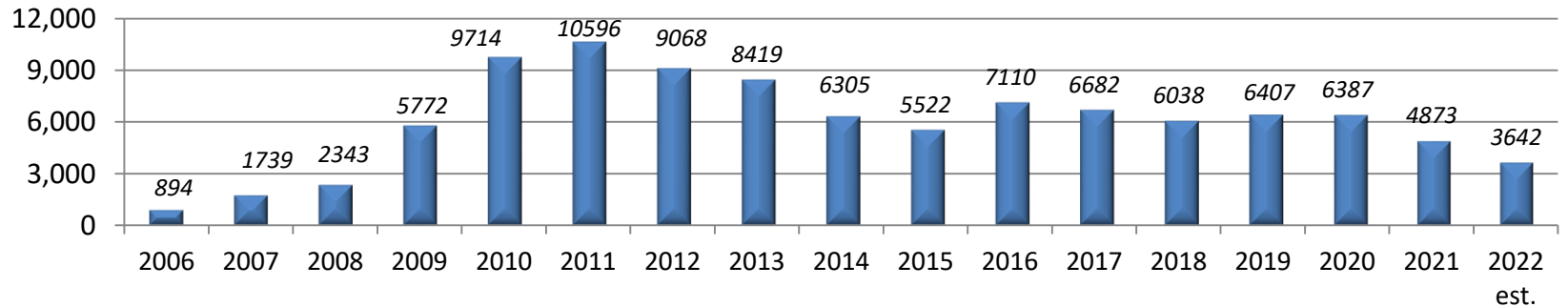
Foreclosure Filings and Judgments



Tax Certiorari Proceedings Commenced

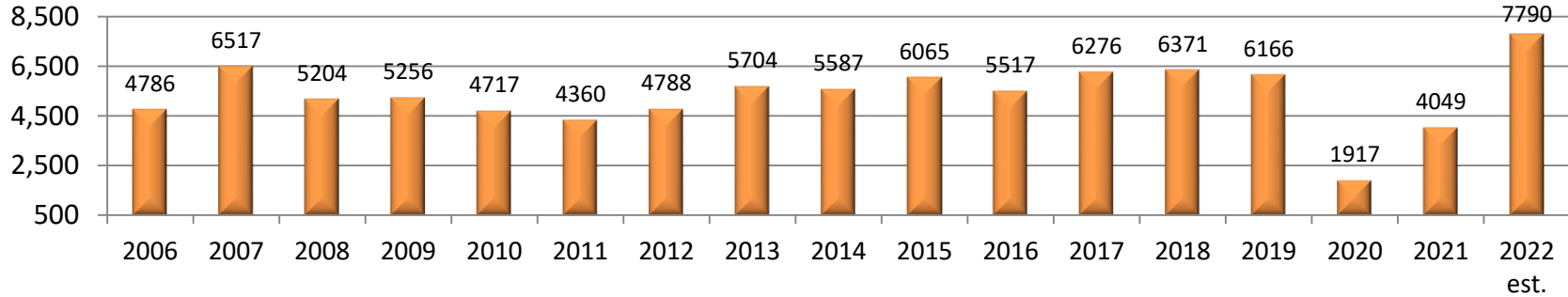


Small Claims Assessment Review Petitions Filed

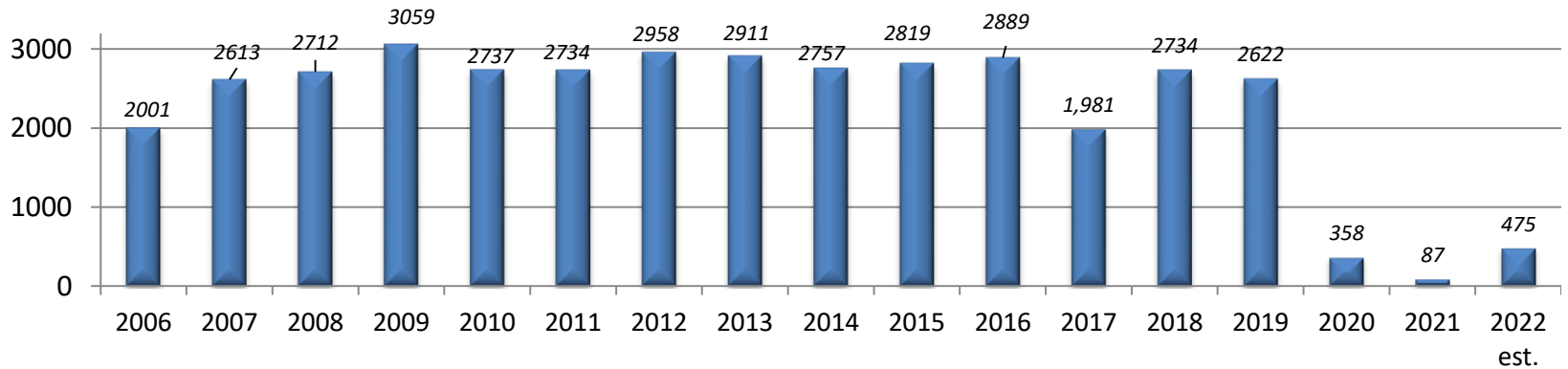


STATISTICS OF INTEREST *Indicators from our Licensing Division*

Passport Applications

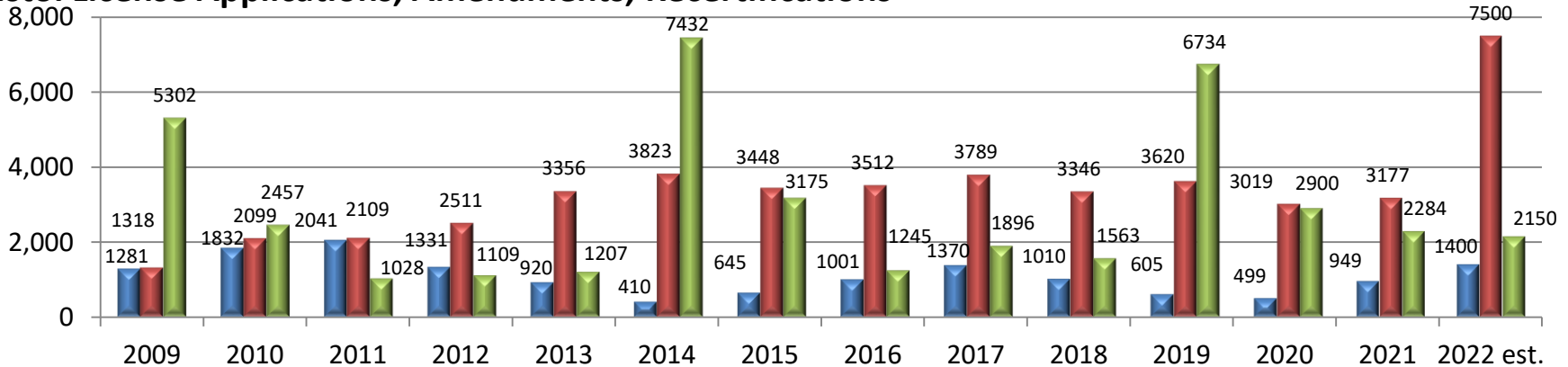


Naturalizations

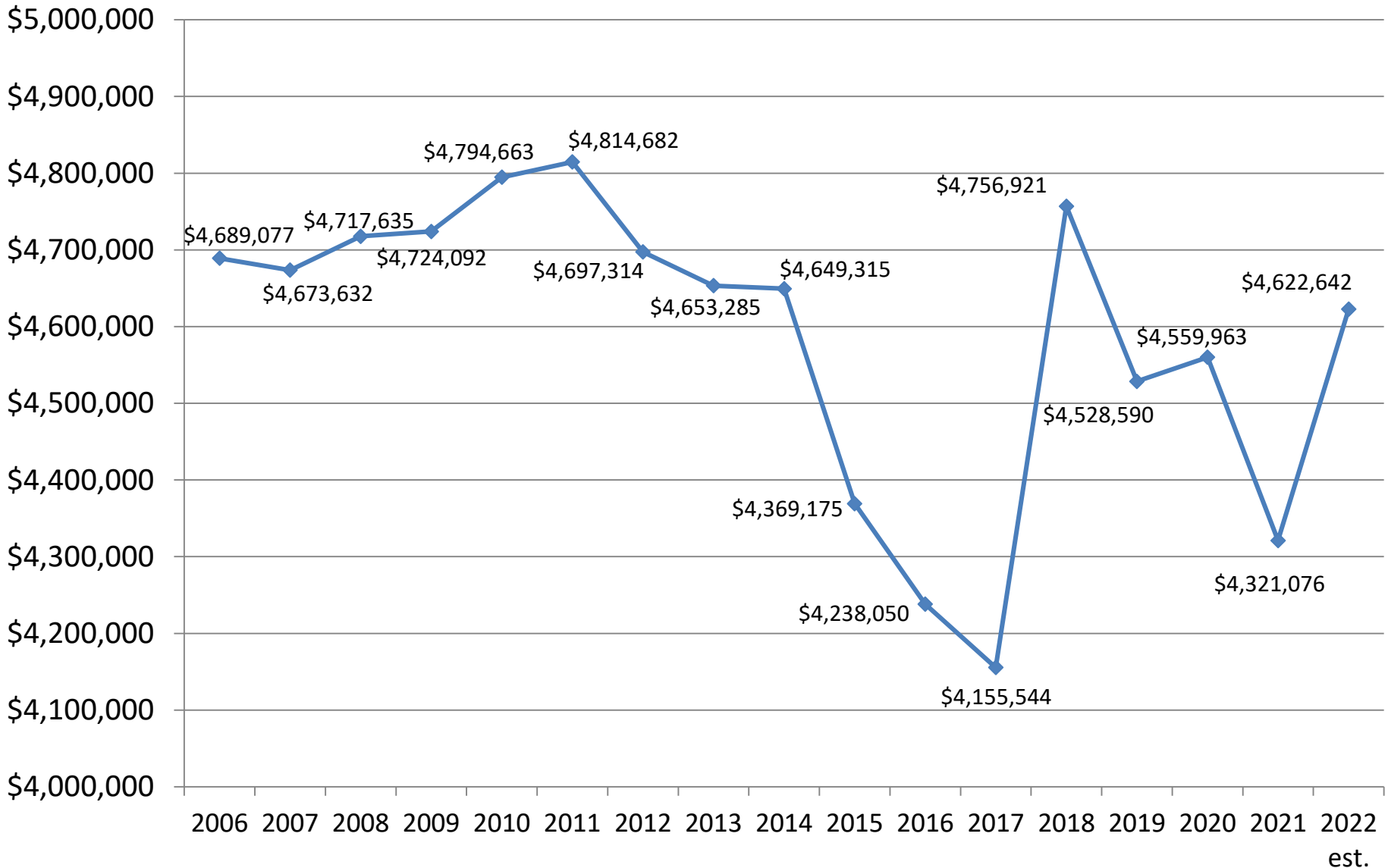


Pistol License Applications, Amendments, Recertifications

■ Applications ■ Amendments ■ Recertifications



Salaries & Personal Services



*In accordance with the terms of the 2018 CSEA Contract, the salary expense increased in 2018 and thereafter to cover retroactive payments and the negotiated increase in salary of 2% in 2018 and 2019, 2.25% in 2020 and 2021, and 2% in 2022.

Inter-Departmental Charges



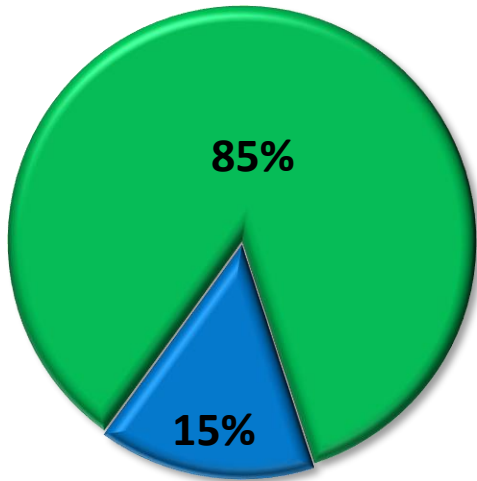
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 est.
IT	2578276	2714223	2364992	2064314	1953004	1884405	1823848	1761968	1782640	1767053	1633812	1553052	1502123	1641121	1686857	1756998	1842485
DPW	45115	39583	36200	29646	24469	22221	14170	18717	14621	4956	6437	4549	3459	18084	704	3172	10271
LAW	267118	339681	321563	293464	253388	177157	89133	45496	55417	66750	38577	21175	7459	7054	3417	5861	12000

* IT charges include information systems support, telecommunications, data processing, and the records center

ELECTRONIC FILING AND RECORDING

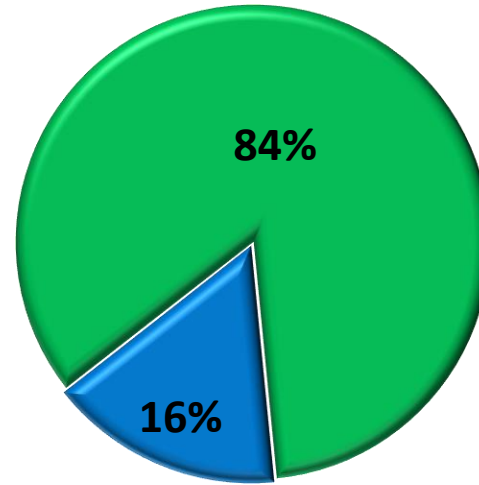
Civil Actions

Approximately **85%** of our civil actions are commenced electronically through the NYS Courts electronic filing system.



Land Records

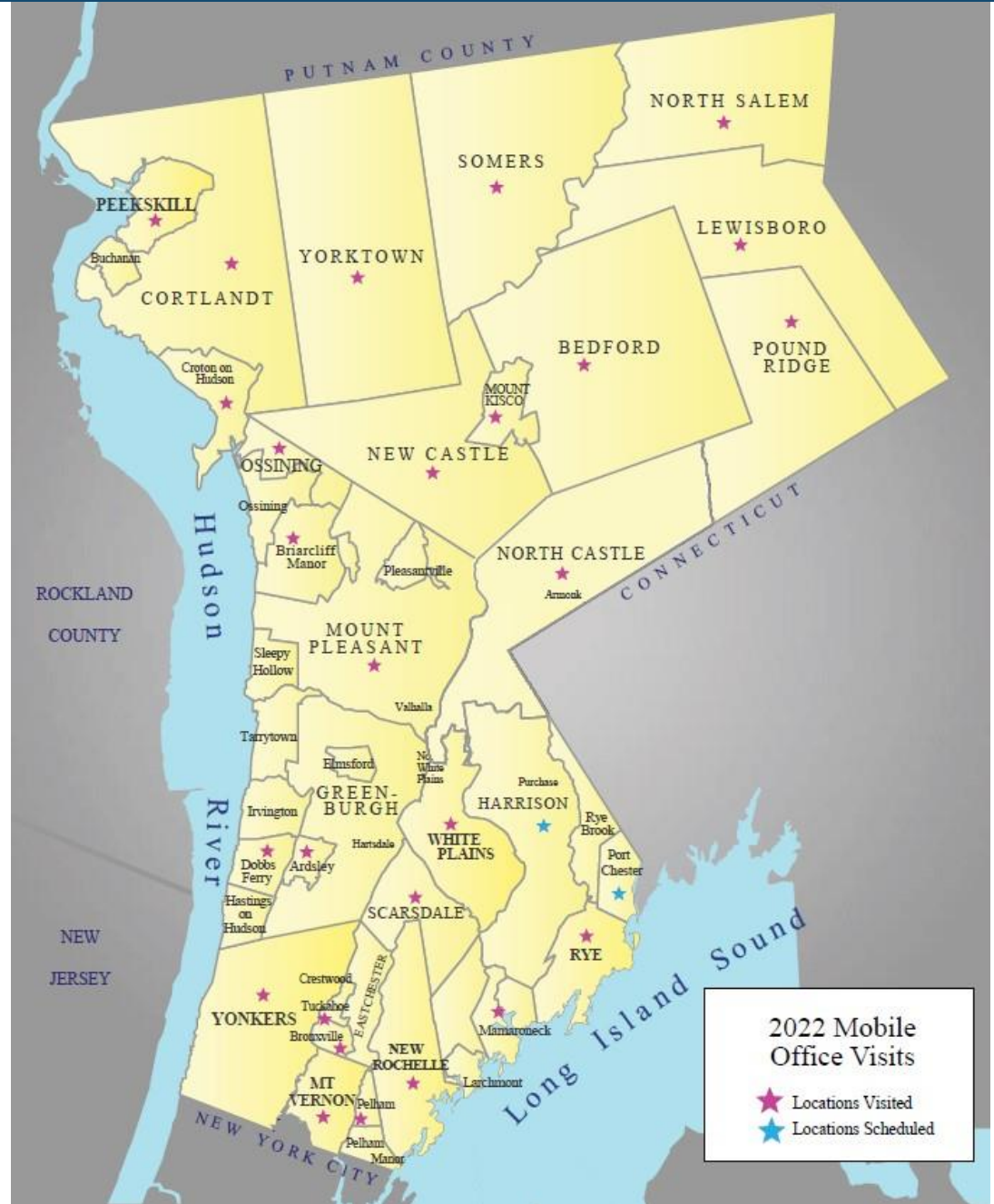
Approximately **84%** of the documents submitted to the Land Records Division are submitted electronically as part of a **voluntary** eRecording program.



County Clerk's Westchester Records Online Program ("WRO").

For the period of 1/1/22 to 10/31/22, **3,050,129** searches were conducted in WRO. Online reports of foreclosure filings and judgments have been made available to local municipalities as a "shared service" to assist in preventing zombie homes.

2022 COMMUNITY OUTREACH



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

2023 Executive Proposed Budget

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Total Funds Collected and Distributed for Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2022 (as of September 30, 2022)

County Clerk Fees Collected		
Land Records Division		
Recording Fees	\$5,115,675.33	
Real Property Transfer Report Fee	\$120,483.00	
Administrative Fee, Refund Processing	\$2,495.00	
Legal Division		
Filing Fees	\$636,994.70	
DWI Surcharges	\$30,485.00	
Criminal Fines	\$46,943.00	
Licensing Division		
Filing Fees	\$312,271.52	
Interest	\$959.21	
Other (online access, copiers, workstation/phone, unclaimed funds)	\$425,484.50	\$6,691,791.26
Mortgage Tax Collected		
Paid to Westchester County		
Westchester County Mortgage Tax	\$22,618,087.42	
Local Mortgage Tax	\$45,138,682.34	
Yonkers Mortgage Tax	\$4,992,174.21	
Reimbursement for Processing Costs	\$743,598.87	
Interest, County Portion	\$ 4,865.51	
Paid to Metropolitan Transit Authority	\$47,015,001.43	
Paid to State of New York Mortgage Agency	\$5,318,903.78	\$125,831,313.56
New York State Real Estate Transfer Tax		
Paid to Westchester County		
Recording Officer's Fee	\$11,215.00	
Interest, County Portion	\$ 4,514.27	
Paid to the Department of Taxation and Finance	\$90,490,140.59	\$90,505,869.86
Court Revenue Paid to NYS Unified Court System	\$3,555,978.00	\$3,555,978.00
Notary Revenue Paid to NYS Department of State	\$183,760.00	\$183,760.00
Records Management Improvement Fund	\$353,001.00	\$353,001.00
Cultural Education Fund	\$1,058,946.00	\$1,058,946.00
Equalization and Assessment Paid to NYS Office of Real Property Services	\$1,703,642.00	\$1,703,642.00
Total Collected and Disbursed:		\$229,884,301.68

Budget Summary

ITEM	2022	2023
Operating Positions	64*	62
Trust Positions	0	0
TOTAL POSITIONS	64*	62
Personal Service	\$4,622,642	\$4,707,078
Equipment	\$41,465	\$6,565
Materials & Supplies	\$111,600	\$141,600
Contractual Expenses	\$164,467	\$146,938
Inter-Departmental Charges	\$1,864,756	\$1,875,756
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$6,804,930	\$6,877,937
*Includes 2 full-time unfunded positions pending permanency of promotions		

Budget Summary

ITEM	2022	2023
Inter-Departmental Revenue	\$0	\$0
Departmental Revenue	\$10,662,197	\$10,110,262
State & Federal Aid	\$0	\$0
TOTAL REVENUE	\$10,662,197	\$10,110,262
DEPARTMENT TAX LEVY	(\$3,857,267)	(\$3,232,325)

Initiatives & Highlights

- **Facilitating E-filing in New York State:** As co-chair of the New York State Association of County Clerks' Court Committee, member of its Legislative Committee, and first ever Chair of the Supreme Court Steering Committee for Supreme Court E-filing, the County Clerk remains committed to advancing e-filing throughout the State. The committees coordinate responses from the county clerks and legal community leaders and make recommendations to the State Chief Administrative Judge on the creation or expansion of mandatory electronic filing programs. The committees' initiatives have resulted in 61 of the 62 counties in the State now providing e-filing. Working with dedicated and diverse legal community leaders has enhanced the ability of the Clerk's Office to serve pro se litigants and attorneys.
- **E-Filing and E-recording:** Approximately 85% of civil actions are commenced electronically through the NYS electronic filing system and approximately 84% of the land record documents are currently e-recorded. Electronic recording has significantly increased the efficiency of the filing and recording and reducing manual labor. Further reduction in paper filings is anticipated with the recent authorization of e-filing of election law cases, special proceedings under the Mental Hygiene Law, and name change applications. Once developed in coordination with the DA's Office and the courts, e-filing of criminal cases could lead to a further estimated 5% reduction.
- **Renovation in Office Space:** Plans are being implemented under the leadership of the County Executive and Department of Public Works and Transportation for the complete renovation of the 32,000 square feet of office space currently occupied by the Clerk's office. With the automation of department functions and the resultant reduction in staffing needs, space has been opened up for adaptive reuse by the County Public Safety department and the Westchester County District Attorney. The renovation will generate a savings in rental costs incurred by other County departments and enhance the efficiency and the environment for an improved staff and visitor experience. Changes made to the Office physical layout in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure distancing between staffers and the public have been carried over into the renovation plans to ensure continued office preparedness.
- **Westchester County Personal Identification Card Expansion:** The Licensing Division experienced a significant increase in the number of County Identification cards issued, with 30 issued in 2014, 896 in 2021, and 608 in 2022 for the period of January 1 through September 30, 2022. These ID cards have opened doors to benefits by providing an option to Westchester residents who, due to citizenship status, poverty, or other circumstances, cannot obtain state-issued photo IDs. Obtaining "a certified copy of a birth certificate" as required by subdivision 2 of section 265.181 of the Laws of Westchester County had been a major obstacle in qualifying for the ID card. Proofs of identity and date of birth are expanded in NYS and NYC agencies to allow other documents, in lieu of or in addition to the birth certificate, to establish date of birth and identity. Accordingly, this Office proposed an amendment to eliminate the birth certificate requirement and in March 2022, the amendment was adopted by the Board of Legislators and approved by the County Executive.
- **Foreclosure Data Captured and Shared to Assist Homeowners in Need:** The Clerk's Office continues to capture information from foreclosure cases to provide Westchester County residents with the data needed to secure funds to assist persons impacted by the foreclosure crisis. There has been a significant reduction in the number of new foreclosure filings from 1041 in 2019 to 224 in 2021 with a slight increase to 282 in 2022 through September 30, 2022. Foreclosure judgments also fell from 715 in 2019 to 134 in 2021, and 211 in 2022 through September 30, 2022.
- **Mobile Community Outreach Vehicle:** The County Clerk's Community Outreach program featuring a custom built truck stops in every town and city in the County. The mobile office staff is authorized to accept passport applications and answer questions about passport applications and renewals. In addition, the mobile office staff is available to take passport photos. In 2021 the program expanded to include notary, veterans, and business licensing services. There has been a significant increase in the number of passport applications submitted through the mobile as well as the physical office.
- **Pistol Licensing:** Pursuant to a 1997 amendment to the NYS Penal Law, Westchester County licenses were required to be certified by April 1, 2000, and recertified every 5 years thereafter. On 6/23/2022, the US Supreme Court struck down that portion of the NYS firearm licensing law requiring the showing of a special need to carry a concealed handgun outside of the home. NYS enacted revisions to the firearm licensing laws, effective 9/1/2022 expanding background checks and shortening the recertification period to 3 years. As a result of the decision and revisions to the licensing laws, there is a significant increase in applications to amend and delete restrictions on licenses and timely recertify current licenses.