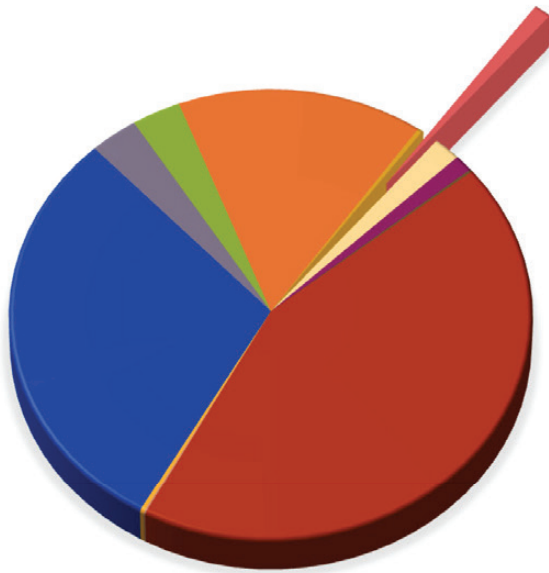


Clerk of the Court

Mission Statement

The mission of the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court is to provide all people with equal access to the judicial system in a fair, efficient, and responsive manner, in order to expeditiously facilitate the redress of grievances and resolution of disputes; to provide professional judicial services to the people of the 31st Judicial Circuit; to provide professional administrative services to the judges of the Circuit Court; to record, preserve, and protect legally and historically significant documents; to preserve and protect elections materials; and to preserve, maintain, and protect land records pertaining to the 31st Judicial Circuit; and to provide access to and instruction in the use of legal resources by operating a public law library.



Public Safety Expenditure Budget:
\$383,324,676

Expenditure Budget:
\$4,285,254



1.1% of Public Safety

Programs:

- Executive Administration: \$635,765
- Court Administration: \$2,442,537
- Records Administration: \$1,064,106
- Law Library Services: \$142,846

Mandates

If the members of the bar practicing in any county or city of the Commonwealth shall procure by voluntary contribution a law library of the value of \$500, at the least, for the use of the courts held in such county or city, and of the bar practicing therein, it shall be the duty of the circuit court of such county or city to require its clerk to take charge of the library so contributed and to keep the same in the courthouse or clerk's office building according to the rules prescribed by the bar and approved by the court.

The Code of Virginia authorizes the local governing body to assess a fee not in excess of four dollars on each civil action. The fee shall be used to support staff, books, and equipment of the law library. The law library is located in the County Courthouse in Manassas.

State Code: [15.2-1634](#) (Clerks of circuit courts), [42.1-65](#) (Local law libraries in charge of circuit court clerks; computer research services; expenses), [42.1-70](#) (Assessment for law library as part of costs in civil actions; contributions from bar associations)

County Code: [Chapter 2, Article IV](#) (Law Library)

Clerk of the Court



Expenditure and Revenue Summary

Expenditure by Program	FY16 Actuals	FY17 Actuals	FY18 Actuals	FY19 Adopted	FY20 Adopted	% Change Budget FY19/ Budget FY20
Executive Administration	\$650,849	\$741,440	\$636,204	\$685,372	\$635,765	(7.24%)
Court Administration	\$2,119,094	\$2,169,298	\$2,203,649	\$2,290,046	\$2,442,537	6.66%
Records Administration	\$1,136,476	\$1,412,149	\$941,045	\$991,784	\$1,064,106	7.29%
Law Library Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$122,325	\$142,846	16.78%
Total Expenditures	\$3,906,419	\$4,322,887	\$3,780,897	\$4,089,527	\$4,285,254	4.79%

Expenditure by Classification

Salaries and Benefits	\$3,345,648	\$3,455,670	\$3,289,128	\$3,527,417	\$3,603,144	2.15%
Contractual Services	\$325,223	\$342,883	\$160,427	\$257,977	\$307,977	19.38%
Internal Services	\$155,865	\$148,621	\$168,237	\$157,861	\$157,861	0.00%
Purchase of Goods & Services	\$69,117	\$88,660	\$159,382	\$131,417	\$201,417	53.27%
Capital Outlay	\$0	\$276,029	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
Leases & Rentals	\$10,566	\$7,938	\$3,723	\$14,855	\$14,855	0.00%
Reserves & Contingencies	\$0	\$3,086	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
Total Expenditures	\$3,906,419	\$4,322,887	\$3,780,897	\$4,089,527	\$4,285,254	4.79%

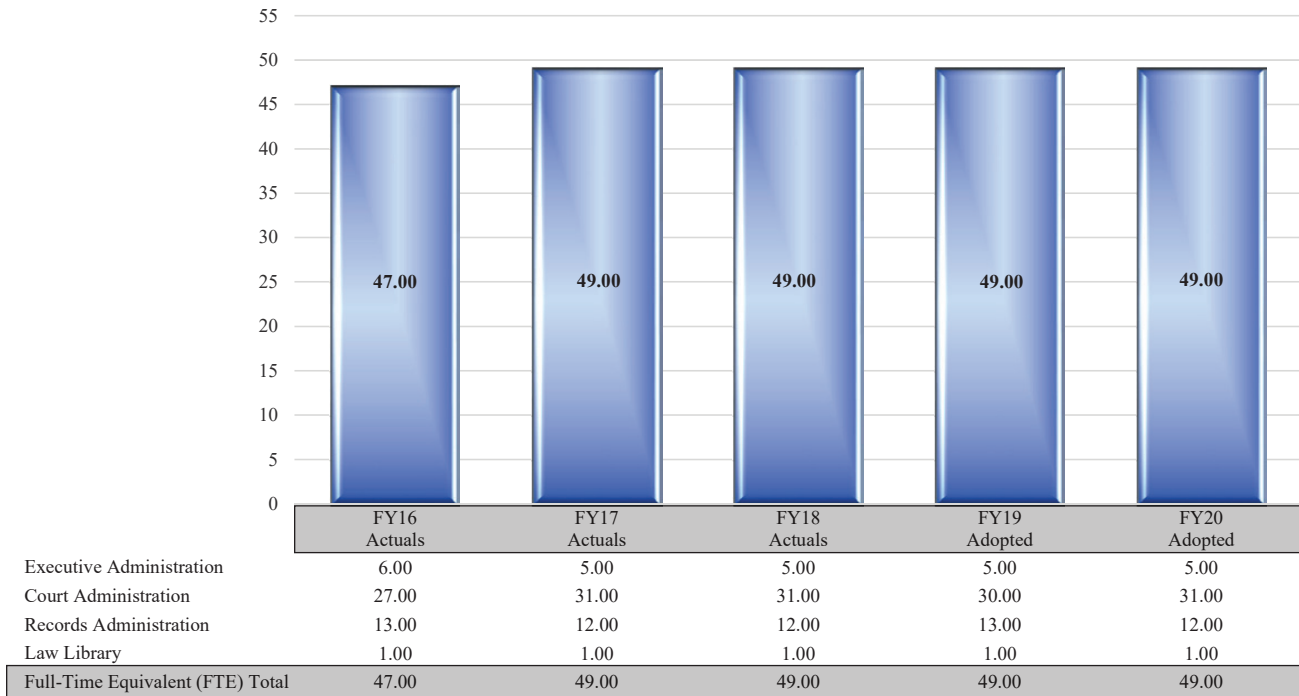
Funding Sources

Fines & Forfeitures	\$23,419	\$16,297	\$20,205	\$24,500	\$24,500	0.00%
Use of Money & Property	\$4,010	\$3,882	\$4,262	\$2,800	\$2,800	0.00%
Revenue from Other Localities	\$440,496	\$618,048	\$690,216	\$690,212	\$711,938	3.15%
Charges for Services	\$1,046,344	\$1,073,361	\$826,632	\$1,144,264	\$1,080,264	(5.59%)
Revenue from Commonwealth	\$1,792,412	\$1,817,978	\$1,886,531	\$1,488,303	\$1,788,303	20.16%
Transfers In	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
Total Designated Funding Sources	\$3,306,682	\$3,529,566	\$3,427,846	\$3,350,079	\$3,607,805	7.69%
(Contribution to)/Use of Fund Balance	(\$51,055)	\$301,819	(\$104,988)	(\$180,127)	\$2,394	(101.33%)
Net General Tax Support	\$781,959	\$622,670	\$589,206	\$919,575	\$675,055	(26.59%)
Net General Tax Support	20.02%	14.40%	15.58%	22.49%	15.75%	

Clerk of the Court



Staff History by Program



Future Outlook

Financial Management Challenges – The Clerk of the Court (Clerk) is in the process of overhauling accounting practices, procedures, and internal controls within the office.

Technological Challenges – As the keeper of the public record, the Clerk preserves, maintains, and protects the land records for the county and two cities. Due to the unique size of our judicial circuit (the second largest in the Commonwealth), maintaining an electronic record and making it accessible to the public has been a challenge. The Clerk will need to change technology vendors in the near future to provide these services in a fair, efficient manner. Additionally, the agency has digitized two-hundred years of historic records that are not currently available online. The agency will need to expand its technological program to make these documents easily accessible to the public. Also, the Clerk intends to provide the bench, bar, and public with the ability to utilize e-filing and digital tracking of documents.

Staff Education and Retention – The Clerk’s office is putting an emphasis on staff training, development, and retention. Training in leadership, management, effective communication, professionalism, and team building ensures that emerging leaders are better prepared to serve the community. Several team members are taking advantage of the educational programs offered by the County and the Supreme Court of Virginia, Office of the Executive Secretary. Once these programs have been completed, it will be necessary for senior leadership to seek higher education through national court associations and real estate industry groups in order to best equip the staff with the best practices of the day, to become a leader among the courts in the nation in customer service, access to justice, and technology.

Security Challenges – Several security measures need to be taken to ensure the safety of staff and the public.

Clerk of the Court

General Overview

- A. **Increase Budgeted Revenue from Commonwealth** – Based on actual revenues received in prior fiscal years, the general fund revenue budgeted for the Clerk’s office has been increased by \$300,000.
- B. **Expenditure Budget for Remote Access** – [Section 17.1-279](#) of the Code of Virginia mandates that the clerk of each circuit court assess a \$5 fee upon each recorded instrument in deed books and upon each judgment for the purpose of modernizing and providing secure, remote access to land records in each circuit court. Collected fees are accounted for in a restricted fund, which may only be used for this purpose. In the FY2020 Budget, a \$120,000 expenditure budget is established for Remote Access Fees. Allowed expenditures can include computer support, enhancements, upgrades, and preservation of court records provided by and maintained by the Clerk. Revenue is decreased by \$70,000 due to a user access fee reduction of \$600 per year to \$240 per year per user. Based on actual revenues received in prior fiscal years, sufficient Remote Access Fee revenue exists to cover this expenditure budget. No general fund revenues will be required to cover expenditures.
- C. **Increase General Fund Support to Law Library** – The law library receives a \$4 fee for every civil filing in the Circuit and General District Courts. Additional general fund support of \$22,000 sustains current operations because reducing expenditures to match available revenues would eliminate subscriptions which provide updates to legal publications serving the public. Because most law library users are non-lawyers, general fund support is appropriate to defray expenses associated with the use of the law library by county residents.
- D. **Revenue Increase for Shared Services (City) Billings** – The billings represent reimbursement from the City of Manassas and Manassas Park for services rendered in the previous year. Services rendered include activities within public safety, community development and human services functional areas. Amounts are calculated using an annual cost allocation report. As a result of the annual report, the Clerk of the Court allocation increased \$21,726.

Program Summary

Executive Administration

Provides administrative support to the agency including budget, bookkeeping, financial reporting to the state, County, cities, and other localities, payroll, purchasing, and receiving, information technology, human resources, and staff management. Processes collection of delinquent accounts, processes applications for concealed handgun permits; performs courthouse wedding services; measures staff performance; facilitates staff training; and works as a liaison to the bar association and public. Maintains records of historic significance dating back to 1731; works with the Library of Virginia to coordinate preservation of artifacts; preserves, maintains, and protects elections materials to include, paper ballots; and administers oaths to public safety officials, political appointees, and elected officials.

Key Measures	FY16 Actuals	FY17 Actuals	FY18 Actuals	FY19 Adopted	FY20 Adopted
Respond to calls and emails within one and letters within three business days	97%	96%	99%	96%	-
Executive Administration respond to calls within 4 business hours	-	-	-	-	99%
Executive Administration respond to emails within 4 business hours	-	-	-	-	99%

Clerk of the Court

Program Activities & Workload Measures (Dollar amounts expressed in thousands)	FY16 Actuals	FY17 Actuals	FY18 Actuals	FY19 Adopted	FY20 Adopted
Administration Services	\$651	\$741	\$636	\$685	\$636
New cases, documents filed and documents processed	145,982	131,990	207,476	130,000	-
Restitution cases active	-	-	4,200	-	4,200
Restitution payments processed	-	-	1,150	-	1,500
Trust and condemnation cases active	-	-	268	-	275
Oaths administered	-	-	2,800	-	2,800

Court Administration

Manages, maintains, and protects land records, elections records, and historic documents for Prince William County, City of Manassas, and City of Manassas Park. Handles all civil, criminal, adoption, and other case filings in the Circuit Court from inception to final disposition or appeal; maintains all civil, criminal, and adoption records; adjudicates divorces; identifies, certifies, summons, and trains jurors; facilitates the work of jury commissioners; ensures jurors are chosen fairly and impartially; coordinates payment of jury members; coordinates payment of fines, fees, and costs; creates payment plans for fines, fees, and costs; performs expungement of cases; facilitates name changes; provides probate services including the appointment of personal representatives and dispositions of estates; provides courtroom support for Circuit Court Judges; preserves, maintains, and protects evidence in court cases; transfers case transcripts to the Virginia Court of Appeals and Supreme Court of Virginia when appealed.

Key Measures	FY16 Actuals	FY17 Actuals	FY18 Actuals	FY19 Adopted	FY20 Adopted
Respond to calls and emails within one and letters within three business days	97%	96%	99%	96%	-
Court Administration respond to calls within 1 business day	-	-	-	-	98%
Court Administration respond to emails within 1 business day	-	-	-	-	99%
Complete research requests within 1 business day	-	-	-	-	98%

Program Activities & Workload Measures (Dollar amounts expressed in thousands)	FY16 Actuals	FY17 Actuals	FY18 Actuals	FY19 Adopted	FY20 Adopted
Court Case Management	\$2,119	\$2,169	\$2,204	\$2,290	\$2,443
Circuit court cases commenced	18,499	17,412	18,433	16,500	18,000
Hours in court	-	4,377	4,227	-	4,500
Court orders drafted and prepared	-	7,217	7,196	-	7,400
Total pages processed	-	-	1,563,368	-	1,600,000

Clerk of the Court

Records Administration

Records all land transactions including deeds and mortgages. Preserves, maintains, and protects land records dating back to the 1700s. Provides services to community members by issuing marriage licenses, marriage officiant credentials, notary commissions, and registration of trade names. Performs and/or oversees the administration of wills, trusts, estates, and acts in a semi-judicial role in probate working with the taxpayer, Commissioners of Accounts, and the bench.

Key Measures	FY16 Actuals	FY17 Actuals	FY18 Actuals	FY19 Adopted	FY20 Adopted
Respond to calls and emails within one and letters within three business days	97%	96%	99%	96%	-
Records Division respond to calls within 4 business hours	-	-	-	-	98%
Records Division respond to emails within 4 business hours	-	-	-	-	98%
Complete Research Requests within 2 business days	-	-	-	-	98%

Program Activities & Workload Measures (Dollar amounts expressed in thousands)	FY16 Actuals	FY17 Actuals	FY18 Actuals	FY19 Adopted	FY20 Adopted
Land Records and Public Service Center	\$1,136	\$1,412	\$941	\$992	\$1,064
Land records documents processed	90,626	93,321	95,657	-	96,500
Public service documents processed	9,898	10,129	10,025	-	10,000
Probate documents processed	4,398	4,132	4,234	-	4,300

Law Library

Provides and facilitates access to law library services including information services, non-advisory reference assistance, materials circulation, and instructions in accessing legal information resources and use of the photocopier for court personnel, the public, bar associations, students, law clerks, law firms, and law librarians. Access is provided through integrated systems, resource selection, acquisition, inter-library loan, cataloguing, processing, and collection preservation.

Key Measures	FY16 Actuals	FY17 Actuals	FY18 Actuals	FY19 Adopted	FY20 Adopted
Print collection meeting American Association of Law Librarian Standards	27%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Online collection meeting American Association of Law Librarian Standards	4%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Users satisfied with Law Library services	90%	NR	90%	92%	90%

Program Activities & Workload Measures (Dollar amounts expressed in thousands)	FY16 Actuals	FY17 Actuals	FY18 Actuals	FY19 Adopted	FY20 Adopted
Law Library Services*	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$122	\$143
Reference inquiries completed within three days	99%	NR	99%	99%	99%
Reference assistance requests	5,467	NR	6,240	6,842	6,240

*Law Library was a stand alone department prior to FY19. FY16-18 information is reported in the Expenditure Summary located in the "Budget Summary" section of the FY2020 Budget.