



Paula Sollami-Covello, Esq.

County Clerk's Corner Newsletter...At Your Service

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Welcome from the County Clerk

Happy Fall! The kids are back in school, football is on TV, pumpkin spice is back in season, and as always, we at the County Clerk's office are working hard to provide much-needed services to the residents of the Capital County.

Our elections office is especially busy as we have sent out an unprecedented number of vote-by-mail ballots in anticipation of the 2019 General Election. Since 2009, New Jersey law states that anyone registered to vote in New Jersey can apply to vote by mail for any reason. Voting by mail is easy and takes away the worry of being able to go to the polls on Election Day. It is also free, as Mercer County covers the cost of postage for applications and for ballot return.

September was National Passport Month, and during that month our two offices processed a total of 675 applications and held outreach events in West Windsor. Amid concerns about REAL ID and national security, a passport is a great form of acceptable identification to have, not just for international travel, but for domestic flights and entrance into government buildings. We also recommend the less expensive passport card, which is the same size as a driver's license, for ID purposes. Our acceptance agents are happy to help you begin your journey!

County IDs continue to be in high demand. We recommend that everyone get one, especially high school students age 16 and older. They are acceptable forms of identification for the SAT, ACT, and many school functions. Of course, our Veterans' ID cards are also great for veterans, and are free at certain times during the year.

On the first Thursday of every month (unless otherwise noted), we hold a "Notary Night" at our Mercer County Connection office in Hamilton, where we swear in new notaries public. We also provide notary education classes, where notaries and prospective notaries learn how to perform their duties at a satisfactory level.

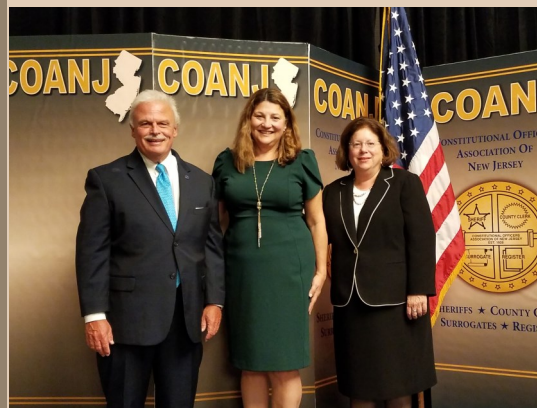
Please check out our Property Information Portal (PIP) which allows you to search any property in Mercer County by address, owner, parcel number, or by shape. You can create an account in seconds by going to pip.mercercounty.org. You can also visit the Mercer County Clerk's office at **209 South Broad Street, Trenton**, to search property information in person. The office contains books and property maps dating back to 1838.

We also provide other services; these include voter registrations, weddings, small business registration, e-recording, notaries public, and others advertised on our site at www.mercercounty.org/government/county-clerk.

Sollami Covello Sworn in as New Vice President of COANJ

Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello was recently sworn in to be the new Vice President of the Constitutional Officers Association of New Jersey. The swearing-in took place at their annual COANJ conference installment dinner at The Westin in Greater Princeton. She was elected to the position by her peers in the organization, based in all 21 counties of New Jersey.

Previously, Sollami Covello served as Secretary and Chief Clerk of COANJ, which is made up of County Clerks, Surrogates, and Registers of Deeds and Mortgages throughout the state. She also has served on various committees through the years.



Pictured: Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello after she is sworn in as the new COANJ Vice President. She is pictured with outgoing COANJ President Scott Colabella and State Senator Linda Greenstein (D-Mercer, Middlesex), who swore her in.

"I'm so humbled to be entrusted to serve in a leadership role in an organization that does so much for New Jersey," said the Mercer County Clerk. "Being the Vice President is an honor, and I will look forward to help shape the agenda for the future of the organization by working with the members of COANJ or the residents of our state."

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County Clerk Advises Residents to Obtain Passports as a Form of REAL ID

Although the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission has stated that it will soon offer REAL ID-compliant driver's licenses, passports (both passport books and passport cards) are still a great form of ID and currently compliant with federal regulations. You can apply for either at the Mercer County Clerk's Office in Trenton or the Mercer County Connection satellite office in Hamilton Township. Residents who wish to travel on domestic flights – or who need access to federal buildings – can use a passport book or card as identification, regardless of whether their current driver's license is REAL ID-compliant.

Passport books are good for any international travel and are REAL ID-compliant for domestic flights. Routine passport service costs \$110, with expedited service costing \$170. For children under 16, routine service is \$80, with expedited service costing \$140.

Passport cards, which are also REAL ID-compliant, are valid for travel by land or sea only to Canada, Mexico, and many Caribbean nations. A passport card can also be used for entrance into federal buildings and proof of US Citizenship to present to a US Embassy if your passport book is lost while abroad. Fees for service are \$30 for adults and \$15 for children under 16. Picture fees are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children and seniors (62 and older).

All passport services of the County Clerk include a \$35 County Clerk's processing fee. **Payment must be in the form of a check or money order.** In addition to offering passport processing every weekday at our locations in Trenton and Hamilton, we periodically hold passport processing days in different areas throughout Mercer County. When these days are announced you can arrange for an appointment by calling (609) 989-6473. Although every effort will be made to accept walk-ins, making an appointment is recommended.

New Jersey was previously one of only five US states and territories whose state-issued driver's licenses were not compliant with the REAL ID Act of 2005, which was signed into law as a response to calls to push for tighter security after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

The announcement from the Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) comes before the October 1, 2020 deadline for all states to fully upgrade their driver's licenses to REAL ID-compliant ones. New Jersey residents can now upgrade their driver's licenses **by appointment only** at one of six MVC offices where appointments are held.

Again, a passport is REAL ID-compliant now. For more information on hours and on what is needed to obtain a passport, please visit our website.

Free Veteran IDs Available During Select Periods

Veterans of the United States Armed Forces living in Mercer County will be able to obtain a free identification card at various points during the year. They can obtain this at the Mercer County Clerk's office on 209 South Broad Street in Trenton.

Veterans are able to obtain a free ID during the weeks before and during Memorial Day, July 4, Veterans' Day, and Pearl Harbor Day (December 7).

"This is a chance for us to properly thank those who have worn the uniform and defended our freedom," said Clerk Paula Sollami Covello. "There are numerous veterans' benefits out there, so it's important that we give veterans in Mercer County easy access to cards that would identify them as such."

In order to obtain a veteran's ID, you must provide:

Proof of US citizenship or residency

Proof that you have been a Mercer County resident for at least six months

A valid birth certificate (with a raised seal), or naturalization certificate, or valid resident alien card

A valid New Jersey Motor Vehicle License, or voter registration card, or lease agreement

DD214 discharge papers.

If you are unable to provide proof of citizenship or residency, you must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or blood relative that lives at the same address.

During all other times of the year, veterans' ID cards are \$10.

Veterans' IDs are good for discounts at various businesses. You can find out more by picking up a discount booklet at one of our offices.

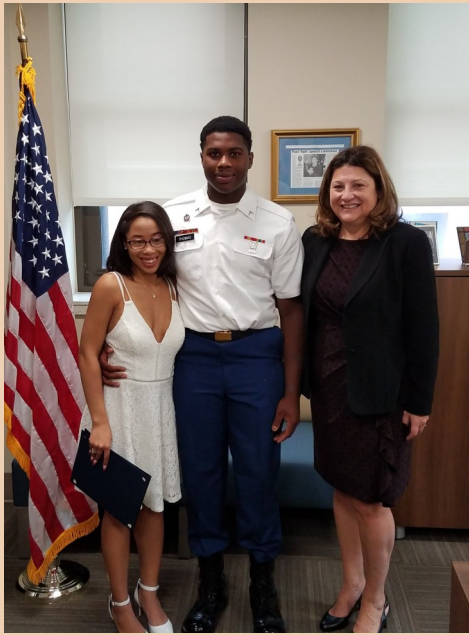
For the past year, we have also issued ID cards to Gold Star Parents, who have lost a child in combat, following the passage of legislation that enabled such identification to be issued. These cards are always free.

Did You Know?

Are you a high school student aged 16 or older? County IDs are valid forms of identification for the SAT and ACT tests, as well as many school functions.

Are you planning on enrolling in college? Make sure your passport is up to date in case you want to study abroad.

You can now register to vote at age 17 so that you will be able to vote at age 18. Here is the state link: <https://www.state.nj.us/state/elections/voter-registration.shtml>



The Mercer County Clerk performs weddings! Weddings are offered once per month by appointment only. You can call 609-989-6820 to receive more information.

It is important to note that we do not issue marriage licenses. You should call the municipal clerk of either bride or groom to obtain a license.

Sollami Covello Sworn in as New Vice President of COANJ, continued from page 1

The Constitutional Officers Association of New Jersey was founded in 1920. Its primary goal, as stated on their website, is *“To establish a cooperative effort among the Sheriffs, County Clerks, Surrogates and Registers of Deeds among the 21 counties of the State of New Jersey to improve services rendered to their respective constituencies.”* In addition to several smaller meetings throughout the year, the constitutional officers hold an annual conference and installment dinner to educate members on emerging topics, swear in new officers, and discuss best practices to improve services throughout the members’ respective counties of New Jersey. County Clerks play a pivotal role in elections, land records management, legal documents, law enforcement, and many other governmental procedures in the state, while surrogates probate wills and estates and sheriffs are instrumental in protecting citizens and courts.

Stay Up to Date With Mercer County News

There is now an email subscription service that allows residents to stay informed on all major events, news, and services in Mercer County. Another exciting addition this service offers is the ability to customize the emails received based on your interests. You may also opt in to receive emergency notifications via text-messages. You’ll need to log in with the email address you received this message at clerkevents@mercercounty.org. If you have any other questions, feel free to call our office at (609) 989-6494 or visit www.mercercounty.org.

About the Mercer County Clerk’s Office

The County Clerk's Office offers many services that Mercer County residents and businesses use every day. The Clerk's Office files and records all documents concerning real estate ownership and transfer, registers small business trade names, processes U.S. passport applications, and swears in notary public applicants.

The office offers photos for people seeking passports and County and Veteran ID cards, and Gold-Star Parent ID cards as well. The County Clerk also has certain election responsibilities – including the printing of ballots, counting of votes cast by electronic machines and the issuance of vote-by-mail ballots. Elections information can be found on our website at <http://www.mercercounty.org/government/county-clerk/elections>.

Get in Touch

**Mercer County Clerk's Office
209 South Broad Street
Trenton, NJ 08608**

**Mercer County Connection Satellite Office
957 State Highway 33
Hamilton, NJ 08690**

Visit our website: mercercounty.org/government/county-clerk

By Phone

Main number: 609-989-6464

Deputy Clerk and Administrative Offices: 609-989-6353

Press Inquiries: 609-278-7161

Elections: 609-989-6494

Indexing/Imaging: 609-989-6476

Business Registrations: 609-989-6469

Passports: 609-989-6473

County ID/Veteran ID/Gold Star Parent ID: 609-278-7108

Recording: 609-989-6466

Fax: 609-989-1111

County Connection: 609-890-9800

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Property Information Portal: pip@mercercounty.org

