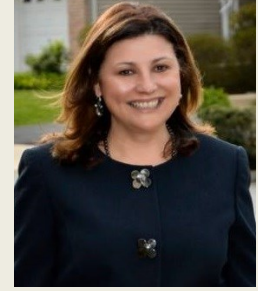


Paula Sollami-Covello, Esq.



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

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Welcome from the County Clerk

Happy Spring! Many people may not know this, but the Mercer County Clerk's Office is the County's Official Property Recording Office. The Office of the County Clerk is responsible for the filing and recording of all documents affecting real property ownership and transfer within Mercer County, including deeds, mortgages, and their related documents, as well as tax liens, powers of attorney documents, and veteran discharge papers, DD-214.

The Clerk's Office maintains copies of all documents affecting real property since Mercer County's incorporation in 1838. Any interested citizen, attorney, title searcher, or historian for their research, reference, or study can be granted access to our large records room, which houses all of the official property records of Mercer County. The records are available for public inspection between 8:30am and 4:30pm Monday through Friday at our office located at 209 South Broad St. in Trenton.

Although by law, our staff cannot conduct a title search, we will help familiarize the public with our computerized recording and indexing system. The County Clerk's Office offers search room classes every year, although these classes are suspended until further notice in lieu of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to our vast array of documents, maps of Mercer County's 12 municipalities are on file, along with minor and major subdivisions within the County. *(continued on page 2)*

Passport Services Update

The Mercer County Clerk advises constituents to plan ahead for travel. The U.S. State Department is experiencing longer than usual delays in the processing times of passports. The current wait time for passport services is 10 weeks for expedited services and up to 14 weeks from the time of submission for a regular application. This delay is likely due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The fee for a **Passport Book** increased from \$110 to \$130, and to \$100 for minors. *For more information regarding passports, please visit the Mercer County Clerk's website at <https://www.mercercounty.org/government/county-clerk/office-services/passports> or call the County Clerk's passport office at 609-989-6473 or the County Connection at 609-890-9800.*

Clerk's Office Honors Black History Month

The County Clerk's office held its 3rd annual Black History Month Program virtually, featuring speakers that have dedicated their lives to giving back to their communities and highlighting the rich black history that exists within Mercer County. The program was led by County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello and Deputy Clerk Walker Worthy who spoke about the accomplishments and contributions of prominent African Americans from Trenton and in Mercer County. Speakers, Rev. John H. Harris Jr. of the Galilee Baptist Church of Trenton, former Trenton Mayor Doug Palmer were featured speakers. As well as Adrienne King President of Alpha Kappa Alpha's Trenton Chapter. The program also featured a tribute to Trenton native singer songwriter Sarah Dash who passed away in 2021. The program can be viewed at the "Mercer County Clerk" Facebook page or on YouTube at the "Mercer County Clerk" official page [here](#).



Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello with Deputy Clerk Walker Worthy Jr. and Adrienne King, President of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Trenton chapter, during the taping of the program.

Over the years, the types of records at the Clerk's office have evolved, as have the methods for recording these documents. As part of our ongoing efforts to provide our constituents with the most efficient and accurate services in recording and filing documents, the Mercer County Clerk's office is able to offer its customers e-Recording. By utilizing imaging technology and a modern electronic land records management system, the e-Recording system allows individuals to perform searches from the comfort of their homes or offices, with records dating back to 1958.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Clerk's office has upgraded e-Recording service significantly. From 3/1/2020 to 12/15/2021, there have been 102,805 records submitted through the County's e-Recording portal, with an average submission rate of over 5,000 records per month. The ultimate goal of this program is to allow total electronic recording of real property, allowing title agencies, mortgage lenders, banks, law firms, and other businesses to record and track the progress of filed documents via the Internet, all from the comfort of their home or office. Subscriptions to E-Recordings of real estate documents are available to subscribers through the county E-Recording portal at www.njcountyrecording.com or by calling our office at 609-989-6465. The e-Recording portal is operated by Sunrise Systems and is also used by many other County Clerk's Offices throughout the State of New Jersey so if you use it in Mercer, you will be able to use it in many other Counties including Middlesex just to our North.

For more information and updates on office openings and closings in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit the Mercer County Clerk's website at <https://www.mercercounty.org/government/county-clerk/>, or call the office's main number at 609-989-6465.

Clerk Celebrates Valentine's Day with a Rekindled Marriage

Love was in the air at Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello's office this Valentine's Day. Justin and Laura Gage got remarried on Valentine's Day -- which happens to be the birthday of their middle son. The wedding was performed Sollami Covello.

The wedded couple first met in graduate school in Montana before marrying for the first time in 2003. Justin is an engineer; Laura is a microbiologist.

"It's always wonderful when I perform weddings for couples because everyone leaves the office happy. However, this Valentines' Day, was especially nice because I was able to marry a couple that found their way back to one another. It was a beautiful celebration of love between two people," said Sollami Covello.

The County Clerk performs weddings for all couples as well as civil union ceremonies once per month by appointment only. For information regarding the Clerk performing a marriage, visit mercercounty.org/government/county-clerk or call 609-989-6465.



Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello with Mercer Residents Laura and Justin Gage on Valentines Day

(article reprinted from "TapIntoHamiltonRobbinsville"; originally printed by Elizabeth Meyers)

Holiday Drive a Massive Success

The Mercer County Clerk's annual holiday drive benefiting local charities was a massive success. Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello and staff, with help from Trenton Fire Director Ken Douglass and members of the Courthouse staff received large amount of donations for both the Children's Home Society of New Jersey and EASEL (Ewing Animal Rescue League). The County Clerk and her staff annually collect toys and clothing to benefit the Children's Home Society. They also collect pet food and pet supplies and monetary donations for the local animal shelters.

"If the public puts their trust in you to serve them, your service should extend beyond your official title," said Sollami Covello. "Of course, this would not be possible without those generous souls and businesses who donated to help our local charities." By collecting toys, clothing, pet food and money, we hope to the make the holidays brighter for the children and animals in need, she explained.

The Children's Home Society has offered many services to vulnerable families including women's health services, clinical and behavioral counseling, educational opportunities, and more. For more information about how to donate or get involved, you can visit their website at <https://www.chsofnj.org/> or call them at 609-695-6274.

Both EASEL and the Trenton Animal Shelter are committed to reducing the euthanizing of homeless animals in Mercer County. They are also accepting donations and volunteers. For more information, you can visit EASEL's website at <https://www.easelnj.org/> or call the Trenton Animal Shelter at 609-989-3254. Trenton, NJ 08608.



Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello and staff pose with toys donated to the Children's Home Society of NJ



The Mercer County Clerk's Office donated a record amount of toys to the Children's Home Society of NJ and put a smile on many faces.



Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello and Deputy Clerk Walker Worthy Jr. pose with EASEL volunteers and the donated supplies from their office drive.

State To Launch Homeowner Assistance Program

The thought of losing one's home through foreclosure can be daunting. But help is on the way for New Jersey homeowners struggling to pay their mortgage or property taxes due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Mercer County Clerk's Paula Sollami Covello is pleased to share information that Governor Murphy has announced a new program that took effect on Feb. 8. More than \$325 million of federal funding will be used to provide financial assistance and counseling for homeowners financially impacted by COVID-19. The Emergency Rescue Mortgage Assistance Program (ERMA) will assist eligible homeowners with up to \$35,000 in aid. The funds for the program have been allocated by Congress from the Homeowner Assistance Program within the federal stimulus American Rescue Plan.

"Thousands of hardworking families in New Jersey have faced unprecedented burdens over the last two years due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic," said County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello. "This program will provide much needed assistance for individuals who have suffered hardships over the past few years to stay on their feet and in their homes."



To be eligible for financial assistance, families must have suffered due to a COVID-19 related financial hardship occurring after Jan. 20, 2020, such as increased expenses due to child care or funeral expenses, or lost income, such as having lost a job. To be eligible, a family must earn less than 150 percent of their respective county's median income. To see if you qualify, visit [FY 2021 Homeowner Assistance Fund Income Limits](#). ERMA will also provide free housing counseling services to help homeowners apply for this program. Counselors will guide them through all available options, and even work with their loan servicers to achieve the best outcome possible for their family. These counselors will also ensure that the process is accessible to those without access to the internet or those having difficulties navigating the process. For assistance with the application process, call **855-647-7700** or email HAFservicing@njhmfa.gov. For free housing counselors who can help with your application, visit tinyurl.com/HAFcounselor.

Applications for assistance can be submitted online at [njerma.com](https://www.njerma.com). The site opened on Feb. 8 at 9 a.m.

The Mercer County Clerk's Office files and records all documents concerning real estate ownership, mortgages and transfers within the county. The Clerk's Office is responsible for sending out proactive letters to distressed homeowners when a Lis Pendens is filed. A Lis Pendens is the first step in the foreclosure process. Those in financial distress are urged to reach out to local community service groups such as Consumer Credit Counseling of Central NJ at 609-586-2574, or the national hotline for Foreclosure Help at 1-888-995-4673. For more assistance, please call the Mercer County Clerk's office at 609-989-6465, or visit the County Clerk online at <https://www.mercercounty.org/government/county-clerk>.

County Clerk Announces Notary Night Schedule for 2022

Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello has announced the monthly Notary Night schedule for 2022. Notary Nights will continue to be held on the first Thursday of each month, from 3:00pm to 7:30pm. Notary Nights are held at the Mercer County Connection satellite office in Hamilton. A mask or face covering must be worn to enter. The remaining dates for 2022 are as follows:

March 3rd	April 7th
May 5th	June 2nd
July 7th	August 4th
September 1st	October 6th
November 3rd	December 1st

To be sworn in by Mercer County Clerk's Office staff as a new notary, prospective notaries must apply and have their applications signed by a legislator. If you file your application online it will be sent to your legislator electronically. After the State of New Jersey processes your application, you will be sent your commission by mail. You must take your oath of office. The fee is \$15; checks and money order are accepted. Prospective notaries will also need a photo ID and their certificate on hand to be sworn in.

At the current time, appointments are required for notary services in Hamilton and in our Trenton offices. Appointments can be made at both by calling the Clerk's main number at 609-989-6465. The Clerk's office offers notary services five days a week from 8:30– 4:30, as well as until 6:45 on Wednesday nights in Trenton. For more information about notaries public and for updates on office openings and closings in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit the Mercer County website at <http://www.mercercounty.org/government/county-clerk-/office-services/notary-public>.

Election Related Deadlines

Apr 4 – Deadline to file nominating petitions for Primary with County, Municipality, or State Office (4pm)

Apr 13 – Deadline to file change of party affiliation form with Superintendent of Elections Office

May 17 – Deadline to register to vote in 2022 Primary Election

May 31 – Last day County Clerk can accept mailed Vote-By-Mail applications

June 3-5 – Early in-person voting

June 6 – Deadline to apply in-person for Vote-By-Mail ballot at County Clerk's office (3pm)

June 7 – Primary Election Day for in-person voting 6am-8pm. *All mail-in ballots must be postmarked, in a County drop box, or delivered to the Board of Elections by 8pm.

Did You Know?

You can 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>

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: 609-989-6465

Deputy Clerk and Administrative Offices: 609-989-6353

Press Inquiries: 609-989-6074

Elections: 609-989-6495

Indexing/Imaging: 609-989-6472

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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