



Paula Sollami-Covello, Esq.

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

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Welcome from the County Clerk

As we move into a very busy Fall at the Mercer County Clerk's Office, where we will prepare for the General Election administration along with Mercer County's two other election offices, it seems appropriate to remind constituents of some of the many other services offered by the Mercer County Clerk's Office.

Seeing a rise nationwide on property fraud, our office prioritized efforts this summer to crack down on property fraud in Mercer County. I currently serve on a Property Fraud task force with City of Trenton Mayor Reed Gusciora and other officials, the Mercer County Prosecutor, members of the NJ Assembly and the Mercer County Consumer Fraud Division. This task force works together to address fraudulent activity taking place by squatters and other bad agents who engage in property-related money-making schemes against property owners and renters throughout Mercer County. One of the tools in our arsenal is the property fraud alert system offered by my office.

As the County's property registrar, my office offers a Property Fraud Alert Service in order to notify property owners with free e-mail alerts when someone tries to record a lien or take any action on a local property. We offer it in conjunction with our land recording computer system, Catalis, so that an email is triggered whenever an action is recorded on a property. This alert is free to use, but you must sign-up with your current email address. Please call the County Clerk's Office to sign up and register your property, and receive alerts immediately.

We also provide a property alert hotline for those in need of help if they feel they have been victimized by such a property scheme. This number is 609-989-6466. A Supervisor from our office will provide you with law enforcement information, or mortgage resources available from HUD certified agencies.

Additionally, our office offers a Property Information Portal, where Mercer County properties can be viewed via GIS satellite. Any bona fide real estate professional can sign up to use this system and obtain information on the same property address from the County Clerk's Office, the Mercer County Tax Office and the Planning Office in a coordinated effort. Basically, this unique property tool saves on research time and it is easy to use. This website is PIP.Mercercounty.org. It is free to search for qualified users, and we encourage you to sign up if you work in the real-estate field.

Thank you and have a happy Fall!!

2024 General Election

The Mercer County Clerk's Office is integral in conducting the Presidential Election, where we anticipate issuing over 44,000 vote by mail ballots for the upcoming general election in November to those currently signed-up on our permanent list of applicants. In fact, we anticipate mailing out even more ballots to residents and higher voter participation in 2024, with candidates running for offices ranging from U.S. President, U.S. Senate, County and municipal government, school board, and fire commissioner.

3 Ways to Vote in Mercer County

VOTE-BY-MAIL

- Registered voters can apply for a vote-by-mail ballot by following the instructions found at VOTE.NJ.GOV or by contacting the County Clerk.

IN-PERSON EARLY VOTING

- In-person you can vote on a voting machine at any early voting location. Early voting will be open Saturday, October 26 through Sunday, November 3. Hours will be Wednesday-Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. and Sunday, 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

AT YOUR POLLING PLACE ON ELECTION DAY

- Vote in person at your polling place, from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, November 5. Your polling locations will be listed on your sample ballot.

(More Election Information continued on page 2)

2024 General Election

Stay informed and exercise your right to vote!

- **Voter Registration Deadline:** October 15, 2024. Apply online here—<https://voter.svrs.nj.gov/register>.
- **Vote By Mail (VBM) Application Deadline (By Mail):** October 29, 2024
- **Vote By Mail (VBM) Application Deadline (In-Person):** November 4, 2024, by 3:00 PM
- **Early Voting Period:** October 26, 2024 - November 3, 2024
- **General Election Day:** November 5, 2024
- **Vote By Mail (VBM) Return Deadline:** November 5, 2024, by 8:00 PM return by drop box or in US mail

For more detailed information and to check your voter registration status, or to track your ballot, please visit the New Jersey State Election website at Vote.NJ.Gov or contact the Mercer County Clerk's Election office at 609-989-6495.

To view Drop Box locations and early voting locations, scan our QR codes on the back of this newsletter

APPLICATION FOR VOTE BY MAIL BALLOT

Please type or print clearly in ink. All information required unless marked optional.

1	I hereby apply for a Mail-In Ballot for: (CHECK ONLY ONE) <input type="checkbox"/> ALL FUTURE ELECTIONS, until I request otherwise in writing. Or for ONLY ONE of the following: <input type="checkbox"/> General (November) <input type="checkbox"/> Primary (June) <input type="checkbox"/> Municipal <input type="checkbox"/> School <input type="checkbox"/> Fire <input type="checkbox"/> Special _____ To be held on ____/____/____ <small>(Specify) (MM / DD / YYYY)</small>	MILITARY/OVERSEAS VOTER ONLY I request Vote-By-Mail Ballots for all elections in which I am eligible to vote and I am (CHECK ONLY ONE) <input type="checkbox"/> A Member of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine on active duty, or an eligible spouse or dependent. <input type="checkbox"/> A U.S. Citizen residing outside the U.S. and I intend to return. <input type="checkbox"/> A U.S. Citizen residing outside the U.S. and I do not intend to return. <input type="checkbox"/> A U.S. Citizen residing outside the U.S. and I have never lived in the U.S.			
PLEASE NOTE: Your ballot can only be sent to the mailing address supplied on this application. If your mailing address changes, you must notify the County Clerk in writing.					
2	Last Name <small>(Type or Print)</small>	First Name <small>(Type or Print)</small>	Middle Name or Initial	Suffix (Jr., Sr., III)	
3	Address at which you are registered to vote: Street Address or RD# _____ Apt. _____ Municipality (City/Town) _____ State _____ Zip _____		4	Mail my ballot to the following address: <input type="checkbox"/> Same Address as Section 3 _____ <small>Please include any PO Box, RD#, State/Province, Zip/Postal Code & Country (if outside US)</small>	
5	Date of Birth (MM / DD / YYYY) _____	6	Day Time Phone Number () _____	7	E-Mail Address _____
PLEASE NOTE: This contact information will be used to contact you concerning the acceptance or rejection of your ballot and how you may cure a defect.					
8	Signature: I affirm that I am the person who is applying for this ballot and I live at the address designated in box 3 of this form. X _____			9	Today's Date (MM / DD / YYYY) _____
OPTIONAL - ONLY COMPLETE SECTIONS 10 OR 11 IF APPLICABLE					
10	Assistor: Any person providing assistance to the voter in completing this application must complete this section. Name of Assistor (Type or Print) _____ Signature of Assistor _____ Date (MM / DD / YYYY) _____ Address _____ Apt. _____ Municipality (City/Town) _____ State _____ Zip _____				
Authorized Messenger: Any voter may apply for a Mail-In Ballot by Authorized Messenger. Messenger shall be a family member or a registered voter of this County. No Authorized Messenger can (1) be a Candidate in the election for which the voter is requesting a Mail-In Ballot or (2) serve as messenger for more than THREE qualified voters per election, except that an authorized messenger or bearer may serve as such for up to five qualified voters in an election if those voters are immediate family members residing in the same household as the messenger or bearer.					
11	I designate _____ to be my Authorized Messenger. <small>Print Name of Authorized Messenger</small> Address of Messenger _____ Apt. _____ Municipality (City/Town) _____ State _____ Zip _____ Date of Birth (MM / DD / YYYY) _____				
X	STOP Authorized Messenger must sign application and show photo ID in the presence of the County Clerk or County Clerk designee. "I do hereby certify that I will deliver the Mail-In Ballot directly to the voter and no other person, under penalty of law." Signature of Messenger _____ Date (MM / DD / YYYY) _____				X
				OFFICE USE ONLY Voter Reg # _____ Muni Code # _____ Party _____ Ward _____ District _____	

NJ Division of Elections - 02/20/21



County Clerk Sollami Covello alongside Hopewell Boro Mayor Ryan Kennedy and Maeve Cannon, Esq. holding a Notary Information Presentation at the Municipal Clerk's Association Meeting in Atlantic City



The staff of the Mercer County Clerk's staff had a night at the ballpark supporting Trenton Thunder baseball



County Clerk Sollami Covello alongside Mercer County Municipal Clerk's in Atlantic City

Mercer County Clerk Shares Online Passport Renewal Information

Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello is pleased to inform constituents that the U.S. Department of State has launched a public website tool for updated Online Passport Renewal (OPR). This innovative tool is designed to streamline the passport renewal process, making it more efficient and convenient for U.S citizens.

The online passport renewal tool aims to save time and effort, providing a user-friendly platform for renewing passports from the comfort of homes. The U.S department of State created this process to enhance the everyday lives of Americans, offering significant benefits to working families and travelers by giving them more time back in their busy schedules.

“We are excited about this new development from the U.S. Department of State,” said Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello. “The updated Online Passport Renewal tool is a step forward in our mission to make essential services more accessible and convenient for everyone. I encourage all eligible Mercer County residents to take advantage of this new tool and experience the ease of renewing their passports online.”

Online Passport Renewal is set to accept new applications at 1:00 pm Eastern Standard Time each day. Eligible individuals must first create an account to renew passports online here: [the public’s one account for government. | Login.gov](#), applicants will be able to apply online until the daily office threshold is met.

applicant must meet the following criteria:

To be eligible to renew a passport online, an

- **Have a recent 10-year passport and be age 25 or older**
- **Possess a U.S passport issued between 2009 and 2015, whether expired or valid.**
- **No change to name, gender, date of birth, or place of birth.**
- **No travel internationally for at least eight weeks after applying. (Note: Processing times are the same as for mail-in renewals.)**
- **Request routine service only (expedited service not available online).**
- **Apply for a regular (tourist) passport (special issuance passports are not eligible).**
- **Reside in the U.S. or its territories (not eligible if living abroad or with an APO/FPO address).**
- **Possess an undamaged passport (not reported lost or stolen). Applicants can pay the passport application fees using a credit/debit card; current fees are found here: [Fees \(state.gov\)](#)**

The Mercer County Clerk's Office continues to offer passport renewals services at both of its offices in Trenton on South Broad Street, and Hamilton Township at the Mercer County Connection. The online service is simply an additional option for those who wish to take advantage of this opportunity.

The County Clerk is dedicated to providing efficient, courteous, and professional services to the residents of Mercer County. For more information about passport services, upcoming events, and other office services please visit the Mercer County Clerk's Office website at www.mercercounty.org or call 609-989-6473.



Mercer County Clerk's staff at a Passport Clinic held at the Lawrence Library co-hosted with Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman and Congressman Andy Kim

US Real ID Requirements

Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello would like to inform Mercer residents that starting May 7, 2025, if you plan to use a driver's license as proof of identity at airport security or to enter certain federal buildings and facilities, it must be the new, more secure Real ID license. A standard driver's license or non-driver identification card can still be used to drive in New Jersey, but it will no longer be considered a valid form of federal identification. Real ID can only be obtained at the DMV, *the Clerk's Office does not offer this service.*

It must be noted, there is no requirement to get a Real ID license. Standard, non-Real ID licenses will still be issued at the DMV. Passport books and passport cards will also remain as valid proof of identification for international travel and are Real ID-compliant for domestic flights.

Real ID complies with federal standards that impose stronger requirements to prove US residency. Real ID is a more secure, federally mandated document that will be accepted at airports as identification and to enter federal buildings. The intent of Real ID is to ultimately reduce identity theft and fraud, and enhance the nation's security.

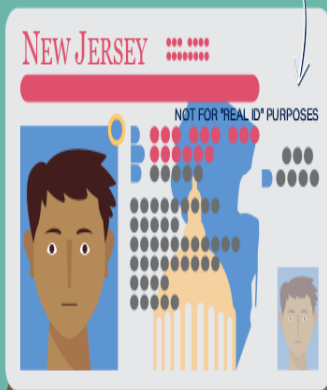
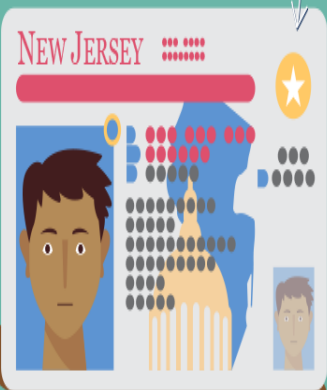
"Don't wait until 2025 to apply for a passport or to obtain a Real ID from the DMV. The time to do this is now to avoid the expected rush and backlog of appointments," said Clerk Sollami Covello.

For more information about Real ID and the requirements and documents needed to obtain one, you can visit [NJ GOV Real ID](#). To apply for Real ID, appointments can be scheduled online at [NJMVC.gov](#).

The Mercer County Clerk's Office offers routine passport services, as well as County IDs and Veteran IDs. **The Clerk's Office does not offer REAL ID.** If you have any questions about the different forms of IDs, please contact the Clerk's Office at 609-989-6465. For more information regarding passports, please visit the County Clerk's website at [Mercer County Clerk's Website](#). For the County Clerk's passport office, please call 609-989-6473. Appointments can also be made at the Mercer County Connection, located at 957 NJ-33, Hamilton, NJ. To schedule an appointment at County Connection, please contact the office at 609-890-9800.

REAL ID

Standard



County Clerk Sollami Covello alongside Superintendent of Elections Walker Worthy Jr. and Elections Staff at National Night out in Trenton

Mercer County Clerk Announces Foreclosure Resources and Information

Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello is dedicated to supporting residents through challenging times, particularly those facing foreclosure. In light of the growing concerns surrounding foreclosures, the County Clerk is pleased to provide some valuable resources and information to empower individuals and families within our community.

The Mercer County Clerk's office is the official record keeper of all Notices of Lis Pendens. A Notice of Lis Pendens is the document that is recorded before property goes into the foreclosure process. When this notice is received at the Mercer County Clerk's office, a letter is immediately sent to the owner of that property notifying them that their house will be going into foreclosure to give the resident an opportunity to take steps save their property.

For Those Currently in Foreclosure:

We recommend you contact the Office of the Courts Foreclosure Mediation Hotline at 888-989-5277 or visit Foreclosure Self-Help | NJ Courts. This program offers access to housing counselors and trained mediators to assist in resolving foreclosure actions and establishing affordable mortgage arrangements. Explore Federal and State Mortgage Modification Programs, which are available at no cost for information and assistance.

For Those Not Yet in Foreclosure:

If you're currently struggling to make mortgage payments, contact your mortgage servicer immediately to discuss your situation and explore available options. Seek assistance from a HUD-certified housing counseling agency in your county. Act promptly; early intervention provides more options for resolution. For more information on avoiding foreclosure please visit [Avoiding Foreclosure | HUD.gov](http://AvoidingForeclosure|HUD.gov) / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Beware of Foreclosure Rescue Scams:

Assistance for foreclosure-related issues should not come with a fee. Be cautious of organizations or individuals requesting payment for housing counseling or loan modifications. Avoid signing over property deeds without direct involvement from your mortgage company, and only submit mortgage payments directly to your mortgage company, unless otherwise instructed. The Clerk's Office offers a hot line where you can call us for referral to law enforcement, if you believe you have been victimized at 609-989-6466.

Reporting Mortgage-Related Fraud:

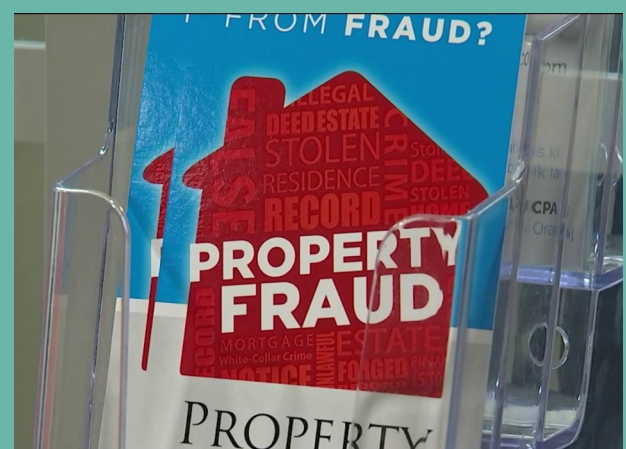
Victims of mortgage-related fraud are encouraged to report incidents to the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs by calling the toll-free hotline at 1-800-242-5846 or visiting New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs (njconsumeraffairs.gov). Legal Services of New Jersey also offers representation at no cost to low-income homeowners who have been misled or taken advantage of by lenders.

County Clerk Advises Residents on Home Title Scam, Property Alert

Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello reminds County residents about home title theft that can occur when someone forges the deed to your property so that the title is no longer listed under your name. This kind of theft usually coincides with identity fraud. Con artists often use a falsified or stolen identity to hide their involvement in the theft. Then, they create a fake document that transfers ownership of the property to their own name instead of the name of the valid owner. Some property owners are much more likely to fall victim to deed theft such as seniors, individuals with second homes, or identity-theft victims.

To ensure that one's property is protected, Sollami Covello reminds residents to register for the County Clerk's Property Alert Service to provide property owners with important alerts concerning their properties. The Property Alert Service is completely free and alerts Mercer County property owners when the Mercer County Clerk's Office records a document affecting a specific property. Residents can sign up for the alert system by clicking [here](#) and registering for more assistance please call the County Clerk's Recording Department at 609-989-6466.

It should be noted that the Property Alert Service does not prevent fraudulent activity from occurring; it helps monitor activity and transactions on properties. Anyone who suspects fraudulent activity should contact local law enforcement authorities.



Did you Know?

The County Clerk's Office performs Wedding Ceremonies *once a month*, in our office at 209 South Broad Street in Trenton. For more information, please call 609-989-6820.



Featured above is County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello with newlyweds at the County Clerk's Office

Summer Office Interns Recap

As the warm summer days come to a close, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on the incredible journey of our talented group of summer interns in 2024. This summer, our interns brought a fresh perspective, enthusiasm, and dedication that enriched our workplace and contributed to our shared goals.

Our interns dove headfirst into a range of challenging projects, spanning all of our departments from Passports, Recording and Indexing, to our Election department. Guided by our dedicated team members, our interns had the opportunity to learn from the best. We had skill-building sessions and one-on-one mentorship, as they worked to sharpen their professional skills. From the first day to the last, the energy and enthusiasm our interns brought to the office was truly infectious. Their positivity and willingness to take on new challenges inspired us all to continue pushing boundaries and striving for excellence.



The Mercer County Internship Program is designed to provide students in high school and college with paid opportunities to work and gain practical training and hands-on, real-world experience that will help meet their educational goals and prepare them for a professional career. During the course of the summer program, students have the opportunity to take part in a variety of curated activities coordinated by the Office of Personnel designed to teach new techniques and skills, enhance existing knowledge and abilities, while also exploring possible career paths in public administration.



For more information regarding Mercer County internship opportunities, please visit [The Office of Personnel](#).



Intern Allie Williams awarded a scholarship by the Lawrence League of Women Voters

County Clerk Offers Free Photo ID Cards For Veterans During Upcoming Holidays

Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello reminds Mercer County residents that Veteran ID cards are free at the County Clerk's Office in honor of the following holidays:

VETERANS DAY- 11/4/24 to 11/15/24

PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY – 12/2/24 to 12/13/24

ID cards that indicate a Veteran's status have become very useful as many stores and home improvement retailers offer discounts to veterans. Veterans can receive their photo ID card by visiting the Mercer County Clerk's Office located on the 2nd Floor of the Old Courthouse at 209 South Broad Street in Trenton. The Clerk's ID department is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Requirements for a Mercer County ID card:

- Must be a Mercer County resident for at least 6 months.
 - Must produce the following:
 - A valid birth certificate with a raised seal or a naturalization certificate.
 - A valid NJ Motor Vehicle License or voter registration card or, lease agreement..
- Voting Profile, which can be obtained at the County Clerk's Election Office located on the 2nd floor as well.

In order to have US military veteran status designated on the ID card, veterans must also produce or register their DD-214 honorable discharge papers with the County Clerk's Office.

RECORDING OF DD-214

A Certificate of Release - Discharge from Active Duty, or DD-214 Form for short, is generally issued when a service member is honorably discharged from active military duty. The document contains information normally needed to verify military service for benefits, retirement, employment, and membership in veterans' organizations. Additionally, Mercer County Veterans can record their DD-214 Form free of charge at the Clerk's office.

“Because military papers can get damaged or lost, veterans should take advantage of the opportunity to file copies of their DD-214 discharge papers with the Clerk's Office,” said Sollami Covello, whose office maintains and preserves official documents and records for Mercer County. “If a copy of discharge papers is needed in the future, a veteran, an immediate family member, or a legally recognized representative of their estate may obtain a copy with proper identification.” noted Sollami Covello.



County Clerk Sollami Covello with Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman and Medina Wilson at a Mercer County Veterans Outreach Event

Notary Night Schedule

Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello has announced the monthly Notary Night schedule for 2024. 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. The remaining dates for 2024 are as follows:

September 5th October 3rd

November 7th December 5th

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.

For more information please 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, please visit the Mercer County website at <http://www.mercercounty.org/government/county-clerk-/office-services/notary-public>.

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>.

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>

Reminder– the 2024 Presidential General Election is set for Tuesday, November 5, 2024

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 : 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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2024 Mercer County Early Voting & Drop Box Locations

