



FISCAL YEAR  
**2021**



# Annual Report

October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021



## A MESSAGE FROM **CINDY STUART** CLERK OF COURT & COMPTROLLER

On January 5, 2021, I took the oath of office as Hillsborough County Clerk of Court and Comptroller just as many of us braced ourselves for another round of the pandemic. Our agency pivoted during this challenging time – putting into place its first remote work policy – but making certain people were served, every hour of every day, in an equitable way. We aspired to not only deliver fast, efficient and friendly service, but to also show compassion to customers experiencing hardship, trauma or other adversity. This was a time, after all, when we all reassessed our goals, priorities and aspirations in a more meaningful way.

Our team has been busy over the last year connecting directly with the people of Hillsborough County through our many educational and awareness programs. As part of our focus on helping others, we support charitable causes that serve our residents. Over the last few months, we have provided opportunities for our employees to give of their talents, time, and treasure to support those causes they find most rewarding. We have provided school supplies to disadvantaged students, donated baby items to families in need, volunteered with Feeding Tampa Bay, written letters of encouragement to domestic violence victims, and employees have donated thousands of dollars to other local charitable causes.

My Office prides itself on setting the standard for a new kind of government office whether it's serving the function of the Court or being stewards of County dollars. With our dedicated, knowledgeable staff, a bold leadership team, and advanced technology, our promise is to keep your records safe, preserve accuracy, and provide documents when you need them. We seek to be transparent and accountable every step of the way because we take our fiscal responsibility to you very seriously.

In fact, the Hillsborough County Clerk's Office has been recognized as a pioneer among our peers by the Florida Supreme Court in a vital statewide case reporting overhaul as we introduce a more modern, near real-time system, providing consistent and accurate reporting data.

We're proud to play an integral role in the day-to-day lives of our community, and we're committed to enhancing your overall quality of life. Whether it's managing your tax dollars or providing important records, it's a responsibility we don't take lightly.

From one corner of Hillsborough County to another, we're here to meet you where you are and help you navigate the government landscape. As a trusted partner of a variety of community agencies, it's about exceeding your expectations every single time.

It's why we serve.

Together we will get to Yes!

*Cindy Stuart*

Cindy Stuart  
Clerk of Court & Comptroller, Hillsborough County

# AN EXPERT TEAM



**Timothy Simon**  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER,  
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER



**MaryLou Fernandez Whaley**  
CHIEF OF STAFF



**Jim Porter**  
GENERAL COUNSEL



**Michelle Decker**  
CHIEF INFORMATION  
OFFICER



CHIEF AUDIT EXECUTIVE



**Doug R Bakke**  
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
COURT OPERATIONS



**Christine Nappi**  
AIDE TO THE CLERK



**Gary S Grayshaw**  
CHIEF OF HUMAN  
RESOURCES



**Kimberly Richards**  
CHIEF DEPUTY RECORDS  
MANAGEMENT



**Andrew Barrios**  
SENIOR DIRECTOR  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
& DEI



**Shevawn M Spencer**  
CHIEF DEPUTY  
RECORDS MANAGEMENT



**Julian Mendez**  
PROCUREMENT &  
FACILITIES



**Jenna Hodgens**  
SENIOR DIRECTOR  
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS



**Lori Samson**  
SPECIAL PROJECTS  
COORDINATOR

## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Harry Cohen



Gwen Myers



Ken Hagan



Kimberly Overman



Mariella Smith



Pat Kemp



Stacy White



Bonnie Wise

## CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS



From left: Craig Latimer, Supervisor of Elections; Nancy C. Millan, Tax Collector; Andrew H. Warren, State Attorney; Julianne M. Holt, Public Defender, 13th Judicial Circuit; Cindy Stuart, Clerk of Court & Comptroller; Chad Chronister, Sheriff; and Bob Henriquez, Property Appraiser



# A FRESH APPROACH

A two-day strategic planning retreat was held in February with the Executive team in order to better understand the needs of the Office today and to anticipate its needs into the future, as well as to strengthen the already cohesive team. A new Mission/Vision was developed alongside a comprehensive Strategic Plan that will serve as a long-term road map and direction for the Office.

## MISSION/VISION

Dedicated to serving the public by providing excellent customer service and safeguarding your records and the public's financial assets and dollars with equity, transparency and independence

## PRIORITIES

### People and Training:

Secure and retain highly effective teams and leaders through smart recruitment, relevant and applicable training and development, and pathways to internal success strategies

### Brand & Communication:

Ensure our brand represents and identifies with the strategic priorities while educating constituents on the values of the Office

### Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI):

Foster a culture that embraces diversity, equity and inclusion so that we may serve our constituents "where they are" and develop a workforce that mirrors the diversity of the communities we serve

### Government Relations & Community Partnerships:

Build and leverage effective relationships to advocate for the needs of the Clerk's Office as well as the community we serve

## CORE VALUES



**Protect**



**Steward**



**Serve**



**Innovate**



**Equity Driven**



**Transparent**



**Competent**



**Inclusive**



**Lead with Integrity**

# AN EVOLVED BRAND

In order to advance the completed strategic planning work, efforts began to evolve the Clerk's brand to effectively convey and represent the new mission, vision and core beliefs in a way that brought trust, clarity, warmth and accessibility through consistent, timely, relevant and inclusive planning and messaging. Part of this effort included a secret shopper process to engage in conversation around continuous improvement.

The result? Updated messaging to help educate employees, community partners and the public about the significance of all the services provided on both sides of the house, and a new look and feel that helps elevate the visibility and accessibility of the Office.

The new seal is a fresh approach for the Office. The blue represents stability, loyalty and confidence and the gold represents compassion, courage and wisdom. The key is a nod to the Court's function and a reminder of the Office's duty to ensure secure records. The scales are a reminder of how the judicial process works and our Office's role in the process. The stars demonstrate the high level of customer service we aspire to provide.

Lady Justice is a symbol of the legal system and is universally known, but was modified to be reflective of the constructs in our community today. She was inspired by a statue commissioned by the County in 2007, which is located in the lobby of the newly dedicated Pat Collier Frank Courthouse building, and is representative of our community and the ideals of the Office. We invite you to visit her in person!

A more informal logo, which replaces the shield, was developed to complement the seal and be used in a variety of communications. Rollout of the new brand is underway and is expected to be complete in early 2022.



# WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED

## DEI

- ✓ Increased dollars spent with minority businesses by 19% YTD
- ✓ Spent 50% of total dollars during most recent fiscal quarter with diverse suppliers
- ✓ Introduced a bilingual pay policy to recognize employees for their interpreter and translation skills
- ✓ Resumed in-person jury selection and criminal trials

## BUILDING OUR TEAM

- ✓ Added key staff to augment communications, government relations, special projects, community relations and equity which are all relevant to the work and community needs
- ✓ Recruited a strong Human Resources Chief and combined training and development to transform the work of people, talent development and culture



## SERVING OUR CUSTOMERS DURING COVID-19

- ✓ Tampa downtown locations never closed; front counter stayed open during pandemic
- ✓ Installed plexiglass for public facing staff, temperature checks, screening questions for all customers on-campus and social distancing
- ✓ Implemented remote work as much as possible with dispatched laptops
- ✓ Outlined COVID precautions and mask requirements for visitors
- ✓ Resumed in-person jury selection and criminal trials

## OTHER INNOVATIONS & INITIATIVES

- ✓ A mail scanning and electronic mail delivery system
- ✓ Property Fraud Alert System
- ✓ Office's first remote work policy
- ✓ eCertify, an electronic certification of Court and official records
- ✓ 24/7 online access to pay tickets and fees

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- ✓ Created a partnership with Feeding Tampa Bay, and in December 2021, opened the Clerk's Table Community Pantry for anyone who is food insecure





# BY THE NUMBERS

Total Recorded Documents  
(including eRecords) : **654,131**

## DECREASE IN PAPER FILES AND INCREASED DIGITIZATION

	2019	2020	2021
New Court Files Received for Storage	10,161	7,070	329
Files Requested by Courts Area (35% reduction in physical files requested by Court's area due to digitization)	20,012	11,652	7,539
Files Destroyed After Digitization	0	91,259	89,960
Imaging Team: Full Case Imaging Files	3,548	8,665	20,811



## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STATS



Total Calls Handled	<b>745,118</b>
Average Wait Time	<b>7:42 minutes</b>
Average Service Time	<b>3:44 minutes</b>
Total SMS Messages Sent	<b>26,163</b>



Total Website Visits:	<b>2.38 million</b>
Total Court Documents Processed:	<b>8,236,542</b>
Total Electronically Filed Court Documents:	<b>2,709,226</b>



Total Served On-Site (QFlow):	<b>192,295</b>
Average Service Wait Time:	<b>8:37 minutes</b>
Average Wait Time:	<b>3:29 minutes</b>



Total Marriage License Applications:	<b>11,104</b>
Total Online Court Payments Processed:	<b>18,580</b>
Total Court Payments Paid Online or Via Automated Call Center:	<b>14,481</b>
Total Passport Applications:	<b>735 (COVID halted April 2020– April 2021)</b>

## GET SOCIAL

We are spreading the word about the Clerk of Court's Mission, Vision, Core Beliefs and Services on multiple social media platforms to reach a variety of audiences. We invite you to follow or like our social accounts to engage with us!



# CHECKS AND BALANCES

The Florida Constitution established the Clerk of the Court & Comptroller as a public trustee, independently elected to safeguard your public records and public funds. Nearly every payment, court document and public record in Hillsborough County passes through our Office.

## THE FUNCTIONS OF OUR OFFICE INCLUDE:

### Chief Financial Officer and Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)

- ✓ Prepare County financial reports for state and federal governments, bondholders and the public
- ✓ Pay all County bills and pre-audit all County expenditures
- ✓ Manage the County's investments to earn investment income on taxpayer funds
- ✓ Document and maintain minutes, records and activities of County government meetings

### Clerk of the Court

- ✓ Process and file all civil and criminal court documents
- ✓ Protect evidence
- ✓ Provide the public with access to court records on paper and online
- ✓ Manage the County's jury system

### County Recorder

- ✓ Maintain official County records
- ✓ Record documents such as mortgages, deeds, liens, judgments and marriage licenses

### County Auditor

- ✓ Assist management in achieving efficient and effective administration of their areas of responsibility
- ✓ Make recommendations to management to improve internal controls and mitigate risk
- ✓ Monitor management's corrective action plans
- ✓ Offer training to County staff on internal controls and fraud prevention

# FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY



20

Audit Projects Completed



43

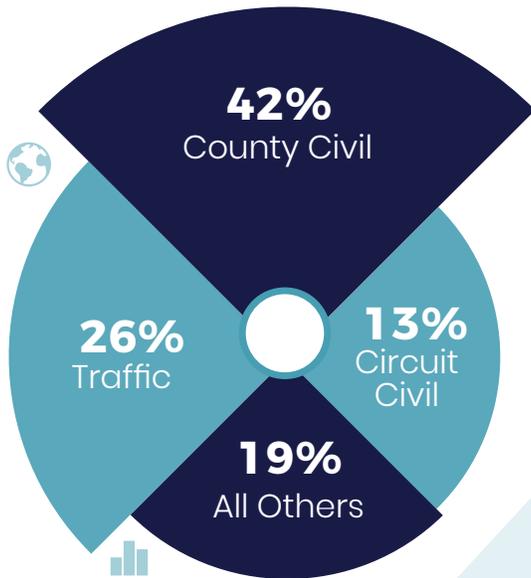
Audit Reports/  
Memos Issued



5

Fraud and Controls  
Training Classes  
Held

## HILLSBOROUGH COURT REVENUE SOURCES



# 2021 LEGISLATIVE WINS

SB838 by Senator Boyd was signed by Governor DeSantis and will provide better stability for Clerks' budgets by allowing for statewide reserves, offering the ability to carry forward revenue from year to year, enhancing payment plan options, streamlining the way jury management costs are paid to the Clerk, and distinguishing the differences between court and county-related fees. This was a step in the right direction in stabilizing Clerks' budgets statewide, although much work is still needed.

## 2022 Legislative Priorities

- ✓ To require the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office to accept domestic violence injunctions electronically to more efficiently serve the respondent, allowing for greater safety for the petitioner
- ✓ Appropriating the \$40 fee for domestic violence injunctions in the budget so Clerks statewide can ask for reimbursement based on the number of injunctions they handle in their office

### DEI Goal Statement:

Fostering a culture that embraces diversity, equity and inclusion so that we may serve our constituents "where they are" while developing a workforce that mirrors the diversity of the communities we serve.



# LEADING THE WAY

Cultivating a culture that is not only committed to providing excellent customer service to all who need the Clerk's services, but that also celebrates their many differences, remains a top priority. The Office is community-focused in its efforts to provide representative voices to Hillsborough County's diverse population in order to be more effective.

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Supplier Diversity Program



Established a Supplier Diversity program and spent 19% of all procurement dollars with minority and small business enterprises in FY 2021



Prioritized spending with small business enterprises (SBEs), which includes, women, minority, veteran and small local businesses



Spent 50% of procurement dollars with minority and small business enterprises in the 3rd quarter of the most recent fiscal year



### Bilingual Pay Policy



Implemented a bilingual pay policy to recognize and compensate the approximately 50 bilingual employees who provide translation/interpretation services to the Hispanic community



Helps make services more available to non-English speaking members of our community, particularly the more than 45,000 Hispanic customers who need translation and interpretation support



**“ Our bilingual employees provide a tremendous service to not only their fellow employees, but to their community as well. This policy demonstrates our commitment and appreciation of them for ensuring our services are accessible to all of our customers who need language support. ”**

- Cindy Stuart, Clerk of Court & Comptroller, Hillsborough County, FL

# IN THE COMMUNITY

**Supporting our partners and giving back to our community makes a real impact on the lives of our residents. Our team is making a difference!**

- ✓ Partnered with Tampa Parks & Recreation to gather baby supplies for a community baby shower to help support new moms
- ✓ Collected school supplies for the Hillsborough Education Foundation's Teaching Tools Supply Closet which benefits Title One Schools, teachers and those in need, allowing them to shop for supplies to supplement their classrooms and schools
- ✓ Sorted food supplies at Feeding Tampa Bay to take a stand against hunger
- ✓ Donated more than 1,000 pounds of food and provided almost 11,000 meals to children experiencing food insecurity for the Clerk's "Cereal for Summer Project"

*"Just 1 hour of volunteer work generates over 150 meals that will feed our neighbors in need."*

– Feeding Tampa Bay





# SPOTLIGHT: OPERATION GREEN LIGHT

Operation Green Light helps those with suspended driver's licenses get back on the road. For the first time, the event was held entirely online through Zoom in 2021, giving drivers the opportunity to get back on the road by addressing overdue court obligations while saving money in additional fees. Judges reviewed each driver's case history and determined if any court fines or fees could be reduced. Registrants will be able to reinstate their driving privileges by visiting the Tax Collector's Office.



**396**

Constituents  
Registered



**246**

Constituents  
Attended



**1,019**

Citations  
Heard



**547**

Cases Recalled from  
3rd Party Collection  
Agents



**909**

Driver's License  
Suspensions  
Cleared



**183**

Cases  
Dismissed



# TEAM APPROACH

Providing all the many services offered by the Clerk's Office – from official court records and marriage licenses to property needs, passports and so much more – takes a dedicated team. We're fortunate to have some of the very best!



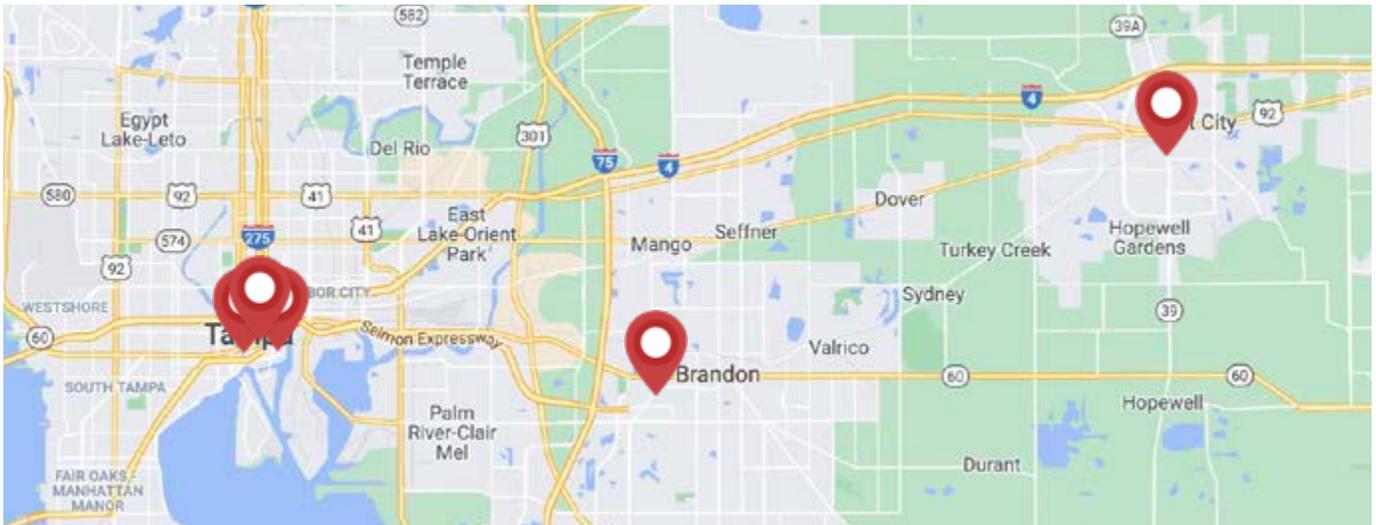
***Our employees go above and beyond to serve our customers with excellence day in and day out.***

– Cindy Stuart, Clerk of Court & Comptroller, Hillsborough County, FL

It's all part of our Yes! campaign – You Empower Service – which symbolizes a mindset and pathway to deliver great customer service and employee engagement experiences that will make our culture that much stronger. Our Atta Clerk program recognizes our employees who exemplify this level of service. Recipients are nominated by their peers and are honored with a certificate and signage, and are also featured in digital communications.



# OUR LOCATIONS



**George E. Edgecomb  
Courthouse**

800 East Twiggs Street  
Tampa, FL 33602

**Pat Collier Frank  
Courthouse**

419 Pierce Street  
Tampa, FL 33602

**Plant City  
Courthouse**

301 North Michigan Avenue,  
Room 1071  
Plant City, FL 33563

**Brandon Regional  
Service Center**

311 Paula Drive,  
Suite 110  
Brandon, FL 33511

**Frederick B. Karl  
County Center**

601 East Kennedy Boulevard,  
12th Floor  
Tampa, FL 33602



**(813) 276-8100**



**HillsClerk.com**









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