



Delia Briones County Clerk

STATE OF THE COUNTY CLERK FY 2015/2016



Delia Briones
County Clerk

Carol Sagaribay
Chief Deputy

Anthony Bedoya
Office Manager

Claudia Parra
Accounting Manager

Gabriel Escandon
Archives Administrator

Corey Bixler
Archives, Supervisor

Guadalupe Garcia
Criminal, Supervisor

Michelle Rodarte
Probate and Civil, Supervisor

Christian Gonzalez
Official Public Records, Supervisor

Diannia Leyva
Vitals, Supervisor

Dear El Paso County,

It is with great honor that I am able to state that thanks to the extraordinary efforts of the entire staff at your County Clerk's Office, there is much progress to report. We continue to modernize your local government services through technology, innovation and collaboration with other County Departments. During this last fiscal year, we were able to achieve the momentous milestones described in this report that have been aimed to serve you better.

Last year, our office collaborated extensively with Commissioner's Court and the Judiciary to support the consolidation of certain court services under the office of Pre-Trial Services. By transferring our Collections Department staff and resources to this consolidated office, we have created additional organizational efficiency to better serve you. While other offices may have resisted such change and viewed it as a reduction in authority, I endorsed such progressive vision with a focus on you, the citizens of El Paso.

I am proud to report that our office was very proactive and ready to execute the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision relating to Marriage Equality. I engaged the State of Texas months prior to this decision to ensure that the systems we have in place were permissive of a potential transition. Unlike other areas in the U.S. where futile legal battles have frustrated the implementation of the Law, you can trust me to continue upholding my constitutional oath.

Looking forward to this fiscal year, I am committed to continue working harmoniously with other departments to ensure our resources are being used effectively. Most importantly, you can rest assured that my office will continue to be centered on you, our primary stakeholder and our main driver for progress!

Respectfully Yours in Public Service,

Delia Briones
County Clerk



Downtown
500 E. San Antonio, Ste 105
El Paso, TX 79901
(915) 546-2071

Northeast
4641 Cohen Dr.
El Paso, TX 79924
(915) 759-0233

Ysleta
9521 Socorro Rd. Ste A-1
El Paso, TX 79927
(915) 860-2484



Accounting

The Accounting Department is essential to the daily operation of the County Clerk's Office.

The Department's duties include assuring all money exchanged within the Office is accounted for. They are also liable for reporting monies to the State.

Due to the staff's diligent day to day processing and tracking of cash bond activity, the Department did not have to report unclaimed cash bond money to the State of Texas this fiscal year. Additionally, this daily process also resulted in a prompt twenty-four hour disbursement of cash bond checks, which provided the community with expedited returns.



Based on reports from October of 2014 through Aug 7, 2015, a total of \$448,805.00 cash bond monies were either forfeited to the County Attorney or released to the proper owner.

Following the contract requirements set forth by the County, in August of 2014, the Accounting Department was assigned the added responsibility of reviewing and maintaining contracts for the County Clerk's Office.

In preparation for the County Budget Department's requirement to steer the County into a performance measurable budget practice, the Accounting Department involved all County Clerk's Supervisors in the budget process. This inclusion afforded each department with insight into their respective expenditures and allowed them to forecast their individual future needs.

In 2016, the County Auditor will administer Munis, a new financial system. This new software will assist the staff in conducting all financial matters to include reporting to Auditors, purchasing, reconciliations and collections more effectively.

The staff is determined to build on previous successes and intends on performing more internal audits throughout the year. To be better equipped to successfully assist the County Clerk Staff, Public and Auditors, the Department will proceed with fully cross-training the staff in every facet of their role.

"Delia Briones as County Clerk, through hard work and technological innovation, has brought the operations of the County in the 21st century. Because of her motivation, she makes the office the best it can be. She has created a user-friendly atmosphere for both lawyers and the general public."

*Bob Warach
Attorney at Law*

Criminal

The County Clerk's Criminal Department continues to work towards modernizing and streamlining all business processes to better serve the public and the Judiciary.

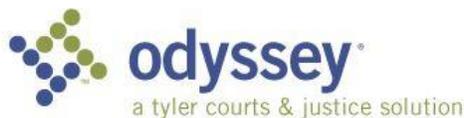
The main focus this fiscal year has been on utilizing technology to its full potential to expedite all aspects of the Department. For example, the use of Code-A-Print software, for new file label creation, was established. Also, with the assistance from the developers in the County's IT Department, modifications were made to the One Bar system, a file tracking software. Through this team effort, the average file creation time has been minimized from six to two minutes per file. These improvements have removed the opportunity for human error in file creation and tracking, which assure all files are created seamlessly.



The use of technology extends to the public with the adoption of a new centralized email address, ClkCrimmail@epcounty.com. This will facilitate addressing and responding to correspondence more expeditiously.

Furthermore, the Department's new electronic microfilm scanner has replaced the dated microfiche machine. As an added benefit, the scanner produces more legible and clear copies of documents provided to the public.

The conversion to Odyssey, a fully integrated justice software package, is a work in progress as new functionality in the program is activated. Odyssey's use of new functions, reports, group event creation and batch printing, have permitted the staff to complete tasks more accurately and efficiently. They are currently implementing and testing upcoming changes, which will enhance the transition into e-filing documents for Criminal Misdemeanor Cases.



The Department has also gained the duty of expunging all Misdemeanor Records. A newly acquired Expunction Clerk is responsible for ensuring the proper deletion and sealing of all records pursuant to judicial orders. As a result, expunged cases will be completely removed from all case management systems including jail and district attorney records. This role is crucial in order to provide the public the ability to pursue opportunities without a criminal record in existence.

The County Clerk's Criminal Department will strive to reach for perfection in serving the El Paso community. With a dedicated staff and encouraging management team, the Department will confront new challenges and overcome obstacles while upholding public service as a priority.

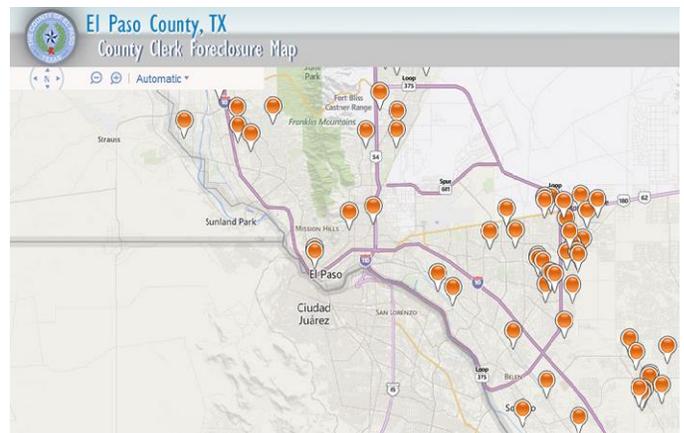
Official Public Records

Official Public Records provides the public optimal service by processing and indexing official documents in the real property records of the County and assisting in business name registrations.

The Department is fueled by employees who are devoted to the skillful process of filing official records. Additionally, the staff has been excelling through a series of County and State trainings, seminars, and conferences, which further empower the employees to assist the public with the utmost of knowledge.

Official Public Records is excited to announce the expansion of its e-filing services to record real property documents. The accelerated online delivery is designed to increase security not only for local filers, but for offices nationwide. This will encourage companies to eliminate paper document filings; therefore, increasing the Department's efficiency, reducing processing times and saving carbon emissions!

OPR has made progressive updates, which will benefit the public. For example, DropBox is now operational. This has enabled the staff to provide real property recordings within a twenty-four to forty-eight hour turn-around time. For more convenient service, payments can be made over the phone for records requests on file, including maps recorded directly with the County.



The recently completed interactive foreclosure map is currently in use by the public. This new feature has been instrumental for Attorneys, Title Companies, and the public, by demonstrating maximum transparency on foreclosed proceedings in El Paso County. The public can directly obtain foreclosure lists via the County Clerk's website.

The collaboration between the Clerk's e-file provider, Professional Document Systems (PDS), and Corporation Service Company, an e-recording vendor, promises to deliver an optimal e-filing process for real property records. The accelerated document delivery approach is designed to increase security not only for local filers, but for offices nationwide in real time on a web based recording.

While the local business registry of Assumed Names has been available online, improvements to the online search capabilities have been made. New businesses are also receiving new folder packets with helpful information, including reminders of when renewals are due. Official Public Records believes that the public's assets should be carefully recorded; as such, this section of the County Clerk's Office is diligent in focusing on guarding the public's information and providing excellent service.

Probate and Civil

There are many facets to the Probate and Civil Department's public service.

The cross-trained staff is able to provide writs of execution, letters of guardianship, letters of testamentary, protective orders, notices and other probate and civil documents as required by law or requested by the public. They can accept payments over the phone and assist via email, ProbateRecordsRequest@epcounty.com.



It is of the utmost importance that the staff pursues and attends local and state seminars to maintain the most current information and Judiciary updates that affect the public.

The Judiciary System is constantly evolving and the Department is continuously exploring opportunities to employ new technology and progressively manage those occurrences. Forthcoming, is the implementation of iDocket, a software system that will allow title companies to obtain the necessary copies of Probate related cases directly from their own office. Civil case information will also be readily available twenty-four hours a day in an electronic format.

For the Probate and Civil Department, public service is inclusive of giving back to the community. In June of 2015, as a token of appreciation, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) awarded the Department a plaque for "ongoing commitment and dedicated service" to the organization. With the help of the Probate Department, LULAC was able to meet State compliance in matters relating to all wards.



In the upcoming fiscal year, the Department will continue to seek improvements that will benefit the public. The staff is already working alongside the other departments to implement the County Clerk's FOIA link on the Clerk's website, which will make the process of requesting open records effortless and accessible at any time.

Attending State trainings to be better informed when assisting the public and legal entities is a recurring objective for the staff. The Probate and Civil Department will also focus on pursuing different avenues to uphold public service as their priority.

Records Management and Archives



As the central repository for the public records, the Records Management and Archives Office is committed to maximizing efficiencies by utilizing state-of-the-art technology to better serve the public, as well as safeguarding and preserving the County's historic records.

The staff is constantly striving to refine and improve the process of retaining public information for the County, by the application of management techniques to the creation, use, maintenance, retention, preservation and disposal of government records.

As the custodian of records for forty-eight El Paso County departments, it is imperative that the staff is regularly trained to keep up with the latest statutory mandates, technologies, and records management techniques. The Department often partakes in various trainings offered by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, including online sessions.

Due to Records Management and Archives' determination to secure and protect records vital to El Paso County's history, the scanning and digitization of property deeds from 1881-1909 Volumes 1-31 is an ongoing process. By the beginning of 2016, the information contained in those historical deeds will be available via the County Clerk's website under the Official Public Records Search section.

This fiscal year, the Department collaborated in a project initiated by the County Clerk's Office and executed by KOFILE to preserve historical records.

The KOFILE Preservation Project's mission is to safeguard record books containing Birth, Marriage, Death, Deed, and countless other record types dating back to 1880. These books will be conserved in state-of-the-art binders that are designed to protect from natural degradation, fire, or other natural disasters to meet the standards set forth by the U.S. Library of Congress.



The staff also assisted in the Clerk's efforts to modernize and implement technology by digitizing all Commissioners Court microfilm. Digitization will make the records available to the public in an easy to access format via the El Paso County website by utilizing a keyword search to retrieve the information needed.

The Records Management and Archives Department has also begun a back scanning project to digitize all criminal case files from 1992 forward to help with e-filing and the conversion into the future of electronic record keeping. This endeavor will carry over into the new fiscal year.

Retaining records and preserving generations of history for all residents of El Paso County is something the Department takes pride in.

Vitals

The Vitals Department is responsible for issuing marriage licenses and recording births, deaths and marriages, which occur in El Paso County.

Through consistent attention to detail and thorough knowledge of Texas law, the Vitals staff aims at serving the public with fast, courteous and precise service. The same dedication extends to the assistance they provide to funeral homes with death certificates and burial transits. Furthermore, the Department cooperates with designated authorities in state and federal fraud investigations when necessary.



The staff's commitment to excelling in the public service they provide has been recognized at the state level. Each year, Texas Vital Statistics bestows the honor of the Five-Star Award upon Texas Vitals Departments that have demonstrated exemplary service.

The Five-Star Award recognizes Texas Counties, which meet certain criteria to include timeliness, improvement, attending state trainings and processing of electronic death registrations. The El Paso County Clerk's Vitals Department is honored and proud to be a six time recipient of this award and will aspire to reach this goal on a yearly basis.

On June 26, 2015, the County Clerk's Vitals Department became part of history by implementing the Supreme Court ruling of allowing same sex marriages in all fifty states. The first same-sex marriage license in El Paso County was issued at 11:26 am, immediately following the ruling.

The Department's devotion to the public and other entities in need of their knowledge, skills and assistance, will transition into the upcoming fiscal year. The staff is eager to broaden their knowledge and keep abreast of any law modifications that affect the El Paso community, by attending state sponsored trainings and conveying any and all acquired information to the public they serve.

FOIA

The County Clerk's Office continually seeks new and innovative ways to improve its customer service capabilities. This fall, the Clerk's office will introduce the new Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) weblink within the County Clerk's webpage, <http://www.epcounty.com/clerk/foia/htm>.

The new weblink will feature individual "tailored" request forms for the various departments within the County Clerk's Office. This will allow for a faster response time to the requestor and a more accurate accountability measure for the Office. Requestors seeking information that is considered "open records" and under the custody of the Clerk, will submit a request online, which will be automatically transmitted to the newly created FOIA email address. It will then be filtered to the appropriate department and requestors will receive an electronic confirmation of receipt along with the status of their request.

The public is encouraged to utilize this new feature, for faster more reliable service that has come to be entrusted upon the Office of the County Clerk.

Community Pride



The County Clerk's Office is proud to support the City's sports teams. The staff not only wears the Chihuahuas' and Miners' shirts to the office on Fridays but together attend games to cheer them on. *Go teams go!*



Eastside Annex



On May 6, 2015, the County Clerk took part in the inauguration of the new County Eastside Annex.

Paying It Forward

The County Clerk's Office understands the importance of paying it forward. Throughout the year, the staff contributes to different organizations and participates in making a difference for others in the El Paso community.

BIENVIVIR CHRISTMAS



VETERANS' CANNED GOODS DRIVE



BACK TO SCHOOL BACKPACKS



EASTER BASKETS DRIVE



County Clerk's Management



ADMINISTRATION

"In dealing with the El Paso County Clerk's Office on both a personal and professional basis, I find that the Office is run efficiently and the staff is both professional and courteous."

Sheriff Richard Wiles



SENIOR CLERKS



SUPERVISORS

July 24, 2015 Flauta Fundraiser for Cancer Survivor

"Thank you all very much for all the good wishes and support! Your donations helped pay for my medication. It was such a huge help and I appreciate it so very much. I'm very honored to have met most of you."



*Lorena Herrera
Cancer Survivor*