Eau Claire COUNTY

OFFICE OF CLERK OF COURT
CHERIE NORBERG, CLERK

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Providing fair, efficient, and accessible court services by managing records, finances, and the jury system responsibly. We serve the public with dignity, fairness, and sensitivity while ensuring accountable use of taxpayer resources.

SELECTED PERFORMANCE MEASURES

OUTPUTS	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Collections through regular payments:	$4,061,736	$3,668,257	$3,383,613	$3,853,482	$3,902,877
Additional Collections:					
Debt turned over to SDC:	$3,041,958	$1,671,821	$2,480,154	$4,343,750	$2,485,099
Debt Collected from SDC:	$1,787,792	$1,436,240	$866,122	$837,631	$903,732
Collected from Tax Intercept	$67,669	$88,307	$61,553	$108,519	$107,461
Collected from Interest	$244,539	$204,837	$142,553	$131,011	$140,699
Hearings clerked	24,644	25,733	25,126	26,497	28,386
Traffic hearings clerked (*including defaults):	*14,410	*5,001	1,673	1,714	1,794
Traffic & Ordinance Cases handled by Clerk including	N/A	7,660	10,810	12,415	12,917
Number of docketed events	273,481	251,488	252,509	270,538	266,591
Documents added (*with system generated)	*402,641	164,854	162,112	168,895	179,791
Number of cases opened	18,809	17,771	17,853	20,239	19,836

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Mandated services:
  - Revenues were higher than anticipated by $70,762 and expenditures under budget by $186,640. This combined with our portion of the increased Circuit Court Support Payment from the state of $54,826 resulted in a surplus of $312,228 going back to the county for 2025.
  - Increased overall collections by $49,395 from 2024.
  - Number of documents added to cases increased by over 10,000 in spite of staffing shortages.

- Processed over 467 Court Appointed Attorney invoices and over 226 Guardian ad Litem attorney invoices for payment.
- Over $100,000 collected utilizing the newly-implemented Income/Wage Assignment procedure.
- Enhancements in our Jury summoning procedures reduced related expenditures and successfully met the benchmarks established by the state.
- Implemented Jury Debriefing Program in collaboration with the Department of Human Services.
- Through the generous juror program, over $10,000 was donated to the Meals on Wheels Program.
- Provided competent assistance to the legal community as well as unrepresented parties ensuring access to the courts.
- Case Retention – digitized and purged 44 paper case files.

- Legislative
  - Effective lobbying resulted in an increase of $218,308 in the Circuit Court Support payment through the state budget, boosting funding for both the Circuit Court and Clerk of Court budgets.
- Staffing
  - Wages and benefits came in under budget by $185,103.
  - We remain committed to promoting from within while strategically reallocating staff to meet the evolving needs of the office. In 2025, we onboarded four Deputy Court Clerks and one Deputy Clerk through a combination of internal promotions and external hires, strengthening our team and supporting continued operational excellence.
- *The Brief* – monthly publication sent to court partners regarding changes, procedures, and information related to the court system.

ISSUES ON THE HORIZON AND SIGNIFICANT TRENDS

- Staff retention continues to contribute to current vacancies. Additionally, the complexity and scope of the Deputy Court Clerk role are not fully aligned with its current salary grid classification, creating challenges for both recruitment and retention efforts.
- The management team remains committed to a strategic and deliberate approach to recruitment, complemented by comprehensive training initiatives that support both newly hired employees and current staff transitioning into new roles.
- Legislative issues:
  - The Wisconsin Clerk of Circuit Court Association (WCCCA) continues to track the long-standing request to increase fees that are 100% county retained and have not changed in over 30 years. Any approved increase would positively impact our budget as well as the Register in Probate and Circuit Court.
  - Proposed increase to the limits for various small claims class codes may slightly reduce revenue, as filing fees for small claims are lower than those for large claims.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

A Positive and Rewarding Workplace

- Expand employee development through ongoing training, cross-training, and skill diversification to improve adaptability and career growth.
- Implement succession planning strategies to preserve institutional knowledge and ensure operational continuity.
- Promote staff retention by offering scheduling flexibility for appointments and fostering a supportive workplace culture.
- Encourage collaborative problem-solving with Court Operations and CCAP to build shared expertise and professional engagement.

Financial Sustainability and Stability

- Continue partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Revenue State Debt Collection program to maximize court-ordered receivable recovery.
- Monitor collection performance and implement process improvements to reduce aged receivables.
- Strengthen collaboration with the Child Support Agency (CSA) to expand reimbursement opportunities for IV-D case work performed by Clerk staff.
- Conduct systematic verification of DNA collection cases to ensure statutory compliance and avoid financial or audit risk.

Sustainable Growth Through Strengthened Partnerships

- Collaborate with County Information Systems and CCAP to enhance connectivity between state and county systems and assure reliable system-wide technology.
- Maintain daily collaboration with judges, court commissioner, District Attorney, Public Defenders, law enforcement agencies, and municipal partners to improve case processing and service delivery.
- Continue weekly reporting to CSA regarding restraining orders to support coordinated service to vulnerable individuals.
- Partner with Court Operations and CCAP management to address legal, procedural, and technology needs.
- Engage in cross-agency discussions to identify efficiencies that improve system-wide performance.

GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR

- Partner with the County Administrator, Human Resources, and Finance to evaluate staff placement within the salary grid in anticipation of a potential level adjustment.
- Develop fiscal impact projections and alignment analysis for any salary adjustments to support informed budget decisions.
- Recruit and fill the vacant Criminal/Traffic Division position to restore full operational capacity.
- Monitor recruitment timelines and onboarding progress to minimize service disruption, while also assessing workload distribution to mitigate manager burnout and support sustainable leadership capacity.
- Enhance onboarding structure for new hires and continue competency development for clerks hired or promoted in 2025.
- Collaborate with the District Attorney's Office to evaluate and streamline procedures. Identify and implement workflow improvements that increase efficiency and reduce administrative delays.
- Develop a data-supported proposal to increase the juror pay line item in the 2027 budget cycle, including fiscal impact and regional comparison analysis.