



Ottawa County

2021 Annual Report

Clerk | Register of Deeds



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To the Board of County Commissioners and Residents of Ottawa County

It's an honor for me to present the 2021 Annual Report for the County Clerk and Register of Deeds Office. Last year was a significant one for our department as we moved forward on a number of new initiatives, while maintaining service in the areas of Circuit Court Records, Vital Records, Register of Deeds and Elections.

I remain grateful and humbled by the tremendous team we have in place at the Clerk | Register's Office. They make our mission of **helping people and encouraging their trust in government** possible. Our staff has proven their resilience again and again through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, which certainly affected not only 2020, but 2021 as well.

Several years ago as the leadership team of the Clerk | Register's Office met to discuss and solidify the values by which we want to be known as a department – we looked inwardly to the team we had in place and listed the values that they showed on a regular basis. These 7 core values remain at the heart of our organization: We provide excellent customer service. We are humble. We value people. We are authentic. We are eager to learn. We seek input from others. We are accountable.

I believe that our team and all of us who serve in county government can play a critical role in one of the fundamental challenges facing our nation today: establishing and maintaining public trust. We can accomplish this through honesty, transparency, and providing great service to our community.

We would not be able to accomplish what we do without the tremendous support of the Board of County Commissioners and many other departments within Ottawa County. The collaborative partnerships we enjoy here allow us to think outside of the box on a daily basis to solve problems for our residents.

Thank you for your support! I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as your Clerk and Register of Deeds!



Justin F. Roebuck
County Clerk | Register of Deeds

Mission, Vision, Values



MISSION

WHY DO WE EXIST?

To help customers and encourage their trust in government.

WHAT DO WE DO?

Create and preserve records for current and future generations.



VISION

HOW WILL WE SUCCEED?

Exceed the expectations of our customers in every aspect of service.

Be creative, strategic, and forward thinking leaders to continually improve.

Create a positive, caring, and engaging environment for our employees and coworkers.

Be conscientious of taxpayer resources.

VALUES

HOW DO WE BEHAVE?



We provide excellent customer service.



We are humble.



We value people.



We are authentic.



We are eager to learn.

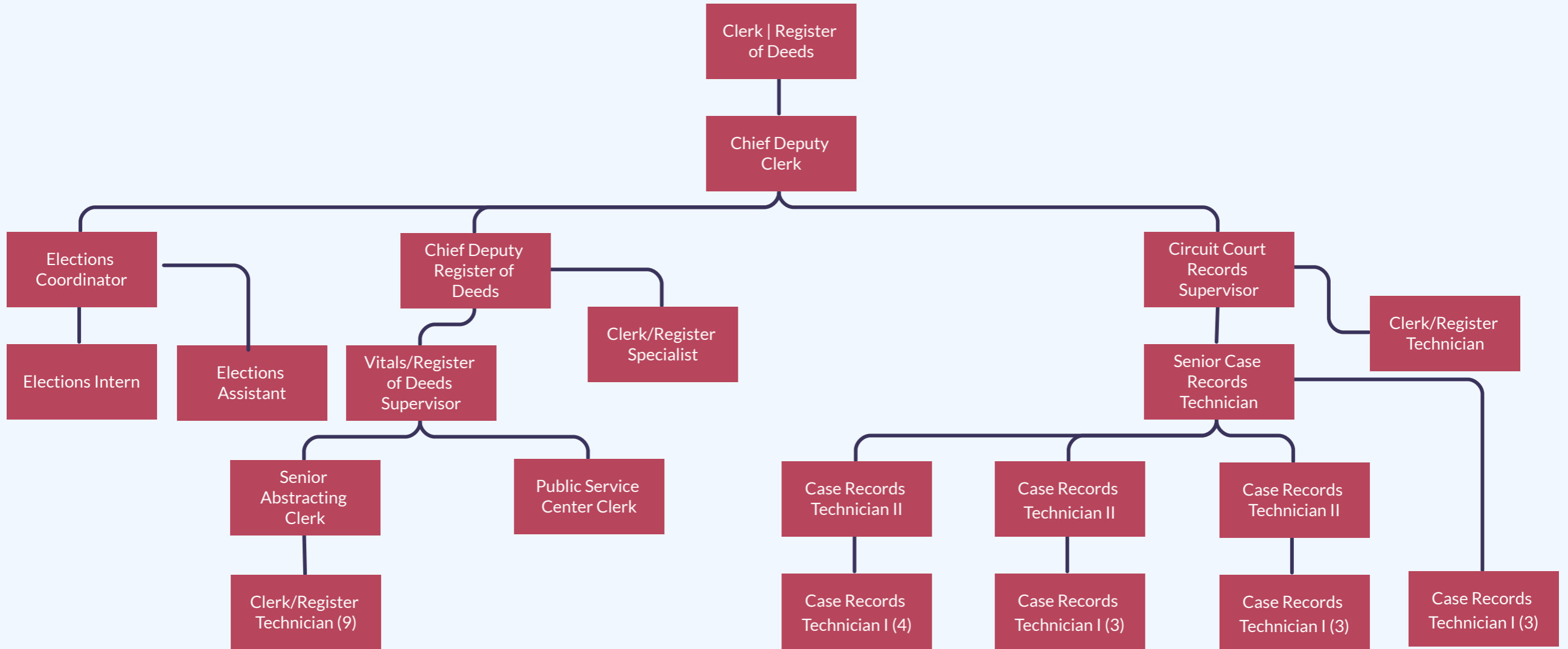


We seek input from others.



We are accountable.

Organization Chart



2021 Goals Accomplished



Fingerprinting and Concealed Pistol License

To enhance the CPL application process and turnaround time, we purchased fingerprinting equipment using CPL fund dollars. Staff became certified by attending MSP training. Revenue generated from the statutory fingerprinting charge will pay for the equipment within one year.



Circuit Court Records Archives Project

Circuit Court Records staff spent four months relocating offsite records to a secured space in the Grand Rapids Public Archives. This move included a reorganization of records to make them more accessible and allowed for 182 boxes of historical records to be sent to the Michigan State Archives.



Electronic Document Return for Land Records

Our Register of Deeds team implemented technology through Swift to allow for the secure electronic return of all paper documents sent to us for recording. This system not only serves customers better but also resulted in nearly \$11,000 in savings in 2021 alone.



Honor Rewards Virtual Veteran Expo

Due to ongoing COVID restrictions, the Honor Rewards team held its first ever virtual Veteran's Expo in 2021. The expo featured videos highlighting area businesses and organizations who are serving the veteran community. Additionally, a live panel of experts discussed issues and challenges facing our veterans today, answered questions and directed them to available resources.

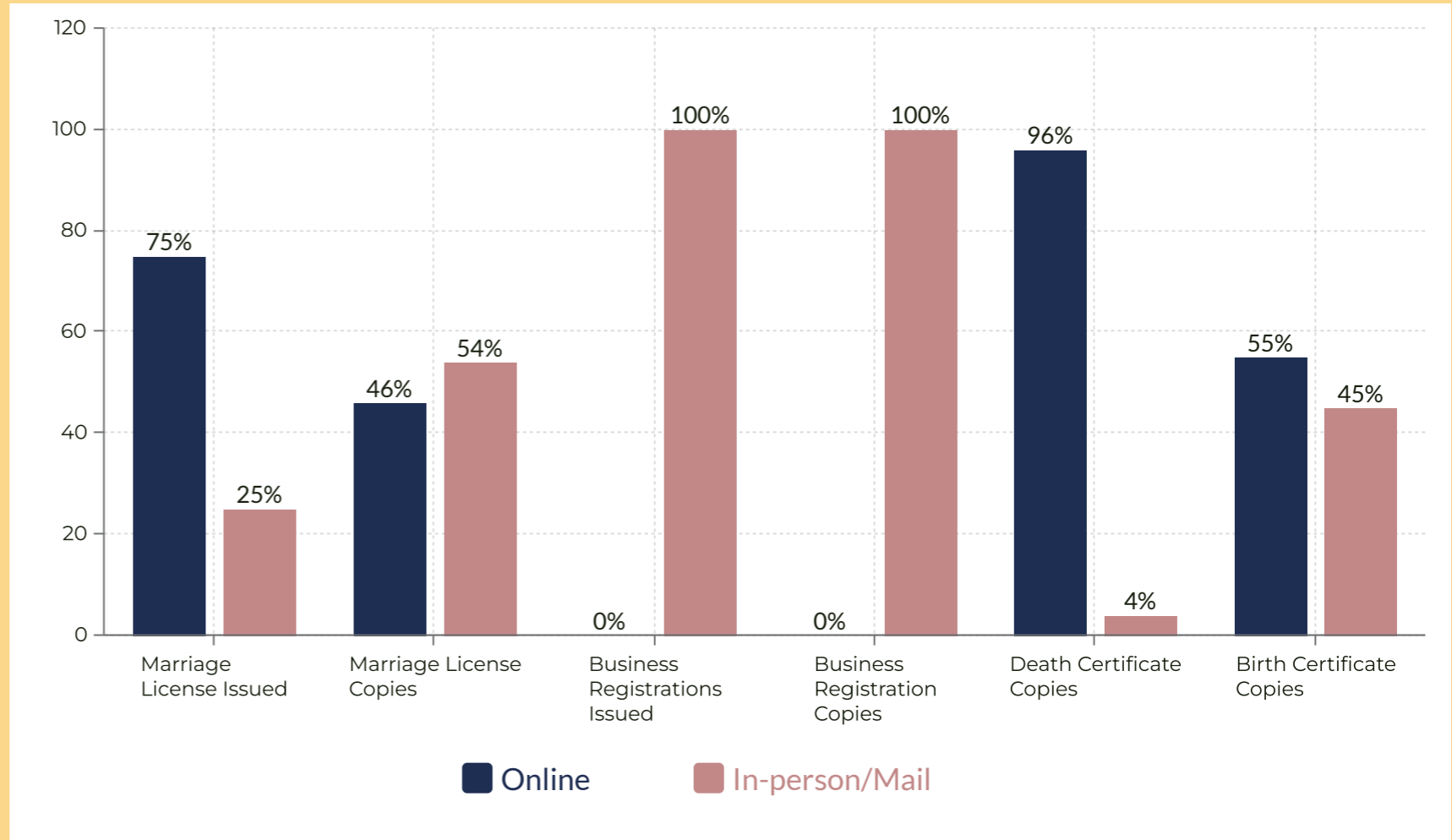


Vital Records

The Vital Records division is the official registrar for birth certificates, death certificates, marriage licenses, concealed pistols licenses, notary applications, and business license registrations.

Records Ordered

How were vital records ordered?



Birth Records



2,111

Babies born



5,455

Copies of birth
certificates







5.3%

decrease in births
from 2020

Top Baby Names of 2021

Boy Names:

-  Hudson
-  Ezra
-  Oliver
-  Liam
-  Henry

Girl Names:

-  Isla
-  Amelia
-  Charlotte
-  Emma
-  Isabella



Death Records



2,111

deaths



18,292

Copies of death
certificates



3.3%

decrease in
deaths from 2020

Notary Public

Our office processed 495 Notary Public applications.

To be a Notary, applicants must:

Obtain a \$10,000 bond, most often from a state-licensed insurance agency or a bonding company

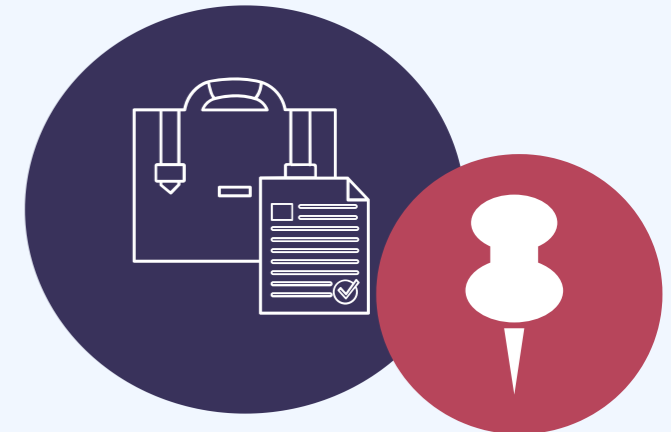
Fill out an application online and visit our office to finalize the application

Mail the completed application and applicable fee to the Michigan Department of State, Office of the Great Seal

Doing Business As (DBA)

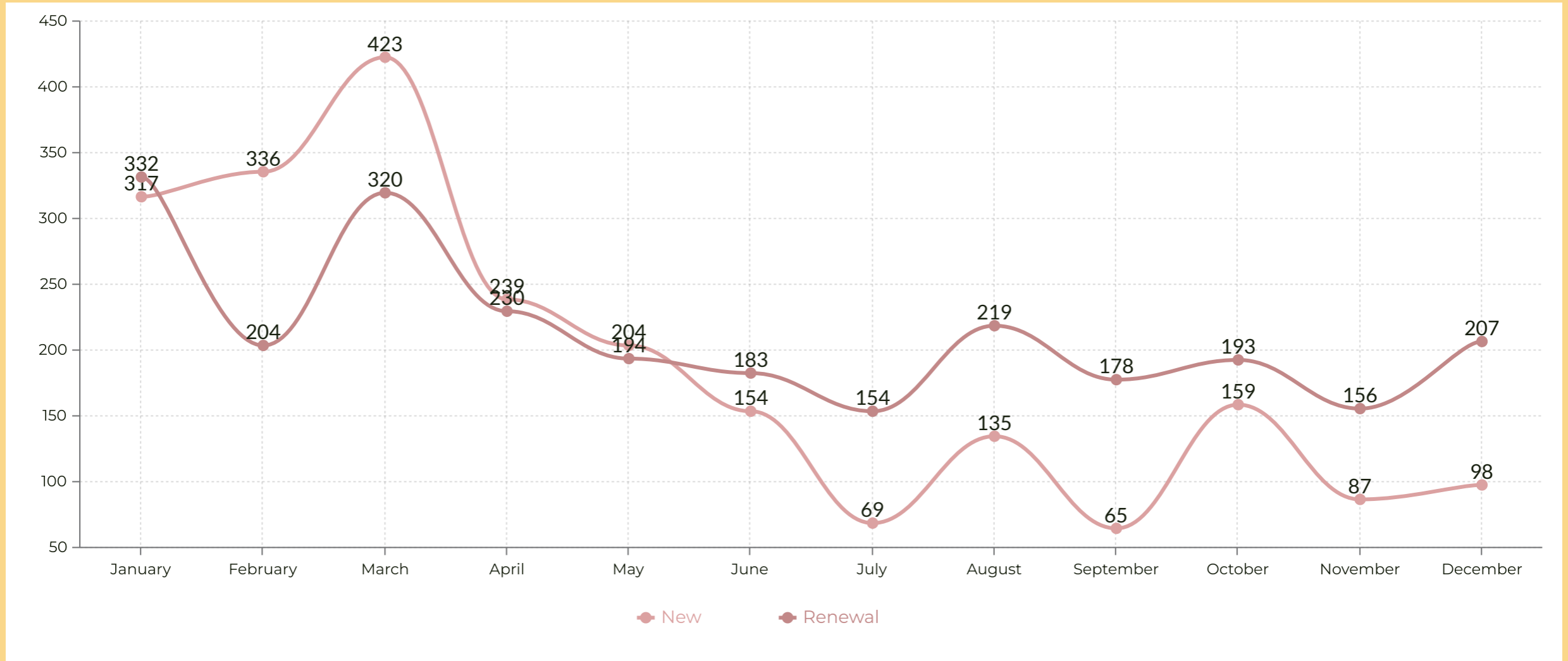
778

business
registrations
processed



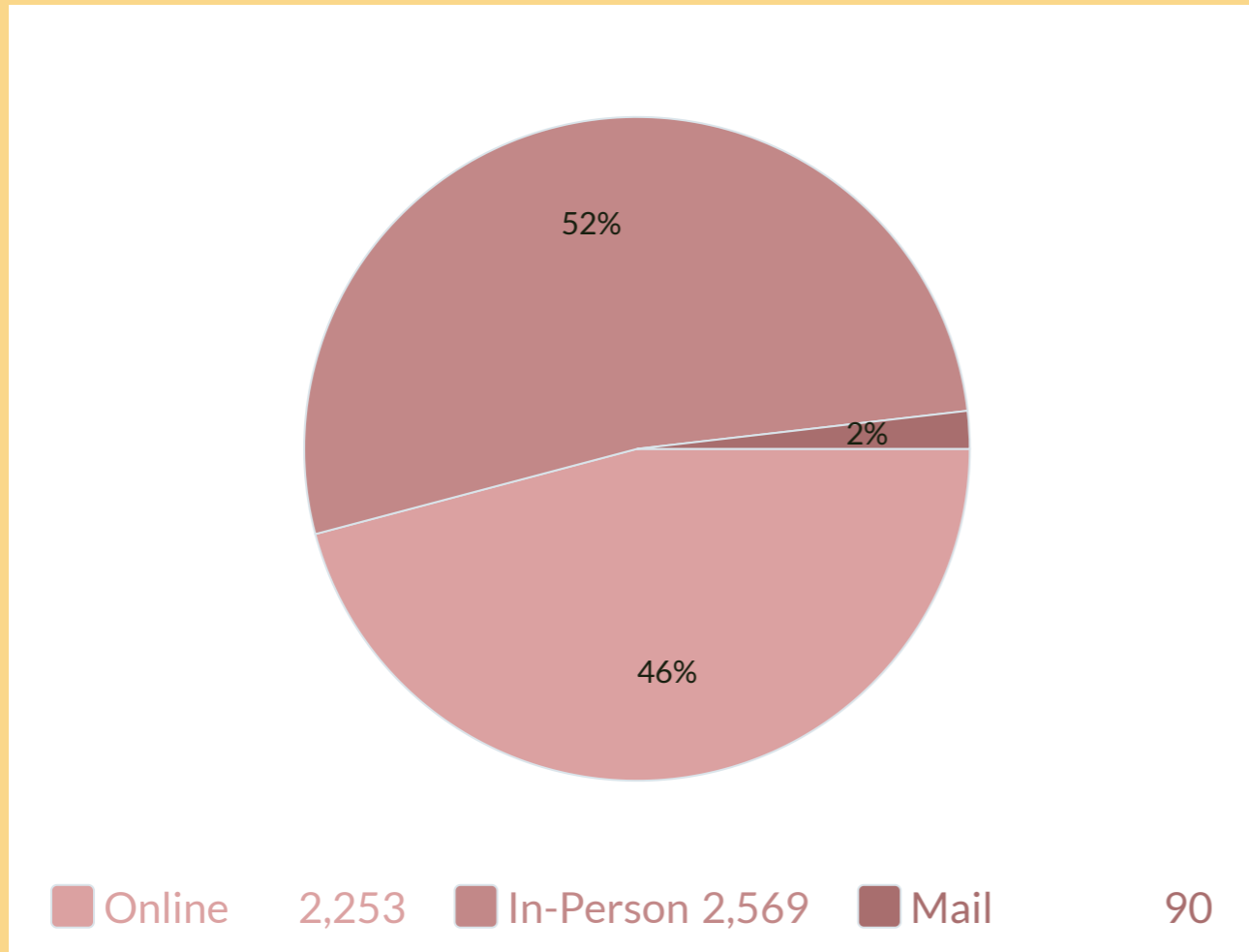
Concealed Pistol License

Our office processed 5,020 CPL applications.



Concealed Pistol License

How did Ottawa County applicants choose to renew?



Of the 4,856 CPL applications that we processed

- 2,286 were new applicants
- 2,570 were renewal applicants

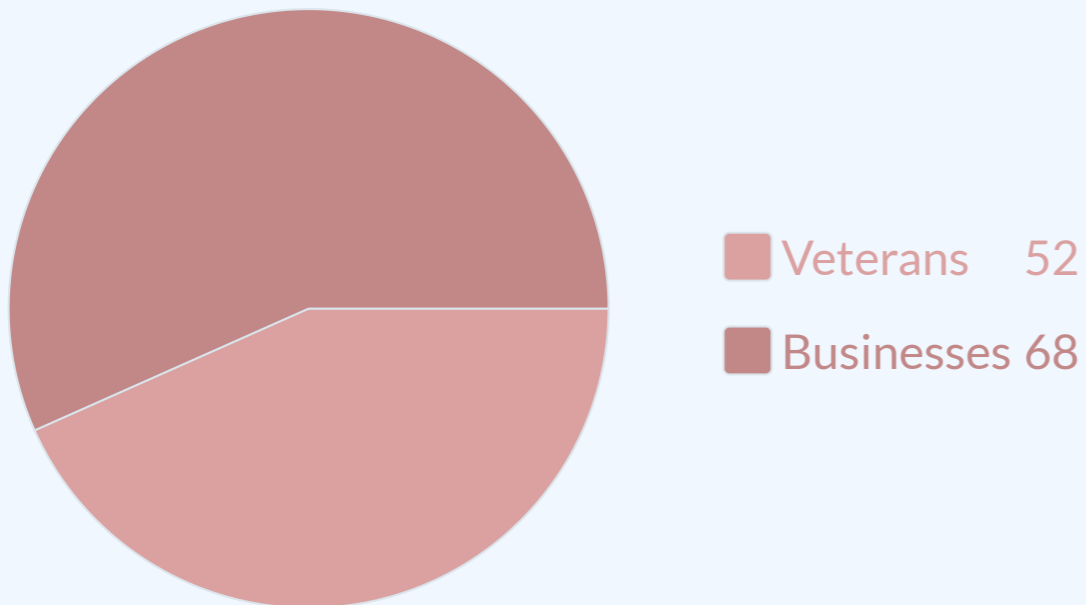
New applicants must apply in-person, but renewal applicants can apply in-person, online, or by mail.

Honor Rewards

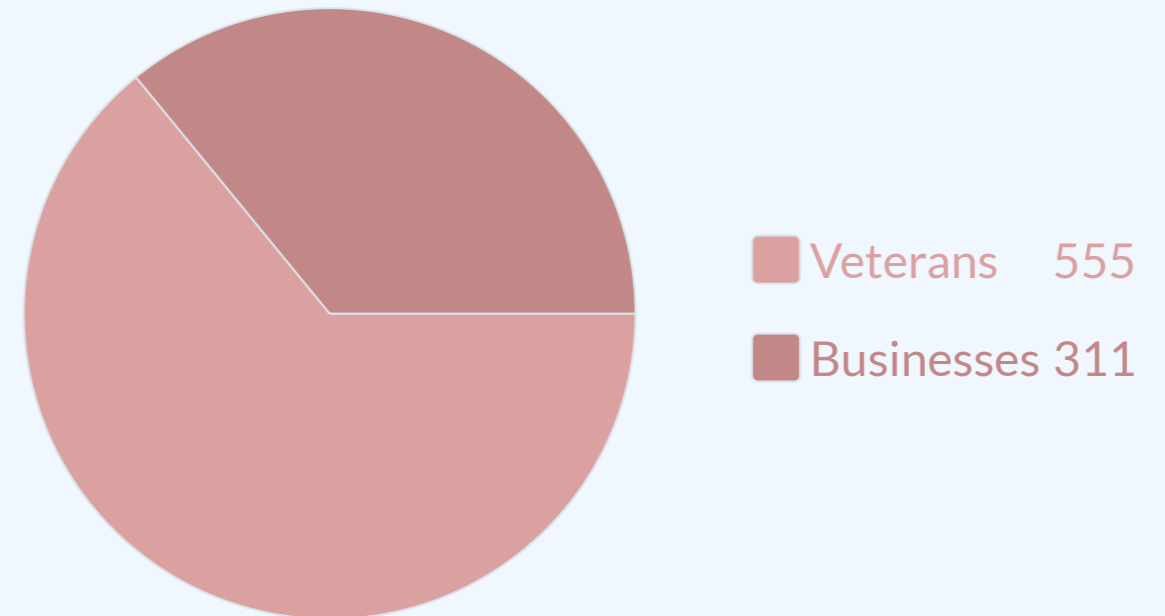
Honor Rewards is a nationally recognized program that allows veterans to receive discounts at participating area businesses by showing their Honor Rewards ID card. To obtain a card, Ottawa County Veterans can fill out an application and file their military discharge paper work with our office.

As a way of connecting our businesses and veterans more often, we started a quarterly newsletter that welcomes new Honor Rewards members, highlights veteran events in the area, and draws attention to veteran organizations and issues. **The newsletter has an average open rate of 41% and is sent to almost 1,000 subscribers.**

New in 2021



Total Since 2015





Honor Rewards Veteran Expo

Out of caution, we held the 2021 Veteran Expo virtually through Facebook and on our website on June 5, 2021. Throughout the day, our office posted 6 pre-recorded videos and held 2 live sessions via Zoom and YouTube.

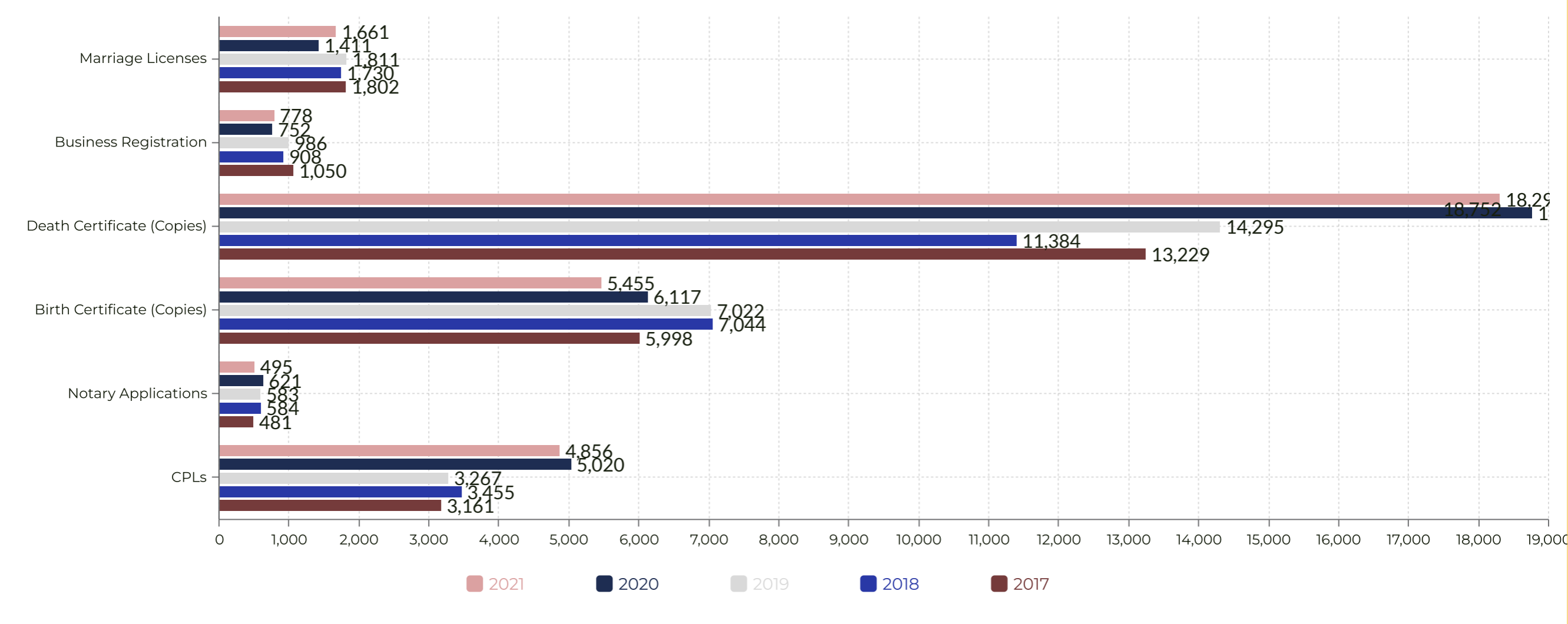
We partnered with a local videographer to capture stories and information from local veteran service organizations and local businesses that support veterans including the West Michigan Veteran Coalition, ReMax Lakeshore & Mutual of Omaha, Folds of Honor West Michigan, Sytsema Funeral Home & Cremation Services and Warriors Set Free.

The 2 live sessions included a benefits overview from the Michigan Veteran Affairs Agency. We also held a panel discussion with representatives from GVSU's Veteran Affairs office, Muskegon County's Department of Veteran Affairs, Ottawa County's Community Mental Health Department and the Veteran Affairs Hospital in Battle Creek.

Panelists covered a wide range of topics and took questions from veterans.

Overall, the expo was a success with over 150 people visiting the website during the day. All information is still accessible on our website at www.miOttawa.org/HonorRewards

Trends Over Time

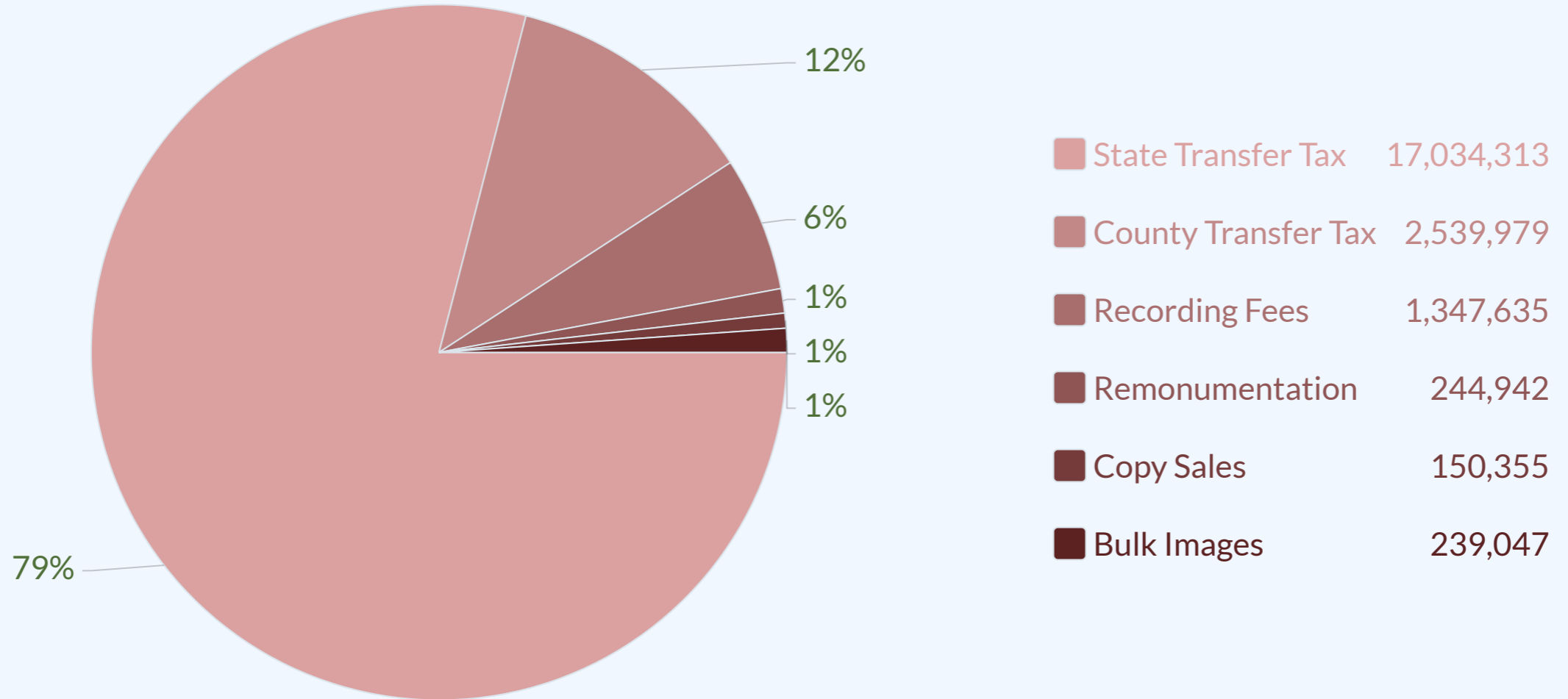




Register of Deeds

The Register of Deeds division is the keeper of the public record for all land documents.

Funds Received



Free Online Record Search



13,453

documents were
purchased through
this service



\$40,824

Revenue
generated in the
General Fund



11.9%

increase in
revenue from
2020

Document Recording



51,360

documents were
recorded
electronically



63,704

total documents
recorded

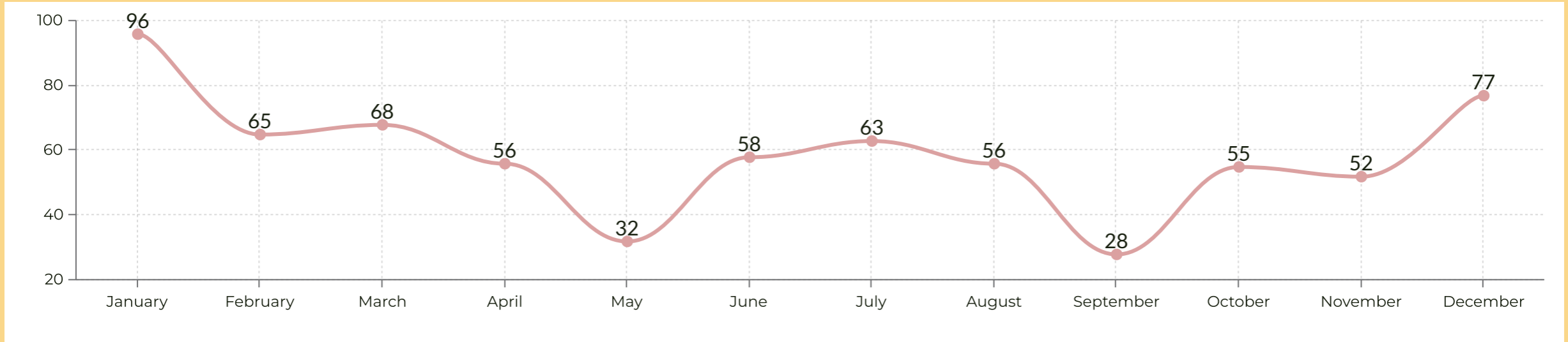


8.2%

increase in
electronic
recordings

Passports

Our office processed 706 passport applications.



\$24,710

Total revenue from passports



\$4,860

Total revenue from
passport photos



1,417

fingerprints taken



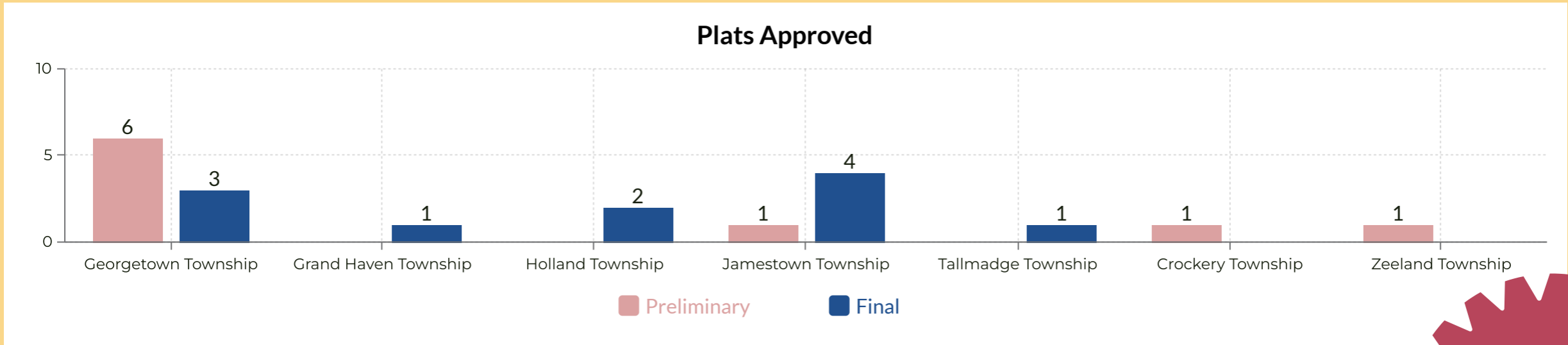
**March-
December
2021**



CPL Fingerprinting

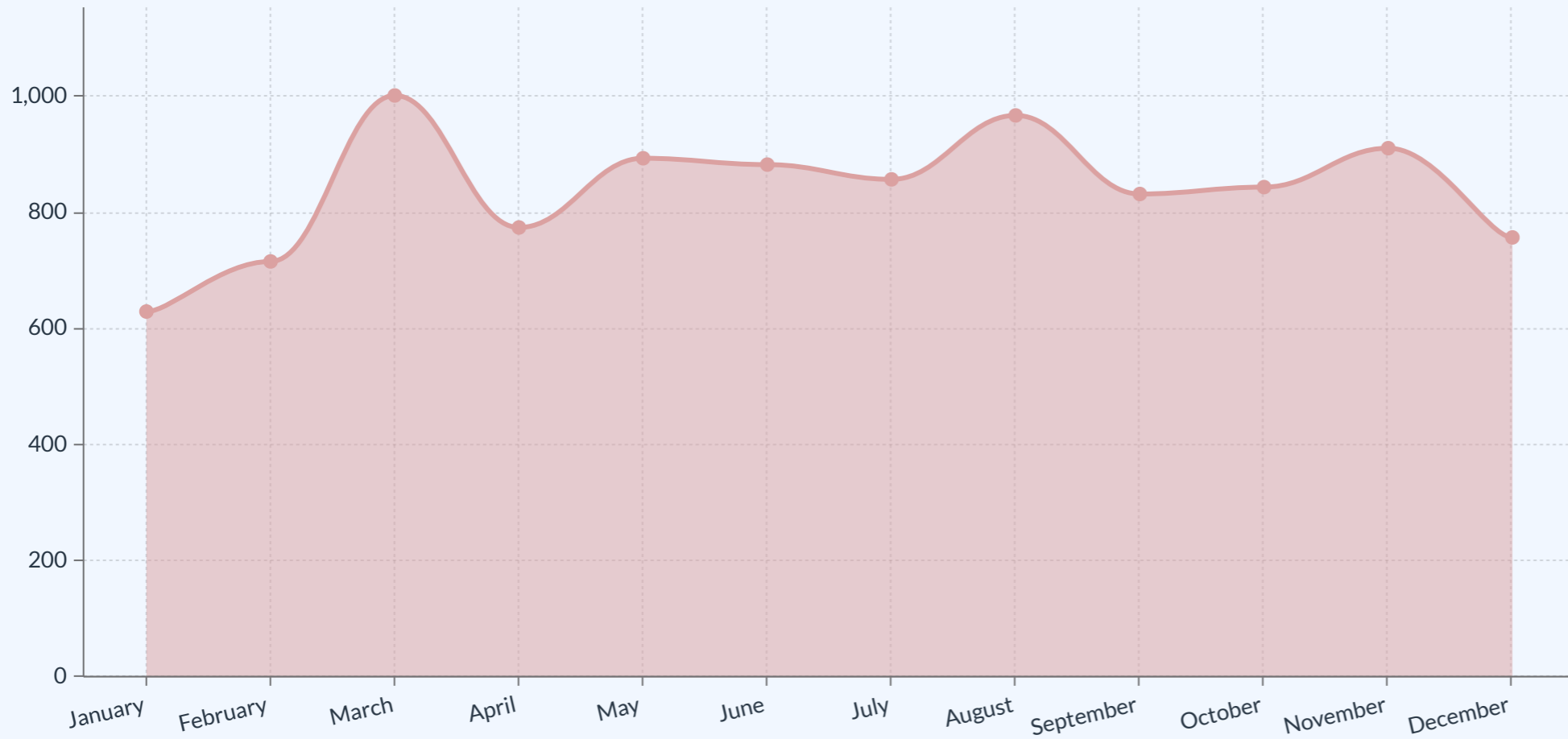
Plat Board

The Ottawa County Plat Board consists of three members including the Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners, the County Treasurer, and the County Clerk | Register of Deeds. The County Clerk | Register of Deeds is the secretary to the Plat Board and therefore responsible for accepting the plats to be reviewed by the board. The board reviews and approves plats to ensure the dimensions of the proposed plat are compliant with the provisions of the Subdivision Control Act of 1967.



**11 Final Plats
Approved in
2021**

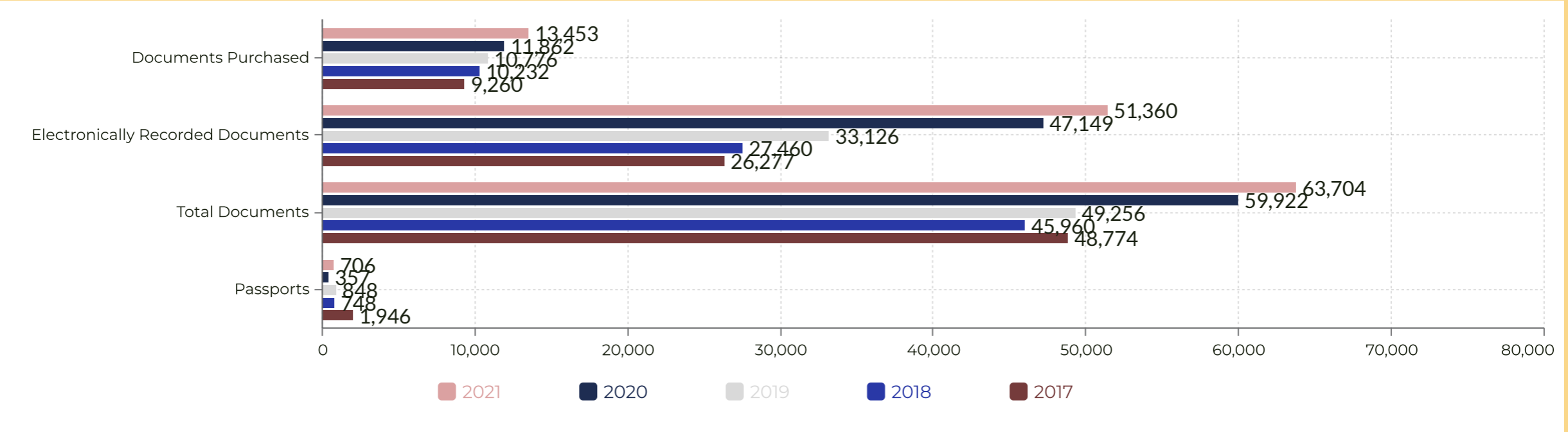
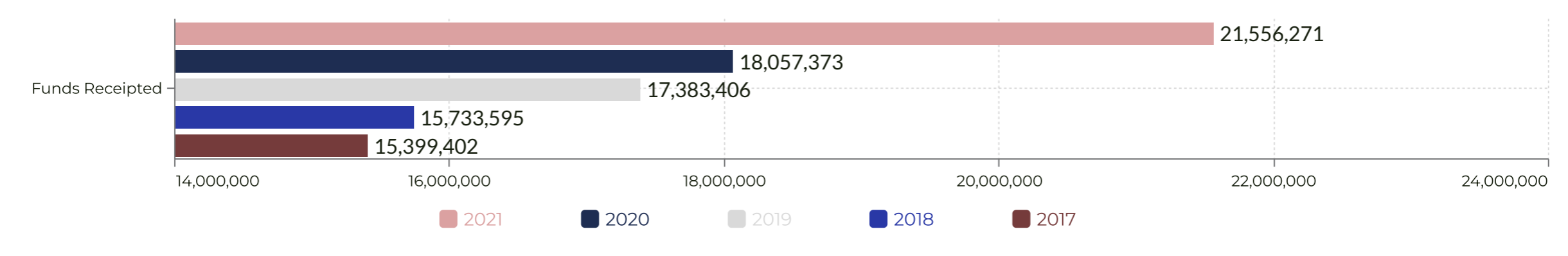
Postage Savings from Electronic Return of Land Documents



Total Savings:

\$10,082.37

Trends Over Time





Circuit Court Records

The Circuit Court Records Division is the keeper of the 20th Circuit Court's records for all Civil, Criminal, Domestic, and Family Division cases.



Funds Received

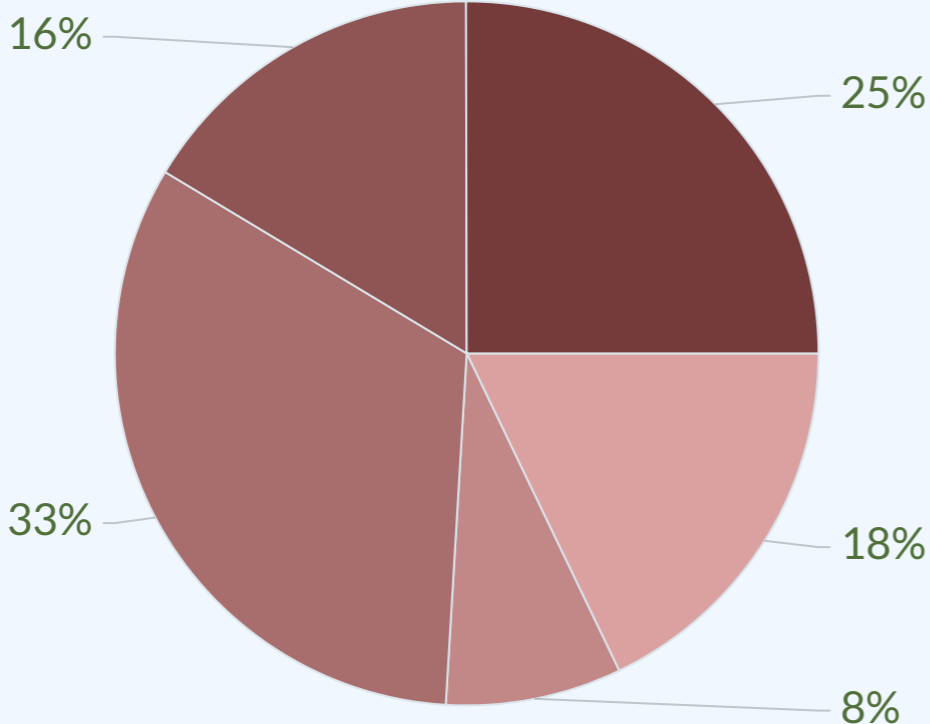
Circuit Court Records receipts all funds for the Circuit Court and the Juvenile Court for items including restitution, state fees, fines and costs, bonds, court orders, filing fees, attorney fees, and several others.






\$2.7
Million

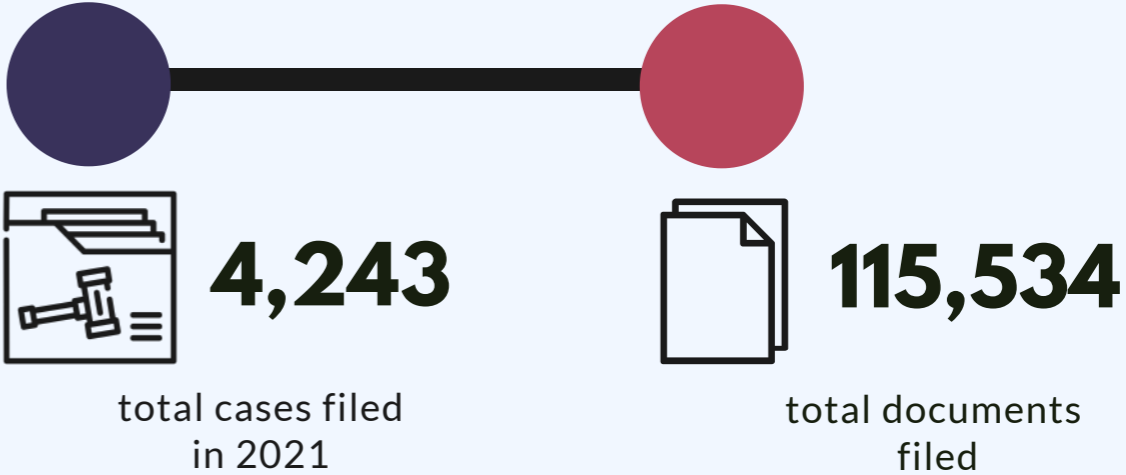
Circuit Court Records funds were down 10% in 2021 due to:

- Collection Clerks didn't hold as many hearings resulting in lower fines and costs
- Juvenile Court did not rent beds to other counties
- Lower overall Court cases due to COVID-19

Cases Filed



 Criminal	758	 Civil	343	 Domestic	1,386
 PPO	694	 Family	1,062		



29
Cases sent to the Court of Appeals

Jury Trials

Jury Trials reconvened in 2021 year with COVID restrictions enforced. One major change included utilizing one court room for jury trials and two other rooms for the voir dire process. In each room a clerk was assigned to assist with the orientation and ensure the jurors recited their oath of service.



22

Trials commenced
as Jury Trials



1,226

Jurors were called
to serve



60%

increase in jurors
called to serve

Family Division Adoptions



98

adoption cases
filed



5

Adoptions finalized
on Michigan
Adoption Day



5.7%

decrease in
adoption cases

4575 Boxes transferred from VRC to GR Archives

182 Boxes sent to state archives

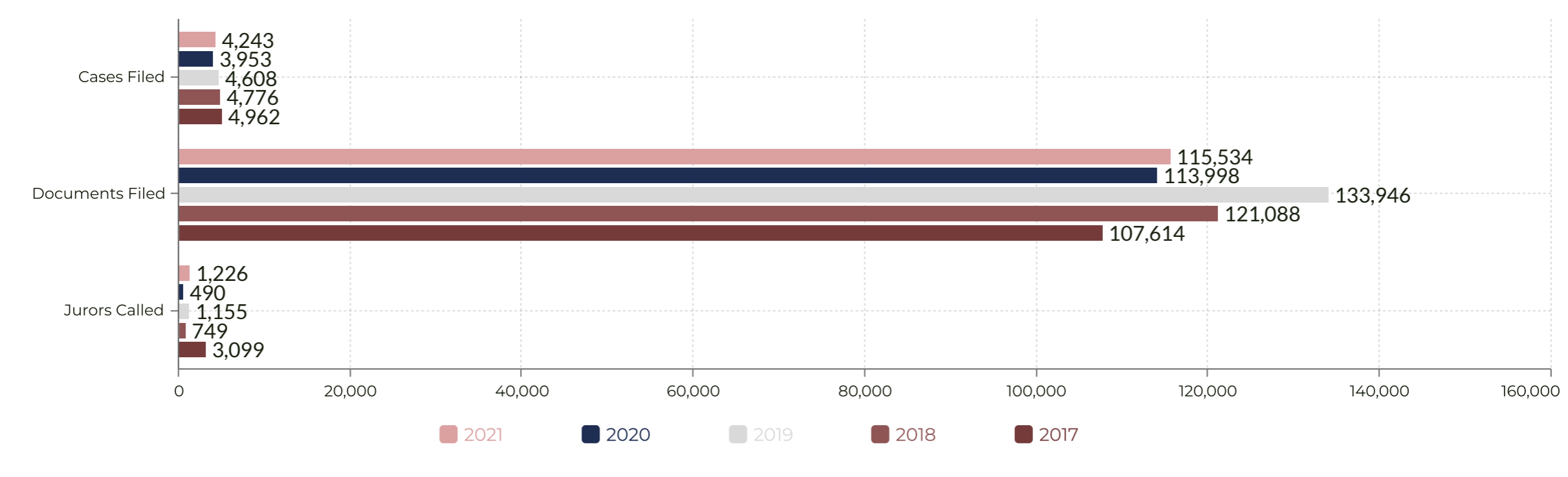
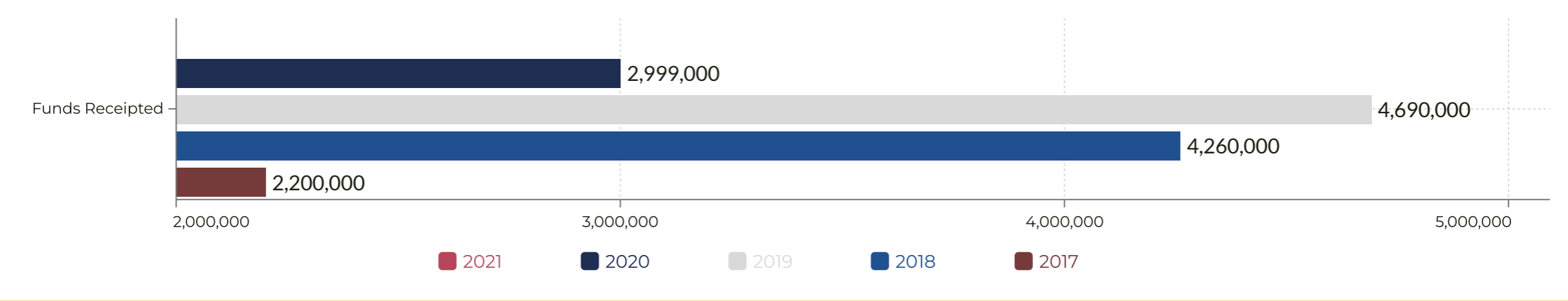
14 Staff members working on this project

Grand Rapids Archives

4/7/2021-8/6/2021

Circuit Court Records recently went through the process of moving thousands of boxes of records from Vital Records Control to the GR Archives. Our team sorted through each box and organized them based on their contents.

Trends Over Time





Elections

The Elections division is responsible for administering and overseeing all elections within Ottawa County.

2021 Elections Rundown



May 4th
Special Election

26,684

Ballots Cast

Voter Turnout

▼ 16%



August 3rd
City Primary Election

2,081

Ballots Cast

Voter Turnout

▼ 22%



November 2nd
City General Election

13,305

Ballots Cast

Voter Turnout

▼ 20%

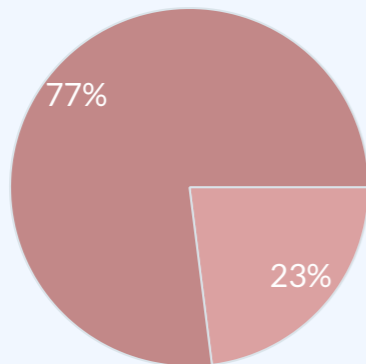


2021 Elections Rundown Continued



**May 4th
Special Election**

How were ballots cast?

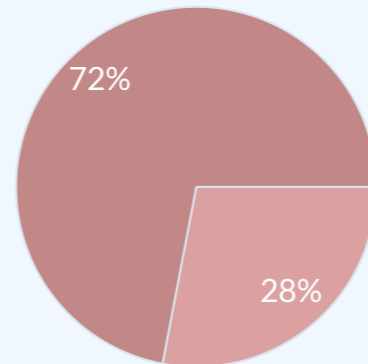


■ In-Person 23 ■ Absentee 77



**August 3rd
City Primary Election**

How were ballots cast?

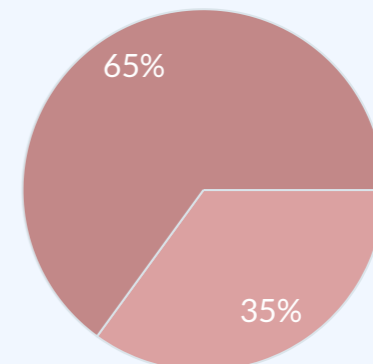


■ In-Person 28 ■ Absentee 72



**November 2nd
City General Election**

How were ballots cast?



■ In-Person 35 ■ Absentee 65

2021 Same Day Voter Registration



**May 4th
Special Election**

5

Voters registered on
Election Day



**August 3rd
City Primary Election**

0

Voters registered on
Election Day



**November 2nd
City General Election**

13

Voters registered on
Election Day

Delivering Election Results– Pilot Program

In anticipation of the elimination of electronic results transmission, our office partnered with the City of Holland Clerk's Office and the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department in a pilot program to physically transmit election Results. The goal of the pilot was to determine the time necessary for the hand delivery of results to the County Clerk .

01 Ahead of Election Day

To prepare for this pilot program, we did not install modems in the tabulators during the Logic and Accuracy Testing. The City of Holland Clerk's office also worked to develop new chain of custody forms to maintain a record of who handled the special USB drive that contained results. Election Inspectors were trained to seal the results drives into containers that were picked up as soon as polls closed.

02 City of Holland

During this pilot program, the City of Holland Clerk and one member of the opposite political party from the Receiving Board drove to each precinct and collected the sealed containers from Election Inspectors. One Election Inspector and the Clerk of the City of Holland signed the chain of custody form.

03 Sheriff's Department

Once the results from each precinct were picked up, all sealed containers were brought back to Holland City Hall to be picked up by two Sheriff Deputies. The Sheriff Deputies signed the chain of custody form and drove the results back to the Ottawa County Administrative Complex.

04 Outcome

This pilot program gave us good insight into areas of improvement for when we physically transmit election results countywide. We learned that results were reported an hour later than all other results that were transmitted electronically. We also learned that we can improve the chain of custody form to be more efficient.

Social Media

As a play on words, we developed a social media campaign titled #MayThe4thBeWithYou for the May 4th Special Election that was Star Wars themed.



5,008

Reach on Facebook



10,530

Impressions on
Twitter

WANT TO VOTE TODAY, BUT YOU'RE NOT REGISTERED? FOLLOW THESE STEPS!



STEP 1

Check your registration status

Have you moved recently? Or are you not sure if you're registered to vote? Check your voter registration status at mi.gov/vote



STEP 2

Go to your local clerk's office

If you want to register to vote and cast a ballot today, you have to register at your local clerk's office, **NOT** your precinct. You can find your local clerk's office at mi.gov/vote



STEP 3, VOTE WHERE YOU WANT TO!

Vote at your local clerk's office

If you register to vote at your local clerk's office on election day, you can cast an absentee ballot at your clerk's office when you register!



Vote at your precinct

If you would rather vote in person, bring your voter registration receipt with you, and you can cast a ballot at your precinct!

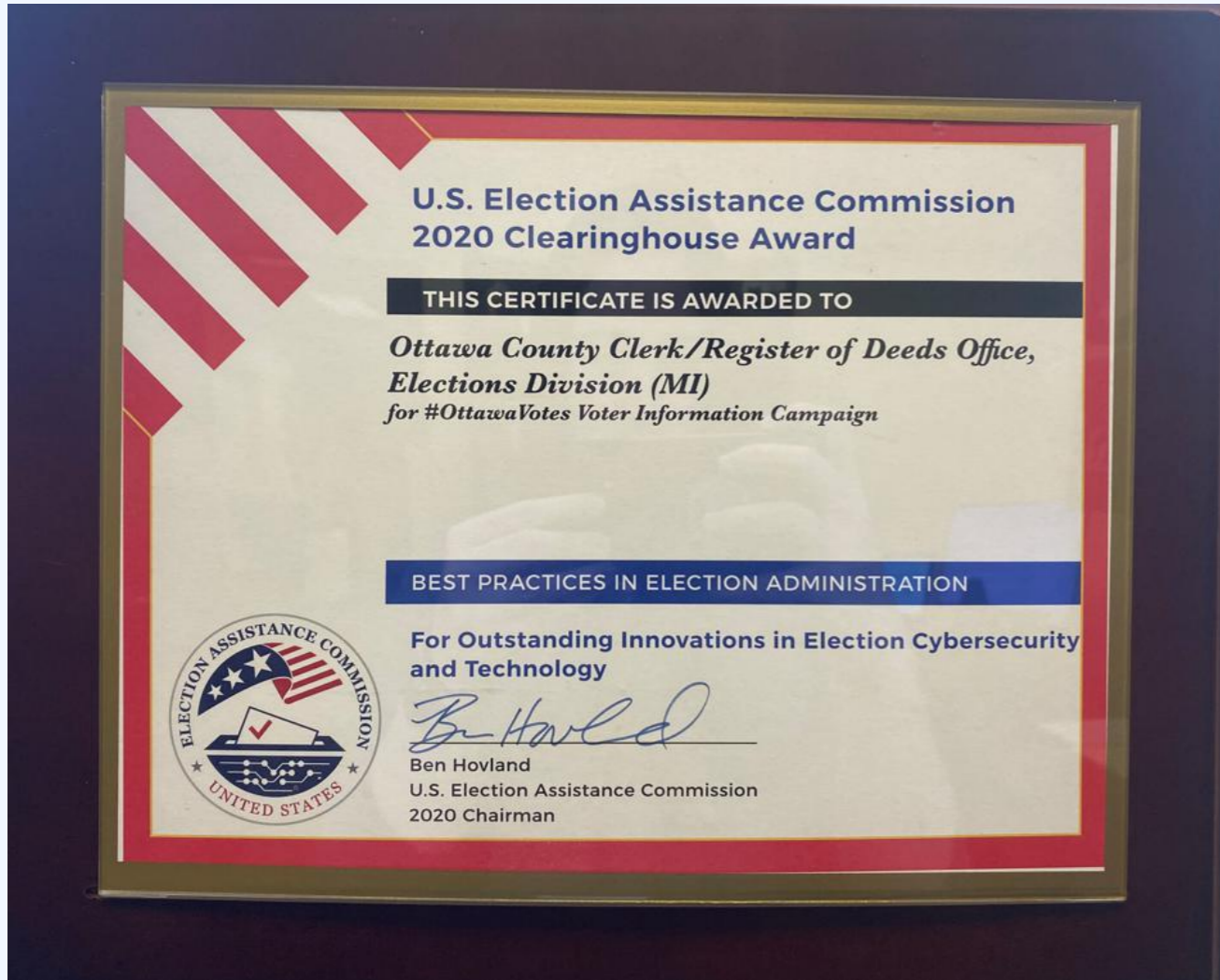


Ottawa County
Clerk | Register of Deeds

Justin F. Roebuck
Ottawa County Clerk | Register of Deeds

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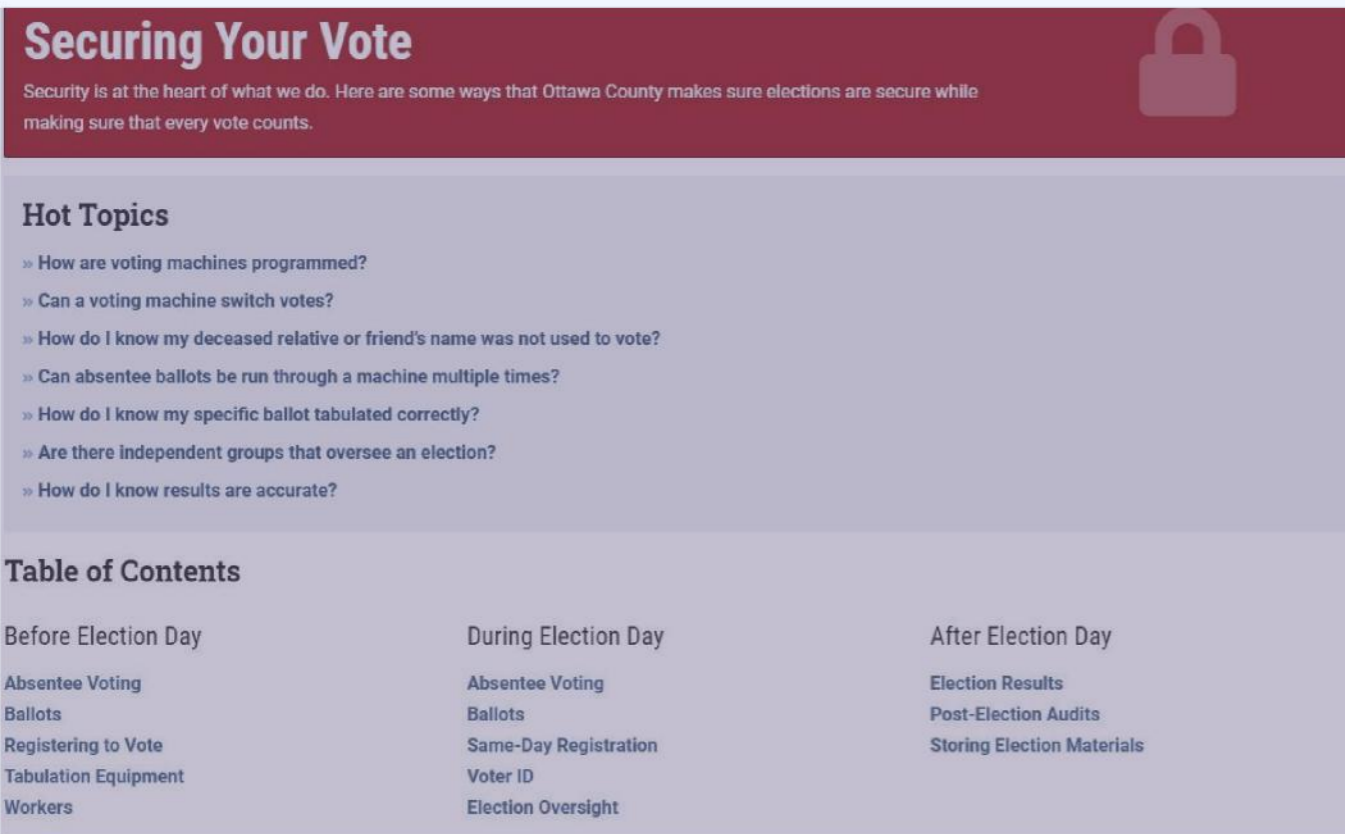
U.S. Election Assistance Commission Award



In April 2021, our Elections team was awarded the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's 2020 Clearinghouse Award for Outstanding Innovation in Election Cybersecurity and Technology. The award was given in recognition of our 2020 #OttawaVotes campaign that was an effort to educate voters on the elections process and on the security of elections in Ottawa County. The campaign reached over 1 million impressions on social media and also educated voters through radio and billboard ads.

Educating Voters on Election Integrity

miottawa.org/SecuringTheVote



Securing Your Vote

Security is at the heart of what we do. Here are some ways that Ottawa County makes sure elections are secure while making sure that every vote counts.

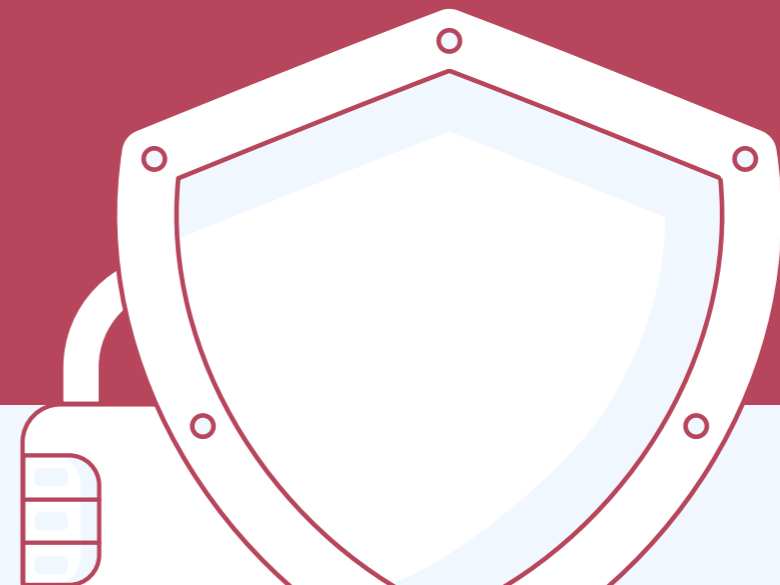
Hot Topics

- » How are voting machines programmed?
- » Can a voting machine switch votes?
- » How do I know my deceased relative or friend's name was not used to vote?
- » Can absentee ballots be run through a machine multiple times?
- » How do I know my specific ballot tabulated correctly?
- » Are there independent groups that oversee an election?
- » How do I know results are accurate?

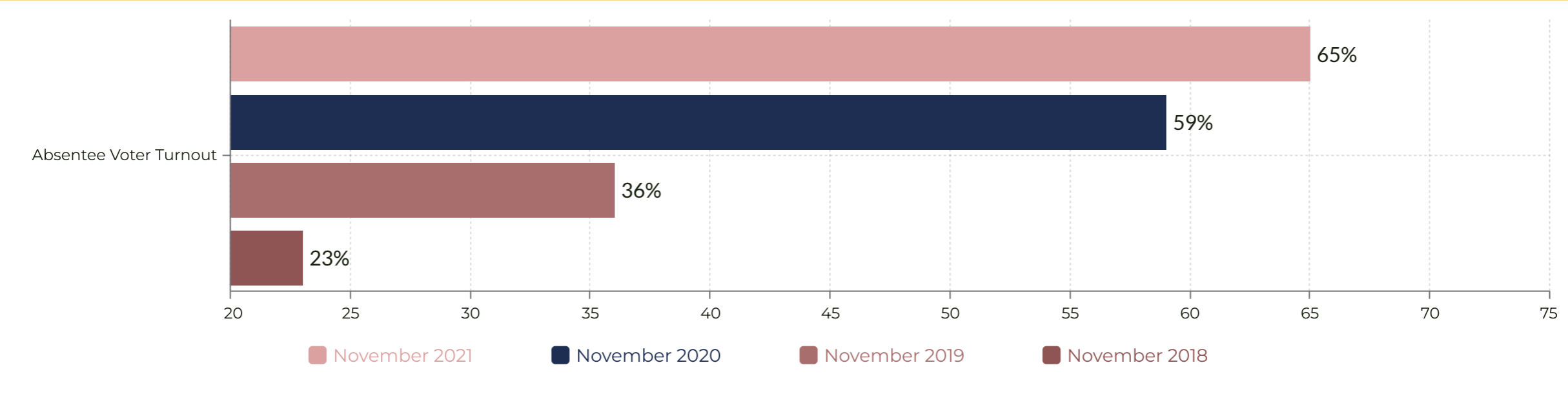
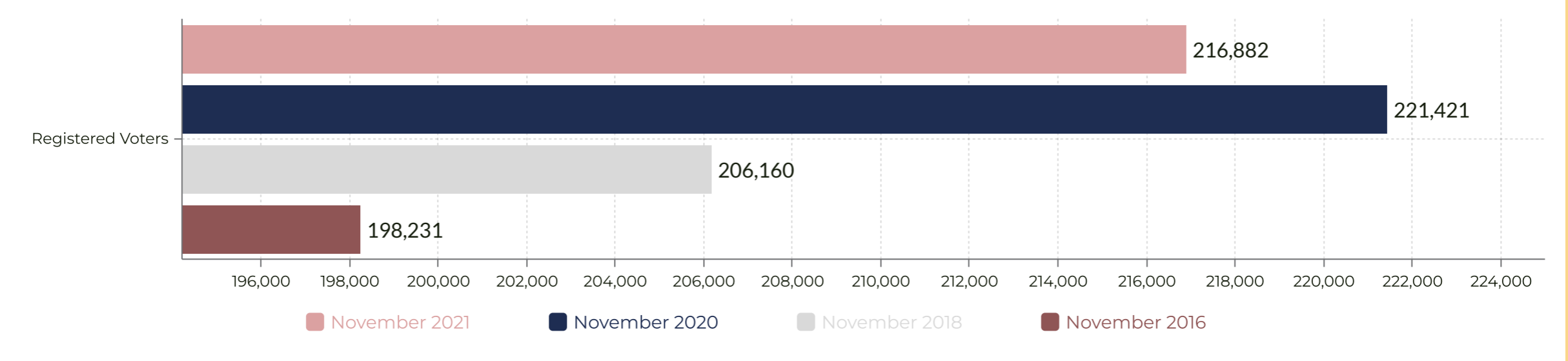
Table of Contents

Before Election Day	During Election Day	After Election Day
Absentee Voting	Absentee Voting	Election Results
Ballots	Ballots	Post-Election Audits
Registering to Vote	Same-Day Registration	Storing Election Materials
Tabulation Equipment	Voter ID	
Workers	Election Oversight	

As questions about election security continued in the wake of the November 2020 Election, we have continued to update our Election Security website to include accurate information about elections.



Trends Over Time



2022-23 Goals



Campaign Finance Online

Our Elections team will launch a new campaign finance platform in mid-2022 that allows for online filing for candidates and online search of all records for the public. This customer service improvement will leverage better technology to improve transparency for the public and also help candidates to file documents more efficiently.



Kiosks for Vital Records and Register of Deeds Services

Our Register of Deeds and Vital Records team will be expanding options for customers by offering online services remotely via kiosk stations. The pilot kiosk stations are currently located in the lobby of our Fillmore Office, with the goal of rolling out stations in public locations across Ottawa County.



Case Management System

To streamline the process of opening a case through the courts, we plan to implement a new case management software system in partnership with the 20th Circuit and 58th District Courts.



Developing Our Team

We recognize that strong teams are built intentionally, and our goal is to help each member of our team grow and develop personally and professionally. The Clerk/Register's Office management team is seeking to expand educational opportunities for staff as well as maintaining a strong focus on our mission, vision and values as we onboard new members of our team.



Ottawa County

THANK YOU

