

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: April 16, 2026

To: Marcelia Nicholson-Bovell, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Israel Ramón, Milwaukee County Register of Deeds

Subject: Milwaukee County Register of Deeds 2025 Annual Report

File Type: Informational Report

This informational report provides a report on how the Milwaukee County Register of Deeds Office set and achieved its 2025 goals.

POLICY

This report aligns to Chapter 108: Achieving Racial Equity & Health.

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| Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances: | Chapter 108: Achieving Racial Equity & Health |
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ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

- 1A: Reflect the full diversity of the County at every level of County government
- 1B: Create and nurture an inclusive culture across County government
- 1C: Increase the number of County contracts awarded to minority and women-owned businesses
- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity
- 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions
- 3A: Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities
- 3B: Enhance the County’s fiscal health and sustainability
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

DEPARTMENTAL REPORT

The Milwaukee County Register of Deeds Office operates under the direct control of Wisconsin State Statute 59.43 (Register of Deeds; duties, fees, deputies) and Wisconsin State Statutes 69.05 and 69.07 (duties of register of deeds). Provision of all services must align with our governing statutes. We therefore provide in this report a compilation of financial and operational performance to policy makers on these services regulated by statute.

The Register of Deeds has several constant goals. Our office seeks to provide helpful, responsive, and friendly service to the public and our industry partners, provide copies of Vital Records to requestors in accordance with our statutory mandate, and to record, search and archive the numerous types of real estate instruments that govern property ownership and condition of title to real estate in Milwaukee County.

In 2025, our office recorded a total of 92,579 real estate records, which is a 7,572 document increase over 2024. Revenues derived from Wisconsin Real Estate Transfer Tax in 2025 totaled \$3,281,938.74, marking an increase of \$451,950.00 over 2024 performance. These increased revenues were partially the result of the average real estate sales price increasing by \$15,443.46 to \$389,199.63 in 2025.

| REAL ESTATE FUNCTION PERFORMANCE | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| | 2024 | 2025 | Increase | Percent Increase (rounded) |
| Document Recording | 85,007 | 92,579 | 7,572 | 8.9% |
| County Share Transfer Fee | \$2,829,988.74 | \$3,281,938.74 | \$451,950.00 | 15.9% |
| Average Value Transferred | \$373,756.17 | \$389,199.63 | \$15,443.46 | 4.1% |

Fiscal performance related to our issuance of Vital Records increased in 2025 as well. Much of the increase is directly related to the "Real ID" deadline. The number of records issued in 2025 was 58,515, which is an increase of 13,500 over 2024 performance. This resulted in revenues of \$284,447.00 for this service area, an increase of \$64,472.00 over 2024 performance.

| VITAL RECORDS FUNCTION PERFORMANCE | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| | 2024 | 2025 | Increase | Percent Increase (Rounded) |
| Copies Issued for Fee | 45,015 | 58,515 | 13,500 | 29% |
| Fees/Charges Collected | \$219,975.00 | \$284,447.00 | \$64,472.00 | 29.3% |

Overall, the total operations of the Register of Deeds in 2025 resulted in an actual tax levy of (\$4,416,670.00) which reflects a \$1,078,483 increased contribution to the county bottom line over 2024 performance. Our 2025 actual tax levy was \$1,818,962.00 above the 2025 budgetary target of (\$2,597,708). Excess revenues of this nature may be used by Milwaukee County to offset other budgetary items or to offset other departmental deficits.

| OVERALL DEPARTMENTAL PERFORMANCE | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2024 Actual Tax Levy | 2024 Levy Target | 2025 Actual Tax Levy | 2025 Levy Target | 2025 (Surplus)/Deficit From Target |
| (\$3,338,187) | (\$2,626,326) | (\$4,416,670) | (\$2,597,708) | (\$1,818,962) |

In 2026, our office will continue to maintain high service standards for all individuals requesting our services, while following all applicable statutes and procedures. Positive customer feedback received throughout 2025 continues to reinforce that our daily efforts to provide high quality services are recognized and appreciated by our customers and industry partners. The Register of Deeds staff is a group of dedicated professionals who reflect the diversity of the communities and business partners we serve. As such, the Register of Deeds plans to continue to provide services in accordance with our statutory responsibilities in the same efficient, cost effective and responsive manner as 2025.

Future fiscal results are not guaranteed and will remain dependent on the local real estate market, employment market, and inflationary pressures felt by consumers. Real concerns exist regarding housing costs outpacing income, which could lead to market instability and buyer inability to enter the market. Additionally, Vital Records issuance numbers are likely to decrease in 2026 without any major initiative requiring individuals to obtain these records to update their identification.

A copy of our complete 2025 statistical report is attached, which reflects the items highlighted above.

FISCAL EFFECT

The report is informational only and there is no fiscal impact.

PREPARED BY:

Steven C. Kroll, Chief Deputy Register of Deeds

APPROVED BY:

Israel Ramón, Register of Deeds

ATTACHMENTS:

2025 Statistical Report

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk

STATISTICAL REPORT

**Israel Ramón
Register of Deeds of Milwaukee County**

Monthly Report of Annual 2025 as Compared with Annual 2024

| YEAR | WITHOUT TRANSFER FEE | WITH TRANSFER FEE | TOTAL TRANSFER FEE | AVERAGE REAL ESTATE SALE PRICE | FORECLOSURES (LisPendens) |
|---------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2025 | 8228 | 14,162 | \$16,409,693.70 | \$389,199.63 | 1232 |
| 2024 | 7886 | 14,020 | \$14,149,943.70 | \$373,756.17 | 1251 |
| CHANGE | 342 | 142 | \$2,259,750.00 | \$15,443.46 | (19) |

| YEAR | TOTAL MORTGAGES | ASSIGNMENTS | PARTIAL RELEASE | RELEASE | LAND CONTRACTS | SHERIFF DEEDS | JOINT TENANCY SURVIVORSHIP |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|---------|----------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| 2025 | 25,145 | 5426 | 636 | 25,101 | 99 | 290 | 1466 |
| 2024 | 22,990 | 4582 | 672 | 22,084 | 127 | 313 | 1452 |
| CHANGE | 2155 | 844 | (36) | 3017 | (28) | (23) | 14 |

| YEAR | FEDERAL TAX LIENS | FINANCING STATEMENTS | MILITARY DISCHARGE | ELECTRONIC RECORDING | E-DOCS % OF TOTAL DOCUMENTS | TOTAL RECORDS |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 2025 | 720 | 1283 | 1 | 80,838 | 87.8% | 92,579 |
| 2024 | 658 | 1194 | 6 | 73,699 | 87.4% | 85,007 |
| CHANGE | 62 | 89 | (5) | 7,139 | 0.4% | 7,572 |

| YEAR | VITAL STATISTICS | | | COPIES ISSUED | | SUBDIVISION PLATS | | CONDOMINIUM PLATS | |
|---------------|------------------|-----------|--------|---------------|--------|-------------------|------|-------------------|-------|
| | Births | Marriages | Deaths | Free | Paid | NO. | LOTS | NO. | UNITS |
| 2025 | 13,014 | 3797 | 8676 | 235 | 58,515 | 4 | 73 | 14 | 74 |
| 2024 | 12,452 | 3752 | 8190 | 114 | 45,015 | 3 | 35 | 18 | 98 |
| CHANGE | 562 | 45 | 486 | 121 | 13,500 | 1 | 38 | (4) | (24) |

| YEAR | COPIES AND IMAGES | RECORDED DOCUMENTS | VITAL STATISTICS | COUNTY SHARE TRANSFER FEE | TOTAL REVENUE |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| 2025 | \$581,601.44 | \$1,371,510.00 | \$284,447.00 | \$3,281,938.74 | \$5,519,497.18 |
| 2024 | \$525,035.06 | \$1,264,045.00 | \$219,975.00 | \$2,829,988.74 | \$4,839,043.80 |
| CHANGE | \$56,566.38 | \$107,465.00 | \$64,472.00 | \$451,950.00 | \$680,453.38 |