Mission:
To provide customer-friendly processes that are efficient and transparent, records that are easy to access, and elections that are accurate, secure and convenient for voters.
OUR 2019 STORY BRINGS 2020 INTO FOCUS

The first year of any elected official’s term is bound to be one of transition and adaptation. Following my June 2019 election, many significant process changes were already in mind as we began to work toward goals of expanding access to the ballot box, preserving and digitizing city records, and ensuring a fair process for those experiencing foreclosure.

Then came the virus. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has forced governments everywhere to evolve and adapt, we are fortunate for our dedicated staff who went right to work to ensure that Denver’s Clerk and Recorder’s Office remains as accessible as possible, using technology to reduce the need for in-person office visits, and maintaining access to voting services across the city. And we did so without skipping a beat.

As we stand more than halfway through a year of changes, anxiety, and uncertainty, we can be confident that the ongoing work to bring our office’s services to the citizens of Denver has equipped us for the road ahead. We will continue to meet the challenges of 2020 by accomplishing the goals we already had in mind: providing the people of Denver with accessibility, transparency, and security in everything we do.

Paul López is the City and County of Denver’s third elected Clerk and Recorder. Prior to his election, he served three terms on City Council, representing Denver’s District 3.

BUDGET AND REVENUE

Budgets and expenses for the Office of the Clerk and Recorder fluctuate from year to year primarily due to the number and types of elections that are held.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerk and Recorder Budget</td>
<td>$7,501,898</td>
<td>$9,292,607</td>
<td>$9,222,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funds Expended</td>
<td>$6,560,825</td>
<td>$8,295,230</td>
<td>$8,781,919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Revenues</td>
<td>$6,874,500</td>
<td>$6,832,500</td>
<td>$6,625,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Revenues</td>
<td>$7,216,555</td>
<td>$6,185,445</td>
<td>$7,514,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Revenue change from projected to actual</td>
<td>4.98%</td>
<td>9.47%</td>
<td>13.42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2019 figures are unaudited

Cover image by Roschetzky Photography
2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2019, we gave Denver voters more ways than ever to cast a ballot. We piloted both a blockchain-based mobile voting application for military and overseas voters and an accessible, vote-at-home option for voters with disabilities, featuring an accessible interactive sample ballot. We offered sample ballots in **seven languages**, including English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Somali, Arabic, and Amharic, and we added five ballot dropboxes in neighborhoods with historically low turnout.

The Office of the Public Trustee handled **581 foreclosure filings** in 2019, a slight increase from the previous year. We also returned **$1,594,366** in excess funds to Denver homeowners experiencing foreclosure. Additionally, the team worked to create standard process documents to ease onboarding and training of new employees.

In 2019, we welcomed dozens of couples for our annual Valentine’s Day wedding celebration. We issued **8,692 licenses**: more marriage licenses than in any previous year.

In 2019, our office digitized and made public more records than ever before. Our digital collections of property, business, marriage, and other records are searchable and comprehensive. By the end of 2019, more than **11 million records** were available on the online records database. The office also made real estate records searchable by name going back to 1950, and all marriage records on file searchable by name from 1903 to present.

2020 VISION

In 2020, we are committed to making sure that voting in Denver is safe, accessible, and easy. Methods like mail ballots, curbside pickup, and accessibility measures are part of this goal, as well as rigorous cleaning and physical distancing practices at our voting centers.

We are only beginning to understand the breadth and depth of the pandemic’s impact on our city’s economy. The Office of the Public Trustee has partnered with the Denver Office of Financial Empowerment and Protection to provide homeowners with information on the foreclosure process, as well as local organizations that provide housing and credit counseling.

A statewide suspension of in-person requirements for marriage licenses allowed us to ensure continuity of marriage license operations during the Denver stay-at-home and safer-at-home orders. Hundreds of couples received licenses without a visit to our office in April and May 2020.

In 2020 the work continues to ensure that residents and researchers can access important records online, from the comfort and safety of home. With more people than ever facing stay-at-home and safer-at-home orders due to COVID-19, online access to records is vital to the legal, business, and personal needs of the public.
2019 was a busy election year, and the Elections Division responded to the challenge with continued efforts to expand voting access and transparency across the City and County of Denver. With mobile voting, more ballot dropboxes, and the ability to track a ballot like a package, voting in Denver is easy, accessible, and accountable.

Denver Elections sought to make voting more convenient and secure for military and overseas citizens during the municipal election cycle in 2019 by piloting a blockchain-based mobile voting application that enables eligible voters to verify their identity, access and mark their ballot, sign their affidavit, and cast their ballot securely from their mobile phone. 120 voters used the application in the May Municipal Election, and 110 voters used the app in the run-off. Denver also piloted a public audit of the votes cast through the blockchain application as proof of concept for end-to-end verifiable elections in which voters can confirm their vote was recorded and counted correctly. Eighteen auditors participated in the public audit and reported no discrepancies.

Denver Elections also piloted an interactive sample ballot to make it easier and more accessible for voters to find information about the candidates and questions on their ballots. The interactive sample ballot features a fully accessible platform for voters with visual or other impairments, and offers one-stop shopping for all information about what’s on voters’ ballots.

In addition to offering remote voting options, the Elections Division is committed to providing a safe and healthy in-person voting experience for those who vote in our physical locations. Elections workers are equipped with personal protective gear and clean and disinfect public voting areas regularly. Voting centers are set up for proper physical distancing practices. These measures will ensure that Denver Elections is prepared for the “new normal” in the 2020 and 2021 elections to come.
• Mailed more than **1.2 million ballots** for three 2019 elections  
  • **481,895** registered voters, **86.8%** of which were active in the November 2019 election  
  • Installed **five new** 24-hour ballot dropboxes in the Montbello, Swansea, West Colfax, Westwood, and Baker neighborhoods  
  • **2019 Democracy Award** for enhanced security and access for Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) voters  
  • **2019 Freedom Award for Innovation** for visualizations of daily ballot returns  
  • **2019 Eagles Award for Use of Technology** for election night results dashboards  
  • **2019 Independence Award for Exceptional Innovation for Voting Accessibility** for the interactive sample ballot

### PUBLIC TRUSTEE: SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Foreclosure rates in 2019 were in line with previous years, with only a slight increase in filings over 2018. But the Office of the Public Trustee is well-positioned in 2020 in the event that the economic impacts of the COVID-19 virus result in an increase in foreclosure filings.

In 2019, the office prioritized documentation of their processes, which will speed onboarding if the team needs to expand to meet the demands of a higher caseload.

The office created a "Foreclosure 101" presentation on the foreclosure process, which was presented in 2019 to representatives from other Front Range-area counties. This document provides the office with an additional training tool.

Finally, in partnership with the Denver Office of Financial Empowerment and Protection, the Office of the Public Trustee compiled a comprehensive guide to resources for those affected by foreclosure. This document provides information on credit and housing counseling organizations and is available on our website in both English and Spanish.

- **581** foreclosure filings  
- **36,424** Releases of Deeds of Trust, up **12%** from 2018  
- **$1,594,366** in excess funds returned to Denver homeowners experiencing foreclosure  
- **$528,674** in excess funds transferred to the Great Colorado Payback program  
- **87** foreclosures cured by homeowners  
- **45** properties sold at auction to third parties  
- Average 2019 third party sales price: **$291,222**
RECORDING: CONTINUITY AND SAFETY

eRecording increased in popularity again in 2019, comprising 18% more of the city’s total eRecorded documents than in 2018. The eRecording option provides qualifying customers with efficient, timely recording, taking only a few minutes to complete. The use of eRecording helped the office maintain continuity of operations during the COVID-related suspension of in-person services, and continues to provide a contact-free way for qualifying customers and firms to record documents without an office visit.

In early 2020, the office obtained a dedicated dropbox for recording customers, providing them another contact-free method of recording documents. This dropbox was used to accept marriage license applications as well, ensuring continuity of service and providing customers with a safe alternative to in-person office visits.

Usage of eRecording: Past Three Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>eRecorded documents</th>
<th>Total Recorded documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>160,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>140,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The office’s dedicated document drop box provides customers with a secure, contact-free way to submit documents.

MARRIAGE LICENSES: LOVE IN A TIME OF COVID

Marriage licenses were more popular than ever in Denver in 2019, reflecting a trend of slight, but steady, increases over the past several years.

Just a month after our 2020 Valentine’s Day marriage license event, the Clerk and Recorder’s Office was closed to in-person services due to the coronavirus.

Following Governor Polis’ statewide suspension of the statute requiring in-person oaths for marriage licenses, the office quickly readjusted with new processes. From mid-March through May 2020, the office issued hundreds of licenses through a process using the US mail and the office’s dropbox.

The office resumed in-person marriage services by appointment only in June 2020, with physical distancing and cleaning protocols in place. However, the lessons learned from the mail and dropbox license process will prove useful in the event that in-person services must be suspended again.

A city hall marriage in Denver may look different for now, but the office’s duty to serve couples seeking licenses continues in these unprecedented times.

- **8,692** marriage licenses issued
- **100+** couples married at our 2019 Valentine’s Day marriage license event
- **1,069** licenses issued in August, the busiest month
CUSTOMER SERVICE: RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

The Clerk and Recorder’s Office experienced a slight increase in customer traffic in 2019, but wait times saw a dramatic decrease: dropping nearly 46% from 2018.

Transaction times also decreased in 2019, with the average transaction dropping under eight minutes for the first time in three years.

Retaining a customer satisfaction rate of 96%, the office demonstrated its commitment to efficient, exemplary customer service throughout the year and into 2020.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT: TELLING OUR STORY

The Denver Clerk and Recorder’s Office began staffing a full-service Communications and Engagement team in 2019, with the stated goals of increasing voter participation and educating the public on the vital government functions of the office.

Although the team was originally tasked with face-to-face engagement activities within and throughout Denver’s neighborhoods, the coronavirus pandemic effectively cancelled or postponed all in-person events across the city in the spring of 2020.

In response, the team has improvised, using technology and innovation to bring the office’s story and services to the residents of Denver. In June 2020, the Clerk and Recorder held its first virtual voter townhall, on the topic of voting during the pandemic.

Throughout 2019 and into 2020, the team has connected with Denver’s residents through social media messaging and timely website content. Building this foundation as a conduit for communication proved invaluable when the office needed to notify customers and residents of changes to processed and services related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
POLICY AND COMPLIANCE: ETHICS AND OVERSIGHT

The Policy and Compliance Office leads the Clerk and Recorder’s government relations activities, including serving as the legislative liaison to the Denver City Council and the Colorado General Assembly. The office also coordinates with the City Attorney’s Office for the Denver Clerk and Recorder’s legal, policy, and compliance needs, including drafting the office’s administrative rules. Policy and Compliance administers the city’s campaign finance laws, registration of lobbyists, and coordinates the disclosure of ethics, gifts, and financial information. The Policy and Compliance office also responds to all Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) requests from the public.

In 2019, the Policy and Compliance Office adopted campaign finance rules to help implement the Fair Elections Act, passed by voters in November 2018. The team also successfully negotiated during the legislative session on the elections omnibus bill, along with a variety of other bills. Policy and Compliance also saw the passage of a marriage bill that raised the age to get married in Colorado.

In 2020, the City Clerk Office joined the Policy and Compliance Office, and maintains legislative records, city contracts, agency rules and regulations, oaths of office, and other municipal records. The team ensures public records are preserved and available online or in person for public inspection.

• 71 candidate committees and 19 political committees actively reporting to the office
• 97 Colorado Open Records (CORA) requests, an increase from 90 in 2018

CITY CLERK: VITAL RECORDS A CLICK AWAY

Access to business and legal documents is all the more important when a community is affected by a health and financial crisis. Thankfully, the City Clerk’s Office laid the groundwork in 2019 to respond to a city’s need for online access to important paperwork, without a visit to the office.

By the end of 2019, more than 11 million records were available to users online, with some dating back to 1859.

• Digitized and made publicly searchable by name all marriage licenses dating back to 1903
• Property records from 1859 to 1949 are searchable using the online indices
• Property records 1950 to present are searchable by name
• All military discharge paperwork is searchable by name, in a collection dating back to 1944
• Fulfilled more than 3,000 certified copy requests in 2019