



## APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 2, 2017.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

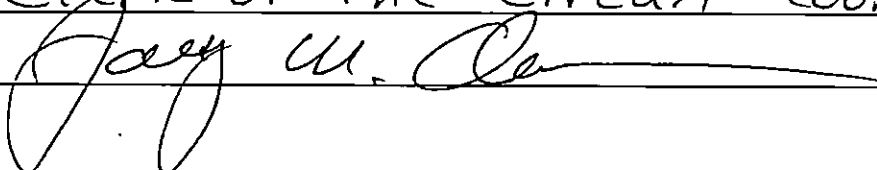
### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Loudoun County  
Program Title: Clerk of Circuit History Programs  
Program Category: Community Development

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Eric Larson  
Title: Manager, Historic Records Division  
Department: Clerk of Circuit Court  
Complete Mailing Address: P. O. Box 550 Leesburg, VA 20178  
Telephone: (703) 777-0270 Website: www.loudoun.gov/clerk  
Email: eric.larson@loudoun.gov

### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Gary M. Clemens  
Title: Clerk of the Circuit Court  
Signature: 



# COUNTY OF LOUDOUN CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

P.O. Box 550  
LEESBURG, VIRGINIA 20178  
[www.loudoun.gov/clerk](http://www.loudoun.gov/clerk)  
(703)-777-0270



**Gary M. Clemens, Clerk**

June 9, 2017

## **VIA EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE**

Mr. Gage Harter  
Virginia Association of Counties

Dear Mr. Harter:

Thank you for your assistance with the annual VACO Achievement Awards nominations process. I am pleased to submit an application for your consideration and for the consideration of the judges in the category of Community and Economic Development. Our Historic Records programs so contribute to the promotion of community development as we empower our citizens to learn more about our county's valuable historic and vital role in the Commonwealth of Virginia. You may certainly consider this submission for the category of Communications as our program do promote communications by virtue of our newsletters and the programs we host.

Attached please find the Application Form Cover Sheet and the application in electronic format. If you are unable to retrieve and/or download these attachments, please feel free to contact me. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email at [gary.clemens@loudoun.gov](mailto:gary.clemens@loudoun.gov) or give me a call at (703) 777-0277.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this application.

With warm regards,

*Gary M. Clemens*

Gary M. Clemens  
Clerk of the Circuit Court

## Clerk of Circuit Court Website Committee

### Overview/Problem:

In 2000, the Clerk's Office did not have a website and the Clerk of the Circuit Court took immediate action to create one to provide public information. The Clerk used a vacant deputy clerk position to create the first information technology support position in the Clerk's Office. One of the duties of this new information technology support position was to assist the Clerk with developing a website. From 2001 – 2002, the Clerk's Office website was essentially hosted by Office of the Executive Secretary for the Virginia Supreme Court. The partnership with the Office of the Executive Secretary was effective as the Clerk's Office had a web presence for the first time but the content was limited to fit the template established by the Office of the Executive Secretary. With no flexibility to modify the template and design of the website, the Clerk's Office commenced a partnership with the County's Information Technology Department and the County's Public Information Office in 2002. The website was managed by a Loudoun County government employee located in the Public Information office, which is now referred to as the Public Affairs Office, in coordination with the Clerk's Office information technology team for many years. While this employee in a different county agency was capable, reliable and helpful, and the coordination with our team was outstanding, the content of the website required aggressive and frequent revisions, prompting the Clerk's Office to pursue a pilot project to manage the website content, redesign and revisions. This opportunity presented itself when the Clerk's Office Probate Division expressed interest in creating an in-house web design team to frequently and comprehensively refresh the probate information on the website. It became apparent that there was a need for a collaboration of several divisions within the Clerk's Office to participate in the content management of the website to reduce unnecessary visits to the Clerk's Office to receive information and to reduce an increasing volume of phone calls to ask basic questions about basic services. The goal was to empower

people to find public information easily, conveniently and efficiently without having to call or visit our office unnecessarily. Traffic congestion in Northern Virginia was, and still is, the one of the biggest challenges facing Loudoun County, so the Clerk's Office established the objective of

reducing traffic on the roadways in Loudoun County by taking a new approach to communicating and sharing information with our residents.

In 2009, the Clerk assembled his probate team, his information technology team and the administrative assistant to create a probate website committee. The team was tasked with assisting our probate clients by providing significant information related to legal definitions of critical probate terms and procedures, how to prepare for probate hearings and appointments, and how to complete certain probate forms to be properly prepared for a probate appointment. Below is a sample of one probate webpage that provides enhanced information.

**Probate Division**

**FYI - The Commissioner of Accounts June seminar for new fiduciaries has been rescheduled and will be held June 14, 2017**

**News Releases**

- [New Uniform Fee Schedule for the Commissioner of Accounts](#)
- [Updated Policy for Nomination of Resident Agents](#)
- [Commissioner of Accounts Public Seminars Schedule - 2017](#)

**Division Responsibilities**

The Code of Virginia grants the Clerk of the Circuit Court the authority to Probate a Will, to appoint and qualify an Executor or Administrator for a Decedent's Estate, to appoint and qualify a Testamentary Trustee, to qualify a Conservator and/or a Guardian for an Incapacitated Adult, to qualify a Guardian for the Person of a Minor and to appoint and qualify a Guardian for the Estate of a Minor.

A person has no legal authority to act or perform any duties as an Executor, Administrator, Testamentary Trustee, Guardian or Conservator until he/she has been appointed by the Judge or the Clerk and until he/she has formally qualified before the Clerk as such.

**Disclaimer**

The purpose of this website is to inform the public of procedural matters involved in the Probate of Wills and the appointment, qualification and duties of an Executor, Administrator, Testamentary Trustee, Conservator or Guardian. Please note that Court personnel are prohibited by law from giving legal advice. If you need legal assistance or information, it is available on our Legal Aid information Quick Link to the right.

**Contact Us**

Bill Loy  
Probate Manager  
[703-777-0272](tel:703-777-0272)  
[Email](#)

Lorrie Gordon  
Sr. Probate Specialist  
[703-777-0639](tel:703-777-0639)  
[Email](#)

Joy Hayes  
Probate Specialist  
[703-777-0691](tel:703-777-0691)  
[Email](#)

Fax: 703-737-8096

**Quick Links**

- [Posted Orders and Notices](#)
- [Parking Information](#)
- [Court Security Information](#)
- [Legal Aid Information](#)
- [Courts Technology](#)
- [Visitor Comment Card](#)

**Probate Webpage 2017**

The new probate website was launched in 2010. The success of the new probate website became obvious instantly as foot traffic to the courthouse to ask simple questions, acquire necessary forms and to schedule appointments started to decline. Over the course of the next two years, the Clerk's Office monitored the successes of this new probate website taking note of what was working well and what features

were not necessary. With the success of this business model for our Probate Division, the Clerk assembled a larger team of managers and employees where the Clerk shared his vision of how the office website could deliver better service to Loudoun residents. Each division manager was tasked with serving on a global website committee or assigning a team representative to the global website committee. The Clerk's Office website committee officially kicked off its efforts in 2012. Each division in the Clerk's Office (Judicial Services, Jury Management, Civil Case Management, Criminal Case Management, Accounting, Land Records, Historic Records, Probate, Public Services and Administration) has a seat on this committee. The Clerk challenged the team members to consider using the website as the primary vehicle by which the office communicates to the public. Additionally, he challenged the team to consider using the website to host customer survey responses to solicit feedback from those clients who have been served by the office and to explore the feasibility of using the website to post legal court notices that were traditionally posted in paper format on a bulletin board.

Prior to using the website to solicit customer surveys and feedback, the Clerk's Office had numerous wooden boxes in the office with special comment paperwork that clients could complete and insert in the wooden boxes. The number of customer surveys was relatively low as clients typically needed to leave the courthouse to take care of other business and they would neglect to complete a survey. The online customer survey tool offered on the website allowed clients to submit their feedback at a more convenient time from their computer. Another challenge with the paper – wooden box customer survey approach was the labor-intensive process of collecting surveys from multiple boxes and then distributing copies of the surveys to management to analyze the results. The online customer survey system allows the system administrator to efficiently distribute relevant customer surveys to multiple management team members simultaneously via email. This approach is efficient and empowers multiple managers to act quickly to collaborate and/or communicate with the customer regarding their feedback.

Prior to using the website to post legal court notices, the Clerk's Office was required to post paper copies of court orders or legal notices on one bulletin board on an outside wall of the courthouse. This approach was labor intensive as an employee was required to photocopy multiple court orders and then affix these notices on a bulletin board with tacks. Employees also had to maintain a manual tickler system to track the amount of time that each notice had to be posted and then remove copies of notices that were no longer valid. This was not an efficient approach. In 2015, the Clerk requested legislation that would allow the Clerk to use a website to post legal notices in lieu of the old-fashioned, traditional bulletin board approach. This legislation passed into law and the Clerk tasked the website committee with designing a new process using the website. The online posting of court/legal notices on the website is more efficient as employees simply scan and post the notices on a designated webpage for the public to see. The system is programmed in a manner that results on automatic removal of a notice after a specified expiration date is entered in the program. This approach saves considerable staff time to manage and saves considerable paper and photocopying costs. Most importantly, the online posting of court/legal notices does not require residents to travel to the local courthouse to see these notices. They are now available for inspection on each resident's desktop computer or mobile device if they have access to the internet on these devices.

In 2016, the Clerk requested that a representative from the Circuit Court Judges Office be assigned to this committee since some information pertains to the processing of court cases. This collaboration of teamwork among the Clerk's office divisions as well as the Circuit Court, has led to a website that is reviewed frequently and has a robust amount of information to serve the citizens and patrons of Loudoun County Clerk of Circuit Court.

## Clerk's Office Website Home Page in 2010 (Prior to Website Committee)

The screenshot shows the website for the Clerk of the Circuit Court in Loudoun County, Virginia. At the top, there is a header with the county name and navigation links like 'Home', 'Government', 'Services', 'Education', 'Public Safety', 'Business', and 'Transportation'. A sidebar on the left lists various services and links. The main content area is titled 'Clerk of the Circuit Court' and contains three bullet points about the office's activities. To the right, there is a portrait of Gary M. Clemens, the Clerk, along with his contact information and a mailing address. The page is annotated with handwritten notes and arrows pointing to specific elements.

**In this section**

- Archives
- Calendar
- Circuit Court Opinions
- Clerk's History Pages
- Directions
- Dockets
- Forms
- General Information
- Guide to Elected Officials
- Jury Information
- Law Library
- Online Services
- Probate
- Spanish Interpreter Certification

**Related Links**

- County Directory
- E-mail Directory

### Clerk of the Circuit Court

- The Clerk of the Circuit Court has **administered the oath of office** to Phyllis Randall. [More](#)
- Information about the **refund process** for NVTA congestion **relief fees** is online [here](#).
- A memo from the Clerk regarding the **actual value of property** for deeds is online. [Details](#)

Welcome to the Circuit Court Clerk's Office website!

#### Business Hours

The Clerk's office is normally open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Land Records Division, Probate Department and the Public Services registers close transactions each day at 4:00 p.m.

#### Overview

The Clerk of the Circuit Court is the custodian of the court records, land records, marriage licenses, judgments, estate records and other legal documents. Most of the records are available for public inspection in the Clerk's Office.

The Clerk of the Circuit Court issues marriage licenses, accepts applications for trade names and processes applications to become a notary public. The Clerk of the Circuit Court accepts deeds and other legal land documents for registration. We also accept the filing of

**Gary M. Clemens,**  
Clerk of the Circuit Court

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## Clerk's Office Website Home Page in 2017



## Summary of Web Committee:

The first websites for the Clerk of the Circuit Court provided very basic information such as a background of the Clerk’s office and duties, location, hours of operation and a calendar of important court dates. In 2010, the Loudoun County government changed the web content manager provider. This change allowed the departments of the Loudoun County government to manage their own web content. It has allowed the Clerk of Circuit Court office to create a redesigned, comprehensive website that offers enhanced and efficient access to diverse and critical information to assist the citizens. The evolution of this website was no small task and required tremendous commitment, creativity, collaboration, consultation and dedication from those deputy clerks who have served on the website committee.

The website can be visited at [www.loudoun.gov/clerk](http://www.loudoun.gov/clerk) . The home page is updated and refreshed on a weekly basis and the other webpages are refreshed when significant new programs are initiated, when new state laws have passed or new information becomes available for dissemination. Each webpage incorporates



a collaborative, dynamic, evolving and vitally important communication tool for the Clerk's Office. The contemporary website is used to relay basic information, offer convenient online links to forms and fee calculators, comprehensive information on the diverse services offered and informational videos. These videos cover a variety of hot topics such as the process of filing an application for a concealed handgun permit, applying for a marriage license (offered both in English and Spanish) expectations for jurors reporting for jury duty information, and information about fraud prevention/jury scams. Since the implementation of eleven (11) video sessions embedded in the website, there has been a total of 14,228 combined views of the various video presentations. This demonstrates the value of these online presentations and the value of visual complements to the written information provided on the website.

The efforts of the website committee has created a model for a valuable Clerk of Circuit Court website in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In fact, many clerks of circuit court have contacted the Clerk of the Circuit Court in Loudoun County to learn more about our website practices, management and approach. In 2015, the Clerk of the Circuit Court for Dinwiddie County asked Loudoun's Clerk for ideas that provided valuable assistance to the Dinwiddie Clerk as he modified and enhanced his website. In 2016, the Office of Executive Secretary for the Virginia Supreme Court asked the Clerk of the Circuit Court for Loudoun County to serve on a panel to provide recommendations for websites to other circuit court clerks at the annual circuit court conference. Serving on this panel with the Loudoun Clerk was the Clerk from Dinwiddie, who used substantial information from the Loudoun Clerk to redesign the Dinwiddie website.

The website committee's constant review and analysis of the website has stimulated new ideas from members of how the website can be used to better manage information internally among employees. The committee began using an application called Laserfiche, which allows teams to manage online records on our website. This program allows the Clerk to post notices of public meetings related to new road construction projects, Metrorail meetings and other public meetings of interest to Loudoun residents. The website has

been designed to integrate with the County's intranet where Clerk's Office employees can quickly identify the proper county employee for referral of citizens to the proper agency.

As stated previously, the website allows citizens to complete an online customer survey about the services they have received in our office. The use of the online comment card has improved customer service and improved the response time to those clients. The website also includes a technology information page where attorneys and other patrons of the court can submit unique technology needs in the courtrooms to ensure all essentially technology components are available for their court hearings or court trials.

## Costs

The costs of forming this web committee are minimal in monetary value as it is fully staffed by fulltime Loudoun County employees who perform these duties as part of their regular job duties. Each committee member has a job component or a job objective referenced in their respective performance plan or job description related to website design and assessment. Each committee member has invested substantial staff time to this effort but the Clerk's Office has not monitored the amount of hours that each committee member has invested since the inception of the website committee. Therefore, an actual dollar amount of the costs involved cannot be provided. The committee has met as often as once a month but the team monitors the site daily.

## Results of Program

By taking this team approach in website content management, we have been able to create a website that is user friendly, easy to manage, promotes the information accurately and relays the material to the public and other agencies. Citizens and clients have received numerous and substantial benefits as they are better empowered with a wealth of information on the website. As a result of the changes to our website we have had fewer phone calls and more informed clients before they arrive at the door of the Clerk's Office to do business. Clients can conveniently share information regarding their experiences.

The benefits to the Clerk's Office are noteworthy as well. While there has been an investment of 4 to 5 hours each month to update the website, this investment translates into numerous hours of time saved by staff to process more cases, more deeds and more transactions because the phone rings less often and fewer visitors come to ask basic questions. Employees have more time to process the daily workload. The Clerk's Office management team can quickly receive customer feedback and take action to address any issue.

The Website committee constantly strives to use other tools and ideas to inform the public of new programs, events, public meetings and critical information without requiring the individuals to physically appear at the courthouse. In the future, the website committee hopes to explore other venues of mass communication such as social media and other new technology as it becomes available to enhance public access to public information.