



## Crystal K. Kinzel

Collier County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller  
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### Letter to the Community...

I want to start this month's newsletter with a personal THANK YOU to all of you who supported my re-election as your Clerk of Courts! I so appreciated the positive encouragement on the campaign trail. Campaigning is not for the faint of heart. We WON!!

I am excited to be your Clerk and I am committed to moving the Clerk's Office forward. Over the next four years we will be focusing on Customer Service and Customer Service and Customer Service!!

As I tried to convey during the last two years as Clerk, and again this summer, all we do is to serve you! Our processes touch everyone in the county in some way. If you want to get married (ceremonies and licenses), travel (passports), divorced (self-help court filing), build, buy or sell a house (Notice of Commencements and recording deeds), pay a traffic ticket, file litigation or set up a guardianship --we are here to help you. We are the keeper of county records: Court; Board of County Commissioners; and Official Documents are all available on our website. The Clerk is the Comptroller and custodian of funds. We invest your tax dollars and pay county bills and payroll. We operate the financial systems and prepare the financial statements and we prepare calculations for Board debt and make debt payments. I plan to continue community outreach so that we can show you how we work for you everyday.

Please visit our website, [Collierclerk.com](http://Collierclerk.com), to sign-up for our newsletter and our risk alert notification program. And please, let us know when and where we can speak to your association, social group, club, organization or just you! We want the opportunity to answer your questions, tell you more about what we do, and most importantly, find out how we can better serve you.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the next four years; we will continue to make sure you receive the best services in Florida.

Sincerely,



## Collier Clerk Newsletter

OCTOBER 2020

### Office Locations

#### Main Office

Courthouse  
3315 Tamiami Trail E.  
Naples, FL 34112

#### Satellite Offices

**Airport Motor Vehicle**  
725 Airport Road South  
Naples, FL 34104

**Eagle Creek**  
6654 Collier Boulevard  
Naples FL 34114

**Everglades City Hall**  
102 Copeland Ave. N.  
Everglades City, FL 34139

**Golden Gate Gov. Center**  
4715 Golden Gate Parkway  
Naples, FL 34116

**Immokalee**  
106 South First Street  
Immokalee, FL 34142

**North Collier Gov. Ctr.**  
2335 Orange Blossom Drive  
Naples, FL 34109

Customer Service  
239-252-2646

[www.CollierClerk.com](http://www.CollierClerk.com)



[www.facebook.com/CollierClerk](https://www.facebook.com/CollierClerk)

# Jury Trials to Resume in Collier County!



Great News! After a suspension of jury trials that has lasted for seven months, jury trials will resume in Collier County beginning in October.

In response to the public health emergency, the Florida Supreme Court and the 20th Judicial Circuit suspended or limited in-person procedures and services including criminal and civil jury trials. Using a four-phased transitioning timeline, the 20th Judicial Circuit is gradually authorizing the resumption of services, which includes a handful of felony and misdemeanor jury trials in Collier County beginning Oct. 6.

*"We are moving forward! Jury trials are a vital part of our justice system and it's great to see them restored in Collier County. If you receive a summons, know that you are crucial to the restoration of our court system. I am grateful for your service."*

*~Crystal Kinzel*

[Continue to read the article.](#)



*The Vote's in Your Court* is a resource for voters regarding judges and judicial elections. It includes the "[Guide for Florida Voters](#)," an easy-to-read, nonpartisan brochure about the courts, the role of judges and the merit retention process.

## Fiscal Matters

### National Financial Experts Say...

#### *Collier's Credit Position is Superior and Among the Best in the Nation*

Moody's Investors Service has assigned an *Aaa* General Obligation rating to Collier County, which is the credit agency's highest credit rating. Moody's most recent analysis found no "material immediate credit risks for Collier County" and identified the county's ratings outlook as stable. In a summary issued on August 21, 2020,

Moody's wrote, "The credit position for Collier County is superior. Its *Aaa* rating is higher than the median rating of *Aa2* for US counties. The financial position of the county is robust and is aligned with the assigned rating of *Aaa*."

[Continue to read full article.](#)

## Over \$700,000 in CollierCares Relief Money Released to Qualified County Businesses, Non-profits

The Collier County Board of County Commissioners established the COVID-19 relief program known as *CollierCARES*, with the purpose of allocating \$67 million in federal CARES Act stimulus money to qualified county businesses, non-profit agencies and residents experiencing significant financial loss as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is the role of county government to approve or deny each application; while it's the responsibility of the Clerk's Finance team to release payment to approved applicants. A total of \$742,460 had been released at the time of this writing.



# Citizens Will Feel the Impact of Statewide Cuts to Clerks' Budgets

## Your questions answered.....

### Why are there statewide budget cuts?

A record drop in revenue caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant budget cuts to clerks in Florida for fiscal year (FY) 2021.

Clerk services performed for courts are funded by a share of the money that we collect from court fines, fees, collections and service charges; however, a major shortfall in that funding has occurred statewide because of shut downs to non-essential court proceedings and significant declines in traffic citations.

The Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation (CCOC), which sets budgets for Clerk court related operations, is cutting over \$36 million from clerk budgets throughout the state based on expected lower revenues due to the pandemic. The CCOC cut over \$801,000 from the last quarter of Collier's FY 2020 budget and almost \$885,000 for FY 2021 from Collier's budget.

Although some clerk agencies experienced up to a 70% reduction in collections, the Collier Clerk's Office remained open for e-filings and e-payments and reached our budgeted revenue goals for FY 2020. We anticipate a 1% reduction for FY 2021.

### If the Collier Clerk is only expecting a 1% reduction in collections, why is the CCOC reducing funding by so much more?

By statute, funds collected in excess of approved budgets must be sent to the CCOC monthly for re-distribution to those counties that do not meet their revenue goals. Regardless of local earnings and efficiencies, funds are redistributed based upon formulas including case types and other workload measures. Even though budgeted and earned, because of other county shortfalls, Collier's expense budget is being cut and Collier's revenues re-distributed to other counties.

### That seems wrong...shouldn't money collected in Collier County stay in Collier County?

Definitely! Although the Collier Clerk's Office operates efficiently and always meets revenue goals, we are, in a sense, penalized for that efficiency. The penalty for remaining and serving our citizens, our revenues are redistributed to counties that may not meet their revenue goals or cover their costs. There are several "donor" counties that continue to argue that this is not an equitable distribution and that the funding construct is flawed. As a participant on the statewide Legislative Committee, Clerk Kinzel is working to change this distribution.

### How will the court services performed by the Clerk's Office be affected by budget cuts?



Although lay-offs and furloughs occurred in many clerk offices statewide, as a result of proactive fiscal practices, lay-offs and furloughs did not occur in the Collier Clerk's office in FY 2020. However, vacant staff positions in the clerk's court operations are expected to remain unfilled for several months, which may cause delays in some of the services that we provide to the courts and the taxpayers of Collier County.

### What are some of the services provided by the Collier Clerk's Office that may be impacted?

The Clerk performs many critical duties for the judiciary and taxpayers, including processing criminal and civil cases; filing indictments, information, and verdicts; collecting and disbursing court fines and fees; auditing guardianship reports; assisting domestic violence victims file for protective injunctions; and juror processing and management; managing the pro se (self-help citizen center) and staffing convenient satellite locations.

Report suspected fraud or wrongdoing in Collier County Government by calling 239-252-8412 or on the confidential hotline at 844-ClerkIG or 844-253-7544 24hrs./day, 7 days/wk. (English or Spanish)



In an abusive relationship?  
Help is a phone call away.

**The Shelter for Abused  
Women & Children**  
24-hour hotline  
(239) 775-1101

The Shelter for Abused Women & Children provides many programs and services and operates two local emergency shelters.

## October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

National *Domestic Violence Awareness Month* is recognized each October to bring awareness to the problem of domestic violence in our community. Ending domestic violence starts with just one small action, whether that is seeking help or promoting available resources.

### ***Did you know...***

Victims of domestic violence or threats of violence have the right to ask the court for an Injunction for Protection, which usually places restrictions on the abuser that prohibit the abuser from committing further acts and/or threats of violence. Petitions are received and processed by staff at the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court - Domestic Violence Division.

Members of the Clerk's team are available to assist the petitioner to determine which of the five types of petitions is most fitting based on the specific situation. Injunctions for Protection are free of charge and are processed and answered by a judge the same day they are received.

In a partnership with the Clerk, the *Shelter for Abused Women & Children* provides an on-site victim's advocate to assist the petitioner with completing documents and to provide important information about the many services available from Shelter.

### **To File a Petition with the Court for a Protective Injunction:**

Clerk of Court-Collier Courthouse Annex, 3rd floor  
3315 Tamiami Trail E.  
Naples, Florida 34112

Clerk of Court-Immokalee Satellite Office  
106 South First St.  
Immokalee, Florida 34142

## Access Secure Online Services 24/7

[www.CollierClerk.com](http://www.CollierClerk.com)



- Pay traffic citations, court fees and fines
- Submit documents for recording in the Official Record
- File court documents via the Florida Courts e-Filing Portal
- Access frequently used forms
- Subscribe to the free risk alert notification service to monitor your property records for fraudulent activity;
- Check for your name on the *unclaimed money* lists
- Access to thousands of records to view and print, including:
  - \* Court records (Civil, Traffic, Probate and Criminal);
  - \* Official land records,
  - \* Financial records & records of the
  - \* Board of County Commissioners