

FRANKLIN COUNTY CLERK
2026 Archival Preservation and Restoration Records Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 77th Texas Legislature passed HB 370 in 2001 to allow *border* counties to assess a \$5.00 Records Archive Fee for the preservation of older records filed with the County Clerk.

The 78th Legislature passed SB 1744 amending the original legislation allowing *all* County's to collect this fee with their Commissioners Court approval. Finally, the 79th Legislature extended this bill indefinitely.

The 83rd Legislature passed HB 1513 to increase the records archive fees and the records management and preservation fees charged by the county clerk to \$10.00. The bill contains a provision reverting back to the \$5 fee effective through the year 2019.

The 86th Legislature SB 658 made the current \$10 maximum allowable amount in the records archive and records management and preservation fee permanent and becomes effective September 1, 2019.

This current legislation amended Local Government Code; Section 118.01, 118.025 (e), to enable Commissioners Court to adopt a Records Archive Fee as part of the County's annual budget.

- Termination: The 79th Legislature extended this bill indefinitely.
- The original \$5.00 archival fee is assessed on any instrument, document, paper, or other record that the County Clerk is authorized to accept for filing or recording (deed or official public records, assumed names, marriage licenses, civil case filings etc.)
- The fee may be used only to provide funds for specific records management and preservation, including automation purposes in accordance with this written plan. The records archive fee is an alternative to raising taxes or spending general fund monies to accomplish these projects.
- Changes to the plan must be approved by Commissioner's Court. The plan may be modified as required.
- It is dedicated, including interest, for the preservation and restoration services of documents.
- This fund cannot be spent without a budget (prepared by the county clerk and approved by commissioner's court).
- The 83rd Legislature HB 1513 allows the increase in the records archive and records management and preservation fee to \$10. This added \$5 fee is assessed when a non-court document is presented to the county clerk for recording or filing. Documents include official public records and marriage license. Commissioners' Court approved this increase on August 12, 2013 and becomes effective January 1, 2014.

Purpose

The County Clerk's office is progressive in the preservation of *current* records and is aggressively striving to electronically preserve and restore *all* documents, plats and survey records that have a priceless historical value. In order to enhance the integrity of the existing system for recording and preserving public documents; the County Clerk's office has taken advantage of the use of the Records Archive Fee for ongoing projects to preserve existing original records. This is being done by restoring or re-creating old volumes, digitizing paper records, re-indexing old handwritten and typed indexed books and uploading to Eagle Recorder or case management software.

Goals and Vision

The overall goal and vision of the County Clerk is to:

- Continue to modernize and upgrade office record systems
- Eliminate or reduce searches of paper documents and volumes and expedite record searching by electronic retrieval
- Increase public information access available on the internet
- Make Commissioner Court Minutes easily available to the public by indexing and imaging and electronically preserving and restoring.
- Make Criminal, Civil and Probate records easily available to the public by indexing, imaging and electronically preserving and restoring old records that have not been indexed, imaged or electronically preserved or restored.
- Disaster Recovery protection to protect records from ransomware attacks.

Scope

The scope of this document includes the following:

- All County Clerk records filed with the County Clerk
- Plans to capture records electronically to improve public access
- Plans to restore and preserve records with significant historical value
- Future plans are to improve public and governmental access
- This plan will be implemented in phases as money is accrued.

It is the intent of the County Clerk's Office to make public records more accessible electronically through internet access and public access computers in the office.

Total accrual, including interest, for this year (2025) through 07/31/2025 –

Archival Funds **\$28,947.27**

Record Retention Funds **\$30,009.08**

PROJECTS COMPLETED

- 57 books restored
- All Contract and Lien records have been imaged, indexed and available online
- All deed / official public records (1843 forward) have been imaged, indexed and online
- Deed record volumes 88 – 162 have been digitally restored
- All Plats have been imaged
- Purchased a large plat scanner for new plats and replat records
- Purchased a large format printer to print large plats for customers
- All Commissioner Court Minutes Scanned and available online
- All above mentioned records are online at www.countygovernmentrecords.com

- DD214 Records – scanned and indexed into our software system (Confidential Records)
- Vital Records (Birth/Death/Marriage) – scanned and indexed into our software system (Confidential Records)
- Restoration of the historic Bible the first Franklin County officials were sworn in on in 1875.

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

- Civil Records: Index, scan, and integrate into Case Management software;
- Criminal Records: Index, scan, and integrate into Case Management software;
- Probate Records: Index, scan, and integrate into Case Management software;
- Removing Civil and Probate records from metal drawers in the storage building, and placing in archival file folders and archival storage boxes for safe keeping to keep bugs/mice away and to inhibit deterioration of the records;
- We are currently in the process of having approximately 4000 criminal cases and 3400 probate cases digitized, repaired (if needed), placed in acid-free folders and storage boxes, and preserved (for records pre-1950). This will not only allow office staff better access to these records, but also our citizens and the public in general;
- We are nearing the completion of upgrading our property and vitals software to allow our constituents and general public more options as well as better, easier access to records in a more timely and secure fashion.