



Ohio Revised Code Section 1901.31 Clerk of court.

Effective: October 3, 2023

Legislation: Senate Bill 21 (GA 135), House Bill 33 (GA 135)

The clerk and deputy clerks of a municipal court shall be selected, be compensated, give bond, and have powers and duties as follows:

(A) There shall be a clerk of the court who is appointed or elected as follows:

(1)(a) Except in the Akron, Barberton, Toledo, Columbiana county, Hamilton county, Miami county, Montgomery county, Portage county, and Wayne county municipal courts and through December 31, 2008, the Cuyahoga Falls municipal court, if the population of the territory equals or exceeds one hundred thousand at the regular municipal election immediately preceding the expiration of the term of the present clerk, the clerk shall be nominated and elected by the qualified electors of the territory in the manner that is provided for the nomination and election of judges in section 1901.07 of the Revised Code.

The clerk so elected shall hold office for a term of six years, which term shall commence on the first day of January following the clerk's election and continue until the clerk's successor is elected and qualified.

(b) In the Hamilton county municipal court, the clerk of courts of Hamilton county shall be the clerk of the municipal court and may appoint an assistant clerk who shall receive the compensation, payable out of the treasury of Hamilton county in semimonthly installments, that the board of county commissioners prescribes. The clerk of courts of Hamilton county, acting as the clerk of the Hamilton county municipal court and assuming the duties of that office, shall receive compensation at one-fourth the rate that is prescribed for the clerks of courts of common pleas as determined in accordance with the population of the county and the rates set forth in sections 325.08 and 325.18 of the Revised Code. This compensation shall be paid from the county treasury in semimonthly installments and is in addition to the annual compensation that is received for the performance of the duties of the clerk of courts of Hamilton county, as provided in sections 325.08 and 325.18 of the Revised Code.



(c) In the Portage county and Wayne county municipal courts, the clerks of courts of Portage county and Wayne county shall be the clerks, respectively, of the Portage county and Wayne county municipal courts and may appoint a chief deputy clerk for each branch that is established pursuant to section 1901.311 of the Revised Code and assistant clerks as the judges of the municipal court determine are necessary, all of whom shall receive the compensation that the legislative authority prescribes. The clerks of courts of Portage county and Wayne county, acting as the clerks of the Portage county and Wayne county municipal courts and assuming the duties of these offices, shall receive compensation payable from the county treasury in semimonthly installments at one-fourth the rate that is prescribed for the clerks of courts of common pleas as determined in accordance with the population of the county and the rates set forth in sections 325.08 and 325.18 of the Revised Code.

(d) In the Montgomery county and Miami county municipal courts, the clerks of courts of Montgomery county and Miami county shall be the clerks, respectively, of the Montgomery county and Miami county municipal courts. The clerks of courts of Montgomery county and Miami county, acting as the clerks of the Montgomery county and Miami county municipal courts and assuming the duties of these offices, shall receive compensation at one-fourth the rate that is prescribed for the clerks of courts of common pleas as determined in accordance with the population of the county and the rates set forth in sections 325.08 and 325.18 of the Revised Code. This compensation shall be paid from the county treasury in semimonthly installments and is in addition to the annual compensation that is received for the performance of the duties of the clerks of courts of Montgomery county and Miami county, as provided in sections 325.08 and 325.18 of the Revised Code.

(e) Except as otherwise provided in division (A)(1)(e) of this section, in the Akron municipal court, candidates for election to the office of clerk of the court shall be nominated by primary election. The primary election shall be held on the day specified in the charter of the city of Akron for the nomination of municipal officers. Notwithstanding any contrary provision of section 3513.05 or 3513.257 of the Revised Code, the declarations of candidacy and petitions of partisan candidates and the nominating petitions of independent candidates for the office of clerk of the Akron municipal court shall be signed by at least fifty qualified electors of the territory of the court.



The candidates shall file a declaration of candidacy and petition, or a nominating petition, whichever is applicable, not later than four p.m. of the ninetieth day before the day of the primary election, in the form prescribed by section 3513.07 or 3513.261 of the Revised Code. The declaration of candidacy and petition, or the nominating petition, shall conform to the applicable requirements of section 3513.05 or 3513.257 of the Revised Code.

If no valid declaration of candidacy and petition is filed by any person for nomination as a candidate of a particular political party for election to the office of clerk of the Akron municipal court, a primary election shall not be held for the purpose of nominating a candidate of that party for election to that office. If only one person files a valid declaration of candidacy and petition for nomination as a candidate of a particular political party for election to that office, a primary election shall not be held for the purpose of nominating a candidate of that party for election to that office, and the candidate shall be issued a certificate of nomination in the manner set forth in section 3513.02 of the Revised Code.

Declarations of candidacy and petitions, nominating petitions, and certificates of nomination for the office of clerk of the Akron municipal court shall contain a designation of the term for which the candidate seeks election. At the following regular municipal election, all candidates for the office shall be submitted to the qualified electors of the territory of the court in the manner that is provided in section 1901.07 of the Revised Code for the election of the judges of the court. The clerk so elected shall hold office for a term of six years, which term shall commence on the first day of January following the clerk's election and continue until the clerk's successor is elected and qualified.

(f) Except as otherwise provided in division (A)(1)(f) of this section, in the Barberton municipal court, candidates for election to the office of clerk of the court shall be nominated by primary election. The primary election shall be held on the day specified in the charter of the city of Barberton for the nomination of municipal officers. Notwithstanding any contrary provision of section 3513.05 or 3513.257 of the Revised Code, the declarations of candidacy and petitions of partisan candidates and the nominating petitions of independent candidates for the office of clerk of the Barberton municipal court shall be signed by at least fifty qualified electors of the territory of the court.



The candidates shall file a declaration of candidacy and petition, or a nominating petition, whichever is applicable, not later than four p.m. of the ninetieth day before the day of the primary election, in the form prescribed by section 3513.07 or 3513.261 of the Revised Code. The declaration of candidacy and petition, or the nominating petition, shall conform to the applicable requirements of section 3513.05 or 3513.257 of the Revised Code.

If no valid declaration of candidacy and petition is filed by any person for nomination as a candidate of a particular political party for election to the office of clerk of the Barberton municipal court, a primary election shall not be held for the purpose of nominating a candidate of that party for election to that office. If only one person files a valid declaration of candidacy and petition for nomination as a candidate of a particular political party for election to that office, a primary election shall not be held for the purpose of nominating a candidate of that party for election to that office, and the candidate shall be issued a certificate of nomination in the manner set forth in section 3513.02 of the Revised Code.

Declarations of candidacy and petitions, nominating petitions, and certificates of nomination for the office of clerk of the Barberton municipal court shall contain a designation of the term for which the candidate seeks election. At the following regular municipal election, all candidates for the office shall be submitted to the qualified electors of the territory of the court in the manner that is provided in section 1901.07 of the Revised Code for the election of the judges of the court. The clerk so elected shall hold office for a term of six years, which term shall commence on the first day of January following the clerk's election and continue until the clerk's successor is elected and qualified.

(g)(i) Through December 31, 2008, except as otherwise provided in division (A)(1)(g)(i) of this section, in the Cuyahoga Falls municipal court, candidates for election to the office of clerk of the court shall be nominated by primary election. The primary election shall be held on the day specified in the charter of the city of Cuyahoga Falls for the nomination of municipal officers.

Notwithstanding any contrary provision of section 3513.05 or 3513.257 of the Revised Code, the declarations of candidacy and petitions of partisan candidates and the nominating petitions of independent candidates for the office of clerk of the Cuyahoga Falls municipal court shall be signed by at least fifty qualified electors of the territory of the court.



The candidates shall file a declaration of candidacy and petition, or a nominating petition, whichever is applicable, not later than four p.m. of the ninetieth day before the day of the primary election, in the form prescribed by section 3513.07 or 3513.261 of the Revised Code. The declaration of candidacy and petition, or the nominating petition, shall conform to the applicable requirements of section 3513.05 or 3513.257 of the Revised Code.

If no valid declaration of candidacy and petition is filed by any person for nomination as a candidate of a particular political party for election to the office of clerk of the Cuyahoga Falls municipal court, a primary election shall not be held for the purpose of nominating a candidate of that party for election to that office. If only one person files a valid declaration of candidacy and petition for nomination as a candidate of a particular political party for election to that office, a primary election shall not be held for the purpose of nominating a candidate of that party for election to that office, and the candidate shall be issued a certificate of nomination in the manner set forth in section 3513.02 of the Revised Code.

Declarations of candidacy and petitions, nominating petitions, and certificates of nomination for the office of clerk of the Cuyahoga Falls municipal court shall contain a designation of the term for which the candidate seeks election. At the following regular municipal election, all candidates for the office shall be submitted to the qualified electors of the territory of the court in the manner that is provided in section 1901.07 of the Revised Code for the election of the judges of the court. The clerk so elected shall hold office for a term of six years, which term shall commence on the first day of January following the clerk's election and continue until the clerk's successor is elected and qualified.

(ii) Division (A)(1)(g)(i) of this section shall have no effect after December 31, 2008.

(h) Except as otherwise provided in division (A)(1)(h) of this section, in the Toledo municipal court, candidates for election to the office of clerk of the court shall be nominated by primary election. The primary election shall be held on the day specified in the charter of the city of Toledo for the nomination of municipal officers. Notwithstanding any contrary provision of section 3513.05 or 3513.257 of the Revised Code, the declarations of candidacy and petitions of partisan candidates and the nominating petitions of independent candidates for the office of clerk of the Toledo municipal court shall be signed by at least fifty qualified electors of the territory of the court.



The candidates shall file a declaration of candidacy and petition, or a nominating petition, whichever is applicable, not later than four p.m. of the ninetieth day before the day of the primary election, in the form prescribed by section 3513.07 or 3513.261 of the Revised Code. The declaration of candidacy and petition, or the nominating petition, shall conform to the applicable requirements of section 3513.05 or 3513.257 of the Revised Code.

If no valid declaration of candidacy and petition is filed by any person for nomination as a candidate of a particular political party for election to the office of clerk of the Toledo municipal court, a primary election shall not be held for the purpose of nominating a candidate of that party for election to that office. If only one person files a valid declaration of candidacy and petition for nomination as a candidate of a particular political party for election to that office, a primary election shall not be held for the purpose of nominating a candidate of that party for election to that office, and the candidate shall be issued a certificate of nomination in the manner set forth in section 3513.02 of the Revised Code.

Declarations of candidacy and petitions, nominating petitions, and certificates of nomination for the office of clerk of the Toledo municipal court shall contain a designation of the term for which the candidate seeks election. At the following regular municipal election, all candidates for the office shall be submitted to the qualified electors of the territory of the court in the manner that is provided in section 1901.07 of the Revised Code for the election of the judges of the court. The clerk so elected shall hold office for a term of six years, which term shall commence on the first day of January following the clerk's election and continue until the clerk's successor is elected and qualified.

(i) In the Columbiana county municipal court, the clerk of courts of Columbiana county shall be the clerk of the municipal court, may appoint a chief deputy clerk for each branch office that is established pursuant to section 1901.311 of the Revised Code, and may appoint any assistant clerks that the judges of the court determine are necessary. All of the chief deputy clerks and assistant clerks shall receive the compensation that the legislative authority prescribes. The clerk of courts of Columbiana county, acting as the clerk of the Columbiana county municipal court and assuming the duties of that office, shall receive in either biweekly installments or semimonthly installments, as determined by the payroll administrator, compensation payable from the county treasury at one-



fourth the rate that is prescribed for the clerks of courts of common pleas as determined in accordance with the population of the county and the rates set forth in sections 325.08 and 325.18 of the Revised Code.

(2)(a) Except for the Alliance, Auglaize county, Brown county, Holmes county, Perry county, Putnam county, Lima, Lorain, Massillon, and Youngstown municipal courts, in a municipal court for which the population of the territory is less than one hundred thousand, the clerk shall be appointed by the court, and the clerk shall hold office until the clerk's successor is appointed and qualified.

(b) In the Alliance, Lima, Lorain, Massillon, and Youngstown municipal courts, the clerk shall be elected for a term of office as described in division (A)(1)(a) of this section.

(c) In the Auglaize county, Brown county, Holmes county, Perry county, and Putnam county municipal courts, the clerks of courts of Auglaize county, Brown county, Holmes county, Perry county, and Putnam county shall be the clerks, respectively, of the Auglaize county, Brown county, Holmes county, Perry county, and Putnam county municipal courts and may appoint a chief deputy clerk for each branch office that is established pursuant to section 1901.311 of the Revised Code, and assistant clerks as the judge of the court determines are necessary, all of whom shall receive the compensation that the legislative authority prescribes. The clerks of courts of Auglaize county, Brown county, Holmes county, Perry county, and Putnam county, acting as the clerks of the Auglaize county, Brown county, Holmes county, Perry county, and Putnam county municipal courts and assuming the duties of these offices, shall receive compensation payable from the county treasury in semimonthly installments at one-fourth the rate that is prescribed for the clerks of courts of common pleas as determined in accordance with the population of the county and the rates set forth in sections 325.08 and 325.18 of the Revised Code.

(3) During the temporary absence of the clerk due to illness, vacation, or other proper cause, the court may appoint a temporary clerk, who shall be paid the same compensation, have the same authority, and perform the same duties as the clerk.

(B) Except in the Hamilton county, Montgomery county, Miami county, Portage county, and Wayne county municipal courts, if a vacancy occurs in the office of the clerk of the Alliance, Lima, Lorain, Massillon, or Youngstown municipal court or occurs in the office of the clerk of a municipal court



for which the population of the territory equals or exceeds one hundred thousand because the clerk ceases to hold the office before the end of the clerk's term or because a clerk-elect fails to take office, the vacancy shall be filled, until a successor is elected and qualified, by a person chosen by the residents of the territory of the court who are members of the county central committee of the political party by which the last occupant of that office or the clerk-elect was nominated. Not less than five nor more than fifteen days after a vacancy occurs, those members of that county central committee shall meet to make an appointment to fill the vacancy. At least four days before the date of the meeting, the chairperson or a secretary of the county central committee shall notify each such member of that county central committee by first class mail of the date, time, and place of the meeting and its purpose. A majority of all such members of that county central committee constitutes a quorum, and a majority of the quorum is required to make the appointment. If the office so vacated was occupied or was to be occupied by a person not nominated at a primary election, or if the appointment was not made by the committee members in accordance with this division, the court shall make an appointment to fill the vacancy. A successor shall be elected to fill the office for the unexpired term at the first municipal election that is held more than one hundred thirty-five days after the vacancy occurred.

(C)(1) In a municipal court, other than the Auglaize county, the Brown county, the Holmes county, the Perry county, the Putnam county, and the Lorain municipal courts, for which the population of the territory is less than one hundred thousand, the clerk of the municipal court shall receive the annual compensation that the presiding judge of the court prescribes, if the revenue of the court for the preceding calendar year, as certified by the auditor or chief fiscal officer of the municipal corporation in which the court is located or, in the case of a county-operated municipal court, the county auditor, is equal to or greater than the expenditures, including any debt charges, for the operation of the court payable under this chapter from the city treasury or, in the case of a county-operated municipal court, the county treasury for that calendar year, as also certified by the auditor or chief fiscal officer. If the revenue of a municipal court, other than the Auglaize county, the Brown county, the Columbiana county, the Perry county, the Putnam county, and the Lorain municipal courts, for which the population of the territory is less than one hundred thousand for the preceding calendar year as so certified is not equal to or greater than those expenditures for the operation of the court for that calendar year as so certified, the clerk of a municipal court shall receive the annual compensation that the legislative authority prescribes. As used in this division, "revenue" means the total of all costs and fees that are collected and paid to the city treasury or, in a county-operated



municipal court, the county treasury by the clerk of the municipal court under division (F) of this section and all interest received and paid to the city treasury or, in a county-operated municipal court, the county treasury in relation to the costs and fees under division (G) of this section.

(2) In a municipal court, other than the Columbiana county, Hamilton county, Montgomery county, Miami county, Portage county, and Wayne county municipal courts, for which the population of the territory is one hundred thousand or more, and in the Lorain municipal court, the clerk of the municipal court shall receive annual compensation in a sum equal to eighty-five per cent of the salary of a judge of the court.

(3) The compensation of a clerk described in division (C)(1) or (2) of this section and of the clerk of the Columbiana county municipal court is payable in either semimonthly installments or biweekly installments, as determined by the payroll administrator, from the same sources and in the same manner as provided in section 1901.11 of the Revised Code, except that the compensation of the clerk of the Carroll county municipal court is payable in biweekly installments.

(D) Before entering upon the duties of the clerk's office, the clerk of a municipal court shall give bond of not less than six thousand dollars to be determined by the judges of the court, conditioned upon the faithful performance of the clerk's duties.

(E) The clerk of a municipal court may do all of the following: administer oaths, take affidavits, and issue executions upon any judgment rendered in the court, including a judgment for unpaid costs; issue, sign, and attach the seal of the court to all writs, process, subpoenas, and papers issuing out of the court; and approve all bonds, sureties, recognizances, and undertakings fixed by any judge of the court or by law. The clerk may refuse to accept for filing any pleading or paper submitted for filing by a person who has been found to be a vexatious litigator under section 2323.52 of the Revised Code and who has failed to obtain leave to proceed under that section. The clerk shall do all of the following: file and safely keep all journals, records, books, and papers belonging or appertaining to the court; record the proceedings of the court; perform all other duties that the judges of the court may prescribe; and keep a book showing all receipts and disbursements, which book shall be open for public inspection at all times.

The clerk shall prepare and maintain a general index, a docket, and other records that the court, by



rule, requires, all of which shall be the public records of the court. In the docket, the clerk shall enter, at the time of the commencement of an action, the names of the parties in full, the names of the counsel, and the nature of the proceedings. Under proper dates, the clerk shall note the filing of the complaint, issuing of summons or other process, returns, and any subsequent pleadings. The clerk also shall enter all reports, verdicts, orders, judgments, and proceedings of the court, clearly specifying the relief granted or orders made in each action. The court may order an extended record of any of the above to be made and entered, under the proper action heading, upon the docket at the request of any party to the case, the expense of which record may be taxed as costs in the case or may be required to be prepaid by the party demanding the record, upon order of the court.

(F) The clerk of a municipal court shall receive, collect, and issue receipts for all costs, fees, fines, bail, and other moneys payable to the office or to any officer of the court. The clerk shall on or before the twentieth day of the month following the month in which they are collected disburse to the proper persons or officers, and take receipts for, all costs, fees, fines, bail, and other moneys that the clerk collects. Subject to sections 307.515 and 4511.193 of the Revised Code and to any other section of the Revised Code that requires a specific manner of disbursement of any moneys received by a municipal court and except for the Hamilton county, Lawrence county, and Ottawa county municipal courts, the clerk shall pay all fines received for violation of municipal ordinances into the treasury of the municipal corporation the ordinance of which was violated and shall pay all fines received for violation of township resolutions adopted pursuant to section 503.52 or 503.53 or Chapter 504. of the Revised Code into the treasury of the township the resolution of which was violated. Subject to sections 1901.024 and 4511.193 of the Revised Code, in the Hamilton county, Lawrence county, and Ottawa county municipal courts, the clerk shall pay fifty per cent of the fines received for violation of municipal ordinances and fifty per cent of the fines received for violation of township resolutions adopted pursuant to section 503.52 or 503.53 or Chapter 504. of the Revised Code into the treasury of the county. Subject to sections 307.515, 4511.19, and 5503.04 of the Revised Code and to any other section of the Revised Code that requires a specific manner of disbursement of any moneys received by a municipal court, the clerk shall pay all fines collected for the violation of state laws into the county treasury. Except in a county-operated municipal court, the clerk shall pay all costs and fees the disbursement of which is not otherwise provided for in the Revised Code into the city treasury. The clerk of a county-operated municipal court shall pay the costs and fees the disbursement of which is not otherwise provided for in the Revised Code into the county treasury. Moneys deposited as security for costs shall be retained pending the litigation. The



clerk shall keep a separate account of all receipts and disbursements in civil and criminal cases, which shall be a permanent public record of the office. On the expiration of the term of the clerk, the clerk shall deliver the records to the clerk's successor. The clerk shall have other powers and duties as are prescribed by rule or order of the court.

(G) All moneys paid into a municipal court shall be noted on the record of the case in which they are paid and shall be deposited in a state or national bank, as defined in section 1101.01 of the Revised Code, that is selected by the clerk. Any interest received upon the deposits shall be paid into the city treasury, except that, in a county-operated municipal court, the interest shall be paid into the treasury of the county in which the court is located.

On the first Monday in January of each year, the clerk shall make a list of the titles of all cases in the court that were finally determined more than one year past in which there remains unclaimed in the possession of the clerk any funds, or any part of a deposit for security of costs not consumed by the costs in the case. The clerk shall give notice of the moneys to the parties who are entitled to the moneys or to their attorneys of record. All the moneys remaining unclaimed that are for restitution payments for crime victims shall be sent to the reparations fund created under section 2743.191 of the Revised Code, with a list from the clerk or other officer responsible for the collection and distribution of restitution payments specifying the amounts and individual identifying information of the funds. All other moneys remaining unclaimed on the first day of April of each year shall be paid by the clerk to the city treasurer, except that, in a county-operated municipal court, the moneys shall be paid to the treasurer of the county in which the court is located. The treasurer shall pay any part of the moneys at any time to the person who has the right to the moneys upon proper certification of the clerk.

(H) Deputy clerks of a municipal court other than the Carroll county municipal court may be appointed by the clerk and shall receive the compensation, payable in either biweekly installments or semimonthly installments, as determined by the payroll administrator, out of the city treasury, that the clerk may prescribe, except that the compensation of any deputy clerk of a county-operated municipal court shall be paid out of the treasury of the county in which the court is located. The judge of the Carroll county municipal court may appoint deputy clerks for the court, and the deputy clerks shall receive the compensation, payable in biweekly installments out of the county treasury, that the judge may prescribe. Each deputy clerk shall take an oath of office before entering upon the



duties of the deputy clerk's office and, when so qualified, may perform the duties appertaining to the office of the clerk. The clerk may require any of the deputy clerks to give bond of not less than three thousand dollars, conditioned for the faithful performance of the deputy clerk's duties.

(I) For the purposes of this section, whenever the population of the territory of a municipal court falls below one hundred thousand but not below ninety thousand, and the population of the territory prior to the most recent regular federal census exceeded one hundred thousand, the legislative authority of the municipal corporation may declare, by resolution, that the territory shall be considered to have a population of at least one hundred thousand.

(J) The clerk or a deputy clerk shall be in attendance at all sessions of the municipal court, although not necessarily in the courtroom, and may administer oaths to witnesses and jurors and receive verdicts.

The Legislative Service Commission presents the text of this section as a composite of the section as amended by multiple acts of the General Assembly. This presentation recognizes the principle stated in R.C. 1.52(B) that amendments are to be harmonized if reasonably capable of simultaneous operation.