



Justan Foster for Rensselaer County Clerk

A Plan To Innovate Customer Service

One of the biggest issues facing those who live, work, and do business in Rensselaer County is the lack of vision from our leaders. Let's fix that. The following document outlines the ways in which the Rensselaer County Clerk's Office can become people centric, business friendly, and drive partnership and innovation. Each year we focused on providing one deliverable solution to cover the four recurring pain points we have learned about during our campaign: Accessibility, Add Value, Accountability, and Partnership.

Overview

Goal	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Accessibility	Provide remote or by-mail options and the ability to schedule visits	Assist customers who are hearing impaired or require an interpreter	Expand language accessibility options for constituents	Provide alternative financial options for consumers
Value Added & Development	Provide a services navigator tool that guides customers	Produce resources for Woman, Minority, and Veteran-owned businesses	Provide interactive features, (e.g., live chat, find a needed service nearest you)	Create an email or text subscription-based service for updates
Accountability & Transparency	Provide live wait times and average transaction times	Make Legislative meetings, actions, and bill status available for review online	Provide a direct feedback option for consumers to comment on their experience	Provide financial reporting for the County Clerk's Office
Partnership	Establish internship opportunities with local organizations	Assist in creating an emergency notification system for residents.	Work to improve Open Data resources, including election results	Create a centralized newsletter for residents



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Year 1

Accessibility: Provide remote or by-mail options and the ability to schedule visits.

- **Benefit:** Allow customers to avoid unnecessary trips, having to find parking, and reduce the time spent in line for those who prefer or require in-person transactions.
- **Outcome:** Shorter (or no) lines, customers are more likely to have all resources at hand, and sessions could provide a customer with links to pay directly. A tracking program would help to determine additional efficiency opportunities.

Value Added: Provide a services navigator tool that guides customers.

- **Benefit:** Customers do not have to search through every form on a website to find the one that they are looking for and are provided information about the services offered. The customer can save time and avoid filling out the wrong (or any) form.
- **Outcome:** Less time spent by customers at the Clerk's office, customers are informed of how to engage the service they need, customers can maximize their day by minimizing interaction with the Clerk's office.

Transparency/Accountability: Provide live wait times and average transaction times.

- **Benefit:** Customers are aware of how long a visit may take and can plan their day accordingly.
- **Outcome:** Reduced wait times and an informed customer base.

Partnership: Establish internship opportunities with local organizations.

- **Benefit:** The Clerk's office would receive more employees through organizations like HVCC and be able to run more efficiently. Interns would receive valuable experience to bolster resumes and could explore if public service was a career of interest before graduation. The Clerk's office would ensure a fresh perspective and explore new technology.
- **Outcome:** Students in the community receive invaluable experience in a public office and the office can run more efficiently and focus on important issues with their assistance.



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Year 2

Accessibility: Assist customers who are hearing impaired or require an interpreter.

- **Benefit:** Foster a more inclusive environment for the 10% of customers who speak a language other than English.
- **Outcome:** Increased accessibility of services and the ability to grow a new revenue stream for Rensselaer County.

Value Added: Produce resources for businesses defined as "disadvantaged" (Currently Woman, Minority, and Veteran-owned).

- **Benefit:** Once identified, businesses can receive support and assistance from the SBA through business training and more and community members can support localized, sustainable growth.
- **Outcome:** Traditionally neglected businesses enter the market on a more level playing field, allowing them to contribute to the larger community more readily.

Transparency/Accountability: Make Legislative meetings, actions, and bill status available for review online

- **Benefit:** Provide up to date information on the current state and agenda of the legislature, allow for review of bills being passed, and be able to update constituents who have questions on the current legislative agenda.
- **Outcome:** Provide information to constituents that results in a county that is generally more informed about what their elected officials are doing.

Partnership: Assist in creating an emergency notification system for residents.

- **Benefit:** Not only does it foster a more informed county but could provide life-saving information to someone who may not know where to look, especially as weather patterns adjust significantly in our region.
- **Outcome:** A safer and more informed community, with better access to emergency services and guidance.



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Year 3

Accessibility: Expand language accessibility options for constituents.

- **Benefit:** Opens services to the communities outlined above and makes a more inclusive space.
- **Outcome:** A more inclusive environment that is accessible to a growing portion of the county.
- **Example:** <https://www.co.genesee.ny.us/departments/countyClerk/>

Value Added: Provide interactive features, (e.g., live chat, find a needed service nearest you).

- **Benefit:** Eliminate the need for customers to call in and be put on hold or send an email and wait for a response. Customers can access a live agent by chat during business hours and access an FAQ chatbot when offline.
- **Outcome:** A more efficient office for customers and constituents of Rensselaer County.

Transparency/Accountability: Provide a direct feedback option for consumers to comment on their experience.

- **Benefit:** Not only does it allow customers to voice their complaints/praise, but it also allows us to take in new ideas on how we can be better directly from those who are using the website. We work better together.
- **Outcome:** A more well-rounded and community-based website as well as a constituency that can see that their voice is being heard and taken into consideration when changes are needed or made.

Partnership: Work to improve Open Data resources, including election results.

- **Benefit:** Make navigation of our data, like election results and financial reporting, easier to do. This can also assist in reducing the need to place FOIL requests and consume staff time with repeated questions saving thousands of hours in labor annually.
- **Outcome:** A more informed constituency, and less confusion when it comes to what is going on in Rensselaer County.
- **Example:** https://www.otsegocounty.com/departments/a-c/board_of_elections/election_results.php



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Year 4

Accessibility: Provide alternative financial options for consumers.

- **Benefit:** Opens services to a larger portion of Rensselaer residents and reduces stress on those who may not be able to pay the full cost of a service upfront or through traditional means.
- **Outcome:** The Clerk's office becomes a more open place that assists disadvantaged communities in the county.

Value Added: Create an email or text subscription-based service for updates.

- **Benefit:** Interested customers can sign up and remain informed of important information coming from the Clerk's office rather than having to call/come in to find out. (ex. If the office is closed unexpectedly for the day)
- **Outcome:** A more updated constituency and a more efficiently run office.

Transparency/Accountability: Provide financial reporting for the County Clerk's Office.

- **Benefit:** Foster trust and accountability between the Clerk and constituents to show that we aren't overcharging or wasting county dollars.
- **Outcome:** Transparency that shows that hard-earned tax dollars and being spent wisely.
- **Example:** <https://warrencountyny.gov/Clerk/revenue>

Partnership: Create a centralized newsletter for residents.

- **Benefit:** Gives residents greater access to important Clerk information that they may not otherwise see if they don't regularly check the website.
- **Outcome:** A more informed constituency who may not be aware of offerings or special events and presentations.



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Years 5-8

- **Accessibility:** Create a “living” county office directory so that residents can get to in touch with the office they need.
 - **Benefit:** Make knowledge and results a self-guided service.
 - **Outcome:** A county system that is more accessible to everyone.

- **Value Added:** Establish a Homeowners Watch List
 - **Benefit:** Saves people the time of needing to confirm that their property filings are in order and could also protect against fraudulent filings. In addition, they can find reliably certified documents in our database.
 - **Outcome:** A more efficiently run Clerk’s Office and residents feeling more protected with their property.
 - **Example:** <https://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Elected-Officials/County-Clerk>

- **Transparency/Accountability:** Provide links or direct information on local demographics.
 - **Benefit:** The people of Rensselaer County can see how well they are represented in government compared to county demographics, which emphasizes the importance of equitable representation.
 - **Outcome:** Provide valuable information to residents that goes beyond the job description.
 - **Example:** <https://www.madisoncounty.ny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/154/Madison-County-Profile-2013-PDF?bidId=>

- **Partnership:** Partner with organizations and businesses to promote and expand the Veteran’s Discount program.
 - **Benefit:** The veterans of Rensselaer County should receive a token of thanks from both the Clerk’s Office and local businesses to show that they add value to our community and deserve our support.
 - **Outcome:** Veterans are able to receive a sustainable form of financial assistance while supporting the local economy.
 - **Example:** <https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/3234/Veterans-Recognition-Program>