

Panola County Clerk Bonus and Supplement Plan

Background

The County Clerk records, files and maintains a wide variety of current and historic records important to the citizens of Panola County and beyond. With technology and resources we now have, the County Clerk and staff have the opportunity to digitize the records we maintain, and in doing so, protect the original documents, case files, books and other records in the County Clerk's Office dating back to sovereignty.

For many years the County Clerk has collected \$10 per recorded document (County Clerk Records Management and Preservation Fee) pursuant to Local Government Code §118.011(b)(2) and 118.0216. This fee is for records management and preservation services performed by the County Clerk after the filing and recording of a document in the records of the office of the clerk and may be used only to provide funding for specific records management and preservation, including automation. Preservation of many of the oldest books and case files has been conducted by outside vendors using this fund along with other fees collected by the County Clerk, with the support and approval of Commissioners' Court. Along with preservation of the original books, digitization of the records provides the ability to locate the records in a records management software system, which completes the preservation and management of the original records. Digitization, including scanning and indexing, may be completed by County Clerk staff as time allows.

Plan

Pursuant to multiple statutes and detailed in Texas Attorney General Opinions GA-0118 and GA-0638, the above referenced fund may also be used to supplement the salaries of eligible County Clerk staff who participate in the preservation and digitization of County Clerk records, in proportion to the amount of time that the employee spends on specific records management and preservation projects. This plan is provided to outline the circumstances in which the employees of the County Clerk's Office may be compensated in the form of a bonus or supplement to county salaries.

The County Clerk shall prepare a plan for each eligible employee at the beginning of every year describing the specific record type and goal for number of records to be digitized during that specific year. Consideration will be given for daily recording and filing volume and expectations may be adjusted accordingly prior to year end. Supplements will be provided on a quarterly, semi-annual or annual basis, at the discretion of the Clerk. The Clerk will be responsible for presenting a request to Commissioners' Court annually during the budget planning process, designating the amount of funding to be added to the upcoming annual budget. This salary supplement will improve efficiency, reduce backlogs and ensure compliance while fairly compensating employees for the additional workload, and will be fully funded through the County Clerk's Records Management and Preservation Fund, with no impact on the general budget.



BOBBIE DAVIS
COUNTY CLERK
PANOLA COUNTY

August 6, 2025

Honorable Commissioners' Court
Honorable Rodger McLane, County Judge
110 South Sycamore
Carthage, TX 75633

Re: County Clerk Bonus and Supplement Plan

Commissioners and Judge McLane,

Pursuant to Texas Local Government Code §118.011(b)(2) and 118.0216, the County Clerk collects a fee of \$10 per recorded document, designated as the Records Management and Preservation Fee. This fee has been collected for many years, and according to statute may be spent on specific records management and preservation projects. The County Clerk's Office records 6,000 to 8,500 documents annually, and in the first half of 2025, this fee alone generated over \$33,000.

During the past several years, with the approval of Commissioners' Court, we have preserved many original books, including birth, death, marriage, livestock marks and brands, probate and final estate minutes and probate case files. The earliest Commissioners' Court Minute books are being preserved now and will be delivered soon. Funding for these projects is provided using fees collected by the County Clerk, including the fee listed above, designated for that purpose according to statute. With the technology and resources we now have, much of the digitization required to complete these projects (including scanning and indexing) may be performed by County Clerk staff as time allows.

I am writing to request that a portion of the Records Management and Preservation Fee described above and collected by the County Clerk's office be set aside on an annual basis to allow for a supplement to the salaries of County Clerk staff members who are performing specific records management and preservation projects. I believe the prospect of a bonus or supplement would incentivize and reward those staff members who diligently strive to complete the projects they are assigned while simultaneously performing daily duties and most importantly, serving the public. Attached is my proposed Bonus and Supplement Plan, required according to Texas Attorney General Opinions GA-0118 and GA-0638.

I am asking that \$40,000 be set aside in the 2026 budget for Special Revenue Fund 170, County Clerk's Records Preservation Fund, which would provide a potential supplement for each hourly employee upon successful completion of records management and preservation projects assigned in 2026.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bobbie Davis".

Bobbie Davis
Panola County Clerk

attachment