



Iowa County Recorder's Association

LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANDATES STUDY COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 7, 2014

Underfunded mandates

- Vehicle licensing and renewals for the DNR
- Archiving and electronic submission of GWH statements for the DNR
- Processing DOV forms for the Dept. of Revenue
- Components of being the County Registrar of Vital Records for the Dept. of Public Health

Counties have worked towards efficiencies each year to make these processes that we are required by law to provide as low-cost as possible. The DNR has worked with outside vendors to, slowly over the years, close the gap between underfunded and fully-funded. With each type of process, there is varying times spent with customers answering questions and processing transactions. Counties have been tasked with keeping these records and maintaining the system until recent years. We have worked hard to help close that underfunded gap without raising fees, but by creating efficiencies as processes change.

Unfunded Mandates – Marriage application process

- July, 1997 process is taken over by County Recorders and fee is \$30
- Iowa Code required County Recorders to process marriage license for no additional fee to user. Taxpayers across Iowa started to subsidize a user-based service.
- In 2005 IDHP raises certified copy fee to \$15 and County Recorder retains \$4 of that.
- Marriage application fee changes to \$35 which includes one certified copy. \$31 is remitted to the state and \$4 is retained by the county for the certified copy.
- ***There has never been a fee collected by the county recorder's office*** to process the marriage application, waiver if necessary, and certificate of marriage.
- Fees are broken down as shown below:

Marriage Application Fee Prior to January 1, 2014

- *\$20.00 – State General Fund*
- *\$8.00 – State Registrar/Vital Records*
- *\$3.00 – State General Fund*
- *\$4.00 – County Recorder (fee for certified copy)*
- \$35.00 – Total*

Marriage Application Fee beginning January 1, 2014

- *\$15.00 – State General Fund*
- *\$13.00 – State Registrar/Vital Records*
- *\$3.00 – State General Fund*
- *\$4.00 – County Recorder (fee for certified copy)*
- \$35.00 – Total*

By the next two charts you can see how the cost of processing a marriage application affects counties. The total cost in just wages to Floyd county over a 5 year period was **\$-17,376**. The cost to the entire state is at a conservative **\$ -2,262,000**.

Task	Materials	per unit cost
print marriage application	archival paper (\$82.64 /ream)	\$0.18
	printing cost	\$0.04
process application w/ applicants	staff time - 15 minutes (\$15/hour)	\$3.75
process certificate address update form	printed form - cost	\$0.04
prepare marriage license/certificate	staff time - 10 minutes (\$15/hour)	\$2.50
store for 3 day wait		na
review w/ applicant	staff time - 3 minutes (\$15/hour)	\$0.75
send applicant w/ packet	#10 return envelope	\$0.04
	license - printing cost	\$0.04
	certificate	\$0.04
	9x12 envelope to keep all material	\$0.13

After ceremony		
Task	Materials	per unit cost
certificate return - proof for legality	staff time - 2 minutes (\$15/hour)	\$0.50
book & page document, index, put in book	staff time - 4 minutes (\$15/hour)	\$1.00

storage shelves/cabinets for record books		
storage book for records	(\$150 per book - holds 200)	\$0.75

Total Cost Per Marriage	\$9.76
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	Salary**	Salary broke in minutes	Cost to county	Marriage Certificates Filed in Iowa	County cost combined statewide	
1999	\$10.00	\$0.17	\$5.78	22,029	\$127,327	
2000	\$10.30	\$0.18	\$6.12	21,792	\$133,367	
2001	\$10.61	\$0.18	\$6.12	21,172	\$129,572	
2002	\$10.93	\$0.19	\$6.46	20,406	\$131,822	
2003	\$11.26	\$0.19	\$6.46	20,371	\$131,596	
2004	\$11.60	\$0.20	\$6.80	20,455	\$139,094	
2005	\$11.95	\$0.20	\$6.80	20,419	\$138,849	
2006	\$12.31	\$0.21	\$7.14	20,060	\$143,228	
2007	\$12.68	\$0.22	\$7.48	19,895	\$148,814	
2008	\$13.06	\$0.22	\$7.48	19,566	\$146,353	
2009	\$13.46	\$0.23	\$7.82	21,139	\$165,306	
2010	\$13.87	\$0.24	\$8.16	20,880	\$170,380	
2011	\$14.29	\$0.24	\$8.16	20,567	\$167,826	
2012	\$14.72	\$0.25	\$8.50	20,986	\$178,381	
2013	\$15.17	\$0.26	\$8.84	23,804	\$210,427	
			Total	313,541	\$2,262,342	Wages Only

Calculated beginning at \$10 per hour in 1999; adding 3% COL increase each year. Based off of SSA raw data average wage of \$9.67 per hour.

**Salary cost broke down to cost per marriage at 34 minutes per marriage application as provided by Marriage Application Process workflow

*** Salary divided by 60 minutes x 34 minutes = cost per application at current year wage.

Marriage Certificates filed in Iowa according to the IDPH Vital States of Iowa 1999 through 2012 - Occurrence Data

In 1999, County Recorders proposed to the legislature an increase of \$10 to cover the cost to the counties. They could see then, in the 18 months that they had been working with the Iowa Department of Public Health, that there was a cost the counties and taxpayers were subsidizing it. Since that time, County Recorders have processed 313,541 marriage applications across the state. If that \$10 fee increase would have been passed, counties would have an additional \$3,135,410 in their general funds.

Compared to other states, Iowa is definitely the lowest. Minnesota and Missouri are two examples of neighboring states what they charge for the marriage license process. *The suggested \$10 increase would cover a majority of the costs to the counties, and keep the total cost to the customer affordable.*

- **Minnesota**
 - **Marriage application fee \$115 without pre-marital classes**
 - **\$40 with pre-marital classes**
 - **State share - \$75/\$15**
 - **County share - \$25**
 - **Certified Copy – 1 included/\$9 for additional**

- **Missouri**
 - **Marriage application fee \$46**
 - **State share - \$17**
 - **County share - \$29**
 - **Certified Copy – \$9**
(not included in application cost)

If we can work together to attain the goal of fully funding at an appropriate level and correct the unfunded process of the marriage application fee, it would take the burden away from the taxpayer. Iowa has fallen behind and some changes are long overdue. It is our hope that today we have opened your eyes to some of the struggles we face on a daily basis to provide efficient services to our constituents, the taxpayers across the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration today in discussing these important issues that affect Counties.