



## NEWS RELEASE



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### **County Clerk Hanlon Advises Residents to Apply for Passports Well in Advance**

FREEHOLD, NJ – Monmouth County Clerk Christine Giordano is advising residents to apply for passports well in advance of any planned travel since the U.S. Department of State is experiencing significant passport processing delays, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In March, the U.S. Department of State largely shut down its passport processing services to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including the suspension of expedited passport processing and the restriction of service to cases involving life-or-death emergencies only.

According to the U.S. Department of State, a backlog of passport applications accumulated during this temporary closure, resulting in 1.23 million applicants awaiting passport issuance, as of July 22. Expedited service continues to be suspended and the State Department has not provided an estimate of time for routine passport service.

“Due to the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in a large backlog of passport applications to the U.S. Department of State, I encourage all residents to apply for a passport well in advance of any planned travel,” said Clerk Hanlon. “In addition, many countries require six months validity on a U.S. passport, so it is critical to check the expiration date in advance if you already have a passport.”

Residents can apply for a passport at the County Clerk’s two Passport Offices. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the two offices are currently operating by an appointment only basis; appointments can be scheduled by calling the offices. Also, the County Connection Office in Neptune has updated business hours until further notice.

- Freehold - Monmouth County Clerk’s Office located in the Market Yard (south of Main Street). The hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please call 732-431-7324 to schedule an appointment.
- Neptune - Monmouth County Connection at 3544 Route 66 (near Home Depot) The hours are Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please call 732-303-2828 to schedule an appointment.

To obtain a passport, it is necessary to have a certified birth certificate with a raised seal, social security number, passport photo 2x2 inches in size, and current identification such as a driver's license or government identification. Passport photos are available for a fee of \$10 at both locations.

Parents who are making a passport application for a child under the age of 16 are required to appear together or submit additional documentation.

“Make sure to contact the Passport Office prior to appearing at a County Clerk passport office to schedule an appointment and to confirm that you have the proper documentation and payments,” said Clerk Hanlon.

For more information about applying for a passport, please visit the Monmouth County Clerk's webpage at [MonmouthCountyClerk.com](http://MonmouthCountyClerk.com), or contact the Freehold Passport Office at 732-431-7324 or Neptune County Connection at 732-303-2828.

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