

Tonya Moore
County Clerk

1. Please describe the qualifications and experience that make you the best candidate for the office of Thurston County Clerk?

I have nearly 25 years of experience working in the superior court system. During this time, I've had the unique experience of working for two different counties, each with their own distinct processes and procedures for the structure and operation of the clerk's office. I worked for 15 years in Pierce County, where the Clerk is appointed by the County Executive, and for nearly 10 years in Thurston County, where the Clerk is elected by the voters.

In observing how each of these counties handled their day-to-day operations, I was able to see opportunities where I could replicate systems that efficiently and effectively served the community and court staff, and retire systems that didn't. For example, as a Judicial Assistant in Pierce County, I had the ability to be sworn in by the county clerk to perform limited clerk functions in the courtroom for judges, including handling exhibits during trials and docketing hearings into the case management system. This allowed the clerk's office to concentrate on their most pressing responsibilities, such as filing integral court documents, and allowed me to learn critical tasks that the clerk performed, to grow in my career. Working in such a collaborative environment gave me insight into how these same systems could be replicated elsewhere, to maximize growth opportunities for courtroom staff and quality of service for the public.

After I was hired in Thurston County as a Judicial Assistant with the superior court, my appreciation for these opportunities, and proven results when I sought to apply them in my new position, prompted my promotion to the role of Court Operations Manager.

1. If you are the incumbent, what are your most notable accomplishments as county clerk?

N/A

1. If you are the challenger, what are the most notable failures of the County Clerk?

As the challenger in this race, I would like to respectfully note the obstacles that the court staff have faced, because of the current leadership, from first-hand experience. The most notable challenges that have resulted from the office's current leadership are:

- The delays in filing critical documents without any communication to the individuals who the untimely filings will impact, which results in parties lacking the paperwork they need to have clarity on their cases and hinders the legal

representatives' abilities to file timely motions on behalf of themselves or their clients.

- Errors in the docketing of hearings, which results in devastating delays to court schedules for our community members, many of whom are relying on the accuracy of the schedules to request unpaid time off from work and/or to protect their health and safety.
- A lack of collaboration amongst court offices to create a more streamlined and efficient legal process for the public, self-represented parties, attorneys, and stakeholders. Currently, the court offices are very siloed and fragmented, when they should be operating in tandem with one another to reduce unnecessary overlap of duties and to reduce the amount of information that could be lost.

1. Please discuss your management style with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.

As the Court Operations Manager for the Thurston County Superior Court, I believe that it is critical to lead by example and approach my management position as an opportunity to model the behavior I expect of the staff who report to me.

In that spirit, I serve on the county's Race, Equity, and Inclusion Team, where I am actively learning how to develop policies and hiring practices, at all levels, that are inclusive and fair. This includes learning how to approach recruiting new staff in a way that prioritizes reaching out to marginalized communities, who are often not included in traditional hiring searches due to various barriers they may face (eg. economic barriers include a lack of internet access, the need to accommodate interview times to allow for public transportation to the meeting, etc.). Prior to the development of this team, I worked with my previous court administrator on a proposal to the Board of Judges for DEI work within the court system. I also serve on the National Association for Court Management's DEI committee, where we work to empower court management teams to address race equity and racial disproportionality within their court systems. I've taken the opportunity to sign up for, and attend, as many classes as I can, that are offered on DEI, and related topics.

In 2017, I organized the Color of Justice © program in Thurston County, with the help of Judge Murphy. This program encouraged marginalized students from our county to go to law school, return to practice law in Thurston, then seek out judicial positions in our county's courts. It was a day where students were meant to interact with marginalized judicial officers, hear their stories, ask questions about their experiences as judicial officers, and even contact them later as a mentor. The program was originally scheduled for October of 2017, but when only 1 student registered, we had to temporarily postpone the event to strategize how to increase interest. After contacting several counselors from various middle and high schools in the area, I learned that the students

of color did not feel safe coming to the courthouse. Hearing this was devastating to me, but it ignited my passion to continue to pursue this opportunity for our local youth. I chose to meet students, counselors, principals, and teachers where they were at, to see what I could do to make the students feel safe. I went to several meetings at the schools, dropped off information packets for their students and their families, and spoke to the school's staff to explain why this program was so important for our community. These steps were successful— we ended up holding the program in March of 2018 and 35 students attended. At the event, we had students, attorneys and judicial officers sit together, and the attorneys and judicial officers talked about the road to their current position. During this time, a student stood up and said that prior to this event she would have never seen herself going to college, let alone law school, but that event showed her that she could do anything she put her mind to. Her testimony touched me, and I felt like the program was a success, even if only *one* student acknowledged how it changed their mindset. I was honored to be a part of this event, and in 2019, I received the Womxn of Achievement Award from the Olympia YWCA.

This work is extremely important to me as a black woman. I am often the only person of color in most of my workspaces, and on most of the committees I serve on. It is imperative for people who look like me, especially young people who look like me, to know, and see, that there is someone who looks like them working for the courts. If I were to be elected Thurston County Clerk, people who look like me would be able to see themselves in our court's leadership, which I feel would establish confidence and trust in our justice system's commitment to equity and inclusivity at all levels.

1. Of the various functions of the County Clerk listed on the county website, are you satisfied with how they are currently managed? Which one(s) would you change?

The overall management of the various functions of the County Clerk's office, as listed on the county website, is not to my satisfaction. While the tasks are mostly being completed, it is important to note *how* those tasks are being completed. When someone is needing services from the clerk's office, they have often experienced a traumatic event, and are undergoing one of the most overwhelming and stressful processes of their lives. This trauma will impact how they process information, and can determine the trajectory of the rest of their lives. I will be committed to making the clerk's office a more compassionate, welcoming environment for those that utilize its services.

I will also dedicate my time to ensuring that the clerk office's staff have access to continued training on how to provide high-quality, efficient, and effective services to our community members. I intend to make forms that the clerk's office provides readily available on the county website, in multiple languages, should the user's first language not be English. I would like to explore how our clerk's office can expand access to these

forms by including them at more locations, and possibly allowing them to be filed there as well. Many people do not have transportation or cannot get to the courthouse easily—this is especially true for the family and juvenile location. By setting up expanded locations for these critical resources in our community, we will ensure easier access to justice. I will work to ensure that the clerk’s office communicates with other court offices to streamline processes, so that no individual navigating the court system is negatively impacted due to an outdated, ineffective internal process. I will continue to bring a fresh perspective and innovative ideas to the clerk’s office, so that workloads are delegated to promote balance for staff’s personal lives, growth opportunities are readily available to all who choose to pursue them, and community members feel they are met with compassion, experience, and transparency.

1. If you are not satisfied with any of the County Clerk functions, how would you improve them?

Please see my answer above, which answers both questions 6 and 7. Thank you!