Mercer County Clerk Explains How REAL ID Extension Relates to Passports

The Federal Government has extended the requirement for citizens to have REAL ID from October 1, 2020 to October 1, 2021. As a result, this lessens the urgency for passport books and cards, which meet REAL ID requirements.

Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello announced that with the closure of County passport offices, this announcement could not come at a better time. “People do not have to feel stressed about needing a passport to meet federal REAL ID requirements at this time and this will allow only those who need them for international travel to visit the offices when they reopen.”

Whereas a REAL ID-compliant drivers’ license will require nine points of identification and an appointment at a Department of Motor Vehicles location to obtain, a passport will require an original birth certificate and a DS-11 (application for passport) for first-time applicants.

Although the Mercer County Clerk’s Office in Trenton and County Connection in Hamilton are currently closed due to orders put forth by the Mercer County Executive to avoid the spread of COVID-19, passport processing is a service offered during business hours. Additionally, passport staff from the Clerk’s Office regularly goes into community to process applications as well. If it is deemed safe to do so, passport acceptance agents will be on hand to accept applications at the Ewing Township Municipal Building at 2 Jake Garzio Drive, on June 11 from 3pm to 7pm. More dates will become available as the spring progresses.

Both the County Clerk’s Office in Trenton and the County Connection in Hamilton will reopen to the public when all other Mercer County agencies are reopened as well.

According to the US Department of Homeland Security, the federal REAL ID Act, signed into law in 2005, “established minimum security standards for license issuance and production.” It was adopted at the suggestion of the 9/11 Commission, who said that standards needed to be set for sources of identification to increase security.

For more information about passport services, as well as updates on closures related to COVID-19, please visit the County Clerk’s website: http://www.mercercounty.org/government/county-clerk-office-services/passports.
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