WASHINGTON COURTS

Administrative Office of the Courts

**October 24, 2014**

**TO:** JISC Data Dissemination Committee

**FROM:** Stephanie Happold, AOC Data Dissemination Administrator

**RE:** Public Access to Accounting Data in JIS for Data Dissemination Requests.

**Issue**

Can AOC provide JIS accounting data for data dissemination requests?

**Recommendation**

AOC is receiving numerous requests from state agencies, researchers and members of the public for financial case information contained in JIS. Examples of requests are: LFO information, how many cases and what amounts are going to collection agencies, penalties associated with cases, and the amounts courts received in past years. Currently, AOC does not provide this information for data dissemination requests.

Public access to information in court records is governed by GR 31, which provides for open public access to court records unless restricted by federal law, state law, court rule, court order, or case law. GR 31 (d) (1). Public access to the information in court cases is also governed by a well-developed body of common law, under which the public has a right to inspect and copy court case records. *See Nast v. Michels*, 107 Wn.2d 300, 730 P.2d 54 (1986).

The JISC Data Dissemination Policy allows for access to JIS information subject to the JISCR 15(f) requirements of:

- availability of data,
- specificity of the request,
- potential for infringement of personal privacy created by release of the information requested, and
- potential disruption to the internal ongoing business of the courts.

Data Dissemination Policy III.B. Confidential information regarding individual litigants, witnesses, or jurors that is collected for the internal administrative operations of the courts will not be disseminated. Data Dissemination Policy IV.B. This information includes, but is not limited to, credit card and P.I.N. numbers, and social security numbers. *Id*. Identifying information (including, but not limited to, residential addresses and residential phone numbers) regarding individual litigants, witnesses, or jurors will not be disseminated, except that the residential addresses of litigants will be available to the extent otherwise permitted by law. *Id*. The JISC Data Dissemination Policy also

states that JIS information provided in electronic format shall be subject to provisions contained in the electronic data dissemination contract. Data Dissemination Policy III.B.

In looking at JIS-Link public access to financial information, level 1 (public) does not have direct access to the following JIS Screens: Case Financial History (CFHB), Case Obligation Status (COS), Accounting Summaries (CFHS), Accounts Receivable (CFHA), Disbursements Detail (CFHD), Receipting Detail (CFHR), A/R Adjustments (CFHJ), Receipts Totals (CFHR), Journal Vouchers (DJV), and Case Accounting Note Inquiry (CAN). However, according to the JIS-Link Security Levels for Non-JIS Organizations, the public has access to case financial information contained in the CFH screens if provided as a screen print with the personal identifiers, such as state ID, driver's license number, and victim's/witness'/person posting bail's address and telephone numbers, redacted. However, information contained on the COS, DJV and CAN screens is currently not available even as a screen shot.

Based on the public having access to the above-referenced JIS screen shots after the appropriate redactions, AOC staff recommends allowing the data to be similarly released for data dissemination requests. The release of data will conform to GR 31, GR 15, and the JISC Data Dissemination Policy and only after a data dissemination contract is executed. Last, AOC staff requests the Committee to review the financial data contained on the DJV, COS and CAN screens to determine if the information is also disclosable for public dissemination requests.