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## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the second edition of our new monthly newsletter, delivered directly to your email every month, or you can download it from our website [here](#). Each month we will keep you up to date with announcements from the project and AOC leadership teams, helpful tips and new tools, and even keep you up to date on what's new in the world of Washington Courts of Limited Jurisdiction.

## **GETTING TO KNOW CUWG SME ALISA HILL**

This month we interviewed Alisa Hill, Court Operations Supervisor at Tacoma Municipal Court and District and Municipal Court Management Association Representative for the CLJ-CMS Court User Work Group (CUWG).

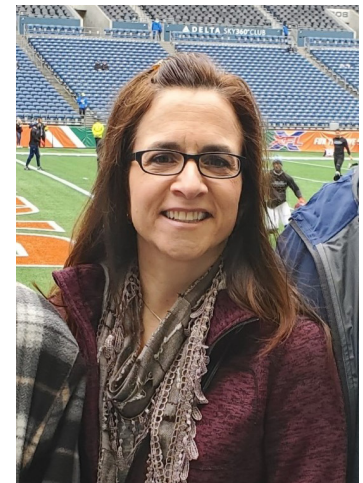
### **When did you first become interested in working within the legal/court community?**

It was my senior year of high school and I started to panic when I realized I didn't know what I wanted to be when I grew up. My sister in law was a paralegal with Davis Wright Tremaine in Seattle, so I asked to observe her at work for a day. After I saw what she did and learned it involved very little math, I was hooked! It was then that I decided to get my paralegal degree.

### **What roles have you held through your career?**

After college I was a family law paralegal for several years and then I took a clerk position with Pierce County District Court. I was with PD1 for 17 years before taking a Court Operations Supervisor position with Tacoma Municipal, where I have been since 2015.

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**What motivates you to continue your work with the courts?**

I am a challenge seeker and courts fulfill that need because there are so many facets to them. I always like to tell people in interviews that we work in the “gray area”. Nothing we do is black and white or easy to sum up and put in a nice tidy manual. There are always exceptions or different circumstances that can change the outcome or decision to be made. We are a unique breed and clerks who understand that and strive to continually learn and grow, can go far in our world. On the flip side, if you don’t like change and crave black and white protocols, you will not be fulfilled working in a court. These jobs are not for everyone.

**What has your experience been like while working with the CLJ-CMS Project?**

Working on the CUWG has been a great experience and enabled me to create relationships with AOC and others in the court community. It has helped to educate me on court trends and processes throughout the entire State. This is a multi-year project that requires a great deal of commitment, so it’s nice to be in the company of other great minds who really respect one another. There have been many hours put into this project and it’s not always easy, we have some great debates and in-depth discussions on what the system should have and, what should be eliminated. I have fought for the less-is-more approach; too many options cause confusion and that allows room for misinterpretation.

**What do you hope the CLJ-CMS Project will bring to the courts?**

The project has been going on for years and we are all anxious to get going with a new system. I’m sure when DISCIS came out many moons ago they went through a long and painful process as well. I hope that the project will keep everyone engaged so we can be on a unified system. Multiple systems add more work and more room for missed information.

**Is there anything you would like to share with the CLJ community?**

Don’t expect the new system to check all the boxes. As with any system, it will have flaws. We will learn to work around them just like we have done for years with JIS. We have so many work arounds in JIS that you don’t even notice how many you use every day. Rather than be frustrated when learning the new system, learn to adapt and conquer. We will all be stepping into some serious gray areas at first. Be patient, be kind, and open to a new way of doing your job in the court.

**Alisa Hill**

**Court Operations Supervisor, Tacoma Municipal  
Voting Member, Court User Work Group**

## **GETTING TO KNOW JISC VICE CHAIR JUDGE JOHN HART**

Similar to many CLJ judges, I serve our courts in many capacities. I am the Vice Chair Judicial Information Systems Committee (JISC), which serves as the committee overseeing information technology for all levels of Washington courts. I serve in this capacity as one of the District and Municipal Court Judges' Association representatives. In my role as Vice Chair of the JISC, I also serve as the Chair of the Data and Dissemination Committee (DDC). The DDC is assigned the responsibility of administration of data dissemination, including responding to requests of the public, other governmental agencies, or other participants in the judicial information system.



I am also one of two judges that serve on the Court User Work Group (CUWG) for the CLJ-CMS. This is an alliance of a broad cross section of participants from our courts of limited jurisdiction, subject matter experts and AOC staff. We examine the Odyssey product "line-by-line" in a collaborative effort to customize the Odyssey to ensure we adopt the best product for our courts.

As an undergraduate at the University of Nebraska, I briefly flirted with the pursuit of a teaching degree and then, a PhD in Philosophy. Recognizing a legal education required a much shorter investment of time than earning a PhD, I traded in my Birkenstocks for wing tips and, three years later, I graduated from the University of Nebraska, College of Law. After briefly practicing in Virginia, I relocated to Whitman County, Washington where I served primarily as a public defender. I was fortunate to appear primarily before my predecessor and mentor, Judge Doug Robinson. Always serving as a shining example of professionalism and diplomacy Judge Robinson was (and still is) a wise judicial officer. He encouraged me to apply for my first judicial position as Colfax Municipal Court Judge. After seven years in that role and following Judge Robinson's retirement, I have now stepped into my current position as Whitman County's District Court Judge.

My primary source of motivation is the desire to make my kids proud of their father. I recognize it is my responsibility and honor to teach them by example. Long ago, I embraced the idea of "service over self" and I emphasize this message with them while I encourage them to pursue a career path in an area they are passionate about and provides them the opportunity to serve others.

My experience with the CLJ-CMS Project has been long but rewarding. I was happy to serve in the original CLJ CMS request for written proposals and vendor demonstrations. That experience, in addition to serving on the CUWG and JISC, has provided me the opportunity to meet and work with many stakeholders from across the state and to gain a greater understanding of the diverse perspectives of our CMS users.

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The CLJ-CMS Project illustrates a statewide collaborative and unified effort to provide the best technology available for our courts and its users.

The adoption and upcoming implementation of the new case management solutions has been and continues to be one of the most important technology projects in our state. Those shepherding the project are proceeding methodically to provide us the best system available that will address and anticipate the needs of our courts and its users.

Aside from a much needed technology upgrade, I hope the new CMS provides an opportunity to enhance the efficiency of data produced and exchanged between all court stakeholders. In addition, the new CMS will allow the public a new level and ease of access to the courts and court data. I am excited to play a small part in bringing this new solution to our CLJs and the eagerly join in the invite you to look forward with anticipation at the for the progressive leap our courts will make in the next five years.

**Judge John H. Hart**  
**Whitman County District Court Judge**  
**Vice Chair, Judicial Information Systems Committee (JISC)**  
**Chair of the Data and Dissemination Committee (DDC)**  
**DMCJA Representative and Voting Member, Court User Work Group (CUWG)**

## PROJECT MANAGER UPDATE

It's now September, and that also means the changing of the seasons. Change is a strange process; no matter what that change may be, whether it's planned or unexpected, it's natural for change to make us nervous. Summer ending and fall beginning is one example of that change – sweater weather, pumpkin spice-everything, leaves turning color - these are all things to get excited for and embrace.

With the upcoming transition to the new Odyssey software suite, it would be normal to feel nervous, especially for many of our court staff who have only known one way to enter data and may be nervous about using the newer system. On the other hand, some staff may be excited about the coming change but are unsure what it entails and how it might affect them.

In the case of a new case management system, change is necessary – our older system cannot be modernized to meet the changing needs of the courts - we've simply outgrown it.



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The newer system will be more adaptable to current requirements and will offer new opportunities for process improvements and growth. Some of these improvements include an easier-to-use interface with a variety of highly requested features designed to make the daily tasks of our court staff easier with fewer roadblocks.

In the upcoming months, our change management team will be looking for new ways to make this transition easier for our courts. One of these new ways involves looking for change leaders in the court community who can help communicate with staff and work with us to guide our courts and justice partners through the process of changing systems. If you, or someone you know, would be a good champion of this change, please consider volunteering – you can reach out to the project team at [CLJCMS.Project@courts.wa.gov](mailto:CLJCMS.Project@courts.wa.gov).

An important way that courts can help make this upcoming change easier is by ensuring that their data is as clean and accurate as possible and ready for the transition into our new system. Ms. Angie Autry covers that in more depth below, and her team is happy to provide guidance on how to review and clean up records in JIS.

I look forward to navigating these changes together, because together we are capable of great things.

“One’s destination is never a place, but rather a new way of looking at things.”  
- Henry Miller

**Cat Robinson**  
**Project Manager**

## **WHY IS DATA CLEAN-UP IMPORTANT?**

Having good data added to any computer system is key to having valid and reliable data you can pull back out and use to help with decision making. This is extremely important in a court system as it can impact things like your calendars, your caseload counts, and your courts’ statistics. A great example of what can happen when you make decisions based on bad data is the recent payment break-down from the Blake funding, which was distributed, and then re-distributed, based on data that came from JIS. Similarly, data clean-up will be crucial for making sure our transition from JIS to Odyssey only carries over clean and accurate data about the courts’ cases.

Let’s start from the beginning...what is data? Data is defined as facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis. So what makes the quality of data “good” or “bad”? Good data is accurate, complete, consistent, relevant, unique, and added in a timely manner. But what does that mean to you when you’re inputting or reviewing information in the systems you use every day?

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Well, it means that whenever possible, you're entering current information precisely, filling in all required fields accurately, making sure that there are no mismatches in the information you enter in the same system or between systems, and ensuring there are no duplicate entries of the same case or parties. Of course, it also means adding all that data as soon as possible so records are updated and accurate, which also helps prevent someone else accidentally replicating bad information.

If your court hasn't already done so, please review eService Answer #2421 – CLJ-CMS Clean-up Reports in the Business Intelligence Tool (BIT). There are many reports that can help you identify cases with errors, make sure cases aren't falling through the cracks, and to help you close out cases that may no longer need to remain open. As we move forward with the project's tasks, our project team will continue to add new reports as we see possible data issues come up. For instance, we recently added a new report that will help you identify cases where the case number may have been changed in JIS in error – the report is titled Case Numbers with Possible Errors.

We understand that not all courts have time to focus on these reports, but ask that you try to do as much as your time allows. If you need assistance getting to the reports, please reach out to Courts-Helping-Courts as others may be able to provide you with clean-up assistance. Working through these reports for your court, and then continuing to manage them until your court is implemented into the new system is crucial to make sure your data will be good to go from day one.

**Angie Autry**  
**Court Business Supervisor**

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## NEW PROJECT WEBSITE

We've updated our project website! Now you can easily find an implementation map and timeline, editions of a new monthly newsletter on the project, ongoing articles about courts of limited jurisdiction (CLJs), links to the project history, and more. [CLJ-CMS Project Website](#)

## **COURTS HELPING COURTS**

The Courts Helping Courts program would like to highlight new, exciting, or innovative actions taken by any of our CLJ courts because we believe those actions should be recognized. If you know of a court that should be highlighted for the CLJ community, please contact the CLJ-CMS Project team at [CLJCMS-SProject@courts.wa.gov](mailto:CLJCMSProject@courts.wa.gov).

If you would like to volunteer for any of the Courts Helping Courts efforts, please contact one of the members listed below. They'd love to hear from you.

**Suzi Elsner – [selsner@marysvillewa.gov](mailto:selsner@marysvillewa.gov)**  
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## **DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS TO ASK OR FEEDBACK TO PROVIDE?**

Questions, comments, and feedback related to this newsletter and the CLJ-CMS Project are welcomed at [CLJCMSProject@courts.wa.gov](mailto:CLJCMSProject@courts.wa.gov).