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A Project Manager's work can be distilled into managing three main things: scope (what the project should achieve), schedule (the time the work should take to complete), and budget (how much the work is expected to cost). This is a Project Manager's "iron triangle" – a set of (often) competing priorities that can make or break a project when the balance is upset. For this reason, Project Managers must regularly review and assess these priorities when deciding how to move forward with a project. In mid-August, the CLJ-CMS Project communicated to CLJ stakeholders our decision to delay the Pilot Court Go-Live originally scheduled for October 2022 to 2023. In this article, I want to share why that decision was made, what benefits we expect to realize from delaying, and what our next steps are.

Before I get into the details of the delay, I want to reiterate that **the CLJ-CMS project is NOT in jeopardy**. The project's intent has always been, and will continue to be, to provide high-quality eFiling, case management, and probation systems to Washington CLJs. Our Project Sponsors and Pilot Courts affirm their support for these systems to be delivered correctly rather than quickly.

Why Delay Go-Live?

Projects of this scale include a certain amount of ambiguity and risk. Our decision to delay is in response to an accumulation of challenges faced by the project over the last two years of implementation. The COVID-19 pandemic presented unique challenges for the Project Team and our vendor, Tyler Technologies. Not only did we have to shift to a remote work environment which initially limited effective collaboration, but we have also been unable to fill a number of key positions crucial for staffing the project. Furthermore, staffing shortages beyond the immediate project team mean fewer resources are available to supplement the project in times of need.

Washington State's CLJs have several unique aspects and business processes that make implementing a statewide system extremely challenging. While the project identified 44 development projects before starting implementation, additional custom development projects were identified as we have moved through implementation. Each of these requires dedicated time to understand, document, translate into the system, and thoroughly test. Some of the initial development projects for implementing Washington's first statewide supervision platform are taking longer than expected, but we are taking the time to ensure that the system will work effectively at a statewide level well into the future.

Benefits of Delaying Pilot Go-Live

We are focused on delivering a complete system that meets the specific needs of CLJs in supporting their goals and objectives for delivering services and providing access to justice. We also want to ensure a good transition from JIS/DISCIS to the new systems. The additional time dedicated to getting these systems set up correctly means we can spend more time ensuring proper functionality. Delaying Pilot Go-Live means we do not need to rush Solution Validation, which is the project's time to fully test the system end-to-end. Additional time to complete data sharing with our Justice Partners is also required – from eTickets and VRV to Enterprise Data Repository (EDR) for displaying information in JABS – to ensure that these systems share information accurately, reliably, and quickly.

The Project's Next Steps

The project team continues to push forward with implementation. The next critical path milestone is Solution Validation. Our Pilot Courts are understanding and supportive of the team taking additional time to ensure a successful Solution Validation - after all, they will be participating in Solution Validation activities and want it to go as smoothly as possible.

As we progress through Solution Validation and into our Go-Live Readiness tasks, we will update the project schedule to align with our new timeline. This task will be a major undertaking, as adjusting a project schedule is not as simple as shifting work further down the calendar – a lot of analysis and discussion is taking place to ensure a successful implementation for our Pilot Courts and the phases beyond. Our goal remains to bring the best possible case management system to our CLJs. We welcome any questions you may have, and ask you to reach out to our project team via email at CLJCMSProject@courts.wa.gov.

Garret Tanner
Project Manager

GETTING TO KNOW PROJECT STAFF

Brittanie Collinsworth

Brittanie Collinsworth joined the team in September as our new Deputy Project Manager. For the previous three years, she worked at the University of California San Diego as the Director of Marketing & Communications for the Center for Microbiome Innovation and Deputy Program Manager for The Microsetta Initiative. Her career also includes project coordination in the biotech, insurance, and solar industries.



She grew up in San Diego but has lived in San Francisco, Orlando, and Phoenix, where she graduated from Arizona State University with a B.S. in Tourism Development and Management. After living in Olympia and working remotely for the past two years, she is delighted to work locally with such a great team.

When not working, she enjoys traveling, hiking, camping, and cooking with her family and friends.

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.