CITY OF
Federal Way

MUNICIPAL COURT
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October 17, 2014

Justice Mary Fairhurst and JISC Members
Judicial Information System Committee
P.O. Box 40929
Olympia, WA 98504-0929

RE: Proposed Data Standards and Implementation Plan

Dear Justice Fairhurst and JISC Members:

Many of our courts are hurting because of budget cuts and other constraints and need immediate help with efficiencies. Other courts are hurting because the home grown technology they developed years earlier to make them more efficient is no longer serviceable or appropriate for today's needs. Off the shelf software has become more affordable and available. Multiple vendors offer courts the possibility of streamlining operations and local legislative bodies have seen the benefits of providing funding to proceed in that direction. Grants have been awarded to assist courts in improving work processes through automation and to better track caseloads and statistics. Other courts are bubbling with creativity to make their courts an asset for their communities by adding services for the public that do not exist now.

I attach my letter of February 28, 2014 imploring you to foster a culture of cooperation as we proceed forward. My suggestion at the February 28th meeting was to develop the data elements required by JISCR 5 as a road map that will lead us to interoperability when the new CLJ CMS goes into effect.

I will summarize my proposal to build a base system for all courts that also allows integration of other local court systems through a data exchange:

1. Develop unified data elements as required by JISCR 5;
2. Use the adopted unified data elements in the development of the new CLJ CMS;
3. Include the development of a data exchange in the RFP for the new CLJ CMS;
4. Include all vendors in the data exchange development process so that they can develop interfaces that work with the AOC adopted system[1];
5. Local courts with their respective vendors could use the adopted unified data elements in the development of their local systems to reduce or eliminate interoperability issues when the new CLJ CMS is rolled out.

My proposal will unite us on a unified path to success. On the other hand, the proposed data standards and implementation plan in their present form will serve to divide us, quash creativity, and retard the

[1] Texas uses a hub and spoke model similar to what I am proposing.

development of much needed efficiencies and updates in our local courts. The courts that desire to use innovation now are all desirous of developing systems that integrate with the new statewide system. These efforts have been met with a variety of roadblocks including the exclusion of dissenting voices from voting on committees and developing data standards and an implementation plan that will deter courts from improving operations; i.e. the requirement to make dual entries on the scope and scale proposed here operates an initiative killer for many courts trying to improve their operations. It also serves the purpose of dividing us with lines in the sand that will send us on the unintended path of actually encouraging divergent systems. There would be less incentive for a local court to create a system that will eventually integrate with the new CMS if manual entries of data will satisfy AOC; i.e. there would be no need for the new system to "talk" to any other system outside of that court. How many different systems will exist that cannot communicate with each other if we do not follow the "road map" plan? No plan is perfect, but the plan I propose will work by uniting us in a common purpose.

Public safety should be the main driver in deciding what data absolutely needs to be entered into JIS while we are pursuing a replacement statewide system. Yet, the new data standards and implementation plan in many cases require minutia that is not needed by other courts for public safety purposes.

Providing information about charges, warrants, docket entries and the like are very useful, but there are ways to provide that access without requiring uploads to JIS. Links from JABS to other court websites is a viable option that is in the process of being developed for Seattle cases. Requiring courts to allow that access after making certain base entries in JIS would accomplish the ends sought. Courts would still need to follow the data road map created under JISCR 5 in developing their systems so that a merger of data could occur if the plan laid out above is followed. In the meantime, monthly reports, as required now, would give AOC the macro information it needs without requiring courts to upload minutia in JIS.

I want to build our court's system so that it works with the new statewide system. Other courts do too. Let's work together to get to our jointly desired destination.

Thank you.

Judge David A. Larson
Federal Way Municipal Court

Enc.

cc: DMCJA Board of Directors

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February 28, 2014

Justice Mary Fairhurst
Judicial Information System Committee
P.O. Box 40929
Olympia, WA 98504-0929

Re: ITG 27 and ITG 102

Justice Fairhurst:

I am writing in support of making it a top priority to bring the courts of limited jurisdiction into the 21st Century technologically. However, I am also expressing my concern about what this might look like and my fear that we are destined for failure unless we choose a path of mutual cooperation.

There have been recent discussions regarding the actions being taken by various courts to improve efficiencies in their local jurisdiction, including my own court. The steps being taken vary from court to court, but all of these initiatives are good faith attempts by each court to meet their local needs.

I implore you, and all in the position to make decisions regarding the direction we take, to embrace and leverage local creativity and initiative and to work with local courts to develop a model system that gives AOC the data it needs while allowing local courts flexibility to meet their local needs. I have made such a proposal and my hope is that it is given serious consideration.

Any attempt to reign in creativity and to quash local initiative in favor of a one size fits all system with no ability for local flexibility will lead us down a path of failure. Open minded cooperation is our only hope for success.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

S

Judge David A. Larson
Federal Way Municipal Court