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Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of our new monthly newsletter, delivered directly to your email every month, or you can download it from our website. 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.

What is the CLJ-CMS Project?

The Courts of Limited Jurisdiction-Case Management System Project (CLJ-CMS Project) is the result of years of close partnerships with our courts of limited jurisdiction, the legal community, and the state legislature. The goal of this project is to deliver the highly requested technology and upgrades that our courts sorely need so that they can meet the ever-evolving needs of the community. These technology upgrades include the ability to eFile through Odyssey File & Serve, and the new Odyssey Case Management and Probation Management Systems. Together, they will enable our courts and probation offices to increase the availability of court resources, improve processing times, and help them fairly and efficiently administer justice.

Leadership Update

As Chair of the Judicial Information System Committee (JISC), which oversees information technology for Washington courts, and executive sponsor of the CLJ-CMS Project, I want to say how grateful I am for the countless hours of work put in by the Project Steering Committee, the Court User Work Group, the court community, and the AOC project team as they work to help us achieve this much needed modernization for the courts of limited jurisdiction. The project is moving in the right direction, and I am excited about the progress being made, and deeply encouraged by our continuing collaboration with our pilot courts.



As you've probably heard by now, the CLJ-CMS Project is making a slight adjustment to the original plan. Specifically, I would like to address the recent decision made by the Project Steering Committee to delay the implementation of electronic filing. While the result isn't what the committee hoped, it was ultimately a positive outcome as it reflects the project governance structure is working effectively. The project staff conducted the appropriate research and analysis and presented data to the Project Steering Committee who in turn exercised their oversight responsibility to make a tough decision in a timely manner. This shows transparency and a good, solid governance model that we can rely upon to bring the best solutions to our courts.

I want to emphasize that the project is very much alive and moving forward. The decision to delay the scheduled implementation of eFiling in 2021 was not made lightly. The steering committee's decision to listen carefully to the feedback received from the CLJ community and delay the implementation of electronic filing to address the concerns raised will provide courts with a more seamless integration between eFiling and the case management system.

Electronic filing has been successfully implemented in states around the country and is a great service for court users and court staff alike. We expect the same will be the case in Washington and we are excited that this service will be available to our courts and court users. Funding the eFiling service through small filing fees has raised questions that we are exploring, and we will report back on this as soon as possible.

In the meantime, the AOC team is focused on configuring the case management system to meet the needs of CLJ courts and probation departments.

If you have additional questions or would like to receive regular project updates, send your information to CLJCMS.Project@courts.wa.gov.

We look forward to bringing you further updates via this newsletter as the project moves forward. Thank you for your partnership and support.

Justice Barbara A. Madsen
Chair, Judicial Information System Committee

Project Manager Update

The Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, once said, "Change is the only constant." That applies to all matters in life, including project plans.

Many of you likely know about the difficult decision the Project Steering Committee made in late June to deliberately pause the implementation of eFiling in order to take a closer look at questions that had been raised surrounding the fees to be charged and the mandatory nature of eFiling. The project team took this major change in stride. I give my sincere thanks to everyone in our district and municipal courts who diligently worked with our eFiling team to ensure the new system was correctly set up. Your active participation was noted and appreciated, and your hard work this year ensures we'll have a better product moving forward when we implement eFiling in the future. As we continue to work through this change of plans, I know that our entire team thanks you for your support, we appreciate your comments, and we look forward to working with you more closely in the future.

eFiling was never the project's only focus; during contract negotiations it was decided that eFiling could be implemented independently of the Case Management System (CMS) in relatively short order. New revelations have since changed that, and as you may know, we're going to implement Odyssey Case Management System and Tyler Supervision for most of Washington's district and municipal courts within the next few years. This is a huge undertaking with many moving parts, and will require input and participation from court users at all levels.

The majority of our work can't be done in a "silo", and we're working closely with our vendor and our Court User Work Group (CUWG). The CUWG is comprised of representatives from our CLJ associations, and is considered a decision-making body for court business processes and requirements. They have diligently identified ways to establish common practices that will translate to a better installation of Odyssey Case Management. Under their guidance and expertise, the AOC project team have arranged the CMS installation to best meet the needs of Washington's courts of limited jurisdiction. We're excited to share that with the pilot courts in 2022! Additionally, the CUWG has looked at all the approved system requirements, and worked with our vendor to make sure each of them has a disposition. This work is never-ending; the CUWG and project team have worked countless hours reviewing configurations and requirements to ensure end users are as pleased as punch when we deploy Odyssey state-wide.

As we embark on this journey, I want to highlight some items I think are important to keep in mind:

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Project Manager Update - Continued

Our first deployments to court users will likely be imperfect. Initially, we won't have all the answers, and will make adjustments as we go.

Change can be challenging, and everyone reacts differently to it. Our change management team is here to help, and we also have resources that have been through it before. If you have questions, ASK. You won't be the only one, and your questions may help others who may be shy about asking.

We are in this together—as a team, as a community—and working together, we will be successful.

I appreciate your feedback, support, and teamwork as we work together to make the CLJ-CMS project successful!

Cat Robinson
Project Manager

CLJ Spotlight - Courts Helping Courts

When LaTricia (Trish) Kinlow received an urgent call from a fellow court administrator seeking help with a GR 29 issue on the afternoon of May 28, 2021, the DMCMA's Courts Helping Courts was called into action.

For those who may not be familiar with the acronym, DMCMA stands for District and Municipal Court Management Association. The association serves as a professional network to support information sharing, the standardization of procedures, and the development of quality education and training for court managers of the district and municipal courts of Washington State. Courts Helping Courts (CHC) is a sub-committee of the association which focuses on coordinating support for any court seeking help with a specific issue. CHC relies on volunteers who happen to be the working administrators and managers of the CLJs; these volunteers practice the philosophy of servant leadership – doing whatever work is required and leading by example. The kind of assistance that can be sought through CHC can range from matters as practical as budget management, data clean up, or coordination of staffing coverage to more sensitive aspects such as confidential coaching, help preparing for a difficult management discussion, or navigating local politics.

Members of DMCMA originally formed Courts Helping Courts in the 1990s, and the committee was revived again recently to assist with data clean up in preparation for the new CLJ case management system.

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The association's foresight in developing the program means that funds are set aside specifically to help cover the costs of travel and per diem for volunteers responding to a request for help.

Courts Helping Courts is led by Paulette Revoir, Court Administrator at Lynwood Municipal Court and Chair of the CLJ-CMS Project Steering Committee, with Trish Kinlow, Judicial Branch Administrator at Tukwila Municipal Court, serving as Co-Chair. Both administrators have become known within the DMCMA community for their expertise in helping with General Rule 29 (GR 29) matters.

Crucially, GR 29 defines the duties and authority of the presiding judge and states how those duties cannot be delegated to persons in either the legislative or executive branches of government. Specific duties may be delegated by a Presiding Judge to other court staff, but never to those outside of the court. A Presiding Judge is ultimately responsible for supervising the daily operations of the court, which includes all employees assigned to perform court functions and all personnel employed under the judicial branch. Essentially, the Presiding Judge is responsible for working conditions, hiring, any disciplinary action required, and termination decisions for staff – this cannot be delegated to city or county executives. Occasionally, especially during times of transition, there can be confusion about the executive branch's role in their local court. It is during such times when a new mayor has been elected, a new city manager hired, or a new city or county council has formed that a court administrator may specifically seek assistance from Paulette and Trish about how to clearly define the roles and responsibilities outlined in GR 29.

On that afternoon in late May when Trish received the urgent request for help on a GR 29 issue, she gathered as much information as she could from the caller and then reached out to Paulette. At the conclusion of their discussion, the pair immediately hopped in their separate vehicles and drove to the court requesting assistance; their goal was to ensure the court administrator knew they had the full support of the DMCMA and on-site resources to help them navigate the crisis at hand. They consulted with both the court's administrator and presiding judge to connect them to necessary resources, and assisted in developing a plan of action to see them through the days following an emergency court closure.

To highlight some of the community effort and the scope of tasks involved with supporting the court through their unexpected emergency, Paulette sent a message to the DMCMA community seeking volunteers and assistance. Dee Morrill, Operations Manager with Seattle Municipal Court, through the gracious support of her court's Presiding Judge and Administrator, was able to come to the rescue by temporarily relocating to the court for a week and working on site to aid court staff and keep cases moving for the court users.

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Both Paulette and Trish spent multiple days working on site as well. Courtney White, Administrator of Bothell Municipal, also contributed to the community effort by loaning the time and skills of her staff, who helped process cases into JIS remotely. All basic functions of the court such as receipting money, creating docket entries, creating calendars required administrative access in JIS to complete; with approval of the court's presiding judge, Paulette assisted by working with AOC to establish temporary permissions for staff from other courts to do business on their behalf. Paulette, Trish, and Dee applied a "no surprises" method and kept their Presiding Judges and executive branch informed of progress and relevant events to ensure there was awareness, and continued support for their efforts in keeping this particular court open.

While the immediate crisis has been resolved at this court, support from Courts Helping Courts continues for the administrator and their staff. Due to a significant loss of staff at this location, Paulette and Trish will help with the hiring process to build a new team. Dee will help with training once the new court staff are hired.

Courts Helping Courts is possible because the DMCMA as an organization has worked tirelessly to form a tight knit community, with administrators and managers who are passionate about their jobs and invested in each other's success. Paulette acknowledges that for GR 29 related matters, it can be very intimidating to sit across from a mayor or council president who doesn't completely understand the rule and might push back on those boundaries. She validates that it can be one of the most important and most difficult parts of a court administrator's job to stand their ground during discussions when a clear separation between executive and judicial authority must be respected. CHC is able to help with conversations related to GR29, budgets, union contracts, and hiring issues.

Courts Helping Courts would love to receive more volunteers from the CLJ community. The experience, expertise, and skills of court administrators and managers are a precious, finite resource, and if you are able to gift some of your time to help others and the association, CHC would greatly appreciate your support. Trish sums it up best - "the DMCMA is more than just an organization. It is a community, a village and a family. If you call, we will come."

If you need help from Courts Helping Courts, or would like to volunteer, please reach out to one of the members listed below. They'd love to hear from you.

Suzi Elsner – selsner@marysvillewa.gov
Trish Kinlow – trish.kinlow@tukwilawa.gov
Dee Morrill – dee.morrill@seattle.gov
Paulette Revoir – prevoir@lynnwoodwa.gov
Margaret Yetter – myetter@kentwa.gov

Business and Technical Update

We want to keep you updated on some of the business decisions being made for the Odyssey Case Management System as these decisions will ultimately affect how you use and interact with the new system.

There were over 1500 requirements initially captured by the Court User Work Group (CUWG) at the start of the project. During the Request For Proposal process, the vendor's team had identified a number of requirements that would require custom development in order to be met. Additionally, in November and December 2020, the project team and CUWG members reviewed all requirements that were not identified as "Met" or "Requires Custom Development" to determine how those remaining requirements could be met, or if any could be closed (because the system was able to meet the need, or the need no longer exists). Any additional requirements that would need custom development were added to the list of development items for the vendor, which were then grouped together into various development projects based on their topics. Some examples of the development projects include auto-closing an infraction case when it is paid in full, processing credits to fines when proof of community service hours are entered, creating an automatic vehicle owner look-up when a vehicle violation case is created, Probation Officer schedule management, and batch updating probation terms and conditions.

Once the development projects were identified, the vendor began identifying the scope of each effort and documented them in a Project Development Document (PDD). Before a solution could be drafted, the scope of each PDD had to be approved by the project team as meeting the needs of the identified requirements for that project. Then, to ensure the proposed solution would work to meet the needs of the requirements, the solutions for each PDD were presented to the CUWG for their review and approval. To date, there are 44 PDD documents; 26 have been finalized and three were closed by the CUWG members. The remaining PDD documents are in various stages of the approval process.

After all PPDs are finalized, the projects will be prioritized by the CUWG members and development work will be done by the vendor.

Angie Autry
Court Business Supervisor

Project Activities

Coming soon - an updated project website where you can find up-to-date information on the status of the CLJ-CMS Project, including information on how to be prepared and how to get involved. We will also be saving our monthly newsletters and our Courts Helping Courts articles on the new website so you never have to worry about missing out!

Here's a sneak preview of what will be coming in the next month.

[Courts Home](#) > [Judicial Information System](#) > [CLJ-CMS](#)



Moving to a modern case management system for today's CLJ courts

[Project Homepage](#)

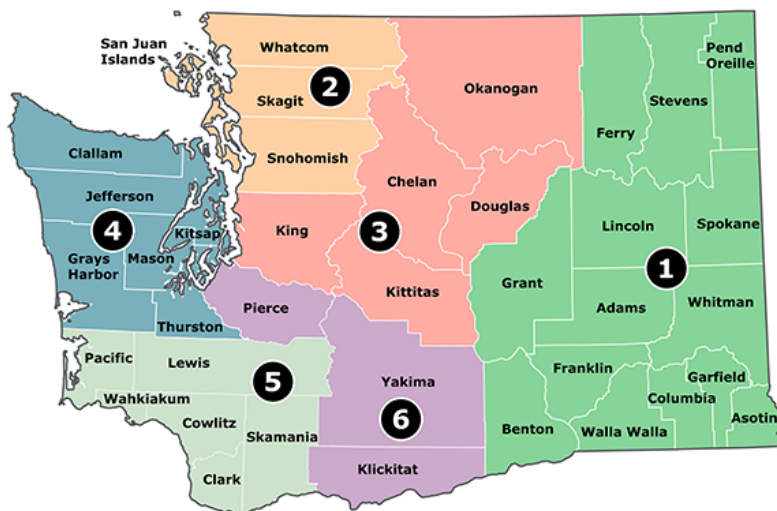
[Map & Timeline](#)

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Counties by Phase:

Pilot Courts: October 2022
Pierce District, Tacoma Municipal,
Gig Harbor Municipal, Fircrest/Ruston Municipal

Phase 1: September 2023
Eastern Washington - Adams, Asotin, Benton,
Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln,
Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, and Whitman

Phase 2: April 2024
North Washington - Island, San Juan, Skagit,
Snohomish, and Whatcom

Phase 3: September 2024
North Central Washington - Chelan, Douglas,
King Municipals, Kittitas, and Okanogan

Phase 4: March 2025
Western Washington - Clallam, Grays Harbor,
Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, and Thurston

Phase 5: August 2025
Southwest Washington - Clark, Cowlitz,
Lewis, Pacific, Skamania, and Wahkiakum

Phase 6: January 2026
South Central Washington - Klickitat,
remainder of Pierce Municipals, and Yakima

The CLJ-CMS Project is the result of years of close partnerships with our Courts of Limited Jurisdiction, legal community, and state legislature. The goal of this project is to deliver the highly requested technology and process upgrades that our courts sorely need so that they can meet the ever evolving needs of our community.

Our Limited Jurisdiction Courts handle roughly 2 million cases each year, or approximately 87% of the states judicial caseload. The varied systems that our courts currently use are nearing their end-of-life after nearly 40 years in service, can no longer support our growing communities, and prevent our courts, probation offices, and criminal justice partners from being able to work together efficiently to fairly and effectively administer justice.

With over 300 courts divided into a Pilot group and 6 Phases, the CLJ-CMS Project will start rolling out the Odyssey eFiling and Case Management Systems starting in 2023. This new software solution will allow for courts to manage their cases entirely online, freeing up time and resources that are currently used up through an intensive and paper-heavy process.

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.