



# The Information Edge

## Current Legal News from Collin County's Curt B. Henderson Law Library

ISSUE 2021-02 [WWW.COLINCOUNTYTX.GOV](http://WWW.COLINCOUNTYTX.GOV) MAY 2021

### Useful Internet Sites and Articles

#### Texas Office of Court Administration Signs New eFiling Contract

<https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1451540/texas-oca-signs-new-efiling-contract-11921.pdf>

The Office of Court Administration (OCA) announced on January 19, 2021, that it has signed a new contract with Tyler Technologies to continue eFileTexas through 2027. The contract is valued at \$98 million over the next five years and features major upgrades to the current system to benefit clerks, attorneys, litigants, and staff. Even with the enhanced features, OCA was able to negotiate the same rate it has paid for electronic filing since eFileTexas went online in 2013.

eFileTexas is a mandatory uniform electronic legal filing system that serves Texas' 254 counties. All civil and criminal cases in the state's appellate, district, county and probate courts are required to be eFiled.

The system has more than 425,000 registered users and has eliminated more than 420 million pages of paper since it was implemented. The system also includes reSearchTX, a statewide document search portal that contains nearly 80 million indexed documents.

"We've achieved a great deal of success for our courts through the use of eFileTexas," said David Slayton, Administrative Director of OCA. "Electronic filing has been key to the Texas Judiciary's ability to overcome disasters from hurricanes, to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to a ransomware attack. Through all of these disasters, our courts have remained open and operational, and that is due in large part to eFileTexas. It is a crucial function of our judicial system, and I am excited to continue to improve the system with new upgrades and features for our court community."

The upgraded features that will go online when the new contract begins in 2022 include:

- Self-service administrative tools
- Robust reporting capabilities for both program administrators and clerks at the local level
- Metrics and analytics tool for courts and clerks to see filing trends and staff issues
- Improved filing experience for users with more upfront document checks – reducing the number of filings returned for correction
- Ability to upload and transmit additional file formats

"It has been exciting to see the Texas OCA's transformation to becoming paperless since the beginning of our partnership with them," said Terry Derrick, general manager of eSolutions for Tyler. "We're very pleased to continue to provide our advanced electronic filing solution to the state, bringing efficiencies to its court processes and helping them improve access to justice for all constituents."

eFileTexas is one of the most successful IT projects in Texas government history. It is the largest mandatory electronic court filing system in the U.S. and has been a model for other states to follow.

The new contract was awarded after an extensive procurement process that began in December 2018, with a Request for Offer released in April 2020. Tyler Technologies was selected among several competitive bids. OCA will have the option to extend the terms of the contract through 2032.



Copies of these articles are available in the library, or from the law librarian via email:  
[bfansler@co.collin.tx.us](mailto:bfansler@co.collin.tx.us)

## Spotlight on the Supremes

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Hours of Operation:  
Monday—Friday  
8:00 am—5:00 pm

Note: Computers will  
automatically log off  
at 4:50 p.m.

On March 5, 2021, the Texas Supreme Court, in a 36th emergency pandemic order, replaced Emergency Order 33 and permits courts to modify or suspend deadlines and procedures through 6/1; encourages courts to continue to use reasonable efforts to hold proceedings remotely; permits all courts to hold in-person proceedings, including jury trials, after certain actions, including adoption of minimum standard health protocols and an in-person schedule; permits courts to hold virtual jury proceedings in certain cases with technology provided to certain prospective jurors; extends the possession and access to a child provisions from previous orders; extends the ability for an attorney professional disciplinary or disability proceeding to conduct proceedings remotely.

## Did You Know?

On April 28, 2021, the Texas Supreme Court extended procedures for landlords and tenants to avoid evictions based on overdue rent. The order, the Court's 37th addressing coronavirus pandemic issues, amends legal requirements for landlords and tenants participating in the Texas Eviction Diversion Program. That voluntary program provides rental assistance. Under the program, evictions may be postponed. If a landlord sues to recover property, the order renews requirements that the property owner and renter be notified that up to 15 months of the rent owed may be paid to stop the eviction. In an eviction trial in a justice court or in a new trial on appeal to a county court the judge is required to outline the eviction-diversion program and abate the eviction proceeding for 60 days if the landlord and tenant agree to participate. As amended, the new order specifies that landlords and tenants may opt in for the program even after an appeal to county court and, as long as an eviction order has not been issued, landlords and tenants may still agree to participation in the diversion program.

The order extends the diversion program for three months to July 27 unless extended by the chief justice. Eligibility for rental assistance under the program will be administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

## Important Announcement

Please keep in mind that if you are not comfortable visiting the library in person to do research during the pandemic, we have a number of resources available online. While we cannot provide legal advice, we may be able to guide you to the resources or forms necessary to assist you in your situation.

Library staff may be reached at 972-548-4255 or 972-548-4244.



## Equal Justice Center—Employment Justice

The Equal Justice Center provides legal assistance to qualifying low-income individuals. They are happy to speak with you to discuss your rights in the workplace and answer your questions. If you contact them, they will provide a free and confidential screening and a licensed attorney will review your matter.

WORKER JUSTICE: (800) 853-4028

Services provided -

The EJC provides direct legal representation to individuals to enforce their rights in the workplace.

Their employment law representation helps

- Working men and women who have not been paid at all for their work
- Workers who have not been paid the legal minimum wage, overtime wages, or prevailing wage rates
- Low-wage workers who have experienced workplace discrimination, including sexual harassment; **and**
- Working people who have suffered retaliation for speaking up about their wages or working conditions.

The EJC provides specialized [employment law help to temporary foreign guest workers](#) who are often exploited while working in the U.S. through temporary visa programs, such as the H-2B, H-2A, and J-1 programs. We also specialize in providing legal services to [survivors of labor trafficking](#).

The Equal Justice Center serves the entire state, but has offices in Austin, Dallas, and San Antonio. Click the link below to find information on all the EJC offices.

<http://www.equaljusticecenter.org/about/contact.html>



## Tech Tips: More Useful Sites and Law Blogs

- <https://www.collincountytx.gov/cares/Pages/EmergencyHousingAssistancePrograms.aspx> - Many cities within Collin County have emergency housing assistance programs. To determine which program operating for Collin County residents you should apply for, enter your address in the link above and click SUBMIT. Based on the answer provided, use the appropriate link below to be directed to the correct program for your address.
- <http://www.northtexasfairhousing.org/index.php> - NTFHC is a non-profit organization dedicated to eliminating housing discrimination in North Texas. Their counseling, discrimination complaint investigation and educational programs are provided free of charge to the community.

## New on the Shelf



**The Law Library will be closed on Monday, May 31st for Memorial Day and Monday, July 5th for Independence Day.**



- Handbook on Texas Discovery Practice 2020-2021
- Bankruptcy Code, Rules, and Official Forms 2020-2021
- Texas Drunk Driving Law 2020 Edition
- Texas Collections Manual
- West's Federal Sentencing Guidelines Digest
- Texas Criminal Jury Charges
- Federal Court of Appeals Manual Seventh Edition
- Federal Civil Judicial Procedure and Rules 2021 Edition
- Federal Criminal Appeals 2021 Edition
- Federal Sentencing Law and Practice 2021 Edition
- O'Connors Texas Family Law Forms 2021
- O'Connor's Texas Causes of Action Pleadings 2021
- Davis's Texas Estate Planning Forms 2021
- O'Connor's Texas Rules: Civil Trials 2021
- Rights of Juveniles 2021 Edition
- Bender's Immigration and Nationality Act Pamphlet 2021 Edition
- O'Connor's Texas Civil Appeals 2021
- Texas Pattern Jury Charges—Business, Consumer, Insurance & Employment 2020
- Texas Pattern Jury Charges—Malpractice, Premises & Products 2020

## Law Library Humor



*"Recess is over, Your Honor."*