



The Information Edge

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

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Useful Internet Sites and Articles

Texas Office of Court Administration Signs Contracts for New Statewide Uniform Case Management System

<https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1452735/contracts-signed-for-new-uniform-case-management-system-media-release-83121.pdf>

The Texas Office of Court Administration (OCA) recently announced that it has selected three vendors to support Texas' new statewide Uniform Case Management System (UCMS). The system is an opt-in court case management system aimed at supporting Texas counties with a population less than 20,000 which equates to over half of the state's 254 Counties.

Following a year-long competitive bidding process, the three vendors selected to support the UCMS are Icon Software, iDocket and Tyler Technologies. Counties across the state will be able to choose one of these three vendors to access UCMS. The system is free to counties and supported by a more than \$30 million dollar state appropriation to OCA.

"The new contracts will support the Texas Judiciary as it looks to use technology to better serve those using the court system. The ability to provide a uniform case management system to our courts and clerks will also improve safety in our state," said Nathan Hecht, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas. "Once implemented, the system will close critical information gaps and provide immediate access to court information to our clerks and magistrates."

"The Texas Judiciary chose an innovative path for this procurement by signing contracts with three vendors. Doing so encourages competition and provides for choice by clerks," said David Slayton, Administrative Director of the Office of Court Administration. "At the same time, the systems will enable courts to become more efficient and provide greater transparency to data, both much needed as the Judiciary responds to the recent crises that place great challenges on the Branch."

Highlights of the UCMS include:

- ◆ UCMS is web-based, and counties only need a computer and internet connection to use.
- ◆ UCMS fully integrates with the statewide eFiling System (eFileTexas) and Document Access system (re:SearchTX) for quicker access to the courts and court documents.
- ◆ UCMS will feed information to the Department of Public Safety's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) to upload criminal records to DPS more timely and efficiently.
- ◆ UCMS supports standardized data files for ease and efficient monthly reporting of court data to OCA.
- ◆ UCMS supports all case types handled by District and County Courts.

The selected vendors began working to onboard counties to the system in September 2021 and are projected to have the first jurisdictions online in early 2022. The website for the UCMS is located at <https://txcourts.gov/programs-services/uniform-case-management-system/>.



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

Current Emergency Orders Issued in response to COVID-19

In response to COVID-19, the Supreme Court has issued the following Emergency Orders that are still in effect.

Emergency Order 43 - Issued 9/21/2021 (effective 10/1/21)

Replaces Emergency Order 40; discontinues the blanket authority provided by prior emergency orders for all courts to modify or suspend any and all deadlines and procedures prescribed by statute, rule, or order; continues justice and municipal courts' authority to modify or suspend trial-related or pretrial hearing-related deadlines and procedures through 4/1/22; continues the authority of courts to modify certain procedures and deadlines in CPS cases for certain stated periods of time and clarifies this may be done without a participant's consent; permits courts to continue to use reasonable efforts to hold proceedings remotely; permits all courts to hold in-person proceedings, including jury trials; encourages the adoption of minimum standard health protocols and an in-person schedule and adds that the chief justices of the courts of appeals and local administrative district judges/municipal court presiding judges have the authority to mandate compliance with their adopted standards and protocols; and permits courts to hold virtual jury proceedings in certain cases with technology provided to certain prospective jurors.

Emergency Order 44 - Issued 11/10/2021 (effective immediately)

Renews the Texas Eviction Diversion Program for tenants and landlords under a statewide rental assistance program intended to avoid evictions for tenants behind on rent. The order allows an eviction proceeding to be abated by agreement for 60 days, requires courts (including county courts hearing trials de novo on appeal from a justice court) to provide tenants with information about the program, and makes court records for participants confidential while eviction cases are delayed. The order also outlines procedure for reinstating evictions. Without such reinstatement, eviction cases will be subject to dismissal.

The new order also allows legal aid or volunteer legal services representatives to be present at an eviction case trial to assist eligible applicants; clarifies that in addition to applying to plaintiffs who have submitted an application for rental assistance, the program also applies to plaintiffs who have provided any information or documentation directly to a rental assistance provider for the purposes of receiving rental assistance; and provides that if the judge must dismiss the action because the plaintiff has not filed and served a motion to reinstate an abated action within the abatement period, the judge must dismiss the action the day after the abatement period expires without the need for a party to file a motion or make a request for the court to do so.

Eligibility for rental assistance under the program will be administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs. More information and online application for rental assistance is available at the Texas Coronavirus Relief Bill Rental Assistance Program website.

Tech Tips: More Useful Sites and Law Blogs

- <https://www.loc.gov/research-centers/law-library-of-congress/about-this-research-center/> -

The mission of the Law Library of Congress is to provide authoritative legal research, reference and instruction services, and access to an unrivaled collection of U.S., foreign, comparative, and international law. To accomplish this mission, the Law Library has assembled a staff of experienced foreign and U.S. trained legal specialists and law librarians, and has amassed the world's largest collection of law books and other legal resources from all countries, now comprising more than 2.9 million items.



Assistance Center of Collin County

The Assistance Center of Collin County brings carefully qualified and prompt short-term assistance to individuals and families in financial crisis to help them regain self-sufficiency. Through discerning programs, guidance and funds, they help stabilize Collin County families' home economies to fight homelessness, hunger and poverty.

Holiday programs include:

- Thanksgiving baskets that will be distributed on November 20th from 11am to 12pm.
- Christmas gifts will be distributed on December 18th and pick up times will be assigned once you are approved for the program.
- You may sign up for one or both programs and you will be required to upload documents when you apply.
- For more information about the programs and where to apply, visit <https://assistancecenter.org/holiday-programs>



ASSISTANCE
CENTER
OF COLLIN COUNTY

Did You Know?

The Office of Court Administration, in consultation with the Texas Access to Justice Commission, has created a self-help resources internet website for pro se parties: www.texascourthelp.gov.

At this website, you can obtain information about the following topics:

- Groups that can help you find a lawyer;
- Places where you can get legal information or do legal research; and
- Information about forms, legal research, filing a case and getting ready to go to court.

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 972-548-4260.



New on the Shelf

- ♦ Texas Business Organizations Code Plus— 2021-2022
- ♦ Texas Property Code Plus— 2021-2022
- ♦ Texas Estates Code Plus— 2021-2022
- ♦ O'Connor's Texas Crimes & Consequences— 2021-2022
- ♦ How Insurance Companies Settle Cases— Revision 29
- ♦ Ineffective Assistance of Counsel— 2021 Edition
- ♦ Federal Civil Judicial Procedure and Rules— 2021 Revised Edition
- ♦ Texas CPRC Plus— 2021-2022
- ♦ Texas Family Code Plus— 2021-2022
- ♦ Texas Family Code Annotated w/ Related State Statutes— August 2021 Edition



The Law Library will be closed November 25-26 for Thanksgiving Day.



The Law Library will be closed December 23-24 for Christmas.

HAPPY NEW YEAR
2022

The Law Library will be closed December 31st, 2021, for New Year's Eve.



The Law Library will be closed January 17, 2022, for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Happy Holidays from the Law Library



Bethany

Jonathan

Faith