



*Florida Courts
E-Filing Authority*
2015-16
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

*In governance of Florida Courts E-Filing Portal, the
statewide access point for electronic transmission of
court records, www.myflcourtaccess.com.*

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While most states struggle to build a single, statewide system, Florida's integrated E-Filing Portal interfaces systems at the state level with those at the local level to provide a seamless experience. This design initially allowed for the rapid implementation of Florida's E-Filing Portal and continues to provide an efficient structure for the expansion of Portal services.

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

TIM SMITH, E-FILING AUTHORITY CHAIRMAN

As Chairman of the Florida Courts E-Filing Authority, I am privileged to once again provide this year's annual report in summarization of the services and improvements we have successfully implemented throughout the fiscal year spanning from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016.

With an ever-expanding catalog of services, the E-Filing Portal continues to save court system users and Florida residents thousands of dollars each year, ensure public safety through its streamlined and secure processes and deliver important and timely information for consideration in critical matters.

Thanks to a strong and experienced E-Filing Portal staff and the work of dedicated board members, the number of registered Portal users rose from approximately 90,000 just one year ago to more than 116,000 by the end of FY 2015-16. Today, Portal users include approximately 70,000 attorneys, 40,000 self-represented litigants, 600 judges, local and state government agency staff, law enforcement personnel, insurance professionals, creditors, and members of the media.

With input from users statewide, we made targeted enhancements to Portal functions allowing us to provide specialized services to a variety of users including judges, the Florida Department of Corrections and pro se litigants.

Additional Portal projects included:

- Updating civil document descriptions to provide Clerks a more standardized approach to case intake and the creation of a search feature to ease selection within the Portal when adding a document.
- Adding a workbench feature allowing filers the opportunity to save a partial filing and complete at a later time.
- Adopting records retention and debt recovery policies for increased business organization.
- Partnering with the Supreme Court to increase the filing and e-service size available to users.
- Implementing a process to connect law firms and vendors with the Portal to transmit multiple civil filings in a single session.

To ensure e-filing remains a valuable tool in court processes, Clerks' attorneys serve as liaisons to each of The Florida Bar Rules Committees and offer advice and guidance on issues related to the Portal.

Thanks to the support of the State of Florida, Florida Court Clerks & Comptrollers, the Florida Courts system, The Florida Bar, and members of the Authority, the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal has become nationally recognized as the premier e-filing system and is exploring additional opportunities in which the Portal could be used to provide more efficient processes throughout state and local government.

THE HONORABLE TIM SMITH

CHAIRMAN
PUTNAM COUNTY CLERK

THE HONORABLE JEFF SMITH, CPA

VICE CHAIR/DISTRICT V
INDIAN RIVER COUNTY CLERK

THE HONORABLE TARA GREEN

SECRETARY/TREASURER
CLAY COUNTY CLERK

THE HONORABLE JOHN TOMASINO

CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT

THE HONORABLE JD PEACOCK II

DISTRICT I
OKALOOSA COUNTY CLERK

THE HONORABLE BOB INZER

DISTRICT II
LEON COUNTY CLERK

THE HONORABLE TODD NEWTON

DISTRICT IV
GILCHRIST COUNTY CLERK

THE HONORABLE KAREN RUSHING

DISTRICT VI
SARASOTA COUNTY CLERK

THE HONORABLE SHARON BOCK, ESQ.

DISTRICT VII
PALM BEACH COUNTY CLERK

The Authority is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors consisting of eight Clerks of the Circuit Court and the Clerk of the Supreme Court, who serves as the Chief Justice's designee on behalf of the state and appellate courts. The Board is responsible for leading the public agency tasked with providing a statewide access point for the electronic access and transmission of court records to and from the courts.

THE FLORIDA COURTS E-FILING PORTAL



The Portal serves as a statewide access point for the electronic access and transmission of court records to and from the courts.

Overview

In 2009, with direction from the Florida Legislature and the Florida Supreme Court, the need to develop and implement a statewide electronic filing system for Florida's county, circuit, and appellate court records was recognized.

In conjunction with the Chief Justice and the Supreme Court, the Florida Courts E-Filing Authority was established in June 2010 by Interlocal Agreement creating a public agency pursuant to chapter 163, Florida Statutes. The agency is comprised of the Clerks of the Circuit Court who join the Authority and the Clerk of the Supreme Court, as the designee of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court on behalf of all the state courts.

The Florida Courts E-Filing Authority contracted with the Florida Court Clerks & Comptrollers to design, develop, implement, operate, upgrade, support and maintain the Portal incorporating the following features:

- A single statewide login
- A single Internet access to court records by authorized users
- Transmissions to and from the appropriate courts
- The ability to provide electronic service of notification receipt of an electronic filing and confirmation of filing in the appropriate court file
- Open standards-based integration ability with existing statewide information systems and county e-filing applications
- Compliance with the Electronic Court Filing Standard 4.0, the Global Justice Extensible Markup Language and Oasis Legal Markup Language

To ensure that the statewide Portal was developed in accordance with court system standards and rules, the Florida Courts E-Filing Authority established a relationship to work in coordination with the Florida Courts Technology Commission (FCTC).

In 2010, Legislative Appropriations proviso language in HB 5401 mandated the courts system to implement electronic filing requirements in five of the ten trial court divisions by January 1, 2011. The ten court divisions included: Circuit Criminal; County Criminal; Juvenile Delinquency; Criminal Traffic; Circuit Civil; County Civil; Civil Traffic; Probate; Family; and Juvenile Dependency. With input from the FCTC, the Authority began work on the divisions of Circuit Civil; County Civil; Probate; Family; and Juvenile Dependency.

The Florida Courts E-Filing Portal opened in January 2011 and during the first months of operation 229 documents were electronically filed. That same year, follow-up SB 2000, required that Clerks implement the electronic filing requirements for all ten trial court divisions, under section 28.36(3), Florida Statutes. The mandate established the Authority's direction for the next six months: to develop the Portal to include the remaining five court divisions.

The Supreme Court issued opinions approving recommendations to require e-filing and e-service by attorneys, through a phased-in implementation. The main document, SC11-399 revised opinion, as amended October 18, 2012, stated that the new rules and amendments to existing rules in the case would require attorneys to file documents with the trial and appellate courts by electronic transmission and made mandatory email service requirements for pleadings and documents. The court

Nationally, Florida is recognized as a leader in electronic filing...in large part due to the governance by the Florida Courts E-Filing Authority, an independent governmental body which oversees the business operation of the Portal.

encouraged attorneys and Clerks throughout Florida to take notice of the new electronic filing requirements and to begin the process of updating their current practices to conform to these requirements.

By mid-2012, 51 counties were connected to the Portal for the acceptance of civil case documents in various civil divisions. By April 1, 2013, all 67 Clerks' offices were

connected for the receipt and processing of civil cases in all five civil divisions: Circuit Civil, County Civil, Probate, Small Claims and Family Law.

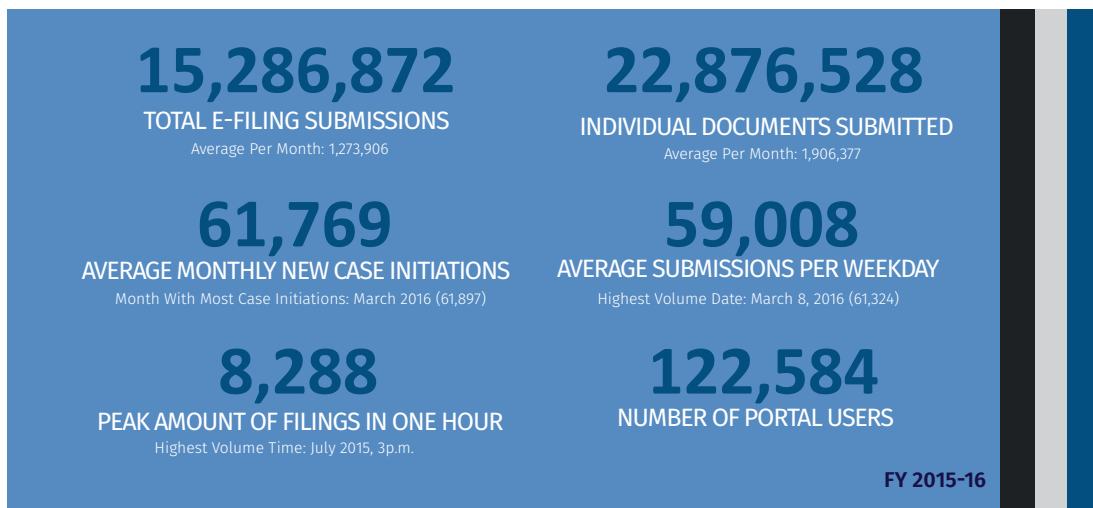
During, 2013-2014, Clerks' offices worked on accepting batch-filed documents on existing criminal cases, while all counties were working on general criminal readiness. Today, all 67 counties receive and process all trial court case types.

The Florida Supreme Court came on-line in February 2013, with limited case filings as part of a live system test. Encountering no serious issues, the Supreme Court began accepting live filings on April 1, 2013. Later that year, Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court Ricky Polston outlined four improvements to be considered for e-filing in Florida's Courts including the addition of standardized drop-down menus for filers; increased Help Desk services; two-way Portal capabilities; and allowing case documents to be viewed by the filer.

The Authority embraced the challenge even though the concept of "standardization" was somewhat undefined at that point. While the primary activity during the year was to complete programming and connectivity with the counties for the acceptance of the civil and criminal case types, the Authority began in earnest to undertake a long-term study of standardization of the drop-down menus for civil case types in 2014-2015.

In late 2013, the Florida Courts E-Filing Authority agreed to a Supplemental Agreement as an amendment to the Development Agreement to establish Help Desk services, a service that had been outboard of the original scope of contracted services.

The Authority adopted the policies and procedures November 1, 2013, and the Association implemented and began fully operating the Help Desk 90 days thereafter as required. The Help Desk was fully staffed by early 2014. Now a robust Service Center, the team handles both technical calls for Clerk's office support and customer service calls from filers. Averaging 2,900 customer service calls a month, resolution time for most calls now is less than half a day.



The Supplemental Agreement also required the provision of education and outreach to the various users, services that were in great demand as the number of users increased.

In early to mid-2014, various technical alternatives were examined to create more standardized log-in and landing screens. A map feature was adopted to create a more uniform method allowing filers to see and select the county to which they are filing.

Due to the way criminal case initiation was implemented through a technical level solution for state attorneys, standardized criminal docket descriptions were adopted as criminal case initiation was implemented. "Sameness" in filing choices in the other case types varied from county to county, in drop-down menus showing court divisions offered and names of document types. This is what all filers of non-criminal cases viewed when filing.

Beginning in earnest the spring of 2015, the Florida Courts E-Filing Authority worked with the Clerks' Association's Best Practices Committee to develop standardized names for the court divisions, case types and sub-types in each division. The Portal's technical team provided on-site training and assistance in a pilot phase to implement the standard nomenclature in the 4th Judicial Circuit and proposed to use the model statewide. The Authority chairman, the Honorable Tim Smith, Clerk of Putnam County, sent a letter to all Clerks of Court asking them to undertake the exercise and have it completed by September 2015.

In addition to completing the standardization project in FY 2015-16, the Portal added a workbench feature allowing filers the ability to save partially completed cases for later submission, partnered with the Supreme Court to increase the file and e-service size available to users, established a process to provide vendors the ability to transmit multiple civil filings in a single session and created a search feature to ease selection within the Portal when adding a document.

FY 2015-16 ENHANCEMENTS



POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Adopted records retention and debt recovery policies for increased business organization.

SECURITY

Created statuses for Disbarred and Suspended filers to prevent them from using the Portal.



STANDARDIZED DESCRIPTIONS

Updated civil document descriptions to provide Clerks a more standardized approach to case intake.

WORKBENCH

Added a workbench feature allowing filers the ability to save their work and process it at a later time.



BATCH FILING

Established process to provide vendors ability to transmit multiple civil filings in a single session.

INCREASED CAPACITY

Partnered with the Supreme Court to increase the file and e-service size available to users.



SEARCH FEATURE

Created a search feature to ease selection within the Portal when adding a document.

PROVIDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

With the number of litigants wishing to represent themselves, the Florida Courts E-Filing Authority recognized the need to assist filers in court and authorized the creation of a self-represented litigant filer role in June 2014.

Since the pro se role was launched, the number of registered filers with this designation has steadily increased and today makes up 43,000 of the Portal's 122,000 users. To further enhance the access to Florida's courts, the Authority endorsed the development of a self-guided system, known as A2J (Access 2 Justice), to offer pro se filers the appropriate forms for their particular situation.

Working in conjunction with the Florida Judicial Management Council, the Florida Courts Technology Commission, The Florida Bar, and various other groups

focused on the needs of self-represented litigants, E-Filing Portal staff researched the most commonly used pro se filer forms which included simplified dissolution of marriage, tenant eviction, and small claims. Through the A2J system, answers provided by self-represented litigants are automatically used to generate file-ready electronic forms.

Currently, these self-guided forms are undergoing testing through the Florida Commission for Access to Civil Justice Statewide Gateway pilot project to fully assess their feasibility for use in a statewide triage system and Improving access to Florida's courts through the use of integrated technologies.



FY 2015-16 BUDGET

The 2015-16 Florida Courts E-Filing Authority budget is comprised of in-kind funds from the Florida Association of Court Clerks Services Group, LLC, and revenue generated from credit and debit card and ACH transaction convenience fees. Funds are used to support the Authority's mandated business activities including board legal counsel, insurance policy premiums, audit fees and related service center and Portal education components.

A mandated annual audit of the Authority's financial statements, and an SSAE 16 operational audit of all operational and technical systems was performed by Lanigan & Associates, in which the Authority received an unqualified, or "clean," audit.

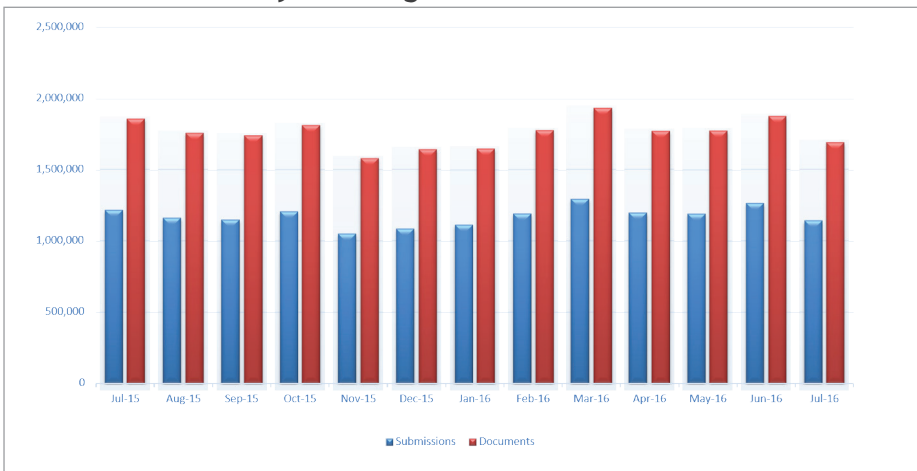
	Approved Budget 2014-15	Proposed Budget 2015-16
Other: Carry Forward Estimated from balance sheet	\$ 1,042,530.00	\$ 480,000.00
Revenues		
Statutory Convenience Fees	\$ 4,280,838.00	\$ 4,267,588.00
In Kind FCCC Contribution	\$ 590,899.00	\$ 595,689.00
Total Revenues	\$ 5,914,267.00	\$ 5,343,277.00
Expenses		
Contractual Services		
FCCC Contract SOW	\$ 590,899.00	\$ 595,689.00
Expansion Expense Beyond SOW	\$ 964,099.00	\$ 1,117,670.00
Additional Education and Service Desk	\$ 1,380,218.00	\$ 1,108,030.00
Audit	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Legal	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
Insurance	\$ 900.00	\$ 900.00
Convenience Fee Charges		
Credit Card Fees & Bad Debt	\$ 2,133,629.00	\$ 1,726,467.00
Bank Fees	\$ 78,000.00	\$ 78,000.00
Payment Controls, PCI Compliance	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00
Accounting and Banking	\$ 331,995.00	\$ 621,199.00
Total Expenses	\$ 5,572,240.00	\$ 5,340,455.00
Balance	\$ 342,027.00	\$ 2,822.00

Total Accounts By Filer Role & Submissions in FY 2015-16

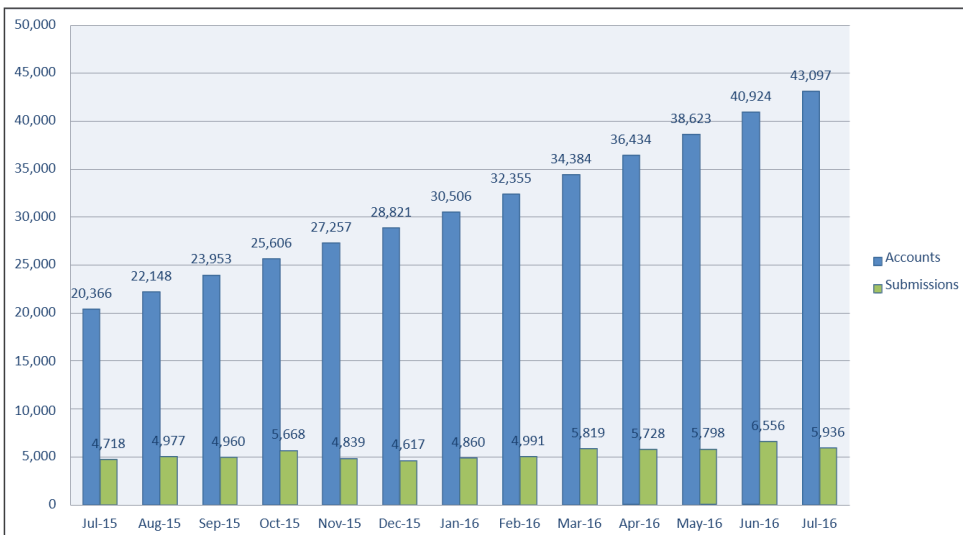
Filer Roles	Total # of Accounts	# of Submissions
Attorneys	70,382	1,035,220
Self-Represented Litigants	43,097	5,936
Judges	710	39,701
Mediators	643	1,536
Process Servers	693	37,047
Court Reporters	341	971
Mental Health Professionals	286	1,432
Law Enforcement	506	4,375

FY 2015-16 NUMBERS AT-A-GLANCE

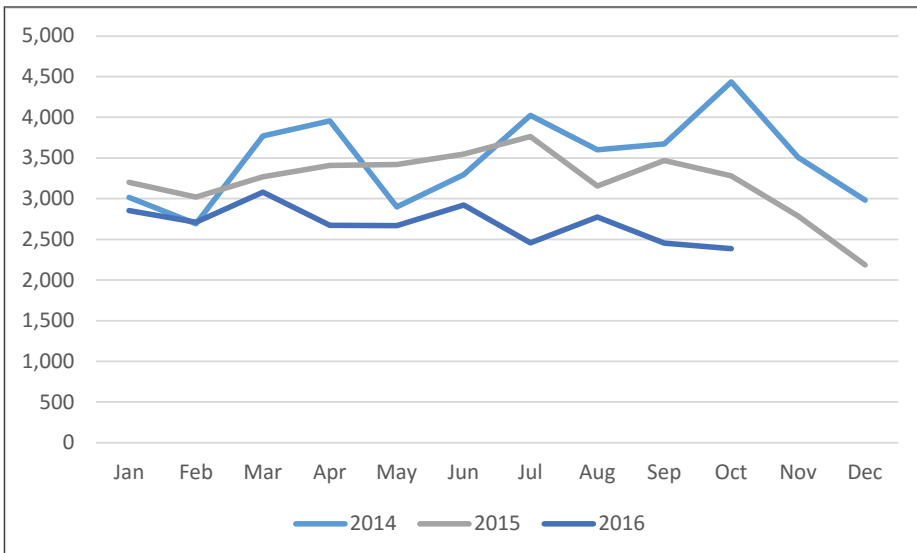
FY 2015-16 Monthly E-Filing Submissions & Documents



Self-Represented Litigants



Customer Calls to Service Center



Additional Resources

To view all documents and materials associated with the Florida Courts E-Filing Authority including the Interlocal Agreement, board meeting documents, and additional materials, visit www.myflcourtagency.com.