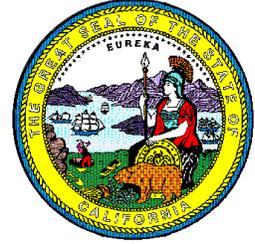




# *Superior Court of California* *County of Fresno*

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## **Fresno Superior Court's Case Management System Recognized for Efficiency and Cost Savings**

Tyler Technologies, Inc., a provider of management solutions and services for local governments, recently awarded a 2017 Tyler Public Sector Excellence Award to the Fresno Superior Court. The recognition was for implementing the Odyssey case management system to save costs, improve operational efficiency, and increase convenience to court users.

### **Background**

In late 2013, the court decided to invest in Odyssey to address a number of issues with the two existing case management systems. The software that tracked civil, family law, and juvenile cases had been in place since 2001. It was outdated and on the brink of failing. The Fresno Superior Court beta tested the V2 traffic and criminal case management system for the Judicial Council of California (JCC) in 2006 but ended up being the only court using it. The two case management systems were developed by separate vendors and had very different operating systems, making cross-searches impossible. This was especially challenging for organizations such as the Department of Child Support Services, Department of Social Services, District Attorney's Office, Probation Department, and Public Defender's Office that routinely accessed case information from both systems for their work.

There were also financial concerns. Beyond maintenance and support expenditures of \$2.5 million annually at the JCC, the two separate case management systems were costing the court \$750,000 per year for problem resolution; support with forms, notices, and reports; upgrades; and interface testing with other organizations such as the Department of Motor Vehicles.

### **Return on Investment**

The Odyssey project was funded through a combination of start-up JCC and Fresno Superior Court funding, basically redirecting funds allocated for case management system maintenance and support. The initial intent was to go live with criminal and traffic cases in April 2015, followed by civil, family law, juvenile, and probate in January 2016. Odyssey went live for all case types in April 2015, resulting in the court being ahead of schedule on the change and under budget, despite having to convert 4.4 million case files.

The new case management system quickly achieved a number of efficiencies and savings, reaching a break even return on investment four months earlier than anticipated. Consequently, it is on track to save the JCC and court a combined total of \$9 million by June 2018 over operating the previous

two case management systems for five fiscal years. More importantly, Odyssey immediately improved an array of procedures to the benefit of court users, organizations that work with the court, and the court itself. For example, a secure e-payment option allows motorists to pay traffic citations conveniently online. Cutting trips to the courthouse saves everyone time and money but is particularly helpful to rural residents.

Similarly, implementing e-filing for civil, small claims, family law, and probate cases nine months ahead of schedule greatly benefitted attorneys and litigants throughout the county and beyond. Odyssey's e-signature function spares court personnel from printing paper copies for customer signatures then scanning the signed forms for uploading into the case management system. This feature alone saves court staff in four departments from manually processing a combined total of 2,000 documents daily.

Odyssey also saves time and resources for the California Highway Patrol and Fresno Police Department by enabling officers to transmit citations directly from the field. This has given more than 44,500 cited motorists additional time to resolve their tickets since Odyssey implementation and allowed the court to divert staff from entering citations to helping traffic court users faster. Integration with the Department of Child Support Services enables that organization to file case documents electronically. Odyssey also expanded access to critical case documents for professionals who have frequent business with the justice system. These approved users are able to sign in through a secure portal, search for the case documents they are permitted to access, and print them at their own offices.

Centralizing records now allows judges to view all of a person's cases easily and quickly. Putting that information at judges' fingertips helps them understand all of the circumstances affecting individuals in their courtrooms. This in-depth and historical knowledge can inform court actions on a wide variety of matters such as child custody and visitation, diversion programs, pretrial releases, substance abuse treatment, and community supervision. Decisions based on persons' specific situations lead to better outcomes, both for them and for the community at large.

Jonathan Conklin, who was the Fresno Superior Court presiding judge when Odyssey was developed, expressed that being recognized by Tyler Technologies is thrilling and quite an honor. He noted that the most exciting part of the project, however, is that it opened the door for future efficiencies and improvements that ultimately benefit the public. "Everyone at the court understood this potential from day one. It was very gratifying to see staff members from all areas of the court roll up their sleeves to develop a system that is most useful for how they serve the public. The success of the Odyssey project is their accomplishment," he said.

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