

California Case Management System

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

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Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Hon. Ricardo Lara, Chair

Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 5

On Public Safety

Hon. Gilbert Cedillo, Chair





Overview of the California Case Management System (CCMS)

- Project Need.** Prior to the realignment of trial courts to the state in 1997, counties maintained their own case management systems to schedule, update, and track court cases. According to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), the 58 trial courts at one point had over 200 case management systems. In 2002, AOC initiated the development of CCMS in order to integrate case management information from individual trial courts into a single statewide system.
- Project Goals.** The AOC indicates that one of the primary goals of CCMS is to increase electronic access to court records, statistics, and information across the state and reduce the work associated with paper-driven filings. The project is also intended to allow the courts to electronically interface with other criminal justice systems (such as local law enforcement) to ensure that the court-related data is shared quickly and efficiently.
- Project Costs.** Between 2002-03 and 2009-10, AOC and the trial courts have spent \$407 million on CCMS—with funding coming primarily from the Trial Court Trust Fund (largely comprised of transfers from the state General Fund, and court fine and fee revenues) and the Trial Court Improvement Fund (fine and penalty revenues). According to the Bureau of State Audits, the estimated total cost to complete the project is \$1.9 billion. If that estimate is correct, this would mean that about \$1.5 billion more would be needed to complete the project.
- Project Implementation.** Initially, AOC estimated that the CCMS project would be completed in 2009. However, for various reasons, AOC now estimates that the project will be completed in 2015-16.



Courts Not Subject to Information Technology (IT) Rules for Other State Agencies

- IT Oversight Process for State Departments.*** In order to mitigate the substantial risk involved in major IT projects, departments must ordinarily provide the California Technology Agency (CTA) in the Executive Branch, and the Legislature with information on (1) estimated costs and benefits before the project is approved, (2) a plan for project oversight and risk management, (3) information on major changes in a project's cost or scope, and (4) an evaluation of the proposed versus actual costs and benefits after the project has been completed.

- Judicial Branch Exempted From State IT Process.*** The AOC is not required to follow this process for obtaining approval and funding. For example, unlike other state departments, AOC is not required to complete a feasibility study report that lays out alternative solutions to address a defined problem, or to identify the estimated costs, quantifiable benefits, and implementation schedule of each possible alternative to their proposed solution.

- LAO Recommendation.*** In order to ensure that court IT projects demonstrate need, justify expenditures, mitigate risks, and ensure cost-effectiveness, we recommended in 2004 that the Legislature require the judicial branch to follow the state's IT process for project planning, development and implementation, and evaluation. This was primarily due to our analysis that there was very little information available to justify the then-proposed cost and scope of the CCMS project.



Despite Adoption of Reporting Requirements, Additional Oversight Still Needed

- ☑ ***Some Reporting Requirements Put in Place.*** The 2004-05 budget package included legislation requiring the Judicial Council to report annually to the Legislature on CCMS, including completed, current, and proposed activities, and a project implementation evaluation. Moreover, in 2009-10, legislation was enacted requiring the CTA to review and offer its recommendations in regard to any court IT projects that were estimated to cost more than \$5 million.
- ☑ ***Existing Reports Provide Limited Oversight.*** Although the annual reporting requirements on CCMS were an improvement, they are only required for CCMS and one other project specified in statute. This is because Judicial Council is not required to report on the dozens of other court IT projects that are currently under development, as well as on any project that may be pursued in the future. We also note that, under the statute, CTA can only offer recommendations to AOC. The AOC is not required to carry out CTA's directions.
- ☑ ***Additional Information Still Needed on CCMS.*** About nine years into the project, the AOC has not yet presented the Legislature with an analysis of the cost and benefits of the CCMS project—which, as we mentioned, is a step normally accomplished before state IT projects are approved. Nor has AOC provided a plan to the Legislature explaining how the future costs for the CCMS project will be financed. The absence of such information makes it difficult for the Legislature to make budgetary decisions regarding CCMS.
- ☑ ***Require Judicial Branch to Follow State IT Process.*** In view of the above, we continue to recommend that the Legislature require the judicial branch to follow the state's IT process.