



eFileTexas.gov

Background & Overview



Overview and Background

Objective

The objective for creating the eFileTexas.gov system is to provide an efficient, cost effective and reliable platform for submitting and processing court documents electronically. Attorneys need a convenient way to interact with Texas courts without coming to the clerk's counter, and they need to be able to do so 24/7/365. Courts need to improve efficiency and eliminate paper so they can provide citizens improved access to the court system and reduce costs. Everyone, including citizens expects to be able to interact with government entities the same way they interact with the private sector – electronically, via the Internet. eFileTexas.gov enables this.

Background

On January 1, 2014, Texas became the most populous state in the country to implement a mandatory electronic filing system for its courts. In 2014, eFileTexas.gov is expected to handle 3.5 million electronic court filings. This will have significant benefits for attorneys, court staff and the public that are outlined below.

In November of 2012, the Texas Office of Court Administration (OCA) announced a plan for providing an e-filing system to be used across the state, and identified Tyler Technologies as the system provider. In December 2012, the Supreme Court announced that e-filing would become mandatory for civil matters in all county and appellate courts, starting January 1, 2014 in the 10 largest counties.

Within nine months the eFileTexas.gov system went live on a pilot basis when an attorney in Gregg County filed the first document into eFileTexas.gov in June 2013. In the fall of 2013 additional courts began using eFileTexas.gov, and there are now more than 118 courts across 53 counties using the system. The system has more than 50,000 registered users and on average has more than 13,000 filings per day during the work week.

Benefits for Citizens, Attorneys and the Court System

Benefits for Citizens – eFileTexas.gov saves tax dollars by allowing courts throughout the state to eliminate paper, and to run more efficiently. E-filing shortens lines at clerk counters, provides staff immediate access to information, so they can provide answers faster and make better decisions. It also simplifies access to public record information.

Benefits for Attorneys

Attorneys and other filers can avoid trips to the courthouse and waiting in line at the clerk's counter, and can file 24/7/365 from their desks. eFileTexas.gov improves



tracking and reporting of filings and is a free service as provided by eFileTXCourts.gov (other than the standard court fees that would apply to paper documents). Specific benefits of e-filing include:

- Instant access to file stamped copies of filings
- Online tracking and proof of delivery
- Advanced search functionality that indexes, bookmarks and locates documents in seconds
- Allows you to send required preliminary and/or courtesy copies instantly at no charge
- Easily generates an audit trail as well as provides logs and reports that represent a firm's filings, and sorts reports based on primary parties, date range and document type
- Accepts statutory court fee payments online and generates relevant financial reports based upon case type, date range and primary parties
- Provides optional status notifications by email for filings submitted, filings accepted, filings rejected, service undeliverable, and/or filing submission failed
- Accepts multiple documents in one electronic envelope, eliminates the need for separate submissions for each pleading

Benefits for the Courts

E-filing makes courts more efficient, shortens wait times at counters, allows courts to redeploy staff to other tasks, reduces costs for paper, and frees up space used for storing paper records. Electronic filing of documents creates a tipping point for the courts to eliminate paper from the court system and become more efficient. It is a tipping point because filing is the first step in the process for civil cases, and once documents enter the system electronically it simplifies the task of using electronic case files throughout the life of a case.

How The System Works

eFileTexas.gov is a system that accepts electronic documents from attorneys (as pdfs) and other filers via Web portals, and securely distributes these documents to the appropriate county or appellate court where they can be accepted into the case management system of that court.

Schedule Timeline

- December 2012 – Texas Supreme Court Issues Mandatory order
- June 2013 – Gregg County District Court became the first court live on the new system
- Fall 2013 – Broad go lives across 60 courts
- January 1 2014 – Mandatory e-filing begins for civil matters in the 10 largest counties as well as appellate courts



- July 1, 2014 – E-filing becomes mandatory in another 12 counties – with a populations greater than 200,000
- Jan 1, 2015 E-filing becomes mandatory in counties with populations greater than 100K
- July 1, 2015 – E-filing becomes mandatory in counties with populations greater than 50K
- Jan 1, 2016 E-filing becomes mandatory in counties with populations greater than 20K
- July 1, 2016 – E-filing becomes mandatory in counties with populations less than 20K