

OCA Statewide eCitation Kickoff Meeting 4/20/16
Questions and Answers

Q: Any project costs for the agencies participating in the project?

A: We are not anticipating any costs to the agencies, other than backend programming costs for interfaces. This project will pay for interfaces between the eCitation system and the agency systems. If the agency needs to do some customization on their side, that could be an additional cost. This will be one of the items looked at as we go through the requirements gathering phase.

Q: Are we going to get a copy of this presentation?

Q: May we have a copy of the PowerPoint at the end of the presentation?

Q: Will the presentation posted on the website after the presentation include the audio as well, to include everyone's questions?

A: Yes. The presentation, including the PowerPoint, a recording of the webinar, and the questions and answers from the presentation will be posted on the eCitation website a few days after the meeting.

Q: Did I hear you correctly, that we are not focusing on traffic related citations?

A: The focus will be on traffic related citations (Class C only). Civil citations and non-traffic related citations are excluded, as are Class B and above citations.

Q: Did the list of participating cities on the PowerPoint include all cities involved in the program?

A: The list is a list of all cities and counties that have responded to our request for volunteers to participate in the requirements gathering phase. This does not exclude other jurisdictions from participating in the final product.

Q: Do you plan to visit every agency participating?

A: Yes, we are in the process of scheduling those visits right now to meet with local law enforcement and courts to discuss their current processes and needs for the citation process.

Q: DPS wants the original citation data from whom?

A: From the original point of capture (the person writing the citation)

Q: Has the state identified a vendor to develop this interface?

A: No, that will be done thru a Request for Offer process. The RFO will be published in summer 2017 for all interested vendors to bid on

Q: If my current software interfaces; however, is selective in what other vendors they interface with will OCA mandate vendors adapt?

A: OCA can't mandate, but we can ask and encourage the vendors to participate. From a business perspective, it would be in vendor's best interest to ensure their systems provide the necessary interfaces so that they aren't at a disadvantage to other vendors

Q: If we don't have a system, are there systems that already have interfaces?

A: Existing case management systems may have an interface today. That will be something we will look at as part of the requirements gathering phase.

Q: Is City of Brownsville part of the list?

A: Yes, Brownsville is one of the participating cities and we will be visiting the municipal court in late May.

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Q: Is DPS interested in getting our warrant info from the courts system? They currently write tickets to people with existing traffic warrants and there is no way to close that loop.

A: DPS may be interested in this, but warrants are not in scope for the eCitation project.

Q: Is the end goal a standardized e-citation system for the state?

A: We are looking to standardize data that is transmitted to the statewide system. We are not looking to replace existing eCitation systems. Each law enforcement agency and court will still have their own system. The statewide system will interface with those existing systems.

Q: Is there a possibility to discuss the "mandatory" use of this e-citation project? The reason being, is this team will work to develop something good and to improve current processes. I do not see the sense to spend 3 years and have a voluntarily project.

A: OCA has no authority to mandate. What we hope to do is to provide efficiencies and value that encourage agencies/courts to participate.

Q: So if we participate in this project, do we have to follow the new citation?

A: We will be working with all customers on what the requirements for the eCitation data are, including any local customization. Participation is voluntary.

Q: So this project will replace the monthly OCA report?

A: This is an item the Project Team will look into as we move forward with the project. There is another project starting soon that will replace the current OCA reporting system with a more modern system which can pull data from a variety of sources, and may eliminate (or at least reduce) the amount of reporting the courts have to manually submit to OCA.

Q: So this team will try to change the current citations and the data is required on the citations?

A: No, we are not looking to change the existing citation. But we do want to look at what are the standard elements are that everyone needs to capture (and may already be capturing today). Identifying the standard data elements will be one of the charges to the requirements team.

Q: So we will have a standard citation?

A: There will be standards for eCitation data, but not a standard citation form.

Q: The courts have been receiving numerous "bulk" records requests for traffic data. Would this be something available through an open records request?

A: This system will not change how bulk data requests are handled at the court. This system is only an electronic transport mechanism to the court. The citation data is still property of the court.

Q: This is just data transmittal of ticket data to the court, correct? We currently still require DPS hardcopies.

A: Yes, data transfer from law enforcement to the courts and then to the state.

Q: We are totally automated with an eCitation program so what is the benefit of this program?

A: As we meet with each agency we will look at what benefits may be to that agency. The statewide system will be a portal that can interface with your local system to provide the data transmission to the state agencies and courts.

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Q: Will we be working to combine information on current standards, uniform information collected on citations, work processes, best practices, to develop a data communication between local agencies to a data hub for distribution to state and federal agencies?

A: Yes, correct. Although at this time, we are only talking about interfaces to state agencies, not federal.

Q: What are DPS and TXDOT hoping to achieve with the data once it is transferred?

A: The goal is to get data to DPS and TxDOT in a timelier, more accurate, and more efficient manner. If we eliminate or reduce the data problems caused by poorly handwritten citations, and by data entry errors from manually entering citations into the system, that will help improve the quality of the data. TxDOT is wanting the data for their CRASH system, and DPS wants to receive original citation data.

Q: What if we are currently working on our own eCitation program?

A: This project is not intended to replace any existing eCitation systems that may be out there. We are looking to interface w/ the agencies to move data between law enforcement and the courts, and the statewide eCitation database. If an agency already has an eCitation system, then we would look at interfacing with it.

Q: We are not formulating an actual electronic citation template to use for eCitation data collection, or yes?

A: Correct, we are not creating a new template. The forms and what is on the forms (paper or electronic) are up to law enforcement and the courts. This project is to establish standard data elements for transmitting citation data. Obviously, we'd like whatever form in use at the local level to contain these minimum data elements.

Q: What is the purpose of DPS getting citation data directly from the agency that issued the citation, prior to the person having an opportunity to be heard in court?

A: DPS wants to be able to take all citation data (whether convicted or not) to match to crashes and other activities to see how they overlap. The intent is for the Texas Highway Patrol Highway Safety Operations Center to be able to provide analysis back to local agencies and to share data with agencies to do their own analysis. DPS has great insight into enforcement in the rural areas, but they need to see how the local areas impact as well. Having access to statewide citation data would allow DPS to identify safety problems and work with local agencies to help address the problems.

Q: What is the purpose of OCA obtaining the data?

A: OCA will want the data to feed into the required court reporting system, at a case level. OCA has partnered with TxDOT to take the lead on this project. TxDOT, DPS, and DSHS are all interested in the data as well for analysis for traffic safety.

Q: What systems interface now?

A: There is a hodgepodge of interfaces today, both from courts to DPS and courts to OCA. We will be identifying the interfaces as we start the requirements gathering process, and look at if there is anything we can do to improve or augment existing interfaces, and create interfaces where there are none today.

Q: What type of data are you specifically interested in?

A: OCA is looking for case level data.

Q: Will racial profiling data be collected?

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Questions and Answers

A: If that is one of the requirements that comes out of the requirements meetings, then yes we will see about including it.

Q: Will the captured data be available to the participating agencies for comparison, research and/or statistical purposes?

A: That will depend on what data sharing agreements between the participating agencies allow for. That will be determined later down the road.

Q: Would it plug into the court or police system?

A: Yes, the system will be able to interface with existing law enforcement and court systems.

Q: Is the goal to make this a mandated initiative from the state? Can agencies opt out?

A: OCA has no authority to do any kind of mandate. Our hope is that people will want to participate, but there is no requirement that people have to participate.

Q: Is the plan to get state agencies onto eCitation?

A: State agencies will have access to the state eCitation database to pull data. per a data sharing agreement.

Q: Will an interface be built to Copsync?

A: We will be working with interested vendors to develop APIs (automated interfaces) to all the participating eCitation systems, as part of this project, and would hope that the vendors would all see the benefit of having their system be able to interface with the statewide system

Q: How does the citation get from OCA to the court?

A: Data would go from law enforcement to the database and then to the court (not from OCA to the court), transmitted electronically.

Q: On DPS side, they are getting electronic citations from DPS today, but they are wondering about the legality of the eCitation. Do they have to wait until the trooper walks in with the paper citation?

A: We will look into this issue and report back to the group. There are lots of people using the electronic citation today, so we don't think that will be an issue.

Q: Is this system in addition to the automated conviction report that we are already providing to DPS on a weekly basis?

A: The requirements team will be looking at what the best mechanism is for getting the data from the courts to DPS. When we met with DPS Driver's License division to discuss this project, they said that a lot of the smaller municipalities are not submitting the data today, unlike the bigger municipalities such as those on this call, so this would provide those jurisdictions with something they don't have today.

Q: Is this project only to interface with existing case management systems or will it include a case management system?

A: The plan is to interface with existing case management systems. Depending on available funding, the project might be able to provide courts with funding for a case management system if they do not have one today, or provide law enforcement agencies with electronic ticket writers. That will have to be looked at as the project gets further down the road. The primary purpose of the project is to develop the statewide eCitation database, and interfaces to and from that database to the courts, law enforcement, and state agencies.