Introduction

This document provides an overview of some of the key steps in starting and implementing an Integration Services Project. Those steps include:

- Identifying Potential Projects
- Requesting Access to Court Integration Services
- Testing and Implementing a Project

Integration Services Overview

Integration Services provides agencies with opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness by using integration technology to exchange information between computer systems. The three categories of integration services are:

- **Notifications**. These are electronic notices that can be used to automatically update the receiving system.
- **Efiling.** These services provide the ability for Court business partners to create and update court cases electronically.
- **Queries**. Queries are used to request information about current cases and cases associated with a party. Query results are electronically transmitted to the system that made the query request.

Each of these services involves the exchange or sharing of information among agencies. Discussions with your business partner agencies can identify needs, the feasibility of possible solutions, and can help ensure a successful implementation of new processes.

Identify Possible Projects

One way to start considering integration projects is to meet with business partners to discuss the goals, objectives and benefits of potential projects. These discussions can help determine the capabilities of the information systems and software involved. They can also help determine the priority of the integration projects under consideration.

Who to Include

There can be several stakeholders for each integration project. Stakeholders can include the Court Administrator, County Attorney, Sheriff, Jail Management, Corrections, IT and or vendor representatives, and other departments that interact with the Court. Depending on the objectives, not all agencies or vendors need to be involved in each project. There are a number of ways to identify potential integration projects.

Look for Integration Gaps

Types of integration gaps include business process gaps, information gaps and latency gaps.

Business Process Gaps: There may be business processes that could be made more efficient. For instance,

- The court prints off a transportation order and sends it to the jail where the order is entered into the jail system. A notification integration could automate this process so that the transportation order could be sent directly from MNCIS to the jail management system, eliminating the need for printing by the Court and data entry by the Jail.
- A warrant is cleared by arrest. The Sheriff prints off a notice about the status change and sends it to court staff who update MNCIS with the new information. This process can be made more efficient by an eFiling integration that automatically sends the status change from the Sheriff's system to MNCIS.

Information Gaps: Sometimes a local system has places for information but that information is not populated. For instance,

- The Sheriff's system may have a place for next court hearing, but that information never gets entered. The Sheriff's staff logs onto MNCIS to check hearings. A hearing notification could be implemented to automatically update the Sheriff's system with hearing information as soon as the information is entered into MNCIS.

Latency Gaps: Sometimes a local system has places for information, but that information is not kept up to date when changes are made in MNCIS. For example,

- A County Attorney eFiles a case with MNCIS. When a court decision on the case was entered in MNCIS the county attorney's system and MNCIS were out of synch. A Court Decision notification integration will send that information immediately County Attorney system so that both MNCIS and the county attorney system have up-to-date case outcome information.

An examination of business processes might find many such opportunities to streamline processing. A list of integration ideas can be found on the Integration Services website in the document called Integration Ideas for Local Agencies.

Discussions with Business Partners

Discussions with staff from other agencies can help identify issues and problems faced by the agencies involved that could be solved by implementing integrations. These discussions usually include agency staff, IT or vendor personnel, and management.

Look at Peer Agencies and Counties

Other state, county and local agencies use Court Integration Services. On the "Our Integration Partners" page, there are documents that describe the integrations at locations throughout the State of Minnesota. You can find ideas there that you could consider implementing in your county or agency.

Evaluating Ideas

There are a number of factors to consider when evaluating which integration ideas to implement.

Feasibility

Your IT staff or system vendor can advise you about which ideas are technically feasible and the relative difficulty of those ideas. If your system is already using some integration services, you might be able to implement additional services without too much difficulty. If your system has no integrations with any external systems then your vendor or IT staff can help you determine the feasibility and degree of difficulty.

The feasibility of changing business practices can be determined by the affected agencies and staff.

Cost Justification

Implementing integration ideas can save money by freeing up staff. One County Attorney's office determined that just implementing hearing notifications saved their office about two hours a day in staff time. Another important benefit is the improvement in the quality and timeliness of information

Prioritization

Determining the feasibility and cost justification will help in prioritization of which projects to implement first. The State Court Integration team can advise you in prioritizing projects.

Request Access to Court Integration Services

When you have decided to begin implementing some integration ideas, complete a request for access. Detailed instructions can be found on the Integration Services website at the "Request Access to Court Integration Services" link. The essential steps are listed here:

1. Review the Request Access information on the Integration Services website. The Subscriber Access Overview page will help you determine if your desired access is allowed.
2. Find your Master Subscriber Agreement if you have one. If you don't have one, you need to start the process to get one. See the Master Subscriber Agreement tab on the Request Access page.
3. Fill out a Request Form. For details on filling out the Request Form, read the directions that are on the pages at the end of the Request Form. Before getting the form approved by your local leadership, please check with Integration Services to review it to be sure it is complete and accurate. If you have a vendor-supplied system, the vendor may already be familiar with the Request Form. If you are unsure how to fill out the form, contact Integration Services for help.

Develop and Test your Integration

1. Set up the environment. See the Integration Services Setup Procedures document for details on how to establish connectivity and make the services available for your agency.
2. Modify your local system. Your IT staff or vendor can leverage a number of helpful resources on the Integration Services web pages, including:
    a. Integration Services Technical Overview – Describes how to access Integration Services.
    b. Sample xml messages on each service page. Look at the service pages for examples.
        i. The query examples have sample requests with a variety of search criteria variations and responses with a variety of return types.
        ii. The notifications include samples of each notification type and notification event.
        iii. The eFiling examples include sample submissions of each of the eFile types and samples of accepted returns and error messages.
    c. Sample programs are found on many of the service pages. These programs can be examined or copied to help you get your application working properly.
3. Test your local system. Test end points are available for eFile and query requests and to receive test responses. Sample notifications are available if needed.

Put your Integration into Production

When ready, your local application can be redirected from the testing environment to production. Information about the endpoint configuration can be found in the Integration Services Technical Overview and the web page for each service type found on the Integration Services website. Do a final check with Integration staff to be sure your production subscription is active.