

Location Overview

Washington County is located in eastern Minnesota, home to about 240,000 residents. Washington County has implemented Court Integration Services to comply with state requirements, to improve their judicial processes and better serve their residents.

Attorney Case Management

The Washington County Attorney has a Case Management System called LENS. The county has implemented Court Integration Services to aid in the eFiling of cases in the Minnesota Court Information System, (MNCIS) using the BCA's eCharging system. Criminal cases originating as citations and criminal complaints are filed in this manner. There are 9 cities within Washington County that also use LENS, including Bayport, Birchwood, Grant, Lake Elmo, Lake St. Croix, Mahtomedi, Oak Park Heights, St. Mary's Point and Woodbury.

Case Notification Services

LENS updates its cases and other information using several case notifications, including Hearing Trial Setting, Subject Party, Case Initiation, and Case Cross Reference.

Hearing Trial Setting

As hearings are created and updated in MNCIS, Hearing Trial Setting notifications are sent to LENS. LENS uses these case notifications to update its calendar.

Subject Party

When associated parties are changed in MNCIS, Subject Party notifications are sent to LENS. The system uses this information to identify and update the attorney and attorney office handling a case.

Case Initiation

When new cases are created in MNCIS, notifications are sent to the attorney case management system. The case management system uses this information and creates a new case. The information will have associated parties, charges and offense information.

Case Cross Reference

When the attorney case number is updated in MNCIS, notifications are sent to the attorney case management system. The notifications include the attorney case management system and court file number. This information is then used by the case management system to receive court file number and add them to the appropriate cases.

Benefits of Integration

Washington County has experienced many benefits through the use of these integrations. The Washington County Attorney's Office began consuming electronic notifications in 2010. This has allowed the office to have a completely electronic court calendar for hearings associated with cases in our case management system.

- a) Receiving hearing notifications electronically saves more than two hours a day in calendar management. Receiving electronically eliminates the need to manually create calendar events in a case management system or Outlook calendar as well as the filing of paper notifications in each physical file.
- b) Receiving the notifications electronically allows our office to begin using that information almost immediately. Electronic notifications are received throughout the day as modifications are made to calendar events. We no longer have the delay associated with the production and handling of the paper notices as well as the delay associated with processing those paper notices within our office.
- c) Electronic notifications are more reliable than paper notices. The instances of missing a paper notice were more frequent than any issues experienced with the electronic notifications. Also, by consuming notice information electronically, there is no opportunity for human error associated with our staff entering those events in our case management system or calendar.
- d) Having the court case information coming from MNCIS into LENS, local staff can use court case information to segregate cases into various views, allowing work to be optimized for their operation. For instance, cases can be grouped by offense level, so those who work on misdemeanors can see just the misdemeanor cases. Another view used is to segregate cases by adult versus juvenile cases. Another view used segregates civil from criminal cases. There are many other views as well.
- e) Overall, even without the resource savings associated with electronic court notices, electronic notices allow our office to have a more complete, accurate, and up-to-date calendar. Our office looks forward to reaping these same benefits with other electronic notifications as they become available from court.