



Name of fully implemented Technology Solution:

Calendaring Online & Indigent Defense System

Name of NACM Member Nominating the Technology

Solution: Peg Liedtke, Civil Court Director

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Name of Court or Organization using the Technology

Solution: Travis County Civil and Criminal Courts

Priority Area addressed by Technology Solution:

(check one or more)

- Advance Excellence in Court Management
- Promote Fair and Accessible Justice
- Develop Leaders for Tomorrow's Challenge
- Utilize Technology to Promote Best Practices
- Enhance Public Perceptions of the Courts

Briefly Describe the Technology Solution you are nominating (feel free to attach URL's, screenshots, etc. to assist the judges with evaluating your solution).

We believe that a core best practice for technology is to provide a platform of innovation, efficiency and effectiveness for the policy goals of the business (e.g., Access to Justice, Fairness, Quality, Quality Representation, etc.) Technology should be a partner in the innovation of the business itself and implement the policy goals of the community through the elected officials in the judiciary. Technology should never drive the business because technology is just another piece of the business puzzle. Only recently have these concepts started to take shape in county government and the Judges should set an example and lead the way.

To that end, the Travis County Courts Technology Team has developed software applications that are customized to the business needs in Travis County. For this nomination, we are looking at the two applications listed below:

- 1) The first is the *Civil Calendaring Online*(CCO)* system which provides greater access and efficiency to the courts through an online settings request, approval and notification system. The courthouse in Travis is difficult to get to in terms of traffic and parking in downtown Austin. Once registered, attorneys and paralegals have online access to their cases, case information and case documents (filings) as well as have the ability to request settings, hearings and changes to those settings and hearing. The Travis County Civil Courts utilize a central docketing system which means that attorneys request settings and times they are available to a central administration office. That office previously only took phone calls and walk-ins for scheduling of court settings. The innovative idea was to empower the attorneys making requests online through Civil Calendaring Online (CCO) rather than calling or driving into the courthouse. This innovation has since allowed the courts to process 49,725 settings and announcement requests from 2,847 court users. At 10 minutes per call and \$40 per hour for employee costs, that represents a savings of \$331,500 over the life of the project just for initial court employee time. The software allows users to select case type (docket), natures and the amount of time for each



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setting. While online, the application evaluates the available settings date according to an internal rulebase engine that takes into account the Travis County Local Rules as well as availability. The user makes a selection which is routed to administrative work queues in the

courthouse for final approval. Status is provided automatically by email to all parties and future communications of any changes to the settings (e.g., cancellations, resets, passes, etc.) are also automated. This notification has saved countless hours of manual emails and phone calls to parties on the case that the setting has been changed. It also guarantees that the notification occurred. Please visit <https://www.traviscourtsapplications.org/nacm/cco> for screenshots of Civil Calendaring Online (CCO) application.

- 2) The second application is called the *Indigent Defense System/Attorney Management Portal* which supports both the Civil and Criminal Courts in Travis County, Texas. Since the landmark Gideon decision in 1963, states are obligated to provide counsel in criminal cases to represent poor defendants. In Travis County, over \$11,000,000 is allocated annually in civil and criminal cases in which parties are required legal representation by law. While counties in Texas are given flexibility on how to implement a fair and structured plan, the Travis County Courts Technology Team has focused on developing a cutting edge, state of the art indigent defense management system that enables program experimentation, helps attorneys be more effective and provides much efficiency for court staff. The system processes over 25,000 appointments per year and saves thousands of hours of employee worktime and untold paper printing and waste. At the attorney's fingertips now is a plethora of features that support their daily work. Court users not only have holistic views into case information aggregated from over a dozen systems, they also have indicators for daily inmate transportation of their clients, alerts for new warrants, weekly schedules, entry of invoices, payment alerts and information, responsive mobile views, online feedback mechanisms, case files and documents, activity trackers, reminders, individualized charts and graphs, defendant histories, and much more. The indigent defense system uses the most current technology to provide efficient and effective service delivery. Jurisdictions across the county are looking at the system as a key innovator and leader in the industry in how to develop software for legally mandated indigent defense.

Please visit <https://www.traviscourtsapplications.org/nacm/idaamp> for screenshots of this application.

The Courts Technology Team has developed over 200 dashboards and data visualizations that support operational efficiency and measure performance management. The Civil and Criminal Court Judges in Travis County believe in, and support, data-informed decision making. Also, the Courts Technology Team developed a comprehensive data warehouse back in 2013 that has grown into a huge aggregation of data from over a dozen systems and allows for interconnected data that easily allows analysis. One example of what this allows us to do is track cases that start out with a Child Protective Services termination petition and track it throughout the life of the case until it is finally resolved, potentially 18 years later, with its final outcome (e.g. reunification, foster care, etc.) The courts are exploring different aspects such as caseloads, case outcomes, settings and hearings, CourTools key indicators, jail



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information, alternatives to incarceration, cost per case, docket efficiency, inmate transportation, case correlations with population growth, budgets, fairness, attorney quality, etc.

In the case of our indigent defense system, we facilitated a group of community stakeholders to discuss community values for indigent defense as the first step. Once we facilitated those goals (e.g., compliance, competent representation, fairness, etc.) from judges, attorneys, state agencies, local nonprofits interested in justice, and county executives, we documented and announced those goals. Next, we identified key metrics that would support those goals and built out systems and data stores that would provide us with transparency in the monitoring of those goals. Please visit <https://www.traviscourtsapplications.org/nacm/analytics> for screenshots of these dashboards.

Replication of the breadth of these solutions is not a simple task and requires significant investment in people, technology and infrastructure. In order to meet this challenge, we worked with the National Legal Aid and Defender Association to produce a paper that outlines a maturity model for jurisdictions to follow. That paper has been published and presented nationally at various conferences and has been referenced now by other jurisdictions in their quest for continued maturity and growth as organizations who also want to provide access to justice, increase efficiency and deliver transparency. To view this published paper, click on the link below:

http://www.nlada.org/sites/default/files/NLADA%20Increasing%20Analytics%20Capacity%20Toolkit%202016_0.pdf

The automation of so many processes in the Travis County Civil and Criminal Courts allows all stakeholders greater access to many court services. The online services are quick, easy and efficient and reduce the amount of time and effort it takes to drive into the courthouse and for court staff to easily process settings and hearings for judges with limited time available. Additionally, appointed attorneys for indigent clients, who are not paid at the same level as private clients, get a substantial suite of services that allows for significantly more productive management of their caseload that frees up more time for them to prepare motions, talk to clients, process administrative billing and get near real time transparency into actions that might affect their clients. This helps level the playing field and increase parity in the court system. The in depth data visualizations measures almost every aspect of the system and provides insights into opportunities for improvement activities and program initiatives. These systems have transformed the way business is executed, how cases are managed and how the systems monitored in Travis County.

In order to protect the data in these systems, these systems are all secure via the Travis County firewall and Identity Management System and utilize a roles based model that allows only specific roles to see specific cases. For instance, an attorney is only allowed to view cases for which they have been appointed. Because this application was coded with configuration in mind, it can be utilized by both the Civil and Criminal Courts.



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These systems are all evergreen applications that have been developed in house for the business needs of the various court stakeholders and community partners both in Travis County and Nationally. The facilitation of community needs via focus groups, community representatives and national and statewide agencies allows for refinement of a new series of best practices for Travis County. Some of our partners include the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, the Texas Indigent Defense Commission, North Carolina Court System Office of Indigent Defense Services, community stakeholders, local non-profits, Judges, internal staff, the Courts Technology Team and other Travis County departments.