Functional Requirements Document

For Court Application Processing System

The Florida Courts Technology Commission ("FCTC"), upon motion of its Trial Court Integrated Management Solution ("TIMS") Committee, adopts this Functional Requirements Document ('FRD') to provide specifications for Court Application Processing Systems ("CAPS") to coordinate the use of information technology and electronic case files, in court and in chambers, by trial court judges and staff. In addition to the functional requirements set forth in this document, systems must comply with applicable Rules of Judicial Administration, and other technical and functional standards established by the Court that may apply to CAPS.

§1.   APPLICABILITY

1.1. Certification Required. Any system meeting the definition of CAPS in this section must be certified under section 2 below before being deployed, renewed, or substantially modified. Each circuit determines which certified system best meets its needs. The chief judge's approval shall be required prior to the purchasing or upgrading of any system.

(a) Certification may only be granted when a product or combination of products meets or exceeds the functional standards specified in this document, unless excluded.

(b)   The system shall meet the general criteria of §3 and perform each of the following functions, as specified in the sections cited and be accessible in a seamless program via a single log on:

(i)   Calendar (§5);

(ii)   Search (§6);

(iii)   Case Management and Reporting (§7);

(iv)   Orders (§8);

(v)   Case Notes (§9); and

(vi)   Help (§10).

1.2. CAPS Definition. CAPS is defined as a computer application designed for in-court and in-chambers use by trial judges or their staff to access and use electronic case files and other data sources in the course of managing cases, scheduling and conducting hearings, adjudicating disputed issues, and recording and reporting judicial activity.

1.3.   Exclusion for Clerk's Responsibilities. The FCTC recognizes that existing law establishes the clerks as the official custodians of court records. Systems built and maintained by clerks of court and limited to their historical functions are excluded from this definition. Specifically, general purpose files, indexes, or document viewers made available by the clerk to users other than the judiciary and in-court participants are not subject to the functional requirements of this document, although they remain subject to all other FCTC policies and requirements, including but not limited to the Integration and Operability standards and all other requirements set forth by the Supreme Court. This standard does require the clerks of court to make their official court files available to the CAPS in

read-only fashion in real time or from a replication delayed no more than five minutes from real time.

§2. CERTIFICATION

2.1. Vendor Product Certification. A product offered by a single commercial vendor must be certified by the FCTC under this section before the vendor may sell or otherwise deploy a new installation, or renew a contract for an existing installation, as meeting the §1.2 definition of CAPS above. When a vendor obtains certification for a product, the State Courts Administrator is authorized to enter into such agreements as she deems advisable to facilitate transactions between such vendor and any trial court unit that chooses to purchase the certified product.

2.2. General System Certification. Any CAPS product or system that is not subject to the vendor product certification section requires general system certification before a new installation or deployment. General system certification can be granted for:

(a) Internally developed systems that comply with the functional requirements of this document; or

(b) Aggregated systems, consisting of components which individually may not meet the functional requirements but taken together do satisfy the requirements.

2.3. Provisional Certification. Provisional certification is for six months and may be renewed at the discretion of the FCTC. It may be granted for:

(a) Partial systems or subsystems that meet only a part of the standards when a plan for attaining certification within a reasonable time has been approved by the FCTC;

(b) Systems that lack specific data reporting requirements because the local clerk's office does not maintain that data and it is not otherwise reasonably available from machine-readable sources; or

(c) Any other partially compliant subsystem. Approval will be on a case by case basis pursuant to the procedures set forth in §2.5.

2.4. Existing Installations. An existing system requires certification upon the earliest of the following events:

(a) Substantial modification of the system; or

(b) Expiration of the contracts under which any vendor provides the system or a subsystem.

2.5. Certification Process. The certifying entity is the Florida Courts Technology Commission. The FCTC delegates its authority to make initial certification determinations to the State Courts Administrator.

(a) Application. An entity seeking certification shall file an application with the Office of State Courts Administrator in such form and location as the Administrator may require.

(b) Administrative Decision. The State Courts Administrator shall issue certification, or a notice that certification has been denied, within a reasonable time. Unless an interested party files a written application for review within thirty days of the Administrator's decision, that decision will constitute the final decision of the FCTC.

(c) Review and Final Action. Review of any disputed certification decision by the administrator is conducted by a subcommittee of the FCTC appointed by its Chair for that purpose. The subcommittee's decision shall constitute final action unless,

within 30 days of its rendition, the FCTC adopts a resolution accepting review of the certification decision.

§3.   SYSTEM DESIGN AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

3.1. Performance. The system must meet or exceed the efficiencies delivered by conventional paper systems or previous electronic systems.

3.2. Robustness. The system must be engineered so that it does not break down upon foreseeable peaks of usage, user error, data corruption, or other stress.

3.3. Compatibility. The system must be adaptable at reasonable cost to be compatible and interoperable with any of the clerk's systems being used in the state. It must use, to the extent feasible, industry standard document formats and transmission protocols, and avoid all use of proprietary formats, data structures, or protocols.

3.4. Adaptability. The system must be designed in a way that anticipates obsolescence of hardware and software, and is upgradeable and modifiable as new technologies become available or statutes, rules, or court procedures change. In particular, the system must be able to accommodate, at reasonable expense, additional data elements for specific divisions of court as adopted by the FCTC.

3.5. Accessibility and Security. The system must prevent access by unauthorized persons and facilitate access by authorized persons according to a defined set of user permission levels. The system must be usable by judges, and also by judicial assistants, clerks, and case managers as the judge may direct.

(a) Security. The system must comply with industry standard security methods, including encryption and authentication protocols, in order to protect access to the application and associated data.

(b) User Permission Levels.

   (i) System-assigned User Permission Levels. The system shall provide the system administrator with the ability to configure user permissions to restrict access to the application, sub-applications (functions), and case data (as needed to comply with statutory restrictions on access to case data).

   (ii) The system shall provide a means for a judge to manage which other authenticated individual users or judge-defined user groups may view or change case-related information he originates, such as notes, document annotations, contents of work folders, case management information, and personal and system calendar entries.

(c) Password Protection. The system must authenticate users and their permission levels based on username and password, providing access to all functional modules using the same credentials.

(d) Electronic Signatures. The system must ensure that encrypted electronic signatures may be applied to orders only by the authenticated user.

(e) Remote Access. The system must be accessible remotely via web by judges and other personnel having appropriate permission levels.

(f) Persons With Disabilities. All Court technologies must comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act ("ADA").

   3.6. External Data Access. The system must employ read-only access to the database(s) of the clerk(s) in the circuit to avoid

any unnecessary re-keying of data by court personnel. It must be able to retrieve basic case information, any scheduling or calendaring information the clerk may maintain, the clerk's progress docket, and the set of electronic documents that constitute the official court file.

3.7. Global Navigation. Each top-level module of §1.1(b) shall be accessible from any non-modal screen in the application by clicking once on a global navigation menu.

3.8. Hardware Independence. The system must be reasonably hardware independent, and must work with touch screen, mouse or other pointing device, or keyboard entry.

3.9. Printer-Friendliness. All displays of case data or document images shall be printable, using either a screen print function or a developed printer-friendly routine. When a document is being displayed, the court shall have the option to print one or more pages at once.

3.10. Disaster Prevention and Recovery Strategy. The system must use reasonable measures to prevent service interruption and have a plan for continuation of operations if interruption occurs. It must be designed to minimize risk of data loss, including but not limited to secure, regular, and redundant data backup.

3.11. Automated Data Reporting. The system shall electronically report to the Office of the State Courts Administrator, and to the Chief Judge of the relevant Circuit, the information pertaining to each case or case event using protocols and methods as specified in the Integration and Interoperability document Section 3.3 Requirements for Interoperability and Data Exchange Standards.

§4. CALENDARING FUNCTION STANDARDS

4.1. Calendaring System Required. A system must include a planning and calendaring function that permits the court to allocate blocks of future time for specific purposes, that permits the court or authorized other persons to book specific hearings or other events into allocated time, and that displays or prints the schedule for a day, week, or month with appropriate level of detail.

4.2. Planning Flexibility. The system must accommodate docket planning using either time-certain or multiple-case-docket approaches, or such other approach as the court may specify. It must permit the court to specify the capacity of any multiple case docket and displays must be able to show the portion of capacity remaining.

4.3. Calendar Control. The calendaring system must prevent a user from inadvertent double booking a hearing for the same time slot that is not a mass docket or intentionally double booked. It must also prevent booking a multiple case docket in excess of its capacity unless the user deliberately overrides the capacity.

4.4. Replication. The system must permit the court to allocate blocks of time on a recurrent basis (e. g. every other Thursday or every fifth Friday) with minimum data entry. It must also be able to call up a list of cases based on defined criteria and schedule or reschedule all of the cases simultaneously into a new time block.

4.5. External User Access. The system must be capable of displaying allocated time blocks to external users such as attorneys or parties as the judge may direct, and must also provide a means by which the external users can either request to book a hearing into an allocated time block, or automatically

and directly book a hearing into an allocated time block, as the judge may direct.

4.6. Direct Access to Calendar Management. The calendar display screens must provide direct access to functions by which a judge, judicial assistant, or case manager can directly and immediately manage the court's calendar with minimal click count, including: set, re-set, continue, or cancel hearings or trials; and add a case to or remove a case from a docket.

4.7. Automatic Notation and Notification. The system shall, as directed by the judge, create immediate automatic e-mail alerts to parties, or paper copies and envelopes to parties without an email address, attorneys, clerks, case managers, court staff, whenever a calendared event is changed on a calendar by a judge, judicial assistant, or case manager. It shall also place a brief entry in the case docket describing the action taken.

4.8. Calendar Display (Internal). The calendaring system shall contain a general purpose calendar viewing function for internal users that displays allocated time blocks, any appointments scheduled within those blocks, and any unallocated time as the user may select.

(a) The displayable fields shall be at least: hearing type; case type; case name; case number; date; time; judge; parties; attorneys; location (court and hearing rooms) and case age.

(b) The fields displayed shall be limited appropriately by the user's permission level. The display must have the ability to sort and filter by any displayed field.

(c) When a specific appointment is listed on the display, clicking on the time and date portion shall call a function that permits editing, canceling, or rescheduling the event without retyping identifying information. Clicking on the case name will bring up a case

calendar display (§4.9). There shall also be a control that opens the progress docket (§5.5).

(d) When an allocated but still available time block, or any portion of unallocated time, is listed on the display, clicking on it shall call a function that permits entry of a new matter into that time block.

4.9. Case Calendar Display. The system shall have the ability to list all events (past and future) scheduled in a specific case.

4.10. Daily Event or Reminder. The calendaring function must support the daily reminder function of the case management module (§6.4) by accepting items posted to a specific date without a specified time, for use as a reminder or tickler system.

4.11. Calendar Export. The system must be able to export calendaring information in industry standard formats (e.g., iCalendar and Outlook).

§5. SEARCH AND DISPLAY FUNCTION STANDARDS

5.1. Case Search and Display. The system must be able to retrieve and display basic case information from the clerk's database and from any internal database it maintains. Basic case information includes at a minimum: Case style (parties names, case number, and division of court); type of case; date opened; current status; identities, roles, and contact information of parties and attorneys.

5.2. Case Search Keywords. The system must be able to search for cases by: Case Number, Party Name, Party Role, Case Filing Date or Date Range, Case Type, or a combination of these fields.

5.3. Lookup Return. The result of a lookup function must return either a list of cases meeting the search criteria, a Basic Case Information display screen if only one match was found, or a notification that no cases were found.

5.4. A Case Information display must contain at least

(a) Basic Case Information and appropriate subsets of the events scheduled in the case and of the clerk's progress docket.

(b) Controls that call:

(i)   the full progress docket;

(ii)   display of detailed information including search for related cases on party, attorney, witness, or other participant;

(iii)   an email window pre-addressed to all the parties or attorneys in the case;

(iv)   a button that opens the scheduling function (and remembers the current case);

(v)   a control that opens the list of orders that the system can generate; and

(vi)   a search window permitting single word and multiple word searches of the searchable electronically filed documents in the case, returning a subset of the progress docket containing the search terms.

(c) Detailed information of a party or other participant consists of: name, aliases, date of birth, role in case, dates when role commenced or ended, charges (for criminal cases), causes of action (for non-criminal cases), other cases, and attorney (or for attorney records, client) contact information.

5.5. Clerk's Progress Docket. The clerk's progress docket is a list of the documents in the official court file for the case. It is the most common entry point for display of the contents of the court file. The court application must display the docket in a useful, user-friendly way.

(a) Each electronically filed document listed on the progress docket must have a link or button that immediately opens the document for viewing. It must be able to retrieve and display the documents without unnecessary delay.

(b) The progress docket must list the documents filed in the case in such a way as to readily distinguish, via icons or color-coding, electronically filed documents from those which have been filed in paper form and not converted.

(c) Orders must similarly be distinguished from motions and from other filings.

(d) There must be a word search function for the progress docket.

5.6. Document Image Display standards. The system must display multiple documents from the clerk's official court files consistent with time standards adopted by the FCTC.

(a) The viewer must be capable of displaying up to three document viewing workspaces side-by-side. The purpose of having up to three open workspaces is to allow the user to view either three different documents or three pages of the same document at the same time. The first viewing workspace will be referred to as the initial workspace, the second and the third viewing areas will be called the second and the third viewing workspace respectively. The initial viewing workspace shall open first, and the second and third workspace viewing areas shall open as the second and third documents are loaded for display. Each workspace must contain a control for paging the document forward or back.

(b) A document being opened for viewing must open in the next available workspace to the right of the last viewing workspace opened. If all workspaces are in use displaying a document, the document shall open as a tab in the initial workspace, or via a horizontal scrolling in the same viewing area.

(c) The workspace viewing area must contain controls that zoom, shrink, rotate, or flip the document they contain.

(d) The display must afford the user an option to specify user settings that identify the documents that can automatically be pre-loaded by default into three display workspaces when a case is opened for viewing.

(e) The system must automatically adjust page workspace viewing area sizes to fit the monitors on which the documents are displayed. For example, smaller monitors would only need to be able to automatically display two workspace viewing areas rather than three.

(f) Variances from these display standards are permitted for tablets and mobile devices to allow for effective use of their smaller displays.

5.7. Word Search. The system must be able to search the contents of the documents in the official court files of a single case or multiple cases selected according to limiting criteria, including division of court, date range, related cases of a party, attorney or other participant, charges or causes of action, and document type.

5.8. Accessing External Data. The system must make reasonable use of available sources of machine-readable data, organized into a display format useful to the court. It must contain a direct means for accessing legal research providers including but not limited to Westlaw and Lexis-Nexis.

§6. CASE MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING STANDARDS

6.1. Reporting. The system must have a comprehensive reporting function for case management data, and must be flexible to meet the reporting needs of individual circuits or counties. At a minimum it must provide:

(a) Active Case List, including title, type, age, attorneys or firms, next scheduled event date, and time since last activity with the ability to sort and filter on any field.

(b) Critical Case List. Listing of cases by type which are near or have exceeded Supreme Court time standards for such cases.

(c) Inactive Case List. List of cases with no activity for 180 days; with motions filed but not set for hearing; with no service of process after 120 days;

(d) Pending Orders list, containing cases having matters held under advisement by the judge, with the number of days since being placed in a work queue, see §7.3 below.

(e) List of cases on appeal, if the data is retrievable from the clerk's database.

(f) Performance Measures. The system shall have the ability to report clearance rate of cases; age of pending cases; and time to disposition of cases.

  (i)   Clearance Rate – This statistic measures the ratio of dispositions to new case filings and assesses whether the court is keeping pace with its incoming caseload.

  (ii)   Age of Pending Cases – This statistic measures the age of the active cases that are pending before the court.

(iii)   Time to Disposition – This statistic measures the length of time between filing and disposition within established time frames

(iv)   Percentage of Disposition – This statistic is presented as a percentage of cases that have been resolved within established time frames.

6.2. Workflow management. The workflow management system shall contain a work queue for each internal user and a due date monitoring system.

6.3. Work Queue. The system shall have a function for tracking the court's work queue.

(a) The judge, when viewing a document or a progress docket, shall have the ability to place a reference to the document directly into the work queue for subsequent action, with the ability to over-ride default due date, or such other due date the judge may select.

(b) The work queue shall also accept other manually entered items.

(c) The judge shall be able to route the work queue item to other court personnel by moving it to the other person's work queue.

(d)   Each work queue must be able to accommodate classification of work queue items into separate item types, such as "proposed orders," "internally generated orders," requests for Domestic Violence Injunctions, Warrants, emergency motions, and other user-specified types.

6.4. Daily Reminder (tickler). The system shall have a function for tracking due dates of specified tasks.

6.5. Alerts. The system must afford each user the ability to specify (and edit) a watch list of cases, sending an alert (electronic notification) advising that there has been a new filing or entry

posted within the last twenty-four hours to the progress docket of any case on the user's watch list.

6.6. Automated Task for Case Management. The system must be able to run automated tasks that provide case management functions for the court, enabling the court to perform a SQL like query of any of the available data elements and populate form orders for each returned result.

§7. ORDER GENERATION AND PROCESSING FUNCTIONAL STANDARDS

7.1. Order Generation and Processing Required. The system shall have the capacity to generate court orders by merging information from the accessible databases and runtime user input into a bank of forms. It shall also have the ability to process proposed orders submitted as PDF or word processor documents by internal and external users.

7.2. Recallable Entries. The order generation subsystem shall be able to recall previous entries by the same user to avoid the necessity of re-keying content.

7.3. Document Models. The document model for the order generation function must not be proprietary. Neither the court nor any county may be prevented from building or customizing their own form banks.

7.4. Generic Order. The order generation function shall afford the court an option to generate a generic order, merging only the case style, signature lines, and distribution list data, leaving the title and body to be entered as free text.

7.5. Electronic Signatures. The Order generation function must support electronic signing of PDF documents, whether

internally generated or submitted as proposed orders by external users.

(a) Unless a document is signed when generated, it shall be placed in the judge's work queue.

(b) The court must have the option of electronically signing some, all, or none of the documents in the work queue at the same time.

(c) The subsystem must have a means for rejecting proposed orders submitted for signature with an explanation of the reason for rejection.

(d) An electronic signature of a judge shall be accompanied by a date, time stamp, and case number. The date, time stamp, and case number shall appear as a watermark through the signature to prevent copying the signature to another document. The date, time stamp, and case number shall also appear below the signature and not be obscured by the signature.

7.6. Electronic Filing and Service. The system shall effectuate electronic filing and service of orders according to the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration.

§8. CASE NOTES FUNCTION STANDARDS

8.1. The system shall have a case note function which accepts input from internal users and may be viewed only by authorized personnel.

8.2. The subsystem shall accept note entries through text entry and insofar as feasible shall be compatible with speech-to-text utilities.

8.3. The subsystem shall be capable of accepting and storing documents or scanned images as part of the case notes.

8.4. When a case note is originally entered from a document viewing screen, the case note must be able to recall the same document when the note is later viewed.

8.5. The system shall automatically document the following in an audit log: scheduling events, changes to scheduled events, orders and judgments sent from the system, and the name of the user who initiated the entry or generated the order or judgment.

§9.   HELP FUNCTION STANDARDS

9.1. The system must have a help system that adequately provides tutorial and documentation for users.

9.2. There must be a control on every screen other than a modal window which can access the help menu.

9.3. The help menu must provide a description of how to use each component of the system.

9.4. The help menu must contain a feedback channel for alerting system administrators of any performance issues or other problems.