Quality and Productivity Commission

29th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program

Champions of Change: Together We Make a Difference

2015 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: COURT RESERVATION SYSTEM (CRS)

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: JUNE, 2013
(Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before July 1, 2014)

PROJECT STATUS: x Ongoing _____ One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? _____ Yes x No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

The Court Reservation System (CRS) allows parties with a case assigned to a participating civil courtroom to reserve a date for a law and motion hearing, and pay the associated filing fees, through the Court's website. This makes reservations available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, without traveling to the courthouse. Fees are paid on line, which decreases time spent at the filing window, and are nonrefundable, which ensures required fees are paid, and decreases the likelihood that hearings are reserved as "place holders," only to be canceled later. CRS eliminates the need to speak directly with courtroom staff to reserve a hearing date, while maintaining control over the number and types of motions set each day. The ability to reserve, reschedule, or cancel reservations through CRS has proven to be a tremendous timesaver for court staff and the public, providing the advantage of 24 hour access, seven days per week. Not only can users access CRS at any time, but they can view available dates immediately, reserve the date, and use email confirmation to save that date to their appointment calendars. All this is done while courtroom staff performs other work because they are freed from the interruption of telephone calls to set motions.

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED **ANNUAL** COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED **ANNUAL** COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED **ANNUAL** REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL **ANNUAL** ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
$ 0	$0	$ 0	$ 0	☒

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Los Angeles Superior Court 111 North Hill Street, Room 109 Los Angeles, CA 90012		**TELEPHONE NUMBER** (213) 830-0819
PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Gregory Drapac		**TELEPHONE NUMBER** (213) 830-0819 **EMAIL** gdrapac@lacourt.org
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME) Mary Hearn Mary Hearn	**DATE** 7/14/15	**TELEPHONE NUMBER** 213-633-0132 **EMAIL** mhearn@lacourt.org
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Margaret Little Margaret Little	**DATE** 7/14/15	**TELEPHONE NUMBER** (213) 633-0414

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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **Challenge, Solution, and Benefits** of the project. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made. Use Arial 12 point font

Challenge:

In 2012, numerous courtrooms were closed due to dramatic cuts in the budget. This included 24 civil courtrooms. Over 400 employees were laid off, or experienced a salary reduction. In 2013, the Los Angeles Superior Court (LASC) consolidated litigation areas, which included consolidating all Personal Injury (PI) matters into only four courtrooms, in the central courthouse. Faced with these reductions, the LASC had to eliminate or reduce some services to the public, including curtailing telephone answering hours.

Prior to CRS, the only way that parties with a civil case filed in the LASC could reserve a date on a law and motion calendar was by contacting the courtroom staff by telephone, or coming to the courthouse in person. This was time consuming for litigants and court staff. Furthermore, given the high volume of cases handled by each courtroom in the LASC, and the demands placed on courtroom staff to call calendars, record the minutes, and address the questions of parties in the courtroom, it was often difficult for parties to speak with someone in the courtroom. This resulted in multiple, time-consuming attempts to receive information. The problem was exacerbated as budget curtailments forced the LASC to centralize or regionalize many functions and reduce staff. This dramatically increased the size of courtroom calendars, and decreased the staff available to address the workload.

What was needed was an automated system that would: allow parties to reserve hearing dates independently, remove court staff from the reservation process, free staff to perform other duties, and free parties from the constraint of needing to communicate via telephone. CRS provided that solution.

Solution:

CRS was first implemented in the PI Courts, at the central courthouse, to mitigate the impact of budget curtailments on the public. For nearly two years it has been integral in the management of over 6,500 cases in active inventory, in each of the four PI courtrooms. The CRS project was developed to minimize the impact of budgetary curtailments on the public, and to enhance the Court's ability to carry out its duties effectively with fewer staff. It was clear that some services provided telephonically had to be automated to offset the increased difficultly of reaching courtroom staff by telephone, and to improve efficiency for staff. The courtrooms most in need of this solution were the Personal Injury courtrooms, so the CRS project was initially focused on assisting these courtrooms.

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CRS was designed and implemented by LASC staff, at no additional cost to the Court. Administrators with expertise in civil operations worked closely with the Court's computer technology experts, to design, test, and implement the program.

The system is easy for courtroom staff to learn. It includes safeguards to prevent calendaring errors, and ensures filing fees are paid. CRS is very intuitive, requiring very little time to master. Several checks and balances prevent calendaring errors. At the time of payment, CRS provides a receipt, along with the reservation ID, and receipt number. When users present the corresponding motion at the filing window, it must include this receipt and the reservation ID. CRS utilizes the following elements of technology:

I. Logical Architecture
   a. Public website (Internet) – portal for which the public can make reservations
   b. Management website (Intranet) – provides management functionality to court staff
II. Framework/Technology
   a. The public and management websites run on Microsoft .Net 4.0 Framework
   b. The database used is Oracle 12c/RAC Database
   c. Ecommerce technology is employed to facilitate online payment of reservations through the use of a third party vendor
   d. The public website uses standard SSL technology for secure communication between client, website and payment gateways.

Benefits:
CRS offers a new service to members of the public that need to schedule law and motion hearings in participating civil courtrooms. It also saves time for staff, freeing them to perform other crucial courtroom functions. It ensures the Court fulfills its fiduciary duty to collect the appropriate mandatory filing fees. Finally, because the filing fees are not refundable, it discourages the setting of multiple time slots as "place holders." This helps ensure that the time reserved on the court's calendar will be used and the maximum number of slots will be available to those needing to appear before the court.

CRS saves courtroom staff the time spent on the telephone setting and rescheduling motions, freeing them to perform other essential courtroom duties. It also makes motion calendars more readily available to courtrooms staff, research attorneys and judges. Finally, CRS provides quick access to the number of reservations for which related motion documents have been filed. CRS also saves time for staff and parties at the filing window, as fees were paid at the time the reservation was made.

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Each reservation/reschedule/cancellation transaction made online means one less telephone call to the courtroom. Based on an average of five-minutes per call, for a non-automated reservation, and the 2,834 reservations made during the month of February, 2015, the time savings to courtrooms using CRS was 14,170 staff minutes or 236 hours in one month, with only 23 courtrooms participating. As CRS is rolled out to additional courtrooms, the savings will continue to grow. Furthermore, these numbers only include the savings due to initial reservations, and do not account for time spent changing reserved dates or other reservation management related calls.

The program results are significant and measurable. As referenced previously, in one month (February 2015), 2,834 reservations were made through CRS. This saved an estimated 236 hours of staff time. Through CRS, over $2.78 million in filings fees have been collected electronically. The success of this innovative program, the savings of staff resources, and the amount of fees collected electronically, are anticipated to continue to grow exponentially.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN (DETAIL IS REQUIRED FOR COUNTY DEPARTMENTS): Use Arial 12 point font

The CRS program fulfills many of the values and goals of the County of Los Angeles' Strategic Plan, put perhaps most specifically: the value of customer orientation, by placing the highest priority on meeting our customers' needs with accessible, responsive quality services, and treating them with respect and dignity, and the goal of community support and responsiveness, by enriching the lives of Los Angeles County residents by providing enhanced services, and effectively planning and responding to economic, social, and environmental challenges.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFIT): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12 point font

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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