

AGENCY ISSUE NARRATIVE:

2013-2014 BUDGET YEAR NARRATIVE: IT COMPONENT? YES

The Florida Courts E-Filing Authority requests \$1,098,331 in recurring funding for the Florida Courts eFiling Portal.

In conjunction with the Chief Justice and the Supreme Court, the Florida Courts E-Filing Authority was established in June 2010 by an Interlocal Agreement creating a public agency pursuant to chapter 163, Florida Statutes, comprised of the Clerks of the Circuit Court who join the Authority and the Clerk of the Supreme Court, as designee of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court on behalf of all the state courts. The Florida Courts eFiling Portal has been in production since January 2011. The eFiling Portal is a key component of an integrated Court System as envisioned by the courts. It is currently being used by attorneys to electronically file court documents on a voluntary basis. Usage of the portal has grown significantly during this time period:

	<u>Service Calls</u>	<u>Percentage Increase</u>	<u>Filings</u>	<u>Percentage Increase</u>
7/2011-12/2011	1,696		21,286	
1/2012-6/2012	4,453	162.56%	64,865	204.73%
7/2012-12/2012	11,899	167.21%	287,001	342.46%
2012 Totals	16,352		351,866	

At this time, there is no funded service desk or on-going training component to support the portal users. When the files exist in electronic form rather than paper, it is imperative that a service desk be available to promptly resolve any user issues with the eFiling Portal system so that access to can be maintained at all times. Without such access, the court will not be able to efficiently operate.

The Supreme Court is in the process of mandating e-filing for all attorneys in 2013. This will be a major step in converting to a totally paperless court in the near future. During 2013, it is anticipated that mandatory e-filing deadlines, as defined by the Supreme Court in SC11-399, will dramatically increase the usage of the eFiling Portal as well as the demand for a Service Desk/Training component to support the eFiling Portal. The following deadlines will occur in 2013:

- Mandatory Civil eFiling April 1, 2013
- Mandatory Criminal eFiling October 1, 2013
- Mandatory Appellate eFiling
 - Supreme Court: February 27, 2013
 - District Courts of Appeal: July - December, 2013
- eService through the Portal TBD

With each mandatory phase of implementation, it is anticipated that there will be a dramatic spike in the need for service desk support for the eFiling Portal users. Based on past experience, the following chart shows estimated eFiling Portal usage projections for 2013:

	<u>Service Calls</u>	<u>Percentage Increase</u>	<u>Filings</u>	<u>Percentage Increase</u>
1/2013-7/2013 Projected	31,796	167.21%	1,047,726	265.06%
7/2013-12/2013 Projected	84,962	167.21%	2,432,018	132.12%
2013 Projected	116,758		3,479,744	

In order to support this level of usage, it is recommended that the service desk component of the eFiling Portal be funded at the level of 10 FTE's. This would result in an annual recurring cost of **\$927,528** for the Service Desk component.

In addition to the service desk component, the Supreme Court issued the following request to support mandatory e-filing: "We take this opportunity, however, to encourage attorneys and clerks throughout Florida to take notice of the new electronic filing requirements that we adopt here and to begin the process of updating their current practices to conform to these requirements. In this regard, The Florida Bar, in coordination with the Florida Association of Court Clerks and Comptrollers (FACC), should undertake comprehensive educational outreach so that litigants and clerks are fully informed of the requirements and the substantial benefits of mandatory e-filing."

These outreach and training activities would include the development of web-based training tools and on-going training workshops and education events. It is estimated that this on-going training would cost **\$111,303** to support.

With this funding, the Authority can mitigate the possibility of delays in sending and accepting electronic filings and processing cases electronically.

The Authority also requests assistance in the expenses of the Board's governance. The Interlocal Agreement speaks to the responsibilities of the Board in governance of the Florida Courts eFiling Portal. The role of the Board requires that the Board have access to legal counsel, Board of Directors liability insurance and an annual audit of the Authority's financial activities and assets. The cost of these three items is anticipated to be \$59,500 for the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

Budget Request Total: \$1,098,331 (recurring)

