

Public Record Update

July 2016

This edition of the Public Record Update is devoted to certain current issues affecting court record access.

All 77 Counties Now on OSCN (Oklahoma State Courts Network)

With the June addition of Cimarron County, free web access to docket information for civil and criminal docket information is now available for all 77 Oklahoma counties at www.oscn.net/dockets/. Search by name or case number. One may also search traffic tickets. Be sure to check the Court Records Help link for searching help including the wild card characters.

While this site is an excellent choice for pre-screening, the site is not considered to be online onsite equivalent. One issue is the site does not indicate the throughput of records per county. One does not know how far back the records go. Plus according to one nationally known record retrieval firm based in Oklahoma:

"Each district court is responsible for the accuracy of data entry. There continues to be a problem requiring a manual pull of the hard copy file to validate information. The OSCN has blocked access to the public viewing information to certain identifier fields and approx. 80% of scanned documents. This information is only available by using a terminal at a physical court location."

OSCN is rated as a 2 (scale is 1 to 5 with 1 being best) on the Equivalency Matrix for subscribers at CriminalRecordSources.com.

Use caution when using this site for strong due diligence needs.

New Facts About the Currency and Accuracy of Criminal Records at State Criminal Record Repositories

There are three key reasons why the completeness, consistency, and accuracy of state criminal record repositories could be suspect-

1. Timeliness of Receiving Arrest and Disposition Data
2. Timeliness of Entering Arrest and Disposition Data into the Repository
3. Inability to Match Dispositions with Existing Arrest Records

The basis for these concerns is supported by documented facts provided by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Every two years the DOJ's Bureau of Justice Statistics releases an extensive Survey of State Criminal

Record Repositories. The latest survey, released December 2015 and based on statistics compiled as of Dec 31, 2014, is a 117-page document with 36 data tables. Below are some eye-catching facts reflected from the current Survey:

- 8 states report 25% or more of all dispositions received could NOT be linked to the arrest/charge information in the state criminal record database. 14 states don't know how many dispositions they have that cannot be linked. (Table 8a)
- 20 states have over 3 million unprocessed or partially processed court dispositions, ranging from 200 in Michigan and North Dakota to over 1 million in Nevada. (Table 14)
- 11 states report at least a 50 day backlog between the time when a felony case is decided and when the record is entered in that state's criminal history database. 18 states do not know how long the delay is. (Table 14)

To view or download a recently posted article with some eye-opening individual state stats from several of the Tables see <https://www.brpublications.com/freeresources/FreeArticles.aspx>

The entire 117-page DOJ survey is available at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/bjs/grants/249799.pdf>.

Massachusetts Cuts Online Access to Court Records for Attorneys and Journalists

Since the 1990's, journalists and attorneys have had online access to basic information for Massachusetts Superior Court criminal case data. Two years ago the MA courts stopped issuing new accounts to journalists but told them it was okay to borrow a log-in from an attorney friend.

However, earlier this month the courts pulled the rug out and terminated online access. Per a recent Boston Globe article, Spokeswoman for the courts Erika Gully-Santiago said the courts decided to cut off access to the information after discovering that "...multiple Internet-based entities have been systematically downloading data on cases...The Information Services Department recommended limiting access to criminal docket information available on the attorney portal as quickly as possible to circumvent additional data harvesting."

About Online Access to State Judicial Systems

Here are some overall stats about online access to court records on statewide judicial systems, as per the [Public Record Research System](#):

- 27 States Offer Online Access to Both Civil and Criminal Records Statewide
- 5 States Offer Online Access to Partial Statewide Access
- 5 States Offer Access to Only Civil Online Records Statewide
- 1 State Offers Access to Only Criminal Online Records Statewide

- 13 States Have Online Access to Neither

Los Angeles County Changing Fax Number at All Courts

Los Angeles County courts will soon be changing fax numbers for all locations. This is part of a Voice-over Internet Protocol (VoIP) which will provide the court system substantial savings. Below is a list of upcoming changes that have been released:

Effective August 1, 2016

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Van Nuys | East | Courthouse |
| Fax Filing | Civil: | 562-753-0315 |
| Fax Filing Small Claims: 562-753-0319 | | |

Effective August 8, 2016

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| San Fernando | Courthouse |
| Felony Clerk | Fax: 562-753-0230 |
| Misd. Clerk | Fax: 562-753-0232 |

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Sylmar | Juvenile | Courthouse |
| General | Fax; | 562-753-0534 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| West Covina | Courthouse |
| Criminal Clerk | Fax: 562-753-0094 |
| Traffic Clerk Fax: 562-753-0093 | |

Effective August 15th, 2016

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Santa Clarita | Courthouse |
| General Fax: 562-753-0482 (do not use for filing) | |

Effective September 1, 2016

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Chatsworth | Courthouse |
| Limited Civil | Fax: 562-753-0346 |
| Family Law | Fax: 562-753-0347 |

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Catalina | Courthouse |
| Clerk | Fax: 562-637-0720 |

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Long Beach - Gov. George Deukmejian | Courthouse |
| Civil, Family | Law Fax: 562-753-0921 |
| Criminal | Fax: 562-753-0699 |
| Traffic Fax: 562-753-0698 | |

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