

Integrated Justice System Drives Efficiencies and \$100,000 Savings

Fort Bend County, Texas | Odyssey Integrated Justice CLIENT CASE STUDY

AT-A-GLANCE

Fort Bend County, Texas

- 585,000 citizens
- 1,900 employees
- 886 square miles
- Sugar Land, a Houston suburb, is the largest city

Challenges

- Manage increased case loads resulting from population growth
- Provide integrated information accessibility
- Eliminate silos within departments
- Increase workflow efficiencies and productivity

Solution

- Tyler Technologies' Odyssey® Solution
 - » Case Manager
 - » Prosecutor
 - » Check Manager
- Used By Probate, Mental Health, Civil, Family, Criminal and Justice of the Peace Courts

Benefits

- Savings of \$100,000/year
- Elimination of 22 applications
- Decreased paper handling
- Streamlined workflow

THE CHALLENGE

Modernize County's technology while eliminating information silos

The population of Fort Bend County, located along the Gulf Coast of Texas outside Houston, increased 50 percent between 2002 and 2010. Along with this surge in population came increased case loads within the County's court system, overburdening the judicial system and the County. To address this challenge, Fort Bend County formed a judicial steering team (JST) composed of 11 member stakeholders tasked with developing a comprehensive business plan to select an integrated justice system that would increase efficiencies and productivity across all departments and offices.

Previously, each County office used its own separate system, which made sharing information between offices difficult. Additionally, most of these systems did not have the capability to scan and upload documents for citizens to retrieve electronically.

Wesley Wittig, a Fort Bend County assistant district attorney, said Odyssey's integrated platform and single, centralized database were major reasons the County chose it. "We were wasting so much time and effort duplicating data entry and information processing with our outdated system," said Wittig. "Since we weren't integrated, we had to wait for information. It was impossible for our offices to communicate with each other in a timely manner."



"Odyssey's integration between offices delivers important information in real-time. The ability to share information across the county has helped our citizens access the information they seek and aids in keeping our public safe."

— Wesley Wittig

Assistant District Attorney
Fort Bend County

THE SOLUTION

A partnership between the County and Tyler

After a thorough review of 6 vendors, Fort Bend narrowed the selection down to 3 vendors to provide demonstrations. "After viewing detailed demos, it was obvious that Tyler's Odyssey was a world apart from the other vendors," said Dianne Wilson, Fort Bend's county clerk and judicial steering team chair. "Odyssey's user friendly design and ability to manage images met Fort Bend County's needs and became our integrated justice system of choice."

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THE SOLUTION (CONTINUED)

Fort Bend chose Tyler's Odyssey Court Case Management software for its ability to simplify processes, improve workflow and ensure operations are as efficient and consistent as possible. Odyssey Prosecutor was installed to effectively manage prosecution tasks and compile case information in real-time.

Tyler's Odyssey software manages aspects of Fort Bend's courts, clerks, prosecutor and justice of the peace offices and provides the County with the ability to locate case information and attach multiple file types, create and view dockets in multiple ways, and calculate fees, fines and payments automatically—all in a secure environment. The County also uses Odyssey to submit general and custom reports to the courts, state and other entities who mine data for budgetary and research purposes.

Tyler converted approximately 1.1 million cases and more than 7 million images during implementation. A dedicated project management and implementation team worked with Fort Bend during the four-phase, four-year implementation project.

"Tyler was both onsite and available by phone during the pre-go-live configuration and testing period, working hand-in-hand with our project management team and individual offices to help implement the system and understand our workflow," said Wilson. "Tyler offered assistance and options if we encountered any roadblocks during implementation and we dealt with issues as a team. Tyler was always conscientious in helping us meet our needs."

As with many counties, technology projects within Fort Bend County were previously led by the IT department and not by the County business leaders. Fort Bend found success by involving all stakeholders and allowing business needs to drive technology adoption, not the other way around.

"Our success was through the collaboration and joint effort of our business leaders combined with the technology department and Tyler," said Connie Heinecke, Fort Bend County's information technology projects manager. "Fort Bend dedicated 50 subject-matter experts representing each office to standardize and consolidate case types, codes, data elements and forms to streamline workflow and integration within Odyssey. These specialized resources and experts allowed the implementation to stay on target and on budget."

BENEFITS

\$100,000 savings per year and elimination of 22 applications

With the implementation of Odyssey, the County was able to eliminate 22 justice applications for an annual savings of \$100,000. Odyssey's integrated platform provided tremendous benefits to the County by reducing duplicate data entry, increasing case accuracy and improving efficiencies. Clerks no longer have to spend time at the counter retrieving documents. Prosecutors, clerks and courts share court calendars ensuring coordinated dockets and more efficient allocation of resources. With Odyssey, integrated court management is possible because it has a single, central data store that lets users share information across offices. This helps both citizens and employees of Fort Bend County electronically access accurate information in a timely manner.

Because of their success implementing Odyssey, Fort Bend County has been recognized for their leadership. Fort Bend received the 2009 Innovation Award presented by the Texas Association of Counties Leadership Foundation for their Team Model Structure used in implementing Odyssey.



"The implementation of Tyler's Odyssey has saved the county and taxpayers money by allowing us to work smarter, not harder."

— **Dianne Wilson**
County Clerk
Judicial Steering Team Chair
Fort Bend County

"Vital information is easily stored, retrieved and viewed from multiple locations simultaneously so we're not dependent upon one paper case file. This results in less waiting, more efficient staff and a public that is better served."

— **Connie Heinecke**
Information Technology Projects
Manager
Fort Bend County

