



FLORIDA COURTS  
**E-FILING AUTHORITY**

# 2021-2022 **ANNUAL REPORT**

✉ P.O. Box 16428 | Tallahassee, FL 32317  [MyFLCourtAccess.com](https://www.MyFLCourtAccess.com)

The Florida Courts E-Filing Authority: In Governance of Florida Courts E-Filing Portal, the Statewide Access Point for Electronic Transmission of Court Records. [www.MyFLCourtAccess.com](https://www.MyFLCourtAccess.com)

# ABOUT THE AUTHORITY

## MEET THE BOARD

2022-2021 E-FILING AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS



CHAIRMAN

THE HONORABLE

**KAREN E. RUSHING**

SARASOTA COUNTY CLERK AND  
COMPTROLLER



THE HONORABLE

**TODD  
NEWTON**

GILCHRIST COUNTY CLERK AND  
COMPTROLLER

VICE CHAIRMAN  
DISTRICT IV



THE HONORABLE

**JEFFREY R.  
SMITH, CPA**

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY  
CLERK AND COMPTROLLER

SECRETARY/TREASURER  
DISTRICT V

## ABOUT

The Authority is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors consisting of eight Clerks of the Circuit Court and the Clerk of the Supreme Court, who serves as the Chief Justice's designee on behalf of the state and appellate courts. The Board is responsible for leading the public agency tasked with providing a statewide access point for the electronic access and transmission of court records to and from the courts.



THE HONORABLE

**JOHN A.  
TOMASINO**

CLERK OF THE COURT  
FLORIDA SUPREME COURT



THE HONORABLE

**CLAYTON O.  
ROOKS**

JACKSON COUNTY CLERK  
DISTRICT I



THE HONORABLE

**STEVE  
LAND**

LAFAYETTE COUNTY  
CLERK AND  
COMPTROLLER

DISTRICT II



THE HONORABLE

**TARA S.  
GREEN**

CLAY COUNTY CLERK  
AND COMPTROLLER

DISTRICT III



THE HONORABLE

**STACY M.  
BUTTERFIELD,  
CPA**

POLK COUNTY CLERK AND  
COMPTROLLER

DISTRICT VI



THE HONORABLE

**KEVIN  
MADOK**

MONROE COUNTY CLERK AND  
COMPTROLLER

DISTRICT VII

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# BENEFITS OF THE PORTAL

## WHY USE THE E-FILING PORTAL?

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Allows users to file their cases anytime. The Portal is available to registered users 24/7.



Allows users to file their cases in batches, helping attorneys and self-represented litigants save time while filing many court documents.



Allows users to file their cases from anywhere. Using the Portal, filers can upload documents from the convenience of their own home or office without stepping foot in a courthouse.



Connects thousands involved in Florida's justice system including more than 330,000+ self-represented litigants, 88,000 attorneys, 1,650 judges, and more.



Provides a free to use service that allows users to file documents while paying the required court fees, as well as minimal payment processing fees.



Has saved filers an estimated \$38 million in postage by providing a method to transfer documents without having to mail, ship, or use a courier service.

## ABOUT THE E-FILING PORTAL

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Filers who use the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal (E-Filing Portal) to transmit their documents to Florida's court system recognize the importance of services being made available in a uniform way and appreciate the Authority keeping that foremost in guiding the E-Filing Portal.

The E-Filing Portal revolutionized the filing of court documents. Electronic recordkeeping has opened up access to an infinite number of people, from anywhere in the world, at any time of the day or night. Not that long ago, clerks received only paper documents and files were kept in numbered folders.

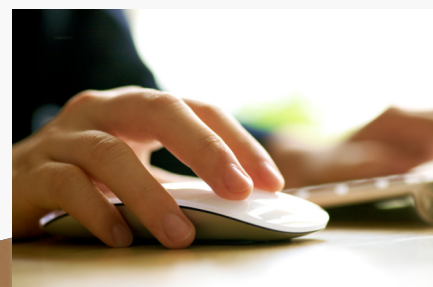
The success of E-Filing Portal has brought efficiencies to the court, attorneys and other justice partners. That said, our work is not done. Innovation, and new and improved ideas will always pave the way for more work that needs to be done to continue to serve the court, The Florida Bar and others who use Florida Court System.

## RESOURCES

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The Florida Courts E-Filing Authority provides several useful resources for learning more about the E-Filing Portal including:

- ▶ A Help Desk Available for All Users on Weekdays from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- ▶ FAQs
- ▶ Training Videos
- ▶ Training Materials and Manuals
- ▶ Helpful Links



# OVERVIEW

**2009** In accordance with direction by the Florida Legislature and the Florida Supreme Court, the need for the development and implementation of a system for statewide electronic filing of Florida’s county, circuit, and appellate court records was recognized in 2009.

**2010** In conjunction with the Chief Justice and the Supreme Court, the Florida Courts E-Filing Authority was established in June 2010 by interlocal agreement, creating a public agency pursuant to chapter 163, Florida Statutes. The agency is composed of the Clerks of the Circuit Court who join the Authority on behalf of all the state trial courts, and the Clerk of the Supreme Court, representing all the appellate courts and as designee of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

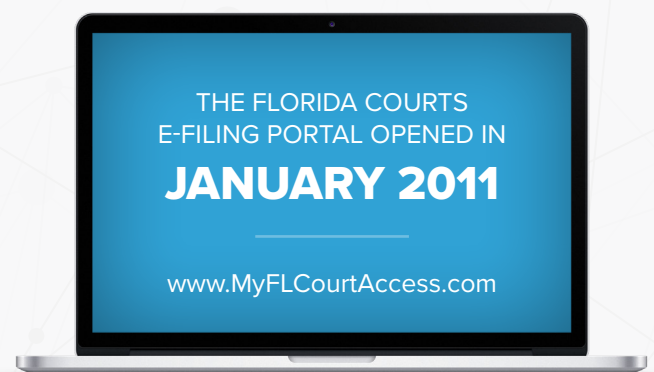
The Authority contracted with the FCCC to design, develop, implement, operate, upgrade, support, and maintain the portal. The portal incorporates the following features.

- ▶ A single statewide access point log-in.
- ▶ A single internet access to court records by authorized users.
- ▶ Transmissions to and from the appropriate courts.
- ▶ The ability to provide electronic service of notification receipt of an electronic filing and confirmation of filing in the appropriate court file.
- ▶ Open standards-based integration ability with existing statewide information systems and county e-filing applications.
- ▶ Compliance with the Electronic Court Filing Standard 4.0, the Global Justice Extensible Markup Language, and Oasis Legal Markup Language.

To ensure that the statewide portal was developed in accordance to court system standards and rules, the Authority established a relationship to work in close coordination with the Florida Courts Technology Commission (FCTC).

In 2010, Legislative Appropriations proviso language in HB 5401 mandated the courts system to implement electronic filing requirements in five of the 10 trial court divisions by January 1, 2011, and identified the 10 court divisions as: Circuit Criminal; County Criminal; Juvenile Delinquency; Criminal Traffic; Circuit Civil; County Civil; Civil Traffic; Probate; Family; and Juvenile Dependency. With input from the FCTC, the Authority began work on the divisions of Circuit Civil; County Civil; Probate; Family; and Juvenile Dependency.

**2011** The Florida Courts E-Filing Portal opened in January 2011 and during the first months of operation 229 documents were electronically filed. That same year, follow-up bill SB 2000 required that Clerks implement the electronic filing requirements for all 10 trial court divisions, pursuant to section 28.36(3), Florida Statutes. The mandate established the Authority’s direction for the next six months: to develop the portal to include the remaining five court divisions.



# OVERVIEW

**2012** The Supreme Court issued opinions approving recommendations to require e-filing and e-service by attorneys through a phased implementation. The main document, AOSC11-399 revised opinion, as amended October 18, 2012, stated that the new rules and amendments to existing rules in the case would require attorneys to file documents with the trial and appellate courts by electronic transmission, and made mandatory email service requirements for pleadings and documents.

By April 1, 2013, the offices of all 67 of Florida's county Clerks were connected for the acceptance and processing of civil cases in all five civil divisions: Circuit Civil, County Civil, Probate, Small Claims, and Family Law.

**2013** Throughout 2013 and 2014, Clerks' offices worked on accepting batch-filed documents on existing criminal cases, while all counties were working on general criminal readiness. Today, all 67 counties accept and process all trial court case types.

The Florida Supreme Court came online in February 2013 with limited case filings as part of a live system test. Encountering no serious issues, the Supreme Court began accepting live filings on April 1, 2013. Later that year, Chief Justice Ricky Polston outlined four improvements to be considered for e-filing in Florida's Courts, including increased Help Desk services; the addition of standardized drop-down menus for filers' two-way portal capabilities; and allowing case documents to be viewed by the filer.

**2014** In late 2013, the Florida Courts E-Filing Authority instituted a help desk service in order to address technical and customer service calls.

In early to mid-2014, various technical alternatives were examined in order to create more standardized log-in and landing screens. A map feature was adopted to create a more uniform method, allowing filers to see and select the county to which they are filing.

Due to the way criminal case initiation was implemented through a technical level solution for state attorneys, standardized criminal docket descriptions were adopted as criminal case initiation was implemented.

**2015** Beginning in earnest the spring of 2015, the Florida Courts E-Filing Authority worked with the FCCC Best Practices Committee to develop standardized names for the court divisions, case types and sub-types in each division.

The portal technical team provided on-site training and assistance in a pilot phase to implement the standard nomenclature in the Fourth Judicial Circuit and proposed to use the model statewide. The Authority chairman, the Honorable Tim Smith, Clerk of Putnam County, sent a letter to all Clerks of Court asking them to undertake the exercise and have it completed by September 2015.

**2016** In 2016, the Authority partnered with the Supreme Court to increase the filing and e-service size available to users and implemented a third-party batch process allowing law firms and approved vendors the ability to transmit multiple civil filings in a single session. Additional enhancements included judges filing proposed orders in certain counties and specialized services for pro se litigants.

**2017** With more than 160,000 users and 14 million submissions during FY2016-17, the portal added state agency integration with the transfer of

# OVERVIEW

timely case data to the Department of Health Bureau of Vital Statistics and the Department of Corrections.

**2018** The number of filings submitted by third party vendors continue to increase this year. A pilot project for Clerks to send the full commitment packet to Florida Sheriffs and on to the Department of Corrections began and is well underway.

**2019** During this fiscal year, 2018-2019, the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal continued to see increases in the volume of filings, the number of registered users and the number of documents submitted through the third party interface. The E-Portal Service Desk initiated a “live answer” feature for users needing filing assistance and a Portal upgrade was implemented in late 2018 allowing both State Attorneys and Public Defenders to accept e-service. For the first time since inception, all five District Courts of Appeal were connected to the Portal.

**2020** The 2019-2020 fiscal year was unique. By March of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and Florida’s Governor ordered citizens to “shelter in place.” The legal community was impacted as courthouses were closed to all but essential personnel, putting a stop to almost all court proceedings. That resulted in a significant downturn in case filings for the finish of the fiscal year. However, filers were still using the E-Filing Portal, Clerks were able to work from home and process documents, and the court was also able to access the official court file and file documents through the Portal from home.

Portal enhancements during this fiscal year included updating the auto-generated Civil Cover Sheet to reflect the new jurisdictional limits, providing a method for students to check driver school completion

certificates and integration with Florida Department of Revenue for filing child support documentation.

**2021** The Covid-19 pandemic continued throughout the 2020-2021 fiscal year. However, by the spring of 2021, the courts began a slow return to operations as public facilities, including courthouses, were cleaned and retrofitted with protective plexiglass panels and seating spaced at safe distances. Limited numbers of the public began to be allowed to enter the courthouses and participate in court proceedings. Trials moved from Zoom platforms to some in-person hearings, although the option for remote access is thought to stay for some time.

During this fiscal year, the Authority recognized 10 years of e-filing in Florida and its growth in usage with a communications campaign. The new branding and updated Authority website made for a new and improved look.

**2022** The project to provide a secure, electronic method of sending commitment packets to Florida’s Department of Corrections came to an end as the last two reception centers were added during this year. It was a milestone to be able to report that now all commitment packets in Florida are being sent securely and efficiently to the Florida Department of Corrections facilities. The Authority continued working with the Florida Department of Revenue to implement an electronic method to send a variety of administrative child support records through the Portal to Clerks. This project has successfully reduced the thousands of pages of paper that were once delivered to Clerks’ offices. The Authority continues to work in partnership with the Florida Supreme Court, adding more interviews to the DIY Florida project, a guided tutorial system for filing some of the most commonly used forms in Florida’s Courts.

# ANNUAL STATISTICS

(JULY 1, 2021 – JUNE 30, 2022)

The Florida Courts E-Filing Authority is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors consisting of eight Clerks of the Circuit Court and the Clerk of the Supreme Court, which serves as the Chief Justice’s designee on behalf of the state and appellate courts. The Board is responsible for leading the public agency tasked with providing a statewide access point for the electronic access and transmission of court records to and from the courts.



**20,904,633**  
SUBMISSIONS



**30,222,856**  
DOCUMENTS



**150,141,627**  
PAGES



**492,695**  
TOTAL FILER ACCOUNTS



**57,005**  
HELP DESK CALLS



**336,900**  
Self-Represented  
Litigants

**88,062**  
Attorneys

**1,650**  
Judges

**2,657**  
Law Enforcement

**2,387**  
Process Servers

**2,034**  
Mental Health  
Professionals

**1,707**  
Mediators

## ENHANCEMENTS



### USER EFFICIENCIES & UPDATES

- ▶ Added the ability to save a payment method prior to filing
- ▶ Added a “forgot password” email with link for ease of updating password
- ▶ Updated payment processor for added security
- ▶ Added ability for parties to receive e-service without having filed to the case
- ▶ Added functionality for Florida Department of Revenue to electronically batch process new cases
- ▶ Updated Civil and Family Cover Sheets to reflect new changes
- ▶ Developed DIY Florida analytics to understand what interviews are used and to what counties they are filed

E-SERVICE NOTICES SAVED  
FILERS APPROXIMATELY  
**\$61,486,670**  
IN POSTAGE COSTS  
FROM 2014-2022



# FINANCIALS

The approved 2021-2022 Florida Courts E-Filing Budget is comprised of revenue generated from credit card, debit card, and ACH transaction convenience fees. Funds are used to support the Authority’s mandated business activities including legal counsel for the Board of Directors, insurance policy premiums, audit fees and related service desk activities, portal upgrades and education.

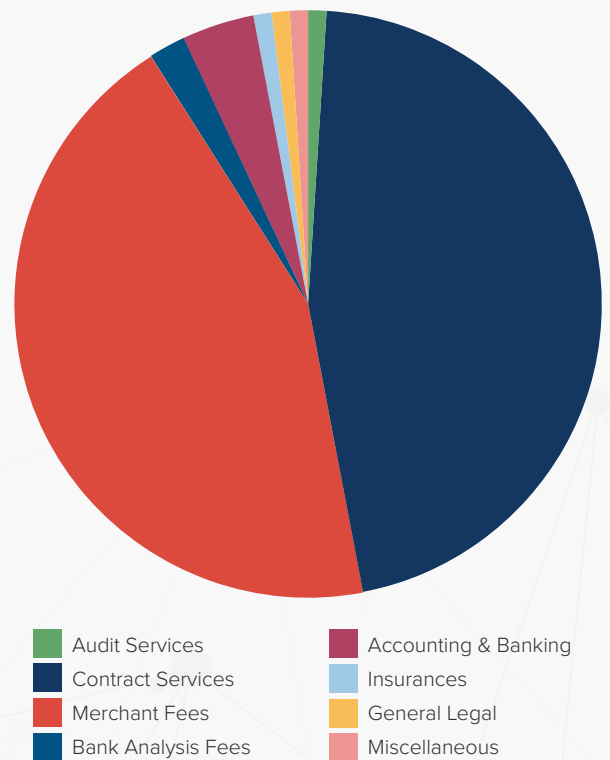
Mandated audits of the Authority financial statements and an SSAE 16 Operational Audit are performed annually and have resulted in unqualified, or “clean” audits to date.

REVENUE	2021-22 BUDGET
Interest Income	\$1,000
Statutory Convenience Fees	\$ 7,900,000
Batch Application Fees	\$2,000
Third Party Batch Filing Fees	\$ 12,500
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$7,915,500</b>

EXPENSES	2021-22 BUDGET
Audit Services	\$27,000
Contract Services	\$3,416,618
Merchant Fees	\$3,294,970
Bank Analysis Fees	\$117,000
Accounting & Banking	\$274,337
Insurances	\$3,352
General Legal	\$60,000
Miscellaneous	\$20,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$7,213,277</b>

**\$702,223**

## EXPENSES





FILE YOUR CASES  
**ANYWHERE**



FILE YOUR CASES  
**ANYTIME**



FILE YOUR CASES  
**IN BATCHES**

*with the*



FLORIDA COURTS  
**E-FILING AUTHORITY**

*Get started today!*

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