THE SUPREME COURT *of* OHIO

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions Concerning
the Electronic Submission of Caseload Statistics

On July 1, 2013, changes to former Rule 37, now 5.30, of the Rules of Superintendence went into effect that create a means for courts to submit electronically their caseload statistics required under that rule using the Supreme Court's new *eStats* report submission process. Below are answers to frequently asked questions concerning the *eStats* process.

1. Is it mandatory?

Yes, under the changes adopted by the Supreme Court, when the *eStats* submission process is available for any particular reporting form type, all judges must begin submitting their reports electronically at that time.

2. When will my court be required to submit its statistics electronically?

In order to provide an orderly transition, the Case Management Section will rollout the *eStats* process one reporting form at a time, beginning with Form A for the general division of the common pleas courts. Notifications have been provided to all applicable judges of the deadline of September 15, 2014 by which to begin submission of Form A via eStats. Judges filing Form A reports may submit reports using the eStats process immediately.

Form B, for reporting domestic relations statistics, will be the next reporting form to be implemented. Information on the status of the rollout schedule can be found on the eStats home page at http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/casemng/estats.

3. How does it work?

Submissions will be done through the *eStats* portal. Judges (or their authorized court staff) first log in to the secure eStats portal, a link which can be found within the Supreme Court's website. Within the *eStats* portal, Excel templates are available for downloading. The templates contain all the reporting elements courts are accustomed to seeing on their reporting forms. The Excel templates appear virtually identical to the traditional form.

Validation formulas are be built into the template in order to ensure facially valid statistics. After downloading the templates, courts simply complete the Excel forms and then,

using a feature in the portal, upload the completed forms. So long as the pending beginning balances in the submitted data match the pending end balances for the immediately preceding period, the submitted data will automatically be loaded into the Supreme Court's database.

A confirmation receipt will be sent via email to the court's Master Email address (see below for more about the court's email address). If there is a mismatch between the pending beginning balances and the prior period's pending end balances or any other validation error, the report will not be accepted and a message explaining the nature of the error will be provided.

In addition to the Excel file submission method, courts are also able alternatively to upload their data via file transfer protocol (FTP). Using the FTP submission method will eliminate any need for you to enter data into the Excel-based templates. Instead, your case management system would generate a text file that you would upload directly to the Supreme Court. Technical specifications for using the FTP process are available on the eStats home page.

4. How does the log in process work?

Login credentials (a Court ID and a password) are set up for each *court*, not each judge. For example, in a multi-judge court, a single Court ID and password will be established. Through that single set of credentials all submissions for the judges of the court will be accomplished. Courts are encouraged to adopt a local rule or internal operating procedure addressing the internal sharing and maintenance of those credentials. In order to provide a backstop for the security of the log in credentials, at any time Supreme Court staff will be able to reset a court's password so that the court's administrative judge may obtain a new one.

5. Will reporting judges still need to sign something?

No, under the revised rule, no physical signatures are required. All report submissions will be done electronically. Pursuant to Sup.R. 5.30, the submission of data through the *eStats* portal, which is only accessible using a court's login credentials, will automatically constitute an attestation by the court's administrative judge and the reporting judge of the accuracy of the reported data.

6. Can I amend a previously submitted report?

If you need to amend a previously submitted report, you will be able to do so but you will be required to use the traditional paper-based reporting form. Amended reports should be emailed to the Case Management Section at CaseMgmt@sc.ohio.gov.

7. How will this new submission process benefit our court?

The data on the mass of paper forms collected annually by the staff of the Case Management Section must be manually entered into the Supreme Court's statistics database.

Each year over 2.2 million individual points of data are reviewed and keyed into the database. That redundancy alone creates the potential for erroneous data becoming part of the Supreme Court's official database of court statistics. By having your data directly populate the Supreme Court's database, data quality will be ensured. The data getting into the Supreme Court's database will be exactly as you reported it.

By eliminating the need for Supreme Court staff to physically retrieve the incoming reports and manually enter the data in the Court's database, existing Supreme Court staff resources will be able to provide a greater level of service to Ohio's courts by helping them learn how to use their caseload statistics for enhancing the administration of justice happening locally in their courts.

Occasionally, courts inadvertently submit invalid data. For example, the pending beginning balance might not match the prior period's pending end balance or the grand total shown for the terminations that period does not match the actual sum of the individual termination categories. Following up with local courts to correct those errors can take time and causes unnecessary delay in the accumulation of the caseload statistics. Not only will your data be more accurate, it will be available in a much more timely manner.

8. Will I be able to download reports containing my data?

Within the *eStats* portal, reports are available for download that provide you summaries of your statistics. Clearance rates and overage rate statistics have been included to assist courts in evaluating their case management performance.

9. What if I have other questions that weren't answered here?

If you have any additional questions, please contact the Case Management Section by email at CaseMgmt@sc.ohio.gov.