



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

455 Golden Gate Avenue • San Francisco, California 94102-3688

www.courts.ca.gov

REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 22-131

For business meeting on July 15, 2022

Title

Judicial Branch: Revisions to the Judicial Branch Statistical Information System (JBSIS)

Agenda Item Type

Action Required

Effective Date

July 15, 2022

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected

None

Date of Report

June 24, 2022

Recommended by

Court Executives Advisory Committee
Kevin Harrigan, Chair
Judicial Branch Statistical Information System Subcommittee
Jake Chatters, Chair
Judicial Council staff
Jackie Henke, Senior Analyst
Business Management Services

Contact

Jackie Henke, 415-865-8963
jackie.henke@jud.ca.gov

Executive Summary

The Court Executives Advisory Committee recommends approving revised data standards for the Judicial Branch Statistical Information System (JBSIS). The proposed JBSIS 4.0 data reporting standards would replace JBSIS 3.0 as the system for collecting statistical data from California trial courts. Transitioning from JBSIS 3.0 to JBSIS 4.0 would simplify and increase the efficiency of court data submission and allow court data contacts and Judicial Council staff to more effectively ensure that important court data elements are reported accurately, reliably, uniformly, and in a timely fashion across all trial courts.

Recommendation

The Court Executives Advisory Committee recommends that the Judicial Council, effective July 15, 2022:

1. Approve the JBSIS 4.0 data reporting standards.
2. Direct Judicial Council staff to revise the JBSIS manual to reflect the JBSIS 4.0 standards.
3. Direct Judicial Council staff to work with the Information Technology Advisory Committee and the Judicial Council Information Technology office to initiate a process to review and recommend an implementation plan for the JBSIS 4.0 standards. The implementation plan should be completed by January 1, 2023 and include the following:
 - a. Details about how to update or develop the platform for JBSIS data submission to align with the JBSIS 4.0 standards as well as how to update the existing JBSIS data warehouse, associated databases, and related applications and interfaces.
 - b. Direction as to how Judicial Council staff will provide informational resources and technological support to court data contacts preceding and throughout the implementation of new data standards.

The Court Executives Advisory Committee will present the revised JBSIS manual and data submission guidelines to the Judicial Council for approval in July 2023.

Relevant Previous Council Action

The Judicial Branch Statistical Information System is a statistical reporting system that defines and electronically collects case information from California trial courts for each major case processing area: criminal, civil, juvenile, probate, mental health, and appeals. JBSIS was established in 1998 to collect court data to inform the Judicial Council's policy and budgetary decisions, produce management reports for court administrators, and fulfill the Judicial Council's legislative mandate to report on the business of the courts. Since 1998, JBSIS has been revised for technical updates and substantive changes. The most recent version of JBSIS, JBSIS 3.0, was approved by the Judicial Council in 2018. The implementation of JBSIS 3.0 sought to clarify JBSIS manual language, align data reporting with changes in the law, and increase ease of use.

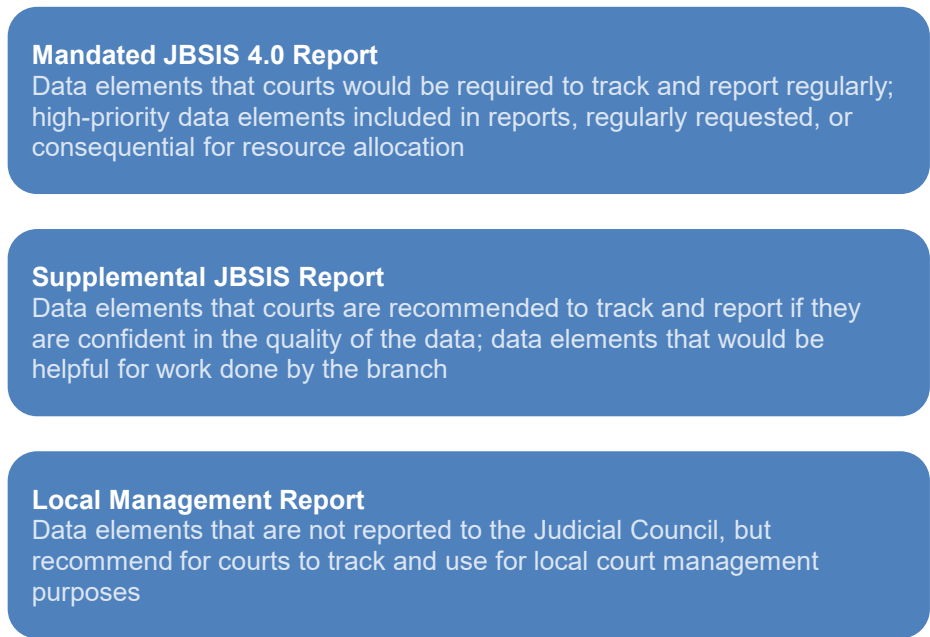
The Court Executives Advisory Committee (CEAC) is charged with improving and modernizing JBSIS. Between 2013 and 2018, the JBSIS Subcommittee of CEAC extensively reviewed JBSIS filing definitions. Filing definitions are especially consequential because of their use in the Resource Assessment Study, and by extension the Workload Formula. The findings of the JBSIS Subcommittee were utilized to inform the development of JBSIS 3.0.

Since completing a review of filing data definitions, the subcommittee has been examining all other JBSIS data definitions and submission guidelines. CEAC has the authority to make technical, non-substantive changes to the JBSIS manual to encourage accurate and efficient data reporting. The proposal for JBSIS 4.0, however, would make substantive changes and requires review and approval by the Judicial Council.

Analysis/Rationale

JBSIS 4.0 would restructure how courts submit data to the Judicial Council, shifting high-priority data elements into a mandated JBSIS report and transferring specific case detail and case processing data into a recommended supplemental JBSIS report and an optional local management report.

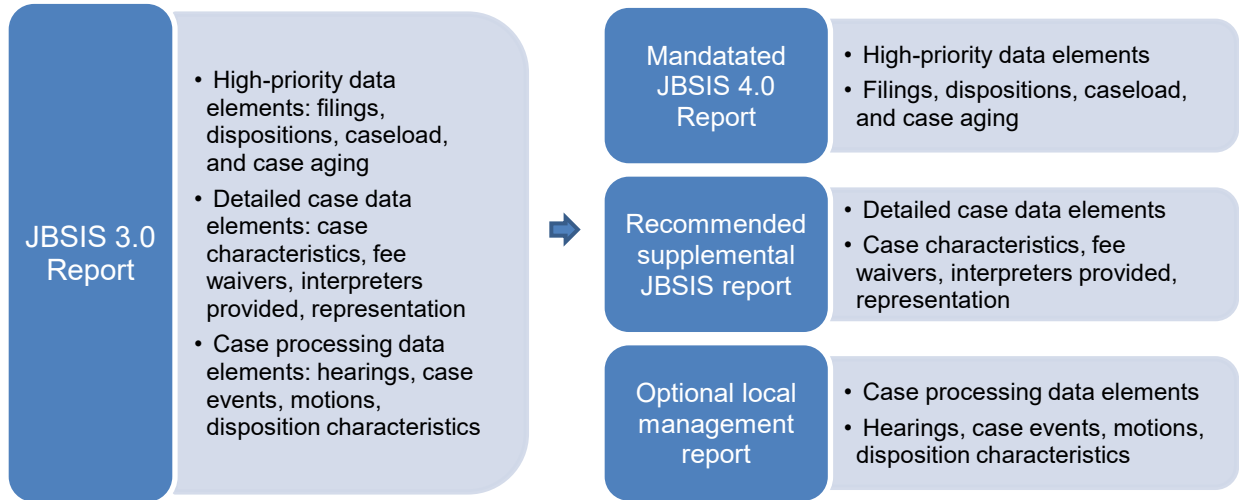
Figure 1: JBSIS 4.0 Report Type Summaries



JBSIS 4.0 would endeavor to follow a principle of prioritization: count fewer things and count them well. Instead of devoting extensive resources to collecting and evaluating all 7,342 JBSIS 3.0 data elements, JBSIS 4.0 would concentrate effort on reporting 1,795 data elements accurately.

The mandated JBSIS 4.0 report would include only data elements that have branchwide importance and are published in Judicial Council reports, regularly requested, and/or have resource allocation implications. For all three proposed reports (the mandated JBSIS 4.0 report, the recommended JBSIS supplemental report, and the optional court management report), Judicial Council staff would continue to provide written guidance and shared definitions on how to report each data element. Each report, though, would serve a different purpose and require different levels of review and uniformity.

Figure 2: JBSIS 3.0 and Proposed JBSIS 4.0 Report Structures



Policy implications

The JBSIS Subcommittee anticipates that implementing JBSIS 4.0 would:

- Ensure that all courts are able to report the same set of core data elements;
- Reduce the labor and resources required to extract, review, and submit data;
- Promote the collection of consistent, high-quality court data;
- Increase timely reporting of and access to high-priority data elements; and
- Update the JBSIS data submission process to align with professional standards and best practices of court data collection.

Unify JBSIS reporting methods

Under JBSIS 3.0, trial courts can submit data to the Judicial Council in two ways: by sending complete JBSIS reports or by completing limited JBSIS portal reports. Courts submitting complete JBSIS reports are compiling and sending 7,342 data elements each month to the Judicial Council. Courts submitting limited JBSIS portal reports are compiling and sending 746 data elements per month.

Figure 3: JBSIS 3.0 Methods of Reporting



As of April 2022, only 27 California trial courts have been able to provide complete JBSIS data. Other courts—courts with limited data extraction capabilities due to technological constraints,

legacy case management systems, or lack of sufficient analytical resources to ensure accurate reporting in all data elements—are providing a subset of JBSIS data.

JBSIS 4.0 would standardize the JBSIS data reporting process. All courts would be required to collect and submit the same set of core data elements for the mandated JBSIS 4.0 report. The JBSIS Subcommittee estimates that the mandated JBSIS 4.0 report would include approximately 1,795 data elements. The report would collect only high-priority data elements: filings, dispositions, caseload, and case aging. See Appendix A for a breakdown of required data point counts by report.

The additional JBSIS 3.0 data elements not included in the mandated JBSIS 4.0 report would be shifted into a recommended supplemental JBSIS report and an optional local management report. Courts currently submitting complete JBSIS reports could continue submitting detailed case data elements to the Judicial Council on the supplemental JBSIS report and continue tracking case processing data elements on a local management report. Courts submitting limited JBSIS portal reports could focus on expanding their reporting capabilities to bridge the gap between the JBSIS 3.0 portal report (746 elements) to the JBSIS 4.0 mandated report (1,795), rather than scaling up to the full JBSIS 3.0 report (7,342 elements).

Reduce demands for data-related labor and resources

The JBSIS 3.0 manual is a 569-page document that contains definitions of a multitude of data elements related to case processing, case events, hearings, case characteristics, party characteristics, workload, and case aging and instructions about how to collect and report these data elements. The manual is highly technical and requires a baseline level of technological, analytic, and court operations knowledge to understand and utilize. Some data elements included in JBSIS 3.0 are relatively straightforward to measure and uncomplicated to extract and count. Other data elements are highly complex, require precise interpretation, and must be processed using advanced mathematical calculations.

Due to the large quantity of data elements and the difficulty of calculating many of these elements, Judicial Council staff work continuously with court data contacts to manage variation in data element measurement across courts. The Judicial Council maintains a JBSIS information web page with JBSIS-related news, references, and supplemental materials. Additionally, Judicial Council staff manage a JBSIS inbox where court data contacts and court administrators can ask questions about how to collect and interpret JBSIS 3.0 data elements. Multiple Judicial Council teams in the Office of Court Research, Audit Services, and Information Technology support JBSIS 3.0 compliance projects.

The scope of JBSIS 3.0 reporting has necessitated that some courts hire data analysts or refocus the work of their existing data analysts for the task of compiling and submitting JBSIS data. Courts that generate JBSIS statistics internally must allocate technological, administrative, and operational resources to ensure that data are entered and extracted from case management systems in ways that allow for accurate JBSIS reporting. Courts that rely on vendors to service their case management systems must coordinate with vendor representatives and internal court

staff to ensure their JBSIS data is reported completely and accurately. Expanding from portal reporting to complete JBSIS reporting or adjusting JBSIS reporting can be costly and labor-intensive.

JBSIS 4.0 would, foremost, reduce the number of data elements courts are required to report. This system would prioritize the collection, transfer, and storage of data elements to those that are tactically necessary and persistently valuable. Moreover, it would allow court administrators to determine how to collect and report other data elements in a way that is consistent with their court's priorities, data maturity, and analytic capabilities. Under JBSIS 3.0, courts must accurately collect every report data element to be certified. Data definitions are mostly static and defined by Judicial Council staff. This ensures that data elements can be correctly aggregated and compared across courts. It does not, however, engender local court data governance or encourage courts to set individualized dynamic data priorities. Shifting some data elements to a recommended supplemental JBSIS report and local management report would allow courts to control their analytic strategy and account for varied local data needs, data storage procedures, and staff capacity while preserving high-priority data elements across all courts.

Focus JBSIS data quality review on most important data elements

The JBSIS data quality review process, too, is time- and labor-intensive. The effort required to coordinate precise calculations across all courts for all JBSIS 3.0 data elements has exceeded and continues to exceed the capacity of Judicial Council staff and court data contacts. Consequently, the bulk of JBSIS data quality assurance work has focused on data elements that are most important for understanding branch needs and trends, such as filings, dispositions, and caseload.

The three-part report structure of JBSIS 4.0 would acknowledge that data elements included in JBSIS 3.0 have different levels of utility and may be valuable for different purposes. What is useful for describing the narrative of the branch may not be useful for local court management and vice versa. Moreover, while it is essential that some data elements are collected consistently across courts and with high levels of precision, others can be collected in ways that best suit the needs and capabilities of each court. The structure would direct the effort of Judicial Council staff toward ensuring the accuracy of critical data elements. So too, it would allow court staff to coordinate a class of data quality review efforts internally, on their own timeline, independent of the availability of Judicial Council staff.

Ensure that JBSIS continues to align with modern professional standards and best practices

When the JBSIS Subcommittee began reviewing JBSIS data elements, members discussed the demands of maintaining a data system with such a breadth of data elements: continually flagging and updating hundreds of pages of reporting guidance to ensure consistency with changing legislation and shared court practices; maintaining extensive centralized data auditing and data quality review processes; coordinating numerous nuanced data collection adjustments across all courts and relevant Judicial Council units; and sustaining and expanding data storage infrastructure. Subcommittee members consulted various sources for court data standards and government data guidelines as well as subject matter experts to determine how to ensure JBSIS is prioritizing efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and timely, reliable, and accurate data collection.

The JBSIS Subcommittee’s proposal for JBSIS 4.0 reflects careful consideration of California state law, National Open Data Standards, reporting practices of other U.S. states, the recommendations of the National Center for State Courts, court and Judicial Council subject matter experts, and feedback from 11 Judicial Council advisory committees. JBSIS 4.0 would retain all data elements required for the Court Statistics Report and federally mandated reporting. Moreover, it would ensure that JBSIS continues to be aligned with modern professional standards and best practices.

Comments

No public comments were received when information about JBSIS 4.0 was presented at the Court Executives Advisory Committee or the 11 other Judicial Council advisory committee meetings. Following each presentation, the JBSIS Subcommittee welcomed questions and comments. Some advisory committee members asked questions about the possible timeline for implementation and the rationale for specific revisions. There were no comments regarding points of concern or opposition.

Alternatives considered

The JBSIS Subcommittee of CEAC has extensively discussed the implications of maintaining JBSIS 3.0 data standards, rather than implementing JBSIS 4.0. This alternative would provide continuity in the data collection and submission procedures for trial courts. Retaining JBSIS 3.0, however, is not advisable for the reasons mentioned above: submitting data for JBSIS 3.0 is time- and labor-intensive for most courts and additional trial court staff and Judicial Council staff would be needed to conduct data quality analysis on all the reported data

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

In the short term, the development of JBSIS 4.0 would require continued work by the JBSIS Subcommittee and Judicial Council staff from the Office of Court Research and the Information Technology office to develop an implementation plan. Subcommittee members and staff would need to revise the JBSIS manual with updated reporting guidance, design a database structure to store the new JBSIS reports, and craft a strategy to inform court administrators and data contacts of planned JBSIS changes.

In order to implement JBSIS 4.0, Judicial Council staff and court data contacts would be required to undertake data reporting redesign work. Some courts would experience a reduction in their required monthly data submission and validation work. Other courts, courts using the portal method of data submission, would need to expand their reporting to provide all high-priority data elements included in the mandated JBSIS 4.0 report. These changes could require vendor-provided updates and adjustments, court staff time and effort, Judicial Council staff time and effort, and tools and software licenses needed to modernize JBSIS and/or court databases and applications.

Attachments and Links

1. Attachment A: Comparison of number of data points required for JBSIS 3.0 and JBSIS 4.0

Attachment A: Comparison of number of data points required for JBSIS 3.0 and JBSIS 4.0

Report #	Report	# of data points in JBSIS 3.0 full report	# of data points in JBSIS 3.0 portal report	# of data points in JBSIS 4.0 mandated report
04a	Appellate Court Appeals	309	0	<i>(Combined with 4b)</i>
04b	Appellate Division Appeals	99	10	21
05a	Limited Civil	1,228	53	234
05b	Unlimited Civil	1,278	80	243
06a	Family Law	764	122	147
07c	Felony	1,292	106	532
08a	Juvenile Delinquency	472	82	91
09a	Juvenile Dependency	342	56	100
10a	Mental Health	320	45	63
11a	Misdemeanors/Infractions	858	106	282
12a	Probate	318	66	67
13a	Small Claims	62	20	15
	TOTAL	7,342	746	1,795