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## E-Citation Preparation Standards

DOT Contract # AQ371  
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## **Executive Summary**

The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) received approval from the Florida Department of Transportation on October 27, 2010, for a sub grant to continue the E-Citation Preparation Standards program which assists in the development of data collection standards for Electronic Citations (E-Citations) by locating and defining the barriers encountered by law enforcement agencies which prevent them from adopting the use of E-Citations in addition to focusing on the collection and transmission of data from law enforcement agencies to the Clerks of Court.

E-Citation usage in Florida began in 2002 and rose steadily over the years, and in late 2010 surpassed 54% of law enforcement agencies using or preparing to use E-Citations. To date, there are 22 approved E-Citation vendors. To become an approved vendor, a company must have the ability to produce a printed citation which contains the same information as a handwritten citation and complete Department approved structure testing.

The Department is continuing its efforts to increase the number of law enforcement agencies utilizing E-Citations. In doing this, the Department is also actively identifying barriers hindering the use of E-Citations. In identifying these barriers the Department is hoping to better understand and combat them, thereby enabling all law enforcement agencies to participate in the E-Citation program. To date, four counties participating in the E-Citation program have gone paperless.

To identify obstacles, gauge law enforcement participation and gain feedback on the E-Citation process, the Department distributed surveys to three major stakeholders: law enforcement agencies, Clerks of Court and authorized E-Citation vendors. Survey invitations were distributed via email to interested stakeholders and results compiled to assist the Department in these efforts.

## **Background and Purpose**

In an effort to develop data testing, evaluate current E-Citation use and needs, and address the issues relating to the Uniform Traffic Citation (UTC) and the transfer of E-Citation data directly from law enforcement to the local Clerks of Court, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles was awarded a sub grant to establish data standards, change control processes and improve the Department's education and outreach efforts.

Surveys were designed to collect information regarding the current interest and use of E-Citations by law enforcement agencies. In addition, the surveys collected information about barriers to E-Citation use and vendor product limitations and capabilities.

In Florida, law enforcement officers are required to submit copies of issued citations to the Clerk of Court within five days of the citation being issued. The Clerk of Court is then required to submit disposition data to the Department within ten days of disposition. In turn, the Department has thirty days to report any serious offenses and/or suspensions to the National Driving Registry and Problem Driver Pointer System upon receipt of a conviction. The use of E-Citations allows the process to be streamlined, allowing citation information to pass more quickly from law enforcement to the Clerk of Court and, by limiting the number of people handling the information, ensure that all necessary reporting requirements are met in a timelier manner.

## **Methodology**

The survey was developed first identifying the data elements necessary to obtain the desired information of law enforcement participation in the E-Citation program. The survey was also geared towards gaining information regarding the reporting procedures of both law enforcement agencies as well as Clerks of Court in addition to the identification of barriers making the implementation of the E-Citation program difficult for interested agencies.

Three different surveys were developed, one for each major stakeholder: law enforcement, Clerks of Court and approved E-Citation vendors. All surveys were designed using Survey Monkey, a web-based program allowing for the development, distribution and analysis of survey materials and results.

## **Law Enforcement**

Law Enforcement agencies throughout the state of Florida were sent email invitations, inviting them to complete the Electronic Uniform Traffic Citation: Law Enforcement Follow-Up Survey by instructing them to follow a link to the Survey Monkey website. Law enforcement agencies were informed that their participation in the survey process was needed to assess current E-Citation usage, interest and roadblocks that deter statewide participation in the electronic transfer of UTC data to the DHSMV.

The survey began with demographic information. To gauge participation, respondents were then broken into the following groups:

- Participating. We use E-Citations
- Not Participating. We do not use E-Citations

Those agencies that indicated they are currently using E-Citations were asked to identify the vendor/software that they are currently using, whether or not they or their vendor maintain electronic copies of citations and whether or not they or their vendor transmit citation data to the Clerk of Court. Participants were then asked a series of questions regarding their awareness of Departmental changes to the E-Citation program including:

- Are you aware that the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles will require all vendors to successfully complete structure testing of their software in the upcoming months?
- Are you aware that the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles will be implementing a new citation numbering system?
- Are you aware that the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles' new inventory system will begin disseminating citation numbers in a spreadsheet format which can be uploaded into agencies' software?

Finally, participants were asked to identify any issues they are currently experiencing with their implementation of the E-Citation program.

Agencies that indicated they do not currently use E-Citations were asked a series of questions including if they have considered using E-Citations, if they are in negotiations to obtain E-Citation software and if they are presently considering a specific vendor. They were then asked to identify from a list of benefits

those which would factor most into their considering participating in the E-Citation program in addition to identifying barriers preventing their participation.

### **Clerk of Court**

Florida Clerks of Court were sent email invitations, inviting them to complete the Electronic Citations: Clerks of Court Follow-up Survey by instructing them to follow a link to the Survey Monkey website. Clerks of Court were informed that their participation in the survey process was needed to assess current E-Citation usage, processes, interest and roadblocks that deter statewide participation in the electronic transfer of UTC data to the DHSMV.

The survey began with demographic information and then asked the Clerks to identify the version of TCATS (Traffic Citation Accounting Transmission System) they are currently operating on. The Clerks were then asked a series of questions regarding their choice of vendor for criminal cases, civil citations and whether or not they are considering changing vendors for either. Respondents were also asked to give their opinion of whether or not they believe E-Citation data and regular UTC data should pass through a central repository for data element and edit checks before being sent to their office.

To gauge participation, respondents were then broken into the following groups:

- Participating. We electronically receive E-Citations from FHP and some law enforcement and electronically transmit data to FACC. All other law enforcement agencies provide paper UTCs and our office inputs the data before it is transferred to FACC.
- Not Participating. We do not accept E-Citations, only paper copies of citations.

Those Clerks that indicated they are participating in the E-Citation program were then asked to identify which agency types (FHP, Sheriff Offices, Municipal Police Departments, University and College Police Departments) they receive E-Citation transmittals from and which agencies they currently receive paper UTCs from. Finally, they were asked to identify all barriers which hinder their office in receiving E-Citation data from law enforcement agencies.

Those Clerks who indicated they are not currently participating in the E-Citation program were asked if they are considering accepting E-Citations, if they are currently working with any law enforcement agencies to receive E-Citation data, to identify roadblocks which prevent them from going completely paperless and barriers preventing them from receiving E-Citation data from law enforcement agencies.

### **E-Citation Vendors**

Authorized E-Citation vendors were sent email invitations, inviting them to complete the Electronic Citations: Vendor Follow-up Survey by instructing them to follow a link to the Survey Monkey website. Vendors were informed that their participation in the survey process was needed to gauge and assess current E-Citation processes and roadblocks that deter statewide participation in the electronic transfer of UTC data to Florida's Clerks of Court.

The vendor survey inquired about product features, services and capabilities including the ability to transmit data directly to the Clerks of Court. It also addressed the number of law enforcement agencies vendors provide service to, which types of law enforcement agencies vendors provide services to (FHP, Sheriff Offices, Municipal Police Departments, University and College Police Departments), does the software provided allow for edit checks, implementation problems and knowledge of Departmental structure testing requirements.

## Analysis

### *Law Enforcement Survey*

The Electronic Citations: Law Enforcement Follow-up Survey was sent to 367 law enforcement agencies, of which 175 (47.68%) responded. When asked to best describe their participation in the E-Citation program, 51.2% of respondents indicated “Participating: We use E-Citations” while 48.8% of respondents described their agency as “Non Participating: We do not use E-Citations.”<sup>1</sup>

Those respondents who indicated that their agency issues E-Citations listed the following as their current software vendors: Advanced Public Safety (26.1%), Executive Information Services (EIS) (1.1%), Infokall (1.1%), Iyetek LLC (12.5%), Smartcop (CTS America) (18.2%), Southern Software (1.1%), Sungard OSSI (13.6%), TRACS (23.9%), USA Software INC (8.0%), Internal Systems (3.3%) and other (6.8%).<sup>2</sup> It was further revealed that while 87.5% of agencies maintain electronic copies of their citations, 12.5% of agencies do not.<sup>3</sup> In addition, 67/8% of respondents stated that their agency/vendor does not transmit citation data to the Clerk of Court, with 32.2% stating that theirs did.<sup>4</sup>

Many law enforcement agencies currently issuing E-Citations are still encountering barriers. Several issues common amongst respondents are as follows<sup>5</sup>:

- Budget issues- insufficient monies to purchase equipment and storage space (laptops, printers, software, servers) (42)
- Insufficient quantity of E-Citation devices (20)
- Insufficient infrastructure to allow E-Citation transmittal to the Clerk of Court (21)
- Connectivity issues with current infrastructure (10)
- Authorization from local or county entities allowing the use of E-Citations (6)
- Problems with printing E-Citations (6)
- Training (8)
- Legal concerns (judges accepting E-Citations, clerks not accepting unsigned E-Citations, issues with court challenges) (4)

Respondents were also asked whether or not their agency has a records management system for all of the E-Citations issued by their agency with 92% stating that they do and 8% stating that they do not.<sup>6</sup>

Respondents who described their agency as “Non Participating: We do not use E-Citations” were asked if they have considered using E-Citations with 62.7% indicating that they have and 30.7% stating that they have not. Of the numerous benefits of E-Citation usage, respondents listed the following as being the most instrumental in their consideration of the E-Citation program<sup>7</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> See chart, page 13

<sup>2</sup> See chart, page 13

<sup>3</sup> See chart, page 13

<sup>4</sup> See chart, page 14

<sup>5</sup> See chart, page 14

<sup>6</sup> See chart, page 15

<sup>7</sup> See chart, page 15

- Reduction of data processing costs (26)
- Reduction of common citation errors (24)
- Improved ability to maintain statistics (19)
- Auto-population of required fields (30)
- Improved officer safety (26)
- Ability to track work performance (12)
- Improved data uniformity and accessibility (13)
- Ability to process a higher quantity of citations thereby increasing revenue (5)

### *Clerk of Court Survey*

The Electronic Citations: Clerk of Court Follow-up Survey was distributed to the 67 Florida Clerks of Court of which 64 responded (95.52%). When asked to best describe their participation in the E-Citation program, 68.3% of respondents indicated “Participating: We electronically receive E-Citations from FHP and some law enforcement and electronically transmit data to FACC. All other law enforcement agencies provide paper UTCs and our office inputs the data before it is transferred to FACC” while 31.7% of respondents described their agency as “Non Participating: We do not accept E-Citations, only paper copies of citations.”<sup>8</sup>

Respondents were also asked identify which agency types (FHP, Sheriff Offices, Municipal Police Departments, University and College Police Departments) they receive E-Citation transmittals from and which agencies they currently receive paper UTCs from. Of the respondents who chose to answer the question, 38 stated that they receive electronic transmittals from FHP while 17 stated that they currently receive paper citations from FHP. In addition, 6 respondents indicated that they receive electronic citations from sheriff offices while 37 indicated that they currently receive paper citations. It was also reported that 8 respondents receive electronic citations from municipal police departments while 38 currently receive paper UTCs.<sup>9</sup>

The Department also attempted to gauge interest in the establishment of a central repository through which UTC data would pass through for edit checks before being sent to the county Clerks of Court. Responses indicated that the majority of county Clerks would prefer the establishment of a central repository system with 53.3% stating “Our agency would prefer data to go through a central repository for data element and error checks before being sent to the county Clerk.” However, 33.3% of respondents stated “E-Citation and regular UTC data should not pass through a central repository before being sent to the county Clerk”, while 13.3% said that their county had no preference.<sup>10</sup>

Clerks of Court working with law enforcement agencies to accept E-Citation data are still encountering barriers. Several issues common amongst respondents are as follows<sup>11</sup>:

-Budget issues- insufficient monies to purchase equipment and storage space (laptops, printers, software, servers) (34.1%)

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<sup>8</sup> See chart, page 16

<sup>9</sup> See chart, page 16

<sup>10</sup> See chart, page 16

<sup>11</sup> See chart, page 17

- Insufficient infrastructure to accept E-Citation transmittals (7.3%)
- Connectivity issues with current infrastructure (2.4%)
- Limited number of law enforcement agencies using E-Citations (56.1%)
- Training (9.8%)
- Legal concerns (judges accepting E-Citations, clerks not accepting unsigned E-Citations, issues with court challenges) (14.6%)

Clerks offices who are not currently accepting E-Citation data directly from law enforcement agencies were asked if they have considered accepting E-Citations (95.7% stated that they have, 4.3% stated that they have not) and if they are currently working with law enforcement agencies to receive E-Citation data (34.8% responded that they are while 65.2% responded that they are not).

### *Approved Vendors Survey*

The Electronic Citations: Vendor Follow-up Survey was sent to 19 approved E-Citation vendors, of which 11 (57.89%) responded. Respondents were asked to define the relationship they have with Florida law enforcement agencies based on whether or not they provide E-Citation programming and equipment to them. The responses were as follows<sup>12</sup>:

- 60% of vendors reported that they “Currently provide E-Citation programming and equipment” to Sheriff Offices while 40% stated that they “Do not provide E-Citation programming and equipment to this agency type.”
- 70% of vendors reported that they “Currently provide E-Citation programming and equipment” to Municipal Police Departments while 30% stated that they “Do not provide E-Citation programming and equipment to this agency type.”
- 30% of vendors reported that they “Currently provide E-Citation programming and equipment” to University and College Police Departments while 70% stated that they “Do not provide E-Citation programming and equipment to this agency type.”

Respondents were asked to answer a series of questions regarding the capabilities of their products. When asked if their product has the capability to transmit E-Citation data to the county Clerk of Court or to a central repository which in turn sends the data to the Clerk of Court, 90% stated “yes” while 10% stated “no.”<sup>13</sup>

Respondents were also asked if the agencies they provide their product to transmit data to their county Clerk of Court<sup>14</sup> (40% replied “yes”, 30% replied “no” and 30% replied “I do not know”) and if law enforcement officers have the ability to correct errors before the transmission of data to the Clerk of Court<sup>15</sup> (70% stated “yes”, 10% stated “no” and 20% stated “I do not know”).

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<sup>12</sup> See chart, page 17

<sup>13</sup> See chart, page 18

<sup>14</sup> See chart, page 18

<sup>15</sup> See chart, page 18

Vendors were also asked whether or not law enforcement officers have the ability to correct errors before the transmission of data to the law enforcement agency's Records Management System. Of those that responded, 70% indicated "yes", 10% stated "no" while 20% stated that "I do not know."<sup>16</sup>

Vendors were then asked to identify any implementation problems that they have experienced with their product. The following were the most commonly identified problems:

- Approval from DHSMV authorizing company participation in E-Citation program (10%)
- Approval of E-Citation design, updates and proofs (10%)
- Transmitting data to county clerks (60%)
- Software maintenance and program upgrades (20%)

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<sup>16</sup> See chart, page 19

## **Conclusion**

The survey process identified all stakeholders involved in developing a fully integrated E-Citation program. The survey collected the opinions of stakeholders regarding barriers to the implementation of the program, Department changes to the program, benefits of E-Citation use, product capabilities and data storage preferences.

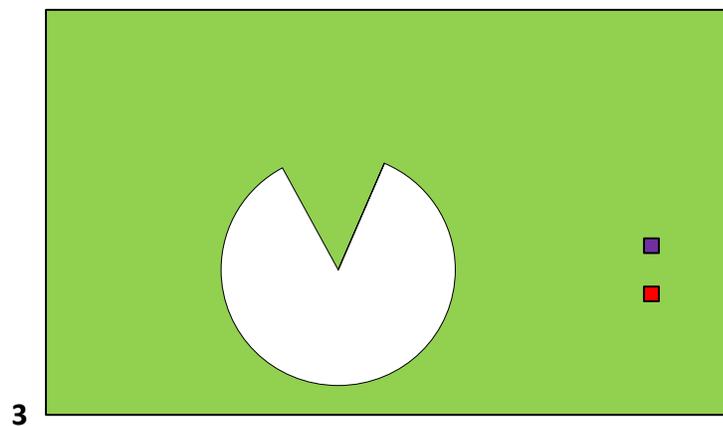
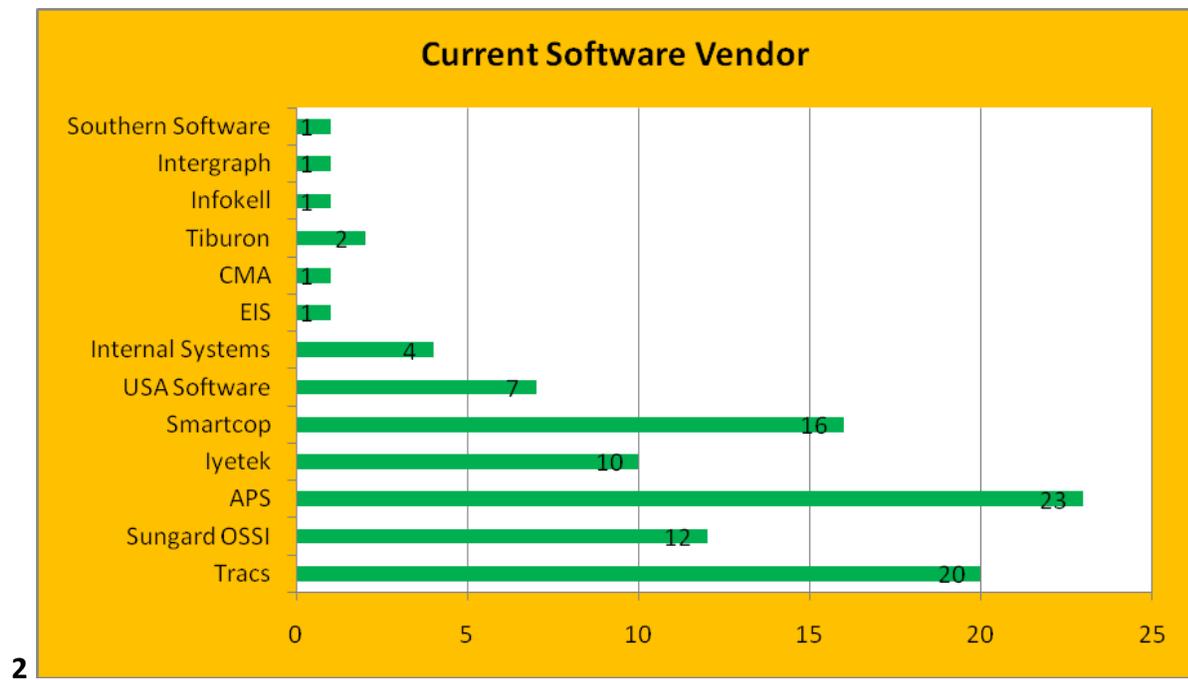
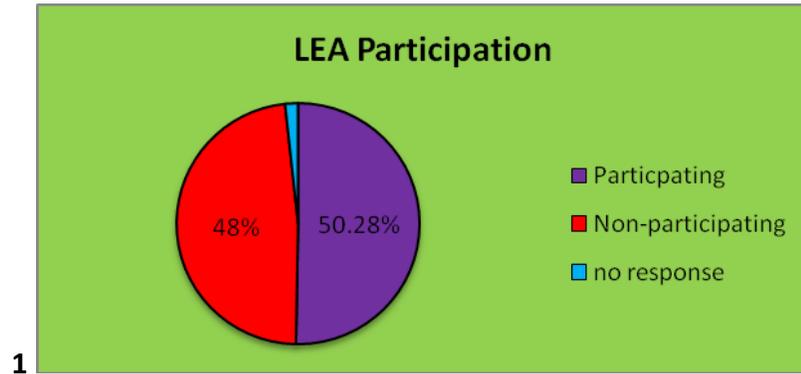
Survey results indicate that the majority of stakeholders continue to encounter barriers to the implementation of the E-Citation program, the predominant barriers being:

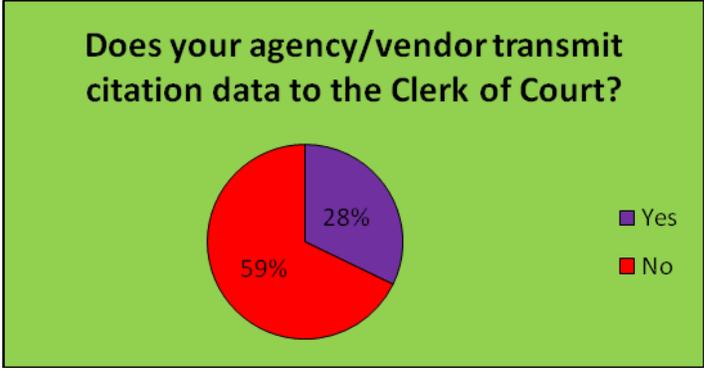
- Budget issues- insufficient monies to purchase equipment and storage space (laptops, printers, software, and servers)
- Insufficient quantity of E-Citation devices
- Insufficient infrastructure to allow E-Citation transmittal to the Clerk of Court
- Connectivity issues with current infrastructure
- Authorization from local or county entities allowing the use of E-Citations
- Problems with printing E-Citations
- Training
- Legal concerns (judges accepting E-Citations, clerks not accepting unsigned E-Citations, issues with court challenges)
- Limited number of law enforcement agencies using E-Citations

Results further indicate that the majority of Clerks of Court would prefer the establishment of a central repository through which UTC data would pass for edit checks before being sent to the county Clerks of Court. The creation of a central repository would allow for improved timeliness and accuracy of data added to driving records, standardized error checking for law enforcement agencies, the ability to pull images for legal proceedings and arrest documents previously sent to the Clerks of Court.

The next step is to continue to work with stakeholders to promote the continued use of E-Citations, find solutions to commonly occurring errors and barriers as well as continue educational efforts on the benefits and usage of E-Citations.

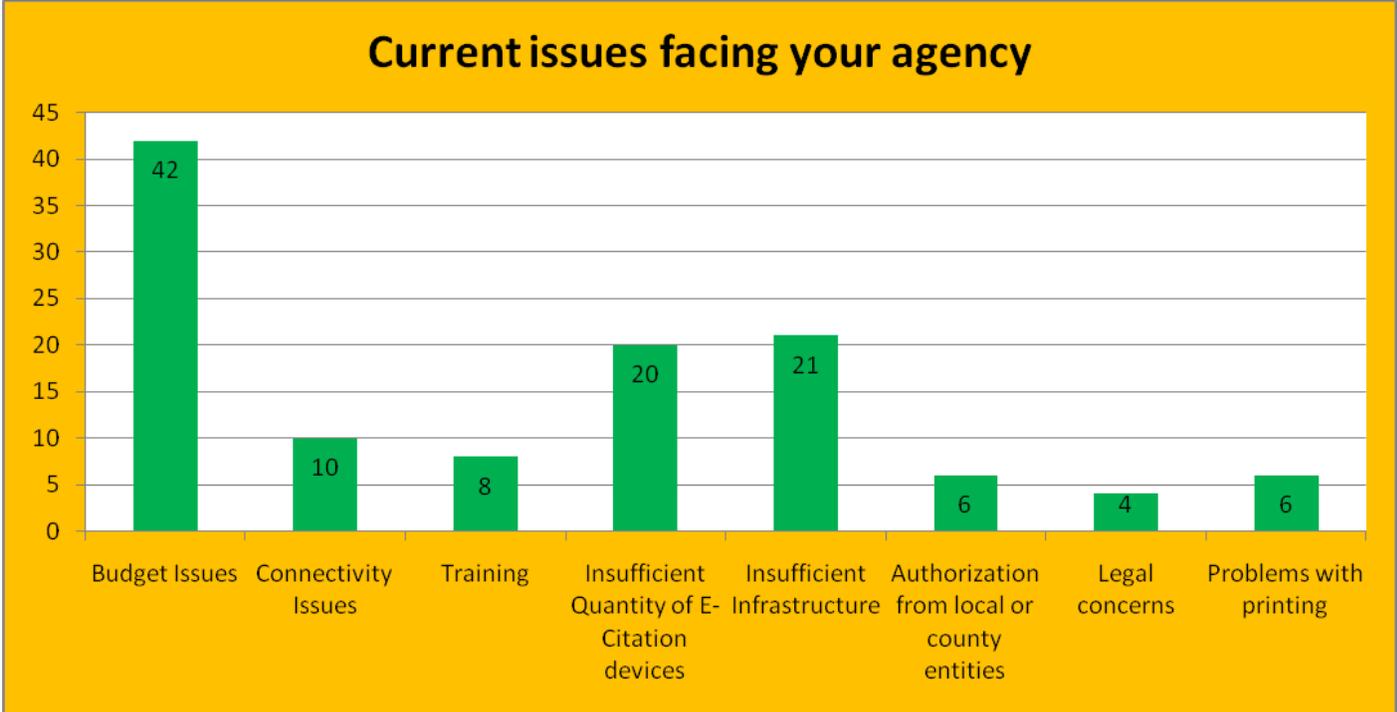
## Charts



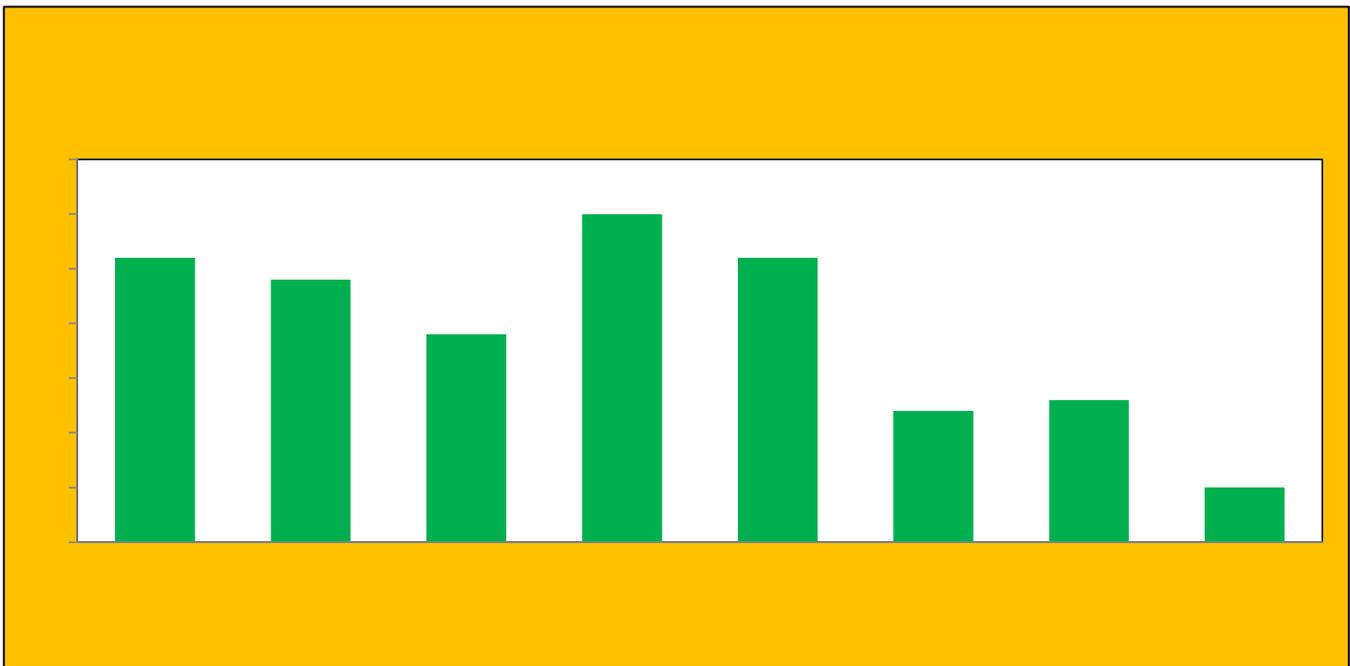


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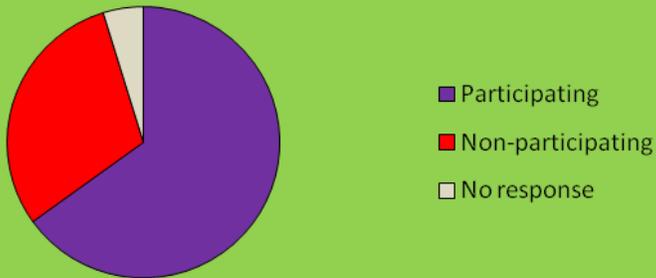


Do you have a repository or records management system for all E-Citations issued by your agency?



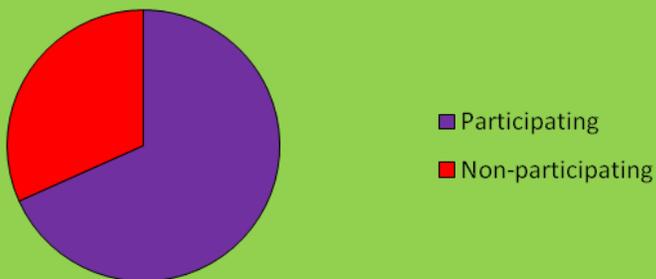
7

What best describes your county's participation in the E-Citation program?



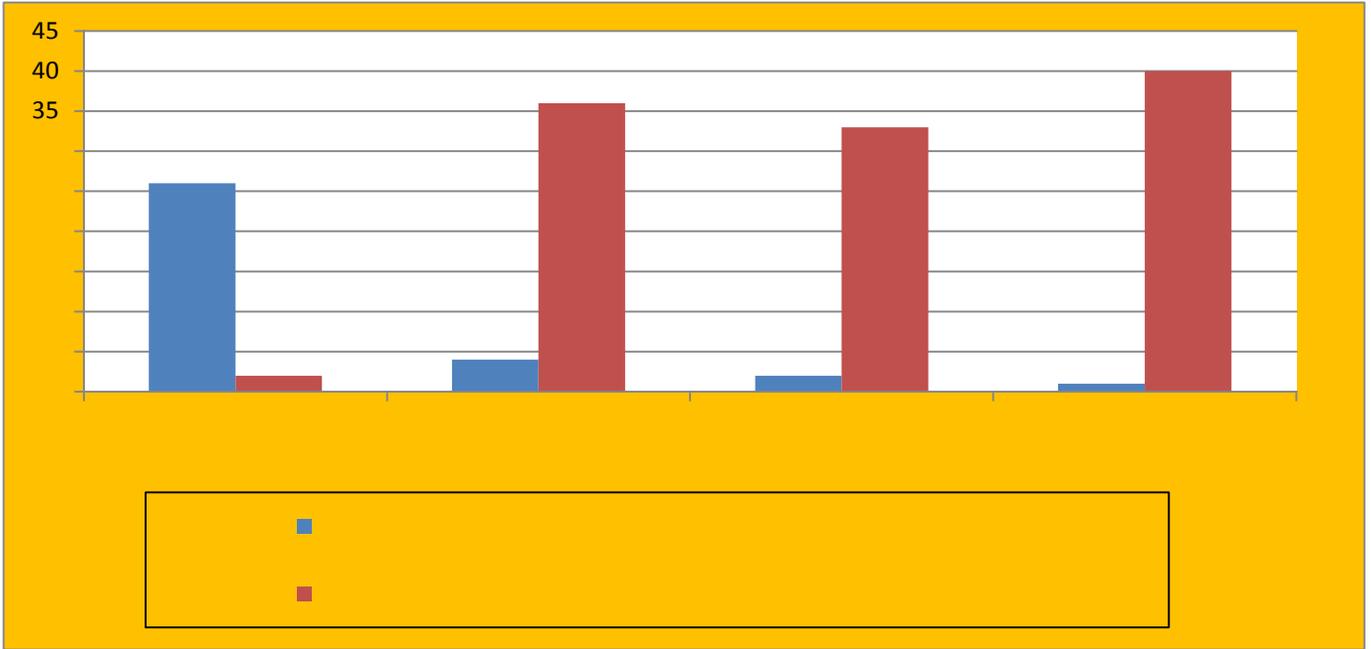
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What best describes your county's participation in the E-Citation program?

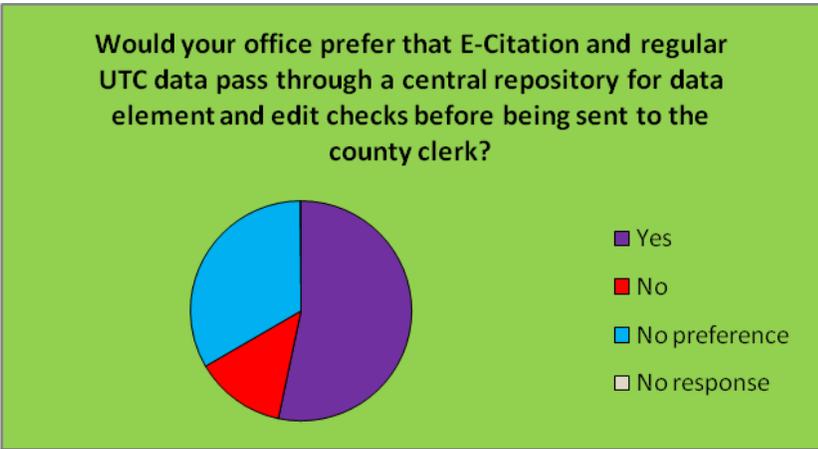


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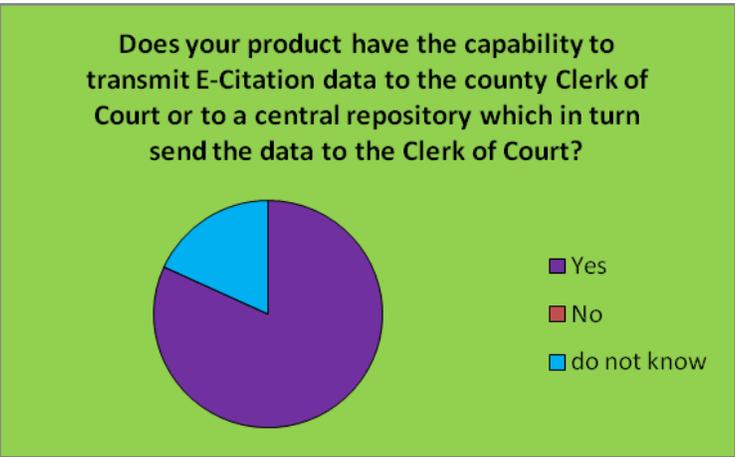


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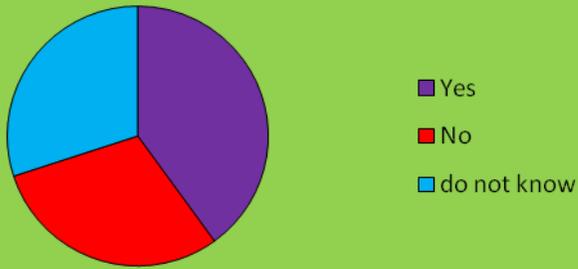


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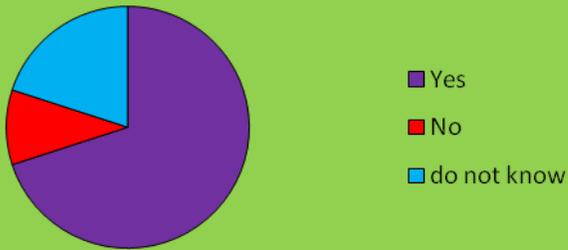
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Do the agencies you provide to transmit E-Citation data to their county Clerk of Court?



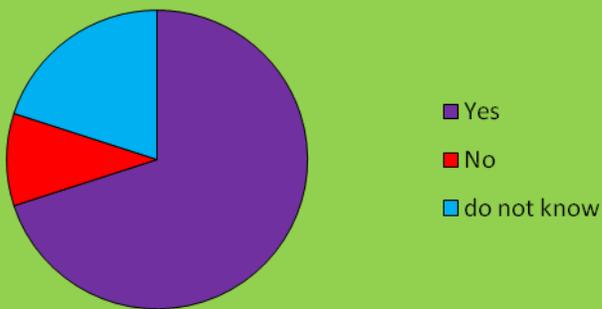
14

Can law enforcement officers correct errors before the transmission of data to the Clerk of Court?



15

Can law enforcement officers correct data before the transmission of data to the Records Management System?



16