
Los Angeles County Warrant System

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History:

In the mid-1980s, Los Angeles County justice stakeholders recognized the need to improve their collective ability to manage warrants among their respective agencies. Led by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), the Countywide Warrant System (CWS) was implemented in 1988 to automate the issuance, search/retrieval, service, maintenance, and reporting of warrants. CWS interfaces with Los Angeles County trial and traffic court systems, law enforcement agencies, and the state repository at the California Department of Justice – which links to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) to report and manage out-of-state extraditable warrants.

The development of this system was—and still is, in many respects—ahead of its time and uses information technology to streamline a complex, time-consuming, and typically paper-based, multiagency workflow process.

CWS takes a somewhat different technical approach from other jurisdictions that have automated warrant processes. Many jurisdictions across the country support warrant automation through a series of individual interfaces among each law enforcement agency records management system, court case management systems, and state repositories. CWS is a standalone application that centrally stores, reports, and manages warrants for all law enforcement agencies within Los Angeles County, acting as a clearinghouse or repository for all warrants issued in the county.

This approach has two key distinctions:

- On behalf of all municipal law enforcement agencies in the county, the LASD is solely responsible for the operation and management of maintaining and reporting warrants.
- Conversely, CWS is the only means by which warrant processes occur in the county and it is the single point of failure. This increases the criticality of the system and potential liability for LASD.

CWS provides several business process advantages for the county justice stakeholders when issuing, reporting, and serving a warrant. The CWS environment includes a direct connection to

the county court Trial Court Information System (TCIS) and Expanded Traffic Records System (ETRS). This enables the courts to issue and recall warrants directly to CWS. This automation process eliminates the need for law enforcement personnel to reenter warrants, per NCIC standards, as the court-generated warrants supported those requirements. This capability addressed a significant resource and time issue that impacted local law enforcement, that traditionally had to re-enter warrant information into another system.

CWS simply routes warrants to the state repository and NCIC, depending upon predefined criteria and the warrant extradition requirements established by the requesting agency. The reliance on court-entered warrant data simplifies law enforcement procedures when executing a warrant. Following NCIC practices, the law enforcement agency attempting to serve a warrant would contact the appropriate law enforcement agency to confirm the warrant's validity and subject transportation requirement. Since the courts are not open 24 hours a day, they could not meet these requirements for warrant confirmation and validation. Under the electronic warrant process, these practices and requirements were eliminated and the warrant provides notice that confirmation is not required.

LASD staff also perform routine audits and reports to ensure the warrants contained in CWS are accurate, valid, and meet the due diligence requirements per agency policy. CWS support staff accomplish this by running reports against the appropriate court case management system and the state Wanted Person System (WPS).

Strengths:

CWS includes the following features and capabilities:

- A single countywide repository of warrants and application functionality that manages all aspects of warrant service processing; warrant request being the sole exception
- A web-like interface—the Justice Data Interface Controller (JDIC) application, known as the JDIC terminal, provides browser-based access to warrant data
- Synchronized system-to-system updates between the courts' warrant issuance/recall transactions and CWS
- Warrant query capability from patrol cars using the JDIC messaging interface to the Sheriff Message Switch
- The ability to issue inmate queries to the Automated Jail Information System (AJIS) from CWS
- The ability to publish officer hazards, exonerations and other officer safety cautions

- A Web Services interface to seven CWS transactions (developed, but not in production)
- Automated system-to-system transmittal of warrants to state Wanted Persons System (WPS) and subsequently to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

Challenges:

LASD's primary challenge with CWS is in its long-term support capabilities. The system is old, and its integration capabilities rely on antiquated technology. This presents difficulties in order to secure maintenance and support resources, as they are becoming increasingly rare and expensive. To address this challenge, LASD and CWS stakeholders are in the planning process to migrate the CWS system-to-system interfaces to modern internet-based technologies.

New Features and Enhancements:

While the CWS meets the majority of the users' needs, several stakeholders expressed an interest in incorporating additional features to improve several facets related to warrant service, primarily identifying warrant subjects. The following new CWS features and enhancements are pending stakeholder review:

- Biometric identification in the field
- Access to state photo repositories
- Improved justice community interfaces (courts, state, Federal)
- Department of Motor Vehicle updates or alerts
- Display of Livescan booking photos
- A web-based version of CWS
- Arrest notifications to investigators or agencies
- Access to mobile devices—a mobile version of the application
- Spelling auto-correction capabilities
- Geo-coding, mapping features
- Link analysis capabilities
- Flexible search, ad hoc, and due diligence reporting capabilities



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