eCourts Portal
Frequently Asked Questions
October 27, 2023

1. **How do I locate the contact details for a specific county Clerk of Court?**

   Select by county or search for more information [Locations.](#)

2. **Where can I get training on eCourts Portal?**

   Additional information about eCourts Portal can be found on the [eCourts Portal Page.](#)

3. **What is eCourts Portal?**

   Portal allows the public and elevated access users to access court information online including:

   - Perform searches by party name, record number, citation number, attorney bar number, attorney name, business name, case cross-reference number, or nickname.
   - Search for court dates and hearings by case number, party name, business name, attorney name, attorney bar number, judicial officer, or courtroom.
   - View case information, records, and documents.
   - Make instant online credit card transactions to pay fines and fees for criminal cases and infractions.

4. **Why is Portal being implemented?**

   North Carolina General Statute requires certain court documents to be available for review by the public. To fulfill these requirements, the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts has chosen Tyler Technologies' Portal solution to provide greater accessibility of court documents. Portal will allow users to view certain court information online and not require a trip to the county Clerk of Courts office.

5. **When will eCourts Portal become available for use?**

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Portal availability will mirror Odyssey ICMS go-live dates. More information regarding the Odyssey ICMS statewide roll-out schedule can be found in the Timeline section of the eCourts webpage.

6. **Who can use eCourts Portal?**

Everyone can use eCourts Portal to access court information online, including the public and elevated access users.

Elevated access is not required to access most court information online; however, certain information is restricted per North Carolina general statutes and requires elevated access.

7. **Is there a fee for using eCourts Portal?**

No, Portal is a service provided by the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts to enhance public access to court information.

8. **Will eCourts Portal work with my internet browser?**

Portal functions best with Microsoft Edge and Google Chrome internet browsers. The use of other browsers may cause issues with search functionalities, displaying documents, and other errors.

9. **Will there be issues for Mac users using Safari? Using Chrome?**
The recommended operating system is Windows, and the recommended browsers are Edge & Chrome. Other operating systems and/or browsers will work, but sometimes result in unexpected errors and/or inconsistent results.

10. **Can I file a document with the court through eCourts Portal?**

No. Portal is only for the viewing of case information and documents. Filing of court documents online can be accomplished though eCourts File & Serve and Guide & File applications. For more information regarding eCourts File & Serve and Guide & File applications please click eCourts File & Serve or eCourts Guide & File and/or see the Info-Graphic at the end of this document.

11. **If you're registered for File & Serve will the same User ID and password work for Portal?**

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Portal and File & Serve are separate applications. You may use the same User ID and Password for both applications, however, you must submit separate access requests for each application.

12. **Do I need to register for eCourts Portal?**

Please view the Portal Introduction and Overview Video for more information about Portal and how to register. Registration for Portal is not required for public users to search and view publicly available court information. Registration is recommended if the user would like the ability to save cases to the 'My Cases' folder. Registration is required for **non-attorney** elevated access users. Only those users who have a verified business need and authority granted by statute will be approved for elevated access to view restricted case types or non-public information. Please reference Portal Government Agency Elevated Access FAQs and Portal Elevated Access Roles.

**Users MUST log into Portal to complete the Registration process.

13. **I cannot see the entire Banner on the Portal Page.**

Your display may be zoomed in. You can reduce your display size by pressing and holding the Ctrl Key, while pressing the minus sign (-), or by right-clicking your mouse on your desktop and selecting "Display Settings."

14. **Do I have to apply for Elevated Access for each case I am assigned?**

No. Once you are granted elevated access, you will have access to restricted information on all cases which you are entitled to by statute and are an Odyssey ACTIVE Party/Participant assigned to the case.

a. **What if I cannot see the results I am expecting?**
Contact the Clerk of Court in the county where the case is assigned to verify you are in fact an Odyssey ACTIVE Party/Participant assigned to the case.

SMART SEARCH

15. **How do I search for a case in eCourts Portal?**

For best results, please review the Advanced User Guide on the eCourts Portal page.

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SMART SEARCH provides users with a detailed and near "real-time" Case Summary (also known as the Register of Actions). In **SMART SEARCH,** members of the public can find a detailed listing of a court file's timeline that would include the Case Summary, Case Information, Assignment Information, Party Information, Causes of Action (Civil, Family, Probate, and Mental Health cases), Case Events, Dispositions, Hearings, and Financial Information (when applicable).

SMART SEARCH has Advanced Filtering Options (Civil Actions, Special Proceedings (non-confidential), Estates, and Criminal Actions), in accordance with NCGS 7A-109(b)(1-4). **SMART SEARCH** houses crucial information and should be used in conjunction with **NC JUDGMENT SEARCH** to provide the most detailed listing of information.

ADVANCED FILTERING OPTIONS can be used to help filter the returns of a search. Advanced Filtering Options cannot be used as a stand-alone SEARCH option.
- Smart Search defaults to Case Number or Party Name. Selecting Party Name from the Advanced Filtering Options is **NOT RECOMMENDED**! It will limit search results and does not support the use of the wildcard.
- Business Name Search: When searching for a Business Name, you must click the Advanced Filtering Options link and select Filter by Search Type: Business Name.

Additional information regarding Portal **SMART SEARCH** functionality can be found on the eCourts Portal Page.

Note: Bondsman are recorded in Odyssey as a Business. Smart Search Criteria must be changed to search for a Bondsman. Refer to Portal Overview Guide for additional information.

WILDCARD FUNCTIONALITY
- Case number must include at least 4 characters before the wildcard.
- Name must include at least 3 characters of the last name, followed by the wildcard, and at least 1 character of the first name, followed by the wildcard.
- If the Business Name includes a comma, then use the wildcard in place of the comma and nothing after the wildcard.
- The wildcard will not work if the 1st **THREE** characters of the business name contain a special character, space, or number. Try entering at least three characters of the entity name *without* the wildcard and click submit or enter the exact business name, as supplied on the court document.

Examples:
A+ Inc.
A'Lure Publishing LLC
A 1000 Miles Fresher, Inc
A10 Capital, LLC

- If searching for a business name, you must use the Advanced Search link and select Business Name from the Filter by Search Type menu in the General Options section.
- If the business name includes a comma, then use the wildcard in place of the comma and nothing after the wildcard.

16. How do I search for an Estate case in eCourts Portal?

Odyssey is a party-based system and Smart Search returns cases regardless of the party association (except victim). Conducting a Smart Search by the FULL Decedent name is only recommended for common names. Other Advanced Filtering options can also narrow the search.

17. Results are inconsistent when selecting the Filter by Search Type: Smart Search vs Party Name Search.

Smart Search automatically defaults to Party Name or Case Number and will provide the most consistent results; the Party Name Filter by Search Type menu option should NOT be used.

18. I can't find...

Please review the Portal Overview Guide and Portal Advanced User Guide for specific details on searching by name and required file number format.

Helpful Hint: Portal works best with Edge and Chrome internet browsers. If you are using one of these preferred browsers, you may need to clear cache or use a browser incognito window.

19. Are all case documents available on eCourts Portal?

All Public users will have access to records which are considered public record and are not confidential, sealed, or otherwise restricted. Some restricted, non-public records require elevated access to view in Portal (e.g., Criminal Warrants Unreturned, Juvenile Case

Records, and Protective Orders). Please reference Portal Government Agency Elevated Access FAQs, Domestic Violence Agency FAQs and Portal Elevated Access Roles.

20. Is there a way to open/download multiple case documents at one time?

No. Documents must be downloaded one at a time.

21. Does eCourts Portal provide an official court record?

No. eCourts Portal is NOT the official court record. eCourts Portal simply provides Internet access to public docket entries for public case types only. Contact the appropriate county Clerk of Court to request official copies of court records.

22. Can I use eCourts Portal to conduct a criminal background check?

No. eCourts Portal is NOT the official court record. eCourts Portal simply provides Internet access to public docket entries for public case types only. Contact the appropriate county Clerk of Court to request official copies of court records. More information about Criminal Background Checks is available on the nccourts.gov website.

23. How current are eCourts Portal records?

Case summaries and document images are available for viewing in Portal within minutes of being uploaded to Odyssey ICMS. Availability of specific case information or documents may be affected by daily case volume and processing times.

24. Can I get a case removed from eCourts Portal?

The Superior Court routinely considers motions to seal or expunge court records. If a court record is ordered sealed or expunged, it will no longer be available for viewing online. Please contact an attorney to determine if your case is eligible to be sealed or expunged. More information about expunctions is available on the nccourts.gov website.

25. How can I locate a Date of Birth in eCourts Portal?

Effective October 2023, the YEAR of birth is available for all cases when the birth year was recorded.

Portal **SMART SEARCH** permits validation of DOB for all PUBLIC users through Advanced Filtering. Results can be narrowed through Advanced Filtering if a SMART SEARCH returns multiple cases which meet the entered criteria. DOB Advanced Filtering can accommodate specific DOB or a range. The filter can be applied at the same time as the original SMART SEARCH name/file number submission or after the results return. E.g. From 01/01/1970 To 01/01/1970 when attempting to narrow results returned or validate the record DOB matches. SMART SEARCH Party Search Results indicate a DOB has been recorded by displaying the masked DOB as XX/XX/1970.

26. Is there a Bond Forfeitures Report in Portal?

Portal does not have any reports, but Bond Forfeitures can be Searched utilizing Smart Search and Selecting the Filter by Search Type: Business Name then entering the Bond Person's name to conduct the search (all Bonds Persons are entered as Businesses in Odyssey).

27. How can I locate Social Security numbers in eCourts Portal?

Social Security Number validation is NOT available through Portal for the PUBLIC or any Elevated Access Role.

28. How do I locate information regarding Warrants Served/Unserved?

Portal SMART SEARCH provides users with a detailed Register of Action (also known as the Case Summary), including docketable Case Events which capture when warrants and orders for arrest and criminal summonses are issued, returned served or unserved, reset to unserved, or recalled.

29. How do I locate information regarding Domestic Violence aka Protective Order Cases?

Protective Order Cases are restricted through Portal to the ACTIVE Odyssey Attorney of Record, Active eWarrants Users, and Domestic Violence Agencies.

30. Why can't I view all Domestic Violence aka Protective Order Cases on Portal?

Portal is an internet-based system and due to Federal Law, some civil matters are not permitted to be indexed in a web-based search, e.g., domestic filing that includes a protection order.

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31. Are there other ways to access Domestic Violence aka Protective Order Cases that are not available on Portal?

Public Access Terminals are available in the Clerk's Offices to confirm the case Exists.

32. How do I locate information regarding an Incompetency case?

Incompetency is a PUBLIC Case Type. The Advanced Filtering by Case Type has been enhanced for ease of access.

33. Can I search by charges (e.g., Murder)?

No. Odyssey is a Party-based system and does not provide the mechanisms to search by charges.

34. Is a defendant Name History available on Portal?

The name history does not display on the Portal but is included as part of the full Odyssey record. Portal searches will include all the names associated with a case, including aliases.

35. Is there a specific way names are entered for defendants with multiple last names?

Yes. A link to the eCourts Name Indexing Standards has been included in the Portal Training Materials and Reference Guides on the eCourts website.

36. When completing searches with No Results Found, is there a way to print the No Results page that will include the criteria used to search?

No. There is not a way to print the search parameters in Portal. If evidence of a "No Results" search is required, the recommendation is for the Searcher to use a Steps Recorder program that will track each click and screen automatically and save it to a downloadable document, so you don't have to take snips of each page. Members of the Portal team use a free application called Google Tango - https://www.tango.us/ (we are

not endorsing Tango; we are simply sharing the name of a program we are familiar with).

37. How do I resolve issues finding a case or defendant through Smart Search?

Reference the Portal Overview Guide and Portal Advanced User Guide for specific details on searching by name and required file number format.

Helpful Hint: Clear cache, use another browser, or a browser incognito window.

If after reviewing the guides, you still have questions, contact the Clerk of Court in the county where the case is assigned.

38. What if I have a question about the documents or specifics of my case?

For answers to specific questions about a case or case documents, please contact the appropriate county Clerk of Court.

39. Will case events prior to the Odyssey Go-Live be viewable on eCourts Portal?

Yes, all case events occurring prior to Odyssey Go-Live will be converted, however the time stamp will be 12:00 AM.

SEARCH HEARINGS

40. How do I search for a hearing in eCourts Portal?

Using Portal's **SEARCH HEARINGS** portlet, you can search current court calendars for hearing locations and times. **SEARCH HEARINGS** allows users to search by case number, party name, business name, attorney name, attorney bar number, judicial officer, or courtroom. Additional information regarding Portal's **SEARCH HEARINGS** portlet can be found on the eCourts Portal Page.

41. When Searching for a hearing does the system let you know if it's virtual or in person?

No. That information is not noted on the Search Hearings results however, if it is virtual, you will be provided a link (outside of Portal).

42. How do I pull a call list?

Different Courts/Judges call cases in different orders; it is recommended you work with the Courtroom Clerk to find out how cases will be called, then you can sort the Search Hearings information, accordingly, by clicking the "v" located on the left of each column header. This works best when conducting a Courtroom Search using a specific date.

NC JUDGMENT SEARCH

43. How do I search for a judgment in eCourts Portal?

The **NC JUDGMENT SEARCH** in Portal functions as an external tool to allow members of the public to search for N.C. Judgment Indexes entered in the N.C. Judicial System's database in accordance with NCGS 7A-109(b)(6). This search can be performed utilizing a party's name or case number. Results include judgments related to Civil, Family, Small Claims, Special Proceedings, Criminal, and Miscellaneous court items. The **NC JUDGMENT SEARCH** can be filtered to help users' narrow results based on the case type, status, location, and date of the judgment. Results provided will feature case number, disposition status, index date and time, parties to the action, and judgment comments that are relevant to the disposition. However, to view the complete case summary, a searcher must navigate to the **SMART SEARCH** portlet.

Additional information regarding Portal's **NC JUDGMENT SEARCH** can be found on the eCourts Portal Page.

Portal NC JUDGMENT SEARCH references the amounts and totals owed based on the original Judgment date. Please contact your county Clerk of Court for the current amounts and totals owed.

The Payoff Date and Current Payoff Amount updates in **SMART SEARCH** once the county Clerk of Court updates to the current date in Odyssey.

Helpful Hints for **JUDGMENT SEARCH**:
- Enter AT LEAST the full last name

- Currently there is no wildcard functionality i.e., "smith" returns all results with name smith. Enter "smith, jo", only Jo Smith returns. Enter "smith, john", only John Smith returns

44. Can the Judgment Index Date and Time be changed?

No, the Index Date and Time are system generated and cannot be backdated or modified by any county Clerk of Court.

MAKE PAYMENTS

45. What payments can be made in eCourts Portal?

Criminal court fees and fines can be paid online without visiting the courthouse by using Portal's **MAKE PAYMENTS** portlet.

The following payment types are accepted online:

- Cost and Fees
- Restitution
- Criminal Attorney Fees
- Probation and Parole Fees

The following **CANNOT** be paid online:

- Alimony
- Bond Forfeitures
- Cash Bonds
- Child Support Payments
- Civil Judgments
- Condemnations
- Rent Bonds
- Trust Funds
- Upset Bids

46. Are there payments I cannot make on Portal?

You are only allowed to make payments online for Criminal cases. Statutes do not allow credit card payments for civil judgments, alimony, trust accounts, etc. These payments must be made in person or by mail, via cash or money order, to the applicable county Clerk of Court.

*Portal NC JUDGMENT SEARCH references the amounts and totals owed based on the **original** Judgment date. Please contact your county Clerk of Court for the **current** amounts and totals owed.*

The Payoff Date and Current Payoff Amount updates in **SMART SEARCH** once the county Clerk of Court updates to the current date in Odyssey.

47. **What if I need to make a payment but can't find my criminal case or infraction?**

Try to search the case in **SMART SEARCH** to verify there is a balance owed that can be paid online.

Contact the appropriate county Clerk of Court if you are unable to find your case and the officer or judge indicated you could pay this online.

48. **What methods of payment are accepted in eCourts Portal?**

Acceptable methods of payment include Visa, Mastercard, and Discover. A 2.39% transaction fee will be assessed, with a $1.00 minimum charge per transaction. eChecks are NOT accepted through Portal **MAKE PAYMENTS**.

49. **I received an error message after entering my payment information and was not sent a receipt.**

Use **SMART SEARCH** to find your case and verify the payment and balance information. Contact the appropriate county Clerk of Court if you still need assistance verifying if the amount owed was paid.

Documents may be filed in person over the counter. These will be scanned by the clerk and entered into Odyssey manually.

Odyssey Case Manager
Odyssey Attorney Manager

File & Serve

Portal

Users file documents electronically to initiate cases, e-file into existing cases, or serve documents. Usage of File & Serve may vary by case type.

Guide & Print
Guide & File

Users view case information via anonymous or registered user access.

Users complete interviews and print forms to deliver to clerk who scans and enters into Odyssey OR users complete interviews and electronically file with clerk.

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