



**NORTH DAKOTA COURT SYSTEM**  
Office of the State Court Administrator  
600 East Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, North Dakota

## **Request For Information (RFI)**

RFP Number: 180-24-02  
Date of Issue: April 23, 2024

**THE NORTH DAKOTA COURT SYSTEM  
IS SEEKING INFORMATION ON IMPLEMENTATION  
AND OWNERSHIP COSTS FOR A DIGITAL EVIDENCE  
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**Sally Holewa**  
**State Court Administrator**

## **Contents – RFI # 180-24-02 Digital Evidence Management System**

### **1.01 Purpose of the RFI**

The North Dakota Court System is considering the purchase of a digital evidence management system that is cloud-based and will be used by all trial courts in the state. The state of North Dakota operates on a biennial legislative and budget cycle. Responses from this RFI will be used to develop a request for an appropriation from the legislature when they meet in session beginning January 1, 2025. If funds are secured, it is anticipated that a formal RFP would be issued in May 2025 for a project that would be expected to be completed between September 1, 2025 and September 30, 2026.

### **1.02 Contact Person, Telephone, Fax, E-Mail**

The Program Administrator is the point of contact for the RFI. The Program Administrator for this RFI is:

John Tassava  
Director of Technology  
Office of the State Court Administrator  
Mailstop 180  
600 E. Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0530  
Phone: 701-328-4218  
Fax: 701-328-2092  
E-mail: [jtassava@ndcourts.gov](mailto:jtassava@ndcourts.gov)

### **1.03 RFI Schedule of Events**

This schedule of events represents the best estimate of the schedule that will be followed for this RFI. The schedule is subject to change by the North Dakota State Court Administrator. In the event a change is made to any component of this schedule, the rest of the schedule will be adjusted by an equal number of days. Should this occur an amended schedule will be posted on the court's website at: <https://www.ndcourts.gov/court-administration/finance/request-for-proposals>.

The schedule for this RFI is:

RFI Issued: April 23, 2024  
Deadline for submission of questions/objections: May 8, 2024  
Response to questions/objections: May 20, 2024

Proposals due by: June 26, 2024

If funds are secured, it is anticipated that a formal RFP would be issued in May 2025 for a project that would be expected to be completed between September 1, 2025 and September 30, 2026.

#### **1.04 Return Mailing Address and Deadline for Receipt of Proposals**

1 hard copy and 1 electronic copy of the proposal must be received in the North Dakota State Court Administrator's Office by 5:00 p.m. central time, on June 26, 2024 at this address:

Office of the State Court Administrator  
Attn: John Tassava  
Mailstop 180  
600 E. Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58505-05330

#### **1.05 Assistance to Vendors with a Disability**

Vendors with a disability who need an accommodation should contact the Program Administrator listed in Section 1.02 sufficiently in advance of the deadline for receipt of proposals so that reasonable accommodations can be made without impacting the vendors ability to respond to the RFI within the deadline for responses.

#### **1.06 Deadline for Receipt of Questions and Objections**

Vendors must carefully review the solicitation and all attachments for defects, questionable, or objectionable material. All questions must be submitted in writing to the email address provided in Section 1.02 and cite the subject RFI in the title. All questions are due by the deadline specified in Section 1.03.

#### **1.07 Amendments to the RFI**

If an amendment to this RFI is issued, it will be provided to all vendors that were mailed a notice of the RFI and to those who have requested a copy of the RFI.

#### **1.08 Electronic Posting of RFI**

The RFI, any amendments to the RFI, any questions submitted by vendors and the responses to those questions will be posted on the following website: <https://www.ndcourts.gov/court-administration/finance/request-for-proposals>. Vendors are encouraged to check the website periodically for any updates related to this RFI. Questions can be directed to John Tassava at [jtassava@ndcourts.gov](mailto:jtassava@ndcourts.gov). **NOTE:** This is a government solicitation. To ensure fair competition, all

questions and answers must be submitted in writing and submitted electronically. Phone calls regarding this request for proposal will not be accepted or returned.

## **2.01 Background Information on the North Dakota Court System**

The North Dakota court system is a unified state court system consisting of one Supreme Court, a temporary, intermediate appellate court that can be called into session as needed, and 53 district courts with general jurisdiction. There are 55 district court judges and 5 judicial referees in the state. The chief justice of the Supreme Court is the administrative head of the court system.

The district courts have original and general jurisdiction in all cases except as otherwise provided by law. The district courts also serve as the juvenile courts in the state and have exclusive and original jurisdiction over any minor who is alleged to be unruly, delinquent, or deprived. Appeals from district court cases are to the Supreme Court. It is important for potential vendors to note that the transfer of data and documents for appeals is done through electronic means only.

The court is organized into eight judicial districts. In each judicial district there is a presiding judge who oversees judicial services of courts in the geographical area of the judicial district. The court is further divided into four administrative units. In each unit there is a trial court administrator who is responsible for the managerial and administrative duties of two districts.

The court employs 390 non-judicial staff and contracts with 42 counties to provide additional court support staff. The average annual criminal caseload for the state is 26,763 cases. The average annual civil caseload for the state is 29,880. A profile of the North Dakota Court System and more detail about the court structure and jurisdiction can be found on the court's website at: <http://www.ndcourts.gov>.

Prosecution of criminal cases filed in North Dakota is the responsibility of individual state's attorneys who are elected or appointed at the county level. Prosecutors have access to a case management system offered through the state's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS). Not all prosecutors have chosen to use this system.

Statewide public defender service for adults charged with a criminal offense, juveniles charged with a delinquency, and for parents involved in a Child in Need of Protection case, is provided through the North Dakota Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents through 7 regional offices staffed with state employees. By statute, at least 50% of public defense services must be handled through contracts with private attorneys. In 2023, the Commission was appointed to serve on 16, 200 cases. Of those assignments, 73% were handled by private attorneys. The Commission has an electronic case management system that can be accessed by all attorneys

providing public defense services, although contract attorneys have fewer access rights than state employed attorneys.

## **2.02 Technical Overview**

Information about the technical environment within which the North Dakota Court System operates will be provided to responsive bidders as needed to develop a response and only after verification of the legitimacy of the vendor.

## **2.03 Background and Purpose of this Request**

The purpose of this request is to determine the estimated cost to procure and estimated time to implement an off-the-shelf digital evidence management system. The system must satisfy the access, security, functionality, and device agnostic data exchange and storage needs of the court for the purpose of receiving, storing, sharing, retrieving, publishing, archiving and removing of exhibits proffered during court procedures. Additionally, the court is interested in a digital evidence management system that may be expanded to include the routine exchange of audio and video evidence between prosecution and defense counsel and high-volume civil case litigators that occurs outside of court proceedings.

The North Dakota Court System does not currently use a digital evidence management system. Instead, the court receives digital evidence through various methods, including CDs, flash drives, and digital images and digital documents in a variety of formats. Exchange of digital evidence between parties occurs outside the court environment. Retrieval and publication of digital evidence during court proceedings requires the use of laptops that have been pre-loaded with proprietary software. In addition to digital evidence, the court receives evidence in the form of paper, photographs, video and audio devices, and 3D objects. At times, there may be a need to digitize these items and upload them to a digital evidence management system.

We desire a digital evidence management system that is compatible with almost all proprietary and non-proprietary video and audio file formats, is able to integrate with our current trial court and appellate court case management systems, has existing APIs for common data retrieval and reporting needs, and can be managed through role-based access, permissions and security controls.

## **2.04 Scope of Work**

The project will result in a contract for a digital evidence management system that requires minimal modifications. Vendors responding to this RFI should include estimated costs for project sizing and planning, implementation of the system, onsite training, user documentation and knowledge transfer to IT staff and end users. Estimated costs should be inclusive of all required software and hardware. Estimated costs-to-own must include costs for licensing, integration, support and storage for cloud-based services.

### **3.01 Applicant Information**

All vendor responses must be submitted in writing and contain the following information in the order listed.

These items must be included on the coversheet of the proposal:

- Name of the organization
- Principal address of the organization
- Nature of the organization (corporation, private company, non-profit, etc.)
- Name, title, email address, phone number, and mailing address of the person submitting the proposal, if different from the principal address of the organization
- Contact information, including an e-mail address for the project director or primary person to be contacted on matters involving the proposal, if different from the person submitting the proposal

### **3.02 Introduction**

Proposals must confirm that the vendor will comply with all provisions in this RFI. The proposal must disclose any instances where the organization or any individuals working on the contract has a possible conflict of interest, and if so, the nature of that conflict.

### **3.03 Experience and Qualifications**

Vendors must describe the experience of their organization in conducting and completing the kind of research and analysis described in this document including evaluation, multi-site project coordination, collaborative research strategies, and use of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Additionally, vendors must provide information specific to the personnel assigned to accomplish the work required. Vendors must provide a narrative description of the organization of the project team and a personnel roster that identifies each person who will actually work on the contract and provide the following information about each person listed:

- title
- resume
- description of the type of work the individual will perform on this project
- number of estimated hours for each individual named above

### **3.04 Method to Complete the Project**

An overall plan with time estimates for completion of all work is required. Elements of the plan should include:

- A description of the vendor's approach to meeting the Purpose of the RFI and Scope of Work as described in Sections 2.04 - 2.06 of this RFI

- A description of any data collection instruments and methods to be used in collecting data
- A description of any supplemental tasks (data collection, information dissemination, staff assignment to project oversight committees, etc.) that it is expected the North Dakota Court System will need to perform to assist the vendor in achieving the Purpose of the RFI as described in Section 2.03 of this RFI
- A proposed timeline for the project
- A description of the final product to be delivered to the North Dakota Court System

### **3.05 Cost Proposal**

Vendors should carefully consider the resources needed to successfully implement the proposed project and present a realistic budget that accurately reflects project costs. The proposal should include a line-item budget showing costs for software licensing, hardware, personnel, travel, supplies, other known costs, and indirect costs.

The cost proposal should include a 5-year cost-of-ownership schedule, including required hardware, software licensing, and storage costs for the primary product and those of any 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendor that is used to support or manage the product.

### **4.02 Clarification of Proposals**

In order to effectively evaluate each proposal, communications by the Program Administrator or the proposal evaluation committee are permitted with a vendor to clarify uncertainties or eliminate confusion concerning the contents of a proposal and determine responsiveness to the RFI requirements. Clarifications may not result in a material or substantive change to the proposal. The initial evaluation may be adjusted because of a clarification under this section.

### **4.03 Interview and Product Demonstration**

It may be necessary to interview one or more vendors to clarify aspects of their submittal or to select from two or more vendors. If interviews are conducted, they will take place by telephone, interactive video or web conferencing.

Vendors whose proposals are selected for further review will be invited to demonstrate their product to the proposal evaluation committee via video conference.

### **4.04 Right to Forgo Proposed Project**

The North Dakota Court System may decline to proceed to a contract for services if sufficient funds are not secured or if it determines it is in the best interest of the state to forgo implementation of a digital evidence management system.