



# 2019 E-COURTS IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

S.L 2018-5, SECTION 18B.4(B)

PREPARED BY  
NORTH CAROLINA ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS  
MARCH 1, 2019



**About the North Carolina Judicial Branch**

The mission of the North Carolina Judicial Branch is to protect and preserve the rights and liberties of all the people as guaranteed by the Constitutions and laws of the United States and North Carolina by providing a fair, independent and accessible forum for the just, timely and economical resolution of their legal affairs.

**About the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts**

The mission of the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts is to provide services to help North Carolina's unified court system operate more efficiently and effectively, taking into account each courthouse's diverse needs, caseloads, and available resources.

## INTRODUCTION

Section 18B.4.(b) of Session Law 2018-5 requires the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) to report on the development of a plan for implementation of an integrated information technology (e-Courts) system in accordance with G.S. 7A-343.2(b). Specifically, Section 18B.4.(b) provides as follows:

**S.L. 2018-5 SECTION 18B.4.(b)** The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) shall develop a plan for implementing the e-Courts system, including estimates of the overall scope, the overall cost, annual costs, and the benchmarks that will be met in each year of the project. AOC is encouraged to consult with the Department of Information Technology when developing the plan for the e-Courts system. AOC shall submit the plan for the e-Courts system to the chairs of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety and the Senate Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety no later than March 1, 2019.

NCAOC respectfully submits this report pursuant to the legislative mandate.

## DRAFTING A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

In September 2015, Chief Justice Mark Martin convened the North Carolina Commission on the Administration of Law and Justice (NCCALJ), a sixty-five member, multidisciplinary commission, to undertake a comprehensive and independent review of North Carolina's judicial system and make recommendations for improving the administration of justice in our state. The Commission completed its work on July 31, 2017.

The [final report of the NCCALJ](#) recommends, “[i]mplementing a strategic technology plan for paperless courthouses.” The report further concludes that one of the most prevalent technology requests from judicial officials across the state is the provision and implementation of a comprehensive, feature-rich integrated case management system (e-Courts system) that includes e-filing, financial management, and document management capabilities.

In early March of 2018, Judge Marion Warren, then NCAOC Director, announced that the North Carolina Judicial Branch would partner with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to gather and document statewide business needs, and draft a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an integrated case and financial management system. The NCSC project team provided a familiarity with national best practices developed through a unique understanding of court systems in other states. Team members brought a history of working successfully with other jurisdictions across the country to select and implement integrated case management systems.

Following the partnership announcement, the NCSC project team held a series of meetings across the state to gather information from groups of clerks, superior court judges, district court judges, judicial support staff, magistrates, and other internal and external stakeholders

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regarding the business needs they had for the e-Courts system. Kickoff meetings were held at the North Carolina Judicial Center on March 5-7, 2018. Between March and May of 2018, NCSC conducted 40+ meetings at eight sites across the state.

Multiple regional sessions were conducted with internal court system stakeholder groups, including:

- Clerks of Superior Court – Elected and staff
- Judicial Staff/Court Managers
- District Court Judges
- Superior Court Judges
- Magistrates
- District Attorneys – Elected and staff

Sessions were also held with external stakeholders, including:

- Dispute Resolution Commission
- Sheriffs / Chiefs of Police
- Department of Public Safety
- Department of Motor Vehicles
- Indigent Defense Services
- Custody Mediation
- Guardian ad Litem
- Language Access Services
- Private Attorneys
- Select NCAOC Staff

Prior to each stakeholder meeting, NCSC provided a draft of the business requirements document to those registered for the meeting. This draft was updated weekly to allow for continued refinement and to ensure that the document reviewed by attendees in subsequent weeks benefited from the input provided in prior meetings.

After the final round of meetings, NCSC made an updated draft of the requirements document available via an on-line collaborative tool so that anyone who registered for and/or attended a regional meeting could provide additional input into the final version of the requirements document. More than 300 judicial branch staff were registered to provide feedback via the on-line tool.

After reviewing the feedback from all of the in-person meetings and online comments, the NCSC team worked with NCAOC staff to finalize the drafting of the RFP. The final RFP document was 371 pages in length, including approximately 300 pages of detailed business and technical requirements.



# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PROCESS – RESPONSES AND EVALUATION

The e-Courts RFP process followed the timeline outlined below:

- The e-Courts RFP was issued on August 6, 2018.
- Vendor responses to the RFP were submitted by October 15, 2018.
- Based on nominations by the respective Judicial Branch constituent groups, then NCAOC Director Marion Warren appointed an e-Courts RFP Evaluation Committee. Membership on the Evaluation Committee consists of: two clerks of superior court, one district court judge, one superior court judge, one district court trial court coordinator, one trial court administrator, one district attorney, one public defender, and four NCAOC personnel.
- The e-Courts RFP Evaluation Committee kickoff meeting was held on Thursday, October 18, 2018. The evaluation committee was provided an overview of the RFP evaluation process and established the scoring scale that would be used for the proposals in alignment with the posted evaluation criteria. Each member submitted scores for each qualified vendor response submitted as well as noting proposal strengths and weaknesses.
- The Committee met as needed to discuss their evaluation of the qualified proposals. As outlined in the RFP, the evaluation of proposals includes vendor demonstrations of a number of vendors, as determined by the Committee.

## OTHER PREPARATION FOR E-COURTS IMPLEMENTATION

- In preparation for an e-Courts system implementation, the NCAOC has launched several key initiatives, many of which are ongoing:
  - In July of 2018, the e-Courts Advisory Committee was formed and is comprised of judicial group members from across the state. The Committee will make recommendations to the e-Courts Steering Committee regarding e-Courts initiatives.
  - The Data Integrity Initiative was developed to clean-up pending civil and criminal case records to ensure that data is accurate and up to date in NCAOC information systems prior to data migration to the e-Courts system;





- Documentation and analysis of workflows and business processes of major court case types is currently being undertaken by the Business Analysis and Process Management Division of the NCAOC; and
- Analysis and remediation of Judicial Branch legacy data issues is being conducted in preparation for e-Courts migration.
- In addition, the NCAOC has continued moving forward to plan and implement projects which are foundational to e-Courts, including:
  - Courtroom wireless implementation
  - Automated Court Event Notification (via text and email)
  - Ongoing rollout of Domestic Violence e-Filing system
  - Desktop and laptop replacement (devices with ending manufacture hardware warranty support)
  - Microsoft Office 365 implementation (migration to cloud email and MS Office suite upgrade)
  - Multi-function copier network enablement
  - Courtroom digital recording software upgrade
  - Phone system software upgrade and desktop phone replacement
  - Desktop software upgrade (Windows 10)
  - Implementation of identity and access management technology to allow for secure Cloud access
  - Redesign of network to allow for Cloud infrastructure access

## FUTURE UPDATES TO BE PROVIDED

As of the submission date of this report, March 1, 2019, the NCAOC is undertaking due diligence to consider the e-Courts Evaluation Committee's input, and to negotiate, as appropriate, with vendor finalists. To respect the sensitivity of the on-going procurement process, the NCAOC expects to submit an amended report with updates on this process in the coming weeks.



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