

Agency: Alaska Court System**Project Title:****Project Type:** Information Systems and Technology

Court Information Technology Enhancements

State Funding Requested: \$1,943,800**House District:** Statewide (1-40)

One-Time Need

Brief Project Description:

Projects are needed to improve the court system's network transmission speed (particularly in rural locations); to modify trial court case management system software to support electronic data capture and sharing with other justice agencies; to replace rural telephone equipment to support telephonic hearings; and to plan and implement a disaster recovery system to insure the availability and security of critical court records.

Funding Plan:**Total Cost of Project:** \$1,943,800*There is no other funding needed***Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

The court system is seeking project funding in four specific areas for critical information systems to improve the completeness, accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, and security of information critical to courts and other law enforcement and justice agencies.

Network Enhancements - \$250,000

The court system is requesting funding to enhance its Wide Area Network (WAN) to increase the amount of data that can be transmitted across the network without incurring additional operating expense (purchasing additional bandwidth). Some of the lag experienced when transmitting data across the network results from pushing the same data repeatedly across the WAN. With the installation of hardware and software that filters data to transmit only what has been changed or updated, transmission speeds will greatly increase. Reducing redundant or duplicate data transmission will be particularly valuable to rural court locations where there is limited bandwidth available. The court system estimates the cost of this important network enhancement to be \$250,000.

Trial Court Case Management System Enhancements - \$1,203,300

Software modifications are required to allow more information, including criminal sentencing and bail conditions, to be captured and shared electronically, thus improving public safety and reducing costs, delays, and errors caused by paper, mailing, and duplicate data entry. Enhancements will allow more efficient use of the court's statewide case management system.

Bail conditions are set by courts on paper and maintained in manual files that are not accessible to state and local police, which impedes enforcement of conditions of release. The court needs to modify its automated case management system to accommodate the entry and storage of bail conditions at the time they are imposed in the courtroom. The court has

developed uniform, standardized bail conditions/orders, evaluated alternatives for capturing and storing the data, and defined modifications needed to link dockets to electronic documents such as bail orders, charging documents and criminal judgments/orders. In FY11 and FY12, the case management system will be modified to allow capture and storage of bail conditions and enhanced sentencing information. The court will develop and implement electronic interfaces to share more court data with authorized external agencies, for example, bail conditions and other court orders, electronic filing of minor offense citations, and reporting of court dispositions.

External agencies also need access to court case statistics to respond to legislative requests, evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitative and other programs and initiatives, and analyze needs for services. The court's case management system analysts must write programs to create special reports to respond to such queries. It would be more efficient to allow external agencies to make their own queries, which would provide faster results and make more efficient use of court resources. Funds are needed to create a website with instructions to help users understand the structure and meaning of court data so they can create their own reports on-line without the intervention of court programming staff.

The court has implemented its automated case management system in 32 courts. After the remaining courts in the first judicial districts are converted in 2010, the court system must begin developing functional specifications for the next system upgrade or redesign. The goal of the project is to have a statewide case management system that retains current functionality, but is easier to learn, use, maintain and modify, in order to accommodate staff turnover rates and lower annual operating costs.

Telephone Systems Replacement or Upgrades - \$32,500

The Alaska Court System regularly conducts telephonic hearings to minimize travel costs for the courts, the Department of Law, the Office of Public Advocacy, the Public Defender Agency, private attorneys, litigants, and witnesses. Teleconferencing is also used extensively to conduct administrative meetings without incurring travel costs.

Modernization of the court's telephone systems has occurred primarily when facilities are either constructed or leased. Several court locations continue to use older systems that have limited functionality. Due to a lack of available funding, new or newly leased courthouses are frequently forced to continue using old phone switches. These older telecommunications systems are not capable of being upgraded to meet the modern demands for voice, data and digital services. Some do not provide modern services that court users need to perform their duties efficiently (voice-mail, automatic call distribution, conference calling, call accounting and computer telephone integration). Funding acquired for this project will be used to upgrade or replace telephone systems in several locations across the state, focusing primarily on rural court locations.

Disaster Recovery Plan - \$458,000

The court system received a federal grant to plan and commence the implementation of a disaster recovery solution and enhanced data backup. For disaster recovery, the plan includes replicating data from the central administrative facilities in Anchorage to a secondary location at the Rabinowitz Courthouse in Fairbanks. This location was selected as it is far enough away from Anchorage that it should be safe from the effects of a disaster impacting Anchorage and the surrounding area. Additionally, Fairbanks has a major airport that might be accessible should the road system in the south-central region be rendered impassable. In the event the Anchorage main data site fails, a network data switchover will redirect network operations to the Fairbanks location.

The major data storage systems, called Storage Area Networks or SANS, have already been purchased with federal grant funds. To complete the disaster and data recovery project, the court system requests funding to purchase a new data

backup system to replace the obsolete tape backup system currently used. The existing system was installed in 2001, has no warranty, is frequently in disrepair and is expensive to maintain. The new system will use a "backup-to-disk" feature allowing more copies of data to remain on-site, facilitating quicker backup and faster restore times as well as permitting back-up operations to an off-site location during business hours without impacting routine court production. A portion of the funding will also be used to purchase enhanced servers, specialized software to support recovery of servers not supported as part of the statewide SANS project, and related costs for project implementation.

Project Timeline:

FY 2011

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Alaska Court System

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Name: Chris Christensen
Address: 820 W 4th Ave.
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone Number: (907)264-8228
Email: cchristensen@courts.state.ak.us

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? Yes No