

Technology Modernization for Operational Efficiency

FY2025 Request: \$385,000

Reference No: AMD 65229

AP/AL: Appropriation

Project Type: Information Technology / Systems / Communication

Category: Law and Justice

Recipient: NA

Location: Statewide

House District: Statewide (HD 1 - 40)

Impact House District: Statewide (HD 1 - 40)

Contact: John Skidmore

Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2024 - 06/30/2029

Contact Phone: (907)269-5100

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

The division can improve its efforts to safeguard public safety, improve morale, and position itself to be a more attractive employer to prospective applicants by embracing new technology, including robotic process automation.

Funding:	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	Total
1002 Fed Rcpts	\$385,000						\$385,000
Total:	\$385,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$385,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
Totals:	0	0

Prior Funding History / Additional Information:

Project Description/Justification:

Background

The volume of evidence in criminal prosecutions, especially digital evidence, that the Criminal Division processes has increased exponentially in recent years. Division employees spend significantly more time requesting, collecting, downloading, sending, and tracking down missing evidence. Obtaining the evidence and providing it to the defense are key responsibilities of the division.

Both the Alaska and U.S. Constitution establish the division’s responsibility to provide the evidence to the defense, regardless of whether the law enforcement agency (LEA) provided the evidence to the division. The failure to provide evidence to the defense negatively impacts the division’s ability to prosecute that case. Consequences include sanctions such as the court precluding the prosecution from using the evidence, a jury instruction telling the jury to presume evidence would have been in the defendant’s favor, or dismissal of the case. Such consequences occur because the failure to provide all evidence is seen as not providing the defendant due process. Such consequences also impact victims who are denied justice.

In addition to the increased workload, over the last several years the division experienced a dramatic

decline in the ability to recruit and retain a workforce. Steps have been taken to improve recruitment and retention; however, one major issue in recruitment and retention is overwhelming workload. When the workforce is spread thin, current employees must perform the work of vacant positions, as well as their own. This results in an increase in errors, low morale, and a reduction in efficiencies. The division believes utilizing a robotic process automation (RPA) software will help with recruitment and retention and current morale by reducing mundane tasks and providing efficiencies across the division. RPA is a software technology that automates digital tasks. With RPA, software users create robots or “bots” that can learn, mimic, and then execute rules-based business processes. An RPA can be utilized for any rote task by building scripts for the bot to follow. RPA is not used for tasks that require judgement calls by a human (ex: should a case be charged, or should a motion be filed), rather RPA is used to automate tasks that always need to be done.

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The division posted a request for information (RFI) to potential vendors to automate the single process of moving digital evidence from Evidence.com (a records management system used by law enforcement) to Nice Justice, the Criminal Division’s new digital evidence management (DEM) software. The division received several responses to the RFI, and ultimately contracted with Svam International.

Proposal

The division has identified several critical processes it would like to explore for RPA, including the following:

- Case initiation – a referral from law enforcement requires personnel to read and enter data such as the defendant’s name and identifiers, any victim and witness names and identifiers, referred charges, date of offense, referring agency, report numbers, location of the offense, etc. All such details are already contained in the police report. Reading and retyping such information in the appropriate field in the division's case management system is appropriate for RPA.
- Creating and distributing a digital, rather than papercopy, of the Criminal Case Intake and Disposition Form (CCID)¹ to appropriate parties. The CCID is a record of each case and each charge that is used to create and track criminal history in Alaska Public Safety Information Network (APSIN). Filling out and transmitting this form is also appropriate for RPA.

¹ This form is used by all law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies in the state. It communicates the referred charges to the prosecutor and at, at the end of the case, the ultimate disposition, including evidence forfeited, to law enforcement.

- Sending email notifications to victims and witnesses about restitution and other information that existing processes cannot provide. The division has standardized language for notices about certain events or processes such as when restitution can be requested or when hearings occur. RPA could assist with ensuring such notices are provided in a timing manner to ALL victims.
- Moving digital discovery from partner LEA platforms to the Criminal Division's DEM software. Repeated searching for new reports or information entered by law enforcement into their records management system and then transferring that information into the division's case management system is appropriate for RPA.
- Creating and modifying witness profiles in the division's case management system and reconciling witness travel. The witness profile is typically created upon case initiation, but the travel required for any witness in any case must be tracked for budgetary purposes. RPA can assist with managing such information for year-end close out.
- Electronically filing documents and recording court data, including searching for, sending, downloading, and routing documents from the Alaska Court System's Truefiling software. RPA would not decide if or when a document should be filed, but it can assist in the time consuming process of submitting the filing to the courts, especially as the courts require more and more filings to be submitted through various digital systems.
- Closing cases in the division's case management system – this involves reading information from judgments and entering that data into the division's case management system. RPA is appropriate for this task. It is also a task the division struggles to perform in a timely manner. This data entry impacts the accuracy of statistics reported by the division.

The division believes that addressing these issues will take a substantial step in a positive direction, one that carefully balances the resources of the most valuable resource, employees, against the realities of the changing workforce as well as enhancing the division's ability to accomplish its mission.

This concept would be implemented by the contractor determining if all the information needed for the bots to do their work is publicly available or if some information would need to be gathered from databases belonging to other entities.