

**Nebraska Information Technology Commission**

**Project Proposal Form**

**New or Additional State Funding Requests  
for Information Technology Projects**

**FY2005-07 Biennium**

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Acquire Juvenile Case Management System</b>
<b>Agency/Entity</b>	<b>Nebraska Supreme Court</b>

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**About this form...**

The Nebraska Information Technology Commission (“NITC”) is required by statute to “make recommendations on technology investments to the Governor and the Legislature, including a prioritized list of projects, reviewed by the technical panel, for which new or additional funding is requested.” In order to perform this review, the NITC and DAS-Budget Division require agencies/entities to complete this form when requesting new or additional funding for technology projects. For more information, see the document entitled “Guidance on Information Technology Related Budget Requests” available at <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/forms/>.

Electronic versions of this form are available at <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/forms/>.

For questions or comments about this form, contact the Office of the CIO/NITC at:

Mail: Office of the CIO/NITC  
521 S 14th Street, Suite 301  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
Phone: (402) 471-3560  
Fax: (402) 471-4608  
E-mail: [info@cio.state.ne.us](mailto:info@cio.state.ne.us)

**Submission of Form**

Completed forms must be submitted by the same date biennial budget requests are required to be submitted to the DAS Budget Division. Completed project proposal forms must be submitted via e-mail to [info@cio.state.ne.us](mailto:info@cio.state.ne.us). The project proposal form should be submitted as an attachment in one of these formats: Microsoft Word; WordPerfect; Adobe PDF; or Rich Text Format. Receipt of the form by the Office of the CIO will be confirmed by e-mail. If an agency is unable to submit the application as described, contact the Office of the CIO prior to the deadline, to make other arrangements for submitting a project proposal form.

**Section I: General Information**

Project Title	Acquire Juvenile Case Management System
Agency (or entity)	Nebraska Supreme Court

Contact Information for this Project:

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**Section II: Executive Summary**

Provide a one or two paragraph summary of the proposed project. This summary will be used in other externally distributed documents and should therefore clearly and succinctly describe the project and the information technology required.

A review of Juvenile case processing by the Supreme Court's Court Improvement Project (CIP) Coordinator resulted in recommendations to better monitor individual case processes, overall court processing times, and better track individuals. The State Court Administrator decided to acquire and install a separate juvenile case management system for the use of the three Separate Juvenile Courts and possibly for the county courts which sit as juvenile courts. This decision was made to avoid development efforts needed to provide this functionality and so the system can be delivered quickly.

**Section III: Goals, Objectives, and Projected Outcomes (15 Points)**

1. Describe the project, including:
  - Specific goals and objectives;
  - Expected beneficiaries of the project; and
  - Expected outcomes.

Recommendations by the CIP reviewers include monitoring each court case for compliance with requirements of the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), highlighting the following:

1. System linking of siblings to each other and a family unit.
2. Accounting for multiple children named as defendants (victims) on complaints filed with the court.
3. Tracking time between critical case events by child.
4. Linking supplemental filings – including amended petitions, adoption petitions, and motions to the original neglect/abuse petition that requests termination of parental rights or guardianship.
5. Historically tracking changes in court-approved case plan (permanency) goals and reasons for these goal changes.
6. Historically tracking a child's time in placement, placement changes and reasons for these (including voluntary placements that pre-date the filing of the neglect/abuse petition).
7. Recording and tracking "contrary to the welfare of the child" and "reasonable efforts."
8. Developing a comprehensive range of quality assurance, aging/case tracking, and summary statistical reports that report on case progress through case closure, not just disposition of the original petition.

The CIP reviewers go on to recommend tracking the following critical case stages:

1. Date of first removal and type of removal (emergency, voluntary, other) so that the ASFA-defined "date first entered into foster care" can be calculated;
2. Date of petition filing and allegations alleged;
3. Date of first scheduled and completed preliminary protective custody hearing;
4. Date of adjudication and allegations found to be true or stipulated to;
5. Date of disposition and disposition decision;
6. Date of first court review;
7. Date of first scheduled and completed permanency hearing and any permanency decision made regarding the child (including any decisions to extend temporary out-of-home care);
8. Filing and resolution dates of TPR motions, guardianship motions and adoption petitions on HHS wards; and
9. Date of case closure and reason for case closure (e.g., child returned to custodial parent, custody granted to relative, child reached age of majority, adoption, etc.)

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The CIP consultants have also recommended reports which should be generated by this new system.

Project beneficiaries should include the children who are affected by these cases as well as the State, which apparently faces potential loss of funding if the ASFA requirements are not satisfied.

The expected outcome is the three Separate Juvenile Courts all using the same computer system to process their cases and comply with ASFA requirements.

2. Describe the measurement and assessment methods that will verify that the project outcomes have been achieved.

The measures will be applied by the Federal reviewers who will determine Nebraska's compliance with ASFA requirements.

3. Describe the project's relationship to your agency comprehensive information technology plan.

This project will replace part of JUSTICE, the trial court case management system.

**Section IV: Project Justification / Business Case (25 Points)**

4. Provide the project justification in terms of tangible benefits (i.e. economic return on investment) and/or intangible benefits (e.g. additional services for customers).

The project will allow the juvenile courts to have better reporting to allow them to improve the management of cases, thereby complying with Federal mandates.

5. Describe other solutions that were evaluated, including their strengths and weaknesses, and why they were rejected. Explain the implications of doing nothing and why this option is not acceptable.

The consultant's report presents three options:

1. Re-design JUSTICE to better address the tracking needs of juvenile jurisdiction cases – particularly neglect/abuse matters.
2. Explore alternative options to meet these juvenile jurisdiction needs – particularly for the State's three Separate Juvenile Courts – at least temporarily until issues regarding the overall court system's access to ex parte information can be resolved and JUSTICE re-design work can begin.
3. Develop a new system to address the needs of juvenile jurisdiction cases and to consider the platform, software and other technologies utilized therein as a prototype for future development of a new generation integrated court case management system.

The consultants also recommend that "the JUSTICE Team to complete some type of needs analysis of JUSTICE to identify/anticipate the types of other system enhancements that are needed/desired by the larger unified court system. Ideally, these decisions should be made within an overall strategic planning process that examines and evaluates the future technological needs of the State's unified court system for the expanded term (probably over the next ten years or thereabouts)."

6. If the project is the result of a state or federal mandate, please specify the mandate being addressed.

The federal mandate is the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA).

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**Section V: Technical Impact (20 Points)**

7. Describe how the project enhances, changes or replaces present technology systems, or implements a new technology system. Describe the technical elements of the project, including hardware, software, and communications requirements. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed solution.

As the solution has not been selected, this discussion must be very general. The State Court Administrator has directed that the solution be a Web-based system. The software vendor's requirements may dictate that the Court acquire separate database and Web servers. The software must be licensed, and the State must contract for maintenance of that software or establish another method to maintain it. Because the system will be Web-based, each juvenile court staff member who will use the software must have a personal computer with a browser and Web access. As this is written, we anticipate Web access will be provided through the State communications network.

This solution would immediately provide the functionality recommended by the consultants and provide tools to allow cases to be monitored closely.

Systems analysis will be required to determine how to integrate the new system with JUSTICE. This will allow financial information to be integrated with similar information in other case types, as well as statistics. Public access to case information will be included, as will reports for the Foster Care Review Board and Crime Commission. It will also include automatic reporting to the Department of Motor Vehicles, as well as filing, indexing and retrieving digital images of court documents.

The court will transfer and replace business analysts to learn the new application, provide training, and provide help desk services. The Court will hire a systems analyst to operate the new system.

8. Address the following issues with respect to the proposed technology:
- Describe the reliability, security and scalability (future needs for growth or adaptation) of the technology.
  - Address conformity with applicable NITC technical standards and guidelines (available at <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/>) and generally accepted industry standards.
  - Address the compatibility with existing institutional and/or statewide infrastructure.

The software has not been selected, so it is not possible to address the issues set forth in this section.

**Section VI: Preliminary Plan for Implementation (10 Points)**

9. Describe the preliminary plans for implementing the project. Identify project sponsor(s) and examine stakeholder acceptance. Describe the project team, including their roles, responsibilities, and experience.

The Supreme Court will appoint a committee to deal with Juvenile matters, including technology. The Court Administrator plans to have two Business Analysts to address Juvenile. The staff members for this project have not yet been identified; because this will not be part of JUSTICE, the staff may come from outside the project.

10. List the major milestones and/or deliverables and provide a timeline for completing each.

These will be developed as we proceed with planning.

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11. Describe the training and staff development requirements.

These will not be known until the product has been selected. Court employees who will use this system must be trained to use the new software, and on-site help must be provided while they learn to use the system in the court (rather than classroom) environment. The JUSTICE Business Analysts perform this function now because they know the application.

12. Describe the ongoing support requirements.

Again, these needs will not be known until the product has been selected. There are a number of ways to provide the Help Desk services which will approximate those in JUSTICE; the vendor may well provide this service for an additional fee. The software must also be maintained; the JUSTICE Technical Analysts perform this function now. This service must almost certainly be provided by the vendor.

**Section VII: Risk Assessment (10 Points)**

13. Describe possible barriers and risks related to the project and the relative importance of each.

It may be difficult to identify the requirements of Nebraska's juvenile courts. The large Separate Juvenile Courts operate in a very different environment than the county courts which sit as juvenile courts in rural areas of the State. Juvenile case processing and management of juveniles is very much in the news and of great concern on a state and local level. As this is written, most states have not complied with ASFA mandates and we know of no model systems for our court and agency structure. It may require considerable negotiation and changes to a system to satisfy the courts' needs.

It may be difficult to coordinate the user support of two very different court automation systems, especially if county courts use JUSTICE for juvenile case processing and Separate Juvenile Courts use a new, Web-based system.

Technical support may be a problem. A system sold nationally with technical support provided from a central location may not be modified readily. This is of concern when the Legislature amends a statute or the Supreme Court changes a ruling which affects the computer system. This change, even if it is simple, will have to be evaluated for its effect on all courts using this software.

14. Identify strategies which have been developed to minimize risks.

Risks must be identified and minimized as part of the selection and development process.

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**Section VIII: Financial Analysis and Budget (20 Points)**

15. Financial Information

Financial and budget information can be provided in either of the following ways:

- (1) If the information is available in some other format, either cut and paste the information into this document or transmit the information with this form; or
- (2) Provide the information by completing the spreadsheet provided below.

**Instructions:** Double click on the Microsoft Excel icon below. An imbedded Excel spreadsheet will be launched. Input the appropriate financial information. Close the spreadsheet. The information you entered will automatically be saved with this document. If you want to review or revise the financial information, repeat the process just described.



Excel Spreadsheet  
(Double-click)

**Financial information appears at the end of the document.**

16. Provide a detailed description of the budget items listed above. Include:

- An itemized list of hardware and software.
- If new FTE positions are included in the request, please provide a breakdown by position, including separate totals for salary and fringe benefits.
- Provide any on-going operation and replacement costs not included above, including funding source if known.
- Provide a breakdown of all non-state funding sources and funds provided per source.

17. Please indicate where the funding requested for this project can be found in the agency budget request, including program numbers.

