

FLORIDA STATE COURTS SYSTEM

Office of the State Courts Administrator

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

FLORIDA COURTS ELECTRONIC FILING PORTAL

RFI# 09-001-CN

Submission Deadline: **October 28, 2009 @ 3:00 PM EDT**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) is soliciting proposals from qualified vendors to implement a uniform statewide electronic filing portal (E-portal). The portal would be a uniform public electronic gateway governed by the Florida State Courts. The portal would provide for e-filing of court documents in 20 circuits comprised of 67 counties, five District Courts of Appeal and the Florida Supreme Court.

The portal would provide parties with a common entry point for filing and viewing electronically filed court documents. Additionally, this portal would uniformly deliver to the clerks of court statutorily mandated filing fees and electronic filings in a form that clerks could immediately receive, review, accept, docket, file and maintain. The portal will also provide the clerks of court and the court with immediate case-related data elements they can use to automatically populate their respective local data bases. The portal will also allow litigants, viewers and subscribers to view case management data throughout the state.

It is expected that the implementation of the E-portal will commence in March 2010 and be implemented in stages beginning with Probate filings. Over a three year period, the program will be expanded to permit electronic filing for all court events for all clerks of court.

The Florida Supreme Court is seeking vendors with experience in implementing, operating, and maintaining electronic filing portals or related technologies, and who preferably have an existing electronic filing portal solution already in use. The portal must be implemented, operated and maintained at no cost to the State Courts System. In addition, vendors at least initially, would not be able to charge users of the electronic filing portal for filing documents or parties to a case for receiving one copy of each document filed by any other party. Vendors may be permitted to charge for additional downloads of electronically-filed documents and may provide certain value-added services (subject to approval by the Florida Supreme Court) in order to defray the cost of implementing, operating, and maintaining the electronic filing portal.

The Florida Supreme Court prohibits any selling of court records or mining of court data.

II. RFI OBJECTIVES

The Florida State Courts System (SCS) is seeking information from vendors relating to the implementation, operation, and maintenance of an electronic filing portal for all trial and appellate courts in Florida. This is a request for information only. It is the current intent of the OSCA to publish an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) and ultimately award a five-year contract to one qualified vendor for the purpose of enabling filers the ability to submit their filing electronically.

The OSCA is seeking information to conduct market research to identify vendors capable of implementing, operating, and maintaining a uniform statewide electronic filing portal. This RFI will also be used to formulate a strategy to oversee the ongoing provision of an electronic portal for the Florida SCS. Information provided by this RFI will also be used to determine a viable business plan that provides the Florida SCS with an electronic filing portal that is in the best interest of The Florida Bar, the SCS, parties, attorneys, and the vendor. The OSCA will not be responsible for any cost incurred by responders in furnishing any information.

III. Background

In Florida, court filings primarily consist of paper submittal to one of 67 Clerks of Court, one of five Clerks of District Courts of Appeals, and/or the Clerk of the Supreme Court. Some jurisdictions have limited electronic filing capability as approved by the Court on a case by case basis, and these e-filing systems are limited by location and court division.

In order to avoid duplication of effort and to achieve savings and standardization through economies of scale, the court wishes to develop a uniform single

electronic filing portal to accept court filings that will then be processed, and electronically delivered to the identified clerk of court.

Major divisions of court include: Criminal (felonies, misdemeanors including criminal traffic), Civil (circuit, county court and civil traffic), Domestic Relations (domestic violence, domestic relations, child support enforcement), Probate (guardianships, involuntary civil commitments), Juvenile (delinquencies, dependencies), appellate division of the circuit courts (appeals from county courts and petitions for writs of certiorari, etc.), Appellate Courts and the Florida Supreme Court.

IV. Information Required

Respondents are asked to respond to the following questions:

1. Would you be willing to provide an electronic filing portal at **no** cost to the courts and at **no** cost to filers or parties (parties to an action will be entitled to receive one copy of each document filed).
2. The content of the portal pages is controlled by the Florida SCS. Restrictions may apply to the type of commercial information that can be displayed, such as corporate names or logos. How would you ordinarily expect to be able to present such information, including corporate names or logos? How would limitations on the display of corporate names or logos impact your proposal to provide a portal? In addition to restrictions on corporate names or logos, it is currently anticipated that no advertising of any sort will be permitted on the electronic filing portal. How will this limitation impact your proposal?
3. What electronic filing portal(s) have you created and/or are currently operating? What courts are using your electronic filing portal(s)? What experience do you have developing and/or implementing electronic filing portal(s)?
4. If you have developed and/or are operating any electronic filing portal(s), on what basis are you licensing the use of such portal(s)? Describe the licensing terms for use of the portal(s).
5. To what extent does your company utilize open source software and/or source code (software and/or source code subject to one or more of the

- various open source license agreements such as the GNU General Public License, IBM Public License, MIT license, Microsoft Public License, Apple Public Source License, etc.)? If you have developed and/or are operating any electronic filing portal(s), have you integrated any open source components into the portal(s)?
6. With which computer operating systems/platforms does your company work? Does your company attempt to develop systems that are platform independent? If your company limits itself to working with certain operating systems/platforms, please explain the reasons for the limitation.
 7. Detail the specific revenue opportunities (direct or indirect), such as value added services, you would want to pursue if awarded the contract for the portal. Please list and describe each.
 8. The Florida Supreme Court is responsible for ensuring compliance with established standards of operation for all court-related business practices in the State, including any electronic filing portal operated in this State (regardless of whether the electronic filing portal is operated by the State directly or by an outside vendor). Do you have any concerns about or objections to the Florida Supreme Court having oversight over the electronic filing portal and any value added services that you may implement with approval from the Florida Supreme Court?
 9. Technical support will be required. Please describe in detail the technical support services you envision providing for the portal. In addition, how would you propose to provide support to users of the system? Would there be any limitations to the type of support you would provide?
 10. Describe the resources your company would be willing to devote to the implementation of the electronic filing portal?
 11. What questions do you think should be addressed in a competitive bid process to select the best portal value for the state of Florida?

12. How would you propose to work with the 67 clerks of court and the six appellate court clerks to integrate one uniform portal with the various systems they currently use? How would you propose to work with the 67 clerks of court and six appellate court clerks to utilize the portal effectively and efficiently?
13. What issues (if any) would arise for you to implement an E-portal system which will initially only accept certain types of filings?
14. How do you envision handling changes/upgrades to the system?
15. How would you propose to handle financial transactions with the trial clerks and the appellate clerks?

V. Timeline

Responses to this RFI must be received by e-mail in Searchable PDF Format by **October 28, 2009 at 3:00 PM EDT.** Responses should be directed to:

Mr. Tom Long
General Services Manager
Office of State Courts Administrator
General Services Unit
Supreme Court Building
500 South Duval Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1900
(850) 487-2373
longt@flcourts.org

VI. Public Records

Florida law expansively defines what constitutes a public record; see, for example, rule 2.420, Florida Rules of Judicial Administration and section 119.07, Florida Statutes. If a respondent believes that its response contains information that should not be a public record, the respondent shall clearly segregate and mark the information (for example, placing the material in a separate electronic file,

and including the word “Confidential” in the filename) and briefly describe in writing the grounds for claiming exemption from the public records requirements, including the specific statutory citation for such exemption.

VII. Addendum

Any clarification or additional information that may substantially affect the outcome of this RFI will be provided in the form of a written addendum. All addenda will be posted on the SCS website at:

http://www.flcourts.org/gen_public/purchasing/index.shtml