



# Request for Information

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**REGARDING:** STATEWIDE SELF-  
REPRESENTED LITIGANTS (SRL)  
E-SERVICES PORTAL

RFI #TCAS-2017-06-MS

**RESPONSES DUE: OCTOBER 18, 2017**  
3:00 P.M. (PDT)



JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA

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ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

## **1. Introduction**

The judicial branch of California, via its administrative office, the Judicial Council of California, seeks to design, build, and launch a state-of-the-art online e-services portal to support the needs of Self-Represented Litigants (SRLs) throughout the state.

More than 4 million Californians per year go to court without an attorney. Ninety-percent of family law cases have at least one party without an attorney. Those who choose to represent themselves face a variety of challenges. Lack of knowledge of due dates, filing timelines, and specialized legal language can cause delays or even outright dismissal of cases.

While the courts are not in a position to advise or represent SRLs, the court system does have a role in ensuring that SRLs are provided with the knowledge necessary to better represent themselves.

The vision is to design, develop and deploy a statewide SRL e-Services portal that will address the educational and procedural needs of the self-represented and provide, where possible, end-to-end services for those choosing to resolve legal issues on their own.

The challenge is complex. The legal system is nuanced, and each individual case may result in different outcomes. In addition, some trial courts may operate on local rules and forms, and a 'one-size-fits-all' approach will not necessarily result in desired outcomes.

## **2. Current Situation**

Each day, hundreds of Californian's form lines outside their county courts in order to research or seek information that will enable them to resolve a legal issue on their own, without the cost of an attorney.

- In California, more than 4.3 million people per year come to court without an attorney.
- 90% of family law cases have at least one party without an attorney.
- 90% of tenants in eviction cases represent themselves.
- More than 75 percent of civil cases have at least one party without an attorney.

In many cases, hiring an attorney may be the prudent or necessary decision to make, but in order to arrive at this conclusion, a would-be Self-Represented Litigant may spend days searching and waiting for information to help make that determination.

In other instances, Californians wait in lines at courts unprepared for the process that awaits them. They may have the wrong forms, or no forms at all.

All the above scenarios could be transformed if the judicial branch offered a high-performing online portal where the self-represented could interact with the court before, during, and after any potential case or hearings.

### **3. SRL e-Services Vision**

This Request for Information (RFI) seeks to identify entities and institutions that can partner with the branch and revolutionize the self-service landscape for those who choose to represent themselves in court.

The envisioned portal will support a customer journey that begins with *education* about specific case types; *triage*, to determine if an individual's actual situation can be completed on a self-service basis; *document assembly* engines to assist in the completion of the necessary online forms and, where available, the option to *e-file* the case without having to visit the court in person.

The California judicial branch envisions a multi-phased project to steadily increase online capabilities into the portal. We seek an agile deployment strategy that will quickly coalesce the features and functions that are available today, and rapidly deploy a suite of significant enhancements to deliver more complex services and integrations on a predetermined roll-out schedule.

The envisioned portal will comprise the following four main e-services areas:

- A. Managed Web Content Hosting & Portal Development**
- B. Education Resources, Intelligent Triage & Integrated Online Dispute Resolution**
- C. Integrated Online Chat and Call Center Assistance**
- D. Systems integration with existing Document Assembly, e-Filing, and Identity Management/Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems**

Today, some or all of the above components exist in disparate locations and deployments. The aim of the envisioned portal is not to hard-code a rigid statewide system, but rather to integrate and connect services into an easy-to-use user-centered front-end, where hand-offs to various courts across jurisdictions happens seamlessly.

Additional information for each of the four e-services areas is provided in Appendix A.

Finally, as background, the Chief Justice of California recently commissioned a special committee to provide recommendations for modernizing the judicial branch. The final report of the “**Commission on the Future of California’s Court System**” can be found [here](#).

### **4. Information Requested**

The California judicial branch is interested in architects, integrators, and developers who can envision and offer solutions to help us launch a new 21<sup>st</sup> century self-represented litigant portal.

Today, there are several strategic and tactical technology projects underway to help modernize the judicial system. Central to all these is an ‘electronic filing’ initiative, or e-filing as it known, that is tasked with developing an e-filing strategy for the state.

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A Case Management Data Exchange initiative recently concluded, in which standards for the exchange of data between justice partners and the courts were established.

A new Forms Modernization initiative is underway to research and strategize how today’s PDF forms can be modernized to better interact with online case management systems throughout the state.

Finally, an Identity Management initiative is underway to deliver standards, strategies, and policies for statewide identity management.

The aim of this current project is to design, architect, and deliver a Self-Represented Litigants portal that will leverage and integrate aspects of the above initiatives, as well as propose new and innovative approaches to better address the specific needs of those representing themselves in court.

Respondents may choose to respond to one, some, or all of the following high-level requirements. At this time, we are most interested in learning about what capabilities and approaches exist in the marketplace, and the general costs associated with those capabilities. Note that estimated costs are for Judicial Council planning and information gathering only.

**A. Managed Web Content Hosting & Portal Development**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Capability (Y/N) (Please describe if Yes)</b>	<b>Estimated Cost or pricing model</b>
Seeking integrated, cloud-enabled web content management or learning management platform comprised of:  a) Distributed end-user publishing supported by configurable Workflow function; b) FISMA-certified platform and site security; c) File/asset management across multiple sites; d) ADA accessibility compliant; e) Mobile-friendly, responsive platform. f) Multi-lingual support and deployment.		
Dedicated developer support and 24/7 back-end customer support.		
Advanced content migration support, including ability to move data, metatags, and URLs.		

**B. Education Resources, Intelligent Triage & Integrated Online  
 Dispute Resolution**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Capability (Y/N) (Please describe if Yes)</b>	<b>Estimated Cost or pricing model</b>
<p>Seeking innovative instructional design consultants to develop and deliver complex training and learning modules related to conveying legal processes. Services may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) E-learning modules;</li> <li>b) Webinars;</li> <li>c) Simulations;</li> <li>d) Quiz and self-assessment tools;</li> <li>e) Interactive overlays for official Judicial Council forms;</li> <li>f) Game-based learning (gamification);</li> <li>g) Multi-lingual support and deployment;</li> <li>h) ADA accessibility compliant;</li> </ul>		
<p>Intelligent, automated interview platform with ability to author and customize complex decision-tree logic. Desired features include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Customizable, rules-based configuration;</li> <li>b) Intelligent chat bots;</li> <li>c) Scalable to support multiple simultaneous sessions;</li> <li>d) Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered platform;</li> <li>e) Multi-lingual support and deployment;</li> <li>f) ADA accessibility compliant;</li> </ul>		
<p>Highly configurable rules-based online dispute resolution engine including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Customizable, rules-based configuration;</li> <li>b) Backend reporting and analytics;</li> <li>c) Ability to integrate with call or online chat engines;</li> <li>d) Email and text notifications for customers.</li> </ul>		

**C. Integrated Online Intelligent Chat and Call Center Assistance**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Capability (Y/N) (Please describe if Yes)</b>	<b>Estimated Cost or pricing model</b>
Highly configurable, multi-channel customer support platform, integrating online chat, call center, and ticketing services.		
Comprehensive analytics and machine learning to automate responses and measure overall system performance.		

**D. Systems integrator to knit all of the above with existing Document Assembly, e-Filing, and Identity Management/CRM systems.**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Capability (Y/N) (Please describe if Yes)</b>	<b>Estimated Cost or pricing model</b>
Solutions architect to act as integrator and orchestrator responsible for overall project management and delivery.		

**5. Questions**

If you have questions regarding the requirements listed above or the process to respond to this Request for Information, please email your questions to the Judicial Council of California (“JCC”) at [TCSolicitation@jud.ca.gov](mailto:TCSolicitation@jud.ca.gov) (“Solicitations Mailbox”) prior to 5:00 p.m. (PDT) on **September 6, 2017**. The RFI number must be included in the subject line of any communication. All questions and answers will be posted on JCC’s website at <http://www.courts.ca.gov/rfps.htm>. Note that questions become part of the public file and are subject to disclosure; you are accordingly cautioned not to include any proprietary or confidential information in your questions.

**6. Informational Conference Call**

The JCC will hold an informational conference call for interested parties on **August 28, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. (PDT)**. If you are interested in participating in the informational conference call, please send an email to the Solicitations Mailbox before **August 24, 2017** to register and

request the conference line information. The email must include the RFI number in the subject line.

## **7. How to Submit Your Response**

### **A. Submittal Information**

All submissions are due by **3:00 p.m. (PDT) on October 18, 2017**. All interested parties should submit a hardcopy and electronic version of the entire response on CD-ROM or USB memory stick/flash drive clearly marked "Response to RFI # BAP-2017-06-MS – Statewide Self-Represented Litigants E-Services Portal" to the following address:

Judicial Council of California  
Attn: Procurement Desk  
2850 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 300  
Sacramento, CA 95833-3509

Submissions may not be transmitted by fax or email. Submissions must be sent by registered or certified mail, courier service (e.g. FedEx), or delivered by hand.

### **B. Response Format and Content**

The response should include the following:

- 1) Cover Sheet, including:
  - Company Name
  - Company Address
  - Name and Contact Information for Company Representative, including:
  - Telephone Numbers
  - E-mail Address
  - Signature of Representative
- 2) Brief company description; size of company; years in business; type of entity.
- 3) Response to Section 4 (Information Requested). Respondents may choose to respond to one, some, or all of the high-level requirements in Section 4.

## **8. Information Exchange**

After the Judicial Council staff has reviewed the submitted material, your firm may be contacted and asked to participate in an information exchange with Council staff. The objective of this is to gain further understanding of your proposed approach or solution.

Information exchange can take the form of additional phone conversations, in-person meetings, and/or application demonstrations (in-person or via the web).

It is important to note that the Judicial Council of California will not reimburse you for any expenses, travel and/or time etc., regarding information exchange activities.

## **9. Disposition of Materials and Confidential or Proprietary Information**

All materials submitted in response to this RFI will become the property of the Judicial Council of California and will be subject to disclosure pursuant to applicable provisions of the California Public Contract Code and rule 10.500 of the California Rules of Court. Information that is submitted will be disclosed in response to applicable public records requests. Such disclosure will be made regardless of whether the submittal (or portions thereof) is marked “confidential,” “proprietary,” or otherwise, and regardless of any statement in the submittal (a) purporting to limit the Judicial Council’s right to disclose information in the proposal, or (b) requiring the Judicial Council to inform or obtain the consent of the vendor prior to the disclosure of the submittal (or portions thereof). Any submittal that is password protected, or contains portions that are password protected, cannot be accepted or considered. Companies are accordingly cautioned not to include confidential, proprietary, or privileged information in the submittal.

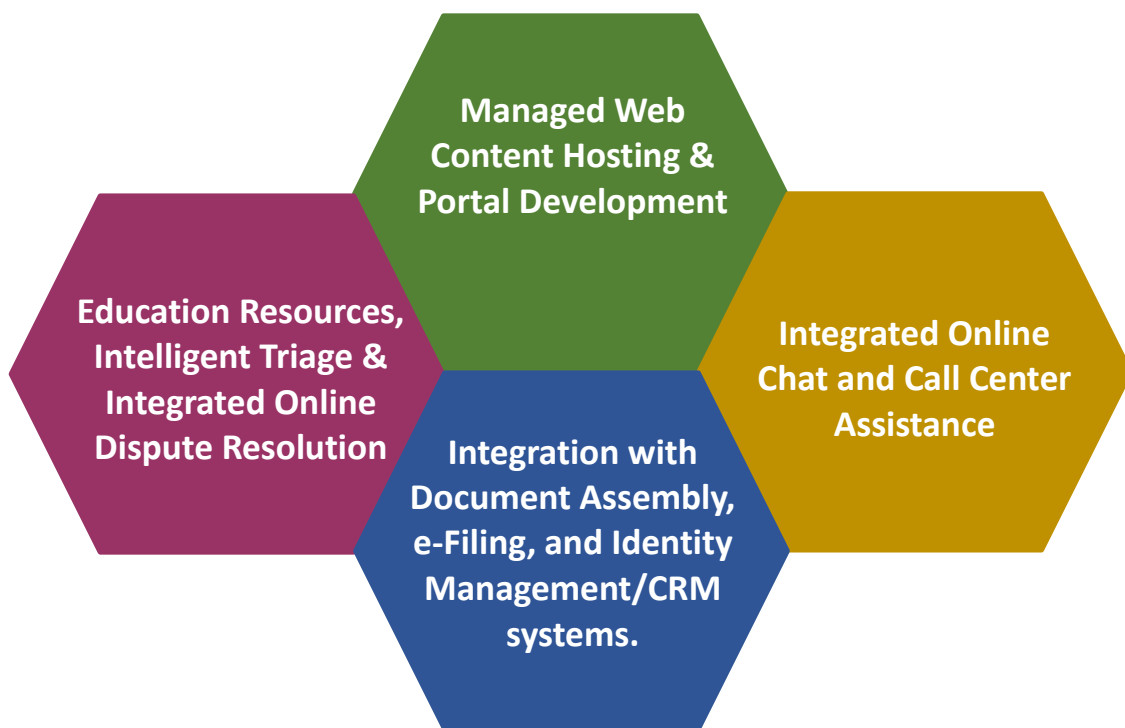
## **10. Disclaimer**

This RFI is issued for judicial branch information and planning purposes only and does not constitute a solicitation. Responses to the RFI will not be returned. A response to this notice will not be considered an offer and cannot be accepted by the Judicial Council of California to form a binding contract. Responders are solely responsible for all expenses associated with responding to this RFI.



## APPENDIX A

### SRL Honeycomb: Components of a statewide SRL e-Services Solution



- **In California, more than 4.3 million people per year come to court without an attorney**
- **90% of family law cases have at least one party without an attorney**
- **90% of tenants in eviction cases represent themselves**
- **More than 75 percent of civil cases have at least one party without an attorney**

## **Managed Web Content Hosting & Portal Development**

### **Approach:**

- Establish a flexible, scalable statewide Web Content Management or Learning Content Management system to support an SRL e-services portal that offers seamless integration with trial court websites.
- Established “Federated model” of governance: where each court on the portal can manage its own site. JCC staff to provide statewide management and coordination of SRL instructional content.
- Single platform that integrates with Identity Management/CRM system to provide personalization and document storage and retrieval for those who choose to establish user accounts.

### **Benefits Derived:**

- Manage and update content and instructional information on a single platform.
- Share and re-use content to help ensure compliance with legal statutes and Rules of Court.
- Consistent interface design for all case types throughout the state (with hand-off to courts for local info.)
- Facilitates systems integration with various statewide platforms, including identity management, document assembly, e-filing, and forms modernization.

## Education Resources, Intelligent Triage & Integrated Online Dispute Resolution

### Approach:

- Develop interactive and improved educational and instructional materials, including video, quizzes, and self-assessment checklists.
- Deploy intelligent 'guided interviews' to provide better 'triage' for those intended to file a case without an attorney.
- Integrate an online dispute resolution engine to facilitate mediation and auto-respond to visitor questions or queries.
- Form a consortium of family case law experts and case areas to guide, validate, and collaborate on delivery of enhanced educational resources.

### Benefits Derived:

- Simplify the learning process for SRLs so that they can more successfully navigate and resolve legal issues.
- Offer different learning modalities, including gamification and intelligent checklists to better meet user needs.
- Provide clear 'customer journeys' to boost comprehension and successful completion of user tasks.
- Automate basic procedural questions and answers; provide system to potentially mediate disputes before they progress to court.

## **Integration with Document Assembly, e-Filing, and Identity Management/CRM systems.**

### **Approach:**

- Design and develop a 'middleware framework' to provide seamless integrations to Identity Management (CRM), Document Assembly, and e-filing platforms, where applicable.
- Provide baseline personalization for users willing to establish accounts.
- Knit all available system integrations into the statewide Web Content Management platform.

### **Benefits Derived:**

- Seamless customer journey that provides an end-to-end continuum, from learning about processes, initiating a case, completing forms, to filing the case.
- Allows for seamless hand-off from statewide portal to local trial courts.
- Allows 'court customers' to save, retrieve, modify, and file pertinent case documents and forms.
- Improves overall user experience and customer satisfaction.

## **Integrated Online Chat and Call Center Assistance**

### **Approach:**

- Implement an online “real-time” chat platform that will assist users complete tasks and overcome obstacles.
- Establish and staff regional “Response Centers” to respond to chat and provide escalation resolution for issues that cannot be resolved by chat engine.
- Develop a group text messaging platform to send notifications and reminders.
- Provide ticket resolution data and other customer data to drive customer satisfaction and greater success filing cases without representation.

### **Benefits Derived:**

- Provide real-time online assistance and problem-resolution.
  - Ensure greater successful completion of SRL tasks and actions.
  - Mitigate need to call or visit individual trial courts.
  - Increase customer satisfaction and greater trust and confidence in the court system.
  - Provide equal access for those in rural areas or those unable to travel to their local courts.
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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Clarke, T.M., Ph.D., *Building a Litigant Portal: Business and Technical Requirements* (2015), Williamsburg, VA: NCSC, in association with State Justice Institute. <http://ncsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/accessfair/id/375/rec/1>

Salem, P., D. Kulak and R.M. Deutsch, *Triaging Family Court Services: The Connecticut Judicial Branch's Family Civil Intake Screen* (2007), 27 Pace L. Rev. 741, pp. 741-783. White Plains, NY. <http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/plr/vol27/iss4/9>

Self-Represented Litigation Network (SRLN), *Report: Resource Guide on Serving Self-Represented Litigants Remotely* (2016), c/o New Venture Fund, Washington, DC. [www.srln.org/node/997/report-resource-guide-serving-self-represented-litigants-remotely-srln-2016](http://www.srln.org/node/997/report-resource-guide-serving-self-represented-litigants-remotely-srln-2016)

Final report of the "Commission on the Future of California's Court System" <http://newsroom.courts.ca.gov/news/chief-justice-receives-report-from-futures-commission>

Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (IAALS), *Court Compass: Mapping the Future of User Access Through Technology* (2017), Denver, CO: IAALS. [http://iaals.du.edu/sites/default/files/documents/publications/court\\_compass\\_mapping\\_the\\_future.pdf](http://iaals.du.edu/sites/default/files/documents/publications/court_compass_mapping_the_future.pdf)

Joint Technology Committee (JTC) Resource Bulletin, *Courts Disrupted* (2017), Williamsburg, VA: NCSC. [http://www.ncsc.org/~media/Files/PDF/About%20Us/Committees/JTC/JTC%20Resource%20Bulletins/Courts%20Disrupted\\_final\\_5-9-2017.ashx](http://www.ncsc.org/~media/Files/PDF/About%20Us/Committees/JTC/JTC%20Resource%20Bulletins/Courts%20Disrupted_final_5-9-2017.ashx)

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