

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Administration of a Judicial Performance Evaluation Program

Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Administration of a Judicial Performance Evaluation (JPE) Program:

Issuing Agency: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC)

Issue Date: August 10, 2026

Proposal Due Date: October 5, 2026

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC) is seeking proposals from qualified contractors to administer a Judicial Performance Evaluation (JPE) program on behalf of the Illinois Supreme Court's Judicial Performance Evaluation Committee. Pursuant to Illinois Supreme Court Rule 58 which governs administration of the program, the successful contractor will work closely with the Judicial Performance Evaluation Committee and its chair to administer a JPE program designed to evaluate and enhance the professional performance of Judges through confidential survey data collection, statistical analysis, and facilitated professional development feedback to promote excellence, professionalism, and accountability within the Illinois judiciary.

This Request for Proposal is issued pursuant to the Illinois Judicial Branch Procurement Code and applicable Illinois Supreme Court administrative policies governing procurement and contracting.

1.2 Procurement Contacts

All communications regarding this RFP must be directed to:

Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Court Services Division

Attn: Jacque Rogers

Address: 3101 Old Jacksonville Road, Springfield, IL 62704

Alternatively, submissions may be sent by e-mail to:

John Chatz, Chief of eBusiness & Data Strategies: jchatz@illinoiscourts.gov

Jacque Rogers, Interim Director, Court Services Division: jrogers@illinoiscourts.gov

Jana Brooks, Court Programs Administrator: jbrooks@illinoiscourts.gov

Unauthorized contact with other personnel may result in disqualification of the proposer.

Section 16 hereof sets forth the deadline for written questions to be submitted and an anticipated date for responses from the AOIC.

SECTION 2 – BACKGROUND

The Judicial Performance Evaluation (JPE) program provides confidential feedback to judges regarding courtroom performance and professional conduct.

The program has several core purposes:

- Provide judges with constructive performance feedback;
- Identify professional development opportunities;
- Promote judicial excellence; and
- Support public trust, transparency and accountability in the judiciary

The Judicial Performance Evaluation (JPE) program, established in 1988 under Illinois Supreme Court Rule 58 to promote judicial excellence and competence, is designed to support continuous improvement of courtroom performance among Illinois circuit and associate judges. Although participation was voluntary at the program's inception, the Illinois Supreme Court made the evaluation process mandatory on December 1, 2008, requiring every circuit and associate judge in the state to undergo evaluations during their judicial tenure. With approximately 920 judgeships statewide, around 670 judges meet the current criteria for evaluation in a given year based on the following:

- Circuit or Associate Judge;
- Completed at least 3 contiguous years on the bench, but no more than 18 years;
- Not completed a JPE in the last 5 calendar years (eligibility for random selection was previously once in a judicial career). For example, if a judge completed a JPE evaluation in 2017, they are eligible to be randomly selected again in 2022;
- Not currently a candidate for judicial office; and
- Judge presided over a regular court calendar the past 2 years (i.e. this may exclude some Chief or Presiding Judges in certain circuits that have been primarily in an administrative role).

The program's core objective is to enhance judicial performance and strengthen public confidence in the judiciary through a structured process of assessment and education. To accomplish this, the JPE program administers confidential surveys to attorneys, court staff, and other judicial partners who have interacted professionally with the judge. These surveys collect subjective yet essential feedback that is compiled through confidential data collection and statistical analysis, followed by the preparation of written evaluation reports. Trained judicial facilitators meet privately with each evaluated judge to review the results, provide context, and discuss opportunities for improvement. All information shared through

the evaluation—including survey responses, analysis, and facilitation discussions—is strictly confidential and accessible only to the judge and facilitator, except under limited circumstances as otherwise authorized under Supreme Court Rule 58. Through this confidential and constructive process, the JPE program aims to foster professional growth, support judicial competence, and reinforce trust in the Illinois judiciary.

SECTION 3 – SCOPE OF WORK

The selected contractor will work closely with the chair and the JPE Committee to ensure that the contractor’s work and survey content are consistently aligned with the Committee’s work, goals and focus.

3.1 Program Administration

The contractor shall:

- Manage and implement all operational aspects of the evaluation program including without limitation survey development, program administration, secure communication methods, and data collection, analysis and reporting, training, and technology necessary for implementation.
- Coordinate with AOIC staff and the JPE Committee, through its Chair or designee, concerning program administration, recommended selection criteria, including number of judges to be evaluated in a calendar year.
- Develop and maintain programmatic written operational procedures, notification of judges selected for evaluation to chief circuit judges.
- Maintain project timelines and schedules.
- The contractor will also attend and participate in regularly scheduled meetings of the Committee for feedback and follow-up.

3.2 Survey Administration

The contractor shall design and administer a single confidential survey for the following groups:

- Attorneys;
- Court personnel;
- Judicial partners

Surveys must be distributed electronically through secure systems and must ensure anonymity of respondents. If agreed and circumstances require, the survey may be distributed via mail or overnight delivery.

3.3 Survey Design

Survey instruments shall evaluate the following areas using fair and measurable criteria reflective of the modern role and responsibilities of a judge, including but not limited to:

- Evaluation of broad judicial competencies of legal reasoning, knowledge, rules of procedure, and technology;
- Ethics, integrity and impartiality;
- Communication skills, demeanor and temperament;
- Courtroom management and administrative capacity; and
- Evaluation of efforts to advance and improve the justice system

The contractor shall propose a survey structure that maximizes completion rates and minimizes respondent burden using industry standards incorporating evaluation criteria which accounts for the changing roles and responsibilities of the judiciary.

The proposal must clearly describe the recommended survey layout, format, number and type of questions, and the estimated average time required for completion. The contractor is expected to design the instrument to be efficient while preserving the integrity of the evaluation. The contractor must provide justification for the proposed survey length, demonstrate how the design encourages full completion, and outline any methodologies—such as adaptive questioning, modular design, or branching logic—that improve usability and reduce fatigue. The proposal shall also identify best practices supported by research or industry standards and explain how the instrument will mitigate bias, and maintain the confidentiality and reliability required by the JPE program. Additionally, the contractor must include whether use of a self-evaluation tool will be used, specify the anticipated testing, refinement, and validation processes that will ensure the final survey tool is both effective and feasible for all respondent groups. All survey questions shall be reviewed and approved for applicability and consistency by the JPE Committee and AOIC staff.

3.4 Data Collection

The contractor shall provide a comprehensive plan for managing all aspects of confidential survey administration. This includes:

1 Standardized Recipient List Management:

The contractor must outline a clear methodology for maintaining accurate, confidential, and up-to-date lists of eligible survey recipients. This should include processes for data intake, verification, secure storage, and periodic updates throughout the evaluation cycle.

2 Secure Electronic Survey Distribution:

The contractor shall describe the electronic platform, delivery methods, and security controls used for distributing surveys. The proposal must include details on encryption, access restrictions, authentication methods, and system reliability. The contractor must also provide technical support to survey recipients, ensuring that users can access and complete the survey without difficulty.

3 Response Rate Monitoring and Improvement Strategies:

The contractor shall track response rates in real time and provide regular reports to the Committee and AOIC program staff. The proposal must explain how the contractor will identify low response trends and propose evidence-based strategies—such as targeted reminders, communication adjustments, or survey design recommendations—to improve participation.

4 Confidentiality Compliance:

The contractor must detail how all collected survey data will be protected in accordance with Supreme Court Rule 58. This includes secure storage protocols, confidentiality safeguards, access controls, staff training, and procedures for handling sensitive judicial information.

3.5 Data Analysis

The contractor shall perform comprehensive statistical analysis and provide clear, actionable insights, including:

1 Aggregate and Individual Scoring:

The proposal must explain the scoring methodologies used, including how aggregate trends are calculated, how individual-level results are derived, and how scoring reliability and accuracy are ensured.

2 Benchmarking Analysis:

The contractor must provide a detailed description of the benchmarking approach, including what comparison groups or metrics will be used, how benchmarks will be constructed, and how results will be interpreted for meaningful context.

3 Narrative Feedback Categorization:

The contractor shall outline their method for systematically analyzing and categorizing qualitative feedback. This should include coding processes, thematic analysis techniques, sentiment assessment, and how narrative insights will be integrated into

final reports in a clear and useful manner.

This data analysis will be produced by the contractor at both the individual evaluation level for use by facilitators, as well as at the broader statewide level, in order to inform statewide best practices and professional development, as determined by the Committee.

3.6 Reporting

The contractor shall produce confidential evaluation reports for each participating judge including:

- Quantitative survey results;
- Comparative benchmarks;
- Narrative feedback summaries;
- Suggested professional development themes as determined by the Committee.

3.7 Facilitation

The contractor shall:

- Train facilitators at the two-session biennial Judicial Education Conference, with attendance required for each judge in Illinois, and at specific times as determined by the Committee.
- Coordinate confidential meetings between facilitators and judges.
- Develop and provide approved facilitation guidance materials to facilitators via a website, shared network folder, or other training resource or platform.
- Develop and maintain a secure portal or platform for exchange of data files between AOIC and contractor.

The criterion for selection of facilitators plays a critical role in the success of the Illinois Judicial Performance Evaluation Project. Active or recently retired judges that have been identified or nominated by a chief judge as a judge with qualifications and characteristics of a facilitator, including senior judges, mentor judges, and judges who have been active in judicial education, are eligible to serve as facilitators. Facilitator selection must take into account the need to have an adequate pool of judges from geographic regions of the state, and an ongoing mechanism for future selection.

Regardless of the method of selection, facilitators must possess the following attributes:

- Bench experience (6 years);
- Background in judicial education;
- Adequate time to fulfill the facilitation duties

If retired, the judge must:

- Be retired less than 5 years; and

- Not be actively practicing as an attorney.

Facilitator selection criteria includes:

- The facilitator and evaluated judge are not from the same circuit but can be from the same Appellate District.
- The facilitator resides within 100 miles of the evaluated judge.
- The facilitator is of equal or greater judicial status than the evaluated judge (i.e. Circuit Judge to Circuit Judge, or Circuit Judge to Associate Judge).
- If either the facilitator or evaluated judge perceive a conflict with the other after receiving the assignment.

3.8 Data Security

The contractor shall maintain strict confidentiality and implement data security protocols which ensure the integrity of the program including but not limited to:

- Secure encrypted data storage;
- Restricted access controls;
- Secure survey platforms;
- Data residency must be within the United States as per State of Illinois and Illinois Judicial Branch protocols

3.9 Program Evaluation

The contractor shall provide quarterly and annual program evaluation reports to AOIC for review by the Committee including recommendations for improvement.

SECTION 4 – CONTRACT TERM

The anticipated contract term is three (3) years with two optional one-year renewal periods.

SECTION 5 – MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Proposers must demonstrate:

- Experience developing and administering large-scale evaluation-based survey programs;
- Expertise in statistical analysis;
- Experience with judicial or governmental organizations;
- Data security capabilities;
- Ability to provide facilitator training

SECTION 6 – PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals must include the following sections:

6.1 Executive Summary

Provide a summary of the proposed services, implementation plan, and organizational qualifications.

6.2 Organizational Background

Provide the company's organization and diversity background as provided in Attachment F:

- Organizational history;
- Relevant project experience;
- Organizational structure

6.3 Technical Proposal

Describe in detail:

- Proposed program administration plan;
- Proposed evaluation methodology(ies);
- Survey administration and design approach;
- Data collection and analysis methods;
- Reporting structure;
- Facilitator training, selection and communication;
- Data security protocols

6.4 Staffing Plan

Provide a list of key personnel including qualifications and experience.

6.5 Project Timeline

Provide a proposed implementation timeline and initial contract term.

6.6 Cost Proposal

Provide detailed pricing [Attachment A] including:

- Contractor personnel costs;
- Survey administration and implementation costs;
- Technology & Platform costs;
- Data analysis costs;
- Facilitation & training costs;
- Optional add-on services;
- Multi-year pricing options;

- Identify assumptions used to calculate pricing and conditions that could trigger additional charges;
- Cost justification, compliance statements, exceptions, exclusions or limitations

SECTION 7 – EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Technical approach/Solution Fit – 30%
- Organizational experience, personnel, & qualifications – 10%
- Plan compliance and responsiveness – 15%
- Data security and confidentiality – 15%
- Implementation plan and timeline– 20%
- Cost – 10%

AOIC reserves the right to conduct interviews with finalists.

SECTION 8 – PROCUREMENT TERMS

8.1 Right to Reject

AOIC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals; to reject individual proposals that fail to meet any requirement of this RFP; to award by item, part or portion of an item, group of items, or total; and to waive minor defects in a proposal.

8.2 Clarifications

AOIC may request additional information or clarification from proposers.

8.3 Negotiations

AOIC may negotiate contract terms with the selected proposer.

8.4 Cancellation

This RFP may be cancelled at any time without obligation.

8.5 Firm & Fixed Pricing

All cost information provided in proposer's cost proposal shall be firm and fixed for no less than 180-days from the date of submission.

8.6 Proposal Evaluation and Standard Vendor Agreement

The AOIC will evaluate the proposals and may make one or more awards. The selected vendor must be able to execute the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts' (AOIC) Standard Vendor Agreement for Goods and Services [Attachment D] and fulfill all required services. If subcontractors are engaged, the vendor must include a complete list of all

subcontractors intended to be used, their primary business office location, and a description of the work each subcontractor will be performing.

This RFP is neither a contract nor meant to serve as a contract and does not create any obligation on the AOIC to affirmatively engage with any bidder or applicant. It is anticipated that one or more of the proposals submitted in response to this RFP may be selected as the basis for negotiation of a contract with the vendor. Such a contract is presently contemplated to contain, at a minimum, the terms of the proposal submitted, as finally negotiated and approved by the AOIC. The AOIC reserves the right to negotiate additions, deletions or modifications to the terms of proposals submitted.

The AOIC's Standard Vendor Agreement for Goods and Services can be found as Attachment D. The selected vendor must be willing to use the AOIC's Standard Vendor Agreement. Given the nature of the JPE program and the confidential information stored therein, the selected vendor will most likely be identified as a "Service Organization." The selected vendor must be willing to obtain and submit annual Service Organization Control (SOC) reports for the duration of the contract. Requirements for Service Organizations can be found in Section 1B of the Standard Vendor Agreement in Attachment D.

SECTION 9 – CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Proposers must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest in Attachment B. A conflict of interest exists when a proposer has financial, professional, or personal interests that could compromise the impartial administration of the program.

The selected contractor must maintain independence from any evaluated judges or judicial candidates.

Failure to disclose conflicts may result in disqualification or contract termination.

SECTION 10 – ETHICS CERTIFICATIONS

Proposers must certify via the information in Attachment B that:

- They have not engaged in bribery or collusion;
- They comply with applicable state ethics laws;
- No prohibited gifts or political contributions have been made in connection with this procurement

Certification forms described in Section 14 must be included in the proposal.

SECTION 11 – PROTEST PROCEDURES

Any proposer may file a protest concerning this procurement. Protests must:

- Be submitted in writing;
- Be filed within seven (7) calendar days after the event giving rise to the protest; and

- Clearly state the grounds for the protest

The Procurement Officer will issue a written determination regarding the protest.

SECTION 12 – CONFIDENTIALITY

The contractor must maintain strict confidentiality of all survey responses and evaluation data. Individual survey responses must never be disclosed or linked to specific respondents, nor used for any other purpose than the administration of the program described in this RFP. All data collected is the property of AOIC and the Illinois Supreme Court.

SECTION 13 – INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

The selected contractor must maintain the following minimum insurance coverage:

- Commercial General Liability;
- Professional Liability; and
- Cybersecurity/Data Breach Insurance

Certificates of Insurance must be provided prior to contract execution.

SECTION 14 – REQUIRED ATTACHMENT DOCUMENTS

In addition to all information required by Section 6 hereof, the proposal must also include the following documents:

Attachment A – Cost Proposal [as required in Section 6.6]

Attachment B – Vendor Bid Certifications Form [See Attached Form]

Attachment C – References

Attachment D – Standard Vendor Agreement for Goods and Services [See Attached Form]

Attachment F – Company Organization and Diversity Questionnaire [See Attached Form]

SECTION 15 – SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format no later than October 5, 2026, at 5PM CT.

Late submissions will not be considered.

Submission email:

John Chatz, Chief of eBusiness & Data Strategies: jchatz@illinoiscourts.gov

Jacque Rogers, Interim Director, Court Services Division: jrogers@illinoiscourts.gov

Jana Brooks, Court Programs Administrator: jbrooks@illinoiscourts.gov

SECTION 16 – PROCUREMENT SCHEDULE

RFP Issued: August 10, 2026

Written Questions Due: August 31, 2026

Responses to Written Questions to be posted: September 14, 2026

Proposal Deadline: October 5, 2026

Evaluation Period: 30 days; November 4, 2026

Notice of Intent to Award: December 2, 2026

Contract Start Date: Anticipated January 1, 2027