



Request for Proposals

**The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) requests proposals for the
Graphic Design of *Trends in State Courts 2018*
A six-month contract beginning January 15, 2018**

Date of RFP Release: November 1, 2017

Deadline for Submissions: December 1, 2017

Submit Qualifications to:

National Center for State Courts
300 Newport Ave.
Williamsburg, VA 23185-4147
Attention: RFP Submissions for Trends in State Courts– Deborah W. Smith

Contact for More Information:

Deborah W. Smith dsmith@ncsc.org or 757/259/1827

NCSC's Profile

The NCSC is the preeminent think tank and clearinghouse of information for state courts across the country and around the world. Since its inception more than four decades ago, the National Center has served as a pioneer and a trailblazer to improve the administration of justice.

Challenges facing the courts have evolved over the years, but the National Center's mission of finding solutions remains as focused and strong as it was in 1971.

The NCSC accomplishes this largely through the tireless dedication and support from court leaders across the country. Their high regard for the rule of law enhances the NCSC's ability to conduct research, develop performance measures, and collaborate with the courts to improve the administration of justice through leadership and service.

Executive Summary

The NCSC is seeking an experienced graphic design firm to design and guide the printing of *Trends in State Courts 2018*. The execution of the contract is expected to begin on January 15, 2018. The publication deadline is June 15, 2018.

Background

The NCSC publishes *Trends in State Courts* annually. This peer-reviewed publication highlights innovative practices in critical areas that are of interest to courts, and often serves as a guide for developing new initiatives and programs, and informing and supporting policy decisions.

Trends in State Courts

- Articles are selected by the Editors at the NCSC from submissions.
- All articles are peer reviewed.
- All copy editing is handled at NCSC.
- There will be 10-15 articles of 2,500 words each in the *Report*.
- The *Report* includes graphics and pictures to help focus the articles.
- Articles are authored by judges, court staff, or researchers who work in the court community.
- 2,000-3,000 copies of the *Report* are printed annually.
- *Trends* is used for conferences and training.
- The NCSC also makes the *Report* available on its website.

The current (2017) [Trends in the State Courts](#) can be reviewed online. Older, [archived](#) editions are also available.

The NCSC will appoint a managing editor to direct the project strategically and ensure it represents the interests of the organization. Work needs to be well -coordinated between NCSC staff and the graphic design firm. After presentation of work from the graphic design firm, the managing editor will make the final decisions on all editorial, graphics, cover, and other matters throughout the publication.

Objectives

The purpose of this RFP is to select an experienced graphic design firm that will also be responsible for guiding *Trends in the State Courts 2018* through to printing.

Editorial

- The graphic design firm will work carefully with NCSC staff. NCSC will provide a managing editor, a copy editor, and staff who have experience working on earlier editions. The graphic design firm will work as part of this team to ensure that the articles are set up for the *Report*.

1. Photography and Art

- The graphic design firm will need to build, source and secure all photos, illustrations, and other design elements. Sometimes authors will provide material and the graphic designers will need to skillfully meld these into the articles. The graphic design firm will need to secure copyright release for any graphic not in the public domain.

2. Design, layout, and production art

The graphic design firm will:

- Execute the complete design and layout of the publication, including covers and all pages.
- Provide multiple cover concepts for the *Report*. The cover needs to fit as a part of a series, since the *Report* is produced annually. Ideas for the 2018 cover will evolve from work between the design firm and NCSC staff.
- Develop page grids, execute new layouts as needed, and create graphics and images to augment text-only articles.
- Usher the *Report* through print production.

3. Project Management

The graphic design firm will:

- Ensure their specified work is on track to meet a publication deadline of June 15, 2018.
- Be available for regular contact with NCSC staff by telephone or email.

4. Production

The graphic design firm will:

- Produce and refine publication files in direct coordination with appointed production staff and the firm selected to print the *Report*.
- Prepare final pre-press files to printer specifications, check color proofs, and perform press checks.

Proponent Qualifications

The graphic design firms considered for this project will be able to demonstrate the following credentials and areas of expertise:

- Design excellence in custom publishing, demonstrating ability to create a contemporary publication that will encourage NCSC's constituents to use, read and share the publication.
- Vision to keep a mature publication fresh.
- Ability to integrate graphics and pictures with text to make the *Report* interesting and visually accessible.
- An experienced, in-house design team using current, best-available design technologies and tools.
- Demonstrated experience leading a custom publishing project from conception through production.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. **Creative Vision** to maximize impact with NCSC's constituents. This will be judged from the sample of the candidate's custom design work that is submitted.

2. **Ability to Deliver Creative and Design Excellence** that shows the *Trends Report* at its very best and provides a high-quality *Report*. Again, this will be judged from the submitted sample of the candidate's work.
3. **Project Management Capability** to ensure all participants with the graphic design firm are well-coordinated and fully informed of progress and deadlines, and that production runs smoothly and results in a precise, high-quality *Report* on-time and on-budget. This will be judged from the reference checks noted in submissions below.
4. **Costs** for completing all estimates for all elements of the project as listed above under "Objectives." Please include cost estimates for the work of producing the Report. Do not include costs for printing.

Submission Details for RFP

Proposals may be sent via e-mail to dsmith@ncsc.org, or can be mailed to:

National Center for State Courts
300 Newport Ave.
Williamsburg, VA 23185-4147
Attention: RFP Submissions for Trends in State Courts– Deborah W. Smith

Submissions should include:

- The written proposal.
- At least one sample of the candidate's custom publishing work with a description of the project's objectives, process, and results.
- Brief biographies of staff who will be directly involved with the project, including project management and design, as well as the principal contact.
- Three references based on projects completed within the past five years. Please provide a contact name and a brief description of the project.
- A project budget that breaks down fixed costs for the project, including editorial, art elements, project management, design and layout. Please also indicate any relevant billing policies.
- The project budget should not include printing costs; those will be sourced separately.

Incurring Costs of Proposal:

The bidder shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of the proposal up to the award of the contract.

Questions

Questions may be directed to Deborah W. Smith at dsmith@ncsc.org.

Selection of Winning Vendor

It is anticipated that a vendor will be selected by December 29, 2017.

Summary of Key Dates

- Deadline for questions: November 15, 2017
- Answers to received questions: November 20, 2017
- **Proposed submission deadline: December 1, 2017, 5:00 p.m. ET**
- Notice of intent to award contract: December 29, 2017
- Expected start of contract: January 15, 2018
- Publication deadline: June 15, 2018

Additional Guidelines

A contract with the winning vendor is conditional on internal NCSC approval. It is anticipated the successful firm will enter into a contractual agreement on terms put forward by the NCSC following the RFP process. NCSC reserves the right to cancel this RFP, accept, or reject any and all proposals, in whole or part, to waive or permit cure of minor irregularities, and to conduct discussions with all qualified offerors in any manner necessary to serve the National Center's best interest. The award will be based on the evaluation criteria listed above.

The National Center retains all rights and interest in the work product, *Trends in State Courts 2018*.

Aside from the designated contact person listed above, we ask you not to contact any NCSC employees or board members. Such contact may result in immediate disqualification.
