MONTANA JUDICIAL BRANCH
Information Technology Program
HB10 Proposal
Refresh Court Electronic Filing System
$1,500,000 project cost
Maintenance already in base budget and HB2

Customers: The Judicial Branch provides an electronic filing system to attorneys, judges, and other court users in the Supreme Court, District Court, Courts of Limited Jurisdiction, and Water Court.

- Approximately **8,000** users including private attorneys, government attorneys, court staff at all levels, court reporters, and other agency legal staff use the Judicial Branch's electronic filing system.
- The system is currently deployed in 81 courts and processed more than **615,000** filings on **134,000** cases in 2024.
- The electronic filing system creates physical storage efficiencies as all court records are stored electronically thereby eliminating physical court files and storage needs. Legal documents are submitted electronically through secure web portals, leading to benefits such as significantly faster filing times, delay reductions creating cost savings, and improved accessibility.
- Additionally, private attorneys, law firms, and government filing agencies (including the county attorneys, state Office of the Public Defender, the Department of Justice, the Department of Revenue, and the Department of Labor and Industry) no longer employ runners to drive from offices to courthouses to hand deliver paper copies of filings. The filings are submitted electronically in a fraction of the time.
- Filings are processed in a much more efficient manner as the courts are not handling paper, scanning, punching, and filing court documents. The electronic file is reviewed, approved, file stamped, and the documents are automatically docketed to the case, as well as routed to judges for their review.

Business Case and Objectives: The system is 10 years-old and the aging architecture must be upgraded to address new cybersecurity challenges as well as maintenance and patching issues.

- The proposal brings Montana's electronic filing system to a modern, supported, and routinely patched environment that will allow the vendor the ability to review internal software packages, conduct vulnerability scanning routines, reduce cybersecurity risks, and alleviate long-standing maintenance and support pain points.

- o **Discovery and Remediation Solution**
- Perform detailed discovery analysis to identify areas within the solution that require updates or pose potential risks. This project task includes conducting vulnerability scanning and internal software packages review.
- Develop remediation plan for identified update or risk areas. Develop risk mitigation for areas that cannot be addressed.
- Create delivery schedule and implementation plan to address identified areas.
- Implement agreed upon changes.
- Perform solution quality assurance and regression testing.

- o **Application/Integration Improvements and Utilities Development**

Create designs and implementation schedule for the following features:
- Adding message queues for all messages within E-File including ability to reprocess messages (where appropriate).
- Provide administrative users ability to manually update document/Docket Entry status and move them along in the process.
- Investigate options to improve the communication between document conversion and ability to better handle high volume filing situations.
- Develop background tasks to check if statuses between CMS and E-File are out of sync.
- Develop tasks to alert administrative users of communication issues with CMS.
- Review options for updating account/role management within the E-File application.

Risks:

- Not upgrading the underlying system components and architecture of Montana's current electronic filing system creates significant risk to the state network/state agencies, and Montana constituents, as cybersecurity actor advancements mature.
- If the vendor discontinues maintenance and support of the current system, the Judicial Branch would shutter the system or be forced to request funding for a complete replacement system, including funding for the many Montana customizations already developed, vetted, and integrated in the current solution. The projected cost of a new system is $7- $8 million.