

*First Judicial District of Pennsylvania's ("FJD")*

*Request for Proposal ("RFP")*

*For*

*Website Chatbot Services*

*Dated April 22, 2026*

***VENDOR'S QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ("Q&A")***

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Q1. Will Criminal Justice Information Services ("CJIS") compliance apply to the chatbot environment, or only to potential future CPCMS integration?

**A1. CJIS compliance may only apply to potential future integrations.**

Q2. What is FJD's expected interaction volume — average and peak? Is there traffic or call center data available?

**A2. Expected interaction volume is unknown, with data being unavailable.**

Q3. What is the contract term structure — base year plus options, or fixed multi-year?

**A3. Typically, contract term structure is an initial year with annual renewal options. However, FJD is open to negotiating a fixed multi-year agreement.**

Q4. Is CPCMS integration informational only in the current scope, or is direct connectivity anticipated in the base contract?

**A4. Informational only in the current scope.**

Q5. Does FJD prefer US-only hosting or specific data residency requirements?

**A5. United States only.**

Q6. Does FJD expect a fixed annual price, an implementation-plus-subscription split, or usage-based pricing tiers?

**A6. FJD is open to all options a prospective vendor chooses to offer.**

Q7. Is live chat an existing system for escalation, or a future capability?

**A7. A future capability.**

Q8. Does FJD require human translation review for the five required languages, or is machine translation with quality assurance acceptable?

**A8. Machine translation with quality assurance is acceptable but must include a warning that translations may not be 100% correct.**

Q9. Is there a target go-live date following contract award?

**A9. No.**

Q10. Live Chat & Escalation (Section 2.i.f) - Does FJD currently use a live chat platform (e.g., Zendesk, Microsoft Teams, Salesforce Service Cloud)? Is real-time session handoff to a live human agent required at initial launch, or is providing contact information and phone numbers acceptable as an interim escalation path?

**A10. FJD currently uses Microsoft Teams. Real-time session handoff to a live human agent is not required at initial launch. FJD is willing to consider providing contact information and phone numbers as an interim escalation path.**

Q11. CPCMS Integration – Launch Scope (Section 2.v.c) - Is CPCMS integration required at initial launch, or is it a future phase enhancement? Does CPCMS expose an API layer for external integrations? Is the integration view-only as stated in the RFP, or could future phases include transactional access?

**A11. See Q4. It is not yet determined whether future phases will include transactional access.**

Q12. CPCMS Integration – Workflow & Data Scope (Section 2.v.c) - What specific user workflows should the CPCMS integration support (e.g., case status lookup by docket number, upcoming hearing dates, outstanding fines or fees, document availability)? Is the data to be surfaced public record, or does it require user authentication? Should the chatbot query CPCMS in real time on each user request, or should data be pre-indexed into the knowledge base on a scheduled basis?

**A12. See Q4 and Q11.**

Q13. Multi-Division Scope (Section 2.i.b) Does FJD intend a single unified chatbot with knowledge spanning all six divisions (Family, Orphans', Trial, Civil, Criminal, Traffic), or a separate chatbot instance per division? If separate instances, will each division have its own admin team, knowledge base, and branding?

**A13. Same chatbot across all divisions.**

Q14. Peak Traffic Volume (Section 2.vii.c) - What is FJD's expected peak concurrent user volume for the chatbot? Are there specific daily or monthly interaction-volume estimates from the courts.phila.gov website analytics?

**A14. Expected peak concurrent user volume for the chatbot is unknown by FJD. Interaction volume estimates are unavailable.**

Q15. Response Time SLA (Section 2.vii.b) What response time SLA does FJD expect for chatbot responses (e.g., first response taken within 2 seconds)? Are there different expectations for peak vs. off-peak hours?

**A15. FJD wants a reasonable response time based on industry standards at all hours.**

Q16. Content Volume for Knowledge Base (Section 2.iii.a)- Approximately how many court procedures, FAQs, forms, and policy documents does FJD anticipate need to be structured and ingested into the knowledge base during the initial content development phase?

**A16. FJD has yet to determine.**

Q17. Plain Language / Low-Literacy Responses (Section 2.vi.c) - Does FJD have specific plain language standards for chatbot responses (e.g., Flesch-Kincaid Grade 6 readability level)? Should the system automatically simplify responses for low-literacy users, or is configuring the AI to use plain language in its system prompts sufficient?

**A17. FJD does not already have specific plain language standards for chatbot responses and would be open to vendor guidance on whether configuring to use plain language in system prompts is sufficiently comparable to automatically simplifying responses.**

Q18. Safety & Crisis Response (Section 2.ii.c.i) - What types of sensitive or crisis-related inquiries do FJD anticipate (e.g., domestic violence, mental health crisis, self-harm)? Should the chatbot provide hotline numbers, route to a live person, or both? Is there a preferred crisis resource list to configure?

**A18. FJD is open to vendor guidance on industry standards so to receive the best solution for sensitive or crisis-related inquiries made to the chatbot.**

Q19. Deployment Model - Does FJD prefer how the chatbot is hosted — cloud SaaS, government cloud (e.g., Azure Government, AWS GovCloud), or on-premises deployment? Are there any IT or security policies that restrict or mandate a specific hosting model?

**A19. FJD does not have a preference on how the chatbot is hosted. Aside from United States only hosting / data residency (see Q5), policies do not otherwise restrict or mandate a specific hosting model or platform.**

Q20. Incumbent / Existing Solution - Does FJD currently have any chatbot, virtual assistant, or AI-powered self-service tool on courts.phila.gov? If so, is this engagement intended to replace or augment it? Are there any existing

content, knowledge base, or Q&A data from a prior system that should be migrated?

**A20. Yes, one exists for the Municipal Court, Civil Division for two of their case types. This engagement is intended to replace it with a solution that works for all divisions. Awarded vendor guidance will be sought on whether migrating such legacy data will be useful for their solution.**

Q21. Session Data Retention (Section 2.iv.e) - What is FJD's preferred user data retention policy for chatbot session data — purge at session end, retain for a defined period for audit purposes, or no retention at all?

**A21. FJD lacks a preferred user data retention policy for chatbot session data at present but is interested in vendor guidance on the options available.**

Q22. Version Control & Audit Logs (Section 2.iii.c.i) - Does FJD require full version history and rollback capability for knowledge base content (e.g., ability to revert to a prior version of a procedure document), or is a change log with timestamps and user attribution sufficient?

**A22. FJD does not have a set requirement but looks forward to vendor guidance and recommendation considering the options available.**

Q23. Optional Impact Metrics / Call Center Analytics (Section 2.xiv.a) - Does FJD have a call center analytics platform that could provide baseline call volume data for benchmarking the chatbot's impact on reducing inbound calls?

**A23. No.**

Q24. Optional Future Expansion (Section 2.xiv.b) - Which future capability is highest priority for FJD — appointment scheduling, SMS/text notifications, or court program guidance tools? Is there an existing scheduling or texting system (e.g., Tyler Technologies, Twilio) that would need to be integrated?

**A24. FJD does not have a set highest priority for future capability at present. FJD does have an existing texting notification solution, but it is undetermined whether that will be integrated in the future.**

Q25. What does success look like (reduced calls, better navigation, user satisfaction)?

**A25. Yes, to all the above examples.**

Q26. Do you envision the model using content outside of what is currently on your website? If so, what other data sources are you envisioning being used?

**A26. Yes, FJD wants the model to use policies, procedures, and court information that is documented within the various divisions but that is not on the website currently.**

Q27. Is any of the data on your site being provided by an external tool or service?

**A27. Possibly, while going through a language translation or web accessibility tool.**

Q28. What platform/CMS is your website built on?

**A28. Microsoft IIS virtual, on-prem server.**

Q29. What systems (like case management) need to be integrated, if any?

**A29. No integrations to start.**

Q30. Should responses be strictly scripted, AI-generated, or hybrid?

**A30. Likely a hybrid approach, but open to prospective vendor recommendation and reasoning.**

Q31. Is there a target go-live date?

**A31. See Q9.**

Q32. Is there a budget range or preferred pricing model?

**A32. No budget range to disclose at present. Open to various pricing models, but total anticipated cost to FJD should be provided.**

Q33. What are the primary objectives for the chatbot, i.e., reducing call center volume, improving public access, or user satisfaction?

**A33. See Q25.**

Q34. What are the most common user inquiries or top use cases the chatbot should prioritize at launch?

**A34. Common user inquirers are unavailable at present.**

Q35. Should the chatbot provide guided, step-by-step workflows or primarily informational responses?

**A35. To be determined, but likely both with heavy emphasis on informational responses to start.**

Q36. What existing content sources will be made available for chatbot training, i.e., FAQs, forms, policies, or website content?

**A36. Yes, to all the above.**

Q37. Who will be responsible on the FJD side for content approval, updates, and governance post-launch?

**A37. A small leadership team led by either FJD's Information Technology Chief or FJD's Chief Deputy District Court Administrator.**

Q38. What level of response control is preferred, i.e., fully scripted responses, AI-generated responses with guardrails, or a hybrid approach?

**A38. See Q30.**

Q39. Are there defined protocols for handling sensitive, crisis-related, or legally ambiguous inquiries?

**A39. See Q18.**

Q40. Can you provide details on the current website CMS and any API availability?

**A40. No API availability and a CMS is not used for the current website.**

Q41. Are there any specific hosting, cloud, or data residency requirements vendors must adhere to?

**A41. See Q5 and Q19.**

Q42. What are the expectations regarding data retention, logging, and CJIS compliance for this solution?

**A42. See Q1 and Q21.**

Q43. Is there a target timeline or preferred go-live date for the chatbot implementation, including any pilot phase?

**A43. No.**

Q44. Are there any budget ranges, funding constraints, or cost expectations that vendors should consider when structuring their proposals?

**A44. See Q32.**

Q45. Functional scope 2.i.a / 2.i.d - Please confirm whether the chatbot must provide step-by-step procedural workflows that can guide users through multi step tasks (e.g., filing), or if high level directional guidance is acceptable.

**A45. Initially, high level informational guidance with an eventual move to multi-step tasks.**

Q46. Content governance 2.iii.a–c - What is the required FJD approval workflow for knowledge base updates, which court roles will have CMS publishing privileges, and what are required retention periods for version control/audit logs?

**A46. See Q21 and Q37.**

Q47. CMS & handoff 2.iii.a.i - Will FJD accept a vendor provided CMS, or must the vendor integrate with an existing FJD content platform? If an existing platform is preferred, please identify it or provide integration constraints.

**A47. The existing platform, managed manually via IIS, is preferred.**

Q48. Does FJD recommend use of a hosted LLM, or are public LLM services (e.g., OpenAI, Perplexity) allowed? Please clarify.

**A48. Hosted LLM but open to vendor guidance and reasoning.**

Q49. Does FJD require ensembled AI for accuracy (e.g., fallback, validation mechanisms)?

**A49. FJD is open to responses that use both single simple solutions and responses that use ensembled AI.**

Q50. Legal boundaries 2.ii.a–c - Please provide the exact disclaimer language, any pre-approved scripted responses for sensitive topics, and the escalation protocol for crisis or legally sensitive queries the vendor must enforce.

**A50. See Q18.**

Q51. CJIS / PII 2.iv.a–b - Identify specific data elements that are prohibited from storage and specify which integrations or use cases will be subject to CJIS controls. Describe the process for formal exceptions to retain limited Personally Identifiable Information (“PII”), if any.

**A51. CJIS is expected to be inapplicable. No case information or PII should be available via the chatbot.**

Q52. Integrations 2.v.a–c - Are there existing APIs or sandbox endpoints for CPCMS or other internal systems for read-only guidance? If available, please provide API documentation, authentication methods, and sample schemas.

**A52. Chatbot will not integrate with CPCMS or other internal Courts systems.**

Q53. Does FJD provide hosting, or is it the vendor's responsibility? Please clarify.

**A53. FJD will consider either option as presented by a prospective vendor.**

Q54. Accessibility / Language 2.vi.a–c - Confirm whether multilingual support must provide full conversational parity for Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese (Mandarin), and Arabic, or whether translated FAQs are acceptable initially; also, state validation/testing requirements for WCAG 2.1 AA.

**A54. FJD would like for users who speak these languages, and eventually others, to have the same experience as English speaking users. Understanding the possibility of a lack of precise precision in translations, appropriate disclaimers should be given.**

Q55. SLA / Performance 2.vii.a–d - Provide numeric targets for uptime, expected concurrent sessions at peak, response time expectations, and required RTO/RPO for disaster recovery.

**A55. See Q2 and Q14. Prospective vendors should provide recommended targets, response times, etc. with reasoning based on industry standards and their expertise.**

Q56. Pricing & timeline 4.v / 2.ix - Clarify preferred commercial model (one-time implementation + annual support vs. subscription), whether FJD has a budget ceiling or target, and whether funding is already approved.

**A56. See A6, A32, A44.**

Q57. Data security 2.iv.c–d - Specify minimum encryption standards (algorithms/key lengths), preferred hosting model (vendor cloud, government

cloud, or on-premises), and maximum allowable retention windows for session logs or conversational transcripts.

**A57. Industry standard encryption. For hosting model, see Q19 and Q53. Maximum allowable retention windows for above referenced items are undetermined at present.**

Q58. Will this solution be expected to be a commercial off-the-shelf (“COTS”) product, or can it be custom-built to meet the district’s requirements?

**A58. Ideally custom built, but FJD is open to all options with reasoning for vendor recommending such.**

Q59. Who is the incumbent vendor currently providing similar services?

**A59. There is no incumbent vendor providing similar services.**

Q60. Is the incumbent vendor permitted to participate in this RFP?

**A60. See Q59.**

Q61. What are the current limitations and challenges being experienced?

**A61. Not Applicable as this will be a new functionality for FJD.**

Q62. Who will be responsible for hosting the solution?

**A62. See Q53.**

Q63. What is the preferred hosting model — cloud-based or on-premises?

**A63. See Q19 and Q53.**

Q64. Is there a preferred cloud service provider (e.g., AWS or Azure)?

**A64. No.**

Q65. Should the chatbot retain context across multiple sessions, or only within a single session?

**A65. FJD is open to guidance from prospective vendors with reasoning for their recommendation.**

Q66. Can you provide additional details on integration with CPCMS or other internal systems (e.g., API availability, access restrictions)?

**A66. See Q11, Q40, and Q52.**

Q67. What is the expected daily/monthly user volume and peak traffic load for the chatbot?

**A67. See Q2 and Q14.**

Q68. Should the chatbot support authenticated user interactions, or remain fully anonymous?

**A68. FJD does not intend for users to be authenticated.**

Q69. What are the expectations and timeline for ongoing support and maintenance after implementation?

**A69. FJD would want ongoing support and maintenance after implementation.**

Q70. What is the anticipated project go-live date?

**A70. See Q9, Q31, and Q43.**

Q71. Will any on-site work be required, or can all work be performed remotely?

**A71. If solution can be accomplished using fully remote work, it is permissible. Training in person may be a better option for FJD.**

Q72. What is the approved budget or estimated budget range for this project?

**A72. See Q32.**

Q73. Does FJD require a fully vendor-hosted SaaS model, or a court-controlled hosting option?

**A73. See Q19.**

Q74. Are there any existing CMS or digital platforms that the chatbot must align with?

**A74. No.**

Q75. Does FJD prefer a rule-based NLP chatbot, an LLM-based AI assistant, or a hybrid approach?

**A75. FJD is open to all options but currently prefers either rule-based or hybrid.**

Q76. Should responses be strictly retrieval-based (RAG only), or allow generative summarization of approved content?

**A76. Open to both options.**

Q77. Will the chatbot be limited to approved knowledge sources, or can it infer across multiple documents?

**A77. Undecided but open to both options with prospective vendor guidance and reasoning for their recommendation.**

Q78. Are APIs for internal systems already available, or will the vendor be responsible for building integration adapters?

**A78. FJD IT does not anticipate chatbot having access to internal systems.**

Q79. Will FJD provide structured FAQs/Q&A datasets, or must the vendor create them?

**A79. FJD can provide FAQs/Q&A datasets but would need guidance from vendor on 'structured' for this type of data.**

Q80. Is a phased rollout (pilot to full launch) preferred, or a single full deployment?

**A80. Pilot to full launch. Ideally starting with an internal pilot.**

Q81. Is there an expected budget range or not-to-exceed amount for this project? What pricing model is preferred (e.g., fixed cost, subscription/SaaS, usage-based per conversation)?

**A81. See Q32.**

Q82. Are there any constraints on the use of third-party AI services (e.g., OpenAI, Azure OpenAI)?

**A82. Potentially, depending on what we use to train the model.**

Q83. Would FJD consider proposals where VOBE participation is introduced for post-award (e.g., during implementation), or must it be defined at submission?

**A83. Yes, all proposals are considered.**

Q84. Are there any restrictions on utilizing internationally based (offshore) resources for development, support, or maintenance activities?

**A84. Yes, FJD requires no use of offshore resources.**

Q85. What are FJD's goals and primary objectives for the chatbot (e.g., improving customer service for litigants/parties, increasing efficiency for court personnel, reducing administrative workload, reducing call center volume)?

**A85. Yes, to all the above.**

Q86. In addition to the FJD website and Common Pleas Case Management System, are there any other tools, systems, or portals that should be integrated with the chatbot (e.g., e-filing, SharePoint)?

**A86. No. FJD's Municipal Court, Civil, has two chat assistants which will be eliminated and replaced by this project.**

Q87. FJD will retain full control over the chatbot knowledge base content. Who will be responsible for creating plain-language information, documents, and forms (e.g., FJD staff/volunteers, the selected vendor, or others)?

**A87. All of these are potential options which FJD will consider from prospective vendors.**

Q88. Does the chatbot need to incorporate external, non-FJD-controlled sources into its knowledge base? If so, which sources?

**A88. No, unless recommended by the prospective vendor with reasoning.**

Q89. When live assistance is required, to whom will users be handed off (e.g., court personnel, help desk)? Will escalation require integration with existing software, or can it be handled within the chatbot?

**A89. This is undetermined at present as live assistance hand-off may not be part of the initial phase.**

Q90. What is the anticipated plan for maintaining, updating, and enhancing the chatbot after launch?

**A90. Ongoing Service and Maintenance agreement with the selected vendor.**

Q91. Will FJD require or prefer any in-person work in Philadelphia during the project?

**A91. See Q71.**

Q92. Is FJD able to share the project's budget range?

**A92. No.**

Q93. How should pricing be structured and presented? Is a 3-year or 5-year pricing model preferred?

**A93. Open to responses with multiple options and/or tiers.**

Q94. What is the budget allocated for this RFP?

**A94. See Q32.**

Q95. Is this initiative a budgeted and fully funded workstream?

**A95. Yes.**

Q96. Can FJD share call volume data (e.g., number of inbound calls) to support analysis of potential chatbot impact?

**A96. See Q2.**

Q97. Will the chatbot be deployed on the following website:

<https://www.courts.phila.gov/>

**A97. Yes.**

Q98. What was the annual spend on this project in the previous year?

**A98. Nothing. This is a new functionality for FJD.**

Q99. If this is a new contract, what is the anticipated annual budget?

**A99. See Q32.**

Q100. Is FJD open to a hybrid delivery model utilizing a mix of offshore and onshore resources?

**A100. See Q71 and Q84.**

Q101. Will the work be performed on-site, remotely, or in a hybrid model?

**A101. See Q71 and Q84.**

Q102. Would FJD consider granting a 1–2-week extension for proposal submission?

**A102. Yes, proposals must be submitted no later than 10:00 AM on Friday, May 22, 2026.**

Q103. Is this contract expected to be awarded to a single vendor or multiple vendors?

**A103. To a single primary vendor.**

Q104. Who are the previous incumbents for this project?

**A104. None. This is a new functionality for FJD.**