



Search for the President  
National Center for State Courts  
Williamsburg, Virginia

## **THE SEARCH**

The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) seeks a visionary, entrepreneurial, and diplomatic leader to serve as its next President. NCSC is an independent, nonprofit corporation committed to improving the administration of justice and the rule of law through leadership and service to our nation's state courts and justice systems around the world. Its mission is to drive innovation and progress in courts and justice systems. Since 1971, NCSC has remained committed to equipping courts with necessary evidence-based research and objective analysis to solve problems and increase public confidence in the administration of justice.

NCSC's next leader will directly impact the provision of improved court processes, education, and innovation while making justice more accessible to all. State courts are the primary adjudicators of personal, contractual, and familial disputes, often issuing the final determination on questions of state law that affect the lives of millions. The Center plays a vital and independent role in supporting the administration of justice in state courts by swiftly identifying and responding to emerging trends and pressure points and deploying resources when and where courts need them. NCSC also works with numerous court systems around the globe. NCSC facilitates constructive conversations among state court leaders and within international justice systems, stimulating and disseminating innovations that improve court administration domestically and globally. The Center's work in creating innovative solutions to the evolving needs of state and international courts in their pursuit of fair and efficient court administration has a tangible impact on parties, legal counsel, jurists, and others the administration of justice touches.

The President will join NCSC at a crucial moment when the judiciary is increasingly expected to solve systemic social issues, courts are under-resourced, and trust in the judicial branch has eroded. The role allows a futurist leader the opportunity to have a direct, positive, and lasting impact on the administration of justice in the United States and around the world. NCSC has recently experienced significant organizational growth in staff and portfolio. The preferred candidate will understand the challenges state courts face, foresee coming challenges, and have the appetite and skills to diplomatically engage key external stakeholders while leading an organization of more than 190 talented and dedicated employees

throughout the United States and abroad. The successful candidate will bring a collegial approach and engender collaboration, transparency, and respect at all levels of the organization.

The NCSC Board of Directors, through its Executive Committee, which will select and engage the President, has appointed and charged a 7-member Presidential Search Committee chaired by Indiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Loretta Rush that will review application materials and vet the candidates. NCSC has retained the services of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important search. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed to the search firm, as indicated at the end of this document.

## **ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW**

The National Center for State Courts is a not-for-profit corporation headquartered in Williamsburg, Virginia. Founded by the Conference of Chief Justices in 1971, NCSC is the preeminent judicial reform organization in the United States, a national and global leader in helping courts improve the administration of justice, and the premier provider of quality services to the U.S. state court community and courts across the globe. A think tank for state courts, NCSC is the place where opportunities for innovation are identified, captured, and tested. Deeply committed to advancing just, free, and safe communities, the Center is a leading provider of technical assistance, training, and technology to strengthen justice systems in the U.S. and around the world. The Center offers [webinars](#), on-site or remote technical assistance, [education and training](#), and direct consulting in numerous areas of expertise, including [access to justice](#); [behavioral health](#); [children, families and elders](#); [communications, civics and disinformation](#); [court management and performance](#); [courthouse planning and security](#); [data](#); [interpreter information](#); [leadership and governance](#); [racial justice](#); and [technology](#). As the only organization that enjoys collaborative relationships with the Conference of Chief Justices, the Conference of State Court Administrators, and other associations of judicial leaders, NCSC has unique insight into the most pressing challenges and opportunities facing state courts. NCSC's International Programs group works in dozens of countries worldwide supporting rule of law efforts.

The mission of the National Center for State Courts to drive innovation and progress in courts and justice systems springs logically from its original purpose to gather information that stimulates innovation to benefit all courts. Initially, the Center concentrated on helping courts to reduce backlog and delay. This work included the publication in 1978 of the groundbreaking [Justice Delayed: The Pace of Litigation in Urban Trial Courts](#). The Center provides judges and court administrators a vital national perspective on court operations through the Court Statistics Project started in 1978; the work of the Knowledge and Information Service; and the holdings of its [Library eCollection](#), one of the largest collections of court administration-related materials in the world, with more than 8,000 documents in a searchable online database. In 2020, NCSC formed a "Rapid Response Team" to provide courts guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic and Artificial Intelligence since 2024. The Center's 2022-2025 strategic plan campaign, [Transforming Justice](#), rests on four overarching principles: access to justice, racial justice, human rights and social justice, and technology. The campaign also identified five areas of focus for NCSC: enhancing

rural court services, improving remote and hybrid court proceedings and services, integrating national court initiatives into court policies and practices, enhancing court leadership and governance, and advancing the rule of law in domestic and international courts and justice systems.

NCSC supports more than 150 projects for state court jurisdictions each year. The Center works with court associations, such as the [Conference of Chief Justices](#) (CCJ), the [Conference of State Court Administrators](#) (COSCA), the [National Association for Presiding Judges and Court Executive Officers](#) (NAPCO), and the [Court Information Technology Officers Consortium](#) (CITOC), among many [other associations and partners](#), to improve public trust and confidence in the courts. For over 30 years, COSCA and NCSC have partnered to provide a national authoritative and comparative source of information on state court work and organization. [Trends In State Courts](#) is an annual, peer-reviewed publication with wide circulation that highlights innovative practices in critical areas and frequently serves as a guide for developing new initiatives and programs and supporting policy decisions. NCSC also provides staff support to the Conference of Chief Justices, the Conference of State Court Administrators, the American Judges Association, the National Association for Court Management, and numerous other national court-related associations.

The organization is headquartered in Williamsburg, VA, and has offices in Arlington, VA, and Washington, D.C. Its professional and administrative staff of more than 190 full-time employees are located in 41 states and abroad. Most staff work fully remotely or on a hybrid schedule. The Center also has a contingent workforce of approximately 150 consultants who work on projects as needed. NCSC's 2024 annual operating budget is approximately \$100 million, including revenues from assessments paid by the state court systems, government and private grants and contracts, tuition and user fees for education programs, conferences and other services, sales of publications, and private contributions. NCSC funding comes from many sources. Approximately 70% of the Center's revenue and programming budget is associated with NCSC's international work.

NCSC works extensively with courts in other countries, particularly in post-conflict societies and developing democracies, to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law, often at the community level. NCSC staff partner directly with embassies in these countries, employing local experts and sending consultants from the U.S. to work at the community level to develop, implement, and manage projects. NCSC is the dominant recipient of U.S. Department of State contracts and funding, primarily through the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Over time, NCSC has worked with government, civil society, and development partners in more than 70 countries to create more accountable institutions and expand access to justice. Currently, NCSC works with more than 30 countries throughout Eastern Europe, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. It presently works in every Central American country, except Nicaragua. The Center's expertise in its [International Program](#) includes judicial governance; judicial education; professional development; judicial administration; court technology; access to justice; ethics, integrity, and anti-corruption; criminal justice; transnational and organized crime; and juvenile justice. NCSC has a significant global impact, strengthening judicial administration and the rule of law abroad and at home.

## **GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP**

The Center is governed by a Board of Directors (“Board”) consisting of 27 members. Members are elected to three-year terms by the state chief justices and state court administrators following an inclusive nomination process. The President is a non-voting member of the Board and reports to the Board often through the Board Chair. Utah Supreme Court Chief Justice Matthew Durrant currently serves as the Chair of the Board of Directors.

Mary C. McQueen has led NCSC as president for 20 years. Before joining NCSC in 2004, Ms. McQueen served as Washington’s state court administrator from 1987 to 2004 and as director of Judicial Services for the Washington State Office of the Administrator for the Courts from 1979 to 1987. In 1995, she was elected president of the Conference of State Court Administrators, and she was chair of the Lawyer’s Committee of the American Bar Association’s Judicial Division.

For a complete list of the Board of Directors and staff, please see the [NCSC website](#).

## **ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT**

Attuned to the evolving landscape of court administration, the President is knowledgeable of court administration public policy issues and best practices, is a thought leader on matters of strategic importance to the Center and seeks opportunities to strengthen NCSC’s position in the future.

The President supervises the daily business affairs of the organization and provides executive oversight of the 190-person full-time staff working in the U.S. and internationally. The President stewards the organization’s resources and manages an operating budget of approximately \$100 million. The President also oversees over \$57 million in assets and \$12 million in endowment. Reporting directly to the President are members of the senior executive staff and one executive assistant. Currently, the following are direct reports within the senior executive staff: an Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer; a Vice President & Chief Administrative Officer; a Vice President of Court Consulting; a Vice President of Research & Design; a Vice President of Public Affairs; a Vice President of Education & Professional Development; a Vice President of International Programs; a Director of Advancement & Strategic Partnerships; a Director of Racial Justice, Equity and Inclusion; a Director of the Center for Judicial Ethics; a Chief Legal Officer; and a Chief Financial Officer.

The President serves as the principal spokesperson for NCSC with employees, state courts and governments, the Federal judiciary, the general counsel and legal communities, public policy communities, and the public. The President must identify, cultivate, and foster productive working relationships with several organizations. This work entails engaging with key stakeholders across the

country and internationally and traveling extensively to conferences, meetings, and NCSC-sponsored events.

### **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

In addition to the duties described above, the President's primary opportunities and challenges will include but are not limited to the following:

#### **Provide visionary leadership in responding to the changing nature of the court system, including the increasing expectation that courts solve systemic societal problems.**

Leading NCSC will require strategic planning and tactical advice to aid courts in a demanding time. Judges are routinely expected to intervene in matters that stem from unaddressed societally-generated issues, often of great consequence. Beyond applying the law to the facts of individual disputes, courts are called upon to resolve disputes generated by homelessness, substance abuse, mental health, and unemployment – topics traditionally within the purview of legislatures and administrators. Courts are also tasked with responding to societal trends that directly impact court operations. Pro se litigation is a good example. In the past several years, the increased volume of pro se litigants, informed by misinformation and social media algorithms, has required judges to devote more time to educating litigants. In a challenging environment, NCSC and its President must respond to the decline in public trust of the courts and the simultaneous increase in public demand for solutions. NCSC's team must understand the challenges of our time, anticipate future ones, and respond carefully and accurately with innovations that can best support the courts.

#### **Maintain a neutral, nonpartisan stance in supporting courts while working to restore public confidence in the justice system.**

The President will promote NCSC's objective engagement in policy based on data and empirical studies and must relentlessly avoid politics and divisiveness. In today's increasingly polarized, hyper-partisan climate, the President and Center must refrain from advocating for a preferred solution, from predicting legal outcomes, and from taking a position aligned with any partisan stance. Instead, the President will navigate the political landscape by diplomatically and judiciously identifying common ground in which NCSC will operate. In addition, the Center's fidelity to impartiality aids in instilling confidence in the judiciary when distrust in the courts is at an all-time high. In promoting best practices, access to justice, and effective court processes, the President will ensure that NCSC supports both the improvement of court systems and the perception of the judicial branch as grounded in ethics and the neutral application of the law.

#### **Promote increased synergy between NCSC's rule of law programming abroad and its court administration work within the United States.**

NCSC serves as the preeminent judicial resource center for the United States and the world. Domestically and internationally, the Center supports judges and court administrators in effectively administering justice and running courts. Although approximately 70% of the Center's budget relates to its international rule of law programming, NCSC's principal commitment is to improve the state court system within the U.S. The next President will encourage greater symbiosis between NCSC's international and domestic programming to ensure that the Center serves as an information clearinghouse on best judicial practices across the globe. In particular, the President will promote receptivity to improvements in access to justice and judicial administration developed outside of the U.S.

**Develop institutional and personal relationships with a wide range of constituents. Solidify and broadcast NCSC's role as a think tank to state courts.**

NCSC strengthens courts' capacity for innovation. To facilitate this, the President must develop partnerships with external constituents, including government officials, funders, and international partner organizations to frequently and consistently champion the value of NCSC and its mission-driven objectives.

NCSC works with a broad array of constituents. State government officials play a crucial role, and the Center aids state courts in developing productive policy relations with their state governments. The President must also foster strong relationships with U.S. State Department officials and members of the U.S. Congress, as well as officials within other potential stakeholder agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Justice, USAID, and the U.S. Department of Education. Given NCSC's position as the dominant provider of U.S. State Department programming on the rule of law, the President must effectively convey the impact of NCSC's international programs within the countries it works and their value to the diplomatic interests of the United States.

To stay on the cutting-edge of judicial administration issues, the President must continually explore and develop new products, services, and potential opportunities while evaluating current NCSC endeavors. This requires an enhanced focus on identifying and assessing opportunities for growth through joint ventures and strategic partnerships. Given the recent significant leadership turnover across U.S. state court systems, it is crucial that the President communicate the value and purpose of NCSC to newer state judicial leaders, so they value NCSC's expertise, services, and programs. The President leads NCSC's engagement with an exceptionally broad array of constituents.

**Use modern technology and communication methods to continually improve the administration of justice.**

The Center must accelerate curricular and pedagogical innovation to meet courts' ever-evolving needs. The President will lead the organization in prototyping educational materials on critical emerging issues, such as the role of artificial intelligence and hybrid schedules in the court system. These materials must come in brief and digestible formats, such as short webinars and infographics. By responding quickly to

pressing topics with practical advice and education, NCSC provides valuable resources that busy judges and court administrators need but lack the time, staff, and expertise to develop themselves.

**Steward and bolster NCSC's financial strength and stability.**

Strategic partnerships and collaborations are essential to NCSC's fiscal health. More than 85% of NCSC revenue is restricted, and approximately 70% is directed to international programming. Working closely with Board members, the President will implement an advancement program to raise private, nonpartisan funds to diversify the Center's revenue streams. This will entail building relationships with donor corporations, law firms, and foundations.

**Provide sound management and foster collaboration within NCSC's hybrid work environment.**

The President will provide sound management of the daily operations of the Center, including providing executive-level oversight for a staff of more than 190 full-time employees, a majority of whom work remotely throughout the United States and abroad. To maintain a cohesive culture and mission, the President must encourage effective working relationships across the organization's various operational groups and work collaboratively with the senior program and administrative leaders to ensure coordinated and effective provision of services, such as the continued development and administration of operational policies. The Center has experienced significant, rapid growth in recent years, particularly in response to demands in its court consulting services and international programs. Now that NCSC is a robust organization, encouraging collaboration across groups and supporting the development of newer staff will be priorities. The President will also prioritize the recruitment, development, retention, and succession planning of the high-performing leadership team at NCSC, including for the role of vice president of international programs with that vice president's impending retirement.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

While no single candidate is likely to have all the ideal qualifications, NCSC seeks candidates with the following experience, abilities, and characteristics:

- Energy, creativity, and humility to lead NCSC to its next level of achievement
- Impeccable character and integrity
- Prior experience overseeing an organization of similar size in an organizational leadership role that involves setting strategic direction, engaging multiple stakeholders, and attracting, managing, and maintaining a diverse professional workforce in a hybrid/remote environment
- Knowledge and understanding of the structure and operations of state courts and a passion for assisting and improving access to justice and the administration of the judicial system
- Proven responsiveness and imagination to identify the needs and issues of the courts and develop programs and services to meet them

- Proven experience managing major policy crises requiring collaboration, legal analysis, public response, and strategic action with political and ideological neutrality
- Willingness and ability to develop the human and financial resources necessary to support NCSC's programs and services and the ability to manage them effectively
- Experience and ability to be an articulate and effective advocate for the court community; to shape and communicate vision, message, and strengths; and to develop effective responses to media and online communication inquiries
- Previous experience working with a governing body is preferred
- Experience developing effective networks across diverse sectors required; working with international justice systems is preferred
  - Established reputation with national and international stakeholders
- A JD is required
- A significant presence at the headquarters in Williamsburg is expected and to facilitate that expectation, relocation to Williamsburg is preferred
- A willingness to travel extensively (domestically and internationally)

#### **COMPENSATION RANGE**

The anticipated annual salary for this role is between \$340,000 and \$380,000. Factors affecting the starting pay within the range include (but are not limited to) a candidate's skills, education, experience, and other qualifications related to the position.

#### **APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS**

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the search process is completed. Confidential inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be made through the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/national-center-state-courts/president>

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*NCSC is an equal opportunity/disability/veteran employer committed to diversity, equity & inclusion.*