

Hey Prosecutors: There's an App for That

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Suppose you are a prosecutor and you want to subpoena a witness from another state to testify at an upcoming trial. How might you go about doing that? What forms do you use? Do you need some sort of certificate from a judge? Is the witness entitled to compensation? If so, how much? Can you pay in advance?

If you are getting ready for trial, all of these questions might occur to you, and you might wish there was a one-stop shop for an answer, given all the other items on your trial prep list. Guess what? There is! It's a new application called NC Prosecutors' Resource Online (NC PRO) and you can find it [here](#). Just type "out of state witness" into the search box, and click on the entry titled "Securing Attendance of Witnesses." There you will find the answers to every question posed above and links to the relevant forms.

Whoa! What's this? For many years, the School of Government published the North Carolina Prosecutors' Trial Manual, a 1,000-plus-page paper resource that identified, explained, and expounded upon the criminal procedure that governs the prosecution of crimes in North Carolina. Our retired colleague, Bob Farb, wrote its contents, publishing the last edition in 2012.

When it came time to update the manual, we wanted to do more. We set out to help more prosecutors resolve more issues. And to help them do it more fairly, quickly, and effectively.

So we built NC PRO, a digital knowledge base for North Carolina prosecutors.

What's a knowledge base? A knowledge base is an organized, searchable repository of information about a topic that expands over time as experts contribute information to it. Technology giant Apple and many other companies have such knowledge repositories. If you want to know how to change your Apple ID or share pictures with friends using AirDrop, for example, you type your question into a search box on [apple.com](#) and an answer appears.

Our knowledge base covers criminal law and procedure. Each entry contains an article written by our resident expert, Prosecutor Educator Jonathan Holbrook, summarizing a discrete procedural issue. Among hundreds of others,

there is an entry for [correcting defective criminal pleadings](#), an entry describing [when offenses and defendants may be joined for trial](#), and an entry addressing the [state's right to appeal](#). Each entry contains hyperlinks to all the cases, statutes, and forms it references. A column on the right-hand side of each article (or at the bottom of an article viewed on a smart phone) lists and links related resources such as relevant sections of the superior court judge's bench book and the defender manual and blog posts. A resources menu at the top of the page links to the criminal case compendium created by our colleague Jessica Smith, pattern jury instructions, opinions from North Carolina's appellate courts, the North Carolina General Statutes, and other helpful and frequently-used materials.

NC PRO is accessible on a laptop or smart phone, enabling prosecutors to view its material from anywhere—including the courtroom.

What if I'm not a prosecutor? You can still use NC PRO—and we hope you will. Some of the site's features, such as the embedded pdf of the [North Carolina Sentencing Handbook](#), may only be viewed by registered prosecutors. But most of the content is available to anyone.

We're not done yet. This is the first iteration of what we hope will be a long-lasting and well-used platform. We plan to expand its scope over the coming year to address additional topics. If you have suggestions about how we can make NC PRO even better, we'd love to hear from you. In the meantime, happy searching – and happy finding.