Request for Information (“RFI”)

Statewide Absentee Printing and Mailing Service

July 7, 2020

INTRODUCTION

The S.C. State Election Commission (“SEC”) is seeking information and estimated costs for a statewide absentee ballot printing and mailing service.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The state of South Carolina, utilizing the ES&SS ElectionWare voting system statewide, serves nearly 3.4 million registered voters within 46 counties and 2200+ precincts. Currently, a voter may vote in person on election day in their assigned polling place, in-person absentee at the county election office or county election office satellite location, or by mail-in absentee. All but 13 counties in South Carolina currently print and mail ballots from their county election and voter registration office. As a result of COVID-19, the state of South Carolina has seen an unprecedented number of votes cast by mail-in absentee. The SEC is seeking an absentee ballot printing and mailing service for use in every county due to an anticipated further significant increase in absentee ballots. We estimate between 1.5-2 million absentee voters for the 2020 General Election. See the attached spreadsheet for absentee ballot, precinct, current, and previous year(s) voter registration totals.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this RFI is to generate information in order to potentially recommend a single statewide service provider to county election offices. A qualified vendor would be capable of accepting absentee ballot requests from county offices of elections and voter registration, printing the absentee ballots, and mailing the absentee ballots (and return envelope) directly to South Carolina voters. The implementation deadline would be no later than October 1, 2020. Vendors should respond with all costs to provide this service to each county.
**SCOPE OF WORK**

The new solution must meet all listed minimum requirements.

**Minimum Service Requirements:**

1) The selected vendor shall either a) be established as an Approved Ballot Printer by South Carolina’s election systems vendor (Election Systems and Software) and certified by the South Carolina Elections Commission or b) complete the process to become an Approved Ballot Printer by South Carolina’s election systems vendor (Election Systems and Software) and certified by the South Carolina Elections Commission by the aforementioned implementation date.

2) The vendor must demonstrate the ability to provide timely absentee mailing services to all counties (46) simultaneously. See attached spreadsheet for register voters per county.

3) The vendor must be capable to include all required documents (return envelope and other county documentation) in the absentee ballot packet sent to voters.

4) The vendor must be able to provide IMB barcodes based on the MID number of each county for the envelope being mailed to the voter and the envelope returned by the voter. This is also known as “roundtrip tracking.”

5) The vendor must be able to integrate with South Carolina’s Voter Registration and Election Management System (VREMS) to process and produce reports to accurately update absentee ballot status for all voters that have requested a mailed absentee ballot. This is to be accomplished through the transfer of text files to and from vendor/county.

6) The vendor must have the ability to securely send/receive data to/from the counties, such as through a secure FTP or comparable process.

7) The vendor must be able to guarantee daily and next-day mailing of absentee ballots based on daily data transfers from county offices.

8) The vendor must include a barcoding function, compatible with VREMS, to scan the return of ballot envelopes.

9) The vendor must include daily reporting of progress and complete accounting of service, to include mail tracking.

10) Vendor must specify the last date it will accept a file for mailing absentee ballots prior to the 2020 General Election.

11) The vendor should be able to mail ballots on Saturdays (after a Friday data upload) during the final 2 weeks of the election.

12) The vendor must have a method for verifying that the voter file was transmitted and received accurately.

13) The vendor must be able to provide images of the ballot mail package for audit purposes.
**SUBMISSIONS:**

All submissions should include, at a minimum, all aforementioned requirements and are due by 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time on **Friday, August 7, 2020**. Please ensure your submission provides any itemized costs or fees, whether one-time or recurring.

Any questions concerning this RFI may be sent to: Howard Knapp, Director of Voter Services, at hknapp@elections.sc.gov no later than Monday, August 3, 2020. Answers to questions received, if any, will be posted on the SCVOTES website (www.scvotes.gov) as an addendum to this RFI. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download the request and check SCVOTES for answers to questions. If technical assistance is required to download, please contact Brian Leach, Information Technology Manager, at bleach@elections.sc.gov.

Submit responses electronically to: Howard Knapp, Director of Voter Services, at hknapp@elections.sc.gov.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABSENTEE BALLOT, PRECINCT AND VOTER REGISTRATION TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spartanburg County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumter County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsburg County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>