

# 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&S 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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:bleach@elections.sc.gov).

Submit responses electronically to: Howard Knapp, Director of Voter Services, at [hknapp@elections.sc.gov](mailto:hknapp@elections.sc.gov).

## ABSENTEE BALLOT, PRECINCT AND VOTER REGISTRATION TOTALS

	Absentee Ballots Mailed	Absentee Ballots Mailed	Absentee Ballots Returned	Absentee Ballots Returned	Precincts	Total Registered Voters
	2016 General	2018 General	2016 General	2018 General		
Abbeville County	2,902	1,598	2712	1505	15 Precincts	15522
Aiken County	18,452	10,152	17039	9065	84 Precincts	115724
Allendale County	1,494	1,634	1421	1424	8 Precincts	5787
Anderson County	15,786	8,821	14359	7944	80 Precincts	121206
Bamberg County	1,658	1,021	1506	926	13 Precincts	9486
Barnwell County	2,117	1,306	1985	1236	15 Precincts	13665
Beaufort County	24,636	19,686	22210	18011	92 Precincts	129639
Berkeley County	18,345	12,363	16045	10638	94 Precincts	131600
Calhoun County	1,900	1,198	1787	1117	12 Precincts	10543
Charleston County	66,024	44,554	60132	40226	182 Precincts	290849
Cherokee County	4,446	2,453	4269	2323	29 Precincts	32853
Chester County	4,590	2,215	4413	2086	21 Precincts	20408
Chesterfield County	3,200	1,599	3019	1486	25 Precincts	25973
Clarendon County	6,415	3,674	6106	3450	26 Precincts	24500
Colleton County	5,689	3,349	5418	3144	32 Precincts	24996
Darlington County	7,918	5,006	7485	4738	32 Precincts	43111
Dillon County	2,293	1,676	1942	1214	19 Precincts	18658
Dorchester County	17,254	10,795	15282	9631	90 Precincts	124198
Edgefield County	3,185	2,027	2994	1859	12 Precincts	17131
Fairfield County	3,186	2,015	3027	1916	22 Precincts	15559
Florence County	18,939	10,861	16466	10214	63 Precincts	87827
Georgetown County	10,025	5,515	9286	5052	34 Precincts	44148
Greenville County	35,426	22,850	30616	19481	154 Precincts	330981
Greenwood County	7,547	4,429	6944	4020	50 Precincts	40823
Hampton County	2,657	1,951	2448	1582	18 Precincts	12769
Horry County	22,978	13,505	19446	11380	127 Precincts	238990
Jasper County	3,081	2,049	2838	1912	15 Precincts	20043
Kershaw County	7,969	4,824	7192	4483	34 Precincts	42100
Lancaster County	11,233	6,469	10459	5779	36 Precincts	62452
Laurens County	4,806	2,571	4430	2363	34 Precincts	39571
Lee County	2,029	1,126	1889	1086	22 Precincts	11580
Lexington County	30,558	16,427	26879	14468	100 Precincts	194455
McCormick County	2,210	1,428	2120	1362	11 Precincts	7324
Marion County	4,096	2,270	3567	2033	17 Precincts	20955
Marlboro County	5,198	3,475	4552	3146	15 Precincts	17812
Newberry County	3,831	2,231	3592	2094	30 Precincts	23524
Oconee County	9,865	6,109	9327	5656	31 Precincts	52021
Orangeburg County	11,744	6,678	11054	5941	55 Precincts	61973
Pickens County	8,258	4,336	7279	3768	63 Precincts	76514
Richland County	61,014	30,135	55450	26425	153 Precincts	270218
Saluda County	1,357	830	1270	774	19 Precincts	12287
Spartanburg County	30,517	15,186	28232	13677	100 Precincts	195353
Sumter County	15,863	8,589	13532	7842	59 Precincts	71148
Union County	2,143	1,161	2034	1092	23 Precincts	16390
Williamsburg County	3,428	2,273	3205	2125	28 Precincts	21514
York County	30,528	13,835	28061	11915	96 Precincts	182087
<b>Total:</b>	<b>558,790</b>	<b>328,255</b>	<b>505319</b>	<b>293609</b>	<b>2290 Precincts</b>	<b>3346267</b>