



**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)
RFI #EKB-2015-0106**

< This is NOT a Bid Solicitation >

The Department of General Services (DGS), at its sole discretion, may or may not issue a solicitation as a result of this RFI.

TITLE: Military / Overseas Online Balloting

ISSUE DATE: January 06, 2015

CONTRACTING OFFICER:
PHONE (804) 786-8425

Ebony K. Beaver, CPPB, VCO, VCA
E-mail: ebony.beaver@dgs.virginia.gov

RESPONSES DUE: **Wednesday, February 11, 2015 02:00PM**

Prospective suppliers requesting clarification on this RFI must submit questions **in writing** to Ebony K. Beaver, CPPB, VCO, VCA, via email at: ebony.beaver@dgs.virginia.gov, no later than 5:00PM on **Wednesday February 4, 2015**. No questions will be answered by telephone. **No prospective supplier or vendor is to directly or indirectly contact any employee, board member, agent or representative of the Virginia State Board of Elections, or the Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT) regarding this RFI.**

This public body does not discriminate against faith-based organizations in accordance with the Code of Virginia or against a bidder or offeror because of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, status as a service disabled veteran, or any other basis prohibited by State law relating to discrimination in employment. This public body complies with the Department of General Services' Division of Purchases and Supply *Agency Procurement and Surplus Property Manual* and the *Vendors Manual*, and the *Code of Virginia*, § 2.2-4310a and § 2.2-4343.1d.

I. PURPOSE OF RFI

This RFI is being issued by the Department of General Services (DGS) for the purpose of assisting the Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT) in the feasibility of providing eligible uniformed services voters deployed outside of the United States to return a voted absentee ballot securely and electronically in a manner that ensures integrity, confidence and accuracy of the vote. Authorizing legislation, 2014 Virginia Acts of Assembly Chapter 604, is available at <http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?141+ful+CHAP0604>.

This RFI's goal is to:

1. survey the marketplace as it relates to the type/s of services and suppliers currently available for this purpose;
2. solicit, collect and assess information from qualified potential vendors regarding their experience and capabilities;
3. assess potential budget constraints, technology, process methodologies;
4. and to assess other possible factors to determine the most secure and auditable methodology.

This RFI is solely intended to gather information; **it is not a procurement.**

II. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this RFI is to obtain information from industry leaders about all factors that may bear upon any secure electronic return of voted ballots program and/or system that might be contemplated. Any response to this RFI should include, but is not limited to:

1. program or system development, production, training, deployment/distribution and scalability;
2. program or system management and/or administration;
3. security and fraud prevention;
4. business intelligence, data management, analytics, and dashboard features (if any);
5. policy and regulatory development (if needed);
6. any other component, feature, or activity integral to the deployment or administration of any such statewide program or system for use in the secure distribution and return of voted absentee ballots from eligible uniformed services voters deployed outside the United States

Information provided should include product information and specifications concerning any overall program system and/or service, as well as any information relative to any and all integral components to the aforesaid program, system and/or services, to include training, maintenance and technical support services, and pricing.

Maintenance and technical support and services are to include, but are not limited to, design, installation, training, asset management/reporting, maintenance, and warranty of hardware and software products provided under a master ordering agreement.

All respondents are encouraged to review the Department of Elections' Military and Overseas voting information page on the web site to become familiar with the Commonwealth of Virginia's specific requirements at <http://elections.virginia.gov/index.php/registration/military-overseas/> .

This information may potentially assist the Department of Elections in providing guidance to the General Assembly regarding the implementation of legislation related to this RFI, and with the development of requirements for any potential future Request for Proposals (RFP).

III. REQUIREMENTS

The intent is that any proposed Solution should support the online distribution of absentee ballots to eligible uniformed services voters outside the United States, the secure return of those online voted ballots, proof that these voted ballots can be securely transmitted from the voter to their respective local election office for printing, and proof that the secrecy of the ballot can be maintained. In addition, the use of the U. S. [Department of Defense's Common Access Card \(CAC\)](#) for authentication and/or verification of a voter's identity for secure return of ballots is strongly desired.

A. Design Requirements

- i. The ballot creation, delivery and marking solution must meet all State and federal website design guidelines and standards, including accessibility standards and security standards.
- ii. The solution must be hosted at the Commonwealth's Enterprise Server Center in Chester, VA on equipment operated by the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) and Northrop Grumman (NG) partnership. Detailed specifications for server, licensing and networking needs should be included in the response. (Additional information may be found at www.vita.virginia.gov).

B. System/Technical Requirements

- i. The Commonwealth seeks a completely web-based solution, meaning that all applications (e.g., maintenance portals, end user interface and reporting) are available to approved users and appropriate login rights via the current version of all standard web browsers, such as, but not limited to: Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, and Safari.
- ii. The front or "start" page of the Services website must be password protected to prevent unauthorized users from accessing or viewing any content or material within the application.
- iii. The Solution shall provide authorized users the ability to access the Service via the internet twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week, and 365 days per year. Ideally, web browsing software shall be the only tool necessary to access the application. If the solution requires other tools (e.g., CAC card reader, Adobe Flash Player, etc.) please provide a list of those necessary tools.
- iv. The application shall accommodate, at a minimum, 10,000 registered users.
- v. The application shall accommodate, at a minimum, 5,000 simultaneous users.
- vi. The application must not require the user to pay for the download of any software to leverage the online content.
- vii. Application must have the ability to be accessible and to operate on PC's utilizing low bandwidth and/or dial-up internet access.
- viii. The application itself must be password protected for access, moderations, and control.
- ix. Access to the application must not be limited to any group of IP addresses.
- x. The application shall include contingencies and alternatives to address emergencies and system failures or shutdowns.
- xi. The application shall not allow for any outside pop-up windows and/or advertisements to display at any time during a user's session.
- xii. Solution shall comply with all provisions of the then-current Commonwealth of Virginia security procedures published by the Virginia Information Technologies Agency ("VITA") and which may be found at:

<http://www.vita.virginia.gov/library/default.aspx?id=537#securityPSGs> or a successor URL(s), as are pertinent to Contractor's operation.

C. Ballot Creation

- i. Each of Virginia's 133 localities will be able to manage its individual ballot styles within the system. Data can be provided by the Department of Elections for the ballots and their associated precincts, but each locality should have the ability to finalize and approve its ballot styles.
- ii. The system shall handle a federal-only ballot style for federal elections and state-only ballot style for statewide office elections.

D. Ballot Distribution

- i. All [Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act](#) (UOCAVA) eligible voters with active, approved absentee applications entered into the statewide voter registration system can access their ballots using this system.
- ii. Each locality will be able to send a link via e-mail to its eligible voters inviting them to access their ballot through the system.
- iii. The voter will access a secure website, authenticate to the website and then view their ballot. The correct and full ballot style will be presented to the voter.
- iv. The ballot distribution website must meet all state and federal website design guidelines and standards, including the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) accessibility standards.
- v. The voter can print the ballot and ballot return package information without marking it so that the ballot may be completed and returned by mail. The printed ballot and package shall scale to print on paper sizes A4 and 8.5"x11".

E. Marking Ballots

- i. Voter can mark the ballot online and review their selections before finalizing the ballot.
- ii. Voter can enter write-in candidates when allowed under state and federal law. (Write-ins are not allowed for primary elections in Virginia).
- iii. System should alert the voter if they under or over vote and provide an opportunity for the voter to correct the issue.
- iv. The voter can print the marked ballot and ballot return package information so that the ballot can be signed and returned by mail. The printed ballot and package shall scale to print on paper sizes A4 and 8.5"x11".

F. Secure Return of Ballots

- i. Only voters with an active, approved absentee voting request with a reason code representing that they are an eligible uniformed services voter deployed outside the United States can return a ballot electronically. UOCAVA voters who are not deployed overseas can access the system, but must print and return their ballot either in person or by mail.
- ii. Absentee ballots being submitted require a signature from the voter and a witness. 2014 *Acts of Assembly* Chapter 604 amends *Code of Virginia*, § 24.2-706 to allow for the modification of the voter statement to make it compatible with electronic submission which could include removal of the witness feature.
- iii. Only one (1) marked ballot can be submitted by each voter.
- iv. Voter should be able to see the status of their submitted ballot at all times.

- v. Voter should receive email confirmation that the ballot was successfully cast.
- vi. Ballot should be returned to the correct local election office in a secure way, ensuring voter privacy. A certification of the recorded submission as cast would be preferred.

G. Other Considerations

- i. Secrecy of voted ballots shall be maintained.
- ii. Auditing controls shall be in place to identify and prevent fraudulent activity.
- iii. The system should not tally any votes.

H. Management Platform

- i. Provide a uniform, interactive solution that can be managed by the Department of Elections using separate user accounts based on user access roles.
- ii. Marked ballots can only be accessed/viewed by the local election official(s) representing the locality where the ballot is cast.

I. Reports

- i. Customizable
- ii. Provide statistical information for online votes requested, approved, denied, and cast based on user access roles while maintaining privacy of the votes.
- iii. Detailed audit log of all actions associated with using the system.
- iv. Application shall be capable of generating user reports in any one or more of the following file formats:
 - a. Text (.txt)
 - b. Rich Text Format (.rtf)
 - c. Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx)
 - d. Adobe Acrobat (.pdf)
 - e. Excel (.xls or xlsx)

Prospective suppliers are encouraged to submit information regarding their services, capabilities, costs, prior experience, examples of work performed, lists of US states where the system is currently in use, and any other information deemed pertinent in accordance with the information requested in this RFI.

The Commonwealth is investigating the market to assess available suppliers, information, services, capabilities, methodologies, processes, etc. prior to possibly conducting a formal procurement for the Goods and Services described above.

IV. TERMS AND CONDITIONS SPECIFIC TO THIS RFI

- A. **General Terms and Conditions:** The Commonwealth of Virginia General Terms and Conditions are hereby incorporated into this RFI by reference. A copy of these General Terms and Conditions may be obtained by contacting the Contracting Officer whose name appears on the front of this RFI or by visiting: http://www.eva.virginia.gov/library/files/APSPM/Appendix_B_Sect_I_APSPM.pdf
- B. **Proprietary Information/Disclosure:** Respondent is advised that the [Virginia Public Procurement Act](#) (Section §2.2-4342F, *Code of Virginia*, as amended) shall govern public inspection of all records submitted by Respondent. Trade secrets or proprietary information submitted by a Respondent in conjunction with this RFI are not subject to public disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; however, Respondent must invoke the

protection prior to or upon submission of the data or other materials. Respondent must provide a statement that identifies the data or other materials to be protected and clearly state why such protection is necessary. Furthermore, Respondent shall submit trade secrets or other proprietary information separately in a sealed envelope clearly marked "PROPRIETARY". Information submitted that does not meet the above requirements will be considered public information in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. An all-inclusive statement that the entire information package is proprietary is **unacceptable**. A statement that the Respondent's costs and/or pricing are to be protected is **unacceptable**. Respondent will be required to remove any such statement(s) in order to be eligible for further review.

- C. **Disposition of Information Packages:** All materials submitted in response to this RFI shall become property of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The original submittal of each Information Package will be retained for official files. Said package will become a public record and will be open to public inspection subject to the Proprietary Information/Disclosure section of this RFI.
- D. **Cost of Responding:** This RFI does not commit the Commonwealth to pay any costs incurred by the Respondent to this RFI or to any other party in the preparation and/or submission of proposals to the RFI or in making necessary studies or designs for the preparation thereof, nor is the Commonwealth obligated to procure or contract for such services.

Proposals should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of capabilities to satisfy the requirements outlined in this RFI. The Respondent is responsible for all costs of proposal preparation.

- E. **Package submission requirements:** Respondent is required to submit **SIX (6)** hard copies, and one (1) electronic CD copy of their information package. **If the Respondent's proposal contains proprietary information, Respondent should submit an additional one (1) redacted hard copy and one (1) redacted electronic copy.**
- F. **Identification of information package envelope:** The Respondent's information package should be contained in a sealed envelope, identified as follows:

From: _____

Name of Respondent	Due Date	Time
Street or Box Number	RFI Number	
City, State and Zip Code	RFI Title	
Name of Contracting Officer:		

Information packages may be hand-delivered to the designated location in the office issuing the RFI. Packages submitted elsewhere, including to other state or federal agencies, **will not be accepted**.

G. **Presentations/Demonstrations:** The Commonwealth reserves the right to request any, all, or none of the suppliers responding to this RFI to present their response or demonstrate their services for discussion and clarification purposes, and as the Commonwealth deems necessary. In such event, the supplier is under no obligation to present their response to this RFI, but if it were to do so, the supplier would bear all expenses. A supplier should be prepared at such time to physically present their response to this RFI, and be prepared to answer any questions.

H. **SIGNATURE BLOCK**

Respondents to this RFI are **required** to provide the following information and return this page with their information package:

RFI EKB-2015-0106 ELECT MILITARY / OVERSEAS ONLINE BALLOTING	
The undersigned acknowledges that a response to this RFI is for informational purposes only, that a information package submittal does not bind the Commonwealth to procure or contract with the Respondent for delineated goods and services, this RFI is not a bid solicitation or any form of a procurement, and that the Commonwealth may or may not issue a formal solicitation as a result of information obtained from the RFI.	
Company Name: _____ Address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____ Signature: _____ Printed Name: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____	Contractor's TIN: _____ eVA Vendor ID or DUNS Number: _____ Telephone: _____ Cell: _____ Email: _____ DSBSD SWaM Certification Number: _____ (if applicable) State Corporation Commission (SCC) Number: _____ (if applicable)
This information below is requested for informational purposes only (please check all that apply): Corporation: <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership: <input type="checkbox"/> Proprietorship: <input type="checkbox"/> Individual: <input type="checkbox"/> Woman Owned: <input type="checkbox"/> Small Business Owned: <input type="checkbox"/> Minority Owned: <input type="checkbox"/>	
NOTE: This public body does not discriminate against faith-based organizations in accordance with the <u>Code of Virginia</u> , §2.2-4343.1 or against an Offeror because of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by state law relating to discrimination in employment.	