

Request for Information (RFI)

## Ballot Scanning and Tabulating System

### Executive Summary

This RFI describes certain requirements of the State of Maine concerning a Ballot Scanning and Tabulating System and invites vendors to provide information which might be of interest to the State. After reviewing submissions, the Department's Division of Elections may issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) based on a complete statement of requirements, inviting responses.

### The Election Process in Maine

State and federal elections in Maine are conducted in a manner common to the New England states, involving a cooperative effort between the State and local jurisdictions ("municipalities") [NOTE: the words will be used interchangeably]; there is no county-level election administration.

The Secretary of State is Maine's chief election official with central authority to oversee the application of the election laws and procedures for federal and State elections to include:

- Approval of voting systems for use by municipalities;
- Design, preparation, and distribution of ballots and other election forms in a consistent format for use by all municipalities;
- Training and advising municipal election officials in the proper conduct of statewide elections;
- Collecting and compiling statewide reports of election results and voter registration figures; and
- Conducting recounts centrally by following uniform procedures.

The conduct of elections is decentralized, taking place in approximately five hundred separate local voting jurisdictions including cities, towns, plantations, and a small number of unorganized townships that administer their own elections. The majority of the approximately 585 voting places statewide are in jurisdictions with a single voting place, while larger municipalities may have up to 11 voting places.

Maine has approximately one million registered voters; however Maine's municipalities vary widely in size and character with the number of registered voters per municipality ranging from 3 to 50,000. Over 90 percent of the voting jurisdictions have fewer than 5,000 registered voters and over 50 percent have fewer than 900 registered voters.

Each municipality has a municipal clerk who is responsible for conducting elections. The local jurisdictions are responsible for determining the location and number of voting places; securing accessible buildings and arranging the voting area for each election; electing or appointing local election officials and ensuring their training; and preparing ballots for all local elections. Municipalities that do not wish to use hand-counted paper ballots must use voting machines approved or purchased by the State.

Two categories of voting systems are currently used in Maine. Hand-counted paper ballots are used by about 373 municipalities (380 voting places) and optical scan ballots are used by about 118 local jurisdictions (206 voting places).

The State provides an Accessible Voting System (AVS) at each voting place to ensure that voters with disabilities have the option to vote privately and independently. Maine's AVS is the Inspire Vote-By-Phone™ system which uses a phone to access an audio ballot and a

telephone facsimile machine to generate a ballot marked according to the voter's selections. The AVS ballots currently are hand-counted at the voting place regardless of whether the municipality uses an optical scan tabulator to count other ballots.

For State and federal elections, results are tabulated at each voting place and reported on a paper form to the municipal clerk. The results are certified by the clerk and transmitted to the Secretary of State within three (3) business days after the election.

## System Requirements

The State of Maine is interested in ballot scanning and tabulating solutions which meet current needs and are compliant with State and federal voting and ballot requirements. The content of submissions should provide information about the following required attributes in addition to general operating characteristics.

### The system must:

- comply with State and federal election laws and rules;
- permit scanning of a paper ballot and tabulation of the votes marked on that ballot;
- contain a digital storage component and its capacity should be described;
- enable the customer to program elections for the tabulating equipment; and
- include election management software that allows for the generation and production of "camera-ready" ballot copy and has a data import/export feature.

In addition, the response should:

- address any existing system rules and constraints for the creation of ballots used with the system (i.e. ballot size, weight of paper, etc.);
- explain whether the equipment and software are certified, or are in the process to become certified, under federal voting system standards and indicate the certification sought and where they are in the process;
- describe the physical attributes of the equipment including the mechanism for processing ballots and placing them in the ballot box, handling ballots that cannot be fully processed (e.g. blank ballots, write-ins, etc.) and reporting the election results;
- explain the method of handling technical support requests when these concern ballot preparation, the operation of equipment, and election programming of the equipment;
- include a description of the available training and documentation for users of the system; and
- address any additional functionality or components of the system that would make it accessible to individuals with disabilities, or describe if the system is compatible with any other accessible voting systems or ballot marking devices.

## Legal Requirements

Any voting system selected must meet the following criteria as required under the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). The system shall:

- notify the voter when they have over-voted one or more contests prior to casting their ballot and provide them the opportunity to correct the ballot;
- comply with the error rate standards established under section 3.2.1 of the voting systems standards issued by the Federal Election Commission; and
- provide a permanent paper record of tabulated votes with a manual audit capacity.

## Content of Response

The Bureau is interested in a timely response to this RFI. Responders should provide specific detail as to how their solution will meet the State's requirements and are asked to limit their responses to thirty (30) pages or less.

## Additional Information and Demonstrations

The Bureau reserves the right to contact one or more of the responders by phone or e-mail for the purposes of obtaining additional information or to schedule a demonstration. The State of Maine also reserves the right to take no further action in response to the information received. All requests will be solely at the discretion of the Bureau.

For any State-requested demonstrations, the Bureau is encouraging an on-site demonstration highlighting the system and functional components to a group of key personnel; however a web presentation is acceptable in cases where a site visit is not possible. This group plans to learn as much as possible about the solutions presented that meet the expected business requirements. Demonstrations will be scheduled during the period from mid-March to mid-April and will not exceed three (3) hours, including time for questions and answers. The Bureau will schedule a facility in the Augusta, Maine area for on-site demonstrations. All costs associated with the response and any demonstration, other than providing the site, will be the responsibility of the responder.

## Disclaimer

This RFI is issued for information and planning purposes only and does not constitute a solicitation for services. Responses to the RFI will not be returned and may be subject to public disclosure if so requested. Responders are solely responsible for all expenses associated with their response. Any subsequent solicitation for services or procurement resulting from this RFI will take the form of a standard Request for Proposals (RFP) to satisfy the needs of the State of Maine and will be issued entirely at the State's discretion.

## Questions from Responders

Questions about this Request for Information may be sent via e-mail to the Bureau at Katharine.Moore@maine.gov. No questions will be accepted after 5 p.m., local time on March 10, 2009.

## Responses to the RFI

Twelve (12) copies of each set of materials comprising a response should be sent by regular mail or private courier and be received by March 17, 2009 at one of the following addresses.

USPS Mailing Address	Physical Address
Julie Flynn, Deputy Secretary of State Bureau of Corporations, Elections, and Commissions 101 State House Station Augusta, ME 04333-0101	Bureau of Corporations, Elections, and Commissions Attn.: Julie Flynn, Deputy Secretary of State Burton M. Cross Building, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor 111 Sewall Street Augusta, ME 04330-6830