

Secure Electronic Voting RFP Kit

The purpose of this document is to assist election officials in jurisdictions with DRE voting systems in identifying and selecting qualified independent security experts to perform a security assessment of those systems.

The following guidelines are provided for officials to consider:

Qualifications: Few studies of voting machine security have been conducted to date. Thus, direct experience is not necessary. However, prospective Vendors should be able to demonstrate a track record of more than five years of design analysis, code reviews, and penetration testing for highly demanding environments such as major financial institutions or intelligence agencies.

References: In all likelihood, the marketing pitches made in responses to the RFP will look and sound alike. Take the time to speak with references at length. Ask them about the prospective Vendor's methodology, openness of communications, quality of findings, and clarity and usefulness of the report(s) prepared. Make sure the references are from institutions with demanding security requirements.

Price: Quality security assessments are relatively expensive – this is custom work and few people have the necessary expertise. It is standard to pay about 10% of the overall project costs for direct security costs, though for voting systems work that percentage is likely to be lower than in the private sector.

Independence: Look for firms that are independent of hardware and software vendors and from the policy debates over these issues. Too often, firms with product ties recommend the use of their products where alternative solutions would better serve your needs. Once written into recommendations, it will take extra work on your part to justify why you are not following the expert's product recommendations.

Timing and Communication: Rather than simply send the RFP to a large number of unknown Vendors, it is preferable to conduct research to identify well-qualified firms to target in conjunction with the RFP process. Experience shows that these discussions will help refine your expectations of the actual project and will allow officials to expedite the Vendor selection process. These discussions will also ensure that the prospective Vendors understand the scope of work and any state-specific requirements and, more importantly, enable your team to assess the responsiveness and qualifications of the Vendors in ways that written RFP responses alone cannot.

RFP Template

Purpose of RFP

The purpose of this RFP is to enable [contracting jurisdiction] to procure the services of a highly qualified independent consulting firm to conduct a security assessment of [contracting jurisdiction]'s electronic voting systems and make recommendations to remedy any deficiencies that are found.

Confidentiality

The terms of this RFP and all other information provided to the Applicant in connection with the RFP or otherwise in connection with this Vendor selection process are to be treated by the Applicant as strictly confidential and proprietary. Such materials are to be used by the Applicant solely for the purpose of responding to the RFP. Access shall not be granted to third parties except upon prior written consent and upon the written agreement of the intended recipient to treat the same as confidential. We may request at any time that any materials be returned or destroyed at the [contracting jurisdiction]'s election. Responses to this RFP will be deemed public information and should not contain proprietary or sensitive information.

Administration

Technical Contact

Any questions concerning technical specifications or Statement of Work (SOW) requirements must be directed to:

Name: _____
Address: _____

Phone(s): _____
Fax: _____
Email: _____
Alternate: _____
(include name, phone number, and email address)

Contractual Contact

Any questions regarding contractual terms and conditions or proposal format must be directed to:

Name: _____
Address: _____

Phone(s): _____
Fax: _____
Email: _____
Alternate: _____
(include name, phone number, and email address)

Due Dates

A written confirmation of the Applicant's intent to respond to this RFP, sent to the Contractual Contact shown above must be received by [Date]. This must be sent in hard copy via U.S. Mail (unless other means of transmission have been specifically and previously agreed to).

All proposals are due by _____ *Time and Date*. Any proposal received at the designated location after the deadline specified for receipt shall be considered late and non-responsive. Late proposals may be evaluated at the discretion of [contracting jurisdiction]. Proposals must be sent in hard copy via U.S. Mail (unless other means of transmission have been specifically and previously agreed to).

Costs

All costs Applicants may incur in preparation of an RFP response are Applicant's sole responsibility.

Contract Award

Award of the contract(s) resulting from this RFP will depend upon which Applicant's proposal is determined to be the most advantageous and responsive to this RFP in terms of cost, functionality and other factors listed below.

[Contracting jurisdiction] reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all offers and discontinue this RFP process without obligation or liability to any Applicant
- Accept other than the lowest priced offer
- Award a contract on the basis of initial offers received, without discussions or requests for best and final offers
- Award more than one contract

Schedule

Event	Date
RFP Distribution to Vendors	X
Written Confirmation of Intention to Bid	X + 1 week
Bidder teleconference Q&A	X + 2 weeks
Proposal Due Date	X + 2 weeks
Vendor Selection Date	X + 4 weeks
Anticipated Commencement of Work	X + 6 weeks

Requested Services

- Examine and critique the [contracting jurisdiction]'s standards governing electronic voting for consistency with relevant NIST and FEC standards and guidelines.
- Conduct a review of publicly available information about known vulnerabilities in the voting machines used by [contracting jurisdiction].
- Conduct a limited review of the source code of each type of voting machine (make, model, software revision level) to determine if the programming is reasonably resistant to relevant threats and risks of malfunction.
- Conduct a limited hands-on evaluation of the voting system (aka Red Team exercise) to assess its resistance to compromise and malfunctions.
- Review and critique procedures used for handling electronic voting systems and data during election preparation, voting, reporting, and after polling.
- Document all findings, conclusions, and recommendations in a comprehensive, customized report.
- Assist [contracting jurisdiction], upon request, in overseeing the remediation of any problems found during the assessment.

Guidelines for Proposal Preparation

Applicant's proposal submitted in response to this RFP will be incorporated into the final agreement between [contracting jurisdiction] and the selected Vendor. Submitted proposals should include each of the following sections:

- Executive Summary
- Firm Background and Qualifications (including but not limited to)
 - Relevant experience?
 - Ownership
 - Number of years in business?
 - Number of employees and contractors?
 - Merger and acquisition history
 - United States entity?
 - Percentage of sales or work revenue related to this type of consulting
 - List of clients
- Approach and Methodology
- Project Management – Project Communications
- Description of Analysis and Deliverables
- Methodologies
- Proposed Project Team including resumes
- Employee security certifications and clearances
- Project timing and fees
- Legal terms & conditions
- Financial Statements
- Certificate of Insurance
- Vendor contact information
- 3 references at a minimum

Description of Electronic Voting System

[Insert brief description of electronic voting system including details about the jurisdiction (geographic extent, political subdivisions, number of polling places), the types of machines, the number of systems, architecture, and controls. This description should be sufficient to enable prospective Vendors to scope the work.]

Evaluation Factors for Award

Any award to be made pursuant to this RFP will be based upon the proposal with appropriate consideration given to operational, technical, cost, and management requirements. Evaluation of proposals will be based principally, though not exclusively, upon the Applicant's responsiveness to the RFP and the total price quoted for all items covered by the RFP.

The following will be the primary considerations in evaluating the responsiveness of each submitted proposal:

- Comprehensiveness and clarity of proposal.
- The extent to which Applicant's proposed services would fulfill [contracting jurisdiction]'s requirements as set forth in this RFP.
- An assessment of the Applicant's ability to deliver the indicated services in a professional and timely manner, including the Applicant's stability, experience, and record of past performance in delivering similar services.

- Availability of high-quality personnel within Applicant's employ with the required skills and experience to perform the proposed services.
- Applicant's acceptance of [*contracting jurisdiction*]'s contractual terms and conditions, if applicable.
- Overall cost of Applicant's proposal.
- Responses from references.