STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
ELECTIONS DIVISION

RFQQ 25-04
ELECTIONS TEXT MESSAGING
AMENDMENT NO. 2
(March 31, 2025)

SUMMARY

This Amendment No. 2 to RFQQ 25-04 compiles all questions submitted by vendors during the Preproposal Conference held on Thursday, March 20, 2025, and provides the official responses from OSOS. These questions and answers are now incorporated into the solicitation as an official addendum.

Q&A FROM THE PREPROPOSAL CONFERENCE

Q1: Can you provide more detail on what the integration between the texting system and VoteWA entails? Will we be pulling data from VoteWA or pushing data in, and at what cadence?

    A1: The OSOS will create the content of the text messages, and this solution must deliver the text message. This is currently accomplished through a webhook.

Q2: Are all messages triggered individually, or are some messages sent at a larger scale (e.g. as a broadcast)?

    A2: The messages are queued up by the centralized voter registration system, VoteWA. VoteWA then uses the webhook API to execute the delivery of the message to the voter at a regular interval.

Q3: Are there any "bulk broadcast" -- upload a list of 100k individuals say -- and then send out to all on the list?

    A3: No. While messages may be enqueued in bulk, they are sent to individual recipients.

Q4: On average, how many messages need to be sent per election?

    A4: In 2024, there were approximately 175,000 text messages sent from VoteWA. We expect that in presidential elections, this number will continue to rise. In non-presidential elections, this number is likely to be lower due to lower participation. However, as more voters subscribe and opt-into text message, it is difficult to estimate.

Q5: Is there any sense of handling constituent replies (other than opt out) -- what if the constituent asks a question -- do you need 2 way conversational capability?

    A5: Text replies from the voter are not planned. We plan to use text messaging to meet the requirements of RCW 29A.60.165 (1) & (2). This means that the voter is provided with a text message when their ballot is received, accepted, or challenged for any reason. We also require a solution that allows voters to respond to notices either via text message or through

a link provided in the text message. An example of the notice is available on our website here: [Missing Signature Form](#) & [Signature Update Form](#)

Q6: Clarification needed regarding Minimum Qualifications. Please let us know whether we have a system in our elections in our Country where when we vote we get a text message that we have voted? Asking 8 years of demonstrated experience in providing a messaging solution/notifications seems odd to us.

    A6: Contractor must possess at least eight (8) years' demonstrated experience providing text messaging solutions for election-related or other government sector notifications.

Q7: Would this also be alerting folks if there was an issue with their ballot (i.e. signature doesn't match)? And if yes, would that point to a link to make changes or hyperlink?

    A7: Yes, we plan to use text messaging to meet the requirements of RCW [29A.60.165](#) (1) & (2). This means that the voter is provided with a text message when their ballot is received, accepted, or challenged for any reason. We also require a solution that allows voters to respond to notices either via text message or through a link provided in the text message. An example of the notice is available on our website here: [Missing Signature Form](#) & [Signature Update Form](#)

Q8: Will messages be via short code, toll free, 10dlc?

    A8: The OSOS has one number that is a short-code that will need to be transferred from the current provider to the new solution provider.

Q9: Within a single time period, such as within an hour, how many messages will be sent?

    A9: This depends on what is happening on that date and cannot be predicted. In 2024, there were approximately 175,000 text messages sent from VoteWA. We expect that in presidential elections, this number will continue to rise. In non-presidential elections, this number is likely to be lower due to lower participation. However, as more voters subscribe and opt-into text message, it is difficult to estimate.

Q10: As the carriers begin supporting more advanced messaging features, how will RCS (Rich Communication Services) messaging impact the messaging strategy of OSOS?

    A10: We do not expect any impacts.

Q11: If we're using hyperlinks: do you need to worry about reputation protecting so you're not blacklisted by telecom orgs?

    A11: Yes, we want to avoid any disruption in service.

Q12: Are you able to say who your current provider is for this functionality?

    A12: We currently use Twilio for message delivery.

Q13: How many messages are being sent on a monthly or yearly basis?

    A13: In 2024, there were approximately 175,000 text messages sent from VoteWA. We expect that in presidential elections, this number will continue to rise. In non-presidential election, this number is likely to be lower due to lower participation. However, as more voters subscribe and opt-into text message, it is difficult to estimate.

Q14: What kind of better experience are you envisioning? Are there more details coming about those experiences forthcoming?

    A14: Currently there is no dedicated vendor supporting this specific integration and functionality. While Twilio provides a service for having the message delivered, there is no vendor support for that integration or the ability for the voter to response to the required notices.

Q15: Is the third-party service included in the budget?

A15: Yes, any third-party services must be within the budget proposal.

Q16: Do you plan on tracking/actioning failed texts?

A16: Yes, the OSOS plans to track failed texts.

Q17: Is any preference or scoring given to Washington based companies submitting bids?

A17: No, there is no preference.

Q18: How does OSOS plan to establish criteria for user testing? What types of subject matter experts will be involved?

A18: The OSOS will utilize on-staff and county election administrators for user testing.

Q19: What are the primary limitations or challenges with the existing system that prompted this RFQQ? if this already addressed, i apologize joined a bit late technical issues..

A19: No vendor currently supports the full scope of this solution. While Twilio provides a service for having the message delivered, there is no dedicated vendor supporting this specific integration and the ability for the voter to response to the required notices.

Q20: Is this RFQQ solely for the texting component or also inclusive of the ballot curing portal?

A20: The objective of this RFQQ is to hire a contractor to provide a text messaging system that can meet the business needs and statutory requirements as well as provide ongoing support. This system must allow the voter to be able to respond to certain state prescribed forms electronically, when authorized by statute, including submitting a signature and/or identification securely. The system also must securely verify the identity of the user.

Q21: Does Washington State have a mobile app to access the voting portal, and if so, would dynamic deep links be delivered in an ideal scenario? Dynamic deep links check to see if a mobile app is installed on the device – if so, it opens a page in the app, and if not then it opens a specific webpage on a browser

A21: No, the voter portal is not available as a mobile application. It is available as a mobile responsive website.

Q22: Will this be a 100% hands on effort integrating the tool into your system or will it be over the shoulder?

A22: This will be a hands on effort integrating the tool.

Q23: Does OSOS have a preference on Cloud platform?

A23: No, there is no preference.

Q24: Can you provide a link to the current ballot curing solution so that a mobile optimized, SMS-first solution can be envisioned?

A24: There currently is no ballot curing solution. The voter portal can be found here: https://voter.votewa.gov/

Q25: Will we be able to work within your environment directly, or will your team be asking us to guide them on the implemental side of things?

A25: The contractor will be providing a fully developed, off-the-shelf solution with only minor customizations and responsible for automated release of the application code using automated release pipelines in all environments. To complete these duties, please include your recommend as to where the application code reside within your proposal.

Q26: Are all these Compliance HIPAA, GDPR, and SOC 2 required or it's a reference to vendors to have them?

A26: No, there is no Compliance HIPAA, GDPR, and SOC 2 requirement.

Q27: "Customizations" are mentioned a couple times in the RFQQ – what customizations are planned by OSOS, or have been implemented by OSOS in the past?

A27: The OSOS recently increased the frequency in which messages are delivered. That is the only customization that has been implement recently due to no vendor support. The customizations expected for the fully developed, off-the-shelf solution would be those necessary to carry out the requirements of RCW 29A.60.165.

Q28: Will the system require the capability to store and archive voter responses (such as ID verification submissions)?

A28: There will be data retention requirements that are consistent with the Records Retention Schedule.

Q29: Is support for multiple languages required in the SMS solution?

A29: Yes, federal law requires that English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese be provided. The OSOS also provides information in Korean, Somali, and Russian to match languages offered by county elections departments.

Q30: What is the protocol for handling failed message deliveries or bounced texts?

A30: The webhook or solution would respond to VoteWA that the text message failed along with any failure reason.

Q31: What are the annual and total budget limits for this procurement?

A31: The total budget for this RFQQ is structured as follows: The annual cost cannot exceed Three Hundred Thousand Dollars ($300,000.00) per year, with a total maximum of One Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($1,500,000.00) over the full five-year term.

Q32: What is the expected response time for resolving technical issues during election and non-election periods?

A32: Election Calendar Period through Election Certification – Starting 90 days prior to election day, and through the final certification of the election, Contractor will respond to issues reported by email or phone within one hour, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Upon notification to the company's Customer Support System the issue will be immediately routed to the appropriate operational personnel, and a case will be opened and managed through satisfactory resolution of the reported issue. Off Peak Times Non-Election Period: After certification of an election and more than 90 days prior to the next election, Contractor will respond to issues reported by email or phone within one hour, during normal business hours. Upon notification to the Contractor's Customer Support System the issue will be immediately routed to the appropriate operational personnel, and a case will be opened and managed through.

Q33: Are there penalties for system downtime or failed message deliveries?

A33: There may be penalties for system downtime or failed message deliveries if they result in a failure to meet the contractual obligations. The contract includes provisions that require the contractor to maintain system performance standards and address deficiencies promptly.

Q34: Will subcontractors be required to go through additional state approvals or vetting?

A34: No.

Q35: Are you looking to offload the management of Twillio or would you be open to (or prefer) a solution that extends your Twillio integration with the functionality you are looking for. The distinction here is you would still have the same delivery mechanism, Twilio account, and reports/functionality in there.

A35: Either of these are acceptable proposals. Our intention is to allow for creativity and innovation in the proposals submitted.

Q36: Do all delivery engineers have a requirement to be US Citizens on US Soil? or is QA being US enough coverage?

A36: No, there is no requirement.

Q37: Will OSOS provide an API for testing the integration, or will we need to develop a custom solution?

A37: The contractor will be responsible for the API or solution that VoteWA can use to integrate with their solution.

Q38: Is it 127,000 text messages for the year 2024?

A38: In 2024, approximately 175,000 text messages were sent from VoteWA.

Q39: Will there be a transition period from the current vendor/system to the new provider?

A39: There could be. Any transition period should be clearly provided in the proposal.

Q40: Will there be an opportunity to do an in-person demonstration?

A40: After receipt of Proposals and prior to the recommendation of an award, OSOS, at its sole discretion, may initiate discussions with one or more Contractors for clarification, and/or select the top-scoring Contractors as finalists for an oral presentation, and/or initiate a best and final offer process.

Q41: If we have questions about this project in general that are NOT related to the project/effort itself, who can we reach out to?

A41: Joshua Paster is the point of contact for VoteWA Development and Stuart Holmes is the point of contact for the Elections Division.