STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
ELECTIONS DIVISION

RFQQ 25-04
ELECTIONS TEXT MESSAGING
AMENDMENT NO. 4
(April 10, 2025)

SUMMARY

This Amendment No. 4 to RFQQ 25-04 compiles all the questions received from vendors during Question-and-Answer Period from February 27, 2025, to April 7, 2025, and provides the official responses from OSOS. These questions and answers are now incorporated into the solicitation as an official addendum.

COMPLETE LIST OF QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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.

Q42: What system or vendor is currently being used for election text messaging?

A42: Twilio.

Q43: What are the primary limitations or challenges with the existing system that prompted this RFQQ?

A43: This vendor facilitates the inbound and outbound sending of text messages. However, the development of voter-facing tools is outside the scope of the current vendor's solution.

Q44: Will there be a transition period from the current vendor/system to the new provider?

A44: Yes.

Q45: Are there any existing contracts or vendors that the selected contractor must coordinate with during implementation?

A45: Yes, the successful vendor will establish an interface between the Secretary of State's centralized voter registration and election management system, VoteWA, and its solution. VoteWA is currently maintained by KnowInk.

Q46: What is the estimated volume of text messages that need to be sent per election cycle?

A46: 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.

Q47: Will messaging be limited to election periods, or will it be ongoing throughout the year?

A47: This will be throughout the year.

Q48: Are there any peak times or expected message surges (e.g., voter registration deadlines, election day)?

A48: Yes, we expect that during the 18 days leading up to each Election Day that the volume of text messages will increase as voters are notified of their ballot status updates.

Q49: What are the requirements for message delivery speed (e.g., should all messages be sent within minutes)?

    A49: Messages should be sent in near real time. Delays in delivery can lead to confusion and calls to the voter hotline for additional support.

Q50: Will the system need to handle multilingual messaging for voter communication?

    A50: Yes, the State of Washington is required to translate voting materials into English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese. The text messages will be translated by the OSOS. However, the solution must be able to support these languages.

Q51: What specific integration points will be required between the text messaging system and VoteWA?

    A51: We only use webhooks from Twilio.

Q52: Are there any additional state-specific security or compliance regulations beyond HIPAA, GDPR, and SOC 2?

    A52: Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) Standards may also apply.

Q53: Will the system require the capability to store and archive voter responses (such as ID verification submissions)?

    A53: There is no requirement for archival, however there will be a need to store data for a period of time to allow for troubleshooting and support.

Q54: What are the expected system uptime and availability requirements beyond the 99.9% SLA?

    A54: 99.9% is the expected uptime and availability.

Q55: What is the protocol for handling failed message deliveries or bounced texts?

    A55: The solution will return a failed delivery indication and that will be logged in VoteWA.

Q56: Are there any specific reporting or analytics requirements for message delivery success rates?

    A56: No, there are no specific reporting or analytics requirements.

Q57: Will OSOS provide an API for testing the integration, or will we need to develop a custom solution?

    A57: With desired solution being webhooks, no API testing will be necessary. We currently rely on Twilio's webhooks. The vendor is responsible for providing the API/webhook and would need to setup webhook testing.

Q58: What is the expected response time for resolving technical issues during non-election periods?

    A58: The contractor will respond to issues reported by email or phone within one hour, during normal business hours.

Q59: Are there penalties for system downtime or failed message deliveries?

    A59: 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 promptly address deficiencies.

Q60: Will subcontractors be required to go through additional state approvals or vetting?

    A60: No.

Q61: Are there any preferred vendors or existing state contracts that subcontractors must comply with?

    A61: No.

Q62: After thoroughly reviewing the RFQQ 25-04 Election Text Messaging document package, we still need clarification on the actual requirements and would appreciate any guidance you can provide.

> **A62:** 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. The system must also be able to send out SMS messages in mass, based on election schedules and ballot statuses.

Q63: Do you have 15 minutes to discuss RFQQ 25-04 before we submit our proposal?

> **A63:** To ensure transparency, questions can be submitted via email during the official inquiry period or asked directly during the Preproposal Conference on March 20. Official responses will be published per the procurement schedule.

Q64: Could the minimum qualifications in Section 1.3 of RFQQ 25-04 be modified to allow a combined eight years of experience across public sector text messaging projects, including at least one deployed elections project?

> **A64:** The minimum qualifications outlined in Section 1.3 of RFQQ 25-04 are a firm requirement and will not be revised.

Q65: The RFQQ states that "the Solution must be capable of allowing the voter to respond to certain state prescribed forms electronically, when authorized by statute, including submitting a signature and/or identification securely, and must securely verify the identity of the user." Can you clarify whether this means the text message will include a link to an external site where the voter would complete identity verification and electronically sign a document? If yes, is the contractor in charge of building this site?

> **A65:** The contractor would be in charge of building the site if an external site is required for the submission of the response from the voter.

Q66: Alternatively, is OSOS looking for a solution that enables user verification and electronic signature directly within the text messaging platform without redirecting the voter?

> **A66:** The OSOS is looking for the contractor to propose the solution that best meets the needs of the State of Washington which could be enabling the user to respond to a notice, including submitting a signature and/or identification securely without redirecting the voter.

Q67: If external identity verification is required, does OSOS have preferred identity verification methods or standards(e.g., multi-factor authentication, document upload, government ID matching)?

> **A67:** The currently authorized forms of ID under state law are listed in RCW 29A.08.107 (1) & (2).

Q68: What is the expected volume of text messages per year?

> **A68:** In 2024, there was 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.

Q69: What is the size of the audience (total number of voters receiving messages)?

> **A69:** As of 3/11/2025, there are 217,044 voters subscribed to text alerts.

Q70: How many rounds of messages will typically be sent to each voter per election cycle?

A70: Voters are current sent a text message when their ballot is received and accepted. If the ballot is challenged, the voter is sent an additional text message related to that challenge. If the ballot is received and accepted on the same day, only the accepted message is sent.

Q71: Can you confirm whether the system will be used only for registered voter notifications or if there are additional engagement goals (e.g. voter education/registration outreach beyond ballot status)?

A71: There may be consideration for text messages beyond ballot status.

Q72: Will OSOS provide specific security and compliance guidelines or standards that the contractor should follow.

A72: No. However, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) publishes state standards that may apply.

Q73: Will VoteWA provide APIs or data formats for integration? Can the API documentation be shared with us to help inform the scope of work on our end?

A73: We currently rely on Twilio's webhooks. The vendor is responsible for providing the API/webhook and would need to setup webhook testing.

Q74: Will OSOS require custom dashboards or reporting formats?

A74: We won't require custom dashboards, however, there will be a need to retain data for a period to be used for troubleshooting and support of the solution.

Q75: For Election-Specific Needs, what defines the "Key Election Period" for 24/7 support? (e.g., early voting, Election Day, certification periods).

A75: 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.

Q76: Does the OSOS plan to have a staff member in charge of responding to the replies that were not automatically classified by the system?

A76: No, the OSOS will only require automated responses by the system.

Q77: Our company has 6-7 years of experience in election-related text messaging and over 11 years in the texting industry. We have sent hundreds of millions of messages. Is the 8 year experience an absolute requirement?

A77: Contractor must possess at least eight (8) years' demonstrated experience providing text messaging solutions for elections related or other government sector notifications.

Q78: 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?

A78: We currently utilize a vendor provided webhook to send data from VoteWA to the current solution. The contractor would be expected to provide a webhook or similar solution.

Q79: Are there any expectations on volumes per year?

A79: In 2024, there was 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.

Q80: Can those volumes be further broken down into ratios of SMS:MMS?

A80: All are SMS.

Q81: Will you be requiring toll-free numbers for outbound texting, shortcode(s), or 10 digit long code (10DLC)?

A81: The OSOS has a shortcode for VoteWA.

Q82: In which time zone is the Preproposal Conference scheduled on Thursday, March 20? Pacific?

A82: The Preproposal Conference is scheduled for Thursday, March 20, at 11:00 AM (Pacific Time).

Q83: How does OSOS plan to use text messaging to improve communications with the public and election administrators? Are there specific initiatives or goals in mind?

A83: We plan to use text messaging to meet the requirements of RCW 29A.60.165 (1) & (2). This means that the voter is provided a text message when their ballot is received, accepted, or challenged for any reason. We also require a solution that will allow the voter to respond to notices 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.

Q84: Ideally, how would an interactive message flow in which the subscriber may respond be used by OSOS? Has OSOS created any specific questions to ask voters and/or election administrators?

A84: No, we have not created any specific questions.

Q85: What types of message responses would OSOS like voters to provide? (e.g., yes/no responses, multiple-choice, etc.)

A85: Voters should be allowed to respond by completing the require notice that is specific to their ballot status, if any notice is required.

Q86: As the carriers begin supporting more advanced messaging features, how will RCS (Rich Communication Services) messaging impact the messaging strategy of OSOS?

A86: We do not expect any impacts.

Q87: In the third bullet of the section titled Objective (1.2), how does OSOS plan to integrate a new text messaging solution with VoteWA? Will the integration consist of a data pipeline, or is it the intention of OSOS to create and deliver messaging from the VoteWA interface?

A87: 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.

Q88: What specific technical requirements or constraints should be considered when integrating the new solution?

A88: The solution must meet State of Washington OCIO cybersecurity and privacy standards.

Q89: What customizations are planned by OSOS, or have been implemented by OSOS in the past?

A89: Custom text message content is planned. Additionally, the rate in which messages are delivered is now closer to instant.

Q90: What are the data storage and retention requirements for text messages and voter responses? How long do records need to be kept, and are there any specific compliance requirements to meet?

A90: The duration of the retention of the information depends on the type of notification and what type of election it is for. That duration can range from 60 days to 22 months. The full Secretary of State Records Retention Schedule is available here: office-of-the-secretary-of-state-records-retention-schedule-v.1.3-(december-2023).pdf

Q91: Can any details be provided about the OSOS-provided monitoring tool mentioned in section 1.2?

A91: The OSOS utilizes DataDog for application monitoring.

Q92: How does OSOS plan to establish criteria for user testing? What types of subject matter experts will be involved?

A92: Yes, user testing will include subject matter experts and acceptance criteria.

Q93: What level of access is required for OSOS security personnel to conduct an independent security review?

A93: The level of access will be determined during discussions with the apparent successful bidder. If the CISO requires further review after reviewing the documentation, the necessary access level will be defined accordingly.

Q94: Who will serve as the point of contact from OSOS with the new text messaging solution?

A94: The VoteWA Development Manager will be the point of contact for the development of this solution.

Q95: How many messages does OSOS expect to send annually during the contract period?

A95: In 2024, there was 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.

Q96: What type of phone number(s) would the OSOS prefer to use for text messaging? How many phone numbers will the OSOS prefer to use for text messaging?

A96: The OSOS has just one number that is a short-code that will need to be transferred from the current provider to the new solution provider.

Q97: Would the OSOS like to continue using their current phone number(s)?

A97: Yes, the OSOS will continue to use the current short-code.

Q98: Please let's know where we 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 excessive. Please clarify.

A98: Contractor must possess at least eight (8) years' demonstrated experience providing text messaging solutions for elections related or other government sector notifications.

Q99: Please kindly confirm submission method. There does not appear to be a way to submit or upload a response on the event page.

A99: You should prepare your proposal as PDF files in accordance with the requirements outlined in the file "RFQQ 25-04 Election Text Messaging.pdf". Completed proposals must be submitted via email no later than 5:00 PM Pacific Time on Monday, April 28, 2025. You will receive a confirmation email upon receipt.

Q100: What is the first election the solution should be ready by?

A100: The solution must be ready no later than July 2026.

Q101: Can I get a recording of the Preproposal Conference held on March 20, 2025?

A101: The Preproposal Conference for RFQQ 25-04 on March 20 was recorded solely to support the development of the official Q&A document. Responses provided during the Conference were unofficial. The official Q&A was published on March 31, 2025, in the WEBS portal and on the Current Procurements | WA Secretary of State webpage. Please refer to these sources for the finalized answers.

Q102: Can OSOS provide a comprehensive list of the issues or limitations with the current system that the new solution must address?

A102: The current solution is minimum viable product without a dedicated vendor to support and document enhancements, usability, stability, and accessibility of the solution. It lacks the ability for voters to respond to notices received via text message or through a link provided in the message.

Q103: Can OSOS provide a list of functional and technical requirements needed to resolve each identified issue?

A103: We plan to use text messaging to meet the requirements of RCW 29A.60.165 (1) & (2). This means that the voter is provided a text message when their ballot is received, accepted, or challenged for any reason. The solution must also allow the voter to respond to notices via text message or through a link in the text message. An example of the notice is available on our website here: Missing Signature Form & Signature Update Form

Q104: Are there publicly available APIs or secure data interfaces to exchange data with VoteWA?

A104: No, there are no public APIs or data interfaces.

Q105: What specific voter data fields can we access and modify through the VoteWA integration?

A105: No voter data fields will be accessed or modified. The OSOS will work with the successful bidder to provide necessary unique identifiers or public voter data as defined in RCW 29A.08.720 for the purposes of notice response.

Q106: Does VoteWA support real-time data exchange, or are interactions limited to scheduled data exports/imports?

A106: VoteWA supports both near real-time data exchange and scheduled events.

Q107: Beyond VoteWA, are there any other systems that the proposed messaging solution must integrate with?

A107: No, there are no other systems to integrate with.

Q108: What authentication methods are required to access VoteWA systems (API key, OAuth 2.0, SAML, etc.)?

A108: The OSOS will work with the successful bidder on the authentication methods proposed. The solution must meet OCIO Security Standards.

Q109: Will form submissions need to update voter records in VoteWA in real-time?

A109: No, voters will not be updated.

Q110: How should form submission data be formatted for integration with existing systems?

A110: There are no requirements on data submission formats. The vendor should provide their data submission format within their proposal.

Q111: Will we need to build mobile-optimized web forms from scratch, or can we use existing form templates?

A111: Examples of the existing notices are available on our website here: Missing Signature Form & Signature Update Form. Vendors should describe their approach for presenting forms to voters.

Q112: Should we build the secure electronic form system or integrate with an existing Secretary of State form platform?

A112: The Elections Division does not have an existing platform. The system should be included in the proposal.

Q113: What specific form types are needed (e.g., signature update, ID verification, ballot issue resolution, address change)?

A113: We plan to use text messaging to meet the requirements of RCW 29A.60.165 (1) & (2). This means that the voter is provided a text message when their ballot is received, accepted,

or challenged for any reason. We also require a solution that will allow the voter to respond to notices via text message or through a link provided in the text message. Examples are available on our website: [Missing Signature Form](#) & [Signature Update Form](#)

Q114: Are there specific accessibility requirements (e.g., WCAG compliance level) for the forms?

A114: Yes, the solution must meet WCAG guidelines. Please include your recommended level in your proposal.

Q115: Will users be redirected to a mobile web form from the SMS conversation, or should form completion happen within the messaging interface?

A115: There is no limit on how the form completion occurring within the RFQQ. We welcome innovative and creative solutions that best serve voters.

Q116: Should forms be capable of pre-populating fields with existing voter data from VoteWA?

A116: There is no requirement that forms be pre-populated. We welcome creative solutions that enhance voter experience.

Q117: Do forms need to work offline and save progress if a voter loses connectivity?

A117: There is no work offline and save progress requirement. Innovative solutions are encouraged.

Q118: Is multi-step form progression required, or should all fields appear on a single page?

A118: There is no requirement. Vendors may propose what they believe best serves the voter.

Q119: Should forms include field validation in real-time or only upon submission?

A119: No specific requirement. Vendors may recommend an approach in their proposals.

Q120: Does VoteWA already have ID verification capabilities we should connect to, or do we need to build this from scratch?

A120: Yes, VoteWA already has ID verification capabilities.

Q121: Who handles the final verification of voter-submitted IDs and signatures — our system automatically or Secretary of State staff manually?

A121: Secretary of State or County Auditor staff will process voter submitted IDs and signatures.

Q122: Will our system need to include automated ID validation software, or will staff perform the actual verification?

A122: Secretary of State or County Auditor staff will complete the verification of submitted notice responses.

Q123: Will voters need to upload documents/photos or just provide electronic signatures?

A123: We plan to use text messaging to meet the requirements of RCW [29A.60.165](#) (1) & (2). This means that the voter is provided a text message when their ballot is received, accepted, or challenged for any reason. We also require a solution that will allow the voter to respond to notices 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](#)

Q124: Do you have an existing method for electronic signature capture we should work with?

A124: No, there is no existing method for election signature capture in VoteWA.

Q125: What types of ID documents will voters need to upload (e.g., driver's license, state ID, passport)?

A125: We plan to use text messaging to meet the requirements of RCW [29A.60.165](#) (1) & (2). This means that the voter is provided a text message when their ballot is received, accepted, or challenged for any reason. We also require a solution that will allow the voter to respond

to notices 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](#)

Q126: What file formats must be supported for document uploads?

A126: There is no file format requirement. We look forward to hearing the innovative and creative solutions that best serve the needs of the voter within the submitted proposals.

Q127: Is there a maximum file size limit for uploaded documents?

A127: No maximum size requirement is defined. Vendors may propose limits based on solution capabilities. We look forward to hearing the innovative and creative solutions that best serve the needs of the voter within the submitted proposals.

Q128: Should the system include capabilities to enhance image quality of uploaded documents?

A128: No such capability is required but may be proposed. We look forward to hearing the innovative and creative solutions that best serve the needs of the voter within the submitted proposals.

Q129: Once a form is submitted, what is the expected response workflow?

A129: A submitted form will be received by VoteWA and placed into a work queue for authorized Secretary of State or County Auditor staff.

Q130: How quickly should voters receive confirmation that their form was received?

A130: There is submission confirmation requirement. We look forward to hearing the innovative and creative solutions that best serve the needs of the voter within the submitted proposals.

Q131: Will form responses be reviewed by automated systems, human agents, or both?

A131: Secretary of State or County Auditor staff will complete the processing of submitted notice responses.

Q132: If signature or ID verification fails, how should the voter be notified and what remediation steps should be offered?

A132: Secretary of State or County Auditor staff will notify the voter in accordance with state laws.

Q133: Should the system track partial form completions and send reminders about unfinished submissions?

A133: There is tracking of partial submissions or reminding voters of unfinished submissions requirement. We look forward to hearing the innovative and creative solutions that best serve the needs of the voter within the submitted proposals.

Q134: Do you already have a Twilio account or other SMS provider, or should we include SMS delivery costs in our proposal?

A134: Yes, the OSOS has a Twilio account. Either of these are acceptable proposals. Our intention is to allow for creativity and innovation in the proposals submitted.

Q135: Based on Washington's 5 million registered voters, we project 2–8 million SMS messages annually. Do your volume projections differ?

A135: In 2024, approximately 175,000 text messages were 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.

Q136: Are short codes required for official election communications, or are toll-free numbers acceptable?

A136: The OSOS does have a short code. Toll-free numbers are acceptable.

Q137: What percentage of notifications require a response from voters, versus simple informational messages?

A137: We plan to use text messaging to meet the requirements of RCW [29A.60.165](#) (1) & (2). If a ballot is challenged for signature does not match or missing signature, there is a response requirement for the voter.

Q138: Will voters be permitted to initiate conversations, or only respond to outbound messages?

A138: There is no conversation requirement. The OSOS only plans to deliver text messages with instructions on how to respond to the required notice, if any.

Q139: Is there an expectation for live chat support through the SMS channel, or is all communication expected to be automated?

A139: There is no expectation for live chat support. Communication is expected to be automated.

Q140: Are voters expected to interact with automated bots, human agents, or a combination of both?

A140: There is no requirement for automated bots, human agents, or a combination. The solution will deliver a text message to the voter with instructions on how to respond to the required notice, if any.

Q141: Should the Customer Support System include any direct support for voters, or is the voter experience expected to remain fully automated?

A141: The solution is expected to be automated. The solution will deliver a text message to the voter with instructions on how to respond to the required notice, if any.

Q142: Does your help desk require a dedicated ticketing system, or can we use our existing support infrastructure?

A142: There is no requirement for a dedicated ticketing system. Existing support infrastructure can be used.

Q143: Would you prefer a phased implementation approach, and if so, which features are highest priority?

A143: We have no preference on implementation. We look forward to hearing the vendor recommendation within their proposal.

Q144: Is there an additional budget available for add-on features beyond the $600,000 five-year cap?

A144: The total budget for this RFQQ is fixed and may not exceed Three Hundred Thousand Dollars ($300,000.00) per year, with a cumulative maximum of One Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($1,500,000.00) over the five-year term. There is no additional funding available beyond this amount. All proposed features, including any optional or add-on components, must be accommodated within the established budget.

Q145: What specific performance metrics will you use to evaluate success?

A145: We do not have any specific performance metrics defined for this RFQQ. However, we do see encouraging response rates for voters who are subscribed to text notifications. We believe that improving the interface will allow for even greater participation.

Q146: The RFQQ references an "OSOS-provided monitoring tool." Can you identify this tool and clarify what integration is required?

A146: The monitoring tool is DataDog. The OSOS will work with the successful bidder on the integration that works best with the solution to monitor the application.

Q147: The RFQ section 1.2 states the solution should be "mobile-friendly", is there a requirement for OSOS staff to upload election results to the archival solution from a mobile device?

    A147: No, there is no requirement to upload election results to the results archive from a mobile device.

Q148: The RFQ section 1.2 states the solution should be "mobile-friendly", is this solely for the public and users to retrieve election results from a mobile device?

    A148: Yes, this requirement is specifically for users viewing election results from the archive.

Q149: Regarding the requirement to "Ensure that the Solution integrates with VoteWA to securely exchange text messages with voters." To ensure the best integration possible with the VoteWA system, we'd like to better understand its architecture.

Q149-1: Is it hosted in on-prem or cloud?

    A149-1: Cloud.

Q149-2: Is it hosted on AWS/Azure?

    A149-2: Azure.

Q149-3: Does it have open APIs?

    A149-3: VoteWA does have its own APIs for various purposes. However, for text message delivery we currently utilize a webhook maintained by Twilio for message delivery. Depending on the method of responding to a required notice, VoteWA can expose or create an API to receive those responses. We look forward to hearing the innovative and creative solutions that best serve the needs of the voter within the submitted proposals.

Q149-4: In addition to the ballot status field what are the other potential triggers that will be used to send messages?

    A149-4: Regulations require that voters "opt-in" to notifications. Currently, those notifications are limited to ballot status notifications.

Q150: Regarding "The current interface also does not allow the voter to respond to notices via text message or through a link provided in the text message." How frequently and with what kind of questions do voters typically respond back to these text messages?

    A150: In 2024, there was 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 in to text messages, it is difficult to estimate. We believe that with these timely notifications most voters will respond through the appropriate tool. We currently see about 76% of voters cure their ballot and know that those that receive these ballot status notifications via text cure at a higher rate.

Q151: Please describe each use case(s) where a voter would need to respond to a text message and what information WA OSOS would need to receive from said voter.

    A151: We plan to use text messaging to meet the requirements of RCW [29A.60.165](#) (1) & (2). This means that the voter is provided a text message when their ballot is received, accepted, or challenged for any reason. We also require a solution that will allow the voter to respond to notices 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](#)

Q152: Regarding "Submitting a signature and/or identification securely, and must securely verify the identity of the user."

Q152-1: What is the current process and info that must be provided for voters to verify their identity when they receive a text that there are issues with their ballot?

A152-1: They are directed to the Voter Portal where they can download the [Missing Signature Form](#) & [Signature Update Form](#) to return to their elections office.

Q152-2: Is there a process and information they must provide that is prescribed in statute for voters to follow of which we need to be aware as a part of this project?

A152-2: The [Missing Signature Form](#) & [Signature Update Form](#) include an instruction section that provides the necessary steps for the voter to follow.

Q153: What Vendors have provided a demonstration in the last 24 months before this RFQQ was issued?

A153: There have been no vendor demonstrations prior to the RFQQ.

Q154: How many voters have subscribed to receive text notifications?

A154: 224,039.

Q155: What is the anticipated annual growth rate for voters to subscribe to receive text notifications?

A155: We expect that in presidential elections, the number of subscribers will continue to rise. In non-presidential election years, this number is likely to be lower due to lower participation. However, as more voters subscribe and opt in to text messages, it is difficult to estimate.

Q156: Is there a plan to grow the number of SMS subscribers for ballot notifications? If so, can you elaborate what that plan entails? If not, would the State be open to working with the vendor on growing your subscriber base?

A156: Yes, we continue to utilize our various strategic messaging campaigns to remind voters of this option. As resources allow, we will emphasize this in partnership with the OSOS divisions that provide external communication publications and products. The OSOS will work with the vendor and any other strategic messaging vendor as needed to grow the subscriber base.

Q157: Please describe how the current text notifications to voters regarding their ballot status are currently triggered?

A157: VoteWA creates a record of an outbound notice in a work queue for an authorized user. The authorize user then can press a "send all" button to place those notices into a status that VoteWA knows means that the text message is ready to be sent. VoteWA then uses Twilio's webhook to deliver the text message.

Q158: Please elaborate on any differences between notifications sent by local/county Board of Elections versus notifications for the OSOS?

A158: There are no differences. All notices a managed through VoteWA. The content of the text message may change slightly to provide the voter with the appropriate contact information.

Q159: As a vendor partner with the largest county in the state, we assisted in setting up mail-in ballot notifications from the County level. Does ballot counting roll up to the Secretary of State's office? Can you shed light on how the ballot counting process works and where in the process the notifications from the State are triggered versus notifications from the County?

A159: No, ballot counting is all done at the county level. In VoteWA, counties will enter into the system the ballot IDs for all returned ballots. During that process, all voters who have subscribed to text notifications will have a "ballot received" text notification queued for sending. If the county indicates that the ballot was challenged for any reason, a "ballot challenged" text notification queued for sending.

Q160: If notifications are coming from both the State and the County level, how do you anticipate addressing duplicate notifications coming from both the county and state levels?

> **A160:** Notifications are only coming from VoteWA, the centralized voter registration and election management system.

Q161: What development resources does the State have and would be willing to commit to this project?

> **A161:** The State has on-staff IT resources and a contracted vendor that provides maintenance and support for VoteWA, the centralized voter registration and election management system. Any resources necessary from the vendor should be defined within the proposal.

Q162: Can you provide some specific use cases?

> **A162-1:** A voter that is subscribed to text notifications returns their ballot and is received by the County Auditor. The County Auditor then presses the "Send All" button in VoteWA. That voter would receive a "ballot accepted" text notification.

> **A162-2:** A voter that is subscribed to text notifications returns their ballot that is received by the County Auditor. During processing, the County Auditor challenges the ballot because the signature does not match. The County Auditor then presses the "Send All" button in VoteWA. That voter would receive a "ballot challenged" text notification that includes instructions on how to cure that challenge.

> **A162-3:** A voter that is not subscribed to text notifications returns their ballot and is received by the County Auditor. That voter would not receive any text notification.

Q163: In Amendment 2, WA OSOS references that it has a short code that will be transferred. Is this short code for high-throughput volumes?

> **A163:** According to Twilio, short codes have a default throughput of 100 MPS (messages per second).