

Request for Proposal

Voting System, VR System, and Implementation Services

Knox County, Illinois

Proposals Due: July 17, 2025; 2:00 P.M. Central Time

Bid Opening: July 17, 2025; 2:01 P.M. Central Time

Direct inquiries to:

Scott Erickson, Knox County Clerk

Phone- 309-345-3815

Email- serickson@knoxcountyil.gov

Address- Knox County Courthouse

200 South Cherry Street

Galesburg, IL 61401

Table of Contents

SECTION 1: Cover Page 4

 Configuration Summary 4

SECTION 2: Timeline..... 5

SECTION 3: Background 6

 RFP Contact..... 6

SECTION 4: Specifications 7

 Voting System and Election Management Software 7

 Warranty 7

 Implementation and Training 7

 Annual Maintenance and Support..... 8

 First Use 8

 Award 8

SECTION 5: Vendor Response 9

 Overall Requirements 9

 Precinct Scanner Hardware 9

 Precinct Scanner Functionality 10

 Scanner Software/Firmware 11

 Precinct Scanner Flexibility of Ballot Design and Layout..... 11

 Ballot-Marking Device..... 11

 Election Management Software 11

 Vendor Requirements..... 12

SECTION 6: General Terms & Conditions..... 13

 Payment Terms 13

SECTION 7: Cost Proposal 14

SECTION 8: Submission Instructions 15

 Proposal Submission 15

 Proposal Timeframe..... 15

Proposal Evaluation Criteria 15

Project Award 16

SECTION 1: COVER PAGE

Provide the following information regarding the person responsible for the completion of your proposal.

Name _____ Role _____
 Address _____ Phone _____
 _____ Email _____

Subject to acceptance by the County, the Vendor acknowledges that by submitting a proposal AND signing in the space indicated below, the Vendor is contractually obligated to comply with all items in this Request for Proposal (RFP), including the Standard Contract if included herein, except those listed as exceptions on the Proposal Exception Summary Form. If no *Proposal Exception Summary Form* is included, the Vendor is indicating that he takes no exceptions. This acknowledgment also contractually obligates all subcontractors that may be proposed. Vendors who sign below may not later take exception to any point during contract negotiations. The Vendor further certifies that the company represented here is an authorized dealer in good standing of the products/services included in this proposal.

Original signature of Company Officer

_____ Signature	_____ Company
_____ Name and Title	_____ State of Incorporation
_____ Date	_____ Street Address
_____ Website address	_____ City, State, Zip

CONFIGURATION SUMMARY

County is seeking to upgrade the voting system and election management system prior to the 2026 primary election.

SECTION 2: TIMELINE

Release of RFP	June 13, 2025
Questions Deadline	July 9, 2025, 8:30 AM CT
Submission Deadline	July 17, 2023, 2:00 PM CT
Award	Timing contingent on submissions received – estimated award date in August 2025
First Use	March 17, 2026

SECTION 3: BACKGROUND

Knox County, in the State of Illinois, with authority and responsibility for the conduct of elections vested in the County Clerk, is seeking to replace the existing voting system with a new election system for the conduct of elections for all 28 precincts in 22 polling places for Election Day, 1 Early Voting site and Vote by Mail.

The county is currently using the following Voting and Election Management Systems:

Voting System

AccuVote OS and TSX

Election Management System

GEMS

The county is seeking to upgrade the voting system and election management system to the following:

- Optical Scan and appropriate ADA device for each polling place and Early voting location.
- New software for reporting.
- Implementation services for the new system.
- Training of election officials on the new system.
- Post-warranty support and maintenance.
- Election support for the first election cycle.

RFP Contact

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to the following contact:

- Scott Erickson, Knox County Clerk
- Phone- 309-345-3815
- Email- serickson@knoxcountyil.gov

SECTION 4: SPECIFICATIONS

The county is requesting proposals for an election system solution from an entity that is owned and operated by a United States company. The selected elections systems provider will provide and support the equipment acquired to ensure maximum benefit from the investment made.

Voting System and Election Management Software

The Voting System to be acquired will include precinct scanners, accessible ballot marking devices, necessary accessories, elections management software, implementation services, warranty, support, and maintenance.

This overview provides a general description of the new election system being solicited by the County. It is the responsibility of the proposing vendor to ensure that all components necessary for a complete system are included in their proposal.

Precinct Scanners

- Each Precinct Scanner shall include a fully securable ballot box, paper roll, backup battery, flash media, and secondary internal memory and be backed by a minimum one (1) year warranty.

Ballot-Marking Devices

- Each Ballot-Marking Device shall include the terminal, internal battery backup, accessible interface, headphones, flash drive, power supply and cord, and case, and be backed by a minimum one (1) year hardware warranty.

Operational, Counting, and Reporting Software

- Will include all required operational software, county-level election-night reporting software, and be backed by a minimum one (1) year software warranty.
- Ancillary Costs, such as shipping and handling costs associated with the acquisition of the voting system, shall be included.

Warranty

One (1) year of post-warranty support shall be included. Pricing will include the annual cost for a minimum three (3) year post-warranty period, including license, maintenance, and support fees for hardware and software.

The cost of annual support after year one (1) shall be stated as a lump sum and shall be billable annually or monthly by mutual agreement of the County and proposing vendor.

Implementation and Training

The county requires the solution provider to provide onsite training on the solution provided to administrative and technical staff who will be performing the day-to-day preparation for

elections as well as maintenance and upkeep of the system acquired.

The vendor will provide all implementation services including equipment and software training for election commissioners, county clerk and staff, technical staff, and train-the-trainer level of training to ready the County to train poll workers.

The vendor will include installation and acceptance testing and documentation, including Administrator and Field Guides.

The vendor will have adequate staff and scheduling to provide immediate support during testing and elections to county clerk and staff.

Annual Maintenance and Support

Bidder shall warrant all equipment to be free from defects in material and workmanship and to operate in accordance with these specifications for a period of not less than one year from the date of delivery.

The first year of maintenance and support shall be included. Annual maintenance and support shall be specified as a yearly lump sum cost for the post-warranty three (3) year period. Maintenance and support shall be paid monthly or annually upon mutual agreement. Include the following at minimum:

- On-call Emergency Response
- Certified Technician Support
- Troubleshooting and Repair
- Software Upgrades
- Firmware Upgrades

First Use

It is expected that the system proposed will be fully functional and available for productive use by the County within 90 calendar days of the date of issuance of the purchase order to the selected vendor for first use on March 17, 2026.

Award

The project award date is dependent on submitted proposals but projected to be in August 2025.

The successful bidder for this project will be selected as soon as possible, after the RFP has closed, following receipt and analysis of the proposals presented and qualification to participate in the sealed bid.

Upon notification of the award, the successful bidder will immediately order the required hardware and software upon receipt of the purchase order. All systems will be installed and tested to be operational no later than the date specified.

The successful bidder will certify that all necessary components can be delivered well in advance of the primary election on March 19, 2024, to allow training, integration, and testing.

Voter Registration System

The County is also interested in purchasing a Voter Registration system. The County Currently uses VEMACS and would be interested in acquiring a voting system that is supported by the successful vendor of the new voting equipment. Please include the initial cost along with the recurring annual cost for the VR system in your proposal. Depending on funding amounts, we may have to forgo the VR system replacement at this time.

SECTION 5: VENDOR RESPONSE

Overall Requirements

1. The system must have the ability to support numerous ballot styles on a single voting unit.
2. The system must support multiple splits in a precinct.
3. The system must support combined precincts, where more than one precinct is voting at the same location, on either the same or a different ballot style.
4. The system must provide for the privacy of votes throughout the election process.
5. The system must provide a human-readable printed vote record.
6. The system must be able to withstand frequent loading and unloading, stacking, assembling, disassembling, reassembling, and heavy use, without damage to internal circuitry. Be transportable, without damage to internal circuitry. Transportation conditions may include extremely bumpy roads and the possibility of exposure to extreme heat and cold, dust, and other environmental elements.
7. The system must require minimal assembling/disassembling of parts.
8. The system must ensure a long product lifecycle by including long-lasting components that allow for replacement or additional components that match the original components.
9. The system must require minimal maintenance during storage.

Precinct Scanner Hardware

1. The scanner unit would preferably have a display to present information clearly to users.
2. The scanner unit must have a touch screen for voters, county staff, and poll worker input.
3. The scanner unit must allow for swift and easy access, under one minute, to the imaging sensors for cleaning and diagnostics.

4. The scanner unit must allow easy access for clearing jammed ballots, with no tools required, and the ability to clear a jam in under one minute.
5. The scanner unit must meet the following battery specifications:
 - a. Contains a lithium-ion battery backup that provides power for the unit for a minimum duration of two (2) hours of continuous use.
 - b. Recharge automatically when power is restored to the system.
 - c. The scanner unit shall provide a display showing the battery charge level.
6. The scanner unit must accept ballots in all four orientations including face up, face down, top first, and bottom first.
7. The scanner unit must support a mixture of paper ballots that are single-sided and double-sided within the same election.
8. The scanner unit must support the use of paper ballots composed of multiple ballot sheets.
9. The included ballot box must have a removable bin that allows for the collection of ballots without requiring the poll workers to touch the voted ballots.
10. The scanner unit must be fully lockable and have no exposed communication ports.

Precinct Scanner Functionality

1. The unit shall clearly display the ballot count during voting sessions.
2. The unit shall have a simple poll opening procedure.
3. The unit shall provide clear and concise messages to tell voters what to do when an exception on the ballot being voted is encountered. Exceptions include overvoted, under voted, blank, etc.
4. The unit shall make clear to the voter how to cast a ballot.
5. The unit shall make clear to the voter when voting action is complete.
6. The unit shall have an indicator that tells the poll worker when the AC power connection (external power) is not available.
7. The unit shall have an indicator that tells the poll worker when the unit is not operating under AC power.
8. The unit shall have screen help, and voter feedback shall be presented clearly and concisely utilizing graphical and color attributes.

Scanner Software/Firmware

1. The scanner system shall be able to provide diagnostics that allow the viewing of the scanned ballot images, marks detection, and digital readings taken by the unit.

Precinct Scanner Flexibility of Ballot Design and Layout

1. The system shall have the ability to adjust all row and column widths.
2. The vendor shall identify the ballot sheet sizes supported.
3. The ballot layout application must create PDF files that can be utilized with either digital or offset ballot printing and can be read with 100% accuracy by scanners.
4. The system shall have the ability to tabulate at the precinct by hand-marked ballots and a ballot mark on a BMD (Ballot Marking Device).

Ballot-Marking Device

1. The ballot-marking device shall ensure all voters possess the same opportunity to independently cast their vote regardless of their physical limitations or disability.
2. The ballot-marking device must be configured to operate without the assistance provided by a poll worker in selecting the accessibility feature(s) for the voter.
3. The ballot-marking device must provide both audio and visual ballot information at the same time and maintain voter privacy.
4. The ballot-marking device must have an internal battery backup to supplement AC power.
5. The ballot-marking device shall be fully lockable and have no exposed communication ports.

Election Management Software

1. All confidential data that is saved to removable media (USB stick, flash card, or other similar devices) must be encrypted using AES and a bit strength of 128 or higher.
2. The election management software must have built-in templates which allow the user to copy the ballot layout format from one election to the next election.
3. The election management software must allow custom templates to be saved and copied from one election to another.
4. The election management software must provide a results output that can be displayed on the internet by authorized county election staff.
5. The election management software must allow results to be reviewed on a periodic basis throughout the tabulation process, at all levels.

Vendor Requirements

1. The proposing vendor must be able to provide ongoing support that includes immediate real time Election Day support (including Primary Election and Testing), on-site support if needed, and remote technical support.
2. The proposing vendor must have access to the software/firmware source code and employ experienced engineers knowledgeable in the software/firmware to make on-going changes/updates to the system without disruption the election in progress.
3. The proposing vendor must describe its security best practices that will safeguard and ensure the integrity of elections and provide documentation if needed in the event that the county clerk receives requests or demands relating to the integrity of the voting system.
4. The proposing vendor must provide the specifications for a workstation required to operate the proposed election management software.
5. The proposing vendor must explain prior experience managing elections for jurisdictions of comparable size based on a number of registered voters. Provide three (3) references and include name, title, jurisdiction, number of registered voters, and number of precincts. Contact information must include name, address, phone number, and email address.
6. The proposing vendor must disclose any litigation or administrative actions that have been filed against it or any owner or active employee relating to election integrity, performance of equipment and software, or election fraud.
7. The proposing vendor must be certified by the Election Assistance Commission and Illinois State Board of Elections and include a copy of the most recent certification letter.
8. The proposing vendor shall disclose all components which are not manufactured or developed in the United States.
9. The proposing vendor shall propose a purchase contract that addresses the parties' administrative, contractual, and legal remedies in the event that the vendor breaches contract terms. 2 CFR § 200 Appendix II(A)).
10. The proposing vendor will be expected to cooperate with the county clerk to comply with procurement and operational standards applicable to expenditures of ARPA funds.

SECTION 6: GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

Payment Terms

Each proposal shall include a statement of the standard payment terms. Include warranty, licenses, maintenance, implementation, and support fees for the first year in the bid. Identify post-warranty costs separately. List all consumables relevant to managing efficient elections with the proposed Voting System.

The County reserves the right to negotiate payment terms upon contract award including the right to withhold up to 50% of the contract price until delivery, installation, and training are complete.

The vendor that is awarded this contract will haul off and responsibly dispose of old voting equipment, which includes AccuVote Optical Scan, Automark, TSX and other related equipment. Disposal will comply with applicable Environmental Protection Agency regulations.

The vendor that is awarded this contract will be required to complete a Disclosure of Lobbying Activities and Certification regarding lobbying.

*****Potential vendors may be asked to provide a demo of their equipment prior to final decisions. If you are intending to bid this project, please contact the Knox County Clerk to schedule a demo time at the Knox County Clerk's office.*****

SECTION 7: COST PROPOSAL

Provide all costs for the proposed Voting System and Election Management System.

In responding to this RFP, the solution provider shall include all hardware, software, installation and configuration services, expenses, ongoing maintenance and support services, any additional support options, rental costs, if available, and other costs broken out separately.

While all the components are to be included in the total price for the system, annual support and maintenance shall be included in the total system price for the first year, but thereafter shall be for consideration as an annual maintenance contract.

SECTION 8: SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

The format of the response to this solicitation is left to the proposing vendor but said response shall include all necessary information to ensure that County can make an informed decision regarding the solution proposed.

Proposal Submission

The county requires the proposal to be submitted as a letter with printed attachments in a sealed envelope marked PROPOSAL FOR VOTING SYSTEM.

The following sections must be addressed in the proposal, at a minimum:

- Section 1: Cover Page
- Section 5: Vendor Response
- Section 6: Cost Proposal

Submit proposals to the following address by the submission deadline:

Scott Erickson, Knox County Clerk
Knox County Courthouse
200 South Cherry Street Galesburg, IL 61401

Proposal Timeframe

Solicitation for proposals will begin on the date of release. Public opening of proposals will begin at the time of the submission deadline. Upon submission and opening, proposals (and bids) may not be withdrawn for a period of 60 days from the date of the submission.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The following are the criteria that will be utilized to weigh the lowest responsive and responsible bidder:

1. Vendor Qualifications - to include three references.
2. Quality and Completeness of Proposal Submitted
3. Compliance with Implementation and Training Requirements
4. Warranty, Support Services, and Maintenance Requirements
5. Compliance with Specifications
6. Pricing of Components

The county reserves the right to disqualify any non-compliant vendors and solutions and reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted.

County has attempted to provide information that may be of benefit in formulating this

proposed solution, but it is the responsibility of the vendor to ensure their proposal is accurate, complete, and capable of providing a complete and functional election system.

Project Award

County intends to award this project to a single qualified vendor who can provide all the required capabilities. The County reserves the right to waive informalities and irregularities, reject any and all bids, and make no award in response to this RFP if in the best interest of the County.

If an award is made as a result of this RFP, it shall be awarded to the respondent whose proposal is most advantageous to the County with price and other factors considered.

In the event that an award results from this RFP, then the winning bidder agrees that the County will be held harmless for any lawsuits resulting from work performed by the winning bidder or acts of the winning bidder's employees. This shall include any resulting issues with patent infringements.