

Model RFP/RFI Documents for RCV Voting Systems

A request for proposal (RFP) specifies the needs of a jurisdiction that a voting system manufacturer will have to meet to be considered for a bid. When jurisdictions post RFPs for any new voting equipment, including language requesting that a system be RCV ready can ensure that capability will be available, whether or not the jurisdiction has adopted RCV at the time of the RFP.

This document includes a series of suggested RFP questions or requirements that cover the fundamental capabilities necessary to accurately process RCV elections. Jurisdictions should review this document and consider including its content within any voting system RFPs or RFIs they publish. If you would like to create a more customized version of this document with requirements specific to any RCV rules adopted in your jurisdiction, feel free to contact the RCV Resource Center at info@rcvresources.org and we can help you draft that request. For more detail about the questions posed in this document, see RCVRC's [Voter Intent Encyclopedia](#) and our [RCV Technical Specifications Report](#).

Disclaimer

This document is not intended as legal advice. All content in this document is provided for general informational purposes only. Any RFP, RFI, or RFQ language should be reviewed by a jurisdiction's legal counsel before the document is published. RCVRC is not responsible for any RFP, RFI, or RFQ language or results thereof based on this document.

Model RFP Questions for RCV-Ready Voting Systems

I. Voter Intent Questions

For more detail about the questions posed in this section, see RCVRC's [Voter Intent Encyclopedia](#).

A. Skipped rankings

Describe the system's treatment of, rules regarding, and ability to handle skipped rankings. Include a description of any warnings provided to the voter if a skipped ranking is detected along with a description of any administrative override and curing process. Note if any warnings provided to a voter can be customized.

B. Overvotes

Describe the system's treatment of, rules regarding, and ability to handle overvotes. Include a description of the overvote warning, administrative override, and curing process. Note if any warnings provided to a voter can be customized.

C. Repeat Rankings

Describe the system's treatment of, rules regarding, and ability to handle repeat rankings. Include a description of any warnings provided to the voter if a repeat ranking is detected along with a description of any administrative override and curing process. Note if any warnings provided to a voter can be customized.

D. RCV Write-in Candidates

Describe the system's treatment of, rules regarding, and ability to handle RCV write-in candidates.

E. Adjudication

Describe the system's ability to handle the adjudication of RCV ballots. The description should include adjudication of skipped rankings, overvotes, repeat rankings, and write-in candidates.

Please provide any training materials regarding ballot adjudication for RCV elections.

II. Ballot Design Questions

Review the example ballots in [this document](#) to see examples of the types of RCV ballots referenced in this section.

A. Ballot Format

1. Can your system generate grid-style RCV ballots? (yes or no)
2. Can your system generate column-style RCV ballots? (yes or no)
3. What is the maximum number of rankings possible in an RCV contest on your system?
4. Is it possible to include RCV contests side-by-side on one side of a ballot? See [this link](#) for an example. If so, what is the maximum number of rankings possible on that sort of ballot?
5. If it is possible to lay out a ballot with RCV that includes multiple columns of contests on one side of a ballot, can both RCV and non-RCV contests appear on a given side of the ballot?

See [this link](#) for an example. Or, if RCV is included on that side of a ballot, can only RCV contests appear on that side of a ballot?

B. Touchscreen/Accessible Ballots

If the voting system allows for voters to provide touchscreen input, provide a description of and screenshots reflecting how voters mark rankings.

Please describe each of the voting system's accessibility capabilities to allow voters with disabilities to rank candidates.

C. Optical Character Recognition

Describe any system features or functionalities providing for optical character recognition for write-in or ranking purposes (such as writing numbers in boxes next to candidate names to rank candidates).

III. Tabulation and Results Reporting

For more detail about the questions posed in parts A and E of this section, see our [RCV Technical Specifications Report](#).

A. Tabulation Capability

Indicate whether the system allows the administrator to tabulate the results of an RCV election on its own or whether the system requires third-party software (such as RCTab, available at rcvresources.org/rctab) to tabulate the results of an RCV election.

Please answer the following in particular and provide screenshots of any relevant administrator user interfaces:

1. Can the system tabulate the results of a single-winner (or "instant runoff voting") election? (yes or no)
2. Can the system tabulate the results of a multi-winner proportional (or "single transferable vote" or "proportional ranked choice voting") election? (yes or no)
3. If the system does not currently provide any of the capabilities identified in A. 1 or A. 2, please indicate the anticipated release date for the capability, if any.
4. If possible, look at the tabulation options screens for each RCV type - what options exist and how are they laid out? Can we have an example image?

B. Ballot Images

Can the system produce ballot images? If so, please provide an example, screenshots of any relevant administrator user interfaces, and a description of the data output format.

C. Cast Vote Records

Respondents should describe the system's cast vote record (CVR) data outputs and what data outputs are produced at each stage of the voting and tabulation process, including what data is or can be produced at the individual voter level, the precinct level, the local level, and the state level.

Please include the following in particular and provide screenshots of any relevant user interfaces:

1. What does the system's RCV CVR look like and what data formats are produced at what levels? Provide sample data files.

2. Does your CVR conform with the NIST common data format v. 1.0 described in NIST SP 1500-103 or any updates to that specification?
3. Can the system segregate CVR data by precinct? If the system can segregate data by precinct, can this be produced directly out of a tabulator or only after processing through the election management system?

D. Data Centralization

Respondents should describe any methods and tools available with the voting system to consolidate precinct-level data for centralized tabulation and results reporting.

Please include the following in particular:

1. Can election data be securely posted and/or securely transferred using the internet or another networked system?
2. Does your system come with any digital centralization practices/tools to assist administrators in this process?

E. Results Reporting

Respondents should describe any methods and tools available with the voting system for displaying RCV results to the public.

Please include the following in particular and provide screenshots of any relevant user interfaces:

1. Does your system come with any built-in results display tools for RCV elections?
2. If yes to #1, please describe any data or document outputs available for public or media use, including samples of such data or documents including all potential categories of information (e.g., the total number of votes each candidate received in each round; the total number of ballots that became inactive in each round because they did not contain any candidates, reached an overvote, reached skipped rankings, etc.).
3. Does your system produce files that can be readily uploaded into third-party visualization tools, such as RCVis (rcvis.com)?

IV. Audit and Quality Control Questions

Respondents should describe any methods or tools available with the voting system to allow administrators to conduct audits and other quality control measures.

Please include the following in particular and provide any relevant resources, guides, training materials, and sample data sets:

1. Does the system come with a set of sample RCV ballots and other materials available for administrators to conduct pre-election Logic and Accuracy Testing?
2. Can the system be subject to a Risk-Limiting Audit (RLA)? If so, what type or types of RLA? Are all scanning machines capable of being subject to RLA or only specific models?

V. Miscellaneous

1. Provide cost estimates for hardware, software, licensing, support, and other services or materials provided when deploying RCV tools.
 - a. Do you have varying cost structures depending on the size and/or location of the jurisdiction?
2. What are your RCV development plans? Do you plan to expand RCV features, such as increasing the number of rankings or adding RCV tabulation variants, in the future?