

# MSRS Election Services RFP

## Exhibit A – Scope of Work

The mission of the Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS) is to empower Minnesota public employees to build a strong foundation for retirement through defined benefit plans, a defined contribution plan, and a health-care savings plan.

### Introduction

MSRS is seeking an election vendor to administer the balloting process for open seats on its Board of Directors (Board).

- Board members are elected or appointed to staggered four-year terms. Membership, election, and terms of the Board, as well as duties and powers of Board members, are specified in Minnesota Statutes 352.03.
- Elections for open Board positions are held during even-numbered years and are conducted by the MSRS Executive Director (Minnesota Administrative Rules 7900.0200).

The selected vendor:

- Will certify the election outcome to MSRS and its stakeholders.
- Will maintain an auditable trail supporting that outcome.
- Will bring independent oversight, security, validity, and accuracy to the election process.

### Board Structure

The MSRS Board is comprised of 11 directors:

One director	Elected by members of the State Patrol Plan
One director	Elected by members of the Correctional Plan
One director	Elected by the retirees of all plans
Four directors	Elected by members of the General Employees Retirement Plan (GERP) and Unclassified Retirement Plan (UNCL)

The four remaining directors are appointed and are not included within the scope of this RFP.

The term “voter” is used in this RFP to denote an active employee or a former employee eligible for a deferred annuity from one of the MSRS-administered plans listed above, or a retired member of any of MSRS’ retirement plans.

## Scope

The vendor responsibilities called for in this RFP will apply to three election cycles occurring within a five-year period – from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2024. See table below:

Election Cycle	Positions/Representing	Total Estimated Voters*
Election 2020 (work starting fall 2019)	2 positions (GERP & UNCL)	51,223 (GERP) 3,217 (UNCL)
	1 position for Correctional Plan	4,650
	1 position for Retirees	45,897
Election 2022 (work starting fall 2021)	2 positions (GERP & UNCL)	51,223 (GERP) 3,217 (UNCL)
	1 position for State Patrol Plan	921
Election 2024 (work starting fall 2023)	2 positions (GERP & UNCL)	51,223 (GERP) 3,217 (UNCL)
	1 position for Correctional Plan	4,650
	1 position for Retirees	45,897

\*Based on the MSRS “Comprehensive Annual Financial Report” for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2018

The vendor is required to propose on all elections in their RFP response, but the initial contract period will be two years (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2021). MSRS will have the option to extend the contract to five years in increments determined by the State of Minnesota.

## Vendor Responsibility Overview

The vendor will take the lead to:

1. Develop and print paper ballots and ballot mailing envelopes.
2. Print candidate biographies (design and content submitted by MSRS).
3. Develop online versions of ballot materials.

Provide your specifications for performance of the following tasks:

## **Ballot Mailers**

Develop and print ballot mailers consisting of:

1. Paper ballots
2. Supporting materials
3. Mailing envelopes

The mailers will be sent to voters. Graphic design for ballot materials will be done by MSRS based on vendor technical specifications.

1. Prepare a personalized ballot mailer for each voter based on MSRS-supplied voter data. Include in each mailer:
  - a. 4-color ballot listing candidates and, depending on the election, space for 1 or 2 write-in names. Candidate names will be rotated from ballot to ballot for equal placement with no numbering system.
  - b. Voter's name and address printed on ballot.
  - c. Candidate biographical sketch (supplied and edited by MSRS). See print specifications below.
  - d. Instructions for online voting.
  - e. MSRS contact information (phone and email) for voting questions.
2. Coordinate the receipt, set-up, and production of all mailing materials.
3. Provide MSRS with complete sample ballot mailing materials for review.
4. Print the number of ballots specified by MSRS per election.
5. Assemble ballot mailers and prepare them to be sent to voters.

## **Voter Database**

MSRS will provide a database of eligible voters for each election.

The vendor will:

1. Receive and load the database specific to each election. Each database will include:
  - a. Voter information necessary to mail ballots and supporting materials to the voters.
  - b. Full instructions for field utilization.
2. Conduct and report on database test procedures to ensure the accurate transfer of data. Report database irregularities, if any, to MSRS for resolution.
3. Sort voter databases to utilize postal discounts in sending ballot mailers. Assign postal barcodes when possible.

## Online Voting Setup

1. Advise and strategize with MSRS on various facets of online voting, including:
  - a. Communications
  - b. Security
  - c. Navigation
  - d. Reporting
  - e. Online election validation
2. Provide MSRS with access to the online voting site and test cases during the development phase for review, test, and approval.
3. Develop online ballots to:
  - a. Include candidates and their biographies, allowing easy navigation between vote casting and biography pages.
  - b. Allow voters to save ballots and complete later.
  - c. Provide a ballot summary/review page (printer-friendly format) before voters submit ballots.
  - d. Provide a survey and comments box for voters to have the option to record their online voting experience after ballot submission.
  - e. Send an email confirmation to each voter after their ballot has been submitted.
4. Provide:
  - a. Voter accessibility to the ballot using a variety of browsing platforms.
  - b. 24/7 accessibility to the online voting site during the voting period.
5. Submit prototype online ballots and supporting materials to MSRS for Quality Assurance testing.

## Voting

1. Send ballot mailers to each voter listed in each election's voter database.
  - a. This mailing will open the vote casting process.
  - b. Ballot mailers must be sent by February 5 (Minnesota Administrative Rules 7900.0200, Subpart 3).
2. Coordinate with MSRS for payment of outbound postage charges.
3. Collect and retain undeliverable ballot mailers.
4. Open and secure online polls at dates agreed-upon with MSRS.

### Voting – continued

5. Provide a verifiable level of security for paper and online balloting (e.g., SSL encryption and authentication, protection against hackers, protection against viewing by unauthorized personnel, protection from electronic or physical data loss, etc.).
6. Monitor and maintain paper and online voting activity.
  - a. Receive and authenticate submitted ballots.
  - b. Separate paper and online ballots that do not meet determined requirements.
  - c. Ensure there is no double voting between paper and online ballots.
  - d. Validate only the online ballot if a voter casts their vote by paper and online.
  - e. Disqualify all paper ballots if more than one ballot is received from a voter.
  - f. The vendor will be granted liberty to infer voter intent unless otherwise instructed by MSRS.
  - g. The vendor will not reveal voting responses to MSRS until the election has ended and votes have been counted and certified.
7. Review and correct questionable marks flagged by scanning software in the presence of MSRS Election Tellers.
8. Issue replacement ballots to eligible voters when authorized in writing by MSRS.

### Reporting

1. Provide reports that include:
  - a. Number of eligible voters.
  - b. Total vote counts with percentage of voter rates of participation.
  - c. Number of votes received, by candidate.
  - d. Percent of votes received, by candidate.
  - e. Number of ballots received and percent returned.
  - f. Rejected votes, sorted by reason.
  - g. Late post-marked or electronically stamped ballots.
  - h. Number of write-in votes.
  - i. Voter satisfaction ratings and comments.
2. Deliver the official election reports, certified and notarized, including MSRS Election Teller signatures, in a sealed envelope.
3. Submit certificate of election(s), showing vote totals by candidate and designating the winners, documented on vendor's letterhead and signed by a vendor official.

## Post-election Activity

1. Archive the election data for twelve (12) months, including the securing of both paper and online voting records.
2. Continue to collect late mail ballots and undeliverable ballot mailers for 30 days after election close. Destroy any materials received after 30 days.
3. Destroy ballots, late ballots, and undeliverable materials twelve (12) months after certified results are issued.
4. Recycle unused materials two months after an election ends, unless other arrangements are agreed to in writing by MSRS.

## MSRS Responsibilities

MSRS will:

1. Provide the graphic design for ballot materials based on vendor technical specifications.
2. Provide an Election Officer to serve as a single point of contact for the vendor.
3. Provide three Election Tellers to verify employees as eligible to vote, and to ensure the proper counting of votes.
4. Publicize the voting process to eligible voters.
5. Provide necessary materials and files used to develop election deliverables:
  - a. A digital list of candidates and offices that will appear on the ballot.
  - b. The candidates' biographical sketches, proofed and final.
  - c. A database of valid voters including all necessary information to complete election processes, as requested by the vendor.
  - d. Voter mailing addresses.
4. Review and approve in a timely manner:
  - a. Print proofs
  - b. Online proofs
  - c. Copy for printed and online materials.
5. Access and test the online voting process with login credentials and test cases provided by vendor and provide comments. Retest, if necessary.
6. Make final decisions on all aspects of the project in a timely manner.
7. Provide MSRS contact information (phone and email) for voting questions.
8. Set up a secure portal for the exchange of election materials.

## Postage and Tax Payments

MSRS will compensate the vendor for services provided, but will pay postage, USPS fees, and/or applicable taxes directly.

Actual postage costs incurred to mail ballots will be paid to the vendor upon MSRS receipt of a signed Postage Statement – First Class Mail and Priority Mail Form 3600-R1.

## Calendar Overview

This calendar is based on past elections and is offered as an overview of election activity and responsibilities.

Date	Action
Early August	Ballot mailer development begins. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. MSRS begins graphic design for ballot.</li> <li>b. Vendor begins development of ballot template (shell).</li> </ol>
October 1	Deadline for candidates to enter the election.
Mid-October	MSRS: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sets up a secure portal for election materials exchange with vendor.</li> <li>b. Sends vendor a mock ballot mailer.</li> <li>c. Sends vendor the candidate list.</li> </ol>
Early November	MSRS sends vendor candidate biographical sketches to be included in the ballot mailer.
Mid-November	MSRS: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Loads a test voter database in the portal per vendor specifications.</li> <li>b. Notifies vendor of test database availability.</li> </ol>
Late November	MSRS sends vendor an estimated count of eligible voters for each election.
Late December	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. MSRS sends voter database to vendor.</li> <li>b. Vendor sends ballot mailer proofs and online ballots to MSRS for approval.</li> <li>c. Vendor sets up a link for testing of online ballot.</li> </ol>

## Election calendar – continued

Date	Action
Mid-January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Vendor sends MSRS ballot mailer proofs for approval.</li> <li>b. MSRS approves ballot mailer.</li> <li>c. Vendor loads address samples into the secure portal for MSRS to check.</li> <li>d. MSRS tests and approves online voting materials.</li> </ul>
Late January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. MSRS notifies vendor when online voting content and functionality are approved.</li> <li>b. MSRS and vendor finalize the ballot mailing date and the online live date/time.</li> </ul>
February 5	<p>Vendor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sends the ballot mailers to voters by February 5 deadline (Minnesota Administrative Rules 7900.0200, Subpart 3).</li> <li>b. Opens online voting.</li> </ul>
Early February	<p>Vendor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Monitors and maintains online voting activity to ensure controls are in place to prevent election fraud, double-voting, late voting, and other irregularities.</li> <li>b. Receives paper and online ballots thru March 1.</li> <li>c. Opens envelopes, validates member numbers, and scans ballots.</li> </ul>
March 1 Unless it falls on a weekend*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Election closes.</li> <li>b. Vendor closes online voting site at midnight on the deadline date and posts a notice that online voting has closed.</li> </ul>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday in March	<p>Vendor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Concludes ballot counting.</li> <li>b. Certifies election in the presence of three Election Tellers supplied by MSRS.</li> <li>c. Certifies results and delivers to MSRS a sealed certification letter and statistical reports with the elections results.</li> </ul>

\* If March 1 falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the deadline date will be the following Monday.

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