

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Election Ballot Printing RFP

1. Introduction

Notice is hereby given that Yellowstone County is seeking proposals for the printing of official ballots for elections held between July 1, 2025 through December 31, 2026. Proposals will be accepted from qualified vendors to supply printed ballots for elections conducted by the County.

The County intends to enter into a contract with the selected vendor that will include printing services and material for 2025 – 2026 elections. This RFP shall not commit the County to enter into an agreement, to pay any expenses incurred in preparation of any response to this request, or to procure or contract for any supplies, goods or services. The County reserves the right to accept or reject all responses received as a result of this RFP if it is in the County's best interest to do so.

2. Background Information

The following information is the County's best-known information at this time and is subject to election cancelations, law changes, and special elections.

Between July 1, 2025 and December 31, 2026, the County expects to hold the following elections:

A potential Municipal Primary Election, subject to cancellation, may be held on September 9, 2025. It is likely the City of Billings will hold its primary and the other two municipalities, Laurel and Broadview, will cancel their elections. If held, the City of Billings has approximately 62,300 active registered voters eligible for mail ballots. Therefore, there would likely be five ballot styles with various candidates and ballot issues and approximately 66,000 single-sided ballots, of which the majority would be folded and approximately 5% would be in flats. If the City of Laurel and the Town of Broadview do not cancel their primary elections, the likely ballot numbers would be the same as estimated in the municipal general election.

A municipal general election will be held on November 4, 2025. Three municipalities are eligible for a municipal general election within Yellowstone County. The three municipalities have approximately 66,000 active registered voters eligible for mail ballots.

Therefore, there would likely be 10 ballot styles with various candidates and ballot issues and approximately 68,500 single-sided ballots, of which the majority would be folded and approximately 5% would be in flats.

A school and special district election will be held on May 5, 2026. The number and style of school and special district elections depend on the number of school or local districts holding elections. The school/special purpose district election will include candidates and possible ballot issues from up to fifteen school districts and various special districts including (but not limited to) rural fire districts, water and sewer districts, drain districts, and irrigation districts. The school districts contain approximately 90,000 active registered voters eligible for mail ballots. There are generally no more than 15 ballot styles with various candidates and ballot issues, and there would likely be no more than 92,500 single-sided ballots printed, of which the majority would be folded and approximately 3% would be flats. However, historically, several school districts and almost all of the special districts will cancel their elections. Ballot printing for school and special district elections has averaged around 50,000-60,000 ballots.

Note: *School and special district elections have historically had very tight printing deadlines, comparatively, with other elections. In addition, the vendor will be required to provide these printing services for May consecutively with the printing of June federal election ballots because of the proximity of those elections and should expect tight printing deadlines.*

A federal, state, and county primary election will be held on June 2, 2026. The primary election will include various candidates and possible ballot issues from local, state, and federal elections on no less than two party ballots per voter. The County required three party ballots per voter in 2024. The number of party ballots depends on the parties qualifying for the primary as determined by the Secretary of State. It is likely the County would require at least three party ballots per voter for the primary. The County currently has 106,817 voters, so the approximate number of ballots would be at least 320,000 double-sided ballots. The County currently has 59 precincts and therefore would likely have 59 ballot styles in each party ballot, for a total of 177 ballot styles. If a fourth party is required, an additional 59 ballot styles and an additional 106,000 double-sided ballots would be required. Special elections called by municipal or other election districts could cause additional ballot styles but would not require changes in the total amount of ballots.

A federal general election will be held on November 3, 2026. The general election will include various candidates and possible ballot issues from local, state, and federal elections. The County would likely print at least 107,000 double-sided ballots for the federal general election in at least 59 ballot styles.

The successful Vendor may be required to print ballots for unscheduled elections during the time period of the contract, however, a proposal should not include costs for unscheduled elections.

3. Scope of Work/Specifications

Since some elections are subject to cancellation, candidates may still file, and jurisdictions may include additional ballot issues, the County offers the following information as our best projections at this time.

The County typically uses 14” ballots with 1” stubs at the bottom of the ballot. However, if enough ballot issues are placed on a ballot, the County will require a 17” ballot with a 1” stub. The longer ballots are only anticipated during the federal general election. Ballot printing must be done on ES&S approved paper stock (CountRight Ballot Stock) for use on ES&S DS850 and DS950 tabulators. *Please specify in your cost proposal whether the cost of ballot stock paper is included or excluded in your pricing and specifically segregate the cost of ballot stock, if it is included. Please also segregate any costs for shipping and specify the shipping times for arrival to Billings, MT.*

Based on historical experience with cancellations, the County anticipates the following estimates are needed for the following elections [estimates are subject to change based on the actual needs of each election district] – please use the following estimates for preparing your cost proposal:

- 2025 Municipal Primary Election - approximately 66,000 single-sided 14” printed ballots with a 1” stub in 5 ballot styles. Stubs on folded ballots will be left on, and the ballots should be folded appropriately to allow the County to remove the stub before sending the ballot (generally an overhanging double parallel fold). The following amounts will be required:

Folded: 62,700

Flats: 3,300.

- 2025 Municipal General Election - approximately 68,500 single-sided 14” printed ballots with a 1” stub in 10 ballot styles. Stubs on folded ballots will be left on, and the ballots should be folded appropriately to allow the County to remove the stub before sending the ballot (generally an overhanging double parallel fold). The following amounts will be required:

Folded: 65,075

Flats: 3,425.

- 2026 School & Special District Election - approximately 55,000 single-sided 14” printed ballots with a 1” stub in 15 ballot styles. Stubs on folded ballots will be left on, and the ballots should be folded appropriately to allow the County to remove the stub before sending the ballot (generally an overhanging double parallel fold). The following amounts will be folded or bundled in flats:

Folded: 53,350

Flats: 1,650.

- 2026 Federal Primary - approximately 321,000 double-sided 14” printed ballots with a 1” stub in 177 ballot styles. Stubs on folded ballots will be cut off, and the ballots should be folded appropriately so that on one side there is only one fold (generally a double parallel fold). The following amounts will be folded or bundled in flats:

Folded: 270,000

Flats: 51,000.

- 2026 Federal General - approximately 107,000 double-sided 14” printed ballots with a 1” stub in 59 ballot styles. Please note that if necessary to accommodate the number of races and ballot issues, the County may opt for a 17” ballot. Stubs on folded ballots will be left on, and the ballots should be folded appropriately to allow the County to remove the stub before sending the ballot (generally an overhanging double parallel fold). *Please also provide separate pricing for this election based on a 17” ballot with a 1” stub.* The following amounts will be folded or bundled in flats:

Folded: 90,000

Flats: 17,000.

Please use the above projected figures when preparing your proposal.

CALENDAR DEADLINES

2025 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS:

PRIMARY ELECTION: The Municipal Primary Election is September 9, 2025. Unless cancelled, the County will send the Primary election ballot content and layout to the Vendor by July 15, 2025, or as soon as the ballot images are available, whichever is sooner. All Municipal Primary election ballots must be delivered to the County on or before August 1, 2025.

GENERAL ELECTION: The Municipal General Election is November 4, 2025. The County will send the General Election ballot content and layout to the printer by October 1, 2025, or as soon as the ballot images are available, whichever is sooner. General Election ballot

mailing begins October 15, 2025. All Municipal General Election ballots must be delivered to the County on or before October 7, 2025.

2026 SCHOOL/SPD ELECTIONS:

- These dates will be scheduled in 2026

2026 FEDERAL PRIMARY ELECTION

- These dates will be scheduled in 2026

2026 FEDERAL GENERAL ELECTION

- These dates will be scheduled in 2026

SPECIFICATIONS

Ballot stock must comply with specifications by Election Systems and Software, Inc. (ES&S). Please separate the cost of the paper in the proposal if provided by the vendor. If not provided by the vendor, please clearly state this in your cost proposal. Please also separate the cost of shipping the ballots, if the vendor is not local.

Ballot stock for Yellowstone County typically measures 8 1/2 x 15". The portion of the ballot read by the scanner will measure 8 1/2 x 14" and there will be a perforation of the ballot at the 14" line (herein referred to as the "ballot stub"). Below the perforation line, the ballot stub will contain the precinct or ballot style, and stub number. The printer will be required to number the ballot stub consecutively for each precinct/style.

As noted above, the County may require a longer ballot for a federal election, specifically the federal general election. In that case, the ballot stock would measure 8 1/2 x 18". The portion of the ballot read by the scanner will measure 8 1/2 x 17" and there will be a perforation of the ballot at the 17" line (herein referred to as the "ballot stub"). Below the perforation line, the ballot stub will contain the precinct or ballot style, and stub number. The printer will be required to number the ballot stub consecutively for each precinct/style.

Folded ballots must be folded in a manner as to avoid folds on the programming code (aka "tic marks") on the board of ballot layout, which falls within 1/2 inch on the left and right margins of the ballot. Folded ballot stubs may be specified for removal prior to delivery to the Elections Office but if they are removed, they must be cut off the printed ballots and delivered to the Election Office to show evidence of how many ballots were printed.

The County prefers an overhanging double parallel fold, if a ballot stub is left attached. If the stub is specified for removal, the County prefers a double parallel fold. Folding of the

ballot must fit into a standard #10 envelope, after the stub is removed, even if the County opts to use a longer ballot length. Therefore, the type of fold may need to be adjusted if a longer ballot length is used to ensure the ballot can fit within the appropriate envelope.

Flat ballots will remain unfolded and packaged in quantities of no more than 100s with stubs attached.

Both folded and unfolded ballots must be delivered in separated bundles of no more than 100 prior to delivery to the elections office. The Election office would prefer folded ballots are delivered in bundles of 25 and flats are shrink-wrapped in 100's.

Commercial common black ink will be used for all printing on the ballot. The printer will be responsible for printing of the ballots and delivering ballots to the election department – include breakout costs for shipping in submitted proposals.

The Election Office anticipates that a new “ballot stamp” layout may be applied to the printed ballot. If required by the Secretary of State, please also provide alternative cost pricing that includes printing of a common red “OFFICIAL BALLOT” stamp impression on each ballot (therefore, in the alternative pricing, each printed ballot would use standard black and a common red ink instead of only black ink).

Ballots must be printed and delivered under potentially tight deadlines.

4. Proposal Content Requirements

Participants interested in providing a proposal for services requested are to submit the following information. Responses should be in the same order as laid out in this RFP and should clearly identify which item the response applies to.

a. Executive Summary

- Include general information about the vendor such as: total years in business, description of services offered, number of employees, and office locations.
- Name, phone number, and email of the designated contact for the proposal.

b. Qualifications of the Vendor

- Include the relevant experience of the vendor for the technically precise printing of ballots read by automated scanners and tabulators, including the ability of the printer to print in black as well as red and black (or color).

- Include the relevant experience of the vendor for precise folding of ballots between relevant programming marks (“tic marks”).
- Include the relevant experience of the vendor for precisely pre-bundling ballots in required amounts, whether the ballots are printed flat or folded.

c. Proposed Solution/Ability to Meet Timeline

- Provide a description and outline detailing the proposed solution for accomplishing this project.
- List resources and equipment that the vendor will use to complete project.
- Specify the minimum time required to prepare and print ballots from the time ballot proofs are sent to the vendor. Please separate any minimum shipping time required if the vendor is not local.
- Provide a delivery and logistics plan, including details related to secure delivery to Yellowstone County especially under tight deadlines or emergency reprints.
- Provide quality control measures associated with proofing printed ballots, security printed ballots, and verification procedures to ensure ballot accuracy and integrity.
- Vendors should have specific contingencies in place for resource allocation conflicts. Please detail your strategies for prioritizing and ensuring fulfillment under high-demand conditions.
- Provide details concerning vendor’s ability to respond and support election operations, including availability for last minute ballot changes and dedicated support staff available during election seasons.
- Provide present and projected workloads, including projected capacity to take on additional projects such as unscheduled special elections, reprints, additional ballot styles, etc.
- Provide details about solutions providing any ancillary services, such as full or partial color printing, or other services offered by the vendor relevant to ballot printing, preparation, or mailing, including the scope of associated services and cost.

d. Past Performance and Demonstrated Results

Due to the concurrent election needs of multiple Montana Counties as well those of neighboring states, preference will be given to vendors with demonstrated experience managing high volume ballot production and delivery across jurisdictions.

- Detail the capacity and scalability of your operation, including specific examples related to demonstrated ability to produce and deliver ballots on time during peak election cycles (e.g., general elections with multiple clients).
- Detail past performance relating to experience printing ballots for multiple jurisdictions simultaneously during high volume federal elections.
- Detail past performance relating to the ability to take on unscheduled special elections, reprints with little to no notice, additional ballot styles, etc.
- Detail past performance printing on ES&S approved ballot stock.

e. References and Relevant Experience

- Provide a list of a minimum of (3) projects of similar scope with details on the project, common issues, and services provided, including client references related to the projects. Projects should be of similar scope for similarly sized jurisdictions at approximately the same or greater volume as described in this RFP
- Provide the timeline in which these projects were completed.
- Client references should include names, titles, addresses, telephone and email addresses for at least three clients related to the relevant projects of similar scope.

f. Price Proposal

- Provide an overall project cost
- Provided itemized breakdowns of costs and rates.
- Describe factors significant to project pricing
- Ensure the proposal pricing form (attached) provides the relevant costs, including alternative pricing for ballots printed with both black and red ink, shipping, if applicable, and cost of ballot paper, if applicable.

5. Proposal Submittal Requirements

Offerors shall submit five (5) hard copies of the proposal in a sealed envelope. All proposals must be labeled “**Election Ballot Printing RFP**”. Proposals may either be mailed to or physically delivered to the following addresses.

Mail To:

Yellowstone County BOCC
PO Box 35000
Billings, MT 59107

Physically Deliver To:

Yellowstone County BOCC
Stillwater Building, Room 3101, 3rd Floor
316 North 26th Street
Billings, MT 59101

All proposals must be received no later than 3:00 PM on Monday, June 2nd, 2025.

Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered.

Timely proposals will be opened and acknowledged at 9:00 AM, on Tuesday, June 3rd, 2025 in Room 3108 on the 3rd Floor of the Stillwater Building, 316 North 26th Street, Billings, MT 59101.

7. Timelines

Event	Date/Time
Publication Dates for RFP	Friday, May 9 th , 2025 Friday, May 16 th , 2025
Deadline for proposals	Monday, June 2 nd , 2025 by 3:00 PM
Evaluation of proposals	Tuesday, June 3 rd , 2025 through Thursday, June 5 th , 2025
Notice of Intent to Award Posting	Tuesday, June 10 th , 2025
Notice of Award Posting	Tuesday, June 17 th , 2025

The county reserves the right to modify the above timeline as needed.

8. Selection Process & Scoring

A selection committee will review and evaluate all RFP responses that meet the submittal requirements and deadlines. The committee will score and rank the proposal.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Qualifications of the Vendor for Scope of Services – [5 points]
- Proposed Solution & Timeline – [30 points]
- Past Performance & Demonstrated Results – [30 points]
- References and Relevant Experience– [5 points]
- Price Proposal – [30 points]

9. Amendments to Solicitation

Any interpretation, correction, or addition of this request will be published on the County website at <https://www.yellowstonecountymt.gov/purchasing/>.

10. Contact Information

Any questions regarding specifications, scope of the RFP, or proposal submittal procedures should be directed to Matt Kessler, Purchasing Agent, at mkessler@yellowstonecountymt.gov.

11. Miscellaneous

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

The Contractor must, in performance of work under this contract, fully comply with all applicable federal, state or local laws, rules, and regulations, including the Montana Human Rights Act, Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. Any subletting or subcontracting by the Contractor subjects Subcontractors to the same provisions. In accordance with Section 49-3-207, MCA, the Contractor agrees that the hiring of persons to perform the contract will be made on the basis of merit and qualifications and there will be no discrimination based upon race, color, religion, creed, political ideas, sex, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, or national origin by the persons performing under the contract.

INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

CONTRACTOR shall maintain at its sole cost and expense, commercial general liability insurance naming Yellowstone County, as additional insured for this contract against liability for damages for bodily injury, including death and completed operations and property damages in a minimum amount of Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$750,000.00) for each claim and One Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars, (\$1,500,000.00), in the aggregate arising from incidents which occur as the result of Contractors negligence during the contract and for which Yellowstone County, sole basis of

liability is vicarious liability for the acts or omissions of the Contractor or/and subcontractors. Contractor shall maintain for this contract at its cost and expense, insurance against claims for injuries to persons or damages to property, including contractual liability which may arise from or in connection with the contract by Contractor, agents, employees, representatives, assigns and sub-contractors. This insurance shall cover claims as may be caused by any negligent act or omission. The policy of insurance shall be an occurrence policy with a Best Rating of A- or better and must be in force throughout the contract.

Contractor shall name on the Certificate of liability insurance Yellowstone County, as additional insured throughout the contract. In addition, Contractor will furnish to Yellowstone County, a copy of the policy endorsement, CG 32 87 05 10, indicating that Yellowstone County, are named as an additional insured under the Contractors insurance policy for this contract. Contractor agrees to furnish both the Certificate of insurance and policy endorsement at least ten (10) days prior to beginning work on the contract.

Contractor agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless Yellowstone County, from and against any and all claims demands, obligations causes of action, lawsuits and all damages and liabilities fines, judgments, costs, (including settlement costs), and expenses associated therewith (including reasonable attorney's fees and disbursements), arising from incidents that occur the result of Contractors negligence during this contract. And for which Yellowstone County, sole basis of liability is vicarious liability for the acts or omissions of Contractor. The defense and indemnification obligations under this paragraph shall not be limited by any assertions or finding that Yellowstone County, is liable for any damages by reason of a non-delegable duty.

The Board of County Commissioners reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received, to waive informalities to evaluate the proposals submitted, and to accept the proposal that best serves the interests of Yellowstone County.

Done by order of the Board of County Commissioners of Yellowstone County, MT this 6th day of May 2025.

Board of County Commissioners
Yellowstone County, Montana

Mark Morse, Chair

Attest:

Jeff Martin
Clerk & Recorder

- End of RFP -

PROPOSAL PRICING FORM

NOTE: Proposal pricing may be submitted on this form. Participants are encouraged to provide any ancillary pricing chart, pricing explanation, ancillary services offered, or any additional information used to calculate pricing for Yellowstone County. Participants may supply any additional cost proposals relative to add-on services. If ballot stock is provided by the vendor or ballots must be shipped from the vendor, please include a breakout cost for the price of the ballot stock and shipping for each election.

2025 Elections

2025 Municipal Primary

Printing: \$ _____

Alternative Cost including black and red ink: \$ _____

If relevant, please provide details concerning these included costs:

Approved ballot stock \$ _____

Shipping \$ _____

2025 Municipal General

Printing \$ _____

Alternative Cost including black and red ink: \$ _____

If relevant, please provide details concerning these included costs:

Approved ballot stock \$ _____

Shipping \$ _____

Total Cost for 2025 elections \$ _____

2026 Elections

2026 School/SPD

Printing \$ _____

Alternative Cost including black and red ink: \$ _____

If relevant, please provide details concerning these included costs:

Approved ballot stock \$ _____

Shipping \$ _____

2026 Federal Primary Election

Printing: \$ _____

Alternative Cost including black and red ink: \$ _____

If relevant, please provide details concerning these included costs:

Approved ballot stock: \$ _____

Shipping: \$ _____

2026 Federal General Election (14" ballot with 1" stub)

Printing: \$ _____

Alternative Cost including black and red ink: \$ _____

If relevant, please provide details concerning these included costs:

Approved ballot stock: \$ _____

Shipping: \$ _____

Total Cost for printing 2026 elections, including 14" ballot in federal general:

\$ _____

2026 Federal General Election (17" ballot with 1" stub)

Printing: \$ _____

Alternative Cost including black and red ink: _____

If relevant, please provide details concerning these included costs:

Approved ballot stock: \$ _____

Shipping: \$ _____

Total Cost for printing 2026 elections, including 17" ballot in federal general:

\$ _____