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RFP Response for:  
The County of Chester, Department of Voter Services



# Voter Ballot Printing and Production

Request for Proposals #2102-04



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ORIGINAL



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## Introduction

NPC, Inc. (“NPC”) is responding to Chester County’s Request for Proposals – Voter Ballot Printing and Production for the County of Chester Department of Voter Services (“RFP”). During these unprecedented times and Act 77 allowing no-excuse absentee voting in Pennsylvania, there is more demand than ever for an automated and accountable vote by mail solution. NPC possesses both the capabilities and capacity to print and mail Chester County’s ballots, envelopes, and supporting documents with complete accountability. NPC proposes a secure and accountable workflow to successfully produce and deliver Chester County’s election materials in accordance with the Scope of Work in the RFP.

NPC is a partner Chester County can trust. Located in central Pennsylvania, a few hours west of Chester County, NPC possesses the requisite experience, capabilities and ample capacity to assist Chester County in delivering successful elections.

## Qualifications and Experience

### History and Mission

NPC is a family-owned business built around a powerful and guiding Mission: “to provide the means for self-reliant individuals to improve both their quality of life and standard of living.” This Mission has driven our decision to create long-term, values-based relationships with our employees, customers, partners, and communities and has enabled NPC to grow and evolve for over 65 years.

NPC specializes in providing the entire spectrum of information management, print, mail and distribution services. NPC focuses on helping our customers inform and engage with their stakeholders through any combination of our core services, including:

- data processing;
- composition;
- accountable, high-volume variable printing;
- optimized mail delivery;
- fulfillment-on-demand solutions;
- return mail processing;
- document-to-data conversion;
- printing and binding expertise; and
- supporting services.

NPC is an accomplished federal, state and local government contractor, with over 50 years of experience providing high quality and timely delivery of products and services. We are consistently one of the top print and mail solution providers for the U.S. Government Publishing Office (“GPO”) and have become the partner of choice for several election officials in Pennsylvania.

**Top print and mail solutions provider to the Federal Government with decades of experience providing high volume, complete match automated printing and mailing services**

NPC has significant experience successfully executing the processes required to perform the services described in the RFP. NPC has decades of experience providing high-volume and high-integrity accountable printing and delivery services, and our exceptional service makes us the partner of choice for our customers, including:

- Montgomery County (PA) Board of Elections;
- Dauphin County (PA) Board of Elections;
- Lancaster County (PA) Board of Elections;
- Blair County (PA) Board of Elections;
- And several other Boards of Elections;
- Internal Revenue Service;
- Social Security Administration;
- Department of Veterans Affairs;
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services;
- Bureau of Labor and Statistics;
- U.S. Postal Service; and
- Many other federal, state and local government agencies.

**Partner of Choice for Several County Election Officials throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

We help these mission-driven organizations deliver hundreds of millions of time-sensitive, mission critical information to stakeholders annually. NPC has been entrusted with some of our nation’s most critical print and delivery needs. Our personnel training and physical and information security controls are designed specifically for the most sensitive document based print and delivery. In addition to traditional new hire background checks, the majority of our employees have been cleared through the federal Office of Personnel Management and hold a moderate public trust clearance.

NPC understands the needs of Chester County and the criticality of upholding the integrity of the democratic process. NPC is excited for the opportunity to partner with Chester County to provide secure and accountable ballot printing and mailing services. Our proposed closed-loop system of controls provides accountability through the entire production process.



## Service Locations

NPC operates within a campus environment with four distinct facilities in central Pennsylvania, located just a few hours west of Chester County. We are committed to providing a safe, secure and clean environment for our employees while meeting the needs of our diverse customer base. For the subject RFP, it is anticipated that all data processing, printing, inserting and mailing would be completed at our corporate headquarters, a 200,000 square foot secure print and mail facility located in Claysburg, Pennsylvania. Our headquarters' close proximity to Chester County will afford us the opportunity to respond to the needs of the Department of Voter Services at a moment's notice. NPC employs nearly 500 employees. Approximately 350 employees work at our headquarter facility which includes our secure print and mail department, production personnel and management, project managers, programmers, data processors, quality assurance personnel, and security team members.

## Key Individuals

Key Personnel<sup>1</sup> for the subject RFP include:

- AJ Farkus, Program Manager
- Suzanne Davis, Customer Service Manager
- Brad Houseknecht, Business Development Lead
- Frank Swalga, Government Contracts Manager
- Luke Barnhart, Vice President of Operations
- George Reed, Director of Operations
- Brian White, Senior Operations Manager
- Ryan McNeely, Chief Risk Management Officer & General Counsel

## Redundancy of Skillsets

NPC maintains a team of Program Managers and Customer Service Representatives who all support each other in delivering for our customers. In addition to the above individuals, NPC will provide experienced, high-performing manufacturing and administrative support personnel. Our production team is made up of four separate crews, providing redundancy of skill sets and leadership oversight. Our team possesses the expertise and skills necessary to support Chester County in delivering successful elections.

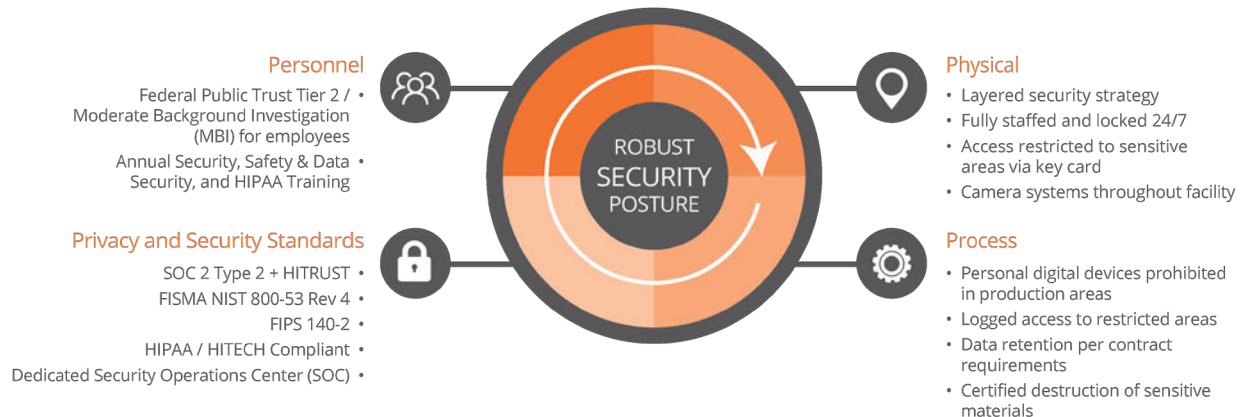
## Security

Protecting voter information and election data is critically important. NPC goes to great lengths to ensure security, more so than most printing and mailing companies can or are willing to do for their networks. For decades, state and federal agencies have trusted us to be the custodians

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<sup>1</sup> Resumes and biographies for Key Personnel are attached as Exhibit A.

of their critical data. This is a responsibility we take very seriously, and NPC has taken significant steps to ensure our physical environment is secure, our digital assets are protected, and our employees are well-trained.



In addition to our file transfer and storage security measures outlined below, our facilities are access controlled and equipped with video surveillance. All employees are required to wear a photo identification at all times and must swipe their NPC-issued badge at various access points throughout the facility in order to be granted access. All Chester County materials will be stored within our restricted facility, and the security of all Chester County information will be maintained throughout the production process. All materials will be stored within our access-controlled facility under video surveillance until they enter the mail stream, and as noted below, NPC is a USPS plant-load facility, which means completed mail packages enter the mail stream within our secure facility.

The security of all ballots and election materials are maintained throughout the production process and the items are accounted for through our tracking and audit systems as discussed below. Since 1998, the effectiveness of NPC's internal controls has been examined and annually re-examined by several agencies of the Federal Government, including the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Social Security Administration, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. In addition to our customer audits, NPC undergoes several third-party audits throughout the year, including our SOC 2, Type II + HITRUST attestation. Our network also undergoes penetration testing by a third party periodically throughout the year. Our most recent penetration test conducted by a third party was in November 2020. Due to the sensitivity and confidentiality of the information contained in a penetration test, a report can be furnished upon award.

## Technical Proposal

NPC has significant experience successfully executing the processes required to perform the services described in the RFP. We have worked with counties on various voting systems, including those using ES&S, and have developed efficient, timely, above-standard processes to enable us to provide timely and accountable election material printing and mailing services to Chester County.

### Program Management

NPC's Proposal begins with our program management approach. Because each customer's needs and expectations are unique, our organizational structure is tailored to meet the specific requirements of each and every customer. NPC understands that Chester County needs a reliable, quality-focused, secure printing and mailing partner to support its elections. We will assign a dedicated Program Manager, as set forth above, to oversee all facets of the project. The Program Manager will work closely with our Operational Leadership and Quality Assurance teams to ensure that Chester County's requirements are met throughout the entire project.

The Program Manager will be paired with a dedicated Customer Service Representative and this team will keep Chester County up to date with all aspects of the project and meet requisite response times. It is our intention that this team function as an extension of Chester County's team, providing project updates, status reports and responding to your inquiries and requests so you are always in control and in the know. NPC operates both day and night shifts, and our team will be available to Chester County around the clock. We believe in providing complete transparency and keeping our customers informed so there are never any surprises.

**NPC operates both day and night shifts, and our team will be available to Chester County around the clock.**

### Receipt of Files

NPC will establish a unique Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) site for Chester County. The SFTP will provide file access, file transfer, and file and content management in a secure and organized manner. All artwork, data files, electronic proofs, and reports will be exchanged through the SFTP site. The SFTP will only be accessible to NPC employees who have a need to access the data and files and access requires two-factor authentication. These individuals all participate in security and privacy training at least annually and hold a public trust clearance through the federal Office of Personnel Management.

## Printing of Ballots and Election Materials

NPC excels when providing high-volume printing and mailing where accuracy, quality and precision are of utmost importance. With state of the art printing equipment, NPC possesses the capability and capacity to produce and deliver Chester County's ballots, envelopes, test decks and supporting forms and documents.

NPC has the requisite experience and print and inserting equipment to accurately produce all ballots in accordance with specifications set forth by Chester County, Pennsylvania Election Code, and ES&S. NPC will produce and deliver Election Day ballots on requisite ballot stock with perforated numbered stubs in accordance with the specifications outlined in the RFP. NPC is accustomed to strict delivery deadlines, and we are well equipped to deliver mail-in and absentee ballots to the US Postal Service within 24-48 hours of receiving each daily voter data file from Chester County.

### *Print Quality Controls*

NPC has a dedicated Quality Control Team that will ensure the quality of all election materials. For all ballots, we will conduct numerous quality checks and audits throughout the production process to ensure our equipment consistently prints machine-readable components and variable information in strict adherence with the specifications set forth by Chester County, Pennsylvania Election Code, and ES&S. These controls include:

- pulling samples every 1,000 or a specified percentage;
- reviewing the samples to ensure alignment and sizing;
- verifying ink density on timing marks; and
- reviewing ink fastness to ensure ink will not smear.

All ballots and materials will be produced, packaged, and delivered with requisite cover sheets in accordance with the requirements of Chester County. For mail-in and absentee ballots, NPC will ensure the folds do not interfere with any tracking mark or voting oval. The tolerances on NPC's automated folding equipment will ensure accurate folding. As a secondary check, every 1,000<sup>th</sup> piece, or a specified percentage, will be reviewed by a member of the Quality Control Team to confirm accurate fold location. Our ballots have had zero scanability issues for our partner counties.

Prior to printing the live ballots, NPC will produce and deliver the required test materials for Chester County.



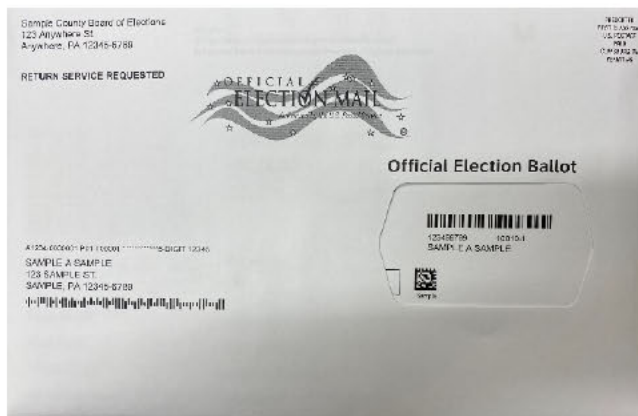
### Inserting and Mailing Services for Absentee and Mail-in Ballots

NPC has an extensive and established history of providing high-integrity accountable mailings. Our extensive inserting capabilities allow us to put hundreds of millions of mail pieces, with multiple inserts, into the mail-stream each year with 100% accountability.

#### *Windowed Outer Envelope Recommendation and Proposal*

For the reasons detailed herein, NPC strongly recommends the use of NPC’s proposed Vote by Mail Packet. NPC’s proposed Vote by Mail Packet utilizes the same size (6 ) outer envelope used by Chester County in the 2020 General Election. The Pennsylvania Department of State and USPS have both approved NPC’s outer envelope design, and NPC assisted our partner counties in executing successful elections in 2020 with this Vote by Mail Packet. With this envelope design, our accountable processes will ensure every voter receives the correct Vote by Mail Packet. Below is a sample of our proposed Vote by Mail Packet.

**DOS and USPS both have approved this design, and NPC assisted our partner counties in executing successful elections in 2020 with this Vote by Mail Packet**



\*Please note that, at the request of Chester County, NPC will make modifications to the envelope design to include any and all of the artwork in the envelope guidance recently released by the PA Department of State.

#### *Accountable Inserting*

Each variable print piece (ballot, return envelope) is imaged with a unique 2D barcode. This unique barcode does not include any personally identifiable information; rather, it tells our systems the version of ballot (ex. precinct) and verifies the return envelope is for Chester County. Each Vote by Mail Package



will be tailored uniquely to each individual voter by selecting and inserting voter instructions, ballot, Referendum/Plain English Statement (when applicable), secrecy envelope, and return envelope as specified by Chester County while ensuring a complete and accurate Vote by Mail Packet.

NPC will utilize automated inserters with vision systems and software, as well as read & write inkjet capabilities to ensure accurate assembly of Vote by Mail Packets. Each component of the Vote by Mail Packet will be pulled from a feed station on the inserting equipment. The feed stations are equipped with detectors to ensure only one component is pulled from each station. The collated components will then be inserted into the outer envelope and sealed.

The sealed Vote by Mail Packet will then feed through an imaging system. The imaging system will print the voter information on the outer envelope (mailing address) and return envelope (barcode and voter information from SURE) simultaneously to eliminate the potential for any mismatch in inserting. It is our understanding that, initially, Chester County experienced problems with scanning barcodes on voter's return envelopes but was able to significantly improve the success rate by increasing the barcode size on the return envelope. NPC has had discussions with BlueCrest, and in addition to an increased barcode size, we have offered recommendations for improvement, including the use of a 2D barcode, which high-speed scanners are better equipped to read. NPC will work with Chester County in advance to ensure there are no surprises on Election Day.

**NPC has had discussions with BlueCrest and in addition to larger barcodes, we have offered recommendations for improvement. NPC will work with Chester County in advance to ensure there are no surprises on Election Day.**

As noted above, each variable print piece is imaged with a 2D barcode, and with a windowed envelope design, we will be able to perform a final scan *after* all components are inserted into the outer envelope. The system will scan the outer envelope, return envelope, and ballot to verify the Vote by Mail Packet is correct and complete.

In the event of a mismatch, the system will shut down and record the error. The rejected piece will be removed and reprinted following the same production steps to maintain assembly integrity. At the end of each run, the job will be reconciled against the input control file to confirm all Vote by Mail Packets are accurate and accounted for. Once reconciled, the Vote by Mail Packets are ready to mail.



The completed mail trays will be appropriately designated with Election tags and staged at NPC's loading dock. As a United States Postal Service authorized plant-load facility, USPS postal workers maintain an office in our building. The in-house USPS operation allows Chester County's finished ballot mail pieces to be verified on-site and directly enter the mail

**In-house USPS operation allows Chester County's finished ballot mail pieces to be verified on-site and directly enter the mail stream – without another delivery or touch point – providing an additional layer of security and accountability.**

stream – without another delivery or touch point. This provides an additional layer of security and accountability. With our strong relationship with USPS, NPC is able to assist Chester County with any communications and approvals from USPS. We will work very closely with the United States Postal Service to confirm the mail meets Postal Service requirements and offers the best value while ensuring the ballots are delivered as quickly as possible to voters. We will apply any and all United States Postal Service bar-coding and presorting to provide the lowest applicable first-class postage rate. Upon mailing completion, NPC will provide the postal receipts and "mail-to" file to Chester County.

**With our strong relationship with USPS, NPC is able to assist Chester County with any communications and approvals from USPS.**

### **Daily Reports to the County**

NPC shall upload a customized daily report to the SFTP showing the names of voters of all ballots mailed and proof of postal delivery. NPC will also provide a report that will show the total number of ballots mailed on each date with a grand total shown at the bottom ("Totals Report"). The Totals Report will be a cumulative report that will include the prior day(s) and add the current day. The reports can be tailored to the exact format as required by Chester County.

### **Conclusion**

NPC has the necessary resources, trained and experienced staff, reliable equipment, specific print and mail knowledge, and a proven record of accomplishment to assist Chester County in the significant print and logistical challenges surrounding election form preparation, printing and mailing. We are ready to partner with Chester County and execute timely, accurate, and secure elections.

## EXHIBIT A – Key Personnel

### ANDREW J. FARKUS PROGRAM MANAGER

*(NPC, 2011 – present)*

AJ is experienced in the creation and management of large, complex digital printing, inserting and mailing projects. AJ is NPC's lead Program Manager for Election Solutions. He has designed, implemented and managed high-profile and high-volume election printing and mailing processes and procedures. In addition to election solutions, AJ is experienced in all forms of digital document printing from print on demand book production, electronic fulfillment, as well as "personalization of one" in quantities of millions. He has worked with large Federal Agencies and State and Local Governments to understand their needs and translated those needs into working processes and procedures that enabled NPC, Inc. to deliver accurately and on schedule.

AJ is responsible for understanding the scope of work presented by clients and executing production accordingly. Duties include: developing, overseeing and managing Westmoreland County's Program, developing the workflows, creating the production plans to successfully execute on behalf of the County. AJ will serve as main point of contact for Westmoreland County throughout the project lifespan.

### SUZANNE DAVIS CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER

*(NPC, 2010 – present)*

Suzanne has served as NPC's Customer Service Manager since 2018. In addition to ensuring the contracts she is directly responsible for are completed accurately, efficiently, and on time, Suzanne leads NPC's team of Customer Service Specialists to make sure we provide the highest level of contract support for our customers. Before transitioning to Customer Service, Suzanne served as the Group Leader for NPC's Call Center Solutions team for nearly five years.



**BRAD HOUSEKNECHT**  
**ELECTION SOLUTIONS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT LEAD**

*(NPC, 2015 – present)*

Brad brings nearly a decade of account management and sales experience to NPC. He possesses a strong understanding of Pennsylvania elections and is responsible for finding and engaging election officials, and helping arrange successful election solutions. Brad achieves results through listening to and understanding client needs and working with NPC's operations team to deliver client's expectations. He assists with long-term strategic sales goals, builds key customer relationships, identifies business opportunities, negotiates and closes business deals, and maintains extensive knowledge of current and developing market conditions.

**FRANK SWALGA**  
**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS MANAGER**

*(NPC, 2006 – present)*

Frank has over 25 years of experience in manufacturing operations and contract management. He excels in contract estimating and pricing. He provides leadership in the implementation and coordination of new and existing contracts. He provides valuable knowledge, in production workflow and business operations. Mr. Swalga is the designated contract manager for the majority of NPC's federal and state government contracts, overseeing nearly \$30 million in annual contract revenue.

His primary responsibilities include evaluating government job opportunities, establishing pricing, submitting bids, and following up on job progress including issue resolution. This requires interaction with the government offices, our customer service staff, upper management, and plant personnel. Manages all aspects of contract compliance. Other responsibilities include handling all aspects of GPO (Government Print Office) jobs by reviewing all of the bid specifications and requirements and acting as a liaison between GPO and NPC to oversee and manage all contractual matters and resolve any issues requiring escalation from customer service staff.

**LUKE BARNHART, GEORGE REED, BRIAN WHITE**  
**OPERATIONS LEADERSHIP**

Luke, George and Brian bring a collective 75+ years of high integrity printing and delivery experience. Luke will work closely with the Program Manager in developing the project plan. George and Brian will collectively ensure that the project plan is effectively carried out.

In addition to the above individuals, NPC will provide experienced, high-performing manufacturing and administrative support personnel. Our team possesses the expertise and skillsets necessary to support Westmoreland County in delivering successful elections in 2021 and successive election cycles.

**RYAN MCNEELY**  
**CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER & GENERAL COUNSEL**

*(NPC, 2016 – present)*

Ryan joined NPC in 2016 as Chief Compliance Officer. In his role, Ryan is responsible for leading organizational compliance efforts, devising risk mitigation strategies, and designing and implementing internal controls, policies and procedures to assure compliance with applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations and third party guidelines. Ryan is a member of the American Bar Association and Pennsylvania Bar Association. In addition, Ryan is responsible for providing guidance on applicable federal, state, and local election laws.

**PROPOSAL SUBMITTED BY:**

**Brad Houseknecht**  
**Business Development Lead**  
**Election Solutions**

Cell:

Email:

**Listening. Understanding. Delivering.**

Visit us at <https://www.npcweb.com/home/election-solutions/>



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