About the Testing and Certification Program

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) assists state and local election officials by providing voting system testing and certification. This program is a requirement of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002, legislation that created the EAC. Participation by states in the EAC's certification program is voluntary.

The purpose of the EAC's national voluntary voting system certification program is to independently verify that voting systems comply with the functional capabilities, accessibility, and security requirements necessary to ensure their integrity and reliability for use in elections. Industry experts, election officials, and federal agencies collaborate to develop certification standards in a transparent process.

What does it mean to be "certified"?

An EAC certified voting system has been thoroughly tested by a federally accredited test laboratory. This analysis and testing may include, but is not limited to documentation review, source code review, physical and functional configuration audits, electrical and environmental testing, functional testing, and system level integration testing. A voting system is EAC certified when it has successfully met the requirements of the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG) and any other claims made by the voting system manufacturer.

The VVSG are a set of uniform specifications and requirements that voting systems, including voting devices and software, can be tested against to determine if they meet required standards. The VVSG serves as a foundational tool for ensuring that the voting systems used in U.S. elections will be secure, reliable, and easy for all voters to use accurately.

The VVSG includes requirements regarding design, quality, cybersecurity, transparency, interoperability, accessibility, privacy, usability, auditability, secrecy, access control, physical security, data protection, system integration, and detection and monitoring of voting systems.

VVSG 2.0

Since 2005, the EAC has adopted three versions of VVSG, with the latest iteration VVSG 2.0 ready to be used for testing on November 15, 2022. On November 16, 2023, the EAC will no longer accept submissions to test new voting systems to the VVSG versions 1.0 and 1.1. No voting systems will be decertified by the EAC as a part of VVSG migration. All VVSG versions, drafts, and supporting documentation can be found on the EAC Voluntary Voting System Guidelines webpage.

The VVSG 2.0 builds on prior versions and defines standards that will be the cornerstone of the next generation of voting systems. With its adoption, manufacturers can design and build voting machines adhering to VVSG 2.0's enhanced cybersecurity, accessibility, and usability requirements. The VVSG 2.0 also supports various audit methods utilizing software independence to confirm the accuracy of the vote and increase voter confidence.

For more information about voting systems certification, please visit the EAC's Voting Equipment Frequently Asked Questions webpage.