# National Association of State Election Directors

## General Overview for Getting a Voting System Qualified

**(all questions concerning this process should be directed to the ITA Secretariat at the Election Assistance Commission)**

1.  The first step is to contact the Election Assistance Commission in Washington, D.C. and obtain a copy of the Federal Voting Systems Standards (FVSS). The contact information for the EAC is:


    Election Assistance Commission

    1225 New York Avenue, N.W. Suite 1100

    Washington, D.C. 20005

    (202) 566 - 3100


    The FVSS contains all the requirements for punchcard, lever, optical scan or direct recording equipment systems. Provisions for Internet enabled voting systems will be included in future revisions.


2.  We (Election Assistance Commission (EAC) or the National Association of State Election Directors (NASED) do not assist inventors or manufacturers with finding sources of funds for promoting your voting system. None of us will "put you in touch with the right people" to assist in the development of your voting system. Our individual and collective roles in this process are to assure the states and local election jurisdictions and the American public that any voting system complies with  the voluntary Federal Voting Systems Standards.

3.  Once you know what your system must do to meet the criteria of the FVSS and you have your system ready to be examined by NASED's Independent Test Authorities (ITA), you contact the appropriate test authority for entering the process. Your contacts and contracts are directly between the ITA and your firm. You can save major time and money by having all of your written documentation of design, operations, technical data package, source code, and maintenance manuals developed and thoroughly documented before contacting the ITA.

    Hardware & Firmware:  All proprietary voting systems hardware has to be tested through an ITA qualified to test hardware. Additionally, if your system utilizes software that is machine resident in a permanent format (programmed onto a Read Only Memory chip) the hardware ITA may also test your source code. At the current time a hardware ITA approved by NASED is:

    Wyle Laboratories

    7800 Highway 20 West

    Huntsville, AL 35807

    Phone: 256-837-4411  ext. 218

    Contact:  Mr. Jim Dearman

    Fax:  256-721-0144

<u>Software:</u>   Vote tabulation software, including source code, and election management software will be examined by a NASED approved ITA.  The software ITA will handle any software which tabulates or reports votes and vote totals and which is not in a permanent machine resident status (on a ROM).  This includes software that is resident on a computer harddrive or any software that is external to the voting system.

At the current time, approved software ITAs are:

CIBER, INC.

7501 South Memorial Parkway
Suite 107

Huntsville, AL 35802

PH:    256-882-6900

FAX:  256-882-9905

Contact:  Mr. Shawn Southworth

SYSTEST LABS, LLC
216 16th Street, Suite 1380

Denver, CO 80202
PH:    303-575-6881
FAX:  303-575-6882
Contact: Ms. Carolyn Coggins

4.      Testing for compliance with the FVSS is directed to designs which would be used by almost all voting systems jurisdictions in America. Testing at the national level will get a vendor on a list of "Qualified" voting systems, meaning that they have been tested to meet or exceed the standards specified in the FVSS.  Testing for specific state requirements (such as ability to do pure candidate rotation on the ballot, or to allow cross over voting, or special situations required in a limited number of states) is done by each individual state. "Certification" of a voting system is done at the state level and is a process between the vendor and the specific state where the system is to be sold.

5.      Once a system is completely through the ITA process, it receives a NASED Qualified identification number.  Where appropriate, one number is given to the hardware and one number to the qualified software to be used with that specific hardware.

6.	In order to maintain its status as a NASED Qualified system, the hardware and software must be identical to the hardware and software tested by the ITAs. Should it differ even slightly, it would not meet the definition of NASED Qualified and may render the system in noncompliance with state's certification process, so it is incumbent upon the manufacturer to keep their systems current through the ITA process.

7.	The role of each organization in this process is as follows:

FEC - The Commission formulates voting systems standards and maintains those standards to keep them dynamic to changes in technology and testing requirements. The FEC coordinates with NASED to assure that independent testing can be performed under the standards. No voting system is ever "Federally Approved" or "FEC Approved."

NASED - NASED selects and approves testing laboratories which can perform testing related to voting systems to meet the FVSS. The standards are not NASED standards and NASED does not have authority over the FVSS or its individual components of the standards. NASED does select and qualify Independent Test Authorities to perform the work of doing professional testing to assure that voting systems manufacturers comply with the FVSS. NASED has no ability to determine whether a system passes or fails; the ITAs operate independently to determine objectively whether the vendor has met or exceeded the FVSS. When a system passes testing through a qualified ITA, the ITA informs NASED of its compliance and then NASED issues one or more numbers which identify to the states that the system has been qualified by NASED.

All vendors meet the same tests for qualification that all other vendors have had to meet (assuming the systems are identical). Each test that is required (as opposed to those that are optional) is performed by the ITAs for each manufacturer so that no vendor gets an advantage over another in the types of testing performed. Vendors are not qualified; specific systems are qualified. Any manufacturer must have each voting system tested for qualification that it wishes to present to the states.

The Election Assistance Commission - The Commission serves as NASED's day-to-day management company for working with the ITAs, with the FEC and with the states.  The Commission has no authority to pass or fail any system, but works with the local jurisdictions in answering questions concerning the manufacturer's products (at least those qualified or not qualified under the FVSS).  The Commission serves as the focal point for coordination among the FEC, NASED and state and local jurisdictions and the ITAs.

The ITAs will not respond to outside inquiries about the testing process for voting systems, nor will they answer questions related to a specific manufacturer or a specific voting system. All such inquiries are to be directed to **The Election Assistance Commission** on behalf of NASED.

8.       Should a difficulty arise in interpreting a standard or a disagreement with an ITA, the vendor can appeal to NASED's Voting Systems Board (VSB).  The VSB is an appointed body of NASED and is comprised of state and local election officials, technical consultants and *ex officio* staff of the FEC, The Election Assistance Commission and of NASED.  The VSB can be reached through:

| The Election Assistance Commission | The Voting Systems Board is chaired by: |
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| Contact: Mr. Brian Hancock | Mr. Thomas Wilkey |
| 1225 New York Avenue, NW | Phone: 518-339-4818 |
| Washington, DC 20005 | |
| Phone:  202-566-3100 | |
| Fax:     202-566-3127 | |
| Email: bhancock@eac.gov | |