



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

# ELECTION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES



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# INTRODUCTION

## Background

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) established the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to “assist in the administration of Federal elections and to otherwise provide assistance with the administration of certain Federal election laws and programs, to establish minimum election administration standards for States and units of local government with responsibility for the administration of Federal elections, and for other purposes.” Section 202 of HAVA directs the EAC to serve as a national clearinghouse and resource for the compilation of information and review of procedures with respect to the administration of Federal elections by adopting voluntary voting systems guidelines; by providing for the testing, certification, decertification, and recertification of voting system hardware and software; and by conducting research and activities that promote the effective administration of elections.

In December 2005, the EAC unanimously adopted the 2005 Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG), which significantly increased security requirements for voting systems and expanded access, including opportunities to vote privately and independently, for individuals with disabilities. The VVSG provide a set of specifications and requirements against which voting systems can be tested to determine if the systems provide all the basic functionality, accessibility, and security capabilities required of these systems. In addition, the VVSG establish evaluation criteria for the national certification of voting systems. As required by HAVA, they also update and augment the 2002 VSSG to address advancements in election practices and computer technologies.

## Purpose

Having adopted and published the 2005 VVSG, the EAC considered and approved the development of a

set of election management guidelines to complement the technical standards for voting equipment. It is the first time that election administration resources are consolidated into one document and made readily accessible to election officials at all levels. Before this effort, election officials depended on materials developed and shared almost exclusively at the State and local levels. The National Association of State Election Directors (NASSED) has long recognized the need for national guidelines, but it is only now that a Federal agency is able to devote the time and resources needed for the development and distribution of such guidelines. The EAC and NASSED have agreed to cooperatively undertake this effort over the next few years.

The creation of the Election Management Guidelines (EMG) is a priority activity under the EAC’s national clearinghouse role to promote the effective administration of elections. The long-term goal of the EMG is to provide a comprehensive set of election management guidelines (consolidated into one document) to assist State and local election officials in effectively managing and administering elections. The EAC expects the full set of guidelines to be completed over the next few years. Because of the urgency for resources to assist election officials, however, the EMG have been divided into subject matter modules so that chapters on particular topics can be completed on a priority basis and be distributed to the election community as soon as they are completed. In addition, a series of Quick Start Management Guides has been developed to highlight and summarize information contained in the EMG chapters. They also introduce readers to subject matter modules that will be expanded in future chapters of the EMG.

The EMG subject matter modules cover a wide spectrum of election administration topics ranging from procedures prior to conducting an election to post-election activities and management. Some particular



areas to be covered are absentee voting, statewide voter registration systems, voting system management, information technology, precinct definition, poll workers, polling places, military and overseas voters, facility management, office administration, voter outreach, and Election Day procedures and practices.

**IMPORTANT** These guidelines do not endorse one method of election administration over another, and they are not intended as “one size fits all.” States and local election jurisdictions are not required to consider or implement the recommendations or practices contained in the EMG. These guidelines are solely designed to serve as a source of information for election officials and not as requirements by which they must abide. Election jurisdictions reserve the right to consider and implement any of the recommendations contained in the EMG in consultation with the appropriate State and local election authorities.

To make the EMG reflective of the realities faced by election officials across the United States, the EAC has sought input and recommendations from State and local election officials and other election professionals and experts who have first-hand experience managing elections. Their input has been invaluable to the development of the EMG. Readers and users of these guidelines are encouraged to provide feedback and recommendations to the EAC regarding the usability and feasibility of the EMG and the practices contained within. The EMG, as a work in progress, can be sustained only by their utility and applicability to the administration of elections.

**Comments or questions should be sent to the following:**

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Copies of the *Election Management Guidelines* and the *Quick Start Management Guide* series brochures are available on the EAC Web site at [www.eac.gov](http://www.eac.gov) or by contacting the EAC at the telephone number or e-mail address listed above.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission thanks the election officials in the following jurisdictions for their time, energy, and experience in making this document both meaningful and usable by the election community in the United States.

## LOCAL ELECTION JURISDICTIONS

Arlington County, VA	Clark County, NV	Halifax, VA	Montgomery County, MD
Augusta County, VA	Comal County, TX	Harris County, TX	New Castle County, DE
Bexar County, TX	County of Henrico, VA	Hinds County, MS	New York City, NY
Boone County, MO	Cumberland County, NC	Lane County, OR	Okaloosa County, FL
Cerro Gordo County, IA	Dallas County, TX	Larimer County, CO	Orange County, NC
Chelan County, WA	Denver County, CO	Linn County, IA	Richmond County, GA
Chesterfield County, VA	District of Columbia	Los Angeles County, CA	Sacramento County, CA
Citrus County, FL	Fairfax County, VA	Marion County, OH	Santa Ana, CA
City of Charlottesville, VA	Forsyth County, GA	Marshall County, IA	Santa Fe, NM
City of Danville, VA	Franklin County, OH	Mecklenberg County, NC	Travis County, TX
City of Richmond, VA	Guilford County, NC	Miami-Dade County, FL	Wake County, NC

## STATE ELECTION OFFICES

State of Arizona	State of Kansas	State of Missouri
State of Florida	State of Louisiana	State of North Dakota
State of Georgia	State of Maryland	State of South Carolina
State of Iowa	State of Michigan	State of Wisconsin

## ORGANIZATIONS

EAC Advisory Board	The International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials, and Treasurers
EAC Standards Board	The National Association of Secretaries of States
The Election Center	The National Association of State Election Directors
Federal Voting Assistance Program	Voting Systems Consultants, LLC
MIT/CalTech Voting Project	

