Frequently Asked Questions about the VVSG 2.0

This FAQ has been developed by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) registered manufacturers whose names are listed below. This document is designed to be a quick reference tool regarding the implementation of the VVSG 2.0.

What is the VVSG?

The Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG) are technical standards approved by the EAC that all voting systems certified by the federal government must meet. They cover testing specifications for accuracy, security, functionality, privacy, usability and accessibility. While VVSG adoption is voluntary for States, most States (38 States plus DC) use some aspect of the VVSG for their own certification process, and all 50 States plus DC use the VVSG as the basis for their voting system approval process. Compliance is therefore not voluntary for voting system providers.

What VVSG version am I currently using?

There are currently three versions of the VVSG:

1) VVSG 1.0
2) VVSG 1.1*
3) VVSG 2.0

All EAC-approved fielded systems across the nation are currently certified to the VVSG 1.0. Please check with your election provider or your State Election Authority to confirm the VVSG version your jurisdiction is using.

*VVSG 1.1 was a slight modification of the VVSG 1.0. Full adoption of VVSG 1.1 was significantly delayed by a prolonged lack of quorum of EAC Commissioners (California is the only state with VVSG 1.1 deployed systems, although these systems are not EAC certified). For this reason, VVSG stakeholders – including manufacturers – have focused on VVSG 2.0, which was approved in February 2021.

What is the significance of the VVSG 2.0?

The VVSG 2.0 is a significant overhaul of the VVSG 1.0, with a different structure and content than the previous versions. It includes high-level principles and guidelines coupled with technical requirements emphasizing usability, accessibility, security and interoperability.

Is my VVSG 1.0 system capable of being upgraded to the VVSG 2.0?

Many fielded VVSG 1.0 systems will maintain full certification to the VVSG 1.0 for the life of the system. This is because specific hardware requirements in the VVSG 2.0 version may not be practical or cost-effective for upgrades to existing VVSG 1.0 systems. (For example, a new screen resolution or screen size requirement.)

To protect your technology investments, the EAC plans to allow manufacturers to upgrade components of currently fielded EAC systems to the VVSG 2.0 version while allowing the overall base system to maintain a VVSG 1.0 designation where feasible.

When will the EAC begin testing VVSG 2.0 systems?

The next step in the implementation of the VVSG 2.0 is for the existing independent voting system test laboratories (VSTLs) to complete the EAC federal lab accreditation process that will allow them to test systems to the VVSG 2.0. Once the VSTLs are accredited to test to the VVSG 2.0, manufacturers may begin to submit systems for testing to either the VVSG 2.0 or the VVSG 1.0.

When will manufacturers have complete VVSG 2.0 systems ready for testing and certification?

While you will need to work directly with your election system provider to determine the optimal timelines for your jurisdiction and your systems, it is likely that full VVSG 2.0 systems will be submitted for testing soon after the 2024 general elections.

Once submitted, the entire testing process will take several months to complete at the federal level. Upon completion of the federal test process, manufacturers will then begin the process of obtaining state approvals.

Will I need to purchase an entirely new system in order to have a complete VVSG 2.0 system?

Yes, at some point this is a reasonable expectation. Because the VVSG 2.0 was such a massive overhaul, it is likely that some VVSG 2.0 requirements cannot be met by your existing system.

Due to this fact, and because many jurisdictions made significant financial investments in new technology before the last general election, the EAC and the manufacturers are committed to working to develop a process that would allow existing VVSG 1.0 systems to have components upgraded to the VVSG 2.0, though your complete system maintains a VVSG 1.0 certification. The EAC is drafting a voting system lifecycle policy which is intended to support these decisions.

Our jurisdiction plans to purchase a new system in the next few years. Should we wait for the VVSG 2.0 systems?

If your voting system requires replacement in the next few years, check with the election system manufacturers active in your State as you plot out your preferred timeline. Most manufacturers have been actively incorporating VVSG 2.0 requirements into existing VVSG 1.0 systems for several years. You may find that systems available for purchase today (and for the next few years) will meet your requirements and have a clear path to VVSG 2.0, even if the full system currently maintains a VVSG 1.0 certification.

If a system replacement is in your four-year outlook, you should speak to election system providers, review the products available, and discuss the products' current features available versus the features that may be forthcoming in new releases. With that knowledge, you can develop requests for proposals (RFPs) according to your needs.

I want more information. Who should I contact?

Please feel free to contact your election systems provider (listed below) or the EAC.

As the process begins to evolve and more information becomes available, it is the election industry's collective goal to continue to work with the EAC to regularly provide information to inform future decisions regarding state and local election technology.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE VVSG 2.0, VISIT: www.eac.gov.

For more information, contact:

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Version date: July 2021