



# FEDERAL CERTIFICATION OF ELECTION SYSTEMS



## **Step 1: Experts Develop Recommendations**

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) works with the Technical Guidelines Development Committee (TGDC) to develop recommendations for what secure, accessible, and reliable voting systems should do.



## **Step 2: National Standards Are Adopted**

The Election Assistance Commission (EAC) reviews these recommendations and adopts them as the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG). This is like the national rulebook that manufacturers can choose to follow when seeking federal certification.



## **Step 3: Manufacturers Build Voting Systems**

Voting system manufacturers design and build voting equipment that meets the VVSG. Once they believe their system is ready, they submit it to an independent Voting System Test Laboratory (VSTL).



## **Step 4: Independent Testing & Federal Certification**

The Voting System Test Laboratory conducts extensive testing to determine whether the system meets the VVSG. If it passes, the laboratory recommends certification, and the EAC certifies the system at the federal level.



## **Step 5: State Certification**

Once federally certified, states can evaluate the voting system under their own certification process. Each state decides whether the system meets its own legal and operational requirements before it can be used in elections.

**Note:** Federal certification is voluntary, but many states, including Michigan, require voting systems to receive federal certification before they can be considered for state certification, and later used in elections.