ELECTION VALIDATION PROJECT
Increasing Trust in Elections Through Audits, Standards, and Testing
Why should we audit elections?

- Detects errors in the election system
- Provides accountability to voters
- Deters fraudulent activity
- Limits the risk of certifying incorrect outcome
- Assures votes were counted & reported accurately
- Provides feedback for process improvement
An audit-centric election culture is beginning to develop...

Now is a good time to get to know your state auditor or comptroller...
What is an Audit?

An **audit** is a...

- systematic
- independent
- documented process

...for obtaining **audit evidence** and evaluating it **objectively** to determine the extent to which the **audit criteria** are fulfilled.
Phases of an Audit

1. Preparation
2. Conducting the Audit
3. Reporting & Feedback
4. Closure

Preparation is 80% of the work and is key for a successful audit!
Internal & External Audits

• **First-party audit** – when an organization measures its strengths and weaknesses against its own procedures or against external standards.

• **Third-party audit** - performed by an independent audit organization and free of any conflict of interest.
Why only audit/test voting equipment?

Why not audit and validate other critical components of the election system?
Audit voter registration database...

- Orange County, CA with CalTech

Forensic and statistical analysis of data to detect potential problems or fraud
Audit district/precinct assignments...

- National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC)
- Michael McDonald, University of Florida
- Implemented by various states
• Resource allocation – Rhode Island

• Ballot layout and design – Center for Civic Design and Virginia

• Enhanced standards for testing voting equipment (focused on paper ballots)
• Security audits (physical & cybersecurity) – New Jersey

• Ballot reconciliation and chain of custody audits - Michigan
Let me teach you how to bake bread

- What are the principles?
- What tools are available and how do they work?
- Recipe with measured ingredients and instructions
- Demonstrate and mentor
Formula for Implementing Audit Standards

- Willingness to pilot an election audit(s)
- Evaluate goals & current statutory requirements
- Documented guidelines and procedures
- Hands on experience
- Tools to help automate the process
- Mentors
- Challenge adversaries to become allies and supporters
Risk-Limiting Audits
A Practical Guide for State and Local Election Officials

- Why audit?
- Why a risk-limiting audit?
- Terms and definitions
- Policy considerations
- Voting equipment and technology
- Preparing for the audit
- Conducting the audit
- Post-audit feedback
- Communication
- Resources
Where are the gaps?

- Communication
- Audit software & tools
- Who sets the standards?
Empower SEO/LEO with information to make good process decisions, advocate for policy change, and make informed purchases.

Confidently explain needs and process to policy makers, voters, vendors, and staff.
We are at our best when we face COMPLEX challenges together.
Public Trust In Elections

“The American electorate deserves a modern, voter-centric election system that runs efficiently and inspires trust in electoral outcomes.”

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