



## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

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**TO:** Supervisor of Elections

**FROM:** Donald L. Palmer, Esq. *DP*  
Director

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**SUBJECT:** County Beta Testing

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In order to provide flexibility to counties for improvement of existing voting systems, the Division is providing some practical guidelines to facilitate your implementation of a program of beta testing in cooperation with its vendor. Beta testing allows software and/or hardware to undergo usability testing with county staff to provide feedback, allowing any issues found in the software and/or hardware to be reported to the vendor for resolution or improvement prior to final development.

A beta test may be performed in the following situations:

- A beta test of a *new voting system* prior to completing a qualification examination. A *new voting system* may be defined as the introduction of a new election management system release level or version;
- A beta test of a *modification* of an existing certified system. A *modified voting system* may be defined as any change or improvement to the counting segment or tabulation equipment;
- A beta test of a *revision* to an existing certified voting system prior to certification or approval. A *revised voting system* may be defined as a change that does not affect the counting segment or election management system.

If you need additional clarification, please contact the Bureau of Voting Systems Certifications.

In order for a county to conduct a beta test, the target voting system must not be reviewed on the primary certified voting system. As a result, this scenario requires that a secondary or backup system be segregated from any element of the primary certified voting system used for your elections. In addition, we recommend but do not require that a Supervisor seek the approval of your local board of

county commissioners for a beta test. The Supervisor must provide within its established security procedures the methodology to perform this test; the steps for security and segregation of your voting system; and compliance with the public records exception under Section 119, Florida Statutes.

The Supervisor, in cooperation with your vendor, must create a test plan, schedule a test date and time, execute the test and prepare the test report. The Supervisor will provide the test report to the Division of Elections in a timely manner. It is important to note that the Division of Elections will be adding similar language for the requirements of county beta testing in proposed Rule 1S-2.004 Procurement, Use and Assessment of Voting Systems.