SOFTWARE APPROVAL PROCESS
(FOR VENDORS AND OTHERS SEEKING APPROVAL)

To begin the software approval process, you must complete a Software Provider Statement of Intention Form for Electronic Filing, which can be downloaded from the Secretary of State's web site at http://www.ss.ca.gov/prd/electronic_filing_info.htm.

The software approval process consists of a developmental phase, a preliminary testing phase, and a final acceptance-testing phase. During the developmental phase, you need to download the current version of our CAL Format from our web site at http://www.ss.ca.gov/prd/release_letter.htm or call the Cal Online Help Desk at 1-877-745-3453, if you need assistance. This document is your guide for creating the CAL Files for all forms required to be electronically filed.

Upon receipt of your Intention Form to be a software provider, we will send you the following utilities: 1) the CAL Validator (which is used to validate the CAL File created by your software); 2) the CAL Print (which allows you to view the virtual form before being transmitted via a printed hard-copy form); and 3) the CAL Load (which enables you to send your CAL File to us through the Internet).

During the preliminary testing phase, we will provide filing information such as passwords, log-in data, and filing procedures when you are ready to transmit our test data. We will also fax or send the campaign and/or lobbying forms that you request for the approval process. You will then electronically transmit the test data back to us.

During the final acceptance-testing phase, we will work with you in order to identify and resolve common problems or "bugs" in your software. We will let you know what you must correct in order to be approved on a given form. You will then be required to resubmit any problematic test submission until all the data is transmitted in an acceptable format.

Acceptance criteria is successful validation of the filing and resolution of any issues identified during a manual review of the printed filing. The Secretary of State will strive to provide feedback on each form submitted within 24 hours of receipt. If we cannot meet this deadline, we will so notify you.

A minimum of two submittals are required for each of the following lobbying forms: 601, 602, 604, 605, 606, 607, 615, 625, 630, 635, 635-C, 640, 645, and 690. You need only test one form 603. However, additional submittals of certain forms are required in order to be approved for those lobbying forms which require one or more attachments. For this reason, you need to contact Pam Banford at (916) 653-6704 regarding the best way to be approved for a particular form. Pam will send you the suite of forms or test samples that are required to be submitted for approval of a particular lobbying form. Additionally, she will review the printed copy of your online test samples for compliance with our business rules. All questions about the lobbying forms and the best way to report lobbying transactions should be directed to Pam. Finally, we will post your approval status for a particular form on our web site if you so desire, since this is the site to which we refer potential customers.

The following campaign forms are subject to the campaign approval process: 400, 401, 402, 410 (two), 425, 450, 460 (three), 461 (two), 465, 470, 470-S, 495, 496 (two), 497 (four), and 498. We will approve your software based on each form type or number and will post only the positive results on our web site if you so wish. If you have any questions about the campaign forms or about the business rules for reporting the different types of transactions on our campaign test samples, please contact either Gail Kurimoto-Jackson at (916) 653-8063, or Harvey Tsuboi at (916) 653-8225. Gail or Harvey will send you the campaign test samples that you request as well as provide feedback on the results of your online test submissions.

Due to the fact that the Form 460 will be the most commonly used campaign form, we encourage you to test the Form 460 first. You will need to obtain the sample data sets from our office.

With respect to the Form 460, the tests must include a broad range of financial transactions. Although there are four committee types identified on the cover page of the Form 460, you will only be given three test samples for the 460. Due to the complexity of the form, we will work with you extensively during the testing phase. Keep in mind that the reliability of your software is crucial to the success of our electronic filing program. We will not make you conform to overly strict or unrealistic standards. Nor will we penalize you if your interpretation of the forms is different from our test samples. However, if you do not pass our software approval process for any given form, we will fully document the reasons for your non-acceptance in a private written report.

If you successfully transmit the test data for any given form or set of forms with no omissions or format errors, you will be approved for that particular form. Accordingly, your new approval status will be noted on our Secretary of State web site, unless you do not wish it posted there. However, if you do not pass a given test sample, we will let you know what you must correct and will require that you resubmit a corrected version of that particular test filing.

Your participation in this process and your feedback are important to us. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding during this landmark software-testing program.

If you have any technical programming questions about our extensive software approval process, please contact the ITD Help Desk at (916) 653-8905.

If you have any questions about the lobbying test data or the lobbying approval process, please contact Pam Banford at pbanford@ss.ca.gov or (916) 653-6704.

If you have any questions about the campaign test data or the campaign approval process, please contact either Gail Kurimoto-Jackson at gkurimot@ss.ca.gov or (916) 653-8063, or Harvey Tsuboi at htsuboi@ss.ca.gov or (916) 653-8225.

If you have any questions pertaining to the issuance of passwords for electronic filing, please contact Debra McCastle at dmccastl@ss.ca.gov or (916) 653-7844.

If you have any other questions about the business process not covered above, please contact our Project Manager, David Allen Hulse, at dhulse@ss.ca.gov or (916) 653-7043.