The following guidelines have been developed to assist public entities that are currently using or considering the acquisition of an electronic imaging system for storage and retrieval of public records:

- **Establish and routinely audit comprehensive records management guidelines:**
  ...for paper, microfilm/fiche, and image-processed records through use of state-issued records retention schedules and records disposition forms, and consult with the Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services, Records Management Services (RMS) for guidance when questions arise.

- **Form a team of agency representatives:**
  ...that will review and select the system. This team should be comprised of users, finance, MIS, and legal representatives. Review the key resources existing within the agency - staff knowledge and expertise, and existing in-house data and telecommunications systems.

- **Consult State standards:**
  ...Image Processing for Public Records (NJAC 15:3-4 et seq.) before preparing specifications for an RFQ, RFI, or RFP for any new system or upgrade.

- **Consult RMS:**
  ... before preparing specifications for an RFQ, RFI, or RFP for any new system or upgrade.

- **Conduct a feasibility study:**
  ...to determine if an imaging system will be appropriate and cost-effective for your records management needs. Maybe another system would provide a better alternative or could be employed alongside an imaging system (e.g. microfilming or COM).

- **Set realistic timelines:**
  ...for the following project phases: feasibility study; vendor bidding; system selection, implementation, testing, and conversion; training; backfile document scanning; and production.
• Be wary:
  …of claims regarding new technologies without track records or standards. RMS can provide guidance in the evaluation of such claims.

• Determine system compatibility:
  …with existing in-house records and information management systems. Identify any agency-specific recordkeeping needs to be incorporated into an imaging system.

• Ensure that system hardware and software are applicable:
  …for the in-house applications they will automate. The system should serve the agency and its applications, and not have the agency serving the system.

• Plan for data migration:
  …during the initial stage of development, for system hardware and software upgrades which should incorporate the creation of a history file which includes copies of old and new versions of system hardware and software documentation (see NJAC 15:3-4.3, 4.7).

• Ensure that the system has an open architecture:
  …with nonproprietary dependent hardware and software (see NJAC 15:3-4.3).

• Use high-quality hardware and software:
  …for your entire imaging system (see NJAC 15:3-4.3).

• Create a data index:
  …data is useless if it cannot be searched and accessed through user specified parameters (see NJAC 15:3-4.7). The index at a minimum must recreate the functionality of the existing records management system.

• Specify security measures:
  …desired with the vendor during initial system discussions.

• Permanent and long-term records (retentions of 10 years or longer):
  …maintained on optical media may require hardcopy, microfilm backup, or have a documented path to migrate (see NJAC 15:3-4.3).

• Develop and implement:
  …routine magnetic tape refreshing and optical media backup procedures (see NJAC 15:3-4.3, 4.4).

• Create and periodically test disaster prevention/recovery plans:
  …for storage media, hardware, and software (see NJAC 15:3-4.4).