



March 31, 2016



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Message from the Director
FVAP Releases 2015 Report to Congress

It is my distinct pleasure to present the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) 2015 Annual Report to Congress. This report provides an assessment of our activities supporting the special elections in 2015 – and our preparations for the 2016 presidential election cycle. It is important to remember that FVAP is an assistance agency — our mission is to inform voters of the right to vote and provide the tools and resources to help those who want to vote do so successfully from anywhere in the world.



Though 2015 was a less visible year in terms of elections for federal office, it was nonetheless a very busy year for FVAP. We worked continuously to ensure voters covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* were armed with the information and assistance needed to successfully participate in special elections. FVAP also dedicated time and resources to planning and advancing recommendations in support of the 2016 election cycle.

Using lessons learned since the 2014 election cycle, FVAP further explored how to reduce obstacles by improving its resources throughout the Department of Defense, establishing mechanisms to expand voter awareness, and enhancing measures of effectiveness to refine its research approach to identify exactly what challenges remain with *UOCAVA* voters.

Thanks to collaboration with our many stakeholders — Congressional Leaders, Department of State, State and local election officials, the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), advocacy organizations, and the Military Services — FVAP made important strides in fulfilling those initiatives. Significant accomplishments include:

- Overhauled the *Voting Assistance Guide*;
- Enhanced FVAP.gov website and Portal;
- Revamped training for Voting Assistance Officers;
- Developed best-practice policy recommendations for military and overseas voting;
- Conducted additional analyses on 2014 post-election data; and
- Initiated a pilot survey of overseas citizens.

This report provides greater detail on these initiatives and introduces new efforts to support our stakeholders during the 2016 election cycle. One that I am most looking forward to is our upcoming Voting Stories Video Project. My goal is to reach all eligible citizens to ensure that anyone who wants to vote knows how to do so and can easily find the available resources.



I know this is an ambitious goal, as our 2014 post-election data continued to reveal a need to increase awareness of resources. This remains one of my top priorities. It is particularly important since we know that when military members use a DoD voting assistance resource, they are more likely to return their ballots. Whether military members use FVAP.gov, speak with a Unit Voting Assistance Officer or visit an Installation Voter Assistance Office, the Department's resources work together to support their ability to participate in the electoral process.

I am also excited about upcoming research; we are conducting a pilot program with the United States Postal Service and the Military Postal Service Agency to provide full ballot tracking in the mail stream to increase the visibility of blank ballots and voted ballots for military voters stationed overseas. This will be limited to the 2016 General Election and only to a select number of jurisdictions to help examine long-term viability for this increased level of customer service. I look forward to sharing the results in our 2016 Post-Election Report to Congress.

We will continue our collaborative efforts and build upon the lessons learned, as shared in this report, throughout the 2016 election cycle. I look forward to the opportunities and accomplishments ahead, and I know that together, in partnership with the dedicated election community, we can reach our shared vision: voting success for those who protect our freedom and defend our most fundamental right.

View the report at
https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Reports/2015AnnualReport_20160328_final.pdf

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew D. Boehmer".

Matt Boehmer

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For more information on FVAP or assistance with the absentee voting process, visit FVAP.gov, call FVAP at 1-800-438-VOTE or DSN 425-1584 (CONUS)/312-425-1584 (OCONUS), or email vote@fvap.gov. Remember, you also can contact your unit or installation voting assistance officers for assistance during any step of the process.

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