

FVAP Dispatch

APRIL 2014



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FVAP works to ensure Service members, their eligible family members and overseas citizens are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully do so — from anywhere in the world.

MESSAGE FROM THE FVAP DIRECTOR

It is hard for me to believe more than a year has passed since I first came to the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP). Needless to say, we at FVAP are (and have been for several months) actively engaged in preparation for and implementation of activities leading up to the 2014 General Election.

One of the questions many people have asked me since coming to FVAP is, "What are you going to do?" There are a thousand things I intend to do, but the two themes that I hope emerge and are reaffirmed throughout my tenure at FVAP are teamwork and assistance.

While FVAP is charged within DoD to lead the efforts required by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), our mission can only be accomplished through teamwork. Not just with the Military Services, overseas citizen organizations and the Department of State, but also with partners in the election community, our stewards on the Hill and colleagues in the advocacy community. It is critical we collaborate and keep each other's efforts in mind as we work toward our similar goal: serving military and overseas citizen voters.

While our ultimate aim is to assist

the voter, we need to support each other in sharing information and discussing the UOCAVA voting experience. I strongly believe this team-centric approach will enable us all to better provide voting assistance to Americans living abroad and our brave men and women in uniform.

I am excited with what the future has in store for us. I am confident we are more than up to the challenge and look forward to ending 2014 on a high note and begin the charge, dare I say it, for the 2016 Presidential election.

-Matt Boehmer
Director, FVAP

UPDATED FEDERAL FORMS NOW AVAILABLE



Throughout 2013, FVAP worked with election officials and stakeholder groups to redesign the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) with accuracy and usability in mind. The two forms are the cornerstone of the

military and overseas voting process. Although the new versions will be available in time for 2014 elections, State and local election officials should continue to accept and process previous versions of the FPCA and FWAB in accordance with State law.

FVAP.GOV WEBSITE REDESIGNED



FVAP released its newly redesigned website earlier this year to provide the best voting assistance possible for UOCAVA voters and those who support them. Based on feedback from usability studies, FVAP.gov improved the user experience by providing tailored content and improved navigation. The content is now organized more intuitively. For example, key election dates and requirements for successfully voting absentee are now included on State-specific pages. Other



enhancements include a portal allowing for a dynamically generated Voting Assistance Guide for Unit Voting Assistance Officers' use in the field, reference metrics for voting assistance provided by each of the Services and dedicated content for overseas citizen voters on how to navigate the absentee voting

regulations for each State.

With the redesign effort, FVAP is well-positioned for the 2014 election cycle; however, a final round of enhancements will occur after the 2014 General Election with a redevelopment of FVAP's online assistants for FPCA and the FWAB.

NEW OUTREACH MATERIALS



FVAP's informational materials help explain the absentee voting process, and FVAP's role. Each piece of collateral (such as wallet cards, fact sheets, posters and brochures) can be used as a stand-alone product,

or can be paired with other pieces to create a comprehensive toolkit for Voting Assistance Officers, overseas citizen organizations, election officials and informal partners. The materials can be used to increase awareness, educate voters on the absentee voting process, detail information regarding proper use of the FPCA and FWAB and explain the

importance of completing an updated FPCA with each change of address. All of these materials are available for your use at:

www.fvap.gov/info/outreach.

If you have a suggestion on what you would find helpful, email us at media@fvap.gov.



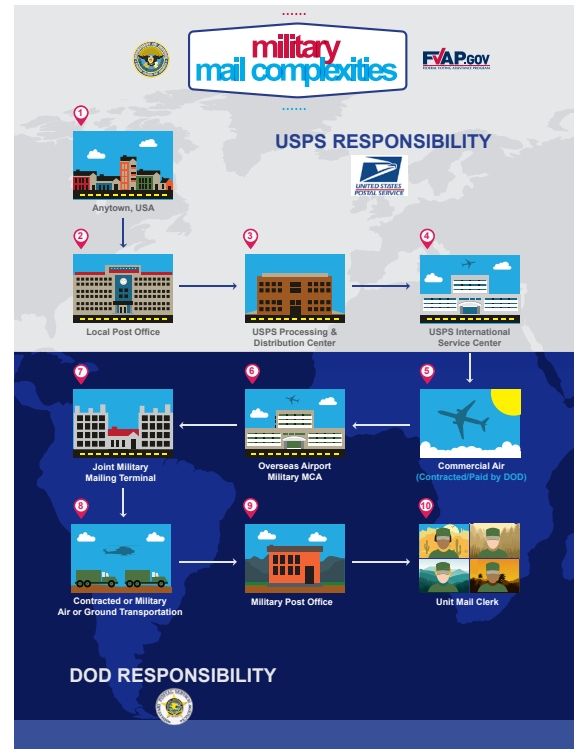
MILITARY POSTAL AUTOMATED REDIRECTION SYSTEM



The cycle time to request and return an absentee ballot may serve as a hindrance to voting absentee successfully. The Department, with the Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA) as the lead, is coordinating with the Department of State and the United States Postal Service (USPS) to modernize military mail delivery. The system, known as Military PARS, will redirect undeliverable-as-addressed election materials to military and diplomatic addresses in the same manner as civilian mail. This will occur at the first processing point stateside — rather than at a

distant, overseas processing center.

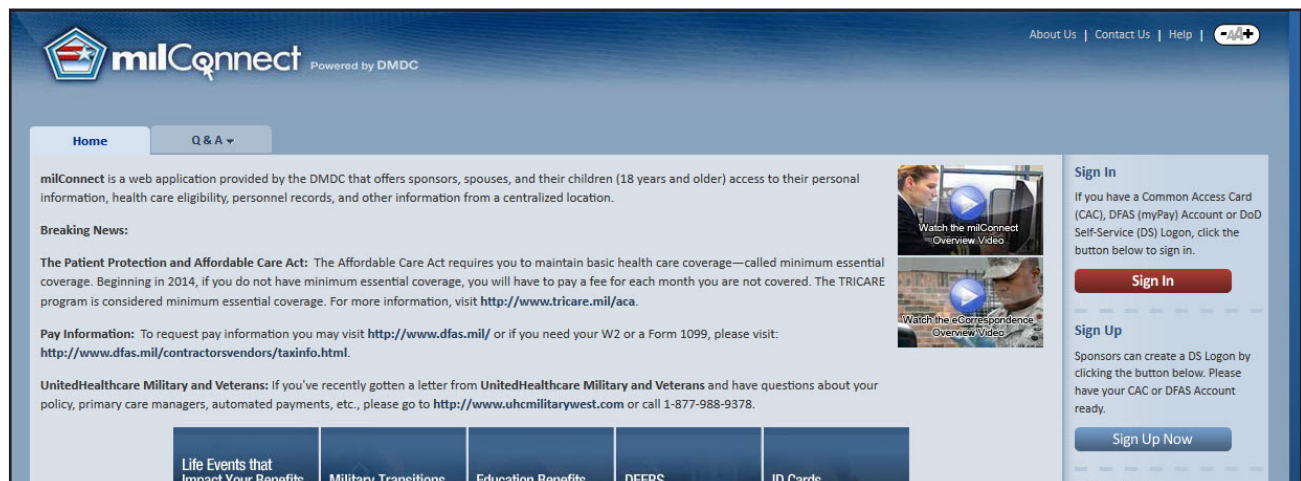
This modernization will drastically improve the transit time required to receive a blank ballot, and provide the voter with every opportunity to submit the ballot in a timely fashion. MPSA estimates that the system will reduce the time required for election materials to be redirected by a range of 7 to 30 days. Military PARS began the process in 2013; it is on track for the scheduled completion date in October 2014 and will be fully established as States begin mailing ballots for the 2016 election cycle.



PROACTIVE ADDRESS UPDATES



This summer, the DoD will deploy a tool to prompt proactive address change messages to Service members each time they process an address-changing event online. Every time a voter initiates an address change within this system, known as milConnect, it will provide reminder information and a link to FVAP.gov to complete a new Federal Post Card Application for submission to his or her local election official.





ELECTION OFFICIALS: WORKING WITH YOU TO ASSIST VOTERS

USING THE NEW FPCA AND FWAB



As noted on page 1, FVAP worked with election officials and outside groups to redesign the FPCA the FWAB. One

important note for election officials: A Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) rule requires we place “previous versions obsolete” at the bottom of both forms and prohibits FVAP from distributing older forms. It does not, however, invalidate any voter registration or ballot request received

on previous versions of the forms. **State and local election officials should continue to accept and process any and all versions of the FPCA and FWAB (as well as other voter registration or ballot request materials from UOCAVA voters) in accordance with State law.**

UPDATED TRAINING FOR ELECTION OFFICIALS

FVAP wants to help you help your military and overseas voters. We provide numerous resources, including intuitive online trainings and quick-start guides for how to process FPCAs and FWABs. Additionally, FVAP is completing a revision of

its online courseware for Election Official Training. With no password requirement or 24-hour waiting period, your short, interactive online training is accessible to you whenever you need it. The training is designed to provide you with the tools and understanding to

help all of your UOCAVA voters. **This revision will be available in early April.** If you have trouble connecting to the training, found at FVAP.gov, please submit your questions to fvaptraining@forsmarshgroup.com.

GRANTS UPDATE

In 2011 and again in 2013, FVAP offered research grants to 46 States and localities to examine the effect of new election technology and procedures for UOCAVA voters. To learn more about these two grant programs go to:

www.fvap.gov/eo/grants.

CONSOLIDATED SURVEY WITH EAC

We know that much of our work—the requests for election data, double-checking of election dates and rules, etc.—can be a burden for you. In an effort to cut down on duplicitous information requests we combined our quantitative survey with the Election Assistance Commission (EAC). After the 2014 General Election, there will be just one, consolidated and quantitative survey that will combine Election Day and UOCAVA voter data requests.

****You may additionally receive a short customer satisfaction survey from FVAP. This is a different initiative and we appreciate your responses!**



VOTING ASSISTANCE OFFICERS: UPDATES AND REMINDERS

Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs) are often the foundation of military and overseas voting programs. You help ensure UOCAVA voters understand their voting rights, understand the absentee voting process and receive nonpartisan voting information and assistance. Thank you for your continued commitment to the men and women with whom you serve. You have a direct and positive impact on protecting our most fundamental right - voting.

UPDATES

Emails Sent: FVAP emailed all Uniformed Service members with .mil email addresses from February 4-6, 2014. This email reminded them of the upcoming primary elections and emphasized the need to fill out an FPCA. VAOs should assist voters who prefer to use the hardcopy forms. Additional emails will be sent between June 17-19 and August 5-7.

Training: FVAP recently revamped its online training for VAOs. This training will better help you support voters. This training can be found at:

fvap.gov/vao/training.

In-person trainings have been a huge success! So far this election cycle, FVAP conducted trainings for more than 2,600 VAOs worldwide. Following the training, FVAP asked VAOs to complete evaluations to gauge the training's effectiveness. The sliding scale went from 1 (unknowledgeable) to 5 (very knowledgeable). The average self-assessment went from 2.4 before the training, to 4.6 after the training, showing a drastic improvement in competency and confidence. Thanks for your support in making these trainings possible.

REMINDERS

Metrics: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard VAOs should submit metrics quarterly to their Service Voting Action Officers and

FVAP (via the FVAP.gov database) on the number of Service members assisted. VAOs who do not yet have access to the database should contact their SVAO for guidance.

1st quarter metrics are due April 15th.

2nd quarter metrics are due July 15th.

Voting Emphasis Weeks: Armed Forces and Overseas Citizens Voters Week are the first of our Voting Emphasis Weeks for 2014. VAOs should plan and participate in voting activities the week of June 30-July 7. Activities should encourage eligible citizens to apply to register to vote and request an absentee ballot.

FPCA Distribution: The DoDI 1000.04 requires military VAOs to distribute FPCAs to all unit members (and eligible family members when possible) for a second time for the 2014 election cycle. July 15th is the deadline for FPCA distribution to be completed. This can be done electronically or by in-hand delivery.