

FVAP UPDATE

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FVAP.GOV
FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

THANK YOU AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

After a busy election season, we want to take a moment to thank you on behalf of military members, their families, and overseas U.S. citizens. We were grateful throughout the cycle to work with election officials at the state and local levels demonstrating such commitment during an unprecedented time. As always, we look forward to working with you in the upcoming year as we prepare for 2022.

POLICY AND PROGRAM INITIATIVES

Over the course of the next few months, FVAP will be engaging states to discuss the 2020 election cycle, policy and program initiatives, as well as ways to continue collaboration that seeks to continue improving upon ways to best serve our mutual UOCAVA voters through both innovation and research.

Digital Ballot Signatures using DoD Common Access Cards

Legislation permitting the use of Department of Defense (DoD) issued Common Access Cards (CAC) to capture digital signatures on absentee ballots is intended to address Active Duty Military (ADM) voters' limited access to printers, scanners, and/or regular mail. The use of digital signatures provides a path for increasing the usability of absentee voting systems not only for submission of Federal Post Card Applications, but also for those states that have already authorized the electronic submission of voted ballots. Given the existing use of CAC throughout the DoD, this infrastructure presents a readily available solution through which the voting process can be made more accessible for ADM voters.

Currently, two states – Montana (SB 124 - 2019) and Nevada (Chapter 293d - Uniformed Military And Overseas Absentee Voters Act – 2013) – allow for ADM voters to utilize DoD Common Access Cards to digitally sign election materials. Moving forward, FVAP is available to provide technical assistance and reference materials to states seeking to adopt legislation authorizing the use of CAC for digital signatures in this capacity.

ESB Data Collection

To help understand more about the voting landscape for military and overseas citizens, FVAP and the Council of State Governments worked to refine a transformative new data schema called the Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) Section B (ESB) Data Standard. The ESB Data Standard builds on other data standardization efforts and allows FVAP to analyze the three key parts of the voting process: (1) ballot request, (2) ballot transmission, and (3) ballot return. The ESB Data Standard is the first approach of its kind to analyze administrative data at the transactional level and attempt to identify drivers for UOCAVA voter success especially in response to Congressional requirements for transmitting ballots by the 45th day prior to federal elections and the options available to voters for receiving or submitting balloting materials.

Looking forward, FVAP's goal is to secure greater levels of implementation across jurisdictions with major populations of UOCAVA voters. Through its work with the Council of State Governments' Overseas Voting Initiative, FVAP is on track to obtain 2020 data representing 40 percent of the UOCAVA population. By increasing its data gathering based on this ESB data format, FVAP intends to drastically reduce the reporting burden on jurisdictions from the EAVS Section B data collection.

FVAP stands ready to work with the states and local election officials who wish to be on the leading edge to help expand this innovative reporting approach and integrate the ESB data file as a routing export file in their state or local election management systems.

FVAP WELCOMES A NEW LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS SPECIALIST- HEATHER EUDY

Heather will be serving as FVAP's State Legislative Affairs Specialist and point person for engagement with State Election Directors and Secretaries of State.

Heather comes to us from the state of Florida with nearly ten years of experience state government. During her tenure with the state, she served in multiple leadership positions including Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs for the Department of Environmental Protection where she helped lead the Department's legislative agenda, including the Senate confirmation of the agencies appointed Secretary. Heather also served as Policy Chief for the Department of Economic Opportunity's Office of Disaster Recovery which was tasked with the implementation of approximately \$1.4 billion in federal funding for the state. Most recently she served as Deputy Director of Strategic Partnerships for the Assistant Secretary of Economic Self-Sufficiency with the Department of Children and Families. In addition to Heather's time as a public servant for the State of Florida, she also served in the Kurdish region of Northern Iraq with a local non-governmental organization. While in Iraq, Heather taught civics to local Iraqi students and was project lead helping identify local needs and project implementation among refugee communities.



Heather is a native Floridian, recent newlywed, and new to the D.C. area. She enjoys spending time with her husband and running with her Golden Retriever, Doak. Heather earned her Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Florida State University and is currently finishing her Master's in International Affairs also at Florida State University.

WHAT IS FVAP DOING NOW?

With 2021 already here, FVAP is looking ahead to the 2022 federal office cycle. While the election is still fresh in all of our minds, we will be opening the Federal Post Card Application and the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot for public comments in the coming months. We are also beginning the process of updating our materials for 2022 including the Voting Assistance Guide.

FVAP has begun fielding its survey, the State Election Officials Post-Election Voting Survey. This survey focuses on how SEOs use FVAP products and services, interact with local election officials, and address UOCAVA specific state ballot and registration policies. We then use the information from this survey to better support you in the future to assist our UOCAVA voters. The survey was fielded on January 4, 2021.

As always, we are appreciative of your participation and comments and we are always open for feedback. In the meantime, if you have any general questions or feedback, please contact the FVAP State Legislative Affairs Specialist, Heather (Martin) Eudy, by email or phone.

POSSIBLE UPCOMING STATE LAW CHANGES

FVAP works closely with state and local election officials to improve the absentee voting process and experience for citizens covered under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). Over the course of 2020, state legislatures made temporary changes to law or election dates. As states consider more permanent changes in this year's legislative sessions, please keep the impact on UOCAVA citizens in mind. If you are involved these decisions or making legislative recommendations, and have any general questions or feedback, please contact the FVAP State Legislative Affairs Specialist, Heather (Martin) Eudy by email or phone.