



FVAP UPDATE

MARCH 2020



FVAP.GOV
FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

NOTE FROM THE FVAP DIRECTOR

Election Officials,

So far #Election2020 is off to a rather interesting start. Last year, we were wrestling with the potential withdrawal from the Universal Postal Union and all of its potential impacts. Now, we are seeing widespread contingency plans going into place for the primary election season. We know the UOCAVA voting population may only make up a small number in comparison to all the voters you serve, so we remain grateful for the continued dedication you have for this important set of voters.

As we move forward this year, I did want to let you know that we are closely monitoring the COVID-19 developments. Due to international airport interruptions, many military and overseas voters will face greater-than-normal challenges with returning mail back to the United States in a timely fashion. FVAP will continue to track these impacts, but we strongly urge election officials to communicate with voters regarding options that may arise to help overcome these challenges. Further, if election dates and deadlines do shift to accommodate COVID-19, please let FVAP know as soon as possible so that we can update our globally accessible information at FVAP.gov as needed.

From an FVAP operations perspective, we have experienced disruption in our ability to support in-person training of Voting Assistance Officers. We are currently in a holding pattern for our workshops until at least May 1st. At that point, we will consider rescheduling workshops or commit to a contingency plan that supports our Voting Assistance Officers with the most effective support possible.

Thank you again for your continued dedication and best of luck this election season.

– David Beirne, Director, Federal Voting Assistance Program

THE MOST VALUABLE PLAYER: THE FPCA



The Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) is our most popular, most used, and most requested form at FVAP. The FPCA requests the required information by all states and territories for UOCAVA voting and ensures UOCAVA voters are given the appropriate federally required protections. As a reminder, the FPCA can serve as both a voter registration and absentee ballot request – simultaneously. Voters can use it to update party affiliation, change their address, or update their information. The use of the FPCA also ensures that UOCAVA voters are appropriately classified in your voter registration database, and possibly determine which ballot choices they will receive. The federal authority behind the FPCA across all states and jurisdictions, its prevalence on military installations and at US Embassies and Consulates, and its simplicity is why the FPCA will always be our most valuable player. While the newest edition of the FPCA is the most common, older editions should still be accepted by election officials and processed if the voter information on the form is correct.

TRAINING FOR NEW ELECTION OFFICIALS

Many election officials will be bringing on new staff to help during the election year. FVAP.gov hosts online training for any new election staff that will be assisting UOCAVA voters. This training can also serve as a good refresher for more seasoned staff. The training is available by visiting our website here: <https://www.fvap.gov/eo/training>.

TRANSLATIONS AVAILABLE

With the release of the new FPCA and FWAB, FVAP also updated fact sheets that walk voters through filling out the Federal Post Card Application and the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot. Available on our website now in English, we worked to ensure we have copies in Spanish, French, and Arabic based on feedback from our customers. FVAP itself is not subject to language assistance requirements, but we recognize the importance of understanding and responding to customer needs. These translated copies are now available on our website.

OUTREACH MATERIALS FOR YOU

If your office is in need of marketing materials for UOCAVA voters, look no further than FVAP.gov. Our website is home to countless FACT sheets, posters, brochures, infographics, and PSA videos. All materials have been updated for 2020, and the popular ‘Greatest Weapon’ ad is back. Election officials are encouraged to use our materials to help reach UOCAVA voters on through email, social media, and through engagements with nearby military installations as applicable. Visit [FVAP.gov/info/outreach](https://www.fvap.gov/info/outreach) or the FVAP YouTube Channel for a full listing of resources.

CUSTOMER SERVICE REMINDERS

With election season well underway, the FVAP call center has already begun noticing common concerns and questions from UOCAVA voters. The most popular: “I have not heard from my election official. Did they receive my forms?” While customer service standards can vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, we encourage a response to UOCAVA voters due to their distant locations, time differences, and inability to visit an election office in person. A simple auto-reply or email (when possible) to let the voter know your office has received and are processing their forms is all that is needed. As a friendly reminder, election officials are always required to notify the UOCAVA voter if an FPCA or FWAB has been rejected.

FVAP.GOV HOW TO REACH FVAP

The FVAP call center remains a resource for election officials, for state or jurisdiction they are from. Have a complicated UOCAVA scenario on your hands? FVAP can help you sort out the nuances and policies surrounding UOCAVA. Do not be shy to call us if you need some help! The Call Center is open Monday to Friday, 8:00am – 4:00pm EST and can be reached at 1-800-438-8683 or by emailing vote@fvap.gov.

