

FVAP UPDATE

JUNE 2021



FVAP.GOV
FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

★ State and Local Engagement

During the month of June, FVAP will be virtually presenting during Florida's Supervisor of Elections Summer Conference and Arizona's Election Officer Certification Training for state, county, city, and town election officials. The presentations will provide information on FVAP resources and training materials for election officials through an overview of UOCAVA, state-specific information from the FVAP perspective, current policy initiatives and what is ahead for 2022. We are thankful to Florida and Arizona and other states who have included FVAP as part of their upcoming election official events. We ask all states to consider including FVAP as part of your meetings on how we can assist you in increasing UOCAVA education and awareness. If you are interested in FVAP's participation in an upcoming event, please contact Heather Eudy at heather.d.eudy.civ@mail.mil.

★ First Comment Period for Updating the FPCA and FWAB has Closed

The first comment period for providing input and suggested updates to draft FPCA and FWAB forms closed on May 28, 2021. Thank you to all those who provided comments and participated in the process, a crucial part of FVAP's preparation for 2022. FVAP is adjudicating the public comments received from the Office of Management and Budget who will then repost the forms on the Federal Register for a final 30-day comment in the coming weeks. Notification will go out when the forms are in the 30-day review period which will include a link to the website where you can view the revised forms and provide further comments. As the recipients of the forms directly from voters, we look forward to receiving your valuable input.

★ TIPS: Email Addresses for UOCAVA Voters

In 2020, many voters contacted us regarding out-of-date email address for their local election office. Often, it was a matter of the official email address being tied to an individual's name who had left the organization. We have found that supporting UOCAVA voters by using a generic email box (e.g. townclerk@townname.state.us), which can be accessed by multiple staff members, instead of an address linked to an individual staff member, is the best way to make sure the email for your office is always available to voters. When creating a generic UOCAVA email box, we suggest adding an automatic reply so the voter knows that their election materials were received and not sent to a spam folder. Also, check your spam folders regularly to catch any emails with attachments, from military voters with a ".mil" address, or from an overseas Internet Service Provider that were flagged as spam.

Please notify FVAP when your office updates your web page, links to your blank ballot delivery tools, or other contact information so web visitors can access your tools directly from FVAP.gov.

EASE Grants Report

FVAP has just published its report to Congress outlining its grant pilot program's assistance to state and local election jurisdictions with delivering ballots to military, their eligible family members, and overseas citizens.

In 2011 and 2013, FVAP began multi-year pilot programs that provided grants to state and local election jurisdictions studying ways to meet their requirements under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). Of particular interest to this research was the 2009 amendment to UOCAVA requiring blank ballot delivery to voters and the systems used to offer the military, their eligible family members, and overseas citizens an electronic means of receiving their ballots.

The "Electronic Absentee System for Elections" (EASE 1) and the "Effective Absentee System for Elections" (EASE 2) grant pilot programs focused on developing and testing innovations to improve voters' ability to obtain ballots in a timely manner, ensuring time to return their voted ballot by the state's deadline. The grant programs accomplished this by providing funding for a variety of pilots in two waves of grants.

Key findings of the report include the following:

- Electronic blank ballot delivery for UOCAVA voters needs to be improved, in particular the usability of electronic blank ballot delivery systems for election officials and UOCAVA voters.
- Future research efforts should provide a more thorough quantitative evaluation of whether the voting innovations studied actually improve UOCAVA voting success rates as part of a more concrete research design.
- The Federal Voting Assistance Program would benefit from future research utilizing the "Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) Section B Data Standard." This standard, which did not exist at the time of the grant programs, focuses on the reporting of UOCAVA voting transactions data through administrative data. This dataset would enable a more complete comparative analysis and assessment of voter success when using new technologies.

The full report is available here for download: <https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Reports/EASE-Report-Narrative-20200408.pdf>

Guide Coordination Updated

While coordination for the new Voting Assistance Guide is ongoing, we wanted to take some time and thank you for your assistance with pulling together the crucial information for UOCAVA voters for the Guide. Your up-to-date contact information is a crucial part of the guidance we provide to military members, their families, and overseas citizens. In addition to being included in the printed Guides, the state-specific information is featured on FVAP.gov and assists voters when using the FPCA and FWAB automated completion tools and returning state ballots.