



Communications Toolkit

FOR ELECTION OFFICIALS SERVING UOCAVA VOTERS

INSTRUCTIONS

This toolkit is designed to support election officials in their efforts to reach *UOCAVA* voters — 1.3 million Uniformed Service members, their 600,000 their eligible family members, and 2.6 million U.S. citizens residing overseas — and help them vote absentee in the 2016 elections from anywhere in the world.

You're welcome to **customize and publish the content in this toolkit on your channels** to best serve your *UOCAVA* voters.

The images in this document are for reference. Source image files are available for download here: <https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Outreach-Materials/EOToolkitAssets.zip>

Overview of *UOCAVA* Communications and Corresponding Toolkit Content

	Post-Ballot Transmission	Pre-Voting Deadline
Timing	After State distributes absentee ballots in late September/early October	During mid-October and early November until State's absentee voting deadline
Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look for your State ballot• Follow instructions (signing, etc.)• Register now if you haven't• Use FWAB as backup ballot if necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vote now• Check that ballot was received by election office• Use FWAB as backup ballot if necessary
Contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voter Email Template• Website Content Template• Social Media Post Templates (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voter Email Template – Reminder to Vote• Voter Email Template – Ballot Receipt Acknowledgement• Website Content Template• Social Media Post Templates (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.)

COMMUNICATING ABOUT THE UOCAVA VOTING PROCESS

Americans can vote. Wherever they are.

Did you know active duty military members, their spouses and overseas citizens can exercise their right to vote from anywhere in the world?

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) works to ensure that Americans living away from their voting residence can cast an absentee ballot in federal elections.

HERE'S HOW:

GO TO FVAP.GOV AND SELECT THE STATE OF VOTING RESIDENCE TO REGISTER AND REQUEST A BALLOT

Or talk to someone at FVAP.

vote@fvap.gov 1-800-438-VOTE

FILL OUT AND SEND IN THE FEDERAL POST CARD APPLICATION (FPCA)
It is both a voter registration form and absentee ballot request form.

HOW?
Use FVAP's online assistant or fill out the FPCA by hand and then mail to the election office. Some States allow email, too. State-specific requirements and contact info are at FVAP.gov.

WHEN?
Send the FPCA by August 1, 2016 (or later depending on the State). Find the specific deadline at FVAP.gov.

FILL OUT THE ABSENTEE BALLOT WHEN IT ARRIVES

WHEN WILL THAT BE?
For the General Election, the ballot should arrive by early October.

ANYTHING ELSE?
Some States require a signed affidavit or envelope.

SEND IN THE BALLOT
WHEN? By the recommended mailing date:

- November 1, 2016 stateside
- October 15, 2016 outside the U.S.
- October 10, 2016 on a ship at sea

WHAT IF THE BALLOT DOESN'T ARRIVE BY THE DEADLINE?
Fill out the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) at FVAP.gov and send it.

MAKE SURE THE BALLOT WAS RECEIVED
HOW? Select the State at FVAP.gov to check its status.

This graphic illustrates the detailed steps of the UOCAVA voting process, when these steps should be taken in 2016, and the resources that the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) provides. It is available for download here: <https://www.fvap.gov/info/outreach/infographics>.

Though it is designed for professionals who support UOCAVA voters (e.g., voting assistance officers in the U.S. military and Department of State, as well as human resources professionals, study abroad coordinators, election office staff, and others), it also incorporates the plain language and key messages that FVAP uses.

This graphic illustrates key components of FVAP's communications to voters:

1. A simple definition of voters covered by UOCAVA (without using the acronym).
2. Key actions, divided into two broad steps and designed to make voting as easy as possible:
 - Register and request ballot
 - Vote
3. Key deadlines or recommended dates for actions to encourage voters to act early and avoid missing deadlines (a common reason for ballot rejection).
4. Alternatives, such as the *Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot* (FWAB).
5. How to check if the ballot was received. This information is frequently requested by absentee voters and helps mitigate one of their chief concerns.

FVAP's voter language was developed in response to needs expressed in multiple research studies with UOCAVA voters. In addition, FVAP materials are tested with UOCAVA voters prior to production.

You are welcome to adopt, borrow or copy any aspect of FVAP's voter communications — language, steps, graphics, etc. — in whole or in part for your own voter communications.

Post-Ballot Transmission (Late September – Early October)

Voter Email Template (Ballot Transmission)

Dear [NAME].

Your [NAME OF STATE] absentee ballot was [EMAILED OR MAILED] to you on [DATE].

Please [INSTRUCTIONS FOR BALLOT] and [INSTRUCTIONS FOR RETURN] by [DATE]. To make sure your ballot has enough time to get here, we recommend you send it back by:

- October 10 if you are on a ship at sea
- October 15 if you are outside the U.S.
- November 1 if you are stateside

If you don't get your [NAME OF STATE] ballot in time, you can use the *Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot* (FWAB). It's available at FVAP.gov.

Want to know if we received your ballot? Check the status at [STATE WEBSITE LINK OR FVAP.gov].

Please share this information with other U.S. citizens who will be away on Election Day.

Thank you,

[ELECTION OFFICIAL]

Voter Email Template (If Not Yet Registered and Before State Deadline)

Dear [INSERT VOTER NAME]:

If you're part of a military family or living overseas, you can vote — wherever you are.

To vote from anywhere in the General Election on November 8, please follow these simple steps and timelines.

1. **Register and request your ballot by [DEADLINE].** You can do so by visiting [ELECTION OFFICE WEBSITE] or by filling out a *Federal Post Card Application* (FPCA) at FVAP.gov.
2. **Vote.** We'll send you the ballot by [DATE]. Please make sure you [INSTRUCTIONS FOR SIGNING, ETC.] and [INSTRUCTIONS FOR RETURN] by [DATE]. To make sure your ballot has enough time to get here, we recommend you send it back by:
 - October 10 if you are on a ship at sea
 - October 15 if you are outside the U.S.
 - November 1 if you are stateside

If you don't get your [NAME OF STATE] ballot in time, you can use the *Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot* (FWAB). It's available at FVAP.gov.

Want to check on the status of your registration or find out if we have received your ballot? Visit [WEBSITE LINK].

Please share this information with other military families or U.S. citizens living abroad who will be away on Election Day.

Thank you,

[ELECTION OFFICIAL]

Website Content Template



Military families and U.S. citizens overseas: Make sure you can vote!

[NAME OF STATE] absentee ballots were sent to registered voters on [DATE].

[IF REGISTRATION DEADLINE HAS NOT YET PASSED:]

If you have not yet registered to vote, please go to [INSERT LINK OR LOCAL INSTRUCTIONS] or go to [FVAP.gov](https://www.fvap.gov) to fill out the *Federal Post Card Application* (FPCA) and send it to [INSERT YOUR ELECTION OFFICE INFORMATION] by [INSERT YOUR STATE DEADLINE].

We will [EMAIL OR MAIL] your ballot to you.

To vote, fill out and send in your ballot so it [arrives OR is postmarked by STATE DEADLINE]. If you don't get your [NAME OF STATE] ballot in time, you can use the *Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot* (FWAB). It's available at [FVAP.gov](https://www.fvap.gov).

Want to know if we received your ballot? Check the status at [STATE WEBSITE LINK OR FVAP.gov].

[WHEN REGISTRATION DEADLINE HAS PASSED:]

To vote in the November 8, 2016 general election, you must have registered by [STATE REGISTRATION DEADLINE]. To check the status of your registration, go to [STATE WEBSITE].

To vote, fill out and send in your ballot so it [arrives OR is postmarked by STATE DEADLINE]. If you don't get your [NAME OF STATE] ballot in time, you can use the *Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot* (FWAB). It's available at [FVAP.gov](https://www.fvap.gov).

Want to know if we received your ballot? Check the status at [STATE WEBSITE LINK OR FVAP.gov].

Social Media Post Templates

FACEBOOK POST #1

Military members/families and overseas citizens: Did you submit your absentee ballot registration and request by [STATE DEADLINE]? You should receive your blank ballot by early October.

Look out for your ballot, and fill it out and send it back ASAP once it arrives. All correctly completed ballots received by the deadline are counted.



TWITTER POST #1

#Absentee ballots for Nov. elections arrive by early Oct. Fill out & send back ASAP.
#BeReady2016 #military
#milsponse #studyabroad #UScits



Pre-Voting Deadline (Mid-October – Early November)

Voter Email Template – Reminder to Vote

Dear [NAME].

It's election time. Where are you voting from?

Your [NAME OF STATE]'s absentee ballot was [EMAILED OR MAILED] to you on [DATE].

Please [INSTRUCTIONS FOR BALLOT] and [INSTRUCTIONS FOR RETURN] by [DATE]. To make sure it has enough time to get here, we recommend you send it back by:

- October 10 if you are on a ship at sea
- October 15 if you are outside the U.S.
- November 1 if you are stateside

If you don't get your [NAME OF STATE] ballot in time, you can use the *Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot* (FWAB). It's available at FVAP.gov.

Want to know if we received your ballot? Check the status at [WEBSITE LINK].

Please share this information with other U.S. citizens who will be away on Election Day.

Thank you,

[ELECTION OFFICIAL]

Voter Email Template – Ballot Receipt Acknowledgement

Dear [NAME].

We have received your ballot for the November 8, 2016 general election. Everything was completed correctly and your vote will be counted.

Thank you for participating in this election, and please remember to keep your voter registration information updated. You can always go to [WEBSITE NAME] to check the status of your registration and your recent voting activity.

Thank you,

[ELECTION OFFICIAL]

Website Content Template



Military families and overseas voters: It's time to vote!

[NAME OF STATE] absentee ballots were sent to voters on [DATE]. To make sure your voted ballot has enough time to get here, we recommend you send it back by:

- October 10 if you are on a ship at sea
- October 15 if you are outside the U.S.
- November 1 if you are stateside

Ballots must be [received OR postmarked] by [DATE] to be accepted. All correctly completed ballots received by the deadline are counted.

If you don't get your [NAME OF STATE] ballot in time, you can use the *Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot* (FWAB). It's available at FVAP.gov.

Want to know if we received your ballot? Check the status at [STATE [WEBSITE LINK OR FVAP.gov](#)].

Social Media Post Templates

FACEBOOK POST #1

Military and overseas citizens:
Time to send back your absentee ballots. All properly completed ballots are counted if they [are postmarked OR arrive] by [STATE DEADLINE].

Visit [ELECTION OFFICE WEBSITE] for help and resources. You can make your own "I voted from ..." digital sticker at <http://www.fvaptraining.com/FVAPIVoted/>



If you did not receive a state ballot, use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB), available at FVAP.gov.

Please share with "absent" friends and family.

TWITTER POST #1

#Military #milspace #studyabroad
#UScits It's voting time! Fill out &
send your absentee ballot now.
Visit [ELECTION OFFICE
WEBSITE] for help



FACEBOOK POST #2



U.S military members/families and citizens abroad: If you haven't received your absentee ballot, you can still vote in the U.S. election.

Visit [FVAP.gov](http://www.fvap.gov) and use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). Then pick up an "I voted FROM" digital sticker at <http://www.fvaptraining.com/FVAPIVoted/>

Please share with "absent" friends and family.

TWITTER POST #2

#Military #milspace #studyabroad
#UScits: If you didn't receive your absentee ballot, use a backup ballot (FWAB) to vote! Get it at FVAP.gov



FACEBOOK POST #3



Military and overseas citizens: Want to know if your ballot made it to us? Visit [[ELECTION OFFICE WEBSITE OR FVAP.gov](#)].

Though media often announce winners before we finish counting, all properly completed ballots are counted if they [[are postmarked OR arrive](#)] by [[STATE DEADLINE](#)].

TWITTER POST #3

#Military #milsponse #studyabroad #UScits: Want to know if your absentee ballot made it to us? Visit [[ELECTION OFFICE WEBSITE OR FVAP.gov](#)].

