



**FVAP.gov**  
FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



## Military Spouses and Eligible Family Members

FACT SHEET

**Wherever U.S. citizens go, FVAP ensures their voice is heard.**

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (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.



### ★ Getting Started

Most States require you to complete an absentee ballot application to start the absentee voting process. FVAP encourages the use of the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to start the absentee voting process as it is standardized for use across all States and territories and will extend your eligibility to receive a ballot for all Federal elections in which you are eligible based on State-specific guidelines. The FPCA acts as both a registration and absentee ballot request form.

FVAP encourages military voters and their eligible family members to submit a new FPCA every year, with every change of address and at least 90 days before the election you want to vote in. Steps for submitting an FPCA and requesting your ballot can be found on the back of this sheet.

### ★ Absentee Voting Eligibility for You and Your Family

As the family member of a Uniformed Service member, your absentee voting rights are covered. This means if you live outside your legal voting jurisdiction you can vote absentee in all Federal elections. Rules are different for Spouses and eligible family members; the Military Spouse Residency Relief Act (MSRRA) covers spouses, and voting-age dependants should check with the State in which they plan to register, as State rules vary.

FVAP.gov provides resources for you to send your vote home.



## ★ Voting Residence

Your State of legal residence or domicile— and accompanying voting residence — may differ from your sponsor's, as it isn't assumed upon marriage. The Military Spouse Residency Relief Act (MSRRA) allows you to retain the same residence or domicile that your Service member has established so long as you also established residency or domicile in the same State.

MSRRA does not permit you to choose any State; you must establish residency or domicile. Ways to do this may include voting, paying taxes, owning property, holding a driver's license and registering a vehicle. Requirements vary by State; consult legal counsel to discuss tax implications and other effects of MSRRA. As a military spouse you can:

- 1) retain your sponsor's or Service member's residency or domicile (if already the same)
- 2) keep your current, established residency or domicile (if different from your sponsor's)
- 3) take the appropriate steps to establish a new residency or domicile

Some children turn 18 while their family is stationed overseas. To vote, they should use the last U.S. address they had before departing to the current duty station.

## »»» Transitioning or Relocating?

As a military spouse, we understand you are extremely mobile. Since voting materials are sent as non-forwardable postal materials it is critical to provide your local election official with your new address after every move. The address you provide is their only way to contact you at your new home. You can use the FPCA at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) to update your address with your election official.

## ★ Share this Information!

As a military spouse you have access to a close network of other military members and spouses. Help us make sure that everyone has the opportunity to vote! Tell them about [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) and the steps to take in order to vote absentee.

## ★ Register, Request and Vote your Ballot

It only takes a few quick steps to make sure your vote is counted no matter where you are in the world. The FPCA enables you to register to vote and request your absentee ballot. You can use the FPCA online assistant, fill out the PDF or pick up a hardcopy version from your Installation Voting Assistance Officer.

### Register and Request your Ballot



- Complete the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to register and request your ballot via: (1) hardcopy or (2) PDF version from the FPCA online assistant or (3) PDF fillable form.
- Sign the form and affix the appropriate postage to the envelope. See [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) for information on mailing.
- Return the completed FPCA to your local election official.

### Receive your Absentee Ballot

- Your ballot may be sent to you via mail, email or fax dependent on your State's requirements.

### Vote and Return your Ballot



- Vote your ballot by marking the appropriate selections.
- Sign the form and affix the appropriate postage to the envelope. See [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) for information on mailing.
- Return the completed ballot to your local election official.

### Out of Time? Complete a Back-Up Ballot!

If you are registered and requested your ballot on time but have not received it 45 days prior to the election you want to vote in, FVAP suggests you complete a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). The FWAB can be found at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) and can be completed using the online assistant, or using a hardcopy version from a unit Voting Assistance Officer.



- Complete and sign the FWAB's Voter Declaration/ Affirmation using your State's instructions at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov).
- Vote the ballot by writing in a candidate or party name. Detach the ballot from the security envelope, fold it, insert it into the security envelope and seal it.
- Fold and place the completed Voter Declaration/ Affirmation and the sealed security envelope into the accompanying "Mailing Envelope." Seal. If using the online FWAB, use your own envelope as the mailing envelope. You may print postage paid insignia on your envelope by using the envelope template available here.
- Address and mail the FWAB to your local election official. Be sure to include your return address, and affix postage if using a foreign postal service.

### CONTACT FVAP

Monday–Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET Phone: 1-800-438-VOTE (8683) | DSN: 425-1584 | Email: [vote@fvap.gov](mailto:vote@fvap.gov)  
Go to [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) and click on "contact" to find where to send your election materials. Media inquiries: [media@fvap.gov](mailto:media@fvap.gov)  
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