

The Biennial Overseas Citizen Population Analysis

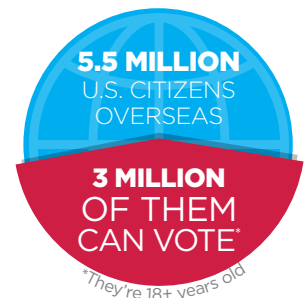
U.S. CITIZENS ABROAD AND THEIR VOTING BEHAVIORS IN 2016

U.S. citizens can vote even when living abroad. To learn more about this group and help its members navigate the absentee voting process, the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) sponsors the multipart Overseas Citizen Population Analysis (OCPA) biennially in conjunction with each federal election cycle and in response to its federal requirement for conducting a statistical analysis on overseas citizen participation rates.

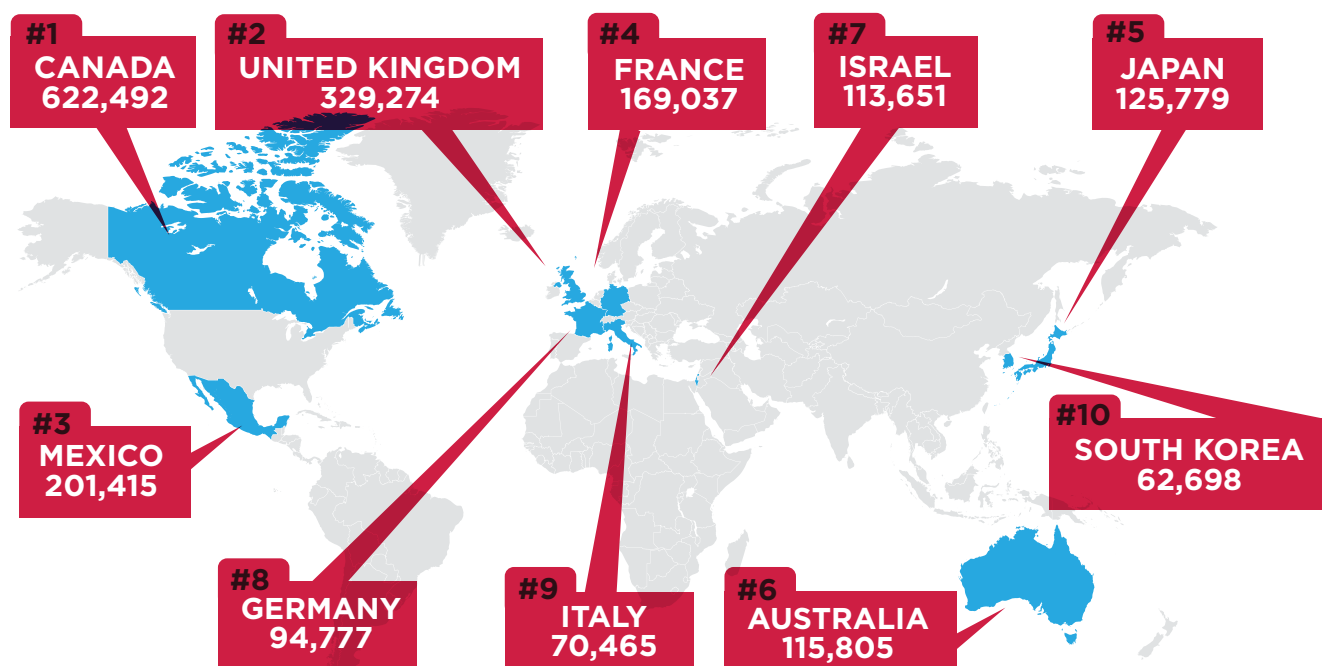
Using 2016 data, this edition of the OCPA estimates the voting rate of the overseas citizen voting-age population in the 2016 General Election; compares the rate to that of the voting-age population living in the United States; determines how much of the difference in participation is due to obstacles unique to the overseas voting process; and assesses how FVAP can help mitigate these obstacles. The full report is available at FVAP.gov.

OVERSEAS CITIZENS WHO CAN VOTE

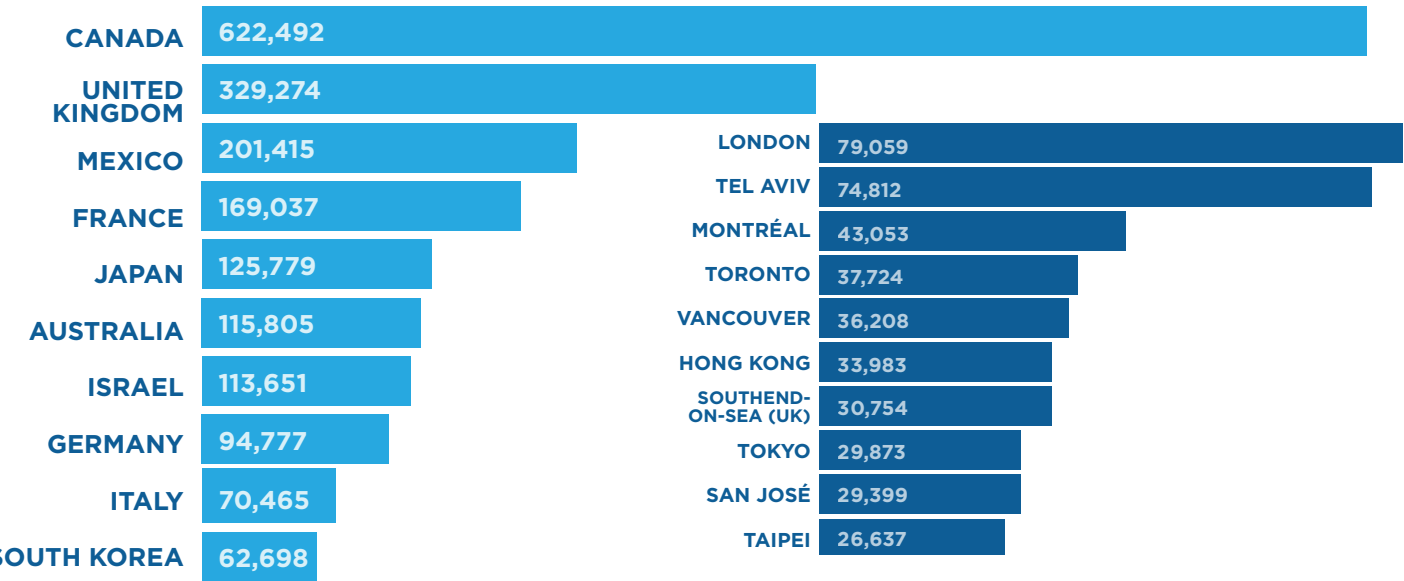
To estimate how many overseas citizens there are, where they are located, and the number who are eligible to vote, FVAP models data combined from foreign government estimates of residents who are U.S.-born or U.S. citizens, U.S. administrative data on particular groups of overseas citizens (e.g., those who have declared foreign income to the IRS or receive Social Security benefits at an overseas address), and multiple sets of predictors from the academic literature on migration.



COUNTRIES WITH THE LARGEST NUMBERS OF ADULT U.S. CITIZENS



COUNTRIES AND CITIES WITH LARGEST POPULATIONS OF VOTING-AGE U.S. CITIZENS



TOP INTERNATIONAL COUNTRIES TOP INTERNATIONAL CITIES

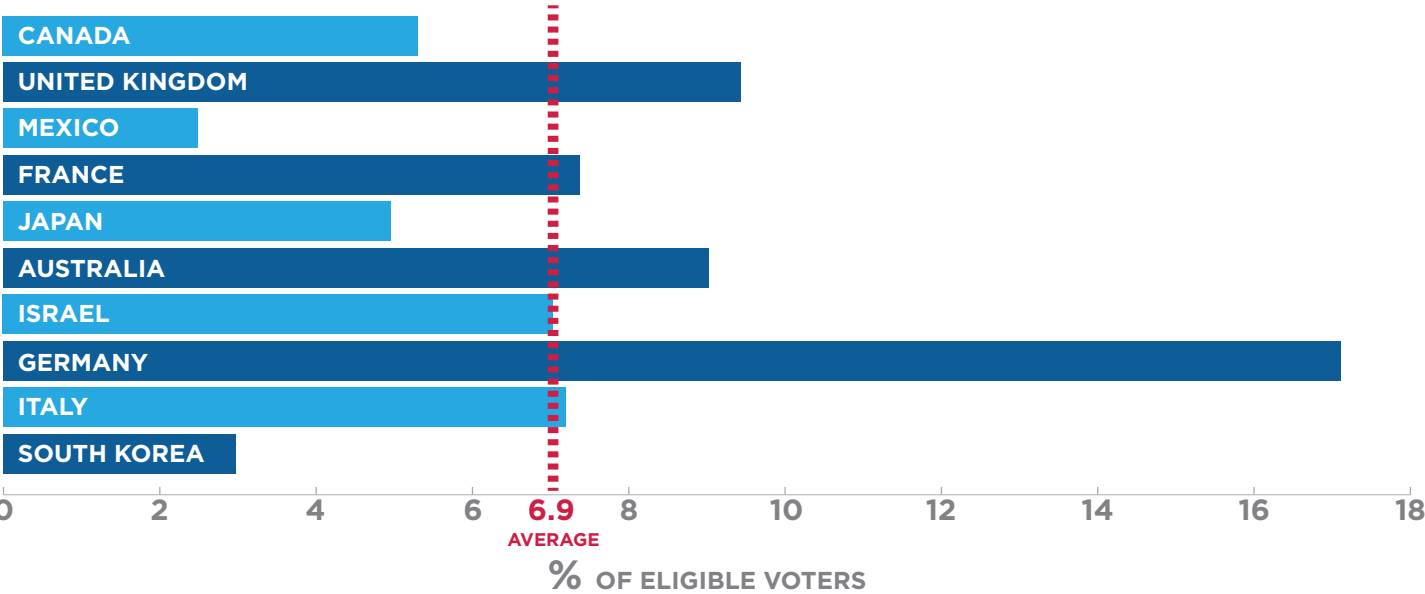
SOURCE: FVAP OVERSEAS CITIZEN POPULATION ANALYSIS

OVERSEAS VOTER TURNOUT

FVAP combined state data on the number of ballots requested and submitted by voters with the estimates of eligible voters to calculate overseas voter turnout overall and by country.

208,329 BALLOTS FROM OVERSEAS CITIZENS WERE RECEIVED IN 2016.
THAT'S A 6.9% TURNOUT OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS.

TURNOUT VARIES GREATLY BY COUNTRY, EVEN AMONG THOSE WITH LARGE NUMBERS OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS.

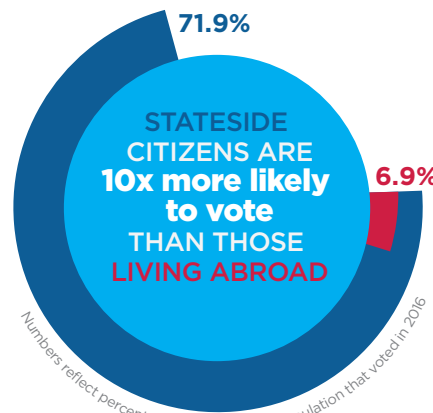


SOURCE: FVAP OVERSEAS CITIZEN POPULATION ANALYSIS OF STATE RECORDS

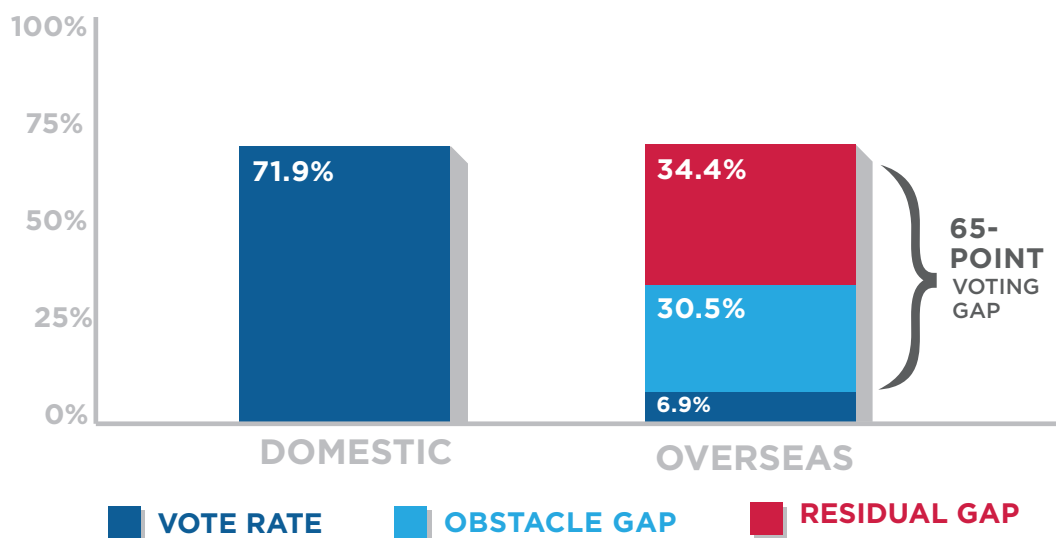
THE VOTING GAP: DOMESTIC VS. OVERSEAS

The OCPA and other studies consistently show that a much smaller proportion of U.S. citizens who live overseas vote in each election compared to the proportion living stateside who vote. The OCPA refers to this difference as the voting gap. In 2016, about 7% of U.S. citizens living abroad who were old enough to vote cast a ballot, versus nearly 72% of those stateside.

To ensure U.S. citizens abroad who want to vote can do so successfully, the 2016 OCPA examined this gap. Data from FVAP's Overseas Citizen Population Survey was used to divide the voting gap into an obstacles gap and a residual gap.



COMPONENTS OF THE VOTING GAP



SOURCE: FVAP OVERSEAS CITIZEN POPULATION ANALYSIS

Obstacles gap: The difference between the actual voting rate of overseas citizens and the voting rate expected if obstacles were similar to those faced by domestic voters.

Residual gap: The proportion of the voting gap due to motivation or other individual factors.

Obstacles: Factors that impact the speed at which voters receive and transmit election materials — voter registration forms, ballot requests and ballots themselves.

Without those obstacles, the overseas voting rate in the 2016 General Election would have been 37.5%, reducing the gap from 65 to 34.4 percentage points.

The voting rate would be over **5x HIGHER** at 37.5% turnout without obstacles.

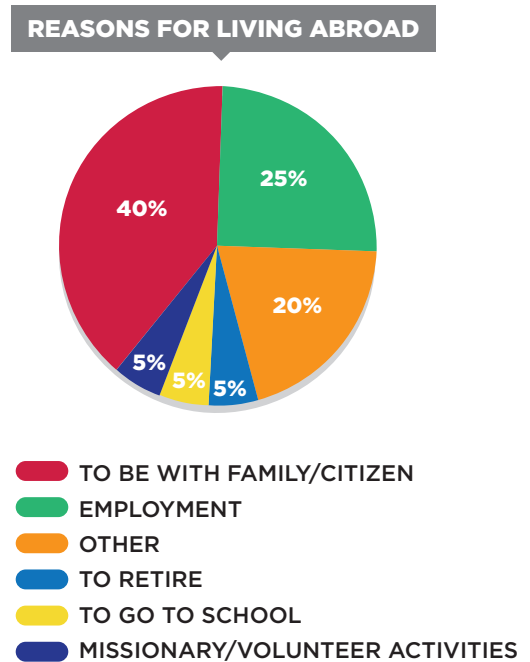
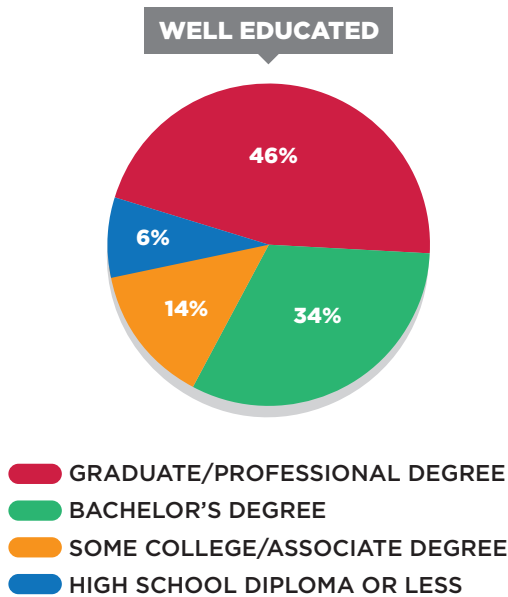
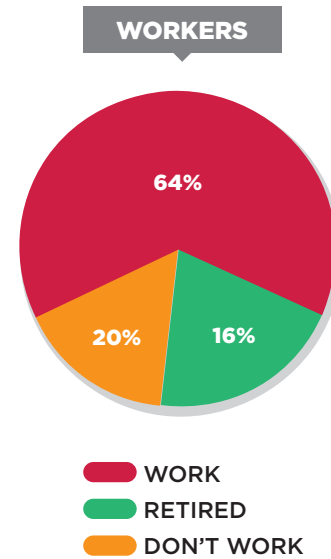
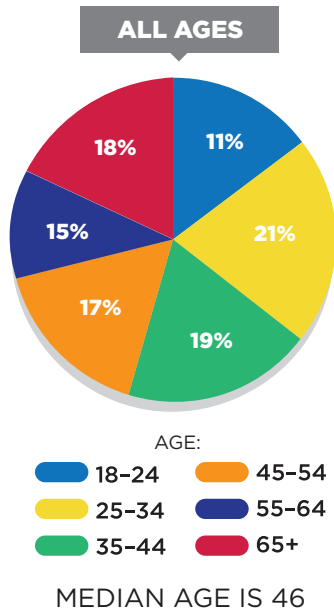
Voters* who received their ballot electronically were **nearly 50% more likely to vote successfully.**

*in high obstacle countries

Voter awareness and use of federally required electronic transmission options (email, fax, or website) can reduce obstacles to voting: In countries with the highest obstacles, voters who received their ballot electronically (rather than mailed) were almost 50% more likely to vote successfully.

WHO ARE OVERSEAS REGISTERED VOTERS?

The Overseas Citizen Population Survey was conducted among a representative sample of 10,965 overseas registered voters who requested a ballot in 2016.



44%

NEARLY HALF SAID IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THEY REQUESTED AN ABSENTEE BALLOT WHILE LIVING IN THAT COUNTRY

87% REQUESTED AN ABSENTEE BALLOT

91% RETURNED IT

86%

OF THOSE WHO VOTED WERE CONFIDENT THEIR VOTE WAS COUNTED

ABOUT THE OVERSEAS CITIZEN POPULATION ANALYSIS

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) first conducted the Overseas Citizen Population Analysis (OCPA) following the 2014 election to learn more about this population and how its members navigate the absentee voting process. The OCPA fulfills Section 20308(b) of Title 52, U.S.C., which requires an annual report by the Department of Defense to the President and Congress, including an assessment of voter registration and participation by overseas civilians. The current analysis of data collected following the 2016 election was a four-step process:

1. Estimate the voting rate of the overseas citizen voting-age population in the 2016 General Election;
2. Compare the level of participation to that of the voting-age population living in the U.S.;
3. Determine to what degree that estimated difference in participation between the two populations is due to voting obstacles unique to overseas citizens; and
4. Assess the extent to which policies designed to mitigate these obstacles are successful.

The OCPA combines data from these sources to provide insights on the voting behaviors of U.S. citizens living abroad that are unavailable elsewhere: foreign government estimates and U.S. government records of citizens abroad; administrative records of absentee ballot requests and vote histories from the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia; and FVAP's 2016 Overseas Citizen Population Survey. Conducted among a representative sample of 10,965 overseas registered voters* who requested a ballot for the 2016 General Election, it details the demographic characteristics and voting experiences of this group.

*Active duty military and their spouses are surveyed separately.

ABOUT FVAP AND UOCAVA

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. The Director of FVAP administers the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* on behalf of the Secretary of Defense.

Citizens whose voting rights are protected under *UOCAVA* include:

- Active duty members of the Armed Forces, Merchant Marine, Public Health Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps
- Eligible family members of Uniformed Services personnel
- U.S. citizens residing outside the United States

UOCAVA requires that the 50 states, U.S. territories and the District of Columbia allow protected voters to register and vote absentee in general, special, primary and runoff elections for federal offices. Federal protections include:

- Requiring all states to allow a citizen covered under *UOCAVA* to register to vote and request an absentee ballot using a single form, the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA).
- Requiring states to send absentee ballots to *UOCAVA* voters no later than 45 days before a federal election.
- Requiring states to offer voters a way to receive their ballots electronically as stipulated in the 2009 *Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act*.
- Allowing citizens covered by *UOCAVA* to use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) as a back-up ballot to vote in any federal election if they do not receive their regular absentee ballot in time to return it before deadlines.

States and territories may have supplementary laws and requirements, which are available at FVAP.gov.