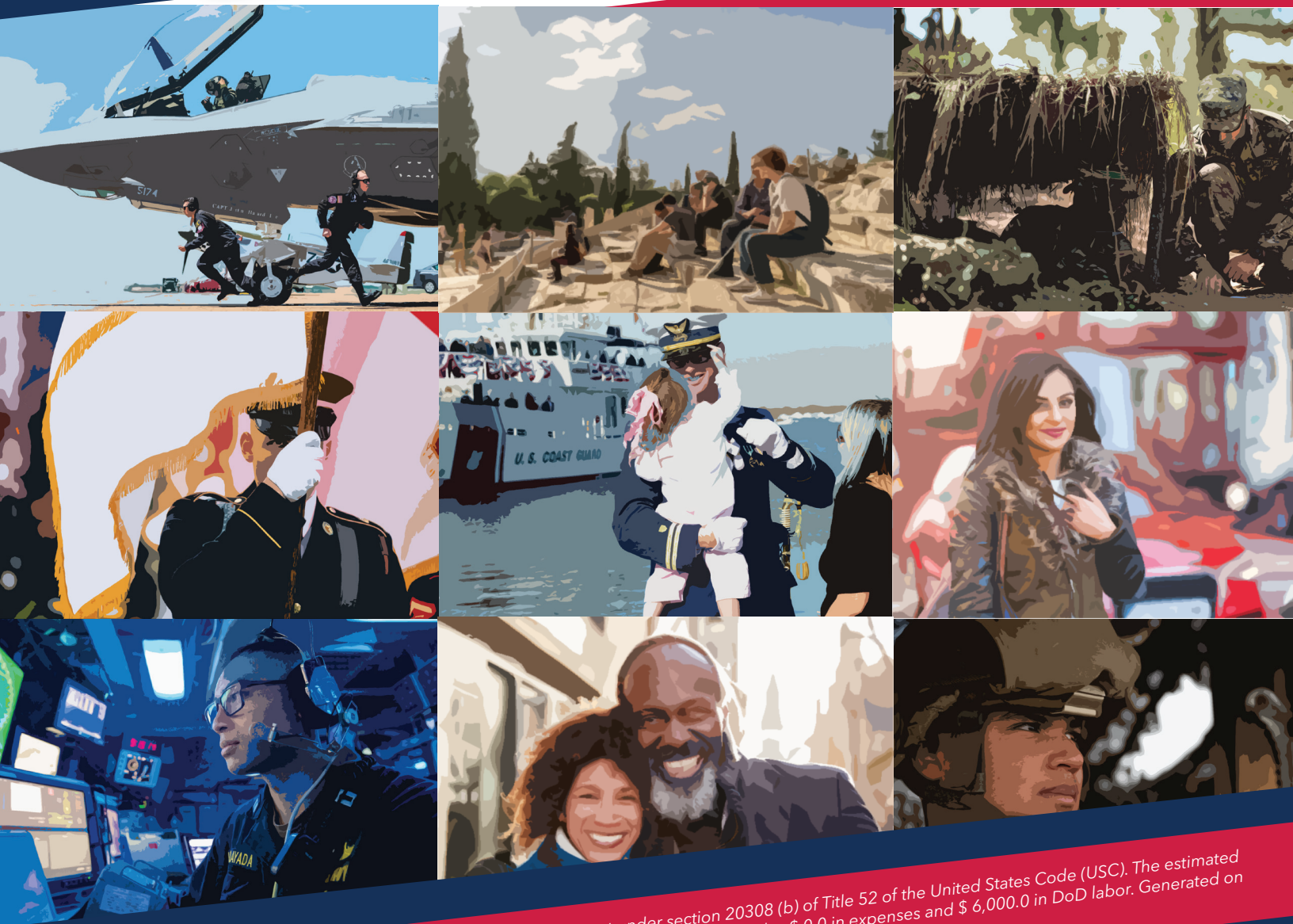


Report to Congress

Federal Voting Assistance Program

2019



This report fulfills the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) requirement under section 20308 (b) of Title 52 of the United States Code (USC). The estimated cost of this report or study for the Department of Defense is approximately \$ 6,000.0 . This includes \$ 0.0 in expenses and \$ 6,000.0 in DoD labor. Generated on 2020Mar20 RefID: 7-C0C4F3E.



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FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



Executive Summary

This report fulfills the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) requirement for its annual report in accordance with section 20308(b) of title 52, United States Code (U.S.C.). FVAP is an assistance program; its mission is to inform voters covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) of their right to vote and provide the tools and resources to help those who want to vote do so successfully from anywhere in the world.

Assessment of FVAP Activities

In fulfilling the Secretary of Defense's and the Department of Defense's (DoD) responsibilities under the law, FVAP is committed to two voting assistance tenets: promoting awareness of the right to vote, and eliminating barriers for those who choose to exercise that right. In its 2018 Post-Election Report to Congress, FVAP recommended three areas for action to improve its effectiveness:

1. Reduce barriers for UOCAVA Voters to successfully vote absentee.
2. Increase awareness about Absentee Voting amongst UOCAVA citizens.
3. Enhance measures of effectiveness and participation.

FVAP has demonstrated significant progress in advancing these recommendations during 2019, in preparation for the 2020 elections for federal office. Thanks to collaboration with its many stakeholders – Congressional leaders, U.S. Department of State, state and local election officials (LEO), the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC), advocacy organizations, and the U.S. Military Services, this year's report provides great detail on those initiatives and introduces new efforts to support voters and stakeholders during the 2020 election cycle.

This report provides a detailed analysis on the progress that FVAP has made in regards to these recommendations. It also includes updates on how FVAP will support UOCAVA voters and stakeholders during the 2020 election cycle.

Reduced Barriers for UOCAVA Voters to Successfully Vote Absentee

FVAP leveraged its time in 2019 by making improvements to many of its resources in preparation for the 2020 election cycle. Barriers to UOCAVA voter success vary depending on the voter's location, access to resources, training opportunities, and the availability of voter assistance. To reduce these obstacles, FVAP made progress in the following key areas:

- Improved absentee voting forms – FVAP made adjustments to its registration and ballot request form and absentee backup ballot using a combination of form development best practices, focus groups, and public comment.
- Realigned Voting Assistance Guide – to reflect changes to absentee voting forms, absentee voting instructions, and state and local election official contact information.

- Enhanced FVAP.gov website – improvements to site usability are ongoing based on comprehensive web analytics data and key site achievement metrics such as site visits and the number of form downloads.
- Continued working with the Council of State Governments and state legislatures enacting legislation authorizing acceptance of digital signatures from the DoD Common Access Card (CAC) on election records.

FVAP will continue to monitor and measure how these changes effectively reduce obstacles to voting success throughout the 2020 election cycle.

Increased Awareness about Absentee Voting amongst UOCAVA citizens

Each year following a federal general election, FVAP assesses its marketing and outreach activities and makes changes to its engagement strategies using industry best practices and evaluations of past activities. FVAP develops outreach strategies each election cycle to increase awareness of FVAP resources around election deadlines and through periodic voter alerts and reminders. FVAP continues to focus on customer service oriented resource activities and leverage its stakeholder relationships to saturate its messaging and information awareness efforts.

These efforts include:

- Incorporation of Service branding into voting assistance posters and information awareness collateral to better resonate with active duty personnel.
- Increased FVAP social media presence by developing a calendar with election dates and deadlines in Google Calendar, establishing an Instagram account, and also increasing shared content with the Military Services, and U.S. embassies and consulates.
- Designed a new resource booklet, brochure, wallet card, fact sheets (including translated fact sheets), generic posters, posters for each Military Service including the Coast Guard.
- Created a direct-to-voter overseas citizens training video, similar to the military-focused video from 2018.
- Filmed and released a video featuring our State of the Military Voter data with the Navy Service Voting Action Officer and Military OneSource.

FVAP derived the video content, creative content and structure, and its overall strategic marketing approach from 2018 post-election research and outreach best practices.

Enhanced measures of effectiveness and participation.

FVAP performed both qualitative and quantitative research in an effort to determine the best practices to assess effectiveness and participation. Based on this research, and by working with federal, state, and local election authorities, FVAP created a new model to evaluate voting assistance efforts. FVAP accomplished the following during 2019 in regards to enhancing measures of effectiveness and participation:

- Revised Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1000.04 which governs DoD voting assistance and now provides greater operational flexibility to the Military Services while adhering to section 1566 of the title 10 U.S.C. and requirements for Voting Assistance Officers.
- Published Post Voting Election Survey Reports for Active Duty Military, Voting Assistance Officers, State Election Officials, and a Quantitative Local Election Official Technical Report.
- Created an Effective Voting Assistance Model Index which is a tool that can be used to evaluate the characteristics of each Military Service's voting assistance program, in order to assess adherence to DoDI 1000.04 or best practices.
- Renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Election Assistance Commission on the Election Administration and Voting Survey to reduce the data reporting burden required by states.
- Leveraged Council of State Governments' Overseas Voting Initiative recommended administrative data and published research findings on the impact of Congressional requirements since passage of the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act of 2009.

FVAP used its research findings to prepare for the 2020 election cycle and make informed changes to voting assistance efforts, and identify longer term program enhancements.

Special Elections for Federal Office

FVAP requested information from the states that conducted special elections for Federal office in 2019 in order to provide an assessment of voter registration and participation by absent Uniformed Service members and overseas citizen voters. However, because the elections were not regularly scheduled as are those held in even-numbered years, the states were not required to provide the data. FVAP sincerely thanks the states of North Carolina and Pennsylvania for sharing their UOCAVA ballot transmission data. An overview of the data is provided in the "Special Elections for Federal Office" section of this report.

Military Voting Assistance Programs

The Military Services continued to provide voting assistance in 2019 to support special elections for Federal office. This assistance was provided by Voting Assistance Officers at the installation and unit levels, Installation Voter Assistance Office staff, FVAP's Voting Assistance Center and online resources such as FVAP.gov. Based on Service reported metrics, the Military Services distributed a combined total of 1,574,023 Federal Post Card Applications (FPCA) and assisted 1,750,004 people during 2019. The people assisted comprised of active duty military members, their eligible family members, and overseas DoD civilian employees and contracted personnel. This report details what each Service did in 2019, including any changes made to their voting assistance programs.

Looking Forward

FVAP will continue its efforts and build upon the lessons learned, as shared in this report, throughout the 2020 election cycle. Together, with its stakeholders – Congressional leaders, Department of State, state and local election officials, advocacy organizations, and the Military Services – FVAP can help ensure that Service members, their families, and overseas citizens can successfully exercise democracy's most important responsibility, the right to vote.

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Message from the FVAP Director

It is my distinct pleasure to present the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) 2019 Annual Report to the President and Congress. This report provides an assessment of our activities supporting the special elections for Federal office in 2019 - and our preparations for the 2020 election cycle. It is important to remember that FVAP is an assistance program – our mission is to inform voters of the right to vote and provide the tools and resources to help those who want to vote do so successfully from anywhere in the world.



During 2019, we completed our activities from the 2018 election cycle and rapidly turned towards preparations for the 2020 election cycle. During this time, we continuously ensured that voters covered by the Uniformed and *Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act* (UOCAVA) had the information and assistance needed to successfully participate in Federal special elections. Using lessons learned since the 2018 election cycle, FVAP further explored how to reduce barriers, expand voter awareness, and enhance our overall measures of effectiveness by conducting research in order to identify the challenges that UOCAVA voters face.

Over the past year, FVAP continued to support its Overseas Voting Initiative through the Council of State Governments. Most notably, the State of Montana joined Nevada in authorizing the acceptance of digital signatures from the DoD Common Access Card on election records. This represents a significant accomplishment in increasing voting process usability for active duty personnel.

For 2020, FVAP is pleased to pilot a Voting Assistance Ambassador program supporting direct assistance for military and overseas citizens in targeted locations overseas. The pilot will determine the viability of the approach long-term and continue building FVAP's ability to leverage administrative data from the states to better assess program effectiveness.

Thanks to collaboration with our many stakeholders who help provide direct voter assistance to our military and overseas citizens – Department of State, state and local election officials, and the Military Services – FVAP is taking a unified approach, which continues in administering Congressional requirements building off our past successes, but with an eye towards the next election cycle and continuous improvements.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Beirne". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial "D" and "B".

David Beirne, Director

Background

This report fulfills the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) requirement for an annual report in accordance with section 20308(b) of title 52, United States Code (U.S.C.).

The Law and its Requirements

The *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act* (UOCAVA) (codified at Chapter 203 of title 52, U.S.C.) and sections 1566 and 1566a of title 10, U.S.C., provide authority for establishment of voting assistance programs for members of the Uniformed Services, their eligible family members, and U.S. citizens residing abroad.

Presidential Executive Order 12642, signed in 1988, names the Secretary of Defense as the Designee for administering UOCAVA. Further, the Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1000.04, "Federal Voting Assistance Program," updated in November 2019 directs the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to perform the responsibilities of the Presidential designee; the responsibilities are carried out by the Director of FVAP. Under these authorities, FVAP provides voting information and assistance to those eligible to vote in U.S. elections for federal office.

Among its provisions, the amended UOCAVA:

- Requires states to transmit ballots at least 45 days before federal elections.
- Requires states to offer electronic transmission of voting information and blank ballots.
- Expands the use of the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) for all federal elections.
- Prohibits notarization requirements.
- Requires the Services to establish voting assistance through Service Installation Voter Assistance (IVA) Offices.
- Authorizes the Secretary of Defense to authorize the Secretaries of the Military Departments to designate IVA offices as voter registration facilities under section 7(a)(3)(B)(ii) of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993, P.L.103-31.
- Requires the Department of Defense (DoD) to field a number of online tools for FVAP-prescribed forms.

Section 20308(b) requires an annual report issued by the DoD to the President and Congress concerning:

- The effectiveness of FVAP activities.
- An assessment of voter registration and participation by absent Uniformed Services voters.
- An assessment of voter registration and participation by overseas citizens not members of the Uniformed Services.
- A description of cooperation between states and the Federal Government in carrying out the requirements of UOCAVA.
- A description of the utilization of voter assistance under section 1566a of title 10, U.S.C.

Assessment of FVAP Activities

Recognizing that military and overseas voters face unique challenges when participating in elections, Congress enacted a set of protections to make voting in Federal elections easier and more accessible. These protections are set forth in UOCAVA.

In fulfilling DoD's responsibilities under the law, FVAP is committed to two voting assistance tenets: promoting awareness of the right to vote and eliminating barriers for those who choose to exercise that right. Each odd-numbered year reflects FVAP's activities in supporting special elections for Federal office and operational improvements to support the next general election cycle, including the conduct of primary elections for Federal office. In its 2018 Post-Election Report to Congress, FVAP recommended three areas for action to improve its effectiveness:

1. Reduce barriers for UOCAVA voters to successfully vote absentee.
2. Expand UOCAVA voter awareness and outreach initiatives.
3. Enhance measures of effectiveness and participation.

Using lessons learned since the 2018 election cycle, FVAP further explored how to reduce obstacles by improving its resources throughout DoD, establishing mechanisms to expand voter awareness, and enhancing measures of effectiveness that refine its research approach and identify what challenges remain with UOCAVA voters. This section examines FVAP's progress on these initiatives.

Reduced Barriers to UOCAVA Voting Success

Part of FVAP's mission is to ensure that Uniformed Service members and overseas citizens that want to vote, have the ability to do so. In this regard, FVAP identifies potential barriers and seeks out ways to reduce or eliminate them. Barriers to UOCAVA voting often refer to the inability for a voter to access voting information or materials or to send voting materials to their local election official. This section describes the activities that FVAP performed in 2019 in an effort to reduce these barriers.

Improved Key Absentee Voting Forms

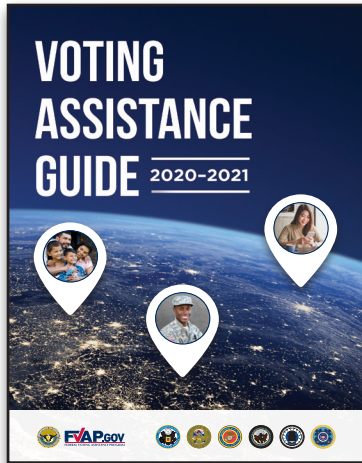
In preparation for the 2020 election cycle, FVAP updated the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). Service members, their eligible family members, and overseas citizens may use the FPCA to register to vote, request absentee ballots, and update contact information. If they do not receive their requested absentee ballot from their state, they can vote using the FWAB as a backup ballot.

UOCAVA requires FVAP to prescribe both the standard forms, identified above, which are accepted by all 50 states, the District of Columbia and four U.S. territories in elections for Federal offices. Both forms require review and public comment every 3 years. However, in order to avoid the introduction of a new form in the middle of an election year, FVAP reaches out for public comment every 2 years. The forms are available at FVAP.gov in both PDF format and through an online assistant for completion. While voters also have the option of using other types of absentee ballot request forms, states may not be able to grant official UOCAVA status due to ambiguous or missing information. UOCAVA status means that the voter has the option to receive their ballot electronically and have the requested ballot transmitted to them at least 45 days before a Federal election. The FPCA is the only form that ensures UOCAVA protections across all 50 states, the District of Columbia and four U.S. territories.¹

To improve the FPCA and the FWAB, FVAP leveraged input of election officials, voters, and other stakeholders. With these efforts and the feedback received during public comment periods through the Federal Register, the forms have been improved. They represent the latest example of FVAP's dedication to continuous process improvement and applied research to increase the opportunity for Service members, their families, and overseas citizens to successfully cast an absentee ballot. Due to administrative controls established with the publication and adoption of new forms, the Office of Management and Budget requires a notice on the bottom of each form, "Previous editions are obsolete." FVAP educates state and local election officials on the importance of accepting previous editions of the official FPCA and FWAB provided the information given confirms voting eligibility in accordance with state law.

The FPCA is the only form that ensures UOCAVA protections across all 50 states, the District of Columbia and four U.S. territories.

¹ FVAP, 2018 Post-Voting Election Survey – State Election Officials, Q.20.



The Guide is a compilation of absentee voting regulations, laws, and deadlines across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the four U.S. territories covered under UOCAVA

Realigned Voting Assistance Guide

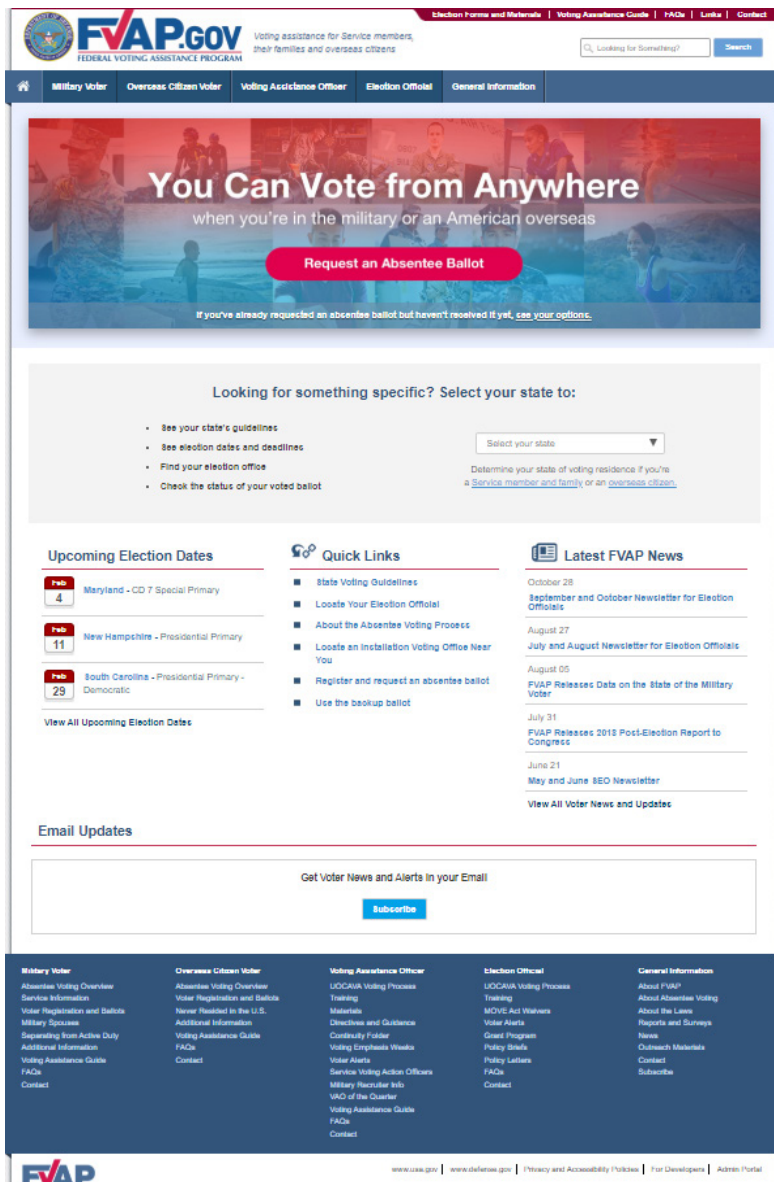
The UOCAVA absentee voting process is different than the process for individuals voting in-person or using a state's absentee process and requires different knowledge and skills. The states administer U.S. elections and while the basic process is the same, each state and territory may have different rules and deadlines for the processing of registration applications, ballot requests, and ballots. Given this complexity, FVAP has made great strides with standardizing and adopting plain language in its publications to reconcile Federal law with state law as part of its effort to make the absentee voting process more welcoming and easier to navigate for UOCAVA voters. Additionally, FVAP's pursuit of standardized language in the Voting Assistance Guide (Guide) embraces the importance of the FPCA as the single standardized form across all states to maximize voting benefits under Federal law.

FVAP publishes the Guide for use by voters, military and State Department Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs), overseas citizen organizations, and election officials. The Guide is printed every 2 years and continually updated online. It is a compilation of absentee voting regulations, laws, and deadlines across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the four U.S. territories covered under UOCAVA. It provides the procedures military and overseas voters need to successfully register to vote and return an absentee ballot. The 2020-2021 version of the Guide includes all of the changes recently made to these forms to ensure greater ease of use for voters in 2020. This important resource serves as a single source of information for both VAOs and individual voters alike. In making it more usable, FVAP worked closely with election officials to condense states' absentee voting guidelines into the standardized, plain language Guide. FVAP continues to distribute the Guide in multiple formats to accommodate the various operational environments our military and overseas voters may find themselves at a given time. The updated 2020-2021 Guide content is available at FVAP.gov for the 2020 election cycle, and hard copies were provided to the Military Services in January 2020.

Enhanced FVAP.gov Website

FVAP.gov is an information-rich site with an intuitive online assistant that guides the user through completing the FPCA

and FWAB to print, sign, and send to their election office. It also offers educational materials that help simplify the UOCAVA voting process, directs users to state websites offering online voter registration and ballot request tools, and provides election news, state-specific voting deadlines, requirements, and contact information. In 2019, FVAP conducted usability testing and made changes in order to help the user find the FPCA online assistant and their state guidelines more quickly.

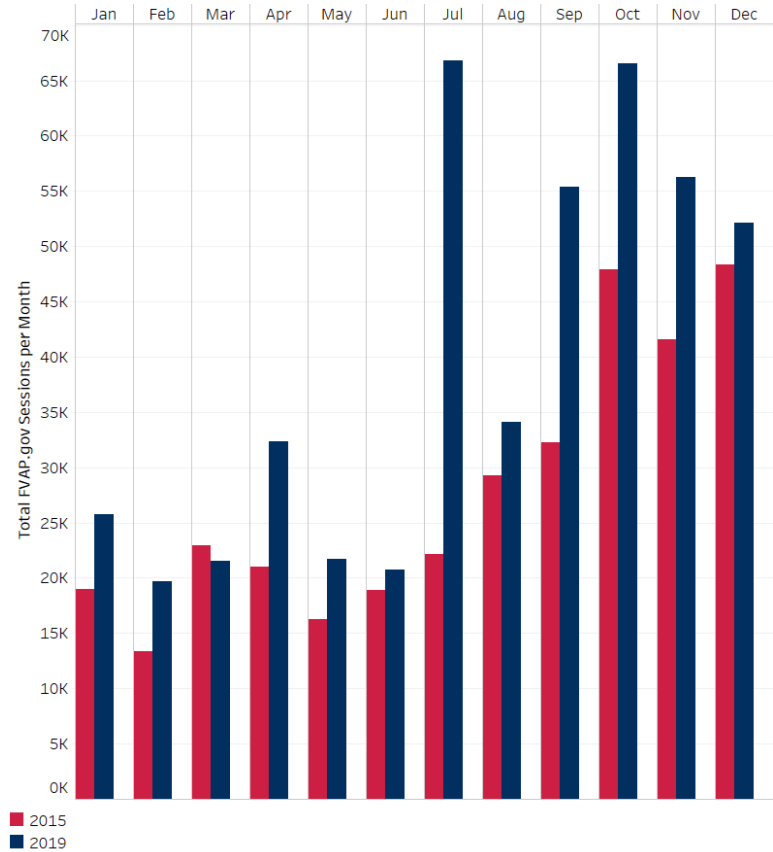


Website Usage in 2019

In determining whether FVAP.gov has increased or decreased in web traffic, FVAP compared its 2019 web metrics to those of 2015. The year 2015 was determined to be the best year for comparing the effectiveness of FVAP's website. This is because

“In 2019, there was a total of 472,940 site sessions which is a 42 percent increase when compared to 2015.”

just like in 2019, the year 2015 had no regularly scheduled Federal elections, and it also fell right before a presidential election year. In 2019, there was a total of 472,940 site sessions, which is a 42 percent increase when compared to 2015.



FVAP.gov’s web metrics indicate that its popularity has increased significantly when compared to 2015 which indicates the ongoing success from FVAP’s marketing and strategic communications effort as the key resource for our military, their families, and overseas citizens to use when attempting to vote absentee in Federal elections.

To assess the effectiveness of FVAP.gov, the following four user actions were tracked:

- using the FVAP.gov online assistant for the FPCA
- using the FVAP.gov online assistant for the FWAB
- opening a PDF of the FPCA
- opening a PDF of the FWAB

In 2019, there was a 59 percent increase in the number of FPCA transactions and a seven percent decrease in FWAB transactions when compared to 2015.

Voting Assistance Center

FVAP’s Voting Assistance Center provides phone, email, and

fax support to UOCAVA voters, VAOs, election officials, and those who assist UOCAVA voters such as academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and concerned citizens. FVAP provided continuous business-hours customer service throughout 2019, with expanded coverage on days where there was a special election. During 2019, FVAP responded to 4410 inquiries, representing an increase of 10 percent in phone call and email volume as compared to 2015. In terms of customer satisfaction, in 2019 the Voting Assistance Center had an average customer satisfaction survey rate of 4.3 out of five, and a median rate of five out of five. Its customer service survey response rate was 8.5 percent.

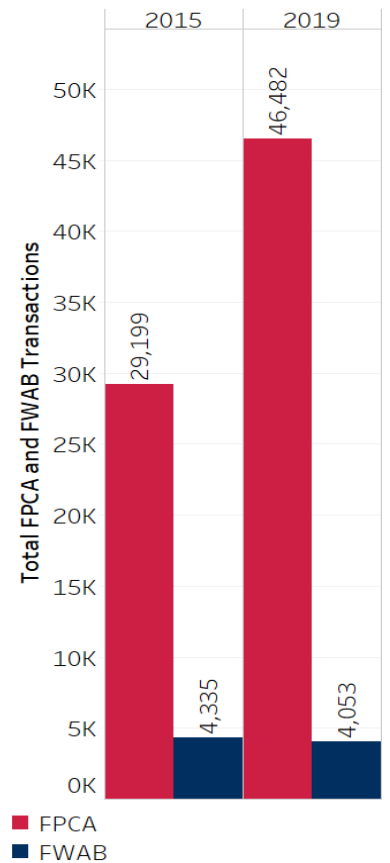
Increased Awareness about Absentee Voting amongst UOCAVA Citizens

Efforts to Increase Awareness

FVAP continuously assesses the needs of UOCAVA voters and stakeholders in order to implement outreach strategies that increase awareness of available absentee voting resources and build rapport with influential partner organizations. In 2019, this approach consisted of several in-person interactions at conferences and local events, promotion of educational content across three social media platforms, and collaboration with new and existing programs that also assist UOCAVA voters.

Shared Media and Organizational Outreach

In 2019, FVAP personnel attended various state and national election related conferences, participated in election data panels, and represented FVAP at events for election officials as part of FVAP's ongoing mission assisting election officials with administering responsibilities under UOCAVA. These actions reinforced FVAP's relationship with key thought leaders and influencers in the election community, as well as promoted FVAP's role as the primary and most accurate source for UOCAVA voting information. FVAP continued to strengthen these ties with the election community through social media engagement across Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Content included call-to-action posts that emphasized the importance of submitting an FPCA to prepare for upcoming Federal elections, as well as best practices for submitting voting materials to election offices. A calendar with



In 2019, there was a 59 percent increase in the number of FPCA transactions and a seven percent decrease in FWAB transactions when compared to 2015.

all of the 2020 Federal Election dates and deadlines was created in Google Calendars, which stakeholders can download to their smart phones from FVAP.gov to better support Voting Assistance Officers and other stakeholders. In addition, FVAP filmed a short direct-to-voter training video for overseas citizens similar to the military focused video from 2018 titled, "How to Vote Absentee When You're in the Military."²

In 2019, FVAP participated in monthly social media roundtable discussions organized by the Office of the Secretary of Defense at the Pentagon to better align social media activities and leverage opportunities to better saturate messaging for active duty personnel and DoD civilians living overseas. FVAP had the opportunity to connect with the social media leads of the different Military Services and DoD agencies to share the program's mission and absentee voting resources.

In addition, FVAP worked closely with the Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) in order to reach audiences of overseas citizens participating in study abroad programs. DLNSEO invited FVAP to distribute absentee voting materials at the pre-departure orientation and seminar for recipients of the Boren Awards, which is a DoD-funded study abroad language scholarship and fellowship program. The DLNSEO partnership also included translation of introductory FVAP outreach materials into Spanish and French based on FVAP customer demand. Finally, FVAP fostered its relationship with Military OneSource who not only dedicated two articles to FVAP resources on their website, but also provided the platform to produce an informational interview with the Navy Service Voting Action Officer focusing on the voting trends amongst active duty military members in the 2018 General Election.

In support of overseas citizens, FVAP enhanced its partnership with the State Department by creating monthly "shout outs" on social media to highlight the efforts of those teams at U.S. embassies and consulates that provide outstanding absentee voting assistance. This example of positive recognition led to increased levels of interest from various U.S. embassies and consulates, evident in the high amount of engagement across FVAP's social media platforms and requests for voting materials. FVAP also established new engagements with the U.S. Peace Corps and the Institute of International Education (IIE) to reach overseas citizens pursuing volunteer work, research, and professional development abroad.



DLNSEO invited FVAP to distribute absentee voting materials at the pre-departure orientation and seminar for recipients of the Boren Awards



Informational interview with the Navy Service Voting Action Officer and FVAP's Director focusing on the voting trends amongst active duty military members in the 2018 General Election

² FVAP. <https://www.fvap.gov/militaryhowto>

Collateral Materials

In 2019, FVAP physically distributed 66,328 hard copy FPCAs and FWABs and 156,501 pieces of educational and outreach materials. In preparation for the 2020 General Election, FVAP newly designed and updated its resource booklets, fact sheets, brochures, wallet cards, and generic posters. FVAP also designed additional posters specifically targeted for each Military Service.



Military Posters (Army, Marines, Coast Guard, Navy, and Air Force)

FVAP also created a new tool called “VAO in a Box”. This is a physical box that is designed to have the printed resources that Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy IVAOs, and Coast Guard and State Department VAOs would need. It also provides an eye-catching display that is easily set up. These boxes will contain a Voting Assistance Guide, a resource booklet, wallet cards, brochures, FVAP pens, posters on the side, FPCAs, FWABs, and instructions on how to use the box to effectively assist voters.

FVAP.gov @FVAP

Shout out to @USAinUK for reaching out to us about absentee voting materials. We recently sent over some FVAP wallet cards to #London so that #USCits can be aware of their right to vote and have the resources they need to vote successfully from across the pond! @StateDept



FVAP highlighted the efforts of those teams at U.S. embassies and consulates that provide outstanding voting assistance.

FAST FACT

A new DoDI was released on November 12, 2019, that establishes greater operational flexibility to each service, while adhering to Federal law.

Enhanced Measures of Effectiveness and Participation

FVAP performed both qualitative and quantitative research in an effort to determine best practices to increase effectiveness and participation. Based on this research, FVAP created a new evaluation model for service voting assistance efforts, and published several reports addressing UOCAVA voting. During 2019, FVAP renewed its Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Election Assistance Commission to identify respective roles in the collection of data from its Election Administration and Voting Surveys to reduce the data reporting burden for state and local election officials.

DoD Instruction 1000.04

DoD released an updated DoD Instruction 1000.04 on November 12, 2019. The new DoDI establishes greater operational flexibility to each Military Service when it comes to managing their individual voting assistance programs while adhering to section 1566 of title 10, U.S.C. This reflects the fact that the Military Service have slight differences in their operations. Most importantly, the DoD adopted its new regulation to focus on standardized outcomes rather than a standardized design for the requirements. Each Service's uniqueness needs to be taken into account in the planning and managing of their voting assistance programs, so they can be as successful as possible when assisting Service members and their families.

2018 Post-Election Voting Survey Reports

In August 2019, FVAP published technical reports on its Post-Election Voting Surveys which included an in-depth analysis of the survey findings. These reports were published on FVAP.gov and include the following:

- Post Voting Election Survey - Active Duty Military (PEVS-ADM) 2018: this report includes an analysis of active duty military registration and participation rates, UOCAVA obstacles to voting, and an assessment of active duty military absentee voting trends and knowledge.³
- Post Voting Election Survey - Voting Assistance Officers (PEVS-VAO) 2018: this report includes the demographics

³ FVAP. https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Surveys/FVAP_ADM-Technical-Report-2018.pdf

of Unit Voting Assistance Officers (UVAOs) and Installation Voting Assistance Officers (IVAOs), the methodology of the Effective Voting Assistance Model (EVAM) and an analysis of VAO roles, responsibilities, interactions, and training.⁴

- Post Voting Election Survey - State Election Officials 2018: this report discusses state election officials interactions with FVAP and local election officials, registration and ballot issues, the Council of State Governments (CSG) Overseas Voting Initiative (OVI) recommendations, and state level policy findings.⁵
- Quantitative Local Election Official Technical Report 2018: this report includes imputations of the Section B data from the Election Assistance Commission's (EAC) Election Administration Voting Survey (EAVS) results to accommodate missing data from the EAC data collection.⁶

FVAP used this research to prepare for the 2020 election cycle by leveraging its findings to make informed changes to voting assistance efforts, and also identify longer term program enhancements.

Effective Voting Assistance Model Index

In consideration of updated DoD guidance on the implementation of its voting assistance program and as part of a deeper examination on how best to evaluate program effectiveness, FVAP introduced the Effective Voting Assistance Model (EVAM) in its 2018 Report to Congress. The EVAM is an index that determines the level of ideal characteristics of voting assistance programs administered by VAOs at the unit or installation level. These ideal characteristics were identified from the results of the 2018 PEVS-ADM and PEVS-VAO, which show 11 variables that are positively associated with effective voting assistance outcomes. These outcomes include high numbers of people assisted, FPCA awareness, ease of voting assistance and registration rates.

The 11 variables positively associated with these outcomes are divided into those that are required by DoDI 1000.04 and those that are encouraged but not required, such as best practices. Variables that are required by DoDI 1000.04 include:

⁴ FVAP. https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Surveys/FVAP_VAO-Technical-Report-2018.pdf

⁵ FVAP. https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Surveys/FVAP_SEO_Technical_Report_2018.pdf

⁶ FVAP. https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Surveys/FVAP_Quant_LEO_Technical-Report_2018.pdf

- Delivering a voting assistance briefing during “in-processing” and “out-processing”
- Delivering a voting assistance briefing at an ADM change of address
- VAOs trained with either FVAP in-person or online training
- VAO use of FVAP’s Voting Assistance Guide (the Guide)
- VAO use of the FVAP Portal
- VAO conducting some type of outreach, such as carrying out a voting emphasis week or posting FVAP posters and banners

Metrics that are encouraged, but not required for every installation, by DoDI 1000.04 include:

- Having an Installation Voting Assistance Office (IVA office)
- Locating the IVA office within walking or bicycling distance of ADM
- Locating the IVA office near two or more key installation landmarks
- Having VAOs with 12 months or more experience as a VAO
- Communicating with other VAOs (UVAOs, IVAOs, and IVA Office staff)

This index is then calculated and reported in FVAP’s Post Voting Election Survey – VAO report, which is released after each Federal general election year.

Election Assistance Commission - Memorandum of Understanding

In October 2019, FVAP signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the EAC on Cooperation with the Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS). FVAP and the EAC recognize the need to continue the coordination of their survey efforts to reduce the reporting burden on state and local election officials. This coordination effort is limited to Section B of the EAVS and projects that contribute to improving the UOCAVA data collected through EAVS.

Cooperative Agreement with the Council of State Governments

In 2014, FVAP entered into a cooperative agreement with the Council of State Governments (CSG) and established the Overseas Voting Initiative (OVI) in recognition of a shared goal to improve the voting process for UOCAVA citizens. FVAP also

wanted this relationship to augment its ongoing efforts to engage stakeholders – especially state and local election officials – in order to institute best practices and explore innovative areas to assist election offices with the administration of elections. The working groups created under the CSG OVI provided stakeholders with the opportunity to come together and discuss concrete measures that would improve the UOCAVA voting process for states, local election offices, and individuals covered by the law. The three OVI working groups examined critical areas for improving UOCAVA voting, including:

- improving communications and community connections between UOCAVA citizens and their election offices;
- making voter registration easier for UOCAVA citizens;
- considering how DoD digital signature capabilities can facilitate document signing by certain UOCAVA voters;
- examining how the ballot duplication process can be improved through transparent standard operating procedures and new technologies; and
- identifying a data standard, the Election Administration Voting Survey Section B (ESB), for reporting data to the EAC and FVAP.

The efforts of these working groups are publicized by CSG at its annual meetings, which provided an opportunity for state legislators, election officials, and others to learn more about this important work. FVAP has publicized the recommendations of the CSG OVI working groups, incorporating key items into the presentations and trainings they conduct for state and local election staff and key stakeholders.

In 2018, FVAP initiated a second cooperative agreement with the CSG to examine two key areas: the overall viability of technical solutions to support the implementation of electronic blank ballot delivery systems and the implementation of a new data reporting standard to assist FVAP with informed program improvements and meeting its Congressional reporting requirements. Going forward in 2020, FVAP will integrate the ESB data standard into longer term reporting and analysis to better isolate the true impact of reforms put into place as a result of the 2009 MOVE Act. Specifically, this data standard and subsequent analysis will isolate the impacts of voters engaging early in the absentee

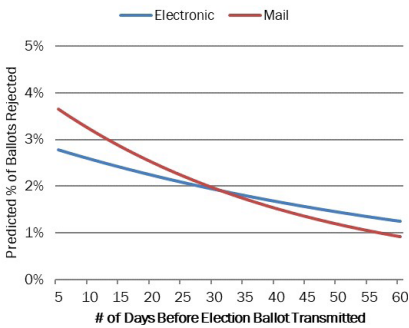
voting process, the federally mandated 45-day blank ballot delivery transmission requirements, and electronic modes of delivering blank ballots to UOCAVA voters.

In 2019, FVAP, together with the CSG, continued to educate the states on the need to support Service members by authorizing acceptance of electronic signatures from the DoD Common Access Card (CAC) in the election process. A CAC is the standard identification for Service members and DoD employees which they use on a daily basis. It also includes a secure digital signature certificate. Depending on the location, Service members may not always have access to support the return of election materials with a wet signature. Having the ability to use an electronic signature when submitting voting materials, and the role of the DoD as a certifying authority, not only better ensures that Service members will get them back to their local election officials in time, but it also enhances the usability of state systems that permit the submission of election materials electronically. In October 2019, Montana followed Nevada’s lead becoming the second state to authorize the acceptance of digital signatures from the CAC on election records.

Research Note on Data Standardization

In March, 2019, FVAP released a research note titled Data Standardization and the Impact of Ballot Transmission Timing and Mode on UOCAVA Voting. This research yields greater insights into 2009 amendments of the UOCAVA. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of these reforms, FVAP and the CSG worked to refine a transformative new data schema called the [Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) Section B] (ESB) Data Standard. The ESB Data Standard allows FVAP to analyze the three key parts of the voting process: (1) ballot request, (2) ballot transmission, and (3) ballot return.

This standard captures data from state databases, a process that has the advantage of more accurately assessing when ballot transactions occurred. The EAVS can report aggregate totals at the state and jurisdiction levels on ballot receipt and transmission time, but aggregate totals may blur the effects experienced by voters into a single statewide estimate. It does not isolate how much timing and transmission type can influence a successful voter transaction in the process or contrast the impacts of these across two differing populations, these being the overseas citizen versus the active duty military voter. The ESB Data Standard is the



Analysis of ESB data from 2016 found the more days before an election that a ballot was transmitted, the less likely the ballot was rejected.

first approach of its kind to analyze data at the transactional level and attempt to identify drivers for UOCAVA voter success.

The results of this research are based off of the data obtained from the 2016 General Election:

- More than 65 percent of all ballot requests were received at least 45 days prior to the election;
- voters who received their ballots earlier were slightly more likely to return them;
- voters who received their ballots early were less likely to have these ballots rejected; and
- voters who received their ballots by mail were more likely to return them than those who received them electronically.

FVAP intends to leverage the momentum created from the ESB Data Standard Analysis to secure greater levels of implementation across jurisdictions with major populations of UOCAVA voters.

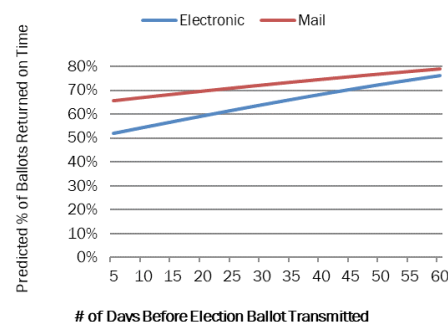
Special Elections for Federal Office in 2019

To provide an assessment of voter registration and participation by Service members, their eligible family members, and overseas citizens, FVAP requested information from the states that conducted special elections for Federal office in 2019. However, because the elections were not regularly scheduled, as are those held in even-numbered years, the states were not required to collect or provide data. FVAP sincerely thanks the states of North Carolina, and Pennsylvania for sharing their UOCAVA ballot transmission data.

The following elections for Federal office took place in 2019:

- North Carolina: A Special Primary Election for the 3rd Congressional District was held on April 30, 2019, in order to fill the vacancy after the death of Walter B. Jones.
 - Of the 146 UOCAVA ballots transmitted, 50 were returned and 50 were accepted.
- North Carolina: A Special Primary Election for the 9th Congressional District was held on May 14, 2019, in order to fill the seat after the North Carolina State Board of Elections refused to certify the results of the 2018 General Election in the district due to allegations of electoral fraud.

“More than 65 percent of all ballot requests were received at least 45 days prior to the election”



In 2016, voters who received their ballots by mail were more likely to return them than those who received them electronically.

- o Of the 61 UOCAVA ballots transmitted, 11 were returned and 11 were accepted.
- North Carolina: A Special Runoff Election for the 3rd Congressional District was held on July 9th, 2019.
 - o Of the 58 UOCAVA ballots transmitted, 25 were returned and 25 were accepted.
- North Carolina: A Special General Election for the 3rd and 9th Congressional Districts was held on September 10, 2019.
 - o Of the 761 UOCAVA ballots transmitted, 267 were returned and 265 were accepted.
- Pennsylvania: A Special General Election for 12th Congressional District was held on May 21, 2019, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Tom Marino. Primary elections were not held in this race; instead, nominees were chosen by each party.
 - o Of an unknown number of UOCAVA ballots transmitted, 74 were returned and 46 were accepted.

"In 2019, the Military Services distributed a combined total of 1,574,023 FPCAs and assisted 1,750,004 people."

Military Voting Assistance Programs

Service Reported Metrics

The Military Services and their corresponding VAOs are required to report on the voting assistance they provide to ADM, their eligible family members and other eligible U.S. citizens residing overseas throughout the year. To do so, metrics are collected every time a person goes to an IVA Office or a UVAO for help or additional information.

The collected metrics include the following:

- total number of FPCAs distributed per Military Service per year in both hard copy and electronic form;
- number of people who received voting assistance per Military Service; and
- number of people who received voting assistance at IVA offices, including ADM, ADM spouses and eligible family members, and other eligible U.S. citizens including DoD civilian employees and contractors

During 2019, the Military Services⁷ distributed a combined total of 1,574,023 FPCAs and assisted 1,750,004 people. The metrics reported per Military Service for 2019 are shown in Figure 5. The results show the percentage of each Military Service population that received a FPCA or voting assistance in 2019. In the DoDI 1000.04, it is prescribed that each Service member is required to receive an FPCA every January 15, in non-election years, which means that for each Military Service the amount of FPCAs distributed should be 100 percent of that Military Service's active duty personnel population.

Service Assessment of Voting Assistance Programs

In addition to reporting metrics, each Military Service is required by DoDI 1000.04 to produce an After Action Report (AAR) in January of each year. In these reports, each Military Service describes how they addressed any policy changes that occurred in the prior year, the outreach that was done in the prior year, any anticipated future program changes, and recommendations for the next year.

Army

The Army Voting Assistance Program restructured the policy regarding Installation Voting Assistance (IVA) Offices in 2019 with Installation Management Command's divestiture of the IVA offices and the Installation Voting Assistance Officer (IVAO) positions. Through the 10 percent Trade Space Initiative, the responsibility of the IVA offices was turned over to the Senior Installation Commander on each installation. On August 29, 2019, Army EXORD 206-19, Transfer of the Army Installation Voting Assistance Program to Senior Installation Commanders (SMC) was released. At the request of the field, the Army released additional guidance through Army MILPER message 19-368, Updated Guidance for Army EXORD 206-19, Transfer of the Installation Voting Assistance Offices to Senior Installation Commanders. The Army also updated Army Regulation 608-20 Army Voting Assistance Program on February 9, 2019. As of December 30, 2019, the Army had 100 percent of its Offices designated on Installations worldwide. The Army is confident that all eligible voters will be receiving voting assistance for the 2020 election cycle.

In terms of outreach, the Army Voting Assistance program

⁷ In regards to Military Service metrics, the Coast Guard metrics are not included in this report, as their recorded numbers were not of a sufficient comparable quantity.

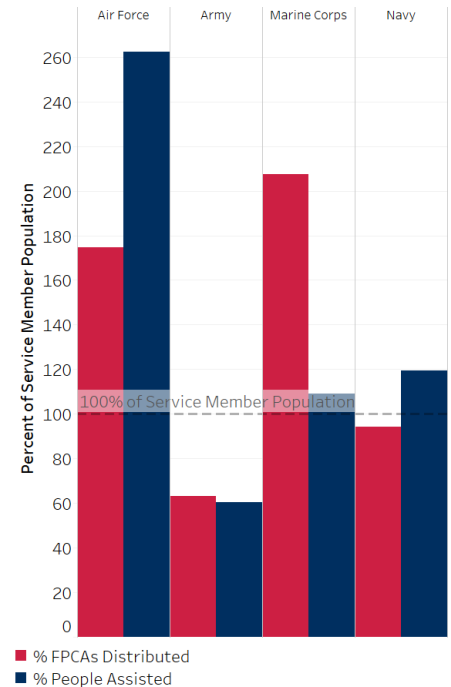


Figure 5. The Military Services distributed a combined total of 1,574,023 FPCAs and assisted 1,750,004 people.

maintained contact with IVAOs and Unit Voting Assistance Officers (UVAOs) throughout 2019. The Army Voting Assistance Program continues to use, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and S-1 Net. In addition, the Army Voting Program developed public service announcements for The Adjutant General of the Army which aired on Armed Forces Networks overseas, YouTube, and Mil Tube. Posters, monthly updates, and flyers were created to provide information to the field. Notices were added to the FVAP portal dashboard and emails were sent out to the active accounts in the FVAP portal. During 2019, FPCAs were distributed by hand or electronically in both January and July. Eligible voters were also informed that FPCAs and FWABs were available on the FVAP website. The Army has also created new materials designed to assist new IVAOs and UVAOs

Navy

No significant policy or operational changes to the Navy Voting Assistance Program occurred in 2019. The Commander of the Navy Installations Command Headquarters continues to spread awareness of voting program requirements, especially the requirement for all commands with more than 25 eligible members to appoint a VAO. The New Navy Voting Action Plan will be released in 2020 and will reflect changes from the new DoDI 1000.04 published on November 12, 2019. The general structure of the program will remain as outlined in the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 1742.1C released in 2016.

The My Navy Family App was released in May, 2019, and includes a voting assistance landing page with information for spouses and families. Another outreach initiative included a filming of a public service announcement with the Navy SVAO, and the director of FVAP, which was released on Military OneSource and FVAP web media.

Navy VAOs distributed FPCAs electronically prior to January 15, 2019. The SVAO sent out Service wide voting newsletters to all VAO's on a monthly basis throughout 2019. Commander, Navy Installations Command is preparing to release an Election Guidance message to regional commanders. The SVAO drafted Naval Administrative Message (NAVADMIN) and Navy Shore Base (NAVSHORE) messages with voting program guidance for early 2020 release.

Marine Corps

In terms of program operations, the Inspector General of the Marine Corps now plays a major role in voting assistance program oversight. Annual VAO training is now a requirement for commanding officers. In addition, the Marine Corps now requires that all VAOs appointed will be in place for a period of no less than 24 months to ensure stability during an election cycle.

Special emphasis was placed to assist Marines deployed at sea and at contingency locations, as well as Marines and their family members stationed overseas. Every Marine Corps unit has an appointed Unit Voting Assistance Officer who deploys and travels with the unit to provide voting assistance when required.

Outreach was conducted on Women's Equality Day on August 26, 2019 and on National Voter Registration Day on September 24, 2019. Some commands had special lunches that included voter registration. On January 15, 2019, UVAO's distributed 281,507 FPCAs to active duty Marine Corps members and Reserve Marine Forces.

Air Force

Installation Airman & Family Readiness Centers (A&FRCs) maintained 73 established Air Force Installation Voter Assistance (IVA) Offices. Each office had a primary and alternate IVAO appointed by the wing commander. 4,657 UVAOs were appointed, in writing, by unit commanders in accordance with Air Force Instruction Air Force Instruction 36-3107, Voting Assistance Program, May 1, 2019, that directs one UVAO within each unit of 25 or more active duty members and one UVAO for every 50 active duty members thereafter.

Virtual training was provided in May 2019 to update VAOs on policy changes. Voting assistance requirements were briefed at New Squadron Commanders' Courses, A&FRC staff's basic training course, FSS Leadership conference, and A&FRC flight chief training. FPCAs were distributed electronically or in-hand to all installation members from January 1, 2019 to January 15, 2019, by service-wide messaging using the Air Force MyPers system and installation e-distribution mailing lists. Records of FPCA distribution were retained using FVAP metric requirements and A&FRC web-based customer service data tracking guidance. The MyPers messaging system simultaneously communicates with 460,000 Total Force Airmen (military and civilian with "af.mil"



Voting assistance booth set up on Women's Equality Day



IVA promotion National Voter House at Registration Day at Wright-Patterson AFB



*Voting information table and IVA Office
Open Buckley AFB*



*Airmen registering to vote at Eielson AFB
newcomers' orientation*

email addresses.)

IVAOs successfully utilized social media platforms, installation newspapers, A&FRC and installation websites to increase voter awareness, encourage voter participation and advertise voting resources. Voter information tables were set up at unit and installation events, dining facilities and Base Exchange during National Voter Registration Day. IVAOs organized open houses and developed introductory letters and supplemental training to ensure new UVAOs were familiar with their responsibilities and a point of contact for installation voting support and information.

The Air Force's Personnel Center (AFPC) posted bi-weekly voting-related articles on Facebook and published a video on Voting Assistance on AFPC's Public Affairs YouTube channel. The Air Force Voting Assistance Program Analyst provided quarterly updates to installation and Major Command leaders on the status of their installations' voting assistance programs, and also sent out routine email messages to IVAOs regarding requirements, resources, tasks, and timelines.

Although 2019 was an odd-numbered, non-Federal election year, IVAOs routinely engaged with installation leaders to encourage voting emphasis throughout the year and during the National Voter Registration Day campaign. Rates for voting assistance and form distribution continued to climb due to continued leadership emphasis. The most significant of these rates show a significant increase in support of civilians on installations: assistance increased from 31,000 in 2018 to 92,000 in 2019.

Centralized voting functions within the installation Airman and Family Readiness Centers (A&FRCs) continues to maximize exposure of voting emphasis while ensuring synchronized and standardized program delivery. The majority of personnel assisted was during existing touchpoints that the A&FRCs administer such as pre-/post-deployment, transition from service, and relocation assistance. By centralizing the IVA Office within installation A&FRCs, Airmen and families know where to go to get voting assistance, what type of assistance is offered, and that assistance is at the same place on every installation.

The Air Force currently has 1,293 recruiters operating in 1,038 recruiting offices authorized to provide voting assistance.

Coast Guard

In 2019, the Coast Guard's Personnel Service Center took several critical steps to re-establish and centralize its voting assistance program. Senior Coast Guard Officials met with FVAP on two separate occasions and put forth a plan of action to FVAP where it received verbal concurrence on meeting the intent of the DoDI 1000.04. In addition, the service participated in two high-level outreach events. They participated for the first time in the March FVAP hosted Face-to-Face in San Diego, CA where the SVAO met with FVAP leadership, other service and department SVAOs as well as state election officials. The Coast Guard also hosted state election officials at Base San Juan in Puerto Rico in December 2019, providing valuable information and insight as to the challenges facing Coast Guard members and their families when it comes to voting. In an effort to make voting easier and information on how to vote more visible, the Coast Guard created a voting section with a link to FVAP.gov on its Work Life App. and Coast Guard Base National Capital Region (NCR) posted a base notice reaching an estimated five thousand employees regarding the upcoming 2020 primary elections.



The Coast Guard met with FVAP to put forth a plan of action for its voting assistance program

Conclusions

The 2019 calendar year represents a transition year between general election years, therefore, much of the activities this past year set the tempo and trajectory for the 2020 election year. In January 2020, FVAP conducted its first in-person voting assistance officer training at Marine Corps Base Quantico, and it will proceed to conduct trainings at 186 worldwide locations consisting of U.S. Military installations, embassies, and consulates. FVAP remains committed to retooling its information awareness tactics to find the best method and approach to raise awareness of FVAP resources and VAOs across the DoD. After the 2020 General Election concludes, FVAP looks forward to sharing more about the following efforts:

- Distribution of consolidated Voting Assistance Officer-In-A-Box to support Uniformed Service members across the DoD regardless of their proximity to Installation Voter Assistance Offices.
- Execution of FVAP's 2020 digital and print media efforts including the success of Service level branding to better resonate with active duty personnel.
- Deployment of a direct-to-the-voter awareness training video for overseas citizens to establish greater alignment between the two populations that DoD serves in administering UOCAVA.
- Continued success with piloting research on the use of administrative data to identify drivers for voting success.
- Lessons learned from the establishment of a pilot "Voting Assistance Ambassador" program to support U.S. citizens overseas and augment FVAP personnel.

All of these preparations and activities are premised on supporting FVAP's key objectives of raising awareness of absentee voting resources for the military, their families, and overseas citizens and reducing obstacles for these voters to exercise their absentee voting rights.

Glossary

A

ADM active duty military

C

CSG Council of State Governments
CVAP citizen voting age population

D

DoD Department of Defense
DoDI Department of Defense Instruction

E

EAC Election Assistance Commission
EASE Electronic Absentee System for Elections (research grant program)
EAVS Election Administration and Voting Survey
EVAM Effective Voting Assistance Model
ESB EAVS Section B

F

FPCA Federal Post Card Application
FVAP Federal Voting Assistance Program
FWAB Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot

G

Guide *Voting Assistance Guide*

I

IVA Office Installation Voter Assistance Office
IVAO Installation Voting Assistance Officer

L

LEO local election official

M

MOU Memorandum of Understanding
MOVE Act *Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act*

N

NVRA National Voter Registration Act

O

OVI Overseas Voting Initiative

P

PEVS Post-Election Voting Survey

S

SEO state election official
SVAO service voting action officer

U

UOCAVA *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act*
U.S.C. United States Code
USPS U.S. Postal Service
UVAO unit voting assistance officer

V

VAO voting assistance officer



FVAP.GOV
FEDERAL VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM