FVAP RESEARCH NOTE

State Administered *UOCAVA* Survey Pilot

Introduction

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) works to ensure that citizens covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully do so. FVAP assists voters through partnerships with the Military Services, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Justice, and election officials from the 50 states, U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia.

With the goal of reinforcing partnerships with local election offices and supporting independent data collection by states and jurisdictions, FVAP designed the State Administered *UOCAVA* Survey (SAUS) pilot. This pilot focused on assisting some states and jurisdictions in fielding a customer satisfaction survey among their *UOCAVA* voters so they could better understand the experiences of this population during the 2022 General Election voting process.

Unlike FVAP's Post-Election Voting Survey of Active Duty Military (PEVS-ADM) and the Overseas Citizen Population Survey (OCPS), which explore national voting and registration trends on subsets of the *UOCAVA* population, the SAUS pilot was conceived to include all *UOCAVA* voters (including spouses and eligible dependents of active duty military) and focus on a particular state or jurisdiction so that results can better serve the election officials of those localities. Additionally, in the SAUS pilot, participating states and jurisdictions had the ability to edit the survey as needed to ensure it met their needs.

To assess the feasibility of this effort, FVAP designed the pilot recommending no more than five states and jurisdictions of different *UOCAVA* population sizes. The Council of State Governments (CSG) Overseas Voting Initiative (OVI) recruited the participating states and jurisdictions. CSG also provided continued support in communications with election officials throughout the pilot, hosted the SAUS survey through their SurveyMonkey corporate account, and provided help desk support for the participants that requested it.[1] FVAP and CSG also collaborated with Marketing for Change and Fors Marsh to plan and support the pilot survey effort.[2] The collaboration between FVAP, CSG, Marketing for Change, and Fors Marsh is referred to in this research note as the "SAUS pilot working group."

[1] Throughout the research note, the term "participant" is used to refer to the states and jurisdictions that participated in the SAUS pilot.

[2] Marketing for Change is a research and creative agency based in Alexandria, VA; and Fors Marsh is a research firm based in Arlington, VA. Fors Marsh has been the implementing partner of FVAP for surveys like the PEVS-ADM and OCPS since 2016. For the SAUS pilot, Fors Marsh created a project plan, developed and programmed the survey instrument, and created technical support materials for election officials to aid them in fielding the pilot survey. Marketing for Change was in charge of coordination efforts and providing feedback and oversight for the duration of the project.

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SAUS Pilot Main Advantages:

The state and jurisdictions that participated in the SAUS pilot highlighted the following as some of the main advantages of this survey:

- The results of this survey provided them with "hard data" and actual quotes from their *UOCAVA* voters on topics like ballot return methods and ballot tracking, which are useful for election officials to have during discussions with their legislatures and lawmakers.
- Participants highlighted the usefulness of the visuals from the survey platform, which made results easy to interpret and share with legislators and other stakeholders.
- The time burden was low for the participating states and jurisdictions (the whole process took only a few hours), and they reported that supporting materials made the fielding very easy. All participants reported they would field this survey again.
- Time burden was also low for respondents, as the median response time was less than 10 minutes.

This research note covers, in detail, the process of creating the survey, recruiting participating states and jurisdictions, and fielding the pilot survey. It evaluates this pilot survey effort in terms of participant experience, survey outcomes, and other considerations for using and interpreting resulting data. The research note concludes with lessons learned through the pilot process and considerations for potential future SAUS efforts.

This research note is organized into the following sections:

- Key Research Questions
- SAUS Pilot—The Process
- Outcomes of the SAUS Pilot
- Lessons Learned
- Conclusions

The analyses in this research note find that:

- The survey was able to obtain feedback from *UOCAVA* populations like spouses and eligible dependents of active duty military who have been underrepresented in other survey efforts.
- Participating states and jurisdictions had positive experiences and reported that they would participate again. They found the information collected to be valuable in better understanding the needs of their *UOCAVA* population and noted that having evidence in the form of data and quotes from actual voters was very useful when discussing election administration changes with their legislatures and lawmakers.
- Survey response rates were above 10% for all participants and reached 29.5% for Ingham County (MI). Over 90% of respondents that started the survey completed it.

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- Over 80% of survey respondents reported voting in the 2022 General Election, whereas the voting rate in most of the participating states and jurisdictions was below 50%. Survey weights helped make the results more representative of the reference population.
- With the help of the SAUS pilot working group in drafting the survey, programing it, and creating accompanying materials to assist in the fielding process, participating states and jurisdictions successfully fielded the SAUS pilot, and the time burden was low for them.

Key Research Questions

This research note addresses the following research questions:

- How feasible is it for state and local election officials to field a post-election customer satisfaction survey to their *UOCAVA* population?
- What are the main challenges for states and jurisdictions to field a post-election survey?
- What are the advantages of a customized survey for election offices in terms of the usefulness of the data collected?
- How does the response rate from *UOCAVA* voters compare with other FVAP-fielded surveys for active duty military and overseas citizens?

SAUS Pilot—The Process

The first steps of the SAUS pilot were to create a draft version of the survey instrument and recruit states and jurisdictions to participate in the pilot. These two steps occurred simultaneously during the spring of 2022. FVAP engaged Fors Marsh to create a team to develop the draft survey, and CSG was in charge of recruitment efforts through their contacts within OVI's working group. Once the survey was drafted and participants were recruited, the SAUS pilot working group shared the draft survey instrument with the participating states and jurisdictions to request their input and edit the questions and contents to meet their needs. The survey was then programmed into an online survey platform, and Fors Marsh created the toolkit materials to guide participants on how to field the survey. Finally, the survey was fielded between December 2022 and March 2023 for a period of six to nine weeks. The following are the detailed steps of the pilot process.

Survey-Drafting Process

The SAUS pilot was conceived as a customer satisfaction survey. Its main goal was to obtain feedback from *UOCAVA* voters about the voting process, the challenges they encountered during that process, and to collect information about their experiences with resources offered by their election officials, FVAP, and other entities that provide support to *UOCAVA* voters to help them successfully complete the voting process.

The first step of the process was to create a draft version of the survey instrument to share with the participating states and jurisdictions so they could review and tailor the instrument to their needs, ensuring that it addressed their topics of interest regarding the voting experiences of their *UOCAVA* populations. The first portion of the survey instrument focused on establishing eligibility to complete the survey (i.e., that the person was a *UOCAVA* voter) and learning whether the respondent was a member of the Uniformed Services or an overseas citizen and their voting history over the past two federal elections. The second portion of the survey covered follow-up items regarding reasons for

not voting (for respondents that reported not casting a ballot for the 2022 General Election) or challenges encountered during the voting process (for respondents that voted or tried to vote).

This was followed by the main section of the survey that covered customer satisfaction items, inquiring about the type of information that respondents looked for to complete the voting process, the sources they used, and the ease of finding the information they were looking for. Respondents were also asked to evaluate communications with the corresponding election office. This section also included questions about if and how respondents received and returned their ballots. The fourth section of the survey contained five to six questions measuring the respondent's knowledge of the voting policies affecting *UOCAVA* voters in their state and the reliability of communications infrastructure in their country of residence. Finally, the survey contained a block of questions focused on demographic characteristics of the respondents, which were necessary for purposes of population weighting (see Appendix A for a full version of the survey instrument).

While drafting the survey instrument, there was an effort to balance obtaining as much information as possible from *UOCAVA* voters and making the survey relatively short to both reduce the time burden on the respondents and increase the likelihood of them completing the survey. During the survey-building process, the target average time for responding to the survey was between five and 10 minutes. The survey also included multiple open-ended questions that gave respondents an option to provide additional details regarding their responses. For example, after being asked about how clear the instructions to complete the ballot for the general election were, respondents were asked to explain why they rated the instructions to be "very clear," "somewhat clear," or "unclear." It is important to note that a response was not required for any of the open-ended questions. The only mandatory questions were the first two, which established eligibility for completing the survey and whether or not the respondent voted in the 2022 General Election.

The questions were drafted to mirror language in the PEVS-ADM and OCPS surveys when covering the same topics. For example: item Q7 of the SAUS pilot ("In preparation for the 2022 primaries or General Election, did you use any of the following resources for voting assistance?") used similar language as Q24 of the 2020 OCPS ("In preparation for the 2020 primaries or General Election, did you use any of the following resources?") and Q45 of the 2022 PEVS-ADM ("Did you seek voting information or assistance from any of the following?"). However, an effort was made to ensure that the topics were relevant for the election officials that would ultimately field the survey and use the results to better understand the voting journey of their *UOCAVA* voters.

Participant Recruitment

With the pilot nature of the SAUS in mind, the SAUS pilot working group aimed to engage no more than five participating states and jurisdictions to explore the feasibility of this effort. The limited number of participants would allow the SAUS pilot working group to provide close support before and during the fielding. At the same time, the SAUS pilot working group looked to recruit different types of jurisdictions to assess the feasibility of fielding the survey for states and local jurisdictions of different sizes. Additionally, one key component was the need for the state or jurisdiction to have the email addresses of their *UOCAVA* population—or, if not all, a relatively large percentage of all their *UOCAVA* voters—as the SAUS pilot would be administered online and invitations would be sent by email to increase the speed of the fielding process and limit the associated costs to postal mail.

CSG communicated with multiple participants of the OVI working group to explain the nature of the pilot and explore interest in participation among the members. After conversations, CSG recruited the states of Colorado and Kentucky and the jurisdictions of Escambia County (FL), Ingham County (MI), and Okaloosa County (FL) to participate in the pilot. The state of Kentucky, however, ultimately dropped-out of the pilot due to internal challenges in allocating resources to this project during the post-election period.

All participants reported having email addresses for a majority of their *UOCAVA* voters except for the state of Kentucky, which reported they could likely obtain the email addresses through their jurisdictions.[3] CSG also asked participants about their experience with survey platforms and whether they currently were subscribers to any platform to field their own surveys. The majority of participants did not have any survey platform subscription, except for Colorado's corporate SurveyMonkey account, and most of the participants that reported using survey platforms in the past had used other free access platforms like Jotform and Smartsheet.

After recruitment, the participating states and jurisdictions met virtually with the SAUS pilot working group to discuss the project, responsibilities, and expectations and to review the draft survey instrument. Participants then had several weeks to revise the survey instrument and provide feedback and suggestions for changes that were implemented by the SAUS pilot working group. The survey instrument was then finalized and approved by participants before it was programmed online.

Survey Platform, Survey Programming, and Toolkit Materials

Survey Platform

Because few participating states and jurisdictions had access to a survey platform, it was necessary to identify an appropriate platform option that participants could use to host and field their surveys. The working group identified the requirements that a survey platform would need in order to meet the survey instrument and the fielding demands, including:

- Response limits: Ensure that software allowed for more than 50,000 responses in a limited period of time. This benchmark was based on the number of ballots transmitted to *UOCAVA* voters in the previous midterm and presidential elections by the participating states and jurisdictions, which ranged from 45,233 in 2018 and 71,394 in 2020, as reported in the Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS).[4]
- Built-in mailing system: To account for the initial survey invitation and additional email reminders, this mailing system should allow personalized invitations with the capability of sending over 100,000 emails.
- Allow skip logic: Some survey questions were only presented to a subset of respondents, depending on their responses to previous questions (e.g., a question about the branch of

[3] Kentucky is a bottom-up state, meaning that most voting information is collected and stored at the local level and then shared with the state upon request or through a shared secure portal.
[4] These numbers include the state of Kentucky, since the state dropped out of the pilot after the survey platform decision process was conducted. The totals were obtained from the 2022 EAVS, available at: https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/2022_EAVS_Report_508c.pdf

the military the respondent belongs to was only asked to respondents who identified as active duty military).

- Security: The survey platform should have sufficient security standards to ensure that data collected through the survey instrument was safe, even though no personally identifiable information was asked in the survey instrument.

Since most of the participants did not have access to a survey platform that met the minimal requirements, the SAUS pilot working group considered several alternative options for hosting the pilot survey. Free options (e.g., Google Forms) were determined to not meet most (if any) of the requirements listed. This left two potential options available: have participants purchase their own license for a paid survey software that met the requirements (e.g., Qualtrics, SurveyMonkey), or provide them with access to a corporate account through a third party that would host the "main account." At this point, to avoid the cost burden for the participating states and jurisdictions and to make the most of CSG's and Colorado's SurveyMonkey accounts, the second option was selected. CSG, which already had a SurveyMonkey account, upgraded their account to be able to offer the pilot participants unpaid access to the software. A pre-programmed survey was provided to Colorado so they could use their existing corporate SurveyMonkey account to field the survey independently.

Survey Programming

Fors Marsh was granted user access by CSG to SurveyMonkey and programmed the final version of the questionnaire. This process involved programming the items, survey logic, and tailoring some items that were specific for each participant (e.g., Q7 listed a personalized voting assistance resource for each state/local jurisdiction). Additionally, participants were asked to provide their logos, branding colors, and other materials to personalize each of the surveys. After programming and testing, links to finished versions of the survey were distributed to the participants and the SAUS pilot working group for final review.

Toolkit Materials

With the goal of providing as much support as possible to participating states and jurisdictions to reduce their time burden during an election period when they already had large volumes of work, Fors Marsh created a series of accompanying materials to guide the participants through the fielding process. These materials, referred to as "toolkit materials" included the following resources:

- Step-by-step guides for SurveyMonkey users: There were two different guides to navigating SurveyMonkey depending on whether the participant fielded the survey on their own or through CSG's main account. For Colorado, the guide included all the information needed to import the survey to their SurveyMonkey account and detailed all the steps involved in the fielding process, the data collection modes available, how to send personalized invitations, etc. For the rest of the participants, the guide included instructions on how to create their SurveyMonkey account and how to monitor progress of the survey. Both guides had detailed step-by-step descriptions and screenshots to help participants navigate the platform with ease.
- Communication templates: Four communication templates were made available to the participants. These included a sample email invitation to send to potential respondents and three follow-up email reminders to complete the survey. The communications provided a brief description of the survey, its goal, and the anticipated time burden. Participants had

the freedom to use these communications, make their own, or edit the templates to match their needs.

- Help desk log: The survey invitations and the survey instrument provided respondents with an email address to contact if they had any questions or concerns about the survey. Participating states and jurisdictions had the choice to manage the help desk on their own or allow CSG to do so. The help desk log consisted of a spreadsheet to log the reason why participants reached out to the help desk with the goal of identifying any recurring issues with the survey.
- Standardized help desk responses: Fors Marsh's experience with fielding surveys allowed them to identify common issues for survey participants and create a brief document that provided standardized responses for those topics. Standardized responses covered instances where participants reached out asking to be excluded from future emails, to get help troubleshooting issues accessing the survey, and to inquire about survey closing.
- Contact removal list: This spreadsheet helped to log all participants that requested to be removed from the email list for survey reminders.
- Fielding schedule: Each participant received a fielding schedule detailing when to update their email lists based on completed surveys and removal requests and when to send each of the three reminder emails. For the standard survey fielding period of two months, the reminders were suggested to be sent 10, 30, and 45 days after the start of the survey fielding.

Survey Fielding

The fielding period for the survey was planned to last two months and take place between December 2022 and February 2023. When creating the schedule, the top priority was to start fielding soon after the November 2022 General Election so respondents had a vivid memory of the voting process and could provide accurate responses, but understanding that state and local election offices need their full focus on conducting the election, counting, canvassing, and other election-related activities during the month of November. Thus, the SAUS pilot working group and the participating states and jurisdictions found December 2022 to February 2023 to be the most feasible time to field the survey.

The participating states and jurisdictions had different support needs for survey fielding and different resource availability to start the fielding process. Thus, the SAUS pilot working group worked with them separately when necessary to ensure all of their needs were met. The SAUS pilot working group met with Colorado in late November to review the toolkit materials and planned their survey fielding to take place between December 6, 2022, and February 6, 2023. The state of Colorado fielded the survey through their own SurveyMonkey account and had full control over it. They used the email system from SurveyMonkey to send emails with personalized survey links to *UOCAVA* voters so only one response was allowed per link. Respondents were also able to save progress and complete the survey in different sessions. Additionally, Colorado hosted their own help desk to respond to questions from survey respondents and used the appropriate toolkit materials for this task. To meet Colorado's needs, all toolkit materials were prepared to cover the whole survey-fielding process, so they had the autonomy to fully field the survey after they imported the survey instrument.

On the other hand, Escambia County (FL), Ingham County (MI), and Okaloosa County (FL), decided to field the survey through CSG's main SurveyMonkey account and allow CSG to coordinate the help desk, while the counties were in charge of sending the invitation and reminder emails to their *UOCAVA* voters. Given this division of responsibilities, the fielding process differed from that of Colorado. Because voters' emails are considered personal information, the counties were not allowed to share them with CSG to send personalized survey links to respondents through the survey platform. Instead, CSG created a general survey link for each county so they could distribute via email to their *UOCAVA* voters through their preferred email system. This approach, however, did not allow respondents to save progress and could not guarantee that the survey was completed only once per participant, although a series of IP constraints were selected in SurveyMonkey to limit that risk.

Okaloosa County (FL) fielded the survey between December 12, 2022, and February 13, 2023, Escambia County (FL) fielded the survey between December 13, 2022, and February 13, 2023, and Ingham County (MI) had a shortened fielding period between January 24, 2023, and March 10, 2023. The main reason for Ingham County's delayed survey fielding start was their need to focus local election office resources on a partial recount of the November 2022 General Election, which limited their ability to start the fielding process earlier.

Closure Activities

After survey fielding was closed, responses were exported from SurveyMonkey in Excel format and shared with the SAUS pilot working group—Colorado also shared their help desk log. The raw survey responses were processed by the SAUS pilot working group to produce topline tables that allowed participants to gain insights on the overall responses from their *UOCAVA* voters, as well as the responses broken down by different categories such as type of *UOCAVA* voter (i.e., overseas citizen or Uniformed Services), age, sex, and world region. In addition to the topline tables provided by the SAUS pilot working group, the participating states and jurisdictions were able to explore the results on their own through SurveyMonkey's dashboard.

The SAUS pilot working group asked the participants to complete, to the best of their ability, a spreadsheet with information about the *UOCAVA* population to which they sent the survey. This information enabled responses to be weighted so that results could be representative of their *UOCAVA* population. The categories included in the spreadsheet were: availability of email, vote history in the past two elections, number of elections they requested a ballot for, country of residence, race/ethnicity, age, sex, educational attainment, and marital status. All the data was asked as aggregated totals so no personally identifiable information was reported. When possible, participants were asked to also provide cross tabulations of these variables (e.g., break down email availability from voters for each age range). For the purposes of weighting, the survey instrument had questions covering these categories, making it possible to weight the responses based on the data provided by the respondent and the pilot participant (see subsection "Survey Weighting" and Appendix B for details). The spreadsheet also contained a table for participants to enter the number of invitation emails sent and the total number of initial invitations returned as undeliverable.

Finally, during the spring of 2023, Fors Marsh conducted interviews with all pilot participants and CSG to inquire about their experiences fielding the SAUS pilot and learn what worked and what could be improved for future iterations of the survey. Overall, feedback was positive and the

participants were satisfied with the experience (more details on the interview results in the "Feedback—Interviews" subsection).

Outcomes of the SAUS Pilot

This section discusses some of the main findings about the process of fielding the SAUS pilot survey. It covers the results on participation rate and survey-completion-related metrics and analyzes when participants responded to the survey. It also shows the potential impact of using survey weights to make the survey results more representative of their reference population and discusses results from some key metrics. Finally, it provides information about the topics in the communications between respondents and the survey help desk and the overall experience of the participating states and jurisdictions with the SAUS pilot.

Survey Completion

In order to evaluate the success of the survey fielding and look for opportunities for improvement, the SAUS pilot working group analyzed the data related to survey completion, when respondents completed the survey, and other related metrics. The state of Colorado and the jurisdictions of Ingham County (MI), and Okaloosa County (FL), provided data about the number of email invitations sent and the availability of email addresses for their *UOCAVA* voters. Table 1 shows that Colorado, Ingham County (MI), and Okaloosa County (FL) had available email addresses of at least 80% of their *UOCAVA* voters and as many as 98.1% of voters in Ingham County (MI), meaning that these participants were able to send the survey to a majority of their *UOCAVA* voters. There were some cases where the email invitations were returned as undeliverable, but these instances were relatively rare and accounted for less than 3% of all the invitations sent. Additionally, SurveyMonkey's emailing system, which was used by Colorado to send the invitations, showed that 76.6% of the email invitations sent by Colorado were opened by the recipient.

Table 1. Survey Invitation and Response Metrics. Over 10% of the *UOCAVA* Voters Invited to Participate in the Survey Started It.

SAUS Pilot Participant	Percentage of *UOCAVA* Emails Available	Total Number of Survey Invitations Sent	Undeliverable Email Invitations	Survey Response Rate
Colorado	93.8%	36,771	2.8%	16.1%
Ingham County (MI)	98.1%	413	1.9%	29.5%
Okaloosa County (FL)	80.7%	6,695	1.8%	11.7%

The survey response rate—that is, the percentage of *UOCAVA* voters invited to take the survey that provided responses to at least a portion of the survey—varied across participants. Ingham County (MI) registered the largest response rate, with 29.5% of invited respondents starting the survey. Okaloosa County (FL) had the lowest response rate with 11.7% responding. Data for Escambia County (FL) was not available at the time of writing this report, but using their reported number of *UOCAVA* ballots transmitted in the 2022 EAVS as a proxy for email invitations sent, and assuming an email address availability of 90%, the result would be about a 10% survey response rate. The survey response rates for the SAUS pilot were slightly higher than the response rates obtained in the 2022 PEVS-ADM (8.0%) and the 2022 OCPS (9.4%).

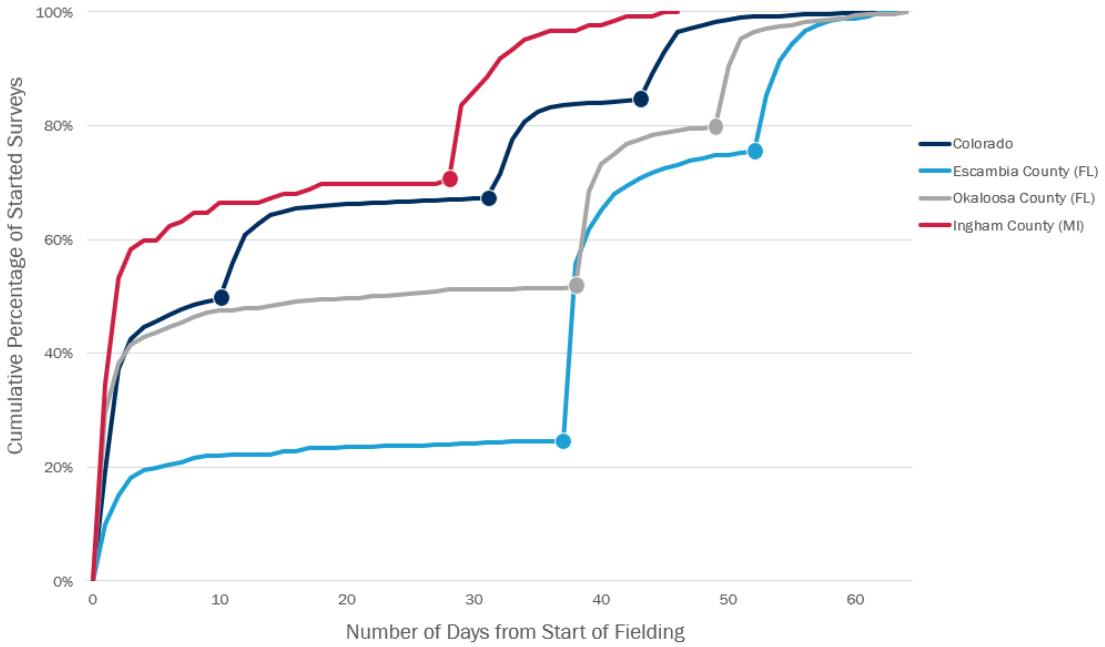
For all participants in the SAUS pilot, over 90% of the respondents that started the survey ended up completing it (see Table 2). The median completion time of the survey was six to eight minutes, matching the expected goal of five to 10 minutes. SurveyMonkey provided the start and completion date and time. In some cases, the total completion time was multiple hours, which likely points to participants completing the survey in more than one sitting or leaving the survey open in order to complete it later, making the median the best central tendency statistic to assess the usual time it took for respondents to complete the survey.

Table 2. Survey Completion Rates and Times. Over 90% of Respondents That Started the Survey Completed It.

SAUS Pilot Participant	Total Started Surveys	Total Completed Surveys	Percent of Started Surveys Completed	Median Survey Completion Time
Colorado	5,912	5,489	92.8%	7 min.
Escambia County (FL)	575	537	93.4%	7 min.
Ingham County (MI)	122	121	99.2%	8 min.
Okaloosa County (FL)	785	741	94.4%	6 min.

Another factor to consider during the survey fielding was the importance of survey reminders. The SAUS pilot working group suggested a survey fielding period of two months, with three reminders that were expected to be delivered 10, 30, and 45 days after the start of the fielding period. However, as discussed above, Ingham County (MI) had a shorter fielding period and reminder schedule because of conflicting responsibilities, whereas Escambia County (FL) and Okaloosa County (FL) missed the first reminder and sent the two reminders in a slightly different schedule. Figure 1 displays the cumulative percentage of respondents that started the survey by the number of days after the start of the fielding period, with the dots flagging the day when a survey reminder was sent to respondents. For all participants except Escambia County (FL), over 40% of the respondents that started the survey did so within the first three days of the fielding period. Additionally, within three days of sending a reminder, all participants experienced spikes in the number of respondents starting the survey, which represented increases of about 10 to 40 percentage points of the total respondents that started the survey. These results demonstrate the importance of reaching out to respondents to remind them about the survey during the fielding period.

Figure 1. Survey Start Timeline. The Days After the Initial Survey Invitation and the Reminder Emails Account for the Majority of Overall Survey Starts.



Survey Weighting

FVAP uses sampling and weighting in their surveys (e.g., PEVS-ADM, OCPS) with the goal of obtaining results that are representative of the national *UOCAVA* population. The SAUS pilot, however, was a census of the *UOCAVA* voters registered to vote on November 8, 2022, in each of the participating states and jurisdictions; thus, no sampling was needed.[5]

Table 3. Weighting Categories Provided by Participant. Most Participants Provided Information on Email Availability, Age, and Sex.

Weighting Category	Colorado	Escambia County (FL)	Ingham County (MI)	Okaloosa County (FL)
Email availability	✓	✗	✓	✓
Voter History (2022 and 2020)	✓	✗	✗	✓
Country of Residence	✗	✗	✗	✗
Race/Ethnicity	✗	✗	✗	✓
Age	✓	✗	✓	✓
Sex	✓	✗	✓	✓
Educational Attainment	✗	✗	✗	✗
Marital Status	✗	✗	✗	✗

[5] The only limitation of the census nature of the SAUS pilot is that the survey was shared with *UOCAVA* voters with an email address on file. See Table 1 for data on email address availability per participant.

Weighting was conducted with the intention of ensuring that the results were as representative of each participant's *UOCAVA* population as possible. With this goal, the SAUS pilot working group requested participants to provide the totals for some key demographics and voter history information to create the appropriate weights. Table 3 shows the information that each of the SAUS participants provided. In addition to the totals for these categories, the participants provided the cross tabulation totals (e.g., for sex by age, the participants provided the total number of *UOCAVA* voters of each sex that belonged to each of the four age groups requested. See Appendix B for more details).

The SAUS pilot survey also asked respondents questions about the weighting topics (e.g., age, whether they voted in the 2022 and/or 2020 General Election), to make it possible to create the population weights. The weighting process looks at the proportion of the *UOCAVA* population in a category (e.g., proportion of *UOCAVA* voters in each of the four age ranges) and adds a weight to each respondent so the overall proportions for the respondents are similar to those in the reference population. For example, if a jurisdiction has the same proportion of *UOCAVA* voters in each of the four age groups (i.e., 25% in each group) but the majority of the people that completed the survey were older people (e.g., 40% of respondents were 65+ years old), larger weights would be given to the responses of the younger age groups so that results better represent the actual population (see more details on the weighting process in Appendix B).

Only surveys with complete demographic data were given weights, and depending on the information that each of the participating states and jurisdictions were able to share, zero to five sets of weights were created for each. Every set of weights included age and sex, whereas race/ethnicity and voter history were included in some sets, as available.

In general, when comparing the observed proportions for age, sex, and race/ethnicity between the unweighted survey responses and the reference population, most had very similar results. For sex, the unweighted responses for the three participants that provided information for this category (i.e., Colorado, Ingham County (MI), and Okaloosa County (FL)) were within five percentage points of their reference population, meaning that men and women accounted for a similar portion of respondents as they did for the actual *UOCAVA* population in their jurisdictions. For the age breakdown, the difference between the respondents and the reference population was slightly higher for some groups. The proportion of respondents that were 45 to 65 years old and 65 years and older was larger than the proportion of these age groups in the actual *UOCAVA* population for each of the participants that provided the information, leading to apply larger weights for younger respondents to address the mismatch. Only Okaloosa County (FL) provided their population information on race/ethnicity, which, when compared to their respondents, displayed small discrepancies within each race/ethnicity category—the larger discrepancy between the reference population and the respondents to the survey was 8.0 percentage points.

Table 4. Ballot Return Rates Using Different Calculations. Survey Respondents Were Mostly Voters.

Ballot Return Rate Calculation Method	Colorado	Escambia County (FL)	Ingham County (MI)	Okaloosa County (FL)
ESB - Baseline	38.1%	45.7%	84.0%	40.7%
UOCAVA Voter History – Reference Population	35.4%	—	—	34.6%
SAUS – Unweighted	84.5%	80.1%	97.5%	82.8%
SAUS – Weighted – Joint Distribution w/Voter History	35.4%	—	—	36.9%
SAUS – Weighted – Joint Distribution w/o Voter History	84.8%	—	96.7%	82.3%
SAUS – Weighted – Marginal Distribution w/Voter History	35.4%	—	—	34.6%
SAUS – Weighted – Marginal Distribution w/o Voter History	84.8%	—	96.8%	82.3%
SAUS – Weighted – Joint and Marginal Distribution w/Voter History	—	—	—	34.6%

On the other hand, when looking at voter history, the differences between the ballot return rates from the actual *UOCAVA* population and the ballot return rates from the respondents was notably large. The breakdown of ballot return rates presented in Table 4 were calculated using different methods to display the impact of the weights. The methods represented in the table are:

- ESB baseline: Uses EAVS Section B (ESB) transactional data to calculate the percentage of ballots transmitted that were returned.[6]
- *UOCAVA* Voter History – Reference population: Uses the data provided from participants about the percentage of *UOCAVA* registrants that voted in 2022 (this was only provided by Colorado and Okaloosa County (FL)).
- SAUS Unweighted: Displays the percentage of survey respondents that reported voting in 2022 based on their response to Q2 in the survey.
- SAUS – Weighted – Joint Distribution w/Voter History: Displays the weighted percentage of survey respondents that reported voting in 2022 after applying the weights based on the joint distributions of the available demographic variables for each participant, including voter history.
- SAUS Pilot – Weighted – Joint Distribution w/o Voter History: Displays the weighted percentage of survey respondents that reported voting in 2022 after applying the weights based on the joint distributions of the available demographic variables for each participant, excluding voter history.
- SAUS Pilot – Weighted – Marginal Distribution w/Voter History: Displays the weighted percentage of survey respondents that reported voting in 2022 after applying the weights based on calibrations using the marginal distributions of the available demographic variables for each participant, including voter history.
- SAUS Pilot – Weighted – Marginal Distribution w/o Voter History: Displays the weighted percentage of survey respondents that reported voting in 2022 after applying the weights based on calibrations using the marginal distributions of the available demographic variables for each participant, excluding voter history.
- SAUS Pilot – Weighted – Joint and Marginal Distribution w/Voter History: Displays the weighted percentage of survey respondents that reported voting in 2022 after applying the weights based on

[6] Transactional data on ballots transmitted and returned used to calculate the return rates for the SAUS participants was obtained from ESB. For more information on this data and the calculations see https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Reports/2022-esb-research-note-final.pdf

the joint distributions for age, sex, and race/ethnicity and the marginal distribution for voter history.

Over 80% of respondents from each state and jurisdiction reported returning a ballot for the 2022 General Election. This contrasts with the ballot return rate registered in each of the participating states and jurisdictions. The first row of Table 4 displays the ballot return rate for 2022 using ESB data, whereas the third row shows the unweighted percentage of the SAUS pilot respondents that reported voting in the 2022 General Election. With the exception of Ingham County (MI), the discrepancies are larger than 30 percentage points.

The second row shows the ballot return rate calculated using the data provided by Colorado and Okaloosa County (FL) for weighting purposes. For both, the rates are relatively similar to ESB's percentages. The rest of the rows display the ballot return rate when using each of the available weights. As expected, the weights including voter history information led to the most similar results and demonstrate how this particular piece of information was crucial when calculating a set of weights that represented the actual *UOCAVA* population, as *UOCAVA* voters—*UOCAVA* registrants that returned a ballot in the 2022 General Election—were notably overrepresented among survey respondents. Overrepresentation of voters in post-election surveys is not rare. For the 2022 OCPS, voters comprised 72.8% of the respondents.[7] This phenomenon is likely associated with voters—particularly mid-term election voters—being more engaged in election-related activities, such as responding to a post-election survey. Including voter history in the weights for the SAUS pilot, however, also led to an increase in the variability of the weights and increased the standard error of the estimators (see more details on the weighting process in Appendix B).

The table and discussion above highlight the importance of the demographic and voter history information provided by participants in order to calculate weights that help to make the results more representative of their actual *UOCAVA* population.

SAUS Survey Advantages

FVAP surveys like the PEVS-ADM and the OCPS aim to obtain results that are representative of the national *UOCAVA* population. However, as shown above, the *UOCAVA* population may vary widely from one state to another, or even between different jurisdictions within the same state. Because of this, targeted surveys such as the SAUS pilot can provide additional insight to states and jurisdictions about the reality of their *UOCAVA* populations.

For example, in the SAUS pilot, respondents were asked whether they had difficulties returning their ballots for the November 8, 2022, General Election (Q6a_3). This question was also asked to active duty military in the 2022 PEVS-ADM (Q35e) and to overseas citizens in the 2022 OCPS (Q17_5). Tables 5 and 6 show in the first row the results for this question at the national level as reported in the 2022 PEVS-ADM and 2022 OCPS, respectively. The following rows show the unweighted and weighted results (where available) for each of the SAUS pilot participants.

[7] For the 2022 PEVS-ADM, voters represented 33.2% of the respondents. However, the reference population of the PEVS-ADM survey is all active duty military—not only ballot requestors like the SAUS pilot and the OCPS surveys. For comparison purposes, if only ballot requestors were considered, the percentage of voters that responded to the PEVS-ADM would be 69.8% and would also show an overrepresentation of active duty military voters.

Table 5. Difficulty Returning Ballot For Active Duty Military Using Different Calculation Methods.

Difficulty Returning Ballot Calculation Method	Colorado	Escambia County (FL)	Ingham County (MI)	Okaloosa County (FL)
PEVS-ADM Q35e – Difficulty returning ballot		4.1%		
SAUS – Unweighted	11.6%	5.3%	0.0%	4.9%
SAUS – Weighted – Joint Distribution w/Voter History	25.3%	–	–	11.3%
SAUS – Weighted – Joint Distribution w/o Voter History	12.1%	–	0.0%	5.3%
SAUS – Weighted – Marginal Distribution w/Voter History	23.6%	–	–	9.3%
SAUS – Weighted – Marginal Distribution w/o Voter History	11.8%	–	0.0%	4.9%
SAUS – Weighted – Joint and Marginal Distribution w/Voter History	–	–	–	9.7%

Table 6. Difficulty Returning Ballot For Overseas Citizens Using Different Calculation Methods.

Difficulty Returning Ballot Calculation Method	Colorado	Escambia County (FL)	Ingham County (MI)	Okaloosa County (FL)
OCPS Q17_5 – Difficulty returning ballot		17.0%		
SAUS – Unweighted	7.6%	10.2%	7.6%	8.3%
SAUS – Weighted – Joint Distribution w/Voter History	16.0%	–	–	22.0%
SAUS – Weighted – Joint Distribution w/o Voter History	7.5%	–	8.4%	8.1%
SAUS – Weighted – Marginal Distribution w/Voter History	16.5%	–	–	25.5%
SAUS – Weighted – Marginal Distribution w/o Voter History	7.5%	–	7.8%	8.0%
SAUS – Weighted – Joint and Marginal Distribution w/Voter History	–	–	–	27.9%

A look at tables 5 and 6 provides insight on how the SAUS pilot survey can better serve states and jurisdictions to understand the challenges experienced by their *UOCAVA* populations. Table 5 illustrates that at the national level, 4.1% of active duty military reported experiencing difficulties returning their ballots in 2022. However, the percentage of active duty military respondents in Colorado that experienced such challenges was noticeably higher, as seen by the unweighted result for the SAUS survey (11.6%). Additionally, the weighted results show that when applying weights to account for the underrepresentation of non-voters in the SAUS pilot survey, the percentage of active duty military respondents in Colorado that reported experiencing these challenges increased to

about six times the number reported in PEVS-ADM. On the other hand, Colorado's overseas citizens reported in the SAUS pilot that they experienced difficulties returning their ballots less often than the national OCPS sample, even after applying weights to adjust for non-voter underrepresentation.

In addition to the targeted results for states and jurisdictions, the SAUS pilot had multiple follow-up open-ended questions that allowed states and jurisdictions to go beyond the percentage of respondents that selected an option and learn the reason for it. Using the example above, respondents who reported experiencing issues returning their ballot were then asked to provide a brief comment about the issues they experienced. For active duty military respondents who reported such issues, 83.5% of them completed the open ended question. This allowed states and jurisdictions to not only learn about how many respondents had issues, but also to learn what those issues were so they could find topics mentioned by multiple respondents and work on addressing them for future elections.

Another advantage of the SAUS pilot survey is that spouses and eligible dependents of active duty military are included in the survey, whereas they are rarely included in other post-election surveys and thus information about their experiences is usually not available. Table 7 provides a breakdown of the different types of *UOCAVA* respondents for each of the participating states and jurisdictions.

Table 7. Percentage of Survey Respondents by Type of *UOCAVA* Population.

SAUS Pilot Participant	Active Duty Military	Active Duty Military Spouse	Active Duty Military Dependent	Overseas Citizen
Colorado	7.4%	3.7%	0.2%	88.8%
Escambia County (FL)	56.1%	19.5%	0.5%	23.8%
Ingham County (MI)	2.5%	0%	0%	97.5%
Okaloosa County (FL)	48.4%	30.7%	1.9%	19.0%

Another advantage of the SAUS pilot is the ability of participating states and jurisdictions to include customer satisfaction questions that are relevant to them. For example, the question covering the respondent's use of resources for voting assistance in 2022 (Q7) included a response option that was personalized with each participant's preferred online voting resource (e.g., EscambiaVotes.gov for Escambia County (FL)). The results showed that between 40.5% and 53.8% of respondents that voted or tried to vote used their local online voting resources, and over 70% of those who used these resources quickly found the information they were looking for.

In addition to personalized items, the SAUS pilot covered additional questions directly related to the local election administration. Most of these questions had follow-up questions and open-ended fields for respondents to provide as much information as needed. For example:

- Q8: Did you contact your election office by telephone, email, chat, or direct message to address any questions or concerns?
    - Q8a (if "yes" to Q8): Did your election office generally respond to you in a timely manner?
- Q9: How clear were the instructions provided by your election office on how to register to vote and/or request a ballot for the November 8, 2022, General Election?
    - This question was followed by an open-ended field to provide further details on why the instructions were clear or not.

- Q11: How clear were the instructions provided by your election office on how to fill your ballot for the November 8, 2022, General Election?
    - This question was followed by an open-ended field to provide further details on why the instructions were clear or not.
- Q14: In your opinion, what would improve your voting experience? (open ended question)

These types of questions provided more personalized feedback and insights to election officials about the election administration in their jurisdictions and the experiences of their *UOCAVA* voters during the 2022 General Election. Questions from the SAUS pilot also measured respondents' interest in topics, like additional methods of ballot return, in an effort to better understand the necessities of their registered *UOCAVA* voters.

Help Desk Log Findings

The SAUS pilot survey invitations provided recipients with an email address to contact if they had any issues or comments regarding the survey. Colorado hosted their own help desk, whereas the other three participating counties had CSG host their help desk and respond to invitees' requests.

Colorado recorded a total of 38 contacts from *UOCAVA* registrants out of the total 36,771 invitations they initially sent. The most common topics of these contacts were invitees reporting they are no longer eligible Colorado *UOCAVA* voters (34.2%) or invitees providing feedback on some of the survey items (34.2%). Respondents who were no longer eligible *UOCAVA* voters either no longer resided overseas or were registered to vote in another state. Over 75% of the item feedback involved the first question that categorized respondents as overseas citizens or active duty military, spouses, or eligible dependents, with the feedback suggesting additional *UOCAVA* populations missing from the categories (e.g., diplomats). Almost 25% of the item feedback involved the sex question, as some respondents requested that more sex options be made available. Only three people contacted the help desk with technological issues with the survey, whereas four people wrote to thank the state for their service, and another five contacted with other comments.

CSG hosted the help desk for the other three participants and received a total of six emails from respondents. Two were from respondents reporting they were no longer *UOCAVA* voters, two were technical issues that were escalated for resolution, one was survey feedback on an item about mail reliability, and one was a request for the county to change their email address on record. Overall, few survey invitees contacted the help desk (less than 0.1% of invitees), suggesting that most respondents did not experience issues with completing the survey.

Feedback — Interviews

Fors Marsh conducted interviews with the participating states and jurisdictions and CSG to inquire about what worked well and what aspects of the pilot they would change. Overall, feedback was positive, and participants were very satisfied with how the process went.

Most participants mentioned that timing for the survey fielding—which was expected to take place from early December to early February—was a good balance between them wrapping-up the election during the month of November and still being close enough to the election that respondents had a vivid memory of their election experience. Ingham County (MI) had to run a recount during

December and had limited personnel, so they started fielding in early February. A slightly later fielding period worked best for them, and the flexibility of the SAUS pilot helped to accommodate to their time frame. One participant noted that the survey fielding period might have been too long (two months), and that six weeks, even with the holidays at the end of the year, would have been enough and would help reduce procrastination among respondents.

Participants noted that the toolkit materials were very helpful, particularly the email invitation templates, which all participants mentioned they only slightly edited to customize to their needs. Colorado, which administered the survey themselves, noted that the SurveyMonkey step-by-step guide to set the survey up was very thorough and helpful. For all participants, the most challenging part of the toolkit materials was the spreadsheet to report the weighting information (i.e., demographics and voter history) because of its complexity. However, participants mentioned that the assistance from the SAUS pilot working group helped them resolve their questions, and they were able to input the information for the fields they track data for.

Regarding the survey content, participants were satisfied with the topics covered in the survey. Although for the most part, the responses aligned with what states and jurisdictions expected, most of them explicitly mentioned that having data and actual quotes from *UOCAVA*-registered voters on topics like ballot return methods and ballot tracking was useful for them when discussing changes in the voting process with their legislatures and lawmakers. They highlighted this as one of the main benefits of the SAUS pilot, in addition to learning more about challenges for some registrants to receive their ballots. Two of the four participants suggested shortening the survey for future iterations to make it less time consuming for respondents and to reduce the number of people not completing the survey due to its length.

All the participants were satisfied with SurveyMonkey as the survey platform. They mentioned that it was easy to navigate and that they valued both the automatic graphs that summarized item responses and the flexibility to break responses down by population or other items. They appreciated that having the visuals from the survey made it easier for them to interpret the results and share with legislators and other stakeholders. However, the counties—who had restricted access to the main survey account—mentioned that they did not have direct access to the contents of the open-ended questions, but the SAUS pilot working group was able to provide all the survey responses in spreadsheet format for their review. Additionally, the SAUS pilot working group sent all participants topline tables with the results for all the survey items from their respondents broken down in several categories (e.g., age, world region) to provide further insight on the responses from their *UOCAVA* registrants.

The only challenge with SurveyMonkey that was mentioned by Colorado during the interview was the limitation on the number of invitation emails of the survey platform. They had a limit of 10,000 emails at a time and had to send 36,771 invitations, so they had to increase the capabilities of their SurveyMonkey account to allow for the total number of emails, invitations, and reminders sent over a two-day period. Challenges sending invitations were also mentioned by other counties. In particular, Okaloosa County (FL) sent the invitations from their county email, and they had to ensure the large number of outgoing emails did not block the email system, as security settings flag when large amounts of emails are sent.

Overall, respondents mentioned that the time burden was relatively low. Colorado reported spending four to six hours to compile the demographic information and to import and set up the survey, which later required only minimal monitoring. In the case of the counties, the part that took the most time was sending the email invitations and reminders, as they had to do little monitoring while the survey was in the field. Counties also mentioned that for scheduled survey reminders, since they had to manually send them from their emails, it would help to have someone from the SAUS pilot working group reach out to them the day before a reminder is expected to be sent so it would be on their radar, as their post-election work made keeping track of the schedule challenging.

In their interview, CSG reported that the state and jurisdiction recruitment process for the SAUS pilot was relatively easy, as they approached OVI members they were familiar with and that were already engaged in research initiatives about their *UOCAVA* population. However, they mentioned the biggest challenge was to find a time that worked for all of them to meet, as they were very busy during an election year. CSG also mentioned that for future iterations, if there is a desire to increase the number of participating jurisdictions, it would be beneficial to approach other jurisdictions during in-person conferences to explain the project and get them involved.

Participants were very happy with the overall experience conducting the SAUS pilot survey, and all reported that they would conduct the survey again in the future. They all agreed that the information collected would be valuable to them when communicating with their *UOCAVA* population and when discussing *UOCAVA*-related topics with legislatures and lawmakers.

Lessons Learned

The SAUS pilot successfully supported participating states and jurisdictions in fielding a customer satisfaction survey among their *UOCAVA* voters to learn about their experiences with the voting process in the 2022 General Election. The goal was to support interested states and jurisdictions in fielding their own post-election survey. The assistance consisted of creating survey materials, step-by-step guides and programming the survey so the fielding process could be as seamless as possible with a low time burden for election officials. The pilot succeeded in its goals and provided valuable lessons that can be applied in potential future iterations of this project.

Recruitment of interested states and jurisdictions through the OVI working group worked well, and the goal of finding five participants of different types and sizes was successfully met with the assistance of CSG. However, the state of Kentucky dropped out of the pilot in late summer due to internal challenges in allocating resources to this project. Nevertheless, this was an isolated case, as the rest of the participants did not have any problems completing the process. During interviews after the pilot was completed, participating states and jurisdictions mentioned that the timing of the project worked for them and the time burden was low overall.

One important point when considering future iterations of the project is that the fielding timing needs to be flexible. Since this project is conducted in a general election year, election officials are busy preparing and conducting primary and general elections. Sharing the survey with election officials during late spring/early summer allowed ample time for election officials to provide feedback and get the survey programmed and ready well before the election. Additionally, depending on the size and the resources available for each participant, fielding may start as early as late November/early December or may need to be delayed until the beginning of the new year.

Being flexible with the needs of each participant and adapting the fielding period ensures that the fielding can be completed smoothly without being a burden for participants.

For the 2022 SAUS pilot, two meetings were conducted with election officials. One in early summer to discuss the project and review the survey draft, and another in late November/early December to review the survey materials and prepare for fielding. We find that these two meetings make the best use of the election officials' time. The first one can be conducted with several participants at the same time. For the second meeting, it is best to group participants depending on how they will be fielding the survey to ensure that the information discussed is relevant for all attendees.

Based on the feedback provided by participating states and jurisdictions, the toolkit materials (which included step-by-step guides and communication templates) were very useful to help them navigate the fielding process. They had positive feedback overall, mentioning that the materials were clear and easy to use. Having a survey draft ready by the first meeting and the materials available by the second meeting (right before fielding) proved to work with the election officials' timing and gave plenty of time to the SAUS pilot working group to get the materials reviewed and ready.

One of the main benefits of this survey that was mentioned by all participants was that it provided them with "hard data" and quotes from their *UOCAVA* voters. This was of great value to them, as they mentioned that the data from this survey can be used when they discuss election administration with their legislatures and policymakers. Although national surveys provide general insight about the voters' experience, this survey collected information directly from their constituents. Additionally, the open-ended questions provided detail about the selections made by the respondents.

The survey instrument also met the expectations during fielding. Not only did it collect information that was relevant for the participants, but it was completed by respondents in less than 10 minutes, as initially planned. However, some respondents reported the survey was too long, and some participating states and jurisdictions also suggested making the survey shorter in the future. Overall, over 90% of the people that started the survey completed it, suggesting that survey length did not have a great impact on whether or not respondents completed all questions. However, there is room for reducing the number of items. Some items that can be considered for removal are marital status and education, as these items were ultimately not used for weighting purposes. Also, some of the follow-up questions can be removed, depending on the needs of states and jurisdictions.

Another important aspect to consider for future iterations of the survey is the importance of sending reminders to the invitees. We saw in the pilot that most responses were clustered on the three days after the initial invitation or reminder was sent. In the 2022 SAUS pilot, some participants missed one of the reminders. During the post-fielding interviews, these participants mentioned that, in the future, to help them send the reminders on schedule, the SAUS pilot working group could reach out to them the day before to remind them about the upcoming delivery date. Additionally, among the participants that sent the invitations and reminders from their election offices' accounts, some mentioned that they had to send the invitations in batches, and it could take hours, making this the most time-consuming part of the whole project. For future iterations, when the options to send invitations and reminders are discussed with participants, there should be a plan to provide

additional strategies to election officials to help them to make this step of the fielding process less time consuming.

The selection of an appropriate survey platform to conduct the survey was one of the most time-consuming tasks for the SAUS pilot working group. Since the key capabilities needed for the survey were identified in the pilot, this process should be easier in future iterations. However, the whole process depends on the availability of a corporate account to accommodate all the participants that do not have such an account on their own. Having this option available will ensure that states and jurisdictions interested in joining future iterations will be likely to participate, as it assures them that the participation cost will be low—consisting of only the time and labor spent in the fielding process. SurveyMonkey worked well overall and provided enough flexibility to program all of the skip logic needed and to personalize the survey with the logo and colors of each participant. Additionally, the state of Colorado—which accounted for the largest *UOCAVA* population of all participants—had their own corporate account, thus making it easier for the shared account to not exceed response or email limits. Participating states and jurisdictions also mentioned that the dashboard in SurveyMonkey allowed them to easily create visualizations of the results of the survey.

Finally, the weighting process proved to be important in order to make the results of the survey more representative of the actual *UOCAVA* population, as voters were overrepresented among survey respondents. The collection of information for weighting from the participating states and jurisdictions, however, had some challenges. The main obstacle was the complexity of the spreadsheet used to collect this information. Most participants needed additional instructions to be able to complete it. Additionally, there were some fields within the spreadsheet for which no participant was able to provide responses, as that information was not collected (e.g., marital status). For future iterations, we recommend that some unused categories are dropped and that there is an emphasis on the categories of age, sex, voter history, and email availability, as these categories were more readily available among participants and provided sufficient information for weighting purposes.

Conclusion

Overall, the SAUS pilot was a success. Participating states and jurisdictions had positive feedback of their experiences and reported that they would participate again if the survey was conducted in the future. They noted that the survey results were useful to them for confirming some perceptions they had about their *UOCAVA* population's voting preferences (e.g., desire to be able to track ballots and to return ballots electronically). It also provided them with "hard data" and actual quotes from voters to back those preferences from their voters. They mentioned that these results can help them support conversations when discussing these topics with their legislatures and lawmakers. Additionally, the survey was focused on customer satisfaction, and had personalized items that provided localities with greater insight about potential improvements in their processes to help their *UOCAVA* voters in their voting journey.

The survey had response rates above 10% for all participating states and jurisdictions. Survey respondents included the spouses and eligible dependents from active duty military who are rarely surveyed, thus providing additional insights from a part of the *UOCAVA* population that is underrepresented in other survey efforts. Survey respondents, however, were mostly *UOCAVA*

registrants who voted in the 2022 General Election. Weighting procedures proved effective in ensuring that results were more representative of the actual *UOCAVA* population for each state and jurisdiction.

Importantly, the support of FVAP and the SAUS pilot working group was successful in reducing the burden for participating states and jurisdictions. The SAUS pilot working group created multiple guides and materials in addition to a draft of the survey, so participating states and jurisdictions did not have to invest much time during a period where they needed their full focus on preparing, conducting, and closing a general election. Participating states and jurisdictions, however, had ample time to review the survey and propose changes to ensure it met their needs and the information collected would be useful to them. Overall, participants noted that the time burden was low and the materials provided by the SAUS pilot working group made it very easy for them to field the survey.

The results of this pilot suggest that it would be feasible to conduct this process in the future with additional states and jurisdictions interested in receiving feedback from their *UOCAVA* voters about the voting process in their localities. With the help of the SAUS pilot working group in creating supporting materials, programming the survey, and providing survey platform credentials when needed, participants can obtain a large amount of information with a relatively low associated time burden.

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Appendix A: SAUS Survey Instrument

Q1. Which of the following best describes your status as of November 8, 2022: - Active Duty Military (including National Guard or Reserve members on active duty orders) - Spouse of an Active Duty Military member (including National Guard or Reserve members on active duty orders) - Dependent of an Active Duty Military member (including National Guard or Reserve members on active duty orders) - US Citizen living abroad - None of the above *[if selected, end survey]*
[if "ADM" is selected in Q1] **Q1a. Which branch of the military do you serve?** - Army - Navy - Marine Corps - Air Force - Coast Guard - Space Force
Q2. Did you return your absentee ballot or Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) for the November 8, 2022 General Election? -Yes -No, I tried/wanted to vote but did not or could not complete the process -No, I did not want to vote
Q3. Which of the following best describes your status as of November 3, 2020 Presidential Election: - Active Duty Military (including National Guard or Reserve members on active duty orders) - Spouse of an Active Duty Military member (including National Guard or Reserve members on active duty orders) - Dependent of an Active Duty Military member (including National Guard or Reserve members on active duty orders) - US Citizen living abroad - None of the above
Q4. Did you return a ballot in the November 3, 2020 Presidential Election? - Yes - No - Not sure

If Q1=ADM, spouse or dependent	If Q1=Overseas Citizens
Q5a. How many times have you voted as a member of the military, or as the spouse or dependent of a member of the military? - Never - One time - Two times - Three times or more	**Q5b. How many times have you voted from overseas?** - Never - One time - Two times - Three times or more

If Q2= Yes (Voted in 2022)	If Q2 = No, I tried… (Could not vote in 2022)	If Q2= No, I did not want to vote
Q6a. Did you experience any of the following situations leading up to the November 8, 2022 election? *(Select all that apply)* **Q6a_1** - I had difficulty registering to vote or requesting an absentee ballot. [if selected show **Q6a_1_OE**: Please describe the types of issues		**Q6b. Why where you not interested in voting in the 2022 General Election?** - I felt out of touch with

If Q2= Yes (Voted in 2022)	If Q2 = No, I tried… (Could not vote in 2022)	If Q2= No, I did not want to vote
you experienced for the situation(s) you selected in the previous question: I had difficulty registering to vote or requesting an absentee ballot] **Q6a_2** - My absentee ballot arrived too late or did not arrive at all. [if selected show **Q6a_2_OE**: Please describe the types of issues you experienced for the situation(s) you selected in the previous question: My absentee ballot arrived too late or did not arrive at all] **Q6a_3** - I had difficulty returning my ballot. [if selected show **Q6a_3_OE**: Please describe the types of issues you experienced for the situation(s) you selected in the previous question: I had difficulty returning my ballot] **Q6a_4** - I had difficulty with the mailing system. [if selected show **Q6a_4_OE**: Please describe the types of issues you experienced for the situation(s) you selected in the previous question: I had difficulty with the mailing system] **Q6a_5** - I was unsure what U.S. address to use on my absentee ballot. [if selected show **Q6a_5_OE**: Please describe the types of issues you experienced for the situation(s) you selected in the previous question: I was unsure what U.S. address to use on my absentee ballot] **Q6a_6** - I had difficulty accessing my state's election website. [if selected show **Q6a_6_OE**: Please describe the types of issues you experienced for the situation(s) you selected in the previous question: I had difficulty accessing my state's election website] **Q6a_7** - The voting process was too complicated. [if selected show **Q6a_7_OE**: Please describe the types of issues you experienced for the situation(s) you selected in the previous question: The voting process was too complicated] **Q6a_8** - Some other challenge (please specify) **Q6a_8_OE** - I experienced no issues		the issues in my voting jurisdiction. - The absentee voting process was too complicated. - I was concerned my absentee ballot would not be counted. - Some other reason (please specify)
Q7. In preparation for the 2022 primaries or General Election, did you use any of the following resources for voting assistance? (*Select all that apply*) **Q7_1** - Federal Voting Assistance Program website (FVAP.gov) **Q7_2** - State or Local Election Office website **Q7_3** - *[additional option(s) personalized to state/jurisdiction]* **Q7_4** - U.S. Embassy/Consulate **Q7_5** - Military source [show only to ADM, spouses and dependents] **Q7_6** - Other sources (please specify) (**Q7_6_OE**) - I did not use any resource for voting assistance		
[if any source selected in Q7] **Q7a. What information were you looking for when you used these sources? (*Select all that apply*)** **Q7a_1** - Determining my eligibility to vote, my legal residency and/or voting jurisdiction **Q7a_2** - Obtaining and/or completing voting forms (e.g., Federal Post Card Application(FPCA)) **Q7a_3** - Finding information on voting deadlines **Q7a_4** - How to send my ballot request and/or ballot back electronically (email/fax/online portal upload) **Q7a_5** - My local election office's contact information **Q7a_6** - Information on how to register and/or how to request a ballot **Q7a_7** - Check on the status of my ballot request and/or my ballot **Q7a_8** - Information on candidates and local initiatives on the ballot **Q7a_9** - Information resolving an issue I was experiencing, or any other information (please specify **Q7a_9_OE**)		

If Q2= Yes (Voted in 2022)	If Q2 = No, I tried… (Could not vote in 2022)	If Q2= No, I did not want to vote
[show only if source was selected in Q7] **Q7b. Which of the following statements best describes your experience when you looked for information *on the Federal Voting Assistance Program website (FVAP.gov)*?** - I found the answer(s) to my question(s) quickly [if selected, show **Q7b_Quick_OE**: Please specify what information did you find quickly when using the…+ source] - I found the answer(s) to my question(s), but it took a long time [if selected, show **Q7b_Long_OE**: Please specify what information took a long time to find when using the…+ source] - I could not find the answer to one or more of my questions. [if selected, show **Q7b_NotFound_OE**: Please specify what information you could not find when using the…+ source]		
[show only if source was selected in Q7] **Q7c. Which of the following statements best describes your experience when you looked for information *on your State or Local Election Office website*?** - I found the answer(s) to my question(s) quickly [if selected, show **Q7c_Quick_OE**: Please specify what information did you find quickly when using the…+ source] - I found the answer(s) to my question(s), but it took a long time [if selected, show **Q7c_Long_OE**: Please specify what information took a long time to find when using the…+ source] - I could not find the answer to one or more of my questions. [if selected, show **Q7c_NotFound_OE**: Please specify what information you could not find when using the…+ source]		
[show only if source was selected in Q7] **Q7d. of the following statements best describes your experience when you looked for information *in [additional option(s) personalized to state/jurisdiction]*?** - I found the answer(s) to my question(s) quickly [if selected, show **Q7d_Quick_OE**: Please specify what information did you find quickly when using the…+ source] - I found the answer(s) to my question(s), but it took a long time [if selected, show **Q7d_Long_OE**: Please specify what information took a long time to find when using the…+ source] - I could not find the answer to one or more of my questions. [if selected, show **Q7d_NotFound_OE**: Please specify what information you could not find when using the…+ source]		
[show only if source was selected in Q7] **Q7e. Which of the following statements best describes your experience when you looked for information *in your Embassy/U.S. Consulate*?** - I found the answer(s) to my question(s) quickly [if selected, show **Q7e_Quick_OE**: Please specify what information did you find quickly when using the…+ source] - I found the answer(s) to my question(s), but it took a long time [if selected, show **Q7e_Long_OE**: Please specify what information took a long time to find when using the…+ source] - I could not find the answer to one or more of my questions. [if selected, show **Q7e_NotFound_OE**: Please specify what information you could not find when using the…+ source]		
[show only if source was selected in Q7] **Q7f. Which of the following statements best describes your experience when you looked for information *using Military sources*?**		

If Q2= Yes (Voted in 2022)	If Q2 = No, I tried… (Could not vote in 2022)	If Q2= No, I did not want to vote
- I found the answer(s) to my question(s) quickly [if selected, show **Q7f_Quick_OE**: Please specify what information did you find quickly when using the…+ source] - I found the answer(s) to my question(s), but it took a long time [if selected, show **Q7f_Long_OE**: Please specify what information took a long time to find when using the…+ source] - I could not find the answer to one or more of my questions. [if selected, show **Q7f_NotFound_OE**: Please specify what information you could not find when using the…+ source]		
[show only if source was selected in Q7] **Q7g. Which of the following statements best describes your experience when you looked for information *using Other sources*?** - I found the answer(s) to my question(s) quickly [if selected, show **Q7g_Quick_OE**: Please specify what information did you find quickly when using the…+ source] - I found the answer(s) to my question(s), but it took a long time [if selected, show **Q7g_Long_OE**: Please specify what information took a long time to find when using the…+ source] - I could not find the answer to one or more of my questions. [if selected, show **Q7g_NotFound_OE**: Please specify what information you could not find when using the…+ source]		
Q8. Did you contact your election office by telephone, email, chat or direct message to address any questions or concerns? - Yes - No - Not Applicable		
[if "Yes" to Q8] **Q8a. Did your election office generally respond to you in a timely manner?** - Yes - No - Not Applicable		
Q9. How clear were the instructions provided by your election office on how to register to vote and/or request a ballot for the November 8, 2022 General Election? - Very clear [if selected show **Q9_1_OE**: *Please describe why you rated the instructions provided by your election office as… "Very Clear"]* - Somewhat clear [if selected show **Q9_2_OE**: *Please describe why you rated the instructions provided by your election office as… "Somewhat Clear"]* - Unclear [if selected show **Q9_3_OE**: *Please describe why you rated the instructions provided by your election office as… "Unclear"]* - Did not receive instructions from my election office on how to vote or register to vote - I don't remember		
Q10. How did you receive your ballot? - Mail - Email - Fax - Downloaded from an online portal - In-person - I used a FWAB / FVAP.gov - Not Applicable		

If Q2= Yes (Voted in 2022)	If Q2 = No, I tried… (Could not vote in 2022)	If Q2= No, I did not want to vote
[if received by email selected in Q10] **Q10a. Did you experience any of the following difficulties with returning your ballot? (*Select all that apply*)** **Q10a_1** - Downloading the ballot **Q10a_2** - Finding access to a printer **Q10a_3** - Finding access to a computer with internet **Q10a_4** - Finding access to a fax machine **Q10a_5** - Finding an envelope **Q10a_6** - Printing the ballot and/or envelope **Q10a_7** - I found the envelope assembly process confusing		
Q11. How clear were the instructions provided by your election office on how to fill your ballot for the November 8, 2022 General Election? - Very clear [if selected show **Q11_1_OE**: *Please describe why you rated the instructions to fill your ballot as… "Very Clear"]* - Somewhat clear [if selected show **Q11_1_OE**: *Please describe why you rated the instructions to fill your ballot as… "Somewhat Clear"]* - Unclear [if selected show **Q11_1_OE**: *Please describe why you rated the instructions to fill your ballot as… "Unclear"]* - Did not receive instructions from my election office on how to fill my ballot - I don't remember		
Q12. Do you wish there was another way to return your ballot? - Yes [if selected show: *Please specify]* - No - Don't know		
Q13. Did you receive confirmation that your ballot was received by… - State's online portal - Email - Telephone - Text message - No, I did not receive a confirmation that my ballot was received - Not Applicable		
[if "No" selected in Q13] **Q13a. How confident are you that your vote in the November 8, 2022 General Election was received and counted?** - Very confident - Somewhat confident - Not too confident - Not at all confident		
Q14. In your opinion, what would improve your voting experience? *[open ended question]*		

Q15. Are you aware that your election office offers at least one electronic option for you to receive your blank ballot (either by email, online portal download, or fax)? - Yes - No
Q16. Are you aware that you can use a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) as a backup ballot, in the event you do not receive your Official State Ballot in time? - Yes - No
Q17. Are you aware that the State of ___ offers the option to return your voted ballot by [fax, email, online] if you are overseas? *This question only applies to participating states like Colorado and Florida that offer some form of electronic ballot return* - Yes - No - Not Applicable
[if "US Citizen living abroad" is selected in Q1] **Q18. How would you characterize the reliability of postal service in the country you were living as of November 8, 2022?** - Very unreliable - Unreliable - Neither reliable nor unreliable - Reliable - Very reliable
Q19. In the four months leading up to the November 8, 2022 election, did you have reliable access to the following? (*Select all that apply*) **Q19_1** - Internet **Q19_2** - Fax machine **Q19_3** - Printer **Q19_4** - Scanner
Q20. What is the best way for your election office to reach you with information about the voting process? - Postal mail - Email - Text - Social Media - Other (if selected ask to specify)
Q21. In which County/Jurisdiction are you registered to vote?
Q22. What is your sex? - Female - Male - Do not wish to answer
Q23. How old were you as of November 8, 2022?
Q24. What country were you located at as of November 8, 2022?
Q25. Are you Spanish/Hispanic/Latino? - No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino - Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origins
Q26. What is your race? (*Select all that apply*) **Q26_1** - White **Q26_2** - Black or African American **Q26_3** - American Indian or Alaska Native **Q26_4** - Asian (e.g., Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese) **Q26_5** - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

Q27. What is the highest degree or level of school that you have completed? - Twelve years or fewer of school - High school graduate—traditional diploma - High school graduate—alternative diploma (home school, GED, etc.) - Some college credit, but less than 1 year - One year or more of college, no degree - Associate degree (e.g., AA, AS) - Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, AB, BS) - Master's, doctoral, or professional school degree (e.g., MA, Ph.D., JD)
Q28. What was your marital status as of November 8, 2022? - Married - Separated - Divorced - Widowed - Never married

Appendix B: Weighting Methodology

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) State-Administered *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* Survey (SAUS) pilot survey was a census of *UOCAVA* citizens from Colorado, Escambia County (FL), Ingham County (MI), and Okaloosa County (FL), who were registered to vote on November 8, 2022, were residing outside the United States, who had a valid email, and who requested an absentee ballot for the 2022 General Election. Of the four participating states and jurisdictions, Escambia County (FL) did not provide demographic data for weighting, and thus was not included in the weighting process.

Only survey cases with complete demographic data received weights. Complete demographic data is with respect to the administrative demographic variables provided by the states and jurisdictions. Weights were calculated via calibration alone due to the lack of information on sample inclusion probabilities and population frame information to estimate differential response probabilities. The calibration aligned the weighted completed surveys with auxiliary population-level data provided by Colorado, Ingham County (MI), and Okaloosa County (FL). The auxiliary population-level data used for calibration involved the following demographic variables:

- Vote History (computed from **Q2** and **Q4**)
  - Vote History was coded into four categories: Voted Neither in 2020 or 2022; Voted in 2020 Only; Voted in 2022 Only; Voted in Both 2020 and 2022
    - Respondents that didn't provide an answer to Q4 were treated as having not voted in 2020.
  - This data was available for Colorado and Okaloosa County.
- Age (computed from **Q23**)
  - Age group was coded into four categories: 18–24 years old, 25–44 years old, 45–64 years old, and 65+ years old.
  - This data was available for Colorado, Ingham County (MI), and Okaloosa County (FL).
- Sex (computed from **Q22**)
  - Due to the lack of an "Other" response in the survey, yet the presence of an "Other" category in the administrative data provided by the localities, "Other" was collapsed into "Female."
  - This data was available for Colorado, Ingham County (MI), and Okaloosa County (FL).
- Race/Ethnicity (computed from **Q25** and **Q26_1**-**Q26_5**)
  - Race/Ethnicity was recoded into five categories: Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, Non-Hispanic Asian, and Non-Hispanic Other.
  - This data was available for Okaloosa County (FL).

To explore how different levels of information in the provided auxiliary population-level data impact the unequal weighting effect (UWE), which is the increase in variance due to weighting (Kish 1965), two sets of weights were created using different levels of information for each of the three localities. One set of weights used the marginal distribution of the available demographic variables for the three different localities; namely, each demographic variable was used on its own during calibration. Another set of weights used the joint distributions of the available demographic variables; for example, vote history crossed with sex. Only joint distributions that were available in the auxiliary population-level data were used.

For Okaloosa, a third set of weights was created that contained the available joint distributions for age, sex, and race/ethnicity as well as the marginal distribution for vote history. In this case, there were detailed joint distribution data but there weren't enough respondents to support all the joint distributions, which necessitated a mixed approach to ensure the data used for weighting were as detailed as possible while allowing the weights to converge.

In addition to exploring the impact different levels of information had on the UWE of weights, further investigation into how the inclusion of vote history impacts the UWE was conducted. For this exploration, two additional sets of weights were produced for Colorado and Okaloosa County that excluded data for vote history while maintaining the rest of the demographic variables. Table B1 shows the weights created during the overall exploration.

Table B1. Weights Created in Exploration.

Locality	Weight Name	Demographic Variables
Colorado	joint_col_weight_1*	Vote History X Age, Vote History X Sex, Age X Sex
	joint_col_weight_2	Age X Sex
	margin_col_weight_1	Vote History, Age, Sex
	margin_col_weight_2	Age, Sex
Ingham County (MI)	joint_ingham_weight*	Age X Sex
	margin_ingham_weight	Age, Sex
Okaloosa County (FL)	joint_oka_weight_1**	Vote History X Age, Vote History X Sex, Vote History X Race/Ethnicity, Age X Sex, Age X Race/Ethnicity, Sex X Race/Ethnicity
	joint_oka_weight_2	Age X Sex, Age X Race/Ethnicity, Sex X Race/Ethnicity
	joint_oka_weight_3*	Vote History, Age X Sex, Age X Race/Ethnicity, Sex X Race/Ethnicity
	margin_oka_weight_1	Vote History, Age, Sex, Race/Ethnicity
	margin_oka_weight_2	Vote History, Age, Sex, Race/Ethnicity

* denotes the main weights to use for analysis
** denotes the weights didn't converge

Based on the results of Table B2, there appears to be a difference in the UWE between the sets of weights containing joint distributions and the sets of weights containing marginal distributions for Colorado and Okaloosa County (FL); however, this difference is only if vote history was included in the distributions. For example, the Okaloosa County (FL) weights with vote history using the joint distributions had a UWE of 3.85, a UWE of 3.49 when using the mixed distributions, and a UWE of 3.38 when using the marginal distributions. Furthermore, the results in Table B2 suggest that there is a large difference in the UWE between the sets of weights that include vote history and the sets of weights that exclude vote history for both Colorado and Okaloosa County (FL). For example, the Colorado weights using the joint distributions of the demographic variables had a UWE of 5.85 with vote history and a UWE of 1.32 without vote history. This difference in UWE suggests that the inclusion of vote history in the weighting design increases the variability of the weights and hence increases the standard error of the estimators.

Table B2. Unequal Weighting Effect: Variance Inflation Factor due to Weighting Design.

SAUS Pilot Participant	Including Vote History			Excluding Vote History	
	Joint Distribution	Mixed Distribution	Marginal Distribution	Joint Distribution	Marginal Distribution
Colorado	5.85	N/A	4.64	1.32	1.30
Ingham County (MI)	3.85	3.49	3.38	1.36	1.31
Okaloosa County (FL)	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.06	1.13