

2022 Federal Voting Assistance Program

REPORT TO CONGRESS



The estimated cost of this report or study for the Department of Defense is approximately \$2,422,000 in Fiscal Years 2022 - 2023. This includes \$2,378,000 in expenses and \$44,000 in DoD labor.

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Executive Summary

This report fulfills the reporting requirements of the Secretary of Defense, as the Presidential designee under the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*, at section 20308(b) of Title 52, United States Code. It includes findings from the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) post-election surveys and provides an assessment of activities supporting the 2022 elections for federal office. FVAP is an assistance program; its mission is to inform voters covered by 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.

This continued support for the UOCAVA absentee voting process was only possible through the collaborative efforts provided by FVAP's stakeholders: state and local election officials, Military Departments and Uniformed Services, Department of State, U.S. Postal Service, Department of Homeland Security, overseas citizen organizations, and other key stakeholders dedicated to supporting military members, their families, and overseas citizens.

Observations from the 2022 General Election

After the November 8, 2022 General Election, FVAP conducted post-election surveys of active duty military (ADM), overseas citizen voters, voting assistance officers (VAO), and state election officials. The survey data yielded the following findings:

- The 2022 voter registration rate for ADM was 63 percent, a four-point increase from 2018.
- The 2022 voter participation rate for ADM was 23 percent, which is less than the 26 percent voter participation rate for the 2018 General Election.
- The 2022 estimated ballot request rate for overseas citizens was 10.6 percent, a slight decrease from 2018, when an estimated 11.9 percent of overseas citizens requested an absentee ballot.
- The 2022 estimated voter participation rate for all overseas citizens was 3.4 percent, which is lower than the estimated 5.6 percent voter participation rate for the 2018 General Election.
- ADM who received assistance from a DoD resource (e.g., FVAP, Unit Voting Assistance Officers, and Installation Voter Assistance Offices) were significantly more likely to submit an absentee ballot than ADM who did not receive such assistance. This consistent finding across the last five general elections (2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020) speaks to the importance and effectiveness of efforts by FVAP and the Military Departments and Services to raise awareness of available resources and provide direct assistance.
- ADM who needed assistance were more than three times as likely to report returning their absentee ballot if they sought assistance from a DoD resource.
- The proportion of ADM voting by absentee was 15 percent in 2022 compared to 16 percent in 2018. This number includes those voting absentee from their legal residence.
- UOCAVA voters requested their ballots slightly later than they did in 2018 and general election ballots were also returned later than they were in the 2018 and 2020 General Elections. Of recent election cycles, 2020 had the earliest ballot return timeframe.

- The 2022 “Overseas Citizen Population Analysis” conducted by FVAP estimated that there were 4.4 million U.S. citizens living overseas in 2022. This represents a 42 percent increase of approximately 1.3 million U.S. citizens since 2010.
- The most frequently reported challenge experienced by U.S. citizen voters living overseas was experiencing difficulty figuring out how to vote.

Recommendations from the 2020 Report to Congress and Results of Activities in 2022

FVAP’s activities fulfill the Secretary of Defense’s responsibilities under *UOCAVA*. These activities raise awareness of the right to vote among *UOCAVA* citizens and seek to reduce or eliminate barriers for those who choose to exercise that right. FVAP’s 2022 activities made important advancements towards implementing the recommendations in FVAP’s 2020 Report to Congress:

Reduce Barriers for UOCAVA Voters to Successfully Vote Absentee

- There was a seven percent decrease in Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) downloads and nearly a 57 percent decrease in Federal Write In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) downloads on FVAP.gov in 2022 as compared to 2018.
- In 2022, FVAP distributed 20,036 hardcopy FPCAs and FWABs as well as 172,561 pieces of other educational and outreach materials to voters in 41 countries and 105 military installations¹ worldwide.
- Twenty-five percent of visits to FVAP.gov resulted in a “conversion²,” which falls in the top 10 percent of conversion rate benchmarks for high-traffic internet sites. This is an increase over 2018 (22 percent).

Increase Awareness About Absentee Voting

- Web metrics for FVAP.gov in 2022 indicate site engagement was similar to that in 2018, with a one percent decrease in users, but with a 36 percent increase in page views.
- 52 percent of ADM were aware of FVAP. Among experienced ADM absentee voters, 74 percent reported being aware of FVAP, as compared to 29 percent of ADM first-time absentee voters.
- Sessions generated by paid media made up nearly 51 percent of all visits to FVAP.gov in 2022, compared to 24 percent in 2018.
- FVAP personnel conducted VAO training workshops, both virtually and in-person, at 132 locations representing 82 U.S. military installations and 44 U.S. embassies and consulates in 29 countries.
- VAOs’ overall workshop satisfaction score of 4.6 out of 5.00 represents a slight increase over 2018 (4.5).
- FVAP responded to over 12,215 inquiries, representing a decrease of four percent in phone call and email volume as compared to the 2018 presidential election.

¹ These numbers only include the forms and materials that were distributed directly by FVAP staff. They do not incorporate the number of FVAP branded materials that were distributed directly by the Military Services or the Department of State.

² “Conversion” occurs when a website visitor performs a desired action. On FVAP.gov, conversions are actions taken by a visitor that represent a first step toward registering and requesting a ballot or using the backup ballot if necessary.

Enhance Measures of Effectiveness and Participation

- FVAP continued enhancement of its Effective Voting Assistance Model (EVAM) to track effectiveness and identification of best practices for VAO responsibilities at installations across the Services.
- FVAP leveraged the Council of State Governments' efforts to implement a reporting data standard for states to assess and more effectively report the impacts of federal legislation. The data collected from states and jurisdictions represents approximately 42.7 percent of the UOCAVA voter population.

FVAP will incorporate its lessons learned from 2022 and create opportunities as part of its ongoing efforts to increase awareness of DoD voting assistance resources and implementation of the FVAP Strategic Plan in 2024.

Recommendations for the 2024 Election Cycle

Goal 1: Be a highly valued customer service program to military members, their eligible family members, Voting Assistance Officers, overseas voters, and election officials.

- Implement an aggressive engagement strategy for state and local election officials to raise awareness of responsibilities under federal law.
- Continue outreach briefings and training on Part 233 of title 32, Code of Federal Regulations, for Federal agencies regarding U.S. citizen services in preparation for the 2024 election cycle to include United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Corps and members of the Merchant Marine.
- Educate states on how to enhance the usability of the absentee voting process by authorizing acceptance of electronic signatures from the DoD Common Access Card (CAC) in the election process, based on the Council of State Governments' Overseas Voting Initiative recommendations.
- Leverage the Council of State Governments' ongoing work to expand implementation of a national data standard in partnership with the U.S. Election Assistance Commission to more effectively collect required election data while reducing the states' reporting burden.
- Utilizing lessons learned during previous election cycles, FVAP will conduct virtual meetings for UOCAVA voters in 2024, providing live platforms for voters to ask questions and receive absentee voting guidance.

Goal 2: Reduce obstacles to military and overseas absentee voting success.

- Continue to review and update, as necessary, the FPCA and the FWAB to focus on core federal election eligibility requirements to enhance usability and maximize benefits codified under UOCAVA. This includes incorporation of bilingual forms and instructions in Spanish, French, Portuguese, Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean.
- Maintain continued alignment across the DoD enterprise to support Military Service-level voting assistance programs.
- Expand use of virtual training opportunities to support VAOs and other stakeholders

throughout the calendar year and within close proximity to the general election.

- Utilize the EVAM to track changes at regular intervals during the election cycle of VAO responsibilities across the Services to ensure effectiveness and identification of best practices.

Goal 3: Increase *UOCAVA* voter awareness of available tools and resources.

- Continue to use paid, earned, shared, and owned media and social media outlets to focus on population segments who are not aware of available resources through FVAP, especially first-time absentee voters.
- Sustain and improve the impact of the Voting Assistance Ambassador program in areas with concentrated U.S. military and citizen communities to expand outreach and assistance to those voters.
- Create and effectively distribute innovative content that resonates with military members, their families, and overseas citizens.

Based on these goals for 2024, FVAP will continue to work on reducing barriers for all *UOCAVA* voters to successfully vote absentee and increase awareness about voting among the *UOCAVA* population. Pursuant to the “Executive Order on Promoting Access to Voting,” 14019 (March 7, 2021) FVAP will continue to support expanded opportunities to raise awareness on voting resources for all DoD personnel to include both absentee voting and traditional opportunities to register and vote.

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Message from the FVAP Director

I am pleased to present FVAP's 2022 Post-Election Report to Congress. The report responds to Congressional requirements but also includes information on the impact and effectiveness of FVAP's efforts and activities to support its requirements under the law. FVAP utilizes data from post-election surveys and other customer feedback mechanisms to assess its impact on voters, those providing voting assistance, state and local election administrators, and other stakeholders. This report covers FVAP's activities supporting our mission to inform citizens covered by *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.



The Department of Defense policy states that the right of U.S. citizens to vote is a fundamental right afforded protection by the U.S. Constitution. Although each election cycle presents unique challenges, other issues faced by *UOCAVA* voters are more perennial. In response, FVAP, other federal agencies assisting voters, stakeholder organizations, and, to the greatest extent, state and local election officials meet these challenges through planning and cooperative efforts with the election community and stakeholders worldwide throughout an election cycle. FVAP serves in many ways as an extension of state and local outreach to military members, their families, and U.S. citizens living overseas. FVAP provides and adapts outreach and messaging to foster an environment where those providing and receiving absentee voting assistance can be successful.

FVAP recognizes that there are still voters who may want to participate in the absentee voting process but do not due to real or perceived obstacles. FVAP staff wrangle with these impediments and share resources with organizations and individuals who can reach and assist *UOCAVA* voters through the process. The absentee voting process is relatively easy but can be complicated by a person's time, distance, and mobility issues. FVAP stands ready to work with all involved to help *UOCAVA* voters find success in 2024 and after.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Scott Wiedmann". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Scott Wiedmann, Director

Background

This fulfills the requirements in section 20308(b) of Title 52, United States Code (U.S.C.) for a report each odd numbered year concerning Federal elections held during the preceding calendar year.

The Law and its Requirements

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) (Chapter 203 of Title 52, U.S.C.) and sections 1566 and 1566a of Title 10, U.S.C., provide authority to establish of voting assistance programs for members of the Uniformed Services, members of the merchant marine, their eligible family members, and U.S. citizens residing abroad.

E.O. 12642, "Designation of the Secretary of Defense as the Presidential Designee Under Title I of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act," (June 8, 1988), identifies the Secretary of Defense as the Presidential designee for administering UOCAVA. Further, the Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1000.04, "Federal Voting Assistance Program," re-issued in November 2019, directs the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to perform the responsibilities of the Presidential designee and identifies responsibilities to be carried out by the Director of FVAP. Under these authorities, FVAP provides voting information and assistance to those eligible under *UOCAVA* to vote in U.S. elections for federal office.

Section 20308(b) of Title 52, U.S.C., requires a biennial report to the President and Congress concerning:

- The effectiveness of FVAP activities carried out under section 20305 of *UOCAVA*.
- 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. to include a description of the specific programs implemented by each military department of the Armed Forces and the number of absent Uniformed Services voters who utilized voter registration

assistance provided under such section.

- A description of the utilization of the procedures for the collection and delivery of marked absentee ballots established pursuant to section 20304 of *UOCAVA*.

Observations from the 2022 General Election

The Active Duty Military Population

FVAP seeks to ensure that all *UOCAVA* voters who want to vote can do so. To achieve this goal, FVAP must measure and evaluate obstacles to participation faced by the *UOCAVA* active duty military (ADM) population. In this context, participation refers to the act of submitting a voted ballot.

FVAP collects the ADM³ data referenced in this section through the Post-Election Voting Survey of the Active Duty Military (PEVS-ADM). One of the main objectives of the PEVS-ADM is to gather the data needed to estimate the *UOCAVA* Gap: the percentage of *UOCAVA* ADM who would have voted, but did not due to *UOCAVA*-specific obstacles to voting.

Registration and Participation Rates

Election observers make direct comparisons between ADM voter registration and participation rates and those of the non-*UOCAVA* citizen voting age population (CVAP). However, the ADM population differs from CVAP in a wide variety of ways including age, sex, education, and mobility. To make useful comparisons of these two populations, FVAP controls for these demographics to provide greater insight into how ADM registration and participation rates compare with the rates of the CVAP that most closely resembles the military population.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate voter registration and participation rates for the following groups:

ADM: FVAP's ADM survey population includes active duty

³ Active duty military participation rates remain limited to the Military Services only as historically reported by FVAP. NOAA and PHS statistics are included in the EAVS Section B report as part of the Uniformed Services. However, due to the small numbers of absent individuals, there is a high risk of privacy concerns for these voters if they were singled out from the rest of the Uniformed Services. In addition to this, the sample size would be too small to produce any meaningful statistics, as the margin of error would be too high. Consequently, we do not provide separate statistics on NOAA and PHS respondents. FVAP will further refine its assessment of voter registration and participation rates of the uniformed services voters outside of the Department of Defense as well as the entire population covered by *UOCAVA*.

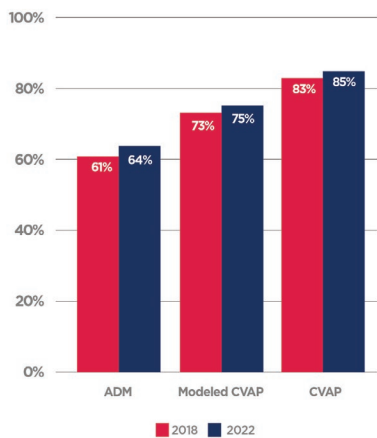


Figure 1. Comparison of 2018 and 2022 voter registration rates of ADM with those of CVAP and Modeled CVAP.

members of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force⁴, and Coast Guard. The percentages listed below for 2022, and in Figures 1 and 2 are for all ADM, not just those who voted by absentee ballot.

In 2022:

- 63 percent of ADM were registered to vote, compared to 59 percent in 2018.
- 23 percent of ADM participated, compared to 26 percent in 2018.

CVAP: The CVAP consists of employed native and naturalized U.S. citizens who are 18 years of age or older, which is the U.S. Census Bureau's standard baseline measurement used when comparing voting statistics. Reported proportions are of a sample of CVAP with necessary demographic and geographic data to match them to a comparable sample of ADM.

Modeled CVAP: The modeled CVAP is the CVAP population adjusted to reflect greater demographic alignment with ADM to provide a more accurate portrayal of military voting participation rates in comparison to CVAP.

Figure 1 compares the population groups based on overall registration rates between 2018 and 2022. While the ADM and CVAP registration rates showed increases of similar magnitude (three and one percentage points respectively), the modeled CVAP registration rate, which reflects participation among CVAP who are demographically and geographically similar to ADM, was approximately 12 percentage points greater than that of ADM in 2022.⁵ This number is calculated by deducting the ADM participation rate of 64 percent from the Modeled CVAP participation rate of 75 percent. Both the CVAP and modeled CVAP registration rates were greater than that of ADM in 2018.



Figure 2. Comparison of 2018 and 2022 voter participation rates of ADM with those of CVAP and Modeled CVAP.

Figure 2 compares the total ADM and CVAP voting participation rates in 2018 and 2022. The rates shown encompass all methods of voting (e.g., in-person on Election Day, early voting, and absentee). Since available data sources do not adequately isolate voting methods, total participation is the best measure of comparison to the CVAP.

The ADM participation rate barely changed between 2018 and 2022. During that same period, CVAP participation rates declined

⁴ Air Force voting program covers Space Force

⁵ 2022 PEVS-ADM, Q5; 2018 PEVS-ADM, Q5

four percentage points, from 67 percent to 63 percent. The modeled CVAP participation rate remained greater than ADM at 48 percent. Both the CVAP and modeled CVAP participation rates were greater than that of ADM in both 2018 and 2022.^{6 7}

ADM Interest Compared to Participation

While Figures 1 and 2 compares two populations and adjusts for demographics, Figure 3 shows ADM interest compared to participation from 2018-2022. The data points are not adjusted for demographics as this reflects survey responses for ADM. This demonstrates that participation fluctuates consistently with motivation over time based on the type of election.

In Figure 3, from 2018 to 2022, there was a large decrease in ADM-reported interest in the election (51 percent to 37 percent). Overall, participation in 2022 was similar to 2018 (24 percent to 23 percent).⁸ This chart illustrates the relative difference between interest and participation for each election cycle.

In further analyzing ADM interest in voting, it was found that in 2022, 72 percent of ADM who did not vote said it was because of lack of motivation, such as choosing the “I did not want to vote” survey response option. While voting interest represents an increase from 2018, these results are roughly in line⁹ with outcomes from the 2018 General Election.¹⁰

Overseas Citizen Voter Population

Due to challenges associated with quantifying and identifying the overseas citizen population, FVAP has not always provided data on the voting behavior of U.S. citizens residing abroad. Following the 2014 election, FVAP conducted the first Overseas Citizen Population Analysis (OCPA) to determine the viability of a new methodology and statistical modeling approach to capture information on the demographics of this population and estimate voter registration and participation rates. The OCPA combines U.S. and foreign government data with state records of ballot requests and voting. It also includes the only representative survey of registered U.S. citizen voters living abroad who requested a ballot for a biennial general election.

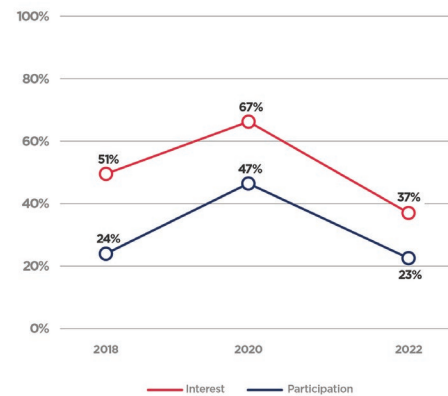


Figure 3. ADM interest compared to participation, 2018-2022.

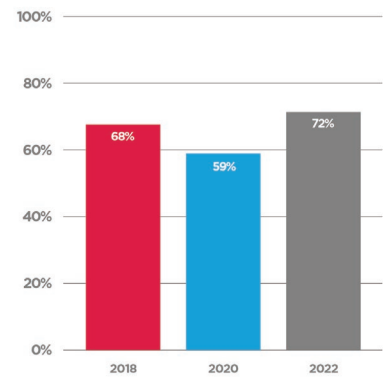


Figure 4. ADM motivation-related reasons for not voting among non-voters in 2018 and 2022.

⁶ 2022 PEVS-ADM, Q32; 2018 PEVS-ADM, Q31

⁷ Rates were statistically significantly ($p < .001$)

⁸ 2022 PEVS-ADM, Q30, Q33

⁹ The results are similar, but statistically different

¹⁰ 2022 PEVS-ADM, Q34; 2018 PEVS-ADM, Q34; 2018 PEVS-ADM, Q33

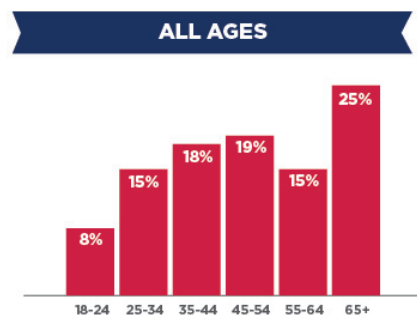


Figure 6. Ages of overseas voters from the 2022 OCPA.

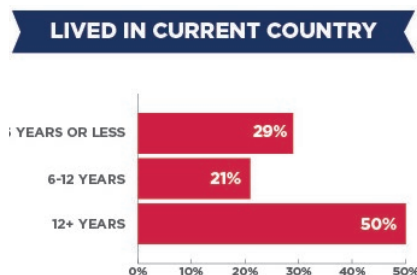


Figure 7. How long overseas voters lived in their country from the 2022 OCPA.

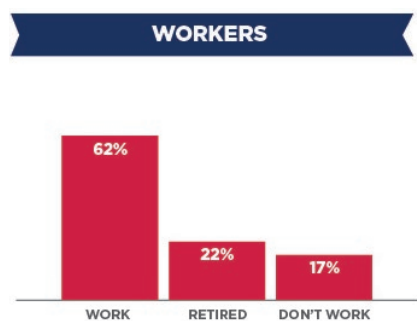


Figure 8. Employment status of overseas voters from the 2022 OCPA.

The 2022 OCPA estimated there were 4.4 million U.S. citizens living overseas during the 2022 General Election. This represents an increase of slightly fewer than 1.3 million U.S. citizens (a 42 percent increase) since 2010. These citizens are distributed across 185 countries, with the largest populations in Europe and the Western Hemisphere, including Canada. The greatest population growth since 2010 has been in Oceania, which had an estimated population increase of 70 percent from 2010 to 2022. The population in the Middle East/North Africa also increased substantially, with the 2022 population estimated to be about 60 percent larger than in 2010.

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

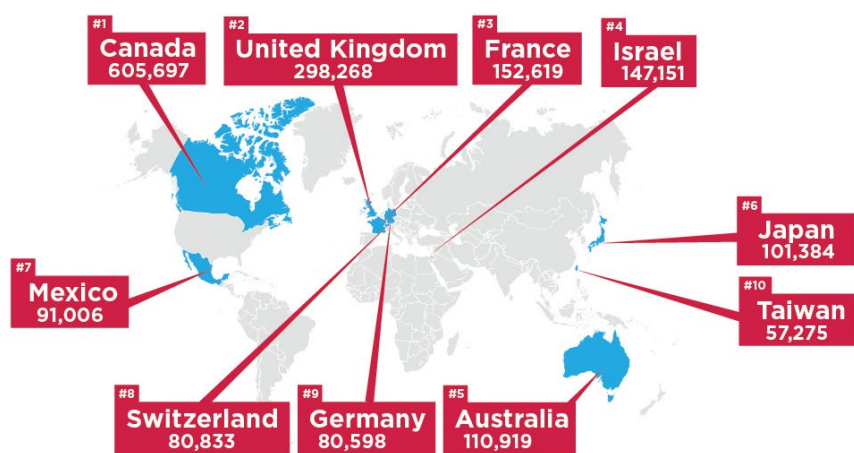


Figure 5. Top 10 locations with the largest number of U.S. citizens over 18 years old.

For each country, the study estimates the total number of U.S. citizens, how many are of voting age, and their voting rates. Countries with the highest numbers of voting-age U.S. citizens are Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Israel, and Australia. Figure 5 shows the estimated overseas citizen population for the top 10 locations with a high UOCAVA voter population.

About one-fifth (21 percent) of Overseas Citizen Population Survey (OCPS) respondents said it was the first time they participated in a U.S. election from the country in which they were living.¹¹ While there is no typical overseas voter, the average respondent is 50 years old¹²; nearly two-thirds are working; 50 percent have lived in their current country for 12 years or longer; and they are highly educated, with nearly half holding a graduate or professional degree and about a third holding a bachelor's degree.¹³

¹¹ 2022 OCPA, Q10A

¹² 2022 OCPA, Q51

¹³ 2022 OCPA, Q49

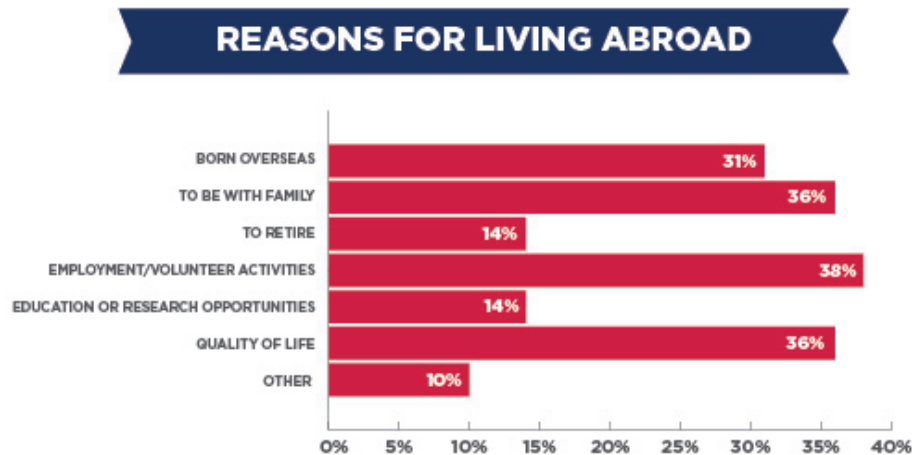


Figure 10. Reasons overseas citizens are living abroad from the 2020 OCPA.

The 2022 estimated ballot request rate for overseas citizens was 10.6 percent, a slight decrease from 2018, when an estimated 11.9 percent of overseas citizens requested an absentee ballot. FVAP's survey further showed that more than eight in 10 overseas citizens returned their ballot in the 2022 election.¹⁴ Among overseas citizens who ultimately did not return their voted ballot, some did not want to vote while others had difficulty completing the process.¹⁵ Across all age groups, those who did not vote reported that difficulties completing the process prevented them from returning their absentee ballot. This was especially true for the youngest voters, who were up to 19 times more likely to have trouble completing the process than they were to report not wanting to vote. Not wanting to vote was most common in the 45 to 54 age group; about half of these respondents selected that option. Figure 11 highlights these different reasons for not voting.

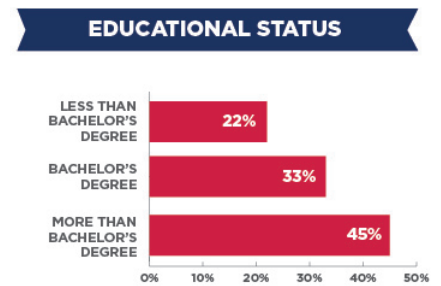


Figure 9. Educational status of overseas voters from the 2022 OCPA.

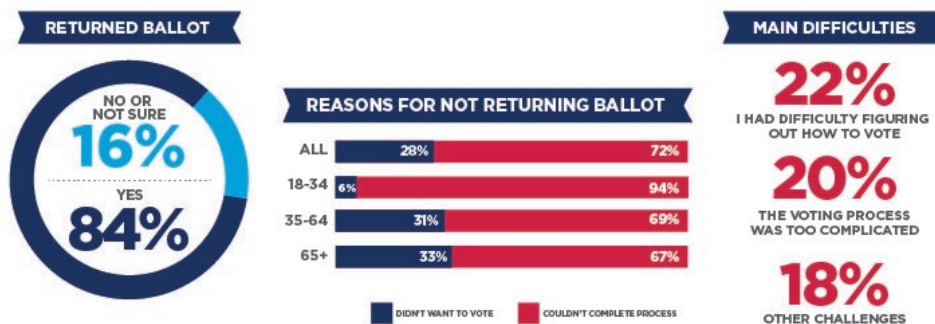


Figure 11. Reasons for not returning a ballot among overseas citizens by age range from the 2020.

In 2022, an estimated 94,927 ballots were received from overseas citizens by their election offices in the United States which accounted for an estimated 3.4 percent turnout, lower than the

¹⁴ 2022 OCPA, Q13

¹⁵ 2022 OCPA, Q16

estimated 5.6 percent turnout for the 2018 Election. Figure 12 further breaks this down, showing the individual voting rates in countries with large UOCAVA populations. The estimated 3.4 percent of eligible overseas voters who returned a ballot during the 2022 General Election is significantly lower than the estimated 62.5 percent of domestic voters. The OCPA indicates that a part of this voting gap is an effect of the real and perceived obstacles experienced by many overseas voters. This voting gap is broken down into an obstacle gap and a residual overseas gap.

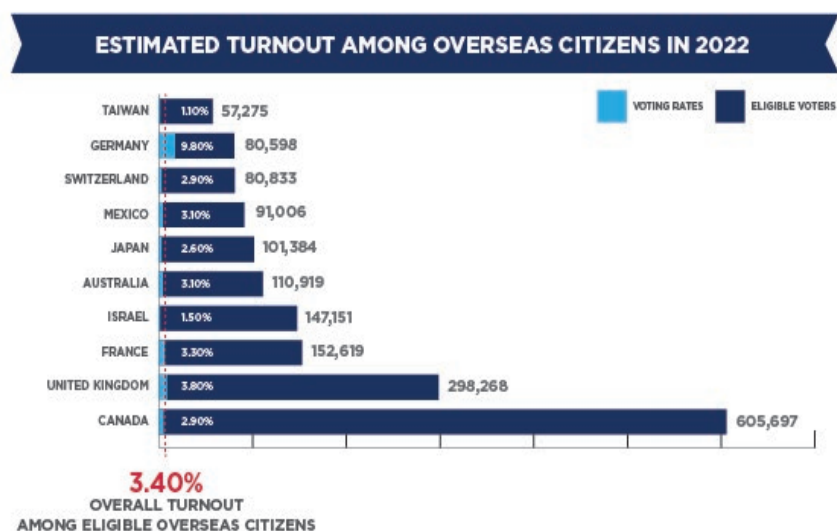


Figure 12. Estimated voting rates of overseas citizens in locations with large UOCAVA populations from the 2020 OCPA.

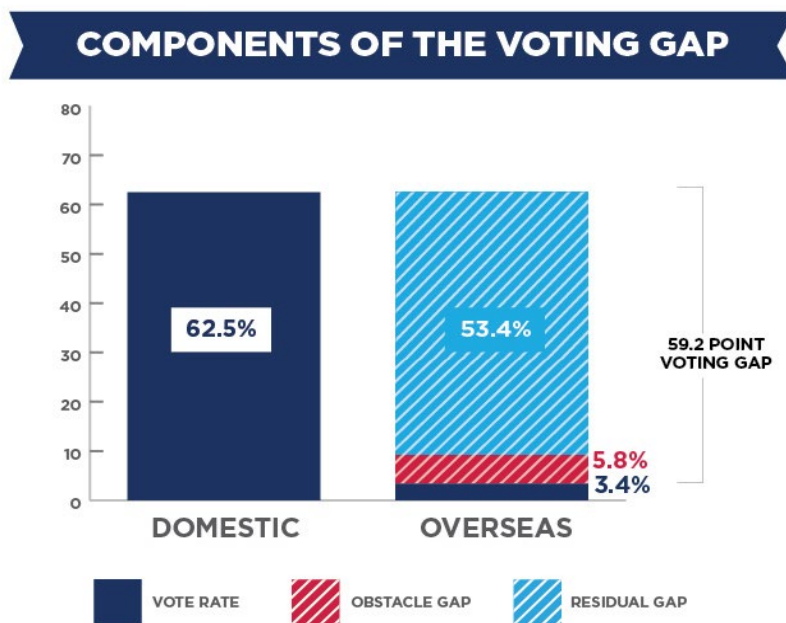


Figure 13. Components of the Voting Gap from the 2020 OCPA.

The obstacle gap includes those overseas U.S. citizens who wanted to vote or tried to vote in 2022 but were unsuccessful due to factors that have the potential to be resolved in future elections through voter education, state legislation changes, or communication with their local election office. An example of an obstacle experienced by a voter is a mailing delay due to a slow or unreliable foreign postal service. Voter awareness and use of federally required electronic transmission options for the blank ballot (email, fax, or website) can reduce obstacles to voting. In countries with the highest obstacles, voters who received their ballot electronically (rather than by mail) were more than 68 percent more likely to vote successfully.

The residual overseas gap consists of voters who did not vote due to factors that cannot be resolved through voter education, legislative changes, or communication with their local election office. U.S. citizens who do not vote due to a lack of interest in voting fall within this gap. FVAP's focus is raising awareness of available resources. Thus, FVAP will continue to evaluate ways to expand educational and outreach initiatives to address how voters can take action early, leverage state-provided return methods, and successfully vote absentee.

Military Voting Assistance Programs

Each Military Service Voting Action Officer (SVAO) serves as the voting program manager, working directly with FVAP to provide Installation Voting Assistance Officers (IVAO), Installation Voter Assistance (IVA) Offices, and Unit Voting Assistance Officers (UVAO) with Military Service-specific support to develop programs and policies for their respective programs. The Military Services are responsible for execution and compliance and are required to submit annual reports outlining the effectiveness of their programs.

Below is the basic outline the Military Services follow with only small differences (e.g. assigning secondary UVAOs).

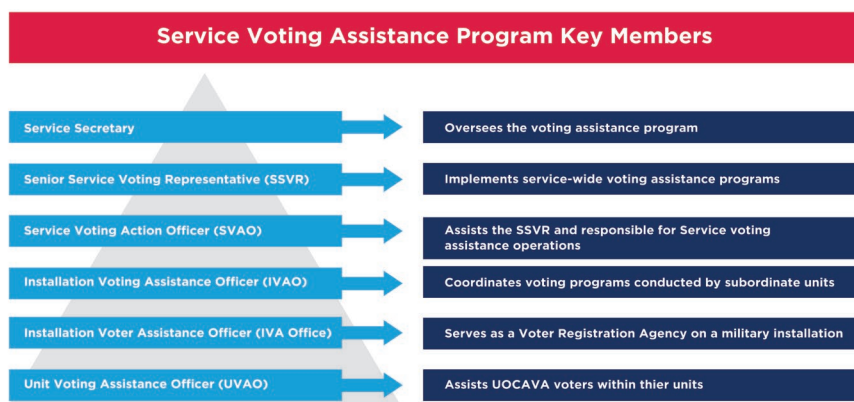


Figure 14. Service voting assistance program key members.

Voting Assistance Officers

VAOs are designated individuals who provide nonpartisan voting information and assistance to military voters, their spouses, and eligible dependents on installations or in units. DoDI 1000.04 requires that a VAO is assigned to each unit. The Military Services establish ratios of personnel to VAOs and designate additional VAOs based on operational conditions or program effectiveness.

FVAP's Post Election Voting Survey of Voting Assistance Officers (PEVS-VAO) data shows that in 2022, 76 percent of VAOs were assigned to their position, while 24 percent volunteered. These numbers represent a slight increase from the number that volunteered in 2018 (21 percent), and a slight decrease from the number of VAOs who were assigned to their position in 2018 (78 percent). In the 2022 PEVS-VAO, 43 percent were enlisted members and 52 percent of VAOs were officers, representing an increase of five percentage points (38 percent) and a decrease of two percentage points (54 percent) respectively from 2018. Figure 15 illustrates a breakdown of VAOs in 2022 by paygrade.¹⁶ To support UVAOs and IVAOs in providing the best possible assistance, FVAP offers in-person and online training, a VAO dedicated section at FVAP.gov, and voting assistance materials such as posters, banners, forms, outreach materials, and the Voting Assistance Guide (the Guide). PEVS-VAO data shows that VAOs found FVAP's materials useful and shared them with military members.

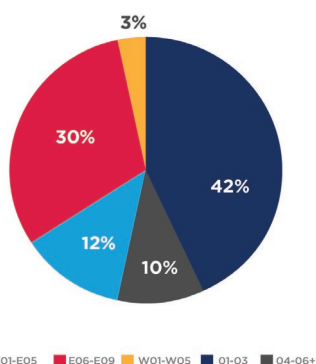


Figure 15. 2020 paygrades of VAOs.

¹⁶ 2022 PEVS-VAO, Q47; 2018 PEVS-VAO, 47

Installation Voting Offices

Section 1566a of Title 10, U.S.C., in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense, directs the Secretaries of the Military Departments and the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard to designate offices on military installations as Installation Voter Assistance Offices under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (Chapter 205 of Title 52, U.S.C.). *The Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act* amendments to UOCAVA require these offices to provide information and direct assistance on voter registration and absentee ballot procedures to Uniformed Services members and their family members when a Service member:

- Undergoes a permanent change of duty station
- Deploys or returns from deployment
- Requests such assistance.

DoDI 1000.04 establishes specific IVA Office requirements in greater detail. IVA Offices may leverage UVAOs to meet staffing requirements or directly assist with meeting processing milestones. However, it is the responsibility of the individual in charge of the IVA Office to require that UVAOs are in full compliance with applicable voter assistance responsibilities. According to the PEVS-VAO responses, 58 percent of VAOs reported that they provided a briefing at either in-processing or out-processing of Service members from their unit. The Marine Corps was the most likely to provide a briefing at in-processing (85 percent) or out-processing at 67 percent, compared to 72 percent at in-processing and 46 percent during out-processing for Navy, 52 percent at in-processing and 38 percent at out-processing for Air Force, and 46 percent at in-processing and 25 percent at out-processing for Army. These results are derived from responses from individual VAOs and may not reflect the extent to which Services are meeting briefing requirements or that required briefings are conducted at the installation level.

ADM seeking any assistance from a DoD resource is significantly related to higher ballot return rates. The Marine Corps was most likely to brief voting-related issues during change-of-address events at 36 percent, compared to 33 percent for Navy, 31 percent for Army, and 31 percent for Air Force.¹⁷

¹⁷ 2022 PEVS-VAO, Q26

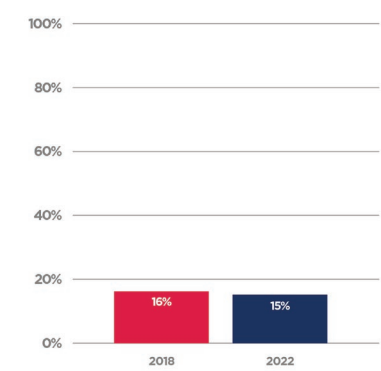


Figure 16. ADM absentee voting rates for 2018 and 2022.

The Active Duty Military Absentee Voter

FVAP examined the use of DoD voting resources among ADM who reported voting absentee to better understand these specific voters who are eligible under *UOCAVA* and represent FVAP’s key customer base. As shown in Figure 16, 15 percent of ADM voted absentee in 2022 compared to 16 percent in 2018.

Absentee Ballot Request, Receipt, and Return Rates

As shown below in Table 1 below, absentee ballot request, receipt, and return rates in 2022 were largely in line with those of the 2018 General Election. In total, 13.39 percent of ADM indicated that they requested a ballot in 2022. Additionally, 9.23 percent said they did not request a ballot, but automatically received a ballot, and 13.84 percent indicated they had expected to get a ballot, but did not receive it.

Of the 13.39 percent of ADM that requested a ballot, 80.44 percent indicated that they received one. Among ADM who received an absentee ballot, either because they requested one or because one was automatically sent to them by their election office, 59.77 percent indicated that they returned their ballot.

	2018	2020	2022
Requested an Absentee Ballot	16.97%	33.70%	13.39%
Received an Absentee Ballot	82.53%	86.64%	80.44%
Returned an Absentee Ballot	64.34%	81.04%	59.77%

Table 1. Rates for ADM absentee ballots requested, received, and returned for 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022.

While Table 1 above provides the key absentee ballot request, receipt, and return rates for 2018-2022, Table 2 provides a more nuanced breakdown of the subgroups included within these rates. Of note, ballot return rates remain high among those who requested a ballot and received it across each election cycle. This is true for the elections in 2018, 2020, and 2022. Those who automatically received a ballot tend to return them at much lower rates. Additionally, the percentage of respondents saying they expected a ballot but did not receive one has declined steadily over time. A similar decline is also evident among respondents who indicated they automatically received an absentee ballot but did not request it. Taken together, these results point to an overall positive trend since 2018, especially to the percentage of ADM receiving and returning an absentee ballot.

	2018	2020	2022
Ballot Request			
Requested a ballot	16.97%	33.70%	13.39%
Expected to get a ballot	15.83%	10.79%	13.84%
Automatically received a ballot	7.58%	6.78%	9.23%
Ballot Receipt			
Overall (all ADM)	20.65%	35.72%	19.00%
Requested a ballot	82.53%	86.64%	80.44%
Ballot Return			
Overall (received a ballot, any reason)	64.34%	81.04%	59.77%
Requested a ballot (and received it)	84.28%	91.21%	90.33%
Automatically received a ballot	35.32%	46.02%	28.39%

Table 2. Ballot request, receipt, and return rate trends for ADM 2014-2022.

To evaluate the effectiveness of DoD voting assistance resources, FVAP examined the relationship between those ADM who needed assistance and reported seeking information or assistance from a DoD resource (FVAP, UVAOs, or IVA Offices) and those ADM who needed assistance but did not report seeking information or assistance from a DoD resource. FVAP compared ADM assistance effectiveness by the overall population, individual age groups, and Military Services.

- 41 percent of ADM (regardless of their age or Military Service) who needed assistance returned their ballot if they reported seeking information or assistance from a DoD resource.
- 24 percent of ADM who needed assistance but did not seek it from a DoD resource returned their ballot.
- The percentage of ADM in 2022 who sought assistance from FVAP, UVAOs, or IVAOs decreased from 2018 levels.
- The percentage of ADM who needed, but did not seek, assistance from at least one DoD resource in 2022 increased by roughly seven percentage points from 2018.¹⁸

ADM who needed assistance were nearly three times as likely to report returning their absentee ballot if they sought assistance from a DoD resource. As depicted in Table 3¹⁹, of those ADM who needed assistance and reported seeking assistance from FVAP in 2022, 38 percent returned their ballot. Of those ADM who needed assistance and reported seeking assistance from

¹⁸ 2022 PEVS-ADM, Q24, Q43, Q44, Q45; 2018 PEVS-ADM Q23, Q44, Q45, Q46; 2018 PEVS-ADM Q22, Q47, Q48, Q49

¹⁹ The percentages for 2018 and 2020 differ from the percentages reported in a similar table in the 2020 Report to Congress. The values in this table are accurate using the most up to date data from 2018, 2020 and 2022.

UVAOs or IVA Offices in 2022, 30.75 percent returned their ballot. Eight percent of ADM needing, but not seeking assistance from a DoD resource reported returning their absentee ballot.²⁰

	2018	2020	2022
Needed, but did not seek, assistance from DoD resource	8.47%	21.60%	8.07%
Sought assistance from DoD resource (FVAP/UVAOs/IVA Offices)	37.95%	52.74%	36.96%
Sought assistance from FVAP	42.14%	54.43%	38.00%
Sought assistance from UVAOs or IVAOs	25.55%	57.76%	30.75%

Table 3. Percentage of ADM who report returning absentee ballot by type of assistance required.

Since the ADM population is much younger than the civilian voting-age population, FVAP examined whether different ADM age segments may be more in need of voting assistance. As depicted in Table 4 below, of all ADM who returned an absentee ballot, 65.26 percent sought assistance from a DoD resource. When comparing those who returned a ballot by age group, ADM 25 years or older had a higher absentee ballot return rate when seeking assistance from a DoD resource than those aged 18 to 24. However, the difference in reported ballot return rates for those who sought assistance from a DoD resource, compared to those who needed assistance but did not seek it, is more pronounced for 18- to 24-year-olds than for older ADM.²¹

	SOUGHT ASSISTANCE FROM DOD RESOURCE AND RETURNED BALLOT	DID NOT SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM DOD RESOURCE AND RETURNED BALLOT
Total ADM	65.26%	49.63%
18 to 24 years old	48.21%	44.66%
25 years or older	70.01%	51.33%

Table 4. Percentage of ADM who returned an absentee ballot, comparing those who sought assistance from a DoD resource and those who did not seek assistance from a DoD resource by age group.

In 2022, ADM across all Services had a higher rate of absentee ballot return when seeking assistance from a DoD resource, compared to ADM who did not seek assistance. As shown in Table 5, the Navy and Air Force had higher absentee ballot return rates when seeking assistance, while the Marine Corps had the lowest. These results indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in ballot return rates between those who did, and did not, seek assistance in the Air Force.²²

²⁰ 2022 PEVS-ADM, Q24, Q43, Q44, Q45; 2018 PEVS-ADM Q23, Q44, Q45, Q46; 2018 PEVS-ADM Q22, Q47, Q48, Q49

²¹ 2022 PEVS-ADM, Q24, Q43, Q44, Q45

²² 2022 PEVS-ADM, Q24, Q43, Q44, Q45

	SOUGHT ASSISTANCE AND RETURNED BALLOT	DID NOT SEEK ASSISTANCE AND RETURNED BALLOT
2022		
Army	66.68%	49.64%
Marine Corps	41.34%	59.58%
Navy	68.72%	48.54%
Air Force	66.89%	47.72%
2018		
Army	73.87%	47.04%
Marine Corps	52.03%	8.22%
Navy	67.41%	51.58%
Air Force	71.59%	36.84%

Table 5. Percentage of ADM who returned an absentee ballot, comparing those who sought assistance from a DoD resource and those who did not seek assistance from a DoD resource by Service in 2018 and 2022.

As each Service branch will continue to exercise operational flexibility for its voting assistance program in 2024, the 2022 findings were used to capture the current utilization rates for all voting assistance resources across the Services.

Table 6 shows the differences in resource utilization across the Military Services in 2022. FVAP was the most utilized resource across the branches; 7.24 percent of ADM who were in the Navy reported they sought assistance from FVAP, compared to 8.68 percent in the Army, 8.64 percent in the Air Force and 7.56 percent in the Marine Corps. These findings align with FVAP's role of supporting and augmenting VAO responsibilities as the preeminent resource for voting assistance.

	FVAP	UVAO	IVA OFFICE
Army	8.68%	4.27%	4.61%
Marine Corps	7.56%	5.66%	4.74%
Navy	7.24%	1.53%	2.00%
Air Force	8.64%	4.01%	3.72%

Table 6. Percentage of ADM who sought assistance from DoD resources by Service.

Awareness of DoD Resources

One of FVAP's key metrics for program effectiveness is the overall awareness of such resources. In 2022, awareness of FVAP among all ADM was 52 percent, as seen in Figure 17. However, among first-time absentee voters, FVAP awareness remains lower than

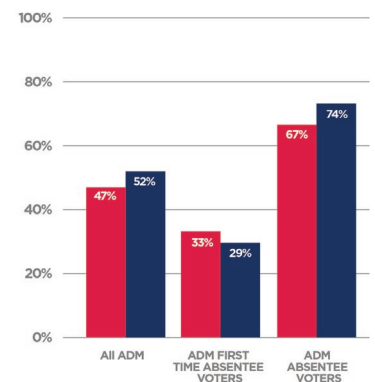


Figure 17. Percentage of ADM who were aware of FVAP in 2018 and 2022, comparing all ADM, ADM first time voters, and ADM absentee voters.

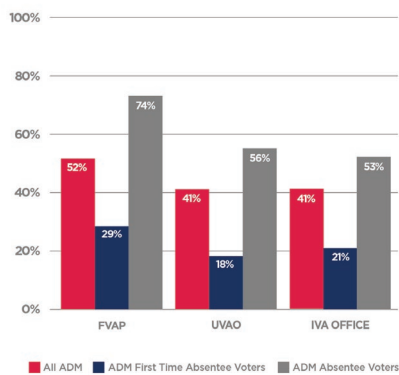


Figure 18. ADM awareness of DoD voting assistance resources.

among all ADM absentee voters. Still, while the gap between the two is somewhat smaller than in 2018, those who sought assistance from a DoD resource in 2022 were significantly more likely to return a ballot than those not seeking assistance.

The awareness of the different DoD resources (FVAP, UVAOs, and IVA Offices) in 2022 is shown in Figure 18. Fifty-two percent of all ADM were aware of FVAP, compared to 29 percent of ADM first-time absentee voters and 74 percent of experienced ADM absentee voters. Among all ADM, awareness of FVAP increased by five percentage points (from 47 percent to 52 percent in 2022). ADM first-time absentee voter awareness of FVAP decreased from 33 percent to 29 percent, while ADM absentee voter awareness of FVAP increased from 67 percent to 74 percent. Figures 17 and 18 shows that more needs to be done, especially when it comes to first-time absentee voters. This represents the ongoing need for FVAP to refine its communication initiatives to reach first-time absentee voters. To address this issue, FVAP continues to include increasing awareness for first-time ADM absentee voters among its recommendations for the 2024 election cycle.

When we examine the level of awareness of DoD resources by Service, members of the Air Force had the highest levels of awareness for FVAP, UVAOs, and the IVA Office, with 60 percent aware of FVAP, 48 percent aware of UVAOs, and 53 percent aware of IVA Offices.²³ High awareness of Air Force IVA Offices is likely due to the previous movement of IVA Offices to Airmen and Family Readiness Centers, which are well-established and well-known locations on Air Force installations.

	FVAP	UVAO	IVA OFFICE	AWARENESS OF NO RESOURCE
Army	49.60%	40.10%	40.40%	44.70%
Marine Corps	47.70%	46.70%	41.10%	44.60%
Navy	49.30%	31.50%	32.10%	47.00%
Air Force	60.00%	48.30%	52.60%	33.30%

Table 7. ADM awareness of DoD voting resources by Service.

In 2022, ADM who sought assistance from UVAOs most frequently reported seeking assistance with obtaining voting forms, followed by finding information on voting deadlines, determining legal residency, determining eligibility, and seeking

²³ 2022 PEVS-ADM, Q44

assistance with websites. ADM who sought assistance from IVA Offices most frequently reported seeking assistance with determining legal residency, followed by electronic transmission, completing voting forms, and obtaining voting deadlines.

Usefulness of DoD Resources for VAOs

FVAP asked VAOs whether they heard or saw any FVAP advertising outreach materials such as radio, print, or online ads. In 2022, 47 percent of all VAOs indicated they were aware of these materials, a decrease of nine percentage points from 2018 (56 percent). Additionally, 63 percent of IVAOs and IVA Office staff were aware of these materials in 2022 compared to 45 percent of UVAOs.²⁴ Among VAOs who obtained FVAP's marketing materials, the majority had a positive view of them, and shared them with others. Figure 19 presents the percentage of VAOs in 2022 who deemed outreach materials useful and shared them with ADM.

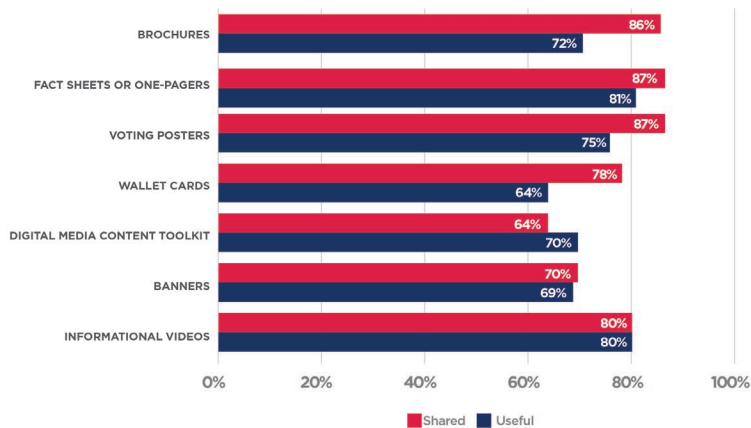


Figure 19. The percentage of VAOs who said that FVAP materials were useful and the percentage of VAOs who shared them with others.

Establishing the Effective Voting Assistance Model by Service

For FVAP and the Military Services to fulfill their requirement of evaluating each installation's voting assistance program, FVAP built upon its existing Effective Voting Assistance Model (EVAM) Index in collaboration with the Services. Previously, the EVAM allowed for biennial analyses at the Service level and was calculated using results from the Post-Election Voting Survey for Voting Assistance Officers. This did not include information the Services needed to take action in relative real time and improve their voting assistance programs. The redesigned EVAM Index now provides feedback at the installation level by using quarterly metrics data reported by VAOs through the FVAP portal.

²⁴ 2022 PEVS-VAO, Q41; 2018 PEVS-VAO, Q41

The EVAM Index is comprised of 14 variables that are required by DoDI 1000.04 and other variables encouraged but not required, such as best practices. Requirement variations based on quarter, year, VAO type, and individual Service guidance are captured within the EVAM Index calculations for each quarter.

The variables that are required by DoDI 1000.04 include:

1. The installation having at least one active IVAO account in FVAP's portal.
2. The number of FPCAs distributed being equal to, or greater than, the total number of ADM at the installation.
3. The number of active VAOs being equal to, or greater than, the total number of expected VAOs at the installation.
4. VAOs submitting quarterly metrics.
5. VAOs providing assistance to military members during in/out processing.
6. VAOs conducting outreach.
7. VAOs communicating with other VAOs (UVAOs, IVAOs, and IVA Office staff).

Best practice variables that are encouraged, but not required, by DoDI 1000.04 include:

1. VAOs taking the VAO training at least once every 12 months.
2. VAOs having at least 12 months experience as a VAO.
3. VAOs delivering a voting assistance briefing during in-/out-processing.
4. VAOs using the Voting Assistance Guide.
5. VAOs distributing outreach materials.
6. VAOs having a complete continuity folder.
7. The number of people assisted being equal or greater than the total number of ADM at the installation.

These improvements to the EVAM Index enable FVAP and the Services to identify which installations fulfilled their requirements for the quarter. For those that did not, the Services will be able to pinpoint exactly which variables need to be improved upon at each installation and make the necessary adjustments. The redesigned EVAM index is scheduled to be implemented during the 2024 General Election cycle.

Military Service-Reported Metrics

The Military Services and their 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 military member goes to an IVA Office or UVAO for help or additional information. These metrics provide a comprehensive overview and enable DoD to better assess the voting assistance provided across the Services. These metrics include:

1. The total number of FPCAs distributed per Service per year in both hard copy and electronic form.
2. The number of people who received voting assistance per Service.
3. The 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.

The metrics reported by each Service for 2022 are in Figures 20-23. The columns in each figure show how many FPCAs were distributed and how many people received voting assistance. The reference line shows the total number of ADM for the Service during 2022.

VAOs are required to distribute FPCAs to every ADM during every first, and every third quarter within even-numbered years, and every first quarter during odd-numbered years. Figures 20 - 23, show that none of the Services met this FPCA requirement during the first and third quarter of 2022, as the FPCAs distributed columns for the first and third quarters fall below the reference line. However, the figures also show that both the number of distributed FPCAs, and the number of people assisted, went up for all Services since the previous midterm in 2018. Also, when totaling the number of FPCAs distributed per Service for the entire year, the total number of FPCAs distributed surpasses the total number of ADM for each Service.

In 2022, the Army reported distributing 672,324 FPCAs and assisting 832,807 people, the Air Force reported distributing 809,216 FPCAs and assisting 1,341,582 people, the Marine Corps reported distributing 330,461 FPCAs and assisting 405,405 people, and, the Navy reported distributing 427,871 FPCAs and assisting 505,727 people. These numbers also include forms distributed by SVAOs. The Services also encourage voters to go to FVAP.gov instead of handing out paper forms.

AIR FORCE

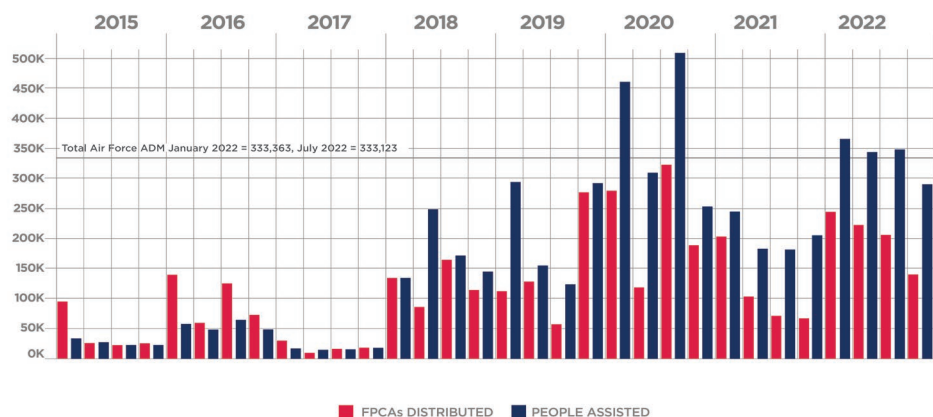


Figure 20. Air Force metrics for FPCAs distributed and people assisted since 2015.

ARMY

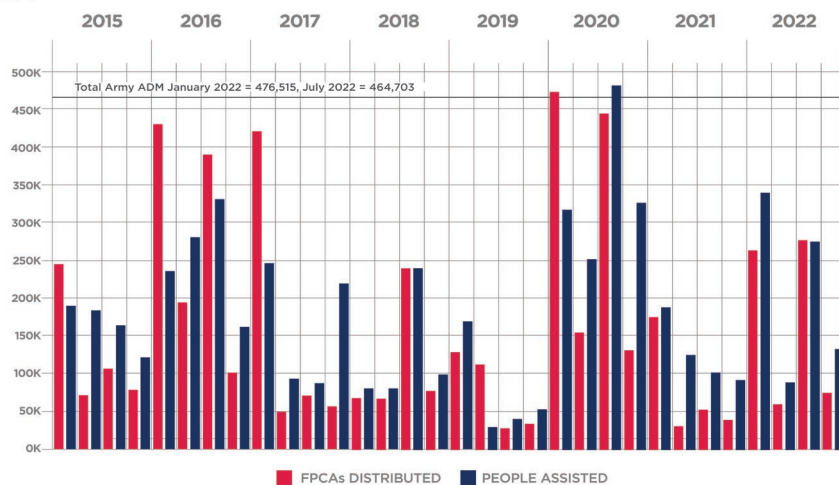


Figure 21. Army metrics for FPCAs distributed and people assisted since 2015

MARINE CORPS

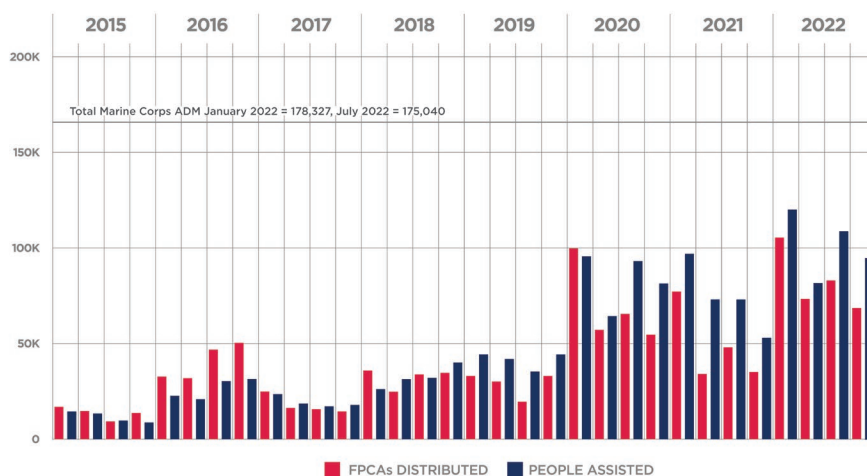


Figure 22. Marine Corps metrics for FPCAs distributed and people assisted since 2015.

NAVY

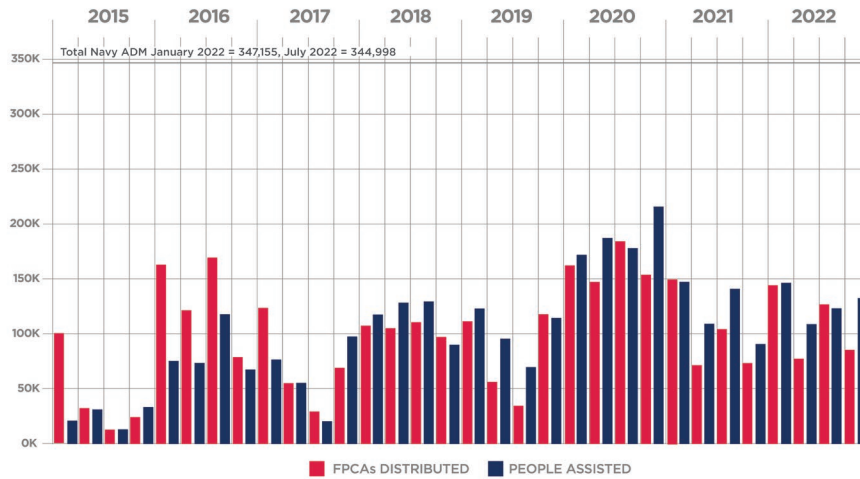


Figure 23. Navy metrics for FPCAs distributed and people assisted since 2015.

Military Service and Department of State Assessments 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. Below are summaries of these reports, outlining the successes and challenges each Service faced while implementing the voting program requirements under DoDI 1000.04. While not under the DoDI 1000.04 requirements, the U.S. Department of State's account of its voting program in 2020 is also included below.

Army

In 2022, the Army Voting Assistance Program had 61 IVA Offices. IVAOs assisted over 145,000 eligible voters throughout the 2022 election cycle. There were no updates or revision of AR 608-20, Army Voting Assistance Program in 2022. The Department of the Army Inspector General found the Army Voting Assistance Program to be in compliance with all Service program requirements in December of 2022.

FPCAs were distributed either in hand or electronically to voters. IVAOs and UVAOs delivered over 599,000 FPCAs through the 2022 election cycle.

Service-wide voting communications included public service announcements, community outreach events, social media, podcasts, and coordinated FVAP materials distribution to Army voters.



An IVAO hands out FVAP outreach materials to VAOs before an FVAP workshop at Fort Polk.



FVAP tweet highlighting an article on voting for ADM and eligible families in 2022.

The Army Voting Assistance Program participated in Armed Forces Voters Week and Absentee Voting Week in 2022. IVAOs and UVAOs set up displays and tables where they trained and assisted eligible voters. Over 828,341 eligible voters were assisted in 2022.

Special efforts to encourage voting participation by flag or general officer leadership included The Adjutant General of the Army (TAG) message that was sent to the field in September 2022, Voting Podcast, social and print media, and TAG road show topic.

Recommendations to improve the voting assistance program in future elections include coordinating communication plans with FVAP and other Services.

Preventative measures taken to ensure voting assistance in response to logistical issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic included IVAOs and UVAOs continuing to communicate with eligible voters via Microsoft TEAMS, email, social media, and during virtual formations.

Navy

The Navy Voting Assistance Program is administered through a broad network of UVAOs and IVAOs in accordance with 10 USC 1566. FPCAs were distributed in accordance with DoDI 1000.04 in January and July of the calendar year, and Navy-wide voting newsletters were sent to all VAO's monthly throughout 2022. Training was conducted for staff and students command-wide for procedures on absentee voting via FVAP's website video. Leadership encouraged Sailors to vote via *All Hands* magazine.

Voting activities and special events were limited due to COVID-19 pandemic precautions. Much of the Voting information provided was done via email and social media. VAOs forwarded email notifications and reminders sent by the SVAO. American Forces Network television and live radio messaging was utilized. IVAOs relied primarily on email and social media to ensure voting assistance. Sailors were encouraged to use personal computers at home to request absentee ballots. At some Commands, emphasis was placed on usefulness of mail-in ballots while away from their home voting jurisdiction.

Naval Air Station Sigonella participated in Armed Forces Voters

Week with an outside event. Voting banners were displayed near HQ entrances. Commands ensured Sailors had adequate time to vote in the general election.

Training was provided locally via Mobile Training Teams at installations that have multiple tenant commands and made sure VAO turnover was with someone who was not on Temporary Additional Duty during the election period. It is required that voting assistance information is an item for command check-in and indoctrination. Navy recommends that FVAP training be a basic General Military Training requirement to be completed prior to every election year, and that VAO workshops be part of All Hands Meetings. Video tutorials were made for shipboard use. A Navy-specific printable FAQ guide was created, aimed specifically towards VAOs on ships who might not have reliable internet. Sailors also have use of the printed FVAP Voting Assistance Guide. Quarterly online refresher training to VAOs. It is recommended that more is done to ensure that VAOs keep better voting assistance metrics.

Marine Corps

Marine Corps units are required to have a designated UVAO assigned in writing. Marine Corps policy is one UVAO assigned for every 200 personnel and units with over 200 personnel will have an Assistant UVAO assigned in writing. Currently, 18 IVAOs are appointed in writing aboard 18 Marine Corps installations, and 1,523 VAOs are currently assigned to the 385 Marine Corps units.

On January 6, 2022, emails with a link to the electronic version of the FPCA were sent to 185,459 active duty and reserve personnel, and 39,107 hardcopies were hand delivered to Service members, recruits, and students in training units. On July 15, 2022, 51,687 FPCAs were also sent to all active duty and reserve personnel. FPCAs were also provided to Marines in deployed status and to personnel changing duty stations.

The 2022 Marine Corps Voting Action Plan highlighted Armed Forces Voters Week and Absentee Voting Week events, and the UVAOs utilized this period to advertise service-wide voting registration activities and conduct absentee voter events. Marine Corps VAOs organized various voting assistance activities during the weeks that highlighted and promoted voter awareness and absentee voter registration. Posters, voter registration forms, and special election information were all disseminated on unit



Naval Support Activity Bahrain Executive Officer conducts 2022 base-wide Federal Voting Assistance Program training.



FVAP conducts a workshop at Marine Corps Base Hawaii in 2022.

social media platforms, administrative messages, and unit emails. Absentee voter registration tables at unit family appreciation events, local exchanges and mess halls were also utilized to promote absentee voting and highlight primary elections. Special voter events such as the voter registration drives at Marine Corps Installations West included the Commanding Generals, historical leaders, and Marvel characters. UVAOs disseminated posters and event emails, and set up voter registration tables at local exchanges and mess halls.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic protections, voting activities were scaled back to protect voters. Various news articles regarding voter registration and voting awareness activities appeared on Marine Corps units and installations websites. Special emphasis was made on reaching voters through emails and social media platforms. Unit voting events were limited, and appropriate preventative measures were used when they occurred. VAOs continued to establish safe working procedures and were able to efficiently execute their responsibilities and successfully disseminated voting materials and information electronically.

The SVAO utilized a dedicated network of various communications tools to reach Commanders, IVA Offices, UVAOs, and Marine Corps personnel service-wide. Official Marine Administrative Messages, email systems, Marine Corps Voting Assistance Program websites, and unit social media websites were used to disseminate voting and election information. The 18 IVA Offices and the UVAOs utilized similar methods to further disseminate voting information to all installation and unit personnel, including eligible family members and DoD civilians. The SVAO worked closely with Marine Corps Community Services to successfully create voter registration posters, disseminate articles on the importance of voting, and notify absentee voters on voter registration drives and absentee ballot return procedures.

Unit commanders and other unit leaders successfully highlighted the importance of voting and highly encouraged their Marine Corps and civilian personnel to register to vote during unit functions. The Commanding General, Marine Corps Installations West and Commanding Officer Marine Base Quantico participated in FVAP workshops and voter registration events that included local guest speakers, Marvel characters and famous U.S. historical figures. Additionally, unit commanders provided manpower support and coordination for their unit's absentee voter registration events.



FVAP Director conducts a workshop at Camp Pendleton in 2022.

More electronic forms and electronic platforms were utilized in order to reach younger voters. The heavy use of social media platforms during 2022 was very effective; education or assistance on the use of these platforms should be readily available to all VAOs. With the increased use of electronic voting forms during the recent election cycles, the technology to successfully utilize electronic signatures for the FPCA and FWABs forms should be explored.

Air Force

The Department of the Air Force (DAF) Voting Assistance Program is aligned at installation Military and Family Readiness Centers (M&FRCs). The DAF maintained IVA Offices at 74 installations. The DAF Voting Assistance Program covers both the United States Air Force and United States Space Force installations under a single DAF program. Installation commanders designated IVA Offices and appointed primary and alternate IVAOs in writing. Unit commanders appointed UVAOs in writing at the rate of one UVAO assigned to each unit with 25 or more permanently assigned ADM, with the option of appointing more based on unit needs. Units with fewer than 25 permanently assigned ADM are serviced by the host-installation IVA Office. At the end of 2022, the DAF had 166 IVAOs and 2,179 UVAOs.

DAF M&FRCs and IVAOs conducted numerous voting activities and special events during 2022. Distribution of the FPCA took place by January 15 and July 15, 2022 as well as by request during the year. DAF used its Service-specific, Service-wide messaging system MyPers to meet the mandatory FPCA distribution. The MyPers messaging system communicated with 285,000 military members and 153,000 civilian employees.

FPCA distribution was documented in accordance with FVAP metric requirements while voting activities and special events were documented in the Air Force Family Integrated Results and Statistical Tracking (AFFIRST) system, which provides web-based customer service data tracking. Additionally, the Air Force Personnel Center, Airman and Family Readiness Operations Division communicated via email and AFFIRST announcements any additional requirements to IVAOs to ensure the widest distribution of the FPCAs to their installation supported population, special election(s) updates, and general election for federal office information.



A VAO looks at the Voting Assistance Guide during an FVAP presentation at Beale AFB.

The DAF continued to maximize lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic on how to connect with people and shaped outreach activities/events by expanding both in-person and virtual efforts at installations (including partnerships with local election officials). DAF installations continued to offer in-person and virtual support of programs with installation leader emphasis through physical and electronic media of program services. IVAOs routinely engaged with installation leaders to encourage voting participation and interest throughout the year and during the voter emphasis week. IVAOs maximized placement of outreach materials available at locations such as at installation gyms, exchanges, commissaries, M&FRCs, and other high-traffic areas. Program delivery and implementation policies remain active and flexible to consistently ensure program objectives are achieved.

IVAOs led two voter emphasis week events in 2022. Armed Forces Voters Week and Absentee Voting Week generated a combined 293,000 contacts. Information tables were set up at unit and installation events strategically at dining facilities, base exchanges, M&FRCs, etc. M&FRCs and installation websites were used to increase voter awareness, encourage voter participation, and advertise voting resources. IVAOs successfully utilized mass marketing via social media platforms, yard signs, base newspapers, marquees, radio, and commanders' action channels. Participation was consistent with that of previous election cycles, with statistics falling between non-election years (2021) and election years for federal office (2022).



An introduction to an FVAP workshop at Cannon AFB.

In addition, installation websites and emails were used to increase voter awareness, encourage voter participation, and advertise voting resources. Some examples of activities included virtual events, mass marketing media efforts via social platforms, yard signs, base newspapers, marquees, commander's call and action channel and commander's action channels, American Forces Network (AFN), and when permissible, information tables at various locations on the bases.

IVAOs provided information and resources via various media outlets, such as: trifold, bulletin boards, bookmarks, smartboards, information booths or other ingress/egress points from facilities, newspaper/media articles, trivia games, distribution of FPCAs, Key Spouses networks, and installation Facebook and Instagram pages. A high number of information tables maximized the provision of physical voting forms, FVAP brochures, and information on election dates, ensuring personnel

could register and receive absentee ballots.

It is recommended that FVAP continue to maximize the potential of virtual tools and processes as these have proven highly successful through safety precautions and sustainment of the long-range effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The FVAP.gov website remains a primary capability to assist our supported eligible voter population. It is easy to use and contains an entire suite of tools to easily help eligible voters.

Coast Guard

Coast Guard policy requires that all unit commanders designate a Unit Voting Assistance Officer (UVAO). Flag officers made a push to reinforce the importance of units having an established UVAO and voting at All Hands gatherings.

Service-wide official message traffic was published on January 14, 2022 and July 13, 2022. Voting assistance messages were communicated across various platforms. These included official record message traffic, MyCG.uscg.mil (the USCG's single repository for news and announcements), and social media. FVAP's prepared social media and marketing materials were particularly useful in filling the gap caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Per agreement with FVAP, the Coast Guard did not participate in Armed Forces Voters Week and Absentee Voting Week, but instead planned to have staffed voting assistance tables at Coast Guard Day events. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many commands did not hold traditional in-person Coast Guard Day events.

The Coast Guard Voting Assistance Program will continue to focus on assisting unit commanders to designate UVAOs, obtain training, and refine our program details. FVAP's assistance, provided via prepared social media materials and marketing materials, has been very helpful. - Of note, "VAO in a Box" continues to be exceptionally helpful during federal election years. - The Coast Guard plans to continue to order these high-demand materials in federal election years.

The Coast Guard will continue to rely heavily on online and electronic means of marketing and assistance as the best way to leverage our limited staff and the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic created.

Department of State Voting Program

The Department of State has one dedicated Foreign Service staff member acting as the Voting Action Officer at each post overseas, with FVAP providing assistance to these staff members. Besides the regular consular email messages regarding absentee voting from overseas, embassies and consulates conducted social media and website campaigns. Consular staff leveraged their networks and community partners to reach overseas citizens. This included physically placing FVAP outreach materials at their locations and advertising links and posts on their websites and social media platforms. Consular staff also worked with local media outlets used by U.S. citizens overseas to amplify the Department of State's voice.

Principal Officers including Ambassadors, Deputy Chiefs of Mission, and Consular Chiefs, held virtual town hall meetings, recorded video messages, and wrote local newspaper op-eds in an effort to educate overseas citizens on how they could vote in 2022. Outreach from Principal Officers generated more attention than other absentee voting outreach.

Many of the embassies and consulates created a voting action plan for the various offices located on post. Consular and Public Affairs sections cooperated on social media postings, new pages on the Embassy or Consulate website, Facebook live chats, and other outlets, and messages to overseas citizens which included pushes recognizing voting emphasis days and weeks. Consular and Regional Security staff developed standard operating procedures for receiving and scanning voting materials and assisting overseas citizens with their questions. Consular or mailroom staff ensured boxes that contained sealed voting materials to be mailed were collected, voting materials were added to the pouch, and boxes were replaced daily. The frequency of pouch shipments was increased in the weeks leading up to the election. Given space and security constraints, as well as COVID-related restrictions, consular sections had to balance admitting visitors for regular consular services and for ballot drop-off.

In 2022, social media communication was vital in reaching overseas citizens. Besides assisting overseas citizens in-person at various events or in consular waiting rooms, embassies and consulates provided assistance virtually through Facebook Live, Zoom meetings, Virtual Town Halls, newspaper op-eds, and other outlets. In 2022, Department of State missions sent out messages

and online posts to overseas citizens with links to the FPCA and FWAB on FVAP's website. Posts also provided hard copy FPCAs and FWABs when requested, and gave voters the opportunity to download the forms at the embassy or consulate.

Voting assistance teams communicated voting procedures as early as possible to mitigate last minute voting questions and concerns. They also explained the multiple options to submit ballots which covered nearly 10 percent of questions from U.S. citizens. This communication for the 2022 General Election started in July 2022 and was maintained through a consistent stream of messages across a variety of sources. These teams had answers to common questions ready in advance and regularly tweeted or sent messages about upcoming deadlines. This resulted in a sense of urgency from the voting public and prompted an increase in inquiries and the number of ballots dropped-off at embassies and consulates.

The voting assistance teams also reported that combining pre-cleared voting messages with locally relevant graphics and videos doubled the number of views and engagements with voting messages over previous election years.

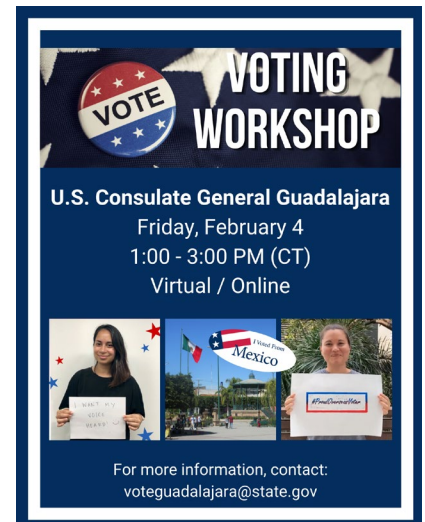
Collection and Delivery of Ballots for Overseas Uniformed Services Voters

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) and the DoD Military Postal Service (MPS) facilitate the delivery of election materials between overseas military voters and election offices. Pursuant to section 20304 of Title 52, U.S.C., the USPS and the MPS provide expedited mail delivery service for overseas Uniformed Services voters' absentee ballots in general elections, which are processed before other classes of mail.

For the 2022 General Election, the average transit time of voted ballots from the absentee voter to election offices was five working days, or 5.9 calendar days.

Procedures for Handling Overseas Military Ballots

Details regarding inbound ballots during the 2022 General Election are described below:



A flyer created for an FVAP virtual workshop for the U.S. Consulate General Guadalajara in 2022.

- Inbound blank absentee ballots from election offices are initially sorted at a USPS International Service Center prior to dispatching them to overseas military postal activities.
- Military postal clerks process and deliver ballots through individual mailboxes or unit delivery.
- For ballots that cannot be delivered as addressed:
 - A directory clerk attempts to locate addressees via the Automated Military Postal System (AMPS) Directory module, change-of-address cards on file, local personnel management systems, or global address listings.
 - If a new address is found, the absentee ballot is then dispatched (forwarded) and delivered to the current address on file, either overseas or domestic.
 - If no new address information is found, the absentee ballot is returned to the election official marked "undeliverable as addressed" (UAA).

Ballots Collected and Delivered to Overseas Uniformed Services

Between September 1, 2022 and December 12, 2022, the MPS postmarked and dispatched 11,013 voted absentee ballots from military voters to election offices using Priority Mail Express Military Service. The average transit time of ballots to election offices was five days. Military Post Offices (MPOs) received 2,633 non-voted ballots (22.4 percent) that were UAA from election offices. This percentage is an increase of 1.4 percentage points over the previous Presidential election cycle (21 percent). MPOs redirected 1,373 ballots to current addresses while 1,260 were returned to sender. The UAA ballots may be attributed to two key factors:

- Election offices did not validate current addresses of voters.
- Absentee voters did not update mailing addresses with election offices.

The top five states with the highest number of redirected ballots were attributed to this to Permanent Change of Station of personnel or Missent: Florida (314), California (250), Washington (148), Nevada (76), and Colorado (75). The top five states with the highest number of ballots returned to sender were primarily due to Attempted - Not Known or Moved - No Forward Address: California (237), Florida (236), Nevada (117), New York (101), and Washington (81).

Expediting and Tracking Overseas Uniformed Services Ballots

Section 20304 of Title 52, U.S.C., requires expedited mail delivery service for marked absentee ballots of overseas military personnel (inclusive of eligible family members residing overseas) in federal general elections. The ballots of overseas military members were processed using the Express Mail Service Label 11-DoD. Upon receipt from the military voter, Military Postal Clerks applied the label to each ballot, ensuring expedited delivery to the election office. The label provides voters and the MPS the ability to track ballots from acceptance through delivery. Ballots are first scanned in at the initial intake point. They are then scanned in upon arrival at the U.S. International Gateways of Chicago, New York, San Francisco, or Miami. Then finally, they are scanned in again by USPS demonstrating delivery at the election office address.

USPS and the MPS continue to build from efforts in 2014 to modernize military mail systems and continue to provide a proactive way to encourage military members to update their mailing address with election offices. In the past, Units maintained their own directory lists which may differ from the separate change of address list maintained by the MPS resulting in delays as ballots were sent overseas before being redirected. Now, when standard-sized ballot envelopes are processed through USPS, the integration of the MPS and USPS address-change information will process outgoing unvoted ballots for forwarding before transmitting it overseas. Improvements in the AMPS Directory module facilitate change of address information from Unit directory entries as well as individuals into the USPS National Change of Address (NCOA) database.

State and local election officials often use USPS Address Information System Services and information from the NCOA database to conduct maintenance on lists of registered voters. In the past, these excluded overseas/APO and FPO address changes. The system consolidated all address change information for MPO addresses into the overall NCOA list maintenance service, meaning that local election officials can now leverage one source of data for the most current address information registered with either USPS or the MPS. These services assist with ensuring the most recent address information is reflected on absentee balloting records and lowering the number of UAA ballots.

The 2020 General Election Cycle was the first election cycle to authorize the use of the Label 11-DoD for DoD personnel assigned to State Department missions. In the 2022 General Election Cycle, DoD personnel obtained the USPS Label 11-DoD from their supporting Service representatives on an individual basis or by securing access to alternative services.

Election Official Engagement

FVAP works with states and localities to raise awareness of their responsibilities under *UOCAVA*, providing election officials with information about the challenges voters face while serving in the military or living overseas, and giving election officials additional information and tools to assist eligible voters. This section provides information regarding FVAP's cooperative efforts with state and local election officials relations program, the Council of State Governments (CSG) Overseas Voting Initiative, and FVAP's combined efforts with the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to improve data collection methodologies for the Election Administration Voting Survey (EAVS) Section B.

Use of FVAP Support and Products

In 2022, FVAP reinforced its commitment to serve as a critical information source for policymakers through its state and local relations program. FVAP fostered and strengthened relationships with state and local government officials to identify and assess areas for improvement to the *UOCAVA* absentee voting process. To support its mission, FVAP tracks and researches policy and state legislative developments that may have implications for military and overseas voters. FVAP also provides policy-related products to the states. Respondents to FVAP's Post-Election Voting Survey for State Election Officials (PEVS-SEO) indicated they found FVAP's policy-related products useful. The PEVS-SEO is also used to evaluate FVAP's effectiveness in serving election officials, shaping future products and services, addressing state ballot and registration issues, and clarifying its understanding of state policies. Of the SEOs who reported using FVAP products or services, the vast majority indicated that they were satisfied with the resources.²⁵ Satisfaction ratings of FVAP products and services ranged from 75 percent to 100 percent.²⁶

²⁵ 2022 PEVS-SEO, Q. 2

²⁶ Interpret with caution due to low n values. For 2022, FVAP.gov n = 37. FVAP Staff Support n = 25. FVAP Military Address Look-up Service & FVAP EO Online Training n = 4

- FVAP.gov: 95 percent satisfied.
- FVAP Staff Support: 100 percent satisfied.
- Address Look-up Service: 100 percent satisfied.
- Online Training: 75 percent satisfied.

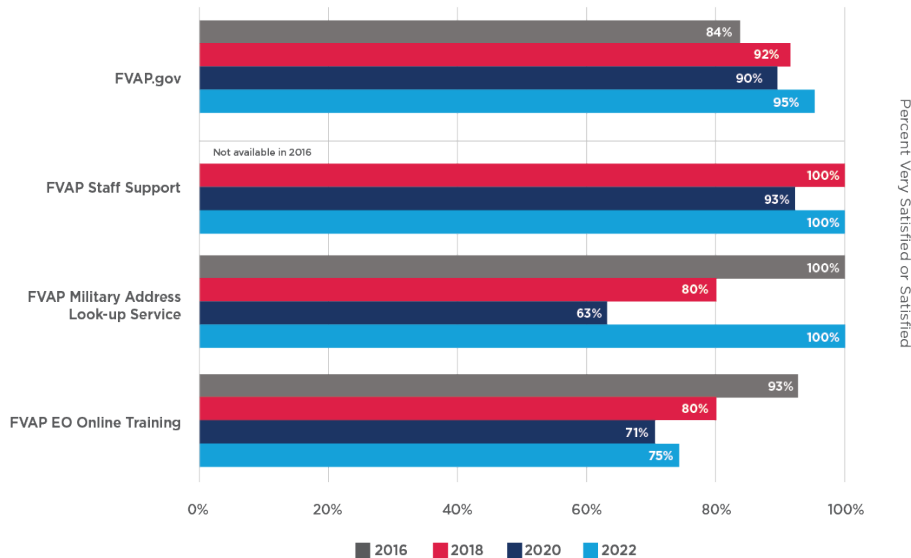


Figure 24. Percentage of SEOs that were very satisfied or satisfied with FVAP products and services.

Eighty-eight percent of SEOs indicated that they referred FVAP resources to local election officials (LEOs) in 2022, an increase from 84 percent in 2020. Just over half (53 percent) of SEOs said they referred LEOs to FVAP Staff Support, a 19 percentage point increase from 2020. FVAP EO Online Training also saw a large increase in SEOs referring LEOs, with 43 percent referring LEOs, an increase of 16 percentage points. FVAP Military Address Look-up Service saw little change from 2020, with 20 percent of SEOs referring LEOs.²⁷

²⁷ 2022 PEVS-SEO, Q. 3

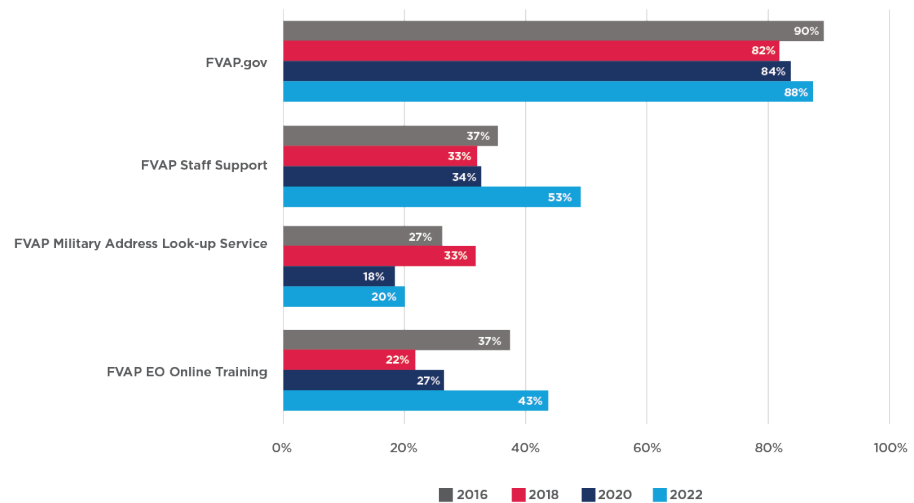


Figure 25. Percent of SEOs that referred LEOs to the following FVAP products.

Based on these results, FVAP will continue to expand direct outreach to local election officials in order to highlight existing products and services available to them. This is especially important for assisting election officials who attempt to train new personnel on the complexities of conducting elections in the U.S. and their specific *UOCAVA* related responsibilities. FVAP will continue to leverage its direct relationship with state election officials on matters of policy, educate local election officials on the administration of their responsibilities under *UOCAVA*, and make them aware of potential obstacles *UOCAVA* voters can face during the absentee voting process.

Ensuring *UOCAVA* protections

Voters covered by *UOCAVA* are entitled to certain protections that states may not extend to other voters. For example, states must allow *UOCAVA* voters to use the FPCA to register to vote and request a ballot and use the FWAB as a backup ballot for federal offices if their requested state ballot does not arrive in time, provided the voter's initial application was timely. States are required to transmit ballots to *UOCAVA* voters at least 45 days before federal elections and must offer electronic transmission of voting information and blank ballots. Based on the 2020 and 2022 PEVS-SEO data, some states do not recognize *UOCAVA* protections for military and overseas voters who do not use the FPCA. While all states recognize the FPCA, just 65 percent provide the same protections when a voter uses a state form with *UOCAVA* classification selected, and 45 percent recognize these protections for online *UOCAVA* registrants, according to the 2022 PEVS-SEO survey.²⁸ This finding underscores the importance

²⁸ 2022 PEVS-SEO, Q. 20

of FVAP activities to distribute and promote use of the FPCA as the general form for UOCAVA voters to ensure they receive the UOCAVA protections to which they are entitled.

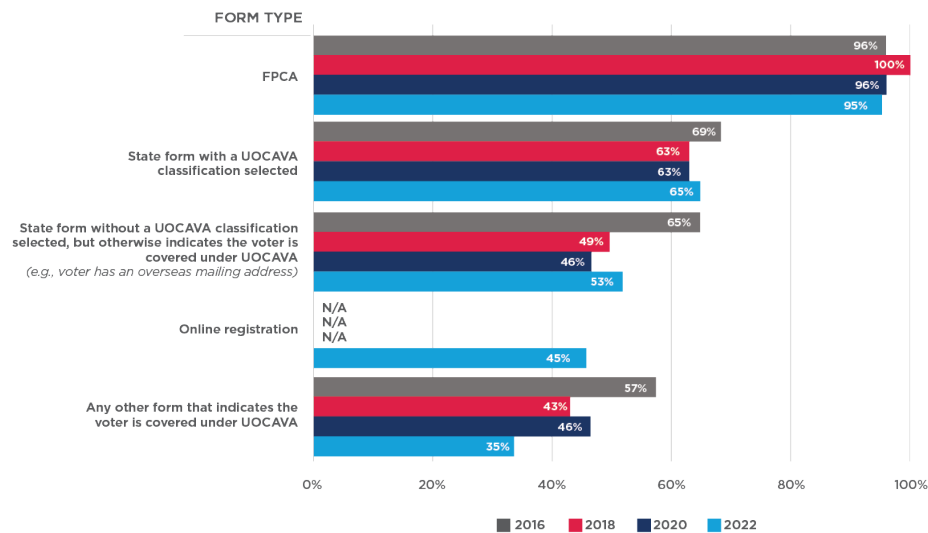


Figure 26. Percentage of states that grant UOCAVA protections to UOCAVA voters if they use one of these ballot request forms.

Election Administration Voting Survey Section B Analysis

In 2016, FVAP and the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) combined data collection efforts at the federal level to survey election officials to obtain the total number of *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* ballots were transmitted, received and counted after each federal general election.²⁹ The EAC's Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) collects data from approximately 6,500 local election jurisdictions on a wide variety of election administration topics, including UOCAVA.

Election offices reported receiving 309,867 FPCAs ahead of the 2022 midterm elections. About 20.7 percent came from Uniformed Service members,³⁰ and 76.5 percent were submitted by overseas citizens. Overall, only 1.9 percent of FPCAs requesting registration or an absentee ballot for the 2022 elections were rejected – of these, 21.4 percent were rejected because the election office received the form after the state's absentee ballot request deadline.³¹ The FPCA rejection rate

²⁹ EAC, 2016 Election Administration Voting Survey https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/eac_assets/1/6/2016_EAVS_Comprehensive_Report.pdf

³⁰ The EAC EAVS Report Uniformed Service members include both ADM and their eligible family members

³¹ Percentages at the national level were calculated using case wise missing data deletion at the state level.

Only states that had data for both the numerator and denominator for a calculation were included when

among Uniformed Service members was slightly higher than among overseas citizens, with 2.6 percent of Uniformed Service members' FPCAs rejected as compared to 1.8 percent of FPCAs submitted by overseas citizens.

GENERAL ELECTION YEAR	2018	2020	2022
FPCAs Received	312,437	764,691	309,867
FPCAs Rejected	6,342	19,854	4,596
FPCAs Rejected (%)	2.30%	2.70%	1.90%

Table 8. FPCAs received and rejected for 2016, 2018, 2020.

UOCAVA voters can use an FPCA to register and request their ballot, or they can use an application authorized by their state. Therefore, the total number of FPCAs received during an election cycle will always be less than the total number of blank ballots that election officials transmit to UOCAVA voters.

According to the EAVS, for the 2022 General Election there were 654,786 UOCAVA ballots transmitted to voters from election officials. Election officials received 267,403 voted ballots and 4,089 FWABs. Of the ballots and FWABs returned, 261,104 were counted (257,657 ballots and 3,447 FWABs), and 10,456 ballots and 655 FWABs were rejected.

GENERAL ELECTION YEAR	2018	2020	2022
Regular Absentee Ballots Transmitted	655,409	1,249,601	654,786
Regular Absentee Ballots Received (Returned)	344,392	911,614	267,403
Regular Absentee Ballots Counted	388,271	889,837	257,657
Regular Absentee Ballots Rejected	19,328	19,060	10,456
Regular Absentee Ballots Rejected (%)	5.60%	2.10%	3.90%
FWABs Received	7,284	33,027	4,089
FWABs Counted	5,016	23,897	3,447
FWABs Rejected	1,208	8,438	655
FWABs Rejected (%)	16.69%	25.50%	16.0%
Total Counted (Both Regular Absentee Ballots and FWABs)	393,287	913,734	261,104
Total Median Rejection Rate (Both Regular Absentee Ballots and FWABs)	2.90%	1.50%	3.10%

Table 9. Ballots transmitted, ballots and FWABs received, counted, rejected for the November General Elections in 2018, 2020, and 2022.

reporting percentages at the national level. Responses of "does not apply," "data not available," and "valid skip" were considered as missing for purposes of creating these calculations. Case wise deletion has been used in the analysis for this report to avoid overinflating the denominator of the calculations.

Data collected at the state level on *UOCAVA* ballots returned and rejected is shown in Figures 27 and 28. Figure 27 shows *UOCAVA* ballots returned as a percentage of total ballots transmitted. The map classifies states into four groups based on relative percentage of ballots returned.

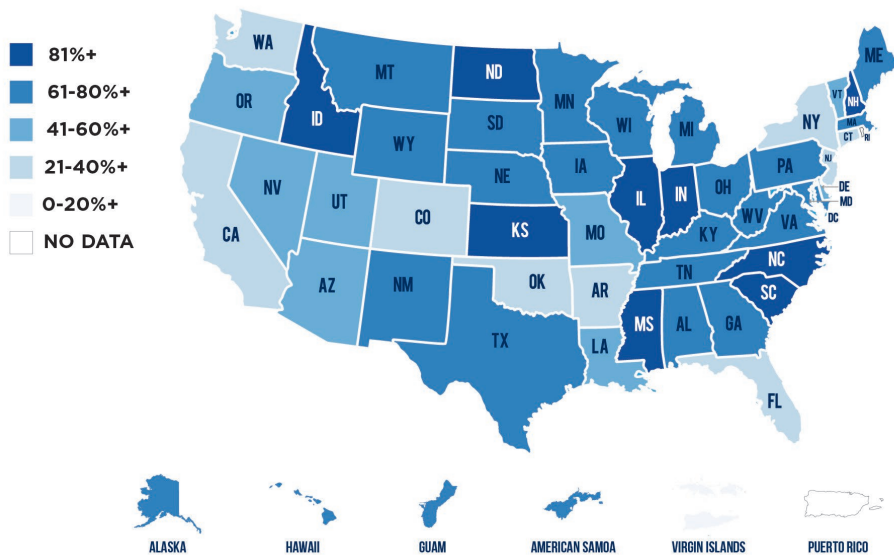


Figure 27. *UOCAVA* ballots returned as a percentage of total ballots transmitted.³²

The overall median rejection rate for ballots received from *UOCAVA* voters was 1.4 percent. Missing the deadline was the most common reason for rejection among both Uniformed Service members and overseas citizens, which at 60.1 percent for Uniformed Service members and 67.4 percent for overseas civilians. Signature issues were the cause of 22.1 percent of ballot rejections for ballots returned by Uniformed Service members and 17.2 percent of ballot rejections for overseas citizens.³³

Figure 28 shows *UOCAVA* ballots rejected as a percentage of ballots returned. The map classifies states into four groups based on relative percentiles: one-quarter with the highest rejection rates (5.7 percent or greater), one-quarter with the lowest rejection rates (0.0 percent to 1.1 percent), one-quarter between 1.2 percent and 2.6 percent, and one-quarter between 2.7 percent and 5.6 percent.

The overall rejection rates reported also include FWABs that were rejected due to the return of an official state ballot. FVAP

³² Map not to scale.

³³ The percentage of ballots rejected for missing the deadline is calculated as B19b/B18b for Uniformed Services voters and B19c/B18c for overseas civilians. The percentage of ballots rejected because of signature issues is calculated as B20b/B18b for Uniformed Services voters and B20c/B18c for overseas civilians. Case wise deletion was used at the state level in calculating these percentages.

stresses the importance of using the FWAB as a backup ballot in case the official state ballot does not arrive 30 days prior to the election. Inevitably, this may lead to an overstated rejection rate when voters return both ballots and the FWAB is rejected to ensure only one ballot is counted in the election. Overall, 25.4 percent of the rejected FWABs were replaced by a regular absentee ballot, making the backup ballot unnecessary. High rejection rates for the FWAB are expected given its backup role. However, this is likely another area where voter confusion is a contributing factor. For example, some states require a potential FWAB user to have submitted a ballot application 30 days prior to the election, mirroring the state-prescribed deadline for voter registration, which is the minimum requirement under federal law. If voters do not fully understand these requirements, it may lead to high instances of FWAB rejections. As detailed in the section titled “Assessment of FVAP Activities,” FVAP needs to continue improving voter comprehension of the form’s proper usage and adherence to state requirements for acceptance.

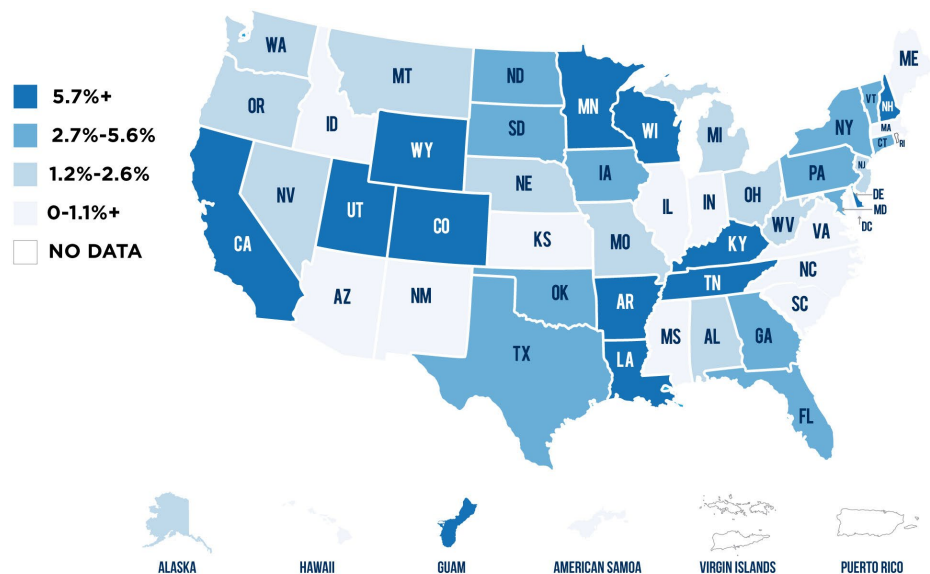


Figure 28. UOCAVA ballots rejected as a percentage of ballots returned.³⁴

ESB Data Standard Information Collection

Since 2015, FVAP has been working with the Council of State Governments (CSG) Overseas Voting Initiative (OVI), to develop a standardized format that captures anonymous transactional-level data regarding military and overseas voters. This standardized format is called the EAVS Section B Data Standard or ESB Data Standard. Unlike traditional survey-based or aggregate data sets like those produced within the EAVS, transactional data can better

³⁴ Map not to scale.

identify the potential challenges encountered in the absentee voting process. The EAC's EAVS Section B provides aggregate information at the jurisdictional level, but does not effectively measure the experiences of an individual voter.

Specifically, the ESB Data Standard attempts to assess the impact of the 45-day transmission of ballots and the impact of electronic blank ballot delivery options on the overall success for voters to cast ballots under provisions outlined in *UOCAVA*. Where utilized, the ESB Data Standard gathers data on how and when voting transactions (e.g., voter registration, ballot request, ballot transmission, and ballot receipt) occur and ultimately whether a ballot was returned and accepted for counting without collecting personal information on voters. The ESB Data Standard not only provides a deeper level of analysis of the *UOCAVA* voting process, but it also has the potential to reduce the post-election data reporting burden for election officials when completing Section B of the Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS).

For the 2022 ESB Data Standard information collection, there were 12 participants, which included nine states and three local jurisdictions. Even though not all states and jurisdictions contributed to this data, the 2022 participants represent approximately 40 percent of the *UOCAVA* voting population. Therefore, this data can be regarded as useful for analyzing and assessing the *UOCAVA* absentee voting process. However, the overall observations remain limited to the participating jurisdictions, and should not be generalized to the overall total *UOCAVA* voting population or to election offices nationwide. As implementation of the ESB Data Standard grows and continues to demonstrate its value, FVAP will be able to reduce the overall reporting burden for the states while still answering key research questions specifically tailored to assess drivers of success for *UOCAVA* voters.

The ESB Data Standard and supporting analysis is intended to illustrate the impact of the *UOCAVA* by answering the following research questions:

- What factors are associated with successfully completing the *UOCAVA* voting process (i.e., having a vote counted)?
- How does the timing and method of ballot requests influence the likelihood of absentee ballot return?
- What is the impact of electronic blank ballot delivery options on the military or overseas citizen voting experience?

Although there are options available at each phase, the *UOCAVA* absentee voting process can be broken down into three basic steps: voter registration/ballot request, blank ballot transmission, and voted ballot return (a voted ballot is processed by the election office and either counted or rejected based on procedural requirements).

However, the likelihood of successfully completing the process and the obstacles faced may vary depending on the individual's environment, such as infrastructure and other conditions in the country where they are currently living.

Comparing the 2022 ESB Data Standard and EAVS data

The ESB Data Standard is intended to support the ability of states to eventually export a file to meet reporting requirements under federal law. FVAP assessed the relative alignment between 2022 EAVS-reported data with data from ESB reporting jurisdictions to determine the relative strength of the ESB standard as a single administrative data source. As shown in Figure 29, the reporting for the ESB Data Standard is similar to that of the EAVS for most states and jurisdictions, however some discrepancies exist. The figure shows the reported *UOCAVA* ballot return rates for both the ESB Data Standard and the EAVS for those states and jurisdictions that participated in the 2022 ESB Data Standard. As the implementation of the ESB Data Standard continues to grow and the number of participants increases, we can anticipate the reporting of more complete data.

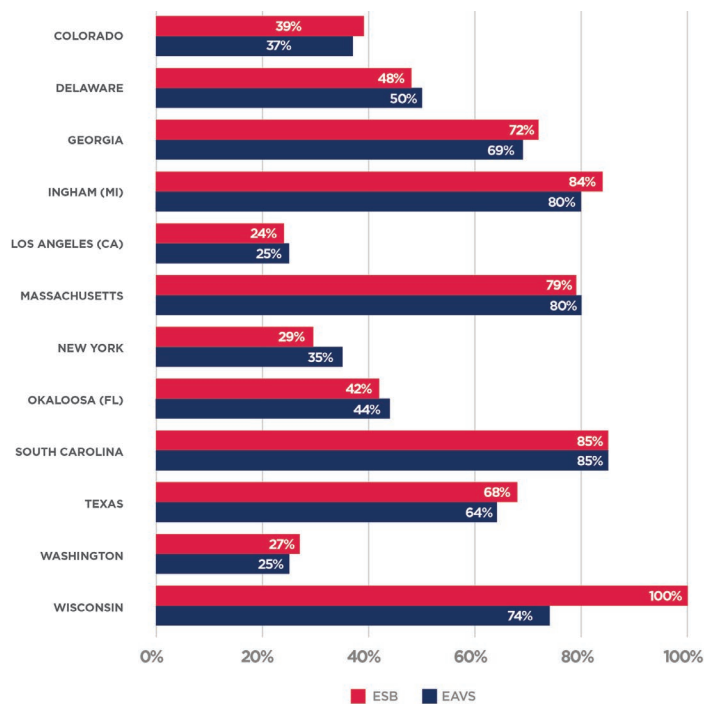


Figure 29. UOCAVA Ballot return rate comparison between the ESB Data Standard and the EAVS for participating states and jurisdictions. ³⁵ ³⁶

As the ESB Data Standard is still attracting new states and jurisdictions, FVAP will continue work through the Overseas Voting Initiative to assist reporting jurisdictions with understanding how the ESB Standard can support creating a single administrative data file to meet their overall reporting burden and use the collected data to improve the absentee voting process for UOCAVA voters.

Ballot Requests: Impact of FPCA

Data reported by ESB Data Standard participating states and jurisdictions since 2018 shows that ballots requested using the FPCA are associated with higher return rates than ballots requested using state absentee ballot applications. This finding, shown in Figure 30, demonstrates the importance of FVAP activities to distribute and promote the use of FPCA as the universal form to ensure protections are in place for UOCAVA absentee voters. Under UOCAVA, election offices are required to

³⁵ The return rate for EAVS is calculated as the total UOCAVA ballots returned (item B9a) divided by the total UOCAVA ballots transmitted (item B5a)—FWABs were not included in this calculation. The return rate for ESB is calculated as the total non-FWAB ballots returned (i.e., those ballots that had both a date and a mode linked to the ballot transmission and return information) divided by the total non-FWAB ballots transmitted (i.e., those ballots that had both a date and a mode linked to the ballot transmission information).

³⁶ The state of Wisconsin shows an unlikely return rate as calculated with ESB data. Because ESB only considers a ballot transmitted if there is information about a ballot's transmission date and method, 2,027 out of Wisconsin's 6,247 observations were not included in the ballot return rate calculation because of a missing ballot transmission date. At the same time, most of these observations corresponded to non-returned ballots.

transmit requested absentee blank ballots by the 45th day before all federal elections within the same calendar year, and voters can request to receive their blank ballot electronically.

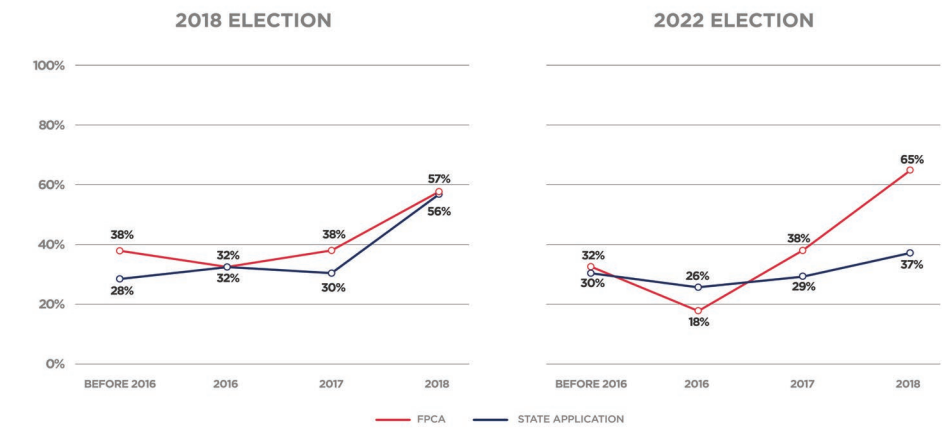


Figure 30. ESB Data Standard reported ballots requested using an FPCA were returned at higher rates than state applications regardless of the request year.³⁷

As shown in Table 10, ADM from participating states and jurisdictions were more likely to use a state application to request an absentee ballot. Overseas citizens, however, used FPCAs and state applications at similar rates. Table 11 shows a similar number of ballot requests received in the form of FPCAs and state applications during the election years of 2022 and 2020. The majority of ballot requests that were filed in 2021 and before 2020, however, were by state applications. ADM submitted almost 10 times more state applications than FPCAs, while most of the FPCAs reported by ESB participants came from overseas citizens.

	ADM	OVERSEAS CITIZENS
FPCA	8,056 (9.2%)	70,952 (50.0%)
State Applications	79,610 (90.8%)	71,042 (50.0%)
Total	87,666	141,994

Table 10. ESB Data Standard Reported Use of FPCAs and state applications by population for the 2022 General Election.³⁸

³⁷ This comparison graph uses only data from states and jurisdictions that completed ESB in 2018 and 2022. The states and jurisdictions that completed ESB for both years are: Colorado, New York, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, Ingham (MI), Los Angeles County (CA), and Richmond (GA). However, Richmond (GA) is not included in the graphs because they reported “Untracked” for ballot request type in 2018 and 2022. Ingham (MI) is not included in the 2022 graph because they reported “Untracked” for ballot request type. The graphs exclude observations with ballot requests dated after Election Day, as well as observations that were rejected due to any of the following reasons: Undeliverable, Voided/Spoiled, Voted in Person, and Voter Died. For 2018, a ballot was considered returned if it had information on ballot return date, independent of if it had information on ballot return method to account for Washington missing data for ballot return method for all their observations.

³⁸ The states of Georgia and Massachusetts, and Ingham County (MI) are not included in calculations. They reported “Untracked” ballot request type for all observations in 2022. Eighty-four percent of observations from Wisconsin, and 22% of observations from Colorado were not included in 2022 calculations for reporting

	PRE-2020	2020	2021	2022
FPCA	21,223 (22.5%)	41,837 (51.4%)	3,523 (25.1%)	29,921 (52.1%)
State Application	73,259 (77.5%)	39,485 (48.6%)	10,491 (74.9%)	27,482 (47.9%)
Total	94,482	81,322	14,014	57,403

Table 11. ESB Data Standard Reported Year of ballot request for FPCAs and state applications.³⁹

Ballots requested using a state application were more likely to be returned undeliverable than those requested using an FPCA. In 2022, only 0.15 percent of ballots requested by an FPCA resulted in an undeliverable ballot in ESB Data Standard jurisdictions, whereas the undeliverable ballot rate for those requested by state application was 0.86 percent. For ballot requests dated before 2022, ballots requested through an FPCA also had lower undeliverable rates than those requested through state applications. This data supports FVAP's recommendations that UOCAVA voters use the FPCA to register to vote and request an absentee ballot, submit an FPCA every year to ensure their data is up to date and take advantage of their protections under UOCAVA.

In 2022, ADM and overseas citizen voters in ESB Data Standard jurisdictions were more likely to request their blank ballots electronically than request their blank ballot by mail. Figure 31 shows that around mid-September, there was a notable increase in the number of ballot requests received by both methods, as shown by the change of slope.⁴⁰ When comparing Figure 32 with Figure 31, in 2020 voters relied more on electronic ballot requests than in 2022—there were almost twice as many electronic ballot requests in 2020 as mail ballot requests. This may have been in part caused by the uncertainty around mail and mailing times during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, while in each elections half of the ballot requests had been received 45 days before the election, the increase in the pace of ballots received happened earlier in 2020 than in 2022, suggesting that voters took action earlier in 2020 compared to 2022.

³⁹ "Untracked" as the ballot request type. Texas is not included in analyses that report data only for ADM or overseas citizens, since they did not report the voter type in their data. Only ballot requests dated by Election Day are included in this table.

³⁹ The states of Georgia and Massachusetts, and Ingham County (MI) are not included in calculations. They reported "Untracked" ballot request type for all observations in 2022. Eighty-four percent of observations from Wisconsin, and 22% of observations from Colorado were not included in 2022 calculations for reporting "Untracked" as the ballot request type. Only ballot requests dated by Election Day are included in this table.

⁴⁰ It is worth noting the spike in mail ballot requests received in early September, which corresponds to over 5,000 ballot requests recorded on September 8, 2023 by Okaloosa (FL) and are the result of an administrative process by which the county updates the ballot request record for UOCAVA voters that had requested ballots for all elections within the past two general election cycles to ensure they receive a ballot for the current election.

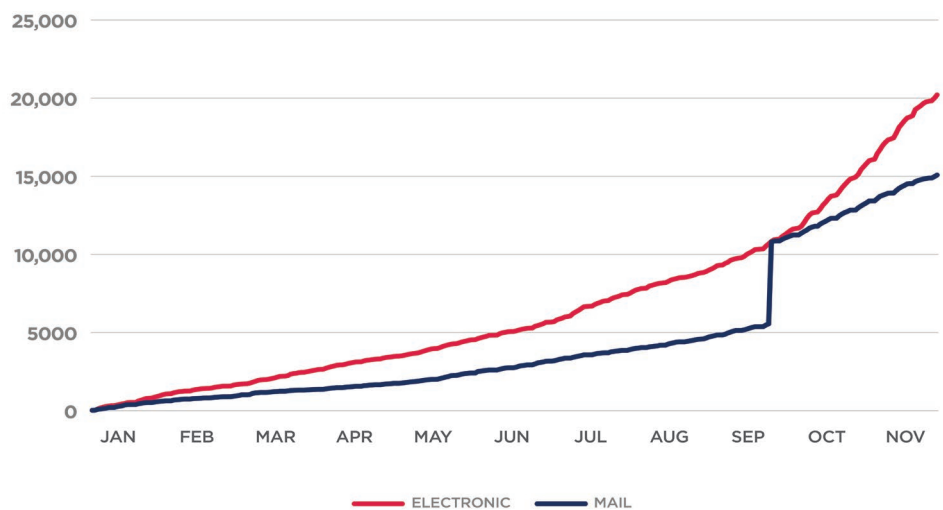


Figure 31. ESB Data Standard Jurisdictions Reported Higher Volume of Electronic Ballot Requests than Mail Ballot Requests in 2022.⁴¹

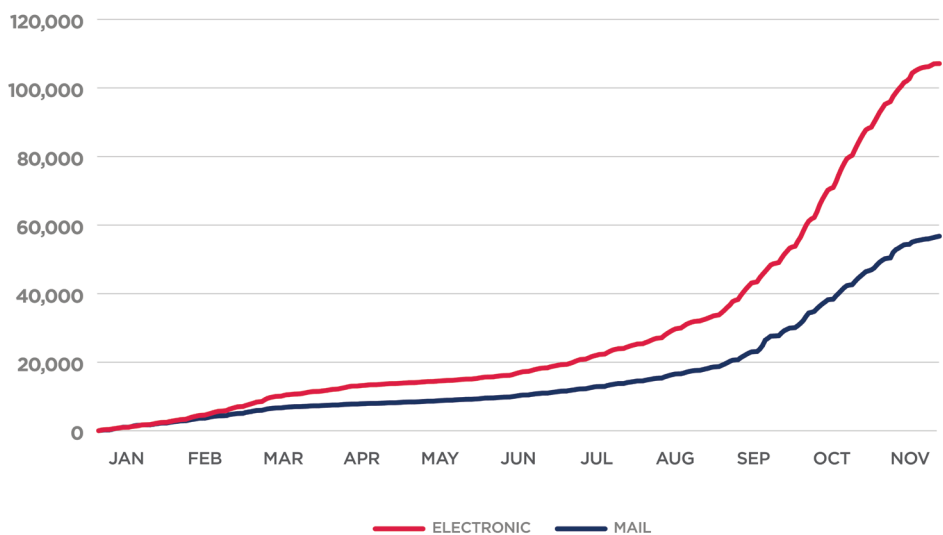


Figure 32. ESB Data Standard Jurisdictions Electronic ballot requests were more frequent than mail ballot requests in 2022.⁴²

In 2022, UOCAVA voters from those jurisdictions that participated in the ESB Data Standard requested their ballots slightly later than they did in 2018. As shown in Figure 33, request timing is very

⁴¹ The states of Georgia, Massachusetts, New York, and Texas, and the jurisdiction of Ingham County (MI) are excluded from analyses for reporting all requests made by mode "Untracked." Ninety-nine percent of Delaware's observations are also excluded for reporting all requests made by mode "Untracked." This graph includes observations with ballot requests dated between January 1, 2022 and Election Day.

⁴² The states of Georgia, Massachusetts, New York, and Texas, and the jurisdiction of Ingham County (MI) are excluded from analyses for reporting all requests made by mode "Untracked." Ninety-nine percent of Delaware's observations are also excluded for reporting all requests made by mode "Untracked." This graph includes observations with ballot requests dated between January 1st 2022 and Election Day.

similar for both election periods until June.⁴³ Similar to previous elections, in September ballot requests increased significantly, as noted by the dots on the graph in Figure 33.

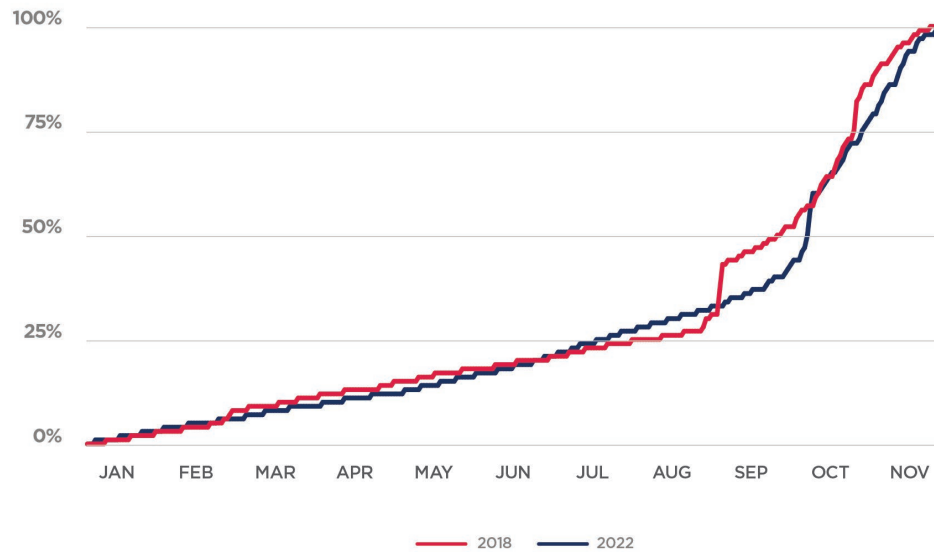


Figure 33. ESB Data Standard States and Jurisdictions Reported UOCAVA Voters Requested Ballots Slightly Earlier in 2018 Compared to the 2022 Election.⁴⁴

Ballot Transmission Method and Ballot Return Rates

The UOCAVA requires that states provide an option for voters to receive blank ballots by at least one electronic method (i.e., email, online, or fax). This protection is particularly critical for those UOCAVA voters who requested their ballots after the 45-day deadline.

Among the states and jurisdictions participating in the 2022 ESB Data Standard, overall, blank absentee ballots transmitted by mail were returned at slightly higher rates than those transmitted electronically. However, for ballots requested in 2022, blank ballots transmitted electronically were returned at higher rates than those transmitted by mail, in particular when the ballot was requested very close to Election Day, as shown in Figure 34.

⁴³ The spike in ballot requests received in August of 2022 is caused by the state of Washington reporting a large portion of their ballot requests on a three-day span, while the spike sought in September 2022 is the result of an administrative process conducted in Okaloosa County, Florida where they updated a majority of their ballot requests on September 8, 2022.

⁴⁴ This graph uses only data from states and jurisdictions that completed ESB in 2018 and 2022. The states and jurisdictions that completed ESB for both years are: Colorado, New York, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, Ingham (MI), Los Angeles County (CA), and Richmond (GA). This graph includes observations with ballot requests dated between January 1, 2018 (or 2022) and Election Day.

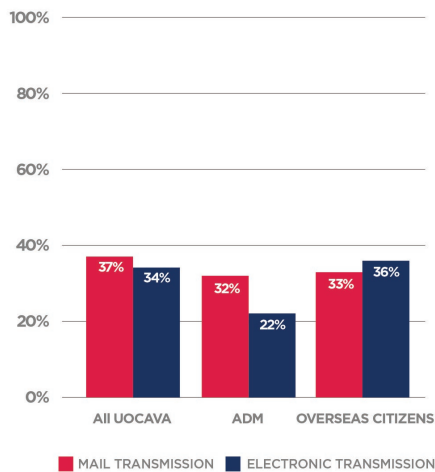


Figure 35. Breakdown between active duty military and overseas citizens for ESB Data Standard Jurisdictions in 2022 comparing the relationship between blank ballot transmission method and ballot return rate.⁴⁶

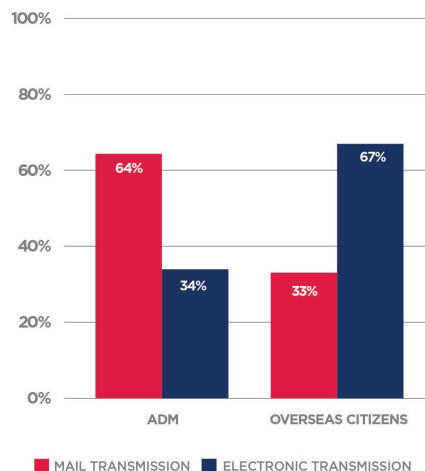


Figure 36. ESB Data Standard Jurisdictions Reported that active duty military members mostly relied on mail ballot transmission, while overseas citizens mostly relied on electronic ballot transmission.⁴⁷

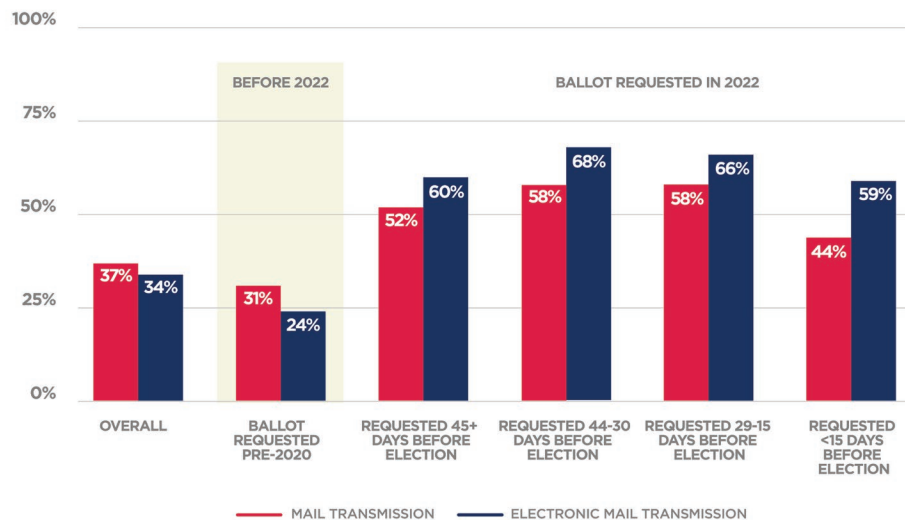


Figure 34. ESB Data Standard Jurisdictions Reported that Blank Ballots Transmitted by Mail Had Lower Return Rates than Blank Ballots Transmitted Electronically for Ballot Requests Made in 2022.⁴⁵

Blank ballots transmitted to ADM by mail were returned at higher rates than those transmitted electronically. However, for overseas citizen voters blank ballots transmitted electronically had slightly higher return rates than those transmitted by mail. Figure 35 demonstrates the breakdown between ADM and overseas citizens when it comes to ballot return in relation to blank ballot transmission method.

Figure 36 illustrates that overseas citizens mostly relied on electronic transmission to receive their blank absentee ballots while ADM members mostly relied on mail transmission. These results indicate that offering mail and electronic ballot return options is equally important when it comes to reducing the obstacles that UOCAVA voters might face when returning their ballots.

⁴⁵ This graph excludes observations with ballot requests dated after Election Day. It also excludes observations that were rejected due to any of the following reasons: Undeliverable, Voided/Spoiled, Voted in Person, and Voter Died. Electronic transmission includes email, fax and online.

⁴⁶ This graph excludes observations with ballot requests dated after Election Day. It also excludes observations that were rejected due to any of the following reasons: Undeliverable, Voided/Spoiled, Voted in Person, and Voter Died. Electronic transmission includes email, fax and online. The group "All UOCAVA" includes observations that do not specify if the voter was ADM or overseas citizen.

⁴⁷ This graph excludes observations with ballot requests dated after Election Day. Electronic transmission includes email, fax and online. In addition to mail and electronic transmission, some states reported a small number of ballots transmitted in-person or by other methods, thus percentages of mail and electronic ballot transmissions may not add up to 100.

Ballot Transmission Timing and Ballot Return Rates

The UOCAVA requires election officials to send out requested blank ballots to voters at least 45 days before every federal election day. This is to provide enough time for UOCAVA voters to receive, complete, and return their ballots by the state deadline. For the 2022 General Election, 89 percent of ballot requests were filed before the 45-day deadline of September 24, 2022. Of all the blank ballots transmitted to UOCAVA voters in the ESB participating jurisdictions, most of them were transmitted by the 45-day deadline. Figure 37 shows that the ballot return rates were higher for ballots requested during the election year, among those requested between 45 and 15 days before the election.

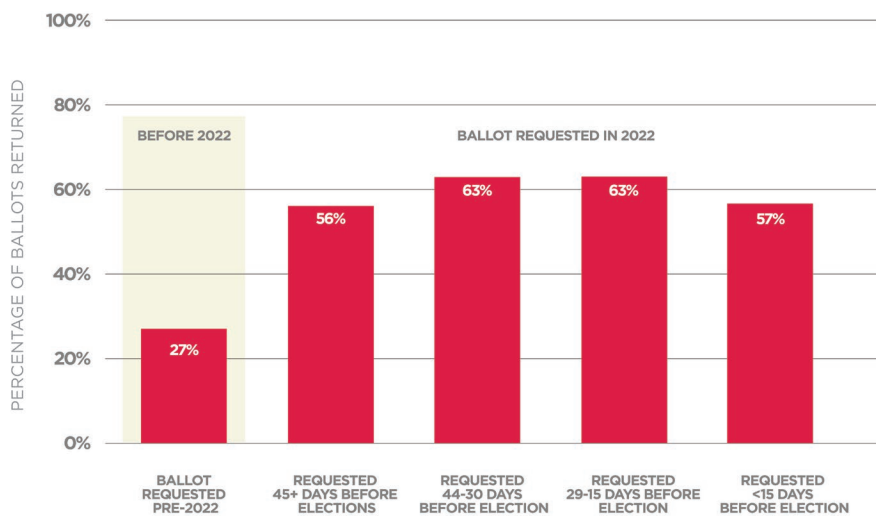


Figure 37. Ballots requested during the election year in ESB Data Standard States and Jurisdictions have higher return rates.⁴⁸

In the 2022 General Election, ballots were returned slightly later than they were in the 2018 and the 2020 General Elections. Figure 38 shows the cumulative percentage of UOCAVA ballots received from 45 days before Election Day until 10 days after Election Day for the last three general elections. The earlier ballot return in 2020 could have been linked to COVID-19-related FVAP messaging and voters taking action earlier to ensure that their ballots were not affected by COVID-19-related delays to meet their state's ballot deadline. The pattern for timing of ballot return came back to pre-pandemic results, as suggested by the almost identical trend in ballot return between the 2018 and 2022 General Elections.

⁴⁸ This graph excludes observations with ballot requests dated after Election Day. It also excludes observations that were rejected due to any of the following reasons: Undeliverable, Voided/Spoiled, Voted in Person, and Voter Died.

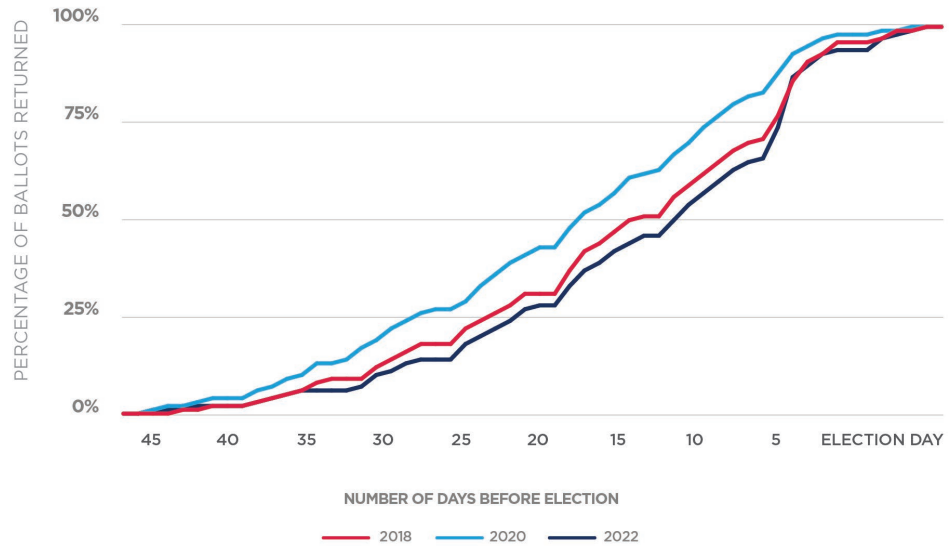


Figure 38. UOCAVA ballots in ESB Data Standard States and Jurisdictions were returned earlier in 2020 than in the 2018 and 2022 elections.⁴⁹

Ballot Return Method

In 2022, electronic and mail ballot return were used at similar rates among states that allowed electronic ballot return. The use of electronic ballot return was concentrated in the days before Election Day with almost half of the ballots returned electronically being received in the seven days leading up to Election Day. Earlier in 2020, electronic ballot return showed a constant pattern similar to that of mail ballot returns. Figures 39 and 40 show that in 2020, regardless of the return mode used, the ballot return flow remained steady, with fewer spikes closer to election day. Electronic ballot return was used more than mail ballot return in states that allowed electronic ballot return.

⁴⁹ This graph uses data from states and jurisdictions that completed ESB in 2018, 2020, and 2022. The states and jurisdictions included are: Colorado, New York, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, Ingham County (MI), Los Angeles County (CA), and Richmond County (GA).

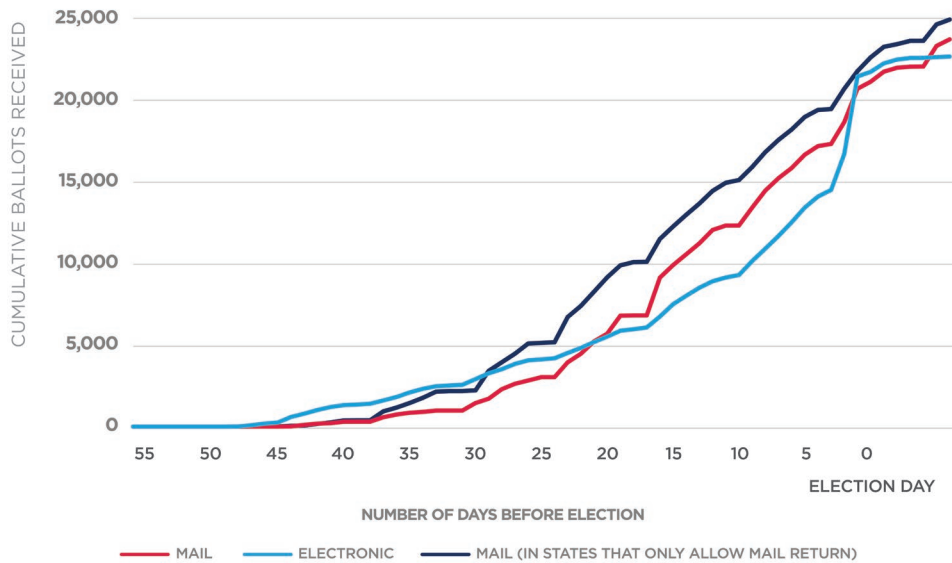


Figure 39. In 2022, Electronic and Mail Ballot Return Were Used at Similar Rates In States Allowing for Electronic Return.⁵⁰

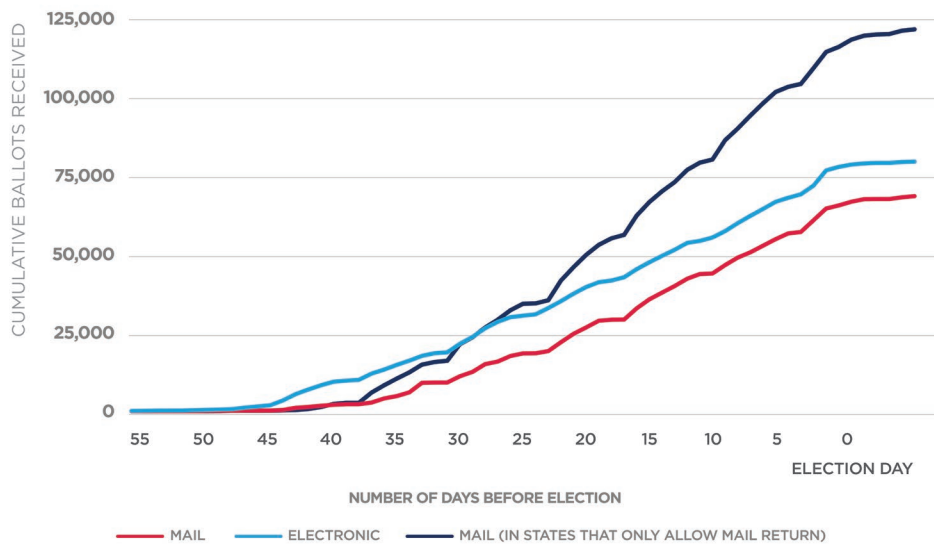


Figure 40. In 2020, electronic ballot return in ESB Data Standard States and Jurisdictions was used more than mail in states allowing electronic return.⁵¹

⁵⁰ This graph displays ballots received between September 14, 2022 and November 15, 2022. Policy on methods allowed for ballot return was obtained from FVAPs Voting Assistance Guide (<https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/States/eVAG.pdf>). The states of Georgia and Massachusetts, and the jurisdiction of Ingham County (MI) are not included because they reported the method of ballot return as "Untracked."

⁵¹ This graph displays ballots received between September 9, 2020 and November 10, 2020. Policy on methods allowed for ballot return was obtained from FVAPs Voting Assistance Guide (<https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/States/eVAG.pdf>). The state of Kentucky, is not included because they reported the method of ballot return as "Untracked." The jurisdiction of Richmond County (GA) is not included because they did not report the method of ballot return.

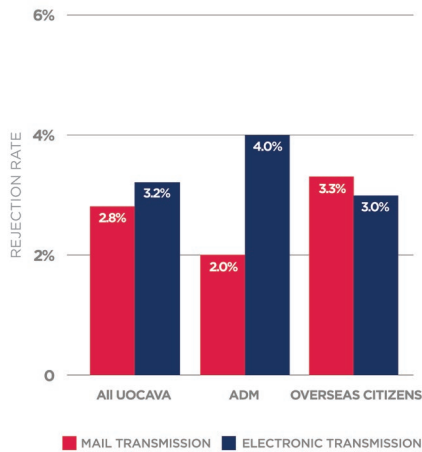


Figure 41. Among voted ballots returned by UOCAVA voters to ESB Data Standard Jurisdictions, those blank ballots transmitted to them electronically had slightly higher rejection rates for ADM compared to ballots transmitted by mail.⁵²

Rejection Rates by Blank Ballot Transmission Method

As seen in Figure 41, the rejection rate for returned ballots was low no matter which mode had been used to transmit the blank ballot. However, ADM had higher levels of ballot rejection for blank ballots that were transmitted electronically compared to those transmitted by mail, while overseas citizens had similar rejection rates for both transmission methods.

This ESB Data Standard further demonstrates the importance of *UOCAVA* – and states’ adherence to its requirements – in support of the absentee voting process for ADM and overseas citizens. It also provides empirical data supporting FVAP’s recommendations that *UOCAVA* voters use the FPCA to register to vote and request an absentee ballot, and that they submit one FPCA at least every election year to ensure their registration data is up-to-date and that they may take advantage of the protections under *UOCAVA*. FVAP will continue to work with state and local election officials to expand the implementation of the ESB Data Standard and structure reporting processes from election jurisdictions before recommending changes to Section B of the EAVS.

Cooperative Agreement with the Council of State Governments

In 2021, FVAP continued the cooperative agreement with The Council of State Governments (CSG) and its work with the Overseas Voting Initiative (OVI). The collaboration aims to improve the voting process for *UOCAVA* voters by providing direct interaction with state and local election officials who are best positioned to discuss difficulties, share best practices, and identify emerging trends. This initiative is critical for FVAP engagement with stakeholders in state and local government to explore areas in which FVAP can improve the connection between *UOCAVA* voters and election administrators.

In 2022, the OVI Working Group consisted of over 20 state and local election officials and was chaired by bipartisan election officials: Secretary of State James Condos (D-VT) and the Honorable David Stafford (R-Escambia County, FL). The OVI Working Group focused on the standardization of *UOCAVA*

⁵² This graph excludes observations with ballot requests dated after Election Day. It also excludes observations that were rejected due to any of the following reasons: Undeliverable, Voided/Spoiled, Voted in Person, and Voter Died. Electronic transmission includes email, fax and online. The group “All UOCAVA” includes observations that do not specify if the voter was ADM or overseas citizen.

administrative data to reduce the post-election reporting burden for state and local election officials, and the exploration and sustainability of *UOCAVA* balloting solutions. 2021 and 2022 saw several key outputs emerge as OVI:

- Hosted a Working Group meeting in September 2021 in Colorado Springs, CO, which included a tour of U.S. Space Force Base Peterson. This meeting discussed final reports from the Working Group, including recommendations for procurement language, innovative security initiatives, and new areas of research.
- Collected transactional-level election data from the states representing more than 40 percent of the total *UOCAVA* population. OVI worked with member jurisdictions to improve their data collection and analysis as well as increase the number of states participating in the EAVS Section B Data Standard data analysis project.
- Published “Access to and Usage of Faxing by Military and Overseas Voters,” a research paper highlighting the lack of access to fax machines by military and overseas citizens. In some states, fax return is the only form of electronic ballot return available to *UOCAVA* voters. However, access to and usage of faxing devices has steadily declined over the past 20 years.
- Produced a series of articles entitled “Beyond the Ballot” following interviews with election officials that “put a face to the name” of those who administer elections. The goal is to explain the mechanics of and story behind elections and election officials.
- Generated numerous reports and articles on *UOCAVA* election processes and provided technical assistance to states on legislation targeting *UOCAVA* voters. At the request of election officials, CSG.org published articles focusing on the basics of election administration.

Special Elections in 2021

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 2021. FVAP sincerely thanks the states of Georgia, Louisiana, and Ohio for sharing their *UOCAVA* ballot transmission data. The following data was provided:

- Georgia: A General Runoff Election for U.S. Senate was held on January 5, 2021.
 - Of the 27,920 *UOCAVA* ballots transmitted, 12,659 were returned and 12,627 were accepted.
- Louisiana: A Special Election for the 5th Congressional District was held on March 20, 2021.
 - Of the 5,035 *UOCAVA* ballots transmitted, 398 were returned and 283 were accepted.
- Louisiana: A Special Runoff Election for the 2nd Congressional District was held on April 24, 2021.
 - Of the 4,152 *UOCAVA* ballots transmitted, 332 were returned and 230 were accepted.
- Ohio: A Special General Election for the 11th and 15th Congressional Districts was held on November 2, 2021.
 - Of the 406 *UOCAVA* ballots transmitted, 209 were returned and 205 were accepted.⁵³

State Waiver Requests

Under *UOCAVA*, the Department of Justice (DOJ) is the federal agency assigned to enforce the provisions of the statute. During the 2022 election cycle, FVAP and the Voting Section of the DOJ continued to work cooperatively and coordinate when issues arose related to FVAP's role in administering *UOCAVA*.

On February 26, 2022, the Ohio Redistricting Commission had not adopted a Congressional district map approved by the Ohio Supreme Court, and legal contests in state and federal court were ongoing. Therefore, the State of Ohio applied for a waiver for *UOCAVA*'s 45-day advance transmission requirement.

FVAP communicated with Ohio election officials and consulted closely with the DOJ when considering the State's waiver request and comprehensive plan. After careful review and consultation with the DOJ, the Department of Defense determined:

- Ohio established an undue hardship on the grounds that the State suffered a delay in generating ballots due to a legal contest, prohibiting compliance with the *UOCAVA* requirement to transmit ballots at least 45 days prior to the May 3, 2022 primary election.

⁵³ Data was not collected specific to the congressional districts so some *UOCAVA* data may include ballots that were transmitted to and returned by voters not in 11th or 15th congressional Districts.

- Ohio’s comprehensive plan did not provide absent *UOCAVA* voters sufficient time to receive and submit absentee ballots in time to be counted in the May 3, 2022 primary election.

On March 4, 2022, FVAP notified Ohio that its waiver request was denied.

Assessment of FVAP Activities

In fulfilling FVAP’s responsibilities under *UOCAVA*, FVAP is committed to promoting awareness of the right to vote and working to eliminate real or perceived barriers for those eligible voters who choose to exercise that right. In its 2020 Post-Election Report to Congress, FVAP recommended three areas for action to improve its effectiveness:

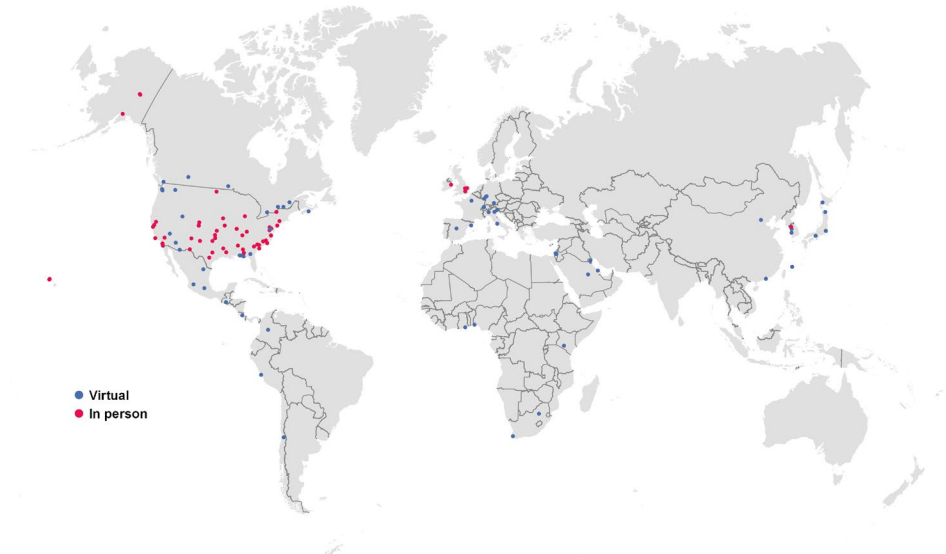
- Reduce barriers for *UOCAVA* voters to successfully vote absentee.
- Increase awareness about voting absentee.
- Enhance measures of effectiveness and participation.

Using lessons learned from previous election cycles, FVAP expanded its efforts to raise awareness of its resources and reduce obstacles by improving its website, online outreach, and call center support.

Reduced Obstacles to *UOCAVA* Citizen Voting Success

Voting Assistance Officer Training

A key component to the absentee voting success of military members and their families is the Voting Assistance Officer. Most units are required to have an assigned VAO. The DoD clearly identifies the role of the VAOs and their responsibilities within DoD Instruction 1000.04. FVAP provides direct support for these VAOs to ensure that they understand the absentee voting process and their responsibilities in carrying out the law and the DoD regulations. Each VAO receives training on how to guide others through the process and use FVAP’s provided state-specific tools and resources. In a typical election cycle, VAO training is offered online through FVAP’s dedicated training website and through both in-person and live virtual workshops conducted by FVAP staff.



Locations of in-person and virtual workshops conducted by FVAP in 2022.

FVAP worked with SVAOs from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and the Department of State to schedule in-person VAO training workshops at military installations domestically and select installations and diplomatic posts around the globe where high populations of U.S. citizens resided in support of the 2022 election. Continuing in-country COVID-19 pandemic restrictions affected the ability to conduct in-person workshops again. Therefore, 56 workshops were conducted in person and 70 virtually.

FVAP adapted the alternative training content created in 2020 for the 2022 virtual presentations. These modified VAO training sessions provided an additional option for live questions and answers by FVAP personnel. FVAP provided these training sessions through a variety of virtual meeting platforms available to, and set up by, the host VAOs. These workshops were able to train VAOs.

On a 5-point scale, assessment survey responses from participating in-person attendees showed the in-person workshops resulted in an average 2.2-point learning increase.

Through this combination of timely in-person and virtual workshops, FVAP trained 2,380 VAOs across the five Services and the Department of State. Assessment of FVAP Activities score among participating in-person attendees was 4.6 (on a scale from 1.00 to 5.00, with 5.00 being the highest rating), a slight increase from the score in 2018 (4.5).



FVAP staff member presenting at Barksdale AFB.

As an additional indicator of the effectiveness of voting assistance training, the 2022 PEVS data show that VAOs who received online or in-person training served more individuals than VAOs who received neither type of training. The combined impact of in-person and online training for UVAOs underscores the need for continued support for the Military Services' in-person training, as attendance at both modes of training resulted in a nine-percentage point increase in the number of individuals assisted.

	Average Number of Individuals Served During 2022 by Training
Neither in Person Nor Online	19.2
Only In-Person	44.7
Only Online	33.7
Both In-Person and Online	51.1

Table 12. Average number of UVAOs who attended FVAP training in 2022 by type of training⁵⁴

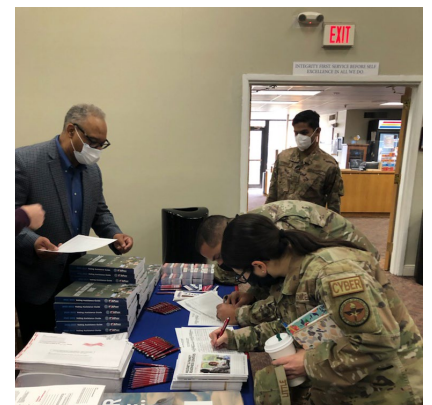
While post-workshop surveys of the trainings showed that FVAP successfully accomplished its objective, it is important to identify the impact of the pandemic and the balance struck again in 2022 between providing the best support possible versus those opportunities that remain the most effective means of conducting training. Based on the overall satisfaction scores and learning assessments from 2022, in-person VAO workshops remain the most effective. This effectiveness is demonstrated by the interactive learning mode itself, as well as the additional benefits of having FVAP staff provide direct guidance to VAOs. This is seen in the ability of FVAP staff to see first-hand and provide guidance to installation voting assistance programs and identify further areas for support. Additionally, onsite FVAP personnel can assist state and local election officials in establishing a direct connection with installation command, public affairs, and the voting assistance community structure.

Moving forward, FVAP will continue to leverage virtual VAO trainings to supplement and enhance the impact of in-person training efforts. The global disruptions experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic illustrate the value of having an expanded support presence closer to the general election. Historically, FVAP concluded in-person workshops by July of each election year to focus on core customer service activities leading into the general election. The 2020 and 2022 election cycles demonstrated the

⁵⁴ PEVS-VAO 2022, Q11, Q21, Q22, Q23. The questions on the number of ADM in military units, spouses and dependents, and ADM at IVA Offices provided ordinal responses (None, 1 to 9, 10 to 24, 25 to 99, 100 or more). In this analysis calculations assumed each respondent helped the midpoint of these ordinal categories (0, 5, 17, 62, and 100, respectively). VAOs were classified as taking online training if they attended either online training or virtual training.



A VAO asks a question during an FVAP presentation at Beale AFB.



VAOs sign in before and FVAP workshop at Lackland AFB.

capacity for the FVAP team to offer additional training mediums and offer support closer to the November election. Virtual VAO trainings for the 2024 election cycle will continue into the summer of 2024 once the majority of in-person workshops have concluded, allowing new VAOs to receive the needed instruction to successfully perform their role.

FVAP.gov Website Metrics

FVAP.gov is an intuitively structured site with online assistants that guide users through completion and submission of the FPCA and the FWAB. The site offers educational materials directly to voters, and those who assist voters, to help simplify the UOCAVA voting process. FVAP.gov directs users to state websites offering online voter registration and ballot request features. It also provides election news, state-specific voting deadlines, requirements, and contact information for FVAP, local election officials, voting assistance offices, and stakeholder organizations. Web metrics for FVAP.gov in 2022 indicate site engagement similar to 2018, with a 36 percent increase in page views and a one percent decrease in users. Engagement in 2022 was higher than in 2018 in the first part of the year, with engagement tapering to slightly lower levels than in 2018 at the end of the year.

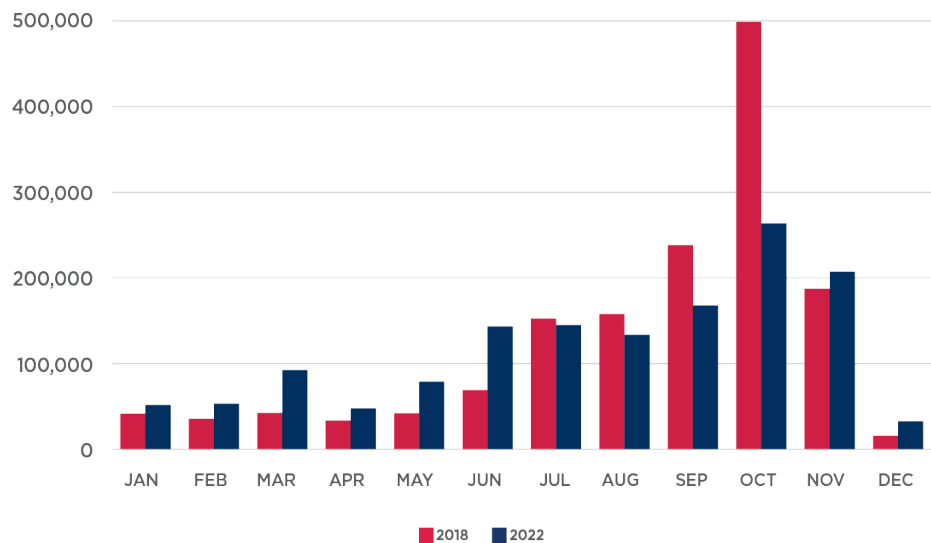


Figure 42. Total FVAP.gov sessions during 2018 and 2022.

To assess the effectiveness of its website, FVAP tracks four desired actions, or “conversions,” that website users might take during a session on FVAP.gov:

- 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.

These conversions indicate a first step toward offline target behaviors – registering to vote, requesting a ballot, and returning a voted ballot. The results of FVAP’s push-to-web efforts in 2022 have an overall conversion rate of 25 percent, which falls within the top 10 percent of conversion rate benchmarks for websites that are deemed “high traffic.” This conversion rate is also higher than in 2018 (22 percent).

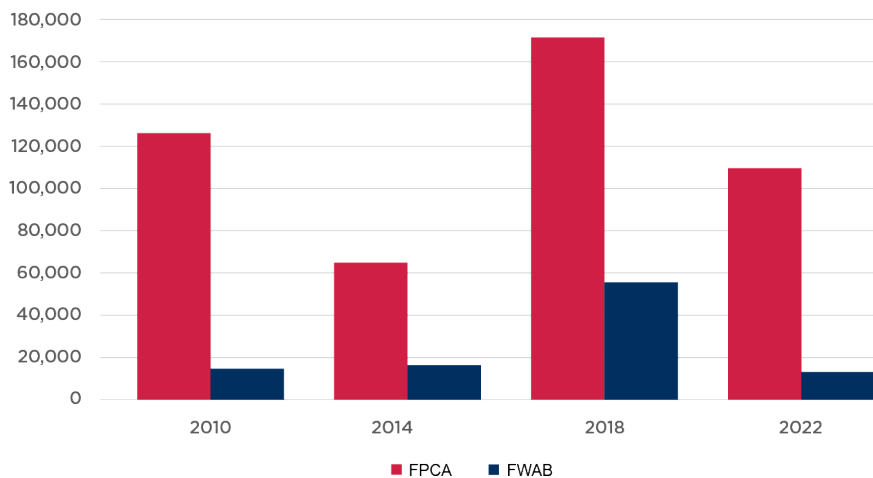


Figure 43. Total FPCA and FWAB transaction on FVAP.gov, 2010-2022.

In 2022, 109,268 FPCAs were downloaded, and 15,479 FWABs were downloaded in the same period. This is nearly a seven percent decrease in FPCA downloads and nearly a 57 percent decrease in FWAB downloads on FVAP.gov in 2022 compared to 2018. It does not appear this significant decrease in FWAB downloads was due to any technical issues, so FVAP will investigate to determine if fewer FWABs were needed due to state ballot receipt success, lack of awareness, or other reasons.

Using the online assistance tools, it took users, on average, 7.59 minutes to complete the FPCA and 9.45 minutes to complete the FWAB (target time for completion is 15 minutes or less). These times are improvements from 2018, when voters required eight minutes to complete FPCA and 10.08 minutes to complete the FWAB. FVAP will continue to assess usability enhancements within its form completion process. The online assistants are important resources as they provide voters with full state-specific completion and submission instructions and prevent visitors from omitting information that could result in their application or ballot being rejected by the election office. While FVAP.gov is the



official federally supported program website required by federal law to support the implementation of *UOCAVA*, the Department recognizes and appreciates other organizations that assist FVAP voters worldwide.

Voting Assistance Center

FVAP's Voting Assistance Center provides phone, email, and fax support to *UOCAVA* voters and those who assist them, including VAOs, election officials, academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and stateside family members. FVAP provided continuous business-hours customer service throughout the election cycle, with expanded coverage on Election Day and during special elections.

Key observations on the performance of the call center in 2022 include:

- FVAP responded to over 12,215 inquiries, representing a decrease of four percent in phone call and email volume as compared to the 2018 presidential election.
- The Call Center achieved a customer satisfaction survey rate of 4.6 out of five with a customer service survey response rate of 11 percent.

Also in 2022, email-to-fax service usage increased by over 122 percent from the 2018 election and supported a total of 3,492 transactions between October 1, 2022, and November 8, 2022. *UOCAVA* customers use FVAP's email-to-fax service when they need to fax their official ballot, FWAB, or FPCA to their election office and do not have access to a fax machine. FVAP transmits voting documents only to states that allow the use of fax machines but not email, as voters can email directly. *UOCAVA* voters emailing documents that do not meet this criterion are provided instructions on how to transmit their voting documents directly to their election office based on their state's guidelines.

In 2022, FVAP ensured that all voting documents received from *UOCAVA* voters were transmitted to the appropriate jurisdictions by the end of Election Day and included a cover memo stating the voter had transmitted the document before the close of polls. FVAP is exploring options to increase email-to-fax efficiencies for 2022.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, FVAP Voting Assistance Center staff members were in permanent telework status starting on March 16, 2020, and throughout 2022. FVAP was seamlessly able to provide improved customer service over previous elections despite the telework status.

Expanded UOCAVA Voter Awareness and Outreach Initiatives

Efforts to Increase Awareness

In 2022, FVAP continued to build upon research-based strategies that proved successful in 2018 and 2020 to increase brand recognition and raise awareness of FVAP resources, including positioning FVAP.gov as the leading official source of absentee voting information for the military, their families, and overseas citizens. These strategies included:

- using behavior-based strategies which include acknowledging citizens who want to vote, but require assistance due to real or perceived challenges;
- focusing on the process steps that specific UOCAVA audiences found most problematic;
- encouraging voters to act earlier to avoid missing deadlines;
- increasing the number of UOCAVA voters reached through advanced data science techniques; and
- reaching voters directly in their homes and through trusted community organizations.

Specific tactics used in 2022 based on lessons learned and stakeholder recommendations included:

- deadlines throughout the election cycle to spur action along with reminders about those deadlines;
- information and resources with a customer service orientation to guide a voter throughout the entire absentee voting process; and
- access to tools that simplify the FPCA and FWAB.

Throughout 2022, FVAP communicated the key message that ADM, their eligible family members, and overseas citizens have the ability to vote in federal elections from anywhere in the world. FVAP adjusted its messaging to coincide with the overall election calendar itself and address each step of the voting process for UOCAVA voters. Messaging in 2022 continued to put greater

emphasis on using the FPCA (to identify oneself as a *UOCAVA* voter to state and local election offices), highlighting trusted and accurate sources of election information, clarifying state voting residency guidelines, and using the FWAB as a backup ballot.

FVAP’s integrated marketing communications campaign achieved its goals of engaging *UOCAVA* voters through a combination of advertising, news media, social media, and direct outreach. The campaign was focused on driving voters to FVAP.gov and encouraging voters to use the online assistants or downloadable forms to complete the FPCA and FWAB for submission to their election office.

Organic (Unpaid) Social Media

FVAP implemented a strategic social media plan across popular platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Instagram. The timing and content of posts were designed to ensure these platforms were fully integrated into the overall outreach campaign and to maximize engagement with voters (both prospective and active) and other organizations with large audiences of U.S. citizens covered by *UOCAVA*.

Each of FVAP’s organic social channels reached a specific audience or mix of audiences. Facebook and Instagram typically reached *UOCAVA* voters directly; Twitter reached voters and stakeholders who could inform voters, including partners such as U.S. embassies and consulates; and LinkedIn reached influencers like state and local election offices.



Instagram post highlighting primary election calendar alerts.

In 2022, FVAP’s Facebook followers dropped by less than one percent due to continuing targeting limitations that began in 2020 with policy changes at Facebook. However, Facebook remains the platform that allows FVAP to reach the largest number of potential *UOCAVA* voters organically. Similar downturns in Twitter followers occurred in 2022 as well, due to changes at Twitter. Instagram saw increased engagement and followers due to an increased interest in short-form media. LinkedIn similarly saw increased engagement and followers, as well as the highest conversion rate among all the FVAP-owned social media platforms at 18.81 percent. This may have been due to increased partner outreach, as more in-person stakeholder events were held in 2022.

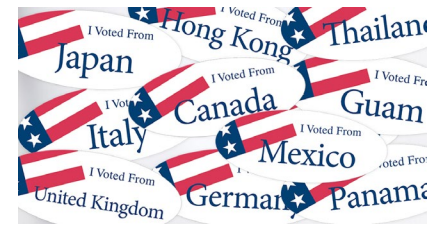
The “I Voted” digital stickers continued to perform well in the 2022 election cycle. The landing page garnered 2,214 unique pageviews and 2,080 clicks to view the selected country or territory-specific sticker. This means the stickers were engaged with after 94 percent of landing page visits, so most users interacted with the stickers after finding the page.

On Instagram, FVAP used GIPHY stickers to attract the attention of the viewer while scrolling through stories on Instagram. These included general voting phrases and actions, the FVAP logo, and an absentee voting checklist. These decorative digital stickers garnered 175,900 views on Instagram Stories, making them nearly as popular as they were in 2020, when they received 180,000 views. These stickers were a part of FVAP’s media strategy that focused on younger and first-time voters.

User-generated content videos received higher engagement rates than still ads. While the “Around the World” ad was used in 2020 and then repurposed for the 2022 election cycle, the ad still had high engagement rates. Video shorts like “Call and Response” and “Form Offerings” exceeded performance with a 12 to 14 percent engagement rate during the campaign. This suggests that short-form video content, and video content that looks like it is created by customers and published to social media, continues to create more engagement than some more traditional methods.



Examples of user generated content video shorts “Form Offerings” and “Call and Response” that performed well in 2022.



Examples of the “I Voted” sticker available on FVAP.gov.

Use our Instagram Sticker or download your own “I Voted From Sticker” at FVAP.gov/IVotedSticker



Examples of the nine GIPHY stickers on Instagram.



The “Around the World” Ad created high engagement in 2020 and it was used in the 2022 media campaign with similar high engagement.

Recent trends of social media users by age group shows that the 18- to 29-year-olds are migrating away from social media channels like Facebook and toward channels like Instagram, YouTube, Reddit, Snapchat, and Twitch, which points to rising engagement with shorter-form media. FVAP plans to take this trend into consideration when creating its media campaign for the 2024 election cycle.

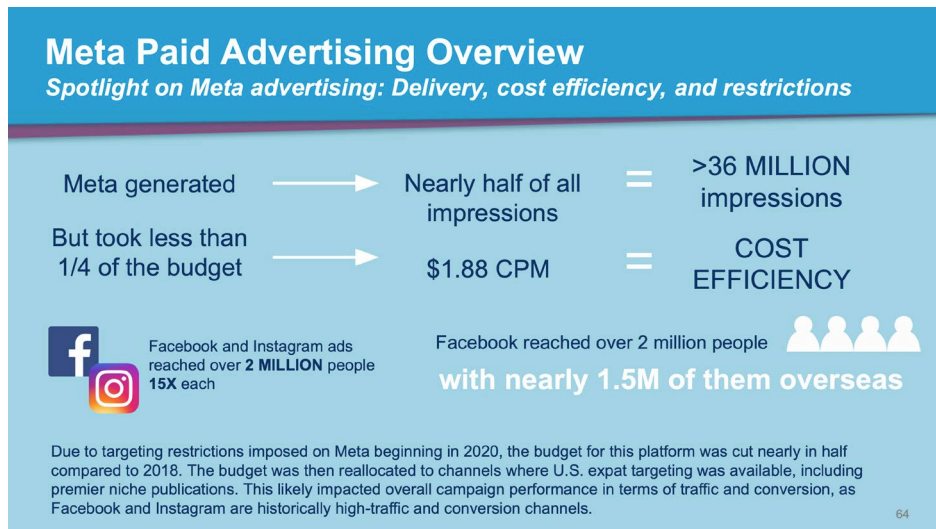
Paid Media

To raise awareness of FVAP's absentee voting materials and services for active duty personnel, their families, and overseas citizens, FVAP placed paid advertising in several mediums that proved to be successful in past election cycles. FVAP's advertising in 2022 was primarily on digital platforms strategically targeting UOCAVA voters. These platforms included social media, search engine marketing, programmatic and video displays, and sponsored content. FVAP combined these placements with similar ones that appeared on a weekly basis in overseas editions of *Stars & Stripes*, print placements in niche publications such as *The American* published in the United Kingdom, and *The Local*, which is published in several cities worldwide. The paid campaigns' impressions (the number of times the ads are displayed) decreased from 133 million in 2018 to 89.5 million in 2022. However, this was more impressions than in 2016 (85 million).

In 2022, FVAP's media campaign generated 1.3 million sessions at FVAP.gov, which was slightly less than in 2018, which had 1.4 million sessions. In regard to users completing their forms to register to vote, request a ballot, or complete a backup ballot using the FPCA or FWAB online assistant on FVAP.gov, there was a 7.4 percent conversion rate. This is slightly higher than the conversion rate in 2018, which was 7.2 percent.

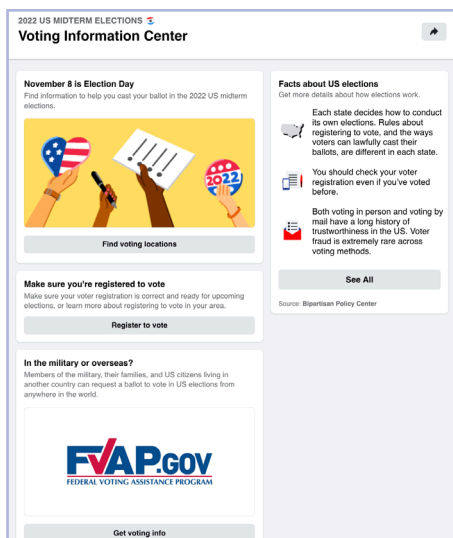
Sessions generated by paid media made up nearly 51 percent of all visits to FVAP.gov in 2022 compared to 21 percent in 2020. Additionally, traffic to FVAP.gov from paid sources spiked during key periods in the absentee voting process. These key periods were just before the recommended August 1 deadline to submit an FPCA, the recommended October 24 ballot return deadline for overseas UOCAVA voters, the October 31 ballot return deadline for stateside military, voter emphasis weeks, and National Voter Registration Day.

Facebook advertising was the most cost-effective amongst all social media platforms in 2022, which was also the case in 2018. Even though Facebook accounted for less than a quarter of the paid media budget, it generated nearly half of all resultant advertising impressions (more than 36 million impressions), reaching some individuals several times with information about FVAP's voting resources.



CPM refers to cost per thousand impressions. It is a standard measure of cost efficiency for advertising.

In 2020, Facebook introduced political advertising restrictions to combat misinformation and attempts to influence elections. These restrictions affected the Facebook and Instagram platforms, creating advertising obstacles for FVAP not just in 2020, but also in 2022. Even though FVAP and its messaging is nonpartisan, the inclusion of election-related keywords in its advertising, such as "voting" and "ballot," caused this advertising to fall under a political classification according to the platforms' regulations. Due to this obstacle, FVAP was unable to target potential UOCAVA voters on these platforms as successfully as it did in past elections. Facebook did, however, continue to increase FVAP's visibility on the Facebook and Instagram platforms through the Voting Information Center (VIC) started in 2020. In order to provide more succinct and helpful information to voters in 2022, FVAP worked with Facebook to redirect the shared link for FVAP.gov from the Voting Assistance Guide to the FVAP.gov homepage.



Facebook's Voting Information Center directed users to FVAP.gov

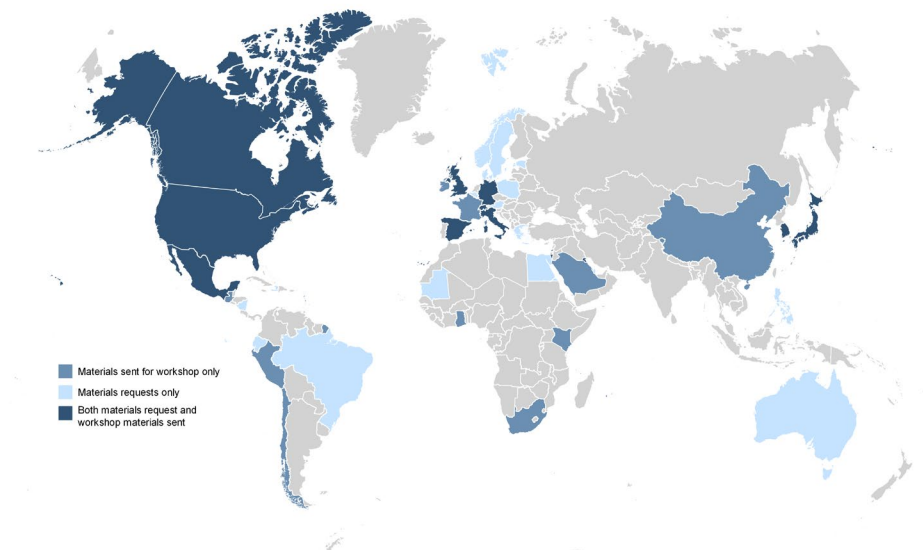
FVAP will continue to coordinate with Facebook in the future to hopefully resolve FVAP's inclusion as political advertising and lead to Facebook's VIC better aligning with overall FVAP outreach.

In the 2024 Election Cycle, FVAP will continue to engage Facebook to better distinguish between political advertising and nonpartisan voter awareness messaging. This is so that election administrators at the federal, state, and local levels are able to engage with UOCAVA voters on a global level.

Shared Media and Organizational Outreach

FVAP's integrated strategic communication approach in 2022 leveraged its wealth of data to a broad network of key stakeholders to reach UOCAVA voters through interaction with organizations and individuals who support military and overseas citizens with the absentee voting process. These organizations reached multiple segments of UOCAVA voters. They included the Services, state and local election offices, other federal agencies, voting advocacy groups, embassies and consulates, federal and private-sector employers overseas, educational institutions, and online channels focused on military or overseas citizens.

Collateral Materials



Countries where FVAP shipped collateral materials in 2020

In 2022, FVAP distributed 20,036 hard copy FPCAs and FWABs, as well as 172,561 pieces of other educational and outreach materials. These materials were sent directly to stakeholders

and voters in 41 countries and on 105 military installations⁵⁵ worldwide. Despite the increased use of digital mediums, hard copy materials continue to be in demand by FVAP stakeholders and voters. This demonstrates the continued value of hard copy materials to end-users and the need for FVAP to provide them.

Videos

For the 2022 Election Cycle, FVAP developed two new training videos – one focused on VAOs and the other geared toward military recruitment officers. The VAO-focused video walks VAOs through their duties and explains the absentee voting process, how to use an FPCA and FWAB, and where to find available resources on FVAP.gov. The VAO-focused video was used as the introduction to FVAP’s Voting Assistance Officer workshops to train both military and Department of State VAOs.

In the second video, military recruitment officers can find their requirements as defined in the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) and DoD Instruction 1000.04, along with the importance of their role in the UOCAVA voting process. The video was shared on social media, published on the FVAP.gov website for future, and shared with recruiters directly through the SVAOs.

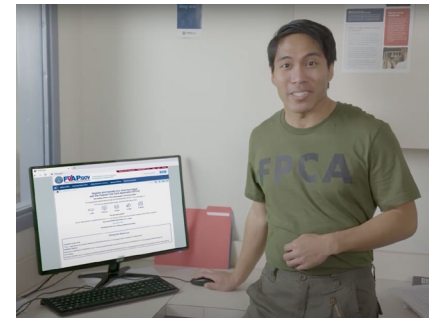
Digital Media Content Toolkits

FVAP updated its downloadable, digital toolkits designed for use by embassies and consulates, the military services (one for military members and a separate one for spouses and family members), human resource professionals who work with overseas citizens, and election offices for 2022. The kits contain customizable shared sample content for publication on digital channels like websites, blogs, social media, email, and other channels. FVAP plans to continue improving these toolkits for the 2024 Election Cycle by including content geared for individuals with no computer graphics experience and templates for VAOs to use in promoting voting assistance events.

Calendar Alerts

In 2022, FVAP provided downloadable Google calendars, first offered in 2020. They contain dates for federal office elections in each state and territory and information on ballot request and

⁵⁵ These numbers only include the forms and materials that were distributed directly by FVAP staff. They do not incorporate the number of FVAP branded materials that were distributed directly by the Military Services or the Department of State.



The Voting Assistance Officer training video.



Recruiter Training Video.

FVAP.gov @FVAP
Pro tip: Download these calendar alerts so you'll never miss a deadline to register to vote, request your ballot, and return your ballot.

Add your state-specific alerts to your desktop or mobile calendar. (5/5)
flap.gov/calendar-alerts



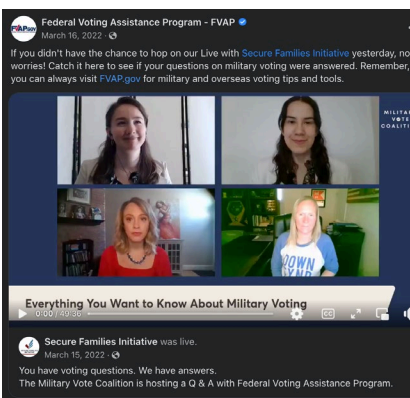
FVAP's downloadable calendars allowed voters to sync their state's election dates and deadlines with their desktop and mobile devices.

ballot return methods. Voters could easily download their state or territory's calendar for synchronization with their mobile or desktop device. Once downloaded, users received calendar alerts and email notifications, as well as automatic updates to their calendars if dates change. The calendars provided users with real-time awareness of these changes. FVAP also created a Google calendar, that contained the events of the military voting action plan, to assist military VAOs with providing regular voting reminders to their unit members. FVAP routinely promoted these online resources through social media and email blasts, resulting in 2,360 calendar users in 2022.

Social Media Engagement



Facebook posts from Armed Forces and Overseas Citizen Voters week.



"Everything You Want to Know about Military Voting" Facebook Live Q&A

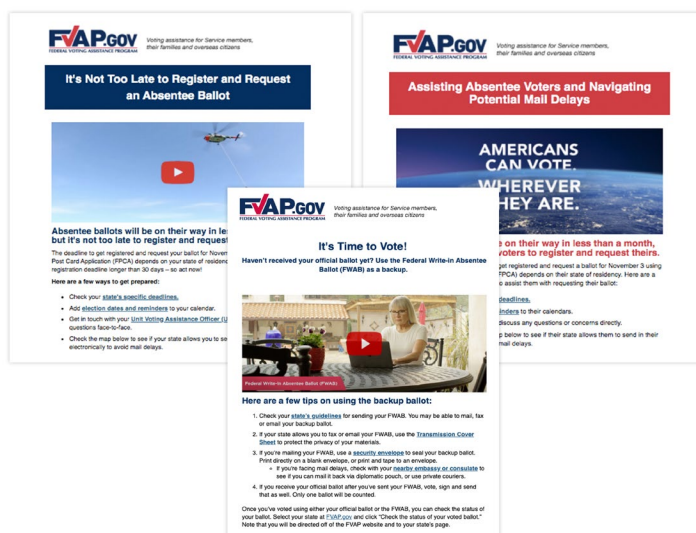
In 2022, FVAP held several virtual town halls and office hour events to engage with partners and voters and provide custom voting assistance. One event that generated over 1,000 views was a Facebook Live Q&A session entitled "Everything You Want to Know about Military Voting" with help from the Secure Families Initiative, National Military Family Association, and Exceptional Families of the Military.

Direct Marketing

Section 20305(a)(2) of Title 52, U.S.C., requires that FVAP notify all military members of election dates and how to vote absentee in the months leading up to each election for federal offices. Based on this requirement, FVAP sent out monthly email notifications

to all ADM from December 2021 to October 2022. Post-election data shows that, of the 86 percent of military VAOs who used FVAP's alerts, 93 percent found them useful in performing their duties, an increase from 88 percent in 2018 and 21 percent in 2020. Embassy and consulate VAOs also received these monthly email notifications and disseminated the information to in-country U.S. citizens through their Message Alert System for Citizens Overseas Tool.

FVAP emailed election officials a quarterly newsletter that detailed research data findings, UOCAVA election tips, general FVAP updates, and enhancements to election official and voter resources. To ensure voters were able to communicate directly with their local election officials, FVAP also contacted election offices requesting any updates to their posted contact information in the directory on FVAP.gov.



FVAP effectively disseminated single-subject email blasts to several audiences throughout the 2022 election cycle.

FVAP increased its targeted outreach with the use of single-subject mass emails to reach overseas citizens, ADM, VAOs, and election officials. These blasts included specific information regarding helpful tips, reminders, and tools like the calendar widget and outreach toolkits that stakeholders could find useful throughout the election cycle. E-blasts maintained open rates within benchmark standards for email marketing, even as audience lists grew each month. With a less than one percent unsubscribe rate and nearly 35,000 clicks directing recipients to FVAP.gov, email marketing efforts showed subscribers were interested in receiving this type of information.

Military Ballot Tracking Program

In March 2021, President Biden issued the Executive Order on Promoting Access to Voting.⁵⁶ This order directed the Secretary of Defense – in coordination with the Department of State, the MPSA, and the USPS – to establish procedures enabling a comprehensive, end-to-end ballot tracking system for absentee ballots cast by voters covered by *UOCAVA*. Voters would be able to view the delivery status of their ballot throughout key stages of its transmittal and return. In doing so, voters could readily identify issues with the delivery or return of their ballot and utilize established contingencies, such as using a FWAB to ensure their vote counted.

This pilot program was a collaboration between FVAP, USPS, MPSA, and the Department of State's Diplomatic Post Office. As lead facilitator, FVAP entrusted The Council of State Governments with managing the pilot and providing administrative support. Runbeck Election Services was contracted as the designated mail service provider for the pilot. Runbeck collaborated with stakeholders to design and print the ballot envelopes.

Early discussions among federal stakeholders – Department of State, FVAP, MPSA and USPS – identified three key constraints when establishing a system that would provide end-to-end tracking for *UOCAVA* voters: a) prior pilot methodology using USPS Click-N-Ship Business Pro interface was not scalable for the new pilot; b) any proposed end-to-end tracking system must be suited for all election jurisdictions, regardless of their size; and c) federal stakeholders had limited funds for pilot research and development.

The *UOCAVA* ballot tracking pilot stakeholders identified key business requirements for the successful execution of the pilot. These requirements were as follows:

1. Ballot envelope barcodes must be nested to receptacles.
2. Federal stakeholders stressed that any potential solution must provide end-to-end ballot tracking information through a voter-facing system. In other words, *UOCAVA* voters must be able to view and interpret mail piece scan data without significant difficulty.
3. Any new system or solution identified should provide the

⁵⁶ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/03/07/executive-order-on-promoting-access-to-voting/>

voter with end-to-end ballot tracking regardless of the mail stream in which a retrograde ballot package was placed.

4. There must be a standardized mail piece design to ensure pilot success.

Finally, the pilot concluded with a report to Congress,⁵⁷ outlining the following opportunities for further research and development:

1. The creation of a dedicated *UOCAVA* shipping label.
2. Collaboration with the Universal Postal Union in order to develop a dedicated International Absentee Voter Label.
3. Investment in the development of a portable, high-speed IMb barcode scanner for MPSA postal clerks.
4. Federal stakeholders agreed that the USPS Click-N-Ship Business Pro interface would be a potential viable solution for all *UOCAVA* voters, if expanded.

End-to-End Electronic Voting Report

FVAP submitted the End-to-End Electronic Voting Report to Congress on behalf of the Secretary of Defense in accordance with the requirements in section 1077 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. The requirement directed FVAP to study and prepare a report on providing end-to-end electronic voting services in participating states for absent overseas Uniformed Service personnel operating in areas with limited postal services.

End-to-end electronic voting services are not explicitly defined in the NDAA for FY 2022 requirement, so in defining the scope of its research, FVAP examined the potential for providing an electronic path for each step of the absentee voting process for absent Uniformed Services voters serving overseas. Steps of the absentee voting process for *UOCAVA* voters entail:

1. Completing and submitting an FPCA to simultaneously register and request an absentee ballot.
2. Receiving an official ballot from an election office.
3. Returning the voted ballot to the election office.
4. Receiving confirmation from the election office that the ballot was accepted for inclusion in the final tabulated results.

⁵⁷ https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Reports/Military_Ballot_Tracking_Pilot_Research_Report.pdf

The challenge of supporting electronic voting services is that it is entirely reliant upon each state authorizing submission methods for election materials. FVAP's focus remains on providing absentee voting assistance to all covered voters under UOCAVA, not just military members serving from specific states that authorize the electronic submission of election materials. While the requirement in the NDAA for FY 2022 is intended to involve only states participating in any subsequent research, FVAP examined this research requirement from the standpoint of longer-term sustainability for all U.S. states and territories.

FVAP established an internal DoD working group to assess these questions and provide an overall approach in consideration of electronic voting services and the Department's role. Specifically, from December 2021 through September 2022, representatives from FVAP, the DoD CIO, the Defense Information Systems Agency, the MPSA, and the Defense Manpower Data Center convened to assist with the overall research associated with this effort. FVAP conducted this research and findings based on past research, internal technical findings, comprehensive literature reviews, and feedback from election officials through FVAP's existing cooperative agreement with CSG. The working group developed the following key findings as outlined in a report to Congress:⁵⁸

- FVAP should continue the use of grants to assist states as a method of further encouraging solutions for military and overseas citizen voters.
- DoD remains best suited to support and assist absent Uniformed Services voters, their families, and U.S. citizens overseas with the absentee voting process, but not directly providing such services.
- States providing electronic voting services should incorporate digital signatures to facilitate greater usability and reduce dependence on the availability of physical equipment.
- Federal agencies should be leveraged to explore avenues for offering election officials the ability to encrypt emails to and from active-duty personnel.

The report includes a proposed research timeline that would span a minimum of 48 months, culminating in fielding such systems by state and local election jurisdictions supporting end-to-end electronic voting services that are subject to state certification requirements and applicable federal information

⁵⁸ <https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Reports/UPR002956-22-SIGNED.pdf>

assurance requirements. Additionally, the DoD recommends requiring states to authorize the acceptance of digital signatures as a precondition for any participation and continue to work with the other federal stakeholders to offer the ability to encrypt and decrypt corresponding election transactions with voters.

Pilot Program: Voting Assistance Ambassadors

FVAP's post-election surveys of ADM and overseas citizens show real and perceived obstacles to absentee voting for those living overseas. FVAP staff conduct voting assistance workshops in a geographic area for 24-48 hours and then focus primarily on direct customer service from their stateside office in the weeks leading up to a general election. To offset the inability to provide longer-term direct outreach in geographic areas with high concentrations of U.S. citizens and military personnel around the globe, FVAP ran a pilot program in 2020 and 2022 to provide customer service in those areas. The structure for the pilot program during 2022 consisted of three term employees in Europe based in London, Rome, and Frankfurt. These locations were chosen based on FVAP survey and military installation data.

In 2022, most in-country COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were lifted, allowing the FVAP Voting Assistance Ambassadors to attend more in-person events than in 2020 with generally a higher rate of turnout than virtual events. This allowed the Ambassadors to safely conduct outreach events for ADM, their family members, and other U.S. citizens residing overseas.

The Ambassadors maintained a social media presence bolstered by the FVAP team. The Ambassadors ran successful online platforms and developed and carried out robust region-specific social media plans via Facebook and Twitter. FVAP created original content as well as promotional graphics to support various outreach initiatives, including in-person informational sessions, Facebook Live events, and virtual voting assistance. The Ambassadors grew their reach throughout the year by joining online U.S. citizen groups, assisting voters at in-person events catered to U.S. citizens, growing their online followers, and making new connections to provide absentee voting assistance.

The Ambassadors assisted 2,316 UOCAVA voters (1,813 overseas citizens) between in-person events and virtual assistance (e.g. emails or online events). A total of 1,217 FPCAs were distributed either in hard copy or PDF format. An additional 1,101 voters were directed to FVAP.gov to use the online assistant.



FVAP Rome Ambassador provided assistance at the American Corner in Trieste for U.S. citizens living in the area.



FVAP London Ambassador tabled outside a military post office at RAF Molesworth during Absentee Voting Week.

FVAP found the pilot program to be successful in supporting military personnel and their family members at overseas military installations and State Department facilities, and U.S. citizens not directly affiliated with the U.S. Government. FVAP was able to glean specific country-level obstacles faced by *UOCAVA* voters, as well as provide effective localized support and create collaborative opportunities with FVAP stakeholders, including the Military Services and the Department of State. The Ambassadors' ability to assist voters in real time was also a benefit. FVAP plans to continue the Voting Ambassador program in 2024.

Conclusion

FVAP demonstrated key progress in the following areas from its 2022 recommendations:

- There was a seven percent decrease in Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) downloads and nearly a 57 percent decrease in Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) downloads on FVAP.gov in 2022 as compared to 2018.
- In 2022, FVAP distributed 20,036 hard copy FPCAs and FWABs as well as 172,561 pieces of other educational and outreach materials to voters in 41 countries and 105 military installations worldwide.
- Web metrics for FVAP.gov in 2022 indicate site engagement was similar to that in 2018, with a 36 percent increase in page views and a one percent decrease in users.
- Sessions generated by paid media made up nearly 51 percent of all visits to FVAP.gov in 2022, compared to 21 percent in 2020.
- FVAP personnel conducted VAO training workshops, both virtually and in-person, at 132 locations, including 82 U.S. military installations and 44 U.S. embassies and consulates in 29 countries.
- VAOs' overall workshop satisfaction score of 4.6 out of 5.00 represents a slight increase from that of 2018 (4.5).
- FVAP continued to enhance its Effective Voting Assistance Model to track changes to VAO responsibilities across the Services for effectiveness and identification of best practices.
- FVAP leveraged the Council of State Governments' ongoing work with implementation of a reporting data standard for states to assess and report the impacts of Congressional reforms passed in the 2009 *MOVE Act*, with data collected from approximately 40 percent of the *UOCAVA* participating voter population. FVAP's activities fulfilled DoD's responsibilities under *UOCAVA*.

FVAP's activities remain geared toward promoting the awareness of the right to vote among *UOCAVA* citizens and eliminating barriers for those who choose to exercise that right. As featured in its Strategic Plan, FVAP remains committed to these key strategic goals and will align all of its 2022 activities to the FVAP Strategic Plan.

Recommendations for the 2024 Election Cycle

The activities that FVAP performed in 2022 aligned with the advancement of its strategic goals and will remain the areas of focus in upcoming election cycles along with these specific initiatives within each area for the 2024 election cycle:

Goal 1: Be a highly valued customer service program to military members, their eligible family members, voting assistance officers, overseas voters, and election officials.

- Continue to have an aggressive engagement strategy for state and local election officials to raise awareness of core responsibilities under federal law.
- Continue outreach briefings and training on Part 233 of title 32, Code of Federal Regulations, for Federal agencies regarding U.S. citizen services in preparation for the 2024 election cycle to include United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Corps and members of the Merchant Marine.
- Educate states on how to enhance the usability of the absentee voting process for ADM by authorizing acceptance of electronic signatures from the DoD Common Access Card (CAC) in the election process, based on the Council of State Governments' Overseas Voting Initiative recommendations.
- Leverage the Council of State Governments' ongoing work to expand the implementation of a national data standard to more effectively report the impacts of Congressional reforms passed in 2009 (the *Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act*) while reducing the post-election reporting burden on the states in partnership with the United States Election Assistance Commission.
- Conduct virtual Voting Assistance Townhalls for *UOCAVA* voters in the weeks leading up to the general election, where FVAP will provide a live platform for voters to ask questions and receive guidance.

Goal 2: Reduce obstacles to military and overseas absentee voting success.

- Continue to review and update the FPCA and the FWAB as necessary and focus on core federal election eligibility requirements to avoid confusion and maximize benefits codified under *UOCAVA*.
- Maintain continued alignment across the DoD enterprise to support Military Service-level voting assistance programs.
- Expand the use of virtual training opportunities to support VAOs, voters, and stakeholders throughout the calendar year and within close proximity to the general election.
- Refine and improve upon FVAP's Effective Voting Assistance Model to track changes to Voting Assistance Officer responsibilities across the Services for effectiveness and identification of best practices.

Goal 3: Increase *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* voter awareness of available tools and resources.

- Continue to use paid media and social media outlets to focus on population segments who lack awareness of available resources through FVAP, especially first-time absentee voters.
- Examine the potential for expanding the Voting Assistance Ambassador program.
- Create and effectively distribute innovative content that resonates with the military, their families, and overseas citizens.

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Glossary

A

ADM active duty military

C

CAC Common Access Card
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
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*
MPO Military Post Office
MPS Military Postal Service

N

NCOA National Change of Address
NVRA National Voter Registration Act
NVRF National Voter Registration Form

O

OCPA Overseas Citizen Population Analysis

P

PEVS Post-Election Voting Survey

S

SEO state election official
SVAO service voting action officer

U

UAA undeliverable as addressed
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

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