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# **2012 Post-Election Voting Survey of Unit Voting Assistance Officers**

## **Statistical Methodology Report**



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**2012 POST-ELECTION VOTING SURVEY OF UNIT  
VOTING ASSISTANCE OFFICERS:  
STATISTICAL METHODOLOGY REPORT**

**Defense Manpower Data Center  
Human Resources Strategic Assessment Program  
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## Acknowledgments

Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) is indebted to numerous people for their assistance with the *2012 Post-Election Voting Survey of Unit Voting Assistance Officers (2012 PEV4)*, which was conducted on behalf of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD[P&R]). The survey program is conducted under the leadership of Kristin Williams, Director, *Human Resources Strategic Assessment Program (HRSAP)*.

DMDC's Statistical Methods Branch, under the guidance of David McGrath, Branch Chief, is responsible for sampling and weighting methods used by HRSAP. The lead statistical analyst on this survey was Jeff Schneider, supervised by Eric Falk, Team Lead of Statistical Methods, who designed the sample and developed weights for this survey.

# 2012 POST-ELECTION VOTING SURVEY OF UNIT VOTING ASSISTANCE OFFICERS: STATISTICAL METHODOLOGY REPORT

## Executive Summary

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986 (UOCAVA), 42 USC 1973ff, permits members of the Uniformed Services and Merchant Marine, and their eligible family members and all citizens residing outside the United States who are absent from the United States and its territories to vote in the general election for federal offices. These groups include:

- Members of the Uniformed Services (including Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard)
- U.S. citizens employed by the Federal Government residing outside the U.S., and
- All other private U.S. citizens residing outside the U.S.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), under the guidance of USD(P&R), is charged with implementing the UOCAVA and evaluating the effectiveness of its programs. The FVAP Office asked DMDC to design, administer, and analyze post-election surveys on Uniformed Services voter participation, and local election officials. Without such surveys, the Department will not be able to assess and improve voter access. In addition, such surveys fulfill 1988 Executive Order 12642 that names the Secretary of Defense as the “Presidential designee” for administering the UOCAVA and requires surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in presidential election years.

The objectives of the 2012 post-election surveys are: (1) to gauge participation in the electoral process by citizens covered by UOCAVA, (2) to assess the impact of the FVAP’s efforts to simplify and ease the process of voting absentee, (3) to evaluate other progress made to facilitate voting participation, and (4) to identify any remaining obstacles to voting by these citizens. Surveys were done of military members, spouses of military members, voting assistance personnel, and local election officials in the U.S.

This report focuses on the *2012 Post-Election Voting Survey of Unit Voting Assistance Officers (2012 PEV4)*, which was designed to capture the attitudes and behaviors of Armed Forces Unit Voting Assistance Officers (UVAOs). This report describes the sampling and weighting methodologies used in the *2012 PEV4*. Calculation of response rates is described in the final section.

The population of interest for the *2012 PEV4* consisted of the Unit Voting Assistance Officers (UVAOs) in the Department of Defense, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force, as well as the Coast Guard from the Department of Homeland Security.

According to Directive 1000.04, Section 5.2.1.4.2, a UVAO must be designated to units which meet the number of permanently assigned active duty members defined by their respective Service. A frame containing all units which met their number of permanently assigned active members by their respective Service was used to capture the population of interest.

The *2012 PEV4* was a census of all units that were considered eligible based on the number of permanently assigned active members specified by their respective Service. The total size of eligible units was initially 8,444 units determined from the Unit Identification Code Address File. This initial number was revised to 7,766 units based on input from each Service Voting Assistance Officer (SVAO) for removing units that were easily identifiable as not being UVAO eligible. This number was further revised to 6,801 eligible units after the survey fielding. The survey administration period lasted from November 7, 2012, to January 9, 2013. There were 2,285 complete eligible questionnaires.

After the determination of eligibility for the survey and completion of a survey, analytic weights were created to account for varying response rates among population subgroups. First, the sampling weights (the inverse of the selection probabilities) were computed. Since the *2012 PEV4* was a census, the initial weight equals 1.0. Second, the base weights were adjusted to account for survey eligibility and completion (nonresponse). The adjustment at this second stage was to the final population of 6,801 by Service, size and location. Throughout the report you will see the term “post stratification” and for purposes of this statistical methods report is used since the population totals were modified by Service, unit and location and the placement of the survey respondent into these groups was based on their response to these key questions in the survey.

Location, completion, and response rates are provided in the final section of this report for both the full sample and for population subgroups. These rates were computed according to the recommendations of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (1982) and the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR, 2008). The location, completion, and response rates among UVAOs were 87%, 35%, and 31%. Because a UVAO could be responsible for more than one unit, respondents were asked for information on units served.

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# 2012 POST-ELECTION VOTING SURVEY OF UNIT VOTING ASSISTANCE OFFICERS: STATISTICAL METHODOLOGY REPORT

## Introduction

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986 (UOCAVA), 42 USC 1973ff, permits members of the Uniformed Services and Merchant Marine, and their eligible family members and all citizens residing outside the United States who are absent from the United States and its territories to vote in the general election for federal offices. These groups include:

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- U.S. citizens employed by the Federal Government residing outside the U.S., and
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The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), under the guidance of USD(P&R), is charged with implementing the UOCAVA and evaluating the effectiveness of its programs. The FVAP Office asked DMDC to design, administer, and analyze post-election surveys on Uniformed Services voter participation, and local election officials. Without such surveys, the Department will not be able to assess and improve voter access. In addition, such surveys fulfill 1988 Executive Order 12642 that names the Secretary of Defense as the “Presidential designee” for administering the UOCAVA and requires surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in presidential election years.

The objectives of the 2012 post-election surveys are: (1) to gauge participation in the electoral process by citizens covered by UOCAVA, (2) to assess the impact of the FVAP’s efforts to simplify and ease the process of voting absentee, (3) to evaluate other progress made to facilitate voting participation, and (4) to identify any remaining obstacles to voting by these citizens. Surveys were done of military members, voting assistance personnel, and local election officials in the U.S.

This report focuses on the *2012 Post-Election Voting Survey of Unit Voting Assistance Officers (2012 PEV4)* which was designed to capture the attitudes and behaviors of Armed Forces Unit Voting Assistance Officers (UVAOs). This report describes the sampling and weighting methodologies used in the *2012 PEV4*. Calculation of response rates is described in the final section. Tabulated results of the survey are reported by DMDC (2013).

The population of interest for the *2012 PEV4* consisted of the Unit Voting Assistance Officers (UVAOs) from the Department of Defense in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force, as well as the Coast Guard from the Department of Homeland Security.

## ***Sample Design and Selection***

### ***Target Population***

According to Directive 1000.04, Section 5.2.1.4.2, a UVAO must be designated to units which meet the number of permanently assigned active duty members defined by their respective Service. A frame containing all units which met their number of permanently assigned active members by their respective Service was used to capture the population of interest. The number of permanently assigned active duty members to require a UVAO differed by Service as follows:

- Army, Navy and Coast Guard: All units with 25 or more permanently assigned active duty members
- Air Force: All units with 100 or more permanently assigned active duty members, or at discretion of SVAO
- Marine Corps: All units with 200 or more permanently assigned active duty members, or at discretion of SVAO

### ***Sampling Frame***

A frame containing all units which met their number of permanently assigned active members by their respective Service was used to capture the population of interest.

The sampling frame was built from the June 2012 Active Duty Master File (ADMF) and the June 2012 Unit Identification Code Address File (UIC). The June 2012 ADMF file consisted of 1,436,319 active duty members who were assigned to a total of 25,472 distinct Unit Identification Codes (UICs). There were 8,444 UICs that were initially considered eligible based on the requirements specified by Service directives. The eligible UICs were merged with the June 2012 UIC file to add unit names, base names, and complete addresses.

The initial eligible UIC list was partitioned by Service and distributed to each SVAO. The SVAOs indicated UICs that they knew were no longer eligible or that had been incorrectly excluded. The initial SVAO revisions reduced the number of UICs to 7,766. Following the fielding period the final SVAO edits reduced the number of eligible UICs to 6,801. This number is considered the eligible population total.

### ***Sample Design***

The 2012 PEV4 was a census containing all units which met their number of permanently assigned active members by their respective Service. In total all 7,766 UVAOs were surveyed and the breakdown of the number of known eligible UICs is shown in Table 2.

### ***Sample Allocation***

Since this was a census, all units were automatically included in the sample. The total sample size was 7,766 units, of which 6,801 sampled UICs were considered eligible. The anticipated response rate was estimated to be 30% from all units in the survey. The estimated

response rate was based on the results from the 2010 PEV4 survey. Please note that the estimated response rate at the UVAO level could be higher than the response rate at the unit level since there may be fewer UVAOs than the number of units. Table 1 shows several key variables contained on the population frame file that were used for non-response adjustments (discussed later). Population distributions are shown in Table 2 for the levels of the variables used in the weighting process. Throughout the report you will see the term “post stratification” and for the purposes of this statistical methods report is used since the population totals were modified by Service, unit and location and the placement of the survey respondent into these groups was based on their response to these key questions in the survey.

**Table 1.**  
*Variables for Post Stratification and Key Reporting Domains*

Variable	Categories
Service Branch*	Army Navy Marine Corps Air Force Coast Guard
Geography*	Continental United States (CONUS) & Alaska and Hawaii (OCONUS) Overseas & Unknown
UIC Size*	25 to 50 active duty members 51 to 99 active duty members 100 to 249 active duty members 250 or more active duty members

Note. \* denotes post stratification variable.

**Table 2.**  
*Sample Size by Post Stratification Variables of Eligible UICs*

Stratification Variable Geography by Size of Unit		Total	Army	Navy	Marine Corps	Air Force	Coast Guard
Total		6,801	4,206	1,092	282	880	341
United States	25-49 members	1,148	795	189*	0	0	164
	50-99 members	1,637	1,399	158*	0	0	80
	100-249 members	2,398	1,448	354*	45	471	80
	≥ 250 members	878	149	253*	222	241	13
Overseas & Other	All Unit Sizes	740	415	138*	15	168	4

Note. \* The Navy provided 388 e-mail addresses corresponding to eligible unit UVAOs. The size and location of these units were unknown. Unit size and location was estimated for these units based on Navy’s original 704 UICs.

## ***Survey Administration Problems***

During the fielding of the survey, the first postal reminder letter was mailed with a mismatch between the Commanding Officer letter and the Unit Voting Assistance Officer letter. The contractor mailed 6,477 letters; 6,033 letters were incorrectly matched. All letters to the Commanding Officer were correct; however, the envelopes addressed to the Commanding Officer contained the wrong Unit Voting Assistance Officer letter. Therefore it is possible that some UVAOs filled out surveys that were intended for other UVAOs. The weighting section describes in more detail the weighting process and indicates that we relied heavily on the responses to the key questions about 1) Service, 2) size of UIC and 3) location. In addition, an independent evaluation of the impact of these operational problems on the overall estimates can be found on the FVAP website (<http://www.fvap.gov/>).

## ***Weighting***

Analytical weights for the *2012 PEV4* were created to account for varying response rates among population subgroups. First sampling weights were computed to account for selection probability as the inverse of the selection probabilities. Since the *2012 PEV4* was a census, the initial weight is 1.0. After determining case dispositions, the base weights are adjusted to account for eligibility and completion (nonresponse). This final step was an adjustment within the “post strata” to the known totals of eligible UICs by Service, size and location. The “post strata” were determined by Service, unit size and location and in some cases collapsing was needed. We relied heavily on the responses to the key questions about 1) Service, 2) size of UIC and 3) location for placement of the sample responses.

## ***Case Dispositions***

Final case dispositions for weighting were determined using information from personnel records, field operations (the Survey Control System or SCS), and returned surveys. No single source of information is both complete and correct; inconsistencies among sources were resolved according to the order of precedence shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.**  
***Case Dispositions for Weighting***

<b>Case Disposition (Samp_DC)</b>	<b>Information Source</b>	<b>Conditions</b>
1. Record ineligible	Personnel record	Record ineligible based on eligible from sample file plus any additional eligibility updates
2. Ineligible by self- or proxy-report	Survey Control System (SCS)	Ineligible -- Self/Proxy-report --deceased, ill, incarcerated, separated, divorced (spouse survey)
3. Ineligible by survey self-report	First two survey questions	Ineligible -- Survey Self Report
4. Eligible, complete response	Item response rate	Item response is at least 50%.
5. Eligible, incomplete response	Item response rate	Survey isn't blank but item response is less than 50%.
8. Active refusal	SCS	Reason refused is any Reason ineligible is "other" Reason survey is blank is "refused-too long", "refused-inappropriate/intrusive", "refused-other", "ineligible-other", "unreachable at this address", "refused by current resident", "concerned about security/confidentiality."
9. Blank return	SCS	No reason given.
10. PND	SCS	Postal non-deliverable or original non-locatable.
11. Non-respondent	Remainder	Remainder

This order is critical to resolving case dispositions. For example, suppose a sample person refused the survey, with the reason that it was too long; in the absence of any other information, the disposition would be “eligible non-respondent.” If a proxy report was also given that the sample person had been hospitalized and was unable to complete the survey, the disposition would be “ineligible.”

Final case dispositions for the *2012 PEV4* are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.**  
**Sample Size by Case Disposition Categories**

Case Disposition Category and (Code Value)	Sample Size
Record ineligible	0
Ineligible by self- or proxy-report	1
Ineligible by survey self report	106
Eligible—complete response	2,285
Eligible—incomplete response	53
Active refusal—refused, deployed, other	35
Blank return	179
PND—postal non-deliverable	1,040
Non-respondents	4,089
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,788*</b>

*Note.* \* The final file received 22 more cases than sent. The additional cases were UIC's that were not able to get into the survey assigned to them and requested an additional survey.

### **Eligible Completed Cases**

The total number of cases where the eligibility and the survey was completed is shown in Table 5.

### **Editing and Imputation**

Cases that were missing responses to key post stratification variables were imputed using administrative record data. The key post stratification variables that had missing values were: Service (25 cases), Size (34 cases), and Location (3 cases). In most cases, administrative record data could be imputed. When record information could not be obtained, values were imputed based on the mode for that respective variable. The three mode values used were: Service – Army (1 case), Size – 100 – 249 members (7 cases), and Location – CONUS (3 cases).

### **Nonresponse Adjustments and Final Weights**

After the determination of completion of a survey, analytic weights were created to account for varying response rates among population subgroups. The weighting of responses for UVAO is relatively straightforward. As the sample was a census, the base weight for all cases is 1.0. The nonresponse adjustment was computed in weighting classes (post-strata) defined by Service, geography, and UIC size.

After case dispositions were resolved, the sampling weights were adjusted for non-response. First, the sampling weights for cases of known eligibility (SAMP\_DC = 2, 3, 4, 5) were adjusted to account for cases of unknown eligibility (Samp\_DC = 8, 9, 10, 11). Next, the eligibility-adjusted weights for eligible respondents (Samp\_DC = 4) were adjusted to account for eligible sample members who had not returned a completed survey (SAMP\_DC = 5).

The weighting adjustment factors for eligibility and completion were computed as the inverse of demonstrated probabilities. First, sample weights (1 since this was a census) for cases of known eligibility were multiplied by the ratio of the total population (SAMP\_DC = 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11) to the known eligibility cases (SAMP\_DC= 2, 3, 4, 5). Next, the resulting weights for complete eligibility cases were multiplied by the ratio of eligible cases (SAMP\_DC= 4, 5) to complete eligible cases (SAMP\_DC= 4). Weights were calculated separately within post strata as defined above.

### ***Distribution of Weights and Adjustment Factors***

Table 6 provides a summary of the distributions of the sampling weights, intermediate weights and final weights by eligibility status. Eligible respondents are those individuals who were not only eligible to participate in the survey, but also completed at least 50% of the survey items. There were no record ineligible cases according to administrative records.

**Table 5.**  
***Usable Cases by Service, Geography, and Size***

Stratification Variable		Total	Army	Navy	Marine Corps	Air Force	Coast Guard
Geography by Size of Unit							
Total		2,285	986	611	143	408	137
United States	25-49 members	328	146	129	2	5	46
	50-99 members	338	220	57	7	18	36
	100-249 members	710	290	192	30	158	40
	≥ 250 members	601	183	165	87	152	14
Overseas & Other	All Unit Sizes	308	147	68	17	75	1

### ***Survey Reporting Problems***

In addition to missing data in post stratification variables, the 2012 PEV4 had several discrepancies in survey reporting compared with administrative record data. Notably these differences occurred when respondents indicated they were in post strata that did not exist on the frame. For instance, based on frame construction criteria the number of USMC units that were under 100 members was initially 0. However, survey respondents indicated that sometimes their unit fell below this number of assigned members. The reporting problems were dealt with in post stratification by collapsing the unexpected survey responses into the next largest expected group. The following post strata had more survey responses than administrative data: 1) Army (100-249 members), 2) Marine Corps (25-49 members), 3) Marine Corps (50-99 members), 4) Marine Corps (Overseas\*All Region Sizes), 4) Air Force (25-49 members), 5) Air Force (50-99 members), and 6) Coast Guard (≥ 250 members).

**Table 6.**  
***Sum of Weights by Eligibility Status***

<b>Eligibility Category</b>	<b>Sum of Sampling weights</b>	<b>Sum of Eligibility Status Adjusted Weights</b>	<b>Sum of Complete Eligible Response Adjusted Weights</b>
Eligible Weighted	2,285	6,300	6,494
Ineligible Weighted	107	307	307
Eligible Unweighted	5,396	195	0
Record Ineligible Unweighted	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,788*</b>	<b>6,801</b>	<b>6,801</b>

*Note.* \* The returned file included 7,788 records. Based on final SVAO revisions the known eligible number of records is 6,801.

### ***Variance Estimation***

Analysis of the 2012 PEV4 data requires a variance estimation procedure that accounts for the weighting procedures. The final step of the weighting process was to define strata for variance estimation by Taylor series linearization. The 2012 PEV4 variance estimation strata correspond to the Service, UIC size, and geographic regions. Some collapsing was required in the cases where there were 1) less than 30 determined as eligible or 30 usable respondents and 2) in cases where the number of usable respondents in post strata was greater than the administrative data. Seventeen variance estimation strata were defined for the 2012 PEV4.

### ***Location, Completion, and Response Rates***

Location, completion, and response rates were calculated in accordance with guidelines established by The Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO). The procedure is based on recommendations for Sample Type II response rates (Council of American Survey Research Organizations, 1982). This definition corresponds to the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) RR3 (AAPOR, 2011), which estimates the proportion of eligibles among cases of unknown eligibility.

The *location rate* (LR) is defined as

$$LR = \frac{\text{adjusted located sample}}{\text{adjusted eligible sample}} = \frac{N_L}{N_E}.$$

The *completion rate* (CR) is defined as

$$CR = \frac{\text{usable responses}}{\text{adjusted located sample}} = \frac{N_R}{N_L}.$$

The *response rate* (RR) is defined as

$$RR = \frac{\text{usable responses}}{\text{adjusted eligible sample}} = \frac{N_R}{N_E}.$$

where

- $N_L$  = Adjusted located sample
- $N_E$  = Adjusted eligible sample
- $N_R$  = Usable responses.

To identify the cases that contribute to the components of LR, CR, and RR, the disposition codes were grouped as shown in Table 7. Record ineligible were excluded from calculation of the eligibility rate because it was assumed that all UIC ineligible had been identified.

**Table 7.**  
*Disposition Codes for Response Rates*

Case Disposition Category	Code Value
Eligible Sample	4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11
Located Sample	4, 5, 8, 9, 11
Usable Response	4
Not Returned	11
Eligibility Determined	2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9
Self Report Ineligible	2, 3

### ***Ineligibility Rate***

The ineligibility rate (IR) is defined as:

$$\text{IR} = \text{Self Report Ineligible Cases} / \text{Eligible Determined Cases.}$$

### ***Estimated Ineligible Postal Non-Deliverable/Not Located Rate***

The estimated ineligible postal non-deliverable or not located (IPNDR) is defined as:

$$\text{IPNDR} = (\text{Eligible Sample} - \text{Located Sample}) * \text{IR.}$$

### ***Estimated Ineligible Nonresponse***

The estimated ineligible nonresponse (EINR) is defined as:

$$\text{EINR} = (\text{Not Returned}) * \text{IR.}$$

### ***Adjusted Location Rate***

The adjusted location rate (ALR) is defined as:

$$\text{ALR} = (\text{Located Sample} - \text{EINR}) / (\text{Eligible Sample} - \text{IPNDR} - \text{EINR}).$$

### ***Adjusted Completion Rate***

The adjusted completion rate (ACR) is defined as:

$$\text{ACR} = (\text{Usable Response}) / (\text{Located Sample} - \text{EINR}).$$

### ***Adjusted Response Rate***

The adjusted response rate (ARR) is defined as:

$$\text{ARR} = (\text{Usable Response}) / (\text{Eligible Sample} - \text{IPNDR} - \text{EINR}).$$

**Table 8.**  
***Comparison of the Final Sample Relative to the Drawn Sample***

Case Disposition Categories	Sample Counts		Weighted Estimates <sup>1</sup>	
	n	%	n	%
Drawn sample & Population	7,788		7,788	
Ineligible on master files	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Self-reported ineligible	-107	1.4%	-107	1.4%
Total: Ineligible	-107	1.4%	-107	1.4%
Eligible sample	7,681	98.6%	7,681	98.6%
Not located (estimated ineligible)	-42	0.5%	-42	0.5%
Not located (estimated eligible)	-998	12.8%	-998	12.8%
Total not located	-1,040	13.4%	-1,040	13.4%
Located sample	6,641	85.3%	6,641	85.3%
Requested removal from survey mailings	-35	0.4%	-35	0.4%
Returned blank	-179	2.3%	-179	2.3%
Skipped key questions	-53	0.7%	-53	0.7%
Did not return a survey (estimated ineligible) <sup>2</sup>	-165	2.1%	-165	2.1%
Did not return a survey (estimated eligible) <sup>2</sup>	-3,924	50.4%	-3,924	50.4%
Total: Nonresponse	-4,356	55.9%	-4,356	55.9%
Usable responses	2,285	29.3%	2,285	29.3%

**Table 9.**  
***Location, Completion, and Response Rates***

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Usable Responses</b>	<b>Sum of Weights</b>	<b>Location Rate (%)</b>	<b>Completion Rate (%)</b>	<b>Response Rate (%)</b>
Sample	7,788	2,285	7,788	86.6%	35.3%	30.6%
Service						
Army	5,034	986	5,034	81.3%	25.0%	20.3%
Navy	1,113	611	1,113	98.4%	56.9%	56.0%
Marine Corps	284	143	284	92.6%	55.5%	51.4%
Air Force	937	408	937	95.4%	46.6%	44.5%
Coast Guard	420	137	420	95.5%	43.4%	41.4%
Geography						
CONUS	6,911	1,977	6,911	86.6%	34.5%	29.9%
Overseas	877	308	877	87.2%	41.3%	36.1%
Size of Unit						
CONUS*25 to 49 members	1,411	328	1,411	76.3%	32.6%	24.9%
CONUS*50 to 99 members	1,688	338	1,688	85.0%	24.9%	21.2%
CONUS*100 to 249 members	2,769	710	2,769	89.8%	29.9%	26.8%
CONUS*250 members and more	1,043	601	1,043	94.4%	62.1%	58.6%
Overseas*All Unit Sizes	877	308	877	87.2%	41.3%	36.1%

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