

POST-ELECTION VOTING SURVEYS State Election Officials

TECHNICAL REPORT

2018



FVAP.GOV
FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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Introduction

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) seeks to ensure Service members, their eligible family members and overseas citizens are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully do so—from anywhere in the world. To adhere to this purpose and to meet legislative and executive responsibilities, FVAP collects data on individuals covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* and the network that supports them.

FVAP administered the 2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials (PEVS-SEO) to help SEOs be more effective in their roles and to understand how SEOs use FVAP products and services, interact with local election officials (LEO), and address state ballot and registration issues. The 2018 PEVS-SEO was intended to be a customer satisfaction survey adhering to the restrictions of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Fast Track approval process. This report focuses on two key goals related to the SEO population: (1) answering within-population absentee voting research questions, and (2) describing the full survey methodology of the 2018 PEVS-SEO data collection, including survey design and survey administration.

This report is one of three interrelated documents evaluating the 2018 Post-Election Voting Surveys (PEVS). The 2018 Voting Assistance Officer (VAO) Technical Report and 2018 Active Duty Military (ADM) Technical Report each focus on the within-population research questions and survey methodology for their respective populations. This introduction discusses FVAP's legislative responsibility for conducting the PEVS, highlights key findings and topics discussed in this report and ends by describing the full outline of this report.

1.1 // FVAP Legislative Responsibility for SEO Data Collection

FVAP is responsible for carrying out the responsibilities of *UOCAVA*, as amended by *the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act* and Executive Order 12642 (in 1988). The various PEVS help fulfill the statistical analyses required by this legislation, especially in terms of measuring program effectiveness. The *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act* of 1986, Section 101.b (1), 42 USC §1973ff, now 52 U.S.C. 20310, affords

members of the Uniformed Services and the Merchant Marine with additional privileges when voting absentee in elections for federal offices. FVAP, under the guidance of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD P&R), is charged with implementing *UOCAVA* and evaluating the effectiveness of its programs. As a customer satisfaction survey, the PEVS-SEO evaluates the effectiveness of FVAP assistance for a key stakeholder group to ensure that FVAP is effectively fulfilling its obligations.

The quantitative nature of PEVS-SEO allows for a systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of current levels of consultation and service provision to a key voting assistance group, which helps all *UOCAVA* populations. The PEVS-SEO fulfills the obligations of *UOCAVA* §20301[b][1], which directs FVAP to “consult with state and local election officials.”

Further, Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1000.04, “Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP),” assigns the USD P&R as the “Presidential designee”; the responsibilities, however, are carried out by the FVAP Director. Under these authorities, FVAP provides voter registration and voting information to those eligible to vote in applicable U.S. elections. FVAP provides assistance directly via resources like the *Voting Assistance Guide* and FVAP.gov, but along with VAOs in the Military Services, SEOs are one of the key populations through which FVAP provides voting information for eligible voters.

In October 2009, *UOCAVA* was amended by *the MOVE Act*, Title V, Subtitle H of P.L. 111-84, National Defense Authorization Act Fiscal Year 2010. Among its provisions, *UOCAVA* (as amended) requires FVAP to evaluate the effectiveness of its activities carried out under section 20305, to assess voter registration and participation by absent Uniformed Services voters, to describe the communication between states and the Federal Government in carrying out the requirements of *UOCAVA*, and to describe the utilization of voter assistance under section 1566a of 10 U.S.C. As a result, FVAP contracted Fors Marsh Group (FMG) to design, administer, and analyze the PEVS-SEO. FVAP helps *UOCAVA* voters in a variety of ways, and SEOs and LEOs are integral to these efforts. The PEVS-SEO is thus necessary for FVAP to assess the status of SEO and LEO assistance to *UOCAVA* voters and effectively carry out the mandates of *the MOVE Act*.

1.2 // SEO Research Topics and Key Findings

This report evaluates the effectiveness of FVAP assistance to State Election Offices and seeks to answer research questions using the 2018 PEVS-SEO. This is done by focusing on four key topics specific to the SEO population:

- 1) SEO and LEO interaction;

- 2) Registration and ballot issues;
- 3) The Council of State Governments' (CSG) Overseas Voting Initiative (OVI) recommendations; and
- 4) Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) processing

Overall, these analysis sections report a number of key findings:

- SEOs were slightly less likely to refer FVAP resources to LEOs this year due to an increased reliance on state-specific resources.¹
- SEOs said that FVAP can improve communication between SEOs and LEOs by conducting outreach to LEOs.²
- The FPCA remains the standard form by which voters can establish their *UOCAVA* status and ensure that they receive the protections afforded to them by that status nationally.
- More states are allowing *UOCAVA* voters to register online.
- The majority of states were aware of the CSG OVI Technology Working Group recommendations.
- Implementation rates of the CSG OVI Technology Working Group recommendations were highest for ballot recommendation policies, whereas there is room for improvement on digital signature and data standardization initiatives, particularly in certain regions.
- From 2016 to 2018, there was a large increase in the percentage of states accepting the FPCA before January 1.

1.3 // Overview of Report Methodology

The results presented below represent only the valid responses to the survey and have not been adjusted for sample weights. Importantly, this means that the results only speak to the attitudes and answers of those who responded to the survey. One cannot extrapolate the findings as applicable to the broader population of SEOs

¹ States provided the following open-ended responses when asked how to improve FVAP election official (EO) online training, how to improve SEO and LEO communication, and the reason for preferring other products as opposed to FVAP products: "We've created our own step by step guides, specific to our state for our locals."; "We can develop training at the state level that is specifically for our state and our laws."; and "We don't feel that it provides enough level of detailed information to be particularly valuable. We give all our clerk's training on *UOCAVA* issues, including what FVAP provides that we feel better suits the counties."

² States provided the following open-ended responses when asked how to improve SEO-LEO communication: "More outreach to local election officials should be suggested/ recommended."; "More outreach."; and "Systematic outreach."

who did not respond to the survey or to future SEOs.

Due to the small sample size of the PEVS-SEO and restrictions on releasing personally identifiable information (PII) on individual states or SEOs, the results presented in this report are purely descriptive and are not divided by demographics or other identifiable characteristics. The data results throughout are descriptive, not inferential statistics, which means they do not present techniques such as correlations or regressions that test hypotheses or the relationship between variables of interest. Descriptive statistics do allow one to visualize the data to identify patterns, both in terms of measures of central tendency, such as mean or median values, as well as the spread or variation in the responses. This information is the foundation for assessing customer satisfaction and most customer satisfaction studies stop at the descriptive statistic stage.³ The survey provides a broad assessment of current SEO attitudes and experiences and offer lessons for improving the survey design and question choice for future iterations of the PEVS-SEO.

1.4 // Outline of Report

This report begins with four analysis chapters devoted to answering research questions specific to the SEO population. The first analysis chapter provides a look into FVAP resource referral rates between SEOs and LEOs. Following this chapter is an assessment of how states deal with various registration and ballot request issues. The third analysis chapter discusses a number of different suggestions from the CSG OVI Technology Working Group and assesses the extent of current and future adoption of these recommendations by the states. The final analysis chapter explores how variations in processing the FPCA can affect *UOCAVA* voters.

Following these analyses, the report turns to describing the full survey methodology of the 2018 PEVS-SEO data collection. This section begins by describing the design of the 2018 PEVS-SEO and how cognitive interviews were used to solicit feedback from SEOs. Next, the survey administration chapter discusses the communication plan and how the survey was programmed, fielded, and quality-checked. The report concludes with a discussion of what these analyses mean for improving FVAP resources and services for SEOs and the limitations of these analyses. Appendix A displays the survey instrument that SEOs were asked to respond to and Appendix B contains the communications sent to PEVS-SEO sample members. Finally, Appendix C of the report includes the full descriptive survey results for each question of the 2018 PEVS-SEO.

³ Richard L. Oliver, 2015. *Satisfaction: A Behavioral Perspective on the Consumer*, (Routledge), p. 29–30.

SEO and LEO Interaction

2.1 // Introduction

State election officials (SEO) serve as an important link between the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) and local election officials (LEO). With thousands of local jurisdictions and offices, it is beneficial for FVAP to interact with the 55 State Election Offices—including the District of Columbia and U.S. territories—and allow state-level officials to pass on information relevant to the needs of their local stakeholders. Indeed, previous research has suggested that because SEOs play such an important role in reconciling FVAP guidance with applicable state laws, their views on FVAP programs are crucial in the effort to assist military and overseas citizens around the world.

This chapter begins by describing the basic structure of the relationship between SEOs and LEOs, the responsibilities of each, and why sharing resources between these two groups is essential. Second, it uses resource referral rates to discuss the exchange of FVAP materials between SEOs and LEOs. Finally, the chapter investigates the reasons why SEOs might choose not to share these resources with LEOs.

The central finding in this chapter is that SEOs are interested in sharing resources with LEOs that help address specific issues or concerns, including FVAP staff support and FVAP address look-up services. These findings differ from 2016 data that suggested that SEOs preferred to share more general materials and support. In 2018, when identifying reasons why an SEO might not share FVAP resources with LEOs, the predominant finding is that SEOs prefer to refer state-specific versions of FVAP materials or support as opposed to FVAP’s original content.⁴ SEOs who did report using FVAP resources commented positively on the usefulness of the information. Open-ended

⁴ States provided the following open-ended responses when asked how to improve FVAP EO online training, how to improve SEO and LEO communication, and the reason for preferring other products as opposed to FVAP products: “We’ve created our own step by step guides, specific to our state for our locals.”; “We can develop training at the state level that is specifically for our state and our laws.”; and “We don’t feel that it provides enough level of detailed information to be particularly valuable. We give all our clerk’s training on *UOCAVA* issues, including what FVAP provides that we feel better suits the counties.”

responses suggest that FVAP can improve communication between SEOs and LEOs by conducting additional outreach to LEOs.

2.2 // Research Questions

This chapter deals with two related research questions:

- Are SEOs sharing FVAP resources with LEOs?
- Are SEOs referring FVAP resources to LEOs?

2.3 // State and Local Election Officials

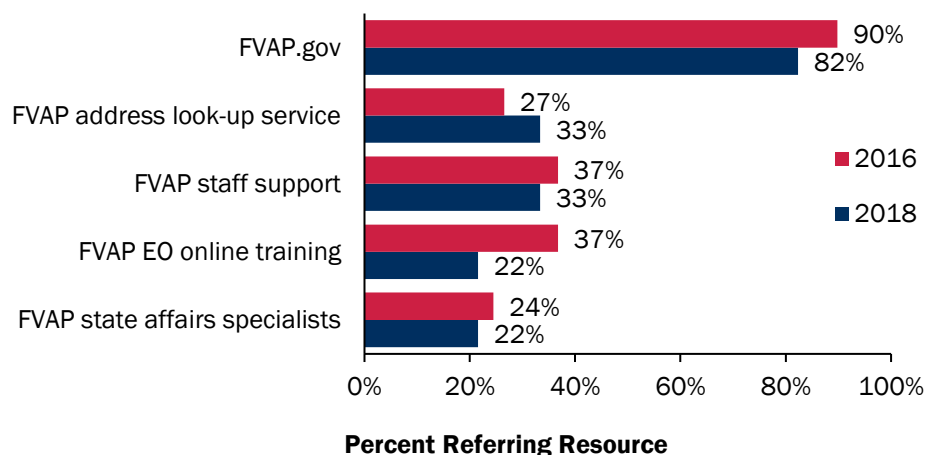
Effective election administration requires effective communication between state and local officials, as laws at the federal and state levels can change, leading to new or different responsibilities for officials. For SEOs and LEOs across the country, the organization of offices, type of staff, and distribution of responsibility for assisting *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* voters is often unique to their state. These variations highlight the need for positive and meaningful interaction between SEOs and LEOs, facilitated by FVAP, to help fulfill all state and local voting assistance duties. FVAP resources and services are designed to help both SEOs and LEOs and to facilitate efficient interactions between these two populations. Elections are complex endeavors, especially when considering the needs of *UOCAVA* voters who can be located large distances from their Local Election Office. These responsibilities create a demand for election assistance from FVAP by both SEOs and LEOs.

2.4 // Results

In 2018, 82% of SEOs referred LEOs to FVAP.gov; these data are consistent with 2016 survey responses in which the overwhelming majority of SEOs reported referring FVAP.gov to LEOs, with 90% having done so. The data shown in Figure 2.1 suggest that SEOs are more likely to refer FVAP.gov as the central resource in their efforts to assist LEOs with *UOCAVA*-related inquiries. FVAP.gov is a multifaceted resource that contains information on a wide variety of issues, which makes it the likely first stop for any voting-related questions.

The second most common resources that SEOs recommended were FVAP address look-up services and FVAP staff support, each of which were referred by 33% of SEOs. This finding differs from 2016 data in which the second most referred resources were online training and FVAP staff support, at 37%. The 2018 survey responses indicate that SEOs are interested in sharing resources that can address specific issues or problems faced by LEOs. The drop in online training referral is consistent with this conclusion: although the training provides a broad array of information, it might not directly address a need for resolving specific issues or concerns. In 2018, FVAP election official (EO) online training and FVAP state affairs specialists were the resources least likely to be referred by SEOs.

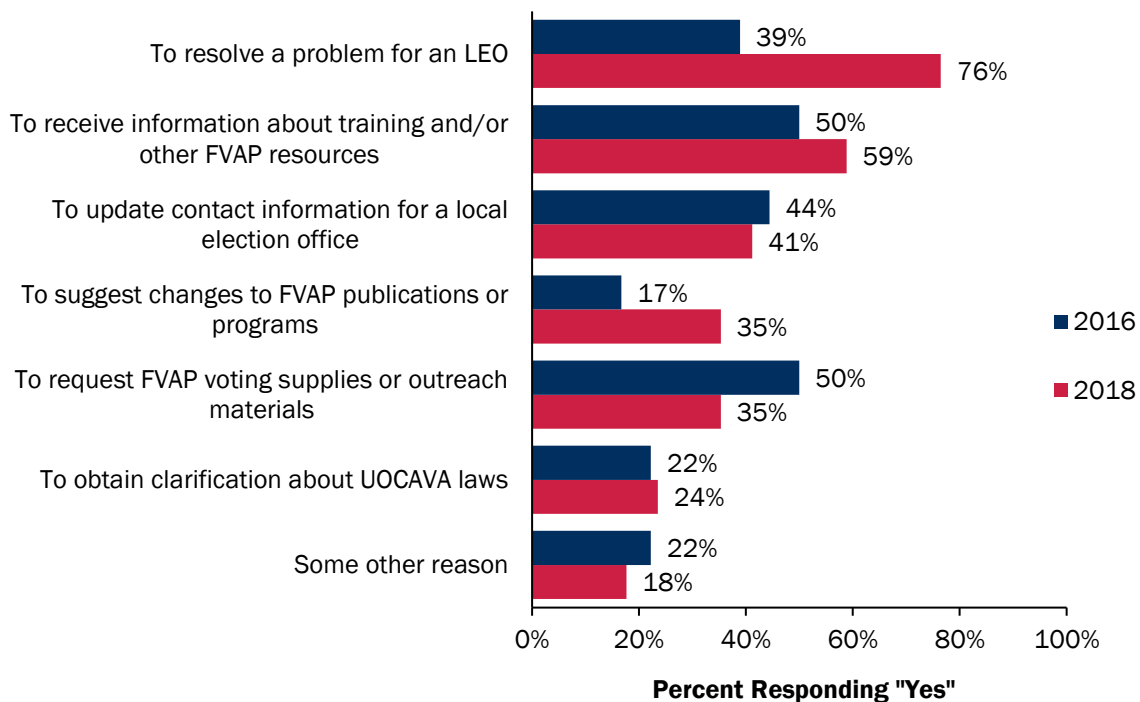
Figure 2.1: Referring FVAP Resources, 2016-2018



Consistent with the findings surrounding referral rates of FVAP resources, Figure 2.2 shows that the most common reason for FVAP referral of staff support is to resolve a problem for an LEO, at 76%. This suggests that when LEOs have difficulties addressing UOCAVA-related problems, they turn to SEO-recommended FVAP resources. From 2016 to 2018, there was a 37-percentage-point increase in SEOs who reported “resolving a problem for an LEO” as their primary reason for referring LEOs to FVAP staff support.

The results suggest that the probability of referring LEOs to FVAP staff support was contingent on the subject matter. Receiving information about training and/or other FVAP resources and updating contact information for a Local Election Office were the second and third most reported reasons behind the referral of FVAP staff support at 59% and 41%, respectively. From 2016 to 2018, SEO referral of FVAP staff support for requesting FVAP voting supplies or outreach material fell by 15 percentage points. The least common reasons for referral in 2018 were obtaining clarification about UOCAVA laws and suggesting changes to FVAP publications or programs.

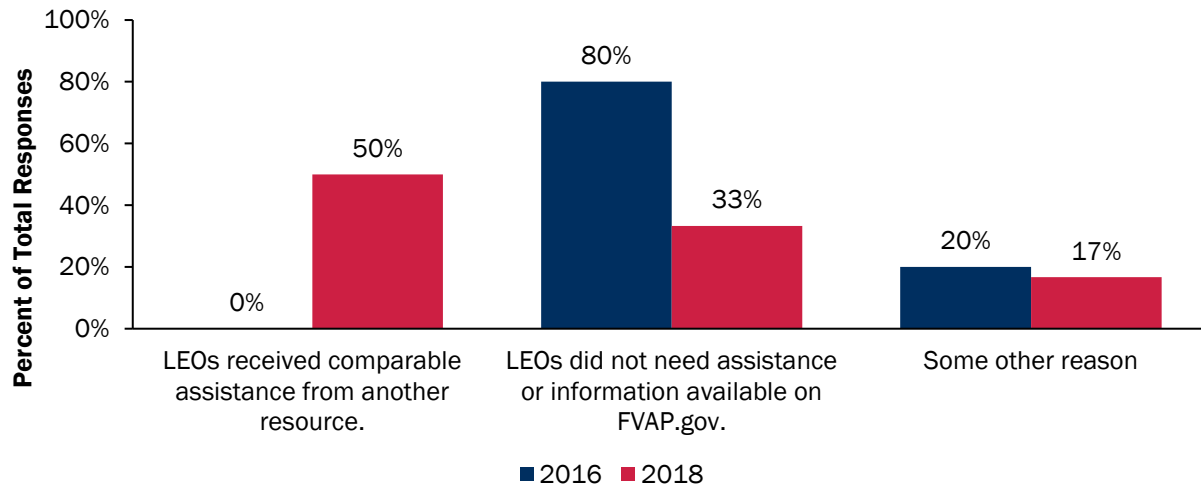
Figure 2.2: Reasons for Referring FVAP Staff Support, 2016–2018



One of the primary goals of this study is to understand why SEOs use and refer FVAP products and services. In keeping that goal in mind, FVAP asked SEOs to explain why they decided not to share FVAP resources with LEOs. The responses provided gave FVAP valuable insights into the perceived usefulness of their products and services. Figures 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 present SEOs’ motives for non-referral of FVAP.gov, FVAP staff support, and FVAP EO online training.

In 2018, 50% of SEOs believed that LEOs received comparable assistance from another resource beyond FVAP.gov, as shown in Figure 2.3. In a somewhat contradictory finding, the percentage of SEOs who reported that LEOs did not need assistance or information available on FVAP.gov decreased by 47 percentage points from 2016 to 2018. This discovery suggests that SEOs are aware of what is provided on FVAP.gov and know that their state also offers similar information. SEOs familiar with FVAP.gov reported a positive overall user experience, citing the availability of the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB), and the address look-up service.

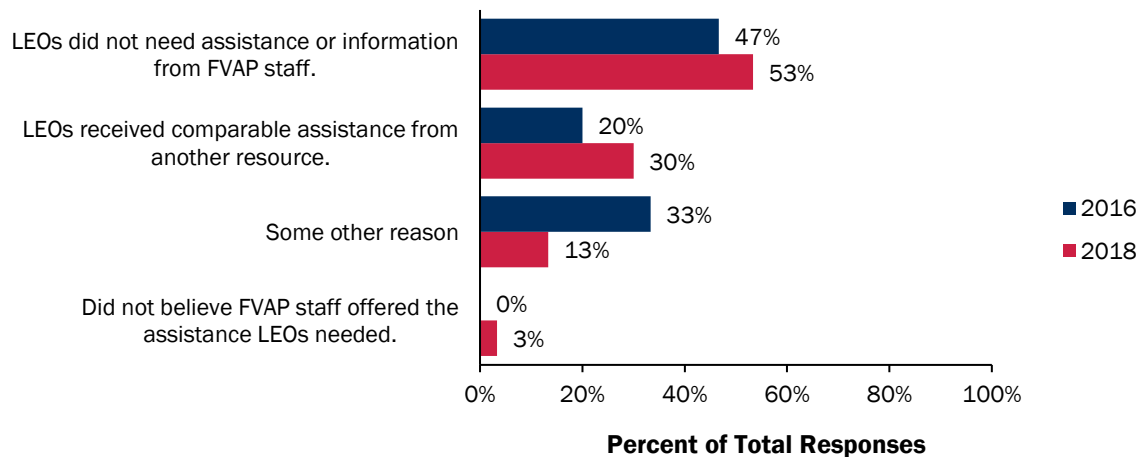
Figure 2.3: FVAP.gov Non-Referral, 2016–2018



Note: Results may be overinterpreted due to a small population size in 2016 and 2018.

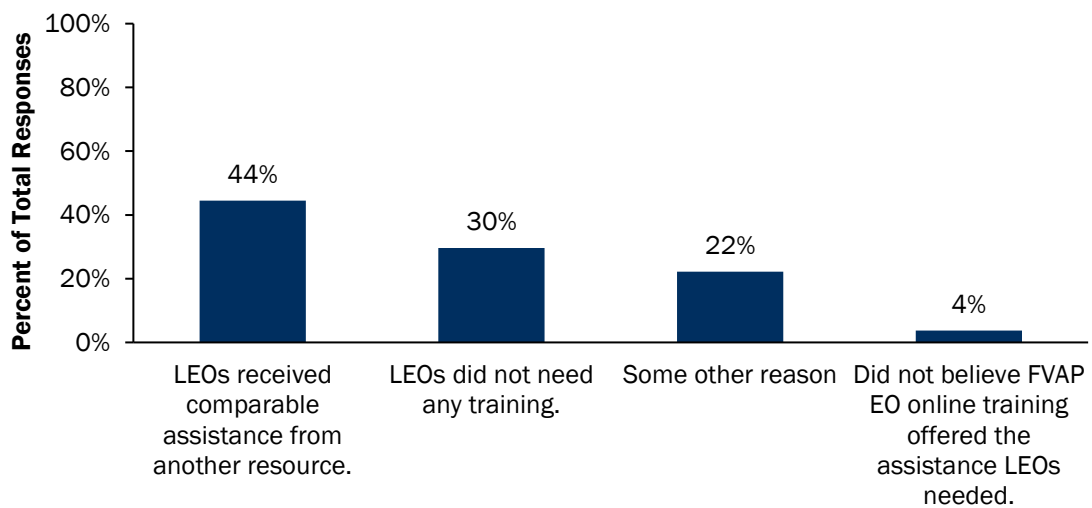
Figure 2.4 reveals that 53% of SEOs felt as though LEOs did not need assistance or information from FVAP staff support whereas 30% reported that LEOs received comparable assistance from another resource. In open-ended responses, SEOs said that their experiences with FVAP staff support were generally positive. One SEO wrote that when he/she requested help, “FVAP staff support was prompt, clear, and concise.” Additional respondents reported that although FVAP staff support is helpful, it is duplicative of the services offered by their State Election Offices. Responses that indicate the preference for state-specific resources reinforce why states believe that LEOs did not need assistance from FVAP staff support or their belief that they received comparable assistance from another resource.

Figure 2.4: Not Referring FVAP Staff Support, 2016-2018



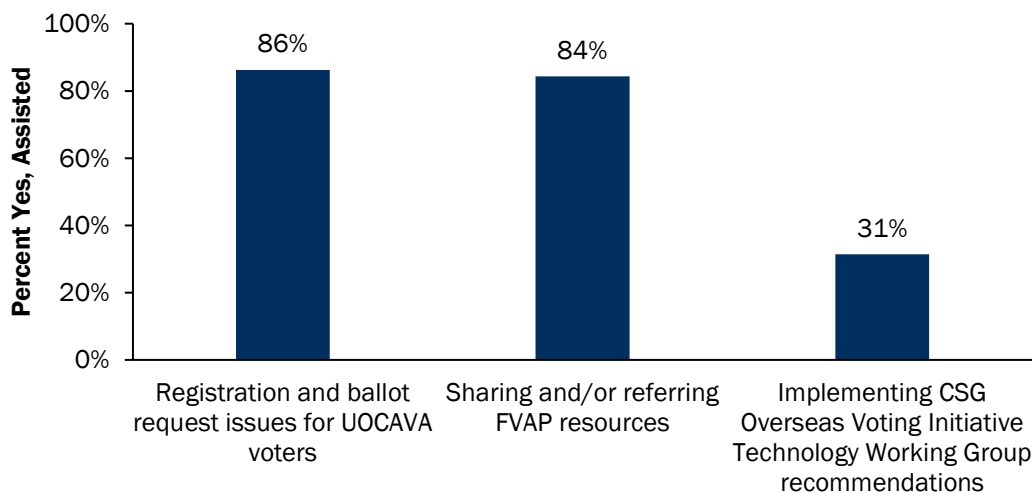
FVAP EO Online Training is a course that helps SEOs and LEOs gain a deeper understanding of the nuanced laws and processes surrounding voting for *UOCAVA* members. In 2018, 44% of SEOs said that they chose not to refer LEOs to the EO Online Training course because LEOs received comparable assistance from another resource. Only 30% of survey respondents reported that LEOs did not need any training. Both the results depicted in Figure 2.5 and the open-ended survey responses suggest that most states believe in offering training to LEOs but may prefer to provide state-specific training that covers their state’s unique election laws.

Figure 2.5: Not Referring FVAP EO Online Training



As shown in Figure 2.6, 86% of SEOs reported that they assisted LEOs with registration and ballot request issues for *UOCAVA* voters. Additionally, 84% said that they had assisted LEOs with sharing and/or referring FVAP resources. The least common reason for assistance was helping LEOs implement The Council of State Governments’ (CSG) Overseas Voting Initiative (OVI) Technology Working Group recommendations. These results show that SEOs are assisting LEOs with *UOCAVA*-related issues and sharing FVAP resources to support this population better.

Figure 2.6: Assisting LEOs



2.5 // Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter described the referral rates and motivations behind SEOs sharing of FVAP resources with LEOs. The chapter revealed a number of key findings:

- Referral of FVAP resources depends on the perceived usefulness of the product by SEOs. SEOs reported that they are more likely to refer resources that help LEOs address specific issues or concerns.
- Referral rates of FVAP products and services may have dissipated in 2018 due to SEOs' use of state-specific resources as opposed to those provided by FVAP.gov.

SEOs work diligently to ensure that LEOs have all the information needed to assist *UOCAVA* voters with the absentee voting process. However, SEOs have hundreds or even thousands of LEOs looking to them for advice and assistance on a variety of issues, making it difficult to address every inquiry. From 2016 to 2018, a shift in resources referred by SEOs occurred. In contrast with 2016, SEOs are referring more problem-solving resources to LEOs. Referral of specific resources—such as FVAP staff support and FVAP address look-up services—support this assertion. Reference to these resources implies that SEOs are looking for ways to reduce their burden when it comes to inquiries about the *UOCAVA* voting process.

Looking closer at the referral of specific products and services, the most common reason for non-referral of FVAP products and services during the 2018 election was the belief that LEOs received comparable assistance from another resource. In evaluating the open-ended responses provided by SEOs, it became evident that many states

have created a state-specific version of the broader support already offered by FVAP.⁵ States should look toward FVAP as the authoritative voice on *UOCAVA* voting and perhaps provide their state-specific information as a supplement for LEOs who require in-depth knowledge on the subject.

⁵ Note: SEOs were given the opportunity to share comments on open-ended responses throughout the survey. Although some of those responses are referenced or quoted briefly in this report, the full content of those responses is not provided in order to protect respondent confidentiality.

Registration and Ballot Request Issues

3.1 // Introduction

Assisting *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* voters is the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) core mission, but one of the many problems that *UOCAVA* voters face is ensuring that they achieve the full protections they are allowed under the law. Despite protections being defined at the federal level, states deviate in key dimensions of how they establish a voter's *UOCAVA* status and implement federal protections. Thus, it is important for FVAP to understand what states are doing so that training and assistance materials can accurately reflect the regulatory environment.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the statutory responsibilities that state election officials (SEO) have in implementing the *UOCAVA* law. It then details the different policies that states apply in carrying out these obligations. The section then concludes with findings of the variation in state approaches to dealing with the various registration and ballot issues.

Results here show that states are inconsistent in how they choose to handle registration and ballot request issues. States are aware of the laws surrounding *UOCAVA* voters but implement them differently. For example, there is wide variation in whether states provide confirmation of ballots at the state level, local level, or both. This finding highlights the fact that there is no clear consensus about ballot receipt notification.

3.2 // Research Question

This chapter asks how do states handle specific registration and ballot request issues for *UOCAVA* voters?

3.3 // SEO Registration and Ballot Request Responsibilities

SEOs must be mindful of a range of registration- and ballot request-related responsibilities that ensure all *UOCAVA* voters receive the assistance and protections they need to complete the absentee voting process. In fulfilling the obligations of the amended *UOCAVA*, states vary on how they deal with registration and ballot request issues for *UOCAVA* voters.

SEOs have several important responsibilities, including:

- Designating a single state office to provide information on registration and absentee ballot procedures for all voters in the state;
- Reporting data within 90 days of each federal election on *UOCAVA* voting in the state;
- Establishing procedures for the electronic transmission of blank ballots to *UOCAVA* voters; and
- Notifying *UOCAVA* voters that their absentee ballot request has been rejected, along with a reason for the rejection.

Although notifying *UOCAVA* voters beyond rejection of a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) is not required, active notification of ballot receipt and return may help *UOCAVA* voters better complete the absentee ballot process and provide positive reinforcement.

States are further required to ensure that all *UOCAVA* voters receive specific protections that are designed to ensure this population can successfully navigate the absentee ballot process. *UOCAVA* voters are allotted a series of protections under federal law and enforced against states by the U.S. Department of Justice. These protections apply to (1) active duty military (ADM) members who are absent from their place of residence and are otherwise qualified to vote; (2) the spouses and dependents of these ADM members who are absent due to the member's active duty or service and (3) qualified voters residing outside of the United States.

These protections include (1) the right to register to vote and request an absentee ballot; (2) the right to receive an absentee ballot by the 45th day before the election; (3) the right to request and receive their voter registration form, absentee ballot request, and blank absentee ballot electronically; (4) the right to cast a Federal Write-In

Absentee Ballot (FWAB); (5) the right to access a ballot tracking system; and (6) the right to submit otherwise-valid voted ballots even if they are not notarized, and even if they are printed on a nonstandard paper size or sent in a nonstandard type envelope.⁶

In ensuring these protections, however, states vary on how they deal with registration and ballot request issues for *UOCAVA* voters.

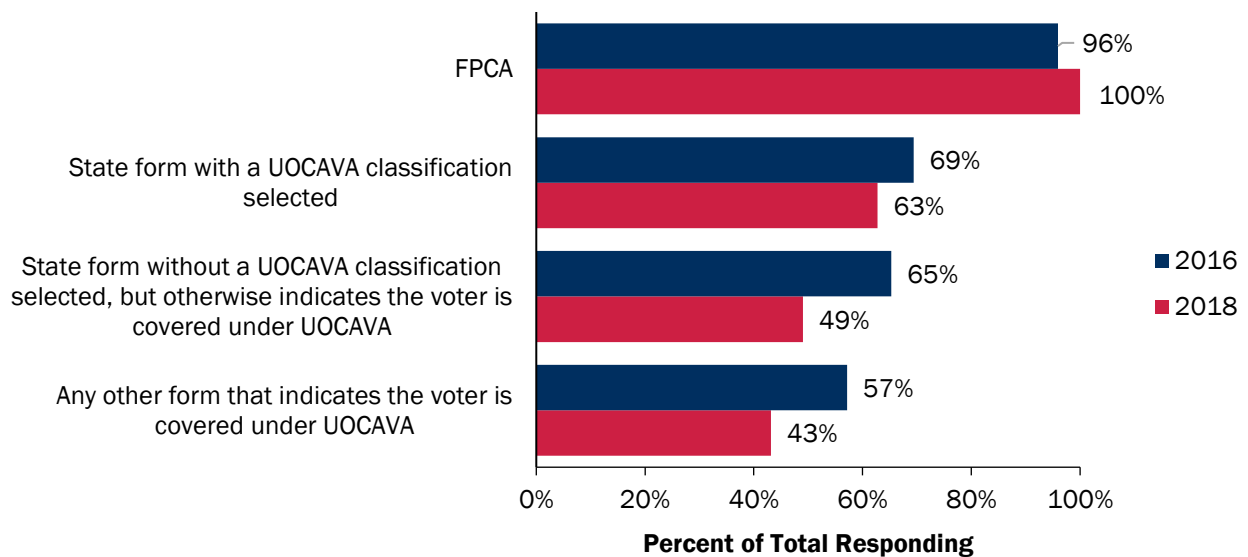
3.4 // Results

Military members and U.S. citizens residing overseas may request absentee ballots using different forms. Figure 3.1 looks at the types of absentee ballot request forms that allow an eligible voter to receive *UOCAVA* protections. In 2018, 100% of SEOs reported that they would provide *UOCAVA* protections to eligible ADM and overseas voters if they requested an absentee ballot using an FPCA. A state form with a *UOCAVA* classification selected was the second most reported ballot request form that allowed *UOCAVA* protections. These findings closely align with the results from 2016.

Forty-nine percent of respondents reported that their state would provide *UOCAVA* protections if voters used a state form but did not select a *UOCAVA* classification. Forty-three percent of SEOs said that they would provide *UOCAVA* protections if a voter used any other form that indicated that the voter is covered under *UOCAVA*. From 2016 to 2018, these responses declined by 16% and 14%, respectively.

⁶ <https://www.justice.gov/crt/uniformed-and-overseas-citizens-absentee-voting-act>

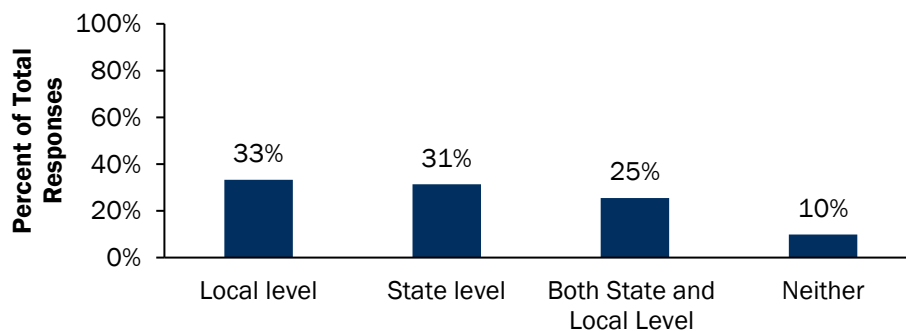
Figure 3.1: Absentee Ballot Request Forms that Allow for UOCAVA Protections, 2016–2018



a. Ballot Notification

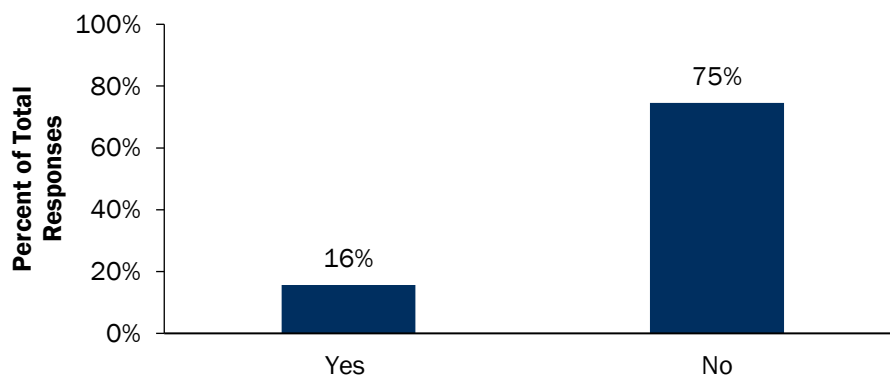
UOCAVA voters are entitled access to a “free access system” for confirming when their SEO received their ballot. SEOs may relay this information at the state or local level. As shown in Figure 3.2, 31% of SEOs reported that they confirm ballot receipts at the state level only, whereas 33% said that they confirm receipts at the local level only. Twenty-five percent of SEOs said that they provide this information at both the state and local levels whereas 10% of SEOs reported that they do not provide confirmation of ballot receipt at the state or local level. The variance in responses shows that there is no consistent method of communicating ballot confirmation to voters across states.

Figure 3.2: Confirmation of Receipt for UOCAVA Voters



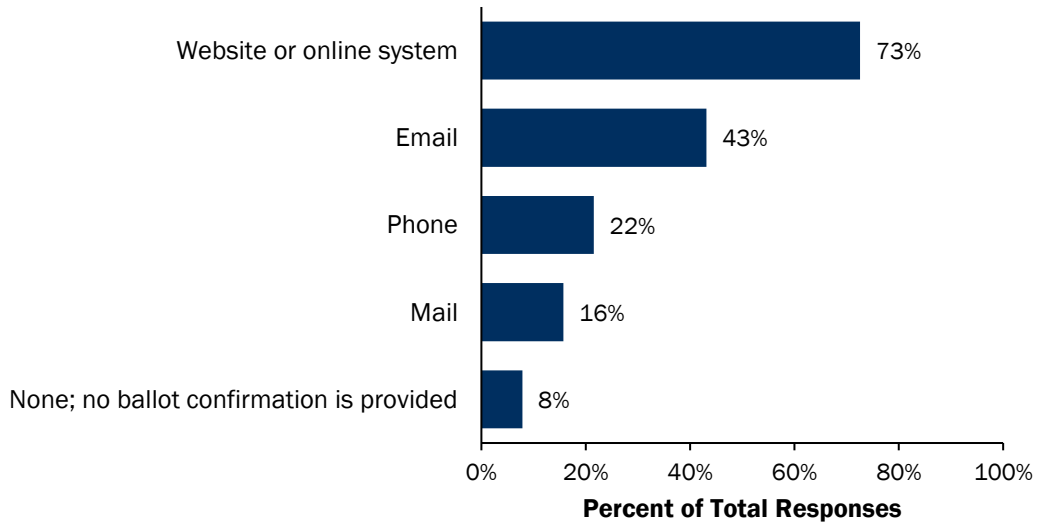
States must provide eligible *UOCAVA* voters with the opportunity to confirm receipt of their ballot. However, the law does not speculate on whether states are required to provide this information proactively (i.e., ballot confirmation is sent automatically without a voter inquiring about their ballot status). As highlighted in Figure 3.3, 75% of states do not provide proactive confirmation of receipt for a completed ballot to *UOCAVA* voters. Election officials may choose not to provide this information due to potential time constraints placed on their offices.

Figure 3.3: Providing Proactive Confirmation of Completed Ballot



Given the long distances and uncertainty of the absentee ballot process, *UOCAVA* voters may be especially concerned about the status of their submitted ballots. SEOs provide several options for voters to check on their ballot status, which are presented in Figure 3.4. Seventy-three percent of SEOs said their state provides a website or online system to confirm ballot receipt; the use of these electronic methods supports the state’s reliance on passive ballot notification. Additionally, 43% of respondents said they use email, 22% include phone access, and 16% said they use regular mail.

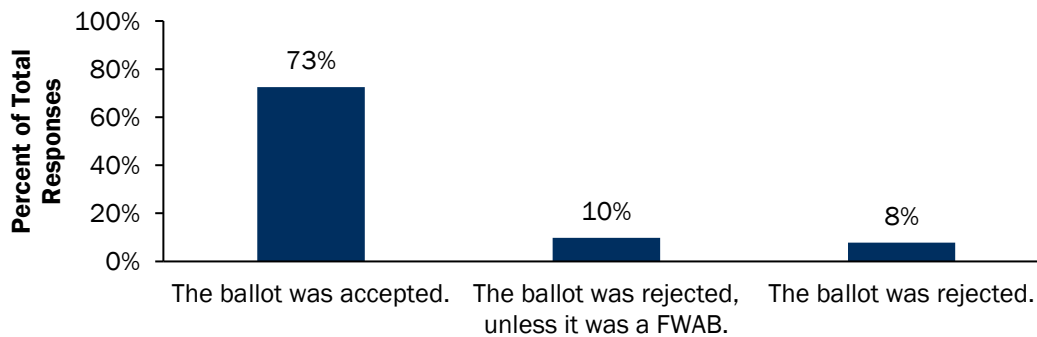
Figure 3.4: Methods of Receipt for Ballot Confirmation



b. Ballot Processing

UOCAVA protections allow for eligible *UOCAVA* voters to send in their otherwise-valid ballots in nonstandard envelopes due to the unique difficulties faced by *UOCAVA* voters living away from their jurisdictions. *UOCAVA* ADM, for example, may be deployed abroad or located in active war zones without access to ballot secrecy envelopes or otherwise-approved envelopes. Figure 3.5 shows that 8% of SEOs rejected *UOCAVA* ballots if voters submitted them without a ballot secrecy envelope. An additional 10% of SEOs said that they refused the ballot unless it was a FWAB.

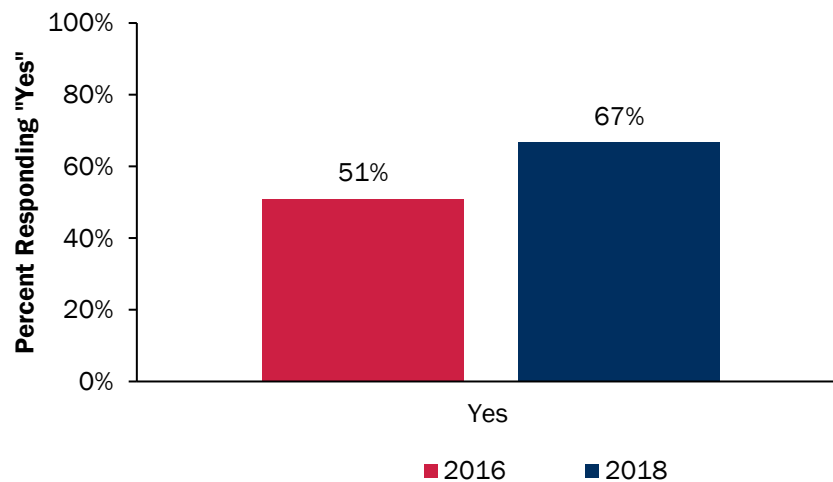
Figure 3.5: Processed without Ballot Secrecy Envelope



c. Online Voter Registration

In 2018, states were increasingly flexible in allowing *UOCAVA* voters access to online voter registration. Figure 3.6 shows that 67% of reporting states allowed online registration in 2018, whereas only 51% approved of it in 2016. Online registration is likely to be of extra importance to *UOCAVA* voters, especially those who are overseas where regular mail access may be ineffective or slow, or where they are so highly mobile that maintaining a valid, stable mailing address may be difficult.

Figure 3.6: UOCAVA Online Voter Registration, 2016–2018



3.5 // Conclusion

This chapter focused on the registration and ballot issues that local election officials (LEO) and *UOCAVA* voters face. The chapter began by discussing statutory guidelines for SEOs implementing *UOCAVA*. It then discussed the different policies that states have adopted to carry out these obligations. It concludes with a list of findings that highlight how states differ in their handling of registration and ballot request issues.

The chapter revealed a number of key findings:

- States show a fair amount of variation in how they implement *UOCAVA* obligations.
- The FPCA remains the national standard method by which voters can establish their *UOCAVA* status and ensure that they receive the protections afforded to them by that status.

- More states are allowing *UOCAVA* voters to register online.
- In 2018, states relied more often on passive ballot notification (e.g., through a website or online system) to confirm ballot receipt for *UOCAVA* voters, as opposed to more active methods recommended by The Council of State Governments (CSG).
- The responsibility of providing access to a system for confirming ballot receipt for *UOCAVA* voters varies widely between SEOs and LEOs.

Voters may have relied on their state ballot form in the past and are unfamiliar with the FPCA, or their state form may not have a clear way to establish *UOCAVA* status. LEOs may have discretion when deciding if there is sufficient additional information to establish someone as a *UOCAVA* voter, but this means that a voter's status may be dependent on who happens to process his or her ballot request.

The results also underline the importance of the FPCA as a consistent method to register to vote. Although other methods may work, the FPCA remains the most direct way to establish *UOCAVA* status and ensure the protections of that status.

Online options, both in terms of registering to vote as well as checking on the status of a ballot, are increasingly available to voters. Indeed, the results shown in Figure 3.6 show that two-thirds of states allowed for online *UOCAVA* voter registration, which has only increased since 2016. States are also employing websites and online systems to provide passive confirmation of receipt for *UOCAVA* voters. However, *UOCAVA* voters may prefer active confirmation by way of email, phone, or mail, which gives them proof of receipt without having to navigate an online system or website.

Regulatory consistency across jurisdictions, especially if states converge on those solutions that make it easier for *UOCAVA* voters to vote and will assist election officials in providing effective assistance. The next chapter addresses one avenue by which such consistency might be achieved.



CSG OVI Recommendations

4.1 // Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapters of this report, *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* voters frequently face ballot and registration issues when exercising their right to vote. In 2013, the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) began working with The Council of State Governments (CSG) to recommend policy changes that aimed to reduce the number of barriers *UOCAVA* voters encounter with their electoral participation. The partnership brought forth CSG's Overseas Voting Initiative (OVI) Technology Working Group: a bipartisan collection of state election officials (SEO) and local election officials (LEO) whose primary mission was to provide best practices and election policy recommendations. The Technology Working Group's recommendations, released in 2016, focused on four general areas: (1) the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), (2) voter communication, (3) voter registration, and (4) engagement with the U.S. military community. Greater detail about these specific recommendations may be found in the 2016 report titled, "Overseas Voting: Strategies for Engaging Every Voter."⁷ Many of the Technology Working Group's recommendations were intended to be implemented unilaterally at the state level. In order to measure SEO awareness of these policy recommendations and to assess state-level implementation rates, FVAP asked SEOs several questions that measure their awareness of these recommendations and the implementation status of each policy in their home state.

In this chapter, FVAP discusses the levels of awareness among SEOs about many aspects of the OVI recommendations, and addresses the extent to which states have implemented the various recommendations. Overall, a large number of states have implemented or have plans to implement many of the OVI recommendations. However, a number of opportunities remain with respect to increasing awareness of the recommendations. The chapter's conclusion offers a discussion of these remaining opportunities.

⁷ <http://www.csg.org/ovi/SpecialReport2016.aspx>

4.2 // Research Questions

This section analyzes a number of research questions related to the CSG Technology Working Group including:

- Are states aware of the CSG Technology Working Group recommendations?
- If states are aware of the working group recommendations, have they implemented the policies?
- If states have not implemented the policies, are they planning to implement the working group recommendations in 2020?

4.3 // CSG Technology Working Group Recommendations

According to the CSG website,⁸ the OVI's primary mission is to "provide state policymakers and state and local election officials with best practice guides to ensure the men and women of the U.S. military and Americans living overseas are able to enjoy the same right to vote as citizens living in the United States." The OVI has three advisory working groups that make policy recommendations based on experiences from SEOs and LEOs and other election professionals. First, the CSG Policy Working Group examined overseas voting recommendations from the Presidential Commission on Election Administration and other successful state-level programs and practices across the country. Second, the CSG Technology Working Group explored issues such as performance metrics and data standardization for incorporation into state and local election administration policies and practices for overseas ballots. The Technology Working Group's motivation was to have a single standard for collecting and reporting voter data at the transactional level, meaning there is a record each time a voter interacts with a State or Local Election Office. The benefits of using the data standard include ease of reporting, evaluating voting success, improving customer service, and identifying cost-saving strategies. The CSG Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) Section B Working Group worked with FVAP and the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to improve the collection of administrative data associated with *UOCAVA* voting. The 2016 Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials (PEVS-SEO) primarily focused on the CSG Policy Working Group recommendations, but the 2018 PEVS-SEO focuses on the Technology Working Group recommendations.

The recommendations of the CSG Technology Working Group fall into three general areas:

1. Unreadable/Damaged Ballot Duplication:

⁸ <http://www.csg.org/ovi>

- State and local jurisdictions should select a ballot duplication process for unreadable and damaged ballots that is appropriate for the number of paper ballots they process.
 - Regardless of whether a jurisdiction uses a manual or an electronic duplication process for unreadable and damaged ballots, there should be clear procedures employed that ensure auditability.
 - Technologies for ballot duplication of unreadable and damaged ballots should be easy to use and promote transparency not only for election officials but for external observers as well.
2. Common Access Card (CAC)/Digital Signature Verification
- State laws should accommodate the use of a CAC digital signature in the election process for *UOCAVA* voters as they have incorporated electronic signatures in other sectors.
 - States should allow the use of a CAC digital signature to complete election-related activities—such as submitting an FPCA to register to vote—and to provide an option for military personnel to designate their *UOCAVA* voting status using a state’s online election portal.
 - State Election Offices should develop procedures and training materials in cooperation with FVAP and their Local Election Offices regarding acceptable use of a CAC digital signature. State Election Offices should also develop, in conjunction with FVAP and their Local Election Offices, educational resources for *UOCAVA* voters about using a CAC digital signature and coordinate efforts with local military installations.
3. Data Standardization/Performance Metrics
- State and Local Election Offices should work with FVAP to adopt and implement the EAVS Section B Data Standard, recognizing that it is the best vehicle for reducing the burden of completing federal reporting requirements for military and overseas voting and providing better data to isolate a voter’s experience and drivers for success.
 - CSG and SEOs should work with FVAP to identify a method or partner agency that can support automated data collection and validation to ensure the continued use of this standard.
 - FVAP should continue to work cooperatively with the EAC and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to establish data repositories and related standards to support the long-term sustainability of the EAVS Section B (ESB) Data Standard. FVAP also should share lessons learned to assist similar EAC efforts in the future to reduce post-election reporting requirements.

Overall, these recommendations from the CSG Technology Working Group have been highly vetted by working group members who, with FVAP’s support, have crafted a blueprint forward for improving the absentee voting process for

UOCAVA voters. Although not all states participate in the working group, it is important for them to be aware of and to consider implementing the recommendations.

4.4 // Methodology

In order to evaluate state awareness and implementation rates of the CSG Technology Working Group recommendations, researchers analyzed each of the 15 recommendation questions included in the survey. An initial question took a holistic approach to awareness by asking whether states were familiar with the working group's recommendations. The question provided the following response options: "Yes," "No," and "Refused." The other questions asked states whether they plan to implement each specific recommendation. These questions provided the following response options: "Already Implemented," "Yes" (meaning the state has plans to implement the recommendation in the future), "No," and "Refused." For each of these questions, refusals are not discussed or reported, but are kept in the denominator.

Most of the analyses in the next chapter consider awareness and implementation rates from a national perspective. In addition to these analyses, this chapter also examines awareness and implementation from a regional perspective. The region coding here uses the CSG's regional definitions rather than the U.S. Census Bureau's regional definitions because state and local policymakers and election officials work directly with their regional CSG office. Because of the decentralized nature of the CSG working relationship among states, using the CSG regions is a more appropriate conceptualization of region for policy implementation comparison.⁹

4.5 // Results

A majority of states are aware of the Technology Working Group's election recommendations as a whole. Figure 4.1 shows that approximately 61% of all states were aware of these initiatives, whereas approximately 35% of states were unfamiliar with these recommendations. Despite the majority of states being aware of these recommendations as a whole, there is some variation in awareness among states as it relates to specific policies.

⁹ For more information on the various CSG regions, please see the CSG website, which can be found at: <https://www.csg.org/about/regions.aspx>.

Figure 4.1: CSG OVI Recommendation Awareness

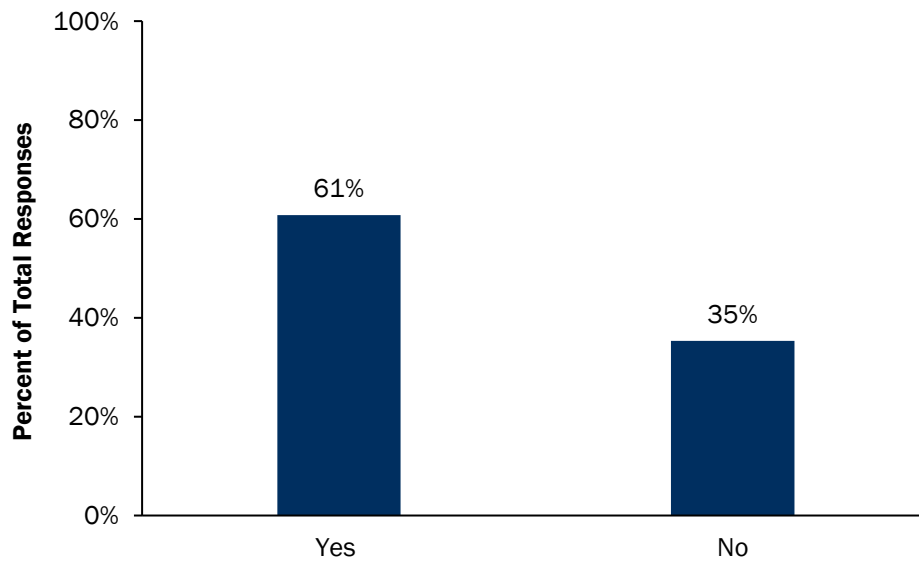


Figure 4.2: Ballot Recommendation Policies

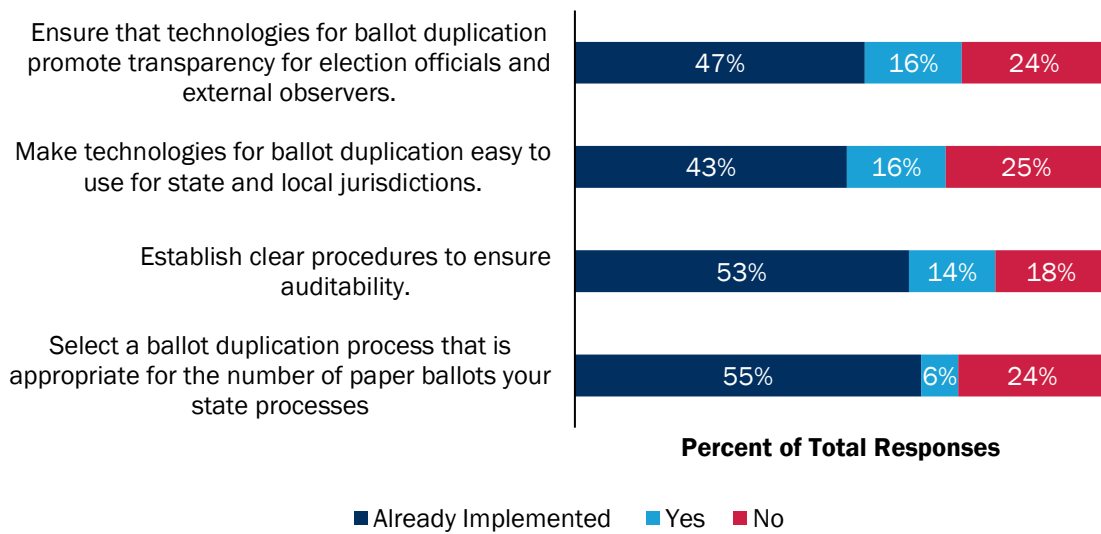


Figure 4.2 shows the current implementation status for OVI recommendations related to ballot processing, duplication, and transparency. In regard to this policy area, the overwhelming majority of states have already implemented these various suggestions, or they plan to take action on these ballot recommendations before the 2020 election. For example, approximately 47% of states have taken steps to ensure that technologies for ballot

duplication promote transparency for election officials and external observers, and an additional 16% of states plan to ensure that their technologies promote transparency before the 2020 election. Forty-three percent of states have taken steps to make ballot duplication procedures easy to use for state and local jurisdictions, and 16% of states will take this action in the future. Fifty-five percent of states have taken appropriate action on their ballot duplication process that considers the number of paper ballots that their state processes. An additional 6% of states will implement new ballot duplication procedures for paper ballots before the 2020 election. Finally, 53% of states have established clear procedures to ensure auditability, and an additional 14% of states will implement new auditability procedures by the next election.

The OVI recommendations also focus on the use of a CAC or electronic signatures for election-related items. As a reference, one of the survey questions external to the Technology Working Group recommendations asked SEOs whether their state allowed the use of digital signatures for non-election activities such as submitting tax forms. Approximately 73% of states indicated that they allow digital signatures on non-election forms, but 14% of states indicated they do not. Figure 4.3 shows that a considerable number of states have yet to approve using a CAC or electronic signatures for election activities. For example, 47% of states indicated that they do not yet allow the use of electronic signatures to register to vote or request an absentee ballot. Forty-one percent of states indicated that they do not yet allow military personnel to designate their *UOCAVA* status using an online election portal. Similarly, 47% of states do not yet treat digital and handwritten signatures equally; they have not yet developed procedures and training regarding the acceptance and use of digital signatures generally; nor have they yet developed educational resources for *UOCAVA* voters about using electronic signatures. Finally, 41% of states do not yet coordinate educational efforts with local military installations.

Figure 4.3: Digital Signature Verification Recommendations

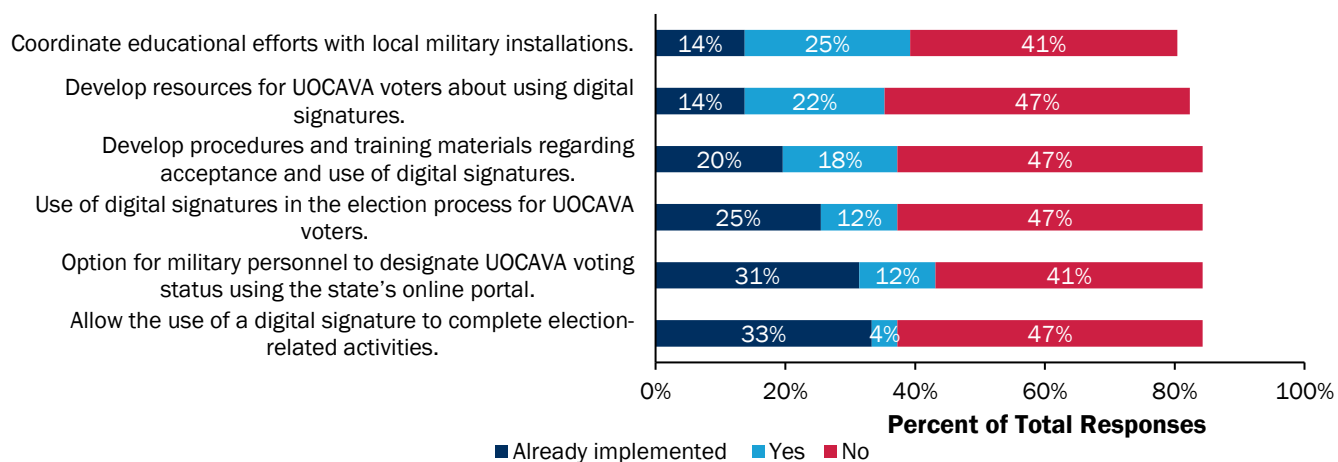
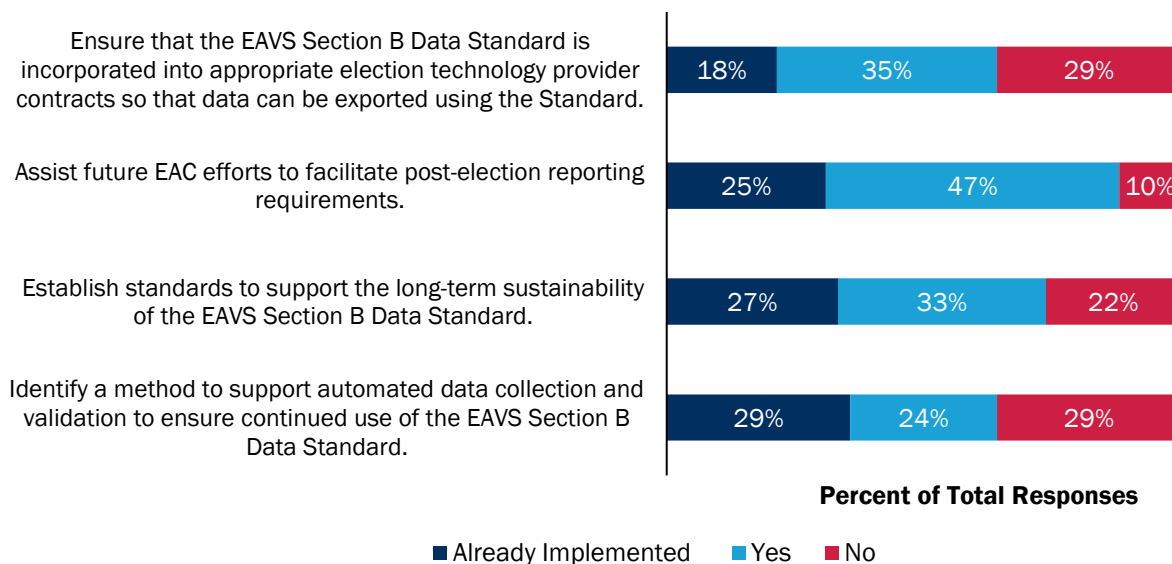


Figure 4.4 shows the various implementation rates with regards to the data standardization recommendations. In contrast to the CAC/electronic signature recommendations, a good deal of states have already implemented the data standardization recommendations, or they plan to do so by the 2020 election. For example, 27% of states have already taken steps to establish standards that support the long-term sustainability of the EAVS Section B Data Standard, and 33% of states plan to incorporate this change by 2020. Significantly, 22% of states indicated that they have not yet begun planning to implement the data standard. Twenty-five percent of states have planned to assist future EAC efforts to facilitate post-election reporting requirements, and an additional 47% of states will implement this policy recommendation in the future. Furthermore, 18% of states indicated that they have incorporated the EAVS Section B Data Standard into technology provider contracts to aid with data distribution requirements, and 35% of states plan to do this by 2020. Finally, 29% of states have identified a method to support automated data collection and validation to ensure the continued use of the data standard, and an additional 24% of states plan to implement this policy by the next election.

Figure 4.4: Data Standardization Recommendations



Another way to think about the awareness and implementation success of the OVI policy recommendations is to evaluate awareness and implementation rates by region. Figure 4.5 shows levels of awareness for the Technology Working Group’s policy recommendations broken down by region. States that are located in the East CSG region have a higher level of awareness of the policy recommendations than do states in the other CSG regions. Sixty-nine

percent of states in the East CSG region reported being familiar with the Technology Working Group’s policy recommendations. States in the West CSG region have the lowest level of awareness about the policy recommendations, with about 50% of the states in the region indicating that they are aware of the initiatives.

Figure 4.5: Regional Awareness of OVI Policy Recommendations

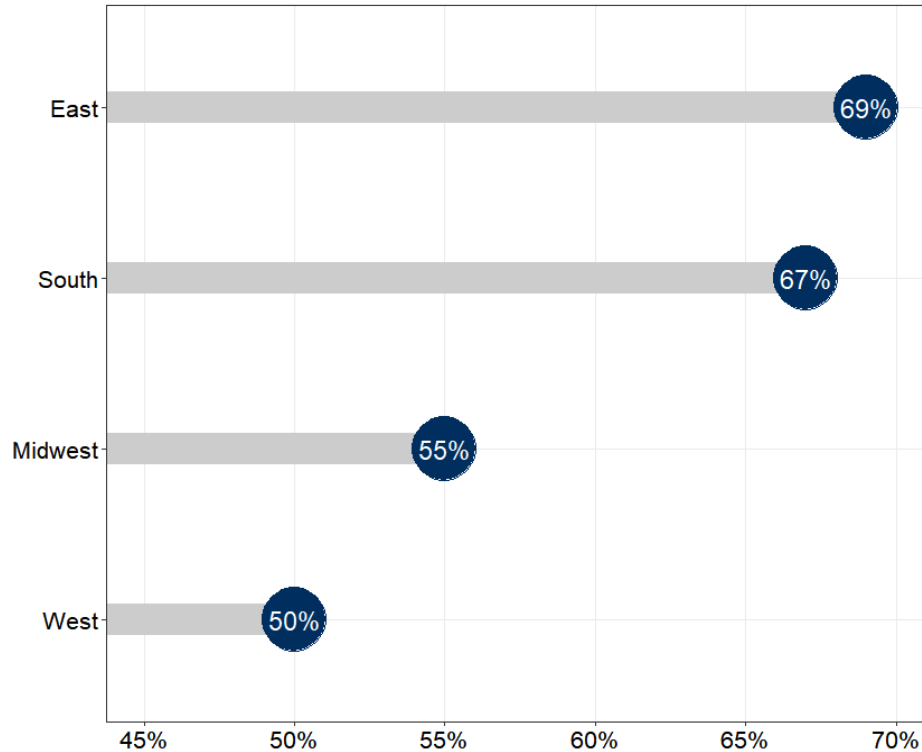


Figure 4.6 shows the various implementation rates of each OVI recommendation by region. Of the four ballot recommendations, the West and the Midwest have the highest implementation rates for this group of policies. The West reports higher rates of implementation for technologies to promote transparency and technologies that improve the duplication process. The Midwest has higher implementation rates for the auditability procedures and ballot duplication processes. By contrast, the South has the lowest implementation rates for each of these ballot recommendation initiatives with implementation rates between 40% and 53% respectively. The East hovers around the 54-62% range for all four of the ballot recommendation initiatives.

With regard to the electronic signature recommendations, all four regions are less likely to have begun implementing these policies compared to the other two CSG recommendation categories. Of these six individual recommendations, the Midwest reports having the highest implementation rates for allowing the military to

designate *UOCAVA* status with an electronic signature, allowing voters to use digital signatures in elections, and coordinating educational efforts with the military. The West has the highest implementation rates for allowing digital signatures to complete absentee ballot activities, and the South has the highest implementation rates for developing educational resources for digital signatures and for developing procedures for digital signature use.

The East seems to be the least likely to implement the CSG electronic signature recommendations. The states in this region have the lowest implementation rates pertaining to developing procedures for using digital signatures, coordinating educational efforts with the military, and developing education resources about using digital signatures. However, this conclusion must be considered in context: Compared to the other two recommendation categories, states in all four regions have reported relatively low implementation rates for the electronic signature recommendations.

For the data standardization recommendations, there is a consistent pattern pertaining to implementation rates. The Midwest leads implementation for all four regions, and the West has the lowest rates of implementation for all four initiatives. The South and the Midwest have implementation rates somewhere in between the other two regions with the South having slightly higher implementation rates than the East for three of the four policy recommendations.

Figure 4.6: Percentage of OVI Recommendations Implemented by CSG Region



4.5 // Conclusion

In this chapter, FVAP evaluated whether states were aware of the various Technology Working Group recommendations. Additionally, FVAP quantified the implementation rates for each of these specific policies by looking at the results nationally and divided by CSG region. The main findings reported in this chapter are as follows:

- States are generally aware of the Technology Working Group recommendations; however, 35% of states reported that they are unaware of these policies.
- States located in the East and South CSG regions are most aware of the Technology Working Group recommendations, but states located in the West and Midwest reported being less aware of these initiatives.

- Implementation rates are highest for the ballot recommendation initiatives, but considerably lower for the electronic signature recommendations.
- Approximately half of the states have begun implementing the data standardization initiatives.
- States located in the Midwest CSG region have the highest rates of data standardization implementation, and states located in the West CSG region have the lowest rates of data standardization implementation.

FPCA Processing

5.1 // Introduction

Voting for *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* voters is often difficult by nature because this population is either living abroad or away from their regular voting jurisdiction. The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) was created to make the absentee voting process easier for overseas citizens, active duty military (ADM) members, and their eligible family members. With the FPCA, *UOCAVA* voters can register to vote and request an absentee ballot from their last state of permanent residence.

This chapter explains the absentee voting process for *UOCAVA* voters and discusses how variations in processing the FPCA can affect voters. The findings section delves into how state election officials (SEO) report on state-specific policies that include:

- Processing FPCAs before the start of an election year;
- Statutory requirements for handling FPCAs in a timely manner;
- Treatment of the FPCA when it is submitted past the voter registration deadline; and
- Determination of permanent registration status.

This chapter shows that more states than in previous years are accepting the FPCA before the start of an election year and that few states in 2018 required certain additional identifying information. This shift in accepting FPCAs earlier allows a higher percentage of *UOCAVA* voters to change their addresses and register to vote at any point in the election cycle. These developments may be representative of a broader initiative by states to simplify the absentee voting process for *UOCAVA* voters.

5.2 // Research Question

This chapter focuses on the following research question: How did states vary in how they processed the FPCA in the 2018 midterm election?

5.3 // FPCA and the UOCAVA Absentee Voting Process

According to the Pew Charitable Trusts' report, *No Time to Vote*, in 2008, 25 states and the District of Columbia did not provide military men and women stationed overseas adequate time to vote. Pew's report found that UOCAVA voters were more likely to complete the absentee ballot process when given more time to vote.¹⁰ Additionally, the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) research note, *Data Standardization and the Impact of Ballot Transmission Timing and Mode on UOCAVA Voting*, said that "voters who received their ballots earlier were slightly more likely to return them and their ballots had less chance of being rejected for inaccuracy or lateness."¹¹ This innovative research conducted by FVAP using transactional absentee voting data has highlighted an increased need for understanding all stages of the absentee voting process.

Most states begin accepting FPCAs before January 1, but the start date for acceptance varies by state. FVAP recommends that voters submit their FPCA in January of an election year to ensure that it is eligible for processing. However, UOCAVA voters may face barriers to voting that make it difficult to send the FPCA by the recommended deadline. If a voter submits his or her FPCA after the voter registration deadline, then it is the state's discretion to determine voter registration status and the provision of an absentee ballot.

Once states receive an FPCA, election officials must process the voter's request. States must transmit the ballot to UOCAVA voters 45 days before an election. After UOCAVA voters receive their absentee ballot, they must fill it out and return it to their Local Election Office. FVAP advises voters to send their ballots no later than October 26 if they are living within the United States, October 13 if they are living outside of the country, and October 2 if they are at sea.

If UOCAVA voters do not receive their absentee ballot at least 30 days before an election, then they are entitled to use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). The FWAB can be used in place of their state-specific ballot but it requires voters

¹⁰ Pew Center on the States. (2009). *No Time to Vote: Challenges Facing America's Overseas Military Voters*. Available at http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/election_reform/nttvreportwebpdf.pdf

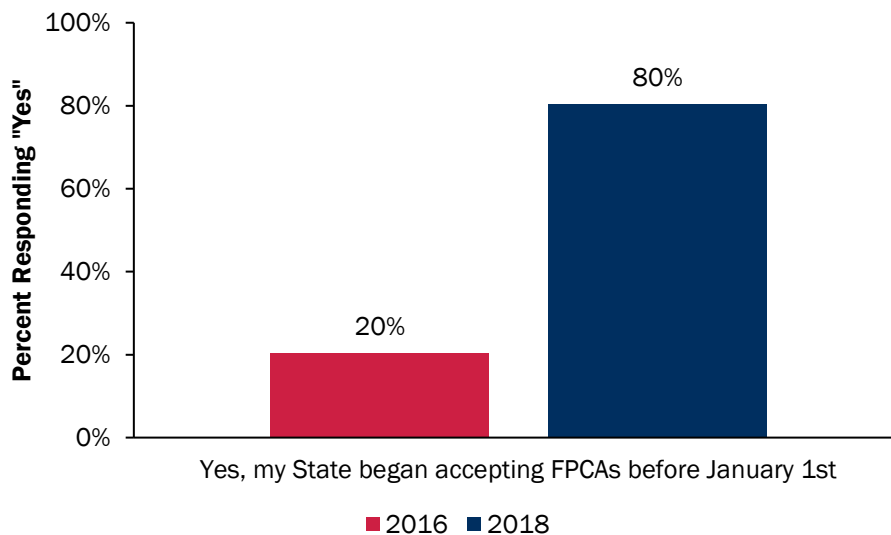
¹¹ FVAP. (2016). *Data Standardization and the Impact of Ballot Transmission Timing and Mode on UOCAVA Voting*. Available at https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Reports/609-ResearchNote11_DataStd_FINAL.pdf

to write in their choice of candidates for federal and non-federal offices, initiatives, and referendums.

5.4 // Results

The most basic rule governing FPCAs is the time frame when voters can submit an FPCA for an upcoming election. This rule is important for *UOCAVA* voters, as they may think to re-register to vote or establish an absentee ballot request as part of the process of moving to a new location outside of their voting jurisdiction. For the November 2018 midterm election, the vast majority of states began accepting FPCAs before January 1. These results differ from 2016 data in which only 20% of states began accepting FPCAs before January 1. As shown in Figure 5.1, only 18% of respondents said that their state only accepted FPCAs after January 1, 2018. In these states, an FPCA submitted in December would not carry over into the election year and would need to be resubmitted in January.

Figure 5.1: FPCA Acceptance Before January 1, 2016–2018



States were divided in their decision to process FPCAs within a statutory time limit during the 2018 midterm election. As Figure 5.2 shows, 49% of states reported having a statutory time limit whereas another 49% stated that they did not have a limit in place. Figure 5.3 shows that when asked about their specific statutory time limit, 87% of SEOs reported having an FPCA processing time limit of three days or less. The finding suggests that states are determined to process FPCAs quickly to ensure that *UOCAVA* voters are both registered to vote and receive their absentee ballot 45 days before the election.

Figure 5.2: Statutory Requirement for Processing FPCAs in a Timely Manner

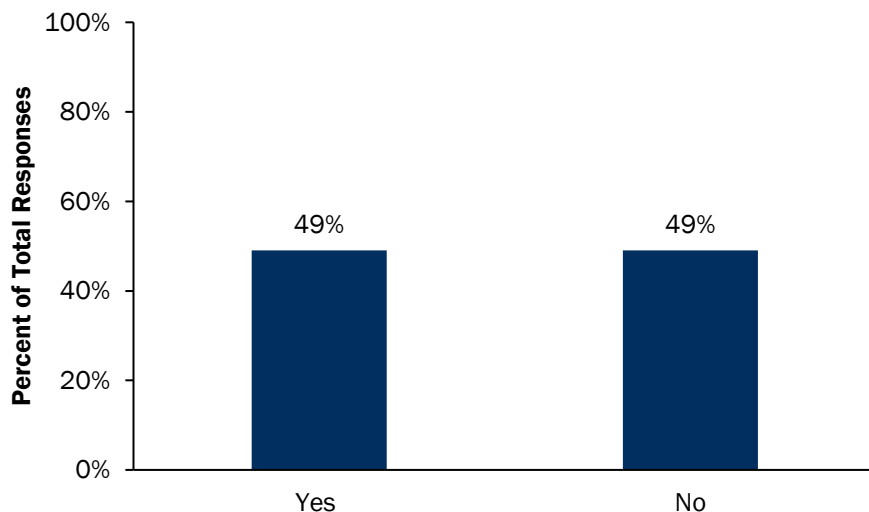
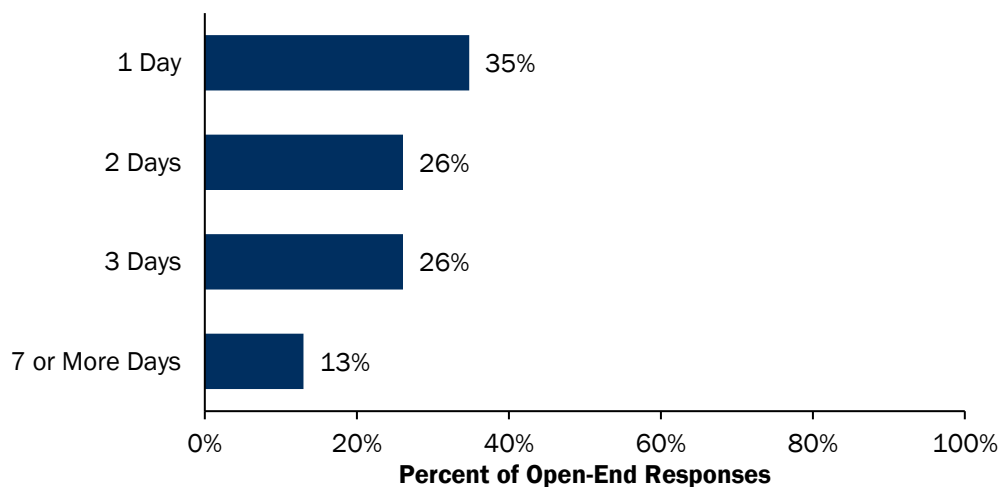
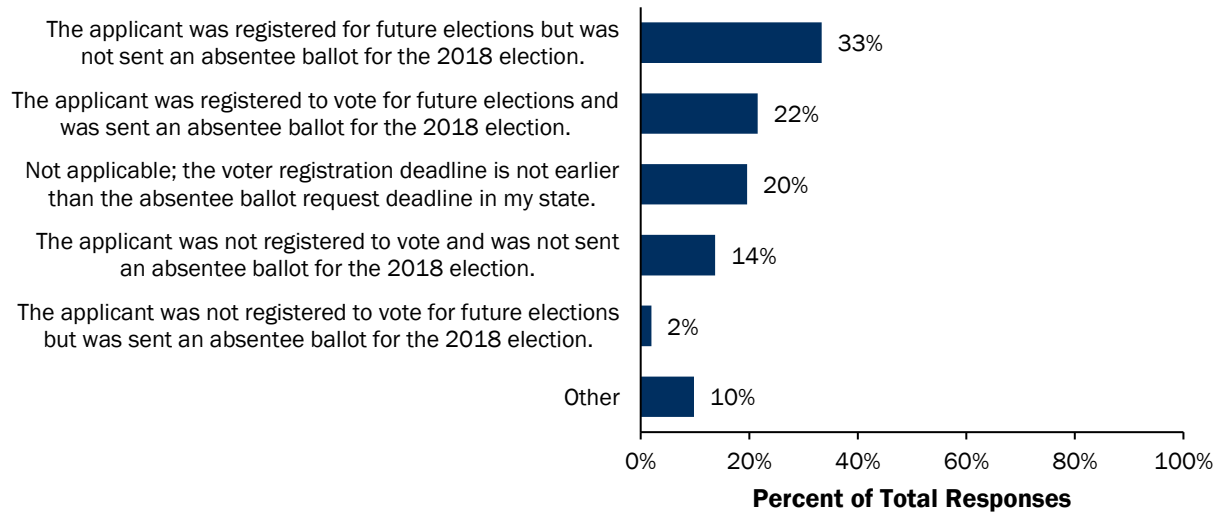


Figure 5.3: FPCA Processing Statutory Time Limit



As Figure 5.4 suggests, states did not have a primary method for processing an FPCA that was received past the registration deadline. In the 2018 midterm election, 33% of states stated that the voter was registered for future elections but was not sent an absentee ballot. Twenty-two percent reported that the applicant was registered to vote for future elections and was sent an absentee ballot for the 2018 election. Only 2% of states responded that the applicant was not registered to vote for the next election but was sent an absentee ballot.

Figure 5.4: FPCAs Received Past the Deadline

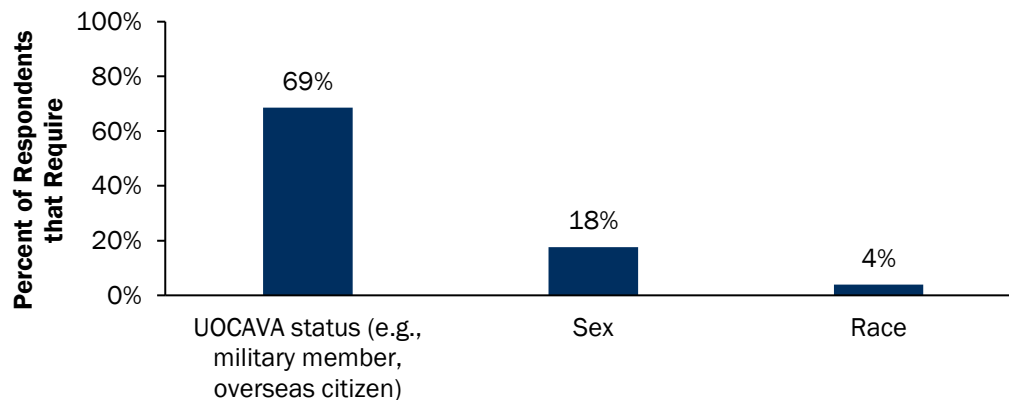


Of all the state registration policies asked about, states varied the most in how they treated the FPCA as a permanent registration form. In 2018, 20% of states reported that they did not consider FPCA voter registration to be permanent. These findings are roughly comparable to the percent of states who treated the FPCA as a permanent registration form in 2016.

To verify the identity of the voter, Block 1 of the FPCA asks for specific identifying information, including (1) reason for *UOCAVA* status, (2) full name, (3) date of birth, (4) sex, (5) social security number, and (6) driver’s license or state ID number.

States may also require certain information on the FPCA from a *UOCAVA* voter in order to process and accept a ballot request. In some instances, states may ask additional questions for voter registration or absentee ballot requests. For example, in 2018, 18% of states acknowledged that they asked voters to identify their sex, and 4% asked voters to identify their race. Additionally, Figure 5.5 shows that the majority of states, 69%, asked voters to specify the reason for their *UOCAVA* status.

5.5: Required Identifiers on the FPCA



5.5 // Conclusion

This chapter focused on variations in how states processed FPCAs during the 2018 midterm election. The chapter delved into looking at how these variations can make it more difficult for *UOCAVA* voters to fill out and submit an FPCA.

The chapter showed a number of key findings:

- In 2018, most states accepted the FPCA before January 1.
- The lack of consistency around permanent voter registration was still an issue during the 2018 midterm election.
- Most states reported that they required *UOCAVA* voters to identify their *UOCAVA* status, whereas less than one-fifth of states required identifying sex and race to process voter registration.

Eighty percent of survey respondents reported that their states began accepting the FPCA before January 1st, 2018; this is a 60-percentage point increase from 2016. The shift in FPCA acceptance means that *UOCAVA* voters in more states have a larger time frame to register to vote and request an absentee ballot. *UOCAVA* face difficulties in voting that most civilians do not. This extra time allows them to complete this key stage of the absentee ballot process earlier, helping reduce later timing difficulties.

It is crucial for *UOCAVA* voters to know their voter registration status before an election. In 22% of reported states, voters are not permanently registered if they attempt to do so through a FPCA. This

finding may be especially confusing for *UOCAVA* voters who may have moved their permanent residence from one that accepts their FPCA as a form of permanent registration to one that does not. *UOCAVA* voters may be unaware that they have to re-register, causing them to miss out on their opportunity to vote in the next federal election.

Survey Instrument Design

6.1 // Introduction

The main purpose of the 2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials (PEVS-SEO) was to collect data from SEOs to help them be more effective in their roles by understanding how to improve Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) services offered to SEOs, local election officials (LEO), and Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (*UOCAVA*) voters. To do this, FVAP designed a customer satisfaction survey focused on understanding (1) SEO engagement with FVAP resources and how resource can be improved, (2) how states handle specific registration and ballot request issues for *UOCAVA* voters, and (3) states' plans to implement Council of State Government' (CSG) Working Group recommendations. The following section explains how the 2018 PEVS-SEO survey instrument was updated to best meet FVAP 2018 research goals for SEOs.

6.2 // Initial 2018 Design

The research team began the design process by meeting with FVAP to discuss findings and lessons learned from the 2016 PEVS-SEO survey and discussing what the new programmatic goals were for SEOs and LEOs for the 2018 election cycle. The research team then created a design document that consolidated the key 2018 research questions and trending questions to help inform revisions to the 2016 instrument. After revising the previous survey based on outlined goals, the research team edited the survey by revising specific questions, adding and removing response options, and rearranging the order of questions.

FVAP's 2018 research questions and goals focused on gaining a better understanding of SEO resources, The CSG Technology Working Group recommendations and barriers to their implementation, and specific issues distinguishing between Federal Post Card Applications (FPCAs) and state ballot request forms. The main trending goals included focusing on retaining questions related to FVAP resource use, SEO and LEO communication, and

election official online training. Throughout all revisions to the survey, questions were revised to best adhere to these research questions, while ensuring that key trending questions were not modified. Researchers used cognitive interviews with SEOs to ensure the instrument language, particularly among new items, was properly suited to the SEO population.

6.3 // Cognitive Interview Procedure

Fors Marsh Group (FMG) interviewed six SEOs who could qualify as point of contact (POC) for the survey, meaning they were the head of their State Election Office or the person most responsible for *UOCAVA* issues. FMG worked with FVAP to identify states and territories that comprise diverse populations in terms of geographical region, size of *UOCAVA* population, and previous response to the 2016 PEVS-SEO. FMG and FVAP decided to reach out to seven states and territories—six of which agreed to be a part of the cognitive interview process. Interviewees did not receive compensation to take part in this study.

FMG interviewed each participant via phone and used one moderator and one note-taker. At the start of the interview, the moderator discussed the purpose of the interview and provided detailed instructions to the participant. After interviewees provided their consent, the moderator recorded each interview. Interviews used a semi-structured interview guide in which researchers identified a predetermined set of targeted questions that they wanted the moderator to collect feedback on, while allowing participants to identify additional questions they had issues with. This process allowed researchers to most efficiently use the SEO's time, while still providing enough time for each participant to elaborate on their state's/territory's specific policies. Each SEO was provided a PDF of the survey questionnaire and, at the beginning of the interview, were instructed to open the survey materials on their screen. Next, the moderator asked the participant to complete the survey as they would normally by reading out their answers to each question, while using a "think aloud" technique in which participants explained their thought process for answering each question.

After reading targeted survey items, participants were asked about their impression of the survey questions. The moderator then reviewed the items participants flagged as confusing. The majority of the moderator questions focused on comprehension of specific phrases in questions, comprehension of subitems and response items, and exploring what criteria a respondent used to answer each question. Throughout this cognitive interview process, question clarity was evaluated based on four aspects:

- Understandable: Was the item "understandable"? That is, did the participant have to read the item more than once

to understand what it was asking? Was the meaning of the question clear and straightforward?

- Scale adequate: Was the scale of response options adequate, meaning that it provided the participant with an appropriate way to respond?
- Only one response: Was the item written in such a way that the respondent could have only answered it one way?
- Loaded: Was the item written in such a way that there was only one obvious answer for the participant?

6.3 // Cognitive Interview Results and Changes

Results of the cognitive interview process helped to inform several changes to the SEO survey instrument. Participant feedback centered around three major themes: (1) re-ordering response options, (2) adding more open-ended questions, and (3) clarifying question wording. First, FMG implemented recommendations from states to re-arrange answer choices in descending order, with the most positive answer (e.g., “Yes,” “Very Satisfied”) having the highest value. Second, FMG added an open-ended question after asking whether states allowed *UOCAVA* voters to register online because “Yes” or “No” answers did not provide sufficient information on the complexity of some state rules. Finally, FMG revised the text to make clear that “ballot receipt” referred to receiving completed absentee ballots, not ballot requests.

6.4 // PEVS-SEO Final Design and Coordination

Following the cognitive interviews, the survey went through multiple rounds of design and approval by the research team and FVAP. The instrument was then reviewed by FVAP staff and ultimately approved by the FVAP Director. Upon final FVAP approval, the survey package was approved of as information collection through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Fast Track generic approval process.

The final version of the survey asked SEOs about their experience with (1) awareness and usage of FVAP resources, (2) SEO and LEO interactions (3) registration and ballot issues, and (4) CSG’s Technology Working Group recommendations. The questionnaire was a 15-minute web survey that contained 35 questions.

Survey Administration

7.1 // Introduction

The survey was administered from January 8 to February 12, 2018 for a fielding period of 36 days. As described in detail in this chapter, researchers programmed the survey and conducted quality control checks on its functions and materials before administration. During fielding, researchers administered email communications, answered helpdesk emails, and monitored survey response rates.

Fors Marsh Group (FMG) created an annotated questionnaire template and programmed the survey with its operations team on Decipher, an online survey software program. Before fielding, the research team tested the web instrument with sample cases and troubleshoot programming, formatting, and data errors. On January 8, FMG launched the survey on a “.com” domain. Immediately following the first week of fielding, researchers analyzed initial cases to ensure that data were being captured correctly.

The 2018 survey frame was a census of 55 State Election Offices. The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) sought either the head of the State Election Office or the person most responsible for *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* voting issues; at least one such individual was identified as the survey point of contact (POC) for each state. FVAP sent state election official (SEO) contact information to the FMG research team on August 6, 2018, providing the basis for the survey frame. The provided frame included one primary POC for each state and territory and a secondary POC for approximately 60% of SEOs. After cleaning, reformatting, and updating contact information, the final pre-fielding frame was completed prior to the survey launch.

A small percentage of frame contacts were revised after the initial communication due either to POCs being retired or email bounce-backs due to an invalid email address. The contact information for these states was updated before the first email reminder to ensure that SEOs could access the survey.

Participants who navigated to the survey URL were greeted with a welcome screen and were instructed to enter the credentials received in their email communications. They then had the option to view frequently asked questions and security information about the survey before viewing the privacy advisory.

During fielding, the initial announcement email and seven scheduled reminder emails were sent on the following days in 2019: January 8, January 14, January 18, January 22, January 25, January 28, January 31, and February 6. All scheduled emails were distributed to state POCs via Decipher. Emails were purposefully varied, both by days of the week and time of day, to prevent bias and to increase reach. Participants were able to contact an email helpdesk at SEO-survey@forsmarshgroup.com for survey inquiries. Participants also had the option to unsubscribe from future email reminders; however, there were no “unsubscribes” from the sample population. Emails were addressed from “PEVS-SEO” using SEO-survey@forsmarshgroup.com and were signed by David Beirne, the Director of FVAP. All communications contained a direct web link for participants to access the survey.

The research team created cut files before each email communication to remove responding states from the email list. After the fifth email, reminders were addressed to the second POC to increase response rates. Contact information was updated again before the final email to account for five states that had experienced SEO turnover during the fielding period. Five new POCs were added to the frame at this time; their contact information was provided by a senior staff member at FMG who had familiarity with the state election landscape.

The original survey deadline and close date was February 8 but was extended to February 12 to allow participants additional time to respond to the survey. Response rates were tracked weekly for comparisons to 2016. The response rate reflected states that answered at least 50% of the survey questions, at which point the survey was considered “complete.” The final response rate for the 2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials (PEVS-SEO) survey was 93%, with the participation of 51 states and territories. This response rate was slightly higher than in 2016, which was 89% with 49 states and territories. Response rates and survey results were not weighted, meaning responses were representative of the population that answered the survey only and were sensitive to non-response. None of the non-responding states were among those with the top 10 highest *UOCAVA* populations in 2018. In contrast, one top 10 state was non-responding in 2016.

Conclusion

T

he Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials (PEVS-SEO) fulfills the obligations of *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA; 52 U.S.C., Section 20301[b][1])*, which directs the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) to “consult with state and local election officials.” It focuses on research questions specific to the SEO population and assesses the current state of customer satisfaction with FVAP materials.

The main purpose of the 2018 PEVS-SEO was to collect data from SEOs to help them be more effective in their roles by understanding how to improve FVAP services offered to SEOs, local election officials (LEO), and *UOCAVA* voters. This survey continued FVAP’s focus on efficiently collecting information from SEOs, as they are the main source for disseminating training and assistance to the thousands of LEOs nationwide. In doing so, the survey builds on the 2016 PEVS-SEO, which reduced the burden on public officials by contacting SEOs versus LEOs and thus drastically reduced the number of sample members.

This report addressed four key research questions related to FVAP’s interactions with State Election Offices. It also reported the full survey design and administration methodology of the PEVS-SEO, detailed the full survey instrument, and reported the full breakdown of responses.

8.1 // Methodological Limitations

The findings presented here, however, must be kept in their proper context. As a survey of customer satisfaction and evaluation, the PEVS-SEO is best viewed as a snapshot of FVAP’s current performance in 2018. As a census of all 55 SEOs and not a random, representative sample, these survey results are not generalizable to non-respondents or a broader potential population of SEOs. In 2016, six states or territories did not respond to the survey, whereas in 2018, four states or territories did not respond, including only one of the non-responding states in 2016. None of these non-responding states in 2018 were top 10 *UOCAVA* population states; nevertheless, the difference in the composition has an impact on trending. Similarly, FVAP helped identify the individual serving as the *UOCAVA* contact

at each state office and had that person provide the answers for the whole office. This is useful for identifying the person most familiar with *UOCAVA* issues, but there may be unknown biases in contacting one staff member based on prior FVAP relationships. Nevertheless, this report provides many important data points to help improve interactions with a key FVAP stakeholder.

8.2 // Summary of Results

a. SEO and LEO Interaction

Referral of FVAP resources is dependent on the perceived usefulness of the product by SEOs. SEOs reported that they are more likely to refer resources that help LEOs address specific issues or concerns. Additionally, referral rates may have dissipated in 2018 due to SEOs' use of state-specific resources as opposed to those provided by FVAP.

b. Registration Ballot Request Issues

More states than in previous years are allowing *UOCAVA* voters to register online. Confirming notification of ballot receipt is divided between State and Local Election Offices, with no clear standard. When State and Local Election Offices confirm ballot receipt, they are most likely to do so through passive ballot notification (e.g., through a website or online system).

c. The Council of State Governments' (CSG) Overseas Voting Initiative (OVI) Recommendations

The majority of states are aware of CSG's Technology Working Group recommendations. From a regional point of view, states located in the East and South CSG regions are the most aware of the Technology Working Group policies, and states located in the West and Midwest have the opportunity to increase awareness of these initiatives. Implementation rates are highest for ballot recommendation policies and opportunities remain available to increase implementation rates for the electronic signature recommendations. However, each of the four CSG regions show a good deal of implementation pertaining to the data standardization initiatives.

d. Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) Processing

A lack of consistency regarding permanent voter registration occurred during the 2018 midterm election that may have caused confusion among *UOCAVA* voters. However, in an effort to ease the absentee voting process, there was a large increase from 2016 to 2018 in the percentage of states accepting the FPCA before January 1, 2018.

References

9.1 // References

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https://www.csg.org/ovi/documents/CSGOVI_2016_recommendations_report.pdf

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Governments. Available at <https://www.csg.org/OVI/documents/KKOVITechRecs.pdf>

Appendix A: 2018 PEVS-SEO Instrument

FVAP Products and Services

// Include running section header “FVAP Products and Services” //

// Display all resources descriptions together on one page. Format each resource inside a separate box with a light blue background //

The first section of this survey will ask about your experience using five different Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) products and services in 2018.

On the next page, please **read the following descriptions** of these FVAP products and services carefully. You can reference these descriptions during the survey by using the links at the bottom of your screen.

FVAP.gov

Provides customized, voting-related information and resources for all *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* voters and election officials. FVAP.gov supplies state-specific election information, including dates, deadlines, and contact information that voters can rely on to adhere to their state’s absentee voting process. Other products and services, such as the election official online training module, are available at FVAP.gov.

Staff Support

FVAP staff is available to provide support to election officials, including voting information, voter outreach materials, and state-specific updates that can be communicated with voters. FVAP staff can be reached by email at vote@fvap.gov or by using a toll-free telephone service.

State Affairs Specialists

These specialists work closely with election officials and states on legislation and regulations related to *UOCAVA* voters. Their goal is to strengthen the relationship between states and FVAP. They are the primary FVAP points of contact for state election officials (SEO) and local election officials (LEO). These specialists provide *UOCAVA* training and conference briefs. They are also available to answer questions on *UOCAVA* policy, election official best practices, and *UOCAVA*-related problems.

Address Look-Up Service

Election officials can contact FVAP when a ballot sent to a military Service member is returned and FVAP will attempt to find the member’s current address information.

Election Official (EO) Online Training

A short, interactive course created for election officials. It provides information on *UOCAVA*-related laws, clarifies the absentee voting process, and includes an overview of FVAP's role in assisting your office with *UOCAVA* voters.

// Page Break //

// At the bottom of QUSE-QSATSPSP, display link to pop up descriptions of FVAP.gov, state affairs specialists, address look-up service, and EO online training with above descriptions //

Item #: 1

Question Type: Grid

// Soft Prompt: "You did not answer all questions; we would like your response to the question above." //

QUSE. In 2018, did your office use any of the following FVAP products or services? Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QUSEWEB	FVAP.gov	Q1a: FVAP.gov use
QUSESTF	FVAP staff support	Q1b: FVAP staff support use
QUSESAS	FVAP state affairs specialists	Q1c: FVAP state affairs specialist use
QUSEADD	FVAP address look-up service	Q1d: FVAP ALUS use
QUSETRN	FVAP EO online training	Q1e: FVAP EO online training use

Value	Value Label
1	Yes
0	No
98	Not applicable; I was not aware of this FVAP product/service
-99	Refused

Item #: Q2

Question Type: Grid

// For each subitem, ask if matching QUSE= 1. If all QUSE subitems ≠ 1, skip to QREF //

QSAT. How satisfied was your office with the following FVAP products or services?

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QSATWEB	FVAP.gov	Q2a: FVAP.gov satisfaction
QSATSTF	FVAP staff support	Q2b: FVAP staff support satisfaction
QSATSAS	FVAP state affairs specialists	Q2c: FVAP state affairs specialist satisfaction
QSATADD	FVAP address look-up service	Q2d: FVAP ALUS satisfaction
QSATTRN	FVAP EO online training	Q2e: FVAP EO online training satisfaction

Value	Value Label
5	Very satisfied
4	Satisfied
3	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
2	Dissatisfied
1	Very dissatisfied

-99	Refused
-100	Valid Skip

Item #: Q2sp

Question type: Open End Essay

// Ask if QSATWEB = 1|2 OR QSATSTF = 1|2 OR QSATSAS = 1|2 OR QSATADD = 1|2 OR QSATTRN = 1|2, else skip to QREF //

QSATSP: Please explain why you were not satisfied with the following products or services from FVAP: [INSERT “FVAP.gov” if QSATWEB = 1|2, INSERT “FVAP staff support” if QSATSTF = 1|2, INSERT “FVAP state affairs specialist” if QSATSAS = 1|2, INSERT “FVAP address look-up service” if QSATADD = 1|2, INSERT “FVAP EO online training” if QSATTRN = 1|2]. Do not provide any personally identifiable information (PII).

Variable Label: Q2sp: FVAP products dissatisfied reason

--

// At the bottom of QREF, display link to pop up descriptions of FVAP staff support, state affairs specialists, address look-up service, and EO online training //

Item #: Q3

Question Type: Grid

// Soft Prompt: “You did not answer all questions; we would like your response to the question above.”//

QREF. In 2018, did your office refer any local election officials (LEO) to the following FVAP products or services?

Mark “Yes” or “No” for each item.

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QREFWEB	FVAP.gov	Q3a: FVAP.gov referred LEO
QREFSTF	FVAP staff support	Q3b: FVAP staff support referred LEO
QREFSAS	FVAP state affairs specialists	Q3c: FVAP state affairs specialist referred LEO
QREFADD	FVAP address look-up service	Q3d: FVAP ALUS referred LEO
QREFTRN	FVAP EO online training	Q3e: FVAP EO online training referred LEO

Value	Value Label
1	Yes
0	No
98	Not applicable; my office was not aware of this FVAP product/service
-99	Refused

FVAP.gov

// Include running section header “FVAP.gov” //

// At the bottom of QWEBNOT-QWEBNOTSP, display link to pop up description of FVAP.gov //

Item #: Q4

Question type: Single punch

// Ask if QUSEWEB = 0|1 AND QREFWEB = 0, else skip to QWEBNOTSP //

QWEBNOT: In 2018, what was the main reason your office did not share information about FVAP.gov with local election officials (LEO)?

Variable Label: Q4: Reason not shared FVAP.gov

Value	Value Label
1	Did not believe FVAP.gov offered the assistance LEOs needed.
2	Did not believe FVAP.gov offered accurate information.
3	LEOs received comparable assistance from another resource.
4	LEOs did not need assistance or information available on FVAP.gov.
5	Some other reason
-99	Refused
-100	Valid Skip

Item #: Q4sp

Question type: Open End Essay

QWEBNOTSP: How can FVAP improve FVAP.gov? Do not provide any personally identifiable information (PII).

Variable Label: Q4sp: How to improve FVAP.gov

FVAP Staff Support

// Include running section header "FVAP Staff Support" //

// At the bottom of QSTFRE-QSTFNOTSP, display link to pop up description of FVAP staff support //

Item #: Q5

Question Type: Grid

// Ask if QUSESTF = 0|1 AND QREFSTF = 1, else skip to QSTFNOT //

QSTFRE. In 2018, did your office refer any local election officials (LEO) to [FVAP staff support](http://FVAP.gov) for any of the following reasons? Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QSTFREA	To request FVAP voting supplies or outreach materials	Q5a: Request voting supplies
QSTFREB	To receive information about training and/or other FVAP resources	Q5b: Receive training or resources
QSTFREC	To resolve a problem for an LEO	Q5c: Resolve LEO problem
QSTFRED	To suggest changes to FVAP publications or programs	Q5d: Suggest FVAP changes
QSTFREE	To update contact information for a local election office	Q5e: Update LEO contact info

QSTFREF	To obtain clarification about <i>UOCAVA</i> laws	Q5f: Obtain <i>UOCAVA</i> clarification
QSTFREG	Some other reason	Q5g: Some other reason

Value	Value Label
1	Yes
0	No
-99	Refused
-100	Valid Skip

Item #: Q5sp

Question type: Open End Essay

// Ask if QSTFREG = 1, else skip to QSTFNOT //

QSTFRESP: Please specify the other reason(s) your office referred LEOs to FVAP staff support in 2018. *Do not provide any personally identifiable information (PII).*

Variable Label: Q5sp: Other reasons referred to staff support

Item #: Q6

Question type: Single punch

// Ask if QUSESTF = 0 | 1 AND QREFSTF = 0, else skip to QSTFNOTSP //

QSTFNOT: In 2018, what was the main reason your office did not refer local election officials (LEO) to FVAP staff support for assistance?

Variable Label: Q6: Reason not referred staff support

Value	Value Label
1	Did not believe FVAP staff offered the assistance LEOs needed.
2	Did not believe FVAP staff offered accurate information.
3	Did not believe FVAP staff provided timely responses.
4	LEOs received comparable assistance from another resource.
5	LEOs did not need assistance or information from FVAP staff.
6	Some other reason
-99	Refused
-100	Valid Skip

Item #: Q6sp

Question type: Open End Essay

// Soft Prompt: "We would like your response to the question above. If you have no comments, please enter 'N/A'" //

QSTFNOTSP: How can FVAP improve the assistance provided by FVAP staff support? *Do not provide any personally identifiable information (PII).*

Variable Label: Q6sp: How to improve staff support

FVAP State Affairs Specialists

// Include running section header “FVAP State Affairs Specialists” //

// At the bottom of QSASCON-QSASCONSP, display link to pop up description of FVAP state affairs specialists //

Item #: Q7

Question type: Grid

// Ask if QUESAS = 1, else skip to QSASP //

QSASCON: In 2018, did your office contact FVAP state affairs specialists for any of the following reasons? Mark “Yes” or “No” for each item.

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QSASCONA	To coordinate in-person FVAP training or a conference presentation	Q7a: Coordinate in-person training or presentation
QSASCONB	To coordinate changes to your state’s voting procedure information listed on FVAP.gov	Q7b: Change FVAP.gov state info
QSASCONC	To resolve a problem for a local election official (LEO)	Q7c: Resolve problem for LEO
QSASCOND	To discuss state <i>UOCAVA</i> -related legislative or regulatory changes	Q7d: Discuss legislative changes
QSASCONE	To obtain clarification about <i>UOCAVA</i> laws	Q7e: Obtain <i>UOCAVA</i> clarification
QSASCONF	Some other reason	Q7f: Some other reason

Value	Value Label
1	Yes
0	No
-99	Refused
-100	Valid Skip

Item #: Q7sp

Question type: Open End Essay

// Ask if QSASCONF = 1, else skip to QSASP //

QSASCONSP: Please specify the other reason(s) your office contacted FVAP state affairs specialists in 2018. *Do not provide any personally identifiable information (PII).*

Variable Label: Q7sp: Other reasons contacted FVAP state affairs specialists

FVAP Policy and Research

// Include running section header “FVAP Policy and Research” //

Item #: Q8

Question type: Grid

QSASP: In 2018, did your office use any of the following FVAP policy-related products? Mark “Yes” or “No” for each item.

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QSASPA	Public policy papers	Q8a: Public policy papers used
QSASPB	FVAP research (e.g., Post-Election Voting Survey or comparisons of military and civilian voting rates)	Q8b: FVAP research used
QSASPC	FVAP congressional reports	Q8c: Congressional reports used
QSASPD	Monthly EO newsletter	Q8d: EO newsletter used

Value	Value Label
1	Yes
0	No
-99	Refused

Item #: Q9

Question type: Grid

// Ask if matching QSASP = 1, else skip to QRESTOP //

QSASPUSF: How useful were the following FVAP policy-related products? Mark one answer for each statement.

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QSASPUSFA	Public policy papers	Q9a: Public policy papers useful
QSASPUSFB	FVAP research (e.g., Post-Election Voting Survey or comparisons of military and civilian voting rates)	Q9b: FVAP research useful
QSASPUSFC	FVAP congressional reports	Q9c: Congressional reports useful
QSASPUSFD	Monthly EO newsletter	Q9d: EO newsletter useful

Value	Value Label
4	Very useful
3	Useful
2	Somewhat useful
1	Not useful
-99	Refused
-100	Valid Skip

Item #: Q10

Question type: Open End Essay

QRESTOP: FVAP conducts periodic research on important election topics. On what policy topic(s) would you most want FVAP to disseminate new research? Do not provide any personally identifiable information (PII).

Variable Label: Q10: Research topics

--

FVAP Election Official (EO) Online Training

// Include running section header “FVAP Election Official (EO) Online Training” //

// At the bottom of QTRNNOT-QTRNNOTSP, display link to pop up descriptions of EO online training //

Item #: Q11

Question type: Single punch

// Ask if QUSETRN = 0 | 1 AND QREFTRN = 0, else skip to QTRNNOTSP //

QTRNNOT: In 2018, what was the main reason your office did not refer local election officials (LEO) to the FVAP EO online training?

Variable Label: Q11: Reason not referred FVAP EO online training

Value	Value Label
1	Did not believe FVAP EO online training offered the assistance LEOs needed.
2	Did not believe FVAP EO online training offered accurate information.
3	LEOs received comparable assistance from another resource.
4	LEOs did not need any training.
5	Some other reason
-99	Refused
-100	Valid Skip

Item #: Q11sp

Question type: Open End Essay

QTRNNOTSP: How can FVAP improve the FVAP EO online training? *Do not provide any personally identifiable information (PII).*

Variable Label: Q11sp: How to improve FVAP EO online training

--

Item #: Q12

Question Type: Grid

QTRNTYPE. FVAP provides training to election officials in various formats. How useful would each of the following types of training formats be for local election officials (LEO) in your state? *Mark one answer for each statement.*

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QTRNTYPEA	Online training modules	Q12a: Online training modules
QTRNTYPEB	In-person training	Q12b: In-person training
QTRNTYPEC	Presentation at your state’s conference	Q12c: Presentation at your state’s conference
QTRNTYPED	Webinar	Q12d: Webinar
QTRNTYPEE	Training formats not available through	Q12e: Training formats not available

	FVAP	
--	------	--

Value	Value Label
4	Very useful
3	Useful
2	Somewhat useful
1	Not useful
-99	Refused

Item #: Q12sp

Question type: Open End Essay

// Ask if QTRNTYPEE = 3|4, else skip to QHELPS //

QTRNTYPESP: Please describe the other training format(s) that would be valuable to your office. *Do not provide any personally identifiable information (PII).*

Variable Label: Q12sp: Other training formats

Improvement of Services

// Include running section header “Improvement of Services” //

// Display below description on same page. Format all inside a separate box with a light blue background //

The following questions ask about how FVAP can improve communication with your office and improve FVAP products and services.

Item #: Q13

Question Type: Grid

QHELPS. Across all of FVAP’s products and services, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the information provided by FVAP? *Mark one answer for each statement.*

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QHELPSA	It helps my office increase our understanding of UOCAVA laws.	Q13a: Helps with UOCAVA laws
QHELPSB	It helps resolve questions my office receives from local election officials.	Q13b: Helps resolves LEO questions
QHELPC	It helps my state’s local election officials be more effective at their jobs.	Q13c: Helps LEOs be more effective

Value	Value Label
5	Strongly agree
4	Agree
3	Neither agree nor disagree
2	Disagree

1	Strongly disagree
-99	Refused

ITEM #: Q14

Question type: Open End Essay

QIMPRVCOMM: How can FVAP help improve communication between state election officials (SEO) and local election officials (LEO)? *Do not provide any personally identifiable information (PII).*

Variable Label: Q14: How to improve SEO and LEO communication

Registration and Ballot Requests

// Include running section header “Registration and Ballot Requests” //

// Display below description and the two definitions on one separate page. Format all inside a separate box with a light blue background //

The following questions will help us better understand your state’s standard procedures for processing registration and ballot requests during the 2018 General Election. Most of these questions ask about *UOCAVA* citizens and the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), described below:

UOCAVA Citizens: U.S. citizens who are active members of the Uniformed Services, their eligible family members or U.S. citizens residing outside of the United States.

FPCA: The FPCA is a single form that can be used to register to vote and/or request an absentee ballot for federal elections.

Each state has unique policies, so you might not see an answer that exactly represents your state’s procedures.

Please select the answer to each question that best represents your state’s procedures. If you would like to add any additional comments about your state’s procedures, please do so in your answer to the open-end question at the end of the survey.

Item #: Q15

Question type: Single punch

QFPCADATE: States have varying dates for when they begin accepting FPCAs before the current federal election year. Did your state accept FPCAs for the 2018 General Election before January 1, 2018?

Variable Label: Q15: Date state began accepting FPCAs

Value	Value Label
1	Yes, my state began accepting FPCAs before January 1, 2018.
0	No, my state only accepted FPCAs received after January 1, 2018.
-99	Refused

Item #: Q16

Question type: Single punch

QONREG: In 2018, did your state allow *UOCAVA* voters to register online?

Variable Label: Q16: State online voter registration

Value	Value Label
1	Yes
0	No
2	It varies by jurisdiction within my state
-99	Refused

Item #: Q16sp

Question type: Open End Essay

// Display QONREGSP immediately below QONREG on the same page //QONREGSP : If you would like to provide additional information, please do so below. Do not provide any personally identifiable information (PII).

Variable Label: Q16sp: State online voter registration other

Item #: Q17

Question type: Single punch

QFPCATIME: In 2018, did your state have a statutory requirement for processing FPCAs in a timely manner (e.g., FPCAs must be processed within 1 business day)?

Variable Label: Q17: State has FPCA processing requirement

Value	Value Label
1	Yes
0	No
-99	Refused

ITEM #: Q17sp

Question type: Open End Numeric

// Limit to 0 through 999, soft prompt "Please enter a number between 0 and 999." //

// Ask if QFPCATIME = 1, else skip to QFPCAPERM //

QFPCATIMESP: In 2018, what was the statutory time limit *in days* for processing FPCAs? Do not provide any personally identifiable information (PII).

Variable Label: Q17sp: FPCA processing day limit

Item #: Q18

Question type: Single punch

QFPCAPERM: In some states, if voters register using the FPCA, they are considered permanently registered under the National Voter Registration Act (i.e., the voter will be placed on your state's voter registration roll). In other states, voters must submit a separate registration form to be permanently registered.

In 2018, did your state consider voters to be permanently registered if they registered using an FPCA?

Variable Label: Q18: Permanently registered if using FPCA

Value	Value Label
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1	Yes
0	No
-99	Refused

Item #: Q19

Question type: Single punch

QFPCAPROC: In 2018, if an FPCA from an unregistered voter was received after the voter registration deadline but before the absentee ballot request deadline, how was the FPCA processed in your state?

Variable Label: Q19: FPCA after registration before ballot request deadline

Value	Value Label
1	The applicant was not registered to vote and was not sent an absentee ballot for the 2018 election.
2	The applicant was not registered to vote for future elections but was sent an absentee ballot for the 2018 election.
3	The applicant was registered for future elections but was not sent an absentee ballot for the 2018 election.
4	The applicant was registered to vote for future elections and was sent an absentee ballot for the 2018 election.
5	Not applicable; the voter registration deadline is not earlier than the absentee ballot request deadline in my state.
6	Other
-99	Refused

Item #: Q19sp

Question type: Open End Essay

// Display QFPCAPROCSP immediately below QFPCAPROC on the same page //

QFPCAPROCSP : If you would like to provide additional information, please do so below. *Do not provide any personally identifiable information (PII).*

Variable Label: Q19sp: FPCA after registration before ballot request deadline other

Item #: Q20

Question type: Multi punch

QPROTECT: Military members and U.S. citizens residing overseas may request absentee ballots using different forms, including FPCAs and state forms. We are interested in whether these types of voters receive the same *UOCAVA* protections if they use non-FPCA forms.

From the list below, mark all types of absentee ballot request forms that would allow a military member, eligible family member, or U.S. citizen residing overseas to receive *UOCAVA* protections in your state.

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QPROTECTA	FPCA	Q20a: FPCA
QPROTECTB	State form with a <i>UOCAVA</i> classification selected	Q20b: State form with <i>UOCAVA</i> classification
QPROTECTC	State form without a <i>UOCAVA</i>	Q20c: State form without <i>UOCAVA</i>

	classification selected, but otherwise indicates the voter is covered under <i>UOCAVA</i> (e.g., voter has an overseas mailing address)	classification
QPROTECTD	Any other form that indicates the voter is covered under <i>UOCAVA</i>	Q20d: Other form

Value	Value Label
1	Marked
0	Not Marked
-99	Refused

Ballot Processing

// Include running section header “Ballot Processing” //

// Display below description and the two definitions on one separate page. Format all inside a separate box with a light blue background //

The following questions will help us better understand your state’s standard procedures for processing backup ballots during the 2018 General Election. Most of these questions ask about *UOCAVA* citizens and the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB), described below:

UOCAVA Citizens: U.S. citizens who are active members of the Uniformed Services, their eligible family members, or U.S. citizens residing outside of the United States.

FWAB: The FWAB is a single form that can be used as a backup absentee ballot for *UOCAVA* voters who have not yet received their ballot. Many states have expanded use of the FWAB for other purposes, such as voter registration.

Each state has unique policies, so you might not see an answer that exactly represents your state’s procedures.

Please select the answer to each question that best represents your state’s procedures. If you would like to add any additional comments about your state’s procedures, please do so in your answer to the open-end question at the end of the survey.

// Display FPCA Section 5 centered above QFWABPROC on the same page //

5. What is your voting preference for future elections?

Do you want to register and request a ballot for all elections you are eligible to vote in? Yes No

How do you want to receive voting materials from your election office? Mail Email or online Fax

What is your political party for primary elections?

Item #: Q21

Question type: Multi punch

QFWABPROC: In 2018, if a FWAB was received from a voter who did NOT indicate a preference for registering and requesting a ballot for future elections in Section 5 (shown above), then how was the FWAB processed in your state? *Mark all that apply.*

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QFWABPROCA	The FWAB was counted as a backup	Q21a: FWAB counted as backup ballot

	ballot.	
QFWABPROCB	The FWAB was processed as a voter registration application.	Q21b: FWAB processed as voter registration application
QFWABPROCC	The FWAB was processed as an absentee ballot application.	Q21c: FWAB processed as absentee ballot application
QFWABPROCD	The FWAB was used to update the voter's registration record if the voter was already registered.	Q21d: FWAB used to update registration record
QFWABPROCE	The FWAB was used to update the voter's absentee ballot application record if the voter had previously submitted an application.	Q21e: FWAB used to update absentee ballot application

Value	Value Label
1	Marked
0	Not Marked
-99	Refused

Item #: Q22

Question type: Multi punch

QCONFLVL: In your state in 2018, confirmation of receipt for a completed ballot was provided to *UOCAVA* voters at the :

Mark all that apply.

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QCONFLVLA	State level	Q22a: Ballot receipt notification by state
QCONFLVLB	Local level	Q22b: Ballot receipt notification by local

Value	Value Label
1	Marked
0	Not Marked
-99	Refused

Item #: Q23

Question type: Multi punch

// Selecting QBALCONFF=1 automatically deselects all other subitems //

QBALCONF: In your state in 2018, which methods did state or local election officials use to provide confirmation of receipt for a completed ballot to *UOCAVA* voters? *Mark all that apply.*

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QBALCONFA	Email	Q23a: Ballot receipt notification by email
QBALCONFB	Mail	Q23b: Ballot receipt notification by mail
QBALCONFC	Website or online system	Q23c: Ballot receipt notification by website or online system
QBALCONFD	Phone	Q23d: Ballot receipt notification by phone
QBALCONF E	Other	Q23e: Ballot receipt notification by other
QBALCONFF	None; no ballot confirmation is provided	Q23f: Ballot receipt notification - none

Value	Value Label
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1	Marked
0	Not Marked
-99	Refused

Item #: Q24

Question type: Single punch

QPROCONF: In 2018, did your state policy require that either state or local election officials provide proactive confirmation of receipt for a completed ballot to *UOCAVA* voters (i.e., a ballot confirmation was sent automatically without a voter inquiring about the ballot status)?

Variable Label: Q24: State required proactive confirmation

Value	Value Label
1	Yes
0	No
-99	Refused

Item #: Q25

Question type: Single punch

QBALSEC: In 2018, if a voter returned a voted ballot without enclosing it in a ballot secrecy envelope, how did your state process the ballot?

Variable Label: Q25: Processed without ballot secrecy envelope

Value	Value Label
1	The ballot was accepted.
2	The ballot was rejected.
3	The ballot was rejected, unless it was a FWAB.
-99	Refused

CSG Overseas Voting Initiative

// Include running section header “CSG Overseas Voting Initiative” //

// Display description on a separate page. Format inside a separate box with a light blue background //

This section of this survey will ask about your state’s awareness and implementation in 2018 of several key recommendations from the Council of State Governments (CSG).

On the next page, please read the following descriptions of these recommendations.

// Display below description and the three definitions all on a separate page. Format all inside a separate box with a light blue background //

In December 2016, the CSG Overseas Voting Initiative Technology Working Group released [recommendations](#) for improvements to state policies regarding the *UOCAVA* voting process, beyond *UOCAVA* and the *Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act* requirements, in three key areas:

1. Unreadable/Damaged Ballot Duplication—Recommend that states use a ballot duplication process for unreadable and damaged ballots appropriate for the number of paper ballots they process, and that states

establish clear audit procedures.

2. Common Access Card (CAC)/Digital Signature Verification—Recommend that states allow the use of CAC digital signatures in the election process for *UOCAVA* voters and that states develop materials to facilitate their acceptance and use.

3. Data Standardization/Performance Metrics—Recommend that states adopt the Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) Section B Data Standard, that states identify methods and partners to support automated data collection and validation, and that states establish data repositories.

ITEM #: Q26

Question Type: Grid

QCSGAW: Was your office aware of the CSG Overseas Voting Initiative Technology Working Group [recommendations](#)? Mark “Yes” or “No” for each item.

Variable Label: Q27: Aware of CSG TWG recommendations

Value	Value Label
1	Yes
0	No
-99	Refused

ITEM #: Q27

Question Type: Grid

QCSGDUPL: The CSG Overseas Voting Initiative Technology Working Group made several [recommendations](#) regarding unreadable/damaged ballot duplication. Does your state plan to implement any of the following before the November 2020 election? *Mark one answer for each statement.*

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QCSGDUPLA	Select a ballot duplication process that is appropriate for the number of paper ballots your state processes.	Q27a: Appropriate ballot duplication process
QCSGDUPLB	Establish clear procedures to ensure auditability.	Q27b: Clear auditability procedures
QCSGDUPLC	Make technologies for ballot duplication easy to use for state and local jurisdictions.	Q27c: Technologies to improve duplication process
QCSGDUPLD	Ensure that technologies for ballot duplication promote transparency for election officials and external observers.	Q27d: Technologies to promote transparency

Value	Value Label
1	Yes
0	No
2	Already implemented
-99	Refused

ITEM #: Q28

Question Type: Grid

QCSGSIG: The CSG Overseas Voting Initiative Technology Working Group made several [recommendations](#) regarding CAC/digital signature verification. Does your state plan to implement any of the following before the

November 2020 election? *Mark one answer for each statement.*

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QCSGSIGA	Allow the use of a digital signature to complete election-related activities (e.g., register to vote, request an absentee ballot).	Q28a: Allow digital signature to complete absentee ballot activities
QCSGSIGB	Provide an option for military personnel to designate their <i>UOCAVA</i> voting status using your state’s online election portal.	Q28b: Provide military option to designate <i>UOCAVA</i> status
QCSGSIGC	Allow the use of digital signatures in the election process for <i>UOCAVA</i> voters (e.g., treat digital signatures equally to handwritten ones).	Q28c: Allow use of digital signatures in election
QCSGSIGD	Develop procedures and training materials regarding acceptance and use of digital signatures.	Q28d: Develop procedures for using digital signature
QCSGSIGE	Develop educational resources for <i>UOCAVA</i> voters about using digital signatures.	Q28e: Develop educational resources about using digital signature
QCSGSIGF	Coordinate educational efforts with local military installations.	Q28f: Coordinate educational efforts with military

Value	Value Label
1	Yes
0	No
2	Already implemented
-99	Refused

ITEM #: Q29

Question Type: Grid

QCSGSTD: The CSG Overseas Voting Initiative Technology Working Group made several [recommendations](#) regarding [data standardization/performance metrics](#). Does your state plan to implement any of the following before the November 2020 election? *Mark one answer for each statement.*

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QCSGSTDA	Identify a method or partner agency that can support automated data collection and validation to ensure continued use of the EAVS Section B Data Standard.	Q29a: Support automated data collection and validation for ESB
QCSGSTDB	Establish standards to support the long-term sustainability of the EAVS Section B Data Standard.	Q29b: Establish standards to support long-term sustainability of ESB
QCSGSTDC	Assist future EAC efforts to facilitate post-election reporting requirements.	Q29c: Facilitate post-election reporting requirements
QCSGSTDD	Ensure that the EAVS Section B Data Standard is incorporated into appropriate election technology provider contracts so	Q29d: Incorporate ESB Data Standard into contracts

	that data can be exported using the Standard.	
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Value	Value Label
1	Yes
0	No
2	Already implemented
-99	Refused

ITEM #: Q30

Question Type: Open End Essay

QCSGNOT: What are the main reasons your state may not implement one or more of the CSG Overseas Voting Initiative Technology Working Group [recommendations](#) by the November 2020 election? *Do not provide any personally identifiable information (PII).*

Variable Label: Q30: Reasons not implementing recommendations

ITEM #: Q31

Question Type: Single Punch

QCSGSIGNES: To the best of your knowledge, does your state allow the use of a digital signature for any non election-related state activities (e.g., tax forms)?

Variable Label: Q31: Allow use of digital signature for non election-related activities

Value	Value Label
1	Yes
0	No
-99	Refused
-100	Valid Skip

Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) versus State Forms

// Include running section header "Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) versus State Forms //

// Display FPCA Section 6 centered above QFPCAINFO on the same page //



ITEM #: Q32

Question Type: Open End Essay

QFPCAINFO: What additional information, if any, does your state require voters to provide in order to register to vote and request an absentee ballot using Section 6 of the FPCA (pictured above)? *Do not provide any personally*

identifiable information (PII).

Variable Label: Q32: Additional absentee requirements

// Display FPCA Section 1 centered above QFPCAREG on the same page //

1. Who are you? Pick one.

I request an absentee ballot for all elections in which I am eligible to vote AND:

I am on active duty in the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine **-OR-** I am an eligible spouse or dependent.
 I am an activated National Guard member on State orders.
 I am a U.S. citizen living outside the country, and I intend to return.
 I am a U.S. citizen living outside the country, and my return is uncertain.
 I am a U.S. citizen living outside the country, and I have never lived in the United States.

Last name _____ Suffix (Jr., II) _____ Sex Female Male
 First name _____ Previous names (if applicable) _____
 Middle name _____ Birth date (MM/DD/YYYY) / / _____
 Social Security Number _____ - _____ - _____ Driver's license or State ID # _____

ITEM #: Q33

Question Type: Grid

QFPCAREG: Does your state require the following information captured in Section 1 of the FPCA (pictured above) to process voter registration?

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QFPCAREGA	Asking voters to specify the reason for their <i>UOCAVA</i> status (e.g., military member, overseas citizen)	Q33a: Require specify <i>UOCAVA</i> status
QFPCAREGB	Asking voters to identify their race	Q33b: Require identify race
QFPCAREGC	Asking voters to identify their sex	Q33c: Require identify sex

Value	Value Label
1	Yes
0	No
-99	Refused

ITEM #: Q34

Question Type: Grid

QFPCALEO: In 2018, did your office assist local election officials (LEO) with any of the following tasks? Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.

Variable Name	Variable Text	Variable Label
QFPCALEOA	Sharing and/or referring FVAP resources	Q34a: Assist LEO sharing/referring FVAP resources
QFPCALEOB	Registration and ballot request issues for <i>UOCAVA</i> voters	Q34b: Assist LEO <i>UOCAVA</i> registration and ballot request issues
QFPCALEOC	Implementing CSG Overseas Voting Initiative Technology Working Group recommendations	Q34c: Assist LEO implementing CSG recommendations

Value	Value Label
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1	Yes
0	No
-99	Refused

Suggested Improvements

// Include running section header "Suggested Improvements" //

Item #: Q35

Question type: Open End Essay

QCHANGE: FVAP strives to provide excellent products and services to state election officials (SEO). What changes could FVAP make to improve our products and services to better assist your office and the local election officials (LEO) you serve? *Do not provide any personally identifiable information (PII).*

Variable Label: Q35: Changes to improve FVAP products and services

Appendix B: 2018 PEVS-SEO Communications

Email Communications

a. First Email: Invitation

Initial Announcement – Sent the day the website opens

Email Subject: Invitation: *2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials (SEOs)*

Your Ticket Number: %key_1%

Dear %FullName,

To help state election officials (SEOs) be more effective in their roles, the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) wants to know how SEOs use FVAP products and services, interact with local election officials, and address state ballot and registration issues. FVAP, a Department of Defense organization, is conducting the *2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials* to improve the services we offer your office, local election officials, and UOCAVA voters. This survey is different from the Election Assistance Commission's (EAC) Election Administration & Voting Survey (EAVS) and focuses on your experience with FVAP, absentee voters, and voting assistance resources. You have been selected to participate in this survey because your office is listed as the state election office of %State%. **As your State Affairs Specialist at FVAP, I personally invite you to participate in a short, 15-minute survey.** Your participation is voluntary; however, we want to hear from all SEOs, regardless of your familiarity with FVAP.

The *2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials* is available at: <http://www.2018-SEO-Survey.com>

Click on the link to go directly to the survey website. If this does not work, "copy and paste" this address into the web address box of your Internet browser. Once you have accessed the website, **enter your personal Ticket Number: %key_1%**

If this survey was sent to a general email account, please determine the best person to complete the survey, such as the head of your office or the staff member most familiar with UOCAVA.

If you have questions regarding how to complete this survey or need assistance, please email SEO-survey@forsmarshgroup.com.

Your response is crucial to improving the absentee voting process for our Uniformed Service members and overseas citizens. On behalf of FVAP, thank you for participating in this survey.

Sincerely,

David Beirne
Director,
Federal Voting Assistance Program

OMB Control 0704-0553, expiration date 04/30/2019

b. Second Email

First Email Reminder
Email Subject: Reminder: *2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of SEOs*

Your Ticket Number: %key_1%

Dear %FullName,

In an effort to improve the services we offer your office, local election officials, and *UOCAVA* voters, the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) wants to learn more about your experiences leading up to the 2018 election. Please take the time today to complete the *2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials*, which focuses on how you use FVAP services, interact with LEOs, and address state ballot and registration issues. This survey is different from the Election Administration & Voting Survey (EAVS). Most people take 15 minutes to complete the survey. Your participation is voluntary but is important because it will provide FVAP and the Department of Defense with valuable information to refine services that allow SEOs to be more effective in their roles.

The *2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials* is available at: <http://www.2018-SEO-Survey.com>

Click on the link to go directly to the survey website. If this does not work, "copy and paste" this address into the web address box of your Internet browser. Once you have accessed the website, **enter your personal Ticket Number: %key_1%**

If this survey was sent to a general email account, please determine the best person to complete the survey, such as the head of your office or the staff member most familiar with *UOCAVA*.

If you cannot access the website or experience other technical issues, please email SEO-survey@forsmarshgroup.com.

On behalf of FVAP, thank you for participating in this survey.

Sincerely,

David Beirne
Director,
Federal Voting Assistance Program

OMB Control 0704-0553, expiration date 04/30/2019

c. Third Email

Second Email Reminder

Email Subject: FVAP 2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of SEOs

Your Ticket Number: %key_1%

Dear %FullName,

To better assist you and other state election officials (SEOs) in your responsibilities, the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) is interested in hearing about your experiences as an SEO leading up to the 2018 election. If you have already completed the *2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials*, we thank you. If not, please try to do so today. This FVAP and Department of Defense-administered survey is different from the Election Administration & Voting Survey (EAVS) that many SEOs are familiar with. Most people take 15 minutes to complete it. The survey will help inform FVAP of how we can improve our products and resources to better serve SEOs, local election officials, and *UOCAVA* voters. Your participation is voluntary; however, we want to hear from all SEOs, regardless of your experience using FVAP resources.

The survey is available at: <http://www.2018-SEO-Survey.com>

Once you have accessed the website, **enter your personal Ticket Number: %key_1%**

If this survey was sent to a general email account, please determine the best person to complete the survey, such as the head of your office or the staff member most familiar with *UOCAVA*.

If you cannot access the website or experience other technical issues, please email SEO-survey@forsmarshgroup.com. If you do not wish to participate or to receive additional reminders about this survey, you may remove yourself from the mailing list by replying to this message. Please include your Ticket Number and the words, "Please remove me from this survey's mailing list."

On behalf of FVAP, thank you for participating in this survey.

Sincerely,

David Beirne
Director,
Federal Voting Assistance Program

OMB Control 0704-0553, expiration date 04/30/2019

d. Fourth Email

Third Email Reminder
Email Subject: FVAP 2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of SEOs

Your Ticket Number: %key_1%

Dear %FullName,

In an effort to improve the services we offer, the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) wants to learn more about your experiences leading up to the 2018 election. If you have already completed the *2018 Post-Election*

Voting Survey of State Election Officials, we thank you. If not, please do so before the website closes on February 8. This short, 15-minute survey is different from the Election Administration & Voting Survey (EAVS). While your participation is voluntary, this is your opportunity to inform policy officials of your opinions on programs and services that assist your office, local election officials, and UOCAVA voters.

The survey is available at: <http://www.2018-SEO-Survey.com>

Once you have accessed the website, **enter your personal Ticket Number: %key_1%**

If this survey was sent to a general email account, please determine the best person to complete the survey, such as the head of your office or the staff member most familiar with UOCAVA.

If you cannot access the website or experience other technical issues, please email SEO-survey@forsmarshgroup.com. If you do not wish to participate or to receive additional reminders about this survey, you may remove yourself from the mailing list by replying to this message. Please include your Ticket Number and the words, "Please remove me from this survey's mailing list."

On behalf of FVAP, thank you for participating in this survey.

Sincerely,

David Beirne
Director,
Federal Voting Assistance Program

OMB Control 0704-0553, expiration date 04/30/2019

e. Fifth Email

Fourth Email Reminder
Email Subject: FVAP 2018 *Post-Election Voting Survey of SEOs*

Your Ticket Number: %key_1%

Dear %FullName,

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) recently invited you to participate in the *2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials*. Please complete the survey **before the website closes on February 8**. This short, 15-minute survey is different from the Election Administration & Voting Survey (EAVS). Your participation is voluntary, but will help FVAP and DoD improve the programs and services that we offer.

The survey is available at: <http://www.2018-SEO-Survey.com>

Once you have accessed the website, **enter your personal Ticket Number: %key_1%**

If you have already started the survey, please complete the remaining items and submit the survey.

If this survey was sent to a general email account, please determine the best person to complete the survey, such as the head of your office or the staff member most familiar with UOCAVA.

If you cannot access the website or experience other technical issues, please email SEO-survey@forsmarshgroup.com. If you choose not to participate, you can remove yourself from the mailing list by replying to this message. Please include your Ticket Number and the words, "Please remove me from this survey's mailing list."

On behalf of FVAP, thank you for participating in this survey.

Sincerely,

David Beirne
Director,
Federal Voting Assistance Program

OMB Control 0704-0553, expiration date 04/30/2019

f. Sixth Email

Fifth Email Reminder
Email Subject: Reminder: *2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of SEOs*

Your Ticket Number: %key_1%

Dear %FullName,

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) recently invited you to participate in the *2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials*. Please complete the short, 15-minute survey **before the website closes on February 8**. This survey is different from the Election Administration & Voting (EAVS) Survey. Your participation is desired, but entirely voluntary.

The survey is available at: <http://www.2018-SEO-Survey.com>

Once you have accessed the website, **enter your personal Ticket Number: %key_1%**

If you have already started the survey, please complete the remaining items and submit the survey. If this survey was sent to a general email account, please determine the best person to complete the survey, such as the head of your office or the staff member most familiar with *UOCAVA*.

If you cannot access the website or experience other technical issues, please email SEO-survey@forsmarshgroup.com. If you choose not to participate, you can remove yourself from the mailing list by replying to this message. Please include your Ticket Number and the words, "Please remove me from this survey's mailing list."

On behalf of FVAP, thank you for participating in this survey.

Sincerely,

David Beirne
Director,
Federal Voting Assistance Program

g. Seventh Email

Sixth Email Reminder

Email Subject: Don't Forget: *2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of SEOs*

Your Ticket Number: %key_1%

Dear %FullName,

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) recently invited you to participate in the *2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials*. Please complete the 15-minute survey **before the website closes on February 8**. This survey is different from the Election Administration & Voting (EAVS) Survey. Your participation is desired, but entirely voluntary.

The survey is available at: <http://www.2018-SEO-Survey.com>

Once you have accessed the website, **enter your personal Ticket Number: %key_1%**

If you have partially completed the survey, but have not clicked the "Submit" button, please log onto the website, complete as many items as you can, and submit the survey. After **February 8**, we will consider whatever items you have completed at that point to be your intended response.

If this survey was sent to a general email account, please determine the best person to complete the survey, such as the head of your office or the staff member most familiar with *UOCAVA*. If you cannot access the website or experience other technical issues, please email SEO-survey@forsmarshgroup.com.

On behalf of FVAP, thank you for participating in this survey.

Sincerely,

David Beirne
Director,
Federal Voting Assistance Program

h. Eighth Email

Seventh and FINAL Email Reminder

Email Subject: Final Reminder – *2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of SEOs*

Your Ticket Number: %key_1%

Dear %FullName,

This is your final reminder to complete the *2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials*. Please **do**

so before the website closes on February 8. Your participation is voluntary. This short, 15-minute survey is different from the Election Administration & Voting (EAVS) Survey.

Take the survey at: <http://www.2018-SEO-Survey.com>

Once you have accessed the website, enter your personal Ticket Number: %key_1%

If this survey was sent to a general email account, please determine the best person to complete the survey. If you cannot access the website or experience other technical issues, please email SEO-survey@forsmarshgroup.com.

On behalf of FVAP, thank you for participating in this survey.

Sincerely,

David Beirne
Director,
Federal Voting Assistance Program

OMB Control 0704-0553, expiration date 04/30/2019

Appendix C: 2018 PEVS-SEO Frequencies

12.1 // Introduction

This appendix reports the survey frequencies for the 2018 Post-Election Voting Survey of State Election Officials (PEVS-SEO). All reported percentages are unweighted and are representative of those who responded to the survey. Within a set of response options, percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. All tables list the number of eligible respondents, *N*, that were asked to answer this question. Tables in which *N* is less than the total number of eligible respondents are due to skip patterns planned within the survey questionnaire.

12.2 // Frequencies

Q1: In 2018, did your office use any of the following FVAP products or services?

All Respondents (<i>N</i> = 51)	Yes	No	Not applicable; I was not aware of this FVAP product/service	Refused
FVAP.gov	96.1%	2.0%	0.0%	2.0%
FVAP staff support	52.9%	43.1%	2.0%	2.0%
FVAP state affairs specialists	39.2%	49.0%	9.8%	2.0%
FVAP address look-up service	9.8%	76.5%	11.8%	2.0%
FVAP EO online training	19.6%	62.7%	15.7%	2.0%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents

Q2. How satisfied was your office with the following FVAP products or services?

	FVAP.gov (N=49)	FVAP staff support (N=27)	FVAP state affairs specialists (N=20)	FVAP address look-up service (N=5)	FVAP EO online training (N=10)
Very satisfied	46.9%	70.4%	70.0%	20.0%	50.0%
Satisfied	44.9%	29.6%	25.0%	60.0%	30.0%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6.1%	0.0%	5.0%	20.0%	10.0%
Dissatisfied	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Very dissatisfied	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Refused	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents answering Q1="yes."

Q3. In 2018, did your office refer any local election officials (LEO) to the following FVAP products or services?

All Respondents (N = 51)	Yes	No	Not applicable; I was not aware of this FVAP product/service	Refused
FVAP.gov	82.4%	11.8%	3.9%	2.0%
FVAP staff support	33.3%	58.8%	5.9%	2.0%
FVAP state affairs specialists	21.6%	64.7%	11.8%	2.0%
FVAP address look-up service	33.3%	49.0%	15.7%	2.0%
FVAP EO online training	21.6%	54.9%	21.6%	2.0%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q4. In 2018, what was the main reason your office did not share information about FVAP.gov with local election officials (LEO)?

All Respondents (N = 6)	% of total responses
Did not believe FVAP.gov offered the assistance LEOs needed.	0.0%
Did not believe FVAP.gov offered accurate information.	0.0%
LEOs received comparable assistance from another resource.	50.0%
LEOs did not need assistance or information available on FVAP.gov.	33.3%
Some other reason	16.7%
Refused	0.0%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents answering Q1a= "yes" or "no" AND Q3a="no"

Q5. In 2018, did your office refer any local election officials (LEO) to FVAP staff support for any of the following reasons? Mark “Yes” or “No” for each item?

All Respondents (N = 17)	Yes	No	Refused
To request FVAP voting supplies or outreach materials	35.3%	64.7%	0.0%
To receive information about training and/or other FVAP resources	58.8%	41.2%	0.0%
To resolve a problem for an LEO	76.5%	23.5%	0.0%
To suggest changes to FVAP publications or programs	35.3%	64.7%	0.0%
To update contact information for a Local Election Office	41.2%	58.8%	0.0%
To obtain clarification about UOCAVA laws	23.5%	76.5%	0.0%
Some other reason	17.6%	70.6%	11.8%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents answering Q1b="yes" or "no" AND Q3b="yes."

Q6. In 2018, what was the main reason your office did not refer local election officials (LEO) to FVAP staff support for assistance?

All Respondents (N = 30)	% of total responses
Did not believe FVAP staff offered the assistance LEOs needed.	3.3%
Did not believe FVAP staff offered accurate information.	0.0%
Did not believe FVAP staff provided timely responses.	0.0%
LEOs received comparable assistance from another resource.	30.0%
LEOs did not need assistance or information from FVAP staff.	53.3%
Some other reason	13.3%
Refused	0.0%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents answering Q1b="yes" or "no" AND Q3b="no"

Q7. In 2018, did your office contact FVAP State affairs specialists for any of the following reasons? Mark “Yes” or “No” for each item?

All Respondents (N = 20)	Yes	No	Refused
To coordinate in-person FVAP training or a conference presentation	30.0%	65.0%	5.0%
To coordinate changes to your State’s voting procedure information listed on FVAP.gov	65.0%	25.0%	10.0%
To resolve a problem for a local election official (LEO)	50.0%	45.0%	5.0%
To discuss State UOCAVA-related legislative or regulatory changes	25.0%	65.0%	10.0%
To obtain clarification about UOCAVA laws	30.0%	70.0%	0.0%
Some other reason	10.0%	75.0%	15.0%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents answering Q1c="yes."

Q8. During 2018, did your office use any of the following FVAP policy-related products?

	All Respondents (N = 51)	Yes	No	Refused
Public policy papers		17.6%	76.5%	5.9%
FVAP research (e.g., Post-Election Survey or comparisons of military and civilian voting rates)		37.3%	58.8%	3.9%
FVAP congressional reports		17.6%	76.5%	5.9%
Monthly EO newsletter		68.6%	27.5%	3.9%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q9. How useful were the following FVAP policy-related products?

	Public policy papers (N = 9)	FVAP research (e.g., Post-Election Survey or comparisons of military and civilian voting rates) (N = 19)	FVAP congressional reports (N = 9)	Monthly EO newsletter (N = 35)
Very Useful	33.3%	36.8%	44.4%	37.1%
Useful	33.3%	57.9%	22.2%	51.4%
Somewhat Useful	33.3%	5.3%	33.3%	11.4%
Not Useful	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Refused	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents answering Q8="yes."

Q11. In 2018, what was the main reason your office did not refer local election officials (LEO) to the FVAP EO online training?

	All Respondents (N = 27)	% of total responses
Did not believe FVAP EO online training offered the assistance LEOs needed.		3.7%
Did not believe FVAP EO online training offered accurate information.		0.0%
LEOs received comparable assistance from another resource.		44.4%
LEOs did not need any training.		29.6%
Some other reason		22.2%
Refused		0.0%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents answering 1e= "yes" or "no" AND q3e="no"

Q12. FVAP provides training to election officials in various formats. How useful would each of the following types of training formats be for local election officials (LEO) in your state? Mark one answer for each statement:

All Respondents (N = 51)	Online training modules	In-person training	Presentation at your State's conference	Webinar	Some other training format
Very Useful	51.0%	25.5%	25.5%	33.3%	9.8%
Useful	25.5%	25.5%	37.3%	35.3%	15.7%
Somewhat Useful	11.8%	27.5%	15.7%	15.7%	25.5%
Not Useful	5.9%	13.7%	13.7%	7.8%	25.5%
Refused	5.9%	7.8%	7.8%	7.8%	23.5%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q13. Across all FVAP's products and services, how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the information provided by FVAP?

All Respondents (N = 51)	It helps my office increase our understanding of UOCAVA laws.	It helps resolve questions my office receives from local election officials.	It helps my State's local election officials be more effective at their jobs.
Strongly agree	37.3%	29.4%	27.5%
Agree	52.9%	43.1%	45.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	9.8%	23.5%	23.5%
Disagree	0.0%	2.0%	3.9%
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Refused	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q15. States have varying dates for when they begin accepting FPCAs before the current federal election year. Did your state accept FPCAs for the 2018 General Election before January 1, 2018?

All Respondents (N = 51)	% of total responses
Yes, my State began accepting FPCAs before January 1, 2018.	80.4%
No, my State only accepted FPCAs received after January 1, 2018.	17.6%
Refused	2.0%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q16. In 2018, did your state allow voters to register to vote as UOCAVA voters through an online voter registration system?

All Respondents (N = 51)	% of total responses
Yes	66.7%
No	31.4%
Refused	2.0%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q17. In 2018, did your state have a statutory requirement for processing FPCAs in a timely manner (e.g., FPCAs must be processed within 1 business day)?

All Respondents (N = 51)	% of total responses
Yes	49.0%
No	49.0%
Refused	2.0%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q18. In 2018, did your state consider voters to be permanently registered if they registered using an FPCA?

All Respondents (N = 51)	% of total responses
Yes	78.4%
No	19.6%
Refused	2.0%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q19. In 2018, if an FPCA from an unregistered voter was received after the voter registration deadline but before the absentee ballot request deadline, how was the FPCA processed in your state?

All Respondents (N = 51)	% of total responses
The applicant was not registered to vote and was not sent an absentee ballot for the 2018 election.	13.7%
The applicant was not registered to vote for future elections but was sent an absentee ballot for the 2018 election.	2.0%
The applicant was registered for future elections but was not sent an absentee ballot for the 2018 election.	33.3%
The applicant was registered to vote for future elections and was sent an absentee ballot for the 2018 election.	21.6%
Not applicable; the voter registration deadline is not earlier than the absentee ballot request deadline in my state.	19.6%
Other	9.8%
Refused	0.0%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q20. From the list below, mark all types of absentee ballot request forms that would allow a military member or U.S. citizen residing overseas UOCAVA protections in your state:

All Respondents (N = 51)	% of total responses
FPCA	100.0%
State form with a UOCAVA classification selected	62.7%
State form without a UOCAVA classification selected, but otherwise indicates the voter is covered under UOCAVA (e.g., voter has an overseas mailing address)	49.0%
Any other form that indicates the voter is covered under UOCAVA	43.1%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q21. In 2018, if a FWAB was received from a voter who did NOT indicate a preference for registering and requesting a ballot for future elections in Section 5 (shown above), then how was the FWAB processed in your state? Mark all that apply:

All Respondents (N = 51)	% of total responses
The FWAB was counted as a backup ballot.	56.9%
The FWAB was processed as a voter registration application.	51.0%
The FWAB was processed as an absentee ballot application.	54.9%
The FWAB was used to update the voter's registration record if the voter was already registered.	45.1%
The FWAB was used to update the voter's absentee ballot application record if the voter had previously submitted an application.	43.1%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents

Q22. In your state in 2018, confirmation of receipt for a completed ballot was provided to UOCAVA voters at the:

All Respondents (N = 51)	% of total responses
State level	56.9%
Local level	58.8%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q23. In your state in 2018, which methods did state or local election officials use to provide confirmation of receipt for a completed ballot to UOCAVA voters?

All Respondents (N = 51)	% of total responses
Email	43.1%
Mail	15.7%
Website or online system	72.5%
Phone	21.6%
Other	0.0%
None; no ballot confirmation is provided	7.8%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q24. In 2018, did your state policy require that either state or local election officials provide proactive confirmation of receipt for a completed ballot to UOCAVA voters (i.e., a ballot confirmation was sent automatically without a voter inquiring about the ballot status)?

All Respondents (N = 51)	% of total responses
Yes	15.7%
No	74.5%
Refused	9.8%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q25. In 2018, if a voter returned a voted ballot without enclosing it in a ballot secrecy envelope, how did your state process the ballot?

All Respondents (N = 51)	% of total responses
The ballot was accepted.	72.5%
The ballot was rejected.	7.8%
The ballot was rejected, unless it was a FWAB.	9.8%
Refused	9.8%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q26. Was your office aware of the CSG Overseas Voting Initiative Technology Working Group recommendations?

All Respondents (N = 51)	% of total responses
Yes	60.8%
No	35.3%
Refused	3.9%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q27. The CSG Overseas Voting Initiative Technology Working Group made several recommendations regarding unreadable/damaged ballot duplication. Does your state plan to implement any of the following before the November 2020 election? Mark one answer for each statement:

All Respondents (N = 51)	Select a ballot duplication process that is appropriate for the number of paper ballots your state processes	Establish clear procedures to ensure auditability.	Make technologies for ballot duplication easy to use for state and local jurisdictions.	Ensure that technologies for ballot duplication promote transparency for election officials and external observers.
Yes	5.9%	13.7%	15.7%	15.7%
No	23.5%	17.6%	25.5%	23.5%
Already implemented	54.9%	52.9%	43.1%	47.1%
Refused	15.7%	15.7%	15.7%	13.7%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q28. The CSG Overseas Voting Initiative Technology Working Group made several recommendations regarding CAC/digital signature verification. Does your state plan to implement any of the following before the November 2020 election?

All Respondents (N = 51)	Allow the use of a digital signature to complete election-related activities (e.g., register to vote, request an absentee ballot).	Provide an option for military personnel to designate their UOCAVA voting status using your state's online election portal.	Allow the use of digital signatures in the election process for UOCAVA voters (e.g., treat digital signatures equally to handwritten ones).	Develop procedures and training materials regarding acceptance and use of digital signatures.	Develop educational resources for UOCAVA voters about using digital signatures.	Coordinate educational efforts with local military installations.
Yes	3.9%	11.8%	11.8%	17.6%	21.6%	25.5%
No	47.1%	41.2%	47.1%	47.1%	47.1%	41.2%
Already implemented	33.3%	31.4%	25.5%	19.6%	13.7%	13.7%
Refused	15.7%	15.7%	15.7%	15.7%	17.6%	19.6%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q29. The CSG Overseas Voting Initiative Technology Working Group made several recommendations regarding data standardization/performance metrics. Does your state plan to implement any of the following before the November 2020 election? Mark one answer for each statement?

All Respondents (N = 51)	Identify a method or partner agency that can support automated data collection and validation to ensure continued use of the EAVS Section B Data Standard.	Establish standards to support the long-term sustainability of the EAVS Section B Data Standard.	Assist future EAC efforts to facilitate post-election reporting requirements.	Ensure that the EAVS Section B Data Standard is incorporated into appropriate election technology provider contracts so that data can be exported using the Standard.
Yes	23.5%	33.3%	47.1%	35.3%
No	29.4%	21.6%	9.8%	29.4%
Already implemented	29.4%	27.5%	25.5%	17.6%
Refused	17.6%	17.6%	17.6%	17.6%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q31. To the best of your knowledge, does your state allow the use of a digital signature for any non-election-related state activities (e.g., tax forms)?

All Respondents (N = 51)	% of total responses
Yes	72.5%
No	13.7%
Refused	13.7%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q33. Does your state require the following information captured in Section 1 of the FPCA (pictured above) to process voter registration?

All Respondents (N = 51)	Yes	No	Refused
Asking voters to specify the reason for their UOCAVA status (e.g., military member, overseas citizen)	68.6%	23.5%	7.8%
Asking voters to identify their race	3.9%	92.2%	3.9%
Asking voters to identify their sex	17.6%	78.4%	3.9%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.

Q34. In 2018, did your office assist local election officials (LEO) with any of the following tasks? Mark “Yes” or “No” for each item:

All Respondents (N = 51)	Yes	No	Refused
Sharing and/or referring FVAP resources	84.3%	7.8%	7.8%
Registration and ballot request issues for UOCAVA voters	86.3%	5.9%	7.8%
Implementing CSG Overseas Voting Initiative Technology Working Group recommendations	31.4%	54.9%	13.7%

Percentage responding is all eligible SEO respondents.



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ABOUT US

Fors Marsh Group (FMG) uses research and strategy to understand, influence, and measure the way people and organizations think and make decisions. As an American Marketing Association Gold Top 50 firm, FMG has always emphasized that our work should be centered on the idea of being better. One way we are creating a positive impact on the world is through our work improving elections in the United States and across the globe. Our team of election administration experts evaluates and measures the public's needs, conducting rigorous evaluation to assess how these needs are being met, and working collaboratively with clients and partners to improve consumer- and citizen-affecting programs and policies .