



2015 Voting Assistance Officer (VAO) “One Stop Shopping”

1. **If you are a new VAO, welcome!** Voting Assistance Officer is an important collateral duty that can be very rewarding. It is very manageable and won't take too much time. There are Unit VAOs and Installation VAOs. Unit VAOs are in every Navy command of 25 or more people. Installation VAOs are specifically appointed by Installation COs and man the IVA Office. The Navy Voting Assistance Program manager, located in Washington DC, can be reached with questions by emailing vote@navy.mil
2. **A VAO's primary responsibility** is to be an expert on all-things voting for their command, including voter registration and the absentee voting process. VAOs assist absentee voters within their command. Keep reading to learn how!
3. **The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)** is the overall Department of Defense organization responsible for implementing legislation to help service members, their dependents, and civilians living overseas vote absentee. Think of FVAP as the parent company that maintains oversight over all of the services' voting activities.
4. **What are your other major responsibilities?**
 - a. SUBMISSION OF QUARTERLY METRICS ON THE FVAP PORTAL (see bullets 6 & 7)
 - b. KEEP YOUR VIMS PAGE UPDATED (see bullet 8)
 - c. Print and read the OPNAVINST program instruction (see bullet 9)
 - d. BE PRESENT IN YOUR COMMAND (and give yearly training, see bullet 12)
 - e. Pass your command IG inspections by maintaining a continuity binder, containing:
 1. DoDI 1000.04
 2. OPNAVINST 1742.1B
 3. A copy of this “one stop shopping” memo
 4. The Navy Voting Action Plan*, available online at <https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/VAO/navyvotingactionplan.pdf>
 5. letter of designation (see bullet 10)
 6. training certificate (see bullet 11)
 7. records of command training (see bullet 12)
 8. any emails that you send to your command relating to voting

*The Action Plan will be updated later in 2015 to reflect the latest information pertaining to the 2016 general election. Stay tuned.

5. **What can you do to get your program started or refreshed?**
 - a. Complete your training, get designated, refresh your VIMS page, and then get familiar with the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov. This is the primary resource where you can find all necessary information, guidance, training, and voting related resources (to include posters and other downloadable items for your command). At the left center side of the FVAP homepage you will see a link (button) for VAOs.

6. **Register for an account on www.FVAP.gov and report your metrics!** All VAOs across the military are required to maintain an account in the FVAP portal and submit a quarterly report (don't worry, it takes only a few minutes every 90 days). *The Navy and FVAP now have the ability to track who and who doesn't submit metrics, and scrutiny will increase as the 2016 election approaches.* Please register for an account – here's how:
- From the website home screen at www.fvap.gov scroll down and locate "Admin Portal" on the very bottom right hand corner of the screen.
 - Accept the privacy terms to get to the sign in page – from here, select "Register for an Account."
 - Select the account type that applies to you. In the vast majority of cases, you will select "Unit Voting Assistance Officer," unless you've specifically been designated as an Installation Voting Assistance Officer.
 - Fill out the rest of the information. In the "Service Unit" block, start typing your unit's name – as you do, the block will auto-fill with possible matches. Select your unit from the list of matches. Try to locate your unit from the possible selections – if you cannot locate your unit, simply type it in as you wish it to appear, and proceed with registration.
7. **Quarterly Reporting on the FVAP portal.** Once you've established an account, you'll be required to log on and submit a quarterly report (every 90 days, calendar year, as explained below.) Submitting your report is easy. **Just log in to your account, click on the METRICS tab towards the top of the page, fill in the blocks, and click SAVE. Your report will automatically be submitted to FVAP when you hit SAVE.** The portal allows for rolling submissions, so you may choose to update your report whenever you provide voting assistance. Otherwise, a few days before the quarter ends, submit your numbers. Please be as accurate as possible, but educated guesses are better than no information at all. *Please email vote@navy.mil if you have questions.* Deadlines follow:
- Quarter 1 – Submit before 31 March**
 - Quarter 2 – Submit before 30 June**
 - Quarter 3 – Submit before 30 September**
 - Quarter 4 – Submit before 31 December**
8. **Voting Information Management System (VIMS).** VIMS is an online database and resource for all Navy VAOs – it's a very good tool for you to use, but over time it will be replaced by the FVAP portal. An account has been established for each echelon-rated unit listed in the Standard Naval Distribution List (SNDL). VAOs need to keep their account up-to-date in order to communicate command contact information and program status. Be sure to update VIMS when you turnover your duties with your relief and at least quarterly. Note: Your Immediate Superior In Command (ISIC) has read-only access to your VIMS account so they can review your account on a regular basis.

Here is the URL for VIMS: <https://qol.navyaims.net/voting/>

The login is as follows:

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|---|------------------------|
| a. Login: your command Unit Identification Code (UIC) | (example: 12345) |
| Password: Uic-(your UIC)\$ | (example: Uic-12345\$) |

If you experience trouble logging in, email vote@navy.mil and be sure to include your UIC within the Email. VIMS includes a self-assessment checklist for you to use. The checklist closely follows what is used by Inspectors General. Don't worry if you answer 'no' to some questions; VIMS will give you information on how to correct the deficiency. If you can answer 'yes' to all of those questions, your program will be compliant.

When you get to the top portion of your VIMS account you will see 'command email'. You cannot edit this

field. The email needs to be a group email account at your command which is always active, doesn't change, and is not associated with an individual name. Possible examples include: CMC@, wardroom, First Class Petty Officer Email groups, admin email groups, etc. This is to ensure continuity and good contact information in case you transfer unexpectedly, are on leave, TAD, etc. The email will not be used except in the rare case that contact cannot be established using the primary account email address.

Once you have established or identified your group email address, send an email to vote@navy.mil so that your command email can be updated (be sure to include your UIC in the email).

9. **Program instructions.** The Navy's Voting Assistance Program instruction is OPNAVINST 1742.1B. There is a separate instruction for IVAOs, CNICINST 17421. Both instructions are based upon overarching DoD Instruction 1000.04. Be sure to read through these instructions and keep a copy on hand for your voting program binder. All instructions can be found at www.fvap.gov. **Note: OPNAVINST 1742.1B is currently under revision to reflect DoD Instruction 1000.04 (Sep 2012) which superseded DoD Directive 1000.04. When OPNAVINST 1742.1B and DoDI 1000.04 conflict, DoDI 1000.04 shall take precedence.**
10. **Designation letter.** You are required to be designated in writing by your CO/OIC. A sample letter can be found in VIMS. Please keep this in your program binder.
11. **VAO training.** You are required to complete training before being officially assigned, otherwise you won't be prepared to assist voters. You can complete training online: <http://www.fvap.gov/vao/training>. Be sure to keep a copy of your training certificate in your program binder, which should be maintained at the command and passed down from VAO to VAO. If you don't have a program binder, use the gouge above (bullet 4.e) along with the FVAP website's VAO resources (under the "continuity folder" tab) and build one!
12. **Command Training.** You are required to administer annual, GMT style voting training and keep attendance records in your program binder. The method of training is up to you, but you can find slide decks and training materials online at: <http://www.fvap.gov/vao/training/voter-training>
13. **Voting alerts.** You can sign up for them on FVAP's website at <http://www.fvap.gov/vao/alerts>. FVAP will send you pertinent information about elections, workshop schedules, events, etc.
14. **Navy Voting Facebook Page.** You can find it at www.facebook.com/navyvoting. Updates and other information will be posted. Please be sure to click the 'like' button on the page to help spread the word.
15. **PER FEDERAL LAW.** Voting Assistance Officers are required to have their performance commented on in an official military evaluation report. For Navy VAOs, listing that you are a VAO in the collateral duty block of your EVAL or FITREP will satisfy this requirement. Please do so.

-In all cases, feel free to contact me at vote@navy.mil with any questions you have on being a VAO!

-Thanks for your support of this program.

Very Respectfully,

LT Whit Abraham

Navy Voting Action Officer & Program Manager