Federal Voting Assistance Program

Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act

August 14, 2021

National Association of Secretaries of State
Today We’ll cover…

- 2021 “Back to Basics” for LEOs
- 2020 Activities & Lessons Learned
- Challenges of COVID-19
- 2022 Preparation
- State Activities
Back to Basics: FVAP & UOCAVA
The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986, or UOCAVA, allows certain U.S. citizens to apply to register and vote absentee in elections for federal office.

- HAVA 2002 required states to notify voters the reasons for rejecting a registration application or absentee ballot request.
- MOVE Act 2009 required states to make voter registration and absentee ballot applications available electronically. Additionally required ballots to be sent out 45 days prior to an election.

FVAP administers UOCAVA on behalf of the Secretary of Defense.
FVAP Responsibilities

- Training
  - Installation and Unit Voting Assistance Officers
  - Embassy and Consulate Staff
  - Federal Government Agencies
- Maintain voter resources
  - Forms
  - Voting Assistance Guide
  - FVAP.gov Website
  - Online Assistants for Form Completion
- Reports to Congress
- Code of Federal Regulations Title 32, Part 233
- DOD Instruction 1000.04
- Data Collection
- Waiver Requests
- Ensure State and Local Election Official Awareness
State Responsibilities / Requirements

States and/or Localities Must:

- Transmit requested UOCAVA ballots by the 45th day prior to elections for federal office
- Offer electronic option for transmitting blank ballots
- Provide a free access system for voters to verify receipt of ballot
- Notify voter if, and why, a registration or ballot request is rejected

Reminders:

- UOCAVA voters exempt from ID requirements
- Satisfying residency requirements is left to the states
- Last address in the United States remains the valid address for voting purposes
- Military Spouses have a choice where to align their residency – prior physical presence not required
- All election materials sent to UOCAVA voters are postage free
2018 Amendment gave military spouses greater flexibility to align their residency with active duty sponsor. They may:

1. Retain sponsor’s or Service member's residency or domicile
2. Keep their own separate but current and established residency or domicile
3. Take the appropriate steps to establish a new residency or domicile when moving

Complexities involved underscore importance of using FPCA to differentiate this group of voters

(b) Spouses - (2) the spouse of a servicemember may elect to use the same residence as the servicemember regardless of the date on which the marriage of the spouse and the servicemember occurred.
2020 FVAP Activities

Customer Transactions
Web Traffic
Outreach
Voting Assistance Ambassadors
Active Duty Military Participation Rates - 2016

Military members’ engagement in the 2016 election decreased compared to 2012, the last presidential election year.

- Percentage who said they were interested in the election in 2016 dropped 8 percentage points from 2012
- Registration was down 13 points
- Participation (submitting a ballot) was down 12 percentage points
DoD Voting Assistance Works - 2016

Service members who sought voting assistance were significantly more likely to return their ballot.

- All military members: 69% (did not seek) vs. 93% (sought)
- 1st time voters: 56% (did not seek) vs. 94% (sought)
FVAP administers UOCAVA on behalf of the Secretary of Defense.

Emails: 17,859
Phone Calls: 9,827
Faxed Balloting Materials: 21,849
Throughout the duration of the 2020 election cycle, FVAP faxed a total of 21,849 Federal Post Card Applications (FPCAs) and Voted Ballots.
Postal service disruptions approaching the 45 day mark before the 2020 General Election

- Delivery delays
- Postal service resumed after being suspended, with delivery delays still likely
- Postal service suspended or unable to deliver by air and sea
- No Data
## Monthly Email Breakdown - 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Tech</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>1011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>1081</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>932</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>662</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>878</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>1648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>1141</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>1859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>2467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>2708</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>3607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>2336</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>2708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncategorized</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTALS**  
12766  
5093  
17859
### Monthly Calls and Comparisons to 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>418</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>1024</td>
<td>911</td>
<td>1469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>2264</td>
<td>2731</td>
<td>1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>3603</td>
<td>4138</td>
<td>2610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>2885</td>
<td>2207</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>11403</strong></td>
<td><strong>13518</strong></td>
<td><strong>9827</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Web Traffic

Jan 1, 2020 - Nov 3, 2020:
Users

Jan 1, 2016 - Nov 8, 2016:
Users
## Metrics for the Election Cycle

**FVAP administers UOCAVA on behalf of the Secretary of Defense.**

### Jan 1, 2020 - Nov 3, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>New Visitor %</th>
<th>Returning Visitor %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Users</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Jan 1, 2016 - Nov 8, 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Visitor %</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning Visitor %</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Jan 1, 2020 - Nov 3, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>New Visitor %</th>
<th>Returning Visitor %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Users</td>
<td>77.57%</td>
<td>76.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessions</td>
<td>81.87%</td>
<td>2.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pageviews</td>
<td>41.24%</td>
<td>-22.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. Session Duration</td>
<td>-29.59%</td>
<td>28.37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FPCA and FWAB Downloads from FVAP.gov

2020

- FPCA- 698,533
  - Completion Time: 8.6 minutes
- FWAB- 79,444
  - Completion Time: 10 minutes

2016

- FPCA- 231,222
  - Completion Time: 9 minutes
- FWAB- 61,894
  - Completion Time: 10.7 minutes
Customer Satisfaction Data

Customer Responses: Kudos!

• “Exceptional professional customer service. Thanks for the support.”
• “Glad to have this service.”
• “I am very grateful that this service exists.”
• “This is a great service for American's living abroad! This is my first time using FVAP and am I extremely pleased with both the ease of use and clear instructions.”
• “I was most impressed with how quickly I received a response. The analyst was extremely well versed and was able to give me the information I needed”
• “Unexpected. I'm impressed.”
Outreach

- Social media posts and campaigns
- Facebook lives and Instagram lives
- VAO in a Box
- Overseas Citizen Training Video
- FVAP Ambassador social media accounts and live sessions
- I voted digital stickers on FVAP.gov and giffy voting themed stickers on Instagram
- Curated email blasts to specific customers on our distro list on govdelivery
- #TrustedInfo campaign
- Partner engagements with State Department, Secure Families Initiative, Military OneSource, and more
- FVAP calendar alerts
- Paid media and ads running on social media channels and other outlets like The Local, The American, Military Spouse, BBC, and several others.
Outreach Results

- **126,744,316** impressions
- **1,402,006** web sessions
- **255,202** conversions

- **Over 41 million more** impressions than in 2016
- **1.1M more** web sessions than in 2016
- **225K more** conversions than in 2016

- **>30%** of visits to FVAP.gov resulted in conversion

- **Jan. 1, 2020 – Nov. 3, 2020**

- IN TOP 10% OF CONVERSION RATES FOR HIGH-TRAFFIC SITES AND HIGHER THAN 2016
Voting Assistance Ambassadors - 2020

- Conducted a pilot program to augment voter assistance in targeted countries with large populations of UOCAVA citizens.
- Due to COVID-19 much of the work became virtual outreach.
- Allowed for voters in those countries to get responses in real-time (Ambassadors were in their same time zones).
- Currently analyzing the prospect to continue for future election cycles.
2022 Preparation
Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)

✓ Up for redesign every 2 years
✓ Just completed Federal Register for public comment periods
✓ Previous editions should still be accepted
✓ State requirements referenced

Used for both Registration & Ballot Request
Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

- Up for redesign every 2 years
- Just completed Federal Register for public comment periods
- If both state ballot and FWAB are received, only accept the state ballot
- UOCAVA voters can also use it in advance of an election by noting the election date on envelope and filling in which party they wish to vote for

Some states require voters to register and request an absentee ballot before submitting the FWAB
✓ In coordination with all 55 States and territories
✓ Distributed to military installations, Consulates, and Embassies worldwide
✓ Standardization of the Voting Assistance Guide into plain language to better support VAOs in the field and individual voters who visit FVAP.gov: **89% VAOs found it useful.**
• Report will include a look at the 2020 cycle to plan out future activities.

• Currently in the progress of pulling together data.

• The results of the PEVS-SEO survey will be included and be one part of what drives our recommendations for the upcoming year.
  • Thank you for providing input!
State Activities
State Actions

Legislative monitoring:
• Shortening windows for return of ballot materials
• Electronic ballot returning using DoD issued electronic mail address, voter portals, etc.
• Pilot studies authorizing ballot return
• FPCA Section 6 requirements
• General impacts to UOCAVA

State Actions to enhance UOCAVA experience:
• Digital Signatures using DoD Common Access Cards
• Military Ballot Tracking Project study
FYI - FVAP 2021 Activities

- State Election Official Post-Election Voting survey
- FVAP availability for briefings to state and local election officials
- Public comment opportunities on proposed changes to FPCA and FWAB
- Updates to materials to include 2022 Voting Assistance Guide
- Continuing refinements to DoD Fax Service
- DoD proposal to remove itself from UOCAVA waiver process
- Release of FVAP EASE Grant Report to Congress
- Release of FVAP 2020 Report to Congress
- Release of FVAP 2020 Overseas Citizen Analysis
- Release of FVAP data standardization for Section B of the EAVS Survey
- Release of FVAP report on Military Ballot Tracking Project
- 2022 election cycle dates and deadlines