

Your vote counts! Did you know that many U.S. elections for the House and Senate have been decided by a margin smaller than the number of ballots cast by absentee voters? All states are required to count every absentee ballot as long as it is valid and reaches local election officials by the absentee ballot receipt deadline.

Follow a few simple steps to make sure that you can vote in the 2016 U.S. elections:

- 1. Request Your Ballot:** Complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). *You must complete a new FPCA after January 1, 2016 to ensure you receive your ballot for the 2016 elections.* The completion of the FPCA allows you to request absentee ballots for all **elections for federal offices (President, U.S. Senate, and U.S. House of Representatives)** including primaries and special elections during the calendar year in which it is submitted. The FPCA is accepted by all local election officials in all U.S. states and territories.

You can complete the FPCA **online** at FVAP.gov. The online voting assistant will ask you questions specific to your state. We encourage you to ask your local election officials to deliver your blank ballots to you electronically (by email, internet download, or fax, depending on your state). Include your email address on your FPCA to take advantage of the electronic ballot delivery option. Return the FPCA per the instructions on the website. FVAP.gov will tell you if your state allows the FPCA to be returned electronically or if you must submit a paper copy with original signature. If you must return a paper version, please see below for mailing options.

- 2. Receive and Complete Your Ballot:** States are required to send out ballots 45 days before a regular election for federal office and states generally send out ballots at least 30 days before primary elections. For most states, you can confirm your registration and ballot delivery online.
- 3. Return Your Completed Ballot:** Some states allow you to return your completed ballot electronically and others do not. If your state requires you to return paper voting forms or ballots to local election officials, you can do so free of charge at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Place your ballots in postage paid return envelopes or in envelopes bearing sufficient domestic U.S. postage, and address them to the relevant local election officials.

You may drop off your ballot inside a locked ballot box which is located inside the Cathedral Road entrance of the U.S. consulate in Chennai. The hours for drop off are from 9:00am to 4:00pm Monday through Friday excluding holidays (you can review the list of holidays that the consulate observes on our website). You do not need an appointment to drop off your ballot and there is no need to see a consular officer, but please remember to bring your U.S. passport for entry purposes. The U.S. consulate will forward your state ballot through the diplomatic pouch. Transit time is normally about 2-3 weeks. Please keep in mind, however, that we strongly encourage you to cast your ballot electronically if possible.

If it's more convenient for you, you can also return your FPCA or ballot to your local election officials via international mail or professional courier service at your own expense.

Researching the Candidates and Issues: Online Resources. Check out the [FVAP links page](#) for helpful resources that will aid your research of candidates and issues. Non-partisan information about candidates, their voting records, and their positions on issues are widely available and easy to obtain on-line. You can also read national and hometown newspapers on-line, or search the internet to locate articles and information. For information about election dates and deadlines, subscribe to FVAP's Voting Alerts (vote@fvap.gov). FVAP also shares Voting Alerts via [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Learn more at the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) website, FVAP.gov. If you have any questions about registering to vote overseas, please contact Chennai's Voting Assistance Officer at 91 (44) 2857-4000, or at votechennai@state.gov.

Remember, your vote counts!