



FVAP.gov
FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



Absentee Voting Myths & Realities

FACT SHEET

Wherever U.S citizens go,
FVAP ensures their voice is heard.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program works 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.

★ Myth

I have heard that absentee ballots only count in close elections.

★ Reality

No — in fact, absentee ballots submitted in accordance with State laws are counted for every election. The difference is that in a close election, the media reports that the outcome cannot be announced until after the absentee ballots are counted. However, all ballots are counted in the final totals for every election — and every vote (absentee or in-person) counts the same.

▶▶▶ The rights of absentee voters are protected by law

The *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act* — *UOCAVA* for short — protects the rights of Service members and their eligible family members to vote in Federal elections regardless of where they are stationed. It also protects the Federal voting rights of U.S. citizens residing outside the United States. FVAP works to administer the Department of Defense's responsibility for *UOCAVA*.



★ Myth

I can vote in person at a local embassy/consulate or on a military installation.

★ Reality

No — actually, U.S. elections are run at the State level and citizens must communicate directly with their election official to register, request a ballot and vote. Voting Assistance is available at most embassies and consulates and in all military units to help in the completion of necessary forms. Be sure to account for submission and mail delivery time to ensure your forms are received by the State deadline.



★ Myth

States all have the same election rules and deadlines for military and overseas voters.

★ Reality

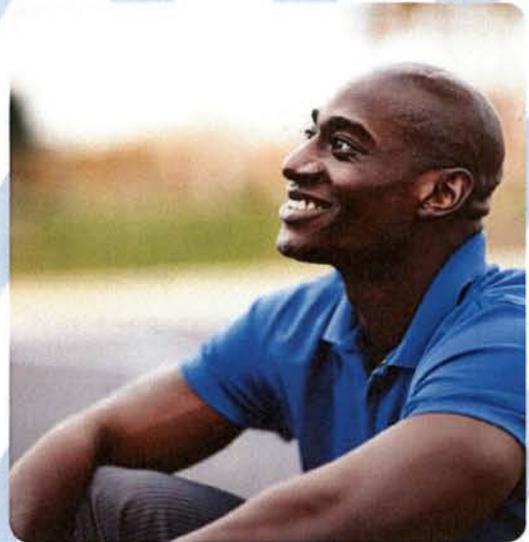
False. States have different rules in regard to how and when the forms are returned. Visit FVAP.gov for your State-specific guidelines.

★ Myth

Military spouses and dependents cannot use military absentee voting forms.

★ Reality

No — in fact, military family members who will be 18 years old by election day should use the same Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) that members of the Uniformed Services and overseas citizens do, even when voting absentee Stateside. Dependents attending college overseas should also use those forms.



★ Myth

Absentee ballots are not secret.

★ Reality

Not true. State absentee ballots and the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot are designed with a "Secrecy Envelope" allowing for the separation of the voter's identity from the cast ballot. Voting Assistance Officers also ensure voters casting absentee ballots on Department of Defense (DoD) facilities are able to do so in a private and independent manner. Local election officials are professionals who go to great lengths in their ballot handling procedures to ensure your vote, and personal information, are kept private.

★ Myth

I am a U.S. citizen who was born overseas and has never lived in the U.S. — I pay taxes but cannot exercise my right to vote.

★ Reality

It depends. A growing number of States now allow U.S. citizens who were born abroad but never resided in the U.S. to vote using the address where a parent or other relative is eligible to vote. Visit FVAP.gov to see a current list of States that allow these U.S. citizens to vote.

★ Myth

Voting will affect the tax status of overseas citizens.

★ Reality

It depends. Voting for Federal office candidates will not affect your Federal or State tax liability. Depending on the laws of your State, voting for State or local offices may affect your State income tax liability. If you are concerned about your State tax status, consult legal counsel.

★ Myth

I can't vote if I'm deployed.

★ Reality

False — you absolutely can vote while deployed. If you're registered to vote while deployed and you don't get your State ballot in time to vote from your location, you can use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) found at FVAP.gov. Remember to submit the form at least 30 days before the scheduled election.

GO TO FVAP.GOV FOR MORE INFORMATION

Monday–Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET Phone: 1-800-438-VOTE (8683) | DSN: 425-1584 | Email: vote@fvap.gov
Go to FVAP.gov and click on "contact" to find where to send your election materials. Media inquiries: media@fvap.gov
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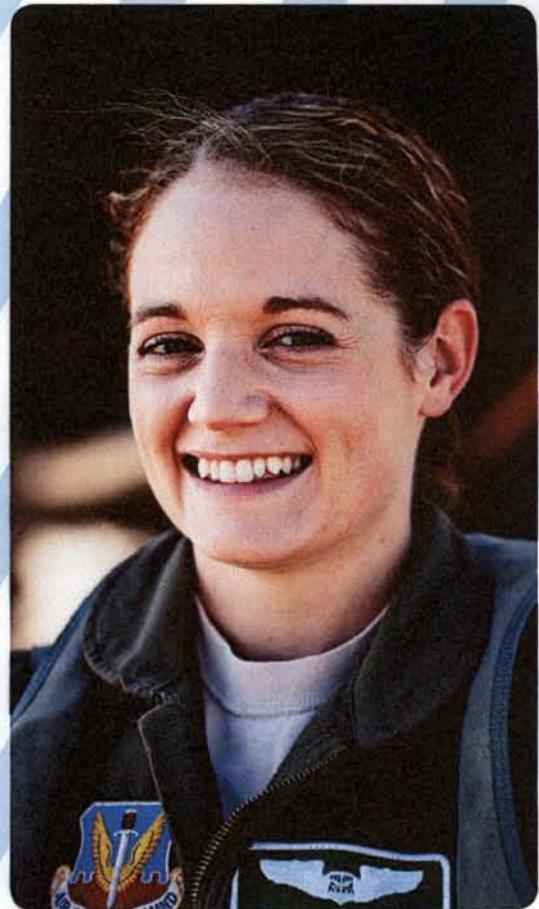


The Federal Post Card Application

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The Federal Post Card Application

The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA, SF-76) allows eligible U.S. citizens to apply to register to vote, request an absentee ballot and/or update their contact information with their local election office.

The FPCA is the primary method of communication between you and your election official. The information you provide on this form is all the local election office has to determine if you meet the State voter registration requirements, which election materials to send you and where and how to send you a ballot.

»»» Where to get an FPCA

Online — FVAP.gov offers an online assistant that walks you through completion of the form, and provides a populated fillable PDF. **Once completed, do not forget to print and sign the form before submitting it to your local election office.**

Hardcopy — Hardcopies of the form are available at all military installations and U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide.



★ Facts you need to know about the FPCA

- The length of time the ballot request is valid varies by State. To ensure you receive an absentee ballot for each election in which you are eligible to vote, **you should complete a new FPCA annually** and with every change of your mailing address, or at least 90 days prior to the election you want to vote in.
- The current FPCA was redesigned in 2013 and is incorporated into the online assistant at FVAP.gov. If you only have access to an older hardcopy version, you can still use it. Please refer to the latest State requirements and deadlines at FVAP.gov or in the current Voting Assistance Guide.
- To process your request and provide you a ballot in a timely manner, your election official may need to contact you for further information or clarification. Be sure to provide contact information (email is preferable for quick communication) in block 5 of the FPCA.
- Block 9 of the FPCA is your opportunity to provide extra information to your election official to help them determine your residence eligibility or other details necessary to help ensure you receive your ballot.

Looking for more information on completing the FPCA? FVAP.gov has everything that you need, from an online assistant to walk you through the form, to State-specific deadlines and rules.

- Submit your completed FPCA in accordance with your State's laws. Link to your State's submission requirements at our website: FVAP.gov/vao/vag.

»»» Will my FPCA be processed?



All FPCAs submitted on time and according to State rules will be processed. Here are the most common mistakes to look out for:

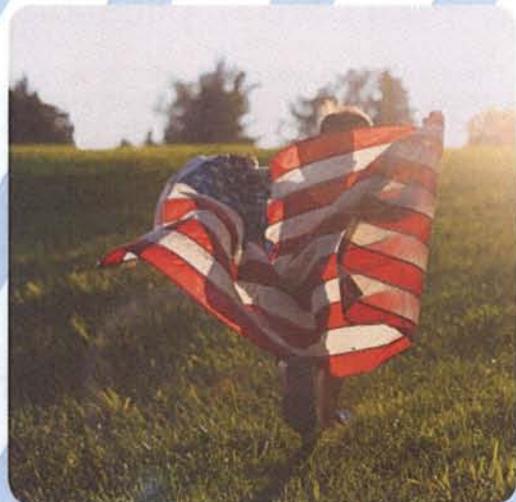
- **Illegible handwriting.** If you prefer to type, you may complete the FPCA form online and print it out.
- **No signature.** Don't forget to sign and date your completed FPCA before mailing to your local election office.
- **Submitted in a manner not in accordance with State law.**
- **Received after registration or request deadline.** Deadlines vary by State.*

Your local election official is required to contact you if your form is rejected, but states differ in notifying voters of a successful application. We encourage you to contact your local election officials* to confirm that your FPCA was successfully processed.

*Find your State's requirements and contact information for election officials at: FVAP.gov/FPCA

★ How and where to submit your FPCA

- **Double-check for completion and sign**
 - Look over your completed FPCA to ensure you have provided all the information required by your State, including a complete voting residence address, current mailing address in that State and all other contact information.
 - Make sure the information provided is clear and legible.
 - Don't forget to sign and date the FPCA.
- **Submit by email, fax or postal mail**
 - Check the Voting Assistance Guide at FVAP.gov/vao/vag to determine if your State allows the FPCA to be submitted by either email or fax. Follow the instructions for electronic submission provided.
 - Hardcopy FPCAs can be folded and sealed using the form's adhesive edging; online FPCAs printed must be placed in an envelope for mailing.
 - If mailing the FPCA through the U.S. Postal Service, APO/FPO or diplomatic pouch, it can be sent postage-paid using the mail indicia available at FVAP.gov. Mailing the FPCA using a foreign country's postal service requires local postage and should have "USA" in the address line of the mailing envelope or folded hardcopy form.
- **Follow up to check registration status**
 - You can contact your local election officials to confirm that your FPCA was successfully processed. Find current contact information at FVAP.gov.



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Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot

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★ The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot

The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB, SF 186) is for use by Service members, their eligible family members living outside their voting jurisdiction and U.S. citizens residing overseas. This write-in absentee ballot can be used as a backup when you are living outside your voting residence, have applied for a regular State ballot through the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA, SF 76) and have not received the requested State ballot in time to vote by the election deadline.

When to submit your FWAB

If you have registered to vote and requested your absentee ballot by the State's deadline but have not received your regular State ballot within 30 days of the election, or longer if you are living in an area where mail delivery is not reliable, FVAP recommends submitting the FWAB as a backup. If you receive your State ballot after submitting the FWAB, vote and return it as well. If both your State ballot and your FWAB are received by the deadline, only your State ballot will be counted.

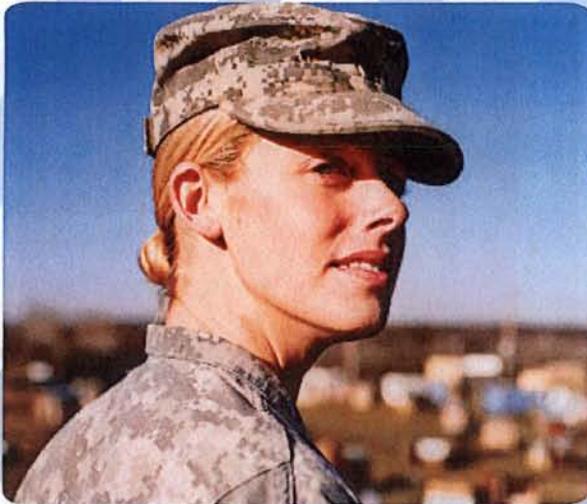
NOTE: Some States allow you to use the FWAB for registration if you did not submit an FPCA. For information about your State's requirements, visit FVAP.gov/FWAB.

★ Where to get a FWAB

FVAP provides an online FWAB assistant to walk you through the form and provide you with applicable candidate names for Federal offices. Simply select your State from the drop-down and choose "Get My Ballot Now" or "Get My Backup Ballot" to begin. **Once completed, do not forget to print and sign the form before submitting it to your local election office.**

For your convenience, the most current FWAB available may be printed out at FVAP.gov. Forms are also available in hardcopy at military installations, U.S. embassies and consulates. If you only have an older hardcopy version of the form, please use it in conjunction with your current State guidelines.





Will my FWAB be counted?



All FWABs submitted on time and according to State rules will be counted. However, here are the most common reasons for rejection:

- **Illegible handwriting.** If you prefer to type your information, you may complete the FWAB form online and print it out.
- **No signature.** Don't forget to sign and date your completed FWAB before mailing to your local election office.
- **No ballot request on file.** Ballot requests can be made using an FPCA. Not all States require you to first submit an FPCA.*
- **Transmitted in a manner not allowed by State law.** Some States accept an emailed or faxed FWAB, while others require a hardcopy.*
- **Received after the deadline.** Deadlines vary by State.*
- **Not witnessed.** Some States require witness signatures.*
- **Voter signatures on file don't match the submitted ballot.**
- **Not filled out completely or accurately.** Look over your completed FWAB to ensure you have provided all the information required by your State, including a complete voting residence address (P.O. Box addresses are not valid).

*Specific State requirements at FVAP.gov/FWAB.

★ Cast your ballot by submitting a completed FWAB

The FWAB has two distinct sections: (1) the Voter's Declaration/Affirmation, which serves to identify and authenticate you with the local election official processing the form and (2) the ballot and security envelope, which allow you to make your selections and keep those choices secret. For the hardcopy or online version of the FWAB, both the Declaration/Affirmation and security envelope (with voted ballot inside) are mailed to your election official.

Step 1: Complete and Sign



- Complete one of two versions of the official Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot: (1) hardcopy or (2) PDF version from the online FWAB assistant or fillable form.*



- Complete and sign the attached Voter's Declaration/Affirmation form.

Step 2: Seal

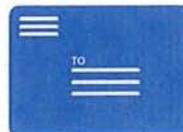


- Place the ballot portion of the FWAB in a sealed security envelope. This comes attached to the hardcopy version, but if you are using a PDF version you must find a blank envelope and label it "Security Envelope."



- Place the Voter's Declaration/Affirmation form and the sealed security envelope in a larger mailing envelope. This comes attached to the hardcopy version, but you must provide one yourself if using a PDF version.

Step 3: Fill Out Envelope



- In the upper left corner, enter your current mailing address and the date of the election in which you just voted.
- Under "To," enter the name and mailing address of the local election office* to which you are sending the packet.

Step 4: Postage

- **Within the U.S.:** The form is postage paid in U.S. mail. This information is included on the hardcopy version's mailing envelope and an envelope template can be downloaded at FVAP.gov if you are using a PDF version.
- **Outside of the U.S.:** The form is postage paid in U.S. mail, to include APO/FPO and diplomatic pouches. If using foreign postal systems, put the correct amount of local postage on the front of the envelope, in the top right corner.

*For information about your State's requirements, how to transmit the form and how to contact your election official, visit FVAP.gov/FWAB.

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2014 Primary Elections by State and territory

This chart lists the 2014 State primary election dates in all the States, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories; primary runoff dates (if applicable); States with U.S. Senate races; number of U.S. Representative seats up for re-election; and gubernatorial races.

The General Election is Tuesday, November 4, 2014.

State	State Primary	State Primary Runoff	General Election		
			U.S. Senate	U.S. Representative	Governor
Alabama	June 3	July 15	Yes	7	Yes
Alaska	August 19	–	Yes	1	Yes
American Samoa	–	–	–	1 Delegate	No
Arizona	August 26	–	No	9	Yes
Arkansas	May 20	June 10	Yes	4	Yes
California	June 3	–	No	53	Yes
Colorado	June 24	–	Yes	7	Yes
Connecticut	August 12	–	No	5	Yes
Delaware	September 9	–	Yes	1	No
District of Columbia	April 1	–	–	1 Delegate	Mayor
Florida	August 26	–	No	27	Yes
Georgia	May 20	July 22	Yes	14	Yes
Guam	August 30	–	–	1 Delegate	Yes
Hawaii	August 9	–	Yes	2	Yes
Idaho	May 20	–	Yes	2	Yes
Illinois	March 18	–	Yes	18	Yes
Indiana	May 6	–	No	9	No
Iowa	June 3	–	Yes	4	Yes
Kansas	August 5	–	Yes	4	Yes
Kentucky	May 20	–	Yes	6	No
Louisiana	–	December 6	Yes	6	No
Maine	June 10	–	Yes	2	Yes
Maryland	June 24	–	No	8	Yes
Massachusetts	September 16	–	Yes	9	Yes
Michigan	August 5	–	Yes	14	Yes
Minnesota	August 12	–	Yes	8	Yes
Mississippi	June 3	June 24	Yes	4	No
Missouri	August 5	–	No	8	No
Montana	June 3	–	Yes	1	No
Nebraska	May 13	–	Yes	3	Yes
Nevada	June 10	–	No	4	Yes
New Hampshire	September 9	–	Yes	2	Yes
New Jersey	June 3	–	Yes	12	No
New Mexico	June 3	–	Yes	3	Yes
New York	June 24	–	No	27	Yes
North Carolina	May 6	TBD	Yes	13	No
North Dakota	June 10	–	No	1	No
Ohio	May 6	–	No	16	Yes
Oklahoma	June 24	August 26	Yes	5	Yes
Oregon	May 20	–	Yes	5	Yes
Pennsylvania	May 20	–	No	18	Yes
Puerto Rico	–	–	–	–	No
Rhode Island	September 9	–	Yes	2	Yes
South Carolina	June 10	June 24	Yes	7	Yes
South Dakota	June 3	August 12	Yes	1	Yes
Tennessee	August 7	–	Yes	9	Yes
Texas	March 4	May 27	Yes	36	Yes
Utah	June 24	–	No	4	No
Vermont	August 26	–	No	1	Yes
Virgin Islands	TBD	–	–	1 Delegate	Yes
Virginia	June 10	–	Yes	11	No
Washington	August 5	–	No	10	No
West Virginia	May 13	–	Yes	3	No
Wisconsin	August 12	–	No	8	Yes
Wyoming	August 19	–	Yes	1	Yes

* Federal Primary

Note: Election Information is current as of September 2013. Check your State election website or FVAP.gov for additional details and updates.

2014 Primary Elections by month

January

No Primaries
Scheduled

February

No Primaries
Scheduled

March

Texas	March 4
Illinois	March 18

April

District of Columbia	April 1
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May

Indiana	May 6
North Carolina	May 6
Ohio	May 6
West Virginia	May 13
Idaho	May 20
Nebraska	May 13
Georgia (F)	May 20
Oregon	May 20
Arkansas	May 20
Kentucky	May 20
Pennsylvania	May 20
Texas	May 27(R)

June

Alabama	June 3
California	June 3
Iowa	June 3
Mississippi	June 3
Montana	June 3
New Jersey	June 3
New Mexico	June 3
South Dakota	June 3
Arkansas	June 10 (R)
Maine	June 10
Nevada	June 10
North Dakota	June 10
South Carolina	June 10
Virginia	June 10
Colorado	June 24
Maryland	June 24
Mississippi	June 24 (R)
New York	June 24 (F)
Oklahoma	June 24
South Carolina	June 24 (R)
Utah	June 24

July

Alabama	July 15 (R)
North Carolina	July 15 (R)
Georgia	July 22 (F, R)

August

Tennessee	August 7
Kansas	August 5
Michigan	August 5
Missouri	August 5
Washington	August 5
Hawaii	August 9
Connecticut	August 12
Minnesota	August 12
South Dakota	August 12 (R)
Wisconsin	August 12
Wyoming	August 19
Alaska	August 19
Arizona	August 26
Florida	August 26
Oklahoma	August 26 (R)
Vermont	August 26
Guam	August 30

September

Delaware	September 9
New Hampshire	September 9
New York	September 9 (S)
Rhode Island	September 9
Massachusetts	September 16

Oct - Nov - Dec

No Primaries Scheduled

Legend

F – Primary for Federal Offices Only
S – Primary for State Offices Only
R – Runoff Primary

North Carolina - TBD

Your Voting Assistance Officer

Name

Location

Phone

Email



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