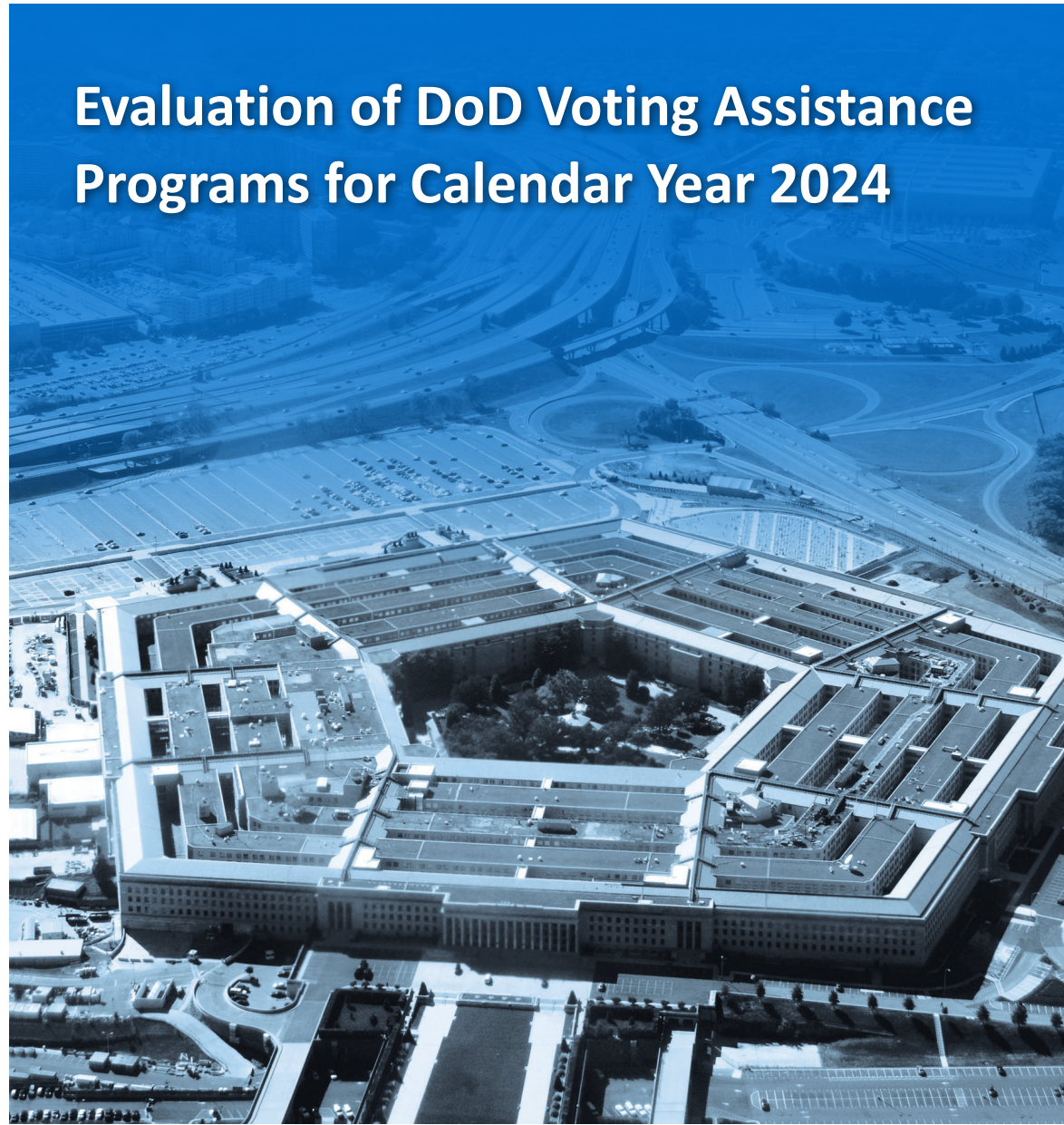




INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Defense

MARCH 18, 2025



Evaluation of DoD Voting Assistance Programs for Calendar Year 2024

INDEPENDENCE ★ INTEGRITY ★ EXCELLENCE ★ TRANSPARENCY





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22350-1500

March 18, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Evaluation of DoD Voting Assistance Programs for Calendar Year 2024
(Report No. DODIG-2025-079)

This final report provides the results of the DoD Office of Inspector General's evaluation. We coordinated a draft of this report with officials from the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, and representatives from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps Offices of Inspector General. We did not make any recommendations; therefore, no management comments were required. However, each organization responded with informal comments concurring with our report and providing technical comments, which we incorporated, as appropriate.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance received during the evaluation. If you have any questions, please contact [REDACTED]

Bryan Clark

Bryan T. Clark
Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations
Programs, Combatant Commands, and Operations

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Introduction

Objective

The objective of this evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of the Military Services' voting assistance programs based on 2024 annual reviews by the respective Service Offices of Inspector General (OIGs), and in accordance with section 1566, title 10, United States Code, 2020, as amended.¹

Executive Summary

Public Law 99-410, "The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act" (UOCAVA), as modified by the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act and other provisions, establishes various voting assistance programs intended to help overseas Service members, their families, and other eligible personnel with the absentee voting process. UOCAVA applies to U.S. citizens who are active members of the Uniformed Services, Merchant Marine, Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who are absent from the place of residence where they are qualified to vote; their eligible family members; and other U.S. citizens residing outside of the United States and absent from the place of residence where they are otherwise qualified to vote.

Section 1566, title 10, United States Code, as amended, defines voting assistance programs as those the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) implements under UOCAVA and any similar program. This section of the law also requires the Inspectors General (IGs) of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force to annually review the compliance and effectiveness of their Service's voting assistance program and report the results to the DoD OIG in time to be reflected in the DoD OIG's March 31 report to Congress.

We reviewed the Service IGs' annual assessments of the Military Services' voting assistance programs covering Calendar Year 2024. Based on our review of the Service IGs' Calendar Year 2024 assessments of the Military Services' voting assistance programs, we found that the Services complied with Federal and DoD requirements, and were effective.

¹ Public Law 116-283, "William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021," January 1, 2021, section 924(b)(1)(M), added the Space Force to 10 U.S.C. § 1566.

Background

Public Law 99–410, “The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act,” is modified by the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act and other provisions. It also establishes various voting assistance programs intended to help overseas Service members, their families, and other eligible personnel with the absentee voting process.² UOCAVA applies to U.S. citizens who are:

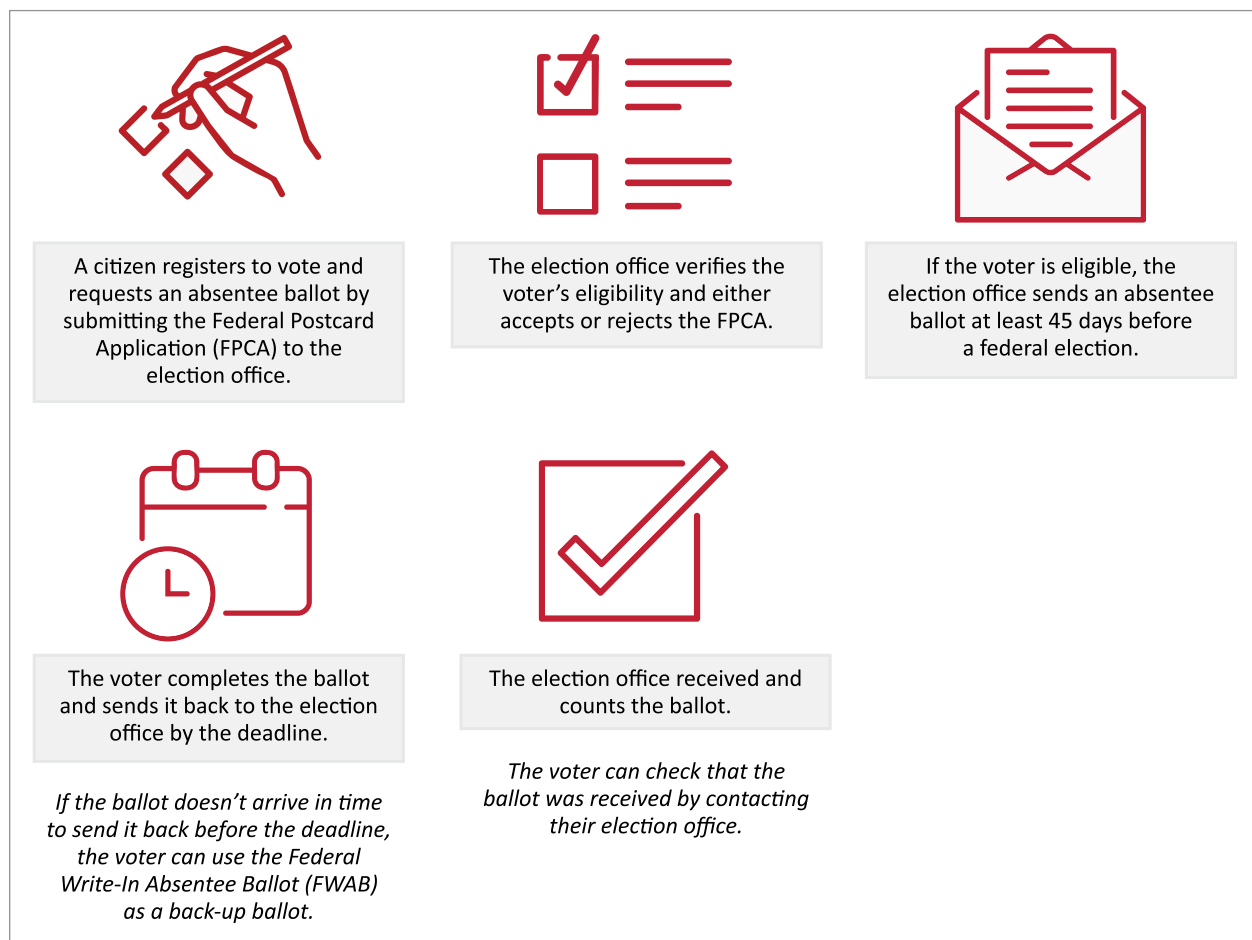
- active members of the Uniformed Services, Merchant Marine, Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who are absent from the place of residence where they are qualified to vote;
- these U.S. citizens’ eligible family members; and
- other U.S. citizens residing outside of the United States and absent from the place of residence where they are otherwise qualified to vote.

UOCAVA created the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). All states accept the FPCA, which allows UOCAVA voters to register to vote and request an absentee ballot for all federal elections in a current calendar year using a single form. The FWAB is used for general, special, primary, and runoff elections for Federal office by UOCAVA voters who apply for state absentee ballots, but do not receive them in time. In addition, some states allow UOCAVA voters to register to vote using the FWAB. The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2020, section 580C, requires Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs) to provide Service members, on request, the FWAB and instructions on how to use the ballot, no later than 45 days before a general federal election.³ For states that do not accept the FWAB as both an absentee voter registration application and an absentee ballot application, section 580C requires VAOs to provide Service members with instructions on, and an opportunity to fill out, the FPCA form no later than 45 days before a general federal election. See Figure 1 for the UOCAVA absentee voting process.

² Public Law 99–410, “The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act,” August 28, 1986, section 20304, “Procedures for collection and delivery of marked absentee ballots of absent overseas uniformed services voters.” Public Law 111-84, “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010,” October 28, 2009, Division A, title V, Subtitle H, Section 575, “Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act” 52 U.S.C. 20301, et seq.

³ The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2020, Division A, title V, Subtitle H, Section 580C, “Information and opportunities for registration for voting and absentee ballot requests for members of the Armed Forces undergoing deployment overseas,” December 20, 2019.

Figure 1. UOCAVA Absentee Voting Process



Source: The Federal Voting Assistance Program.

Executive Order 14019, section 8, requires the following:

- Secretary of Defense—Establish procedures consistent with applicable law to offer each active duty Armed Forces member the opportunity to annually register to vote in Federal elections, update voter registration information, or request an absentee ballot.
- Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Department of State, the Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA), and the U.S. Postal Service—Take all practical steps to establish procedures to enable a comprehensive, end-to-end ballot tracking system for all absentee ballots cast by military and other eligible overseas voters under UOCAVA. The Secretary of Defense must also submit a report to the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy with a strategic plan for establishing the ballot tracking system.

- Head of each agency with overseas employees—Designate an employee to be responsible for coordinating with the FVAP Office, including promoting voter registration and voting services available to the agency’s overseas employees. The Director of the Office of Management and Budget may issue guidance to assist agencies in making such designations.⁴

The Secretary of Defense’s Responsibilities Under UOCAVA

According to section 20301, title 52, United States Code, the President must designate responsibility for UOCAVA’s Federal functions to the head of an Executive department. Executive Order 12642 designated the Secretary of Defense as the presidential designee.⁵ As the presidential designee, the Secretary of Defense is tasked by UOCAVA with the following duties.

- Consult with state and local election officials to implement the UOCAVA and ensure that such officials are aware of its requirements.
- Work with the Election Assistance Commission and state officials to develop standards for reporting and storing absentee ballot data.
- Prescribe an official post card form, a Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot, and an envelope design for the ballot, as well as compile and distribute materials on elections, registration, and voting procedures.
- Report to Congress and the President biennially each odd-numbered year on the effectiveness of programs to assist voters covered by UOCAVA after each presidential election.
- Prescribe a standard oath used to certify any UOCAVA documents, affirming that a material misstatement of fact in the completion of such a document may constitute grounds for a conviction for perjury.
- Implement procedures to collect and deliver absentee ballots of UOCAVA-covered voters, ensure that absentee voters can cast ballots in a private and independent manner, and safeguard all completed absentee ballots cast at DoD locations or facilities.
- Implement FVAP improvements, including developing an online portal of voting information for absent Uniformed Service overseas voters and a program to notify these voters 90, 60, and 30 days before each election for Federal office.

⁴ Executive Order 14019, “Promoting Access to Voting,” March 7, 2021, was in effect throughout Calendar Year 2024. However, Executive Order 14148, “Initial Recissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions,” January 20, 2025, revoked Executive Order 14019.

⁵ Executive Order 12642, “Designation of the Secretary of Defense as the Presidential Designee” under title I of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, June 8, 1988.

The Secretary of Defense Delegated Responsibility to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Executive Order 12642 authorized the Secretary of Defense to delegate UOCAVA responsibilities within the DoD. The Secretary of Defense delegated responsibilities under UOCAVA to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

DoD Instruction (DoDI) 1000.04, “Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP),” establishes the responsibilities of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs).⁶ Policy support and operational responsibilities are assigned to the Director, Defense Personnel and Family Support Center. DoDI 1000.04 also assigns responsibilities to the DoD Components to develop written, voting-related policies to support all eligible Uniformed Services personnel and their family members, including those in deployed, dispersed, and tenant organizations.

The FVAP Office Responsibilities Under UOCAVA

The FVAP Office carries out the DoD’s responsibilities under UOCAVA. The FVAP Office works to ensure that military personnel, their eligible family members, and other overseas citizens are aware of the right to vote and have the tools and resources to do so anywhere in the world. The FVAP Office developed and maintains a website to conduct outreach and inform these groups about voter registration and absentee ballot procedures.⁷

UOCAVA requires the FVAP Office to report information specified in the law to the President and Congress by September 30 of each odd-numbered year. The report must include descriptions of Military Department voter registration assistance programs and their use, absentee ballot collection and delivery, and cooperation between states and the U.S. Government. The report also includes assessments of the registration and participation of absent Uniformed Service and overseas voters.

Military Service Responsibilities Under UOCAVA

Section 1566, title 10, United States Code, as amended, defines voting assistance programs as those the FVAP carries out under UOCAVA and any similar program. This section of the law also requires the IGs of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force to annually:

- review the compliance and effectiveness of their Service’s voting assistance program, and
- report the results to the DoD OIG in time to be reflected in the DoD OIG’s March 31 report to Congress.⁸

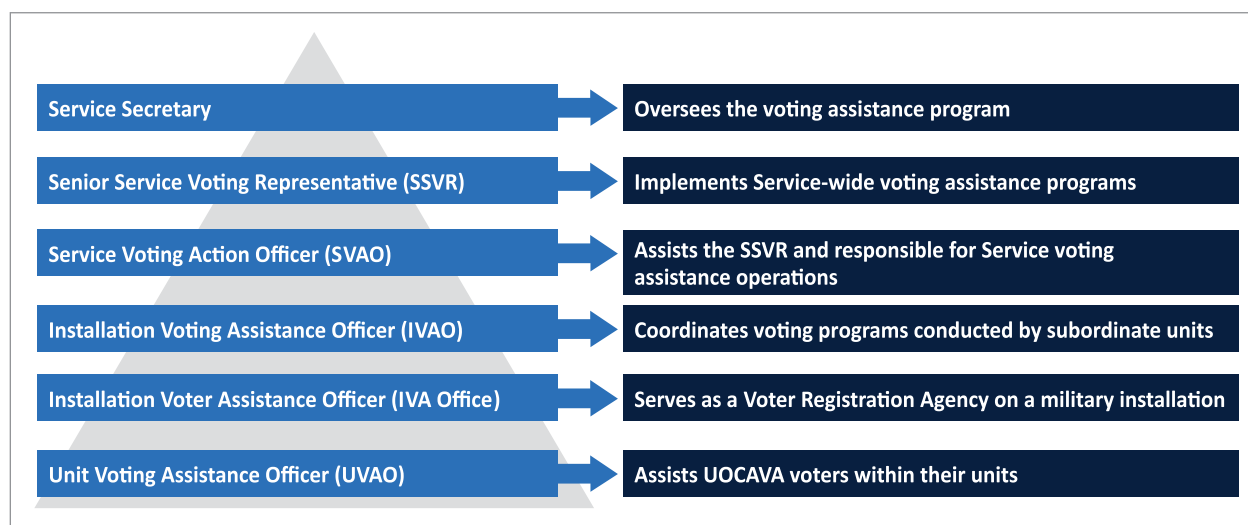
⁶ DoDI 1000.04, “Federal Voting Assistance Program,” November 12, 2019.

⁷ The presidential designee is required under 52 U.S.C. § 20305 to develop online portals of information to inform absent Uniformed Service voters of voter registration procedures and absentee ballot procedures for Federal office elections.

⁸ We reviewed the Service IGs’ 2024 voting assistance program reports for calendar year 2024. For the purposes of this reporting requirement, the Department of the Air Force IG reported on Space Force IG findings.

DoDI 1000.04 and 10 U.S.C § 1566, as amended, require the IGs of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Space Force to submit their reports assessing voting assistance program efforts, along with supporting statistical information, to the DoD OIG and the FVAP Office by December 1 of each year.⁹ DoDI 1000.04 also requires the written designation of personnel at all levels (unit, installation, and Service) to manage the respective Service's voting assistance programs. As shown in Figure 2, DoDI 1000.04 establishes a hierarchy of voting assistance offices and trained voting assistance officers to provide voter assistance to military personnel, their dependents, civilian Federal employees, and all qualified voters who have access to DoD installations both in the United States and overseas.

Figure 2. Service Voting Assistance Program Key Members



Source: The FVAP 2022 Report to Congress.

⁹ As a result of this compressed time frame, our ability to review, test, or examine the Service IG reports was limited. While we reviewed the Service IGs' 2024 voting assistance program reports for consistency and reasonableness, we did not validate their data and conclusions.

Finding

Military Service Offices of Inspector General Found That Military Service Voting Assistance Programs Were Compliant and Effective

Based on our review of the Service IGs' Calendar Year 2024 assessments of the Military Services' voting assistance programs, we found that the Services complied with the requirements of UOCAVA and DoDI 1000.04. Specifically, we reviewed the Service IGs' annual assessments of the Military Services' voting assistance programs covering Calendar Year 2024. All the Service IGs found that their respective Service voting assistance programs complied with the requirements of UOCAVA and DoDI 1000.04 and were effective. For their Calendar Year 2024 assessments, each Service IG:

- applied the "Measures of Effect and Performance" developed by the FVAP Office (see Appendix B for Service voting assistance program performance metrics and reporting requirements);
- described Service coordination with the FVAP Office, including routine input of voting data to the FVAP web portal;
- identified data used to support the distribution of voting materials and contact with eligible voters; and
- applied a standardized checklist—tailored to DoDI 1000.04, the MPSA "Strategic Postal Action Plan ISO 2024 Federal General Election" (the MPSA 2024 Strategic Postal Action Plan), and corresponding Service voting policies—for IG inspections of voting assistance programs in seven specific program areas.¹⁰

The Army Inspector General Reported That the Service Voting Assistance Program Is Effective

The Army IG reported that the Army had an effective voting assistance program during 2024. The criteria the Army IG used for compliance testing included 10 U.S.C. § 1566; DoDI 1000.04; Army Regulation 608-20, "Army Voting Assistance Program;" and the MPSA 2024 Strategic Postal Action Plan.¹¹ In 2024, the Army IG report compiled inspection results from all senior-level commands. The Army IG reported that all assessed commands complied with FVAP standards for 2024 and met each of the MPSA requirements. The Army IG report highlighted the following results.

- The Army designated a Service VAO. In addition, the Army designated VAOs at all the assessed U.S. Army major commands.

¹⁰ MPSA "Strategic Postal Action Plan ISO 2024 Federal General Election," November 17, 2023. The seven specific areas consist of staffing, training, material distribution, communication and information network, commander—and installation-level involvement, metrics, and MPSA requirements.

¹¹ Army Regulation 608-20, "Army Voting Assistance Program," November 13, 2020.

- All assessed Unit VAOs distributed the absentee ballot requirements to subordinate Unit VAOs. In turn, the subordinate Unit VAOs distributed this information throughout their organizations.
- All assessed Unit VAOs received training before assuming their duties.
- All assessed commands developed a system to deliver physical or electronic FPCAs to eligible voters by July 15 of even numbered years.
- The Army Service VAO used a centralized website, a channel on a commonly used software application, and several social media platforms to ensure Soldiers and their families had access to voting information.
- All assessed Unit VAOs communicated with and distributed voter information to Service members in geographically separated units.
- The 2024 Army Postal Voting Action Guidance complied with MPSA's strategic Postal Action Plan and provided guidance on meeting MPSA's objectives.
- Military Post Office Postal Voting Representatives monitored ballot accountability and reporting in the Automated Military Postal System.

For its CY 2024 assessment, the Army IG applied the “Measures of Effect and Performance,” developed by the FVAP Office; described its coordination with the FVAP Office, including routine input of voting data to the FVAP web portal; identified data used to support the distribution of voting materials and contact with eligible voters; and applied a standardized checklist—tailored to DoDI 1000.04, the MPSA Strategic Postal Action Plan, and Army voting policies—for IG inspections of voting assistance programs in seven specific program areas.

The Naval Inspector General Reported That the Service Voting Assistance Program Is Effective

The Naval IG reported that the Navy had an effective voting assistance program in 2024 with some discrepancies, which we will closely track in the 2025 reporting. The criteria the Naval IG used for compliance testing included 10 U.S.C. § 1566, DoDI 1000.04, Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 1742.1C, and the MPSA 2024 Strategic Postal Action Plan.¹² The Naval IG evaluated the 31 major commands overseeing all Navy units, including U.S. Central Command and Defense Media Activity, which are supported by the Navy.

The Naval IG report highlighted the following results.

- The Commander, Navy Installations Command, encompasses 10 regions and 71 installations.¹³ All installation voting assistance officers were designated in writing and assigned in the FVAP web portal.

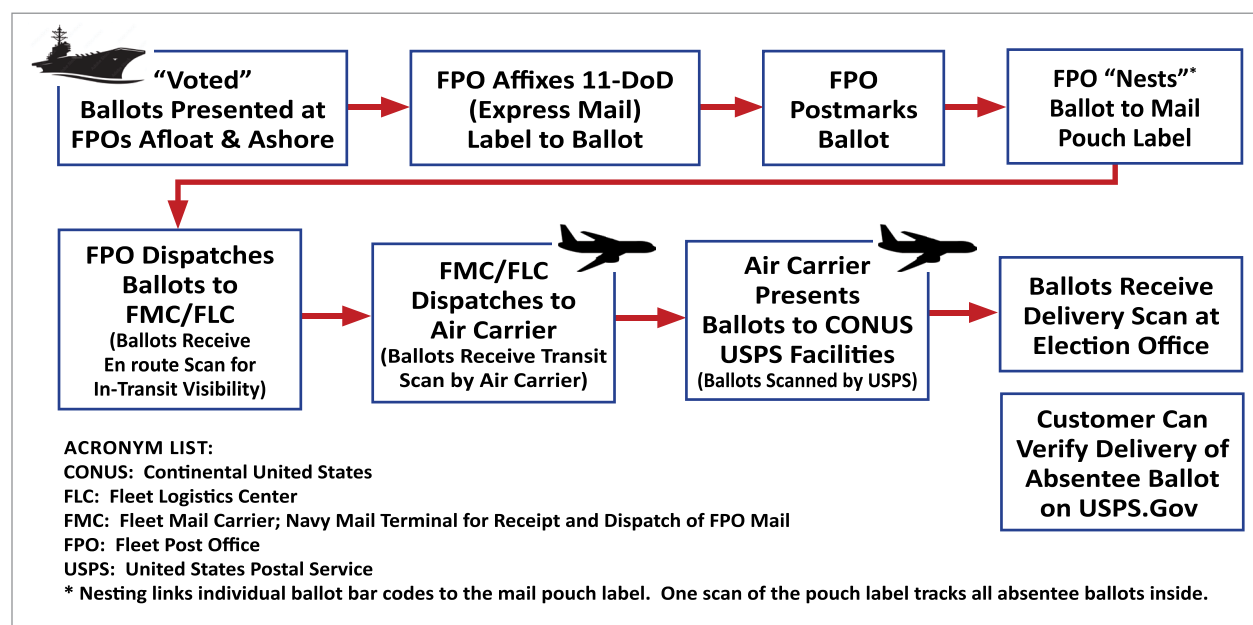
¹² Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 1742.1C, “Navy Voting Assistance Program,” February 5, 2016.

¹³ Commander, Navy Installations Command is the name of the organization and does not refer to the person.

- Of the 31 Naval commands, 22 (71 percent) appointed voting assistance officers in writing, as required, to effectively assist voters for all Federal elections, and 22 of the commands (71 percent) were found to be effective in providing voting assistance. Major commands are responsible for ensuring that subordinate units maintain a VAO and enter voting assistance metrics through the FVAP web portal. VAOs are required to submit periodic program self-assessments to the unit commanding officer or officer in charge, and the Navy Service Voting Action Officer conducts annual data calls.¹⁴
- The Naval Education and Training Command was overall compliant and effective, with some discrepancies. Of the 26 recruiting commands, 26 provided information and voter registration forms to prospective enlistees, and 24 (92 percent) transmitted completed forms to state election officials within the 5 calendar days allotted by DoDI 1000.04. In addition, 24 of the 26 (92 percent) recruiting commands kept records on file for the required 2 years documenting that all enlistees were offered voting-related forms.
- Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 1742.1C and the Navy's voting action plan established the requirements and deadlines for distributing the FPCA. The Service voting action officer reminded all unit and installation VAOs of the SF 76 distribution requirement through a monthly newsletter and posted instructions on social media. Unit VAOs also logged distribution metrics for the SF 76 through the FVAP web portal.

Figure 3 shows how the Navy processes absentee ballots.

Figure 3. Navy Voting Absentee Ballot Processing



Source: Adapted from the Naval Supply Systems Command 2022 Naval Postal Voting Training and Action Plan, August 2022.

¹⁴ Each Military Service assigns a Service Voting Action Officer to manage its voting program.

For its CY 2024 assessment, the Navy IG applied the “Measures of Effect and Performance,” developed by the FVAP Office; described its coordination with the FVAP Office, including routine input of voting data to the FVAP web portal; identified data used to support the distribution of voting materials and contact with eligible voters; and applied a standardized checklist—tailored to DoDI 1000.04, the MPSA Strategic Postal Action Plan, and Navy voting policies—for IG inspections of voting assistance programs in seven specific program areas.

The Marine Corps Inspector General Reported That the Service Voting Assistance Program is Effective

The Marine Corps IG concluded that the Marine Corps voting assistance program was effective in assisting eligible voters and that it complied with 10 U.S.C. § 1566, DoDI 1000.04, Marine Corps Order 1742.1C, and the Military Postal Service Agency’s 2024 Strategic Postal Action Plan.¹⁵ The Marine Corps IG based this conclusion on the results of 176 unit inspections during 2024. The Marine Corps IG used data submitted by the commands to analyze their voting assistance. The Marine Corps IG report highlighted the following results.

- On January 10, 2024, the Marine Corps emailed 305,426 electronic versions of the SF 76 (FPCA) to all military personnel and another 318,460 electronic versions of the SF 76 on July 15, 2024. In addition, 31,678 personnel received hard copies of the SF 76 in training.
- In 2024, recruiters issued over 12,896 voter registration forms (DD Form 2645) to eligible prospective enlistees.
- The Marine Corps determined compliance with Executive Order 14019, section 8, and established procedures to enable a comprehensive, end-to-end ballot tracking system for all absentee ballots cast by military and other eligible overseas voters covered by UOCAVA.¹⁶
- The Marine Corps appointed an installation voting assistance officer for each of the 19 Marine Corps installations and maintained the established ratio of 1 unit voting assistance officer per 200 Marines at each command.
- In 2024, Marine Corps voting assistance officers provided voter assistance to 585,179 military personnel, 14,750 military spouses, and 21,394 federal civilian personnel.¹⁷

For its CY 2024 assessment, the Marine Corps IG applied the “Measures of Effect and Performance,” developed by the FVAP Office; described its coordination with the FVAP Office, including routine input of voting data to the FVAP web portal; identified data used to support the distribution of voting materials and contact with eligible voters; and applied

¹⁵ Marine Corps Order 1742.1C, “Voting Assistance Program,” June 25, 2021.

¹⁶ Executive Order 14148, “Initial Recissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions,” January 20, 2025, revoked Executive Order 14019.

¹⁷ This total includes multiple assistance touchpoints for the same individuals, so it exceeds the actual number of Marines in the Service.

a standardized checklist—tailored to DoDI 1000.04, the MPSA Strategic Postal Action Plan, and Marine Corps voting policies—for IG inspections of voting assistance programs in seven specific program areas.

The Department of the Air Force Inspector General Reported That the Service Voting Assistance Programs Are Effective

The Department of the Air Force IG concluded that the Air Force and Space Force voting assistance programs were effective in assisting eligible voters and complied with 10 U.S.C. § 1566; DoDI 1000.04; Air Force Instruction 36-3107, “Voting Assistance Program;” and the MPSA 2024 Strategic Postal Action Plan.¹⁸ The Department of the Air Force IG interviewed voting assistance officers, inspected their procedures and project management from major Air Force commands and Space Force field commands.

The Department of the Air Force IG conducted 301 FVAP inspections across 119 wing organizations and identified 160 deficiencies. As of October 17, 2024, 68 of 158 (43 percent) minor deficiencies remained open and 2 of 2 significant deficiencies remained open.

The Department of the Air Force IG did not identify any critical deficiencies.¹⁹

The Department of the Air Force IG report highlighted the following results.

- The Department of the Air Force designated a Service Voting Action Officer. In addition, the Department of the Air Force maintained 73 Installation Voting Assistance Offices, and each had a primary and alternate Installation VAO appointed from the permanent government civilian staff. The Department of the Air Force appointed VAOs, and unit commanders appointed a Unit VAO assigned to each unit with permanently assigned active-duty members.
- VAOs completed FVAP computer-based training. Most received training no later than 30 days after assuming duties. Specifically, 291 of 301 (97 percent) of Department of the Air Force Unit VAOs and 9 of 9 Department of the Air Force Installation VAOs inspected complied with this requirement.²⁰
- The Department of the Air Force developed a Service-wide plan to deliver FPCAs directly to all eligible voters by January 15 of each calendar year and by July 15 of even-numbered years. Specifically, the Department of the Air Force developed a redundant Service-wide messaging system and installation electronic distribution mailing lists. The messaging system simultaneously communicated with 285,000 military members and 153,000 civilian employees. The Department of the Air Force retained records of FPCA distribution and voting information and assistance provided in accordance with FVAP metric requirements and an Air Force web-based system for tracking customer service data.

¹⁸ Air Force Instruction 36-3107, “Voting Assistance Program,” July 1, 2021.

¹⁹ For the Space Force inspections, the Field Commands and the Delta IGs conducted 20 FVAP inspection across 20 Delta organizations. As of October 17, 2024, 1 of 2 (50 percent) minor deficiencies remained open and 3 of 6 (50 percent) significant deficiencies remained open. The Space Force did not note any critical deficiencies.

²⁰ A total of 20 of 20 Space Force Unit VAOs and 1 of 1 Space Force Installation VAO inspected complied with this requirement.

- The Department of the Air Force provided voting information through social media, newspapers, installation marquees, radio, and television from the American Forces Network. Installation VAOs maintained a voting assistance web page on the installation's public website, which the installation public affairs office approved. Unit VAOs also provided absentee voting information that included details about voters' home states, election dates, absentee registration, and voting rules and forms.
- The 2024 Federal General Election Headquarters Air Force Strategic Postal Action Plan complied with MPSA's strategic Postal Action Plan and provided guidance on meeting MPSA's objectives.

For its CY 2024 assessment, the Department of the Air Force IG applied the "Measures of Effect and Performance," developed by the FVAP Office; described its coordination with the FVAP Office, including routine input of voting data to the FVAP web portal; identified data used to support the distribution of voting materials and contact with eligible voters; and applied a standardized checklist—tailored to DoDI 1000.04, the MPSA Strategic Postal Action Plan, and Department of the Air Force voting policies—for IG inspections of voting assistance programs in seven specific program areas.

Appendix A

Scope and Methodology

We conducted this evaluation from October 2024 through February 2025 in accordance with the “Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation,” published in December 2020 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. Those standards require that we adequately plan the evaluation to ensure that objectives are met and that we perform the evaluation to obtain sufficient, competent, and relevant evidence to support the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. We believe that the evidence obtained was sufficient, competent, and relevant to lead a reasonable person to sustain the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The scope of this evaluation included the reporting period of January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, in accordance with our responsibilities under 10 U.S.C. § 1566. We collected reports from the IGs of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, assessing their Services’ voter assistance program compliance for 2024. We reviewed these reports and supporting data to report on the level of compliance and effectiveness of Service voting assistance programs. While we reviewed the Service IGs’ 2024 voting assistance program reports for consistency and reasonableness, we did not validate their data and conclusions.

We issued requests for information, met with officials from the DoD FVAP Office, and reviewed the Service IGs’ FVAP reports to assess their implementation of requirements specified in DoDI 1000.04.

We reported on the effectiveness of the Services’ voting assistance programs and whether they complied with relevant Federal and DoD policies. To evaluate the effectiveness of the Military Services’ voting assistance programs, we collected annual reports from the IGs of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, assessing their Services’ voting assistance programs compliance during 2024. We also reviewed:

- statute and executive policies;
- DoD policies and procedures;
- FVAP and Service guidance on voter assistance, access to absentee voter registration, and absentee ballot handling; and
- prior annual DoD OIG evaluation reports on the effectiveness of DoD VAPs and compliance with the voting assistance programs of the Military Services.

We also reviewed relevant Federal laws, DoD and Service policies, voting action plan reports, and other appropriate documents, including the following policies and guidance.

Statutes and Policies

- 10 U.S.C. § 1566
- 10 U.S.C. § 1566a
- The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)
- Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act
- Public Law 116-92, “National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2020”
- Public Law 116-283, “National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2021”
- Executive Order 12642, “Designation of the Secretary of Defense as the Presidential Designee” under Title I of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act
- Executive Order 14019, “Promoting Access to Voting”

DoD Policy

- DoD Directive 5101.11E, “DoD Executive Agent for the Military Postal Service and Official Mail Program”
- DoD Directive 5124.02, “Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R))”
- DoD Instruction 1000.04, “Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)”

Service Policies

Each Military Service published voting assistance program policies to implement DoD Instruction 1000.04.

- Army Regulation 608-20, “Army Voting Assistance Program,” November 13, 2020
- Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 1742.1C, “Navy Voting Assistance Program,” February 5, 2016
- Air Force Instruction 36-3107, “Voting Assistance Program,” July 1, 2021
- Marine Corps Order 1742.1C, “Voting Assistance Program,” June 25, 2021

We also reviewed the MPSA “Strategic Postal Action Plan ISO 2024 Federal General Election,” November 17, 2023.

Use of Computer-Processed Data

We did not use computer-processed data to perform this evaluation.

Prior Coverage

During the last five years, the DoD OIG issued five reports discussing the DoD’s VAP. Unrestricted DoD OIG reports can be accessed at <http://www.dodig.mil/reports.html/>.

DoD OIG

DoD OIG Report No. DODIG-2024-070, "Evaluation of DoD Voting Assistance Programs for Calendar Year 2023," March 28, 2024.

The objective of this evaluation was to determine the effectiveness and compliance of the voting assistance programs of the Military Services during calendar year 2023 in accordance with the requirements of section 1566, title 10, United States Code, as amended. Additionally, the DoD OIG examined whether the FVAP Office complied with the requirements of Public Law 116-92, Executive Order 14019, DoD Directive 5101.11E, and DoD Instructions 1000.04 and 4525.09 on outreach and access efforts for voters covered by the UOCAVA.

The DoD OIG found that the FVAP Office provided effective outreach and assistance to eligible voters covered by UOCAVA and their family members, as well as stakeholder agencies. The FVAP Office coordinated with the Services, election officials, eligible voters, and Congress to promote awareness of the right to vote and the resources to exercise that right. Specifically, the FVAP Office met legal and policy requirements regarding access and outreach through multiple actions. As a result of the FVAP Office's actions and its coordination with stakeholder agencies, eligible voters had access to the information necessary to participate in the voting process. DoD organizations and leaders also had the necessary tools to help ensure access to vote and compliance with Federal law and DoD Instruction 1000.04. This report did not contain recommendations.

DoD OIG Report No. DODIG-2023-063, "Evaluation of the DoD Voting Assistance Programs for Calendar Year 2022," March 30, 2023

The DoD OIG found that the FVAP Office provided effective outreach and assistance to eligible voters covered by UOCAVA and their family members, as well as stakeholder agencies. The FVAP Office coordinated with the Services, election officials, eligible voters, and Congress to promote awareness of the right to vote and the resources to exercise that right. Specifically, the FVAP Office met legal and policy requirements on access and outreach through multiple actions. As a result of the FVAP Office's actions and its coordination with stakeholder agencies, eligible voters had access to the information necessary to participate in the voting process. DoD organizations and leaders also had the necessary tools to help ensure access to vote and comply with Federal law and DoDI 1000.04. This report did not contain recommendations.

DoD OIG Report No. DODIG-2022-079, "Evaluation of the Department of Defense Voting Assistance Programs for Calendar Year 2021," March 31, 2022

The DoD OIG found that the FVAP Office generally provided effective outreach and assistance to eligible voters covered by UOCAVA and their family members, as well as stakeholder agencies, such as the Council of State Governments, U.S. Postal Service,

MPSA, Election Assistance Commission, and Departments of Commerce, Health and Human Services, Justice, State, and Transportation. The FVAP Office coordinated with the Services, election officials, eligible voters, and Congress to ensure that Service members, their eligible family members, and other overseas citizens were aware of their right to vote and had the tools and resources to exercise that right. Specifically, the FVAP Office met the requirements of Executive Order 14019 on access and performed outreach through multiple actions, as required by DoDI 1000.04. As a result of the FVAP Office's actions and its coordination with stakeholder agencies, eligible voters had the information necessary to participate in the voting process. DoD organizations and leaders also had the necessary tools to ensure access to vote and comply with Federal law and DoDI 1000.04. This report did not contain recommendations.

DoD OIG Report No. DODIG-2021-066, "Evaluation of Department of Defense Voting Assistance Programs for Calendar Year 2020," March 29, 2021

The DoD OIG found that the FVAP Office generally provided effective outreach assistance to eligible UOCAVA voters and their family members, as well as external stakeholder agencies, such as the Election Assistance Commission and the Departments of Commerce, Health and Human Services, Justice, State, and Transportation. The FVAP Office coordinated with the Services, election officials, eligible voters, and Congress to ensure that Service members, their eligible family members, and overseas citizens were aware of their right to vote and had the tools and resources to successfully exercise that right. Specifically, the FVAP Office performed outreach through multiple actions, as required by DoDI 1000.04. As a result of the FVAP Office's actions, eligible voters had the information necessary to participate in the voting process. DoD organizations and leaders also had the necessary tools to ensure access to and comply with Federal law and DoDI 1000.04. However, the FVAP Office had not developed and implemented agreements, such as memorandums of understanding, with all external stakeholder agencies to enhance outreach and ensure a collaborative and efficient effort to support UOCAVA voters. Entering into memorandums of understanding with other Federal agencies would allow the FVAP Office to strengthen its communications by expanding its outreach through other Federal agencies. These efforts boost voter awareness, knowledge, and participation in upcoming election cycles.

The DoD OIG recommended that the FVAP Office Director develop and implement agreements, such as memorandums of understanding, with all external stakeholder agencies to enhance outreach efforts and ensure a collaborative and efficient effort to support UOCAVA voters and their eligible family members, including those in deployed, dispersed, and tenant organizations. The FVAP Office Director agreed with the recommendation, stating that entering into agreements such as memorandums of understanding with Federal agencies would allow the FVAP to standardize its approach for meeting the requirements of UOCAVA

and leverage opportunities to increase the reach of its existing information awareness efforts. The FVAP Office Director stated that, to the extent practicable, the FVAP Office would adopt this recommendation for the 2022 election cycle. As of November 2024, this recommendation remains open.

DoD OIG Report No. DODIG-2020-076, "Evaluation of the Department of Defense Voting Assistance Programs for Calendar Year 2019," March 31, 2020

While each Service IG found their Service's voting assistance program to be compliant and generally effective, we also reviewed compliance with DoDI 1000.04 by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Additionally, the Office of the Secretary of Defense receives voting assistance support from the FVAP Office, whose processes and procedures generally provided eligible voters and their family members access to voting information. The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness is responsible for voting support throughout the Office of the Secretary of Defense through the FVAP Office. The FVAP Office coordinates with the Services, election officials, eligible voters, and Congress to ensure that Service members, their eligible family members, and overseas citizens are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully exercise that right. As a result of the FVAP Office's actions, eligible voters had the information necessary to participate in the voting process, and DoD organizations and leaders had the necessary tools to ensure access to and comply with Federal law and DoDI 1000.04.

However, the DoD OIG found that the Joint Staff did not have a written voting policy, as required by DoDI 1000.04. The absence of a written policy occurred because responsible Joint Staff officials believed that personnel assigned to the Joint Staff received voting assistance support from their respective Service voting assistance officers. However, the voting assistance support provided by their respective Service voting assistance officers only occurs when Service members initially arrive and are on-boarded. In addition, the Joint Staff voting assistance portfolio manager did not know who the Service voting representatives were and Services did not confirm that Service members assigned to the Joint Staff and their eligible family members had access to Federal voting information and assistance. As a result, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff cannot ensure that the Joint Staff meets the intent of DoDI 1000.04.

The DoD OIG recommended that the Director of the Joint Staff develop and implement a written voting assistance policy to support Service personnel assigned to the Joint Staff and their family members, including those in deployed, dispersed, and tenant organizations. This recommendation is closed.

Appendix B

Service Voting Assistance Program Performance Metrics and Reporting Requirements

The FVAP Office developed voting assistance program performance metrics and reporting requirements, as specified in its “Measures of Effect and Performance” matrix. Each Service provided data to the FVAP Office quarterly using the FVAP portal.



FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
DEFENSE HUMAN RESOURCES ACTIVITY
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 05E22
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22350-5000

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR SERVICE VOTING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
MILITARY DEPARTMENTS

SUBJECT: Voting Assistance Program Metrics

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) coordinated with each Service on the voting assistance program performance metrics and reporting requirements, as required by the Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1000.04. The attached Measures of Effect and Performance reflect FVAP's current measures of effectiveness based on research combined with the ongoing assessment FVAP applies to voting assistance.

FVAP prescribes the collection of the following data elements, via the FVAP portal, with quarterly entries to be provided after the end of each quarter.

WIEDMANN. J. SCOTT. [Redacted]
[Redacted]
J. Scott Wiedmann
Director

Digitally signed by
WIEDMANN.J.SCOTT
[Redacted]

Attachments:
As stated.

Service Voting Assistance Program Performance Metrics and Reporting Requirements (cont'd)

Measures of Effect & Performance

Installation Voter Assistance Office

<u>Metrics</u>	<u>Justification</u>
Number of Personnel Assisted: Categorize into the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Military ▪ Spouses/Dependents ▪ Other Civilians 	To provide an accurate representation of the utilization of this resource for voting assistance.
Of the Total Number of Personnel Assisted, how many did you directly assist with completing the following forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) ▪ Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) ▪ National Voter Registration Form (NVRF) 	To provide an accurate representation on the level and type of assistance provided to qualified voters through each Installation Voter Assistance Office. "Directly assisting" refers to the assistance that instructs on the completion on one of the forms listed and/or responding to questions related to the completion of the form.
Of the total Number of Personnel Assisted, how many did you provide general information:	To provide a distinguishing characteristic for the levels of assistance that is provided and provide context for the type of assistance sought through this resource.
Total Number of FPCAs distributed:	To measure the extent of utilization for the use of the FPCA and potential penetration of the FPCA at an installation.
Of the total number of FPCAs distributed, describe the method of distribution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hard Copy forms ▪ Electronic (e.g., e-mail, online) ▪ Referred voter to FVAP.gov 	To provide clarifying characteristics for the preferred method of distributing the FPCA.
Total Number of FWABs distributed:	To measure the extent of utilization for the use of the FWAB and potential penetration of the FWAB at an installation.
Of the total number of FWABs distributed, describe the method of distribution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hard Copy forms ▪ Electronic (e.g., e-mail, online) ▪ Referred voter to FVAP.gov 	To provide clarifying characteristics for the preferred method of distributing the FWAB.
Total Number of NVRFs distributed:	To measure the extent of utilization for the use of the NVRF and potential penetration of the NVRF at an installation.
Of the total number of NVRFs distributed, describe the method of distribution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hard Copy forms ▪ Electronic (e.g., e-mail, online) ▪ Referred voter to FVAP.gov 	To provide clarifying characteristics for the preferred method of distributing the FWAB.
Total Number of NVRFs mailed on behalf of the voter	To measure the extent and volume of NVRFs transmitted from an IVA Office

Service Voting Assistance Program Performance Metrics and Reporting Requirements (cont'd)

Reporting Requirements and usage of the FVAP Portal located at FVAP.gov:

1. Date of appointment
2. Date and method of most recent training
3. Continuity Book created and available for inspection.

Service Voting Assistance Program Performance Metrics and Reporting Requirements (cont'd)

Unit Voting Assistance Officers

<u>Metrics</u>	<u>Justification</u>
Number of Personnel Assisted: Categorize into the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Military ▪ Spouses/Dependents ▪ Other Civilians 	To provide an accurate representation of the utilization of this resource for voting assistance.
Total Number of Personnel Assisted, how many did you directly assist with completing the following forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) ▪ Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) 	To provide an accurate representation on the level and type of assistance provided to qualified voters through each Installation Voter Assistance Office. "Directly assisting" refers to the assistance that instructs on the completion on one of the forms listed and/or responding to questions related to the completion of the form.
Total Number of Personnel Assisted, how many did you provide general information:	To provide a distinguishing characteristic for the levels of assistance that is provided and provide context for the type of assistance sought through this resource.
Total Number of FPCAs distributed:	To measure the extent of utilization for the use of the FPCA and potential penetration of the FPCA at an installation.
Of the total number of FPCAs distributed, describe the method of distribution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hard Copy forms ▪ Electronic (e.g., e-mail, online) ▪ Referred voter to FVAP.gov 	To provide clarifying characteristics for the preferred method of distributing the FPCA.
Total Number of FWABs distributed:	To measure the extent of utilization for the use of the FWAB and potential penetration of the FWAB at an installation.
Of the total number of FWABs distributed, describe the method of distribution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hard Copy forms ▪ Electronic (e.g., e-mail, online) ▪ Referred voter to FVAP.gov 	To provide clarifying characteristics for the preferred method of distributing the FWAB.

Reporting Requirements and usage of the FVAP Portal located at FVAP.gov:

4. Date of appointment
5. Date and method of most recent training
6. Continuity Book created and available for inspection.

Service Voting Assistance Program Performance Metrics and Reporting Requirements (cont'd)

Recruiting Offices

<u>Metrics</u>	<u>Justification</u>
Number of Personnel Assisted for Recruiting Services (Total Number of Persons Entering the Recruiting Office)	To provide an accurate representation of the utilization of this resource for voting assistance.
Number of DD Form 2645 (Yes/No) Completed (Must be Citizen and 18 Years Old by Date of Election to Complete Form)	To provide an accurate representation of the utilization of this resource for voting assistance.
Number of Voter Registration Applications Submitted by Recruiting Offices, By State	To provide an accurate representation of the utilization of this resource for voting assistance.
Number of Voter Registration Applications Taken by Citizens, but Not Submitted by Recruiting Offices	To provide an accurate representation of the utilization of this resource for voting assistance.
Total Mailing Costs to Submit Voter Registration Application to States	To provide an accurate representation of the cost of this resource for voting assistance.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

DoDI	DoD Instruction
FPCA	Federal Post Card Application
FVAP	Federal Voting Assistance Program
FWAB	Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot
IG	Inspector General
MOVE	Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment
MPSA	Military Postal Service Agency
OIG	Office of Inspector General
UOCAVA	Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act
VAO	Voting Assistance Officer



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Legislative Affairs Division
703.604.8324

Public Affairs Division
public.affairs@dodig.mil; 703.604.8324



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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE | INSPECTOR GENERAL

4800 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22350-1500
www.dodig.mil
DoD Hotline 1.800.424.9098

