



# Federal Employees

## Working Outside the United States

### Wherever U.S. citizens go, FVAP ensures their voices are heard.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) 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.

### What is my voting residence and why is it important?

For the purposes of voting, your residence is in the state or territory where you last resided, immediately before leaving the United States. It is the true, fixed address that you considered your permanent home and where you had a physical presence.

*This residence may remain valid even if:*

- You no longer own property or have other ties to that state.
- Your intent to return to that state is uncertain.
- Your previous address is no longer a recognized residential address.

You need a voting residence to vote via absentee ballot — even if you are only voting for federal offices. Your election office needs your exact voting residence address to send you the correct ballot for your voting precinct.

### Are you a federal employee who wants to vote from outside the United States?

You can! As a U.S. citizen living outside the United States, your right to vote in elections for federal offices is protected by federal statute. That law, the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), covers all overseas citizens, as well as Uniformed Service members and their eligible family members.

### Vote absentee from overseas.



- 1 Fill out and send in the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to register to vote and request your ballot.



- 2 Fill out and send in your ballot when it arrives.



If your ballot doesn't make it to you on time, you can fill out the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) at FVAP.gov. Print, sign, and send it to your election office.

After you send your ballot, you can check if it was received by your election office. Get started at FVAP.gov.

As a Federal employee, you need to be aware that some political activities are off limits under the Hatch Act. The U.S. Office of Special Counsel provides specific guidance regarding permitted and prohibited activities at <https://osc.gov/pages/hatchact.aspx>. It includes activities while on and off duty, as well as guidance on social media usage and frequently asked questions. For more information, contact the U.S. Office of Special Counsel at (202) 254-3650 or [hatchact@osc.gov](mailto:hatchact@osc.gov).

Voting in an election for federal offices often may not be used as the sole basis for determining residency for the purpose of imposing state and local taxes. When claiming a new legal residence, you should consult legal counsel because there may be other factors to consider, such as tax implications.

# FAQ

## What is the FPCA?

It is a form that tells your election office that you want to vote absentee and need to receive absentee ballots that year. Send in a new FPCA every January, every time you move, or at least 90 days before an election.

## How do I get the FPCA and fill it out?

Go to [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) and select your state of voting residence. Use FVAP's online assistant or fill out the FPCA by hand. Then print, sign and send it to your election office. Hard copies are available at any U.S. embassy, consulate or military installation.

## How do I send in my FPCA?

Mail your FPCA to your election office. Find the address at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov).

If you are mailing through the U.S. Postal Service, APO/FPO or diplomatic pouch, you can download a postage-paid envelope at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov). Or contact your closest U.S. embassy or consulate to see if you can drop off your FPCA for mailing free of charge.

If you are mailing the FPCA using a foreign country's postal service, place the correct postage and write "USA" in the address line.

You may be able to send in your FPCA by email or fax. Check [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) to see what your state allows. If eligible, you can send your FPCA or ballot electronically with FVAP's help by faxing it toll-free to 800-368-VOTE (8683) or emailing it to [ets@FVAP.gov](mailto:ets@FVAP.gov).

## How do I check the status of my ballot request?

You can follow up with your election office to make sure your FPCA was received and find out when to expect your ballot. Find contact information at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov).

## What are the most common mistakes made on the FPCA?

- Illegible handwriting. If you prefer to type, you can fill out the FPCA form using the online assistant and print it out.
- No signature. Don't forget to sign and date your FPCA before mailing to your election office. If you use the online assistant, you still need to print and sign.
- Not meeting state requirements. You must fill out all sections of the FPCA required by your state and send it ahead of the state deadline. Find your state's requirements and deadlines at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov).

## What if I don't get my ballot in time?

You should receive your ballot at least 30 days before the election or with enough time to send it so that it arrives by your state's deadline. If you don't get your ballot in time, you can use the *Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)* as a backup.

Go to [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) and select your state of voting residence. Use FVAP's online assistant or fill out the FWAB by hand. Then print, sign and send it to your election office. Find contact information at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov).



## Need More Assistance?

### Contact your Voting Assistance Officer

Most U.S. embassies, consulates, and military installations have Voting Assistance Officers who can provide you with in-person assistance. Find their contact information at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov).

### Attend an event

During election years, U.S. embassies and consulates work with FVAP to host informational events for overseas voters. Sign up for info about local events with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at [step.state.gov](http://step.state.gov).

Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET | Go to [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) and click on "contact" to find where to send your election materials. Media inquiries: [media@fvap.gov](mailto:media@fvap.gov)



**VISIT**  
[FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov)



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