

Military and Overseas Voting

The Federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)

Active duty military members, their dependents, and U.S. citizens living abroad may request a mail-in absentee ballot the same way as other registered voters. They may also apply to register and vote through special programs for military and overseas voters.

The UOCAVA (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://www.fvap.gov/info/laws/uocava>) allows certain voters who are active duty military or their families as well as U.S. citizens abroad special rights that provide an expedited means to register and vote by mail-in ballot. Citizens covered by UOCAVA include:

- Members of the active or reserve components of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard who are on active duty.
- Members of the Merchant Marine, the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service, or the commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
- Members of the National Guard or state militia units on activated status.
- Spouses and dependents of uniformed services members listed above.
- U.S. citizens residing outside the country.

Special Voting Options for Military and Overseas Voters

Military and overseas voters may register and vote through the Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Forms/fpca2013.pdf>) or the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB). (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Forms/fwab2013.pdf>) The advantage of the FPCA is that the voter receives a ballot that includes all ballot choices, including local contests and ballot items. The FWAB is a simpler option if the voter only wants to vote in prominent federal contests, such as presidential elections. With a FWAB ballot, the voter may vote for all contests (federal, state and local) for which he or she is eligible, but the voter must get information for local contests and ballot items in order to write in a choice for those items.

A military or overseas voter should only apply for an absentee ballot using the FPCA or the FWAB, but not both. Generally, the FWAB serves as a backup to the FPCA. For most voters, the FPCA is the best option.

Federal Voting Assistance Project (FVAP) links:

- [FVAP.gov \(https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://www.fvap.gov/\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://www.fvap.gov/) homepage
- [Election Materials \(Including FPCA/FWAB printable forms\) \(https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://www.fvap.gov/eo/overview/materials/forms\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://www.fvap.gov/eo/overview/materials/forms)
- [Information for election officials \(guides for processing voting materials, sending ballots, election official online training\) \(https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://www.fvap.gov/eo\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://www.fvap.gov/eo)
- [Voting Assistance Guide \(https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://www.fvap.gov/guide\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://www.fvap.gov/guide)

Where to Send a Request

To register to vote and/or request an absentee ballot, UOCAVA citizens may complete a FPCA or FWAB and send the form to their county board of elections using one of these methods:

Online Portal: [UOCAVA Absentee Ballot Request Portal \(https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://votebyemail.ncsbe.gov/app/uocava\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://votebyemail.ncsbe.gov/app/uocava)

Mail: NC State Board of Elections

PO Box 27255 Raleigh, NC 27611-7255

Email: [ABSENTEE@ncsbe.gov \(https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/mailto:ABSENTEE@ncsbe.gov\)](mailto:ABSENTEE@ncsbe.gov)

Fax: (919) 715-0351

Email address and fax number are for use by military and overseas citizens only.

The request must be signed before submitting it to the [county board of elections. \(https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://vt.ncsbe.gov/BOEInfo/\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://vt.ncsbe.gov/BOEInfo/) The deadline for individuals eligible under UOCAVA to register to vote and/or request an absentee ballot is 5 p.m. on the day before Election Day.

Only the voter may sign their FPCA or FWAB application. Family members may not sign these forms on the voter's behalf.

Requesting and Receiving a Ballot

Federal Postcard Application (FPCA)

When requesting a ballot, UOCAVA voters may receive their balloting materials by mail, fax or email or in the [online portal](https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://votebymail.ncsbe.gov/app/uocava). (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://votebymail.ncsbe.gov/app/uocava>) Remember to choose your transmittal preference on your FPCA application and provide information on where to send materials.

Ballot materials will be sent as soon as ballots are available for a given election. UOCAVA ballots will also be available in the [online portal](https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://votebymail.ncsbe.gov/app/uocava) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://votebymail.ncsbe.gov/app/uocava>) for UOCAVA voters with a valid request.

Absentee ballots typically are available 30 days before municipal elections, 50 days before statewide primaries, and 60 days before general elections. For any other type of election, ballots will be available 50 days before the election. After submitting a FPCA, military and overseas voters will receive a ballot for any election for which they are eligible during that year.

Download the FCPA form 

Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

Military and overseas voters may also vote a FWAB instead of a regular ballot. In North Carolina, military and overseas voters may use a FWAB application to register to vote, request an absentee ballot, and vote for all federal, state and local contests in which they are eligible. The FWAB links above go to the Federal Voting Assistance Program, where voters may answer automated questions to set up the FWAB application.

The voter can vote for any ballot items that would be on the regular ballot. However, the voter must obtain the choices for those ballot items. The voter can get this information by contacting their county board of elections, or by looking up their sample ballot through the State Board's [Voter Search tool](https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup/). (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup/>) The FWAB (Federal Standard Form 186) serves as an emergency backup ballot for UOCAVA citizens. If you do not receive your absentee ballot from your state in time to return it to your election official to participate in the election, use the FWAB.

Download the FWAB form 

Returning the Ballot

Military or overseas voters may return their ballot, including an FWAB, via mail, fax or email. Additionally, a military or overseas voter who has submitted an FPCA or completed the UOCAVA portion of the North Carolina Absentee Request Form may use the [online portal](https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://votebymail.ncsbe.gov/app/uocava) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://votebymail.ncsbe.gov/app/uocava>) to retrieve, mark and return their ballot.

The deadline to return military and overseas ballots is the close of polls on Election Day (7:30 p.m. EST). If the ballot is received after the deadline, it will not be timely, unless the voter transmitted the ballot by 12:01 a.m. on the day of the election (voter time) and the county board receives the ballot by the last business day before the county canvass. The county canvass is typically conducted 10 days after a general election and 7 days after other elections. When returning the ballot by mail, no postmark is required.

Before returning the ballot, the military-overseas voter must sign the Affirmation of Military-Overseas Voter. The affirmation will be included in the instruction materials that are included with the blank ballot. If the balloting materials are mailed, then the affirmation is also on the back of the container-return envelope. Detailed instructions on returning the voted ballot are included with the absentee balloting materials sent to the voter.

Related Content

[The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act Overview | FVAP \(https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://www.fvap.gov/info/laws/uocava\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20201229152902/https://www.fvap.gov/info/laws/uocava)
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[FAQs: Voting by Mail in North Carolina in 2020 \(/web/20201229152902/https://www.ncsbe.gov/voting/vote-mail/faqs-voting-mail-north-carolina-2020\)](/web/20201229152902/https://www.ncsbe.gov/voting/vote-mail/faqs-voting-mail-north-carolina-2020)

Detailed Instructions for Voting by Mail (/web/20201229152902/https://www.ncsbe.gov/voting/vote-mail/detailed-instructions-voting-mail)