

7 FAM 1540 VOTING ACTION PLAN

(TL:CON-81; 06-18-2004)
(Office of Origin: CA/OCS/PRI)

7 FAM 1540.1 Training

7 FAM 1540.2 Building a Network

7 FAM 1540.3 Dissemination of Information

7 FAM 1540.1 Training

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a. You play a critical role in assisting citizens covered by the UOCAVA to request registration and a ballot to vote absentee. You also play an important role in training your VA and volunteers so they can assist citizens in registration and voting. Downloadable on-line training tools are available through the FVAP website. You are encouraged to hold voting information briefings for your volunteers and/or U.S. citizens/voters in your consular district.

b. In addition to on-line training there are voting assistance workshops organized by FVAP employees to help VAOs and voters better understand the entire process.

c. Funding for travel to these workshops should be included in your post's budget. The Chief Voting Action Officer will keep you apprised of the schedule for workshops as they are developed.

7 FAM 1540.2 Building a Network

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a. Initiate outreach programs deemed effective for your post and the local American community. For example:

- Embassy staff and country team meetings
- Welcome packets
- Voter registration drives
- Wardens

- Town hall meetings
- Fourth of July celebration
- Overseas citizens voters' week (even-numbered years)
- Post website
- Prison visits
- Workshops for large companies, overseas schools, study abroad programs, religious institutions and other special interest groups

b. Use organizations' websites and network using voting volunteers in the U. S. citizen community as multipliers to get out the word about voting. Start early to reach remote and unfamiliar first-time voters or those who may be unaware of their right to participate in the voting process.

7 FAM 1540.3 Dissemination of Information

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KEEP AMERICANS APPRISED

See Chapter II of the VAG.

Be aware of registration and voting deadlines. These all vary by state.

See the state by state absentee and voting procedures in Chapter III of the VAG.

You must not provide partisan information on candidates and issues to civilians, military personnel or their family members. 5 U.S.C. 7321-7326 (The Hatch Act)

a. Basically, you have two communities to serve: the official community and the private U.S. citizen community. You may best reach each as follows:

Official Community:

- Country team meetings
- Newsletters
- Bulletin boards
- Staff meetings
- Welcome kit
- E-mail

Private U.S. Citizen Community:

- Warden messages
- Post website
- Media websites
- Embassy monthly newsletter to U.S. citizen community
- Town hall meetings

b. Following are suggestions for developing a Voting Action Plan:

- Create a Voting Calendar and publicize it. Include, for example:
 - Town Hall Meetings
 - Registration Deadlines
 - Primary Elections
 - General Elections
 - Mailing Deadlines for Ballots
- Advise voters to contact the **Voter Information Center** that has toll-free access from many countries for military and civilian personnel. The caller can be transferred directly to the office of his/her elected officials in the U.S. Congress, state Governor and

state Chief Election Official, or speak directly to a FVAP representative.

- Post notices in the ACS unit giving your (VAO) telephone number, E-mail address, hours of availability to the public and upcoming voter outreach efforts.
- Add voting information to your website. In coordination with DOD's FVAP, CA/OCS/ACS, the Department's Bureau of Public Diplomacy and your post's Public Affairs Officer, you may disseminate accurate non-partisan information through the media, community newsletters and post publications to expand global and local voter education outreach efforts.

Repeatedly state that voters should refer to their particular state requirements (e.g., residency requirements, registration forms and ballots) as they vary greatly from state to state and election to election.

- Display posters and calendars, and make available Voting Assistance Guides.
- Because the use of electronic media to transmit registration forms and ballots is changing rapidly, it is best to refer to on-line information frequently for the latest requirements. Update information on your websites by reviewing the FVAP website, the "Voting Information Newsletter," and Voting Information News Releases frequently.