Army Regulation 608–20

Personal Affairs

Army Voting Assistance Program

Headquarters
Department of the Army
Washington, DC
13 November 2020

UNCLASSIFIED

SUMMARY of CHANGE

AR 608–20 Army Voting Assistance Program

This major revision, dated 13 November 2020—

- o Adds responsibilities for the Commanding General, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (para 2–3).
- o Removes responsibilities for the Commander, U.S. Army Installation Management Command (formerly para 2–5).
- o Updates appointment criteria for voting assistance officers (para 3–3).
- o Adds a requirement for voting assistance offices to provide written information on voter registration and absentee ballot procedures (para 3-7d).

*Army Regulation 608-20

Effective 13 December 2020

Personal Affairs

Army Voting Assistance Program

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

JAMES C. MCCONVILLE General, United States Army Chief of Staff

Official:

KATHLEEN S. MILLER Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army

History. This publication is a major revision.

Summary. This revision updates policy, responsibilities, and procedures for Department of Army implementation of the Federal Voting Assistance Program. It also conforms to revised policies in DoDI 1000.04.

Applicability. This regulation applies to the Regular Army, the Army National Guard/Army National Guard of the United States, and the U.S. Army Re-

serves, unless otherwise stated. It also applies to Department of the Army Civilians.

Proponent and exception authority.

The proponent of this regulation is the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1. The proponent has the authority to approve exceptions or waivers to this regulation that are consistent with controlling law and regulations. The proponent may delegate this approval authority, in writing, to a division chief within the proponent agency or a direct reporting unit or field operating agency of the proponent agency in the grade of colonel or the civilian equivalent. Activities may request a waiver to this regulation by providing justification that includes a full analysis of the expected benefits and must include formal review by the activity's senior legal officer. All waiver requests will be endorsed by the commander or senior leader of the requesting activity and forwarded through their higher headquarters to the policy proponent. Refer to AR 25-30 for specific guidance.

Army internal control process. This regulation contains internal control

provisions in accordance with AR 11–2 and identifies key internal controls that must be evaluated (see app B).

Supplementation. Supplementation of this regulation and establishment of command and local forms are prohibited without prior approval from the Deputy Chief of Staff, G–1 (DAPE–MP), 300 Army Pentagon, Washington, DC 20310–0300.

Suggested improvements. Users are invited to send comments and suggested improvements on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to the Commander, U.S. Army Human Resources Command (AHRC–PDP–P), 1600 Spearhead Division Avenue Fort Knox, Kentucky 40122–5408.

Distribution. Distribution of this publication is available in electronic media only and is intended for the Regular Army, the Army National Guard/Army National Guard of the United States, and the U.S. Army Reserve.

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^{*}This regulation supersedes AR 608-20, dated 5 February 2019.

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Glossary

Chapter 1 Introduction

1-1. Purpose

This regulation prescribes policies and procedures for the Army Voting Assistance Program (AVAP). It describes registration, materials, assistance, and information required to encourage Army Soldiers, Department of the Army (DA) Civilians attached to and serving with these components outside the continental United States (OCONUS), and eligible Family members accompanying these Soldiers and DA Civilians to register and vote in primary and general elections.

1-2. References and forms

See appendix A.

1-3. Explanation of abbreviations and terms

See glossary.

1-4. Responsibilities

Responsibilities are listed in chapter 2.

1-5. Records management (recordkeeping) requirements

The records management requirement for all record numbers, associated forms, and reports required by this regulation are addressed in the Army Records Retention Schedule-Army (RRS-A). Detailed information for all related record numbers, forms, and reports are located in ARIMS/RRS-A at https://www.arims.army.mil. If any record numbers, forms, and reports are not current, addressed, and/or published correctly in ARIMS/RRS-A, see DA Pam 25–403 for guidance.

1-6. Program objectives

The objectives of AVAP are to—

- a. Make registration and voting information, materials, and assistance readily available to all eligible Army voters.
- b. Educate eligible Army voters about the importance of voting and provide them every opportunity to register and cast a ballot.

Chapter 2 Responsibilities

2-1. Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1

The DCS, G-1 will—

- a. Provide policy oversight for the management of the AVAP.
- b. Ensure the Commanding General (CG), U.S. Army Human Resources Command—
- (1) Designates an Army Voting Action Officer in the grade of general schedule (GS)-12.
- (2) Provides administrative support, including a website dedicated to AVAP that links directly to the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) website.
- (3) Ensures The Adjutant General serves as the senior Army voting representative (as designated by the Secretary of the Army) and—
 - (a) Manages the AVAP.
- (b) Prepares the implementing instructions for the conduct of the AVAP in accordance with the DoD Voting Action Plan (see https://www.fvap.gov/vao/directives).
- (c) Provides input, as required by the Army Voting Action Officer (AHRC-PDP-P), concerning the status of implementation of the AVAP to senior Army leadership.

2-2. Chief, Army Reserve and Commanding General, U.S. Army Reserve Command

The CAR and CG, USARC will-

- a. Coordinate with the Army Voting Action Officer (AHRC-PDP-P) to maintain a contingency AVAP for Reserve units and personnel who have been activated and deployed, and to support the AVAP efforts as directed by DoDI 1000.04.
 - b. Designate a point of contact at headquarters level.
 - c. Ensure a unit voting assistance officer (VAO) is appointed within each activated unit (see para 3-3).

2-3. Commanding General, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command

- a. The CG, TRADOC will emphasize and advertise voting assistance programs for Servicemembers attending initial entry training (for example, basic training) and command courses.
 - b. On behalf of the CG, TRADOC, the CG, U.S. Army Recruiting Command will—
- (1) Inform all personnel assigned to recruitment offices of the policies in this regulation and are trained to provide voter registration assistance. Resources are available at https://www.eac.gov/voters/register-and-vote-in-your-state and DD Form 2645 (Voter Registration Information) unless the applicant, in writing, declines to register to vote.
- (2) Distribute the National Mail Voter Registration Form to each eligible citizen and provide assistance in completing the form unless the applicant refuses such assistance.
- (3) Provide each eligible citizen or prospective enlistee who does not decline to register to vote the same degree of assistance for the completion of the National Mail Voter Registration Form as is provided by the office for the completion of its own forms (for example, the application for enlistment), unless the person refuses such assistance.
- (4) Transmit all completed registration applications within 5 calendar days to the appropriate state election officials.
- (5) Maintain statistical information and records on voter registration assistance provided by recruitment offices in the format prescribed by the Director, FVAP for a period of 2 years, in accordance with Section 20507, Title 52, United States Code (52 USC 20507(i)).

2-4. Senior commander

Senior commanders will—

- a. Establish an installation voting assistance office on each military installation as outlined in paragraph 3–7, which will serve as a voter registration agency.
- b. Appoint, in writing, an installation voting assistance office to administer and coordinate the voting assistance mission within the commands and Army installations for assigned Soldiers, DA Civilians OCONUS, and their eligible Family members (see para 3–3).
 - c. On behalf of the senior commander, the garrison commanders will—
- (1) Coordinate closely with the installation VAO to coordinate, publicize, and execute the voting assistance mission.
- (2) Provide a fixed location where voting assistance material and assistance can be obtained by all military personnel, DA Civilians overseas, and their eligible Family members, regardless of the sponsor's unit of assignment on the installation.
- (3) Provide voting assistance support to the Soldiers, DA Civilians overseas who are assigned to the garrison organization, and their eligible Family members.

2-5. Commanders at all levels

All commanders will-

- a. Establish a voting assistance program and provide command emphasis and support to the program.
- b. Appoint command action officers and VAO alternates to manage the subordinate command program.
- c. Ensure voting assistance is provided to small and/or geographically separated units within their area of responsibility.
 - d. Assist garrison commanders, ensuring they-
- (1) Coordinate closely with the installation VAO to assist and support the senior commander in the coordination, publicity, and execution of the voting assistance mission.
- (2) Provide a fixed location where voting assistance material and assistance can be obtained by all military personnel, DA Civilians overseas, and their eligible Family members, regardless of the sponsor's unit of assignment on the installation.
- (3) Provide voting assistance support to the Soldiers, DA Civilians overseas who are assigned to the garrison organization, and their eligible Family members.
- e. Provide oversight to company and detachment commanders, ensuring they appoint, in writing, unit VAOs (see para 3–3).

- f. Submit recurring reports and provide information and input as required by the Army Voting Action Officer (AHRC–PDP–P). (See details from implementing instructions at https://www.hrc.army.mil/content/army%20voting under Memorandums.) Report Soldier training and/or contact data semi-annually.
 - g. Ensure clear channels of communication are established throughout the command down to unit level.
- h. Direct internal information media to publicize all aspects of the voting information program in a timely and effective manner.
- *i.* Maintain a list of all subordinate VAOs and their designated alternates. Update and forward the list, as requested, to the Commander, U.S. Human Resources Command, Army Voting Action Officer (AHRC–PDP–P), 1600 Spearhead Division Avenue, Fort Knox, KY 40122–5408.
 - *j.* Comply with the additional responsibilities listed in paragraph 3–4*a*.

Chapter 3 Program

3-1. Program goals

The primary goal of the AVAP is to actively assist Soldiers and other eligible individuals to register and vote without violating statute or regulation. VAOs should obtain assistance from the servicing staff judge advocate (SJA)'s office. VAOs will comply with the following prohibitions:

- a. By-name accounting or tracking of registration or voting decisions is not authorized. Do not use lists to keep account of Soldiers' decisions regarding registration and voting. Reporting requires only numbers indicating Soldier participation in the AVAP, regardless of whether they choose to register or vote later.
- b. In accordance with AR 360–1, senior commanders will not permit the use of installation facilities by any candidate (either incumbents or new office seekers) or members of their staffs and campaign representatives for political assemblies or meetings, media events, fund-raising dinners, parties or social events, causes, press conferences, or similar activities, regardless of the sponsor. If a current government official who is also a candidate is visiting the installation for an official purpose, senior commanders will coordinate with the local public affairs office for guidance.
- c. Senior commanders will decline requests for military support from the installation to any event that may imply DA association with any partisan political group or cause.
- d. Unit VAOs will not engage in or support any activities that could be interpreted as associating DA with political causes or candidates.
- e. All persons assisting in the voting process will take all necessary steps to prevent discrimination, fraud, intimidation or coercion, and unfair registration and voting assistance procedures. This includes, but is not limited to, preventing actions such as:
- (1) Using military authority to influence the vote of any other member of the uniformed services or to require any member to march to the polling place or place of voting as proscribed by 18 USC 592, 18 USC 593, and 18 USC 609.
- (2) This regulation does not in any way prohibit free discussion about political issues or candidates for public office discussed in 18 USC 592, 18 USC 593, 18 USC 596, 18 USC 607, 18 USC 608, and 18 USC 609. For additional guidance on this issue, contact the servicing SJA office.

3-2. Voting assistance officer restrictions

- a. Unit VAOs must be aware that the kind of voting literature that may be distributed is very limited.
- (1) DoDD 1344.10 prohibits active duty personnel while in uniform from distributing any campaign literature, whether partisan or not. Active duty personnel will only distribute information relating to the process of registering to vote (that is, the Voting Assistance Guide, SF 76 (Voter Registration and Absentee Ballot Request: Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)), and SF 186 (Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB))).
- (2) Neither DoD nor DA is authorized to collect or distribute voting information of a partisan nature. Soldiers, overseas DA Civilians, and their eligible Family members must obtain this type of information from their local election office. Much of this information may be obtained from the DoD Voting Information Center at 1–800–438–VOTE (8683). Toll-free telephone numbers are listed by country on the FVAP website (http://www.fvap.gov).
- b. VAOs will not contact state or local officials or agencies about voting matters. They should contact the Army Voting Action Officer (AHRC–PDP–P) for assistance.
- c. No one may conduct any poll among members of the U.S. Armed Forces concerning their choices or votes for any candidates (see 18 USC 596). This restriction applies—
 - (1) To written or oral polls.
 - (2) Before or after members vote.
 - (3) Inside or outside the United States.

(4) To Regular Army Soldiers and Reserve Component Soldiers on active duty are required to adhere to the policies in DoDD 1344.10 and AR 600–20. DA Civilian employees must comply with the limitations on political activity in Part 734, Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (5 CFR 734) and DoD 5500.07–R, chapter 6.

3-3. Appointment of voting assistance officers

- a. VAOs must be appointed, in writing, at each level of command. The VAO at the company and detachment command level must assist voters in all units with 50 or more permanently assigned Servicemembers. (Appoint an additional VAO for each 75 assigned Servicemembers above the 50-Servicemember base).
- b. Each level of command maintains a listing of all VAOs and alternates and provides the listing to the Army Voting Action Officer (AHRC–PDP–P) as directed. The listing must include the following:
 - (1) Grade or title.
 - (2) Name.
 - (3) Email.
 - (4) Telephone and fax numbers (commercial and defense switched network (DSN)).
- (5) Completion date of FVAP voting assistance online training that must be completed within 30 days of appointment.

3-4. Program responsibilities

- a. In addition to the responsibilities outlined in paragraph 2–5, all commanders will—
- (1) Designate a day(s) to emphasize voting registration and support the week designated as Armed Forces Voters Week and Absentee Voting Week as established by the AVAP.
- (2) Ensure that nonpartisan offers to assist in the installation's voting assistance program from on-post private organizations are accepted, where appropriate, and integrated into the installation's voting assistance program.
- (3) Coordinate with the servicing SJA so that the conduct of the voting assistance program remains within the limits of law and policy.
- (4) Provide voting assistance to activated Soldiers of the Army National Guard and Army Reserve when they are serving within their subordinate commands inside or outside the continental United States.
 - (5) Ensure 100 percent of assigned personnel are contacted and informed on, at a minimum, the following:
 - (a) The name of unit VAO(s).
 - (b) Contact information for the VAO(s).
 - (c) Available voting materials and their location.
 - (d) Public Law 99–410 (also known as the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act) entitlements.
- b. Unit VAOs at all levels will be responsible for all aspects of the voting assistance program in the unit. The individuals appointed as unit VAO will—
 - (1) Be readily available and equipped to give personal aid to voters for federal, state, and local elections.
- (2) Ensure that delivery of the SF 76 is done in an informational, not coercive way. Provide SF 76 to Soldiers who want them; avoid the appearance of coercing Soldiers to use them.
- (3) Encourage access to the FVAP website (http://www.fvap.gov) for all voting materials and information. All states accept the online version of the SF 186 on the FVAP website.
- (4) Provide input, as required by the Army Voting Action Officer (AHRC–PDP–P), concerning the status of implementation of the voting assistance program to senior Army leadership through the respective chain of command to the Army Voting Action Officer (AHRC–PDP–P).

3-5. Ballot materials

SF 76 will be used to notify local election officials of the change of mailing address for absentee ballot delivery purposes.

3-6. Polls, ballots, or straw votes

DA may conduct surveys for statistical data needed to measure voting participation by DA personnel. No other poll, ballot, straw vote, or opinion research will be permitted among DA personnel unless specifically authorized by Headquarters, DA (see 18 USC 596).

3-7. Installation voting assistance offices

a. The installation voting assistance office will be established within the installation headquarters reporting directly to the senior commander, even if geographically located in another office.

- b. The installation voting assistance office will be included in the administrative in-processing and out-processing activities of reporting and detaching personnel.
- c. Uniformed services members, their voting-age dependents, and overseas DoD civilians will be provided proper voting assistance at the installation voter assistance office, including the opportunity to update their voter registration information through the submission of the revised SF 76 or National Mail Voter Registration Form.
- d. The installation voting assistance office will provide written information on voter registration and absentee ballot procedures. This can be met by providing the applicant with the SF 76, SF 186 (if applicable), or the National Mail Registration Form; the attached instructions for these forms; and the state-specific instructions from the Voting Assistance Guide (available at http://www.fvap.gov) for absent uniformed services voters, voting-age dependent voters, and overseas citizens. Citizens may also be provided with all the necessary resources including, but not limited to, access to a computer system connected to the internet, a printer, and a scanner to use the federal post card application wizard available at the FVAP website www.fvap.gov.
- e. The installation voting assistance office will provide voting assistance to all personnel, military and civilian, reporting for duty on the installation, detaching from duty station, deploying, and returning from deployment of 6 months or longer.
- f. Advise a member of a uniformed service who is released from active duty to notify their local election office that they are no longer covered under the provisions of 52 USC Chapter 203, and provide the Servicemember concerned with an opportunity to submit a National Mail Voter Registration Form.
- g. The installation voting assistance office will provide direct assistance to individuals in completing the forms necessary to register to vote, update their voter registration information, and request absentee ballots.
- h. The installation voting assistance office will collect from the voter and transmit the completed SF 76 or National Mail Voter Registration Form for the applicant, within 5 calendar days, to the appropriate local election official. (Encourage voters to transmit their own ballots to the post office).
- *i.* The installation voting assistance office will, to the greatest extent practicable, ensure voters who are eligible to cast absentee ballots to DoD facilities are able to do so in a private and independent manner.
- *j*. The installation voting assistance office will maintain voting program metrics as coordinated with and prescribed by the Director, FVAP and furnish a report, via their service voting action officer, to the Director, FVAP each calendar quarter as requested.
- k. Installation voting assistance offices will be designated in writing to serve as voter registration agencies under 52 USC 20506(a)(2).
- *l.* The installation voting assistance office should be located in a well-advertised, fixed location and should be physically co-located with an existing office that receives extensive visits by Service personnel, Family members, and DoD civilians. It will be staffed during the hours the installation office is open with personnel trained to provide direct assistance in registration and voting procedures, including the assistance required under 52 USC 20501.
- m. The National Mail Voter Registration Form will be provided to federal civilian employees and other U.S. citizens who have access to the installation voter assistance office within the United States, and to uniformed services voters who currently reside in their voting districts.

Appendix A

References

Section I

Required Publications

AR 600-20

Army Command Policy (Cited in para 3-2c(4).)

Section II

Related Publications

A related publication is a source of additional information. The user does not have to read a related reference to understand this publication. Unless otherwise indicated, DA publications are available on the Army Publishing Directorate website (https://armypubs.army.mil). DoD publications are available on the Executive Services Directorate website (https://www.esd.whs.mil/dd/). USC material is available at https://uscode.house.gov/.

AR 11-2

Managers' Internal Control Program

AR 25-30

Army Publishing Program

AR 360-1

The Army Public Affairs Program

AR 623-3

Evaluation Reporting System

DA Pam 25-403

Guide to Recordkeeping in the Army

DoD 5500.07-R

Joint Ethics Regulation (JER)

DoDD 1344.10

Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces

DoDI 1000.04

Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)

Public Law 99-410

Registration and Voting by Absent Uniformed Services Voters and Overseas Voters in Elections for Federal Office (also known as the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (Available at $\frac{1}{100} \frac{1}{100} \frac{1}{1$

Voting Assistance Guide

(Available at http://www.fvap.gov.)

5 CFR 734

Political Activities of Federal Employees (Available at https://www.ecfr.gov/.)

10 USC 1566

Voting assistance: compliance assessments

18 USC 592

Troops at polls

18 USC 593

Interference by armed forces

18 USC 596

Polling armed forces

18 USC 607

Place of solicitation

18 USC 608

Absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters

18 USC 609

Use of military authority to influence vote of member of Armed Forces

52 USC Chapter 203

Registration and Voting by Absent Uniformed Services Voters and Overseas Voters in Elections for Federal Office

52 USC 20501

Findings and purposes

52 USC 20506

Voter registration agencies

52 USC 20507

Requirements with respect to administration of voter registration

Section III

Prescribed Forms

This section contains no entries.

Section IV

Referenced Forms

Unless otherwise indicated, DA forms are available on the Army Publishing Directorate website (https://armypubs.army.mil/). DD forms are available on the Executive Services Directorate website (https://www.esd.whs.mil/directives/forms/). Standard forms are available on the General Services Administration website (https://www.gsa.gov/reference/forms).

DA Form 11-2

Internal Control Evaluation Certification

DA Form 2028

Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms

DD Form 2645

Voter Registration Information

National Mail Voter Registration Form

(Available at https://www.eac.gov/voters/national-mail-voter-registration-form/.) (Prescribed in para 2–3b(2).)

SF 76

Voter Registration and Absentee Ballot Request: Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) (Prescribed in para 3–2a(1).)

SF 186

Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) (Prescribed in para 3–2a(1).)

Appendix B

Internal Control Evaluation

B-1. Function

The function covered by this evaluation is the administration of the AVAP.

B-2. Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to assist assessable unit managers, internal control administrators, and test control officers in evaluating the key internal controls outlined. It is intended as a guide and does not cover all controls.

B-3. Instructions

Answers must be based on the actual testing of key internal controls (for example, document analysis, direct observation, sampling, simulation, or other). Answers that indicate deficiencies must be explained and the corrective action indicated in supporting documentation. These key internal controls must be formally evaluated at least once every 5 years or whenever the internal control administrator changes. Certification that this evaluation has been conducted must be accomplished on DA Form 11–2 (Internal Control Evaluation Certification).

B-4. Test questions

- a. Are all unit VAOs and installation VAOs (and alternates) posting their name, office telephone numbers, and email address in a consolidated, well-advertised, fixed location on the installation?
- b. Are registration and voting information, materials, and assistance made readily available by the unit VAOs and the installation voting assistance office to all eligible Army voters?
- c. Are eligible voters educated on the importance of voting and provided every opportunity to register and cast their ballot?

B-5. Supersession

This is internal control evaluation replaces the evaluation previously published in AR 608–20, dated 5 February 2019.

B-6. Comments

Help make this a better tool for evaluating management controls. Submit comments to Commander, U.S. Army Human Resources Command (AHRC–PDP–P), 1600 Spearhead Division Avenue, Department 470, Fort Knox, KY 40122–5408.

Glossary

Section I

Abbreviations

AR

Army regulation

AVAP

Army Voting Assistance Program

CAR

Chief, Army Reserve

CG

commanding general

DA

Department of the Army

DCS

Deputy Chief of Staff

DD Form

Department of Defense form

$D^{\nu}D$

Department of Defense

FVAP

Federal Voting Assistance Program

OCONUS

outside the continental United States

SF

standard form

SJA

staff judge advocate

TRADOC

U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command

USARC

U.S. Army Reserve Command

USC

United States Code

VAO

voting assistance officer

Section II

Terms

Absent uniformed services voter (Army)

A Soldier on active duty or his or her Family members who, by reason of the Soldier's active duty, are absent from the place of residence where they are otherwise qualified to vote.

Federal office election

Any general, special, or primary election held to select, nominate, or elect any candidate for:

- a. President, Vice President, or presidential elector.
- b. The U.S. Senate or House of Representatives.
- c. Resident Commissioner to Congress.

Installation voting assistance office

The office designated by the senior commander to provide voter assistance to military personnel, voting-age military Family members, government employees, contractors, and other civilian U.S. citizens with access to the installation.

Installation voting assistance officer

An individual responsible for voting assistance coordination at the installation level.

Local election

An election at a lower level than a state election, such as a municipal, county, or township election.

Poll

Any request for information regarding the content of an individual's vote.

Recruitment offices of the military services

Any office of a military service open to the public and engaged in the recruitment of persons for the appointment or enlistment in an Active Component of the military services. This does not include Army National Guard or Air National Guard recruiting offices.

State election

Any general, special, or primary election held to select, nominate, or elect any candidate for any state office. Examples of such offices are governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general.

Voter

A person in one of the following categories who is authorized by law to vote and is registered to vote in a primary, special, or general election:

- a. Members of the Armed Forces while in active service, and their Family members, wherever stationed.
- b. Other U.S. citizens residing outside the United States.

Voting assistance officer

An individual responsible for voting assistance.