

**MILITARY HEROES INITIATIVE**

**GRANT # E4064914**

**U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION**

**TASK 1 REPORT**

**ASSESSMENT OF VOTING SUPPORT SERVICES FOR INJURED SERVICE MEMBERS**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Military Heroes Initiative (MHI) is a research project with the objective of identifying potential ways to improve the accessibility of the voting process by assisting military service members who have sustained disabling injuries in the Global War on Terrorism. The MHI target population consists of retired service members with a disability evaluation rating of 30% or greater. In particular, this research focuses on the subset of this population whose disabilities interfere with the independent performance of the tasks associated with voting.

This report documents baseline research on election administration practices associated with accessible voting and the voting assistance services available to the study population. This research begins at the time when wounded military service members are beginning the transition process from active duty service to re-integration into civilian life as disabled veterans. The voting assistance services provided by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs are described. A brief summary of relevant legislation is provided. This is followed by an overview of voter registration and voting procedures and the types of accommodations currently available for disabled voters under state election procedures. Practices in the State of Georgia are summarized as a case study example.

The report concludes with a set of preliminary recommendations for state election offices, the Veterans Affairs, and the Election Assistance Commission. Appendix E also includes a set of findings of opportunities to improve information and services provided to military service members that are transitioning to civilian life. These findings have been transmitted to the Departments of Defense. These preliminary recommendations and findings will be analyzed in conjunction with research results from other tasks to develop a final set of recommendations, which will be documented in a later report.

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Background**

In September 2010 the U.S. Election Assistance Commission selected the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF) as the recipient of the Military Heroes Initiative (MHI) research grant. ITIF is a non-partisan, non-profit think tank whose mission is to formulate and promote public policies to advance technological innovation and productivity. ITIF publishes policy reports, holds forums and policy debates, advises elected officials and their staff, and is an active resource for the media. ITIF has partnered with Operation BRAVO Foundation, a pioneer in developing voting alternatives for military and overseas citizens; and the Georgia Tech Research Institute, a global leader in universal design and evaluation of information technology and consumer products.

The purpose of this research grant is to identify potential ways to improve voting technology and processes for military service members who have sustained disabling injuries in combat operations since 2001. As of July 2012, more than 49,000 U.S. service members have been wounded in action in the Global War on Terrorism. Many of these personnel have sustained permanently disabling injuries, including loss of multiple limbs, loss of sight, and traumatic brain injury. In addition, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is increasingly being diagnosed in military personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. While not appearing as an overt physical injury, psychological trauma can be very debilitating, with symptoms that can significantly affect the ability to perform voting tasks.

From the perspective of voting participation, there are both personal and systemic challenges for this population:

- existence of a variety of disability conditions which pose barriers to independently performing the tasks associated with registration and voting;
- absence from their place of voting residence;
- transience due to multiple transfers among treatment and rehabilitation facilities, which makes it difficult for their election office to know where to contact them;
- different forms and voting procedures for active duty military and civilian voters; and
- disparity in technology tools available for active duty military and civilian voters.

In October 2010 the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) and the Office of Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy in the Department of Defense launched a related research project, the Wounded Warrior Initiative (WWI). Some of the WWI research pertaining to the examination of voting assistance services provided by the Department of Defense is similar in scope to the Military Heroes Initiative (MHI). To avoid duplication of effort, it was decided that the WWI project would focus on voting assistance services provided to wounded military personnel while they were in active duty status. The MHI research would begin at the time these personnel were transitioning from active duty to civilian status and continue through their re-integration into civilian life.

## **1.2 Definition of MHI Target Population**

The MHI target population consists of retired service members with a physical disability evaluation rating of 30% or greater as a result of injuries or illness incurred in the line of duty in support of overseas

contingency operations in the Global War on Terrorism, designated as beginning in October 2001. In particular, this research focuses on the subset of this population whose disabilities interfere with the independent performance of tasks associated with voting. The overwhelming majority of these service members were wounded in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF).

As reported in the Global War on Terrorism Casualty Report periodically compiled by the Defense Manpower Data Center, there were 45,588 Wounded In Action (WIA) casualties of all types in OEF/OIF and Operation New Dawn as of August 15, 2011. As of August 1, 2011, 29,557 WIAs were caused by explosive devices. The breakdown of total WIAs by Service (including Guard and Reserve components) and active and retired status is as follows:

**Table 1: Global War on Terrorism Casualties by Military Service**

	All WIA Casualties
Army	31,467
Marines	12,484
Navy	897
Air Force	740
TOTAL	45,588

Source: Department of Defense Statistical Information Analysis Division,  
<http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/castop.htm>

The target population of this study is a subset of the total population that will ultimately benefit from this research. Veterans from previous and future conflicts with similar disabling conditions will also be affected, as well as disabled voters in the general population.

### **1.3 Purpose and Scope of this Report**

This report documents the research results from Task 1 of the research project: the assessment of voting support services for injured service members. The objective of this task is to document the baseline of current processes and resources already in place to promote voting awareness, voter registration and voting participation by the target population; to identify potential intervention points where voting assistance services might be offered; and to evaluate the need for additional support services or modified election administration procedures. The principal entities examined are the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and state election practices.

The research traces the injured service member's path through the Department of Defense (DoD) medical care and treatment process from the time of injury until their discharge from active duty and return to civilian life. The voting assistance services provided by DoD are examined for the period during which these injured service members are in transition from active duty to being medically discharged. Once discharged, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides medical treatment and other support services to many injured service members who have returned to civilian status. The report

describes the voting assistance services provided by the VA and the state election practices that apply to these personnel.

While very important as a means of reaching the target population, the voting assistance activities of DoD, VA and other agencies are only supplements to the work of state and local election offices. State laws and administrative procedures prescribe the manner in which election administration is conducted in each state. The ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all eligible voters are able to register and vote lies with these agencies who administer elections.

A change in voting procedures takes place when a recently injured service member returns to civilian life. While on active duty, he or she can utilize the special UOCAVA procedures established to accommodate the voting circumstances of military service. When he or she leaves active duty, UOCAVA procedures are replaced by procedures that apply to domestic civilian voters. Many states provide special accommodations for voters with disabilities. It is important to understand these differences for voting assistance purposes because different forms and procedures come into play. All of these forms and procedures are examined in this report.

## **1.4 Overview of Report**

Section 1 of the report introduces the project and its objectives, defines the target research population and describes the scope of the report. Section 2 provides a brief overview of relevant federal and state laws pertaining to the accessibility of the voting process for the study population.

Section 3 describes and compares voter registration and voting processes for UOCAVA and domestic voters. Election practices in the State of Georgia are provided as illustrations. This section includes a national overview of state accessible voting practices based on an analysis of information provided on state election office websites.

Section 4 describes the transit of injured service members through the multiple stages of military medical treatment and rehabilitation, disability evaluation and eventual transition to civilian life and potentially Veterans Affairs care.

Section 5 provides an overview of the voting assistance services provided to the target population by federal agencies, the State of Georgia and the National Association of Secretaries of State.

Section 6 presents recommendations for election administration practices and the delivery of voting assistance services that could make voting participation more accessible for the target population. Additional findings applicable to the target population are in Appendix E.

## **2 LEGISLATIVE MANDATES**

The Elections Clause of the U.S. Constitution (Article I, Section 4, Clause 1) allocates authority for federal elections to both the states and the federal government: “The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of

chusing Senators.” Historically, the states have exercised primary responsibility for prescribing the rules, practices and procedures for the conduct of elections. While from time to time the Congress has enacted legislation overriding state election procedures, the states continue to have the dominant role.

One aspect of elections reserved to the states under Article I, Section 2 and the Seventeenth Amendment, is the authority to set voter eligibility requirements. Several Constitutional amendments have extended the right to vote to groups previously disenfranchised due to race, gender or age and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 provides enforcement of these provisions. So the questions of who is eligible to vote and the manner in which they may vote are addressed by both state and federal requirements.

## **2.1 Federal Legislation**

From time to time federal statutes have been enacted to address particular voting issues of national import. Several of these are relevant to the subject matter of this study:

- The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) of 1986, as amended by the Military and Overseas Voters Empowerment Act (MOVE) of 2009
- The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993
- The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990
- Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984

The provisions of these laws that are relevant to this research are summarized below.

### ***2.1.1 The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) of 1986***

This Act protects the right to vote for federal offices by active duty members of the U.S. uniformed services and the merchant marine and their spouses and dependents. UOCAVA provisions apply when these voters, by reason of being on active duty, are absent from the place of residence where they are otherwise qualified to vote, which includes duty stations in the U.S. It also applies to U.S. civilians when they are residing outside of the United States.

UOCAVA requires states to allow these citizens to use absentee registration procedures and to vote by absentee ballot in federal elections. It prescribes a standard federal form, the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), which serves the dual purpose of being both a voter registration application and an absentee ballot request. States are required to accept this form from UOCAVA citizens. These citizens can also use their state’s voter registration and absentee ballot request forms if they choose. The Act also provides for a standard fail-safe ballot, the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB), for use in the event the state absentee ballot does not reach the voter in time. States are required to accept and count these ballots in appropriate circumstances.

The Secretary of Defense is the executive agent for this Act, and the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) administers the law on behalf of the Secretary. The FVAP has an active program to inform UOCAVA citizens of their right to vote, to foster their voting participation and to protect the integrity of the electoral process. Program activities include production and worldwide distribution of print, broadcast and electronic voter education and information services; provision of automated tools on



their website to assist with the completion of the FPCA and the FWAB; and the development of training materials for a worldwide network of military members, government employees and volunteers who serve as Voting Assistance Officers who provide personal assistance to UOCAVA voters. FVAP also operates an Electronic Transmission Service to facilitate the delivery of election materials from local election offices to UOCAVA voters worldwide.

### ***2.1.2 The Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act (MOVE) of 2009***

The MOVE Act makes a number of significant amendments to UOCAVA. It cites the Congressional finding that due to logistical, geographical, operational and environmental barriers, UOCAVA voters are burdened by many obstacles that impact their right to vote and register to vote, the most critical of which include problems transmitting balloting materials and not having enough time to vote.

To address these barriers the Act requires states to provide UOCAVA voters the option of at least one electronic method for requesting and receiving voter registration applications and absentee ballot requests, and for receiving blank ballots. States are also required to transmit requested absentee ballots not later than 45 days before an election to allow more time for voters to receive and return their ballots. They must develop a free access system to enable UOCAVA voters to determine if their ballots were received by the appropriate election office.

The Act requires FVAP to maintain an on-line repository of state contact information; to develop an online tool to generate the appropriate list of federal candidates for completing the FWAB, based on voting residence or other identifying information; and to develop an online information portal to inform UOCAVA voters. The Military Departments are directed to designate a voter registration agency on each military installation in conformance with section 7(a)(2) of the National Voter Registration Act (see below). These Installation Voting Assistance Offices are to be included as a standard part of the administrative in-processing of personnel.

### ***2.1.3 The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993***

One of the principal purposes of the National Voter Registration Act is to establish national procedures to increase the number of eligible citizens who register to vote in federal elections. The Act requires each state to include a voter registration form as part of the application for a motor vehicle driver's license. If an applicant chooses to complete the voter registration form the motor vehicle authority must transmit it to the appropriate election official within 10 days. The Act prescribes a standard federal form to be used for this purpose, the National Voter Registration Form (NVRF).

In addition, states are required to designate additional voter registration agencies in all offices providing public assistance, all offices providing services to persons with disabilities and other offices. Each voter registration agency is charged with distributing registration forms; assisting applicants in completing the forms, if desired; and accepting completed forms for transmittal to the appropriate election office. All Armed Forces recruitment offices are also designated as voter registration agencies. Federal government organizations and nongovernmental entities are encouraged to cooperate with the states in designating voter registration agencies.

The Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is responsible for prescribing regulations for this Act, developing the voter registration application form and informing the states regarding their responsibilities. The EAC provides the National Voter Registration Form on its website along with the state-specific instructions for completing and submitting the form.

#### ***2.1.4 The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002***

The portion of the Help America Vote Act relevant to this study is Title III – Uniform and Nondiscriminatory Election Technology and Administration Requirements, Section 301 (a)(3) Accessibility for Individuals With Disabilities, which requires voting systems to “be accessible for individuals with disabilities, including nonvisual accessibility for the blind and visually impaired, in a manner that provides the same opportunity for access and participation (including privacy and independence) as for other voters.” Each polling place is required to provide at least one voting system that is equipped for individuals with disabilities.

#### ***2.1.5 The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990***

While the Act itself is not specific to voting, the ADA is pertinent because it requires state and local governments to provide people with disabilities equal opportunity to benefit from all government provided programs, services and activities, including voting. The Department of Justice has developed guidance for polling place accessibility and standards for accessible design to assist election officials and voting system developers in meeting these requirements.

#### ***2.1.6 Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984***

This Act requires states to provide accessible registration facilities and polling places. It also provides for alternatives to in person registration such as registration by mail.

### **2.2 State Legislation**

As noted above, elections are subject to both federal and state laws. State legislation provides the specific requirements and guidance for how elections are administered to implement both federal and state policies. There is considerable variation in election practices around the country, so no one state can be said to represent the national picture. The State of Georgia had a particular interest in taking part in this research effort and so is being used as a case study and model for the development of a pilot project. An overview of Georgia election administration practices is documented in a separate report.

## **3 ELECTION ADMINISTRATION PRACTICES**

This section presents a high level overview of voter registration and voting procedures. There are basically two parallel tracks: 1) the domestic voting procedures applicable to the civilian population in the U.S., and 2) the procedures prescribed to accommodate the special circumstances of uniformed services members and citizens living overseas, established pursuant to the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). The specific target study population consists of transitioning and retired military service members, so the overseas citizens aspect of UOCAVA is not addressed.

The principal focus of this research is on the voting assistance services and election administration practices that apply after the target population has returned to civilian life and is no longer eligible to

utilize UOCAVA procedures. Nevertheless, the UOCAVA procedures are relevant for consideration for several reasons:

- 1) The study target population was subject to UOCAVA procedures from the time they entered military service and continuing through their medical treatment and rehabilitation process. If they were voting, these are the procedures they would be familiar with – their baseline expectation.
- 2) The Department of Defense has developed voting assistance procedures and tools for military voters that could be used as a model to develop similar aids for disabled veterans.
- 3) A defining characteristic of a UOCAVA voter is his or her inability, due to geographic distance, to travel to a polling place to vote in person. Some severely disabled veterans similarly encounter barriers in getting to a polling place. They may face additional challenges related to interaction with the instrumentalities of voting, e.g., voting devices, paper ballots. Some of the technology alternatives developed to assist UOCAVA voters overcome the barrier of geographic separation may also be useful for disabled veterans.

Practices in the State of Georgia are provided as illustrations, but should not be interpreted as completely representative of practices elsewhere. There is a great deal of variability in election administration practices from state to state, which makes it difficult to draw broad generalizations.

### **3.1 Voter Registration Procedures**

Without getting into the legal definition of what constitutes voting residence in the various states, in general it can be said that U.S. citizens are eligible to register to vote in the state where they have their principal residence. If they decide to move to another state, they have to register again in that location. Only the state of North Dakota does not require voters to register. Unlike private citizens who can choose where they live, military service members are ordered by the government to move to specified locations and to relocate as often as required. They may reside in many different places in the U.S. as well as abroad over the course of their careers. If they are relocated within the U.S. and can fulfill the new state's residency criteria, they have the option of registering there and voting in that jurisdiction, just as civilian voters do. However, since they have not moved by choice and may be stationed there less than two years, they may prefer to continue voting in the jurisdiction they consider their home. Under the provisions of UOCAVA, states are required to allow these voters to vote absentee in the same jurisdiction for the duration of their military career.

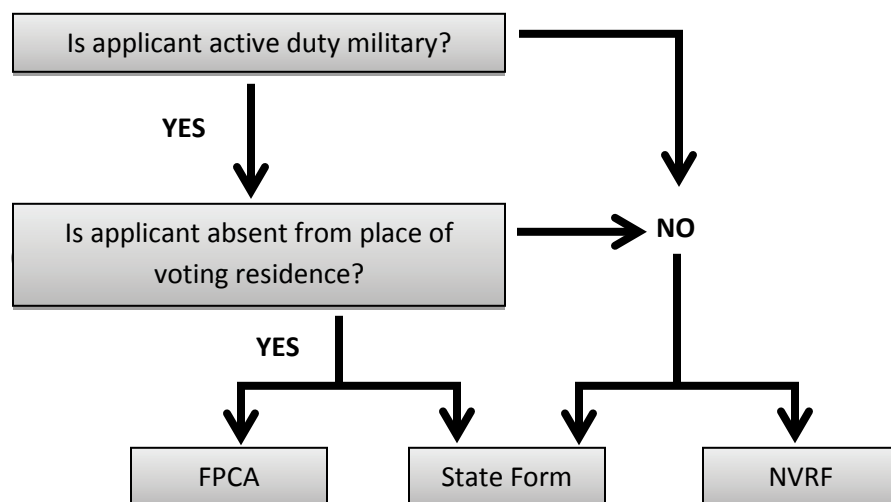
To facilitate this process, a standard federal form, the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) was created. All the states are required to accept and process the FPCA as a combined voter registration application and absentee ballot request for UOCAVA voters. Each state also has its own voter registration and absentee ballot request forms that all voters can use, including UOCAVA voters. In addition, there is another standard federal form that can be used by civilian voters in any state to register, the National Voter Registration Form (NVRF). This form was created pursuant to the National Voter Registration Act.

The figure below illustrates the decision process for determining which application form to use for citizens living within the U.S. Under UOCAVA, any citizen living abroad, whether military or civilian, may

use the FPCA. Only absentee military service members are eligible to use this form while residing in the U.S. So, the first question is whether the person is on active military duty or a dependent of a person on active duty. If they are not active duty, e.g., a non-mobilized member of the Guard or Reserve or a civilian, they must use either their state's form or the NVRF.

If they are active duty military, a second question must be answered – whether they are absent from their place of voting residence. If they are not, they must use either their state's form or the NVRF. As a general rule, any person currently residing in the jurisdiction where they are eligible to vote is expected to vote in person. There are some exceptions, such as Oregon and Washington, where elections are entirely or mostly conducted by mail. If the active duty person is residing in another jurisdiction, they may use either the FPCA or their state's form. Since the FPCA serves as a simultaneous voter registration application and absentee ballot request, it is the preferred form for use by active duty military.

**Figure 1: Choosing the Appropriate Registration Form for Citizens Living in the U.S.**



Copies of an FPCA, an NVRF and a State of Georgia Application for Voter Registration are provided in Appendices A, B and C respectively. A comparison indicates that many of the basic information elements requested are nearly identical, as summarized in the list below. This is attributable to the voter registration purpose that all these forms serve:

- Name
- Residence address
- Mailing address (if different from residence address)
- Telephone number (may be optional)
- Email address (may be optional)
- Date of birth
- Gender/race/ethnicity (optional in many states)
- Voter identification

- Social Security Number (may be partial)
- Political party preference (optional in many states)
- Affirmation of various facts pertaining to voter qualifications; e.g., applicant is a U.S. citizen, will be 18 years of age by election day, is eligible to vote in the specified jurisdiction, is not registering in any other jurisdiction, is not serving a sentence for a felony conviction, has not been declared mentally incompetent
- Acknowledgement that knowingly providing false information constitutes grounds for conviction of perjury

There are also significant differences in the content of the forms. As noted above, the FPCA serves the dual purpose of voter registration and absentee ballot request. Consequently it includes several information elements pertaining to absentee ballot eligibility and delivery that the other two forms do not. For example, the applicant is required to designate whether they are an active duty uniformed services member or a U.S. citizen living abroad temporarily or indefinitely. Military voters have the option of receiving their ballot by mail or electronically so there is a space to record this preference.

The NVRF is used solely for the purpose of voter registration. Since it is a federal form that can be used by any U.S. citizen in any state, the NVRF is standardized on the information elements most commonly used for the determination of voter eligibility. State forms may contain additional information elements. “County” is an important data field on the Georgia form because registration applications are processed at the local level. Since the NVRF does not contain this field, it requires the additional processing step of identifying the county where the applicant resides so the form can be forwarded to the appropriate jurisdiction. The Georgia form also includes a space for applicants to supply an email address.

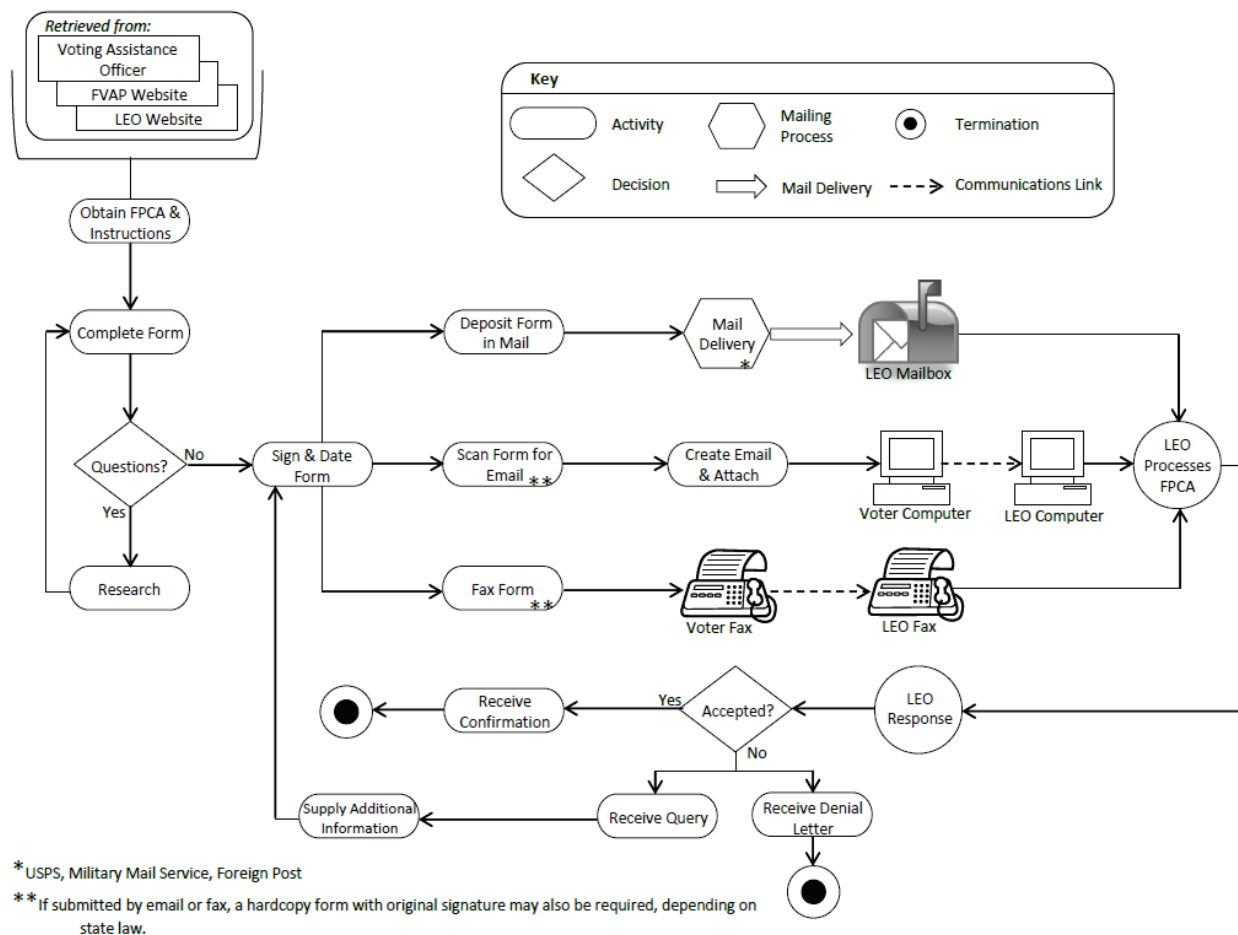
The Georgia state form is more user friendly for voters than the NVRF. The instructions are on a single page adjacent to the form making them easy to follow. The paper version incorporates a pocket to securely enclose the identification document required when a first time applicant mails in the form. The state website provides an automated assistant to complete the application online. In addition to guiding the applicant through the form, it automatically fills in the mailing address for the correct jurisdiction. The NVRF is only available online, but no automated assistance is available. The applicant has to page back and forth between the form and the instructions for his state.

Figure 2 shows the process for submitting an FPCA.<sup>1</sup> The form and the instructions for completing it can be obtained from a Voting Assistance Officer assigned to an installation or unit or directly from the FVAP website. It is also often available on state and local election office websites. Another source is the Overseas Vote Foundation website ([overseasvotefoundation.org](http://overseasvotefoundation.org)).

The instructions for completing the form and the timeline and methods for returning it vary somewhat from state to state. FVAP publishes a Voting Assistance Guide that documents each state’s requirements. This information is updated for every federal election cycle. FVAP also provides an FPCA wizard on their website which brings up the appropriate state requirements to make it easier to fill out the form. The completed form must be printed, signed and dated. As shown in the diagram, it can be returned by mail, as an email attachment or by fax, depending on state law. Each state is required by the

MOVE Act to provide at least one method of electronic return to expedite delivery. As noted in the diagram, some states require a signed original to be returned by mail in addition to the electronic version. This is to obtain an original signature for voter identification.

**Figure 2: Prepare & Submit Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)**



The FPCA serves multiple functions: an application to register to vote; a form to update voter registration information, such as a name or mailing address change; and an absentee ballot request. When the local election official (LEO) receives an FPCA it is time-stamped to record the date and time to provide verification that the submission deadline was met. Then the name is checked against the voter registration list to see if the person is already registered. If a record exists and the signatures match, the voter's record is updated with any changed information. If the form is received by the specified deadline, the voter's record is flagged to receive an absentee ballot for the next election.

If no record exists, the information in the application is verified to determine if the applicant qualifies to vote in the jurisdiction. In particular, HAVA requires the driver's license number and/or the last four digits of the social security number to be validated against the databases of the state motor vehicle authority and/or the Social Security Administration. If the applicant meets the voter qualification requirements, a new voter record is added to the voter list. A confirmation notice, typically a voter

registration card, is sent to the voter to indicate his application was approved. Many states also provide a registration status feature on their elections website that voters can check. If the application is denied, a letter is sent giving the reason for the denial. The LEO also may contact the applicant to request additional information to enable them to complete the processing of the application. Once their application is approved, no other action is required by the voter to receive an absentee ballot because the FPCA serves as a simultaneous registration and absentee ballot request form.

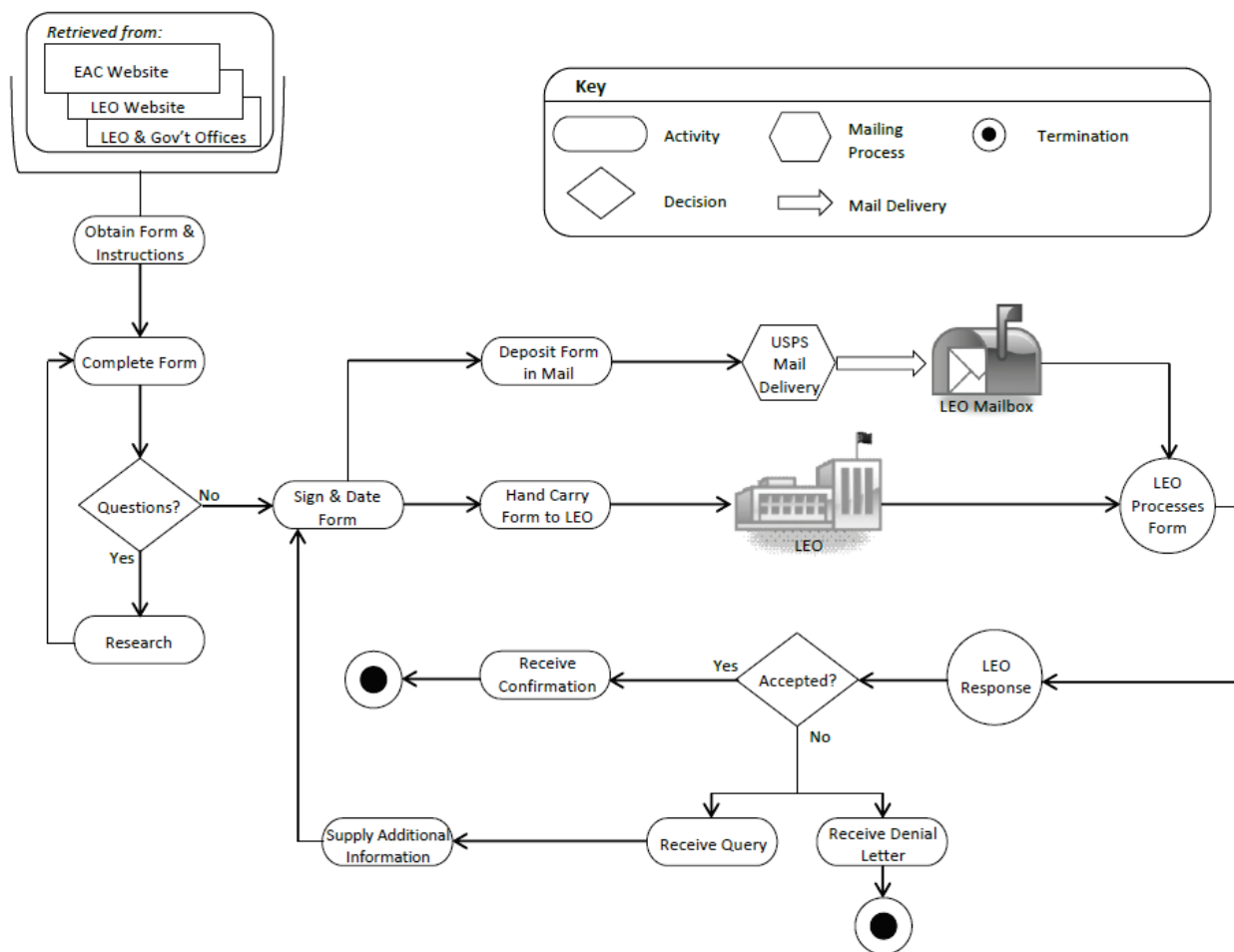
Figure 3 shows the process for a citizen to submit a state application form or an NVRF. The LEO processes these forms in the same manner as an FPCA, but only for the purposes of voter registration and updating voter information. After his registration is approved, the voter must submit a separate request if he wishes to vote absentee.

State voter registration forms are available on state websites and in local election offices. Georgia forms can also be obtained at public libraries, public assistance offices and other government offices. Seventeen states currently allow voters to submit this form online.<sup>2</sup> This number is expected to increase as more states establish procedures to cross-check voter registration application data with motor vehicle records and use the original signatures from driver's license applications for voter identification. Georgia provides automated assistance for completing the form online, but the completed form must be printed, signed and mailed or hand-delivered. The Georgia registration deadline is the fifth Monday before an election. Specific registration deadlines are published for each election on the state website.

The NVRF form and the instructions for completing it can be obtained from the EAC website. Some state election websites also provide this form. The instructions for completing the form and the deadline for returning it vary somewhat from state to state, just as they do for the FPCA. The EAC updates this information on its webpage whenever a state submits a change. The NVRF can be submitted by mail or in person.

As required by the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), states must include a voter registration application form as a portion of the application for a motor vehicle driver's license. A driver's license applicant may decline to register to vote. However, if the applicant signs the voter registration form, it is automatically forwarded to the state election office by the motor vehicle agency.

**Figure 3: Prepare & Submit State Registration Form or National Voter Registration Form (NVRF)**



The NVRA also requires states to designate agencies for the registration of voters. All offices that provide public assistance as well as offices providing services to persons with disabilities are required to provide voter registration. Other agencies may be designated for this purpose, such as public libraries, public schools, offices of city and county clerks, fishing and hunting license bureaus, government revenue offices, unemployment compensation offices, as well as federal and nongovernmental offices. Designated registration agencies are required to provide a voter registration form and assist applicants in completing the form, unless the applicant refuses this assistance. These agencies accept the completed forms and transmit them to the state election office.

The EAC reports voter registration statistics to Congress every two years. This report is broken down by the method by which voter registration applications are submitted (e.g., in person, by mail) and does not identify which forms were used. According to the most recently published report for the period between 2008-2010, nationwide the most voter registration forms were received from motor vehicle agencies (37%). Delivery by mail, fax or email was the next highest submission method reported at 20.9%. In person registrations submitted at an elections office were 14.5%, and online registrations were 1.7%. Registration applications submitted by designated registration agencies were less than 1%.



The State of Georgia reported a total of 1,796,700 applications received. Most were received by mail: 994,137 (55.3%). The Motor Vehicle agency was the next highest source at 684,880 (38.1%). In person applications numbered 91,976 (5.1%). Designated registration agencies supplied 902 applications (less than 1%). Georgia does not offer online registration.<sup>3</sup>

## **3.2 Voting Procedures**

Speaking generally, there are two methods of voting permitted in the U.S.: voting in person and voting absentee. Historically, in person voting entails a voter going to an assigned polling place on election day to cast his ballot under the supervision of the local election office. Many states now offer an early voting alternative. This enables voters to go to any one of a number of designated voting locations and cast their ballot prior to election day. Early voting centers are supervised by the local election office and operate for periods of several days. They typically close a few days before election day so poll books can be prepared for polling place voting.

Absentee voting allows the voter to receive and cast his ballot somewhere other than a polling place or early voting site and is not supervised. It typically extends over a prescribed period that starts prior to election day. Historically, to be permitted to vote absentee, the voter's reason for not voting at a polling place had to fall within the list of exceptions specified by his state. UOCAVA prescribes absence due to military service as an acceptable reason for all states. Many states include disability as an acceptable reason; some require a physician's affidavit that the person is unable to go to a polling place. Some states have adopted a 'no fault' absentee voting policy whereby any voter can request to vote absentee and no reason is required.

### ***3.2.1 Accommodations for UOCAVA Voters***

Requesting an absentee ballot is the first step in the absentee voting process. Since UOCAVA voters are presumed to be voting absentee, the FPCA serves the simultaneous purposes of registering to vote and requesting an absentee ballot. As noted above, when the LEO approves an FPCA, the voter's name is flagged to receive an absentee ballot for federal elections. Submission of a single FPCA is good for all federal elections in the year.

UOCAVA absentee ballots are required to be sent out 45 days before election day to allow enough time for the ballots to be delivered to the voters and subsequently be returned by the deadline. Under the MOVE Act, each state is required to provide at least one electronic means for delivering blank ballots to voters in order to reduce the ballot delivery time. The voter can specify whether they want to receive their ballot electronically or by mail.

### ***3.2.2 Accommodations for Voters with Disabilities***

When they are discharged from active duty and enter the VA system, Wounded Warriors are classified by level of disability in the same manner as veterans disabled by injuries sustained in any military service related activity. As civilians, they are subject to the same voting rules and procedures as the rest of the general electorate.

Under the provisions of the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, state and local governments are required to provide people with disabilities with

equal opportunity to benefit from all government activities, including voting. Registration facilities and polling places are required to be physically accessible or an alternative must be provided. The Help America Vote Act requires voting systems to be accessible for individuals with disabilities in a manner that provides the same opportunity for access and participation (including privacy and independence) as for other voters. Each polling place is required to provide at least one voting system equipped for individuals with disabilities.

Many states and localities provide a variety of polling place accommodations for voters with disabilities. The most frequently provided is allowing a voter to receive assistance with casting their ballot. Curbside voting is also an option in several states. See Section 3.3 Overview of State Accessibility Practices for further discussion.

Depending on the extent and nature of their disability, a wounded veteran may be permitted to vote absentee. This requires making a request for an absentee ballot. Some states require a request to be made for each election, which could be two or more in a federal election year. Other states accept a single request for all elections in a year. Some states have a permanent absentee status whereby a voter can make a single request and receive an absentee ballot for every election until such time as he informs the election office this is no longer necessary. In 'no fault' absentee and vote-by-mail states (e.g., Oregon, Washington) any voter can receive an absentee ballot.

Georgia requires a separate application for each election but makes exceptions for elderly, disabled and UOCAVA voters. (See Figure 4.) These voters can make a single request for all elections in one year. Disabled voters can have another person request an absentee ballot on their behalf. The ballot may be mailed to an alternate address for a physically disabled voter.

Figure 4: Georgia Absentee Ballot Application

_____ COUNTY or MUNICIPALITY	GA Driver's License # _____
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### APPLICATION FOR OFFICIAL ABSENTEE BALLOT

**PLEASE PRINT** (FAILURE TO FILL OUT THE FORM COMPLETELY COULD DELAY YOUR APPLICATION)

Date of Primary, Election, or Runoff: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_\_\_

**FOR PRIMARY ELECTIONS ONLY, CHOOSE A PARTY BALLOT (check one):** ☐ DEMOCRATIC ☐ REPUBLICAN

<b>APPLICATION DATE</b> ____/____/____	<b>DATE OF BIRTH</b> ____/____/____	<b>DAYTIME CONTACT NUMBER (optional)</b> (____) ____-____	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS(required for UOCAVA Voter requesting electronic transmission)</b> _____ _____
<b>NAME AS REGISTERED</b>		LAST	FIRST
<b>ADDRESS AS REGISTERED</b>		STREET #	CITY
		ZIP CODE	

☐ Mail the ballot to my temporary out-of-county address: (or alternate address for physically disabled voter).

# STREET	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
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**Note: You must file a separate application for each election for which you are requesting an absentee ballot (\*see exceptions below for voters over the age of 75, disabled, or military or overseas citizens). You may file your application up to 180 days prior to the Date of the Election.**

**\* EXCEPTIONS:**

**If you meet the following criteria**, you may choose to complete one application and receive a ballot for the General Primary, General Primary Runoff (if any), General Election, and General Election Runoff (if any) by checking one of the following boxes:

☐ E - Elderly - I am 75 years of age or older.

☐ D - Disabled - I have a physical disability which would render me unable to see or mark a ballot.

☐ U - UOCAVA Voter - Member of armed forces or Merchant Marines of the United States, commissioned corps of the Public Health Service or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, spouse or dependent residing with or accompanying said member, or a United States citizen residing overseas. My current status is **(please mark one)**:

☐ MOS - Military Overseas ☐ MST - Military Stateside

☐ OST - Overseas Temporary Resident ☐ OSP - Overseas Permanent Resident (federal offices only)

**For UOCAVA Voters Only** - I would like to receive my absentee ballots by electronic transmission ☐.

**NOTE: A SEPARATE APPLICATION IS REQUIRED FOR A PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY**

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**SIGNATURE OR MARK\* OF VOTER - REQUIRED**

**You may apply on behalf of another person only in the following circumstances:** In the case of a voter residing temporarily out of the county or a physically disabled voter residing within the county, application may be made by mother, father, grandparent, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, spouse, son, daughter, niece, nephew, grandchild, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law or sister-in-law of the age of 18 or over upon completing the following oath: I, the undersigned do swear (or affirm) that the above-named voter is (check one): ☐ residing temporarily out of the county or is a ☐ physically disabled voter residing within the county and that the facts included in this application are true.

➔ **SIGNATURE AND RELATIONSHIP OF RELATIVE REQUESTING BALLOT - REQUIRED**

\*Signature of person preparing application if voter is disabled or illiterate - **REQUIRED**

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<p><b>OFFICE USE ONLY</b></p> <p>Voter Registration # _____</p> <p>DIST. COMBO _____ PRECINCT _____</p> <p>BALLOT # _____ ISS. DATE _____</p> <p>CERTIFIED DATE _____ REJECTION DATE _____</p> <p>ID SHOWN: GADL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____</p> <p>Ballot to be: <input type="checkbox"/> Mailed <input type="checkbox"/> Electronically Transmitted</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Delivered to voter in hospital by Registrar/Deputy Registrar</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Voted in office (Municipal Only)</p> <p>FORM #ABS-APP-10</p>	<p>I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE NAMED VOTER</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> IS ELIGIBLE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE AN ABSENTEE BALLOT</p> <p>REASON FOR REJECTION: _____</p> <p>Registrar Signature _____</p> <p>PACKET PREPARED BY: _____</p> <p>PACKET REVIEWED BY: _____</p>
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### 3.3 Overview of State Accessibility Practices

The research team conducted a review of all the state election websites to get a sense of the national picture on accommodations provided for voters with disabilities.<sup>4</sup> An important caveat must be borne in mind when considering the results of this analysis. The scope of website content and level of detail provided varies widely. For example, 15 websites contain no information for voters with disabilities. This does not mean these states have no policies or procedures, only that this topic is not addressed on their websites. The websites that do address the topic are very uneven in terms of the level of detail provided. Consequently, the results below do not give a complete picture of state accessibility policies and procedures. The research team has distributed a questionnaire to state election offices to obtain a more complete account of state accessibility practices. The results of this survey will be published separately.

The website analysis questions and results are as follows:

- a. Is information provided on the website for voters with disabilities?

Thirty-nine of the 54 websites reviewed provided information specifically for voters with disabilities. Eight sites have a separate webpage or online pamphlet on this topic. Thirty-one include questions on accessible voting interspersed with other voting questions on the FAQs page. No information could be found on fifteen websites.

- b. Is there a voter registration procedure to accommodate voters with disabilities?

Twelve websites indicate that another person can assist with the completion and submission of the registration form. Two websites note that the ID requirement for by mail registration is waived. The State of North Dakota does not require voter registration for any voter.

- c. Does the state voter registration application or absentee ballot request allow voters to indicate if they need assistance in voting?

Twelve state voter registration applications and 38 absentee ballot request forms include this data element. Four states do not post their voter registration application. Twelve states do not post their absentee ballot request form.

Twenty websites indicate that having a disability is an acceptable reason to request to vote absentee.

- d. Are there polling place accommodations available for voters with disabilities in addition to providing the HAVA-mandated accessible voting machine?

Twenty-seven websites report that a voter may receive assistance with casting their ballot from a person of their choosing (subject to various limitations, e.g., an assistant cannot be

an employer). Curbside voting is reported on 13 websites. Three websites indicate that voter may vote at another polling place, if his assigned polling place is not accessible.

- e. What procedures are in place for voters who are hospitalized or residing in group living facilities, such as assisted living centers and nursing homes?

Seven websites indicate that supervised voting can be provided in group living facilities. Six websites report that absentee ballots can be provided to voters in group living facilities, including facilities outside the county of voter's voting residence. One website notes specifically that patients in VA hospitals can vote absentee.

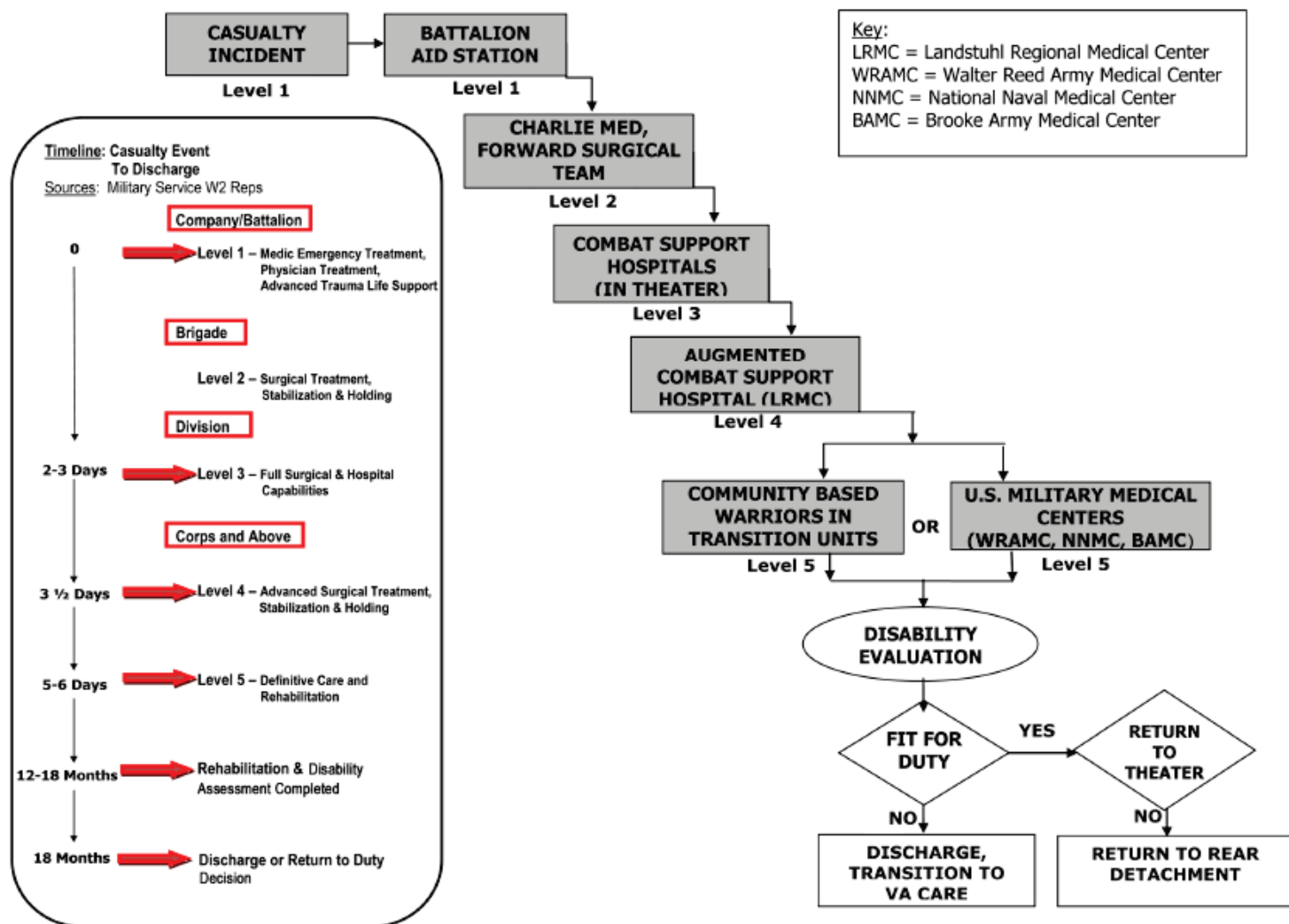
## **4 FROM COMBAT CASUALTY TO CIVILIAN LIFE**

This section provides an overview of how the military medical process is organized and how severely injured service members are moved through the process. Since the OEF/OIF conflicts are winding down, there should be a significant decrease in the incidence of severe combat injuries within the next few years. But there will undoubtedly be future U.S. military engagements. As the state of the art and practice of combat medicine continues to improve, the trend of more service members surviving catastrophic injuries and returning to civilian life is expected to continue.

### **4.1 The Journey Through the Military Medical Process**

The OEF/OIF Theater Medical Treatment Flow Chart (Figure 5) illustrates the progression of a recently injured service member through the multiple levels of the combat medical system. It includes a notional timeline from the occurrence of an injury until the return to duty or discharge decision is made. The combat medical system has been designed to ensure that combat wounded receive immediate and lifesaving treatment virtually at the moment of wounding and that this care continues with safe and timely evacuation until final recovery and rehabilitation is completed. The five levels have evolved over time and, with the support of an advanced medical evacuation system, have enabled increasing numbers of the most severely wounded soldiers to reach a definitive care facility and survive. It is now standard practice to stabilize the medical condition of many of these personnel and deliver them to advanced treatment centers in Germany and the U.S. within a few days of the casualty incident.

Figure 5: OEF/OIF Theater Medical Treatment Flow Chart



Sources: Timeline from COL Stephen P. Hetz, MD, "Introduction to Military Medicine: A Brief Overview," pp.675-688, "A Handbook for Injured Service Members and Their Families," the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, the Wounded Warrior Project, and Davis Polk & Wardwell. July 2007, and The Washington Post, Oct/Nov 2010 series of articles on injured service members. Flow chart adapted from chart provided by Georgia National Guard.

The combat medical structure illustrated in the figure parallels the military combat organizational structure. As described in Hetz, "Introduction to Military Medicine," a typical Army infantry combat unit is structured as follows. Infantry soldiers are grouped into squads of 10 men, with four squads in a platoon. An infantry company consists of four platoons with additional soldiers in leadership and staff positions. Five companies of similar composition constitute an infantry battalion, and three to five battalions make up a brigade. Other units of platoon, company or battalion size are attached to this brigade to form a brigade combat team, providing the necessary equipment, weapons systems, logistics support and soldiers to conduct independent combat operations. A typical brigade combat team has

approximately 4000 to 5000 soldiers. Several brigade combat teams comprise a division, and several divisions can be grouped under a corps headquarters.

The medical care structure begins at the company level. Combat medics in an infantry company may be assigned down to the squad or platoon level to support combat patrols and missions. The Level 1 care administered on the battlefield at the time of the casualty incident is emergency treatment performed by medics. In recent years, their training has emphasized extremity hemorrhage control and procedures for pneumothorax injuries and obstructed airways, which have been identified as the leading causes of potentially preventable combat deaths. This training focus is attributed with a 25% reduction in the killed-in-action death rate for the Global War on Terror (approximately 15% killed-in-action compared with the historical average of approximately 20%). When medics are not available, care may be provided by non-medical soldiers designated as combat lifesavers. These personnel receive training in initial combat wounding care and advanced first aid techniques.

Continuation of Level 1 care is provided by the Battalion Aid Station (BAS), the first medical treatment facility in the combat medical system. The BAS is staffed with primary care physicians, emergency medicine physicians, or physician assistants. This facility brings Advanced Trauma Life Support capabilities close to the battlefield and provides stabilization and resuscitation of the wounded to allow transport to more advanced treatment facilities.

Level 2 care occurs at a brigade level facility designated Charlie Med. This facility is staffed with similar professional skill sets as the BAS, but has additional diagnostic and treatment capabilities such as radiography and a laboratory. If a patient is considered stable enough to tolerate transport and is likely to require surgery, the patient will be transported directly from the battlefield to a Level 3 facility, bypassing Level 2. When a patient is too unstable for immediate travel or does not require surgery, he or she will be transported to a Level 2 center. When the combat situation warrants, the BAS may be supplemented by a Forward Surgical Team (FST). These highly mobile units are assigned to combat maneuver brigades and follow closely behind the battle to perform lifesaving surgery for casualties who otherwise would not survive transport to a Level 3 facility. After FST patients are resuscitated and stable enough to survive transport, they are rapidly evacuated to Level 3 care.

Level 3, the Combat Support Hospital (CSH), is the point where full surgical and hospital capability is available. A CSH corresponds to the Division level in the military hierarchy, so it serves as an aggregation point for casualties from all the units in that chain of command. Approximately 500 soldiers are assigned to a CSH to provide the medical and support activities required to carry out the broad spectrum of Level 3 medical treatment. These facilities are staffed with a variety of surgical specialties, internal and emergency medicine and other primary care physicians, psychiatrists, and related medical specialties such as anesthesiology and radiology.

Level 4 care is provided by an Augmented Combat Support Hospital, typically located far from the area of active combat operations. Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany functions as a Level 4 facility for both OIF and OEF. At this level the CSH medical team is augmented with additional surgical

and medical specialties and enhanced laboratory and microbiology capabilities. Rehabilitation services, nutritional care and other treatment support capabilities are also available.

The highest level of care available for combat wounded is in the United States. Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the National Naval Medical Center (recently merged to create the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center) and Brooke Army Medical Center are among the principal Level 5 facilities for receiving OIF/OEF casualties. Typically the casualties transported to U.S. treatment centers are those requiring major abdominal, thoracic, vascular, brain, head, eye, neck, and extremity operations and treatment for major burns. These individuals may require prolonged intensive care or rehabilitation at various military Centers of Excellence. Active duty patients may also be sent to VA Polytrauma Centers or other VA hospitals as well as to university and private hospitals and treatment facilities that offer specialized care.

## **4.2 Warriors in Transition**

While each case is unique, the duration of the DoD medical treatment, rehabilitation and disability assessment period is on the order of 12 to 18 months from the time of the casualty incident. Typically a determination can be made after 12 – 18 months regarding the soldier's potential capability to return to active duty. This does not mean that medical treatment and/or rehabilitation services are no longer required. Disability assessment is a triage point that sets the direction of the soldier's future path: either to continue under DoD care in preparation for returning to active duty or to transition to civilian life if active duty is no longer possible.

For soldiers unable to continue on active duty, care continues through the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care System. The ultimate goal is to reintegrate these individuals into society with the highest level of function possible.

DoD Instruction 1300.24, Recovery Coordination Program, establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and prescribes uniform guidelines, procedures and standards for improvements to the care, management and transition of recovering service members across the Military Departments. The Office of Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness is charged with administering the Recovery Coordination Program, overseeing the development of policies and procedures by the Military Departments, and coordinating with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to develop and implement administrative processes, procedures and standards for transitioning recovering service members from DoD care and treatment to VA care, treatment and rehabilitation.

This instruction also charges the Military Departments to establish Recovery Coordination Program elements, Wounded Warrior and family support programs.<sup>5</sup> Family members are notified as soon as possible after a casualty occurs and may be invited to travel to the soldier's bedside if a medical officer determines it is in the patient's best interest to have family members present to aid in the recovery process. One or more family members may remain at the Medical Treatment Facility for extended periods to provide emotional support and participate in treatment decisions and rehabilitation activities. When a soldier leaves the hospital a medical authority may determine that he or she requires a non-



medical attendant to assist with daily living activities. One person designated by the soldier may remain until a physician determines that assistance is no longer needed. In addition to directly assisting the soldier during treatment, these individuals are also preparing to become the long term caregivers when the soldier is discharged to civilian life.

The Wounded Warrior support programs for each of the Military Services are listed below. Each of these programs has an associated family assistance program:

- Army Wounded Warrior Program
- Navy Safe Harbor
- Air Force Wounded Warrior Program
- Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment
- Special Operations Command Care Coalition
- Army Reserve Recovery Coordination Program

The Army's Wounded Warrior (AW2) program is the most robust of these programs because Army units have had the largest number of personnel wounded in action. The following discussion describes the Army program, but the programs sponsored by the other Services are similar in operation.

The Army has established a Warrior Transition Command (WTC) whose mission is to develop, coordinate, and integrate the Army's Warrior Care and Transition Program. The WTC manages the care and recovery of soldiers evacuated from theater, ensuring that everything possible is done to retain and return to active duty soldiers who are fully fit for duty. Those assessed to be unlikely to return to duty within a specified time frame or highly unlikely to return to duty are referred to the AW2 Recovery Coordination Process.<sup>6</sup>

Upon enrollment in AW2, each soldier is assigned an AW2 advocate. This may occur when the soldier is evacuated from the combat theater to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center or possibly at a later point in the medical treatment process. While the AW2 soldier is receiving medical care, the advocate identifies individual soldier and family issues and manages these issues while preparing the soldier and his or her family for the next phase of the recovery process. Advocates are located at military treatment facilities, VA Polytrauma Centers, VA facilities and most Army installations.

When soldiers are ready to leave the hospital, they may be assigned to a Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) to continue their recovery and rehabilitation process. To be eligible for assignment, a soldier must require at least six months of complex medical management. At the WTU the soldier's schedule centers on medical rehabilitation, employment and physical fitness. After completing administrative in-processing to the unit, the soldier will work with an assigned Triad of Care and a multi-disciplinary team to develop a Comprehensive Transition Plan. The Triad of Care consists of a primary care physician, a case manager who facilitates all medical care, and a squad leader who serves as the soldier's first line supervisor and facilitates administrative issues for the warrior and his or her family. The multi-disciplinary team consists of social workers, physical and occupational therapists, other care specialists, the AW2 advocate and a VA representative.

Next the soldier receives goal-setting training and consults with an occupational therapist to select a transition track. The track selection is validated by the chain of command, the Triad of Care, and the multidisciplinary team. Career track options include:

- Return to Duty
- Return to Duty with a new Military Occupational Specialty
- Separate from military service

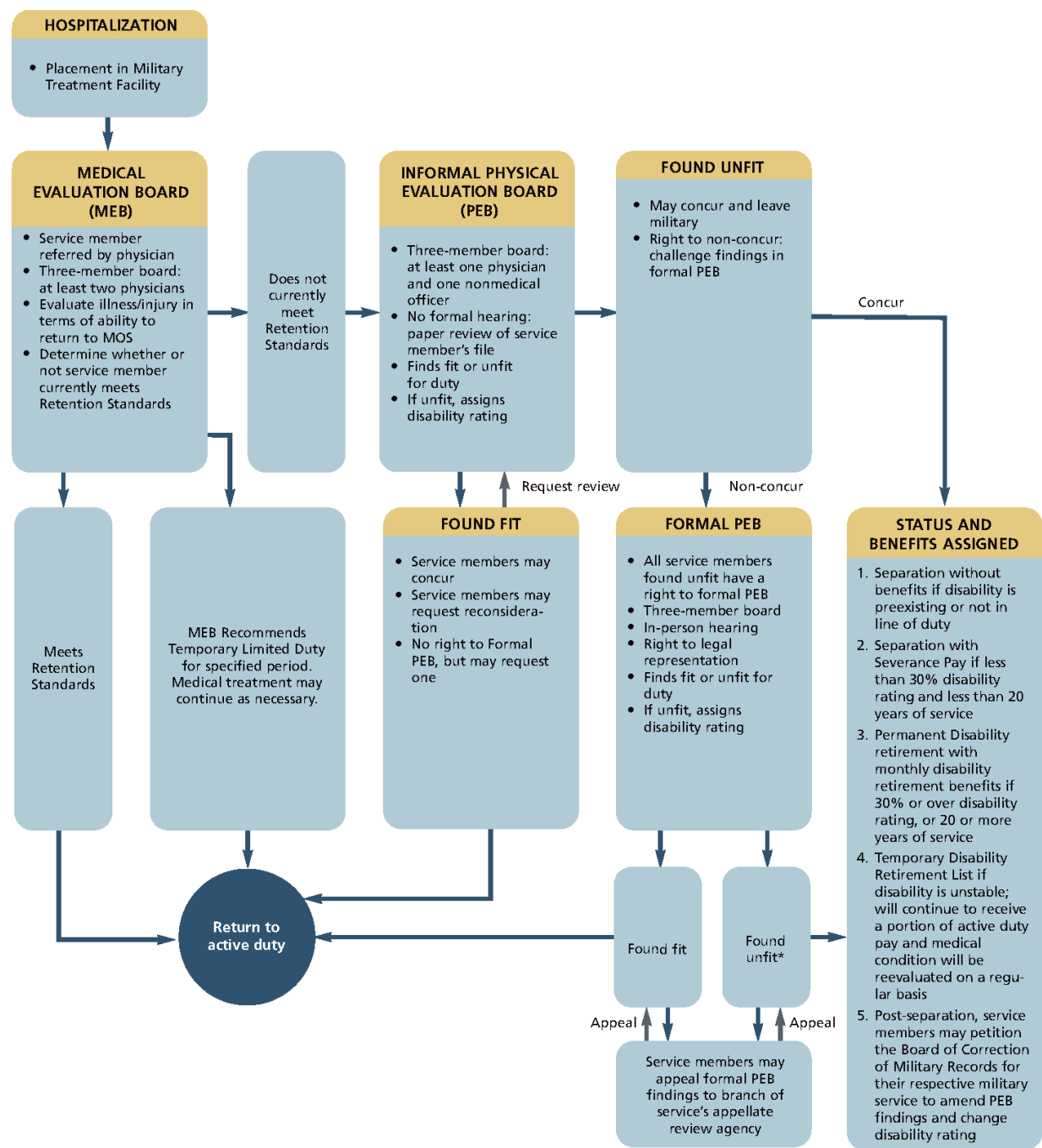
The soldier works with family and team members, including the AW2 advocate, to develop a personalized transition plan to support the soldier's goals in six domains: career, physical, emotional, social, family, and spiritual. This plan is formalized within 30 days and becomes the basis for evaluating the soldier's progress in the WTU program. Progress against the transition plan is formally reviewed periodically by the WTU Commander for the purpose of identifying the soldier's transition date. The first review is 180 days after the completion of the plan. Once the transition date is established, the soldier follows the milestones set out for the transition process. After completing his or her transition plan, a VA handoff is completed if the soldier is separating from the Army, and the soldier is administratively out-processed.

At some point in the treatment process the attending physician may conclude that the service member may not be able to return to full duty within a reasonable time. Then the soldier is referred for a Medical Evaluation Board (MEB). This could happen prior to assignment to a WTU or while in a WTU program. Figure 6 illustrates the two stages of the disability evaluation process. Personnel are initially reviewed by a MEB to assess their ability to perform the duties of their assigned Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), i.e., their military job description. If found unable to perform the duties of their original MOS, they may be evaluated for their potential to perform the duties of another MOS or to remain on active duty through a Permanent Limited Duty assignment. The focus of the MEB is to determine if the soldier meets the Service's retention standards or if there is potential to meet the standards. When a service member wishes to remain in service, considerable effort is made to find an appropriate duty assignment for them.

### **4.3 Re-integration into Civilian Life**

The final stage of transition is initiated by the convening of a Physical Evaluation Board (PEB). This Board evaluates the service member's ability to continue in military service and determines whether he or she is fit or unfit for duty. If determined to be unfit, a disability rating is assigned. Planning begins for discharge from the military and transition to veteran status. The soldier may be transferred to either VA institutional or community-based care, as appropriate. The Recovery Care Coordinator ensures that all appropriate care coordination, both medical and non-medical, has been completed with the VA. This includes notification of the appropriate VA point of contact, such as the Transition Patient Advocate, when the physical disability evaluation process begins. Alternatively, the soldier might transition to a civilian medical care facility. In this case, the same coordination takes place to ensure continuity of medical and other support services for the soldier and his or her family. In all cases, the soldier's address and contact information is provided to the department or agency for veterans affairs of the State where he or she intends to reside after separation.

### Figure 6: The Disability Evaluation Process



\* Service members found unfit may request special consideration to remain on active duty through Permanent Limited Duty, reclassification to a new MOS by their MOS Medical Retention Board (MMRB) or application for COAD.

Reproduced from "A Handbook for Injured Service Members and Their Families," the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, the Wounded Warrior Project, and Davis Polk & Wardwell, November, 2010, p. 30. Reprinted with permission from Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP.

Each retiring service member is required to receive pre-separation counseling, to attend a VA benefits briefing, to receive a Disabled Transition Assistance Program briefing sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and to participate in a Disabled Transition Assistance Program Employment Workshop conducted by the Department of Labor. These activities are coordinated by the Installation Transition Assistance staff. After completing his or her Comprehensive Transition Plan the service member administratively out-processes from their command. This includes a sign-off by either the Installation or Unit Voting Assistance Officer.

There is a bewildering array of federal, state and privately-supported programs to assist injured service members and their families as they transition to civilian life and cope with the on-going adaptation to living with their disabling conditions. The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is jointly sponsored by the Department of Defense, the Department of Labor and the Department of Veterans Affairs. TurboTAP ([www.turbotap.org](http://www.turbotap.org)) is a web portal maintained by this program to provide one stop access to information about transition programs and services. It covers the full gamut of services including employment, compensation and benefits, housing, and medical care and support. It includes a Disabled Veterans section that focuses on the special needs of this group. The “Leaving the Service” tab, which describes actions that retiring service members should address, includes the topic of Register to Vote. This provides a link to [canlvote.org](http://canlvote.org), a webpage maintained by the National Association of Secretaries of State. This webpage enables a voter to identify their appropriate state or local election office to get information about registering and voting.

## **5 CURRENT VOTING ASSISTANCE PRACTICES**

### **5.1 Examples of Voting Assistance Services**

The listing below provides examples of voting assistance services that could be provided directly to the disabled veteran or to his or her caregiver. The method of providing assistance and the amount and type that might be required for any given case depend on several factors:

- Does the disabled veteran or a caregiver want assistance?
- Is the disabled veteran in a residential facility or living in the community?
- What is their ability to independently perform the physical and cognitive tasks associated with registration and voting?
- The need to protect personally sensitive information required for voter registration.
- Enabling the disabled veteran to vote their ballot privately and independently.

#### **Voter Education**

1. Ensuring that disabled veterans know their voting rights.
2. Providing information about the voting process.
3. Providing election-related information.

## Voter Registration

1. Determining if the disabled veteran is registered.
2. If registered, determining if their voter information is up-to-date, e.g., current address.
3. If not registered, assisting with registration process. This could include finding out where they are eligible to vote; help with obtaining, completing and submitting the appropriate registration form and any supporting documentation required, such as an ID; assisting with responses to any election official questions regarding the application.

## Voting

1. Determining if they must vote in person at a polling place or can vote absentee. If residing in a group living facility, LEOs in some states may provide supervised voting in the facility.
2. Obtaining, completing and submitting an absentee ballot request, if applicable.
3. Ensuring they receive their ballot. This could include picking it up in person or retrieving from the mail and delivering to the voter.
4. Reading and/or marking the ballot and completing related documents, e.g., voter affidavit, privacy waiver, identification of the person assisting, if applicable.
5. Assembling the voted ballot packet for return. This may include ensuring that any document requiring a signature has been signed and dated by the voter and/or person assisting, placing the marked ballot in a privacy sleeve or envelope, placing the ballot and other documents in an outer envelope.
6. Returning ballot. This could include mailing the return ballot packet in time to arrive by the deadline or hand delivering to the local election office.
7. Checking that ballot was received, if returned by mail.
8. Following up with local election office if ballot was not received.

## 5.2 Department of Defense

Executive Order 12642 designates the Secretary of Defense as the Presidential designee responsible for carrying out the federal functions prescribed by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act. DoD Directive 1000.04 establishes the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) to manage, coordinate and perform the responsibilities assigned to the Secretary of Defense. The FVAP is charged with ensuring that eligible voters receive information about registration and voting procedures and materials pertaining to scheduled elections.

Paragraph 4.3 of the directive directs that:

Every eligible voter shall:

- Be given...an opportunity to register and vote in any election in which he or she is eligible.
- Be able to vote in person or by absentee process...
- Receive voting assistance in a manner that safeguards the integrity of the electoral process and secrecy of the ballot.

The directive further instructs DoD Components and the Uniformed Services to assist eligible voters by designating Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs) at every level of command who are trained and equipped to personally assist voters for all elections. This includes providing assistance in the appropriate language for any person needing assistance in reading or understanding English language materials. VAOs must ensure that Uniformed Services members and their dependents have ready access to absentee voter registration, ballot request and absentee ballot submission information, and deadlines. In brief, the Department of Defense has a highly structured and organized program of voting assistance that provides a wide array of services and support for active duty military personnel and their dependents.

As required by the MOVE Act, the FVAP is developing a new web portal. FVAP provides voting information and assistance to military service members, their families and U.S. citizens living abroad. They maintain the Voter Assistance Guide, the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). They provide online assistance tools for completing the FPCA and FWAB. They also supply information for Voting Assistance Officers, election officials and the research community. The new web portal will make information more readily accessible for users and facilitate keeping all information current.

As required by the MOVE Act, the Department of Defense has recently made changes to its voting assistance program. On November 15, 2010, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness issued Directive-Type Memorandum (DTM) 10-021 – Guidance in Implementing Installation Voter Assistance Offices. This document is provided in Appendix D. Key provisions of this memorandum are the following:

1. An Installation Voting Assistance Office (IVAO) will be established on each military installation. This office is charged with providing robust voter assistance to military personnel, their dependents, civilian federal employees, and such other qualified voters as may have access to these offices. The purpose and location of these offices will be well advertised.
2. The IVAOs will be included in the administrative processing of personnel reporting to the installation. This includes deploying personnel, personnel returning from deployment and personnel changing their address.
3. The IVAOs are designated as voter registration agencies to implement the voter registration provisions of the National Voter Registration Act.
4. The IVAOs must provide written information on voter registration and absentee ballot procedures. This includes providing the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) or the National Voter Registration Form (NVRF) as appropriate for the eligibility of the requestor. Instructions for completing these forms will also be provided.
5. The IVAOs will provide direct assistance to individuals in completing these forms, updating their voter registration information and requesting absentee ballots. They may also transmit the completed forms to the appropriate local election office on behalf of the applicant, if requested.

### 5.3 Department of Veterans Affairs

In 2008 the Department of Veteran Affairs promulgated Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive 2008-053, providing guidelines for registration and voting assistance for VA patients. Posters and other information on patient voting rights had been provided in VA facilities prior to this, but the new directive stated further requirements. The goal was to provide a uniform approach and procedures for providing this assistance.

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is the lead office for the implementation of this directive and is committed to assisting patients who seek to exercise their right to register and vote. The policy is to assist residents in community living centers, domiciliaries, and patients with limited access to other voter registration and information resources. While help from state and local election officials and nonpartisan groups is welcomed, all external assistance must be coordinated with the facility to avoid disruptions in patient schedules and to ensure that assistance is nonpartisan.

Each facility director must ensure that there is a written published policy on voter assistance that addresses the following:

- a. Patients are granted authorized absence for such periods of time as necessary to register and to vote, subject to the opinions of their health care providers.
- b. If patients are unable to leave the facility, assistance is provided for registering and for voting by absentee ballot.
- c. Information on the voting assistance program is posted throughout the facility.
- d. Criteria for evaluating the time, place, and manner of voter registration and voter assistance activities are established.
- e. Procedures for coordinating offers of assistance in providing voter registration and voter assistance from state and local governments and nonpartisan organizations and for consulting with Regional Counsel regarding determining the nonpartisan character of groups offering such assistance.

The facility Voluntary Service Officer, or designee, is responsible for:

- a. Informing all inpatients or residents of the opportunity to receive voting assistance information. NOTE: *This also needs to be done when the patient is admitted to the facility.*
- b. Ensuring all VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) personnel (including volunteers), prior to providing any information or assistance to VA patients who seek to register to vote or vote, annually review and sign the "Political Activities Fact Sheet and Certification" (VA Form 10-0462) and maintain the completed form in the volunteer's file. NOTE: *In addition to the prohibition on partisan activity at VA facilities imposed by 38 CFR 1.218(a)(14), VA personnel must also be mindful of the Hatch Act's (5 U.S.C. 7321-7326) restrictions on the partisan political activities of Federal employees.*
- c. Obtaining and maintaining all materials used to assist with voter registration and voting.

As the requirements and procedures for absentee voting vary widely by state and because there is currently no single form that allows a voter in the U.S. to request an absentee ballot from any or all states, VAVS offices at each facility need access to timely and accurate state voting information.

Nonpartisan voter resources include the following:

- National Voter Registration Form available at [www.eac.gov](http://www.eac.gov)
- Information is also available at [www.eac.gov](http://www.eac.gov) and [www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Voting/Register](http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Voting/Register), and from state, local and county government election officials and voter registrars, and nonpartisan organizations with expertise in voter registration.

The facility director must ensure that any request by an outside organization to facilitate voter registration on VA property is forwarded to local Regional Counsel for review.

Pursuant to this directive, voting assistance is provided when requested by either inpatients or outpatients. Interviews with VA personnel indicated that this may be done by either VAVS staff or volunteers. In addition to direct voter assistance, informational posters are displayed in all facilities, and informational flyers distributed on patient meal trays or by other means. Some facilities have placed informational announcements on their patient education channels.

The following instructions are provided in the “Checklist for Voter Registration Volunteer”:

1. Be familiar with state voting laws, rules, and regulations regarding registration and absentee voting. Find out how to apply for and vote via an absentee ballot.
2. Know the deadline for requesting and returning ballots. Ballots received AFTER the deadline will not be counted.
3. Protect the integrity and privacy of the veteran voter. Do not let another person tell them how to vote, **including you**.
4. Carefully review the instructions with the veteran and make sure the information is complete. Incomplete information or errors may cause the ballot to not be counted.
5. Ensure all printing is legible.
6. Provide brochures, pamphlets, etc., to veterans on registering to vote and on absentee voting.

On-line resources referenced are at [www.eac.gov/voter/docs/votersguideelectionday](http://www.eac.gov/voter/docs/votersguideelectionday) and [www.usa.gov/Citizens/Topics/Voting/Register](http://www.usa.gov/Citizens/Topics/Voting/Register).

One of the voting assistance challenges for the VA is convenient access to current information about voter registration and absentee voting requirements as well as the election schedule for every state. The EAC website provides the National Voter Registration Form which is accepted by most states for voter registration. However, as noted in the VHA Directive, the requirements and procedures for absentee voting vary widely by state and there is no single form that allows a voter to request an absentee ballot from all states. The VA has hundreds of facilities distributed all over the country. In addition to serving



patients who are eligible to vote in the state where a facility is located, there also may be patients whose voting residence is in other states. It is a difficult task to assemble and maintain a master schedule for all the federal, state and local elections occurring around the country. While federal elections occur every two years, many states conduct statewide and local elections in the off-years. Veterans are eligible to vote in all elections taking place in their jurisdictions. This suggests a need for a national information portal for disabled veteran voters similar to the portal under development by the Federal Voting Assistance Program for UOCAVA voters.

A VA priority is to ensure that all assistance is provided on a strictly nonpartisan basis. As outlined in the “Political Activities Fact Sheet and Certification,” the following activities are permitted when requested:

- Providing a form or other information to register to vote or to obtain an absentee ballot from the appropriate state.
- Assisting in completing and mailing the form to register to vote or to obtain an absentee ballot, or in completing the ballot itself.
- Directing a patient to the state or local government office or entity responsible for voter registration, e.g., the State Board of Elections or the Local Election Office.

Staff and volunteer personnel are prohibited from discussing partisan politics; promoting a particular candidate, party or issue; wearing partisan political buttons, pins or ribbons in a VA facility; and directing persons to voter registration being conducted by a non-governmental entity, such as a political party, union or special interest group.

Voting assistance is just one of many services that volunteers and staff provide. The VA does not have a highly structured voting assistance program or dedicated resources for this purpose. The VAVS staff is limited to one or two people per facility. Volunteers are unpaid and the number available at any given facility can vary significantly over time. There is no training budget, so training has to be delivered at the facility or provided in a form that can be used at home. As with many other volunteer situations, these individuals tend to be older, often retirees, and are available only part time. In some instances VA volunteers have also been poll workers, so they have some knowledge and experience with certain aspects of voter assistance. However, this does not appear to be the norm.

#### **5.4 Election Assistance Commission**

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) established the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to serve as a national clearinghouse and resource for the compilation of information and review of procedures with respect to the administration of federal elections by adopting voluntary voting system guidelines; establishing a testing and certification program for voting systems; and conducting studies to promote the effective administration of Federal elections, among other duties. Section 802 transferred all the functions previously exercised by the Federal Election Commission under section 9(a) of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) to the EAC. These include prescribing regulations for carrying out the NVRA; developing a mail voter registration application form; submitting periodic reports to Congress assessing the impact of the NVRA on election administration and making recommendations for

improvements in federal and state procedures and forms; and providing information to the states regarding their responsibilities under the Act.

The EAC maintains an electronic version of the National Voter Registration Form on their website, along with each state's instructions for completing and submitting the form. This information is updated whenever the EAC receives new information from a state. A FAQs page answers commonly asked questions about the NVRF.

Title III of HAVA requires voting systems to "be accessible for individuals with disabilities, including nonvisual accessibility for the blind and visually impaired, in a manner that provides the same opportunity for access and participation (including privacy and independence) as for other voters." Each polling place is required to provide at least one voting system that is equipped for persons with disabilities.

Related to this requirement is the responsibility of the EAC to promulgate guidelines for use in the design, development and certification of voting systems. The 2005 Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG) and the draft VVSG 1.1 have significantly expanded the usability and accessibility requirements that voting systems must meet. In spite of this increase in scope, it is anticipated that the actual accessibility needs of voters, as evidenced by an aging population as well as growing numbers of veterans with TBI, PTSD and multiple disability conditions will exceed these specifications.

To support the EAC voting system testing and certification program, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has developed a Human Factors Test Suite. The present version is a high level evaluation, which is limited in terms of the size and composition of the test subject group and the disability conditions covered (primarily visual and auditory impairments, some dexterity and mobility). Implementation of accessibility testing is currently at a fairly rudimentary stage. It is performed by the voting system manufacturers and the test results are reviewed by a testing lab. The responsibility for accessibility testing will transfer to the test labs when VVSG 1.1 takes effect. Experience so far indicates there is a great deal more to learn about how to accommodate a wide range of disability conditions without proliferating multiple versions of voting systems, as well as how to meaningfully test these systems for compliance.

## **5.5 State of Georgia**

The website of the Office of the Secretary of State has a Disabilities Resource Page, which can be accessed through an information portal on the My Voter Page at [www.sos.ga.gov/mvp](http://www.sos.ga.gov/mvp). The site is 508 compliant so it can be accessed using a screen reader or mobile device. The Resource Page describes all the registration and voting services available for disabled voters. The following information is summarized from this source.

Voters with disabilities can receive assistance in completing the state voter registration application. The person providing assistance must sign the oath next to the signature of the applicant. Forms can be downloaded from the Secretary of State's website or obtained at the county board of registrars or election office, public libraries, public assistance offices, and other government offices.

Georgia law requires all polling places to be fully accessible and staffed with poll workers who are trained to take care of the needs of voters with disabilities. If a disabled voter arrives at the polling place between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., he is not required to wait in line. The accessibility of polling locations can be found by contacting the local county elections office.

A voter who is unable to sign his or her name, unable to see or mark the ballot, operate the voting equipment, or enter the voting booth without assistance, can receive assistance voting. The individual assisting a voter with a disability must record his or her name on the disabled elector's voter certificate. In federal elections, a voter with a disability can receive assistance from any individual except his or her employer, a representative of his or her employer, or a representative of his or her union. In all other elections, a voter with a disability can receive assistance from any voter, except a poll worker or poll watcher who is a resident of the precinct in which the voter is attempting to vote. A voter with a disability can receive assistance from his or her mother, father, sister, brother, spouse, or child.

Voters with disabilities have the option of using an accessible touch screen voting unit designed to assist with voting independently and privately. These voting units provide an audio ballot for voters who are visually impaired or have difficulty with reading. These units allow a voter to vote while sitting in a chair or wheelchair. In addition to these special units, every Georgia voting device allows the voter to adjust the print size and contrast for displaying the ballot. Every polling place is also required to have a magnifying glass to assist visually impaired voters.

Any voter can request a mail-in ballot. No excuse is needed. A voter who has a disability or cannot read or write may get help when filling out the mail-in ballot application. The person helping the voter must sign an oath that is either printed on the ballot envelope or on the ballot application. Georgia provides early and advance voting that allows anyone to vote in person before Election Day without having to provide a reason.

It is within each county's discretion to arrange for absentee ballot delivery by a registrar or deputy registrar to voters confined to a hospital, if requested. A physically disabled voter can designate a relative or an individual residing in the same household to return his or her voted ballot in person or by mail to the registrar or absentee ballot clerk. A video is available for anyone assisting a voter to register and vote.

The Georgia Secretary of State provides a guide for nursing home administrators that describes their responsibilities. All residents legally eligible to vote must be permitted to vote in all primary, special and general elections and in referenda. If requested by the resident, the facility must assist in obtaining a voter registration form, an application for an absentee ballot and an absentee ballot. They must assist the resident in meeting all legal requirements in order to be able to vote. The facility may not interfere with, nor attempt to influence, the actual casting of the resident's ballot.

## **5.6 National Association of Secretaries of State**

Every state has a website that provides extensive information about elections and registration and voting procedures. This is typically found on the Secretary of State's site. Many local election offices also post this information on the city or county website. However, every website is organized differently and

a voter may have to click through multiple webpages to find the information they need. The National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) has developed a voter information application, CanIVote, that makes this information more easily accessible. Anyone can log onto the [www.CanIVote.org](http://www.CanIVote.org) website, enter their zip code and select the type of information they are seeking. Categories include voter registration, polling place locations, identification requirements, absentee voting, early voting and contact information for local election offices. The application connects the voter directly to the pages of their state's website that contain the information they are seeking. Voters can also use the software to sign up for email reminders and alerts about election related deadlines.

## **6 MAKING VOTING PARTICIPATION MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR DISABLED VETERANS**

The extensive employment of improvised explosive devices in Iraq and Afghanistan has made multiple amputations and traumatic brain injuries the signature injuries of these conflicts. Significant improvements in battlefield medical treatment and evacuation capabilities are enabling combat personnel to survive severe levels of trauma that would have been fatal just a few years ago. Through advanced surgical and rehabilitation treatment methods and prosthetics technology many of these individuals can return to their families and communities. Others will require long term institutional care. Some will continue in active duty military service.

In 2010 the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act was passed by a nearly unanimous bipartisan vote in both Houses of Congress.<sup>7</sup> When signing this bill into law, President Obama stated: "...our nation's commitment to our veterans and their families ... is a sacred trust, and upholding that trust is a moral obligation."<sup>8</sup> This level of commitment from the President and the Congress makes support of disabled veterans a matter of national priority.

There are many pressing issues to be addressed regarding daily quality of life for these military heroes and their families including medical care, jobs, education, help for caregivers, mental health counseling, and transportation. Up to this point, the topic of voting participation hasn't received much attention, but it is nevertheless an important issue. Improving voting accessibility will enable these individuals to exercise their fundamental right to vote and to engage in civic participation on a par with other citizens.

The following recommendations to improve voting accessibility are divided into two parts: election administration practices, directed to state and local election offices; and delivery of voting assistance services, directed to federal agencies. These recommendations are all procedural in nature and, for the most part, could be implemented at minimal cost. The recommendation for states to consider providing electronic ballot delivery and marking to disabled civilian voters may require legislative or administrative rule changes. The recommendations to modify the NVRF would require a formal decision by the EAC.

### **6.1 Election Administration Practices**

Interview information suggests there is very little coordination between election officials and VA facilities nationwide. Recommendations one through three are intended to bridge that gap.

Recommendation State Election Office (SEO)/Local Election Office (LEO)-1: State and local election officials should develop uniform statewide procedures for providing assistance in VA residential and

community-based facilities for voter registration and voting. The state election office should coordinate this effort with the Chief of Voluntary Services in facilities within their state and the appropriate VA Regional Counsel's office.

Recommendation SEO/LEO-2: The LEO for the jurisdiction where a VA facility is located should be the on-going point of contact for coordinating and delivering voting assistance services. The LEO should assign a single staff person to coordinate with VA facilities, to maintain regular contact and report on all activities.

Recommendation SEO/LEO-3: State election offices should prepare and conduct training for VA staff or volunteers who are designated to provide voter assistance. Training should be updated periodically when election laws and procedures change.

Information technology is a cost effective method for disseminating voting information and providing voter services. An analysis of state website content revealed that only a small number of states are effectively using this technology to inform disabled voters about voting procedures and available accommodations. Some states do not post their voter registration and/or absentee ballot request forms on their website. Recommendations four through six identify information technology improvements to assist disabled voters.

Recommendation SEO/LEO-4: State election offices should post their voter registration application and absentee ballot request forms on their website in a Section 508 compatible format.

Recommendation SEO/LEO-5: State election offices should consider the use of electronic delivery and online marking of absentee ballots for disabled veterans, which would enable their use of assistive technologies. Every state is required by the MOVE Act to provide electronic ballot delivery for UOCAVA voters. This recommendation envisions extending this capability to disabled voters.

Recommendation SEO/LEO-6: Fifteen state websites provide no information for disabled voters. Another 31 state websites provide very limited information. Only 8 state websites include a webpage specially designated as information for voters with disabilities. All states should have a specific webpage for voters with disabilities that describes the procedures and services available to assist these voters.

When a service member separates from military service, his or her address and contact information are provided to the veterans affairs agency of the state where he or she intends to reside. These offices advocate on behalf of veterans and coordinate support activities and services.

Recommendation SEO/LEO-7: State election offices should designate the state veterans affairs agency as a voter registration agency under the NVRA.

## **6.2 Delivery of Voting Assistance Services**

### ***6.2.1 Election Assistance Commission***

The National Voter Registration Form is available online on the EAC website. Each state has particular instructions for how to complete this form. At present an applicant has to page back and forth between

the form and the state instructions while filling out the form. This is a cumbersome process. Recommendations one through three are suggested improvements to the NVRF form.

Recommendation EAC-1: The EAC should enhance the online form by adding automated assistance to make it easier for applicants to refer to their state's instructions when filling out the form. FVAP's automated assistant version for the online FPCA is a good example of a user-friendly tool for this purpose. Information collected in Voting Assistance Officer interviews indicated that military voters prefer the ease of use of the automated assistant version of the FPCA over the standard online version.

Recommendation EAC-2: Twenty-six states plus D.C. and Puerto Rico include a question on either the state voter registration form or the absentee ballot request form inquiring whether a voter requires assistance with voting. EAC should consider adding this as an optional question on the NVRF form to facilitate identification of a voter's need for assistance.

Recommendation EAC-3: NVRF forms are received by the state election office and typically are forwarded to the appropriate local election office for processing. Since the NVRF does not include a space for the applicant to enter the name of their county, state offices have to look up this information which adds to their workload and slows down the processing of these forms. The EAC should consider adding a space to enter the county name on the NVRF to streamline state processing of these forms.

The EAC could make better use of information technology to improve voting accessibility nationwide. UOCAVA voters can go to the FVAP portal to find everything they need to know about UOCAVA voting. But there is no similar authoritative source of information for disabled voters. Recommendation four is intended to remedy this deficiency.

Recommendation EAC-4: VA hospitals and other residential facilities house veterans from multiple states and jurisdictions. Many disabled veterans live in the community and do not have regular contact with the VA. Convenient, authoritative online information about registration and voting procedures for all the states is needed to enable VA volunteers as well as community-based veterans and their caregivers to easily find information about elections in their home jurisdictions and contact information for their local election officials. In its role as a national clearinghouse and resource regarding election administration in the United States, the EAC seems the logical organization to provide a web portal that provides a "one stop shop" for voters with disabilities and their caregivers. This activity is complementary to EAC's oversight role in fostering state compliance with the HAVA mandate to provide private and independent voting for disabled voters and establishing guidelines to test accessible voting systems. It is also consistent with EAC's regulatory responsibility for the National Voter Registration Act.

As noted under Election Administration Practices above, there needs to be more coordination between state and local election officials and VA facilities. Accomplishing this is complicated by the fact that the VA is not organized by state but by region. As the federal agency charged with providing assistance to state and local election officials, the EAC could facilitate the development of common procedures for coordinating state and local election office assistance to VA facilities. Recommendation 5 addresses this point.

Recommendation EAC-5: The EAC should provide a forum for VA representatives and state election officials to develop and implement consistent policies and procedures for the provision of voting assistance.

### ***6.2.2 Department of Veterans Affairs***

The Voluntary Services Office is the organization within the VA that has responsibility for providing voting assistance services. Aside from the Chief of Voluntary Services position in VA facilities and perhaps one staff person, there are no other paid employees who provide this support. The VA relies almost entirely on volunteers for this purpose.

Recommendation VA-1: The VA has no budget to provide voting assistance training for their volunteers. Any training has to be done on the volunteer's own time. VA facilities should coordinate with state and local election offices to provide appropriate training materials for VA personnel providing voting assistance. (See Recommendations SEO/LEO-2 and 3 above.)

Recommendation VA-2: VA hospitals and other residential facilities may house veterans from multiple states and local jurisdictions. The VA should work with the EAC and state and local election officials to develop guidelines for the provision of EAC, state and local election office assistance for VA facilities. (See Recommendation EAC-5 above.)

Recommendation VA-3: FVAP maintains a variety of online services, including a local election official directory. As an interim step to the development of an EAC portal, the VA should coordinate with FVAP to gain access to this directory and any other materials that may be useful information resources for VA staff and volunteers.

### ***6.2.3 Department of Defense***

There are many opportunities to improve voting services for individuals who are separating from military service. See Appendix E for a list of findings submitted to the Department of Defense for how voting services can be improved in ways that would positively impact recently injured veterans.

## **ACRONYMS**

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act  
AW2 = Army Wounded Warrior Program  
BAS = Battalion Aid Station  
CSH = Combat Support Hospital  
DoD = Department of Defense  
DTM = Directive-Type Memorandum  
EAC = Election Assistance Commission  
FPCA = Federal Post Card Application  
FST = Forward Surgical Team  
FVAP = Federal Voting Assistance Program  
FWAB = Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot  
HAVA = Help America Vote Act  
ITIF = Information Technology and Innovation Foundation  
IVAO = Installation Voting Assistance Office  
LEO = Local Election Official  
MEB = Medical Evaluation Board  
MHI = Military Heroes Initiative  
MOS = Military Operational Specialty  
MOVE = Military and Overseas Voters Empowerment Act  
NIST = National Institute of Standards and Technology  
NVRA = National Voter Registration Act  
NVRF = National Voter Registration Form  
OEF = Operation Enduring Freedom  
OIF = Operation Iraqi Freedom  
PEB = Physical Evaluation Board  
PTSD = Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder  
SEO = State Election Official  
TAP = Transition Assistance Program  
TBI = Traumatic Brain Injury  
UOCAVA = Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act  
VA = Department of Veterans Affairs  
VAO = Voting Assistance Officer  
VAVS = VA Voluntary Service  
VHA = Veterans Health Administration  
VMSG = Voluntary Voting System Guidelines  
WIA = Wounded In Action  
WTC = Warrior Transition Command



WTU = Warrior Transition Unit

WWI = Wounded Warrior Initiative

## ENDNOTES

1. Process descriptions are based on material in U.S. Election Assistance Commission, "Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act Registration and Voting Processes," 6 April 2011.
2. U.S. Election Assistance Commission. "The Impact of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 on the Administration of Elections for Federal Office 2009-2010." Report to the 112 Congress, 27 June 2011, p. 1.
3. Ibid., Table 2a, Application Sources: Total Forms Received, p. 38.
4. The term "all states" includes the District of Columbia and U.S. territories. American Samoa was not included in the website review because their website was not available.
5. This paragraph summarizes information found in the Soldier Family Assistance Handbook. Source citation is provided under References.
6. The discussion of the transition process for recently injured soldiers is based on information from the Warrior Transition Command website, the Walter Reed Warrior Transition Brigade Warrior Handbook, and the Walter Reed Family Assistance Handbook. Source citations are provided under References.
7. GovTrack.us, "S. 1963: Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010," accessed 31 March 2011.
8. The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by the President at Signing of Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act," May 5, 2010. <http://www.whitehouse.gov>, accessed 31 March 2011.

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## **APPENDIX A. FEDERAL POST CARD APPLICATION**

ON NEXT PAGE

# Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)

## Voter Registration and Absentee Ballot Request

A quicker, easier to complete, electronic version of this form is also available on **FVAP.gov**. For any questions about this form, consult your Voting Assistance Officer or the Voting Assistance Guide available in hard copy or on **FVAP.gov**. Please print in black ink.

<b>Classification</b> Make only 1 selection.  (In most States, you must be absent from your voting district to use this form).	<b>1</b>	I request an absentee ballot for all elections in which I am eligible to vote <b>AND</b> : <input type="checkbox"/> I am a member of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine on active duty <b>OR</b> <input type="checkbox"/> I am their spouse or dependent. <input type="checkbox"/> I am a U.S. citizen residing outside the U.S., and I intend to return. <input type="checkbox"/> I am a U.S. citizen residing outside the U.S., and I do not intend to return. <input type="checkbox"/> I am a U.S. citizen otherwise granted military/overseas voting rights under State law (check the Voting Assistance Guide).
<b>Political Party</b>	<b>2</b>	To vote in primary elections, your State may require you to specify a political party: <input type="text"/>
<b>Your legal name</b>	<b>3</b>	Last name <input type="text"/> Suffix <input type="text"/> First name <input type="text"/> Middle name <input type="text"/> Previous name (if applicable) <input type="text"/>
<b>Identification</b> Some States require your full SSN. Check your State's pages in the Voting Assistance Guide on <b>FVAP.gov</b> .	<b>4</b>	Sex <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F Race <input type="text"/> Birth date <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> State Driver's License or ID <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <b>OR</b> Social Security Number <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
<b>Contact information</b> Include international prefixes. No DSN number.	<b>5</b>	Telephone <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Fax <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Email <input type="text"/> Alternate Email <input type="text"/>
<b>Ballot receipt</b>	<b>6</b>	I prefer to receive my ballot, as permitted by my State, by: <input type="checkbox"/> Email/Online <input type="checkbox"/> Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Fax (rank from 1 -3 in order of preference; be sure appropriate contact information is provided above)
<b>U.S. address for voting purposes</b> Usually your last U.S. residence or your legal U.S. residence. See instructions.	<b>7</b>	Street Address (not P.O. Box) <input type="text"/> Apt. # <input type="text"/> City/Town/Village <input type="text"/> County <input type="text"/> State <input type="text"/> Zip Code <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
<b>Address where you live now</b> This is different from above. Your voting materials will be sent here, unless you specify a forwarding address in Box 9.	<b>8</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Additional requirements for your State</b> Such as: mail forwarding address, additional phone, or other State required information. See your State's pages in the Voting Assistance Guide on <b>FVAP.gov</b> .	<b>9</b>	<input type="text"/>

**Affirmation (REQUIRED):** I swear or affirm, under penalty of perjury, that:

- I am a member of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine on active duty or an eligible spouse or dependent of such a member, or a U.S. citizen temporarily residing outside the U.S., or other U.S. citizen residing outside the U.S.
- I am a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years of age (or will be by the day of the election), eligible to vote in the requested jurisdiction.
- I have not been convicted of a felony or other disqualifying offense or been adjudicated mentally incompetent, or if so, my voting rights have been reinstated.
- I am not registering, requesting a ballot, or voting in any other jurisdiction in the U.S.
- My signature and date herein indicate when I completed this document.
- The information on this form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that a material misstatement of fact in completion of this document may constitute grounds for conviction of perjury.

Signature

Print this form, sign, and send in.

Today's date

 /  / Witness signature / date if required by your State.  
See the Voting Assistance Guide on **FVAP.gov**.

Signature

Date

## **APPENDIX B. NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION FORM**

ON NEXT PAGE



# Voter Registration Application

Before completing this form, review the General, Application, and State specific instructions.

Are you a citizen of the United States of America? No <input type="checkbox"/>		This space for office use only.				
Will you be 18 years old on or before election day? No <input type="checkbox"/>						
<b>If you checked "No" in response to either of these questions, do not complete form.</b> (Please see state-specific instructions for rules regarding eligibility to register prior to age 18.)						
1	Ms. <input type="text"/>	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name(s)	The Fo <input type="text"/>	
2	Home Address		Apt. or Lot #	City/Town	State	Zip Code
3	Address Where You Get Your Mail If Different From Above			City/Town	State	Zip Code
4	Date of Birth		5	Telephone Number (optional)		
		Month Day Year		6		
7	Choice of Party (see item 7 in the instructions foy your State)		8	Race or Ethnic Group (see item 8 in the instructions for your State)		
9	I have reviewed my state's instructions and I swear/affirm that: ■ I am a United States citizen ■ I meet the eligibility requirements of my state and subscribe to any oath required. ■ The information I have provided is true to the best of my knowledge under penalty of perjury. If I have provided false information, I may be fined, imprisoned, or (if not a U.S. citizen) deported from or refused entry to the United States.			<div></div> <p>Please sign full name (or put mark) ▲</p> <p>Date: <div></div><div></div><div></div> Month Day Year</p>		

**If you are registering to vote for the first time:** please refer to the application instructions for information on submitting copies of valid identification documents with this form.

## Please fill out the sections below if they apply to you.

If this application is for a **change of name**, what was your name before you changed it?

A	Ms. <input type="text"/>	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name(s)	The Fourth <input type="text"/>
---	--------------------------	-----------	------------	----------------	---------------------------------

If you were **registered before but this is the first time you are registering from the address in Box 2**, what was your address where you were registered before?

B	Street (or route and box number)	Apt. or Lot #	City/Town/County	State	Zip Code
---	----------------------------------	---------------	------------------	-------	----------

If you live in a rural area but do not have a street number, or if you have no address, please show on the map where you live.

C	<div>■ Write in the names of the crossroads (or streets) nearest to where you live. ■ Draw an X to show where you live. ■ Use a dot to show any schools, churches, stores, or other landmarks near where you live, and write the name of the landmark.</div> <div><div>Example</div><div>Public School ●</div><div>Route #2</div><div>● Grocery Store</div><div>Woodchuck Road</div><div>X</div></div>		<div>NORTH ↑</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
---	--	--	--

If the applicant is unable to sign, who helped the applicant fill out this application? Give name, address and phone number (phone number optional).

D	
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**Mail this application to the address provided for your State.**

## **APPENDIX C. STATE OF GEORGIA APPLICATION FOR VOTER REGISTRATION**

ON NEXT PAGE

# STATE OF GEORGIA APPLICATION FOR VOTER REGISTRATION

Fill out the bottom half of this application by following these directions. Print clearly and use blue or black ink.

- LEGAL NAME.** Your full legal name including any suffix such as Sr., Jr., III, is required on this form.
- ADDRESS.** Provide residential address. This information is required.
- MAILING ADDRESS.** If mailing address is different from residential address, complete the mailing address section.
- PERSONAL INFORMATION.** A telephone number is helpful to registration officials if they have a question about your application. Gender and race are requested and are needed to comply with the Voting Rights Act of 1965, but are not mandated by law.
- VOTER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER.** Federal law requires you to provide your full GA Drivers License number or GA State issued ID number. If you do not have a GA Drivers License or GA ID you must provide the last 4 digits of your Social Security number. Providing your full Social Security number is optional. Your Social Security number will be kept confidential and may be used for comparison with other state agency databases for voter registration identification purposes. If you do not possess a GA Drivers License or Social Security number please check the appropriate box and a unique identifier will be provided for you.
- OATH.** Federal law requires that you answer the citizenship and age questions. Read the oath and sign your name. If you cannot complete this application unassisted because of physical disability or illiteracy, you must either sign or make your mark on the signature line, and the person assisting you **MUST** sign the signature space for person assisting voter.
- POLL OFFICER QUESTION.** Your willingness to be a poll worker will have no bearing on your application for registration.
- NAME/ADDRESS CHANGE.** Complete these sections to change the name or address of your current voter registration.
- MAP/DIAGRAM:** If you live in an area without house numbers and street names, please include a drawing of your location to assist us in locating your appropriate voting precinct.
- DELIVERY INSTRUCTIONS:** Verify that you have completed and signed the application. Enclose a copy of your ID if you are submitting this form by mail and registering for the first time in Georgia. Fold the application in half, remove the tape at the top, and press the edges together. The application is ready for you to mail (postage is prepaid) or deliver to your county voter registration office.
- You are NOT officially registered to vote until this application is approved.** You should receive a voter precinct card in the mail. If you do not receive this acknowledgement within two to four weeks after mailing this form, please contact your county voter registration office. You can find your poll location and other election information on the Secretary of State's website at [www.sos.state.ga.us/elections](http://www.sos.state.ga.us/elections).



**REQUIREMENT:** If you are submitting this form by mail and you are registering for the first time in Georgia, enclose a copy of one of the following with your application: A copy of a current and valid photo ID, a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows your name and address. Those who are entitled to vote by absentee ballot under the Uniform and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act are exempt from this requirement.

Place copy of  
ID in pocket



Trim copy of  
ID to size

COUNTY PRECINCT	MUNICIPAL PRECINCT	DISTRICT COMBO	DDS APPLICATION NO.	REGISTRATION NO.	CHANGE OF ADDRESS CHANGE OF NAME OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>													
OFFICE USE ONLY																			
1	LAST NAME		FIRST NAME		MIDDLE OR MAIDEN NAME	SUFFIX <input type="checkbox"/> Jr. <input type="checkbox"/> Sr. <input type="checkbox"/> II <input type="checkbox"/> III <input type="checkbox"/> IV <input type="checkbox"/> V													
2	RESIDENCE ADDRESS: House No. and street name		APT. NO.	CITY	COUNTY	STATE <b>GA.</b> ZIP CODE													
3	MAILING ADDRESS (If different from residence address): Post-office box or route			CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE													
4	TELEPHONE NUMBER ( )	DATE OF BIRTH: MM/DD/YYYY	GENDER Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	RACE/ ETHNICITY: <input type="checkbox"/> Black <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Other															
5	VALID GA. DRIVER'S LICENSE OR GA. I.D. NO. <table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>										If no GA Driver's License or GA. I.D. No., must provide last 4 digits of your Social Security Number		FULL SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (OPTIONAL) Last 4 Digits (Required) <table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>						<input type="checkbox"/> Check if you do not have a GA Driver's License, GA. I.D. No. or Social Security No.
6	<p><b>I SWEAR OR AFFIRM:</b> (Your answer is required under federal law) Are you a citizen of the United States of America? Check One: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Will you be 18 years of age on or before election day? Check One: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <b>If you checked "No" in response to either of these questions, do not complete this form.</b></p> <p><b>I SWEAR OR AFFIRM THAT:</b> I reside at the address listed above. I am eligible to vote in Georgia. I am not serving a sentence for having been convicted of a felony involving moral turpitude. I have not been judicially declared to be mentally incompetent.</p> <p>Date _____ Signature _____ X Signature of person helping illiterate or disabled voter _____</p>																		
7	May we contact you about working as an Election Day poll officer? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If you would like to receive additional information by email, please provide your e-mail address:		8			Military Active Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>													
		CHANGE OF NAME: If you are changing your name, list the name under which you were previously registered: Last Name Suffix First Middle or Maiden Name																	
		CHANGE OF ADDRESS: If you are changing your address or if you were previously registered to vote, list your previous address: CITY COUNTY STATE																	

**APPENDIX D. DIRECTIVE-TYPE MEMORANDUM (DTM) 10-021, GUIDANCE IN  
IMPLEMENTING INSTALLATION VOTER ASSISTANCE OFFICES**

ON NEXT PAGE



## UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

November 15, 2010

PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
DEPUTY CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER  
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
DIRECTOR, OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION  
DIRECTOR, COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM  
EVALUATION  
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
ASSISTANTS TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT  
DIRECTOR, NET ASSESSMENT  
DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES  
DIRECTORS OF THE DoD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Directive-Type Memorandum (DTM) 10-021 – Guidance in Implementing  
Installation Voter Assistance Offices (IVAOs)

References: (a) DoD Directive 5124.02, "Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and  
Readiness (USD(P&R))," June 23, 2008  
(b) Section 583(b) of Public Law 111-84, "National Defense Authorization  
Act for Fiscal Year 2010," October 28, 2009  
(c) Section 7(a)(2) of Public Law 103-31, "National Voter Registration Act  
(NVRA)," May 20, 1993  
(d) DoD Directive 1000.04, "Federal Voting Assistance Program,"  
April 14, 2004

Purpose. This DTM:

- In accordance with the authority in Reference (a), establishes policy and implements the requirement of Reference (b) to establish an IVAO on each military installation.
- Designates each of those IVAOs as voter registration agencies pursuant to Reference (c).

- This DTM is effective upon its publication to the DoD Issuances Website; it shall be incorporated into the revision of DoD Directive 1000.04 (Reference (d)). This DTM shall expire effective June 1, 2011.

Applicability. This Instruction applies to OSD, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the Department of Defense (hereafter referred to collectively as the “DoD Components”).

Policy. It is DoD policy that:

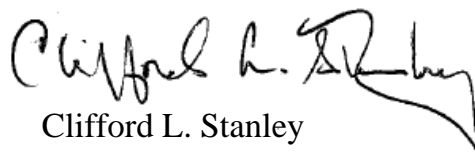
- IVAOs shall be established on each military installation. The IVAO will provide robust voter assistance to military personnel, their dependents, civilian Federal employees, and such other qualified voters as may have access to such installation offices.
- IVAOs shall also serve as voter registration agencies consistent with Reference (c), fully implementing the voter registration provisions of References (b) and (c).

Responsibilities. The Secretaries of the Military Departments shall:

- Designate IVAOs on all installations under their control.
- Simultaneously designate those IVAOs as voter registration agencies consistent with Reference (c).
- Publish implementing guidance within 60 days of the effective date of this DTM.
- Ensure the purpose and the location of IVAOs are well advertised.

Procedures. The attachment provides procedures for complying with this DTM.

Releasability. UNLIMITED. This DTM is approved for public release and is available on the DoD Issuances Website at <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives>.

  
Clifford L. Stanley

Attachment:  
As stated

ATTACHMENT

IVAO PROCEDURES

1. GENERAL. This attachment provides guidance for and establishes procedures concerning the establishment of IVAOs on military installations.

2. PROCEDURES

a. Criteria. The IVAO shall be established within the installation headquarters organization reporting directly to the installation commander, even if geographically located in another office such as a Personnel Support Detachment, Family Readiness Group, In & Out Processing Center, Community Service Offices, or other centralized administrative support site. As of the date of this DTM, the IVAO shall also be considered to be a voter registration agency designated consistent with Reference (c) and should be located in a well-advertised, fixed location, consistent throughout the Service, and should be physically co-located with an existing office that receives extensive visits by Service personnel, family members, and DoD civilians.

b. Requirements. The IVAO shall:

(1) Be included in the processing activities required of reporting personnel. Unit Voting Assistance Officers (UVAOs) may advise and assist the IVAO in fulfilling the voter assistance functions for deploying personnel, personnel returning from deployment, and personnel recording a change of address. However, the IVAO is responsible to ensure that UVAOs have fully complied with the voter assistance responsibilities as described in References (b) and (c). This includes both military and civilian personnel, as well as any voting-age dependents, contractors, and other civilians who have access to the IVAO.

(2) Provide written information on voter registration procedures and absentee ballot procedures. This can be met by providing the applicant the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) or the National Voter Registration Form, the attached instructions for those forms, and the Voting Assistance Guide for absent uniformed services voters, voting-age dependent voters, and overseas civilians.

(a) The FPCA shall be provided to absent uniformed services personnel and their family members (both within and outside the United States), and to Federal civilian employees and other U. S. citizens who have access to the IVAO outside the United States.



(b) The National Voter Registration Form issued by the Election Assistance Commission shall be provided to Federal civilian employees and other U.S. citizens who have access to the IVAO within the United States, and uniformed services voters who currently reside in their voting districts.

(3) Provide direct assistance to individuals in completing the forms necessary to register to vote, updating their voter registration information, and requesting absentee ballots, regardless of the form used.

(4) Transmit the completed FPCA or National Voter Registration Form for the applicant, within 5 calendar days, to the appropriate local election office, if requested by the applicant.

(5) Maintain monthly records regarding the number of citizens assisted in the registration and absentee ballot request process; the number of FPCA and NVRA forms provided to citizens; the number of forms mailed to election offices for citizens; and the number of forms taken by the citizens themselves.

c. Guidance. The DoD Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) has developed specific training and assistance and made it available to individual Service Voting Action Officers (SVAOs) and installations to ensure this process is implemented fully, correctly, and precisely in accordance with the guidance developed by the Department of Defense in coordination with the Department of Justice, the enforcement agency for NVRA. FVAP will coordinate with individual SVAOs as to their Service's requirements for such training and assistance, which the Services are strongly encouraged to use and implement.

## **APPENDIX E. FINDINGS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

There are many opportunities to improve voting services for individuals who are separating from military service. The following are a list of findings submitted to the Department of Defense for how voting services can be improved in ways that would positively impact recently injured veterans.

DoD-1: The differences between UOCAVA and civilian absentee voting should be emphasized to separating military service members. They should be advised that, as civilians, they are expected to vote in person at their designated polling place. However, they may still be eligible to vote absentee. States have established a variety of qualifying criteria for civilian absentee voting, which often include having a disability. The voter must make a separate request to vote absentee using the state absentee ballot request form. Some states allow permanent absentee voting for disabled voters. Other states require voters to make an absentee request either each election year or for each election.

DoD-2: Each state has its own instructions for how to complete the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and how to complete the National Voter Registration Form (NVRF). These instructions are not necessarily consistent because these forms serve two different purposes. The FPCA is a simultaneous voter registration application and absentee ballot request. The NVRF is only a voter registration application. In addition to possibly varying instructions, submission deadlines may also be different for the two forms. Installation Voting Assistance Offices (IVAOs) should be made aware of these differences so they are able to appropriately advise separating military service members.

DoD-3: When military personnel are separating from service and returning to civilian status, IVAOs should inform them that they (and their dependents) must contact their local election office (LEO) to update their voter registration information. The LEO needs to have any change of address information as well as be advised that the voter is no longer a UOCAVA voter. Failure to do so may result in their not being permitted to vote or possibly being given a provisional ballot when they go to their polling place.

DoD-4: When injured service members transfer to Warrior Transition Units they engage with a multi-disciplinary team to develop and implement their personalized Comprehensive Transition Plans. These plans cover six domain areas to ensure that transitioning service members are fully prepared to function on all levels when they return to civilian life: career, physical, emotional, social, family and spiritual. The opportunity for civic engagement through voting participation should be covered under the social domain. Transitioning personnel should be advised of civilian registration and voting procedures and other pertinent information so that those who choose to vote know what actions they need to take.

DoD-5: There are several non-medical personnel on the multidisciplinary team with whom transitioning personnel have frequent contact, for example, Recovery Care Coordinators, Family Management Specialists, Social Workers, Transition Assistance Advisors. These individuals should know who the VAO is for their installation to refer transitioning personnel for registration and voting information.

DoD-6: Severely injured individuals may require personal assistance with some of the tasks associated with reviewing a ballot, marking their ballot choices and submitting the ballot. Every injured service member is assigned to a Wounded Warrior Advocate whose responsibility is to identify and manage individual and family issues throughout the course of the recovery and transition process. These

Advocates are also stationed in VA hospitals, where there are no Voting Assistance Officers. Warrior Advocates could be providers of personal voting assistance, if requested by the voter. However, there may be a question of whether these personnel are authorized to perform this service. DoD and/or the Services should evaluate whether this is an appropriate duty for Warrior Advocates and if authorization is required.

DoD-7: Family members are notified as soon as possible after a severe casualty occurs and often accompany the wounded service member throughout his or her course of treatment and rehabilitation. The family member could also provide personal assistance with voting tasks, especially after service member has returned to civilian status. There is no restriction in VAO training and guidance materials that prevents VAOs from working with a family member on the voter's behalf to submit a voter registration application or to request an absentee ballot. DoD should evaluate whether it is necessary to explicitly provide VAO guidance that this is permitted.