



**FVAP.gov**  
FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

# Voting Residence

Uniformed Service Members and  
Their Eligible Family Members

FACT SHEET

**Wherever U.S. citizens go,  
FVAP ensures their voice is heard.**

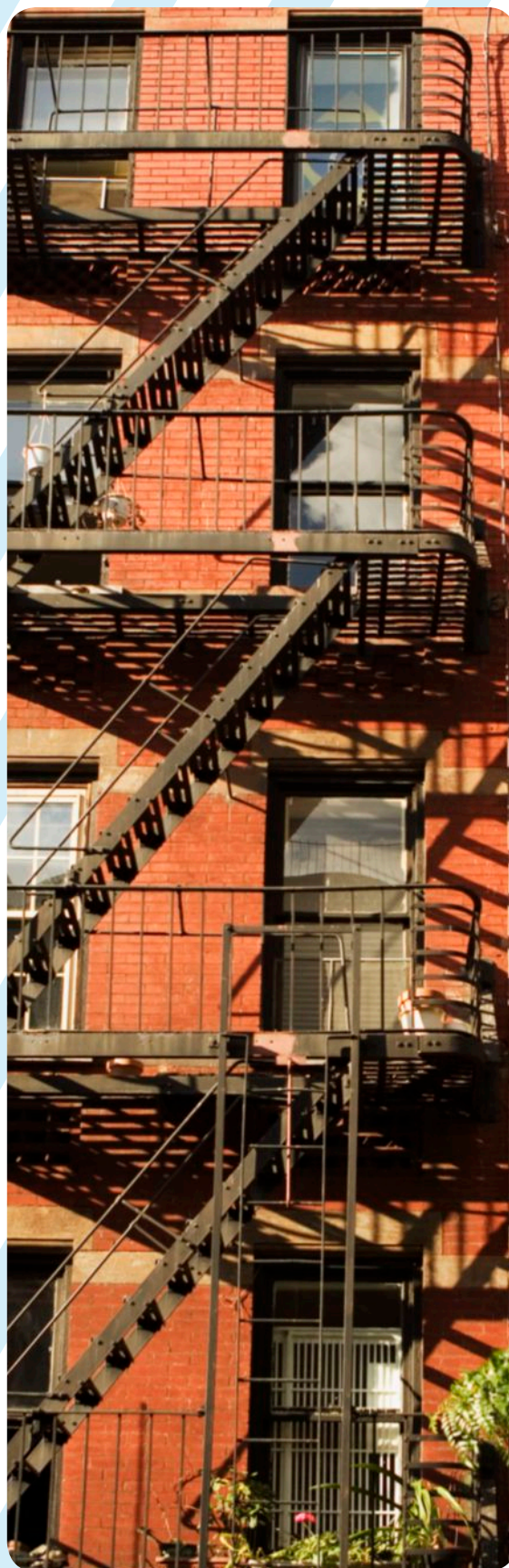
The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) works to ensure Service members, their eligible family members and overseas citizens are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully do so - from anywhere in the world.

## »»» What is a voting residence and why is it important?

Your voting residence is within your State of legal residence or domicile. It is the true, fixed address that you consider your permanent home and where you had a physical presence. Your State of legal residence is used for State income tax purposes, and determines eligibility to vote for Federal and State elections and qualification for in-state tuition rates.

State of legal residence and voting residence is sometimes mistaken for home of record. While your voting residence may be the same as your home of record at the beginning of your military career, if you change your legal residence or domicile at any point you also need to update your voting residence.

To claim a new legal residence or domicile, consult your legal counsel or military legal assistance office, as there may be other factors to consider, such as tax implications.





## ★ Military Service members

You may only have **one legal voting residence at a time**.

Service members, **your voting residence should be within the State listed on your Leave and Earnings Statement** which defines your State for withholding State taxes.

**Don't confuse voting residence with home of record.** Your home of record is the place you lived when you entered the military. It does not change while you are on active duty. Your voting residence may be the same as your home of record but needs to be updated if and when you decide to establish a new State of legal residence.

**Your State of legal residence is not automatically changed** when you are assigned to a new duty location.

It may be changed with your approval by submitting the appropriate paperwork to your finance officer. However, **you should first consult legal counsel**.

You have the option to **establish residency or domicile each time you are transferred** to a new location. Once you change your residence or domicile, you may not revert to a previous residence without re-establishing a new physical presence according to residency laws of that State.

**You can't vote in person at embassies, consulates or military installations.** The online assistant at FVAP.gov or your Voting Assistance Officer can help you complete the necessary absentee voting forms found at FVAP.gov and provide additional information.



## ★ Spouses and eligible family members

Your State of legal residence or domicile ☐ and accompanying voting residence ☐ may differ from your sponsor's, as it isn't assumed upon marriage. The Military Spouse Residency Relief Act (MSRRA) allows you to retain the same residence or domicile that your Service member has established so long as you also established residency or domicile in the same State.

MSRRA does not permit you to choose any State; you must establish residency or domicile. Ways to do this may include voting, paying taxes, owning property, holding a driver's license and registering a vehicle. Requirements vary by State; consult legal counsel to discuss tax implications and other effects of MSRRA. As a military spouse you can:

- 1) retain your sponsor's or Service member's residency or domicile
- 2) keep your current, established residency or domicile
- 3) take the appropriate steps to establish a new residency or domicile

Some children turn 18 while their family is stationed overseas. To vote, they should use the last U.S. address they had before departing to the current duty station.

## ★ Maintain current contact info

Your local election official needs your current contact information to reach you come election time. The most efficient way is to complete a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) annually, with every change of address and at least 90 days prior to the election you want to vote in. That way your election official knows you want to register in that State, how to reach you, and most importantly where to send your ballot!

### CONTACT FVAP

Monday–Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET Phone: 1-800-438-VOTE (8683) | DSN: 425-1584 | Email: [vote@fvap.gov](mailto:vote@fvap.gov)  
Go to [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) and click on "contact" to find where to send your election materials. Media inquiries: [media@fvap.gov](mailto:media@fvap.gov)  
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