



**Category: (NEW) Uniformed and Overseas Voters: Exemplary Services to Assist Military and Overseas Voters**

**Program Title:** PWC UOCAVA Connect

**Jurisdiction:** Prince William County Office of Elections

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**Overview and Purpose**

Prince William County serves a highly mobile, “in-transit” electorate, including a large population of Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) voters. In 2024, the jurisdiction supported over 1,000 UOCAVA voters, creating a substantial volume of time-sensitive ballot requests, renewals, and communications.

To advance the voting rights of military and overseas voters, and to proactively prevent lapses in eligibility for ballot delivery, Prince William County implemented a purpose-built UOCAVA database and automated communication program. The program closes a critical service gap in the current statewide voter system by identifying expiring FPCA applications and initiating timely voter outreach, paired with automated acknowledgements once renewals are received and processed.

This program ensures UOCAVA voters receive clear, individualized instructions and confirmation of their ballot status, while reducing administrative burden and minimizing manual errors.

**Problem Statement**

Virginia’s statewide voter system does not provide a mechanism to remind UOCAVA voters when their Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) is expiring. While an expiration reminder is not required under Virginia law, Prince William County has chosen to provide this service for several years as a proactive, customer-service-driven practice to better support military and overseas voters and reduce the risk of interrupted ballot delivery. <sup>1</sup>

Prince William County used that acknowledgement approach in prior years, but it required staff to create and manage more individualized messaging manually - particularly when voters’ circumstances differed.

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<sup>1</sup> Attachment #1



As UOCAVA volume increased, relying on manual processes created operational risks and service limitations, including:

- Higher likelihood of missed expirations without a system prompt
- Inconsistent messaging and a greater potential for errors when communications were handled individually
- Delays during peak election periods, when staffing is stretched across multiple mission-critical functions
- Significant administrative workload for a high-mobility jurisdiction

To maintain a proactive, voter-centered standard of service and to make individualized communication scalable and consistent, Prince William County implemented a dedicated UOCAVA database with automated expiration outreach and enhanced acknowledgements.

## **Solution**

Prince William County built and deployed a UOCAVA - focused database designed to proactively manage FPCA expirations and standardize communication. We do not characterize our support as personal outreach to UOCAVA voters based solely on portal activity. The online portal does not fully capture the end-to-end UOCAVA workflow, so we supplement portal-based interactions with additional staff review and targeted follow-up as needed to ensure UOCAVA voters receive appropriate guidance and can successfully complete the process.

This program evolved over several years. It began with staff sending manual emails to acknowledge receipt of FPCA forms and to provide courtesy reminders as applications neared expiration. As UOCAVA volume increased, it became clear we needed a more efficient and consistent tool. We then converted our established email templates<sup>2</sup> into automated, voter-specific notifications and acknowledgements, enabling timely outreach while reducing manual workload and minimizing errors.

## **Automated FPCA Expiration Reminders**

The database tracks UOCAVA FPCA status and expiration dates and enables the office to send targeted reminder emails to voters whose FPCA applications have expired (or are expiring, per internal schedule). These reminders provide direct guidance and reduce the

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<sup>2</sup> Attachment #2



likelihood that voters experience an interruption to their ballot delivery for upcoming elections due to an administrative expiration.

### **Situation-Based Attachments and Clear Action Paths**

Each reminder email includes multiple attachments, allowing the voter to take the correct action based on their current circumstances:

- Renew UOCAVA Status – complete a new FPCA form
- Cancel Registration (when applicable) – Virginia requires a voter signature to cancel registration, so the email includes the proper form to comply with state requirements
- Update Registration Status – for voters who are no longer active military or living overseas, the email provides documentation to update their status appropriately

This approach reduces back-and-forth emails and ensures voters receive *all* compliant options in a single communication.<sup>3</sup>

### **Automatic Acknowledgement After Renewal**

The GREB Handbook (Section 7.7.1.7, FPCA Acknowledgment) recommends that when ballots are not yet ready to be issued, and an FPCA is properly completed and the voter is eligible to receive a ballot, the jurisdiction should provide an acknowledgement notice (including by email). Consistent with this guidance, our acknowledgements include key information such as the ballot type (e.g., full ballot or federal-only) and the ballot delivery method (e.g., mail, email, or fax).<sup>4</sup>

Once the application is renewed and processed, an acknowledgement email is triggered, confirming the voter's updated status. Acknowledgements are provided via email because many UOCAVA voters cannot reliably receive mailed notices within the timeframes required for election-related actions. Email allows for timely confirmation of FPCA processing and reduces the risk of delays associated with domestic and international mail delivery. This acknowledgement confirms key details, such as:

- New expiration date
- Primary election selection (if chosen)
- Ballot type / ballot status details

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<sup>3</sup> Attachment #3

<sup>4</sup> Attachment #4



This confirmation step improves transparency and trust, and reduces inbound inquiries regarding receipt of their requests or ballot status. <sup>5</sup>

## **Impact and Measurable Benefits**

### **Improved Voter Access and Confidence**

By proactively prompting renewals and sending confirmations, the program helps ensure military and overseas voters remain continuously eligible to receive ballots without interruption. The voter experience is clearer, faster, and more reliable.

### **Reduced Administrative Burden During Peak Election Cycles**

For a high-volume UOCAVA jurisdiction, automation substantially reduces repetitive manual tasks, including:

- Manually tracking expiration dates
- Manually drafting individualized emails
- Re-sending forms and instructions repeatedly
- Responding to status-check inquiries

This allows election staff to focus on ballot preparation, compliance, and core election readiness.

### **Lower Error Rates and More Consistent Compliance**

Standardized templates, attachments, and automated routing of communications reduce:

- Data entry mistakes
- Missed expirations
- Voters receiving incomplete instructions

The program strengthens process integrity and improves consistency across staff, shifts, and election cycles.

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<sup>5</sup> Attachment #5



## **Equity, Accessibility, and Customer Service Improvements**

UOCAVA voters often face barriers not experienced by domestic voters: inconsistent mail service, international timelines, deployment conditions, and limited ability to make phone calls during U.S. business hours. This program advances equitable access by providing:

- Proactive outreach (instead of waiting for voters to discover a problem)
- Simple, complete action packets in one email
- Clear confirmation that renewals were accepted and recorded

## **Innovation and Replicability**

This program is highly replicable for other jurisdictions because it is built around core election administration principles:

- Date-based tracking of FPCA status and expirations
- Standardized, voter communications
- Automated acknowledgements to maintain compliance
- Scalable workflows that perform under high volume

The model can be adapted to any locality facing growth in UOCAVA population or staffing constraints.<sup>6</sup>

## **Summary**

Prince William County's UOCAVA database program modernizes and strengthens services for military and overseas voters by closing a known system gap, the statewide system does not generate FPCA expiration reminders, and replacing manual, error-prone outreach with a proactive, compliant, and scalable solution.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond improving administrative efficiency, the program materially improves the voter experience. The more individualized acknowledgement emails provide clear, specific information about the voter's status (including expiration date and ballot details), which increases voter confidence and reduces the need for back-and-forth follow-up questions

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<sup>6</sup> Attachment #6

<sup>7</sup> Attachment #7



about whether forms were received, processed, or whether the voter remains eligible for ballot delivery.

Collectively, this approach improves transparency, preserves ballot access, and supports high-volume UOCAVA service delivery in a fast-moving, in-transit jurisdiction.