

# ***SURVEY OF FEDERAL OVERSEAS CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY***

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the Survey of Federal Overseas Civilian Employees. What follows is a brief description of the survey methodology, including questionnaire design, the survey sample, distribution, response rate, and data weighting.

In succeeding sections of this chapter, the reader will find:

- detailed findings for the survey, including a question-by-question analysis of the survey data;
- 29 data tables, providing survey results cross-tabulated by important respondent characteristics; and
- a copy of the survey questionnaire used to administer the Post-Election Survey of Federal Overseas Civilian Employees.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Questionnaire**

The instrument used for data collection was the “1996 Post-Election Voting Survey,” which is attached at the conclusion of this chapter. The questionnaire contained 47 questions and an optional section allowing the respondent to make comments.

The first 8 questions ask about the characteristics of the respondent, such as age, years away from the U.S., and overseas country of residence. Questions 9 through 12 ask the respondent about his or her own voting behavior in the 1996 election. Questions 13 through 23 ask about the process of obtaining an absentee ballot, including use of the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). Questions 24 through 42 ask about voting information resources provided by the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), plus electronic transmission of election materials. Questions 43 through 45 ask about other sources of voting information that are available to the respondent. Finally, Questions 46 and 47 ask respondents for their pay category and Department/Agency.

### **Sample**

2,500 Federal civilian employees living overseas were selected to be surveyed. The sample file was provided by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Prior to sample selection, certain individuals are excluded from the file, because they are not eligible for the survey: employees living in the U.S., summer employees, non-paid individuals, non-citizens, and those less than 18 years old were all excluded. After those exclusions, the remaining OPM file was sorted by Social Security Number. Every “nth” record selected, to yield a total sample of 2,500.

### **Distribution**

The post-election survey packets were distributed through the personnel office installations (POI) responsible for the specific Federal employees who were to be sampled. Survey packets were individually addressed, then batched and sent to 94 POI, along with a respondent list and distribution instructions for each POI. POI personnel distributed survey packets to individual respondents.

The batched questionnaire packages were shipped by the U.S. Postal Service to each POI on October 10, 1996. POI personnel were asked to distribute the survey packages in time to reach the respondents on or about Election Day, November 5.

The survey packages contained the questionnaire, a cover letter from the Secretary of Defense, and a post-paid return envelope.

Approximately 8 weeks later, a duplicate mailing package was sent to a representative sampling of those who had not yet responded to the survey, in order to increase the overall survey response.

Responses were accepted until April 4, 1997.

### **Response Rate**

The response rate is the ratio of completed and returned surveys to the number receiving a questionnaire, less postal non-deliverables. The response rate for the 1996 Survey of Federal Overseas Civilian Employees was 32%. [757 completed survey forms received ÷ (2,500 survey packages distributed, less 115 packages returned as non-deliverable)].

### **Weighting**

Consistent with past post-election survey practice, survey results have not been weighted.

### **Conclusion**

The following section presents the detailed findings of the Survey of Federal Overseas Civilian Employees.