

SURVEY OF UNIT VOTING ASSISTANCE OFFICERS: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the Survey of Unit Voting Assistance Officers (UVAOs). 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;
- 15 data tables, providing survey results cross-tabulated by Service Branch and other respondent characteristics; and
- a copy of the survey questionnaire used to administer the Post-Election Survey of Unit Voting Assistance Officers.

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire

The instrument used for data collection was the “1996 Post-Election Survey of Unit Voting Assistance Officers,” which is attached at the conclusion of this chapter. The questionnaire contained 44 questions and an optional section allowing the respondent to make comments.

The first 5 questions ask about characteristics of the respondent, such as age, Branch of Service, and paygrade. Questions 6 through 9 address the UVAO’s responsibilities, including the size of their unit and the length of their service as a UVAO. Questions 10 through 31 ask about voting information resources provided by the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), plus electronic transmission of election materials. Questions 32 through 44 address other sources of voting information available to UVAOs, their experience obtaining needed materials, the number of people they served in 1996, time spent on UVAO responsibilities, major activities as a UVAO, and level of satisfaction with several important factors affecting their responsibilities, and most frequent complaints or problems they faced.

Sample

500 UVAOs were selected to be sampled from each of the Service Branches: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard. Two distinct sampling methodologies were used.

For the Coast Guard portion of the sample, 500 individual UVAOs were selected from a list supplied by the Coast Guard.

For the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps a more complicated sample selection process was used, with survey respondents selected by the Chain of Command. Each of the 4 Service Voting Action Officers (SVAOs) selected 40 installations to participate in the survey process. The 40 installations are grouped as follows:

- 10 from the largest installations in the continental US (CONUS), each containing at least 20 units.
- 10 from the smallest CONUS installations, each containing at least 5 units.
- 10 from the largest installations outside the continental US (OCONUS), each containing at least 20 units.
- 10 from the smallest OCONUS installations, each containing at least 5 units.

The selected Installation Voting Officers (IVOs), in turn, chose the Unit Voting Assistance Officers within their installation who would participate in the survey.

Distribution

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

The Coast Guard respondents' survey packets were individually-addressed and mailed directly to the 500 UVAOs who had been selected to participate in the survey.

Approximately 2 weeks after distribution of the survey packets, the UVAOs were sent a reminder letter encouraging them to respond to the survey.

Distribution for the other Service Branches was handled through the Chain of Command. Box(es) of 500 survey packets and 500 reminder letters, plus administrative materials, were sent to each of 4 SVAOs.

Each SVAO distributed batches of 5 and 20 survey packets and reminder letters to the 40 installations they had selected. The IVOs then distributed the individual survey packets to the UVAOs. Approximately two weeks later, the IVOs distributed the reminder letters to the participating UVAOs.

The Coast Guard survey packets were mailed on October 30, 1996. For the other Service Branches, distribution through the Chain of Command began on October 14, in order to assure that the packets would be received by the UVAOs on or about Election Day, November 5.

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 Unit Voting Assistance Officers was 50%. [1,249 completed survey forms received ÷ (2,500 survey packages distributed, less 17 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 Unit Voting Assistance Officers.