

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Post-election Survey of Overseas Citizens, Post-election Survey of Local Election Officials

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Need for Information Collection. *The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986 (UOCAVA)*, 42 USC 1973ff (Attachment 1), mandates this information collection. The *UOCAVA* permits members of the Uniformed Services and Merchant Marine, and their eligible family members and all citizens residing outside the United States who are absent from the United States and its territories to vote in the general election for federal offices. The 1988 Executive Order 12642 (Attachment 1) names the Secretary of Defense as the “Presidential designee” for administering the *UOCAVA*. The Secretary of Defense in turn delegated this responsibility to the Director of the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), in Department of Defense Directive 1000.4, *Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)* (Attachment 1), which defines the responsibilities and authority of the FVAP.

To obtain information required under *UOCAVA* for statistical analysis of uniformed services and overseas nonmilitary voter participation and the absentee voting process, surveys are administered to overseas citizens and local election officials.

2. Use of Information. The respondents for this information collection are overseas citizens and local election officials. The two surveys associated with this information collection, the *Post-Election Voting Survey of Overseas Citizens* and the *Post-Election Voting Survey of Local Officials*, will be administered to overseas U.S. citizens not affiliated with the federal government and to local election officials, respectively. Attached are paper versions of both survey instruments (Attachment 2). Web-based versions are not as yet available, but will contain the same text as paper versions.

The U.S. Postal Service and the Department of Defense Military Postal Service Agency facilitate the physical transmission of election materials between the voter and local election officials. The Department of Justice enforces *UOCAVA* protections.

As in prior survey administrations, the data collected under *UOCAVA* will identify areas where the electoral process can be improved by providing an accurate picture of the absentee voting process through the perspectives of the overseas voters and the local election officials. Additionally, the data will permit a continuing evaluation of the extent recent legislative changes have been successful in removing barriers to the Federal Post Card Application for absentee voting and identify any remaining obstacles to voting by *UOCAVA* citizens. To obtain this data FVAP must collect current information to compare with the information collected following previous Federal elections. Approximately 9 months prior to fielding the *Post-Election Voting Survey of Local Officials* the survey sample will be drawn. A letter and accompanying data collection sheet were sent to the sample of local election officials (Attachment 3). This letter

states the items listed on the data collection sheet are based on items on the survey and thus may be used to facilitate data collection. The letter states the data collection sheet is for the local election officials' convenience only. OMB granted verbal approval to send the letter to the local election officials along with the data collection sheet "on the condition the data are not sent in until after the election." The data collection sheet may be used by the local election officials as an operational tool to help gather the data during the election year and assist in completing the Federal Voting Assistance Program post-election survey. The information collection will occur immediately following the 2008 Federal election with surveys arriving for the local election officials immediately prior to the 2008 election.

The DoD Voting Information Center, or "VIC," is a Web site providing callers direct access to their U.S. Senators and Representative, Governor, Secretary of State, chief election official, and Service or Department of State Voting Action Officers. The VIC provides information on upcoming elections and general information on requesting and submitting absentee ballots.

Following the 2004 election, the FVAP reported to the President and Congress that 1) voting participation of non-federally employed overseas citizens was higher than in any past Presidential election; and 2) local election officials had encountered problems with voting residence addresses, inadequate mailing addresses, and illegible writing on the Federal Post Card Applications. As a result of the 2004 survey, FVAP has updated and made changes to the VIC.

3. Improved Information Technology. For local election officials, paper-and-pencil survey with a Web-option is available. For overseas citizens, Web surveys with a paper-and-pencil option will be available.

The Web surveys will be administered on the operations contractor's secure Web site. At the entry point to the surveys, sample members will be prompted for an individual ticket number to access the survey. For the 2008 survey the ticket number will be affixed to the paper survey and will be included in all e-mail notifications. The purpose of the individual ticket number is to ensure only eligible persons access the survey Web site and to ensure participants complete the Web survey instrument only once. For further details on protection of data for the Web-based versions see paragraph A11.

For the 2004 data collection, the response rate for local election officials was just over 50%. This survey asks questions about data that may not be readily available, or not collected. Hence, with OMB approval, a letter and accompanying data collection sheet were sent to the sample of local election officials to alert potential respondents of the materials needed prior to the data collection.

Data collection for the overseas citizens has been problematic resulting in low response rates (16% in 2004). In the past, data collection was not customized to accommodate local conditions so that overseas citizens in areas with poor mail delivery were treated similarly to those in areas with good mail delivery. The survey packages were sent to Posts (embassies/consulates) for distribution to local overseas citizens. In some cases Posts reported they did not receive the packages resulting in low response rates. Our plan for the 2008 administration is to capitalize on

the use of web-based data collection methodology for those selected overseas citizens with registered email addresses and internet access, while maintaining hard copy paper survey data collection for those without such capability but for whom a postal mailing address is know.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication. There is no other Federal agency tasked with collecting this information. The Secretary of Defense is the "Presidential designee" under 42 USC 1973ff. The FVAP administers the Federal responsibilities of the Act for the Secretary of Defense. Presently, the only information of a similar nature available is information collected by FVAP from surveys of prior elections. This information is obsolete and cannot be used for the current election. Without current information, the FVAP cannot perform its responsibilities under the Act.

5. Methods Used to Minimize Burden on Small Entities. This data collection is from a sample of possible voters and local election officials, not businesses.

6. Consequences of Not Collecting the Information. *UOCAVA* mandates this information collection. This public law requires a report to Congress not later than the end of each year after a Presidential election. If surveys were not administered, the Department would not be in compliance with the law.

7. Special Circumstances. There are no special circumstances. This collection will be conducted in a manner consistent with guidelines contained in 5 CFR 1320.5(d)(2).

8. Agency 60-Day Federal Register Notice and Consultations Outside the Agency. An agency 60-Day Federal Notice (Attachment 4) was published in Vol. 72, No.68, April 10, 2007, Federal Register, page 17880, as required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d). No public comments were received in response to the notice. The FVAP corresponds regularly with interested citizens and State and local government officials. Any comments received throughout the approved license period are taken into consideration.

Consultations were conducted with the following individuals:

Drs. Shelley Perry, Michael Wilson, David Morganstein, Kimya Lee and John Rauch of Westat, Inc (301) 251-4366) reviewed the methodology for the 2004 data collection and suggested the FVAP data collection continue to support Web surveys but maintain the pencil-and-paper surveys to reach sample members without Internet access.

Coordinations were obtained from Ms. Cindy L. Allard, Chief, OSD/JS Privacy Office, WHS/ESD, ((703) 588-2386) and Dr. Jane S. Styer, Exempt Determination Official for the Office of Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Program Integration, Human Research Protection Program, ((831) 583-4076).

The Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), the survey research arm of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, will manage the data collection in 2008 for FVAP.

9. Payments to Respondents. The FVAP will provide no payments or gifts to respondents.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality. This information collection does not ask the respondent to submit propriety, trade secret, or confidential information to the Department.

11. Sensitive Questions. Neither survey contains any questions of a sensitive nature, such as for whom the respondent voted. One question on the overseas citizens survey asks the respondent to choose an age category. Age categories are used as reporting variables in the report to illustrate changes in voting participation from the previous survey. Age categories are also used to illustrate proportion of overseas citizens voting as a function of age. The majority of questions focus on problems encountered by voters during the absentee voting process and by election officials in providing absentee ballots to overseas voters. The surveys will be non-intrusive and will make it clear participation is fully voluntary and responses will be private. Surveys state the purpose of the surveys on the first page prior to the Agency Disclosure Notice.

These surveys do not collect or use personally identifiable information and are not retrieved by personal identifier. Therefore, the information collected is not subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended. The DMDC acted as FVAP's agent to develop the surveys and will collect the data. Ticket numbers permit access to the Web site and prevent respondents from taking multiple surveys. Personal identifiers will not appear on the survey instruments and only aggregate data will be reported in the form of a statistical summary to preserve the anonymity of all respondents. Surveys are conducted by mail and Internet.

The sample of overseas citizens is anonymous. First, the Department of State draws the sample of Posts that will participate in the survey. Second, Department of State Voting Assistance Officers at the selected Posts draw the sample from U.S. citizens registered at the Posts. Neither the operations contractor, Westat, nor anyone in the Department of Defense will know which citizens are in the sample or which sample members participated.

The local election officials in the survey sample will have names attached to their records when they are sent to Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), so that DRC can control the mailings and obtain additional address information as required. DRC removes names from datasets returned to DMDC and identifies the records by a randomly assigned identification number. Survey response data are segregated from the record identification data.

On the paper version of both surveys, the Agency Disclosure Notice (ADN) is located on the inside cover immediately before the Privacy Act Statement. The Privacy Act Statement is followed by the Informed Consent Information on the inside front cover before any questions. The Informed Consent Information includes the instructions "Returning this survey indicates your agreement to participate in this research."

On the Web version of both surveys, the Agency Disclosure Notice (ADN) is located on a screen the sample members must read before continuing to the Privacy Act Statement and Informed Consent Information screen. The Privacy Act Statement is included with Informed Consent Information on a screen the sampled members must read before taking the survey (Attachment

5). The Informed Consent screen includes the instruction "Click 'continue' if you agree to do the survey" and informed consent is indicated by clicking the "Continue" button and answering the survey questions.

Because the data are collected on a Web site, the Web site is required to include Security Protection Advisory information according to the Office of the Secretary of Defense Policy for Establishing and Maintaining a Publicly Accessible Department of Defense Web Information Service (dated July 18, 1997; updated January 9, 1998). The Advisory for the survey program informs visitors to the Web site that no information on the person's computer or Internet connection is collected in a way that it can be associated with the person or the survey responses. The Security Protection Advisory page is accessed via a link from the Opening page. The Opening page is not yet available but normally thanks the person for their participation, informs them about the survey and directs them to the Agency Disclosure Notice, the Privacy Act Statement and Informed Consent pages and the survey.

DRC has been contracted to administer the local election officials survey, while Westat has been contracted to administer the overseas citizens survey.

DMDC's and DRC's network sites are secure and password protected. Security is strictly enabled by using physical and software access restrictions. All servers are physically located in locked rooms with access permitted only to Technical Services staff through the use of a security card system. Access to the network is allowed only through a login account and password. In addition, employees use password protected screen savers at workstations to protect their systems while they are away from their desks. At DMDC, the network is accessed through the use of Common Access Card (CAC) readers and utilizes Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) security. Logging on to the network requires both physical possession of the CAC and a separately issued Personal Identification Number. Both DRC and DMDC computer systems comply with current FISMA security standards.

DRC makes daily backup tapes that are stored for five years in fire proof vaults located within a security-card protected area. The contract with DRC expires on September 1, 2009 for purposes of ordering new work; however, provisions dealing with the protection of human subjects and data security are in force for as long as the contractor retains any protected data.

Westat is currently operating under a timed conditional Interim Authority to Operate (IATO). Currently DMDC/DoD data is secured in a stand alone and non networked environment referred to as Enclave-1. The environment is configured to standards as directed by DoDI 8500.1. This enclave is the data repository meant to protect DoD data until Enclave-2 is completed.

Enclave-2 will configure a new, separate network infrastructure where all equipment, including firewalls, IDS, IPS, routers, and server equipment located in this zone will be configured and dedicated to meet DoD information security requirements. Under this timed IATO, Enclave-2 is scheduled to be ready for production use November 1, 2008. At that time, security will be strictly enabled using physical and software access restrictions. All servers will be physically located in locked rooms with access permitted only to Technical Services staff through the use of a security card system. Access to the network will be allowed only through a login account and

password. In addition, employees will use password protected screen savers at workstations to protect their systems while they are away from their desks.

The data collection procedures are not expected to involve any risk to participants. The Department of State will distribute the survey to selected American citizen civilians overseas. The Department of State will not release the names, e-mail addresses, street addresses or any other personally identifiable information to DMDC or a third party. Names are used only in communicating with sample members. These names are kept securely by the operations contractors, DRC and Westat, Inc, and are not linked to response data. The datasets sent to DMDC contain no names or addresses. Access to full detailed confidential data is limited to DMDC analysts and contractors under their direct supervision.

12. Estimates of Annual Response Burden and Labor Costs for Hour Burden to the Respondent for Collection of Information.

a. Response Burden:

Information collected quadrennially from each respondent. The following information is an annual average over a three-year license period.

(1) *UOCAVA Post-election Survey of Overseas Citizens* (1920 respondents)

Total average annual respondents:	640
Frequency of response:	1
Total annual responses:	640
Burden per response:	15 minutes
Total burden hours:	160 hours

(2) *UOCAVA Post-election Voting Survey of Local Election Officials* (1,500 respondents)

Total average annual respondents:	500
Frequency of response:	1
Total annual responses:	500
Burden per response:	30 minutes
Total burden hours:	250 hours

(3) Estimated Average Annual Burden.

# Respondents	:	1140
# Responses per respondent:		1
Total annual responses:		1140
Average hours per response:		.36 hours (Total hours (410) divided by total responses (1140) equals average hours per response (.36))
Total annual burden:		410 hours (Total average annual responses (1140) x average hrs per response (.36))

b. Explanation of How Burden was Estimated. The 2008 surveys are similar to previous survey instruments. Respondents reported the amount of time required to complete previous forms. The burden was reported in two groups: 1) the *Post-election Survey of Overseas Citizens*; 2) the *Post-election Survey of Local Election Officials*. The estimated number of respondents is based on response rates to previous surveys.

c. Labor Cost to Respondent

(1) *UOCAVA Post-election Survey of Overseas Citizens*

Total average annual respondents:	640
Frequency of response:	1
Total annual responses:	640
Burden per response:	15 minutes
Average cost per response:	\$3.64 (Weighted average hourly wage for overseas citizens (\$14.56)).
Total cost	\$2330 (Average cost per response (\$3.64) by total average annual response (640)).

(2) *UOCAVA Post-election Voting Survey of Local Election Officials*

Total average annual respondents:	500
Frequency of response:	1
Total annual responses:	500
Burden per response:	30 minutes
Average cost per response:	\$9.30 (Weighted average hourly wage for GS9 level respondents (\$18.60)).
Total cost	\$4,650 (Average cost per response (\$9.30) by total average annual response (500)).

(3) *Estimated Average Annual Cost.*

# Respondents:	1140
# Responses per respondent:	1
Total annual responses:	1140
Average cost per response:	\$6.12 (Total hours (410) divided by weighted hourly cost (\$9.30) by 180 plus \$3.64 by 230))
Total Cost:	\$ 6,980 (Total average annual responses (1140) by average cost per response (\$6.12))

13. Estimates of Other Cost Burden for the Respondent for Collection of Information.

a. Total Capital and Start-up Cost. There are no capital/startup costs.

b. Operation and Maintenance Cost. There are no operation and maintenance costs. Any computer costs borne by the respondent will be minimal.

14. Estimates of annualized cost to the Federal Government. Contractor cost includes printing of paper survey instruments, development of Web site surveys, application of sampling strategy, mailing of surveys, receipt of the survey instruments, scanning and cross-tabulation of data, coordination with FVAP, and preparation of a summary data report.

DMDC Staffing Costs

Paygrade	Months	Rate/ Month	Total
GS14	3	\$10,015	\$30,045
GS13	6	\$8,475	\$50,850
GS12	6	\$6,100	\$36,600
Total DMDC Costs			\$117,495

Operation and Maintenance Cost \$ 26,638
(Includes labor to produce surveys and letters,
Materials and freight, and postage.)

Contractor Support \$200,000
(Costs for support contracts are based on
negotiated rates for similar services.)

Government Staffing Cost \$117,495
(Includes contract administration and preparation
printing, coordination, and distribution of the final
report to the President and the Congress.)

Total Cost \$344,133

Average annual cost over a three year license period: \$114,711
((\$344,133 divided by 3 years)

15. Changes in Burden. Change in burden is due to re-estimate of the number of respondents.

16. Publication Plans/Time Schedule. The analytic effort focuses on presenting the current findings and drawing comparisons against previous data. The *UOCAVA* requires FVAP

to submit a formal report to the Executive Branch and Congress every four years. The administrative schedule is as follows:

Print Survey: Completed by the end of the third quarter of the calendar year immediately prior to the November Presidential election.

Mail Survey. Survey mailing coincides with the November election. Overseas surveys are sent earlier.

Return. Not later than the end of the first quarter of the calendar year immediately following the election.

Tabulation Completed. By the end of the second quarter of the calendar year immediately following the election.

Report Submitted. By the fourth quarter of the calendar year immediately following the election.

17. Approval Not to Display Expiration Date. This approval is not requested.

18. Exceptions to the Certification Statement. No exceptions to the certification statement are requested.

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Description of Activity. Under *UOCAVA*, FVAP will conduct a post-election survey of overseas citizens not affiliated with the Federal Government, and local election officials. DMDC will conduct the survey construction and data collection process.

Overseas Citizens Survey. The information provided by the Department of State for sample selection is a listing of overseas Posts which identifies their geographic region (Africa, East Asia/Pacific, Europe, Near East and South Central Asia, and Western hemisphere), and size as measured by the number of registered citizens of the Post (small, medium, large and very large). The Department of State list may not be representative of all Posts overseas, however, because areas affected by natural disaster, coup d'etats, war, or other extreme conditions will likely be excluded from the list the Department of State provides.

The sample design for the overseas citizens is a stratified two-stage random sample. First-stage sample units will be Posts. In the first stage, Posts will be sorted by geographic region, Human Development Index, and size. Separate samples of Posts will be drawn for each region using the systematic random sampling method. Once Posts within a region have been selected, separate systematic random sampling selection rates will be used for Posts based on size.

Two common strategies for allocating sample, in this case across Posts of different sizes, are equal allocation, where the same size sample is drawn from each Post regardless of size, and proportionate allocation, where the sample drawn is proportionate to the size of the Post. Equal allocation in the present case would introduce large design effects. Proportionate allocation would greatly favor the large and very large Posts leaving little sample allocated to the small

posts. A compromise allocation, termed the square root allocation, which minimizes the problems of equal and proportionate allocations will be utilized.

Several critical assumptions are necessary to estimate the sample size, and discussions with Department of State personnel have established that there are no firm figures from which to clearly set assumptions. However, there is some guidance. Email address coverage is considered good (between 75 and 80 percent) but the list of registered overseas citizens will include some minors and non-citizens (e.g., parents of children who are citizens). Rate of internet access and the potential response rate for an internet survey are unknown but we do know the response rate for the previous *Post-Election Survey of Overseas Citizens* was 16%.

Taking all these circumstances into consideration, we are assuming the following for the purposes of calculating web and mail sample size: 1) rate of email addresses on list, 75-80% leaving 20-25% of the sample for mail administration, 2) rate of eligibility on list, 60%, 3) rate of internet access, 80%, and rate of postal access, 60%, and 4) cooperation rate for survey regardless of administrative mode, 50%. With these assumptions we have sample hit/response rates of 24% for web administration and 18% for mail administration. The result of these calculations sets a sample size by geographic region at 1,700 to obtain 384 completed surveys (384 respondents allow reporting of survey results with a $\pm 5\%$ confidence interval). The total sample size for overseas citizens in the five geographic regions combined, then, is set at 8,500.

In the second stage, overseas citizens will be selected from each list of registered citizens maintained at the Posts through a systematic random selection procedure. Beginning at a random starting point on the list, every n^{th} individual, using the predetermined interval for a given Post, will be selected. As a matter of internal policy, the Department of State does not circulate outside the Department the listings of registered overseas citizens. However, clear detailed procedures for making the selections will be written by Westat and discussed with the Department of State, who, in turn, will communicate the procedures to the selected Posts. The Posts will be provided a contact person's email address and/or phone number in the event any questions arise pertaining to the selection process.

Finally, it is known that registration coverage varies by geographic region (relatively complete coverage in Africa and less complete coverage in Europe). However, focusing upon lists of registered overseas citizens allows the drawing of a probability sample and therefore projection of survey results to that population.

Construction of survey weights for overseas citizens will take into account several factors, including original sample selection probabilities, survey nonresponse, and known population counts from the sampling frame. The final weight for a survey respondent, including nonresponse adjustment and post-stratification, can be viewed as the number of persons in the population that each respondent represents. The proposed three-stage weighting process includes the calculation of, first, base weights, then nonresponse adjustment weights, and finally post-stratification weights. What follows is a brief description of each type of weight.

The base weight for each sample member is equal to the reciprocal of his/her probability of selection within a Post. The probability of selection for an individual is the sampling rate for the corresponding sampling stratum. Sampling strata for overseas citizens are defined as each individual post sampled within a geographic region.

Regarding nonresponse adjustment, following the completion of the survey field period, all sample cases within a stratum will be initially divided into one of four groups depending on final survey disposition: eligible respondents; eligible nonrespondents; ineligible sample members; and sample members with unknown eligibility. Nonresponse adjustment will first resolve the status of sample members with unknown eligibility then calculate the nonresponse adjustment for eligible respondents. The resolution of unknown eligibility is imputed from sample cases with known eligibility. The nonresponse adjustment is calculated by inflating stratum base weights of respondents to account for nonrespondents. The base weights of nonrespondents will be distributed proportionally over eligible respondents.

Post-stratification is a common adjustment procedure in which the survey sample weights are modified so that the sums of the adjusted weights are equal to known population totals for certain subgroups of the population, i.e. post strata. Two levels of post strata will be used for adjustment purposes. The first will be the population counts of registered overseas citizens in individual Posts within a geographic region. The second post stratum used for adjustment purposes will be the total population of registered citizens within a geographic region in each of the categories of embassy size (small, medium, large, and very large). Regardless of the post strata used (first individual Posts, then within region by Post size) the adjustment procedures are the same.

For overseas citizens, the estimated total number of respondents is 384 per geographic region for a total of 1920 respondents over the five geographic regions.

Local Election Official Survey. The sample design for the survey of the local election officials in the Federal Voter Assistance Program is a stratified single-stage random sample. The sample units will be voting jurisdictions. The voting jurisdictions will be stratified into ten strata by jurisdiction type and the number of registered voters. Samples will be drawn from each stratum using simple random sampling.

A frame provided by Election Data Services, Washington DC, has 10,051 voting jurisdictions nationwide including the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the territories Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa. The frame contains the contact information for the jurisdictions. The contact information will be updated prior to fielding the survey.

The frame will be stratified by two jurisdiction types and seven size categories using the number of registered voters. The jurisdiction types are counties or independent cities and minor civil divisions. Most minor civil divisions are designated by towns, townships, and villages. The categories for the number of registered voters represent small to very large number of registered voters. The following table identifies the ten strata by jurisdiction type and number of registered voters.

Sample Design Information for the Survey of Local Elected Officials

Stratum	Jurisdiction Type	Number of Registered Voters	Probability of Selection	Jurisdictions	
				Sample	Total
1*	Any	200,001 or more	1.00	200	200
2	County / City	100,001 – 200,000	0.83	131	157
3	“	75,001 – 100,000	0.72	81	112
4	“	40,001 – 75,000	0.73	212	290
5	“	10,001 – 40,000	0.58	726	1242
6	“	5,001 – 10,000	0.58	338	578
7	“	Less than 5,001	0.58	291	498
8	Minor Civil Division	10,001 – 200,000	0.18	74	414
9	“	5,001 – 10,000	0.20	77	384
10	“	Less than 5,001	0.14	874	6176
				3004	10051

*This stratum also contains the largest jurisdiction for states or territories with only jurisdictions less than 200,001 registered voters.

The stratum with jurisdictions with more than 200,000 registered voters will be included in the sample with certainty. For states or territories with only jurisdictions less than 200,001 registered voters, the largest jurisdiction from that state or territory will be included in the sample with certainty. So, the sample will include at least one jurisdiction from the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the four territories.

The remaining jurisdictions will be independently and randomly selected within each stratum. Approximately 80 percent of the registered voters in the remaining jurisdictions reside in counties or independent cities. Jurisdictions representing more registered voters will be allocated sample units at a higher rate than jurisdictions with fewer registered voters. The allocation will be in proportion to the frequency of the number of registered voters. The final probability of selection will be adjusted to account for anticipated response rates and to control precision. The above table displays the final probabilities of selection for each stratum.

The sample (3,004) jurisdictions will be weighted to represent the total number (10,051) of jurisdictions. Data will be weighted using the industry standard three-stage process. This form of weighting produces survey estimates of population totals, proportions, and means (as well as other statistics) that are representative of their respective populations. Unweighted survey data, in contrast, could produce biased estimates of population statistics. The industry standard three-stage process of weighting consists of the following steps:

1. Adjustment for the selection probability – The reciprocal of the selection probability for each sample unit is the base, or first weight.

2. Adjustment for nonresponse – Some sampled members do not respond to the survey. To adjust for nonresponse, the base weights either are multiplied by the reciprocal of the nonresponse rate or some other methodology such as a logistic model, is used.

3. Adjustment to known population values – The sample design and adjustments to nonresponse cannot take into account all differences related to who responds to a survey and how they respond, therefore, auxiliary information is used to increase the precision of survey estimates. A final weighting adjustment is computed that reproduces population totals for important demographic groupings related to who responds to a survey and how they might answer the survey.

For local election officials, the estimated total number of respondents is 1,500.

2. Procedures for the Collection of Information. The overseas citizens and local election officials who complete a hard copy survey will mail the survey directly to the respective operations contractors, Westat or DRC. Each survey population has a designated alpha code for the group based on the population surveyed (e.g., Form B for overseas citizens). The operations contractors scan the survey instruments, and convert raw data files to SAS datasets according to specifications written by DMDC. Datasets are then transmitted to DMDC via secure file transfer protocol. DMDC then creates a report to FVAP of the survey responses in subgroup categories and percentages (weighted to reflect the population). FVAP then further analyzes the data and prepares a report to the President and the Congress. Section 3, below, includes more details pertaining to the data collection protocol.

3. Non-response, Maximization to Response Rates, and Accuracy and Reliability. The response rate is the ratio of completed and returned surveys to the number receiving a survey, less non-deliverables.

Local Election Official Survey: Local election officials receive two postal mailings. Local election officials receive a survey cover letter (from the Department of State) with accompanying survey, and postage-paid pre-printed return envelope. This letter explains the purpose of the survey and asks for voluntary completion of the survey. The local election officials will also receive a postal reminder/thank you letter from FVAP in early December.

Overseas Citizens Survey: Contact with sample members will begin with a pre-notification letter from the Department of State which will be postal-mailed to all sample members with registered mailing addresses in late August or early September. The pre-notification letter will explain the purposes of the survey and the modes of data collection (i.e., Web-based or hard copy) and ask for voluntary participation. For those without a postal mailing address but with an email address registered with their Post, the pre-notification will be emailed and will contain the same content as the hard copy letter.

In early November, 2008, data collection will commence. Sample members with an email address will receive an email announcing the start of the survey field period. As was the case with the pre-notification email and letter, the email announcement will explain the purposes of the survey and state that participation is voluntary. The announcement will also describe how sample members can complete the survey on-line by logging on to the secure web-site listed in the announcement and by entering their randomly generated ticket number, also provided.

Sample members receiving the email will be informed that they can request a hard copy survey if they prefer by contacting their Post. For sample members with only a postal mailing address, the announcement will be mailed as a cover letter from the Department of State. The mailing will also include a paper copy of the survey and a postage-paid pre-printed return envelope. The cover letter, as well as the hard copy survey, will include their randomly generated ticket number. Both the email announcement and the postal cover letter will list the FVAP contact person's name and toll-free phone number in the event the sample member has any questions about the survey or about how to participate.

In late November or early December, a postal reminder/thank you letter will be mailed to all sample members who are not active refusers and for whom a postal mailing address is available. A corresponding email reminder/thank you will be sent to the email address-only sample members. The email will state that if they would prefer a hard copy survey they can contact their local Post. The text that comprises the letters/emails is included in Attachment 6.

A second round mailing of paper surveys to all non-responders will not be attempted because this mailing would place an undo burden on the Posts

4. Tests or Procedures. DMDC establishes a schedule of deliverables and the operations contractors provide reports on progress according to the schedule. DMDC ensures the sample is statistically sound, representative, and consistent with past reports. The operations contractors perform quality control checks on assembly of survey packages, address lists and data input.

5. Personnel/Organizations Responsible for Design, Collection or Analysis of the Information.

DMDC has overall responsibility for the survey effort.

Design review: Drs. Shelley Perry, Michael Wilson, David Morganstein, Kimya Lee and John Rauch of Westat, Inc. (301)-251-1500.

Scientific Review of Survey: Dr. Robert Simmons, (703) 696-8961, of Defense Management Data Center

Operations Contractor for local election officials: Data Recognition Corporation, (800) 826-2368.

Operations Contractor for overseas citizens: Westat, Inc. (301)-251-1500.

Principal Investigator: Dr. Tim Elig, (703) 696-5858, of Defense Manpower Data Center