

SUPPORTING STATEMENT – PART A

2014 Ethnographies and Focus Groups - 0704-TBD.

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Need for the Information Collection

Legal Authorities. The President of the United States designated the Secretary of Defense to administer the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) As Modified by the Military and Overseas Voting Empowerment Act*, 42 USC 1973ff. UOCAVA is the principal enabling statute that grants authority for the Department of Defense to facilitate absentee voting amongst members of the Uniformed Services and Merchant Marine, their eligible family members and all citizens residing outside the United States who are absent from the United States. The 1988 Executive Order 12642 names the Secretary of Defense as the “Presidential designee” for administering UOCAVA. In the Department of Defense Instruction 1000.04, *Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)*, the Secretary of Defense delegated UOCAVA-related responsibilities first to the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, and then, in turn, to the Director of the Federal Voting Assistance Program. The DoD Instruction 1000.04 also updates the policy and responsibilities for FVAP under Executive Order 12642.

Primary Objectives. The primary objective of the *2014 Ethnographies and Focus Groups among Non-military UOCAVA voters, UOCAVA-eligible voters, Military families, and Local Election Officials*, conducted on behalf of the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), is to examine the behaviors and environments of a host of actors involved in the UOCAVA voting process. This research will explore potential deficiencies, risks, and pitfalls which serve as barriers to voting success among these UOCAVA voters. The data obtained through this study will provide an assessment of potential changes to address current barriers to UOCAVA voting. This study is intended to provide insights into existing barriers to UOCAVA voting and recommendations for addressing these challenges. Conducting this research will help FVAP meet its federal and congressional mandates in terms of reporting annually on its activities as well as overall voter registration and participation rates after each Presidential election.

To obtain the necessary information, the 2014 Ethnographies and Focus Groups project will explore these issues using qualitative research among these populations to explore perceptions of and attitudes toward the voting process to identify barriers, opportunities, and motivations.

A study, by Michael R. Alvarez, Thad E. Hall, and Betsy Sinclair (“Whose Absentee Votes are Counted?” *Electoral Studies* 27 (4): 673-83, 2008) of the absentee voter file (AVF) from Los Angeles County’s November 2002 general election found that UOCAVA voters were roughly two times more likely to not return a requested absentee ballot and approximately three times more likely to have that ballot challenged when compared to non-UOCAVA voters. However, their data do not allow for exploring *why* this is the case. Additionally, FVAP’s research has determined that the vast majority (81%) of UOCAVA voting failures occur in the ballot return process. FVAP has also identified some of the challenges that contribute to ballot return failure, including inherent delays and limitations in traditional mail service, the absence of widespread technological solutions, difficulty reaching state or local election officials, and incomplete data, among other issues. However, it is not yet known why this is the case or how voters and other actors involved with the UOCAVA voting process understand and experience these challenges. Post-election surveys administered through FVAP do provide assistance in identifying trends within the voting behavior of this population, but they do not capture the full context of the UOCAVA voter’s environment and context for their ability to successfully return their absentee ballot. The 2014 Ethnographies and Focus Groups project is designed to explore why these challenges exist. The research

will explore the behavior, beliefs, misconceptions, experiences, and other factors underlying barriers to UOCAVA voting success.

This research is part of a broader study related to a similar research project underway (DD-P&R (OT) 2532) that included ethnographies among CONUS and OCONUS military voters and overseas U.S. government employees as well as in-depth interviews (conducted via telephone) among military leaders, military Voting Assistance Officers, Department of State Voting Assistance Officers, Local Election Officials, and “organic VAOs” (study abroad leaders, human resource managers, and staff of NGOs).

The research proposed here studies populations of UOCAVA voters and actors not included in the first phase and also involves different ways of studying key actors that build on findings and lessons learned from the earlier phase of research. For example, the in-depth phone interviews with Local Election Officials were designed to obtain a broad assessment of the successes and challenges involved in the UOCAVA voting process. Participants had a leadership role in that they were responsible for overseeing the UOCAVA voting process from the county’s perspective. In contrast, the proposed ethnographies with Local Election Officials in this phase of research will provide a deeper and closer look at the actual process of receiving ballot requests, sending ballots, and processing UOCAVA ballots. While the data collected through the in-depth interviews was limited to what the LEOs were willing to tell the researchers, the ethnographies allow learning to occur through observation.

This research focuses on other critical subpopulations of UOCAVA voters with a unique environment and set of challenges when attempting to vote. This research will focus on overseas civilians (non-government employees) and military families (spouses and dependents of service members). The encouragement and support structures each group relies on are very different, making these groups of voters quite distinct. For this reason, the instruments used to collect this information vary from what was used among military members. For example, in the ethnographies among military members, we focused on how the culture of their installations might have impacted the voting process. Encouragement and support from the command and VAO program are critical variables that influence how the voting process works. We exclude these questions from the instrument used to study civilians, and replace them with questions about communications and assistance originating from the embassy, Department of State Voting Assistance Officers, and non-governmental organizations.

Additionally, in the focus groups we ask civilians to react to resources and communications that are specifically designed for civilians living overseas. Because military and civilian voters are exposed to different communications about voting (though there is some overlap), it is critical to capture how civilians are interpreting the resources and communications that they use and receive.

2. Use of the Information

The sponsor of this research is the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP). The primary user of the data/results will be FVAP. Additional potential users of the results could include the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), other DoD senior staff and administrators, and the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC).

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) issued solicitation number 12-233-SOL-00463 for research into the barriers to voting success among UOCAVA voters. The component of the research covered under this Information Collection submission pertains to CONUS and OCONUS military families, Local Election Officials who assist UOCAVA voters and who are responsible for processing their ballots, among other steps in the voting process, and non-military, non-federal employee UOCAVA or UOCAVA-eligible voters. The latter population includes civilians residing overseas who vote as well as civilians residing overseas who do not vote, but who are eligible to do so and who are considered

UOCAVA-eligible. The Federal Voting Assistance Program will use the data gathered through this research to assess the current barriers to and factors inhibiting success of UOCAVA voting among these audiences. It is also critical to examine Local Election Officials and understand the barriers and opportunities from their vantage point. Insights gained from this research will be used to provide recommendations on potential changes or additional information or communication needed to address these barriers. Results will also be used to inform a quantitative survey project as well as “finishing” focus groups that will be conducted at the end of this project. (These focus groups and survey are separate data collections and are not covered by this request.)

The research covered under this Information Collection submission involves two components: ethnographies and focus groups. A total of 115 ethnographies and 36 focus groups will be conducted, segmented as follows:

- 39 ethnographies with non-military/non-federal employee, civilian UOCAVA voters
- 28 ethnographies with military families (spouses and adult children); 12 among families of CONUS personnel, 16 among families of OCONUS personnel
- 48 ethnographies with Local Election Officials (LEOs)
- 24 focus groups with civilian UOCAVA voters (12 in-person, 12 online)
- 4 focus groups with UOCAVA-eligible civilians (in-person)
- 8 focus groups with military families (4 among CONUS, 4 among OCONUS)

The following research instruments will be utilized in this qualitative research, all of which have been included in the OMB submission:

- Ethnography Guide: Non-military Civilian Voters
- Ethnography Guide: Local Election Officials
- Ethnography Guide: Military family members
- Focus Group Guide: Civilian UOCAVA voters
- Focus Group Guide: UOCAVA-eligible civilians
- Focus Group Guide: Military families (CONUS)
- Focus Group Guide: Military families (OCONUS)
- Participant Consent Form

Qualitative Methodology. There is limited research around UOCAVA voters generally, and even less so among specific sub-types, like military families and UOCAVA-eligible civilians. What little research exists indicates that UOCAVA voters have a higher vote failure rate than non-UOCAVA voters and that delays receiving and returning ballots from overseas locations play a role. However, what is not known is what challenges UOCAVA voters experience in particular, how they respond to these challenges, how they feel about voting, and what they have done in the past regarding the vote process. We know even less about UOCAVA-eligible voters—those civilians living overseas who are eligible to vote and who may be registered, but who ultimately do not cast a ballot. In short, the current body of knowledge does not address *why* UOCAVA voters have a higher vote failure rate than their regular absentee voting counterparts and what can be done to improve the situation. The 2014 ethnographies and focus groups are designed to address these questions.

The ethnographies and focus groups are different but complementary methodologies. Conducting research among the voters themselves as well as those who are involved in assisting these voters (LEOs) allows for an analysis of what voting barriers and challenges are identified and observed among the former group and how these compare or contrast from the latter group’s perspective.

The ethnographies are two hour observational sessions where the researcher asks the participant questions about their experience with UOCAVA voting and also asks them to simulate what they did in the voting process. The session is mostly observational in nature, with a limited amount of discussion (see ethnography guides submitted as part of this OMB package). The focus groups are conducted in-person (2 hours and 15 minutes) and online (90 minutes). The submitted discussion guides present the questions that are asked for each of the three respondent audiences. The ethnographies provide information from UOCAVA voters themselves, obtained through discussions with respondents and through observational techniques. Actually *observing* what military personnel and their families do during the voting process is key to understanding existing barriers in the voting process and the root causes of vote failure. Additionally, ethnographic research can uncover findings not directly discoverable through focus groups or surveys. Observing issues facing UOCAVA voters enables the development of a concrete set of tactical and actionable steps to reducing vote failure. For example, voters may report that they did not experience any problems with filling out a ballot and figuring out the various instructions, but in our ethnographic observations where we have voters simulate the process they went through to vote we may see that they missed the instruction to sign the ballot. If we observe this to be a recurring issue observed in multiple settings, this might lead to some specific steps that we can implement to increase voter awareness of this step in the voting process.

Finally, ethnographies conducted among LEOs will aid us in understanding their role in voting failure, as we will be able to observe the process by which they process ballot requests and receipts while looking for barriers or challenges that may impede voting success.

Ethnographic research is particularly crucial to understanding human processes that individuals do not readily express in survey interviews or focus groups. This method is used to study the complexity of human experience by close and sustained observation of human behavior in natural environments. In order to facilitate uncovering the range of potential barriers to UOCAVA voting, we conduct these ethnographic observations in everyday settings: where UOCAVA voters vote and get their information on how to vote, where and how they request and receive their ballots, and where they transmit or mail their completed ballots. The process by which LEOs receive and transmit ballots can also be observed in a similar manner. Ethnographic research allows us to identify information unavailable through other qualitative or quantitative research methods because it allows us to focus on the meaning of individuals' actions and explanations rather than their quantification, and because it allows us to discover what the participants "don't know they don't know."

The ethnographic method is widely accepted in social science research and has been used for a variety of research needs, including in research sponsored by the Department of Defense and U.S. government. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) conducted a review of the use of ethnographies in U.S. federal agency research programs and noted their effectiveness in their ability to "fill gaps in what we know about a community whose beliefs and behavior affect how federal programs operate" (1).¹ The GAO examined the use of ethnographies in two DOD studies—one among youths of military enrollment age that was designed to understand factors affecting youths' propensity to join the military and strengthen targeted recruitment and another among military personnel in Antarctica in order to help understand and improve health conditions. The GAO also notes that the federal government has a long history of using ethnographic research in order to obtain needed information that has improved agency programs.

Focus groups are structured but open-ended discussions which permit us to explore people's thoughts and opinions at a much deeper level than survey research. In a survey, people must resolve their ambivalence; they must answer our questions with a "yes" or a "no." In a focus group, people can give free rein to their

¹ The Government Accountability Office. "Ethnographic Studies Can Inform Agencies' Actions." March 2003. Available: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d03455.pdf>.

ambivalence; they can fully express why their real answer is “maybe.” The groups explore the often subtle and hidden assumptions and attitudes that people have. While in ethnographies we observe the voting process on an individual level, in focus groups we probe and assess attitudes *toward* the voting process in a group setting to better explore larger themes about voting and barriers to completing the process.

After data collection is complete, audio recordings of the ethnographies and focus groups are transcribed. The transcriptions are used as the basis for analysis of results, along with notes taken by individual researchers. At least two researchers read every transcript and develop an initial list of themes in order to categorize the responses. Researchers then conduct what is called a “quote sort” in order to pull out quotations from respondents that answer key questions and fall under the initial themes developed previously. During this process, more nuanced themes often develop as a result of closer readings of transcriptions. This process is repeated until transcripts are exhausted and researchers are confident they have captured the full range of responses to key questions under study. Multiple researchers work together to analyze results in order to avoid biased interpretations resulting from any one person.

Recruiting Process. Military families: FVAP will make initial contact with potential participants for the military family ethnographies and focus groups by sending an initial e-mail explaining the purpose of the project and indicating the criteria for participation (registered voter, voted absentee in 2012, active duty status). If respondents meet the criteria and are interested in participating, they are invited to reply to the e-mail with their best contact information. After potential participants indicate willingness to participate, FVAP will forward their contact information to LRP to secure participation and inform participants of logistical information.

LEOs: FVAP will help identify and contact potential LEOs to participate in ethnographies.

Non-military civilian UOCAVA voters and UOCAVA-eligible civilians: Because no centralized list of this population exists, we will rely on organizations who work with U.S. citizens who live and work overseas to contact potential participants. Organizations identified to assist in this endeavor include: Overseas Vote Foundation, Democrats Abroad, Catalist, several Fortune 500 companies, and study abroad programs.

Individuals who participate in both the ethnographies and focus groups will be contacted by phone or e-mail and issued an invitation to participate on a given date. The researchers use a recruitment instrument (screener) to ask potential participants questions that aid the researchers in determining whether or not the individual fits the study’s criteria. For example, individuals who were not registered to vote in the 2012 election would be screened out of the voter ethnographies. We also ask questions to confirm the individual we reach matches our sample information. For the ethnographies conducted with LEOs, we ask potential participants what their primary job function is, so that we are confident the individual has knowledge or experience that is useful for the purposes of our research.

Ideally, the mix of participants would reflect our stratification scheme which aims to vary the sample by variables like gender, race, age, occupation, location, etc. Because of the limitations in recruiting an adequate number of participants for this study, we may not be able to “screen out” participants based on demographic information. However, we do ask participants a series of questions during the screening process in the event that we are afforded the luxury of stratifying our sample based on certain variables.

Once individuals successfully pass the screening process, we extend an invitation to participate in our study. Participants are simply told that the study’s purpose is to understand the voting process. A mutual day and time for participation is secured, and reminder e-mails and/or phone calls are issued prior to the day of participation. We simulate the voting environment in a pre-determined location (assembly hall,

gymnasium, etc.) as closely as possible to their homes. We coordinate with FVAP personnel in selecting these locations.

Travel Locations. One of the benefits of the ethnographic method is that observing individuals in their natural environments allows researchers to uncover information that otherwise would be impossible to obtain. Data is obtained not only through the responses of participants, but through researchers' observations of the participants' surroundings and the context in which voting occurs. For this reason, researchers will travel to targeted locations in order to conduct ethnographies among military family members, civilian UOCAVA voters, and Local Election Officials.

The installations chosen to study military family members are meant to vary by service branch and geographical location. A mix of CONUS and OCONUS locations is necessary in order to understand the differences in the voting experience of military family members stationed in the U.S. compared to abroad. The sites where study will take place are included below. In the previous phase of research conducted for this project, ethnographies among service members were conducted at centrally located sites on base that were secured in advance with the help of points of contact at each location, primarily the Installation Voting Assistance Officers, and we expect to recreate the same process for the research listed below.

Installation Name	Location
Naval Station Mayport	Jacksonville, FL
Fort Campbell	Fort Campbell, Kentucky
Garrison Stuttgart	Stuttgart, Germany
Joint Base Lewis-McChord	Fort Lewis, WA
US Fleet Activities	Yokosuka, Japan
Eglin Air Force Base	Valparaiso, FL

Additionally, 8 focus groups (4 in-person, 4 online) among military family members will also be conducted. The four in-person groups will be conducted at the following locations:

Installation Name	Location
Fort Bragg	Fayetteville, NC
Lakenheath	Suffolk, UK

The locations chosen to study Local Election Officials are meant to represent the geographical diversity of UOCAVA voters' voting jurisdictions, but also a mix of high and low vote failure rates among UOCAVA voters. The counties with low failure rates represent the exemplars of processes that work to ensure that UOCAVA votes are counted while counties with high failure rates need to be studied in order to ascertain what about the county's processes might be contributing to vote failure.

Location	Participant Type
Anchorage, AK	State Absentee LEOs
Mobile, AL	Mobile County LEOs
Los Angeles, CA	Los Angeles County LEOs
District of Columbia	District of Columbia LEOs
Boise, ID	Ada County LEOs
Indianapolis, IN	Marion County LEOs
Crestview, FL	Okaloosa County LEOs
Atlanta, GA	Fulton County LEOs
Chicago, IL	City of Chicago LEOs
Baton Rouge, LA	East Baton Rouge Parrish LEOs
Boston, MA	Boston City LEOs
Augusta, ME	State Board of Elections LEOs
Pontiac, MI	Oakland County LEOs
Meridian, MS	Lauderdale County LEOs
Las Vegas, NV	Clark County LEOs
New York, NY	New York County LEOs
Cleveland, OH	Cuyahoga County LEOs
Philadelphia, PA	Philadelphia County LEOs
Columbia, SC	Richland County LEOs
Houston, TX	Harris County LEOs
Fairfax, VA	Fairfax County LEOs
Renton, WA	King County LEOs
Milwaukee, WI	Milwaukee County LEOs
Grantsville, WV	Calhoun County LEOs

The location stratification scheme for the civilian ethnographies and focus groups was designed to capture the range of overseas locations where eligible American voters are working and living. Respondents will comprise a mix of Americans who are overseas for a variety of reasons, including for work, study, or personal reasons.

Civilian Ethnography Locations
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Sydney, Australia
Toronto, Canada
Hong Kong, China
San Jose, Costa Rica
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
London, England
Tel Aviv, Israel
Bangkok, Thailand
Mexico City, Mexico
Manilla, Philippines
Johannesburg, South Africa
Madrid, Spain
Istanbul, Turkey

Civilian Focus Group Locations
France
Thailand
Germany
Israel
Turkey
Dominican Republic
Mexico
Canada

Additionally, 12 focus groups among civilian UOCAVA voters will be conducted online.

Participant consent. Successful recruitment depends on individuals’ willingness to participate. Participants must agree to take part in the research. An essential part of the recruiting and screening process is explaining these procedures to participants and asking for their consent prior to the actual date of study. Participants will be informed that they are free to choose not to participate in the study and that refusal to participate carries no penalty. They will also be advised that they are free to discontinue participation at any time during this study. It is always possible individuals could refuse to take part in the study. For this reason, participants will be over-recruited in each ethnography and focus group location, so that supplemental participants are available. There are no foreseeable risks of participating in this study. There are also no specific benefits of participation to the individual.² (Please see the participant consent form included in this submission).

² We offer incentives (\$125) to non-military civilian UOCAVA voters as well as UOCAVA-eligible civilians but not to LEOs or military family members.

3. Use of Information Technology

Recruitment to secure participation in this research study will be administered via email and phone. The exact mode of communication depends on available contact information, and it is possible that recruitment will involve a mix of phone and email communication. Emails are sent to potential respondents for whom a valid email address is available explaining the purpose of the research and inviting them to participate. Email communication, as well as phone calls, will be used to invite potential respondents to participate in the research and to discuss and confirm logistics, such as date and time of the ethnography or interview. Once participation is secured, respondents in the research will not be asked or required to submit any paperwork, forms, or other information. The research protocols (e.g. the ethnography and focus group guides) are for the researchers' use in guiding the ethnographic observations and focus group discussions, and as such, respondents will not receive nor be asked to print, read, or fill out these forms.

4. Non-duplication

There is no other federal agency tasked with collecting information specific to the populations covered by UOCAVA. To date, no similar qualitative research of this type and scope has been conducted along the lines of voting inquiry among UOCAVA voters or other actors involved with the UOCAVA voting process (e.g. LEOs). This project is unique in its methodology and areas of inquiry.

FVAP and affiliated agencies have conducted related research on UOCAVA voting among State and Local Election Officials in order to evaluate the electoral process for UOCAVA voters, but the research proposed under this submission is unique. A thorough review of the existing literature and data surrounding the UOCAVA voting process reveals that, to our knowledge, no research exists that is comparable to what is proposed in this project. In reviewing the existing body of research, it appears there is a dearth of research on UOCAVA voters, especially specific sub-types like civilian voters and members of military families. Studies of general population voting behavior, turnout, and election administration typically have not included overseas civilians, military personnel, and their dependents. For example, these populations are generally excluded from the major longitudinal studies of elections—e.g., the American National Election Study (ANES)—and from other studies of elections (e.g., the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES)). Additionally, although there is data on the general issues facing UOCAVA voters, such as the issue of ballot transit for by-mail voting, there is a lack of reliable data on the variety of barriers that exist to UOCAVA voting and why these barriers exist. Qualitative research (e.g. ethnographies and focus groups) is particularly useful for exploring why people hold the beliefs they do, why they behave a certain way, and how they respond to new ideas and information. Existing research on UOCAVA voters tends to be quantitative surveys, while little to no in-depth qualitative research has been done among these audiences.

5. Burden on Small Business

The participants in this qualitative research for this data collection will be civilian UOCAVA voters, UOCAVA-eligible civilians, military families, and Local Election officials. No data collection is being conducted with other businesses or establishments.

6. Less Frequent Collection

The proposed ethnographic observations and focus groups are vital components of the research Lake Research Partners is conducting to satisfy the “Barriers to Voter Success” project requested by FVAP. Risks involved with a denial or limitation of this information collection process include impeding our ability to identify the root causes of vote failure among the populations identified above. These voters constitute a significant portion of UOCAVA ballots, and it is imperative that we explore what obstacles exist for greater vote success among this audience. While we will conduct other phases of research among military audiences, we may miss some of the drivers of vote failure if we are unable to conduct this research. The insights gained from this research will ultimately be used by the FVAP’s work to overcome voting obstacles and improve voting success rates among military and non-military UOCAVA voters by adjusting its internal programs and policies.

7. Paperwork Reduction Act Guidelines

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. Consultation and Public Comments

- a. A 60-day Federal Register Notice was posted for public review in Federal Register Volume 78, No. 82, page 25061 on April 29, 2013. No public comments were received.
- b. A 30-day Federal Register Notice was published on April 23, 2014, Volume 79, No 78, page 22629.
- c. This is a one-time information collection and no other information collection reflecting this methodology has occurred. Consultations occurred based on past survey data from FVAP to scope this current effort and a review of external literature related to UOCAVA voting and application of best practices in the preparation and conduct of this information collection.

9. Gifts or Payment

No payments or gifts will be provided to LEOs or family members of military personnel who participate in this research. An incentive of either \$75 or \$20 will be offered to non-military UOCAVA voters and UOCAVA-eligible civilians who participate in this research. The \$75 incentive will be offered to those who are participating in-person and thus have to travel to the site, e.g., the hotel where the focus groups are being held, and the \$20 incentive will be offered to those who are participating on-line and thus are not required to travel.

Incentives are critical components of the recruiting process. Because of rules and regulations governing research among the LEO and military populations that prohibit the use of incentives, recruitment among these populations will require extraordinary effort. To be sure, one advantage to conducting research among LEOs and military personnel in their natural settings (i.e., at the county office and military installations) is that the population is concentrated—because the researchers are already on base or in the respondents’ place of employment, the burden of traveling to the research site is reduced. However, there is no natural setting to conduct research among civilians, except in their homes, which we are prohibited from using as research sites. For this reason, focus groups and ethnographies will be conducted at a local hotel or some other conference-style building that participants will have to travel to on their own in order to participate. Further, the length of the ethnographies and focus groups impose a time burden that make

recruitment without incentives extremely difficult. We run the risk of recruiting participants who are extremely interested in voting or who are “experts” at the overseas voting process and strong advocates for overseas voting, thereby biasing our results.

The use of incentives in social science research is widely accepted and recommended by researchers and professionals. Researchers at the University of Michigan’s Survey Research Center note that even in survey research, which imposes far fewer burdens on respondents, lack of incentives severely depresses response rates.³ As researcher David W. Stewart explains in his book:

“Focus groups are a time-consuming activity for participants. Taking 2 or more hours out of one’s life to talk to a group of strangers is not the most appealing prospect, particularly if one has worked all day. There are a variety of incentives that may be used to encourage participation, and most focus groups participants are provided monetary and other incentives (e.g., product samples or a chance to win a prize)...A stimulating discussion is not enough to induce most individuals to spend time in a focus group, however.” (56)⁴

Other researchers explain the need for incentives this way:

“Incentives are needed because it takes effort to participate in a focus group. The participant must promise to reserve a time on their schedule. For individuals whose lives are unpredictable or who are subject to the wishes of others, this can be a big promise. Furthermore, the participant incurs financial and emotional expenses to participate: child care, travel, having to leave their kids when they feel like they don’t spend enough time with them anyway, having to be inside on a beautiful day, having to leave home after they have just settled into their favorite chair, the apprehension of talking about something dear to them. Finally, the participant spends a designated amount of time in the focus group. This level of individual contribution exceeds that needed for other forms of data gathering. The mail-out survey and the telephone interview are conducted in the participant’s home or office and no travel is necessary. With the mail-out survey, and to a lesser extent the telephone interview, the participant has some choice about when they will respond. Furthermore, surveys and telephone interviews rarely take two hours.” (77)⁵

Both theory and practice suggest a strong need for incentives in order to successfully complete the qualitative research that is part of this study and doing so will assist with ensuring an adequate response rate.

10. Confidentiality

The information collection does not ask respondents to submit proprietary or trade secret information to DoD. Respondents will be told that all information they provide, either directly in their verbal responses or indirectly in their observed behavior, are pertinent to the Privacy Act and will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. Furthermore, findings will be reported in the aggregate and specific comments will not be attributed to individual participants. Identifying information such as participants’ names, addresses, e-mail addresses, or phone numbers will not be used in association with the data used in reporting.

³ Eleanor Singer. 2012. “The Use and Effects of Incentives in Survey Research.” University of Michigan, Survey Research Center.

⁴ David W. Stewart et al. 2007. *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

⁵ Richard A. Kreuger and Mary Anne Casey. 2009. *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

No Personally Identifiable Information will be collected as part of a qualifying information system so a Privacy Act System of Records Notice is not applicable.

11. Sensitive Questions

The data collection instruments contain no questions of a sensitive nature. The questions asked in the individual interviews and ethnographies and the situations and processes respondents are asked to describe in the ethnographies will be non-intrusive and will not explore any areas related to sensitive subjects, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, or other matters that are commonly considered private. While the subject matter involves the processes and behaviors surrounding voting, the discussions will not include questions about respondents’ political attitudes, their vote selections, or any other voting-related topics that could be considered controversial or private. Social Security numbers or other personal information will not be collected. Respondents will be informed that their participation is voluntary and that their responses will be kept private and confidential. Responses will be reported in the aggregate, answers will not be attributed to individuals, and participants will not be identified in reports by name or by any other identifying information.

12. Respondent Burden, and its Labor Costs

a. Estimation of Respondent Burden

Burden rates are calculated based on projected Not-to-Exceed figures for the respondents to participate in the focus groups and ethnographies. Initial qualitative research for these populations will constitute further consultation with a sampling of the potential survey respondents.

Response Burden	Civilian UOCAVA voters: ethnographies	Military families: ethnographies	LEOs: ethnographies	Civilian UOCAVA voters: focus groups (in-person)	Civilian UOCAVA voters: focus groups (online)	UOCAVA -eligible civilians: focus groups	Military families: focus groups in-person (CONUS & OCONUS)	Military families: focus groups (online)	Total number of respondents
Number of respondents in ethnographies and focus groups	39	28	48	120 (10 respondents per group)	120 (10 respondents per group)	40 (10 respondents per group)	40 (10 respondents per group)	40 (10 respondents per group)	475
Average length (minutes)	120 minutes	120 minutes	120 minutes	120 minutes	90 minutes	120 minutes	120 minutes	90 minutes	
Frequency of collection	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Total length	78 hours	56 hours	96 hours	240 hours	180 hours	80 hours	80 hours	60 hours	870 hours

b. Labor Cost of Respondent Burden

Since this is a one-time information collection all costs referenced below reflect the appropriate annual assessment of costs. Costs are based on estimated wages for civilians and local election officials.

	Civilian UOCAVA voters: ethnographies	Military families: ethnographies	LEOs: ethnographies	Civilian UOCAVA voters: focus groups (in-person)	Civilian UOCAVA voters: focus groups (online)	UOCAVA-eligible civilians: focus groups	Military families: focus groups (in-person) (CONUS & OCONUS)	Military families: Focus groups (online)	Total
Number	39	28	48	120 (10 respondents per group)	120 (10 respondents per group)	40 (10 respondents per group)	40 (10 respondents per group)	40 (10 respondents per group)	475
Hourly rate	\$13.50	\$13.50	\$28.54	\$13.50	\$13.50	\$13.50	\$13.50	\$13.50	
Labor cost per respondent	\$27.00 (2 hours)	\$27.00 (2 hours)	\$57.08 (2 hours)	\$27.00 (2 hours)	\$20.25 (1.5 hours)	\$27.00 (2 hours)	\$27.00 (2 hours)	\$20.25 (1.5 hours)	
Labor cost	\$1,053.00	\$756.00	\$2739.84	\$3240.00	\$2430.00	\$1080.00	\$1080.00	\$810.00	\$13,188.84

13. Respondent Costs Other Than Burden Hour Costs

- a. There are no capital/startup costs.
- b. There are no operation and maintenance costs. No outside resources, consultations, or record retrieval are required to participate in either the ethnographies or individual interviews

14. Cost to the Federal Government

Since this is a one-time information collection all costs referenced below reflect the appropriate annual assessment of costs. Estimates are based on costs incurred with managing this contract, coordinating authorization for this collection and monitoring contractor activities.

FVAP Staffing Costs

Title	GS Grade	Hourly Rate	Total Hours	
Supervisor	GS-15	59.89	140	\$8,384.60
Researcher	GS-14	54.31	65	\$3,530.15
Total			205	\$11,914.75

FVAP costs are based on two employees devoted to the project during the contract period (September 24, 2012 to November 30, 2014). The Federal labor costs were estimated using the GS Salary Table for 2014.

Additional Costs: Estimated Contractor Staffing and Fieldwork Costs

Estimated costs for ethnographies and focus groups, including contractor labor to produce discussion guides, recruiting participants and reminder communication, incentives (where applicable), and conducting the ethnographies and focus groups: \$476,118.

Equipment for ethnographies (video and audio recording): \$6,693

Estimated international and domestic travel: \$153,600

Total estimated contractor costs for ethnographies and focus groups: \$636,411

Research Method	Cost
39 Ethnographies with non-military/nonfederal	\$115,258.50
28 ethnographies with military families	\$74,377.26
48 ethnographies with LEOs	\$71,932.76
36 focus groups	\$374,842.48
Total	\$636,411

Total costs for the government combining contractor costs and federal labor is \$648,325.75.

15. Reasons for Change in Burden

The Supporting Statement for the *2014 Ethnographies and Focus Groups among Non-military UOCAVA voters, UOCAVA-eligible voters, Military families, and Local Election Officials* is part of a submission package for a new collection rather than a renewal of an existing collection, so there is no change in burden.

16. Publication of Results

The duration of the data collection period for this submission will be from August, 2014 through October, 2014. Lake Research Partners will present the research findings to FVAP and any other agencies or individuals at FVAP's direction. FVAP plans to publish part or all of the written results of this study.

17. Non-Display of OMB Expiration Date

This approval is not being requested.

18. Exceptions to "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Submissions"

No exceptions to the Certificate Statement are being requested.