

**Ethnographers Guide**  
FVAP: Local Election Officials  
2013

**I. Ethno Set-Up**

- A. Record date, time, city, county, and state in notes.
- B. Observe the outside of the building and describe the neighborhood in notes.
- C. Note that Sections IV, V, and VI may need to be done with different LEOs in charge of each area, or with the same person for smaller counties.

**II. Standard Introduction (5 minutes)**

- A. Your name, and that you are conducting research on behalf of FVAP.
- B. Logistics of ethno and why we are doing an ethno.
- C. Participation is voluntary, and refusal to participate carries no penalty.
- D. Their name, job title, name of organization they work with, total number of employees in that organization, description of organization. Total time they have spent with the organization and in that job title, along with any previous jobs held in the organization.

**III. Tour (30 minutes or longer depending on facility)**

- A. Tour of the entire facility.
- B. Mentally note information on mood of facility for your post-ethno report.
- C. Inquire about the best and worst parts of working for the organization/at that facility.

**IV. Simulation 1: Request for Ballot, Processing that Request, Sending the Ballot (30 minutes)**

- A. View simulation.
- B. Probe specific steps in the process if not clear.
- C. Roughly, how many ballot requests did they receive this year for the November election?
- D. Anything new or different about ballot requests or delivery this year? If yes, how did you manage that? Was that part of state or local legislation?
- E. Do you have specific literature or information (or places of information) on your website for overseas/UOCAVA voters? Have them log on.
- F. How many per different mode of communication? (Mail, fax, e-mail, call, etc.)

- G. How is it different for overseas voters vs. regular absentee voters? How is it different for military voters vs. non-military overseas voters? How many staff process those requests?
- H. How is the staff trained?
- I. What are the biggest problems they face from those who make request?
- J. How would they solve those problems?
- K. What are the biggest problems they face within their system?
- L. How would they solve those problems?
- M. What could make the system even better? How would improvements make it better?
- N. What are the obstacles to improvements being made?

**V. Simulation 2: Receive Ballot, Processing Ballot (30 mins)**

- A. View simulation.
- B. Probe specific steps in the process if not clear.
- C. Roughly, how many absentee ballots did they receive in the November 2012 general election? How many from UOCAVA voters?
- D. Anything new or different about receiving, or processing ballots this year? If yes, how did you manage that?
- E. How many per different mode of communication? (Mail, fax, e-mail)
- F. How is it different for overseas voters vs. regular absentee voters?
- G. How is it different for FWAB vs. permanent absentee voters?
- H. How many staff process those requests?
- I. How is the staff trained?
- J. How many ballots were not counted? Reasons?
- K. How would they solve the problems that kept the UOCAVA ballots from being counted? How would they solve the problems that kept the regular ballots from being counted?
- L. What are the biggest problems they face within their system?
- M. How would they solve those problems?
- N. What would you do if a voter forgot to sign an absentee or overseas ballot?
- O. What could make the system even better? How would that make it better?
- P. What are the obstacles to improvements being made?

**VI. Simulation 3: Reporting the Vote Totals (10 minutes)**

- A. View simulation.
- B. Probe specific steps in the process if not clear.
- C. How many staff are involved in reporting vote totals?
- D. How is the staff trained?
- E. Biggest problems they face within their system?
- F. How would they solve those problems?

- G. What could make the system even better? How would that make it better?
- H. What are the obstacles to improvements being made?

**VI. Legislation and Changes in Procedures (10 minutes)**

- A. How do they keep up with changes in federal legislation (if web sites, have them log on)?
- B. How do they keep up with changes in state legislation (if web sites, have them log on)?

**VII. Wrap-Up (10 minutes)**

- A. Are you familiar with the FVAP voting guide? If yes, is it helpful? [Show copy to participant] What would you change? Ever get requests for the FVAP voting guide from voters?
- B. Do you know how other counties handle UOCAVA voters? What do you think the counties that have the lowest rates of vote failure among UOCAVA voters do differently than the counties that have the highest rates of vote failure?
- C. You are the new Voting Czar and can make any change to reduce the number of vote failures among UOCAVA voters. What would you do?
- D. You have a lot going on here and a lot of voters to worry about. What priority would you say you give to overseas ballots?
- E. How important is it that ballots from UOCAVA voters are counted?

Thank you!