



For Immediate Release
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New systems to automate, simplify military/overseas balloting

Pentagon issues \$375,300 grant to Chicago Election Board

CHICAGO – The Pentagon’s Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) has issued a \$375,300 grant to the Chicago Election Board to implement systems designed to automate and simplify balloting for military and overseas voters.

The funding is part of the Department of Defense’s \$20 million “Electronic Absentee Systems for Elections” (EASE) program, to support the development of systems for online registration, absentee ballot requests, and blank ballot delivery. The goal is to increase the rates at which military voters are able to receive, vote and return their ballots in time to be counted.

Chicago Election Board Chairman Langdon D. Neal said the agency plans to start using the new hardware, software and web programs in time to begin delivering 2012 Primary Election ballots, starting Feb. 3, to members of the U.S. Armed Forces and civilians stationed overseas.

“Chicago’s military and overseas voters now will be able to use online services, such as voter registration and the ability to request, receive and mark their absentee ballots online,” Neal said. “Our military and overseas voters then will be able to print out their selections and their envelope labels, and return the documents with a signed certification through military mail, standard mail, embassies and international courier services.”

“These voters also will be able to track the status of their ballots to see when they arrived online,” Neal said. “We are extremely grateful to the FVAP for including Chicago in these pilot programs that are designed to protect the voting rights of members of our Armed Forces who are defending our democracy.”

“We have always prided ourselves on consistently delivering the ballots to members of the Armed Forces first, ahead of any other voters,” Neal said. “We hope this system will simplify that process for the benefit of all voters covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) in this and future elections.”

FVAP Director Bob Carey said, “FVAP continuously researches how to improve these UOCAVA ballot acceptance rates. One way to improve the success rates of voted ballots is to research the technology used by the voters. These grants give the States a chance to test technologies to learn what helps military and overseas voters most.”

The grant to Chicago covers elections through 2014. The Election Board is partnering with California-based Everyone Counts for the new software, hardware and web-based systems.

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