



Essential Online Resources

State Department offices and their services

The Transition Center located at FSI helps people prepare for successful overseas assignments through post research and training.

Post Research at the Transition Center's Overseas Briefing Center:

Each employee will have to prioritize posts within the first week of orientation. For those able to access FSI, there are many different resources available in the Overseas Briefing Center. Besides written reports and background information, we also have extra resources such as post newsletters and DVDs about daily life at post.

If you are not able to visit FSI, you can still participate in post research on the employee's bid list using these INTERNET links and subscription services:

- Bidding and country research links <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c10391.htm> and U.S. Destinations <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c20448.htm>
- Checklist for Preparing to Go Overseas: <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c6955.htm> - A million things you need to do once assigned, and the invaluable book, *Foreign Service Assignment Notebook: What Do I Do Now?* The book covers the logistics of moving, overseas mail service, allowances and benefits, basic medical information, insurance, taxes, automobiles, pets, electricity, television, mobile phones, packing, adjusting successfully, spouses and members of household, family member employment, children, education, eldercare, household employees, embassy overview, contingency planning, diplomatic immunity, legal issues, financial issues, unaccompanied assignments, and acronyms. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/22052.htm>.
- CultureGrams: Experience the cultures of 190 countries, find out more about the U.S., or let your children enjoy the "Kids Edition"
<http://online.culturegrams.com>
User name: OBC Password: countries
- Worldwide medical information, including post health handbooks and recommended immunizations
www.travax.com
User name: statedept Password: 4re\$ted
- Travel Warnings, Consular Information Sheets, public announcements and other useful information <http://travel.state.gov>

Training at the Transition Center's Training Division:

The Transition Center offers training courses to prepare employees and family members for essential personal preparation for the Foreign Service lifestyle. Once the employee is sworn in, you may register for courses (some are restricted to spouses only). Classes are held during the week but some are offered on evenings and Saturdays.

The Transition Center publishes the Foreign Affairs Community Life Skills Training Continuum booklet. It comprehensively guides employees and family members through training choices and directs users toward helpful classes during all phases of Foreign Service life. From protocol classes to seminars on raising bi-lingual children and financial advice, this booklet offers a quick reference guide for all our clients.

The updated Continuum is available at: <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/training/>. For a full listing of current courses and upcoming schedules, go to: <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/training/c21090.htm>

Also online from the Training Division, *Protocol for the Modern Diplomat*, the classic textbook designed for U.S. State Department personnel at <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c9649.htm>

The Family Liaison Office (FLO) located at the Main State building at 22nd and 23rd Streets in Washington, DC, is the primary advocate for family members within the Department. They assist with spouse employment, education, divorce, naturalization and family support issues: <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/>

The Office of Overseas Schools (OOS): located at Main State, is the liaison to all Department-supported schools at posts around the world. A directory of those schools is available at: <http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/c16483.htm>. Families may successfully use other schools than the ones listed in the online fact sheets; check the Post Reports, and other resources to verify your options.

The Office of Medical Services (MED) manages medical clearances for employees and all family members. Read about the MED program in chapter 5 of the Foreign Service Assignment Notebook: <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/22052.htm> and find country-specific medical information and recommended immunizations at www.travax.com (user name: statedept, password: 4re\$ted, click on "Destination Information.")

International organizations that support the Foreign Service community

The American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), the "union" for Foreign Service employees; of interest to family members are the yearly tax guide, college scholarships, and the book *Inside an Embassy* published by AFSA. www.afsa.org

The American Association of Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW), a non-profit organization supporting Foreign Service family members and employees. See

www.aafsw.org for useful articles and information and consider joining their Livelines e-mail Listserv group for complete 24/7 responses to your questions. They offer a play group, foreign-born spouses group, French group, guest speakers, and more to members staying in the Washington, DC, area.

The Foreign Service Youth Foundation, designs programs for Foreign Service kids ages 5 to 18 and distributes a monthly newsletter as well as hosts an e-mail Listserv for parental networking. They sponsor monthly events in the DC area. www.fsyf.org.

Books and resources on the Foreign Service life

Realities of Foreign Service Life, edited by Foreign Service spouses, it provides unvarnished views and personal experiences of U.S. Foreign Service writers, primarily spouses. Volumes I and II - published by AAFSW at www.aafsw.org.

Inside a U.S. Embassy, edited by Shawn Dorman, it describes U.S. diplomats and their typical workday around the world - published by AFSA at www.afsa.org.

A Portable Identity: A Woman's Guide to Maintaining a Sense of Self While Moving Overseas, by Debra Bryson and Charise Hoge, contains exercises and information to help "trailing spouses" manage the identity shift that occurs during an international move. Ms. Hoge also presents a Transition Center workshop called, "Developing a Portable Identity" and the next class offering is at: <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/training/c21090.htm>. For further resources on change, read the Family Liaison Office's article on "Challenges of Change" at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/18759.pdf>

Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds, by David C. Pollock.

A systematic exploration of what happens to children who grow up living abroad.

The State Department's youth website offers the view of diplomatic children living abroad at: <http://future.state.gov/where/stories/>. Also, the Transition Center Youth Pages provide age-appropriate information on other countries and games at: <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/training/c21782.htm>