

# FS Direct

Direct Communication to Foreign Service Employees and Family Members  
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## **FS Direct Subscriptions**

Welcome to the June 2003 edition of *FS Direct*. To keep the publication user-friendly and simple, we have listed the articles in the sidebar to the left. Simply click on those items you are interested in reading. Subscribe using the following links:

**Internet:** <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c9156.htm>

**Intranet:**

<http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/FLO/FLOSubscription.html>

**Via AAFSW:** Visit the FLO area of the AAFSW web site at <http://www.aafsw.org> and click on FLO newsletters.

*FS Direct* is also available one week after publication on the FLO Internet web site at

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/c5709.htm>

## **From FLO Director Faye Barnes**

In the end of March, I reported on our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. While FLO celebrated our quarter-century mark, the crisis in Iraq brought five evacuated CLOs to the FLO Office. They joined two other CLOs already in Washington supporting their evacuated communities. With this added team, our expanded FLO staff helped evacuees settle children into schools, find temporary employment for spouses, fill out necessary paperwork, understand regulations and procedures, and provided support to those in transition. Special events, briefings and emails kept evacuees informed.

Since January, over 1,600 evacuees have been "on the move" from thirty-four (34) posts. While not all evacuees were here in the United States at the same time, the workload for the Family Liaison

Office increased markedly. All of our evacuated CLOs have now returned to their communities overseas, except CLO Abidjan due to the post converting to “unaccompanied status.”

We learned much from these first four months of 2003 and made great strides in changing regulations and improving allowances for families on evacuation status.

As a result of the international situation in March-April, we had to cancel our Spring CLO training, but were able to reschedule for 24 CLOs from May 29 - June 6. With added knowledge and new-found professionalism, and a boost from the FLO staff, these trainees are back at post finding new ways to improve their CLO programs.

Our Spouse Networking Assistance Program (SNAP) has expanded to 8 additional countries (read article below). And we are pleased to see Missions value family member employment options by initiating positions and creative solutions for providing services to family members looking for overseas work (read Tbilisi article!).

## **Click Your Way to More FLO Resources**

**FLO Homepage on the Intranet**

<http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/index.html>

**FLO Homepage on the Internet**

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo>

### **FAMILY MEMBER EMPLOYMENT**

- **(Updated) Working in a U.S. Embassy or Consulate Overseas**  
<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/7235.htm>
- **(New) Hiring Mechanisms to Employ Family Members at U.S. Missions Overseas**  
<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/21936.htm>
- **(New) Checklist for Overseas Employment**  
<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/22179.htm>
- **(Updated) Employment for Family Members Returning to the United States**  
<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/7237.htm>
- **(New) Checklist for Washington Area Employment**  
<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/4500.htm>
- **(Updated) Federal Employment**  
<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/9859.htm>
- **(Updated) Spouse Networking Assistance Program (SNAP)**  
<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/9888.htm>
- **(New) Unemployment Compensation Information for Family Members on Evacuation Status** <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/22195.htm>

## EDUCATION AND YOUTH

- **(New) Recent Education Initiatives in the Department of State**  
<http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/21952.htm>
- **(New) Virginia Standards of Learning and the No Child Left Behind Act**  
<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/19998.htm>
- **(New) Check out our New Homework Helpers w/ links to Kids' Federal web sites** <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/1994.htm>
- **(New) Education Checklist for Returning to Washington**  
<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/22244.htm>

## EVACUATIONS

- **(New) Unemployment Compensation Information for Family Members on Evacuation Status** <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/22195.htm>

## Domestic Hard-to-Fill Opportunities with the Department of State

Domestic hard-to-fill job opportunities might be available in the 2003 summer and fall for EFMs who were employed on an Family Member Appointment (FMA) or a TEMP appointment overseas and are returning to the Washington, DC area. (See FLO's Hiring Mechanism paper at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/21936.htm> for definitions of FMA and TEMP).

The Family Liaison Office, in conjunction with all functional and geographic bureaus in the Department of State, is currently assembling a list of unfilled domestic Foreign Service vacancies. The list of jobs and application procedures will be announced and sent out to the field by the end of July. Candidates must have been employed in an FMA or TEMP position, earned Executive Order Eligibility (EOE) and hold a current security clearance. (See EOE information on the FLO web site at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/2093.htm>.)

There will be a window of opportunity for applications during August. All qualified EFMs interested in filling these substantive jobs on a two year temporary appointment to the Civil Service should email [FLOAskEmployment@state.gov](mailto:FLOAskEmployment@state.gov) with their contact information, including email address so we can forward the cable information detailing the application process.

## Demystifying Family Member Hiring at US Missions Overseas

There is often confusion at post as to how jobs are advertised and how family members are hired into positions in US Missions overseas.

Family members should be aware that the Department of State's HR/Office of Overseas Employment established guidelines for advertising DOS positions at U.S. Missions overseas. The concept of opening recruitment to all qualified candidates is addressed in the following references:

- STATE 109145, June 22, 2001 - PSA Guidance NO. 9, Advertising Positions
- STATE 155213, August 14, 2002 – Overseas Recruitment: Model Vacancy Announcements For Advertising Locally Recruited Positions

These cables outline the principle that agencies should not advertise vacancies by hiring mechanism but according to the specific duties, knowledge, skills and abilities required for the position. STATE 155213 states: “.....positions are no longer advertised as FSN, PSA, or USPSC positions. Instead, they are advertised for the specific duties with both the FSN and FP grades and post management determines the appropriate employment mechanism for the selected candidate based on the residency of the applicant.” (This information applies to agencies that following DOS hiring guidelines.)

FLO has asked CLOs worldwide to encourage post ADMIN/HR offices to establish a uniform and transparent Post Employment Policy that is readily available to all employees and family members at post.

To help further demystify the process, FLO wrote a paper entitled “Hiring Mechanisms to Employ Family Members in U.S. Missions Overseas.” Find it on the FLO web site at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/21936.htm>

## **Unemployment Compensation**

Evacuations cause great upheaval and for working family members, an evacuation can mean loss of income. FLO wrote a new paper to address the possibility of unemployment compensation for family members during an evacuation. Click on it from the Post Evacuations page of the FLO web site at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1991.htm>.

## **SNAP Expands to Eight More Countries**

FLO's Special Employment Projects Coordinator is currently traveling to provide support to SNAP posts in London, Warsaw and Krakow. She is also visiting **Frankfurt and Berlin**, two new SNAP pilot sites for 2003. **Other new SNAP posts are San Jose, Costa Rica, Santiago, Chile, Almaty, Kazakhstan, Budapest, Hungary, Geneva, Switzerland and Pretoria, Capetown and Durban in South Africa.** These posts join **London, Brussels, Warsaw, Krakow, Cairo, Singapore, Seoul, Mexico City, Monterrey, Guadalajara, and Ottawa.** FLO is scheduling training in September for all the newly hired overseas coordinators for this program. If you are the spouse of a USG employee located at or relocating to a SNAP post, and if you are interested in working on the local economy, contact the SNAP Local Employment Adviser at post.

FLO is planning several new publications to support family member employment options, including a guide to developing a home-based business overseas. More news on that effort will follow.

For contact information, email the Family Liaison Office at [flo@state.gov](mailto:flo@state.gov). Information on the Spouse Networking Assistance Program (SNAP) can be found on the FLO web site at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/9888.htm>.

## **Tbilisi Creates Spousal Employment Advocate Position**

While SNAP continues to grow, we also congratulate posts like Tbilisi, who outside of the SNAP umbrella, requested and was given authority to create a Spousal Employment Advocate FMA position at FP-06 level. Such efforts reinforce and support the importance of employment opportunities for our family members overseas. Other posts are creating family member job banks, conducting employment workshops, and finding creative ways to assist spouses in finding work both on the local economy and inside the Mission.

## **Updated Information on the PIT Retirement Buyback**

The Family Liaison Office was initially pleased with the passage of PIT Retirement Buyback legislation, making it possible for family members to "buy back" their retirement benefits. The PIT retirement buyback language was incorporated into the State Authorization Bill which passed in September 2002.

Language in the State authorization bill called for the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to issue the implementing guidelines. OPM opposes this legislation so is not issuing the guidelines and in fact has talked about a repeal of the bill. The American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) has been working this issue on the Hill and indicates there is no support for repeal of the bill. AFSA has begun lobbying for legislation that will require an implementation date.

Once these guidelines are issued and roles and responsibilities more clearly defined, the Department of State will send out an ALDAC and issue a Department Notice with instructions.

## **Recent Education Initiatives in the Department of State**

On Wednesday, June 18, 2003, a cable (STATE 173203) entitled "Recent Education Initiatives in the Department of State" was distributed from the Office of Overseas Schools, the Office of Allowances, and the Family Liaison Office. The cable highlights new education initiatives in the Department of State. This is a "must read" for anyone interested in the education of Foreign Service children. You can find the cable under "What's Hot" on the FLO web site at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c9652.htm>.

The cable touches on allowances for students identified as gifted and talented, homeschooling, SMA and TSMA, storage of UAB for college students, and payment for Advanced Placement / International Baccalaureate exams.

## **Foreign Service Youth Foundation Calendar of Events**

The following Washington-based events are being publicized by the Foreign Service Youth Foundation.

<b>July 29</b>	<b>Manassas Splashdown Waterpark</b>
<b>August 20</b>	<b>Six Flags America Adventure Theme Park</b>
<b>September 21</b>	<b>Welcome Back Family Picnic, Lubber Run Park</b>

The Foreign Service Youth Foundation sponsors the AWAL (ages 13-19) and Globe Trotters (ages 9-12) youth development programs for Foreign Service kids who share the experience of living overseas. New members (whether you are returning from overseas, starting A-100 or have been in DC for awhile) are always welcome to join in the fun!

For information about the Foreign Service Youth Foundation, AWAL and Globe Trotters, contact the Foreign Service Youth Foundation at tel: (301) 404-6655, email: [fsyf@fsyf.org](mailto:fsyf@fsyf.org), or through their web Site: <http://www.fsyf.org>.

## **DMVs and Driver's Licenses**

FLO encourages all employees and family members to read the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) cable dated June 23, 2003 (STATE 178913). The cable contains information pertaining to Virginia and Maryland driver's licenses. For information on DMV regulations by state, see [http://nevadadm.state.nv.us/50\\_state\\_dmv\\_list.html](http://nevadadm.state.nv.us/50_state_dmv_list.html).

## **AFSA Awards Family Members with the M. Juanita Guess Award and the Avis Bohlen Award**

Congratulations to Joy Khoo Bacik (CLO Jakarta) for receiving the M. Juanita Guess Award for outstanding dedication, energy and imagination in assisting the families of Americans posted at an overseas post. Joy received her award at the AFSA Awards Presentation on June 26, 2003 at the Department of State. Joy was recognized for her exemplary performance in assisting the over 300 family members and non-emergency personnel who were evacuated from Jakarta in 2002-2003. The program also noted "her remarkable achievements as Community Liaison Office coordinator, including developing an innovative teen security program, overseeing the production of a teen-produced video for the Overseas Briefing Center, and establishing a tremendously effective two-day orientation program for newcomers."

FLO also extends congratulations to Bonnie S. Miller, who was awarded the Avis Bohlen Award at the same event. The Avis Bohlen Award honors a family member whose relations with the American and foreign communities at a Foreign Service post have done the most to advance American interests. Bonnie used her professional skills as a psychologist and educator to become a passionate advocate for women and children in her host country. Using her high profile visibility as spouse of the American Ambassador to Greece, the program noted that “the two major areas on which she focused her attention are human trafficking and children with learning disabilities. She has worked tirelessly to shut down know trafficking operations and establish programs to help the rescued women.”

### **Divorce in the Foreign Service Context : What Becomes of Items in the HHE and in Storage?**

Divorces are never easy. Divorce in the Foreign Service context can be especially stressful and complex if both both parties are residing at the same post when the decision to divorce is made. FLO’s *Divorce and the Foreign Service Family*, available on the FLO web site, is a helpful booklet that explains some of the challenges, including jurisdiction, departure from post, lawyers, mediation, children issues, retirement and health benefits, and financial and privacy act considerations. **One item of special note is access to HHE and stored property.** The divorce booklet recommends that a separation agreement be signed at post before the spouse leaves post stating that the separation is by mutual consent and that one party is not abandoning the other. The booklet also recommends that the employee sign a statement allowing the spouse authorization to receive goods shipped from post and access to stored property. HHE can ONLY be removed from an overseas location or from storage (if stored at USG expense) with the employee’s consent or a valid court order. This is why it is important that the employee sign an authorization before the spouse leaves post. (See pages 13 – 15 in the Divorce booklet for more information).

In November 2002, FLO’s Support Services Officer attended a training program on divorce, organized by the Department of State Office of Retirement. The training focused on the regulations regarding pensions and survivor benefits following a divorce. Topics covered included: an overview of the legal framework of foreign service divorces, employee/annuitant divorces, foreign affairs agency procedures and responsibilities, garnishment of wages, subpoenas and Touhy procedures, and the Privacy Act.

FLO can share this information with couples considering a divorce, and when appropriate, with their attorneys to help them make informed decisions, based on some of the unique provisions of Department of State regulations on annuities. Questions should be directed to [ReddyJA@state.gov](mailto:ReddyJA@state.gov).

## **FLO Launches New Subscription Database**

**For those individuals with Intranet access, it is now possible to subscribe to FLO publications online at <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/FLOSubscription.html>.**

**For those who have Internet access, subscribe to FLO publications online at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c9156.htm>.**

**The following FLO publications are available:**

***FS Direct*** - a newsletter for the Foreign Service community, emailed to subscribers bi-monthly.

***The Network*** - a newsletter for Foreign Service family members seeking employment in the Washington, DC area, published monthly.

***Global Employment Connections*** - a newsletter which covers current information, resources, and job search strategies to help build a global career in a mobile lifestyle. It also features real-life success stories from spouses in the global workforce as well as employment advice from family members who want to share their lessons learned with others.