

FS Direct



Direct Communication to Foreign Service Employees and Family Members
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What's Inside

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

[THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY ON FAMILIES](#)

NOT-TO-BE-MISSED INFORMATION

[GOING OVERSEAS DAY](#)

FAMILY MEMBER EMPLOYMENT

[THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATES PROGRAM](#)

[RETURNING TO THE DC JOB MARKET](#)

[LOCAL EMPLOYMENT ADVISOR TRAINING](#)

[SNAP'S JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE WEB TOOL](#)

[NATURALIZATION FEES RAISED](#)

EDUCATION AND YOUTH

[RETURNING TO WASHINGTON](#)

[FSYF ANNUAL WELCOME-BACK PICNIC](#)

SUPPORT SERVICES

[IMMEDIATE BENEFIT PLAN](#)

Click Your Way to 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/dqhr/flo>



EMPLOYMENT

[The Network](#), the monthly FLO newsletter highlighting the Washington, D.C. job search.



INFORMATION & RESOURCES

[Returning to Washington](#) offers links to area reentry resources.



FS FAMILY MEMBERS

[Training opportunities](#) for Foreign Service family members.



FS DIRECT SUBSCRIPTIONS

To subscribe, please use the following links:

Internet: <http://www.state.gov/m/dqhr/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 on the FLO Internet web site at <http://www.state.gov/m/dqhr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/c5709.htm>

Notes from the Field

Featuring articles submitted by Foreign Service Officers or their family members serving at posts abroad. Please submit your article to the FLO Publications Coordinator at ayerstdm@state.gov.

THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY ON FAMILIES

By Leslie Teixeira
CLO London

Moving to another country is a wonderful adventure, full of possibilities -- it can also be a period of tremendous stress and adjustment, affecting each member of the family differently, each facing different issues. All of us who move internationally go through similar stages of cultural adjustment, but how it impacts us depends on what our role is in the family, the timing of the move, our age, and other factors.

There are four generally recognized stages of cultural adaptation that all people go through. The first stage is often known as the “**honeymoon**” stage, where everything is exciting and exotic -- Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, castles, Regents Park, theatre, double-decker buses, “mind-the-gap”, Edwardian architecture.... This is followed by the stage where all those things you initially found quaint are suddenly intensely **irritating** and incomprehensible (everything is expensive, the traffic is awful, the tube is always breaking down, nothing works properly, my house has FIVE levels of stairs). This is the “why can’t they do things *right*, the way *we* do it” stage. This reaction is otherwise known as “**culture shock**”. The good news is that the vast majority of people do get out of this stage and you’re well on the way to the third stage, **adapting** -- starting to accept how things work, and managing day-to-day routines. The best stage to be in is when you are finally comfortable, you don’t have to consciously think about doing everything, you appreciate the way many things are done here, and even occasionally prefer some things to your “home” culture – in fact, you have **adjusted**.

Although everyone in the family will go through this general process, the impact on individual members of the family will be different:

- For the **Employee**, there will be a new job, often a new corporate culture, and of course, the new country culture. There will usually be a high level of stress, high expectations, and high profile. However, the employee has the advantage of a built-in support network of people in the office to answer questions and guide him/her through the process.
- If the **spouse/partner** is also seeking employment, they will go through all the normal stress of a job search, except that there are additional stressors due to having to adjust to a different style of cv or resume, different interview techniques, different networking techniques and opportunities -- and sometimes a different language. In addition the partner has normally not developed any support system yet, either socially or professionally.

If not seeking employment, the spouse/partner is the person dealing with all of the day-to-day aspects of settling in, the frustrations of finding the supermarket, finding things in the supermarket, dealing with plumbers, telephone or cable installation, getting the kids settled in school if there are children -- again, usually before he or she has developed any type of network of people to call on for advice.

- For **children** at certain ages (ok, parents, lets face it -- at all ages!), friends are infinitely more important than family, and it is YOUR FAULT their life has been destroyed forever... Some type of regression is normal at all ages (even adults have been known to have meltdowns!), so younger children may do things like start wetting the bed, sucking their thumb or having tantrums. Others might withdraw. Older children tend to pout a lot, and do a fair amount of back talking and slamming of doors. Older teens will likely withdraw, and may become rebellious and demanding.

What is the good news? There is nothing you can do to avoid going through the stress of moving -- but there are things you can do to minimize the negative stress, and take advantage of the positive stress. There are some basic strategies that can be used to make the transition an easier and more productive one. And even better news is that this really is an enriching lifestyle, and no, you have not ruined your children's lives forever! Professionally, it is likely to provide opportunities for growth that one would never see in the home country. You tend to have more autonomy in international positions, more responsibility and more authority. On a personal level, you have the opportunity to do and see things, and go places that people back home (wherever that is) would consider incredibly exotic. Children are exposed to globalization as a living reality, not an abstract concept -- they are in classrooms with Japanese, American, Nigerian, Saudi, French, German, and Brazilian children. They are learning about different languages and cultures, how to get along with and appreciate people who are different. "Global nomads" tend to be much more adaptable, more flexible, and more willing to take risks. What amazing life skills they are acquiring! I have been asked, "How can you do this to your children?" My response is -- "given the opportunity, how can I NOT do this FOR my children?"



Not-to-be-Missed Information

FSI Transition Center Presents:

GOING OVERSEAS DAY
Saturday, May 15, 2004

Morning Sessions 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

- **Going Overseas for Singles & Couples without Children, MQ200**
Discuss the personal impact of moving abroad.

- **Going Overseas for Families, MQ210**

Afternoon Sessions 1 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

- **Going Overseas – Logistics for Children, MQ230**
Children participate in activities to help them prepare for their move.
- **Going Overseas – Logistics for Adults, MQ220**
Learn the “Nuts & Bolts” of planning an international move.

These programs are open to USG employees and their Eligible Family Members. Children in grades 2 through 12 are invited to attend MQ210 & MQ230. Parents must be present on campus during the sessions. Non-State tuition rate: No Charge. To register call (703) 302-7268/9 or email FSITCTraining@state.gov

All courses will take place at the George P. Schultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center



EMPLOYMENT

THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATES PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

Tenured Department Civil Service (CS) employees have had the opportunity to bid on vacant Foreign Service (FS) positions as part of the Overseas Hard-to-Fill (HTF) exercise. In 1996, the Department implemented the Professional Associates Program in order to give family members the option to bid on these same positions. Initially this included only vacant junior officer (JO) positions but was expanded to include mid-level positions as well. In order to bid, family members must meet a series of criteria, including but not limited to the condition that they be at the same post as the employee. Specific requirements are outlined in the worldwide cable (ALDAC) that announces the program when funding is available.

This is one of the best programs available to eligible family members who want to do substantive work at our missions overseas. Family members should be aware that they must have the relevant employment background, education, experience and, in some instances, requisite language for language designated positions. Additionally, family members are usually appointed at one grade level below the established officer level position, depending on the applicant's qualifications.

UPDATE

The cable announcing the 2004 Professional Associates Program is currently in the clearance process. As we understand it, this year there will be the opportunity for two PA positions per bureau. The cable will outline the Program and provide specific

information on application procedures. FLO will post updated information on our web sites as soon as it is available.

This year the Department is launching the Civil Service Hard-to-Fill Exercise (CS HTF) and the PA Program concurrently. The only difference will be that the PA Program application deadline will be one week longer than the CS HTF deadline in order to give family members overseas the opportunity to apply in a timely manner. Once the Program is formally announced, family member applicants are encouraged to network with posts, HR/CDA and the bureaus in order to obtain information on these positions.

FLO has reminded the bureaus that selecting an equally qualified family member makes sound fiscal sense, improves post morale and will make participating posts more attractive to bidders. Stay tuned!



RETURNING TO THE DC JOB MARKET

As many FS families prepare to return to the U.S. this summer, the time is right to discuss [employment options for FS family members](#) and to offer tips on preparing to reenter the DC area job market. CLO might consider offering an Employment Re-entry Workshop for Family Members. Information is available on the FLO web sites:

Intranet – <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/employment/washjobseach.html>

Internet - <http://www.state.gov/m/dqhr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/c1979.htm>

Preparing for the DC Area Job Market - [Checklist](#)

▪ Update Your Resume

Federal - In Washington, DC the federal government application form SF-171 is seldom used; a Written Federal Government Resume and application package is preferred. To be selected for an interview, your application package MUST be complete! An application package will include a Cover Letter, Resume, Separate Section in which you address the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) as stated in the Job Opening Announcement, your Personnel Actions, your Evaluations (PAR), and any Awards or Training Certificates.

The Department of State's **Career Development Resource Center** (CDRC) is available to FS family members. The CDRC's Intranet site offers information and suggestions on all aspects of a job search

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

Private Sector – Resumes for private sector job openings are very different from a Federal application package and may be only two very concise and clearly

organized pages. FLO's website offers resume examples and builders <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c5516.htm>.

▪ **Where to Find the Government Job Openings?**

Intranet -

The Department of State's Intranet site lists [job openings by category](#). Family members who will be returning to the U.S. with non-competitive eligibility (see [Executive Order Eligibility](#)), may apply (in advance of leaving post) for jobs in the following categories:

- For Department Of State Employees Only
- For Status Candidates
- For All Sources and Job Openings advertised via OPM (Officer of Personnel Management)

Internet sites for USG jobs –

www.careers.state.gov - Civil Service job search.

[OPM website](#), which lists all federal government job openings allowing search by agency, profession, date, and location.

▪ **Subscribe to [The Network](#)**

The Network is an electronic newsletter published monthly for Foreign Service family members seeking employment in the Washington, DC area. The publication includes immediate job openings (Federal and non-Federal), helpful job search tips, and announcements of workshops and continuing education opportunities. To subscribe to future issues, email FLOAskEmployment@state.gov.

▪ **[Hand Carry all of your Important Employment Records](#)** - Complete list at bottom of page.

▪ **Contact FLO for a Job Advisory Session; Join FLO's Job Seekers Network Group for the DC area**

The Job Seekers Network Group is for Foreign Service family members who are committed to a job search. Whether looking for Federal employment or employment outside of government, searching for a job is a challenge. Successful job searches require time, energy, information, skills, and the motivation to get started and keep going! The Network Group will serve to keep you abreast of new job search information, keep you motivated, and put you in touch with colleagues also looking for work. The idea is to share information, contacts, tips, and offer support. After a break for summer, the group will reconvene in September. Please, contact FLO to register - FLOAskEmployment@state.gov.





LOCAL EMPLOYMENT ADVISOR TRAINING

Last week in Washington, FLO hosted the annual Professional Skills Development Training Conference for Strategic Networking Assistance Program (SNAP) Local Employment Advisors (LEAs). LEAs in attendance came from 12 different SNAP posts, including Pretoria, London, Geneva, San Salvador, Cairo, Budapest, Almaty, San Jose, Seoul, Frankfurt, Mexico City, and Berlin.

The conference consisted of informational and problem-solving sessions designed to help LEAs get organized, sharpen their skills, and build a foundation of information to help them become the best Local Employment Advisors possible.

Director General W. Robert Pearson welcomed the group and cited the importance of SNAP in the effort to retain Foreign Service families. An opportunity for Q and A's with the DG energized the already enthusiastic LEAs.

Some of the key issues emerging from the conference included creating partnerships with multi-national company and collaborating with appropriate offices and individuals to address bilateral work agreement concerns.

The LEAs went back to post ready to take SNAP to the next level!



SNAP'S JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE WEB TOOL

For the majority of people, the Internet's value is as a research tool to get employment information -- to take a look and see what kind of jobs are out there in a given country, look at salaries, and to get ideas of occupations that might be of interest. We invite you to use our [SNAP Job Search Assistance](#) web tool as part of your research. Click on "Worldwide" for an indication of the companies (and the types of positions) looking to hire people in a given region/country.



NATURALIZATION FEES RAISED

The U.S. Citizenship and Naturalization Services (USCIS) is increasing its fees as of April 30, 2004 -

- For applicants applying from **abroad** using Form N400, the new fee is \$320.
- Applicants applying **within the U.S.** must be fingerprinted electronically at a domestic USCIS facility, adding an additional fee of \$70, for a combined total of \$390.



EDUCATION AND YOUTH

RETURNING TO WASHINGTON

One area of concern that many families have about returning to Washington is the transition their children will face. We offer lots of advice on our FLO Education and Youth website at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm>. In particular, check out:

[Washington Area Schools](#)

[Suggested Book List for Parenting and Living Abroad](#)

[Returning to Washington Resources](#)

[Youth Are The World's Future Diplomats](#)

[Foreign Service Youth - Relocation Issues, Third Culture Kids, and More](#)

[Foreign Service Youth Foundation](#)

[Special Needs and the Foreign Service Child](#)



FSYF ANNUAL WELCOME-BACK PICNIC

The **Annual Welcome Back Potluck Picnic** sponsored by the Foreign Service Youth Foundation is an excellent way to link up with other Foreign Service kids and families. It will be held on **Sunday, September 19, 2004** from 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm. Please contact FSYF for location.

FSYF will provide hotdogs and drinks. Please bring a dish to share with six people. A speaker will discuss transitioning to the DC area with kids. Youth Program Directors will offer activities for teens and pre-teens. Activities will be offered for the younger children.

Please take this opportunity to connect with old and new Foreign Service friends and to tell returnees about the current Washington scene. Parents can learn about the re-entry adjustment process and what the FSYF youth development programs offer your family. If you know of any Newcomers or Returning Foreign Service families in the area, please invite them to join in the fun.

Reservations are requested by **Wednesday, September 15**. Please RSVP to Melanie Newhouse at 301-404-6655 or e-mail fsyf@fsyf.org.



SUPPORT SERVICES

IMMEDIATE BENEFIT PLAN (IBP) OPENS TO USAID, FAS AND FCS EMPLOYEES

GOOD NEWS!!! The Immediate Benefit Plan is now open to all:

- ✓ **Foreign and civil service employees of USAID**
- ✓ **Foreign and civil service employees of FAS**
- ✓ **Foreign Service employees of FCS**

The Immediate Benefit Plan, offered by the American Foreign Service Protective Association (AFSPA), is a \$15,000 optional term life insurance policy (at age 70 the benefit reduces to \$7,500) that is intended to help offset the unexpected and extraordinary expenses incurred in the first days and weeks following the death of a loved one and before other benefits can be paid. Upon official notification of the death of an enrollee, payment is made to designated beneficiaries within two workdays. The cost is \$2.00 per pay period and will be made through a payroll deduction. There is no physical examination or other pre-screening required when employees enroll in the IBP during an open enrollment period.

The current Open Enrollment period is from May 1, 2004 to July 1, 2004. **Employees must complete all forms online, download and fax them to AFSPA no later than July 1, 2004.** Coverage for all FAS, FCS and USAID enrollees commences on July 1, 2004.

You are encouraged to visit AFSPA's website at www.afspa.org or contact them at ibp@afspa.org for more detailed information and to determine if this new life insurance program should be part of your overall coverage.

For State employees:

This is not an open enrollment period for Department of State employees. Therefore, new DOS enrollees must complete a Short Form Health Statement Questionnaire as well as the enrollment form to be considered for coverage under the IBP. All forms are available online at www.afspa.org.

