

Chapter 24

TRANSITION CENTER RESOURCES

TRANSITION CENTER

The Foreign Service Institute's Transition Center provides information, training, and referrals to U.S. Government employees and family members assigned to diplomatic posts overseas, as well as post-career services for employees and family members of the foreign affairs agencies.

Three divisions provide different services, listed below. The Transition Center also partners with the Office of Medical Services on the **High Stress Assignment Outbrief Program**, which is mandatory for those returning from Iraq and highly recommended for returnees from other high threat posts.

Overseas Briefing Center

Are you in the process of bidding on an assignment or considering an overseas appointment? The Overseas Briefing Center offers a family-friendly place to research potential posts and find out more about Foreign Service life. If you are able to reach Arlington, Virginia, the OBC Information Center operates as a drop-in facility weekdays from 8:15 a.m. to 5 p.m., as well as some Saturdays and evenings. For more information, check the online schedule (www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc, click on "Overseas Briefing Center" and then on "Open Hours"), call (703)302-7277 or e-mail FSIOBCInfoCenter@state.gov.

The Information Center provides the following:

- Country briefing boxes containing post reports, Personal Post Insights (first-person opinions on posts), welcome material, and post-specific information on spouse employment, housing, security, education, consumables, medical facilities, automobiles, importing pets, tourism materials, and maps.
- Embassy newsletters listing current events and announcements from posts, school yearbooks, cultural guides, and cross-cultural reference books.

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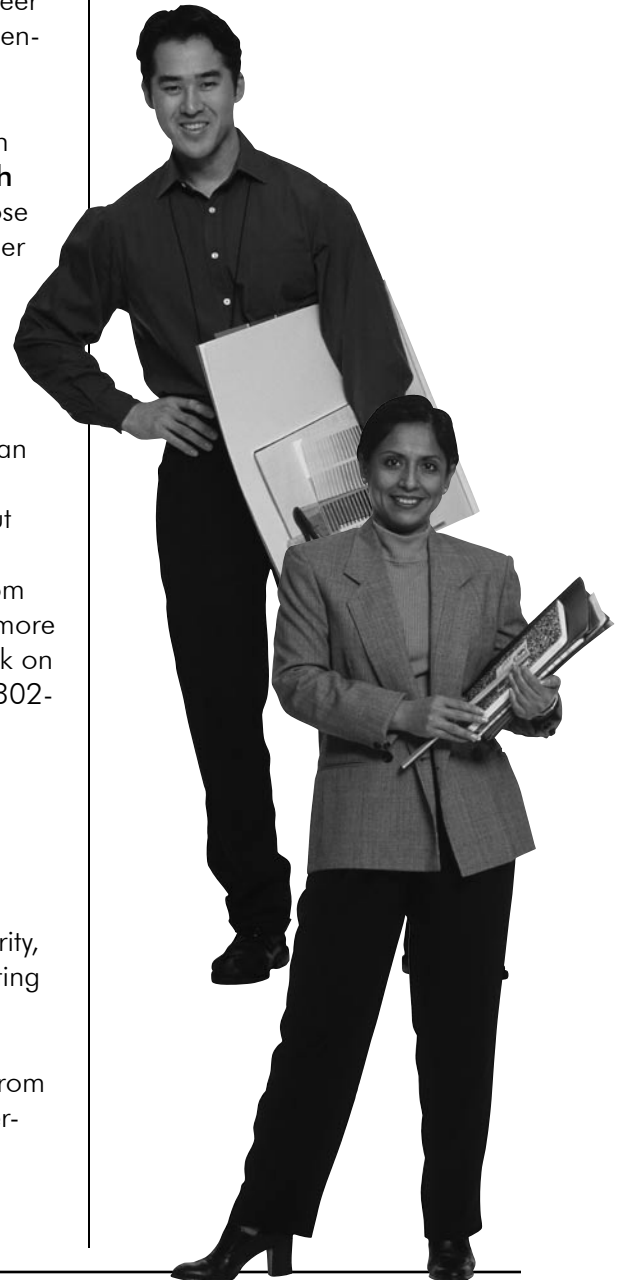
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- Over 1000 post-specific audiovisuals, including videos, CDs, and DVDs, which may be checked out or viewed at the center. A growing number of these are being broadcast by BNET and appear on the intranet at <http://obc.bnet.state.gov> (U.S. viewers only).
- Print publications such as the *Foreign Service Assignment Notebook: What Do I Do Now?* *Where in the World Are You Going* (a children's workbook), and *Protocol for the Modern Diplomat*. These are also on the Internet at <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c9649.htm>.
- Handouts on consumables, traveling with pets, personal documents, financial planning, insurance, and more. These can also be downloaded by employees from the intranet at <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc/default.asp?id=1156>.
- Brochures, consumables catalogs, listings of consumer services and products, including automobiles and 220V appliances.
- "Welcome to Washington" resources and material from other helpful organizations.

Dozens of training videos in the Information Center cover topics ranging from allowances to youth security. These may be viewed in the center or checked out for two days.

Even if you are nowhere near Arlington, much of OBC's information appears on the State Department intranet at <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc>, click on "Overseas Briefing Center. Users can now access "Post Info To Go" containing every electronic document OBC has about posts (see <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc/epb/epb.asp>). This fantastic new feature makes it easy to find information and e-mail it to those without intranet access. "Personal Post Insights" is the place to read or complete anonymous surveys on life at post, describing housing, schools, nightlife, special attractions, and more. These first-hand glimpses provide a helpful, unofficial view of post.

While Internet information is more limited (www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc), a number of publications and links guide those headed overseas. OBC staff can also provide electronic post information, including Person-

al Post Insight surveys and responses, to U.S. Government employees and family members upon e-mail request (FSIOBCInfoCenter@state.gov).

Those eligible to access OBC services also benefit from subscription services for country research. Log-on information appears on OBC's intranet site, or e-mail for user names and passwords.

- **CultureGrams** offer information in three editions: world, kids, and states. The world edition reports on the culture of dozens of countries and territories using maps, statistics, a glossary, and more. The kids' edition explores a smaller number of countries from a child's perspective, incorporating timelines, maps, flags, anthems, and charts. The states edition tours the U.S. through facts, symbols, timelines, and more.

In addition to managing self-help resources, OBC staff delivers over 113 formal briefings a year, serving over 3500 individuals in 17 federal agencies. Staff members have many years of overseas Foreign Service experience and a strong commitment to outstanding customer service. Stop by, call, or e-mail if you need help with questions related to serving the U.S. overseas.

Transition Center Training Division

Not sure which courses offered by the Transition Center might help you? Check the *Foreign Affairs Community Life Skills Training Continuum*, a training guide listing courses and workshops appropriate for foreign affairs agency employees and their family members at various stages (also available online, although it is a very large file).

Courses also appear both by topic and by date on the intranet (with direct links to register—see <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc>) and the Internet (www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc). In both cases, select "Training Division" to find out more.

U.S. Government employees and their family members heading to or returning from overseas assignments may register for Transition Center courses. Offerings include the following:

- **Security Overseas Seminar** – required (or its equivalent) prior to a first overseas assignment. Also available in a special format geared to children from grades two through twelve
- **Advanced Security Overseas Seminar**—required (or its equivalent) every five years
- Personal and financial planning courses such as **Regulations, Allowances, and Finances in the Foreign Service Context, Tax Seminar, Personal Finances and Investments in the Foreign Service, Managing Rental Property from Overseas, and Legal Considerations in the Foreign Service**
- “Family” courses such as **Encouraging Resilience in the Foreign Service Child, Maintaining Long-Distance Relationships, Young Diplomats Day, and Traveling with Pets**
- **Protocol and U.S. Representation Abroad, Realities of Foreign Service Life, Explaining America, Communicating across Cultures,** and other courses helping employees and family members alike function successfully in other countries
- Employment-related courses such as the **English Teaching Seminar** and **Making Presentations: From Design to Delivery**

Career Transition Center

The Career Transition Center provides training, counseling, job leads, and other assistance to U.S. citizen employees of the Department of State and other federal foreign affairs agencies who are leaving U.S. Government service.

The CTC conducts two flagship programs: the Job Search Program and the Retirement Planning Seminar. In addition, the CTC offers a one-day workshops on Financial Management and Estate Planning and Annuities, Benefits, and Social Security. (The Retirement Planning Seminar includes both of these one-day workshops.)

The CTC also provides several other job search services for its clients:

- monthly newsletters providing advice and information on job search techniques
- job leads compiled from numerous sources and delivered by e-mail
- three job fairs annually with private sector and non-profit employers

Foreign Service Institute Transition Center (M/FSI/TC)

George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center (SA-42)
 Department of State
 Washington, DC 20522-4202
 Physical location: 4000 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, VA (do not send mail to this address)
 Intranet: <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc/>
 Internet: <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/>

Directions, maps, parking and other information
<http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c16687.htm>

High Stress Assignment Outbrief Program

Tel: (703) 302-7272 or (202) 663-1903
 E-mail: FSITCTraining@state.gov

Overseas Briefing Center (M/FSI/TC/OBC)

Room E2126
 Tel: (703) 302-7277
 Fax: (703) 302-7452
 E-mail: FSIOBCInfoCenter@state.gov

Transition Center Training Division (M/FSI/TC/T)

Foreign Service Life Skills Training
 Tel: (703) 302-7268
 E-mail: FSITCTraining@state.gov

Security Overseas Seminars

Tel: (703) 302-7269/71
 E-mail: FSISOS@state.gov

Career Transition Center (M/FSI/TC/CTC)

Room E2101
 Tel: (703) 302-7407
 E-mail: FSICTC@state.gov