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## Chapter 14

# FAMILY MEMBER EMPLOYMENT

For family members of U.S. Government employees assigned abroad, finding employment overseas presents both challenges and opportunities. Although possibilities for working at U.S. embassies and consulates and on the local economy have increased, the emergence of the two-career family in American society has placed greater demands on the system to further expand job opportunities. Access to a variety of resources can help. Take the time to learn about the kinds of work that might be available overseas and how you can maximize your chances for meaningful employment.

### FAMILY LIAISON OFFICE

The Family Liaison Office (FLO) is the primary point of contact for Foreign Service eligible family members (EFMs) and members of household (MOHs) with employment questions. FLO provides job search guidance for family members seeking employment either overseas or in the Washington, DC, area. FLO offers numerous online resources as well as the following types of assistance:

- Family Member Employment Report (FAMER)
- functional and other training information for family members
- employment workshops
- individual and group employment advising
- information on local economy opportunities at post, including free subscriptions to the Going Global service
- employment programs inside the missions, including the Professional Associates, Consular Associates, Hard-to-Fill, and other pilot programs
- information on bilateral work agreements and de facto work arrangements
- Strategic Networking Assistance Program (SNAP/GEI)
- publications focusing on employment, including *FS Direct*, *The Network* (for those in the Washington, DC, area), *Global Employment Connections*, and the *FLO-CLO Connection*

FLO can also direct you to other sources of employment assistance, both inside and outside the Department of State.



## TYPES OF OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT

Overseas employment for family members falls into several categories: work within the U.S. mission, employment on the local economy, telework, and/or self-employment. Each has advantages and disadvantages that may vary from post to post, so research the alternatives carefully. The following guidelines will help you get started, but be sure to check with the Family Liaison Office, the Community Liaison Office at post, the Human Resources Officer, or the Local Employment Advisor (if a SNAP post) to clarify the local situation.

### *U.S. Mission Opportunities*

Employment within a U.S. mission may be with the Department of State or other U.S. Government agencies. U.S. Government salaries, regardless of hiring mechanisms and overseas locations, are taxable, including both federal and state tax where applicable.

Jobs within the mission differ in the hiring mechanisms that define the terms and conditions of employment. Family members should understand the terms of any appointment before accepting a position. For example, a Family Member Appointment (FMA) allows U.S. citizen family members working at post to make contributions toward the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) and participate in the Thrift Savings Plan. The FMA is a five-year appointment. FMA employees are entered into Intermittent No Work Schedule (INWS) when they leave a position. This means that they remain on the Department of State personnel rolls for the remainder of their appointment, until the five-year period ends. One of the key advantages for those returning to Washington, DC, is that FMAs in INWS status can apply for jobs within the Department of State restricted to "State Department Employees Only."

A post employment committee at each post should ensure equity in the selection process for mission positions. Family members may compete against local resident U.S. citizens and foreign nationals, depending on the job. According to Subchapter 8200, Appendix A 3 FAM 123.8-4, American family members who are deemed qualified according to the job opening announcement will be given preference over residents or other local nationals. Candidates

should be aware that competition for jobs may be intense. Language ability, salary demands, and issues of continuity are considerations and, in a period of restricted budgets, posts may not always have sufficient funds to hire Foreign Service family members.

Family members who work 52 weeks in an overseas FMA or TEMP appointment (if days worked while outside the U.S. add up to 52 weeks) and have a fully successful or better performance evaluation, have the opportunity to earn **Executive Order Eligibility 12721** (<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrcs/pubs/2093.htm>). Under this authority, a family member who meets all other requirements may be appointed by an agency non-competitively to a competitive service position within the U.S. Government during a period of three years after return to the United States. Family members serving in appropriated fund positions overseas should check with the HR office to make certain that a performance evaluation is written and filed.

Family members interested in government employment should be aware that hiring practices can change quickly. Downsizing, budget shifts, and budget cuts directly impact employment opportunities for family members at home and abroad. Many agencies are utilizing an increasing number of contract employees for both part-time and full-time work. Working on contract can be interesting and lucrative, depending on the project; however, it does not count as creditable government service. It may, on the other hand, provide meaningful work and build an interesting resume.

In addition to the foreign affairs agencies (the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, Foreign Agricultural Service, Foreign Commercial Service), many other federal agencies send employees overseas. The website [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) now provides employment information for all federal positions.

### *The Strategic Networking Assistance Program and Global Employment Initiative (SNAP/GEI)*

The Strategic Networking Assistance Program (SNAP/GEI) provides career counseling services through

a local employment advisor (LEA) to assist eligible family members and members of household with their hunt for employment on the local economy. The advisor networks within the local business community, maintains contacts with local and international employers, and assists clients in their job search. The Department of State understands that in order to retain Foreign Service Officers and improve their quality of life, we must provide job assistance for EFMs and MOHs. To that end, the SNAP pilot program began in 2002 with eight offices and has expanded to provide services to thirty-five including Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bolivia, Botswana, Canada, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, India, Italy, Korea, Latvia, Malawi, Namibia, Mexico, Montenegro, Panama, Peru, Poland, South Africa, Switzerland, The Netherlands, UK, and Zambia. Additional information can be found on the intranet at <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/employment/SNAP.html>.

In addition to their active networking, the SNAP advisors provide assistance in six areas:

- resume writing appropriate to the local culture
- interviewing skills
- self-assessment
- briefings on cultural issues in the workplace
- lists of possible companies in your job sector
- realistic encouragement during your job search

The local employment advisor will help you identify viable options so that you will not necessarily have to compromise your work history while living overseas. Although SNAP/GEI is not a placement service, the LEA will certainly work hard to help with the job search. If you are interested in working on the local economy at a SNAP/GEI post, contact the Family Liaison Office ([flo@state.gov](mailto:flo@state.gov)) or the local employment advisor at post.

### ***Manpower Partnership***

FLO has developed another great career resource by negotiating a partnership with Manpower to provide professional training and employment opportunities around the world. This opportunity is coordinated through SNAP/GEI and

is available to all EFMs and MOHs in Washington, DC, and under Chief of Mission authority at overseas posts. The U.S. Government has negotiated bilateral work agreements or de facto work arrangements in 57 of the 72 countries where Manpower services are offered, making local economy employment feasible.

Through this new partnership, Manpower provides online training, on-the-ground support, and job placement services for EFMs and MOHs seeking professional career opportunities. The entire range of Manpower assessment tools and training programs, including 3,600 online courses, are available at no cost to EFMs and MOHs. Access to Manpower's wide selection of online courses may help EFMs and MOHs from all agencies to build or maintain specialized skills required in a business setting.

In addition, EFMs and MOHs receive targeted employment assistance in the 72 countries where Manpower has 4,400 offices and 27,000 employees. Manpower's philosophy of local people serving local markets enables it to serve more than 300,000 small and medium size employers each year. Manpower is eager to assist EFMs and MOHs with job placements. EFMs and MOHs who are interested should contact Manpower directly at [GES@na.manpower.com](mailto:GES@na.manpower.com). Please copy FLO on your e-mail at [FLOaskemployment@state.gov](mailto:FLOaskemployment@state.gov) so FLO can track who participates in the program. A Manpower representative will then contact you, sending you a form to complete, and entering you into their Global Employment Tracker.

### ***Going Global***

The Family Liaison Office now offers family members free access to **Going Global's Country Career Guides** and the **Global Key Employer Directory** to assist in an international job search.

Registration is from the intranet only: <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/FLO/employment/goingglobal.html> (scroll down to where it says "create your unique user name and password.") A trustworthy employee with intranet access can create an account for you, giving your first and last name, e-mail address, password, and security question, or you can ask the CLO coordinator at post how to access the intranet. There are kiosks avail-



able at many embassies and consulates for family members. Once you have a Going Global log-on, you can access the database from any Internet connection.

### ***Bilateral Work Agreements and De Facto Arrangements***

With the permission of the host government, Foreign Service eligible family members may find employment on the local economy. The Department of State has bilateral work agreements (BWA) with more than 90 countries and reciprocal de facto work arrangements with over 50 others. A bilateral work agreement facilitates job searches on the local economy, since eligible family members do not have to wait for a job offer, but can request a work permit immediately upon arrival at post. HR will help with the process. Under a BWA, the request only has to indicate the presence of the family member on the official diplomatic list and the length of time that the family member will live at post. No other specifications are required or advised. A list of the bilateral work agreements and de facto work arrangements can be found on FLO's website at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/16261.htm>.

Under the regulations of the Vienna Convention for Diplomatic Law, family members who work on the local economy do not have civil and administrative immunity with respect to matters arising out of their employment, but always keep their criminal immunity. (See Chapter 21, "Privileges and Immunities.") Questions on waiver of diplomatic privileges or immunities should be directed to the Family Liaison Office.

Working on the local economy subjects family members to local labor laws and to host country taxation, possibly including contributions to a social security or national insurance system. If they work for an American employer (a citizen or resident of the United States, an American company, or its foreign subsidiary), tax responsibilities include U.S. federal income tax and social security tax. Such employees may be eligible for overseas earned income exclusion or, if taxes have been paid to the host country, a foreign tax credit, but not both. Consult a professional tax advisor.

### ***Telecommuting***

Telecommuting offers another employment option for Foreign Service family members. EFMs or MOHs who are presently working in the U.S. might wish to approach their employers about the possibility of teleworking. Operating a home-based business provides another option. With funding from the Cox Foundation, FLO began offering the e-Entrepreneur program in 2005, through which EFMs and MOHs can participate in a workshop on setting up a home-based business featuring web-based consultancy services. Keep in mind that there are tax implications involved with self-employment. It is also important to learn about the local regulations covering self-employment, how to obtain a work permit, and how to register the business with the local labor authorities. The Family Liaison Office can answer further questions and assist you in your research.

### **VOLUNTEERING**

Volunteering can be an excellent way to explore a career field, gain experience, or learn new skills. Short-term volunteer experiences can fit into those transition times when you are settling into the new location. Target and document the volunteer experience so that it helps build your career plan. Even if you do not have a career plan, documented volunteer experience can serve you well. Some expenses incurred in connection with volunteering, job search, or education and training that advance your career may be tax deductible. Check with your tax advisor or the Internal Revenue Service.

### **TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

You may want to take training courses to help you obtain additional job skills, instead of seeking paid employment. Such skills may help with future job searches in an internationally mobile lifestyle. Family members who want to take time to develop skills or knowledge can get information on adult education programs on FLO's website (<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/2035.htm>).

**FasTrac** is a government-wide distance learning program offering thousands of courses in business, information technology, leadership, management,

and more. Funded through the Foreign Service Institute, the program is available on the Internet via the FSILearnCenter, allowing access at anytime, anywhere—from home, work, or wherever is convenient. Certain minimum system requirements are necessary. The courses are self-paced and usually take between two and eight hours to complete. Department of State employees and eligible family members may access the courses by registering on the intranet at <http://fsi.state.gov/admin/reg/default.asp?Cat=FasTrac>. (You may need to have someone do this for you if you cannot access the State Department intranet). You must provide first and last name, birthdate or the last four digits of your Social Security number to register. Once you have registered, you can access the LearnCenter at <http://fsilearncenter.state.gov> from any Internet connection using your log-on information. If you have questions, e-mail [fsiregistrar@state.gov](mailto:fsiregistrar@state.gov).

To get a head start on building teaching skills that can be used abroad, the **Foreign Affairs Spouses Teacher Training Project (FAST-TRAIN)** (<http://www.gse.gmu.edu/programs/fasttrain>) prepares elementary and secondary teachers for work at international schools. The program was initiated by the Office of Overseas Schools and is sponsored by the George Mason University Graduate School of Education.

Functional training (Consular, Financial Management, General Services, Computer, and Human Resources) at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) may be scheduled for family members on a space-available basis. Normally, training must be linked to an ongoing assignment and the needs of the Department.

**Family members of employees of agencies other than the Department of State are not eligible for functional training, except for the Basic Consular course.** In this case, a tuition waiver must be requested by post and approved by FSI prior to enrollment. Completion of training does not guarantee employment. Contact FLO for more information and to apply for training.

The following courses are offered by the Transition Center's Training Division. Call (703) 302-7268, e-mail [FSITCTraining@state.gov](mailto:FSITCTraining@state.gov), or go to <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c6950.htm> for more information.

- Post Options for Employment and Training Overseas (MQ 703)

- English Teaching Seminar: An Employment Option (MQ 107)
- Making Presentations: From Design to Delivery (MQ 111)

Another resource is the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW). AAFSW members interested in continuing their studies are eligible for a low interest loan. For more information, contact AAFSW by e-mail: [office@aafsw.org](mailto:office@aafsw.org).

## RESOURCES

The **Family Member Employment Report (FAMER)** is a primary resource for job hunters preparing for an overseas assignment. It can be found on the FLO intranet site (<http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/employment/famer.html>). EFMs and MOHs can request that a FLO employment specialist e-mail them copies of specific FAMERs. This database provides a snapshot of the employment situation inside and outside the mission. It describes the working environment on the local economy and gives an idea of which job skills are in highest demand for each post. Moreover, it includes an electronic job bulletin board, which lists vacancies at post. The FAMER also identifies whether a bilateral work agreement or de facto work arrangement exists and if the post participates in the Strategic Networking Assistance Program. If being able to work at post is a determinative factor for you, review the FAMER during the bidding process to determine the employment situation at different posts. A summary of the FAMER from February 2006 follows this chapter.

FLO's newsletters and publications, found at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c9156.htm> and <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsracs/>, provide up-to-date information to Foreign Service employees, family members, and members of household.

*The Network* electronic newsletter (<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/39711.htm>) connects those looking for a job in the Washington, DC, area with current job listings both in the federal government and in private companies. E-mail [flo@state.gov](mailto:flo@state.gov) to subscribe. If you are moving to the Washington, DC, area, start early and subscribe from overseas.

*Global Employment Connections* is a quarterly newsletter for Foreign Service family members and mem-

bers of household covering overseas employment issues. To subscribe, email [flo@state.gov](mailto:flo@state.gov) or go to the website at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/pubs/53949.htm>.

FLO advises people to contact the Community Liaison Office, Human Resource Officer, or Management Counselor at your assigned post before you go. CLO contact information is listed on the intranet at <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/CLO/clolist.html>. The post may not be aware of all new arrivals interested in employment, so it is important to e-mail or fax the CLO, HRO, or Management Counselor telling him/her of your expected arrival date and type of employment you will be seeking. Enclose a resume or federal application and ask for advice and/or referrals. The CLO, HRO or Management Officer cannot submit applications for you, but they can keep you in mind and may advise you of any appropriate upcoming employment opportunities. Remember that the CLO is only a resource; you are the manager of your job search.

If your area of expertise is one in which USAID has programs (e.g., health, environment, urban planning, or population), the USAID Contract Management Office or the appropriate USAID program office may be able to provide a list of non-governmental organizations or consulting companies that have USAID contracts. Check the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse website (<http://dec.usaid.gov>) to order free USAID reports. USAID maintains a comprehensive list of private voluntary organizations at <http://www.pvo.net/usaid/pvo.asp>.

**Individual and group advising for re-entry into the U.S. job market**

FLO offers several services to support family members returning from overseas and looking for employment in the U.S. During the summer, family members can sign up for monthly Employment Orientation Sessions, and in September of each year, the Job Seekers Network Group starts up again for a new season. This networking group provides the latest job search information, insight on Civil Service or private sector employment, and the opportunity to ask questions and network with other family members. The schedule for the Employment Orientation Sessions and Job Seekers Network Group meetings can be found on FLO's website. In addition, a family member can

schedule an individual advising session by contacting the FLO Employment Program Specialist.

**Family Liaison Office (M/DGHR/FLO)**

Room 1239, Harry S Truman Building  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520-7512  
Tel: (202) 647-1076 or (800) 440-0397  
Fax: (202) 647-1670  
Intranet: <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/index.html>  
Internet: <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/>  
E-mail: [flo@state.gov](mailto:flo@state.gov) for general questions.  
[FLOAskEducation@state.gov](mailto:FLOAskEducation@state.gov) for education questions.  
[FLOAskEmployment@state.gov](mailto:FLOAskEmployment@state.gov) for questions about family member employment.

**Career Development Resource Center**

Room L321, SA-1  
Columbia Plaza  
2401 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20522-0108  
Tel: (202) 663-3042  
Fax: (202) 663-3146  
Intranet: <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/csp/cdrc>  
E-mail: [CDRC@state.gov](mailto:CDRC@state.gov)

The Career Development Resource Center is a free resource for Foreign Service family members and State Department Civil Service employees. Professional career counselors offer individual appointments and group programs. Topics covered include job hunting strategies, resumes and federal application preparation, networking, evaluation of interests, skills, values, and preferred work situations, career planning, and more. CDRC offers a library with books, newspapers, and multi-media materials, as well as computer stations with Internet access, federal application information, and online training.

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

George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center (SA-42)  
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>

**Overseas Briefing Center (M/FSI/TC/OBC)**  
Room E2126  
Tel: (703) 302-7277  
Fax: (703) 302-7452  
E-mail: [FSIOBCInfoCenter@state.gov](mailto: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](mailto:FSITCTraining@state.gov)

**Office of Overseas Schools (A/OPR/OS)**  
Room H328, SA-1  
Columbia Plaza  
2401 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20522-0132  
Tel: (202) 261-8200  
Fax: (202) 261-8224  
Intranet: <http://aopros.a.state.gov>  
Internet: <http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/>  
E-mail: [OverseasSchools@state.gov](mailto:OverseasSchools@state.gov)

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Internet: <http://www.aafsw.org>



## The Family Liaison Office

### Worldwide Family Member Overview

Family Member Employment Report Statistics  
(199 Posts reporting Sept 2006)

#### Family Member Population Overseas:

Population	Family Members	Family Members %
Female:	7311	81%
Male:	1731	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9042</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Employment Status of Family Members Overseas:

Employment Status	Family Members	Family Members %
Working Inside the Mission	2340	26%
Working Outside the Mission	1125	12%
Not working	5577	62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9042</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Geographic Distribution of Family Member Employment:

Bureau	Family Members at Post	Family Members at Post Working	Family Members at Post Working %
African Affairs	1000	455	46%
Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs	1061	572	54%
East Asian Pacific Affairs	1758	614	35%
Western Hemisphere Affairs	2010	700	35%
European Affairs	3213	1124	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9042</b>	<b>3465</b>	<b>38%</b>

Note: Statistics refer to adults family members of a U.S. Government employee assigned to an overseas mission under Chief of Mission authority.



**Family Member Employment Outside the Mission:**

Employment Field	Number Working Outside Mission	Working Outside Mission %
Education	382	34%
Freelance	186	17%
Home Business	97	9%
International Org	117	10%
Law	24	2%
Local Economy	132	12%
Medical	45	4%
Military	57	5 %
PVO/NGO	43	4%
Tele-Work	42	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1125</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Statistics refer to adults family members of a U.S. Government employee assigned to an overseas mission under Chief of Mission authority.