

Consular Corner

Official Consular Newsletter, U.S. Embassy Tbilisi, Georgia

October 2016

Special points of interest:

- Overseas Voting
- Diversity Visas

Inside this issue:

- Overseas Voting How To 2
- Absentee Voting 2
- Overseas Voting FAQ's 2
- Diversity Visas 3
- Passports & Visas 3
- American Citizen Services 4
- Helpful Links 4

Ambassador's Message:



On November 8, 2016 America goes to the polls to vote for its 45th President, thus continuing our unbroken tradition of democracy and the peaceful transfer of power. Since George Washington was

elected President on February 4, 1789 until the present day, this quadrennial democratic rite has been a defining feature of our nation's political life. Our country is the world's oldest democracy, upheld by our Constitution and the active participation of our citizens. Thomas Paine once said: "Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must, like men, undergo the fatigues of supporting it." As an American living overseas I know that voting requires forethought and effort. Fortunately this process has been streamlined and simplified. Start by going online to

Federal Voting Assistance Program at <https://www.fvap.gov/>. If you require more assistance our Consular Section stands ready to offer guidance. "Honor the past, support the future – VOTE!"
Ambassador Ian Kelly

**"Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting."
Franklin D. Roosevelt
32nd President Of the United States**

VOTE! It's Fast, It's Free, and It's Accessible.

Complete a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) every year, even if you have voted overseas before.

It's Fast:

For fastest delivery, choose electronic delivery of your absentee ballot from your home state, and include an email address on your FPCA.

It's Free:

Return your FPCA or completed ballot to U.S Embassy Tbilisi for mail delivery to the United States free of charge via diplomatic pouch. Your [postage-paid return envelopes](#) are available from [FVAP.gov](https://www.fvap.gov).

It's Accessible:

U.S. citizens may drop off an FPCA or completed ballot at U.S Embassy Tbilisi, Consular entrance during public hours - 2 pm to 5 pm.



Americans can vote. Wherever they are.



Did you know active duty military members, their spouses and overseas citizens can exercise their right to vote from anywhere in the world?

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) works to ensure that Americans living away from their voting residence can cast an absentee ballot in federal elections.

HERE'S HOW:



GO TO FVAP.GOV AND SELECT THE STATE OF VOTING RESIDENCE TO REGISTER AND REQUEST A BALLOT

Or talk to someone at FVAP.



vote@fvap.gov 1-800-438-VOTE

FILL OUT AND SEND IN THE FEDERAL POST CARD APPLICATION (FPCA)

It is both a voter registration form and absentee ballot request form.



HOW?

Use FVAP's online assistant or fill out the FPCA by hand and then mail to the election office. Some States allow email, too. State-specific requirements and contact info are at FVAP.gov.



WHEN?

Send the FPCA by August 1, 2016 (or later depending on the State). Find the specific deadline at FVAP.gov.

FILL OUT THE ABSENTEE BALLOT WHEN IT ARRIVES

WHEN WILL THAT BE?
For the General Election, the ballot should arrive by early October.

ANYTHING ELSE?
Some States require a signed affidavit or envelope.

SEND IN THE BALLOT

WHEN? By the recommended mailing date:

November 1, 2016
stateside

October 15, 2016
outside the U.S.

October 10, 2016
on a ship at sea



WHAT IF THE BALLOT DOESN'T ARRIVE BY THE DEADLINE?

Fill out the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) at FVAP.gov and send it.

MAKE SURE THE BALLOT WAS RECEIVED

HOW? Select the State at FVAP.gov to check its status.



FVAP - Federal Voting Assistance Program

So you want to vote but are unsure where to start. Begin by filling out your Federal Post Card Application (FPCA).

It's Fast. Really? Yes!

It only takes a few quick steps to make sure your vote is counted no matter where you are in the world. To register and request your ballots, complete the Federal Post Card

Application (FPCA) using the [FPCA online assistant](#), or [fill out the PDF](#), or pick up a hardcopy version from the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consular Office.

But you filled out an FPCA for the last election - so you are all set right? Wrong! You need to fill out a new postcard every year. Click this [link](#) or call 1-800-438-VOTE.

Absentee Ballots - What do I need to know?

You clicked the link and filled out your FPCA right? It you haven't, stop and do it now! Did you know this form also registers you to vote? Most States require you to register to vote before you can begin the Absentee Ballot voting process.

Time to check the requirements for your [State](#). Many

States allow you to submit your FPCA electronically and all States allow for at least one form of electronic transmission of your blank ballot. Now download and print the PDF package, sign and send to your election office. This PDF package even includes a pre-addressed and postage-paid label so you don't have to worry about finding stamps!

FAQs

I don't know what my State residency is!

Overseas citizens' legal state of residence for voting purposes is the State or territory where they last resided immediately prior to their departure from the United States.

I requested my State absentee ballot but it hasn't come, now what? Complete and send a

[FWAB](#) (Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot) to your election office before the ballot return deadline.

When is the Absentee ballot return deadline?

It varies by State. Check [here](#)! Nov. 1 is common.

This tiny space hasn't answered all my questions - I'm confused. FAQ's and answers [here!](#)

Diversity Visa Program for 2018

Ready!

Mark your calendar - The Diversity Visa Program for 2018 is almost here. Entries will be accepted October 4, 2016 at 12 pm EST and continue for one month only. The entrance period closes on November 7, 2016 at 12 pm EST. One month only - Don't miss it!

Get Set!

Check your qualifications - only enter if you qualify. A High School education - it's equivalent - **OR** two years of qualifying work experience is required. If you are unsure about your qualifications go [here](#).

Go!

Now go enter! It's free. Do it [here](#). Note that you **MUST** use the Electronic Diversity Visa website, dvlottery.state.gov/ to submit your entry for a Diversity Visa. For detailed instructions on how to enter click [here](#).



Remember - It is FREE to Enter!

Do you have still have questions? The top 7 questions are answered at ShareAmerica.gov.

Picture Perfect Passport Photo

Bad Photo?

Did you know bad photos are the #1 reason passport applications get held up during the application process? Submitting a bad passport photo will delay processing your application and could interfere with planned travel.

Requirements found [here!](#)

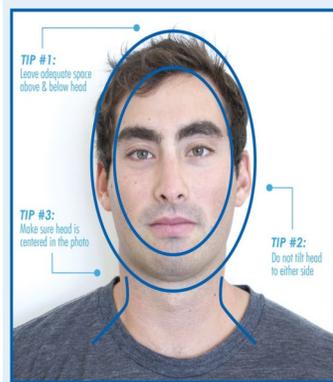


Photo Tips

- Recent picture taken within last 6 months.
- Image size that is too close or too far will be rejected
- Proper Exposure to reflect skin tone
- Good quality image on good quality paper

[Picture Perfect Photo time!](#)

Take off those glasses for a Picture Perfect Passport! Beginning November 1 glasses will NOT be allowed in passport photos.

Visas and Passports: Helpful Hints!

Passports - Did you Know?

- The average wait time for your new or renewed passport to be returned is about two weeks.
- Some Countries require 6 month validity prior to travel (or a visa) - be prepared! Check your country of destination's requirements [here!](#)
- Is your passport book almost full? Pages are no longer added - renew your 52 page passport!

Appointments for passport services are required! Make one at: <http://georgia.usembassy.gov/service.html>
! Have an EMERGENCY? Walk-in business days from 2pm to 4pm or call the ACS helpline at 995 32 227 724.

Visas - Take Note

Do you need Visa information? Please visit the websites below - they will guide you through the process. For Georgian Passport holders wanting to visit the US:

- Travel.State.Gov is the first place to start. Review requirements, fees, and more!
- UsTravelDoc.s.com will walk you through the application process.

! More questions? Email us at: support-georgia@ustraveldocs.com or Call: 995 32 2471 160 (Geogia) or 703 988 7103 (U.S.) Ready to make an appointment? Go [here!](#)

**EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA
TBILISI, GEORGIA**

11 George Balanchine Street
Tbilisi, Georgia, 0131
<http://georgia.usembassy.gov>
www.travel.state.gov

**Contact the
Consular Section
during business hours
8:30 am to 5:30 pm:**

(995 32) 227-77-24

**For after-hours
Emergencies:**

(995 32) 227-70-00

**Email:
AskConsulTbilisi@state.gov**

**Make an Appointment:
[http://
georgia.usembassy.gov/
service.html](http://georgia.usembassy.gov/service.html)**

Everything is
online!

**Make
[Travel.State.Gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)
your first stop.**

**More helpful and
interesting
information here!**



American Citizen Services

American Citizen Services are available by appointment only. Visitors may receive multiple services during the same visit - please make a separate appointment for each service (e.g., to apply for passports and obtain a notary service, make two appointments). Arrive a few minutes before your appointment to allow time to go through security.

ACS appointments must be made using our website:

<http://georgia.usembassy.gov/service.html>

In the event you need an emergency appointment, please contact us via phone or email and we will try to accommodate your request at the earliest possible convenience.

Appointment and Walk-In services are available Monday through Thursday 2 pm to 4 pm. Emergency Walk-In services are available Monday through Friday 2 pm to 4 pm.

**Appointments
Required:**

- New Passports
- Passport Renewals
- Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA)
- Notarial Services
- Applying for Social Security Cards
- Applying for Social Security Benefits

**Emergencies - Walk
In Services:**

- Lost, Stolen or Emergency Passports
- Report an American Citizen emergency or an urgent matter (e.g., death, hospitalization, arrest)
- Child Abduction
- Welfare and Whereabouts Inquires

**No Appointment
Needed:**

- Pick up passports
- Pick up Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA)
- Pick up Social Security Benefit Checks
- Pick up tax refund checks

After making your appointment, please don't neglect to complete all application forms, verify that you have all necessary documents, and cash payment for all fees.

<http://twitter.com/TravelGov>
<https://www.facebook.com/travelgov>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/statephotos>
<http://blogs.state.gov/>
<http://pinterest.com/consularcorner/>
<https://step.state.gov/step/>
<https://www.facebook.com/tbilisi.usembassy/>
app_256579511063777

**Emergencies and
Natural Disasters:**

American citizens are advised to tune in to the following FM radio stations for U.S. Embassy emergency messages:

- Radio Green Wave-107.4 FM (Tbilisi & Gori)
- Radio GIPA - 94.3 FM (Tbilisi)
- Radio Atinati - 105.9 FM (Zugdidi)
- Radio Hereti - 102.8 FM (Lagodekhi & Kakheti)
- Radio Dzveli Kalaki - 107.9 FM (Kutaisi)
- Radio Harmonia - 100.5 FM (Poti)

IMPORTANT SECURITY ANNOUNCEMENT

When visiting the Embassy, please remember not to bring mobile phones, cameras or any electronic devices (such as Blackberries, iPods, or iPads), food/drinks, medicine or cosmetic products, as they are not allowed within the Embassy. We also strongly advise that you do not bring large bags, such as backpacks, suitcases or packages to the interview as there are no storage facilities on Embassy grounds.

