



Embassy of the United States of America
100 Duke & Young Streets, Kingston, Georgetown, Guyana

**Ask the Consul Installment One Hundred Thirty-Nine
Voting in Upcoming U.S. Elections**

Q: I am a U.S. citizen and I want to vote in the next U.S. presidential election, can I vote while I am living in Guyana?

Yes! Most U.S. citizens 18 years or older who reside outside the United States are eligible to vote absentee for candidates for federal offices in U.S. primary and general elections. In addition, some states allow overseas citizens to vote for candidates for state and local offices, as well as for state and local referendums. Details are available at the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) website www.FVAP.gov, which is the official U.S. Government website for overseas voting information.

Q: How do I register to vote, or apply for an absentee ballot?

You may register and request an absentee ballot with a single form: The Federal Post Card Application. This application form is accepted by all States and territories. Hard copies of the form can be obtained from the U.S. Embassy or requested directly from the Federal Voting Assistance Program.

An online version of the Voter Registration/Absentee Ballot Request form is available at <http://www.fvap.gov>. The online version of the form must be mailed in an envelope with proper postage, or mailed using the prepaid return envelope available at www.fvap.gov.

Your Voter Registration/Absentee Ballot Request form must be completed, printed, signed, dated and mailed directly to your local election official.

You may mail election materials from the U.S. Embassy.

Q: When mailing election materials to my State or territory, do I have to pay postage?

When election materials are mailed from any U.S. post office or U.S. embassy or consulate, the hardcopy voter registration/absentee ballot form is postage-paid. In order to receive free postage, the online version of the form must be mailed in an envelope printed with the postage-paid envelope template, found on the FVAP website. You may also mail the completed form in an envelope with proper postage affixed. Ensure that your form is postmarked by the mailing facility that you are using and sent to arrive before your State's specific deadline. You must pay postage if the materials are mailed from a non-U.S. postal facility.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) recommends that voted ballots be mailed from your location outside the U.S. rather than be given to another individual to be placed in the U.S. postal system. If the ballot is postmarked from any location inside the U.S., your local election official may not count your ballot.

Q: Can I register or vote in-person at the U.S. Embassy?

There are no provisions for in-person voting or on-site registration at U.S. embassies or consulates. U.S. embassy and consular officials can assist U.S. citizens in completing the Voter Registration/Absentee Ballot Request form or other election materials for their state, witness election materials (if required), and provide other absentee voting information.

You may also mail election materials from the U.S. Embassy. The Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Georgetown will accept election materials for mailing only if received by the Embassy prior to November 1, 2012.

Q: If I do not maintain a legal residence in the United States, what is my "legal State of residence"?

Your "legal State of residence" for voting purposes is the state or territory where you last resided immediately prior to your departure from the United States. This applies to overseas citizens even though they may not have property or other ties in their last state of residence and return to that state may be uncertain.

When completing block 7 of the Voter Registration/Absentee Ballot Request form, be sure to enter the entire mailing address of your last residence, including rural route and number if applicable. That address determines your proper voting jurisdiction.

Some states allow children of U.S. citizens residing overseas who are U.S. citizens but who have never resided in the United States themselves to claim one of their parents' legal states of residence as their own.

Additional Questions? You may contact the U.S. Embassy Georgetown via our e-mail address: Visageorge@state.gov. You can receive in-person assistance from the Consulate Voting Assistance Officer, American Citizen Services Staff, or Consular Officers, Monday thru Friday between 7:30a.m. - 4:00p.m.

“Ask the Consul” is a bi-weekly column from the U.S. Embassy answering questions about U.S. immigration law and visa issues. If you have a general question about visa policy please email it to us at AskGeorge@state.gov. We select questions every other week and publish the answers in Stabroek News and on our website at <http://georgetown.usembassy.gov/ask-the-consul.html>. Information about visas and travel can be viewed at <http://georgetown.usembassy.gov>, <http://travel.state.gov>, and at <http://www.dhs.gov>. Applicants are strongly encouraged to prepare their own documents and avoid third-party advice. U.S. Consular rules change frequently and non-US government advisors often provide inadequate or inaccurate information.

Other than the questions we select, we DO NOT respond to questions sent to Ask the Consul. Please contact the visa inquiries unit (email visageorge@state.gov or call 225-7965 between 8 am and 4 pm Monday through Friday) if you have questions about a specific case.