



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

## **Installment Seventy Nine**

### **Ask the Consul – Unofficial Visa Information**

Many advertisements in print and the Internet feature images of President Obama with claims of helping the public reach the American dream through obtaining a visa to the United States. Unless the advertisement or website is an official U.S. Government source of information, then it is a private commercial service that is designed to take your money in exchange for either information that already exists free of charge from official sources, or misinformation, or fraudulent service.

#### **How Do I Know If U.S. Visa Information Is Official and Correct?**

The only official resources for U.S. visa information are the websites of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Embassy. The website for the U.S. Embassy in Guyana is <http://georgetown.usembassy.gov/>; while the U.S. Department of State website, which includes comprehensive information on all types of visas, is <http://travel.state.gov/visa/>. If you prefer to call, the U.S. Embassy's visa inquiries number is (592) 225-7965 or (592) 225-7966.

Visa applicants are advised to be cautious in all dealings with private companies that claim to offer assistance in obtaining U.S. visas. If payment is requested for information from a non-governmental source, this payment is not received by the U.S. Government and in no way applies towards a visa fee or ensures issuance of a visa. In some cases, these sites may even be used to gather personal information that could result in identity fraud or theft. In particular, please note the following suspect Websites (e.g., using the suffixes ".com," ".org," ".info," or ".net") instead of .gov:

**Immigration Related Websites.** Many private or non-official Websites provide legitimate and useful immigration about visas. Regardless of the content, however, the U.S. Department of State does not endorse, recommend or sponsor any information or material shown on these Websites, and the information provided may not be correct or up-to-date so should always be verified independently.

**Impostor or Fraudulent Websites and E-mail.** Some Websites may try to mislead the public into thinking they are official Websites and therefore provide an official means of obtaining a U.S. visa. These Websites may have a U.S. flag or picture of an official U.S.

Government building or famous U.S. person to mislead you into believing that the website is sponsored by the U.S. Government. Such websites may even require payment for services, such as to download forms and information about immigration procedures, which are otherwise free on the U.S. Department of State's Visa Services Website (<http://travel.state.gov/visa/>), or available through the Embassy's Consular Section Website (<http://georgetown.usembassy.gov/>). Sometimes, these Websites may even contact or solicit you by e-mail to lure you to take advantage of their false offer to get you a U.S. visa.

**Diversity Visa (DV) Lottery Program Scams.** Some companies pretending to be the U.S. Government have sought money in order to "complete" DV lottery entry forms. The only official way to apply for the DV lottery is directly through the official U.S. Department of State Website (<http://travel.state.gov/visa/>, click on Diversity Visas) during a specified and limited-time registration period. Those who enter the DV lottery and are successful by being randomly selected in the drawing are notified by the Department of State's Kentucky Consular Center by letter, NOT by e-mail. No private organization or company is authorized by the U.S. Department of State to notify DV lottery applicants of their successful entry or the next steps for processing their immigrant visa.

**How Do I Report Internet Fraud or Unsolicited Email?** If you wish to file a complaint about Internet fraud, please go to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Internet Crime Complaint Center ( <http://www.ic3.gov/> ). To file a complaint about fraudulent, unsolicited e-mail, contact the U.S. Department of Justice's unsolicited commercial e-mail at <http://www.usdoj.gov/spam.htm>

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*"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](mailto: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/guyana/ask\\_con.html](http://georgetown.usembassy.gov/guyana/ask_con.html). For more information about visas please see <http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov> or <http://georgetown.usembassy.gov/>.*

*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](mailto:visageorge@state.gov) or call 225-7965 between 8 am and 4 pm Monday through Friday) if you have questions about a specific case.*