

Notice Regarding Cultural Ambassadors (Auxiliares de Conversación) Program in Spain

The Spanish Ministry of Education's Cultural Ambassadors program, also known as Auxiliares de Conversación, has the potential to broaden the horizons of thousands of Spanish students studying English, and it can be a uniquely rewarding experience for the U.S. Auxiliares who come to Spain to share U.S. culture and experience with Spanish students. Due to continued reports of lengthy delays in payment for Auxiliares in certain regions of Spain, however, the Embassy advises any U.S. citizens considering participation in the program to be prepared to come to Spain with funds sufficient to cover living expenses for your first three to four months in the country. Since November 2012, U.S. Embassy Madrid has received numerous reports of delayed payment from U.S. citizen participants in the program. (This notice does NOT apply to the English Teaching Assistant program administered by the U.S. – Spain Fulbright Commission.) For the 2012-13 school year, we have received particular complaints of delays from Auxiliares serving in Murcia, Andalucía, and Extremadura; other regions either have not been affected or have resolved any administrative delays relatively quickly.

While the U.S. Embassy has no role in the recruitment, organization, or payment of the U.S. Auxiliares, we advocate on behalf of U.S. Auxiliares with the national and regional government when issues arise. We also provide information about available courses of action as we do for all American citizens. The U.S. Embassy, however, has limited input into the administration of the Auxiliares de Conversación program, which is administered directly by the Spanish Ministry of Education and regional governments' departments of education. The Spanish Embassy in the United States is responsible for recruitment of Auxiliares. When the U.S. Embassy receives complaints from U.S. Auxiliares on payment issues, we refer these cases directly to the Spanish Ministry of Education and regional governments and urge them to ensure timely payment. We are aware that some Auxiliares in certain regions who arrived for the 2012-2013 school year were not paid until January 2013. In previous years, payments have generally regularized by January, though not in all regions or all individual cases.

The U.S. Embassy will continue to engage with the national and regional governments on this issue to the extent possible. Current and potential U.S. Auxiliares should take the chronic payment delays into account when determining your financial needs if you plan to continue in or join the Auxiliares program.