

THE ANDZNAGIR

News for the American citizen community in Armenia



Photo Credit: Heather T.

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Fall in Armenia means changing colors, chilly days, and rain. In American Citizens Services we are continuing to help you, our fellow citizens, renew passports, document the birth of children born overseas, and notarize marriage and property documents, and handle other personal matters.

We have some new faces at the Embassy to introduce to you. Be sure to read page 2 to meet our new Deputy Chief of Mission Chris Smith and page 7 to meet our new American Citizen Services Clerk.

In this issue you will find answers to “Frequently Asked Questions” on page 3. Please look at page 5 to find all the latest details on Social Security issues, plus information on how to contact the Federal benefits office in Athens, Greece. On page 6 we provide information on flu vaccination. For your planning purposes review our holiday schedule on page 7. Please pull this last page out as it has a lot of good information. Thanks for reading and we look forward to serving you in 2020!

Meet Our New Deputy Chief of Mission Chris Smith



Christopher W. Smith is a career member of the Foreign Service. He has served in Tbilisi, Istanbul, Kabul, Cyprus, and Ukraine. In Washington D.C. Chris served as Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Arms Control, and recently completed a master's degree in National Security and Strategic Studies at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island.

On September 6, 2019, Chris and his family arrived in Armenia, where he began his assignment as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan. Chris speaks Russian and Turkish. He is married with three sons.

U.S. Embassy Online Auction

U.S. Embassy Yerevan frequently sells surplus movable property – often furniture or vehicles – via online auction. Each auction is active for about two weeks. During the active period you can take part and submit your bids for items. We suggest monitoring your bids so you can react to changes in price. Winners will receive an email with a link to the auction application where you can review your purchased items.

The next auction is scheduled for January/February 2020. Please see the details at <https://online-auction.state.gov/en-US>.

Frequently Asked Questions

I am planning to marry a citizen of Armenia. How can my (future) spouse come to the United States to live with me?

Whether you are engaged or married, you will be petitioning for a visa for your partner. In both cases, you start by going to the website for the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service www.uscis.gov. If you are engaged, find the **I-129F** form and follow the instructions to complete the petition and send it to USCIS, paying any required fees and providing required documents.

If you are married, follow the same procedure, except you would use the **I-130 petition** form.

Petitions are processed by USCIS and then sent to the National Visa Center in Portsmouth, NH. Once the fees and documents are collected, the visa center will send the case to Yerevan, where your spouse or fiancé will be interviewed at the Embassy. For further questions about these visa categories, please visit the website:

http://armenia.usembassy.gov/immigrant_visas.html

Where can I seek legal advice while travelling or living in Armenia?

The Consular Section maintains a list of local lawyers to assist citizens who require legal assistance. You can find the list here at <https://am.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/attorneys/>

How do I apply for a job at the U.S. Embassy?

Vacancies frequently arise at the Embassy.

The current list of available positions at U.S. Embassy in Yerevan is located at the following website. <https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/arm/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms>

My relative would like to visit or immigrate to the United States. As a U.S. citizen, how can I help them?

We understand you want to help your family, and that the visa process can be difficult to navigate.

To save you time and effort, please know that appointments for American Citizen Services, and our ACS email and phone number are not useful points of contact to ask your visa questions. We do not have information on visa cases, nor can we provide guidance to you.

Questions relating to visas can be directed as follows:

All visa-related questions:

Telephone: 060 46 59 86

Visitor and other nonimmigrant visas:

Email: consyerevan@state.gov

U.S. green card holders, immigrant visa applicants and petitioners:

For Armenian applicants:

Email: ivyerevan@state.gov

For Iranian applicants:

Email: IranIVYerevan@state.gov

American Citizen Services does not answer any visa related questions.

Don't Forget to Sign Your Child's Passport!

This is a reminder that when picking up a passport for your child or children after a passport renewal, the regulations require that one parent signs the passport as outlined below. As of age 16, the passport is issued with ten year validity, and the applicant (your child) can sign the passport.

On the signature line, please print out your child's full name. Sign your signature next to their name. Above your signature, or next to it, in parentheses designate the relationship: "mother," "father," "parent," or "legal guardian," for example:



Border officials, like airport security agents, are trained to spot victims of kidnapping and child trafficking, and closely examine a child's passport when it's presented. Assuming it's valid and signed correctly, you and your child should be on your way without difficulty.

The STEP Program: What it is and Why You Should Register

STEP is short for *The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program*. It's a way for U.S. citizens living and travelling abroad to provide contact information to the nearest U.S. embassy. In the event of a political crisis or natural disaster, or even a family emergency, Embassy staff can reach you and connect you with friends or family. We also use STEP to send you travel safety and security information and messages, as well as sending newsletters and emails. While enrolling in STEP is not required, we highly encourage it. Have your passport and itinerary handy when you enroll at: <https://step.state.gov>

The American Liaison Network

Do you have what it takes to lead in times of crisis?

The American Liaison Network is always looking for U.S. citizens to act as Citizen Liaison Volunteers, formerly known as "wardens". For more information please email ACSYerevan@state.gov

Social Security: News You Can Use

If you reside in Armenia and have questions regarding services provided by the Social Security Administration, you must contact the Federal Benefits Unit located in Athens, Greece. At the American Citizens Services section at the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan we do not have authority to accept claims, process requests for Social Security numbers, or provide comprehensive advice to potential beneficiaries.

We suggest as a first step to review Federal Benefits Unit webpage at <https://gr.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/social-security/>. For specific questions, the office can be reached at fbu.athens@ssa.gov or via telephone at +30 2107202426. When contacting the Federal Benefits Unit via email, please remember to include your full name, telephone number, address and the last 4 digits of your Social Security Number.

For comprehensive information on the Social Security Administration's services abroad, please visit the webpage [Service Around the World](#).

Putting you
in control...



Securing today
and tomorrow

Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security, and Gail S. Ennis, the Inspector General for the Social Security Administration, announce the launch of a dedicated online form at <https://oig.ssa.gov> to receive reports from the public of Social Security-related scams. These scams—in which fraudulent callers mislead victims into making cash or gift card payments to avoid arrest for purported Social Security number problems—skyrocketed over the past year to become the #1 type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission and the Social Security Administration.

For more information, please visit <https://www.ssa.gov/news/press/releases/>.

SocialSecurity.gov



Protect your family and co-workers!
Don't bring influenza home or to the office; get your flu shot now!

Influenza Myths ...

"I got vaccinated last year and got sick anyway."

- Many other germs besides the flu cause symptoms similar to flu – you might have caught one of them.
- The flu vaccine takes two weeks to become effective; you may have been infected before you developed immunity.

"The flu shot gave me the flu."

- Flu shots are made with killed virus that cannot give you the flu. Sometimes your body's immune response after vaccination can make you feel a little ill, and that's normal—it just means your body's defenses are working.

"Flu vaccines are not effective. Why bother?"

- Circulating viruses change every year. Last year, the flu vaccine was 36%-67% effective.
- Flu is very serious and can cause pneumonia, hospitalization and death.
- Even though the flu vaccine is not 100% effective, vaccination may make your illness milder
- Two studies in 2017 showed flu vaccination resulted in fewer complications like hospital or ICU stays for adults, and lowered the risk of death for children by over 50%.

"The flu is just like a bad cold—it's not serious."

- Flu is sometimes confused with a cold. When a person catches the flu, they often have a fever and body aches. When complications set in, flu can be life-threatening. Babies, pregnant women, those with certain health conditions, and seniors are at highest risk.

"I'm healthy and have never had the flu. I don't need a flu shot."

- Flu viruses mutate from year to year. That means your immunity can change. Every year, healthy people who have never caught the flu before suddenly get infected.

About Us...



Shane Spellman serves as chief of our American Citizen Services Unit. Shane and his family were previously assigned to U.S. Embassy Beijing.

Anahit Movsesyan is an Armenian citizen with extensive consular experience. She has worked for the U.S. Embassy for twelve years. She previously served as Protocol Assistant to the U.S. Ambassador. Anahit speaks Armenian, Russian, and English.

Georgetta Carroll serves as our new Consular Clerk. Georgetta and her family's previous post was Bucharest, Romania, where she worked in the Consular section.

U.S. Embassy upcoming holidays

December 25 – Christmas
December 31 – New Year's Eve

January 1 – New Year's Day
January 2 – New Year's Day
January 6 – Armenian Christmas
January 21 – Martin Luther King
January 28 – Army Day

February 18 – Presidents Day

Fees for Services

Notarial services - \$50 per seal
Marriage letter notary - \$50
Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) - \$100
Adult passport renewal - \$110
Minor passport / renewal - \$115
First time adult or replacement of lost or stolen passport - \$145

Fees can be paid in either U.S. dollars or Armenian drams.

After applying for a passport or CRBA, you will receive an email from our office indicating that document is ready for pick up:

Passport and CRBA Pick-Up Hours
2:00 - 4:30p.m., Monday to Friday
(Excluding holidays)

As always, we welcome your comments, questions and feedback. Please write to us at ACSyerevan@state.gov

U.S. Embassy, Yerevan
Consular Section/ACS
1 American Ave, Yerevan 0082

Phone (M-F 8:30am-5:30pm):
(+374) 10 49-45-85

Emergency Phone (after hours):
(+374) 10 49-44-44