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# THE ANDZNAGIR

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## Getting Home



Since commercial air flights ceased in much of the world in mid-March, many travelers found themselves stranded, unable to easily find a route home.

At the U.S. Embassy in Armenia we have been working to help Americans get back to the United States, and we have also been coordinating with our partners in the Armenian government to help their citizens in the United States return to Armenia.

On April 17, our Deputy Chief of Mission and the Consular team helped facilitate a flight from Zvartnots International Airport to Doha, Qatar for onward travel to the United States. Learn more about how the U.S. Embassy team is working to support U.S. citizens in this issue!

**Thirteen adults and two children flew from Yerevan to Doha on April 17, 2020.**

**Four Armenian citizens took the direct flight from Dulles, VA to Yerevan, Armenia.**

## Virtual Town Hall Meetings with the Ambassador

Ambassador Lynne Tracy has held six online meetings with U.S. citizens since the COVID outbreak began. During these virtual town hall meetings, she discusses the latest case numbers in Armenia and the United States, outlines changes in local lockdown procedures, and answers questions from participants in English and with Armenian translation.



The next Town Hall Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, at 4:00pm. Watch your inbox for an upcoming email with details!



Shane Spellman (above) and Ellen Scholl (below) assisting travelers on the departing flight at Zvartnots International Airport.

## Hail and Farewell

Our current American Citizen Service Chief Shane Spellman and his family are scheduled to depart Armenia this summer. We have really appreciated his leadership in the office, and Shane will be greatly missed. Please join us in wishing him well in his next assignment.

You might recognize Ellen Scholl from the recent series of virtual Town Hall meetings with Ambassador Lynne Tracy. She was sitting to the left of Ambassador Tracy at those briefings. Ellen has taken over as the new ACS Chief. She hails from the Lone Star state of Texas and speaks German and Armenian. Please say hello (howdy) the next time you see her!

## Appointments at the Embassy



Until further notice, U.S. citizens requiring assistance should schedule their appointments via email. Please send an email to [ACSYerevan@state.gov](mailto:ACSYerevan@state.gov) and include "appointment request" in the email subject line. Please include your first and last name as it appears on your passport, your contact information, and the service requested.

We are taking precautionary safety measures to protect visitors and staff, by spacing out the appointments to minimize interaction



in the waiting room, making hand sanitizer available, and increasing the cleaning schedule.

## Economic Impact Payment

Described in the news as the *stimulus check* from the U.S. government. Recipients of these payments must meet certain income and other tax filing criteria. The details are available at the website for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

in a question-and-answer format: <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus-tax-relief-and-economic-impact-payments>.

## Federal Tax Return Deadline Extended

*Federal tax filing deadline extended to July 15, 2020.* The IRS has extended the deadline for filing returns and making federal tax payments. For more information about taxes and filling go to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

## Preparing for a Crisis

The COVID-19 situation caught many of us unprepared. We rely on access to cash, medicine, food and shelter, and in normal times, enjoy traveling and visiting friends and family.

*What is possible, practical and wise has changed, perhaps for a long time.*

So, what can we do to prepare ourselves for the unexpected? Especially when traveling?



Check the following website from the State Department on international travel.

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/crisis-abroad--be-ready.html>

We have a practical list of actions you can take before you travel to help yourself be prepared, stay safe and connected to your friends and family.



HOW TO VOTE FROM ANYWHERE IN  
**2 Simple Steps...**  
 WHEN YOU'RE AN AMERICAN OVERSEAS

**Enroll in STEP!**

STEP is short for the *Smart Traveler Enrollment Program*. It's a way for U.S. citizens living and traveling abroad to register with the U.S. embassy in any given country, and a way for the embassy to contact its citizens in the event of a political crisis or natural disaster, a mass evacuation, or even a family emergency.

STEP is also a way for family and friends to contact you during such events. STEP is also the way the U.S. Embassy in Armenia communicates important Travel Advisories and Alerts via text and email, and through newsletters and emails. Though visitors and those living in Armenia and elsewhere are not required to register for STEP, we highly encourage it. Have your passport and itinerary handy when you register:

<https://step.state.gov>

ACROSS THE POND?  
**NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE, YOU CAN VOTE.**  
 If you're an American living abroad, you can have your absentee ballot sent to you.

**HERE'S HOW:**

**STEP 1**  
 FILL OUT THE **FEDERAL POST CARD APPLICATION (FPCA) AT FVAP.GOV TO REGISTER AND REQUEST YOUR BALLOT**  
**WHEN?**  
 Send it to your election office by August 1\* (or later depending on your state) for the General Election on November 3, 2020.

**STEP 2**  
 FILL OUT AND SEND IN YOUR BALLOT WHEN IT ARRIVES  
**WHEN?**  
 By the recommended deadline of **OCTOBER 13, 2020.**

**WHAT IF THE BALLOT DOESN'T ARRIVE IN TIME TO FILL OUT AND SEND BACK BY THE DEADLINE?**  
 Use the *Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)* as a backup ballot at FVAP.gov.

**WANT TO MAKE SURE YOUR BALLOT WAS RECEIVED?**  
 Check the status at FVAP.gov.

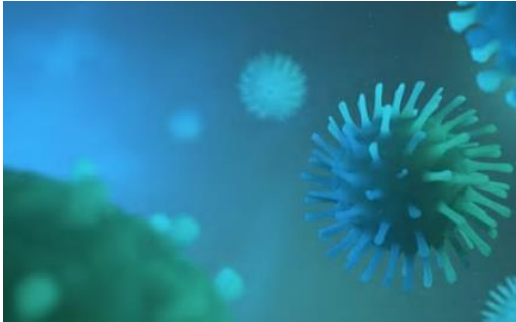
**THAT'S IT. YOU'RE AN OVERSEAS VOTER.**  
 GET MORE INFO AND ASSISTANCE AT FVAP.GOV



Americans can vote. **Wherever they are.**

\*Recommended to ensure ballot arrives by election day

## COVID-19 in Armenia



The U.S. Embassy updates the [COVID-19 notice](#) for Armenia every day. The notice provides information on local restrictions, COVID case numbers, and resources.

On international travel, the State Department provides timely information through its [COVID-2019 webpage](#), as well as [global](#) and [country-specific](#) travel advisories.

## Other COVID-19 Resources

Travel.state.gov [Country Information on Armenia](#) and [Travel Advisory page](#)

For the most recent information on what you can do to reduce your risk of contracting COVID-19, please see the [CDC's latest recommendations](#)

Visit the [COVID-19 crisis page on travel.state.gov](#) for the latest travel information

Check with your airlines, cruise lines, or travel operators regarding any updated information about your specific travel plans and/or restrictions

Visit the WHO Health Page for more information about COVID-19. [WHO Health Topics: Coronavirus](#)

Visit the [Department of Homeland Security's website](#) on the latest travel restrictions and entry procedures into the United States

## Commercial Flights

While most land borders remain closed, there are still flights from Yerevan to Belarus on Belavia Belarussian Airlines. From [Minsk National Airport](#) flights depart for Amsterdam, France, London Munich, Rome, and Vienna. U.S. citizens who wish to go back to the U.S. should do so by securing a commercial flight. No additional charter flights are being planned or arranged at this time.



# Coronavirus: Practicing Wellness While You Stay at Home

By: Harpreet Gujral

[www.hopkinsmedicine.org](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org)

Harpreet Gujral, program director of [integrative medicine at Johns Hopkins' Sibley Memorial Hospital](#), offers the following suggestions on staying centered and healthy when you're working at home during the pandemic:

**GREETING THE DAY** If you're waking in the morning and feeling uncertain because your routine is so different, Gujral suggests a 15-minute ritual to get prepared for your day. "First thing in the morning, I recommend spending 10 to 15 minutes on self-care. I take a moment to think about three things I'm grateful for. They can be simple things, such as a comfy blanket, a safe home, warmth, spring trees, blue sky or blossoming trees." Many of us lunge for our cellphones as soon as we're conscious, but Gujral says she makes a point not to pick up her phone for at least 15 minutes.

**BREATHING FOR STRESS RELIEF** Before the day's demands take over, Gujral recommends becoming centered with some stress-relieving breaths "Take a few minutes to really focus on your breathing. There is a technique called 4-7-8 breathing, or relaxing breath, which helps you concentrate on deep breaths. The practice is simple: Breathe in for a count of 4, hold for a count of 7 and breathe out for a count of 8. Practicing this for four breaths four times each day or more can help relieve anxiety and reset the autonomic nervous system," Gujral says.

**MOVING & STRETCHING, INDOORS & OUT** Gujral says staying active can increase immunity and boost mental health. "Stress puts us up in our head, and we forget about the rest of our bodies," she says. "Try 10 minutes of qi gong — movements that help you practice mindfulness — or use stretches and yoga poses to bring your awareness back into your body." Even if you don't know how to practice these disciplines, she says, you can simply close your eyes and move your awareness into your feet to feel more grounded. "Concentrate on your feet and their connection to the floor and the earth to get out of your worries," she advises. Social distancing doesn't mean you have to isolate yourself or to stay inside. Gujral says gardening and hiking outdoors, and taking notice of the natural world, helps alleviate anxiety and improve well-being. "Home air can get stuffy," she says. Gujral suggests getting outside each day for 15 minutes of fresh air and sunshine, which helps the body make vitamin D. "Vitamin D deficiency can create vulnerability to the common cold," she notes.

**EATING WELL** Good nutrition is essential in stressful times. "We need the best nutrition now," Gujral notes, adding that trying to boost your immunity with supplements may not be as helpful as simply eating whole foods. "Eat meals rich in plant-based foods, especially leafy vegetables and fruit," she says. "Work in the whole rainbow of produce colors to get all the phytonutrients." Taking steps to cut out inflammatory foods such as sugar and bad fats is a good idea. These foods might be more tempting when you're feeling tense or worried. "Don't eat your feelings. Cook homemade foods with ginger and turmeric. A little rosemary can be good for focus," she says. Drink plenty of water, and consider green or black tea.

## ABOUT US

**Ellen Scholl** serves as chief of our American Citizen Services Unit. She previously studied and worked in Germany. Ellen speaks Armenian.

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

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

**As always, we welcome your comments, questions and feedback.**

**Please write to us at**

**[ACSyerevan@state.gov](mailto: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

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)***

### **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.*

### **Websites to know**

**US Embassy Yerevan:** [www.usa.am](http://www.usa.am)

**US Embassy Auction:** <https://online-auction.state.gov/en-US>

**Employment at US Embassy:**  
[https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms?\\_ref=ym4c1h3pt0](https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms?_ref=ym4c1h3pt0)

**Social Security:** <https://gr.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/social-security/>