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Description of document: Eight Issues of the International Trade Administration (ITA) News You Can Use internal employee newsletter, 2019-2020

Requested date: 14-March-2020

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Source of document: Freedom of Information Act Request
International Trade Administration
Freedom of Information Officer
Room 40003
14th and Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230
E-mail: foia@trade.gov
[FOIAonline request](#)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
International Trade Administration
Washington, DC 20230

January 28, 2021

RE: DOC-ITA-2020-000946

This letter is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request received by the International Trade Administration (ITA) on March 14, 2020. In your request, you sought:

A copy of the last 8 issues of "News You Can Use"; a newsletter relating to the ITA FOIA Office.

ITA began its search March 16, 2020, which is the cut-off date for responsive records. After a thorough search, ITA has located seventy-two (72) pages responsive to your request and will be releasing them to you in their entirety.

If you have any questions or concerns or would like to discuss any aspect of your request, you may contact the analyst who processed your request, Brian Yanos, at 202-482-0549 or Brian.Yanos@trade.gov.

You may also contact ITA's FOIA Public Liaison, using the following information:

Victor E. Powers
Director, Management Operations
Office of the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer
International Trade Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room 40003
Washington, D.C. 20230
(202) 482-5436, foia@trade.gov

Please refer to your FOIA request tracking number, DOC-ITA-2020-000946 when contacting ITA.

In addition, you may seek FOIA mediation services offered by the National Archives and Records Administration, Office of Government Information Services (OGIS). You may contact OGIS using the following information:



Office of Government Information Services
National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS
College Park, MD 20740-6001
(202) 741-5770 or toll free, 1-877-684-6448
facsimile: (202) 741-5769; email: ogis@nara.gov

In accordance with 15 C.F.R. §§ 4.10(a) and (b), you have the right to appeal this determination within 90 calendar days from the date of this letter. The Department deems appeals arriving after normal business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday) as received on the next normal business day. If the 90th calendar day for submitting an appeal falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal public holiday, an appeal received by 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time, the next business day will be deemed timely. The appeal should include a copy of the original request, this response, and a statement of the reasons why you consider the Department made this determination in error. Please mail written appeals to:


Assistant General Counsel for Litigation, Employment, and
Oversight
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W. Room 5896
Washington, D.C. 20230

You may send an appeal by e-mail to FOIAAppeals@doc.gov, or through FOIAonline at <https://www.foiaonline.gov/foiaonline/action/public/home> if you have a FOIAonline account. Clearly mark "Freedom of Information Act Appeal", in the e-mail subject line, or on both the appeal letter and envelope.

For the purpose of assessing fees, there are no billable fees for processing of this request.

Sincerely,

Victor
Powers

 Digitally signed by Victor
Powers
Date: 2021.01.27 17:38:44
-05'00'

Victor E. Powers
Director
Management Operations
Office of the Chief Financial and
Administrative Officer

Enclosure
Responsive Record

OCFAO NEWS YOU CAN USE

A Monthly Newsletter from the
Department of Commerce
International Trade Administration
Office of the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer

January/February 2020

This issue of Office of Chief Financial and Administrative Officer (OCFAO) *News You Can Use* focuses on the following:

- [*FY 2021 President's Budget Headed to Congress*](#)
- [*ITA Risk Profile*](#)
- [*Knowledge Management: Enterprise-wide Program at ITA*](#)
- [*ITA Intern Network – Spring Session*](#)
- [*ITA Passport and Visa – Destinations!*](#)
- [*Using Non-Conventional Lodging \(e.g., Airbnb\)*](#)
- [*Did You Receive an E2 Reservations Warning Message?*](#)
- [*Calendar Year 2019 OSHA 300A Report Summary*](#)
- [*Employee Highlights*](#)
- [*Latest ITA Comings and Goings*](#)



January/February 2020

February is derived from the Latin term *februum* or purification, named after the *Februa* ritual in the ancient lunar Roman calendar. Romans considered winter a "monthless" period, hence January and February were the last two months to be added to the Roman calendar.



FY 2021 President's Budget Headed to Congress

On Monday, February 10, 2020, the FY 2021 President's Budget (PB) will be delivered to Congress (also known as the Congressional Justification or CJ). Over the past year, OCFAO's Budget and Finance Division led the internal ITA process through close coordination with the Resource Coordinators and unit budget offices, worked with the Department, and liaised with the Office of Management and Budget. This submission is the culmination of months of hard work from the ITA team members who contributed to this product.

ITA's FY 2021 request supports ITA's mission to create prosperity by strengthening the international competitiveness of U.S. Industry, promoting trade and investment, and ensuring fair trade and compliance with trade laws and agreements. This will be achieved by continuing to: 1) ensure that U.S. industries and workers have an effective remedy for the injurious impact of dumped and subsidized goods entering the United States; 2) deliver high quality sectoral and

analytical capacity to support trade to combat Chinese industrial policy; 3) support its Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) coordinator role to meet the expected increase in case load under Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act; and, 4) advocate for U.S. companies to win international government procurements. ITA will also continue to execute required sector reviews for Section 201 cases, Section 232 and Section 301 exclusion requests.



ITA Risk Profile

ITA's Risk Team, facilitated by the OCFAO's Analysis and Reporting Division, is developing a Risk Profile to include risks that could adversely affect ITA's efforts to meet FY2020 goals and objectives. The team and business units will implement Risk Treatment Plans to address those risks. In February, ITA will submit its Risk Profile to the Department, which will then send its priority risks to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). ITA's current Profile includes risks to achieving ITA's Annual Performance Goal (APG): support jobs for American workers and strengthen U.S. economic and national security by increasing U.S. exports and inward investment.

In FY 2019, the following risk was identified as a Department priority and submitted to OMB: "Trade: if resources are not made available to address trade enforcement actions, trade barrier reduction, and export expansion, then U.S. jobs, national security, and economic growth could decline." OMB Circular A123, Management's Responsibility for Enterprise Risk Management and Internal Control, requires Federal agencies to develop an annual Risk Profile. For more information, please contact Brendan Millan.



Knowledge Management: Enterprise-wide Program at ITA

The Knowledge Management (KM) Division within OCFAO, led by Stan Kowalski and Ericka Ukrow, is building the foundations for an enterprise KM program at ITA. The team has organized its efforts across the following five core workstreams:

KM Training: The KM Division, in partnership with the OCFAO Learning Division, will host a three-day, in-depth training on KM concepts, tools, and techniques. Approximately 18 people across ITA have been identified to participate in this training, expected to take place in March/April 2020. Graduates of the training will serve as KM Champions in their business units and will form a KM Community of Practice to help embed KM principles in ITA's daily work. KM Champions will also identify, shape, and execute an initial set of KM pilot projects to address challenges within their business units where knowledge and experience can improve performance.

SharePoint/Office 365: The KM Division is working with TSI and other offices to understand the resources required to apply SharePoint/Office 365 capabilities to ITA's work processes. When properly implemented, SharePoint/Office 365 has the potential to transform how ITA collaborates.

Taxonomy: The KM Division is building upon ITA's existing industry taxonomy, putting the finishing touches on expanding the "Safety and Security" section, documenting all taxonomy build and maintenance activities in order to support knowledge transfer to future taxonomy Subject Matter Experts and expanding the ITA taxonomy to include internal SharePoint libraries to facilitate search for internal working level documents.

Knowledge Capture and Retention: The KM Division is currently piloting several knowledge capture efforts with retiring ITA employees. The Division will then broaden the effort to include knowledge capture from ITA employees with critical knowledge not available elsewhere in the organization. Furthermore, our KM Training will introduce concepts and techniques to embed learning before, during, and after ITA projects to facilitate real-time learning and continuous improvement. In partnership with the OCFAO Learning Division, we will also identify enterprise learning needs and execute solutions to address those needs.

User Management/One Directory: TSI has been working hard to put the finishing touches on the User Management platform, formerly referred to as the One Directory. One of the core functions of User Management is to serve as an expertise locator, which will aid ITA employees in finding SMEs across the organization. The KM Division will assist with demonstrating the platform this Spring as well as the rollout and communications of the platform soon thereafter.



ITA Intern Network – Spring Session

All ITA interns are very welcome to sign up for the spring session of the ITA Intern Network (ITAIN). Domestic field and overseas interns are welcome to participate by phone. The ITAIN aims to provide interns with opportunities to learn more about ITA, Commerce and the U.S. Government as well as facilitate networking. ITAIN meetings will be held in the main Commerce Department Building and a conference call-in number will be provided. The first meeting is expected to be held in early February. Meeting topics may include:

- An Overview of the Three ITA Units
- Domestic/International Operations/Opportunities in the Commercial Service
- The Federal Hiring Process; and more!

Other events may include informal networking lunches for ITA interns and additional activities. Interested ITA interns are asked to email the following information to Nicole Melcher (Nicole.Melcher@trade.gov) with subject line "ITAIN Sign Up": Intern Name, Email Address, ITA Office, School Name, Internship Start and End Dates, Internship Schedule (e.g., which weekdays and start/end times in EST), and Spring Break dates (if not interning during that time).

Travel Corner



ITA Passport and Visa – Destinations!

The [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#) is continuing its series of informative publications about different destinations. Each month we provide official travel-specific information about one or two destinations: visa requirements, useful links etc. If you have suggestions on countries you would like to see included, please email us at PassportVisa@trade.gov.

This issue's highlighted destination is:

Mozambique



Visa Requirements:

- **Each package must contain:**
 - Official/Diplomatic Passport
 - Visa Application Form (Please contact [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#))
 - Two 2X2 color photo with full face, neutral expression, front view with a plain white or off-white background, and less than six months old, No Eyeglasses
 - Letter of authorization (Please contact [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#))
 - If the applicant recently has been in a Yellow Fever endemic country, the applicant must provide a Yellow Fever Certificate.
- Visa processing time: 10 business days minimum

Useful Links:

- [U.S. Department of State Travel Security Page for Mozambique](#)
- [World Health Organization Page for Mozambique](#)
- [myServices eCC](#) (*requires log-in to view country pages*)

Need Help?

- **General Assistance:** Contact Aramayis (Aram) Baloyan, ITA Passport and Visa Contractor (HCHB Room 41023; PassportVisa@trade.gov; 202-482-6908).
- **Domestic Field Staff:** The processing of passports/visas for Global Markets (GM) Domestic Field staff assigned to domestic locations remains with the GM/U.S. Field HQ Office. U.S. Field employees should continue to submit any passport and visa application packages directly to Angela Pinckney in the GM/U.S. Field HQ office, and she will coordinate directly with ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact Angela Pinckney at Angela.Pinckney@trade.gov or (202) 482-6340.
- **Overseas Field Staff:** The processing of passports for Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) assigned to overseas locations remains with the Global Markets (GM) Human Resources (HR) Operations Branch. FSOs should also submit their visa applications to their assigned HR Point-of-Contact (POC). Once received, the HR POC will submit the visa applications to ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact your HR POC.



Using Non-Conventional Lodging (e.g., Airbnb)

Are you thinking of using non-conventional lodging services such as Airbnb? Before you book that lodging, the ITA Travel Office wants to remind you of the policies for booking lodging through these alternate means so that you don't wind up on the wrong end of an audit. Because the rooms available through a service like Airbnb are usually in non-commercial, private residences, they are considered non-conventional lodging. Under [Federal Travel Regulation \(FTR\) §301-11.12\(a\)\(4\)](#) the term non-conventional lodging includes "rooms not offered commercially but made available to the public by area residents in their homes." This style of lodging would generally **not** be authorized or reimbursable for the following reasons:

- [FTR §301-11.12\(a\)\(4\)](#) specifies that non-conventional lodging would **only be reimbursed** when "there are no conventional lodging facilities in the area (e.g., in remote areas) or when conventional facilities are in short supply because of an influx of attendees at a special event (e.g., World's Fair or international sporting event)". This would require specific justification in ITA's Travel Management System (TMS), E2.
- In addition, [FTR §301-11.11\(a\)](#) and [§301-50.3](#), and [DOC Travel Policy Handbook 3.3.1](#), specify that the **CWTSato and/or E2 are required to make all travel arrangements**. Airbnb properties are obtained on a separate online system outside of the control and access of these resources. **Only the agency head or his/her designee may grant a case-by-case exception to this requirement in certain specific conditions**. Per the Department, Airbnb use would require pre-approval by the Business Unit Principal

Deputy Assistant Secretary (PDAS) or equivalent (e.g., GM – Deputy Director General (DDG)), the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer (CFAO), and the Department's Senior Travel Official (STO).

- Finally, for **any travel** (not just non-conventional lodging), if you do not use E2 and/or CWTSato to book your air/rail, hotel, or car rental reservations, then [FTR §301-50.5](#) states that "**you are responsible for any additional costs resulting from the failure to use the TMS or E-Gov Travel Service**, including service fees, cancellation penalties, or other additional costs (e.g., higher airfares, rental car charges, or hotel rates). In addition, your agency may take appropriate disciplinary action." This would not apply in situations where E2 and CWTSato cannot book the lodging, such as some overseas lodgings that must be booked through Post for security reasons or when per diem is only available through conventional lodging at a conference.

If you have questions, please contact your [Business Unit Travel Coordinator](#), or travel@trade.gov.



Did You Receive an E2 Reservations Warning Message?

Does your E2 travel authorization contain the below warning message about your reservations? While this message was designed to confirm that the reservation details and associated expenses have been updated in E2, CWTSato has confirmed that some users are receiving this message even when no changes have occurred:

"Reservations associated to the trip have changed. The trip may need to be returned and amended to update reservation and expense information."

While CWTSato is working on resolving this issue, if you receive this message, *whether you have made changes or not*, please review your reservation and expense information to confirm that it is correct. You should also add a remark to show that you have verified your reservations and expenses so that your approvers are aware that your reservations have already been verified.

If you are an approver and see this message, you should review the remarks to see if the reservations and expenses have been verified. If they have already been verified, then you can proceed with reviewing and approving the travel as normal.

If you have E2 technical questions, please contact the NIST E2 Help Desk at cic@nist.gov or (301) 975-5375, option 1. For travel policy questions, please contact your [Business Unit Travel Coordinator](#) or travel@trade.gov.

Calendar Year 2019 OSHA 300A Report



Office Safety

Summary

ITA Headquarters and U.S. Field Employees:

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) mandates employers post a summary of work-related injuries and illnesses from the previous calendar year (CY). The summary must be posted February 1st through April 30th. ITA had two reportable OSHA cases during CY 2019.

To view the CY 2019 OSHA 300A Report Summary, please visit the [Management Operations Division Office Safety Webpage](#).

If you have any questions regarding the safety program, please contact [Aisha Wilson](#) at (202) 428-1244 or [Adrian Valentine](#) at (202) 482-4683.



Employee Highlights

Two new colleagues recently joined OCFAO's Management and Operations Division (MOD) and are featured below.

Aisha Wilson

What I handle in ITA: Space and Safety

Background: My professional background is in contracting and government real estate. My educational background is in forensic psychology.

Fun Fact: I was born in Honolulu, HI.

Adrian Valentine

What I handle in ITA: Lead for Space and various MOD programs

Background: My professional background is space and facilities management, training, employee development, and human resources. My educational background is mathematics, accounting, and leadership.

Fun Fact: I purchased my first home at 26 years old.



ITA Comings and Goings

A note of thanks to Eugenio DaSilva for his past work on this newsletter. Eugenio has recently moved on from ITA and we wish him well on future endeavors.

Arrivals:

- **E&C:** Benjamin Smith, Thomas Conley
- **GM:** Aaron Krish, Alexandra Natale, Andrew Francis, Charlotte Conerly, Daniel Bruner, Ian Saunders, Jennie Lee Davis, Lauren Baker, Nasim Sadr, Tashanna Amenyenu
- **I&A:** Alexander Layser, Colin Leach, Karen Grunstra, Kathryn Von Richthofen, Kenneth Whaley, Luke Myers, Luke Yanos
- **Ex-Admin:** Adrian Valentine, Aisha Wilson, Giselle Frias

Departures:

- **E&C:** Albert Hsu, Christian Llinas, Donna Kinsella, Edyth Artman, Joshua Poole, Keith Haynes
- **GM:** Anthony Diaz, Debra Rogers, Holly Vineyard, Leann Tagwerker, Richard Corson, Robert Peaslee, Skip Jones, Tamara Gregory, William Lawton, Young Oh
- **I&A:** Andrew Steele, Elizabeth (Libby) Hennemuth, Jeffrey Hall, Rose Williams
- **Ex-Admin:** Eugenio DaSilva

Send your suggestions or comments about this Newsletter to helen.eliassian@trade.gov

The International Trade Administration, [U.S. Department of Commerce](#), manages this global trade site to provide access to ITA information on promoting trade and investment, strengthening the competitiveness of U.S. industry, and ensuring fair trade and compliance with trade laws and agreements. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

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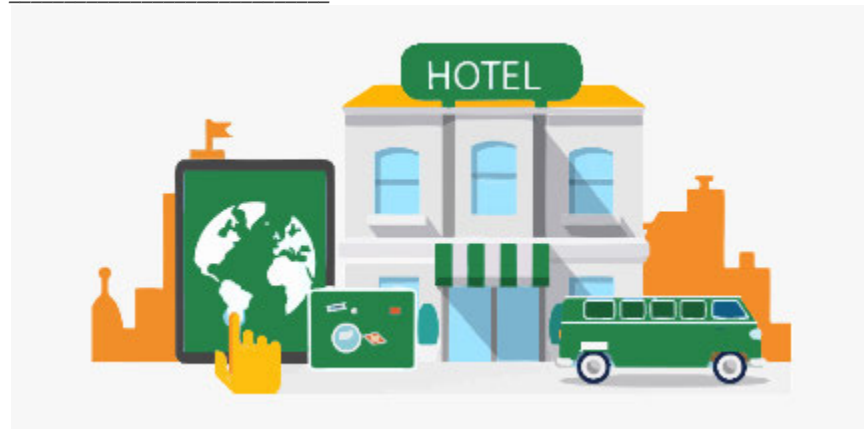
OCFAO NEWS YOU CAN USE

A Monthly Newsletter from the
Department of Commerce
International Trade Administration
Office of the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer

December 2019

In this issue of *OCFAO News You Can Use*, we focus on the following:

- [**How to Avoid Pitfalls on Excess Lodging Expenses**](#)
- [**Passport and Visa Destination of the Month: Turkey!**](#)
- [**Computer Monitors Become Non-Accountable Assets**](#)
- [**Do You FOIA? Our Q&A is for You!**](#)
- [**Transit Benefit: FY20 Recertification Coming Soon**](#)
- [**Latest ITA Comings and Goings**](#)



Exceeding Lodging Allowances on Foreign Travel

Requesting to go over per diem on official travel must be reviewed and approved by senior ITA leadership. In accordance with [Federal, Departmental, and ITA policy](#), you need to submit a [cost comparison](#) to document that staying at a higher per diem lodging provides better value to the Government versus finding lodging that offers per diem in the vicinity. These steps provide an audit trail for the request and show that you and your approvers could not avoid the extra costs without impacting the mission. While all above per diem lodging is subject to audit, post-travel requests for actual per diem are even more highly scrutinized and may be rejected.

Foreign travel offers challenges to making sure you remain under per diem and within policy. While [Domestic lodging rates set by GSA](#) allow you to claim lodging taxes and fees separately, the [Foreign lodging rates set by the State Department](#) **INCLUDE** taxes and fees. It is incumbent on you as the traveler to determine what taxes and fees you will pay at each foreign hotel, include them in your calculations of your lodging costs, and request above per diem approval if warranted.

Another challenge of Foreign Travel are the fluctuations in exchange rates. If your chosen lodging rate, including all taxes and fees, is close to the per diem lodging rate, there is a chance that when the exchange rates are applied, you could exceed per diem simply due to currency fluctuations. You should consider this **PRE-TRIP**, and if the numbers are close, you should use a [cost comparison](#) to request an actual lodging approval in case it is needed.

How to stay on top of these situations?

- Make sure that you check with each foreign hotel to determine if taxes and fees will push the cost over per diem. If the total exceeds the limit, does your need to stay at that hotel meet the justification and approval scrutiny you will receive, or is there another hotel within per diem that would meet the mission requirements?
- Be aware of the level of exchange rate fluctuation at your official travel destination. If it regularly, or even seasonally, changes, you should increase your estimates accordingly and consider if you have the necessary justification for the lodging choice.

Remember – if you exceed lodging rates without approval, and cannot obtain post-trip approval, you may be **personally responsible** for the additional costs.

If you have questions, please contact your [Business Unit Travel Coordinator](#), or ITA's Travel Manager, Jeff Scherr, at (202) 482-3266 or Jeffrey.Scherr@trade.gov.



ITA Passport and Visa – Destinations!

The [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#) is continuing its series of informative publications about different destinations. Each month we provide official travel-specific information about one or

two destinations: visa requirements, useful links etc. If you have suggestions on countries you would like to see included, please email us at PassportVisa@trade.gov.

The December destination is:

Turkey



Visa Requirements:

Each package must contain:

- Official/Diplomatic Passport
- Visa Application Form (Please contact [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#))
- 2X2 color photo with full face, neutral expression, front view with a plain white or off-white background, and less than six months old, No Eyeglasses
- Letter of authorization (Please contact [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#))
- Visa processing time: 12-14 days

Useful Links:

- [U.S. Department of State Travel Security Page for Turkey](#)
- [World Health Organization Page for Turkey](#)
- [myServices eCC](#) (requires log-in to view country pages)

Need Help?

- **General Assistance:** Contact Aramayis (Aram) Baloyan, ITA Passport and Visa Contractor (HCHB Room 41023; PassportVisa@trade.gov or (202) 482-6908.
- **Domestic Field Staff:** The processing of passports/visas for GM staff assigned to domestic locations remains with the GM/U.S. Field HQ Office. U.S. Field employees should continue to submit any passport and visa application packages directly to Angela Pinckney in the GM/U.S. Field HQ office, and she will coordinate directly with ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact Angela Pinckney at Angela.Pinckney@trade.gov or (202) 482-6340.
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Contact (POC). Once received, the HR POC will submit the visa applications to ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact your HR POC.



Monitors to Be Removed from Sunflower Inventory

To achieve administrative cost savings and reduce the level of effort required by ITA's worldwide Property Officials to track personal property assets, ITA is implementing the Department's [revised Monitor Accountability guidelines](#) to remove all non-capitalized monitors valued below \$5,000 from ITA's worldwide Sunflower personal property inventory.

Per Department's guidance, only the following monitors need to be tracked in the DOC Personal Property Management System, Sunflower:

1. Monitors purchased in a bulk purchase of \$250,000 or more; and,
2. Monitors with an original purchase price of \$5,000 or more.

ITA is working with the Department to conduct a mass retirement of all non-capitalized monitors from Sunflower. This action is expected to be completed before the start of the FY20 Inventory. No action is required from ITA Property Officials at this time to retire these monitors as "not accountable".

By removing over 5,000 monitors which are no longer considered sensitive assets by the Department, the ITA inventory volume will be reduced by over 25%. This effort will lower ITA's risk of fraud, waste, and abuse by allowing Property Officials to maintain greater accountability of assets with higher visibility or value.

This initiative also aligns with OMB directives to streamline mission-support functions for greater efficiency and eliminate unnecessary steps that do not add value. Aside from reducing personnel time costs, this project will likely also result in cost savings by lowering ITA's

Sunflower database costs which are partially based on the total number of assets in the system.

To ensure accountability, the Department continues to require property passes in order to remove Government-owned items from Headquarters, including non-accountable assets such as monitors. ITA also requires the use of Release Agreements for Field locations for any situations where Government-owned property is kept outside of the workplace for more than 30 days.

If you have questions about property, please contact your [Business Unit Property Accountability Officer \(PAO\)](#), or ITA's Property Management Officer (PMO), Jeff Scherr, at (202) 482-3266 or Jeffrey.Scherr@trade.gov. Property guidance is also available on [ITA Central](#). If you are a Property Custodian and have technical questions about the Sunflower system, please contact the Sunflower Management Center at (202) 482-4110 or SunflowerHelpDesk@doc.gov.



Freedom of Information ACT

Got a FOIA Request? Our Team is Here to Help!

Any ITA office can be tasked to provide copy of documents under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) program. Do you know how to go about if you are requested to fulfill a FOIA request? To help ITA employees get familiar with the program, the FOIA team is launching a series of "Questions & Answers" on the FOIA. Here are the first four:

Q: Who can submit a request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?

A: "Any person" can file a FOIA request, including U.S. citizens, foreign nationals, organizations, associations, and universities.

Q: What can be requested under the FOIA?

A: Any existing government agency record can be requested. However, the FOIA does not require agencies to create any new records, answer questions, or perform analysis.

Q: How can ITA protect information?

A: There are three exemptions commonly used by ITA to protect information from disclosure:

- Exemption 4 protects trade secrets and commercial or financial information.
- Exemption 5 protects agency documents which are both pre-decisional and deliberative.
- Exemption 6 protects personal information.

Q: Who makes FOIA requests?

A: Journalists comprise only 7.6% of FOIA requests! The primary requesters are business, law firms, and individuals. Check out an article on the subject from Columbia Journalism Review [here](#).

Do you have a FOIA question for ITA FOIA?

Email us at foia@trade.gov and your question could be featured in a future edition of the ITA newsletter. The ITA FOIA program is managed by the OCFAO Management Operations Division, Room 40003.

For Frequently Asked FOIA Questions visit: <https://www.foia.gov/faq.html>



Transit Benefits: Recertification to Open in January

All ITA employees located at Headquarters and in the U.S. Field who receive transit benefits are required to certify/recertify their status annually. The FY 20 Recertification period will be open in early February, and to continue receiving the benefits the recertification must be completed by the set deadline. Keep your eyes open for an ITA Announcement that will be broadcasted soon.

Note that all participants in the program are required to recertify, even those who have joined recently. Beneficiaries who do not recertify will have their benefit discontinued once the deadline has passed. To restore the benefit, employees who have been removed from the program will need to re-enroll by logging in to their account with [DOT/TRANServe](#), and following the guidance to "Certify/Enroll".

Limit Increase

Congress has approved a \$5 monthly increase to the maximum allowance for federal transit benefits, and senior management has authorized the increase to be made available to ITA participants who qualify for it. The new benefit limit is being increased from \$265 to \$270 per month, beginning January 1.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact the Acting ITA Transit Benefit program managers, Eugenio DaSilva, at Eugenio.DaSilva@trade.gov or (202) 482-3756, and April Banks, at April.Banks@trade.gov, or (202) 482-5201.



ITA Comings and Goings

Arrivals:

- **E&C:** Dakota Pots, Glenn Bass, Laurian Douthett, Pamela Dow, and Zoe Yousik
- **GM:** Alexis Tercero, Darren Srebnick, Kerry Barnett, and Maria (Mia) Adamowsky
- **I&A:** Kevin Doyle
- **Ex-Admin:** Jason Capehart

Departures:

- **E&C:** Raymond Lowman

Send your suggestions or comments about this Newsletter to eugenio.dasilva@trade.gov

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OCFAO NEWS YOU CAN USE

A Monthly Newsletter from the
Department of Commerce
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Office of the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer

November 2019

In this issue of *OCFAO News You Can Use*, we focus on the following:

- [**Travelling on Official Business? eCC Has New Process**](#)
- [**ITA Offers Seminar on Obtaining Passport and Visas**](#)
- [**Country of the Month: Destination Taiwan!**](#)
- [**Snowed In? Keep the Work Going... from Home**](#)
- [**ITA Rotation Program Now Open for 2020 Season**](#)
- [**Language Affinity: Three New Groups Formed**](#)
- [**Flying Away These Holidays? Review Our Tips**](#)
- [**Holiday Season: Safety Advices to Keep in Mind**](#)
- [**Latest ITA Comings and Goings**](#)



Attention! New eCountry Clearance Process Now in Effect

Are you travelling overseas for official business? The Department of State has announced that it is shifting **immediately** to a new eCountry Clearance (eCC) system, [myServices eCC](#), to replace <https://ecc.state.gov>. Users will need to [request an account](#) and [enable multi-factor authentication](#) by downloading the Microsoft Authenticator or Google Authenticator apps on their mobile device and following the instructions during myServices setup to scan a Quick Response (QR) code. A detailed [New User Guide](#) and [profile management instructions](#) are available on the [ITA Central Travel Management Website](#).

While the former eCC system will remain read-only until January 20, 2020, all future requests should be submitted in [myService eCC](#). Here are several features of the new system:

- After a profile is setup for each traveler, the traveler's profile information will auto-populate each time a travel request is created for them.
- Travel arrangers can set up profiles for travelers and manage travel requests on their behalf; travelers can also view and edit travel requests made by their travel arrangers through their own myServices eCC account.
- Similar previous trips can also be copied and used as a template for newer travel.
- A request for multiple people traveling to the same post is allowed even if they are on separate flights and staying in different hotels.
- The system will include a list of commonly used hotels.

If you have technical questions regarding myServices, the Department of State's Help Desk can be contacted at 1-888-313-4567 or myServiceseCC@state.gov. If you have travel security questions, please contact the ITA Security Team at ITASecurityTeam@trade.gov. For travel questions, please contact your [Business Unit Travel Coordinator](#) or travel@trade.gov. If you are serving Overseas and have questions, please contact your assigned HR Point-of-Contact (POC) in the Global Markets (GM) Office of Foreign Service Human Capital (OFSHC) or your Post's travel contact.



Learn from the Experts: Passport and Visa Seminar on Dec 4

Do you need a passport or visa for upcoming official travel? Do you know the best ways to avoid delays in the passport and visa process? Do you want helpful tips on how to get your requests approved by the Department of State and Embassies – the first time? Then, come learn from the experts! Join ITA's Passport/Visa Specialist, Aram Baloyan, and Barbara Baker from ADTRAV Travel Management, to learn about ITA's visa and passport services and tips for applying in advance for a passport or visa.

During the seminar we will discuss the following topics:

- ITA Travel Program Office Services
- Diplomatic vs. Official Passport
- Passport Processing Requirements & Times
- Appropriate Use of Diplomatic and Official Passports
- Visa Definition and Types
- Visa Requirements & Tips

Date/Time: Wednesday, December 4, 2:00–3:00 p.m. EST

Location: HCHB Room 41017 and Skype Webinar

To register, please contact PassportVisa@trade.gov and we will send you a calendar invite. Please indicate whether you will participate in-person or via Skype webinar.

Need Help?

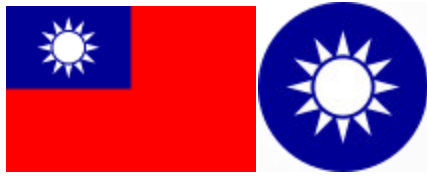
- **General Assistance:** Contact Aramayis (Aram) Baloyan, ITA Passport and Visa Contractor, HCHB Room 41023, PassportVisa@trade.gov or (202) 482-6908.
- **Domestic Field Staff:** The processing of passports/visas for Global Markets (GM) Domestic Field staff assigned to domestic locations remains with the GM/U.S. Field HQ Office. U.S. Field employees should continue to submit any passport and visa application packages directly to Angela Pinckney in the GM/U.S. Field HQ office, and she will coordinate directly with ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact Angela Pinckney at angela.pinckney@trade.gov or (202) 482-6340.
- **Overseas Field Staff:** The processing of passports for Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) assigned to overseas locations remains with the GM's Human Resources (HR) Operations Branch. FSOs should also submit their visa applications to their assigned HR Point-of-Contact (POC). Once received, the HR POC will submit the applications to ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact your HR POC.

ITA Passport and Visa – Country of the Month

The [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#) is continuing its series of informative publications about different countries. Each month we provide official travel-specific information about one or two countries: visa requirements, useful links etc. If you have suggestions on countries you would like to see included, please email us at PassportVisa@trade.gov.

The November country of the month is:

Taiwan



Travel tips:

- When traveling to, from, or through Taiwan all executive branch personnel must use a regular (blue tourist) passport. Special issuance passports must not be used.
- SIA requires that all executive branch personnel who plan to travel to Taiwan for work-related reasons to receive prior concurrence (email) from the Department of State's Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Office of Taiwan Coordination (EAP/TC), before requesting eCountry Clearance (eCC). EAP/TC can be reached at (202) 647-7711 or EAP-TC-Office-DL@state.gov. You should attach the concurrence email from EAP/TC to your E2 travel authorization along with your approved eCountry Clearance.

Useful Links:

- [U.S. Department of State Travel Security Page for Taiwan](#)
- [myServices eCC](#) (requires log-in to view country pages)

Need Help?

- **General Assistance:** Contact Aramayis (Aram) Baloyan, ITA Passport and Visa Contractor, HCHB Room 41023, PassportVisa@trade.gov, or (202) 482-6908.
 - **Domestic Field Staff:** The processing of passports/visas for Global Markets (GM) Domestic Field staff assigned to domestic locations remains with the GM/U.S. Field HQ Office. U.S. Field employees should continue to submit any passport and visa application packages directly to Angela Pinckney in the GM/U.S. Field HQ office, and she will coordinate directly with ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact Angela Pinckney at angela.pinckney@trade.gov or (202) 482-6340.
 - **Overseas Field Staff:** The processing of passports for Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) assigned to overseas locations remains with the GM's Human Resources (HR) Operations Branch. FSOs should also submit their visa applications to their assigned HR Point-of-Contact (POC). Once received, the HR POC will submit the applications to ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact your HR POC.
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ITA Teleworking and Inclement Weather – Winter Edition

With winter approaching we are sending out this message to remind you about unscheduled (situational) telework practice, in particular during [inclement weather and/or government emergency closures](#). ITA also asks that employees ensure they have an updated understanding of [ITA's Telework \(TW\) policy](#) and that they have an updated and signed [TW agreement](#) in place.

If Government Offices Are Closed:

As a reminder, any employee with an approved TW agreement in place (Routine and Situational) is considered "telework ready" and *required* to exercise telework during inclement weather or an emergency closure, *unless* the employee opts to request to use personal leave in lieu of teleworking. Employees who do not participate in the TW program (i.e., those who do not have a signed Telework Agreement in place) will automatically receive administrative paid leave on days the conventional office (e.g., HCHB) is closed.

If Government Offices Are Open with Option for Employees to Telework:

If government offices are open and employees with approved TW agreements in place are given the option to TW (Situational Telework), then employees must notify their supervisor of intent to TW. Employees who are not eligible to telework or have opted not to participate in the TW program must report to the conventional office (e.g., HCHB), unless they request personal leave.

ITA staff is also encouraged to sign up to receive federal government [Operating Status messages from OPM](#) in times of inclement weather to find out the latest on the status of government operations and closures.

Eligible to telework and not already enrolled in the telework program?

There are many work-life balance advantages to teleworking. Talk to your supervisor about signing up to telework! If you have any questions on ITA Telework policy, please reach out to matthew.hundemann@trade.gov.

ITA's [Human Capital \(People\)](#) team manages ITA's TW program.



FY 20 Rotation: Application's Deadline is Nov 29

The ITA Rotation program has 21 opportunities open for Fiscal Year 2020. The due date for expressions of interest for the FY20 ITA-Wide Rotation Program is **COB November 29**. To view opportunities and eligibility guidance visit the Human Capital Learning Division SharePoint site at [ITA Rotation Program](#).

Eligible employees may apply for up to three assignments by submitting applications to ITARotation@trade.gov. A separate application form is required for each opportunity of interest. Please put "ITA Rotation Program Participant Application" in the subject line of your email submission. We expect that offers to the selected candidates will be made by the end of December. Rotations will begin in February 2020.

If you have questions, please contact the Rotation program manager, Cynthia Cole, at cynthia.cole@trade.gov or at ITARotations@trade.gov.



Language Affinity Group Updates

Three new Language Affinity Groups (Indonesian, Italian, and Portuguese) have been recently established, bringing the total number of groups to 12! If you have a desire to develop your language skills, consider connecting with one or more of these groups.

Here are current list of groups and their respective Points of Contacts:

Language	Leader/POC
Italian (New!)	Evangeline "Lin" Keenan
Indonesian (New!)	Samuel Glickstein
Portuguese (New!)	Mark Castillo
Korean	Shanah Lee (<i>New POC</i>)
Russian	Garret Mitchell
Arabic	<i>Seeking new POC</i>
French	Tshanda Kalombo
German	Jeffrey Eversman / Devin Horne
Chinese	Benjamin Carlson
Turkish	Eli Lovely
Spanish	<i>Seeking new POC</i>
Japanese	Lily McFeeters

To assist in the coordination and collaboration of Language Affinity Groups, we are asking established group's POCs to provide the names of their group members to Cynthia.Cole@trade.gov. This will support us connecting interested employees with current group members, as well as enable the program coordinator to keep information on our various communication platforms up to date.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Language Affinity Group Coordinator, Cynthia Cole at Cynthia.cole@trade.gov.



Taking off for the Holidays? Air Travel Hints

Holiday travel comes with many distractions as you navigate past thousands of other travelers making the same pilgrimages. While some level of stress is inevitable, here are some ideas to help manage your travel and prepare for the spectacle of an airport during the Holidays and other busy times. Many of these reminders are common sense, especially for seasoned travelers, but we think they are valuable resources to keep fresh in mind:

- **Expect Crowds** – Arrive early to allow more time for checking in, parking, and security than you would normally. Consider using Uber/Lyft or taxis to avoid parking. Have devices charged and expect charger stations to be crowded. If you are on official travel and charging your phone, don't forget to unplug it before you rush to your flight! Bring some snacks, as airport restaurants may have huge lines.
- **Online Check-in** – If you have the option, check in online. Make sure you print your boarding passes because not every terminal, gate, and airline will support scanning your ticket from your phone (especially overseas).
- **Prepare for Flight Issues** - Sign up for flight alerts from your airline (if available) so you can be notified of any flight changes. Have the CWTSato numbers with you always on official travel. Call 1-855-813-2844, or internationally, call collect 1-210-877-3311 (these numbers are also printed on your CWTSato flight itinerary). CWTSato support is available at all times, even after-hours, on weekends, and on holidays. Don't use personal funds to purchase airfare on official travel. On personal travel, have airline numbers or apps handy so you can avoid the rush to the counter if there is a delay.
- **Don't Wrap Your Presents Yet** – TSA does not [prohibit](#) wrapped gifts, but if a wrapped gift attracts attention during screening, it will have to be unwrapped (especially food items). Instead of wrapping presents, TSA recommends taking gift bags which you can easily use at your destination. Also, keep in mind that gifts being carried are subject to the same review as any other carried-on items. All liquids, spreads, sauces, etc., are subject to the liquid carry-on rules. For more information, see [TSA's Holiday Guidelines](#).

- **Manage Your Baggage Choices** – Full flights, delays, and busy airports are not friendly if you are travelling with many bags and packages. Delays might mean moving about the airport from gate to gate or even to a different terminal. Overhead bins fill up quickly. Carry-on bags add stress, but if you are travelling with Government equipment, be sure to pack it in your carry-on and not in your checked luggage. Also, think ahead to the return trip and have extra space (or an extra bag) in your baggage, if needed.

If you have questions on official travel, please contact your [Business Unit Travel Coordinator](#), or travel@trade.gov.



Celebrate without Drama: Safety Tips for the Season

The holiday season is often a time for celebrations and sharing gifts. This holiday season remember that one of the best gifts you can bring home is the one of safety. Most of the practices are common sense, but it is never too much to review them and ensure you and your loved ones celebrate "the most wonderful time of the year" without incidents.

Keep Hazards Out of Reach:

- Place candles on a stable surface where they won't be knocked over and away from materials that can catch fire. Flameless candles, where doable, can be a good alternative.
- Poisonous plants, such as poinsettias, should be placed out of the reach of children and pets.
- Make sure trees and wreaths are placed away from fireplaces, space heaters and radiator heating systems.

Guest Safety:

- Clear outdoor sidewalks and steps of snow and ice before guests arrive.
- Store prescription and other medications away and out of sight of children and guests.

Decorating Safety:

- Make sure trees are on a stable platform and well-watered, if applicable.
- Place ladders on a solid surface and make sure it is stable before using them.
- Electrical outlets should be kept free of overloads. Use surge protectors.
- *Wiring* for tree lights should not be frayed and/or damaged and should be routed to ensure the wires are free of sharp objects and clearly visible.

Plan Ahead:

- Check the weather before you go out and always keep an emergency kit in your vehicle.
- Drink responsibly, have a designated driver or plan on an alternate ride home.
- If hosting, provide plenty of non-alcoholic drinks and make sure guests have a safe ride home.

Happy Holidays!!!



ITA Comings and Goings

Arrivals:

- **E&C:** Abdul Alnoor, Dusten Hom, Faris Montgomery, Jonathan Hall-Eastman, Katherine Sliney, Lochard Philozin, Marc Castillo, Melissa Kinter, Nathan James, Nicolas Mayora, Olatunbosun Leigh, Paola Aleman Ordaz, Raymond Lowman, Robert Scully, Samuel Glickstein, Seo (Eva) Kim, Theodore Pearson, Viet Le, William Langley
- **GM:** Alex Howell, Debra Sturdivant, Jeffrey Cady, Percy Martin, Sam Leon, Tashana Jones
- **I&A:** Alex Rued, Andrew Moyseowicz, Andrew Rechenberg, Brooke Tenison, Christina Gay, Dana Fager, Julia Schuble, Leah-Perle Bloomenstein, Nicholas Enz, Ujjwall Uppuluri,
- **Ex-Admin:**

Departures:

- **E&C:** Daniels Deku, James Doyle, Leah Will Owens, Maria Tatarska, Mohammad Qureshi, Susan Pulongbarit, William Thompson
- **Ex-Admin:** Tyler Berard, Michael Cortese
- **GM:** Daniel Crocker, Hoa Kern, Lisa Lawn, Mary Sloan
- **I&A:** Courtney Lang, Jennifer Carton, Stephen Astle

Send your suggestions or comments about this Newsletter to eugenio.dasilva@trade.gov

The International Trade Administration, [U.S. Department of Commerce](#), manages this global trade site to provide access to ITA information on promoting trade and investment, strengthening the competitiveness of U.S. industry, and ensuring fair trade and compliance with trade laws and agreements. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

[USA.gov](#) | [FOIA](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Disclaimer](#) | [Information Quality Guidelines](#) | [Intranet](#)

OCFAO NEWS YOU CAN USE

A Monthly Newsletter from the
Department of Commerce
International Trade Administration
Office of the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer

October 2019

In this issue of *OCFAO News You Can Use*, we focus on the following:

- [**REAL ID Is Here: Are You Compliant Yet?**](#)
- [**Purchase Card Gets Dedicated Mailbox with MOD**](#)
- [**Speak a Foreign Language? Connect with Your ITA Peers**](#)
- [**Life-Work Balance: AWS May Be Good for You**](#)
- [**Interning with ITA? Join Your Network**](#)
- [**Country of the Month Takes You to Vietnam**](#)
- [**Government Property: Know Your Responsibilities**](#)
- [**Rotation Program Scores High in FY19**](#)
- [**Latest ITA Arrivals and Departures**](#)



TRAVELER's CORNER

REAL ID Becomes Mandatory for Flying by October 2020

Does your driver's license have a star at its top portion? If not, you are not "REAL ID-Compliant" and, unless you get a [compliant driver's license](#) by **October 1, 2020**, you will not be able to use your driver's license as acceptable identification at airport security checkpoints. In compliance with the 2005 REAL ID Act, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requires that, effective

October 1, 2020, every air traveler 18 and over must present a REAL ID-compliant driver's license, state-issued enhanced driver's license (MI, MN, NY, VT, WA), or [other acceptable form of identification](#) (HSPD-12 PIV card, valid passport, U.S. military ID, etc.) to fly within the U.S.

If you do not have a Real ID-compliant driver's license or other [acceptable identification](#), you WILL NOT be able to travel by air in the United States after October 1, 2020.

If your driver's license is not yet REAL ID-compliant, then you should check with your state's driver's license agency to learn its requirements and plan to obtain one in the next months. You will likely need to visit the driver's license agency in person with original identification, proof of residency, and Social Security Number documents. Here are links to the requirements for [Washington, DC](#); [Maryland](#); and [Virginia](#).

Please note that New Jersey, Oklahoma, Oregon, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands have not yet been ruled compliant by DHS. If you are a resident of one of these states or territories, you should monitor media reports, their respective driver's license agencies, and the [DHS REAL ID Website](#) for updates.

If you have travel questions, please contact your [Business Unit Travel Coordinator](#) or travel@trade.gov.



Dedicated Mailbox Facilitates Purchase Card Communication

The OCFAO, Management and Operations Division (MOD) has established a dedicated mailbox for ITA's Purchase Card Program to ensure prompt customer service. All purchase card inquiries related to the following topics should be sent to SP3PurchaseCards@trade.gov:

1. Account closure
2. New Cardholder Account

3. New Approving Official Account
4. Hierarchy moves
5. General purchase card questions/assistance

The mailbox is monitored by MOD Staff daily. Responses to any questions or concerns will be provided by the next business day or sooner.

If you have any questions, please contact Robin Carpenter, ITA's Purchase Card Program Manager, via email at robin.carpenter@trade.gov or at (202) 482-4989.



Nine Language Groups Active; and Counting!

Want to hone your language skills while learning with colleagues? Consider joining (or starting) a Language Affinity Group. These groups offer collaboration and voluntary developmental activities in a language of choice. Participants may meet in person and/or virtually to practice and build language capabilities.

Currently, there are nine language groups in activity. Below is the list of groups and their respective volunteer points-of-contacts. Feel free to reach out to them directly if you are interested in joining their group.

And, if you are interested in leading a group (Spanish is seeking a new lead or co-leaders), please contact Cynthia Cole at Cynthia.Cole@trade.gov. She can connect you with others interested in continuing this one or establishing a new language group.

Established groups include:

Language	Point of Contact	Language	Point of Contact
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Korean	<i>Esther Lee</i>	Chinese	<i>Benjamin Carlson</i>
Russian	<i>Garret Mitchell</i>	Turkish	<i>Eli Lovely</i>
Arabic	<i>Mary Sloan</i>	Spanish	<i>Currently seeking new leader / co-leaders</i>
French	<i>Tshanda Kalombo</i>	Japanese	<i>Lily McFeeters</i>
German	<i>Jeffrey Eversman</i> <i>Devin Horne</i>		

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Language Affinity Group Coordinator, Cynthia Cole at Cynthia.cole@trade.gov.



AWS May Benefit Your Work/Life Balance

The ITA Alternative Work Schedule (AWS) policy includes several work arrangement request options at the ITA level. The AWS applies across all ITA as applicable. If you would like more flexibility in your schedule and/or the opportunity to get an extra day for personal errands and activities for a better work-life balance, an AWS might be the option for you!

ITA uses the [Department of Commerce's overarching policy](#) as general guidelines regarding to Alternative Work Schedules. The availability of AWS may vary by business unit/office. Keep in mind that the AWS is a privilege, not an entitlement, and office policy is set at the discretion of each office supervisor. Actual flexible work schedules, including core hours (if applicable), are at the discretion of your first-line supervisor.

Supervisors establish the appropriate AWS criteria for their offices and are to apply and practice exercising criteria consistently, as applicable. Employees that wish to start an AWS or change their current AWS schedule should discuss it with their first-line supervisors. [Click here](#) to view ITA's specific AWS policy and various work schedule options that business units/offices may adopt to fit your needs.



ITA Networking: Calling Fall Interns

All ITA interns are very welcome to sign up for the fall session of the ITA Intern Network (ITAIN). Domestic field and overseas interns are welcome to participate by phone. The ITAIN aims to provide interns with opportunities to learn more about ITA, the department of Commerce, and the U.S. Government, as well as facilitate networking.

ITAIN meetings will be held in the main Commerce building and a conference call-in number will be provided. Meeting topics may include: An overview of the three ITA Business Units; Domestic/International operations/opportunities in the Commercial Service; The Federal hiring process; and more! Other events may include informal networking lunches for ITA interns and additional activities.

Interested ITA interns are asked to email the following information to Elaine Li (elaine.li@trade.gov) and Nicole Melcher (nicole.melcher@trade.gov) with subject line "ITAIN Sign Up": Intern name, email address, ITA office name, school name, internship start and end dates, and internship schedule (e.g., which weekdays and start/end times in EST).



ITA Passport and Visa – Country of the Month

The [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#) is continuing its series of informative publications about different countries. Each month we provide official travel-specific information about one or two countries: visa requirements, useful links etc. If you have suggestions on countries you would like to see included, please email us at PassportVisa@trade.gov.

The October country of the month is:

Vietnam



Visa Requirements:

- **Each package must contain:**
 - Official/Diplomatic Passport
 - Visa Application Form (Please contact [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#))
 - One 2X2 color photo with full face, neutral expression, front view with a plain white or off-white background, and less than six months old; no eyeglasses
 - Letter of authorization (Please contact [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#))
- **Note: Visa approval number is mandatory.** Please contact your Host Organization or the Post in Vietnam and ask them to provide you the visa approval number issued by the Department of Immigration or Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam (Usually takes up to 14 days to get the number).

Useful Links:

- [U.S. Department of State Travel Security Page for Vietnam](#)
- [World Health Organization Page for Vietnam](#)
- [eCountry Clearance](#) (requires log-in to view country pages)

Need Help?

- **General Assistance:** Contact Aramayis (Aram) Baloyan, ITA Passport and Visa Contractor (HCHB Room 41023; PassportVisa@trade.gov; 202-482-6908).
- **Domestic Field Staff:** The processing of passports/visas for Global Markets (GM) Domestic Field staff assigned to domestic locations remains with the GM/U.S. Field HQ Office. U.S. Field employees should continue to submit any passport and visa application packages directly to Angela Pinckney in the GM/U.S. Field HQ office, and she will coordinate directly with ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact Angela Pinckney at Angela.Pinckney@trade.gov or (202) 482-6340.
- **Overseas Field Staff:** The processing of passports for Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) assigned to overseas locations remains with the Global Markets (GM) Human Resources

(HR) Operations Branch. FSOs should also submit their visa applications to their assigned HR Point-of-Contact (POC). Once received, the HR POC will submit the visa applications to ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact your HR POC.



Protecting ITA-Owned Equipment Is Your Responsibility

Everyone at ITA is assigned Government-owned equipment. You may have a laptop or SurfacePro, a monitor or two, an iPhone, or other items. Some people, such as Property Custodians (PCs) and supervisors, are also "assigned" as the contacts for shared or vacant assets. Whether you are assigned 1 item or 20, we want to remind you of your responsibilities to protect that equipment (*this is **separate** from the ITA Rules of Behavior, which you must follow when using your IT assets*):

Supervisors:

- Ensure adequate separation of duties and management accountability throughout the inventory process
- Verify that your office's PCs have completed all required training, have implemented the mandatory [Property Critical Element](#) in their FY20 performance plans, and have issued [hand receipts](#) to all users for their assets

Users:

- Don't leave ITA equipment in the hallways, in unattended vehicles, or other places where it could be at risk of theft. If you must store the item in your vehicle because of no other option, keep it covered in your trunk and make sure that all doors are locked.

- Keep close hold of your iPhone. Don't leave it on desks, in the airplane seat pocket, or in unattended areas. Be sure that the "[Find My iPhone](#)" feature is turned on.
- Obtain pre-approval from your PC, supervisor, and any other approval required by your Business Unit before surplussing equipment, and obtain a receipt listing the barcode(s). Do not simply dispose of assets or contact a local recycler (1-800-GOT-JUNK, etc.). The DOC preferred surplus method for U.S. Field locations is the Blue Earth Program via the U.S. Postal Service (contact your PC for details). Overseas, Posts should work with the Department of State's General Services Organization (GSO) whenever possible.
- Promptly [report](#) to your PC any lost, missing, stolen, damaged, or destroyed (LMSDD) assets **within five business days** (report **immediately** to CSC@trade.gov if Personally-Identifiable Information (PII) is involved). In accordance with Departmental policy, based on the circumstances of each incident, the ITA Property Board of Review may require that employees with LMSDD incidents review and sign best practices, obtain their supervisor's signature, submit a Corrective Action Plan, or even reimburse the Government.
- Promptly notify your PC if there are any corrections needed to your hand receipt. **You are required to annotate corrections, sign your hand receipt, and return it to your PC.**

If you have questions about property, please contact your [Business Unit Property Accountability Officer \(PAO\)](#), or ITA's Property Management Officer (PMO), Jeff Scherr, at 202-482-3266 or Jeffrey.Scherr@trade.gov. Property guidance is also available on [ITA Central](#). If you are a Property Custodian and have technical questions about the Sunflower system, please contact the Sunflower Management Center at 202-482-4110 or SunflowerHelpDesk@doc.gov.



Rotation Program: 17 Successes in FY19

The 2019 Rotation program year ended successfully, with **17** assignments completed in spite of our delayed start, resulting from the government shutdown. We had overseas assignments located in India, South Africa, France, Mozambique, Kenya and Morocco. And there were U.S. field office assignments in Florida, Tennessee, New York, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, along with several in headquarters.

Respondent comments from our end of program evaluation included:

- *"The knowledge and perspectives I gained from the rotation experience will be very helpful for my role at my home office. In addition, my manager at the rotation office is an excellent role model of how to be a good middle-level manager in an organization like the ITA."*
- *"Having been immersed in the day-to-day activities of a busy post, I have a greater appreciation for the responsibilities they shoulder, the various leadership positions they have to answer to, and the workload they have to manage . . . this is very useful in helping to set careful expectations with our clients. Also, the connections made with industry partners who play vital roles in organizing the U.S. presence at the Paris Air show will be valuable in working on future trade shows/events, and I will make efforts to maintain those connections."*
- *"I am actually applying things I've learned every day, in my routine work. The way I view and understand the clients demands is so much clearer and more objective; I can really put myself into the client's shoes now. And also understand all the work that's done prior to the company becoming 'export-ready' and coming to us in the International Field. This has completely changed the way I think of and deliver services and is truly making me a better commercial specialist, every day."*

A couple of Host Manager responses to the question "Please provide a short paragraph detailing highlights or experiences from the assignment" included (names withheld):

- *"The participant viewed his time in Johannesburg as an opportunity to learn – not only new markets, but also different methods and ideas that could be useful in his home and future assignments – and to share his experience and expertise. From his first day in the office, he was focused on identifying ways to leverage his potential contributions. He met with each member of the CSSA staff for one-on-one meetings to better understand their roles and to ascertain where they might be previously under-explored opportunities. He was a quick study and a strong teacher, both essential skills to making big impacts in short periods. In addition to ensuring the seamless continuity of ongoing operations during his TDY and suggesting/modelling several useful processes for keeping administrative tasks up-to-date, he made a real impact in CS South Africa's approach to cultivating WINS from the tourism sector."*
- *"From our office's perspective, the assignment was very worthwhile. Since our office director is a member of the Healthcare Team, the participant was able to cover for her at the HIMSS show and assist the Team, which had fewer international specialists able to attend because of the shutdown. She was actually able to substitute for the commercial specialist from Brazil who could not attend. Our office was able to learn about our foreign offices' activities, challenges, and opportunities and the participant was able to experience, firsthand, counseling local exporters and the tools we use to assist them. In addition, she had the opportunity to meet almost all our local partners, including a US Senate office; enhance her understanding of their services, goals, and objectives; and help them understand the challenges and opportunities in Brazil. Among the unanticipated benefits to the assignment were a couple of FDI opportunities from Brazil now being pursued, ongoing export opportunities to Brazil pursued by some of the companies counseled, and helping our partners evaluate Brazil as their next export sales mission destination now set to occur August 12-15, 2019. The mission has now been successfully recruited. Unquestionably, there will be WINS resulting from this assignment."*

Many thanks to all of the host managers, home office supervisors, participants and applicants for an exciting program year and to your continued support of the Rotation Program. We look forward to working with you for the FY2020 program.

For the FY 2020, rotation assignment proposals were accepted until October 25, and **the application period will be open in early November.**

If you have any questions or comments, please contact ITA's Rotation Program Manager, Cynthia Cole at Cynthia.cole@trade.gov or at itarotation@trade.gov.



ITA Comings and Goings (August-September 2019)

Arrivals:

- **GM:** Antonios Louloudakis, Bryan Goldfinger, Daniel Pint, Heather McLeod, Jeffrey Cady, Leann Tagwerker, Ned Rauch-Mannino, Nelson Kolbjorn-Thomas, Richard Pearson.
- **I&A:** Brett McGee, Jacqueline Arrington-Goins.
- **Ex-Admin:** Stanislaw Kowalski.

Departures:

- **E&C:** Cara Lofaro, Laura Merchant, Shane Subler, Timothy Hruby.
- **Ex-Admin:** Dianna Finley.
- **GM:** Leslie Wilson, Matthew Turpin, Stephen Renna.
- **I&A:** Kevin Haley.

Send your suggestions or comments about this Newsletter to eugenio.dasilva@trade.gov

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OCFAO NEWS YOU CAN USE

A Monthly Newsletter from the
Department of Commerce
International Trade Administration
Office of the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer

September 2019

In this issue of *OCFAO News You Can Use*, we focus on the following:

- [**Before You Fly: Premium-Class Upgrade Has Strict Rules**](#)
- [**Receiving a Foreign Visitor? Follow the Procedures**](#)
- [**Citibank Card: You Can Opt to Receive Paper Statement**](#)
- [**"Country of the Month" Takes You to "Japan"**](#)
- [**"Travel Policy" and "Records 101" Training Due Sep 30**](#)



Premium-Class Upgrade Approval Rules

Did you know that premium-class travel is frequently [audited](#) and is only authorized when certified as medically required or, in very rare circumstances, when absolutely necessary to allow the mission to occur? As a reminder, the [Federal Travel Regulation \(FTR\)](#) and [DOC Travel Policy Handbook](#) only permit upgrades if:

- The traveler has a certified medical disability (requires written certification from the Department's Reasonable Accommodations Coordinator (RAC))
- Coach-class service is not available
- It is necessary to the Agency Mission – must justify and document in E2
- Scheduled flight time, with non-overnight stopovers, exceeds 14 hours, **and**:

- The origin and/or destination are outside the Continental U.S. (OCONUS) – upgrades on return flight to U.S. are rarely approved
- The traveler must report to duty within 24 hours of arrival **and** travel dates cannot be modified for official reasons – **must provide documentation** (e.g., meeting schedules, etc.)

In accordance with the [DOC Travel Policy Handbook](#) and [ITA Travel Policy Bulletin #FY17-3, "Travel Approval Process"](#), the Deputy Under Secretary (DUS) and Chief Financial and Administrative Officer (CFAO) must pre-approve all upgrades using form [CD-334, "Request for Approval of Other Than Coach-Class Accommodations"](#). The pre-approved CD-334 must be attached in E2 **prior to** submission of the travel authorization.

To allow time for DUS and CFAO approvals amidst other priorities, the CD-334 must be approved by the Business Unit's Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary (PDAS) or equivalent (DDG, CIO, etc.) and submitted to travel@trade.gov **at least 48 hours prior to travel or ticketing deadlines**. Requests submitted with less than 48 hours' notice **will not** be considered by the DUS and CFAO unless exceptional circumstances are justified.

As a [reminder](#), upgrades provided by an airline must be documented in E2 as no cost to ITA, but they do not require a CD-334.

If you have travel questions, please contact your [Business Unit Travel Coordinator](#) or travel@trade.gov.



Foreign National Visitor Procedures Refresher

In April of 2019, the Department of Commerce Office of Security introduced changes to the Foreign National Visitor (FNV) program. The Department of Commerce process for sponsoring Foreign National Visitors is as follows:

Planning for Foreign National Visitors:

Sponsor Responsibilities as well as Foreign National Guest Responsibilities and the associated policies and forms are located [here](#).

- **Visitors** (accessing Departmental facilities for three or fewer days or attending a conference of five or fewer days): Submit only section A of the form containing all requested information as soon as it is available, but not later than one full business day (at least 24 hours) prior to the visit.
- **Guests** (accessing Departmental facilities for more than three days): Submit the entire form containing all information at least 30 calendar days prior to arrival.

Please Note – Only Section A is required to be completed on the form for Foreign National Visitors. The entire form is required to be filled out for Foreign National Guests. The sponsor is responsible for ensuring that all information related to the Foreign National being sponsored is included on the submitted form.

Hand carry signed forms to the HCHB Security Service Center in Room 1522, or email signed forms using [Kiteworks](#) to the following OSY staff: ACHance@doc.gov; ZSmith@doc.gov; AStaggs@doc.gov.



Are You Receiving Your Citibank Travel Card Bill?

ITA has been notified by the Department and Citibank that most ITA travel cardholders were defaulted by Citibank to **electronic (paperless) statement delivery only**. Cardholders who want to receive paper statements should contact the Citibank Help Desk (1-800-790-7206 or, internationally, 1-904-954-7850) to request that service. Citibank statements are issued on or about the 28th of each month. You can always view your current and past statements by logging into [CitiManager](#).

As a government travel cardholder, you are required to pay your account in full upon receipt of your travel card statement but no later than 30 calendar days from the closing date on the statement in which the charge(s) appeared, **regardless of whether you have been reimbursed**. Cardholders must comply with the terms and conditions of the vendor's cardholder agreement and [DOC Travel Charge Card Program Handbook](#), including the timely payment of account balances. Citibank will levy a 2.5% late fee each month on the entire undisputed amount until payment has been received. Cardholders cannot be reimbursed for late fees.

If you are currently disputing any charges on your account, you must pay the undisputed portion of your bill. Citibank can assist you in filing disputes and resolving any unauthorized transactions placed on your account. For additional information on making payments on your Citibank travel card account, please contact Citibank:

- **Online or Customer Service Activation:** www.citimanager.com/login or 1-877-905-1861
- **Customer Service – 24/7 (Cardholder & General Inquiries):** 1-800-790-7206 (after hours 9pm EDT Monday through Friday and Weekends)
- **Helpdesk – For Online and File related Issues:** 1-877-841-7185, Option 1
- **International Customer Service (listed on back of the card):** 1-904-954-7850
- **"Chat with Us" ([CitiManager](#) – top right corner in black bar):** If "Chat with Us" is available, a CitiManager representative is available at that time to chat online

If you questions, please contact ITA's Travel Card Program Manager, April Banks, at travelcard@trade.gov or (202) 482-5201, or visit the [ITA Central Travel Card Website](#).

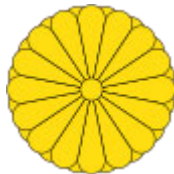


ITA Passport and Visa – Country of the Month

The [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#) is continuing its series of informative publications about different countries. Each month we provide official travel-specific information about one or two countries: visa requirements, useful links etc. If you have suggestions on countries you would like to see included, please email us at PassportVisa@trade.gov.

The September country of the month is:

Japan



Visa Requirements:

- **Each package must contain:**
 - Official/Diplomatic Passport
 - Visa Application Form (Please contact [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#))
 - One 2X2 color photo with full face, neutral expression, front view with a plain white or off-white background, and less than six months old; no eyeglasses
 - Letter of authorization (Please contact [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#))
- Visa processing time: 7-10 days

Useful Links:

- [U.S. Department of State Travel Security Page for Japan](#)
- [World Health Organization Page for Japan](#)
- [E-Country Clearance](#) (*requires log-in to view country pages*)

Need Help?

- **General Assistance:** Contact Aramayis (Aram) Baloyan, ITA Passport and Visa Contractor (HCHB Room 41023; PassportVisa@trade.gov; 202-482-6908).
 - **Domestic Field Staff:** The processing of passports/visas for Global Markets (GM) Domestic Field staff assigned to domestic locations remains with the GM/U.S. Field HQ Office. U.S. Field employees should continue to submit any passport and visa application packages directly to Angela Pinckney in the GM/U.S. Field HQ office, and she will coordinate directly with ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact Angela Pinckney at Angela.Pinckney@trade.gov or (202) 482-6340.
 - **Overseas Field Staff:** The processing of passports for Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) assigned to overseas locations remains with the Global Markets (GM) Human Resources (HR) Operations Branch. FSOs should also submit their visa applications to their assigned HR Point-of-Contact (POC). Once received, the HR POC will submit the visa applications to ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact your HR POC.
-
-



Have You Completed Your FY19 Mandatory Training?

Thank you to everyone who has completed the mandatory [ITA Travel Policy Training](#) and [Records Management 101](#) training in FY 2019. The [Commerce Learning Center \(CLC\)](#) is sending weekly "pinging" email reminders to Headquarters and U.S. Field employees who have not yet completed these courses, so please do not ignore these messages if you receive them.

If you are in Headquarters or the U.S. Field, and do not complete "ITA Travel Policy Training" in CLC by **September 30**, then your E2 account will be **disabled**.

There are two ways that you can access these trainings for FY 2019:

1. You can search for the course title ("ITA Travel Policy Training" or "Records Management 101") in the upper righthand corner search box in CLC:

- You must click "**Request**", rather than "**Launch**", to open the course and to ensure the system generates a new certificate;

Note: If you have previously completed that training in any year, and you click "Launch", then the system will not generate a new certificate and it will not be marked as complete on CLC reports for the current year.

- Alternatively, if the course is already listed in your [active CLC transcript](#), you may open it from the CLC active transcript page and once you complete the course, a new certificate will be generated.

Note: You may receive a message in CLC that you already completed the course. This message will appear if you completed the course in FY 2018, even if you did not complete it in FY 2019. These courses are required annually.

Technical assistance

If you receive a "pinging" reminder-email but believe that you completed the course in FY 2019, or have any other technical issues, please contact **CLC Live Support** by clicking the **green** 24x7 live support button on the ITA main page on [CLC](#). They can assist in getting you credit if you completed either course in FY 2019.

If you have policy questions:

- **Travel:** Please contact your [Business Unit Travel Coordinator](#) or travel@trade.gov
- **Records Management:** Please contact Nina Harris at (202) 482-3585 or Nina.Harris@trade.gov

Send your suggestions or comments about this Newsletter to eugenio.dasilva@trade.gov

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OCFAO NEWS YOU CAN USE

A Monthly Newsletter from the
Department of Commerce
International Trade Administration
Office of the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer

August 2019

In this issue of *OCFAO News You Can Use*, we focus on the following:

- [**Mandatory Training: ITA Travel Policy Due Sept 30**](#)
- [**State's STEP Helps Keep You Safe Abroad**](#)
- [**Going to Thailand? Check These Useful Tips**](#)
- [**Property: Guidance on Managing Your CTI-Serviced Equipment**](#)
- [**TRANServe Credit Card: Purchases Should be Done by the 4th**](#)
- [**ITA Latest Arrivals and Departures**](#)



Time is Ticking to Complete ITA Travel Policy Training

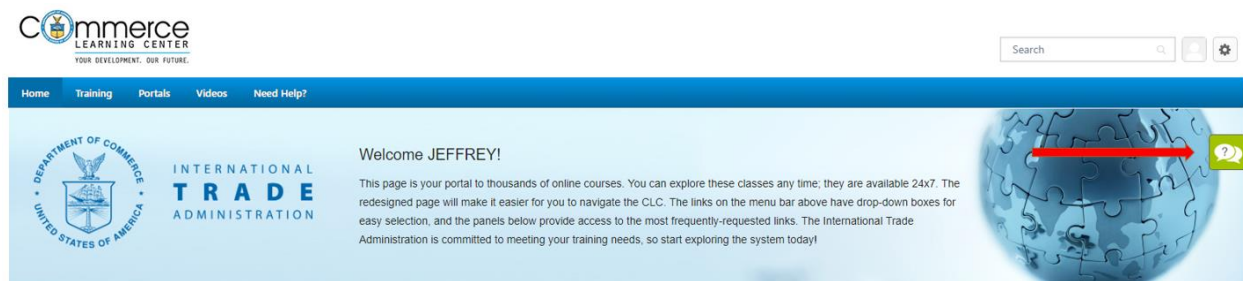
Have you completed your [mandatory](#) ITA Travel Policy Training in FY 2019? This annual training meets the Department's travel policy training requirements and is mandatory for all Headquarters and U.S. Field employees. ITA employees can disregard the DOC Broadcast message of Tuesday, August 20, 2019, titled "Mandatory Travel Training on Basic Travel, Approving Official's Responsibilities, and Fly America Act, which includes Open Skies Agreement (OSA)".

If you do not complete the "ITA Travel Policy Training" on the [Commerce Learning Center \(CLC\)](#) by **September 30**, then your E2 account will be disabled.

To complete the ITA course:

1. Access [CLC](#) using the Chrome or Edge browsers (be sure your pop-up blocker is disabled and do not use Internet Explorer);
2. Search for "ITA Travel Policy Training", select the course, and click "Request" to begin.
 1. It is a CLC requirement (*not unique to this course*) that you must click "**Request**", rather than "**Launch**", to open the course and to ensure the system generates a new certificate. If you have previously completed that training in any year, and you click "Launch", then the system will not generate a new certificate and it will not be marked as complete on CLC reports for the current year.
 2. Alternatively, if the course is already listed in your [active CLC transcript](#), you may open it from the CLC active transcript page and it will generate a new certificate.
3. After passing the final quiz with a score of 80% or higher, click "Next" to close the course. You can [access your certificate](#) from your CLC transcript of completed courses.

If you completed the course in FY 2019, and do not have a certificate dated FY 2019 in your [CLC transcript](#) (or have other technical issues), please contact CLC Live Support by clicking the green button on the ITA main page on CLC (as shown below):



If you have questions, please contact your [Business Unit Travel Coordinator](#) or travel@trade.gov.



Travel Security... One STEP at a Time

Are you travelling overseas? Whether you are travelling for official business or on a personal vacation, ITA encourages you to enroll beforehand in the [Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#). This **free** service helps U.S. citizens and nationals traveling and living abroad to enroll their trips with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Benefits include:

- Receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination country, helping you make informed decisions about your travel plans.

- Help the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency.
- Help family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency.

For more travel security information or to enroll in STEP, please visit the [STEP Website](#) or [the Department of State's International Travel Website](#). If you have travel security questions, please contact the ITA Security Team at ITASecurityTeam@trade.gov. For travel questions, please contact your [Business Unit Travel Coordinator](#) or travel@trade.gov.



ITA Passport and Visa – Country of the Month

The [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#) is continuing its series of informative publications about different countries. Each month we provide official travel-specific information about one or two countries: visa requirements, useful links etc. If you have suggestions on countries you would like to see included, please email us at PassportVisa@trade.gov.

The July country of the month is:

Kingdom of Thailand



Visa Requirements:

Each package must contain:

- Official/Diplomatic Passport
- Visa Application Form (Please contact [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#))
- Two 2X2 color photo with full face, neutral expression, front view with a plain white or off-white background, and less than six months old, No Eyeglasses
- Letter of authorization (Please contact [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#))

Visa processing time: 10-12 days

Useful Links:

- [U.S. Department of State Travel Security Page for Thailand](#)
- [World Health Organization Page for Thailand](#)
- [E-Country Clearance](#) *(requires log-in to view country pages)*

Need Help?

- **General Assistance:** Contact Aramayis (Aram) Baloyan, ITA Passport and Visa Contractor, in HCHB Room 41023, at PassportVisa@trade.gov, or at (202)-482-6908.
- **U.S. Field Staff:** The processing of passports/visas for Global Markets (GM) U.S. Field staff assigned to domestic locations remains with the GM/U.S. Field HQ Office. U.S. Field employees should continue to submit any passport and visa application packages directly to Angela Pinckney in the GM/U.S. Field HQ office, and she will coordinate directly with ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact Angela Pinckney at Angela.Pinckney@trade.gov or (202) 482-6340.
- **Overseas Field Staff:** The processing of passports for Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) assigned to overseas locations remains with the Global Markets (GM) Human Resources (HR) Operations Branch. FSOs should also submit their visa applications to their assigned HR Point of Contact (POC). Once received, the HR POC will submit the visa applications to ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact your HR POC.



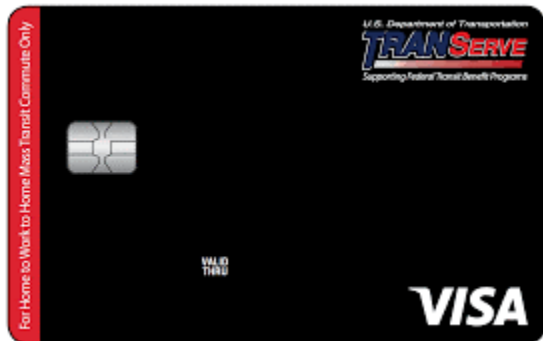
CTI-Serviced Equipment: Keep Your Records Accurate

Attention Headquarters Employees! ITA currently has a contract with Cartridge Technologies, Inc (CTI) to service HCHB copiers, printers, and fax machines, and to provide toner for this equipment. In order to maintain accurate records, it is imperative when offices obtain new equipment that is managed under the CTI contract (printers, copiers, etc.), that they report it to Robin Carpenter, OCFAO/MOD, with the following information:

- Make/Model;
- Serial Number;
- CD Number;
- Location;
- POC; and,
- Extension.

You must also notify the Property Custodian, OCIO, and Robin with the CD number when you surplus your old equipment so that it can be removed from the CTI contract.

If you have any questions, please contact Robin Carpenter at (202) 482-4989 or via email at robin.carpenter@trade.gov.



TRANServe Credit Card: Purchase by the 4th Ensures Correct Processing

For processing purposes, participants using SmartPay3 TRANServe Credit Cards are advised to purchase their tickets, passes, or other transit fare **by no-later-than the 4th day of each month**. For example: funds loaded on August 10th for September should be used prior to September 4th.

The posting of transit fare media expenses from purchases performed with credit cards can take up to five days for U.S. Bank to process. Participants adhering to a 4th of the month purchasing deadline will ensure charges against their transit fare are posted to the appropriate monthly benefit cycle. Purchases made at the end of the monthly benefit cycle—between the 5th and 9th of each month—may generate lagging charges that could post against the next month's transit benefit.

Participants and transit providers that conduct and process transit fare purchases using auto-billing are advised to execute payment processing no later than the 4th day of each month. This also applies to transit providers that batch and schedule credit card payments. Participants should review the payment

collection and processing timelines of their transit providers to ensure adherence to the 4th of the month deadline.

If you have any questions regarding transit benefits processing, please contact the ITA Transit Benefit Manager, Nina Harris, at nina.harris@trade.gov, or (202) 482-3585.



ITA Comings and Goings (July 2019)

Arrivals:

- **E&C:** Ava Jamerson.
- **GM:** Nicole White, Tamara Gregory.
- **I&A:** Alex Greenstein, Brett McGee.
- **Ex-Admin:** Brendan Millan; Stanislaw Kowalski.

Departures:

- **E&C:** Edward Yang, Jonathan Lyons.
- **Ex-Admin:** Sarah Kemp.
- **GM:** Jason Ha, Joseph Jackson.
- **I&A:** Laura Hayes.

Send your suggestions or comments about this Newsletter to eugenio.dasilva@trade.gov

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OCFAO NEWS YOU CAN USE

A Monthly Newsletter from the
Department of Commerce
International Trade Administration
Office of the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer

July 2019

In this issue of *OCFAO News You Can Use*, we focus on the following:

- [New Citi Travel Card: Managing Your Statements and Bills](#)
- [Travelling to South Korea? Read Our Tips](#)
- [Two Pathways Interns Join OCFAO](#)
- [Free ITA Trainings: Strategic Planning, Facilitation Skills](#)
- [Focus Groups: Your Participation, Our Appreciation](#)
- [ITA Latest Arrivals and Departures](#)



ITA Travelers: Are You Receiving Your Citibank Bills Correctly?

ITA has been notified by the Department and Citibank that most ITA travel cardholders were defaulted by Citibank to **electronic (paperless) statements delivery only**. Cardholders who want to receive paper statements should contact the Citibank Help Desk (1-800-790-7206 or, internationally, 1-904-954-7850) to request that service. Citibank statements are issued on or about the 28th of each month. You can always view your current and past statements by logging into [CitiManager](#).

Prompt Payment: As a reminder, cardholders are responsible for paying the full amount due on each monthly statement by the due date, regardless of whether you have received reimbursement from NIST. ITA receives delinquency reports from Citibank monthly and follows up with affected cardholders and supervisors as appropriate to ensure prompt payment. The [Federal Travel Regulation \(FTR\)](#) requires cardholders to file their E2 voucher within five business days of the completion of their trips, which will help them to receive reimbursements promptly.

PIN Number: Cardholders should also make sure that they know their card's PIN number prior to travel, as it is sometimes required to conduct transactions. To set up or change your PIN number, please contact the Citibank Help Desk on the above numbers.

If you have travel card questions, please visit the new [ITA Central Travel Card Website](#) or contact travelcard@trade.gov.



ITA Passport and Visa – Country of the Month

The [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#) is continuing its series of informative publications about different countries. Each month we provide official travel-specific information about one or two countries: visa requirements, useful links etc. If you have suggestions on countries you would like to see included, please email us at PassportVisa@trade.gov.

The July country of the month is:

South Korea



Visa Requirements:

Each package must contain:

- Official/Diplomatic Passport
- Visa Application Form (Please contact [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#))
- One 2x2 color photo with full face, neutral expression, front view with a plain white or off-white background, and less than six months old, no eyeglasses
- Letter of authorization (Please contact [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#))

Useful Links:

- [U.S. Department of State Travel Security Page for South Korea](#)
- [World Health Organization Page for South Korea](#)
- [E-Country Clearance](#)(requires log-in to view country pages)

Need Help?

- **General Assistance:** Contact Aramayis (Aram) Baloyan, ITA Passport and Visa Contractor, in HCHB Room 41023, at PassportVisa@trade.gov, or at (202)-482-6908.
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-



OCFAO Welcomes Two Pathways Interns

The OCFAO has two interns on board for this summer: Tyler Berard (left) and Saajid Hasan (right). They have joined our team through the Pathways Internship Program. This program provides students with opportunities to work in Federal agencies and explore career options while completing their education.

Tyler joined the Human Capital/Learning Division as a program analyst. Originally from Louisiana, Tyler graduated from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette with a B.A. in International Relations and Economics. Most recently he worked as an English Teaching Assistant at a high school in Spain and as a Project Assistant for the USAID ASSIST Project at University Research Co. Tyler is currently pursuing his master's in Applied Economics at George Washington University, in Washington, DC.

Saajid joined the Management Operations Division, as a business analyst. Born in Maryland but raised mostly in Northern Virginia, Saajid graduated from the University of Virginia with a B.A in International Economics and Government. During his time at UVA, he earned a scholarship to study in Oman on an immersive Arabic language program and later interned with Opinion Research Business International, a public opinion polling firm. Saajid is returning to UVA in the fall for his final year to pursue his master's in public policy.

Welcome Tyler! Welcome Saajid! We are glad to have you on board!



ITA-Wide Open Enrollment Training

ITA will be offering two instructor-led courses during the month of August:

Course Title	Time and Location (Times are in EDT)
ITA – Strategic Planning for Government Organizations	Tue–Thu, August 6-8, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. at HCHB Room 48019 (Half-Day Workshop)
ITA – Introduction to Facilitation Skills	Tue, August 20, 12:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m., at HCHB Room 48019

There are spaces still available for both training. To register for these courses, access the Commerce Learning Center ([CLC](#)), type the course name in the search field, and follow the prompts. There is no charge for these courses.

If you have questions, please contact the program manager, Cynthia Cole, at cynthia.cole@trade.gov, or (202) 482-2814.



A "Thank You" Note from the Learning Division

The OCFAO/Human Capital Learning Division would like to extend a sincere "*Thank You*" to the many Departmental colleagues, ITA employees—SES, Directors, supervisory and non-supervisory who have supported our efforts by participating in the various focus groups and one-on-one interviews that we have held to help inform resource allocations for strategic training, talent management, developmental initiatives and priorities for the coming years.



ITA Comings and Goings (June 2019)

Arrivals:

- **GM:** Suhailah Young.
- **I&A:** Roger Jones (Pathway Intern)
- **Ex-Admin:** Saajid Hasan (Pathway Intern)

Departures:

- **E&C:** Amanda Brings, Carolyn Bethea, Gary Taverman, Madeline Heeren, and Renato Barreda.
- **Ex-Admin:**
- **GM:** Karen Allen Marisa Goepel, Michael Mangelson, and Randall Bussman.
- **I&A:** Frederick Elliott.

Send your suggestions or comments about this Newsletter to eugenio.dasilva@trade.gov

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June 2019

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- [**Department's OIG Releases First 2019 Report**](#)
- [**Take Note: FY19 Procurement Cutoff Dates**](#)
- [**Mandatory Training: Have You Completed Yours?**](#)
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March 2019 Report Released to Congress

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) recently released the Semiannual Report to Congress. As the Department's internal watchdog, the OIG's role is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's programs and to detect and deter fraud, waste and abuse.

To report on its efforts, the DOC Inspector General prepares a semiannual report to the Secretary of Commerce and Congress on the activities of the office during the six-month periods ending March 31 and September 30. Each report summarizes the OIG's key audits, evaluations, and investigative works and is designed to keep the Commerce Secretary and Congress informed of significant findings and recommendations.

The Semiannual Report to Congress also includes a summary of the top management challenges facing the Department. In this report, the OIG provides a current assessment of the Department's programs and activities and the most serious management and performance challenges facing the DOC bureaus.

In the latest report, ITA is mentioned for the initiation of the OIG *Evaluation of the 2018 U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service Officer Promotion Process*. ITA is also identified in Challenge 6 related to rebalancing trade enforcement and promotion activities. The full report is available [here](#).

To learn more about the OIG reports and view reports from previous years, check out the [OIG Audits page on ITA Central](#) and [WikiITA](#), or contact Jennifer Eveland, at jennifer.eveland@trade.gov.



ES-Set FY19 Procurement Cut-Off Dates

The Enterprise Services has established the following deadlines for the submission of **Procurement Request** packages to reasonably ensure completion of the contract action and obligation of funds by the end of Fiscal Year 2019:

Friday, July 12:

- Task Orders under Single Award Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity contracts, Blanket Purchase Agreements' and Government Wide Acquisition Contracts
- Open Market Purchase Orders \$25,001- \$150,000
- 8(a) Sole Source procurements up to \$4M
- Sole source GSA Professional Services Schedule

- Sole Source BPA Orders
- Inter/Intra-agency Agreements (IAA) and Modifications to Existing IAAs
- Complex Modifications and Amendments (Change in scope, ceiling, requiring negotiations, etc.)

Friday, July 25:

- Open Market Purchase Orders \$3,501 - \$25,000
- Lowest Price/Technically Acceptable. GSA Federal Supply Schedules

Friday, August 9:

- Open Market Purchase Orders \$3,500 & under (i.e., credit card purchases)
- Orders against the Commerce Strategic Sourcing Portfolio
- Basic Modifications and Amendments (i.e., administrative, no cost time' extensions, funding oily, exercising options)

Due to the high probability of increased submissions near the stated dates, early submission is encouraged and will enhance the quality of the acquisition process for all parties involved. If you have questions, please contact Robin Carpenter at (202) 482-4989 or Robin.Carpenter@trade.gov.



Records Management and Travel Policy Training Are Mandatory

Have you completed your mandatory Records Management training and Travel Policy training in FY 2019? As a reminder, the Department requires that all ITA worldwide employees complete these trainings annually through the [Commerce Learning Center \(CLC\)](#):

- [Records Management 101](#) – Deadline was **May 17**
- [ITA Travel Policy Training](#) – Deadline is **September 30**

For both trainings, it is a CLC requirement (*not unique to these courses*) that you click "**Request**", rather than "**Launch**", to open the course and to ensure the system generates a new certificate. If you have previously completed that training in any year, and you click "Launch", then the system will not generate a new certificate and it will not be marked as complete on CLC reports for the current year.

Alternatively, if the course is listed in your [active CLC transcript](#), you may open it from the CLC active transcript page and it will generate a new certificate. If you completed the course in FY 2019, and do not have a certificate dated FY 2019 in your [active CLC transcript](#), please contact CLC Live Support (*see below instruction*)

OCFAO is working with the CLC vendor to develop a long-term solution but is unable to implement the solution this year as these possible solutions would risk affecting training records for those employees that have already successfully completed these trainings in FY 2019.

Need Help?

- **CLC Technical Assistance:** Click the [CLC](#) "Live Support" button located in the ITA main page on CLC:

The screenshot shows the Commerce Learning Center (CLC) homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, Connect, Training, Instructor Led Training, Content, Reports, Performance, Admin, Portals, Videos, and Need Help?. Below the navigation bar, the page is divided into several sections. On the left, there is a logo for the Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration. In the center, there is a 'Welcome Melea!' message. On the right, there is a 'Contact Live Support' button, which is highlighted with a red circle and a red arrow. Below the main content area, there are three columns of training resources. The first column is titled 'Department Required Training' and lists various training topics. The second column is titled 'ITA Featured Training' and lists 'Microsoft Office 2016 Training (New!)' and 'Project Management (CAPM) exam - PMBOK Guide - 6th Edition-aligned (Latest Edition!)'. The third column is titled 'Your Inbox' and lists 'View transcript' and 'View Training Exemption Requests'. At the bottom, there is a section titled 'Other ITA Training Resources' with links to 'ITA Centralized Training Page (ITA Central)' and 'Global Markets & Commercial Service (CLC Training Page)'.

- **Records Management:** Please contact ITA's Records Manager, Nina Harris, at (202) 482-3585 or nina.harris@trade.gov.
- **Travel:** Please contact your [Business Unit Travel Coordinator](#) or travel@trade.gov.



Purchase Card Refresher Training Due June 28

This is a friendly reminder that Cardholders and Approving Officials must complete their annual refresher training! Per Departmental policy outlined in the [Commerce Acquisition Manual \(CAM\) 1313.301](#), Section 2.1.4, Refresher Training Cardholders and Approving Officials are required to complete their annual refresher training to retain their purchasing and approval authority. The due date has been extended to **Friday, June 28**.

Once you have completed the training, please send your certificate to SP3PurchaseCards@trade.gov. Cardholders and Approving Officials who do not meet the Purchase Card Annual Refresher Training requirements by close of business on the above date, will have their account **suspended** starting on **Monday, July 1**.

The FY2019 Purchase Card Annual Refresher Training is available through the [Commerce Learning Center](#) (CLC) by searching on the course title. No login credentials are required. You only need to click on the ITA tab. The online training takes approximately one hour to complete.

If you need assistance or experience technical difficulties, please contact the 24/7 live support.

If you have questions related to the purchase card program, please contact ITA's Agency Program Coordinator, Robin Carpenter, via email SP3PurchaseCards@trade.gov, or (202) 482-4989.



TRAVELERS' CORNER:

E2 Has New Requirements for Gift or Bequest Travel

- Non-Federally Sponsored (or Gift or Bequest) travel is travel that includes expenses paid for by a non-federal source of funds, either "sponsored" (also known as "to-be-billed") or "in-kind". All in-kind and sponsored expenses must be documented in E2:
- **Sponsored ("to be billed") expenses** are incurred by the federal agency (and thus are obligated) and then are reimbursed by the Non-Federal Sponsor (NFS).
- **In-kind expenses** reflect the value of goods or services received directly from the NFS for the trip; these expenses do not require obligation or reimbursement. For example, if the NFS gives the traveler an airline ticket, the ticket is considered an in-kind expense.

New Functionality

Effective immediately, in addition to [current Gift or Bequest processes](#) which remain unchanged, the Department requires that all Non-Federally Sponsored E2 documents also identify the Sponsor, which expenses are being supplied, and how (in-kind or sponsored) they will be supplied.

Follow these steps to complete your E2 authorization and voucher:

1. In your E2 authorization, list regular expenses and sponsored (reimbursable) NFS expenses in Step 4, "Expenses", of the authorization.
 1. As is current process, select "Domestic Non-Federal Sponsored" or "Foreign Non-Federal Sponsored" as appropriate in E2 Step 1, "Trip Type".
 2. Do not include in-kind expenses on this step.
2. Select "Add Non-Federal Sponsor" from "Other Actions" on the authorization.
3. E2 will automatically open a dialog box.
 1. Select the Non-Federal Sponsor (NFS); if the NFS is not currently in E2, send the [NFS Form](#) to NIST at cic@nist.gov (this form requires supervisory approval).
 2. Input all in-kind and sponsored expenses in the E2 dialog box.
4. Attach in E2 the approved [CD-210, "Record of Gift or Bequest"](#) (or [CD-342](#) for foreign governments); [SF-326, "Semiannual Report of Payments Accepted from a Non-Federal Source"](#); Office of the General Counsel (OGC) Ethics Approval Email, and Sponsor's Letter.
 1. In accordance with [ITA policy](#), the CD-210 or CD-342 must be signed by the Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) or above (for Overseas staff only, the Headquarters Region's Executive Director may approve).
5. Submit the authorization for approval and, once approved, go on official travel.
6. Upon return from travel, verify the NFS expenses and, if needed, amend the authorization.
7. Voucher for all expenses and attach all required receipts.

For more details and screenshots, please see the [Department's SOP document here](#). If you have questions, please contact your [Business Unit Travel Coordinator](#), or travel@trade.gov.



ITA Passport and Visa – Country of the Month

The [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#) is continuing its series of informative publications about different countries. Each month we provide official travel-specific information about one or two countries: visa requirements, useful links etc. If you have suggestions on countries you would like to see included, please email us at PassportVisa@trade.gov.

The country of this month is...

INDONESIA



Visa Requirements:

Each package must contain:

- Official/Diplomatic Passport
- Visa Application Form (Please contact [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#))
- One 2X2 color photo with full face, neutral expression, front view with a plain white or off-white background, no eyeglasses, and less than six months old
- Letter of authorization (Please contact [ITA Passport and Visa Office](#))
- Tentative flight itinerary

Useful Links:

- [U.S. Department of State Travel Security Page for Indonesia](#)
- [World Health Organization Page for Indonesia](#)
- [E-Country Clearance](#) (*requires log-in to view country pages*)

Need Help?

- **General Assistance:** Contact Aramayis (Aram) Baloyan, ITA Passport and Visa Contractor (HCHB Room 41023; PassportVisa@trade.gov; 202-482-6908).

- **Domestic Field Staff:** The processing of passports/visas for Global Markets (GM) Domestic Field staff assigned to domestic locations remains with the GM/U.S. Field HQ Office. U.S. Field employees should continue to submit any passport and visa application packages directly to Angela Pinckney in the GM/U.S. Field HQ office, and she will coordinate directly with ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact Angela Pinckney at Angela.Pinckney@trade.gov or (202) 482-6340.
 - **Overseas Field Staff:** The processing of passports for Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) assigned to overseas locations remains with the Global Markets (GM) Human Resources (HR) Operations Branch. FSOs should also submit their visa applications to their assigned HR Point-of-Contact (POC). Once received, the HR POC will submit the visa applications to ITA for review and processing. If you have questions, please contact your HR POC.
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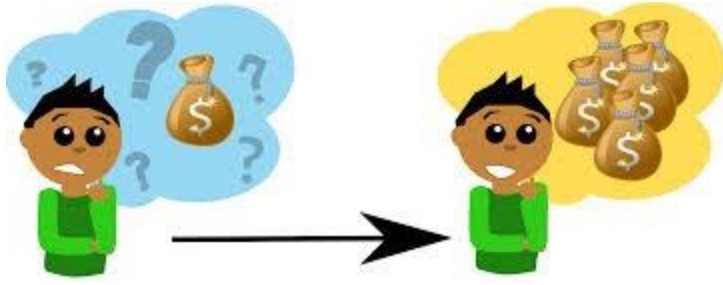
FOIA "Refresher" Training Makes Toolkit Available

The Deputy Under Secretary Sarah Kemp hosted an ITA Brown Bag – FOIA "Refresher" Training on June 5. The brown bag session was well-attended, and participants had an opportunity to ask questions and receive a demonstration of Adobe Pro Software used for streamlining the redaction process.

The FOIA Toolkit, including documents shared during the brown bag, is listed below for future reference.

- [FOIA Refresher Intro](#)
- [Best Practices for Business Units](#)
- [FOIA Resources](#)
- [Redaction Guide](#)

If you have questions or need more information, please contact Victor Powers the OCFAO Management Operations Division, Victor Powers, at Victor.Powers@trade.gov, or (202) 482-1422.



Payroll Issues – Who Do I Talk To?

For any payroll issues for General Schedule, employees need to initiate a ticket via the [Enterprise Services Portal](#). Employees will be able to track the status of their ticket via the ES Portal too. As soon as an employee initiates a ticket, they will receive an Enterprise Services email acknowledging receipt of the ticket, with an assigned ticket number for tracking purposes.

Here are the steps to submit a ticket:

1. Access the [Enterprise Services](#) Portal;
2. Use the drop-down menu under "Please Select Your Bureau" and select "ITA";
3. Click on "Human Resources" tab;
4. Click on "Need HR Help?" box;
5. Use the drop-down menu again under "Please Select Your Bureau" and select "ITA";
6. Under "Category", select "My Payroll";
7. Under "Subject" provide a short description of your issue;
8. Under "Please fully describe your issue below" provide detailed information on the nature and timeline of your issue. **Note:** *Providing an example will enhance Enterprise Services understanding and help them resolve your issue promptly;*
9. Click "submit". *You will receive an email acknowledging your submission along with a ticket for tracking purposes.*

If you have questions or need more information, please contact Enterprise Services at (888) 316-2285, or at EnterpriseServices@doc.gov.

ITA Comings and Goings (May 2019)

Arrivals:

- **I&A:** Bola Somade

Departures:

- **E&C:** Scott Hoefke
- **Ex-Admin:** Diana Moyseowicz; Reginal Simms; Jonathan Leeman

Send your suggestions or comments about this Newsletter to eugenio.dasilva@trade.gov

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