October is National Cyber Security Month

You do not have to be a computer expert to understand the basics of cybersecurity. Even small actions can make a huge difference in keeping you safe online.

As cybercrimes, such as scams, frauds, identity theft, and network breaches, continue to increase it is important to know how to protect yourself against online threats. The U.S. Government provides a variety of online resources to help Americans remain safe and secure in the cyber world.

Stop.Think.Connect™
National Cyber Security Alliance

The Department of Homeland Security’s Stop.Think.Connect™ program is a national public awareness campaign aimed at increasing the understanding of cyber threats and empowering the American public to be safer and more secure online.

OnGuardOnline™
Tips to stay safe online

OnGuard Online is a free online security tips and resources website run by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) that provides practical tips from the federal government and the technology industry to help you be on guard against internet fraud, secure your computer, and protect your personal information.

The FTC resource also includes information for parents to help keep children safe from online threats. The opportunities kids have to socialize online come with benefits and risks, including cyberbullying and exploitation. Adults can help reduce these risks by talking to their children about making safe and responsible decisions. Review the OnGuard Online Parents Resource Page for additional information.

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Message From the Consul

Greetings from the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Helsinki, Finland.

As we enter the holiday season we would like to encourage everyone to check the expiration date on your U.S. passport. Don’t wait until the night before your holiday trip to realize your passport has expired. Application instructions for a new U.S. passport are available on the Embassy’s webpage.

When planning your holiday getaway consult travel.state.gov for the most up-to-date travel, safety, and security information for your destination country. The Department of State also publishes a handy Traveler’s Checklist to help you plan for your trip and stay safe while abroad.

Kind regards,
Jeremy R. Wisemiller
Consul, U.S. Embassy Helsinki
To commemorate the centennial year of Finnish-U.S. diplomatic relations, Ambassador Robert F. Pence visited a number of cities throughout Finland and met with a variety of local government, business, academic, and community leaders.

**Lappeenranta**
Ambassador Pence spoke at a half-day business and investment seminar on September 12 hosted by the Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology (LUT). Following the seminar, Ambassador Pence toured the campus and met with American and Finnish students at the prestigious research institution. The trip concluded with a meeting with Lappeenranta Mayor Kimmo Jarva and members of the City Council.

**Joensuu**
Ambassador and Mrs. Pence visited Joensuu on September 11. During their busy schedule they met with representatives from Business Joensuu, delivered Remarks on U.S.-Finnish relations at the Paasikivi Society, met with city leaders, visited the Carelicum museum, and toured the University of Eastern Finland. One of the trip’s highlights was a stop at the John Deere Forestry Oy factory.

**Rovaniemi**
During his September 18 visit to Rovaniemi, Ambassador Pence visited the University of Lapland, met with Mayor Esko Lotvosen, toured the Roosevelt Cottage, explored the new Arctic Tree House Hotel, and spoke with local business leaders at a networking event, among other activities.

**Tornio & Kemi**
Ambassador and Mrs. Pence visited the Outokumpu stainless-steel factory in Tornio on September 17. Following their visit, Ambassador and Mrs. Pence ventured 500 meters under Finland to tour the Outokumpu ferrochrome mine located in Kemi. More than 700,000 tons of chrome from this mine goes to Outokumpu’s mill in Calvert, Alabama, to produce American steel.

**Oulu**
In Oulu, Ambassador Pence spoke with Finnish entrepreneurs interested in expanding their business operations into the United States followed by a visit to the University of Oulu. While in Oulu the Ambassador met with the Head of the City Council, Kyosti Oikarine, and visited two technology companies that operate in both Finland and the United States.
Notarizing officers at U.S. Embassy Helsinki provide services similar to the functions of a notary public in the United States. Notarial services are provided for U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens whose documents are intended for use in the United States. Each notarial service is by appointment only.

For complete information, including requirements, scheduling, and examples of notarial services provided, please visit the Embassy’s notarial services page & review the following useful tips and requirements.

**Notarial Services Tips and Requirements**

- The fee per Consular seal is $50, payable in cash or by credit card.

- Bring valid government issued identification such as a passport, driver’s license, or national I.D. card. Your name must be spelled correctly in the document/s and must match the identification presented.

- Please review your document/s carefully and clearly identify all places where the notarizing officer needs to sign prior to your appointment. **DO NOT SIGN THE DOCUMENT IN ADVANCE.**

- You must understand the document you are signing, Embassy staff are not able to explain documents or provide legal advice.

- If two people need to sign the same document, or if a witness is required, the names of all attendees must be submitted in advance. Embassy staff are not able to serve as witnesses.

- Appointments should be made using the Embassy’s online reservation system.

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**Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (DV-2021)**

The U.S. Department of State is accepting entries for the 2021 Diversity Immigrant Visa Program ([DV-2021](https://dv-2021.state.gov)). For the DV-2021 program year, 50,000 diversity visas will be made available. Applicants who are selected in the program must meet simple but strict eligibility requirements to qualify for a diversity visa. Eligibility requirements and entry guidance is available on the [DV-2021 information page](https://dv-2021.state.gov).

The online registration period runs through noon (EST), on **Tuesday, November 5, 2019.** There is no cost to submit an electronic entry form, however, applicants must submit their entry no later than this date to be eligible for the program. Late or incomplete entries will not be accepted. Applicants are advised not to wait until the last week of registration to enter, as heavy demand could result in website delays.

Please visit the [Diversity Visa (DV-2021) entry instructions page](https://dv-2021.state.gov) for additional information. A video with step-by-step guidance on submitting a DV-2021 entry is also available [here](https://dv-2021.state.gov).
President of the Republic of Finland Sauli Niinistö made an official working visit to the United States and met President of the United States Donald J. Trump in Washington, D.C. on October 2, 2019.

The meeting occurred during the 100th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Finland and the United States. In their joint statement released for the occasion, Presidents Trump and Niinistö celebrate the nations’ shared values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

See:
- [Joint Statement from the President of the United States and the President of the Republic of Finland](#)
- [Remarks by President Trump and President Niinistö of the Republic of Finland in Joint Press Conference](#)

Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto joined Ambassador Robert Pence for a reception honoring American Fulbright grantees at the U.S. Ambassador’s residence on August 20, 2019. The event also marked the 70th anniversary of the Fulbright Program in Finland in addition to the 100th anniversary of Finnish-U.S. diplomatic relations.

A glass “kuksa” cup, specially designed by Fulbright Fellow Jonathan Capps (2018-2019) to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Fulbright Program in Finland was presented to the Embassy. Since its inception in 1949, over 5,700 Finnish and U.S. citizens have received grants through the Finnish-American Fulbright Program.

Read more: “Kuksa – an Object that Embodies the Exchange of Culture and Ideas”
More photos of the event on Embassy’s [Flickr album](#).

American Studies Grant (Application Deadline: November 29, 2019)
U.S. Embassy Helsinki’s annual scholarship provides a grant to students of Finnish nationality, enrolled at a Finnish university, who are currently working on a Master’s Thesis on a U.S. related topic. We welcome applications from all fields of study. The grant is intended to help students complete their Master’s Thesis.

Details of how to apply are available on the [American Studies Grant](#) page.
When travelling with your pet(s), there may be animal health requirements specific for that destination. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends that when traveling with pets, you should contact your local veterinarian to assist with the pet travel process as soon as you know your travel dates. Factors to consider may include meeting time frames for obtaining a health certificate, updating vaccinations, diagnostic testing, or administration of medications/treatments.

The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service publishes a Pet Travel Information webpage that provides travelers with important information and guidance about taking your pet from the United States to a foreign country or bringing your pet into the United States from a foreign nation.

**Taking your pet FROM the United States TO a foreign country (Export):**

Your destination country may have specific health requirements that must be met before your pet can enter the country. Since export requirements are determined by each country and can change frequently, every time you plan pet travel you will need to verify the export requirements.

From the USDA Pet Travel Information webpage you are able to select your destination country to view that nation’s requirements when bringing a pet from the United States.

**Bringing your pet INTO the United States FROM a foreign country (Import):**

Animals entering the U.S. may be subject to regulation by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service as well as other federal agencies. Depending on your destination state of residence, your pet may need to also meet additional health requirements.

From the USDA Pet Travel Information webpage you are able to select the type of animal you plan to bring into the United States and see the specific health requirements for that animal. You are also able to find updated state specific requirements per animal type.

Please remember that it is the responsibility of the pet owner to make sure their pet has met the entry requirements of the destination country. Failure to meet the requirements could result in problems upon arrival in the destination country, including the United States.

Questions regarding entry requirements should be addressed to the USDA Animal and Plant Inspection Service, National Import Export Service by phone at (301) 851-3300 or email to VS.Live.Animal.Import.Export@aphis.usda.gov.
U.S. citizens can become victims of scams at home or abroad. There are many different types of scams, but they all share a common goal: monetary gain for the scammers.

Tips to protect yourself - and your money - from scams:

- Generally, **never** send money to someone overseas if you have not met in person, especially if you have only met online.
- Do not disclose **personal details** over the phone or online – even in your social media.
- Refer someone claiming to be a **U.S. citizen in distress overseas** to the nearest **U.S. embassy or consulate**.
- Contact **Overseas Citizens Services at 888-407-4747** if someone claiming to be a U.S. citizen overseas says the nearest U.S. Embassy will not help. We can offer tips for verifying if the situation is legitimate or a scam.
- **File a complaint** with the [Federal Trade Commission](https://www.ftc.gov) and the FBI at [ic3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov) if you have been the victim of a scam.
- Report scams affecting seniors to the U.S. Senate’s Committee on Aging [Fraud Hotline at 1-855-303-9470](https://www.fightingseniorfraud.org) and read [Fighting Fraud: U.S. Senate Aging Committee Identifies Top 10 Scams Targeting Our Nation’s Seniors](https://www.fightingseniorfraud.org).
- Before traveling abroad, **research your destination**.
- Be aware that something that seems **too good to be true** usually is.

Additional information available from the [FBI Scams and Safety website](https://www.fbi.gov/scams-safety).  

Additional information available from the [Department of State, International Financial Scams website](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/travelers/new-traveler-questions/international-financial-scams.html).
Absentees Voting
Myths & Realities

The Federal Voting Assistance Program works to ensure that overseas citizens are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully do so—from anywhere in the world.

For additional information go to https://www.fvap.gov

I can vote in person at a local embassy on election day.

Myth
No - actually, U.S. elections are run at the State level and citizens must communicate directly with their election official to register, request a ballot and vote. Voting Assistance is available at most embassies to help in the completion of necessary forms. Be sure to account for submission and mail delivery times to ensure your forms are received by the State deadline.

Reality

States have the same election rules & deadlines for overseas voters.

Myth
False. U.S. States have different rules in regard to how and when election forms are returned. Please visit FVAP.gov for your State-specific guidelines.

Reality

Absentee ballots are not secret.

Myth
Not true. State absentee ballots and the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot are designed with a “Secrecy Envelope” allowing for the separation of the voter’s identity from the cast ballot. Local election officials are professionals who go to great lengths in their ballot handling procedures to ensure your vote, and personal information, are kept private.

Reality

I am a U.S. citizen born overseas and have never lived in the U.S. - I pay taxes but cannot vote.

Myth
It depends. A growing number of States allow U.S. citizens who were born abroad but never resided in the United States to vote using the address where a parent or other relative is eligible to vote. Visit FVAP.gov to see a current list of States that allow these U.S. citizens to vote.

Reality

Voting will affect the tax status of overseas citizens.

Myth
It depends. Voting for Federal office candidates will not affect your Federal or State tax liability. Depending on the laws of your State, voting for State or local offices may affect your State income tax liability. If you are concerned about your State tax status, consult legal counsel.

Reality

I have heard that absentee ballots only count in close elections.

Myth
No - in fact, absentee ballots submitted in accordance with State laws are counted for every election. The difference is that in a close election, the media reports that the outcome cannot be announced until after the absentee ballots are counted. However, all ballots are counted in the final totals for every election - and every vote (absentee or in-person) counts the same.

Reality

You can VOTE from here!
National Hispanic Heritage Month

Presidential Proclamation on National Hispanic Heritage Month - 2019
September 13, 2019

National Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates the accomplishments of Hispanic Americans, who have enriched our culture and society and helped make America into the incredible country it is today. Hispanic-American men and women embody the American values of devotion to faith and family, hard work, and patriotism through their countless contributions as leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs, and members of our Armed Forces.

Read the full Presidential Proclamation, [here](#).

Embassy Holiday Closures

U.S. Embassy Helsinki will be closed in observance of the following Finnish and U.S. holidays:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Holiday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, November 11, 2019</td>
<td>Veterans’ Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, November 28, 2019</td>
<td>Thanksgiving</td>
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<td>Friday, December 6, 2019</td>
<td>Finnish Independence Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, December 24, 2019</td>
<td>Christmas Eve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, December 25, 2019</td>
<td>Christmas Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, December 26, 2019</td>
<td>Second Christmas Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, January 1, 2020</td>
<td>New Year’s Day</td>
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<td>(U.S. Holiday)</td>
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Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15, by celebrating the histories, cultures, and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. The observation started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988.

The Library of Congress hosts a [National Hispanic Heritage Month website](http://travel.state.gov) containing photos, videos, and audio recordings, along with other multimedia tools and learning resources, to inform the public and celebrate the many contributions of Hispanic-American men and women to American culture and society.

U.S. Embassy Helsinki
American Citizen Services
Itäinen Puistotie 14 B
Email: HelsinkiACS@state.gov
Web: [http://fi.usembassy.gov](http://fi.usembassy.gov)
[http://travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)