



Volunteer liaisons link Embassy and Americans

An American civilian living in Angola recently played a critical role in assisting two American brothers obtain their New York birth certificates and other official documents.

Rosa Ferreira's personal touch in resolving the matter exemplified the role of civilian volunteers who assist U.S. Embassy personnel worldwide through the U.S. Department of State's newly revamped American Liaison Network program.

The initiative is a robust replacement for the Department of State's Warden program. By any name, the initiative serves as a key component of each embassy's efforts to ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens abroad.

In Angola, the volunteers help keep consular officers informed about U.S. citizens throughout the country, and stand ready to assist embassy personnel deliver emergency services in extraordinary circumstances, particularly to Americans outside of Luanda.

They also serve as contacts for American employees in particular companies or industry sectors.



U.S. Embassy Consular Assistant Riquita Sampaio, left, and Citizen Liaison Volunteer Rosa Ferreira helped two American boys obtain their U.S. birth certificates last year.

[Continued next page]

IN THIS ISSUE

Volunteer helps U.S. kids obtain birth certificates	1-3
Deadlines for voting in U.S. elections are approaching	4
Consulate contact info, closure dates and more	5

Liaisons: Brothers in Angola without documents

The U.S. Embassy in Luanda uses a network of Citizen Liaison Volunteers, previously known as Wardens. Ferreira has filled the role for years in Lubango, in the province of Huila. She is an Angolan native who moved to Massachusetts during the Angolan civil war, became a U.S. citizen, and later returned to Angola.

Last year, she came to the aid of two U.S.-citizen brothers who were left without documents following the death of their father in 2009.

The boys were born in New York. In the summer of 2009, they went with their mother to Angola to visit family, while their father attended to business in Brazil. After their father concluded his business, he boarded Air France Flight 447, which was bound from Rio de Janeiro to Paris.

The plane encountered freezing weather, and when compounded by faulty equipment and other factors, crashed into the Atlantic Ocean, killing all 228 people aboard.

The boys' mother was so devastated, she never returned to New York to retrieve essential documents or other personal belongings. The family took up residence in Lubango.

As a fellow American in the area, Ferreira was aware of the boys' presence and inquired about them from time to time. She knew that without the proper paperwork, the boys were considered undocumented residents.

[Continued next page]

Liaisons handle various tasks

Citizen Liaison Volunteers provide a window into the concerns, interests and needs of U.S. citizens.

Among their important duties:

- *Disseminate information from the embassy to Americans within their areas of interest.*
- *Serve as on-the-ground resources to help embassy officers understand issues of concern to Americans.*
- *Identify risks for potential local and regional crises and security issues.*
- *In exigent situations, help the embassy provide emergency services to U.S. citizens.*
- *Maintain local contacts with U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens expatriates.*
- *Encourage Americans to enroll in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program.*

Liaisons: Volunteers gain boys' birth certificates

“I would check up on them to see if they were okay, to see if they needed anything. It was difficult to see the kids, but I had contact with one of their aunts,” Ferreira said.

Last year, the aunt told Ferreira that the boys needed to obtain their U.S. documentation in order to continue their schooling and to travel outside of Angola. The only documents their mother had retained were the sons' expired U.S. passports.

Ferreira worked with the boys' aunt and officials at the U.S. Embassy in Luanda to obtain certified copies of their U.S. birth certificates, official confirmation from Air France that the father was aboard the flight, and the father's death certificate.

The first step was procuring the birth certificates. Ferreira contacted U.S. Embassy consular assistant Riquita Sampaio and together they devised a strategy to obtain the birth certificates using the internet and a courier service.

Their immediate challenge was that they had little information to work with. The boys' father had arranged all the details of their births, and as a result, the mother didn't even recall the name of the hospital where the kids were born. But to Ferreira's surprise, New York officials identified the records quickly. Next they had to pay document fees from a U.S. checking account. Finally, having the documents delivered to Lubango took several tries.

After weeks of research, effort and coordination among the Community Liaison Volunteer, Embassy personnel, and family members, the boys received their birth certificates.

“When I saw the birth certificates, I was jumping with happiness. I thought, ‘We did it! We did it!’” said Ferreira, who has volunteered with the Embassy for more than 10 years.

With the documents in hand, the boys were able to prove their U.S. citizenship and apply for dual Angolan citizenship, which allowed them to continue in school. In the future, if they choose to travel out of Angola, they'll be able to apply for new U.S. passports.

More typically, liaisons help keep lines of communication to and from Americans in the field and officers at the embassy. Liaisons also help Embassy personnel get to know U.S. citizens and officials at key local institutions such as hospitals and police stations, both inside and outside Luanda.

Would you be willing to assist U.S. citizens in Angola, in ways big and small? The U.S. Embassy is seeking additional Citizen Liaison Volunteers. Contact us at ConsularLuanda@state.gov.

Americans overseas can cast ballots in U.S. elections

Mid-term elections across the United States are underway or fast approaching. Americans living overseas can participate, but they need to take a few extra steps to ensure they receive absentee ballots.

The primary elections for the mid-term general elections typically occur in mid to late summer, depending upon the state. The general elections are in November for races across the United States.

Americans can register through the Federal Voting Assistance Program at www.FVAP.gov.

Here are some general frequently asked questions and answers:

Question: What's at stake in the mid-term elections?

Answer: All 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and 35 of 100 seats in the U.S. Senate will be contested, plus various state and local offices.

Q: In which state election do I vote?

A: In most cases, you vote in the state you use for tax purposes or the last state in which you lived, using your last U.S. address, even if you only rented at that location or even if you've sold the property.

Q: I haven't voted in one or more election cycles. Can I vote this time?

A: Yes. Just be sure to update your address.

Q: What about my child who recently turned 18 and became eligible to vote, but has lived overseas his or her entire life?

A: Young voters can register using their parents' last U.S. address.

Q: Must I request a physical absentee ballot and mail it, or can I vote electronically?

A: Most states require paper ballots. The Voting Assistance Guide, which has detailed information about every state, is available at www.FVAP.gov and at the Consular Office at the U.S. Embassy in Luanda. Americans can drop by any Wednesday afternoon or Friday morning to get specific more information.

Q: How do I return my ballot to the elections bureau in my state?

A: Simply drop it at the Consular Section at the embassy and we'll forward it to the United States. No postage is required for most states.



Q: Is the www.FVAP.gov site for military personnel use exclusively?

A: No. It's primarily used by military personnel, but any American living overseas can use the site, too. Furthermore, there is no charge.

Q: What are the five steps to vote overseas?

- 1) Register to vote in your state.
- 2) Print a ballot request from www.FVAP.gov.
- 3) Submit the request to your local election office.
- 4) Receive your absentee ballot.
- 5) Vote, sign and return the ballot to your state.

For more info: www.FVAP.gov

The AmCit

August 2018

Consular contact information

Our American Citizen Services hours are from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays, excluding holidays.

For notaries and non-emergency passport services, please make appointments via:

<https://ao.usembassy.gov/>.

Here are other ways to reach us:

ConsularLuanda@state.gov

<https://ao.usembassy.gov/>

(244) 222-641-000, business hours

(244) 923-404-209, emergency after-hours

Embassy wants to reach Americans during crises

The **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** allows Americans to register with the U.S. Embassy when they travel overseas. The program provides embassy officers the means to reach Americans during emergencies abroad and in times of need for their families back home.

Americans should keep their contact information updated, because it may be the only way for them to be contacted during critical times. Travelers can enroll in the program and edit their information at <https://step.state.gov/step/> or at the U.S. embassy.

Embassy closure dates ahead

The U.S. Embassy closes for official U.S. and Angolan holidays. Here are the closure dates through Christmas:

- Sept. 3** U.S. Labor Day
- Sept. 17** Angolan National Heroes Day
- Oct. 8** U.S. Columbus Day
- Nov. 2** Angolan Memorial Day
- Nov. 12** U.S. Veterans Day and Angolan Independence Day
- Nov. 22** U.S. Thanksgiving
- Dec. 25** U.S. and Angolan Christmas

Seeking suggestions for the newsletter's future editions

The AmCit newsletter is designed for American citizens who live and work in Angola.

The embassy's goal is to provide relevant information. What topics would you like to know more about? How can we make this forum as useful as possible? Send your ideas, comments, questions and suggestions via email to

ACSLuanda@state.gov.