



GLOBAL
TALENT
MANAGEMENT

SUPPORT RESOURCES FOR SENIOR CARE, FAMILY ILLNESS, AND DEATH



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If you are reading this guide, you may be looking for guidance on care options for an elderly family member. You may also be preparing for or may have recently experienced the death of a family member, or you may be supporting a co-worker in those situations - we want to help you during this difficult time. Coping with care responsibilities or the death or illness of a family member is taxing for all, and the Bureau of Global Talent Management (GTM) compiled this guide to help employees, as well as Post Management Officers and Human Resource Officers (HROs), by providing consolidated information about the various support services available for caregivers and survivors following the death or serious illness/injury of an employee or their family member.

This guide provides a general overview of various support services for U.S. direct hires which may be available under law or Department policy. To find out more about a specific benefit, refer to the governing Foreign Affairs Manual policy for clarification (see [3 FAM](#)). Employees should contact their post Human Resources office or management with specific questions about their situation.

If a U.S. direct hire employee serving abroad, their eligible family member (EFM), or any Department of State employee in the United States has died, immediately contact the Operations Center at 1-202-647-1512 or SES-O@state.gov. Additionally, inform your regional bureau and your post HR, if posted overseas. On your behalf, post HR or Management can report the death to the Operations Center, and reach out to GTM's Office of Casualty Assistance (OCA) via email (oca@state.gov) for assistance.

GTM also encourages all U.S. direct hire employees dealing with stress, grief, or trauma to utilize MED's Office of Employee Consultation Services (ECS). U.S. direct hires and eligible family members (EFMs) can contact ECS 24/7 at MEDECS@state.gov or at 1-202-634-4874. We also recommend employees consult the [TalentCare](#) website for access to Department resiliency resources.

RESOURCES TO HELP: WORKLIFE4YOU

WorkLife4You (WL4Y) is a 24/7 comprehensive resource and confidential referral service that assists employees (Civil Service and Foreign Service) balancing the demands of personal and professional life. WorkLife4You offers a variety of tools to support employees suffering through grief and loss or supporting an aging loved one, including those who may have a serious illness. Those tools include guides, such as:

- Senior Housing and Healthcare, Simplified
- Legal and Financial Consultation at a discounted rate
- Long-Distance Caregiving Tips
- Helping Others Cope with Grief
- How to Close Accounts and Cancel Benefits After Death
- How to Deal with Grief

GTM encourages employees to use these resources and reach out to WL4Y specialists at Specialist@LifeCare.com for support. You can also log on to WorkLife4You.com to access in-depth and interactive work/life content and tools. To access the website, log on to WorkLife4You and enter registration code: dos. For quick access, simply enter screen name: statedepartment and Password: infoquest.

SENIOR CARE RESOURCES

Senior Care In-Home Assessments

If you are concerned about an aging loved one and their safety at home, [WL4Y](#) will assist you with an expert in-person assessment from a Senior Care Manager.

The following services are available through a WL4Y Senior Care Manager:

- in-home assessment and customized care plan that evaluates your loved one's physical, mental, social, and financial needs with recommendations for next steps such as in-home care;
- home safety modifications; community programs;
- review of senior care facilities in your area and recommendations for most appropriate placement for your loved one;
- and ongoing care coordination services including post-hospitalization assessments.

To request a senior care assessment, call 1-866-552-4748 to speak with a WL4Y Specialist about your individual needs and caregiving situation. The WL4Y Specialist can connect you with a Senior Care Manager, who will conduct an in-person assessment and deliver a customized care plan. Your WL4Y benefit as a Department of State employee includes one assessment from a Senior Care Manager, per benefit year.

Senior Living Foundation Foreign Service Parent Program

The Senior Living Foundation can provide guidance for active duty Foreign Service employees who are managing their parents' urgent and long-term health needs from afar. Foundation social workers can arrange an in-person visit by a local Aging Life Care Manager to assess their needs, develop a care plan, provide information on helpful resources, and coordinate ongoing help and support.

The Foundation also has limited grants available to help meet the needs of parents and parents-in-law whose resources are not sufficient to meet their needs. The financial assistance, granted on the basis of need, is intended to help families obtain the necessary care for an elderly parent. Foreign Service colleagues with eligible parents are encouraged to contact the Foundation. The Foundation will engage an Aging Life Care Professional to support the parent. To learn more, go to www.slfoundation.org or contact the Foundation via email at info@SLFoundation.org.

LEAVE OPTIONS

To care for an ill loved one or manage affairs following a death, employees have several options for taking leave. Subject to applicable Department policies, the following types of leave may be available to you for periods when a family member is incapacitated:

- Accrued, accumulated, or advanced annual leave ([3 FAM 3410](#) and [3 FAH-1 H-341](#));
- Accrued, accumulated, or advanced sick leave ([3 FAM 3420](#) and [3 FAH-1 H-3420](#));
- Leave Without Pay (LWOP - [3 FAM 3510](#) and [3 FAH 3510](#));
- LWOP under the Family Medical Leave Act ([3 FAM 3530](#)); and/or
- Donated annual leave received through a shared leave program, such as the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program ([3 FAM 3340](#)).

Following the death of a loved one, the following types of leave may be available to you:

- Accrued, accumulated, or advanced annual leave;
- Up to 104 hours of accrued or advanced sick leave may be used to make arrangements necessitated by the death of a family member or to attend the funeral of a family member ([3 FAM 3423](#) and [3 FAM 3428](#));
- Leave Without Pay (LWOP);
- Funeral leave (excused absence) for service member relative killed in the line of duty ([3 FAM 3464.4](#)).

Family and Medical Leave Act

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allows qualifying employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for several reasons, including to care for a family member (spouse, child, or parent) who has a serious health condition. FMLA is a statutory entitlement to unpaid leave; FMLA is not a separate leave category.

Supervisors **may not refuse leave requests invoked under the FMLA**, as long as proper medical documentation is submitted, and you have served at least one year of federal employment. Employees may invoke FMLA by checking the FMLA box on their leave request form (DS-7100). FMLA requests must be submitted through Post HR to the regional/employing bureau EX for approval. (Supervisors are strongly encouraged to approve discretionary LWOP for those who are not eligible because they do not have one year of federal service. Supervisors may grant up to 80 hours of LWOP without higher-level approval.) See 19 STATE 87902 ([Guide to the FMLA](#)) for more details. For a general overview of the FMLA, see the Office of Employee Relations' [Work Life Division intranet site](#) for video tutorials on Leave Options for Childbirth, Adoption, and Foster Care; Module 5 is about the FMLA (only available on GO Virtual or OpenNet.)

FMLA may also be taken intermittently. If an employee wants to invoke FMLA to work intermittently or on a reduced schedule, the supervisor's approval is required, unless the intermittent or reduced schedule is medically necessary based on the employee's own or the employee's family member's serious health condition. For further leave questions, please email GTMLLeave@state.gov.

EMERGENCY VISITATION TRAVEL

Emergency visitation travel (EVT) is a benefit that allows an eligible individual stationed abroad (generally the employee or EFM spouse) to be authorized travel at U.S. Government expense in certain situations of family emergency ([3 FAM 3742](#)). EVT allows for round-trip airfare, mandatory airport taxes, connecting transportation between airports, and two pieces of checked luggage (up to 50 lbs or 23 kg each). The EVT Coordinator can be reached at EmergencyVisitationTravel@state.gov.

Where and how do I start the EVT process?

Contact post HR and they will assist you. The EVT policies and procedures are outlined in [3 FAM 3742](#) and [3 FAH-1 H-3740](#).

Who are the eligible individuals?

Foreign Service employees stationed abroad [including Civil Service employees on limited noncareer appointments (LNAs)] and certain EFMs (if residing at the employee’s post of assignment) are eligible for emergency visitation travel ([3 FAM 3743](#)). Below are examples of eligible employees:

Eligible for EVT	Ineligible
Foreign Service Officer	Personal Services Contractor (PSC) <i>*Unless otherwise provided by contract</i>
Foreign Service Specialist	Locally Employed Staff on Temporary Duty (TDY)
Foreign Service Limited <i>*Only authorized through home agency</i>	
Individuals in 3161 positions (excepted Civil Service)	
Civil Service on LNA overseas	

What are “situations of family emergency”?

- **Medical EVT:** Travel in a situation where an immediate family member is seriously ill or injured where death is imminent - [3 FAM 3744\(a\)\(1\)](#).
- **Death EVT:** Travel in connection with the death of an immediate family member - [3 FAM 3744.\(a\)\(2\)](#).
- **Eldercare EVT:** Travel to assist a parent who has recently become temporarily or permanently incapacitated, and needs assistance - [3 FAM 3744.\(a\)\(3\)](#).
- **Unusual Personal Hardship:** Travel in connection with an unusual situation involving personal hardship, which is not covered under another type of EVT - [3 FAM 3744.\(a\)\(4\)](#).
- **Unaccompanied Post EVT:** Travel of an employee on official duty at an unaccompanied post who is seriously wounded or becomes critically ill, is subsequently medevaced to another medical facility, and a family member’s and/or agent’s presence is determined to be medically required during the emergency period. GTM/OCA approves unaccompanied Post EVT, while the regional bureaus fund unaccompanied post EVT - [3 FAM 3744.\(a\)\(5\)](#).

Are EVT benefits transferrable?

Generally, the employee or EFM spouse who is directly related to the family member to be visited is eligible for EVT. There is an exception for Eldercare EVT, which permits the directly-related employee or EFM spouse to designate an EFM spouse to travel in his or her place. Each employee and spouse is eligible for two trips - [3 FAM 3744 \(e\)](#).

How many individuals are eligible to travel?

Only one individual may travel at U.S. government expense, with the following exceptions - [3 FAM 3744 \(d\)](#).

- If an employee or EFM resident at post dies, the surviving EFMs resident at post may travel to the funeral or place of interment;
- A nursing child may accompany his or her mother;
- Preschool-aged children may accompany a single parent;
- For a child requiring exceptional medical attention, both parents residing at post may be authorized to accompany their child;
- For Unaccompanied Post EVT, the number of travelers may not exceed three unless the total number of travelers includes solely an EFM spouse and dependent children. In other cases, additional travelers are approved on a case-by-case basis.

Are there limits on the total number of EVT trips per employee or EFM over the course of their Foreign Service tenure?

Eldercare EVT ([3 FAM 3746.3b](#)) permits a Foreign Service employee and EFM spouse to each take two (2) round-trips to care for their respective parents (a traveler may choose to use both trips for one parent). For each instance of Eldercare EVT, travel will be authorized for only one individual. While there is no cap on the other kinds of EVT an individual can take with the Foreign Service, the Department will generally authorize only one type of EVT per qualifying event.

Can an EVT traveler authorize an EFM to travel in his or her place?

Eldercare EVT is the only type of EVT that permits an employee or spouse to travel on each other's behalf. For example: Jane is an employee at post, and John is the EFM spouse. Jane may be authorized two (2) round-trips for Eldercare EVT. Jane's mom needs to enter an assisted living facility. Jane can use her eldercare EVT to visit her mom, or she can designate her husband to travel on her behalf. If John travels, it counts against Jane's EVT limit, not his.

Is it possible to request any category of EVT after-the-fact?

Yes. For Medical EVT, if the traveler needs to leave immediately, the employee should sign and submit a Repayment Acknowledgement to post HRO, which can be found in [3 FAH-1 H-3740](#). Post will then initiate the travel arrangements for the traveler, and the reimbursement request can be addressed upon the traveler's return. Post HR must ensure that the employee understands EVT eligibility requirements and that the employee will be required to repay travel costs if subsequent processing indicates that criteria were not met. More information can be found in [3 FAH-1 H-3742.3](#).

What if I need to travel outside the United States?

In the event the family member is located outside the United States, or an immediate family member died abroad, travel costs are "cost-constructed" (i.e., the cost of the actual EVT travel may not exceed the cost to travel between post and the employee's service separation address on the OF-126).

Exceptions:

- Employees on TDY are not required to cost-construct travel, regardless of TDY location. However, if the destination for EVT is outside the United States, the EVT ticket will be cost-constructed unless the location of the person being visited is abroad due to the employee's assignment abroad.

For example, if the employee is on long-term TDY at a post other than their original post of assignment and an eligible family member experiences an emergency at the post of assignment, the employee does not have to cost-construct the ticket.

Is EVT travel permitted to visit in-laws?

EVT benefits are generally not transferable. Only the employee or EFM spouse who is directly related to the family member to be visited may be authorized EVT (e.g., an employee could travel under Death EVT at U.S. government expense for his mother's own funeral, but not for his mother-in-law's funeral).

There are several specific exceptions:

- In exceptional circumstances, such as the critical illness or injury of the traveler who otherwise would be authorized for EVT, the chief of mission or head of another agency establishment abroad may authorize that individual's spouse to travel instead.
- For eldercare EVT, an employee or EFM spouse may travel in one another's place.
- For unaccompanied post EVT: If an immediate family member is not a suitable designee or if the employee has no immediate family, the employee may designate other member(s) of the employee's extended family or the employee's spouse's family or designate an agent (as defined in [3 FAM 3745](#)) to undertake the EVT, subject to GTM/OCA approval.

Are employees on TDY eligible for EVT?

Yes. Employees assigned abroad who are away from post of assignment on TDY are eligible for EVT regardless of TDY location. See [3 FAM 3743\(b\)](#). However, if the EVT destination is outside the United States, EVT will be cost-constructed. Employees who are on other official travel (R&R or home leave) or personal leave are eligible for cost-constructed EVT (see [3 FAM 3749.1](#)), as long as the employee's EVT point of departure is not in the

same country where the family member to be visited is located. See [3 FAH-1 Exhibit H 3741\(1\)](#).

What if I work for another agency?

All Foreign Affairs agencies (Department of State, USAID, Commerce, Agriculture, and USAGM) provide EVT benefits, but other agencies may provide more/less of the EVT benefits outlined in the FAM. We recommend contacting your agency's HR office for more details.

For additional frequently asked EVT questions, please review our FAQs [here](#). For additional information on those serving at SIP posts and EVT eligibility, please see [3 FAM 3735.1](#).

It's important to note that EVT eligibility is limited and does not cover all types of family emergencies. For any questions on the Emergency Visitation Travel policy or procedures, please contact the EVT Coordinator at EmergencyVisitationTravel@state.gov.

DEATH OF U.S. DIRECT HIRE EMPLOYEE OR ELIGIBLE FAMILY MEMBER

[GTM's Office of Casualty Assistance \(OCA\)](#) provides administrative assistance and ongoing support following a serious incident (injury, illness, or death) involving a U.S. direct-hire Department of State employee (Civil Service and Foreign Service) serving overseas or in the United States, and EFMs on travel orders overseas ([1 FAM 233.8](#)). OCA also plays an advisory role in supporting posts following the death of a non-State U.S. government employee who falls under Chief of Mission authority, or Locally Employed (LE) Staff, and can assist posts and bureaus when a Personal Service Contractor dies. OCA trains and utilizes its Crisis Support Team when needed.

OCA facilitates the entire death benefit process, ensuring the beneficiary/ies receives their loved one's federal death benefits in a timely fashion.

OCA also provides support resources and referrals to grief counseling. OCA is the primary link between the beneficiary/ies and the Department. OCA works collaboratively with post and bureaus to ensure the necessary actions are taken and the family receives the dedicated support they need. In the case of an employee's death overseas, OCA will notify GTM's Executive Office (EX) to coordinate the return of remains, and return overseas belongings.

Support offered is not just limited to death; it also includes serious injuries and life-threatening illnesses. OCA is available 24/7 to assist.

OCA's Resources: It is important for posts and bureaus to read [OCA's Standard Operating Procedures \(SOPs\)](#). You can find these SOPs, as well as other useful information and support resources via the [OCA website](#).

Employees should also periodically review and update their Designation of Beneficiary forms. Additionally, OCA offers one-on-one and group presentations regarding personal contingency planning in an effort to ensure that all employees are aware of the importance of preparing for the possibility, however remote, of death or incapacitation. You can arrange an appointment by sending an email to OCA@state.gov.

As stated on page one, to report a death or serious injury/illness, call the Department of State Operations Center 202-647-1512. Then send a follow-on email to OCA@state.gov for assistance.

GRIEF COUNSELING RESOURCES

[Employee Consultation Services \(ECS\)](#) provides confidential services to assist the Foreign Affairs Community and State Department Civil Service Employees who may be experiencing professional or personal life challenges, including coping with grief and trauma. ECS offers services face-to-face, by video or telephone, both domestically and abroad. To arrange to speak with a counselor or learn more about ECS services, contact ECS 24/7 at MEDECS@state.gov or 1-202-634-4874.

Grief Support Group for DC-based Employees: The death of a loved one can be one of the most challenging experiences we face as we journey through life. ECS hosts a grief support group, to share feelings, exchange coping strategies and resources, and connect with others who may be grieving. This group is open to all who have lost a loved one. For information on grief support group during COVID-19, please contact Ms. Kristin Scholl at schollke@state.gov. GTM/OCA's website also offers [resources for those coping with grief or trauma](#). This includes reading materials, information on common reactions to grief and potential coping mechanisms, guidance for when an adult loses a parent, and articles on talking with children about death. (Resources available only on GO Virtual and OpenNet.)

SHIPPING INHERITED EFFECTS

Within one year following the death of an employee's immediate family member or spouse, for those posted abroad the Department may cover the cost of shipping and storing household effects (HHE) comprised of inherited personal effects; the HHE shipment must be shipped from the United States or a U.S. territory, and will go into permanent storage in the United States ([14 FAM 611.6](#)). This benefit may also be available when an immediate family member is placed in an assisted living facility. Request for shipment and storage of inherited personal effects must be made to the GTM/EX Executive Director. (See [14 FAM 611.3](#) for a definition of inherited personal effects.) If approved, an HR technician will revise the employee's travel authorization to authorize placement of those effects into a U.S. Government storage facility. Domestically assigned employees are not eligible for shipment of inherited effects.