

Implementing Passport Services in an International Office

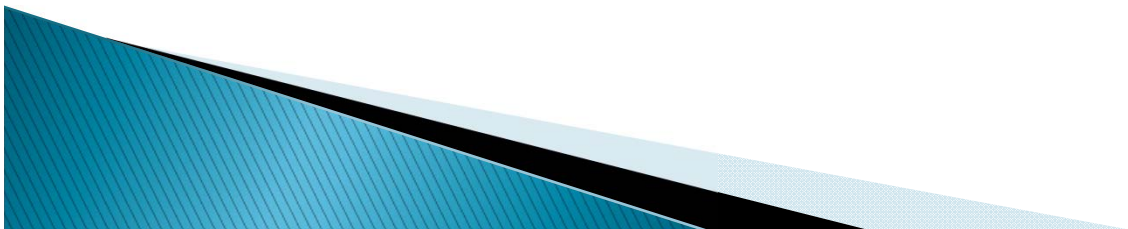
Presented by Michael Clement
Study Abroad Programs Office
Texas A&M University



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Disclaimer

- ▶ I am not a representative of the U.S. Passport Office or the Houston Passport Office
- ▶ I am a representative of Texas A&M University's Study Abroad Programs Office
- ▶ All information shared is from our personal experience as a Passport Acceptance Facility
- ▶ Rules and regulations may change abruptly and without notice, so always contact your Regional Passport Office for the most accurate information



What is a Passport Acceptance Facility?



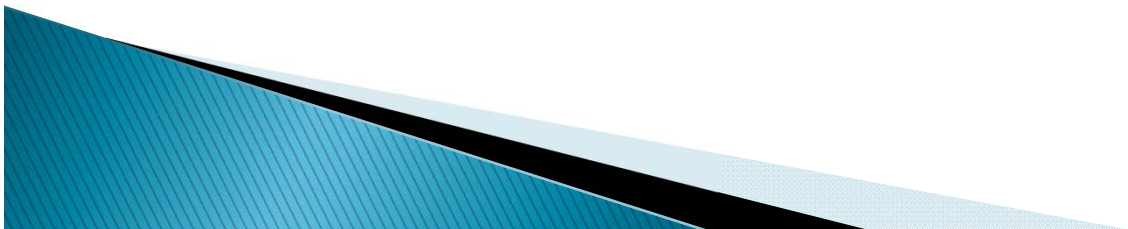
Definition of a Passport Acceptance Facility or PAF

- ▶ A Passport Acceptance Facility, or PAF, is a facility that has been approved by the U.S. State Department and the National Passport Office to accept and execute passport applications for U.S. Citizens.
- ▶ In addition to accepting and executing passport applications, PAF's provide U.S. Passport information and assistance to the community.



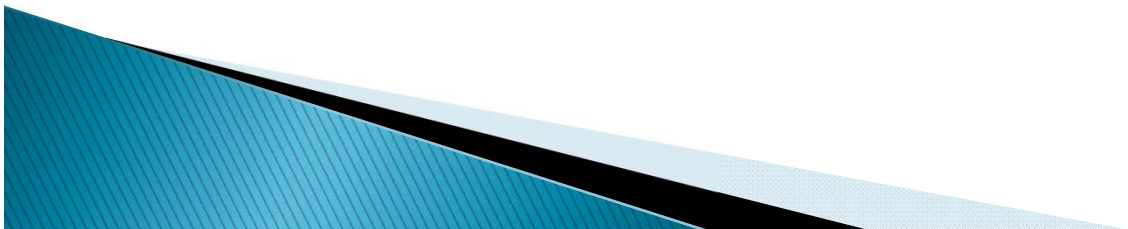
A Passport Acceptance Facility must be:

- ▶ One of the following:
 - Federal, state, county, township or municipal offices
 - U.S. Post Offices *or*
 - Other public entities, such as libraries and state/city universities, operating under governmental auspices
- ▶ Separate from any unit that issues, prints, or modifies birth certificates



Requirements for a Passport Acceptance Agent

- ▶ Agents must be all of the following:
 - Not presently on parole or probation related to any Federal, State, or local convictions
 - Not presently under indictment for a Federal, State, or local felony, or a misdemeanor related to breach of trust or moral turpitude
 - Free of any Federal, State, or local felony convictions
 - Free of any Federal, State, or local misdemeanor convictions related to breach of trust or moral turpitude (i.e. embezzlement, document fraud, drug offense, or dishonesty carrying out a responsibility involving public trust)



Requirements for a Passport Acceptance Agent

- Be a United States citizen or U.S. national (Passport Program Manager must review evidence of U.S. citizenship or U.S. nationality)
- Be at least 18 years old
- Be approved by the Department of State



Requirements for a Passport Acceptance Agent

- Be a permanent employee of the designated facility (not temporary, *ad hoc*, contractual, or volunteer) or be an employee on-site at a Passport Agency
- Be unable to issue, create, or amend citizenship or identity documents, such as birth certificates and driver's licenses

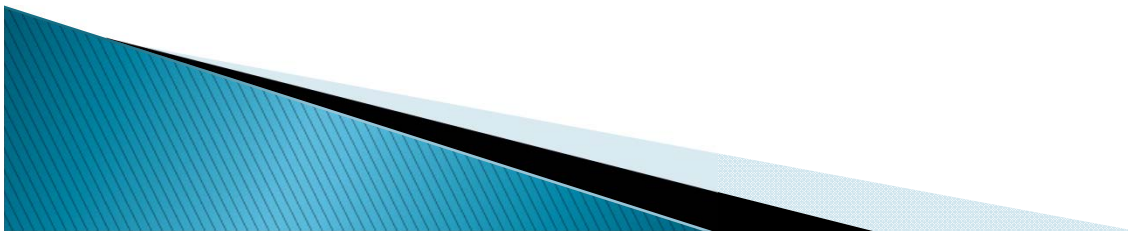


Why would you want to
be a PAF?



Advantages

- ▶ Can provide additional revenue for an International Office
- ▶ Provides a valuable service to your institution and the larger surrounding community
- ▶ Relatively inexpensive to set up
- ▶ Brings foot traffic through the office



Disadvantages

- ▶ Revenue generated may not offset the employee hours required to operate
- ▶ Passport Services does require at the least a small amount of office space
- ▶ You have to be set up to accept some form of payment



Things to consider

- ▶ Time required
 - Who is going to operate passport services?
 - Who is going to be a passport acceptance agent?
 - Remember: the amount of employee hours needed will vary based on the amount of applications being accepted, as business picks up more hours will be required
- ▶ Space Needed
 - A small amount of dedicated space is required for forms and equipment
 - Do you have the space needed?
 - If you offer additional services, will you have the space needed for these additional services?
- ▶ Business Office Expertise
 - You will need access to business office expertise. This can come from within your department or a centralized business office
 - What forms of payment will you be allowed to accept?



How Do You Become a PAF?



The application process:

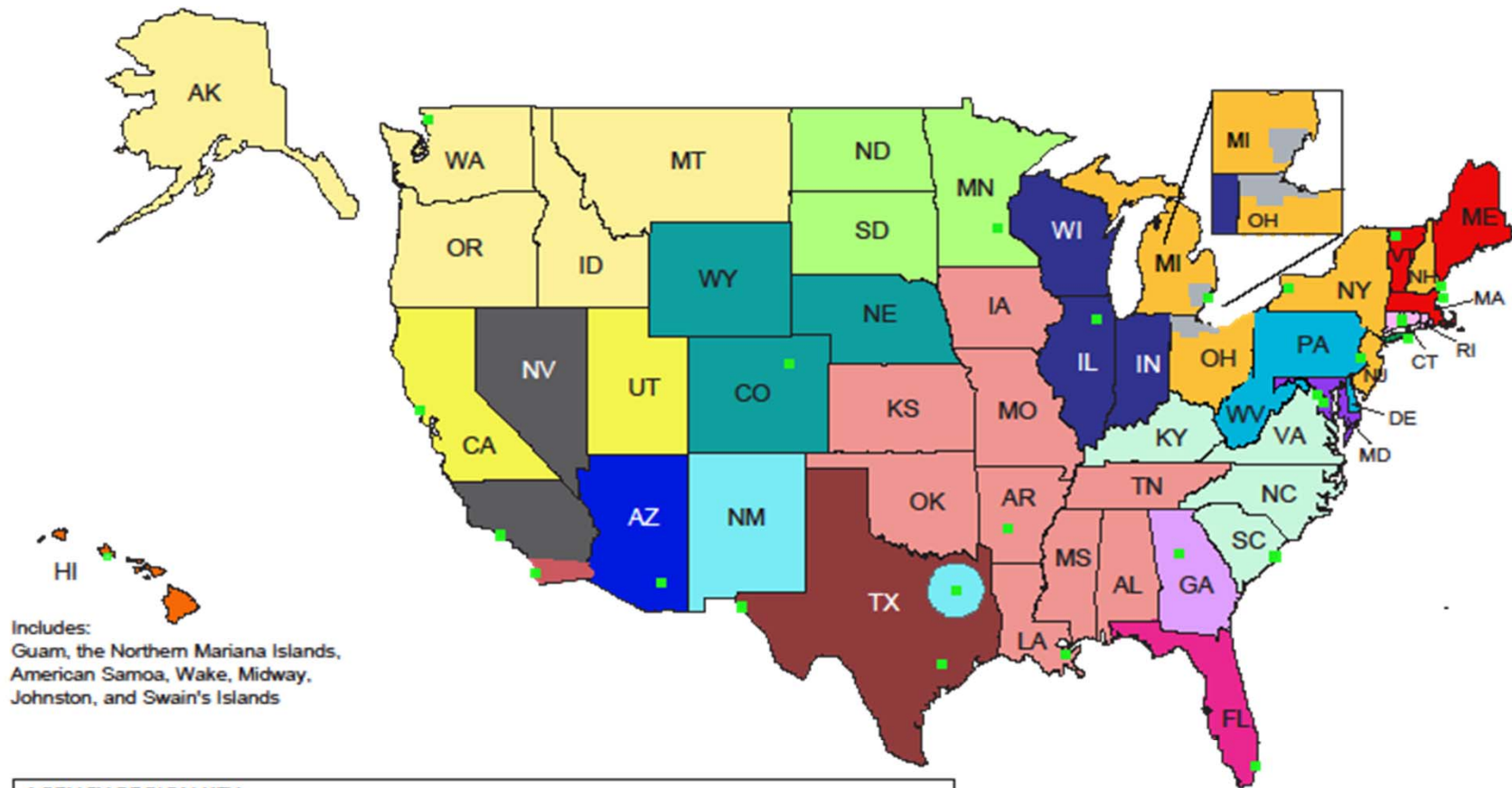
- ▶ Contact your Regional Passport Office
- ▶ Your Regional Passport Office will supply you with the required forms
 - It may take several weeks for the Passport Office to respond, be patient
- ▶ Once completed, requests must be sent to the Regional Passport Agency's Customer Service Manager(s)
 - The Passport Office will review your application and the number of Passport Acceptance Facilities in your area to determine the viability of an additional PAF in your area
- ▶ Final Approval is granted by Passport Services Headquarters
 - If your facility is granted official designation as a PAF you will be sent a Certificate of Designation



How to request an application:

- ▶ Send a request in writing, on official letterhead, to your regional passport office
- ▶ It should be sent to the attention of Customer Service
 - For example:
 - Houston Passport Agency
 - ATTN: CUSTOMER SERVICE
 - 1919 Smith St.
 - Suite 1400
 - Houston, TX 77002





Includes:
 Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands,
 American Samoa, Wake, Midway,
 Johnston, and Swain's Islands

AGENCY REGION KEY:			
■ Boston	■ Chicago	■ Colorado	■ Connecticut
■ Dallas	■ Detroit	■ Honolulu	■ Houston
■ Los Angeles	■ Miami	■ Minneapolis	■ New Orleans
■ New York	■ Philadelphia	■ San Francisco	■ Seattle
■ Washington	■ National Passport Center	■ Charleston Passport Center	■ Western Passport Center
■ San Diego			
■ Atlanta			
AGENCIES WITHOUT A REGION:			
■ Buffalo	■ Vermont		
■ Arkansas	■ El Paso		

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You've been Designated. Now What?



Setting up shop

▶ Questions to ask:

- Are you going to offer any additional services?
 - Will they be complimentary to the function of your office and your office's new role as a Passport Acceptance Facility?
- Will you be offering photo services?
 - Will you be taking non-U.S. Passport sized photos?
 - Do you know where to find visa and passport photo requirements for other countries?
 - What will you charge for your various photo services?



Setting up shop

- ▶ How will you get the word out?
 - The PARG has suggestions and a press release template
 - Institution wide newsletters and listservs can be very useful
- ▶ Do you need additional promotional materials?
 - Develop a brochure with your application requirements, services offered, service hours and costs
 - Create a simple price sheet with the passport-related fees and additional services fees
 - Post the price sheet in multiple places at eye level



Setting up shop

- ▶ Mailing the applications:
 - Have you set up a U.S. Post Office online account?
 - You have to send passport applications by priority mail, but:
 - Do you want to use preprinted labels and pay for postage based on weight? OR
 - Do you want to mail all applications using flat rate envelopes?
 - Do you have the proper envelopes?



Other services you may offer:

- ▶ Photos
 - Passport photos (the most common)
 - Visa photos
 - Optional Practical Training (OPT) photos
- ▶ International Student ID Cards (ISIC)
 - ISIC photos
- ▶ Passport covers, money belts, etc.
- ▶ Travel books



Official Supply List

- ▶ This is a brief list of the official supplies that you will need and that are not provided by the Passport Office
- ▶ Detailed procedures on the requirements for setting up a PAF will be provided to new facilities in the form of the Passport Agent Resource Guide
- ▶ Work Station
 - Seal or round date stamp
 - Black pens
 - Stapler and staples
 - Photo template
- ▶ Secure Storage
 - Two file folders or trays
 - Locking cabinet
- ▶ Mailing
 - Mailing envelopes
 - Mailing addresses

Unofficial Supply List

- ▶ This is a list of supplies we have found useful in our day to day operations.
- ▶ We have found that using Priority Mail Flat Rate envelopes is the simplest mailing option for our office so at the end of the day we print the postage, cut it out and glue it to the Flat Rate Envelopes
- ▶ Work Station
 - “For Deposit” stamp
 - More black pens, Fine tip
 - Trays
- ▶ Secure Storage
 - Trays
- ▶ Mailing
 - Priority Mail Flat Rate Envelopes
 - Glue stick
 - Scissors

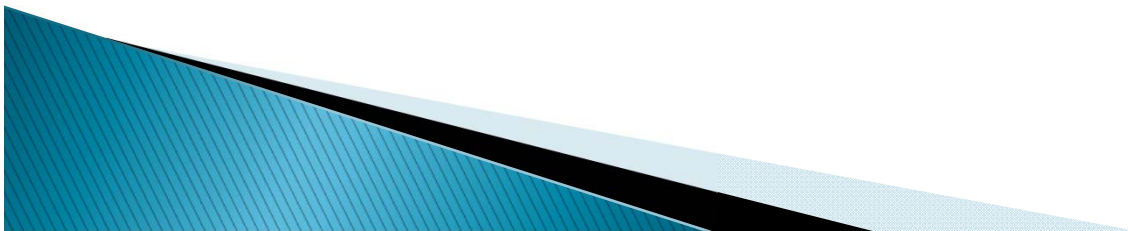
Unofficial Supply List

- ▶ This is a list of supplies we have found useful for the photo services we offer
- ▶ Photo Services
 - A passport photo system
 - Digital Camera
 - Photo Printer
 - Extra photo paper and ink
 - 2"x2" Photo Cutter
 - White Photo Screen
- ▶ Extra Items
 - Fluffy, white towel
 - Couple of t-shirts in various sizes
 - Selection of eye-glass frames with the lenses removed
 - Additional photo cutters in different sizes
 - Small clear plastic bags
 - Small envelopes or passport photo envelopes

Potential Vendors

- ▶ Adorama www.adorama.com
- ▶ UniquePhoto www.uniquephoto.com
- ▶ Identification Products Manufacturing Company www.identification-products.com
- ▶ Parkor www.parkor.com
- ▶ Amazon www.amazon.com

While we don't endorse any particular vendor we have found the above to carry products we needed.



Lessons Learned



Customer Relations

- ▶ Procedure Checklist
 - Particularly when starting out, I would suggest developing a checklist for executing passport applications.
 - If a customer has to come back because you forgot to sign their application they are not going to be happy.
- ▶ Be very clear that processing times are not guaranteed



Photos

▶ Pictures with Children

- If you have an open area or a table you can lay an infant on the ground on a soft white towel and take the photo from above
- Try to keep parents from being the ones to get their attention. This results in the child not looking into the camera
- A foot stool or sturdy chair can be used if a child is too short for the screen. Get the parent's permission to do this
- Always ask the parent before physically positioning their child



Photos

- ▶ Inappropriate attire
 - Any clothing that appears military in design or nature may cause a photograph to be rejected
 - Spaghetti straps, tube tops, or any clothing that makes the applicant appear to be nude may cause a photograph to be rejected
 - Keeping several t-shirts on hand can allow the applicant to take an appropriate picture without going home to change



Photos

▶ Glasses

- Taking the photos of people who wear glasses can be problematic
- Asking the customer to raise the ear pieces an inch or so off their ears often tilts the lenses so that they do not reflect into the camera lens. It may look odd in person, but is not noticeable in the picture
- Having a selection of cheap eyeglass frames with the lenses removed can be useful



Birth Certificates

- ▶ Birth Certificate Reference Sheets
 - 1st get permission to make a photo copy of a person's birth certificate
 - 2nd redact all the personal information on the photo copy and write void in marker on it.
 - Correction tape works better than marker
 - 3rd copy the birth certificate again
 - 4th have the customer review the 2nd copy to verify none of their information is visible
 - 5th SHRED the first photo copy
- ▶ List of the various Departments of Vital statistics in all 50 states.



Questions?

Michael Clement

Study Abroad Advisor

Passport Acceptance Agent

Texas A&M University

Study Abroad Programs Office

Tel. 979.845.0544

mclement@tamu.edu

<http://studyabroad.tamu.edu>

