

# ANNUAL REPORT 2015



American Foreign Service Association

SERVE  
PROTECT  
PROMOTE  
INFLUENCE  
CHALLENGE  
BUILD  
INSPIRE  
NEGOTIATE  
UNDERSTAND  
CHAMPION  
COMMUNICATE



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AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION



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## ABOUT AFSA

The American Foreign Service Association, established in 1924, is the professional association and labor union of the United States Foreign Service. With more than 16,500 dues-paying members, AFSA represents all active and retired Foreign Service employees of the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, Foreign Agricultural Service, Foreign Commercial Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Broadcasting Board of Governors.



## MISSION

AFSA promotes a strong professional career Foreign Service, fosters a better understanding of and appreciation for the Foreign Service's critical role in promoting America's national security, economic prosperity and values, and safeguards the interests of its members.

## WHO WE SERVE

AFSA exists to support the United States Foreign Service, which deploys worldwide to protect and serve America's people, interests and values. The Foreign Service is the only U.S. government entity that is globally deployed with an enduring physical presence in almost every country in the world, creating an enormous competitive advantage for America and for Americans from all walks of life.

Nearly 80 percent of active-duty members of the Foreign Service choose to join AFSA, the voice of the Foreign Service. AFSA's members are career professionals who volunteer to live and work abroad for roughly two-thirds of their careers, families often in tow, sometimes not, representing America to the people and leaders of other countries. Members of the Foreign Service are posted to more than 270 U.S. embassies, consulates and other missions that are scattered across the globe—most in difficult and many in dangerous environments.

*Members of the Foreign Service are leaders, problem solvers and adept communicators.*

*They preserve peace, end wars, challenge authority when needed and inspire others to see merit in American ideals of democracy, human rights, dignity and justice for all.*

America's Foreign Service understands and speaks foreign languages; comprehends other countries' politics, laws, economic drivers and cultures; and knows how to get things done on behalf of American people in unfamiliar territory.

The Foreign Service Act of 1980, the legal foundation for the Foreign Service, opens by declaring that "a career foreign service, characterized by excellence and professionalism, is essential in the national interest." AFSA speaks for its members individually, ensuring that the law is upheld and due process followed, but also, crucially, for the long-term health and vigor of the Foreign Service as an institution, certain in the conviction that a career Foreign Service, characterized by excellence and professionalism, is in America's national interest. ■



**FROM THE PRESIDENT**  
***Ambassador Barbara Stephenson***

I am pleased to report that 2015 was a productive year for the American Foreign Service Association, one in which we experienced growth in nearly every aspect of our organization and made significant progress on a number of issues about which our members care deeply.

Serving as the president of AFSA has given me an ideal platform for pursuing the vital work of strengthening the professional career Foreign Service. We are charting the course for a healthy, attractive career path for members of the U.S. Foreign Service for decades to come. The magnitude of this task is not lost on me, and I thank members for electing me and entrusting me with this responsibility.

The world is a much different place than when I first set out on my Foreign Service journey 30 years ago. American leadership is needed now more than ever if we are to successfully address a new set of challenges (e.g., unprecedented refugee flows, terrorism, climate change, cybersecurity, pandemics), even as the global landscape shifts and power becomes more diffuse.

I believe that a bold, effective American foreign policy capable of addressing this new threat set rests on the shoulders of a Foreign Service comprised of career professionals who are fully trained (e.g., in languages and regional knowledge) to make common cause with the people and leaders of other countries. That is why the 2015-2017 Governing Board has pledged to make the Foreign Service stronger than when we first took office. We aim to ensure that the Foreign Service continues to attract and retain America's best and brightest talent for our vital work of protecting and serving America's people, interests and values wherever we are deployed across the globe.

Three pillars, or work streams, structure AFSA's efforts and this annual report:

***Outreach*** to tell the proud story of the Foreign Service in all 50 states, so that the Foreign Service, like the U.S. military, has broad support among the citizens we serve.

***Workforce Planning*** to ensure a healthy, attractive career path that guarantees a steady stream of top-flight recruits at entry level and a deep bench of seasoned, experienced senior leaders 20 years later.

***Inreach*** to foster the professional development of our members and the cohesion, strength and resilience of our institution.

I'd like to close by recognizing the work done by the 2013-2015 Governing Board, whose efforts led to demonstrably improved governance at AFSA. We, the current Governing Board, are carrying that work forward and hope to leave as our legacy an American Foreign Service Association even more professionally governed, as well as better aligned behind the priorities most important for the institutional health of the Foreign Service. We thank the members of the previous Governing Board for their dedication to AFSA, the voice of the Foreign Service. ■



**FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
*Ian Houston*

As I took the final steps to close out an eventful year for AFSA in 2015, I was fortunate to find an elusive moment of reflection—the one that every executive director wishes for, but which, unfortunately, often slips through one’s grasp in the midst of a busy season. That reflection turned into a moment of gratitude. It is inspiring to see AFSA’s development in working to build a stronger Foreign Service, supported by visionary board leadership that truly cares about the association, volunteers who serve on important committees and a talented and committed staff.

In 2015, AFSA made substantial progress and enjoyed genuine success on a variety of fronts. We closed the year knowing that a sturdy bridge had been built to 2016. This report highlights many of these achievements and demonstrates to our members and those who care about the Foreign Service, diplomacy and development that AFSA is a vibrant organization with a rich history and abundant potential.

This past year AFSA made significant strides on the governance side of the operational equation. We addressed governance issues head on, developed and tested checks and balances, and set in place processes that will serve the association well for years to come. Such growth is never easy, but the maturity gained enabled AFSA to smoothly transition to a new board—affording vital legal, fiscal and awareness training for a uniquely cohesive board as they enthusiastically took office. Our members can truly be proud of these accomplishments.

I’m also pleased to report that, once again, AFSA achieved the highest rating from our outside financial and management auditors. It is the sixth year in a row that AFSA has performed to this standard, demonstrating that we are conscientious stewards of association resources.

Similarly, a healthy business must always focus on how to properly align limited resources to further its goals and have the business acumen to adjust where necessary. I found the AFSA internal budget process that wrapped up in November to have done just that.

The exercise was strategic, transparent, inclusive and collaborative. Thanks to this deliberative process, I sat alongside gifted board leaders and staff managers to seriously consider our vision and purposeful direction for the association. We then wired that vision into a fiscal engine designed to propel us down a strategic path to help build a stronger Foreign Service.

***This 2015 AFSA Annual Report offers an engaging window into our operations and accomplishments on behalf of our members.***

I hope when you review it, you will also feel the appreciation I felt at the end of 2015, and that you, too, will take a moment to reflect on the attributes that make AFSA the energetic and service-oriented organization that it is. ■

## GOVERNING BOARD

### President

Hon. Barbara Stephenson

### Secretary

William Haugh

### Treasurer

Hon. Charles A. Ford

### State Vice President

Angie Bryan

### USAID Vice President

Sharon Wayne

### FCS Vice President

Steve Morrison

### FAS Vice President

Mark Petry

### Retiree Vice President

Hon. Tom Boyatt

### State Representatives

Lawrence Casselle, John Dinkelman, Eric Geelan, Josh Glazeroff, Margaret "Nini" Hawthorne, Phillip Laidlaw, Peter Neisuler, Erin O'Connor, Leah Pease, Samuel Thielman, Tricia Wingerter

### USAID Representatives

Jeffrey Cochrane, Lorraine Sherman

### FCS Representative

Youqing Ma

### FAS Representative

Corey Pickelsimer

### BBG Representative

VACANT

### APHIS Representative

Mark C. Prescott

### Retiree Representatives

Hon. Patricia Butenis, Dean J. Haas, Hon. Al La Porta, Hon. John Limbert

## AFSA STAFF

### Executive Office

Ian Houston (Executive Director),  
Patrick Bradley

### Member Services

Janet Hedrick (Director), Natalie  
Cheung, Todd Thurwachter, Isabelle  
Hazel, Ana Lopez

### Advocacy

Javier Cuebas (Director)

### Communications

Ásgeir Sigfússon (Director),  
Jeff Lau, Allan Saunders

### Publications

Shawn Dorman (Director/Foreign  
Service Journal Editor), Susan Maitra,  
Maria Livingston, Shannon Mizzi

### Awards

Perri Green

### Scholarships

Lori Dec (Director), Jonathan Crawford

### Finance and Accounting

Femi Oshobukola (Director),  
Ed Miltenberger, Kalpna Srimal,  
Cory Nishi

### Labor Management

Sharon Papp (General Counsel),  
Zlatana Badrich, James Yorke,  
Douglas Broome, Neera Parikh, Raeka  
Safai, Andrew Large, Colleen  
Fallon-Lenaghan, Jason Snyder,  
Lindsey K. Botts, Erika Bethman

## AFSA COMMITTEES

### Awards and Plaques\*

Annie Pforzheimer (Chair), Richard  
Todd Andrews, John Bushnell,  
Anthony Fernandes, Josh Glazeroff,  
Ruth Hall, Allison Lee, Daniel Marti-  
nez, Steve Morrison, Patricia Norland,  
Sandy Robinson, Bridgette Walker

### Finance, Audit and Management\*

Hon. Charles A. Ford (Chair), Angie  
Bryan, Sharon Wayne, Steve Morri-  
son, Mark Petry, Hon. Tom Boyatt

### Scholarship Committee\*

Hon. Lange Schermerhorn (chair),  
Karen Brown, John Dinkelman,  
Dr. Alia El-Mohandes, Jim Golsen,  
Thomas Smitham, Christine  
Strossman, Bess Zelle

### Elections

Hon. Robert "Bill" Farrand (chair),  
Jenna Bucha Jones, Mort Dworken,  
Chris Green, Ian Houston, Sharon  
Papp, Janet Hedrick

### Foreign Service Journal Editorial Board\*

Beth Payne (Chair), James Bever,  
Angela Bond, Hon. Gordon S. Brown,  
Stephen W. Buck, Eric Green, Kara  
McDonald, John G. Rendeiro Jr.,  
Duncan Walker, Tracy Whittington

### Governance\*

William Haugh (Chair), Hon. Charles  
Ford, Ian Houston, Sharon Papp,  
Patrick Bradley

### Profession and Ethics\*

Robert Dry (Chair), Anne Bodine,  
Angela Dickey, Kara Eyrich, Eva  
Groening, Aaron Held, Hon. Al La  
Porta, Susan R. Johnson, Inga  
Litvinsky, Hon. Charles Ray

\* Hon. Barbara Stephenson  
(ex officio member)



## FROM THE STATE VICE PRESIDENT *Angie Bryan*

***Nearly two-thirds of AFSA's membership hails from the Department of State. Representing this deserving group is a source of great pride; it also makes for very busy days.***

Throughout 2015, AFSA met with department management on a biweekly basis to promote our members' interests on a wide range of issues affecting the Foreign Service. Here are some highlights.

After strongly (but ultimately unsuccessfully) protesting the department's proposal to significantly change the criteria and procedures for posts to qualify for danger pay and hardship differentials, AFSA was able to protect employees at danger pay posts from some negative repercussions related to Fair Share bidding and six- and eight-year rules. We also got management to grandfather in certain elements for bidders who had been assigned to, but not yet arrived at, danger pay posts. Unfortunately, our push for a later implementation date to allow employees to make necessary financial adjustments did not succeed.

AFSA and the department negotiated language for revised sections to the Foreign Affairs Manual that govern (1) the differences between affinity groups and employee organizations, (2) Members of Household and (3) employees' capacity to conduct official and private outreach.

The department and AFSA also negotiated the terms of a new Fitness-for-Duty policy for service in Iraq that mirrors the one in effect for Afghanistan, signed a memorandum of understanding capping linked assignments and negotiated a performance management reform package. As a result of the Supreme Court ruling on same sex marriage, the department notified AFSA in July that it would be phasing out the Same Sex Domestic Partner program. After consulting

with GLIFAA, AFSA negotiated the grace period for enrollment and the cutoff date for the program.

AFSA also partnered with our Civil Service union counterparts to negotiate the establishment of a leave bank for all department personnel. The leave bank allows employees to contribute unused, accrued annual leave for use by leave bank members who need such leave because of a medical emergency.

We also met with the Foreign Service Institute to discuss how to improve transportation options to its campus. And we worked with them to create a labor relations course.

In consultation with groups such as the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association, Balancing Act and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, AFSA remains engaged in ongoing negotiations on many additional issues, such as assignment restrictions, consular staffing, domestic help, the FSI Rosslyn annex, the Overseas Development Program, short-term disability insurance, the Vance memo and work-life wellness. We hope to report positive developments in all of those areas and more in 2016. ■



**FROM THE USAID VICE PRESIDENT**  
*Sharon Wayne*

I have had the distinct honor of representing my fellow Foreign Service colleagues as AFSA's U.S. Agency for International Development vice president for the past three years. Each year has brought with it new challenges and opportunities as we have endeavored to promote the interests of our development professionals who dedicate their lives to advancing U.S. national security and prosperity by working to end extreme poverty and advance resilience abroad. By most measures, 2015 was a turbulent year, but we begin 2016 with much reason for optimism.

The departures of Administrator Raj Shah and Chief Human Capital Officer and Director of Human Capital and Talent Management Elizabeth Kolmstetter caused considerable upheaval within the agency. AFSA was pleased when President Barack Obama nominated Gayle Smith to become the new Administrator and when Acting Administrator Alfonso Lenhardt called for a comprehensive review of HCTM to improve how USAID supports its staff around the world.

Both developments have created a space for addressing critical workforce planning challenges affecting the career paths of USAID Foreign Service officers and, thus, the effectiveness of the agency itself. For example, USAID has begun to respond to AFSA's call for transparency in workforce issues, by posting promotion statistics and guidelines on FSO career paths to the HCTM webpage and vowing to continue to improve and expand these resources.

***AFSA continues to call for more transparent and better workforce data to guide appropriate hiring and development of FSOs throughout their career.***

We are currently engaged in an alternative dispute resolution with USAID to address staffing challenges in a way that delivers on the long-term goal of fostering a strong and resilient Foreign Service and upholds the law as enacted by the Foreign Service Act of 1980.

Meanwhile, AFSA has increased its focus on outreach, telling the world of the agency's successes and elevating the field of development as a key component of U.S. foreign policy, often in collaboration with allies such as the USAID Alumni Association. I have focused on fostering the resolve of Congress to uphold a strong, competitively hired, continuously trained, career Foreign Service managed under a transparent personnel system with compatibility across the foreign affairs agencies.

Thanks to the commitment of our members, an experienced USAID team was elected to the 2015-2017 AFSA Governing Board and a standing committee comprised of AFSA USAID members is now in place. I plan to expand communications to our members in 2016, to report on the work we are doing on your behalf. AFSA looks forward to making more progress on strengthening the Foreign Service in collaboration with USAID Administrator Smith and Deputy Administrator Lenhardt in 2016. ■



## FROM THE FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE VICE PRESIDENT *Steve Morrison*

As AFSA wraps up another whirlwind year of work in support of our Commercial Service Foreign Service officers, I am proud to report that we made solid progress on a number of fronts.

First, AFSA advocated tirelessly on Capitol Hill for the resources necessary to help our more than 260 trade professionals succeed at promoting U.S. goods and services in the more than 75 countries where we have offices around the world. AFSA's constructive conversations with the new legislative leadership with oversight for FCS paid off with a "steady-as-she-goes" budget in 2016—not bad in light of the considerable downward pressure on and increased costs affecting our budget.

AFSA continues to bring together all parties to ensure that the bargain made during the International Trade Administration's consolidation in 2013 is upheld. Thanks to our efforts, key positions such as the deputy assistant secretary for Europe, the Middle East and Africa and the deputy director general of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service are firmly situated in the career-FSO orbit.

We also celebrated our colleagues' accomplishments. In January, AFSA hosted a widely attended send-off celebration for then-ambassador designate to Brunei and longtime FCS FSO Craig Allen. Ambassador Allen is only the fourth ambassador to come out of FCS in its 35-year history.

In 2015, AFSA saw through the launch of several new program benefits. These include the new and improved Reemployed Annuitant Program and the first-ever FCS Temporary Duty Lodging Program.

We hope to see many more officers take advantage of the latter, a new turnkey operation that could benefit those returning to Washington, D.C., during the 2016 reassignment season, as well as those new members of the Commercial Service who must attend the New Commercial Officer Training class and those simply back for extended training.

***AFSA continues to evolve, adapt and improve, particularly when it comes to becoming better organized and effective in spreading the word regarding the Foreign Commercial Service's contribution to American economic prosperity.***

This effort is fueled by a new, enthusiastic Governing Board, to which we added a new FCS representative, Youqing Ma.

Proving that our officers see the value-added in what AFSA offers its members, the Commercial Service now has three officers serving on three AFSA standing committees—Awards, Scholarships and Professionalism and Ethics. I would like to thank all three for taking time out of their busy schedules to help me protect and promote your and our interests. ■



**FROM THE FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE VICE PRESIDENT**  
**Mark Petry**

With more than 100 Foreign Service officers (and counting) assigned to 93 overseas offices helping to link U.S. agriculture to markets in more than 171 countries, the Foreign Agricultural Service appears strong and is moving in the right direction.

The FAS budget for Fiscal Year 2016 is \$191 million—a small but important increase over 2015 that will help FAS more effectively carry out its mission.

Much of the credit for this bump goes to FAS leadership and its advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill to promote our work and gain recognition of our role supporting the American economy. We are grateful that the U.S. agricultural industry recognizes the importance of exports to rural income and is an ardent supporter of both FAS and the Foreign Service.

A positive budget environment in 2015 allowed AFSA to re-engage FAS management on addressing long-term staffing challenges caused by years of adopting short-term fixes to weather temporary budget constraints. Specifically, AFSA redoubled efforts to raise awareness of the critical need for succession planning. Our push led management to take concrete and measurable steps, yielding the largest incoming class of officers ever. We also saw the largest number of promotions in many years.

In addition, FAS management retracted certain Civil Service overseas assignments—ones that FSOs are qualified to fill—that violated the collective bargaining agreement, which requires equal access, open competition and transparency in the assignments process. Despite these successes, AFSA still has a lot to do on behalf of FAS FSOs in 2016.

The lack of officers at senior levels continues to stress the personnel placement system and has led management to propose a greater number of Civil Service employees in overseas positions.

***AFSA will push for meaningful succession planning for all levels and advances in training and education opportunities to develop our officers to meet the ever-evolving demands of our profession.***

Allow me to conclude by recognizing my predecessor, David Mergen, for his several years of excellent service as FAS VP. He has been a strong voice for FAS Foreign Service officers and had a significant impact on moving the needle on many of these issues, especially on creating awareness and support for robust succession planning. ■

**\$191  
million**  
**FAS BUDGET FOR  
FISCAL YEAR 2016**



**FROM THE RETIREE VICE PRESIDENT  
Ambassador (ret.) Thomas Boyatt**

***AFSA highly values our retiree members who hail from all six foreign affairs agencies, have had careers spanning decades representing American interests abroad, and whose collective knowledge and experience are invaluable assets to today's Foreign Service.***

At our August meeting, the Governing Board approved my proposal to utilize its authorities under the Foreign Service Act of 1980 to nominate and approve members of the Foreign Service Labor Relations Board and the Foreign Service Grievance Board. The FSLRB was created by the Act to administer the labor-management relations program for Foreign Service employees. The FSGB handles grievances by Foreign Service employees.

The nominations will come from AFSA's retired constituency because active-duty personnel are prohibited from such service. We intend to nominate retired officers with overseas, foreign policy and AFSA experience, bringing a broader view to these adjudicatory bodies, while serving AFSA's goals of building a stronger Foreign Service, achieving better outcomes for Foreign Service personnel and garnering enhanced respect for the Foreign Service Act.

In October, retired Career Ambassador and AFSA stalwart Hank Cohen was nominated by AFSA, with the Department of State's concurrence, to be one of three members of the FSLRB, and his appointment was confirmed shortly thereafter. In 2016, some of the terms on the FSGB will lapse, and we will pursue our policy of nominating interested retired AFSA members with overseas, foreign policy and AFSA experience for these positions.

I should point out that positions on the adjudicatory bodies under the Foreign Service Act are not full-time. However, the legislation does mandate that their members are well compensated on a daily basis—at what was then the GS-18, now the highest Senior Executive Service, rate—as they participate in the adjudication of cases. This arrangement is ideal for retired colleagues who pursue a diverse portfolio of activities in retirement. It is a win-win-win-win situation for the individual retiree member, for AFSA, for the FSGB and for the Foreign Service.

Meanwhile, we have assisted many of you with the usual problems associated with a complicated retirement system and our evolving health insurance situation. This year we have faced additional challenges in dealing with special situations that have arisen.

The most important of these is the Office of Personnel Management's response to a major data breach potentially affecting 22 million current and former government employees. OPM has since provided a helpful protection package including credit monitoring, liability insurance and other elements. AFSA continues to monitor developments. ■

# OUTREACH

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Fostering Appreciation of the Foreign Service

In 2015, AFSA enhanced its outreach explaining who the Foreign Service is and why what it does is in the interest of every single U.S. citizen. We focused on two primary audiences: Congress and the American public.

## CONGRESSIONAL OUTREACH

On the congressional side, AFSA's Advocacy Department expanded its network once again. Through a series of initiatives, the association progressed from tapping into a small, targeted network on Capitol Hill to having access to more than 250 offices and committees in the House and Senate.

AFSA started the year with a bang when it began a new tradition in January by sending a team to the Hill to welcome 31 newly elected members of the 114th Congress on their first day in office.

During AFSA's 2nd Annual Advocacy Day on April 15, the association visited nine Senate and House offices and hosted more than 100 congressional offices at an evening networking reception. We were pleased to be able to feature an impressive lineup of keynote speakers: member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Representative Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), Career Ambassador and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Near East Affairs Gerald Feierstein and Edith Bartley, whose father, FSO Julian Bartley Sr., and brother Julian Jr. were killed in the 1998 attack on Embassy Nairobi.

AFSA raised the profile of the Foreign Service in other ways, as well. Foreign Commercial Service Vice President Steve Morrison participated in the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute's 4th Annual Trade and International Affairs Symposium and the Association of Government Relations Professionals' Congressional Trade Panel. In October, AFSA partnered with the Foreign Affairs Congressional Staff Association to sponsor a panel titled "Strong Diplomacy in Today's World: U.S. Foreign Service 101." Roughly 100 congressional staffers, fellows and interns attended.

## STATE INFLUENCERS

The association's advocacy efforts also target decision-makers at the state level. For example, AFSA participated in Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe's Latino Summit and the Virginia Public Access Project's Ethics Seminar. In Wisconsin, we helped one of our members introduce legislation that would provide active-duty Foreign Service members the same vehicle registration and motor vehicle-operator licensing privileges enjoyed by our active-duty colleagues in the U.S. Armed Forces. And in Maryland, we connected with civic and business leaders at the Montgomery County Executive Hispanic Gala. ■



*Representative Gerald Connolly (D-Va.) speaks on the future of international development and transparency and accountability in foreign aid during a Feb. 9 members-only town hall at AFSA headquarters. (AFSA/Debra Blome)*

## BUILDING A FOREIGN SERVICE CONSTITUENCY

The association retooled one of its communications department positions to focus exclusively on strategic outreach and relationship building to help amplify AFSA's voice to the American public. Partners include universities and civic organizations ranging from Kiwanis Clubs to World Affairs Councils, the business community, and the Smithsonian Associates and Road Scholar programs. In November, AFSA solidified a partnership with the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, which will significantly augment AFSA's multifaceted outreach strategy to reach numerous target audiences in all 50 states in 2016.

## SPEAKERS BUREAU: A FORCE MULTIPLIER

AFSA coordinated roughly four dozen programs through our Speakers Bureau—a speaker placement service that is free of charge for anyone interested in hosting a member of the Foreign Service to speak to their group. Thanks primarily to our retiree members, AFSA doubled the size of the Speakers Bureau in 2015 to more than 360 volunteers who stand ready to share their experiences with American audiences.

## FOREIGN SERVICE BOOKS

AFSA's imprint and book publishing division, Foreign Service Books, is also instrumental in the association's efforts to reach outside audiences. The popular guide to the Foreign Service, *Inside a U.S. Embassy: Diplomacy at Work*, continued to sell well through 2015 primarily to military institutions and universities for courses, and to those considering a Foreign Service career.

In 2015, AFSA sold about 3,000 copies of the current (third) edition. In July, AFSA published the first-ever history of the association, *The Voice of the Foreign Service: A History of the American Foreign Service Association*, by former Foreign Service officer Harry Kopp. ■





*An audience member asks about U.S. foreign policy in Latin America while participating in a daylong workshop co-sponsored by AFSA and the Smithsonian Associates and titled "Inside the World of Diplomacy."  
(AFSA/Maria C. Livingston)*



# ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

## AFSA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST

*This year's High School Essay Winner Thomas Keller traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with Secretary of State John Kerry. (Department of State/James Pan)*

The AFSA National High School Essay Contest, now in its 18th year, is one of the association's most enduring and successful outreach tools. The contest invites high school students whose parents are not in the Foreign Service to think critically about the key role diplomacy plays in the world.

*The winner, Thomas Keller of the Episcopal School of Dallas, Texas, wrote about the power of microfinance to combat crime in Honduras.*

AFSA collaborates with Semester at Sea and the National Student Leadership Conference on this initiative and, in 2015, added the U.S. Institute of Peace as a partner. Over the years, more than 6,000 high school students have been exposed to the Foreign Service and its mission through this contest. Past winners have come from such diverse places as Missoula, Montana; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Clayton, New York; and Lincoln, Nebraska. Winning essay topics have included security along the U.S.-Canadian border, promotion of human rights in China, democratization in Burma and inclusive development in South Sudan. ■



# THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

## AFSA'S FLAGSHIP PUBLICATION

*The Foreign Service Journal*—AFSA's flagship publication covering foreign affairs, the practice of diplomacy and the U.S. Foreign Service from an insider's perspective since 1924—produced 10 strong issues in 2015. Its distribution stretches far beyond our membership, to include congressional and foreign affairs agency offices, universities, think tanks, private firms, Department of Defense officials and media outlets, among others, across the United States and overseas. The focus of each *FSJ* issue is often a trigger for substantive debate and dialogue on issues affecting the Foreign Service.

For instance, the focus of the October issue of the *FSJ*, "Working with the Military: What You Need to Know," received wide acclaim by our members and outside audiences alike. Authors discussed the nuts and bolts of what it takes to make civilian-military relations work in overseas settings, an increasingly important skillset in a post 9-11 world.

The December issue of the *Journal* focused on the International Visitor Leadership Program—the Department of State's premier professional exchange program—on the occasion of its 75th anniversary. The issue emphasized the important role that the IVLP plays in advancing U.S. national security through building relationships and bridges with other countries. It also provided a springboard for a new relationship between AFSA and Global Ties U.S.—a department partner helping to implement the IVLP. ■

# WORKFORCE PLANNING

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Toward a Stronger Foreign Service

As the principal advocate for the long-term health of the Foreign Service, AFSA is immersed in conversations with management at the foreign affairs agencies, Congress, our members and other stakeholders on a range of policy issues affecting the integrity and attractiveness of the Foreign Service career path.



*Members of the 183rd A-100 orientation class for State Foreign Service officers visit AFSA for the first time and learn how the association is working to ensure their Foreign Service career path is strong. (AFSA/Maria C. Livingston)*

## **AFSA'S VIEW ON STATE'S REPORT TO CONGRESS ON WORKFORCE PLANNING**

In 2015, the Department of State submitted its Section 326 report—a document mandated every four years by 22 U.S.C. Section 4173—to Congress on the state of its Foreign Service workforce. AFSA's response to the report was included as an addendum and addressed Foreign Service career path analysis, elimination of the mid-level position deficit, peer-constituted Selection Boards,

assignment process reform and challenges to retention and diversity within the ranks of the Foreign Service. The response reflected AFSA's focus on the mid-level "pig in the python" personnel bulge and on ensuring that the department is able to provide a "regular, predictable flow of talent through the ranks into the Senior Foreign Service" as mandated in Section 601 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended. It also emphasized the need for a more transparent, efficient and user-friendly assignments process. ■

## FY 2016 BUDGET DELIVERS BEST-VALUE CONTRACTING AND OVERSEAS COMPARABILITY PAY

In December, the House and Senate passed a \$1.14 trillion omnibus appropriations package containing many pieces of good news for the Foreign Service. AFSA worked in lockstep with Representatives Lois Frankel (D-Fla.), Randy Weber (R-Texas) and Ed Royce (R-Calif.) to secure a new provision within the spending bill that now permits the Department of State to use “best-value” contracting when selecting local guard contractors at our overseas diplomatic missions. Previously, State was required—at all but high-threat posts—to hire the security firm offering the lowest price, regardless of past performance or quality of service.

We also preserved Overseas Comparability Pay—a mechanism designed to place all federal employees posted abroad on equal footing

in terms of salary with those serving in Washington, D.C.—at the two-thirds level. Given the current budget environment, AFSA is pleased with this outcome. Funding for full OCP remains one of our members’ highest priorities, and we will continue to work with agency management and interlocutors on the Hill to secure it at the earliest possible opportunity.

## UNSTICKING COMMISSION, TENURE AND PROMOTION LISTS

Finally, AFSA is cognizant of the possibility that lists of Foreign Service employees recommended for commissioning, tenure



*AFSA Governing Board members consider nominations to the Foreign Service Labor Relations Board. (AFSA/Maria C. Livingston)*

and promotion can be held up in the Senate. Consequently, AFSA used every opportunity to raise awareness among our congressional contacts regarding the negative impact of this practice on our members' morale and eligibility for onward assignments, its imposition of financial hardship on deserving members and their families, and, ultimately, its detrimental effect on the ability of consulates, embassies and USAID missions to conduct the business of the United States overseas. We are glad to report that our efforts have helped spur faster processing of lists, and we remain committed to addressing any setbacks to this progress should the need arise.

## FIGHTING FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE INCREASE CONFERRALS

The Foreign Service Act of 1980 authorized the issuance of Meritorious Service Increases as a tool for the Department of State to provide an increase to the next higher salary rate of the Foreign Service member's class for especially deserving service. Our Labor Management Department is handling a number of implementation disputes related to the Department of State's violation of the parties' collective bargaining agreement related to the conferral of MSIs by the 2013, 2014 and 2015 Foreign Service Selection Boards.

***In September, the Foreign Service Grievance Board ruled in favor AFSA's implementation dispute on behalf of the 554 Foreign Service employees who never received the monetary component of their MSIs awarded by the 2013 selection board.***

The ruling stated that the Department of State had indeed breached a provision of the 2013 Procedural Precepts, a negotiated agreement with AFSA. In its ruling, the FSGB directed the department to retroactively pay the 2013 MSIs, with interest, dating back to Nov. 3, 2013—the effective date of promotions. The department appealed the ruling to the Foreign Service Labor Relations Board. As of Dec. 31, the parties were still awaiting a ruling.

The 2014 MSI case, which AFSA filed when the Department of State implemented a 5-percent cap on the number of people who could receive MSIs, continues to make its way through the FSGB process. The department denied this grievance, arguing that it had the discretion to either pay or not pay MSIs to whatever number of employees it chose.

AFSA appealed this decision, arguing that—as the FSGB eventually found in its decision on the 2013 MSI case—the department is bound by its past practice of paying MSIs to all those employees rank-ordered by the selection boards, up to the 10-percent cap that the parties agreed to in the Procedural Precepts. Meanwhile, the department followed the same procedure in 2015, implementing a 5-percent cap on MSIs. ■





*On Jan. 23, AFSA met with Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken to discuss the need to achieve full Overseas Comparability Pay for all members of the Foreign Service. (Department of State/James Pan)*

## OTHER BARGAINING UNIT MATTERS

AFSA filed an implementation dispute in 2015 on behalf of our Foreign Agricultural Service bargaining unit regarding the Department of Agriculture's failure to follow procedures relating to the assignment of two Civil Service employees to overseas positions. This case is currently at the agency grievance level.

AFSA also filed three cohort grievances: two relating to Overseas Comparability Pay (one at State and one at USAID) and one in response to the Department of State's inconsistent application of per diem regulations. The OCP cases are with the Foreign Service Grievance Board.

In another action, AFSA filed a negotiability appeal with the Foreign Service Labor Relations Board in December when USAID deemed AFSA's proposals regarding the agency's plan to hire FS-2s to be nonnegotiable.



*On her first day as AFSA president, Ambassador Barbara Stephenson takes the oath of office in front of other members of the 2015-2017 AFSA Governing Board.*

Ongoing collective bargaining negotiations include: reform of the assignments process at the Department of State; limited career extensions for certain categories of career members of the Foreign Service whose time-in-class is due to expire; fitness for duty standards for Iraq; permissibility of audio and visual recordings during Diplomatic Security interviews; ensuring that AFSA maintains its bargaining rights; mid-level hiring at the FS-2 level and Foreign Service-to-Civil Service conversions at USAID; changes to assignment procedures for the Foreign Commercial Service; and an initial framework agreement for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Apart from formal labor disputes, AFSA communicates regularly with management from the foreign affairs agencies on a wide range of issues impacting the Foreign Service career. These include but are not limited to danger and hardship pay; same sex domestic partner benefits; employee and eligible family member security clearance issues; lodging and meals and incidental expenses; the reform of USAID's Human Capital and Talent Management Office; and the creation of temporary duty housing programs for Foreign Service officers with USAID and FCS. ■

# INREACH

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Serving Our Members

Communicating with and serving AFSA members is among the association's chief priorities. Whether we are reaching out by AFSANET email messages, social media posts, the association's website or *The Foreign Service Journal*, AFSA strives to ensure our members are informed and always welcomes member input.

**In 2015, AFSA's Member Services Department assisted nearly 1,000 active-duty, retired and associate members on a wide variety of issues, such as membership benefits and dues, retirement planning, social security and health insurance.**

## NAVIGATING THE OPM DATA BREACHES

When it was revealed in June that the Office of Personnel Management had suffered two cybersecurity data breaches exposing the personally identifiable information of millions of current and former federal employees, AFSA's advocacy, labor management and membership teams worked diligently to keep our members up-to-date on the issue. In its conversations with OPM, AFSA stressed the unique vulnerability of the Foreign Service, given its overseas presence and diplomatic assignments, and petitioned for credit monitoring services and liability insurance, among other requests.

## 2015-2017 GOVERNING BOARD ELECTIONS

AFSA held its biennial Governing Board election from April to June. During this time, 41 candidates campaigned for 29 spots on the board, and members considered a bylaw amendment that would reduce the number of Governing Board members from 29 to 19 starting in 2017. At 4,034 votes, the 2015 election saw more AFSA members voting than ever before. The bylaw amendment passed and is expected to impact all foreign affairs agencies equally while preserving the relative voting strengths of each constituency.

## A DIALOGUE WITH POST REPRESENTATIVES

In March, then-AFSA President Bob Silverman and State Vice President Matthew Asada held a webinar for current AFSA post representatives—our active-duty Foreign Service volunteers who represent both the collective and individual interests of members at post in dealing with post management and liaising with AFSA headquarters. The webinar served to review the role of post representatives in labor management relations and explain AFSA priority issues, as well as to receive feedback on member concerns at posts and on potential future enhancements to the post rep program.

## AFSA NEWS: KEEPING MEMBERS INFORMED

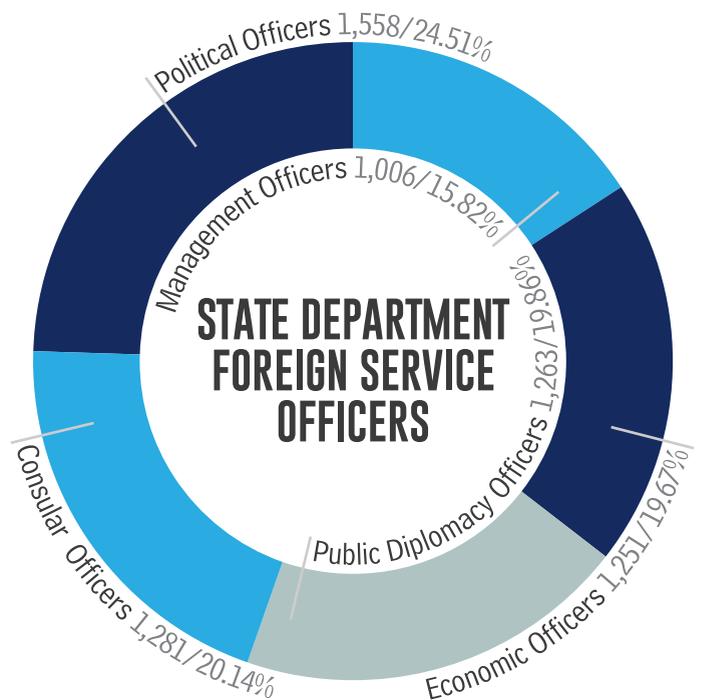
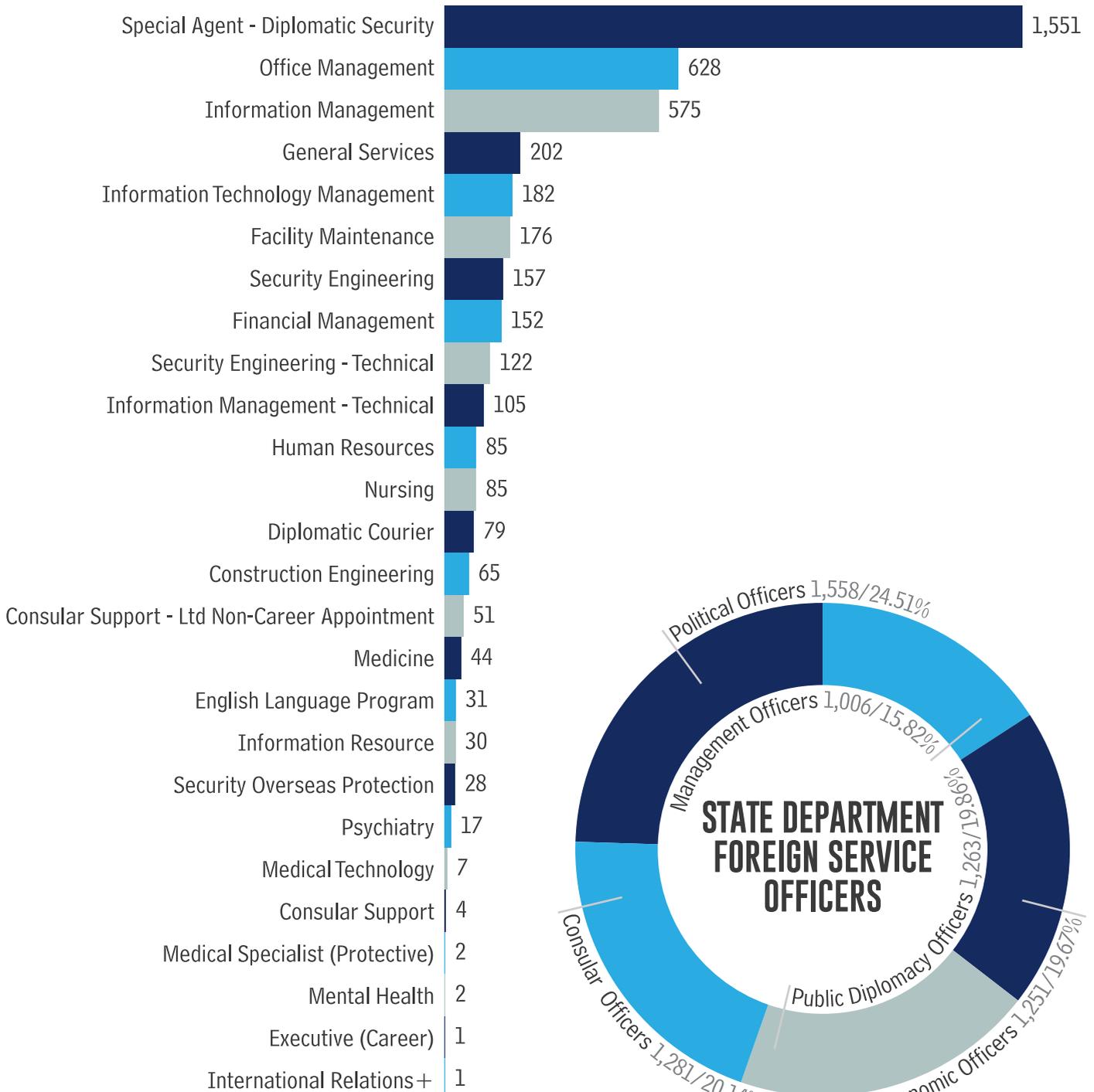
The AFSA News section of *The Foreign Service Journal* is the official record of the association highlighting association news, activities and advocacy on behalf of the Foreign Service. In 2015, AFSA News introduced a new feature—a readout of Governing Board meeting decisions to keep members informed of the activities of the elected officials who represent them.

## AFSA COMMUNITY CONNECTS MEMBERS

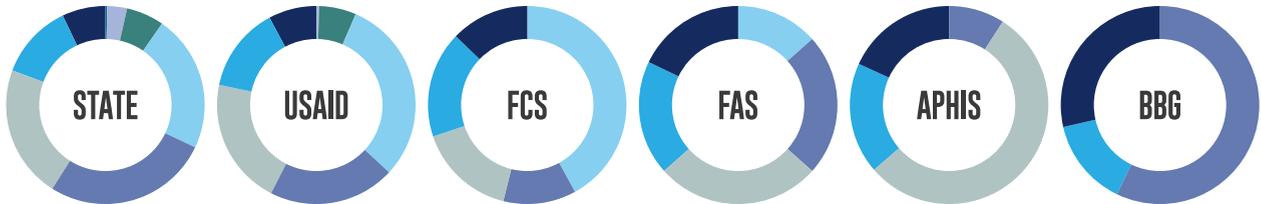
In March, the association rolled out the AFSA Community—an online discussion forum that allows members to connect, engage and share experiences across the globe. The community boasts 11,000 members and has resulted in more than 80 lively discussions on such diverse topics as the OPM data breach, visa processing, federal health benefits open season, 360-degree reviews and more. ■

# MEMBERSHIP SNAPSHOT

## STATE DEPARTMENT FOREIGN SERVICE SPECIALISTS BY SKILL CODE



## ACTIVE-DUTY MEMBERS BY AGENCY & GRADE

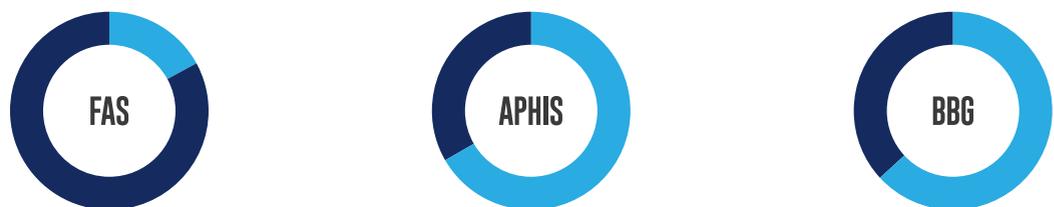


SFS	759/7.07%	119/7.81%	28/12.79%	20/17.86%	2/18.18%	2/28.57%
FS-1	1,317/12.26%	212/13.92%	38/17.35%	21/18.75%	2/18.18%	1/14.29%
FS-2	2,331/21.70%	316/20.75%	35/15.98%	30/26.79%	6/54.55%	-
FS-3	2,894/26.94%	314/20.62%	26/11.87%	26/23.21%	1/9.09%	4/57.14%
FS-4	2,402/22.36%	463/30.40%	92/42.01%	15/13.39%	-	-
FS-5	659/6.14%	92/6.04%	-	-	-	-
FS-6	348/3.24%	6/0.39%	-	-	-	-
FS-7	30/0.28%	1/0.07%	-	-	-	-
FS-9	1/0.01%	-	-	-	-	-
Total	10,741/100%	1,523/100%	219/100%	112/100%	11/100%	7/100%

## MEMBER PARTICIPATION BY CONSTITUENCY



AFSA Members	3,675/22.64%	10,741/78.06%	1,523/84.10%	219/85.88%
Non-Members	12,560/77.36%	3,019/21.94%	288/15.90%	36/14.12%



AFSA Members	112/82.96%	11/33.33%	7/36.84%
Non-Members	23/17.04%	22/66.67%	12/63.16%

## LABOR MANAGEMENT COUNSELING FOR INDIVIDUALS

An important benefit of AFSA membership is access to individual counseling with AFSA's legal team in the Labor Management Department.

The labor management staff opened 301 new individual cases in 2015 (72 of these had been resolved by year's end). The majority of individual cases are grievances, most of which concern performance evaluations that can lead to denial of tenure, failure to be promoted, low-ranking and selection out by the Foreign Service Performance Standards Board.

AFSA's labor management staff also prepared and represented eight members during transcribed interviews with the House Select Committee on Benghazi.

In total, our labor management team recorded 873 contacts from Foreign Service members. Of those recorded, roughly 93 percent were from State employees, and 75 percent of those were from employees at the FS-4, FS-3 and FS-2 levels. ■



*AFSA Staff Attorney Raeka Safai explains the implications of the latest changes to Foreign Affairs Manual rules governing the review process for employees' official and unofficial public speaking, teaching, writing and media engagements. (AFSA/Maria C. Livingston)*

# 873

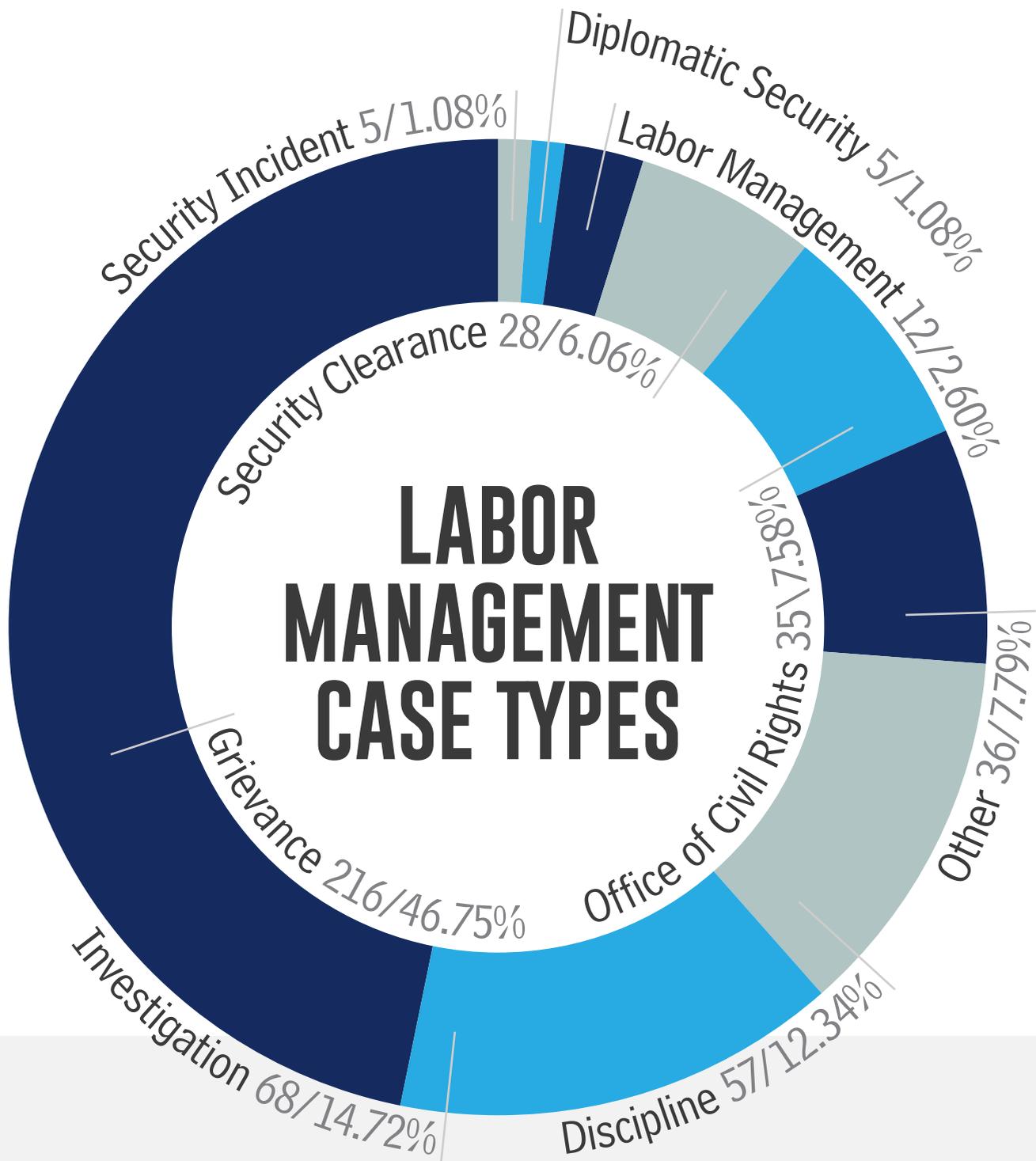
**CONTACTS FROM  
FOREIGN SERVICE MEMBERS**

# 93%

**STATE  
EMPLOYEES**

# 75%

**FS-4, FS-3, FS-2  
LEVEL EMPLOYEES**





# CELEBRATING MEMBERS

*The 2015 recipients of AFSA's awards for dissent, exemplary performance and lifetime contributions in the State Department lobby.  
(AFSA/Joaquin Sosa)*



## RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE AND COURAGE

Since 1968, AFSA has formally recognized those in the Foreign Service community who demonstrate intellectual courage, exemplary performance and outstanding service. AFSA held its annual awards ceremony in June in the Department of State's Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Rooms.

Ambassador (ret.) William C. Harrop received the 2015 Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award in recognition of a distinguished Foreign Service career, decades of service to AFSA and a lifetime of advocacy championing the critical role of diplomacy in foreign policy.

AFSA also awarded six constructive dissent awards recognizing Foreign Service members who work within the system to change policy and performance for the better.

These awards are unique: they are the only ones recognizing dissent within the entire federal government. Six awards are granted for exemplary performance highlighting professionalism and the spirit of service and volunteerism within the Foreign Service community.

The association also recognizes Foreign Service employees for their dedication and hard work in the study of Category III or IV languages. This year ten members of the Foreign Service received the Matilda W. Sinclaire Language Award. And one graduate from the National War College whose final paper was chosen as the best essay on strategy or policy among State Department employees received the George F. Kennan Strategic Writing Award. ■

## REMEMBERING OUR FOREIGN SERVICE COLLEAGUES

The AFSA Memorial Plaques honor colleagues who have given their lives while serving the American people abroad.

*In 2015 AFSA added two names to the plaques: FSO David Collins and Foreign Service Specialist Rayda Nadal. The total number of names on the plaques now stands at 247.*

In addition, AFSA established a permanent online memorial tribute site in 2015 to honor colleagues who died on active-duty or in retirement and pays tribute to their service. The site contains biographical information, photos and links to online obituaries when known. AFSA members may search for the names of their deceased colleagues, friends and family, leave a comment in the guest-book and make a donation in the deceased person's name. ■

## HONORING 247 COLLEAGUES





*On May 1, AFSA hosted its 82nd Annual Memorial Ceremony honoring Foreign Service personnel who have given their lives while serving the United States overseas. (AFSA/Joaquin Sosa)*

# REMEMBER



# COMMUNITY

## FOSTERING ESPRIT DE CORPS

AFSA was initially founded as a professional association for the purpose of fostering an esprit de corps among the members of the Foreign Service and continues on that mission to this day.

In May, AFSA paid homage to the more than 600 members of the Foreign Service who had served in Vietnam during the 1960s and 1970s. *The Foreign Service Journal* paid tribute with its April issue, "40 Years After the Fall of Saigon: The Foreign Service in Vietnam," featuring narratives by Foreign Service Vietnam veterans. Copies of the issue were distributed at AFSA's private screening of the American Experience documentary "The Last Days of Vietnam" for Foreign Service members at the Department of State's Marshall Auditorium.

AFSA capitalized on the popularity of *The Foreign Service Journal's* November issue, "In Their Own Write," which featured 48 books recently published by members of the Foreign Service community, by hosting the second annual AFSA Book Market. In addition, AFSA hosts an ongoing Book Notes series featuring conversations with Foreign Service authors.

In 2015, Book Notes events brought Ambassadors Chris Hill and Dennis Jett and retired Foreign Service Officer Stu Kennedy to AFSA headquarters to discuss their new books with AFSA members. ■





*In November, 20 Foreign Service authors showcased their books at the second annual AFSA Book Market. Executive Director Ian Houston welcomed the group before opening the doors to the public. (AFSA/Maria C. Livingston)*



*Eleni Smitham receives the BlueCross BlueShield Federal Employee Program Scholarship at AFSA's annual Merit Awards ceremony in May. (AFSA/ Brittany DeLong)*

## THE FOREIGN SERVICE COMMUNITY GIVES BACK THROUGH AFSA SCHOLARSHIPS

The AFSA Scholarship Program has benefited Foreign Service children since 1926. In the last 25 years alone, it has provided 2,200 students with more than \$4 million in college aid. The program delivers need-based, financial aid scholarships to undergraduates and a community service and academic and art merit awards to graduating high school seniors.

In 2015, the program bestowed \$263,000 on 84 recipients—the largest outlay of scholarship funds in its history and a 9-percent increase over the previous year.

The aid would not be possible without generous bequests and donations from those in the Foreign Service community. In August, Tracy McMackle established the Joshua Lane-Holman McMackle Memorial Scholarship in memory of her late son.

In March, the late Linda K. Fitzgerald bequeathed \$950,000—the largest single amount ever—to the AFSA Scholarship Fund, bringing the total endowment to \$7 million. That endowment generates roughly \$300,000 each year, enabling AFSA to give out \$263,000 in scholarships. The remaining money goes to the overhead costs of administering the scholarship program, which does not use AFSA dues. ■

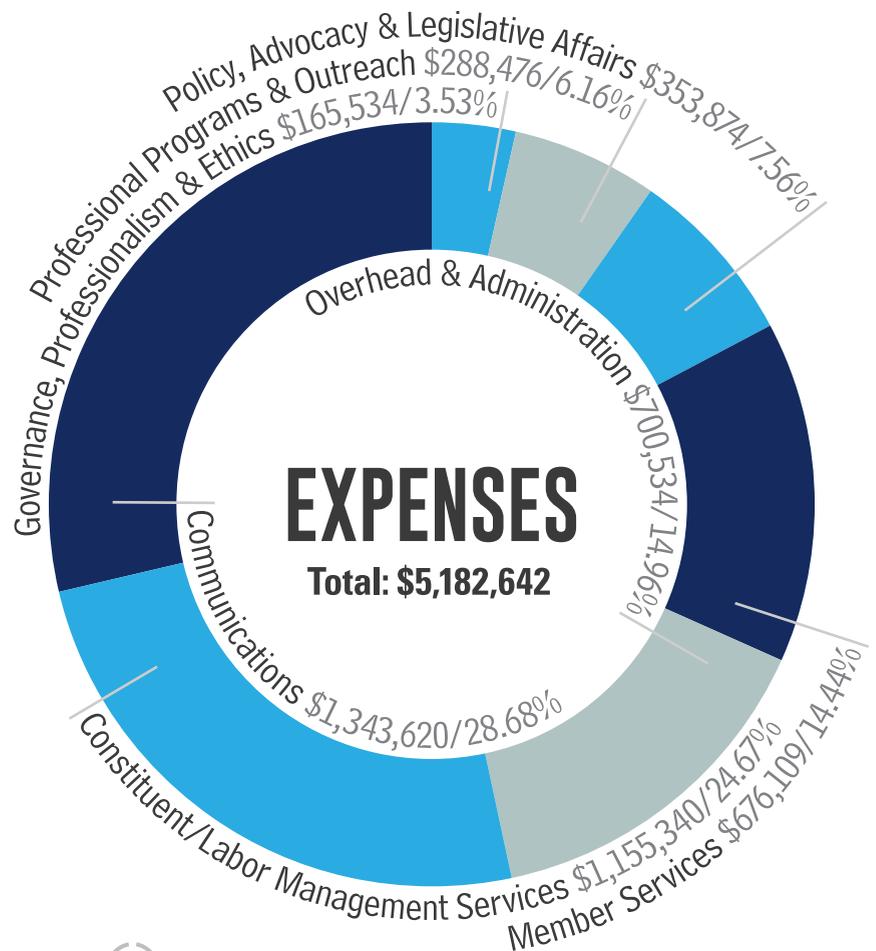
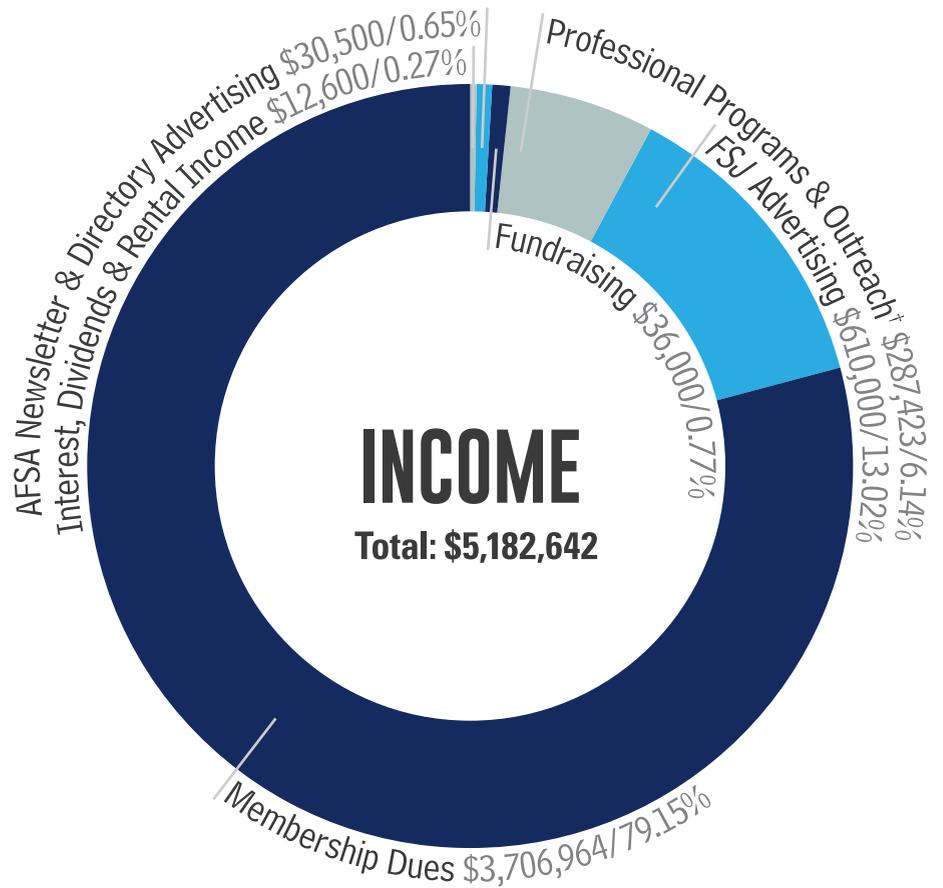
**\$7  
million**

**TOTAL ENDOWMENT  
OF THE AFSA  
SCHOLARSHIP FUND  
TO DATE**

# 2015 BUDGET IN BRIEF\*

\* Reflects Approved Budget figures. Audited Financial Statements for 2015 are available at [www.afsa.org](http://www.afsa.org).

† Includes Special Awards, Outreach, High School Essay Contest, Publications and Road Scholar Program.



**\$263,000**  
in College Aid  
Granted



**22**

FS High School  
Seniors Who  
Received Merit  
Awards Ranging  
from \$750 to  
\$2,500



**400**

FS Volunteer  
Hours Dedicated  
to Choosing  
Scholarship  
Recipients



**729**  
New AFSA Members  
(gross)



**4,034**  
AFSA  
Voters  
in the  
2015  
Election



**192,058**  
**192,058**  
**192,058**  
**192,058**

192,058 unique visits to the AFSA website

**2,037** Colleagues Honored in the  
Online Memorial Tributes Page

**2,355**  
2,355 Pageviews for "Building  
a Foreign Service for 2025 and  
Beyond," the Most Viewed *FSJ*  
Article Online in 2015  
**THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL**



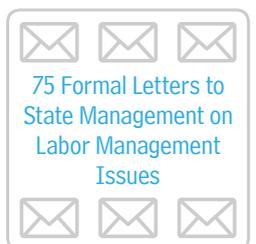
**16**  
16 Luncheons  
Hosted for  
Incoming Foreign  
Service Classes

10 Constructive  
Dissent and  
Performance  
Award Recipients



**10**

10 Sinclair  
Language Award  
Recipients



**75** Formal Letters to  
State Management on  
Labor Management  
Issues

# AFSA BY THE NUMBERS

**2,000+** Foreign Service-Related Articles Shared  
Through AFSA's Daily Media Digest

**301**  
New Cases Worked by  
Labor Management Staff

**20**  
Foreign Service Authors  
at Second Annual AFSA  
Book Market



Members Listed in  
AFSA's Retiree Directory:

**3,772**

**112**  
New  
AFSA  
Post  
Reps

**122**  
OPM Data Breach  
Inquiries Fielded

**f** **7,480**  
Facebook Likes\*

**261**  
Posts to the AFSA  
Online Community



**88**  
Meetings with  
Members of  
Congress

49 Speakers Bureau Events  
40 Venues Connected with FS Speakers



**48**  
Foreign Service-Authored  
Books Featured in the  
*FSJ*'s "In Their Own  
Write" Issue



**t** **1,997**  
Twitter followers\*

**2**  
2 New Names Added  
to the AFSA Memorial  
Plaques

**33**  
Congressional  
Hearings  
Covered

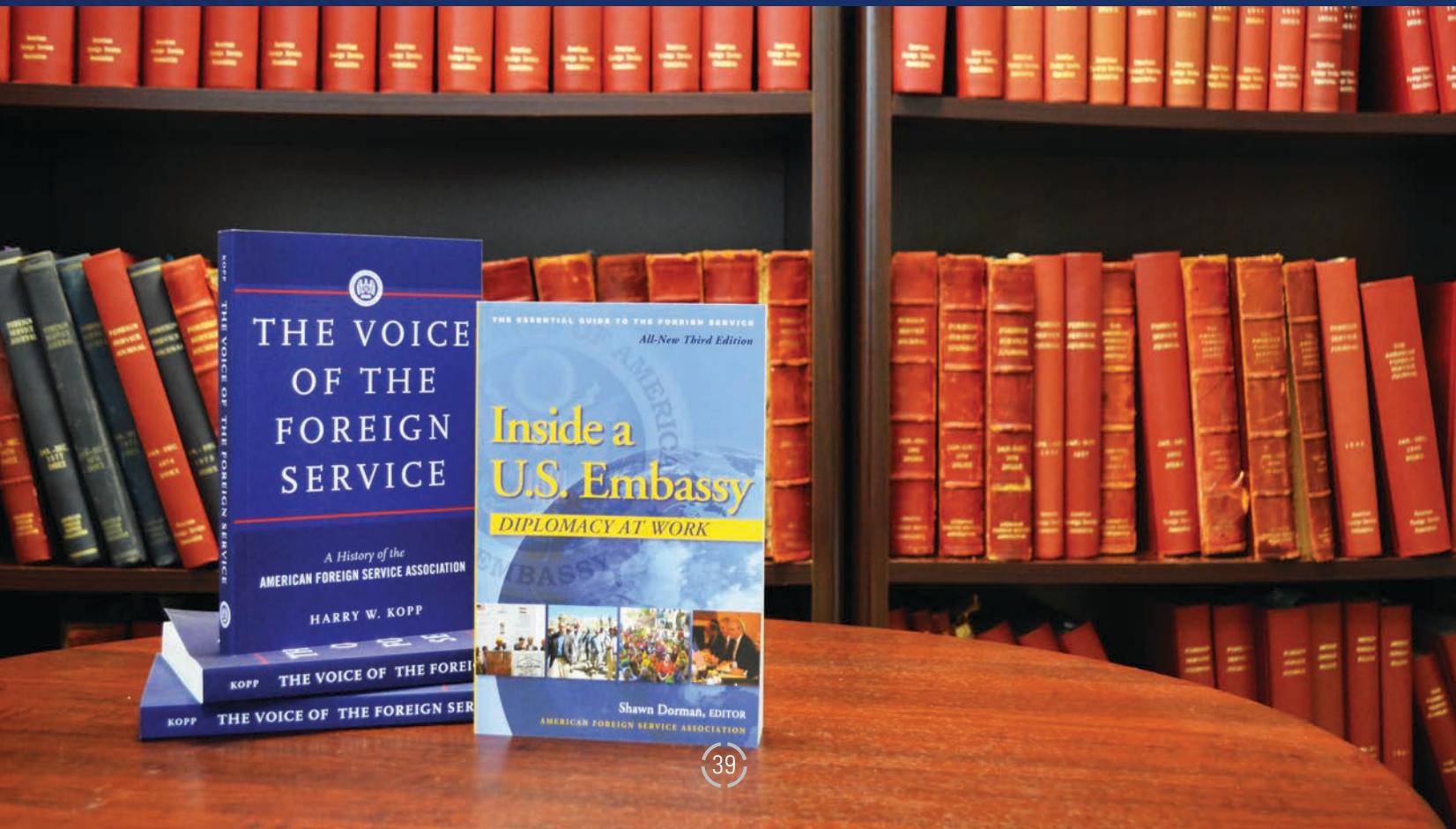
**457**  
Retirees Counseled

**1**  
New Book Published:  
*The Voice of the Foreign  
Service* by Harry Kopp

\*and growing - data current as of 12/31/15

# SUPPORT THE FOREIGN SERVICE

- ▶ Write or call your elected officials in the House or Senate expressing your support for the critical role of the Foreign Service in protecting and serving America's people, interests and values overseas. Request that they ensure the Foreign Service is adequately funded to be able to meet its objectives.
- ▶ Stay current on issues affecting the Foreign Service by following AFSA on Facebook or Twitter and visiting our YouTube channel or Flickr site.
- ▶ Sign up to receive AFSA's Daily Media Digest featuring articles relevant to the Foreign Service.
- ▶ Share information on AFSA's National High School Essay Contest with local schools, educators and parents.
- ▶ Contact AFSA to schedule an AFSA Speakers Bureau member to speak to local community groups and educational institutions.
- ▶ Subscribe to *The Foreign Service Journal*, and once you've done that, submit an article or letter for possible inclusion in the *Journal* (subject to our Editorial Board's review).
- ▶ Become a member of AFSA and get your colleagues to join, as well.
- ▶ Read *Inside a U.S. Embassy* to learn more about the Foreign Service.





# WAYS MEMBERS CAN GET INVOLVED!

- ▶ Join AFSA's Speakers Bureau.
- ▶ Participate in the online forum, AFSA Community.
- ▶ Volunteer to serve on an AFSA committee.
- ▶ Help judge applications submitted to the AFSA Scholarship Program.
- ▶ Become an AFSA post representative.
- ▶ Write an op-ed for your local newspaper explaining why a strong Foreign Service is in your community/state's best interests.
- ▶ Run for AFSA's Governing Board and vote in elections.

For more information, go to [www.afsa.org/getinvolved](http://www.afsa.org/getinvolved)



*Graduates of the Foreign Service Institute's Job Search Program celebrate their retirement with colleagues and friends during a reception co-sponsored by AFSA and DACOR. (AFSA/Maria C. Livingston)*

American Foreign Service Association  
2101 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037

[www.afsa.org](http://www.afsa.org)



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State Department Fax: (202) 647-0265  
USAID Office: (202) 712-1941  
USAID Fax: (202) 216-3710  
FCS Office: (202) 482-9088  
FAS Office: (202) 720-3650  
AFSA Retiree Counselors: (202) 338-4045, ext 509  
General Email Address: [member@afsa.org](mailto:member@afsa.org)  
Twitter: [@afsatweets](https://twitter.com/afsatweets)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/afsapage](https://facebook.com/afsapage)  
YouTube: [youtube.com/afsatube](https://youtube.com/afsatube)  
Flickr: [flickr.com/americanforeignservice](https://flickr.com/americanforeignservice)