

REPORTING DEATHS OF FOREIGN SERVICE RETIREES OR SURVIVORS

Family members often are unfamiliar with offices and functions in Foreign Service agencies, so AFSA offers this list of steps to take in the event of the death of a FS retiree, spouse, or ex-spouse.

- 1. Notification and FEHB:** Notify the Department of State's Human Resources Service Center (HRSC) in Charleston, S.C. during regular office hours at (866) 300-7419 (toll free), (843) 308-5539 (from outside the U.S.), or HRSC@state.gov. HRSC will ask the survivor to provide documentation, including a Foreign Service death benefits claim form and a certified copy of the death certificate. HRSC will take the following steps:
 - Immediately terminate the deceased person's annuity.
 - Initiate a survivor annuity within 45 days of receiving required documentation (complicated cases can take up to three months).
 - Continue Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) for eligible survivors.
- 2. FEGLI:** File a claim for Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) benefits, if applicable, after HRSC notifies the Office of Personnel Management of the death. OPM will send the designated beneficiary a claim form and instructions. Required documentation includes a certified copy of the death certificate.
- 3. TSP:** File a claim for Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) benefits, if applicable, by calling (877) 968-3778. Press 3 from the main menu and hold to speak to a TSP Service Representative. You will need to submit a TSP-17 form and a certified copy of the death certificate.
- 4. SSA:** Notify the Social Security Administration by authorizing the funeral home to do so or by calling SSA at (800) 772-1213. SSA will determine if benefits are due.
- 5. LTC:** If you are a surviving spouse with a Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) whose premiums were deducted from the Foreign Service retiree's annuity, then call the BENEFEDS Customer Service Center at (877) 888-3337 to arrange for premiums to be deducted from your survivor annuity.
- 6. FEDVIP:** If you are a surviving spouse with dental and/or vision insurance coverage under the Foreign Service retiree's Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) policy, then call the BENEFEDS at (877) 888-3337 to arrange for premiums to be deducted from your survivor annuity.
- 7. AFSA:** Notify AFSA at member@afsa.org or (202) 338-4045. AFSA can explain how to place an obituary in *The Foreign Service Journal*. AFSA's Retirement Benefits Counselor is available to answer questions about the processes described above. Surviving spouses are encouraged to join AFSA to benefit from ongoing help in dealing with Washington offices on benefits questions and other issues as they arise.

8. **Obituary:** If you would like an obituary of your loved one to appear in *The Foreign Service Journal*, please send information via email to journal@afsa.org. Obituaries, with photographs, also may be sent to State Magazine, which is published monthly by the Bureau of Global Talent Management at the U.S. Department of State. As of 10/2020, State Magazine offered the following contact name for obituaries: Amanda Richard at RichardAJ@state.gov. An additional general email address is statemagazine@state.gov.