

Using the HR Service Center: *A Guide for Foreign Service Annuitants*

How Your Annuity is Processed

GTM/RET adjudicates all Foreign Service retirement cases and determines the actual amount of the final annuity, based on the laws and regulations in effect at the time of retirement and on the certified service history data. Once the retirement claim is finalized, the Office of Retirement provides each retiree a **statement of benefits** and other important information, including when annuity payments will begin. GTM/RET then sends the retirement application and related records to the State Department's Annuity Pay Division (CGFS/GC/PPR/ANP) in North Charleston, South Carolina. ANP is responsible for processing annuity payments and other retiree financial transactions.

Annuity Payments/Income Tax Withholding - ANP handles all retiree payments, including annuities, survivor benefits, insurance premiums, etc. Retiring employees may direct ANP to withhold federal income tax from their annuity by completing form W-4P. [Note: Federal taxes are withheld as if the retiree were married and claiming 3 withholding allowances unless the retiree instructs the Department of State to do something different.]

After Retirement

ANP sends new Foreign Service retirees a retirement contribution letter by mail not later than January 31 of the year following their retirement. Annuitants should retain this important document in their personal records in order to calculate the portion of their yearly annuity that is not taxable. See: IRS publication #721, "Tax Guide to US Civil Service Retirement Benefits, Part II" at www.irs.gov; or http://apps.opm.gov/tax_calc/index.cfm. If you do not receive a letter from the Retirement Accounts Division with the amount of your mandatory contributions by February 15 of the year following your retirement, you should contact ANP at PayHelp@state.gov.

Retirees may also start, change, or stop Federal income tax withholding and change or stop State income tax withholding by contacting ANP at Payhelp@state.gov. These transactions can also be completed at www.employeeexpress.gov. Retirees will need their Social Security number and a Password, which is sent to each employee after retirement by OPM, to access Employee Express.

GTM/RET and the HR Services Center in Charleston, S.C. share in the management of other annuitant services. Annuitants should contact GTM/RET, through the HR Service Center, if they marry, remarry, divorce, or become reemployed in the federal government. Annuitants should contact the HR Services Center in Charleston if they want to change their designation of beneficiary forms, change health insurance carriers during Open Season, change their life insurance coverage, etc. Annuitants should also look to GTM/RET's website for information on the latest issues affecting retirees, as well as appropriate forms and other information (<https://rnet.state.gov>).

GTM/RET posts an **annual retiree newsletter** on <https://rnet.state.gov> (Click on "What's New?)" **during the fall Open Season** to inform them of changes in insurance benefits plans and the COLA for the following year. The annual *Annuitant Newsletter* also includes Form DS-5026 to enable those receiving an FSPS Annuity Supplement to report their income from the previous year, in order to retain eligibility for the Supplement. Failure to report such income to GTM/RET by January 8 each year could result in cancellation of your FSPS annuity supplement.

Reports of Death:

The HR Service Center handles reports of deaths and related survivor issues and advises annuitants and survivors on their benefits. Deaths of annuitants or beneficiaries should be reported immediately to the HR Shared Services Center at **1-866-300-7419 (toll free), 1-843-308-5539 (outside the U.S.). Or, e-mail: HRSC@state.gov.**

Contacting DoS Office of Retirement (GTM/RET)

- E-mail: HRSC@state.gov.
- Call 1-866-300-7419 (toll free) or 1 843-308-5539 (outside the U.S.).
- Write: U.S. Department of State, HR Service Center, Annuitant Services, 1999 Dyess Avenue Bldg. E, Charleston, SC 29405.

Contacting the HR Service Center

- E-Mail: HRSC@state.gov
- Call: 1-866-300-7419 (toll free) or 1 843-308-5539 (outside the U.S.);
- Fax: 1-843-202-3807
- Write: U.S. Department of State, HR Service Center, Annuitant Services, 1999 Dyess Avenue Bldg. E, Charleston, SC 29405

Contacting the Annuity Pay Processing Branch (CGFS/GC/PPR/ANP)

Annuitants can contact the Annuity Pay Processing Branch

- E-Mail: **PayHelp@state.gov**;
- Call: 877-865-0760; Fax: 843-308-5471
- Write: U.S. Department of State, Global Financial Services/ANP, 2010 Bainbridge Avenue, Building C, North Charleston, SC 29405.