Guideline for Passport Photos and Requirements

**Consulates have strict requirements** about the quality of photos that they will accept and they are getting stricter. Because of the increasing incidence of counterfeit passports, some consulates already do, or are preparing to, implement biometric facial recognition technology requirements for passport photos. Biometric facial recognition allows for automated authentication of the passports and recording of the passport holder’s arrivals and departures. What this means for you: poor quality, scanned, and/or computer generated photos will no longer be accepted. If the photos you receive do not meet the requirements below, ask the photographer to retake them. If the photos are still not acceptable to you, reject them. Don't pay for inferior photos!

**General Recommendations for Passport Photos**

**SCANS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE!!!** Consulates increasing will not accept scanned, photocopied, or pixilated photos, despite what their websites say.

**Photo Size:**
- 2” x 2” square
- Trimmed, clean borders

**Background:**
- Plain white background, not colored, no shading
- No shadows

**Image:**
- Centered horizontally and vertically within the 2 x 2 square
- Head and tops of shoulders, full front view
- Head size should be between about 1” and 1 3/8” from top of hair to chin
- All facial features must be clear – no fuzziness or blurring. Focus must be clear and sharp.
- Must be neither too dark nor too light. Skin tone should be natural.

**Your Appearance:**
- A slight closed mouth smile is o.k. A huge grin is not! Teeth should not be visible in the photograph as this will affect the biometric scanning and recognition of the photograph.
- Hair must be tucked behind both ears so both ears are visible. The entire face including ears and forehead must be fully visible.
- No glasses – take them off for the photo
- Eyes must be open and looking ahead
- If you wear white, your shoulders will not show up in the photo. We recommend wearing a darker color.
• No scarves, hats, uniforms, hair accessories, or head coverings unless for religious reasons

What You Need to Take With You When Applying for Your Passport*

• **Payment** – You can pay by check or money order. If you pay by check, it cannot be a starter check or counter check from the bank. A personal check, cashier’s check, traveler’s check, Treasury check, certified check or money order works. If you do not have a check book, get a money order by taking cash or a debit card to the post office and get the money order for a fee of $1.00. It should be made out to the U.S. Dept. of State. **Note:** If you plan to obtain your passport from a passport agent at Kalamazoo Township, rather than the post office, do not include the $25.00 execution fee on your check as that goes to Kalamazoo Township (and can be paid by cash or a separate check).

• **Drivers License** - If you have an out-of-state driver’s license, you must bring your student ID.

• **Birth Certificate** - It has to be the real thing with a seal, not a copy. If you already have a passport, chances are you were under 16 when you got it so it won’t work as proof of citizenship. This is why you need to bring your birth certificate.

• **U.S. Passport & International Travel** - for more information visit http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english.html

*Info provided 9/19/2013 by Molly Cole, Supervisor’s Assistant/Benefits Coordinator Charter Township of Kalamazoo at 269-381-8080 or molly@ktwp.org