2017 Peace Corps Prep Invitation to Participate

NEW PARTNER PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

DEADLINE: Friday, December 1, 2017

Accepted partners will be expected to launch their programs in the Fall of 2018 or Spring of 2019.

INTRODUCTION

Since 2007, Peace Corps Prep (PC Prep) has provided a path to partnership for undergraduate institutions and Peace Corps. Using a streamlined model, colleges and universities help their students interlace coursework, extracurricular and professional development activities that build competencies proven to benefit Peace Corps service and other intercultural work.

The PC Prep program can aid in globalizing the scope of college classes and campuses, and attracts motivated students with a worldly curiosity. In turn, it professionalizes these students' education with marketable skills such as foreign language, intercultural competency, and an area of specialty backed by coursework and hands-on experience. It also gives students and alumni a competitive edge when applying for Peace Corps service, though Peace Corps cannot guarantee that they will be selected for service.

Peace Corps service itself offers students a two-year, all-expense-paid jumpstart to their careers. As Volunteers, they serve as representatives of the United States in communities overseas, cultivating leadership and project management skills. With nearly 7,000 Volunteers in the field helping communities in over sixty countries make progress toward their goals, today's Peace Corps is more vital than ever.

HOW PEACE CORPS PREP WORKS

Peace Corps has identified four core competencies that prepare students for intercultural service (listed below). Using a full suite of templates, the partner institution creates a program through which their students build those competencies. The institution also designates a PC Prep program coordinator to liaise with Peace Corps and guide the institution's marketing, implementation, and management of the program.

Partner institutions are granted some degree of flexibility as they align these four competencies with their current programs, structures, and culture, and are asked to highlight local service opportunities through which students can build relevant skills. The strongest programs create a detailed, user-friendly structure that allows students to see their options and make a plan for how they will build the required competencies.

Peace Corps Prep is intended to reach students from any major who are in good academic standing, with a special emphasis on students from diverse and traditionally underrepresented communities.

THE FOUR CORE COMPETENCIES TO BE BUILT BY PREP STUDENTS

Detailed below are the minimum programmatic requirements for PC Prep. Partner institutions are free to add additional requirements atop these.

1. Training *and* experience in a specific work sector

Leveraging concrete knowledge and skills is central to on-the-ground international development work. Students should take at least **three courses** that build their capacity to work in one of the following sectors. Additionally, they should accumulate **a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer or work experience in that *same* sector**, preferably in a teaching or outreach capacity. Learn more about Peace Corps' six sectors [here](), and browse current volunteer openings (and their needed qualifications) [here]().

- Education

- Health

- Environment

- Agriculture

- Youth in Development

- Community Economic Development

2. Foreign language skills

Most Peace Corps applicants are expected to hone their capacity to interact professionally using a non-English language. Minimum course requirements vary by desired placement region.

- *Latin America*: Students indicating an intention to serve in Spanish-speaking countries must build strong intermediate proficiency, having completed two 200-level courses or learned Spanish through another medium.
- *West Africa*: Students indicating an intention to serve in French-speaking African countries must build proficiency in French or another Romance language, having completed one 200-level course or learned the language through another medium.
- *Everywhere else*: Students indicating an intention to serve anywhere else do not have explicit language requirements to complete the Program, but they should still be encouraged to study a foreign language.

3. Intercultural competence

Engaging thoughtfully and fluidly across cultures begins with one's own self-awareness. Students should deepen their cultural agility through **a mix of three introspective courses** in which they learn about others while reflecting upon their own selves in relation to others. The goal is to build the capacity to shift perspective and behavior around relevant cultural differences. Some example courses:

- Any Diversity & Inclusion course

- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI), or Disability Studies

- African/Asian/Black/Latin or Native American Studies
- Intercultural Communication

Note: Prolonged intercultural experiences—such as studying/volunteering abroad, supporting new Americans/immigrants in the local community, or teaching in diverse schools—also strengthen a candidacy significantly and may be written into program structures in addition to or in place of up to two of these courses.

4. Professional and leadership development

Peace Corps service and similar international development work opportunities are highly professional and selective. Students will benefit from these three activities:
1. Having their **resume** critiqued by someone in Career Services
2. Attending a workshop or class on **interview skills**
3. Developing at least one significant **leadership experience** and preparing to discuss it thoughtfully (i.e., organizing an event, serving on an executive board, or leading a project)

ELIGIBILITY
The Peace Corps invites proposals from accredited American institutions of higher education granting bachelor's degrees.

PROPOSALS
Proposals must follow the attached template and address all questions and requested appendices. Please ensure that responses are numbered to correspond with the template questions. Do not include supplementary materials unless specifically requested by the Peace Corps. Proposals should not exceed 5 pages in length, excluding cover page and appendices. Incomplete or alternatively formatted proposals will not be reviewed.

SUBMISSION
One electronic copy of the proposal in PDF format must be submitted to the Peace Corps via this online form go.usa.gov/xRAw2 by 11:59pm PST, Friday, December 1st, 2017.

SELECTION/EVALUATION CRITERIA
Institutions will be selected based on the following criteria:
- On-time submission of a detailed, thoughtful, complete proposal (with fully individualized appendices) that follows the provided templates and guidelines. Development of a program that is easy for students to understand and navigate as they build PC Prep's four core competencies through curricular and experiential learning (much attention will be given to the student guide).
- Development of a strong on-campus recruitment, marketing, and outreach plan for the program so as to ensure growth and success, with concrete, specialized plans for recruiting diverse and underrepresented student communities into the program.
- Evidence of a robust and committed staff infrastructure to manage the program, including a designated coordinator who will liaise with Peace Corps.

NOTIFICATION

Submitters will receive an auto-confirmation of their submission. All submitters will be notified via e-mail of their proposal's final status on or before **February 15th, 2018.** Decisions are final, though unsuccessful applicants are free to resubmit in future proposal cycles.

ESTABLISHMENT

Peace Corps staff will prepare a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) based on a standard (non-editable) template for each accepted institution. The Peace Corps Director will sign the agreements before they are sent to institutions for countersignature by a top administrator. The co-signed MOA establishes the partnership and serves as the formal record of understanding between Peace Corps and the partner school, and is valid for a term of 5 years. A sample MOA form is available for review by request.

INITIAL AND ONGOING REQUIREMENTS

The PC Prep MOA details all core partnership expectations for both Peace Corps and partner institutions. Here are the more prominent actions required of partner institutions:

- *Requirements by February 15, 2019:* (1) Cosign the MOA, then (2) publish an approved PC Prep webpage within the college or university's official website and build, publicize, and launch the program.
- *Ongoing requirements:* Complete an annual, template-based report for Peace Corps; promptly inform Peace Corps of any changes in coordinator or key programmatic elements.

CONTACT

Questions related to the submission of a proposal may be directed to your Program Specialist in Peace Corps' Office of University Programs. If you do not know who that is, please inquire via the contact information below.

Phone: 202-692-1643
E-mail: pcprep@peacecorps.gov