

# IPS 1-15 Global Health Service Partnership Policy

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**Effective Date:** July 23, 2015

**Responsible Office:** Office of Global Operations

**New Interim Policy Statement**

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Issuance Memo (07/23/15)

Peace Corps Response Handbook

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## 1.0 Purpose

This Interim Policy Statement sets out the Peace Corps policies for Peace Corps Response Volunteers (PCRVs) serving in Global Health Service Partnership (GHSP) assignments (GHSP PCRVs) as medical professionals. This IPS will also apply to spouses and partners of GHSP PCRVs (referred to as PCRV spouses) who are serving as PCRVs concurrently with their GHSP PCRV spouse/partner. These policies do not apply to any other Peace Corps Volunteers or PCRVs, unless indicated otherwise.

## 2.0 Authority

22 U.S.C. §2504.

## 3.0 Policy

- (a) In recognition of the very demanding assignments and highly technical qualifications of GHSP PCRVs, certain of the general policies covering Volunteers and PCRVs are modified as provided in this IPS.
- (b) Unless modified by this IPS, all policies applicable to Volunteers and PCRVs apply to GHSP PCRVs.

## 4.0 Annual Leave

- (a) MS 220 *Leave for Volunteers and Trainees*, 4.4 and 4.5 are modified for GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses to the extent that weekends and host country holidays will not be counted in the computation of annual leave days.
- (b) GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses must obtain written permission from the appropriate Peace Corps staff member (GHSP Program Manager or Country Director) and supervisor at the hosting institution prior to taking annual leave per post policy. A determination on the request for annual leave should, to the extent feasible, be made by the Country Director or GHSP Program Manager within 48 hours of the request.

- (c) GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses should request annual leave involving in-country and international travel at least one week prior to commencing leave.
- (d) There are no restrictions on when GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses may take annual leave during their service.
- (e) GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses do not need to request annual leave to be away from their community on weekends and local holidays as provided above. However, in ALL cases when GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses are away from their community, they must comply with post policies on whereabouts notification.

## **5.0 Professional Leave**

7.4 of MS 220 is not applicable to GHSP PCRVs. However, the Country Director may authorize professional leave for GHSP PCRVs without limit as long as it does not interfere with the GHSP PCRV's work responsibilities, but each event should be limited to a maximum of 7 days, unless it occurs during a school or work break at the hosting institution. Professional leave may be used to participate in continuing education for credentialing or proficiency purposes, to take professional examinations, to attend medical or health conferences, or for similar activities.

On a case by case basis, the Country Director may authorize more than 7 days of professional leave for one event if the time frame of the event and related travel necessitates additional days. While on professional leave, the living allowance, professional allowance, and readjustment allowance of the GHSP PCRV will continue, but no other allowances will be paid or authorized. Any absence beyond the period authorized will be charged to annual leave or Leave Without Allowance.

## **6.0 Volunteer Allowances**

Due to the highly technical nature of the GHSP PCRV assignments and the related additional expenses, GHSP PCRVs are provided a professional allowance of \$300 per month, in addition to the allowances provided to GHSP PCRVs under MS 221 Volunteer Allowances. This allowance is intended to cover technical supplies, educational materials, travel expenses, internet access, and other unforeseen expenses.

## **7.0 Extension and Special Leave**

- (a) The Peace Corps may permit GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses to extend their service.
- (b) GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses who extend their service for at least 12 months or one full academic calendar year are eligible for special leave in accordance with this IPS.

### **7.1 Extension of GHSP Assignments**

### **7.1.1 Application for Extension**

A GHSP PCRV may request permission to extend service by submitting a written request to the Country Director. For administrative purposes, such requests must be made at least two months before the established Close of Service (COS) date. In unusual situations, an extension request made during the last two months of a GHSP PCRV's service may be considered for approval by the Country Director.

### **7.1.2 Criteria for Extensions**

The Country Director must consider all of the following factors in determining whether to grant an extension request:

- (a) A GHSP PCRV's unique importance to the total program and the overall benefit to the host country.
- (b) The degree to which the GHSP PCRV's supervisor and other host country officials support an extension.
- (c) The GHSP PCRV's motivation in seeking the extension.
- (d) Medical approval from the Peace Corps Medical Officer.
- (e) The previous conduct of the GHSP PCRV.
- (f) The quality of the GHSP PCRV's service to date.
- (g) The total time the GHSP PCRV will have served as a result of the extension.

### **7.1.3 Implementation of Extension**

- (a) The Country Director may approve an extension of service after consultation with the Peace Corps GHSP Program Manager and notification to the Peace Corps Response Chief of Operations. An extension of service is reported through the VICA application as soon as the extension is approved. A change of 30 days or less beyond the original COS date is classified as a date change, not an "extension of service".
- (b) An extending GHSP PCRV is credited at the beginning of each extension with annual leave in accordance with MS 220 (see also section 5.3).
- (c) GHSP PCRVs extending less than 12 months or less than one full academic calendar year from the original COS date may not receive a partial payment of readjustment allowance at the time of extension. GHSP PCRVs extending for 12 months or more or one full academic calendar year are entitled to a one-third readjustment allowance payment at the time of original COS date and a one-third readjustment allowance payment at the extended COS date. Country Directors must follow the procedures in MS 223.

## **7.2 Special Leave for Extending GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses**

### **7.2.1 Eligibility for Special Leave**

GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses extending their service for (i) 12 months or more or (ii) another full academic year at their hosting institution (even if this is less than 12 months from the original COS date) are entitled to 15 days of special leave upon either the completion of the original term of service or as provided for under section 7.2.3 below. An additional 5 days of special leave can be requested by extending GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouse for time devoted to professional development/academic enrichment activities or Peace Corps Third Goal activities, which have been approved by the GHSP Program Manager in country. Each day of special leave is considered part of the GHSP PCRV's or PCRV's service.

### **7.2.2 Second Extension and Special Leave**

After an additional 12 months or full academic year extension, a GHSP PCRV and PCRV spouse who extends service for an additional 12 months will again be eligible for special leave as specified in section 7.2.1 above. Eligibility for a second special leave is based solely on the length of extended service regardless of the timing of the previous special leave.

### **7.2.3 Timing of Special Leave**

- (a) Extending GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses are expected to take special leave at a time that works best with their hosting institution's academic calendar and work responsibilities, but special leave may not be taken within 90 days of the new COS date.
- (b) GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses may extend the special leave period by using up to 8 days of accrued or advanced annual leave for a combined total of leave not to exceed 28 consecutive days, unless the special leave is taken during an extended break in the academic calendar at the hosting institution. In the latter case, the GHSP PCRV may request the Country Director to approve additional annual leave and Leave Without Allowance. The Country Director may approve the request if it does not interfere with the GHSP PCRV's work responsibilities.
- (c) GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses who do not take special leave within the time frames allowable forfeits the right to any special leave allowances and airline tickets for travel in conjunction with that special leave.

### **7.2.4 Allowances during Special Leave**

For each day of special leave actually taken, GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses receive the current special leave allowance. The living allowance continues to be paid during periods of special leave for GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses who extend in their original host countries or extend and transfer to another country. (For guidance regarding payment of living allowance to those GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses who extend and transfer, see MS 282 Transfers/ Reassignments, Reinstatements and Reenrollments of Trainees and Volunteers.) Readjustment allowance continues to accrue during special leave.

### **7.2.5 Travel during Special Leave**

- (a) GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses departing on special leave should be issued a ticket for round-trip travel from the host country to the U. S. home-of-record. Excursion fare tickets are to be issued, whenever possible, for the most direct route to the U. S. home-of-record. If a GHSP PCRV or PCRV spouse wishes to use indirect travel that will not conform to the excursion fare restrictions, the GHSP PCRV or PCRV spouse must pay the difference and coordinate any additional cost directly with the airline.
- (b) GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses who wish to travel elsewhere than to their home-of-record may request a ticket for round-trip excursion air fare from the host country to any location in an amount not greater than the cost of the least expensive fare from the host country to the U.S. home-of-record, or pay the difference.
- (c) GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses will not be given cash in lieu of this ticket under any circumstances.

### **7.2.6 Medical Care for Conditions arising during Special Leave**

The Peace Corps continues to provide GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses with necessary medical care during special leave. A condition arising in the U. S. that requires post-service care will generally not be deemed "service-connected" for purposes of Federal Employee Compensation Act (FECA) benefits. See MS 266 Post-Service Health Benefits Program for Volunteers, Trainees, and Dependents.

### **7.2.7 Life Insurance**

Extending GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses continue to be eligible for the Peace Corps life insurance during special and advanced annual leave, regardless of where the leave is taken.

### **7.2.8 Early Termination after Receiving an Extension of Service**

- (a) Effect on Special Leave. The grant of special leave is based on a GHSP PCRV and the PCRV spouse's commitment to additional service for a minimum 12-months or one full academic year extension (not including the days of special leave). GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses who fail to fulfill that commitment forfeit their right to special leave and, if they have already taken special leave, may be required to refund certain amounts to the Peace Corps.
- (b) Resignation before Special Leave. GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses who resign during an extension of service and who have not taken special leave will be deemed to have shortened their service extension and to be a COSing Volunteer as of the date of resignation. See subsection (g) below for resignations in lieu of administrative separation.
- (c) Resignation during Special Leave. GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses who take special leave and resign before returning to the host country while on special leave will be deemed to have shortened their service extension and to be a COSing Volunteer as of the date when the GHSP PCRV and PCRV spouse formally notify the Peace Corps of the intent to resign from service or the last day of special leave, whichever is earlier. The GHSP PCRV and PCRV spouse must refund any allowances granted during special leave

(excluding the cost of excursion class airfare from the host country to the home-of-record) and return any unused plane tickets provided at Peace Corps expense. The GHSP PCRV and PCRV spouse also may not receive any living allowances held for him/her during special leave.

- (d) Resignation after Taking Special Leave. A GHSP PCRV and PCRV spouse who take special leave and resign after returning to the host country will be considered early terminees subject to the provisions of MS 284 *Early Termination of Service*. The GHSP PCRV and PCRV spouse will not be required to refund the cost of the special leave round-trip airfare between host country and home-of-record. If the Country Director determines, however, that the GHSP PCRV and PCRV spouse accepted the special leave in bad faith, the GHSP PCRV and PCRV spouse may, with the concurrence of the Regional Director, have any allowances given to the GHSP PCRV and PCRV spouse for use during special leave deducted from the readjustment allowance.
- (e) Medical Separation or Interrupted Service. GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses who extend and are medically separated or have interrupted service during that extension will be considered either early terminees (i. e., medical separation or interrupted service) or COSing Volunteers, depending on whether they are separated before, during, or after special leave. Their designation will be based on the standards used in subparagraphs (b), (c) and (d). These GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses will not be required to refund allowances granted to or held for them during special leave.
- (f) Sexual Assault, Stalking and Serious Crime. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section, if either a GHSP PCRV or a PCRV spouse, who has extended service becomes a victim of sexual assault, stalking or serious crime, he or she may terminate Peace Corps service and may receive an advance of the extended COS date. The GHSP PCRV and PCRV spouse will not be required to refund allowances granted to or held for them during special leave.
- (g) Administrative Separation. GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses who fail to complete their extension of service as the result of an administrative separation or resignation in lieu of administrative separation will be deemed early terminees and treated in accordance with the provisions of MS 284 *Early Termination of Service*, regardless of the point during their extension of service when the termination occurs or whether they have taken special leave.

## **8.0 Spouses and Partners of GHSP PCRVs**

A GHSP PCRV's non-Volunteer spouse or partner may accompany and reside with the GHSP PCRV in the country of assignment, contingent upon the execution of the attached Acknowledgement, which sets out the terms and conditions, policies and expectations of the spouse or partner.

## **9.0 Driving**

- (a) To the extent permitted by applicable host country laws, GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses may:
  - (i) own and drive an appropriately modest personal automobile for their personal use
  - (ii) rent and drive a locally owned automobile
  - (iii) drive an automobile provided at their host country assignments.
- (b) A GHSP PCRV and PCRV spouse driving or owning an automobile is responsible for compliance with all host country driving laws and regulations, including license requirements.
- (c) GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses who own an automobile must purchase and maintain liability insurance to the extent required by local law. The Peace Corps does not insure privately owned automobiles and will not replace or reimburse GHSP PCRVs for automobiles lost, damaged or stolen.
- (d) GHSP PCRVs shall provide copies of their license and liability insurance to Peace Corps.
- (e) GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses who rent an automobile must maintain liability insurance to the extent required by local law.
- (f) GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses may drive host country automobiles provided by their hosting institution if host country requirements regarding liability insurance are met.
- (g) GHSP PCRVs and their PCRV spouses are required to comply with the ban on phone use and texting while driving under Manual Section 522, section 10.0.
- (h) In situations authorized by (a) above, the Peace Corps is not responsible for payment or reimbursement of any expenses or fees associated with the automobile or its operation, including purchase or rental of the automobile gasoline charges, repair bills, tolls and related expenses insurance or shipping charges.

## **10.0 Procedures**

Procedures implementing this Interim Policy Statement Section are contained in the Peace Corps Response Handbook, which must be approved by the Office of Global Operations, the Office of Chief Financial Officer and the Office of the General Counsel.

## **11.0 Effective Date**

The effective date is the date of issuance.