

MS 123 Office of the Director: Organization, Mission, and Functions

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1.0 Authority

Peace Corps Act, 22 USC 2503

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this manual section is to describe the organization, mission, and functions of the Office of the Director.

3.0 Organization

The Office of the Director is headed by the Director of the Peace Corps (D). The Office of the Director includes: the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning; the Office of the General Counsel; the Office of Civil Rights; the Compliance and Risk Office; the Office of Innovation; the Office of Victim Advocacy; and the Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response. Each sub-unit is headed by an A Delegate.

4.0 Office Missions and Role Descriptions

4.1 Office of the Director

It is the mission of the Office of the Director to provide executive-level direction to the Peace Corps, overseeing its programs and activities and establishing Peace Corps policy and its congruence to the three goals of the Peace Corps, as well as ensuring compliance with the Peace Corps Act. Within the Office of the Director, the Director is assisted by the Deputy Director and Chief of Staff, who perform such duties as the Director delegates.

4.2 Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning

It is the mission of the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning to strengthen agency performance and advance evidence-based management, data governance, and accountability through strategic, analytical, and operational support to the Director, senior leadership, and partner offices.

4.3 Office of the General Counsel

It is the mission of the Office of the General Counsel to provide legal advice and services and policy guidance and services to the Director and overseas and domestic staff and to assist in the development of Peace Corps policies and procedures.

4.4 Office of Civil Rights

It is the mission of the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) to provide leadership and guidance on all civil rights and equal opportunity matters under the law. The office also processes complaints of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, in the recruitment or employment of staff and in the recruitment or service of Volunteers or Trainees. OCR works with other offices to encourage them to ensure that Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) principles and management initiatives are fully integrated into the human resources and organizational data systems *See MS 653 Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Employment.*

4.5 The Compliance and Risk Office

It is the mission of the Compliance and Risk Office (CRO) to develop, implement, and oversee the Peace Corps' Compliance and Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Programs, while working to address and mitigate complex compliance or risk-related issues or areas of agency concern. CRO coordinates agency compliance with the Office of Inspector General (OIG) reports and referrals, Congressional mandates, Executive Orders, and applicable laws, regulations, policies, and authoritative guidance. CRO supports proactive agency involvement in identifying areas of non-compliance and risk for the purpose of strengthening internal controls and systems of accountability, which address systemic issues across the Peace Corps. CRO administers the ERM Program, including its process and use as a governance and strategic decision-making tool.

4.6 Office of Innovation

It is the mission of the Office of Innovation to work closely with senior management of the Peace Corps to better deliver on its mission.

4.7 Office of Victim Advocacy

It is the mission of the Office of Victim Advocacy to ensure that each Volunteer is made aware of, and receives access to, services provided by the Peace Corps in cases of sexual assault, stalking or other crimes, to facilitate access of Volunteers to such services and to help develop and update the Peace Corps' sexual assault policy and the sexual assault prevention and response training program. The Office of Victim Advocacy will give priority to cases involving serious crimes, including sexual assault and stalking.

4.8 Office of Sexual Assault-Prevention and Response

The mission of the Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) is to coordinate the implementation of the agency's SAPR Program, to employ comprehensive measures to prevent sexual assault and respond to Volunteers who experience a sexual assault. The SAPR Program endeavors to reduce the risk of sexual assault and counter the experience of sexual

assault with a compassionate, victim-centered, and trauma-informed response to support the Volunteer's well-being. The Office of SAPR is led by the SAPR Program Director who coordinates all aspects of prevention, policy development, and Volunteer response through the implementing offices comprising the SAPR Program.

4.9 Office of the Executive Secretariat

The mission of the Office of the Executive Secretariat is to: serve as the coordination and communications hub for agency deliverables and products, including reports, memoranda, and Director's Office leadership correspondence; serve as the authority and channel for documents, communications, and decisions within the Peace Corps that require clearance from the leadership team in the Director's Office; coordinate deliverables to the White House and U.S. government departments and agencies; and serve as the agency's protocol office.

5.0 Office Functions

5.1 Office of the Director

The Director of the Peace Corps:

- (a) Reports to the President of the United States on Peace Corps programs and operations.
- (b) Directs the implementation of the Peace Corps Act.
- (c) Provides executive direction to the Peace Corps, overseeing its programs and activities and establishing Peace Corps policy.
- (d) Represents the Peace Corps before Congress.
- (e) Consults with representatives of foreign governments and international organizations in furtherance of the Peace Corps mission.
- (f) Consults with the Secretary of State, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Administrator of the Agency for International Development, and other U.S. government officials to coordinate Peace Corps programs and activities with those of other agencies of the Executive Branch.
- (g) Articulates Peace Corps policy, plans, goals, and accomplishments to the people of the United States.

5.2 Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning

- (a) Assists the agency in meeting federal requirements as mandated by the Government Performance Results Act of 1993 and Modernization Act of 2010, Sam Farr and Nick Castle Peace Corps Reform Act of 2018, and the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018.

- (b) Ensures performance of the authorities related to the Kate Puzey Act of 2011 that have been delegated to the Director of Strategic Information, Research and Planning under Attachment K of MS 114 *Delegation of Authority*.
- (c) Manages the agency strategic planning process and quarterly performance reviews; coordinates development of goals, measures, and performance indicators and related data collection and analysis; and represents the Peace Corps on the inter-agency Performance Improvement Council.
- (d) Incorporates performance information and other agency evidence into planning and reporting documents that include the Peace Corps' Strategic Plan, Annual Performance Plan, Annual Performance Report, and Agency Financial Report.
- (e) Pursuant to the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018, coordinates the Peace Corps' organizational learning agenda and an annual evaluation plan, and conducts agency-level evaluations related to strategy, effectiveness, productivity, and efficiency of agency programs and business processes.
- (f) Conducts the Annual Volunteer Survey, Returned Peace Corps Impact Survey, and Host Country Staff Survey. Constructs and manages the Country Portfolio Review Tool and authors Early Termination reports.
- (g) Supports the agency in fulfilling requirements of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 and relevant OMB regulations. This includes, but is not limited to, leading revisions to and execution of the Peace Corps' Open Data Plan and publishing agency data assets for the public. Leads the agency's Enterprise Data Governance Council and represents the Peace Corps on the inter-agency Chief Data Officer Council.
- (h) Oversees agency data governance, manages data lifecycle quality assurance, and provides guidance regarding data methodology and collection.
- (i) Ensures the consistency, currency, completeness, relevance, reliability, and validity of data shared with the public via Congressional Relations, Communications, and other Peace Corps offices.

5.3 Office of the General Counsel

- (a) The General Counsel, as the principal legal officer of the Peace Corps, issues legal opinions in relation to the Peace Corps Act and other laws and regulations administered by or affecting the Peace Corps.
- (b) The Office of the General Counsel, acting on behalf of the Peace Corps, among other things:
 - (1) Provides legal advice and policy guidance and assistance to the Director and overseas and domestic staff in relation to the Peace Corps and its programs and operations;

- (2) Provides legal advice on, and interpretations of, the Peace Corps Act, all other laws, treaties, orders, directives, judgments, regulations, rules, policies, procedures and administrative, legislative, and judicial issuances that affect the Peace Corps and its programs and operations and all agreements and undertakings to which the Peace Corps is a party;
- (3) Provides advice on legal issues and guidance on policy issues relating to the Peace Corps' relationship with staff, contractors, Volunteers, Trainees, the President, Congress, other federal agencies, state and local governments, host country and other foreign governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, private individuals, returned Peace Corps Volunteer organizations and other private sector entities;
- (4) Provides legal advice and policy guidance on administrative determinations, including the expenditure of appropriated and other funds, the enrollment and termination of, and other actions in relation to, Volunteers and Trainees, the appointment and termination of, and other personnel actions in relation to, staff and the entering into, administration and termination of grants, cooperative agreements and contracts;
- (5) Administers the Peace Corps' ethics and financial disclosure program;
- (6) Assists the Office of Congressional Relations in preparing for and participating in congressional presentations and in responding to congressional inquiries or hearings;
- (7) Reviews and approves all forms submitted to OMB under the Paperwork Reduction Act and all Peace Corps publications for legal sufficiency and policy consistency;
- (8) Reviews and comments on, and, as appropriate, liaises with other federal officials and agencies in connection with, proposed legislation, orders, rules, regulations, policies, and other legal matters that affect the Peace Corps;
- (9) Works with the Office of Congressional Relations to prepare draft legislation relating to the Peace Corps and its operations and assists in the presentation of such draft legislation to OMB and Congress;
- (10) Prepares regulations to be issued by the Peace Corps;
- (11) Assists in the preparation of delegations of authority, directives, notifications under the Vacancies Reform Act and other administrative issuances;
- (12) Prepares Peace Corps country agreements and agreements and undertakings with other federal agencies and participates in the negotiation and execution of such agreements and undertakings;
- (13) Reviews and approves for legal sufficiency agreements with state and local governments, host country and other foreign governments, international

organizations, non-governmental organizations, returned Peace Corps Volunteer organizations, private individuals, and private sector entities;

- (14) Represents the Peace Corps in administrative proceedings and coordinates with the Department of Justice and Department of State for representation of the Peace Corps in domestic and foreign judicial proceedings and administrative proceedings in foreign jurisdictions;
- (15) Approves retention of legal counsel to represent the Peace Corps in protecting the interests of the U.S. government or enabling staff members to carry out their official duties effectively and to represent Volunteers and Trainees who are victims of crime or involved in foreign judicial or administrative proceedings;
- (16) Negotiates and makes recommendations regarding settlement of claims against the Peace Corps to the extent the authority to do so has not otherwise been delegated;
- (17) Makes determinations under the Peace Corps' policy on eligibility for Peace Corps employment or Volunteer service of applicants with intelligence backgrounds;
- (18) Furnishes legal advice to Peace Corps staff as to their obligations under the Freedom of Information Act and related regulations and takes such other actions as may be necessary or appropriate to assure a consistent and equitable application of the Freedom of Information Act and such regulations by and within the Peace Corps;
- (19) Provides legal clearance for requests for waivers of Peace Corps Manual provisions;
- (20) Provides legal, administrative, and other support to the Policy Secretariat and the Senior Policy Committee; and
- (21) Reviews any other matter as requested by the Director or other appropriate Peace Corps officials.

5.4 Office of Civil Rights

- (a) Serves as the civil rights and equal opportunity authority that advises and assists the agency and senior management on the implementation and enforcement of U.S. Equal Opportunity laws and regulations.
- (b) Prepares and proposes policies and procedures and applies laws, regulations, and executive orders to ensure equal opportunity for applicants for Volunteer Service, Trainees, Volunteers, employees, applicants for employment, and members of the public.
- (c) Develops and monitors the implementation of the Peace Corps' equal opportunity and affirmative employment plans for the employment and advancement of persons with disabilities; monitors implementation of these plans; and works with Peace Corps managers to ensure progress.

- (d) Collaborates with other parts of the Peace Corps to conduct barrier analysis to provide equal opportunity for all applicants for Volunteer service, Trainees, Volunteers, employees, and applicants for employment, including the elimination of sexual and non-sexual harassment.
- (e) In accordance with legislation, Executive Orders, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission directives, and Peace Corps regulations and policies, administers a system for processing complaints of discrimination and/or harassment filed by applicants for Volunteer service, Trainees, Volunteers, employees, applicants for employment, and members of the public; and prepares Final Agency Decisions for the Director.
- (f) Establishes and provides mandatory EEO compliance training. Collaborates with OSLD and other departments to develop and implement intercultural competence and training and mentoring.
- (g) Designates agency EEO counselors and investigators, develops training for counselors and investigators, and serves as their coordinator.
- (h) Communicates and promotes the Peace Corps' EEO program to employees, trainees, and volunteers, as required by 29 CFR 1614.
- (i) Provides advice and guidance on disability inclusion and accessibility issues for all aspects of the agency, including employment, Volunteer service, and accessibility to the public and communities we serve, including advice and guidance on communication access such as captions and sign language interpretation.
- (j) Facilitates reasonable accommodation requests for employees.

5.5 The Compliance and Risk Office

- (a) Liaises with the OIG and manages and coordinates the agency's review of and response to OIG reports and other products, as appropriate. Nothing in the CRO's role precludes offices at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, DC (Headquarters) and overseas Posts from reaching out directly to the OIG to discuss matters of interest. Moreover, nothing precludes the OIG from reaching out directly to agency staff.
- (b) Coordinates the agency's review of and response to the OIG's Semiannual Report to Congress (SARC), prepares mandated accompanying information, and transmits the OIG's SARC, as required.
- (c) Coordinates, negotiates, guides, and tracks OIG recommendation completion by Headquarters offices and overseas Posts, and provides status reports to senior leadership and other relevant stakeholders on the agency's progress in closing recommendations from OIG reports.
- (d) Oversees and administers the agency's ERM Program, including the development of office-level risk registers, a consolidated agency-level risk profile, and an annual agency risk appetite statement, and all aspects of conducting ERM Council meetings. Please note that Annual Assurance Statements are coordinated by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer.

- (e) Identifies and supports mitigation of systemic, recurring compliance issues through proactively working with overseas Posts and Headquarters offices to monitor issues and, when determined by the agency to be necessary, works to address the underlying issues through the development, implementation, or strengthening of internal or management controls or other agreed upon actions.
- (f) Creates resources for Headquarters offices and overseas Posts and advises them on the development of their own resources to monitor compliance with agency requirements and increase awareness of systemic issues, risks, and trends affecting the Peace Corps.
- (g) Tracks and verifies completion of required actions, as determined by the Office of the General Counsel in consultation with the Office of the Director to be legally applicable, which the agency must undertake to comply with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and other mandatory and/or authoritative guidance (such as Congressional mandates, Executive Orders, Presidential Memoranda, and OMB Memoranda).
- (h) Develops compliance-related guidance resources to support Headquarters offices and overseas Posts in their preparation for OIG reviews.
- (i) In consultation and coordination with the Office of Staff Learning and Development, provides compliance and ERM training to agency staff, as needed, to increase their understanding of the agency's Compliance and ERM Programs.

5.6 Office of Innovation

- (a) Analyzes, synthesizes, and presents ideas to catalyze substantial positive change including:
 - (1) undertaking studies of agency operations and key issues, and
 - (2) assisting with process and procedural improvements that enable the agency to operate more efficiently and effectively.
- (b) Creates a culture of innovation to generate new practices and share best practices for the continuous improvement of all aspects of the Peace Corps.
- (c) Works with senior management to examine other government-wide efforts to implement “smarter government” initiatives at the Peace Corps. This may include actively seeking the agency participation in federal government “pilot” innovation projects.

5.7 Office of Victim Advocacy

- (a) Advocates for Volunteers who are victims of sexual assault, stalking and other crimes, giving priority to cases involving serious crimes, including sexual assault and stalking.
- (b) Establishes protocols, procedures, and systems to ensure that Volunteers who are victims of sexual assault, stalking and other crimes are made aware of the Peace Corps support services available to them and receive full and open access to such services.

- (c) Facilitates access of Volunteers who are victims of sexual assault, stalking and other crimes to the support services to which they are entitled under applicable law and Peace Corps policy.
- (d) Coordinates with other Peace Corps offices to assure efficient, responsive, and compassionate management of cases involving Volunteers who are victims of sexual assault, stalking and other crimes.
- (e) May assist a Volunteer who is the victim of a sexual assault, stalking or other crime in dealing with the local legal system.
- (f) May, in carrying out the responsibilities of the Office of Victim Advocacy, communicate with outside parties on behalf of a Volunteer who is the victim of a sexual assault, stalking or other crime.
- (g) Provides input, guidance and subject matter expertise in the development and updating of the Peace Corps' policies, procedures and practices pertaining to Volunteers who have been the victims of sexual assault, stalking or other crimes, including Peace Corps' comprehensive sexual assault policy.
- (h) Provides input, guidance and subject matter expertise in the development and updating of the Peace Corps' sexual assault prevention and response training program for Volunteers.
- (i) Ensures performance of the authorities related to the Kate Puzey Act that have been delegated to the Director of the Office of Victim Advocacy under Attachment K of MS 114 *Delegation of Authority*.

5.8 Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

- (a) Plans, organizes, and manages the SAPR Team (a team of representatives from the five implementing SAPR Program offices, led by the Director of the Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response) on behalf of the Director to ensure an integrated and responsive victim-centered program.
- (b) Under the supervision and guidance of the Director, provides authoritative guidance to individual SAPR implementing offices regarding the direction, development, and implementation of SAPR activities, in keeping with best practices in the field.
- (c) Develops and implements activities designed to assist with ongoing strategic planning for the SAPR Program.
- (d) Works with the SAPR Team to assure compliance with all policies and procedures impacting the SAPR Program.
- (e) Supports the Sexual Assault Advisory Council (SAAC).
- (f) Works with the SAPR Team to implement SAAC recommendations.

- (g) Ensures performance of the delegated authorities as outlined within Attachment K – Kate Puzey Act of MS 114 *Delegation of Authority*.

5.9 Office of the Executive Secretariat

The Executive Secretariat oversees the Office of the Executive Secretariat which, among other things, has the following principal roles and responsibilities:

- (a) To partner with offices to task, track, edit, format, and review decision and policy memoranda, agency report inputs, and briefing materials for the leadership team in the Director’s Office and ensure that leadership receives information and recommendations to make informed and timely decisions on Peace Corps policy, programs, organization, and management while maintaining communications throughout the agency, as well as lead project management for select reports;
- (b) To prepare, review, transmit and track all correspondence for the Director, including Director-level messages to the agency, and coordinate with relevant offices and subject matter experts and to support other leadership in the Directors’ office on messages to the agency, other agencies, and partners;
- (c) To provide the agency with an effective, efficient, and innovative process for document management, maintain all records documenting the Director Office leadership decisions and key agency documents and assists offices upon request to locate past decisions and activities; and
- (d) To serve as the protocol office for the agency, receive all gifts given to the agency or Director’s Office leadership, and advise offices on the protocol for correspondence, invitations, events, ceremonies, gifts, flags, and order of precedence.

6.0 Effective Date

The effective date of this Manual Section is the date of issuance.