



SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM Handbook

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List of Abbreviations

- AMCS: Administrative Management Control Survey
- APCD: Associate Peace Corps Directors
- BOC: Bill of Collection
- CD: Country Director
- COS: Completion of Service
- CRM: Customer Relationship Management
- DMO: Director of Management and Operations
- DPT: Director of Program and Training
- EFT: Electronic Funds Transfers
- FA: Financial Assistant
- GA: Global Agreement
- GGM: Office of Gifts and Grants Management
- IRC: Information Resource Coordinator
- IST: In-service Training
- LCU: Local Currency Units
- LLITN: Long-Lasting Insecticide-Treated Net
- M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation
- MS: Manual Section
- OCFO: Office of the Chief Financial Officer
- OFAC: Office of Foreign Assets Control
- OGAP: Office of Global Accounts Payable
- OGC: Office of General Counsel
- OGHH: Office of Global Health and HIV
- OIG: Office of the Inspector General
- OPATS: Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support
- OSIRP: Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning
- PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action
- PCPP: Peace Corps Partnership Program
- PCRV: Peace Corps Response Volunteer
- PCV: Peace Corps Volunteer
- PCVL: Peace Corps Volunteer Leader
- PDM: Project Design and Management
- PEPFAR: President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
- PM: Program Managers
- PST: Pre-Service Training
- PTA/PTS: Programming and Training Assistants/Specialists
- RSO: Regional Security Officer
- SGC: Small Grants Coordinator
- SPA: Small Project Assistance
- SPIGA: Strategic Partnerships and Intergovernmental Affairs
- USAID ENCAP: Environmentally Sound Design and Management Capacity- building for Partners and Programs in Africa
- USAID: United States Agency for International Development
- USD: United States Dollar
- VAST: Volunteer Activities Support and Training
- VPS: Volunteer and PCS Financial Services
- VRG: Volunteer Reporting and Grants
- WASH: Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
- WQAP: Water Quality Assurance Plan

Introduction

The Peace Corps makes funding available for Peace Corps Small Grants Program projects to Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) and the community organizations with which they work. This handbook for Post staff provides guidance on the requirements and processes of the Peace Corps Small Grants Program. Although each funding source has distinctive characteristics and requirements, the Peace Corps has made the guidance for all grants uniform to the maximum extent possible. For U.S. government-funded grant programs (USAID, PEPFAR), Post staff should contact the respective small grants program for program specific information.

This handbook provides information on the basic rules and requirements that are applicable for all grants. It also includes recommendations on Post-level management of grants programs and links to tools to help run them effectively.

The Peace Corps strongly recommends that each Post use the same procedures and processes for each grant program, including the same grant development and submission procedures, the same grants committee, and a single Small Grants Coordinator (SGC). This will provide clarity for PCVs, ensure consistent grant quality across all funding sources, and reduce redundancy and overlap in Post staff responsibilities.

The Peace Corps Small Grants Program is comprised of several funding sources. However, not all of these sources are available at every Post, as some sources are geographically or programmatically limited. The funding sources are described briefly below:

Grant Program Information			
Grant Program	Funding Source	Post Eligibility	Contact for More Information
Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP)	Private sector donations (including "RPCV/Friends of" groups, individuals, and organizations)	All Posts	peacecorpspartnerhipprogram@peacecorps.gov
Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program	United States Agency for International Development (USAID) SPA V Agreement	Posts for which a USAID Mission has contributed funds through the SPA Program Post	spareports@peacecorps.gov

Grant Program Information			
Grant Program	Funding Source	Post Eligibility	Contact for More Information
Volunteer Activities Support and Training (VAST)	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)	Any Post that receives PEPFAR funds	OGHHsupport@peacecorps.gov
Global Agreement (GA)	USAID	Posts for which a USAID Mission has contributed funds through the GA Program	usaidpartnerships@peacecorps.gov

PCVs may only accept funds through the Peace Corps Small Grants Program. Currently the Peace Corps Small Grants Program consists of those programs listed above, which are subject to change.

Considerations before Undertaking a Funded Project

The Peace Corps Small Grants Program is an excellent tool for PCVs and their communities to access support for small-scale small scale development projects. However, before planning and implementing a project that requires funding under the Peace Corps Small Grants Program, it is important to consider how the intervention complements Peace Corps' approach to development. Additionally, staff and PCVs must be aware of the rules surrounding external funding. In this handbook, external funding is defined as any funding source that comes from the private sector or other U.S. Government Agency and is not part of Peace Corps' Congressional appropriation.

I. Small Grant Funding in the Context of the Peace Corps Approach to Development

The Peace Corps' general approach to development is described in the [Programming and Training Guidance](#). Development in its broadest sense is any process that promotes the dignity of a people and their capacity to improve their own lives¹. Two key characteristics of the Peace Corps approach to development are capacity building and sustainability.

1. Capacity Building: The focus of Peace Corps' development work is on the development of the capacity of people. PCVs work with counterparts/ community representatives to identify and prioritize what the community would like to change, and to use their strengths or learn new skills to achieve that change. PCVs direct their capacity-building efforts to several different, but integrated levels: individuals, service providers/trainers/multipliers, organizations, and communities.
2. Sustainability: Sustainability refers to the ability of activities to continue to meet the needs of a community once the initial funding has ended. PCVs use gender-sensitive, participatory approaches to analyze, design, implement, and evaluate projects to ensure that they have considered different contextual factors, and to support the sustainability of the changes they promote. In addition, PCVs work to facilitate systems improvements and organizational change that not only increase the potential for sustainability, but often improve the quality of service provided and increase the number of beneficiaries.

To support the development of projects that align with the agency's approach to development and in compliance with the Peace Corps Small Grants Program, the Peace Corps recommends Posts do the following:

- Ensure that PCVs understand the [Peace Corps' External Funding Policy](#), as

¹¹ Programming, Training, and Evaluation Guidance (No.T0140), page 3

described below. When orienting PCVs on the availability of grants, hold a session on the appropriate use of grant funds and some of the common pitfalls PCVs may encounter.

- Ensure PCVs are aware that the Peace Corps does not require PCVs to apply for grant funds. Applying for a Peace Corps grant is at the discretion of the PCV provided she/he/they meet the Post's requirements for a Small Grants Program activity.
- Provide [Project Design and Management \(PDM\)](#) training to PCVs and counterparts/community representative.
- If a PCV determines that it is appropriate to develop a grant-funded project, ensure that the PCV is aware that she/he/they are required to engage the counterpart/community representative in all stages of grant planning and implementation.
- Confirm PCV awareness that he/she/they will have access and signature authority to manage grant funds, therefore they are liable and responsible for all grant funds associated with their Peace Corps small grant project.

II. External Funding Policy

The Peace Corps Small Grants Program exists to support PCV work in the field and to ensure projects meet agency policies and procedures. PCVs may not accept external funds outside of the Small Grants Program because it not only makes them susceptible to safety and security risks, but it can also undermine Peace Corps' approach to development and their effectiveness in their communities.

[Manual Section \(MS\) 721](#) states "Volunteers are prohibited from accepting gifts on behalf of the Peace Corps." The definition of "gift" in [MS 721](#) is "Gift means a thing given willingly to the Peace Corps without payment or expectation of payment. A gift can be voluntary services, money, and property (real, personal, tangible, or intangible)."

PCVs may only accept funds through the Peace Corps Small Grants Program². This program exists to fund PCV projects that align with Peace Corps approach to development through required community engagement, monitoring and evaluation, and strong project design and management, as well as reporting on the completion of a project. In other words, PCVs should not use their personal funds or funds from other sources to support Peace Corps activities.

Post staff is responsible for communicating the external funding policy to PCVs. Although PCVs may never directly accept funds outside the Peace Corps Small Grants Program, they may *assist* their counterparts/community representatives in applying for funds from external organizations. These external applications submitted by the community for funding must be in the name of the counterpart/community

² PCVs may accept personal gifts from their friends and families. They may not accept in-kind donations or financial support for work they are doing as PCVs except through the Peace Corps Small Grants Program.

representative, not in the name of the PCV. Furthermore, the PCV may not accept or manage funds on behalf of a community or supporting organization.

Occasionally, organizations may reach out directly to PCVs or Posts to encourage them to apply for funding. PCVs and/or Post staff should direct these organizations to the [Office of Gifts and Grants Management \(GGM\)](#) immediately and follow the procedures below. GGM will then clarify the Peace Corps' policy with the organization and convey the best way to proceed.

III. External Funding Procedure

As Post staff work daily with PCVs, they are best suited to ensure that PCVs are aware of and comply with [MS 721](#). Post should undertake the following procedures to ensure PCV compliance with [MS 721](#):

A. Preventative Procedures

1. Incorporate [MS 721](#) into pre- and in-service training. Sharing the policy with PCVs early and often throughout their service ensures they are well aware of how they can apply for Peace Corps grant funds. Again, PCVs may not accept funding or in-kind contributions for their PCV projects outside of the Peace Corps Small Grants Program. This External Funding Policy has also been incorporated into the Peace Corps Small Grants Handbook and the "External Funding- Volunteer Do's and Don'ts" guidance (found in the [Small Grants Resource Center](#)). Each Post should circulate these documents to PCVs early in their service, and repeat key information, policies, procedures, and related guidance to PCVs throughout service to ensure compliance.
2. Emphasize that PCVs should communicate all questions and external funding opportunities to Post. PCVs may hear of external funding opportunities outside of the Peace Corps Small Grants Program through friends or family, on the internet, or directly from local organizations, non-governmental entities, embassies, and foreign donors. PCVs should not accept funds through or from these entities. Rather, if a PCV would like to learn more about a particular opportunity, he/she/they should contact the Post's SGC immediately, and Post will then guide them regarding appropriate actions.
3. Use the survey questions about external funding within the Administrative Management Control Survey (AMCS) to help Post determine areas where training regarding the use of external funds by PCVs may be necessary.
4. If Posts need more information or assistance, please contact [GGM](#).

B. Policy Violation Procedures

Peace Corps headquarters may become aware of a PCV's violation of [MS 721](#) prior to the Post becoming aware. If this occurs, Peace Corps headquarters will notify the Post's Small Grants Coordinator (SGC) and DPT immediately.

If, at any time, Post staff determines that a PCV has violated [MS 721](#) by accepting, pursuing, or receiving external funds (outside of the PC Small Grants Program),

Post staff must immediately take the following steps, as applicable:

1. Inform the Country Director (CD) so that she/he/they are aware of the situation.
2. Explain and clarify Peace Corps policy (including, but not limited to the external funding policy described above) with the PCV, verbally and in writing.
3. Instruct the PCV to immediately cease use, or acceptance of the external funds or pursuit of the external funding opportunity.
4. Assist the PCV to comply with Peace Corps policy by proposing an alternative approach. There are two main alternatives:
 - a. Consider if the proposed gift qualifies as a third-party contribution(s) which can then be incorporated into the proposed project in accordance with Peace Corps grant requirements.
 - b. The PCV can take steps to ensure that the external funds are provided and/or transferred directly from the donor to the PCV's community.

Post staff may also seek additional guidance from Peace Corps headquarters grants program staff.

Should the PCV refuse to cease work with external funders and/or continue to directly receive funds from external entities, the CD will need to consider appropriate action to address the situation. This may require conversations with the Office of General Counsel (OGC) and the Region's Chief of Operations.

Roles and Responsibilities

Numerous stakeholders work together to support Small Grants Programs, including Peace Corps Post and Peace Corps headquarters staff, PCVs, counterparts/community representatives, Small Grants Committees and Peace Corps strategic partners. This section describes the primary responsibilities of the offices and staff involved with managing Peace Corps Small Grants Program grants.

I. Peace Corps Headquarters

A. The Office of Gifts and Grants Management

The Office of Gifts and Grants Management (GGM) oversees and manages the solicitation and acceptance of monetary and in-kind gifts and administers the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) and the USAID-funded Small Project Assistance Program (SPA). GGM administers and manages the Peace Corps Small Grants Program in coordination with relevant Peace Corps headquarters offices.

- PCPP: GGM is responsible for accepting donations and applying them to approved PCPP projects, verifying compliance with PCPP requirements, posting projects on the Peace Corps website for fundraising, authorizing Post's obligation of funds for fully funded projects, reviewing grant documentation, interpreting grants requirements as related to the PCPP program, maintaining grant records, and reporting to donors, strategic partners, and Congress. GGM is the only office authorized to solicit funds on behalf of PCV grant projects under the Small Grants Program.
- SPA: GGM is responsible for the management of the SPA program with USAID, supporting Posts in their annual SPA funding negotiations with USAID, reviewing Posts' annual SPA planning documents, collaborating with Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) to establish and maintain SPA program administration in the agency's financial systems, verifying compliance with grants requirements for SPA grants, reviewing grant documentation, interpreting grant requirements as they relate to the SPA program, and maintaining SPA grant records.
- In coordination with relevant Peace Corps headquarters offices, GGM establishes standards and policies for the Peace Corps Small Grants Program.

B. The Office of Strategic Partnerships and Intergovernmental Affairs

The Office of Strategic Partnerships and Intergovernmental Affairs (SPIGA) is responsible for the management of interagency agreements with U.S. government agencies, including the Global Agreement with USAID (GA). SPIGA is responsible for supporting Posts and Peace Corps headquarters offices in their annual funding negotiations with USAID, collaborating with Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) to establish and maintain GA funds in the agency's financial systems, verifying compliance with requirements for GA grants programs, supporting implementing Posts and offices in interpreting grant

requirements as they relate to the GA, and ensuring that GA grant records are maintained in VRG.

C. The Office of Global Health and HIV

The Office of Global Health and HIV (OGHH) administers the Volunteer Activities Support and Training (VAST) program funded by PEPFAR. OGHH manages the agency's overall PEPFAR agreement and portfolio, supporting Posts in the negotiation of annual PEPFAR/VAST funding, working with OCFO to establish and maintain VAST program administration in the agency's financial systems, verifying compliance with grant requirements for VAST grants, reviewing grant documentation, interpreting grants requirements related to the VAST program, and maintaining VAST grant records.

OGHH may be consulted for technical and programming advice regarding grant-supported health and HIV/AIDS interventions, regardless of funding source.

D. The Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support

The Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS) provides program management and support for active grant programs in all sectors, except Health, and may be consulted for technical and programming advice regarding grant-supported interventions in all sectors, except for HIV/AIDS and Health, regardless of funding source. OPATS may also support the development and update of training resources to support the preparation of volunteers to effectively implement grant projects.

E. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) supports grant financial management and maintains financial systems related to grants programs. Working with the program offices that manage the Peace Corps Small Grants Program, OCFO establishes and operates systems for receiving, processing, making payments, and accounting for grant funds. Acquisitions and Contracts Management (ACM), under OCFO, is responsible for reviewing and signing SPA, PEPFAR, GA, and any other interagency assistance agreements.

F. The Office of Global Operations/Regions

Regions support Posts in obtaining access to grant funds and connecting Posts to appropriate Peace Corps headquarters small grants offices. Regions may also review grants for consistency with Post, region, and agency programming priorities.

II. Peace Corps Posts

This section summarizes grant management roles and responsibilities based on current best practices at Posts. It is recommended that Posts budget for a full time SGC to provide support, oversight, and coordination for small grants management. CDs should ensure that specific grant support and administration functions are assigned to the appropriate program and admin/finance staff members to ensure that all necessary

responsibilities are covered. Grant administration and support duties should be included in job descriptions and performance plans.

Below are the grant administration and support functions:

- Grant program management and oversight
- Seeking and allocating grant funds
- Working with funding/strategic partners and donors
- Financial management of grant funds
- Orienting and training PCVs
- Grant design
- Grant review and approval
- Grant implementation
- Grant tracking and monitoring
- Reporting and closeout
- Program learning and evaluation

Post staff share varying levels of responsibilities for grants. Some positions, such as the SGC, may have responsibilities covering all 11 functions. Other staff positions, such as the Director of Management and Operations (DMO), may be responsible for fewer functions. The allocation of these roles and responsibilities may be appropriately shifted among staff to fit the needs of each Post.

A. Country Director

The CD provides oversight, direction, and accountability for the in-country administration of all grants programs and related activities. In addition, the CD maintains relationships with in-country strategic partners who provide funding for grants programs.

Specific duties include the following:

- Grant program management and oversight
 - *Assign staff responsibilities:* Work with the Director of Programming and Training (DPT) and the DMO, to budget for and hire a full time SGC to provide day- to-day management, administration, and support for each active grant, and establish specific roles and responsibilities for other Post staff supporting the grants programs.
 - *Set Post-level guidelines:* Establish specific grant requirements consistent with guidance and requirements in this handbook.
- Seeking and allocating funds
 - *Seek and negotiate funding:* Access grant resources consistent with Post's needs and programming priorities, provide liaison with funding/strategic partners (i.e. USAID), and negotiate annual funding levels.
 - *Allocate available funding:* In coordination with the DPT and funding/strategic partners, determine allocation of USAID (SPA, GA) funds between grants and other allowable activities; for PCPP, allocate available country funds and any applicable memorial funds to individual grants.

- *Ensure that all staff is familiar with [MS 721](#) on external funding:* Train staff on [MS 721](#) and make sure that Post adheres to guidelines.
- Working with funding/strategic partners and donors
 - *Maintain relationships with strategic partners:* In coordination and consultation with Peace Corps headquarters, serve as the top-level liaison at Post with strategic partners and donors, or delegate this responsibility as appropriate.
 - *Awareness raising:* Ensure that funding/strategic partners and donors are aware of the Peace Corps' policy on external funds.
- Orienting and training PCVs
 - *Messaging to PCVs:* Set the tone at Post to support the use of grants in appropriate circumstances, to further capacity building within communities where PCVs serve and in the context of their Peace Corps assignments.
 - *Policy on external funds:* Ensure PCVs understand [MS 721](#) on external funds and that PCVs should refer potential donors to the CD and may not accept donations (monetary or in-kind) on behalf of the Peace Corps.
- Grant design
 - In conjunction with the DPT, ensure that the large majority of grant applications fall under Post's key sectors and include capacity building and sustainability.
- Grant review and approval
 - *Sign off on each approved grant:* Following the review and recommendation process undertaken by the SGC and Small Grants Committee, respective sector Program Manager/Associate PC Director, and the DPT (unless CD substitutes for DPT), the CD must give final approval on each grant application by signing the Project Liability and the Project Agreement forms. If a grant is to be canceled, transferred, or receive additional funds, the CD must certify and approve the grant change.
 - *Approve costs that require special consideration:* This handbook provides the CD authority to approve or deny costs that require special consideration (see [Grants that Require Special Consideration](#)). A PCV may submit a Cost Approval form and the CD must approve or deny the request in writing.
- Grant implementation
 - *Address lost, stolen, misused, or unaccounted for funds:* Document and determine if the PCV is responsible and whether they will be held liable for all or part of missing or misused funds; notify the headquarters Office of the Inspector General (OIG), the appropriate contact person in GGM, and external stakeholders.
- Grant tracking and monitoring
 - When possible, the CD monitors ongoing grant progress during site visits.

- Reporting and closeout
 - Approve and sign completion report.
- Program learning and evaluation
 - *Oversee grant program evaluation:* Oversee in-country grant program evaluations funded by strategic partners, donors, or other sources, unless such evaluations are conducted by the OIG.

B. Director of Programming and Training

The DPT typically supervises the SGC, oversees the grants committee and serves as the program chair of the committee (differs in some Posts). The DPT works with Post staff to ensure grants complement the Post's programming priorities and are adapted to meet the local development context. The DPT works with staff to provide training to PCVs, counterparts/community representative, and other staff on accessing grant funding, appropriate use of grant funds, and designing and managing grant activities.

Specific duties include the following:

- Grant program management and oversight
 - *Ensure proper training and direction for staff:* With the SGC, train Small Grants Committee members on committee responsibilities; ensure associate Peace Corps directors (APCDs), program managers (PMs), and programming and training assistants/specialists (PTAs/PTSs) provide appropriate support to PCVs in developing and implementing grant activities.
 - *Ensure that all programming and training staff is familiar with [MS 720](#):* Train programming and training staff on [MS 720](#) and make sure that Post staff adhere to guidelines.
- Seeking and allocating funds
 - *Determine funding needs:* Based on Post programming priorities, determine grant funding needs that support those priorities.
- Allocate available funding: With CD (and in consultation with donors as appropriate), determine allocation of available funds.
 - *Work with strategic partners and donors:* As delegated by the CD, in coordination and consultation with Peace Corps headquarters, liaise with strategic partners/donors. Agree on program scope and priorities with strategic partners (i.e. USAID) and ensure proper reporting and day-to-day communication with partners (i.e. USAID).
 - *Awareness raising:* Ensure that funding/strategic partners and donors are aware of the Peace Corps' policy on external funds.
- Orienting and training PCVs
 - *Ensure proper training for PCVs:* Ensure training is provided to PCVs on the role of external funding within the Peace Corps' approach to development and on Project Design and Management (PDM) and/or related topics.

- Grant review and approval
 - *Oversee grant committee:* Sit on the Small Grants Committee and provide oversight of the committee and the review process.
- Grant tracking and monitoring
 - *Monitoring and evaluation:* Work with the Small Grants Committee, SGC and staff to implement a system to monitor and evaluate grant activities.
- Program learning and evaluation
 - *Manage grant program evaluation:* Manage in-country grant program evaluations funded by strategic partners, donors, or other sources, unless such program evaluations are conducted by OIG. Work with contractors and Peace Corps staff to support evaluation completion.

C. Small Grants Coordinator

The SGC is responsible for the day-to-day administration of grants at Post. The coordinator serves as the primary grant program contact at each Post for PCVs, other Post staff, and Peace Corps headquarters grant program support staff. The SGC stays abreast of program requirements and guidance and ensures that the Post's policies, procedures, and approved grants are consistent with such guidance.

Every Post is strongly encouraged to appoint a full-time SGC to manage all grant programs. If this is not feasible due to budget constraints, a Post may appoint more than one coordinator across different grant programs. In this case, the Post must ensure that the SGCs employ consistent small grant management and oversight practices.

Note: The SGC may not simultaneously serve as the Cashier for a Post.

Specific duties include the following:

- Grant program management and oversight
 - *Program expertise:* Understand grant program rules and requirements; keep abreast of updates/best practices for grant programs and convey updates to the Small Grants Committee and PCVs.
 - *Communicate with Peace Corps headquarters:* As primary liaison with Peace Corps headquarters on grant program(s), contact relevant Peace Corps headquarters office with questions and program updates; submit all required reports to Peace Corps headquarters.
 - *Grant files:* Establish and maintain official grant files in the grant database.
 - *Small Grants Committee:* Organize, prepare for, and facilitate Small Grants Committee meetings.
- Seeking and allocating funds
 - *Help determine funding needs:* Provide support to CD and DPT in determining funding needs and negotiating new funds; provide input on funding needs based on remaining carryover funds and spending patterns.

- Working with funding/strategic partners and donors
 - *Liaison*: As delegated by the CD, serve as day-to-day liaison with in-country funding/strategic partners (i.e. USAID or other) regarding ongoing grant program operations.
 - *Reports*: Support DPT/CD in drafting regular reports to USAID or other funding partners.
 - *Awareness Raising*: Ensure that funding/strategic partners/donors are aware of Peace Corps' policy on external funds.
- Financial management of grant funds
 - *Funding balances*: In coordination with the administrative unit, track grant spending and available funds by grant program and by funding areas (e.g., by SPA program element).
 - Work with administrative unit to ensure financial processing of approved grants.
- Orienting and training PCVs
 - *Orientation session for PCVs*: Work with DPT to introduce grant programs and the grant application process to PCVs.
 - Advise PCVs on accessing grant funds and developing grant proposals.
 - *Awareness raising*: Ensure PCVs understand [MS 721](#) on external funds and that PCVs may not accept or solicit donations (monetary or in-kind) on behalf of the Peace Corps.
- Grant design
 - Understand PDM tools and ensure Post consistency.
 - Provide PCVs with feedback on applications submitted for approval.
 - Communicate acceptable activities and prohibited activities.
- Grant review and approval
 - Receive grant applications from PCVs and disseminate to small grants committee members and other appropriate Post staff.
 - Facilitate communication with PCVs to follow up on requested grant application revisions.
 - Ensure that funds are available in the proper funding source (e.g. proper program element for SPA) prior to recommending approval of grants.
- Grant implementation
 - Work with PCV in the event of grant cancellation, transfer, or amendment, to report to the relevant Peace Corps headquarters office and provide appropriate documentation for grant reconciliation.
- Grant tracking and monitoring
 - Track the status of all ongoing grant activities in the grant database.
 - Provide status updates to the CD, Post staff, and relevant Peace Corps headquarters staff.
- Reporting and closeout
 - Ensure that PCVs completion reports meet all Small Grants Program guidelines. If the report meets the guidelines, submit the report to the

DMO. Maintain all Peace Corps Small Grants Program records in the grant database at the Post.

- Collect and process all grant reports and SPA training activity reports; send reports to Peace Corps headquarters.
- Provide updates on grants to USAID or other donors per agreed-upon schedule.
- Program learning and evaluation
 - Compile best practices to be used in future program planning.

D. Associate Peace Corps Director/ Program Manager, Regional Manager, and Programming & Training Assistant/Specialist

Associate Peace Corps Director (APCD), program manager (PM), and programming and training specialist/assistant (PTS/PTA) support the PCVs to promote effective use of grant funds.

Specific duties may include the following depending on the Peace Corps Post:

- Grant program management and oversight
 - *Understand available funding:* Check balances periodically with SGC; present funding information to PCVs, trainees, and staff.
- Seeking and allocating funds
 - *Identify funding needs:* Discuss with DPT/CD and negotiate with USAID on appropriate program elements for grants.
- Working with funding/strategic partners and donors
 - With approval from the CD/DPT, participate in meetings with strategic partners and donors.
- Orienting and training PCV
 - *Guidance to PCVs:* Keep records of success stories and share with PCVs/trainees.
 - *Training:* Provide overview of Peace Corps Small Grants Program. Promote different grant programs according to PCV sector assignments, potential or anticipated secondary activities, and site assignments.
 - *Awareness raising:* Ensure that PCVs are aware of the Peace Corps' policy on external funds.
- Grant project design
 - Support PCVs in developing grants; review applications and provide feedback to PCVs on how to better design grants.
 - Help PCVs consider all options, including local resource mobilization, before presenting a grant to the Post's Small Grants Committee; APCDs/PMs, and PTA/PTSs also serve as members of the committee (varies per Post). At some Posts, these staff members provide a general orientation to PCVs about external funding and grant programs, as part of an early reconnect/Early Service Training, a PDM in-service training (IST), or a technical IST.

- Clearly and frequently communicate to PCVs and counterparts/ community representative about the Peace Corps' approach to development.
- Grant project review and approval
 - *Vetting grants*: All grants should be vetted by APCDs/PMs, ideally at the early stages of the grant design process. Review grants within their sector to provide feedback to the committee on technical design and content.
 - *Grant committee*: Review and give feedback on grants as a member of the Small Grants Committee.
- Grant project implementation
 - Provide technical support to PCVs and counterparts/community representatives for ongoing grant activities related to the APCD/PM's program sector.
- Grant project tracking and monitoring
 - *Grant monitoring*: Monitor ongoing grant activities during regularly scheduled site visits.
- Reporting and closeout
 - *Grants closeout*: Review completion reports for grants in their sector to gather lessons learned to support PCVs with similar grants in the future.

E. Director of Management and Operations and Financial Assistant/Specialist

The Director of Management and Operations (DMO), with support from the Financial Assistant (FA) or Financial Specialist (FS), handles the financial administration of grant funds. The DMO certifies that PCVs have presented all receipts (grant fund expenditures and community contribution) and have met all requirements to close out their grants.

Specific duties include the following:

- Financial management of grant funds
 - Ensure that the financial administration of grants is consistent with Peace Corps policies.
 - Upon request, provide the relevant financial information/documents to the CD, DPT, or SGC.
 - Track fund balances in FORPost (in collaboration with the SGC) and coordinate with GGM regarding the balance of PCPP funds on a semi-annual basis; provide quarterly updates on funding balances to the Small Grants Committee and program staff.
- Creating vendor accounts for funds disbursement
 - Ensure that proper bank accounts are in the Peace Corps vendor system at both Peace Corps headquarters and Post level so that PCVs can receive the grant funds once the grant is approved and funds are available for disbursement.

- Obligating Funds
 - Record obligations for approved grants in FORPost under correct funding source.
 - PCPP obligations may not be recorded until written authorization (email) is received from Peace Corps headquarters after grant is fully funded.
 - Submit all required documentation to OCFO/Global Accounts Payable for proper processing.
 - Ensure the timely liquidation of funds.
- Reporting and closeout
 - Ensure accountability of funds and verification of grant expenditures/receipts.
 - Certify that all grant funds are accounted for and reconciled in an approved manner.
 - Review completion reports to ensure that all grant funds were spent in accordance with the goals and objectives of the grant.
 - If funds are reported Lost, Stolen, Misused or Unaccounted for, notify CD that SGC will report the issue to the OIG for review.
 - If all funds are accounted for, sign the completion report.
 - Issue Bill of Collection (BOC) to collect unused funds and return them to the original obligation.

F. Cashier

The cashier is responsible for collecting remaining grant funds, when applicable, during grant closeout. Cash returns of unspent funds from the PCV must be given only to the Cashier or their designated back-up, as determined by Post.

Note: The Cashier may not simultaneously serve as the SGC.

G. Training Manager

Training managers play an important role in building into Post training calendars opportunities to train PCVs and their counterparts/community representatives on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to be effective in planning and implementing grants.

Specific duties include the following:

- Orienting and training PCVs
 - Ensure training on grant design and management is included in PCV training.
 - Include orientation on external funding and grant programs in the training calendar (recommend orientation in pre-service training and a complete grants training at Re-connect/Early Service Training or IST).
- Grant implementation
 - Support PCVs' planning and implementation of grants that may have a training component.

H. Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator

Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinators provide expertise in designing a plan for tracking grant progress and can support PCVs with training related to monitoring and evaluation and answer questions related to grant evaluation techniques and tools.

Specific duties include the following:

- Orienting and training PCVs
 - Ensure training on data quality and monitoring and evaluation is included in PCV training.
- Grant design
 - Support PCVs in developing grants and creating clear goals and objectives; provide feedback to PCVs on how to better design grants with a clear monitoring and evaluation plan and appropriate tools.
 - Support PCVs in selecting appropriate indicators that address the goals and objectives of the grant.
- Grant implementation
 - Provide technical support to PCVs and counterparts/community representatives for ongoing grants, advising PCVs on how to best use indicator data for adjusting grant plans.
- Reporting and closeout
 - Review grant completion reports to confirm accurate reporting.
- Program learning and evaluation
 - Assist in developing Post-level tools for monitoring and evaluating Post's grants programs.
 - Provide analysis and support for the development and dissemination of Post's best practices to be used in future program planning.

I. Small Grants Committees

Each Post is required to establish a Small Grants Committee. This committee reviews and approves applications for all grants at a Post, regardless of the funding source (SPA, PCPP, VAST, and GA). Each Post has discretion as to how its committee will be structured, the committee's specific functions and responsibilities, and the committee's grant approval process.

Small Grants Committees are encouraged to have representation from a variety of positions among Post staff and PCVs cohorts/sectors, if possible. Typically, Post-level Small Grants Committees have four to six members and are composed of one or more of the following:

- Country director (CD)
- Small Grants Coordinator (SGC)
- Director of Programming and Training (DPT)
- Associate Peace Corps Directors (APCD) or Program Managers (PM)
- Director of Management and Operations (DMO)

- Program Assistants and Training Assistants (Pas, TAs)
- Financial Assistants (FAs)
- PCVs (Posts must take into consideration PCV safety and security and potential interference with community work before placing PCVs on the Small Grants Committee. PCV members are typically second or third year PCVs and PCV leaders, all of whom have completed a successful grant)
- For SPA: a USAID mission representative (at the mission’s discretion for SPA grants)
- Host country nationals and/or NGO representatives, as appropriate or possible

USAID Mission representatives may request to be a part of the Small Grants Committee. Likewise, Posts with VAST grant programs are highly encouraged, but not required, to invite representatives from the respective PEPFAR Mission to be on the Small Grants Committee for reviews of VAST grants. These representatives can provide insight into and technical expertise on the current programming priorities of the country team; their inclusion also fosters clear communication and relationship-building.

The Small Grants Committee fulfills key three functions:

1. Establishes Post-specific grant criteria/requirements and processes consistent with this handbook (“Peace Corps Small Grants Staff Handbook”), including application submission and review procedures, submission deadlines, etc.
2. Supports PCVs with the grant applications, supports SGCs with preliminary reviews and preliminary approval of grant application, which will then be reviewed by APCDs/PM and DPT (for final review and approval by the CD). The committee should refer to the *Project Review Checklist – Application and Completion Report* (found in the [Small Grants Resource Center](#)) for guidance on review of grant applications.
3. Monitors and evaluates grants and the grants process, reviews, and analyzes results, feedback, and data to improve the Post’s grant programs.

J. [Volunteers and Counterparts/Community Representatives](#)

PCVs work with counterparts/community representatives to identify and then support capacity-building grants that meet locally identified priorities. Throughout the grants process, the PCV will do the following:

- Collaborate with counterpart/community representative to identify, develop, implement, and complete a grant project that meets a determined community need.
- Help counterpart/community representative to complete and submit a grant application via the Volunteer Portal to the SGC and Small Grants Committee for review and approval.

- Work with counterpart/community representative to maintain and submit accurate and comprehensive financial records and receipts.
- Ensure documentation for in-kind contributions.
- Regularly report status updates to the SGC and Small Grants Committee.
- Submit completion documentation via the Volunteer Portal with receipts and pictures to the SGC no later than one month before COS date.
- Submit a Transfer of Responsibility form and/or budget amendment, if necessary.

III. Peace Corps Strategic Partners and Donors

Peace Corps strategic partners and donors contribute funds to the agency to issue as grants. Funding sources include contacts of current PCVs, RPCVs, members of the public, other private sector sources, and other US Government agencies. The Peace Corps does not use its own appropriated funds for the Peace Corps Small Grants Program. Therefore, Posts may not use appropriations to fund PCV grants. The Peace Corps is accountable for the use of funds from contributing partners and donors and may be required to provide reports.

Donors and strategic partners remain engaged with the overall work of the Peace Corps Small Grants Program. Their engagement can vary significantly depending on which type of grant program is being utilized; interaction may be at the Post level and/or at the Peace Corps headquarters level with GGM, SPIGA, OGHH, or OPATS. Occasionally, donors or strategic partners reach out directly to PCVs for project information. In these cases, PCVs should not share any personally identifiable information, including their specific-community or site/location. PCVs should alert their SGC, DPT, or CD if a donor requests this type of information and Post staff may also direct these organizations to contact the [Office of Gifts and Grants Management \(GGM\)](#), if they are requesting additional project information.

Grant Requirements

This section describes the basic requirements that all grant projects must meet. In addition, it highlights limitations on project costs that may not be funded by a Small Grants Program grant and costs that require a CD's approval. Using these requirements, Peace Corps staff can ensure that grant activities meet community needs and adhere to Peace Corps guidelines. Peace Corps headquarters will defer to Post-level guidance in cases where Posts have implemented more stringent policies³.

I. Basic Grant Requirements

Peace Corps grant funds may be used in various ways to support community-led development initiatives in a wide variety of programmatic areas, including Agriculture, Community Economic Development, Education, Environment, Health, and Youth in Development. Grants may also support Peace Corps programming priorities in gender equality, people with disabilities, volunteerism, and to address other community-defined priorities. Regardless of the funding source chosen by the PCV (SPA, VAST, PCPP, or GA), all projects supported with Peace Corps grant funds must do the following:

- Be community initiated and directed: This ensures that the community is the driving force behind the project and will take ownership once it is completed. All projects should be initiated, designed, and implemented by a local community organization or group, with the support of a PCV.
- Meet a community-determined need: This guideline helps establish the merit of the particular project among a host of other expressed needs.
- Include capacity building components and promote sustainability: "Sustainable" refers to the ability of a project to continue to meet the needs of a community once the initial grant or external source of funding has ended. "Capacity building" refers to strengthening the skills, competencies, and abilities of people in the local community so they can overcome obstacles that inhibit them from realizing their developmental goals.
- Include indicators of success through monitoring, reporting, and evaluation: Indicators of success are quantifiable measurements, determined during project design, that measure project progress toward its goals and objectives, and demonstrate desired changes are taking place. They measure both tangible (e.g., acres of forest preserved, number of women training in new gardening techniques) and intangible outcomes (e.g., an increase in self-esteem among the participants).
- Incorporate agency-wide programming priorities and/or initiatives, where feasible.

³ For example, if posts determine that grants may not be over \$10,000, Peace Corps headquarters will defer to this post-level policy.

- Support a stand-alone activity with definite start and end dates and concrete goals and objectives. Well-defined dates and targets document thoughtful project design, realistic implementation timelines, as well as community ownership for the project post-grant-funding. Multiple projects may not be aggregated into one grant application.
- Be scheduled for completion within one year and should be fully closed at least one month before the PCV's close of service date.
 - If a PCV anticipates that a project will require more than a year to implement, such project should be broken into manageable phases with funding coming from independent, consecutive grant applications with unique goals and objectives.
 - To provide time for projects to be fully closed while a PCV is still in country, completion reports and receipts must be submitted and accurately reconciled at least one month before a PCV's COS date.
- Not exceed U.S. \$10,000 in funding from the Small Grants Program, except as authorized by the appropriate regional director and the director of the respective grant program office (i.e., the director of OGHH authorizes VAST grants).
- Include a community contribution of at least 25% of the total estimated grant cost: To ensure community ownership and initiation, as well as to enhance the sustainability of the grant, a 25% minimum community contribution of the total project cost is required. See [Grant Budget Formulation](#) for further information.
- When possible, projects should be designed with the participation and inclusion of vulnerable populations.
- Not discriminate against any individuals in the implementation of the project, such as by withholding, adversely impacting, or denying equitable access to the benefits provided through the project on the basis of any factor not expressly stated in the grant. This includes, for example, any discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), national origin, disability, age, genetic information, marital status, parental status, political affiliation, or veteran's status. Nothing in this provision is intended to limit the ability of the individual receiving the grant to target project activities toward the assistance needs of certain populations as defined in the grant.

Each Post may also develop additional Post-specific criteria to better reflect local community development issues and priorities. For example, a Post may develop its own requirements regarding maximum grant size (at most \$10,000), minimum community contribution (at least 25%), or whether grants may be developed outside of a PCV's primary assignment or sector.

II. Limitations on Peace Corps Small Grants Program Project Budgets

All costs funded with Peace Corps grant funds must be reasonable, appropriate, and justified in light of the grant activities and objectives. The following limitations apply specifically to costs covered by grant funds. If the local community chooses to provide or pay for any of the following outside of grant funds, that is acceptable and does not require an approval request signed by the CD.

- Land, structures, and other capital assets
Grant funds may not be used to purchase land, structures, or other capital assets.
- Infrastructure grants
Grant funds may not be used for large infrastructure activities such as major construction, dams, multiple classrooms, or dormitories as these activities tend to be complex, could be prolonged or face delays, and may have liability issues or potential negative environmental ramifications.

Grant funds may be approved to construct small infrastructure projects, such as adding a small room to an existing building for use as a library, computer resource room, club space, meeting, or storage room. It is advisable to pair these kinds of activities with relevant sector trainings to improve the sustainability of the project. For example, if building a wall around a garden, the PCV should be encouraged to conduct trainings on gardening, nutrition, or other topics relevant to the project. Large infrastructure activities, especially those that require the use of explosives or other inherently dangerous materials, will not be approved. Posts should consult with the respective grant program office at Peace Corps headquarters before any grant application is developed for these types of activities.

Prior to approving an infrastructure project, the Small Grants Committee must ensure that the community has clear title to the land on which the building will be located or has a signed, long-term lease or other legally valid agreement providing long-term access to the land, and approval to construct according to local legal requirements. If the land is under a long-term lease, the community organization must demonstrate that it will be able to cover any monthly rent required by the landowner. Due to these complexities and potential challenges to meeting these requirements, it is strongly advisable to keep these types of activities to a minimum.

- Loan funds
Grant funds may not be used as loan collateral or to supplement a community organization's revolving credit or loan fund. However, if the community generates income as a result of grant activities, it may elect to use this income to establish a credit or loan fund to continue or expand grant activities.

- “Sub-grant”, umbrella grants, or re-granting Small Grant Program funds
PCVs who are recipients of grant funds may not award those grant funds to other persons or groups in their community or other PCVs in the form of a secondary or sub-grant/prize/loan. If participants would like to use skills and/or knowledge gained as a result of project activities to design a follow-up grant, the PCVs and the community should apply for funding for a second grant through the normal Peace Corps grant application process. If several PCVs wish to do similar, micro-scale activities, each PCV must submit a separate grant application. At the discretion of Post, they may include largely the same grant application content, with key sections adapted for their unique community's background and involvement, including project timeline, budget, etc.
- Contingency/undefined funds
Grant budgets should not include funds for undefined or unexpected “contingencies” or similar cost categories (e.g., “unexpected costs”). The use of grant funds must be clearly identified for all costs.
- Multiple Small Grants Program funding
Applying for funding from multiple grant sources is not permitted. Each proposal must be a stand-alone grant that is funded through one small grant program.
- Alcoholic beverages
Grant funds may not be used to purchase alcoholic beverages.
- Recurring costs over three months
Grant funds may not be used to cover regularly recurring monthly expenses (e.g., rent, permanent salaries, telephone service and utilities, Internet service, service contracts) beyond an initial start-up period of three months. Salaries of contracted workers necessary for actual grant completion (e.g., construction workers building a small room) are allowable, while permanent salaries (e.g., a librarian to staff the library) are not. Calculations of community contributions should also not include recurring costs beyond three months. If start-up costs will be covered by the grant, there must be a clear sustainability plan demonstrating how the community will pay for the costs beyond the start-up period.
- Motor vehicles and other conveyances
Grant funds may not be used to purchase motor vehicles and other transportation conveyances. This includes but is not limited to cars, trucks, motorcycles, tractors, and other similar equipment.
- Non-organic pesticides, insecticides, or rodenticides
Grant funds may not be used to purchase pesticides, insecticides, or rodenticides. Improper application of these materials can have significant impact to human health and the environment. Community purchase and application of non-organic pesticides, insecticides, or rodenticides may not be counted towards the required community contribution.

- International travel for a PCV except when accompanied by a counterpart/community representative/participant(s)
Grant funds may not be used to fund international travel of a PCV to a training, conference, or other grant-related travel unless the PCV is accompanied by a community partner or local participants. Accompaniment will ensure that any gained skills and knowledge is more sustainably transferred to the counterpart/community representative in the local community. See below on Costs that Require CD Approval.

III. Costs that Require Country Director Approval

Certain costs require approval by the CD before they may be included in a grant budget. These costs are to be included in grants only after thorough review by Post staff, with final approval by the CD.

For any costs listed below, the PCV must attach a CD Approval Special Costs Form to the grant record when submitting an application to the Small Grants Committee and CD for signature/approval. The completed form should include a brief justification describing how the costs will contribute to the overall success and capacity building of the grant. To document the approval of the request, the CD must sign the form, which must be maintained in the grant record. Projects should not be designed in such a way that include these costs as a necessary component, as these costs are allowable *only* when absolutely necessary. Should these costs be incurred without a signed approval request, the PCV is responsible for paying for the unapproved cost.

Grant costs that require an approval request signed by CD:

- Modest giveaways and ceremonial expenses
Generally, grant funds may not be used to purchase giveaways⁴, prizes, ceremonies, celebrations, or other similar items or activities. However, if the use of grant funds to purchase these items will support the realization of grant goals and objectives and the Small Grants Committee supports this use of funds, PCVs must submit a CD Approval Special Costs Form. If there is any question regarding a cost, PCVs should fill out a Country Director Approval Special Costs Form.
- Volunteer costs
Generally, grant funds may not cover costs to support or benefit PCVs. For example, grant funds may not be used for per diem for PCVs. However, if a PCV cost is necessary for the success of a project, including closeout, he/she/they may submit a Country Director Approval Special Cost Form. Examples of potentially acceptable PCV costs may include modest lodging and food costs related to a grant, or travel costs if the PCV is traveling with counterpart(s)/community representative(s). (See International travel for local participants and counterparts/community representatives below.)

⁴ In most cases, T-shirts are considered giveaways; however, if T-shirts are given to participants as a uniform or a means of raising awareness of the Peace Corps, they may be included in the grant budget.

- International travel for local participants and counterparts/community representatives

Allowing international travel to be included in a grant requires careful consideration. Peace Corps headquarters strongly recommends not approving international travel costs due to potential logistic and liability issues. If a CD determines that the overall benefit of including international travel outweighs the considered risks associated with the travel, the CD may approve the request after considering and noting the responses to the following questions.

- What is the purpose of including international travel in the grant project? Could the participants/conference attendees and their organization get the same benefit from attending a conference or training in-country?
- Will the attendees learn something new and transfer skills to others when they return?
- Is this travel making the best use of small grant funds? What is the percentage cost of this proposed travel compared to other costs of the project budget?
- Where is the training component? Take into consideration the distance necessary to travel. If the training is simply across a border, and participants may easily drive to the training, the inclusion of the travel cost may make sense. However, if airfare or several hours of travel is included, the inclusion of the travel cost should not be considered.
- Does the project meet the small grants requirement to be sustainable and to build local self-reliance?
- Have you considered potential logistical problems, i.e., if a person misses a flight and must pay additional fees to get home, how will this be paid for?
- Who is responsible or liable for the person and/or his/her/their actions while traveling? If the Peace Corps is funding the travel, is the agency liable for anything that goes wrong when the attendees are in another country or the United States? It should be noted that the Peace Corps is potentially subject to a claim against the agency made by a host country national.

IV. Grants Requesting over USD \$10,000

All Peace Corps grants—regardless of funding source—have established a maximum grant request amount of \$10,000 United States Dollars (USD). (While the grant request may not exceed \$10,000, total grant costs may exceed \$10,000, if such total amount includes the community contribution and, if applicable, a third-party contribution.) This limit takes into consideration several key factors:

- Volunteer Safety and Security
As with all aspects of the agency's operations, PCV safety and security is a top priority. In cases where PCVs receive grant funds directly into their Peace Corps bank accounts, they inherently take on a measure of risk. For example, due to banking fees, PCVs often opt to take out larger sums at once, which

increases the risk of robbery or theft. Post staff should encourage each PCV to develop a plan to ensure their own safety and security when withdrawing funds, e.g. go to bank with a counterpart/community representative; pay vendors immediately upon withdrawal of funds; do not schedule an overnight in the banking town with funds in hotel room, etc. Additionally, in cases where PCVs are known to have access to large amounts of money, they may be pressured to use grant funds for costs not associated with the grant. These situations, and more, can contribute to an overall view that PCVs are a conduit for funds to the community, which may increase overall safety and security risk and diminish their effectiveness.

- **Logistics and Money Management**
Grants in excess of \$10,000 are considerably more difficult to manage and implement. Larger grants typically have a longer implementation timeline, and *all* expenses and their corresponding receipts (grant fund expenditures and community contributions) must be documented and secured throughout grant implementation. If the PCV and his/her/their counterpart/community representative do not have prior experience with managing and accounting for large sums of money, they must have a strategy in place to ensure funds are not lost or misused and are kept in a secure place only accessible by the appropriate parties. Post staff must be prepared to work with or guide the PCV as he/she/they plan and implement steps for the financial management of the grant.
- **Liability**
PCVs are required to sign the grant agreement and liability forms which state that “any grant funds disbursed to the Peace Corps Volunteer that cannot be accounted for or were spent on non-approved costs, lost, or stolen may be deducted from the readjustment allowance as a debt owed to the Peace Corps.” Accounting for and managing funds in excess of \$10,000 exposes PCVs to much greater liability, which may not be completely covered by their readjustment allowance. Employing a \$10,000 limit mitigates, to some extent, risk to PCVs.
- The Peace Corps’ approach to development and the role of outside funding
A \$10,000 limit facilitates the large majority of PCV grants and preserves the agency’s mission to provide trained men and women—not funds—to aid host communities.

The majority of approved grants are below \$10,000. Though the \$10,000 limit is in place for the reasons detailed above, in some cases it may be appropriate for a grant to go above that amount. When this occurs, Post staff will need to work with the PCV to complete the approval process detailed below.

A. Exceptions to the \$10,000 U.S. Limit

The Small Grants Program acknowledges that there may be rare or exceptional instances when it is necessary and appropriate for a grant to exceed the \$10,000

limit. Post staff will take into consideration the higher risks and responsibilities associated with a large-scale grant and may need to allocate extra time and resources to ensure appropriate implementation and financial management.

B. Post-level Approval Process for Grants above \$10,000

Grants with a request of more than \$10,000 must still satisfy all Small Grants Program requirements, as noted in the [Grant Requirements](#) section. Once the grant is submitted, the SGC will work with the PCV to fill out the Projects in Excess of \$10,000 Approval Request Form. The request will contain written justification for the grant and details of financial management planning and steps by the PCV and counterpart/community representative. If it is a PCPP grant, the PCV must articulate a resource strategy to demonstrate the ability to sufficiently fundraise for the grant.

The SGC will also complete a section of the Projects in Excess of \$10,000 Approval Request form that considers available funding at Post and, if a PCPP grant, the additional time that will be required for fundraising. SPA, VAST, or GA agreements have limited annual grant amounts negotiated by Posts. If a grant is to be funded by one of these funding sources, the SGC must determine whether such a project warrants use of a large percentage of available funds within the applicable SPA, VAST, GA program. Post staff must consider if this particular project is the best use of these funds. For PCPP, Post staff must consider the time it may take to fundraise for a grant exceeding \$10,000⁵ and ensure the PCV has a backup plan in the event the fundraising goal is not reached in time to allow for the project to be completed.

The SGC will also be responsible for detailing the Post's processes and procedures for ensuring the project will be successfully implemented and completed. This includes the Post's strategy to assist the PCV throughout the life cycle of the grant. These may include monthly check-ins with the PCV and counterpart/community representative, periodically collecting written progress reports and receipts from the PCV, and/or reviewing grant expenditures and receipts (for community contributions and grant fund expenditures) throughout the grant life cycle.

It is important to note that the Projects in Excess of \$10,000 Approval Request Form will be reviewed by Peace Corps headquarters offices. Justifications must be well-written and thorough in order to receive Peace Corps headquarters final approval. Before submission of the grant to the Small Grants Committee at Post, the PCV and SGC must sign the Projects in Excess of \$10,000 Approval Request Form and upload it to the grant application.

⁵ Grants requesting \$5,000 or below take an average three months to fund, depending on a PCV's fundraising plan. Often PCPP grants requesting \$10,000 or above take an exceedingly long time to fund or PCV submit a budget amendment to implement the grant on a smaller scale.

If the application is approved, the CD will sign all required standard forms, as well as the Projects in Excess of \$10,000 Approval form Request. The SGC must submit all documents signed by PCV, counterpart/community representative, and CD (application, signature forms, and Projects in Excess of \$10,000 Approval Request form) to Peace Corps headquarters grants program point of contact for final approval.

C. Peace Corps Headquarters Approval Process for Grants above \$10,000

Once the application for a grant in excess of \$10,000 is received at Peace Corps headquarters, the appropriate Small Grants program staff will review the grant documents and all supplementary materials for approval. Following this, the grant must be approved by appropriate regional director, and the director of GGM (for SPA and PCPP grants), the director of OGHH (for VAST grants), or director of SPIGA (for GA grants). Peace Corps headquarters staff will review each grant, taking into consideration the key factors listed above (Volunteer Safety and Security, Logistics/Money Management, Liability, and the Peace Corps' Approach to Development and the Role of External Funding). Once approval is obtained and all signatures are collected, the grant will be moved forward for processing.

D. Implementation

Grants in excess of \$10,000 require a greater amount of oversight and management by Post staff. Staff should define grant milestones when filling out the Projects in Excess of \$10,000 Approval Request form and undertake regular check-ins to ensure the grant is on-time, on-budget, and properly managed. Grant files should document regular check-ins from programming and financial staff and a quarterly review of receipts (for both community contribution and grant fund expenditures) and grant progress. Answers to these questions should be noted:

- Does documented spending (grant log) match receipts?
- Does the calculated grant balance match the bank balance?
- Have there been any delays in the timeline?
- If it is a PCPP project and fundraising online: What is the fundraising status? If the full grant amount has yet to be donated, is there still time to implement the grant?

In an effort to uphold the Peace Corps' approach to development, all grants in excess of \$10,000 require detailed planning, thorough review, and several approvals. PCVs submitting grants above \$10,000 should be prepared to undertake a more detailed initiative; they may wish to work with their communities to consider scaling down a large grant into smaller individual activities that support the original grant goals.

V. Grants that Require Special Consideration

A. Scholarship Activities (PCPP and SPA Only)

While scholarships have in the past been allowable for PCPP and SPA projects only, this type of project is considered inconsistent with the agency's development model for capacity building and sustainability. It is possible that small scholarships or limited financial support may be provided if tied to discrete camps, school clubs or similar Post-specific activities, but these will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis. Volunteers may assist communities to seek out organizations (i.e. non-governmental organizations) that are well suited to administering scholarship programs, which can help address access to education and other barriers.

B. Training and Skills Building Camps and Clubs

PCVs may implement camps or similar events to provide training and skills building for youth. These may be supported by grants depending upon their adherence to the camp requirements. Peace Corps strongly encourages that applications demonstrate sustained learning for youth by linking participants to existing clubs where they can share their experience and continue to develop their skills. This approach maximizes program impact and sustainability. For this reason, camps supported by grants should not focus solely on sports or recreational activities. When designing a grant that implements a camp or club, PCVs must incorporate guidance from Peace Corps' [Youth Camps Manual: GLOW and Other Leadership Camps \[ICE No. M0100\]](#) and [Youth Clubs Toolkit](#).

Per the Youth Camp Manual and Youth Club Toolkit, PCVs are required to collaborate on camps and clubs with host organizations and work with other host-country stakeholders. Planning and implementing camps and clubs alongside local organizations, such as a government institution, local NGO, or community partner (e.g. school or youth center), greatly improves the effectiveness of the activity. Camp and club activities should also include organizational and staff capacity building to facilitate long-term sustainability of the camp and/or club. Any camp and/or club should be led by a host country partner. PCVs may co-facilitate camp activities including safety and child protection, logistics, curriculum development, and other appropriate activities. Additionally, PCVs play an important role in ensuring sustainability by creating or facilitating a link between camps (i.e. one-time activity) and clubs (i.e. ongoing activities).

All activities with youth should be consistent with [MS 648 Child Protection Policy](#), which outlines required proper conduct while working or engaging with children during Peace Corps service or employment. For a detailed discussion of appropriate and inappropriate behavior see the [Child Protection Code of Conduct](#), which is attached to [MS 648](#). All activities should also adhere with Post's policies, procedures, and other requirements (including events guidelines). All photos of children uploaded into the grants database must be accompanied by a

signed [Child Media Authorization and Agreement Form](#). This form must be signed by the minor's parent and collected and accounted for by the host organization prior to the use of any minor's photos.

Peace Corps Small Grants Program grants for camp and club activities must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Project must meet all of the [basic grant requirements](#).
- Funds requested for equipment and materials should support the training to be provided and not be the principal justification for grant support.
- Follow-up plans should be included for sharing the learning of participants with their clubs, peers, and communities at large and applying the skills learned during the camp experience.
- Activities should generally take place within PCV's community and not require travel on the part of the PCV or camp participants.
- As with any Peace Corps Small Grants Program grant, a counterpart/ community representative or organization should assume responsibility for hosting and designing the camp or club for the purposes of liability and sustainability, submitting the application, managing the funds, running the camp, acquiring, and accounting for all necessary authorizations, and completing reporting requirements, assisted by the PCV.
- Grants should follow and apply guidance articulated in the Peace Corps [Youth Camps Manual: GLOW and Other Leadership Camps \[ICE No. M0100\]](#) and [Youth Clubs Toolkit](#).

C. Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Grants (USAID-Funded Grants)

As part of the Peace Corps' agreements with USAID, SPA and the GA grants programs have Initial Environmental Examination (EIA) requirements. PCVs must complete an environmental checklist for water, agriculture, and natural resource management grants. This is available in the grant document section of the VRG Volunteer Portal.

D. Requirements for Water Provision Grants

To ensure the safety and quality of water, the Peace Corps Small Grants Program has developed additional guidelines for projects that involve water (see diagram below).

In many countries, there are naturally occurring water contaminants, such as arsenic, that could pose a major health risk to populations. Other contaminants, such as fecal coliform can have long-ranging health impacts, including chronic diarrhea and reduced health. In some cases, dangerously high levels of contamination may go undetected. Increasing accessibility and use of these water sources without first attempting to validate the safety of the water is unethical.

As a result, the grant program fully supports WASH projects that fit into one of these categories:

- WASH trainings
- Hand-washing projects (not including the rehabilitation/creation of a water access point(s))
- Behavior change activities
- Materials development
- Community-led sanitation
- Community organization
- Latrine construction

No additional documentation or requirements beyond the grant application are necessary for these types of grants.

All other water-related grants have an additional requirement to obtain grant funding. At a minimum, a Water Quality Assurance Plan (WQAP) must be developed with community input and attached to the grant application. WQAP Templates can be found within the VRG section of Peace Corps LibGuides, under [Grant Application Resources](#). Community ownership and empowerment should be outlined throughout. A copy should also be maintained within the community. The type of water provision project will influence the focus of the plan (see graphic below).

Additional due diligence is necessary for projects explicitly designed for providing drinking water or creating/rehabilitating infrastructure that *could* be used for a drinking water access point.

For water projects using non-rainwater source, the water must be tested to ensure safety. The minimum testing standards are:

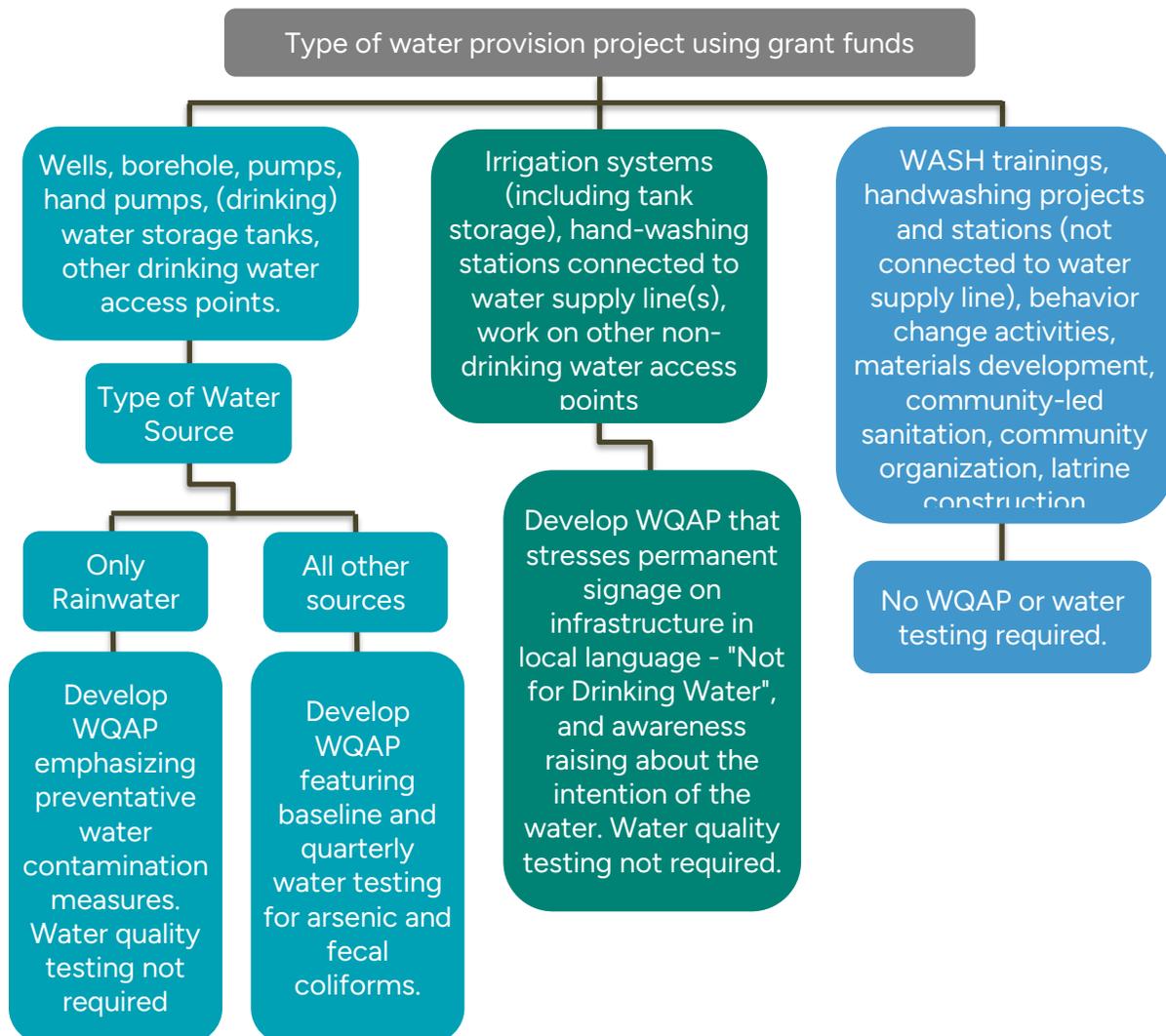
- Baseline and quarterly testing for a year for arsenic (target quality is less than 0.01 mg/L (10 ppb)) and fecal coliforms (not detectable in any 100mL sample).
 - This testing protocol should also be documented in the WQAP.
 - The [USAID ENCAP Visual Field Guide: WATER SUPPLY](#) provides links to some sample water testing kits. Less expensive testing kits may also be available at the local level; in some cases, host-country governments have provided low-cost or free kits and testing.
 - Costs associated with obtaining the water testing kits and paying for the results may be covered with Small Grants funding as part of the grant application.
 - It is best practice for PCVs and counterparts/community representatives to consult with relevant local authorities/experts when testing water quality.
- The test results for the entire year are to be reported to the respective Post and attached to the PCV's grant application. Posts are encouraged to consult

with relevant local authorities, their USAID Missions, and the Peace Corps headquarters grant program point of contact about such grants.

- Well construction/rehabilitation grants must also be informed by Well Activity Requirements and Considerations, which can be found within the VRG section of Peace Corps LibGuides, under [Grant Application Resources](#).

PCVs and Post staff are encouraged to carefully consider water-provision grant applications. The development of a WQAP and testing can greatly strengthen the grant design, contribute significantly to building local communities' capacities, and foster connections between local communities and government services. However, the timeline for testing may not align with a PCV's remaining time at site; in such cases, *counterpart(s)/community representative(s)* will need to take on *additional responsibilities* to obtain testing results and communicate them to the local communities and Peace Corps.

Diagram of Requirements for Water-Provision Projects



E. Medical Supplies

If a PCV and counterpart/community representative are planning a grant design that includes the purchase of medical supplies, there are requirements that the PCV and counterpart/community representative must meet in order for the grant to be approved. The SGC and applicable program manager *must* review and ensure such requirements are met prior to CD approval of the grant. PC Medical Officers (PCMO) should not be involved in any aspect of these activities.

PCVs are required to work with Peace Corps staff and local health professionals when designing and developing a sustainable and effective project that involves the purchase of medical supplies. Only trained health professionals are permitted to use any medical supplies authorized to be purchased with grant funds as listed below. Once approved for purchase, these medical supplies may only be provided as an initial supply for a health facility, per the Recurring Cost section of this handbook. PCVs must include in the grant design a plan for the organization or community to cover recurring costs, maintenance, and future training needs.

Confidentiality must be maintained with respect to all individual medical information, including testing and test results, discussion of those results, and any recommendations for treatment and counseling.

Authorized Medical Supplies

- All authorized medical supplies must be produced by reputable manufacturers and stored properly, including refrigeration, as determined by an external trained health professional.
- The PCV and counterpart/community representative are responsible for meeting the requirements below for purchases of authorized medical supplies.
- Examples of authorized medical supplies include:
 - Testing kits – (e.g. HIV testing kits, malaria testing kits, diabetes testing kits, vision screening materials, COVID-19 testing kits), provided that:
 - Testing must be administered by externally trained health professionals. PCVs are prohibited from administering these testing kits.
 - Counseling services by trained professionals must be made available to discuss results with the patient population. A referral system should be in place to connect patients to appropriate medical services.
 - First Aid kits/Emergency Medical Supplies kits -
 - First aid kits may be authorized for purchase including those that contain over-the-counter medications normally included in medical kits, such as pain relievers, antiseptic ointment, or digestive aids.

- A counterpart/community representative(s) must be responsible for administering first aid.
- Medical supplies - (e.g. Intravenous (IV) tubing, gauze, tape, bandages, dressings, gloves, masks). Where possible, latex-free materials should be obtained.
- Medical equipment that does not require routine expert maintenance - (e.g. Stethoscope, blood pressure monitor, patient beds).
- Education and training resources for medical professionals, students, and community members - (e.g. medical diagrams, medical simulation equipment, medical books).

Unauthorized Medical Supplies

Examples of medical supplies that are not authorized for purchase with grant funds or to be used in a PCV project include:

- Medical supplies or medications from the Peace Corps-issued PCV medical kits intended for PCV use only.
- Medicines not normally available in first aid kits/emergency medical supplies kits, those that require a prescription from a medical professional, or medicines that require specialized training to administer.
- Medical equipment that requires expert training for use and regular maintenance (e.g. MRI scanners, x-ray machines, ultra-sound equipment, sterilization machines).

Any questions as to whether a grant expense is authorized should be directed to the appropriate Peace Corps headquarters grant program point of contact by the SGC.

Monitoring and Evaluation of a Project

I. Why Monitor and Evaluate Projects?

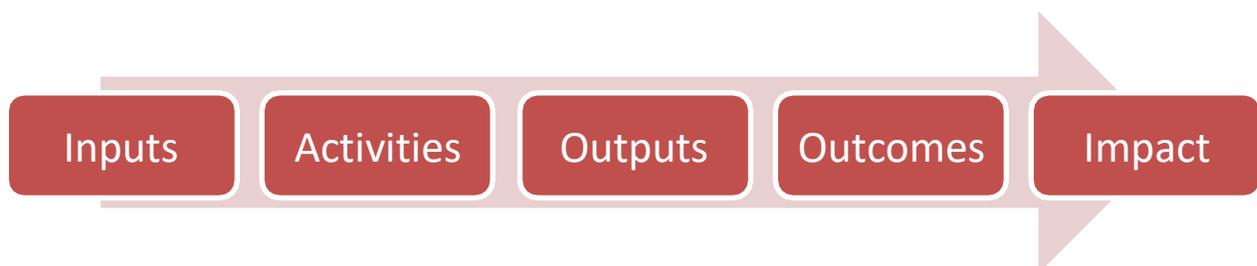
The Peace Corps' contribution to the development community can be demonstrated through monitoring and evaluating (M&E) PCV activities and outcomes within their primary and secondary assignments. M&E enables us to adjust assignment activities, learn from assignment successes and challenges, demonstrate the impact of PCV activities, and tell the Peace Corps story to stakeholders in a clear and compelling way. Documenting the outcomes of projects provides tangible evidence of the impact of PCV activities and demonstrates the contributions of the Small Grants Program. Finally, evaluating the success of a project advances the agency's ability to demonstrate the degree to which the Peace Corps is achieving its strategic goals and enables the Peace Corps to promote transparency by sharing the results of its work with communities and funding partners. As such, it is a vital component of the Small Grants Program.

II. M&E Planning and Design for Project

A well-designed and clearly articulated project is the foundation for M&E efforts. In order to successfully implement, as well as monitor and evaluate, a project, it is important to first have a clear and "logical" picture of the project: what are expected accomplishments, what activities will be undertaken, and how those activities will lead to the desired outcomes. Basically, the PCV needs to be clear on the "theory of change" or *how* s/he expects the project to achieve its objectives so the right activities can be implemented, progress can be tracked over time, project adjustments can be made as necessary, and the project can be evaluated for success. For an example of a Theory of Change model, see the [Women's Economic Empowerment through Digital Literacy Theory of Change](#).

If PCVs clearly articulate what they hope to accomplish in their project and how they expect to accomplish it, they will be able to easily develop a plan for how to measure the success of the project upon completion. PCVs may thus find it useful to create a logic model to help them design their grants and to help inform their M&E plan for reporting at the completion of their grant.

What is a Logic Model? A logic model is a visual representation showing the sequence of related events (e.g. inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, impact) that connect the need for a planned activity or set of activities. The logic model has been used for decades in the development arena. The basic template looks like the following:



Many formats exist for the logic model – Peace Corps has recently adopted a relatively simple “theory-of-change informed” logical framework to replace the Project Framework template. This is applicable to small grants; see Small Grants Theory of Change and Logic Model. Peace Corps’ small grants logic model presents a clear articulation of the project rationale, goal, objectives, activities, outputs, and anticipated outcomes, as well as assumptions and external factors that may affect project implementation. The logic model feeds into the M&E plan which defines indicators to track and measure achievement of outputs and outcomes in the logic model, establishes targets, identifies the specific tool(s) used to measure achievement of indicators, and delineates the frequency of reporting.

Reviewing the small grants logic model requires project planners to think carefully about and describe relationships among the desired changes or outcomes, the activities that will enable achievement of the outcomes, assumptions underlying these relationships, and other factors that might affect achievement of project objectives. The small grants logic model can thus serve as a useful tool for structuring project planning and design discussions.

III. Project Specific Goals, Objectives, and Indicators

When designing a project, the PCV and their counterpart/community representative should establish a project goal and objectives based on identified needs in their community:

- Goal: The project goal statement articulates the intermediate or long-term outcomes of the project. It may be a higher-level aspiration that will not be entirely within the project’s control to achieve.
- Objectives: Project objectives articulate the most significant outcome(s) that will result from PCV and partner activities and will contribute to achievement of the project goal. An objective should be something that the grant has control over and can reasonably be expected to accomplish.

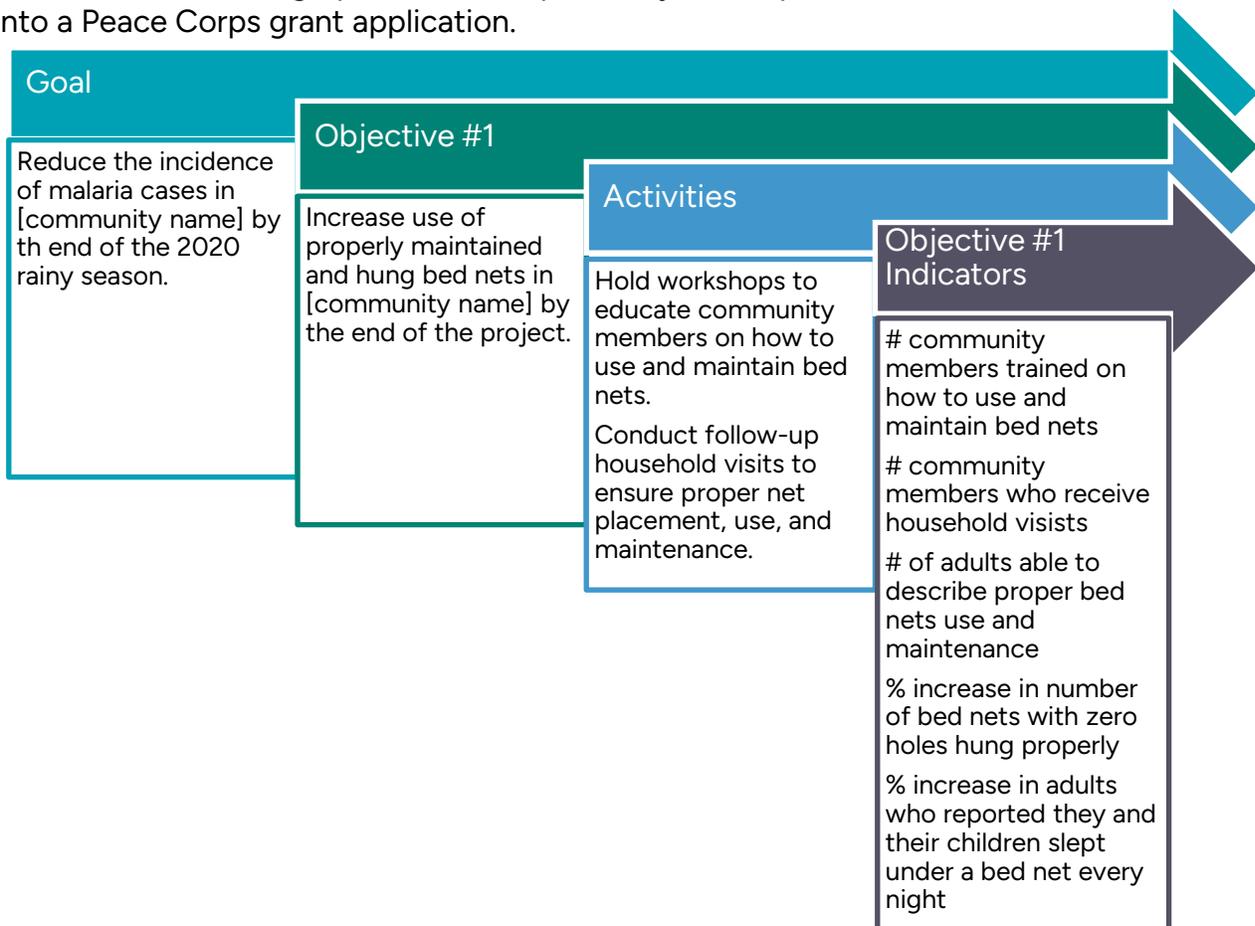
A project should have one overarching goal and it is best practice to have no more than three objectives.

Next, the PCV and counterpart/community representative should define the activities that they believe will lead to achievement of the objectives, and the inputs needed to carry out those activities. They can then build out a logic model that illustrates the activities that will be implemented and the outputs and outcomes of the activities. This informs the development of relevant indicators (see graphics on next page).

Objective: Increase use of properly maintained and hung bed nets in [community name] by the end of the project.

Activities	Outputs	Output Indicators	Outcomes	Outcome Indicators
Hold workshops to educate community members on how to use and maintain bed nets	Community members trained on how to use and maintain bed nets	# community members trained on how to use and maintain bed nets	Adults (age 18+) able to describe proper bed net use and maintenance	# of adults able to describe proper bed net use and maintenance
Conduct follow-up household visits to ensure proper net placement, use, and maintenance	Community members receive household visits to ensure proper net placement, use, and maintenance.	# community members who receive household visits	Well maintained bed nets that are hung properly Adults and children sleeping under a well maintained and properly hung bed net every night	% increase in number of bed nets with zero holes hung properly % increase in adults who reported they and their children slept under a bed net every night

The small grants logic model can directly translate to the project-specific Goals, Objectives, and Indicators within the grant application. The small grants logic model table above and the graphic below depict a stylized representation of what is entered into a Peace Corps grant application.



The M&E plan is developed from the logic model; indicators are developed to track and measure achievement of the outputs and outcomes articulated in the logic model. If the grant is funded through SPA, VAST, or GA, one or more of the project-specific indicators may match those of the required, [Funding-Specific Indicators](#). Since these indicators are reported to different audiences, there should be no concern regarding double-counting outputs/outcomes. After developing project-specific indicators, PCVs will need to determine who is responsible for collecting data for each indicator, and what data collection tools will be used.

IV. Peace Corps' Standard Grant Indicators

In addition to the project-specific goals, objectives, and indicators, all Peace Corps grants are required to report against a standard set of indicators that are applicable across all grant types. These indicators measure capacity development and the number of people reached by the grant. They enable Peace Corps to demonstrate:

- Increased capacity of participants to define and meet goals and objectives in the future, and/or
- Increased organizational capacity as a result of the grants.

There are three indicators that must be measured across all grants: capacity development, number of indirect beneficiaries, and number of direct participants. Numbers entered at the application stage represent targets; numbers entered at the completion report stage represent the actual entities reached.

A. Capacity Development

For the capacity development indicator, the PCV and counterpart/community representative must first determine the unit of measurement. Will the activity target individuals, service providers, and/or an organization/association?

- Individual members of the community: The main focus of the Peace Corps, whether directly through the work of PCVs and their work partners or through those trained by PCVs, is to build capacity at the individual level so community members are empowered to improve their quality of life, be they individual students, farmers, clients served by an NGO, or others.
- Service providers, trainers, or multipliers: Strengthening capacity of service providers, trainers, or other multipliers, be they teachers, leaders of an NGO, peer educators, or managers of a farmers' cooperative, helps ensure local leadership for continuing activities into the future.
- Organizations/associations: Strengthening organizational capacity, such as management processes within an NGO, helps support other activities in an ongoing, functioning, and supportive environment.

For these units of measurement, the counterpart/community representative and PCV will then choose which indicator(s) best fits the project.

B. Beneficiaries (Indirect) and Participants (Direct)

Peace Corps Small Grants Program uses specific definitions for “indirect beneficiaries” and “direct participants” of a project. When deciding who is a participant and who is a beneficiary, PCVs should note the following definitions:

- Beneficiaries: Those who receive an indirect benefit from the execution of the project, but are not involved in its planning or implementation.
 - Beneficiaries often benefit from the execution of the project after the main period of implementation has passed.
 - Beneficiaries may receive a transfer of knowledge, skills, or abilities from participants who were trained during the main period of implementation.
- Participants: Those directly involved in the design and implementation of the project, including those who attend trainings or workshops.
 - Participants are usually involved in the project during the planning and/or implementation phases.
 - Participants receive a direct transfer of knowledge, skills, and attitudes as a result of participation in project activities and may go on to teach what they learned during the project to other community members.

V. Funding-Specific Indicators

PCVs are required to provide indicator information for their selected funding source (for SPA, VAST, and GA grants programs in particular). Post staff should assist PCVs in understanding which indicators should be reported on for the respective project. These indicators are essential to monitoring and evaluating grant programs and will be submitted to the appropriate Peace Corps office for reporting purposes. The next graphic summarizes the reporting requirements specific to each grant program:

PCPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A
SPA & GA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For all USAID-funded grants, PCVs must report on at least one indicator in this section of the grant application to qualify for funding.• PCVs should report on all indicators relevant to their grant.• SPA indicators are derived from the Foreign Assistance Framework standard and custom indicators according to the program element(s) agreed upon by the Peace Corps and USAID.• GA indicators are agreed to by USAID and the Peace Corps when developing the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for each individual GA buy-in.• Indicator and activity data must be reported by the post to the Peace Corps headquarters and the USAID mission in a mid-year and annual report.
VAST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For all VAST grants, PCVs must report on at least one of the five key PEPFAR indicators in this section of the grant application that have been identified by Peace Corps and the PEPFAR initiative.• These indicators are the same as those used by posts for reporting HIV/AIDS work in the PEPFAR Country Team Reports.

VI. Data Collection

All projects require the collection of output and outcome indicator data. The SGC and M&E specialist at Post should train PCVs on the importance of ensuring that data is complete, accurate, and collected in a timely manner.

At a minimum, PCVs should record attendance at grant-funded events or activities and submit signed participant lists with their completion reports. This helps to ensure that the output data (but not personally identifiable information of participants) reported to partners and donors is accurate, valid, and auditable. SGCs must ensure that participant lists are saved in the appropriate grant files for audit purposes.

When possible, PCVs should use existing data collection tools when they seek to measure project outcomes. These may be tools used by a relevant government ministry, NGO, or other Peace Corps sector project. Which tool to use should be considered during the project design process and developed (if not using an existing tool) at the beginning of the project. The type of data collection tool used will depend on the indicator being measured. Examples of tools include:

- Attendance sheets
- Detailed tracking sheets
- Pre- or Post-test assessments that measure increases in skills, knowledge, and/or behaviors (attitudes)

Tools used or developed to measure achievement of outcome indicators should meet standards of validity, integrity, precision, reliability, and timeliness.

Frequency of use will be determined by the type of tool and what is being measured – this should be outlined in the M&E plan contained in the [Project Specific Goals, Objectives, and Indicators](#) section of the grant application. The SGC and/or M&E specialist can assist in identification and/or development of appropriate tools to measure project indicators.

Volunteer Reporting and Grants (VRG)

VRG is a web-based system in which PCVs submit, manage, and report both their Volunteer Activities and Grants. Through VRG, Volunteer activities are directly associated to grant records, which enhances the quality of data reported by PCVs. All grant records are housed in an online database which is located on Agency CRM alongside other products that Peace Corps staff use, such as Volunteer Information Database Application (VIDA), PCRm, and SIMS. The VRG allows both Post and headquarters staff to access all grant records at any point in time regardless of where the grant is in the grant lifecycle. It improves grant record keeping practices by storing all documents, notes, feedback, and required paperwork on the individual grant record.

I. Basic Functionality

VRG is a dual interface system that is accessible online. The staff-facing side of VRG is housed on Agency CRM. It requires that the user be connected to the Peace Corps network to use it. On Agency CRM, staff can see every grant record that exists. VRG contains various data points related to grants such as status, fiscal year, programmatic area, and funding amount. All of this information can be extracted by staff from Agency CRM.

The system also sends automatic emails to staff and PCVs when a grant's status changes to inform them of pending actions in the grants process. See *Grant Status Flow Reference Document Folder* in the [Small Grants Resource Center](#) to understand when automatic emails are sent.

The second interface is accessible by PCVs through the Volunteer Portal. The Volunteer Portal is a public-facing site with a login that requires authentication via Login.gov. In order for PCVs to successfully perform tasks in the Volunteer Portal, the email address that they use for Login.gov must be linked to their Volunteer record in VIDA. Once the PCV successfully logs in to the Volunteer Portal, they can begin to log Volunteer Activities and submit grant applications. The Volunteer Portal is linked to VRG on Agency CRM, so any changes that PCVs make to their grant records will be visible to staff on Agency CRM in real time.

II. Licensing

There is an unlimited number of staff licenses for Agency CRM. This means that all staff who need access to VRG can have a license. There are several different staff security roles for VRG that allow users to interact with the systems in different ways. There is a *Grant Manager* role which is held by the VRG Grant Manager position at Peace Corps headquarters. The Grant Manager is responsible for setting up the grant programs, program elements, and grant indicators as well as ensuring they are up-to-date each year.

The *Grant Contributor* role will be held by the majority of staff that use VRG to interact with grants. There are two sub-levels, headquarters, and Post users, under the Grant

Contributor role . These two roles are virtually the same, but only headquarters users are able to change the grant status to certain statuses such as “Posted” for PCPP grants or into the “Completed” status.

The final security role that a user might have is *VRG reader*. This allows the user to view and read the grant record, but they are unable to make any changes to the grant.

III. Post Reviewing Grants

Since there are an unlimited number of licenses for Agency CRM, any staff member involved in the grant review process may have access to VRG on Agency CRM. This means that multiple staff can be involved in the grant review process. In the Grant Administration section of the grant record, there is a note function that staff can use to easily track their notes. There is also a section to provide feedback directly to the PCV in the feedback section. If the user requires the ability to make changes to the grant record, they must be assigned a Grant Contributor role in Agency CRM. If they are only reviewing grants, they may be assigned to the VRG Reader role.

IV. Reporting Capabilities

VRG has advanced functionality that allows users to search for any information collected in the grant application or completion report. This information can be analyzed within CRM with views, charts and dashboards or it can be exported to Microsoft Excel for analysis. Reports can be generated with aggregate data on grant funding across programs, community contributions, participants, beneficiaries, capacity building, grant-specific indicators, etc.

For example, a report can be pulled containing the narrative summary of grants classified as "Gender and Development". Additionally, VRG requires that PCVs associate Volunteer Activities with their grant applications. This means that reports can be generated using data from Volunteer Activities as well. For example, a report can be made showing all the grants with Volunteer Activities that contributed to third goal.

V. Remote Access to Agency CRM

Licensed staff members are able to access VRG on Agency CRM as long as they are logged on to their Peace Corps Active Directory accounts and connected to the internet. If a staff member is traveling out of the office, they may need to consult with their Post IT specialist regarding options for remote access, including a laptop with Global Protect, accessed through an RSA token.

Grant Design and Development

Applying for a grant begins well before a PCV fills out the grant application. PCVs must first earn the trust of counterparts/community representatives to determine an appropriate grant to plan and implement. As Peace Corps grants support community development, grants should be initiated and driven by the PCV's community, rather than solely by the PCV. PCVs must work with the counterparts/community representatives throughout the entire grant design, application, and implementation process.

Before developing a grant, PCVs must work with counterparts/community representatives to conduct a community needs assessment and should use the skills they have acquired from the PACA Field Guide for Volunteers, which can be found in the [PACA LibGuide: Volunteer Resources](#) page. To obtain hard copies, Post staff may work through their Information Resource Coordination (IRC) managers to contact the Peace Corps headquarters Librarian.

As the [PDM manual](#) states, "Community projects are most successful when they result from locally perceived desires or needs and where community members take part in the planning, implementation, and evaluation. This development process builds the community's capacity to better its own situation, strengthen its resources, and work toward solving problems more independently in the future". Thus, it is important for Post staff to ensure that each grant demonstrates community engagement and involvement, that there is a clear and specific need for the grant, and that it will be sustainable upon the PCV's departure.

Here are ways to ensure community involvement:

- Counterpart/community representative and PCV conduct PACA mapping or other assessment activities
- Counterparts/community representatives prepare a summary in the local language
- Counterparts/community representatives come to Post to present the project and for grant advocacy⁶
- Counterparts/community representatives attend PDM workshops with PCVs
- Post staff visit grant/community sites

As PCVs and their counterparts/community representatives conduct community needs assessments and design grants, the following questions should be asked to determine if grants are meeting pressing community needs:

- What indicates this grant will meet a need community members consider important?
 - What are the benefits—both immediate and long-term? Are these measurable, either quantitatively or qualitatively?

⁶ Some Posts have found it helpful to have counterparts/community representatives come to the Post to present the project and advocate for the funding of their grant application.

- Of these, which measurable changes can be captured within reasonable grant start and end dates?
- Why is this grant a priority?
- Does the grant require resources external to the local community?

If a grant is prioritized by the community and is determined to need external funding, the PCV and their counterpart(s)/community representative(s) should review [Basic Grant Requirements](#) to determine if a Peace Corps grant would be appropriate. The PCV should also consult with their program staff early in the process to ensure the aligns with Post priorities. Successful grants offer compelling answers to the following key components:

1. Community Ownership and Initiation

- How was the opportunity identified?
- Who first proposed this project?
 - If the project was proposed or is supported by a person outside of the local community, is it clear community members really want or need it, intend to participate, and want to use their resources in this way?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of community members? How are community members the primary drivers of the project?
- How involved are the beneficiaries in project planning?
- How will the community oversee the project?
- Can the community contribute the minimum 25% of the total grant value?
 - PCVs may help their communities quantify how much time, labor, transportation, and financial or material support the community will be able to provide. Most often, communities contribute much more than 25 % in material, financial, labor, or in-kind contributions. Post staff may utilize and distribute the “Estimating the Value of In-Kind Contributions” guide.

2. Sustainability

- Will the project be self-sustaining?
- What external or internal activities will sustain the project after outside funding ends? Is there a revenue-generating aspect of the project for continued operations?
- How long is this project anticipated to be in use or have an effect?
- Is there clear community participation and oversight for the project?
- How will any buildings, parts, or machinery be repaired or replaced?
- Does the community have the resources (human, financial, or material) to sustain the project long-term?
- Could the community replicate or teach the implementation of this project in the future?

3. Capacity Building

All grants should build local capacity. Grant timelines should be designed to allow for the collection of measurable changes in capacity. Grants can build capacity in different ways:

- Most grants have an inherent skill-building type of education or training that takes place during implementation. This could be informal (i.e., in constructing latrines, community members gain new knowledge that will allow them to replicate that activity in the future) or formal (i.e., the training of community members on good hygiene practices in addition to building latrines).

For some grants, the outcome will increase self-sufficiency in development activities and/or enable community members to carry out activities that build the local. For example, a community might build a new room for the local school, which will enable them to better educate their children, or a grant might purchase a loom for a women's cooperative to help them get a weaving project off the ground.

- All grants include a budget and require financial management by the PCV and their counterpart/community representative.

If a PCV and their counterpart/community representative determine that a grant meets the "Basic Grants Requirements" and is community initiated, sustainable, and builds capacity, they can move on to applying for a grant. Throughout the course of any grant, PCVs and their communities should continually reflect on the questions asked during the grant development phase, and consult with program staff, to ensure the grant remains community driven and sustainable.

Application Process

The following section outlines the process that PCVs and communities should follow when developing small-scale development activities and applying for Peace Corps Grants funding. Additionally, each Post may develop Post-specific criteria and/or procedures outlining the application process for PCVs.

When PCVs and their communities are ready to apply for grant funding, they should follow the procedures below, and also adhere to Post-specific procedures on which they have received training.

I. Orienting Volunteers

All PCVs should be oriented and trained by Post staff on how to design activities and access Peace Corps grants during their service. Post staff must ensure that small grant guidelines, deadlines, and review procedures are effectively communicated to PCVs. PCVs should understand the [role of small grants within the Peace Corps' approach to development](#) and methods to design activities and write grant applications. Effective means of communicating small grant information include scheduling small grant orientation sessions at PST or IST, distributing informational pamphlets, and including grant-related items in Volunteer newsletters.

Essential training content should cover agency-level grant requirements in MS 720, Peace Corps' [external funding policy](#), and any Post-specific requirements such as PCVs managing simultaneous grants. PCVs should also understand the timeline for applying for grants, available funding sources, the grant application and close out processes (including what types of automated emails to expect), and budget documentation requirements in VRG.

Due to the shorter length of Peace Corps Response (PCR) service, and while there are no strict limitations on Peace Corps Response Volunteers (PCRVs) completing grants, Posts should closely coordinate, communicate, and proactively monitor PCRV's grants. PCR managers and SGCs should closely communicate regarding grant feasibility within PCRVs' short service timelines. Post-level grant materials specific to PCRVs can be developed to document and communicate different processes for PCRVs' grant submissions. Also, PCRVs and counterparts/community representatives may benefit from grants-related training offered to PCVs.

II. When a Volunteer May Apply

PCVs may apply for grants after a minimum of three months at a site, and preferably after having received PDM training. PCVs should work with Post staff to understand Post's specific submission requirements and/or deadlines. Before beginning work with their communities to design an activity, PCVs should discuss the proposed activity with their APCD/PM or other appropriate programming staff. PCVs should also acquaint themselves with the Volunteer Portal, starting an application, entering activity details,

and saving the application in “Draft” status for the duration of the planning period until PCVs are ready to submit.

To allow sufficient time for completion of an activity prior to a PCV’s close of service, PCVs may not apply for grants during the last three months of their service unless the CD approves the PCV’s written justification explaining how the activity will be implemented and completed with all documentation submitted at least one month before the PCV’s close of service date.

Additionally, a PCV may not submit a grant application that includes activities that would be implemented past a PCV’s close of service date or where activities are designed to be transferred to another PCV.

III. Funding Availability

As each grant program utilizes different funding sources and has its own unique requirements, Posts should think strategically about how to communicate with PCVs about the availability of funding sources. The PCPP program, which fundraises for grants, operates on a rolling funding basis without set funding amounts or limits each fiscal year. However, other grant programs (SPA, VAST, and GA) have a set amount of funds each year. As such, Posts may impose guidelines to ensure strategic deployment of these funds. For example, Posts may consider restricting applications to a specific time frame(s), which can help ensure that grants are reviewed in the context of the fixed amount of funding available and the strategic objectives of the Post’s grant program. Since the SPA, VAST and GA programs typically have fixed funding amounts available to support different types of grants in a year, PCVs should be oriented accordingly.

IV. Simultaneous Grants

Peace Corps headquarters strongly recommends that PCVs only have one open grant at a time. Once a PCV has successfully completed and closed one grant, the SGC and other appropriate staff may permit a PCV to undertake a second grant. Additionally, PCVs may not utilize two different funding sources or two different grants to contribute to the same activity (e.g. SPA and PCPP funds may not be applied to the same activity).

V. Grant Budget Formulation

Creating a realistic budget is a key component of a grant. Budgets set a realistic outline of the grant cost and demonstrate the community investment in the activity through community contribution and third party, if involved in the project. The budget also highlights the responsibility of the PCV and the counterpart/community representative to properly manage, implement, and account for grant funds. Budgets must include all items needed for project implementation and ensure that the grant is fully supported through its intended outcome. The total grant budget includes the community contribution, any third-party contributions, and the amount requested from the Small Grants Program.

VI. Community Contribution

Essential to the sustainability of any activity is community buy-in. Without community support, activities typically fall apart after external support ends. For these reasons, communities are required to contribute at least 25% of the total budget for all grants. This requirement is often quantified through the costs of donated manual labor and transportation associated with the activity. Community contributions might also include direct contributions of raw materials or cash. If the community contribution is cash, the grant application must clearly detail how the cash will be spent. Contributions to the community from local or other in-country sources, such as local organizations, local businesses, or host government ministries, may also be considered as part of the community contribution. Contributions from an international organization may not be considered as part of the community contribution and should instead be counted as a third-party contribution.

PCVs may help their communities quantify how much time, labor, transportation, and financial or material support the community will provide (see the VRG section of Peace Corps LibGuides, under [Grant Application Resources](#), *Estimating the Value of In-Kind Contributions*). Historically, communities often contribute well above the 25% minimum requirement.

NOTE: as the cost of an activity increases, the community contribution must also increase accordingly to continue to meet the 25% minimum requirement.

VII. Third-Party Contributions

Third-party contributions are those given by international entities or individuals outside of the community. These contributions may be cash or in-kind and must be itemized separately in the grant budget. PCVs should work with their communities and Post staff to determine how best to classify these contributions.

Contributions from international NGOs (CARE, World Vision, Save the Children, Plan International, UN organizations, Darien Book Aid, US Embassies, foreign governments etc.), no matter where located, are considered a third-party contribution.

While third-party contributions are certainly an option for cost sharing, grants should never be designed specifically around a third-party contribution (for example, a large book donation from a third-party should not be the genesis for a grant). It is important for PCVs and communities to understand that including a third-party contribution increases the total grant budget, which will in turn increase the required 25% community contribution. The total grant budget includes the community contribution, any third-party contributions, and the amount requested from the Small Grants Program. This ensures that the community is fully invested in the activity, and that third-party contributors are not leading or overtaking the activity based on their own mission or goals. In some cases, third-party contributions raise the grant total significantly, and in turn, requires the community contribution to increase proportionally, in order to meet the 25% minimum requirement. Therefore, PCVs and communities should carefully consider any inclusion of potential third-party contributions to an activity.

PCVs should never receive or manage third-party funds. The third-party must give the funds directly to the community or managed by local representatives of the third-party organization. PCVs should also be aware that logistical and administrative challenges are common when funds are transferred from third-party contributors, particularly larger international organizations.

VIII. Exchange Rates

For all grant programs, no currency stabilization is accounted for when obligating funds for projects. Post staff and PCVs should monitor currency fluctuation and develop the budget accordingly. Otherwise, if there is a shortfall, the grant budget or the scope of the project would need to be amended. For PCPP, grant budgets are developed in local currency units (LCU) then converted to USD for the fundraising process. At the time of obligation of PCPP grant funds, USD is converted back to the LCU (using the current exchange rate) and the PCV reports grant expenditures in LCU.

IX. High Value Item Grants

Grants involving items of high value, including technology items, are increasingly being implemented by PCVs and their communities. While these projects are often successful at providing technological training and resources for communities, it is important to carefully consider the following questions and clearly document the answers in the grant application:

- If an item requires electricity, is that readily available and how will it be paid for in the future?
- Is the physical environment conducive for the sustained use of technology items? Can the items be properly stored and safeguarded?
- How will community members be trained on the use of the items?
- Who will manage and oversee access, usage, maintenance, and upgrades to these items? Will access and usage be provided in a fair and equitable manner?
- How will high value items be maintained and repaired in the future? For example, if a computer were to break after a project ends, will there be resources and trained personnel available to repair it?
- If an item requires ongoing resources or upgrades to function, for example ink for a printer, can those items be purchased locally and does the community have the resources to purchase these items in the future?
- For purchases of technology, how will future licensing and upgrades be financed?

X. Working with Youth

Peace Corps encourages youth (ages 10-24) to be involved in planning and implementation, where appropriate. Their involvement engages them as community members and supports the learning of life skills such as planning, goal setting, and leadership. However, volunteer efforts of youth may not be considered as labor and therefore not included as part of the 25% community contribution.

All activities with youth should be consistent with [MS 648 Child Protection Policy](#), which outlines required proper conduct while working or engaging with children during Peace Corps service or employment, and incorporate any additional Peace Corps guidance. For a detailed discussion of appropriate and inappropriate behavior see the [Child Protection Code of Conduct](#), which is attached to [MS 648](#). All activities should also adhere with Post's policies, procedures, and other requirements (including events guidelines).

XI. Required Materials for Submission

A. Grant Application

The Peace Corps grant application asks PCVs and their communities to think through all aspects of the grant, including the implementation plan, budget, and how the project will be monitored and evaluated. If a Post decides to request additional information pursuant to the Post's grant procedures (a project summary in the local language, for example), it may do so, though this will be a separate, supplementary document that should be uploaded to the grant record.

B. Forms

The grant application has forms that are downloaded from the grant record and are required to be signed by all parties identified on the forms. Text and budget information that is in the forms once downloaded must not be altered; and handwritten forms will not be accepted. Once signed, all forms must be uploaded to the grant record:

1. Grant Agreement Form
2. Grant Liability Form (2 Pages)
3. Media Authorization Form
4. Additional forms are required:
 - If the grant budget is more than \$10,000, the PCV will need to fill out the Projects in Excess of \$10,000 Approval Request form and submit it to the SGC. The SGC will complete section 2 and provide it to the CD for review, approval, and then signature.
 - If the budget includes [costs that require CD approval](#), such as prizes, PCV-related costs, or international travel, the PCV will need to submit a CD Approval Special Project Costs Form.
 - If the grant is determined to require a Water Quality Assurance Plan, the PCV must develop a plan with the counterpart/community representative and submit with application.
 - Note: All photos of children uploaded into VRG must be accompanied by a signed Child Authorization and Agreement Form.

XII. Planning for Small Grants Committee Review

Each Post has a Small Grants Committee which reviews all grant applications. Prior to committee review, the SGC should review each application to ensure that all sections have been thoughtfully completed and meet the minimum requirements for approval.

The SGC may request changes or updates from the PCV prior to submission to committee review.

Grant applications for VAST, SPA, and the GA must fall within the scope of the program areas or elements under which USAID or PEPFAR has contributed funds. PCPP must fall within the established program elements also referred to as PCPP sector funds. The SGC should request FORPost reports from their financial unit at Post to monitor funding levels throughout the fiscal year.

When planning for the committee's reviews, Post staff may find it useful to consider

- seasonal activity calendars of PCVs and their counterparts/community representatives (e.g., education PCVs might request funds for projects that will take place during school breaks),
- budget cycle realities (e.g. fiscal year close out) and the potential effects of a continuing resolution, and
- dates of PDM workshops or other similar trainings, after which grant application submissions may increase.

Once a grant has been reviewed by the SGC and all requirements have been met, the application should be forwarded (electronically or converted to a PDF report and printed out) to the review committee participants.

XIII. Small Grants Committee Review

Posts are required to review and approve grants through a Small Grants Committee. The Small Grants Committee should meet (in person or electronically) to review applications at least quarterly, and more frequently (e.g., monthly) if the volume of applications so necessitates. The calendar should be established far in advance and be publicized to PCVs in newsletters and other formats, so that PCVs can plan ahead to submit their applications on time. As PCPP grants may be submitted on a rolling basis, committee review may be more frequent.

The Small Grants Committee should establish the following:

- Post-specific grant criteria or requirements
- submission, review, and approval procedures
- a review calendar and application submission deadlines
- Post-specific grant materials which are consistent with this handbook and [MS 720](#) (e.g., local small grants handbook, small grant funding announcements, training materials, etc.)

Most Posts use a grant review checklist to help Peace Corps staff, PCVs, and communities assess the strengths and weaknesses of projects. Such a checklist should become part of any information guide that the Post disseminates to PCVs and communities. A sample checklist can be found in the documents section of the [Small Grants Resource Center](#).

XIV. Assigning Grant Numbers

Once the Small Grants Committee approves the application, the SGC will press the Generate Grant Number button on the grant record in VRG. This will automatically assign a number to the grant. The number will be tied to the application and will serve as the identifying factor for the grant in the database. This number is used to track the grant in the database and should also be included when obligating the grant in FORPost.

The grant number identifies the grant's funding source, the fiscal year in which the number was generated, and the Post (by a three-digit country location code). The number will be used to track the project until it is completed, and all programmatic and financial reports have been submitted.

Below are the codes for each grant program:

- Small Project Assistance (SPA) = SP
- Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) = PP
- Volunteer Activities Support and Training (VAST) = VA
- Global Agreement (GA) = GA

Approved grants are numbered as follows, using the example of a SPA grant in Albania that was approved in October 2020:

SP = SPA Program
20 = Fiscal year 2020
304 = the country location code for Albania
002 = the second SPA grant for which funding was obligated in Albania during fiscal year 2020

In this example, SP-20-304-002 becomes the assigned number. For VAST, GA, and PCPP, the prefix will differ. All grant numbers are auto populated when the Generate Grant Number button is pressed.

The grant number should not be confused with the obligation number.

Also, please note that the grant number sequence (i.e., 002 in the example above) should be kept separate for each program and each fiscal year. For posts with several SPA program elements, grant numbers will continue in numerical sequence regardless of the SPA program element. So, continuing with the example above, the third SPA grant approved in Albania during fiscal year 2020 would have the number SP-20-304-003. And if the last grant in the prior fiscal year 2019 for SPA was SP-19-304-019, the first grant in fiscal year 2020 would be SP-20-304-001, not SP-19-304-020.

All emails including information about a grant must reference grant numbers.

XV. Country Director and Peace Corps Headquarters Review

Following the Small Grants Committee's approval of an application, the SGC will forward the grant application to the CD for final approval. The CD will review the application and, if approved, sign all required forms. The SGC will then upload the signed forms and change the grant status to "Post Approved" in VRG.

Once the status has been changed to "Approved", the grant application will be forwarded to Peace Corps headquarters for review. Peace Corps headquarters staff will review PCPP grant applications to ensure they meet all of the basic grant requirements. After PCPP grants have been approved by Peace Corps headquarters staff, they will be posted online to raise funds. Once a SPA grant application is approved by the CD, it is ready to be funded. SPA grants requesting over \$10,000 are reviewed by Peace Corps headquarters staff and reviewed and approved by the director of Gifts and Grants Management and the appropriate regional director. All VAST grants are reviewed and approved only at the Post level, except for grants requesting over \$10,000, which are also reviewed and approved by the director of OGHH and the appropriate regional director. Unless specified otherwise by USAID and Peace Corps headquarters, GA grants are reviewed and approved only at the Post level, except for grants requesting over \$10,000, which are also reviewed and approved by the director of SPIGA and the appropriate regional director.

Fundraising for Approved PCPP Grants

As PCPP projects are funded through private sector donations, they are posted on the Peace Corps website, where donations can be made directly to proposed projects. Once an application is received and approved at Peace Corps headquarters, PCPP staff will post the project on the Peace Corps website and change the grant application status to “Posted”. This will trigger an automated email to the PCV and SGC informing them that the project is now posted online. The “Summary”, “Community Involvement”, and “Sustainability” sections of the application are posted on the Peace Corps website. Projects remain online until they are fully funded, at which point online donations may no longer be made⁷. Once the donated funds are available for Posts to obligate, the project will be unpublished from the website.

The fundraising timeframe depends on the project type, amount requested, PCV referrals, and availability of Peace Corps headquarters and post-level funds.

I. Referrals for PCPP

In the grant application, each PCV should include a list of individuals and organizations with which they have a connection in the “Referrals” section. These generally include members of a PCV’s network (former colleagues, professional contacts, friends, or family) who may be interested in donating to the PCV’s project. Once a project is posted online, all listed referrals will receive an automated email that directs them to the specific PCV’s project on the Peace Corps website, enabling them to make a donation.

PCVs can help raise awareness of their project by contacting individuals and organizations in their networks, and other parties, to tell them about their project ([Visit the Small Grants Resource Center, PCPP](#) for a *Guide to Raising Awareness*). Please note that under PC Policy MS 720 that PCVs do not have the authority to solicit or accept donations on behalf of the Peace Corps for their projects. All potential donors should be directed to the activity’s webpage on the Peace Corps website. PCVs can view a list of donors on their grant record in the Volunteer Portal.

II. Peace Corps headquarters and Post Managed Funds to Support PCPP Grants

PCPP has four types of funds that are available to be allocated to approved PCPP projects: Global Funds, Special Funds, Country Funds, and Memorial Funds. The availability of these funds does not change the requirement in [MS 720](#) that project budgets must include at least a 25% community contribution. Any PCPP project that has been approved by Peace Corps headquarters for fundraising may be eligible to receive Peace Corps headquarters and Post-managed funds.

⁷ Once a project is fully funded online, the donate button is deactivated and visitors are notified that funding is complete.

A. Peace Corps headquarters Managed Funds

1. Global Fund

The Global Fund is a fund to provide financial support to PCPP projects to meet their fundraising goals. Global Funds may be used in conjunction with Country Funds, Memorial Funds, and Special Funds. Global Funds are applied based on the criteria below to PCPP projects, regardless of country of service, grant type, or number of referrals. *PCPP Funding Guidelines* may be found on the [PCPP Small Grants Resource Center](#).

GGM reserves the right to amend any of the Global Fund criteria at any time and will inform Posts of any such amendment(s).

2. Special Funds

Special Funds allow donors to donate to specific project types or sectors that they are interested in supporting (for example, donations to the Education Fund support education projects). Based on availability, these funds provide startup funding for PCPP projects. *PCPP Funding Guidelines* may be found on the [PCPP Small Grants Resource Center](#).

A PCPP grant may only receive funding from one Special Fund which is determined by grant sector classification and funds availability.

For the most up-to-date information on other special PCPP funding opportunities, SGCs are encouraged to refer to the PCPP one-pagers on the [PCPP Small Grants Resource Center](#).

B. Post Managed Funds

1. Country Funds

Country Funds give RPCV groups, other private-sector entities, and individuals the opportunity to support a specific country while giving Post the flexibility to determine how the money may be allocated among Post's approved PCPP projects. Donations to country funds may only be used for approved PCPP projects.

Each Post may determine its own criteria for distributing country funds to PCPP projects when those funds are available. To utilize Country Funds, the CD must send an email to the SGC and PCPP staff authorizing use of the fund. This email must include the following information: amount to be applied from the fund, project receiving the funds, and reason for applying the funds.

Country Fund balances are sent to CDs and SGCs on a quarterly basis by PCPP staff, but the CD or SGC may request their country fund balance at any time. They may also request a country fund donor list, so they know who has given or if funds are designated for specific projects.

2. Memorial Funds

A Memorial Fund is generally established by the Peace Corps at the written request of the family of a PCV who passed away while in service. The family of the PCV works in collaboration with GGM staff to determine the intended use of donations to the fund. Creating a Memorial Fund allows friends, family, and others to donate to PCPP to honor the life and service of a PCV. These funds can be used to fully or partially fund PCPP projects.

Memorial Funds may be designated to support either a sector, a Region or a specific country or Post. Memorial Funds that are sector or region-specific are allocated by the PCPP headquarters staff. Memorial Funds that are country or Post-specific are allocated by Post at the discretion of the CD. Each Post may determine its own process for distributing Memorial Funds to PCPP projects when those funds are available. To utilize Memorial Funds, the CD must send an email to the SGC and the PCPP team authorizing use of the fund. This email should include the following information: amount to be applied from the fund, project receiving the funds, and reason for applying the funds.

Memorial Fund balances may be requested from PCPP staff, as needed.

III. Budget Amendments While Fundraising

If it is necessary to amend the proposed budget between submission and full funding, an updated budget must be submitted to the CD, SGC, and the program manager for approval. The PCV must fill out the *Budget Amendment Form* (found in the [Small Grants Resource Center](#)) and submit to the SGC. The SGC will review the form and submit to the CD for approval. Once approved and signed by the CD, the Post should submit the form to the appropriate Peace Corps headquarters Small Grants Program contact for approval before proceeding to amend any grant budget. New signature forms will also need to be submitted indicating approval of the new amount being requested. Additionally, be mindful that when a PCV is submitting an increase in the project budget, the community contribution must still total at least 25% of the amended budget amount. For additional information on budget amendments to increase a project budget, see [Supplemental Funding Amendments](#).

IV. PCPP Projects that Fail to Reach Fundraising Goal

If a proposed project does not reach its fundraising goal, GGM will not authorize the Post to obligate the funds already raised for that project. There are two options if this occurs:

1. Submit a budget amendment: If the PCV would like to access the amount raised, s/he will need to submit a budget amendment (see above); or
2. Cancel the project: If the project can not be implemented with the amount fundraised, the project will be canceled and funds will not be authorized to obligate. Donors that gave to cancelled projects will be notified and will be offered the opportunity to reallocate their donation to another project or have their donation returned.

V. Donor Lists

PCVs can view donor lists in the “Donors” section of their application in the Volunteer Portal. PCVs may use the donor list to write thank-you letters and send progress updates to donors, always copying GGM at donate@peacecorps.gov.

As a U.S. government agency, the Peace Corps is bound by the Privacy Act: “No agency shall disclose any record which is contained in a system of records by any means of communication to any person, or to another agency, except pursuant to a written request by, or with the prior written consent of, the individual to whom the record pertains.” Accordingly, if authorized by a donor, the Peace Corps will only share a donor’s name, contact information, and, if included, a personal message with PCVs. The Peace Corps does not include the donation amount.

Funding Approved Grants

I. Processing Guidelines for All Grant Programs

A. Information Disseminated to Volunteers Prior to Receiving Funds

- Post staff must provide PCVs and their counterparts/community representatives with specific instructions on how to account for the use of grant funds, the level of documentation required to substantiate expenses, and any additional Post-specific accounting procedures.
- PCVs and counterparts/community representatives may not expend funds for a project prior to receiving funds from Peace Corps. Grant funds may not be used to reimburse any personal funds that were expended at any time.
- Consistent with Peace Corps policy and as set forth in the [External Funding Policy section](#), PCVs may never directly solicit, accept, or manage funds except through an approved Peace Corps small grant project.

B. Disbursement of Grant Funds

PCVs must have access to grant funds and have signature authority to manage them. Therefore, PCVs are liable and responsible for all grant funds associated with their Peace Corps small grant activity. Posts may disburse funds in one of three ways:

- Disbursement into a joint account
The PCV and counterpart/community representative may seek to open up a joint account for the grant funds.
- Disbursement to Volunteer in a separate activity account
If local banking laws make it difficult or impossible to open joint accounts, funds may be deposited into a separate account the Volunteer opens for the activity. This reduces potential accountability problems that can result from commingling activity funds and the Volunteer's living allowance.
- Disbursement to Volunteer in his/her/their primary account
If in-country banking restrictions make it exceedingly difficult to establish a joint account, funds may be deposited in the PCV's primary account. If a PCV maintains grant funds in their personal account, the DMO or SGC must establish and train Volunteers on appropriate safeguards and procedures to help PCVs ensure that all grant funds are properly used and accounted for.

Both the PCV and counterpart/community representative (an authorized representative of the community partner/organization implementing the grant) must sign the Grant Liability and Grant Agreement forms. By signing these forms, the PCV and counterpart/community representative accept responsibility for managing and utilizing the funds in accordance with the approved grant budget outlined in the application, and for the recording and collection of all receipts (for

both grant fund expenditures and community contribution). Any unused funds must be returned to Peace Corps upon completion of the project and no later than one month before a PCV's close of service.

C. Ensuring Grant Funds Are Not Issued to Prohibited Sources

It is vitally important that Peace Corps Small Grants Program funds are not provided to organizations or individuals whom the U.S. federal government has identified as a Specially Designated Nationals (SDNs) or prohibited individuals, groups, or entities. Before a PCV opens a joint bank account with a counterpart/community representative, Post financial staff must check the counterpart/community representative against [Office of Foreign Assets Control \(OFAC\)](#) database. If they are listed as a Specially Designated Nationals (SDNs) or prohibited individuals, groups, or entities Post must inform the Regional Security Officer (RSO) and funds may not be issued to the proposed joint bank account.

II. Processing Approved Grant Funds

A. Budget Authority

Transfers of budget authority for the grant programs are distributed to Posts at the beginning of each fiscal year, usually in mid- to late October for execution on a fiscal year cycle. For grant programs funded by other U.S. government agencies (SPA, VAST, GA), funds may also be added later in the fiscal year depending on USAID's funding/modification schedule. For additional information on the VAST funding and the PEPFAR funding cycles contact OGHH. Transfer of budget authority for PCPP grants are distributed to Posts on a semi-annual basis, with the option for adjustments as necessary. Budget authority is based on anticipated PCPP grant amounts. Posts may not exceed their budget authority by approving and obligating grants in excess of authority already transferred to Post. If additional authority is needed, Posts should contact the Peace Corps headquarters office responsible for the administration of the particular grant program as soon as possible.

B. Creating Obligations for Grants

The DMO or financial assistant records an obligation for each approved grant against available budget authority. Posts must record a separate obligation for each grant. The DMO maintains an up-to-date accounting of grant obligations through FORPost.

For PCPP grants, Peace Corps headquarters will send an email authorizing Post to obligate funds that aligns with the amount fundraised in USD. The SGC or the Post admin staff then complete an Authorization Memo for the CD to sign. This Authorization Memo and Peace Corps headquarters' email authorizing funding serve as the obligating documentation for PCPP grants. (The *Authorization Memo* may be found on the [PCPP Small Grants Resource Center](#).) The amount obligated to the Volunteer may not exceed the authorized USD amount listed in the Peace Corps headquarters email or the amount listed in the Funding

Information section in VRG. Funds may not be obligated to PCPP projects before they have been fully funded and email notification is sent to Post from Peace Corps headquarters.

For all other grants, the Peace Corps Small Grant Project Agreement form is the principal obligating document. The SGC sends the Peace Corps Small Grant Project Agreement (signed by the appropriate community representative, the PCV, and the CD) for each approved grant to the Post's administrative unit. Either the DMO or an assigned financial staff member will record the obligation and FORPost will assign an obligation number. When recording the obligation, the DMO or financial assistant should enter the unique grant number in the "item description" line.

C. Requesting Payment for Approved Grants

To request payment for approved grants, a Post's DMO or financial assistant must send copies of the completed and signed obligating documents with complete fiscal code to the Office of Global Accounts Payable (OCFO/GAP). The original forms must be scanned and uploaded to the grant record.

Electronic funds transfers (EFT) are required for all Posts with EFT capacity. For those Posts without EFT capacity, checks may be used. In general, EFTs are received five business days after processing and checks are received 14 days after processing. Processing information is available in OdyWeb through the EFT Confirmation Report.

After a project has received funding, it is important that the PCV, counterpart/ community representative, and Post appropriately manage the grant funds, including any unforeseen situations that may arise, and consult with Peace Corps headquarters staff, as needed.

Grant Management

I. Volunteer, Counterparts/Community Representatives, and Post Management of Grant Funds

It is essential that all grant funds are accounted for and properly documented throughout the project's implementation. Though each small grant program receives funds from varying sources (VAST, GA, and SPA from other U.S. government agencies, and PCPP from private donors), all programs are subject to audit by the funding agency or grantor. In addition, the Peace Corps Office of Inspector General may review Small Grants Program documentation during the course of an audit or program evaluation. The DMO, in coordination with a Post's Small Grants Committee, is responsible for establishing appropriate procedures to safeguard funds and to monitor budgets for each grant throughout the life of the project.

As a part of the application process, PCVs and counterparts/community representatives must sign Grant Liability and Project Agreement forms. These documents outline the PCV's and counterpart's/community representative's respective responsibilities in managing grant funds, including documenting all purchases made throughout the duration of the project, and submitting corresponding receipts (for grant fund expenditures and community contributions).

It is best practice for Post staff to check in on projects during implementation such as during site visits.

II. Tracking Grant Expenditures

As part of their orientation to the Small Grants Program, or prior to approval of a grant, Peace Corps staff must provide instructions to PCVs and their counterparts/community representatives on how to manage grant funds, including accounting for the use of grant funds and completion of the required documentation to track purchases.

At a minimum, PCVs and counterparts/community representatives must do the following:

- From the start of the project, PCVs must document each grant expenditure in the "Final Spending Log" section of the grant record. This should represent all spending of the grant funds, as well as the community contributions (in-kind or monetary), and third-party contributions, if any. PCVs should work with the local organization to keep the "Final Spending Log" tab up-to-date, thereby building the community's capability to manage and account for grant funds. The PCV can export the "Final Spending Log" as an Excel file to share with their community partner organization.
- See specific receipt guidelines (under [Verifying Budget and Receipts](#)) before undertaking purchases to understand the type of documentation that should be collected.

- If a purchase was made with grant funds that were not specified in the initial budget, PCVs must still document the transaction in “Final Spending Log”. Prior to closing the project, the DMO must review this report to ensure that all funds are accounted for and that funds were spent in accordance with the goals and objectives outlined in the grant application.
- Any discrepancies between the proposed budget and expenditures must be resolved prior to the close of service of the PCV. The DMO has the right to request proof from a PCV to verify a purchase or transaction. A PCV must be prepared to provide such proof if they are unable to account for any expenditure, such as lost or missing receipts. See [Documenting Grant Expenditures for Incomplete, Illegible or Missing Receipts](#).

III. Post-Approval for Changes to Grants

Each Post should establish a process for implementing changes to project activities or budgets after a project is underway. If changes do not include a request for additional funds, change the project scope or objectives, entail significant revisions to the approved budget, or are relatively minor⁸ then it may not be necessary for the PCV and counterpart/community representative to contact the Post’s SGC and/or Small Grants Committee. In these scenarios, even though a budget amendment is not needed, the PCV should ensure all purchases, contributions, and changes to the project are recorded in the completion report. However, if there may be significant changes to the previously approved activities, such as to the budget, scope, or objectives of the project, then the PCV and counterpart/community representative must receive prior approval from the Post’s SGC and/or Small Grants Committee to ensure that funds are being used appropriately. For example, if the project was funded through SPA under a specific Program Element, the SGC or Small Grants Committee must make sure that the updated objectives and activities still fit within the original Program Element. If a PCV needs to update the grant information in the application narrative or proposed budget, the grant will need to be placed in “Under Revision” status.

For budget changes in particular, Posts may set a threshold above which prior approval is required. A 25% increase or decrease in any budget category is the suggested threshold. For example, a Post might require prior approval if a budget reallocation would result in an increase or decrease of 25% from the approved budget in any budget category. Such prior approval need not be a lengthy process and may be carried out by email or phone, depending upon available means of communication. Post staff should ensure that Post-approved changes are appropriately documented in the grant record.

All budget changes that result in either an excess or shortage of funds must be accounted for in the final narrative section of the completion report. If the budget changes are due to lost, stolen, misused, or unaccounted for funds, see Section VI. [Lost, Stolen, Misused or Unaccounted for Funds](#).

⁸ Minor budget changes include small supply purchases like a receipt book, pens, notebooks, that may not have been listed in the grant application but are required once the project is underway.

IV. Supplemental Funding Amendments

Posts generally should not approve amendments to add funds to existing projects. PCVs and their communities should receive sufficient orientation to the Small Grants Program (or participate in Project Design and Management training) to enable them to prepare realistic budgets from the start of project design that includes all necessary and appropriate costs. PCVs may also consult with the SGC, Small Grants Committee or financial staff at Post during the grant development process for assistance in preparing budgets.

In the case of budget shortfalls resulting from poor budgeting, incorrect calculations, lost or stolen funds, the SGC may suggest the following:

- The community contributes additional funds.
- The grant is revised to stay within the original approved budget.
- The budget is revised to eliminate other costs to cover the shortfall in funding.

Budget amendments, if approved, also increase the total project cost. Therefore, this requires a corresponding increase in the community contribution to meet the 25% minimum requirement.

If Post believes that, in a rare case (such as natural disasters, large change in cost of supplies/materials, or significant change in scope of project), supplemental funding should be approved, the PCV should fill out the *Budget Amendment Form* (found in the [Small Grants Resource Center](#)) and submit to the SGC. The SGC will review the form and submit to the CD for approval. Once approved and signed by the CD, the Post should submit the form to the appropriate Peace Corps headquarters Small Grants Program contact for approval before proceeding to amend any grant budget. The graphic below provides guidance on amendments specific to each grant program.

PCPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If there are funds in the Country Fund, the Country Director may choose to approve and allocate funds to the grant in need of funds.• With approval from Peace Corps headquarters, the grant could be placed back online to raise the additional funds needed.
SPA GA VAST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The appropriate Peace Corps headquarters Small Grants Program contact should be consulted prior to adding additional funds.• The Country Director must review and approve increases to the grant budget. The DMO should increase the original obligation accordingly, keeping the same grant number.

V. Expending and Accounting For Grant Funds

As PCVs implement their projects and enter budget data into the grant record, they should keep track of their expenditures. Small Grants training should emphasize that well-designed and well-managed projects are completed on time and within budget. In other words, the Peace Corps expects that approved grant budgets and timelines will closely correspond to actual expenditures and timelines. If items decrease in cost while the project is underway and there are grant funds remaining, PCVs should work with their SGC and/or Small Grants Committee to identify additional reasonable costs within the scope of the original project. Thereafter, PCVs may use those funds towards the identified costs prior to closing the project. If at all possible, PCVs and their communities should endeavor to spend the full grant budget amount in accordance with the objectives of the project.

If there is significant funding left after a project is completed and additional costs or activities are not approved by the SGC, please follow the procedures in the [“Returning Funds”](#) section under Project Closeout.

VI. Lost, Stolen, Misused or Unaccounted for Funds

If grant funds or project supplies/equipment⁹ (such as bags of concrete or computers for a lab) are lost, stolen, misused, or unaccounted for during the implementation of a project, the PCV must immediately notify the SGC at Post who will, in turn, notify the DMO, Safety and Security Manager, and other staff as appropriate. The SGC must then report the issue to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) in accordance with [MS 861 Office of Inspector General](#) and the appropriate Peace Corps headquarters Small Grants Program contact. OIG may choose to open an investigation or may refer it back to the agency to handle. If the project is funded by a USAID-funded grant program, the CD should notify the USAID mission of the incident, including the amount lost, the steps taken to resolve the situation, and the possibility of recovering funds and/or supplies.

If the OIG refers the case back to the agency, it is up to the CD and Peace Corps staff to manage and determine liability. The SGC will direct the PCV to submit a memo to explain the circumstances of the missing funds or misuse of funds.

The CD will determine whether or not the PCV was responsible and may be liable for repaying all or part of the missing or misused grant funds. The CD will then prepare a memo to the appropriate Peace Corps headquarters Small Grants Program contact stating his/her/their determination of liability. If the PCV was determined to be responsible, the PCV must repay the funds and/or the amount equal to the fair market value of the lost project supplies/equipment. The DMO should initiate collection procedures at Post to obtain repayment as soon as possible by issuing a BOC to the PCV. Post staff must document all actions taken by PCV, Post staff, and OIG regarding lost, stolen, misused, or unaccounted for funds, in the “Grant Documents” section of the grant record.

⁹ This section applies to grant funds and does not include lost, stolen, misused, or unaccounted for funds from community or third-party contributions.

Generally, when funds are lost, stolen, misused, or unaccounted for, the PCV and the counterpart/community representative work together to determine what can be accomplished with the remaining funds. Typically, additional funds will not be awarded to replace missing funds, though this may be addressed by Post with the Small Grants Program contact at Peace Corps headquarters on a case-by-case basis. (See [Supplemental Funding Amendments](#) section above). When submitting the completion report, the PCV must report on the full amount of funding allocated to the grant, including the missing funds and/or supplies.

If a PCV or staff person is uncomfortable or concerned about reporting lost, stolen, misused, or unaccounted for funds to the Post, he/she/they may contact the Peace Corps OIG hotline directly:

OIG Hotline: 202.692.2915

Toll-free: 800.233.5874 Email: oig@peacecorps.gov

A PCV may also contact Peace Corps staff pursuant to MS 271 "Confidentiality Protection".

VII. Early Termination, Transfer of Project Responsibility, Cancelling a Project, and Evacuation

A. Early Termination

In the event of the early termination (including resignation, medical separation, administrative separation, or interrupted service) of a PCV with an ongoing grant, Post staff must determine if the project can be completed. If all grant funds have been expended and used to carry out the majority of project activities, a Post may allow the community to finish the project on its own, as long as the community understands the Peace Corps' reporting requirements. However, if most project activities remain incomplete and/or funds remain unspent, Post staff should either cancel the grant and collect unspent funds or transfer responsibility to another willing PCV.

Prior to PCV departure from Post, whether the grant is transferred or canceled, Post staff should make every effort to obtain an update on the status of the project and an accurate accounting of the use of grant funds. Accordingly, the SGC or DMO should verify receipts for grant fund expenditures and community contributions already incurred and logged in the "Final Spending Log". If any receipts are incomplete, illegible, or missing, please follow process detailed in the [Documenting Grant Expenditures for Incomplete, Illegible or Missing Receipt\(s\)](#) section. Ideally, final narrative sections and indicators would also be completed to the greatest extent possible.

B. Transfer of Project Responsibility

Post staff must take into consideration the following criteria to determine if a project should be transferred: the project can still be completed within one

year of the start of activities, and the new PCV has been at site at least three months, has been oriented on and accepts the transfer willingly, and accepts responsibility for any remaining grant funds. If Post staff decide to transfer the project, they must clearly document the transfer by completing the Transfer of Responsibility form. In addition, if the new PCV will be accepting funds, a Grant Liability form must also be completed by all involved. An explanation for any discrepancies between funds allocated to and grant fund expenditure receipts collected from the original PCV and must be documented and attached to the Transfer of Responsibility form. Posts must upload the Transfer of Responsibility form and, if applicable, the Grant Liability Form to the grant record and alert the appropriate Peace Corps headquarters Small Grants Program contact. The "Lead Volunteer" field on the grant record must be updated to the new PCV who will be taking responsibility for the grant. Transfer of a grant may occur at any time during the grant's life cycle. For PCPP grants, the project may be transferred even if it is still fundraising online.

It is not recommended, but it may be necessary for a project to be transferred more than once. The first transfer of responsibility for a project may be approved and completed at Post. If a second transfer of responsibility is deemed necessary, grant program staff at Peace Corps headquarters must approve before beginning the transfer process.

C. [Canceling a Project](#)

If the Post elects to cancel a project due to early termination or a medivac, the Post must attempt to recover all unexpended funds. A BOC should be issued and attached to the "Grant Documents" section of the grant record along with the General Receipt, once funds have been collected, to account for returned funds. To the greatest extent possible, the collection should be completed before the PCV leaves the country.

If the PCV leaves the country without accounting for and returning unused grant funds in his/her/their possession, the Post should contact the OCFO/GAP Claims Officer to determine the best means of collection, including a deduction from an RPCV's readjustment allowance or issuance of a BOC to the RPCV. If unused grant funds are received from the RPCV, these funds will be Posted against the original obligation(s) and the RPCV will be released from liability.

If possible, the SGC should obtain a completion report for the project from the PCV, regardless of whether the project was completed or not. The report should include information on the progress made toward meeting project objectives, the results or outcomes achieved, and a final financial accounting. If any receipts are incomplete, illegible, or missing, please follow process detailed in the [Documenting Grant Expenditures for Incomplete, Illegible or Missing Receipt\(s\)](#) section.

Once the document collection for the cancelled grant is complete, the grant can be moved into “Cancelled by Post” status by the SGC and the cancelled grant will be reviewed by staff at Peace Corps headquarters.

It is important that cancelled grants remain in the grant database with all related documentation, especially if funds were disbursed to the PCV or counterpart/community representative. Cancelled grants should never be marked for deletion.

D. Post Evacuation or Suspension

In the case of an evacuation or suspension of a Peace Corps Post, PCVs remain liable for grant funds. It is common during an evacuation or suspension that PCVs are unable to secure hard copies of receipts detailing the expenses of their projects. PCVs must work with Post staff to complete the steps necessary to account for grant funds and therefore reduce liability. To document the project status and provide alternative expenditure documentation, please follow the process in the [Documenting Grant Expenditures for Incomplete, Illegible or Missing Receipt\(s\)](#) section.

Posts should contact the appropriate Peace Corps headquarters Small Grants Program contact and refer to the Small Grants Guidance for Evacuated Posts found in the [Small Grants Resource Center](#).

VIII. Logos, Branding, and Marking

A. Peace Corps Logo Guidance

The Peace Corps name and logo may be used only to designate programs authorized under the Peace Corps Act. The Peace Corps logo may not be altered or manipulated in any manner. Also, the Peace Corps name and logo may not be used by third parties for commercial or fundraising purposes, or for endorsement or promotion of such third parties or their respective goods or services. Consult [Peace Corps brand guidance \(logo, color palette, and fonts\)](#) for additional guidance.

In accordance with these guidelines, the name and logo may be used with written CD approval by/for the following:

- In connection with Peace Corps programs, events, and activities that are held to publicize Peace Corps programs at home and abroad (e.g., handouts and logo items to promote Peace Corps programs to the local community), Peace Corps publications (e.g., Posts’ annual reports or materials, such as brochures, paper fliers), and banners and logo items (e.g., T-shirts) for service project events, trainings, and PST swearing-in ceremonies.
- In connection with PCV primary or secondary projects.

As Peace Corps small grants support PCV primary or secondary projects, PCVs may use the Peace Corps logo to raise awareness for their small grants project. However, any flier or website must link back to the Peace Corps website. For example, if a PCV is creating a flier to raise awareness for his/her/their PCPP project fundraising online, the flier must direct donors to the Peace Corps website, where the project is listed. PCVs should contact the Office of Communications at design@peacecorps.gov for further guidance on the use of the Peace Corps logo.

B. SPA and GA Logo Guidance

For SPA and GA projects, the Peace Corps has agreed to co-brand or co-mark with the USAID logo. This means that where SPA/GA-funded materials, equipment, etc., are branded with the Peace Corps name and/or logo, they must be co-branded with the USAID logo in the same size and manner. There is no requirement to use the Peace Corps name or logo, but if the CD determines it is appropriate to do so, then the USAID name or logo must also be displayed. Similarly, if the USAID name and logo are displayed, then the Peace Corps name and logo should also be displayed. This applies to social media as well. Waiver provisions must be followed if one does not co-brand, i.e., if the Peace Corps name or logo is used without the USAID name or logo. Specific instructions on waivers and the placement of the USAID logo are available via the USAID Branding website. Post staff should contact the USAID mission for in-kind support.

C. VAST – PEPFAR Logo Guidance

For VAST projects, the Peace Corps has also agreed to co-brand or co-mark with PEPFAR. This means that where VAST-funded materials, equipment, etc., are branded with the Peace Corps name and/or logo, they must be co-branded with the PEPFAR logo in the same size and manner. There is no requirement to use the Peace Corps name or logo, but if the CD determines it is appropriate to do so, then the PEPFAR name or logo must also be displayed. Similarly, if the PEPFAR name and logo are displayed, then the Peace Corps name and logo should also be displayed.

PEPFAR's logo is to be placed in the left corner, and the Peace Corps logo to its right, followed by the implementing partner's logo. Additional guidance is found here [Reports and Guidance – PEPFAR - United States Department of State](#), under Guidance.

Grant Closeout

At the close of a grant, PCVs and their communities must prepare and submit a grant completion report. It is important that the grant completion reports include detailed and accurate information. Posts can use the completion reports to gain valuable insight into lessons learned and use this to improve the strength of grant design in the future. Peace Corps headquarters uses the information to report to donors and partners who supported the grant, to compile data on the overall impact of the Small Grants Program, and to justify update policies and procedures.

I. Volunteer Completion Report Submission

The PCV must submit the completion report and receipts (for both community contributions and grant fund expenditures) as soon as all grant activity, including monitoring and evaluation, is completed, and no less than one month prior to his/her/their close of service. Failure to submit reports in a timely manner reduces the opportunity to address problems that may be identified in the report.

Posts should incorporate submission of a completion report into the COS check-out packet for any PCV who received grant funds. Posts must not establish a policy that allows PCVs to wait until their close of service date to submit the completion report.

The completion report mirrors the grant application. Once a grant has been approved and placed in "Active" status, PCVs are able to edit the completion report in the Volunteer Portal. PCVs should use the completion report throughout grant implementation to document activities and record information, spending, indicators, goals, objectives, outcomes, and challenges encountered. As with the application form, depending on the type of grant funding (PCPP, VAST, SPA, and GA grant programs), PCVs may need to report funding-specific information, such as final indicators. Once the PCV has submitted the completion report, it is ready for Post review; at that time, PCVs should provide Post staff with receipts (for both community contributions and grant fund expenditures).

II. Post Review of Completion Reports

Once a PCV submits their completion report, the SGC will receive an automated email informing them that the report is ready for review. The SGC and relevant program manager should initially review the completion report to ensure completeness and verify that the PCV has entered all requested information. Posts may use a checklist to make sure the grant file is complete. SGCs and program managers can use a Completion Report Review Checklist to ensure all sections have been completed. A sample checklist can be found in the documents section of the Small [Grants Resource Center](#).

As with the application process, the SGC should use VRG on Agency CRM to anticipate grant closure and verify all steps have been completed. For SPA, VAST, PCPP, and GA grants, the SGC must ensure that appropriate indicator data is filled out in the

“Monitoring and Evaluation Results” section of the grant (see [M&E Funding-Specific Indicators section](#)).

If there are photos uploaded, the SGC must make sure that the [Media Authorization form](#) has been uploaded. If there are photos of children, make sure that the Child Authorization and Agreement Form is signed and uploaded. Please view the training on Media Authorization for additional guidance.

Once the initial review has been completed, the DMO must review the final budget for accuracy.

A. Verifying Budget and Receipts

Before the SGC closes a grant, all expenditures must be accounted for and staff must verify that funds were spent in accordance with the approved budget. Each Post may determine the process for this review. However, ultimately, the DMO and financial team is responsible for certifying that PCVs have presented all receipts, entered all expenditures in the grant record and met financial requirements before signing the Completion Signature forms. Discrepancies must be resolved prior to the close of service date of the PCV. As Post staff close PCV grants, they may use the Completion Report Review Checklist as a reference. A sample checklist can be found in the documents section of the [Small Grants Resource Center](#).

The SGC, DMO and Financial team must verify the following:

- Each disbursement of funds and in-kind contribution is documented in the “Final Spending Log” section of the grant.
- Receipts are included for all expenditures, whether for grant-funded purchases or community contributions.
- Documentation must be legible, include an English translation, and contain the name of the vendor, name of the purchaser, date of the purchase, an itemization of materials purchased, including quantity, unit cost, and the total amount of the purchase. For goods and services such as artisan or skilled labor, documentation must include the type of service, date of service, the name of the service provider and contact information, the number of hours or days worked, an hourly or daily rate, and the total amount paid. If any receipts are found to be incomplete or illegible or if any expenditures do not have a receipt, please follow steps below in [Documenting Grant Expenditures for Incomplete, Illegible or Missing Receipt\(s\)](#)
- All receipts of grant fund expenditures should be scanned and uploaded to the grant. This may be done by the PCV or Post staff. While both grant-funded purchases and community contributions receipts should be submitted for review, the Post needs to keep only the grant fund expenditure receipts on file. Once the receipts of grant fund expenditures

are uploaded to the grant, they become the record on file and the originals may be destroyed. (Please note that the scans or images of the receipts MUST be clear and legible. If the scan or image is not clear, it will not be acceptable in the case of an OIG review.) Any grant receipts of grant fund expenditures that have not yet been uploaded to the grant must be maintained at Post until the record may be destroyed. See [Post-level Records Management](#).

- Shortages of grant funds must be accounted for in the final budget and narrative sections. If funds were reported as lost, stolen, misused, or unaccounted for, a line item must be added to the final detailed budget showing the total amount missing. Once this is done, the budget will show as fully expended in VRG. In cases where funds are remaining and will be returned, a line item should not be added to the final detailed budget. This will leave a balance showing in the "Grant Amount Remaining" field on the grant record and will alert SGCs that funds should be returned and a BOC and General receipt uploaded to the grant record.

B. Documenting Grant Expenditures for Incomplete, Illegible or Missing Receipts¹⁰

In the event that submitted receipts for purchases made with grant funds are incomplete or illegible (see [Verifying Budget and Receipts](#)), or if any grant funds were expended without a matching receipt, the PCV will need to submit an *Incomplete, Illegible, or Missing Receipt(s) Form* (found in the documents section of the [Small Grants Resource Center](#)) to the SGC and DMO. The Volunteer must include details of the incomplete, illegible, and/or missing receipts with credible alternative documentation for expenditures e.g. photos and/or counterpart/community representative statement(s). The SGC and DMO must review the form and accompanying documentation to determine if enough evidence was provided to approve the expenditures with incomplete, illegible, or missing receipts. If approved, the SGC and DMO will recommend that the CD submit a *Recommendation to Close Project with Incomplete, Illegible, or Missing Receipt(s) Memorandum* (found in the documents section of the [Small Grants Resource Center](#)) and submit to Peace Corps headquarters staff. Both the form and memorandum with accompanying credible alternative documentation for expenditures must be uploaded to the grant record before the grant can be closed out.

If the Volunteer is unable to provide credible alternative documentation for expenditures without receipts, please follow the steps detailed in the [Lost, Stolen, Misused or Unaccounted for Funds](#) section.

¹⁰ Please note that this process is only required for incomplete, illegible, or missing Peace Corps Small Grant funds, as these funds are obligated by and the responsibility of Peace Corps. However, Post should request and verify additional documentation for any community contribution expenditures with incomplete, illegible, or missing receipts.

C. Returning Funds

As mentioned in the “Expending Grant Funds” section, PCVs should try to utilize any remaining grant funds to support or enhance their grant in line with its original goals and scope. If that is not possible, any remaining funds must be returned to the Cashier. In this case, the DMO should create a BOC to document the funds owed. The BOC should be uploaded to the “Grant Documents” section of the grant, along with the General Receipt upon collection of the funds. The DMO will then submit the returned funds to Peace Corps headquarters through FORPost Web using the original payment obligation for the grant. For PCPP grants, when funds are returned, they will be placed in the global fund and allocated to future grants. For VAST, SPA, and GA grant programs, Posts are able to use the “recovered” budget authority to support additional grants.

PCVs must return unused grant funds to the Post cashier. In extraordinary circumstances where the PCV cannot return the unused funds (e.g., early termination, medical separation, and Post evacuation), Post should work with OCFO/GAP and grant program staff to deduct the funds from the PCV’s readjustment allowance as a debt owed to the Peace Corps. Per the Overseas Financial Management Handbook, Section 4.7, no funds should be deducted from a PCV’s readjustment allowance without prior approval from the Director of Volunteer and PCS Financial Services (VPS). In the case of deductions from readjustment allowances, Post should include any documentation provided to, or communication with VPS that indicates the deduction is taking place and the amount deducted for unspent grant funds in the grant record and notify the appropriate small grant program. The appropriate small grant program Staff will instruct Post on issuing a journal voucher (JV) for the deduction.

Unused funds are extremely difficult to collect once a PCV has left Post, therefore every effort must be made to collect unused funds while a PCV is in-country. If the PCV leaves the country and does not return unused grant funds in his/her/their possession, the Post must contact OGAP and the appropriate Peace Corps headquarters Small Grants Program contact. OGAP will work with Post to send a BOC (which will include the appropriate fiscal coding) to the PCV, requesting repayment of the funds in question. When the payment is received from the PCV, it will be posted against the original obligation(s) and the PCV will be released from liability. The appropriate Post staff must upload the BOC and email confirmation upon collection of the funds to the “Grant Documents” section of the grant. If the PCV still does not return the unused grant funds, OCFO/GAP will decide if it is appropriate to pursue further collection methods.

As mentioned above, the grants completion reports are essential to ensuring improved future grant design, accurate reporting to donors and partners on the grants they have funded, as well improving the overall success of the grant program.

III. Final Grant Closure

Once the final report, receipts, and finances have been reviewed and verified, the Completion Signatures form must be signed by the PCV, SGC, DMO and CD. Once all signatures are completed, the form and grant fund expenditure receipts should be scanned and uploaded to the grant. Without all signatures, the grant may not be closed.

Once a PCV's grant has been reviewed, funds have been returned (if necessary) and all appropriate documents have been collected, signed, and uploaded, the SGC will change the status of the grant to "Closed by Post". Peace Corps headquarters will then review all documentation, ensure unused funds have been returned (if needed) and all appropriate paperwork submitted.

Peace Corps headquarters staff will communicate any needed changes to the SGC. Timely attention to these emails—by the SGC and PCV—will ensure a smooth closeout process. Headquarters staff officially close the grant by changing the status to "Completed".

Records Management

Federal law requires that all documentation for externally funded grants be maintained for ten years. As such, the SGC must ensure that all grant documentation for each grant (see list below) be scanned and uploaded to the grant record. VRG serves as the electronic record therefore e-files do not need to be duplicated in shared folders, nor printed and saved as paper files. All uploaded files must be readable and clearly scanned. After 10 years, these electronic records may be destroyed by Peace Corps headquarters staff.

Records for grants that pre-date VRG or the legacy system Peace Corps Grants Online (PCGO) (FY 2014 and prior) should be maintained at Post for 10 years. All files should be maintained in accordance with Peace Corps records management directives on file management and utilize the established naming convention (program name, fiscal year, grant number, document title).

Post staff should ensure each grant record is completed with all necessary documentation.

All Post-level records management must be consistent across all Peace Corps Small Grants Program funding types (e.g. PCPP, SPA, GA, VAST).

Below is the records disposition for grant files at Post, which can be found on Page 51 of the "Guide to Peace Corps' Records Schedules (Posts)" (see [Office of Records Management Workspace](#)):

Externally Funded Grants and Training Activity Files
(Disposition Authority: DAA-GRS-2013-0008-0001) [GRS 1.2, item 020]

Files for externally funded grants and training activities initiated by the community and implemented by a PCV and their counterpart/community representative. Includes but is not limited to: SPA, PCPP, VAST, and GA. Files include documents relating to funding requests (proposals, abstracts, etc.); original liability forms and grant agreements; Post-level agreements; reports and evaluations; financial documents; major communications; waivers; project transfer forms; and any other documents related to externally funded grants and training activities.

DISPOSITION: Temporary. Destroy 10 years after final action is taken on file.

NOTE: Peace Corps headquarters is responsible for the permanent retention of the grant proposal/abstract, grant final report/completion report, and grant agreement for PCPP grants.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Post Grant Programs

This section describes Post-level M&E, of the Post's Peace Corps' Small Grants Program. M&E is carried out to ensure that grant programs are properly functioning at Posts, to verify that PCVs are successfully moving grants toward completion, and to assess the impact of projects and determine whether they are achieving capacity building and sustainability for the host country. Robust and regular M&E measures for a Post's grant programs can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of a Post's management of a grant program.

The foundation of a strong M&E plan is data quality. Accurate, complete, consistent, and reliable data enables Posts to represent grant results with confidence, learn continuously, and make informed decisions about grant programming. High quality data is essential for ensuring program funds are being well-managed, grants are implemented and conducted in a timely manner, and the grants are effectively building capacity and contributing to sustainability for host countries. Post should assist the PCV in identifying and designing accurate data collection tools that will most comprehensively measure both baseline data and the end line data collected at the completion report stage. Grants-related training of PCVs should also leverage the wider Post training on M&E; PCVs should understand the applicability of broad M&E conceptual frameworks to discrete grants.

I. Grant Program Monitoring and Tracking

A. VRG Grant Database

At any given time, Posts will typically have a large number of prospective and ongoing grants, spread across different funding sources and at different stages in the process. To effectively support PCVs and be accountable to internal and external audiences (including funding partners), it is critical that Posts track the status of each grant from application to completion in VRG. Each project status change triggers an automatic message to the staff or PCV responsible for engaging in the next step of the process, so it is important that statuses are changed promptly and in the proper order. (For reference, see *Grant Status Flow Reference Document Folder* in the [Small Grants Resource Center](#).) In general, the SGC will be responsible for coordinating day-to-day monitoring and tracking; however, other staff may have access to VRG and play a role in monitoring grants. Grants do not need to be tracked externally in a spreadsheet document or other programs; any data housed in VRG can be exported to Excel for analysis.

The VRG database is also used to run Post-level grant status reports (e.g., number of grants per fiscal year, beneficiaries, indicators, types of grants by sector, grants that still need funding, among others). Status reports allow both Peace Corps headquarters and individual Posts to quickly gauge the Peace Corps Small Grants Program progress/status in each country.

Note: When the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) performs audits or evaluations, OIG will typically review how a Post is tracking grants. Posts should ensure that they have a comprehensive understanding of VRG and that it is kept up-to-date and incorporated into regular business operations.

B. Maintaining Engagement with Volunteers throughout the Grant Lifecycle

Post staff should be proactive in monitoring grants instead of simply reacting to information provided by PCVs. VRG will assist Post in this proactive approach. At least quarterly, each Posts should collect updates from PCVs with currently implementing projects and those with completed projects that have yet to submit their completion report. Although each Post may use whatever means it finds appropriate and effective, some examples of proactive monitoring include:

1. Reaching Out to Volunteers Directly

The SGC should proactively reach out to PCVs by phone, email, text message, or other means to inquire about project status, particularly if there has been no communication via the Volunteer Portal. The SGC should ensure that she/he/they record the date that the communication occurs and any project status updates in the "Grant Notes" section in VRG. The SGC should also follow up with PCVs who do not respond within a reasonable timeframe. Finally, project updates should be shared with appropriate staff according to Post procedures.

This kind of outreach is effective because PCVs are often more responsive and may provide more substantive feedback to an individual. Although VRG provides automatic notification emails, check-ins are useful for closer project oversight. Though VRG reduces time-consuming check-ins with hundreds of PCVs, it is helpful for a SGC to schedule calls with PCVs at least once per quarter. The SGC should spread check-ins over time to identify and anticipate any potential problems.

2. Requiring Regular Status Updates from Volunteers

Though VRG prompts PCVs to submit their completion report in a timely manner, Posts may require more regular PCV project updates. Brief status updates can be emailed to staff and uploaded to VRG. Such an update could include:

- The status of project activities: What have you done and what is planned next?
- A budget update: How much of the funds have been spent?
- Any anticipated major changes: Do you expect any significant changes to be made to the project?
- Any changes to the expected completion date: When do you expect to finish the project?
- Any challenges: What challenges are you facing during project implementation and what support can the Peace Corps provide to help you successfully navigate these challenges?

C. Site Visits

Site visits are perhaps the best way to learn the status of projects and to observe first-hand the progress to date. In addition, site visits provide an opportunity to directly engage with the counterpart(s)/community representative(s)/ regarding the status of the project and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the project, its progress, and any challenges.

If resources are available, Posts may schedule visits by the SGC, DPT, or other appropriate staff (including PCV members of a Post's Small Grants Committee). If funds for separate monitoring trips are not available, however, Posts should capitalize on otherwise scheduled site visits by APCDs/PMs or other Post staff. If the USAID mission agrees, USAID funds may pay for the travel costs for such a monitoring visit to SPA-funded projects.

In order to gather comprehensive information from a site visit, the staff member conducting the visit should bring a short interview questionnaire to fill out. See Project Site Monitoring and Evaluation Form Example – Ukraine, which can be found in the [Small Grants Resource Center Documents](#) section. This should also be shared with the SGC, the Small Grants Committee, and any other staff so that appropriate support may be provided to the PCV. The completed questionnaire should also be uploaded to VRG so that it may serve as additional documentation regarding the respective grant.

II. Grant Program Evaluation

In addition to monitoring and tracking grant operations, Posts should engage in more comprehensive program evaluation at the Post-level. Evaluations can provide actionable information on what results are achieved from grants, why projects succeed or fail, and how to improve program management. This information allows Posts to develop strategies to better support PCVs in the design and implementation of effective projects that promote sustainability and build capacity. Post's M&E specialist should be involved in grant evaluation efforts, as she/he can provide a connection to the most-up-to-date M&E tool provided by Peace Corps headquarters.

This section describes different ways that Posts can engage in evaluations. Several techniques for engaging in informal, internal evaluations are described that can be used without significant resources to enhance program learning and adaptation. This section also briefly describes the planning and design of full-scale, independent performance evaluations of grant programs at Post, if there are resources available.

A. Informal Evaluation Techniques

1. Completion Report Review and Analysis

For each approved grant, the PCV is required to submit a Peace Corps Small Grant completion report. These reports are an excellent source of information regarding the outcome of grants, the challenges that PCVs face in implementing grants, and possible solutions to resolve such problems. The SGC should ensure that appropriate staff are able to review the reports which can be exported as Word, pdf, or Excel documents to facilitate sharing and analysis). At a minimum, this should include the APCDs/Program Managers

and Program Assistants/Specialists of the sector(s) that the PCV works in and that the grant falls within. Programming staff should review the reports to identify programmatic best practices for projects within their sectors.

In addition to distributing reports to Post staff for review, responses to two of the questions in the completion report may provide more general feedback and learning that could help Post to better support PCVs in designing and implementing projects. Specifically, the completion report asks the PCV:

- What unexpected events (positive or negative) did you encounter during the project? Based on your experiences, do you have any recommendations for others implementing a similar project?
- What were major lessons learned during this project?

Posts are encouraged to review and analyze the responses to these questions to identify trends and major lessons learned. For example, once a year the SGC (or possibly a Peace Corps Volunteer Leader (PCVL)) can collect the responses to these two questions in a spreadsheet, review them all at once, and identify trends and recurring obstacles that PCVs have faced. The analysis should be presented for discussion at a Small Grants Committee meeting, and key findings can then be shared with PCVs in accordance with Post communications. Posts can also utilize the “Advanced Find” function in the VRG to compile summary data on all grants and each program (funding source) utilized in country. The [Small Grants Resource Center](#) provides a number of guides for these functions. Lastly, Post staff may contact Peace Corps headquarters to request additional data on SPA, PCPP, VAST, or GA if needed.

2. Volunteer Debriefs

Beyond reviewing and analyzing completion reports, Posts can also systematically collect feedback from PCVs about the grant process itself. Such feedback can be helpful in designing and clarifying processes and support systems for PCVs.

One way to do this is to require a 15-minute debrief with the SGC or other staff member upon submission of a PCV’s completion report. During the debrief session, the SGC should use a Post-developed standard questionnaire to collect the PCV’s opinions and ideas. PCV responses should be written down and uploaded to VRG. Trends identified from such PCV feedback should be shared with the Small Grants Committee, programming staff, and Peace Corps headquarters on a regular basis (and at least annually). While this is an additional evaluation step, it can lead to a comprehensive review and understanding of program processes and effectiveness.

3. Internally Managed Evaluation of Sample Sites

Posts can also carry out more systematic evaluations of a sample of projects that were completed in past years to assess sustainability and longer-term project impact. By utilizing a program evaluation questionnaire (see example from Ukraine, which can be found in the [Small Grants Resource Center](#)), posts

can identify evidence of a project's sustainability. Historically, Posts have done this using PCVLs or local staff. However, Posts should bear in mind potential bias that an evaluation completed by PC staff or constituents may introduce. An example can be found from Albania in the [Small Grants Resource Center Documents](#) section.

B. Funded Evaluation

Where agency or external resources (SPA, GA, and/or PEPFAR) are available, Posts are encouraged to engage an outside contractor to conduct an independent, country-level evaluation of the impact or performance of one or more grant programs. Such an evaluation can provide insight into project outcomes and sustainability over a longer period (e.g., four to five years), and is useful in identifying trends and major areas of accomplishment. In addition, an independent evaluation reduces bias that may be introduced in informal evaluations carried out by the Peace Corps itself. An independent evaluation is also an effective tool for demonstrating project impact to in-country partners, including the host government, funding partners (such as USAID), and other key stakeholders.

Costs will vary significantly from country to country and will depend largely on the number of projects included in the evaluation sample and the geographic size of the sampled area. Based on past experience, Posts should plan on budgeting at least \$20,000–\$30,000 for an evaluation with a sample of 30–40 projects. Because of the costs, such evaluations are typically feasible only when funded by partners external to the Peace Corps, such as USAID (through SPA or GA) or PEPFAR.

Posts that are interested in carrying out in-country evaluations should work with Post M&E specialists and contact Peace Corps headquarters grant program staff for assistance, guidance and/or approval, if using SPA, GA, or VAST funds.

Using informal and formal evaluations, grant data, and/or communications with PCVs, Posts can evaluate the overall success for their Small Grants Program, as well as ensure PCVs receive proper support when implementing grants. Post level monitoring and evaluation also allows Posts to highlight the important work being done by PCVs, as well as gain a better understanding of the impact projects are having in PCVs' communities.