

Peace Corps Small Grants Program



Staff Handbook

October 22, 2012

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Foreword

Dear Peace Corps Staff,

We have seen the difference a small grant can make in a community's development. Whether it is bringing young girls together to participate in a GLOW camp, introducing clean cookstove technology to a local women's group, or implementing an HIV/AIDS training for at-risk individuals, small grants can lead to lasting positive change. Over this past year, we have worked to make it easier for Volunteers and their communities to access small grants—and for you to manage them.

It is my pleasure to introduce the Peace Corps Small Grants Program Staff Handbook. This resource, along with the Small Grants Program Volunteer Handbook, the combined Small Grants Program Application, and the Completion Report, was developed by the Office of Strategic Partnerships and the Office of Global Health and HIV in collaboration with representatives from Peace Corps posts worldwide. The Small Grants Program incorporates recommendations from the agency's Comprehensive Agency Assessment to streamline small grants, better manage external funding, and improve monitoring and evaluation through the development of new materials and guidance.

The Peace Corps Small Grants Program includes Small Project Assistance (SPA), Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP), Volunteer Activities Support and Training (VAST), Energy Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA), and Feed the Future (FTF). Though each program is supported by different funding sources and different offices at headquarters, they all share the same goal: to facilitate the development and implementation of sustainable grassroots small grant projects that build capacity in communities where Volunteers serve.

The Small Grants Program offers a mechanism that enables posts to better support and enhance the Peace Corps approach to development and to more thoroughly monitor, evaluate, and report on projects in line with Focus In/Train Up. We hope that it will assist communities and Volunteers to implement strong and lasting community initiated development activities.

Please contact the Small Grants Program Working Group (smallgrants@peacecorps.gov) if you have questions.

Carrie Hessler-Radelet
Acting Director

Introduction

The Peace Corps makes funding available for small projects to Volunteers and the community organizations with which they work. This handbook for post staff provides guidance on the requirements and processes of the Peace Corps grant programs. Although each funding source has distinctive characteristics and requirements, the Peace Corps has made the guidance for all grant projects uniform to the maximum extent possible.

This handbook provides information on the basic rules and requirements that are applicable for all small grants. It also includes recommendations on post-level management of small grant 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 project development and submission procedures, the same small grants committee, and a single small grants coordinator. This practice provides clarity for Volunteers, ensures consistent project quality across all funding sources, and reduces redundancy and overlap in post staff responsibilities.

I. Funding Sources

It is stated in the Peace Corps Manual, Section 720 3.3, as well as in the Volunteer Handbook¹, that “Volunteers are not authorized to accept donations on behalf of Peace Corps.” Occasionally, non-Peace Corps organizations may reach out to Volunteers or posts directly to encourage them to apply for funds. These organizations should be directed to the Office of Gifts and Grants Management. The only authorized way a Volunteer can receive funds to implement a project is through the Peace Corps Small Grants Program. Within this program, there are several funding sources available. However, not all of these sources are available at all posts, as some sources are geographically or programmatically limited. The funding sources are briefly described here:

Grant Program	Funding Source	Post Eligibility	Contact for More Information
Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	Posts for which a USAID mission has contributed funds; posts with no in-country or regional presence are generally ineligible.	spareports@peacecorps.gov

¹ This statement is included in the “Technical Resources and Supplementary Programs” section of the Volunteer Handbook, Page 48 in the 2011 Volunteer Handbook.

Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP)	Private sector donations (including “RPCV/Friends of” groups as well as individuals and organizations)	All Volunteers in all posts are eligible for PCPP grants in any sector.	pcpp@peacecorps.gov
Volunteer Activities Support and Training (VAST)	President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)	Any post that receives PEPFAR funds	vast@peacecorps.gov
Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA)	Department of State, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs	Select posts in Central and South America	Contact ECPA program representative
Feed the Future (FTF)	USAID	Posts participating in the Feed the Future partnership	Contact FTF program representative

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

Peace Corps’ general approach to development is described in the Programming and Training Guidance². Development in its broadest sense is any process that promotes the dignity of a people and their capacity to improve their own lives. Two key characteristics of the Peace Corps approach to development are capacity building and sustainability.

- **Capacity Building:** The Peace Corps uses the word “development” in human, people-to-people terms: helping people develop the capacity to improve their own lives. The focus of the work is on the **development of the capacity of people**, not things. Peace Corps Volunteers help people learn to identify and prioritize what they would like to change, and to use their own strengths and learn new skills to achieve that change. With this approach, development is not just planting a garden to produce food for the community, but organizing and working with people to establish and maintain their own gardens. Volunteers direct their capacity-building efforts to several integrated levels: individuals, service providers/trainers/multipliers, organizations, and communities.
- **Sustainability:** Sustainability 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. Volunteers use gender-sensitive, participatory approaches to analyze, design, implement, and evaluate projects. These approaches increase the likelihood of a

² Peace Corps Programming and Training Guidance, Publication No. T0140 (Version: October 2011)

sustainable project. In addition, Volunteers work to facilitate systems improvements and organizational change that not only increase the potential for sustainability, but often improve the amount or quality of service provided or the volume of business conducted.

Small grants projects should be designed and implemented consistent with the Peace Corps approach to development. Thus, even though the projects bring external funds into the community, they should include a significant capacity-building component and should be designed to maximize sustainability. In order to support the development of projects that are in line with the Peace Corps approach to development, the Peace Corps recommends the following:

- When orienting Volunteers on the availability of small grant funds, hold a session on the appropriate use of small grant funds within the Peace Corps approach to development and some of the common pitfalls Volunteers face. (A [session plan](#) and accompanying [PowerPoint](#) are available for post use.);
- Ensure Volunteers are aware that the Peace Corps does not require Volunteers to apply for small grant funds. Applying for and managing a small grant is entirely up to the discretion of the Volunteer. Additionally, Volunteers may choose to work with their community organizations to assist in the application for funds outside of the Peace Corps. This is acceptable and not in violation of the manual section as long as the Volunteer will not be directly responsible for receiving or managing the money³;
- Provide [Project Design and Management](#) (PDM) training to Volunteers and counterparts; refer to the PDM training session that is part of the Focus In/Train Up Global Core Training Package;
- If a Volunteer feels it is appropriate to develop a funded project, s/he is required to engage the community in the planning and implementation of the project;
- Ensure that all projects include capacity building, sustainability, and other important aspects of the Peace Corps approach to development.

³ Volunteers may assist community members in grant writing or application development outside of Peace Corps small grants, but may not accept funds from external sources on behalf of the Peace Corps or the community. Applications for external grants must be written in the name of the community or a community representative, not in the name of the Peace Corps Volunteer.

Roles and Responsibilities

Numerous stakeholders work together to support small grants programs, including Peace Corps post and headquarters staff, Volunteers, counterparts, small grants committees and Peace Corps partners. This section describes the primary responsibilities of the many offices and staff involved with managing small grants.

I. Peace Corps/headquarters

A. The Office of Strategic Partnerships

The Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP) coordinates and oversees the development and implementation of strategic partnerships to support the agency's three goals and to enhance programs through every stage of Volunteer service. OSP establishes standards and policies for all small grants programs directly administered by the Peace Corps. In addition to this handbook, OSP may issue supplemental guidance regarding the administration of small grants programs. The Office of Gifts and Grants Management (GGM) and the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Global Partnerships (IGAP) are located in the Office of Strategic Partnerships.

B. The Office of Gifts and Grants Management

The Office of Gifts and Grants Management (GGM) administers the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) in addition to managing and accepting general donations to the Peace Corps, both monetary and in-kind. GGM is responsible for accepting donations and applying them to PCPP projects; verifying compliance with small grants requirements for PCPP projects; posting projects on the Peace Corps website for fundraising; obligating funds for fully funded projects; reviewing project documentation; interpreting small grants requirements as related to the PCPP program; maintaining project records; and reporting to donors, partners, and Congress.

C. The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Global Partnerships

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Global Partnerships (IGAP) administers the Small Project Assistance (SPA) program. This includes management of the SPA agreement with USAID/Washington; supporting posts in their annual funding negotiations with USAID; 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 small grants requirements for SPA projects; reviewing project documentation; interpreting small grants requirements as they relate to the SPA program; and maintaining project records.

IGAP also provides technical support and assistance for project managers of other Peace Corps small grants funded by other U.S. government agencies. This includes grants

under the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA), Feed the Future (FTF), and in-country funded agreements.

D. The Office of Global Health and HIV

The Office of Global Health and HIV (OGHH) administers the Volunteer Activities Support and Training (VAST) program. This includes managing 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 small grants requirements for VAST projects; reviewing project documentation; interpreting small grants requirements related to the VAST program; and maintaining project records.

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

E. The Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support

The Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS), together with the IAP Region, provides program management for the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA) grant program. This includes providing liaison with the Department of State regarding the ECPA agreement; verifying compliance with small grants requirements for ECPA projects; reviewing project documentation; interpreting small grants requirements related to the ECPA program; maintaining project records; and providing program direction and oversight for ECPA-funded small grants.

OPATS 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.

F. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) is responsible for supporting small grants financial management and maintaining financial systems related to small grants programs. Working with the program offices that manage Peace Corps' small grant programs, OCFO establishes and operates systems for receiving, processing, making payments, and accounting for small grant funds.

G. Regions

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

II. Peace Corps Posts

This section summarizes small grants management roles and responsibilities based on current best practices at posts. Country directors should assign specific small grants support and

administration responsibilities to staff members to ensure that all necessary responsibilities are covered. Small grants administration and support duties should be included in job descriptions and performance plans.

To facilitate division of responsibilities, the responsibilities are grouped among several consistent categories:

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

The staff listed below has varying levels of responsibilities for small grants. Some positions, such as the small grants coordinator, may have responsibilities in all 11 categories. Other staff positions, such as the director of management operations (DMO), have responsibilities in fewer categories. These roles and responsibilities may be adapted to fit the needs of each post.

A. Country Director

Country directors (CD) provide oversight, direction, and accountability for the in-country administration of all small grants programs and related projects. In addition, CDs maintain relationships with in-country partners that provide funding for small grant programs.

Specific duties include the following:

- Grant program management and oversight
 - *Assign staff responsibilities:* Working with the director of programming and training (DPT) and the DMO, establish specific roles and responsibilities for post staff managing small grant programs; appoint a small grants coordinator (or coordinators) at post to provide day-to-day management, administration, and support for each active small grant project.
 - *Set local guidelines:* Establish specific small grant requirements consistent with guidance and requirements in this handbook.
- Seeking and allocating funds
 - *Seek and negotiate funding:* Access small grant resources consistent with post's needs and programming priorities, provide liaison with funding partners (i.e., USAID), and negotiate annual funding levels.

- *Allocate available funding:* In coordination with DPT and funding partners, determine allocation of SPA funds between grants and other allowable activities; for PCPP, allocate available country funds to individual projects.
- Working with funding partners/donors
 - *Maintain relationships with partners:* Serve as the top-level liaison with partners and donors, agree upon program scope and priorities with partners, and ensure proper reporting and day-to-day communication with partners.
- Orienting and training Volunteers
 - *Messaging to Volunteers:* Set the tone at post to support the use of small grants, in appropriate circumstances, to further capacity building within communities where Volunteers serve and in the context of their Peace Corps assignments.
- Project design
 - In conjunction with the DPT, ensure that small grant applications address post's key issues of capacity building and sustainability.
- Project review and approval
 - *Sign each approved grant:* Following review and recommendation by the small grants committee, the CD must give final approval on each grant application. If a project is to be canceled, transferred, or receive additional funds, the country director must certify and sign off on this project change.
 - *Approve waivers:* In situations in which this handbook provides the CD authority to issue waivers, consider and approve or deny waiver requests in writing.
- Project implementation
 - *Address lost or stolen funds:* Document and determine liability for lost or stolen funds; report to appropriate internal and external stakeholders.
- Project tracking and monitoring
 - When possible, the CD monitors ongoing projects during site visits.
- Reporting and closeout
 - Final approval and signature of small grant completion report.
- Program learning and evaluation
 - *Oversee grant program evaluation:* Oversee in-country grant program evaluations funded by partners, donors, or other sources.

B. Director of Programming and Training

Directors of programming and training (DPT) typically have direct oversight of small grants committees and serve as the program chair of the committees. DPTs work with post staff to ensure small grant projects complement post's programming priorities and are adapted to meet the local development context. DPTs work with staff to provide training to Volunteers, counterparts, and other staff on accessing small grant funding, appropriate use of small grant funds, and designing and managing small grant projects.

Specific duties include the following:

- Grant program management and oversight
 - *Ensure proper training and direction for staff:* With the small grants coordinator, train small grants committee members on committee responsibilities; ensure associate Peace Corps directors (APCDs), program managers (PMs), and programming and training assistants/specialists (PTAs/PTS's) provide appropriate support to Volunteers in developing and implementing projects.
- Seeking and allocating funds
 - *Determine funding needs:* Based on post programming priorities, determine small grant funding needs that complement those priorities.
 - *Allocate available funding:* With CD (and in consultation with donors), determine allocation of available funds.
- Working with funding partners/donors
 - *Work with funding partners and donors:* Provide liaison with funding partners or donors; oversee drafting of post-level progress reports to funders.
- Orienting and training Volunteers
 - *Ensure proper training for Volunteers:* 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.
- Project review and approval
 - *Oversee grant committee:* Sit on the small grants committee and provide oversight of the committee and the review process.
- Project tracking and monitoring
 - *Monitoring and evaluation:* Work with the small grants committee and staff to implement a system for monitoring and evaluating small grant projects.
- Program learning and evaluation
 - *Manage grant program evaluation:* Manage in-country grant program evaluations funded by partners, donors, or other sources; work with research contractors and Peace Corps staff to support evaluation completion.

C. Small Grants Coordinator

Small grants coordinators are responsible for the day-to-day administration of grant projects at post. The coordinator serves as the primary grant program contact at post for Volunteers, other post staff, and Peace Corps/headquarters grant program support staff. The coordinator is responsible for understanding program requirements and guidance and for ensuring that the post's policies, procedures, and approved grants are consistent with such guidance.

Every post is strongly encouraged to appoint a single small grants coordinator for all grant projects. If this is not feasible due to staffing, workload, or budget constraints, posts may appoint more than one coordinator for different grant programs. In this case,

the post must ensure that the small grants coordinators employ consistent small grant management and oversight practices.

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 Volunteers.
 - *Communicate with Peace Corps/headquarters*: Primary liaison with Peace Corps/headquarters on grant program(s); contact Peace Corps/headquarters grant program points of contact with questions and program updates; submit all required reports to Peace Corps/headquarters.
 - *Grant files*: Establish and maintain official grant files.
 - *Small grants committee*: Organize, prepare for, and facilitate small grants committee meetings.
- Seeking and allocating funds
 - 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 partners/donors
 - *Liaison*: As delegated by the CD, serve as day-to-day liaison with in-country funding partners (USAID or other) regarding ongoing grant program operations.
 - *Reports*: Support DPT/CD in drafting regular reports to USAID or other funding partners.
- 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 Volunteers
 - *Orientation session for Volunteers*: Work with DPT to introduce grant programs to PCVs.
 - Advise PCVs on accessing grant funds and developing projects.
- Project design
 - Understand PDM tools and ensure post consistency.
 - Provide Volunteers with feedback on applications submitted for approval.
 - Communicate potential activities and prohibited activities.
- Project review and approval
 - Receive grant applications from Volunteers and disseminate to small grants committee members and appropriate APCDs.

- Facilitate communication with Volunteers to follow up on requested application revisions.
- Ensure that funds are available in the proper funding source (including proper program element for SPA) prior to recommending approval of grants.
- Project implementation
 - If a project is to be canceled, transferred, or amended, the small grants coordinator must work with the Volunteer sponsor to report to the relevant Peace Corps/headquarters office.
- Project tracking and monitoring
 - Track the status of all ongoing grant projects.
 - Provide status updates to the CD, post staff, and relevant Peace Corps/headquarters staff.
- Reporting and closeout
 - When a Volunteer finishes the completion report, the small grants coordinator must ensure that the report meets all Small Grants Program guidelines. If the coordinator is satisfied that the project has met the guidelines, the report is submitted to the director of management and operations. The small grants coordinator must maintain small grant program records at post.
 - Collect and process all grant reports and SPA training activity reports (send reports to PC/headquarters and enter data into reporting workbooks).
 - Provide regular updates on small grants to USAID or other donors.
- Program learning and evaluation
 - Compile best practices to be used in future program planning.

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

Associate Peace Corps director (APCD), program manager (PM), and programming and training specialist/assistant (PTS/PTA) support the Volunteers in their projects or programs to promote effective use of small grant funds.

Specific duties include the following:

- Grant program management and oversight
 - *Understand available funding:* Check balances periodically with small grants coordinator; present funding information to PCVs/PC trainees/staff.
- Seeking and allocating funds
 - *Identify funding needs:* Discuss with DPT/CD and negotiate with USAID good/appropriate program elements for projects.
- Working with funding partners/donors
 - With approval from the CD, participate in meetings with partners/donors who fund community projects in the APCDs program sector.
- Orienting and training Volunteers
 - *Guidance to Volunteers:* Keep records of success stories and share with PCVs/PCTs.

- *Training:* Overview of Small Grant Programs. Promote different grants according to PCV types and site conditions; request/look for grants that support the project.
- Project design
 - Support PCVs in developing projects; review applications and provide feedback to Volunteers on how to better design projects.
 - Help Volunteers consider all options, including local resource mobilization, before presenting a project to the post's small grants committee; APCDs, PMs, and PTAs also serve as members of the committee. In some posts, these staff members provide a general orientation to Volunteers about fundraising, including the SPA Program and other external donors, as part of an early reconnect, a PDM in-service training (IST), or a technical IST.
 - Clearly and frequently communicate to PCVs and community counterparts about the Peace Corps approach.
- Project review and approval
 - *Vetting projects:* All small grants projects should be vetted by APCDs and PMs, ideally at the early stages of the project design process. Review projects within their sector to provide feedback to the committee on technical design and content.
 - *Grant committee:* Be part of the committee.
- Project implementation
 - Provide technical support to Volunteers and counterparts for ongoing projects related to the APCDs program sector.
- Project tracking and monitoring
 - *Project monitoring:* Monitor ongoing grant projects when performing regularly scheduled site visits.
- Reporting and closeout
 - *Project closeout:* Review grant completion reports for projects in their sector to gather lessons learned in order to support Volunteers in the future with similar projects.

E. Director of Management and Operations and Financial Assistant

The director of management and operations (DMO) is responsible for the financial administration of grant funds. The DMO certifies that Volunteers have presented all receipts and requirements to close out their small grants.

- Financial management of grant funds
 - Ensure that the financial administration of small grant projects is consistent with Peace Corps policies.
 - Upon request, provide the relevant financial information/documents to the CD, DPT, or small grants coordinator.
- Project review and approval
 - Sign off on approved projects.
- Reporting and closeout

- Ensure accountability of funds and verification of project expenditures/receipts.
- The DMO is responsible for certifying that all project funds are accounted for and spent in an approved manner.
- When a completion report is submitted, the DMO must review it to ensure that all funds raised for the project have been spent in accordance with the goals and objectives of the project.
- If all funds are accounted for, sign the completion report.
- Collect unused funds.

There are slight differences in responsibility depending on the type of grant:

PCPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •If a project is canceled and related funds remain, the director of management and operations must return those funds to OSP. •If all funds are not accounted for, the director of management and operations must collect the difference from the Volunteer and submit a budget reconciliation memo to OSP.
SPA VAST ECPA FTF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Create obligations for grants. •Ensure that obligations are properly made, obligations are created for approved projects, and the timely liquidation of funds. •Submit voucher requests to OCFO/GAP. •Track fund balances (in conjunction with small grants coordinator); provide periodic updates on funding balances to small grants committee and program staff.

F. Training Manager

Training managers play an important role in building into post training calendars opportunities to train Volunteers and their community counterparts in the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to be effective in planning and implementing small grant projects.

- Orienting and training Volunteers
 - Ensure training on project design and management is included in Volunteer training.
 - Include orientation on small grants in the training calendar (recommend orientation in pre-service training and complete small grants training in IST).

- Project implementation
 - Support Volunteers to plan and implement small grant projects which may have a training component.

III. Small Grant Committees

Each post is required to establish a small grants committee. This committee reviews and approves applications for grants, including SPA, PCPP, VAST, and other programs. Within the general guidance provided in the “Peace Corps Small Grants Staff Handbook,” each post has discretion as to how its committee will be structured, the approval process the committee will follow, and the specific functions and responsibilities to be assumed by the committee.

The small grants committee plays key three functions:

1. Establish post-specific grant criteria/requirements and processes consistent with the “Peace Corps Small Grants Staff Handbook” (e.g., application submission and review procedures, submission deadlines, etc.)
2. Review and preliminarily approve grant applications (to be finally reviewed and approved by the Country director)
3. Monitor and evaluate small grants and the grants process and review and analyze results, feedback, and data to improve the post’s grant programs

IV. Volunteers and Counterparts

Volunteers work with counterparts and community members to identify and then support capacity-development projects that meet locally identified priorities. Throughout the small grants process Volunteers will do the following:

- Collaborate with community members to identify, develop, implement, and complete a project that meets local priorities.
- Help community members to complete and submit a small grant application to the small grants coordinator and small grants committee for review and approval.
- Support community members in maintaining accurate financial records and receipts.
- Ensure documentation for in-kind contributions.
- Regularly report status updates to the small grants coordinator and small grants committee.
- Submit final reports with receipts and pictures if desired to the small grants coordinator.
- Submit a Transfer of Responsibility form and/or budget amendment, if necessary.

V. Peace Corps Partners and Donors

Peace Corps partners and donors contribute funds for posts to issue as small grants. The Peace Corps does not use its own appropriated funds for small grants. The Peace Corps is accountable for the use of funds from contributing partners and donors and may be required to provide reports.

Grant Requirements

This section lays out the basic requirements that all small grants must meet. In addition, it pinpoints costs that may **not** be included in a project's budget and those that may be included but require a signed waiver. Using these requirements, Peace Corps staff can ensure that projects meet community needs, as well as follow Peace Corps guidelines. **PC/headquarters will defer to post-level guidance in cases where posts have implemented more stringent policies⁴.**

I. Basic Grant Requirements

Peace Corps Small Grant funds can be used in various ways to support community-led development initiatives in a wide variety of programmatic areas, including agriculture, the environment, small-enterprise development, education, water and sanitation, and health. Cross-Sector Programming Priorities (CSPP) of gender equity and women's empowerment, youth development, girl's education, the prevention of HIV/AIDS, people with disabilities, NGO development, municipal development, food security, volunteerism, and the integration of ICT can also be addressed. Regardless of the funding source chosen by the Volunteer (SPA, VAST, PCPP, ECPA, or FTF), all projects supported with Peace Corps Small Grant funds **must**:

- Support a discrete project, with definite start and end dates and concrete goals and objectives
- Be scheduled for completion within one year and end at least three months before the Volunteer's close of service (COS) date
- Not exceed U.S. \$10,000 in funding
- Include at least a 25-percent community contribution of the total project cost
- Be submitted in English
- Ensure appropriate liability is documented

Posts may also develop additional post-specific criteria to better reflect local community development issues and priorities. For example, a post can develop its own requirements regarding maximum grant size, not to exceed \$10,000, minimum community contribution (at least 25 percent), or whether projects can be developed outside of a Volunteer's primary assignment or sector.

The following criteria must also be satisfied:

A. Community Initiated

The project must be community initiated and directed. This ensures that the community

⁴ For example, if posts determine that projects should be less than \$10,000, PC/headquarters will defer to this post-level policy.

is the driving force behind the project and will take ownership once it is completed. **All small grants projects should be initiated, designed, and implemented by a local community organization or group, with the support of a Peace Corps Volunteer.**

The first action a Volunteer should take before beginning project development is to conduct a community needs assessment to ensure appropriate project selection and community buy-in. Volunteers should conduct this needs assessment using the skills they have acquired from the [Participatory Analysis for Community Action \(PACA\) manual](#), which is provided by Peace Corps Information, Collection and Exchange (ICE).

Once a project has been identified, the following questions should be taken into consideration during project development and included on the application:

- Who first proposed this project?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of community members?
- How involved are the beneficiaries in project planning?
- How will the community oversee the 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 would not rather use their resources in some other way?

The project meets a pressing community need. This guideline helps establish the merit of the particular project among a host of other expressed needs. The following questions should be asked:

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

B. Demonstrate Sustainability

The project inherently promotes sustainable, community development. “Sustainability” 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. In order to build mechanisms into the planning process that promote this type of long-term success, Volunteers and community partners should consider these questions:

- Can the project operate self-sufficiently or be revenue-generating?
- What external or internal activities will occur to sustain the project after outside funds disappear?
- How long is this project anticipated to be in use or have an effect?
- Is there clear community participation and oversight over the project?
- How will the 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?

C. Demonstrate Capacity Building

A capacity-building element is included in the project. “Capacity building” refers to strengthening the skills, competencies, and abilities of people in the local community so they can overcome the obstacles that inhibit them from realizing their developmental goals. Capacity building is an important part of any project, as it helps to ensure continued development long after outside funding has been exhausted.

Because development activities often address specific tangible needs, it is common for Volunteers to develop projects for municipal development-based projects such as school or latrine construction, building renovations, small business expansions, etc. These types of projects, though providing valuable assets for the community, must still demonstrate an active capacity-building aspect.

While the actual process of developing a small grant project in itself has value for the community, the project should contain aspects which achieve one or both of the following:

- The project builds the capacity of people. There is an inherent skill-building type of education that takes place during the project—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 project trains community members on good hygiene practices in addition to building latrines).
- The project builds the material capacity of the community. The outcome of the project will increase self-sufficiency in development activities and/or enable community members to carry out activities that build the capacity of people. For example, a community might build a new room for the local school, which will enable them to better educate their children or a project might purchase a loom for a women’s cooperative to help them get a weaving project off the ground.

D. Incorporate Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is built into the project plan. A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan should be incorporated from the beginning of project development. Peace Corps’ contribution to the development community can be demonstrated through results captured. Volunteers should incorporate good monitoring and evaluation methodologies to measure project outcomes and success. Projects should do the following:

- Include an M&E component that indicates how learning or changes in behavior will be measured.
- Address how learning will be enhanced or how access to the information might promote behavior change among individuals who receive the training or service provided.

- Demonstrate how the project will be beneficial to recipients and the community at large.
- Not include project goals that only state Volunteer outputs.

E. Include Indicators of Success

Indicators of success are outlined. Indicators of success are quantifiable measurements, agreed to beforehand, that demonstrate desired changes took place. They measure both tangible (e.g., the number of people participating) and intangible outcomes (e.g., an increase in self-esteem among the participants). Indicators include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Participants acquiring new skills that improve their quality of life (e.g., literacy, new English or math skills, or new agricultural techniques).
- Improved capacity of participants to define and meet goals and objectives in the future (e.g., ability to set up a working group to address a problem or enhanced planning skills).
- Presence of linkages with similar groups or networks (e.g., learning how to connect with other organizations and people).
- Improved decision making (e.g., changes in attitudes such as gender inclusiveness, willingness to share ideas).

F. Community Contribution

To verify community ownership and initiation, as well as to enhance the long-term sustainability of the project, a 25-percent **minimum** community contribution of the total project cost is required.

This contribution often includes the costs of all manual labor and transportation associated with the project. Host community contributions might also include direct financial contributions of cash or raw materials (though if the community contribution is cash, it must be clear what it will pay for). Contributions from local or other in-country sources, such as indigenous organizations or government ministries, can also be factored into the community contribution. However, a contribution from an international organization cannot be considered as part of the community contribution (e.g., contributions from USAID, United Nations organizations, foreign embassies, or international NGOs such as CARE, Save the Children, or the International Red Cross).

Volunteers may help their communities quantify how much time, labor, transportation, and financial or material support the community will provide (see [Appendix 1](#)). Most often, communities contribute well above the minimum 25-percent requirement.

II. Unallowable Costs

All costs funded with Peace Corps small grant funds must be reasonable, necessary, and justified in light of the project activities and objectives. The following limitations apply

specifically to costs covered by grant funds. Should the local community choose to provide or pay for any of the following, it is acceptable and does not require a waiver.

- **Land and other capital assets**

Grant funds cannot be used to purchase land. If grant funds are approved to construct or equip a building, prior to approving the 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 officially approved agreement providing long-term access to the land. 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.

- **Loan funds**

Grant funds cannot 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 project activities, it may elect to use this income to establish a credit or loan fund in order to continue or expand project activities.

- **"Sub-grant" projects**

Recipients of Peace Corps small grant funds may not award project funds to other persons or groups in their community in the form of a secondary small grant/prize/loan. If grant project participants would like to use skills and/or knowledge gained as a result of project activities to design a follow-up project, they should apply for the funding for the second project through the normal Peace Corps small grant application process.

- **Contingency funds/Multiple funding sources**

Grant budgets should not include funds for undefined or unexpected "contingencies" or similar cost categories (e.g., "unexpected costs"). This includes, but is not limited to, applying for funding from multiple grant sources.

- **Alcoholic beverages**

Grant funds may not be used to purchase alcoholic beverages.

- **Recurring costs**

Grant funds cannot be used to cover regularly recurring monthly expenses (e.g., rent, permanent salaries, telephone service and utilities, Internet service) beyond an initial start-up period of three months. Salaries of contracted workers necessary for actual project completion (e.g., construction workers building a library) are allowable, while permanent salaries (e.g., a librarian to staff the library) are not. Calculations of in-kind contributions should 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.

III. Costs that Require a Country Director's Approval (Waiver)

Country directors have authority to approve a waiver for certain costs which are normally not approved. These costs are to be included in grants **only** if deemed appropriate by post staff, and should be approved only after thorough review.

For any costs listed below, the Volunteer must attach a waiver (if deemed appropriate) when submitting an approved project for CD signature/approval. The request should include a brief justification describing how the costs will contribute to the overall success and capacity building of the project. To approve the waiver, the CD must sign the waiver request, and the waiver authorization must be maintained in the grant file. Most projects should not be designed in such a way that requires any unallowable costs, as waivers are to be taken under consideration only when absolutely necessary. A template of the waiver can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

Project costs that require a waiver:

- **Giveaways, prizes, and celebrations**

Generally, grant funds cannot be used to purchase giveaways⁵, prizes, celebrations, or other similar items or activities. However, if the use of grant funds to purchase these items will support the realization of project goals and objectives and the small grants committee supports this use of funds, volunteers may request a waiver of this limitation from the CD.

- **Motor vehicles and other conveyances**

Grant funds cannot be used to purchase motor vehicles and other transportation conveyances that are intended primarily for personal use. In limited circumstances, funds may cover the costs of these items if the project clearly demonstrates that the goods are integral to the objectives of a project, intended for shared use, and benefit more than a single individual or business.

- **Volunteer costs**

Generally, grant funds may not cover costs to support or benefit Peace Corps Volunteers. Grant funds may not pay for per diem for Volunteers. The CD may issue a waiver for funds to cover modest travel, lodging, and food costs related to a project if the Volunteer is traveling with host country counterparts and such costs are necessary for the success of the project.

- **International travel**

Allowing international travel to be included in a project must be considered very carefully. PC/headquarters strongly recommends not approving international travel

⁵ 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, they may be included in the grant budget. If there is any question surrounding the cost, Volunteers should fill out a waiver.

waivers due to potential logistic and liability issues. If a Country director feels that the overall benefit of including international travel outweighs the risks associated with the trip, s/he may approve the waiver. Please consider the following questions before approving these costs:

- 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, a waiver could make sense. However, if airfare or several hours of travel is included, a waiver should not be considered.
- Will the attendees learn something new and transfer skills to others when they return?
- Does the project meet the small grants requirement to be sustainable and to build local self-reliance?
- Is this project making the best use of small grant funds? Could the participants/conference attendees and their organization get the same benefit from attending a conference or training in-country?
- Have you considered potential logistical problems, i.e., if a person misses a plane ride and has to pay extra money to get home, how will this be paid for?
- Who is responsible or liable for the person and/or his/her 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 the States or another country?

IV. Projects that Require Special Consideration

A. Scholarship Programs (PCPP and SPA Only)

Scholarship programs can be effective tools to encourage education and increase retention in schools. When creating a scholarship program, it is important to plan strategically for the long-term administration and sustainability of the program. This process involves significant planning and the inclusion of host country nationals and local organizations. The following key points must be addressed in order for a scholarship project to be approved for funding:

- ***A Small Grants application must be submitted.*** Applications must be submitted consistent with small grant program guidelines outlined in this handbook. The application should spell out very specifically the process by which host country nationals will identify, evaluate, and select recipients and it should show a plan for sustainability.
- ***The program should become self-sustaining.*** The program's survival—financial and administrative—should not be dependent on PCVs or small grant funding.
- ***Help organize a selection committee.*** Creating a committee that will plan how the scholarship program will operate is one of the most important steps. The ultimate goal for the Volunteer should be to assist the community in developing

a selection committee and process made up entirely of host country participants. Volunteers should not be part of the selection process.

- **Selection process.** Volunteers must not be in a position where they may be perceived as handing out money or be involved in the selection or evaluation of students as recipients of money. The project must demonstrate that only host country nationals should be in charge of the process of nomination, selection, and administration of any funds used for this purpose.
- **Host country nationals.** Host country representatives from all levels—from the recipients' families to the local or national governments—should be involved.
- **No scholarship project may last longer than a school year.** No scholarship project may last longer than the current school year. If the community would like to have scholarships again the following year, a new small grant application must be submitted.
- **Expectations and evaluations.** Set realistic expectations and evaluate how well these expectations have been met during the first year. In subsequent years, the scholarship program committee should meet annually to evaluate the previous year and make any changes to the next year's strategy.
- **Completion reports must be sent in as well as any extra money.** Scholarship reporting requirements are the same as Partnership Program requirements (i.e., completion report, receipts with financial accounting summary). At the end of each year/project, as with all small grants projects, any unused funds should be returned to the appropriate small grant funding source.

B. Training and Skills Building Camps

Volunteers may provide training and skills building in a camp-like setting and, under certain conditions, camps may qualify for small grant support. Appropriate roles for Volunteers include developing technical content and curricula, creating a learning environment, providing training to prepare camp counselors to lead camp sessions, supporting community-led fundraising efforts, and assistance with planning and logistics. Camps supported by small grants should not focus solely on sports or recreational activities.

Small grant projects for camp-related activities should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Have clear project descriptions with goals and objectives
- Community buy-in, including community and counterpart contributions to cover up to 25 percent of the project cost
- Funds requested for infrastructure, equipment, and materials should support the training to be provided, and not be included as the principal justification for grant support
- Grant funds **cannot** be used to purchase giveaways, commemorative mugs, or prizes; when these items are considered essential to the success of a training

project, funds to purchase them should be contributed by the community or a third-party organization

- Include monitoring and reporting indicators that will measure project outcomes
- Include follow-up plans for sharing the learning of campers with peers and the community at large and applying the skills learned during the camp experience in the community throughout the year
- Activities should generally take place within the community and not require travel on the part of the Volunteer or camp participants
- Camps must be safe and should make parents/guardians aware of activities involved
- Staffing of the camp should be well planned, as enough staff must be present to manage all participants
- As with any small grant, a community or organization should assume responsibility for designing the camp, submitting the application, managing the funds, running the camp, and completing reporting requirements, assisted by the Volunteer.

Application Process

Applying for a small grant begins well before a Volunteer physically fills out the small grants application. Volunteers must earn the trust of community partners to determine an appropriate project to plan and implement.

In order to best manage the small grant programs and the volume and frequency of projects, posts may develop post-specific criteria and/or procedures outlining the application process for Volunteers. Additionally, posts may create a brief supplemental application in the local language for Volunteers and community members to complete together, to facilitate community engagement in the needs assessment process.

The following section outlines the process for Volunteers and communities when developing small-scale development projects and applying for Peace Corps small grant funding.

I. Orienting Volunteers

All Volunteers should be oriented and trained on how to access small grants during their service. As part of this training, Volunteers should have an understanding of the role of small grants within the Peace Corps [approach to development](#) and methods to [design projects and write applications](#)⁶. This can be presented during Pre-service Training (PST) and/or during In-service Training (IST).

Posts should provide an overview document ([see example from Guyana](#)) to Volunteers explaining the different funding sources available to Volunteers at post and their specific requirements. The small grants Volunteer handbook provides specific program information for Volunteers and guidance for developing strong projects. Volunteers should be knowledgeable of which small grant resources (SPA, PCPP, VAST, ECPA, FTF) are available in their country and the post-specific requirements for submitting a small grant application. Volunteers should also be made aware of their responsibility to follow Peace Corps requirements and guidelines that do not allow them to solicit funds outside of the small grants program. Partnering with fundraising organizations that enable Volunteers to raise funds outside of the small grants program is a violation of Manual Section 720, Section 3.3.

II. Funding Availability

Each program utilizes different funding sources for Volunteer community projects. Due to the nature of the PCPP program, which fundraises for projects, the program operates on a rolling funding basis without set funding amounts or limits each fiscal year. However, other Peace Corps small grant programs that are supported by U.S. government agencies and posts receive

⁶ This PowerPoint can be updated depending on what funding sources are available at in-country.

set amounts of money each year for the grant programs that may be available at post (SPA, VAST, ECPA, FTF, etc.). These programs are further limited in that funding may only support grants in particular programmatic areas. Therefore, posts should think strategically about how to communicate with Volunteers about funds availability across programs when calling for grant applications.

III. When a Volunteer Can Apply

Volunteers may apply for funding for small grant projects after a minimum of three months at a site, and preferably after having received Project Design and Management (PDM) training.

- Volunteers should only begin working with their communities to design and submit an application after discussing the proposed project with their APCD or other appropriate programming staff.
- In order to allow sufficient time for completion of a project prior to a Volunteer's COS date, Volunteers may not submit projects during the last three months of their service unless the country director approves a written justification explaining how the project will be implemented and completed before the Volunteer's COS date.
- Peace Corps/headquarters recommends that Volunteers implement **one grant at a time**. Once a Volunteer has successfully completed and closed a small grant, the small grants coordinator and other appropriate staff may permit a Volunteer to undertake the management of simultaneous grants. Additionally, Volunteers **cannot utilize two different funding sources to contribute to the same project** (e.g., SPA and PCPP funds may not be applied to the same project).

Each post should establish a regular review calendar for reviewing grant applications for all funding sources. The grant committee should meet to review applications at least quarterly, and more frequently (e.g., monthly) if the volume of applications necessitates more frequent review. The calendar should be established far in advance and publicized to Volunteers in newsletters and other formats, so that Volunteers can plan ahead to submit their applications on time. As PCPP projects may be submitted on a rolling basis, committee review may have to be more frequent or may be done virtually.

IV. Community Involvement

Volunteers should work with the community organizations throughout the entire application process. As Peace Corps small grants support community development, projects should be initiated and driven by the Volunteer's community, rather than solely by the Volunteer.

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" (Page 25). Thus, it is important for post staff to ensure that each

project demonstrates community engagement and involvement, that there is a clear and specific need for the project, and that it will be sustainable upon the Volunteer's departure.

Ways to ensure community involvement:

- Local language summary or document
- Counterparts come to post for project advocacy⁷
- Counterparts attend PDM workshops with Volunteers
- Post staff visit project/community sites
- PACA mapping
- Community assessment tools

To verify community ownership and initiation, and as mentioned in the Grant Requirements Section I, F, a 25-percent **minimum** community contribution of the total project cost is required for each small grant project. Volunteers may help their communities quantify how much time, labor, transportation, and financial or material support the community will provide. Most often, communities contribute much more than 25 percent in material, financial, or physical contributions. Post staff may utilize and distribute the guide in [Appendix 1](#) for valuing in-kind contributions.

V. Required Materials and Project Development

The Peace Corps small grants application guides Volunteers through a series of sections that ask Volunteers and their communities to think through all aspects of the project, including timeline, budget, and how the project will be monitored and evaluated. If a post decides to request additional information (a local language summary, for example), it may do so.

The application must be filled out for all grant programs. Volunteers and community counterparts should read through the entirety of the small grant application before completing any information. Volunteers must complete each section of the application and follow all directions in each section. They should be aware which funding source they are applying for prior to completing the application, and should make sure to fill out the program-specific section at the end of the application.

Volunteers may need guidance when determining the beneficiaries for their projects. When deciding who is a beneficiary and who is a participant, Volunteers should consider these guidelines ([Appendix 3](#)):

- 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 project planning and/or implementation phases.

⁷ Some posts have found it helpful to have community counterparts come to the post to advocate for the funding of their project application. This is dependent of the size of the country and the ability for community members to travel to post. While it is something that ensures community members are engaged and serious about the project, it could be prohibitive depending on the travel distance.

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

Volunteers and their community counterparts will be asked to create goals and objectives for their projects. This includes creating indicators of success that will be reported on in the completion report at the end of the project.

All Peace Corps small grants include a standard set of indicators that are applicable across all project types. As all projects are required to incorporate a capacity-building element, these standard indicators measure if the project was able to build community capacity. Further, these indicators measure if the newly learned skills or technologies have been adopted by project participants. To this end, all small grants projects will measure against these indicators:

Capacity Development

1. Number of individuals⁸ who have increased capacity due to this small grant (unit of measure: individual)
2. Number of service providers⁹ who have increased capacity due to this small grant (unit of measure: service provider)
3. Number of community organizations and/or associations¹⁰ that have increased capacity due to this small grant (unit of measure: community organizations and associations)

New Technology and Practices

1. Number of individuals who have applied new technologies and/or practices as a result of this grant (unit of measure: individual)
2. Number of new technologies and/or practices that have been adopted as a result of this small grant (unit of measure: technologies and practices)

⁸ Individuals are participants who attend a training and are expected to implement the knowledge gained for themselves.

⁹ Service providers are participants who receive a training and are expected to train additional populations following the training—a training of trainers.

¹⁰ Community organizations and/or associations are participants that engage in a training to improve an organization as a whole. For example, an organization that learns to create an organization structure, strategic plan, or fundraising strategy.

Volunteers may find it useful to create a project management framework to plan their project and set up an evaluation plan. Post staff may be asked to provide resources for Volunteers to help them with this process, particularly if it is not included in PDM or additional trainings. In addition to available Peace Corps resources, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers a series of evaluation tools used to help clarify approaches to and methods of evaluation and recommends resources for additional reading. Below are links to the CDC guides that may be helpful for staff and Volunteers:

- [Guides Home](#)
- [Writing SMART Objectives](#)
- [Developing and Using a Logic Model](#)
- [Developing an Evaluation Plan](#)
- [Fundamentals of Evaluating Partnerships](#)
- [Using Indicators for Program Planning and Evaluation](#)

In addition to specific project indicators, Volunteers and their communities will also be required to provide indicator information based on the grant for which they are applying. Post staff should assist Volunteers in understanding which indicators are applicable to their projects. These indicators are essential to monitoring and evaluating projects and programs, and will be submitted to the appropriate Peace Corps office for reporting purposes.

The application has formal signature forms at the end of the document. All forms must be completed and signed by all parties. The application should be submitted electronically whenever possible.

Volunteers should review all applications to ensure accuracy and should be prepared to provide more information or documentation than requested in than in the application if post staff determines it necessary.

VI. Reporting and Indicators

The application also includes a section specific for each program by funding source. The section asks for information on indicators requested by the donor (for SPA, PEPFAR, ECPA, and FTF in particular), or for referral contact information in the case of PCPP. The section below summarizes the reporting requirements specific to each program:

PCPP

- Peace Corps Partnership Program will solicit funds from friends and families on behalf of the Volunteer as Manual Section 720 prohibits Volunteers from directly soliciting funds. In the Referral Section of the application, Volunteers should provide contact information of friends, family, and/or organizations so that Peace Corps/headquarters can contact them to solicit funds.
- Indicators of the project should be outlined and maintained in the monitoring and evaluation section of the application. PCPP and the Volunteer should review the goals and objectives sections when monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the project.

SPA

- For all posts, the Peace Corps Small Grant Application and Completion Report include a set of standard indicators that have been chosen by Peace Corps/headquarters from the Foreign Assistance Framework. Posts may also work with the USAID mission in their country to choose "custom" indicators specific to their program. Custom indicators should be communicated to Peace Corps/headquarters before the beginning of the fiscal year in order for them to be added to the report templates. The best way to do this is to work with the USAID mission in-country to fill out the SPA Program Data Sheet (which lists the funding levels and reporting requirements for each post-level SPA program) and turn it into Peace Corps/headquarters in a timely manner.
- An additional environmental checklist is incorporated at the end of the SPA indicator section.

VAST

- For all posts, the Peace Corps Small Grant Application and Completion Report include a set of standard indicators for VAST that have been established by Peace Corps and the PEPFAR initiative.
- These indicators are the same as those used by post for reporting all HIV/AIDS work in the Agency Initiatives Report.

ECPA

- The ECPA program is established through an agreement with USAID and operates in the same manner as SPA.
- Select posts that have ECPA should work with the USAID mission to identify "custom" indicators specific to their program.
- As with SPA, custom indicators should be communicated to Peace Corps/headquarters before the beginning of the fiscal year in order for them to be added to the report templates.

FTF

- All indicators are reported by Peace Corps posts participating in Feed the Future.
- These indicators mirror the indicators for SPA and should be determined by the FTF coordinator along with the USAID mission in-country. Volunteers should report on all indicators relevant to their projects.

VII. Pre-Committee Review

A post's small grants committee is responsible for reviewing all applications. **At a minimum**, all approved projects must follow the basic grant guidelines.

SPA- and VAST-approved projects must also fall within the scope of the program areas or elements under which the mission and PEPFAR has contributed funds. For SPA, at the beginning of each fiscal year, IGAP staff sends each post a reporting workbook to assist in tracking funds and USAID indicators. Small grants committees should use this workbook to keep a running balance of available funding in each supported program area or element for the SPA program. The small grants coordinator should also keep a tracking workbook at the beginning of each fiscal year to keep record of VAST funding availability.

Post small grant programs are meant to function as agile funding mechanisms. Although projects must be considered for their capacity-building potential, the application review process should be structured in such a way as to facilitate timely decision making and distribution of funds, with minimal paperwork for Volunteers, Peace Corps staff, and USAID staff.

In managing the application review process and calendar, posts may find it useful to consider:

- the total amount of post's SPA and VAST grant authority;
- seasonal activity calendars of Volunteers and their counterparts (e.g., education Volunteers might request funds for projects that will take place during school breaks);
- budget cycle realities and the potential effects of a continuing resolution; and
- dates of PDM workshops or other similar trainings, after which application submissions may increase.

Posts must ensure that small grant guidelines, deadlines, and review procedures are effectively communicated to Volunteers. Effective means of communicating small grant information include distribution of informational pamphlets, inclusion of programmatic updates and reminders in Volunteer newsletters, and scheduling small grant orientation sessions at PST or IST.

Prior to committee review, the small grants coordinator should review each application to ensure that all sections have been completed and meet the minimum requirements for approval. Signatures for each project may be obtained after final approval of the project.

VIII. Grant Committee Review

Posts are required to review and approve small grants projects through a small grants committee. 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
- Director of programming and training (DPT)
- Associate Peace Corps directors (APCD) or program managers (PM)
- Administrative officer (AO)
- Program assistants and training assistants
- Financial assistants
- Volunteers (posts must take into consideration Volunteer safety and security and potential interference with community work before placing Volunteers on the small grants committee. Volunteer members are typically third-year Volunteers, Volunteer Leaders, or Volunteers who have completed a successful small grants project)
- For SPA: a USAID mission representative (at the mission's discretion for SPA projects)
- Host country nationals and/or NGO representatives, as appropriate or possible

One member of the committee should serve as the grant coordinator. The small grants coordinator is responsible for organizing meetings, collecting and distributing project applications to committee members before review meetings, ensuring all members of the committee have reviewed (either in person or via email) and approved the application, ensuring all signatures have been obtained, and submitting required reports and documents to Peace Corps/headquarters.

It is recommended that the small grants committee establishes the following:

- post-specific project criteria or requirements;
- submission, review, and approval procedures;
- a review calendar and application submission deadlines; and
- post-specific grant materials (e.g., local small grants handbook, small grant funding announcements, training materials, etc.).

Most posts use a project review checklist to help Peace Corps staff, Volunteers, and communities assess the strengths and weaknesses of small grant projects. Such a checklist should become part of any information guide that post disseminates to Volunteers and communities. A sample review checklist is included in [Appendix 4](#). Posts must provide orientation and training to the members of the small grants committee. It is important for longer-serving members play a role to orient newer committee members.

IX. Assigning Project Numbers

Once the grant committee approves the application, the post's small grants coordinator will assign a number to the project. Previously, Peace Corps/headquarters assigned project numbers for PCPP. Now, posts will assign project numbers for all small grant projects and will inform Peace Corps/headquarters of the assigned number. This number is used to track the project at post and at Peace Corps/headquarters. 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**

- Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA) = **EC**
- Feed the Future (FTF) = **FF**

The project number identifies the grant's funding source, the fiscal year in which the project is funded, and the post (by a three-digit country location code), and will be used to track it until it is completed and all programmatic and financial reports have been submitted. The post's small grants coordinator should enter the project number into the Peace Corps small grant application prior to submitting it to Peace Corps/headquarters and **ensure that the same number appears on all documentation and communication related to the project**, including all project files and emails.

Approved projects are numbered as follows, using the example of a project in Albania that was approved and obligated in October 2012:

SP = SPA Program
13 = Fiscal year 2013
304 = the location code for Albania
002 = the second SPA project for which funding was obligated in Albania during fiscal year 2013

In this example, **SP-13-304-002** becomes the assigned number. For VAST, PCPP, FTF, or ECPA, the prefix will differ and be auto-populated by the application.

This number should **not** be confused with the obligation number.

Also, please note that the project 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, project numbers should continue in numerical sequence regardless of the SPA program element. So continuing with the example above, the second project for which funding is obligated through SPA in Albania during fiscal year 2013 would have the number SP-13-304-002. And if the last project in fiscal year 2012 for SPA was SP-12-304-019, the first project in fiscal year 2013 would be SP-13-304-001, **not** SP-13-304-020.

All project files and emails must include project numbers.

X. Tracking Projects

Once assigned a project number, all posts should track all projects in a post [small grant tracking workbook](#). The tracking workbook is all-inclusive and incorporates all programs available to Volunteers. The small grants coordinator should input all new projects into the workbook and update as necessary once a project attains a new status (i.e., projects have been submitted to Peace Corps/headquarters, projects are funded, projects are in the implementation phase, etc.).

The tracking workbook is also useful to assist posts with tracking projects and establishing post-level monitoring and evaluation of the Small Grant Program as a whole.

Additionally, posts may wish to use a small grant checklist (see [Appendix 5](#)) which will “follow” the project along the lifecycle from application, to review, to approval and implementation, to completion and close out.

Processing Approved Projects

I. Processing Guidelines for all Small Grant Programs

A. Information Disseminated to Volunteers Prior to Receiving Funds

- Volunteers and their community partners must receive specific instructions on how to account for the use of small grant project funds, the level of documentation required to substantiate procurements, and any additional, post-specific accounting procedures.
- Volunteers and/or community organizations may not spend their own money on project expenses prior to receiving grant funds from the Peace Corps with the expectation of being reimbursed.

B. Disbursement of Small Grants Funds

Small grants funds may be disbursed in a variety of ways. In determining how funds should be obligated and disbursed, the administrative unit may consider the options outlined below. Post staff should work with the Volunteer to obtain and submit banking information if a different method is desired. This should be done as soon as the project is submitted and approved. Posts may have specific rules for grant disbursement; those below are presented only as options.

- **Disbursement directly to community organization**—Depositing funds in the community organization's bank account gives the organization direct experience in managing money, strengthens the financial management capacity of the organization, and reduces the need for Volunteers to travel with or handle large sums of money.
- **Disbursement into a joint account**—If the community organization does not have an account or if there are concerns about the organization's ability to manage funds on its own, the next preferred option is for the Volunteer and community organization to open up a joint account for the project funds.
- **Disbursement to Volunteer in a separate project account**—If local banking laws make it difficult or impossible to open joint accounts, the next preferred option is for the funds to be deposited in a separate account the Volunteer opens for the project. This reduces potential accountability problems that can result from commingling of project funds and the Volunteer's living allowance.
- **Disbursement to Volunteer in his/her primary account**—If payment cannot be made directly to the community organization and in-country banking restrictions make it exceedingly difficult to establish a joint or separate project account, funds may be deposited in the Volunteer's primary account. Peace Corps/headquarters does not recommend commingling a Volunteer's living allowance with small grant funds. If small grant funds must be deposited in a Volunteer's account, Peace Corps/headquarters recommends opening a project account following the small

grant deposit. If there are fees associated with opening an additional account, it may be included in the project budget. If a Volunteer must keep the funds in a personal account, the DMO must establish appropriate safeguards and procedures to ensure that all small grant funds are accounted for prior to a Volunteer's COS so that Volunteers do not leave the country with small grant funds.

- **Disbursement directly to the vendor/service provider**—For major purchases going to a single vendor, payment may be made by check or an electronic funds transfer (EFT) directly to the vendor or supplier. This reduces the amount of project funds that must be managed by the local community organization or the Volunteer. If the vendor/service provider is not already a vendor in the financial system, the administrative unit needs to submit a vendor file request form. See OFMH chapter on vendor IDs.

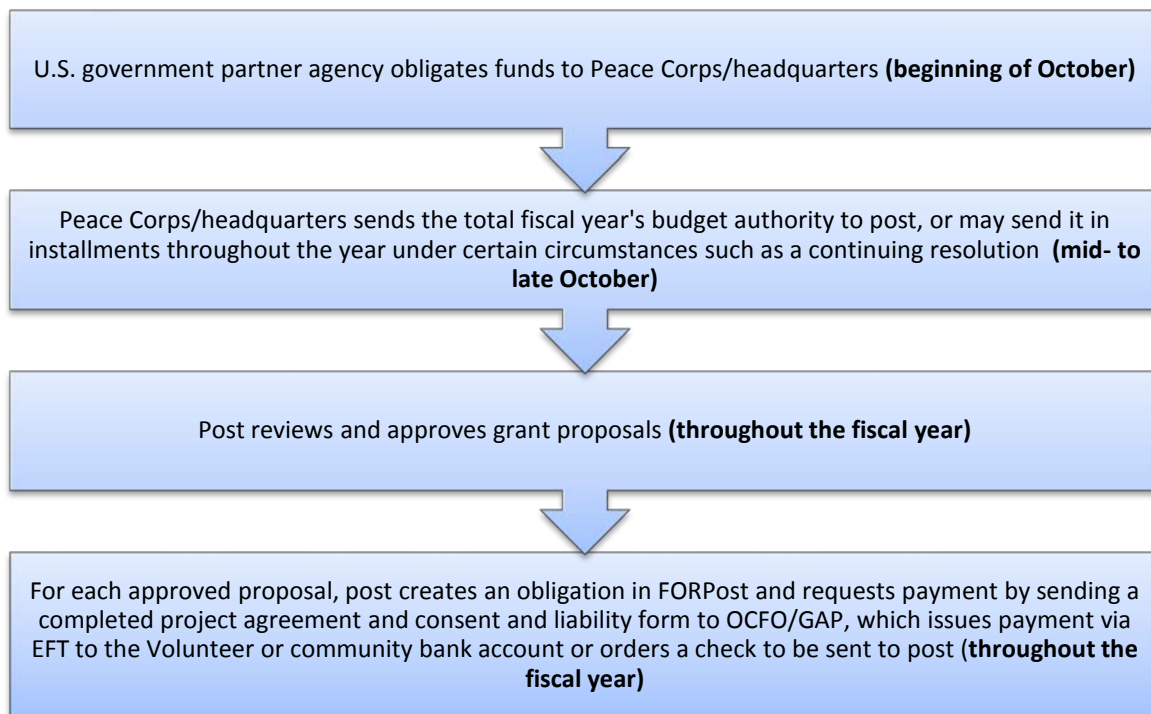
Whoever receives the funds for a small grants project must sign the liability form included in the small grants application form.

II. Processing Approved SPA/VAST/ECPA/FTF Grants

A. Budget Authority

Transfers of budget authority for the small grant programs funded by U.S. government agencies (SPA, ECPA, FTF¹¹) are distributed to posts at the beginning of each fiscal year, usually in mid- to late October. (VAST funding is distributed on the PEPFAR funding cycle; contact OGH for specific funding information.) On occasion, due to agency-level budgetary and fiscal considerations, and especially during a continuing resolution (CR), the total amount of the transfer for each program may be spread out over the course of the year. Posts are advised **not to exceed** their grant authority by approving projects in excess of authority already transferred to post. If additional grant authority is needed, posts should contact the Peace Corps/headquarters office responsible for the administration of the grant program in question with as much notice as possible.

¹¹ FTF small grants projects will only be funded once USAID approves the Environmental Review Form.



B. Creating Obligations for U.S. Government-Funded Grant Projects

The DMO or financial assistant creates an obligation for **each** approved project against available budget authority. **Posts must create a separate obligation for each grant.** The DMO maintains an up-to-date accounting of grant obligations through FORPost. The Peace Corps Small Grant Project Agreement is the principal obligating document. In addition to the standard fiscal coding attached to the obligating document, each approved grant project should be marked with a specific project number (see section about [Assigning Project Numbers](#)).

The small grants coordinator sends the Peace Corps Small Grant Project Agreement (signed by the appropriate community representative, the Volunteer, and the country director) for each approved grant project to the post's administrative unit. Either the DMO or another financial staff member will create the obligation and assign an obligation number. When creating the obligation, the DMO or financial assistant should **enter the grant project number in the "item description" line.**

It is possible to request more than one payment for an approved grant project obligation to reduce the Volunteer's or community group's liability in handling these funds. Payments should be made based on a planned activity implementation schedule.

C. Requesting Payment for Approved U.S. Government-Funded Grant Projects

To request payment for approved grant projects, post's DMO or financial assistant sends **copies** of the completed Peace Corps Small Grant Project Agreement with complete fiscal code to the Office of Global Accounts Payable (OCFO/GAP). The **original forms**

should be retained by post in the grant project files.

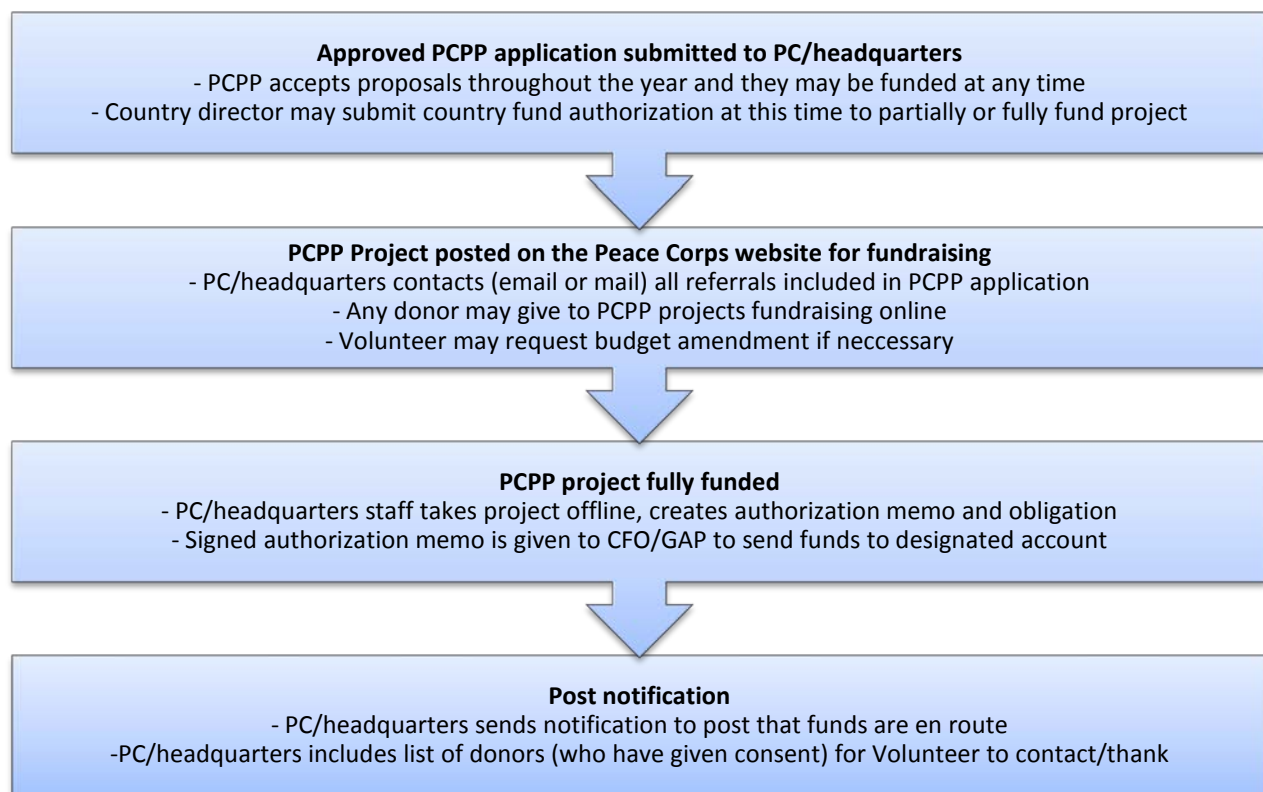
Electronic funds transfers (EFT) are required for all posts with EFT capacity. For those posts without EFT capacity, checks may be ordered or, in exceptional circumstances and for cash-only posts, imprest funds may be used based on a post-specific waiver provided by the Office of Global Accounts Payable.

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.

III. Processing Approved PCPP Grants

Once a PCPP project has been approved by the small grants committee, the small grant application must be submitted to PC/headquarters, which is responsible for receiving donations for all PCPP projects and obligating funds. The figure below shows the PCPP funding process.

A. Fundraising for Fully Funded Projects



Upon receipt and acceptance of the application, PCPP markets the project in several ways. Each Volunteer should submit a list of individuals and organizations with whom the Volunteer has a personal connection. These generally include friends, family, and

professional contacts. GGM will contact each of these referrals and post the Volunteer's summary on the Peace Corps website.

Volunteers can help by contacting friends, family, fraternal organizations, civic groups (such as Kiwanis or Rotary Clubs), and other parties to tell them about their projects. All donations and potential donors should be directed to GGM. While there is no guarantee a project will be funded, on average it takes three to four months for projects under \$4,000 to be funded. The fundraising time frame depends on the project type, amount requested, strength of the Volunteer's referrals, and clarity of the summary provided in the application. Projects remain online until they are fully funded, at which point the project is automatically removed from the website and online donations can no longer be made toward the project.

Note: Should a proposed project not reach full funding, GGM does not release the portion of funds raised for that project. If the Volunteer would still like to access the amount raised, s/he would need to submit a budget amendment (see section C) and a narrative detailing how a scaled-down version of the project would be possible with less funding. If this is not possible, the project will be canceled and funds will not be released.

B. Obligation and Sending of Funds from PC/headquarters

Once a project is fully funded, the Partnership Program authorizes funds to be disbursed to the Volunteer. All funds remain in PC/headquarters, and are obligated toward each Partnership Project as the project is fully funded. Once funds are obligated by GGM, the authorization memo is sent to the Office of Global Accounts Payable in Peace Corps/headquarters, which sends funds to the Volunteer's Peace Corps bank account.

Once funds are sent to the Volunteer, the authorization memo is sent to post and with a donor list and information on the sponsors. This information should be kept on file at post and given to the Volunteer to write thank-you letters and send progress updates to donors.

As a 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." If a donor gives permission for the Peace Corps to share his/her contact information with the Volunteer, it will be included in the donor list. If the donor does not give permission, Peace Corps staff is not able to include the information. The Peace Corps will only share the name and contact information with Volunteers if authorized and, if included, a personal message. The Peace Corps does not include donation amount.

C. Budget Amendments

If it is necessary to alter the proposed budget between submission and full funding, an updated budget and narrative can be submitted to the country director, small grants coordinator, and the program specialist for approval. Include a narrative explaining the changes and the reasons for them. Additionally, be mindful of the following:

- Decreased budgets. If the new amount has already been raised, the funds will be released to the Volunteer.
- Increased budgets. The community contribution must still total at least 25 percent of the new budget total. Should a project need more funds after full funding, budget amendments will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

D. Use of Country Funds to Support PCPP Projects

The objective of country funds is to give posts the ability to better leverage private-sector support for approved Peace Corps Partnership Program projects. Country funds give returned Volunteer groups, other private-sector entities, and individuals the opportunity to support a specific country while giving posts the flexibility to determine how the money may be allocated among their approved PCPP projects. All donations to GGM country funds will only be used for approved PCPP projects. Country funds are subject to GGM country fund guidance.

Each post may determine their own guidelines for distributing country funds to PCPP projects. If a post would like to fund a project quickly, post staff may submit a country fund authorization form at the same time as the approved small grants application. Once the application with the country fund authorization is received by PC/headquarters, funds can be allocated to the PCPP project and obligated to the designated account.

The small grants coordinator or country director may request country fund balance updates. They may also request a donor list from a PCPP program specialist, so they know who has given or if funds are for special projects, such as to support Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment projects. **Donor lists for country funds are not to be shared with Volunteers.** Donors must give express permission for their information to be shared: The donor lists supplied to posts do not filter the donor information to be viewed by Volunteers. It is for post staff.

Grant Management

I. Volunteer, Community, and Post Management of Grant Funds

It is essential that all small grant funds are accounted for and properly documented throughout the small grant process. Though each grant program receives funds from varying sources (VAST, FTF, and SPA from the U.S. government, PCPP from private donors), all programs are subject to audit by the funding agency or grantor. In addition, the Peace Corps 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.

Volunteers and counterparts/communities sign liability and project agreement forms when submitting their projects. These documents hold the Volunteer or community liable—depending on whom the funds are disbursed to—for the funds they are receiving. The individual receiving the funds is also responsible for documenting all purchases made throughout the project.

II. Using the Project Log and Verifying Receipts

As part of their orientation to the Small Grants Program, or upon approval of a project, Volunteers and their community partners must receive instructions on how to account for the use of project funds and the documentation they are required to obtain to support purchases and procurements.

At a minimum:

- When a project is approved, the Volunteer receives the completion report (in MS Excel), which includes a project log. Each disbursement of project funds must be documented in the project log. Volunteers should work with the local organization to keep the project log up-to-date, thereby building the community's capability to manage and account for grant funds. If the community organization does not have computer access, the Volunteer should print out the project log and fill it in manually with the community organization. The project log is incorporated into the completion report to ensure consistency in financial reporting; the project log should represent spending of the grant funds as well as the community contributions (in-kind or monetary).
- Invoices should be obtained for all large purchases. Invoices should be legible, include an English translation, and contain the name of the vendor, name of the purchaser, date

of the purchase, and an itemization of materials purchased, including quantity, unit cost, and the total amount of the purchase.

- For goods and services where invoices are not traditionally used (e.g., artisan skilled labor), receipts should be collected to confirm the date the service was provided, the name of the service provider, the number of hours or days worked, an hourly or daily rate, and the total amount paid, converted to U.S. dollars.
- All invoices and receipts (documenting purchases and/or in-kind contributions) must be submitted by the community and Volunteer to the post's small grants coordinator. Invoices representative of the community contribution amount (including in-kind transactions) should be clearly labeled, as should invoices representing costs covered by grant funds. While both should be submitted for review, the post needs to keep only the grant fund expenditure receipts on file. Along with invoices and receipts, Volunteers and their community must submit the completion report (including project log) upon conclusion of the project and prior to the Volunteer's departure from post.
- The final project log should provide an accounting of **all** expenditures of the grant funds. If a purchase was made with grant funds that was not outlined in the initial budget, Volunteers **must still document the transaction** in the project log. The DMO should review the project log to ensure that all funds are accounted for and that funds were spent in accordance with the approved budget. Discrepancies must be resolved prior to the COS date of the Volunteer. The DMO has the right to request proof from a Volunteer to verify a purchase or transaction. Volunteers must be prepared to provide this should the Volunteer be unable to account for lost or missing receipts or invoices.

III. Post-Approval Changes to Grants

Each post should establish a process for implementing changes to project activities or budgets after the project is underway. Where changes do not require the awarding of additional funds, are relatively minor, do not change the project scope or objectives, and do not entail significant revisions to the approved budget, then it may not be necessary for the Volunteer and community to contact the small grants committee. Though a budget amendment is not needed, the Volunteer should ensure all purchases, contributions, and changes to the project are recorded in the project log. However, where activities significantly change the approved activities, budget, or the scope or objectives of the project, then the Volunteer or community should receive prior approval from the small grants committee to ensure that funds are being used appropriately.

For budget changes in particular, posts can set a threshold above which prior approval is required. A suggested threshold is 25-percent change in any budget categories. For example, a post might require that if a budget reallocation would result in an increase or decrease of 25 percent from the approved budget in any budget category, then prior approval would be

required. Such prior approval need not be a lengthy process and may be carried out by email or phone, depending upon available means of communication. Posts should ensure that post-approval changes are appropriately documented in the project file.

IV. Supplemental Funding Amendments

Posts generally should not approve amendments to add funds to existing projects. Volunteers 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 budgets that include all necessary and appropriate costs. Volunteers may also consult with the small grants committee or financial staff at post during the project development process for assistance in preparing budgets.

In the case of budget shortfalls resulting from poor budgeting or incorrect calculations, the small grants coordinator can suggest the following:

- The community contributes additional funds;
- The project be redesigned to stay within the original approved budget; and/or
- The budget be revised to eliminate unnecessary costs and cover the shortfall.

If post believes that, in an exceptional case, supplemental funding should be approved, the post should contact the appropriate PC/headquarters Small Grants contact for approval before proceeding to amend any project budget.

PCPP

- If there are funds in the country fund, the country director could allocate funds to the project in need of more funds.
- With approval from PC/headquarters, the project could be placed back online to fundraise for the additional amount needed.

SPA VAST ECPA FTF

- Country director must review and approve increases to the project budget. The DMO should increase the original obligation accordingly, keeping the same project number.
- When the project is completed, the Volunteers must report on the total amount of funding received for the project.
- To offset the possible negative effects of inflation, posts are encouraged to obligate and liquidate projects as close as possible to their scheduled start dates, so that there is the shortest possible time between project approval, payment requests, and transfer of funds.

V. Unused Funds

In almost all instances, funds remaining at the end of the project should be returned to post. Volunteers or community organizations cannot use remaining funds to start new projects or to significantly expand the scope of the original project. Small grants training should emphasize that well-designed and -managed projects are completed on time and within budget. In other words, the Peace Corps expects that approved project budgets and timelines to closely correspond to actual expenditures and timelines. However, at the discretion of the small grants committee, if only a small amount of funds remain, they may be used to fund additional reasonable costs that fall within the scope of the original project.

The post's DMO should follow standard agency collection procedures to credit unused funds against the original obligation. For PCPP, when funds are returned, they will be placed in the global fund and allocated to projects based on the Global Fund Guidance. For SPA, FTF, and VAST, post will be able to use the "recovered" budget authority to support additional grants during the same fiscal year. Unused funds are extremely difficult to collect once a Volunteer has left post, therefore every effort should be made to collect unused funds while a Volunteer is in-country.

VI. Lost or Stolen Funds

If grant funds are lost or stolen during the implementation of a project, the Volunteer must immediately notify the small grants coordinator at post who will, in turn, notify the DMO, safety and security coordinator, and other staff as appropriate. The DMO should then contact the appropriate PC/headquarters small grants contact immediately. The small grants coordinator must ask the Volunteer to submit a memo explaining the circumstances of the loss or theft. The DMO may ask the Volunteer or community to file a police report or post staff may communicate directly with local authorities as appropriate. If the project is funded by SPA, the CD should notify the USAID mission of the incident, the amount lost, the steps taken to resolve the situation, and the possibility of recovering funds.

Based on the circumstances of the incident, the CD will determine whether or not the Volunteer was negligent and should be held liable for repaying all or part of the small grant funds. The CD will then prepare a memo to the appropriate PC/headquarters small grants contact of his/her determination of liability. This memo is to be submitted as soon as possible, along with a copy of the consent and liability acceptance form that was signed at the time of project approval.

If the CD determines that the Volunteer was negligent, the Volunteer will be responsible for repaying the funds. The DMO should initiate collection procedures at post to obtain repayment as soon as possible by having a bill of collection issued to the Volunteer.

Generally, when funds are lost or stolen the Volunteer and the community work together to determine what can be accomplished with the remaining funds. Additional funds will not be awarded to replace lost or stolen funds. When submitting the small grants completion report, the Volunteer must report on the full amount of funding allocated to the project, including the lost or stolen funds.

VII. Early Termination and Transfer of Project Responsibility

A. Early Termination

In the event of the early termination (including resignation, medical separation, administrative separation, or interrupted service) of a Volunteer with an ongoing small grant project, post staff must determine whether the project can be completed. If all small grant funds have been disbursed and used to carry out the major portion of project activities, a post may allow the community to finish the project on its own, without the need to transfer responsibility to another Volunteer. However, if the project is not near completion and major project activities remain incomplete or funds remain unspent, post should either cancel the project and collect unspent funds or transfer responsibility to another willing Volunteer. (Note: In the case of an official evacuation or temporary suspension of a Peace Corps post, post should contact the appropriate PC/headquarters small grants contact for advice on closing out open projects.)

Whether the project is transferred or canceled, post should make every effort to obtain an update on the status of the project and an accurate accounting of the use of grant funds up to the date of termination. Accordingly, prior to the departure of the early terminating Volunteer, the small grants coordinator or AO should verify receipts for expenditures already incurred against the project log.

B. Transfer of Project Responsibility

If post elects to transfer responsibility to another Volunteer, this transfer should be clearly documented using the Transfer of Responsibility form ([Appendix 6](#)) and, if the new Volunteer will be accepting funds directly, a volunteer consent and liability acceptance form (available in the small grant application). The new Volunteer must accept the transfer willingly, be oriented on his or her responsibilities in overseeing the completion of the project, and agree to assume responsibility for all reporting obligations. An explanation for any discrepancies between funds allocated to Volunteer and receipts collected should be documented and attached to the transfer of responsibility form. Posts must send a copy of the Transfer of Responsibility form to Peace Corps/headquarters small grants contact. Transfer of a project may occur at any time during the process of the project's lifecycle. For PCPP projects, projects may be transferred even if the project is still fundraising online.

C. Canceling a Project

If the post elects to cancel a small grants project due to early termination, the post should attempt to recover all unexpended funds. **The collection should be completed**

before the Volunteer leaves the country. If the Volunteer leaves the country without accounting for and returning unused small grant funds in his or her possession, the post should contact Volunteer Placement and Staging (VPS) to send a bill of collection to the Volunteer, requesting repayment of the funds in question. When received from the Volunteer, these funds will be posted against the original obligation(s) and the Volunteer will incur no additional liability.

If possible, the small grants coordinator should obtain a completion report for the project, regardless of whether the project is complete 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.

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, which may include Peace Corps recruiting and Third Goal activities. 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.

In accordance with these guidelines, the name and logo may be used 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 Volunteer primary or secondary projects with the expressed written consent of the country director.

As Peace Corps small grants support Volunteer primary or secondary project, Volunteers 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 Volunteer is creating a flier to raise awareness for his/her PCPP project fundraising online, the flier must direct donors to the Peace Corps website, where the project is listed. Volunteers should contact the Office of Communications at pressoffice@peacecorps.gov for further guidance on the use of the Peace Corps Logo.

Additionally, Peace Corps-produced web banners may be used on websites and social media sites and are available for download at www.peacecorps.gov/resources/media/psa/webbanners. The web banners are intended to promote general awareness and recruitment for the Peace Corps. Web banners must link to the Peace Corps website and may not be altered in any way. The use of a web banner does not constitute authorization to use the Peace Corps name and logo separate and apart from the banner.

B. SPA and FTF Logo Guidance

For SPA and FTF projects, the Peace Corps has agreed to co-brand or co-mark with USAID or Feed the Future logos. This means where SPA/FTF-funded materials, equipment, construction sites, etc., are branded with the Peace Corps name and/or logo, they must be co-branded with USAID in a similar manner. There is no requirement to use the Peace Corps name or logo, but if you do then you must also use the USAID name or logo. Waiver provisions must be followed where you do not co-brand, i.e., if you use the Peace Corps name or logo without the USAID name or logo. Specific instructions on waivers and the placement of the USAID logo are available via the USAID website at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding/>. Post should contact the USAID mission for in-kind support.

C. VAST Logo Guidance

For VAST projects, the Peace Corps has also agreed to co-brand or co-mark with PEPFAR. Three logos exist for use by the U.S. government and implementing partners to brand PEPFAR. The PEPFAR logo should be the lead brand, followed by any specific agency logos, when marking PEPFAR-funded materials or programs in-country.

Currently, PEPFAR country-specific logos exist for 30 countries, and they should be used when marking country-specific materials. Those countries without a country-specific logo should use the general PEPFAR logo for foreign audiences. The country-specific logos are available in JPG and EPS.

Whenever the materials will be viewed by a foreign audience that is not country-specific, including at international conferences, the PEPFAR general logo for foreign audiences must be used. This logo includes an image of the standard, rectangular U.S. flag paired with the PEPFAR logo.

In addition, the general logo for foreign audiences must be used any time a PEPFAR program is implemented by the Department of State rather than another implementing agency (for example: Ambassador's small grants programs, Regional Procurement Support Office-RPSO, etc.). This logo includes an image of the standard, rectangular U.S. flag paired with the PEPFAR logo.

The PEPFAR general logo for U.S. audiences should be used when marking program materials that are not country-specific and directed at an American audience. The general logo is available in JPG and EPS in color and JPG in grayscale.

Contact the small grants coordinator for access to the appropriate PEPFAR logo and further guidance on logo size and placement.

Project Closeout

At the close of a project, Volunteers and their communities must prepare and submit a small grants completion report to their small grants coordinator and PC/headquarters. For PCPP, the small grants completion report also acts as a final report for donors who supported the project. Volunteers are encouraged to include photographs showing the implementation and final result of the project with their completion report. PC/headquarters will share the completion report to donors and other agencies upon request.

I. Completion Report

The completion report mirrors the small grant application. It is similar in that all Volunteers completing a small grant fill out the same document, but designate within the report, the appropriate funding source they utilized. As in the application, each of the funding sources has some unique required information that must be reported on by the Volunteer when submitting the completion report. **The completion report should be provided to the Volunteer when their project begins implementation so as to better record goals, outcomes, project spending, and indicators throughout implementation.**

A. Submission of Completion Report to Post's Small Grants Coordinator by the Volunteer

The Volunteer must submit the small grants completion report as soon as the project is completed, and no less than one month prior to his or her COS date. **Posts should not establish a policy that allows Volunteers to wait until their COS date to submit the completion report.** Failure to submit reports in a timely manner reduces the opportunity to address problems that may be identified in the report.

The small grants coordinator should review the reports to ensure completeness and verify that the Volunteer has entered all narrative and budget information requested. As with the application process, the small grants coordinator should utilize the grant file checklist ([Appendix 5](#)) and the [Grants Tracking Workbook](#) to anticipate project closure and ensure all steps have been completed. For SPA, VAST, ECPA, and FTF the small grants coordinator must ensure that appropriate indicator data is filled out in the appropriate tab of the report (see below).

The small grants completion report must be signed by the Volunteer, the small grants coordinator, the director of management and operations, and the country director.

B. Submission of Completion Report to PC/headquarters by Post's Small Grants Coordinator

The small grants coordinator should send completion reports to the appropriate small grants contact at Peace Corps/headquarters throughout the year, as projects are completed. Electronic submission of reports is highly preferred; however, posts may submit reports in hardcopy if the Volunteer does not have computer access. Posts should send reports as they are received and approved. FTF completion reports should be submitted to the FTF coordinator.

II. Reporting and Indicators

Within the completion report, as with the application, indicators and reporting are required. This data is submitted to Peace Corps' partnering agencies and initiatives (USAID, Feed the Future, PEPFAR) to report on the wide and comprehensive work Volunteers implement in the field.

PCPP

- PCPP does not require indicators as other Peace Corps programs. This is because the grant funds are not provided by the U.S. government but, rather, by the private sector.
- Volunteers should complete the completion report in the same manner they would for any other program, as donors (foundations, corporations, high-net-worth individuals) often request the completion report for their files and reporting.
- All reporting on projects is essential to monitoring and evaluating the Peace Corps Small Grant Program as a whole and its effects on the communities the Peace Corps serves.

SPA VAST ECPA FTF

- If the project was funded by SPA, VAST, ECPA, or FTF Volunteers must report on one or more indicators. The small grants completion report contains a subset of standard indicators that correspond with activities that Volunteers typically engage in under the program elements for which Peace Corps posts frequently receive funds. The indicators found in the completion report should match those included in the small grant application that the Volunteer submitted.
- SPA program elements are agreed upon by the USAID mission representative and Peace Corps country director during the annual funding discussions, and may not be changed without explicit approval of the USAID mission.
- For SPA: Upon reviewing the completion report, and prior to submitting to PC/headquarters, the small grants coordinator should also enter funding amounts and indicator data on the custom SPA reporting workbook issued by the IGAP at the beginning of the fiscal year.

III. Verifying Budget and Receipts

The small grants coordinator or the director of management operations (DMO) is responsible for verifying that all purchases and procurements are accounted for and that funds were spent in accordance with the approved budget. Discrepancies must be resolved prior to the COS date of the Volunteer. As post staff close out Volunteer small grant projects, they may want to reference [Appendix 7](#), which includes a guide for reviewing completion report.

The small grants coordinator or DMO should ensure the following:

- Each disbursement of funds is documented in the project log;
- A final budget may also be provided in addition to the project log;
- Invoices are included for all large purchases. Invoices 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;
- Receipts are included for goods and services where invoices are not traditionally used (e.g., artisan/skilled labor). Receipts confirm the date the service was provided, the name of the service provider, the number of hours or days worked, an hourly or daily rate, and the total amount paid, converted to U.S. dollars;
- In the event that funds were spent but have not been recorded with a receipt or invoice, it is the responsibility of the DMO to determine if the funds were spent accurately. This may be done by recording photographs or testimonies from local community members;
- Once the completion report, receipts, and finances have been reviewed and verified, the Volunteer and small grant coordinator must ensure that all required signatures are obtained;
- Upon obtaining all necessary signatures, the completion report must be submitted to PC/headquarters for close out. It is not necessary for invoices and receipts to be submitted to PC/headquarters, but they must be retained for records at post.

For SPA, VAST, and PCPP, all completion reports should be submitted to PC/headquarters upon obtaining all signatures. FTF completion reports will be submitted to the regional coordinator. Without all signatures, projects cannot be closed.

IV. Returning Funds

Once the completion report has been reviewed at post, the director of management and operations will determine if there are unused funds that must be returned to PC/headquarters. If there are unused funds at the end of project implementation, Volunteers should try to utilize those funds to support or enhance their project in line with its original goals and scope. If that is not possible, Volunteers must return the funds. The collection of these funds must be completed before the Volunteer leaves the country.

If funds remain and are turned in by the Volunteer with the completion report, the DMO should create a bill of collection to document that the funds were returned to post. The DMO will then submit the returned funds to PC/headquarters through the FORPost system using the original payment obligation for the project.

If the Volunteer does not return unused small grant funds in his or her possession, the post should contact VPS to send a bill of collection (which will include the appropriate fiscal coding) to the Volunteer, requesting repayment of the funds in question. When received from the Volunteer, these funds will be posted against the original obligation(s) and the Volunteer will incur no additional liability.

Reporting Requirements and Records Management

The final phase of all Peace Corps small grant projects is the submission of the completion report to both post and Peace Corps/headquarters. The completion report should be provided to Volunteers when their project is funded and implementation begins. Volunteers should utilize the completion report to document activities and record information, spending, indicators, goals, objectives, outcomes, and challenges encountered throughout project implementation.

I. Submission of Reports to Peace Corps/Headquarters by Post's Small Grants Coordinator

As outlined in the previous section, the small grants coordinator sends reports to the appropriate office at Peace Corps/headquarters throughout the year as projects are either approved and submitted for funding or completed and submitted for close out. Electronic submission of reports is highly preferred; however, posts may submit reports in hardcopy if the Volunteer does not have computer access. Electronic reports are submitted to the program specialist assigned to managing a specific region or to the following general email addresses:

- 1) SPA: spareports@peacecorps.gov
- 2) VAST: vast@peacecorps.gov
- 3) PCPP: pcpp@peacecorps.gov
- 4) ECPA: contact ECPA program representative
- 5) FTF: contact FTF program representative

Posts should send project applications as soon as possible, particularly for the PCPP program, as submissions are rolling, and the sooner a project begins fundraising, the sooner it may begin implementation. Completion reports, however, may be sent as they are received, or posts may bundle reports and send them in batches monthly or quarterly. As mentioned in the Application Process section, all project documents and correspondence (emails, mail, faxes, etc.) must be clearly labeled with the project number.

The following forms are required by Peace Corps/headquarters:

- The Peace Corps Small Grant **Application**
- The Peace Corps Small Grant **Completion Report**
- The **Transfer of Responsibility** form, if applicable
- **Budget Amendments**, if applicable

Optional submissions:

- Photos of the project. These may be submitted to the office managing the grant program along with the completion report, though they are not required. PCPP may also accept photos with the application to upload and post on the website during fundraising. All photos should be submitted in JPG format.

II. Reporting on Projects

In both the application and completion report, indicators are required for reporting purposes. PC/headquarters utilizes these indicators to report Peace Corps' effects and work in the field to USAID, PEPFAR, and the Feed the Future Initiative. Indicators are essential to Peace Corps' reporting, and posts should ensure that Volunteers are accurately completing the indicator sections in both the application and the completion report.

Posts may also collect project information from Volunteers for their own post-level reporting of Peace Corps small grant programs. The Volunteer Reporting Form (VRF) may be utilized by posts to collect small grant project information for their own reporting purposes.

III. Post-level Records Management

Records management at the post-level must be consistent for all Peace Corps small grant projects.

According to the current records schedule, posts should keep any and all documentation pertaining to grant projects on file for seven years after the creation of the documents. This includes the following materials:

- Applications
- Completion reports
- Signature pages
- Transfers of responsibility
- Budget amendments
- Original liability forms
- Project agreements
- Post-level agreements
- Reports and evaluations
- Financial documents
- Authorization memos
- Donor lists
- Waivers (from country director and/or PC/headquarters)
- Country fund authorization memos
- Significant communication

Further details on this can be found in the [Post Guide to Peace Corps' Records Schedule](#) (Page 18).

The small grants coordinator must retain a complete grant file (both electronic and paper) containing all documentation related to the project (see list above) at post. All files should be maintained in accordance with Peace Corps directives on file management. The [Small Grant Project Checklist](#) may assist with ensuring project files are complete with all necessary documents.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Small Grants Programs at Post

This section describes post-level monitoring and evaluation of small grant programs. Such monitoring and evaluation is carried out to ensure that small grant programs are properly functioning at posts, to verify that Volunteers are successfully moving projects toward completion, and to assess why grant projects are or are not effective at posts. Monitoring and evaluation can also measure the impact small grants have within the local community, and whether small grants are achieving capacity building and sustainability.

Taking into consideration the tools and techniques described below, each year the small grants committee should discuss how the post will monitor and evaluate its grant programs and develop a plan for continuing monitoring and evaluation that lays out clear staff responsibilities and action items. Promising practices that are determined as a result of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) should be shared with Peace Corps/headquarters so the information can be shared with other posts and included in any subsequent grants guidance.

I. Grant Program Monitoring and Tracking

A. Tracking System

At any given time, posts will typically have a large number of prospective and ongoing grant projects, spread across different funding sources and at different stages in the process. In order to effectively support Volunteers and be accountable to internal and external audiences (including funding partners), it is critical that each post have a system for monitoring and tracking the status of each project from application to completion. In general, the small grants coordinator will be responsible for coordinating day-to-day monitoring and tracking.

In order to provide a “one-stop shop” where staff members can learn up-to-date project status, grants from all programs should be tracked in a single system and using the same processes. If a post has different coordinators for different funding sources, the coordinators must coordinate their tracking activities and systems rather than establish entirely independent systems.

A [Grant Tracking Template](#) has been developed to assist in establishing a tracking system. Posts should either use this template or another form of tracking that provides at least comparable functionality and ability to track projects throughout every phase of execution. As applications are received, an entry in the template should be created immediately, and should be updated each time the project moves to a new phase. To the extent possible, the tracking sheet (or other similar system) should link to electronic folders or locations in which full project documentation is stored for each project.

Note: When the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) performs audits or evaluations, it will typically review how a post is tracking grant projects. In order to avoid negative findings in OIG reports, posts should ensure that tracking systems are kept up-to-date and incorporated into regular business operations.

B. Collecting Project Status Updates from Volunteers

Posts should be proactive in monitoring small grants rather than simply reacting to information provided by Volunteers. Each post must develop a system for collecting updates from Volunteers with outstanding projects at least quarterly. Although posts may use whatever means it finds appropriate and effective, a few options that posts have employed include the following:

1. Reaching out to Volunteers by Phone, Email, Text Message, or Other Means

The small grants coordinator can proactively reach out to Volunteers by phone, email, text message, or other means to inquire about project status. The small grants coordinator should ensure that s/he records the date that the communication occurs and note any project status updates in the grant tracking system. The small grants coordinator should also follow up with Volunteers who do not respond within a reasonable timeframe. Finally, project updates should be shared with appropriate staff, particularly if there are issues that can be addressed with staff assistance.

This kind of outreach is effective because Volunteers are often more responsive and may provide more substantive feedback to an individual. However, there are some challenges associated with this approach. It can be time consuming to reach out individually to all Volunteer grant recipients. Spacing check-ins over time can help to reduce the workload. For example, a small grants coordinator can schedule two or three calls a week, rather than doing them all at the end of the quarter. In addition, ensuring that each Volunteer grant recipient receives a check-in at least once a quarter can pose organizational challenges. This can be addressed by planning check-ins in advance and including them in Outlook calendars and the grant tracking system.

2. Requiring Regular Status Updates from Volunteers

Alternatively, posts can require each Volunteer with an outstanding grant to submit a status update on a quarterly, or more frequent, basis. The status update can be short and submitted informally through email. Such an update could include

- A brief description of project activities status (What have you done and what is planned next?)
- A budget update (How much of the funds have been spent?)
- Major changes (Do you expect any significant changes to be made to the project?)

- The expected completion date (When do you expect to finish the project?)
- Challenges (What challenges are you facing during project implementation and what support can the Peace Corps provide to help you successfully navigate these challenges?)

3. Volunteer Reporting Tool

To help posts and Volunteers to more accurately report on the work being done in the field, questions may be inserted into the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT) to receive regular grant project updates.

C. Site Visits

Site visits are perhaps the best way to learn the status of grant projects and to observe first-hand the progress to date. In addition, site visits provide an opportunity to directly engage with host country national work partners regarding the status of the project and gain a more comprehensive picture of the project and its progress to date.

If resources are available, posts can schedule visits by the small grants coordinator, DPT, or other appropriate staff solely for the purpose of monitoring grants. (Note: If the USAID mission agrees, SPA funds can pay for the travel costs for such a monitoring visit. However, SPA funds may only be used to monitor SPA projects.) If funds for separate monitoring trips are not available, however, posts can capitalize on otherwise scheduled site visits by APCDs or other post staff.

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. This can also be shared with the small grants coordinator, the small grants committee, and any other staff so that appropriate support can be provided to the Volunteer.

II. Grant Program Evaluation

In addition to monitoring and tracking grant operations, posts should engage in more concerted evaluation. The purpose of evaluation efforts is to periodically consider not only what results are achieved from small grants, but why projects succeed or fail. This information allows posts to design strategies to better support Volunteers to design and implement effective small grant projects that promote sustainable results and build capacity.

This section describes different ways that posts can engage in evaluations. First, several possible techniques for engaging in informal, internal evaluation are described that can be used to enhance program learning. The techniques described do not require significant resources but can still be used effectively to enhance program performance over time. Second, if posts have the resources available, this section briefly describes the planning and design of full-scale, independent performance evaluations of grant programs at post.

A. Informal Evaluation Techniques

1. Completion Report Review and Analysis

For each approved project, the Volunteer is required to submit a Peace Corps Small Grant Completion Report. These reports are an excellent source of information regarding the outcome of small grant projects, the challenges that Volunteers face in implementing projects, and possible solutions to resolve such problems. The small grants coordinator should ensure that copies of the reports are distributed to appropriate post staff. At a minimum, this should include the APCDs/program managers and program assistants/specialists of the sector(s) that the Volunteer works in and that the project falls within. Programming staff should review the reports so that they can identify programmatic best practices for small grants within their sectors.

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

- 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 small grants coordinator (or possibly a PCVL) can collect the responses to these two questions in a spreadsheet, review them all together, and identify trends and recurring obstacles that Volunteers have faced. The analysis should be presented for discussion at a small grants committee meeting, and key findings can then be shared with Volunteers in the volunteer handbook or in other tailored communications to assist Volunteers in designing or implementing their projects. Posts can also contact Peace Corps/headquarters to request summary data on SPA, PCPP, or VAST.

2. Volunteer Debriefs

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

One way to do this is to include in the project completion checklist a requirement for the Volunteer to have a 15-minute debrief with the small grants coordinator. At the debrief, the grant coordinator should use a [standard questionnaire](#) to collect the Volunteer's opinions and ideas. Volunteer responses

should be written down and collected in a [spreadsheet](#) so that they can be reviewed and analyzed with the responses from other Volunteers to enable the identification of best practices and common challenges. Trends identified from such Volunteer feedback should be shared with the small grants committee on a regular basis (and at least annually) and shared with Peace Corps/headquarters.

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](#), posts can identify evidence of a project's sustainability. In the past, 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 from the field can be found in [Albania's self-evaluation](#) of the SPA program in 2010.

B. Funded Evaluation

Where resources are available, posts are encouraged 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 of time (e.g., four to five years), and is useful in identifying trends and major areas of accomplishment. In addition, an independent evaluation limits 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 or PEPFAR.

Peace Corps/headquarters can provide post assistance with setting up a data-entry interface in which the research firm can enter evaluation data. Posts that are interested in carrying out in-country evaluations should contact support staff for assistance in planning and preparing for an in-country evaluation. Depending upon resource availability, the Peace Corps may be able to send a staff person from the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) to train the in-country research firm.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Estimating the Value of In-Kind Contributions

Appendix 2: Small Grants Waiver Form

Appendix 3: Guidance for Determining Participants vs. Beneficiaries

Appendix 4: Small Grants Committee Project Review Form

Appendix 5: Small Grant Project Checklist

Appendix 6: Transfer of Responsibility Form

Appendix 7: Managing Grant Funds and Project Closeout

Appendix 1: Estimating the Value of In-Kind Contributions

Many grant programs include community contribution requirements. Such requirements are put in place for several reasons: They help to ensure that the community is directly invested in the project and will continue to take ownership of the project throughout its life. They limit the risk of a community becoming dependent on outside funding to purchase materials or services that the community already has or can obtain with its own resources. Finally, encouraging a community to identify resources within its reach recognizes the assets a community already possesses and can build upon to support further development.

For these reasons, it is important that community contribution requirements are taken seriously. However, many of the organizations that Peace Corps Volunteers work with do not have the ability to make their contributions in cash. To ensure that cash-poor communities are not excluded from receiving grants, contributions may, in some cases, be provided as in-kind goods or services. In-kind contributions may include labor, meeting or conference space, transportation, food and lodging, materials, supplies, or any number of other costs.

Where in-kind contributions are allowed, it is important that contributed goods or services are carefully and reasonably valued so that the grant recipient's level of commitment and investment can be accurately gauged. Volunteers should work with their community counterparts to determine the value of in-kind services, and are also advised to seek input from post staff—in particular, host country national staff who are familiar with local costs. The following four guidelines will help Volunteers determine a reasonable value for in-kind contributions:

- 1. In-kind contributions should only be counted if they are reasonably necessary to meet the objectives of a project.**
 - *Example 1:* Manual labor for digging a hole and laying cement is a valid in-kind contribution for a latrine-building project.
 - *Example 2:* A television set should not be counted as an in-kind contribution for a latrine-building project.
- 2. The value of in-kind contributions should be estimated at the price the organization would have to pay to purchase the specific good or service being contributed.**
 - *Example 1:* Manual labor should be valued based on the daily rate of a day laborer in the community times the number of days labor was provided.
 - *Example 2:* Although provision of meeting space might be a valid in-kind contribution for a project, a small meeting room in an office should not be valued at the price it would cost to rent a large conference room in a fancy hotel down the street.
- 3. When valuing in-kind goods or services, estimates must take into account the state of repair or quality of the contributed item (in other words, a used item should not be valued at the price the item would cost if it were new).**
- 4. In-kind contributions should be actual contributions that will be provided during the life of the funded project itself; they should not include speculative future contributions that will be made in the future after the project has been completed.**

Appendix 2: Small Grants Waiver Form



PEACE CORPS SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

Small Grants Waiver Form

PROJECT #

Grant Type

FY

Country Code

Grant #

Date:

Country:

PCV Name:

Project Amount:

Please check all unallowable costs for which a waiver is being issued. Written justification and total sum in U.S. dollars must be provided for each:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Vehicles/Other Conveyances | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Costs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Giveaways, Prizes, Celebrations | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International Travel | |

Justification for waiver:

This project meets all other relevant Small Grants Program requirements and has been reviewed and approved by the small grants committee:

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

This request follows the guidance and procedures set forth in the Small Grants Staff Handbook issued October 2012.

Peace Corps Country Director's Signature

Date

Appendix 3: Guidance for Determining Participants vs. Beneficiaries

Volunteers and their communities are required to record on the small grants application and completion report the number of people in their community who participate in and benefit from the project. It can be difficult to distinguish participants from beneficiaries and to make an accurate determination of how many people belong in each category. This document provides guidance on how to accurately determine the number of participants and the number of beneficiaries for each project and how to avoid double counting.

I. Characteristics of Participants vs. Beneficiaries:

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 project planning and/or implementation phases.
- Participants receive a transfer of knowledge, skills, and attitudes as a result of participation in project activities and might go on to teach what they learned during the project to other community members.

Beneficiaries: Those who receive an indirect benefit from the execution of the project, but are not involved in its planning or execution.

- Beneficiaries often profit from the execution of the project after the main period of project implementation has passed.
- Beneficiaries may receive a transfer of knowledge, skills, or abilities from participants who were trained during the main period of project implementation.

II. Who Should not be Counted as Participants or Beneficiaries?

- Community members who could potentially participate in or benefit from the project if they chose to but are not reasonably expected to do so.
- The entire population of a village, unless they all actually participate in or benefit from the project in a tangible, measurable way.
- Community members who receive a benefit from the project at an indefinite point in the future.

As a rule of thumb, PCVs and their communities can be reminded that they should not feel compelled to report high numbers, since they are not being judged on the number of people reached. A PCV might do excellent capacity-building work with just a few people! PCVs are simply expected to do their best to report on these figures **accurately**. The purpose of reporting these numbers is to have a clear idea of the number of people involved or benefiting from the project.

III. Examples of Direct vs. Indirect Beneficiaries

- 1) A community works with their Volunteer to develop a project for a teacher training. The project is to be regional in scope, involving the travel of ESL teachers from 10 villages to the regional capital to take part in a three-day workshop. Following the training, the teachers will utilize new activities and teaching techniques that they learned at the training in their classrooms. There will be 10 teachers at the workshop and each teacher has three classes of approximately 60 students.

For this project, the teachers are the participants and those they will teach after the training are the beneficiaries. Thus, there are a total of:

- 10 participants
- 1,800 beneficiaries

- 2) A youth group approaches a Volunteer asking him to help them raise funds for a community youth center. Together, they develop a project that includes building the center and planning a series of events to take place at the center that will focus on giving information about educational and work opportunities available to youth in the area. There are 15 youth in the group and there is an expected attendance at the events of an additional 70 youth. Following the planned events, it is expected that a portion of the youth in the community will make use of the new space for meetings and other events.

For this project, the participants are the 15 youth in the youth group and the 70 youth who will attend the initial informational sessions. The beneficiaries are those who will likely use the meeting space in a reasonable time frame following the project's implementation. Assuming there are about 800 youth in the town in general, but that not all of them will make use of the center, the beneficiaries could be determined by the Volunteer and the community making an informed guess of what portion of those youth would use the center. Thus, there are a total of:

- 85 participants
- 400 beneficiaries (assuming half of the village youth would make use of the space)

- 3) A Volunteer and her community work together to plan a project to educate the community about malaria prevention and treatment and distribute treated mosquito nets to every household in the community. During the project, 15 local volunteers will attend a training about malaria prevention and treatment and will then be responsible for holding a town meeting to educate citizens about the disease and distribute bed nets. Following this meeting, the volunteers will visit homes in the community of people who did not attend the town meeting to distribute nets and educate household members about malaria. A representative of the volunteers will also appear on a radio show in the regional capital to talk about the disease. The population of the town is 2,000. The expected number of listeners to the radio show is 6,000.

For this project, the participants are the 15 volunteers and the beneficiaries are the citizens of the town being educated about the disease and receiving bed nets as well as the listeners of the radio show. Thus, there are a total of:

- 15 participants
- 8,000 beneficiaries

- 4) A Volunteer works with the Water Committee of a town to plan a project to build a large-diameter well in a part of town where water is scarce. The population of the town is 5,000, but the Volunteer and the Water Committee estimate that only about 200 people will make regular use of the well.

The participants of this project are the members of the Water Committee and the beneficiaries are the citizens who will make regular use of the well. Thus, there are a total of:

- 8 participants (the Water Committee)
- 200 beneficiaries

Appendix 4: Small Grants Committee Project Review Form



PEACE CORPS SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

Small Grants Committee Project Review Form

Project Title _____	Sector _____	Community _____
PCV Name _____	Group _____	COS Date _____
Reviewer _____	Review Date _____	Funding Source _____
Grant Amount _____	Community Contribution _____	Total Project Cost _____

Criteria	Excellent	Acceptable	Needs improvement
Available funding. What funding source is requested in the grant: _____ If SPA/VAST/ECPA/FTF, does the project fall within a USAID program element in which funds are available?			
Project Design and Management training received. Has the Volunteer and/or community counterpart received PDM training? Is the project designed according to the Peace Corps approach, and is the Volunteer and/or community counterpart equipped to implement the project?			
Community initiated. Is the project initiated and directed by the local community? Was there a participatory needs assessment? Does the project address a community priority?			
Goals and objectives. Does the project have clearly defined goal(s) and objective(s)?			

Criteria	Excellent	Acceptable	Needs improvement
Capacity building. Does it have a capacity-building component? Does it build the skills of participants and project partners?			
Action plan and timeline. Does it provide a realistic and detailed action plan and timeline stating who is responsible for each aspect of the project?			
Budget. Does it include a complete, realistic, and reasonable budget that falls within grant program guidelines? Does the budget align with project activities? Does the budget include any unallowable costs?			
Community contribution. Does the project demonstrate significant community counterpart contributions?			
Locally available resources. Does it use locally available materials and technical resources insofar as possible?			
Sustainability. Will the community likely be able to sustain the project benefits into the future? Does it demonstrate community commitment and ability to cover recurring costs necessary to continue the project?			
Monitoring. Does it describe the process for monitoring the progress of the project?			

Criteria	Excellent	Acceptable	Needs improve- ment
Evaluation. Does it include specific indicators for tracking expected outcomes?			
Beneficiary and indicator numbers. Are beneficiary and indicator numbers reasonable in light of the project activities and scope?			
SPA environmental checklist. For SPA projects only. Has the Volunteer filled out the required environmental checklist and considered all environmental factors surrounding the project?			
Completion within one year. Is it scheduled for completion within approximately one year of commencement and well before the Volunteer's COS date?			
Comments.			

Appendix 5: Small Grant Project Checklist



PEACE CORPS SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

Small Grant Project Checklist

PROJECT # _____

Grant Type

FY

Country Code

Grant #

Volunteer Name: _____ COS date: _____

Volunteer Site/Province: _____

Project Name: _____

Project Start Date: _____ Estimated End Date: _____

	Document / event / task	Date	Document in file	Comment
Application	Application submitted			
	Application reviewed by committee			
	Request for revision sent (if necessary)			
	Revised application			
	Approved by committee			
	Project agreement			
	Country director signature			
	Community consent and liability form (if applicable)			
	PCV consent and liability form (if applicable)			
	Community/local language narrative received (if applicable)			
	SPA projects: environmental checklist included			
	Notification of project approval sent to Volunteer			
Implementation/ Communication	Application sent to PC/headquarters			
	Paperwork sent to admin unit			
	PCPP—fully funded			
	Obligation of funds and request for payment			
	PCPP—authorization memo received			
	Funds received by Volunteer			
	Project status check with PCV (phone, email, visit)			
	Project transfer (if applicable)			
t /	Grant closeout reminder sent			

	Document / event / task	Date	Document in file	Comment
	Completion report received			
	Receipts verified			
	Unused funds collected (if applicable)			
	Workbook updated with indicator data			
	Completion report submitted to PC/headquarters			

Appendix 6: Transfer of Responsibility Form



PEACE CORPS SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

Transfer of Responsibility

PROJECT #

Grant Type

FY

Country Code

Grant #

Original Volunteer Coordinator: _____ COS date: _____

New Volunteer Coordinator: _____ COS date: _____

Volunteer Transfer Agreement

We, respectively, the undersigned, _____, stationed in _____, and _____, stationed in _____, both Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs), hereby agree to the following:

1. The purposes and objectives of this small grants project shall be completed by the new PCV coordinator along with the community organization because the original PCV coordinator is no longer able to complete the approved project.
2. **If any small grant project funds have been spent**, the previous PCV project coordinator will submit a completion report detailing any funds spent and an explanation of the current project status.
3. The original PCV has passed on to the new PCV the total amount of project funds remaining, purchase receipts, project logs, and all other information related to Small Grant funds already expended in his or her possession.
4. The new PCV is aware of reporting and other obligations related to the management of the project and will submit the Small Grants Completion Report to the post's small grants coordinator upon completion of project activities and well in advance of COS.
5. The transfer of responsibility is undertaken willingly by the new PCV and the assumption of the responsibility for the project shall in no way hamper the regular duties of the new PCV project coordinator and that the site of the project is readily accessible to said PCV.

Status of funds and expenditures to date

(a) Total Small Grant funds originally awarded (US\$)	
(b) Expenditures to date, verified by receipts (US\$)	
(c) Grant funds remaining (US\$)	

If the sum of line (b) and line (c) does not match the amount in line (a), please attach an explanation and justification for the discrepancy.

Consent and liability

Is the new PCV accepting funds directly? (Yes/No)

If the answer is “yes,” a signed Peace Corps Volunteer consent and liability acceptance form must be attached to this document

This agreement shall be effective upon the approval of the Peace Corps country director.

Original Peace Corps Volunteer Signature

Date

New Peace Corps Volunteer's Signature

Date

Approved by:

Administrative Officer's Signature

Date

Peace Corps Country Director's Signature

Date

Appendix 7: Managing Grant Funds and Project Closeout



PEACE CORPS SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM Tips for Managing Grant Funds and Project Closeout

Managing Grant Funds

DOs

- Keep your funds only in your grant bank account (if applicable).
- Check all prices and availability of the products that you would like to buy prior to withdrawing grant funds.
- To the maximum extent possible, withdraw grant funds in small amounts—only enough for the purchases you will make today. Make all purchases for your project together with your local project partners.
- Keep copies of all receipts and submit them with the completion report.
- Together with your local project partner, record entries into the grant project log on the same day of the purchase.

DON'Ts

- DO NOT keep grant funds at home.
- DO NOT travel by yourself with large sums of money.

Receipts

- You must collect and keep receipts for all purchases made with grant funds.
- Receipts should include the date, vendor name, items purchased (including quantity and unit price), and should bear the signature of the vendor or vendor stamp.
- If the vendor does not have a receipt, you should draft a receipt or purchase a receipt booklet to properly record the costs.

Grant Closeout Procedure

1. Group the receipts in categories and subtotal them (i.e., transportation, logistics, stationary, etc.).
2. Use clear tape to tape your receipts to blank paper (regular-sized paper).
3. Number all of your receipts.
4. Use the project log to list your expenses, using corresponding receipt numbers for easier cross-referencing.
5. Prepare the completion report, using the appropriate template.
6. Email your completion report and project log to the small grants coordinator, your APCD, and the DMO.
7. Bring originals of the receipts to the small grants coordinator to verify the receipts against the project log and check to make sure that everything is otherwise complete.
8. If you have unspent funds, you must bring them to the cashier, who will issue a bill of collection and collect the remaining funds from you.
9. Please provide the small grants coordinator and your APCD with any feedback you have regarding your project and “lessons learned” that might help Volunteers in the future who are engaging in similar projects.