

THE PEACE CORPS WELCOMES YOU TO

CAMBODIA



A PEACE CORPS PUBLICATION FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS

July 2015



Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative. Names in Vietnam are shown without diacritical marks.

A WELCOME LETTER

Greetings from the Kingdom of Wonder, and congratulations on being invited to enter into the adventure of a lifetime.

You were selected for this program because we believe you have the skills to contribute to Cambodia's development, as well as the dedication, flexibility, maturity, and resourcefulness to handle the challenges of living in one of the world's poorest countries. As a Peace Corps/Cambodia Volunteer, you have a unique opportunity to contribute to one of the newest Peace Corps programs in the world. Your experience and efforts will help inform the direction of what we hope will be a long meaningful presence in Cambodia.

As a Volunteer, you will meet many new interesting people, learn a new language and culture, partake in local celebrations and customs, and experience many other thrills. Along with all of the excitement of being a Volunteer comes frustrations, language barriers, bouts of loneliness, and days when things just do not work out as planned. Your patience will be pushed to its limits at times. But if you come with an open mind, a warm heart, and a good sense of humor, you will do well. You will develop resiliency skills that will serve you throughout your life.

You will find that the Peace Corps has both high expectations and many policies and regulations that govern your Peace Corps life. Adapting to our organizational culture can sometimes be as taxing for Volunteers as integrating into Khmer culture. For the most part, the Peace Corps' policies and regulations are designed to help ensure your safety and security while serving. They are also designed to protect the integrity and reputation of the Peace Corps and honor the service of the more than 215,000 Americans who have joined the Peace Corps family since 1961. You should consider carefully—both before you come and during training—if you are willing to accept all of the challenges and rewards of being a Peace Corps Volunteer.

From my own experience as a PCV, I can say with confidence that the success of your experience resides with you. Our staff is committed to providing the best medical, training, programmatic, and administrative support we can, but this is only one piece of the equation. The most accomplished Volunteers view themselves as responsible for the outcomes of their experience and take responsibility for making the most of their assignment and navigating the challenges. You will need to be creative, persistent, flexible, and willing to adapt both to Cambodia and to the Peace Corps. As it has for over 50 years, the Peace Corps will look to you to be as independent and as self-reliant as possible. Some trainees and Volunteers experience difficulty in making changes in themselves that are essential to effective Peace Corps service. Perhaps their expectations are unrealistic or the Peace Corps is simply not the right fit for them at this time in their lives. As you read this welcome book, which is designed to give you a better picture of what lies ahead, you must consider whether Peace Corps/Cambodia is right for you and whether you are right for it.

This self-assessment will continue during the nine weeks of pre-service training (PST). Soon after arriving in Cambodia, you will begin to learn Khmer and adapt to the culture, which will include living with a Cambodian host family both during training and throughout your service. Most PCVs find this the most difficult aspect of service to adapt to. You will surrender the privacy and independence you have likely been accustomed to. However, as difficult as it can be, by the end of their service the majority of PCVs report that the most rewarding aspect of their service was living with their host family.

PST is an exciting, intense time. You may feel overwhelmed, overscheduled, and exhausted; not every session will seem interesting or necessary. But you will also establish relationships within your training

group, with your Khmer trainers, with Peace Corps staff, and with your training host family. Some of these relationships will last a lifetime. Most importantly, training, like your two years of service, will be what you make of it through the effort you put into it, the attitude with which you approach it, and the constructive feedback you provide to the Peace Corps staff.

PST is a time for both you and the Peace Corps staff to assess your suitability for service in Cambodia. A two-year commitment should not be entered into casually. It is one that you may need to reaffirm in many ways during PST and throughout your service. Trainees confronted finally with the reality of what lies ahead occasionally make the decision to not complete training and return home. Similarly, in fairness to our local partners and to safeguard the reputation of the organization, we do periodically determine that a trainee or Volunteer is not suited to serve here and send him or her home.

As I said, though staff members are here to support you, you are the ultimate architect and builder of a successful Peace Corps service. Please read this welcome book as part of your preparation for living and working in Cambodia as a Peace Corps Volunteer. We look forward to meeting you and to working with you.

My warm regards to you and your family.

Peace,
Sue Dwyer
Country Director
Peace Corps/Cambodia
(RPCV/Uganda 1992–94)

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CORE EXPECTATIONS FOR PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS

In working toward fulfilling the Peace Corps mission of promoting world peace and friendship, as a trainee and Volunteer, you are expected to do the following:

1. Prepare your personal and professional life to make a commitment to serve abroad for a full term of 27 months
2. Commit to improving the quality of life of the people with whom you live and work and, in doing so, share your skills, adapt them, and learn new skills as needed
3. Serve where the Peace Corps asks you to go, under conditions of hardship if necessary, and with the flexibility needed for effective service
4. Recognize that your successful and sustainable development work is based on the local trust and confidence you build by living in, and respectfully integrating yourself into, your host community and culture
5. Recognize that you are responsible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for your personal conduct and professional performance
6. Engage with host country partners in a spirit of cooperation, mutual learning, and respect
7. Work within the rules and regulations of the Peace Corps and the local and national laws of the country where you serve
8. Exercise judgment and personal responsibility to protect your health, safety, and well-being and that of others
9. Recognize that you will be perceived in your host country and community as a representative of the people, cultures, values, and traditions of the United States of America
10. Represent responsively the people, cultures, values, and traditions of your host country and community to people in the United States both during and following your service

PEACE CORPS/CAMBODIA HISTORY AND PROGRAMS

History of the Peace Corps in Cambodia

The Royal Government of Cambodia first invited the Peace Corps to open a program in Cambodia in 1992. An assessment team was sent the following year, which resulted in a country agreement being signed on October 3, 1994. However, the political situation was found to be too unstable for Volunteers to be sent at that time. A second assessment team visited in 1996 and, although an improvement in the political and safety situation was noted, these concerns and budget constraints resulted in a decision not to establish a presence in Cambodia. In 2004, the Ministry of Education again expressed an interest in the Peace Corps establishing a program and, in 2005, officials of the Royal Government of Cambodia concurred. This time, the assessment team found the administrative and security infrastructure to be sound and the opportunities for Peace Corps Volunteers to work safely and effectively had improved significantly.

When you arrive in Cambodia, you will enter a peaceful country that is growing rapidly. While the developmental needs are great and much of the infrastructure is still lacking, there are enough supports in place to ensure a safe and productive service.

Peace Corps Programming in Cambodia

The first Peace Corps/Cambodia Volunteers arrived in 2007. The initial project emphasized English Teaching and English Teacher Training with secondary projects in life-skills development. In 2009, health education was introduced as a significant secondary project. With the K4 training group in 2010, a new full-time health education sector was launched. Both programs work on building the capacity of public institutions to meet the basic needs of the students/citizens using their facilities.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW: CAMBODIA AT A GLANCE

History

Cambodia is a history buff's dream, with rich stories of empire and tyranny over the past 1,000 years. There are a variety of books and websites (some of which are listed in the Resources for Further Information section) that provide excellent summaries of Cambodia's ancient and recent history. Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambodia>) provides a good overview. (Remember that Wikipedia's content is user-generated, and might not be verified.)

Cambodia is a successor state of the once-powerful Hindu and Buddhist Khmer Empire, which ruled most of the Indo-Chinese peninsula between the 11th–14th centuries. The empire's center was Angkor, located near the present-day provincial capital of Siem Reap. The famous temple of Angkor Wat serves today as a well-preserved testament to Cambodia's powerful and influential past.

After abandoning Angkor to the Thais in 1432, the Khmer Empire began a long decline. For most of the years between the 15th–19th centuries, the Khmer kingdom alternated as a vassal state of the Thai or Vietnamese monarchies. In 1863, King Norodom (installed under Thai authority) sought the protection of France. After almost a century as a French colony, Cambodia's independence in 1953 was orchestrated by King Norodom Sihanouk.

As the Vietnam War progressed, Sihanouk (then the constitutional monarch) adopted an official policy of neutrality until he was ousted in 1970 in a military coup led by Prime Minister General Lon Nol and Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak. Exiled in Beijing, Sihanouk aligned himself with the communist Khmer Rouge rebels, who had slowly been gaining territory in the remote mountain regions of Cambodia. Sihanouk urged his followers to help in overthrowing the pro-United States government of Lon Nol, hastening the onset of civil war.

The Khmer Rouge, under the leadership of Prime Minister Pol Pot, marched victoriously into Phnom Penh on Khmer New Year in mid-April 1975, immediately forcing urban dwellers into the countryside and beginning the systematic destruction of Cambodia's cultural, economic, social, and political life. Estimates vary as to how many Cambodian people died under the Khmer Rouge regime. Depending on whether or not one includes deaths from starvation and subsequent deaths in refugee camps, estimates range from 1.7 million–3 million people. Many were deemed to be "enemies of the state," whether they were members of the previous regime, civil servants, educated people, religious figures, or critics of the Khmer Rouge. Hundreds of thousands more fled across the border into neighboring Thailand.

In November 1978, amid increasing tension between the Khmer Rouge and Vietnamese leadership (heightened by Khmer Rouge incursions across the border), the Vietnamese army invaded Cambodia. Although the Khmer Rouge lost effective control over Cambodia in January 1979, violent warfare between the Vietnamese forces and Khmer Rouge holdouts continued through the 1980s. Peace efforts began in 1989, culminating two years later in the Paris Peace Accord, in which the United Nations was given the mandate to enforce a cease-fire, oversee disarmament, and administer refugee services. U.N. representatives oversaw Cambodia's first democratic elections in 1993.

After the brutality of the 1970s and '80s, it is only in recent years that reconstruction efforts have begun, and some political stability has finally returned to Cambodia. The democracy established in the early 1990s was shaken in 1997 by a coup d'état, but has otherwise remained in place. Cambodia continues to depend on foreign aid to support the provision of basic services and the rebuilding of infrastructure.

Government

Cambodia has been a constitutional monarchy with a multiparty system since the 1993 United Nations-supported elections. The chief of state is King Norodom Sihamoni and the head of state is Prime Minister Hun Sen, who represents the Cambodian People's Party (CPP). The National Assembly has 123 seats and the Senate has 61 seats. In 2003, 2006, and 2008, the CPP reasserted its outright majority in Cambodia's parliament. After the 2012 Senate election, the Cambodian People's Party held 46 seats and the Sam Rainsy Party held 11 seats. After the 2013 National Assembly election, the CPP held 68 seats and the Cambodia National Rescue Party held 55. This outcome surprised most and resulted in a stalemate that lasted for more than a year and multiple protests on the election process.

Economy

Cambodia faces significant challenges in its efforts to spur desperately needed economic growth. Roughly 80 percent of the population is engaged in subsistence agriculture, a sector with insufficient productivity to provide jobs for a labor force that is growing more than 5 percent annually. Garment manufacturing, construction, and tourism are major cash industries and growth sectors, but they employ only a small percentage of the labor force. The government encourages the development of small and medium enterprises, but expertise and capital are extremely limited.

Corruption is having a corrosive effect on the economy, political life, and society. According to a recent USAID study, "annual diversions from government coffers range between \$300 million and \$500 million," or an amount approximately equal to the amount of donor assistance that Cambodia receives each year.

People and Culture

Cambodia's estimated 2013 population is just over 15 million people. The country is ethnically homogeneous, with more than 90 percent of the population being ethnic Khmer. The remainder of the population is Chinese, Vietnamese, Cham, Khmer Loeu, and Indian. Theravada Buddhism, suppressed by the Khmer Rouge but now revived, is the dominant religion, but Islam (5 percent) and Christianity (2 percent) are also practiced.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Following is a list of websites for additional information about the Peace Corps and Cambodia and to connect you to returned Volunteers and other invitees. Please keep in mind that although the Peace Corps tries to make sure all these links are active and current, the Peace Corps cannot guarantee it. If you do not have access to the Internet, visit your local library. Libraries offer free Internet usage and often let you print information to take home.

A note of caution: As you surf the Internet, be aware that you may find bulletin boards and chat rooms in which people are free to express opinions about the Peace Corps based on their own experiences, including comments by those who were unhappy with their choice to serve in the Peace Corps. These opinions are not those of the Peace Corps or the U.S. government, and please keep in mind that no two people experience their service in the same way.

Social Media

<https://www.facebook.com/cambodia.peacecorps>

<https://instagram.com/peacecorpscambodia>

Our Facebook and Instagram accounts are run by staff and current PCVs and gives you a glimpse into the daily life of PCVs in Cambodia and the work they are doing in their communities.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/6077264578/>

This is the unofficial Facebook group for Volunteers.

General Information About Cambodia

State.gov

The Department of State's website issues background notes periodically about countries around the world. Find Cambodia and learn more about its social and political history. You can also go to the site's international travel section to check on conditions that may affect your safety.

Gpo.gov/libraries/public/

The U.S. Government Publishing Office publishes country studies intermittently.

lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html

The Library of Congress provides historical and sociological data on numerous countries.

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/pocketbook/World_Statistics_Pocketbook_2013_edition.pdf

United Nations resource book with 2013 statistical country data

Data.un.org

United Nations site with links to data from U.N. member countries

Wikipedia.org

Search for Cambodia to find encyclopedia-type information. Note: As Wikipedia content is user-generated, information may be biased and/or not verified.

Worldbank.org

The World Bank Group's mission is to fight poverty and improve the living standards of people in the developing world. It is a development bank that provides loans, policy advice, technical assistance, and knowledge-sharing services to developing countries to reduce poverty. This site contains a lot of information and resources regarding development.

Data.worldbank.org/country

Provides information on development indicators on countries, including population, gender, financial, and education, and climate change statistics.

Connect With Returned Volunteers and Other Invitees

RPCV.org

This is the site of the National Peace Corps Association, made up of returned Volunteers. On this site you can find links to all the Web pages of the "Friends of" groups for most countries of service, comprised of former Volunteers who served in those countries. There are also regional groups that frequently get together for social events and local volunteer activities. Or go straight to the Friends of Cambodia site:

PeaceCorpsWorldwide.org

This site, hosted by a group of returned Volunteer writers, is a monthly online publication of essays and Volunteer accounts of their Peace Corps service.

Online Articles/Current News Sites About Cambodia

UN.org/News/

The United Nations news service provides coverage of its member states and information about the international peacekeeping organization's actions and positions.

VOAnews.com

Voice of America, the U.S. government's multimedia broadcaster, features coverage of news around the world.

<http://www.cambodiadaily.com/>

Cambodia Daily Newspaper

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/>

Phnom Penh Newspaper (English)

International Development Sites About Cambodia

<http://www.usaid.gov/cambodia>

<http://www.vsinternational.org/where-we-work/cambodia.asp>

<http://www.koicacambodia.org/>

Recommended Books

Books About the History of the Peace Corps

1. Hoffman, Elizabeth Cobbs. "All You Need is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s." Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.
2. Rice, Gerald T. "The Bold Experiment: JFK's Peace Corps." Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.
3. Stossel, Scott. "Sarge: The Life and Times of Sargent Shriver." Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2004.
4. Meisler, Stanley. "When the World Calls: The Inside Story of the Peace Corps and its First 50 Years." Boston: Beacon Press, 2011.

Books on the Volunteer Experience

1. Dirlam, Sharon. "Beyond Siberia: Two Years in a Forgotten Place." Santa Barbara, CA: McSeas Books, 2004.
2. Casebolt, Marjorie DeMoss. "Margarita: A Guatemalan Peace Corps Experience." Gig Harbor, WA: Red Apple Publishing, 2000.
3. Erdman, Sarah. "Nine Hills to Nambonkaha: Two Years in the Heart of an African Village." New York City: Picador, 2003.
4. Hessler, Peter. "River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze." New York City: Perennial, 2001.
5. Kennedy, Geraldine ed. "From the Center of the Earth: Stories out of the Peace Corps." Santa Monica, CA: Clover Park Press, 1991.
6. Thomsen, Moritz. "Living Poor: A Peace Corps Chronicle." Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997 (reprint).

Books About Cambodia

1. Brinkley Joel, "Cambodia's Curse." Perseus Books Group, 2011
2. "Development, and the State in Cambodia." Monash Asia Institute, 1998. (Note: this book is available at a low price in Cambodia)
3. Coe, Michael D., "Angkor and the Khmer Civilization" (Ancient Peoples and Places series). Thames & Hudson, reprint edition, 2005.
4. Dunlop, Nic, "The Lost Executioner: A Journey to the Heart of the Killing Fields." Walker & Company, 2006.
5. Fiske, Edward B, "Using Both Hands: Women and Education in Cambodia." Asian Development Bank, 1995.
6. Hinton, Alexander Laban and Robert Jay Lifton, "Why Did They Kill?: Cambodia in the Shadow of Genocide" (California Series in Public Anthropology, 11). University of California Press, 2004.
7. Kamm, Henry, "Cambodia: A Report From a Stricken Land," Arcade Publishing, 1999.
8. Locard, Henri, "Pol Pot's Little Red Book: The Sayings of Angkar." Silkworm Books, 2005.
9. North, Peter. "Culture Shock! Cambodia: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette" (Culture Shock! Guides). Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company, 2005. [Note: this book will be provided to Volunteers in-country as a reference, but may be interesting to read before coming and to leave at home as a resource for family and friends.]
10. Ray, Nick., "Lonely Planet Cambodia." Lonely Planet Publications, 5th edition, 2008.
11. Shawcross, William, "Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia," Cooper Square Press, 2002.
12. Shawcross, William, "The Quality of Mercy: Cambodia, Holocaust, and Modern Conscience," Simon & Schuster, 1984.
13. Stewart, Frank and Sharon May. "In the Shadow of Angkor: Contemporary Writing from Cambodia" (Manoa). University of Hawaii Press, 2004.

14. Ung, Loung, "First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers." Harper Perennial, 2001.
15. Yathay, Pin, "Stay Alive, My Son." Silkworm Books, 2000.

LIVING CONDITIONS AND VOLUNTEER LIFESTYLE

Communications

Mail

Few countries in the world offer the level of mail service Americans consider normal in the United States. Mail takes a minimum of four to six weeks to arrive in Cambodia, often longer. Some mail may simply not arrive (fortunately, this is not a frequent occurrence, but it does happen). Please be aware of the reality of mail service in developing countries.

Peace Corps Cambodia's mailing address is as follows:

(Your Name)
Peace Corps
P.O. Box 2453
Phnom Penh 3
Kingdom of Cambodia

Please ensure that senders do not write "c/o U.S. Embassy" in the mailing address. Unauthorized mail and packages inadvertently routed to or through the embassy will be rejected and returned to sender.

The Peace Corps will retrieve trainees' packages from the post office box in Phnom Penh. Any customs fees or other expenses will be paid by the Peace Corps and deducted from the trainee's walkaround allowance. These items will be periodically delivered to the training site, or available at hub site days.

Once you have been assigned to a site and sworn in as a Volunteer, you will be responsible for sending your site address to family and friends.

Cellphones

Peace Corps/Cambodia issues basic cellphones to trainees during pre-service training, to keep for the duration of their two years of service. These phones are essential for communication in emergency situations. Additionally, some trainees bring smartphones from the U.S. that are unlocked and can function in Cambodia. Most cellphone service in Cambodia is through with pre-paid phone cards. Long-distance communication is easy and fairly inexpensive—between seven and 10 cents per minute. Incoming international calls to Cambodian cellphones are free and this is the most common method of communication for trainees during training. Landline phones are not common in Cambodian homes.

Peace Corps/Cambodia issues Volunteers cellphones for safety and security reasons, however, it is understood that cellphones will be used for non-official reasons as well. Therefore, while the Peace Corps purchases the cellphones initially, Volunteers are personally responsible for their phones, and must pay for repairs and/or replacements if they are damaged or lost. NOTE: If you Peace Corps-issued phone is stolen, Peace Corps/Cambodia will pay for the replacement. Typically this means issuing you a used replacement phone, when available. If a phone is stolen more than once, the Volunteer/trainee is solely responsible for replacing the phone.

Computer, Internet, and Email Access

Internet access during pre-service training is limited and you should not expect daily Internet and email availability. Only half of the training sites have Internet cafes and price and speed vary considerably, but Wi-Fi access is available four to five times during pre-service training on hub site days. After pre-service training, a majority of Volunteers have the ability to access the Internet on a daily basis. Many cellphone

providers have Internet packages through a USB modem, or Internet packages are available on unlocked smartphones.

At the Peace Corps office in Phnom Penh, there is a Volunteer resource room with computers and Wi-Fi, as well as a printer and a scanner for Volunteers' use. Laptops are essential for writing proposals, project reporting and composing letters and stories. Peace Corps Cambodia is not responsible for caring for, updating, or maintaining your computer, so bring back-up copies of your software, and a flash drive. You will also need to bring anti-spy/malware/virus programs that are easy to update, too.

Housing and Site Location

Peace Corps/Cambodia Volunteers live with host families throughout their service. A few Volunteers live in provincial towns, however, most live in smaller villages. Some homes have electricity and indoor plumbing, including toilets and cold water showers. Electricity is not available at every site. Drinking water must be boiled, filtered, or purchased. Other basic amenities such as soap, shampoo, hair conditioner, lotion, stationery, sodas, and instant coffee are available.

Living Allowance and Money Management

Volunteers receive a monthly allowance that is sufficient to live at the level of the members of the community they are assigned. The allowance covers food, housing, household supplies, clothing, transportation to and from work, utilities, recreation and entertainment, and incidental expenses. Peace Corps Volunteers are expected to live at a level that is comparable with that of their host country counterparts. The Peace Corps discourages Volunteers from supplementing their living allowance with funds from home. Your monthly living allowance will be transferred directly to your Peace Corps bank account on a regular basis. Expensive dinners out at Phnom Penh tourist restaurants will be possible only rarely for you as a Volunteer. However, the allowance is certainly enough to enable you to purchase basic necessities.

Food and Diet

The food in Cambodia is excellent. Cambodians like to eat three meals a day, as well as snacks between meals. The staple food is rice, so you can expect to eat **a lot** of it. Rice is extremely important to Khmer culture, and Volunteers may be surprised by the amount of rice they are expected to eat. It is important to remember that the offering of rice is an intrinsic part of Cambodian hospitality. That said, noodles and bread are widely available, and no two families have the same eating habits. For example, you might have rice with some type of meat for breakfast, fried rice or noodles with or without meat for lunch, and rice with curry or stir-fried vegetables for dinner.

District towns usually have a market that will serve the surrounding villages. An amazing variety of fruits and vegetables are available in season. Food stalls offer reasonably priced cooked food and are open from early morning until evening. Many Cambodians eat at these noodle shops during the day, rather than going home for lunch.

Vegetarians can survive in Cambodia, but may find it difficult to maintain a strict diet, especially in some social contexts. In some areas, it may also be difficult to get enough protein without eating meat or fish. Living and eating with a host family may also complicate attempts to adhere to strict vegetarianism. Volunteers eat at least one meal a day with their host families—some eat all their meals with the family—and the majority of Volunteers do not cook for themselves. As with so many aspects of your daily life, in order to thrive as a Volunteer in Cambodia you will need to maintain a flexible attitude about food.

Transportation

Transportation in Phnom Penh and most provincial towns is predominantly by motorbike (*moto*), *tuk-tuk*

(a small carriage pulled by a *moto*), *cyclo* (a bike with a chair in front), bicycle (known as a pushbike), or on foot. The central part of Phnom Penh is relatively small, and walking is quite pleasant, especially along the river. Most Cambodians ride on the back of a *moto* (called a *motodop* or moto taxi). As a Peace Corps Volunteer, you are **not** allowed to ride on motorbikes except in specific work-related situations, so you will have to use other safe and affordable alternatives, such as tuk-tuks.

The intercity transportation system in Cambodia is good. One can travel between provincial towns and Phnom Penh via air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned buses on paved roads. Between provincial towns and district towns and villages, Cambodians travel by van or pickup truck. These smaller conveyances are less well-organized and likely to be crowded. Additionally, the roads are sometimes very bad, especially during the rainy season. As previously noted, within towns, people ride motos or bikes, take moto taxis or tuk-tuks, or walk. Finding a consistent means of transportation to and from your site may be a challenge, especially in the early months of service.

Peace Corps Cambodia provides a bike and bicycle helmet to each Volunteer for travel to work, for errands, and pleasure. You will have a bike during pre-service training and will receive training in bike maintenance and repair. You will rely heavily on your bike to get around in and near your site. **Wearing your helmet while biking is mandatory.**

Geography and Climate

Cambodia is in Southeast Asia, in the southern part of Indochina. It covers an area of 181,035 square kilometers (69,898 square miles). Cambodia's climate is warm, humid, and tropical. The country experiences tropical monsoons from May to October, causing flooding in large portions of this mostly flat country. Cambodia has four seasons: mild and wet, warm and dry, hot and dry, and hot and wet. April is particularly hot and muggy, just before the monsoons start.

The most significant geological feature of Cambodia is the Tonle Sap Lake. During the rainy season, as the Mekong River reaches flood stage, it forces the Tonle Sap River to flow backward. The water of the Mekong flows northwest to fill the huge Tonle Sap Lake to many times its normal size and volume. When the Mekong flood has peaked and the lake reaches capacity, which usually occurs in late September, the river changes direction once again to flow southeast into the Mekong and south to Vietnam.

Social Activities

Cambodians spend a lot of time socializing with their families. As most houses in rural areas are built on stilts, you will see many families passing the time under the house during the hottest part of the day. Cambodian women generally socialize in and around the home. Cambodian men often socialize outside the home, playing sports, shooting pool, drinking, and playing cards or chess in cafés. Some activities that are popular with men are associated with gambling, and are therefore not appropriate activities for Volunteers to participate in with students.

In keeping with its goal of cross-cultural exchange, the Peace Corps expects Volunteers to establish social networks with Cambodian friends and colleagues at their sites rather than seek out other Volunteers for social activities. You will spend much of your free time socializing with your Cambodian colleagues and neighbors, eating, and attending Cambodian festivals, weddings, and other cultural events. Your ability to adjust to and enjoy this kind of social life will be an important aspect of your success as a Volunteer and will enhance your ability to be effective in your work.

Professionalism, Dress, and Behavior

Cambodians, dress neatly and take great personal pride in appearances. Following this example as a Volunteer will increase your effectiveness and credibility in the community. First impressions in

Cambodia are extremely important. Throughout your Volunteer service in Cambodia, from the moment you step off the plane at the start of training to your arrival at your worksite and beyond, you will be expected to dress professionally. Cambodian staff, host families, colleagues, community members, and local officials will pay very close attention to how you present yourself.

Peace Corps Volunteers, especially teachers, will be seen as role models. Appropriate professional dress for men includes slacks, collared short-sleeved shirts, and neat shoes (no flip-flops). For women, blouses (with collars) and long skirts are appropriate for work, with closed-toe shoes or shoes/sandals with back straps (no flip-flops). You will find that colleagues may wear more open sandals or shoes (mules, slides) as well, but Volunteers should bring both and take time to observe what is most appropriate. Sleeveless, transparent, tight and/or low-cut tops are inappropriate. Shorts can be worn around the house and to play sports, but they are not worn in professional settings.

Male Volunteers should be aware that long hair, beards, moustaches, and earrings are generally not worn by Cambodian teachers or professionals and are considered to be inappropriate, particularly in the rural provinces. Multiple-pierced ears and visible body piercings or tattoos are not generally accepted in professional settings. If you have tattoos, be prepared to wear clothing that will cover them. Additionally, shaved heads may cause unwanted attention; in Cambodia, a shaved head means you are becoming a monk.

Personal Safety

More detailed information about the Peace Corps' approach to safety is contained in the Safety and Security section, but it is an important issue and cannot be overemphasized. As stated in the Volunteer Handbook, becoming a Peace Corps Volunteer entails certain safety risks. Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment (oftentimes alone), having a limited understanding of local language and culture, and being perceived as well-off are some of the factors that can put a Volunteer at risk. Many Volunteers experience varying degrees of unwanted attention and harassment. Petty thefts and burglaries are not uncommon, and incidents of physical and sexual assault do occur, although most Cambodia Volunteers complete their two years of service without incident. The Peace Corps has established procedures and policies designed to help reduce the risks and enhance your safety and security. These procedures and policies, in addition to safety training, will be provided once you arrive in Cambodia. Using these tools, one can be empowered to take responsibility for his or her safety and well-being.

Each staff member at the Peace Corps is committed to providing Volunteers with the support they need to successfully meet the challenges they will face to have a safe, healthy, and productive service. Volunteers and families are encouraged to look at safety and security information on the Peace Corps website at peacecorps.gov/safety.

Information on these pages gives messages on Volunteer health and safety. There is a section titled Safety and Security in Depth. Among topics addressed are the risks of serving as a Volunteer, posts' safety support systems, and emergency planning and communications.

Rewards and Frustrations

Cambodia is a study in contradictions. It is an ancient culture that has existed for more than 1,000 years that, at times, is frustrated from a pace of development that is lagging behind that of its neighbors. From another perspective, Cambodia has only recently emerged from decades of terror and turmoil. Cambodia has made remarkable progress in a short time and is continuing to develop rapidly.

The development needs in Cambodia are huge. The education and health systems are still emerging from a state of complete collapse, the agricultural systems that support most of the population are still quite primitive, and infrastructure gaps can make completing simple bureaucratic tasks difficult. Corruption is

endemic in all government systems, including education and health care. Legal systems are also fragile, and many laws relating to basic human rights are not enforced.

At the same time, the potential for impact as a development worker in Cambodia is enormous. Cambodian people are kind and friendly, eager to learn so as to improve their conditions. Everyone is aware of the problems and most are willing to discuss solutions openly. Cambodians, especially those over 35, can tell you stories of horror and loss. Everyone lost family members and friends under the Khmer Rouge regime. Yet, as a largely Buddhist society, people get along peacefully and without visible rancor or competition.

Although the potential for job satisfaction in Cambodia is quite high, like all Volunteers, you will encounter numerous frustrations. The pace of work and life is slower than that with which most Americans are accustomed. For these reasons, the Peace Corps experience of adapting to a new culture and environment is often described as a series of emotional peaks and valleys.

You will be given a high degree of responsibility and independence in your work—perhaps more than in any other job you have had or will have. You will often find yourself in situations that require an ability to motivate yourself and your co-workers with little guidance from supervisors. You may work for months without seeing any visible impact, or without receiving feedback (positive or negative) on your work. Development anywhere in the world—including disadvantaged areas in the United States—is slow work that requires perseverance. You must possess the self-confidence, patience, and vision to continue working toward long-term goals without seeing immediate results.

To overcome these difficulties, you will need maturity, flexibility, open-mindedness, resourcefulness, and, above all, patience. The Peace Corps staff, your Cambodian co-workers, and fellow Volunteers will support you during times of challenge, as well as in moments of success. Judging by the experience of former Volunteers around the world, the peaks are well worth the difficult times, and most Volunteers leave feeling they have gained much more than they have sacrificed during their service. If you are able to make the commitment to integrate into your community and work hard, you will be a successful Volunteer.

PEACE CORPS TRAINING

Overview of Pre-Service Training

The Peace Corps uses a competency-based training approach throughout the continuum of learning, supporting you from arrival in Cambodia to your departure. Pre-service training (PST) is the first event within this continuum of learning and ensures that you are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to effectively perform your job. Pre-service training is conducted in Cambodia by Peace Corps staff, most of whom are locally hired trainers. Peace Corps staff measure achievement of learning and determine if you have successfully achieved competencies, including language standards, for swearing-in as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Peace Corps training incorporate widely accepted principles of adult learning and is structured around the experiential learning cycle. Successful training results in competence in various technical, linguistic, cross-cultural, health, and safety and security areas.

Integrating into the community is one of the core competencies you will strive to achieve both in PST and during the first several months of service. Successful sustainable development work is based on the relationships you build by respectfully integrating into the host country community and culture.

You will be prepared for this through a homestay experience, which often requires trainees to live with host families during PST. Integration into the community fosters language and cross-cultural learning and ensures your health, safety, and security.

The goals of Peace Corps training are to give you the technical, language, safety and security, medical and cross-cultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes you will need to live and work successfully in Cambodia. You will not learn everything you need to know during this intensive two-month period, but you will leave training with the tools you will need to continue the self-learning process at your site.

Peace Corps/Cambodia's training program is community-based and will prepare you to live and work safely and productively at your site for the first three to six months. Most language, cross-cultural, and technical sessions and activities will occur in the training village. You will live with a Cambodian host family in your training village, which will help you learn about and adjust to Khmer culture and practice your Khmer language skills. You will also take part in various cultural activities and excursions.

A lengthy in-service training will occur after you have been at your site for approximately four months. You will be asked to identify technical, language, cross-cultural, and other topics on which you would like further training.

Technical Training

Technical training will prepare you to work in Cambodia by building on the skills you already have and helping you develop new skills in a manner appropriate to the needs of the country. The Peace Corps staff, Cambodia experts, and current Volunteers will conduct the training program. Training places great emphasis on learning how to transfer the skills you have to the community in which you will serve as a Volunteer.

Technical training will include sessions on the general economic and political environment in Cambodia and strategies for working within such a framework. You will review your project's goals and objectives and will meet with the Cambodia agencies and organizations that invited the Peace Corps to assist them. You will be supported and evaluated throughout training to build the confidence and skills you need to

undertake your project activities, report your progress, and serve as a productive member of your community.

Language Training

As a Peace Corps Volunteer, you will find that language skills are key to personal and professional satisfaction during your service. These skills are critical to your job performance, help you integrate into your community, and can ease your personal adaptation to the new surroundings. Therefore, language training is at the heart of the training program. You must successfully meet minimum language requirements to complete training and become a Volunteer. Cambodia language instructors usually teach formal language classes five days a week in small groups.

Your language training will incorporate a community-based approach. In addition to classroom time, you will be given assignments to work on outside of the classroom and with your host family. The goal is to get you to a point of basic social communication skills so you can practice and develop language skills further once you are at your site. Prior to being sworn in as a Volunteer, you will develop strategies to continue studying language during your service.

Cross-Cultural Training

Cross-cultural training will provide opportunities for you to reflect on your own cultural values and how they influence your behavior in Cambodia. You will also discuss the questions you have about the behaviors and practices you observe in Cambodia, exploring the underlying reasons for these behaviors and practices.

Cross-cultural and community development training will help you improve your communication skills and understand your role as a facilitator of development. Training will cover topics such as the concept of time, power and hierarchy, gender roles, communication styles, and the concept of self and relationships. Because adjusting to a new culture can be very challenging, you will participate in resiliency training, which provides a framework and tools to help with adjustment issues.

The host family experience provides a unique context for cross-cultural learning, and is designed to ease your transition to life at your site. Families go through an orientation conducted by Peace Corps staff to explain the purpose of PST and to assist them in helping you adapt to living in Cambodia. Many Volunteers form strong and lasting friendships with their host families.

Health Training

During pre-service training, you will be trained in health prevention, basic first aid, and basic treatment of medical illnesses found in Cambodia. You will be expected to practice preventive health and to take responsibility for your own health by adhering to all medical policies. Trainees are required to attend all medical sessions. Health education topics will cover nutrition, food and water preparation, emotional health, alcohol awareness, prevention of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), common illnesses, domestic and intimate partner violence, emergencies, and medical policies in Cambodia.

Safety and Security Training

During the safety and security training sessions, you will learn how to adopt a lifestyle that reduces your risks at home, at work, and during your travels. You will also learn appropriate, effective strategies for coping with unwanted attention, how to identify safety risks in-country and about Peace Corps' emergency response and support systems.

Additional Trainings During Volunteer Service

The Peace Corps' training system provides Volunteers with continual opportunities to examine their commitment to Peace Corps service while increasing their technical and cross-cultural skills. During service, there are usually three training events. The titles and objectives for those trainings are as follows:

- **In-service training:** Provides an opportunity for Volunteers to upgrade their technical, language, and project development skills while sharing their experiences and reaffirming their commitment after having served for three to six months.
- **Midservice training** (done in conjunction with technical sector in-service): Assists Volunteers in reviewing their first year, reassessing their personal and project objectives, and planning for their second year of service.
- **Close-of-service conference:** Prepares Volunteers for their future after Peace Corps service and reviews their respective projects and personal experiences.

The number, length, and design of these trainings are adapted to country-specific needs and conditions. The key to the training system is that training events are integrated and interrelated, from the pre-departure orientation through the end of your service, and are planned, implemented, and evaluated cooperatively by the training staff, Peace Corps staff, and Volunteers.

Evaluation of your performance throughout service is a continual process, as Volunteers are responsible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for personal conduct and professional performance. Successful completion of pre-service training is characterized by achievement of a set of learning objectives to determine competence. Failure to meet any of the selection standards by the completion of training may be grounds for a withdrawal of selection and disqualification from Peace Corps service.

Progress in one's own learning is a dialogue between you and the training staff. All of the training staff—including the training manager, and the language, technical, medical, safety and security, and cross-cultural trainers—will work with you toward the highest possible competencies by providing you with feedback on learning objective performance throughout training. After reviewing and observing your performance, the country director is responsible for making the final decision on whether you have qualified to serve as a Volunteer in the host country.

Upon successful completion of training, trainees who qualify for Peace Corps service are required by law to swear or affirm an oath of loyalty to the United States; it cannot be waived under any circumstances. The text of the oath is provided below. If you have any questions about the wording or meaning of the oath, consult a staff member during training.

I, (your name), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America against all enemies, domestic or foreign, that I take this obligation freely, and without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge my duties in the Peace Corps (so help me God).



YOUR HEALTH CARE IN CAMBODIA

The Peace Corps' highest priority is maintaining the good health and safety of every Volunteer. Peace Corps medical programs emphasize the preventive, rather than the curative, approach to disease. The Peace Corps in Cambodia maintains a clinic with a full-time medical officer who takes care of Volunteers' primary health-care needs, including evaluation and treatment of most medical conditions. Additional medical services are also available in Cambodia at local hospitals. If you become seriously ill and cannot receive the care you need in Cambodia, you will be transported to a Peace Corps-approved regional medical facility. If the Office of Health Services (OHS) determines that the care is not optimal for your condition at the regional facility, you will be transported to the United States.

Health Issues in Cambodia

Many of the health issues in Cambodia are similar to issues in other developing countries—malaria, dengue fever, lack of clean drinking water, traffic accidents, etc. Outside of Phnom Penh, reputable health-care facilities are few, so it is important to stay healthy to prevent problems.

Malaria is prevalent in Cambodia, dengue fever is common. Cambodia also has a high rate of tuberculosis. Again, staying well rested and hydrated, maintaining good nutrition, and seeking care early will help prevent you from becoming seriously ill from these diseases.

Cambodia has a high HIV rates in specific populations. The spread of HIV and AIDS is always a concern. You should use the same precautions that are recommended worldwide..

Helping You Stay Healthy

The Peace Corps will provide you with all the necessary inoculations, medications, and information to stay healthy. Upon your arrival in Cambodia, you will receive a country-specific medical handbook. By the end of training, you will receive a medical kit with supplies to take care of mild illnesses and first aid needs. The contents of the kit are listed later in this section.

During pre-service training, you will have access to basic medical supplies through the medical officer. However, during this time, you will be responsible for your own supply of prescription drugs and any other specific medical supplies you require, as the Peace Corps will not order these items during training. Please bring a three-month supply of any prescription drugs you use, since they may not be available here and it may take several months for shipments to arrive.

You will have physicals at midservice and at the end of your service. If you develop a serious medical problem during your service, the medical officer in Cambodia will consult with the Office of Health Services in Washington, D.C., or a regional medical officer. If it is determined that your condition cannot be treated in Cambodia, you may be sent out of the country for further evaluation and care.

Maintaining Your Health

As a Volunteer, you must accept considerable responsibility for your own health. Proper precautions will significantly reduce your risk of serious illness or injury. The adage “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” becomes extremely important in areas where diagnostic and treatment facilities are not up to the standards of the United States. The most important of your responsibilities in Cambodia is to take the following preventive measures, which will prevent the onset on serious illnesses such as dengue fever:

- Always drink boiled, filtered, or bottled water
- Stay well-rested and eat right
- Eat thoroughly cooked foods

- Use your Peace Corps-provided mosquito net
- Keep your personal living space clean

Malaria is endemic in most geographic areas of Cambodia. Volunteers assigned to Cambodia will be required to take appropriate malaria drug suppression therapy. Dengue fever, also a mosquito-borne illness, is endemic in all of Cambodia. Volunteers will be provided with mosquito nets and an effective insect repellent. Pre-service health training will focus on behavior modification and personal and environmental practices to avoid exposure to tropical illnesses common in-country.

Many illnesses that afflict Volunteers worldwide are preventable if proper food and water precautions are taken. These illnesses include food poisoning, parasitic infections, hepatitis A, dysentery, Guinea worms, tapeworms, and typhoid fever. Your medical officer will discuss specific standards for water and food preparation in Cambodia during pre-service training.

Abstinence is the most effective way to prevent infection with HIV and other STIs. You are taking risks if you choose to be sexually active. To lessen risk, use a condom every time you have sex. Whether your partner is a host country citizen, a fellow Volunteer, or anyone else, do not assume this person is free of HIV/AIDS or other STIs. You will receive more information from the medical officer about this important issue.

Volunteers are expected to adhere to an effective means of birth control to prevent an unplanned pregnancy. Your medical officer can help you decide on the most appropriate method to suit your individual needs. Contraceptive methods are available without charge from the medical officer.

It is critical to your health that you promptly report to the medical office or other designated facility for scheduled immunizations, and that you let the medical officer know immediately of significant illnesses and injuries.

Women's Health Information

If feminine hygiene products are not available for you to purchase on the local market, the Peace Corps medical officer in Cambodia will provide them. If you require a specific product, please bring a three-month supply with you. Many female Volunteers take menstrual cups (The Diva Cup, The Keeper, The Moon Cup, etc.) to avoid potential problems with availability or disposal of feminine hygiene products.

Pregnancy is treated in the same manner as other Volunteer health conditions that require medical attention. The Peace Corps is responsible for determining the medical risk and the availability of appropriate medical care if the Volunteer chooses to remain in-country. Given the circumstances under which Volunteers live and work in Peace Corps countries, it is rare that the Peace Corps' medical standards for continued service during pregnancy can be met.

The Peace Corps follows the 2012 U.S. Preventive Services Task Force guidelines for screening PAP smears, which recommend women aged 21–29 receive screening PAPs every three years and women aged 30–65 receive screening PAPs every five years. As such, most Volunteers will not receive a PAP during their service, but can use Peace Corps supplied health insurance after service to have an exam.

Your Peace Corps Medical Kit

The Peace Corps medical officer will provide you with a kit containing basic items to prevent and treat illnesses that may occur during service. Kit items can be periodically restocked at the medical office.

Medical Kit Contents

First Aid Handbook	Decongestant
Ace bandages	Dental floss
Acetaminophen (Tylenol)	Gloves
Adhesive tape	Hydrocortisone cream
Antacid tablets	Ibuprofen
Anti-diarrheal (Imodium)	Insect repellent
Antibiotic ointment	Iodine tablets (for water purification)
Antifungal cream	Lip balm
Antihistamine	Oral rehydration salts
Antiseptic antimicrobial skin cleaner	Scissors
Band-Aids	Sore throat lozenges
Bismuth Subsalicylate (Pepto-Bismol)	Sterile eye drops
Butterfly closures	Sterile gauze pads
Calagel anti-itch gel	Sunscreen
Condoms	Thermometer (Temp-a-dots)
Cough lozenges	Tweezers

Before You Leave: A Medical Checklist

If there has been any change in your health—physical, mental, or dental—since you submitted your examination reports to the Peace Corps, you must immediately notify the Office of Health Services (OHS). Failure to disclose new illnesses, injuries, allergies, or pregnancy can endanger your health and may jeopardize your eligibility to serve.

If your dentist or Peace Corps dental consultant has recommended that you undergo dental treatment or repair, you must complete that work and make sure your dentist sends requested confirmation reports or X-rays to the Office of Health Services.

If you wish to avoid having duplicate vaccinations, bring a copy of your immunization record to your pre-departure orientation. If you purchase any immunizations prior to Peace Corps service that are not listed as required in your Medical Applicant Portal, the Peace Corps cannot reimburse you for the cost. The Peace Corps will provide all the immunizations necessary for your overseas assignment. Volunteers must be willing to get all required vaccinations unless there is a documented medical contraindication. Failure to accept required vaccination is grounds for administrative separation from the Peace Corps. You do not need to begin taking malaria medication prior to departure.

Bring a three-month supply of any prescription or over-the-counter medication you use on a regular basis, including birth control pills. Although the Peace Corps cannot reimburse you for this three-month supply, it will order refills during your service. While awaiting shipment—which can take several months—you will be dependent on your own medication supply. The Peace Corps will not pay for herbal or nonprescribed medications, such as St. John's wort, glucosamine, selenium, or antioxidant supplements. Medications supplied may be generic or equivalent to your current medications.

You are encouraged to bring copies of medical prescriptions signed by your physician. This is not a requirement, but they might come in handy if you are questioned in transit about carrying a three-month supply of prescription drugs.

If you wear eyeglasses, bring two pairs (of the current prescription) with you. If a pair breaks, the Peace Corps will replace them, using the information your doctor in the United States provided on the eyeglasses form during your examination. The Peace Corps Office of Health Services strongly

discourages Volunteers from wearing contact lenses while overseas unless there is a true medical indication documented by your ophthalmologist. Contact lenses, particularly extended use soft contacts, are associated with a variety of eye infections and other inflammatory problems. One of the most serious of these problems is infectious keratitis which can lead to severe cornea damage which could result in permanent blindness requiring corneal transplantation. These risks of permanent eye damage are exacerbated in the Peace Corps environment where the Volunteer's ability to properly clean the lenses is compromised due to limited access to sterile water as well as decreased effectiveness of cleaning solutions due to prolonged storage in unsatisfactory conditions. In addition, when bacterial eye infections occur, assessment and treatment within hours by a competent ophthalmologist is indicated. This is virtually impossible in the Peace Corps setting. If you feel that you simply must be able to use your contacts occasionally, please consider using single use, daily disposable lenses which do not require cleaning.

NOTE FOR CONTACT WEARERS: Corneal infections or ulcers caused by unsanitary conditions prevalent in Cambodia are common occurrences for foreigners traveling in Cambodia who wear contact lenses. Corneal infections/ulcers are further complicated by the lack of good ophthalmology services in-country. A corneal ulcer may result in scarring of the cornea with permanent visual impairment or rupture of the globe of the eye. Therefore, it is highly recommended that Peace Corps Volunteers do not wear contact lenses while in Cambodia.

If you are eligible for Medicare, are over 50 years of age, or have a health condition that may restrict your future participation in health-care plans, you may wish to consult an insurance specialist about unique coverage needs before your departure. The Peace Corps will provide all necessary health care from the time you leave for your pre-departure orientation until you complete your service. When you finish, you will be entitled to the post-service health-care benefits described in the Peace Corps Volunteer Handbook. You may wish to consider keeping an existing health plan in effect during your service if you think age or pre-existing conditions might prevent you from re-enrolling in your current plan when you return home.

SAFETY AND SECURITY IN DEPTH

Ensuring the safety and security of Volunteers is Peace Corps' highest priority. Serving as a Volunteer overseas entails certain safety and security risks. Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment, a limited understanding of the local language and culture, and the perception of being a wealthy American are some of the factors that can put a Volunteer at risk. Property theft and burglaries are not uncommon. Incidents of physical and sexual assault do occur, although most Volunteers complete their two years of service without a serious safety and security incident. Together, the Peace Corps and Volunteers can reduce risk, but cannot truly eliminate all risk.

Beyond knowing that the Peace Corps approaches safety and security as a partnership with you, it might be helpful to see how this partnership works. The Peace Corps has policies, procedures, and training in place to promote your safety. The Peace Corps depends on you to follow those policies and to put into practice what you have learned. An example of how this works in practice—in this case to help manage the risk and impact of burglary—follows:

- The Peace Corps assesses the security environment where you will live and work.
- The Peace Corps inspects the house where you will live according to established security criteria.
- The Peace Corps ensures you are welcomed by host country counterparts or other community leaders in your new community.
- The Peace Corps responds to security concerns that you raise.
- You lock your doors and windows.
- You adopt a lifestyle appropriate to the community where you live.
- You get to know your neighbors.
- You decide if purchasing personal articles insurance is appropriate for you.
- You don't change residences before being authorized by the Peace Corps.
- You communicate your concerns to Peace Corps staff.

This welcome book contains sections on Living Conditions and Volunteer Lifestyle, Peace Corps Training, Your Health Care, and Safety and Security, all of which include important safety and security information to help you understand this partnership. The Peace Corps makes every effort to give Volunteers the training and tools they need to function in the safest way possible and prepare for the unexpected, teaching you to identify, reduce, and manage the risks you may encounter.

Factors that Contribute to Volunteer Risk

There are several factors that can heighten a Volunteer's risk, many of which are within the Volunteer's control. By far the most common crime that Volunteers experience is theft. Thefts often occur when Volunteers are away from their sites, in crowded locations (such as markets or on public transportation), and when leaving items unattended.

Before you depart for Cambodia there are several measures you can take to reduce your risk:

- Leave valuable objects in the United States, particularly those that are irreplaceable or have sentimental value
- Leave copies of important documents and account numbers with someone you trust in the States
- Purchase a hidden money pouch or "dummy" wallet as a decoy
- Purchase personal articles insurance

After you arrive in Cambodia, you will receive more detailed information about common crimes, factors that contribute to Volunteer risk, and local strategies to reduce that risk. For example, Volunteers in Cambodia learn to do the following:

- Choose safe routes and times for travel, and travel with someone trusted by the community whenever possible
- Make sure one's personal appearance is respectful of local customs
- Avoid high-crime areas
- Know the local language to get help in an emergency
- Make friends with local people who are respected in the community
- Be careful and conscientious about using electronics (phones, cameras, laptops, iPods, etc.) in public or leaving them unattended
- Limit alcohol consumption

As you can see from this list, you must be willing to work hard and adapt your lifestyle to minimize the potential for being a target for crime. As with anywhere in the world, crime occurs in Cambodia. You can reduce the risks by avoiding situations that place you at risk and by taking precautions. Crime at the village or town level is less frequent than in the large cities; people know each other and generally are less likely to steal from their neighbors. Tourist attractions in large towns are favorite worksites for pickpockets.

The following are other security concerns in Cambodia of which you should be aware:

- One of the most common causes of injury among expatriates in Cambodia is bag snatching. Men on motorbikes ride by, often with another person passing at the same time as a distraction, and grab the victim's bag off her or his shoulder, often pulling the victim into the roadway. Never carry anything in a shoulder bag that you cannot afford to lose. Some victims have been pulled off the backs of motorcycles when a thief on a passing moto grabbed their bag.
- Another serious concern is that there is little or no law enforcement in Cambodia. Often rich or influential people, as well as their children, can commit serious crimes and get away with it by bribing the police. For this reason, it is extremely important not to be confrontational if you are faced with someone who is angry or drunk. Aggressive behavior or resistance could result in a violent confrontation that could include weapons.
- Although land mines and unexploded ordinances have received much publicity, and are certainly a significant issue in some rural areas of Cambodia, Volunteers are unlikely to visit affected areas during their service.
- Volunteers tend to attract a lot of attention both in large cities and at their sites, but they are more likely to receive negative attention in highly populated centers, and away from their support network—friends and colleagues—who look out for them.
- While whistles and verbal harassment based on race or gender may be fairly common on the street, this behavior may be reduced if you abide by local cultural norms, dress conservatively, and respond according to the training you will receive.

Staying Safe: Don't Be a Target for Crime

Because many Volunteer sites are in rural, isolated settings, you must be prepared to take on a large degree of responsibility for your own safety. To reduce the likelihood that you will become a victim of crime, you can take steps to make yourself less of a target such as ensuring your home is secure and developing relationships in your community. While the factors that contribute to your risk in Cambodia

may be different, in many ways you can do what you would do if you moved to a new city anywhere: Be cautious, check things out, ask questions, learn about your neighborhood, know where the more risky locations are, use common sense, and be aware. You can reduce your vulnerability to crime by integrating into your community, learning the local language, acting responsibly, and abiding by Peace Corps policies and procedures. Serving safely and effectively in Cambodia will require that you accept some restrictions on your current lifestyle.

Support from Staff

If a trainee or Volunteer is the victim of a safety and security incident, Peace Corps staff is prepared to provide support. All Peace Corps posts have procedures in place to respond to incidents of crime committed against Volunteers. The first priority for all posts in the aftermath of an incident is to ensure the Volunteer is safe and receiving medical treatment as needed. After assuring the safety of the Volunteer, Peace Corps staff response may include reassessing the Volunteer's worksite and housing arrangements and making any adjustments, as needed. In some cases, the nature of the incident may necessitate a site or housing transfer. Peace Corps staff will also support and assist Volunteers who choose to make a formal complaint with local law enforcement. It is very important that a Volunteer reports an incident when it occurs. The reasons for this include obtaining medical care and emotional support, enabling Peace Corps staff to assess the situation to determine if there is an ongoing safety and security concern, protecting peer Volunteers and preserving the right to file a complaint. Should a Volunteer decide later in the process to file a complaint with law enforcement, this option may be compromised if evidence was not preserved at the time of the incident.

Office of Victim Advocacy

The Office of Victim Advocacy (OVA) is a resource to Volunteers who are victims of crime, including sexual assault and stalking. Victim advocates are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help Volunteers understand their emotional, medical, and legal options so they may make informed decisions to meet their specific needs. The OVA provides a compassionate, coordinated, and supportive response to Volunteers who wish to access Peace Corps support services.

Contact information for the Office of Victim Advocacy

Direct phone number: 202.692.1753

Toll-free: 855.855.1961 ext. 1753

Duty phone: 202.409.2704 (available 24/7, call or text)

Email: victimadvocate@peacecorps.gov

Crime Data for Cambodia

Crime data and statistics for Cambodia, which are updated yearly, are available at the following link:

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/countrydata/cambodia>

Please take the time to review this important information.

Few Peace Corps Volunteers are victims of serious crimes. Crimes that do occur abroad are investigated and prosecuted by local jurisdictional authorities. If you are the victim of a crime, you will decide if you wish to file a complaint with law enforcement, who will then determine whether to prosecute. If you decide to file a complaint, the Peace Corps will help through the process. The Peace Corps staff will ensure you are fully informed of your options and understand how the local legal process works. Further, the Peace Corps will help you exercise your rights to the fullest extent possible under the laws of your host country.

The Peace Corps will train you on how to respond if you are the victim of a serious crime, including how to get to a safe location quickly and contact your Peace Corps office. It's important that you notify the Peace Corps as soon as you can so Peace Corps staff can provide assistance.

Volunteer Safety Support in Cambodia

The Peace Corps' approach to safety is a five-pronged plan to help you stay safe during your service. The plan includes information sharing, Volunteer training, site selection criteria, a detailed emergency action plan, and protocols for addressing safety and security incidents. Cambodia's in-country safety program is outlined below.

The Peace Corps/Cambodia office will keep you informed of any issues that may impact Volunteer safety through **information sharing**. Regular updates will be provided in Volunteer newsletters and in memorandums from the country director. In the event of a critical situation or emergency, you will be contacted through the emergency communication network. An important component of the capacity of Peace Corps to keep you informed is your buy-in to the partnership concept with the Peace Corps staff. It is expected that you will do your part to ensure that Peace Corps staff members are kept apprised of your movements in-country so they are able to inform you.

Volunteer training will include sessions on specific safety and security issues in Cambodia. This training will prepare you to adopt a culturally appropriate lifestyle and exercise judgment that promotes safety and reduces risk in your home, at work, and while traveling. Safety training is offered throughout service and is integrated into the language, cross-cultural aspects, health, and other components of training. You will be expected to successfully complete all training competencies in a variety of areas, including safety and security, as a condition of service.

Certain **site selection criteria** are used to determine safe housing for Volunteers before their arrival. The Peace Corps staff works closely with host communities and counterpart agencies to help prepare them for a Volunteer's arrival and to establish expectations of their respective roles in supporting the Volunteer. Each site is inspected before the Volunteer's arrival to ensure placement in appropriate, safe, and secure housing and worksites. Site selection is based, in part, on any relevant site history; access to medical, banking, postal, and other essential services; availability of communications, transportation, and markets; different housing options and living arrangements; and other Volunteer support needs.

You will also learn about Peace Corps/Cambodia's **detailed emergency action plan**, which is implemented in the event of civil or political unrest or a natural disaster. When you arrive at your site, you will complete and submit a site locator form with your address, contact information, and a map to your house. If there is a security threat, you will gather with other Volunteers in Cambodia at predetermined locations until the situation is resolved or the Peace Corps decides to evacuate.

Finally, in order for the Peace Corps to be fully responsive to the needs of Volunteers, it is imperative that Volunteers immediately report any safety and security incidents to the Peace Corps office. The Peace Corps has established **protocols for addressing safety and security incidents** in a timely and appropriate manner, and it collects and evaluates safety and security data to track trends and develop strategies to minimize risks to current and future Volunteers.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OVERVIEW

The Peace Corps mission is to promote world peace and friendship and to improve people’s lives in the communities where Volunteers serve. Instituting policies and practices to support a diverse and inclusive work and Volunteer environment is essential to achieving this mission.

Through inclusive recruitment and retention of staff and Volunteers, the Peace Corps seeks to reflect the rich diversity of the United States and bring diverse perspectives and solutions to development issues. Additionally, ensuring diversity among staff and Volunteers enriches interpersonal relations and communications for the staff work environment, the Volunteer experience, and the communities in which Volunteers serve.

The Peace Corps defines diversity as a “collection of individual attributes that together help agencies pursue organizational objectives efficiently and effectively. These include, but are not limited to, characteristics such as national origin, language, race, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and family structures. Diversity also encompasses differences among people concerning where they are from and where they have lived and their differences of thought and life experiences.”

We define inclusion as a “culture that connects each [staff member and Volunteer] to the organization; encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness; and leverages diversity throughout the organization so that all individuals are able to participate and contribute to their full potential.” The Peace Corps promotes inclusion throughout the lifecycle of Volunteers and staff. When staff and Volunteers are able to share their rich diversity in an inclusive work environment, the Peace Corps mission is better fulfilled. More information about diversity and inclusion can be found in the Volunteer Handbook.

An inclusive agency is one that seeks input from everyone in an effort to find the best ideas and strategies possible to execute its objectives. When input is solicited, heard, and considered from a rich multitude of individuals the best course of action usually emerges. The Peace Corps seeks to improve its operations and effectiveness by ensuring that all voices and ideas are heard and that all Volunteers and staff feel welcome and appreciated. When each person’s voice is heard, the agency is stronger and the impact of Volunteers is strengthened.

Diversity and Inclusion at Your Site

Once Volunteers arrive at their sites, diversity and inclusion principles remain the same but take on a different shape, in which your host community may share a common culture and you—the Volunteer—are the outsider. You may be in the minority, if not the sole American like you, at your site. You will begin to notice diversity in perspectives, ethnicity, age, depth of conversation, and degree of support you may receive. For example, elders, youth, and middle-aged individuals all have unique points of views on topics you may discuss, from perspectives on work, new projects, and social engagements to the way community issues are addressed.

Peace Corps staff in your host country recognize the additional adjustment issues that come with living and working in new environments and will provide support and guidance to Volunteers. During pre-service training, a session will be held to discuss diversity and inclusion and how you can serve as an ally for your peers, honoring diversity, seeking inclusion, challenging prejudice and exclusion, exploring your own biases, and learning mechanisms to cope with these adjustment issues. The Peace Corps looks forward to having Volunteers from varied backgrounds that include a variety of races, ethnic groups, ages, religions, sexual orientations and gender identities. The agency expects you to work collaboratively to create an inclusive environment that transcends differences and finds common ground.

Cross-Cultural Considerations

Outside of Cambodia's capital, residents of rural communities might have had little direct exposure to other cultures, races, religions, and lifestyles. What people view as typical U.S. behavior or norms may be a misconception, such as the belief that all Americans are rich and have blond hair and blue eyes. The people of Cambodia are known for their generous hospitality to foreigners; however, members of the community where you will live may display a range of reactions to cultural differences that you present.

As a Volunteer and representative of the United States, you are responsible not only for sharing the diversity of U.S. culture (to include your individual culture and the culture of other Americans) with your host country national counterparts, but also for learning from the diversity of your host country. An important aspect of this cultural exchange will be to demonstrate inclusiveness within your community in a sensitive manner. Additionally, you will share the responsibility of learning about the diversity of your fellow Peace Corps Volunteers and exploring how best to respect differences while serving as supportive allies as you go through this challenging new experience.

To ease the transition and adapt to life in your host country, you may need to make some temporary, yet fundamental, compromises in how you present yourself as an American and as an individual. For example, female trainees and Volunteers may not be able to exercise the independence they have in the United States; male Volunteers may be expected to not perform chores or other tasks ascribed to women; political discussions need to be handled with great care; and some of your personal beliefs may best remain undisclosed. You will need to develop techniques and personal strategies for coping with these and other limitations. The Peace Corps staff will lead a diversity, inclusion, and sensitivity discussion during pre-service training and will be on call to provide support. This training covers how to adapt personal choices and behavior to be respectful of the host country culture, which can have a direct impact on how Volunteers are viewed and treated by their new communities. The Peace Corps emphasizes professional behavior and cross-cultural sensitivity among volunteers and within their communities to help integrate and be successful during service.

An ideal way to view the pursuit of cross-cultural adaptation and/or cultural integration is to recognize that everything done in your host country has both a specific reason for why it is done and an expected outcome. Trust that your host country counterparts are acting with positive intentions and work to mutually seek understanding and commonality. Language differences may add a communication barrier and lead to misunderstandings. Listen more than you speak and seek clarity. Remember that having the ability to laugh at yourself and at life's little surprises goes a long way—laughter is universal.

What Might a Volunteer Face?

Possible Gender Role Issues

Gender is a set of socially constructed roles, responsibilities, behaviors, and opportunities. Gender differs from sex, which refers specifically to biological and physiological characteristics of males and females. Gender roles and expectations are learned, change over time, and vary within and among cultures. Volunteers are trained in gender awareness as they approach their work in the host country. Gender roles in the United States may differ greatly from those in your country of service. It is important to absorb and to attempt to understand the cultural nuances of gender where you are. For example, in many cultures males are held in higher regard than females and females may manage the households. In some places, females are encouraged to attend school, while in other countries females are discouraged from engaging in such activities and instead work inside or outside of the home.

During the pre-service training, trainees receive an introduction to gender awareness in their country of service, and examine their own thinking about gender roles and how this thinking has impacted them.

They then learn how to analyze development projects using a gender lens to better understand gender roles in their host country and to understand how these gender roles can benefit or limit what females and males may or may not do. During their 27 months of service, Volunteers will further engage in gender trainings to understand better how their gender identity impacts who they are as females or males in the host country and how this perception influences their work and relationships.

Most expatriate women feel safe in their communities in Cambodia, in addition to traveling within the country. Physical harassment is not common, but precautions still need to be taken. Female Volunteers are likely to attract some unwanted attention, so it is important to develop strategies to deal with this harassment. The higher status given to men over women can be manifested in both subtle and not so subtle ways. Female Volunteers should be aware that smoking and drinking alcohol in public is not culturally appropriate behavior. Female Volunteers may also feel somewhat restricted by the expectations of their host families that they stay home in the evening, always communicate where they are going, etc. Women who are uncomfortable changing these behaviors should carefully consider their decision to serve in Cambodia.

Many Cambodian men are introduced to sex by being taken to a brothel by friends in their early 20s. Your Cambodian colleagues and friends may expect you to join them when they go to brothels, even if they know you are married or have a serious girlfriend. In addition to the health risks due to the high HIV rates in Cambodia, you might have ethical issues with this behavior. You will need to develop strategies to avoid risky behavior without damaging your social relationships. Additionally, male Volunteers may feel pressured into heavy drinking at social gatherings. All Volunteers, but especially non-drinkers, will have to find ways to maintain healthy social relationships without drinking or drinking to excess.

Possible Issues for Volunteers of Color

Volunteers of color sometimes, but not always, have a different Peace Corps experience than white Volunteers. Because of limited exposure, some foreign nationals will expect to see U.S. citizens who are white. Cultures of the world do not typically envision the States as a place of rich diversity with various culturally acceptable perspectives, personalities, and characteristics. Thus, a Volunteer of color may be questioned as about their U.S. citizenship.

In places where American stereotypes and/or caste system dynamics influence perception, Volunteers of color should be mindful of the reasons for these views without creating contentious environments. All too often, host country nationals are simply unaware of the diversity of the United States and require additional information and dialogue. Direct interactions with someone new or something different can take time to get used to, but those who take the time tend to be better off. Although host country nationals may assert that the United States is made up of predominately one race, we know that is not true. If a member of your community knows of compatriots living in the United States or of notable U.S. citizens of color, you can build on this knowledge as a point of reference for discussing diversity within the States.

For Volunteers of color, the range of responses to their skin color may vary from the extremely kind to the very insensitive. In African and Latin American countries, host country nationals may say “welcome home” to African Americans or Hispanic Americans. Sometimes Volunteers expect to be “welcomed home” but are disappointed when they are not. More commonly, if a Volunteer is mistaken for a host-country national citizen, he or she is expected to behave as a male or female in that culture behaves, and to speak the local language fluently. Host country nationals are sometimes frustrated when the Volunteer does not speak the local language with ease. Conversely, some in the same country may call you a “sell out” because they feel the United States has not done enough to help with social issues. These instances can be turned into teachable moments for the Volunteer and the host country national, in which the Volunteer can ask questions surrounding perception and collaborate with respect to issues and projects at

hand, while engaging in cross-cultural exchanges. All Volunteers, to include white Volunteers and those of color, should be mindful of the issues of race that are embedded in U.S. culture and within the culture in your country of service. These issues may significantly affect how Volunteers interact with fellow Volunteers and host country nationals. Being open and inclusive to everyone will improve your experience in interacting with fellow Volunteers and members of your host community.

In general, Cambodians view lighter skin as more beautiful, a perception based more on an aesthetic bias than any racial prejudice and one that existed long before encounters between Cambodia and the West. Cambodians are not well-informed about the ethnic and racial diversity of the United States, and they may expect Volunteers to be Caucasian. African Americans and others with darker complexions should try to view beliefs about skin color within the Cambodian context rather than from the American perspective, in order to promote a greater understanding of respective cultural views.

Cambodians view skin color as a sign of status, the lighter the skin the more privileged or beautiful you are; darker skin indicates long hours in the rice field, therefore a lower or poorer status.

It is common for Asian Americans to be mistaken for Cambodians, which can have both benefits and drawbacks. One advantage is that Asian Americans blend better into the community and thus may not receive as much unwanted attention in public. A disadvantage is that Cambodians may initially expect you to have the language skills of a native speaker. Or they may express surprise that you are fluent in English. They may also view you as a citizen of an Asian country rather than America.

Initially, Volunteers of color may find that Cambodian co-workers do not respect your professional skills as much as they respect the skills of white Volunteers. Most Volunteers find acceptance and respect once personal relationships have been developed and professional competence has been demonstrated. Speaking Khmer and showing respect for Cambodian cultural norms will help, and providing information about your family and your life in the United States will assist in breaking down stereotypes.

Possible Issues for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning/Queer, Ally (LGBTQA) Volunteers

For LGBTQ Volunteers: Given Cambodia's traditional values, sexual orientation and non-conforming gender identities might not be discussed openly. In some cases, the LGBTQ community may be stigmatized. Mindful of the cultural norms and country-specific laws, the decision to serve openly is left to each individual Peace Corps Volunteer. Many LGBTQ Volunteers have chosen to be discreet about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity within their host communities. Some LGBTQ Volunteers have chosen to come out to community members, with a result of positive and negative reactions, while some have come out only to select Peace Corps staff and Volunteers. Dealing with questions about boyfriends, girlfriends, marriage, and children may, at times, be stressful for LGBTQ Volunteers. You may find that Cambodia is a less open and inclusive environment than you have previously experienced. Please know, however, that Peace Corps is supportive of you and Peace Corps staff welcomes dialogue about how to ensure your success as an LGBTQA Volunteer. More information about serving as an LGBTQ Volunteer is available at the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Peace Corps Alumni website at lgbprcv.org. Additionally, the Peace Corps' LGBTQ employee resource group, Spectrum, can be reached at spectrum@peacecorps.gov.

For Ally Volunteers: Peace Corps staff intends to create open, inclusive, and accepting environments. As an agency, the Peace Corps encourages Volunteers to serve as allies to their LGBTQ colleagues in order to create a safe environment.

Many LGBTQ Volunteers have served successfully in Cambodia and have very fond memories of their community and service. LGBTQ support groups may be available in your country of service, providing

a network to support the needs of the Peace Corps LGBTQA community. Peace Corps staff will work with Volunteers to provide them with locally informed perspectives.

Cambodians do not usually view LGBT individuals or identities, nor are there criminal penalties against sexual acts between members of the same sex. There are some documented Cambodian same-sex married couples. Physical contact in public between members of the same sex (such as linking arms while walking down the street) is a common way for Cambodians to show affection, and it is important for Volunteers to realize that such displays of affection are likely nonsexual in nature. Volunteers who are accustomed to being part of a vibrant gay community in the United States may not get the understanding or support to which they are accustomed in their rural sites, though they can expect to find significant support within the Peace Corps community, including staff and fellow Volunteers. In addition, most large Cambodian cities have significant LGBT communities, established organizations, and Pride activities that Volunteers occasionally take part in.

All female Volunteers should be prepared to encounter questions or teasing about boyfriends, marriage, and sex. All male Volunteers should be prepared to deal with questions about American women, and pressure from co-workers to visit brothels. During pre-service training, trainees will be encouraged to think through these issues and plan possible responses with the assistance of informed local staff members who will act as cultural guides.

Possible Issues for Volunteers with Disabilities

As part of the medical clearance process, the Peace Corps Office of Health Services determined you were physically and emotionally capable, with or without additional medical support, to perform a full tour of Volunteer service in Cambodia without a significant risk of harm to yourself or interruption of service. The Peace Corps/Cambodia staff will work with disabled Volunteers to support them in training, housing, jobsites, or other areas to enable them to serve safely and effectively.

Cambodia has a significant population of people with disabilities, largely as a result of landmines and motorbike accidents. Some NGOs have made efforts to help disabled individuals have productive jobs and lives. Volunteers with disabilities need to be aware of the rigors of the Peace Corps/Cambodia program during both training and service. Volunteers must be able to ride a bicycle to travel to the various training venues and workplaces. Any special accommodations needed during training and when at one's site, such as an alternative to biking, should be made known during the placement process in the United States, prior to arriving in Cambodia.

Possible Issues for Volunteer Couples

Before committing to Peace Corps service, couples should consider how different degrees of enthusiasm about Peace Corps service, adaptation to the physical and cultural environment, and homesickness will affect their lives. It can be helpful to recognize that your reactions to these issues will change throughout your service, and you may not always feel the same as your partner. You and your partner will have different jobs, different schedules, and difference societal pressures. One partner may learn the language faster than the other or have a more satisfying assignment. This can create competition and put different kinds of stress on each person. Anticipating how these pressures will affect you and your partner differently throughout your service can help you remain a source of support for each other. Making friends with other Volunteers is a critical part of fitting into the larger Volunteer culture and can also be a good way to expand your support network.

While couples will live together during their service, they may live in separate towns during their pre-service training. This is a stressful time for most Volunteers, and it can be helpful to discuss in advance how you will deal with this potential separation. Your partner can be an important source of stability but

can also add stress to your training experience. You may feel torn between traveling to visit your partner and focusing on your training, your host family, and friends you have made at your training site.

Couples often face pressure from host country nationals to change their roles to conform better with traditional Cambodian relationships. Cambodian men and women alike will often not understand American relationship dynamics and may be outwardly critical of relationships that do not adhere to traditional gender roles. It is also helpful to think about how pressures to conform to Cambodian culture can be challenging to men and women in very different ways. Considering how your partner is being affected and discussing what, if any, aspects of your relationship should be changed can help reduce stress for you both.

Since all Volunteers live with host families throughout service, Volunteer couples are likely to find the lack of privacy to be frustrating. You may be asked constantly if you have children and be viewed with pity if you do not. In addition, you and your partner may need to adjust to an increased amount of time spent together during your service. You will need to develop strategies for making friends, practicing Khmer with other community members, and working on separate projects.

Possible Religious Issues for Volunteers

A high degree of religious tolerance exists in Cambodia. It is doubtful that any religious issues will arise, unless a Volunteer breaks the Peace Corps' rule against proselytizing.

Possible Issues for 50+ Volunteers

Older Volunteers may find their age an asset in Cambodia. They will often have access to individuals and insights that are not available to younger Volunteers. On the other hand, they will be in a distinct minority within the Volunteer population and could find themselves feeling isolated, looked up to, or ignored.

Older Volunteers are often accustomed to a greater degree of independence and freedom of movement than the Peace Corps' program focus and safety and security practices allow. Pre-service training can be particularly stressful for older individuals, whose lifelong learning styles and habits may or may not lend themselves to the techniques used. A 50+ Volunteer may be the only older person in a group of Volunteers and initially may not feel part of the group. Younger Volunteers may look to an older Volunteer for advice and support; some find this to be an enjoyable experience, while others choose not to fill this role. Some 50+ Volunteers may find it difficult to adapt to a lack of structure and clarity in their role after having worked for many years in a very structured and demanding job.

More than younger Volunteers, older Volunteers may have challenges in maintaining lifelong friendships and dealing with financial matters from afar. They may want to consider assigning power of attorney to someone in the States.

Cambodian government workers are subject to a mandatory retirement age of 55, so Volunteers over that age will find that most, if not all, of their Cambodian co-workers will be younger than they are. Cambodians give great respect and importance to senior family members, and 50+ Volunteers often receive similar deference and respect, though this does not necessarily translate to greater respect for their professional competence or technical knowledge. Your co-workers may smile, nod, and appear to agree with you when the opposite is true, perhaps because they do not want to offend you.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much luggage am I allowed to bring to Cambodia?

Most airlines have baggage size and weight limits and assess charges for transport of baggage that exceeds those limits. The Peace Corps has its own size and weight limits and will not pay the cost of transport for baggage that exceeds these limits. The Peace Corps' allowance is two checked pieces of luggage with combined dimensions of both pieces not to exceed 107 inches (length + width + height) and a carry-on bag with dimensions of no more than 45 inches. Checked baggage should not exceed 100 pounds total with a maximum weight of 50 pounds per bag.

Peace Corps Volunteers are not allowed to take pets, weapons, explosives, radio transmitters (shortwave radios are permitted), automobiles, or motorcycles to their overseas assignments. Do not pack flammable materials or liquids such as lighter fluid, cleaning solvents, hair spray, or aerosol containers. This is an important safety precaution.

What is the electric current in Cambodia?

220 volts

How much money should I bring?

Volunteers are expected to live at the same level as the people in their community. You will be given a settling-in allowance and a monthly living allowance, which should cover your expenses. Volunteers often wish to bring additional money for vacation travel to other countries. Credit cards and traveler's checks are preferable to cash. If you choose to bring extra money, bring the amount that will suit your own travel plans and needs.

When can I take vacation and have people visit me?

Each Volunteer accrues two vacation days per month of service (excluding training). Leave may not be taken during training, the first three months of service, or the last three months of service, except in conjunction with an authorized emergency leave. Family and friends are welcome to visit you after pre-service training and the first three months of service as long as their stay does not interfere with your work. Extended stays at your site are not encouraged and may require permission from your country director. The Peace Corps is not able to provide your visitors with visa, medical, or travel assistance.

Volunteers who are assigned to the English Teaching and Teacher Training project may not take leave while school is officially in session. They will be authorized leave in the months of April, July, August, and September.

Will my belongings be covered by insurance?

The Peace Corps does not provide insurance coverage for personal effects; Volunteers are ultimately responsible for the safekeeping of their personal belongings. However, you can purchase personal property insurance before you leave (contact your insurance company). Volunteers should not ship or take valuable items overseas. Jewelry, watches, radios, cameras, electronics, and expensive appliances are subject to loss, theft, and breakage, and, in many places, satisfactory maintenance and repair services are not available.

Do I need an international driver's license?

Volunteers in Cambodia do not need an international driver's license because they are prohibited from operating privately owned motorized vehicles. Most urban travel is by bus or taxi. Rural travel ranges from buses and minibuses to trucks, bicycles, and lots of walking. On very rare occasions, a Volunteer may be asked to drive a sponsor's vehicle, but this can occur only with prior written permission from the

country director. Should this occur, the Volunteer may obtain a local driver's license. A U.S. driver's license will facilitate the process, so bring it with you just in case.

What should I bring as gifts for Cambodia friends and my host family?

This is not a requirement. A token of friendship is sufficient. Some gift suggestions include knickknacks for the house; pictures, books, or calendars of American scenes; souvenirs from your area; hard candies that will not melt or spoil; or photos to give away.

Where will my site assignment be when I finish training and how isolated will I be?

Peace Corps trainees are not assigned to individual sites until after they have completed pre-service training. This gives Peace Corps staff the opportunity to assess each trainee's technical and language skills prior to assigning sites, in addition to finalizing site selections with their ministry counterparts. If feasible, you may have the opportunity to provide input on your site preferences, including geographical location, distance from other Volunteers, and living conditions. However, keep in mind that many factors influence the site selection process and that the Peace Corps cannot guarantee placement where you would ideally like to be. Most Volunteers live in small towns or in rural villages and are frequently within one hour from another Volunteer. Some sites require a day's travel to reach the Peace Corps/Cambodia Office.

How can my family contact me in an emergency?

The Peace Corps Counseling and Outreach Unit provides assistance in handling emergencies affecting trainees and Volunteers or their families. Before leaving the United States, instruct your family to notify the Counseling and Outreach Unit immediately if an emergency arises, such as a serious illness or death of a family member. The Counseling and Outreach Unit can be reached at 855.855.1961, select option 1, ext. 1470. After business hours, on weekends, and on holidays, the COU duty officer can be reached at the same number. For non-emergency questions, your family can contact your country desk staff through the main Peace Corps number: 855.855.1961.

How easy is it to call home from Cambodia?

Yes, it is relatively easy to call the United States from Cambodia. In addition to your Peace Corps-issued cellphone, many provincial Internet cafes have inexpensive Internet calling.

Should I bring a cellphone with me?

It is not necessary to bring a cellphone from the United States to Cambodia. The Peace Corps will provide you with a cellphone. If you choose to bring a personal smartphone with you to Cambodia, make sure it is unlocked and will accept an international SIM card.

Will there be email and Internet access? Should I bring my computer?

Most provinces have Internet cafes, although speed and price vary considerably. Volunteers recommend that if you have a laptop computer, you should bring it. Some Volunteers find a computer to be a vital organizational tool for creating lesson plans, storing photos, listening to music, or writing letters. Even if electricity is not available in your area, you will be able to power your computer by car battery. Additionally, Peace Corps/Cambodia sends email messages to Volunteers regularly, and Volunteer reports and leave requests are all submitted electronically.

Many Volunteers have been able to get relatively inexpensive Internet service via cellphone. If you think you may want such service, having a computer at your site will make it easier to access the Internet.

Be aware that public use of computers might further the assumption that you are a wealthy foreigner with a lot of money to spend.

WELCOME LETTERS FROM CAMBODIA VOLUNTEERS

Congratulations on being invited to serve with Peace Corps/Cambodia and thank you for your dedication in agreeing to spend two years in the service of Cambodians and the Peace Corps!

When I got my invitation to serve I knew very little about Cambodia. I had so many questions about what being a Peace Corps Volunteer would be like. What kind of house would I live in? Would I get along with locals and other Volunteers? How would I learn the language quickly enough? Would I enjoy my service?

You will learn the answers to your questions and much more. You will learn to scarf down ladles of rice with your host family after you bike home from work, sweating in the afternoon heat or soaking wet from the rainstorm you managed to ride through. You will become a skilled dancer (at least Cambodians will think you are) from all the practice you get at weddings where people slowly dance in a circle, contorting their hands and fingers impossibly and gracefully. You will learn to appreciate the beauty of the verdant rice fields in September which stretch as far as the eye can see. In sweltering May, you will hone your ability to throw rocks into trees to shake the ripe juicy mangoes from the branches. In December, you will learn to shower with ice cold buckets of water and then shiver all the way back to your room.

There will be challenging days, and there will be great days. The Peace Corps experience is not for everyone, but if you can persevere through the hardships and if you have a desire to understand and benefit others, you can impact Cambodian lives for the better. There are many opportunities for us to improve things here. Volunteers participate in and create many types of projects according to what their communities need and what their personal interests are.

Personally, my experience has been rewarding. I have learned about understanding a culture that is vastly different from my native culture and through this, I have come to appreciate both cultures more. I have been introduced to a completely different way of life and I have gained a clearer appreciation for the privileges I have.

Every Volunteer has a unique experience, but I would like to share a bit about my service as an English Teacher and Teacher Training (ETTT) Peace Corps Volunteer.

All Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) in Cambodia are required to live with Cambodian host families. I love my current host family and I feel that in many ways I am treated just like a real family member. You spend enough time with your host family that you can get to know them quite well despite the language barrier. You will literally call your host mother and father “mother” and “father” in Khmer, the national language of Cambodia, and they will probably think of you as a son or daughter. Living with a host family has presented me the opportunity to get to experience Cambodian cultural traditions and practices which I wouldn't if I was living by myself.

My site is in a rural area near the famous Angkor Wat, and I primarily work at a local middle/high school teaching English with Khmer co-teachers. My school faces tough challenges in providing a strong education to its students. The school suffers from a lack of resources both in terms of money and in terms of human resources. Many teachers are not well trained and don't teach effectively. They have very low salaries and often have to take a second job for that reason. As Peace Corps Volunteers, we can use our experience to assist Cambodian schools in providing a good education for students.

Outside of my main project of English teaching and teacher training, I have been met with a lot of freedom in terms of secondary projects. My high school's director is very grateful to have Peace Corps Volunteers and he has been very open to my ideas. He has let me use classrooms to teach free English

classes, has agreed to let me and a Cambodian counterpart use school resources to teach organic gardening classes, and has been supportive of taking students to leadership camps.

In my experience, Cambodia has been a wonderful country to serve in. I hope you have an even more rewarding experience here than I have had. Enjoy your last months in the U.S.!

—*Jeff Shum*
K7 ETTT Peace Corps Volunteer

Hello, from the Cambodia!

I'm sure you have many questions and maybe even some expectations for what things will be like over the next two years as you embark on this amazing journey. I remember stepping off the plane and taking in my first deep breath of the humid Cambodian air and feeling excited, but anxious about how much I had to learn and not knowing what to expect. This experience is challenging, but with an open mind and a good attitude, I think you will find your work here in Cambodia rewarding.

Figuring out a new language and trying to understand unfamiliar cultural norms was often frustrating, yet humbling. Committing frequent cultural faux pas has sometimes reduced me to feeling like a child, but was essential in navigating life in this foreign land. Rest assured, you will come to learn about Cambodia on many levels and experience things that not many people ever get to experience in their lifetime. Be comforted by the fact that you have been invited to work in a unique part of the world where you will be frequently reminded why Cambodia is appropriately called the Kingdom of Wonder!

After almost two years into my service, I enjoy riding my bike throughout my village passing some of the friendliest and most curious people who I now call my friends and family. I knew that coming into the Peace Corps I would be learning about the people of Cambodia and working alongside them, but I never knew just how connected I would become to the community members and small rural village, surrounded by lush rice fields and unique cultural intricacies.

Although there have been many ups and downs, the positive experiences have heavily outweighed all of the challenges. Speaking Khmer every day and learning the language has opened up a world of information that once felt beyond my reach to understand, but has now offered me with more than just a glimpse of how life works in this part of the world, it's now my life too. Of course there are things that we will never understand, but that's exactly what has continued to intrigue and fascinate me about this beautiful and unique country.

Every Peace Corps Volunteer will undoubtedly have their own unique individual experience, but I'd like to share just a few of the things that I'm involved with as a Volunteer. As a community health education extension agent, I realized that my work would be rather unstructured. I spent time observing staff at my health center and finding opportunities where I could jump in and help. After a while, I began weighing young children at the health center as they came in for vaccinations. It's through this role that I discovered many underweight children in and around my village, which provides me with an opportunity to educate families about nutrition and ways they can combat malnutrition. If I'm not meeting with families and doing various types of health education in or around my community, I help one of my counterparts with a community garden project, I enjoy meeting with my art club that I established at the local high school, and I spend time with my host siblings and chatting with local villagers.

This experience has provided me with cultural revelations, deeply rewarding interactions, and enumerable amazing moments. Although there will be challenges, you will find solace in Peace Corps staff and other

Volunteers who are here to support you on this journey. You have been invited to a very exciting country where you will be warmly welcomed and charmed by the local people and culture.

Welcome to the Kingdom of Wonder!

—*Westen Thomas*
K7 Community Health Education Volunteer

Welcome to the Kingdom of Wonder!

I remember when I first saw my Peace Corps invitation to serve in Cambodia I was very excited. I immediately began researching the country and finding videos on YouTube on the Khmer language. When I first arrived in-country I felt overwhelmed, tired, and nervous, but those feelings faded very quickly because you realize you are not alone: You are with other Peace Corps trainees and have a great Peace Corps staff that really help to make you feel comfortable. Your PST will help you prepare for your two years of service.

Cambodia is a country in need and your community will thank you for helping. As an ETTT Volunteer, you will be busy with teaching and working on projects, you will quickly develop friendships and bond with your students. It's a great feeling when you see that you are making a difference.

You will also experience hardships at site: We all do. It's part of the experience. When I first learned I would be at a site with no electricity, I was worried as I've never lived without electricity. But after a few weeks, I got used to it; you don't have a choice but to adapt. Adapting and adjusting to change will be a big part of your Peace Corps experience, but it will make you a stronger person.

I am the first American at my site and the first American that many of my community members have ever met, but when I first arrived at site many community members were confused. I am of Sri-Lankan decent and don't fit the typical appearance of what my community sees as an American. I was taken back at first by this reaction, and sometimes felt hurt by it, but I used this as motivation to help educate my community on American diversity. If you are a minority Volunteer you may encounter some of these same reactions, but don't worry stay strong and use it as a motivation to help educate your community on America. As a Peace Corps Volunteer this is one of the most important things you can do.

Remember your time in Cambodia is short—your two years will fly by—but in these two years you will make a difference. You will form lifelong friendships with people in your community, you will change hearts and minds and, after two years, you will feel like the community is your home. You will never forget this experience; it's something special that only a few Americans get to experience. So work hard, don't sweat the small things, keep a positive attitude, and you will truly have a wonderful experience.

Congratulations and best of luck to all of you during your Peace Corps service!

—*Michael Wanigasekera*
K7 ETTT Volunteer

Dear K9s (or canines, perhaps? :)),

I vividly remember some two years ago, standing in a winding line at the front of a New York University meeting room at an event for newly accepted Peace Corps Volunteers. My fingertips tapping nervously at my sides, I peeked at the others on the line, listening as they shouted out their names followed by the

country they'd be serving in. When it was my turn, I followed suit, "My name is Glynn and I will be serving in Cambodia!" I belted out a little too loudly. A guy and girl perched at a table in the corner cheered even louder. "Whoo-hoo!" they squealed, clapping, and whistling.

After the presentation, I headed over to their table, timidly, to ask questions. "You got so lucky! It's the best country to serve in!" they gushed. At the time I was hesitant to trust their review. How could a place so far from home, with possibly no electricity or running water be hitting the jackpot? The notion scared and thrilled me all at once. But, now, as my service comes to a close, I know they were right. I did get lucky. Incredibly, wonderfully, amazingly lucky. And, with the fantastic opportunity to serve in Cambodia, so have you.

I have been lucky to serve in a country whose people have taught me to be compassionate, to relish life's small pleasures, and to remain positive, even if at times it feels impossible. I have been lucky to eat red-hot chillies and to see endless stretches of bright green rice fields, both of which have brought tears to my eyes. I have been lucky to dance all night at raucous Khmer weddings, in my finest threads, hand-in-hand with local friends who are sometimes hard to communicate with verbally, but with a language of smiles and off-beat swaying there to fill in the blanks. I have been lucky to teach students whose curiosity and drive has inspired me to no end, and whose wit and energy never cease to make me laugh. I have been insanely lucky to call a small house in small village home and have been even luckier to call the beautiful people who live there family.

What's more, I've been lucky to call members of my Peace Corps cohort and staff a part of this new extension of brothers, sisters, aunts, and uncles. That loud cheering at the NYU event? Oh, that was nothing out of the ordinary for Peace Corps/Cambodia. You'll find that we have a certain flair—a group of people who cheer loudly in support of each other and will always have your back, whether you need a second pair of eyes for a grant proposal or a shoulder to cry on.

Samnang laor means "good luck" in Khmer and in Cambodia it's an often muttered phrase. I can't begin to express how many "I wish you good luck teacher!" notes, texts, and general wishes in passing I've received from my students. And, although you've already gotten incredibly lucky with a placement in Cambodia, here's to 27 months of "samnang laor" in the 'Bodes (as I affectionately call it). I assure you, if you approach this incredible country, and incredible experience, with an open mind and an open heart, it won't be too hard to find.

Congratulations! I'm so excited for you.

—Glynn Pogue
K7 ETTT Volunteer

PACKING LIST

This list has been compiled by Volunteers serving in Cambodia and is based on their experience. Use it as an informal guide in making your own list, bearing in mind that each experience is individual. There is no perfect list! You obviously cannot bring everything on the list, so consider those items that make the most sense to you personally and professionally. You can always have things sent to you later. As you decide what to bring, keep in mind that you have a 100-pound weight limit on baggage. And remember, you can get almost everything you need in Cambodia.

General Clothing

Volunteers in-country discourage packing a lot of clothes as they are readily available in-country and tailoring is inexpensive. For women in particular, you will have to get most of your clothes for school/formal occasions made in Cambodia (Peace Corps/Cambodia staff will help you to do this during training). Volunteers also recommend not bringing white clothes, as they are difficult to keep clean.

- Two to three pairs of lightweight pants (jeans can be hot, but bring them if you like them because chances are you won't find your size here)
- Shorts (for vacation)
- Three to five T-shirts/tops (cotton, linen, or quick-dry synthetic materials are best)
- Sweatshirt or fleece top and a few long-sleeved shirts (it can get chilly during the cold season and in air conditioning in Phnom Penh)
- A windbreaker or lightweight rain jacket
- Athletic clothes and braces/supports (if you work out or play sports)
- Baseball cap or other hat

For women

- Four or five work outfits: light-colored collared blouses and dark-colored skirts (at least calf-length, nothing shorter). Cambodian women dress very conservatively; women in villages do not wear clothing that shows their knees. You can have traditional Khmer skirts made cheaply in-country. Cambodian women do not wear pants at school, but do wear them at health centers.
- Bathing suit (a one-piece is best). When you are on vacation with other foreigners, you may want a Western-style bathing suit, but be aware that Cambodian women generally swim fully clothed.
- A good supply of bras and cotton underwear, including sports bras

For men

- Five or six dress shirts (light colors, especially blue, are best)
- Four or five casual dress pants
- One necktie
- Bathing trunks (Speedo-style swimsuits are not recommended)

Shoes

Unless you wear hard-to-find sizes (for women 9 and above; for men, 12 and above), shoes, sandals, and flip-flops are easily found in Cambodia

- One pair of casual dress shoes for work
- One pair of sport sandals (e.g., Tevas/Chacos)
- One pair of athletic shoes
- One or two pairs of slip-on shoes (you will often have to take off your shoes before entering a building)

- One or two pairs of flip-flops (you will live in them when you are not at school)

Note about PST: During PST trainees should wear professional clothing to all training sessions. This means collared shirts and slacks or skirts.

Personal Hygiene and Toiletry Items

The Peace Corps medical kit contains almost everything you will need for basic first aid, though not necessarily in the brands you like. You may want to bring a three-month supply of the following items for pre-service training. After training, you will be able to find a variety of these products in local shops.

- Shampoo and conditioner
- Deodorant (available in Phnom Penh, but bring a supply of your favorite brand if you are particular)
- Good razor and supply of blades
- Sunscreen
- Allergy medication
- Tampons, sanitary napkins, or a reusable menstrual cup (some Volunteers recommend “The Keeper” or “Diva” because they are easy to clean and you do not have as much trouble disposing of your sanitary products)
- Volunteers who wear glasses should bring at least two pairs of glasses with them to Cambodia. If your glasses are lost, stolen, or broken, Peace Corps will replace **one** pair of glasses during two years of service. Sunglasses or photo gray lenses will not be provided. The Peace Corps advises against the use of contact lenses (see the Health section) and will not provide contacts or solutions.
- Nail clippers or nail care kit
- Earplugs (you may especially want them in your first few months as you are adjusting to your new surroundings)
- Heat rash powder (Gold Bond is recommended)
- Cosmetics (if you use them normally)

Electronics

- A portable music player (e.g., Walkman/Discman/MP3/iPod, etc.) and plenty of your favorite music
- Inexpensive, portable speakers (also available at a low price in Phnom Penh)
- Camera and film or digital with extra flash cards
- A voltage converter (if you are bringing any electronics)
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Alarm clock (battery-operated)
- Good batteries (solar batteries or battery rechargers may be a good alternative)
- Sturdy but inexpensive watch, preferably waterproof
- External hard drive
- E-reader

Miscellaneous

Remember, there’s not enough room in your luggage for everything. Bring what is most important to you. The things that are important to you in the U.S. are likely to be important to you in Cambodia as well.

- Sturdy backpacks (small packs for work and bike rides; larger packs for trips)
- Leatherman, Swiss Army knife, or other multipurpose tool

- A sturdy water bottle (e.g., Nalgene, Camelbak)
- Lightweight, quick-dry towel
- One or two flat sheets and a pillowcase (bedding will be provided during training)
- Zip-top bags to protect your camera, iPod, food, etc.
- Good scissors (and/or hair-cutting scissors)
- Sturdy sunglasses
- Photos of your life in the United States to show to Cambodian friends
- Small gifts from home for your host family during training and at site (magazines, coins, postcards, stamps, cool pens, hard candy, etc.)
- Contact information for resources in U.S. (former employers, colleges, organizations, etc.)
- Copies of important documents (résumé, cover letter, credit card information, etc.).
- Things from home that will make you feel more comfortable (e.g., posters, books, journals, hobbies, music, photos)

Additional Items to Consider Bringing

- Visual aids for teaching
- Your favorite dictionary
- Art supplies
- U.S. and world maps
- Travel games (e.g., chess, checkers, Frisbee, backgammon, Scrabble, Uno, Monopoly, Taboo, Trivial Pursuit, Risk—playing cards are available but associated with gambling, so these are less recommended)
- Shortwave radio
- Musical instrument
- Calendar
- Notecards, stationery, good writing pens, address book, books of U.S. stamps
- Small toolkit (including locking pliers)
- Eyeglass repair kit
- American quality pens
- Dry bags/packs

What Not To Bring

- Food
- Heavy coat
- A large quantity of clothes (tailors and fabric are readily available)
- Camouflage or military-style clothing
- A lot of language materials
- A lot of cash
- A two-year supply of toiletries
- Pots, pans, kitchen utensils, or cookstove
- Water filter (provided by the Peace Corps)
- For women: spaghetti strap tops or mini skirts

PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

The following list consists of suggestions for you to consider as you prepare to live outside the United States for two years. Not all items are relevant to everyone, and the list is not comprehensive.

Family

- Notify family that they can call the Counseling and Outreach Unit at any time if there is a critical illness or death of a family member (24-hour phone number: 855.855.1961 ext. 1470).
- Give family and friends the Peace Corps [On the Home Front](#) handbook.

Passport/Travel

- Forward to the Peace Corps travel office all paperwork for the Peace Corps passport and visas.
- Verify that your luggage meets the size and weight limits for international travel.
- Obtain a personal passport if you plan to travel after your service ends. (Your Peace Corps passport will expire three months after you finish service; if you plan to travel longer, you will need a regular passport.)

Medical/Health

- Complete any needed dental and medical work.
- If you wear glasses, bring two pairs.
- Arrange to bring a three-month supply of all medications (including birth control pills) you are currently taking.

Insurance

- Make arrangements to maintain life insurance coverage.
- Arrange to maintain supplemental health coverage while you are away. (Even though the Peace Corps is responsible for your health care during Peace Corps service abroad, it is advisable for people who have pre-existing conditions to arrange for the continuation of their supplemental health coverage. If there is a lapse in coverage, it is often difficult and expensive to be reinstated.)
- Arrange to continue Medicare coverage if applicable.

Personal Papers

- Bring a copy of your certificate of marriage or divorce.

Voting

- Register to vote in the state of your home of record. (Many state universities consider voting and payment of state taxes as evidence of residence in that state.)
- Obtain a voter registration card and take it with you overseas.
- Arrange to have an absentee ballot forwarded to you overseas.

Personal Effects

- Purchase personal property insurance to extend from the time you leave your home for service overseas until the time you complete your service and return to the United States.

Financial Management

- Keep a bank account in your name in the United States.
- Obtain student loan deferment forms from the lender or loan service. Information about loan deferment is online at peacecorps.gov/loans.
- Execute a power of attorney for the management of your property and business.

- Arrange for deductions from your readjustment allowance to pay alimony, child support, and other debts through the Office of Volunteer Financial Operations at 855.855.1961 ext. 1770.
- Place all important papers—mortgages, deeds, stocks, and bonds—in a safe deposit box or with an attorney or other caretaker.

CONTACTING PEACE CORPS HEADQUARTERS

This list of numbers will help connect you with the appropriate office at Peace Corps headquarters to answer various questions. You can use the toll-free number and extension or dial directly using the local numbers provided. Be sure to leave the toll-free number and extensions with your family so they can contact you in the event of an emergency.

Peace Corps headquarters toll-free number: 855.855.1961, press 1, then extension number (see below)

Peace Corps mailing address: Peace Corps
Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Headquarters
1111 20th Street NW
Washington, DC 20526

For Questions About	Staff	Toll-free extension	Direct/Local
Responding to an invitation	Office of Placement	ext. 1840	202.692.1840
Country information	Brian Persse Desk Officer	ext. 1184 bpersse@peacecorps.gov	202.692.1184
Plane tickets, passports, visas, or other travel matters	CWTSatoTravel	ext. 1170	202.692.1170
Legal clearance:	Office of Placement	ext. 1840	202.692.1840
Medical clearance and forms processing (includes dental)	Screening Nurse	ext. 1500	202.692.1500
Medical reimbursements (handled by a subcontractor)			800.544.1802
Loan deferments, taxes, financial operations		ext. 1770	202.692.1770
Readjustment allowance withdrawals, power of attorney, staging (pre-departure orientation), and reporting instructions	Office of Staging	ext. 1865	202.692.1865
<i>Note: You will receive comprehensive information (hotel and flight arrangements) three to five weeks prior to departure. This information is not available sooner.</i>			
Family emergencies (to get information to a Volunteer overseas) 24 hours	Counseling and Outreach Unit	ext. 1470	202.692.1470
Office of Victim Advocacy		ext. 1753 24 hours (call or text)	202.692.1753 202.409.2704