

## FELLOWS USA VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Voice #1: When you're finishing up your Peace Corps experience, you think about what that next step is. For me, the Fellows program was an opportunity to keep doing the service, but also a chance to try out something and think about my next big career step.

Voice #2: I'm working with communities and doing work that is important to people and building strengths on a community level.

Voice #3: . I knew I wanted to go into graduate school, but I knew I'd rather have work experience to start before I fully decided what type of program I really wanted to go into.

NARRATOR: Fellows/USA is a program that offers financial benefits to returned Peace Corps Volunteers who want to earn a master's degree, a doctoral degree, or professional certification. Peace Corps Fellows use the skills they developed working abroad to complete internships in underserved U.S. communities while gaining both academic credit and valuable on-the-job experience. The Fellows/USA program is offered at more than 50 universities across the country and works in partnership with community organizations.

PEI-ZEI LIN: Prior to Peace Corps, I worked in banking so I did banking for about four years and decided that I didn't really enjoy that. So I joined the Peace Corps and it sort of helped me hone in on what my interests are and I decided to study public policy. I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Burkina Faso in a rural small town. There was no running water and no electricity. I served as a secondary education volunteer where I taught math and English to 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders and it was a wonderful experience. I'd never taught before so it was very challenging. I think that it has opened my eyes to the types of things that I would like to do and the way we interact as Americans with the world. So, there were a lot of things that I considered when I thought about returning back to the States and I knew I wanted to get a graduate degree. I looked specifically at the Fellows Programs because there was a diversity of degrees that were available- not just public policy or international development.

NARRATOR: Fellows/USA partners with schools to provide education choices to accommodate a variety of needs. With hundreds of degree programs available, there is likely to be one to match your interests; and with campuses all over the country, there are multiple locations to choose from.

JUSTIN OVERDEVEST: I'm going to be at the University of Oregon for my Master's degree in an interdisciplinary program that's focusing on sustainable type issues. So, it's really been a perfect marriage of the practical- getting the PC experience of different projects, but then project management here in the

States working on economic development as well.

I'm currently working managing a rural economic development project and we're working with youth entrepreneurship through the WK Kellogg Foundation.

MARK PEERIE: Justin's been a support to us in terms of what we're trying to do with our students in small business development here. We have a philosophy in using the community as a classroom. So, somebody who has experience with Peace Corps has experience with worldwide issues and bringing any kind of knowledge of the global economy or current events into an environment like this is healthy because a lot of our students may not know what's going on outside of Lincoln city or Lincoln County.

NARRATOR: No matter how a particular Fellows/USA program is structured, Fellows complete a substantial, degree-related internship that focuses on real community needs. Fellows work under the guidance of school mentors and community partners who are dedicated professionals. Internships may be part time or full time, and vary in length from three months to two years.

MARIAN PARSONS: You're placed with a service or a nonprofit organization or a municipal government or a county government so you essentially have a high level of responsibility and you're focused on a specific project so the caliber of work that you do and the need that you're meeting is really high. Similar to Peace Corps in that you have to come in and you have to project design and management and implement all of these projects and you're in charge of them. So the amount of professional experience that you gain through the Fellows program is fantastic.

NARRATOR: A basic component of every Fellows/USA program is financial aid designed to reduce students' out-of-pocket expenses. Depending on the partner school, Fellows receive benefits that may include reduced tuition, scholarships, assistantships, stipends, health insurance, or housing allowances.

ALYSSA BITTENBENDER: I think another benefit of the Fellows Program is that there's an incredible network of RPCVs. I've met my roommates through the Fellows list serve and I found housing through that and then they've been helping me with my course schedule and places to find internships.

ILLANA LANCASTER: The Fellows program naturally gives you a community, an intellectual community, so people are not just talking about, in my case, education, but I'm in this community with other educators or people who've had the experience being on the ground, bringing another perspective, a global perspective to classrooms.

JENNIFER FORNEY: The cohesion is very clear among the students from start

to finish. They not only come in with that special bond, it is enhanced when they become a part of our student community. They have established an RPCV alumni group, they participate in professional development seminars, and also a number of service activities throughout the community and region.

NARRATOR: Peace Corps Volunteers of any age who satisfactorily complete their service have lifetime eligibility for Fellows/USA. This program will help you bring your skills talents and experiences back home. In fact, internships may lead to permanent job offers from community partners. Regardless of the path you take, you will have the experience and credentials to excel at a career anywhere in the world.

PEI -ZEI LIN: After graduate school, I started working at the State Department on a contract and I worked as a partnership analyst for the Global Partnership Center.

ILLANA LANCASTER: My PhD is in International Education Policy and I'm currently the project director for the Prince George's teaching corps fellows partnership at George Washington University.

REENA LICHTENFELD: There is a wide variety of careers that students go into when they graduate. They go into NGO non-profit, they go into the for-profit sector with multinationals. We have a student now with Exxon-Mobil. We've had students working with NGOs such as Chemonics, Axion, International Development Fund, World Bank, and Habitat for Humanity.

Voice #4: If the program suits your needs, if it does draw to your interests, I would say it's probably one of the best opportunities that are out there.

NARRATOR: For more information on the Peace Corps Fellows/USA program, please visit the Peace Corps website: HYPERLINK "http://www.peacecorps.gov/fellows" [www.peacecorps.gov/fellows](http://www.peacecorps.gov/fellows) or send us an e-mail at HYPERLINK "mailto:fellows@peacecorps.gov" [fellows@peacecorps.gov](mailto:fellows@peacecorps.gov).

9/01/09