



# Master's International Coordinators' Guide

Your Guide to Designing and Maintaining a Successful Program on Campus



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## Important Notice: Change to the Application Process for Students

Please note that prospective Master's International students should first apply and be accepted to their graduate program and then apply to the Peace Corps. Previously, students had to apply to the Peace Corps first and to the Master's International program at their chosen university second. This process has now been reversed.

## Introducing Master's International

Since its inception, the Peace Corps has enjoyed a productive and mutually beneficial relationship with the academic community. The Master's International program was established in 1987 at Rutgers University, Camden to provide the Peace Corps with Volunteers with advanced skillsets and to afford potential Volunteers academic preparation and experiential learning opportunities in specialized skill areas.

Master's International is a partnership program between the Peace Corps and select universities that allows students to incorporate Peace Corps Volunteer service into a master's degree. It is designed to fulfill three basic needs:

1. Meet the demand from Peace Corps host countries for Volunteers with higher levels of education and technical expertise.
2. Provide faculty and campus administrators options for experiential learning abroad for their students.
3. Enable prospective Peace Corps candidates to combine Peace Corps service with graduate school.

The Master's International program is flexible and can accommodate varying academic requirements at each university. Typically, students complete a minimum of one year of on-campus academic course work, followed by 27 months of Peace Corps service. After Peace Corps service, students complete any remaining degree requirements designated by the university. Upon graduation, these students enjoy the credibility of both a graduate-level education and two years of substantive, professional field experience in an international setting.

This guide has been designed as a resource to assist you in developing and maintaining a successful Master's International program at your university. For additional information, please contact the Master's International program staff in the Office of University Programs (UP) at Peace Corps headquarters at 855.855.1961 ext. 1812 or via email at [mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov](mailto:mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov). For additional information and insight, please contact other Master's International universities, whose staff can provide their perspective and advice on implementing and administering a program.

## Section 1: Getting Started: General Information

### The Need for Master's International

More than 215,000 Americans have served in the Peace Corps since the agency was established in 1961. The Peace Corps is currently active in more than 60 countries throughout Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Pacific. Peace Corps Volunteers serve for 27 months, sharing their technical expertise, creativity, flexibility, and dedication with people all over the world. (Please refer to the Peace Corps website at [peacecorps.gov/openings/](http://peacecorps.gov/openings/) to see upcoming Volunteer assignments.)

As the needs of its host countries evolve, the Peace Corps consistently strives to attract individuals with the appropriate level of education, experience, and cross-cultural sensitivity to facilitate sustainable, community-centered development. There are thousands of Peace Corps Volunteer opportunities for those with a college degree. In particular, the Peace Corps has a need for individuals with expertise in specialized skill areas such as agriculture, education, environment, and health. Master's International is designed to address the need for highly skilled Volunteers while providing graduate students with the opportunity for practical training and professional experience.

### *Benefits of the Master's International Program*

Master's International students receive many benefits from participating in the program. International field experience, along with second language fluency often acquired during service, give students a competitive edge in the job market. All aspects of Volunteer service are paid for by the Peace Corps.

Recognizing the value of Peace Corps service, the U.S. government provides for the deferment and/or cancellation of certain government-backed educational loans. Learn more about the Peace Corps and student loans at [peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/whyvol/during/loans/options/](http://peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/whyvol/during/loans/options/).

To learn more about the Department of Education's Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, visit this webpage: [studentaid.ed.gov/repay-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/charts/public-service](http://studentaid.ed.gov/repay-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/charts/public-service)

Peace Corps service also results in noncompetitive eligibility for federal government jobs for one year after the completion of service or when full-time status as a student ends. More information on student loans and on noncompetitive eligibility is available on the Peace Corps website at [peacecorps.gov/resources/returned/careercen/noncomp/](http://peacecorps.gov/resources/returned/careercen/noncomp/).

The institutions participating in the Master's International program benefit as well. The university can offer its students low-cost, professionally relevant field experience in an international setting at no cost to the university. Faculty advisers expand their own academic and experiential base through the students' work in new environments abroad.

The Master's International program is also a useful recruitment tool to boost admission efforts. Master's International schools will attest that the program attracts high-caliber students who are mature, motivated, and committed to their studies.

### *University Support for Students*

The memorandum of agreement (MOA) sets forth a formal record of understanding between the Peace Corps and the university, which includes incentives offered to Master's International students by the university. In many cases, academic credit is earned for a Volunteer's time in service. Otherwise, some form of financial aid or scholarship is offered. In most cases, Peace Corps service should contribute to existing academic requirements for a thesis, a professional paper, a practicum, student teaching, independent study, or foreign language proficiency.

Both the university and the Peace Corps take on specific responsibilities for the training and support of graduate students. The Peace Corps places students abroad in projects that meet the needs and requests of host countries while also affording opportunities for students to work, typically in secondary projects, relevant to their academic studies. Volunteer assignments always influence students' subsequent choices of research topics.

All partner institutions offer Master's International students incentives to help them complete their Volunteer assignments and earn their degrees. Examples of these incentives include the following:

- Academic credit for Peace Corps service
- Reduced or waived fees for credits earned during Peace Corps service
- Credit for language skills gained during Peace Corps service
- Scholarships
- Research or teaching assistantships
- Out-of-state tuition waivers

In addition, the memorandum of agreement requires that Master's International partners have a contingency plan in place so that students who are unable to complete their Peace Corps service can still earn their graduate degrees.

## Section 2: The Master's International Coordinator: Your Role as a Key Player

### *Launching a Successful Master's International Program on Your Campus*

#### **Your School's Choice of a Coordinator**

The Master's International coordinator serves as the university's primary liaison to the Peace Corps. He or she designs and establishes the Master's International program on campus, publicizes the program to faculty and students, works with the graduate school admissions office to recruit students, and acts as a point of contact with Peace Corps staff.

The Master's International coordinator should be well versed in the benefits and requirements of the Master's International program, as he or she will be the primary point of contact for Master's International inquiries and matriculating students.

The Master's International coordinator can be a dean, associate dean, chair or professor of an academic department, admissions director, director of international programs, or another faculty member or administrator. If the coordinator serves in a non-academic administrative role at the college or university, the Peace Corps recommends that at least one faculty member be involved in the ongoing management of the program, as faculty support is essential to the success of the Master's International program. The Master's International coordinator should be allowed sufficient time by the university to ensure that the program is firmly established and running effectively.

#### **Coordinator Responsibilities**

Coordinator responsibilities include the following:

- Using Peace Corps media resources to develop promotional materials, including maintaining Master's International pages on the university's website.
- Providing the Peace Corps a completed marketing template in order to publicize the Master's International partnership on the Peace Corps website.
- Publicizing and promoting the program both within and beyond the university.
- Advocating on campus for program resources.
- Responding to all inquiries from prospective students.
- Processing applications in collaboration with the campus admissions office.
- Advising and supporting students both on campus and abroad.
- Responding in a timely manner to requests from the Peace Corps.

- Providing liaison and corresponding on a regular basis with Peace Corps staff on behalf of the program and Master's International students.
- Working with returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) on campus, recruiters, and your Peace Corps regional recruitment office to help recruit and inform students about the program.
- Incorporating lessons learned from the Volunteer experience into academic curricula and the Master's International campus program, as appropriate.
- Working with faculty advisers to ensure they are aware of the requirements of and possibilities offered by the program.

### **Campus Resources for the Coordinator**

The coordinator is encouraged to utilize the many resources available on campus. The following is a list of campus resources Master's International coordinators have relied on to reach potential participants at minimal expense:

- Academic bulletins and catalogs
- Internet bulletin boards
- Student union public announcement boards
- Student associations
- Social networking sites
- University newspapers
- University websites and department web pages
- Academic advisers
- Graduate admissions offices
- International program offices
- Career centers
- Chairpersons of departments offering courses within the Master's International curriculum
- Returned Peace Corps Volunteer groups on campus and in the community
- Peace Corps recruiters

### **Coordinating with the Peace Corps Office of University Programs**

The Office of University Programs at Peace Corps headquarters works closely with the Master's International coordinator to meet the program's shared goals and to create



realistic expectations of Volunteer service among faculty and program participants. The coordinator should maintain regular communication with students on campus, as well as with students serving abroad.

In addition, the coordinator will be asked to complete and submit a student census and report to Master's International program staff at Peace Corps headquarters on an annual basis. The purpose of the report is to confirm individual admissions of Master's International students and to provide statistical data as well as feedback on Master's International programs.

### *Chronology of Establishing a Master's International Program*

The establishment of a Master's International program can take approximately one to three years, largely depending on the capacity of the academic program, support from the university, and the amount of financial aid offered to attract students to the program. A typical chronology of program design and implementation follows:

- The Office of University Programs staff and the coordinator review program details within 60 days of signing the MOA to address any problems or questions arising as the program takes shape.
- With help from Peace Corps staff, the university page on the Peace Corps website is set up with a link to the Master's International page on the university's website.
- Prospective Master's International students apply to the university first **and then** to the Peace Corps.
- Students start their master's programs.
- Students reach out to a recruiter and then complete the online Peace Corps application within one year of when they wish to depart for the Peace Corps. The application can be completed in approximately one hour.

Once you have established your Master's International program, you and your Peace Corps point of contact should share regular updates regarding student participation and program development.

The typical student life cycle follows:

- Students apply to the Master's International program at your university.
- Students complete initial course work.
- Students apply to the Peace Corps one year or within one year before they wish to begin service. Volunteer opportunities are posted by the Peace Corps about 12 months before Volunteers are expected to arrive in country.
- After assessment of the students' skills and abilities through the Peace Corps application process, students receive an invitation to a specific Peace Corps assignment.
- Students complete up to three months of Peace Corps training and two years of Volunteer service, documenting their experience according to the academic requirements established by their university.
- Students return to campus to complete any required course work and receive their degrees.

### **Section 3: We're Here to Help: The Peace Corps' Role**

#### *Role of the Peace Corps Office of University Programs*

##### **General Programmatic Support**

Located in the University Programs (UP) division of the Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP), the Master's International program staff—consisting of a program specialist for each of the five domestic regions in the U.S.—are the Peace Corps staff members responsible for the general oversight and advocacy of the Master's International program. Your program specialist serves as the primary liaison between Peace Corps headquarters and your school. He or she will contact you to introduce herself or himself and then to communicate about management of the Master's International program.

In addition, UP staff promotes the program nationally, supports new program development, helps universities maintain and strengthen existing programs, and supports students completing the Peace Corps application process.

UP staff also assists students seeking clarification while going through the placement process. Master's International program staff monitors the administration and management of the program, produces and disseminates national Master's International materials, maintains the Peace Corps Master's International webpage, educates Peace Corps staff, and promotes the program within the agency.

UP also oversees the sister program to Master's International, the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program. Coverdell Fellows offers returned Peace Corps Volunteers a lifelong opportunity to receive financial aid and study at graduate school programs across the country. For more information on Coverdell Fellows, visit [peacecorps.gov/fellows](http://peacecorps.gov/fellows).

## **Peace Corps Website Support and Cooperation**

Direct links to all Master's International schools and contact information for coordinators are listed on the Peace Corps website. Master's International schools are required to provide up-to-date information for their page on the Peace Corps website, as well as to maintain a page on their own school's website describing their Master's International program. Master's International program staff, with the assistance of the coordinators, ensures that links from the Peace Corps website to each partner's webpage are kept up to date. In addition, further information about the program is available on the Peace Corps website at [peacecorps.gov/masters](http://peacecorps.gov/masters).

## ***Other Peace Corps Offices***

There are a number of other Peace Corps offices and staff that support Master's International students through the various stages of their Peace Corps service, listed below.

## **Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection**

The Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection handles all applications to the Peace Corps. It is divided into three major operations: recruitment, placement, and staging.

## **Regional Recruitment Offices**

The recruitment operation is comprised of eight regional offices located throughout the United States—in Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, D.C.—which are responsible for directing interested individuals to the application process. The Peace Corps regional recruiting offices schedule recruitment trips to participating Master's International schools, visiting most each academic year. University Programs staff keep the recruitment staff updated about the Master's International programs offered nationwide. Recruiters may seek your assistance in setting up class talks or general informational meetings for prospective undergraduate Peace Corps candidates.

It is advisable that Master's International students reach out to Recruitment prior to applying. Recruiters can assist students with ensuring their skills align with the sector they are interested in or can recommend how to gain the required skills for the sector they are interested in.

## Placement

The Peace Corps Placement Office screens, interviews, and conducts suitability assessments for Peace Corps applicants. The Peace Corps now offers a great deal of choice in its application and placement process, and Master's International students can apply to their top three programmatic choices. Applicants are encouraged to be open-minded and to designate "Anywhere I am needed" as a selection option. At the same time, the Placement Office screens candidates for suitability and skills and matches them to assignments based on education, experience, and medical support needs (if any). It is important to understand that ultimately all Placement Office decisions are driven by the requests the Peace Corps receives from its host countries.

## Office of Medical Services

The Office of Medical Services is part of the Office Health Services, which is dedicated to assuring the physical and emotional health of Volunteers abroad. There is a medical officer posted in each Peace Corps host country who trains Volunteers to maximize their own health and safety in-country and responds to their individual health needs as they arise. Before students are assigned to a Peace Corps project, applicants must submit a Health History Form to Peace Corps headquarters. All individuals' records are reviewed to ensure they are medically qualified to serve as Peace Corps Volunteers. There are some medical conditions the Peace Corps cannot accommodate; there are other conditions that need special accommodation and/or support.

## Counseling and Outreach Unit

The Counseling and Outreach Unit (COU) is part of the Peace Corps Office of Health Services. Its role is to support Volunteers when mental health issues arise in the field. COU works closely with the Office of Medical Services to provide appropriate services for Volunteers, including phone counseling, one-on-one counseling in Washington, D.C., and consultation with medical professionals. Additionally, COU assists posts in the event of widespread emergencies such as evacuation.

## Peace Corps Country Staff

Every Peace Corps post has a country director and a director of programming and training, who supervise one or more associate Peace Corps directors (APCD) and/or program managers. Depending on the country's projects, a post may have several APCDs managing projects in different sectors. A country may, for example, have an APCD or program manager for health projects, one for community and economic development projects, one for agricultural and environmental projects, and one for educational projects. APCDs provide supervision, guidance, and moral support to Master's International students and other Volunteers assigned to their posts.

## Office of Safety and Security

The safety and security of Peace Corps Volunteers is the agency's highest priority. The Peace Corps devotes significant resources to providing Volunteers with the training, support, and information they need to stay healthy and safe. For additional information about the Peace Corps' safety efforts, visit [peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/safety/](http://peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/safety/).

## Office of Victim Advocacy

The Office of Victim Advocacy is a resource to currently serving and returned Volunteers who have been victims of crimes during their service, and works to ensure Volunteers have access to the full range of support services provided by the Peace Corps. Trained victim advocates are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to Peace Corps Volunteers. The Office of Victim Advocacy can be reached at 202.409.2704 or at [victimadvocate@peacecorps.gov](mailto:victimadvocate@peacecorps.gov).

## Section 4: Logo Usage and Marketing

### Logo Usage

As a Peace Corps university partner, you have the right to use the Peace Corps logo to recruit students to your Master's International program. When you are first invited to join the Master's International program, you will receive a brief manual on logo usage. You may request additional copies of this manual from your program specialist or from [mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov](mailto:mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov). In all cases, use of the logo must be pre-approved by Office of University Programs staff.

### Additional Peace Corps Marketing Materials

As a Master's International partner, you are permitted to use Peace Corps taglines, photos, and other media-related materials. Many of these additional resources can be found online:

- Media Resources: [peacecorps.gov/resources/media/mediare/](http://peacecorps.gov/resources/media/mediare/)
- Public Service Announcements: [peacecorps.gov/resources/media/psa/](http://peacecorps.gov/resources/media/psa/)

For use of these Peace Corps photos, web banners, public service announcements, and the like, please abide by the terms and conditions on the website.

## Section 5: The Peace Corps Application and Placement Process

Students should apply to the Master's International program at your university first and to the Peace Corps second. The Peace Corps application and placement process can take about a year to complete, so students should apply to the Peace Corps within one year of when they wish to depart. As part of the application process, the Peace Corps will ask the student for a copy of an official letter from your school's Master's International program affirming that he or she has been accepted to your program.

Students seeking detailed information on the application and placement process should speak to their Peace Corps recruiter and/or refer to the following:

[peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/howvol/applynow/](http://peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/howvol/applynow/)

## Section 6: Master's International Students' Responsibilities on Campus and Overseas

Master's International students are expected to do the following:

- Complete the Peace Corps application and respond in a timely manner to requests for further information, if needed.
- Inform the Master's International coordinator of changes or delays that occur during the Peace Corps placement process.
- After applying, update personal contact information in the Applicant Portal and the Medical Portal.
- Schedule regular meetings with the Master's International coordinator and faculty adviser as needed.
- Comply with all Peace Corps rules and regulations while serving as a Volunteer.
- Maintain your school's required academic standing and fulfill academic requirements in a timely manner.
- Serve as a positive representative for the Master's International program and for peers both on campus and abroad.
- Take responsibility, once abroad, for communicating with the faculty adviser and the Master's International coordinator on a regular basis.
- Strive to fulfill the Third Goal of the Peace Corps upon completion of service: To promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

## Section 7: Frequently Asked Questions

### *Where can my Master's International students find more information?*

Detailed information about the Master's International program tailored for students and potential students is located on the Peace Corps website at [peacecorps.gov/volunteer/graduate/mastersint/lifecycle/](http://peacecorps.gov/volunteer/graduate/mastersint/lifecycle/)

### *What does a Master's International Volunteer do?*

The Peace Corps makes every effort to place Master's International Volunteers in projects relevant to their course of study. When a primary project directly related to the Volunteer's course work is not possible, the Volunteer may design a secondary project collaboratively with their faculty adviser that meets degree requirements. Some sample projects designed by Master's International students have included the following:

- Introducing photography and other visual arts to local youth in Azerbaijan through educational programs.
- Designing and building a schoolhouse made from recycled plastic bottles in Guatemala.
- Interviewing providers and patients at health facilities throughout the island nation of Vanuatu in order to promote participatory hygiene and sanitation.
- Raising HIV/AIDS awareness by encouraging youth in Kazakhstan to submit untold secrets written on artistic postcards through a program called "Post Secret Kazakhstan."
- Developing economic and community organization methods for the Association of Tourism Development in El Salvador.

### *What are the benefits of being a Master's International student?*

The foremost benefit of Master's International is that students gain both a master's degree and two years of international experience. In addition, schools provide a combination of credits, scholarships, tuition waivers, or other forms of financial aid. These benefits are unique to each school.

In addition to receiving excellent training and practical experience, Master's International students receive all the standard benefits of Peace Corps service. More information is at [peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/whyvol](http://peacecorps.gov/volunteer/learn/whyvol).

### *When will students receive their Peace Corps assignments?*

The Peace Corps application process can take about 12 months to complete. Peace Corps host countries submit requests for Volunteers generally about 12 months prior to the scheduled start date of training. The Peace Corps Placement Office works to ensure a successful fit for each student's skills and experience and the programming needs in the country. Further, the Placement Office makes every effort to select available projects that most closely match a student's technical and language skills and the graduate degree the student is pursuing. The Peace Corps will extend an invitation to service only when an appropriate match between the nominee and country of service and project is made. This will occur between four and nine months before departure.

### *What determines the degree programs offered through Master's International?*

Degrees are offered in areas of study sought by the Peace Corps at the time new schools are added to the program.

### *What is the role of the faculty adviser?*

Faculty advisers are particularly crucial to a Master's International students' graduate experiences. The faculty adviser will help identify an academic project that is suited to the student's Volunteer project. Master's International students and their faculty advisers should remain in communication throughout the duration of the student's service abroad. Some Master's International schools even arrange for site visits by the adviser to the country of service.

### *Where might students serve in the Peace Corps?*

The invitation will specify both a country of service and an assignment area. There are many factors involved in making a placement, including the selection criteria set by the countries, the student's academic skills, possible medical accommodations needed, and programmatic availability. While students are encouraged to express preferences for particular assignments, it is not always possible for the Peace Corps to invite students to a specific country or project within the country the applicant has selected.

### *How do students combine Peace Corps service with their academic projects?*

Peace Corps Volunteers serve abroad for 27 months. This includes three months of technical, cross-cultural, and language training that takes place in the country of service prior to beginning work on assigned projects. Volunteers typically say that it takes at least one year to get adjusted, learn the language, and establish the necessary credibility in the host community before they can start working on their Master's International



academic project. The Master's International program staff encourages patience with this process: The results are worth the wait.

### ***Are Master's International students treated differently from other Peace Corps Volunteers?***

Master's International students have the same responsibilities as other Peace Corps Volunteers. They will need to discuss their status as a Master's International student to the Peace Corps staff in the host country of service and determine appropriate ways of integrating their studies into their Volunteer work. The Office of University Programs staff can support participants in preparing for this aspect of their Peace Corps service. It will provide a letter of introduction sharing information about the graduate program and the student's academic preparation to the country director. It is important to emphasize that once abroad, academic work cannot take precedence over Volunteer responsibilities.

### ***Can one get a Ph.D. through Master's International?***

Master's International currently has only one partnership that offers an opportunity to earn a doctoral degree. Master's International's sister program for returned Peace Corps Volunteers, the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program, offers many more such opportunities. The Master's International program is always open to expanding to additional partnerships with doctoral programs in the future.

### ***How is Master's International different from entering graduate school and the Peace Corps separately?***

As a Master's International student, academic work is integrated with Peace Corps service. In some cases, the school will offer credits for Peace Corps service and may waive or reduce the cost of these credits. Master's International students further have the benefit of graduate school classes to prepare them for Peace Corps service and of a faculty adviser's technical expertise and support as they identify and address areas of need abroad.

### ***Does the Peace Corps provide financial support to Master's International students?***

The Peace Corps does not provide scholarships to Master's International students. However, some student loans can be deferred or partially canceled (depending on loan type) in connection with Peace Corps service. Peace Corps service can also apply toward the Department of Education's Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. While serving as a Volunteer, all costs are covered by the Peace Corps, including transportation, medical care, and living expenses. In addition, the Peace Corps provides a modest readjustment allowance, which is paid at the end of service. Most schools provide

students with an opportunity for research or teaching assistantships, scholarships, or tuition waivers to offset the cost of credits earned while in the Peace Corps.

### ***What happens if Master's International students don't complete Peace Corps service?***

Master's International students who do not complete their service will need to work with the university and their Master's International coordinator to determine how the early termination of their Peace Corps service will affect degree completion. All Master's International programs are required to have a contingency plan that allows students who cannot finish their Peace Corps service to still earn their graduate degrees.

## **Section 8: Common Peace Corps Terms**

**Africa (AF):** One of the three geographic regions where the Peace Corps sends Volunteers; also the name of the Peace Corps department responsible for overseeing programming in this region.

**Assignment:** Refers to the program area in which a Volunteer is working (e.g., Environment); can also refer to the program area together with the location (e.g., Environment, Burkina Faso).

**Associate Peace Corps Director (APCD):** Peace Corps staff member responsible for programming, administration, and support of Volunteer projects in-country. Also sometimes called a program manager.

**Close of Service (COS):** The end of a Volunteer's completed term. This includes an end-of-service conference that is held for each Peace Corps Volunteer.

**Counseling and Outreach Unit (COU):** Headquarters unit responsible for the behavioral health of Peace Corps Volunteers. COU works closely with Peace Corps medical officers, country staff, and headquarters staff to provide consultation and training on issues concerning the emotional health of Volunteers, as well as handles emergencies affecting trainees, Volunteers, or their families.

**Country Director (CD):** Senior Peace Corps official in the country of assignment; responsible for all aspects of the Peace Corps program in that country.

**Country of Service:** Not to be confused with "COS," this is the country where the Volunteer lives and performs his or her Peace Corps service.

**Description of Service (DOS):** Official Peace Corps record or statement of service for returned Volunteers.

Director of Programming and Training (DPT): Peace Corps staff member who directs program and training efforts in the country of assignment.

Enter on Duty (EOD): The act of formally beginning Peace Corps service.

Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia (EMA): One of the three geographic regions where the Peace Corps sends Volunteers, and also the name of the Peace Corps department responsible for overseeing programming in this region.

Health History Form (HHF): A description of medical readiness for Peace Corps service.

Inter-America and the Pacific (IAP): One of the three geographic regions where the Peace Corps sends Volunteers, and also the name of the Peace Corps department responsible for overseeing programming in this region.

Invitation: Email inviting a prospective Volunteer to serve in the Peace Corps, which includes the volunteer assignment description and other country-specific information.

Medical Application Portal (MAP): The Peace Corps' online system for managing the candidate medical clearance process.

Medical Separation (MedSep): The classification of a Volunteer who was separated from the agency for medical reasons. Volunteers who medically separate are eligible for the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA): The agreement signed between the Peace Corps and a university in order to establish a Master's International program.

Noncompetitive Eligibility (NCE): One year of eligibility available for federal employment that permits a returned Peace Corps Volunteer with the relevant qualifications to apply for employment with certain federal agencies without going through the formalities of the competitive process. The eligibility is available to Volunteers who satisfactorily complete a full tour, as well as, at the discretion of the country director, Volunteers who have completed at least one year of service and have ended their service early for reasons outside of their control but have served for a sufficient period of time.

National Peace Corps Association (NPCA): Private, nonprofit alumni association, not affiliated with the Peace Corps, that serves as an organizational umbrella for returned Peace Corps Volunteer groups and their members.

Office of Health Services (OHS): Headquarters office that provides medical screening, in-service health care, and post-service support to trainees and Volunteers.

Office of Medical Services (OMS): Peace Corps office responsible for assuring medical viability of Volunteers.

Office of Programming and Training Support (OPATS): Headquarters office that assists Peace Corps posts with the resources they need to improve the effectiveness of their programming and training. OPATS provides training and support for overseas staff who, in turn, train and support Volunteers.

Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP): Peace Corps office that coordinates and oversees the development and implementation of partnerships and donor engagement to support the agency's three goals and enhance programs through every stage of the Volunteer life cycle. Both the Master's International program and the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows program operate within this office, in the Office of University Programs (UP).

Office of Victim Advocacy (OVA): Headquarters office that provides information and assistance to Volunteers and trainees who are the victims of crime.

Public Affairs Specialist (PAS): Peace Corps regional recruitment office staff member responsible for public communications and press relations.

Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program: A graduate school program for returned Peace Corps Volunteers (formerly known as Fellows/USA).

Peace Corps Trainee (PCT): Prospective Peace Corps Volunteer during the period of the staging event through the completion of pre-service training.

Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV): U.S. citizen who has completed pre-service training and has been sworn in as a Volunteer.

Placement: Peace Corps process of determining both suitability to serve and, if a candidate is selected as a Volunteer, where and in what capacity s/he will serve.

Pre-Service Training (PST): Period of approximately eight to 12 weeks of training in language, intercultural, safety, and technical skills that precedes Volunteer service.

Project Sectors: (Also known as "program areas.") These are the professional fields or sectors in which Peace Corps Volunteers conduct their work, namely: Agriculture, Community and Economic Development, Education, Environment, Health, and Youth in Development.

Recruiter: A Peace Corps employee, typically not based at headquarters, who is a resource for candidates in the initial stages of applying to the Peace Corps.

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV): Peace Corps Volunteer who has completed his/her service.

Regional Recruitment Office (RRO): One of the various offices across the United States, through which the Peace Corps recruits new Volunteers. RROs may also offer marketing and recruitment services.

Returned Volunteer Services (RVS): The department within the Peace Corps that provides career, education, readjustment, and other services to returned Volunteers.

University Programs (UP): One of the three sub-offices in the Office of Strategic Partnerships, which is located in Peace Corps headquarters. UP oversees the Master's International and Coverdell Fellows programs and supports collaboration with domestic partners.

Volunteer Assignment Description (VAD): Profile of the project to which the Peace Corps has assigned a Volunteer. It provides a general description of the Volunteer's assignment.

Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (VRS): The division of the Peace Corps that recruits and places Volunteers.

World Wise Schools (WWS): A Peace Corps program that helps American schoolchildren learn about the world's diverse peoples, cultures, and geography through contact with Peace Corps Volunteers. Master's International students are encouraged to participate in WWS.

## Section 9: Peace Corps Contact Information

You can always call the Peace Corps toll-free at 855.855.1961.  
[peacecorps.gov](http://peacecorps.gov)

Master's International

Master's International Program Staff Ext. 1812 or 202.692.1812  
Fax 202.692.1490  
[mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov](mailto:mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov)

Placement Office Ext. 1840 or 202.692.1903  
Fax 202.692.1897  
[miplacement@peacecorps.gov](mailto:miplacement@peacecorps.gov)

Legal Questions Ext. 1845 or 202.692.1845  
Fax 202.692.1898

Medical and Dental Clearance

Office of Medical Services Ext. 1500 or 202.692.1500  
Fax 202.692.1561

Office of Medical Services, Pre-Service Unit  
Ext. 4049  
[pre-serviceunit@peacecorps.gov](mailto:pre-serviceunit@peacecorps.gov)

Loan Deferment Questions Ext. 1784 or 202.692.1170

Passports/Visas/Travel Arrangements Ext. 1170 or 202.692.1170  
(CWT Sato Travel)  
Staging Office Ext. 1871 or 202.692.1871  
[staging@peacecorps.gov](mailto:staging@peacecorps.gov)

Regional Recruiting Offices 855.855.1961  
Your call will be directed to your local recruiting office.  
(You may also call direct using the phone numbers below.)

Atlanta (AL, FL, GA, MS, SC, TN, PR, Virgin Islands) 404.562.3456  
Chicago (IL, IN, KY, MI, MO, OH, IA, MN, ND SD, WI) 312.353.4990  
Dallas (AR, LA, NM, OK, TX, CO, KS, NE, UT, WY) 214.253.5400  
Los Angeles (AZ, Southern CA) 310.356.1100  
New York (CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT) 212.352.5440  
San Francisco (HI, Northern CA, NV) 510.452.8444  
Seattle (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA) 206.553.5490  
Washington, D.C. (DC, DE, MD, NC, VA, WV) 202.692.1040

For the most up-to-date information, you may also [follow this link.](#)