



Open Government Plan

The Peace Corps

June 1, 2012

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1. Introduction

President Obama signed the [Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government](#) on his first day in office. On December 8, 2009, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued memo M-10-06, titled [Open Government Directive](#), to executive departments and agencies. This memo dictates specific actions, with the goal of transforming the way government operates by creating a culture of transparency, participation, and collaboration. The directive provided guidelines for creating a plan to document progress toward meeting the goals of the Open Government Directive.

The Peace Corps Open Government Plan has been developed and updated in accordance with the Open Government Directive. Its purpose is to describe how the Peace Corps will incorporate the principles of the [Open Government Initiative](#) into its regular operations. This update also reports on the status of the first flagship initiative and outlines plans for the agency's four new initiatives.

The Peace Corps' mission is to promote world peace and friendship. While much has changed in the world since the Peace Corps' founding in 1961, its mission has not. The Peace Corps' three goals are as relevant today as they were more than 50 years ago:

- 1) To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.
- 2) To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
- 3) To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

The Peace Corps carries out its mission and goals by assisting interested countries with their development needs and building cross-cultural understanding, while providing efficient and effective support to ensure a positive Volunteer experience for a diverse group of Americans.

Since 1961, over 200,000 Americans have served as Peace Corps Volunteers living and working side-by-side with local community members in 139 countries around the world. These Volunteers foster positive relationships with the people of those countries, represent the diverse faces of America, and promote sustainable development. During and after their service, Volunteers share with the American people their stories about life overseas, the people they served, and their cultural experiences.

The principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration are at the heart of the agency's work. Volunteers work side-by-side with host country partners, engaging the communities around them. When Volunteers return to the United States, they share their experiences with others, explicitly through Third Goal programs (where returned Volunteers share their Peace Corps experience and information about host country cultures), as well as through their everyday interactions with fellow Americans.

2. Open Government at the Peace Corps

With partnership and participation being central to the work of the Peace Corps, the development of the Open Government Plan began with an assessment of ongoing activities that aligned with Open Government principles. Opportunities to enhance or incorporate these principles into new areas were also examined.

This plan is considered a living document, and the agency will listen to comments and incorporate suggestions in future versions. By institutionalizing the values of transparency, participation, and collaboration into existing structures and processes, the agency will further strengthen the principles of Open Government within its operations.

2.1 *Open Government Structure*

The original plan was developed through work guided by the Peace Corps' Open Government Steering Committee. The committee collected employee and public input; this feedback was incorporated into the plan.

Agency leaders and staff from around the agency were consulted during the update of the plan. The Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning coordinated efforts across the agency to collect feedback and further integrate Open Government ideals into ongoing operations at headquarters and in the field.

2.2 *Public Engagement*

The Peace Corps used its Open Government portal (www.peacecorps.gov/open) to begin its initial engagement of the public for comments and ideas on Open Government issues. The agency will continue to explore a variety of ways to increase public and staff engagement, promote creative solutions to agency problems, and champion Open Government as an integral part of Peace Corps' culture.

The Peace Corps engages the public in a number of ways, both domestically and abroad. One example of how the agency has been engaging the American public since 1964 is the Peace Corps Partnership Program, which links interested private-sector donors with small, community-initiated, Volunteer-led development projects in the countries where Volunteers serve.

The agency provides various opportunities for the public to learn more about the agency directly from Volunteers, through programs like Volunteers in Action Recruiting Others, where currently serving Volunteers speak at various regional recruitment events.

Additionally, thousands of Americans follow the work and experiences of Volunteers through emails, blogs, and social media.

2.3. Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Engagement

The Peace Corps has a unique constituency in returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs), with whom the agency works to achieve its mission. When Volunteers return home, they share the knowledge gained from their experiences while serving in developing nations and contribute to the Peace Corps' Third Goal. Sharing their experience with Americans also provides insight into what the agency does. This interaction bridges the gap between the government and the American people, as well as with other countries.

The agency keeps RPCVs involved in the work of the agency through quarterly and monthly e-newsletters, including *RPCV Hotline* and *Peace Corps Update*. These newsletters provide RPCVs with career advice, job openings, advanced education opportunities, and information about major agency initiatives. Additionally, the agency manages a Speaker's Match program that provides RPCVs with opportunities to share their stories through classrooms, panels, conferences, and other venues around the country.

Through the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program, RPCVs are also given the opportunity to pursue graduate school while continuing to serve the American public. RPCVs participating in the Coverdell Fellows Program receive a reduction in the overall cost of tuition for an accredited graduate school program and participate in an internship benefitting an underserved American community.

2.4 Employee Engagement

The Peace Corps is committed to the development of a sustainable infrastructure and processes to support the adaptation of Open Government principles into its activities and to reduce the barriers to employee innovation.

There are several ways in which employees at all levels engage and discuss innovative approaches to ensure continuous improvements. Offices at headquarters and overseas posts engage employees in planning future activities during annual strategic planning retreats and through the preparation of office strategic plans. The Office of Innovation, within the Director's Office, strives to create a culture of innovation by sharing best practices and identifying opportunities to solve issues across agency functions.

2.5 Alignment with Strategic Goals and Performance Measures

The agency's 2009-2014 Strategic Plan consists of the following strategic goals:

Strategic Goal One: Enhance the capacity of host country individuals, organizations, and communities to meet their skill needs.

Strategic Goal Two: Promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of host country individuals, organizations, and communities served by Volunteers.

Strategic Goal Three: Foster outreach to Americans through agency programs that assist Volunteers and returned Peace Corps Volunteers to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

Strategic Goal Four: Provide Volunteers, who represent the diversity of Americans, to meet the evolving technical needs of host countries.

Strategic Goal Five: Implement the Peace Corps mission in an effective and efficient manner through the provision of high quality Volunteer support, with optimal health care, safety and security support, and effective management of resources.

These five goals support the agency's mission of promoting world peace and friendship. The Open Government goals of transparency, participation, and collaboration naturally align with the agency's strategic goals, especially Goals Two and Three. These goals foster a culture of understanding and openness between countries.

In June 2010, the agency published a comprehensive agency assessment that included extensive consultations with stakeholders, including current and former Peace Corps staff, RPCVs, currently serving Volunteers, and members of Congress and congressional staff. The assessment outlined six strategies that the agency would pursue to more effectively meet its mission and set a vision for its next 50 years. The agency incorporated the six strategies from the assessment into its Annual Performance Plan, which contains the performance goals and indicators that measure progress towards the mission.

Additional information on the goals and performance measures are found on Page 4 of the *Peace Corps Strategic Plan FY 2009-2014* and is available online on the agency's [Open Government Portal](#).

3. Transparency

The Peace Corps is committed to providing information on its activities to the general public, including individuals interested in becoming Volunteers; friends and family members of Peace Corps Volunteers; RPCVs; and individuals interested in international development, cross-cultural experiences, and international volunteerism.

The agency continually reviews its financial and performance data and shares this information with the public annually in the *Peace Corps Performance and Accountability Report*. This report describes how the agency managed its resources, highlights major accomplishments of the Volunteers and staff serving around the world, and outlines plans to address future challenges. The financial and performance results in this report allow the president, members of Congress, and the American people to assess the effectiveness of the agency's operations

For the last five years, the Peace Corps has been awarded the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR) award. The award is given to federal government agencies whose Performance and Accountability and Annual Financial Reports achieve the highest standards of clarity in communicating financial information and performance accountability.

3.1 *High-Value Data and Information*

The Peace Corps recognizes that high-value information is useful for its partners and the general public alike. The agency plans to make its Open Government portal an effective tool for interested citizens to find the data and information they seek. The Peace Corps conforms to industry and agency best practices in regards to open format standards. Data available through the agency's website is available in formats that are accessible through any modern Web browser or freely available software.

The agency publishes summarized Volunteer information by listing a number of variables, including post, age group, and sector. As most agency data and information are centered on individuals (Peace Corps Volunteers and staff), extra care must be taken to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place to protect the safety and personally identifiable information of Volunteers. The agency will continue to work, with guidance from the Office of Management and Budget, on safety and privacy standards for published data.

The Peace Corps will continue to publish high-value data sets and other tools as they are identified and become available. The agency is reviewing publication of a variety of data, including:

- Agency financial statements
- Evaluation data
- Employee staffing – organizational charts and types of employees
- Data on trainee and Volunteer attrition
- Volunteer satisfaction data
- Data to support published reports
- Project summary information

Most of these data are currently published in summarized form. The agency plans to produce new data sets on a regular basis and will continue to post them on the agency's Open Government portal. The Peace Corps is considering the development of a data warehouse to more easily publish high-value data sets for public release.

The Peace Corps will continue to seek input from the public on what data and information citizens deem to be of high value and will make every effort to respond to those requests. The agency will continue to publicize the availability of any new data sets via its Open Government portal, and through social media such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

3.2 *Informing the Public*

To build a culture of open government, active communication with the public agency progress is vital. The Peace Corps plans to leverage its Open Government portal, as well as traditional and new media tools, to communicate key milestones and significant actions.

The Peace Corps is committed to fully leveraging social media and electronic media for accomplishing its goals within all sectors of the agency. The Peace Corps will continue to use its news releases and online social media outlets such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#) to regularly inform the public about Peace Corps activities, Volunteer profiles, and agency news. For example, throughout Peace Corps' 50th anniversary year in 2011, the agency placed many of its photo and video archives online through the Peace Corps' digital library, Flickr and YouTube sites. The Peace Corps will also use these resources to solicit feedback from the public about how the agency can be more transparent and to inform the public about the many Open Government-related resources available to them, consistent with this Open Government Plan.

The agency will continue to expand the use of the Peace Corps website and social media to share agency information with the public in an electronic format. Many paper forms, documents, and recruiting materials are being transitioned to electronic versions that Volunteers, staff, and the public can access. Recent examples of documents that have been moved to an electronic version include the *Peace Corps Volunteer Handbook* and the recruitment catalog. In addition, the launch of the new online Volunteer application system will leverage the redesigned Volunteer Delivery and Support System platform—the agency's flagship initiative in 2010—to keep applicants better informed during the application process. The Peace Corps will also continue to make use of its Open Government portal (and other types of media) to announce changes, new products, or other milestones related to open government.

3.3 *Congressional Requests*

The Peace Corps Office of Congressional Relations coordinates activities related to legislative issues and interests, serving as the official liaison between the Peace Corps Director and members of Congress and congressional staff. The Office of Congressional Relations also coordinates a timely response to congressional inquiries related to specific constituent and operational issues.

Annual reports mandated by Congress and testimony before congressional committees are posted on the agency's Open Government portal. Additionally, Congressional Budget Justifications from 1961 through the current fiscal year are included.

3.4 Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Office for the Peace Corps is located in the Office of Management and operates under the authority of the associate director for management.

The office is supervised by the FOIA officer and consists of one full-time FOIA/Privacy Act specialist, as well as Federal Work Study students and college interns. In addition to the FOIA Office, an associate general counsel from the General Counsel's Office is responsible for reviewing agency responses and counseling staff on FOIA-related legal issues. The FOIA Office relies on other Peace Corps offices to provide responsive documents related to FOIA requests.

The Peace Corps Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has the authority to process, release, deny, and respond to requests for OIG records. Requests for OIG-generated documents are processed by the OIG FOIA officer. The deputy inspector general and legal counsel provide counseling and legal advice to the OIG FOIA officer. The Peace Corps FOIA officer and the OIG FOIA officer consult with each other when a request includes both Peace Corps and OIG records. This is done to ensure consistency and to prevent duplication in processing the request.

The Peace Corps maintains an FOIA website (www.peacecorps.gov/FOIA) that includes FOIA reports by fiscal year, an outline of the process for making a FOIA request, instructions on how to file an FOIA request (with a sample FOIA request letter), and responses to frequently asked questions.

FOIA Electronic Reading Room

The Peace Corps' FOIA website also includes an electronic Reading Room that contains information routinely available to the public, in addition to frequently requested documents. According to new FOIA guidelines issued by the attorney general and in keeping with Open Government principles, the list of documents maintained in the Reading Room will continue to expand as records are added in which the public expresses an interest.

FOIA Proactive Disclosures

The Peace Corps makes proactive disclosures, when possible, to ease the administrative burden of responding to frequently requested and disclosed requests. In FY 2011, 51 percent of all requests resulted in the full release of the documents. When full disclosure is not possible, the FOIA Office suggests partial disclosure, where appropriate. If a portion of a record is technically exempt, the FOIA Office determines whether the exempt portions can be released on a discretionary basis. This requires further review and determination of "foreseeable harm" and consent of the program office and General Counsel. In determining "foreseeable harm," the FOIA Office generally follows the Department of Justice, Office of Information Policy guidelines.

FOIA Requests

The average number of days for processing FOIA requests was 37 days in FY 2011. The Peace Corps processed approximately 38 percent of all FOIA requests received within 20 working days. The number of FOIA requests decreased from 188 in FY 2010 to 159 in FY 2011.

While the number of backlogged requests increased from 10 in FY 2010 to 23 in FY 2011, nine out of the 10 oldest requests pending at the end of FY 2010 were closed. To facilitate compliance, the agency trains staff about FOIA requirements and responsibilities. In addition, the FOIA Office has received funds to acquire a new electronic FOIA tracking system that will improve the monitoring of FOIA requests.

FOIA Discussion

In July 2010, the FOIA Office established a point-of-contact with each major program office within the Peace Corps. This person bears primary responsibility for communicating with the FOIA staff about responsive documents and any issues or concerns the office may have with releasing the documents. The FOIA office provides annual training on the FOIA process and any procedural changes to the office points-of-contact.

3.5 *Records Management*

The Federal Records Act of 1950 establishes the basic responsibilities for records management in the federal government. It also sets the basic requirements for the creation, use, and potential destruction of records created by the federal government.

Records management refers to planning, controlling, directing, organizing, training, promoting, and other managerial activities involved with respect to records creation, maintenance, use, and disposition to achieve adequate and proper documentation of the policies and transactions of the agency and effective and economical management of agency operations. Records management addresses the complete life cycle of all records, regardless of physical form or characteristics.

Records Management Staff

The Records Management Office for the Peace Corps is located in the Office of Management and operates under the authority of the associate director of management.

The records management program is supervised by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) officer. The staff consists of one full-time records management officer, responsible for overseeing the records management program for the entire agency. The records management program shares one program assistant.

Records Management Responsibilities

Peace Corps staff must create and maintain records to ensure that agency functions and activities are adequately and properly documented. Such records must protect the rights of the agency and persons directly affected by the agency's actions. Having comprehensive, accurate record schedules is essential to the agency's ability to conduct business, fulfill legal responsibilities, and most importantly, ensure a lasting history of the Peace Corps and its accomplishments.

The Peace Corps is responsible for adhering to all federal laws and regulations regarding the disposition of records. The agency follows two sets of mandatory instructions regarding records no longer needed for current government business: (1) The General Records Schedule (GRS), which is issued by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and provides mandatory disposal authorization for temporary administrative records common to several or all agencies of the federal government; and (2) The Peace Corps's own schedules for records unique to the agency. There are more than 70 schedules, written and proposed by the agency between 1966 and 2010, and approved by the Archivist of the United States. Both types of records control schedules indicate how long a record must be kept before it is destroyed or transferred to NARA for permanent preservation. Both the GRS and Peace Corps' records schedules are available on the NARA website at www.archives.gov/records-mgmt.

Records Management Discussion

The agency is committed to completely revamping its records management program. A few major objectives of the records management officer are: 1) Developing records schedules and proposing dispositions to NARA for all unscheduled records; 2) Revising records schedules for outdated record series; 3) Compiling a comprehensive records manual; and (4) Providing ongoing training to staff on the importance of record maintenance to ensure their correct disposition. Pursuit of these objectives is in addition to other priorities and objectives. Successful completion will require several years of commitment by all Peace Corps staff members as advised and assisted by the records management officer.

3.6 Using Technology to Improve Transparency

The Peace Corps is committed to maintaining compliance with applicable transparency initiatives listed in the Open Government Directive. The agency will continue to explore new ways to promote transparency, participation, and collaboration that surpass current requirements.

Data.gov

In May 2009, Data.gov was launched to allow the public easier access to government data sets. The agency will continue to identify potential data sets for inclusion on this site. Please refer to Section 3.1 for more information, including a description of data provided and currently being evaluated for future availability.

eRulemaking

The eRulemaking initiative is a current government-wide program with the goals of

- Increasing public access to, and participation in, developing regulations and other related documents that can impact the public; and
- Promoting more efficient and effective rulemaking through public involvement.

In 2003, the eRulemaking program launched the [Regulations.gov](#) website to enable citizens to search, view, and comment on regulations issued by the federal government. Peace Corps' Federal Register notices are available on the regulations.gov website.

IT Dashboard

In June 2009, the Office of Management and Budget launched [IT Dashboard](#), enabling federal agencies and the general public to view details of federal information technology investments. The Peace Corps reports its IT investments to OMB via reports known as "Exhibit 300s" and the data is found on IT Dashboard under the "other agencies" aggregation.

USASpending.gov

[USASpending.gov](#) is the Office of Management and Budget's response to the requirements of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006. The Transparency Act requires a single searchable website with data on contracts, grants, purchase card spending, and other transactions. Peace Corps data are accessible on this site.

4. Participation

Public participation is central to the Peace Corps' mission. The Third Goal of the Peace Corps is to help promote Americans' understanding of other peoples, and Volunteers and RPCVs carry out this goal as they engage Americans by sharing their experience about the countries where they served. The agency hosts many events to bring RPCVs and the general public together, providing a window to the people and cultures where Volunteers have served and highlighting agriculture, business, education, health, youth development, and other Peace Corps projects being conducted around the world. The agency's 50th anniversary was a milestone that provided additional opportunities to showcase and share the work of Peace Corps Volunteers in the U.S.

4.1 Activities

The Open Government Directive instructed agencies to engage the public as they developed their Open Government Plan. The Peace Corps created an Open Government portal and requested input on how to make the Peace Corps more open and transparent. Additionally, the agency holds yearly forums where senior leaders share progress on activities and answer questions directly from RPCVs and employees.

4.2 *50th Anniversary*

The Peace Corps marked 50 years of promoting world peace and friendship in 2011. The agency designed a series of nationwide events and activities involving the Peace Corps community — as well as an extensive outreach and media campaign — to share the Peace Corps experience with people in the U.S. and around the world.

By emphasizing education and engagement, 50th anniversary activities directly supported the agency's three goals and raised the profile of the Peace Corps among key audiences. The anniversary provided an opportunity for the extended Peace Corps family to come together and reflect on the many successes and accomplishments of those who have volunteered and worked for Peace Corps over the last half century. The agency also engaged audiences outside of the Peace Corps family, not only to emphasize the benefits of service to individuals who might consider volunteering, but to share the cultures of the countries in which the Volunteers worked. In this way, the agency sought to create an experience in which everyone could participate. In addition, the 50th anniversary provided the agency with an opportunity to share the great work done by Volunteers, to tell the unique stories of the Peace Corps, and to engage in opportunities to partner with other organizations.

Nearly 1.2 million people attended various Peace Corps events, including the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, which attracted more than 1 million visitors.

The agency will build on the success of the 50th anniversary outreach activities to continue to engage the public and greater Peace Corps community and encourage their participation in the agency's work.

5. Collaboration

The purpose behind the principle of collaboration is to leverage cooperation with other government (federal and non-federal) agencies, the public, and nonprofit and private entities to drive the agency's core mission. The agency is continuing to seek ways to increase strategic partnerships with international and local nongovernmental organizations and community-based organizations.

5.1 *Collaboration Within the Agency*

Volunteers and staff work with host country partners to fulfill the mission of the Peace Corps. Employees engage colleagues across organizational units to share promising practices, develop solutions to problems, and foster a climate of creativity and innovation. Both formal and informal working groups form as new challenges arise.

5.2 Collaboration Across Departments and Agencies

The Office of Strategic Partnerships is responsible for developing and implementing the agency's policy and strategy for building and maintaining relationships with other executive branch departments and agencies. Of particular focus are those agencies whose missions intersect most directly with that of the Peace Corps, making it possible to cultivate strategic partnerships and maximize the Peace Corps' contribution to international development efforts. These include the U.S. Department of State, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Millennium Challenge Corporation, Environmental Protection Agency, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For example, through the Small Project Assistance Agreement, the Peace Corps works with USAID to provide small grants to communities to implement development projects alongside Peace Corps Volunteers. Through the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas, the Peace Corps and the Department of State provide training on sustainable energy practices in rural areas, with an emphasis on expanding the use of clean cookstoves.

Since 2004, the Peace Corps has been an active partner in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), working closely with the Department of State, USAID, the Department of Health and Human Services, and others. Additionally, the agency collaborates with the President's Malaria Initiative (USAID, CDC, NIH) and its implementing partners (Population Services International, World Vision, and others) to maximize the effectiveness of Volunteers and ensure that the malaria prevention efforts of all Volunteers complement, rather than duplicate, partner activities. The Peace Corps also supports the Feed the Future initiative, working with USAID and other agency partners to promote food security.

5.3 Collaboration Across Levels of Government

The Peace Corps often works with state and local government officials to celebrate the work of Volunteers. Official proclamations from state governments help inform local communities about the power of service and the value of volunteerism. Beyond U.S. borders, the Peace Corps partners with governments in every one of the countries in which Volunteers are placed, working together to develop projects that meet the needs of the host countries that request Peace Corps assistance.

5.4 Public-Private Collaboration

The Peace Corps engages a wide array of partners both domestically and abroad. Most overseas projects involve a partnership between the Peace Corps and host country organizations to plan and manage projects. The agency also forms partnerships with local and international NGOs to augment training and offer work opportunities to Peace Corps Volunteers. Domestically, the agency has a number of programs that contribute to furthering the mission of the Peace Corps. The agency established two new offices in

2012: the Office of Strategic Partnerships and the Office of the Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services. These offices manage strategic partnerships and develop opportunities for RPCV groups and individuals to collaborate with the agency.

The Office of the Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services manages the Coverdell World Wise Schools (WWS) program, established in 1989 by then-Peace Corps Director Paul D. Coverdell. It is designed to help America's schoolchildren learn about the world's diverse peoples, cultures, and geography through standards-based classroom resources and educator partnerships with current and returned Peace Corps Volunteers. WWS connects U.S. elementary and secondary schools with current Peace Corps Volunteers who share their Peace Corps experiences through a variety of media and new technologies. It also connects RPCVs with classrooms and communities via the Speakers Match program. More information on this program can be found at www.peacecorps.gov/www.

The Peace Corps also relies heavily on collaboration with RPCVs to help the agency achieve its Third Goal. Resources are provided to help RPCVs engage in activities that promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. Information about all of the Peace Corps' Third Goal efforts can be found at www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal.

The Master's International program is a unique opportunity for Peace Corps Volunteers to combine a master's degree with their overseas service. It also provides the Peace Corps with Volunteers with additional education and skills. Currently, the Peace Corps partners with over 80 academic institutions nationwide through the Master's International program. More information on this program can be found at www.peacecorps.gov/masters.

The Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program is another example of how the agency collaborates with private institutions. Participating graduate schools provide financial assistance to RPCVs enrolled in various advanced degree programs. At the same time, RPCVs make a commitment to work in an underserved U.S. community as they pursue their graduate degrees. Peace Corps Volunteers can participate in the program at any point after they satisfactorily finish their Peace Corps service. A complete list of all Coverdell Fellows Program partner schools and additional information is located at www.peacecorps.gov/fellows.

The agency also supports the work of Peace Corps Volunteers through the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP), connecting interested groups or individuals to Volunteer-led, community-initiated projects worldwide. Although many are able to undertake projects utilizing local resources and skills, PCPP supports Peace Corps Volunteers as they work with host communities to identify local needs and design sustainable solutions. The program provides a critical source of private sector support that is complemented by a mandatory local contribution of at least 25 percent of the total cost of a project. Further, it connects the American public to Volunteers' work and enables them to learn about the communities where Volunteers serve. Through PCPP, the Office of Strategic Partnerships offers a transparent mechanism for the private sector—which includes families and friends of Volunteers, RPCV groups, schools, foundations, trusts, corporations, businesses, faith-based organizations, and civic groups—to be part of the Peace Corps experience by donating directly to the important work of

Volunteers and agency initiatives. More information about PCPP can be found at www.peacecorps.gov/donate.

The Peace Corps also accepts in-kind donations. As defined by the Peace Corps Act (Pub. L. 87-293, as amended: 22 U.S.C. §2501 et seq.), gifts or bequests to the Peace Corps are tax-deductible as charitable contributions under Section 170(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code.

5.5 Using Technology to Improve Collaboration

The Peace Corps uses several tools and applications to collaborate with its staff and Volunteers. Web conferencing tools are used to interact with potential and new applicants, as well as for training staff and interacting with other government agencies and organizations.

Additionally, the Peace Corps has developed an online forum that enables staff from headquarters and overseas posts to share best and promising practices in the form of documents and discussion groups. At some posts, staff and Volunteers use post-specific Internet and Intranet sites to coordinate activities. The agency is currently working on a knowledge exchange that will provide staff, Volunteers, and the public with access to training and reference materials.

6. Status of 2010 Flagship Initiative

6.1 Volunteer Delivery and Support System Redesign Update

In 2010, the redesign of the Volunteer Delivery and Support (VDS) System was chosen as the flagship initiative for the agency's Open Government Plan. The redesign was needed to make the selection and placement process more transparent to applicants and improve the efficiency of recruitment operations. The new system was internally branded as DOVE (Database of Volunteer Experience).

In early 2010, the agency committed budget and personnel resources to the VDS redesign by creating and staffing a VDS Program Management Office, located within the office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (VRS). This was followed closely by the production of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the life cycle side of the redesign. After a competitive process, a contract was awarded and work began on the DOVE life cycle project in August 2010. The procurement process for the medical pre-screening project began in April 2011 and the project was initiated in June 2011.

Work on DOVE accelerated in FY 2011 with the awarding of the two contracts. Design and development for both the life cycle and medical screening projects were worked on simultaneously and they were integrated by the end of the year. At the start of FY 2012, the agency was in the testing and training

phases of the project, and the ability to support Peace Corps Response was implemented in January 2012. The implementation for the rest of the agency is scheduled for August 2012.

Once implemented, this new information technology system will drive the Volunteer delivery process and help the agency better match posts' program needs with Volunteer applicant profiles, resulting in better Volunteer placement. The new system will also provide the agency with enhanced reporting capabilities that will provide important information to managers and agency leadership. In addition, prospective Volunteers will be better informed of the progress of their applications. The agency is currently developing metrics to measure the improved efficiency of the system, applicant satisfaction, increased transparency, and cost savings from its implementation.

7. New Initiatives to Advance Transparency, Collaboration, and Participation: 2012-2014

7.1 *Flagship Initiative: Stomping Out Malaria*

Stomping Out Malaria is a Peace Corps-led initiative that matches Volunteers serving in Africa with partners such as Malaria No More and the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), as part of a collective commitment to significantly reduce the number of malaria deaths in Africa. The agency will leverage the agency's Open Government website to share data sets and reports with the public in an open format and link to open platforms for the discussion of malaria eradication strategies.

The agency launched the Stomping Out Malaria in Africa Initiative on World Malaria Day – April 25, 2011. This regional initiative is coordinated by a program manager who is responsible for building and maintaining partnerships with U.S. government and external actors, in addition to overseeing the development and implementation of the region's action plan and training. To date, three malaria “boot camps” have been held, and 51 Volunteers, 12 staff members, and numerous partners have been trained in both malaria science and in the specifics of establishing and running an in-country malaria project. By the start of 2013, 21 posts are expected to have fully-functioning malaria initiatives.

In addition to the “boot camp” trainings, the agency is developing a training curriculum for malaria prevention. The first two-hour “Introduction to Malaria Prevention” session was finished and rolled out to all posts in December 2011. Bed net distribution lesson plans were also made available in March 2011, and the entire 16-hour malaria package will be finished by 2013. This training is intended to equip and mobilize over 3,000 Volunteers to help prevent malaria at the community level across the continent.

The Peace Corps Malaria Initiative has built formal alliances with PMI, USAID, Johns Hopkins University, Population Services International, Malaria No More, and others in a joint commitment aimed at significantly reducing malaria deaths in Africa by 2015. These partnerships have expanded and promoted Peace Corps' role in country-level programs and have already provided Volunteers access to resources, such as bed nets and funding for Volunteer housing. The Peace Corps will continue to maintain this multi-year commitment to providing partner organizations with a team of dedicated trained men and women.

The agency will leverage its Open Government website to post data sets and reports and share its progress in significantly reducing the number of malaria deaths by 2015. As a publicly available website, these data sets and reports will be widely available for distribution. In addition, the data sets will be posted in an open format available to the public to incorporate into their own projects and analysis. By focusing on transparency, participation, and collaboration, the malaria initiative will serve as a model for future agency efforts in creating a more open and transparent government.

The agency plans to fully implement this initiative by September 30, 2013.

7.2 Initiative 2: Develop an Agency Evaluation Policy

The Peace Corps evaluation policy will provide guidelines and standards, and define organizational roles and responsibilities, for conducting evaluations and sharing results with stakeholders, Congress, and the American public. By setting policy on how the agency documents the impact of Volunteers' work, the initiative will increase transparency and support evidenced-based decision-making and stewardship of agency resources.

The evaluation policy will align with the policies of other foreign assistance agencies, such as the U.S. Department of State and USAID. At the same time, it will articulate key principles of the agency's unique service model – participation, capacity building, and learning.

The agency will create an evaluation section on the Open Government portal. In addition to the evaluation policy, the section will also house the agency's evaluation reports and provide status updates on the agency's evaluation-related activities, such as providing training for staff, Volunteers, and partners.

The agency plans to fully implement this initiative by September 30, 2012.

7.3 Initiative 3: Establish at Least One Agency-level Partnership to Broaden Information Sharing

The Peace Corps will develop one agency-level partnership with a federal agency, nongovernmental organization (NGO), or private company to encourage greater collaboration and to improve the agency's data capabilities and information sharing.

The Peace Corps will leverage the work of government agencies and other organizations to aggregate and share data with partners and the public. Initiatives such as Feed the Future and PMI provide expertise, resources, and data that the agency will use to make program decisions and better support Volunteers. By working with a partner, the agency will complement internal data with external data sources, yielding a better understanding of development needs. This exchange of data will strengthen the agency's field and headquarters-based programming and provide partners with additional information on the Peace Corps' activities.

The agency plans to fully implement this initiative by September 30, 2013.

7.4 Initiative 4: Enhance the Agency's Social Media Strategy

The agency will continue to use social media to encourage currently-serving Volunteers, returned Peace Corps Volunteers, and partners to participate in the agency's activities. Various social media platforms will be utilized to share press releases, Volunteer stories, and other relevant agency information.

Increasingly, the public is accessing information about the agency through the Internet, social media and other Web-based applications. The agency has already started using social media by actively leveraging Facebook, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr to engage the public. As social media continues to develop, the agency will explore innovative ways to involve the public and use social media as a platform to link RPCVs together. In addition, the agency will expand social media's role in recruiting future Volunteers and providing information to families and friends of Volunteers. By engaging with the public through popular social media platforms, the Peace Corps will increase its visibility among stakeholders and encourage public participation.

The agency plans to fully implement this initiative by September 30, 2013.

Appendix – Links to Existing Resources

Peace Corps General Links

[Mission](#)

[Strategic Plan](#)

[Performance and Accountability Reports](#) (under Documents and Reports)

[Open Government Portal](#)

New Media

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[Flickr](#)

FOIA

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Electronic Reading Room](#)

Records Management Resources

The Peace Corps follows the National Archives and Records Administration guidelines, rules, and regulations. The following resources are used by the Peace Corps and are available online at

www.archives.gov/records-mgmt

- [Law and Statutes](#)
- [National Archives and Records Administration](#)
 - [Federal Register](#)
 - [Records Management Programs](#)
 - [Records Center Locations](#)
- [Records Management Handbook](#)