



ANNUAL VOLUNTEER SURVEY 2017–2025 COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

From Pause to Progress

April 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report synthesizes Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) results from 2017–2025, highlighting trends, pre-pandemic (2017–2019) versus post-pandemic (2023–2025) respondent sentiment, and notable subgroup differences. Each numbered section provides actionable insight by survey area and references the specific AVS question(s) for verification. The [full dataset of 2017-2025 AVS results](#) is available on the website, and the main throughline is summarized below.

KEY FINDINGS

Volunteer satisfaction and readiness have largely returned to pre-pandemic levels. Following an initial dip during the return to in-person service, overall Volunteer satisfaction is 82 percent as of 2025; satisfaction proxies (e.g., “service is personally rewarding,” “would recommend service to others”) show similar increases and are generally within five points of 2017-2019 baselines.

Satisfaction with in-country support has remained strong throughout the return of Volunteers to in-person service. Satisfaction in site matching/preparation, medical services, and administrative/logistics have all reached new highs and now sit above their pre-pandemic baselines.

Reported effectiveness in Peace Corps goal implementation and in applying technical training shows the largest post-pandemic decline. Respondents’ self-rated effectiveness in achieving the First Goal of the Peace Corps: *Strengthen Local Capacity* experienced the most pronounced drop in positive sentiment at the return to in-person service. Technical training areas such as utilizing Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA), applying technical knowledge, and monitoring/reporting on activities, showed similar declines. Despite steady improvement since 2023, these areas remain below pre-pandemic baseline levels.

Volunteers consistently rate intercultural engagement (e.g., building bridges, experiences within the community) as more personally rewarding than the impact of their projects. Training responses mirror this as well; respondents generally find their cultural interaction training to be more effective than their technical skill transfer training. This aligns with the finding of intrinsic motivations being the primary drivers among respondents in the decision to accept a Peace Corps invitation.

The AVS items most strongly correlated with overall Volunteer satisfaction are how personally rewarding the primary assignment feels and how strong a sense of belonging Volunteers feel in the Peace Corps. This is followed by site matching/preparation, post leadership culture, and adjustment/integration. Recent gains in these areas could help explain the rebound in satisfaction despite lower technical ratings.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1975, the Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) has been a core source of evidence on the state of Peace Corps programming for the agency, Congress, researchers, and the public. The AVS collects Peace Corps Volunteers' perspectives to help the agency improve performance by understanding how practices contribute to program outcomes and shape the Volunteer experience. In addition to program feedback, the survey captures Volunteers' assessments of training effectiveness; personal health, safety and security perceptions; post culture; and in-country staff support. AVS data is used in the agency's strategic planning and country portfolio review processes, as well as in ongoing monitoring and evaluation of agency performance.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report synthesizes AVS results from 2017–2025, highlighting overall trends, differences between the pre-pandemic period (2017–2019) and the post-pandemic period (2023–2025), and notable subgroup variation. The purpose of this report is to summarize significant findings that can inform agency operations and decision-making.

CONTEXT AND SCOPE

Service pause and resumption: In-person Volunteer service assignments were paused from 2020–2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In-person service resumed in March 2022, and the AVS restarted in June 2023. Analyses in this report focus primarily on performance since the return to in-person service, comparing post-pandemic sentiment (2023–2025) with pre-pandemic sentiment (2017–2019). The reporting range begins in 2017 to provide balanced, three-year comparisons. All question numbers and content within this report are based on the 2025 AVS.

Subgroups analyzed: Key comparisons include regions; project sectors; and respondent sex, age group, and tenure of service (time in country). Administrative regions are abbreviated throughout the report as AF for Africa Region; EMA for Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; and IAP for Inter-America and the Pacific Region.

HOW TO READ THE RESULTS

Question references: Each numbered section presents actionable insight by survey area and cites specific AVS question(s) for verification.

Metrics and interpretation: Most AVS items use a five-point Likert scale. "Positive sentiment" is defined as the percent of respondents selecting 4 or 5 (e.g., agree or strongly agree) on a 1–5 scale, with 3 as neutral and an additional unscaled option for "NA" or "don't know." Checkbox items are the second most common; these are reported as the percentage of respondents selecting each option among those who answered the question.

Selectivity of findings: This report features only the most substantial, actionable findings from each survey section. A complete view of all questions and response distributions is available in the [full dataset of 2017–2025 AVS results](#).

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

A total of 2,298 Volunteers participated out of an eligible population of 2,805, resulting in an 82 percent overall response rate. Out of these participants, 2,219 Volunteers completed the entire survey (79 percent). Geographically, all 60 countries where eligible Volunteers served are represented in the results provided.

2025 survey respondents closely mirrored the overall Peace Corps Volunteer population (within three percent) across demographics and service characteristics. Most respondents in 2025 were unmarried (93 percent), college-educated (98 percent), white (73 percent), and female (58 percent). About 40 percent worked in the agency's Education sector, and 40 percent served in the IAP Region. The typical respondent was about 25 years old, and on average 11 months into service.

Response rates have been notably high in all periods examined. While response rates have been slightly lower since the post-pandemic return, they have consistently remained between 77 percent and 90 percent in all periods covered.

Response rates have remained strong across survey years. Response rates dipped slightly following the post-pandemic return to in-person service, but stayed within 77–83 percent, which is consistent with the high participation seen in 2017–2019 (88–90 percent).

Volunteer composition has slightly shifted since the post-pandemic return. Compared with pre-pandemic years, a larger share of Volunteers is now serving in the IAP Region (40 percent in 2025 vs. 24–27 percent in 2017–2019) and a smaller share in AF Region (27 percent in 2025 vs. 45–47 percent in 2017–2019). The median time in country is shorter but recovering (~nine to 11 months vs. ~14 months pre-pandemic), and men now comprise about 44 percent of Volunteers, up from about 37 percent pre-pandemic.

I. VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION AND PREPAREDNESS

This section summarizes Volunteers' overall satisfaction with their Peace Corps experience and their sense of preparedness for service. The items in this section provide an overview of how rewarding Volunteers find their service, how well expectations align with reality upon arrival, and which aspects of the service experience most strongly shape overall satisfaction. In general, Volunteer satisfaction has returned to pre-pandemic levels in most areas, while cultural aspects of service consistently outpace project-focused readiness.

Despite an initial dip at the return to in-person service, Volunteer satisfaction has generally rebounded and continued to rise through 2025, broadly returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Positive ratings for overall satisfaction (AVS Q1) increased from roughly three in four Volunteers to a little over four in five by 2025, with fewer reporting negative experiences. Year-over-year results for key satisfaction proxies (Q2.a, Q3, Q4, and Q5) also trend upward, with positive sentiment mostly within five percentage points of 2019; the recovery pattern is broadly consistent across subgroups for 'finding overall service rewarding' (Q2.a), with expected variation in impact. See AVS Q1–Q5.

Volunteers report that the cultural dimensions of service feel more personally rewarding than the project-focused aspects. Experiences such as building intercultural bridges and interacting with host country partners are rated higher than Volunteers' primary assignment and other development-related items, and these cultural elements align more closely with overall sentiments of personal reward. Note: Q2.d (building intercultural bridges) was clarified in 2025. See AVS Q2.

Since 2023, more respondents say service was the right call for them than would recommend it to others. While this gap has narrowed by 2025, it remains wider than pre-pandemic alignment. Intent to complete service is still ~95 percent, indicating strong personal commitment. See AVS Q3–5.

Education projects tend to be the highest rated among sectors. Seventy-seven percent of Education sector respondents in 2025 reported that their primary assignment was rewarding, and between 74 and 77 percent across all years analyzed. Environmental projects have been declining in how rewarding respondents rate their primary assignments, gradually shifting from 76 percent in 2017 to 63 percent in 2025. This decline began pre-pandemic and has continued since in-person Volunteer service resumed. See AVS Q2.b.

Volunteer satisfaction is most strongly correlated with how personally rewarding primary assignments feel and the sense of belonging within the Peace Corps. Site matching/preparation, post leadership culture, and adjustment/integration services also show robust correlations with overall satisfaction (Q1). Analysis of these top five variables shows statistically significant, moderate positive associations with Q1; however, no single factor should be overinterpreted in isolation. See 2025 AVS correlations file for more details.

Positive ratings around the quality of pre-service information have increased year-over-year. However, only about half of respondents in 2025 (48 percent) felt that the information they received before arriving in country adequately prepared them for the expectations and conditions of service. See AVS Q6.

AVS QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS REPORT SECTION

Q1) How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your Peace Corps service experience?

Q2) How personally rewarding do you find your:

- Q2.a) Overall Peace Corps service
- Q2.b) Primary assignment/project (Goal 1)
- Q2.c) Other development activities
- Q2.d) Experiences building intercultural bridges (Goals 2 & 3)
- Q2.e) Work with counterparts/community partners
- Q2.f) Experiences with other host country individuals

Q3) Today, would you still make the same decision to serve with the Peace Corps?

Q4) Would you recommend Peace Corps service to others?

Q5) Do you intend to complete your Peace Corps service?

Q6) To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

- Q6.a) The information provided by the Peace Corps prior to my arrival in country adequately prepared me for the expectations and conditions of service.
- Q6.b) My site placement was consistent with the description provided to me by the Peace Corps.
- Q6.c) My primary assignment/project was consistent with the description provided to me by the Peace Corps.
- Q6.d) The posted job requirements were a good match for what I need to complete my work in the field.

II. APPLICATION PROCESS

This section covers applicant awareness and decision drivers, staff touchpoints, and areas for improvements in the application process. The application section was introduced to the survey in 2025. Results reflect the views of Volunteers who ultimately accepted invitations and may differ from experiences across the broader applicant pool. Overall, the application experience is driven primarily by intrinsic motivations and personal networks, with process rigor and medical requirements emerging as key friction points that applicants most want streamlined.

Respondents primarily learned about the Peace Corps through word-of-mouth, which also most often influenced their decision to apply. Most first heard of the Peace Corps via family (24 percent), friends/coworkers (21 percent), or teachers/mentors (18 percent), and these sources most often had the greatest influence on the decision to apply. Institutional channels, such as Peace Corps staff, advertising, and social media played a comparatively minor role, with each selected by fewer than 10 percent of respondents. See AVS Q7 and Q8.

Respondents rate intrinsic considerations as most important in their decision to accept a Peace Corps invitation. Exposure to other cultures, personal growth, and the opportunity to serve others rank as the top reasons for accepting a Peace Corps invitation; 95–97 percent of respondents say these factors matter across all periods analyzed¹. In contrast, serving their country and extrinsic benefits (e.g., financial, educational, and career) are rated important far less frequently, at only 41 percent and 61 percent, respectively, in 2025. See AVS Q9.

In choosing to accept their invitation, applicants placed more weight on their assigned project than the assigned country (69 percent vs. 50 percent). However, both drivers ranked below the intrinsic drivers highlighted above (i.e., exposure to other cultures, personal growth, serving others at 95–97 percent). See AVS Q9.

Only one in five respondents said that Peace Corps staff convinced them to submit an application (20 percent). Smaller shares of respondents cite application coaching (16 percent) and introductions to the idea of service (11 percent) as the impetus for submitting an application. Staff influence was lowest for country/program selection (nine percent) and the final acceptance decision (seven percent). See AVS Q10.

Application rigor (i.e., medical clearance, legal clearance, interviews, wait times) was the top concern when deciding whether to apply to the Peace Corps, at 44 percent. This was followed by personal isolation/mental health considerations (37 percent), and financial concerns (35 percent). The most frequently cited improvement areas were fewer medical requirements (59 percent), more opportunities to speak with current/former Volunteers (55 percent), and shorter wait times (42 percent). See AVS Q11 and Q12.

Three out of four respondents in 2025 are serving at the post for which they originally applied. Among those assigned elsewhere, 75 percent were satisfied with the process of being moved. See AVS Q13 and Q14.

¹ Scope note: Q9, regarding the importance of factors in accepting a Peace Corps invitation, is the only Application Process item with trend data across the periods covered in this report. All other questions in the Application Process section were first fielded in 2025 and are reported for 2025 only.

AVS QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS REPORT SECTION

Q7) How did you first become aware of the Peace Corps?

Q8) Who or what had the greatest influence on your decision to apply to the Peace Corps?

Q9) How important were the following factors in accepting your Peace Corps invitation?

- Q9.a) Exposure to other cultures
- Q9.b) Gaining work experience
- Q9.c) Opportunity to serve others
- Q9.d) Gaining international experience
- Q9.e) Learning other language(s) or enhancing skills in other language(s)
- Q9.f) Personal growth
- Q9.g) Travel/adventure
- Q9.h) Opportunity to serve my country
- Q9.i) Financial, educational, and career benefit programs available to current and Returned Volunteers
- Q9.j) Opportunity to build friendships and connections (networking)
- Q9.k) Your assigned country of service
- Q9.l) Your assigned project of service

Q10) To what extent did a Peace Corps staff (e.g., a recruiter, placement officer, etc.) play a role in each of the following areas?

- Q10.a) Introducing you to the idea of Peace Corps service
- Q10.b) Convincing you to submit an application
- Q10.c) Coaching you on your application
- Q10.d) Helping you select a country and program that fit your interests/skills
- Q10.e) Helping you decide to accept your invitation

Q11) What, if anything, were your biggest areas of concern when making your decision to apply to the Peace Corps? (Checkbox - Select up to three)

Q12) If you could make any improvements to the Peace Corps' recruitment/application process, what would be the top three? (Checkbox - Select up to three)

Q13) Are you currently serving at the same Peace Corps post to which you initially applied?

Q14) Overall, were you satisfied with the process of being moved?²

² Q14 is displayed only to respondents who respond 'No' to Q13.

III. TRAINING

This section consists of AVS questions on Peace Corps training (pre-service and in-service), with most items assessing training overall and a subset focused on pre-service safety modules. Overall, training effectiveness shows a gradual post-pandemic recovery, with interpersonal/cultural and physical health modules rated strongest and technical/project competencies lagging.

Most respondents found their training related to interacting across cultures, local language, community connections, and preventing/managing common health conditions to be effective. These interpersonal and health-related areas were among the highest-rated in 2025, with effectiveness ranging from 65–71 percent across culture, language, community connections, and common health training (Q15.a–Q15.d). Intercultural and language training has seen improvement since the return to in-person service but remain below their pre-pandemic levels (75–77 percent in 2018–2019). In contrast, common health training is higher post-pandemic than it was pre-pandemic (68 percent in 2025 versus 59 percent in 2018 and 55 percent in 2019). See AVS Q15.

Physical health training outperforms mental/emotional training in perceived effectiveness. In 2025, about two out of three respondents (68 percent) found their physical health training to be effective; however, less than half (42 percent) felt that their mental and emotional health training was effective. Common health training was among the top-rated areas in 2023–2025 and shows the strongest post-pandemic lift vs. pre-pandemic levels. See AVS Q15.

Training related to applying technical knowledge, transferring technical knowledge, utilizing PACA, and monitoring/reporting was rated as effective much less frequently. Only about half of respondents in 2025 (42–54 percent) found their training in these more technical areas to be effective. However, each of these technical areas has improved since 2024, indicating momentum to build on through more practical, hands-on application and transfer pathways. See AVS Q15.

Pre-service safety training sessions were rated positively by most Volunteers across the measured dimensions. Among these training sessions, bystander intervention training received the lowest ratings; in 2025, fewer respondents reported remembering the content (66 percent vs. 72–84 percent across other sessions), being able to apply it if needed (68 percent vs. 74–85 percent), and finding it useful for service (71 percent vs. 77–84 percent). On actual application in the past 12 months, bystander intervention also scored lowest (74 percent vs. 82–87 percent for personal security and risk reduction and unwanted attention training sessions). See AVS Q17, Q19, and Q21–Q23.

AVS QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS REPORT SECTION

Q15) How effective do you think the training and learning experiences provided by the Peace Corps were in preparing you to:

- Q15.a) Interact effectively and appropriately with cultural differences and similarities
- Q15.b) Communicate with host country nationals in local language(s)
- Q15.c) Create meaningful connections with members of the local community
- Q15.d) Prevent and manage common health conditions
- Q15.e) Maintain your mental/emotional health

- Q15.f) Apply technical knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to your assigned project
- Q15.g) Transfer technical knowledge, skills, and attitudes to others
- Q15.h) Utilize Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA) to facilitate community-led development
- Q15.i) Monitor, learn, adapt, and report on activities
- Q15.j) Build awareness of and access to opportunities that connect the U.S. and host country

Q17) To what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements related to the Personal Security and Risk Reduction training you received?

Q19) To what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements related to the Unwanted Attention training?

Q21) To what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements related to the Bystander Intervention training?

- Q17.a.; 19.a; 21.a) I remember this content well.
- Q17.b1.; 19.b1; 21.b1) In the past 12 months, I have been able to apply this content when needed.³
- Q17.b2.; 19.b2; 21.b2) I could apply this content if I needed to.⁴
- Q17a.; 19.a; 21.a) This training provides Volunteers with useful information for service.

Q22) To what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements related to the Sexual Assault Awareness training?

Q23) To what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements related to the Sexual Assault Reporting and Response training?

- Q22.a; Q23.a) I remember this content well.
- Q22.b; Q23.b) I could apply this content if I needed to.
- Q22.c; Q23.c) This training provides Volunteers with useful information for service.

³Q17b1., 19.b1, and 21.b1 were only asked if the respondent stated that they experienced a situation in the last 12 months where the information from the training session was needed.

⁴ Q17b2, 19.b2, and 21.b2 were only asked if the respondent stated that they have *not* experienced a situation in the last 12 months where the information from the training session was needed.

IV. CURRENT WORK

This section relates to project contexts such as counterpart readiness/collaboration, community alignment, and support. Items related to intercultural skills from the “Everyday Life” section of the AVS have been added to present a more cohesive view. Overall, Volunteers report that project activities generally align with community priorities and are implementable, yet early-stage foundations—counterpart onboarding and feedback loops—remain weaker and limit learning and adaptation.

Project activities are widely viewed as aligned with community priorities (67 percent positive sentiment) and implementable (75 percent). Ratings for counterpart knowledge upon arrival (45 percent) and feedback from post staff (51 percent) are notably lower. This trend has been consistent since these questions were first introduced in 2023. See AVS Q24.

Among those who participated in a Peace Corps small grant, ~89 percent agree it strengthened their ability to address community-defined priorities (Q24.e). This is the single highest sentiment observed across this section’s questions related to work projects, pointing to grants as a potential lever for skill building and confidence in community-driven work. See AVS Q24.

The Education sector’s large representation and comparatively high 2025 ratings skew global averages for activity alignment and ability to implement upward. In 2025, 80 percent of Education sector respondents felt that activities in their assigned project could be implemented at their site (vs. 68–75 percent across all other sectors), and 72 percent felt that the activities addressed community-defined priorities (vs. 61–67 percent). See AVS Q24.

Counterpart collaboration is growing, but their role in monitoring and reporting remains limited. Across most collaboration areas—such as developing relationships, identifying priorities, and implementing activities—roughly three out of five respondents report positive experiences (58–64 percent in 2025). However, when it comes to monitoring and reporting project activities to Peace Corps staff and local stakeholders, only one in three respondents (34 percent) note counterpart involvement. This trend is generally consistent across project sectors and respondent time in country. See AVS Q25.

Respondents exhibit strong intercultural confidence, even when language skills lag. In 2025, four out of five respondents expressed confidence in navigating cultural differences and similarities across complex environments, while three out of five expressed confidence using local language and intercultural communication skills to engage meaningfully with host country nationals. This gap between language and interactions suggests that even when language proficiency lags, Volunteers still find effective ways to build relationships. Positive sentiment on integration, especially language skills, appears to rise with tenure, which suggests these skills improve as Volunteers spend more time in the community. See 2025 AVS Q46.

AVS QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS REPORT SECTION

Q24) To what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?

- Q24.a) Community partner(s)/ counterpart(s) were knowledgeable about my assigned project when I arrived at site.
- Q24.b) Activities in my assigned project address community-defined priorities.

- Q24.c) Activities in my assigned project can be implemented at my site.
- Q24.d) The feedback that I receive from post staff on my work reports helps me learn and adapt.
- Q24.e) Participating in a Peace Corps Small Grants Program grant project has strengthened my ability to address community-defined priorities.

Q25) My community partner(s)/counterpart(s) collaborate with me to...

- Q25.a) develop relationships with community stakeholders.
- Q25.b) identify locally defined priorities.
- Q25.c) identify local resources and assets that can support community projects (e.g., human, financial, material, etc.).
- Q25.d) design activities that address locally defined priorities.
- Q25.e) implement project activities.
- Q25.f) monitor and report project activities to Peace Corps staff and local stakeholders.

Q46) How effectively are you able to perform the following activities?

- Q46.a) Use local language and intercultural communication skills for meaningful/successful engagement with host country nationals.
- Q46.b) Interact appropriately with cultural differences and similarities across complex environments.

V. GOAL EFFECTIVENESS

This section consists of questions on respondents' self-rated effectiveness in achieving the three goals of the Peace Corps and the barriers that limit achievement. The First, Second, and Third Goals of the Peace Corps:

- First Goal: Strengthen Local Capacity. Partner with the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained individuals.
- Second Goal: Sharing America with the World. Promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
- Third Goal: Bringing the World Back Home. Promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

Overall, self-rated effectiveness recovered after an initial post-pandemic dip but remains below pre-pandemic levels, with stronger performance on intercultural understanding than on technical skill transfer.

Effectiveness ratings across all three goals dipped in 2023 with the return to in-person service, then showed year-over-year gains through 2024–2025. Recovery has been relatively slower in this domain, with items still short of pre-pandemic baselines. The First Goal took the hardest hit, moving from ~68 percent positive sentiment on average in 2019 to ~58 percent by 2025, despite consistent gains since 2023. See AVS Q27 and Q29.

In 2025, Second Goal effectiveness ranges ~70–76 percent positive across audiences, while First Goal ranges ~53–60 percent overall. Effectiveness is higher among longer-tenure Volunteers, consistent with experience accumulation, though survivorship may contribute to those differences. See AVS Q27 and Q28.

Volunteers consistently identify professional challenges (~51 percent), language (~46 percent), and counterpart logistics (~44 percent) as the most common impediments to goal effectiveness. These challenges suggest that day-to-day capacity, communication, and coordination constraints are primary barriers to effective skill transfer. Meanwhile, skill mismatch and 'community not needing a Volunteer' remain among the least cited (~10–12 percent), suggesting Volunteers see potential to have greater impact with adequate support. See AVS Q30.⁵

AVS QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS REPORT SECTION

Q27) (Peace Corps Goal 1) How effective are you in transferring knowledge and skills to help:

- Q27.a) Your counterpart(s)/community partner(s)
- Q27.b) Your host institution/organization
- Q27.c) Group(s) with which you work closely
- Q27.d) Members of your host community

⁵ Interpretation note: Respondents could select multiple response options for Q30; therefore, percentages reflect the share selecting each response option and may sum to more than 100 percent.

Q28) (Peace Corps Goal 2) How effective are you in promoting a better understanding of U.S. Americans among:

- Q28.a) Your counterpart(s)/community partner(s)
- Q28.b) Your host institution/organization
- Q28.c) Group(s) with which you work closely
- Q28.d) Members of your host community

Q29) (Peace Corps Goal 3) How effective are you in promoting a better understanding of host country nationals among:

- Q29.a) Your family and close friends
- Q29.b) Your match program (e.g., Global Connections/World Wise Schools)
- Q29.c) Other groups with which you work closely
- Q29.d) Your social network in the United States
- Q29.e) Individuals on social media
- Q29.f) New people you have met since starting service

Q30) Which of the following challenges have prevented you from being more effective in achieving Peace Corps goals? (check all that apply)

VI. VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Questions in this section consist of satisfaction with in-country services provided by Peace Corps staff. The seven areas covered are administrative/logistical, integration, medical, emotional, technical, safety/security, and site matching services. Overall, satisfaction within country services rose broadly with the return to in-person service, with medical, logistics, and site matching at new highs, while project-specific technical support remains the lagging outlier.

Satisfaction with in-country services generally increased when in-person Volunteer service resumed. Satisfaction with services related to project-specific technical skills is the only area that dipped at the return to in-person service and is still below pre-pandemic levels. In contrast, site matching/preparation, logistics, and medical services have reached new highs, with site matching/preparation—an area strongly correlated with overall Volunteer satisfaction—now surpassing its pre-pandemic baseline alongside admin/logistical and medical services. In general, safety/security and medical are the highest-rated service areas across all years measured (79 and 80 percent positive, respectively, in 2025), while project-specific technical skills and emotional services are the lowest (60 and 63 percent in 2025). See AVS Q31.

Medical services and safety/security are the highest rated overall; satisfaction with emotional services is growing steadily. Satisfaction with medical and security services has consistently been rated highest relative to the other areas, with 80 and 79 percent of respondents expressing satisfaction in these areas, respectively, in 2025. Medical services, in particular, have seen great improvement since the return to in-person service. Satisfaction with emotional services has also made notable gains post-pandemic, increasing from ~45 percent pre-pandemic to ~57 percent post-pandemic. See AVS Q31.

Respondents in EMA report higher satisfaction with in-country safety and security services than AF and IAP; AF Region remains the lowest. More than four out of five respondents in the EMA Region in 2025 reported being satisfied with in-country safety and security services, compared to 74 percent in AF and 77 percent in IAP. Notably, IAP has shown a clear downward trend, dropping 10 percent since its high of 87 percent in 2017. These regional differences, together with post-pandemic shifts in Volunteer composition, make the overall average appear relatively stable despite the notable downward trend in IAP. See AVS Q31.

AVS QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS REPORT SECTION

Q31) How satisfied are you with the following types of services provided by in-country Peace Corps staff?

- Q31.a) Administrative/logistical
- Q31.b) Adjustment and integration
- Q31.c) Medical
- Q31.d) Emotional
- Q31.e) Project-specific technical skills
- Q31.f) Safety and security
- Q31.g) Site matching/preparation

VII. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Questions in this section cover Volunteers' physical health, emotional well-being, limiting factors, and stressors. Overall, well-being indicators improved across multiple dimensions in 2025, even as site conditions, social connectedness, and role clarity continue to limit health and elevate stress for many Volunteers.

Volunteer well-being indicators strengthened in 2025, led by notable gains in personal well-being and feelings that service is valued by counterparts. Ability to meet personal well-being needs (Q38.e) reached its highest level to date in 2025 at 76 percent positive sentiment, increasing nine points since 2024. Perceptions that counterparts value Volunteers' service (Q38.b) was the second highest at 72 percent positive and improved in 2025, contributing to the overall upward trend. See AVS Q38.

Staff validation and leadership engagement, while improving, remain comparatively weaker than other well-being indicators. In 2025, only 42 percent of respondents agreed that post staff help them meaningfully connect with their assignments and counterparts (Q38.a), making it the lowest-rated well-being item in this section. Perceptions that post staff listen to and validate Volunteers' concerns (Q38.c) and that post leadership creates a culture that reinforces Volunteers' desire to make a difference through their service (Q38.d) also remained relatively lower at 65–66 percent positive sentiment, despite modest year-over-year improvement. See AVS Q38.

Site conditions, social connectedness, and role clarity are primary constraints to health and emotional well-being.⁶ Since 2023, the leading identified health constraints are local diet (cited by 45 percent of respondents), outdoor exercise limits (33 percent), and stress level (30 percent); with lack of exercise (26 percent), environmental factors (25 percent), and lack of purpose (25 percent) also frequently cited in 2025. The top stressors identified in 2025 are isolation/loneliness (40 percent), communicating in the local language (39 percent), close-of-service/future (38 percent), and work/lack of work (33 percent each). See AVS Q42 and Q43.

Stress profiles differ meaningfully by region, sector, and gender. The AF Region stands out as unique compared to the other two regions, with a greater percentage of respondents in AF experiencing stress from harassment and interactions within their host country than in EMA and IAP. Respondents who experienced non-sexual harassment, in particular, saw a ~25-percentage point difference in 2025 between AF (35 percent) compared to EMA and IAP (12 percent and 9 percent, respectively). Education, Youth in Development, and Peace Corps Response Volunteers showed lower reported stress from lack of work (~27 percent), compared to the other sectors (~45 percent). Female respondents were far more likely to note sex-based discrimination as a stressor than male Volunteers (24 percent compared to 2 percent) and sexual harassment (23 percent compared to three percent). These differences highlight that while many stressors overlap, meaningful variation across subgroups may warrant targeted interventions. See AVS Q42.

⁶ Interpretation note: Respondents could select multiple response options for Q42; therefore, percentages reflect the share selecting each response option and may sum to more than 100 percent.

AVS QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS REPORT SECTION

Q38) To what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?

- Q38.a) Post staff have helped me meaningfully connect with my assignment and counterparts.
- Q38.b) My service is valued by my counterparts.
- Q38.c) Post staff listen to and validate my concerns.
- Q38.d) Post leadership creates a culture that reinforces my desire to make a difference through my service.
- Q38.e) I can meet my personal well-being needs during Peace Corps service.

Q42) Do any of the following factors currently limit your ability to maintain your physical health and emotional well-being? (check all that apply)

Q43) Which of the following factors contribute to elevating your stress level? (check all that apply)

VIII. SAFETY

This section consists of AVS questions on perceived safety, experiences of in-country harassment and discrimination, and the adequacy of sexual harassment training and response. Overall, Volunteers feel very safe where they live and work, but travel—especially transportation—remains a notable safety gap, with harassment and discrimination incidents lower post-pandemic yet uneven across demographics and regions.

Respondents feel very safe where they live and work, but notably less safe when it comes to in-country travel and transportation. About 90–95 percent of respondents report that they feel safe where they live and work, which has held steady across all years measured. However, perceptions of in-country travel safety, especially transportation safety, have been consistently rated lower across years, despite year-over-year improvement since 2023. This travel safety gap is especially pronounced in AF, which reports substantially lower transportation safety (47 percent in 2025) compared to EMA and IAP (~78 percent each). See AVS Q49.

Respondents report fewer incidents of in-country harassment and discrimination post-pandemic, though the most common characteristics remain unchanged.⁷ Across all years, the most frequently cited bases for insensitive comments, harassment, or discrimination are race/color/ethnicity, sex, and American nationality, while disability is consistently the least cited, with sexual orientation and religion also comparatively low. Post-pandemic, respondents appear to encounter these behaviors less often than in 2017–2019; the share reporting no in-country harassment or discrimination in the prior 12 months has risen across all three service regions, now averaging roughly 26 percent, compared to about 17 percent pre-pandemic. See AVS Q50.

Higher rates of in-country harassment and discrimination are reported among women, younger Volunteers, and those serving in the AF Region. AF Region stands out as the highest-friction context, both before and after the pandemic, with larger portions of respondents citing in-country harassment or discrimination based on race/color/ethnicity, American nationality, and marital status; and fewer reporting “none,” compared with EMA and IAP. Demographically, women and younger Volunteers continue to experience more incidents than their peers; in 2025, over half of female respondents (55 percent) reported sex-based harassment and discrimination (vs. eight percent of men) and were less likely to report no incidents (16 vs. 35 percent). Age patterns remain similarly pronounced, with about 60 percent of respondents aged 50+ reporting no incidents in 2025, compared to ~18 percent of those aged 29 or younger. See AVS Q50.

Since in-person Volunteer service resumed in 2022, confidence in sexual harassment training is up. Roughly three out of four respondents (~76 percent) have rated training as adequate for identifying/reporting sexual harassment, ~67 percent find the strategies useful, and ~67 percent feel comfortable seeking staff support; all of which are higher in 2025 than they were in 2023. At the same time, only ~57 percent trust the agency to effectively address reports, and 65 percent believe the agency provides adequate resources to those affected, with AF having lower positive sentiment than EMA and IAP. See AVS Q57.

⁷ Interpretation note: Respondents could select multiple response options for Q50; therefore, percentages reflect the share selecting each response option and may sum to more than 100 percent.

AVS QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS REPORT SECTION

Q49) How safe do you feel in the following environments?

- Q49.a) Where you live
- Q49.b) Where you work
- Q49.c) When you travel in-country: transportation safety
- Q49.d) When you travel in-country: personal security
- Q49.e) In the city where your country's main Peace Corps office is located

Q50) In the last 12 months, have you experienced insensitive comments, harassment, or discrimination toward you in your host country based on any of the following characteristics? (check all that apply)

Q57) To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

- Q57.a) The Peace Corps provides adequate training on identifying and reporting sexual harassment.
- Q57.b) Peace Corps training has provided me with useful strategies for mitigating and responding to sexual harassment.
- Q57.c) I feel comfortable asking Peace Corps staff for support or advice regarding sexual harassment.
- Q57.d) I am confident in the Peace Corps' ability to effectively address reports of sexual harassment.
- Q57.e) The Peace Corps provides adequate resources and support to those who are affected by sexual harassment.

IX. CULTURE AT THE PEACE CORPS

This section addresses AVS questions on post-level norms among Volunteers and the organizational culture of the Peace Corps at post. Overall, post-level norms increasingly emphasize peer support and health, while perceptions of policy adherence among Volunteers remain comparatively low; belonging and voice are rising, though psychological safety around admitting mistakes still trails.

More than four in five respondents since 2023 (~86 percent) say Volunteers at their post help one another be effective. Health norms at posts also appear to be strengthening, with a larger share in 2025 than in prior years saying Volunteers at their post effectively manage their physical and mental health.

About 69 percent of respondents say Volunteers at their post follow Peace Corps policy.

Roughly 61 percent believe Volunteers report their whereabouts according to policy, and about 59 percent believe Volunteers drink alcohol responsibly. Taken together, the results highlight a divergence in post-level norms, where peer support and health norms are generally strengthening while perceptions of policy adherence among Volunteers remains comparatively low. See AVS Q59.

Regional differences are evident in perceptions of whereabouts reporting among

Volunteers. Respondents in EMA show stronger agreement that Volunteers at their post report their whereabouts according to policy, with nearly three out of four in 2025 endorsing this view (72 percent), compared to about 56 – 59 percent of respondents in AF and IAP. At the same time, about 15 percent of total respondents across regions selected “NA/Don’t Know,” indicating that a meaningful portion was not able to judge whether Volunteers at their post report their whereabouts according to policy. See AVS Q59.

Tenure shapes how Volunteers perceive policy-related norms at their posts. In 2025, 80 percent of respondents who had been in country six months or less reported that Volunteers at their post follow Peace Corps policy, compared with 62 percent among those in country 18–23 months and 56 percent among those in country more than 24 months. Similar downward trends appear in perceptions of Volunteer practices around whereabouts reporting, responsible alcohol consumption, and management of mental and emotional health. Overall, positive sentiment tapers with tenure, suggesting that perceptions of these norms may become less favorable as Volunteers spend more time in country. See AVS Q59.

Sense of belonging in the Peace Corps is notably high. Three in four respondents in 2025 said they feel a sense of belonging, an increase from last year. Comfort with speaking freely has also risen year over year, with two-thirds in 2025 saying they are comfortable expressing opinions that differ from those of staff. See AVS Q60.

Just over half of respondents report they would feel comfortable telling post leadership if they made a mistake. The pattern implies a connected community that feels increasingly heard yet still weighs the cost of candor when errors occur. See AVS Q60.

AVS QUESTIONS COVERED IN THIS REPORT SECTION

Q59) To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements? Peace Corps Volunteers at my post...

- Q59.a) follow Peace Corps policy.
- Q59.b) help each other be effective Volunteers.
- Q59.c) report their whereabouts according to Peace Corps policy.
- Q59.d) drink alcohol responsibly.
- Q59.e) effectively manage their physical health.
- Q59.f) effectively manage their mental/ emotional health.

Q60) To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

- Q60.a) The organizational culture of the Peace Corps (including staff and Volunteers) is free of discrimination.
- Q60.b) I am comfortable expressing opinions that are different from Peace Corps staff.
- Q60.c) I feel a sense of belonging within the Peace Corps.
- Q60.d) If I were to make a mistake, I would feel comfortable letting post Leadership know.

METHODOLOGY

The AVS is fielded between June and August of each year. The 2025 survey is the 27th in a series of studies designed to collect feedback from all Volunteers globally. The first global survey of Volunteers was administered in 1975. Since 2009, the survey has been administered on an annual basis to meet agency performance requirements.

The objective of this study is to capture Volunteers' perspectives on the current state of the Peace Corps program to help the agency improve its performance by better understanding how practices in the field contribute to program outcomes and affect the Volunteer experience. The scope includes Peace Corps Volunteers who were sworn in and had served for one month or longer as of the survey launch date. Peace Corps Response Volunteers were added to the survey frame for the first time in 2025. Ineligible groups include Trainees, Volunteers at site for less than one month, and Virtual Service Pilot Participants.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION AND INSTRUMENT

The AVS is distributed to Volunteers through a direct link specific to each respondent, sent via email. Distribution is centrally managed by the Peace Corps Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning.

The 2025 AVS questionnaire contains 61 detailed questions (with applicability varying by respondent) covering:

- Overall assessment of Peace Corps service
- The Peace Corps' application process
- Training for Peace Corps assignment
- Work activities
- The Peace Corps' goals and impact
- The Peace Corps' in-country services for Volunteers
- Health and well-being of Volunteers
- Everyday life as a Volunteer
- Safety and security
- The Peace Corps culture

The 2025 instrument builds on the 2024 AVS, with edits to reduce respondent burden while preserving each item's data utility. The instrument is linked in the Appendix.

All AVS responses are confidential. Names and email addresses are removed from submissions, and individual responses are accessible only to survey analysts at Peace Corps/Washington to support data preparation, integration with existing information systems, and aggregate reporting. All questions are voluntary. The online survey is mobile-accessible and could be completed in multiple sessions.

APPENDIX

- [2017–2025 Annual Volunteer Survey \(AVS\) - Detailed Quantitative Dataset](#)
- [2025 AVS - Correlations with Volunteer Overall Satisfaction](#)
- [2025 AVS - Questionnaire](#)
- [2025 AVS - Detailed Data Report](#)
- [2024 AVS - Detailed Data Report](#)
- [2023 AVS - Detailed Data Report](#)