Peace Corps Macedonia

Application guidelines for Community Development Program

2017
I. BACKGROUND

Peace Corps is an independent US government agency that provides Volunteers to countries that have requested support. Its establishment was initiated in 1960 when US senator (and later president) John F. Kennedy called United States citizens to serve their country by living and working in developing countries and to promote world peace and friendship. To this day, the three original goals of Peace Corps remain the same:

1. Helping the people of interested countries in meeting their needs for trained men and women.
2. Helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
3. Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of all Americans.

Through a formal intergovernmental agreement signed in 1996, Peace Corps Volunteers started working with schools and organizations in Macedonia to help meet the diverse needs of their communities.

Peace Corps in Macedonia conducts its activities through two programs:

- *English Education Development Program*
- *Community Development Program*

In the last 21 years more than 550 Volunteers have served in Macedonia working in the field of Education and Community Development.

II. PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER

Peace Corps Volunteers commit to serve for a minimum of two years. Placement of Volunteers is all around Macedonia with priority on villages. The Volunteers receive 11 weeks of intensive training in the local language(s), traditions and customs of their host country in order to become part of the communities in which they serve. They also receive technical orientation to their project to ensure that they are able to adapt and apply their skills effectively in the host country environment. The agency devotes significant resources to provide Volunteers with the training, support and information they need to stay healthy and safe.

Volunteers receive a living allowance that covers housing, food and incidentals, enabling them to live the lifestyle of the people in their local communities.
The Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. is responsible for recruiting Volunteers throughout the United States. Peace Corps Volunteers must be American citizens, above twenty one years of age, and must possess the necessary skills and training required for the program for which they apply.

Volunteers are expected to devote at least two years to carry out their duties as Volunteers. There are no restrictions regarding age, sex, ethnicity or religion. Most volunteers worldwide have at least a bachelor's degree and many possess advanced degrees in their area of work. Some are recent graduates, others are mid-career professionals, and some are retired.

III. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Community Development Program in Macedonia caters to the needs of the local communities and main stakeholders in creating opportunities for citizen participation, in particular youth. It also assists local organizations in developing sustainable and meaningful programs and activities that will build the capacities of young people, citizens, service providers, educators, and marginalized groups.

The Community Development program of Peace Corps Macedonia partners with local government units, local organizations from the civil society sector, as well as local grass root and non-formal community-based organizations. Our main partners at national level are the Ministry of Local Self-Government, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and other stakeholders.

Peace Corps Volunteers can be hosted by one or multiple organizations from the same community. For example, when a volunteer is hosted by multiple organizations, one of them acts as a hub and coordinates the efforts of the volunteer to assist other organizations from the same community. This type of arrangement encourages closer cooperation and networking in the community as well as building a closer and stronger community. The people working directly with the volunteer are of a key essence in identifying the needs of the community and turning those needs into opportunities and possibilities to bring new ideas and positive actions into the community.
IV. HOW TO REQUEST A VOLUNTEER?

**Step 1**
Read the guidelines carefully;
The organizations/municipalities/public institutions should use the template for Community Development Program

[http://macedonia.peacecorps.gov/content/resources](http://macedonia.peacecorps.gov/content/resources)

**Step 2**
Before filling out the application form, please discuss the following questions with your team and colleagues:

- What community and organizational problems/needs will you address when working with Peace Corps Volunteer
- What do you want to achieve by cooperating/working with the volunteer?
- What does the job description of the volunteer look like, what are the working hours, where is the working space?

Having a clear idea about the work of the volunteer will allow your team to better utilize the skills of the volunteers as well as to achieve better success. Volunteers will work in partnership with the organization staff/volunteers and one main counterpart.

The counterpart is the person who will work very closely with the volunteer; will participate in trainings organized by Peace Corps Macedonia; will stay in regular communication with Peace Corps staff; will plan and implement the joint work with the volunteer.

The work of the volunteer is supervised by the Head of the organization as well as the staff from Peace Corps Macedonia office.

**Step 3**
Identify at least 3 options for housing available at your community. More information about this program can be found below.

**Step 4**
The completed applications should be sent to: pcv@mk.peacecorps.gov or by post to: Peace Corps Macedonia str. 8 Udarna Brigada br. 2, 1000 Skopje.
V. SELECTION PROCESS

In period of two months after the application form is submitted, the Peace Corps staff will contact you and will organize a visit at your organization. The counterpart and the head of the organization must be present at the visit as well as other staff/volunteers that will potentially work with the Volunteer. The potential partner organizations should be present at the meeting too.

Peace Corps Staff will review the application form and discuss in details about expectations and volunteer responsibilities.

The staff will organize a visit to homestay families. After two months if necessary the staff will contact you and schedule a second visit to your organization or potential homestay family.

Minimum Criteria for Primary Work Assignment (Community Development):

- The host organization/school has a demonstrated organizational need and strong interest and commitment to host a Volunteer
- Organizational and community priorities are consistent with the Community Development project objectives and goals
- There are clearly defined working expectations of the volunteer, sufficient workload, and an appropriate work space
- There is/are available, interested, and committed counterpart(s) in the host organization willing to work with and provide support to the Volunteer.
- There is a potential for partnership or collaboration for secondary/community activities with other groups or organizations in the community. These might be formal or informal groups, or any community members interested in working on activities with the Volunteer.
- There should be at least two available options for homestay families that meet the Peace Corps criteria
- Community meets the safety and security and medical criteria according to the Peace Corps Macedonia requirements

Only the selected organization will be contacted with information about the Volunteer’s profile and the next steps.
VI. HOMESTAY FAMILY PROGRAM

Provide contact information of three potential host families in your community who are willing to host the Volunteer for at least the first 6 months (potentially two years). The potential HSFs should be open to share their home and culture with the American volunteer and to accept him/her as a member of their family.

After applications are received, host families will be called for initial interviews. Staff will then visit host families to ensure they meet Peace Corps housing criteria.

**Peace Corps housing criteria list:**

- Room with a bed (mattress), a desk or table, a chair and a wardrobe, that will be used only by the volunteer;
- Heating provided in the room;
- Windows that close properly;
- Lockable door;
- Access to a toilet and a bathroom;
- Water heater in the bathroom;
- Access to kitchen and cooking facilities;
- Housing located within 30 minutes’ walk from work;
- Located in a safe neighborhood with a respectable family;
- The Volunteer is not allowed to live with their supervisor’s and potential counterpart’s families.

**Payment:**

The Head of the household will receive 8,000 MKD per month to offset the costs of heating, electricity and other increased expenses of the HSF. If the house has available separate floor for the PCV with access to separate kitchen and bathroom, the payment is 9,500 MKD. Volunteers will additionally cover costs for internet and food.
TIPS HOW TO IDENTIFY HOMESTAY FAMILIES:

- Make an announcement to all staff members of your organization, regardless of their position;

- Organize community meetings to spread the information out. Talk to your relatives, friends and neighbors;

- Distribute the Host family brochures to interested host families;

- Make sure the interested families are already aware of the basic requirements of the PC HSF program and are truly willing to have PC volunteer 6 to 24 months in their home;

- Make sure that the families understand that the payment is not a rent, but an amount to cover the increased costs.
If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact Peace Corps Macedonia Program Managers and the Housing Coordinator:

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**Dragan Atanasov. Temporary Program Manager**
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**Lindita Rexhepi - Program Manager**
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