

# **IPS 1-20 Re-enrollments and Reinstatements of Volunteers, Peace Corps Response Volunteers, and Trainees Granted Completion of Service Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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**Effective Date:** June 5, 2020

**Responsible Offices:** Office of Global Operations; Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection; Office of the Chief Financial Officer; and Office of Health Services

**New Interim Policy Statement**

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Issuance Memo (06/05/2020)

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## **1.0 Purpose**

Interim Policy Statement (IPS) 1-20 *Re-enrollments and Reinstatements of Volunteers, Peace Corps Response Volunteers, and Trainees Granted Completion of Service Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic* establishes the Peace Corps policy regarding Re-enrollments and Reinstatements of Volunteers, Peace Corps Response Volunteers, and Trainees who were granted Completion of Service (COS) status after January 1, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (for the purposes of this IPS, V/Ts).

To the extent feasible, implementation of this IPS will be guided by the following:

- (a) The Peace Corps is committed to providing options for V/Ts who were granted COS status due to the COVID-19 pandemic (COVID-19), who wish to be reinstated or re-enrolled.
- (b) The Peace Corps will endeavor to create opportunities for Cohorts of V/Ts who were granted COS status to return to service in their prior post of service, whenever such return to service continues to support the programmatic needs of the communities and host government, and to meet Peace Corps' health, safety, and other requirements.
- (c) If requests for Reinstatement cannot be fulfilled, V/Ts may be offered the opportunity to re-enroll for service.

## **2.0 Applicability**

This IPS applies to Volunteers, Peace Corps Response Volunteers, and Trainees who were granted COS status after January 1, 2020 due to COVID-19.

The provisions of the Peace Corps Manual including: MS 220 *Leave for Volunteers/Trainees* and MS 281 *Completion of Service Date Advancement and Extension of Service* remain applicable to V/Ts covered by this IPS, with exceptions as follows:

(a) **MS 220 Leave for Volunteers/Trainees**

The provisions outlined in section 7.1 of MS 220 for special leave will not be applicable to V/Ts who are reinstated under the provisions of this IPS. However, special leave provisions will be applicable to those Volunteers who extend their service for another term of one year or more beyond the agreed Reinstatement service term and fulfill the requisite eligibility requirements outlined in section 4.0 Special Leave for Extending Volunteers of MS 281 *Completion of Service Date Advancement and Extension of Service*.

(b) **MS 281 Completion of Service Date Advancement and Extension of Service**

- (1) In accordance with sections 2.0 Advancing Completion of Service Date and 3.0 Extension of Volunteer Service Within the Host Country of MS 281 and as set forth below, the term of service and new COS date will be established by the Country Director (CD) to meet the programmatic needs of the host country.
- (2) In accordance with section 4.0 Special Leave for Extending Volunteers and as set forth above regarding section 7.1 Special Leave of MS 220, the provisions for Special Leave will not be applicable to V/Ts who are reinstated under the provisions of this IPS. However, special leave provisions will be applicable to those Volunteers who extend their service for another term of one year or more beyond the agreed Reinstatement service term and fulfill the requisite eligibility requirements outlined in section 4.0 Special Leave for Extending Volunteers of MS 281.

### 3.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this IPS, the following definitions apply:

- (a) **Re-enrollment** means the return to Peace Corps service of a V/T, who was granted COS status due to COVID-19, for a full two-year term of service (in addition to training as outlined in section 4.0(d) below).
- (b) **Reinstatement** means the return to Peace Corps service of a V/T, who was granted COS status due to COVID-19, to the post of assignment from which the V/T's service was ended to complete a service commitment as outlined in section 4.0(b) below.
- (c) **Cohort** means a group of V/Ts who commenced their service at the same time in the same country of service.

### 4.0 Policy

- (a) V/Ts who were granted COS status due to COVID-19 may be eligible for Reinstatement and Re-enrollment regardless of their length of service prior to evacuation, as long as the V/T is willing to commit to serve the length of time requested by the post.

- (b) In general, Reinstatement will be offered to Cohorts of V/Ts who were granted COS status for service terms between six months and two years depending on the programmatic and operational needs of each country. The CD may offer options for shorter lengths of service if deemed to be in the best interests of the Peace Corps, the host country and community, with approval of their Regional Director and the Associate Director for the Office of Global Operations.
- (c) The duration of Peace Corps Response (PCR) assignments will be determined on a case-by-case basis based on programmatic and operational needs. PCR assignments will not be shorter than three months, and will not exceed 12 months.
- (d) Posts will provide a re-orientation for all reinstated V/Ts, including PCR Volunteers, in accordance with agency guidance. Each post will determine the extent to which additional training may be required for reinstated V/Ts, inclusive of all mandatory training not yet received. Re-enrolled V/Ts will receive training as is standard for all new V/Ts to service.
- (e) The Office of Placement and Assessment (Placement) or PCR (for Peace Corps Response Volunteers) will inform the V/T of, and the V/T must agree to, all of the requirements of the Reinstatement/Re-enrollment, including the service term (start and end date), prospective assignment, and any additional training as determined by the post and Region.
- (f) Once V/Ts are reinstated or re-enrolled, they shall be subject to all other Peace Corps policies (including Post policies).

## **5.0 Criteria for Re-enrollment**

For purposes of this IPS, a V/T may be considered for Re-enrollment by Placement or PCR upon their completion and submission of the expedited application and provided they meet certain conditions, including:

- (a) The V/Ts who were granted COS status due to COVID-19 must request Re-enrollment from Placement or PCR within one year of their COS date. The time period within which Re-enrollment must be requested may be extended by the Director;
- (b) The V/T has received a favorable recommendation from the CD at the post from which they were evacuated; and
- (c) The V/T has skills in high demand or their Re-enrollment is otherwise in the best interest of the Peace Corps.

## **6.0 Criteria for Reinstatement**

For purposes of this IPS, a V/T, who was granted COS status due to COVID-19, may be considered for Reinstatement by Placement or PCR to the post of assignment from which their

service was ended and must request Reinstatement by completing and submitting the expedited application within the requisite time period. The time period within which the application for Reinstatement must be submitted will be set by the Peace Corps and applicants will be informed. The time period within which Reinstatement must be requested may be extended by the Director.

In addition to the eligibility criteria outlined above, Placement or PCR, in consultation with the CD, prior to approving the Reinstatement application shall consider the following:

- (a) The performance (including quality of previous service, if applicable) and conduct of the V/T during service;
- (b) The V/T's stated motivation and reasoning in seeking to continue service through Reinstatement; and
- (c) The availability of an assignment for which the V/T is qualified, given the suggested date of return to the country.

## **7.0 Establishing a new Completion of Service Date for Reinstated Volunteers**

For the purposes of this IPS, CDs have the authority to establish a new:

- (a) Volunteer completion of service date that meets the programmatic needs of a country.
- (b) Peace Corps Response Volunteer completion of service date, in consultation with PCR, that meets the programmatic needs of a country.

## **8.0 Legal and Medical Clearance for Re-enrollment and Reinstatements**

- (a) Prior to requesting legal and medical clearance for a V/T, Placement (for Re-enrollments and Reinstatements) or PCR (for Peace Corps Response Volunteers) will verify that both of the following conditions have been met:
  - (1) The V/T receives an approval from the CD for Reinstatement or a favorable recommendation from the CD for Re-enrollment; and
  - (2) The V/T accepts the terms and conditions for the assignment.
- (b) Once the conditions outlined in section 8.0(a) are verified, Placement or PCR will request:
  - (1) Legal clearance from the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection; and
  - (2) Medical clearance from the Office of Health Services.

## **9.0 Procedures**

Procedures implementing IPS 1-20 may be developed under the direction and guidance of the Office of Global Operations. If developed, those procedures must be approved by the Office of Global Operations, Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Office of the General Counsel, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of Health Services, and each of the three Regions.

## **10.0 Effective Date**

- (a) The effective date of this IPS is the date of issuance.
- (b) Given the dynamic nature and uncertainties presented by COVID-19, this IPS will be reviewed by the Senior Policy Committee within 12 months of its date of issuance to assess the need for any revisions to the policy and the time-frame for continued applicability.