

# IPS 1-26 Peace Corps Manual: Authority and Revision Process

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## 1.0 Purpose

This Manual Section sets forth the authority for the Peace Corps Manual (the “Manual”), the authoritative status of the Manual, and the process for revising the Manual.

## 2.0 Authority for the Manual

Promulgation of the Manual is authorized by section 4 (b) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. § 2503 (b)). Specific Manual Sections are authorized by either the Peace Corps Act, the Foreign Service Act, Executive Orders, and/or other applicable federal law. Each Manual Section lists its underlying authority in the Authorities section.

## 3.0 Authoritative Status and Applicability of the Manual

The Manual constitutes the authoritative policies governing the operations of the Peace Corps and the responsibilities and conduct of Volunteers and Peace Corps employees, i.e., direct hire employees and personal services contractors. For purposes of the Manual, direct hire employees are persons hired by appointment by the Peace Corps under Sections 7(a), 7(c) (22 U.S.C. § 2506) and 13 of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. § 2512) and similar appointment authorities and personal services contractors are persons hired by contract under Section 10(a)(5) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. § 2509).

Peace Corps procedures including directives, handbooks, standard operating procedures, technical guidelines, and other publications must be consistent with the policies in the Manual. If an applicable procedure conflicts with a policy in the Manual, the policy will prevail. Staff are encouraged to consult with the Office of General Counsel in such circumstances.

Any reference in the Manual or procedures to Peace Corps "employees" or "staff" includes personal services contractors, unless excluded by operation of law or Peace Corps policy.

## **4.0 Revision Process**

### **4.1 Senior Policy Committee**

The Senior Policy Committee has oversight responsibility for the Manual revision process. This responsibility includes developing the process for revising the Manual, coordinating the formulation of Manual policies, working with appropriate offices in drafting new or revised language, ensuring that the Manual accurately reflects applicable law and policy and coordinating the issuance and distribution of new or revised Manual sections. The Senior Policy Committee also has oversight and approval authority for procedures that implement Manual policies. The Senior Policy Committee will be assisted in carrying out these responsibilities by a Policy Secretariat. *See* Senior Policy Committee Charter and By-Laws.

### **4.2 Approval**

All substantive revisions to the Manual must be approved by the Director. Technical revisions to the Manual must be approved by the Policy Team which consists of the Associate General Counsel for Policy and the Policy and Program Analyst.

#### **4.2.1 Substantive Revisions**

Substantive revisions are revisions to the Manual other than technical revisions.

#### **4.2.2 Technical Revisions**

Technical revisions are revisions that have a minimal or non-material policy impact, such as spelling, grammar, or style corrections; revisions to factual information (e.g., changes in addresses or names of offices); citations or cross-references to legal authorities; changes to conform with revisions to other Manual Sections; or updates to out-of-date administrative processes in policy provisions to align with current agency practices. Technical revisions may be

proposed by the office that implements such policies, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders to ensure accuracy and concurrence. The Policy Team approves of and maintains a record of technical revisions which are made directly to the Manual and do not require approval from the Senior Policy Committee or the Director.

#### **4.3 Issuance and Distribution**

Approved Manual Sections must be issued and distributed in accordance with procedures determined by the Senior Policy Committee.

#### **4.4 Effectiveness**

Approved Manual Sections become effective on the date of issuance and have prospective effect only, unless otherwise stated in the Manual Section.

### **5.0 Interim Policy Statements**

When there is an immediate need to issue a new Peace Corps policy, an Interim Policy Statement may be issued. The procedure for issuing Interim Policy Statements is the same as for issuing a Manual Section. An Interim Policy Statement has the same legal force and effect as a Manual Section and should be issued as a new Manual Section or integrated into an existing section in a timely manner.

### **6.0 Waiver of Manual Provisions**

As long as the waiver is not inconsistent with controlling legislation, as verified by the Office of the General Counsel, a Manual provision may be waived:

- (a) If specifically permitted by the terms of the relevant Manual Section in accordance with the procedures set forth therein; or
- (b) By the Director for compelling or equitable reasons, unless the waiver would be adverse to the interests of an individual who has relied on the provision.

### **7.0 Procedures**

The office(s) responsible for a particular policy, along with the assistance and guidance of the Policy Team, and where appropriate the Policy Secretariat and/or the Senior Policy Committee, is responsible for overseeing the development of the procedures that implement the policies in the Manual. The office(s) responsible for a particular policy will lead the development of implementing procedures and will ensure, in consultation with the Policy Team, that relevant stakeholders, which it determines have a substantive programmatic interest in the proposed procedures, are given the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed procedures. Procedures should include the process by which amendments shall be reviewed and approved before inclusion in the Peace Corps Manual. In the case that there is a lack of consensus amongst stakeholders of a particular procedure, the Senior Policy Committee may be requested to approve

of the procedure via a vote. All procedures will be made available on the Peace Corps internal repository and the external facing website, as appropriate.

## **8.0 Effective Date**

The effective date of this Manual Section is the date of issuance.