

# MS 131 Office of External Affairs: Organization, Mission, and Functions

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## 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Manual Section is to describe the organization, mission, and functions of the Office of External Affairs.

## 2.0 Authority

Peace Corps Act, 22 U.S.C. 2501, *et seq.*

### **3.0 Organization**

The Office of External Affairs is headed by the Associate Director for External Affairs. The Associate Director for External Affairs reports directly to the Chief of Staff. The Office of External Affairs includes five sub-units: the Office of Gifts and Grants Management; the Office of Strategic Partnerships and Intergovernmental Affairs; the Office of Communications; the Office of Congressional Relations; and the Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services. Each sub-office is headed by an A Delegate, either a Director or Officer, who reports to the Associate Director for External Affairs.

### **4.0 Office Missions**

#### **4.1 Office of External Affairs**

The mission of the Office of External Affairs is to provide coordination and support for the Peace Corps' external engagement with other agencies and partners, the media, and Congress.

#### **4.2 Office of Gifts and Grants Management**

The mission of the Office of Gifts and Grants Management is to oversee and manage the solicitation and acceptance of monetary and in-kind gifts to the agency and to oversee small grants programs.

#### **4.3 Office of Strategic Partnerships and Intergovernmental Affairs**

The mission of the Office of Strategic Partnerships and Intergovernmental Affairs is to promote, develop, and manage the Peace Corps' strategic partnerships and relationships with U.S. Government agencies, state and local governments, non-governmental organizations, multilateral institutions, and corporations.

#### **4.4 Office of Communications**

It is the mission of the Office of Communications to increase the awareness and understanding of the Peace Corps and the work of Volunteers.

#### **4.5 Office of Congressional Relations**

It is the mission of the Office of Congressional Relations to develop the Peace Corps' legislative strategy, coordinate activities related to all legislative issues and interests, and serve as the official liaison between the Peace Corps Director and members of Congress and congressional staff.

#### **4.6 Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services**

The Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services engages the Peace Corps community to further intercultural understanding and support Volunteers through career transitions.

## **5.0 Office Functions**

### **5.1 Associate Director for External Affairs**

The Associate Director for External Affairs:

- (a) Advises the Peace Corps Director and senior staff on matters related to the Peace Corps' external affairs operations;
- (b) Develops and implements Peace Corps external affairs policies, procedures, goals and objectives;
- (c) Leads agency efforts to engage, inform, and educate external stakeholders in support of the agency's mission, priorities, programs, and initiatives;
- (d) Sets Peace Corps-wide external affairs priorities; and
- (e) Oversees the Offices of Gifts and Grants Management; Strategic Partnerships & Intergovernmental Affairs; Communications; Congressional Relations; and Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services.

### **5.2 Office of Gifts and Grants Management**

- (a) Develops and implements agency policies and strategy for strategic fundraising partnerships.
- (b) Identifies potential strategic fundraising partners and establishes the agency's strategic fundraising partnership development priorities in close collaboration with other relevant offices.
- (c) Coordinates the development and approval of memoranda of understanding and strategic fundraising partnership agreements pursuant to Peace Corps policies.
- (d) Issues guidance and develops procedures on strategic fundraising partnership development and implementation.
- (e) Supports the implementation of agency strategic partnerships, including the establishment and management of funds received by the agency through strategic partnerships.
- (f) Maintains donor relations and seeks to broaden the donor base for small grants programs and approved agency fundraising activities.
- (g) Administers the Small Project Assistance Program and the Peace Corps Partnership Program, and establishes standards and policies for all small grants programs directly administered by the Peace Corps.
- (h) Oversees and manages the solicitation and acceptance of monetary gifts for the Peace Corps Partnership Program and other authorized purposes.

### **5.3 Office of Strategic Partnerships and Intergovernmental Affairs**

- (a) Serves as a primary agency liaison for strategy, planning, and development of strategic partnerships with U.S. government agencies, state and local governments, non-governmental organizations, multilateral institutions, and other private sector strategic partners.
- (b) Leads the agency's engagement in National Service, International Volunteering, and Global Citizenship efforts, both domestically and internationally.
- (c) Advises on strategic partnership opportunities and evaluates proposals for strategic partnerships with external entities.
- (d) Supports overseas Posts to effectively utilize global strategic partnerships to support programming and training at Posts.
- (e) Collects and analyzes data on strategic partnership activity from Peace Corps Posts, regional recruiting offices, and headquarters offices.
- (f) Monitors, evaluates, and reports on the effectiveness of agency strategic partnerships.
- (g) Leads the agency's public engagement efforts, which includes representing the Peace Corps and the Peace Corps Director in meetings with key officials from external stakeholders, and promotes relationships consistent with the policies and objectives of the administration of the agency.

### **5.4 Office of Communications**

- (a) Advises the Associate Director for External Affairs and the Peace Corps Director concerning the effectiveness of all agency communications functions.
- (b) Advises the Associate Director for External Affairs and agency managers regarding appropriate public affairs support of Peace Corps programs, internationally and domestically.
- (c) Prepares speeches and remarks for the Peace Corps Director.
- (d) Represents the Peace Corps to public and other agencies in the planning and administration of communications functions.
- (e) Establishes and maintains relationships with members of the media and provides on-the-record information on behalf of the agency, and prepares and disseminates media materials to members of the media.
- (f) Develops and maintains the agency's public website.
- (g) Provides graphic design assistance and expertise to the entire agency.

- (h) Provides video programs and photographic services to the entire agency, and produces video programs in cooperation and consultation with program offices.
- (i) Advises agency management and field staff on photography and video production, purpose, and potential equipment expenses, and provides direction, programmatic objective information, conceptual approaches, and technical assistance to contractors.
- (j) Manages and administers the agency's printing program and provides technical guidance to assure that program requirements are met, and advises on the utilization of the Government Printing Office, as well as the Peace Corps' printing authority.
- (k) Manages the agency's photographic library and digital archives.
- (l) Handles information requests from members of the media and the public.
- (m) Manages design, production, and delivery of all recruitment and other promotional products, including paid advertising, public service announcements and all collateral materials.
- (n) In close coordination with the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (VRS), works with the public affairs specialists in the regional recruitment offices, as well as with other headquarters departments.
- (o) Manages the agency's official social media channels.
- (p) Develops and implements the agency's strategic communications plans in coordination with relevant offices.
- (q) In collaboration with VRS, provides country-specific information for applicants on the agency's public website, as required by the Peace Corps Act.
- (r) Approves, in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel, the use of the Peace Corps logo, name, and all other Peace Corps marks. For more information, *see MS 321 Use of the Peace Corps Name, Seal and Logo*.

## **5.5 Office of Congressional Relations**

- (a) Develops and implements strategies for legislative and other congressional activities, including the tracking of the authorization and appropriations process for the Peace Corps' annual budget.
- (b) In coordination with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, oversees the production of the agency's annual Congressional Budget Justification document.
- (c) Handles constituent cases involving Peace Corps Volunteers (i.e. a Volunteer or relative of a Volunteer who writes his or her Member of Congress about a particular issue).

- (d) Provides any required consultation with, or notification to, Congress regarding an opening, closing, suspension, or significant reduction of a domestic or overseas office or country program.
- (e) Involves members of Congress and their staff in special events related to the Peace Corps.
- (f) Provides information about and enhances the visits of congressional delegations (CODELS) and staff delegations (Staffdels) to Peace Corps countries.
- (g) Represents the Peace Corps Director as the exclusive and official agency liaison with Congress.
- (h) Ensures performance of the authorities related to the Kate Puzey Act that have been delegated to the Director of the Office of Congressional Relations under Attachment K of MS 114 *Delegation of Authority*.
- (i) Engages with the White House and Senate Foreign Relations Committee to secure Senate confirmation of the Peace Corps Director and Deputy Director.
- (j) Facilitates the delivery of the agency's congressionally mandated reports to the appropriate Congressional committees.
- (k) Ensures that the appropriate Congressional committees are notified whenever the Peace Corps Director approves a proposal to open, close, significantly reduce, or suspend a domestic or overseas office or country program.

## **5.6 Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services**

- (a) Develops and implements Peace Corps' Third Goal programming, outreach, and training, leveraging the Peace Corps experience to increase Americans' global and intercultural competence.
  - (1) Incentivizes Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) and Volunteers to achieve the Third Goal through innovative contests (such as, Blog it Home, Storytelling Contest, etc.) and campaigns.
  - (2) Provides trainings, promotional items (including Third Goal Kits), and other resources to Volunteers, RPCVs, and staff to assist them in supporting the Third Goal.
  - (3) Connects American classrooms and community groups with current Volunteers and RPCVs through World Wise Schools programming, resources, and events to increase global competence and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.
- (b) Engages and supports RPCVs as they return home from service with career resources to aid their transition.
  - (1) Hosts RPCV Career Link, a searchable web-based jobs board featuring positions around the world with employers seeking to hire RPCVs.

- (2) Holds career conferences, career events, and career fairs in cities around the country to bring local RPCVs together for career development training, networking, and events with local employers.
- (3) Promotes career and transition information and services through a variety of avenues.
- (4) Supports Volunteers by providing career information through Close of Service Conferences (COS) and COS emails, alerting them to the career resources available.
- (c) Engages employers (public, nonprofit, and corporate organizations) to hire RPCVs by promoting the benefits of Peace Corps service and noncompetitive eligibility.
- (d) Collaborates with RPCV Groups nationwide to support RPCVs in Third Goal and career events and activities.
- (e) Produces official documentation of Peace Corps service to support RPCV employment, education, and other post-service transition issues.
- (f) Maintains RPCV contact information and other data through the RPCV Portal, surveys, and focus groups.

## **6.0 Effective Date**

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