

MS 281 Procedures: Completion of Service Advancement

Effective Date: These Procedures will be effective on August 1, 2025. After that date, any advancement of a Volunteer's Completion of Service (COS) date must comply with the following provisions.

Responsible Offices: Office of Global Operations (OGO), Office of Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), Office of Health Services (OHS)

Attachments

Attachment A – Template: Country Director's Request for Early COS

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1.0 Purpose

These Procedures address the advancement of a Volunteer's Close of Service (early COS) and seek to:

- (a) Standardize the decision-making across Regions; and
- (b) Provide criteria on which early COS beyond thirty (30) days could be granted.

2.0 Early COS Decisions for Cohorts of Volunteers

- (a) For purposes of these Procedures, a cohort is defined as two or more Volunteers who entered into service on the same day.
- (b) The Country Director (CD) is authorized to grant early COS of 30 days or less to a cohort of Volunteers if it is for operational efficiency only (e.g., airline schedules, administrative convenience of Post staff). For all other reasons, the CD must seek the approval of the Regional Director (RD) before granting early COS for 30 days or less.
- (c) The RD must authorize early COS of more than 30 days for a cohort of Volunteers.
- (d) In accordance with MS 281, the RD cannot authorize early COS to a date that is less than 21 months after the Volunteers' oath date.

3.0 Early COS Decisions for Individual Volunteers

- (a) In accordance with MS 281, the CD may grant early COS for an individual Volunteer when the early COS date reflects more than 23 months of service after the Volunteer's oath date.
- (b) If the CD determines that a Volunteer's COS date should be advanced to a date that is between 21 months and 23 months after the Volunteer's oath date, the CD must seek approval from the Region. (*see* Attachment A)
- (c) Early COS decisions by the Region are delegated as follows:
 - (1) Between 22 and 23 months after the oath date: Regional Chief of Operations (ChOps); and
 - (2) Between 21 and 22 months after the oath date: RD.
- (d) In accordance with MS 281, the RD cannot authorize early COS to a date that is less than 21 months after the Volunteer's oath date.

4.0 Criteria for Early COS Decisions for Individual Volunteers

- (a) The Peace Corps will normally advance the COS date of a Volunteer who concludes an emergency leave or a medical evacuation more than 21 months after their oath date, unless the CD determines that there are compelling programmatic reasons for returning the Volunteer to the host country. (*see* MS 281, Section 2.2(b))
- (b) If a Volunteer, who has served more than 21 months after their oath date becomes a victim of a sexual assault, stalking, or other serious crime, the Peace Corps may advance the COS date of the Volunteer at the Volunteer's request. (*see* MS 281, Section 2.2(c))
- (c) Advancing an individual Volunteer's COS date by more than 30 days should be rare and infrequent. As such, Regions should not advance a Volunteer's COS date by more than 30 days for the following situations:
 - (1) Employment, education, or professional opportunities;
 - (2) Personal plans (e.g., marriage, travel, home purchase);
 - (3) Events with family or friends (e.g., weddings, reunions, travel); or
 - (4) Peace Corps Response assignments.
- (d) If a Volunteer's service assignment is less than 24 months (e.g., Peace Corps Response service), early COS beyond 30 days will not be granted unless the Volunteer is a victim of a sexual assault, stalking, or other serious crime.
- (e) Prior to submitting an early COS request beyond 30 days to the Region, the CD must verify that the following minimum criteria will be met:
 - (1) The Volunteer will have completed their primary and secondary responsibilities; and
 - (2) The host country officials (e.g., supervisor or counterpart) concur with advancing the Volunteer's COS date.
- (f) If the CD determines that the above criteria are met, the CD must request the Region's approval of early COS beyond 30 days by submitting information outlined in MS 281 Attachment A.

- (g) If the CD concludes the criteria in Section 4.5 are not met, the CD should notify the Volunteer, present their findings, and give the Volunteer an opportunity to submit additional information.

5.0 Travel Restrictions

Volunteers who are granted early COS beyond 30 days will be provided a return ticket to their home of record and will not be provided a travel stipend.

6.0 Resignation Alternative

- (a) If a Volunteer is not deemed eligible for early COS, the Volunteer has the option of resigning from service. (*see MS 284 Early Termination of Service, Section 2*).
- (b) If a Volunteer chooses to resign, the Volunteer will receive all of the benefits to which returned Peace Corps Volunteers are entitled, except:
 - (1) Non-competitive Eligibility (NCE) or Peace Corps Eligibility (PCE) if their resignation is determined to be for reasons that are within their control. (*see MS 285, Volunteer Description of Service, Non-Competitive Eligibility, Peace Corps Eligibility, and Certificate of Group Health Coverage, Section 4.3.2 and Section 5.2*); and
 - (2) The Paul D. Coverdell Fellowship program, which awards financial assistance and other professional benefits at participating graduate school programs. (*see MS 126 Attachment A Template: Country Director's Request for Early COS*)

Attachment A

TEMPLATE: Country Director's Request for Early COS

When requesting early COS beyond 30 days for an individual Volunteer, the CD must submit a memorandum to the Region via the VICA application. The memorandum must contain the following information.

If requesting early COS for a cohort of Volunteers, the CD should adjust the content of the memorandum accordingly.

In accordance with MS 281: 2.3.2; "Advancing Completion of Service Date: Approval Authority and Procedures," approval for an early COS date is requested.

PCV Full Name: **Name**

PCV ID #: **ID #**

PCV Sector:

Original COS Date: **Date**

Oath Date: **Date**

Proposed COS Date: **Date**

Advanced Days: **# days**

1. Briefly explain the reason the Volunteer is requesting their COS date be advanced to the proposed COS date.
2. Provide a brief description of the Volunteer's assignments:
 - Primary Assignment:
 - Secondary Assignment:
3. Provide a brief description of how Post confirmed that the Volunteer's primary and secondary responsibilities will be completed by the advanced COS date? *(Explain how the information was verified, including the name/title of Peace Corps staff and community counterparts who were contacted. If the Volunteer has classroom assignments, the end-date of the school term must be clearly stated.)*
4. Provide a brief description of how Post confirmed that host country officials concur with the advanced COS date. *Who did Post contact and what were their responses? Host country officials (e.g., supervisor or counterpart) who have a direct working relationship with the Volunteer should be contacted. Provide the name and title of the individual(s) contacted and the responses provided.)*
5. Confirm that the Volunteer will travel directly to their Home of Record on a ticket issued by the Peace Corps.