

MS 636 Employee Volunteer Program

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Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources (HR)

Supersedes: Interim Policy Statement 3-10 *Employee Volunteer Program Pilot*

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Attachments

Attachment A – Volunteer Activity Approval Form

Attachment B – Request for Leave or Approved Absence Form (OPM 71)

1.0 Purpose

This Manual Section establishes the Peace Corps Employee Volunteer Program (EVP) policy. Administrative leave may be granted for approved volunteer activities in accordance with the provisions below.

2.0 Applicability

The EVP is open to all Peace Corps employees, including: U.S. direct hires, serving on full-time or part-time appointments; Foreign Service National (FSN) employees; and Peace Corps personal services contractors (PSCs). A Country Director may determine not to have a Post EVP due to issues of parity with other agencies at the Post or other concerns affecting the efficient operation of the Post as raised by the local U.S. embassy or other agency local staff, or other concerns. This Manual Section describes the policy for all Peace Corps employees. Additional

procedural guidance for overseas Peace Corps employees (including FSNs and PSCs) will be provided by the Post or through the Office of Acquisitions and Contract Management Handbook.

3.0 Policy

3.1 Employee Volunteer Program

The EVP is an agency sponsored volunteer program for which administrative leave may be granted. While managers, supervisors, and other agency officials may encourage employees to become more involved in volunteer activities, employees may not be required to participate in the EVP.

3.2 Administrative Leave Accrual

- (a) An employee may request up to 52 hours of administrative leave during the leave year to participate in the EVP. An employee's 52 hours of EVP administrative leave becomes available for use (subject to appropriate approval as described below) on the effective date of the policy and subsequently, at the beginning of each leave year.
- (b) For an employee who begins employment after the effective date of the policy, the total amount of EVP administrative leave hours for which the employee is eligible is an amount equal to two hours for each remaining pay period in the year.
- (c) The number of EVP administrative leave hours available to an employee, who used administrative leave during 2011 under the predecessor EVP pilot, will be reduced by the number of hours used by the employee under the pilot in 2011.
- (d) For part-time staff, the number of EVP administrative leave hours is pro-rated based on the number of hours an employee works.
- (e) An employee who terminates Peace Corps employment before the end of the leave year will not be required to repay the EVP administrative leave hours used.
- (f) Unused EVP hours do not carry over to subsequent leave years.

3.3 Requesting and Approving EVP Administrative Leave

To request administrative leave to participate in the EVP, an employee must submit both a Volunteer Activity Approval Form (Attachment A) and a Request for Leave or Approved Absence (Attachment B) to the official designated to approve the employee's leave under MS 635 Staff Absence and Leave. The request for EVP administrative leave must be submitted to the approving official prior to starting the volunteer activity.

3.4 Approving Official

For domestic employees, immediate supervisors must approve EVP administrative leave. For overseas employees, a Country Director (or his or her designee) must approve EVP administrative leave.

3.5 Approved EVP Activities

Under the EVP, an employee may request approval for a volunteer activity of any of the following types:

- (a) ***Group Activities*** - A group volunteer activity organized and sponsored by the employee's office as a skill-building or team-building exercise by the head of that office.
- (b) ***Individual activities***
 - (1) Activities that promote the Peace Corps mission or that promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.
 - (2) With established tax-exempt or government entities for activities designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means or other disadvantaged persons and involving one or more of the sectors in which Peace Corps Volunteers are involved, namely:
 - (i) Education;
 - (ii) Youth and Community Development;
 - (iii) Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention;
 - (iv) Environment;
 - (v) Agriculture;
 - (vi) Small Business Development; and
 - (vii) Information and Communications Technology.

3.6 Approving Administrative Leave

In deciding whether to approve a request by an employee for administrative leave under the EVP, the leave approving official must:

- (a) determine whether the activity is an approved EVP activity under section 3.5; and
- (b) give due consideration to the effect of the employee's absence or change in duty schedule on work operations and productivity of the office.

3.7 Conditions on EVP Activities

While on administrative leave under the EVP, an employee:

- (a) must make it clear, when engaging in activities under 3.5, that the employee is acting in the employee's private rather than official capacity and does not represent the Peace Corps;

- (b) may not participate in lobbying or partisan political activities;
- (c) may not represent or advocate on behalf of anyone to the U.S. Government or any federal agency (but may provide non-representational assistance, such as assistance in filling out forms for persons seeking government benefits or in the preparation of tax returns without compensation - see 18 U.S.C. 205); and
- (d) is responsible for ensuring that the employee's volunteer activities do not violate the Standards of Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch (5 CFR Part 2635) or any other rules or statutes (employees are encouraged to consult with ethics officials in the Office of the General Counsel).

3.8 Use of Government Facilities and Equipment

Employees may make limited use of Peace Corps facilities and equipment for EVP purposes in accordance with MS 643 *Limited Personal Use of Government Office Equipment*.

3.9 Employee Work-related Injuries

Under certain circumstances, employees injured while on administrative leave under the EVP may be covered by the Federal Employee Compensation Act, which is administered by the Department of Labor. (See MS 682 *Staff Safety and Health Program* for information on work-related injuries.)

4.0 Effective Date

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