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List of Abbreviations

- AMCS: Administrative Management Control Survey
- APCD: associate Peace Corps directors
- BOC: Bill of Collection
- CD: country director
- COS: Completion of Service
- CRM: Customer Relationship Management
- DMO: director of management and operations
- DPT: director of program and training
- EFT: Electronic Funds Transfers
- FA: financial assistant
- FTF: Feed the Future
- GEF: Global Education Framework
- GGM: Office of Gifts and Grants Management
- IRC: information resource coordinator
- IST: In-service Training
- LCU: Local Currency Units
- LGL: Let Girls Learn
- LLITN: Long-Lasting Insecticide-Treated Net
- M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation
- MS: Manual Section
- OCFO: Office of the Chief Financial Officer
- OFAC: Office of Foreign Assets Control
- OGAP: Office of Global Accounts Payable
- OGC: Office of General Counsel
- OGH: Office of Global Health and HIV
- OIG: Office of the Inspector General
- OPATS: Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support
- OSIRP: Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning
- PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action
- PCGO: Peace Corps Grants Online
- PCPP: Peace Corps Partnership Program
- PCRV: Peace Corps Response Volunteer
- PCV: Peace Corps Volunteer
- PCVL: Peace Corps Volunteer Leader
- PDM: Project Design and Management
- PEPFAR: President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
- PM: program managers
- PST: Pre-Service Training
- PTA/PTS: programming and training assistants/specialists
- RSO: regional security officer
- SPA: Small Project Assistance
- SPIGA: Strategic Partnerships and Intergovernmental Affairs
- USAID ENCAP: Environmentally Sound Design and Management Capacity-building for Partners and Programs in Africa
- USAID: United States Agency for International Development
- USD: United States Dollars
- VAST: Volunteer Activities Support and Training
- VPS: Volunteer and PCS Financial Services
- VRF: Volunteer Reporting Form
- VRT: Volunteer Reporting Tool
- WASH: Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
- WQAP: Water Quality Assurance Plan
Introduction

The Peace Corps makes funding available for Peace Corps Small Grants Program projects to Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) and the community organizations with which they work. This handbook for post staff provides guidance on the requirements and processes of the Peace Corps Small Grants Program. Although each funding source has distinctive characteristics and requirements, the Peace Corps has made the guidance for all grants uniform to the maximum extent possible. For US government-funded grant programs (USAID, PEPFAR), post staff should contact the respective small grants program for program specific information.

This handbook provides information on the basic rules and requirements that are applicable for all grants. It also includes recommendations on post-level management of grants programs and links to tools to help run them effectively.

The Peace Corps strongly recommends that each post use the same procedures and processes for each grant program, including the same grant development and submission procedures, the same grants committee, and a single grants coordinator. This will provide clarity for PCVs, ensure consistent grant quality across all funding sources, and reduce redundancy and overlap in post staff responsibilities.

The Peace Corps Small Grants Program is comprised of several funding sources. However, not all of these sources are available at all posts, as some sources are geographically or programmatically limited. The funding sources are described briefly below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Program</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Post Eligibility</th>
<th>Contact for More Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Small Project Assistance (SPA) | United States Agency for International Developmen t (USAID) | Posts for which a USAID mission has contributed funds; posts with no in-country or regional USAID presence are generally ineligible | spareports@peacecorps.gov
SPA IV Agreement
SPA V Agreement |
<p>| Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) | Private sector donations (including “RPCV/Friends of” groups, individuals, and organizations) | All posts, all sectors | <a href="mailto:pcpp@peacecorps.gov">pcpp@peacecorps.gov</a> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Let Girls Learn (LGL)</td>
<td>Private sector donations</td>
<td>All posts, grants that increase girls’ access to education and/or seek to empower girls</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pcpp@peacecorps.gov">pcpp@peacecorps.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Activities Support and Training (VAST)</td>
<td>President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)</td>
<td>Any post that receives PEPFAR funds</td>
<td><a href="mailto:OGHHsupport@peacecorps.gov">OGHHsupport@peacecorps.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feed the Future (FTF)</td>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>Posts participating in the Feed the Future partnership</td>
<td><a href="mailto:partnerships@peacecorps.gov">partnerships@peacecorps.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Education Framework (GEF)</td>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>Posts participating in the Global Education Framework</td>
<td><a href="mailto:partnerships@peacecorps.gov">partnerships@peacecorps.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other USAID Global Grant Programs</td>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>Participating posts</td>
<td><a href="mailto:partnerships@peacecorps.gov">partnerships@peacecorps.gov</a></td>
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</table>

PCVs are only allowed to accept funds through the Peace Corps Small Grants Program. Currently the Peace Corps Small Grants Program consists of those programs listed above, which are subject to change.
Considerations before Undertaking a Funded Project

The Peace Corps Small Grants Program is an excellent tool for PCVs and their communities to access support for small-scale development projects. However, before planning and implementing a project that requires funding under the Peace Corps Small Grants Program, it is important to consider how the intervention complements the Peace Corps’ approach to development. Additionally, staff and PCVs must be aware of the rules surrounding external funding. In this handbook, external funding is defined as any funding source that is not included in the Peace Corps Small Grants Program.

I. Small Grant Funding in the Context of the Peace Corps Approach to Development

The Peace Corps’ general approach to development is described in the Programming and Training Guidance. Development in its broadest sense is any process that promotes the dignity of a people and their capacity to improve their own lives. Two key characteristics of the Peace Corps approach to development are capacity building and sustainability.

- **Capacity Building**: The focus of development work is on the development of the capacity of people, not things. PCVs help people learn how to identify and prioritize what they would like to change, and to use their own strengths and learn new skills to achieve that change. With this approach, development is not just planting a garden to produce food for the community, but organizing and working with people to establish and maintain their own gardens. PCVs direct their capacity-building efforts to several different, but integrated levels: individuals, service providers/trainers/multipliers, organizations, and communities.

- **Sustainability**: Sustainability refers to the ability of a project to continue to meet the needs of a community once the initial funding has ended. PCVs use gender-sensitive, participatory approaches to analyze, design, implement, and evaluate projects to ensure that they have considered different contextual factors, and to support the sustainability of the changes they promote. In addition, PCVs work to facilitate systems improvements and organizational change that not only increase the potential for sustainability, but often improve the amount or quality of service provided.

Projects should be designed and implemented in a manner consistent with the Peace Corps’ approach to development. In order to support the development of projects that align with the agency’s approach to development and the Peace Corps Small Grants Program, the Peace Corps recommends posts do the following:

- Ensure that PCVs understand the Peace Corps’ External Funding Policy, as described below.
- When orienting PCVs on the availability of grants, hold a session on the appropriate use of grants funds within the Peace Corps approach to development and some of the common pitfalls PCVs face.
- Ensure PCVs are aware that the Peace Corps does not require PCVs to apply for grant funds. Applying for a Peace Corps grant is at the discretion of the PCV.
- Provide Project Design and Management (PDM) training to PCVs and counterparts.
- If a PCVs determines it is appropriate to develop a grant, ensure the PCV is aware that s/he is required to engage the community in all stages of grant planning and implementation.

II. External Funding Policy
The Peace Corps Small Grants Program exists to support PCV work in the field and to ensure projects meet agency policies and procedures. PCVs may not accept external funds outside of the Small Grants Program because it not only makes them susceptible to safety and security risks, but also undermines the Peace Corps’ approach to development and their effectiveness in their communities.

Manual Section (MS) 721 states “Volunteers are prohibited from accepting gifts on behalf of the Peace Corps.” The definition of “gift” in MS 721 is “Gift means a thing given willingly to the Peace Corps without payment or expectation of payment. A gift can be voluntary services, money, and property (real, personal, tangible or intangible).”
PCVs may only directly accept funds through the Peace Corps Small Grants Program. This program exists to fund PCV projects that align with Peace Corps approach to development through required community engagement, monitoring and evaluation, and strong project design and management, as well as reporting on the completion of a project.

Post staff is responsible for communicating the external funding policy to PCVs. Although PCVs may never directly accept funds outside the Peace Corps Small Grants Program, they may assist their community members in applying for funds from external organizations. These applications submitted by the community for funding must be in the name of the community or a community representative, not in the name of the PCV. Furthermore the PCV may not accept or manage any of these funds.

Occasionally, organizations may reach out directly to PCVs or posts to encourage them to apply for funding. PCVs and/or post staff should direct these organizations to the Office of Gifts and Grants Management (GGM) immediately and follow the procedures below. GGM will then clarify the Peace Corps’ policy with the organization and convey the best way to proceed.

---

1 PCVs may accept personal gifts from their friends and families. They may not accept in-kind or financial support for work they are doing as PCVs except through the Peace Corps Small Grants Program.
III. External Funding Procedure
As post staff work daily with PCVs, they are best suited to ensure that PCVs are aware and comply with MS 721. Informational materials should be distributed to PCVs upon their arrival in-country at pre-service training and other in-service training conferences.

Post should undertake the following procedures to ensure PCV compliance with MS 721:

B. Preventative Steps

- Posts should incorporate MS 721 into pre- and in-service training. Sharing the policy with PCVs early and often throughout their service ensures they are well aware of how they can apply for Peace Corps grant funds. Again, PCVs may not accept funding for their PCV projects outside of the Peace Corps Small Grants Program. This External Funding Policy has also been incorporated into the Peace Corps Small Grants Handbook and the “External Funding- Volunteer Do’s and Don’ts” guidance. Each post should circulate these documents to PCVs early in their service, and make the documents available throughout service to ensure that PCVs comply with the guidance.

- An additional tool posts can utilize to ensure PCVs are aware of, and comply with, MS 721 is to make the Volunteer Reporting Form (VRF) Funding Tab available to PCVs. When PCVs complete their VRF, utilizing the Funding Tab allows them to recognize the role of funding, and challenges them to consider how they are working with their communities to identify the source of funds. It also allows posts to review the way PCVs are reporting the use of external funds, and can preempt violation of the policy.

- Posts should emphasize that PCVs should feel comfortable communicating all questions and external funding opportunities with post. Often PCVs hear of external funding opportunities through friends or family on the internet, or directly from local organizations, non-governmental entities, embassies and foreign donors. PCVs should not accept funds through or from these entities. Rather, if a PCV would like to learn more about a particular opportunity, he or she should contact the post grant coordinator immediately, and post will then guide them in the appropriate actions.

- Survey questions have been included about external funding within the Administrative Management Control Survey (AMCS). The survey questions will help post determine areas where training regarding the use of external funds by PCVs may be necessary. If posts need more information or assistance, please contact the Office of Gifts and Grants Management (GGM).

C. In-Service Steps
In some instances, Peace Corps headquarters may be aware of a PCV’s violation of MS 721 prior to the post being aware. If this occurs, Peace Corps headquarters will notify the small grants coordinator and DPT immediately.
If, at any time, post staff determines that a PCV has violated MS 721 by accepting, pursuing, or is in the process of receiving external funds, post staff must immediately take the following steps:

- Instruct the PCV to immediately cease use, or acceptance of the external funds or pursuit of the external funding opportunity.
- Explain and clarify Peace Corps policy (including, but not limited to the external funding policy described above) with the PCV.
- Assist the PCV to comply with Peace Corps policy by proposing an alternative approach. There are two main alternatives: first, the PCV may utilize the Small Grants Program, in which third-party contributions can be incorporated into a larger project that conforms to all of the Peace Corps grant requirements; second, if the first approach is not feasible, the PCV should take steps to ensure the external funds are provided directly to the PCV’s community. In the latter case, the PCV may assist his or her community in applying for funding, but the PCV may not directly accept those external funds. Post staff may also seek additional guidance or suggestions from Peace Corps headquarters grants program staff.
- Should the PCV refuse to cease work with external funders and/or continues to directly receive funds from external entities, post staff must inform the CD so that appropriate action may be taken to address the situation. This may require conversations with the Office of General Counsel (OGC).
Roles and Responsibilities

Numerous stakeholders work together to support small grants programs, including Peace Corps post and headquarters staff, PCVs, counterparts, small grants committees and Peace Corps strategic partners. This section describes the primary responsibilities of the many offices and staff involved with managing Peace Corps Small Grants Program grants.

I. Peace Corps Headquarters

A. The Office of Gifts and Grants Management
The Office of Gifts and Grants Management (GGM) oversees and manages the solicitation and acceptance of monetary and in-kind gifts and administers the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP), including Let Girls Learn (LGL) grants, and the USAID-funded Small Project Assistance Program (SPA). GGM administers and manages the Peace Corps Small Grants Program in coordination with relevant headquarters offices.

- PCPP/LGL: GGM is responsible for accepting donations and applying them to PCPP and LGL projects, verifying compliance with PCPP requirements, posting projects on the Peace Corps website for fundraising, authorizing post’s obligation of funds for fully funded projects, reviewing grant documentation, interpreting grants requirements as related to the PCPP program, maintaining grant records, and reporting to donors, strategic partners, and Congress. GGM is the only office authorized to solicit funds on behalf of PCV grant projects.

- SPA: GGM is responsible for the management of the SPA agreement with USAID, supporting posts in their annual funding negotiations with USAID, collaborating with Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) to establish and maintain SPA program administration in the agency’s financial systems, verifying compliance with grants requirements for SPA grants, reviewing grant documentation, interpreting grant requirements as they relate to the SPA program, and maintaining grant records.

In coordination with relevant headquarters offices, GGM establishes standards and policies for the Peace Corps Small Grants Program.

B. The Office of Strategic Partnerships and Intergovernmental Affairs
The Office of Strategic Partnerships and Intergovernmental Affairs (SPIGA) provides technical support and assistance for other Peace Corps grants programs funded by U.S. government agencies. This includes grants under the Feed the Future (FTF), Global Education Framework (GEF), and other applicable USAID-funded global grant programs.

C. The Office of Global Health and HIV
The Office of Global Health and HIV (OGHH) administers the Volunteer Activities Support and Training (VAST) program funded by PEPFAR. OGHH manages the agency’s overall PEPFAR agreement and portfolio, supporting posts in the negotiation of annual PEPFAR/VAST funding, working with OCFO to establish and maintain VAST program...
administration in the agency’s financial systems, verifying compliance with grant requirements for VAST grants, reviewing grant documentation, interpreting grants requirements related to the VAST program, and maintaining grant records.

OGHH may be consulted for technical and programming advice regarding grant-supported health and HIV/AIDS interventions, regardless of funding source.

D. The Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support
The Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS) provides program management for the Feed the Future (FtF) and Global Education Framework (GEF) grant programs.

OPATS may be consulted for technical and programming advice regarding grant-supported interventions in all sectors except for HIV/AIDS and health, regardless of funding source.

E. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer
The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) supports grant financial management and maintains financial systems related to grants programs. Working with the program offices that manage the Peace Corps Small Grants Program, OCFO establishes and operates systems for receiving, processing, making payments, and accounting for grant funds.

F. The Office of Global Operations/Regions
Regions support posts in obtaining access to grant funds and connecting posts to appropriate Peace Corps headquarters small grants offices. Regions may also review grants for consistency with post, region, and agency programming priorities.

II. Peace Corps Posts
This section summarizes grant management roles and responsibilities based on current best practices at posts. Country directors should assign specific grant support and administration functions to staff members to ensure that all necessary responsibilities are covered. Grant administration and support duties should be included in job descriptions and performance plans.

Below are the grant administration and support functions:
- Grant program management and oversight
- Seeking and allocating grant funds
- Working with funding stratégic partners and donors
- Financial management of grant funds
- Orienting and training PCVs
- Grant design
- Grant review and approval
- Grant implementation
- Grant tracking and monitoring
- Reporting and closeout
- Program learning and evaluation
Post staff share varying levels of responsibilities for grants. Some positions, such as the small grants coordinator, may have responsibilities covering all 11 functions. Other staff positions, such as the director of management and operations (DMO), are responsible for fewer functions. These roles and responsibilities may be adapted to fit the needs of each post.

A. Country Director

The country director (CD) provides oversight, direction, and accountability for the in-country administration of all grants programs and related projects. In addition, the CD maintains relationships with in-country strategic partners who provide funding for grants programs.

Specific duties include the following:

- **Grant program management and oversight**
  - *Assign staff responsibilities*: Work with the director of programming and training (DPT) and the DMO, establish specific roles and responsibilities for post staff managing grants programs, appoint a small grants coordinator(s) to provide day-to-day management, administration, and support for each active grant.
  - *Set post-level guidelines*: Establish specific grant requirements consistent with guidance and requirements in this handbook.

- **Seeking and allocating funds**
  - *Seek and negotiate funding*: Access grant resources consistent with post’s needs and programming priorities, provide liaison with funding/strategic partners (i.e. USAID), and negotiate annual funding levels.
  - *Allocate available funding*: In coordination with the DPT and funding/strategic partners, determine allocation of SPA funds between grants and other allowable activities; for PCPP, allocate available country funds and any applicable memorial funds to individual grants.
  - *Ensure that all staff is familiar with MS 721 on external funding*: Train staff on MS 721 and make sure that post adheres to guidelines.

- **Working with funding/strategic partners and donors**
  - *Maintain relationships with strategic partners*: Serve as the top-level liaison with strategic partners and donors, agree on program scope and priorities with strategic partners (i.e. USAID), and ensure proper reporting and day-to-day communication with partners.
  - *Awareness raising*: Ensure that funding/strategic partners and donors are aware of the Peace Corps’ policy on external funds.

- **Orienting and training PCVs**
  - *Messaging to PCVs*: Set the tone at post to support the use of grants in appropriate circumstances, to further capacity building within communities where PCVs serve and in the context of their Peace Corps assignments.
  - *Policy on external funds*: Ensure PCVs understand MS 721 on external funds and that PCVs may not accept donations (monetary or in-kind) on behalf of the Peace Corps.

- **Grant design**
  - In conjunction with the DPT, ensure that grant applications address the post’s key issues of capacity building and sustainability.
- Grant review and approval
  - **Sign off on each approved grant:** Following review and recommendation by the grants committee, the CD must give final approval on each grant application by signing the Grant Liability and the Project Agreement forms (both downloaded from PCGO). If a grant is to be canceled, transferred, or receive additional funds, the CD must certify and sign off on the grant change.
  - **Approve costs that require special consideration:** This handbook provides the CD authority to approve or deny costs that require special consideration. A PCV may submit a Project Cost Approval form (downloaded from PCGO) and the CD must approve or deny the request in writing.

- Grant implementation
  - **Address lost, stolen, misused, or unaccounted for funds:** Document and determine liability for lost or stolen funds; report to appropriate internal and external stakeholders.

- Grant tracking and monitoring
  - When possible, the CD monitors ongoing grant progress during site visits.

- Reporting and closeout
  - Approve and sign completion report.

- Program learning and evaluation
  - **Oversee grant program evaluation:** Oversee in-country grant program evaluations funded by strategic partners, donors, or other sources.

**B. Director of Programming and Training**

The Director of Programming and Training (DPT) typically oversees the grants committee and serves as the program chair of the committee. The DPT works with post staff to ensure grants complement the post’s programming priorities and are adapted to meet the local development context. The DPT works with staff to provide training to PCVs, counterparts, and other staff on accessing grant funding, appropriate use of grant funds, and designing and managing grant projects.

Specific duties include the following:

- **Grant program management and oversight**
  - **Ensure proper training and direction for staff:** With the grants coordinator, train small grants committee members on committee responsibilities; ensure associate Peace Corps directors (APCDs), program managers (PMs), and programming and training assistants/specialists (PTAs/PTSs) provide appropriate support to PCVs in developing and implementing grant projects.
  - **Ensure that all programming and training staff is familiar with MS 720:** Train programming and training staff on MS 720 and make sure that post staff adhere to guidelines.

- **Seeking and allocating funds**
  - **Determine funding needs:** Based on post programming priorities, determine grant funding needs that support those priorities.
  - **Allocate available funding:** With CD (and in consultation with donors), determine allocation of available funds.

- **Working with funding/strategic partners and donors**
- **Work with strategic partners and donors**: Liaise with strategic partners/ donors; oversee drafting of post-level progress reports to strategic partners (i.e. USAID).
- **Awareness raising**: Ensure that funding/strategic partners and donors are aware of the Peace Corps’ policy on external funds.

- Orienting and training PCVs
  - *Ensure proper training for PCVs*: Ensure training is provided to PCVs on the role of external funding within the Peace Corps’ approach to development and on Project Design and Management (PDM) and/or related topics.

- Grant review and approval
  - *Oversee grant committee*: Sit on the small grants committee and provide oversight of the committee and the review process.

- Grant tracking and monitoring
  - *Monitoring and evaluation*: Work with the small grants committee and staff to implement a system to monitor and evaluate grants.

- Program learning and evaluation
  - *Manage grant program evaluation*: Manage in-country grant program evaluations funded by strategic partners, donors, or other sources; work with research contractors and Peace Corps staff to support evaluation completion.

**C. Small Grants Coordinator**

The small grants coordinator is responsible for the day-to-day administration of grants at post. The coordinator serves as the primary grant program contact at each post for PCVs, other post staff, and Peace Corps headquarters grant program support staff. The coordinator stays abreast of program requirements and guidance and ensures that the post’s policies, procedures, and approved grants are consistent with such guidance.

Every post is strongly encouraged to appoint a single small grants coordinator for all grant programs. If this is not feasible due to staffing, workload, or budget constraints, a post may appoint more than one coordinator for different grant programs. In this case, the post must ensure that the small grants coordinators employ consistent small grant management and oversight practices.

Specific duties include the following:

- **Grant program management and oversight**
  - *Program expertise*: Understand grant program rules and requirements; keep abreast of updates/best practices for grant programs and convey updates to the small grants committee and PCVs.
  - *Communicate with Peace Corps headquarters*: As primary liaison with Peace Corps headquarters on grant program(s), contact relevant Peace Corps headquarters office with questions and program updates; submit all required reports to Peace Corps headquarters.
  - *Grant files*: Establish and maintain official grant files in PCGO.
  - *Small grants committee*: Organize, prepare for, and facilitate small grants committee meetings.

- **Seeking and allocating funds**
- Provide support to CD and DPT in determining funding needs and negotiating new funds; provide input on funding needs based on remaining carryover funds and spending patterns.

- **Working with funding/strategic partners and donors**
  - **Liaison:** As delegated by the CD, serve as day-to-day liaison with in-country funding/strategic partners (i.e. USAID or other) regarding ongoing grant program operations.
  - **Reports:** Support DPT/CD in drafting regular reports to USAID or other funding partners.
  - **Awareness Raising:** Ensure that funding/strategic partners/donors are aware of Peace Corps’ policy on external funds.

- **Financial management of grant funds**
  - **Funding balances:** In coordination with the administrative unit, track grant spending and available funds by grant program and by funding areas (e.g., by SPA program element).
  - Work with administrative unit to ensure financial processing of approved grants.

- **Orienting and training PCVs**
  - **Orientation session for PCVs:** Work with DPT to introduce grant programs and PCGO to PCVs.
  - Advise PCVs on accessing grant funds and developing grant projects.
  - **Awareness raising:** Ensure PCVs understand MS 721 on external funds and that PCVs may not accept donations (monetary or in-kind) on behalf of the Peace Corps.

- **Grant design**
  - Understand PDM tools and ensure post consistency.
  - Provide PCVs with feedback on applications submitted for approval.
  - Communicate acceptable activities and prohibited activities.

- **Grant review and approval**
  - Receive grant applications from PCVs in PCGO and disseminate to small grants committee members and other appropriate post staff.
  - Facilitate communication with PCVs to follow up on requested grant application revisions in PCGO.
  - Ensure that funds are available in the proper funding source (e.g. proper program element for SPA) prior to recommending approval of grants.

- **Grant implementation**
  - Work with PCV in the event of grant cancellation, transfer, or amendment, to report to the relevant Peace Corps headquarters office and provide appropriate documentation in PCGO for grant reconciliation.

- **Grant tracking and monitoring**
  - Track the status of all ongoing grant projects using PCGO.
  - Provide status updates to the CD, post staff, and relevant Peace Corps headquarters staff.

- **Reporting and closeout**
  - Ensure that PCVs completion reports meet all Small Grants Program guidelines. If the report meets the guidelines, submit the report to the DMO. Maintain all Peace Corps Small Grants Program records in PCGO at the post.
- Collect and process all grant reports and SPA training activity reports; send reports to Peace Corps headquarters.
- Provide regular updates on grants to USAID or other donors.

- Program learning and evaluation
  - Compile best practices to be used in future program planning.

D. Associate Peace Corps Director, Program Manager, Regional Manager, and Programming & Training Assistant/Specialist

Associate Peace Corps director (APCD), program manager (PM), and programming and training specialist/assistant (PTS/PTA) support the PCVs to promote effective use of grant funds.

Specific duties may include the following depending on the Peace Corps Post:

- Grant program management and oversight
  - *Understand available funding:* Check balances periodically with small grants coordinator; present funding information to PCVs, trainees, and staff.

- Seeking and allocating funds
  - *Identify funding needs:* Discuss with DPT/CD and negotiate with USAID on appropriate program elements for grants.

- Working with funding/strategic partners and donors
  - With approval from the CD/DPT, participate in meetings with strategic partners and donors.

- Orienting and training PCV
  - *Guidance to PCVs:* Keep records of success stories and share with PCVs/trainees.
  - *Training:* Provide overview of Peace Corps Small Grants Program. Promote different grant programs according to PCV sector assignments, potential or anticipated secondary projects, and site assignments.
  - *Awareness raising:* Ensure that PCVs are aware of the Peace Corps’ policy on external funds.

- Grant design
  - Support PCVs in developing grants; review applications and provide feedback to PCVs on how to better design grants.
  - Help PCVs consider all options, including local resource mobilization, before presenting a grant to the post’s small grants committee; APCDs, PMs, and PTA/PTSs also serve as members of the committee. At some posts, these staff members provide a general orientation to PCVs about external funding and grant programs, as part of an early reconnect, a PDM in-service training (IST), or a technical IST.
  - Clearly and frequently communicate to PCVs and counterparts about the Peace Corps’ approach to development.

- Grant review and approval
  - *Vetting grants:* All grants should be vetted by APCDs/PMs, ideally at the early stages of the grant design process. Review grants within their sector to provide feedback to the committee on technical design and content.
  - *Grant committee:* Review and give feedback on grants as a member of the small grants committee.
• Grant implementation
  - Provide technical support to PCVs and counterparts for ongoing grant projects related to the APCD/PM’s program sector.
• Grant tracking and monitoring
  - Grant monitoring: Monitor ongoing grant projects during regularly scheduled site visits.
• Reporting and closeout
  - Grants closeout: Review completion reports for grants in their sector to gather lessons learned to support PCVs with similar grants in the future.

E. Director of Management and Operations and Financial Assistant/Specialist
The director of management and operations (DMO), with support from the financial assistant (FA) or financial specialist (FS), handles the financial administration of grant funds. The DMO certifies that PCVs have presented all receipts (grant fund expenditures and community contribution) and have met all requirements to close out their grants.

Specific duties include the following:
• Financial management of grant funds
  - Ensure that the financial administration of grants is consistent with Peace Corps policies.
  - Upon request, provide the relevant financial information/documents to the CD, DPT, or small grants coordinator.
  - Track fund balances in FORPost (in collaboration with small grants coordinator); provide quarterly updates on funding balances to small grants committee and program staff.
• Creating vendor accounts for funds disbursement
  - Ensure that proper bank accounts are in the Peace Corps vendor system at both Peace Corps headquarters and post level so that PCVs can receive the grant funds once the grant is approved and funds are available for disbursement.
• Obligating Funds
  - Record obligations for approved grants in FORPost under correct funding source.
    ▪ If PCPP or LGL, obligations may not be recorded until authorization is received from Peace Corps headquarters after grant is fully funded.
  - Submit all required documentation to OCFO/Global Accounts Payable for proper processing.
  - Ensure the timely liquidation of funds.
• Reporting and closeout
  - Ensure accountability of funds and verification of grant expenditures/receipts.
  - Certify that all grant funds are accounted for, and reconciled in an approved manner.
  - Review completion reports to ensure that all grant funds were spent in accordance with the goals and objectives of the grant.
  - If all funds are accounted for, sign the completion report.
  - Issue BOC to collect unused funds and return them to the original obligation.
F. **Cashier**  
The cashier is responsible for collecting remaining grant funds, when applicable, during grant closeout.

G. **Training Manager**  
Training managers play an important role in building into post training calendars opportunities to train PCVs and their counterparts on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to be effective in planning and implementing grants.

Specific duties include the following:
- **Orienting and training PCVs**
  - Ensure training on grant design and management is included in PCV training.
  - Include orientation on external funding and grant programs in the training calendar (recommend orientation in pre-service training and complete grants training in IST).
- **Grant implementation**
  - Support PCVs’ planning and implementation of grants that may have a training component.

H. **Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator**  
Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinators provide expertise in designing a plan for tracking grant progress and can support PCVs with training related to monitoring and evaluation and answer questions related to grant evaluation techniques and tools.

Specific duties include the following:
- **Orienting and training PCVs**
  - Ensure training on data quality and monitoring and evaluation is included in PCV training.
- **Grant design**
  - Support PCVs in developing grants and creating clear goals and objectives; provide feedback to PCVs on how to better design grants with a clear monitoring and evaluation plan and appropriate tools.
  - Support PCVs in selecting appropriate indicators that address the goals and objectives of the grant.
- **Grant implementation**
  - Provide technical support to PCVs and counterparts for ongoing grants, advising PCVs on how to best use indicator data for adjusting grant plans.
- **Reporting and closeout**
  - Review grant completion reports to confirm accurate reporting.
- **Program learning and evaluation**
  - Assist in developing post-level tools for monitoring and evaluating post’s grants programs.
  - Provide analysis and support for the development and dissemination of post’s best practices to be used in future program planning.
I. Small Grant Committees

Each post is required to establish a small grants committee. This committee reviews and approves applications for all grants at a post, regardless of the funding source (SPA, PCPP, LGL, VAST, FtF, GEF, and other applicable USAID-funded global grant programs). Each post has discretion as to how its committee will be structured, the committee’s specific functions and responsibilities, and the committee’s grant approval process.

Small Grants Committees are encouraged to have representation from a variety of positions among post staff and PCVs cohorts/sectors, if possible. Typically, post-level small grants committees have four to six members and are composed of one or more of the following:

- Country director (CD)
- Small grants coordinator
- Director of programming and training (DPT)
- Associate Peace Corps directors (APCD) or program managers (PM)
- Director of management and operations (DMO)
- Program assistants and training assistants
- Financial assistants
- PCVs (posts must take into consideration PCV safety and security and potential interference with community work before placing PCVs on the small grants committee. PCVs members are typically third-year PCVs, PCV leaders, or PCVs who have completed a successful grant)
- For SPA: a USAID mission representative (at the mission’s discretion for SPA grants)
- Host country nationals and/or NGO representatives, as appropriate or possible

USAID Mission representatives may request to be a part of the Small Grants Committee. Likewise, posts with VAST grant programs are highly encouraged, but not required, to invite representatives from the respective PEPFAR Mission to be on the Small Grants Committee for reviews of VAST grants. These representatives can provide insight into and technical expertise to the current programming priorities of the country team; their inclusion also fosters clear communication and relationship-building.

The small grants committee fulfills key three functions:

1. Establishes post-specific grant criteria/requirements and processes consistent with this handbook (“Peace Corps Small Grants Staff Handbook”), including application submission and review procedures, submission deadlines, etc.
2. Reviews and preliminarily approves grant applications (for final review and approval by the CD). The committee should refer to the Project Review Checklist – Application and Completion Report for guidance on review of grant applications.
3. Monitors and evaluates grants and the grants process, reviews and analyzes results, feedback, and data to improve the post’s grant programs.
J. Volunteers and Counterparts
PCVs work with counterparts and community members to identify and then support capacity-development grants that meet locally identified priorities. Throughout the grants process, the PCV will do the following:

- Collaborate with community members to identify, develop, implement, and complete a grant that meets local priorities.
- Help community members to complete and submit a grant application via PCGO to the small grants coordinator and small grants committee for review and approval.
- Support community members in maintaining accurate financial records and receipts.
- Ensure documentation for in-kind contributions.
- Regularly report status updates to the small grants coordinator and small grants committee.
- Submit final reports via PCGO with receipts and pictures to the small grants coordinator no later than one month before COS date.
- Submit a Transfer of Responsibility form (downloaded from PCGO) and/or budget amendment, if necessary.

III. Peace Corps Strategic Partners and Donors
Peace Corps strategic partners and donors contribute funds to the agency to issue as grants. Funding sources include friends and family of current PCVs, RPCVs, members of the public, other private sector sources, and other US Government agencies. The Peace Corps does not use its own appropriated funds for the Peace Corps Small Grants Program. Therefore, posts may not use appropriations to fund PCV grants. The Peace Corps is accountable for the use of funds from contributing partners and donors and may be required to provide reports.

Donors and strategic partners remain engaged with the overall work of the Peace Corps Small Grants Program. Their engagement can vary significantly depending on which type of grant program is being utilized; interaction may be at the post level and/or at the Peace Corps headquarters level in GGM, SPIGA, OGHH, or OPATS.
Grant Requirements

This section lays out the basic requirements that all projects must meet. In addition, it pinpoints limitations on project costs that may not be funded by a Small Grants Program grant and costs that require country director’s approval. Using these requirements, Peace Corps staff can ensure that projects meet community needs, as well as Peace Corps guidelines. **Peace Corps headquarters will defer to post-level guidance in cases where posts have implemented more stringent policies.**

I. Basic Grant Requirements

Peace Corps grant funds may be used in various ways to support community-led development initiatives in a wide variety of programmatic areas, including Agriculture, Community Economic Development, Education, Environment, Health, and Youth in Development. Peace Corps programming priorities of gender equality and women’s empowerment, support for people with disabilities, volunteerism, and technology for development may also be addressed. Regardless of the funding source chosen by the PCV (SPA, VAST, PCPP, LGL, GEF, FTF, or other applicable USAID-funded global grant programs), all projects supported with Peace Corps grant funds must do the following:

- Be community initiated and directed: This ensures that the community is the driving force behind the project and will take ownership once it is completed. All projects should be initiated, designed, and implemented by a local community organization or group, with the support of a Peace Corps Volunteer.
- Meet a determined community need: This guideline helps establish the merit of the particular project among a host of other expressed needs.
- Include capacity building components and promote sustainability: “Sustainable” refers to the ability of a project to continue to meet the needs of a community once the initial grant or external source of funding has ended. “Capacity building” refers to strengthening the skills, competencies, and abilities of people in the local community so they can overcome obstacles that inhibit them from realizing their developmental goals.
- Include indicators of success through monitoring, reporting, and evaluation: Indicators of success are quantifiable measurements, determined during project design, that measure a project progress toward its goals and objectives, and demonstrate desired changes are taking place. They measure both tangible (e.g., acres of forest preserved, number of women training in new gardening techniques) and intangible outcomes (e.g., an increase in self-esteem among the participants).
- Incorporate cross-sector programming priorities where feasible. Peace Corps’ cross-sector programming priorities are outlined in the beginning of the “**Basic Grant**” section.

For example, if posts determine that grants may not be over $10,000, Peace Corps headquarters will defer to this post-level policy.
Requirements” section. When possible, projects should be designed to be inclusive and empowering of vulnerable populations.

- Support a stand-alone activity with definite start and end dates and concrete goals and objectives. Well-defined dates and targets document thoughtful project design, realistic implementation timelines, as well as community ownership for the project post-grant-funding. Multiple projects may not be aggregated into one grant application.

- Be scheduled for completion within one year and should be fully closed at least one month before the PCV’s close of service date.
  - If a PCV anticipates that a project will require more than a year to implement, such project should be broken into manageable phases with funding coming from independent, consecutive grant applications with unique goals and objectives.
  - In order to provide time for projects to be fully closed while a PCV is still in country, completion reports and receipts must be submitted and accurately reconciled at least one month before a PCV’s COS date.

- Not exceed U.S. $10,000 in funding from the Small Grants Program, except as authorized by the appropriate regional director and the director of the respective grant program office (i.e., the director of OGHH authorizes VAST grants).

- Include a community contribution of at least 25% of the total estimated grant cost: To ensure community ownership and initiation, as well as to enhance the sustainability of the grant, a 25% minimum community contribution of the total project cost is required. See Section II Grant Budget Formulation for further information.

Each post may also develop additional post-specific criteria to better reflect local community development issues and priorities. For example, a post may develop its own requirements regarding maximum grant size (at most $10,000), minimum community contribution (at least 25%), or whether grants may be developed outside of a PCV’s primary assignment or sector.

II. Limitations on Peace Corps Small Grants Program Project Budgets
All costs funded with Peace Corps grant funds must be reasonable, appropriate, and justified in light of the grant activities and objectives. The following limitations apply specifically to costs covered by grant funds. If the local community chooses to provide or pay for any of the following outside of grant funds, it is acceptable and does not require an approval request.

- Land, structures, and other capital assets
  Grant funds may not be used to purchase land, structures, or other capital assets. Grant funds may be approved to construct or equip a building. Prior to approving such grant, the small grants committee must ensure that the community has clear title to the land on which the building will be located or has a signed, long-term lease or other valid agreement providing long-term access to the land, and approval to construct. If the land is under a long-term lease, the community organization must demonstrate that it will be able to cover any monthly rent required by the landowner. Due to the complexities, it is advisable to keep these types of projects to a minimum.
• **Loan funds**
  Grant funds may not be used as loan collateral or to supplement a community organization’s revolving credit or loan fund. However, if the community generates income as a result of grant activities, it may elect to use this income to establish a credit or loan fund to continue or expand grant activities.

• **“Sub-grant” or Umbrella grants or re-granting Small Grant Program Funds**
  PCVs who are recipients of grant funds may not award grant funds to other persons or groups in their community or other PCVs in the form of a secondary or sub-grant/prize/loan. If project participants would like to use skills and/or knowledge gained as a result of project activities to design a follow-up grant, the PCVs and the community should apply for funding for a second grant through the normal Peace Corps grant application process. If several PCVs wish to do similar, micro-scale activities, they may, at the discretion of post, use largely the same grant application content, with key sections adapted for their unique community's background and involvement, including project timeline, budget, etc. Each PCV must submit a separate grant application in PCGO.

• **Contingency/Undefined funds**
  Grant budgets should not include funds for undefined or unexpected “contingencies” or similar cost categories (e.g., “unexpected costs”).

• **Multiple Small Grants Program funding sources**
  Applying for funding from multiple grant sources is not permitted. Each proposal must be a stand-alone grant that is funded through one grant program.

• **Alcoholic beverages**
  Grant funds may not be used to purchase alcoholic beverages.

• **Recurring costs over three months**
  Grant funds may not be used to cover regularly recurring monthly expenses (e.g., rent, permanent salaries, telephone service and utilities, Internet service) beyond an initial start-up period of three months. Salaries of contracted workers necessary for actual grant completion (e.g., construction workers building a library) are allowable, while permanent salaries (e.g., a librarian to staff the library) are not. Calculations of community contributions should also not include recurring costs beyond three months. If start-up costs will be covered by the grant, there must be a clear sustainability plan demonstrating how the community will pay for the costs beyond the start-up period.

• **Motor vehicles and other conveyances**
  Grant funds may not be used to purchase motor vehicles and other transportation conveyances. This includes but is not limited to cars, motorcycles, and tractors.

• **Non-organic pesticides, insecticides or rodenticides**
Grant funds may not be used to purchase pesticides, insecticides or rodenticides. Improper application of these materials can have significant impacts to human health and the environment. Community purchase and application of pesticides, insecticides, or rodenticides may not be counted towards community contribution.

- **International travel for a PCV except when accompanied by a community partner or local participants**
  Grant funds may not be used to fund international travel of a PCV who is not accompanied by a community partner or local participants. Accompaniment will ensure that any gained skills and knowledge can more sustainably be transferred to the local community; see below on Costs that Require Country Director Approval.

### III. Costs that Require Country Director Approval

Certain costs require approval by the CD before they may be included in a grant budget. These costs are to be included in grants only if deemed appropriate by post staff, and should be approved only after thorough review.

For any costs listed below, the PCV must attach a Country Director Approval Special Costs Form (downloaded from PCGO) when submitting an application to the small grants committee and CD for signature/approval. The completed form should include a brief justification describing how the costs will contribute to the overall success and capacity building of the grant. To approve the request, the CD must sign the document, which must be maintained in the PCGO grant file. Most grants should not be designed in such a way that requires these costs, as requests are to be taken under consideration only when absolutely necessary. Should costs be incurred without a signed approval request, the PCV is responsible for paying for the unapproved cost...

Grant costs that require an approval request:

- **Modest Giveaways and Ceremonial Expenses**
  Generally, grant funds may not be used to purchase giveaways, prizes, ceremonies, celebrations, or other similar items or activities. However, if the use of grant funds to purchase these items will support the realization of grant goals and objectives and the small grants committee supports this use of funds, PCVs may submit a Country Director Approval Special Costs Form to the CD.

- **Volunteer costs**
  Generally, grant funds may not cover costs to support or benefit PCVs. Grant funds may not pay for per diem for PCVs. The PCV may submit a Country Director Approval Special Costs Form for approval of funds to cover modest travel, lodging, and food costs related to a grant if the PCV is traveling with counterparts and such costs are necessary for the success (including the closeout) of the grant. However,

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3 In most cases, T-shirts are considered giveaways; however, if T-shirts are given to participants as a uniform or a means of raising awareness, they may be included in the grant budget. If there is any question surrounding the cost, PCVs should fill out a Country Director Approval Special Costs Form.
remain aware that using grant funds for these costs will increase the total amount the community needs to raise to reach the 25% community contribution.

- **International travel – for local grant participants and international travel for a PCV accompanied by a community partner or local grant participants**

  Allowing international travel to be included in a grant must be considered very carefully; it is only allowable if there is a community partner accompanying every participating PCV and the travel is not designed to benefit the PCV. Peace Corps headquarters strongly recommends not approving international travel costs due to potential logistic and liability issues. If a CD feels that the overall benefit of including international travel outweighs the risks associated with the trip, the CD may approve the request. Please consider the following questions before approving these costs:

  - How will international travel affect a PCV’s time away from their primary assignment?
  - Where is the training component? Take into consideration the distance necessary to travel. If the training is simply across a border, and participants may easily drive to the training, the inclusion of the travel cost may make sense. However, if airfare or several hours of travel is included, the inclusion of the travel cost should not be considered.
  - Will the attendees learn something new and transfer skills to others when they return?
  - Does the project meet the small grants requirement to be sustainable and to build local self-reliance?
  - Is this travel making the best use of small grant funds? Could the participants/conference attendees and their organization get the same benefit from attending a conference or training in-country?
  - Have you considered potential logistical problems, i.e., if a person misses a flight and has to pay additional fees to get home, how will this be paid for?
  - Who is responsible or liable for the person and/or his/her actions while traveling? If the Peace Corps is funding the travel, is the agency liable for anything that goes wrong when the attendees are in another country or the United States?

IV. **Grants Requesting over $10,000**

All Peace Corps grants—regardless of funding source—have established a maximum grant request amount of $10,000 United States Dollar (USD) (While the grant request may not exceed $10,000, total grant costs may exceed $10,000 when added with the community contribution and, if included, a third-party contribution.) This limit takes into consideration several key factors:

- **Volunteer Safety and Security**
As with all aspects of the agency’s operations, PCV safety and security is a top priority. In cases where PCVs receive grant funds directly into their Peace Corps bank accounts, they inherently take on a measure of risk. For example, due to banking fees, PCVs often opt to take out larger sums at once, which increases the risk of robbery or theft. Additionally, in cases where PCVs are known to have access to large amounts of money, they may be pressured to use grant funds for costs not associated with the grant. These situations, and more, can contribute to an overall view that PCVs are a conduit for funds to the community, which may increase overall risk and diminish their effectiveness.

- **Logistics and Money Management**
  Grants in excess of $10,000 are considerably more difficult to manage and implement. Larger grants typically have a longer implementation timeline, and *all* expenses and their corresponding receipts (grant fund expenditures and community contributions) must be noted and secured throughout grant implementation. If the PCV and his/her counterpart do not have prior experience with managing and accounting for large sums of money, they must have a strategy in place to ensure funds are not lost or misused, and are kept in a secure place only accessible by the appropriate parties. Post staff must be prepared to work with or guide the PCV as he/she plans the financial management for the grant.

- **Liability**
  PCVs are required to sign the grant agreement and liability forms (downloaded from PCGO), which state that “any grant funds disbursed to the Peace Corps Volunteer that cannot be accounted for or were spent on non-approved costs, lost, or stolen may be deducted from the readjustment allowance as a debt owed to the Peace Corps.” Accounting for and managing funds in excess of $10,000 exposes PCVs to much greater liability, which may not be completely covered by their readjustment allowance. Employing a $10,000 limit mitigates, to some extent, risk to PCVs.

- **The Peace Corps’ approach to development and the role of outside funding**
  A $10,000 limit both facilitates the large majority of PCV grants and preserves the agency’s mission to provide trained men and women—not funds—to aid its host countries.

In FY 2016, 99% of all approved grants requested were below $10,000. Only 1%\(^4\) of approved grants requested was above $10,000. Though the $10,000 limit is in place for the reasons detailed above, in some cases it may be appropriate for a grant to go above that amount. When this occurs, post staff will need to work with the PCV to complete the approval process detailed below.

A. **Exceptions to the $10,000 U.S. Limit**

   The Small Grants Program acknowledges that there may be rare instances when it is necessary and appropriate for a grant to exceed the $10,000 limit. Post staff will take into

\(^4\)In FY 16, 18 grant requested funds greater than $10,000, out of a total of 1,791 approved grants.
consideration the higher risks and responsibilities associated with a large-scale grant and may need to allocate extra time and resources to ensure appropriate implementation and financial management.

B. Post-level Approval Process for Grants above $10,000

Grants with a request of more than $10,000 must still satisfy all Small Grants Program requirements, as noted in the Grant Requirements section. Once the grant is submitted, the small grants coordinator will work with the PCV to fill out the Projects in Excess of $10,000 Approval Request form (downloaded from PCGO), which can be downloaded from PCGO. The request will contain written justification for the grant and proof of financial management planning by the PCV and community. (If it is a PCPP grant, the PCV must articulate a resource strategy to demonstrate the ability to sufficiently fundraise for the grant.)

The small grants coordinator will also complete a section of the Projects in Excess of $10,000 Approval Request form (downloaded from PCGO) that considers available funding at post and, if a PCPP grant, the additional time that will be required for fundraising. If the grant is to be funded by SPA, VAST, FTF, GEF, or other applicable USAID global grant programs, the small grants coordinator will determine if there are enough funds at post to warrant one large grant exceeding $10,000 versus several smaller grants. Post staff must consider if this particular grant is the best use of these funds. For PCPP, post staff must consider the time it may take to fundraise for a grant exceeding $10,000\(^5\) and ensure the PCV has a backup plan in the event the fundraising goal is not reached in time.

The small grants coordinator will also be responsible for detailing the post’s processes and procedures for ensuring the project will be successfully implemented and completed. This includes the post’s strategy to assist the PCV throughout the life cycle of the grant. These may include monthly check-ins with the PCV and community, periodically collecting written progress reports and receipts from the PCV, and/or reviewing grant expenditures and receipts (for community contributions and grant fund expenditures) throughout the grant life cycle.

It is important to note that the Projects in Excess of $10,000 Approval Request form will be reviewed by Peace Corps headquarters leadership. Justifications must be well-written and thorough to ensure final approval. Before submission of the grant to the small grants committee at post, the PCV and small grants coordinator must sign the Projects in Excess of $10,000 Approval Request form and upload it to the grant application in PCGO.

If the application is approved, the CD will sign all required standard signature forms (downloaded from PCGO), as well as the Projects in Excess of $10,000 Approval form Request (downloaded from PCGO). The small grants coordinator must submit all

\(^5\) Grants requesting $5,000 or below take an average three months to fund, depending on a PCV’s fundraising plan. Often PCPP grants requesting $10,000 or above take an exceedingly long time to fund or PCV submit a budget amendment to implement the grant on a smaller scale.
documents signed by PCV, community, and CD (application, signature forms, and Projects in Excess of $10,000 Approval Request form) to Peace Corps headquarters grants program point of contact for final approval.

C. Peace Corps headquarters Approval Process for Grants above $10,000 (Staff Only)

Once the application for a grant in excess of $10,000 is received at Peace Corps headquarters, the appropriate Small Grants program staff will review the grant documents and all supplementary materials for approval. Following this, the grant must be approved by appropriate regional director, and the director of GGM (for SPA and PCPP/LGL grants), the director of OGH (for VAST grants), or director of SPIGA (for other applicable USAID-funded global grant programs, FtF, GEF) Peace Corps headquarters staff will review each grant, taking into consideration the key factors listed above (Volunteer Safety and Security, Logistics/Money Management, Liability, and the Peace Corps’ Approach to Development and the role of external funding). Once approval is obtained and all signatures are collected, the grant will be moved forward for processing.

D. Implementation

Grants in excess of $10,000 require a greater amount of oversight and management by post staff. Staff should define grant milestones when filling out the Projects in Excess of $10,000 Approval Request form (downloaded from PCGO) and undertake regular check-ins to ensure the grant is on-time, on-budget, and properly managed. Grant files should document regular check-ins from programming and financial staff and a quarterly review of receipts (for both community contribution and grant fund expenditures) and grant progress. Answers to these questions should be noted:

- Does documented spending (grant log) match receipts?
- Does the calculated grant balance match the bank balance?
- Have there been any delays in the timeline?
- If PCPP and fundraising online: What is the fundraising status? If the full grant amount has yet to be donated, is there still time to implement the grant?

In an effort to uphold the Peace Corps’ approach to development, all grants in excess of $10,000 require detailed planning, thorough review, and several approvals. PCVs submitting grants above $10,000 should be prepared to undertake a more detailed initiative; they may wish to work with their communities to consider scaling down a large grant into smaller individual activities that support the original grant goals.

V. Grants that Require Special Consideration

A. Scholarship Programs (PCPP and SPA Only)

Scholarship programs can be effective tools to encourage education and increase retention in schools; scholarships can also present challenges in creating sustainable change. When creating a scholarship program, it is important to plan strategically for the long-term administration and sustainability of the program, taking into consideration financial support, program management, and sustainability after the PCV’s departure. Scholarships must also put in place checks and balances to ensure that funds are
accounted for and applied as planned. This process involves significant planning and the inclusion of host country nationals and local organizations. The following key points must be addressed in order for a scholarship grant to be approved for funding:

- **A grant application must be submitted**
  Applications must be consistent with the guidelines outlined in this handbook. The application should spell out very specifically the process host country nationals will use to identify, evaluate, and select recipients and should show a plan for sustainability.

- **The program should become self-sustaining and may not last longer than a school year**
  The program’s survival—financial and administrative—should not be continually dependent on PCVs or grants funding. No scholarship grant may last longer than the current school year. The grant application should include a thorough action plan outlining how the community or local organization will generate or access funds in order to continue the scholarship program; the action plan should also state explicitly who will administer the scholarship program and what procedures will be followed to ensure future success.

  If a local organization is involved with the scholarship program, PCVs, with the help of post staff, should assess the reliability and capacity of the organization for stewardship and management of scholarship funds.

- **Help organize a selection committee**
  Creating a committee that will plan how the scholarship program will operate is one of the most important steps. The ultimate goal for the PCV should be to assist the community or local organization in developing a selection committee and process comprised entirely of host country participants. PCVs should not be part of the selection process.

- **No PCV participation in selection process**
  PCVs must not be in a position where they may be perceived as handing out money or be involved in the selection or evaluation of students as recipients of money. The grant must demonstrate that only host country nationals are involved in all stages of the scholarship program, including nomination, selection, award, and administration of any funds used for this purpose.

- **Expectations and evaluations**
  Set realistic expectations and evaluate how well these expectations have been met. The scholarship program committee should meet, at least annually, to evaluate the program and make any necessary changes to improve it.

- **Completion reports must be sent in as well as any remaining grant funds**
  Scholarship reporting requirements are the same as grant requirements (i.e., completion report, submitting receipts (for both grant fund expenditures and
community contributions with financial accounting summary). At the end of each year/grant, as with all grants, any unused funds should be returned to the appropriate grant funding source.

B. Training and Skills Building Camps and Clubs

PCVs may implement camps or similar events to provide training and skills building for youth. These may be supported by grants depending upon their adherence to the following criteria below. Peace Corps strongly encourages that applications demonstrate youth’s sustained learning by linking participants to existing clubs where they can share their experience and continue to develop their skills. This approach maximizes program impact and sustainability. For this reason, camps supported by grants should not focus solely on sports or recreational activities. When designing a grant that implements a camp or club, PCVs must incorporate guidance from Peace Corps’ *Youth Camps Manual: GLOW and Other Leadership Camps [ICE No. M0100]* and *Youth Clubs Toolkit*.

Per the *Youth Camps Manual: GLOW and Other Leadership Camps [ICE No. M0100]* and *Youth Clubs Toolkit*, PCVs are required to collaborate on camps and clubs with host organizations and work with other host-country stakeholders. Planning and implementing camps and clubs alongside local organizations, such as a government institution, local NGO, or community partner (e.g. school or youth center), greatly improves the effectiveness of the activity. Camp and club activities should also include organizational and staff capacity building to facilitate long-term sustainability of the camp and/or club. Appropriate roles for PCVs include co-facilitator of grant activities including safety and child protection, logistics, and curriculum development. Additionally, PCVs play an important role facilitating the link between camps and clubs.

All activities with youth should be consistent with *MS 648* which outlines proper conduct while working or engaging with children during Peace Corps service or employment. For a detailed discussion of appropriate and inappropriate behavior see the *Child Protection Code of Conduct*, which is attached to *MS 648*. All activities should also adhere with post’s policies, procedures, and other requirements (including events guidelines).

Peace Corps Small Grants Program grants for camp and club activities should adhere to the following guidelines:

- All of the *Basic Small Grants requirements*
- Funds requested for infrastructure, equipment, and materials should support the training to be provided, and not be included as the principal justification for grant support
- Include follow-up plans for sharing the learning of participants with their clubs, peers, and communities at large and applying the skills learned during the camp experience
- Activities should generally take place within PCV’s community and not require travel on the part of the PCV or camp participants
- As with any Peace Corps Small Grants Program grant, a community or organization should assume responsibility for hosting and designing the camp for the purposes of liability and sustainability, submitting the application,
managing the funds, running the camp, and completing reporting requirements, assisted by the PCV.

- Grants should follow and apply requirements articulated in the Peace Corps Youth Camps Manual: GLOW and other Leadership Camps and Youth Clubs Toolkit.

C. Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Grants (SPA and other applicable USAID grant programs)

As part of the Peace Corps’ agreement with USAID, SPA, FTF and other applicable USAID-funded global grant programs have Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) requirements. Peace Corps PCVs must complete an environmental checklist for water, agriculture, and natural resource management grants (directions are contained within from PCGO).

D. Requirements for Water Provision Grants

To ensure the safety and quality of water, the Peace Corps Small Grants Program has developed additional guidelines for projects that involve water (see diagram below).

In many countries, there are naturally occurring water contaminants, such as arsenic, that could pose a major health risk to populations. Other contaminants, such as fecal coliform can have long-ranging health impacts, including chronic diarrhea and reduced health. In some cases, dangerously high levels of contamination may go undetected. Increasing accessibility and use of these water sources without first attempting to validate the safety of the water is unethical.

As a result, the grant program fully supports WASH projects that fit into one of these categories: WASH trainings, hand-washing projects (not including the rehabilitation/creation of a water access point(s)), behavior change activities, materials development, community-led sanitation, community organization, and latrine construction. No additional documentation or requirements beyond the grant application are necessary for these types of grants.

All other water-related grants have an additional requirement to obtain grant funding. At a minimum, a Water Quality Assurance Plan (WQAP) must be developed with community input and attached to the grant application in PCGO. WQAP Templates can be found within the Small Grants section of PCLive. Community ownership and empowerment should be outlined throughout. A copy should also be maintained within the community. The type of water provision project will influence the focus of the plan (see graphic below).

Additional diligence is necessary for projects explicitly designed for providing of drinking water or creating/rehabilitating infrastructure that could be used for a drinking water access point.

For water projects using non-rainwater source; the water must be tested to assure safety. The minimum testing standards are:
- Baseline and quarterly testing for a year for arsenic (target quality is less than 0.01 mg/L (10 ppb)) and fecal coliforms (not detectable in any 100mL sample).
  - This testing protocol should also be documented in the WQAP.
  - The USAID ENCAP Visual Field Guide: WATER SUPPLY provides links to some sample water testing kits. Less expensive testing kits may also be available at the local level; in some cases, host-country governments have provided low-cost or free kits and testing.
  - Costs associated with obtaining the water testing kits and paying for the results may be covered with Small Grants funding as part of the grant application.
- The test results for the entire year are to be reported to the respective post and attached to the PCV’s grant application in PCGO. Posts are encouraged to consult with their USAID Missions and the Peace Corps headquarters grant program point of contact about such grants.
- Well construction/rehabilitation grants must also be informed by Well Project Requirements and Considerations.

PCVs and post staff are encouraged to carefully consider water-provision grant applications. The development of a WQAP and testing can greatly strengthen the grant design, contribute significantly to building local communities’ capacities, and foster connections between local communities and government services. However, the timeline for testing may not align with a PCV’s remaining time at site; in such cases, community partners will need to take on additional responsibilities to obtain testing results and communicate them to the local communities and Peace Corps.
Diagram of requirements for water-provision projects

Type of water-provision project using grant funds

- Wells, borehole pumps, hand pumps, (drinking) water storage tanks, other drinking water access points

Type of water source

- Only rainwater
  - Develop WQAP emphasizing preventative water contamination measures. Water quality testing not necessary.
- All other sources
  - Develop WQAP that stresses permanent signage on infrastructure in local language "not for drinking water" and awareness raising about the intention of the water. Water quality testing not necessary.

- Irrigation systems (including tank storage), hand-washing stations connected to water supply line(s), work on other non-drinking water access points

- WASH trainings, handwashing projects and stations (not connected to water supply line), behavior change activities, materials development, community-led sanitation, community organization, latrine construction
  - No WQAP needed. No water testing needed.
E. Medical Supplies

If a PCV and community partner are planning a grant design that includes the purchase of medical supplies, there are requirements that the PCV and community partner must meet in order for the grant to be approved. The small grants coordinator and applicable program manager must review and ensure such requirements are met prior to CD approval.

PCVs are required to work with Peace Corps staff and local health professionals when designing and developing a sustainable and effective project that involves the purchase of medical supplies. Only trained health professionals are permitted to use any medical supplies authorized to be purchased with grant funds as listed below. Once approved for purchase, these medical supplies may only be provided as an initial supply for a health facility, as restricted in the Recurring Cost section of this handbook. PCVs must include in the grant design a plan for the community to cover recurring costs, maintenance, and future training needs.

**Authorized Medical Supplies**

- All authorized medical supplies must be produced by reputable manufacturers and stored properly including refrigeration, as determined by a trained health professional.
- The PCV and community partner are responsible for meeting the requirements below for purchases of authorized medical supplies.
- Examples of **authorized medical supplies** include:
  a. Testing kits – (e.g. HIV testing kits, malaria testing kits, diabetes testing kits, vision screening materials), provided that:
     i) Testing must be administered by trained health professionals. PCVs are prohibited from administering these testing kits.
     ii) Counseling services by trained professionals must be made available to discuss results with the patient population. A referral system should be in place to connect patients to appropriate medical services.
     iii) Confidentiality must be maintained with respect to all individual medical information, including testing and test results, discussion of those results, and any recommendations for treatment and counseling.
  b. First Aid kits/Emergency Medical Supplies kits -
     i) First aid kits may be authorized for purchase including those that contain over-the-counter medications normally included in medical kits such as, pain relievers, antiseptic ointment, or digestive aids.
     ii) A community partner(s) must be responsible for administering first aid.
  c. Medical supplies - (e.g. Intravenous (IV) tubing, gauze, tape, bandages, dressings, gloves). Where possible, PCVs are encouraged to obtain latex-free materials.
  d. Medical equipment that does not require routine expert maintenance - (e.g. Stethoscope, blood pressure monitor, patient beds).
  e. Education and training resources for medical professionals, students, and community members - (e.g. Medical diagrams, medical simulation equipment, medical books).
**Unauthorized Medical Supplies**

Examples of medical supplies that are not authorized for purchase with grant funds or to be used in a PCV project include:

- Medical supplies or medications from the Peace Corps-issued PCV medical kits intended for PCV personal use only.
- Medicines not normally available in first aid kits/emergency medical supplies kits or those that require a prescription from a medical professional.
- Medical equipment that requires expert training for use and regular maintenance (e.g. MRI scanners, x-ray machines, ultra-sound equipment, sterilization machines)

Any questions as to whether a grant expense is authorized should be directed to the appropriate Peace Corps headquarters grant program point of contact by the small grants coordinator.
Monitoring and Evaluation of a Project

I. Why Monitor and Evaluate Projects?
The Peace Corps’ contribution to the development community can be demonstrated through monitoring and evaluating (M&E) PCV activities and outcomes within their primary and secondary assignments. M&E enables us to adjust assignment activities, learn from assignment successes and challenges, demonstrate the impact of PCV activities, and tell the Peace Corps story to stakeholders in a clear and compelling way. Documenting the outcomes of projects provides tangible evidence of the impact of PCV activities and demonstrates the contributions of the small grants program. Finally, evaluating the success of a project advances the agency’s ability to demonstrate the degree to which the Peace Corps is achieving its strategic goals and enables the Peace Corps to promote transparency by sharing the results of its work with communities and funding partners. As such, it is a vital component of the small grants program.

II. M&E Planning and Design for Project
A well-designed and clearly articulated project is the foundation for M&E efforts. In order to successfully implement, as well as monitor and evaluate, a project, it is important to first have a clear and “logical” picture of the project: what are expected accomplishments, what activities will be undertaken, and how those activities will lead to the desired outcomes. Basically, the PCV needs to be clear on the “theory of change” or how s/he expects the project to achieve its objectives so the right activities can be implemented, progress can be tracked over time, project adjustments can be made as necessary, and the project can be evaluated for success using the Theory of Change and Logic Model.

If PCVs clearly articulate what they hope to accomplish in their project and how they expect to accomplish it, they will be able to easily develop a plan for how to measure the success of the project upon completion. PCVs may thus find it useful to create a logic model to help them design their grants and to help inform their M&E plan for reporting at the completion of their grant.

*What is a Logic Model?* A logic model is a visual representation showing the sequence of related events (e.g. inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, impact) that connect the need for a planned activity or set of activities. The logic model has been used for decades in the development arena. The basic template looks like the following:
Many formats exist for the logic model – Peace Corps has recently adopted a relatively simple “theory-of-change informed” logical framework to replace the Project Framework template. This is applicable to small grants; see Small Grants Theory of Change and Logic Model. Peace Corps’ small grants logic model presents a clear articulation of the project rationale, goal, objectives, activities, outputs, and anticipated outcomes, as well as assumptions and external factors that may affect project implementation. The logic model feeds into the M&E plan which defines indicators to track and measure achievement of outputs and outcomes in the logic model, establishes targets, identifies the specific tool(s) used to measure achievement of indicators, and delineates the frequency of reporting.

Reviewing the small grants logic model requires project planners to think carefully about and describe relationships among the desired changes or outcomes, the activities that will enable achievement of the outcomes, assumptions underlying these relationships, and other factors that might affect achievement of project objectives. The small grants logic model can thus serve as a useful tool for structuring project planning and design discussions.

III. Project Specific Goals, Objectives & Indicators
When designing a project, the PCV and their community counterpart should establish a project goal and objectives based on identified needs in their community:

- **Goal:** The project goal statement articulates the intermediate or long-term outcomes of the project. It may be a higher level aspiration that will not be entirely within the project’s control to achieve.

- **Objectives:** Project objectives articulate the most significant outcome(s) that will result from PCV and partner activities and will contribute to achievement of the project goal. An objective should be something that the grant has control over and can reasonably be expected to accomplish.

A project should have one goal and no more than three overarching objectives.

Next, the PCV and counterpart should define the activities that they believe will lead to achievement of the objectives, and the inputs needed to carry out those activities. They can then build out a logic model that illustrates the activities that will be implemented and the outputs and outcomes of the activities. This informs the development of relevant indicators (see graphics on next page).
**Objective:** Increase use of properly maintained and hung bed nets in [community name] by the end of the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Output Indicators</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Outcome Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hold workshops to educate community members on how to use and maintain bed nets</td>
<td>Community members trained on how to use and maintain bed nets</td>
<td># community members trained on how to use and maintain bed nets</td>
<td>Adults (age 18+) able to describe proper bed net use and maintenance</td>
<td># of adults able to describe proper bed net use and maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct follow-up household visits to ensure proper net placement, use, and maintenance</td>
<td>Community members receive household visits to ensure proper net placement, use, and maintenance.</td>
<td># community members who receive household visits</td>
<td>Well maintained bed nets that are hung properly</td>
<td>% increase in number of bed nets with zero holes hung properly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The small grants logic model can directly translate to the project-specific Goals, Objectives, and Indicators within the grant application. Reference the overlap between the small grants logic model table above and the graphic below depicting a stylized representation in a Peace Corps grant application.

The M&E plan is developed from the logic model; indicators are developed to track and measure achievement of the outputs and outcomes articulated in the logic model. If the grant is funded through SPA, VAST, LGL, GEF, FTF, or other applicable USAID-funded global grant programs, one or more of the project-specific indicators may match those of the required Funding-Specific Indicators. Since these indicators are reported to different audiences, there should be no concern regarding double-counting outputs/outcomes. After developing project-specific indicators, PCVs will need to determine who is responsible for collecting data for each indicator, and what data collection tools will be used.
IV. Peace Corps’ Standard Grant Indicators

In addition to the project-specific goals, objectives, and indicators, all Peace Corps grants are required to report against a standard set of indicators that are applicable across all grant types. These indicators measure capacity development and adoption of new technologies and practices. They enable Peace Corps to demonstrate:

- Acquisition of new skills that improve quality of life,
- Increased capacity of participants to define and meet goals and objectives in the future, and/or
- Increased organizational capacity as a result of the grants.

Within the PCGO portal, the application: Part 2 of 2, Tab 2: “Classification and Indicators, section Initial Indicators” shows the four indicators that must be measured across all grants: capacity development, new technology and practices, number of indirect beneficiaries, and number of direct participants. Numbers entered at the application stage represent targets; numbers entered at the completion report stage represent the actual entities reached.

A. Capacity Development

For the capacity development indicator, the PCV and community must first determine the unit of measurement. Will the project target individuals, service providers, and/or an organization/association?

- Individual members of the community: The main focus of the Peace Corps, whether directly through the work of PCVs and their work partners or through those trained by PCVs, is to build capacities at the individual level so community members are empowered to improve their quality of life, be they individual students, farmers, clients served by an NGO, or others.

- Service providers, trainers, or multipliers: Strengthening capacity of service providers, trainers, or other multipliers, be they teachers, leaders of an NGO, peer educators, or managers of a farmers’ cooperative, helps ensure local leadership for continuing activities into the future.

- Organizations/associations: Strengthening organizational capacity, such as management skills within an NGO, helps support other activities in an ongoing, functioning, and supportive environment.

For these indicators, the community and PCV will choose the one(s) that best fits the project.

B. New Technology and Practices

For the new technology and practices indicator, the community and PCV must determine what new technologies and/or practices they expect to see adopted as a result of the project. For example, if the project focuses on gardening, the indicator might relate to participants adopting a new fertilization or planting technique. In a hygiene project, the expected new practice might be community members incorporating hand-washing after using the new latrine.
C. Beneficiaries (Indirect)

Peace Corps’ small grants program uses specific definitions for “direct participants” and “indirect beneficiaries” of an activity. When deciding who is a participant and who is a beneficiary, PCVs should note the following definitions (also found in the Guidance for Determining Participants vs. Beneficiaries):

- **Beneficiaries**: Those who receive an indirect benefit from the execution of the project, but are not involved in its planning or implementation.
  - Beneficiaries often benefit from the execution of the project after the main period of implementation has passed.
  - Beneficiaries may receive a transfer of knowledge, skills, or abilities from participants who were trained during the main period of implementation.

D. Participants (Direct)

Peace Corps’ small grants program uses specific definitions for “direct participants” and “indirect beneficiaries” of an activity. When deciding who is a participant and who is a beneficiary, PCVs should note the following definitions (also found in the Guidance for Determining Participants vs. Beneficiaries):

- **Participants**: Those directly involved in the design and implementation of the project, including those who attend trainings or workshops.
  - Participants are usually involved in the project during the planning and/or implementation phases.
  - Participants receive a direct transfer of knowledge, skills, and attitudes as a result of participation in project activities and may go on to teach what they learned during the project to other community members.

V. **Funding-Specific Indicators**

PCVs are required to provide indicator information for their selected funding source (for SPA, VAST, LGL, GEF, and FTF, and other applicable USAID-funded global grant programs in particular). Post staff should assist PCVs in understanding which indicators should be reported on for the respective project. These indicators are essential to monitoring and evaluating grant programs, and will be submitted to the appropriate Peace Corps office for reporting purposes. The next graphic summarizes the reporting requirements specific to each grant program:
| PCPP | N/A |
| SPA | • For all SPA-funded grants, PCVs must report on at least one indicator in this section of the grant application to qualify for funding.  
• PCVs should report on all indicators relevant to their grant.  
• Indicators are derived from the Foreign Assistance Framework standard and custom indicators according to the program element(s) agreed upon by the Peace Corps and USAID.  
• Indicator and activity data must be reported by the post to the USAID mission in a mid-year and annual report. |
| LGL | • For all LGL-funded grants, PCVs must report on at least one LGL indicator in this section of the grant application to qualify for funding.  
• PCVs should report on all indicators relevant to their grant.  
• These indicators are used to report to donors on an ongoing basis of overall program success. |
| VAST | • For all VAST grants, PCVs must report on at least one of the five key PEPFAR indicators in this section of the grant application that have been identified by Peace Corps and the PEPFAR initiative.  
• These indicators are the same as those used by posts for reporting HIV/AIDS work in the PEPFAR Country Team Reports. |
| GEF | • For all GEF grants, PCVs should report on at least one GEF indicator in this section of the grant application to qualify for funding.  
• PCVs should report on all indicators relevant to their grant.  
• Select posts that have GEF funds available to them should work with their Peace Corps headquarters contact to determine indicators specific to their country. |
| FtF | • For all FtF grants, PCVs should report on at least one FtF indicator in this section of the grant application to qualify for funding.  
• PCVs should report on all indicators relevant to their grant.  
• FtF indicators are determined by the FTF coordinator along with USAID. |
VI. Data Collection

All projects require the collection of output and outcome indicator data. The small grants coordinator and M&E specialist at post should train PCVs on the importance of ensuring that data is complete, accurate, and collected in a timely manner.

At a minimum, PCVs should record attendance at grant-funded events or activities and submit signed participant lists with their completion reports. This helps to ensure that the output data (but not personally identifiable information of participants) reported to partners and donors is accurate, valid, and auditable. Small grants coordinators must ensure that participant lists are saved in the appropriate grant files (ideally uploaded to PCGO) for audit purposes.

When possible, PCVs should use existing data collection tools when they seek to measure project outcomes. These may be tools used by a relevant government ministry, NGO, or other Peace Corps sector project. Which tool to use should be considered during the project design process and developed (if not using an existing tool) at the beginning of the project. The type of data collection tool used will depend on the indicator being measured. Examples of tools include:

- Attendance sheets
- Detailed tracking sheets
- Pre- or post-test assessments that measure increases in skills, knowledge, and/or behaviors (attitudes)

Tools used or developed to measure achievement of outcome indicators should meet standards of validity, integrity, precision, reliability, and timeliness.

Frequency of use will be determined by the type of tool and what is being measured – this should be outlined in the M&E plan contained in the Project Specific Goals, Objectives and Indicators section of the grant application. The small grants coordinator and/or M&E specialist can assist in identification and/or development of appropriate tools to measure project indicators.
Peace Corps Grants Online (PCGO)

The PCGO database serves as a detailed tracking system for posts. All grants, from submitted applications, to approved grants being implemented in the field, to grants that are closed out or cancelled, are registered and searchable within the PCGO database at each post and headquarters.

The database electronically records and manages grants and their status seamlessly (connecting the PCV application and completion report system with the post and headquarters). The small grants coordinator has access to the database, and manages the grants within the database. Peace Corps headquarters also has the ability to see grant status and information in the same database. This resource not only assists posts in tracking and managing all grants and funding programs, but allows Peace Corps headquarters access to information on a global scale without burdening posts with information and reporting requests.

I. Basic Functionality
PCGO is a two-sided system for managing Peace Corps’ small grants. The PCGO portal side of PCGO is used by PCVs to input and submit grant applications and completion reports. PCVs also have the option of downloading an offline version of the grant application and completion report. Staff and PCVs participating in grant application review can register to access the PCGO portal as reviewers, which allows them to view all applications currently in “Submitted” status for their post.

All information that PCVs will need, including the PCGO Volunteer Step-by-Step Guide, FAQs, and resources for the offline workaround, can be found on the PCLive Small Grants Resource Page.

The PCGO Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database, the second side of the system, is used by Peace Corps staff at posts and Peace Corps headquarters to manage grants and to pull data. Information entered in the system is viewed in real time in both the PCGO portal and PCGO CRM database.

The system also sends automatic emails to staff and PCVs when a grant’s status changes to inform them of pending actions in the grants process. See PCGO Project Status Explanations and Flow Chart on when automatic emails are sent.

II. Licensing (Staff Only)
Each post has two or three CRM licenses available, depending on the number of grant programs and the size of the program. Please submit a request through the Peace Corps Self Service Center for information on your post’s licenses. The primary license holder should be the small grants coordinator or main person responsible for grants at post. Posts may decide which additional staff should have a license. Licenses may be temporarily transferred at any time; if the primary license holder is unavailable for some period of time, the license may be used by another staff member until the primary license holder return.
III. Reviewing Grants (Staff Only)
At least two staff members have access to PCGO from each Post – the small grant coordinator and an additional staff person determined by the Post. Depending on the Post’s bandwidth and review process, grants may be reviewed through the PCGO CRM database, the PCGO portal, or printed/downloaded as a Word document or PDF file for grant review committees. Peace Corps staff and PCVs may register in the PCGO portal as “Reviewers”, which will give them read-only access to all grants at their post that have been submitted but not yet approved.

IV. Reporting Capabilities (Staff Only)
The PCGO CRM database has advanced functionality that allows users to search for any information collected in the grant application or completion report. This information can be analyzed within CRM with views, charts and dashboards or it can be exported to Microsoft Excel for analysis. Reports can be generated with aggregate data on grant funding across programs, community contributions, participants, beneficiaries, capacity building, grant-specific indicators, etc.

For example, a report can be pulled containing the narrative summary of grants classified as "Gender and Development". As another example, a report can also be pulled with the names of the implementing community organizations and locations of all grants led by health-sector PCVs. The possibilities for reporting and information gathering from PCGO are vast. For guidance on creating reports, consult “Creating Charts in PCGO” and “PCGO Reporting data using Pivot Tables and Charts” resources.

V. Remote Access of PCGO CRM (Staff Only)
Licensed staff members are able to access the PCGO CRM database as long as they are logged on to their Peace Corps Active Directory accounts and connected to the internet. If a staff member is traveling out of the office, they may need to consult with their post IT specialist regarding options for remote access, including a laptop with Direct Access or VMWare, accessed through an RSA token.

VI. Resources
All information that PCVs will need, including the PCGO Volunteer Step-by-Step Guide, the PCGO Volunteer Working Offline Quick Guide, FAQs, and resources for the offline workaround, can be found on the PCLive Small Grants Resource Page.

All information that grants staff will need, including troubleshooting guides, links to training resources and forms can be found under the PCGO sections of the Small Grants Resource Center on the Intranet. If post staff require additional support, please submit requests and issues through the Peace Corps Self Service Center.
Grant Design and Development

Applying for a grant begins well before a PCV fills out the grant application. PCVs must first earn the trust of community partners to determine an appropriate grant to plan and implement. As Peace Corps grants support community development, grants should be initiated and driven by the PCV’s community, rather than solely by the PCV. PCVs should work with the community organizations throughout the entire grant design, application, and implementation process.

Before developing a grant, PCVs should conduct a community needs assessment to ensure appropriate grant selection and community buy-in. PCVs should conduct this needs assessment using the skills they have acquired from the PACA Field Guide for Volunteers. To obtain hard copies, post staff may work through their Information Resource Coordination (IRC) managers to contact the Peace Corps headquarters Librarian.

As the PDM manual states, “Community projects are most successful when they result from locally perceived desires or needs and where community members take part in the planning, implementation, and evaluation. This development process builds the community’s capacity to better its own situation, strengthen its resources, and work toward solving problems more independently in the future” (Page 25). Thus, it is important for post staff to ensure that each grant demonstrates community engagement and involvement, that there is a clear and specific need for the grant, and that it will be sustainable upon the PCV’s departure.

Here are ways to ensure community involvement:

- Counterparts prepare a summary in the local language
- Counterparts come to post for grant advocacy
- Counterparts attend PDM workshops with PCVs
- Post staff visit grant/community sites
- Counterpart and PCV conduct PACA mapping or other assessment activities

As PCVs and their community partners conduct community needs assessments and design grants, the following questions should be asked to determine if grants are meeting pressing community needs:

- What indicates this grant will meet a need community members consider important?
  - What are the benefits—both immediate and long-term? Are these measurable, either quantitatively or qualitatively?
  - Of these, which measurable changes can be captured within reasonable grant start and end dates?
- Why is this grant a priority?
- Does the grant require resources external to the local community?

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6 Some posts have found it helpful to have community counterparts come to the post to advocate for the funding of their grant application. This depends on the size of the country and community members’ ability to travel to the post. While it is something that ensures community members are engaged and serious about the grant, the distance could be a hindrance.
If a grant is prioritized by the community and is determined to need external funding, the PCV and their community counterpart(s) should review Basic Grant Requirements to determine if a Peace Corps grant would be appropriate. Successful grants offer compelling answers to the following key components:

A. Community Ownership and Initiation
   - Who first proposed this project?
     - If the project was proposed or is supported by a person outside of the local community, is it clear community members really want or need it, intend to participate, and want to use their resources in this way?
     - What are the roles and responsibilities of community members? How are community members the primary drivers of the project?
     - How involved are the beneficiaries in project planning?
     - How will the community oversee the project?
     - Can the community contribute the minimum 25% of the total grant value?
       - PCVs may help their communities quantify how much time, labor, transportation, and financial or material support the community will provide. Most often, communities contribute much more than 25% in material, financial, or physical contributions. Post staff may utilize and distribute the “Estimating the Value of In-Kind Contributions” guide.

B. Sustainability
   - Will the project be self-sustaining?
   - What external or internal activities will occur to sustain the project after outside funding ends? Is there a revenue-generating aspect of the project for continued operations?
   - How long is this project anticipated to be in use or have an effect?
   - Is there clear community participation and oversight for the project?
   - How will any buildings, parts, or machinery be repaired or replaced?
   - Does the community have the resources (human, financial, or material) to sustain the project long-term?
   - Could the community replicate or teach the implementation of this project in the future?

C. Capacity Building
   All grants need to build capacity in some way. Grant timelines should be designed so as to allow for the collection of measurable changes in capacities. Most grants build capacities in at least two of three ways:
   - Are any people or groups gaining new knowledge or skills?
     - Most grants have an inherent skill-building type of education that takes place during the timeline. This could be informal (i.e., in constructing latrines, community members gain new knowledge that will allow them to replicate that activity in the future) or formal (i.e., the training of community members on good hygiene practices in addition to building latrines).
For some grants, the outcome will increase self-sufficiency in development activities and/or enable community members to carry out activities that build the capacity of people. For example, a community might build a new room for the local school, which will enable them to better educate their children or a grant might purchase a loom for a women’s cooperative to help them get a weaving project off the ground.

- Will any of the direct participants or groups gain experience in financial management?
  - All grants include a budget and require financial management, a significant component of capacity building is ensuring the transfer and honing of financial management skills on the part of the community.
  - The Peace Corps Small Grants Program encourages the use of the [Financial Management and Capacity Building Assessment Tool](#) as a resource for PCVs, their communities, and posts in determining initial capacity for financial management. The tool assists PCVs and their communities to work through the strengths and challenges of a community’s capacity for financial management, and determine a score that rates their level of readiness and the next grant design steps. Though not lengthy, the tool requires critical thinking and action to ensure a grant’s finances will be used, managed, and reported on by a community in line with the grants stated goals. At the grant design phase, the scores may equate to key actions:

If a PCV and their community partners determine that a grant meets the “Basic Grants Requirements” and is community initiated, sustainable, and builds capacity, they can move on to applying for a grant through PCGO. Throughout the course of any grant, PCVs and their communities should continually reflect back on the questions asked during the grant development phase to ensure the grant remains community driven and sustainable.
Application Process

The following section outlines the process that PCVs and communities should follow when developing small-scale development projects and applying for Peace Corps Grants funding. Additionally, each post may develop post-specific criteria and/or procedures outlining the application process for PCVs.

When PCVs and their communities are ready to apply for grant funding, they should follow the procedures below, and also adhere to post-specific procedures on which they have received training.

I. Orienting Volunteers

All PCVs should be oriented and trained by post staff on how to design projects and access grants during their service. Post staff must ensure that small grant guidelines, deadlines, and review procedures are effectively communicated to PCVs. PCVs should have an understanding of the role of small grants within the Peace Corps’ approach to development and methods to design projects and write grant applications. Effective means of communicating small grant information include scheduling small grant orientation sessions at PST or IST, distributing informational pamphlets, and including grant-related items in Volunteer newsletters.

Essential training content should cover external funding, PCGO online and offline grant applications, grant close out processes (including what types of automated emails to expect), any post-specific requirements for submitting a grant application, timeline for when a PCV may apply, available funding sources, and post policies regarding simultaneous grants.

Due to the shorter length of Peace Corps Response service, and while there are no strict limitations on Peace Corps Response Volunteers (PCRVs) completing grants, posts should closely coordinate, communicate, and proactively monitor PCRVs grants. Response managers and small grants coordinators should closely communicate regarding grant feasibility within PCRVs’ short timelines. Post-level grant materials specific to RCRVs, as is included in PC/Georgia’s Handbook, can be developed to document and communicate different processes for PCRVs’ grant submissions. Also, PCRVs and counterparts may benefit from grants-related training offered to PCVs.

II. When a Volunteer May Apply

PCVs may apply for grants after a minimum of three months at a site, and preferably after having received PDM training. PCVs should work with post staff to understand post’s specific submission requirements and/or deadlines. Before beginning work with their communities to design a project, PCVs should discuss the proposed project with their APCD/PM or other appropriate programming staff. PCVs should also acquaint themselves with the PCGO system, starting an application, entering project details, and saving the application in “Draft” status in PCGO for the duration of the planning period until they are ready to submit.
To allow sufficient time for completion of a project prior to a PCV’s close of service, PCVs may not apply for grants during the last three months of their service unless the CD approves the PCV’s written justification explaining how the project will be implemented and completed with all documentation submitted at least one month before the PCV’s close of service date.

Additionally, a PCV may not submit a grant application that includes activities that would be implemented past a PCV’s close of service date or where activities are designed to be transferred to another PCV.

### III. Funding Availability (Staff Only)
As each grant program utilizes different funding sources and has its own unique requirements, posts should think strategically about how to communicate with PCVs about funding availability. Due to the nature of the PCPP and LGL programs, which fundraise for grants, these programs operate on a rolling funding basis without set funding amounts or limits each fiscal year. However, other grant programs (SPA, VAST, GEF, FtF, etc.) that are supported by U.S. government agencies and managed by posts have a set amount of funds each year; as such posts may impose guidelines to ensure strategic deployment of funds. PCVs should also be oriented to the programmatic requirements of any applicable USG-funded grant programs at post.

### IV. Simultaneous Grants
Peace Corps headquarters strongly recommends that PCVs only have **one open grant at a time**. Once a PCV has successfully completed and closed one grant, the small grants coordinator and other appropriate staff may permit a PCV to undertake the management of simultaneous grants. Additionally, PCVs **may not utilize two different funding sources to contribute to the same project** (e.g. SPA and PCPP funds may not be applied to the same project).

### V. Grant Budget Formulation
Creating a realistic budget is a key component of a grant. Budgets set a realistic outline of the grant cost and demonstrate the community investment in the project through community contribution, possibly detail support of a third party, and highlight the responsibility of the PCV and the community to properly manage and account for grant funds. Budgets must include all items needed for project implementation and ensure that the grant is fully supported and could be easily replicated. Budget input information begins on page 15 of the **PCGO Volunteer Step-by-Step Guide**.

### VI. Community Contribution
Essential to the sustainability of any project is community buy-in. Without community support, projects typically fall apart after external support is removed. For these reasons, communities are required to contribute at least 25% of the total budget for all grants. This requirement is often quantified through the costs of donated manual labor and transportation associated with the project. Community contributions might also include direct contributions of raw materials or cash (if the community contribution is cash, the grant plan must clearly detail how the cash will be spent). Contributions from local or other in-country sources, such as local organizations, local businesses, or host government ministries, may also be considered as part of the community
contribution. However, a contribution from an international organization may not be considered as part of the community contribution and should instead be counted as a third-party contribution.

PCVs may help their communities quantify how much time, labor, transportation, and financial or material support the community will provide (see Estimating the Value of In-Kind Contributions). Most often, communities contribute well above the 25% minimum requirement.

VII. Working with Youth
Peace Corps encourages youth to be involved in all phases of project planning and implementation. Their involvement engages them as community members and supports the learning of life skills such as planning, goal setting, and leadership. However, labor contributed by youth must not be included as part of the 25% community contribution.

VIII. Third-Party Contributions
Third-party contributions are contributions given by international entities or individuals outside of the community. These contributions may be cash or in-kind, and must be itemized separately in the grant budget. PCVs should work with their communities and post staff to determine how best to classify these contributions.

Contributions from large international NGOs (CARE, World Vision, Save the Children, Plan International, UN organizations, etc.) no matter where located are considered a third-party contribution.

While third-party contributions are certainly an option for cost sharing, grants should never be designed specifically around the option of having a third-party contribution (for example, a large book donation from a third-party should not be the genesis for a grant). It is important for PCVs and communities to understand that including a third-party contribution increases the total grant budget, which will in turn increase the required 25% community contribution (the total grant budget includes the community contribution, any third-party contributions, and the amount requested from the Small Grants Program). This ensures that the community is fully invested in the project, and that third-party contributors are not leading or overtaking the project based on their own mission or goals. In some cases, third-party contributions raise the grant total significantly, requiring the community contribution to increase proportionally, in order to meet the required 25%. Therefore, PCVs and communities should carefully consider any potential third-party contributions.

PCVs should never manage third-party funds; funds from the third-party must be directly given to the community or managed by local representatives of the third-party organization. PCVs should also be aware that logistical challenges are common when funds are transferred from third-party contributors, particularly larger international organizations.

IX. Exchange Rates
For all grant programs, no currency stabilization is accounted for when actually obligating funds for projects. Post staff and PCVs should monitor currency fluctuation and develop the budget
accordingly. For PCPP and LGL, grant budgets are developed in local currency units (LCU) then converted to USD for the fundraising process. At the time of obligation of PCPP and LGL grant funds, USD is converted back to the LCU (using the current exchange rate) and the PCV reports grant expenditures in LCU.

X. **High Value Item Grants**

Grants involving items of high value, including technology items, are increasingly being implemented by PCVs and their communities. While these projects are often successful at providing technological training and resources for communities, it is important to carefully consider the following questions and document them well in the grant application in PCGO:

1.) If an item requires electricity, is that readily available and how will it be paid for in the future?
2.) Is the physical environment conducive for the sustained use of technology items? Can the items be properly stored and safeguarded?
3.) How will community members be trained on the use of the items?
4.) Who will manage and oversee access, usage, maintenance, and upgrades to these items? Will access and usage be provided in a fair way?
5.) How will high value items be maintained and repaired in the future? For example, if a computer were to break after a project ends, will there be resources and trained personnel available to repair it?
6.) If an item requires ongoing resources or upgrades to function, for example inks for a printer, where can those items be purchased locally? Does the community have the resources to purchase these items in the future?
7.) For purchases of technology, how will future licensing and upgrades be financed?

XI. **Required Materials for Submission**

A. **Application**

The Peace Corps grant application guides PCVs through a series of sections that ask PCVs and their communities to think through all aspects of the grant, including timeline, budget, and how the project will be monitored and evaluated. If a post decides to request additional information (a local language summary, for example), it may do so, though this will be a separate, supplementary document that should be uploaded to the grant in the PCGO system.

B. **Forms**

The application has forms that are downloaded from PCGO and are required to be signed by all parties identified on the forms. Text and budget information that is in the forms once downloaded must not be altered; and handwritten forms will not be accepted. Once signed, all forms must be uploaded into PCGO:

1) Project Agreement Form
2) Grant Liability Form (2 Pages)
3) Press Authorization
4) In the following instances, additional forms are required:
   o **If the grant budget is more than $10,000**, the PCV will need to fill out the Projects in Excess of $10,000 Approval Request form and submit it to
the small grants coordinator. The small grants coordinator will complete section 2 and provide to the CD for signature.

- **If the budget includes costs that require CD approval**, such as prizes, PCV-related costs, or international travel, the PCV will need to submit a Country Director Approval Special Project Costs Form.
- **If the grant is determined to require a Water Quality Assurance Plan**, the PCV must develop a plan with the community and submit it.

### XII. Planning for Small Grants Committee Review

Each post has a small grants committee which reviews all grant applications. Prior to committee review, the small grants coordinator should review each application to ensure that all sections have been thoughtfully completed and meet the minimum requirements for approval. The coordinator may request changes or updates from the PCV prior to submission to committee review.

Grant applications for VAST, SPA, and other applicable USAID programs, must fall within the scope of the program areas or elements under which the USAID mission or PEPFAR has contributed funds. The small grants coordinator should request FORPost reports from their financial unit at post to monitor funding levels throughout the fiscal year.

When planning for committee reviews, post staff may find it useful to consider:

- seasonal activity calendars of PCVs and their counterparts (e.g., education PCVs might request funds for projects that will take place during school breaks);
- budget cycle realities (e.g., fiscal year close out) and the potential effects of a continuing resolution; and
- dates of PDM workshops or other similar trainings, after which application submissions may increase.

Once a grant has been reviewed by the small grants coordinator and all requirements have been met, the application should be passed on (electronically, or converted to a PDF report and printed out) to the review committee participants.

### XIII. Small Grants Committee Review

Posts are required to review and approve grants through a small grants committee.

The small grants committee should meet (in person or electronically) to review applications at least quarterly, and more frequently (e.g., monthly) if the volume of applications necessitates more frequent review. The calendar should be established far in advance, and be publicized to PCVs in newsletters and other formats, so that PCVs can plan ahead to submit their applications on time. As PCPP and LGL grants may be submitted on a rolling basis, committee review may be more frequent.

The small grants committee should establish the following:
- post-specific grant criteria or requirements;
- submission, review, and approval procedures;
• a review calendar and application submission deadlines;
• post-specific grant materials which are consistent with this handbook and MS 720 (e.g., local small grants handbook, small grant funding announcements, training materials, etc.).

Most posts use a grant review checklist to help Peace Corps staff, PCVs, and communities assess the strengths and weaknesses of projects. Such a checklist should become part of any information guide that the post disseminates to PCVs and communities. A sample checklist can be found here.

XIV. Assigning Grant Numbers (Staff Only)

Once the small grants committee approves the application, the small grants coordinator will change the grant status in PCGO to “Post Approved”. This will automatically assign a number to the grant in PCGO. The number will be tied to the application and will serve as the identifying factor for the grant in the PCGO database. This number is used to track the grant in the PCGO database, and should also be included when obligating the grant in FORPost.

The grant number identifies the grant’s funding source, the fiscal year in which the grant is funded, and the post (by a three-digit country location code), and will be used to track it until it is completed and all programmatic and financial reports have been submitted.

Below are the codes for each grant program:

- Small Project Assistance (SPA) = SP
  - SPA-funded/post managed Training Activity Description (TAD) = TAD
  - SPA-funded/post managed Program Support Description (PSD)= PSD
- Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) = PP
- Let Girls Learn Program (LGL) = LGL
- Volunteer Activities Support and Training (VAST) = VA
- Feed the Future (FTF) = FF
- Global Education Framework (GEF) = GEF
XV. Country Director and Peace Corps headquarters Review

Following the small grants committee’s approval of an application, the small grants coordinator will forward the grant application to the CD for final approval. The CD will review the application and then sign the Grant Liability and Project Agreement forms. The small grants coordinator will then upload the signed forms and change the grant status to “CD Approved” in PCGO.

Once the status has been changed to “CD Approved” in PCGO, the grant application will be forwarded to Peace Corps headquarters for review, and the PCV and small grants coordinator will receive an automated email informing them that the CD has approved the grant. Peace Corps headquarters staff will review PCPP and LGL grant applications to ensure they meet all of the basic grant guidelines. After PCPP and LGL grants have been approved by Peace Corps headquarters staff, they will be posted online to raise funds. Once a SPA grant application is approved by the CD, it is ready to be funded. SPA grants requesting over $10,000 are reviewed by Peace Corps headquarters staff, and reviewed and approved by the director of Gifts and Grants Management and the appropriate regional director. All VAST grants are reviewed and approved only at the post level, except for grants requesting over $10,000, which are also reviewed and approved by the director of OGGH and the appropriate regional director. All GEF and FtF grants are reviewed and approved only at the post level, except for grants requesting over $10,000, which are also reviewed and approved by the director of SPIGA and the Africa regional director.

Approved grants are numbered as follows, using the example of a grant in Albania that was approved and obligated in October 2020:

- **SP** = SPA Program
- **20** = Fiscal year 2020
- **304** = the location code for Albania
- **002** = the second SPA grant for which funding was obligated in Albania during fiscal year 2020

In this example, **SP-20-304-002** becomes the assigned number. For VAST, PCPP, LGL, FTF, or GEF the prefix will differ. All grant numbers are auto-populated by PCGO when the grant status is changed to “Post Approved”.

The grant number should **not** be confused with the obligation number.

Also, please note that the grant number sequence (i.e., 002 in the example above) should be kept separate for each program and each fiscal year. For posts with several SPA program elements, grant numbers will continue in numerical sequence regardless of the SPA program element. So continuing with the example above, the third grant for which funding is obligated through SPA in Albania during fiscal year 2020 would have the number **SP-20-304-003**. And if the last grant in fiscal year 2019 for SPA was **SP-19-304-019**, the first grant in fiscal year 2020 would be **SP-20-304-001**, **not** **SP-19-304-020**.

**All emails pertaining information about a grant must include grant numbers.**
Fundraising for Approved PCPP & LGL Grants

As PCPP and LGL projects are funded through private sector donations, they are posted on the Peace Corps website, where donations can be made directly to projects. Once an application is received and approved at Peace Corps headquarters, PCPP staff will post the project on the Peace Corps website and change the application status to “Project Posted” in PCGO. This will trigger an automated email to the PCV and small grants coordinator informing them that the project is now posted online. The “Summary”, “Community Involvement”, and “Sustainability” sections of the application are posted on the Peace Corps’ website. Projects remain online until they are fully funded, at which point online donations may no longer be made.

The fundraising timeframe depends on the project type, amount requested, PCV referrals, and availability of Peace Corps headquarters and post-level funds.

I. Referrals for PCPP and LGL Grants
In the grant application, each PCV should include a list of individuals and organizations with which they have a personal connection in the “Referrals” section of PCGO. These generally include friends, family, and professional contacts who may be interested in donating to the PCV’s project. Once a project is posted online, all listed referrals will receive an automated email that directs them to the specific PCV’s project on the Peace Corps website, enabling them to make a donation.

PCVs can help raise awareness of their project by contacting friends, family, organizations, and other parties to tell them about their project (see Guide to Raising Awareness). All potential donors should be directed to the project’s webpage on the Peace Corps website. PCVs can view a list of donors on a weekly basis in the “Referrals” section of their application (see Donor Lists section).

II. Peace Corps headquarters and Post Managed Funds to Support PCPP Grants
PCPP has four types of funds that are available to be allocated to approved PCPP projects: Global Funds, Special Funds, Country Funds, and Memorial Funds. The availability of these funds does not change the requirement in MS 720 that budgets include at least a 25% community contribution. Any PCPP project that has been approved by Peace Corps headquarters for fundraising may be eligible to receive Peace Corps headquarters and post managed funds.

A. Peace Corps headquarters Managed Funds

1. Global Fund
The Global Fund is a fund to provide financial support to PCPP projects to meet their fundraising goals. Global Funds can be used in conjunction with Country Funds, Memorial Funds, and Special Funds. Global Funds are applied based on the criteria
below to PCPP projects, regardless of country of service, grant type, or number of referrals.

Global Fund Criteria
1) a PCPP grant must be posted on the agency’s website for at least 30 days;
2) a PCPP grant must have raised 30% of the grant amount requested, not including Special Funds; and
3) the remaining amount needed to fully fund the PCPP grant must equal $2,000 or less for Global Funds to be applied.

GGM reserves the right to amend any of the Global Fund criteria and will inform posts of any such amendment(s).

2. Special Funds
Special Funds allow donors to donate to specific project types or sectors that they are interested in supporting (for example, donations to the Education Fund support education projects). Based on availability, these funds provide startup funding for PCPP projects that meet the following criterion:
1) a PCPP project is eligible to receive Special Funds once it has been online fundraising for 15 days.

A PCPP grant may only receive funding from one Special Fund which is determined by grant sector classification and funds availability. Special Funds will be allocated as available, up to $500.00 per grant.

For the most up-to-date information on special PCPP funding opportunities, including for Women’s Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) projects, small grants coordinators are encouraged to reference the PCPP one-pagers on the Small Grants Resource Center.

B. Post Managed Funds
1. Country Funds
Country funds give RPCV groups, other private-sector entities, and individuals the opportunity to support a specific country while giving posts the flexibility to determine how the money may be allocated among post’s approved PCPP and LGL projects. Donations to country funds may only be used for approved PCPP and LGL projects.

Each post may determine its own criteria for distributing country funds to PCPP and LGL projects when those funds are available. To utilize Country Funds, the CD should send an email to the small grants coordinator and PCPP staff authorizing use of the fund. This email should include the following information: amount to be applied from the fund, project receiving the funds, and reason for applying the funds.

Country Fund balances are sent to CDs and small grants coordinators on a quarterly basis by PCPP staff. Additionally, the small grants coordinator or CD may request
their country fund balance at any time. They may also request a country fund donor list, so they know who has given or if funds are designated for specific grants.

2. **Memorial Funds**

A Memorial Fund is established by the Peace Corps at the written request of the family of a PCV who passed away while in service. The family of the PCV works in collaboration with GGM staff to determine the intended use of donations to the fund. Creating a Memorial Fund allows friends, family, and others to donate to PCPP to honor the life and service of a PCV. These funds can be used to fully or partially fund PCPP or LGL projects, generally at the discretion of the CD.

Each post may determine its own process for distributing memorial funds to PCPP and LGL projects when those funds are available. To utilize Memorial Funds, the CD should send an email to the small grants coordinator and the PCPP team authorizing use of the fund. This email should include the following information: amount to be applied from the fund, project receiving the funds, and reason for applying the funds.

Memorial Fund balances are sent to CDs and small grants coordinators on a quarterly basis by PCPP staff. Additionally, the small grants coordinator or CD may request a memorial fund balance at any time.

### III. Budget Amendments While Fundraising

If it is necessary to alter the proposed budget between submission and full funding, an updated budget must be submitted to the CD, small grants coordinator, and the program manager for approval. The PCV should also include a separate narrative explaining the changes and the reasons for them. New signature forms (downloaded from PCGO) will also need to be submitted indicating approval of the new amount being requested. Additionally, be mindful that when a PCV is submitting a budget increase, the community contribution must still total at least 25% of the new budget amount. For additional information on budget amendments see [Supplemental Funding Amendments](#).

### IV. PCPP and LGL Projects that Fail to Reach Fundraising Goal

If a proposed project does not reach its fundraising goal, GGM will not authorize the post to obligate the funds already raised for that project. If the PCV would like to access the amount raised, s/he will need to submit a budget amendment (see above). If this is not possible, the project will be canceled and funds will not be authorized to obligate. Donors that gave to cancelled projects will be notified and will be offered the opportunity to reallocate their donation to another project or have their donation returned.

### V. Donor Lists

PCVs can view donor lists on a weekly basis in the “Referrals” section of their application. PCVs may use the donor list to write thank-you letters and send progress updates to donors, always copying GGM at [donate@peacecorps.gov](mailto:donate@peacecorps.gov).
As a U.S. government agency, the Peace Corps is bound by the Privacy Act: “No agency shall disclose any record which is contained in a system of records by any means of communication to any person, or to another agency, except pursuant to a written request by, or with the prior written consent of, the individual to whom the record pertains.” Accordingly, if authorized by a donor, the Peace Corps will only share a donor’s name, contact information, and, if included, a personal message with PCVs. The Peace Corps does not include the donation amount.
Funding Approved Grants

I. Processing Guidelines for All Grant Programs

A. Information Disseminated to Volunteers Prior to Receiving Funds

- PCVs and their community partners must receive specific instructions on how to account for the use of grant funds, the level of documentation required to substantiate expenses, and any additional post-specific accounting procedures. See Using PCGO to Track Project Expenditures section.

- PCVs and community organizations may not expend funds for a project prior to receiving funds from Peace Corps. Grant funds may not be used to reimburse any personal funds that were expended...

- Consistent with Peace Corps policy and as set forth in the External Funding Policy section, PCVs may never directly accept or manage funds except through an approved Peace Corps small grant program.

B. Disbursement of Grant Funds

PCVs are liable and responsible for all grant funds associated with their Peace Corps small grant project. Due to this, at a minimum, PCVs must have access to grant funds and have signature authority to manage grant funds. Posts may disburse funds in one of two ways:

- Disbursement into a joint account
  The PCV and community organization may seek to open up a joint account for the grant funds.

- Disbursement to Volunteer in a separate project account
  If local banking laws make it difficult or impossible to open joint accounts, funds may be deposited into a separate account the Volunteer opens for the project. This reduces potential accountability problems that can result from commingling project funds and the Volunteer’s living allowance.

- Disbursement to Volunteer in his/her primary account
  If in-country banking restrictions make it exceedingly difficult to establish a joint account, funds may be deposited in the PCV’s primary account. If a PCV maintains grant funds in their personal account, the DMO or small grants coordinator must establish appropriate safeguards and procedures to ensure that all grant funds are properly used and accounted for.

Both the PCV and an authorized representative of the community partner/organization implementing the grant must sign the Grant Liability and Project Agreement forms (both downloaded from PCGO). By signing these forms, the PCV and community partner/organization accept responsibility for managing and utilizing the funds in accordance with the approved grant budget outlined in the application, and for the recording and collection of all receipts (for both grant fund expenditures and community contribution). Any unused funds must be returned to Peace Corps upon completion of the project and no later than one month before a PCV’s close of service.
C. Ensuring Grant Funds Are Not Issued to Prohibited Sources (Staff Only)

It is vitally important that Peace Corps Small Grants Program funds are provided to organizations or individuals whom the U.S. federal government has identified as a Specially Designated Nationals (SDNs) or prohibited individuals, groups, or entities. Before a PCV opens a joint bank account with a community partner/organization, post financial staff must check community partners/organizations against Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) database. If they are listed as a Specially Designated Nationals (SDNs) or prohibited individuals, groups, or entities, funds may not be issued to the proposed joint bank account and the post must inform the Regional Security Officer (RSO).

II. Processing Approved Grant Funds (Staff Only)

A. Budget Authority

Transfers of budget authority for the grant programs are distributed to posts at the beginning of each fiscal year, usually in mid- to late October for execution on a fiscal year cycle. For grant programs funded by other U.S. government agencies (SPA, VAST, etc.), funds may also be added later in the fiscal year depending on USAID’s funding/modification schedule. For additional information on the VAST funding and the PEPFAR funding cycle contact OGHH. Transfer of budget authority for PCPP and LGL grants are distributed to posts on a semi-annual basis, with the option for adjustments as necessary. Budget authority is based on anticipated PCPP and LGL grant amounts. On occasion, due to agency-level budgetary and fiscal considerations, and especially during a continuing resolution, the total amount of the transfer for each program may be spread out over the course of the year. Posts may not exceed their budget authority by approving and obligating grants in excess of authority already transferred to post. If additional authority is needed, posts should contact the Peace Corps headquarters office responsible for the administration of the grant program in question as soon as possible.

B. Creating Obligations for Grants

The DMO or financial assistant records an obligation for each approved grant against available budget authority. Posts must record a separate obligation for each grant. The DMO maintains an up-to-date accounting of grant obligations through FORPost.

For PCPP grants, Peace Corps headquarters will send an email authorizing post to obligate funds. The small grants coordinator or the post admin staff then complete an Authorization Memo for the CD to sign. This Authorization Memo and Peace Corps headquarters’ email authorizing funding serve as the obligating documentation for PCPP grants. Funds may not be obligated to PCPP projects before they have been fully funded and email notification is sent to post from Peace Corps headquarters.

For all other grants, the Peace Corps Small Grant Project Agreement form (downloaded from PCGO) is the principal obligating document. The small grants coordinator sends the Peace Corps Small Grant Project Agreement (signed by the appropriate community representative, the PCV, and the CD) for each approved grant to the post’s administrative unit.
Either the DMO or an assigned financial staff member will record the obligation and assign an obligation number. When recording the obligation, the DMO or financial assistant should enter the unique grant number from PCGO in the “item description” line.

C. Requesting Payment for Approved Grants
To request payment for approved grants, a post’s DMO or financial assistant must send copies of the completed and signed obligating documents with complete fiscal code to the Office of Global Accounts Payable (OCFO/GAP). The original forms must be scanned and uploaded to PCGO.

Electronic funds transfers (EFT) are required for all posts with EFT capacity. For those posts without EFT capacity, checks may be used. In general, EFTs are received five business days after processing and checks are received 14 days after processing. Processing information is available in OdyWeb through the EFT Confirmation Report.

After a project has received funding, it is important that the PCV, community and post appropriately manage the grant funds, and any unforeseen situations that may arise.
I. Volunteer, Community, and Post Management of Grant Funds

It is essential that all grant funds are accounted for and properly documented throughout the projects process. Though each small grant program receives funds from varying sources (VAST, FTF, GEF, and SPA from other U.S. government agencies, and PCPP and LGL from private donors), all programs are subject to audit by the funding agency or grantor. In addition, the Peace Corps Office of Inspector General may review Small Grants Program documentation during the course of an audit or program evaluation. The DMO, in coordination with a post’s small grants committee, is responsible for establishing appropriate procedures to safeguard funds and to monitor budgets for each grant throughout the life of the project.

As a part of the application process, PCVs and counterparts/communities must sign Grant Liability and Project Agreement forms (both downloaded from PCGO). These documents outline the PCV’s and community’s responsibilities in managing grant funds, and documenting all purchases made throughout the duration of the project, and submitting corresponding receipts (for grant fund expenditures and community contributions).

Post staff are encouraged to check in on projects at any time during implementation.

II. Using PCGO to Track Grant Expenditures

As part of their orientation to the Small Grants Program, or upon approval of a grant, Peace Corps staff must provide instructions to PCVs and their community partners/organizations on how to account for the use of grant funds and how to complete the required documentation to track purchases.

At a minimum, PCVs and community partners/organizations must do the following:

- PCVs must document each grant expenditure in the “Final Report” budget tab in PCGO. PCVs should work with the local organization to keep the “Final Report” under the “Budget” tab up-to-date, thereby building the community’s capability to manage and account for grant funds. If the community partner/organization does not have computer or Internet access, the PCV can download the offline template for the final project log and fill it in with the community organization.\(^7\) The “Final Report” tab within the final report budget should represent all spending of the grant funds as well as the community contributions (in-kind or monetary) and third party contributions (if applicable).

\(^7\) PCVs may upload an offline version of the grant application and/or their completion report back on PCGO. The Excel template is highly recommended for PCVs with many expenditures in their final grant log.
• See specific receipt guidelines (under Final Volunteer Completion Report Submission: Verifying Budget and Receipts) before undertaking purchases to understand the type of documentation that should be collected.

• If a purchase was made with grant funds that were not outlined in the initial budget, PCVs must still document the transaction in “Final Report” tab. The DMO should review this report to ensure that all funds are accounted for and that funds were spent in accordance with the goals and objectives outlined in the grant application.

• Any budget discrepancies must be resolved prior to the close of service of the PCV. The DMO has the right to request proof from a PCV to verify a purchase or transaction. A PCV must be prepared to provide this if he or she is unable to account for lost or missing receipts.

III. Post-Approval for Changes to Grants
Each post should establish a process for implementing changes to project activities or budgets after a project is underway. If changes do not require requesting additional funds, are relatively minor, do not change the project scope or objectives, or do not entail significant revisions to the approved budget, then it may not be necessary for the PCV and community to contact the post’s small grants coordinator and/or small grants committee. In these scenarios, though a budget amendment is not needed, the PCV should ensure all purchases, contributions, and changes to the project are recorded in the completion report. However, where activities significantly change the approved activities, budget, the scope or objectives of the project, then the PCV or community should receive prior approval from the post’s small grants coordinator and/or small grants committee to ensure that funds are being used appropriately. If a PCV needs to update the grant information in the application narrative or proposed budget, the grant will need to be placed in “Draft” status in PCGO to allow for changes.

For budget changes in particular, posts may set a threshold above which prior approval is required. A 25% change in any budget categories is the suggested threshold. For example, a post might require prior approval if a budget reallocation would result in an increase or decrease of 25% from the approved budget in any budget category. Such prior approval need not be a lengthy process and may be carried out by email or phone, depending upon available means of communication. Post staff should ensure that post-approved changes are appropriately documented in the grant file.

All budget changes that result in either an excess or shortage of funds must be accounted for in the final narrative section. If the budget changes due to lost or stolen funds, a line item should be added to the final detailed budget showing the total amount reported missing. Once this is done, the budget will show as fully expended in PCGO. In cases where funds are remaining and will be returned, a line item should not be added to the final detailed budget. This will leave a balance showing in the “Grant Amount Remaining” cell of the PCGO database, and will alert grant managers that funds should be returned and a bill of collection uploaded to the grant file.
IV. Supplemental Funding Amendments

Posts generally should not approve amendments to add funds to existing projects. PCVs and their communities should receive sufficient orientation to the Small Grants Program (or participate in Project Design and Management training) to enable them to prepare realistic budgets from the start that include all necessary and appropriate costs. PCVs may also consult with the small grants coordinator, small grants committee or financial staff at post during the grant development process for assistance in preparing budgets.

In the case of budget shortfalls resulting from poor budgeting, incorrect calculations, lost or stolen funds, the small grants coordinator may suggest the following:

The community contributes additional funds.
The grant is revised to stay within the original approved budget.
The budget is revised to eliminate unnecessary costs and cover the shortfall.

Budget amendments, if approved, also increase the total project cost. Therefore, this requires a corresponding increase in the community contribution to maintain the 25% minimum.

If post believes that, in a rare case (such as natural disasters, large change in cost of supplies/materials, or significant change in scope of project), supplemental funding should be approved, the post should contact the appropriate Peace Corps headquarters Small Grants Program contact for approval before proceeding to amend any grant budget. The graphic below provides guidance on amendments specific to each grant program.

- If there are funds in the country fund, the country director may choose to allocate funds to the grant in need of funds.
- With approval from Peace Corps headquarters, the grant could be placed back online to raise the additional funds needed.

- The appropriate Peace Corps headquarters Small Grants Program contact should be consulted prior to adding additional funds
- The country director must review and approve increases to the grant budget. The DMO should increase the original obligation accordingly, keeping the same grant number.
- When the project is completed, the PCV must report on the total amount of funding received for the project.
- To offset the possible negative effects of inflation, posts are encouraged to obligate and liquidate grants as close as possible to their scheduled start dates, so that there is the shortest possible time between grant approval, payment requests, and transfer of funds.
V. Expending Grant Funds
As PCVs implement their projects and enter budget data into PCGO, they should keep track of their expenditures. Small Grants training should emphasize that well-designed and well-managed projects are completed on time and within budget. In other words, the Peace Corps expects that approved grant budgets and timelines will closely correspond to actual expenditures and timelines. If items decreased in cost while the project is underway, PCVs should work with their small grants coordinator and/or small grants committee, to fund additional reasonable costs that fall within the scope of the original project. If at all possible, PCVs and their communities should endeavor to spend the full grant budget amount according to the goals and objectives of the project.

If there is significant funding left after a project is completed and additional costs or activities are not approved by the small grants coordinator, please see the “Returning Funds” section under Project Closeout.

VI. Lost, Stolen, Misused or Unaccounted for Funds
If grant funds or project supplies (such as bags of concrete or computers for a lab) are lost, stolen, misused, or unaccounted for during the implementation of a project, the PCV must immediately notify the small grants coordinator at post who will, in turn, notify the DMO, safety and security coordinator, and other staff as appropriate. The small grants coordinator must then report the issue to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) in accordance with MS 861 Office of Inspector General and the appropriate Peace Corps headquarters Small Grants Program contact. OIG may choose to open an investigation or may refer it back to the agency to handle. If the project is funded by SPA, the CD should notify the USAID mission of the incident, including the amount lost, the steps taken to resolve the situation, and the possibility of recovering funds and/or supplies.

If the OIG refers the case back to the agency, it is up to the CD and Peace Corps staff to determine liability. The small grants coordinator will direct the PCV to submit a memo to explain the circumstances of the missing funds or misuse of funds. If appropriate, the DMO may ask the PCV or community to file a police report or post staff may communicate directly with local authorities as appropriate.

The CD will determine whether or not the PCV was negligent and should be held liable for repaying all or part of the grant funds. The CD will then prepare a memo to the appropriate Peace Corps headquarters Small Grants Program contact of his/her determination of liability. If the PCV was determined negligent, the PCV will be responsible for repaying the funds and/or the amount equal to the worth of the lost supplies. The DMO should initiate collection procedures at post to obtain repayment as soon as possible by having a bill of collection issued to the PCV. Post staff must document all actions taken by PCV, Post staff, and OIG regarding lost, stolen, misused, or unaccounted for funds, in the PCGO “Notes and Article” section.

Generally, when funds are lost, stolen, misused, or unaccounted for, the PCV and the community work together to determine what can be accomplished with the remaining funds. Typically, additional funds will not be awarded to replace lost or stolen funds, though this may be
addressed by post with the Small Grants Program contact at headquarters on a case-by-case basis. (See Supplemental Funding Amendments section above). When submitting the completion report, the PCV must report on the full amount of funding allocated to the grant, including the lost or stolen funds and/or supplies.

If a PCV or staff person is uncomfortable or concerned about reporting lost, stolen, misused, or unaccounted for funds to the post, he or she may contact the Peace Corps OIG hotline directly:

OIG Hotline: 202.692.2915
Toll-free: 800.233.5874
Email: oig@peacecorps.gov

VII. Early Termination, Transfer of Project Responsibility, Cancelling and Evacuation

A. Early Termination

In the event of the early termination (including resignation, medical separation, administrative separation, or interrupted service) of a PCV with an ongoing grant, post staff must determine if the project can be completed. If all grant funds have been expended and used to carry out the majority of grant activities, a post may allow the community to finish the grant on its own, as long as the community understands the reporting requirements...

However, if the project is not near completion and major project activities remain incomplete or funds remain unspent, post staff should either cancel the grant and collect unspent funds or transfer responsibility to another willing PCV.

Whether the grant is transferred or canceled, post staff should make every effort to obtain an update on the status of the project and an accurate accounting of the use of grant funds up to the date of termination. Accordingly, prior to the departure of the early terminating PCV, the small grants coordinator or DMO should verify receipts for grant fund expenditures and community contributions already incurred and logged in the budget tab under “Final”. Ideally, final narrative sections and indicators would also be completed.

B. Transfer of Project Responsibility

If post elects to transfer responsibility to another PCV and the project can still be completed within one year of the start of activities, the transfer should be clearly documented using the Transfer of Responsibility form (downloaded from PCGO) and, if the new PCV will be accepting funds directly, a Grant Liability form (downloaded from PCGO). The new PCV must have been at site at least three months, accept the transfer willingly, be oriented on his or her responsibilities in overseeing the completion of the project, and agree to assume responsibility for all reporting obligations. An explanation for any discrepancies between funds allocated to the PCV and grant fund expenditure receipts collected should be documented and attached to the transfer form. Posts must upload the Transfer of Responsibility form to PCGO and alert the appropriate Peace Corps headquarters Small Grants Program contact. Also in PCGO, the names of the PCVs must be updated. The PCV taking on the project must first register an account in the PCGO portal if they do not already have one. Once this is done, their contact record
should be assigned to the grant in the “Volunteer/Staff” field and this PCV’s information should be moved to the PCV1 line within the “Volunteer Information” section. The information of the initial PCV should be moved from the PCV1 line to the PCV2 line within the “Volunteer Information” section. Transfer of a grant may occur at any time during the process of the grant’s life cycle. For PCPP grants, grants may be transferred even if the grant is still fundraising online.

The first transfer of responsibility may be completed at post, but if a second transfer of responsibility is deemed necessary, grant program staff at Peace Corps headquarters needs to approve the transfer before the forms are completed.

C. Canceling a Project
If the post elects to cancel a project due to early termination, the post should attempt to recover all unexpended funds. A bill of collection (BOC) should be issued and attached to the “Volunteer Documents” section of the grant to account for returned funds. The collection should be completed before the PCV leaves the country.

If the PCV leaves the country without accounting for and returning unused grant funds in his or her possession, the post should contact Volunteer and PSC Services (VPS) in OCFO to determine the best means of repayment: a readjustment allowance deduction or a BOC to the RPCV. When received from the PCV, these funds will be posted against the original obligation(s) and the PCV will incur no additional liability.

If possible, the small grants coordinator should obtain a completion report for the project, regardless of whether the project was completed or not. The report should include information on the progress made toward meeting project objectives, the results or outcomes achieved, and a final financial accounting.

It is important that Cancelled grants remain in PCGO with all related documentation – if money was sent to the PCV or counterpart/community, it should never be marked for deletion.

D. Post Evacuation or Suspension
In the case of an official evacuation or temporary suspension of a Peace Corps post, Volunteers remain liable for grant funds. Volunteers should work with post staff to complete the steps necessary to account for grant funds and therefore reduce liability.

Posts should contact the appropriate Peace Corps headquarters Small Grants Program contact and refer to the Small Grants Guidance for Evacuated Posts.

VIII. Logos, Branding, and Marking

A. Peace Corps Logo Guidance
The Peace Corps name and logo may be used only to designate programs authorized under the Peace Corps Act, which may include Peace Corps recruiting and Third Goal activities. The Peace Corps logo may not be altered or manipulated in any manner. Also, the Peace
Corps name and logo may not be used by third parties for commercial or fundraising purposes, or for endorsement or promotion of such third parties or their respective goods or services. Consult Peace Corps brand guidance for additional guidance.

In accordance with these guidelines, the name and logo may be used by/for the following:

- In connection with Peace Corps programs, events, and activities that are held to publicize Peace Corps programs at home and abroad (e.g., handouts and logo items to promote Peace Corps programs to the local community), Peace Corps publications (e.g., posts’ annual reports or materials, such as brochures, paper fliers), and banners and logo items (e.g., T-shirts) for service project events, trainings, and PST swearing-in ceremonies.
- In connection with PCV primary or secondary projects with the written consent of the country director.

As Peace Corps small grants support PCV primary or secondary projects, PCVs may use the Peace Corps logo to raise awareness for their small grants project. However, any flier or website must link back to the Peace Corps website. For example, if a PCV is creating a flier to raise awareness for his/her PCPP project fundraising online, the flier must direct donors to the Peace Corps website, where the project is listed. PCVs should contact the Office of Communications at design@peacecorps.gov for further guidance on the use of the Peace Corps logo.

B. SPA GEF and FTF Logo Guidance
For SPA, FTF, GEF, and other applicable USAID-funded global grant programs’ projects, the Peace Corps has agreed to co-brand or co-mark with the USAID logo. This means where SPA/FTF/GEF-funded materials, equipment, construction sites, etc., are branded with the Peace Corps name and/or logo, they must be co-branded with the USAID logo in the same size and manner. There is no requirement to use the Peace Corps name or logo, but if one does then the USAID name or logo must also be used. Similarly, if the USAID name and logo are used, then the Peace Corps name and logo should be used. This applies to social media as well. Waiver provisions must be followed if one does not co-brand, i.e., if the Peace Corps name or logo is used without the USAID name or logo. Specific instructions on waivers and the placement of the USAID logo are available via the USAID Branding website. Post staff should contact the USAID mission for in-kind support.

C. VAST – PEPFAR Logo Guidance
For VAST projects, the Peace Corps has also agreed to co-brand or co-mark with PEPFAR. Three logos exist for use by the U.S. government and implementing partners to brand PEPFAR. The PEPFAR logo should be the lead brand, followed by any specific agency logos, when marking PEPFAR-funded materials or programs in-country.

Currently, PEPFAR country-specific logos exist for 30 countries, and they should be used when marking country-specific materials. Those countries without a country-specific logo should use the general PEPFAR logo for foreign audiences. The country-specific logos are available in JPG and EPS.
Whenever the materials will be viewed by a foreign audience that is not country-specific, including at international conferences, the PEPFAR general logo for foreign audiences must be used. This logo includes an image of the standard, rectangular U.S. flag paired with the PEPFAR logo.

In addition, the general logo for foreign audiences must be used any time a PEPFAR program is implemented by the Department of State rather than another implementing agency (for example: an ambassador’s grant programs, regional procurement support office, etc.). This logo includes an image of the standard, rectangular U.S. flag paired with the PEPFAR logo.

The PEPFAR general logo for U.S. audiences should be used when marking program materials that are not country-specific and are directed at an American audience. The general logo is available in JPG and EPS in color and JPG in grayscale.

Contact the small grants coordinator for access to the appropriate PEPFAR logo and further guidance on logo size and placement. You may also visit the PEPFAR Branding website.
Grant Closeout

At the close of a grant, PCVs and their communities must prepare and submit a completion report in PCGO. It is important that the grant completion reports include detailed and accurate information for both posts and headquarters. Posts can use the completion reports to gain valuable insight into lessons learned and use this to improve the strength of grant design in the future. Headquarters uses the information to report to donors and partners who supported the grant, to compile data on the overall impact of the small grants program, and to justify policy and procedural updates.

I. Volunteer Completion Report Submission
The PCV must submit the completion report and receipts (for both community contributions and grant fund expenditures) as soon as all grant activity, including monitoring and evaluation, is completed, and no less than one month prior to his or her close of service. Failure to submit reports in a timely manner reduces the opportunity to address problems that may be identified in the report.

Posts should incorporate submission of a completion report into the COS check-out packet for any PCV receiving grant funds. Posts should not establish a policy that allows PCVs to wait until their close of service date to submit the completion report.

The completion report mirrors the grant application in PCGO. Once a grant has been approved in PCGO and placed in “Project Active” status, PCVs are able to see the completion report template in the PCGO portal. PCVs should use the completion report throughout grant implementation to document activities and record information, spending, indicators, goals, objectives, outcomes, and challenges encountered. As with the application form, depending on the type of grant funding (LGL, VAST, SPA, GEF, FtF and other applicable USAID-funded global grant programs), PCVs may need to report funding-specific information such as final indicators. Once the PCV has submitted the completion report in the PCGO portal, it is ready for post review; at that time, PCVs should provide post staff with receipts (for both community contributions and grant fund expenditures).

II. Post Review of Completion Reports
Once a PCV submits their completion report in PCGO, the small grants coordinator will receive an automated email informing them that the report is ready for review. The small grants coordinator and relevant program manager should initially review the completion report to ensure completeness and verify that the PCV has entered all requested information. Small grants coordinators and program managers can use the Completion Report Review Checklist to ensure all sections have been completed.

As with the application process, the small grants coordinator should use the PCGO CRM database to anticipate grant closure and ensure all steps have been completed. For SPA, VAST, LGL, GEF, FtF, and other applicable USAID-funded global grant programs grants, the small
grants coordinator must ensure that appropriate indicator data is filled out in the “Grant Specific Indicators” section in PCGO (see M&E Funding-Specific Indicators section). Once the initial review has been completed, the DMO should review the final budget for accuracy.

A. Verifying Budget and Receipts
Before the small grants coordinator closes a grant in PCGO, all purchases must be accounted for and staff must ensure that funds were spent in accordance with the approved budget. Each post may determine the process for this review to take place. However, ultimately, the DMO and financial team is responsible for certifying that PCVs have presented all receipts, entered all expenditures in PCGO and met financial requirements before signing the Completion Signature forms (downloaded from PCGO). Discrepancies must be resolved prior to the close of service date of the PCV. As post staff close PCV grants, they can reference the Completion Report Review Checklist.

The small grants coordinator and DMO should ensure the following:

- Each disbursement of funds and in-kind contribution is documented in the “Final Budget” section of PCGO.
- Receipts are included for all purchases, whether for grant-funded purchases or community contributions. Documentation must be legible, include an English translation, and contain the name of the vendor, name of the purchaser, date of the purchase, an itemization of materials purchased, including quantity, unit cost, and the total amount of the purchase. For goods and services such as artisan or skilled labor, documentation must include the date the service was provided, the name of the service provider, the number of hours or days worked, an hourly or daily rate, and the total amount paid.
- All receipts of grant fund expenditures should be scanned and uploaded to the grant in PCGO. This may be done by the PCV or post staff. While both grant-funded purchases and community contributions receipts should be submitted for review, the post needs to keep only the grant fund expenditure receipts on file. Once the receipts of grant fund expenditures are uploaded to PCGO, they become the record on file and the originals may be destroyed. (Please note that the scans or images of the receipts MUST be clear and legible. If the scan or image is not clear, it will not be acceptable in the case of an OIG review.) Any grant receipts of grant fund expenditures that have not yet been uploaded to PCGO must be maintained at post until the record may be destroyed. See Post-level Records Management.
- In the event that grant funds were spent but have not been recorded with a receipt, it is the responsibility of the DMO to determine if the grant funds were spent accurately. This may be done by recording photographs or testimonies from local community members.
- Excess or shortages of grant funds must be accounted for in the final budget and narrative sections. (See Post-Approval for Changes to Grants) If funds are returned, the small grants coordinator should check the box titled, “Unspent Grant Funds Returned?” in PCGO.
B. Returning Funds
As mentioned in the “Expending Grant Funds” section, PCVs should try to utilize any remaining grant funds to support or enhance their grant in line with its original goals and scope. If that is not possible, any remaining funds must be returned. In this case, the DMO should create a BOC to document that the funds were returned to post. The DMO will then submit the returned funds to Peace Corps headquarters through FORPost Web using the original payment obligation for the grant. For PCPP grants, when funds are returned, they will be placed in the global fund and allocated to future grants. For VAST, SPA, FTF, GEF, and other applicable USAID-funded global grant programs posts are able to use the “recovered” budget authority to support additional grants.

PCVs must return unused grant funds to the post cashier. In extraordinary circumstances where the PCV cannot return the unused funds (e.g., early termination, medical separation, and post evacuation), post should work with OGAP and grant program staff to deduct the funds from the PCV’s readjustment allowance as a debt owed to the Peace Corps. Per the Overseas Financial Management Handbook, Section 4.7, no funds should be deducted from a PCV’s readjustment allowance without prior approval from the director of Volunteer and PCS Financial Services (VPS). Documentation of any funds returned should be uploaded into PCGO.

Unused funds are extremely difficult to collect once a PCV has left post, therefore every effort should be made to collect unused funds while a PCV is in-country.

If the PCV leaves the country and does not return unused grant funds in his or her possession, the post should contact OGAP to send a BOC (which will include the appropriate fiscal coding) to the PCV, requesting repayment of the funds in question. When received from the PCV, these funds will be posted against the original obligation(s) and the PCV will incur no additional liability. If the PCV still does not return the unused grant funds, OGAP will decide if it is appropriate to pursue further collection methods.

As mentioned above, the grants completion reports are essential to ensuring improved future grant design, accurate reporting to donors and partners on the grants they have funded, as well improving the overall success of the grant program.

III. Final Grant Closure in PCGO
Once the final report, receipts, and finances have been reviewed and verified, the Completion Signatures form (downloaded from PCGO) must be signed by the PCV, small grants coordinator, DMO and CD. Once all signatures are completed, the form and grant fund expenditure receipts should be scanned and uploaded to the grant in PCGO. Without all signatures, the grant may not be closed.

Once a PCV’s grant has been reviewed, funds have been returned (if necessary) and all appropriate documents have been signed and uploaded, the small grants coordinator will change the status of the grant to “Project Closed by Post” in PCGO. For VAST, FTF, and GEF, “Project Closed by Post” is the official final completion status. For PCPP, LGL and SPA, Peace Corps
headquarters will then review all documentation, ensure unused funds have been returned (if needed) and appropriate paperwork submitted. Headquarters staff will communicate any needed changes to the small grants coordinator. Timely attention to these emails—by the small grants coordinator and PCV—will ensure a smooth closeout process. Headquarters staff officially close the grant by changing the status to “Project Completed” in PCGO.
Federal law requires that all documentation for externally funded grants be maintained for ten years. As such, the small grants coordinator must ensure that all grant documentation for each grant (see list below) be scanned and uploaded to PCGO. PCGO serves as the electronic record therefore e-files do not need to be duplicated in shared folders, nor printed and saved as paper files. All uploaded files must be readable and clearly scanned. After 10 years, these electronic records may be destroyed by Peace Corps headquarters Staff.

Records for grants that pre-date PCGO (FY 2014 and prior) should be maintained at post for 10 years. All files should be maintained in accordance with Peace Corps records management directives on file management and utilize the established naming convention (program name, fiscal year, grant number, document title).

Post staff should utilize this Grant Records Checklist to ensure each grant file or grant record in PCGO is completed with all necessary documentation.

All post-level records management must be consistent across all types of Peace Corps Small Grants Programs.

Below is the records disposition for grant files at post, which can be found on Page 19 of the “Guide to Peace Corps’ Records Schedules (Posts)”:

**Externally Funded Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Training Activity Files** (Disposition Authority: DAA-GRS-2013-0008-0001) [GRS 1.2, item 020]

Files for externally funded grants, cooperative agreements, and training activities initiated by the community and implemented by a PCV and the community. Includes but is not limited to: SPA, PCPP, VAST, FTF, LGL, and GEF. Files include documents relating to funding requests (proposals, abstracts, etc.); original liability forms and project agreements; post-level agreements; reports and evaluations; financial documents; major communications; Cost Exception (Waiver) and other waivers (if applicable), project transfer forms; and any other documents related to externally funded grants and training activities.

**DISPOSITION:** Temporary. Destroy 10 years after final action is taken on file.

**NOTE:** Peace Corps headquarters is responsible for the permanent retention of the grant proposal/abstract, grant final report/completion report, and grant agreement for PCPP grants.
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Management of Post Grant Programs (Staff Only)

This section describes post-level M&E, as well as general management of the post’s Peace Corps’ Small Grants Program. M&E is carried out to ensure that grant programs are properly functioning at posts, to verify that PCVs are successfully moving grants toward completion, and to assess if grants are effective at supporting posts’ broader program initiatives and objectives. M&E can also be used to measure the impact of projects and determine whether they are achieving capacity building and sustainability for the host country. Robust and regular M&E measures for a post’s grant programs can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of a post’s management of a grant program.

Posts should utilize all available M&E tools to develop a monitoring and evaluation plan for their grant program that includes clear staff responsibilities and action items. Promising practices that are determined as a result of this M&E should be shared with Peace Corps headquarters and post programming staff so that the information may be shared with other posts and included in any subsequent grants guidance.

The foundation of a strong M&E-based grants program is data quality. Each post must pay close attention to the quality of their data. Quality data ensures analysis and assessments represent accurately the work PCVs and posts do in country.

- In the context of a grant, post must assist the PCV in identifying and designing accurate data collection tools, that will most comprehensively measure both baseline data and the end line data collected at the completion report stage. Grants-related training of PCVs should also leverage the wider post training on M&E; PCVs should understand the applicability of broad M&E conceptual frameworks to discrete grants.
- In the post-level small grants program context, data quality is essential for ensuring program funds are being well-managed, grants are implemented and conducted in a timely manner, and the grants are effectively building capacity and ensuring sustainability for host countries.

Integrating quality M&E design, data capture, and reporting throughout the grant program will increase the usability of data for grant program learning.

I. Grant Program Monitoring and Tracking

A. PCGO Database

At any given time, posts will typically have a large number of prospective and ongoing grants, spread across different funding sources and at different stages in the process. In order to effectively support PCVs and be accountable to internal and external audiences (including funding partners), it is critical that each post track the status of each grant from application to completion in the PCGO CRM database. Each project status change triggers an automatic message to the individual(s) responsible for engaging in the next step of the process, so it is
important that statuses are changed promptly and in the proper order. Please see the PCGO Project Status Explanations and Flow Chart. In general, the small grants coordinator will be responsible for coordinating day-to-day monitoring and tracking; however, other staff may have licenses for the PCGO CRM database and may play a role in monitoring grants in the database. PCGO Dashboards and PCGO Reporting data using Pivot Tables and Charts can be a valuable tool for managing this process. Grants do not need to be tracked externally in a spreadsheet document or other programs; any data housed in PCGO can be exported to Excel for analysis.

The PCGO CRM database is also used to run post-level grant status reports (i.e., number of grants per fiscal year, beneficiaries, indicators, types of grants by sector, grants that still need funding, etc.). Status reports allow both Peace Corps headquarters and individual posts to quickly gauge the Peace Corps Small Grants Program progress/status in each country.

Note: When the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) performs audits or evaluations, OIG will typically review how a post is tracking grants in PCGO CRM database. Posts should ensure that they have a comprehensive understanding of the PCGO CRM database that it is kept up-to-date, and is incorporated into regular business operations.

B. Collecting Data/Information from Volunteers
Post staff should be proactive in monitoring grants instead of simply reacting to information provided by PCVs. The PCGO CRM database will assist post in this proactive approach. Each post must ensure it is collecting updates from PCVs with outstanding grants at least quarterly. Although each post may use whatever means it finds appropriate and effective, including new tools provided in the database, a few options that posts have employed include the following:

1. Reaching Out to Volunteers Directly
The small grants coordinator can proactively reach out to PCVs by phone, email, text message, or other means to inquire about project status, particularly if there has been no communication via the PCGO system. The small grants coordinator should ensure that s/he records the date that the communication occurs and note any project status updates in PCGO. The small grants coordinator should also follow up with PCVs who do not respond within a reasonable timeframe. Finally, project updates should be shared with appropriate staff.

This kind of outreach is effective because PCVs are often more responsive and may provide more substantive feedback to an individual. Because the database system provides automatic notification emails, the grant coordinator doesn’t need to communicate with PCVs on their grant status; however, check-ins may be useful for closer project oversight. Though the shared database cuts down on time-consuming check-ins with hundreds of PCVs, it is helpful for a small grants coordinator to schedule calls with PCVs at least once per quarter. The small grants coordinator should spread check-ins over time to identify and anticipate any potential problems. A small grants coordinator should schedule two or three calls a week, rather than doing them all at the end of the quarter.
2. **Requiring Regular Status Updates from Volunteers**

Though the database prompts PCVs to submit their completion report in a timely manner, posts may require more regular PCV work updates. Brief status updates can be emailed to staff and uploaded to PCGO. Such an update could include:

- A status of project activities: What have you done and what is planned next?
- A budget update: How much of the funds have been spent?
- Any anticipated major changes: Do you expect any significant changes to be made to the project?
- Any changes to the expected completion date: When do you expect to finish the project?
- Any challenges: What challenges are you facing during project implementation and what support can the Peace Corps provide to help you successfully navigate these challenges?

3. **Volunteer Reporting Tool**

To help post staff and PCVs more accurately report on the work being done in the field, questions may be inserted into the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT) to receive regular grant updates. Contact VRT support for more information.

C. **Site Visits**

Site visits are perhaps the best way to learn the status of projects and to observe first-hand the progress to date. In addition, site visits provide an opportunity to directly engage with the local community representative(s) of community partner/organization regarding the status of the project and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the project, including its progress.

If resources are available, posts may schedule visits by the small grants coordinator, DPT, or other appropriate staff (including PCV members of a post’s small grant committee). If funds for separate monitoring trips are not available, however, posts should capitalize on otherwise scheduled site visits by APCDs or other post staff. If the USAID mission agrees, SPA funds may pay for the travel costs for such a monitoring visit; however, SPA funds may only be used to monitor SPA-funded projects.

In order to gather comprehensive information from a site visit, the staff member conducting the visit should bring a short interview questionnaire to fill out. See [Project Site Monitoring and Evaluation Form: Ukraine Example](#). This should also be shared with the small grants coordinator, the small grants committee, and any other staff so that appropriate support may be provided to the PCV. The completed questionnaire should also be uploaded to the grant file in PCGO so that it may serve as a reference to the respective grant.

II. **Grant Program Evaluation**

In addition to monitoring and tracking grant operations, posts should engage in more comprehensive program evaluation at the post-level. The purpose of evaluation efforts is to periodically consider not only what results are achieved from grants, but why projects succeed or fail, and how to improve program management. This information allows posts to develop strategies to better support PCVs in the design and implementation of effective projects that promote sustainability and build capacity. Post’s M&E specialist should be involved, as she/he
can provide a connection to the most-up-to-date M&E toolkits provided by Peace Corps headquarters.

This section describes different ways that posts can engage in evaluations. First, several possible techniques for engaging in informal, internal evaluation are described that can be used to enhance program learning. The techniques described do not require significant resources but can still be used effectively to enhance program performance over time. Second, if posts have the resources available, this section briefly describes the planning and design of full-scale, independent performance evaluations of grant programs at post.

A. Informal Evaluation Techniques

1. Completion Report Review and Analysis

For each approved grant, the PCV is required to submit a Peace Corps Small Grant completion report. These reports are an excellent source of information regarding the outcome of grants, the challenges that PCVs face in implementing grants, and possible solutions to resolve such problems. The small grants coordinator should ensure that appropriate staff are able to review the reports in the PCGO system (or documents may be export to word, pdf, or Excel to facilitate sharing and analysis). At a minimum, this should include the APCDs/program managers and program assistants/specialists of the sector(s) that the PCV works in and that the grant falls within. Programming staff should review the reports so that they can identify programmatic best practices for projects within their sectors.

In addition to distributing reports to post staff for review, two of the questions in the completion report may provide more general feedback and learning that could help post to better support PCVs in designing and implementing projects. Specifically, the completion report asks the PCV:

- What unexpected events (positive or negative) did you encounter during the project? Based on your experiences, do you have any recommendations for others implementing a similar project?
- What were major lessons learned during this project?

Posts are encouraged to review and analyze the responses to these questions to identify trends and major lessons learned. For example, once a year the small grants coordinator (or possibly a PCVL) can collect the responses to these two questions in a spreadsheet, review them all together, and identify trends and recurring obstacles that PCVs have faced. The analysis should be presented for discussion at a small grants committee meeting, and key findings can then be shared with PCVs in the post’s volunteer handbook or in other tailored communications. Posts can also utilize the “Advanced Find” function in the PCGO CRM database to compile summary data on all grants and each program (funding source) utilized in country; the Small Grants Resource Center provides a number of guides for these functions. Lastly, post staff may contact Peace Corps headquarters to request additional data on SPA, PCPP, LGL, VAST, GEF, or FTF if necessary.
2. **Volunteer Debriefs**
Beyond reviewing and analyzing completion reports, posts can also systematically collect feedback from PCVs about the grant process itself. Such feedback can be very helpful in designing and clarifying processes and support systems for PCVs.

One way to do this is to require a 15-minute debrief with the small grants coordinator or other staff member upon submission of a PCV’s completion report. During the debrief session, the small grants coordinator should use a post-developed standard questionnaire to collect the PCV’s opinions and ideas. PCV responses should be written down and uploaded to PCGO. Trends identified from such PCV feedback should be shared with the small grants committee, programming staff, and Peace Corps headquarters on a regular basis (and at least annually). While this is an additional evaluation step, it can lead to a comprehensive review of program processes and effectiveness.

3. **Internally Managed Evaluation of Sample Sites**
Posts can also carry out more systematic evaluations of a sample of projects that were completed in past years to assess sustainability and longer-term project impact. By utilizing a program evaluation questionnaire (see example from Ukraine), posts can identify evidence of a project’s sustainability. In the past, posts have done this using PCVLs or local staff. However, posts should bear in mind potential bias that an evaluation completed by PC staff or constituents may introduce. It may be helpful to reference the [Post Small Grants Evaluation: Albania Example](#).

**B. Funded Evaluation**
Where agency or external resources (SPA and/or PEPFAR) are available, posts are encouraged to conduct an independent, country-level evaluation of the impact or performance of one or more grant programs. Such an evaluation can provide insight into project outcomes and sustainability over a longer period of time (e.g., four to five years), and is useful in identifying trends and major areas of accomplishment. In addition, an independent evaluation reduces bias that may be introduced in informal evaluations carried out by the Peace Corps itself. An independent evaluation is also an effective tool for demonstrating project impact to in-country partners, including the host government, funding partners (such as USAID), and other key stakeholders.

Costs will vary significantly from country to country, and will depend largely on the number of projects included in the evaluation sample and the geographic size of the sampled area. Based on past experience, posts should plan on budgeting at least $20,000–$30,000 for an evaluation with a sample of 30–40 projects. Because of the costs, such evaluations are typically feasible only when funded by partners external to the Peace Corps, such as USAID (through SPA) or PEPFAR.

Posts that are interested in carrying out in-country evaluations should work with post M&E specialists and contact Peace Corps headquarters grant program staff for assistance, guidance and/or approval.

Using informal and formal evaluations, PCGO data, and/or communications with PCVs, posts can evaluate the overall success for their small grants program, as well as ensure PCVs receive
proper support when implementing grants. Post level monitoring and evaluation also allows posts to highlight the great work being done by PCVs, as well as gain a better understanding of the impact projects are having in PCVs’ communities.
Resource List

Peace Corps Staff Resources
Authorization Memo for PCPP Projects
Completion Report Review Checklist
Creating Charts in PCGO
Email Authorization Template to Use Country or Memorial Funds for PCPP Projects
Grant Records Checklist
Guide to Peace Corps’ Records Schedules (Posts)
Manual Section 861
Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Database
Office of Inspector General (OIG) Intranet Page
Overseas Financial Management Handbook, Section 4.7
PC/Georgia Handbook
PCGO CRM database
PCGO Dashboards
PCGO Project Status Explanations and Flow Chart
PCGO Reporting data using Pivot Tables and Charts
Peace Corps Programming, Training, and Evaluation Guidance
Post Small Grants Evaluation: Albania Example
Post Vendor File Request Form
Project Design and Management (PDM) Training Manual
Project Review Checklist – Application and Completion Report
Project Site Monitoring and Evaluation Form: Ukraine Example
Small Grants Guidance for Evacuated Posts
Small Grants Project Status Explanations
Small Grants Resource Center
System for Award Management (SAM)

Peace Corps Volunteer and Staff Resources
Best Practices for Water Supply Grants
Child Protection Code of Conduct
ENCAP Visual Field Guide: Water Supply
Estimating the Value of In-Kind Contribution
External Funding - Volunteer Do’s and Don’ts
Financial Management and Capacity Building Assessment Tool
Guidance for Determining Participants vs Beneficiaries
Guide to Raising Awareness
Manual Section 648
Manual Section 720
Manual Section 721
The PACA (Participatory Analysis for Community Action) Field Guide for Volunteers
PCGO portal
PCGO Volunteer Step-by-Step Guide
PCGO Volunteer Working Offline Quick Guide
PCLive Small Grants Resource Page
Peace Corps brand guidance
Peace Corps Self Service Center
PEPFAR Branding website
Theory of Change Logic Model
USAID Branding
USAID ENCAP Visual Field Guide: Water Supply
Water Quality Assurance Plan (WQAP) Templates
Well Project Requirements and Considerations
Youth Camps Manual: GLOW and Other Leadership Camps [ICE No. M0100]
Youth Clubs Toolkit