MS 892 Records Management

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1.0 Authorities

2.0 Purpose

This Manual Section sets out the policies for administering Peace Corps' records management program.

3.0 Applicability

Federal law requires that the head of each Federal agency make and preserve records containing adequate and proper documentation of the organization. This Manual Section applies to all records generated by the Agency both domestically and overseas. The policies within this Manual Section cover the creation, maintenance, retention, storage, and disposition of all Agency records regardless of format.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 Adequate and proper documentation means a record of Agency business that is complete and accurate to the extent required to document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the Agency. It also includes a record of the information necessary to protect the legal and financial rights of the government and of persons directly affected by the Agency's activities.

4.2 Attachment A – Guide to Peace Corps Records Schedules (Headquarters and Recruiting Offices) and Attachment B – Guide to Peace Corps Records Schedules (Post) are supporting attachments of MS 892 that contain descriptions of and disposition instructions for Peace Corps records.

4.3 Capstone Officials are those senior officials whose emails have been deemed to have historical significance and will be accessioned to NARA for permanent preservation. They include the head of the agency; principal assistants to the head of the agency, such as Associate Directors; deputies in of all positions above, including the Deputy Director of the Peace Corps; principal management positions, such as Chief Information Officer and Chief Financial Officer; directors of significant program offices; principal regional officials, (Regional Directors); and roles or positions that routinely provide advice and oversight to the agency, including General Counsel, Chief of Staff, and Inspector General. Additionally, an individual serving in any of the above positions in an acting capacity for more than 60 days is considered a Capstone Official.

4.4 Disposition means actions taken regarding the disposal of records no longer needed for Agency business, either through physical and legal transfer to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); deletion or destruction; or, in rare instances, donation to another government agency, academic institution, or other organization.

4.5 File means an arrangement of records. The term is used to denote any recorded information regardless of physical form or characteristics, accumulated in any type of storage space or arrangement.
4.6 Non-record materials are federally-owned informational materials that do not meet the statutory definition of records. These materials are extra copies of documents kept only for reference, stocks of publications and processed documents, and library or museum materials intended solely for reference or exhibit.

4.7 Permanent record means any Federal record that has been determined by NARA to have sufficient value to warrant its preservation in the National Archives of the United States. Permanent records include all records accessioned by the National Archives of the United States and later increments of the same records.

4.8 Recorded Information, for purposes of 4.2, includes all traditional forms of records, regardless of physical form or characteristics, including information created, manipulated, communicated, or stored in digital or electronic form.

4.9 Recordkeeping requirements means all statements in statutes, regulations, and Agency directives or authoritative issuances, that provide general and specific requirements for Federal agency personnel on particular records to be created and maintained by the Agency.

4.10 Recordkeeping system is a manual or automated system in which records are collected, organized, and categorized to facilitate their preservation, retrieval, use, and disposition.

4.11 Records include all recorded information, regardless of form or characteristics, made or received by a Federal agency under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the United States Government or because of the informational value of data in them.

4.12 Records management means the planning, controlling, directing, organizing, training, promoting, and other managerial activities involved with respect to records creation, maintenance and use, storage, and disposition.

4.13 Records schedule or schedule means a legal directive containing the records' descriptions and disposition instructions.

4.14 The National Archives is the Nation’s record keeper for records that have been determined by the Archivist of the United States to have sufficient historical or other value to warrant their continued preservation by the Federal government and that have been transferred to the physical and legal custody of NARA.

5.0 Responsibilities

5.1 Associate Director for Management

The Associate Director for Management is responsible for:

   (a) Overseeing the establishment and implementation of records policies and procedures;
(b) Maintaining records of the Agency’s functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions; Ensuring that Peace Corps records adequately protect the legal and financial rights of the U.S. government and of persons directly affected by the Agency’s activities;

(c) Serving as the Senior Agency Official for Records; and

(d) Coordinating with the Agency Records Officer and appropriate Agency officials to ensure the Agency’s compliance with records management statutes and regulations.

5.2 Peace Corps Records Officer (Records Officer)

The Records Officer is responsible for:

(a) Maintaining an active program to economically and efficiently manage Peace Corps records;

(b) Providing records management guidance and training to headquarters offices, domestic field offices, and overseas posts regarding records management;

(c) Establishing schedules for the transfer of records to records centers;

(d) Establishing safeguards against removal or loss of necessary records;

(e) Assuring that the Guide to Peace Corps Records Schedules (Headquarters and Recruiting Offices) and Guide to Peace Corps Records Schedules (Posts) reflect current Federal laws and regulations; and

(f) Briefing Capstone officials about their records management responsibilities upon arrival at and prior to departure from the Peace Corps; and reviewing the inventory and, if necessary, the actual copies of records proposed for removal, if any, prior to a Capstone official’s departure.

5.3 Capstone Officials

Capstone Officials are responsible for:

(a) Receiving an incoming briefing from the Records Officer;

(b) Properly maintaining all agency email accounts that they manage and any email accounts managed on their behalf by other staff, such as personal assistants, confidential assistants, or administrative assistants;

(c) Conducting Peace Corps business only on Agency email accounts, except in rare occurrences. If sending or receiving a record using a non-official electronic messaging account, responsible for copying or forwarding a complete copy of the email record to an official email account not later than 20 days after the original creation or transmission of the record;
(d) Providing an inventory of proposed copies of records for removal to the Records Officer prior to their departure briefing; and

(e) Completing a Copies of Records Removal/Non-Removal Certification; and

(f) Receiving an outgoing briefing from the Records Officer prior to departure from the Peace Corps

5.4 Office Directors

Office Directors (for example, Associate Directors, Regional Directors, Country Directors, and Staff Office Heads) are responsible for:

(a) Administering the Agency's records management program within their area of responsibility;

(b) Ensuring that all staff who report to them are aware of their records management responsibilities, and make resources such as Attachment A – *Guide to Peace Corps Records Schedules (Headquarters and Recruiting Offices)* and Attachment B - *Guide to Peace Corps Records Schedules (Post)* available;

(c) Coordinating the office's record keeping with the Peace Corps Records Officer, including notification regarding any new types of records the office may be creating;

(d) Reporting any unauthorized destruction or loss of records to the Records Officer; and

(e) Reviewing the inventory and actual record copies, if necessary, of any staff member who proposes to remove copies of records from the Peace Corps, completing a Copies of Records Removal/Non-Removal Certification, and forwarding a copy of the Certification and inventory to the Records Office.

5.5 Peace Corps Employees

Employees at all locations both foreign and domestic are responsible for:

(a) Maintaining records in accordance with the established file plans and records schedules;

(b) Notifying their Office Director of any new types of records they are creating or receiving for proper scheduling;

(c) Reporting any unauthorized destruction or loss of records to the Records Officer; and

(d) Protecting personally identifiable information in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act and Manual Section 897.
6.0 Policies

6.1 Government Ownership of Records

All information received, created, or compiled by the officers, employees, and contractors of the Peace Corps in the conduct of their official duties and information obtained under contract are official record materials and are the property of the United States government.

No Peace Corps official or employee has any personal or property right to official Peace Corps records even though he or she may have helped develop or compile them.

Federal law prohibits the unlawful destruction, removal, and concealment of official records. The only disclosures of personal information permitted are those set forth in the Privacy Act and in Peace Corps’ Privacy Act Systems of Records Notices.

6.2 Documentation Standards

The following required standards ensure that adequate records are created and preserved:

(a) Peace Corps records shall be complete in order to facilitate action by an incumbent and his/her successor. The records must pass the scrutiny of the Congress, other authorized agencies of the U.S. government, and other persons directly concerned. Additionally, the records must protect the financial and legal rights affected by the government's actions;

(b) Peace Corps officials shall incorporate all essential information of their official actions into Agency records. Significant decisions and commitments reached orally (person to person, by telephone, or in conference) shall be documented and included in the record. Minutes shall be taken at important committee and staff meetings and these, together with a copy of the agenda, and documents considered at or resulting from these meetings, shall be made part of the record;

(c) The programs, policies, and procedures of Peace Corps shall be adequately documented in appropriate directives. A record copy of each directive (including those superseded) shall be maintained as part of Peace Corps official files;

(d) Electronic messages (e.g., Skype for Business, Blackberry or iPhone text messages, Google Voice, Twitter, Snapchat, WhatsApp, etc.) must be copied or exported to an approved Peace Corps records keeping system;

(e) The use of personal accounts should only be used in exceptional circumstances. The use of non-Peace Corps issued email accounts for official Peace Corps business is prohibited unless specifically authorized by an individual’s supervisor during a disruption of Peace Corps email service [see MS 542 Rules of Behavior]; and

(f) A complete copy of electronic messages (including metadata, such as sender/recipient information, date, and attachments) created under (d) or (e) above must be copied or forwarded to and captured in an official electronic messaging account of the officer or
staff member not later than twenty (20) days after the original creation or transmission of the records.

6.3 Private or Non-Official Records

Private or non-official papers, shall at all times be filed separately from the official records of the office. In cases where documentation of official business is received in personal accounts, that portion of the record which pertains to official business shall be extracted and made a part of the record.

6.4 Copies of Records Removal/Non-Removal Certification

Official record copies are the property of the U.S. government and shall remain with the Peace Corps.

The Peace Corps Records Officer has oversight responsibility for the removal of all copies of records. Peace Corps Capstone officials and staff members may be permitted to remove copies of records that they have drafted, reviewed, or otherwise acted upon, if they prepare an inventory of copies of records proposed for removal, obtain approval for removal, and provided that removal will not:

(a) Diminish the official records of the Agency;

(b) Violate confidentiality required by national security, privacy, or other interests protected by law; or

(c) Exceed normal administrative economies.

Employees must understand that although copies may be in their possession, the content and record copies of these documents remain Peace Corps and U.S. government records. Release of these documents or their contents is subject to the approval of the Agency. Approval for release of Agency documents must come from the Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act Office (see Manual Sections 893 Freedom of Information Act Administration and 897 Privacy Act Administration).

6.4.1 Capstone Officials Copies of Records Removal/Non-Removal

Prior to departure, Capstone Officials must:

(a) Undergo a records de-briefing from the Agency’s Records Officer. The General Counsel or designated attorneys in the Office of General Counsel (Designee) may conduct the de-briefing in the absence of the Records Officer;

(b) Complete a Copies of Records Removal/Non-Removal Certification Form (Attachment C). This form must be signed whether or not the official requests the removal of copies of records;
(c) If requesting to remove copies of records, prepare an inventory of those copies. The inventory need not be a listing of documents, but rather a description of categories of documents (e.g., copies of speeches or outgoing correspondence prepared by the departing official);

(d) If requesting the removal of copies of records, schedule a review of the actual copies of records. The Agency’s Records Officer or Designee will conduct the review for Presidential appointees confirmed by the Senate and other Capstone Officials. Approval will be granted if the removal complies with Federal laws and regulations, and meets the standards listed in Section 6.4 of this Manual Section; and

(e) Present the approved inventory, if any, and certification form to the Records Officer or Designee. The Records Officer or Designee signs the certification form, provides a copy to the official, and retains the completed form (and inventory, if any) in the Records Office.

6.4.2 Non-Capstone Officials Copies of Records Removal

Prior to departure, non-Capstone staff members who wish to remove copies of records must:

(a) Prepare an inventory of the copies of records requested for removal. The inventory need not be a listing of documents, but rather a description of categories of documents (e.g., documents written by the departing staff member);

(b) Request a review of the actual copies of records requested for removal. The staff member’s Office Director will conduct the review. Approval will be granted if the removal complies with Federal laws and regulations, and meets the standards listed in Section 6.4 of this Manual Section; and

(c) Complete a Copies of Records Removal/Non-Removal Certification Form (Attachment C) and present the completed form and approved inventory to the staff member’s Office Director. The Office Director signs the form, gives a copy to the employee, and sends a copy of the completed form and inventory to the Records Office for retention.

6.5 Maintenance and Use of Records

Offices shall institute adequate records management controls over the creation, maintenance, and use of records to ensure that records can be located when needed and that they are preserved for eventual disposition. Procedures and legally approved dispositions for complying with this requirement are set forth in MS 892 Records Management Procedures, Attachment A – Guide to Peace Corps Records Schedules (Headquarters and Recruiting Offices), and Attachment B – Guide to Peace Corps Records Schedules (Post). Offices shall also follow the guidance for safeguarding specific types of records in various Manual Sections (see MS 267 Volunteer Medical Records; MS 405 Classified National Security Information; MS 893 Freedom of Information Act Administration; and MS 897 Privacy Act Administration).
6.6 Disposition of Records

Offices shall ensure that permanent records are legally and physically transferred to NARA according to their legally required records schedule dispositions. Offices shall ensure that temporary records that are no longer needed for Agency business, but are not yet eligible for deletion or destruction, shall be properly stored and maintained at a NARA-approved Federal Records Center, in a Records Office-approved physical agency space, or in Agency-approved electronic storage. Temporary records that have met their retention requirement(s) may be destroyed or deleted, according to the legally approved retention schedule. All offices must comply with retention requirements approved by the Archivist of the United States. Retention requirements for Peace Corps records are contained in Attachment A – Guide to Peace Corps Records Schedules (Headquarters and Recruiting Offices) and Attachment B - Guide to Peace Corps Records Schedules (Post) and file plans.

6.7 Records of Alternate Format

Records in alternative formats (for example: electronic, audio-visual, or micrographic) must dispositioned in accordance with Attachment A – Guide to Peace Corps Records Schedules (Headquarters and Recruiting Offices) and Attachment B – Guide to Peace Corps Records Schedules (Post). Employees are responsible for proper maintenance and protection of records regardless of format.

6.8 New Record Categories

Any office creating categories not contained in the Peace Corps records schedule shall submit the following information in writing to the Records Officer:

(a) A brief description of the record and its intended use, including whether or not the record contains personally identifiable information;

(b) Annual increase in volume of records;

(c) Types of documents in the files (i.e., forms, correspondence);

(d) Filing method (i.e., alphabetical, numerical);

(e) Approximate dates the records cover and if they are ongoing;

(f) Amount of time records need to be stored in the office;

(g) Amount of time records need to be stored at the Federal Records Center;

(h) Any fiscal or legal needs for the records; and

(i) Historical significance of the record, if any.
Any proposed changes to existing retention standards shall be submitted in writing along with a justification statement to the Records Officer for evaluation. The Records Officer shall forward acceptable proposals to NARA.

7.0 Procedures

Procedures implementing this Manual Section may be adopted by the Office of Management in consultation with OGC.

Legally approved records schedules are set forth in Attachment A – Guide to Peace Corps Records Schedules (Headquarters and Recruiting Offices) and Attachment B – Guide to Peace Corps Records Schedules (Posts), which may be revised from time to time by the Records Officer in consultation with the affected offices and with the concurrence of the National Archives and Records Administration.

8.0 Effective Date

This Manual Section takes effect on the date of issuance.