



Introduction

The good news is that a person does not need to understand NCE to benefit from it. The bad news is that there is a lot of confusion about NCE. To gain a basic understanding of NCE requires an explanation of the different types of Federal service and where Peace Corps fits. (Note: Serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer is NOT Federal employment.)

What is NCE?

The three letters NCE are short-hand for non-competitive eligibility. NCE is granted to some noncompetitive service federal employees, volunteers, and others by statute, regulation, or Executive Order.

What is the competitive service and excepted service?

Most jobs in the Federal government are considered part of the “competitive” service (also referred to as employees with “status”). There are civil service laws established by Congress and regulations established by the Office of Personnel Management that govern the competitive service hiring process. There are a smaller number of jobs that are non-competitive (not part of the competitive service) and are “excepted” from many civil service laws and regulations. The Peace Corps Act requires that all Peace Corps direct hire employees (excluding Experts) are appointed based on the Foreign Service Act as non-career members of the Foreign Service. As such, the Peace Corps is an excepted (or non-competitive) service agency. The main thing to understand is that employment in the excepted service does not, in and of itself, establish eligibility to apply for positions in the competitive service. If a federal job is only open to competitive service employees, excepted service employees cannot apply. However, NCE is the mechanism that can open this hiring process to Peace Corps employees and volunteers who have acquired NCE.

What authority provides NCE for Peace Corps Volunteers and Peace Corps Staff?

Executive Order 11103 provides NCE to Peace Corps Volunteers.

<https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/11103.html> 5 CFR § 315.607 provides NCE to Peace Corps Staff

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/5/315.607>

[5 CFR § 315.605 Appointment of former ACTION volunteers](https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/5/315.605)

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/5/315.605>

How does NCE work?

Whether a Federal agency decides to consider NCE candidates for competitive service jobs is decided on a case-by-case basis; it is up to the hiring agency. If an agency is willing to accept NCE candidates, it will be made clear on USAjobs.gov. Agencies accepting both competitive and NCE eligible will generally create 2 lists – a list of competitive service candidates and a list of NCE candidates.

Competitive service candidates are scored and ranked. A list of the ranked candidates is created. The hiring authority has the **OPTION** to interview candidates from the ranked list and NCE list. The hiring authority interviews and decides who to hire based on who is most competitive.

To answer specific questions regarding NCE it is best to reach out to the human resources contact identified in the job announcement.

Is NCE a preference?

No. NCE is not a preference. Veterans, on the other hand, do receive preference in federal hiring and, depending on their particular status (disabled or not), generally float to the top of the “selection certificate”. Federal employees who displaced through lay-offs (CTAP, ICTAP, and RPL) are granted a hiring priority and in some cases must be selected before other candidates. It is best to think of NCE as a “hiring option”. Hiring authorities have the option of hiring from the NCE list.

How is NCE used?

1. A Peace Corps Volunteer visits <http://rpcvportal.peacecorps.gov> and creates a portal account. Alternatively, Peace Corps staff person who has served 3 years receives an email from the Office of Human Resources providing notice of NCE eligibility. An NCE letter is attached.
2. A Peace Corps Volunteer requests an [NCE certification](#) from the RPCV Portal. A Peace Corps staff person contacts the Office of Human Resources.
3. Visit [RPCV Career Link](#) to view job vacancies that accept NCE.

Click on the box that reads “ONLY SHOW NON-COMPETITIVE ELIGIBILITY JOBS”. A list NCE vacancies can be reviewed and applications submitted.

4. Visit USAjobs.gov. Start a job search (click search). On the right hand menu scroll down and click the Peace Corps AmeriCorps Vista Box. This will provide a list of jobs that will accept NCE. A list NCE vacancies can be reviewed and applications submitted. NCE certificates should be included in submissions
5. Visit the [RPCV/RPCVR Non-competitive Eligibility Employment Program](#) page. If the positions listed are of interest, an application can be submitted.

When does NCE expire?

For a Peace Corps Volunteer who is granted NCE, NCE is good for 1 year or 12 months from the date of close of service. For a Peace Corps staff person granted NCE, NCE is good for 3 years from date employment with Peace Corps ends.

Can NCE be extended beyond 12 months?

Executive Order 11103 Sec. 4., provides that the 12 months “may be extended to not more than three years in the case of persons who, following such service, are engaged in military service, in the pursuit of studies at a recognized institution of higher learning, or in other activities which, in the view of the appointing authority, warrant an extension of such period”.

To establish eligibility for an extension be prepared to provide: (1) a DD Form 214 for military service; or (2) a transcript from a recognized institution of higher learning. To meet the third extension criteria, be prepared to provide documentation that the activity warrants an extension. It is up to the hiring authority to determine whether to grant the extension.

The 3 years cannot be extended in the case of a Peace Corps staff person that earned 3 years of NCE eligibility.