

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAM

About The Program

There is no higher priority for Peace Corps than the health, safety, and security of its Volunteers. The agency's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program is dedicated to reducing the risk of sexual assault for all Peace Corps Volunteers and responding with empathy and care to those who have been sexually assaulted. Since its launch in 2013, following passage of the 2011 Kate Puzey Act, the program has helped pioneer a broad culture shift at Peace Corps, elevating an approach to sexual assault training and support that is trauma-informed and victim-centered at every step of the way.

COMMITMENTS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS

No one deserves to be a victim/survivor. Peace Corps' commitments to Volunteers who experience sexual assault include:

- **COMPASSION:** We will treat Volunteers with dignity and respect.
- **SAFETY:** We will take appropriate steps to provide for Volunteers' ongoing safety.
- **SUPPORT:** We will provide Volunteers with the support they need to begin to recover.
- **LEGAL:** We will help Volunteers understand their legal options.
- **OPEN COMMUNICATION:** We will keep Volunteers informed of the progress of their case.
- **CONTINUATION OF SERVICE:** We will work closely with Volunteers to make decisions regarding their safety and continued service.
- **PRIVACY:** We will respect Volunteers' privacy and will not, without the Volunteer's consent, disclose incident details, including victim identity, with anyone who does not have a specific need to know.

The Peace Corps is firmly committed to reducing risks for Volunteers and responding effectively and compassionately to those who are victims of sexual assault.



Fast Facts

- Year SAPR Program established: 2013 (after several years of collaborative work)
- Number of training hours Peace Corps Volunteers receive on sexual assault: 8+ throughout service
- 24 hours a day/7 days a week: Availability of Peace Corps' Office of Victim Advocacy
- Number of sexual assault response liaisons around the world: 120+

Reducing Risks and Supporting Volunteers

Peace Corps' SAPR Program is an interdisciplinary, agency-wide commitment to the physical and emotional wellbeing of every single Volunteer. Key elements include:

- **EXTENSIVE TRAINING:** Sexual assault risk-reduction and response training is mandatory for all Volunteers and staff.
- **VICTIM ADVOCACY:** Peace Corps' Office of Victim Advocacy can be reached 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (202) 409-2704 or victimadvocate@peacecorps.gov.
- **SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE LIAISONS:** In addition to dedicated security and medical staff, every Peace Corps post has two sexual assault response liaisons trained to directly assist victims.
- **24/7 HELPLINE:** An anonymous sexual assault hotline staffed by external crisis counselors is accessible by phone, text, or online chat via pcsavehelpline.org; +1.408.844.HELP (4357) (outside the U.S.); and 1.408.844.HELP (4357) (within the U.S.).
- **OUTSIDE EXPERTISE:** The agency utilizes outside experts to review agency policies and procedures to ensure incorporation of best practices.
- **REPORTING OPTIONS:** Victims of sexual assault can choose between restricted reporting, which provides access to health, safety, advocacy, and other services without requiring a formal investigation; and standard reporting, which offers the same core services with additional options, including reporting to law enforcement and seeking administrative discipline against the accused.

CONTINUING PROGRESS

As best practices in victim-centered care have evolved, so too has Peace Corps' approach to sexual assault. Through extensive reforms to policies and procedures, the agency has sought to reduce risks for Volunteers and ensure effective and compassionate support when crime occurs. The Peace Corps continues to work with policymakers, subject matter experts, returned Peace Corps Volunteers, and other stakeholders to ensure sustained progress in reducing risks and supporting Volunteers.

CONTACT

To learn more, please contact SAPROffice@peacecorps.gov or visit: <https://www.peacecorps.gov/sapr>



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