



Peace Corps Office of

INSPECTOR GENERAL

Annual Plan

FISCAL YEAR 2023

The Role of OIG:

- Promote integrity, efficiency, effectiveness, and economy
- Prevent and detect waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement
- Identify risk and vulnerabilities and offer expert assistance to improve the Peace Corps' programs and operations

Established in February 1989, OIG receives its legal authority from the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (IG Act). The IG Act establishes OIG as an independent entity within the Peace Corps. The law requires that OIG fully and currently inform the Peace Corps Director and the Congress about problems and deficiencies relating to the administration of agency programs and operations. OIG is authorized by law to review all programs and operations of the Peace Corps. OIG's work typically examines agency operational efficiency, effectiveness, financial stewardship, and compliance with federal law, regulations, and agency policy.



In accomplishing its mission, OIG is committed to:

Excellence: issuing accurate, timely, and reliable work products.

Positive change: making value-added recommendations to address issues and challenges with agency programs and operations.

Integrity: maintaining independence from the agency, meeting professional and ethical standards, and committing to continual improvement.

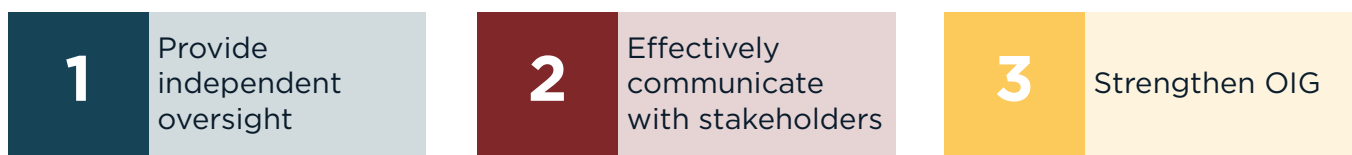
Collaboration: working together and promoting best practices within the office, with the agency, and with external stakeholders.

Staffing and Resources

OIG is comprised of four units: Audit, Evaluation, Investigation, and Management and Administration. Each unit develops its fiscal year (FY) work considering staff availability and FY funding. OIG has a cross-unit outreach committee responsible for informing all stakeholders (agency staff, Volunteers, Congress, and the general public) about the role, work, and resources of OIG, including promotion of the OIG Hotline.

Strategic Goals

As detailed in the OIG Strategic Plan for FYs 2023 to 2025, OIG has three strategic goals:



OIG plans to meet its goals by supporting the Peace Corps through our work to improve program effectiveness, efficiency, compliance, and accountability. OIG will provide briefings, lead trainings, and conduct external engagement while working to deepen our knowledge of the Peace Corps, acquire additional subject matter expertise, improve internal controls, and engage in collaborative activities.

Focus Areas

Throughout the year, OIG will conduct audits, evaluations, investigations, and other reviews addressing the following three priorities:

- Full resumption of overseas post operations, including Volunteer return to service
- Agency-wide processes, programs, and systems
- Management Challenges identified annually by the IG and published in the Peace Corps' [Agency Financial Report](#) (AFR)¹

¹ The most recent AFR covering FY 2020 was issued in November 2021. The AFR is issued annually in November covering the previous fiscal year.

Advice and Assistance

In addition to our work to help address the focus areas, OIG also plans to conduct the following advice and assistance functions in support of agency goals and objectives:

- Monitor and provide advice/expertise, as appropriate, on the agency's process for planning the resumption of global operations and implementation of its re-entry plan. OIG will support the agency by providing applicable best practices and lessons learned derived from OIG work products.
- Provide technical assistance to Peace Corps managers on issues related to financial and administrative policies, procedures, best practices, and effective internal controls.
- Deliver training and best practices presentations on fraud awareness and compliance with agency internal controls.
- Participate as presenters in overseas staff trainings and similar orientations for staff.
- Provide Volunteers/trainees and agency staff with informational materials, guidance, trainings, and other presentations on the role, responsibilities, authority, and functions of OIG and how to effectively and confidentially report fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, serious administrative misconduct, or criminal wrongdoing involving Peace Corps staff, contractors, or Volunteers/trainees.

COVID-19 Pandemic

After the unprecedented evacuation of all Peace Corps Volunteers more than two years ago due to the COVID-19 pandemic, overseas operations have resumed and Volunteers began to return to posts in March 2022. While this is an important milestone, OIG program oversight activity for FY 2023 will continue to be strongly impacted by the pace of Volunteer re-entry and complications stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

OIG oversight will include ongoing reviews of the re-entry process with a focus on the health and safety of the Volunteers, and an emphasis on proper spending of taxpayer funds. Our goal is to direct OIG oversight activities in ways that help the Peace Corps safeguard its integrity, better its effectiveness, and cement its long-term success.

Audit Unit

The Audit Unit conducts audits and other reviews of agency programs and financial/administrative operations that support the Peace Corps' mission and its Volunteers serving abroad. The unit performs audits of the agency's field activities at overseas posts and its administrative support functions at headquarters and domestic recruiting offices. The unit also contracts with independent public accounting firms to conduct an audit of the agency's financial statements and a review of the agency's compliance with the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014. Audits are performed in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. These Standards were updated in 2018 to place increased emphasis on internal controls and ensuring adequate root cause analysis.

Most recently, the Audit Unit has focused its audits on human resource management at Peace Corps headquarters and agency compliance with COVID Cares Act expenditure requirements. In FY 2022, we issued reports on the agency's compliance with The Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 and the agency's compliance with the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014. We have recently initiated audits of PEPFAR Expenditures and Volunteers Payments and Collection at end of Service. Both audits were from our FY 2022 annual plan. The Audit Unit has also focused internally on updating our internal policies and procedures based on the results of recent internal and external quality assurance reviews.

Post Audits

The COVID-19 emergency evacuation of all Volunteers disrupted our planned activities for FY 2020 through FY 2022. During FY 2023, we will assess how we conduct post audits and the impact those audits will have on the agency. We expect that we will resume post audits in the second half of FY 2023.

Agency-Wide Programs and Special Reviews

The Audit Unit intends to initiate, perform, or complete a variety of audits, reviews, and follow-ups of agency-wide programs. These projects are cross-functional and may require assistance from other OIG units. For example, the Audit Unit works closely with the Investigation Unit on forensic analysis of financial data and on Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA)² issues. In addition, we collaborate with the Evaluation Unit when we need their expertise on programmatic issues. We will continue to review the agency's internal controls and report on its effectiveness in our audits.

2 The FECA program is authorized in statute at 5 U.S.C. Sections 8101 et seq.

We have identified the following program audits and reviews to be initiated in FY 2023:

Program Audits and Reviews
Process for Communicating and Implementing Overseas Financial and Contracting Policy, Procedures, and Guidance
Post Spending During Suspension of Overseas Operations
Contract Management

Legislatively Mandated Work

We will oversee the following legislatively mandated work:

Legislatively Mandated Audits and Reviews
The Peace Corps' Compliance with The Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019
The Peace Corps' Financial Statement Audit
Review of the Peace Corps' Information Security Program

Reports Initiated in FY 2020 and FY 2022

The following audit and reviews were initiated in FY 2020 and FY 2022 and will result in a final report in FY 2023:

- The Peace Corps' Management of Payroll and Benefits for U.S. Direct Hires
- The Peace Corps' PEPFAR Expenditures
- The Peace Corps' Volunteer Payments and Collections at End of Service

Evaluation Unit

The Evaluation Unit conducts independent assessments of the design, implementation, and results of agency operations, programs, and policies. Our goal is to provide timely, credible, and useful information to agency managers, policymakers, and others on program operations and policy issues. We accomplish this through evaluations of the management and program operations of the Peace Corps at overseas posts and domestic offices. We also participate in cross-functional reviews of agency operations undertaken with OIG auditors or investigators.

OIG evaluations promote integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness; identify best practices; and recommend program improvements and means to comply with Peace Corps policies. The Evaluation Unit conducts evaluations and assessments using applicable Federal laws; regulations; and Peace Corps policies, procedures, and performance plans, including the agency's Integrated Planning and Budgeting System and strategic plans. Evaluations are conducted under the direction and guidance of the Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations and in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections and Evaluations, published by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE). These standards are instrumental in maintaining impartiality, reliability, and credibility; and they set the bar for staff competency, independence, professional judgment, internal quality controls, and stakeholder feedback for process improvements.

Post Evaluations and Reviews

During FY 2023, we will begin preparations to resume our standard country program evaluations. These evaluations could be re-launched towards the end of the fiscal year.

As the agency continues its efforts to return Volunteers to service overseas, we plan to continue to review the implementation of the agency's re-entry requirements, with a focus on key aspects of Volunteer health and safety. These reviews will include travel to posts and we plan to survey staff and Volunteers to identify challenges and emerging issues related to the resumption of overseas operations. In addition, we plan to conduct evaluations of agency programs and operations with a focus on headquarters activities.

We have identified the following work to be initiated in FY 2023:³

Evaluations and Reviews
Post re-entry health and safety reviews (posts TBD)
Evaluation of the Peace Corps' Knowledge Management Policies
Evaluation of the Peace Corps' Systems, Policies, and Procedures for Addressing Staff Misconduct

³ Subject to the availability of staff, the Evaluation Unit may initiate some or all the evaluations.

Reports Initiated in FY 2021 and FY 2022

The following work was initiated in FY 2021 and FY 2022 and will result in final reports issued in FY 2023:

- Evaluation of Human Resources Management for Overseas Contract Staff
- Evaluation of the Office of Health Services' Technical Guidelines' Revision and Implementation
- Post Re-Entry Health and Safety Review of Peace Corps/Colombia

Investigation Unit

The Investigation Unit assists the Peace Corps in maintaining integrity in its programs and operations by investigating allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, and misconduct involving grant, contract, and procurement fraud; violations of law and agency policies committed by Peace Corps personnel, contractors, and vendors; and the FECA⁴ claimants.

Our investigations are conducted in accordance with the IG Act, the Attorney General Guidelines for Offices of Inspectors General with Statutory Law Enforcement Authority, and the Quality Standards for Investigations issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency and affirmed by CIGIE. Our investigations can result in criminal prosecutions, civil monetary penalties, sanctions, and personnel actions, including verbal counseling, suspensions, debarments, and terminations from Peace Corps service.

OIG is authorized by the Attorney General to exercise statutory law enforcement powers pursuant to Section 6(f) of the IG Act and in accordance with the Attorney General Guidelines for Offices of Inspector General with Statutory Law Enforcement Authority.

This authority provides OIG with important law enforcement tools including the authority to, upon probable cause, seek and execute warrants for arrest, search premises or seize evidence, make arrests without a warrant while engaged in official duties, and carry firearms.

Investigative Priorities

With the return to service of Volunteers in the field, the Investigation Unit will be prioritizing collaboration with numerous Peace Corps offices, including the Office of Victim Advocacy, the Office of Safety and Security, and the Office of the Chief Compliance Officer. Our investigative priorities are as follows:

- Strengthen our engagement with stakeholders by providing them with briefings about OIG investigative responsibilities and mechanisms for making confidential complaints.
- Investigate allegations of violations of the Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to end the Exploitation of Children Today (PROTECT) Act by Peace Corps staff or by Volunteers prior to their evacuation.⁵
- Investigate allegations of sexual assaults by Peace Corps staff or Volunteers.
- Track complaints or allegations originating with Volunteers about Peace Corps staff relating to misconduct, mismanagement, or policy violations; any breaches of the confidentiality of the Volunteers; and any actions to assure the safety of Volunteers who file such complaints.
- Continue to provide technical assistance to partners and stakeholders on Volunteer deaths.
- Ensure that allegations of whistleblower reprisal involving staff, Volunteers, and contractors are thoroughly investigated.

4 The FECA program is authorized in statute at 5 U.S.C. Sections 8101 et seq.

5 Pub. L. 108-21.

- Investigate and refer crimes occurring within the Special Maritime and Territorial Jurisdiction of the United States⁶ for U.S. prosecution.
- When appropriate, seek local prosecutions by working with the Diplomatic Security Service and host country police entities.
- Proactively work with the agency, the Audit and Evaluation Units, and external partners to review high-risk programs and contracts for fraud, e.g., FECA.
- Ensure referrals of individuals and entities for suspension and debarment, as appropriate.
- Assist the agency with applicant vetting processes by expeditiously conducting namechecks of returned and evacuated Volunteers.

⁶ See generally 18 U.S.C. § 7. A number of U.S. criminal laws apply outside of the United States. In many cases, these laws are meant to apply to U.S. nationals who become a victim of crime abroad, or who are perpetrators of crimes abroad under certain conditions. Examples include when the crime is committed in a property owned, leased, or used for a government purpose, such as at a Peace Corps post, training office, or similar site. Another circumstance relates to crimes occurring in residences used by the Peace Corps or its personnel, which may include residences where Volunteers or staff permanently reside.