



# Peace Corps

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## GLOBAL POLICY HANDBOOK

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OFFICE OF GLOBAL OPERATIONS

March 1, 2020

This document is intended to serve as a convenient reference guide. It is a summary of policies contained in the Peace Corps Manual, which governs the functioning of the agency. **In the event of inconsistencies between the language in the Global Policy Handbook and the Peace Corps Manual, the language in the Peace Corps Manual prevails.**

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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

### OVERVIEW: GLOBAL POLICY HANDBOOK<sup>1</sup>

This Global Policy Handbook is based on and intended to accurately reflect Peace Corps policies set forth in the Peace Corps Policy Manual. This Handbook is for use by applicants, Trainees and Volunteers.

Where the term Volunteer (sometimes abbreviated as “V/T”) is used, the policies are applicable to all Peace Corps Trainees and Volunteers, spanning 27 months of service that begins with Staging. The policies delineated in the Global Policy Handbook apply to all Volunteers, with certain exceptions pertaining to Peace Corps Response, the agency’s shorter-term, highly specialized Volunteer program. Areas of policy which differ for Peace Corps Response Volunteers (PCRVs) are explicitly indicated.

It is your responsibility to read and understand the contents of this Handbook. You will be given an opportunity to review it and ask questions during Pre-Service Training. Please read it carefully, consult it regularly, and keep it with you throughout your time with the Peace Corps. You will also be provided a handbook specific to your country of assignment (post-specific handbook) that reiterates these global policies and includes post-specific policies and procedures.

Please note that this document is intended to serve as a convenient reference guide. It is a summary of policies contained in the Peace Corps Manual, which governs the functioning of the agency. **In the event of inconsistencies between the language in the Global Policy Handbook and the Peace Corps Manual, the language in the Peace Corps Manual prevails.** You can consult the [Peace Corps Manual on-line](#). Footnotes refer to policy sources from the Peace Corps Manual or other official U.S. government documents. Please reach out to Peace Corps staff at any time throughout your service if you have any questions about global or post policies.

### THE PEACE CORPS ACT<sup>2</sup>

The Peace Corps Act, originally passed in 1961, declares “it is the policy of the United States and the purpose of this Act to promote world peace and friendship through a Peace Corps, which shall make available to interested countries and areas men and women of the United States qualified for service abroad and willing to serve, under conditions of hardship if necessary, to help the peoples of such countries and areas in meeting their needs for trained manpower, particularly in meeting the basic needs of those living in the poorest areas of such countries, and to help promote a better understanding of the American people on the part of the peoples served and a better understanding of other peoples on the part of the American people.”

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<sup>1</sup> MS 204

<sup>2</sup> 22 USC §2501et seq.

## THE PEACE CORPS MISSION

The Peace Corps was established to promote world peace and friendship. As it has adapted to changing needs around the world, the Peace Corps continues to be guided by three goals:

To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.

To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.

To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of all Americans.

## SECTION 2: TRAINING AND SWEARING IN

### QUALIFYING FOR SERVICE<sup>3</sup>

In order for the Peace Corps to be able to make appropriate selection and placement decisions, it is critical that applicants for Peace Corps service provide complete and accurate information throughout the application process. If at any time the Peace Corps determines that you provided misleading, inaccurate or incomplete information (“non-disclosure”) during the Peace Corps application process, you may be disqualified as an applicant or administratively separated as a Trainee or Volunteer.

All Trainees begin in-country service with Pre-Service Training (PST). The Peace Corps uses a competency-based training approach designed to help you master essential competencies and serve effectively and safely as a Peace Corps Volunteer. Peace Corps staff will measure your learning achievement and determine if you have successfully achieved competencies to swear-in as a Peace Corps Volunteer. Successful training results in competence in various technical, linguistic, cross-cultural, health, and safety and security areas. Failure to meet initial selection standards, attain any of the selection standards by the completion of training, or maintain these standards during service, may be grounds for de-selection and disqualification from Peace Corps service.<sup>4</sup>

Peace Corps Response Volunteers (PCRVs), considered Volunteers upon departure from their home of record for service, undergo an initial orientation period. Typically two weeks in length, their training is designed to orient them to their host country and to convey important information regarding Peace Corps development model, health, safety and security, and other topics.

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<sup>3</sup> MS 201; 22 CFR 305.

<sup>4</sup> MS 201

## OATH AND PLEDGE<sup>5</sup>

All individuals who satisfy the standards for enrollment as a Volunteer by the end of PST must swear or affirm to the following oath orally and in writing (in English) in order to become a Volunteer. You have the option to swear or affirm, and to omit the last sentence.

I, *(insert first and last name)* do solemnly swear *(or affirm)* that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter.*[So help me God.]*

At the discretion of the Country Director, after taking the required oath, Volunteers may also be required to take a version of the following Peace Corps Pledge orally and in writing:

I *(insert first and last name)* promise to serve alongside the people of *(insert Country of Service)*. I promise to share my culture with an open heart and open mind. I promise to foster an understanding of the people of *(Country of Service)*, with creativity, cultural sensitivity, and respect. I will face the challenges of service with patience, humility, and determination. I will embrace the mission of world peace and friendship for as long as I serve and beyond. In the proud tradition of Peace Corps' legacy, and in the spirit of the Peace Corps family past, present, and future, I am a Peace Corps Volunteer.

## SECTION 3: EXPECTATIONS FOR VOLUNTEER CONDUCT

As a Trainee and Volunteer, you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner reflecting credit on the Peace Corps and the United States. Appropriate conduct is critical to the Peace Corps because it is intimately tied to the reputation and effectiveness of the Agency's Volunteer program and the safety and security of Trainees, Volunteers, and post staff.

V/Ts have responsibilities more complex than those of private citizens. While they are expected to learn and respect host country culture and customs as Peace Corps Volunteers, they must also conduct themselves in a way that reflects credit on the United States and the Peace Corps. Indeed, the V/T is often the most identifiable, and frequently the only, U.S. citizen in a community. Accordingly, you are expected to adopt lifestyles sensitive to host country cultural norms, and exercise common sense and good judgment to promote safety and reduce risks at home, at work, and while traveling.<sup>6</sup>

Volunteers are expected to participate fully in the culture of their host communities. Accordingly, you are expected to be at their sites unless they are on official Peace Corps business or on leave.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> MS 207

<sup>6</sup> MS 204

<sup>7</sup> MS 218



## CORE EXPECTATIONS<sup>8</sup>

In working toward fulfilling the Peace Corps mission, as a Trainee and Volunteer, you are expected to:

- Prepare your personal and professional life to make a commitment to serve abroad for a full term of 27 months.
- Commit to improving the quality of life of the people with whom you live and work and, in doing so, share your skills, adapt them, and learn new skills as needed.
- Serve where the Peace Corps asks you to go, under conditions of hardship if necessary, and with the flexibility needed for effective service.
- Recognize that your successful and sustainable development work is based on the local trust and confidence you build by living in, and respectfully integrating yourself into, your host community and culture.
- Recognize that you are responsible 24 hours a day, seven days a week for your personal conduct and professional performance.
- Engage with host country partners in a spirit of cooperation, mutual learning, and respect.
- Work within the rules and regulations of the Peace Corps and the local and national laws of the country where you serve.
- Exercise judgment and personal responsibility to protect your health, safety, and well-being and that of others.
- Recognize that you will be perceived, in your host country and community, as a representative of the people, cultures, values, and traditions of the United States of America.
- Represent responsibly the people, cultures, values, and traditions of your host country and community to people in the United States both during and following your service.

## DISCIPLINARY ACTION<sup>9</sup>

Volunteers and Trainees may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including administrative separation from the Peace Corps for any violation of the policies in the Peace Corps Manual or post-specific policies, for unsatisfactory conduct or performance, or on other grounds that diminish the effectiveness of the Volunteer or the Peace Corps program.

*(See also Immunity from Disciplinary Action, SECTION 4: Safety and Security) and Administrative Separation, SECTION 11: Early Termination).*

## ALCOHOL<sup>10</sup>

Peace Corps recognizes that excessive use of alcohol, including binge drinking, may compromise V/T's health, safety and security, lead to behavior which is a discredit to the Peace Corps or the individual V/T, or affect the V/T's performance in an assignment. Examples of such behavior include but are not limited to: public intoxication, drinking while at the work site, failure to appear for work or training due to intoxication or hangovers, and verbal or physical aggressiveness while under the influence of alcohol. Such inappropriate or unsafe behavior or inability to perform

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<sup>8</sup> MS 204

<sup>9</sup> MS 204, MS 284

<sup>10</sup> MS 204

adequately in the assignment may be grounds for disciplinary action, including administrative separation. V/T's who choose to drink are responsible for their conduct at all times; and must always consider host country laws and culture and the effects of their conduct on their service and the in-country program.

## CHILD PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT<sup>11</sup>

All Volunteers must adhere to the Child Protection Code of Conduct inserted below.

In the course of an employee's or Volunteer's association with the Peace Corps:

### Acceptable Conduct

Volunteers will:

- Treat every child with respect and dignity.
- When possible, work in a visible space and avoid being alone with a child.
- Be accountable for maintaining appropriate responses to childrens' behavior, even if a child behaves in a sexually inappropriate manner.
- Promptly report any concern or allegation of child abuse by an employee or Volunteer.

### Unacceptable Conduct

Volunteers will not:

- Hire a child for domestic or other labor which is culturally inappropriate or inappropriate given the child's age or developmental stage, or which significantly interferes with the child's time available for education and recreational activities or which places the child at significant risk of injury.
- Practice corporal punishment against, or physically assault, any child.
- Emotionally abuse a child.
- Develop a sexual or romantic relationship with a child.
- Touch, hold, kiss, or hug a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way.
- Use language that is offensive, or abusive towards or around a child.
- Behave in a sexually provocative or threatening way in the presence of a child.
- Perform tasks for a child that the child is able to do for himself or herself that involves physical contact, including changing the child's clothing or cleaning the child's private parts.
- Access, create, or distribute photos, videos, or other visual material of a sexual and abusive nature to or involving a child.

A child is defined as anyone under 18 years of age, regardless of local law. A Volunteer found to have violated this policy may also be subject to host country and U.S. prosecution.

## COMPLIANCE WITH U.S. AND LOCAL LAWS

Peace Corps Volunteers and Trainees must comply with host country laws, just like any other American citizen in country. The legally binding agreements under which the Peace Corps

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<sup>11</sup> MS 648

operates in each country are clear that Volunteers and Trainees are to be treated no differently than other Americans present in your country of service. You have no “immunity” or other special legal status associated with being a Peace Corps Volunteer or Trainee.

Volunteers and Trainees are also expected to comply with U.S. law where it applies to Americans overseas.

In the event that a Volunteer is arrested or otherwise made a party to a foreign judicial or administrative proceeding during service, the Peace Corps may provide bail, retain counsel, and pay legal fees.<sup>12</sup>

*(For information about legal representation, see SECTION 4: Safety and Security)*

## DRUGS<sup>13</sup>

Peace Corps has a zero tolerance policy regarding V/T involvement with drugs. Involvement with drugs includes, but is not limited to, the direct sale, distribution, acquisition, purchase, possession, smuggling, and use of illicit drugs, including marijuana, and any drug not authorized by the Peace Corps for medical purposes. The Peace Corps enforces this strict policy not only because the cultivation, manufacture, and traffic in and use of drugs, including marijuana, is illegal in most countries; but also because drug involvement by V/Ts in any country could seriously jeopardize the entire Peace Corps program, as well as the safety and health of the V/Ts. Moreover, it is a violation of the trust Peace Corps has placed in V/Ts upon their selection and entry into public service.

Peace Corps staff are required to expeditiously report to the Office of Inspector General any suspected sale, distribution, or smuggling of illegal or prescription drugs, or any other violations of Peace Corps policies that may have a serious impact on the integrity of Peace Corps programs or operations. All allegations or concerns identified by V/Ts will be given serious consideration and review and will be handled, resolved, or disposed of, as appropriate, by Peace Corps management or, if appropriate, the Office of Inspector General.<sup>14</sup>

Except as noted in Voluntary Self-Referral below, a V/T found to be involved with drugs, as described above, in a manner not authorized by the Peace Corps for medical purposes, in any way in any country, shall be administratively separated immediately. Individuals separated in connection with involvement with drugs shall not be considered for a transfer to another program or reinstatement regardless of the quality of their service.

Because of the potentially serious social, political, and legal impact of such incidents, every case of V/T drug involvement shall be brought immediately to the personal attention of the Peace Corps Director, Deputy Director, Chief of Staff, Associate Director for the Office of Global Operations, and the appropriate Regional Director.

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<sup>12</sup> 22 U.S.C. 2504(l); MS 774.

<sup>13</sup> MS 204

<sup>14</sup> MS 271

## Unconfirmed Allegations or Rumors<sup>15</sup>

Although a V/T may not be formally charged with violating drug laws, some host countries' attitudes toward involvement with drugs are so negative that mere rumors of such involvement, though unproven, may affect the credibility of the individual V/T or the Peace Corps program. In cases where an unsubstantiated allegation is made that a V/T is involved with drugs while serving in the host country, and the Country Director determines that the knowledge of the allegation is sufficiently widespread to jeopardize the credibility of the V/T or the program, the Country Director may discontinue the service of the V/T as interrupted service.

## Voluntary Self-Referral<sup>16</sup>

A V/T may request help from Peace Corps staff on the basis that the V/T's involvement with drugs is associated with an illness (such as a substance use disorder as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) that requires treatment. If such a request is made prior to the Peace Corps (including the Office of Inspector General) receiving information indicating possible violation of drug policies, the V/T will be referred to the PCMO and Office of Health Services for assessment. The PCMO/OHS must inform the Country Director about whether or not the assessment resulted in a recommendation for medical evacuation to the United States.

If you are medically evacuated under these circumstances, you will not return to service. If you are not medically evacuated or medically separated, you will be referred back to the Country Director for initiation of administrative separation.

*(See also SECTION 11: Early Termination of Service)*

## ETHICS AND FINANCIAL GAIN<sup>17</sup>

Peace Corps Volunteers and Trainees may not take advantage of a situation in the host country or use their Peace Corps status for their own financial gain. This means that you may not purchase or acquire real estate, bonds, shares or stock of commercial concerns headquartered in your country of assignment or which conduct a substantial portion of their business in that country. You may not engage in any business or activity for profit or personal financial gain or undertake any gainful employment. Nor may you sell or dispose of personal property at prices producing profits, including those that might result from import privileges deriving from your status as a Volunteer or Trainee.

You may not accept payment during service for any written work or photographs relating to your Peace Corps service.

*(See also Fundraising and Gifts, SECTION 8: Administrative and Financial Issues.)*

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<sup>15</sup> MS 204

<sup>16</sup> MS 204

<sup>17</sup> MS 204

## FIREARMS<sup>18</sup>

V/Ts are not permitted to use or possess any firearms. Those who wish to hunt while on leave may request the Country Director's permission to rent or borrow weapons appropriate for the purpose.

## HARASSMENT<sup>19</sup>

If you believe you have been harassed by another V/T based on the protected categories set forth in Peace Corps policies, you may file a complaint in writing with the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCD) within 30 days of the occurrence. Such complaints, as well as complaints of general harassment not based on a protected category, may also be filed with the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) or with your Country Director.

If you believe you have been harassed or witnessed harassment by Peace Corps staff, you should report it to the OCD, OIG or your Country Director.

*(See SECTION 9: Reporting Allegations and Concerns)*

## INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES<sup>20</sup>

It is crucial to the Peace Corps in carrying out its mission that there be a complete and total separation of Peace Corps from the intelligence activities of the United States Government or any foreign government, both in fact and appearance. For this reason, Peace Corps restricts individuals with intelligence connections from Peace Corps Volunteer service either for specified periods of time after the intelligence connection has terminated, or in some cases, permanently. In addition, certain Intelligence Agencies restrict Returned Peace Corps Volunteers from employment with those Intelligence Agencies, either permanently or for a specified period after leaving Peace Corps service.

## NONDISCRIMINATION<sup>21</sup>

The Peace Corps does not discriminate against any person on account of race, color, religion, sex (including but not limited to gender identity and gender expression), national origin, age (40 and over), disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, parental status, political affiliation, union membership, genetic information, or history of participation in the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) process, any grievance procedure or any authorized complaint procedure. Volunteers and Trainees are expected to act accordingly in their dealings with Peace Corps staff, other V/Ts, and community members.

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<sup>18</sup> MS 204

<sup>19</sup> MS 204, MS 645

<sup>20</sup> MS 611

<sup>21</sup> 22 CFR 305.1(d).

(See also Office of Civil Rights and Diversity, SECTION 9: Reporting Allegations and Concerns)

## PERSONAL APPEARANCE<sup>22</sup>

V/Ts are expected to dress suitably both on and off the job, and to respect host country and community attitudes towards personal appearance. Country-specific policies regarding personal appearance are provided at post.

## POLITICAL EXPRESSION<sup>23</sup>

The Peace Corps' credibility, and hence its ability to perform its mission, is contingent on not becoming identified with controversial or political issues of local interest or local political issues or movements. While serving overseas in the Peace Corps, V/Ts in-country are not present in a purely individual capacity with obligations only to themselves. They are abroad having responsibilities to, and representing, the Peace Corps. Public political expression overseas may endanger the safety and security of V/Ts or the post, or impair the effectiveness of the Peace Corps or the individual V/T.

Therefore, you must avoid becoming involved in the political affairs of your host country. Any public statement or action (including on the internet and social media) which potentially may involve you with host country political issues or other controversial issues within the host country, or which are otherwise matters of official concern to Peace Corps, must be first discussed and reviewed with your Country Director. "Matters of official concern" are those that are related to Peace Corps or U.S. foreign policy, or matters that can reasonably be expected to affect the foreign relations of the United States.

You should also be aware that, particularly in the area of foreign affairs, some policies or actions of the United States or other countries may relate to political issues or other controversial issues within the host country. A V/T's statements or actions concerning such issues that may, in the opinion of the Country Director, endanger your or the post's safety and security, or impair your or the Peace Corps' effectiveness, may be grounds for administrative separation or other disciplinary action.

You may privately discuss issues relating to the United States or other countries. However, in doing so, you must comply with the laws of the host country and you should make it clear that the views expressed are your own and not necessarily those of the Peace Corps or the U.S. Government. You may (in your personal capacity only) petition the U.S. Government and its officials in the same manner as you could have had you remained in the United States.

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<sup>22</sup> MS 204

<sup>23</sup> MS 204

## RADIO TRANSMITTERS<sup>24</sup>

You may not possess radio transmitters without the express permission of the Country Director.<sup>25</sup>

## RELATIONSHIPS

### Adoption of children<sup>26</sup>

Volunteers who adopt a child during their Peace Corps service must have their Country Director's approval to continue service after the adoption.

### Marriage<sup>27</sup>

A Volunteer or Trainee who intends to marry and continue in service must notify and consult with the Country Director. Approval in writing from the Country Director is required for a Volunteer or Trainee to continue in service after the marriage.

### Paternity<sup>28</sup>

A V/T who fathers a child by a woman to whom he is not married may be administratively separated if the Country Director determines that the V/T's action has impaired his ability to perform in his assignment or the credibility of the Peace Corps program, or has violated host country law or custom.

### Sexual behavior<sup>29</sup>

While the matter of V/T sexual behavior is a highly personal one, V/Ts are required to follow certain legal and policy requirements.

Because of the legal, social, and political implications of inappropriate behavior, it is important that you understand the host country sexual mores, including in relation to dating, pre-marital experience, and single parent maternity and paternity. Country-specific guidance is provided at post.

### Commercial Sex<sup>30</sup>

V/Ts are prohibited from procuring commercial sex, regardless of whether prostitution is legal in the host country.

### Fraternization<sup>31</sup>

Fraternization is prohibited by the Peace Corps. Fraternalization means any dating or intimate physical or sexual relationship between any Peace Corps staff member and any Peace Corps

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<sup>24</sup> MS 204

<sup>25</sup> MS 204

<sup>26</sup> MS 206

<sup>27</sup> MS 205

<sup>28</sup> MS 204

<sup>29</sup> MS 204

<sup>30</sup> MS 204

<sup>31</sup> MS 644

Volunteer, or between any Volunteer and person, including a student, over whom the Volunteer exercises authority.

#### Minors<sup>32</sup>

Depending on the applicable age of consent, V/Ts who engage in sexual activity or contact with minors overseas may be subject to prosecution both in the United States and in the host country. Regardless of the applicable age of consent, V/Ts are prohibited from engaging in sexual activity or contact with anyone who is under the age of 18.

*(See also Child Protection Code of Conduct in this SECTION).*

#### Sexual Misconduct<sup>33</sup>

Sexual Misconduct comprises a broad range of behavior, including rape, aggravated sexual assault, non-aggravated sexual assault, sexual exploitation and stalking, that will not be tolerated in the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps is committed to providing an environment free from Sexual Misconduct.

Any current or former V/T may report Sexual Misconduct concerning another V/T to the Peace Corps. However, the Peace Corps can only take administrative action against the accused V/T if the accused V/T continues to serve as a V/T at the time the complaint is brought. So long as the accused continues to serve as a V/T, there is no time limit for making a report of Sexual Misconduct. Nevertheless, V/Ts are encouraged to report Sexual Misconduct immediately in order to maximize the Peace Corps' ability to obtain evidence and conduct a thorough, impartial and reliable investigation. Failure to promptly report Sexual Misconduct may result in the loss of relevant evidence and witness testimony and may impair the Peace Corps' ability to enforce this policy.

Sexual Misconduct may also violate criminal and other laws of the U.S. or the local jurisdiction in which the Sexual Misconduct took place.

A V/T may report Sexual Misconduct directly to the Office of Inspector General, and to relevant law enforcement agencies regardless of whether that V/T has brought a complaint of Sexual Misconduct under this policy.

More detailed information about the Peace Corps' process for addressing sexual misconduct by one V/T against another V/T is available in IPS 1-12 and from your CD or PCMO.

*(See also Retaliation Prohibited, SECTION 9: Reporting Allegations and Concerns and Administrative Separation, SECTION 11: Early Termination of Service).*

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<sup>32</sup> MS 204

<sup>33</sup> IPS 1-12



## EXERCISE OF PERSONAL RELIGIOUS BELIEFS<sup>34</sup>

V/Ts are free to exercise their personal religious beliefs, but they may not engage in religious proselytizing. If you are not clear as to what activity constitutes religious proselytizing, consult with your Country Director.

## SECTION 4: SAFETY AND SECURITY

The safety and security of Trainees and Volunteers is a paramount objective of the Peace Corps and is the responsibility of the Peace Corps staff, Trainees and Volunteers.<sup>35</sup> The Peace Corps safety and security program is based upon the following factors:

- The recognition that Volunteers are generally safest and most productive when they establish strong ties to their community and develop an effective support network;
- The need for staff, Trainees and Volunteers to take actions to reduce the likelihood of adverse events or reduce the impact of such events; and
- The necessity of having plans in place to respond promptly and effectively to threats or events.

Service in the Peace Corps entails certain safety and security risks that are commensurate with living and traveling in an unfamiliar and potentially more dangerous environment overseas. Consequently, safety and security is the responsibility of each Trainee and Volunteer, who is responsible for the following:

- Adopting lifestyles that support community integration, promote safety, minimize risk, and are sensitive to, and are consistent with, host country cultural norms.
- Exercising good judgment at all times to promote safety and to reduce risks at home, work, and while traveling.
- Participating in safety and security training and learning and following the specific safety and security policies, procedures and rules at post.
- In addition, Trainees and Volunteers are strongly encouraged to report safety and security incidents and concerns to post staff.

## REPORTING SECURITY INCIDENTS<sup>36</sup>

The Peace Corps is committed to creating an environment that encourages Volunteers to report incidents committed against them so that the necessary and proper support can be provided.<sup>37</sup>

You are responsible for reporting any safety or security concerns about your site to post staff. If you feel at risk of imminent bodily harm at your site, you may request to be removed from such site. When you make such a request, the post must remove you from the site as expeditiously as practicable, even if the post has a different opinion of site safety at the time of your request. The post must conduct an assessment and evaluation of the safety of the site before making a

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<sup>34</sup> MS 204

<sup>35</sup> MS 270

<sup>36</sup> MS 270

<sup>37</sup> MS 461

determination that it is safe for you to return to the site. If the post determines the site to be safe, the post may, if you agree, return you to the site.

## CRIMES AGAINST TRAINEES AND VOLUNTEERS<sup>38</sup>

The Peace Corps recognizes that crime may have a lasting impact on you, may disrupt your service, and may undermine your sense of safety and security. Each incident and Volunteer is unique. The response and support by the Peace Corps to an incident should help a Volunteer who is a victim of crime regain a sense of control by:

- taking into consideration your preferences in the decision-making process;
- providing you with a transparent response and decision-making process; and
- providing you with choices consistent with Peace Corps obligations and limitations.

If you are a victim of crime, the Peace Corps will maintain your confidentiality and will not, without your prior written consent, disclose your Personally Identifying Information or details of the incident to anyone within or outside of the Peace Corps who does not have a need to know. In this regard, “need to know” means, with respect to particular information, that access by an individual to that information is useful in or facilitates the efficient performance of that individual’s official duties. The Peace Corps will not, without your consent, report incidents to host country authorities except in cases involving the death of a Volunteer, where required by law, where there is a compelling government interest, or where there is an ongoing security threat or concern to you or others.

## OFFICE OF VICTIM ADVOCACY<sup>39</sup>

It is the mission of the Office of Victim Advocacy (OVA) to ensure that each Volunteer is made aware of, and receives access to, services provided by the Peace Corps in cases of sexual assault, stalking or other crimes. OVA facilitates access of Volunteers to such services and helps develop and update the Peace Corps’ sexual assault policy and the sexual assault risk-reduction and response training program. The Office of Victim Advocacy gives priority to cases involving serious crimes, including sexual assault and stalking.

The OVA can be reached via:

- Call or text: 202-409-2704 or
- Email: [victimadvocate@peacecorps.gov](mailto:victimadvocate@peacecorps.gov).

## SEXUAL ASSAULTS<sup>40</sup>

### Peace Corps Commitments

Peace Corps is committed to providing a compassionate and supportive response to all Volunteers and Trainees who are sexually assaulted. To that end, the Peace Corps makes the following commitment to our Volunteers who are victims of sexual assault. Peace Corps staff worldwide will demonstrate this commitment through our words and actions:

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<sup>38</sup> MS 461

<sup>39</sup> MS 123

<sup>40</sup> MS 243

- Compassion: We will treat you with dignity and respect. No one deserves to be a victim of a sexual assault.
- Safety: We will take appropriate steps to provide for your ongoing safety.
- Support: We will provide you with the support you need to aid in your recovery.
- Legal: We will help you understand the relevant legal processes and your legal options.
- Open Communication: We will keep you informed of the progress of your case, should you choose to pursue prosecution.
- Continuation of Service: We will work closely with you to make decisions regarding your continued service.
- Privacy: We will respect your privacy and will not, without your consent, disclose your identity or share the details of the incident with anyone who does not have a specific need to know.

### Reporting options and response

A Volunteer who has been sexually assaulted during his or her service has the option to make either a Restricted Report or a Standard Report of a Sexual Assault.

- Restricted Reporting provides a Volunteer who might not otherwise report a Sexual Assault under Standard Reporting with the option of confidentially reporting the Sexual Assault and requesting certain specific services, without dissemination of information about the Volunteer or the Sexual Assault except as necessary for the provision of the services requested by the Volunteer and without automatically triggering an Official Investigation.
- Standard Reporting provides a Volunteer with the full array of support services and options, including the opportunity to request an official Investigation, while still maintaining to the extent possible the confidentiality of information about the Volunteer and the sexual assault. The Peace Corps believes that it is best able to respond to the needs of a Volunteer who has been sexually assaulted when the Volunteer makes a Standard Report of the sexual assault.

You will receive specific training on the Peace Corps' policies and procedures for responding to reports of sexual assault.

### Sexual assault response liaisons (SARLs)<sup>41</sup>

A SARL is a member of your Peace Corps post's designated staff team who, in addition to their regular duties, support Trainees and Volunteers who report a sexual assault. SARLs are available to serve as first responders along with other members of the designated staff team. You can contact a SARL directly, or their services can be requested through another designated staff person. You will be provided information about how to contact a SARL at your post.

### Sexual assault Helpline (PC Saves)<sup>42</sup>

An anonymous sexual assault helpline is available to all V/Ts currently serving in the Peace Corps, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The purpose of the helpline is to provide crisis counselling, support and information to V/Ts who have experienced sexual assault. Information received on the PC Saves Helpline will be treated as confidential information and may not be disclosed to the Peace Corps or any other party without the individual's consent. In calls when there is a serious or imminent threat, suicidal or homicidal ideation, or sexual abuse of minors, however, the Helpline support staff will make an attempt to collect personally identifying information and, if

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<sup>41</sup> MS 244

<sup>42</sup> MS 241

obtained, will disclose information to individuals with a specific need to know. The Peace Corps will take such action as is necessary to protect your privacy and safety and will limit this disclosure to the minimum information necessary to attempt to prevent, lessen or address the imminent threat to your health or safety or that of others.

Contact information: pcsaveshelpline.org or reach the helpline by phone at 011-408-844-HELP(4357).

### Immunity from disciplinary action<sup>43</sup>

Victims of a sexual assault or V/T witnesses who provide information or assistance in relation to the sexual assault will not be subject to any disciplinary action for violations of Peace Corps policy that may have taken place in connection with, or in the same general time frame as, the sexual assault incident. Prohibited disciplinary actions include, but are not limited to, verbal or written reprimands, behavioral contracts or administrative separation.

This policy applies only to the Peace Corps; it does not grant immunity for criminal or civil liability for violations of U.S. or local law. V/Ts found to have encouraged or voluntarily participated in a sexual assault are excluded from this policy. Nothing in this policy is intended to preclude the Peace Corps from taking appropriate action against V/Ts who knowingly or recklessly make false statements or accusations.

### Stalking<sup>44</sup>

Stalking behavior means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person (including the Volunteer or staff) to either (a) fear for his or her safety or the safety of others or (b) suffer substantial emotional distress. Even if one of the foregoing behaviors may appear to be non-threatening or not serious, such behavior may constitute stalking when it occurs repeatedly or in combination with other behaviors. Under some circumstances, behavior constituting stalking may be a crime or a violation of another Peace Corps policy.

You are strongly encouraged to report stalking incidents and concerns to post staff pursuant to the post-specific incident reporting procedures. In cases where a Volunteer suspects that another Volunteer or staff member is engaging in stalking behavior against another Volunteer, a Volunteer may report the stalking behavior to the Office of Inspector General, the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (for staff conduct), and/or Post.

## LEGAL REPRESENTATION<sup>45</sup>

When a Volunteer has been made a party to a foreign judicial or administrative proceeding during the Volunteer's service, the Peace Corps may:

- Retain counsel for the Volunteer and pay the related legal fees;
- Pay court costs, bail, and other expenses incident to the Volunteer's defense, including costs relating to investigations, counsel's travel, witness fees etc.; and
- Continue to pay such expenses after the Volunteer leaves Peace Corps service.

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<sup>43</sup> MS 240

<sup>44</sup> MS 242

<sup>45</sup> MS 774

The Peace Corps retains sole discretion to determine whether to retain counsel or to continue the services of counsel.

However, the Peace Corps will hire counsel on request for a Volunteer who has been the victim of a sexual assault. It may hire counsel for Volunteers who have been victims of other serious crimes.

The Peace Corps does not hire counsel in civil proceedings where a Volunteer is a plaintiff. Nor will the Peace Corps pay for fines or penalties.

## EMERGENCY PREPARATION AND RESPONSE

You will receive policies and procedures related to emergency preparation and response in your country of service.

## HOUSING<sup>46</sup>

All V/T housing or host family arrangements must be inspected and approved by post staff prior to occupancy to ensure each house and/or homestay arrangement meets all minimum standards as established by the Peace Corps and the post.

Particular rules about housing are post-specific. You will receive detailed information from your Post.

## TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION

Due to the substantial safety and security risks that Volunteers may face during travel, Peace Corps posts are required to have a written post-specific transportation policy for Volunteers and Trainees. Country specific guidance is provided at post.

You must adhere to the transportation policies in your country of service. When you are on official travel or personal leave in a Peace Corps country outside of your country of service, you must also adhere to that post's transportation policies.

*(See also Leave, SECTION 8: Administrative and Financial Issues)*

## VEHICLES<sup>47</sup>

You are prohibited from operating Peace Corps or other motor vehicles overseas, except when you are on approved leave and the operation of the vehicle does not violate the post-specific transportation policy in the country where the leave is taken, or when otherwise specifically authorized by the Country Director.

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<sup>46</sup> MS 270

<sup>47</sup> MS 450

## Motorcycles<sup>48</sup>

Motorcycle use (including as a passenger) is prohibited except where the Country Director has determined that use is clearly necessary to accomplish the goals of the particular project to which Volunteers are assigned. In most posts, motorcycle use is not permitted in any situation. You may not purchase or own a motorcycle for project or personal use during Volunteer service. In any case where motorcycle use is approved by the Country Director, Volunteers/Trainees must wear approved helmets at all times while operating or riding on a motorcycle. You are required to comply with motorcycle and helmet policies at all times during your Peace Corps service, including periods of leave.

Except in extraordinary circumstances, failure to wear a Peace Corps approved motorcycle helmet while operating or riding on a motorcycle will result in mandatory administrative separation.

## Bicycles<sup>49</sup>

You must wear an approved bicycle helmet while operating or riding a bicycle.

## WHEREABOUTS REPORTING<sup>50</sup>

Whereabouts Reporting is a core component of the Peace Corps' emergency preparedness and response program requiring you to report your whereabouts every time you are away from your site overnight (without exception) and when you return to your site. The Whereabouts Reporting requirement is an essential function in order to locate and contact V/Ts quickly, in the event of a crisis or emergency. You are required to adhere to your post's Whereabouts Reporting processes. Posts are not authorized to use Whereabouts Reporting as a measurement of individual V/T's performance at site, time in site, or to track a V/T's annual leave.

## SECTION 5: MEDICAL CARE

### OVERVIEW<sup>51</sup>

You will be provided with all necessary and appropriate medical care during the course of your Peace Corps service. A comprehensive health care program is managed and implemented in country by the post Peace Corps Medical Officer (PCMO) under administrative supervision of the Country Director and with professional guidance and oversight from the Office of Medical Services (OMS) in Peace Corps Washington. Some Peace Corps countries are also served by a Regional Medical Officer (RMO).

For the purposes of providing health care, Peace Corps service is considered to begin when you begin travel directly to a staging event. Since Peace Corps Response Volunteers do not participate in a U.S.-based staging, their Peace Corps service begins upon departure from their Home-of-Record.

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<sup>48</sup> MS 523

<sup>49</sup> MS 523

<sup>50</sup> MS 270

<sup>51</sup> MS 262

The health care program includes:

- Pre-service immunization and prophylaxis as described in the OMS Technical Guidelines, as well as regular immunization and prophylaxis as necessary throughout the term of service;
- Clinical care throughout service;
- Health orientation and education throughout service;
- Evaluation of health conditions at potential sites for Volunteer placement; and
- Other health support for Volunteers at their sites through site visits, when appropriate.

All necessary medical care and services are provided primarily through, or under the direction of, the PCMO(s) at post and through local health care providers in country, as necessary. Prior authorization from the PCMO is required (except in emergencies) for all medical and dental care not provided directly by Peace Corps medical staff.

Because Volunteers and Trainees face significant health risks, and immediate access to health care overseas is often limited, you are expected to follow both Peace Corps medical policies and the medical advice of your PCMO. Refusal to take required immunizations and vaccinations and medical prophylaxes will result in administrative separation. In addition, failure to consistently follow other medical advice or policies may lead to administrative separation, where such failure poses a serious risk of harm to you or others.<sup>52</sup>

## MEDICAL EVACUATION<sup>53</sup>

In appropriate situations (as determined by the Office of Health Services and your PCMO), a Volunteer may be medically evacuated to the United States or some other destination when an illness, injury, or other medical necessity requires evaluation and/or treatment beyond the scope of care available in-country.

## MEDICAL RECORDS<sup>54</sup>

The Peace Corps maintains Volunteer medical and mental health information electronically. These electronic records are medically confidential and are maintained in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) in a secure cloud environment.

You may request access to your medical records through your PCMO or the Medical Records office in OHS.

*(See also SECTION 6: Confidentiality of Volunteer Information)*

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<sup>52</sup> MS 262

<sup>53</sup> MS 262

<sup>54</sup> MS 267

## SECTION 6: CONFIDENTIALITY OF VOLUNTEER INFORMATION<sup>55</sup>

The Peace Corps seeks to protect the confidentiality of Volunteer information to the greatest extent possible consistent with applicable laws and effective management of Peace Corps programs. Peace Corps policies limit the amount of information staff members may disclose about applicants, Trainees, Volunteers and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

Your name, dates and country of service are considered public information and may be disclosed to any person upon request and to the public as the Peace Corps deems appropriate. Sensitive information (such as a Volunteer's contact information, location, travel plans, conduct or performance) may only be disclosed to other Peace Corps staff members who need to know the information to perform their Peace Corps duties. Disclosure of Protected information (such as your medical information, certain information relating to a sexual assault or stalking, and information relating to Volunteer allegations of misconduct) is further restricted; it may be disclosed only to Peace Corps staff members who cannot perform a specific task without having that particular information. The Peace Corps provides that a PCMO may share medical information about you to the Country Director or other staff, where the PCMO determines that there may be a significant risk to your safety or health or that of others or to the Peace Corps' reputation in country. Peace Corps medical staff are required to disclose evidence of illegal drug use by a Volunteer or Trainee.

With only a few exceptions, the Peace Corps will not disclose non-public information about you to someone outside the agency (including to another Volunteer, your family or friends) unless you have provided written consent.

*(For more information, see MS 294 and MS 294 Guidance. For more information about the special rules about disclosure of information relating to sexual assault, see MS 243. For information about the special rules on disclosure of information relating to allegations of misconduct, see MS 271.)*

## SECTION 7: COMMUNICATION

### MEDIA CONTACT<sup>56</sup>

You are free to discuss your role in the Peace Corps with media representatives, however you should, if possible, notify your Country Director of such discussions before they take place. Volunteers and Trainees must be aware of, and be sensitive to, the impact their personal comments may have on themselves, their co-workers and program, and the Peace Corps world-wide.

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<sup>55</sup> MS 294

<sup>56</sup> MS 204



## PUBLICATION OF ARTICLES<sup>57</sup>

You may write articles for publication during service; however, these should be discussed in advance with your Country Director to ascertain whether they might cause problems which you may not have anticipated. Publication of material, contrary to the advice of the Country Director, which subsequently results in adverse consequences for you or the program, may be grounds for administrative separation.

Articles, manuals, teaching materials and other work-related products developed in connection with Peace Corps service and/or financed by Peace Corps or other United States Government funds may not be copyrighted.

*(See also SECTION 3: Ethics and Financial Gain)*

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE INTERNET<sup>58</sup>

The thoughtful and accurate insights that Volunteers convey in their communications with others can contribute substantially to bringing to the United States a better understanding of other countries. However, given the broad access to Volunteer-posted material on the web, both in their country of service and elsewhere, Volunteers should remain culturally sensitive with respect to the material they post to any website. People in host countries and members of the U.S. public may make inferences about the Peace Corps or the Volunteer's country of service based on the material a Volunteer posts to a website. Volunteer-posted material on the Web should not embarrass or reflect poorly on the Peace Corps or the countries where Volunteers serve.

Volunteers are expected to use discretion and judgment when using Peace Corps or non-Peace Corps-owned computer equipment. This is of particular importance when communicating via e-mail or the Internet, which have the potential for mass distribution. V/Ts are free to discuss their role in the Peace Corps with any individual or group, but they should recognize that ill-considered statements could be used to embarrass themselves, the host country in which they serve, the Peace Corps, or the United States. Material that might be viewed as disparaging to the host country or as politically sensitive by the host government could create significant problems for the Peace Corps program in that country. The care one takes in private communication should be no less than the care taken in public utterances; messages to friends and family or the contents of webpages may be passed to the press or others and become a public issue.

Volunteers who create their own websites or post material to websites created by others are responsible for discussing the content in advance with the Country Director to ensure that the material is suitable and complies with this general guidance as well as any country-specific guidance. Any website maintained by a Volunteer during his or her Peace Corps service must reflect the fact that it is not an official publication of the Peace Corps or the U.S. Government. The site, therefore, must be labeled clearly and prominently with an appropriate disclaimer such as: "The contents of this website are mine personally and do not reflect any position of the U.S. Government or the Peace Corps."

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<sup>57</sup> MS 204

<sup>58</sup> MS 543

As a safety precaution, Volunteers must not include on their websites information about their precise living location or those of other Volunteers, or information about the location of events to be attended by a large number of Volunteers. For example, Volunteers who live in remote areas should use care before placing the name of their towns or villages on their website and, instead, should refer to the general area of the country where they live. For their own protection, it is advisable not to provide information about Volunteers' personal possessions. Volunteers should also be aware of the risk of identity fraud and other security concerns connected with the posting of any personal information about themselves, family members and others.

## USE OF THE PEACE CORPS NAME, SEAL AND LOGO<sup>59</sup>

You may use the Peace Corps name and logo in connection with your primary and secondary projects with the approval of your Country Director. You may use the Peace Corps name and logo on business cards, emails and other official communications during service, but only in connection with your Peace Corps service and for the purposes of accurately identifying your position to interested parties. Country Directors must approve all such uses. You may not use the Peace Corps name or logo for personal gain, financial benefit or other individual purposes. Returned Volunteers may not use the Peace Corps logo after their service ends, except it may be used in connection with activities authorized under the Peace Corps Act.

## USE OF PEACE CORPS AND OTHER INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS<sup>60</sup>

Peace Corps-owned computers are made available overseas to Volunteers and Trainees on a limited basis. You are required to comply with the mandatory guidelines on the use of such computers as set out in Peace Corps policies.

There is no expectation of or right to privacy on Peace Corps computers or networks.

The extent to which you have access to computer equipment owned by other entities, such as a sponsoring agency, local non-governmental agency, or private donor, may vary from post to post. If you use such equipment, you should follow applicable computer use policies and be aware that the Peace Corps will not be responsible for the maintenance or replacement of the equipment.

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<sup>59</sup> MS 321

<sup>60</sup> MS 543

## SECTION 8: ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

### ALLOWANCES

It is Peace Corps policy that Volunteers live modestly by the standards of the people they serve, yet not in a manner that would endanger their health or safety. Living allowances should be based on local living standards and costs and will thus vary among, and sometimes within, countries.<sup>61</sup>

#### Pre-service Training<sup>62</sup>

Peace Corps provides Trainees the necessary support for their needs during pre-service training, such as lodging, food, transportation, and supplies. While a Trainee, you also will be provided a walk-around allowance which allows you to pay for personal needs not directly related to the training program, such as toiletries.

#### Settling-in Allowance<sup>63</sup>

Volunteers are provided a settling-in allowance to purchase necessary housing supplies and equipment for their initial site assignment. This allows you to be involved immediately in your community with freedom to manage your own affairs. Volunteers are encouraged to purchase items available locally and to restrict their purchases to genuine needs. Supplies and equipment purchased with the settling-in allowance become your personal property.

#### Living Allowance<sup>64</sup>

Volunteers receive a living allowance in order that they may serve effectively and safely overseas. It is Peace Corps policy that Volunteers live modestly by the standards of the people they serve, yet not in a manner that would endanger their health or safety. Calculations for living allowances include categories such as housing, food, local transportation, some communication costs, supplies and clothing.

Included with the monthly living allowance are funds to assist Volunteers with annual leave expenses.<sup>65</sup> Peace Corps Washington sets a global annual leave rate for all Volunteers.

#### Readjustment Allowance<sup>66</sup>

The Readjustment Allowance, set at a global rate by Peace Corps Washington, assists Volunteers in transitioning from Peace Corps service. It accrues for each month of satisfactory service (pro-rated for partial months of service) from your enter-on-duty date as a Trainee to the date you end your Peace Corps service. Upon completion of service, one-third of your net Readjustment Allowance will be paid to you immediately. The remaining balance will be sent electronically to your bank or a check will be mailed to the U.S. address of your choosing. The Readjustment

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<sup>61</sup> MS 221

<sup>62</sup> MS 222

<sup>63</sup> MS 221

<sup>64</sup> MS 221

<sup>65</sup> MS 221

<sup>66</sup> MS 223

Allowance is subject to deductions for Social Security and Medicare tax; those deductions cannot be waived.

You are not entitled to receive or use this allowance until your service ends, except under specific circumstances outlined in Peace Corps policy<sup>67</sup>.

## Peace Corps Response Volunteers

Peace Corps Response Volunteers receive a one-time allowance for pre-departure expenses since they travel directly to post. They also receive a living allowance, a one-time settling-in allowance, and a readjustment allowance.

## BAGGAGE<sup>68</sup>

You are given baggage allowances for the transport of personal effects from your authorized point of departure to your country of assignment and return. Airline baggage regulations vary greatly on a worldwide basis. Peace Corps' authorized allowances are restricted to a total of 100 pounds in two checked pieces of accompanied baggage. If your airline allows more than two checked pieces of baggage free of charge, you may take advantage of the airline's allowance provided there is no additional charge to the Peace Corps.

When returning home after service, to the extent feasible, Volunteers may transport pets home at their own expense.

The Peace Corps assumes no responsibility for accompanied or unaccompanied baggage that is damaged or lost.

## DEBT OBLIGATIONS<sup>69</sup>

Service in the Peace Corps does not relieve you from responsibility for private debts, and the Peace Corps will not permit such service to be used to avoid these responsibilities. Volunteers and Trainees are expected to pay their financial and legal obligations promptly. Generally, the Peace Corps has no authority to act as an intermediary to collect private debts on behalf of a claimant, whether the debt was incurred before or during Peace Corps service; nor does Peace Corps staff have authority to direct Volunteers to take specific action concerning their financial affairs. The allowances of Peace Corps Volunteers generally are not subject to garnishment and cannot be diverted, without the Volunteer's permission or as otherwise provided by law, to satisfy private indebtedness. However, debts owed to the U.S. government, including the Peace Corps, may be deducted from your Readjustment Allowance.

You should make every effort to resolve any financial difficulties and to prevent them from becoming matters of controversy. Continued nonpayment of an acknowledged or adjudicated obligation without good cause reflects adversely upon you and the Peace Corps. Moreover, the failure to discharge your debts promptly may create difficulty for other Volunteers in dealing with

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<sup>67</sup> MS 223

<sup>68</sup> MS 214

<sup>69</sup> MS 232

the host country commercial community. Thus, such conduct may be grounds for administrative separation.

### Student loans<sup>70</sup>

Peace Corps has no authority to grant a deferment of student loan obligations, to permit forbearance of student loans, or to pay down, cancel, or forgive student loan obligations. Moreover, Peace Corps has no authority to determine if a V/T is eligible for a loan deferment, forbearance, cancellation, or forgiveness. Such actions are at the discretion of the lending institution or loan servicer and their respective student loan policies. Upon your request, the Peace Corps can certify your Peace Corps service and have a portion of your accrued readjustment allowance apply to the repayment of student loans.

### FUNDRAISING AND GIFTS<sup>71</sup>

The Peace Corps Small Grants Program, funded by external sources, enables posts to better support and enhance development and implementation of sustainable grassroots projects that build capacity in communities where Volunteers serve. The Peace Corps Small Grants Program is managed by offices at Peace Corps Washington. Information regarding Small Grants Program processes and requirements will be provided at your post.

Volunteers are not authorized to solicit or accept gifts on behalf of the Peace Corps, including crowdfunding or other on-line fundraising efforts for your project. You may, however, promote approved Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) projects among your family and friends. Information about PCPP processes can be obtained from your post.

You should refer any potential donors outside of the Peace Corps Small Grants Program or PCPP to your Country Director, who will work with appropriate offices at Peace Corps Washington to determine whether the gift is appropriate and how best to accept the gift.

### HOME-OF-RECORD<sup>72</sup>

Your Home-of-Record is the city and state or country which you determine to be your permanent residence. Peace Corps utilizes your home of record for multiple purposes, including travel arrangements, medical evacuations, and mailing income tax forms following the end of your service. Peace Corps policies set forth specific criteria for changing your Home-of-Record; it cannot be done merely for your convenience. Requests for any changes to your Home-of-Record must be submitted no later than 75 days prior to your scheduled departure date and must be approved by your Country Director.

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<sup>70</sup> MS 231

<sup>71</sup> MS 720

<sup>72</sup> MS 219

## INCOME TAX<sup>73</sup>

Your Country Director will advise Volunteers which portion of the Living Allowance is subject to federal income tax. At your post you will be provided federal income tax form 1040, a W-2 form issued by the Peace Corps, and other basic tax guides. Upon your request, your Country Director may approve cash withdrawals of up to \$350 from your readjustment allowance account for payment of federal income tax. Withdrawals of more than \$350 require authorization from Peace Corps Washington. You can also request monthly deductions from your readjustment allowance account for federal tax withholding.

## LEAVE<sup>74</sup>

You must comply with Whereabouts Reporting policies<sup>75</sup> and Peace Corps' transportation and travel policies<sup>76</sup> when you leave your community. Authorization from Peace Corps Washington or your Country Director is required before you leave your country of assignment. Additionally, you must adhere to travel and transportation policies whenever you travel to another country that has Peace Corps programs.

*(See also Whereabouts Reporting and Travel and Transportation, SECTION 4: Safety and Security)*

### Annual Leave<sup>77</sup>

Annual leave, also known as vacation leave, generally provides Volunteers the opportunity to increase their understanding of their host country and region or to travel to areas outside of their country or region, while allowing time for rest and relaxation. Volunteers accrue annual leave at a rate of two days for each month of service.

Annual leave is discouraged during the beginning or end of service, and should not be taken during the first three months or last three months of service, except when the Country Director approves leave under special circumstances, or in conjunction with an authorized emergency leave.

Country Directors have the discretion, consistent with policies established in-country, to advance annual leave, not to exceed the amount accruable during the Volunteer's service.

You must take annual leave any time you travel out of your country of assignment for vacation purposes. Annual leave for out-of-country travel is computed in terms of calendar days, including weekends and host country and U.S. holidays. The day after departure from the country of assignment through the day of return to the country of assignment are counted as annual leave days. The computation of annual leave days does not include the necessary minimum time to

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<sup>73</sup> MS 236

<sup>74</sup> MS 220

<sup>75</sup> MS 270

<sup>76</sup> MS 450 and post-specific policies

<sup>77</sup> MS 220

travel between the Volunteer's site and the point of exit out of or entry into the country of assignment.

When annual leave is taken within your country of assignment, host country holidays are not counted in computing annual leave days. However, all weekends and U.S. holidays that fall within the annual leave period are counted in computing annual leave days.

### Time away from community<sup>78</sup>

It is the policy of the Peace Corps that Volunteers participate fully in the culture of their host communities. However, the Peace Corps recognizes that you may need occasional days away from your community to take care of personal needs. Such time away from your community does not constitute annual leave. However, such breaks should be taken infrequently and must not be abused. Specific guidance on taking personal leave will be provided at post. Reporting under your post's Whereabouts policy is still required.

### Holidays and Host Country Vacation Periods<sup>79</sup>

Volunteers may be excused, according to Post policy, from work on holidays during which their host country counterparts do not work. Volunteers are not excused from work on U.S. holidays, which are not observed by their co-workers. During host country vacation periods, Volunteers, unless otherwise permitted by Peace Corps policies, are expected to take annual leave or use this time to work on Peace Corps activities.

### Emergency Leave<sup>80</sup>

In the event of a family medical emergency affecting a family member, as defined below, Peace Corps Washington may authorize emergency leave and travel, at the Peace Corps' expense. The term "medical emergency" is defined as:

- a terminal illness;
- a critical, life-threatening illness or injury;
- onset of para/quadruplegia;
- death; and
- a situation in which the personal presence of the V/T is required to make new living or care arrangements for an ill or injured family member.

Emergency medical leave is available only for medical emergencies directly affecting:

- a member of your immediate family (i.e., a parent, spouse, sibling, child, or grandchild related to you by blood, marriage, or adoption). This definition includes step-relatives (e.g., stepmother), but does not include in-laws, (e.g., mother-in-law).
- a caregiver who, in the absence of one or both parents, lived with you and performed a parent's duties and responsibilities for you for at least five consecutive years prior to you reaching the age of 18. (This is a surrogate parent who took the place of a parent absent in your life, not an additional person who lived with you.)
- a person for whom you assumed a parent's duties and responsibilities for at least five consecutive years prior to that person attaining the age of 18.

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<sup>78</sup> MS 218, 220

<sup>79</sup> MS 220

<sup>80</sup> MS 220

(Friends and family of currently serving Volunteers can reach a Peace Corps staff member 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The emergency line is available toll-free at 855.855.1961 or 202.692.1470.)

Emergency leave is generally limited to 14 days, excluding travel time.

Peace Corps Washington will determine whether a family medical emergency exists, including verification of the emergency with a third party (e. g., doctor, nurse, funeral director, coroner), and then authorize or deny emergency leave. Neither your Country Director nor post staff has the authority to approve emergency leave.

Your Country Director and training director have the authority to set a shorter limit to the number of days a Trainee may be absent from a training program.. In some cases, it may be necessary for a Trainee to resign from the Peace Corps.

During the emergency leave and any authorized extensions, you must keep Peace Corps Washington informed about the family medical emergency and your whereabouts. Guidance will be provided by the Office of Health Services or your PCMO.

### Professional or Academic Examinations<sup>81</sup>

You may take up to three days of administrative leave in order to take professional or academic examinations (e.g., LSAT, GRE, Foreign Service Exam). During that time, you will continue to receive your living allowance and readjustment allowances; however, no other allowances will be paid or authorized.

### Leave Without Allowance (LWOA)<sup>82</sup>

At the Country Director's discretion, you may be placed in LWOA status and be absent from training or your project site for personal reasons for up to 30 days. Your Country Director is authorized to grant a subsequent extension of up to 30 days. The Country Director's decision must be based on a determination that your absence will not adversely affect your training, project, or Peace Corps' effectiveness in the host country.

### Third Goal on Annual Leave (3GOAL)<sup>83</sup>

Your Country Director has the discretion to approve a credit of up to three annual leave days for a Volunteer who registers for and conducts a Third Goal activity while on annual leave in the United States. You can receive up to a day of 3GOAL credit for each leave day during which you conduct one or more Third Goal activities, up to a maximum of three days credit during your Volunteer service.

### Respite Leave<sup>84</sup>

The Peace Corps may authorize in-country Respite Leave and travel, at the agency's expense, for Volunteers in the event of a traumatic event that a Volunteer experienced during service. Respite Leave is granted in cases where the leave may provide appropriate respite, recovery or

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<sup>81</sup> MS 220

<sup>82</sup> MS 220

<sup>83</sup> MS 220

<sup>84</sup> IPS 2-15



resolution to a traumatic event the Volunteer has experienced within the time allotted (generally 30 days from the traumatic event). A Volunteer may request Respite Leave through the Office of Victim Advocacy (OVA), the PCMO, and/or the Country Director.

You can be considered for Respite Leave if all of the following conditions are satisfied:

- The traumatic event prompting the Respite Leave request is the result of any of the following incidents that happen during Peace Corps training and service:
  - a sexual assault or stalking;
  - an aggravated physical assault;
  - being a witness to a violent crime;
  - directly experiencing or witnessing an accident that resulted in serious injury or a person's death; or
  - any other traumatic event, as determined in the Country Director's discretion.
- You reported the incident to the Peace Corps and request Respite Leave within 30 days of submitting that report.
- The PCMO does not believe that medical hold is warranted at the time of the request.

### Administrative Hold<sup>85</sup>

The Regional Director may authorize non-duty status where the Peace Corps requires a Trainee or Volunteer to be away from the country of assignment for a limited period of time.

### Medical Hold<sup>86</sup>

The Office of Medical Services may place Trainees and Volunteers on non-duty status for a limited period of time because of an unresolved medical condition.

## LIFE INSURANCE<sup>87</sup>

Volunteers are automatically insured by a non-convertible death benefit insurance policy effective from the first day of Staging. Coverage under the policy terminates automatically:

- At the end of fifteen days following termination of service in the U.S.; or
- At the end of sixty days following termination of service overseas.

Premium charges are deducted for each month you accrue readjustment allowance. You can waive life insurance coverage at the start of service or at any time during service. Once waived, insurance coverage may be restarted during your current term of service but additional actions, such as an independent health assessment, may be required.

## MAIL AND PACKAGES<sup>88</sup>

You will receive additional information about mail services in your country of assignment.

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<sup>85</sup> MS 220

<sup>86</sup> MS 220

<sup>87</sup> MS 223

<sup>88</sup> MS 835

## PASSPORTS<sup>89</sup>

You will receive a no-fee U.S. passport (containing service-related visas) to be used during your Peace Corps service and up to 90 days after the completion of your service. You may not use the no-fee passport in countries where use of the passport has been restricted by the U.S. Department of State. You also may not use the no-fee passport for any personal travel after your return to the United States, following early termination or completion of service, even if the passport has not expired.

You are responsible for safeguarding your passport at all times. Your Country Director has the authority to hold and secure no-fee passports for safekeeping in certain limited situations. However, Country Directors cannot retain no-fee passports to restrict Volunteers' travel; no-fee passports must be returned upon a Volunteer's request for purposes of travel.

Unless granted an exception to direct and immediate return, early terminating Trainees and Volunteers must return their no-fee passports, stamped by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, to the Transportation Division of Peace Corps Washington. Volunteers who complete their service may retain their no-fee passport in order to submit it as proof of U.S. citizenship when applying for any type of U.S. passport in the future.

*(For field terminations, see Early Termination Travel, SECTION 11: Early Termination of Service)*

## PERSONAL PROPERTY<sup>90</sup>

You are personally responsible for safeguarding your personal cash, living and other allowances, personal property, and Peace Corps property in your possession. You should bring only the amount of personal property and cash that is necessary to maintain a modest standard of living, and should not bring excess cash or expensive or valuable items. The Peace Corps will generally not replace or reimburse you for property or cash lost, damaged, or stolen.

The Peace Corps recommends that Volunteers consider the purchase of personal property insurance, as the Peace Corps does not insure a Volunteer's property and cash. Upon your request, the Peace Corps will provide personal property insurance information to you and will arrange for a withdrawal from your readjustment allowance account to pay the insurance premiums.

## TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION<sup>91</sup>

Trainees and Volunteers traveling on official business will be provided transportation at Peace Corps expense via the most direct, economical, and advantageous means available in compliance with Peace Corps regulations and procedures.

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<sup>89</sup> MS 213

<sup>90</sup> MS 235

<sup>91</sup> MS 281

## VOTING<sup>92</sup>

Volunteers who wish to vote by absentee ballot are personally responsible for observing the requirements and regulations of the jurisdictions where they intend to vote.

## SECTION 9: REPORTING ALLEGATIONS AND CONCERNS<sup>93</sup>

You have the right to bring to the attention of the Peace Corps allegations of misconduct, mismanagement, or violations of law or policy that relate to Peace Corps staff, contractors, other Volunteers, programs and operations. You also have the right to discuss with the Peace Corps allegations or concerns on topics or issues that are beyond the legal jurisdiction of the Peace Corps, such as behavior by a host country national with whom the Volunteer has regular contact, but who does not work for the Peace Corps or participate directly in a Peace Corps project or program.<sup>94</sup> If you request confidentiality, Peace Corps staff must handle the information with the utmost discretion and confidentiality consistent with appropriate handling of such information. You will receive more information and training on this subject at Post.

No Peace Corps staff person may retaliate against a Volunteer or Trainee because the Volunteer reported an allegation or concern. Volunteer complaints of retaliation may be filed with the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity within 60 days of the occurrence of the retaliation (*see below*).

### REPORTING OPTIONS

Allegations and concerns may be raised with multiple Peace Corps staff.

#### Staff at Your Post

You are always encouraged to raise and discuss concerns with Peace Corps staff at your post, including but not limited to the Country Director.

#### Office of the Inspector General

Volunteers are strongly encouraged to promptly report to the Office of Inspector General suspected fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement related to Peace Corps programs and operations, including criminal wrongdoing, serious administrative misconduct and violations of federal laws, rules and regulations, by Peace Corps staff, Volunteers and any contractors and other individuals and entities conducting transactions with the Peace Corps or receiving Peace Corps funds. Volunteers are also strongly encouraged to promptly report to the Office of Inspector General any activity which they reasonably believe constitutes a substantial and specific danger to the public health or safety relating to programs and operations of the Peace Corps.<sup>95</sup>

You may contact the Office of the Inspector General at [oig@peacecorps.gov](mailto:oig@peacecorps.gov), 1-800-233-5874 or 202-692-2915. (*See below for more information about the OIG*).

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<sup>92</sup> MS 253

<sup>93</sup> MS 271 and MS 861

<sup>94</sup> MS 271

<sup>95</sup> MS 271, 861

## Office of Civil Rights and Diversity

If you feel that you have been discriminated against by Peace Corps staff or been subject to harassment by staff or other Volunteers, you may contact the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCD). You may also contact OCD if you would like to request an accommodation for a disability.

Current rules provide that you must contact OCD within 30 days of the alleged discriminatory action.<sup>96</sup>

You may contact the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity at [ocrd@peacecorps.gov](mailto:ocrd@peacecorps.gov), 202.692.2139, or 1275 First Street NE, 1111 20th Street NW, Washington, DC 20526.

## Office of Medical Services

If you are concerned about the care you are receiving from your medical officer or an in-country provider, you may contact the Office of Medical Services Quality Nurse Line at [qualitynurse@peacecorps.gov](mailto:qualitynurse@peacecorps.gov).

## WORKING WITH THE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL<sup>97</sup>

Volunteers and Trainees are strongly encouraged to report misconduct, mismanagement and violations of law or policy to the OIG. Volunteers and Trainees are also strongly encouraged to cooperate fully and truthfully with the OIG during the course of an audit, evaluation, investigation, or review. In addition, Volunteers and Trainees are required to comply with the instructions of the Country Director to cooperate with the OIG during the course of an investigation. Refusal to do so may, in the sole discretion of Peace Corps management, result in disciplinary action.

Knowingly furnishing false or misleading information to an OIG representative during the course of an authorized OIG function may result in disciplinary or other administrative action and/or criminal prosecution.<sup>98</sup>

Peace Corps staff are required to report the following types of Volunteer misconduct to the Office of Inspector General:

- Sale, distribution, or smuggling of illegal drugs or prescription drugs.
- Engaging in sexual activities or sexual contact with any person under the age of 18.
- Fraternalization;
- Sexual assault (does not include restricted reports), sexual exploitation or stalking.
- Loss, theft, embezzlement or misuse of Peace Corps funds or funds entrusted to the V/T by another party.
- Fraud or other misuse of the V/T's position for financial gain.
- Materially misleading or inaccurate information in the application process;
- Theft or serious misuse of Peace Corps property or other resources, including but not limited to Peace Corps IT systems.
- Any other criminal wrongdoing under U.S. state or federal law.

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<sup>96</sup> MS 293

<sup>97</sup> MS 861, MS 271

<sup>98</sup> MS 861

- Any other violations of Peace Corps policies that may have a serious impact on the integrity of Peace Corps programs or operations.

## RETALIATION PROHIBITED<sup>99</sup>

Peace Corps staff may not retaliate against a Volunteer or Trainee because they contacted the OIG or OCRD, or reported alleged discrimination or harassment, or raised concerns or allegations of misconduct by a Peace Corps staff person. Allegations of retaliation may be reported to the OCRD or the OIG.

## SECTION 10: CLOSE OF SERVICE<sup>100</sup>

Peace Corps Volunteers are expected to honor fully their commitments to serve the people of the host country to the best of their abilities for the period of time specified by the Peace Corps, which is usually 24 months plus pre-service training. A Country Director in specified circumstances may advance a Close of Service date or grant an extension.

## EXTENSIONS<sup>101</sup>

A Volunteer may request permission to extend service by submitting a written request to the Country Director. For administrative purposes, such requests must be made at least two months before the established Close of Service (COS) date. In unusual situations an extension request made during the last two months of a Volunteer's service may be considered for approval by the Country Director.

Volunteers extending their service for 12 months or more are entitled to 30 days of special leave. Each day of special leave is considered part of the Volunteer's service, but is not counted toward completion of the extension period, e.g., a 12-month extension and 30 days of special leave extends a Volunteer's COS date by 13 months. If the Country Director determines that the nature of the Volunteer's assignment is such that an 11-month rather than a 12-month extension would be appropriate, the Regional Director's concurrence is needed to authorize an extension with special leave privileges. This option should be exercised only where the shortness of the Volunteer's assignment results from circumstances beyond the control of the Volunteer, such as the length of the school year.

## NONCOMPETITIVE ELIGIBILITY (NCE)<sup>102</sup>

Non-competitive eligibility permits, but does not require, a federal agency to hire non-competitively an RPCV who meets the minimum qualifications for the position. The decision whether to hire an RPCV under non-competitive eligibility is at the discretion of the hiring agency.

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<sup>99</sup> MS 271

<sup>100</sup> MS 281

<sup>101</sup> MS 281

<sup>102</sup> MS 285

A Volunteer who has been appointed (either by initial appointment or extensions to an initial appointment) to a term of Peace Corps service of at least two consecutive years and satisfactorily completed his or her full term of service is eligible for NCE certification. In addition, a Volunteer whose service is terminated prior to the end of the full term of service may also be eligible for NCE certification when:

- The Volunteer's period of service was of sufficient duration (at least 12 consecutive months, including training) to demonstrate the capability to complete satisfactorily a full term of service; and
- The termination of the Volunteer's service is determined to be for reasons beyond the Volunteer's control.

Eligibility for NCE begins upon termination of service and lasts for one year. When a Volunteer enters military service, pursues studies at a recognized institution of higher learning, or engages in other activities that in the view of the hiring agency warrant extension, that agency may extend the period for up to three years.

The Country Director must provide a written notification to any Volunteer whose service terminates for a reason beyond the Volunteer's control and who served at least 12 months if such Volunteer is denied NCE certification. The notification must include the reasons for denial and information on appeal procedures.

NCE does not mean that RPCVs are entitled to federal employment.

### Peace Corps Response

Upon successful completion of a 12-month assignment, Peace Corps Response Volunteers are entitled to Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) only for jobs at the Peace Corps. Upon successful completion of assignments totaling 24 months of unbroken, consecutive service, a Peace Corps Response Volunteer is entitled to NCE for other federal agencies.

## DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE<sup>103</sup>

The Description of Service (DOS) is an official Peace Corps statement of a Volunteer's service that describes the Volunteer's training and overseas activities in non-evaluative terms. It also includes the certification of NCE for those Volunteers who qualify for the benefit. The DOS is a publicly available document except for any information regarding a Volunteer's Social Security Number. The DOS can also serve as an official verification of services performed. Trainees do not receive a DOS.

## PERSONAL RECOMMENDATIONS<sup>104</sup>

Peace Corps staff members may provide personal references for Trainees, Volunteers and Returned Volunteers as long as the recommendation is based on the staff member's personal knowledge of the Volunteer or Trainee. However, no Volunteer or Trainee is entitled to such a reference.

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<sup>103</sup> MS 285

<sup>104</sup> MS 285

## POST-SERVICE MEDICAL BENEFITS<sup>105</sup>

Upon leaving service, Peace Corps Volunteers and Trainees will receive information about medical benefits available to them after service.

The Peace Corps provides vouchers to terminating Volunteers and Trainees for certain limited medical and dental evaluations after service.

V/Ts may be eligible after service for benefits under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) for conditions that are incurred during Peace Corps service overseas. The Peace Corps provides assistance in filing for FECA benefits with the U.S. Department of Labor, which manages the FECA program.

The Peace Corps also facilitates purchase of a short-term insurance policy that covers medical needs not covered by either FECA or the vouchers described above. The Peace Corps pays for the first month's coverage; you have the option to purchase two additional months of coverage.

## RE-ENROLLMENTS AND REINSTATEMENTS<sup>106</sup>

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) who complete service or are early terminated due to medical separation, interrupted service, or other circumstances beyond their control may seek to be re-enrolled or reinstated to Peace Corps service.

## SECTION 11: EARLY TERMINATION OF SERVICE<sup>107</sup>

Peace Corps policies govern the circumstances under which your service may end prior to the completion of your service date. Service in the Peace Corps is voluntary, but once the commitment to serve is made, expectations are created on the part of the Peace Corps, the host country and cooperating agencies. By accepting an invitation, you commit yourself to serve the people of the host country to the best of your ability within the framework and support systems established by the Peace Corps. However, there are circumstances under which you cannot or should not remain in service. There are four types of early termination, as outlined below.

### RESIGNATION

A resignation is a decision made by a Trainee or Volunteer who no longer wishes to continue in Peace Corps service.

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<sup>105</sup> MS 266

<sup>106</sup> MS 282

<sup>107</sup> MS 284

## MEDICAL SEPARATION

If you have or develop a medical condition that Peace Corps cannot medically accommodate or resolve within forty-five (45) days or any medical hold extension period granted by the Peace Corps, you will be medically separated. This decision is made by the Office of Medical Services in Peace Corps Washington in consultation with the PCMO at your post and, if needed, appropriate medical consultants.

You may appeal a decision to medically separate you by requesting a review by the Director of Medical Services. The decision of the Director of Medical Services will be the final Agency decision in the case.

## INTERRUPTED SERVICE

You may be separated with interrupted service status if the Country Director determines that circumstances beyond your control make it necessary for you to leave your present assignment.

Interrupted service may be appropriate if:

- You are unable to meet technical or language requirements in your current assignment or country but the Country Director recommends future volunteer service;
- You no longer meet eligibility requirements due to changes in legal, marital, or other circumstances that are beyond your control;
- There is no viable assignment in the country of assignment for which you are qualified;
- Circumstances in the country of assignment prevent you from carrying out your assignment
- Circumstances beyond your control may damage your effectiveness or the credibility or effectiveness of the Peace Corps program;
- The host country (or other cooperating agency to which you are assigned) requests that you be removed from service for reasons that would not constitute grounds for administrative separation;
- You have a spouse who has been medically separated, administratively separated, or separated with interrupted service status, and you personally are not subject to administrative separation;
- Circumstances in your country of assignment may endanger your safety, or
- You were the victim of a sexual assault, stalking, or other serious crime.

If you believe that conditions for Interrupted Service do not apply, you may appeal the decision in writing to the Regional Director for your country of assignment.

## ADMINISTRATIVE SEPARATION

A Trainee may be administratively separated at any time during staging in the U.S. by the Regional Director, or during training overseas by the Country Director, following consultation with appropriate offices. Trainees are given the option to resign in lieu of being administratively separated within 24 hours after being notified of administrative separation.

A Volunteer may be administratively separated for unsatisfactory conduct or performance; violation of any Peace Corps policy, including those in the Peace Corps Manual, whether agency-



wide or post-specific; or other grounds that diminish the effectiveness of the Volunteer or the Peace Corps program, as determined in the sole discretion of the Peace Corps.

Following consultation with the Office of General Counsel, the Country Director (CD) will provide the Volunteer a brief Consideration of Administrative Separation (COAS) memo stating the grounds for the separation and the information in support of those grounds. If, after considering the Volunteer's response, the CD decides to separate the Volunteer, the CD may do so only with the concurrence of the applicable Regional Director. A Volunteer may resign in lieu of administrative separation at any time after receiving a COAS memo. Following a final administrative separation decision, the Volunteer is given an additional 24 hours after being informed of the decision to resign in lieu of being administratively separated. If the Volunteer does not resign within 24 hours, the Volunteer will receive written notification of administrative separation from service.

There is no appeal from an administrative separation.

## EARLY TERMINATION TRAVEL<sup>108</sup>

The Peace Corps will pay return transportation costs for early terminating Volunteers and Trainees who, upon termination from the Peace Corps, return directly and immediately to their home of record from their country of assignment. "Direct" means the most direct route from country of assignment to the V/T's Home of Record. "Immediate" means no more than seventy-two (72) hours after departure from the host country for the U.S. The Country Director may grant a Volunteer an exception to the requirement to return directly and immediately to the Volunteer's Home of Record if the requirement would create a hardship for the Volunteer and the early termination is for reasons beyond the Volunteer's control. Trainees are not eligible for this exception.

An early terminating Trainee or Volunteer who chooses not to be bound by the direct and immediate return requirement is considered to have a field termination. The Peace Corps will not cover return travel costs to the U.S. for field termination, but may, at the individual's request, pay for a ticket from the individual's readjustment allowance. Once the decision to field terminate is made and termination is complete, the decision cannot be reversed or changed. The Peace Corps will not assume any expenses for return transportation costs or shipment of personal effects; and the no-fee passport must be surrendered to the CD prior to termination. V/Ts who field terminate travel as private U.S. citizens, must surrender the no-fee passport to the Country Director prior to termination, and are responsible for securing a personal passport and any other necessary immigration documents through the U.S. Embassy.

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<sup>108</sup> MS 284