



Peace Corps Volunteers improve the lives of people in communities around the world. If you are a family member or friend of a prospective Volunteer, it's important for you to understand Peace Corps service to play a supporting role in their success. The information provided here, along with [peacecorps.gov/family](https://www.peacecorps.gov/family), will help answer questions asked frequently by Volunteers' loved ones and address common concerns.

## Health and Safety

The well-being of Volunteers is the Peace Corps' highest priority. Although there are inherent risks to living and traveling in countries where Volunteers serve, the Peace Corps works to protect Volunteers with a thorough training program, medical and emotional support, and a comprehensive safety and security program.

### Volunteer Safety

The Peace Corps assesses and approves the sites where Volunteers will live and work, ensuring these locations are safe.

The Peace Corps provides training that includes language skills, intercultural awareness, and how to adapt personal choices and behavior to be safe and avoid risk factors, and also be respectful of the host country culture.

Volunteers are assigned to work counterparts in their communities, and many live with or near a host family. Integrating into the community fosters an environment where Volunteers are valued and protected as extended family members and respected colleagues.

If a Volunteer's safety or well-being is at risk, Peace Corps staff will help resolve the situation or move the Volunteer to another location.

### All Volunteers have access to

- Medical training and health education
- An emergency medical officer on call 24/7
- Site visits from the Peace Corps medical officer
- Full medical and dental coverage
- Mid-service and close-of-service physical and dental evaluations
- Eligibility for Federal Employees' Compensation Act Benefits

### Volunteer Health

The medical evaluation during the application process ensures that Volunteers are placed where there are adequate resources to meet their specific health-care needs.

Every country where the Peace Corps serves has a medical unit, staffed by one or more credentialed medical officers to provide Volunteers with primary care as needed. If a health problem occurs that cannot be treated locally, the Peace Corps will arrange for medical treatment at an appropriate facility in a nearby country or the United States without cost to the Volunteer.





## Emergency Planning

One advantage of serving in the Peace Corps is the safety net that comes from the agency being part of the U.S. federal government.

Each post has a country-specific emergency action plan to address events such as natural disasters and civil unrest. The plan ensures Volunteers can be contacted and supported in case of an emergency.

Additional information is available at [peacecorps.gov/safety](https://peacecorps.gov/safety).

## Communicating with Volunteers

More than 91 percent of Volunteers have a cellphone and many have regular Internet service. Access can vary greatly from site to site, but most Volunteers are able to maintain contact with family and friends via phone, mail, and online.

## Family Emergencies

The Peace Corps Counseling and Outreach Unit has a 24-hour duty officer available to family members who need to advise their Volunteer of a critical illness or death of a family member, answer questions about a Volunteer's status, or provide an update about civil unrest or a natural disaster in the host country.

The 24-hour telephone number is 855.855.1961 ext. 1470 or 202.692.1470.

If a death occurs in a Volunteer's immediate family, the Peace Corps allows a leave period and pays for the Volunteer's travel home. Immediate family is defined as a parent, spouse,

sibling, child, or grandchild related to the Volunteer by blood, marriage, or adoption. This includes step-relatives, but does not include in-laws or grandparents.

## Visiting Your Volunteer

Families who, at their own expense, want to visit a Volunteer are welcome to after the Volunteer's two- to three-month pre-service training and first three months of service are both complete. When making plans, families should work closely with the Volunteer to schedule a visit as Volunteers need approval for vacation days to spend time with visitors.

## Supporting Your Volunteer

There are many ways to be involved with your Volunteer's experience:

- Stay in touch with emails, phone calls, video chats, letters, and packages.
- Develop a relationship with a returned Peace Corps Volunteer group (see [rpcv.org](https://rpcv.org)) or join/create a support group for parents. These groups are independent of the Peace Corps and are generally organized around a particular country or training group, often through private social network groups.
- Get involved in the Volunteer's projects through donations to the Peace Corps Partnership Program. See [peacecorps.gov/contribute](https://peacecorps.gov/contribute) for current projects and information on giving.

[peacecorps.gov/family](https://peacecorps.gov/family)

*Make a difference.  
Be a Volunteer.*



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