

RPCV Handbook

You're on your way home



PEACE CORPS
*Office of Third Goal and
Returned Volunteer Services*



Need to Contact the Peace Corps?

The Peace Corps' main number is 855.855.1961.

Reentry Difficulty

Contact: Office of Medical Services

855.855.1961, ext. 1540, or 202.692.1540

<http://peacecorps.sevencorners.com>

If, within the first six months of your COS, you are having a particularly difficult time with your reentry adjustment and feel you need a medical evaluation, contact the Office of Medical Services to discuss your situation.

Medical and Dental Issues

Contact: Office of Medical Services

855.855.1961, ext. 1540, or 202.692.1540 <http://peacecorps.sevencorners.com>

- For an explanation of the Peace Corps 127C authorization form
- For medical or dental problems that are a result of your Peace Corps service
- For requests for authorization of evaluation or further diagnostic work-up of Peace Corps service-related conditions
- For information regarding treatment after diagnosis of injury or illness incurred while a Volunteer or other illness or disability issue related to your Peace Corps service; and for Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) claims

Contact: Medical Records Department

855.855.1961, ext. 1502, or 202.692.1502

- To obtain a copy of your health records (with written authorization)

Contact: Peace Corps Health Benefit Program

800.544.1802

- For medical billing/reimbursement issues related to 127C authorization
- For medical billing/reimbursement issues related to AfterCorps, call 855.855.1961, ext. 1540, or 202.692.1540

Early Termination (ET)

Contact: Office of Counseling and Outreach

855.855.1961, ext. 1470, or 202.692.1470

- If you decide to ET while in the United States on home leave or emergency leave, you need to contact the Office of Counseling and Outreach. If you decide to ET while in your country of service, you need to contact your in-country staff.

Financial Issues, Taxes, Descriptions of Service

Contact: Volunteer Financial Operations

855.855.1961, ext. 1770, or 202.692.1770

- For readjustment allowance questions
- For verification of Peace Corps service for an employer or college (oral and/or written)
- For copies of your description of service (DOS)
- For income tax questions and W-2 forms
- For loan deferment, cancellation, and economic hardship certifications
- For information about U.S. Savings Bonds

Request Information from Your Peace Corps File

Contact: Office of Management

855.855.1961, ext. 1236, or 202.692.1236

- For requests related to your in-country files and your Volunteer application file, or any other Peace Corps records, submit questions to the Privacy Act Officer
- For a copy of your medical file, contact the Medical Records Department directly at 202.692.1502

Stay Connected to the Peace Corps

Participate in the Peace Corps' Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program:

855.855.1961, ext. 1440, or 202.692.1440

Coverdell World Wise Schools (as a classroom speaker):

855.855.1961, ext. 1450, or 202.692.1450

Peace Corps Response (as a Volunteer):

855.855.1961, ext. 2250, or 202.692.2250

National Peace Corps Association

Note: NPCA is a separate entity from the Peace Corps

www.peacecorpsconnect.org or 202.293.7728

To Update Your Address

For Peace Corps mailings and to update your records, visit:

www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/info or e-mail rpcvupdate@peacecorps.gov

Other Questions About Reentry Services

Refer to the Career Resource Manual;

Contact the Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services at

855.855.1961, ext. 1430, or 202.692.1430;

or visit www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv

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Introduction

Thank you for your Peace Corps service, and welcome to your COS Conference.

The acronym “COS” has two meanings: *close of service* and *continuation of service*, and you will hear both terms during your conference.

You will focus on bringing closure to your service and completing your work in-country. This is also a time to say goodbye to counterparts, friends, and host families.

For many Peace Corps Volunteers, community service becomes a life-long commitment. Most returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) will tell you that Peace Corps service was one of the most significant experiences of their lives. Many RPCVs get involved in Third Goal activities and other kinds of community service after returning to the United States. Through your overseas service, you have gained exceptional experience working in underserved communities and with people of different cultural backgrounds. You can apply these skills back home by continuing your commitment to community service.

Once you close your overseas service, you will officially be a returned Peace Corps Volunteer. As an RPCV, you return to the United States with a new set of skills and abilities, a deeper understanding of people from other cultures, and a different perspective on the world. You will have the opportunity to make a difference in your own country on behalf of the country and people you served as a Volunteer.

This handbook provides information to assist you in bringing your service overseas to a close and begin planning for Third Goal activities. It also offers useful tips for your transition and serves as a reference for post-service opportunities. It includes a COS checklist, information about the *RPCV Career Link* jobs and scholarship board and other free RPCV resources, addresses for Peace Corps regional offices, and descriptions about other programs of interest.

We hope you find this useful as you conclude your Peace Corps service and transition to life as an RPCV. Thank you for your service, and best of luck with the transition!

For the most up-to-date information related to RPCVs, visit www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv.

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Making the Most of Close of Service: Advice for Volunteers

The Close of Service (COS) Conference has four objectives: to discuss the Peace Corps experience, to address post-Peace Corps readjustment, to help in career planning, and to offer suggestions for Third Goal opportunities. This conference is the only time during your Peace Corps service that these issues are discussed formally within the PCV group.

The Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services – at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. – offers the following suggestions to help you maximize the benefits of your COS conference.

Be Sure to Attend Your COS Conference

Sometimes, the timing of the COS conference isn't right for everyone in the group. Each PCV has his or her own level of emotional readiness for dealing with post-Peace Corps issues. If you are one of the ones for whom the timing of the conference is just right, enjoy and participate. If the timing is not right for you, go anyway and try to get as much out of the conference as you can.

Contribute

The conference is for PCVs, and its success depends on your willingness to discuss what are sometimes tough issues. Help one another begin the transition process of ending Peace Corps service and returning to the United States.

Listen

Listen to other PCVs' ideas and

opinions about COS issues. As you have learned in training and throughout your service, there are many ways of assessing issues and solving problems. You may be able to address your concerns with your fellow PCVs' assistance and help them address theirs in turn.

Recognize This Emotional Time and Share Concerns

Thinking about COS issues can be exciting, scary, sad, exhilarating, confusing, awful, and wonderful all at once. Experiencing these contradictory emotions is to be expected. Once a PCV begins to talk about his or her emotions, others will do so as well.

Consider Next Steps

The COS Conference is not the place to make monumental decisions about your future, but it will provide an opportunity for you to consider important issues, such as how to approach your next career steps, how to ensure the continuation of your projects, and how to say goodbye.

The Peace Corps Will Help When You're Back Home

Once you return to the United States, the Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services and other Peace Corps offices can help you with career and education transition and readjustment. Visit www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv for additional information.

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Before Leaving the Country: A Close of Service Checklist

Ask for Recommendations from Supervisors

The Peace Corps will provide you with a Description of Service (DOS); however, the DOS should not be regarded as a reference for job applications. Rather, it is simply a factual account of your Peace Corps service. Ask an Associate Peace Corps Director (APCD) or site supervisor to write you a recommendation before you leave. After you get home, it will be much more difficult to locate or communicate with a former supervisor.

Write Your DOS Statement

The DOS includes the training you completed, the tasks you performed, and your accomplishments. This is the only official record of your training and service as a Volunteer, and it is your responsibility to ensure that your DOS is accurate and complete. Should you decide to work for the federal government, the DOS will document your eligibility for various benefits. Unfortunately, many PCVs either forget to pick up their signed DOS or lose it in their country of service. If you get home and find you no longer have your DOS, contact Volunteer and PSC Services (VPS) at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. Contact information can be found on the first page of this document.

Keep All Training Certificates

Some of the training you received as a Peace Corps Trainee or Volunteer can be credited toward college or professional certification. Hold on to your training certificates because they cannot be replaced.

Keep Your Language Proficiency Certificate

If you think you are going to need your language score when you're back home, hold on to your language certificate, as well. The Peace Corps does not keep copies of these and will not test you again in the United States.

If you lose your language certificate, the Office of Programming and Training Support at Peace Corps headquarters may be able to provide you with your score. To request your score after you have completed service, you can email the Language Testing Specialist at Peace Corps headquarters at lpj@peacecorps.gov.

Collect Contact Information of Your Volunteer Friends

The U.S. Privacy Act prevents Peace Corps staff from releasing personal contact information of returned Volunteers. You should gather this from your Volunteer friends before you complete your service.

Trade Addresses With Your Host Country Friends

One of the best ways to relieve Peace Corps homesickness is to stay in contact with your host country friends. You may need to think about setting up a method of communicating with friends who are unable to read or write.

Select Health Insurance

Remember, Peace Corps health care stops when you end service, even if you remain in country. Therefore, you are strongly advised to purchase health care insurance prior to closing your service.

The Peace Corps recognizes that you may not have health insurance upon your immediate return to the United States. For this reason, we provide you with the opportunity to purchase the AfterCorps Insurance Plan, a personal health insurance policy designed specifically for returned Volunteers.

The purchase of AfterCorps is not mandatory. The Peace Corps pays the first month's premium for Volunteers. Spouses are also eligible for AfterCorps; however, the Volunteer must pay all monthly premiums for a spouse, including for the first month.

You may find it difficult to enroll in a health insurance plan immediately upon returning to the States, so you should consider signing up for the full coverage through AfterCorps. This suggestion is especially pertinent if you are planning to travel before going home. It is also a good idea to carry the address of the insurance company with you. You can find more information on the AfterCorps policy options and premiums at <http://peacecorps.sevencorners.com/plan4.cfm>.

Take Care of Financial Obligations

In your host country, be sure to settle all accounts and save receipts to prove those accounts have been paid. Outstanding bills from years past may come back to haunt you later. In the States, be sure to address deferred obligations. For example, student loans that were deferred while you were in the Peace Corps might have to be restarted as early as one month after your COS date.

Take More Pictures and Get More Souvenirs

Not keeping mementos is a common regret among returned Volunteers. You can never have enough pictures, leather bags, or wooden masks. Some Volunteers pack newspapers, food package labels, and favorite recipes. Music is important as well; you might wish to tape one of the local radio programs. Take back whatever you can to help remember your Peace Corps service.

Prepare Yourself for Tax Time

Check with your administrative officer to get country-specific information to help you file your U.S. tax return. Once in the States, if you need assistance with taxes related to your in-country living allowance and readjustment allowance, contact Volunteer Financial Operations in Washington, DC at taxhelp@peacecorps.gov. Peace Corps will mail you a W-2 to your current address on record after the last week of January in the year following your close of service. Your current record defaults to your home of record unless you update it by visiting www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/info.

Plan Your Travel on the no-fee Passport

Volunteers may use their no-fee passports for travel up to 90-days after completion of service except for travel in countries where travel by U. S. citizens has been restricted by the Department of State. These restrictions are usually stamped inside all passports. No-fee passports may be retained by the Volunteer following completion of service travel. Volunteers who retain their no-fee passports are not authorized to use their no-fee passports to travel beyond 90-days after completion of service.

3

Reentry, Readjustment, and Reverse Culture Shock

The experience of returning to the United States after living in another country is commonly referred to as the reentry or readjustment period and is often accompanied by reverse culture shock. The intensity of returning to a familiar culture—yet feeling like a stranger—is something you will probably experience.

Many RPCVs have said that reentry from their Peace Corps service was one of the most significant transitions of their lives. Many have recalled the challenges and difficulties of returning home. They searched for meaningful employment. They struggled to identify with their own culture – one that does not always share their global attitudes and cultural tolerance. They sought to understand why they sometimes felt disconnected from society, including from family and friends who had not experienced what they had. They tried to understand the abundance of food, technology, and choices for just about anything. They realized they were different, but were not sure who they were or how they had changed. Most RPCVs would agree that they did finally readjust well, but, they did not put their Peace Corps experience behind them. Instead, they took it with them and threaded it through their lives.

The reentry experience is generally characterized by four stages: a preparatory period (putting closure on your Peace Corps experience and mentally focusing on the impending transition); the honeymoon period at home (feeling glad to be home, seeing friends and family, and getting

back to the things you missed); a low period (feeling foreign in your own culture, sometimes accompanied by a negative attitude); and the final readjustment period (integrating both cultures through positive activity). It is the fourth stage that presents opportunities to grow and truly thrive. The fourth stage is also when RPCVs recommit themselves to service by starting their lifelong commitment to the Third Goal of the Peace Corps: Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of all Americans.

The Four Components of Reentry

As returned Peace Corps Volunteers know, those going through post-Peace Corps transition will need to cope with at least four major issues: 1) losses associated with leaving the country of service; 2) change in employment; 3) cross-cultural adaptation; and 4) changes in expectations. Each component of reentry has the potential to cause difficulty for an RPCV. However, identifying and understanding these components may help you cope more effectively with the transition.

Losses

Losses associated with leaving a Peace Corps assignment include loss of role, loss of status, and loss of a major support network.

Loss of role occurs when Peace Corps Volunteers leave their work. Trained for critically needed roles in schools, organizations, or villag-

es, PCVs are often viewed as experts in the workplace. They are given major responsibilities and exercise much autonomy in their assignments. Conversely, subsequent U.S. employers rarely delegate major responsibilities with as much autonomy, particularly to younger employees.

Loss of status is a second loss experienced by RPCVs. In country, PCVs are typically perceived as different – usually as special – by host country citizens. Further enhancing PCVs' status in country are their cross-cultural understanding, indigenous language ability, and commitment to living and working in ways similar to their host country neighbors. Returning home generally means reverting to a situation where RPCVs are not viewed and treated as exceptional.

Loss of a major support network is a third loss characteristic of RPCVs. The Peace Corps expends much time and energy in pre-service training to help PCVs create a primary support group for themselves. Other PCVs, host country family members, co-workers, and friends become part of a stimulating learning environment and support network. Additionally, Peace Corps staff members visit PCVs at their workplaces; act as technical program consultants; give attention and feedback; mediate workplace and personal conflicts; and meet some programmatic, medical, and emotional needs. All these network elements established in country are dismantled when Volunteers return to the United States.

End of Employment

The second major component of the post-Peace Corps transition is change in employment. Ending Peace Corps service means leaving your job – of-

ten an important one that you cared passionately about. Such a major professional transition can be stressful, especially when accompanied by real financial concerns. RPCVs are not eligible for unemployment compensation, and the modest readjustment allowance doesn't go far.

Many Volunteers also lack experience with career decision-making and job-seeking principles. Knowing how to conduct a self-assessment, research occupations and work environments, and implement an effective job-search strategy will make your transition go much more smoothly. To help you get back on the career or education track, the Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services provides a variety of programs. See the Career Resource Manual for more information.

Cross-Cultural Adaptation

The third major component of the post-Peace Corps transition is cross-cultural adaptation. The most challenging cross-cultural changes for RPCVs are usually physical. The slow pace of life in much of the developing world is often in marked contrast to the hectic pace in much of the United States. Driving everywhere instead of walking is unfamiliar, and the consumer choices in the United States can be staggering. Overseas styles of dress may be inappropriate or unacceptable in the United States. Change of diet can contribute to changes in energy levels and in feelings of general well-being. Health problems that started in the host country may continue back home.

A second area of cross-cultural adaptation is reassimilation of U.S.

cultural norms. Volunteers in their host countries sometimes do not speak English for weeks at a time. They may dream in their new languages and integrate host country culture into their behaviors and assumptions. Assimilation overseas is gradual, beginning with three months of Peace Corps training. Reassimilation into the United States is similarly gradual. English can sound strange. North Americans may look and act differently from what RPCVs remember.

Feeling out of the mainstream and viewing old friends, family members, and past situations through the filter of Peace Corps life are common experiences for returning Volunteers. Further complicating reassimilation into U.S. life are the autonomous nature and length of Peace Corps service. To be successful, PCVs must be relatively autonomous. They often live in isolated villages with few transportation options. They learn to rely on their instincts and good sense. Operating with such autonomy for two or more years may result in difficulty accepting direction, information, advice, and supervision from family members, friends, and potential employers upon reentry.

A third area of cross-cultural adaptation is change in values. Strong identity with host country values and those of the Peace Corps is common among RPCVs. Many return to the United States determined not to lose values learned and practiced during their Peace Corps service. Back home, RPCVs often become more sensitive to the lack of respect some show toward the values of other nations and may strive for a simpler lifestyle.

Changes in Expectations

The fourth major component of the post-Peace Corps transition is change in expectations. As with any change, how realistic someone is about the transition can skew the experience positively or negatively. In the early 1960s, the Peace Corps expected RPCVs to reassimilate with little difficulty. Similarly, current Volunteers may underestimate how difficult their post-Peace Corps transitions will be. Having overcome major cross-cultural and language barriers in other countries, the inevitable transition back to the United States seems less problematic. Others, recognizing the changes in themselves, wonder how they will fare upon returning to their former environments.

The expectations of others, such as pre-Peace Corps friends and family members, are also part of this transition component. Some family members and friends may expect a Volunteer to return more or less unchanged. This is as unrealistic as Volunteers believing nothing at home will have changed while they were gone.

As during Peace Corps training, RPCVs should fashion a support group to rely on. Unlike pre-service or community-based training, this group will not be ready-made and will have to be created from other RPCVs, family members, and new and old friends.

Coping with Reentry

There are specific behaviors and attitudes RPCVs can cultivate for a smoother landing in the United States. Working chronologically, the first of these is to orchestrate a smooth departure from your host country.

Before You Leave

Before you leave your post, be sure to do all the things you always wanted to do but never got around to doing. Buy the carpet, crystal, or sweater you have been eyeing for months. Take the trip you have been putting off. Visit your favorite places and indulge in favorite pastimes one last time. Go to the restaurant that was the scene of so many good memories. Have the dish no one else prepares quite as well as they do. Maybe there is a view of your village or city you want to see one last time, a park you want to visit, a walk you want to take.

In the same way, visit all the people you want to see before leaving and say a proper thank you and a proper goodbye. This should not be left for the last week—or even the last month. Some of these people may be in other parts of the country or away on vacation or on business the week you are leaving. If you wait until the last minute to contact them, it may be too late. You may think you do not need to say goodbye to some of your PCV friends because they will be going back to the States, too. You should remember that the United States is a big place, and you might end up living far away from one another.

Another thing you should do while you are still in country is to identify your expectations about going home. What kind of reception are you expecting? Do you assume people are going to be interested in what has

happened to you? Are you expecting to be able to pick up where you left off in your key relationships? Do you assume people will realize you have changed? Do you expect them to like the “new” you? How are you going to feel about living back in the land of hundreds of channels and grocery stores the size of your village?

After You Arrive

While all the issues discussed above are certainly real enough, for many returnees the surprise of reentry is almost as hard as the reentry itself. Although it will not relieve you entirely of the discomfort associated with readjustment, proper preparation will ease the process.

Above all, give yourself time to reenter and readjust to the States as well as to your friends and family. Do not expect to hit the ground running, immediately happy and content. Do not judge your country and your compatriots too soon or too harshly in the beginning. You used to like this place and these people; you can probably learn to do so again, if you are patient. And patience is one thing you have learned in the Peace Corps.

Remember that you do not have to tell all your stories and show all your pictures on your first day back. Let your Peace Corps story come out slowly, over time, in digestible doses suitable to your audience. Ask people what happened to them in the past two years, and listen carefully to their answers.

Try to avoid the temptation to publicly compare the States unfavorably with Tonga or Romania, for example. (In private or with other RPCVs, you can be more open.)

This practice may rub people the wrong way. They may ask you, “If it’s so bad here, why did you come back?” If this question does come up, be careful not to let your friends and loved ones feel threatened and rejected. You may not mean that you are unhappy being among them again, but you should not be surprised if they think so.

One of the best things you can do to cope with reentry is to seek out other RPCVs, ideally from your same host country. Talking to other RPCVs allows you to vent some of your frustrations and reassures you that you are not alone. You will find out it is perfectly normal to want to eat with your fingers in fancy restaurants and that you are not the only person hanging your laundry on the front hedge to dry.

Once in the United States, you can join an RPCV alumni or “Friends of” group. These independent organizations—comprising a nationwide network of approximately 140 RPCV geographic and country-of-service groups—can assist newly returned Volunteers with readjustment and job-search issues. They provide a ready-made professional network of people in different fields. Some groups consist of RPCVs in a given region or city, while other groups are national in scope, consisting of RPCVs who served in the same country. Although alumni groups are as diverse as the RPCVs who organized them, membership gives a sense of shared service and common experience. These are great resources to help you stay connected with other RPCVs.

Remember, too, that you have experienced transitions before—not necessarily reentry, but other unsettling periods in your life when you had

to make adjustments and changes in your lifestyle and your self-perception—and you managed. Reentry is just another transition, albeit on a scale you may not have had to contend with before. Think back to how you felt when you were going through culture shock in your host country. It all seemed like a lot then, but you lived to tell about it. And you will this time as well.

Finally, do not be afraid of readjusting. Your Peace Corps experience has changed you at your core. You will continue to add layers to your personality and character the rest of your life, and your Peace Corps experience will always be a part of who you are.

Leaving Service Early: Reentry with a Twist

The reasons behind early termination are complicated and often involve extremely difficult choices and complex circumstances.

The reentry process, which is a significant transition in and of itself, may become more complicated as a result of early termination. This is not to say that all PCVs who end service early will have a more difficult time with reentry than PCVs who have completed their service as planned. However, there are certain characteristics of early termination that may add to the already complex process of reentry. Consider the following:

Control and Choice

Control and choice over our lives and life decisions are extremely important in successful transitions. Often the decision to terminate early is not under the control of the Volunteer, nor is it the choice of the

Volunteer. More likely, it is the better of two or more choices, none of which is ideal.

Preparation

Having time to prepare for change is always helpful and is usually central to any adjustment process. However, there is usually little time, and in some cases almost no time, to prepare when terminating early. Goodbyes to friends, colleagues, and counterparts are usually rushed or sometimes not possible. There is often a sense of leaving work projects and relationships unfinished or incomplete.

Closure

Achieving closure as we make transitions is often an important part of the processes of leaving. Most Volunteers who terminate early do not have the opportunity to participate in a Close of Service (COS) Conference with their training group. The Peace Corps offers the COS Conference as a formal opportunity for closure, and it constitutes one of the first steps in preparing to leave. Lack of a COS Conference may be experienced as another loss by PCVs who have to end their service early.

Reasons for Leaving

There are many reasons a PCV cannot or should not remain in service until their completion of service date. Early terminations may fall into the following categories: resignation, medical separation, administrative separation, and interrupted service. Resignation is a decision made by a PCV that he or she no longer wishes to continue in Peace Corps service. Medical separation is a decision made by the Office of Medical Services that a PCV's medical condition

cannot be medically accommodated or resolved within 45 days. Administrative separation is a determination by the Peace Corps that a PCV should not continue in Peace Corps service. Interrupted service is a determination by the country director that circumstances beyond the control of the PCV make it necessary for the PCV to leave his or her present assignment.

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Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services

The Peace Corps is authorized to undertake programs to counsel Volunteers on opportunities for further education and employment after their return from service.

The Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services provides career, education, and transition assistance to the thousands of Peace Corps Volunteers who return to the United States each year. If you have a question or need any help upon returning, think of us as your frontline resource. You can reach us at 855.855.1961, ext. 1430; 202.692.1430; or at rvs@peacecorps.gov.

Most RPCV information can be found on the Peace Corps website: www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv. You can find information on noncompetitive eligibility, accompanied by a downloadable letter addressed to federal employers. You can also find answers to frequently asked questions, such as “How do I get a copy of my description of service? How can I get assistance with financial and medical issues? How can I change my address? How can I stay connected with the Peace Corps?” To access these and many more FAQs, visit www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/faqs.

A summary of services follows:

RPCV Career Link – A Hot Job Search Tool for RPCVs!

RPCV Career Link (formerly Hotline) is an online jobs board of employment and educational opportunities. It contains job announcements from employers interested in hiring

RPCVs, as well as scholarship announcements from educational institutions interested in enrolling RPCVs into their programs. To browse opportunities, visit www.peacecorps.gov/rpcvcareerlink.

Please help us keep this network alive! If you hear of a job that would be well-suited for RPCVs or know of an employer who would be interested in hiring RPCVs, please connect them with our free resources at www.peacecorps.gov/rpcvcareerlink.

RPCV Mentoring Program

For Peace Corps Volunteers, it has often been said that the hardest thing about the experience is adjusting to life back home. That’s why in 2007 the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA), in conjunction with the Peace Corps, created a unique program to help returning Volunteers link up with RPCV mentors.

A mentor can help you make the most of the network of Peace Corps resources available to you and provide invaluable emotional support as you transition back to your life in the United States.

Via phone, email, and face-to-face meetings, these mentors help ease the difficult transition, provide a connection to the RPCV community at large, and can say some of the most comforting words in the English language, namely, “I know what you’re going through. I’ve been there.”

More information regarding the

program is available at www.rpcv-mentoring.org or by emailing mentor@rpcv.org.

Career Events

The Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services hosts periodic D.C. and regional career events that offer you the chance to meet and talk one-on-one with representatives from many organizations that are interested in hiring returned Peace Corps Volunteers. Selected for their special appeal to RPCVs, these organizations typically come from the educational, healthcare, international development, business, environmental, and nonprofit sectors, and include federal agencies. Career fairs are held at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, DC, and in various cities around the United States. The career fairs are very popular and are heavily attended. Career event schedules and updates, including career fair attendees, are available at www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/events, and in RPCV Career Link.

Third Party Job Bulletins

The Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services subscribes to a variety of industry-specific online job bulletins, including international, environmental, and public health publications. We provide RPCVs and soon-to-COS PCVs access to these services for FREE. For a list of available online job bulletins, visit www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv or contact us at 855.855.1961, ext. 1430; 202.692.1430; or rvs@peacecorps.gov.

Online Career Assessment Software

To help you assess your career-

related interests, abilities, and job values, the Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services offers Focus Careers, an interactive career and education planning system. This questionnaire-based program will help you determine career options that are a good match for you. The online software combines self assessment, career exploration, and decision making into one comprehensive program. Focus Careers help users narrow down their results to plan their education and career paths. E-mail us at rvs@peacecorps.gov for a free password.

Career Resource Manual

The Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services publishes the Career Resource Manual, which contains information on self-assessment, networking, résumés, and cover letters. The Career Resource Manual is loaded on the Digital COS Kit under RVS Publications. If you need an electronic version of this publication sent to you, please send an email to rvs@peacecorps.gov.

RPCV Handbook

This is the electronic resource you are now reading. Though you may not be able to focus too intently on it now, we hope it proves useful as you make your transition. We are always looking to improve our offerings so if you have suggestions for this handbook, please e-mail us at rvs@peacecorps.gov.

Career Center

The RPCV Career Center is located at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. It is staffed by an RPCV Career Counselor who can help you with your job or education search. The center features computers, telephones, a fax machine, a photocopier, a resource shelf with career guidance books, a database of organizations and companies, and a housing and employment bulletin board. For more information, call 855.855.1961, ext. 1433, or 202.692.1433.

Smaller career resource areas are available at regional recruiting offices throughout the United States.

Noncompetitive Eligibility (NCE)

After an RPCV successfully completes their tour of service, they are granted 12-months of noncompetitive eligibility (commonly referred to by its acronym, NCE), a special federal hiring status. NCE is awarded by your Country Director and language explaining this can be found at the bottom of your DOS (Description of Service) document. (Note: The Country Director may issue certification to Volunteers who have satisfactorily served and whose termination is determined to be for reasons beyond the Volunteer's control.) Country Directors will include the certification statement as the final paragraph on the DOS for Volunteers granted this benefit.

NCE can be a bit confusing, but this section is designed in a Q & A format to help answer some commonly asked questions about NCE. If, after completing your COS Conference and reviewing this section, you still have questions, feel free to contact the Office of Third Goal and

Returned Volunteer Services (contact information is listed on the last page of this document).

What is NCE exactly?

Under the Provisions of Executive Order (EO) 11103 (5 CFR, § 315.605), certain returned Peace Corps Volunteers are awarded one year of noncompetitive eligibility (NCE) for selection for federal employment. This eligibility does not mean that returned Volunteers are entitled to federal employment.

However, although noncompetitive eligibility does not require, it does permit an agency to hire a returned Volunteer who meets the minimum qualifications for the position without going through all of the formalities of the competitive process. The decision whether to hire a returned Volunteer under noncompetitive eligibility is within the discretion of the hiring agency. Therefore, to alleviate any confusion it is advised that RPCVs make the hiring agency aware of their remaining NCE as clearly as possible.

What are competitive service positions?

Congress has established laws, policies, and procedures governing employment. This formal process is designed to eliminate discrimination and favoritism and to provide fair and open competition so that hiring and promotion are based on merit. These competitive service jobs are governed by specific examination or appointment procedures as set out by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Thus, RPCVs (with NCE) who have an interest in a "competitive service" position may be hired more easily because that employing

agency can select that RPCV without going through all the competitive-related hiring procedures.

How do I make sure the employing agency is aware of my NCE?

RVS has developed a sample cover letter that can be tailored to help explain NCE status to the hiring agency. The regulatory authority for NCE is set out under Title 5 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) § 315.605. RPCVs should highlight NCE status in their cover letter, on their resume, and through the supplemental documents area most online applications systems provide.

In addition, we have made available an informational letter from Peace Corps that RPCVs may also give to prospective federal employers explaining their noncompetitive eligibility. This letter can be found at www.peacecorps.gov/nce.

How do I prove NCE?

NCE is officially granted to you through your Description of Service (DOS) and is proved by attaching a copy of your DOS when applying for a federal job. The DOS will reference “Executive Order 11103,” which is the Presidential directive that established NCE. If you have misplaced your original DOS, the Peace Corps can send you a copy. Contact the Office of Volunteer and PSC Financial Services for a copy at certifications@peacecorps.gov.

How do I prove NCE without filling in a grade and series on the application?

Many federal applications require that you enter your grade and series when proving NCE. RPCVs do not have a grade and series since they were Volunteers and weren't federal employees. An RPCV must contact

the employing agency to determine how they should fill out an application that requires a grade and series in order to prove NCE.

Can NCE be extended?

Noncompetitive eligibility can be extended by the hiring agency for up to two additional years (which would equal a maximum of three years from the COS date) for three reasons. Again, please see 5 CFR § 315.605. These reasons are:

- If after Peace Corps service, you enter the military.
- If you study at a recognized institution of higher learning. This normally means becoming a full-time student.
- If you engage in another activity that the hiring agency thinks warrants an extension. The Federal Personnel Manual states, “Generally, work experience which is pertinent to the position being filled and which can be expected to enhance the candidate’s performance and value to the agency could be an appropriate basis for extension. Extensions should not be granted routinely, but should be reserved for situations in which the activity has truly enhanced the RPCV’s value to the agency.”

Can noncompetitive eligibility be “used up” during the 12 month period?

The answer to this question is “no.” You are able to use your noncompetitive eligibility more than once during the period of eligibility if the hiring agency permits you to do so.

Does noncompetitive eligibility apply only to federal positions?

Yes. NCE is applicable only to federal government positions. Noncompetitive eligibility does not apply to state or local government jobs.

5

Peace Corps Headquarters – Administrative Information

After returning home, Peace Corps Volunteers often have questions or needs related to Peace Corps service. This chapter addresses the questions most frequently asked by PCVs and RPCVs and identifies the appropriate Peace Corps office to contact for additional information.

Financial (Readjustment Allowance, Taxes, Student Loans, etc.)

All questions relating to an RPCV's finances should be directed to Volunteer Financial Operations (VFO). The final portion of your readjustment allowance is usually mailed to you two to four weeks after Peace Corps/Washington receives the COS/early termination e-mail from your country of service. If you have not received it after four weeks, contact VFO.

Federal income tax withholding statements (W-2s) are mailed to RPCVs by the end of January in the year following close of service. A tax guide accompanies the W-2. RPCVs are not eligible to receive unemployment compensation.

Questions about student loan deferments during PCV service and Perkins Loan cancellations after PCV service should be directed to VFO or the lending institution.

Description of Service

The Volunteer Description of Service (DOS) is an official Peace Corps statement of a Volunteer's service. It describes the Volunteer's training and overseas activities in non-evaluative terms. The DOS is a publicly avail-

able document.

A Volunteer who terminates service while away from post will prepare the DOS and forward it to the post for the Country Director's approval and signature. The Country Director will then return the original DOS to the Volunteer, send one copy to CFO/VPS and file one copy at post.

For questions regarding your DOS, please contact certifications@peacecorps.gov.

Medical Issues

RPCVs with medical problems resulting from their Peace Corps service may require a medical or dental evaluation. Your PCMO may have given you a PC 127C authorization for evaluation. This can be used within six months of COS. For service-connected conditions that require evaluation, RPCVs should call the post-service unit in the Office of Medical Services. Post-service staff also can provide you with information about filing a Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) claim and mail you the necessary forms. The following section provides more information on FECA.

Questions about your post-service health insurance should be directed to AfterCorps, or another carrier, should you choose not to continue with AfterCorps.

Federal Employees' Compensation Program

The Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) provides medical and disability compensation to Volunteers after service for injuries or illnesses that are related to their Peace Corps service. The FECA is administered by the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP), U.S. Department of Labor. This office is solely responsible for adjudicating all claims.

In general, any injury or illness deemed to be the result of your Peace Corps service may be claimed under FECA. The following are excluded from coverage:

- Conditions caused by willful misconduct
- Conditions caused by the Volunteer's intention to bring about the injury or death of self or another
- Conditions caused by the intoxication of the injured Volunteer
- Injuries occurring or illnesses contracted in the United States that were not related to the performance of Peace Corps duties

If you have a compensable injury or illness and would like to file a claim when you reach COS, please discuss your medical conditions with the Peace Corps medical officer and ensure that there is an entry in your official health record that mentions these conditions. When you return to the United States, contact the Peace Corps Office of Medical Services' post-service unit at 855.855.1961, ext. 1540.

6

Peace Corps Regional Recruiting Offices

Help Recruit the Next Generation of Volunteers

As a returned Peace Corps Volunteer, you are the best advertisement the Peace Corps has. When you return home, prospective Volunteers will want to talk with you about your service—the rewards and challenges—so they can gauge whether the Peace Corps is right for them. By sharing your stories, you will not only help recruit the next generation of Peace Corps Volunteers, but also contribute greatly to the Peace Corps' Third Goal of helping to promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of all Americans. (Read more about third-goal opportunities in the following chapter.)

Staying connected with the Peace Corps and talking about your service in conjunction with recruitment activities will also help ease your readjustment; in a sense, you will be continuing your service here at home. Many RPCVs have reported that by talking to others about their host country friends and experiences, their feelings of reverse culture shock and “homesickness” for their host countries was easier to bear.

You can stay connected with the Peace Corps by working with your local regional recruiting office on recruitment events and publicity activities as well as by becoming a member of the national or local RPCV organizations. Through such membership in the national or a local RPCV group you will not only learn about opportunities to help with Peace Corps recruitment efforts, but you will also be

part of a national or local network that could help in your job search or continuing education efforts.

Your support of, and participation in, Peace Corps recruitment and Third Goal activities are sure to be fun and informative—and is greatly appreciated!

Ways to assist with recruitment, support the Peace Corps' Third Goal, and ease your own transition:

- Speak with applicants about the Peace Corps program you worked in or provide country information to invitees preparing to leave.
- Speak to a class at a postsecondary institution.
- Staff a recruiting table at a career fair or community event.
- Submit a story or photo to the Peace Corps Digital Library at <http://collection.peacecorps.gov>.
- Participate in events sponsored by Peace Corps recruiting offices, such as nomination parties, Volunteer send-off celebrations, applicant/family roundtables, picnics, and general information sessions at schools and community venues.

How to facilitate participation in Peace Corps activities and programs:

- Complete the Privacy Act Release form that you receive in your COS kit, and return it to your COS conference presenter or mail it to: RPCV Program Specialist, Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Service-

es, Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Headquarters, 1111 20th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20526. (This is how we know you want to help.)

- Keep your contact information current through the Peace Corps website, at www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/info.
 - An RPCV group. These groups help promote the Peace Corps and support recruitment activities. Your local recruiting office can direct you to regional RPCV groups that are eager to meet you.
 - Search for Peace Corps recruiting events in your area. Visit www.peacecorps.gov and scroll down to the section “Find Local Events.” You also can add your own event to this site by contacting your local recruiting office.
 - Contact your local recruiting office if you are attending a college or university and are willing to share your experiences with a class at an information session or one-on-one with other students. The recruiting office will provide support and resources, such as fliers and presentation templates.
 - Complete the Close of Service Hometown Questionnaire that you received in your COS kit.
- This will enable a public affairs specialist in your regional recruiting office to contact you and try to get a story in your local newspaper or school publication about your service.
- Send a friend who may be interested in the Peace Corps a message with a link to the Peace Corps website. Visit www.peacecorps.gov, “Returned Volunteers,” “Help Us Recruit.”
 - Find a speaking opportunity in your community by registering for the Speakers Match program at www.peacecorps.gov/wws/speakersmatch.
 - Participate in Third Goal activities. Visit the Peace Corps Third Goal website, www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal. You will receive a presentation kit with resources to help you prepare for and promote your Third Goal presentation.
 - Keep your stories alive and forward prospective applicants to your local regional recruiting office.
 - Just call us and let us know you’d like to help!

A list of regional recruiting offices follows:

Atlanta

(AL, FL, GA, MS, PR, SC, TN,
USVI)
60 Forsyth Street
Suite 3M40
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404.562.3456
Fax: 404.562.3455
E-mail: atlinfo@peacecorps.gov

Chicago

(IA, IL, IN, KY, MI, MN, MO,
ND, OH, SD, WI)
55 West Monroe Street
Suite 450
Chicago, IL 60603
Phone: 312.353.4990
Fax: 312.353.4192
E-mail: chicago@peacecorps.gov

Dallas

(AR, CO, KS, LA, NE, NM, OK,
TX, UT, WY)
1100 Commerce St
Suite 427
Dallas, TX 75242
Phone: 214.253.5400
Fax: 214.253.5401
E-mail: dallas@peacecorps.gov

Los Angeles

(AZ; Southern CA)
2361 Rosecrans Avenue
Suite 155
El Segundo, CA 90245
Phone: 310.356.1100
Fax: 310.356.1125
E-mail: lainfo@peacecorps.gov

Mid-Atlantic

(DC, DE, MD, NC, VA, WV)
Attn: Recruitment Office
1111 20th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20526
P: 202.692.1040
F: 202.692.1065
dcinfo@peacecorps.gov

Northeast

(CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA,
RI, VT)
201 Varick Street
Suite 1025
New York, NY 10014
Phone: 212.637.6498
Fax: 212.352.5441
E-mail: nyinfo@peacecorps.gov

San Francisco

(Northern CA, HI, NV)
1301 Clay Street
Suite 620N
Oakland, CA 94612
Phone: 415.977.8800
Fax: 415.977.8803
E-mail: sfinfo@peacecorps.gov

Seattle

(AK, ID, MT, OR, WA)
1601 Fifth Avenue
Suite 605
Seattle, WA 98101
Phone: 206.553.5490
Fax: 206.553.2343
E-mail: seattle@peacecorps.gov

7

Continuation of Service: The Third Goal

As you may very well already be aware, a Peace Corps Volunteer's job does not end once he or she returns to the United States. Quite to the contrary, this is often the time when an important, integral stage of Volunteer service begins. As a returned Peace Corps Volunteer you have the privilege and responsibility of being an ambassador of your host country to your American family, friends, and communities. It is a wonderful opportunity, as you can help people in the United States begin to understand the culture with which you have become so familiar.

At the same time, we recognize that it can be daunting to try to explain food, customs, dress, living conditions and attitudes which have become second nature to you to audiences that don't have this background or perspective, and often have a devastatingly short attention span. To assist with this challenge, the Peace Corps Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services is proud to provide a variety of Third Goal resources and opportunities.

Prepare Your Story In-Country

The Peace Corps encourages RPCVs, PCVs, and Peace Corps families to tell their stories and to relate the everyday experiences of Volunteer life through articles and interviews with the media as well as through presentations to students and community groups. In this way, you can explain the work you have done, dispel stereotypes, and share with fellow

Americans elements of the culture in which you've lived. We recognize that after living anywhere for a prolonged period of time, it can be difficult to decide what might interest people who haven't lived there, so we would like to offer some suggestions. During your last few months in country, here are some ways you can prepare for future Third Goal activities:

Photos and Videos

Photographs and videos are a great way to share your Peace Corps experience. Images from your service can be used in published articles and in visual presentations including slide shows, PowerPoint presentations, and exhibitions of photographic prints. Color shots are best for presentations to large groups. People will want to see you, too—not just your host country friends or co-workers—so, don't be too modest. Get close-up shots, since newspaper reproductions often lose details.

Photos showing some kind of action or personal interaction are far more interesting than stiff, posed photos of you and your friends standing in front of a building or landscape. Try to get a variety of images, including such things as local scenery, transportation details (e.g., roads, bush taxis, horse-drawn carts), your work projects, and your host country family and friends. Be sure to keep a record of places, dates, and names, as these particulars will fade over time.

Videos are a great way to capture

“When it came time for me to leave Mali at the end of my two years, an official cable was wired to Washington announcing the end of my service. The truth is that when I stepped on the plane to return to the United States, I had one-third of my service awaiting me back home.”

—Shawn Davis RPCV,
Mali (1996-98)

the voices and personalities of those with whom you have become close. They also help breathe life into your stories, in informal conversations, as well as presentations. You might want to record videos of traditional music or dances, local festivities or ceremonies, neighborhood kids playing common games, or your host family greeting those in the United States.

If you would like guidance assembling a slideshow, start with the PowerPoint template on the Third Goal Activity Suggestions and Resources page, which can be accessed through www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal. This resource is designed to be used either in its present condition, as a customizable template where you can insert your own photos, or as a jumping-off point from which you can draw inspiration for creating your own visual presentations.

Journal

A diary or journal will help you recall events more easily. To tell your story, be a reporter and note the views of your host country friends on everyday life. Topics which might be of interest to you and future audiences may include differences in a sense of time, the role of parents and grandparents, and eating customs. Your journal also can include interesting sayings or slogans. If you have been using a blog, podcast, YouTube channel or emails to communicate your experience to those at home and/or around the world, congratulations on already starting to further the Third Goal! These will also prove useful for jogging your memory about events, people, lifestyles, and moments once you have completed Peace Corps service.

Artifacts

An artifact or local item helps make host country life more vivid to U.S. audiences. Things such as masks, clothing, statuettes, or tools can help illustrate your experience to a group or give a newspaper reporter a reference point for discussion.

Peace Corps Service Continues: Furthering the Third Goal

Peace Corps Week

On March 1, 1961, President John F. Kennedy signed the executive order establishing the Peace Corps. Each year during the week of March 1, thousands of current and returned Peace Corps Volunteers commemorate the agency’s anniversary by participating in activities that advance Peace Corps’ Second Goal, helping people from countries in which we serve better understand Americans, as well as our Third Goal, improving Americans’ understanding of other peoples.

Today, our mission to promote world peace and friendship is perhaps even more vital than it was when the Peace Corps was created. During Peace Corps Week, RPCVs “bring the world home” by relating their Peace Corps experiences to their communities—in classrooms, at community organizations, and in workplaces throughout the United States. Peace Corps Volunteers and country posts also play an important role by organizing activities that showcase American culture in their host communities.

Peace Corps Week is a great time to get out into the community and participate in Third Goal activities. Another great time is any day of the

To update your address:

Visit www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/info

or contact:

rpcvupdate@peacecorps.gov

year, and we encourage you to use the following suggestions to spark your creativity as you plan your own Third Goal events.

Third Goal Activities

Celebrate making a difference in the world and provide your community with a rewarding experience by participating in a Third Goal Activity. This can be any event, presentation, conversation, workshop, panel discussion, etc. which educates Americans about the culture of your host country or promotes volunteerism and community service. Your stories, photographs, and artifacts from your country of service can leave lasting impressions on people, both young and old. Many RPCVs report being energized and impressed by the sophisticated discussions prompted by Third Goal presentations.

To help your creative juices flow, here are some suggestions for Third Goal activities:

- Organize a brown bag lunch at your workplace, offering traditional snacks from the country where you or your family member served
- Set up a display at your local library, featuring crafts, pictures, words from the local language, and traditional clothing and music
- Visit a school in your neighborhood and teach the students how to make a craft that is unique to your country of service
- Team up with fellow RPCVs in your area and put together a presentation at a community center representing many different Peace Corps countries and experiences
- Encourage your local newspaper

to run a story about your Peace Corps experiences or to publish a letter to the editor about Peace Corps service

- Contact your local RPCV group or look online to find youth, faith-based, retirement, special interest groups and clubs, and professional associations in your area.
- Host an international potluck meal
- Write and/or perform a play about your Peace Corps experiences
- Start a community sports club which plays traditional sports from various countries
- Perform or play recordings of traditional music from your country of service for friends and family
- Write a story about a particularly moving experience that highlights an aspect of your host country's culture, and submit it to the Peace Corps Digital Library

For more ideas, we recommend exploring Peace Corps' Third Goal resources at www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal. You will find activity suggestions and resources, including a customizable PowerPoint presentation, as well as highlighted stories, videos, and Peace Corps Week information. While you're on this site, we encourage you to register your Third Goal Activities as you plan them. When you do, you will receive a Third Goal kit, including stickers and bookmarks to hand out at your event and a world map showing where Peace Corps Volunteers have served.

One great way to set up Third Goal presentations and other events

Paul D. Coverdell
World Wise Schools

Visit [www.
peacecorps.gov/wws](http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws)

or contact:

[wwsinfo@
peacecorps.gov](mailto:wwsinfo@peacecorps.gov)

is to check with people you know – friends, relatives, former teachers, etc. – and find out who is interested in hosting you. Popular audiences for Third Goal activities include local school classes, library reading program groups, Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops, community groups, church groups, and senior citizen groups.

If you would like help finding an audience, keep reading for information on the World Wise Schools Speakers Match program.

Connect with Educators and Learners

The Coverdell World Wise Schools program (WWS) supports the Peace Corps' Third Goal by providing a wealth of cultural education resources for educators, mentors, and learners. The WWS Speakers Match Program connects RPCVs with classrooms and community groups interested in hearing about world cultures and global community service projects.

To support your efforts and to help you prepare for Third Goal activities, WWS provides an online presentation handbook on its website, <http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/speakersmatch/handbook/rpcv.pdf>. The Speakers Match Handbook for RPCVs on this site provides tips about materials to bring to your presentation and how to share your information with groups of various ages. The WWS website also features lesson plans, podcasts, slideshows, e-books, and videos on a variety of topics from global issues to language learning.

If you would like to share an experience you have had while speaking to students, or if you have additional tips to offer other RPCV speakers, please contact World Wise Schools at wwsinfo@peacecorps.gov.

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Groups

There are approximately 140 geographic and country-of-service RPCV groups throughout the United States. The goals and objectives of each group vary. Most groups publish regular newsletters to highlight special events such as issue forums, community involvement, and social activities.

Developing education programs that utilize the experiences and knowledge of RPCVs to educate Americans about the developing world is a major goal of many RPCV groups. These groups also participate in community service projects, develop speaker's bureaus, participate in the Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools programs, and support Volunteer projects under the Peace Corps Partnership Program.

The National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) is a membership-based alumni organization that serves all returned Peace Corps Volunteers and former staff, as well as Peace Corps family, friends, and supporters. The NPCA is a nonprofit organization governed by a board of directors and managed by a professional staff with headquarters in Washington, DC. It is a separate entity from the Peace Corps. For a complete affiliate group list and to register for a free year of membership upon conclusion of your service, visit www.peacecorpsconnect.org.

Invest in Your World - Peace Corps Partnership Program

The Peace Corps Partnership Program ties into the Third Goal because it allows Americans to

become invested in projects which positively affect the lives of people in other countries. The program has two purposes: (1) to help current Peace Corps Volunteer communities realize a development project through their own efforts using technologies most appropriate to local resources, culture, economy, and traditions; and (2) to provide a bridge that enables Americans to participate in international development in a personal way. Partnership supporters find participation meaningful, and it helps them gain greater insight into other cultures. If you don't currently have the resources to donate yourself (as many recently returned Volunteers don't, we know), encourage friends and family members to support projects in your host country, or in a region or project that interests them.

Host country communities can request one-time assistance for locally initiated projects, such as recreation centers, workshops, schools, and clinics. Funding sources may include the friends and family of PCVs; civic groups in the United States, such as Rotary International and Kiwanis International; or other clubs, schools, and churches. Individual project costs average \$3,000 or less. One hundred percent of the donations go to the projects and all donations are tax deductible. Volunteers and local counterparts liaise with American donors and facilitate the projects through their completion.

RPCVs are encouraged to participate in Partnership projects as individuals or as part of an RPCV group. For more information, please visit www.peacecorps.gov/donate. If you have questions, contact the Peace Corps Partnership staff by email at donate@peacecorps.gov or by phone

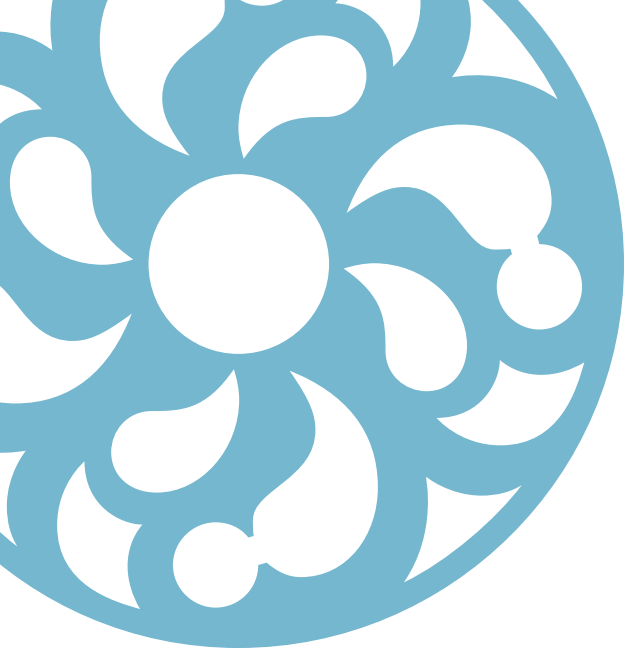
at 855.855.1961, ext. 2170.

Peace Corps Response

Peace Corps Response is an innovative program that sends Peace Corps Volunteers reaching the end of their service, RPCVs, and other qualified professionals to serve in rewarding, short-term assignments, in various programs around the world. Peace Corps Response Volunteers bring skills and experience to projects in places where they are needed most.

Peace Corps Response is different from the traditional 27-month Peace Corps program in that assignments are highly technical and are shorter term placements—three months to one year—in specific countries. Strong applicants will have the necessary language, technical, and cross-cultural skills needed for the position, and will also be available for the required start date and duration of the assignment.

For more information about Peace Corps Response, visit www.peacecorps.gov/response.



PEACE CORPS
Office of Third Goal and
Returned Volunteer Services

