

Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award FAQs

The Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award recognizes an outstanding global leader who reflects the core Peace Corps values of service, peace, development, human rights, health, and understanding. To better understand the selection process and eligibility for the award, we have included a list of frequently asked questions to aid you in submitting your nomination.

1. When are nominations accepted?

Nominations are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year. As the date of the Peace Corps Connect conference varies from year to year, the deadline also varies. The 2020 Peace Corps Connect gathering and award presentation will be in July, thus the deadline for consideration for the 2020 award is January 24, 2020.

2. Who is eligible to be nominated?

The Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award recognizes an outstanding leader who grew up in and continues to live in a country where Peace Corps volunteers served and who is a citizen of the country where the Peace Corps connection began. The eligibility of nominees who no longer reside in their home country due to employment with an international organization, such as the United Nations or World Bank, will be evaluated on a case by case basis, but the nomination should demonstrate continued connections to their home country. In general, nominees residing outside of their home country for more than ten years may be considered ineligible for the award.

3. Why this award?

Several years ago, a group of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers realized that many people in the U.S., including political leaders, did not realize the kind of impact Peace Corps volunteers have in supporting and furthering the development of national and global leaders in the countries in which it operates. However, after 58 years and counting, these Peace Corps inspired leaders are everywhere! The award is about showcasing these amazing people who have become global leaders because of Peace Corps.

4. What do we mean by global leader?

There are many incredible host country nationals who are making major contributions to the quality of life of their communities and there are many local leaders who have heavily impacted Peace Corps volunteers themselves. While these are people who are inspirational and have a powerful story to tell, this award is not intended for them.

This award is meant to recognize people who have grown into national and international roles as political, civil society, or business leaders. This includes politicians with international reach, civil society leaders addressing issues of international concern (i.e. disability, human rights, displacement, etc.), and entrepreneurs and business leaders who lead global enterprises or have international impact.

Previous winners are:

- 2011: H. E. Atiku Abubakar of Nigeria; former Vice President of Nigeria; Founder, American University of Nigeria
- 2013: Dr. Mohamud Sheikh Nurein Said of Kenya; Medical Doctor; Governor, Kenya Red Cross Society; President, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
- 2014: Dr. Surin Pitsuwan of Thailand; former Secretary General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- 2015: Berhane Daba of Ethiopia; Founder and Executive Director of the Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association
- 2016: Ibrahima Sankare of Mali; Founder and CEO of the Education, Public Health, and Conflict Resolution NGO, Delta Survie
- 2017: Siotame “Drew” Havea of Tonga; Chairperson, Civil Society Forum of Tonga
- 2018: Kul Chandra Gautam of Nepal; former Assistant Secretary General, United Nations
- 2019: Luis Argueta of Guatemala; documentary film director and producer

5. How can we say the Peace Corps has been the only influence in causing them to become global leaders?

Clearly, a person is shaped by many influences. We do not intend to suggest that exposure to the Peace Corps and to its volunteers alone caused these leaders’ success. However, there are many examples of people in countries who have become leaders or expanded their leadership roles because of a significant relationship with the Peace Corps. These people themselves are the ones that give credit to the Peace Corps, which is important.

It is their story we want to tell. It is also the story of how the Peace Corps played a role in exposing them to new opportunities for growth and new perspective on what they could do or become. Many others have usually played a role in this growth—but the Peace Corps is seen as a crucial influence in their path to leadership.

6. What do we mean by Peace Corps connection?

The Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award recognizes an outstanding global leader whose life and career were influenced by the Peace Corps. Nominees should explain not only their personal experience with Peace Corps volunteers – in the past and now – but also how the tenets of the Peace Corps have continued to influence their thinking, values, and actions to this day.

7. Why do they have to live in their countries?

We want to talk about their ongoing influence to their countries. There are people who have emigrated to the U.S. or elsewhere who may still be very involved in their home countries and supporting development, but this award is for global leaders still working in their countries. It is not for others who are doing great work outside their countries.

8. What criteria do the committee weigh?

The Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award Selection Committee weighs several factors when reviewing nominations. First and foremost, the committee decides if the nominee is eligible for the award on the basis of residency, citizenship and connection to home country, as well as availability to attend the Peace Corps Connect annual gathering when the award is presented. They then look at what the nominee is doing now – how they are furthering international peace, volunteerism, development, health, human rights, and understanding – both in their home country and beyond the boundaries of his/her home country. Which nominee best embodies the core values of the Peace Corps? They also consider the candidate's personal connection to the Peace Corps – in the past and now – and how the tenets of the Peace Corps have continued to impact his/her thinking, values, and actions to the present day.

9. What is expected of the winner?

The winner of the Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award is expected to play a prominent public role while visiting the United States to receive the award. First and foremost, he/she must be able to give the Global Leaders Lecture at NPCA's annual Peace Corps Connect gathering and communicate his/her compelling story in individual meetings with members of Congress on Capitol Hill. Winners will be interviewed by the media and will participate in other public events. Winners must be able to spend at least ten days in the United States in Washington, DC and at the Peace Corps Connect gathering, the culmination of which is the formal awards ceremony at which the winner must be present. National Peace Corps Association covers all travel costs for the winner and makes a monetary donation in honor of the nominee to an organization of the nominee's choice.

10. What are the goals of the Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award?

The Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award seeks to honor an outstanding global leader whose life was influenced by the Peace Corps and whose work retains strong connections to their home country. We want to celebrate the accomplishments of host country nationals whose lives were significantly impacted by the Peace Corps and provide them with the opportunity to share their story with others. We also want to show people in the U.S. and political leaders the kind of impact that the Peace Corps has in supporting and furthering the development of national and global leaders. In other words, the Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award seeks to fulfill the third goal of the Peace Corps in “bringing the world home” and embodies the mission of National Peace Corps Association in championing lifelong commitment to Peace Corps ideals.