



Support Strong Peace Corps Funding!

Our Request to Lawmakers

- Please prioritize an increase in funding for the Peace Corps in your Fiscal Year 2023 personal appropriations request. Ask for no less than the president's request of \$430.5 million.
- Look for and sign the annual Senate or House Peace Corps funding Dear Colleague letters, which should be issued in the coming weeks.

Background

- Congress is finalizing funding levels for federal Fiscal Year 2022, which runs until September 30, 2022.
- Unfortunately, Congress has voted to fund the Peace Corps at \$410.5 million (the Senate recommendation), turning aside the \$430.5 million recommended by the House of Representatives.
- Baseline funding for the Peace Corps (\$410.5 million) has been essentially flat for seven consecutive years, ever since Congress approved \$410 million in Fiscal Year 2016.
- As work on FY 2022 funding concludes, preparations are underway for the Fiscal Year 2023 federal budget. FY 2023 begins October 1, 2022.
- On March 28, 2022, President Biden submitted his FY 2023 budget to Congress. His budget for this fiscal year includes the \$430.5 million that was previously recommended by the House.
- At the same time, the Peace Corps is preparing a gradual process to return volunteers to the field. In late March, nearly three dozen volunteers began the return to service, starting with a return to the Dominican Republic and Zambia. At the same time, the agency announced that invitations have been sent to Volunteers to serve in 22 additional countries, with the expectation they will begin returning in April, May, and June.

Key Talking Points

- **The Peace Corps is a National Treasure:** Since 1961, approximately 240,000 citizens have served our nation as Peace Corps Volunteers in 142 countries. They collaborate with host-country counterparts on a wide range of projects that correspond to the United

Nations' sustainable development goals, working in the fields of health, education, food security, environmental protection, and more. Over the past 60 years, Peace Corps Volunteers have provided well over 3 billion hours of service, building lifelong friendships with countless citizens around the world.

- **Share Your Peace Corps Story:** While facts and figures are important, Members of Congress and/or their staff benefit when they hear about your personal Peace Corps experience. However, as time is limited, you will need to keep your Peace Corps stories short. Plan to condense your experience to a minute or two, depending on the projected time for your meeting and the number of speakers in your group.
- **Our National Security is Advanced by the Peace Corps:** Peace Corps' mission and work align very well with the Biden Administration's Foreign Policy and National Security objectives, which include the need to "Strengthen Global Health Security" and "Revitalize Our Ties with Allies and Partners." A strong Peace Corps leads to a strong American presence overseas.
- **A Funding Increase as Volunteers Return:** In a February 22, 2022 news post, the agency announced that invitations have been sent to Volunteers to serve in 24 countries. By the end of March, the first groups of Volunteers have begun their service in Zambia and the Dominican Republic. If conditions permit, additional groups will follow in April, May, and June. While numbers of returning volunteers will be gradual and cautious, the pace will undoubtedly increase, with additional costs tied to a new, post-COVID operating environment.
- **Peace Corps' Budget Has Lost Significant Purchasing Power Over the Past Six Years Due to Flat Funding Levels:** Peace Corps funding of \$410 million has been flat since FY 2016. When adjusted for inflation, the equivalent level of funding for FY 2022 should be more than \$480 million.
- **Congress Needs to Fund Critical Peace Corps Reforms:** The bipartisan Peace Corps Reauthorization Act (H.R. 1456) outlines a number of critical reforms to improve volunteer health and safety, and to honor and support Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. Increased emphasis is needed to further build up a diverse and welcoming Peace Corps and break down economic barriers to service. Inadequate funding must not be cited as a reason for not implementing past laws, including the Sam Farr and Nick Castle Peace Corps Reform Act passed in 2018. Several key reforms come with a price. These needed improvements which demonstrate respect for Peace Corps service, are not truly supported without increased federal spending.
- **Americans Support Federal Volunteer Service Programs:** A January 2021 poll conducted by Change Research on behalf of Service Year Alliance found that 77 percent of those polled support the expansion of service opportunities such as Peace Corps and AmeriCorps. Majorities of Democrats (93 percent), Republicans (59 percent), and Independents (77 percent) all support national service expansion.
- **The World is Awaiting Peace Corps' Return:** All 61 countries that had Volunteer programs at the time of evacuation want the Peace Corps back. Peace Corps also has plans to resume past programs in El Salvador and the Solomon Islands, and to begin a first-ever program in Vietnam.

- **The Road to 10,000:** As Peace Corps begins to resume sending volunteers overseas and implement improvements, we also urge support to move towards a minimum of 10,000 Peace Corps Volunteers in the field, as outlined in the original Peace Corps Act. Just over 7,000 Volunteers were serving overseas in March 2020.