

**Peace Corps**  
A Legacy of Service and Compassion

(in the thousands)

Account	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 Enacted	FY 2006 Request
Peace Corps (rescission)	308,171	320,000 <u>(2,560)</u> 317,440	345,000

The Peace Corps provides practical assistance to developing countries by sharing America's most precious resource-- its people. The close interaction between Peace Corps Volunteers and local communities has allowed the Peace Corps to establish an admirable record of service that is recognized around the world. For 44 years, Peace Corps Volunteers have helped build the path to progress with people who want to build a better life for themselves, their children, and their communities. Throughout the world, Peace Corps Volunteers continue to bring a spirit of hope and optimism to the struggle for progress and human dignity. More than 178,000 Americans have served in 138 countries.

While times have changed since the Peace Corps' founding in 1961, the agency's mission—to promote world peace and friendship-- has not. The three core goals of the Peace Corps are as relevant today as they were forty-four years ago:

- 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 Americans.

Through the work and contributions of its Volunteers, the Peace Corps has emerged as a model of success for encouraging sustainable development at the grass-roots level. Volunteers work with teachers and parents to improve the quality of, and access to, education for children. They work with communities to protect the local environment and to create economic opportunities. Volunteers work on basic projects to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, help provide food security and access to potable water. They train students to use computers and help communities establish resource centers with Internet access.

The Peace Corps, however, is much more than a development agency. Its larger purpose is to empower people in developing countries to take charge of their own futures and strengthen the bonds of friendship and understanding between Americans and the people of other cultures. The on-the-ground, people-to-people relationships that Peace Corps Volunteers forge with their host country colleagues and communities serve as a crucial foundation for world peace, cross-cultural exchange, and understanding.

Volunteer safety remains the top priority of the Peace Corps. Because health and safety risks are an inherent part of Volunteer service, the Peace Corps staff and Volunteers work together to create a framework that safeguards their well-being to the greatest extent possible, enabling them to carry out the Peace Corps' mission. The Peace Corps takes responsibility for ensuring that safety and security issues are fully integrated in all aspects of Volunteer recruitment, training, and service and that the Peace Corps' safety and security policies and training curricula are adjusted as situations change. Volunteers do their important part by taking personal responsibility for their behavior at all times and assimilating successfully into their host communities. Volunteers can also reduce risks by following recommendations for locally appropriate behavior, exercising sound judgment, and abiding by the Peace Corps' policies and procedures.

Through their service, Volunteers make lasting contributions to our country and society in the following ways:

**Representing American Values and Diversity** — The women and men who serve as Peace Corps Volunteers reflect the rich diversity of our country and represent some of the finest characteristics of the American people: a strong work ethic, a generosity of spirit, a commitment to service, and an approach to problems that is both optimistic and pragmatic. They are afforded no special privileges and often live in remote, isolated communities. They speak local languages and adapt to the cultures and customs of the people they serve. In this process, Volunteers share and represent the culture and values of the American people, and in doing so earn respect and admiration for our country—among people who often have never met an American.

**Responding to Humanitarian Crises and Natural Disasters** – Through the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, Peace Corps Volunteers are meeting the challenges of this global pandemic working both formally and informally, in 10 of the 15 focus countries. They are enhancing programming and in-country HIV/AIDS training, supplying Crisis Corps Volunteers (former Volunteers that return to the field on a short-term basis), and making small grants available for community initiated projects. Additionally, Crisis Corps Volunteers are assisting with disaster recovery in Thailand following the devastating tsunami and in the Caribbean after Hurricane Ivan helping these nations address critical needs in restoration, mitigation, and prevention. More and more, Peace Corps Volunteers are finding ways to meet humanitarian challenges and, thereby, spreading American compassion abroad.

**Preparing America’s Work Force with Overseas Experience** — Peace Corps training and service provide skills that are increasingly important to America’s participation in the international economy. Volunteers worldwide learn more than 180 languages and dialects, and they receive extensive cross-cultural training that enables them to function effectively at a professional level in different cultural settings. Returned Volunteers often use these skills and experiences to enhance careers and make contributions to our society in virtually every sector — Congress, the Executive branch, the Foreign Service, education, business, finance, industry, trade, health care, and social services.

**Peace Corps Volunteers Educating Young Americans** — Through the Coverdell World Wise Schools Program, thousands of current and returned Peace Corps Volunteers share their experiences in developing countries with students in America’s classrooms. This successful program allows young Americans to learn about the peoples and cultures of other countries and to interact with positive role models who have engaged in public service as Peace Corps Volunteers. These exchanges have allowed American students—especially those who have not had the opportunity to travel or to experience another culture—to gain a global perspective and to realize that they can make a difference in their communities and in the world.

**Contributing to America’s Legacy of Service** — Encouraging service and volunteerism among the American people is part of a long tradition in the United States and of this Administration. Over one hundred thousand people contact the Peace Corps each year seeking information about serving as a Volunteer. When Volunteers complete their overseas service, many continue their commitment to volunteerism by offering their time and skills to community volunteer programs across the country.