

PEACE CORPS

LGBTQ+ VOLUNTEERS

The Peace Corps values diversity and the LGBTQ+ community.

Our individual attributes bring us together to help us meet our mission of world peace and friendship.

The Peace Corps seeks to reflect the diversity of our country in its recruitment, inclusive of the LGBTQ+ community, whose members have a long history of important contributions as Peace Corps Volunteers and staff.

Support for LGBTQ+ Volunteers

The Peace Corps intends to create open, inclusive, and accepting environments. To ensure productive, healthy, and safe experiences for Volunteers, the Peace Corps reviews work and housing sites in advance, collaborates on project development with local communities, and develops and tests plans for responding to emergencies. Field staff receive training to support same-sex couples that addresses safety and security issues, host family preparation, job assignments, and resources for same-sex couples (including host country LGBTQ+ organizations as available).

Once Volunteers are in-country, Peace Corps staff provide them with guidance for maintaining their safety and well-being. Many posts have implemented Safe Zone trainings to enable staff to offer support and discuss LGBTQ+ and diversity issues with Volunteers (look for the “Safe Zone” signs). Many posts also offer LGBTQ+ support training for Volunteers and have Volunteer support groups—such as diversity committees and peer support networks—that offer a safe space to share experiences. Volunteers often create formal and informal support groups at their posts.

Benefits Overview

- Living stipend and vacation time
- Full medical and dental coverage
- Student loan benefits
- Unique graduate school opportunities
- Transition funds after service
- Marketable professional skills
- Advantages in federal employment
- Job search services
- Travel to and from the country of service
- No fee to participate

“Peace Corps picks people from all over the country and Americans are diverse, and have strongly-held beliefs. I was worried that some might not be as accepting of [trans] people like me. But I learned that Peace Corps also picks people who are open-minded and want to learn and be open to new things. I was immediately accepted and supported by my fellow Volunteers as well as by Peace Corps staff.”

Lee Kirby

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, Mozambique



Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity In-country

LGBTQ+ Volunteers should be mindful of the cultural norms and country-specific laws, but the decision to serve openly is left to each individual Peace Corps Volunteer. Most LGBTQ+ Volunteers have chosen to be discreet about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity within their host communities. Some have chosen to come out to community members, with a mix of positive and negative reactions, while some come out only to select staff and fellow Volunteers. Peace Corps staff will work with Volunteers to provide them with locally informed perspectives, which may influence a Volunteer's decision.

Serving with a Same-sex Partner

The Peace Corps accepts same-sex couples. Both you and your partner must apply at the same time and qualify for assignments in the same country. The Peace Corps will only consider you as a couple, and will look to place you at the same site. Because of this, couples sometimes experience longer application periods. Unmarried couples seeking to serve as a couple must execute an affidavit attesting to their committed domestic partner relationship as part of their applications.

Required Documents for Transgender Individuals Applying for a Peace Corps Passport

Transgender applicants are required to provide: 1. A social security card; 2. A passport or birth certificate. If your documents have not been updated with your new gender, you will need to submit a physician's certificate for your passport application validating whether your gender transition is in process or complete.

LGBTQ+ Peace Corps Volunteer Network

Peace Corps recruiters can put you in touch with current or returned LGBTQ+ Volunteers. Additionally, the LGBTQ Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Association offers resources for applicants and prospective Volunteers, including a mentor program, an email listserv, and a quarterly e-newsletter.

For more information, connect with a Peace Corps recruiter.

The Peace Corps provides equal volunteer opportunities for all persons. No person will be denied equal opportunity under applicable laws to volunteer with the Peace Corps because of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.



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