

## **Supporting Statement For Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Impact Survey (Part A)**

### **A. Justification**

#### **A1. Circumstances of Information Collection**

Since its establishment in 1961, the Peace Corps has been guided by a mission of world peace and friendship. The agency exemplifies the best of our nation's spirit by sending Americans to serve around the world, advancing development, and building cross-cultural understanding. Today, the Peace Corps continues to build strong relationships between our country and the people of our partner nations, while making a difference in overseas communities, in the lives of our Volunteers, and back home in the United States. More than 240,000 Volunteers have served in 142 countries since 1961, changing lives—including their own.

Peace Corps Volunteers are the face of our nation in communities around the globe, building positive perceptions of the United States and sharing American values with their communities. After Volunteers complete their service, they return to the United States with new skills, deep knowledge of other cultures, and long-lasting relationships. Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) continue their service by promoting awareness of other cultures and global issues with friends, family, and the American people; maintaining relationships with colleagues and friends from the countries where they served; and sustaining their commitment to volunteerism and public service.

Through the *Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Impact Survey*, the Peace Corps aims to measure the demonstrable impact of the Peace Corps on the Returned Volunteer. Specifically, this survey will fulfill the mandate required by the *H.R.2559 - Sam Farr and Nick Castle Peace Corps Reform Act of 2018 Sec. 103 (22 U.S.C. 2501; Pub. L. 115-256, §1(a), Oct. 9, 2018, 132 Stat. 3650)*, in compliance with *Section 3506(c) (2) (A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995*, where the Peace Corps shall assess the impact of the Peace Corps on the former Volunteer, including the Volunteers' well-being, career, civic engagement, and commitment to public service. Additionally, by documenting the career paths chosen by RPCVs at different life stages post-service and engagement they have with their communities, the agency will have data relating to the continuing impact of the Peace Corps on American society, through the lives and careers that Peace Corps Volunteers build after they return to the United States after service. The relevant text of the *Sam Farr and Nick Castle Peace Corps Reform Act of 2018* can be reviewed in Appendix A1.

The *Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Impact Survey* is designed to collect information from Returned Peace Corps Volunteers whose first service ended in 2017, 2014, 2009, or 1999, corresponding to 2, 5, 10, and 20 years post-service. Members of the target audience for the survey are Returned Peace Corps Volunteers from those four cohorts, representing the diversity of our Returned Volunteers' backgrounds as well as the Peace Corps' programmatic and geographic reach. This survey is consistent with the Peace Corps' mission to promote world peace and friendship through community-based development and cross-cultural understanding.

The *Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Impact Survey* will be administered online, with respondents being invited to participate either via email or print mail, depending on the availability of contact information.

The survey will collect data that will relate Returned Volunteers' experiences of Peace Corps service (determined both through available administrative data and survey responses) to measures representing respondents' post-service outcomes in the following areas: well-being, career, civic engagement, and commitment to public service.

## **A2. Purpose and Uses of the Data**

Per the reporting requirement established by the *Sam Farr and Nick Castle Peace Corps Reform Act of 2018*, the results of this survey will be submitted in a report by the Director of the Peace Corps to (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate; (2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; (3) the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and (4) the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

Furthermore, this data collection is an opportunity for the Peace Corps to strengthen its quantitative data coverage of the Returned Volunteer experience post-service. The information gathered will allow the agency to generate insight into the lasting direct and indirect impacts Peace Corps operations may have on Returned Volunteers' lives, their social/family networks, their places of employment, and their communities. These insights will provide the Peace Corps greater capability in making data-informed decisions to optimize the agency's operational effectiveness and overall value to the United States.

The data collection was designed to fulfill the survey mandate in a manner that:

1. Sufficiently and efficiently covers the key concepts that underlie each of the mandated topic areas of measurement
2. Leverages questions that are in wide use in respected, large scale, and long-running surveys to measure the aforementioned key concepts
3. Minimizes the burden to our respondents

Per a review of federal guidance, research literature, and existing surveys, the agency has identified the following concepts underlying their respective mandated topic areas of measurement:

### Well-being

1. Physical well-being - Physical health
2. Mental well-being - Mental and emotional health
3. Social well-being - Providing and receiving support from family, friends, and others

### Career and public service<sup>1</sup>

1. Career intention - Factors influencing the choice of a career or specific job
2. Career outcomes - Employment/Service/Military/Education status and details
3. Career satisfaction - Factors associated with job and career contentment

### Civic engagement

1. Civic action - Participation in activities to help better the community
2. Civic commitment/duty - The willingness to make positive contributions to society
3. Civic skills - The ability to be involved in civil society, politics, and democracy
4. Social cohesion - A sense of reciprocity, trust, and bonding to others

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<sup>1</sup> We are generally treating public service as a vocation, since many formal definitions of public service imply working as part of an organization providing that service. Additionally, some elements of public service can and will be considered "civic engagement".

In order to identify appropriate questions to measure the topic area concepts, the Peace Corps focused on long-running large-scale omnibus surveys conducted by federal agencies and respected non-governmental organizations, including:

- U.S. Census Bureau - *American Community Survey*
- U.S. Census Bureau/U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) - *Current Population Survey*, including the *Civic Engagement and Volunteering Supplement*
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System*
- NORC at the University of Chicago - *General Social Survey*

We also closely referenced the *AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes Survey*, conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), due to the similar objectives of that data collection and the related mission of AmeriCorps/CNCS. In any event, the intention is to adhere to topic conceptualizations and instrument constructions that already exist, where there is consensus by practitioners of their validity. This approach has the following advantages:

1. The surveys we are drawing from are acknowledged to be of high quality, with conceptualizations, methodology, and content already developed and rigorously assessed
2. The omnibus nature of these surveys will likely include questions of sufficient specificity to address a particular concept without being unnecessarily burdensome

The questions to be asked in the survey are in the included survey questionnaire, contained in Appendix A2. An overview of the survey questions' connection to the mandated topic areas for data collection are described in Exhibit A1.

In addition to designing the survey instrument to address required topics for measurement in an efficient manner, the agency will also minimize respondent burden by prioritizing, where possible, the use of existing Peace Corps administrative records instead of soliciting information from the respondent using the survey instrument.

**Exhibit A1. Survey question relevance to mandated topic areas for data collection**

Survey question number	Mandated topic area	Question source	Notes
<b>Section 1. Peace Corps Volunteer Service</b>			
1.1.a-b	n/a	CNCS- <i>AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes Survey (AAOS)</i> (slightly modified)	These questions classify respondents and relate their experiences as Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) to their subsequent lives as Returned Volunteers.  We will leverage available administrative data (such as records of successful Completion Of Service (COS), Medical Separation, post/sector assignment, etc.) to identify seminal Volunteer experiences in service. The questions asked in 1.1 fill in the gaps where administrative records are unavailable or inappropriate.
1.1.c-e	n/a	Peace Corps- <i>Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS)</i>	Questions 1.1.c-e align with the three goals of the Peace Corps as enshrined in the <i>Peace Corps Act</i> authorizing the creation of the Peace Corps. Perceived effectiveness in meeting these goals will be treated as a proxy for “skills developed in service”, since the PCV selection, training, and support model is aligned to generating enabled Volunteers with the skills to action on the three Peace Corps goals.
1.1.f-g	n/a	Specific to the Peace Corps	Questions 1.1.f-g identify respondents who experienced significant medical or safety/security concerns but did not ultimately need to be separated from service.
<b>Section 2. Education</b>			
2.1	Career/Public Service	Census- <i>American Community Survey (ACS)</i> , Analogues in <i>NORC-General Social Survey (GSS)</i> and CNCS-AAOS	
2.2	Career/Public Service	NORC-GSS (slightly modified)	Required to determine if a respondent pursued graduate-level education before and/or after service, since agency PCV pre-service education records may not be complete and post-service records do not exist.
<b>Section 3. Career/public service arc - Before Peace Corps service</b>			
3.1	Career/Public Service, Civic Engagement	CNCS-AAOS (slightly modified), Analogues in Census-ACS, NORC-GSS	We are constructing the career arc measurement similarly to CNCS-AAOS: six months before service, six months after service, current status.

**Exhibit A1 (continued). Survey question relevance to mandated topic areas for data collection**

Survey question number	Mandated topic area	Question source	Notes
<b>Section 4. Career/public service arc – Transition after Peace Corps service</b>			
4.1	Career/Public Service, Civic Engagement	See 3.1	We will leverage administrative data to determine if a respondent subsequently served again as a PCV or Peace Corps Response Volunteer (PCRV).
4.2.1	Career/Public Service	Census-ACS (slightly modified) CNCS-AAOS	Used Census-ACS classifications (with simplified self-employment categorizations), informed by CNCS-AAOS wording.
4.2.2-4.2.5	Career/Public Service	NORC-GSS (slightly modified)	Identifies the respondent's general position in their work organization's hierarchy and if they are in a leadership/managerial position.
4.2.6	Career/Public Service	CNCS-AAOS (modified)	Helps address career "return on investment (ROI)" of Peace Corps service for the individual PCV, and skills development ROI that Peace Corps generates for the United States.
4.2.7	Career/Public Service	NORC-GSS (modified)	
4.2.8	Career/Public Service	NORC-GSS	Career satisfaction inventory, covering intrinsic, extrinsic, and interpersonal drivers of satisfaction, per contemporary job satisfaction theory.
4.3	Career/Public Service, Well-being	CNCS-AAOS (slightly modified), Analogue in NORC-GSS	
<b>Section 5. Career/public service arc – Current status</b>			
5.1.1	Career/Public Service, Civic Engagement	See 3.1	
5.1.2	Career/Public Service	n/a, skip logic question	Identifies respondents whose current jobs are not the same as the ones they held six months after service. This will also reduce burden for those respondents who are still at the same job.
5.2.1	Career/Public Service	See 4.2.1	
5.2.2-5.2.5	Career/Public Service	See 4.2.2 - 4.2.5	
5.2.6	Career/Public Service	See 4.2.6	
5.2.7	Career/Public Service	See 4.2.7	
5.2.8	Career/Public Service	See 4.2.8	
5.3	Career/Public Service, Well-being	See 4.3	

**Exhibit A1 (continued). Survey question relevance to mandated topic areas for data collection**

Survey question number	Mandated topic area	Question source	Notes
<b>Section 6. Social network and engagement</b>			
6.1	Civic Engagement, Well-being	Census- <i>Current Population Survey (CPS)</i> (modified), Analogue in NORC-GSS	Recent academic research suggests that a person's social networks not only have implications for career and levels of civic engagement, but also have an impact on their well-being. CDC guidance now incorporates the view that meaningful social connectedness is a necessary element of general well-being, in addition to the traditional physical and mental/emotional health elements.
6.2	Civic Engagement, Well-being	Census-CPS, Analogue in NORC-GSS	
6.3	Civic Engagement, Well-being	Census-CPS, Analogue in CNCS-AAOS	
6.4	Civic Engagement	Census-CPS, (modified) Analogue in NORC-GSS	
<b>Section 7. Civic engagement and community involvement</b>			
7.1	Civic Engagement	Census-CPS	
7.2	Civic Engagement	Census-CPS, Analogue in NORC-GSS	
7.3	Civic Engagement	NORC-GSS (modified), Analogue in Census-CPS	
7.4	Civic Engagement	Census-CPS (modified), Analogue in NORC-GSS	This will help determine where RPCVs are focusing their volunteering efforts.
7.5	Civic Engagement	Census-CPS, Analogue in NORC-GSS	
7.6	Civic Engagement	Census-CPS (modified)	This will help determine where RPCVs are focusing their volunteering efforts.
7.7	Civic Engagement	Census-CPS (modified), Analogue in NORC-GSS	Topic is of interest to external Peace Corps stakeholders.

**Exhibit A1 (continued). Survey question relevance to mandated topic areas for data collection**

Survey question number	Mandated topic area	Question source	Notes
<b>Section 8. Physical and mental well-being</b>			
8.1 - 8.4	Well-being	CDC- <i>Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System</i> (BRFSS). Same question in NORC-GSS	We may have to adjust for seasonality issues surrounding these questions (8.1 – 8.4), since responses may be influenced by the time of the year these questions are asked.
<b>Section 9. Final questions</b>			
9.1 - 9.2	n/a	Standard demographic questions	Education, current place of residence, and household size/composition are the only demographic data we need to collect on the survey itself. All other required demographic data exist in agency administrative records. Requesting ZIP code in question 9.1 provides maximum flexibility with any post-survey weighting. Question 9.2 is employed to determine if the respondent lives with children under the age of 18, as this can impact career and civic engagement outcomes. Additionally, this question may have some limited utility in inferring other family status characteristics.
9.3	n/a	Stakeholder request	Addresses the request voiced both by internal agency stakeholders and general public commenters asking that respondents have an opportunity to provide relevant narrative data. The data collected may also be potentially useful for qualitative analysis.

**A3. Use of Information Technology to Reduce Burden**

The *Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Impact Survey* will be administered online, with invitations distributed either via email or paper mailing. We anticipate that an online survey will be considered less invasive for prospective participants compared to other formats and will be the most convenient for them to complete. Furthermore, using online surveys will allow for skip patterns to be employed where appropriate, reducing the total number of items that a respondent has to read and answer. In an effort to make the survey process as convenient as possible, most eligible participants will be sent an email invitation that includes a brief description of the survey and an accompanying survey link. In situations where we do not have the email address of an eligible participant, they will be invited via a paper mailing with an identical description of the survey accompanied by a survey link. Respondents will also be provided the link to a dedicated *Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Impact Survey* email address where they will be able to reach out for questions, comments, or concerns.

**A4. Efforts to Identify Duplication**

Based on a review of existing data collection efforts, the most recent systematic and comprehensive collection of data concerning the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer experience occurred in a survey conducted in 1996.

## **A5. Small Business**

Participation in the *Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Impact Survey* data collection will not involve small businesses or small entities, or their workforces.

## **A6. Consequences of Not Collecting the Information**

Without this data collection, the agency would not be complying with the Congressionally-mandated *H.R.2559 - Sam Farr and Nick Castle Peace Corps Reform Act of 2018 Sec. 103 (22 U.S.C. 2501; Pub. L. 115-256, §1(a), Oct. 9, 2018, 132 Stat. 3650)*. Specifically, the Peace Corps would not have survey data to assess the impact of the Peace Corps on the former Volunteer, including the Volunteers' well-being, career, civic engagement, and commitment to public service.

The *Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Impact Survey* is designed to be administered to each respondent one time.

## **A7. Special Circumstances Justifying Inconsistencies with Guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6**

This information collection fully complies with 5 CFR 1320.6(d)(2) guidelines.

## **A8. Consultation Outside the Agency**

A 60-day public comment Notice was published in the *Federal Register* on July 11, 2019 (*Volume 84, No. 133, Page 33097*). Additionally, the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA), an independent non-profit organization that serves as the alumni association for returned Peace Corps Volunteers and staff, was made aware of the Notice and was encouraged to publicize the Notice to its membership. The comment period ended September 9, 2019. Six public comments were received. The content of the proposed collection was reviewed for general congruency with each comment received.

Consultations on the design, sampling plan, instrumentation, and analysis of this data collection effort have occurred throughout the planning phase of this project. The Peace Corps initiated informal consultations with stakeholder groups such as the NPCA and with federal agencies such as the Corporation for National and Community Service which share a similar or complementary mission with the Peace Corps and/or have experience in data collections similar to the one being proposed. These consultations have provided, and will continue to provide, the opportunity to ensure the technical quality and appropriateness of the overall survey design, sampling approaches, and data analysis plans; to obtain advice and recommendations concerning the instrumentation; and to structure the data collection and instruments so as to minimize overall and individual response burden.

## **A9. Payment to Respondents**

There will be no payment to respondents for participating in the survey.

## **A10. Assurances of Confidentiality**

It is the policy of the Peace Corps to comply with the *Privacy Act of 1974* as outlined in 22 CFR Part 308. Respondents will be advised that the *Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Impact Survey* is entirely voluntary and that any information they provide will be combined and summarized with information provided by others, and no individually identifiable information will be released. All sampled Returned Volunteers

will be assured that no adverse consequences will accrue to non-respondents, and that their comments and opinions will be kept private. In addition, survey invitation letters (both in email and print form) that will link to the online survey will indicate the Peace Corps' federal status and the purpose of the survey.

The survey will be administered by the Peace Corps, utilizing a specialized survey management software platform supplied by a *FISMA ACT of 2002* and *FIPS Publication 200*-compliant vendor contracted by the Peace Corps. During the administration process, collected data will be stored on a vendor server that has redundancies implemented in the event of system failure and is protected by high-end firewall systems which are scanned regularly for vulnerabilities.

Upon completion of the survey administration period, data stored on the vendor server will be removed and transferred to the Peace Corps utilizing a compliant encryption standard. The entire dataset will be encrypted so that any data stored will be further protected. Finally, access to any data with identifying information will be limited to Peace Corps staff directly working on the survey. Upon completion of the study, the Peace Corps will destroy the dataset with individuals' names, addresses, and other identifying information.

### **A11. Questions of a Sensitive Nature**

None of the questions will request any personally invasive or sensitive information. Respondents will be informed about the purpose of the data collection and that responding to all survey questions is voluntary.

### **A12. Estimates of Response Burden**

#### ***Estimate the Annualized Hour Burden of the Collection of Information from Participants***

The estimates for hour burden were informed by the online survey methodology being used. The final per-respondent hour burden estimate was based on an initial survey duration estimate (17 minutes) calculated by the agency's survey management software assuming that respondents would see and answer every question on the survey. However, because many respondents will not see every question due to skip logic incorporated in the survey programming, the final survey duration estimate was adjusted down to 15 minutes per respondent. This 15 minute final estimate was corroborated by small-scale testing by agency employees with the same characteristics as the target audience (i.e., testers were Returned Peace Corps Volunteers). Taking the final per-respondent hour burden estimate results in an estimate of 249.25 total burden hours assuming the minimum number of respondents expected to participate. Exhibit A2 presents estimates of annualized burden. Sampling procedures are discussed in Section B1.

#### ***Estimate the Annualized Cost Burden to Respondents for the Collection of Information from Participants***

There are no direct costs to respondents other than their time to participate in the study. The total annual costs of the time respondents spend completing these surveys is \$6,226.27, calculated as the number of respondent hours, which is 249.25, multiplied by the estimated average hourly wages for individuals working in all occupations in May 2018, \$24.98, as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Exhibit A2 contains estimated response burdens for the target audience included in this survey.

**Exhibit A2. Data Collection Burden for Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Impact Survey**

Components of Burden Estimation	Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Impact Survey
Minimum Number of Respondents	997
Frequency of Response	1
Average Hours per Respondent	0.25
Total Annual and Total Aggregate Hours Burden	249.25
Estimated Annual Cost per Respondent	\$24.98 x 0.25
Annualized Cost to Respondents for the Hours Burden*	\$6,226.27

\* Respondents' total annualized cost are calculated as hourly wage x time spent on survey x number of participants

**A13. Estimate of Total Capital and Startup Costs/Operation and Maintenance Costs to Respondents or Record Keepers**

No capital, startup, or operational and maintenance costs are incurred by study participants in this information collection activity.

**A14. Estimates of Costs to the Federal Government**

The total incremental cost for the survey, which runs for a 1-year period, is \$3,052.24. These costs are inclusive of printing, mailing and respondent contact information verification activities. All other resources required will not incur incremental expense to the agency.

**A15. Changes in Burden**

This is a new data collection.

**A16. Plans for Publication, Analysis, and Schedule**

***Time Schedule***

The project covers a 1-year period from October 2019 through September 2020. Data collection activities and data analysis will be conducted over this time period. Exhibit A3 indicates when each of the activities associated with the project will occur.

**Exhibit A3. Project Timeline**

Project Activity	Time Frame
Verify Respondent Contact Information	December 2019 - January 2020
Field Survey	January - March 2020
Process Data and Analyze Survey Results	April - July 2020
Prepare Survey Results Reporting	July - September 2020

***Publication Plans***

Per the reporting requirement established by the *Sam Farr and Nick Castle Peace Corps Reform Act of 2018*, the results of this survey will be submitted in a report by the Director of the Peace Corps to (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate; (2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; (3) the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and (4) the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives. Additionally, the Peace Corps intends to make this

written report publically available on its website and may further disseminate the results through conference presentations and peer-reviewed publications.

### ***Analysis Plan***

The analyses will be descriptive in nature, with both quantitative and qualitative analyses being conducted in order to document the impact of the Peace Corps on Returned Volunteers' well-being, career, civic engagement, and commitment to public service. The findings will be shared with Congress as mandated, Peace Corps staff, and the general public.

### ***Data Set Up, Cleaning, and Reliability and Validity Analysis***

- **Data set up and cleaning.** Once the survey fielding period has closed, the data will be downloaded and cleaned, applying any post-coding as needed for the analysis. The data files produced will be in restricted format only for use by Peace Corps staff directly responsible for analyzing the collected data to produce reporting deliverables. Sampling weights will be calculated and applied to the survey results during analysis and reporting.
- **Response rates and nonresponse bias analysis.** The data analysis will calculate response rates (per OMB's Standards and Guidelines for Statistical Surveys) for the overall sample and for all relevant subgroups. If the response rate is below 80 percent or the item response rate is below 70 percent, a nonresponse and response bias analysis for individual survey items will be conducted. See Sections B2 and B3 for a detailed description of procedures used to address nonresponse.
- **Response frequencies.** Response frequencies (i.e., counts and percentages) for each item and the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values for continuous survey questions will be calculated. Frequencies and descriptive statistics will be calculated for all participants combined and for each cohort separately.
- **Psychometric analysis.** Psychometric analysis of the data will be conducted to assess the quality and limits of the survey instrument and inform changes that will improve future *Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Impact Surveys*. Inter-item reliability will be calculated for items making up scales to assess internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha. If internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, is below .70, alternative scales will be developed using factor analysis. Validation of the survey items will illustrate that the items on the survey are internally consistent.

### ***Analysis for reporting***

Basic descriptive analyses (including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) will be calculated. Statistical associations will be calculated between respondent characteristics and any constructed scales' factors using t-tests and ANOVA as necessary.

The survey questions on the *Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Impact Survey* were modeled on relevant questions asked in the *American Community Survey*, *Current Population Survey*, *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System*, *General Social Survey*, and *AmeriCorps Alumni Outcomes Survey*. Original question wording and construction were retained to the greatest extent possible in order to maximize the possibility that the results of the source surveys could serve as reference points to the results of the Peace Corps survey..

Analytic techniques (e.g., regression) and more granular comparisons (e.g., results comparison by sector or geography of service) may be attempted if the final sample size permits. Finally, the included open-ended survey question will be analyzed qualitatively, and will consist mostly of narrative summaries of the answers and the identification of general themes.

**A17. Approval to Not Display Expiration Date**

The expiration date will be displayed on all instruments approved for this study.

**A18. Explain each exception to the topics of the certification statement identified in “Certification for *Paperwork Reduction Act* Submissions.”**

This collection of information involves no exceptions to the Certification for *Paperwork Reduction Act* Submissions.