

## **Peace Corps Response Interview Questions**

0. Where did you hear about this position? [drop down list]
  - a. Additional Information: [text box]
1. Peace Corps Response candidates are considered for highly specialized positions that are developed by post staff and local partner organizations in our countries of service. Peace Corps Response Volunteers are expected to depart for their assignments on a timetable that works for local partners and to complete their entire term to ensure completion of assignment tasks and deliverables. This position is scheduled to depart on (DATE) and is a (# of months)-month term of service. Do you have any commitments (family, personal, or professional) that could prevent you from fulfilling your obligation to the Peace Corps, if invited?
  - a. Follow-up: Is this Peace Corps Response assignment your highest priority? If selected, would you forgo other opportunities in order to accept it?
2. How does this assignment fit with your personal or professional goals? What is your motivation for wanting to be a Peace Corps Response volunteer?
- 3.
4. What are your expectations of the work you will be doing in this assignment?
5. Having reviewed the position, what knowledge, skills, and abilities do you possess that enable you to successfully fulfill the requirements of this position?
  - a. Follow-up: Would you anticipate needing any training or building any skills prior to beginning an assignment, according to the required skills and deliverables?
6. (For RPCVs only) What do you see as differences between service with Peace Corps Response and your previous experience as a two-year Peace Corps Volunteer?
7. (For RPCVs only) Did you successfully complete your two-year service? If not, tell me more about why you were unable to do so.
8. In this Peace Corps Response assignment, you and your counterpart will develop a work plan related to your position description. How will you approach working with your partner organization to develop this plan?
  - a. Follow-up: Describe a time when you've had to build a professional relationship with a new team in a short amount of time. How did you address that challenge?
  - b. Follow-up: What would you do if you did not feel that you would be able to complete your work plan in the time available?
  - c. Follow-up: What will you do to ensure sustainability of the work you perform in this assignment?
9. Peace Corps Response Volunteers face unique challenges which require flexibility, adaptability, and resilience. Tell me about a challenging experience that required you to work outside your comfort zone.
  - a.
10. Describe a specific situation in which you worked with a person or group of people ethnically or culturally different from yourself. What did you learn from this experience?
11. Tell me about a time where you had to navigate a conflict, misunderstanding, or confusing situation in an intercultural environment.. How did you resolve this situation?
12. While serving overseas our volunteers could be viewed as different/foreign/outside of the cultural norm because of their nationality, race, physical appearance, cultural background, and/or other identity characteristics. Because of this, our volunteers may stand out and receive more attention in

- public than they are typically used to experiencing. What challenges and/or opportunities do you expect to encounter? How would you respond?
13. Peace Corps Response Volunteers live in urban and rural settings, and this can mean different things from region to region, country to country, and site to site. Are there any living and working conditions that could negatively impact your commitment to service?
    - a. Do you have any non-medical dietary preferences? What are your expectations for living with a host family?
  14. This assignment is impacted by adverse events and conflict in the following ways: (inserted from job specific information). Do you have any questions or concerns?
  15. Volunteer safety and security is among the Peace Corps' top priorities. Service also requires Volunteers' compliance with agency standards for mitigating risks wherever possible. Please tell me what your approach would be to staying safe in this assignment.
    - a. Follow-up: What do you expect the role of the Peace Corps is in securing your safety?
  16. To help ensure health, safety, and security during Volunteer service, you will have to follow rules and regulations you may not completely agree with, such as notifying Peace Corps staff each time you leave your site, wearing an approved helmet when you're riding a bike, not being able to drive, etc., as well as appropriate medical guidance and instructions. In the past, how have you responded to following rules that you did not agree with or want to follow?

### **Guidance on Scenarios**

- Applicants without previous Peace Corps experience: two scenarios
- RPCVs who served over 10 years ago: one scenario
- Recently returned Peace Corps Volunteers: optional scenario #8

#### **Scenario #1 (Motivation in different culture)**

It is early in your assignment and it is already obvious to you that your counterparts are not accustomed to working at the same pace as you. People are often 45 minutes late to meetings and counterparts struggle with what you perceive as easy tasks. You know you only have a few months to get a lot accomplished and you are worried that your service could be a failure.

How would you respond to this situation?

#### **Scenario #2 (Lack of work partner support)**

You are provided with a specific position description about your assignment. The assigned partner's roles and responsibilities are well defined, and so are yours. You arrive at your assignment and discover that your assigned partner is no longer working at the organization and there is no one else there to provide you with more specific structure or support.

What do you do?

#### **Scenario #3 (Gender)**

You have been working in your assignment for about a month and everything has been going well. You get along very well with the head of the office, Jacob, and the project manager, Beth, with whom you work closely. You've

been invited to join them for a meeting in one of the villages where your project will be implemented. When you all arrive at the meeting, you notice that Beth is mostly ignored by the village elders, while Jacob is treated exceptionally well. You know that Beth is doing most of the work and is the best source of information on the project.

How might you respond?

**Scenario #4 (Vegetarian—If candidate discloses they are vegetarian during the interview or to assess a candidate's response to a situation out of their control)**

To celebrate your arrival in your host country, your colleagues at your partner organization prepare a traditional, festive meal. One of the few phrases you learned how to say in the local language is, "I am a vegetarian," and you are sure there will be meatless dishes at dinner. However, when you sit at the table you are faced with expensive plates of sausage, jellied chicken, layered fish salad, and cabbage stuffed with rice and meat. As they start to serve you, you again say, "I'm a vegetarian." You are looked at blankly for a moment and then they continue to serve you large portions of meat. There are no vegetarian options available.

Tell us how you might respond in situations where you have no control over the food you are offered to eat, and the people who are hosting you serve you meat since that is how they honor special guests.

**Scenario #5 (Diversity 1)**

You are asked to attend a weekly religious practice. Your counterparts worship regularly together and repeatedly ask you to worship with them; however, you do not practice their religion.

How would you manage this situation?

**Scenario #6 (Diversity 2)**

You are receiving a visit from another volunteer and your host family is excited to meet another American. When your friend, Tina, arrives you notice your host family's enthusiasm disappears and they become confused. and your host family believes that she is not American since they were expecting a volunteer who shares your racial identity. Tina is also a vegetarian and your host family doesn't understand why she doesn't eat meat when you do eat meat. You and Tina have different racial identities

How would you explain individual choices and differences to them as an American?

**Scenario #7 (Advancing Health Professionals only)**

As an AHP Volunteer, you will be asked to work at institutions with limited resources and to interact with students with a low knowledge base and local colleagues who have other demands on their time that may limit their ability to improve and deliver medical education. Which one of these—limited resources, low student knowledge base, and colleagues with other priorities—might be most difficult for you during your Peace Corps service, and what in your background has prepared you to work effectively despite this challenge?

**Scenario #8 (Recent RPCVs only)**

As an RPCV, you really enjoyed your prior service. You quickly bonded with your community, had close relationships with your neighbors and coworkers, and got along very well with the Peace Corps staff. You felt supported. Your Response service is at a different post and you've found that forming relationships with your community has been more challenging. Some of the aspects of your host community can be frustrating and you feel less supported by the Peace Corps staff compared to your prior service.

What skills that you've learned from your prior service would you utilize to address this challenge? How would you approach these challenges?

**Wrap Up Information:**

During the time remaining before departure, you would need to be available to complete your medical clearance, passport and visa paperwork, and answer additional questions regarding legal clearance if invited. Are there any periods during which it might be difficult to contact you before the projected departure?

Passport information (type, number of blank pages, and date of expiration)

Home of record

Next steps in process (legal, medical, references)

Do you have any questions or concerns you would like to discuss?

**Privacy Act Statement**

The Peace Corps, a U.S. government agency, is required by the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a) to advise you of the following information regarding this form. The Peace Corps follows the requirements of the Privacy Act which protects personal information that the agency maintains and uses in its systems of records (SORs).

Authority: The Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2501 et seq.), as amended.

Purpose: The primary use of this information is to determine whether a volunteer candidate for Peace Corps Response is qualified and suitable for volunteer service.

Routine Use: Use of the information collected on this form is restricted to the purposes cited in this privacy statement or unless the disclosure is otherwise permitted under the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a (b) "Conditions of disclosure," and the agency's privacy policy. The information you provide on this form may be shared under the system of records routine uses A, B, C, E, F, G, H, I, K, L and M. Peace Corps also allows shares the name, country of service and dates of service for former and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers/Trainees. This information is considered public information and may be disclosed to any person upon request and to the public as the Peace Corps deems appropriate. For information on these routine uses, click the link to the [Peace Corps Privacy webpage](#). This information collection is covered by System of Records Notice PC-21, Peace Corps Response Database.

The Privacy Act of 1974 also allows the head of an agency to publish rules to exempt any system of records from the requirement that individuals be permitted access to records pertaining to themselves, as well as exemption from other requirements. This system has been exempted from the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974 per 5

U.S.C. 552a(k) (6), that permit access and correction. The exemption from access is limited if the disclosure would compromise the objectivity or fairness of the test or examination process. The agency is committed to ensuring that any personal information it receives is safeguarded against unauthorized disclosure.

Disclosure: Completion of this form is voluntary; however, failure to complete this form may impair or delay the Peace Corps' ability to process and consider the candidate's application.