

THE PEACE CORPS WELCOMES YOU TO

PERU



A PEACE CORPS PUBLICATION
FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS



March 2007



A WELCOME LETTER

Congratulations on being invited to serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Peru! We look forward to your arrival and to working closely with you over the next two years.

Peace Corps is an exciting and rewarding adventure in any country, and I believe that we have a particularly strong program awaiting you in Peru. Peace Corps returned to Peru in 2002, after an absence of 27 years, and since then has grown to 140 Volunteers, established good working relationships with a variety of counterpart agencies, and built an excellent reputation.

We can promise you a beautiful country, hospitable and receptive people, a well-thought-out assignment, and many development challenges. What we can't promise you is that it is going to be easy. There are numerous cultural and institutional obstacles to training and motivating people in a country like Peru. Some people in your community will be resistant to change, others suspicious of your motives. But with hard work and commitment on your part, you will be amazed at what you can accomplish. Numerous lives will be changed for the better because of your service as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

In addition, you will have a once-in-a-lifetime cross-cultural experience. Living with a Peruvian family, you will become part of your community (which may be anything from an urban barrio to a rural hamlet), participating in community activities and sharing special moments with newfound friends. Both you and the Peruvians you come in contact with will be enriched from the experience.

You will have 11 weeks of training before you are sworn in as a Volunteer. The training will strengthen your language proficiency, technical skills, safety and security awareness, and community integration. Take full advantage of this opportunity.

Both during training and throughout your service, there is a highly committed staff to support you. All of us share your excitement about coming to Peru and making a contribution to the development of this country. We look forward to meeting you soon.

Best regards,

Michael Hirsh,
Country Director

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PEACE CORPS/PERU HISTORY AND PROGRAM



History of the Peace Corps in Peru

The Peace Corps first opened a program in Peru in 1962. Over the next 13 years, some 2,600 Volunteers worked in health and nutrition, city planning, social work, agricultural extension, agricultural cooperatives, savings and loan associations, elementary and secondary education, community development, and earthquake reconstruction (after the severe earthquake and landslide of 1970). The Peace Corps had a main office in Lima and regional offices in Puno, Cuzco, Chimbote, and Arequipa. Peace Corps' departure from Peru in 1975 was due to political and economic instability.

In 2001, then-President Alejandro Toledo invited the Peace Corps to return. As well as seeing Peace Corps as part of his development plan for the country, President Toledo had a personal relationship with the Peace Corps. When he was young, his family had hosted a Volunteer in their home in Chimbote. Volunteers taught him English and were instrumental in his attending college and graduate school in the United States. President Toledo also worked at the Peace Corps training center in California, teaching Spanish while he was going to college.

Teams from Peace Corps headquarters made assessment visits to Peru in late 2001 and early 2002, and a country agreement was signed in Lima on March 23, 2002. The Peace Corps was represented by its then-director, Gaddi Vasquez. Staff was deployed to Lima in May 2002. The first four Volunteers, third-year transferees from other Latin American countries,

arrived in August 2002. They were followed by the first new group of Volunteers, who arrived for training in November and were sworn-in in February 2003. A second group arrived in September 2003. Since then, two new groups of trainees arrive to serve in Peru each year.

History and Future of Peace Corps Programming in Peru

Peru is a poor country with significant development challenges. According to USAID, 48 percent of the population lives below the official poverty line (U.S. \$58 per month), with 18 percent living in extreme poverty (under U.S. \$32 per month). Peru is plagued by high unemployment (around 10 percent) and underemployment (estimated at 43 percent). Health indicators show that large sectors of the population suffer from nutritional deficiencies (24 percent of children are chronically malnourished), a high infant mortality rate (43 per 1,000 in rural areas), and limited access to basic healthcare services.

Although Peruvians take pride in their country's rich biodiversity, in practice there is little environmental ethic. Few activities are being implemented to preserve natural resources, and in some cases severe degradation is taking place.

Youth are seriously affected by Peru's economic situation. Many children are sent to the streets to sell candy or find other ways to earn a few coins a day. Facilities that serve orphaned, abandoned, or abused children provide little more than food and shelter, and the residents become instantly unemployed when they leave at age 18. Even among less disadvantaged low-income youth, there is often a feeling of hopelessness and low self-esteem that can lead to drug abuse and crime.

Based upon these realities, the Peace Corps program in Peru is focused on four sectors: small business development, community health, youth development, and environmental

awareness. All Peace Corps activities are directed toward providing people at the community level with the knowledge, tools, and capacities to help them improve their own lives.

In the small business development project, Volunteers help agricultural associations, artisan groups, and other small business owners improve their net incomes by enhancing their marketing links to urban and export markets, and by strengthening their management and accounting practices. Volunteers also look for creative ways to integrate information technology into small business management.

In the community health project, Volunteers promote preventive healthcare practices. They train and work side-by-side with community health promoters, health post staff, parents, and community members. Preventive healthcare practices include basic hygiene, nutrition education (including promoting family gardens), disease prevention, and maternal and infant care.

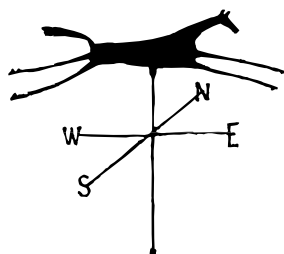
In the youth development project, Volunteers work with orphanages, centers for street-children, schools, health posts, and other youth-serving organizations in programs to develop vocational skills, self-esteem, life skills, and components of good citizenship.

In the environmental awareness project, Volunteers work in small towns and rural communities on environmental education, recycling campaigns, and conservation of protected areas.

In all its projects, the Peace Corps works closely with Peruvian counterpart agencies to help the agencies achieve their goals. These agencies include government ministries, local municipalities, and a variety of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).



COUNTRY OVERVIEW: PERU AT A GLANCE



History

When the Spanish landed in 1531, Peru's territory was the nucleus of the highly developed Inca civilization. Centered in Cuzco, the Inca empire extended over a vast region from northern Ecuador to central Chile. In search of Inca wealth, Spanish explorer Francisco Pizarro, who arrived in the territory after the Incas had fought a debilitating civil war, conquered the weakened people. The Spanish captured the Inca capital at Cuzco in 1533 and consolidated their control by 1542. Gold and silver from the Andes enriched the conquerors, and Peru became the principal source of Spanish wealth and power in South America.

Pizarro founded Lima in 1535. The viceroyalty in Lima had jurisdiction over all of Spanish-controlled South America. Throughout the colonial period, right up to the wars of independence (1820-1824), Lima was the most distinguished colonial capital.

Peru's independence movement was led by José de San Martín of Argentina and Simón Bolívar of Venezuela. San Martín proclaimed Peru's independence from Spain on July 28, 1821. Emancipation was completed in December 1824, when General Antonio José de Sucre defeated the Spanish troops at Ayacucho, ending Spanish rule in South America. Spain made some futile attempts to regain its former colonies, but in 1879, finally recognized Peru's independence.

After independence, Peru and its neighbors engaged in intermittent territorial disputes. Chile's victory over Peru and Bolivia in the War of the Pacific (1879-1883) resulted in a territorial settlement. Following a clash between Peru and Ecuador in 1941, the Rio Protocol sought to establish the boundary between the two countries. Continuing border disagreements led to brief armed conflicts in 1981 and 1995, but in 1998, Peru and Ecuador signed a historic peace treaty and demarcated the border. In 1999, Peru and Chile likewise implemented the last outstanding article of their 1929 border agreement.

The military has been prominent in Peruvian history. Coups have repeatedly interrupted civilian constitutional government. The most recent period of military rule (1968-1980) began when General Juan Velasco Alvarado overthrew elected President Fernando Belaúnde Terry of the Popular Action (AP) Party. Velasco undertook an extensive agrarian reform program and nationalized the fish meal industry, some petroleum companies, and several banks and mining firms. Francisco Morales Bermúdez, a centrist Peruvian general who came to power in 1975, moved the revolution into a more pragmatic "second phase," tempering the authoritarian abuses of Velasco and beginning the task of restoring the country's economy. Morales Bermúdez presided over the return to civilian government in accordance with a new constitution drawn up in 1979. In the May 1980 elections, Belaúnde was returned to office by an impressive plurality.

Nagging economic problems left over from the military government persisted, worsened by an occurrence of the El Niño weather phenomenon in 1982-1983, which caused widespread flooding on the coast and a severe drought in the highlands. The El Niño decimated schools of ocean fish, a major revenue source.

During the 1980s, terrorism by Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) and the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) began and rapidly increased, deriving significant financial support from alliances with those involved in the illicit cultivation and trafficking of coca. In 1985, the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) won the presidential election, bringing Alan García Pérez to office. The transfer of the presidency from Belaúnde to García on July 28, 1985, was Peru's first exchange of power from one democratically elected leader to another in 40 years.

García's management of the economy was weak, and hyperinflation became rampant, particularly from 1988 to 1990. Concerned about the economy, the increasing terrorist threat, and allegations of corruption, voters chose relatively unknown mathematician-turned-politician Alberto Fujimori as president in 1990. Fujimori implemented drastic measures that caused inflation to drop from 7,650 percent in 1990 to 139 percent in 1991. One of his other accomplishments was the jailing of Sendero Luminoso's leadership and a significant reduction in terrorism. Faced with opposition to his reform efforts, Fujimori dissolved Congress in an "autocoup" on April 4, 1992. He then revised the constitution, called new congressional elections, and implemented substantial economic reforms, including the privatization of numerous state-owned companies and the creation of an investment-friendly climate.

Fujimori won a second term in 1995, after engineering a change in the constitution to allow a president to run for a second consecutive term. Fujimori's decision to seek a third term, even though not permitted by the constitution, and his subsequent victory in June 2000, brought political turmoil. A bribery scandal that broke just weeks later forced Fujimori to flee the country and resign from office in November 2000.

A caretaker government presided over by Valentín Paniagua Corazao took on the responsibility of conducting new presidential and congressional elections in April 2001.

Alejandro Toledo won the presidency in the elections of April 8 and June 3, 2001, and he was sworn-in on July 28, 2001. In his inaugural address, President Toledo pledged to continue the reconstruction of democratic institutions, fight poverty and unemployment through a reactivation of the economy, and combat corruption. In general, the Toledo administration was successful in promoting macro-economic growth, with Peru leading South American countries from 2002 to 2005 in gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates. The public's perception that the fruits of this growth were not reaching the citizenry and that the Toledo government was unconcerned with social programs caused President Toledo's approval ratings to dip as low as 10 percent.

Elections were held in April 2006, with a run-off in June between the two leading candidates. The winner was former President Alan García of the APRA party, who pledged not to repeat the policies that led to hyperinflation and uncontrolled terrorism. President García has named well-experienced technocrats to many important positions, and he is in the process of reforming and strengthening many social programs. He values Peru's relationship with the United States and looks forward to the United States' continued assistance in Peru's development efforts.

Government

The president is popularly elected for a five-year term, and the 1993 constitution permits one consecutive reelection. The first and second vice presidents also are popularly elected but have no constitutional functions unless the president is

unable to discharge his duties. The principal executive body is the Council of Ministers, headed by a prime minister and appointed by the president. All presidential decree laws and draft bills sent to the legislative branch must be approved by the Council of Ministers.

The legislative branch consists of a unicameral Congress of 120 members. In addition to passing laws, Congress ratifies treaties, authorizes government loans, and approves the national budget. The president has the power to block legislation with which the executive branch does not agree. The judicial branch is headed by a 16-member Supreme Court seated in Lima. In 1996, an ombudsman's office was created to address human rights issues.

Peru is divided into 24 departments, plus the constitutional province of Callao, the country's chief port, adjacent to Lima. Departments are subdivided into provinces, which are composed of districts (each with a municipal government). The national government is promoting decentralization and direct elections for local officials. In several parts of the country, adjoining departments are in the process of forming "mega-regions", which under the decentralization laws will receive allotments from the central government and be able to determine how expenditures are made.

Economy

During the 1990s, Peru was transformed by market reforms and privatizations, setting the stage for long-term growth. Although some years have been better than others, real GDP has grown dramatically over the past decade. Growth rates have been above 5 percent each of the past five years (6.3 percent in 2005), with growth being driven by construction, mining, foreign investment, domestic demand, and exports.

Other macroeconomic indicators have also been favorable. Inflation rates are low (1.5 percent in 2005), exports are robust (\$17 billion in 2005), the fiscal deficit is relatively low (1.1 percent of GDP), and external debt is considered healthy (44 percent of GDP).

The growth, however, has not been spread evenly among the population. Though per capita income is \$2,440, 48 percent of the population lives on less than \$696 a year. New job creation is barely keeping up with new entrants into the labor force. Wealth and economic activity are concentrated in Lima and other major cities, with many rural areas suffering extreme poverty. The government lacks revenues for adequate social investment. Addressing these issues are the great challenges for the current and future governments.

People and Culture

Peru has a population of about 28 million, 70 percent of whom live in urban or semi-urban areas. Some 8 million people live in and around the capital of Lima, and there are 18 other cities with a population of 100,000 or more. Some 85 percent of the population is split roughly equally between indigenous and mestizo (mixed indigenous and European descent). The lines, however, are not clearly drawn, since socioeconomic and cultural factors are as important as actual blood lines. For example, Peruvians of pure Amerindian descent who have adopted aspects of Hispanic culture typically consider themselves mestizos. About 12 percent of the population is white, and roughly 3 percent is made up of black, Chinese, Japanese, and other groups. In the past decade, Peruvians of Asian heritage have made significant advancements in business and politics; a past president, several past cabinet members, and several current members of the Peruvian Congress are of Japanese or Chinese descent.

Peru has two official languages—Spanish and Quechua, the latter being the most widely spoken indigenous language. Spanish is the dominant language of government, culture, and commerce. Quechua is spoken by many indigenous people who live in the Andean highlands, although there are other indigenous languages spoken in the highlands as well. Some indigenous communities speak only Spanish. Indigenous groups who live on the eastern side of the Andes and in the tropical lowlands adjacent to the Amazon basin speak a variety of native languages.

There are significant socioeconomic divides between the mestizo culture of the coast and the traditional Andean cultures of the mountains and highland valleys. In the tropical areas east of the Andes, there are a variety of groups; some still adhere to traditional customs, while others have been almost completely assimilated into the mestizo-Hispanic culture.

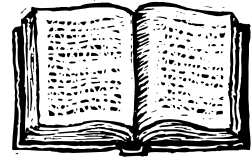
Environment

Sharing borders with Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia, and Chile, Peru is a large and diverse country. Its unique environmental variations include the arid coastal desert, the Andean mountains and valleys, and the Amazonian tropical forests. With so many ecosystems and climatic zones, it should come as no surprise that Peru is a country rich in biodiversity, with many rare species of flora and fauna.

With such extreme geographical variations, Peru's climate differs significantly among regions. While the valleys tend to maintain a moderate temperature, the highlands are dry and cool during much of the year, and the tropical lowlands are hot and humid. The country has suffered through historical cycles of flooding and drought. Like many other areas in the Americas, Peru is subject to occasional tremors and earthquakes, particularly in the northern coastal area.



RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION



The following is a list of websites for additional information about Peru. Please keep in mind that although we try to make sure that we are providing you with links that are active and current, we cannot guarantee that all are.

A note of caution: As you surf the Internet, you may find bulletin boards and chat rooms in which people express opinions about the Peace Corps based on their own experiences. These opinions are not those of the Peace Corps or the U.S. Government. We hope you will keep in mind that people experience their service in different ways.

General Information About Peru

www.state.gov

The U.S. State Department's website contains useful background notes on Peru and other countries around the world.

<http://www.peruvianembassy.us/>

This is the website of the Embassy of Peru in Washington, D.C. It provides information on Peru's history, politics, economy, and tourism, as well as links to other websites on Peru.

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pe.html>

This is the Peruvian section of the World Factbook, produced by the Central Intelligence Agency. It provides current statistics on the country.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/petoc.html>

This is the online version of *Peru: A Country Study*, which was published in 1992 by the Library of Congress. It is an excellent resource for historical and background information on Peru.

www.peru.gob.pe

This is the Peruvian government's official website, with a wealth of current information (in Spanish)

www.inei.gob.pe

This is the site of the Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, providing access to statistical information on Peru, including economic and social indicators (in Spanish).

www.geography.about.com/library/maps/blindex.htm

This online world atlas includes maps and geographical information. Each country page contains links to other sites that contain historical, social, and political information.

www.cyberschoolbus.un.org/infonation/info.asp

This United Nations site allows you to search for statistical information for member states of the U.N.

www.lanic.utexas.edu

This site of the Latin American Network Information Center links to a variety of resources on Latin America.

www.worldinformation.com

This site provides an additional source of current and historical information for countries around the world.

www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations

Visit this site for general travel advice about Peru and almost any other country in the world.

<http://www.peru.info/peru.asp>

This is the Peruvian government's tourism website, offering bilingual information on festivals, hotels, and what to see.

www.rumbosperu.com

This website for the *Travel Magazine of Peru* provides information for travelers in English and Spanish. It has excellent photographs of the various regions and attractions of Peru.

www.peru.com

This site contains news and links related to Peru (in Spanish).

International Development Agencies

The following agencies have programs in Peru. Peace Corps works directly with the Ministry of Health, PRISMA, CARE, and PIDECAFE, and has a close relationship with USAID.

www.usaid.gov/country/lac

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

www.paho.org

Pan American Health Organization

www.iadb.org

The Inter-American Development Bank

www.minsa.gob.pe

Peru's Ministry of Health (in Spanish)

www.prisma.org.pe/nwWeb/Paginas/

PRISMA, a Peruvian nongovernmental organization

www.care.org.pe

CARE/Peru (in Spanish)

www.pidecafe.com.pe

PIDECAFE, a Peruvian nongovernmental organization promoting the production of organic coffee and cane sugar (in Spanish)

Connect With Returned Volunteers and Other Invitees:

www.rpcv.org

This is the site of the National Peace Corps Association, made up of returned Volunteers. On this site you can find links to all the Web pages of the "friends of" groups for most countries of service, made up of former Volunteers who served in those countries. There are also regional groups who frequently get together for social events and local volunteer activities.

www.peacecorpswriters.org

This site is hosted by a group of returned Volunteer writers. It is a monthly online publication of essays and Volunteer accounts from countries around the world.

www.amigosdeboliviayperu.org

Amigos de Bolivia y Peru is the returned Peace Corps Volunteer group for Volunteers and staff who have served in Bolivia and Peru. Its website has information on both countries. This organization publishes a quarterly newsletter for members, which you may receive in-country. Your friends and family may join this group as well.

Recommended Books on Peru:

1. Arana, Maria. *American Chica: Two Worlds, One Childhood*. New York, NY: The Dial Press, 2001.

2. Danbury, Richard. *The Inca Trail, Cuzco and Machu Picchu: Includes the Vilcabama Trail and Lima City Guide*. Trailblazer Publications, 2002.
3. Hemming, John. *Conquest of the Incas*. Harvest Books, 1973.
4. Starn, Orin, Carlos Ivan Degregori, and Robin Kirk (eds.). *The Peru Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995.
5. Stern, Steve J. (ed.). *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*. Duke University Press, 1998.

Books About the History of the Peace Corps

1. Hoffman, Elizabeth Cobbs. *All You Need is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960's*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000.
2. Rice, Gerald T. *The Bold Experiment: JFK's Peace Corps*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.
3. Stossel, Scott. *Sarge: The Life and Times of Sargent Shriver*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2004.

Books on the Volunteer Experience

1. Banerjee, Dillon. *So You Want to Join the Peace Corps: What to Know Before You Go*. Berkeley, Calif.: Ten Speed Press, 2000.
2. Casebolt, Marjorie DeMoss. *Margarita: A Guatemalan Peace Corps Experience*. Gig Harbor, Wash.: Red Apple Publishing, 2000.

3. Dirlam, Sharon. *Beyond Siberia: Two Years in a Forgotten Place*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: McSeas Books, 2004.
4. Erdman, Sarah. *Nine Hills to Nambonkaha: Two Years in the Heart of an African Village*. New York, N.Y.: Picador, 2003.
5. Herrera, Susana. *Mango Elephants in the Sun: How Life in an African Village Let Me Be in My Skin*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1999
6. Hessler, Peter. *River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze*. New York, N.Y.: Perennial, 2001.
7. Kennedy, Geraldine ed. *From the Center of the Earth: Stories out of the Peace Corps*. Santa Monica, Calif.: Clover Park Press, 1991.
8. Thompsen, Moritz. *Living Poor: A Peace Corps Chronicle*. Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1997 (reprint).

NOTES



LIVING CONDITIONS AND VOLUNTEER LIFESTYLE



Communications

We strongly recommend that you establish a regular and realistic communication pattern with your family and friends, so they do not become concerned if they do not hear from you for an extended period of time.

Mail

Most Volunteers find the Peruvian postal service (Serpost) to be safe and reliable, though it is slower than service in the United States. In general, airmail takes about two weeks to and from Peru. During training, you can receive mail at the Peace Corps office in Lima:

“Your Name,” PCT
Cuerpo de Paz
Calle Vía Láctea 132
Urb. Los Granados, Surco
Lima 33, Peru

Once you are sworn-in as a Volunteer, you will be assigned a regional post office box in a city convenient to your site. You are responsible for notifying your family and friends of your new address.

We do not recommend that people mail you packages. All packages over half a kilo (1.1 pounds) or with a declared value of \$100 or more will be assessed customs duty fees based on the value of the items enclosed. This not only is costly but is a time-consuming process. We recommend that friends and family only send small items (e.g., one book or one cassette), and use padded envelopes.

Having items sent to you via a shipping company (e.g., FedEx, UPS) does not eliminate the requirement to pay customs fees. You may also be assessed a delivery charge. Shipping companies, however, may be a good way to receive important documents with no intrinsic value.

It is not advisable for your family or friends to send you money by cash or check. ATM machines are common in Peru, and many accept U.S. ATM cards. Your family can deposit money for you in your U.S. account, and then you can access the money via an ATM. Similarly, e-tickets are a safer option than having paper airline tickets mailed to you.

We request that your family not send money for your community or for the project in which you are involved. Once you are at your site, you and Peace Corps staff members can determine the most appropriate way to access outside resources, should they be needed.

Should you and Peace Corps staff determine that it is advisable to seek outside funding for a project in your community, one alternative is the Peace Corps Partnership Program, through which family members and other private individuals and firms may donate funds through Peace Corps and receive a tax deduction. More information may be found on the Peace Corps website, www.peacecorps.gov, or at 800.424.8580, ext. 2170

Computer, Internet, and E-mail Access

All major cities and many smaller communities in Peru have Internet locations. You may or may not have access to the Internet at your site, but if not, you will be able to access the Internet and send and receive e-mails in your regional capital for a reasonable hourly rate. In addition, the Peace Corps office in Lima has Internet-accessible computers available for Volunteer use.

Telephones

International phone service to and from Peru is relatively good. Some Volunteers have telephone access in their homes and/or work facilities. When that is not the case, there is usually access to a community telephone. There are inexpensive local and international calling cards available in Peru that provide affordable rates. International long-distance calls without a calling card can be expensive.

The cellular telephone network in Peru is expanding rapidly. Most Volunteers live in communities with cellular service, or have cellular service not far away. Peace Corps does not provide cellphones or cellphone service to Volunteers, but does arrange for Volunteers to participate in a low-cost group plan. Almost all Volunteers participate in the plan.

Housing and Site Location

During training, you will live with a Peruvian family near the training facility. Sharing meals, conversation, and other experiences with your host family is an important step in developing the skills and attitudes that will help you fully integrate into your host community.

For months prior to your arrival, the associate Peace Corps director (APCD) for your sector will be exploring potential assignments with counterpart agencies, local municipal authorities, and community leaders. Peace Corps strategic goals, counterpart agency goals, local interest, and the perception that a Volunteer can be successful at the site are all factors that are considered. Assignments may be in a major city, a mid-sized town, a small town, or a rural village. You will be matched to one of these assignments based on your specific background and experience. While you will have

an opportunity to discuss geographic preferences with your APCD during training, the final decision will be based on the best match between your skills and community needs.

All Volunteers in Peru are required to live with a family during their entire service. Living with a family may require adjustments that some North Americans find difficult, given our cultural values concerning privacy and personal space. The benefits of this policy, however, far outweigh any negatives. Living with a Peruvian family allows you to quickly integrate into the community and greatly enhances your safety and security. In addition, your language and cross-cultural skills will be reinforced daily.

Housing is usually made of cement or adobe blocks, sometimes covered with stucco. Roofs are made of tile, corrugated tin, or thatch. You will have your own room, which may be within the larger house or a separate room within a family compound. You will likely have electricity and occasional running water, although not all Volunteers do. You will have access to either indoor plumbing or a latrine.

Living Allowance and Money Management

All Volunteers receive a monthly living allowance, paid in Peruvian currency, that enables them to maintain a modest but safe, healthy, and adequate lifestyle. The living allowance is reviewed once a year to ensure that it is sufficient to meet basic needs, and is adjusted by Peace Corps if necessary. Living allowances in Peru vary by site, but tend to be around \$300 (U.S.).

Three additional allowances are provided to Volunteers. First, Volunteers receive the equivalent of \$24 in Peruvian currency each month to help with vacation expenses. Volunteers accrue two days of vacation leave for each month of service. Second,

after taking the oath of service, each Volunteer receives a one-time settling-in allowance, the equivalent of \$200, to cover the initial expenses of furnishing a room and purchasing basic supplies. Finally, the Peace Corps sets aside \$225 for each month of service, which is available on completion of service. This readjustment allowance permits returning Volunteers to resettle in the United States without undue burden. The living allowance, vacation allowance, and settling-in allowance are deposited in Volunteers' local bank accounts, which can be accessed via ATMs.

As a Volunteer, your effectiveness depends in large measure upon living at the level of the people in your community. We encourage you not to rely on gifts or savings from home to supplement your monthly living allowance. That said, you may wish to tap savings for extraordinary expenses or for travel during vacations. ATM cards from most U.S. financial institutions are readily accepted at ATM machines in all larger communities. U.S. credit cards are also widely accepted.

Food and Diet

Your diet will vary according to your site location. While each region has its traditional foods and specialties, potatoes, rice, and pasta are part of the diet everywhere. Many Volunteers take all or most of their meals with their host family. Others make arrangements with another family, rotate among families in their community, or prepare their own meals.

It can be challenging to maintain a strictly vegetarian diet during Peace Corps service because of community customs. Nonetheless, many Volunteers have been able to maintain a vegetarian diet successfully, and one Volunteer has even prepared a vegetarian cookbook using locally available Peruvian ingredients.

Transportation

Public transportation varies widely, depending on the site. Volunteers living in or visiting cities use taxis, minivans, and three-wheeled mototaxis. Most smaller communities where Volunteers live have regular bus service to and from the community, which can vary from several times a day to just once or twice a week. Roads, however, are often unpaved, and the buses may be slow and unreliable. Most Volunteers are within an hour (by foot or regular ground transportation) from another Volunteer's site. Volunteers not assigned to a city or large town are usually within three or four hours by bus from one.

As a Volunteer, you will be responsible for arranging your personal and work-related travel and for transporting personal belongings, supplies, and project-related equipment to and from your site. For Volunteer safety, Peace Corps requires that Volunteers use only certain carriers which have good safety records on long-distance bus routes. Your living allowance is calculated to cover your transportation needs.

Bus travel in Peru is often long and arduous. It is not uncommon for Volunteers to be 12 to 16 hours from Lima. Roads are often dusty, and significant elevation changes and temperature fluctuations are common. Volunteers must be willing and able to adjust to such conditions.

Volunteers in Peru may not operate motor vehicles during their service, including motorcycles. Volunteers in Peru may not be passengers on motorcycles. Riding on a motorcycle is grounds for administrative separation.

In many areas, both urban and rural, conditions are difficult for bicycle riders. Streets and roads are bumpy and narrow, and unexpected hazards (e.g., potholes, uncovered manholes) are commonplace. Motor vehicle operators show little respect for bicycle riders.

In some sites, however, Volunteers find that bicycles are an excellent means of transportation, especially when their jobs require them to be at multiple locations. Peace Corps provides bicycles to some Volunteers, while others purchase their own bicycles. In all cases, Volunteers must wear Peace-Corps-issued helmets when riding bicycles. Volunteers are responsible for the cost of all bicycle maintenance and repair.

Geography and Climate

Three times the size of California, Peru boasts outstanding biological and geographic diversity, ranging from stark desert bordering the Pacific to productive highland valleys to treeless plains surrounding snow-covered peaks to tropical jungle lowlands.

The arid coastal desert is interspersed with irrigated agricultural zones that support prosperous towns and fishing villages. The highland valleys are characteristically temperate and provide fertile soils. The alternating hills and flatlands of the sierra are punctuated with breathtaking, snow-covered mountain peaks that reach more than 20,000 feet. The lowlands offer steamy forests and swamps, along with high humidity and tropical downpours.

Though the coast is arid, it is marked by high humidity year-around. During the winter season (May-November), much of the coastal plain is overcast and chilly. During the summer (December-April), skies clear, and temperatures can get quite hot.

In the sierra, seasons are defined more by rainfall. The rainy season is generally November through March. The driest months are May through September. In both seasons, temperatures during the day are moderate, while nights are cool.

Lima, the capital, is a large, cosmopolitan city on the coast that offers a blend of colonial history, the challenges of any big city, extremes of wealth and poverty, and the amenities and cultural life of a major capital.

Social Activities

Most social activities revolve around daily and special events in the community, including religious holidays and processions. Volunteers are often invited to join family and community events such as birthday parties and sports activities, or just to chat over coffee.

Integrating into your community is the key to an enjoyable and rich experience as a Volunteer. By building solid relationships—through both your work assignment and interaction with Peruvian neighbors and other community members—you will have greater opportunities to participate in social activities.

You will need to develop a keen awareness of Peruvian culture and customs. Many celebrations and other social events include significant alcohol consumption. In the interest of safety, you will have to exercise careful judgment when under social pressure to drink.

The Peace Corps prohibits the use of all illegal drugs, including marijuana, by Peace Corps Volunteers and trainees. The government of Peru, with the support of the United States, has taken a strong stand against the illegal cultivation of coca and the use of illegal drugs. It has passed stringent anti-drug laws that mandate stiff prison sentences for possession and use of drugs. Any invitee who feels compelled to use illegal substances should not accept an invitation to serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Professionalism, Dress, and Appearance

Peruvians take great pride in being neat, clean, and well-groomed, and Volunteers should follow the example of Peruvians at their work site and in their community. Inappropriate dress or grooming is considered disrespectful, may make Peruvians less receptive to you, and may single you out and put you in danger.

During training, and occasionally as a Volunteer, there will be times when it is appropriate for men to wear jackets and ties and for women to wear dresses or slacks and a blouse. In classroom and office settings in cities and larger towns, attire should be professionally casual—skirts or slacks for women, slacks and button-down shirts with collars for men. Work clothes at field or rural sites will be more informal—for example, men and women may wear jeans and boots. Clothes should always be neat and clean.

The climate impacts dress significantly. In warmer areas, men will wear short-sleeved shirts and women sleeveless blouses and dresses. In colder areas, men and women wear sweaters and jackets. It is best to bring a variety of clothing that can be layered.

Shorts are generally worn only in the home, at the beach, or in other informal settings, not on the street. Piercings, other than pierced ears for women (one per ear), are uncommon and may make the Volunteer an unwanted source of attention. The same goes for visible tatoos. It is preferable that male Volunteers not have ponytails, long hair, or beards, but if so, hair must be neatly groomed, and beards must be neat and trimmed.

Personal Safety

Being a Peace Corps Volunteer entails certain safety risks. Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment, having a less-than-perfect understanding of local language and culture, and being perceived as well-off are some of the factors that can put a Volunteer at risk. Volunteers experience varying degrees of unwanted attention and harassment. Although most Volunteers complete their two years of service in Peru without any personal security incidents, petty thefts and burglaries do occur, and incidents of physical and sexual assault have occasionally occurred. The Peace Corps has established procedures, policies, and training designed to help you reduce your risks and enhance your safety and security. At the same time, you are expected to take the primary responsibility for your safety and well-being. More information on these topics can be found in the Health Care and Safety chapter.

Rewards and Frustrations

It takes sensitivity and effort to establish your credibility, both as a professional and as a member of your community. With most Peruvians, you will need to develop friendly social relations before you can proceed with satisfactory work relations. Volunteers in Peru must demonstrate flexibility and maturity, the ability to deal with uncertainty and ambiguity, an optimistic attitude, and a sense of humor.

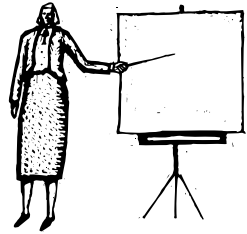
Successfully addressing the challenges of Peace Corps service depends in large part on the attitude of the individual Volunteer. Some common occurrences that you may find annoying or frustrating include having to repeatedly explain your role as a Volunteer, limited technical support from your counterparts, numerous delays during the course of your work and daily life, lack of privacy, gossip about you, and perceptions that you are a wealthy foreigner.

Other frustrations faced by Volunteers result from inadequate infrastructure, including poor roads, infrequent and unreliable public transportation, poor communications, and lack of access to water and sanitation facilities. Volunteers also may get bothered by community health and hygiene practices, antiquated educational approaches, and an inappropriate dependence on external resources.

On the other hand, there are few more enriching experiences than living and working in a new culture, interacting with people different from you, developing an awareness of diverse values, and helping others to better their lives. Volunteers find that the rewards of Peace Corps service far outweigh the challenges. Most Volunteers report a high level of personal satisfaction in developing new technical and language skills, discovering formerly untapped personal strengths and abilities, broadening their global perspective, deepening their cultural understanding, and helping others live happier, healthier, more productive lives.



PEACE CORPS TRAINING



Overview of Pre-Service Training

Pre-service training consists of 11 weeks of instruction and practice in six major areas: Spanish language; staying healthy; safety and security; living in the Peruvian culture; the role of the Volunteer in development; and technical project training. During your training, you will live with a Peruvian family, sharing meals, language, and other activities. Classes are conducted at a training center in Santa Eulalia (about an hour east of Lima), as well as in the surrounding communities where host families live.

Pre-service training is a dynamic, intense period of learning, and you should be prepared to work hard and absorb as much as possible. By the end of training, as a prerequisite to being sworn in as a Peace Corps Volunteer, you will be required to demonstrate certain competencies in each of the training areas.

Training is a time to reflect on your decision to serve as a Volunteer in Peru for the next two years of your life. We expect a strong commitment from each Volunteer. If you develop doubts during training, you will have the opportunity to discuss your feelings and options with Peace Corps staff.

Language Training

As a Peace Corps Volunteer, you will find that language skills are key to personal and professional satisfaction during your service. They are critical to job performance, integration into your community, and adaptation to new surroundings. Therefore, language training is at the heart of the training program, and you must successfully meet minimum language requirements to become a Volunteer.

Six days a week you will work with Peruvian language instructors in small groups. Your language training will be provided using multifaceted techniques, including classroom time, field trips, community integration activities, and other assignments outside the classroom. One of the most important learning tools is your host family; time spent interacting with them will help improve your ability to communicate in the Peruvian context.

Your level of Spanish and your site assignment will determine whether you receive instruction in an indigenous language at some point during your service. If so, it would most likely occur as in-service training. Similarly, some Volunteers receive additional Spanish training or tutoring during their service.

Health Training

During pre-service training, you will be given basic health training and information. You will be expected to practice preventive healthcare and to take responsibility for your own health by adhering to Peace Corps medical policies. Topics covered during training include nutrition, safe food preparation, mental health, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Safety and Security Training

During the safety training sessions, you will learn how to adopt a lifestyle that reduces your risks at your home, at work, and during your travels. You will learn appropriate, effective strategies for coping with unwanted attention and about your individual responsibility for promoting safety in all situations throughout your service.

Cross-Cultural Training

Living with a Peruvian host family in a small community during pre-service training will help prepare you for life at your site, where you will also be living with a Peruvian family. Peace Corps staff provide an extensive orientation to the host

families, showing them how they can help you adapt to living in Peru. Many trainees form strong and lasting friendships with their host families.

In addition, you will participate in an extensive array of cross-cultural training sessions, covering Peruvian history, regional customs, and the Peruvian political structure. You will go on field trips to places of historical note and will have a chance to apply your cross-cultural knowledge through hands-on activities.

During pre-service training, you will also receive a good grounding in development theory and practice. You will have an opportunity to visit current Volunteers at their sites and observe successful ongoing projects. A series of sessions will help you understand your role as a development worker. You will build skills in areas such as community assessment and nonformal education techniques. You will learn about the role gender plays in the development process. You will participate in hands-on community development activities in communities close to the training center, under the guidance of Peace Corps/Peru trainers. About three weeks before you are sworn-in, you will have the opportunity to visit your future site, meet your future counterparts, and draft an initial work plan for the coming months.

Technical Training

Technical training will prepare you to work in Peru by building on the skills you already have and by helping you develop new skills that address the needs of your community and the goals of your assignment. Great emphasis is placed on learning how to transfer these skills to the community in which you will serve as a Volunteer. Peace Corps staff, Peruvian experts, current Volunteers, and former Volunteers all actively participate in the training program.

Technical training will include sessions on the general economic and political environment in Peru and strategies for working within such a framework. You will learn how things get done in Peru, and will meet with Peruvian agencies that Peace Corps is collaborating with to facilitate Peru's development. You will be supported and evaluated throughout the training so you can build the confidence and skills you need to undertake your project activities and be a productive Peace Corps Volunteer.

In-Service Training

During your Peace Corps service, you will participate in a series of training workshops designed to further build your skills. In some cases, you will attend with a community counterpart. In other cases, the workshops are for Volunteers only.

Volunteers attend a two-day workshop about three months after swearing-in that focuses on the adjustment process to-date and on refining their work plans. Roughly three months later, Volunteers and counterparts attend a second workshop covering how to design and implement community-based projects.

Other types of workshops that may occur during a Volunteer's term of service are sector-specific workshops in which Volunteers share best practices and learn new skills; theme-specific workshops, for example, disaster preparedness and mitigation); and language training.

Finally, about three months before a group completes its Peace Corps service, Volunteers attend a close-of-service (COS) conference, which provides an opportunity to review Volunteers' experiences and prepare the Volunteers for the future.

The entire training curriculum is designed to be an integrated continuum, from pre-departure orientation through the COS conference. Each training activity is interrelated with all other training activities, to provide you with a complete set of skills to be an effective and productive Volunteer.



YOUR HEALTH CARE AND SAFETY IN PERU



The Peace Corps' highest priority is maintaining the good health and safety of every Volunteer. Peace Corps' medical and safety programs emphasize preventive approaches. Peace Corps/Peru maintains a clinic in the Lima office with two full-time medical officers, both of whom are experienced physicians, who take care of Volunteers' primary healthcare needs. If you become more seriously ill, you will be referred to local American-standard medical facilities or evacuated to Panama or the United States. To assist Volunteers with safety and security issues, Peace Corps/Peru employs a full-time safety and security coordinator. In addition, the Peace Corps regional safety and security officer, who covers eight countries, is based in Lima and assists in safety and security training and response as well.

Health Issues in Peru

Infectious diarrhea, tuberculosis, hepatitis, dengue fever, and typhoid fever are among the illnesses that are widely found in Peru. Malaria, bartonellosis, leishmaniasis, and yellow fever are endemic in specific areas of the country. All of these diseases can be prevented through vaccinations or preventive health measures. Immunizations are required for all Volunteers in Peru and are kept current during their tour. You do not need to take any special medications or get any vaccinations before your arrival in Lima. The Peace Corps medical officer will determine your immunization and medication needs based on your medical history and site assignment. For Volunteers assigned to areas where malaria is found, taking an antimalarial medication and sleeping inside a mosquito net are mandatory.

About half of the Volunteers in Peru are assigned to high-altitude locations (above 8,000 feet). A quarter to a half of all people who travel to high altitude locations experience an unpleasant period of acclimatization that may persist for several days. Symptoms of altitude sickness may include headache, nausea, vomiting, respiratory distress, and insomnia. On rare occasions, altitude sickness may transform itself into pulmonary edema and other life-threatening illnesses. It is not possible to tell in advance who will have problems, although those who have had previous difficulties are likely to have similar problems each time they go to high altitudes. Those with respiratory infections, such as colds, bronchitis, or pneumonia, should delay travel to high altitudes until they are fully recovered. People with certain pre-existing medical conditions, such as hypertension, diabetes, angina pectoris, asthma, or emphysema, should get clearance from a physician before traveling to high altitudes. The Peace Corps medical officer is available to consult with Volunteers prior to their travel or assignment to high altitude locations. There are medicines that help prevent or relieve the symptoms of altitude sickness, which the medical officer prescribes when appropriate. Lima and the training center are located close to sea level, and there are no altitude issues.

Helping You Stay Healthy

The Peace Corps will provide you with all necessary vaccinations, medications, and information to stay healthy. Upon your arrival in Peru, you will receive training and written information on diseases and medical problems you may encounter while in-country. You will also receive a medical kit with supplies to take care of mild illnesses and first-aid needs. The contents of the kit are listed later in this chapter.

The Peace Corps medical officers are on call to address Volunteer medical problems 24-hours a day. The first consultation is typically carried out by telephone. The medical

officer may instruct the Volunteer on how to handle the illness, may ask the Volunteer to come to Lima, or may refer the Volunteer to medical facilities closer to the Volunteer's site.

There are many good, American-trained medical specialists in Lima and in many departmental capitals. If you develop a serious medical problem during your service, you may be sent to one of these specialists for consultation or treatment. The medical officer will also consult with the Peace Corps Office of Medical Services in Washington, D.C., on your condition. If it is determined that your condition cannot be effectively treated in Peru, you may be sent to Panama or the United States for further evaluation and care.

You are responsible for bringing a three-month supply of any prescription drugs and any other medical supplies you regularly use. Once you swear-in as a Volunteer, the Peace Corps will order additional supplies to carry you through your service.

Volunteers have two routine physical examinations, one approximately one year after beginning service, and the other just before leaving the Peace Corps. These examinations also include dental X-rays and cleaning.

With a few exceptions (e.g., cosmetic surgery), the Peace Corps covers the cost of all medical care during a Volunteer's service.

Maintaining Your Health

As a Volunteer, you must accept a considerable amount of responsibility for your own health. Proper precautions will significantly reduce your risk of illness or injury. Preventive measures are particularly important for food-borne and waterborne intestinal disorders, respiratory illness, other infectious airborne diseases, illnesses related to substance abuse, STDs, preventable skin disorders and infections, cuts

and bruises, sunburn, and heatstroke. Also, most accidents can be prevented. In addition, you should follow recommendations to avoid aggravation of any preexisting medical condition.

Proper food and water preparation prevent many of the illnesses that afflict Volunteers worldwide. The medical officer will discuss specific standards for water and food preparation in Peru during pre-service training, and will caution you on what foods and practices to avoid.

Abstinence is the only certain choice for prevention of HIV/AIDS and other STDs. If you choose to be sexually active, it is critical to use a condom every time you have sex. Whether your partner is a host country citizen, a fellow Volunteer, or anyone else, do not assume this person is free of HIV or other STDs. Condoms are available at no charge from the medical officer or at low cost throughout Peru. You will receive more information from the medical officer about this important issue.

Volunteers are expected to adhere to an effective means of birth control to prevent unplanned pregnancies. The medical officer can help you decide on the most appropriate method to suit your individual needs. Contraceptive methods are available free of charge from the medical officer.

While Peace Corps does its part to provide excellent medical care, Volunteers need to do their part as well. It is critical that you promptly report to the medical office for scheduled examinations and immunizations, and that you let the medical officer know immediately of significant illnesses and injuries.

Women's Health Information

Pregnancy is treated in the same manner as other Volunteer health conditions that require medical attention but also have programmatic ramifications. The Peace Corps is responsible for determining the medical risk and the availability of

appropriate medical care if the Volunteer remains in-country. Given the circumstances under which Volunteers live and work in Peace Corps countries, it is rare that the Peace Corps' medical and programmatic standards for continued service during pregnancy can be met.

Sanitary napkins are available and affordable in most towns. Tampons are available in larger cities, but relatively expensive. The cost of these supplies is the responsibility of each Volunteer.

Your Peace Corps Medical Kit

The Peace Corps medical officer provides Volunteers with a medical kit that contains basic items necessary to prevent and treat illnesses that may occur during service. Kit items can be periodically restocked at the medical office.

Medical Kit Contents

- Ace bandage
- Acetaminophen
- Adhesive tape
- Alarm whistle
- Antacid tablets
- Antibiotic ointment
- Antifungal cream
- Antiseptic antimicrobial skin cleaner
- Aquatabs (for water purification)
- Band-Aids
- Butterfly closures
- Condoms
- Cough drops
- Dental floss
- Diphenhydramine HCL 25 mg (Benadryl)
- Emergency First Aid Pocket Guide*
- Eyewash
- Gloves

Hydrocortisone cream
Ibuprofen
Insect repellent stick
Lip balm
Oral rehydration salts
Pepto-Bismol tablets
Pseudoephedrine HCL 30 mg (Sudafed)
Scissors
Sterile gauze pads
Sunblock (SPF 30)
Thermometers (disposable)
Throat lozenges
Tweezers

Before You Leave: A Medical Checklist

If there has been any change in your health—physical, mental, or dental—since you submitted your examination reports to the Peace Corps, you must immediately notify the Office of Medical Services. Failure to disclose new illnesses, injuries, allergies, or pregnancy will endanger your health and may jeopardize your eligibility to serve.

If your dental exam was done more than a year ago, or if your physical exam is more than two years old, contact the Office of Medical Services to find out whether you need updated examinations. If your dentist or the Peace Corps dental consultant has recommended that you undergo dental treatment or repair, you must complete that work and make sure your dentist sends requested confirmation reports or X-rays to the Office of Medical Services.

If you wish to avoid having duplicate vaccinations, contact your physician's office, obtain a copy of your immunization record, and bring it to Peru. The Peace Corps will provide all the

immunizations necessary for your overseas assignment shortly after you arrive in Peru. The Peace Corps does not reimburse for the cost of immunizations prior to Peace Corps service.

Bring a three-month supply of any prescription or over-the-counter medication you use on a regular basis, including birth control pills. Although the Peace Corps cannot reimburse you for this three-month supply, it will provide you with refills for the remainder of your service. While awaiting shipment—which can take several months—you will be responsible for your own supply. The Peace Corps will not pay for herbal or many nonprescribed medications, such as St. John's wort, glucosamine, selenium, or antioxidant supplements.

You are encouraged to bring copies of medical prescriptions signed by your physician. This is not a requirement, but they may come in handy if you are questioned in transit about carrying a supply of prescription drugs.

If you wear eyeglasses, bring two pair with you—the pair you regularly use and a spare. If the first pair breaks, the Peace Corps will replace it, using the information your doctor in the United States provided on the eyeglass form during your examination. We discourage you from using contact lenses during your service, to reduce your risk of infection or other eye disease. Peace Corps will not supply or replace contact lenses or associated solutions unless an ophthalmologist has recommended their use for a specific medical condition and the Peace Corps Office of Medical Services has given approval.

If you are eligible for Medicare, are over 50 years of age, or have a health condition that may restrict your future participation in healthcare plans, you may wish to consult an insurance specialist about your coverage needs before your departure. The Peace Corps will provide all necessary healthcare from the time you leave for your pre-departure

orientation until you complete your service. When you finish, you will be entitled to the post-service healthcare benefits described in the Peace Corps *Volunteer Handbook*. You may wish to consider keeping an existing health plan in effect during your service if you think age or preexisting conditions might prevent you from reenrolling in your current plan or obtaining a new plan when you return home.

Safety and Security—Our Partnership

Serving as a Volunteer overseas entails certain safety and security risks. Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment, a limited understanding of the local language and culture, and the perception of being a wealthy American are some of the factors that can put a Volunteer at risk. Property thefts and burglaries are not uncommon. Incidents of physical and sexual assault do occur, although almost all Volunteers complete their two years of service without serious personal safety problems. In addition, more than 84 percent of Volunteers surveyed in the 2004 Peace Corps Volunteer Survey say they would join the Peace Corps again.

The Peace Corps approaches safety and security as a partnership with you. This *Welcome Book* contains sections on: Living Conditions and Volunteer Lifestyle; Peace Corps Training; and Your Health Care and Safety. All of these sections include important safety and security information.

The Peace Corps makes every effort to give Volunteers the tools they need to function in the safest and most secure way possible, because working to maximize the safety and security of Volunteers is our highest priority. Not only do we provide you with training and tools to prepare for the unexpected, but we teach you to identify and manage the risks you may encounter.

Factors that Contribute to Volunteer Risk

There are several factors that can heighten a Volunteer's risk, many of which are within the Volunteer's control.

Based on information gathered from incident reports worldwide in 2004, the following factors stand out as risk characteristics for assaults. Assaults consist of personal crimes committed against Volunteers, and do not include property crimes (such as vandalism or theft).

- Location: Most crimes occurred when Volunteers were in public areas (e.g., street, park, beach, public buildings). Specifically, 43 percent of assaults took place when Volunteers were away from their sites.
- Time of day: Assaults usually took place on the weekend during the evening between 5:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m.—with most assaults occurring around 1:00 a.m.
- Absence of others: Assaults usually occurred when the Volunteer was unaccompanied. In 82 percent of the sexual assaults the Volunteer was unaccompanied and in 55 percent of physical assaults the Volunteer was unaccompanied.
- Relationship to assailant: In most assaults, the Volunteer did not know the assailant.
- Consumption of alcohol: Forty percent of all assaults involved alcohol consumption by Volunteers and/or assailants.

Summary Strategies to Reduce Risk

Before and during service, your training will address these areas of concern so that you can reduce the risks you face. For example, here are some strategies Volunteers employ:

Strategies to reduce the risk/impact of theft:

- Know the environment and choose safe routes/times for travel
- Avoid high-crime areas per Peace Corps guidance

- Know the vocabulary to get help in an emergency
- Carry valuables in different pockets/places
- Carry a "dummy" wallet as a decoy

Strategies to reduce the risk/impact of burglary:

- Live with a local family or on a family compound
- Put strong locks on doors and keep valuables in a lock box or trunk
- Leave irreplaceable objects at home in the U.S.
- Follow Peace Corps guidelines on maintaining home security

Strategies to reduce the risk/impact of assault:

- Make local friends
- Make sure your appearance is respectful of local customs; don't draw negative attention to yourself by wearing inappropriate clothing
- Get to know local officials, police, and neighbors
- Travel with someone whenever possible
- Avoid known high crime areas
- Limit alcohol consumption

Support from Staff

In March 2003, the Peace Corps created the Office of Safety and Security with its mission to “foster improved communication, coordination, oversight, and accountability of all Peace Corps’ safety and security efforts.” The new office is led by an Associate Director for Safety and Security who reports to the Peace Corps Director and includes the following divisions: Volunteer Safety and Overseas Security; Information and Personnel Security; Emergency Preparedness, Plans, Training and Exercise; and Crime Statistics and Analysis.

The major responsibilities of the Volunteer Safety and Overseas Security Division are to coordinate the office’s

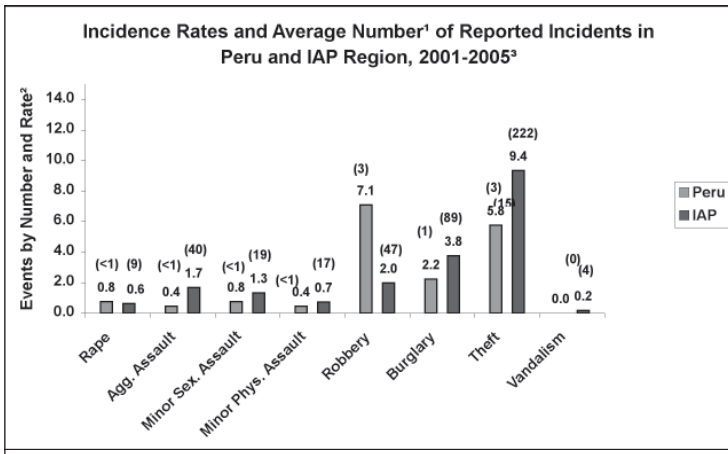
overseas operations and direct the Peace Corps' safety and security officers who are located in various regions around the world that have Peace Corps programs. The safety and security officers conduct security assessments; review safety trainings; train trainers and managers; train Volunteer safety wardens, local guards, and staff; develop security incident response procedures; and provide crisis management support.

If a trainee or Volunteer is the victim of a safety incident, Peace Corps staff is prepared to provide support. All Peace Corps posts have procedures in place to respond to incidents of crime committed against Volunteers. The first priority for all posts in the aftermath of an incident is to ensure that the Volunteer is safe and receiving medical treatment as needed. After assuring the safety of the Volunteer, Peace Corps staff provides support by reassessing the Volunteer's work site and housing arrangements and making any adjustments, as needed. In some cases, the nature of the incident may necessitate a site or housing transfer. Peace Corps staff will also assist Volunteers with preserving their rights to pursue legal sanctions against the perpetrators of the crime. It is very important that Volunteers report incidents as they occur, not only to protect their peer Volunteers, but also to preserve the future right to prosecute. Should Volunteers decide later in the process that they want to proceed with the prosecution of their assailant, this option may no longer exist if the evidence of the event has not been preserved at the time of the incident.

The country-specific data chart below shows the incidence rates and the average number of incidents of the major types of safety incidents reported by Peace Corps Volunteers/trainees in Peru as compared to all other Inter-America and Pacific (IAP) region programs as a whole, from 2001–2005. It is presented to you in a somewhat technical manner for statistical accuracy.

To fully appreciate the collected data below, an explanation of the graph is provided as follows:

The incidence rate for each type of crime is the number of crime events relative to the Volunteer/trainee population. It is expressed on the chart as a ratio of crime to Volunteer and trainee years (or V/T years, which is a measure of 12 full months of V/T service) to allow for a statistically valid way to compare crime data across countries. An “incident” is a specific offense, per Peace Corps' classification of offenses, and may involve one or more Volunteer/trainee victims. For example, if two Volunteers are robbed at the same time and place, this is classified as one robbery incident.



¹The average numbers of incidents are in parenthesis and equal the average reported assaults for each year between 2001–2005.

²Incident rates equal the number of assaults per 100 Volunteers and trainees per year (V/T years). Since most sexual assaults occur against females, only female V/Ts are calculated in rapes and minor sexual assaults. Numbers of incidents are approximate due to rounding.

³Data collection for Peru began as of 2001

Source data on incidents are drawn from Assault Notification Surveillance System (ANSS) and Epidemiologic Surveillance System (ESS); the information is accurate as of 09/21/06.

The chart is separated into eight crime categories. These include vandalism (malicious defacement or damage of property); theft (taking without force or illegal entry); burglary (forcible entry of a residence); robbery (taking something by force); minor physical assault (attacking without a weapon with minor injuries); minor sexual assault (fondling, groping, etc.); aggravated assault (attacking with a weapon, and/or without a weapon when serious injury results); and rape (sexual intercourse without consent).

When anticipating Peace Corps Volunteer service, you should review all of the safety and security information provided to you, including the strategies to reduce risk. Throughout your training and Volunteer service, you will be expected to successfully complete all training competencies in a variety of areas including safety and security. Once in-country, use the tools and information shared with you to remain as safe and secure as possible.

What if you become a victim of a violent crime?

Few Peace Corps Volunteers are victims of violent crimes. The Peace Corps will give you information and training in how to be safe. But, just as in the U.S., crime happens, and Volunteers can become victims. When this happens, the investigative team of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) is charged with helping pursue prosecution of those who perpetrate a violent crime against a Volunteer. If you become a victim of a violent crime, the decision to prosecute or not to prosecute is entirely yours, and one of the tasks of the OIG is to make sure that you are fully informed of your options and help you through the process and procedures involved in going forward with prosecution should you wish to do so. If you decide to prosecute, we are here to assist you in every way we can.

Crimes that occur overseas, of course, are investigated and prosecuted by local authorities in local courts. Our role is to coordinate the investigation and evidence collection with the regional security officers (RSOs) at the U.S. embassy, local police, and local prosecutors and others to ensure that your rights are protected to the fullest extent possible under the laws of the country. OIG investigative staff has extensive experience in criminal investigation, in working sensitively with victims, and as advocates for victims. We also, may, in certain limited circumstances, arrange for the retention of a local lawyer to assist the local public prosecutor in making the case against the individual who perpetrated the violent crime.

If you do become a victim of a violent crime, first, make sure you are in a safe place and with people you trust and second, contact the country director or the Peace Corps medical officer. Immediate reporting is important to the preservation of evidence and the chances of apprehending the suspect. Country directors and medical officers are required to report all violent crimes to the Inspector General and the RSO. This information is protected from unauthorized further disclosure by the Privacy Act. Reporting the crime also helps prevent your further victimization and protects your fellow Volunteers.

In conjunction with the RSO, the OIG does a preliminary investigation of all violent crimes against Volunteers regardless of whether the crime has been reported to local authorities or of the decision you may ultimately make to prosecute. If you are a victim of a crime, our staff will work with you through final disposition of the case. OIG staff is available 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week. We may be contacted through our 24-hour violent crime hotline via telephone at 202.692.2911, or by e-mail at violentcrimeline@peacecorps.gov.

Security Issues in Peru

When it comes to your safety and security in the Peace Corps, you must be willing to adapt your behavior and lifestyle to minimize the potential for being a target of crime. Crime exists in Peru. You can reduce your risk by taking precautions and by avoiding dangerous situations. One of the best deterrents is to make friends and be an active part of your community. Crime at the town or neighborhood level is less frequent than in the heart of large cities; people know each other and generally will not steal from their neighbors.

While most Peace Corps Volunteers in Peru complete their two years of service with no incidents, some Volunteers have been victims of crime. Most of the incidents have involved theft or burglary of property, but there have been physical assaults as well. You will receive considerable pre-service training on safety issues, and the safety and security coordinator is available 24-hours a day to answer questions, address concerns, and help when incidents do occur. Although there are no guarantees of complete safety in any country, we feel that the more informed and aware you are, the greater the likelihood that you will be able to avoid risky or dangerous situations.

Peace Corps Volunteers are often the targets of crime when they are viewed as rich North Americans. Wearing expensive clothing, or carrying accessories such as expensive backpacks, cameras, or a portable music player, may make you an attractive target for petty thieves.

The Peace Corps does not cover the loss of personal property, and it recommends that you obtain insurance coverage for your valuable belongings. The Peace Corps will provide you with information on how to obtain personal property insurance at the pre-departure orientation session.

Peru is prone to earthquakes, and several major quakes have caused considerable damage over the course of its history. Peru is also affected by occasional floods, landslides, droughts, and tsunamis. During pre-service training, Volunteers are taught how to prepare for disasters, and what to do in case one does occur.

Since the early 1980s, two terrorist organizations, Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) and the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) have operated in Peru. Most of the leadership of these organizations have been captured and jailed, and the organizations are a small fraction of their previous size. Nonetheless, remnants remain active, particularly in areas where coca is grown, providing protection to narcotics traffickers. Peace Corps does not place Volunteers in areas where coca is produced or where the terrorist organizations are active. Peace Corps Volunteers are also not allowed to travel in or through those areas.

Peru has a high incidence of openly expressed political unrest. Demonstrations, transportation strikes, and road blockages are common. Peace Corps notifies Volunteers when it obtains information that such incidents are about to occur. Many times, however, Peace Corps does not have advance notice. Volunteers need to remain vigilant, and keep their distance if they encounter a demonstration. Peace Corps/Peru may on occasion declare certain geographic locations off limits.

Staying Safe: Do Not Be a Target for Crime

You must be prepared to take on a large degree of responsibility for your own safety. Only you can make yourself less of a target, ensure that your house is secure, and develop relationships in your community that will make you an unlikely victim of crime. In coming to Peru, do what you would do if you moved to a new city in the United States—be observant, check things out, ask questions, learn about your neighborhood, know where the

more risky locations are, use common sense, and be aware. You can reduce your vulnerability to crime by integrating into your community, acting responsibly, and abiding by Peace Corps policies and procedures. You may have to accept some changes from your current lifestyle.

Volunteers may receive negative attention, especially outside their sites. Unwanted attention can be reduced or managed if you dress conservatively, avoid eye contact, and do not respond to street comments. Keep your money out of sight by using a money pouch, the kind that hangs around your neck and stays hidden under your shirt or inside your coat. Do not keep your money in backpack pockets, coat pockets, or fanny packs. Watch your belongings on buses and other public transportation. Take only registered taxis (not unlicensed “gypsy cabs”) Avoid using ATMs that are in public view. At night, always walk with a companion.

Preparing for the Unexpected: Safety Training and Volunteer Support in Peru

The Peace Corps’ approach to safety is a five-pronged plan to help you stay safe during your two-year service and involves the following: information sharing, Volunteer training, site selection criteria, a detailed emergency action plan, and protocols for addressing safety and security incidents. Peace Corps/Peru’s in-country safety program is outlined below.

Volunteers are kept informed of any issues that may impact their safety through **information sharing**. Routine updates will be provided in e-mails and newsletters. In the event of an emergency situation, you will be contacted by telephone or through another Volunteer. Peace Corps/Peru maintains a communications network, that it periodically tests, enabling every Volunteer to be quickly contacted. For their part, Volunteers need to keep Peace Corps informed when they are out of their site.

Volunteer training includes sessions to prepare you for specific safety and security issues in Peru. This training will prepare you to adopt a culturally appropriate lifestyle and exercise good judgment that promotes safety and reduces risk in your home, at work, and while traveling. Safety training is offered throughout your two-year service and is integrated into the language, cross-cultural, health, and other components of training.

Certain **site selection criteria** are used to determine a safe site and safe housing for Volunteers before their arrival. Peace Corps/Peru goes to great efforts to identify appropriate communities for Volunteer assignments. Peace Corps staff works closely with community leaders and counterpart agencies to help prepare them for a Volunteer's arrival and to define their roles in supporting the Volunteer. Factors such as crime statistics, access to medical and other essential services, availability of transportation and communications, and housing availability are all taken into account when deciding where to place Volunteers. Counterpart agency staff, community leaders, and Peace Corps staff typically work together to identify an appropriate family with which the Volunteer will live. Housing must fill specific safety and security criteria. For example, the Volunteer must have a private room that can be locked; and if there are windows directly facing a street, the windows must be barred. Volunteers are expected to stay with their initial host family for at least three months and preferably for the majority of their service. If a Volunteer wishes to move in with another host family, Peace Corps staff must inspect the housing and interview the new family before the move, and approve the house and family based on Peace Corps' safety and security criteria.

Peace Corps/Peru has a detailed **emergency action plan**, which is implemented in the event of severe civil or political unrest, or a major natural disaster. When you arrive at your site, you will complete and submit a site locator form with your

address, contact information, and a map to your house. Your locator form will include both routine and backup methods of communication. If there is severe unrest or a major disaster, you will be contacted and provided with appropriate instructions. Depending on the situation, you may be asked to stay put at your site, or to move to a designated consolidation or evacuation point.

For the Peace Corps to be fully responsive to the needs of Volunteers, it is imperative that Volunteers immediately report any security incident to the appropriate Peace Corps staff person. The Peace Corps has established **protocols for addressing safety and security incidents** in a timely and appropriate manner, and it collects and evaluates safety and security data to track trends and develop strategies to minimize risks to future Volunteers. In addition, Volunteers are encouraged to speak with staff members about security concerns or possible threats to security at any time.



DIVERSITY AND CROSS-CULTURAL ISSUES



In fulfilling its mandate to share the face of America with host countries, the Peace Corps makes special efforts to see that all of America's richness is reflected in the Volunteer corps. Differences in race, ethnic background, age, religion, and sexual orientation are expected and welcomed among our Volunteers. Part of the Peace Corps' mission is to help dispel any notion that Americans are all of one origin or race and to establish that each of us is as thoroughly American as the other.

While our diversity helps us accomplish that goal, in other ways it poses challenges. In Peru, as in other Peace Corps host countries, Volunteers' backgrounds, beliefs, lifestyles, and behaviors are judged in a cultural context different from our own.

Overview of Diversity in Peru

The people of Peru are known for their generous hospitality to foreigners; however, members of the community in which you will live may display a range of reactions to differences that you present. Outside of Peru's capital, residents have had less direct exposure to other cultures, races, religions, and lifestyles.

To adapt to life in Peru, you may need to make some compromises in how you present yourself as an individual. Female trainees and Volunteers may not be able to exercise as much independence as they do in the United States; political discussions need to be handled with great care; and some of your personal beliefs or orientations may best remain undisclosed. You will need to develop techniques and

personal strategies for coping with these issues. Peace Corps staff will lead diversity and sensitivity discussions during pre-service training and will be on call to provide support, but the challenge ultimately will be your own.

What Might a Volunteer Face?

Possible Gender Issues for Volunteers

Gender roles in Peru are different from those in the United States, and it is important to understand them to be effective and to find personal satisfaction in your project assignment. Most Peruvian women have traditional roles, especially in rural areas, where they run the household, prepare meals, clean, and rear children. In addition, many women work in the fields, run small businesses, and care for farm animals. Men also have specific roles, and “manliness” is very important.

It is not uncommon for women to experience stares, comments, and requests for dates on the street and in other situations. Female Volunteers are obvious targets because they generally look different from Peruvian women. Female Volunteers may have to accept certain constraints that male Volunteers do not, and adjust to different norms, behaviors, and ways of doing things.

Male Volunteers also encounter harassment, but less frequently. Male Volunteers may be teased about not being “manly” enough for not pursuing women or drinking. Male Volunteers who cook, wash clothes and dishes, and clean the house may be considered strange by their neighbors.

Possible Issues for Volunteers of Color

Peru has many ethnic groups, including large Chinese and Japanese populations, and an Afro-Peruvian community concentrated in Lima and other coastal areas. Peruvians

from these minority groups, particularly Afro-Peruvians, are sometimes subject to subtle forms of discrimination, and Volunteers, including African-American Volunteers, may experience similar treatment.

All Volunteers may hear racial comments while on the street, although the comments are more likely to be descriptive than derogatory. For example, persons of Asian descent are called *Chinos*, whether or not they are of Chinese descent. All Volunteers, but particularly Volunteers of color, will be subjected to a variety of questions, comments, and perhaps even jokes regarding their race or ethnicity. While some of these may be mean-spirited, most will be innocent, arising from unfamiliarity with or misinformation about other races and cultures. You will find it helpful to maintain a positive attitude about yourself and to approach any negative comments with patience and confidence. Peruvians, particularly in rural areas, tend to think all Americans are Caucasian and may express disbelief when you introduce yourself as an American. The need for repeated explanations of your ethnic background may become tiresome, but it is a wonderful opportunity to explain the rich cultural diversity of the United States to Peruvians.

Possible Issues for Senior Volunteers

In general, older members of the community are well-respected in Peru. Specific challenges for senior Volunteers are often related to language acquisition and adaptation to the basic living conditions of Peru. Also, because most Volunteers are in their 20s, seniors may find that developing a peer support system within the Volunteer community is a challenge.

Possible Issues for Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual Volunteers

While there is some openness about sexual orientation in the larger cities, homosexuality is not looked upon favorably in smaller communities. We recommend that gay, lesbian,

and bisexual Volunteers be circumspect about their sexual orientation with their Peruvian colleagues, particularly at first. Once established in their site, each Volunteer will make the decision with whom to discuss their sexual orientation. Support mechanisms are available within the Peace Corps community and from Peace Corps staff.

Volunteer Comment:

“As a gay Asian-American Volunteer in a small town in Peru, I often have to face stereotypes and prejudices directed toward ethnicity and sexual orientation. At times, it can be comical to answer questions concerning my skills in martial arts and my relationship to ex-president Fujimori, but it can be uncomfortable to hear people openly degrade homosexuals. However, to integrate into the community, sometimes it is necessary to sacrifice some of the liberties that one is used to in the States. Fortunately, the support groups and resources provided by Peace Corps/Peru, and my network of friends and family in the States and in Peru, have made it easier to work through the frustrations.”

Possible Religious Issues for Volunteers

Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion in Peru. Many other religious groups are present and visible around the country, and tolerance of all religions is fairly high. In some smaller communities, divisions exist across religious lines, and Volunteers need to understand these and be careful about being seen as aligned with one side or the other. If you are an observant member of any religion, particularly a non-Christian one, it may be challenging to explain your beliefs to Peruvians. Obtaining special foods and locating a place of worship for major holidays may also be a challenge. Lima has places of worship for most major religions, including several synagogues for the Jewish population.

Volunteer Comment:

“I am a youth development Volunteer in a small southern suburb of Lima, Peru, called San Bartolo. The majority of residents in San Bartolo are Catholics, but there are also Evangelicals and Jehovah Witnesses. I am the only Jew who lives in my community. Being the only Jew in the community has not been very difficult. I find people here to be respectful of my faith, and I am treated well. Naturally, they are curious to learn what it means to be Jewish, why I am Jewish, and why I do not believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God. I answer their questions, and often they are happy to learn something new about another religion and culture.”

Possible Issues for Volunteers With Disabilities

As a disabled Volunteer in Peru, you will face a special set of challenges. There is very little infrastructure to accommodate those with disabilities, and few places make any accommodation for those with physical disabilities. The major cities do, however, offer some institutional support for those with disabilities.

As part of the medical clearance process, the Peace Corps Office of Medical Services determined that you were physically and emotionally capable, with or without reasonable accommodations, to perform a full tour of Volunteer service in Peru without unreasonable risk of harm to yourself or interruption of your service. Peace Corps/Peru staff will work with disabled Volunteers to make reasonable accommodations in training, housing, job sites, and other areas to enable them to serve safely and effectively.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS?



How much luggage am I allowed to bring to Peru?

You will most likely be flying American Airlines or Delta Airlines to Peru. The baggage size and weight limits change from time to time. Currently, passengers are allowed to check two bags with each weighing up to 50 pounds and with certain size restrictions. Passengers are also allowed one carry-on bag, plus a purse, briefcase, or laptop. We strongly advise you to check current limits on the airline's website once you know the carrier you will be taking to Peru. You will be responsible for any excess-baggage charges. Please check the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) website for a detailed list of permitted and prohibited items at <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm>.

Peace Corps Volunteers are not allowed to take pets, weapons, explosives, radio transmitters, or motorized vehicles to their overseas assignments. Do not pack flammable materials or other items restricted by the airlines or the Department of Homeland Security. It is best not to pack aerosol containers.

You will be passing through Peruvian customs upon your arrival. While all normal personal items are acceptable, there are limits on the number of certain electronic items that may be brought to the country. For example, a Volunteer may bring in only one laptop.

What is the electric current in Peru?

The current is 220 volts. Electrical appliances that utilize 110 volts require a transformer.

How much money should I bring?

Volunteers are expected to live at the same level as the people in their community. You will be given a settling-in allowance and a monthly living allowance, which are adequate to cover all your expenses. Similarly during training, you will be provided with a “walk-around” allowance, to cover all expenses. Trainees may, however, wish to bring a small amount of cash, perhaps \$50 to \$100, with them to Peru for initial or extra expenses. Dollars are easily exchanged into Peruvian currency virtually anywhere in Peru.

From time to time, Volunteers may wish to have additional money for vacation travel or other special occasions. Cash can be obtained from ATM machines throughout Peru and South America. Credit cards and traveler’s checks are widely accepted (note that some Volunteers report that American Express traveler’s checks are more readily accepted than other brands).

When can I take vacation and have people visit me?

You are encouraged to use your vacation time to travel in Peru and other South American countries. Each Volunteer accrues two vacation days per month of service (excluding training). Leave may normally not be taken during training, the first three months of service (an important time for developing good relationships with Peruvians in your community), or the last three months of service (when you will be completing your projects). Travel outside Peru may normally not be taken during the first six months of service. Family and friends are welcome to visit you after you have been at your site for six months and as long as their stay does not interfere with your work. Extended stays at your site are not encouraged and should be discussed with your associate Peace Corps director in advance. The Peace Corps cannot provide your visitors with visa, medical, or travel assistance.

Will my belongings be covered by insurance?

The Peace Corps does not provide insurance coverage for personal effects. You are encouraged to purchase personal property insurance before you leave the United States. If you wish, you may contact your own insurance company; additionally, the Peace Corps will provide you with insurance application forms, and we encourage you to consider them carefully. Volunteers should not take valuable items overseas. Jewelry and expensive watches, radios, cameras, and electronic equipment are subject to loss, theft, and breakage, and satisfactory maintenance and repair services may not be available. It is advisable to bring inexpensive items, or to purchase them once in Peru.

Do I need an international driver's license?

No. Volunteers in Peru are prohibited from operating motorized vehicles.

What should I bring as gifts for Peruvian friends and my host family?

This is not a requirement, but a simple token of friendship is a nice gesture. Knick-nacks for the house are usually appropriate gifts—framed pictures or photos, books, calendars of American scenes, or souvenirs from your area.

Where will my site assignment be when I finish training, and how isolated will I be?

Peace Corps trainees are not assigned to their permanent sites until the seventh or eighth week of pre-service training. This gives Peace Corps staff the opportunity to assess each trainee's skill set prior to assigning sites. You will have the opportunity to provide input on your site preferences, but Peace Corps cannot guarantee placement where you might like to be. The final decision will be based on the best match between your skills and community needs, and may be in a

major city, a mid-sized town, a small town, or a rural village. Even if assigned to a small town or rural village, you will be within three or four hours by bus from a city or large town, and will likely be within an hour by foot or ground transportation from another Volunteer's site.

How can my family contact me in an emergency?

The Peace Corps Office of Special Services (OSS) provides assistance in handling emergencies affecting trainees and Volunteers. Before leaving the United States, instruct your family to notify OSS immediately if an emergency arises, such as the serious illness or death of a family member. During normal business hours, the number for the Office of Special Services is 202.692.1470. It can also be reached through Peace Corps' toll-free number at: 800.424.8580, extension 1470. After normal business hours, and on weekends and holidays, the OSS duty officer can be reached at 202.638.2574.

For nonemergency questions, your family can get information from the country desk staff at the Peace Corps. The desk staff can be reached at 202.692.2515, 2516, or 2525. Or they can be reached through the toll-free number: 800.424.8580, extensions 2515, 2516, or 2525.

Can I call home from Peru?

International phone service to and from Peru is good in major cities. Volunteers in smaller communities will typically have access to a community telephone, through which international calls may be made and received. Most Volunteers also have cellular phones. There are reasonably priced local and international calling cards available in Peru.

Will there be e-mail and Internet access? Should I bring my computer?

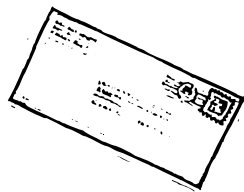
While you may or may not have Internet access at your site, there are numerous, affordable Internet locations throughout the country. Most Volunteers bring laptops and find that they come in handy. However, if you bring your laptop, the Peace Corps strongly encourages you to insure it.

How can people send things to me in Peru?

We do not recommend that people mail packages, money, airline tickets, or other valuable items to Volunteers. Customs duties may exceed the value of the items sent, and packages often disappear in transit. The modern supermarkets and well-stocked stores in Lima and other cities have anything you will need. Should family or friends need to send you something, we strongly recommend that the package be under half a kilo (1.1 pounds), with a declared value of under \$100, and mailed in a padded envelope. Once you are at your site, all mail, including packages, should be sent to your regional mailbox. We strongly discourage people sending you items via courier services (e.g., DHL or FedEx), as both the sender and the receiver must often pay fees. If your friends or family want to send you something for a special occasion, it would be best for them to deposit the money into your account in the U.S. You can then access the funds from an ATM machine and purchase something special in Peru.



WELCOME LETTERS FROM PERU VOLUNTEERS



Congratulations on your invitation to serve in Peru! I'm sure that you're getting excited as the time draws near, and rightfully so. Peru is a great country with delicious foods, breathtaking scenery, and wonderful people. During your two years as a Volunteer, you'll have the opportunity to become part of a Peruvian family, take part in unique cultural celebrations, work professionally with Peruvians of all different classes, see places you've never dreamed of, master a new language, adapt to a different style of life, and form life-long friendships... in short, it will be one fantastic adventure!

As far as packing goes, don't let yourself get stressed out. You can find most things here, and the lighter you pack, the better. Here are a few tips:

- Stationery, duct tape, and hand sanitizer are useful things that are hard to come by here.
- Bring photos of your friends, family, and hometown to share with people in your community. They serve as a great ice-breaker.
- Hand-washing can really stretch your clothes, so try to bring durable socks and underwear. (I buy socks that are a few sizes too small.)
- If you're a music lover, you may want to look into small speakers that you can plug into your Discman/Walkman/iPod. They're not as bulky as a stereo and fill your room with music.
- Most camping gear, such as tents, pads, and sleeping bags, can be rented cheaply at the popular tourist destinations.

To tell you a little about myself, I live in the northwestern part of Peru in the department of Piura, known for its beaches, sun, artisans, and a fermented corn drink called

chicha. My town, Pozo de los Ramos, has a population of about 2,000 people and is located about one hour inland in the Sechuran desert, where it is quite hot, dry, and flat. Nevertheless, there is much beauty to be found in the rows of palm trees, blowing cotton fields, diverse species of birds, and above all, warm people. I felt instantly embraced by the community and have found such an incredible network of friends and family, that it is easy for me to call Pozo home. I live and eat all of my meals with my host family and find the main diet of rice, beans, and fish to be quite tasty! We have running water for about six hours a week, during which time we fill up buckets and storage tanks around the house so that we have water all week. The walls of the houses here are made of a combination of bamboo, mud, and brick, with corrugated metal or reed-mat roofs. I wake up at dawn several days a week to go jogging through the fields and have developed a wonderful routine of greeting the farmers on their way to work.

My main work here is supporting the association of health promoters, a group of community members who volunteer their time and energy to better the health of the district. In my spare time, I teach at an all-girls boarding school, cook with women in the *comedores* (a type of soup kitchen), read books with kids, and promote leadership in teenage girls. I have helped the community organize its own library. One of the wonderful things about Peace Corps is that your work can be adapted to utilize the skills and interests that you and your community find best.

Enjoy your last moments in the States with friends and family. I look forward to meeting you here in Peru!

—Katie Gass, Health Sector Volunteer

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Hello and welcome, future Peace Corps Volunteers of Peru! Happy journeys as you make your way from the life you've known into a new and exciting adventure. No matter

where you are coming from, you are bound to be struck by the differences as well as the similarities that Peru has to the United States. You will be amazed by the vastly different geographical regions in a country that includes a coastal desert, breathtaking mountains, and a lush jungle.

I live in Northern Peru, in a small rural town called Porcón, which is about 40 minutes from the regional capital city of Cajamarca. At an altitude of over 9,000 feet, it gets a little cold, and from November to March we experience the rainy season, where it rains almost every afternoon. The houses in my community are built using mud, which they mold and dry into adobe bricks. Kitchens are pretty basic, and everyone I know uses an open fire to cook their food, which mainly consists of rice, potatoes, and noodles. I also cook a lot of my own food and have enjoyed sharing some American traditions with the people in my community.

I live with a wonderful host family who treat me like a daughter and with whom I share the experience of navigating through all of the cultural differences. My community has been very welcoming and is extremely interested in who I am and where I come from. My interaction with host families and communities is one of the most enlightening parts of the Peace Corps experience. It has been eye-opening and mind-expanding. As I'm sure will happen for many of you, the world has become much bigger.

I work with several groups of local artisans who use lambs' wool to weave textiles, including rugs, tapestries, pillowcases, and purses. As a business Volunteer, I am helping them to organize the way they do business, including keeping records of sales and designs and completing orders on time. I also help the artisans find new places to sell their products by introducing them to exporters, supporting them at artisan fairs, and finding stores interested in selling their products.

In the vast and varying geographies and climatic ranges of Peru, it probably makes sense to pack a little bit of everything. But don't stress; in regional capitals, and certainly in Lima,

you can find a lot of the things you will need. The people overall have been very welcoming, and while not a lot of people speak English, they seem to accept stumbling Spanish with a smile. So relax, spend some time with the family, and get your fill of good American food and football. *Bienvenidos al Perú!!!*

—Meghan Herwehe, Small Business Sector Volunteer

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Hola! I would like to congratulate you on your acceptance to the Peace Corps and your invitation to serve in Peru. You will soon join a dedicated team of Volunteers and Peace Corps staff who, working hand-in-hand with a variety of committed Peruvian counterparts, are assisting in the development of this country and bettering the quality of life on a community level.

My time here in Peru thus far has been filled with many new experiences and fun adventures, has challenged me to think critically and creatively, and has provided opportunities to share my knowledge and grow personally. I am living in the department of Piura, approximately 700 miles north of Lima. My site, Chulucanas, is a district capital and quite urban, with a population nearing 50,000. The climate is warm and dry. I have very much enjoyed living in this desert environment.

I am working with a program of volunteer health promoters locally connected with the Catholic Church. We are involved in community outreach in the marginalized neighborhoods of the city. Our volunteers go into these communities and teach the families about ways to better their quality of life by preventing illnesses and maintaining their family's health. To witness the conditions that face the people of this area, one that has been marked as "extremely impoverished" by the national government, has been an eye-opening experience, and I feel fortunate to be able to aid in its overall development.

Beyond my primary work project, I have had the opportunity to work with youth and young adults in the area. I have found this work extremely rewarding and feel that

this population has an inspiring amount of motivation and excitement. I have given several talks about self-esteem and personal responsibility and have been asked to discuss a wide variety of issues from drug use to community service and development... and of course to teach English. Working with youth, broadening their perspectives, and sharing new ideas are great ways to encourage future development and harvest a desire to better their current situations.

As the Peace Corps in Peru continues to grow, so do our opportunities to reach out to those in need and create positive environments for change. Your work here will be met with unique challenges which, in my experience, will produce great rewards. *Best of luck, and welcome!*

—Meghan McNeil, Health Sector Volunteer

[Note: Meghan is currently serving a third year in Lima as Peace Corps Volunteer Coordinator for the health sector.]

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The misconception among many Peace Corps Volunteers is that they will be isolated in a small village for months on end without the luxuries found in the United States. This leads to the idea that Volunteers have to bring everything from home that they will need for two years. In Peru, this definitely is not the situation. Every departmental capital offers shopping for clothes, appliances, tools, new technology, and modern communications in the form of high-speed Internet and phones to call home. We would recommend going light on clothes and appliances (things that you can buy cheaply in Peru) and bringing things that will be hard to find here in Peru or that will be expensive (e.g., iPod, digital camera, lots of books, durable shoes, and items to continue your hobbies). If you have a laptop, you should definitely bring one. Peace Corps work involves a lot of office work, document-writing

and information-exchanging, not just field work. A laptop will make life much easier and expedite many projects. As always, just be careful with expensive technology, as there is always a risk of theft or breakage.

—Jimmy Nguyen, Health Sector Volunteer; and
—Lenah Geer, Environmental Sector Volunteer

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Bienvenidos al Perú! I'm sure you're feeling excited and probably a little nervous as you begin your latest adventure. I've been in Peru for a year now, and I'd summarize my experience to-date as incredibly difficult, absolutely fantastic, and worth every up and down.

I'm an environmental Volunteer in the department of Ancash. I live in the town of Carhuaz, which is noted in many Peru guidebooks for its ice cream. I believe we have six ice cream shops in a one-block radius surrounding the plaza. Needless to say, ice cream makes up a large part of this Volunteer's diet.

I work with Peruvians who form the environmental committee of our local government. Our project is being supported by Ciudad Saludable, an NGO with projects throughout Peru and other parts of South America. Ciudad Saludable's role in Carhuaz has been to establish the infrastructure and carry out the initial education of the population for an integrated waste-management program. What that means is that I work with a lot of trash.

We hope Carhuaz will be a model for other communities in Peru in the way it collects and manages trash. We tend to take the collection of trash and management of waste for granted in the United States; here in Peru, such activities are not common. In Carhuaz, the organic waste collected is used to make compost and fertilizer, which we then sell to cover the costs of the project. The recyclables collected are also sold. Materials that cannot be recycled or made into compost go into our landfill. It's possibly the most beautiful landfill in the world, affording a perfect view of the snow-capped Andes.

My main role within the project is education. One of my

counterparts and I spend the majority of our time in the schools. We give short classes on general environmental themes such as deforestation, water contamination, and biodiversity. We also do a lot of hands-on activities reusing recycled materials, such as making paper. We try our best to communicate to the kids that a healthier environment is their responsibility—something they can feasibly work toward.

When I'm not working on my main project, I spend some of my time with a local group of knitters. I'm also starting a gardening project in a nearby town, and I'm organizing a women's group with one of the other Volunteers who shares my site. Indeed, there are three of us in Carhuaz. When I imagined my Peace Corps experience, I thought I would be hours away from the nearest Volunteer. Peace Corps is nothing if not full of surprises.

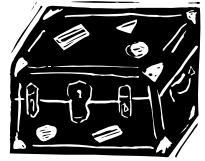
When I have time to myself, I read, write in my journal, draw, knit, do crossword puzzles, practice yoga, go running, ride my bicycle, or work in my garden. I live with a great host family and really feel comfortable with my living situation. Of course, just like a real family, we have the occasional conflict; but as with real families, those conflicts pass and give us something to laugh about later on.

I hope I've given you a glimpse of what life is like here. Of course, every Peace Corps experience is different, so your experience may be nothing like mine. As you prepare to join us here in Peru, remember to eat your favorite meal one last time, not stress out about packing (it's hard, I know), and give your family and friends lots of hugs. We're excited to meet you!

—Anne Hosey, Environmental Sector Volunteer



PACKING LIST



Use this list as an informal guide in making your own packing decisions. There is no perfect list! You obviously cannot bring everything we mention, so consider those items that make the most sense to you. As you decide what to bring, keep the airline's weight restriction on baggage in mind. Remember, you can get almost everything you need in Peru, most at an equal or lower price than in the U.S.

The standard for work attire in Peru is neat and professional but not fancy, which applies during pre-service training as well as Volunteer service. Think in terms of comfort, versatility, and, most important, durability (i.e., able to withstand repeated and vigorous washing). Since there are considerable variations in the weather, items that coordinate well and that can be layered on or off as needed are useful. Given the cold evening temperatures in the sierra, long underwear and flannel pajamas may be an excellent investment. Thick-soled shoes are best purchased in the United States because of price and quality, and larger men's and women's shoe sizes are difficult to find in Peru.

Women find that skirts, loose-fitting shirts, and simple dresses, both with sleeves and without, are comfortable for coastal heat. Slacks (especially khakis) are good in colder climates, as are cotton turtlenecks and sweaters. For men, a mix of short-sleeved polo shirts and short- and long-sleeved button-down shirts is recommended.

Among the things you do not need to bring—either because they are provided by Peace Corps or widely available locally—are disposable razors, sheets, shampoo and conditioner, pots and pans, dishes and utensils, a kerosene burner, a mosquito net, and standard first-aid items. Good-quality knitwear and

sweaters are widely available in Peru. Radios and cassette players are also available at reasonable prices, although the compact versions found in the U.S. may not be available. Favorite electronic players, such as a Discman or iPod, should be brought.

General Clothing

- Three or four pairs of casual pants for work
- Two or more pairs of jeans
- Two pairs of shorts
- Bathing suit
- One pair of dress pants for men
- Sports jacket and tie for men
- Skirts and/or dresses for women
- Collared polos and blouses for women
- One casual, nice outfit (for evenings out)
- Underwear (12 pairs, good-quality cotton)
- Long underwear
- Socks (just enough to get started, as they are available in Peru); it is recommended that some be “smartwools” for colder sites
- Light, waterproof jacket
- Fleece jacket and/or vest with hood
- Down or heavy jacket suitable for higher altitudes
- One or two sweaters*
- One or two sweatshirts*
- One pair of sweatpants*
- Baseball cap or wide-brimmed hat (the Peruvian sun is fierce!)

* Note: These items are bulky and are widely available in Peru, so if you are short of space or weight, you may want to plan on buying them in Peru.

Shoes

- One pair of dress or professional shoes
- One pair of sneakers
- Hiking boots and/or sturdy walking shoes
- One pair of running shoes (if you run)
- Flip-flops or sandals

Personal Hygiene and Toiletry Items

- Strong sunglasses (with UV protection and polarized)
- Start-up supply of soap, shampoo, shaving cream, and other personal toiletries
- Hand sanitizer
- Tampons (they are more expensive in Peru)
- Any favorite brands of sunscreen or other over-the-counter medicines (the Peace Corps provides needed items, but they may not be your preferred brands.)
- Contact lens solution (note that the Peace Corps discourages the use of contact lenses)
- Towels (available in Peru)

Miscellaneous

- Sturdy, small backpack or duffel bag (with a lock) for short trips
- Swiss army knife or Leatherman tool (do not pack in carry-on luggage)
- A pair of workgloves
- Fanny pack or money belt
- Photos of family, friends, your house, car, pets, and hometown
- Flashlight
- Compact umbrella (available in Peru)

- Digital or film camera (film is widely available in Peru)
- Books to read and exchange
- Cassettes/CDs to listen to and exchange (also available in Peru)
- Travel water bottle (e.g., Nalgene)
- Watch
- Duct tape and ziplock bags
- A deck of playing cards
- Small pocket notebook (widely available in Peru)
- A jar of your favorite peanut butter
- Favorite electronic items (either inexpensive or insured)
- A laptop computer (insured)
- An extra pack of batteries for the electronic items (available in Peru, but often more expensive)
- Sleeping bag (light, stuffable, and preferably waterproof)*
- Camping equipment (if you are a camper)*

* Note: Sleeping bags and other camping equipment can be rented in tourist areas. Also, some Volunteers choose to have these items brought down later by visiting family members and friends

NOTES



PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST



The following list consists of suggestions for you to consider as you prepare to live outside the United States for two years. Not all items will be relevant to everyone, and the list does not include everything you should make arrangements for.

Family

- Notify family that they can call the Peace Corps' Office of Special Services at any time if there is a critical illness or death of a family member (telephone number: 800.424.8580, extension 1470; after-hours duty officer: 202.638.2574).
- Give the Peace Corps' *On the Home Front* handbook to family and friends.

Passport/Travel

- Forward to the Peace Corps travel office all paperwork for the Peace Corps passport and visas.
- Verify that luggage meets the size and weight limits for international travel.
- Obtain a personal passport if you plan to travel after your service ends. (Your Peace Corps passport will expire three months after you finish your service, so if you plan to travel longer, you will need a regular passport.)

Medical/Health

- Complete any needed dental and medical work.
- If you wear glasses, bring two pairs.
- Arrange to bring a three-month supply of all medications (including birth control pills) you are currently taking.

Insurance

- Make arrangements to maintain life insurance coverage.
- Arrange to maintain supplemental health coverage while you are away. (Even though the Peace Corps is responsible for your healthcare during Peace Corps service overseas, it is advisable for people who have preexisting conditions to arrange for the continuation of their supplemental health coverage. If there is a lapse in coverage, it is often difficult and expensive to be reinstated.)
- Arrange to continue Medicare coverage if applicable.

Personal Papers

- Bring a copy of your certificate of marriage or divorce.

Voting

- Register to vote in the state of your home of record. (Many state universities consider voting and payment of state taxes as evidence of residence in that state, which may be useful if you are planning on going to graduate school after your Peace Corps service.)
- Obtain a voter registration card and take it with you overseas.
- Arrange to have an absentee ballot forwarded to you overseas.

Personal Effects

- Purchase personal property insurance that will cover you from the time you leave your home for service overseas until the time you complete your service and return to the United States.

Financial Management

- Obtain student loan deferment forms from the lender or loan service.
- Execute a power of attorney for the management of your property and business.
- Arrange for deductions from your readjustment allowance to pay alimony, child support, and other debts through the Office of Volunteer Financial Operations at 800.424.8580, extension 1770.
- Place all important papers—mortgages, deeds, stocks, and bonds—in a safe deposit box or with an attorney or other caretaker.



CONTACTING PEACE CORPS HEADQUARTERS



The following list of numbers will help you contact the appropriate office at Peace Corps headquarters with various questions. You may use the toll-free number and extension or dial directly using the local numbers provided. Be sure to leave the Peace Corps' toll-free number and extensions with your family so they have them in the event of an emergency during your service overseas.

Peace Corps Headquarters

Toll-free Number: 800.424.8580, Press 2, then
Ext. # (see below)

Peace Corps' Mailing Address: Peace Corps
Paul D. Coverdell
Peace Corps Headquarters
1111 20th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20526

| For Questions About: | Staff | Toll-free Extension | Direct/ Local Number |
|------------------------------------|---|---------------------|----------------------|
| Responding to an Invitation | Office of Placement Inter-America and Pacific Region | Ext. 1835 | 202.692.1835 |
| Programming or Country Information | Desk Officer Shawn Wesner E-mail: peru@peacecorps.gov | Ext. 2515 | 202.692.2515 |
| | Kim Coyne Desk Assistant E-mail: peru@peacecorps.gov | Ext. 2516 | 202.692.2516 |
| | Saba Firoozi Desk Assistant E-mail: peru@peacecorps.gov | Ext. 2525 | 202.692.2525 |

| For Questions About: | Staff | Toll-free Extension | Direct/ Local Number |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Plane Tickets, Passports, Visas, or Other Travel Matters | Travel Officer (Sato Travel) | Ext. 1170 | 202.692.1170 |
| Legal Clearance | Office of Placement | Ext. 1845 | 202.692.1845 |
| Medical Clearance and Forms Processing (including dental) | Screening Nurse | Ext. 1500 | 202.692.1500 |
| Medical Reimbursements | Handled by a Subcontractor | | 800.818.8772 |
| Loan Deferments, Taxes, Readjustment Allowance Withdrawals, Power of Attorney | Volunteer Financial Operations | Ext. 1770 | 202.692.1770 |
| Staging (Pre-departure Orientation) and Reporting Instructions <i>Note: You will receive comprehensive information (hotel and flight arrangements) three to five weeks before departure. This information is not available sooner.</i> | Office of Staging | Ext. 1865 | 202.692.1865 |
| Family Emergencies (to get information to a Volunteer overseas) | Office of Special Services | Ext. 1470 | 202.692.1470 9-5 EST 202.638.2574 (after-hours answering service) |

PEACE CORPS

Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Headquarters

1111 20th Street NW · Washington, DC 20526 · www.peacecorps.gov · 1-800-424-8580