



Peace Corps

Peace Corps Small Grants Program

External Funding - Volunteer Do's and Don'ts

I. Introduction

Peace Corps Volunteers are creative and resourceful; through social media and the increasing availability of the internet, they are becoming more locally and internationally connected than ever before. Due to these advances in technology, it is not uncommon for Volunteers and their communities to discover local or international funding sources that may directly support work in their communities. However, Peace Corps Volunteers are bound to policies and guidelines that ensure all their work is accounted for and transparent. This document provides Peace Corps Volunteers with a snapshot of how to access external funding in the most appropriate and allowable way.

II. Overview and Philosophy

The Peace Corps approach to development promotes the dignity of a people and their ability to improve their own lives. The focus of Peace Corps Volunteers' work is on the **development of the capacity of people**, not things. Volunteers help their communities identify and prioritize things they would like to change, and to use their own strengths and newly acquired skills to achieve that change. Even with this philosophy, however, it is understood that sometimes funding is necessary to turn ideas into realities.

Volunteers should consider sustainability and capacity building as core tenets of their work, especially when incorporating funding into a project. The process of identifying and applying to funding for projects can be a valuable learning and capacity building process for communities and Volunteers alike.

III. Agency Policy on External Funds

It is [Peace Corps' policy](#) that Volunteers are prohibited from soliciting or accepting gifts, both monetary and in-kind, on behalf of the Peace Corps or their communities. Volunteers may only directly accept and manage funds through the Peace Corps Small Grant Program, currently made up of five funding sources (SPA, PCPP, LGL, VAST, and GEF).

These programs exist in order to facilitate the appropriate channeling of funds into a Volunteer's community through small grant projects that require community engagement, strong project design and management, and monitoring, reporting, and evaluation.

Occasionally, external organizations may reach out to Volunteers directly to encourage them to apply for funds. In these cases, Volunteers should contact their Small Grants Coordinator. The Small Grants Coordinator can work with Volunteers to lay out the most appropriate way to move forward.

IV. Volunteer Do's and Dont's

What Can a Volunteer Do?

- Utilize the Peace Corps Small Grants Program to secure funds for a project
- Assist communities in identifying and applying for external funding sources
- Raise awareness of Small Grants Program projects and community-led fundraising initiatives

What Can't a Volunteer Do?

- Solicit or accept funds from external sources or crowdsourced fundraising campaigns (Kickstarter, GoFundMe, etc.)
- Directly solicit donations for PCPP or LGL projects
- Solicit or accept in-kind gifts or donations

Always remember... any projects that require funds at a Volunteer's site must be accessed either through the Peace Corps Small Grants Program or directly applied for, received, and managed by the community.

For any grants/funding-related questions, Volunteers should contact their Small Grants Coordinator.