

BACKGROUND CHECKS OF OVERSEAS STAFF

POLICY

It is a requirement of law that the Peace Corps complete appropriate background checks on all staff, including Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) and Personal Service Contractors (PSCs). Because of the trust and responsibility that we place in our staff, we must ensure that all personnel have been properly vetted. The procedures outlined below are designed to ensure that a proper assessment of a candidate's suitability to work for the Peace Corps has been performed.

NOTE: Background checks of US direct hire personnel are conducted in accordance with federal executive orders and are managed directly by the Information and Personnel Security Division (SS/DO/IPS).

STAFF RECRUITED IN THE COUNTRY OF SERVICE

FOREIGN SERVICE NATIONALS (FSNs)

The background check process applied to FSN employees is established in 3 FAM 7222 and 12 FAM 422.4.

Initial Investigation: The Country Director must request that the RSO conduct a background investigation. Based on the outcome of the investigation, the RSO will make a determination for the issuance or denial of a security certification. If there will be a delay in issuing the final security certification, the RSO can issue a temporary certification good for 120 days. The RSO can issue extensions of the temporary certification if necessary.

Update Investigation: The RSO must conduct an update investigation every 5 years and evaluate the results for the purpose of issuing or denying recertification.

Documentation: The post must keep the RSO's security certification on file and send a copy by email to SS/DO/IPS at BackgroundChecks@peacecorps.gov.

HOST OR THIRD COUNTRY PSCS - LONG-TERM (260 DAYS OR MORE)

The background check process applied to long-term PSCs is established in 3 FAM 7222 and 12 FAM 422.4. (This procedure applies to any persons legally residing in the country of service except US Citizens.)

Initial Investigation: The Country Director must request that the RSO conduct a background investigation before the contract can be executed. Based on the outcome of the investigation, the RSO will make a determination for the issuance or denial of a security certification. If there will be a delay in issuing the final security certification, the RSO can issue a temporary certification good

for 120 days. The RSO can issue extensions of the temporary certification if necessary.

Update Investigation: The RSO must conduct an update investigation every 5 years and evaluate the results for the purpose of issuing or denying recertification.

Documentation: The post must keep the RSO's security certification on file and send a copy by email to SS/DO/IPS at BackgroundChecks@peacecorps.gov.

HOST OR THIRD COUNTRY PSCS - SHORT-TERM (less than 260 days)

The background check process for short-term PSCs was developed through close collaboration between the Peace Corps and Diplomatic Security/International Programs and is outlined in MS 743 (Section 8.3). (This procedure applies to any persons legally residing in the country of service except US citizens.)

Initial Investigation: The Country Director (or Acting Country Director) must:

1. Ensure that an appropriate check with relevant law enforcement entities concerning the proposed PSC is completed and documented.*
2. Conduct appropriate reference and previous employment checks.
3. Submit the proposed PSC's name to the RSO for an Embassy "name check" through the Consular Section visa fraud database and the RSO's surveillance detection database.
4. Review this information prior to contract execution.

Should any derogatory information be developed in the course of the background check, the Country Director must refer the case to the RSO for final adjudication before contract execution.

*NOTE: In most countries the individual PSC is able to request the police records check and should be required to provide this information to the Peace Corps. If that is not possible, the Country Director should request the RSO to obtain the necessary records.

Update Investigation: An update investigation following the same procedures must be conducted every 3 years for any short-term PSC who is contracted with on a recurring basis. The Country Director will evaluate the results for the purpose of issuing or denying recertification.

Documentation: The post must keep all a copy of the background check on file. The Country Director must write and sign a memo certifying that all required checks have been satisfactorily completed. (A single memo can be used for multiple PSCs so long as each person is listed individually.) A copy of the memo must sent by email to SS/DO/IPS at BackgroundChecks@peacecorps.gov.

US CITIZEN PSCs - LONG-TERM (260 days or more)

The background check process for US citizen long-term PSCs is consistent with Agency policy for short-term staff working at Peace Corps Headquarters, in accordance with federal executive orders.

Initial Investigation: The Country Director (or Acting Country Director) must request that the Information and Personnel Security Division conduct a National Agency Check with Inquiries (NACI). The contract cannot be executed until the NACI has been satisfactorily completed.

Update Investigation: An update investigation following the same procedures must be conducted every 5 years.

Documentation: The post must keep a copy of the background check on file. The original documentation of the background check is maintained by SS/DO/IPS.

US CITIZEN PSCs - SHORT-TERM (less than 260 days)

The background check process for US citizen short-term PSCs is consistent with Agency policy for short-term staff working at Peace Corps Headquarters, in accordance with federal executive orders.

Initial Investigation: The Country Director (or Acting Country Director) must request that the Information and Personnel Security Division conduct a National Agency Check (NAC). The contract cannot be executed until the NAC has been satisfactorily completed.

SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR FORMER VOLUNTEERS: If the former Volunteer's close of service date does not precede the proposed contract execution date by more than nine months, no additional suitability check will be required.

Update Investigation: An update investigation following the same procedures must be conducted every 5 years.

Documentation: The post must keep a copy of the background check on file. The original documentation of the background check is maintained by SS/DO/IPS.

STAFF RECRUITED OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY OF SERVICE

US CITIZEN PSCs - LONG-TERM (260 days or more)

The background check process for US citizen long-term PSCs is consistent with Agency policy for staff working at Peace Corps Headquarters, in accordance with federal executive orders.

Initial Investigation: The Country Director (or Acting Country Director) must request that the Information and Personnel Security Division conduct a National

Agency Check with Inquiries (NACI). The contract cannot be executed until the NACI has been satisfactorily completed.

Update Investigation: An update investigation following the same procedures must be conducted every 5 years.

Documentation: SS/DO/IPS will provide the post with the results of the background check. The post must keep a copy of the background check on file. The original documentation of the background check is maintained by SS/DO/IPS.

US CITIZEN PSCs - SHORT-TERM (less than 260 days)

The background check process for US citizen short-term PSCs is consistent with Agency policy for short-term staff working at Peace Corps Headquarters, in accordance with federal executive orders.

Initial Investigation: The Country Director (or Acting Country Director) must request that the Information and Personnel Security Division conduct a National Agency Check (NAC). The contract cannot be executed until the NAC has been satisfactorily completed.

SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR FORMER VOLUNTEERS: If the former Volunteer's close of service date does not precede the proposed contract execution date by more than nine months, no additional suitability check will be required.

Update Investigation: An update investigation following the same procedures must be conducted every 5 years.

Documentation: SS/DO/IPS will provide post with the results of the background check. Post must keep a copy of the background check on file. The original documentation of the background check is maintained by SS/DO/IPS.

THIRD COUNTRY NATIONAL PSCs - LONG-TERM (260 days or more)

The background check process applied to Third Country National PSCs is established in 3 FAM 7222 and 12 FAM 422.4. (This procedure applies to any persons recruited from outside of the country of service except US Citizens.)

Initial Investigation: The Country Director (or, if relevant, the Headquarters office seeking to contract with the Third Country National) must request that the Information and Personnel Security Division initiate the necessary investigation.

The Information and Personnel Security Division will coordinate through Diplomatic Security to request the appropriate RSO to conduct a standard background investigation (as they would for an FSN).

The contract cannot be executed until the background check has been satisfactorily completed.

Update Investigation: An update investigation following the same procedures must be conducted every 5 years.

Documentation: SS/DO/IPS will provide the post with the results of the background check conducted by Diplomatic Security. The post must keep a copy of the background check on file. The original documentation of the background check is maintained by SS/DO/IPS.

THIRD COUNTRY NATIONAL PSCs - SHORT-TERM (less than 260 days)

The background check process for non-resident Third Country National short-term PSCs is consistent with those developed jointly by Peace Corps and Diplomatic Security/International Programs for resident short-term PSCs.

Initial Investigation: The Country Director (or, if relevant, the Headquarters office seeking to contract with the Third Country National) must request that the Information and Personnel Security Division initiate the necessary investigation.

The Information and Personnel Security Division will coordinate through Diplomatic Security to request the appropriate RSO to conduct a check with relevant law enforcement entities and to conduct an Embassy “name check” through the Consular Section visa fraud database and the RSO’s surveillance detection database.

The Country Director or the relevant Headquarters office is responsible for conducting and documenting the appropriate reference and previous employment checks. The Country Director or the relevant Headquarters office must write a memo to SS/DO/IPS certifying that all required reference and previous employment checks have been satisfactorily completed. A copy of the memo must be sent by email to SS/DO/IPS at BackgroundChecks@peacecorps.gov.

The contract cannot be executed until these background checks have been satisfactorily completed.

Update Investigation: An update investigation following the same procedures must be conducted every 3 years for any short-term PSC who is contracted with on a recurring basis.

Documentation: SS/DO/IPS will provide the post with the results of the background check conducted by Diplomatic Security. The post must keep the records of the background check on file. The original documentation of the background check is maintained by SS/DO/IPS.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT

The Information and Personnel Security Division will maintain the Agency’s master records of all background checks. SS/DO/IPS will conduct periodic audits to ensure that records of background checks have been provided for all staff overseas.

Peace Corps Safety and Security Officers will conduct random audits at posts to ensure the proper documentation is on-hand and will conduct comprehensive audits as part of the tri-annual safety and security program reviews.