

# MS 892 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

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### 1.0 AUTHORITIES

Federal law requires the head of each federal agency to make and preserve records. The policy contains adequate and proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the agency. See 44 U.S.C. 3101.

### 2.0 PURPOSE

This manual section sets out the policies for administering Peace Corps? records management programs.

### 3.0 APPLICABILITY

This manual section applies to all records generated by the Agency both domestically and overseas. The policies within this manual section cover the retention, storage, archiving, and disposal of all Agency records regardless of format.

## **4.0 DEFINITIONS**

**4.1** Adequate and proper documentation means a record of Agency business that is complete and accurate to the extent required to document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the Agency. It also includes a record of the information necessary to protect the legal and financial rights of the government and of persons directly affected by the Agency's activities.

**4.2** Disposition means actions taken regarding the disposal of records no longer needed.

**4.3** File means an arrangement of records. The term is used to denote any recorded information regardless of physical form or characteristics, accumulated in any type of storage space or arrangement.

**4.4** National Archives of the United States (NARA) is the storage manager for records that have been determined by the Archivist of the United States to have sufficient historical or other value to warrant their continued preservation by the federal government and that have been transferred to the legal custody of the Archivist of the United States.

**4.5** Non-record materials are federally-owned informational materials that do not meet the statutory definition of records (see 44 U.S.C. 3301). Excluded materials are extra copies of documents kept only for reference, stocks of publications and processed documents, and library or museum materials intended solely for reference or exhibit.

**4.6** Permanent record means any federal record that has been determined by NARA to have sufficient value to warrant its preservation in the National Archives of the United States. Permanent records include all records accessioned by NARA into the National Archives of the United States and later increments of the same records, and those for which the disposition is permanent.

**4.7** Recordkeeping requirements means all statements in statutes, regulations, and agency directives or authoritative issuances, that provide general and specific requirements for federal agency personnel on particular records to be created and maintained by the Agency.

**4.8** Recordkeeping system is a manual or automated system in which records are collected, organized, and categorized to facilitate their preservation, retrieval, use, and disposition.

**4.9** Records include all books, papers, maps, photographs, machine readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by an agency of the United States government under federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the government or because of the informational value of the data in them (see 44 U.S.C. 3301).

**4.10** Records management means the planning, controlling, directing, organizing, training, promoting, and other managerial activities involved with respect to records creation, records maintenance and use, and records disposition.

**4.11** The Peace Corps Records Management Handbook contains descriptions of and disposition of instructions for all documentary materials, records, and non-records.

**4.12** Records schedule or schedule means a directive containing the records' descriptions and disposition instructions.

## **5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **5.1 Associate Director for Management**

The Associate Director for Management is responsible for:

- (a) Overseeing the establishment and implementation of policies and procedures;
- (b) Maintaining records of the Agency's functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions; and
- (c) Ensuring that Peace Corps records adequately protect the legal and financial rights of the U.S. government and of persons directly affected by the Agency's activities.

### **5.2 Peace Corps Records Officer (Records Officer)**

The Records Officer is responsible for:

- (a) Maintaining an active program to economically and efficiently manage Peace Corps records;
- (b) Providing technical guidance to headquarters' offices, domestic field offices and overseas posts regarding records management;
- (c) Establishing schedules for the transfer of records to records centers; and
- (d) Establishing safeguards against removal or loss of necessary records.

### **5.3 Office Directors**

Office Directors (for example, Associate Directors, Regional Directors, Country Directors, and Staff Office Heads) are responsible for:

- (a) Administering the Agency's records management program within their area of responsibility;
- (b) Making certain that all staff who report to them are aware of their records management responsibilities, and make resources such as the Records Management Handbook available;
- (c) Coordinating the office's record keeping with the Peace Corps Records Officer, including notification regarding any new types of records the office may be creating.

### **5.4 Peace Corps Employees**

Employees at all locations both foreign and domestic are responsible for:

- (a) Maintaining records in accordance with the established file plans and records schedules;
- (b) Notifying their Office Director of any new types of records they are creating or receiving for proper scheduling, and
- (c) Protecting personally identifiable information in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act and Manual Section 897.

## **6.0 POLICIES**

### **6.1 Government Ownership of Records**

All information received, created, or compiled by the officers and employees of the Peace Corps in the conduct of their official duties and information obtained under contract are official record materials and are the property of the United States government.

No Peace Corps official or employee has any personal or property right to official Peace Corps records even though he or she may have helped develop or compile them.

The law prohibits the unlawful destruction, removal from files, and concealment of official records. The only disclosures of personal information permitted are those set forth in the Privacy Act and in Peace Corps' Privacy Act systems of records notices.

## **6.2 Documentation Standards**

The following required standards ensure that adequate records are created and preserved:

- (a) Peace Corps records shall be complete in order to facilitate action by an incumbent and his/her successor. The records must pass the scrutiny of the Congress, other authorized agencies of the U.S. government, and other persons directly concerned. Additionally, they must protect the financial and legal rights affected by the government's actions;
- (b) Peace Corps officials shall incorporate all essential information of their official actions into Agency records. Significant decisions and commitments reached orally (person to person, by telephone, or in conference) shall be documented and included in the record. Minutes shall be taken at important committee and staff meetings and these, together with a copy of the agenda and documents considered at or resulting from these meetings, shall be made part of the record; and
- (c) The programs, policies, and procedures of Peace Corps shall be adequately documented in appropriate directives. A record copy of each directive (including those superseded) shall be maintained as part of Peace Corps official files.

## **6.3 Private or Non-Official Records**

Private or non-official papers, shall at all times be filed separately from the official records of the office. In cases where matters requiring the transaction of official business are received in personal correspondence that portion of the correspondence, which pertains to official business shall be extracted and made a part of the record.

## **6.4 Personal Use of Extra Copies of Official Agency Records**

Official record copies of correspondence, papers, etc. are the property of the U.S. government and shall remain with the Peace Corps. Peace Corps officials may be permitted to retain extra reference copies of papers and other material that they have drafted, reviewed, or otherwise acted upon, provided that retention will not:

- (a) Diminish the official records of the Agency;
- (b) Violate confidentiality required by national security, privacy, or other interests protected by law; or
- (c) Exceed normal administrative economies.

Employees must understand that although copies may be in their possession, content and record copies of these documents remain Peace Corps and U.S. government records. Release of these documents or their contents is subject to the approval of the Agency. Approval for release of Agency documents must come from the Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act Office (see Manual Sections 893 and 897).

## **6.5 Maintenance and Use of Records**

Offices shall institute adequate records management controls over the maintenance and use of records to ensure that records can be located when needed and that they are preserved for eventual disposition. Procedures for complying with this requirement are in the Records Management Handbook available from

the Records Officer. Offices shall also follow the guidance for safeguarding specific types of records in various manual sections (see MS 267, Volunteer Medical Records; MS 833, National Security Classified and Agency-Designated Protected Information; MS 893, Freedom of Information Act Administration; and MS 897, Privacy Act Administration).

## **6.6 Disposition of Records**

Offices shall ensure that permanent records are preserved and that records that are no longer of use to the Agency are properly disposed of or retired. All offices must comply with retention standards approved by the Archivist of the United States. Retention standards for Peace Corps records are contained in the Records Management Handbook.

## **6.7 Records of Alternate Format**

Records in alternative formats (for example: electronic, audio-visual, or micrographic) must all be retained and disposed of in accordance with the Records Management Handbook. Employees are responsible for proper maintenance and protection of records regardless of format.

## **6.8 New Record Categories**

Any office creating categories not contained in the Peace Corps records schedule shall submit the following information in writing to the Records Officer:

- (a) A brief description of the record and its intended use, including whether or not the record contains personally identifiable information;
- (b) Annual increase in volume of records;
- (c) Types of documents in the files (i.e., forms, correspondence);
- (d) Filing method (i.e., alphabetical, numerical);
- (e) Approximate dates the records cover and if they are ongoing;
- (f) Amount of time records need to be stored in the office;
- (g) Amount of time records need to be stored at the Federal Records Center;
- (h) Any fiscal or legal needs for the records; and
- (i) Historical significance of the record, if any.

Any proposed changes to existing retention standards shall be submitted in writing along with a justification statement to the Records Officer for evaluation. The Records Officer shall forward acceptable proposals to NARA.

## **7.0 EFFECTIVE DATE**

This manual section takes effect on the date of issuance.