

# PEACE CORPS

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Review By: National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations

### **AUTHORITY**

In accordance with Executive Order 13522, dated December 9, 2010 – Creating Labor-Management Forums to Improve Delivery of Government Services

### **SCOPE**

The National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations is designed to support agency partnerships and cross-agency learning for cooperative and productive labor-management relations.

### **PURPOSE**

The Executive Order requires agencies to develop a formal plan to implement Labor Management Forums.

The Plan should serve to facilitate the effective implementation of the Executive Order. The Plan also serves to improve the labor-management relations climate and improve agency performance through labor-management engagement.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

The Plan should describe the following:

- How the Agency will conduct a baseline assessment of the current state of labor relations within the Agency
- The process the Agency will undertake to design and implement Labor Management Forums at appropriate levels within the Agency
- The process the Labor Management Forum will undertake to develop a limited number of mission-linked or process-improving performance goals
- A plan developing Agency and/or bargaining unit-specific metrics to monitor progress toward these goals and performance trends in key areas such as labor-management satisfaction, productivity gains, cost savings, and other measures as identified by relevant Labor Management Forum participants

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Plan was jointly developed by Peace Corps and Local 3548 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), AFL-CIO (the Union) as required by Section 3 (b) of Executive Order 13522.

## **BACKGROUND**

Originally conceived in 1961, the Peace Corps' (Agency) mission is to promote world peace and friendship. Since its inception employees serve term-limited appointments of thirty (30) months with an opportunity for extension of up to five (5) years. The head of the agency (Director) has the authority to grant extensions not to exceed eight and one-half (8 ½) years for no more than 15 % of the workforce.

The Peace Corps is a small, global agency of approximately 860 employees serving domestically and internationally. Approximately 200 of the 860 employees serve in overseas countries (Posts). Approximately 60% of employees are Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. In addition, the Peace Corps employs scores of locally engaged staff (Foreign Service Nationals, Host Country Nationals, and Personal Service Contractors) overseas to support the mission.

### **Headquarters**

The Peace Corps headquarters is located in Washington, D.C. Among other things, headquarters staff serves to train and support the Volunteer Corps, with approximately 7,700 Volunteers currently serving worldwide in 76 countries.

### **Regional Recruiting Offices**

There are nine (9) Regional Recruiting Offices domestically located in the United States to provide a broad scope of outreach. The primary goal of the Regional Recruiting Offices is to target talented and highly-skilled Volunteers to serve out the Peace Corps mission.

### **Union**

The current Collective Bargaining Agreement) between Peace Corps and the Union was written in 1995, with amendments made in 1997. Like all Federal agencies operating under "Open Shop" legislation, the Peace Corps Employees Union struggles to maintain membership levels. However, the impact of term-limited employment (i.e., the Five-Year Rule) on most Agency personnel further inhibits recruitments efforts. Historically, the Union's membership has never exceeded more than 20% of the collective bargaining unit.

Today, the Union represents approximately 500 members with a growing active roster. AFSCME has appointed the current officers in “Acting” capacities and will support their efforts to hold elections of officers in the coming months.

The Union represents all Agency employees, except those excluded by law and overseas U.S. Direct-Hire employees.

## **BASELINE ASSESSMENT OF LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS IN THE AGENCY**

During the past several years, the Agency and the Union have developed a constructive and cooperative relationship that has essentially reduced the number of formal administrative disputes (unfair labor practice charges, institutional Union grievances, and negotiation impasses) to zero. Accordingly, the parties have agreed to continue to monitor these indicators. The parties are committed to work collaboratively to improve on relationship-building through effective, focused engagement. Any change to the number of formal disputes will indicate a need to reassess the process improvement goals and the tenor of our labor management relations. The parties will periodically review the established performance goals to engage the Union on pre-decisional matters (to the fullest extent practicable) to determine whether adjustments are necessary.

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF LABOR-MANAGEMENT FORUMS**

Article 24 of the CBA calls for a Joint Labor-Management Committee “*to foster an atmosphere of open communication and to facilitate an exchange of ideas about a broad range of issues affecting working conditions...*” In September 2009, the Union requested the establishment of an Article 24 Joint Labor-Management Committee.

In anticipation of the Executive Order and the Union’s requested Article 24 Joint Labor-Management Committee, the parties began working proactively to shape their labor-management activities. At the time of the Executive Order, the parties acted promptly to set in motion the work developed over the last few months.

The parties established the Labor-Management Partnership Forum tailored to Peace Corps’ unique mission/goals and priorities. Since the principles set out in Article 24 - Joint Labor-Management Committee parallels the purpose of the Executive Order, the parties agreed that the Labor-Management Partnership Forum will serve both the requirements of Article 24, and the Executive Order.

## **Management Membership - Labor-Management Partnership Forum**

The Director has appointed a balance of senior executive and high-level managers to represent the Agency on the Labor-Management Partnership Forum and to carry out the Executive Order. The Director has charged Management Forum members to work collaboratively with the Union; and to discuss pre-decisional involvement to the fullest

extent practicable to foster constructive labor-management engagement. The Director has charged Management Forum members to report directly to him on the business of the Labor Management Partnership Forum. The Director appointed such members based on their position in the agency, reporting relationships, wealth of experience, and a balance of cross-organizational representation. The Director will make a global announcement (week of March 8<sup>th</sup>) to the workforce concerning the Executive Order, the work of the Labor Management Partnership Forum and appointed members. Currently, the Labor Management Partnership Forum will meet on a quarterly basis. However, as the Partnership Agreement is finalized the parties may reach a consensus to meet more often.

1. Earl Yates, Associate Director of Management (Presidential Appointee)
2. Jennifer Chavez Rubio, Director, Office of Private Sector Initiative (Presidential Appointee)
3. Everett Lott, Chief Administrative Officer/Volunteer, Recruitment and Support
4. Octavia Johnson Richardson, Chief, Labor and Employee Relations

### **Earl Yates, Associate Director of Management**

As Associate Director of Management, Mr. Yates is focused on supporting the agency's strategic plan world-wide through the offices of Administrative Services, Human Resources Management, the Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act, and Records Management.

Mr. Yates previously served as Regional Director for the Africa Region and, prior to that, as the first Country Director of the Peace Corps program in South Africa. Mr. Yates brings more than 30 years of expertise and professional accomplishment in the areas of domestic and international development to the Peace Corps. He has extensive experience in senior leadership positions focusing on policy planning and analysis, strategic planning, organizational development, and human resource development.

He has also served as the Executive Director of Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance; Senior Vice President of the Academy for Educational Development; and Program Management Officer at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

### **Jennifer Chavez Rubio, Director, Office of Private Sector Initiatives**

The Office of Private Sector Initiatives (OPSI), part of the Director's Staff Offices, oversees and manages all donations to the Peace Corps. The office services three distinct customer groups: Peace Corps Volunteers and the communities they serve, Peace Corps the Agency, and donors to the Peace Corps.

OPSI supports the work of Peace Corps Volunteers through the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) and by processing gift-in-kind donations. PCPP is the only mechanism, aside from USAID's Small Project Assistance Program, through which PCVs may receive funding for project work.

OPSI serves to build strong and enduring alliances with the Private Sector that support and further Peace Corps Global Initiatives and respect and protect the integrity of the Peace Corps.

Ms. Chavez Rubio brings several years of philanthropic expertise to the Peace Corps. She has been extensively involved in grant making, working with corporations and community and private foundations. In addition, she has considerable experience in the development of effective cross-sector partnerships and initiatives, broad stakeholder engagement, and impact measurement.

### **Everett Lott, Chief Administrative Officer, Volunteer, Recruitment and Selection**

Mr. Lott serves as the Chief Administrative Officer, Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (VRS), the largest employee organization of Peace Corps. As such, VRS holds the largest bargaining unit members. Mr. Lott reports directly to a presidential appointee, Associate Director of VRS. Mr. Lott is responsible for procurement, financial (\$16.9M budget) and human resources for 9 Regional Recruiting Offices, and 6 headquarters offices.

The mission of VRS is to recruit, select and place diverse Volunteers in overseas programs. Additionally, VRS through its recruitment and outreach operations promotes Peace Corps and educates the public on the agency's mission and accomplishments.

VRS plays a critical role in supporting the Director's three initiatives: growth, innovation and 3rd Goal. Mr. Lott will continue to support the re-structuring of VRS to effectively manage the growth of the Volunteer Cops. Mr. Lott has the experience and a consensus-building temperament to leverage the Union's interests to increase the efficiency of meeting these new agency initiatives.

Prior to joining the Peace Corps, Mr. Lott served as the Deputy Director/Chief of Staff of the Office of Unified Communications – Washington, D.C.'s emergency 911 communications center. Mr. Lott managed payroll, human resources, budget, labor relations, facilities, and procurement of 353 personnel with a budget of \$31M.

### **Octavia Johnson Richardson, Chief, Labor and Employee Relations**

Since 2005, Ms. Johnson Richardson has served as Chief, Labor and Employee Relations (LER) for Peace Corps. Ms. Johnson Richardson oversees an operation of a domestic and international LER Program. She serves as chief consultant to management of all levels in Headquarters, regional offices, and overseas posts on a broad range of human resources functions to include: adverse and disciplinary actions, policy development, program management, benefits administration, performance management, labor relations, and complex and controversial employee relations.

Ms. Johnson Richardson provides expert advisory services to management on the full range of labor relations. She assists management in interpreting and implementing policies to ensure proper alignment with current negotiated agreements and the

established culture. Ms. Johnson Richardson work with management to respond to disputes and serves as management's technical advisor and chief negotiator on all negotiations.

Ms. Johnson Richardson brings more than 17 years of expertise of managing LER programs and dispute resolution processes. She also served as a senior litigator on complex cases, mediating and arbitrating cases before the FLRA and FSIP.

Note: The Chief, LER's role on the Labor Management Partnership Forum will primarily serve as resource and support to facilitate the labor-management engagement.

### **Union Membership - Labor-Management Partnership Forum**

To date, the Union has not appointed Forum Members, but is waiting for final wording on the "Partnership Agreement" to do so. However, the following individuals from the Union are working with Management to implement the goals of the EO.

1. Matthew Klismith, Acting Executive Vice-President, AFSCME Local 3548
2. Helen Petrozzola, Acting Secretary, AFSCME Local 3548
3. Justin Barbalace, Acting Chief Steward, AFSCME Local 3548
4. Fern Finley, AFSCME Council 26 Staff Liaison

### **Matthew Klismith, Acting Executive Vice-President, AFSCME Local 3548**

Mr. Klismith has an extensive and proud family tradition of union service and leadership going back generations. Mr. Klismith served in Kenya (as a Peace Corps Volunteer) as a computer specialist for the local schools and he worked extensively with local labor organizations. Currently, Mr. Klismith is the technical support specialist for the computer systems in Peace Corps' Inter-Americas and Pacific region (IAP).

Mr. Klismith has a bachelor's degree in computer science from the University of Wisconsin/River Falls, and has done extensive master's studies in the field of number theory.

Since early 2009, Mr. Klismith has been acting Vice President of the Union and has worked with all levels of union membership on a wide variety of projects.

### **Helen Petrozzola, Acting Secretary, AFSCME Local 3548**

Currently Ms. Petrozzola serves as the Programming and Training Advisor for the Office of AIDS Relief. Prior to assuming this position she was a Technical Training Specialist in the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support. Ms. Petrozzola served as Programming and Training Officer for the Eastern Caribbean from 2007-2009 and for Ukraine from 2005-2007.

Prior to joining the Peace Corps, Ms. Petrozzola worked for the United Nations Development Program in the areas of HIV/AIDS prevention, anti-drug trafficking and

gender equality. Ms. Petrozzola holds a bachelors degree from the University of New York in Russian and Eastern European Studies; and a master's degree in Policy and Management from the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa.

**Justin T. Barbalace, Acting Union Chief Steward, AFSCME Local 3548**

Mr. Barbalace currently serves as an IT Specialist for domestic Desk Side Support. Mr. Barbalace served in Armenia from 2006-2009 as a CBD/ICT Volunteer, Information and Communications Technology.

Mr. Barbalace has a background in computer and network support, management and administration as a consultant for the oil industry. Mr. Barbalace joined Peace Corps as an IT Specialist in October 2009 and accepted the Acting Chief Shop Steward in January 2010.

As Acting Chief Shop Steward, Mr. Barbalace is responsible for working with our other stewards, interfacing with CBU members to address concerns, issues and grievances with management, as well as the recruitment of other members and stewards.

**Fern Finley, AFSCME Council 26 Staff Liaison**

Ms. Finley currently serves as a Representative with the AFSCME Council 26. In addition to providing support to the Peace Corps Union, she also works with locals at the Library of Congress, Architect of the Capitol, U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. Her primary duties include contract negotiations, training local officers and stewards and providing technical support when needed.

Ms. Finley is a federal retiree from the U.S. Agency for International Development where she served as a Program Analyst and President of the Civil Service Union, AFGE Local 1534 for 10 years.

Ms. Finley was one of the charter members of the Labor-Management Partnership mandated under the Clinton Administration. Ms. Finley's role on the Labor Management Partnership Forum will be to serve as Union Advisor.

**Partnership Agreement**

The parties agreed to develop a Partnership Agreement to establish the essential framework, rules of engagement, and function of the Labor-Management Partnership Forum. On January 22, 2010, Management presented the Union with a proposed Agreement. After the parties reach a consensus on the Partnership Agreement, it will be duly noted in the Implementation Plan.

The first Labor-Management Partnership Forum meeting was scheduled for February 11, 2010, but was canceled due to the Federal government-operation shut down during

the snow emergency. Although the Parties have not yet signed a Partnership Agreement, the parties held the first meeting on Monday, March 8, 2010.

The agenda for the first meeting of the Labor-Management Partnership Forum held Monday, 8, 2010, was:

1. Welcome (E. Yates, Associate Director of Management)
2. Introduction of Management Forum Members
3. Introduction of Union officials
4. Director's Remarks
5. Union - Acting President's Remarks
6. Executive Order (Facilitated by AD Yates)
7. Purpose of Labor-Management Partnership Forum (Facilitated by LER Chief)
8. Agency Implementation Plan (Facilitated by LER Chief)
9. Closing Remarks (Facilitated by AD Yates)

The Director and Chief of Staff attended the meeting and expressed their commitment to the Executive Order and to the work of the Labor Management Partnership Forum. The parties will explore scheduling the next meeting within six weeks.

## **THE PROCESS THE LABOR MANAGEMENT FORUM WILL UNDERTAKE TO DEVELOP MISSION-LINKED GOALS**

The Labor Management Partnership Forum will study the Agency mission/goals and the Director's priorities to guide its labor-management engagement.

Agency Mission: Promote world peace and friendship

### Agency Goals

1. Help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women
2. Help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served
3. Help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans

Today, nearly 7,700 Peace Corps Volunteers serve around the world in 76 countries. Volunteers face old and new challenges. Poverty, disease, and illiteracy are issues that continue to challenge developing countries and, in some cases, are exacerbated by current problems like climate change, government instability, and terrorism. Volunteers live and work in communities around the world for two years. Volunteer health, safety, and security remain the Agency's highest priorities. There are inherent dangers in serving overseas, but with quality training, a committed staff, and clear systems in place, the health, safety, and security of Peace Corps Volunteers will be assured in a



manner that allows flexibility for Volunteers to truly become a part of the community in which they serve.

The past year marked the first year of agency operations under the FY 2009–2014 Strategic Plan. The new plan uses the Peace Corps' three core goals as the focus of the agency's strategic planning efforts. The Director has identified his top priorities as (1) quality growth; (2) innovation; and (3) enhanced 3<sup>rd</sup> goal activities.

The Peace Corps FY 2010 appropriation represents the first step in a strategic presidential initiative to increase the number of Peace Corps Volunteers. To ensure that the Peace Corps does the best possible job of recruiting, training, and supporting an expanded number of Volunteers, the agency must and will identify best practices and rigorously incorporate them in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

In FY 2010, the Peace Corps will continue to take significant steps to implement and manage quality growth in both new countries and in countries where we already have a post. The agency is establishing an Office of Innovation to encourage the pursuit of cutting edge ideas and agency best practices. Finally, the Peace Corps will place greater emphasis on the agency's third goal and encourage returned Peace Corps Volunteers to continue their service at the conclusion of their overseas tour.

Congress has asked the Agency to conduct a comprehensive agency-wide assessment of the Peace Corps as a means of strengthening, reforming, and growing the Agency. Congress has also requested that the Agency make a number of specific recommendations. The comprehensive agency-wide assessment will also focus on strengthening third goal activities and reporting mechanisms.

The Agency continues to balance growth, new initiatives, and improving operations to optimize its performance and remain relevant in meeting host country needs and the agency's mission and three core goals.

### **Labor-management engagement**

The new leadership of the Agency has developed new initiatives in response to President Obama's Call To Service Campaign and an increased appropriated funding budget. The new Union leadership has identified a number of key agenda items to engage Management in its effort to meet these new initiatives. The Director understands that it will take a team approach to collect the best ideas to drive targeted mission and performance goals.

The process: Through the Labor Management Partnership Forum, Management and the Union will collaboratively develop a "Joint Issue List." The Labor-Management Partnership Forum will develop metrics and guiding principles (based on the National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations) to link the "Joint Issue List" to the mission and workforce. The Labor-Management Partnership Forum will rank the issues by order of priority and address each accordingly. The parties will study the current initiatives and goals mentioned-above (agency-wide assessments, the Agency's

Strategic Plan, and the Performance and Accountability Reports) to craft mission-linked issues and recommendations that will support the Agency's mission/goals and priorities.

The Director and the Union leadership are committed to the Executive Order. The Director plans to engage senior level management in the labor-management process: 1) to chair a briefing on key initiatives under their leadership at a Labor-Management Partnership Forum meeting; 2) by requesting senior level management to take ownership of the agreed upon "Joint Issue List"; and 3) as appropriate, to Chair a Sub-Committee of the Labor-Management Partnership Forum.

The Union has committed considerable resources to work with Management to implement the Executive Order. The Union is committed to engaging its membership to the fullest to support the mission and a healthy, productive workforce.

## **DEVELOP METRICS FOR IMPROVEMENTS**

The National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations has reached a consensus on:

- Metrics to help Agency and union measure progress of labor-management forums and evaluate effectiveness and success
- Guiding Principles to serve as a framework for labor-management forums

The parties will explore the idea of seeking a trained Facilitator from the Federal Mediation Conciliation Service to assist the parties in mapping out mission-linked goals.

## **GOAL 1: Improve the Agency's ability to achieve its mission/goals and priorities**

### **Metrics**

- Improvement in all seven (7) areas identified by Congress
- Position the Agency to support the growth initiative without sacrificing health, safety, security, talent and support of Volunteers
- Develop new and improve upon existing global partnerships to address host country development goals
- Improve Volunteer Satisfaction
- Support the growth initiative in a responsible, cost-effective manner

## **GOAL 2: Improve the quality of employee worklife**

### **Metrics**

- Higher employee morale
- Greater job satisfaction
- Lower attrition rates
- Employee Development and Training
- Enhance WorkLife Programs and Activities to support healthy worklife balance
- Baseline employee survey

### **GOAL 3: Improve the labor-management relations climate**

#### **Metrics**

- Elections of Union Officers
- Amend the CBA, as deemed necessary
- Fewer grievances, bargaining disputes, and unfair labor practices
- Greater union and employee engagement in workplace decisions
- Expedited collective bargaining process
- Use of skilled stewards and facilitators at appropriate times
- Cost savings and/or cost avoidance
- Baseline survey of union membership
- Create a tracking system to monitor and record labor-management activity

The Director wishes to improve labor-management relations to build a stronger and more accountable management workforce. Such labor-management engagement with union principals and employees should foster collaborative teams that will work towards identifying problems and offering solutions; enhancing systems and resources to efficiently accomplish the Agency's mission/goals and priorities. The Director and Chief of Staff are committed to attending future Labor-Management Partnership Forum meetings, as deemed appropriate. This Implementation Plan clearly demonstrates the Director's commitment to the Executive Order and the importance of the Labor-Management Partnership Forum.

A number of surveys, assessments, and studies will assist the parties to identify performance goals, measure and track performance goals, and communicate results. The parties will benchmark best practices to model improved Worklife balance and improved labor-management relations.

The parties are committed to work together, with the participation of the following: Avue, Office of Human Resources Management, Office of Global Operations, VRS, Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning, Office of Private Sector Initiatives, Office of Innovation, Office of Management, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of Public Engagements, and the Office of Volunteer Support to establish appropriate metrics to measure the success of the Labor-Management Partnership Forum. The parties will consider a review of the Office of Personnel Management employee questionnaire feedback, development of supplemental questionnaires (especially to measure manager satisfaction), and the use of the agency-wide assessments, Strategic Plan, and Performance and Accountability Reports as other credible sources of metrics for staying on track and assessing progress.

#### **RESOURCES**

The parties are committed to review the work of the Labor Management Partnership Forum and assess the need for additional human capital and financial resources. As

needed, Management, union officials, and Labor Management Partnership Forum members should receive training on the requirements of the Executive Order, Guiding Principles, and effective tools and processes that could assist with interest-based bargaining for labor-management engagement.

The Agency will partner with the Union to identify relevant, low-cost training through Federal Labor Relations Authority, Federal Mediation Conciliation Service, and other credible sources. As such, the parties will engage in an assessment to identify training needs, and associated costs and resources. The Agency and the Union are committed to setting aside appropriate funds to support the training needs, as deemed appropriate by the parties.

The Agency will commit to developing, in cooperation with the Union, a series of training modules for all operational managers.

## **CLOSING**

The parties welcome feedback from the National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations. The parties will continue working through effective, focused engagement to position itself to implement a final Plan no later than May 8, 2010.