

## 28.0 ICASS

- 28.1 [General Information](#)
- 28.1.1 [Basic Principles](#)
- 28.2 [Services](#)
- 28.3 [The ICASS Cast](#)
- 28.4 [Distributing Costs](#)
- 28.5 [Paying for Services](#)
- 28.6 [Peace Corps ICASS Process](#)
- 28.6.1 [Authorized Services for Peace Corps](#)
- 28.6.2 [Documents Used at Post](#)
- 28.6.3 [Washington-based funds](#)
- 28.6.4 [Invoice Approval](#)
- 28.7 [Other Mission Responsibilities](#)
- 28.8 [Cost Distribution Methodology \(Also see Distributing ICASS Costs\)](#)
- 28.9 [Notes on Specific Cost Centers](#)
- 28.9.1 [Community Liaison Office \(CLO\)](#)
- 28.9.2 [Shipping and Customs](#)
- 28.9.3 [Pouch](#)
- 28.9.4 [Local Guard Program](#)
- 28.10 [Cost Center Waiver Requests](#)
- 28.11 [Workload Counts and Modifications](#)
- 28.12 [Distribution and Overhead](#)
- 28.13 [Sub-Cost Centers at Lite Posts](#)
- 28.14 [Alternate Service Providers](#)
- 28.15 [Peace Corps as a Service Provider](#)
- 28.16 [Joint Medical Unit](#)
- 28.17 [Services Outside ICASS](#)
- 28.18 [Policy Issues](#)
- 28.18.1 [Housing](#)
- 28.18.2 [Security Standards](#)
- 28.18.3 [Local Guard Program](#)
- 28.18.4 [Sale of Excess Property](#)
- 28.19 [Timeline](#)
- 28.19.1 [Service Subscription](#)
- 28.19.2 [Workload Counts](#)
- 28.19.3 [Billing](#)
- 28.20 [Contact Information](#)

Also see:

[Peace Corps Manual Section 708, "Foreign Affairs Administrative Support](#)

## **28.1 General Information**

International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) is the system by which the U.S. Government provides and shares the cost of a common administrative platform at overseas missions. ICASS seeks to provide quality services at low cost, while attempting to ensure that agencies pay their share of having an overseas presence. For Peace Corps, services to American and local-hire staff are included under ICASS, while services to Volunteers are never part of ICASS.

NOTE: The term "Mission" in this chapter refers to the entire U.S. mission in a country, while "Post" refers to a Peace Corps country program.

### **28.1.1 Basic Principles**

Although administered by the Department of State, ICASS is truly an interagency endeavor. Representatives from customer agencies serve on Mission ICASS Councils and on the Washington-based boards. ICASS is made up of customers and service providers. Peace Corps is always a customer. Department of State staff can be either customers (Consular, Econ, and Political) or service providers (GSO, Financial, Personnel). While other U.S. government agencies, such as USAID, may occasionally offer ICASS services, the principal provider remains the Department of State. All these entities work together to ensure the integrity of the system's operating principles:

- Selection of Service and Providers - Customers decide to which ICASS services they will subscribe. Although Department of State is the main provider, the Council may choose other agencies or private vendors.
- Equity - All agencies receive and pay for services the same way.
- Local Empowerment - Mission ICASS Councils make decisions as to service priorities, budgets, and providers.
- Customer Focus - Through their Mission ICASS Councils, customer agencies evaluate services. Councils and providers develop performance standards for each service offered.
- Transparency - Budget and cost distribution software makes it possible to explain how invoices are developed, the extent of service use, and the unit cost of each service.

## **28.2 Services**

A full range of administrative services is available through ICASS. Examples include American staff health unit, shipping and customs clearance, and FSN payrolling. ICASS is mostly voluntary. Only two services are mandatory for all agencies at a Mission. Basic Package and Community Liaison Office (CLO). Basic Package is a cluster of functions that really only the Department of State can perform. Services include diplomatic accreditation to the host government, issuance of embassy access badges, and maintenance of the Mission emergency action plan. The Community Liaison Office works to benefit the Mission community as a whole. Services include sending out welcome packets, coordinating orientation, and acting as a sounding board for the community. Beyond Basic Package and CLO, each customer agency

may select the services it wants to receive. Peace Corps has a standard list from which its Posts may choose.

### **28.3 The ICASS Cast**

ICASS is established in each country under Chief of Mission (COM) authority). The COM ensures that the ICASS Council is functioning and that the relationship between the Council and service provider(s) is constructive. In the event that a Council cannot resolve a dispute, the Chief of Mission may step in and make a ruling. The head of the service provider agency, usually the Management Counselor, sits on the ICASS Council as an ex-officio member. The Deputy Chief of Mission is also a non-voting Council member.

The Mission ICASS Council is comprised of heads of customer agencies. The Council sets shared priorities, selects service providers, approves Mission ICASS budgets and all new ICASS positions, develops standards with the service provider, and assesses provider performance. The Council is responsible for reviewing actual expenditures against budgets on a quarterly basis and monitoring the quality of services provided against the agreed upon standards. The role of the Council is not to micro-manage the provider. However, it should have a voice in decisions that impact the cost of the ICASS platform. (Decisions about American ICASS personnel staffing are an exception to Council oversight, although the Council can and should make recommendations when appropriate.)

Many ICASS Councils establish a Mission ICASS Working Group to focus on projects such as developing proposals for improving services. In most cases, the Peace Corps Country Director will be on the Council and the Administrative Officer (Director of Management and Operations) (AO) on the Working Group. Participation in Missions ICASS activities is not a perfunctory process but a highly visible endeavor. Peace Corps is expected to be a team player.

ICASS is supported by the Washington-based ICASS Executive Board composed of senior representatives from thirteen agencies, including Peace Corps' Chief Financial Officer. The Board, which meets at least twice a year, is the highest policy making body in ICASS and the final court of appeal for disputes.

The Washington-based ICASS Working Group (IWG), which reports to the Board, is composed of representatives of any U.S. Government agency receiving ICASS services. The Working Group addresses ICASS policies and practices. Peace Corps' ICASS Coordinator is a member of the IWG.

The Washington-based ICASS Service Center (ISC) serves as the Secretariat to both the ICASS Executive Board and the Working Group. The Center works to facilitate the effective operation of the system. It coordinates the budget process and maintains the software. It offers training workshops for overseas missions. The Center also provides policy guidance and brings unresolved matters to the IWG for resolution.

## 28.4 Distributing Costs

The real goal of ICASS, improving quality and lowering the cost of services, is often overlooked. No one, even Department of State, will be able to afford these services unless their delivery is streamlined. To accomplish this, ICASS Councils must focus on process-improvements and search for efficiencies.

All ICASS services are categorized in a menu of choices called cost centers. Large and medium-sized Missions have 32 cost centers and use the ICASS Standard system. For ease of administration, smaller Missions collapse the same set of services into 16 cost centers use the ICASS Lite system. The mechanism for capturing how much customers use a service is called workload counts. Workload varies by cost center. For some cost centers, cumulative transactions (e.g., number of vouchers processed) determine workload. For others, workload is a static factor such as the number of staff positions. In some instances, a customer agency may request a modification to counties. If the ICASS Council agrees, workload counts may be multiplied by .3 or .6, thereby decreasing charges. Not all ICASS services are modifiable.

In order for all ICASS costs to be billed out, every penny expended to deliver a service must be allocated to a cost center. For example, all costs required to run the embassy health unit are put into the ICASS Health Services pot. Once costs for running all ICASS services are allocated to cost centers, they are distributed to customers based on workload count. For example, the workload count under ICASS Health Services is number of direct-hire Americans plus dependents. If 10 Peace Corps direct-hires and dependents use ICASS Health Services, and those 10 represent 2 percent of all ICASS Health Service users, then Peace Corps would be billed for 2 percent of all costs required to run ICASS Health Services. This distribution of costs is done for each service, resulting in one invoice to Peace Corps for all ICASS services.

It is important for posts to carefully monitor their use of and evaluate the need for support via ICASS. Although ICASS funds are not in Post budgets, fees effectively reduce funding available for all Peace Corps programs.

## 28.5 Paying for Services

The ICASS Service Center in Washington consolidates invoices worldwide and adds costs that are not country-specific (e.g., State Office of Medical Programs, Charleston and Bangkok Financial Service Centers). Peace Corps/Washington receives and pays for this worldwide billing twice yearly.

Unlike many U.S. Government programs which operate on the basis of single-year funding, ICASS uses a no-year Working Capital Fund. Funds not spent at the end of the fiscal year are rolled over for use by the Mission in the next fiscal year. When reviewing a Missions ICASS budget, the Council may want to keep these points in mind:

- Unobligated balances carry forward from one fiscal year to the next.
- Unliquidated balances from prior years can be deobligated and returned to the Mission.

- Proceeds of sale for vehicles and other equipment are returned to the Mission for vehicle and equipment replacement.
- Missions can put money aside toward future purchases of vehicles and equipment through depreciation and capitalization requirements.

## **28.6 Peace Corps ICASS Process**

### **28.6.1 Authorized Services for Peace Corps**

Under ICASS, customer agencies are required to subscribe to two services: Basic Package and Community Liaison Office (CLO). Beyond these two, Peace Corps policy is that Posts may only subscribe to a specific list of services. Use of any service not authorized requires advance approval by the Chief Financial Officer (see section 19.6 waiver requests). The Office of Budget and Analysis reviews Post ICASS invoices. Any Post whose service selection does not conform to guidance is subject to having its operating budget reduced to cover the cost.

The ICASS software, managed by embassy staff, uses cost and workload counts to develop Mission ICASS budgets and generate customer invoices. The software also provides useful reports and can run "what if" scenarios showing the impact of changes to service subscriptions. Any financial or workload information requested by a customer agency should be available upon request to the embassy. It is the customers, after all, who are paying for it. A working copy of the software can be loaded on Peace Corps machines; contact the Peace Corps ICASS Coordinator at headquarters to get a copy.

### **28.6.2 Documents Used at Post**

#### Charter

Each Mission has a standard charter that establishes the general terms of ICASS. This rarely changes.

#### Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

This further delineates the terms of ICASS. Some Missions have added modifications but most language is standard. It must be signed by each customer agency each year. Included in the MOU are the terms for changing service providers (1 year advance notice) and changing selection of services (6 months advance notice: October 1 for April 1 implementation and April 1 for October 1 implementation).

#### Subscription of Services

attached to the MOU is a document establishing subscription of services. In principle, services selected will not vary much from year to year; however, Peace Corps staff should pay close attention to this exercise. Service subscription errors can result in marked overcharges; these errors are very difficult to correct once bills are generated months later.

### Customer Service Standards

Customer Service Standards are service levels agreed upon by the provider(s) and the ICASS Council. Established standards should cover time and quality factors relating to the delivery of a particular service. These service standards should be updated annually.

### Budget

Each Mission has an ICASS budget that covers all services. While the service provider prepares the budget, the Council is responsible for approving it. ICASS services are broken into cost centers. The cost of a service is shared by all customers. These costs are aggregated by agency and presented in invoice form for customer signature. Country Director signatures collectively bind Peace Corps to millions of dollars in payments, so careful review is necessary before signing.

### Mission Budget and Invoice Categories

ICASS budgets, which are developed by the embassy and approved by the ICASS Council, must reflect the total cost of providing services at a Mission. Mission budgets must include all the Mission-based costs plus certain Washington costs. The invoices that Peace Corps staff review are divided into three main sections: 1) Mission funds, 2) Washington-based funds, and 3) ICASS and Overhead costs.

### Mission funds:

#### Leases and living quarters allowance (LQA)

Funds housing for American ICASS personnel (e.g., Financial Management Officer, GSO, Personnel Officer, and CLO).

Other Mission Bureau Funds -Supports the local guard program and other Mission activities.

### **28.6.3 Washington-based Funds**

American salary and benefit costs - Pays for American ICASS personnel. The budgeted amount for each position is a standard grade and step based on the position, not on the grade of the person currently filling it.

Assignment travel - Covers assignment travel for American ICASS personnel at a Mission. There will be a cost factor applied to each year.

FSN Separation Liability fund -0 Should be zero at this time.

Dept. of State central and regional bureau costs - Applies to only 3 or 4 Missions worldwide.

### **28.6.4 Invoice Approval**

Twice a year each Peace Corps Post will be asked to formally approve its Mission ICASS budget and the distribution of costs. The Council should review the budget and compare it to last years actual expenditures. The Council should also ask if it meets Mission needs and stays within target marks sent by the ICASS Service Center. By signing invoices, the Country Director is

effectively agreeing to all costs allocated to Peace Corps. The Initial Invoice (December) is presented after the development of the Mission initial budget. The Final Invoice (April) is presented after development of the final budget. Most analysis and questioning should occur early in the fiscal year, before receipt of the Initial Invoice.

Be aware that if all customer invoices are not signed by a stated deadline missions may be financially penalized, so occasionally service providers will ask customers to sign on very short notice. While Country Directors should do what they can to comply, no one should sign without understanding all charges. In these instances, CDs may politely decline to sign and contact the ICASS Coordinator at HQ for guidance.

Likewise, no CD should approve an invoice without back-up reports. Recommended reports are Workload Summary by Post and Cost Center Detail by Agency: Includes Unit Cost by Post. The embassy should provide these upon request. They are easily printed from the ICASS software.

Here are the questions to ask when invoices arrive:

- Did we receive 10 working days to review?
- Are charges appearing in cost centers to which we did not formally subscribe?
- Are workload counts correct? Do they correspond to agreed upon counts from May 1?
- Are PSCs erroneously counted the same as FSNs? Are PCMCs erroneously counted the same as direct-hire Americans?
- Are approved modification factors (.3 or .6) applied?
- Is Overhead less than 5%?
- Is Distribution less than 40%?

If workload load counts and service subscription exercises performed earlier in the year are done correctly, invoices should be straightforward. Any questions or inaccuracies should be raised and corrected upon receipt of the Initial invoice in December. Changes to the Final Invoice (April) are only for major adjustments that could not be foreseen in December.

## **28.7 Other Mission Responsibilities**

After initial standards and processes are in place, the Council should meet at least quarterly. The Council should review customer service quality against pre-established standards. The service provider should present a report of actual obligations to date against the mission budget with explanations of variations. As part of an analysis, the service provider or the Council may suggest that resources be reprogrammed or services improved. This kind of discussion is the Council's opportunity to have ongoing and timely input.

## **28.8 Cost Distribution Methodology**

There are two versions of the ICASS cost distribution system: Standard and Lite. Standard is used by medium to large Posts and Lite is used at small Posts. ICASS Councils choose which to use. Standard methodology is advantageous because the greater number of cost centers make it

easier to select and pay only for services required. Standard methodology is almost always best for Peace Corps.

Whenever possible, the State Department is advised to direct-charge for services that fall outside of ICASS. Generally, direct charging should be done whenever the cost for a service can be determined for a particular agency. However, direct charging is not appropriate as a supplemental charge for items whose costs have already been allocated through ICASS.

## **28.9 Notes on Specific Cost Centers**

### **28.9.1 Community Liaison Office (CLO)**

CLO is one of two mandatory services to which all customer agencies must subscribe. During ICASS development in the mid 1990s, Peace Corps' position was that CLO should not be mandatory. In the face of opposition, Peace Corps relented with the stipulation that it would be modifiable. Peace Corps staff generally does not fully use CLO services and, thus, should not pay fully for them. The CLO typically has eight task areas. (See CLO customer service standards in the ICASS Handbook 6 FAH-5). Country Directors should decide on the appropriate service level at their Mission and ask the Council to approve a workload modification of .6 or .3.

### **28.9.2 Shipping and Customs**

Posts handling all their own shipping and customs services should inform the Headquarters Transportation Officer (M/AS/T) that they are no longer shipping through the Embassy so that appropriate headquarters offices can be notified.

### **28.9.3 Pouch**

Peace Corps must be very careful in allowing any non-standard use of the pouch. Pouch issues can arise either because of incoming program materials for Volunteers who are not counted in ICASS or because, in exceptional circumstances, other-than-direct-hire Americans accessing the service. Per MS 835, host country nationals, third country nationals, and contractors, including PCMCs, are not authorized Pouch use for sending or receiving personal mail. Bona fide official mail, however, may be sent to the Peace Corps Medical Officer.

Peace Corps pays for use of the diplomatic pouch in two ways: Pouches sent from overseas are part of mission-level ICASS agreements and are charged on Post ICASS invoices. Conversely, pouches sent to overseas are paid centrally by Peace Corps headquarters. As long as packaging requirements are met, embassies should not limit the receipt of incoming pouches because they are not part of mission-level ICASS agreements.

### **28.9.4 Local Guard Program**

Non-Residential Security may be direct-billed, based on an Inter Agency Agreement, or charged through ICASS. Peace Corps always prefers direct billing.

Residential Security, including Mobile Patrol, must be direct-billed because residential security is by statute a Diplomatic Security function and may not be charged through ICASS. Posts currently using the embassy guard contract are encouraged to seek direct billing from either the embassy or the contract vendor. Posts currently managing their own guard contract or force should continue to do so.

Essentially four security activities are covered in ICASS:

- Non-residential local guard program. This includes the cost of the guards themselves, certain equipment (Budget and Analysis Teams, flashlights) and supervision/oversight of the guard contract.
- FSN security investigations. This is the cost of the police and other security checks conducted for new FSN hires and for periodic follow-up checks.
- Incident investigations/assistance. Examples of this are traffic tickets, motor vehicle accidents and burglaries where the Embassy assists in dealing with the local police.
- Facilities security checks. This is the evaluation of any office prior to occupancy to determine if security upgrades are required to meet the Department of State security requirements. This excludes all residential security since residences are, by statute, not an ICASS service.
- Confusion about security stems from the various permutations of service providers. For example, the Regional Security Officer (RSO) is paid solely by Department of State Diplomatic Security, and thus, any task performed is technically not an ICASS cost. However, in small Missions, the Management Officer may perform such security functions. Further, the RSO may have local hire assistants. These employees are charged to ICASS to the extent that they perform any of the four activities above. If other employees work on non-ICASS issues they should not be paid from ICASS.

## **28.10 Cost Center Waiver Requests**

If a Post wishes to use an ICASS service not on the list of pre-approved services the Peace Corps Chief Financial Officer must first approve a waiver. Waivers are not pro forma. Requests should address why using an ICASS service is a sound management decision. Cost comparisons should be based on the most recent ICASS data available and include Distribution and Overhead estimates. Posts may ask the embassy to run a "what if" scenario using the ICASS software; this will show changes in the invoice if a new service is used.

## **28.11 Workload Count Modifications**

Each year, ICASS workload counts should be taken by the service provider on May 1, presented to customers by June 1, and agreed to by all parties by July 1. These counts are used to develop ICASS invoices in the coming fiscal year. For example, FY 2007 invoices are based on workload counts taken May 1, 2006. Posts should pay close attention to this exercise. If inaccurate counts are approved in July, it is extremely difficult to get them corrected when the Initial invoice arrives in December.

ICASS costs are allocated to customers based on workload for each service. Workload is captured in one of two ways: static (e.g., headcount of positions, office square footage) or cumulative (e.g., number of lines of fiscal coding processed).

Static or headcounts are based on a snapshot of personnel taken on May 1, not the number of approved NSDD-38 positions on the embassy staffing pattern. Peace Corps may have positions that have been approved but never filled. These long-term vacancies should not be counted since services are not being used.

As noted below, some workload count errors are common. Country Directors and Administrative Officers are expected to represent Peace Corps' position on these points as local decisions have policy implications worldwide:

Peace Corps Volunteers are not government employees and do not receive ICASS services. (Also see the ICASS Handbook 6 FAH-5. Also see the cable, 95 STATE 287362, Attachment A, paragraph 4). They should never be counted.

US-hire PSCs, including PCMCs, generally do not receive ICASS services. Their contracts are written to exclude many if not all of the services received by their direct-hire counterparts (including Pouch, Health, and CLO). The exceptions are Security Services and Shipping & Customs Services for American PCMCs.

PSCs are engaged through the contracting function not direct-hire staff employed through Human Resources. Because Department of State does not make this distinction for its staff, they can be confused and make counting errors. Embassy access badges for all staff, including PSCs, are already included under Basic Package. Care should be taken that PSCs are not included in counts for FSNs (Personnel Services, Payrolling, and GSO).

Modification factors of .6 or .3 may be used to decrease workload counts when less than the full range of a service is used. For example, if Peace Corps workload for a service is 8 Americans, this count may be decreased to 4.8 (8 x .6) or 2.5 (8 x .3). Lower workload means lower costs. There are many cost centers in which Peace Corps performs a substantial part of the service for itself. This is especially true at Lite missions. For example, GSO Services typically includes nine tasks in the service standard. Peace Corps only uses one, Shipping & Customs, and performs all others itself. Thus Posts should negotiate a .3 modification.

To obtain a modification, Peace Corps must make a written request to the Council. The modification process does not have to be completely revisited each year unless there is a marked change in service use. Modification approval rests with the Council, not the service provider.

## **28.12 Distribution and Overhead**

The ICASS Handbook (6 FAH-5 Cost Distribution) provides an explanation of Distribution, but does not thoroughly explain its importance. The basic explanation is that in addition to ICASS providing services to customers, it also provides services to itself. For example, an American General Services Officer is an ICASS service provider. The costs to support the GSO (salary,

benefits, travel, computer, office space) are paid by customers. At the same time, that person consumes ICASS services (residence lease and furniture, CLO, Health). These costs are attributed to ICASS as if it were a customer agency. Its costs are then shared by all customers after their own bills are determined.

Understanding distribution is important because it reflects the cost of the ICASS administrative platform. If a Mission's ICASS Distribution represents 40% of the ICASS budget, that means 60% of the Mission's resources are used to deliver services to customers and 40% are used to deliver services to the administrative platform itself.

Another item on the ICASS invoice is Overhead. This line categorizes miscellaneous expenses (e.g. stamps) for items too small to allot to a specific service. Overhead charges should not exceed 5 percent of an overhead invoice.

### **28.13 Sub-cost Centers at Lite Posts**

In many instances, the Lite methodology results in a bill to Peace Corps that exceeds what the services received should cost. Lite Posts might consider negotiating with the ICASS Council to break out a cost center into sub-units. For example, the only service Peace Corps normally uses under General Services (GSO) is Shipping and Customs. In this case, a sub-cost center could be developed under GSO for Shipping and Customs; Peace Corps would then subscribe to and be charged for this sub-cost center instead of all General Services.

### **28.14 Alternative Service Providers**

When ICASS services are provided by an agency other than State (e.g., USAID), Peace Corps must be invoiced using the same format but payment cannot be made through the State billing process. When billed by alternate service providers, contact the ICASS Coordinator in Washington for guidance.

### **28.15 Peace Corps as a Service Provider**

No Post may provide ICASS services without clearance from the Chief Financial Officer. At this time, Peace Corps has no interest in providing ICASS services.

### **28.16 Joint Medical Units**

For JMUs established prior to ICASS, the embassy signed an MOU with Peace Corps in which terms for how other agency employees would be provided medical services was entirely under Peace Corps control. Under ICASS, the multi-agency Council exercises management oversight over service providers, including the health unit. This has the potential to create unacceptable conflicts, potentially compromising Volunteer care over which Peace Corps unequivocally maintains sole control. In order to maintain a JMU at Post, staff health care service must be managed outside of ICASS, using a separate reimbursement arrangement. Missions with a "Peace Corps as sole provider" JMU should look closely at this. No charges or offsets for JMUs may be made through the ICASS system.

## **28.17 Services Outside ICASS**

Certain services are almost always handled outside the ICASS framework, including:

Marine Guards do not provide ICASS services. They are present due to an interagency agreement between State and Defense. However, the Marine Guards are an ICASS customer.

Communications operations (the cable room) are funded entirely by State programs and are not a part of ICASS. Unclassified cables present the only small exception to this rule in that they are often distributed through the mailroom, which is an ICASS function.

Defense provides APO services to some Missions. APO services are not part of ICASS since State historically has not paid directly for these services. On the other hand, APO services may require that the Embassy provide a room and staff to handle mail distribution. These costs are appropriate ICASS charges.

DTS-PO is a service entirely separate from ICASS but is billed through the ICASS framework. DTS-PO provides reduced-cost voice and message telecommunications between overseas and the U.S. Access to the network is provided through a business called International Voice Gateway that is virtually identical to any other telephone company providing international service. Typically, the DTS-PO network ends at the gateway in the Embassy. Agencies outside the Embassy compound use a locally leased line that links them to the DTS-PO network without passing through the Embassy switchboard. Initial installation charges, plus costs for any necessary repairs or upgrades related to the local line, are appropriate for Peace Corps to pay but separate from ICASS.

Security functions are currently split between ICASS (non-residential guards) and non-ICASS (residential guards, mobile patrol).

## **28.18 Policy Issues**

Peace Corps is in many ways unique among U.S. government agencies overseas. Some of these issues are discussed below.

### **28.18.1 Housing**

Housing policy is detailed in the Department of State document A-171. Volume 6 of the Foreign Affairs Manual, Parts 720, 721 and 728. Peace Corps' position is that A-171 does not require Peace Corps to participate in housing pools or the Interagency Housing Boards. It does generally require Peace Corps to abide by housing space standards, and it does require Peace Corps to provide certain housing-related information (e.g., residential square footage) to State on an annual basis.

One reason Peace Corps ordinarily locates staff housing independently rather than through the mission housing pool is that, as stated in the MS 515, Peace Corps expects its employees to live at a level that appropriately reflects the Peace Corps status as a people-to-people, volunteer

organization." For this reason, Peace Corps offices and staff residences have traditionally not been located in mission compounds or in areas frequented by foreigners.

Peace Corps is able to secure housing without using the mission housing pool in part because Peace Corps, unlike many other agencies, has authority granted by statute (Peace Corps Act § 15(d)(9)) to use funds for overseas. The Peace Corps Director has delegated that authority to Country Directors (per MS 114) to be exercised in accordance with Peace Corps MS 733. Country Directors have been delegated contracting and leasing authority up to \$50,000 to implement this provision.

The Mission Interagency Housing Boards continue to operate independent of ICASS. Even though Peace Corps does not usually participate in mission housing pools, Country Directors sometimes provide intermittent representation to show support and to have a voice in managing ICASS housing costs for ICASS American staff.

### **28.18.2 Security Standards**

Peace Corps is a signatory to A-179, which establishes security standards and guidelines for physical security of all U.S. overseas mission facilities. However, Peace Corps' mission at times makes these difficult to achieve in a manner that is satisfactory both to Peace Corps and the Regional Security Officer. Acknowledging this, State's Office of Diplomatic Security sent a worldwide cable in March of 1994 (State 054998) regarding application of State security standards to Peace Corps overseas offices. The key paragraph states:

"It is generally recognized that the Peace Corps' operations overseas are inherently different from those of other agencies under the COM's authority. Nevertheless, the Department and HQ Peace Corps agree that, to the maximum extent feasible, the OSPG-approved physical security standards should apply to Peace Corps staff offices."

An equivalent standard also applies to Peace Corps staff residences. However, if Peace Corps and the RSO have different views regarding appropriate application of security standards, State Department offers a process for resolving the conflict and may in fact override the RSOs determination.

### **28.18.3 Local Guard Program**

Since the Peace Corps is not a signatory to A-41 (which provides for a unified guard force for U.S. missions), it has the option of NOT using the local guard services provided by the Embassy local guard program. Nevertheless, the standards for local guard programs retained by USG agencies, as laid out in the Security Standards Handbook, apply to guards protecting Peace Corps' offices and staff residences, whether provided under the auspices of the mission or by Peace Corps for itself.

At Missions where Peace Corps has its own guard force, whether contracted or PSCs, the RSO has the authority to oversee the guard force to ensure that it is properly trained, equipped, and managed to conform to local guard program standards. At Missions where Peace Corps is a part

of the mission guard contract, Peace Corps (like USAID) pays its bills locally with local funds. At Missions where the RSO determines that the threat level requires roving or mobile patrols, Peace Corps generally participates. In these cases, direct billing applies. Like all residential security, mobile patrols are, by definition, a Diplomatic Security function and may not be billed through ICASS.

#### **28.18.4 Sale of Excess Property**

Some Posts dispose of excess property through Embassy sales. See MS 511 and the Proceeds of Sale chapter for details. No matter the method, sale proceeds must be deposited as a collection through the Peace Corps cashier, NOT the embassy cashier.

If Posts are required by local law, to use the embassy, keep the following in mind: At Lite Missions, there are 9 categories of service under GSO Services. Peace Corps ordinarily uses only one of these, Shipping and Customs. Peace Corps also ordinarily receives a .3 modification to reflect the "low" service level required from the provider under the GSO cost center. Since this scenario provides for one-ninth of services and one-third of the bill, Posts could make a reasonable case that occasional property disposal is included in the .3 low service modification factors. No additional service subscription or costs should be required.

#### **28.19 Timeline**

##### **28.19.1 Service Subscription**

April 1 Customers withdrawing from an ICASS service must give written notice to the service provider and ICASS Council by this date in order to be effective on October 1.

October 1 Customers withdrawing from a service must give written notice to the service provider and ICASS Council by this date in order to be effective on April 1.

May to September Customers update service subscriptions for the coming fiscal year.

##### **28.19.2 Workload Counts**

May 1 The service provider records workload counts for each customer agency. Capitation (# of people) counts are based on a snapshot of positions as of this date. Cumulative counts (# of lines of fiscal coding processed) are based on actual usage during the previous 12 months.

June 1 The service provider provides workload counts to customers.

July 1 Customer agencies provide written approval of counts. These finalized workload counts will be used to develop Post ICASS invoices for the coming fiscal year.

### **28.19.3 Billing**

December The service provider completes the Mission's Initial ICASS budget for the current fiscal year and presents customers with the Initial Invoice for signature.

April The service provider completes the Mission's Final ICASS budget and presents customers with the Final Invoice for signature.

### **28.20 Contact Information**

Specific questions can be referred to the Peace Corps ICASS Coordinator in the Office of Budget and Analysis.