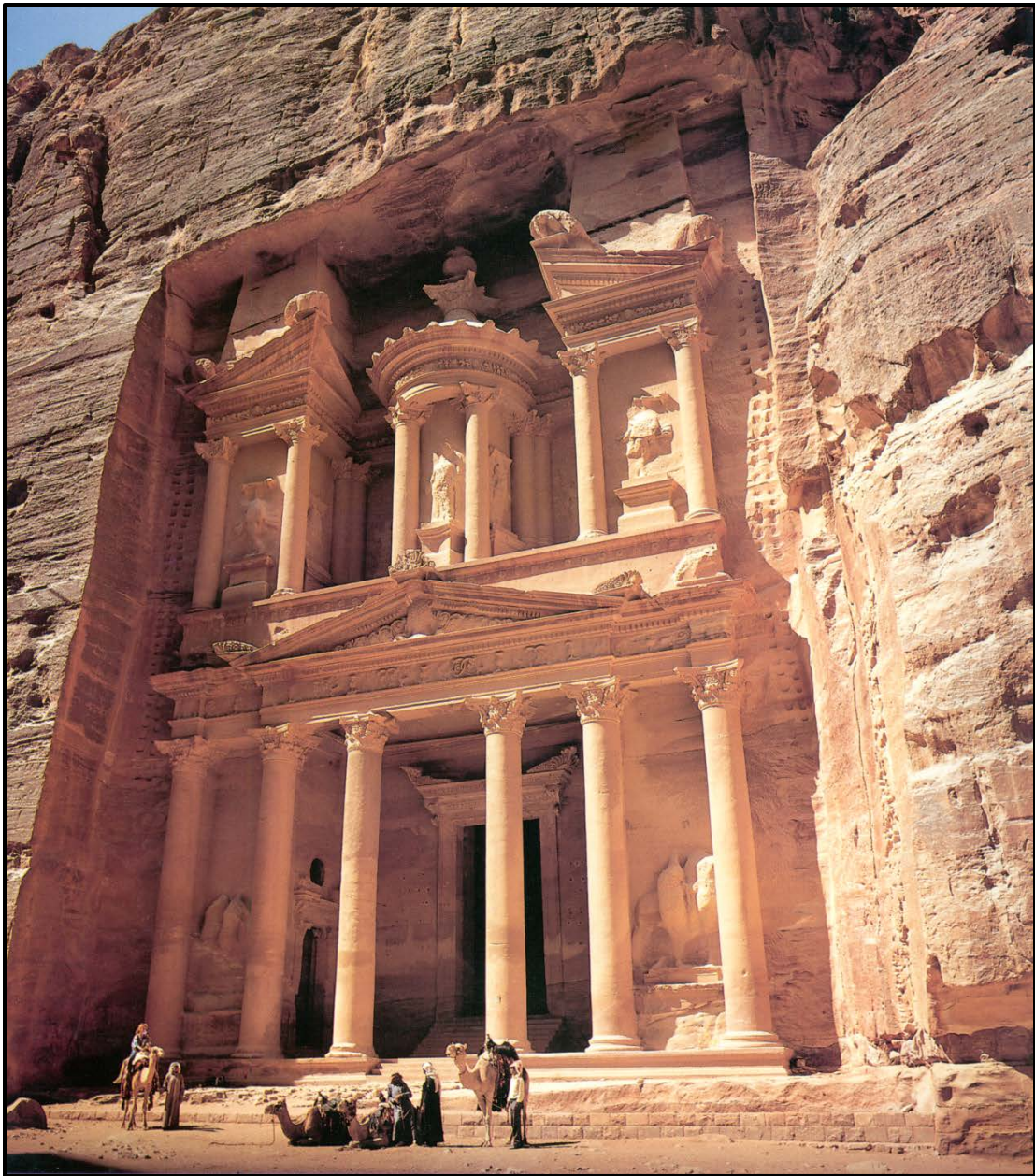


THE PEACE CORPS WELCOMES YOU TO

The Hashemite Kingdom of

JORDAN





A WELCOME LETTER

Congratulations on your invitation to Peace Corps and to Jordan!

Your decision to accept this invitation marks the beginning of a two-year challenge unlike any you may have known.

As you follow world news, you may find yourself wavering between two positions, both valid and relevant to your commitment process. On one hand, the political realities of this region can be volatile and are far from resolved, which may give you pause. On the other hand, there is a need in Jordan for mature individuals who can work and contribute to its continued development. If there were ever a time and place for Peace Corps to demonstrate its three goals to the fullest, it is now in the Middle East. Jordan is currently the only Peace Corps program in the region, increasing our visibility and our potential.

There is also the pragmatic side that is just as important for you to consider in your review of the materials assembled in this welcome book. I think you will find that Jordanian people are very warm and welcoming. They are proud, independent, and strongly hold to their ideals and values, yet they are often open to the ideas of others when presented in a congenial and exploratory exchange. The Peace Corps has been invited to Jordan to contribute to its development goals and to add skills, perspective, and energy in fields where our Volunteers offer something unique, which they do.

The most successful Volunteers maintain a healthy balance between idealism (“I have something to contribute, I can make a difference, and I have the luxury of time and opportunity to do so.”) and pragmatism (“I want to develop new skills, advance my professional development, challenge my own thinking, and explore where and how I fit in the world”). If you are too idealistic, disappointment will come hard and fast when you cannot single-handedly transform the world, your village, or those you work with. However, if you are overly focused on personal achievement, you may lack sufficient motivation or commitment to overcome barriers, resistance, or inertia, and may miss the joys and rewards of living simply.

Peace Corps/Jordan staff will work hard to prepare for your arrival and support you while you are in Jordan. In the final analysis however, Peace Corps service is, perhaps more than any other job you will have, what you make of it. Your success will depend upon your own diligence, flexibility, resilience, creativity, level of professionalism, and sense of humor. In accepting your invitation, we presume that you come to Jordan willing to push yourself in all of these areas. We look forward to meeting you at Queen Alia Airport. We are interested in what you bring to your service and what you seek to accomplish. For each of you, this will be a distinct journey shaped by your goals, strategies, and expectations.

P. Bryan Butki
Country Director

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CORE EXPECTATIONS FOR PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS

In working toward fulfilling the Peace Corps mission of promoting world peace and friendship, as a trainee and Volunteer, you are expected to do the following:

1. Prepare your personal and professional life to make a commitment to serve abroad for a full term of 27 months.
2. Commit to improving the quality of life of the people with whom you live and work and, in doing so, share your skills, adapt them, and learn new skills as needed.
3. Serve where the Peace Corps asks you to go, under conditions of hardship if necessary, and with the flexibility needed for effective service.
4. Recognize that you're successful and sustainable development work is based on the local trust and confidence you build by living in, and respectfully integrating yourself into, your host community and culture.
5. Recognize that you are responsible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for your personal conduct and professional performance.
6. Engage with host country partners in a spirit of cooperation, mutual learning, and respect.
7. Work within the rules and regulations of the Peace Corps and the local and national laws of the country where you serve.
8. Exercise judgment and personal responsibility to protect your health, safety, and well-being and that of others.
9. Recognize that you will be perceived in your host country and community as a representative of the people, cultures, values, and traditions of the United States of America.
10. Represent responsively the people, cultures, values, and traditions of your host country and community to people in the United States both during and following your service

PEACE CORPS/JORDAN HISTORY AND PROGRAMS

History of the Peace Corps in Jordan

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is one of the more recent countries to invite the Peace Corps to provide technical assistance to its people. The Peace Corps began in Jordan in 1997 as the result of discussions between the late King Hussein and former President Clinton. American-born Queen Noor and influential politicians familiar with the Peace Corps were instrumental in establishing this productive relationship.

Jordan is the eighth Arab country to have hosted the Peace Corps over the years, but the only one in the Middle East with a current program. Now, more than ever, Volunteers are essential in bridging gaps between, and dispelling myths about, the country and its region. Volunteers can foster peace through trusting relationships, mutual respect, and diligent contributions.

The first group of 27 Jordan Volunteers began their service in July 1997 in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development and several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) supported by the royal family. In 1998, Volunteers began working with the Ministry of Education, teaching English in rural primary and secondary schools. The current youth development project got underway in 2001.

Due to security concerns, the Peace Corps suspended its program and withdrew Volunteers in November 2002. In 2004, Peace Corps/Jordan resumed programming. Peace Corps/Jordan did a complete program review in the summer and fall of 2013. As a result, the program in Jordan was redesigned. Currently, because of a break in Volunteers in order to complete the program review, there are approximately 30 Volunteers in Jordan.

Peace Corps Programming in Jordan

Peace Corps Volunteers in Jordan bring unique skills and ideas to address the needs of their communities. Combining local assets and Volunteer creativity produces more sustainable projects. Successes have included working with a local community to allow girls access to a local youth center, repair of used wheelchairs for redistribution to the needy, developing local Special Olympic programs, implementing summer camps for female youth, creating therapeutic playgrounds for disabled children, promoting local Volunteerism by involving university students in Peace Corps projects, and creating a variety of teaching materials in Arabic.

In the summer and fall of 2013, Peace Corps/Jordan did a complete review of its programming. Peace Corps/Jordan is very excited to say that you will be the first group of Volunteers to work within the new program, which combines English education with youth development. This new program will draw on the strengths of Volunteers, and tap into the enthusiasm and energy of young Jordanians. Volunteers will have two organizations assigned to them: a school and either a local youth center or another local organization. Activities will focus on building capacity of Jordanian youth, and Volunteers will work directly with a Jordanian youth counterpart.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW: JORDAN AT A GLANCE

History

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a modern, Middle Eastern, sovereign state, which was established in the middle of the 20th century. The geographical area in which Jordan is situated has a fascinating history of settlement and organized community life stretching back almost 9,000 years. Stone Age inhabitants lived along the river valleys half a million years ago. Permanent stone and mud-brick houses were first constructed around 8000 B.C. As of 3200 B.C., urban life has been recorded in walled cities situated throughout the land. Semitic Amorites settled the area of Canaan in the Jordan River Valley around 2000 B.C. Subsequent settlers and invaders included Egyptians, Israelites, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Crusaders, Turks, and the British.

Until the early 1900s, political boundaries in this region were based on clan migrations and affiliations rather than geographical lines drawn in the sand. The modern boundaries of Jordan were established when the League of Nations mandated that Great Britain administer the former Ottoman territory now known as Jordan, Israel, the West Bank, Gaza, and Iraq. During this time, the Hashemite Prince Abdullah was chosen to rule the semi-autonomous Emirate of Transjordan. In 1946, Britain abolished the mandate and Transjordan became the Kingdom of Jordan. In 1948, Britain oversaw creation of the state of Israel and the West Bank was assigned to Jordan. Violence erupted as a result of this mandate, causing more than 1 million Palestinian refugees to flee—many into Jordan. This wave of refugees nearly doubled the population of Jordan, putting social and economic pressure on the country.

In 1951, King Abdullah I was assassinated outside the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. His son, Talal, ruled for one year before being proclaimed unsuitable. Abdullah's grandson Hussein, only 17, became King of Jordan. Ruling from 1952–99, Hussein was one of the longest reigning monarchs in the world, surviving a number of Egyptian and Palestinian attempts to overthrow his rule. He was extremely popular among the East Bankers and the Bedouin population of Jordan.

As a result of the 1967 war between Israel and the Arab states, Israel obtained military occupation of the West Bank. Immediately following the war, Palestinian refugees again flooded into Jordan. The country's economy suffered the loss of valuable agricultural lands, tourist income from the holy lands, and revenues from the West Bank. In 1988, Jordan renounced its claim to the West Bank.

In 1991, Jordan agreed to participate in direct peace negotiations with Israel sponsored by the United States and Russia. This breakthrough led to a host of new developments. Legislation passed in 1992 ended martial law, legalized political parties, and reduced government monitoring of the media. In 1994, Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty permitting trade, travel, and tourism between the two nations. Since then, the tenor of Jordanian-Israeli relations has varied and, at times, been strained due to actions in and reactions to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

King Hussein died in 1999 and was succeeded by his son, King Abdullah II, who has continued his father's policies of trying to bring peace and stability to the region.

Government

Jordan is a constitutional monarchy ruled by King Abdullah II bin Hussein. The constitution gives the king broad powers to determine domestic and foreign policy, while the prime minister and cabinet manage the daily affairs of government. Parliament consists of a 55-member Senate appointed by the king and a 110-member popularly elected Chamber of Deputies.

Economy

Jordan has a mixed economy, with a significant but declining government role, few natural resources, and very limited water supplies. The government is increasing the role of the private sector and improving the country's investment climate by pursuing sound economic policies and trade and investment liberalization, including a landmark free trade agreement with the U.S. that went into effect in December 2001. Gross domestic product growth has strengthened since 2000, yet high poverty and unemployment rates remain significant problems.

People and Culture

In general, Jordanians are friendly and hospitable to Westerners. Many urban Jordanians were educated in the West and speak excellent English. While Jordanians will often voice criticism of American policy in the Middle East, individual Americans are generally well-liked and treated respectfully.

Jordan has a population of about 7.9 million, of whom 95 percent are Sunni Muslim. Arabic is the official language. The literacy rate is 95.9 percent and life expectancy stands at about 74 years. The population includes approximately 1.7 million Palestinian refugees who reside in Jordan. Christians and Shiites represent small minorities, and there are even smaller numbers of non-Arab Sunni Circassians from the Southern Caucasus, as well as Armenians and Kurds.

Depending on the source, Palestinians represent 60 percent of the population. Some continue to live as registered refugees in United Nations-supported camps, but many have established Jordanian citizenship and play important roles in the country.

Many Jordanians claim lineage from Bedouin forebears. They are often among the underprivileged in Jordanian society. While many Bedouin have left nomadic life and only periodically graze their animals, others have settled in government-funded villages where water and animal feed are provided. Still, a large percentage of Bedouins have decided not to accept government medical and educational assistance in an attempt to maintain a lifestyle that has served them well for generations. Bedouins are proud, honorable people who represent an ancient system of cultural values and norms slowly dying in Jordan.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Following is a list of websites for additional information about the Peace Corps and Jordan and to connect you to returned Volunteers and other invitees. Please keep in mind that although the Peace Corps tries to make sure all these links are active and current, the Peace Corps cannot guarantee it. If you do not have access to the Internet, visit your local library. Libraries offer free Internet usage and often let you print information to take home.

A note of caution: As you surf the Internet, be aware that you may find bulletin boards and chat rooms in which people are free to express opinions about the Peace Corps based on their own experiences, including comments by those who were unhappy with their choice to serve in the Peace Corps. These opinions are not those of the Peace Corps or the U.S. government, and please keep in mind that no two people experience their service in the same way.

General Information About Jordan

State.gov

The Department of State's website issues background notes periodically about countries around the world. Find Jordan and learn more about its social and political history. You can also go to the site's international travel section to check on conditions that may affect your safety.

Gpo.gov/libraries/public/

The U.S. Government Printing Office publishes country studies intermittently.

lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html

The Library of Congress provides historical and sociological data on numerous countries.

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/pocketbook/World_Statistics_Pocketbook_2013_edition.pdf

United Nations resource book with 2013 statistical country data

<http://www.Data.un.org>

United Nations site with links to data from U.N. member countries

<http://www.Wikipedia.org>

Search for Jordan to find encyclopedia-type information. Note: As Wikipedia content is user-generated, information may be biased and/or not verified.

Worldbank.org

The World Bank Group's mission is to fight poverty and improve the living standards of people in the developing world. It is a development bank that provides loans, policy advice, technical assistance, and knowledge-sharing services to developing countries to reduce poverty. This site contains a lot of information and resources regarding development.

Data.worldbank.org/country

Provides information on development indicators on countries, including population, gender, financial, and education, and climate change statistics.

Connect With Returned Volunteers and Other Invitees

RPCV.org

This is the site of the National Peace Corps Association, made up of returned Volunteers. On this site you can find links to all the Web pages of the “Friends of” groups for most countries of service, comprised of former Volunteers who served in those countries. There are also regional groups that frequently get together for social events and local volunteer activities. Or go straight to the Friends of Jordan site:

<http://friendsofjordan.org/>

PeaceCorpsWorldwide.org

This site, hosted by a group of returned Volunteer writers, is a monthly online publication of essays and Volunteer accounts of their Peace Corps service.

Online Articles/Current News Sites About Jordan

UN.org/News/

The United Nations news service provides coverage of its member states and information about the international peacekeeping organization’s actions and positions.

VOAnews.com

Voice of America, the U.S. government’s multimedia broadcaster, covers news from around the world.

www.jordantimes.com

The Jordan Times, a major daily English newspaper

www.petra.gov.jo

Jordanian News Agency (in Arabic and English)

www.nic.gov.jo

Jordanian National Information System

<http://jordan.usembassy.gov/>

U.S. Embassy in Amman, Jordan

www.arabinfo.org

Website for Voice of the Arab World, a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing education and information to Arab and Muslim people around the world. It contains extensive information on Arab and Muslim countries, music, books, news, and links to other sites.

www.4arabs.com

A source for Arabic, Islamic, and Middle Eastern sites. You can find information on Arab countries, culture, and related links.

International Development Sites About Jordan

<http://www.usaidjordan.org/>

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

www.undp-jordan.org

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/jordan_statistics.html

United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

Recommended Books

Books About the History of the Peace Corps

1. Hoffman, Elizabeth Cobbs. "All You Need is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s." Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.
2. Rice, Gerald T. "The Bold Experiment: JFK's Peace Corps." Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.
3. Stossel, Scott. "Sarge: The Life and Times of Sargent Shriver." Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2004.
4. Meisler, Stanley. "When the World Calls: The Inside Story of the Peace Corps and its First 50 Years." Boston: Beacon Press, 2011.

Books on the Volunteer Experience

1. Dirlam, Sharon. "Beyond Siberia: Two Years in a Forgotten Place." Santa Barbara, CA: McSeas Books, 2004.
2. Casebolt, Marjorie DeMoss. "Margarita: A Guatemalan Peace Corps Experience." Gig Harbor, WA: Red Apple Publishing, 2000.
3. Erdman, Sarah. "Nine Hills to Nambonkaha: Two Years in the Heart of an African Village." New York City: Picador, 2003.
4. Hessler, Peter. "River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze." New York City: Perennial, 2001.
5. Kennedy, Geraldine ed. "From the Center of the Earth: Stories out of the Peace Corps." Santa Monica, CA: Clover Park Press, 1991.
6. Thomsen, Moritz. "Living Poor: A Peace Corps Chronicle." Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997 (reprint).

Books About Jordan

1. Armstrong, Karen. "Islam: A Short History." N.Y.: Modern Library; revised update edition, 2002.
Discusses the history of the region from the sixth-century days of the Prophet Muhammad to the present.
2. Asad, Muhammad. "Road to Mecca." Ky.: Fons Vitae; reprint edition, 2001.
Autobiography of an Austrian journalist who traveled throughout the Middle East, immersing himself in the Arab culture and converting to Islam.
3. Bowker, John. "Voices of Islam." Rockport, Mass.: Oneworld Publications, 1995.
Examines common misunderstandings of Islam.
4. Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck and John L. Esposito. "Islam, Gender, and Social Change." New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
Essays exploring the impact of Islamic resurgence on gender issues in several Muslim countries.
5. Harik, Ramsay M. and Elsa Marston. "Women in the Middle East." London: Frank Watts Publishing, 2003.
A brief introduction to this complex subject.
6. Hourani, Albert. "A History of the Arab Peoples." Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; revised edition, 2003.
A single-volume history of the Arabic-speaking peoples of the Islamic world through several decades, beginning with Islam's rise in the seventh century to the late 1980s.
7. Nydell, Margaret K. "Understanding Arabs. A Guide for Westerners." Yarmouth, Maine: International Press; third edition, 2002.

Introduction to the Arab culture that covers beliefs and values; religion and society; role of the family, friends, and strangers; roles of men and women; etiquette; and communication.

8. Patai, Ralph. "The Arab Mind." N.Y.: Hatherleigh Press; revised edition, 2002.
Explores Arab culture, religion, and issues.
9. Robins, Philip. "A History of Jordan." Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
Surveys Jordan's political history from the early 1920s to today.
10. Viorst, Milton. "Sandcastles: The Arabs in Search of the Modern World." Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995.
Introduction to the history and current political situations in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey.

LIVING CONDITIONS AND VOLUNTEER LIFESTYLE

Communications

Mail

Few countries in the world offer the level of mail service we take for granted in the United States. Though the Jordanian mail service is generally reliable, some mail may simply not arrive (fortunately this is not a frequent occurrence, but it does happen). Advise family and friends to send all letters via air mail. Mail can sometimes take as long as two to four weeks between U.S. and Jordan in either direction.

Packages can be sent via international mail through the U.S. postal system. All packages addressed to you are subject to customs. Hints: Used items are usually delivered customs-free, while new items are taxed at full value. Smaller packages (particularly those in padded envelopes) seem to make it through with relative ease.

Important: Never have anyone send cash through the mail. Such letters seldom arrive. Packages are inspected by custom officers.

Please note that you will get a temporary address to use during your pre service training. Once you receive your permanent assignment, partway through your training, you will also be getting a new address for you to use throughout your service.

Telephones

Generally, high-quality, long-distance communication is available. However, Volunteers have had little success with calling cards (AT&T, MCI, etc.). It is possible to purchase Jordanian pre-paid international phone cards in various Jordanian dinar (JD) denominations, but these can only be used for public phones. Cellphones from the United States will not work here. Cellphones can be purchased in Jordan; the Peace Corps provides very basic cellphones to Volunteers for safety and security purposes. Volunteers can also use these phones to keep in touch with family and friends in Jordan and in the United States. Volunteers pay for airtime out of their living allowances.

Computer, Internet, and Email Access

While computers are available in most schools and in some host agencies in Jordan, you should not expect your worksite to have Internet access or email. Internet cafes are found in all major cities, usually at a cost of JD1 (US\$1.40) per hour. Most Volunteers bring laptops. Each year, more Volunteers have access and decide to have Internet hooked up in their homes at their permanent sites. The Peace Corps office has three computers and a printer for Volunteer use during office hours. Volunteers must coordinate their use among themselves.

Housing and Site Location

After completing pre-service training, you will move to your actual worksite for two years of service. You will receive your assignment partway through training, once the staff in Jordan has had the opportunity to get to know you and make an appropriate match. Your host agency or school will have helped to identify acceptable housing within the local community. Your living accommodation is intended to be simple and comparable to your Jordanian neighbors. Most buildings in Jordan are concrete and not insulated. Your house/apartment will likely have one or two rooms, a kitchen, and a bathroom.

The Peace Corps will provide a settling-in allowance for the purchase of essential household items. Washing machines, clothes dryers, air conditioners, and central heating are seldom found in either urban or rural areas and will not be featured in Volunteer housing, but you will have indoor plumbing, electricity, and water.

Volunteer accommodations must meet the Peace Corps' health, safety, and security standards, yet be modest and typical of the area in which you work and live. You may have an apartment or a free-standing house, some part of which may be occupied by the owner's family. While all Volunteer housing meets minimum Peace Corps criteria, the level of comfort and amenities may differ greatly among Volunteer houses depending upon local availability. You are expected to live in the village where you work.

This is very important! Some of your Jordanian supervisors and co-workers may commute from the nearest town and be less involved in community life. However, as a Volunteer, you are more than an employee doing a job. You are considered a member of the community in which you work, and there is no better way to demonstrate this than by being visible and involved.

Other Volunteers will be within relatively close proximity due to Jordan's small size and reliable transportation. You may have another Volunteer in the same village, or it may be a few hours by bus to the nearest Volunteer site. The Peace Corps office in Amman is no more than a four- or five-hour drive from the furthest Volunteer site (public buses may take longer).

Living Allowance and Money Management

Volunteers receive a monthly allowance in Jordanian currency that is sufficient to live at the level of the local people. The allowance covers food, housing, household supplies, clothing, transportation to and from work, utilities, recreation and entertainment, and incidental expenses. Peace Corps Volunteers are expected to live at a level that is comparable with that of their host country counterparts. The Peace Corps discourages Volunteers from supplementing their living allowance with funds from home.

Peace Corps/Jordan establishes a bank account (with an ATM card) for every Volunteer. All allowances are deposited directly into that account. ATM access is exceptionally good throughout Jordan.

There should be no need to supplement your living allowance. In fact, you are discouraged from using personal savings to raise your lifestyle above that of your Jordanian colleagues. Volunteers may, nevertheless, wish to bring along a credit card for emergencies, trips, or special occasions. American Express, Visa, and MasterCard are accepted in many hotels, shops, and restaurants frequented by tourists, especially in the capital and larger towns. In Amman, there are a number of places to exchange currency with little or no commission. ATMs are widely available and will accept most major bank cards. Banks will charge at least a 1.5 percent cashing fee for traveler's checks and some will only cash them for their customers.

Food and Diet

High-quality food is generally available in Jordan. Tea, unleavened flat bread (pita), rice, and yogurt are Jordanian staples and you can find a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables at reasonable prices. In addition, eggs, powdered milk and drink mixes, canned tuna, pasta/noodles, and processed cheese are available. Lamb, chicken, and goat are common; however, due to their relatively high cost, they are not always included in daily diets. In general, meals are rice-based and mildly spiced.

Vegetarians will experience minimal problems in ensuring an interesting and wholesome diet. You should be aware, however, that most meals in Jordanian homes are eaten from a common plate, and there will likely be meat on the plate.

Small shops, called *doucans*, are found everywhere, even in the smallest rural community. The range of goods offered depends on the size of the community and local preferences. Only very basic foods and household necessities are found in the smallest stores. There are several 24-hour supermarkets in Amman and a few other cities, and mini-markets are universally found in provincial towns.

Islamic law forbids eating pork and drinking alcohol. Although somewhat tolerant of other people's beliefs and customs, rural Jordanians are likely to show little respect to Volunteers who are known to drink—especially if it becomes public knowledge through gossip or if the physical effects of overindulgence are apparent. Tea, Arabic coffee, soft drinks, fruit juices, and bottled water are readily available throughout the country.

The holy month of Ramadan follows the Islamic calendar, so its timing changes every year. Ramadan is a time when nothing is consumed during daylight hours (fast is broken at nightfall). Smoking is not permitted during the day. Volunteers should be respectful of religious requirements and significance during the month of Ramadan. This year, Ramadan will end before you arrive in Jordan.

Transportation

As a Volunteer in Jordan, you are not permitted to own, rent, or operate any form of motorized vehicle, including motorcycles. Volunteers are also not permitted to be a passenger on a motorcycle. Most Volunteers can catch a small village bus from their home into the nearest city. In these small cities, they can catch a bus to Amman. Although buses are cheap and universal, they can be time-consuming and unpredictable, as they do not run on fixed schedules. Since most village buses stop running at nightfall (4:45 p.m. in the winter), patience and planning are required. Within larger regional centers, private and shared taxis are most frequently used. Travel on buses within Amman is manageable, but at first it will be an adventure, as there are neither set schedules nor posted routes.

Geography and Climate

The geography of Jordan is varied, from the Dead Sea at 1,300 feet below sea level (the lowest place on earth) to mountains reaching 5,700 feet. On the western edge of the country, the Jordan River winds its way through a low valley into the Dead Sea. Mountains rise to the east of this valley, with Amman located on the central highlands. About 80 percent of Jordan is arid, rocky, and receives less than 100 millimeters of rain per year. The temperature varies from 120 F in the summer to below freezing in the winter. Skies are blue and sunny from March until November, and from November to March when it does rain, it pours.

Social Activities

Invitees should be aware that there is strict separation between genders in Jordan. For example, men and women, although celebrating the same occasion, will do so in separate areas. Male Volunteers should not expect to socialize with female Volunteers at their sites after training. This standard is applied even to visiting friends and family members of the opposite sex.

Volunteers find the hospitality and generosity of Jordanians to be a wonderful part of the culture, and visiting and drinking tea will likely become a daily routine for you. Social activities will vary depending on where you are located, as well as your gender and marital status. Many Volunteers attend weddings, parties, and picnics with Jordanians and often visit neighbors' and colleagues' homes for lunch or tea. Most social activities revolve around food and family, and there can be pressure to eat a lot. During Ramadan, Volunteers often fast and are invited to share *iftar* (a feast of traditional Jordanian dishes) with neighbors and friends at sunset.

Professionalism, Dress, and Behavior

The Peace Corps expects Volunteers to behave in a manner that fosters respect within your community and reflects well on you as a citizen of the United States and a Volunteer in the Peace Corps. You will receive ample training in appropriate behavior and cultural sensitivity during pre-service training. As a Volunteer, you have the status of an invited guest. As such, you should be sensitive to the habits, tastes, and taboos of your hosts. Public drinking or even references to alcohol are offensive and can be damaging to a Volunteer's reputation and, hence, effectiveness. Also, there are strong taboos regarding intimate relationships, and extreme discretion must be exercised. Unmarried Muslim women engaging in sexual relations may be subject to severe family retribution and even death. It is forbidden for unmarried males and females to be alone together. This applies to Volunteers as well, so it is inappropriate for males and females to visit each other at their sites. You must constantly monitor your personal behavior and understand the consequences of your actions.

Long hair on men is not culturally acceptable and male trainees should arrive at staging with short, undyed hair. Body piercing is unacceptable and tattoos must be covered at all times. Pierced ears for women are acceptable.

Jordanians take great pride in their personal appearance, regardless of their economic status. Dress codes are **very conservative**. To gain the acceptance, respect, and confidence of your co-workers, it is essential that you dress and conduct yourself modestly and professionally. Suits are not required, but clothing should always be neat and clean. It is not appropriate to wear jeans or T-shirts at the workplace or during social occasions. As you adjust to Jordanian culture and can make more informed decisions about dress, you may find a few social or tourist situations where jeans would be acceptable. Shorts are never appropriate for male or female Volunteers, regardless of the weather or activity.

Halter-tops or tight-fitting apparel worn by women are considered offensive and provocative by Jordanians and must not be worn. Most women in Jordan cover their hair with a scarf, and while Volunteers will not be expected to do so, they may still receive some pressure to cover. Female Volunteers wear loose-fitting clothing that covers wrists and ankles and shirts that reach mid-thigh. Male Volunteers wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts for work. The packing list section at the end of this book goes into more detail regarding appropriate choices. Dressing according to local custom is crucial for successful integration.

Most appropriate clothing can easily be purchased in-country. There is no need to pack an entire wardrobe before you see for yourself what the dress codes are really like.

The weather can be very hot, so natural fibers will be more comfortable. Winters are cold and sometimes wet, with snow falling in some areas. Appropriate warm clothing and layering are necessary, as most buildings and offices are insufficiently heated. Fleece clothing is a good choice as it is light to pack and easily washed.

Jordanians generally do not exercise outdoors, but a few Volunteers have eventually felt comfortable running in their villages with the appropriate attire. Volunteers should consider options for indoor physical activity (jumping rope, yoga, etc.).

Personal Safety

More detailed information about the Peace Corps' approach to safety is contained in the Safety and Security section, but it is an important issue and cannot be overemphasized. As stated in the Volunteer Handbook, becoming a Peace Corps Volunteer entails certain safety risks. Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment (oftentimes alone), having a limited understanding of local language and culture, and being perceived as well-off are some of the factors that can put a Volunteer at risk. Many Volunteers

experience varying degrees of unwanted attention and harassment. Petty thefts and burglaries are not uncommon, and incidents of physical and sexual assault do occur, although most Jordanian Volunteers complete their two years of service without incident. The Peace Corps has established procedures and policies designed to help reduce the risks and enhance your safety and security. These procedures and policies, in addition to safety training, will be provided once you arrive in Jordan. Using these tools, one can be empowered to take responsibility for his or her safety and well-being.

Each staff member at the Peace Corps is committed to providing Volunteers with the support they need to successfully meet the challenges they will face to have a safe, healthy, and productive service. Volunteers and families are encouraged to look at safety and security information on the Peace Corps website at www.peacecorps.gov/safety.

Information on these pages gives messages on Volunteer health and safety. There is a section titled Safety and Security in Depth. Among topics addressed are the risks of serving as a Volunteer, posts' safety support systems, and emergency planning and communications.

Rewards and Frustrations

Though you may not be making as many environmental adjustments in Jordan as you might in other Peace Corps countries, you must **be aware of and accept the significant cultural adjustments you will have to make** (not drinking alcohol, gender expectations, loss of privacy). Be open to these changes and take time to consider them before leaving the U.S. Jordan is a beautiful country with generous people. The adjustments may be difficult at times, but it will be worth it to become a full participant in your community.

Although the potential for job satisfaction is quite high, like all Volunteers, you will encounter numerous frustrations. Due to financial or other challenges, collaborating agencies do not always provide the support promised. The pace of work and life is much slower than what most Americans consider normal. For these reasons, your Peace Corps experience will be a journey of emotional peaks and valleys as you adapt to the new culture and environment.

You may be given a high degree of responsibility and independence in your work, perhaps more than in any other job you have had or will ever experience. Often you will find yourself in situations that require an ability to motivate yourself and your counterparts with little guidance from supervisors. You may work for months without seeing any visible impact or without receiving feedback on your work. Development is a slow process! Positive progress is often seen only after the combined efforts of several generations of Volunteers. You must possess the self-confidence, patience, and vision to continue working toward long-term goals without the validation of immediate results.

You must make a commitment to integrate into your community, withhold judgment, and work hard if you expect to be a success. You will also need to be mature, flexible, and resourceful.

Peace Corps staff, your co-workers, and fellow Volunteers will support you during times of challenge as well as in moments of success. Judging by the experience of former Volunteers, the highs are well worth the lows and most depart feeling that they have gained as much as or more than they gave.

PEACE CORPS TRAINING

Overview of Pre-Service Training

The Peace Corps uses a competency-based training approach throughout the continuum of learning, supporting you from arrival in Jordan to your departure. Pre-service training (PST) is the first event within this continuum of learning and ensures that you are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to effectively perform your job. Pre-service training is conducted in Jordan by Peace Corps staff, most of whom are locally hired trainers. Peace Corps staff measure achievement of learning and determine if you have successfully achieved competencies, including language standards, for swearing-in as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Peace Corps training incorporates widely accepted principles of adult learning and is structured around the experiential learning cycle. Successful training results in competence in various technical, linguistic, cross-cultural, health, and safety and security areas.

Integrating into the community is one of the core competencies you will strive to achieve both in PST and during the first several months of service. Successful sustainable development work is based on the relationships you build by respectfully integrating into the host country community and culture. You will be prepared for this through a homestay experience, which often requires trainees to live with host families during PST. Integration into the community fosters language and cross-cultural learning and ensures your health, safety, and security.

Technical Training

Technical training will prepare you to work in Jordan by building on the skills you already have and helping you develop new skills in a manner appropriate to the needs of the country. The Peace Corps staff, Jordan experts, and current Volunteers will conduct the training program. Training places great emphasis on learning how to transfer the skills you have to the community in which you will serve as a Volunteer.

Technical training will include sessions on the general economic and political environment in Jordan and strategies for working within such a framework. You will review your project's goals and objectives and will meet with the Jordan agencies and organizations that invited the Peace Corps to assist them. You will be supported and evaluated throughout training to build the confidence and skills you need to undertake your project activities, report your progress, and serve as a productive member of your community. Please note that as the first group working within a new project framework, you will also be going through a pre-service technical training curriculum entirely new to Peace Corps/Jordan. The post will rely on your feedback, as well as your maturity and patience, as both staff and trainees learn from the experience.

Language Training

As a Peace Corps Volunteer, you will find that language skills are the key to personal and professional satisfaction during your service. These skills are critical to your job performance, help you integrate into your community, and can ease your personal adaptation to the new surroundings. Therefore, language training is at the heart of the training program. You must successfully meet minimum language requirements to complete training and become a Volunteer. Arabic language instructors usually teach formal language classes five days a week in small groups.

Your language training will incorporate a community-based approach. In addition to classroom time, you will be given assignments to work on outside of the classroom and with your host family. The goal is to get you to a point of basic social communication skills so you can practice and develop language skills

further once you are at your site. Prior to being sworn in as a Volunteer, you will develop strategies to continue studying language during your service.

If you have the opportunity to study Arabic before departure, please do so. However, as you will soon discover, there are many different dialects of Arabic; be sure to focus on Jordanian Arabic.

Cross-Cultural Training

Cross-cultural training will provide opportunities for you to reflect on your own cultural values and how they influence your behavior in Jordan. You will also discuss the questions you have about the behaviors and practices you observe in Jordan, exploring the underlying reasons for these behaviors and practices. Cross-cultural and community development training will help you improve your communication skills and understand your role as a facilitator of development. Training will cover topics such as the concept of time, power and hierarchy, gender roles, communication styles, and the concept of self and relationships. Because adjusting to a new culture can be very challenging, you will participate in resiliency training which provides a framework and tools to help with adjustment issues.

The host family experience provides a unique context for cross-cultural learning, and is designed to ease your transition to life at your site. Families go through an orientation conducted by Peace Corps staff to explain the purpose of PST and to assist them in helping you adapt to living in Jordan. Many Volunteers form strong and lasting friendships with their host families.

Cross-cultural training will include an introduction to Jordan's history, customs, and politics, as well as an orientation to Islamic beliefs and practices. Adjusting to another culture requires three basic skills: the ability to predict the behavior of others; the ability to accept, without judgment, local values and customs; and the ability to adapt your own behavior to conform to that culture's expectations. You are not expected to be someone you are not; rather, you are expected to take on the challenge of finding ways to be true to yourself and responsive to local cultural norms.

Health Training

During pre-service training, you will be trained in health prevention, basic first aid, and treatment of medical illnesses found in Jordan. You will be expected to practice preventive health and to take responsibility for your own health by adhering to all medical policies. Trainees are required to attend all medical sessions. Health education topics will nutrition, food and water preparation, emotional health, dealing with alcohol, prevention of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and common illnesses in Jordan.

Safety and Security Training

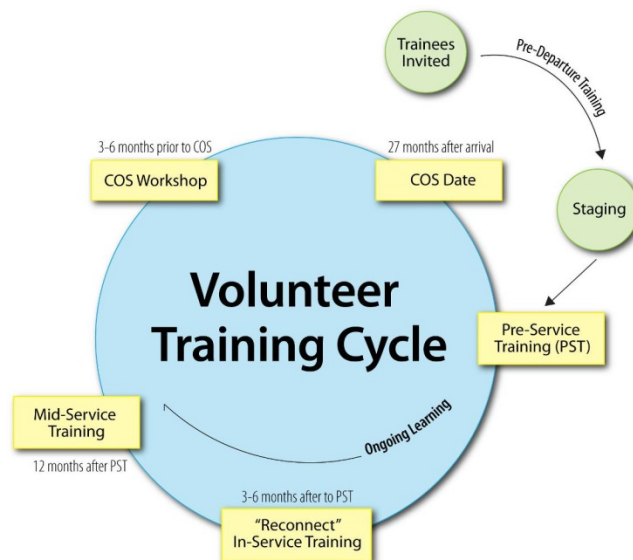
During the safety and security training sessions, you will learn how to adopt a lifestyle that reduces your risks at home, at work, and during your travels. You will also learn appropriate, effective strategies for coping with unwanted attention, how to identify safety risks in-country and about Peace Corps' emergency response and support systems.

Additional Trainings During Volunteer Service

The Peace Corps' training system provides Volunteers with continual opportunities to examine their commitment to Peace Corps service while increasing their technical and cross-cultural skills. During service, there are usually three training events. The titles and objectives for those trainings are as follows:

- **In-service training:** Provides an opportunity for Volunteers to upgrade their technical, language, and project development skills while sharing their experiences and reaffirming their commitment after having served for three to six months.
- **Mid-service training** (done in conjunction with technical sector in-service): Assists Volunteers in reviewing their first year, reassessing their personal and project objectives, and planning for their second year of service.
- **Close-of-service conference:** Prepares Volunteers for their future after Peace Corps service and reviews their respective projects and personal experiences.

The number, length, and design of these trainings are adapted to country-specific needs and conditions. The key to the training system is that training events are integrated and interrelated, from the pre-departure orientation through the end of your service, and are planned, implemented, and evaluated cooperatively by the training staff, Peace Corps staff, and Volunteers.



YOUR HEALTH CARE IN JORDAN

The Peace Corps' highest priority is maintaining the good health and safety of every Volunteer. Peace Corps medical programs emphasize the preventive, rather than the curative, approach to disease. The Peace Corps in Jordan maintains a clinic with a full-time medical officer who takes care of Volunteers' primary health-care needs, including evaluation and treatment of most medical conditions. Additional medical services are also available in Jordan at local hospitals. If you become seriously ill and cannot receive the care you need in Jordan, you will be transported to a Peace Corps-approved regional medical facility. If the Office of Health Services (OHS) determines that the care is not optimal for your condition at the regional facility, you will be transported to the United States.

Health Issues in Jordan

Major health problems among Peace Corps Volunteers in Jordan are rare and are often the result of a Volunteer's failure to take preventive measures to stay healthy. The most common health problems here are the same ones found in the U.S., such as colds, diarrhea, hemorrhoids, constipation, sinus infection, skin infections, headaches, dental problems, minor injuries, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), adjustment disorders, and emotional problems. These may be more frequent or compounded by life in Jordan because certain environmental factors here raise the risk or exacerbate the severity of the symptoms or illness. Smoking, for example, is not restricted at work or in public buildings. Volunteers are usually unprepared for the amount of cigarette smoke to which they are exposed. Summers are hot and dry. Dust and wind in parts of the country may cause your throat, nose, and eyes to sting and create cold-like symptoms. Winters, on the other hand, are much colder and damper than you might expect and may lead to sinusitis and upper-respiratory infections.

One of the most common health concerns in Jordan is diarrhea, which can be avoided for the most part by thoroughly washing fruits and vegetables, boiling your drinking water, and avoiding street food and food that has been cooked and maintained at room temperature for an extended period of time (chicken roasted on skewers in the market).

Hepatitis is always present in the population. You will be vaccinated against hepatitis A and B, meningitis, tetanus, diphtheria, typhoid, MMR (measles, mumps, rubella), and polio if you have no documentation of previous immunization.

Helping You Stay Healthy

The Peace Corps will provide you with all the necessary inoculations, medications, and information to stay healthy. Upon your arrival in Jordan, you will receive a country-specific medical handbook. By the end of training, you will receive a medical kit with supplies to take care of mild illnesses and first aid needs. The contents of the kit are listed later in this section.

During pre-service training, you will have access to basic medical supplies through the medical officer. However, during this time, you will be responsible for your own supply of prescription drugs and any other specific medical supplies you require, as the Peace Corps will not order these items during training.

Please bring a three-month supply of any prescription drugs you use, since they may not be available here and it may take several months for shipments to arrive.

You will have physicals at mid-service and at the end of your service. If you develop a serious medical problem during your service, the medical officer in Jordan will consult with the Office of Health Services in Washington, D.C., or a regional medical officer. If it is determined that your condition cannot be treated in Jordan, you may be sent out of the country for further evaluation and care.

Maintaining Your Health

As a Volunteer, you must accept considerable responsibility for your own health. Proper precautions will significantly reduce your risk of serious illness or injury. The adage “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” becomes extremely important in areas where diagnostic and treatment facilities are not up to the standards of the United States. The most important of your responsibilities in Jordan is to take the following preventive measures.

Many illnesses that afflict Volunteers worldwide are preventable if proper food and water precautions are taken. These illnesses include food poisoning, parasitic infections, hepatitis A, dysentery, Guinea worms, tapeworms, and typhoid fever. Your medical officer will discuss specific standards for water and food preparation in Jordan during pre-service training.

Abstinence is the most effective way to prevent infection with HIV and other STIs. You are taking risks if you choose to be sexually active. To lessen risk, use a condom every time you have sex. Whether your partner is a host country citizen, a fellow Volunteer, or anyone else, do not assume this person is free of HIV/AIDS or other STIs. You will receive more information from the medical officer about this important issue.

Volunteers are expected to adhere to an effective means of birth control to prevent an unplanned pregnancy. Your medical officer can help you decide on the most appropriate method to suit your individual needs. Contraceptive methods are available without charge from the medical officer. It is critical to your health that you promptly report to the medical office or other designated facility for scheduled immunizations, and that you let the medical officer know immediately of significant illnesses and injuries.

Women’s Health Information

If feminine hygiene products are not available for you to purchase on the local market, the Peace Corps medical officer in Jordan will provide them. If you require a specific product, please bring a three-month supply with you. Many female Volunteers take menstrual cups (The Diva Cup, The Keeper, The Moon Cup, etc.) to avoid potential problems with availability or disposal of feminine hygiene products.

Pregnancy is treated in the same manner as other Volunteer health conditions that require medical attention. The Peace Corps is responsible for determining the medical risk and the availability of appropriate medical care if the Volunteer chooses to remain in-country. Given the circumstances under which Volunteers live and work in Peace Corps countries, it is rare that the Peace Corps’ medical standards for continued service during pregnancy can be met.

The Peace Corps follows the 2012 U.S. Preventive Services Task Force guidelines for screening PAP smears, which recommend women aged 21–29 receive screening PAPs every three years and women aged 30–65 receive screening PAPs every five years. As such, most Volunteers will not receive a PAP during their service, but can use Peace Corps supplied health insurance after service to have an exam.

Your Peace Corps Medical Kit

The Peace Corps medical officer will provide you with a kit containing basic items to prevent and treat illnesses that may occur during service. Kit items can be periodically restocked at the medical office.

Medical Kit Contents

First Aid Handbook	Decongestant
Ace bandages	Dental floss
Acetaminophen (Tylenol)	Gloves
Adhesive tape	Hydrocortisone cream
Antacid tablets	Ibuprofen
Anti-diarrheal (Imodium)	Insect repellent
Antibiotic ointment	Iodine tablets (for water purification)
Antifungal cream	Lip balm
Antihistamine	Oral rehydration salts
Antiseptic antimicrobial skin cleaner	Scissors
Band-Aids	Sore throat lozenges
Bismuth Subsalicylate (Pepto-Bismol)	Sterile eye drops
Butterfly closures	Sterile gauze pads
Calagel anti-itch gel	Sunscreen
Condoms	Thermometer (Temp-a-dots)
Cough lozenges	Tweezers

Before You Leave: A Medical Checklist

If there has been any change in your health—physical, mental, or dental—since you submitted your examination reports to the Peace Corps, you must immediately notify the Office of Health Services (OHS). Failure to disclose new illnesses, injuries, allergies, or pregnancy can endanger your health and may jeopardize your eligibility to serve.

If your dental exam was done more than a year ago, or if your physical exam is more than two years old, contact OHS to find out whether you need to update your records. If your dentist or Peace Corps dental consultant has recommended that you undergo dental treatment or repair, you must complete that work and make sure your dentist sends requested confirmation reports or X-rays to the Office of Health Services.

If you wish to avoid having duplicate vaccinations, contact your physician's office to obtain a copy of your immunization record and bring it to your pre-departure orientation. If you have any immunizations (other than yellow fever vaccination as directed by OHS) prior to Peace Corps service, the Peace Corps cannot reimburse you for the cost. The Peace Corps will provide all the immunizations necessary for your overseas assignment, either at your pre-departure orientation or during your first six months in Jordan. Volunteers must be willing to get all required vaccinations unless there is a documented medical contraindication. Failure to accept required vaccination is grounds for administrative separation from the Peace Corps. You do not need to begin taking malaria medication prior to departure.

Bring a three-month supply of any prescription or over-the-counter medication you use on a regular basis, including birth control pills. Although the Peace Corps cannot reimburse you for this three-month supply, it will order refills during your service. While awaiting shipment—which can take several months—you will be dependent on your own medication supply. The Peace Corps will not pay for herbal or non-prescribed medications, such as St. John's wort, glucosamine, selenium, or antioxidant supplements.

Medications supplied may be generic or equivalent to your current medications (including birth control pills).

You are encouraged to bring copies of medical prescriptions signed by your physician. This is not a requirement, but they might come in handy if you are questioned in transit about carrying a three-month supply of prescription drugs.

If you wear eyeglasses, bring two pairs (of the current prescription) with you. If a pair breaks, the Peace Corps will replace them, using the information your doctor in the United States provided on the eyeglasses form during your examination. The Peace Corps Office of Health Services strongly discourages Volunteers from wearing contact lenses while overseas unless there is a true medical indication documented by your ophthalmologist. Contact lenses, particularly extended use soft contacts, are associated with a variety of eye infections and other inflammatory problems. One of the most serious of these problems is infectious keratitis which can lead to severe cornea damage which could result in permanent blindness requiring corneal transplantation. These risks of permanent eye damage are exacerbated in the Peace Corps environment where the Volunteer's ability to properly clean the lenses is compromised due to limited access to sterile water as well as decreased effectiveness of cleaning solutions due to prolonged storage in unsatisfactory conditions. In addition, when bacterial eye infections occur, assessment and treatment within hours by a competent ophthalmologist is indicated. This is virtually impossible in the Peace Corps setting. If you feel that you simply must be able to use your contacts occasionally, please consider using single use, daily disposable lenses which do not require cleaning.

If you are eligible for Medicare, are over 50 years of age, or have a health condition that may restrict your future participation in health-care plans, you may wish to consult an insurance specialist about unique coverage needs before your departure. The Peace Corps will provide all necessary health care from the time you leave for your pre-departure orientation until you complete your service. When you finish, you will be entitled to the post-service health-care benefits described in the Peace Corps Volunteer Handbook. You may wish to consider keeping an existing health plan in effect during your service if you think age or pre-existing conditions might prevent you from re-enrolling in your current plan when you return home.

SAFETY AND SECURITY IN DEPTH

Ensuring the safety and security of Volunteers is Peace Corps' highest priority. Serving as a Volunteer overseas entails certain safety and security risks. Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment, a limited understanding of the local language and culture, and the perception of being a wealthy American are some of the factors that can put a Volunteer at risk. Property theft and burglaries are not uncommon. Incidents of physical and sexual assault do occur, although most Volunteers complete their two years of service without a serious safety and security incident. Together, the Peace Corps and Volunteers can reduce risk, but cannot truly eliminate all risk.

Beyond knowing that the Peace Corps approaches safety and security as a partnership with you, it might be helpful to see how this partnership works. The Peace Corps has policies, procedures, and training in place to promote your safety. The Peace Corps depends on you to follow those policies and to put into practice what you have learned. An example of how this works in practice—in this case to help manage the risk and impact of burglary—follows:

- The Peace Corps assesses the security environment where you will live and work.
- The Peace Corps inspects the house where you will live according to established security criteria.
- The Peace Corps ensures you are welcomed by host country counterparts or other community leaders in your new community.
- The Peace Corps responds to security concerns that you raise.
- You lock your doors and windows.
- You adopt a lifestyle appropriate to the community where you live.
- You get to know your neighbors.
- You decide if purchasing personal articles insurance is appropriate for you.
- You don't change residences before being authorized by the Peace Corps.
- You communicate your concerns to Peace Corps staff.

This welcome book contains sections on Living Conditions and Volunteer Lifestyle, Peace Corps Training, Your Health Care, and Safety and Security, all of which include important safety and security information to help you understand this partnership. The Peace Corps makes every effort to give Volunteers the training and tools they need to function in the safest way possible and prepare for the unexpected, teaching you to identify, reduce, and manage the risks you may encounter.

Factors that Contribute to Volunteer Risk

There are several factors that can heighten a Volunteer's risk, many of which are within the Volunteer's control. By far the most common crime that Volunteers experience is theft. Thefts often occur when Volunteers are away from their sites, in crowded locations (such as markets or on public transportation), and when leaving items unattended.

Before you depart for Jordan there are several measures you can take to reduce your risk:

- Leave valuable objects in the United States, particularly those that are irreplaceable or have sentimental value
- Leave copies of important documents and account numbers with someone you trust in the States
- Purchase a hidden money pouch or "dummy" wallet as a decoy
- Purchase personal articles insurance

After you arrive in Jordan, you will receive more detailed information about common crimes, factors that contribute to Volunteer risk, and local strategies to reduce that risk. For example, Volunteers in Jordan learn to do the following:

- Choose safe routes and times for travel, and travel with someone trusted by the community whenever possible
- Make sure one's personal appearance is respectful of local customs
- Avoid high-crime areas
- Know the local language to get help in an emergency
- Make friends with local people who are respected in the community
- Be careful and conscientious about using electronics (phones, cameras, laptops, iPods, etc.) in public or leaving them unattended
- Limit alcohol consumption

As you can see from this list, you must be willing to work hard and adapt your lifestyle to minimize the potential for being a target for crime. As with anywhere in the world, crime occurs in Jordan. You can reduce the risks by avoiding situations that place you at risk and by taking precautions. Crime at the village or town level is less frequent than in the large cities; people know each other and generally are less likely to steal from their neighbors. Tourist attractions in large towns are favorite worksites for pickpockets.

The following are other security concerns in Jordan of which you should be aware:

- **Motor vehicle accidents:** This is the single greatest risk to your safety in Jordan. Volunteers are required to wear seat belts when available. Due to high risk involving certain modes of transportation, many countries have placed restrictions on travel. In Jordan, Volunteers are prohibited from traveling away from their village after dark, except in emergencies. Volunteers are also encouraged to choose larger buses that appear to be in good repair.
- **Robbery/burglary:** Some Volunteers have been pickpocketed or had their homes broken into in the past, and Volunteers must employ the same precautions and good habits that they would in the U.S. The Peace Corps will teach you about proper home safety during training and requires that all Volunteers change the locks (and maintain all keys) before moving into approved accommodations.
- **Regional conflicts:** Political uncertainty and regional volatility, while not presently adversely impacting the safety and security of Volunteers at their sites, are growing concerns and this climate is not likely to change in the immediate future. Jordan borders Syria, and Volunteers are not currently placed in certain areas near the Syrian border. Jordan also borders the West Bank and Israel, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict continues. More than 60 percent of Jordan's population is Palestinian, and people in Jordan are very sensitive to events that affect Palestinians. When tension is high between the Arabs and Israelis, which is much of the time, there can be large demonstrations of solidarity from Palestinians in Jordan. You are discouraged from traveling to Israel during your service in Jordan. There is no travel to Iraq! Updates about these political situations will be provided as your departure for Jordan nears and frequently throughout your service.
- **Harassment:** Volunteers report varying levels of harassment, such as having rocks thrown at them by children, being called derogatory names by teenagers, and being subject to overt sexual comments. This is less likely to happen at a Volunteer's site and more likely to happen in larger cities where Volunteers are unknown. Strategies for coping with harassment are discussed at

length during pre-service training. While whistles and verbal harassment based on race or gender may be fairly common on the street, this behavior may be reduced if you abide by local cultural norms, dress conservatively, and respond according to the training you will receive.

- **Alcohol abuse:** Jordan is an Islamic country and alcohol, although available in Amman and some larger towns, is strictly forbidden by the Muslim religion. A Volunteer should not be seen drinking alcohol at any time and should not even discuss or refer to alcohol while at work or in her/his community. Alcohol use can discredit a Volunteer and the Peace Corps.
- **Sexual assault:** Volunteers have been targets of sexual assault in Jordan. Alcohol consumption and cross-cultural differences in gender relations are associated with these assaults, and the assailant, on occasion, has been an acquaintance of the Volunteer. Volunteers who take seriously the training provided by Peace Corps/Jordan regarding sexual assaults can minimize their risk. Volunteers are required to report all assaults and threats of assault to Peace Corps staff so an appropriate response and support can be provided.
- **Dating:** Sex outside marriage is judged harshly in Jordan and may jeopardize your safety and/or ability to develop mutually respectful relationships in your community. Muslim women may be subject to severe retribution, even death, in the name of family honor. Though not illegal, homosexuality is culturally unacceptable in Jordan. Jordanian gays may be jailed and beaten by police. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual Volunteers will have to practice discretion. The Peace Corps is committed to providing confidential support to all Volunteers, regardless of sexual orientation.

Staying Safe: Don't Be a Target for Crime

Because many Volunteer sites are in rural, isolated settings, you must be prepared to take on a large degree of responsibility for your own safety. To reduce the likelihood that you will become a victim of crime, you can take steps to make yourself less of a target such as ensuring your home is secure and developing relationships in your community. While the factors that contribute to your risk in Jordan may be different, in many ways you can do what you would do if you moved to a new city anywhere: Be cautious, check things out, ask questions, learn about your neighborhood, know where the more risky locations are, use common sense, and be aware. You can reduce your vulnerability to crime by integrating into your community, learning the local language, acting responsibly, and abiding by Peace Corps policies and procedures. Serving safely and effectively in Jordan, will require that you accept some restrictions on your current lifestyle.

Support from Staff

If a trainee or Volunteer is the victim of a safety and security incident, Peace Corps staff is prepared to provide support. All Peace Corps posts have procedures in place to respond to incidents of crime committed against Volunteers. The first priority for all posts in the aftermath of an incident is to ensure the Volunteer is safe and receiving medical treatment as needed. After assuring the safety of the Volunteer, Peace Corps staff response may include reassessing the Volunteer's worksite and housing arrangements and making any adjustments, as needed. In some cases, the nature of the incident may necessitate a site or housing transfer. Peace Corps staff will also support and assist Volunteers who choose to make a formal complaint with local law enforcement. It is very important that a Volunteer reports an incident when it occurs. The reasons for this include obtaining medical care and emotional support, enabling Peace Corps staff to assess the situation to determine if there is an ongoing safety and security concern, protecting peer Volunteers and preserving the right to file a complaint. Should a Volunteer decide later in the process to file a complaint with law enforcement, this option may be compromised if evidence was not preserved at the time of the incident.

Office of Victim Advocacy

The Office of Victim Advocacy (OVA) is a resource to Volunteers who are victims of crime, including sexual assault and stalking. Victim advocates are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help Volunteers understand their emotional, medical, and legal options so they may make informed decisions to meet their specific needs. The OVA provides a compassionate, coordinated, and supportive response to Volunteers who wish to access Peace Corps support services.

Contact information for the Office of Victim Advocacy

Direct phone number: 202.692.1753

Toll-free: 855.855.1961 ext. 1753

Duty phone: 202.409.2704 (available 24/7, call or text)

Email: victimadvocate@peacecorps.gov

Crime Data for Jordan

Crime data and statistics for Jordan, which are updated yearly, are available at the following link: <http://files.peacecorps.gov/manuals/countrydata/jordan.pdf>

Please take the time to review this important information.

Few Peace Corps Volunteers are victims of serious crimes. Crimes that do occur abroad are investigated and prosecuted by local jurisdictional authorities. If you are the victim of a crime, you will decide if you wish to file a complaint with law enforcement, who will then determine whether to prosecute. If you decide to file a complaint, the Peace Corps will help through the process. The Peace Corps staff will ensure you are fully informed of your options and understand how the local legal process works. Further, the Peace Corps will help you exercise your rights to the fullest extent possible under the laws of your host country.

The Peace Corps will train you on how to respond if you are the victim of a serious crime, including how to get to a safe location quickly and contact your Peace Corps office. It's important that you notify the Peace Corps as soon as you can so Peace Corps staff can provide assistance.

Volunteer Safety Support in Jordan

The Peace Corps' approach to safety is a five-pronged plan to help you stay safe during your service. The plan includes information sharing, Volunteer training, site selection criteria, a detailed emergency action plan, and protocols for addressing safety and security incidents. Jordan's in-country safety program is outlined below.

The Peace Corps/Jordan office will keep you informed of any issues that may impact Volunteer safety through **information sharing**. Regular updates will be provided in Volunteer newsletters and in memorandums from the country director. In the event of a critical situation or emergency, you will be contacted through the emergency communication network. An important component of the capacity of Peace Corps to keep you informed is your buy-in to the partnership concept with the Peace Corps staff. It is expected that you will do your part to ensure that Peace Corps staff members are kept apprised of your movement's in-country so they are able to inform you.

Volunteer training will include sessions on specific safety and security issues in Jordan. This training will prepare you to adopt a culturally appropriate lifestyle and exercise judgment that promotes safety and

reduces risk in your home, at work, and while traveling. Safety training is offered throughout service and is integrated into the language, cross-cultural aspects, health, and other components of training. You will be expected to successfully complete all training competencies in a variety of areas, including safety and security, as a condition of service.

Certain **site selection criteria** are used to determine safe housing for Volunteers before their arrival. The Peace Corps staff works closely with host communities and counterpart agencies to help prepare them for a Volunteer's arrival and to establish expectations of their respective roles in supporting the Volunteer. Each site is inspected before the Volunteer's arrival to ensure placement in appropriate, safe, and secure housing and worksites. Site selection is based, in part, on any relevant site history; access to medical, banking, postal, and other essential services; availability of communications, transportation, and markets; different housing options and living arrangements; and other Volunteer support needs.

You will also learn about Peace Corps/Jordan's detailed **emergency action plan**, which is implemented in the event of civil or political unrest or a natural disaster. When you arrive at your site, you will complete and submit a site locator form with your address, contact information, and a map to your house. If there is a security threat, you will gather with other Volunteers in Jordan at predetermined locations until the situation is resolved or the Peace Corps decides to evacuate.

Finally, in order for the Peace Corps to be fully responsive to the needs of Volunteers, it is imperative that Volunteers immediately report any safety and security incidents to the Peace Corps office. The Peace Corps has established **protocols for addressing safety and security incidents** in a timely and appropriate manner, and it collects and evaluates safety and security data to track trends and develop strategies to minimize risks to current and future Volunteers.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OVERVIEW

The Peace Corps mission is to promote world peace and friendship and to improve people's lives in the communities where Volunteers serve. Instituting policies and practices to support a diverse and inclusive work and Volunteer environment is essential to achieving this mission.

Through inclusive recruitment and retention of staff and Volunteers, the Peace Corps seeks to reflect the rich diversity of the United States and bring diverse perspectives and solutions to development issues. Additionally, ensuring diversity among staff and Volunteers enriches interpersonal relations and communications for the staff work environment, the Volunteer experience, and the communities in which Volunteers serve.

The Peace Corps defines diversity as a “collection of individual attributes that together help agencies pursue organizational objectives efficiently and effectively. These include, but are not limited to, characteristics such as national origin, language, race, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and family structures. Diversity also encompasses differences among people concerning where they are from and where they have lived and their differences of thought and life experiences.”

We define inclusion as a “culture that connects each [staff member and Volunteer] to the organization; encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness; and leverages diversity throughout the organization so that all individuals are able to participate and contribute to their full potential.” The Peace Corps promotes inclusion throughout the lifecycle of Volunteers and staff. When staff and Volunteers are able to share their rich diversity in an inclusive work environment, the Peace Corps mission is better fulfilled. More information about diversity and inclusion can be found in the Volunteer Handbook.

An inclusive agency is one that seeks input from everyone in an effort to find the best ideas and strategies possible to execute its objectives. When input is solicited, heard, and considered from a rich multitude of individuals the best course of action usually emerges. The Peace Corps seeks to improve its operations and effectiveness by ensuring that all voices and ideas are heard and that all Volunteers and staff feel welcome and appreciated. When each person's voice is heard, the agency is stronger and the impact of Volunteers is strengthened.

Diversity and Inclusion at Your Site

Once Volunteers arrive at their sites, diversity and inclusion principles remain the same but take on a different shape, in which your host community may share a common culture and you—the Volunteer—are the outsider. You may be in the minority, if not the sole American like you, at your site. You will begin to notice diversity in perspectives, ethnicity, age, depth of conversation, and degree of support you may receive. For example, elders, youth, and middle-aged individuals all have unique points of views on topics you may discuss, from perspectives on work, new projects, and social engagements to the way community issues are addressed.

Peace Corps staff in your host country recognizes the additional adjustment issues that come with living and working in new environments and will provide support and guidance to Volunteers. During pre-service training, a session will be held to discuss diversity and inclusion and how you can serve as an ally for your peers, honoring diversity, seeking inclusion, challenging prejudice and exclusion, exploring your own biases, and learning mechanisms to cope with these adjustment issues. The Peace Corps looks forward to having Volunteers from varied backgrounds that include a variety of races, ethnic groups, ages, religions, sexual orientations and gender identities. The agency expects you to work collaboratively to create an inclusive environment that transcends differences and finds common ground.

Cross-Cultural Considerations

Outside of Jordan's capital, residents of rural communities might have had little direct exposure to other cultures, races, religions, and lifestyles. What people view as typical U.S. behavior or norms may be a misconception, such as the belief that all Americans are rich and have blond hair and blue eyes. The people of Jordan are known for their generous hospitality to foreigners; however, members of the community where you will live may display a range of reactions to cultural differences that you present.

As a Volunteer and representative of the United States, you are responsible not only for sharing the diversity of U.S. culture (to include your individual culture and the culture of other Americans) with your host country national counterparts, but also for learning from the diversity of your host country. An important aspect of this cultural exchange will be to demonstrate inclusiveness within your community in a sensitive manner. Additionally, you will share the responsibility of learning about the diversity of your fellow Peace Corps Volunteers and exploring how best to respect differences while serving as supportive allies as you go through this challenging new experience.

To ease the transition and adapt to life in your host country, you may need to make some temporary, yet fundamental, compromises in how you present yourself as an American and as an individual. For example, female trainees and Volunteers may not be able to exercise the independence they have in the United States; male Volunteers may be expected to not perform chores or other tasks ascribed to women; political discussions need to be handled with great care; and some of your personal beliefs may best remain undisclosed. You will need to develop techniques and personal strategies for coping with these and other limitations. The Peace Corps staff will lead a diversity, inclusion, and sensitivity discussion during pre-service training and will be on call to provide support. This training covers how to adapt personal choices and behavior to be respectful of the host country culture, which can have a direct impact on how Volunteers are viewed and treated by their new communities. The Peace Corps emphasizes professional behavior and cross-cultural sensitivity among volunteers and within their communities to help integrate and be successful during service.

An ideal way to view the pursuit of cross-cultural adaptation and/or cultural integration is to recognize that everything done in your host country has both a specific reason for why it is done and an expected outcome. Trust that your host country counterparts are acting with positive intentions and work to mutually seek understanding and commonality. Language differences may add a communication barrier and lead to misunderstandings. Listen more than you speak and seek clarity. Remember that having the ability to laugh at yourself and at life's little surprises goes a long way—laughter is universal.

What Might a Volunteer Face?

Possible Gender Role Issues

Gender is a set of socially constructed roles, responsibilities, behaviors, and opportunities. Gender differs from sex, which refers specifically to biological and physiological characteristics of males and females. Gender roles and expectations are learned, change over time, and vary within and among cultures. Volunteers are trained in gender awareness as they approach their work in the host country. Gender roles in the United States may differ greatly from those in your country of service. It is important to absorb and to attempt to understand the cultural nuances of gender where you are. For example, in many cultures males are held in higher regard than females and females may manage the households. In some places, females are encouraged to attend school, while in other countries females are discouraged from engaging in such activities and instead work inside or outside of the home.

During the pre-service training, trainees receive an introduction to gender awareness in their country of service, and examine their own thinking about gender roles and how this thinking has impacted them.

They then learn how to analyze development projects using a gender lens to better understand gender roles in their host country and to understand how these gender roles can benefit or limit what females and males may or may not do. During their 27 months of service, Volunteers will further engage in gender trainings to understand better how their gender identity impacts who they are as females or males in the host country and how this perception influences their work and relationships.

Jordan is a traditional, patriarchal culture. Though Jordanian women are gaining more authority in the public eye, there are still few women in top positions in government or the private sector. Women, irrespective of the deference shown to them within the family, are usually not given the public status and respect afforded men. You should understand that this is an essential element of a centuries-old society and culture. On the other hand, it is important to note that Jordanians enjoy a greater level of formal, legal, and institutional gender equity than many other Arab societies.

While a major challenge for female Volunteers is a reduction in their independent lifestyle, they can still play an important role in modeling behavior that demonstrates to communities the extended capabilities of women. Gender and development activities are an integral part of Peace Corps/Jordan activities.

Female Volunteers may

- Find that a single woman living alone is contrary to the cultural norm;
- Receive much more unwanted and inappropriate attention from young Jordanian men than they would in the United States;
- Experience the perception that they are “loose,” and therefore not afforded the respect that conservative Muslim women are given by men on the street;
- Have to work harder than male Volunteers to gain the respect of host country colleagues in the workplace;
- Need to keep a low social profile and practice discretion in public (e.g., smoking in public, drinking in bars, restrictions on dress) to avoid unwanted attention and an undesirable reputation; and
- Find satisfaction and acceptance in being a part of the “female world” of the community.

Volunteer Comment:

“Sexual relationships between Volunteers and Jordanians of the same or opposite sex are almost impossible. Women hold the family honor in the Muslim world and their actions or even suspected actions seen as tarnishing the family honor are sure to bring severe and sometimes fatal consequences to them. Male Volunteers need to understand the serious ramifications for Jordanian women who get involved in even innocent relationships with men from outside the extended family. Men may interact with women in a work setting, but rarely in a social setting.”

“As a female Volunteer in Jordan, you will most likely experience difficulties and frustrations with the role of women. In villages especially, the woman’s role is in the home, caring for—and often serving—the children and husband. The men are considered and treated as superior. There are many things that women aren’t allowed to do, such as be out after dark or travel alone, while men have much more freedom outside the home. Expect to have quite a bit of unwanted attention, which can include staring and inappropriate comments made to you in the streets by some men and boys. You can’t change these things; you must let them roll off your shoulders and continue on. I was raised to be a strong, independent woman and have found it challenging to be the quiet, submissive woman I am expected to be here. As Americans, we do have the opportunity to be positive examples of independent females and leaders, but we must not push the culture limits.”

Possible Issues for Volunteers of Color

Volunteers of color sometimes, but not always, have a different Peace Corps experience than white Volunteers. Because of limited exposure, some foreign nationals will expect to see U.S. citizens who are white. Cultures of the world do not typically envision the States as a place of rich diversity with various culturally acceptable perspectives, personalities, and characteristics. Thus, a Volunteer of color may be questioned as about their U.S. citizenship.

In places where American stereotypes and/or caste system dynamics influence perception, Volunteers of color should be mindful of the reasons for these views without creating contentious environments. All too often, host country nationals are simply unaware of the diversity of the United States and require additional information and dialogue. Direct interactions with someone new or something different can take time to get used to, but those who take the time tend to be better off. Although host country nationals may assert that the United States is made up of predominately one race, we know that is not true. If a member of your community knows of compatriots living in the United States or of notable U.S. citizens of color, you can build on this knowledge as a point of reference for discussing diversity within the States.

For Volunteers of color, the range of responses to their skin color may vary from the extremely kind to the very insensitive. In African and Latin American countries, host country nationals may say “welcome home” to African Americans or Hispanic Americans. Sometimes Volunteers expect to be “welcomed home” but are disappointed when they are not. More commonly, if a Volunteer is mistaken for a host-country national citizen, he or she is expected to behave as a male or female in that culture behaves, and to speak the local language fluently. Host country nationals are sometimes frustrated when the Volunteer does not speak the local language with ease. Conversely, some in the same country may call you a “sell out” because they feel the United States has not done enough to help with social issues. These instances can be turned into teachable moments for the Volunteer and the host country national, in which the Volunteer can ask questions surrounding perception and collaborate with respect to issues and projects at hand, while engaging in cross-cultural exchanges. All Volunteers, to include white Volunteers and those of color, should be mindful of the issues of race that are embedded in U.S. culture and within the culture in your country of service. These issues may significantly affect how Volunteers interact with fellow Volunteers and host country nationals. Being open and inclusive to everyone will improve your experience in interacting with fellow Volunteers and members of your host community.

Volunteers of color may

- Be the only minority trainee or Volunteer within a particular program;
- Work and live with individuals who have no experience or understanding of their culture;
- Not receive sufficient personal support from other Volunteers; and
- Not find minority role models among Peace Corps country staff.

Volunteer Comment:

“I believe being a Volunteer of color presents great potential, but offers challenges during the initial community integration phase. Not only am I a foreigner, but I don’t fit the image of what they think an American should look like. However, with this extra challenge comes an extra opportunity to educate and share my Chinese heritage with my community. I know this opportunity for cross-cultural understanding will be worth more than the challenges that may arise. Isn’t this partly why we are here?”

“If you’re not comfortable with who you are racially, and even if you are, be prepared to get more than your fair share of stares, blank looks, pointing, and the more than frequent comments. Every new person you meet will ask what country you are from or forcefully state one that they are sure you are from. The support you may need will usually come from back home or from other Volunteers going through a

similar situation. But as time passes and you've integrated into your community, you will find friends that you trust and new ways to cope with the ongoing racial difference between you and your community."

Possible Issues for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning/Queer, Ally (LGBTQA) Volunteers

For LGBTQ Volunteers: Given Jordan's traditional values, sexual orientation and non-conforming gender identities might not be discussed openly. In some cases, the LGBTQ community may be stigmatized. Mindful of the cultural norms and country-specific laws, the decision to serve openly is left to each individual Peace Corps Volunteer. Many LGBTQ Volunteers have chosen to be discreet about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity within their host communities. Some LGBTQ Volunteers have chosen to come out to community members, with a result of positive and negative reactions, while some have come out only to select Peace Corps staff and Volunteers. Dealing with questions about boyfriends, girlfriends, marriage, and children may, at times, be stressful for LGBTQ Volunteers. You may find that Jordan is a less open and inclusive environment than you have previously experienced. Please know, however, that Peace Corps is supportive of you and Peace Corps staff welcomes dialogue about how to ensure your success as an LGBTQA Volunteer. More information about serving as an LGBTQ Volunteer is available at the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Peace Corps Alumni website at lgbrpcv.org. Additionally, the Peace Corps' LGBTQ employee resource group, Spectrum, can be reached at spectrum@peacecorps.gov.

For Ally Volunteers: Peace Corps staff intends to create open, inclusive, and accepting environments. As an agency, the Peace Corps encourages Volunteers to serve as allies to their LGBTQ colleagues in order to create a safe environment.

While there are no laws protecting LGBT people in Jordan, homosexual sexual activity is not criminalized. Many LGBTQ Volunteers have served successfully in Jordan and have very fond memories of their community and service. LGBTQA support groups may be available in your country of service, providing a network to support the needs of the Peace Corps LGBTQA community. Peace Corps staff will work with Volunteers to provide them with locally informed perspectives.

Gay, lesbian, or bisexual Volunteers may have to contend with

- Host country acceptance of LGBT foreigners being different than their acceptance of LGBT Jordanians.
- Constant questions about boyfriends or girlfriends, marriage, and sex. Wearing an "engagement ring" can help.
- The fact that most Jordanian LGBTs will have migrated to larger cities while most Volunteers are posted at rural sites, where cultural difficulties may be greater. Relationships with host country nationals can happen, but as with all cross-cultural relationships, they may not be easy.
- Lack of anti-discrimination protections for sexual and gender minorities; sexual and gender minorities may be hassled in clubs or on the street.
- Machismo, i.e., talk of conquest(s), girl-watching, and dirty jokes.

Volunteer Comment:

"Being gay in Jordan comes with its difficulties. For those of you out of the closet, be prepared to jump back in during your two years. With the exception of Peace Corps peers and staff, your sexual identity is better off not mentioned or even lied about. There are also some people in Jordan who use the words 'gay' or 'lesbian' as a kind of insult, although I've never felt physically threatened nor intimidated due to my orientation. You might try thinking about serving in Jordan as an opportunity to develop your identity

outside the sphere of sexuality. Even with all these warnings, I can honestly say that being gay in Jordan makes for a fascinating experience in gender relations: I wouldn't think twice about signing up again!"

Possible Issues for Volunteers with Disabilities

As part of the medical clearance process, the Peace Corps Office of Health Services determined you were physically and emotionally capable, with or without additional medical support, to perform a full tour of Volunteer service in Jordan without a significant risk of harm to yourself or interruption of service. The Peace Corps/Jordan staff will work with disabled Volunteers to support them in training, housing, jobsites, or other areas to enable them to serve safely and effectively.

Possible Issues for Volunteer Couples

Before committing to Peace Corps service, couples should consider how different degrees of enthusiasm about Peace Corps service, adaptation to the physical and cultural environment, and homesickness will affect their lives. It can be helpful to recognize that your reactions to these issues will change throughout your service, and you may not always feel the same as your partner. You and your partner will have different jobs, different schedules, and difference societal pressures. One partner may learn the language faster than the other or have a more satisfying assignment. This can create competition and put different kinds of stress on each person. Anticipating how these pressures will affect you and your partner differently throughout your service can help you remain a source of support for each other. Making friends with other Volunteers is a critical part of fitting into the larger volunteer culture and can also be a good way to expand your support network.

While couples will live together during their service, they may live in separate towns during their pre-service training. This is a stressful time for most Volunteers, and it can be helpful to discuss in advance how you will deal with this potential separation. Your partner can be an important source of stability but can also add stress to your training experience. You may feel torn between traveling to visit your partner and focusing on your training, your host family, and friends you have made at your training site.

Couples often face pressure from host country nationals to change their roles to conform better with traditional Jordanian relationships. Jordanian men and women alike will often not understand American relationship dynamics and may be outwardly critical of relationships that do not adhere to traditional gender roles. It is also helpful to think about how pressures to conform to Jordanian culture can be challenging to men and women in very different ways. Considering how your partner is being affected and discussing what, if any, aspects of your relationship should be changed can help reduce stress for you both.

Volunteer Comment:

"In our estimation, being married has enhanced our Peace Corps/Jordan Volunteer experiences. First of all, we feel that the gender issues faced are very real; however, being married makes them somewhat easier to deal with. We also feel that being married affords us a greater degree of privacy. Beyond that, of course, you never really feel the same degree of loneliness, etc., because you always have someone there for such things as communication, support, and language study."

Possible Religious Issues for Volunteers

For many in America, faith and religion are distinct from other aspects of their lives. In Jordan, Islam shapes every aspect of daily life. This can call for adjustments on your part, given the amount of interest or curiosity you'll experience regarding your religious observance or the lack of privacy that will be accorded to this personal matter. All Volunteers need to think carefully about how they will respond to questions about religious beliefs and observance. Declarations of agnostic, atheistic, multi-theistic, or other beliefs will elicit responses varying from confusion to intolerance.

Possible Issues for Jewish Volunteers

Jordan is the only country in the Middle East to host Peace Corps Volunteers, which makes serving in Jordan a very unique opportunity. It can be especially unique for Jewish Volunteers serving in Jordan, who learn what may not be frequently discussed in homes and schools in the United States about Palestine and Israel. For many Jewish PCVs, their views are dramatically changed after getting to know Palestinians and Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin on personal levels. This is something that is extremely valuable for them, and something that they take home and talk about with their friends, families, and Jewish communities back in the States.

In contrast, being a Jewish Volunteer in Jordan can also be very damaging to a Volunteer's sense of Jewish identity. Volunteers have expressed a sense of guilt over the political situation in the region, primarily those Volunteers with Jewish affiliation. There is also a sense of anxiety that permeates Volunteers' lives here as they fear the consequences of being exposed in their community as being Jewish.

It is not an easy task to serve in Jordan as a Jewish Volunteer. As a Volunteer (regardless of your background) you will likely hear anti-Semitic comments that range from mildly to violently hateful. You might also, at times, feel that you cannot adequately defend your political, religious, and cultural views for fear of being found out, and that you are failing at creating meaningful cultural exchange. This can all be extremely frustrating.

Safety and Security Risks

Jewish Peace Corps Volunteers serving in Jordan may risk compromising their safety and security if they are open about their Jewish identity in their communities. There is an *extreme* prejudice of people perceived to be allied with Israel and its politics because of the region's history, Jordan's involvement, and the high number of Palestinian refugees and Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin residing in Jordan. Regardless of PCVs' political views, Jordanians do not separate the Jewish ethnicity, religion, culture, and spirituality from Zionism and the Israeli government.

As a Volunteer, depending upon the region in which you are serving, you may hear Jordanians referring to Israel and Israelis as "the Jews," rather than their nationality. In the south of Jordan, where the population is largely Bedouin, and where tourist sites like Petra and Wadi Rum see large numbers of American, European, and even Israeli tourists, some PCVs have chosen to share their Jewish identity in the past with a select few community members of their sites. They were, however, advised by the Jordanians in whom they had confided not to share the information with the greater community. Jordan's social culture is one of chit-chat and gossip: By disclosing such information to even a small group of people, the likelihood that it would reach the community at-large is extremely high.

In Amman and in the north of Jordan, where there are many Palestinian refugee camps, and where Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin generally account for a large number of PCVs' community members, families, friends, and co-workers, disclosing that information even to a small number of people may pose a significant risk. Living in an area that is populated by Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin, PCVs will frequently hear anti-Semitic and anti-Israel comments.

Given these realities, disclosing your Jewish identity before forming a solid relationship would likely result in negative consequences, especially if the information reached someone seeking to make a political statement.

Disclosing a Jewish Identity

Many invitees are not prepared for the inner struggle that comes with suppressing their identity.

Aside from safety and security risks, disclosing your Jewish identity can negatively affect integration and reduce effectiveness in your work assignment. Although many Jewish PCVs have falsely identified themselves as being Christian, this can often become very tiring and frustrating.

Some PCVs might feel that they could better connect on a spiritual level with their community members by sharing their identity. Before doing so, PCVs should recognize that pursuing such a strategy could be potentially very dangerous. If a Volunteer chooses to disclose his/her Jewish identity, s/he should carefully consider potential reactions. For example, recently a PCV who has Judaism only on one side of his family, decided to disclose this to his students and close friends at site in the last weeks of their service. Though the PCV disclosed Judaism on one side of the family, the PCV chose to maintain his Christian religious identity. This was met more with curiosity than prejudice, but the outcome could have been different, especially had he not maintained his Christian identity. Furthermore, the PCV chose to disclose this information toward the end of his service when he was better integrated and had a trusting relationship with these community members.

Other PCVs who have chosen to share with community members that they are Jewish have also been told by those community members not to share the information with anyone else. It is important that a Volunteer fully integrate into the community before s/he can fully assess the potential reactions to revealing a Jewish identity.

“Jewish” Names

The notion that certain names sound more Jewish than others is definitely one that is American/European and one that generally does not reach Jordan. Unless someone has spent a particularly long amount of time living in the States, in an area where there is a large Jewish population, Jordanians do not tend to recognize names that may sound Jewish to Americans. It has been the experience of Volunteers that as long as they maintain that they are Christian, their names do not matter. Therefore, while Jewish PCVs may choose to alter their names while in Jordan, Peace Corps/Jordan does not consider it necessary. It is especially important for Volunteers who are Jewish to be able to maintain some part of their true identity, which might help them to better cope psychologically while hiding their religious and cultural background.

Jewish Holidays

In Jordan there is minimal knowledge of when Jewish holidays occur. Sometimes these holidays are announced in the news, but since there are so many Jewish holidays, only the bigger ones like Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish new year) and Yom Kippur (the Jewish day of atonement and fasting) tend to be mentioned, if at all. Jewish Volunteers have found it important and helpful to be able to get together and celebrate these holidays in their own “Jordanian” way. Since Volunteers frequently visit each other’s sites, it is unlikely that any suspicions would be raised by the fact that they might be getting together during a Jewish holiday. The ability to celebrate together with others who have to hide their religious identities is very important in helping Jewish PCVs maintain their identities.

Information for Non-Jewish Volunteers

It is important that Volunteers are aware of the risks to their Jewish colleagues. All Volunteers must respect a Jewish colleague’s decision to disclose or not disclose his/her Jewish identity and should never discuss another Volunteer’s identity with community members. Oftentimes, Volunteers can be in the midst of a stimulating and intellectual conversation with someone who seems to be very accepting and open-minded. However, Volunteers must always be cautious and should refrain from discussing the Jewish identity of any fellow Volunteer, even when/if that Volunteer has previously disclosed his/her Jewish identity to others.

Support for Jewish Volunteers

Please remember that Peace Corps staff members are always available to listen to you and to provide support. If you have further questions or are interested in talking to a Jewish Volunteer currently serving with the Peace Corps in Jordan, please contact your country desk officer at Jordan@peacecorps.gov.

Possible Issues for 50+ Volunteers

Senior Volunteers may find their age an asset in Jordan. They will often have access to individuals and insights that are not available to younger Volunteers. On the other hand, they will be in a distinct minority within the Volunteer population and could find themselves feeling isolated, looked up to, or ignored.

Seniors are often accustomed to a greater degree of independence and freedom of movement than the Peace Corps' program focus and safety and security practices allow. Pre-service training can be particularly stressful for seniors, whose lifelong learning styles and habits may or may not lend themselves to the techniques used. A senior may be the only older person in a group of Volunteers and initially may not feel part of the group. Younger Volunteers may look to an older Volunteer for advice and support; some seniors find this to be an enjoyable experience, while others choose not to fill this role. Some seniors may find it difficult to adapt to a lack of structure and clarity in their role after having worked for many years in a very structured and demanding job.

More than younger Volunteers, older Volunteers may have challenges in maintaining lifelong friendships and dealing with financial matters from afar. They may want to consider assigning power of attorney to someone in the States.

Volunteer Comments

"What's it like? Surprising. You'll be just another one of the gang, unless you need a special courtesy, which will be given quickly and unobtrusively. The Jordanians are thrilled to have older Volunteers, as I've been told many times. You will be happy to see so many children and teenagers who are pleased with your presence and readily show it. Many of us at home are used to being 'invisible.' Here it's more likely that you'll be part of a minority and will feel like a celebrity.

"The medical system in this country is terrific; the Peace Corps medical officer is efficient and responsive. If you've been medically cleared to serve here, come with no worries!

"The food is great, it's mandatory to give you a seat on the bus, and the kids will be thrilled to have an older person to look up to."

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much luggage am I allowed to bring to Jordan?

Most airlines have baggage size and weight limits and assess charges for transport of baggage that exceeds those limits. The Peace Corps has its own size and weight limits and will not pay the cost of transport for baggage that exceeds these limits. The Peace Corps' allowance is two checked pieces of luggage with combined dimensions of both pieces not to exceed 107 inches (length + width + height) and a carry-on bag with dimensions of no more than 45 inches. Checked baggage should not exceed 100 pounds total with a maximum weight of 50 pounds per bag.

Peace Corps Volunteers are not allowed to take pets, weapons, explosives, radio transmitters (shortwave radios are permitted), automobiles, or motorcycles to their overseas assignments. Do not pack flammable materials or liquids such as lighter fluid, cleaning solvents, hair spray, or aerosol containers. This is an important safety precaution.

What is the electric current in Jordan?

When it works, it is 50 cycles, 220 volts. Surges and cuts strain voltage converters and appliances, so bring good-quality items. The Peace Corps does not provide transformers. Batteries are generally easy to find, but some Volunteers bring rechargeable ones for electronics.

How much money should I bring?

Volunteers are expected to live at the same level as the people in their community. You will be given a settling-in allowance and a monthly living allowance, which should cover your expenses. Volunteers often wish to bring additional money for vacation travel to other countries. Credit cards and traveler's checks are preferable to cash. If you choose to bring extra money, bring the amount that will suit your own travel plans and needs.

When can I take vacation and have people visit me?

Each Volunteer accrues two vacation days per month of service (excluding training). Leave may not be taken during training, the first three months of service, or the last three months of service, except in conjunction with an authorized emergency leave. Family and friends are welcome to visit you after pre-service training and the first three months of service as long as their stay does not interfere with your work. Extended stays at your site are not encouraged and may require permission from your country director. The Peace Corps is not able to provide your visitors with visa, medical, or travel assistance.

Will my belongings be covered by insurance?

The Peace Corps does not provide insurance coverage for personal effects; Volunteers are ultimately responsible for the safekeeping of their personal belongings. However, you can purchase personal property insurance before you leave. If you wish, you may contact your own insurance company; additionally, insurance application forms will be provided, and you are encouraged to consider them carefully. Volunteers should not ship or take valuable items overseas. Jewelry, watches, radios, cameras, electronics, and expensive appliances are subject to loss, theft, and breakage, and, in many places, satisfactory maintenance and repair services are not available.

Do I need an international driver's license?

Volunteers in Jordan do not need an international driver's license because they are prohibited from operating privately owned motorized vehicles. Most urban travel is by bus or taxi. Rural travel ranges from buses and minibuses to trucks, bicycles, and lots of walking. On very rare occasions, a Volunteer may be asked to drive a sponsor's vehicle, but this can occur only with prior written permission from the

country director. Should this occur, the Volunteer may obtain a local driver's license. A U.S. driver's license will facilitate the process, so bring it with you just in case.

What should I bring as gifts for Jordanian friends and my host family?

This is not a requirement. A token of friendship is sufficient. Some gift suggestions include knickknacks for the house; pictures, books, or calendars of American scenes; souvenirs from your area; hard candies that will not melt or spoil; or photos to give away.

Where will my site assignment be when I finish training and how isolated will I be?

Peace Corps trainees are not assigned to individual sites until after they have completed pre-service training. This gives Peace Corps staff the opportunity to assess each trainee's technical and language skills prior to assigning sites, in addition to finalizing site selections with their ministry counterparts. If feasible, you may have the opportunity to provide input on your site preferences, including geographical location, distance from other Volunteers, and living conditions. However, keep in mind that many factors influence the site selection process and that the Peace Corps cannot guarantee placement where you would ideally like to be. Most Volunteers live in small towns or in rural villages and are frequently within one hour from another Volunteer. Some sites require a day's travel to reach the Peace Corps/Jordan office.

How can my family contact me in an emergency?

The Peace Corps Counseling and Outreach Unit provides assistance in handling emergencies affecting trainees and Volunteers or their families. Before leaving the United States, instruct your family to notify the Counseling and Outreach Unit immediately if an emergency arises, such as a serious illness or death of a family member. The Counseling and Outreach Unit can be reached at 855.855.1961, select option 1, ext. 1470. After business hours, on weekends, and on holidays, the COU duty officer can be reached at the same number. For non-emergency questions, your family can contact your country desk staff through the main Peace Corps number: 855.855.1961.

Will there be email and Internet access? Should I bring my computer?

There are Internet cafes and businesses offering Internet access in most major towns in Jordan. Because of weaker telephone and electrical infrastructure in outlying areas, Volunteers in rural sites might be limited to writing and receiving email on their occasional visits to larger towns or regional hubs. Before departing, many prospective Volunteers sign up for free email accounts, such as Yahoo, Hotmail, or Gmail, which they can access worldwide.

Many Volunteers find laptops helpful for work projects and to stay connected to friends and family. However, be aware that unreliable electrical currents, weather, theft, and accidents are potential problems. Because of the high value of laptops, owners significantly increase their risk of becoming targets of crime. Moreover, you will not find the same level of technical assistance and service here as you would at home, and replacement parts could take months to arrive. Personal property insurance is a good idea. If you bring a laptop, be sure to buy a high-quality surge protector. Electrical lapses and surges are common. The Peace Corps office in Amman maintains several computers (with Internet access) and a printer in the Volunteer lounge that Volunteers can use.

WELCOME LETTERS FROM JORDAN VOLUNTEERS

The following letter is not from one individual, but is a compilation of the challenges and frustrations Volunteers in Jordan face and about which they talk to staff and each other. While these may not all happen to you or may not all happen on the same day, they are real and presented to you so you can imagine how you would cope in these situations: laugh, cry, dig in your heels and survive? If these are not reactions you had in mind (such as if you'd be more likely to quit), please be honest and honorable in accepting your invitation!

Dear Invitee:

Are you up to a bad day as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Jordan? You wake up with intestinal issues following a long evening of forced eating at a neighbor's house. You endure taunts from school kids, some friendly, some not. Stones are thrown in your direction, just to get your attention. Even though your clothes feel loose and conservative, the stares you're getting make you think you should cover up even more. At work, people engage you in pointed conversations: You are pressured to reveal details about your sexual history, to explain what's going on at Guantanamo Bay, to confess the "real" reasons you are here, to recite the names of the Prophets. Someone condemns America and asks for a U.S. visa in the same breath. Your colleagues seem more interested in drinking tea than working, and your new ideas are met with indifference. Someone takes you aside to preach passionately about why you should be Muslim. While resting at home, visitors arrive and come in to examine and discuss among themselves every item in your house, including the contents of your refrigerator. A friendly university student of the opposite sex lives next door, and speaks great English, but you can't talk to him/her without scrutiny and criticism from other neighbors. If you are female, you wish you could take a walk alone through your village; if you are male, you wish you could visit families without the father sending his wife and daughters to another room. A relative of someone in your village saw you at a cafe in Amman (one weekend! one drink!) and now you are battling serious rumors that you go into Amman every weekend to drink alcohol with boy/girlfriends. Your parents call because they're concerned about regional violence and keep asking, "Isn't it time to come home?"

These are not exaggerations; they are common experiences. Welcome to Jordan!

Surely a Volunteer in any Peace Corps assignment has many difficult days. You are probably already anticipating this; these unknown challenges are part of the appeal, right? As you decide whether to accept an assignment in Jordan, please take the time to become familiar with the cultural issues you will face here and determine whether you are capable of living with them. While Jordan on the surface may seem "easy" (hot and cold running water, electricity), it is not.

Don't come if you are thinking, "I will just give it a try, and we'll see if it works out." Don't come if you are thinking, "I'd like to make a change in that culture of theirs." Don't come if you are thinking, "Hey, they have Safeway supermarkets and cellphones, how bad could it be?" Don't come if you are thinking, "Surely an occasional party at a hotel with friends is no big deal." Don't come if your recruiter thought Jordan might be good, but you were hoping for [name your region].

To be successful in Jordan you must be committed to doing all you can to serve the kids of your village. What exactly does this commitment look like? We think you have to live by the rules—the cultural rules of your village and the Peace Corps rules that reflect them. You have to be open and nonjudgmental. You have to appreciate that your neighbors have things to teach you, not only about their culture, but also about your own! You have to have a sense of humor, every day. You have to have a bit of courage and a lot of common sense. Finally, we think you have to have the strength to behave gracefully, generously,

and, yes, peaceably, when you are having a very bad day. This is an amazing opportunity to represent your country and be a part of history, so please take your commitment seriously.

Some things I wish I'd known about (or paid attention to) before leaving for staging and during PST:

Clothing for Women

1. Conservative really means conservative: collarbone to wrists to ankles and loose, loose, loose! Also, your shirt is too short if you can see the waist of your pants/skirt when you stretch your arms up or bend over.
2. Closed-toe shoes are required; another pair of dress shoes is good, and make sure you can walk on uneven ground without spraining your ankle. It's best if shoes can easily be slipped on and off.
3. Know size conversions. The European scale (e.g., 40 = size 6, 44 = size 8, etc.; 1, 2, 3 = S, M, L) is the most common in Jordan.
4. It will be very hard to find shoes in sizes larger than 8-1/2 or 9.

Culture and Orientation/Training

1. Plan to take the initiative in organizing groups to get things done (e.g., buying phones, clothes, electronics, hitting the Internet cafes, etc.) and keep in mind that there are only a handful of staff members available to help all of you accomplish your shopping/errand goals.
2. The training staff is strict (especially in the beginning) for a reason! Some trainees are hosted by, and eventually placed in, more conservative villages than others and it's critical that trainees are seen in the most culturally appropriate light possible.
3. The staff is truly open to feedback: Don't be afraid to speak up if you think another teaching strategy would work better for the lesson and/or your learning style.
4. During homestay, get used to the idea of being told the same thing by the same person 50 times, of having what you already know explained thoroughly while your original question goes unanswered, and of the constant comparison with your village-mates about your language abilities and eating habits.
5. Be prepared for children clamoring for your attention: hands waving in your face, attempts to hold your hands, and pulling at your hair and clothes. A good strategy to deal with this is to let them know you will only speak English with them and that you will only allow hand-shaking on the streets. You can visit, make friends, and practice your Arabic in their homes or yours.
6. It's discussed throughout PST, but you can never be reminded enough: **You are here to learn from Jordanians and their culture, not to change them.** You will see and experience many difficult/frustrating things that are practiced in this culture, but don't judge what they do before trying to understand how these things are a part of who they are. You are making a difference simply by being who you are right here!

—Peace Corps/Jordan Volunteers

PACKING LIST

This list has been compiled by Volunteers serving in Jordan and is based on their experience. Use it as an informal guide in making your own list, bearing in mind that each experience is individual. There is no perfect list! You obviously cannot bring everything on the list, so consider those items that make the most sense to you personally and professionally. You can always have things sent to you later. As you decide what to bring, keep in mind that you have a 100-pound weight limit on baggage. And remember, you can get almost everything you need in Jordan.

General Clothing

Dress is more conservative and formal than you might think and suggestions from recently arrived Volunteers are listed below. Your appearance is very important as a sign of respect and your effectiveness can be influenced by how you present yourself. Both men and women are expected to look “sharp” with clean and unwrinkled clothes. It gets quite cold in the winter and there is no central heating in the centers or schools. Dressing in layers is key! Any additional clothing you may need is readily available in-country at retail and secondhand shops. However, good quality cotton underwear are generally expensive and hard to find. Laundry facilities are limited, so clothing that can be easily washed by hand and air-dried is a good choice. You can wear the same things repeatedly, so pack lightly!

Both Men and Women

- A warm coat
- A lightweight, waterproof jacket
- At least two heavy wool sweaters (you can wear one while the other is in the wash or drying)
- Silk or cotton thermal underwear (they pack tightly, are quick drying, and can double as sleeping outfits during the winter)
- Scarves for warmth
- Turtlenecks
- Jeans, a pair or two
- Wool socks
- A bathing suit (women should bring shorts and a T-shirt to wear over their suits; men’s bathing suits should be baggy, knee-length)
- Summer hats
- Knitted hat and gloves or mittens
- Loosely tailored pants or khakis and lined pants for winter
- One dressier outfit (for women, either pants or long skirt; for men, a sports jacket/blazer and dress slacks plus a tie) and dress shoes. These will be worn for the occasional official reception, swearing-in ceremony, and other important functions

Women

Covering up is important and may feel strange at first, but neatness and appropriate dress will enhance your credibility and smooth your integration. All clothing must be loose-fitting for comfort and modesty, but still look neat.

- Shirts/blouses: any top worn on the outside needs to be thigh-length (in other words, covering your behind), loose (masking your shape), and long-sleeved. Collars or high necklines are imperative; do not bring anything sheer or opaque (really check yourself in the mirror)
- Dresses/skirts: must be long enough to cover the ankle; side slits must be sewn up
- Pants: loose and long enough to cover the ankle
- Short-sleeved or tank tops only to wear under long-sleeved tops
- Lightweight, long-sleeved jackets to wear over short-sleeved shirts
- A few pairs of black slacks

- A long cotton slip
- Tights (hard to find here), dress socks, and knee-high stockings (preferably black)

Men

- Tie, belt, dress socks
- Nice short-sleeved dress shirts for summer months
- Professional-looking jacket for warmth and also for the workplace

Shoes

- Comfortable, nice dress shoes for work (closed-toe; black is best; avoid suede due to dust and scuffing)
- Sturdy sandals
- Hiking boots
- All-purpose shoes (something to walk, run, bike, or hike in)
- Flip-flops or slipper sandals for use in the bathroom (can be purchased cheaply in Jordan)

Personal Hygiene and Toiletry Items

A range of imported items (L’Oreal, Neutrogena, Nivea, Colgate, Tampax, Always, etc.) are widely available, but they are expensive relative to the Volunteer living allowance. Contact lens solution is available, but expensive. Tampons are available, but expensive. If you plan to use them, bring a good supply.

- Makeup (the quality here is OK; if you are picky, pack it)
- Scissors or other hair-cutting device. Every group seems to have at least one person who can cut hair, but you need good scissors
- Three-month supply of any prescription medications

Electronics

- Voltage converter if you plan to bring small appliances (hair dryer, electric shaver)
- Rechargeable batteries and recharger (with power converter)
- Pocket calculator (preferably solar-powered)
- Small, battery-powered alarm clock or wristwatch
- E-reader loaded with books
- iPod or other MP3 player
- Radio with shortwave and medium-wave (a decent shortwave radio will pick up VOA, BBC, and the Jordanian English station)
- Laptop computer and a good surge protector (power surges are common). Get personal articles insurance; the Peace Corps does not insure/replace personal items.
- DVDs and portable DVD player (if your laptop won’t play them); Volunteers often swap TV shows and movies on DVD.
- Camera (film and processing are readily available)

Kitchen

- Favorite stove-top recipes and cookbook (The Peace Corps provides a stove top; you can purchase an oven separately)
- Measuring cups, spoons, etc.

Miscellaneous

- A lightweight towel and washcloth (travel towel is good)
- One or two sets of double-sized bed sheets and pillow cases
- Decorations for your house (pictures, maps, etc.)
- Compact sleeping bag
- Good-quality backpack for travel, as well as a smaller daypack
- Baseball, football, Frisbee, hacky sack, or Uno
- Jump rope, yoga mat, round ball, or any small and light exercise equipment (as an alternative to jogging, which may not be a viable option)
- Sewing items (iron-on mending tape, straight and safety pins, etc.)
- Duct tape (can be bought in Amman, but it's costly)
- Stationery
- U.S. stamps (for sending mail via anyone traveling to the U.S.)
- Family photographs (screen these for appropriateness to Jordanian culture. For example, photos of beach scenes with minimally clothed people or scenes with alcohol consumption will be viewed as inappropriate by many Jordanians). You may want to get them laminated because they're going to be passed around a lot
- A few good books (can be traded or donated to the Volunteer book exchange)
- Journal, diary, or schedule book
- Pocket-size dictionary and thesaurus
- Travel guides
- Maps (good for wall hangings and traveling)
- Swiss Army, Leatherman, or an equivalent multipurpose knife
- Small, retractable tape measure
- Tape, scissors, crayons, and markers for teachers (you can buy lower-quality here)
- Polarized sunglasses
- Money belt or other means of concealing passport and valuables when traveling

What Not To Bring

- Hairdryer or iron (these are readily available)

PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

The following list consists of suggestions for you to consider as you prepare to live outside the United States for two years. Not all items are relevant to everyone, and the list is not comprehensive.

Family

- Notify family that they can call the Counseling and Outreach Unit at any time if there is a critical illness or death of a family member (24-hour phone number: 855.855.1961 ext. 1470).
- Give family and friends the Peace Corps On the Home Front handbook.

Passport/Travel

- Forward to the Peace Corps travel office all paperwork for the Peace Corps passport and visas.
- Verify that your luggage meets the size and weight limits for international travel.
- Obtain a personal passport if you plan to travel after your service ends. (Your Peace Corps passport will expire three months after you finish service; if you plan to travel longer, you will need a regular passport.)

Medical/Health

- Complete any needed dental and medical work.
- If you wear glasses, bring two pairs.
- Arrange to bring a three-month supply of all medications (including birth control pills) you are currently taking.

Insurance

- Make arrangements to maintain life insurance coverage.
- Arrange to maintain supplemental health coverage while you are away. (Even though the Peace Corps is responsible for your health care during Peace Corps service abroad, it is advisable for people who have pre-existing conditions to arrange for the continuation of their supplemental health coverage. If there is a lapse in coverage, it is often difficult and expensive to be reinstated.)
- Arrange to continue Medicare coverage if applicable.

Personal Papers

- Bring a copy of your certificate of marriage or divorce.

Voting

- Register to vote in the state of your home of record. (Many state universities consider voting and payment of state taxes as evidence of residence in that state.)
- Obtain a voter registration card and take it with you overseas.
- Arrange to have an absentee ballot forwarded to you overseas.

Personal Effects

- Purchase personal property insurance to extend from the time you leave your home for service overseas until the time you complete your service and return to the United States.

Financial Management

- Keep a bank account in your name in the United States.
- Obtain student loan deferment forms from the lender or loan service. (Information about loan deferment is online here: peacecorps.gov/learn/whyvol/finben/. Answers to frequently asked loan deferment questions are here: peacecorps.gov/learn/whyvol/finben/faq/.)
- Execute a power of attorney for the management of your property and business.
- Arrange for deductions from your readjustment allowance to pay alimony, child support, and other debts through the Office of Volunteer Financial Operations at 855.855.1961 ext. 1770.
- Place all important papers—mortgages, deeds, stocks, and bonds—in a safe deposit box or with an attorney or other caretaker.

CONTACTING PEACE CORPS HEADQUARTERS

This list of numbers will help connect you with the appropriate office at Peace Corps headquarters to answer various questions. You can use the toll-free number and extension or dial directly using the local numbers provided. Be sure to leave the toll-free number and extensions with your family so they can contact you in the event of an emergency.

Peace Corps headquarters toll-free number: 855.855.1961, press 1, then extension number (see below)

Peace Corps mailing address: Peace Corps
Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Headquarters
1111 20th Street NW
Washington, DC 20526

For Questions About	Staff	Toll-free extension	Direct/Local
Responding to an invitation	Placement Office	ext. 1840	202.692.1840
Country information	Country Desk Officer	ext. 2419 jordan@peacecorps.gov	202.692.2419
Plane tickets, passports, visas, or other travel matters	CWTSatoTravel	ext. 1170	202.692.1170
Legal clearance	Placement Office	ext. 1840	202.692.1840
Medical clearance and forms processing (includes dental)	Screening Nurse	ext. 1500	202.692.1500
Medical reimbursements (handled by a subcontractor)			800.818.8772
Loan deferments, taxes, financial operations		ext. 1770	202.692.1770
Readjustment allowance withdrawals, power of attorney, staging (pre-departure orientation), and reporting instructions	Staging Office	ext. 1865	202.692.1865
<i>Note: You will receive comprehensive information (hotel and flight arrangements) three to five weeks prior to departure. This information is not available sooner.</i>			
Family emergencies (to get information to a Volunteer overseas) 24-hour hotline	Counseling and Outreach Unit	ext. 1470	202.692.1470
Office of Victim Advocacy		ext. 1753 24 hours (call or text)	202.692.1753 202.409.2704