



**MICHIGAN STATE**  
**U N I V E R S I T Y**

# PEACE CORPS PREP

## Student Guide 2023-24

Information about and requirements  
for completing the Peace Corps Prep  
program at Michigan State University

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## Introduction to the Peace Corps Prep program

**Prepare yourself to be the best Peace Corps Volunteer you can be!**

The Peace Corps Prep (PC Prep) program at Michigan State University (MSU) will prepare you for international development fieldwork and potential Peace Corps service. To accomplish this, you'll build four core competencies during your undergraduate years through interrelated coursework, hands-on experience, and professional development support. These four competencies and their basic requirements are:

- **Training *and* experience in a specific work sector**
  - Three courses (approximately nine credits) related to your chosen work sector
    - Sector 1: Education
    - Sector 2: Health
    - Sector 3: Environment
    - Sector 4: Agriculture
    - Sector 5: Youth in Development
    - Sector 6: Community Economic Development
  - Fifty hours of related volunteer/work experience in your chosen work sector
- **Foreign language skills**
  - Language courses
    - Requirements vary by language and world area
  - It may also be possible to demonstrate language proficiency through some education abroad programs, volunteer work, or other means.
- **Intercultural competence**
  - One core course
  - Two elective courses
  - It may also be possible to meet the requirements for this competency through some education abroad programs, volunteer work, or other means.
- **Professional and leadership development**
  - Résumé preparation
  - Interview preparation
  - Demonstration of leadership activities

## General program information

- PC Prep is open to all MSU undergraduate students, first year through senior year, from any college, with any major.
- Note that while only US citizens may apply to serve in the Peace Corps, students with citizenship from other countries may still participate in PC Prep, as it can serve to document a general desire to work in the international development sector.
- Completion of the PC Prep program does not guarantee that you will be offered a position as a Peace Corps Volunteer, though it serves to document your interest in development and gives you a competitive foundation.
- It is not necessary to complete the PC Prep program to apply to the Peace Corps, either through MSU's recruiting office or independently.
- PC Prep is not a transcriptable certificate, but the four competencies are integrated with the [Spartan Experience Record](#) (SER), providing an official MSU record of your involvement in the program. The SER documents student learning and engagement in non-credit bearing experiences and can be requested from the Registrar along with your transcript. Look for the globe icon in each competency to tell you the position name to search for in the SER system.

## Community and connecting

PC Prep program participants typically check in with the Program Coordinator once a semester to go over their progress and discuss any changes or newly completed steps since their last meeting. There is also an exit interview when all program requirements are met to ensure that the Program Coordinator has all the necessary documentation to have Peace Corps issue the certificate. The Program Coordinator is also available at any time for questions or concerns, and participants are always welcome to make an appointment or pop in.

In addition to those one-on-one meetings, there are occasional social activities that you are welcome (and encouraged!) to attend so you have a chance to meet like-minded people from across campus. Some are aimed at PC Prep students, some at anyone interested in Peace Corps service, some at Returned Peace Corps Volunteers on campus and in the community, and some are for all of the above! Activities include things like representing the Peace Corps by marching in the MSU Homecoming Parade, painting the Rock during Peace Corps Week, informal pizza parties and coffee chats, panel sessions, and a spring reception to celebrate graduates.

## Learn more

Comprehensive answers to frequently asked questions can be found on the [PC Prep website](#). To learn more, please complete the [PC Prep Program Interest Survey](#) and the Program Coordinator will provide information about any upcoming information sessions and the next steps in the application process.

## Apply

Interested students can apply at any time through the program's rolling admissions process. Information sessions will be offered multiple times throughout the academic year and may also be available online.

This Student Guide explains each of these requirements in detail. **Use this handbook and the [PC Prep Planning Sheet](#) to map out your PC Prep course of study at MSU.** Refer to the information in this guide when completing your PC Prep application, where you'll need to document how you plan to fulfill each requirement; **this guide aligns point-by-point with each section of the application.**

Ready to begin your PC Prep experience? Use the information you gathered on the [PC Prep Planning Sheet](#) to complete the [online application](#) on the PC Prep website.

## Competency I: Training *and* experience in a specific work sector

### 3 courses + 50 hours related experience

Leveraging concrete knowledge and skills is central to on-the-ground international development work. Through the PC Prep program at MSU, you will begin to build a professional specialty, which should serve your career well whether you become a Peace Corps Volunteer, pursue other opportunities in the development sector, or both.

For PC Prep, you need to complete **at least three courses** that align with a specific work sector (they *can* come, but *do not have to* come, from your academic major or minor). Since your participation in PC Prep is meant to demonstrate your developing expertise in a certain subject area, you must receive at least a 2.0 in each course you plan to count toward your PC Prep certificate. You also must accumulate and document **a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer or work experience in that *same* sector**, preferably in a teaching or outreach capacity.

There are [six sectors](#) in which Peace Corps Volunteers currently serve, detailed in the following pages. **Choose one sector to focus on then complete at least three courses + 50 hours of related experience in that sector.** These sectors are broad and not necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, environment, health, and education may be tightly connected in a setting where composting, gardening for better nutrition, and teaching are relevant. Similarly, agriculture and community economic development may both be relevant where household farmers work to feed themselves and their families, as well as sell products at the local market.

Choosing one sector focuses your experiences in the PC Prep program, but in no way limits how you may ultimately apply to the Peace Corps. Many programs at MSU may also serve to fill two requirements at once, such as field-based education, international or domestic, that includes theory and practice. Actual Peace Corps assignments are based on local needs, and thus may or may not align seamlessly with your qualifications.

Flexibility, creativity, and adaptability are key!

### Peace Corps Tip

*If you intend to apply to the Peace Corps, the best way to assure that you will be a strong candidate is to explore Peace Corps' openings and identify the type of assignments in which you'd like to serve, then review the positions' required and desired qualifications and build them up accordingly. In the process, you should fulfill these PC Prep experiential requirements!*



**SER Activity:** Peace Corps Prep Program Competencies

**Position:** Sector-Specific Skills Competency

## Sector 1: Education



***Teach lessons that last a lifetime.*** Education is the Peace Corps' largest program area. Volunteers play an important role in creating links among schools, parents, and communities by working in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools as math, science, conversational English, and resource teachers or as early grade reading and literacy teacher trainers. Volunteers also develop libraries and technology resource centers.

If you choose Education, take **three courses (approximately nine credits)** from **ONE subject area below** (e.g., all related to Math education, or two LLT classes plus one LIN course) to build expertise in that subject area. You may also wish to explore the italicized minors and special programs below, as the coursework for these programs is well-aligned with Peace Corps' Education sector targets.

- College of Arts and Letters
  - *Minor in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*
  - *Online Certificate in TESOL* (stand-alone non-credit online courses, additional tuition fee)
  - Any Language, Learning and Teaching (LLT) courses
  - Any Linguistics (LIN) courses
- College of Education
  - *Minor in Educational Studies*
  - *Global Educators Cohort Program (GECP)*
  - Any Educational Administration (EAD) courses
  - Any Teacher Education (TE) courses
  - Any Counseling, Educational Psychology & Special Education (CEP) courses
- College of Engineering
  - Any Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) courses
  - Any Engineering (EGR) courses
- College of Natural Science
  - *Minor in Teaching Mathematics – Elementary*
  - *Minor in Teaching Mathematics – Secondary*
  - *Minor in Teaching Earth Science*
  - Any Astronomy and Astrophysics (AST) courses
  - Any Cell and Molecular Biology (CMB) courses
  - Any Chemistry (CEM) courses
  - Any Integrated Science Education (ISE) courses
  - Any Mathematics Education (MTHE) courses
  - Any Science and Mathematics Education (SME) courses
- College of Social Science
  - *Minor in Teaching Geography*
  - Any Geography (GEO) courses



## Recommended courses

These courses have been curated as being particularly relevant for preparing students for service in the Education sector. This is not an exhaustive list—many other MSU courses would also provide valuable background information for this sector. Some courses may have prerequisites, may require a certain major to enroll, or may not fit into your academic program; please work with your academic advisor to find courses best suited for your plans.

- ANP 420 Language and Culture
- CEP 460 Communication Skill Training for the Helping Professional
- EAD 362 Student Culture and Higher Ed.
- EAD 363 Diversity and Higher Education
- LIN 200 Introduction to Language
- LIN 230 Languages of the World
- LIN 401 Introduction to Linguistics
- LIN 471 Sociolinguistics
- LLT 306 Methods of Teaching Adult and Community English to Speakers of Other Languages
- LLT 307 Methods of Second and Foreign Language Teaching (*but see sidebar*)
- LLT 346 Pedagogical English Grammar for English Teachers
- LLT 361 Second and Foreign Language Learning
- LLT 496 Practicum in Adult English as a Second Language Teaching
- TE 101 Social Foundations of Justice and Equity in Education
- TE 102 Pedagogy and Politics of Justice and Equity in Education
- TE 250 Human Diversity, Power, and Opportunity in Social Institutions
- TE 352 Immigrant Language and Culture
- TE 353 International Education
- TE 431 Learning Through Drama
- TE 448 Issues of Diversity in Children's and Adolescent Literature

### MSU Pro Tip



*Let's talk TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). If you have*

*no experience with language teaching and hope to teach English in the Peace Corps, consider the class in **Methods of Teaching Adult and Community English to Speakers of Other Languages (LLT 306)**. This course provides a methods foundation for teaching English to teens and adults and is well-suited for those hoping to teach overseas. The LLT 307 course is aimed more at those hoping to teach in K-12 environments in the US.*

If there is another course in the [Course Descriptions catalog](#) that you feel meets the requirement for this sector, please discuss it with the Program Coordinator. To request that a course count toward the requirements for this Peace Corps sector, please complete the [Peace Corps Prep course petition form](#). You will need to upload a recent copy of the course syllabus and write a short paragraph about how the course aligns with the subject area requirement.

## Peace Corps Tip

*Nearly two-thirds of Peace Corps Volunteers serve in Education or Health. Coursework and meaningful experience in one of these areas—especially teaching English as a second or foreign language—produce some of the strongest candidates.*



## Field experience

In addition to your coursework, you will accumulate and document 50 hours of **related** field experience through an activity such as those listed here. New opportunities may become available throughout your participation in PC Prep, and some of the activities listed below may no longer be possible. If you become aware of new field experiences that could be added, or the closure of any of the listed programs, please let the Program Coordinator know.

### General opportunities

- Teaching in a classroom, with a community outreach organization, in a formal tutoring capacity, or similar format. The subject of the teaching may be English as a Foreign/Second Language, special education, drama, or a STEM subject.

### Local opportunities

- [America Reads](#)
- [Capital Area District Libraries ESOL Programs](#)
- [Capital Area Literacy Coalition/The Reading People](#)
- [Community Volunteers for International Programs](#)
- [Cristo Rey Community Center](#)
- [Honors Times Two Mentoring Program](#)
- [Impression 5 Science Center](#)
- [Lansing Public Schools](#) (including a K-6 Spanish immersion school, a K-8 International Baccalaureate/Chinese immersion school, and an international magnet school)
- [Read to Succeed/Student Literacy Corps](#)
- [Refugee Development Center](#)
- [Refugee Outreach Collective MSU](#)
- [Science Theatre](#)
- [Telamon Corporation](#)
- [Visiting International Professional Program](#)
- [Volunteer English Tutoring Program](#)

## MSU Pro Tip



*The Education sector is so broad that the sector requirements can technically be met without any coursework in pedagogy, methods, or comparative education.*

*If you have selected the Education sector, but most of your coursework has been in other disciplines (e.g., STEM fields), **TE 353 International Education** would be an excellent course to complement your other classes. This course, open to any major, provides a foundation in global education and examines issues of access and achievement, gender differences, pedagogy and culture, role of home and community, school resources, teacher quality and policy, policy challenges in developing countries, and more.*

## Sector 2: Health



***Serve on the front lines of global health.*** Health Volunteers work within their communities to promote important topics such as nutrition, maternal and child health, basic hygiene, and water sanitation. Volunteers also work in HIV/AIDS education and prevention programs to train youth as peer educators, develop appropriate education strategies, provide support to children orphaned by the pandemic, and create programs that provide emotional and financial support to families and communities affected by the disease.

If you choose Health, take **three courses (approximately nine credits)** related to the health sector from any of the following areas. You may also wish to explore the italicized minors and special programs below, as the coursework for these programs is well-aligned with Peace Corps' Health sector targets.

- College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
  - Any Human Nutrition and Foods (HNF) courses
- College of Education
  - *Minor in Health Promotion*
- College of Engineering
  - Any Environmental Engineering (ENE) courses
- College of Human Medicine
  - *Minor in Global Public Health and Epidemiology*
  - Any Human Anatomy (ANTR) courses
  - Any Epidemiology (EPI) courses
  - Any Human Medicine (HM) courses
  - Any Physiology (PSL) courses
- College of Natural Science
  - Any Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (BMB) courses
  - Any Cell and Molecular Biology (CMB) courses
- College of Nursing
  - Any Nursing (NUR) courses
- College of Social Science
  - *Minor in Environment and Health*

### Recommended courses

These courses have been curated as being particularly relevant for preparing students for service in the Health sector. This is not an exhaustive list—many other MSU courses would also provide valuable background information for this sector. Some courses may have prerequisites, may require a certain major to enroll, or may not fit into your academic program; please work with your academic advisor to find courses best suited for your plans.

- ANP 270 Women and Health: Anthropological and International Perspectives
- ANP 370 Culture, Health, and Illness
- ANP 471 The Anthropology of Alternative Medicine
- EEM 260 World Food, Population and Poverty
- ENE 280 Principles of Environmental Engineering and Science
- ENE 483 Water and Wastewater Engineering
- ENE 487 Microbiology for Environmental Science and Engineering
- EPI 200 A Multidisciplinary Approach to Problems in Global Public Health and Epidemiology
- EPI 390 Disease in Society: Introduction to Epidemiology and Public Health
- GEO 235 Geography of Environment and Health
- GEO 435 Geography of Health and Disease
- HM 101 Introduction to Public Health
- HNF 150 Introduction to Human Nutrition
- HNF 250 Contemporary Issues in Human Nutrition
- HNF 375 Community Nutrition
- HNF 385 Public Health Nutrition
- HNF 406 Global Foods and Culture
- HNF 415 Global Nutrition
- KIN 121 The Healthy Lifestyle
- KIN 355 Physical Activity and Health Education for Elementary Teachers
- MC 337 Global Public Health
- NUR 324 Health Promotion and Disease and Injury Prevention I
- NUR 464 Health in Our World
- PHL 453 Ethical Issues in Global Public Health
- REL 385 Religion, Health, and Healthcare
- SOC 475 Health and Society

If there is another course in the [Course Descriptions catalog](#) that you feel meets the requirement for this sector, please discuss it with the Program Coordinator. To request that a course count toward the requirements for this Peace Corps sector, please complete the [Peace Corps Prep course petition form](#). You will need to upload a recent copy of the course syllabus and write a short paragraph about how the course aligns with the subject area requirement.

### Field experience

In addition to your coursework, you will accumulate and document 50 hours of **related** field experience through an activity such as those listed here. New opportunities may become available throughout your participation in PC Prep, and some of the activities listed below may no longer be possible. If you become aware of new field experiences that could be added, or the closure of any of the listed programs, please let the Program Coordinator know.

## General opportunities

- Volunteer or work experience in such areas as HIV/AIDS outreach, hospice, family planning counseling, emergency medical technician (EMT) or CPR teaching/certification, maternal health, and hands-on caregiving in a hospital, clinic, or lab technician setting
- Counseling or teaching in health subjects
- Working as a resident advisor in a residence hall, as a peer nutritionist, or as a sexually transmitted infections counselor
- Significant experience in mechanical repairs, construction, carpentry, masonry, plumbing, hydrology, or set design

- [American Cancer Society Michigan](#)
- [American Red Cross Michigan Region](#)
- [Camp Casey](#)
- [Camp Catch-a-Rainbow](#)
- [Care Free Medical](#)
- [Carriage Town Ministries](#) (Flint)
- [Center for Survivors \(MSU\)](#)
- [Child Family Health International](#)
- [College of Human Medicine Public Health Association \(MSU\)](#)
- [Cristo Rey Community Center](#)
- [EVE – End Violent Encounters](#)
- [FitKids360](#)
- [Foundation for International Medical Relief of Children](#)
- [Hamilton Community Health Center](#) (Flint)
- [Hospice of Lansing](#)
- [Ingham Community Health Centers](#)
- [Lansing Area AIDS Network](#)
- [Lansing Latino Health Alliance](#)
- [McLaren Greater Lansing](#)
- [Michigan Clinicians for Climate Action](#)
- [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#) (apply to specific county office)
- [Planned Parenthood Generation Action](#)
- [Planned Parenthood of Michigan](#)
- [Sparrow Health System](#)
- [Spartan Street Medicine](#)
- [St. Vincent Catholic Charities – Refugee Services](#)
- [Women’s Health Interest Group – Grand Rapids](#)

### From the Field

***[Peace Corps gave me] the chance to grow and reflect.*** As an immigrant, I appreciated the opportunity to excel here in the US and valued the opportunity to give back in a safe and secure environment.



Professionally, it was a way to pursue my passion in global health. I also saw an opportunity for a career in a government organization after finishing service, by using non-competitive eligibility (NCE). My dream job is to serve as part of the Commissioned Corps of the US Public Health Services.

- Nirav Shah, served in Zambia

## Sector 3: Environment



**Help forge a global movement to protect our planet.** Volunteers lead grassroots efforts in their communities to protect the environment and strengthen understanding of environmental issues. They teach environmental awareness in elementary and secondary schools and to youth groups and community organizations, empowering communities to make their own decisions about how to protect and conserve the local environment. Volunteers also address environmental degradation by promoting sustainable use of natural resources.

If you choose Environment, take **three courses (approximately nine credits)** related to the environment sector from any of the following areas. You may also wish to explore the italicized minors and special programs below, as the coursework for these programs is well-aligned with Peace Corps' Environment sector targets.

- College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
  - *Minor in Applied Development in International Agriculture and Natural Resources*
  - *Minor in Conservation, Recreation and Environmental Enforcement*
  - *Minor in Environmental Economics*
  - *Minor in Forestry*
  - *Minor in Marine Ecosystem Management*
  - *Minor in Sustainable Natural Resource Recreation Management*
  - *Minor in Urban and Community Forestry*
  - Any Community Sustainability (CSUS) courses
  - Any Forestry (FOR) courses
  - Any Fisheries and Wildlife (FW) courses
- College of Engineering
  - *Concentration in Bioenergy and Bioproduct Engineering*
  - *Concentration in Ecosystems Engineering*
  - *Concentration in Environmental Engineering*
  - Any Environmental Engineering (ENE) courses
- College of Natural Science
  - *Minor in Environmental and Sustainability Studies*
- College of Social Science
  - *Minor in Environment and Health*
  - *Minor in Environmental Social Science*
- James Madison College
  - *Minor in Science, Technology, Environment and Public Policy*

## Recommended courses

These courses have been curated as being particularly relevant for preparing students for service in the Environment sector. This is not an exhaustive list—many other MSU courses would also provide valuable background information for this sector. Some courses may have prerequisites, may require a certain major to enroll, or may not fit into your academic program; please work with your academic advisor to find courses best suited for your plans.

- AFRE 265 Ecological Economics
- ANP 325 Anthropology of the Environment and Development
- ANP 443 Human Adaptability
- ANR 250 Global Issues in Agriculture and Natural Resources
- ANR 292 Applications in Environmental Studies
- ANS 480 Animal Systems in International Development
- CMP 445 Green and Energy Efficient Building Construction
- CSUS 200 Introduction to Sustainability
- CSUS 215 International Development and Sustainability
- CSUS 265 Exploring Environmental and Sustainability Issues and Policy Using Film
- CSUS 278 Introduction to Conservation, Recreation and Environmental Enforcement
- CSUS 310 History of Environmental Thought and Sustainability
- CSUS 445 Community-Based Environmental and Sustainability Education
- EC 310 Economics of Developing Countries
- ENE 280 Principles of Environmental Engineering and Science
- ENE 483 Water and Wastewater Engineering
- ENE 487 Microbiology for Environmental Science and Engineering
- FOR 202 Introduction to Forestry
- FOR 330 Human Dimensions of Forests
- FW 101 Fundamentals of Fisheries and Wildlife Ecology and Management
- FW 181 Introduction to Science, Technology, the Environment and Public Policy
- FW 434 Human Dimensions of Fisheries and Wildlife Management
- FW 439 Conservation Ethics
- FW 444 Conservation Biology
- FW 445 Biodiversity Conservation Policy and Practice
- FW 450 International Environmental Law and Policy
- FW 480 International Studies in Fisheries and Wildlife
- FW 481 Global Issues in Fisheries and Wildlife
- FW 813 Natural Resources and Environmental Governance (*undergrads may be eligible for override*)
- GEO 235 Geography of Environment and Health
- GLG 306 Environmental Geomorphology



- GLG 421 Environmental Geochemistry
- GLG 446 Ecosystems Modeling, Water and Food Security
- IBIO 355 Ecology
- IBIO 357 Global Change Biology
- IBIO 446 Environmental Issues and Public Policy
- IBIO 485 Tropical Biology
- ISS 310 People and Environment
- JRN 472 Environmental, Science and Health Reporting
- MC 338 Environmental Justice and Global Change
- PDC 403 Introduction to Domicology: Sustainable Built Environment
- PHL 342 Environmental Ethics
- SOC 452 Advanced Seminar in Environmental Sociology

## From the Field

*We love encouraging others in our community to find their own personal connection with the environment and outdoors – whatever that may look like! **Now more than ever, it is crucial that each individual does their part to protect the environment for generations to come.** In the environment sector, we also have so much to learn from Paraguayans – they are very creative when it comes to reusing items, and it seems like everyone has knowledge on native species and the best remedies to put in your tea for a sore throat!*

*- Allison Bell, served in Paraguay*

If there is another course in the [Course Descriptions catalog](#) that you feel meets the requirement for this sector, please discuss it with the Program Coordinator. To request that a course count toward the requirements for this Peace Corps sector, please complete the [Peace Corps Prep course petition form](#). You will need to upload a recent copy of the course syllabus and write a short paragraph about how the course aligns with the subject area requirement.

## Field experience

In addition to your coursework, you will accumulate and document 50 hours of **related** field experience through an activity such as those listed here. New opportunities may become available throughout your participation in PC Prep, and some of the activities listed below may no longer be possible. If you become aware of new field experiences that could be added, or the closure of any of the listed programs, please let the Program Coordinator know.

## General opportunities

- Educating the public on environmental or conservation issues, or working on environmental campaigns
- Conducting biological surveys of plants or animals
- Gardening, farming, nursery management, organic or low-input vegetable production, or landscaping
- Providing technical assistance and training in natural resource management



### *Local opportunities*

- [Allen Neighborhood Center – Hunter Park GardenHouse](#)
- [Alliance for the Great Lakes](#)
- [Blueprints for Pangaea MSU](#)
- [Citizens' Climate Lobby](#)
- [Clean Water Action](#)
- [Climate Reality Project Campus Corps](#)
- [Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice](#)
- [Ecology Center](#)
- [EcoWorks](#)
- [Engineers for a Sustainable World](#)
- [Fenner Nature Center](#)
- [Friends of the Lansing Regional Trails](#)
- [Greater Lansing Food Bank – Garden Project](#)
- [Green Home Institute](#)
- [Leadership in Environmental and Agricultural Fields \(LEAF\)](#)
- [League of Michigan Bicyclists](#)
- [LEED Green Associate Credential](#)
- [Michigan Audubon](#)
- [Michigan Clinicians for Climate Action](#)
- [Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy \(EGLE\)](#)
- [Michigan Energy Options](#)
- [Michigan Environmental Council](#)
- [Michigan Interfaith Power & Light](#)
- [Michigan League of Conservation Voters](#)
- [Michigan Recycling Coalition](#)
- [Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance](#)
- [Michigan Trout Unlimited](#)
- [Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council](#)
- [Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance](#)
- [MSU Greenpeace](#)
- [MSU Office of Sustainability](#)
- [Nature Conservancy](#)
- [Reach Outside](#)
- [Residential Initiative on the Study of the Environment \(RISE\)](#)
- [Sierra Club Michigan Chapter](#)
- [South Side Community Coalition](#)
- [Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision](#)
- [Stewardship Network](#)
- [Student Greenhouse Project](#)
- [Sunrise Movement Lansing Hub](#)
- [Sustainable Spartans](#)
- [US Fish and Wildlife Service](#)
- [US Green Building Council West Michigan Chapter](#)
- [West Michigan Environmental Action Council](#)
- [Woldumar Nature Center](#)

## Sector 4: Agriculture



**Lead grassroots efforts to fight hunger in a changing world.** *Agricultural Volunteers work with small-scale farmers and families to increase food security and production and adapt to climate change while promoting environmental conservation practices. They introduce farmers to techniques that prevent soil erosion, reduce the use of harmful pesticides, and replenish the soil. They work alongside farmers on integrated projects that often combine vegetable gardening, livestock management, agroforestry, and nutrition education.*

If you choose Agriculture, take **three courses (approximately nine credits)** related to the agriculture sector from any of the following areas. You may also wish to explore the italicized minors and special programs below, as the coursework for these programs is well-aligned with Peace Corps' Agriculture sector targets.

- College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
  - *Minor in Agribusiness Management*
  - *Minor in Agronomy*
  - *Minor in Applied Development in International Agriculture and Natural Resources*
  - *Minor in Environmental Economics*
  - *Minor in Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems*
  - Any Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) courses
  - Any Agricultural Technology (AT) courses
  - Any Crop and Soil Sciences (CSS) courses
  - Any Entomology (ENT) courses
  - Any Horticulture (HRT) courses
- College of Social Science
  - *Minor in International Development*

### Recommended courses

These courses have been curated as being particularly relevant for preparing students for service in the Agriculture sector. This is not an exhaustive list—many other MSU courses would also provide valuable background information for this sector. Some courses may have prerequisites, may require a certain major to enroll, or may not fit into your academic program; please work with your academic advisor to find courses best suited for your plans.

- AFRE 100      Decision-making in the Agri-Food System
- AFRE 206      World Food, Population and Poverty
- AFRE 327      Global Agri-Food Industries and Markets
- ANR 250      Global Issues in Agriculture and Natural Resources
- ANR 475      International Studies in Agriculture and Natural Resources
- ANS 110      Introductory Animal Agriculture
- ANS 124      Introduction to Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems
- ANS 401      Ethical Issues in Animal Agriculture
- ANS 480      Animal Systems in International Development
- AT 101      Spanish for the Agricultural Industry
- AT 214      Leadership Development in Agriculture and Natural Resources Industries
- CSS 101      Introduction to Crop Science
- CSS 124      Introduction to Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems
- CSS 294      Issues in International Agriculture
- CSS 424      Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems: Integration and Synthesis
- CSS 431      International Agricultural Systems
- CSS 455      Environmental Pollutants in Soil and Water
- ENT 205      Pests, Society and Environment
- ENT 410      Apiculture and Pollination
- ENT 479      Organic Pest Management
- GEO 410      Geography of Food and Agriculture
- HNF 406      Global Foods and Culture
- HRT 203      Introduction to Horticulture
- HRT 224      Sustainable Farm and Food Systems Field Studies
- HRT 251      Organic Farming Principles and Practices
- HRT 253      Compost Production and Use
- HRT 405      Sustainable Practices for Horticultural Food Crop Production
- MC 430      Applied International Development

If there is another course in the [Course Descriptions catalog](#) that you feel meets the requirement for this sector, please discuss it with the Program Coordinator. To request that a course count toward the requirements for this Peace Corps sector, please complete the [Peace Corps Prep course petition form](#). You will need to upload a recent copy of the course syllabus and write a short paragraph about how the course aligns with the subject area requirement.

## Field experience

In addition to your coursework, you will accumulate and document 50 hours of **related** field experience through an activity such as those listed here. New opportunities may become available throughout your participation in PC Prep, and some of the activities listed below may no longer be possible. If you become aware of new field experiences that could be added, or the closure of any of the listed programs, please let the Program Coordinator know.

### General opportunities

- Working with a large-scale or family-run business involving vegetable gardening, farming, nursery work, tree planting or care, urban forestry, landscaping, livestock care and management, or fish cultivation and production
- Teaching or tutoring the public in environmental or agricultural issues/activities
- Working on the business management or marketing side of a commercial farm

### Local opportunities

- [Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Education Club](#)
- [Allen Neighborhood Center – Allen Farmers Market](#)
- [Allen Neighborhood Center – Hunter Park GardenHouse](#)
- [Bailey GREENhouse and Urban Farm](#)
- [Dairy Club \(MSU\)](#)
- [East Lansing Farmers Market](#)
- [Greater Lansing Food Bank – Garden Project](#)
- [Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance](#)
- [Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences](#)
- [MSU Extension 4-H](#)
- [Residential Initiative on the Study of the Environment \(RISE\)](#)
- [Slow Food MSU](#)
- [Student Food Bank \(MSU\)](#)
- [Student Greenhouse Project](#)
- [Student Horticulture Association](#)
- [Student Organic Farm \(MSU\)](#)
- [Tollgate Farm and Education Center \(MSU\)](#)

### From the Field

*As an Agriculture Volunteer, I've enjoyed the flexibility to direct my time towards projects that are both interesting to me and beneficial for my community. I've also had the flexibility to work with the local schools and village groups and have been able to try new activities like beekeeping and pig husbandry together with my community.*



*Much of what I've enjoyed about being an Agriculture Volunteer can also be enjoyed by Health and Education Volunteers, but I do think Agriculture Volunteers, at least in Tanzania, start off with the most flexibility of the three sectors.*

*- John Whiting, served in Tanzania*

## Sector 5: Youth in Development



***Empower the next generation of changemakers.*** Volunteers work with youth in communities on projects that promote engagement and active citizenship, including gender awareness, employability, health and HIV/AIDS education, environmental awareness, sporting programs, and information technology.

If you choose Youth in Development, take **three courses (approximately nine credits)** related to this sector from any of the following areas. You may also wish to explore the italicized minors and special programs below, as the coursework for these programs is well-aligned with Peace Corps' Youth in Development sector targets.

- College of Education
  - *Minor in Educational Studies*
  - *Global Educators Cohort Program (GECP)*
  - Any Counseling, Educational Psychology & Special Education (CEP) courses
- College of Social Science
  - *Certificate in Social Work with Global Populations*
  - *Minor in Youth and Society*
  - *Minor in Human Behavior and Social Services*
  - Any Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) courses
  - Any Psychology (PSY) courses
  - Any Social Work (SW) courses

### Recommended courses

These courses have been curated as being particularly relevant for preparing students for service in the Youth in Development sector. This is not an exhaustive list—many other MSU courses would also provide valuable background information for this sector. Some courses may have prerequisites, may require a certain major to enroll, or may not fit into your academic program; please work with your academic advisor to find courses best suited for your plans.

- ANR 292      Applications in Environmental Studies
- CEP 240      Diverse Learners in Multicultural Perspective
- CEP 260      Dynamics of Personal Adjustment
- CSUS 200      Introduction to Sustainability
- CSUS 301      Community Engagement for Sustainability
- CSUS 445      Community-Based Environmental and Sustainability Education
- EAD 315      Student Leadership Training
- HDFS 211      Child Growth and Development

- HDFS 212 Children, Youth and Family
- HDFS 270 Introduction to Human Development and Family Studies
- HDFS 412 Ecological Perspective of Adolescents
- HNF 375 Community Nutrition
- HNF 377 Applied Community Nutrition
- HNF 385 Public Health Nutrition
- HNF 406 Global Foods and Culture
- HNF 415 Global Nutrition
- KIN 355 Physical Activity and Health Education for Elementary Teachers
- PSY 244 Developmental Psychology: Infancy Through Childhood
- PSY 270 Community Psychology
- PSY 316 Children's Exposure to Domestic Violence: Promoting Resiliency
- PSY 444 Developmental Psychology: Adolescence Through Youth
- SOC 316 Youth and Society
- SOC 475 Health and Society
- SW 200 Introduction to Social Work
- SW 310 Human Behavior and Social Environment
- SW 320 Social Work and Social Policy I
- SW 470 Foreign Area Studies in Social Work
- TE 101 Social Foundations of Justice and Equity in Education
- TE 102 Pedagogy and Politics of Justice and Equity in Education
- TE 250 Human Diversity, Power, and Opportunity in Social Institutions
- TE 291 Special Topics in Urban Education
- TE 352 Immigrant Language and Culture
- TE 353 International Education

If there is another course in the [Course Descriptions catalog](#) that you feel meets the requirement for this sector, please discuss it with the Program Coordinator. To request that a course count toward the requirements for this Peace Corps sector, please complete the [Peace Corps Prep course petition form](#). You will need to upload a recent copy of the course syllabus and write a short paragraph about how the course aligns with the subject area requirement.

### Field experience

In addition to your coursework, you will accumulate and document 50 hours of **related** field experience through an activity such as those listed here. New opportunities may become available throughout your participation in PC Prep, and some of the activities listed below may no longer be possible. If you become aware of new field experiences that could be added, or the closure of any of the listed programs, please let the Program Coordinator know.

### General opportunities

- Teaching or counseling in at-risk youth programs
- Activities that involve planning, organizing, assessing community needs, counseling, and leadership, in areas such as education, youth development, health and HIV/AIDS, the environment, and/or business

### Local opportunities

- [Advent House Ministries](#)
- [Big Brothers Big Sisters – Michigan Capital Region](#)
- [Boy Scouts of America – Michigan Crossroads Council](#)
- [Boys and Girls Club of Lansing](#)
- [Capital Area Response Effort \(CARE\)](#)
- [Cristo Rey Community Center](#)
- [Fostering Academics, Mentoring Excellence \(FAME\)](#)
- [Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan](#)
- [Girls on the Run Mid-Michigan](#)
- [Haven House](#)
- [Impression 5 Science Center](#)
- [Junior Achievement of Mid Michigan](#)
- [Lansing Public Schools](#) (including a K-6 Spanish immersion school, a K-8 International Baccalaureate/Chinese immersion school, and an international magnet school)
- [REACH Studio Art Center](#)
- [Refugee Development Center](#)
- [Refugee Outreach Collective MSU](#)
- [Samaritas](#)
- [South Side Community Coalition](#)
- [St. Vincent Catholic Charities](#)

#### From the Field

*I enjoy working with young people because they are usually open-minded and eager to learn new skills and build relationships. I know that I am making a difference in their future. **Youth are the future leaders, and if we invest in them, we will have a better world.***

*- Fabenson Frisch, served in Ukraine*

## Sector 6: Community Economic Development



***Harness 21st-century tools to help communities lift themselves.*** Volunteers work with development banks, nongovernmental organizations, and municipalities to strengthen infrastructure and encourage economic opportunities in communities. They frequently teach in classroom settings and work with entrepreneurs and business owners to develop and market their products. Some Volunteers also teach basic computer skills and help communities take advantage of technologies such as e-commerce, distance learning, and more.

If you choose Community Economic Development, take **three courses (approximately nine credits)** related to this sector from any of the following areas. You may also wish to explore the italicized minors and special programs below, as the coursework for these programs is well-aligned with Peace Corps' Community Economic Development sector targets.

- College of Arts and Letters
  - *Minor in Arts and Cultural Management*
  - *Concentration in Nonprofit Leadership*
  - Any Arts and Cultural Management (ACM) courses
  - Any Graphic Design (GD) courses
- College of Communication Arts and Sciences
  - Any Communication (COM) courses
  - Any Media and Information (MI) courses
  - Any Public Relations (PR) courses
- College of Engineering
  - Any Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) courses
- College of Social Science
  - *Certificate in Non-Profit Leadership*
  - *Minor in Leadership of Organizations*
  - Any Human Resources and Labor Relations (HRLR) courses
- Eli Broad College of Business
  - *Minor in Business*
  - *Minor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation*
  - *Minor in International Business*
  - Any Accounting (ACC) courses
  - Any Business (BUS) courses
  - Any Entrepreneurship (ESHP) courses
  - Any Finance (FI) courses
  - Any General Business and Business Law (GBL) courses
  - Any Management (MGT) courses
  - Any Marketing (MKT) courses



## Recommended courses

These courses have been curated as being particularly relevant for preparing students for service in the Community Economic Development sector. This is not an exhaustive list—many other MSU courses would also provide valuable background information for this sector. Some courses may have prerequisites, may require a certain major to enroll, or may not fit into your academic program; please work with your academic advisor to find courses best suited for your plans.

- ANP 436 Globalization and Justice: Issues in Political and Legal Anthropology
- CAS 114 Creativity and Innovative Entrepreneurship
- CAS 214 Social Media and the Start-up
- COM 240 Introduction to Organizational Communication
- COM 275 Effects of Mass Communication
- CSUS 200 Introduction to Sustainability
- CSUS 430 Non-Profit Organizational Management for Community Sustainability
- CSUS 433 Grant Writing and Fund Development
- CSUS 473 Social Entrepreneurship and Community Sustainability
- EAD 315 Leadership Training
- EC 310 Economics of Developing Countries
- EC 410 Issues in the Economics of Developing Countries
- ESHP 190 The Art of Starting
- ESHP 202 Entrepreneurship Abroad
- GBL 393 Introduction to International Business
- GBL 460 International Business Law and Sustainability
- GBL 467 Emerging Enterprise Law
- GD 295 Design Thinking for Entrepreneurs
- HRLR 201 Human Capital and Society
- HRLR 211 Introduction to Organizational Leadership
- HRLR 420 Comparative Human Capital Systems
- MGT 352 Entrepreneurship: New Venture Process
- MGT 476 Globalization and International Management
- MI 301 Bringing Media to Market
- MI 304 Information and Society
- MKT 310 International Business
- PHL 345 Business Ethics
- PHL 452 Ethics and Development
- PLS 310 Public Administration and Policy Making
- PLS 342 Comparative Political Economy
- PLS 344 Politics of Developing Areas
- PLS 347 Democratic Regimes
- PR 310 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Public Relations and Advertising

- PSY 255 Industrial and Organizational Psychology
- PSY 270 Community Psychology
- SOC 161 International Development and Change
- SOC 322 Sociology of Work
- SOC 424 Organizations and Society
- WRA 401 Rhetoric, Leadership, and Innovation
- WRA 453 Grant and Proposal Writing

If there is another course in the [Course Descriptions catalog](#) that you feel meets the requirement for this sector, please discuss it with the Program Coordinator. To request that a course count toward the requirements for this Peace Corps sector, please complete the [Peace Corps Prep course petition form](#). You will need to upload a recent copy of the course syllabus and write a short paragraph about how the course aligns with the subject area requirement.

### Field experience

In addition to your coursework, you will accumulate and document 50 hours of **related** field experience through an activity such as those listed here. New opportunities may become available throughout your participation in PC Prep, and some of the activities listed below may no longer be possible. If you become aware of new field experiences that could be added, or the closure of any of the listed programs, please let the Program Coordinator know.

### General opportunities

- Working with businesses, organizations, or cooperatives in accounting, finance, microfinance, management, project management, budgeting, or marketing
- Starting and running your own business or other entrepreneurial activity
- Training others in computer literacy, maintenance, and repair
- Website design or online marketing
- Founding or leading a community- or school-based organization

### Local opportunities

- [180 Degrees Consulting – MSU](#)
- [Capital Area Response Effort \(CARE\)](#)
- [Capital Area United Way](#)
- [Cristo Rey Community Center](#)

### From the Field

*I wished to further connect with my Latin American heritage, to exchange with another Hispanic culture and better understand the intricacies of the Latinx identity. Most importantly, **I felt compelled to contribute to the goodness in the world and expand its reach, offering skills to help build a more inclusive global economy through local business and entrepreneurship.***

- Yvette Garcia, served in the Dominican Republic

- [Eastside Community Action Center](#)
- [Michigan Community Action](#)
- [Multicultural Business Students](#)
- [Native American and Hispanic Business Students](#)
- [Professional Asian Student Association](#)
- [Refugee Development Center](#)
- [Refugee Outreach Collective MSU](#)
- [Samaritas](#)
- [South Side Community Coalition](#)
- [St. Vincent Catholic Charities](#)
- [Students Consulting for Non-Profit Organizations](#)
- [Sustainable Business Association](#)
- [Women and Minorities in Economics](#)
- [Women in Business Students' Association](#)
- [Women in Entrepreneurship](#)

## Competency II: Foreign language skills

### Requirements vary by language and region of interest

Being successful in cross-cultural contexts often requires knowledge of spoken (and nonverbal) languages different from your own first language. Increasing your proficiency in one or more world languages is thus another critical component of the PC Prep program. Most students must hone their capacity to interact professionally using a non-English language through coursework and dedicated practice.



**SER Activity:** Peace Corps Prep Program Competencies

**Position:** Foreign Language Skills Competency

### Fulfilling the language competency through coursework

PC Prep minimum course requirements vary by your desired placement region for Peace Corps service. Many MSU colleges have a foreign language requirement in place, so PC Prep students may already be fulfilling this requirement for their degree.

- **Latin America:** Students hoping to serve in a Spanish-speaking country must build strong intermediate proficiency. This typically means completing **two 200-level courses** or having learned Spanish through another medium.
- **West Africa:** Students hoping to serve in French-speaking African countries must build proficiency in French (or in some cases another Romance language). This typically means completing **one 200-level course** or having learned French through another medium.
- **Everywhere else:** Peace Corps has no explicit language requirements for individuals applying to serve in most other countries. However, you will still likely learn and use another language during your service, so prior language-learning experience will strengthen your application. **MSU strongly encourages you to pursue language coursework related to the world area in which you hope to serve.**

### MSU Pro Tip



*Foreign language proficiency related to your world area, even at the novice level, can make you a more competitive Peace Corps applicant. The block tuition system may make it easier to add a language course from MSU's extensive offerings. **Go ahead – try a Swahili class or check out a beginner Thai course!***

MSU has a [robust program in world languages](#), with dozens of options for courses and tutorials. Regularly offered languages include:

Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe)	Arabic	Chinese	French	German
Hebrew	Hindi	Indonesian	Italian	Japanese
Korean	Persian (Farsi)	Portuguese	Russian	Spanish
Swahili	Tagalog	Tajik	Tamil	Thai
Turkish	Urdu	Uzbek	Vietnamese	Yoruba
Zulu				

Languages that are not regularly taught on campus, but which that may be available in a tutorial or course share format, include:

Amharic	Bamanankan	Bambara	Bengali	Chewa
Dutch	Finnish	Fulfulde/Pulaar	Hausa	Igbo
Indonesian	Kazakh	Khmer	Malagasy	Mende
Norwegian	Polish	Romanian	Shona	Somali
Swedish	Tagalog	Tamil	Twi	Venda
Wolof	Xhosa			

In some cases, fellowship funding may be available for students studying less commonly taught languages at higher proficiency levels. Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships are awarded to students enrolled in a program that combines the study of a modern foreign language with advanced training in international development studies or in the international development aspects of professional or other fields of study. FLAS funding is currently available through MSU's African Studies Center. Interested students can learn more at the link below.



Department of Romance and Classical Studies (RCS)  
<https://rcs.msu.edu/>



Department of Linguistics, Languages, and Cultures (LILAC)  
<https://lilac.msu.edu/>



Less Commonly Taught Languages Program  
<https://lilac.msu.edu/lctl/>



Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships  
<https://africa.isp.msu.edu/resources-funding/financial-support-applications/applications-students/foreign-language-and-area-studies-flas>

## Fulfilling the language competency other ways

### Education abroad programs

Participating in an education abroad program can quickly improve your language proficiency, though not all programs offer the same level of language immersion. MSU is a national leader in education abroad, with over 275 credit-bearing programs around the world. Education abroad programs can offer opportunities to use another language with host families, in the community, and in the classroom.

Programs vary widely in terms of length, focus, and actual language exposure. Coursework in most MSU education abroad programs is taught in English, except for intensive language-learning programs. Most languages in which majors or minors are offered at MSU have language-intensive education abroad programs available. Students may also want to explore non-MSU education abroad programs, summer immersion programs, and other opportunities.

Because so many factors can impact your language study, please speak with the Program Coordinator about whether your planned education abroad program can be used to fulfill the language competency.

There are scholarships that can help with funding for education abroad. Some, such as the Boren Awards, focus specifically on language training, and could align well with this PC Prep competency if the language is spoken in your chosen region. Visit the Education Abroad pages on [scholarships and fundraising](#) and [national scholarships](#) for more information.



Office for Education Abroad  
<https://educationabroad.isp.msu.edu/>

### MSU Pro Tip



*You can search MSU's Education Abroad programs and filter them using parameters*

*like country, program length, language of instruction, and whether the program is focused on language immersion. Visit the [Program Search page to get started!](#) Creating a profile will allow you to save programs to look at later, but the catalog is also [visible to visitors](#) without the need to create a profile.*

## Volunteer work

It may be possible to attain the required level of language proficiency through extensive volunteer work that uses the target language. Please speak with the Program Coordinator if you would like to explore whether your volunteer experience could be used for this competency.

Possible opportunities to explore include:

- [Cristo Rey Community Center](#) – essential services for vulnerable populations
- [Refugee Development Center](#) – collaboration with refugees and newcomers through education, engagement, and support
- [Telamon Corporation](#) – education, outreach, and support for migrant and seasonal workers

## Critical Language Scholarship

The Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) is a program of the US Department of State. Its website describes CLS as “an intensive overseas language and cultural immersion program for American students enrolled at U.S. colleges and universities. Students spend eight to ten weeks abroad studying one of 15 critical languages. The program includes intensive language instruction and structured cultural enrichment experiences designed to promote rapid language gains.”

If you are interested in studying one of the 15 critical languages offered through the CLS program, many of which are spoken in countries where Peace Corps operates, you are encouraged to apply for this intensive summer program. The 15 languages currently offered through CLS are:

Arabic	Azerbaijani	Bangla	Chinese	Hindi
Indonesian	Japanese	Korean	Persian (Farsi)	Portuguese
Punjabi	Russian	Swahili	Turkish	Urdu

Note that CLS applications are due in November each year, with awards taking place the following summer. Learn more at the link below and contact Lynn Aguado in the Office for Education Abroad for more information about CLS opportunities for MSU students.



Critical Language Scholarship

<https://clscholarship.org/>

## Boren Awards

The Boren Awards are another federal opportunity, funded by the Defense Language and National Security Education Office. The program provides funding to support intensive language study abroad for undergraduate and graduate students whose long-term goals include public service. Boren applicants can choose from over 90 preferred countries in Africa, Asia, Central/Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East, many of which also serve as Peace Corps host countries. Recipients of Boren Awards are required to complete 12 months of federal service after they graduate (Peace Corps service would fulfill this requirement).

### Peace Corps Tip

***You will be surrounded by, speaking, and working in your host country language for 27 months.** Some countries may conduct an interview before you depart for service to assess your level and determine what classes you may need during training. All Peace Corps countries will require you to meet a specific language benchmark in order to swear in as a Volunteer.*



Awards generally last one or two semesters. Preference is given to students applying for programs lasting at least 25 weeks, though students can apply for as few as 12 weeks of funding. STEM majors, who may find it more difficult to fit an extended overseas program into their academic plans, are given an exception and can apply for shorter summer programs.

The list of preferred languages includes dozens, from Akan to Zulu, so it is likely that you can find a match for a language spoken in your proposed Peace Corps country. Except for French and Spanish, there is no minimum proficiency requirement for a Boren Award; you can apply to any program appropriate for your level, even if you are a novice learner.

Boren applications are due in February each year, with awards taking place as early as that summer, though most begin the following academic year. Learn more at the link below and contact Lynn Aguado in the Office for Education Abroad for more information.



Boren Awards

<https://borenawards.org/>

## Native speaker proficiency

If you are a strong native speaker and hope to serve in a country in which your non-English first language is spoken, you can meet this requirement by demonstrating your proficiency and do not need to take language courses. Please speak with the Program Coordinator about how to document your proficiency level.



## Competency III: Intercultural competence

**3 approved courses or 1-2 courses + substantive intercultural experience**

Engaging thoughtfully and fluidly across cultures begins with one's own self-awareness. With this learning objective, you will deepen your cultural agility through a mix of **three introspective courses** in which you learn about others while reflecting upon your own self in relation to others. The goal is for you to build your capacity to shift perspective and behavior around relevant cultural differences, so you are able to communicate effectively with people from varied cultures and backgrounds.



**SER Activity:** Peace Corps Prep Program Competencies

**Position:** Intercultural Competency

### Core courses

PC Prep students at MSU are required to take three approved classes, **at least one of which must come from the core course list below**. These core courses involve critical reflection on engaging with cultural differences and will give you a framework for processing life as an intercultural volunteer.

- AAAS 100 Race and Community in Local to Global Perspective
- AL 200 Cultural Difference and Study Abroad
- ANP 200 Navigating Another Culture
- ANP 201 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
- ANP 330 Race, Ethnicity, and Nation: Anthropological Approaches to Collective Identity
- COM 310 Intercultural Communication
- COM 320 Diversity and Communication
- GSAH 200 Questions, Issues, and Debates in Global Studies
- GSAH 201 Introduction to Global Studies in the Arts and Humanities
- GSAH 220 Global Interactions and Identities
- GSAH 230 Values, Experience, and Difference in Global Contexts
- GSAH 301 Global Citizenship
- GSAH 314 Race, Gender, and Global Identities
- ISS 215 Social Differentiation and Inequality
- ISS 318 Lifespan Development Across Cultures
- MC 111 Identity and Community: An Approach to Writing I
- PSY 342 Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

- RCAH 203 Transcultural Relations through the Ages
- SOC 214 Social Inequality
- SOC 215 Race and Ethnicity
- SOC 310 Global Migration
- SOC 362 Developing Societies
- WS 102 Navigating Sex and Gender in Everyday Life
- WS 403 Women and Change in Developing Countries

### Elective courses – pre-approved options

You will choose two additional courses to fulfill the intercultural competence elective requirement. Any of the core courses above are approved and you may take multiple classes from the core list if you choose. Some other elective possibilities are listed below; all courses on this list are pre-approved for this requirement.

- ANP 203 Introduction to Archaeology
- ANP 220 Gender Relations in Comparative Perspective
- ANP 236 The Anthropology of Peace and Justice
- ANP 270 Women and Health: Anthropological and International Perspectives
- ANP 321 Anthropology of Social Movements
- ANP 410 Anthropology of Latin America
- ANP 417 Introduction to Islam in Africa
- ANP 419 Anthropology of the Middle East
- ANP 420 Language and Culture
- ANP 422 Religion and Culture
- ANP 426 Urban Anthropology
- ENG 360 Studies in Postcolonial and Diaspora Literature
- ENG 449 Seminar in Race, Ethnicity, and Literature
- ENG 460 Seminar in Global and Postcolonial Literature
- GSAH 310 Questions of Justice in Global Contexts
- GSAH 311 Global Perspectives on Borders and Migration
- GSAH 313 Violence and Power in Global Contexts
- HDFS 442 Ethnic Families in America
- IAH 203 Latin America and the World
- IAH 204 Asia and the World
- IAH 205 Africa and the World

### Peace Corps Tip

*In-country intercultural training for new Peace Corps trainees will allow you to reflect on your own cultural values and how they influence your behavior in-country. You'll also discuss the questions you have about the behaviors and practices you observe in-country, exploring the underlying reasons for these behaviors and practices—and 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.*



- IAH 207 Literatures, Cultures, Identities
- IAH 211 Area Studies and Multicultural Civilizations (Series of 211A, B, C, D each focusing on different a world region)
- JRN 345 Images and Messages
- MC 376 Modern Political Thought in the Muslim World
- RCAH 225 Introduction to Community Engagement
- RCAH 235 Introduction to Language and Culture Studies
- SSC 399 Service Learning and Civic Engagement: Theory and Practice

### Elective courses – other options

**There are many other courses in departments across campus that may also fulfill this requirement.** If you choose to explore options not listed above, the following guidelines will help you begin your course search:

- The courses can be from any department so long as they have a focus on comparative perspectives, diversity and inclusion, and/or the study of marginalized groups. At least one should have an international focus.
- The courses will typically be 3 credits each, though there may be valid and valuable offerings with more or fewer credits.
- Search the [Course Descriptions](#) catalog from the Office of the Registrar using keywords to find courses of interest to you.
  - For example, if you are interested in deepening your knowledge of African Studies, you could search using “Africa” as a keyword.
- If there is another course in the catalog that you feel meets this requirement, please discuss it with the Program Coordinator.
  - To request that a course be considered for this competence, please complete the [Peace Corps Prep course petition form](#). You will need to upload a recent copy of the course syllabus and write a short paragraph about how the course aligns with the intercultural competency requirement.

The following minors are also likely to include courses which would meet the intercultural competence elective requirement and are a good place to explore other elective possibilities.

- College of Arts and Letters
  - *Minor in African American and African Studies*
  - *Minor in Women’s and Gender Studies*
- College of Social Science
  - *Minor in African Studies*
  - *Minor in Asian Pacific American Studies*
  - *Minor in Asian Studies*
  - *Minor in Chicano/Latino Studies*
  - *Minor in Global Studies in Social Science*

- *Minor in International Development*
- *Minor in Latin American and Caribbean Studies*
- *Minor in Peace and Justice Studies*
- *Minor in Race and Ethnicity in the United States*
- *Minor in Youth and Society*
- James Madison College
  - *Minor in Muslim Studies*

### Fulfilling the intercultural competency other ways

You may be able to substitute an intercultural experience for one or both electives. In some cases, education abroad or extensive work in an intercultural context (e.g., internship, volunteer work) may be used to fulfill this competency. Please speak with the Program Coordinator about this option if you would like to use an intercultural experience toward your certificate requirements.

#### Peace Corps Tip

*Prolonged intercultural experiences—such as studying or volunteering abroad, supporting new immigrants or refugees in their acculturation to the United States, or volunteering in diverse schools—would also significantly strengthen your Peace Corps candidacy.*



## Competency IV: Professional and leadership development

### Résumé and interview support + leadership experience

Peace Corps service and similar international development work opportunities are highly professional and selective. PC Prep requires **three specific activities** that will strengthen your candidacy for the Peace Corps (or any other professional endeavor).



**SER Activity:** Peace Corps Prep Program Competencies

**Position:** Professional Development and Leadership Competency

### Résumé preparation

Read materials specific to creating a Peace Corps résumé, then have your résumé critiqued by a Peace Corps recruiter, someone in MSU's Career Services Network, or the career consultant in your College.

- General résumé tips:
  - The Career Services Network provides concrete tips for writing a résumé here: <https://careernetwork.msu.edu/channels/write-a-resume-or-cover-letter/>
  - There are also lots of tips in the Career Services Network's Career Handbook, available here: <https://careernetwork.msu.edu/resources/msu-career-handbook/>
- Peace Corps-specific tips:
  - Resources created specifically for tailoring your résumé for an eventual Peace Corps application are available [on the resources page of the PC Prep website](#), along with sample résumés are for each Peace Corps sector.
- Use the provided resources to tailor your own résumé, then make an appointment with the Peace Corps Recruitment Office or Career Services to have it reviewed.
- Have the person reviewing your résumé sign off on your [Résumé Review Verification Form](#).

#### Peace Corps Tip

***Your résumé is the most important part of your Peace Corps application!***

*Spending the time to tailor your résumé to the specific volunteer opening you hope to fill is worth the effort, since this document demonstrates your qualifications in terms of academic, work, and volunteer experience, and serves as a concise way to show that you have what it takes to serve.*



## Interview preparation

You may fulfill the interview preparation requirement portion of this competency in one of two ways:

- **Method 1:** Work independently to prepare using available PC Prep materials, then participate in a mock interview.
  - Resources with specific interview tips and sample questions (sourced from real Placement Officers and interviews) are available [on the resources page of the PC Prep website](#) and in the campus Peace Corps Recruitment Office. The detailed handout was created specifically to help PC Prep participants plan for the interview
  - If you choose Method 1, thoroughly review the materials to prepare, then schedule a mock interview.
- **Method 2:** Attend an interview prep workshop, then participate in a mock interview.
  - The Career Services Network provides tips on preparing for interviews here: <https://careernetwork.msu.edu/channels/prepare-for-interviews/>
  - The Career Services Network offers regular workshops on a variety of topics; check their [Events tab](#) for upcoming sessions related to preparing for professional interviews.
  - The Program Coordinator and/or Peace Corps recruiters on campus may also offer occasional workshops specific to Peace Corps interviews; watch the website and email communications for announcements.
  - If you choose Method 2, have the workshop leader sign off on Step 1 of your [Interview Preparation Verification Form](#), then schedule a mock interview.

### Mock interview options

- Schedule a one-on-one mock interview with a Peace Corps campus recruiter or consultant from the Career Services Network.
- Record a virtual interview with Interview Stream (a Career Services Network tool) and send the link to a Peace Corps recruiter for feedback.
- Have the interviewer sign off on Step 2 of your [Interview Preparation Verification Form](#).



Career Services Network

<https://careernetwork.msu.edu/>

## Leadership experience

Develop at least one significant leadership experience and be prepared to thoughtfully discuss it in the online form and during your exit interview.

- For example, you could choose to organize a campus event, lead a work or volunteer project, or serve on the executive board of a student organization.
- The MSU Department of Student Life provides several resources for finding leadership opportunities through their [Leadership Development](#) programs.
- The [Spartan Experience Record](#) can be useful in documenting leadership experiences.
- When you have completed your leadership experience(s), use the [Leadership Experience Form](#) to describe and reflect on your endeavors.

### From the Field

*Once I found out about Peace Corps, every fiber of my being told me that this was the perfect way to not only start a life of global public service, but also where I could use my skills of leadership, diplomacy, and management in an unconventional way. **I could be the change I want to see.***

- Peter Wilborn, served in Comoros

## Completing the Peace Corps Prep program

### Validate program requirements and get that certificate

When you are ready to verify that you have met the requirements for the PC Prep certificate, please take the following steps:

- Go through the “Pre-Exit Checklist Checklist” on the [documents page of the PC Prep website](#) to make sure you have all the documentation needed to complete your Exit Interview.
- Schedule an appointment with the Program Coordinator to review and sign your Exit Checklist.

### Apply to the Peace Corps

If you plan to apply to the Peace Corps, contact the campus recruiters to get started. It can take up to a year from application to departure for those who are selected, so plan accordingly.

MSU has a Peace Corps office in the International Center, and the recruiters there are well-equipped to get you started on your application journey. More information about the application process is provided in the next section.

### From the Field

***My Peace Corps service wasn't what I thought it would be, but instead, turned out to be exactly what I needed it to be. So, what am I going to be taking away from the toughest job I'll ever love? ...The most important things this journey has given me don't necessarily take the shape of items that can merely be packed away, but instead, come in the form of lessons learned that have made a lasting impression deep within. Their mark not only endures through the way they have contoured the person I have grown to become during service but will continue to take root in shaping the choices I make, both personally and professionally from here on forward.***

***- Anne Lyons, served in Costa Rica***

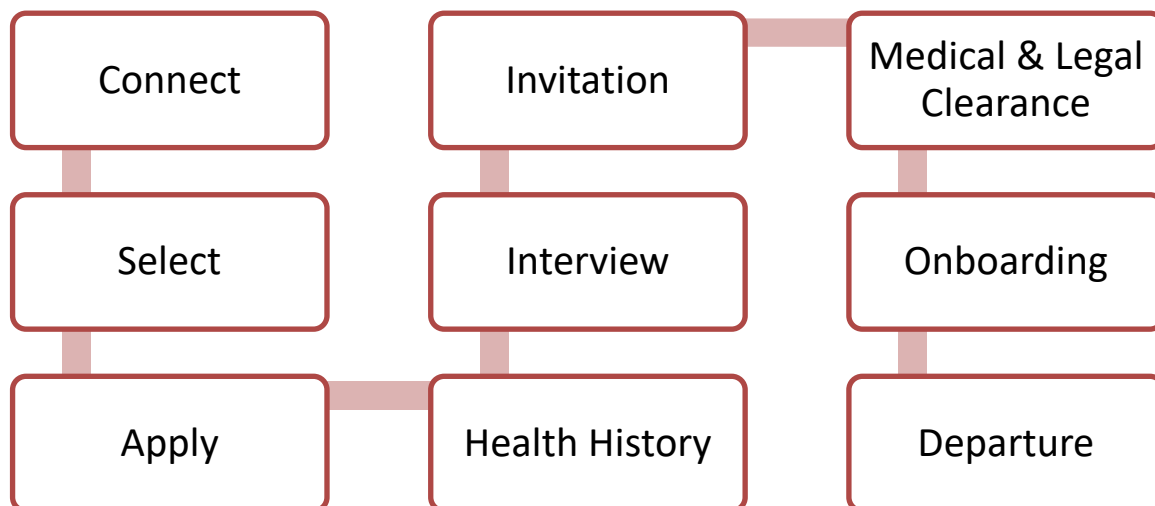


## Peace Corps application process

**Next step... apply!**

MSU's Peace Corps recruiters will guide you through each step of the lengthy application process, which can last up to a year from application to departure. They provide information sessions, tips and feedback on various sections of the application, networking and social opportunities for applicants to meet RPCVs, reminders about deadlines, and more. Recruiters also serve as liaisons with the Peace Corps central office and can seek answers to any questions you have during the process.

### Application process



1. Connect with the MSU Peace Corps recruiter(s).
2. Select the current Peace Corps opening best suited to your skills and interest.
3. Apply online via the Peace Corps website (there are four deadlines per year).
4. Provide your health history so Peace Corps can understand your individual medical needs.
5. Interview via videoconference if you are selected.
6. Accept your invitation to serve if you are chosen and invited.
7. Provide additional medical and legal information so Peace Corps can certify that medical support for your specific needs can be provided.
8. Complete the online documentation required for departure about two months prior to departure.
9. Embark on your Peace Corps service assignment!

## Application components

Following are the [essential information and documents](#) you will need to provide in your application to serve in the Peace Corps. Items in italics will be part of your Peace Corps Prep certificate program, so these areas will be easy for you to document. MSU's recruiters will be able to assist with tips on writing your motivation statement, choosing references, and any other questions you have.

- Basic personal information such as contact info
- Legal history
- Intelligence agency background (for you and any immediate family members)
- Education background
- Motivation for Serving statement (about 1 page)
- Three references
- *Sector specific experience*
- *Foreign language skills*
- *Résumé (1-3 pages)*
- *Peace Corps Prep certification*

### Peace Corps Tip

*You can only have one active Peace Corps application at a time. You submit one application, either for a specific position or to be considered for programs where you are needed most. You can also apply again for future programs if you are not selected for the position to which you applied.*



## Benefits of service

In addition to the lifelong friendships you will form during your service, and the immeasurable impact your service will have on your world view, there are a number of [important tangible benefits](#) to serving in the Peace Corps.

- Financial benefits
  - Volunteers receive a stipend for housing and living expenses during service.
  - A generous readjustment allowance (currently \$10,000) is provided upon completion of service to help with the transition to life in the US.
- Student loan benefits
  - Some public student loans may be eligible for deferment or for Public Service Loan Forgiveness by your lender.
  - Perkins loans may be eligible for partial cancellation by your lender.
- Travel benefits
  - Transportation to and from your country of service is covered.
  - Each Volunteer receives two paid vacation days per month of service.
- Medical and dental benefits
  - Medical and dental coverage is provided during service.

- Career benefits
  - The training you have at the start of service, in addition to hands-on work during your service, provide valuable experience which is sought after by corporate, nonprofit, and government employers.
  - The Peace Corps offers career support to help you prepare for your next step after service, including:
    - Help “translating” your field experience to prospective employers
    - One year of noncompetitive eligibility status for federal employment
    - Access to job announcements, résumé services, and career fairs
  - Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) certificate program
    - Volunteers can earn a recognized teaching credential during service.
- Graduate school benefits
  - More than 90 participating universities and colleges offer Coverdell Fellowships to RPCVs, providing reduced tuition, assistantships, and stipends in a range of disciplines.
- Networking benefits
  - Hundreds of thousands of Americans have served as Peace Corps Volunteers, making for a highly active and diverse alumni network.

### From the Field

*As a placement officer, I encounter a common misunderstanding that Peace Corps Volunteers are not paid during their service. While the motivation to serve people is the essential factor needed for a successful service, that doesn't mean foregoing compensation.*

*- Justin Tabor, served in the Philippines*

## Application deadlines and position listings

Peace Corps has four application deadlines per year:

- January 1
- April 1
- July 1
- October 1

Programs begin to accept applications approximately one year prior to the departure date. Each two-year position opening includes three dates: apply by, depart by, and know by. Here, from the Peace Corps website, is an approximate calendar of when new jobs go live on the [Peace Corps Volunteer Openings site](#):

- In February, programs that depart January through March of the following year are posted
- In May, programs that depart April through June of the following year are posted
- In August, programs that depart July through September of the following year are posted
- In November, programs that depart October through December of the following year are posted

## Contacts, links, and forms

### Connect with the people and resources you need

#### MSU Peace Corps contacts and links

##### Peace Corps Prep Central Contact

Use this email address for all program-related questions, and your inquiry will be routed to the most appropriate person.

Email: [pcprep@msu.edu](mailto:pcprep@msu.edu)

##### Peace Corps Prep Program Coordinator

Coordinator: Joy Campbell (RPCV Morocco, 1998-2000)

Email: [joycamp@msu.edu](mailto:joycamp@msu.edu)

Phone: 517.884.2167

Office: International Center, Room 216

Office hours: By appointment via [Calendly](#)

##### Peace Corps Prep Website

<http://isp.msu.edu/pcprep>

##### Peace Corps Recruitment Office

Recruiters: Caitlin Barker (RPCV Cameroon, 2014-2015)

Cindy Fiser (RPCV Malawi, 2018-2020)

Email: [msupeace@msu.edu](mailto:msupeace@msu.edu)

Website: <http://isp.msu.edu/peacecorps>

Phone: 517.432.7474

Office: International Center, Room 201A

Office hours: See website for current hours

#### Campus contacts and links

##### Career Services Network

<https://careernetwork.msu.edu/>

##### Center for Community Engaged Learning

<https://communityengagedlearning.msu.edu/>

Course Descriptions Catalog

<https://reg.msu.edu/Courses/Search.aspx>

Department of Student Life Leadership Development resources

<https://studentlife.msu.edu/leadership/index.html>

Education Abroad

<https://educationabroad.isp.msu.edu/>

Involve@State – List of Registered Students Organizations

<https://msu.campuslabs.com/engage/organizations>

Spartan Experience Record

<https://ser.msu.edu/>

Writing Center

<https://writing.msu.edu/>

## Other contacts and links

Peace Corps website

<https://www.peacecorps.gov/>

Peace Corps Prep website

<https://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/university-programs/peace-corps-prep/>

## Peace Corps Prep forms and links

### Planning and applying

#### [Peace Corps Prep Program Interest Survey](#)

- Complete this survey to indicate your interest in the program; the Program Coordinator will provide information about the next steps in the application process.

#### [Peace Corps Prep Planning Sheet](#)

- Use this document to plan out your Peace Corps Prep classes and other experiences. This sheet mirrors the online application form you will fill out when you are ready to apply.

#### [Peace Corps Prep Online Application](#)

- When you are ready to apply for the program, use the information you gathered on the Planning Sheet to complete the online application.

## During the program

### [Course Petition Form](#)

- Use this online form to request that a course be considered for requirements in either your work sector or the intercultural competence requirement

### [Work Sector Hours Verification Form](#)

- Use this document to verify your minimum of 50 hours' experience related to your work sector.

### [Résumé Review Verification Form](#)

- Use this form to verify that you have had your résumé critiqued by an appropriately qualified person.

### [Interview Preparation Verification Form](#)

- Use this form to verify that you have attended an interview preparation workshop and participated in a mock interview.

### [Leadership Experience Form](#)

- Use this online form to describe and reflect on a leadership experience.

## Completing the program

### [Pre-Exit Checklist Checklist](#)

- Use this internal checklist to make sure you have everything you need before you make your appointment with the Program Coordinator to complete the Exit Checklist.

### [Exit Checklist](#)

- This is the official checklist provided by the Peace Corps to certify that you have completed the program. You and the Program Coordinator will sign this form and if you apply to the Peace Corps, you will scan and attach the Exit Checklist to your application.

## Peace Corps Prep program graduates

**You could be next!**

Some PC Prep graduates apply to the Peace Corps as they finish their undergraduate studies. Others may wait until after they have worked for a few years, finished graduate school, or pursued other endeavors. Some may never apply to the Peace Corps, and that's OK, too! The PC Prep certificate never expires, so whether Peace Corps service is in your immediate future or a long way down the road, you'll always have that credential to show your preparation for service.

Completed Program	Name	Major(s)	PC Prep Sector	Peace Corps Service Status If Known
Spring 2023	Cheyenne	Political Science	ENV	
Spring 2023	Danielle	Human Development and Family Studies	HEA	Invited to serve in Cameroon (2023)
Spring 2023	Liam	International Relations, Russian	EDU	Invited to serve in Kyrgyzstan (2023)
Spring 2023	Maya	Arts & Humanities, Russian	EDU	Invited to serve in Costa Rica (2024)
Spring 2023	Sarah	Environmental Studies and Sustainability	EDU	
Fall 2023	Aditi	Comparative Cultures and Politics	AGR	
Fall 2023	Kaitlyn	Environmental Studies and Sustainability	ENV	
Fall 2023	Malcolm	Applied Engineering	CED	Applied (2023)