

PEACE CORP SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

MOTIVATION / COMMITMENT

1. What motivates you to seek a service position as a Peace Corps Volunteer? How does Peace Corps service fit into your long-range plans?
2. Remember back to your first playground experience. Why did you want to play on the playground? What games did you play?
3. What, if anything, might keep you from completing a 27-month commitment to Peace Corps Service?
4. Do you have a specific geographic preference? If yes, what is the reason for your preference and how flexible are you? If there are specific regions where you are unwilling to serve, what are your reasons and what is your degree of flexibility?

PRODUCTIVE COMPETENCE

1. Please tell me about your most successful experience in a leadership role. Be as specific as possible.
2. Please tell me about an experience when you were able to transfer some knowledge or skill to someone who was different from yourself. What did you learn about your interpersonal skills from that experience? What did you learn about the other person?
3. Please tell me about the most frustrating experience you have had when working with others. Specifically, how did you manage that frustration?
4. Please tell me about a time when you worked in an unstructured or ambiguous situation? How did you approach the task at hand? What did you learn about your personal strengths from that experience?
5. All Peace Corps Volunteers learn a new language. Have you studied a second language?
6. What aptitudes or abilities can you draw on to help you succeed in learning a new language?

MATURITY

1. What situations do you typically find stressful? What do you currently do to reduce stress?
2. When you are overseas, circumstances and/or cultural norms may prevent you from employing your usual ways of managing stress, boredom, and loneliness. You will also most likely be out of touch with your familiar support group.
3. If your support group currently plays a critical role in helping you cope with stress, how will you manage without them?
4. What is the longest you have been physically separated from important people (family, friends, romantic interests, etc.) in your life? What was the most difficult part of being away from those closest to you? How did you cope?
5. What kind of support have you received from those closest to you on your decision to join the Peace Corps?
6. Has anyone close to you opposed your decision to join Peace Corps? If so, who was it? What were his/her concerns? How have you responded to them?
7. Tell me about a time when you had trouble following a rule.
8. One's ability to work through and resolve differences or conflict is often tested in cross-cultural situations. Please tell me about a specific situation, one we haven't already discussed, when you needed to work through a disagreement or difference of opinion. Were you able to reach a resolution? How, specifically, did you do that?
9. If you weren't able to resolve the conflict, what prevented you from doing so? In retrospect, is there anything you would do differently?

SOCIAL SENSITIVITY / CULTURAL AWARENESS

1. In some countries, tattoos, body piercing, or unusual hairstyles may be culturally unacceptable. To be a successful volunteer in such a country, you would have to modify your appearance so that it conforms to local norms. Are you willing to make such an adjustment? Give an example of a time that you had to modify your appearance.
2. The following are issues that you may face in your country of service. Please note any concerns:
 - a. different and/or lack of familiar foods
 - b. different living conditions
 - c. lack of privacy; isolation
 - d. prescribed gender roles
 - e. possible minority challenges
 - f. personal religious requirements/possible lack of access to your own religious services
 - g. living in a culture where alcohol may be widely consumed and accepted/living in a culture that prohibits the use of alcohol altogether

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES TO CONSIDER ASKING DURING AN INTERVIEW

HEALTH/SAFETY

1. What if I get severely ill or injured and can't get to the Peace Corps office or another volunteer--what happens?
2. If the PCVs are pulled out of a geographic area--what happens to me if that should happen?
 - a. Will I be reassigned?
 - b. Do I have more of a say on a new country?
 - c. How long would a reassignment take?
 - d. How long will I wait to see if we go back to that country?
 - e. How do our belongings get back to us if we are very quickly evacuated?
3. What steps do they take to make sure they are providing their volunteers with the safest environment possible?

TRAINING/WORK

1. I have heard in-country training consists of language, culture, technical, & safety--could you tell me anything more specific about it?
2. How much of your work as a volunteer is completed solely by you and how much does the Peace Corps help with?
3. If you are having trouble getting your project started, does the Peace Corps provide any help?
4. If I am nominated, what can I do to make myself more competitive for placement?

LIFESTYLE

1. Ask about the recruiters'/interviewers' experience in the Peace Corps.
2. Where and when did they go?
3. What was it like?
4. What was the most difficult thing they encountered?
5. How did they deal with this?
6. What was the thing they least expected that happened?
7. What did they get out of it the most?
8. If you are interested in the PC Fellows program, ask about it.
9. How far apart are volunteers placed?
10. In some countries you can live on your own after training, and in others you're required to live the full 2 years with a host family, is that correct?
11. In countries where it's required to live with a host family, why is that required?
12. How is a host family chosen?