

§ 1225.2 Policy.

It is the policy of Peace Corps and ACTION to provide equal opportunity in all its programs for all persons and to prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, handicap or political affiliation, in the recruitment, selection, placement, service, and termination of Peace Corps and ACTION Volunteers. It is the policy of Peace Corps and ACTION upon determining that such prohibited discrimination has occurred, to take all necessary corrective action to remedy the discrimination, and to prevent its recurrence.

§ 1225.3 Definitions.

Unless the context requires otherwise, in this Part:

(a) *Director* means the Director of Peace Corps for all Peace Corps applicant, trainee, or Volunteer complaints processed under this part, or the Director of ACTION for all domestic applicant, trainee, or Volunteer complaints processed under this part. The term shall also refer to any designee of the respective Director.

(b) *EO Director* means the Director of the Equal Opportunity Division of the Office of Compliance, ACTION. The term shall also refer to any designee of the EO Director.

(c) *Illegal discrimination* means discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, handicap or political affiliation as defined in section 5(a) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2504); section 717 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000-16); Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791, et seq.); and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101, et seq.). Further clarification of the scope of matters covered by this definition may be obtained by referring to the following regulations: Sex Discrimination: 29 CFR part 1604; Religious Discrimination: 29 CFR part 1605; National Origin Discrimination: 29 CFR part 1606; Age Discrimination: 45 CFR part 90; Handicap Discrimination: 29 CFR 1613.701 through 1613.707.

(d) *Applicant* means a person who has submitted to the appropriate agency personnel a completed application required for consideration of eligibility for Peace Corps or ACTION volunteer

service. "Applicant" may also mean a person who alleges that the actions of agency personnel precluded him or her from submitting such an application or any other information reasonably required by the appropriate personnel as necessary for a determination of the individual's eligibility for volunteer service.

(e) *Trainee* means a person who has accepted an invitation issued by Peace Corps or ACTION and has registered for Peace Corps or ACTION training.

(f) *Volunteer* means a person who has completed successfully all necessary training; met all clearance standards; has taken, if required, the oath prescribed in either section 5(j) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2504), or section 104(c) of the Volunteer Service Act of 1973, as amended (42 U.S.C. 104(c)) and has been enrolled as a full-time Volunteer by the appropriate agency.

(g) *Complaint* means a written statement signed by the complainant and submitted to the EO Director. A complaint shall set forth specifically and in detail:

(1) A description of the Peace Corps or ACTION management policy or practice, if any, giving rise to the complaint;

(2) A detailed description including names and dates, if possible, of the actions of the Peace Corps or ACTION officials which resulted in the alleged illegal discrimination;

(3) The manner in which the Peace Corps or ACTION action directly affected the complainant; and

(4) The relief sought.

A complaint shall be deemed filed on the date it is received by the appropriate agency official. When a complaint does not conform with the above definition, it shall nevertheless be accepted. The complainant shall be notified of the steps necessary to correct the deficiencies of the complaint. The complainant shall have 30 days from his or her receipt of notification of the complaint defects to resubmit an amended complaint.

(h) *Counselor* means an official designated by the EO Director to perform the functions of conciliation as detailed in this part.

(i) *Agent* means a class member who acts for the class during the processing

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of a class complaint. In order to be accepted as the agent for a class complaint, in addition to those requirements of a complaint found in §1225.3(g) of this part, the complaint must meet the requirements for a class complaint as found in subpart C of these regulations.

§ 1225.4 Coverage.

(a) These procedures apply to all Peace Corps or ACTION applicants, trainees, and Volunteers throughout their term of service with the Peace Corps or ACTION. When an applicant, trainee, or Volunteer makes a complaint which contains an allegation of illegal discrimination in connection with an action that would otherwise be processed under a grievance, early termination, or other administrative system of the agency, the allegation of illegal discrimination shall be processed under this part. At the discretion of the appropriate Director, any other issues raised may be consolidated with the discrimination complaint for processing under these regulations. Any issues which are not so consolidated shall continue to be processed under those procedures in which they were originally raised.

(b) The submission of class complaints alleging illegal discrimination as defined above will be handled in accordance with the procedure outlined in subpart C.

§ 1225.5 Representation.

Any aggrieved party may be represented and assisted in all stages of these procedures by an attorney or representative of his or her own choosing. An aggrieved party must immediately inform the agency if counsel is retained. Attorney fees or other appropriate relief may be awarded in the following circumstances:

(a) Informal adjustment of a complaint. An informal adjustment of a complaint may include an award of attorney fees or other relief deemed appropriate by the EO Director. Where the parties agree on an adjustment of the complaint, but cannot agree on whether attorney fees or costs should be awarded, or on their amount, this issue may be appealed to the appro-

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priate Director to be determined in the manner detailed in §1225.11 of this part.

(b) Final Agency Decision. When discrimination is found, the appropriate Director shall advise the complainant that any request for attorney fees or costs must be documented and submitted for review within 20 calendar days after his or her receipt of the final agency decision. The amount of such awards shall be determined under §1225.11. In the unusual situation in which it is determined not to award attorney fees or other costs to a prevailing complainant, the appropriate Director in his or her final decision shall set forth the specific reasons thereof.

§ 1225.6 Freedom from reprisal.

Aggrieved parties, their representatives, and witnesses will be free from restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal at any stage in the presentation and processing of a complaint, including the counseling stage described in §1225.8 of this part, or any time thereafter.

§ 1225.7 Review of allegations of reprisal.

An aggrieved party, his or her representative, or a witness who alleges restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal in connection with the presentation of a complaint under this part, may, if covered by this part, request in writing that the allegation be reviewed as an individual complaint of discrimination subject to the procedures described in Subpart B or that the allegation be considered as an issue in the complaint at hand.

Subpart B—Processing Individual Complaints of Discrimination

§ 1225.8 Precomplaint procedure.

(a) An aggrieved person who believes that he or she has been subject to illegal discrimination shall bring such allegations to the attention of the appropriate Counselor within 30 days of the alleged discrimination to attempt to resolve them. The process for notifying the appropriate Counselor is the following:

(1) Aggrieved applicants, trainees or Volunteers who have not departed for