

Advice for Peace Corps applicants

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<https://www.peacecorps.gov/stories/i-didnt-get-selected-service-now-what/>

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Whether you've already applied for the Peace Corps or you're planning on it, you will inevitably wonder, "What if I don't get in?!"

Allow me to walk with you down the path of this not-so-fun but oh-so-important question from my perspective as a Peace Corps placement officer.

When you consider that nearly [23,000 applications](#) were submitted last year and approximately 4,000 candidates were invited to serve as Volunteers, you realize that hearing you weren't selected for service is actually quite common. Thus, reapplying to the Peace Corps is becoming an option to consider.

Of course, it is really tough to receive this news, which will be shared with you via email on or around (and always no later than) the 'know-by' date for the program to which you applied. Give yourself some space to take it in and reflect, refresh and recenter.

Perhaps a good starting point is to reevaluate whether the Peace Corps is the [right fit for you right now](#)? Maybe you haven't yet deeply considered this question and your answer will be no. But for many, you've already asked this question and you're ready to give it another go.

So, what did you learn the first time around? (Pro tip: One thing *not* to do is the exact same thing you did the first time. If you reapply, we want to see that you've enhanced various aspects of your application, skills and/or preparation for service.) Is your [résumé tailored to the position\(s\)](#) to which you've applied? Have you attended an [information session or application workshop](#), or spoken with returned Peace Corps Volunteers or a [recruiter](#)? (Fun fact: Applicants who connect with a recruiter are 55 percent more likely to become Volunteers.)

You might consider enhancing your skill set to match the requested [needs of our host countries](#). The best way to know what they are looking for is to review the [required and desired skills](#) of the position description. If you're not sure how to gain related skills... you guessed it: [Connect with a recruiter](#) for advice. Sometimes an additional 30 hours of related experience can take your application to the next level.

What about your essay? Does it answer the question and did someone proofread it? Don't overlook the importance of [understanding the process](#) and being strategic with your choices on the [assignment selection form](#). There are four 'apply-by' dates throughout the year (typically

January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1) that correspond with a range of departure dates (for example, applications for programs departing April to June 2017 must be submitted by October 1, 2016), and selections are made on a rolling basis. Thus, we recommend submitting your application early in the application cycle rather than waiting until the 'apply-by' date. And, whether you were interviewed the first time around or not, [professionalism always matters](#).

Okay, so you're ready to reapply? The good news is that it's not hard. Once you receive official notice from the Peace Corps that we are unable to offer you a position at this time, you can reapply at any time... although we recommend waiting at least 24 hours to ensure our system is ready for your next application.

To make reapplying easier, some of your submitted information is retained within our system. In fact, you don't even have to complete the soft skills questionnaire again within one year. The one piece you must submit with each application is the health history form, as we all know our health can change from one day to the next.

Finally, if you were interviewed – depending on how much time has gone by since your most recent application – you may not need to undergo the full interview process again. This decision will be left up to the discretion of your new placement officer, who will also determine whether or not your application will require another set of references.

And if you're skeptical about hearing all of this from a placement officer on the 'inside,' I highly encourage you to read [one candidate's experience](#) of non-selection and reapplication. I think you'll find her advice helpful and encouraging (and I can tell you that she's right on!).

So there you have it, the not-so-hard answer to a not-so-fun question. We look forward to the release date of the next generation of *your* application and can't wait to experience all of its enhancements and upgrades. (Re)application 2.0 – we're ready for you!