

Houston Peace Corps Association Statement of Appropriate Conduct

Adopted by the HPCA 2024

This statement applies to all Houston Peace Corps Association (HPCA)–sponsored and officially recognized activities, including, but not limited to, social events, meetings, workshops, online forums, social media, partner events, and all means of communication between members and nonmembers. [1]

It applies to all HPCA members, nonmembers, invited guests, speakers, board members, moderators, instructors, partners, staff, volunteers, and all others who participate in any HPCA activity or event.

1. Values and Beliefs

“The U.S. Peace Corps seeks to reflect the rich diversity of the United States and to bring diverse perspectives to our global work in order to make hands-on, lasting impact alongside local counterparts and communities.” [2]

As Peace Corps Volunteers we worked to learn humility within ourselves and to partner at the grassroots level with people from more than one-hundred different countries. As former Volunteers and friends of Volunteers, we continue to foster inclusive, equitable, and accessible organizational culture—one that ensures diversity of thought, experience, and personal background as we fulfill the third goal of Peace Corps which is “*To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.*” [3]

Believing that diversity, equity, and inclusion are the threads that strengthen our association, HPCA seeks to ensure that the following core values and behaviors reflect who we are:

- an open, inclusive, and collaborative environment within the association in all its activities, events and communications,
- diversity, equity, and inclusion in everyday interactions and with our HPCA leadership,
- advancement and support of accessibility, and
- irreproachable ethical standards that call for our personal interactions to be conducted with courtesy and respect.

In HPCA’s effort to provide an environment of mutual human respect in which diverse participants may learn, network, and enjoy their interactions with colleagues, we recognize that we have a shared responsibility to create and sustain that environment for the benefit of all, consistent with these core values.

HPCA Commitment

HPCA is committed to promoting a better understanding of other cultures by intentionally and ethically sharing our Peace Corps experience with each other, family, friends, and the American public. Therefore, HPCA is committed to:

- ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are intentionally valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have quality access to HPCA opportunities; feel a sense of belonging; and can contribute fully to HPCA's success,
- providing a harassment-free environment for everyone, regardless of race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, political beliefs, language, culture, marital or military status, caste, nationality, age, ability status, and religion, and
- protecting diversity, equity, inclusion, and the free and respectful expression of ideas.

2. Behaviors

HPCA participants are expected to observe these rules and behaviors in all venues, including online, and during meetings and social events. When speaking on behalf of HPCA to any media or outside organization, maintain professional and respectful dialogue and tone.

The following individual behaviors are encouraged:

- be respectful
- be inclusive
- appreciate and accommodate similarities and differences
- lead by example
- exercise your right to distance yourself from a person or situation
- participate respectfully in activities and avoid being distracting to others
- be mindful that most social activities include photography and your likeness may be posted on HPCA social media and website

The following individual behaviors are specifically prohibited:

- engaging in harassment or intimidation, including sexual harassment or intimidation, such as unwelcome sexual attention, stalking (verbal, physical, or virtual), or unsolicited physical contact
- yelling at or threatening others (verbal, physical, in print, or online)
- posting or communicating messages that are defamatory, abusive, profane, threatening, or offensive
- engaging in personal attacks
- engaging in disruptive behavior or statements that intimidate, disenfranchise, interrupt (an event, activity, or process) by causing a disturbance, demeans, or threatens the well-being or safety of others
- posting illegal materials
- posting copyrighted material without first obtaining permission of the copyright holder

Participants who are asked to stop such inappropriate or unwelcome behavior are expected to comply immediately.

3. Reporting and Investigation

HPCA is committed to ensuring that you feel comfortable in reporting inappropriate behavior that you experience or observe. If possible, during the time of the situation, seek out a person on the HPCA Board and directly speak up about the situation so it can be addressed in real time by the Board Member.

Alternatively, after the situation has passed, please contact an HPCA Board Member to discuss. Board Members will gather information as needed and take steps to resolve the situation with appropriate confidentiality.

[Submit a report online](#) or [directly contact](#) the President, Vice President, or Secretary of the Houston Peace Corps Association.

4. Consequences and Resolution

All efforts are made to seek a positive outcome where everyone can feel included and safe, thus all incidents determined by HPCA Board Members to violate HPCA's Statement of Appropriate Conduct could result in one or more of the following consequences:

- being asked to stop disruptive, hostile, or harassing behavior immediately
- being asked to make sincere efforts to cease the inappropriate behavior and resolve the situation within agreed boundaries
- being removed (without membership reimbursement) from HPCA meetings and activities; if appropriate, security or local law enforcement may be contacted
- being excluded from HPCA meetings and activities for a specified time period or indefinitely
- terminating HPCA membership, without membership reimbursement
- other actions deemed appropriate by HPCA Board Members and/or required by law

If appropriate, a follow-up report will be made to individuals who report a concern.

References

[1] With thanks to the [Medical Library Association Statement of Appropriate Conduct](#) from which our work derives.

[2] [US Peace Corps Equity Inclusion and Accessibility statement](#). (Referenced 2024 - see an archival [web preservation page](#))

[3] [Goals of the United States Peace Corps](#)