

MICRONESIA SPRING PROGRAM

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LAWYERS PROGRAM

Micronesia offers a challenging opportunity for those who are genuinely interested in becoming involved in the lives and culture, hopes and aspirations of the people of Micronesia. Those of you who are invited and accept the job of Peace Corps service in Micronesia may begin an experience in your life which has no parallel in alternatives available to young Americans. The opportunity to serve others while experiencing their culture, sharing their hardships and joys, when entered into with a spirit of mutual exchange, can result in invaluable benefits to the giver as well as the recipient of that service. Many returned Volunteers feel that they gained much more in understanding and wisdom than they gave with their particular skill. You too may learn that the people of the so-called "underdeveloped countries" have much to offer the people of a materially and technologically developed United States.

The Country of Micronesia is presently governed under a United Nations Mandate by the United States Trust Territory Administration. Micronesia, lying just north of the equator in the Western Pacific, is referred to as the "land of tiny islands." Its 2,141 islands, stretching over 3,000,000 square miles of ocean, constitute a total land area of only 700 square miles, about half the size of Rhode Island. Ninety-seven of these are inhabited with a population of approximately 100,000 racially mixed Asiatic-Polynesian peoples.

Micronesia is now in a critical state of change. The locally elected legislatures are taking a major responsibility for the operation and development of this country. Peace Corps Volunteer lawyers, over the past two years, have had a vital input into the development of the legislative system of this country in assisting and training the Micronesian Legislators on a district and country level. (There are six District Legislatures and the Congress of Micronesia).

Continued assistance will be necessary over the next few years. Moving toward more self government will require a great deal of effort and development by Micronesians of the various legislative bodies. Volunteer help is needed in this development.

The districts of Truk and the Marshalls will need lawyers to replace those terminating in June of 1971. This request comes through the district legislative bodies for Volunteer assistance to be continued. There are now three Micronesians in law school and nineteen studying in pre-law undergraduate programs. It will be three years before the first of these complete their studies

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and are available to return to Micronesia.

This project calls for two Volunteers:

Two (2) Lawyers who have passed the  
BAR Examination Male

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

This project addresses itself to the critical need for skilled, trained, lawyers in Micronesia. The lawyers will assist Micronesians in learning and using correct procedures in every phase of legislative and government operation that requires adherence to specific legal concepts and rules to be enforceable at law. Assistance is needed in this rapidly developing society to insure a sound and legal base for the society to continue to develop. Specifically, the program will assist in the development of:

1. Essential legal skills, techniques and procedures not currently present in Micronesia to keep abreast of of the pace of development.
2. To help, assist and train Micronesians in the various legislative bodies, municipal offices, administrative functions, who, without a legal education or without the knowledge and skills of legal experience are charged with the responsibility of conducting government procedures by precise legal dictum.
3. To provide legal training in procedures and techniques in the administration, writing, coding and enforcement of laws through the legislative bodies and government offices throughout the Trust Territory.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Volunteer lawyers' primary assignments will be as legislative counsels with District Legislatures and Municipal Legislatures and Councils. The Volunteer will assist with the drafting of legislation, advising officers and committees on the legal technicalities of legislation and rules of procedure and interpretation of procedural questions as they arise. Lawyers will assist in the training of members and employees of the legislatures in the proper and correct terminology and language used to make their ordinances, resolutions, laws, and other legal materials have the force and effect desired by that body. In

between sessions of these law making bodies, the lawyers will assist legislative secretaries in incorporating and codifying enacted legislation. They will help train legislative clerks and other employees in procedures and techniques necessary for sound administrative operation of the legislature. They will provide a comprehensive research and reference service on legislative matters. They will advise on the need to revise present laws and recommend possible new areas of legislation. They will render legal opinions when requested by officers of the legislative bodies after due consideration and legal research on the question or problem.

With the rapid development of Micronesia and expanded role of Micronesian government participation, the legislatures' role requires more and more time and skill and greater degrees of maturity and sophistication. The PCVs' time will be occupied in preparation and training legislative members and employees in the precise techniques and procedures necessary to function in this development.

Secondary Assignments - Legal assistance is at a premium in Micronesia. There is only one lawyer engaged in private practice in the whole of Micronesia. Although the Peace Corps lawyers will not practice law in the courts of Micronesia, they will be called upon by many Micronesian private groups to draw legal documents dealing with incorporation of non-private organizations, community projects, charitable bodies and related needs for legal assistance. In many instances the lawyers will work with and train court clerks, municipal clerks and officials, trial assistants, and others by classroom instruction or by on-the-job assistance. The Volunteer will be a source of advice to and for prosecutors, public defenders, and others in the legal fields of his district.

#### TRAINING

If you express an interest to become involved in the development of Micronesia, you will be invited to attend what we call a Pre-invitational Staging, at Peace Corps expense, on or about February 15, 1971 for about two days -- this is a preliminary process during which you can examine the suitability of Peace Corps to meet your expectations while Peace Corps can examine you in the light of its expectations.

This period gives Peace Corps an opportunity to make you aware of what to expect in the coming months of training and service. We will also present you with our expectations of you in terms of commitment and dedication to Micronesia and your job which we will further develop during the training program. This period will provide an opportunity for an initial examination and determination that we, you and Peace Corps, are mutually suitable for

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At the completion of this period, if Peace Corps issues you an invitation and you decide to accept, you will then attend an administrative staging just prior to the beginning of training which will include the completion of administrative and medical requirements, an initial interview with a psychologist and an introduction to the training program that has been set up for you.

On or about March 15, you will move on to your training site. To prepare you for your two years of service in the Marshalls or in Truk, we propose to train you for ten weeks prior to assigning you to a specific site.

The training program is designed to accomplish several things. First, it will provide you with an ability to speak the language -- Marshallese in the Marshall Islands or Trukese in the Truk District -- which you will need in doing your job and which will bring you into closer contact with the community in which you live. Next, it will provide you with technical training as needed.

Thirdly, and very important, training will attempt to prepare you in the best way possible for adaptation to the island culture of Micronesia. Most people act and react according to fairly well defined and generally predictable patterns which they have learned as part of their culture. In your preparation for work and life in a foreign country you should be able to recognize your own culture for what it is and see this as simply one example of the phenomenon of culture. You should begin to learn to recognize how you, as a product of American culture, are conditioned to react to other cultures.

There is really no distinct separation between training to become a Volunteer and service as a Volunteer. It is hoped that training will provide you with the foundation and start a thinking process for continuous learning and improvement of your abilities over the term of your service.

Following the initiation of this learning process, an examination of the specific cultural differences to be found in Micronesia should prepare you with an awareness and sensitivity to these differences and help you to learn and work more effectively in your new surroundings.

It is important to mention here too that coming from a large country like the United States and moving to a small, outer island may call for a unique cultural adjustment in addition to the normal cultural changes Volunteers experience going to foreign

mainlands. Living on a small, outer island, one can feel very far away. The diversions that one is normally accustomed to, although present at the district centers on larger islands, do not exist on these smaller islands. There is often very little contact with the outside world due to infrequent transport and a more intense isolation is felt calling for more internal dependency on the island, its food, local customs and practices. In many cases time is passed "chatting" with friends. The fast pace, competition-oriented ways of the United States do not exist among the island people. Their goals and aspirations are oriented differently than ours. Often times it is difficult for Volunteers to feel they are being effective as a part of this different pace of life. They become frustrated before they learn to redirect their energies into effective channels common to the Micronesians. Volunteers, once they learn this, are often very creative in finding ways to satisfy their intellectual pursuits through reading, writing and study of the people and their culture and find they can help to make an effective contribution.

The foregoing description hopefully gives you a basic understanding of this program you are considering. It is a difficult program in many ways, yet it offers satisfaction through the opportunity it provides for individual contribution. If, having read this description of the job and its requirements, you wish to play a part in Micronesia's economic development; if you believe you can work with in the framework of the Trust Territory; if you believe you could enjoy living and working in Micronesia doing the work described above, we are looking forward to discussing with you in more detail your interest in and role as a prospective Volunteer in Micronesia.

If you have any further questions about Micronesia, the Peace Corps, or this program, please feel free to contact Charles Shorter, the Micronesia Program Training Officer, c/o Peace Corps, Washington, D.C. 20525, or call collect Area Code: (202) 382-2588.

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