

Hi, here we are again with another episode of Presidential Archives Uncovered—the podcast that brings to you cool clips from the collections of the Presidential Libraries of the U. S. National Archives.

Encouraged by over 25,000 letters responding to his call to serve abroad, the new president took immediate action to make the campaign promise a reality.

Kennedy asked his brother-in-law, R. Sargent Shriver, to direct a Peace Corps Task Force. Shriver, known for his ability to identify and motivate creative, visionary leaders, led the group to quickly shape the organization. After only a month of intense dialogue and debate among task force members, Shriver outlined “seven steps” to forming the Peace Corps in a February 22, 1961 memorandum to Kennedy.

Avoiding a drawn out legislative process, Kennedy launched the Peace Corps on March 1, 1961 by executive order.

I have today signed an executive order providing for the establishment of a Peace Corps on a temporary pilot basis. I am also sending to Congress a message proposing authorization of a permanent Peace Corps. This Corps will be a pool of trained men and women sent overseas by the United States government or through private institutions and organizations to help foreign countries meet their urgent needs for skilled manpower. It is our hope to have between five hundred to a thousand people in the field by the end of this year. We will send Americans abroad who are qualified to do a job. We will send those abroad who are committed to the concept which motivates the Peace Corps.

It will not be easy. None of the men and women will be paid a salary. They will live at the same level as the citizens of the country which they are sent to. Doing the same work, eating the same food, speaking the same language.

We are going to put particular emphasis on those men and women who have skills in teaching, agriculture, and in health.

I am hopeful it will be a source of satisfaction to Americans and a contribution to world peace.

More audio, photographs, and film clips about the establishment of the Peace Corps can be found on the Presidential Timeline, [www.presidentialtimeline.org](http://www.presidentialtimeline.org).