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Interior Assistant Secretary Eddie F. Brown and United states Peace Corps Director Paul D. Coverdell today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that provides for cooperation between the two agencies in recruitment of returned Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV) to work in Bureau of Indian Affairs-funded (BIA) schools on Indian reservations.

"This will help the BIA recruit for teachers among Peace Corps veterans, many of whom have worked throughout the world in isolated areas similar to those on a number of Indian reservations," Brown said. "We have had problems in recruitment in the past because of these conditions and we believe this will boost our prospects for more experience in our schools."

Coverdell said the challenges facing the Indian education community are unique. "I can think of few non-Indian Americans who are as well-suited to assist in meeting those challenges as are the PCVs."

The 1:30 p.m. signing took place in New Mexico at a BIA-funded elementary school at the Isleta Pueblo. The five-year agreement provides that through the Peace Corps' Fellows/USA Program, the two agencies will work together in the coordination of activities designed to enlist teachers to accept teaching or other education .related positions on Indian reservations. They will encourage state and local education authorities to provide alternative or emergency teaching certification or waivers of certification to participants in the Fellows/USA Program, when necessary.

Participants in the program will be in paid positions and afforded the opportunity to pursue graduate degrees during summer study programs at collaborating universities. During the life of the agreement, the two agencies would work to identify other opportunities in which the agencies might cooperate.

Specific objectives for the program will be established within the next 90 days. Within 60 days after the end of each year, a review will determine if changes are needed in the program.