



FISCAL YEAR 2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN  
FY 2021 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN AND  
FY 2019 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT



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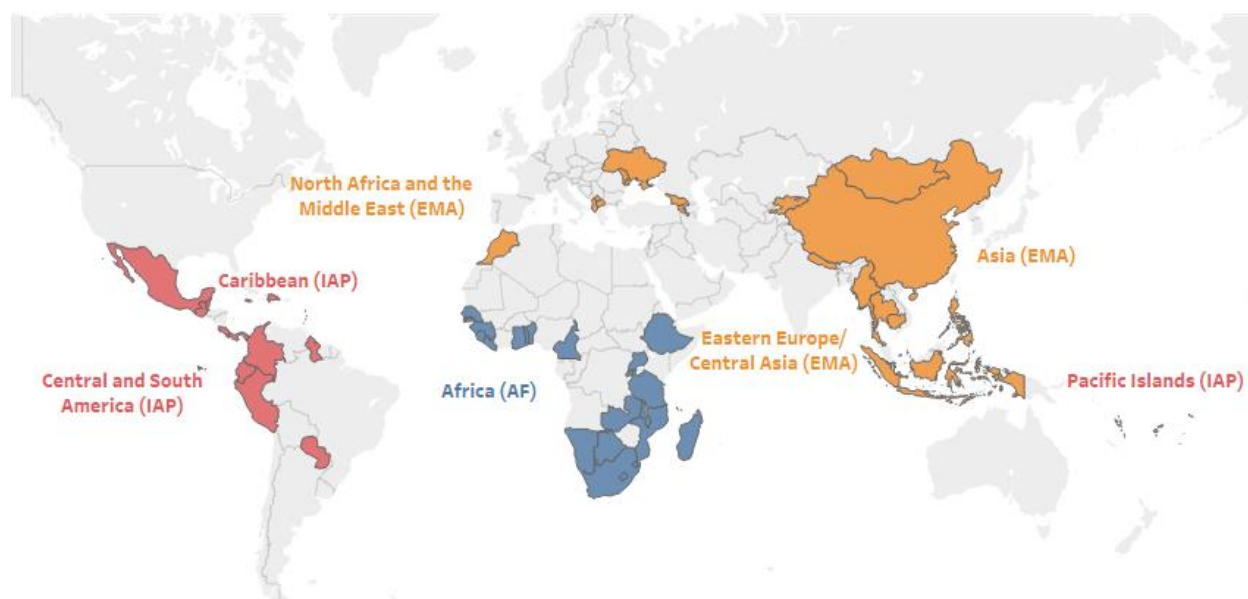
Promoting World Peace and Friendship since 1961

*Front cover: Peace Corps Volunteer Connor Schmitz works with local farmers and the community in Nepal to create a garden that will grow sustainable fruits and vegetables.*

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This report is available at [peacecorps.gov/docs](https://peacecorps.gov/docs).  
Comments or questions on this plan may be sent to [OSIRP@peacecorps.gov](mailto:OSIRP@peacecorps.gov) or to the mailing address above.

## WHERE PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS SERVED IN FY 2019



### Caribbean

Dominican Republic  
 Eastern Caribbean:  
 Dominica  
 Grenada and Carriacou  
 St. Lucia  
 St. Vincent and the  
 Grenadines  
 Jamaica

### Central and South America

Belize  
 Colombia  
 Costa Rica  
 Ecuador  
 Guatemala  
 Guyana  
 Mexico  
 Panama  
 Paraguay  
 Peru

### Africa

Benin  
 Botswana  
 Cameroon  
 Comoros  
 Eswatini  
 Ethiopia  
 Ghana  
 Guinea  
 Lesotho  
 Liberia  
 Madagascar  
 Malawi  
 Mozambique  
 Namibia  
 Rwanda  
 Senegal  
 Sierra Leone  
 South Africa  
 Tanzania  
 The Gambia  
 Togo  
 Uganda  
 Zambia

### North Africa and the Middle East

Morocco

### Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Albania  
 Armenia  
 Georgia  
 Kosovo  
 Kyrgyz Republic  
 North Macedonia  
 Moldova  
 Ukraine

### Asia

Cambodia  
 China  
 Indonesia  
 Mongolia  
 Myanmar  
 Nepal  
 Philippines  
 Thailand  
 Timor-Leste

### Pacific Islands

Fiji  
 Samoa  
 Tonga  
 Vanuatu

AF: Africa Region

EMA: Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region

IAP: Inter-America and Pacific Region

Countries with Volunteers during FY 2019

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## Mission

To promote world peace and friendship through community-based development and cross-cultural understanding

Since its establishment in 1961, the Peace Corps has been guided by a mission of world peace and friendship. The agency exemplifies the best of our nation’s spirit by sending Americans to serve around the world, advancing development, and building cross-cultural understanding. Today, the Peace Corps continues to build strong relationships between our country and the people of our partner nations, while making a difference in overseas communities, in the lives of our Volunteers, and back home in the United States. More than 240,000 Volunteers have served in 142 countries since 1961, changing lives—including their own.

The Peace Corps advances its mission through the work of its Volunteers. Rather than providing monetary assistance to countries, the agency sends Volunteers to share their skills and experience while living and working alongside local individuals and communities. This day-to-day interaction gives Volunteers a unique perspective and the opportunity to learn from and with their host communities to address development challenges and strengthen mutual understanding.

Peace Corps Volunteers are the face of our nation in communities around the globe, building positive perceptions of the United States and sharing American values with their communities. After Volunteers complete their service, they return to the United States with new skills, deep knowledge of other cultures, and long-lasting relationships. Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) continue their service by promoting awareness of other cultures and global issues with friends, family, and the American people; maintaining relationships with colleagues and friends from the countries where they served; and sustaining their commitment to volunteerism and public service.

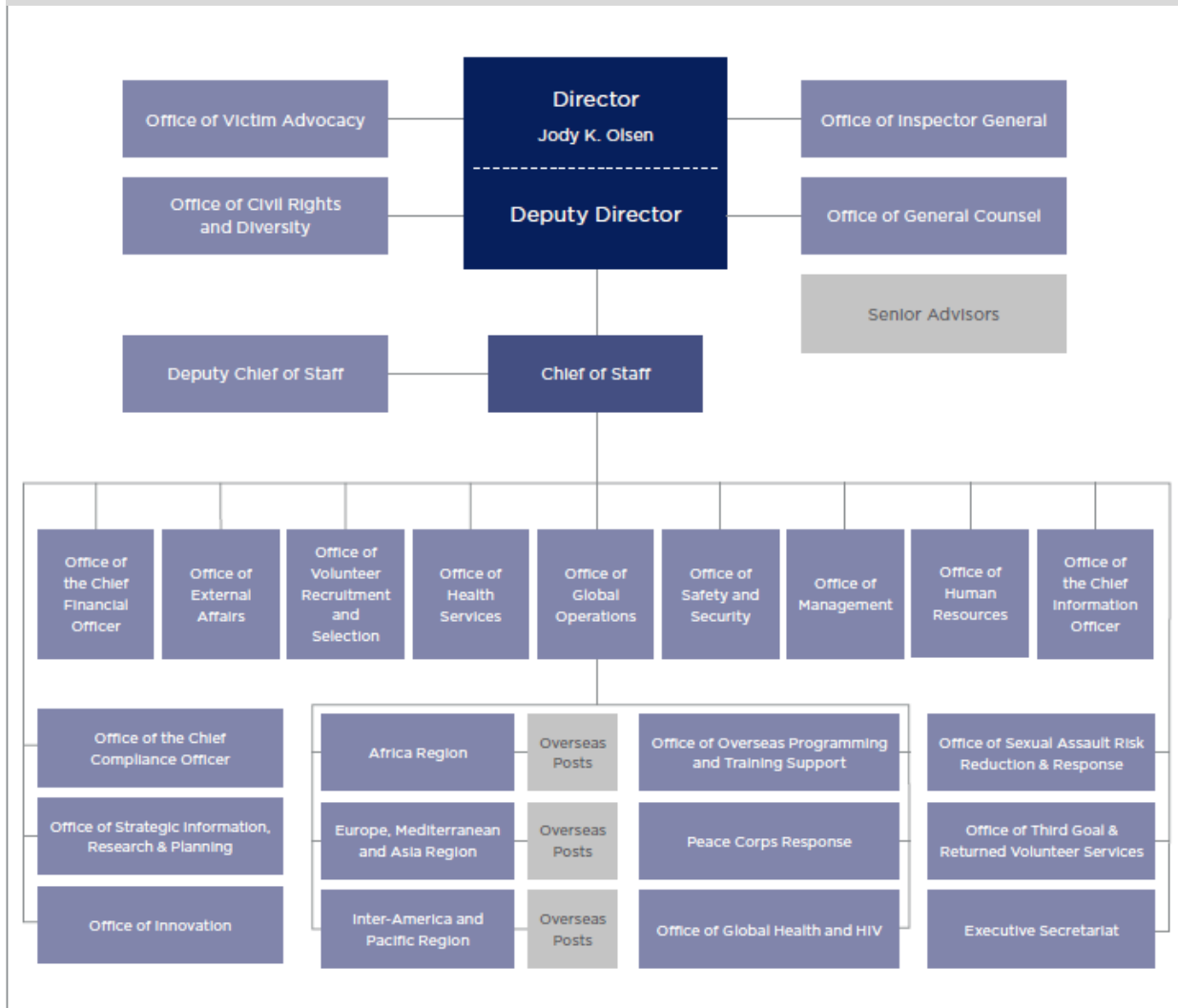
## Vision

To be a dynamic, forward-leaning champion for international service, defined by our energy, innovation, and development impact.

*“The Peace Corps represents some, if not all, of the best virtues in this society. It stands for everything that America has ever stood for. It stands for everything we believe in and hope to achieve in the world.”*

*Sargent Shriver  
Founding Director of the Peace Corps, 1961–66*

# PEACE CORPS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## Core Values

The following core values shape and guide decisions at all levels in the agency and are part of the fiscal year (FY) 2018-2022 Strategic Plan:

**Volunteer Well-Being:** The Peace Corps works to provide a safe, healthy, and productive service for every Volunteer. The safety, security, and physical and emotional health of Volunteers are the top priorities of the agency.

**Quality and Impact:** The Peace Corps pursues quality improvements to strengthen its programs while maintaining a global presence.

**Commitment to National Service:** The Peace Corps seeks to expand opportunities for Americans to serve their country by volunteering their time abroad in the service of others and to continue that commitment to service once they return.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** The Peace Corps actively supports a culture of inclusion that embraces diversity—from the rich diversity of America to the incredible diversity of the countries in which Volunteers serve.

**Evidence-Based Decisions:** The Peace Corps uses high-quality data and evidence to focus resources on agency priorities, inform performance improvements both in the field and at headquarters, and promote institutional learning.

**Innovation:** The Peace Corps utilizes innovative approaches and technology to solve both persistent and emerging operational challenges and to advance local development.

## Plan Overview

The FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan lays out long-term goals and objectives designed to advance the Peace Corps’ mission. The annual performance plan identifies the strategies employed to accomplish these goals and objectives, as well as the specific results the agency expects to achieve.

The combined FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan and FY 2021 Annual Performance Plan includes the following components:

- **Strategic goals** reflect the broad, long-term outcomes the agency works toward to achieve the Peace Corps’ mission to promote world peace and friendship through community-based development and cross-cultural understanding.
- **Strategic objectives** break down the high-level strategic goals to express the specific focus areas the agency will prioritize in order to achieve the strategic goals.
- **Management objectives** communicate improvement priorities for functions that cut across the Peace Corps, such as human capital management, information technology, and financial stewardship.
- The **rationale** for each objective provides an overview of priority opportunities or issues to be addressed and the expected contribution of that objective to the agency’s strategic goals.
- **Strategies** articulate the broad course of action or unifying approach that indicates how actions lead to outcomes.
- **Performance goals** state levels of performance, or “targets,” to be accomplished within a specific timeframe. In this plan, two types of performance goals are used depending on whether the goal relates to a new agency process to be measured using milestones or a quantitative measure. In both cases, annual targets in terms of a milestone or a numeric target to be achieved are set through FY 2021. Actual results are provided for prior years when available. The agency uses performance goals both to assess progress on strategic goals and objectives and to drive performance improvement. Performance goals will be updated each year in the annual performance plan in conjunction with the budget formulation process.
- **A lead** is identified for each objective and performance goal with the title of the lead individual and the name of the office in the lead role. While it is recognized that several offices or overseas posts may be responsible for the individual strategies that advance progress on objectives and performance goals, leads are given the convening authority to coordinate agencywide efforts to develop, implement, and report on plans.

Appendices provide additional detail on the development of the FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan and FY 2021 Annual Performance Plan. Appendices include a summary of the Peace Corps’ performance management framework (Appendix A), a description of how



evaluation and research informed the development of the plan (Appendix B), data verification and validation standards for the performance goal indicators (Appendix C), a summary of the stakeholder outreach conducted (Appendix D), and a list of acronyms used throughout this document (Appendix E).

### **GPRM Modernization Act of 2010**

The President's Budget identifies lower-priority program activities, where applicable, as required under the GPRM (Government Performance and Results Act) Modernization Act, 31 U.S.C. 1115(b)(10). The public can access the volume at [whitehouse.gov/omb/budget](https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget).

The Peace Corps has not been asked to contribute to the federal government's cross-agency priority goals. Per the GPRM Modernization Act of 2010, the contributions of those agencies required to report on cross-agency priority goals can be found at [performance.gov](https://www.performance.gov).

## Strategic Goals

The [Peace Corps Act](#) (1961) articulates three core goals that contribute to the Peace Corps' mission of world peace and friendship:

1. To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women
2. To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served
3. To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans

These three core goals in the Peace Corps' legislation continue to serve as the foundation for the Peace Corps' approach to development and the three strategic goals that guide the FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan:

### Strategic Goal 1: Building Local Capacity

*Advance local development by strengthening the capacity of local communities and individuals through the service of trained Volunteers.*

The Peace Corps' approach to development is local and community-based. Peace Corps Volunteers work to strengthen the capacity of host country individuals, groups, and communities to advance local development outcomes. They engage in project work and train local partners in areas such as agriculture, community economic development, education, environment, health, and youth in development. This focus on local capacity building helps to ensure that the work of the Volunteers is sustained long after their service is complete.

**Public Benefit:** Through Volunteers' capacity-building work, local communities and individuals strengthen the skills they need to address their specific challenges. As a result, local conditions are improved around the globe, and the American people benefit from a more stable, prosperous, and peaceful world.

### Strategic Goal 2: Sharing America with the World

*Promote a better understanding of Americans through Volunteers who live and work within local communities.*

Volunteers promote a better understanding of Americans among local people through day-to-day interactions with their host families, counterparts<sup>1</sup>, friends, and others. Over the course of their two years of service, Volunteers share America with the world—dispelling myths about Americans and developing deep relationships with local people. Through this approach, Volunteers also learn more about local challenges, resources,

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<sup>1</sup> The Peace Corps assigns one or more “counterparts,” or primary host community partners for integration and work, to each Volunteer.

and conditions in their host countries. Over time, they build the trust that is essential to project success.

**Public Benefit:** Volunteers are some of America's most effective goodwill ambassadors in communities where other development or cross-cultural exchange organizations are rarely present. As a result of these sustained interactions with Volunteers, local individuals and communities gain a more complete understanding of the United States and become more willing to engage with Americans.

### **Strategic Goal 3: Bringing the World Back Home**

*Increase Americans' awareness and knowledge of other cultures and global issues through Volunteers who share their Peace Corps experiences and continue to serve upon their return.*

During their two years of service, Volunteers learn the languages, customs, traditions, and values of the people with whom they live and work. Volunteers bring the world back home by sharing their experiences with family, friends, and the American public during and after their service. They directly connect Americans with local individuals and communities both independently and through Peace Corps-supported programs. As a result, they deepen and enrich Americans' awareness and knowledge of other countries, cultures, and global issues. Long after they return from their assignments abroad, returned Volunteers continue their service by promoting a better understanding of other cultures, encouraging and supporting volunteerism, and engaging in public service.

**Public Benefit:** Sustained interaction between Americans and other peoples engenders mutual understanding and trust, increasing respect and promoting human dignity in world affairs at home and abroad. Additionally, through their overseas experiences, Volunteers develop language, intercultural, technical, and entrepreneurial skills that prepare them for today's competitive job market. They bring these skills with them to their work in both the public and private sectors, sharing their global experiences and perspectives with their colleagues, friends, and family. This, in turn, helps to build a more competitive U.S. workforce.

## Strategic and Management Objectives

The four strategic objectives and two management objectives identified in this plan constitute the roadmap for advancing the Peace Corps mission and strategic goals. Strategic and management objectives are the primary unit of analysis for assessing the agency's performance and are measured through specific, time-bound performance goals.

### **Strategic Objective 1: Sustainable Change**

*Foster positive individual, organizational, and community change through Volunteer and stakeholder engagement, collaborative community relationships, the mobilization of local resources, skill building, and cultural exchange.*

### **Strategic Objective 2: Volunteer Effectiveness**

*Equip Volunteers to be technically and culturally competent professionals who collaborate with partners to support community-driven solutions by establishing an environment conducive to achieving the three strategic goals of the Peace Corps.*

### **Strategic Objective 3: Volunteer Resilience**

*Optimize the ability of Volunteers to successfully navigate the challenges of service, from recruitment to close of service, through a systematic approach to setting expectations, building skills, and supporting Volunteers, staff, and partners.*

### **Strategic Objective 4: Building Leaders of Tomorrow**

*Strengthen American communities and organizations by enabling returned Volunteers to reinvest the skills and abilities gained during service.*

### **Management Objective 5: Foundational Business Management**

*Continuously improve the agency's core infrastructure, including the cost-effectiveness, speed, ease-of-use, and quality of business services.*

### **Management Objective 6: Organizational Risk Management**

*Identify and proactively address risks and opportunities through systematic, evidence-based decision making.*

## Strategic Objective 1: Sustainable Change

*Foster positive individual, organizational, and community change through Volunteer and stakeholder engagement, collaborative community relationships, the mobilization of local resources, skill building, and cultural exchange.*

**Rationale:** The Peace Corps' strength lies in the promotion of individual, community, and organizational development through effective engagement in local partnerships, evidence-based programs, and the intercultural exchange of knowledge, skills, experiences, and values. Volunteers serve as catalysts for local capacity building through participatory and inclusive development processes that focus on relationships and communities' existing assets, institutions, and resources. Volunteers and program staff working with local counterparts, partner agencies, and government entities are also seen as catalysts for increasing engagement and interaction with individuals and organizations with common objectives. In the long run, successful engagement not only leverages resources and knowledge but also strengthens local ownership and the sustainability of development efforts. In the short term, priority areas in this strategic objective include improving program outcomes and evidence-based decision making.

### Strategies:

- Increase the capacity of posts<sup>2</sup> and headquarters offices to access and synthesize multiple data sources for evidence-based planning and management decisions.
- Develop an approach and tools for gathering quantitative and qualitative data on host country partners' assessment of the Peace Corps' contributions to local development priorities that are outlined in logical project frameworks and designed to facilitate sustainable change in local organizations and communities.<sup>3</sup>
- Identify priority programmatic and operational themes to explore the Peace Corps' impact and effectiveness.

**Strategic Objective Lead:** Associate Director for Global Operations

### FY 2019 Progress Update

All three strategies identified above remain relevant in supporting the overall goal of Strategic Objective 1: fostering positive individual, organizational, and community change. By improving tools and supporting training, the agency continues to increase its capacity for evidence-based planning at posts and at headquarters. Two key tools supporting this strategy are the Peace Corps' annual Country Portfolio Review—a process for generating recommendations to support leadership decisions about the

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<sup>2</sup> "Posts" are the principal offices responsible for managing day-to-day operations within host countries. In some cases, multiple countries may be administered from a single post to economize on overhead costs. For more information on the Peace Corps' countries of service, please refer to the map on page 1.

<sup>3</sup> Logical project frameworks are expected to be rolled out for all projects by FY 2021 as a systematic foundation for evidence-based program design, implementation, and evaluation.

allocation of Volunteers to each post—and the Field Research Dataset, which includes a wide variety of internal and external data on each post.

In FY 2019, the agency made progress toward the achievement of both performance goals on advancing community-based results and conducting assessments of the Peace Corps. As the agency nears the midway point in its transition to the new Logical Project Frameworks that underpin program design and promote sustainable change in local organizations and communities, the need for a new indicator to measure Performance Goal (PG) 1.1 became apparent. Consequently, a new metric was developed to transition agency reporting from a defined set of 19 standard indicators to a more holistic assessment of project-level achievements. More details regarding this transition are provided in PG 1.1.

For PG 1.2, the agency has exceeded its target by completing two studies on improved community integration and site management practices. The conclusions from these two studies resulted in a set of “good practices” and “practices to avoid.” The results generated significant interest and discussion. A series of consultations with the posts was used to gather feedback on the study recommendations, find out how the recommendations are being applied, and discuss options to further strengthen implementation of the recommended practices going forward. Further details on the objectives and findings from the community integration and site management studies are provided in the progress update for PG 1.2 together with the topics proposed for FY 2020 to assess different dimensions of the Peace Corps' effectiveness and impact.

These studies complement regular assessments of the Peace Corps' support for the development priorities of host country governments. The Peace Corps continually updates the list of study topics by consulting with stakeholders across its offices. These studies will continue to be instrumental in identifying and prioritizing operational areas to improve the Peace Corps' impact and effectiveness.

**Performance Goal 1.1: Advance Community-Based Results**

*Increase the percentage of projects with documented achievements in community-based development by FY 2022.*

**Indicator 1:** Increase achievements on the selected set of 19 standard indicators.

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	80%	85%	87%	89%	90%	90%
Results	75%	76%	86% <sup>4</sup>	80% <sup>5</sup>	76% <sup>6</sup>		

**Indicator 2:** Increase achievements of projects that use logical project frameworks.

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets					Baseline data collection	Baseline data collection	
Results	NA	NA	NA	NA	Baseline data collected		

In FY 2014, the Peace Corps developed this performance goal to systematically measure the agency’s global development impact using data from the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT) and each project’s framework of goals, objectives, activities, and indicators. The concept underpinning this performance goal is that the percentage of projects with documented results in the VRT provides evidence of Volunteers’ contributions to community-based development. This work is captured in Indicator 1 by using a set of 19 standard indicators. The selected indicators measure changes in specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that resulted from project activities across all six of the Peace Corps’ sectors—Agriculture, Community Economic Development, Education, Environment, Health, and Youth in Development. This metric was used in the Strategic Plan for FY 2014–2018 as well as the current plan for FY 2018–2022.

The Peace Corps’ global initiative for strengthening programming, training, and evaluation (PT&E) was tested and finalized in FY 2017 and began being rolled out more broadly in FY 2018. When fully implemented, this initiative will ensure that the Peace Corps has integrated PT&E systems that maximize the impact of Volunteers. This effort involves transitioning to industry-standard templates for project design, strengthening links between project design and Volunteer training, and simplifying Volunteers’ reporting of their achievements.

The centerpiece of PT&E alignment is the new project design document, the Logical Project Framework (LPF). The LPF consists of two templates. The first is a logic model that articulates the project goals, objectives, and anticipated community benefits

<sup>4</sup> This result includes all data received by November 30, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> This result includes all data received by November 27, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> This result includes all data received by November 22, 2019.

(outcomes). The activities reflect both the Peace Corps' niche and evidence-based practices. The second template is a plan for monitoring, reporting, and an assessment of project progress that defines evidence-based indicators, data collection tools, and standardized measurement strategies. Each sector's LPF and supporting materials reflect what Volunteers do to effect change.

Posts adapt these reference materials to design project frameworks that are tailored to their local context. Posts also draw on the reference materials to strengthen identification of sites and partner organizations, training, and reporting. Their project frameworks describe Volunteers' expected contributions to host community, organization, and government development goals. These frameworks also define annual targets that each post will review and refine as they gain experience implementing the projects.

Beginning in 2019—as the new project frameworks are entered into the VRT and new cohorts of Volunteers are trained on their use—a new baseline is being developed to transition agency reporting from the current set of 19 standard sector indicators (Indicator 1) to a holistic review of the full suite of indicators that posts have selected for use in their projects (Indicator 2). The criteria for including projects in Indicator 2 calculations will be that they have an endorsed LPF (as described in Performance Goal 2.5) and trained Volunteers who have had sufficient time in their communities by the end of the fiscal year to begin effecting change and reporting results.

The transition to Indicator 2 will enable the agency to more clearly evaluate project-level achievements across a range of Volunteer activities related to capacity building; improving knowledge, skills, and behaviors among project participants; and other priorities identified by posts. This transition will happen progressively from FY 2019 to FY 2022 with the posts that are implementing new PT&E frameworks reporting on their new indicators while results for projects in posts that are still in the process of changing their frameworks continue being analyzed using Indicator 1. By the end of FY 2021, it is anticipated that the vast majority of projects will have been developed using the new frameworks, and Indicator 1 will be discontinued. Indicator 2 will continue to be used through FY 2022.

### **FY 2019 Progress Update**

Performance Goal 1.1 includes two indicators. The target for Indicator 1 was not met. In FY 2019, 76 percent of the projects which use the 19 selected indicators passed the two thresholds used to measure achievement (i.e., the percent of Volunteers reporting and the percent of the post's annual target met). Among the projects that did not meet the defined thresholds for this goal, the most common reason was that the percentage of assigned Volunteers reporting results was below the threshold for measuring achievements. This may be due to the transition from the older project frameworks, on which the Indicator 1 analysis is based, as posts shift to the newer project frameworks and indicators.



In contrast to the limited information from the 19 indicators used in Indicator 1, the second indicator for this performance goal was developed in FY 2019 to provide a more holistic view of contributions to community-based development by projects in the new Logical Project Frameworks. The threshold used to measure achievement for the second indicator is that the results reported by the Volunteers on a project meet or exceed half of the annual targets on at least half of the indicators in that project's framework.

Baseline data was collected on Indicator 2 from approximately 1,400 Volunteers from 29 posts who reported on 45 new project frameworks in the Volunteer Reporting Tool. The analysis of this data showed that 71 percent of the new projects passed the thresholds used to measure achievement for the baseline. As more project frameworks are endorsed and more posts begin training incoming Volunteers to report on them, the agency will be better able to assess its impact and the results of the Volunteers' work.

The Peace Corps will continue to collect and analyze baseline data on Indicator 2 in FY 2020 in order to inform agency targets for FY 2021 and FY 2022.



*Peace Corps Volunteer Peter Deucher works with teachers on planning lessons around read-alouds and library utilization in the Gambia.*



*Peace Corps Volunteer Alex Shur works closely with extension agents from the local Ministry of Agriculture, promoting adult learning strategies in Guatemala.*

**Goal Leads:** Chiefs of Programming and Training (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

**Data Source:** VRT reporting against post project frameworks

**Calculations: Indicator 1:** The number of projects that meet the two thresholds for a documented achievement on at least one of the selected standard indicators used for this goal divided by the number of projects that use one or more of the 19 selected indicators. The two thresholds are at least 25 percent of the Volunteers assigned to the selected projects must report some results, and the combined total of all Volunteer results must be at least 25 percent of the annual target for the project. **Indicator 2:** The number of projects that meet the threshold for documented achievements divided by the number of PT&E projects that meet the criteria for inclusion. The threshold for achievement is that results reported by assigned Volunteers on the project meet or exceed half of the annual targets on at least half of the indicators in that project's framework.

<b>Performance Goal 1.2: Assess the Peace Corps' Impact</b>							
<i>Conduct one thematic study per fiscal year of a broad component of the Peace Corps' programming to assess its effectiveness and impact.</i>							
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	List of proposed topics developed  Tools and approach developed	First study conducted  Second study planned	Two studies commenced	FY 2020 studies completed  One additional study conducted
Results	NA	NA	NA	List of proposed topics, tools, and approach developed	Two studies completed: Community Integration and Site Management <sup>7</sup>		

Between 2008 and 2012, the Peace Corps conducted 24 [impact studies](#) on individual host country projects. These studies were conducted retrospectively by interviewing counterparts, beneficiaries, host country families, and stakeholders. In contrast to this earlier effort, this performance goal will focus on one programming or operational topic that is common across a range of Peace Corps countries and is identified as a priority by the Office of Global Operations and the senior leadership in the agency. Topics for annual impact studies are developed in consultation with stakeholder offices and advisory groups so that the findings are of maximum relevance for continuous improvement in the agency. These annual impact studies will assess the impact of evidence-based practices and programs globally and identify opportunities to strengthen programs or improve operational efficiency and effectiveness. The findings from these studies will be widely disseminated in order to promote learning and consolidate best practices across the agency.

The studies will be conducted using a combination of desk reviews, existing administrative data from the VRT, annual surveys of Volunteers, interviews with staff in Peace Corps' posts, and other materials that are related to the topic of the study. Possible topics identified for the Strategic Plan FY 2018-2022 include programs (e.g., girls' education, youth camps, malaria prevention, HIV/AIDS awareness, and/or Peace Corps' contributions to sustainable change in its host country programs) or operational topics (e.g., best practices in site development, working with local counterparts, and global and local partnerships; and/or mechanisms to engage communities in productive,

<sup>7</sup> The site management study also fulfills the FY 2019 target for Performance Goal 2.4: Implement an Improved Site Management System.

collaborative, and inclusive relationships that foster development and strengthen cultural exchange).

The topic for the FY 2019 study was “Enabling Successful Community Integration.” In addition, a study on management of work locations for newly arriving Volunteers was completed. (See also Performance Goal 2.4). For FY 2020, two studies are targeted for completion. The first study will focus on understanding attrition between the time that applicants are invited to serve and their enter on duty date. The study will identify characteristics of invitees that are related to attrition before enter on duty, with the goal of providing senior leadership with clear, actionable information to inform decision-making aimed at decreasing attrition between invitation and arrival at post. The second study will focus on the use of technology in language learning. The purpose of this project will be to better understand how posts are using web-based language learning across the 30-month learning continuum of service with the Peace Corps’ learning management system “LearningSpace” and identify promising practices.

### **FY 2019 Progress Update**

The study on Enabling Successful Community Integration was finalized in July 2019. The study design drew upon data from the Annual Volunteer Survey to compare and contrast posts with high and low levels of satisfaction with community integration.

This study identified 17 practices at posts where Volunteers expressed a high level of satisfaction on integration as “good practices” and eight practices at posts with a low level of satisfaction as “practices to avoid.” The good practices included beginning to build language skills before trainees started service, having language instructors on staff, and activities for homestay families during pre-service training. The study also found that where trainees stay during site visits and where Volunteers live during service helped promote community integration. Practices associated with the first few months at site (such as making a host family connection or having a counterpart who could show the Volunteer around the community) and involving Volunteers in identifying new sites were often found at posts with more integrated Volunteers. The study found that Volunteers who reported spending more than three days per month away from their sites felt less integrated into their communities.

The study also identified 32 practices that had been assumed to promote higher community integration which were actually neutral, providing neither an advantage nor a disadvantage. These included practices like community-based pre-service training, community meetings, spreading Volunteers out across geographic areas, or discouraging Volunteers from reaching out to their friends and family in the United States. Neutral factors that did not appear to be associated with the extent of integration included the number of languages that the post teach trainees, host country attitudes towards strangers, the ease of transportation, and the size of the program area.

The Office of Global Operations has shared the results of the community integration study and the site management study (described in PG 2.4) with the posts and has scheduled follow-up calls to understand how the results are being used by the posts.



*Peace Corps Volunteer Katrina Johnston with her host mother and sister on host family appreciation day at the end of training in Ethiopia holding a framed photo of her with the whole family that she presented to them. This portrait now hangs in the host family's living room.*

**Goal Leads:** Associate Director in the Office of Global Operations and Director of the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning

**Data Source:** Agency records and administrative data

**Calculation:** Completion of the milestones listed above

## Strategic Objective 2: Volunteer Effectiveness

*Equip Volunteers to be technically and culturally competent professionals who collaborate with partners to support community-driven solutions by establishing an environment conducive to achieving the three strategic goals of the Peace Corps.*

**Rationale:** Achievement of the agency's three goals is contingent on establishing an enabling environment conducive to effective Volunteer service. This requires targeted and strategic support from the agency, including developing staff capacity, designing and managing projects with an evidence-based approach, and using a systematic approach to site management. It also includes facilitating Volunteer learning; ensuring the integration of comprehensive intercultural competence, diversity, and inclusion (ICD&I) into all agency operations; and engaging and supporting host country partners in their roles.

### Strategies

- Develop a competency-based overseas staff learning strategy, focused on programming, training, and evaluation (PT&E) staff that differentiates and targets resources for each phase of the employee lifecycle: onboarding (forming), norming, informing (field experts), and off-boarding.
- Develop a competency-based Volunteer learning strategy that differentiates and targets learning and development resources with an emphasis on technical, ICD&I, and language training for each phase of the Volunteer lifecycle (applicant, invitee, trainee, Volunteer, and returned Volunteer) and includes the creation of guidance and standards for the pre-departure environment.
- Conduct post-level case studies to identify best practices in site and partner identification, preparation, and support. Utilize the findings to enhance site identification and monitoring guidance and to develop simple site assessment tools that enable staff to better place Volunteers with communities and partners that have the greatest potential to achieve development outcomes.
- Operationalize PT&E processes and tools (PT&E alignment) for project design and management so that all posts have logical project frameworks that articulate training, implementation plans, and the expected contributions of the Volunteers to local development goals.
- Develop and implement a project-level monitoring and evaluation strategy and mobile data system to facilitate the real-time reporting and monitoring of Volunteer activities, outputs, and outcomes.

**Strategic Objective Lead:** Associate Director for Global Operations

### FY 2019 Progress Update

The five strategies identified above continue to be necessary for establishing an enabling environment conducive for effective Volunteer service. Progress was made toward all of these strategies in FY 2019.

The first major element required for development of the competency-based learning strategies for staff and Volunteers was completed in FY 2019. All staff competencies in the areas of programming, training, evaluation, and Volunteer support were developed with Peace Corps' subject matter experts. Global core competencies such as continual learning, adaptability, intercultural engagement, and accountability were developed based on the Peace Corps' core expectations of Volunteers. The agency expects to complete the other elements for development and implementation of the learning strategies that are described in PGs 2.1 and 2.2 by the end of FY 2020.

In FY 2019, Volunteer language proficiency at close of service exceeded targets in both levels of language difficulty that are described in PG 2.3. A new user-friendly system for gathering data on language test scores was introduced this year, which facilitated reporting by posts. Scores for 97 percent of the Volunteers who completed service in FY 2019 were received, the highest percentage recorded since this performance goal was first measured in FY 2015. The Peace Corps expects high levels of Volunteer language proficiency to continue as posts implement more structured and robust language learning programs based on improved guidance, resources, and training.

The study of site management practices in PG 2.4 was completed in FY 2019, focusing on comparing and contrasting posts perceived by Volunteers to be more proficient at site management with those perceived as less proficient. The results were organized into good practices for site management effectiveness, neutral practices, and practices to avoid. The study findings will be disseminated and discussed with posts in FY 2020, and the conclusions of those discussions will be incorporated into revised site management guidance.

The agency continues to make steady progress toward reaching the ultimate goal of 100 percent of projects in new Logical Project Frameworks by the end of FY 2021. The importance of this effort was underscored by the study, which found that the new Logical Project Frameworks support better site management. By the end of FY 2019, the design, development, and technical review process had been completed for 54 percent of projects as discussed in PG 2.5.

At the end of FY 2019, the agency awarded a contract for Volunteer In-Service IT Modernization. This contract includes development of a new data system that will allow Volunteers to report project activities on mobile devices and enable staff to monitor and analyze the impact of their projects. Software development for a combined Volunteer activity and small grants reporting platform will begin in FY 2020 with the goal of global availability of the new system by the end of FY 2021.

**Performance Goal 2.1: Optimize Staff Performance**

*Establish a competency-based learning strategy for overseas PT&E staff that supports targeted professional development throughout the employee lifecycle by the end of FY 2021.*

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	Competencies developed	Competencies developed Resource plan developed Sequencing and mapping completed User interface on IT platform completed	Resource plan completed Sequencing and mapping completed Content on IT platform uploaded and organized	Staff capacity in competencies built
Results	NA	NA	NA	Language, training, and ICD&I competencies developed	Programming and evaluation competencies developed		

This performance goal targets capacity building for overseas PT&E staff in core and technical competencies that support and enhance Volunteer effectiveness. This performance goal will be achieved in a series of phases:

- Phase 1: Develop competencies in language, training, and ICD&I in FY 2018. Additional competencies in programming and evaluation will be developed in FY 2019.
- Phase 2: Identify, refine, develop, and align resources—including resources that help staff support Volunteers in building their resiliency. Map the resources to the competencies that have been defined.
- Phase 3: Sequence and map learning and development resources to the employee lifecycle, beginning with onboarding.
- Phase 4: Roll-out staff competencies and learning and development resources on an integrated and navigable IT platform that supports staff professional development.
- Phase 5: Build the capacity of staff to use learned competencies in their work and to continue their professional development using the related resources.
- Phase 6: Update the performance goal to measure increased effectiveness among staff who have participated in skills building.

## **FY 2019 Progress Update**

The target for FY 2019 was not met. Of the four planned elements, the first—development of competencies—is complete. This element is the foundational for the achievement of the other targets for this performance goal. The agency expects to complete the other three planned elements by the end of FY 2020.

The Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS) served as the lead office in developing competencies in the areas of programming, monitoring and evaluation, and Volunteer support. All competencies were developed with Peace Corps' subject matter experts and benchmarked to industry standards in the public and private sector. The competencies are scheduled to be vetted with a representative group of Peace Corps' post staff through a participatory and iterative process. The development of the competencies is foundational to the achievement of the other targets in FY 2020.

The targets set for the development of the programming, monitoring, and evaluation of staff competencies were ambitious, and the availability of key staff needed to complete this work was constrained by various factors including staff reductions and turnover. As a result, significant time was needed to onboard new staff—including three key supervisory positions—which delayed progress on this goal. In addition, the development of programming and evaluation competencies require the participation of the same staff who are responsible for supporting the transition of post projects to the Logical Project Frameworks (PG 2.5), an agency priority.

The agency transitioned to a new Learning Management System in FY 2019. This system is administered by the Office of Staff Learning and Development (OSLD), which is also responsible for the development of core competencies for agency staff. OPATS and OSLD are in the process of exploring options for the systematic use of this learning management system as the IT platform for supporting competency-based learning for staff and development for both technical and core competencies.

**Goal Lead:** *Director of the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support*

**Data Source:** *Agency records and administrative data*

**Calculation:** *Completion of the milestones listed above*



**Performance Goal 2.2: Optimize Volunteer Performance**

*Establish a competency-based Volunteer learning strategy that supports capacity building throughout the Volunteer lifecycle by the end of FY 2021.*

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	Competencies developed	Global core competencies developed Resource plan developed Sequencing and mapping completed	Resource plan completed Sequencing and mapping completed	Content on IT platform uploaded and organized Pre-departure environment standards and guidance established Volunteer capacity built in competencies
Results	NA	NA	NA	Technical competencies developed	Global core competencies developed		

This performance goal targets capacity building at all phases of Volunteer service in core and technical competencies in order to ensure Volunteers’ effectiveness and accountability. This performance goal will be achieved in a series of phases:

Phase 1: Develop technical competencies and additional competencies in the “global core” (which includes competencies related to resilience and adjustment challenges).

Phase 2: Identify, refine, develop, and align resources that are mapped to the competencies.

Phase 3: Sequence and map learning and development resources related to language acquisition, sector, and global core to the appropriate phases of the Volunteer lifecycle, beginning with the pre-departure environment.

Phase 4: Establish a standardized approach, guidance, and content for the pre-departure environment which allows for competencies to be introduced earlier in the Volunteer lifecycle.

Phase 5: Roll-out Volunteer competencies and learning and development resources on an integrated and navigable IT platform that supports Volunteer learning.

Phase 6: Build the capacity of Volunteers to use the learned competencies and related resources during their service.

Phase 7: Update the performance goal to measure increased effectiveness among Volunteers who have participated in skills building.

## FY 2019 Progress Update

The target for FY 2019 was not met. Similar to the result reported in PG 2.1, of the four planned elements, the first major element—the development of global core competencies—is complete. Significant progress was also made in the standardization of the pre-departure environment. The agency expects to complete the other three planned elements by the end of FY 2020.

Global core competencies for Volunteers were developed based on the Peace Corps' core expectations. The development of the competencies, benchmarked against existing agency policy and guidance, involved the contributions of subject-matter experts and representatives from 10 offices across the agency. Drafts of global core competencies were then discussed with one or more field staff from 40 Peace Corps posts during programming and training leadership conferences in the Africa and Inter-America and the Pacific regions.

All global core competencies describe the measurable or observable knowledge, skills, and attitudes that Volunteers need to achieve the Peace Corps' three strategic goals. Each competency is described by a standard, tasks critical to achievement of the standard, and knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to carry out the tasks. The comprehensive competency model will serve as the foundation for the modification and/or design of training and learning resources to support Volunteer competency development.

The agency transitioned to a new Learning Management System in FY 2019. The Office of Global Operations hired a project expert to facilitate a process to standardize the use of the system for pre-departure engagement of invitees. The project expert established a template to facilitate and manage critical pre-departure tasks required of invitees and trained country desk officers to use the templates. All posts are now following the minimum standards for pre-departure engagement.

The targets set for the development of the Volunteer competencies were ambitious. As noted in PG 2.1, the lead office was affected by reduced staffing level in FY 2019. The development of competencies for both staff and Volunteers involve the same small group of staff, some of whom were new to the lead office and/or to the agency in FY 2019. The implementation of global core competencies also requires significant change management as global core competencies apply to all Peace Corps Volunteers and, as such, impact each Peace Corps post. Once implemented, ongoing oversight and management of global core competencies and related guidance and standards is essential. The agency is in the process of determining the appropriate governance structure to include in the resource plan, sequencing and mapping efforts.

**Goal Lead:** Director of the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support

**Data Source:** Agency records and administrative data

**Calculation:** Completion of the milestones listed above

**Performance Goal 2.3: Improve Language Learning**

*Increase the percentage of Volunteers tested at close of service who achieve the “advanced” level or above on the language proficiency interview.*

**Indicator 1:** Increase the percentage of Volunteers tested at close of service who achieve the “Advanced” level or above in Level 1 and 2 languages.

	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	-	84%	85%	85%	85%
Results	NA	<i>81%*</i>	82%	82%	82%	86% <sup>8</sup>		

**Indicator 2:** Increase the percentage of Volunteers tested at close of service who achieve the “Advanced” level or above in Level 3 and 4 languages.

	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	-	39%	40%	42%	42%
Results	NA	<i>46%*</i>	38%	38%	38%	44% <sup>8</sup>		

*\* Italicized results are not comparable to later years due to changes in measurement.*

Developing local language skills is critical to the Volunteers’ ability to integrate into their communities; work effectively toward the Peace Corps’ Strategic Goals One, Two and Three; and maintain their safety and security. An increase in the percentage of Volunteers who achieve the advanced level of language proficiency indicates that the agency is supporting effective language training and independent language learning throughout the service of the Volunteers.

The language ability of the Volunteers is measured through a language proficiency interview (LPI), administered by agency-certified language testers. The LPI includes four proficiency levels based on guidelines from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Superior. At the Advanced level, Volunteers should be able to perform the functions required in most projects such as training, co-planning, or facilitating technical activities.

Volunteers are taught and tested in key language(s) spoken at their site. Measuring language ability at mid-service and close of service allows posts to assess the efficacy of their language-learning programs and determine the types of activities that Volunteers can reasonably be expected to perform in the local language(s). This indicator continues to be particularly important as posts design and implement new strategies for language learning throughout service that are consistent with their project frameworks.

<sup>8</sup> These results include Volunteers who tested at the advanced level during their service and were thus not re-tested at close of service.

Advanced proficiency in a language that is classified as a Level 3 or Level 4 in terms of difficulty is more challenging and time-consuming than developing that level of proficiency in languages classified at Level 1 or 2. Over time, the proportion of Volunteers serving in posts with more difficult languages has increased steadily from 51 percent of the Volunteers tested in 2015 to 57 percent of those tested in 2018. Thus, this performance goal has been revised from the goal used in the FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan to take into account the larger numbers of Volunteers being tested in more languages where it is more difficult to achieve advanced proficiency. For this reason, two separate indicators for language skills were established for agency performance reporting in FY 2018 and beyond.

Additional contextual factors may be considered in the future for this performance goal such as the fact that some Volunteers may learn more than one language during the course of their service. As the Peace Corps further refines language learning expectations in light of the posts' PT&E alignment efforts, this performance goal may be further updated.

### **FY 2019 Progress Update**

FY 2019 language proficiency interview results slightly exceeded the targets set for both groups of languages. The results were based on the most comprehensive reporting by the agency since this performance goal was introduced in FY 2015. In FY 2019, results were reported for 97 percent of the 2,194 Volunteers who were trained in local languages and completed service, compared with 87 percent in FY 2018 and 54 percent in FY 2015. This comprehensive reporting was made possible by the development of a new, user-friendly tool for posts.

Three offices collaborated effectively to develop the new reporting tool and training materials. Five posts piloted the tool and provided useful feedback. All posts are now using the new tool for reporting. For the first time in FY 2019, improved access to this data has allowed the agency to include results for Volunteers who achieved the advanced level during their service and thus were not re-tested at close of service.

Increased reporting has provided headquarters and posts with the clearest picture yet of the language development of Volunteers. The agency's language specialists continue to provide guidance, resources, and training to support posts in the development of robust language learning programs including in-person and self-directed learning strategies. The development of competencies (as described in PG 2.2) for each of the Peace Corps' six sectors has enabled posts to clearly identify the tasks Volunteers need to perform in their local languages and strengthen learning resources. The agency expects that as more training resources are deployed, Volunteers' proficiency in local languages will improve, particularly in the more difficult Level 3 and 4 languages where fewer Volunteers are achieving advanced proficiency.

**Goal Lead:** Director of the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support

**Data Source:** Peace Corps databases (VIDA<sup>9</sup> and SharePoint)

**Calculations: Indicator 1:** The number of Volunteers who achieved an Advanced or Superior level score on their LPI for Levels 1 and 2 languages at close of service divided by the number of Volunteers who were tested at close of service. **Indicator 2:** The number of Volunteers who achieved an Advanced or Superior level score on their LPI for Levels 3 and 4 languages at close of service divided by the number of Volunteers who were tested at close of service.

<b>Performance Goal 2.4: Implement an Improved Site Management System</b>							
<i>Define, design, and implement a comprehensive site management system by the end of FY 2021.</i>							
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	Parameters and hypothesis defined Data collection tools developed	Structured interviews and case studies conducted in selected posts	Existing site management guidance enhanced with research findings	Orient staff in all posts to the updated site management guidance
Results	NA	NA	NA	Scope of work and hypothesis defined	Research completed		

This performance goal establishes an improved and comprehensive site management system based on evidence-based guidance and tools. The system will foster an enabling environment for Volunteers, communities, and partners to address mutually-defined development priorities. The improved site management system will be completed using a phased approach:

- Phase 1: Use existing data to define parameters for successful site management.
- Phase 2: Develop tools, such as structured interview questionnaires, to collect and analyze data.
- Phase 3: Conduct structured interviews and case studies on site management practices at selected posts to compare and contrast the posts with the most and least success using the parameters defined in Phase 1.
- Phase 4: Enhance existing site management guidance for each Region based on findings from the operational research conducted in Phases 1-3.
- Phase 5: Develop an integrated and navigable technology platform (VIDA) to capture and manage critical site management data. Facilitate use of this data by post staff to identify sites with shared programmatic goals and committed partners with whom Volunteers can work.
- Phase 6: Orient staff in all posts to revisions to their Region’s site management guidance at regional conferences and in regular communications.

<sup>9</sup> The Volunteer Information Database Application (VIDA) tool allows posts to manage data on Volunteers, sites, and Emergency Action Plans. Beginning in FY 2019, posts will use a new data collection tool on SharePoint to report this data.

## FY 2019 Progress Update

The target for FY 2019 was met. The study was conducted from April-June 2019, using data collected from 31 structured interviews from 11 posts. The goal of the study was to improve the agency's understanding of what constitutes highly-effective site management activities, with an emphasis on work location management. Annual Volunteer Survey data was used to select posts that were perceived by Volunteers as more proficient at site management activities for comparison to ones that were perceived as less proficient.

This study illustrated how the project review and redesign elements of the PT&E Alignment process (described in PG 2.5) have had a beneficial impact on site management. The main findings of the study were summarized into site management practices in three categories: 12 good practices to be shared widely, two practices that do not appear to influence site management effectiveness, and three practices which seem to impede successful work location identification and selection and should thus be avoided.

The good practices that related to identification and selection of work locations included the following:

- Building project frameworks and specific criteria into the Post Site Management Manual, Volunteer Request Form/application, and communication products for organizations applying to host a Volunteer
- Having an objective on improving site identification in the annual process for integrated planning and budgeting and discussing results of it in the post's Annual Reflections
- Screening host organizations requesting a Volunteer to ensure a good fit
- Formally documenting the roles and responsibilities assigned to the Volunteer, counterpart, and local supervisor with each host organization
- Maximizing work opportunities for the Volunteer by identifying more than one organization in a site and/or by asking organizations requesting Volunteers to list three to five potential counterparts
- Having host organizations identify someone to serve as a "community guide" to help Volunteers integrate during the first few weeks of service

These findings will be used in FY 2020 in a series of round table discussions with posts. These discussions will be used to clarify study findings and understand how posts are using the findings in ways that reflect the culture and practices in the countries where they work. Regions will use the study findings and a summary of round table discussions to improve and extend the site management guidance used by posts as a framework for developing and identifying work locations for Volunteers.

**Goal Leads:** Deputy Director of the Office of Global Operations

**Data Source:** Agency administrative records

**Calculation:** Completion of the milestones listed above

**Performance Goal 2.5: Strengthen Project Planning and Management***Develop logical project frameworks for all projects using PT&E Alignment processes and tools by FY 2021.*

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	35% of projects	68% of projects	84% of projects	100% of projects
Results	NA	NA	4% of projects	21% of projects	54% of projects		

This performance goal is designed to implement an improved, integrated project planning and management system that addresses community-defined priorities through evidence-based activities. The project frameworks that are developed as an integral part of the updated project planning process known as “PT&E alignment” will ensure that Volunteers have meaningful work that contributes to development outcomes. PT&E alignment uses the lessons learned by the agency over recent years as it has focused its programs in six sectors and supported post staff in designing, implementing, and evaluating high-quality programming and training for Volunteers. The PT&E alignment process was launched with the development of “anchor activities,” resource packages, and related guidance, tools, and templates for each sector to support posts in designing projects using logical project frameworks. In FYs 2016 and 2017, the agency field-tested the new approach and sector resource packages at 15 participating posts. The process of developing new project frameworks began in FY 2017. This process culminates when the regional offices complete their final review of post plans and endorse the project frameworks.

**FY 2019 Progress Update**

The target was not met though there was significant progress. The agency has set annual targets for the number of post projects using the new Logical Project Frameworks that are expected to be endorsed by regional offices, with the overall goal of reaching 100 percent of all projects by the end of FY 2021. The FY 2019 target was 68 percent of projects endorsed. A total of 45 projects were endorsed during this fiscal year, reflecting 54 percent of the 138 active Peace Corps projects. At the close of FY 2019, an additional 10 projects nearing the end of the design process were scheduled to be endorsed in the first quarter of FY 2020.

The agency continues to make steady, sustained progress towards reaching the ultimate goal of Logical Project Frameworks for all projects by the end of FY 2021. Staff have become more proficient in the use of the new tools and processes that support project design. As a result, the pace has increased, with 50 percent more projects endorsed in FY 2019 than in FY 2018. Although the total number of projects endorsed to date has fallen short of the overall target, it is expected that the FY 2020 target of 84 percent endorsed is achievable.

**Goal Leads:** Chiefs of Programming and Training (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

**Data Source:** Administrative records

**Calculation:** Number of projects with an endorsed project framework divided by the number of projects. The targets and results expressed above for FY 2017-2018 are based on a global total of 142 projects that are being developed or refreshed using the agency's PT&E process. In FY 2019, with the suspension of programming in Nicaragua, the denominator decreased to 138 projects.



## Strategic Objective 3: Volunteer Resilience

*Optimize the ability of Volunteers to successfully navigate the challenges of service, from recruitment to close of service, through a systematic approach to setting expectations, building skills, and supporting Volunteers, staff, and partners.*

**Rationale:** Since its inception in 1961, optimizing Peace Corps Volunteers' natural resilience has been part of the Peace Corps' approach to development. Recent developments in the field of resilience, stress management, intercultural competence, diversity, and inclusion point to the need to review and revise the agency's approach to enhancing resilience. Volunteers encounter unique stressors associated with living and working abroad and integrating into host communities. These stressors may be experienced differently by individual Volunteers depending on their prior life experiences, identity, education, or other factors, as well as the social and cultural complexities of development work at their sites. Delineating a systematic and comprehensive approach to setting expectations and building resilience skills—one that includes staff, in-country partners, and Volunteers who support each other—will increase the ability of Volunteers to successfully navigate the challenges of service, from recruitment to close of service and life beyond the Peace Corps.

### Strategies

- Promote a suite of standardized products to inform core expectations, such as short videos, digital content, job descriptions, and post communications.
- Analyze the existing applicant interview questions, job descriptions, and country pages, including sections related to expectations of service and adaptation strategies; modify or update as needed to strengthen messages targeted to prospective applicants.
- Identify methods and opportunities to inform resilience skill building at posts that is integrated with properly sequenced ICD&I coaching and other training, using simulation and experiential learning techniques where appropriate.<sup>10</sup>
- Identify external research findings on resilience and incorporate the most relevant findings into Volunteer and staff skill building to enhance the Volunteer-support environment.
- Enhance the ability of post staff to address individual Volunteer adjustment challenges and/or resilience gaps.
- Advance a common understanding of Volunteer adjustment and resilience and its critical contributing factors across all elements of the agency engaged in Volunteer support, including the development of materials and activities for counterparts and host families.
- Build ICD&I concepts, actions, and tools into core agency business processes.

**Strategic Objective Lead:** Associate Director of the Office of Health Services

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<sup>10</sup> One example of experiential learning is to let trainees experience a cultural setting where a shared value like respect is shown through different behaviors than the ones to which they are accustomed.

## **FY 2019 Progress Update**

Substantial progress has been made in this strategic objective in FY 2019. This effort is now an agency-wide initiative. Progress in advancing a common understanding of adjustment and resilience was reflected throughout the November meeting of the Field Advisory Board, which is comprised of different types of staff from a range of posts. At this meeting, resilience was highlighted as a theme that impacts post operations from pre-departure communication to on-going support and training needs for staff and for Volunteers throughout their service. During FY 2019, resilience was also a featured theme at most of the annual conferences for country directors and directors of programming and training. Posts have requested that the Office of Global Operations increase support going forward.

Supporting the ability of Volunteers to manage the challenges of service improves their chances for success. Volunteers' innate resilience can be further enhanced by empowering staff at posts to support the adjustment of Volunteers through the uniquely challenging aspects of Peace Corps service. Training is underway to increase staff capacity to engage in interpersonal support for Volunteers. Of equal importance is the development or enhancement of Volunteer life skills. The Volunteer resilience training pilot is well underway in responding to this need.

Volunteer resilience is closely aligned with clarity on expectations for service. The agency is looking system-wide at critical areas where there are opportunities to diminish any gaps between applicant and invitee expectations and the realities of Volunteer service. The development of digital content that assists in the adjustment of invitee expectations is well underway and proving beneficial. Examples include the development of a short video to orient invitees on health care services during service, information on specific jobs, and updated country pages on the Peace Corps website. With the identification of these main focus areas, realistic expectations about Peace Corps service will be clarified for maximum impact.

To better understand how to support Volunteer resilience, the agency is analyzing data from Volunteers, capturing perceptions of their effectiveness along with other data from the application and onboarding process. The goal of this analysis is to identify unique combinations of predictive variables related to Volunteer effectiveness and performance that may help inform future recruitment efforts. Through these efforts, the agency hopes to increase the recruitment of applicants who are more resilient when faced with the challenges inherent to Peace Corps service.

Intercultural competence, diversity, and inclusion (ICD&I) are important factors to consider in relation to Volunteer resilience. Research shows that long-term immersion in unfamiliar environments can create stress as a result of the uncertainty presented by differing cultural norms and values. Understanding appropriate and effective behavior in a new context, as well as the values that inform those behaviors, can help mitigate stress and improve adjustment. Ensuring that the range of experience before Peace

Corps service is taken into account in core business practices will enable the agency to support resilience for all Volunteers including those from diverse backgrounds.

Finally, work in the ICD&I space includes, but is not limited to, training. Volunteer and staff training will enhance the ability of posts to address individual Volunteer adjustment challenges and/or resilience gaps. Delivering this training through experiential learning or other methods will help maximize its effectiveness. A proposal to develop staff training via a moderated online course is under review as a potential approach to expand upon the Volunteer training modules already developed.

<b>Performance Goal 3.1: Establish Realistic Expectations of Service</b>							
<i>Ensure that all agency messaging is focused and consistent on internal and external platforms throughout the applicant lifecycle to establish realistic expectations of service by FY 2020.</i>							
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	Analysis of current messaging from HQ and post conducted	New resiliency content and adjustment standards developed	New content for recruiters and stakeholders approved and disseminated	Research on readiness conducted with Volunteers entering service
Results	NA	NA	NA	HQ analysis underway; post analysis to be conducted in FY 2019	Resiliency content and standards developed		

After revamping marketing and simplifying online application and screening processes in 2014, the Peace Corps increased the number of applications from around 10,000 in FY 2013 to a peak of nearly 24,000 in FY 2016. The agency continues to receive approximately 15,000–20,000 applications a year. Furthermore, prospective Volunteers are now moving from application to service in the shortest time in decades. Through social media they are exposed to more information about Peace Corps service than past generations of Volunteers. Some of this information is created or curated by the Peace Corps, but much of it is not. The agency requires additional processes that help candidates, invitees, trainees, and, ultimately, Volunteers prepare for the rigors of service by setting appropriate expectations.

Milestones for this performance goal include:

- Phase 1: Conduct an analysis of current messaging from headquarters that addresses resiliency as it relates to expectations of service.
- Phase 2: Conduct an analysis of current pre-departure messaging from posts.

Phase 3: Create and disseminate agency content, standards, and messaging on challenges to expect during Peace Corps service.

Phase 4: Conduct research on Volunteer readiness when entering service.

## FY 2019 Progress Update

The target for FY 2019 was met with the development of a wide range of new content focused on resiliency. The agency’s social media platforms, website, and press outreach featured stories, blogs, photos, and interviews with current and returned Volunteers that are designed to help applicants develop realistic expectations for service as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

New features that were introduced in FY 2019 included “Ask Me Anything,” a real-time question and answer sessions with subject matter experts sharing information about applications, health requirements, and living conditions. Volunteers were also recruited to participate in “Volunteer Takeovers” of the agency’s flagship Instagram account to share firsthand accounts of a day in their lives. Other popular projects featured virtual “house tours” with current Volunteers via Instagram slideshows and stories from Volunteers representing the agency’s diverse applicant pool about their motivation to serve, perspectives and experiences. The messaging on these platforms placed a premium on Volunteers’ ingenuity, resourcefulness, and grit and emphasized their core commitment to service. These platforms and messaging help answer the applicants’ question: “Is Peace Corps service right for me?”

The Peace Corps website now provides easy access to updated information on service conditions, safety and security, health concerns, diversity and inclusion, travel preparations, country-specific FAQs, and new videos on pre- and post-service medical questions. The following screenshots from these materials show recent examples of the new digital content that was developed. These types of posts drove visitors to peacecorps.gov and generated two-way conversations.



By Megan McWilliams  
JULY 11, 2019

I wake up at 6:30 a.m. to the sound of a woman shouting her wares as she walks by my house, a basket balancing high on her head. “Eggs!” she yells, “boiled eggs!”

This walking market serves as my daily alarm and I stretch leisurely in the early morning sunlight that streams through the windows. I dress in my freshly ironed green and white teacher uniform. The tailored white top and long green skirt are symbols of pride and respect in Myanmar where teachers are highly valued.



By Peace Corps  
MAY 24, 2019

Though they represent less than 5% of the overall Volunteer population, Americans [over the age of 50](#) are a valuable asset to the Peace Corps community.

After a lifetime of experiences, both professional and otherwise, older individuals bring a special set of skills, wisdom and perspective to service. You don't have to take our word for it; here's what nine Volunteers - all of whom are over the age of 50 - have to say about serving abroad with the Peace Corps.

Sample story of a day in the life of a Volunteer



View Insights

Promote



ASK US ANYTHING. 🗣️ Have questions about applying to serve or about Peace Corps service in general? 😊 Ask them in the comments below! From 3-5 pm ET today, Emily will answer YOUR questions from @gopeacecorps. Emily served as a community economic development Volunteer in @peacecorpsarmenia and now works to recruit the next generation of Peace Corps Volunteers. 🙌 Ask her anything!

Sample "Ask Me Anything" question and answer session

Sample of the stories from diverse Volunteers



View Insights

Promote



Liked by peacecorpstonga and 1,745 others

peacecorps Buenos dias! My name is Akil (@athegrayt), I am a civil engineer currently serving as a WASH volunteer in Perú. Today I'll be taking over the Peace Corps instagram for the day.

One of the beautiful things about living here in Perú is the variety of local produce that can only be found only here! I try to take advantage of this fact and try a new fruit or vegetable every week from the Sunday farmers market.

What you see in this photo is that being here in Perú has taught me that even with language barriers, we all speak the language of laughter.

Sample Instagram takeover

**Goal Leads:** Associate Director of Volunteer Recruitment Services (VRS) and Director of the Office of Communications

**Data Sources:** Website, Volunteer Delivery System applications (DOVE and MAXx)

**Calculation:** Completion of the milestones listed above

**Performance Goal 3.2: Increase Management of Adjustment Challenges Outside the Clinical Environment**

*Increase the range of individuals from whom Volunteers can seek support when facing adjustment challenges during service.*

**Indicator 1:** Decrease and maintain the Volunteer/Trainee (VT) rate of care seeking from Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMOs) for adjustment difficulties.<sup>11</sup>

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets				6.2 cases per 100 VT years	6.0 cases per 100 VT years	6.0 cases per 100 VT years	6.0 cases per 100 VT years
Results	NA	6.7 cases per 100 VT years <sup>12</sup>	6.4 cases per 100 VT years	6.3 cases per 100 VT years	7.2 cases per 100 VT years		

**Indicator 2:** Fully develop an ICD&I framework to build staff, Volunteer, and partner capacity to support Volunteer adjustment and resilience.

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	Agency vision and strategy developed Peace Corps' status against key ICD&I benchmarks analyzed	Peace Corps' status advanced by one level on selected ICD&I benchmarks	ICD&I benchmarks and/or reflection questions within the Administrative Management Control Survey developed	Resource list of ICD&I best practices across core business functions developed and distributed to Regions
Results	NA	NA	NA	Vision completed; benchmarks under development	MD-715 completed		

<sup>11</sup> An “adjustment difficulty” is defined as managing a new situation (related to work, living situation, culture, etc.) that requires support from the PCMO, such as empathetic interactions and minor skill building. This does not rise to the level of diagnosable concern in that it does not impact functioning in a detrimental way, has not been present for a significant period of time, and does not require treatment from a licensed mental health provider. Rates are calculated using Volunteer/Trainee years to account for the number of Volunteers and the length of time they served.

<sup>12</sup> The FY 2016 rate relies on data reported through PCMEDICS from January-September 2016 only; data prior to January 2016 was unavailable or was not comparable to later months due to changes in the criteria for coding cases as “adjustment difficulty.”

**Indicator 3: Develop resilience resources to build staff, Volunteer, and partner capacity to support Volunteer adjustment and resilience.**

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	Evidence-based resilience training modules field tested and finalized	10% of posts completed review of modules and incorporated materials into their training programs	20% of posts representing all regions completed review of modules and incorporated materials into training programs	Modules disseminated to posts
Results	NA	NA	NA	Modules completed	19% of posts completed review		

Volunteers face a number of challenges as they learn to navigate the rigors of service. As a result, they reach out to staff—including PCMOs—for emotional support. While PCMOs are well-equipped to handle Volunteer's medical needs, other host country staff, Volunteer peer groups, counterparts, or other partners are also well situated to assist Volunteers in managing the inevitable adjustment difficulties that come with service, but they need the appropriate skills and resources to do so.

While the Office of Health Services strives to maintain the rate of care seeking at 6.0 cases per 100 VT years, additional measures will be taken to better support Volunteers and PCMOs. These measures will include increasing the capacity of PCMOs to respond to Volunteer adjustment and pre-clinical concerns via the provision or development of a suite of evidence-based, online interventions which enable Volunteers to solve their problems independently or with limited PCMO assistance. In addition, the Office of Health Services will assess countries in which Volunteers' annual utilization of PCMOs for adjustment difficulties varies significantly from the norm. These posts will be compared with management and survey data assessing post resilience and diversity to identify and target regions and countries that need enhanced mechanisms for support.

The agency also recognizes that individual Volunteers may encounter unique stressors that further add to adjustment challenges. The same conditions in a host country may be experienced differently by individual Volunteers as a result of the interplay between their particular demographic characteristics, identity, education, prior life experiences, and the social and cultural complexities of development work at their sites. The agency has begun exploring ways to capture the extent to which Volunteers' experience differs by common demographic characteristics. Data collected from Volunteers will be used to determine if adjustment challenges are experienced more acutely by specific demographic groups and to raise awareness of their unique challenges in being accepted into their communities so that a broader range of support is available to them.

The Peace Corps continues to develop training to enhance Volunteers' innate resilience by building life skills that focus on effective problem solving, social connectedness and empathy, emotional balance and flexibility, and building mental strength. This training helps them better withstand the challenges that are inherent in adapting to a new cultural and linguistic environment where many of their support systems are not present or need to be reconstructed and promotes adaptation, adjustment, and acculturation.

Given that a major element of resilience relates to cultural adjustment, Volunteers can be supported to enhance their own resilience through training that builds upon ICD&I. Posts that have conducted ICD&I training report that it is an effective approach.

To further this work organizationally, senior staff in the agency collaborated to analyze its status against benchmarks recognized by external experts in the field of ICD&I. The agency seeks to make progress on two fronts using both existing tools such as the MD-715 which measures equal employment opportunity compliance and by developing new, agency-specific ICD&I benchmarks and reflection questions within the Administrative Management Control Survey, a tool that is used by posts for their annual integrated planning and budgeting efforts. In this way, the ICD&I actions are integrated into core agency business processes, maximizing their effectiveness and sustainability to ensure that all Volunteers are receiving equitable support and that staff feel prepared to handle these complexities.

Milestones for this performance goal include:

- Phase 1: Create guidance for skill building and resources to optimize the use of Volunteer leaders, peer support networks, affinity groups, post staff, and diversity committees at post so that Volunteers have other non-medical resources available to them.
- Phase 2: Communicate the new guidance, resources, and tools at Peace Corps headquarters and plan for roll out to posts.
- Phase 3: Roll out the new guidance, resources, and tools for posts to review and incorporate into their business processes and training for staff, as well as Volunteers. Refine staff capacity and/or standard operations in order to increase the range of individuals from whom Volunteers can seek support when facing adjustment challenges during service.

## **FY 2019 Progress Update**

Performance Goal 3.2 includes three indicators. The target on Indicator 1 of 6.0 cases of careseeking from Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMOs) for adjustment difficulties for every 100 Volunteer/trainee years was not met. A number of factors may have contributed to that result. First, the PCMOs were trained to report adjustment concerns more accurately, which may have contributed to this increase. Second, the epidemiological team was more rigorous in FY 2019 in cleaning, analyzing, and reporting data in comparison to previous years. As a result, more cases of adjustment difficulties were found. The Office of Health Services is analyzing these results to



determine if there were any specific changes in any regions or any country-specific trends that might have accounted for this increase while also considering additional reporting. To further this work, an expert consultant position was approved and a strong candidate was identified to support the development of e-learning resources on resilience and preventive mental health efforts for Volunteers to use as “self-help.”

The target for Indicator 2—advancing one level within selected diversity and inclusion benchmarks—was not met but progress was made. An essential element of model programs requires the integration of equal employment opportunity concepts into the agency's strategic mission. For this reason, Management Directive 715 (MD-715) is the external benchmark that was used in FY 2019 to measure progress for Indicator 2. MD-715 is the policy guidance that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) provides to federal agencies for their use in establishing and maintaining effective programs under Section 717 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. While there were efficiencies gained by using the MD-715 as it is well established in the federal context, changes made to the tool itself by the EEOC made it difficult to compare that progress across fiscal years and set benchmarks.

The agency is continuing to build upon these foundations by providing resources for a comprehensive analysis project aimed at uncovering and removing barriers to equal opportunity and diversity and inclusion at all levels of the workforce within the Peace Corps as well as those barriers preventing access to national service for prospective Peace Corps Volunteers. Furthermore, benchmarks that are more specific to Volunteer resilience in Peace Corps service are being developed. These new benchmarks will enable the agency to measure adjustments across core business practices, with particular focus on Volunteers who have been historically underrepresented within the Peace Corps. This effort—coupled with the ICD&I vision and framework which were completed in FY 2018—will enable Volunteers, staff and other stakeholders to name the common dynamics which affect Volunteers’ resilience and collaborate together to find effective and appropriate ways to support them.

The target for Indicator 3 was to have 10 percent of the posts complete their review of resilience modules and incorporate the materials into their training programs. This target was surpassed with the participation of 19 percent of all posts. During FY 2019, the Resilience Pilot was rolled out in the Africa and Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia regions. Three countries—Namibia, Timor L’Este, and Malawi—have already completed all training. Training is in progress in eight additional countries: Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, the Gambia, Kosovo, Liberia, Mongolia, and Morocco. Trainings are primarily delivered by directors of programming and training with the support of training managers in these countries. Many of the posts will complete training by the end of the calendar year 2019; the final three-month post-test to gauge progress will be forthcoming in February and March 2020 for these posts.

Feedback from the posts that have conducted training has been largely positive, with important suggestions for tailoring content which will be incorporated into the revised training materials. The Inter-America and Pacific Region has recently joined the pilot,

and seven more countries who have expressed interest are being contacted to schedule their training sessions beginning with Costa Rica in January 2020.

**Goal Leads:** *Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region), Associate Director of the Office of Health Services, and Chief Diversity Officer*

**Data Sources:** *PCMEDICS and post administrative data*

**Calculations:** **Indicator 1:** *Incidents of adjustment difficulty (or other behavioral health epidemiological codes) divided by VT years; **Indicator 2:** Completion of milestones listed above; **Indicator 3:** FY 2018: Completion of milestones listed above. FY 2019: Number of posts that incorporate the modules for building resilience into their training programs divided by the number of posts with two-year Volunteers.*

## Strategic Objective 4: Building Leaders of Tomorrow

*Strengthen American communities and organizations by enabling returned Volunteers to reinvest the skills and abilities gained during service.*

**Rationale:** Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) constitute a significant “domestic dividend” of skilled and dedicated individuals. Volunteers return to America with a unique and diverse set of highly marketable skills, including leadership, language, technical, intercultural, and entrepreneurial skills that contribute to a more competitive U.S. workforce. In addition, returned Volunteers often use their intercultural knowledge and experience to continue their service at home by engaging in public service, supporting volunteerism, and promoting a better understanding of other cultures. This strategic objective directly supports Strategic Goals Two and Three. Priority areas within this strategic objective focus on streamlining returned Volunteer services to ensure operational efficiency, interoffice collaboration, a coordinated, effective RPCV communication strategy, and gathering and strategically analyzing existing data on the Peace Corps’ Third Goal.

### Strategies

- Identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities gained during Volunteer service, particularly those related to leadership and intercultural competence. Develop training and tools that enable RPCVs to successfully translate those competencies into marketable skills after service.
- Monitor the distribution of employment opportunities for RPCVs across sectors (public and private) in order to maximize the diversity of available options.
- Integrate a virtual and user-friendly career resource center into existing platforms, such as the RPCV portal and [peacecorps.gov](https://www.peacecorps.gov) website, to reduce staff administrative burden and to deliver services efficiently.
- Promote civic engagement and cross-cultural exchange in U.S. communities by centralizing online resources and raising awareness of opportunities for returned Volunteers.
- Strengthen business procedures to efficiently manage RPCV contact data.

**Strategic Objective Lead:** Director of the Office of the Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services

### FY 2019 Progress Update

In FY 2019, inter-office and external collaborations and partnerships played critical roles not only in meeting the Performance Goals (PG) for this objective but also in ensuring that currently serving and returned Volunteers were able to successfully carry out the Third Goal of the Peace Corps. Examples of this include currently serving Volunteers writing letters and emails to friends and family in the United States and returned Volunteers speaking at their former university or high school.

This year, the Office of the Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services collaborated with the Office of Global Operations to change the agency’s business processes so that Volunteers who are about to close their service are able to access the RPCV Portal before they return to the United States. This change resulted in a 30 percent boost in the number of returned Volunteers accessing the Portal compared to FY 2018. The portal now enables these returned Volunteers to access essential career service information, which better enables them to find jobs upon their return.

Another important internal collaboration involved working with the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection to collect data on the number of returned Volunteers who are engaged in recruitment events. The improved reporting that resulted from this effort was a key factor in meeting PG 4.2. As in prior years, these collaborations are integral to achieving each goal under this objective.

In addition to working with internal partners, the Office of the Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services continues to coordinate with other agencies and partners to support returned Volunteers in their post-Peace Corps careers. Returned Volunteer Services hosted a job fair in Austin, Texas, and webinars with FEMA, GSA, USDA, the U.S. State Department, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Over 1,000 returned Volunteers and 200 employers participated in these events. In addition, the Office of the Third Goal responded to over 4,000 inquiries from returned Volunteers seeking certification of their service. These efforts ensure that the Peace Corps continues to effectively support and enable Volunteers to be successful when they return from service.

<b>Performance Goal 4.1: Cultivate Leadership Skills</b>							
<i>Develop and share leadership and intercultural competency tools to support returned Volunteers as they transition from their service by FY 2020.</i>							
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	Map created of leadership and intercultural competencies developed during service (model)	Methodology developed to link leadership and intercultural competencies to activities in the VRT	Templates and other tools developed for documenting competencies gained by Volunteers in their individual DOS	Templates and related user guidance and training reviewed and approved
Results	NA	NA	NA	Competency structure completed	Methodology developed		

During Peace Corps service, powerful learning experiences provide practical opportunities to develop leadership skills and intercultural competencies. The

competencies gained during service include participatory analysis, project design and management, coaching, and mentoring. These competencies enable Volunteers to be effective not only in their overseas communities and organizations but also when they return home. Back home in the United States, RPCVs use competencies cultivated through Peace Corps service that contribute to a high-quality American workforce.

Competency assessment is critical to ensuring that the skills Volunteers acquire during service prepare them for success in the global workforce. The Peace Corps can strengthen its transition resources so that returned Volunteers are better able to articulate the foundational concepts of leadership and intercultural competence acquired during service when reentering the workforce or furthering their education. By making these transition resources available online and incorporating related curricula into regional and national programming efforts, the Peace Corps will be able to expand its reach to Volunteers regardless of their geographic location. Returned Volunteers continue to use and refine the competencies they gained abroad by reinvesting those skills back home in both their workplaces and communities.

Volunteers develop competencies during service by engaging in activities identified in the posts' project frameworks and reported in the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT). Linking VRT activities to competency development clarifies how Volunteer activities enable posts to fulfill commitments to host countries. It also provides evidence to future employers of the ways in which Volunteers have demonstrated leadership and intercultural competencies.

The Description of Service (DOS) is the agency record that documents Volunteer achievements during service. Peace Corps Manual Section (MS) 285 sets out the policy and procedures for documenting service and provides a sample DOS that posts can provide to Volunteers. This template—as well as other tools for documenting skills gained by Volunteers—will be updated and developed to align with the new logical project frameworks and competencies outlined in Strategic Objective 2. It will include information that summarizes the activities reported by a Volunteer in the VRT. Developing these new tools requires collaboration with the Office of Global Operations (OGO), the Field Advisory Board, and the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS). Any new Volunteer training relating to the DOS will be submitted to the Volunteer Learning Council.<sup>13</sup> Once the templates and related user guidance and training materials have been approved by these stakeholders, they will be distributed to all posts. These revisions to the DOS will help highlight the skills Volunteers have gained through their service that employers seek.

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<sup>13</sup> This Council is being organized to develop a balanced training plan that considers requirements for invitees, trainees, and Volunteers. The Council may consider a range of options including revisions, replacements, combinations, and/or changes in the approaches to training before making recommendations to the Director for incorporation into agency policy. The Council will also delineate clear guidelines for determining what is mandatory and what is optional within the Volunteer training portfolio.

## FY 2019 Progress Update

The target for FY 2019 was met. All of the project frameworks from one region were reviewed and consistent language was identified in every framework that linked back to leadership and intercultural competencies. The methodology that was used for this analysis was based on assessing the significance and frequency of key words and phrases in each of the frameworks. These keywords and phrases indicated that Volunteers executing the frameworks were engaged in leadership and intercultural competencies. These keywords and phrases were drawn from two sources: the Office of Personnel Management's Leadership Competencies and the SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence. A briefing document on this methodology was created in consultation with OPATS. Leadership and intercultural competencies were found to be deeply embedded in all of the frameworks.



*Peace Corps Volunteer Maoulay Adjorlolo building leadership skills at a community event in Cameroon.*

*Peace Corps Volunteer Sunni Wesson is working with community members in Zambia to build a maternity hospital using grants that she wrote during her service.*

**Goal Lead:** Director of the Office of the Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services

**Data Source:** Agency administrative records.

**Calculation:** Completion of the milestones listed above

**Performance Goal 4.2: Continuation of Service***Increase the number of opportunities for returned Volunteers to engage in continued service to 3,000 by FY 2022.*

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	2,500	2,500	2,600	2,700
Results	2,250	2,300	1,831 <sup>14</sup>	2,153	2,742		

The Peace Corps is a conduit to a lifetime commitment to service. Volunteers return to the United States as “cultural ambassadors” and community leaders, equipped with a broadened sense of diversity and inclusion, service to others, and refined intercultural competencies. This enables them to engage diverse communities through volunteerism and cross-cultural learning opportunities. The agency is committed to cultivating and expanding opportunities for returned Volunteers to reengage with the mission (e.g., Peace Corps Response and the Peace Corps Fellows Program) and to share their experience.

**FY 2019 Progress Update**

The target for FY 2019 was met. To meet the goal, each partner overcame a different set of challenges. The Peace Corps’ Fellows/University Programs is in the process of standardizing contributions from partner universities. Peace Corps Response was impacted by various unforeseen events at posts that resulted in cancellations or postponement of requests for Volunteers. The federal government shut-down in early 2019 was a factor in limiting the growth for all three partners in FY 2019: Peace Corps Fellows (775 opportunities), Peace Corps Response (337 opportunities), and World Wise Schools (1,040 opportunities).

The Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection has been a long-term partner with the World Wise Schools/Speakers Match program. That program provides a list of interested returned Volunteers for recruitment events. The events represent an opportunity for returned Volunteers to share their service and assist in recruiting the next generation of Volunteers. Recruitment staff are now required to report on the numbers of events, returned Volunteers, and participants attending these events. For FY 2019, 590 events with 1,477 RPCVs in attendance were reported by recruiters. These events are included in the total number of opportunities reported in PG 4.2.

**Goal Lead:** Director of the Office of the Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services**Data Source:** Agency administrative records**Calculation:** Number of opportunities for returned Volunteers per fiscal year

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<sup>14</sup> The FY 2017 result has been adjusted from 2,230 to 1,831 based on improved calculations.

**Performance Goal 4.3: Consolidate Career and Transition Services for Returned Volunteers**

*Increase the percentage of recently returned Peace Corps Volunteers who access the RPCV Portal to 75 percent by FY 2022.*

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	45%	50%	60%	70%
Results	NA	43%	38%	32%	49%		

The agency can better serve returned Volunteers by developing a streamlined mechanism for RPCVs to identify, request, and access career and transition services. Centralizing these services to one location (the online RPCV Portal) will achieve several improvements in efficiency, including: consistent marketing to RPCVs, streamlined access to services, a more user-friendly experience, and standardization of all agency outreach to the RPCV community. Additionally, centralizing services and communication with RPCVs will increase efficiency and reduce the administrative burden on Peace Corps staff providing these services as well as other offices that rely on this information for core business functions.

**FY 2019 Progress Update**

The target for FY 2019 was slightly below target. The agency’s Returned Volunteer Services unit experienced some challenges in improving access to the RPCV Portal, but progress was made in reaching the target audience of Volunteers who have very recently closed their service in FY 2019. The Office of Global Operations and Returned Volunteers Services collaborated to overcome the challenges by developing information on the RPCV Portal for posts to share with Volunteers who are attending their Close of Service Conference. An RPCV Portal fact sheet was created along with a marketing flyer. An intense, targeted email campaign was then used to contact the very recently returned Volunteers. The result of this combined effort dramatically increased the number of recently returned Volunteers accessing the RPCV Portal.

**Goal Lead:** Director of the Office of the Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services

**Data Source:** RPCV Portal component of the agency data system

**Calculation:** Number of recently returned Peace Corps Volunteers and Response Volunteers who set up an RPCV Portal account divided by the number of recently returned Peace Corps Volunteers who have completed service in the past 12 months



**Performance Goal 4.4: Fulfilling the Third Goal***Identify and analyze existing internal and external sources of Third Goal data.***Indicator 1: Number of Volunteers participating in PCPP projects, WWS/Speakers Match Program and VRT activities.**

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	-	5,600	5,700	5,800
Results	NA	5,512*	5,803	5,190	4,954		

**Indicator 2: Number of participants reported in PCPP projects, WWS/Speakers Match Program and VRT activities.**

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	-	70,000	73,000	75,000
Results	NA	38,274*	29,847*	65,993	91,862		

\* *Italicized results are not comparable to later years due to gaps in available data.*

The agency's Third Goal responsibility, as mandated by Section 2517 of the Peace Corps Act, states that the Director shall "...encourage, facilitate, and assist activities carried out by former Volunteers ... and the efforts of agencies, organizations, and other individuals to support or assist in former Volunteers' carrying out such activities." Various data sources, both internal and external to the agency, already record Third Goal activities carried out by Volunteers and RPCVs, but the agency has not made a sustained effort to compile and analyze this data. This new performance goal reflects a renewed commitment to capturing and reporting this information in order to demonstrate fulfillment of the Third Goal mandate to stakeholders. Several types of data are used including numbers of Volunteers and participants from the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) projects, Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools (WWS)/Speakers Match Program, and Third Goal activities reported in the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT).

**FY 2019 Progress Update**

Performance Goal 4.4 includes two indicators. The target for Indicator 1 on the numbers of Volunteers reporting on the Third Goal activities was not met, but the agency exceeded the target for the overall number of activity participants in Indicator 2. A dramatic increase in reporting on World Wise Schools from approximately 22,700 participants in FY 2018 to more than 60,000 in FY 2019 was the factor that drove the overall increase in the results for Indicator 2.

In FY 2019, the Office of the Third Goal improved data collection in the World Wise Schools program by introducing a new online form which enabled Volunteers to more easily report the number of participants who engaged in Third Goal activities. The Office of the Third Goal conducted training and outreach programs to World Wise Schools coordinators, directors of programming and training, and country directors, resulting in improvements in how Volunteers reported Third Goal activities. The agency continues to train Volunteers on monitoring and evaluation to facilitate and encourage their use of the Volunteer Reporting Tool for a broad range of Third Goal activities.

**Goal Lead:** Director of the Office of the Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services

**Data Sources:** Gift, Grants, and Management (PCPP); agency administrative records; Volunteer Reporting Tool

**Calculations: Indicator 1:** The number of currently serving Volunteers participating in activities that correspond to the Third Goal including the PCPP, the WWS/Speakers Match Program, and Volunteers reporting Third Goal activities in the VRT. **Indicator 2:** The number of participants in activities that correspond to the Third Goal, including people who become PCPP donors or attend the WWS/Speakers Match Program and community members in activities reported by currently serving Volunteers in the VRT.

## Management Objective 5: Foundational Business Management

*Continuously improve the agency's core infrastructure, including the cost-effectiveness, speed, ease-of-use, and quality of business services.*

**Rationale:** The Peace Corps needs to improve the cost-effectiveness, speed, ease-of-use, and quality of its business services. These efforts should be ongoing. Processes that work well should be kept; those that do not should be improved or discarded, and duplication should be eliminated. Decision makers should have access to the business intelligence they need, when they need it. Agency financial, human capital, and technology resources should be used wisely according to established best practices and business requirements. As these efforts improve operational efficiency, the burden to domestic and overseas staff will be reduced. The ultimate outcome of this objective is the alignment of business services with the agency's strategic objectives.

### Strategies

- Improve the cost-effectiveness, speed, ease-of-use, transparency, and quality of the processes used to deliver business services to domestic and overseas staff and of the services delivered.
- Support good decision making by ensuring that agency leaders not only have access to timely, relevant, accurate, and easy-to-use business intelligence but are also held accountable for outcomes.
- Manage agency financial, human capital, and technology resources wisely by following best practices to meet (and strive to exceed) business requirements.

**Management Objective Lead:** Chief Human Capital Officer

### FY 2019 Progress Update

The Peace Corps continues to make substantive progress toward completing this objective. With the completion of the office dashboards in FY 2019, Peace Corps leadership now has access to operational, financial, human capital, and customer service metrics for better decision making. In FY 2020, the Peace Corps plans to give all staff access to the dashboards, which will increase transparency across the agency.

The FY 2019 pilot aligning the performance plans of selected senior staff with the Strategic Plan will be completed in calendar year 2019 in keeping with the regular agency performance cycle. Building on this success, the Peace Corps will align performance plans for all staff in FY 2020.

Quarterly workforce planning meetings continue to have a positive impact on the agency's ability to forecast staffing changes months and years in advance. In addition to these meetings, workforce planning relies heavily on tools, such as the staffing pattern database and workforce dashboard, which accurately inform leadership of the agency's real-time human capital. These tools were launched in 2019 and are significant milestones in the efficiency and innovation of Peace Corps' human capital management.

Combining these efforts with recommendations from a 2019 study on the Peace Corps conducted by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the agency is on track to complete its Human Capital Operating Plan in FY 2020, which will include additional improvements to support this management objective.

Using OPM’s 80-day hiring model, the Office of Human Resources will continue to streamline the hiring process in order to meet the goal set for FY 2020. Improvements include the development of better position management systems and information gathering practices. For example, the tracking system database for onboarding employees, which was launched in 2019, helps the Office of Human Resources accurately identify roadblocks.

In 2019, LearningSpace became the official system of record for staff learning. This new system has allowed the agency to increase efficiencies in supporting staff and Volunteer learning. All Peace Corps countries now use LearningSpace to manage and track learning.

IT modernization efforts will begin in FY 2020. As part of this effort, the Peace Corps is in the process of baselining the ratio of funds budgeted for development, modernization, and enhancement (DME) compared to funds budgeted for operations and maintenance (O&M). The baseline will be completed in FY 2020. The goal is to increase over time the ratio of funds used for DME in order to dedicate more funds to improvement opportunities. This is a joint effort between the offices of the Chief Information Officer and the Chief Financial Officer.

**Performance Goal 5.1: Improve Decision Making with Better Access to Business Intelligence**

*Increase the percentage of offices that maintain dashboards containing a combination of operational, financial, human capital, and customer service metrics to 100 percent of selected offices by FY 2019.*

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	80%	100%	100%	NA
Results	NA	NA	NA	75%	100%		

This performance goal helps ensure that timely, relevant, accurate, and easy-to-use business intelligence is available to decision makers, both at the office level and the director level. Office dashboards that contain operational, financial, human capital, information technology, and customer service metrics help focus attention on both the effectiveness and cost efficiency of decisions, while promoting better alignment of activities with agency strategic objectives.

Once the target of 100 percent of the selected offices having dashboards is achieved, the agency will work to ensure that business processes support the sustainability of the new dashboards in FY 2020. This performance goal will then be retired. Going forward, the dashboards will continue to serve as a key part of the agency's business intelligence to help identify further opportunities for improvement.

### **FY 2019 Progress Update**

The target for FY 2019 was met. The three remaining associate director-level offices established dashboards during the first of half of FY 2019. Every associate director-level office is now reporting their business metrics aligned with the agency's top priorities. Each office has identified key customers to whom they provide services and their initiatives to improve services. Three financial metrics and four human capital metrics are also reported by each office.

The dashboards are updated on a quarterly schedule in conjunction with the agency's quarterly performance plan reviews. These balanced sets of measures help provide senior decision makers with access to timely, relevant, and accurate business information focusing attention on effectiveness, cost efficiency, and customer satisfaction of agency decisions. Beginning in FY 2020, the dashboards will be accessible to all Peace Corps staff on the agency's intranet.

Now that the dashboards are firmly established, agency offices will continue assessing their performance as a regular process. The insights gained from this regular review will support the strategic plan goals and other high priorities. This performance goal will be retired at the end of FY 2020.

**Goal Lead:** Director of the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning

**Data Source:** Agency administrative records

**Calculation:** Number of offices with dashboards that meet criteria divided by the number of offices selected for inclusion in this metric

**Performance Goal 5.2: Align Office Performance with the Strategic Plan**

*Increase the percentage of agency leaders who have metrics in their individual performance plans that are linked to at least one performance goal or objective in the strategic plan to 100 percent by the end of FY 2020.*

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	Individual performance plans developed and/or restructured to align with this goal	Performance plans aligned for 50% of senior leaders	Performance plans aligned for 100% of all Peace Corps employees	Performance plans of 10% of staff randomly assessed to ensure alignment to strategic plan
Results	NA	NA	NA	New performance management system under development	100% of performance plans for selected senior leaders aligned		

Linking the individual performance plans of leaders to specific performance goals and objectives in the strategic plan will provide line-of-sight throughout the agency on how the actions of individual offices are tied to the agency’s overall strategic objectives. This will drive accountability and action on the business intelligence being utilized under Performance Goal 5.1. Additionally, it will build staff engagement through an increased understanding of how individual efforts align with agency goals. After plans are aligned, the Peace Corps will randomly select ten percent of the plans to ensure that the alignment is functioning as planned before retiring this performance goal.

**FY 2019 Progress Update**

The target for FY 2019 was met. The agency selected all career Foreign Executive (FE) staff as the first ones to have their individual plans aligned with the agency’s strategic plan using new quantitative rating performance plans. The first year of the new plans will close on Dec. 31, 2019 at the end of the regularly scheduled performance cycle. In FY 2020, the new quantitative rating performance plans will be used for all Peace Corps employees.

**Goal Lead:** Chief Human Capital Officer

**Data Source:** Human Resources records

**Calculation:** Number of managers and directors (and above) with performance plans that meet criteria divided by the number of managers (and above) selected for inclusion in this metric. The FY 2019 target includes only career staff. The FY 2020 target includes both career staff and political appointees.

**Performance Goal 5.3: Improve Human Capital Planning and Processes**

*Improve the agency’s ability to strategically deploy its talent by strengthening advance planning and minimizing vacancy gaps by the end of FY 2021.*

**Indicator 1: Develop an agencywide Human Capital Operating Plan.**

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	Plan drafted	Plan drafted	Plan finalized	Plan implemented
Results	NA	NA	NA	Office-level planning underway	Agency-level planning underway		

**Indicator 2: Decrease the average vacancy gap to 80 days.<sup>15</sup>**

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	100 days	90 days	80 days	80 days
Results	NA <sup>16</sup>	89 days <sup>17</sup>	132 days <sup>18</sup>	71 days	111 days		

One of the most critical factors affecting the Peace Corps’ ability to serve its Volunteers is its ability to maintain an engaged workforce, both domestically and abroad. Success depends on the agency’s ability to strategically deploy talent—the right people, in the right place, at the right time. The development of a Human Capital Operating Plan should not only comply with OMB A-11 directives but should also drive increased focus on aligning operations with the agency’s core mission and values. This includes filling vacancies in a timely manner, providing appropriate and targeted training, delivering world-class customer service to internal and external stakeholders, and espousing industry-leading practices in diversity, inclusion, and belongingness. After the Human Capital Operating Plan is in place, process improvements should lead to a decrease in the time it takes for vacancies to be filled. This is a critical human capital outcome for Peace Corps, as vacancy gaps are considered a major risk factor for both domestic and overseas operations. Vacancy gaps decrease the agency’s knowledge management capabilities, decrease staff and Volunteer engagement and satisfaction, and complicate project management. Achieving a reduction in the length of time of vacancy gaps indicates that human capital operations have been improved.

<sup>15</sup> The percent of employees hired within 80 days is consistent with the recommended timeframes on [hiring reform](#) published by the Office of Personnel Management.

<sup>16</sup> Data from the former application system (Avue) is no longer accessible.

<sup>17</sup> Career Connector is the Peace Corps’ job vacancy management system. It was utilized for the first time in January 2016; as a result, the FY 2016 data does not reflect the entire fiscal year.

<sup>18</sup> In FY 2017, the federal government hiring freeze impacted the agency’s hiring process, resulting in delays in onboarding new staff until the freeze was lifted in August 2017.

## FY 2019 Progress Update

Performance Goal 5.3 includes two indicators. For Indicator 1, the target for FY 2019 was met; agency planning is underway. The Office of Human Resources is reviewing the findings and recommendations from a workforce study conducted in 2019 by the Human Resources Solutions Division at the Office of Personnel Management. Those recommendations will help inform development of the agency’s Human Capital Operating Plan in FY 2020.

For Indicator 2, the target for FY 2019 was not met. The lapse in appropriations and furlough from December 2018 to late January 2019 impacted the agency’s hiring process, resulting in delays in onboarding new staff. The Office of Human Resources is now implementing a data-driven plan to closely monitor the entire hiring process. The insights will be used to identify aspects of the hiring process that can be streamlined to reduce vacancy gaps.

**Goal Lead:** Chief Human Capital Officer

**Data Source:** Human Resources records

**Calculations:** **Indicator 1:** Completion of the milestones listed above. **Indicator 2:** Total number of days that domestic positions filled within the reporting period were vacant in Career Connector divided by the number of domestic positions filled within the reporting period.

<b>Performance Goal 5.4: Modernize Agency Information and Communications Capabilities</b>							
<i>Increase the percentage of agency investment on new information and communications capabilities to 40 percent of all IT spending.</i>							
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-		Baseline data collection	Baseline data collection	
Results	NA	NA	NA	NA	Baseline data collected		

In the FY 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, under Strategic Objective 10, the Peace Corps set a performance goal to track the retirement of legacy applications. The agency then turned its attention to developing a flexible and secure network of strategically important IT systems using modern, cloud-based architecture and integration of systems for improved customer service to staff, Volunteers, and other stakeholders.

As technology changes over time, the cost of maintaining older systems increases. Newer technologies and delivery methods that focus on rapid, agile development, cloud-based storage, integrated architecture, and convergent platforms, are able to deliver a lower-cost solution to the agency while increasing both information availability and security.



In FY 2020, the agency will shift its modernization focus from merely counting the number of outdated systems to be retired to emphasizing strategic investments in net new information and communications capability. To this end, the agency will measure the proportion of IT funds invested in modern, integrated information systems compared to spending to maintain outdated legacy systems. For this goal, the agency will strive to meet, and eventually exceed, the average federal ratio of development, modernization, and enhancement (DME)<sup>19</sup> to operations and maintenance (O&M)<sup>20</sup> IT investment, currently measured at approximately 25 percent and 75 percent respectively. In preparation for launching this new goal, the agency will first baseline its current DME:O&M ratio before setting targets for increasing the ratio.

### **FY 2019 Progress Update**

This is a new performance goal. The offices of the Chief Information Officer and the Chief Financial Officer are working together to compile and analyze baseline data in order to inform the agency targets for FY 2021 and beyond. As part of these efforts, the Office of the Chief Information Officer's budget was aligned to a new operating model, and the office has begun to categorize operations and maintenance funds separately from development, modernization, and enhancement for its FY 2020 budget.

**Goal Lead:** *Chief Information Officer*

**Data Source:** *Agency administrative records*

**Calculations:** *Percent of IT funds spent on DME / Percent of IT funds spent on O&M*

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<sup>19</sup> Costs for DME services are for projects and activities leading to new IT assets/systems and projects and activities that change or modify existing IT assets to substantively improve capability or performance, implement legislative or regulatory requirements, or meet an agency leadership request. For more information on these concepts, please refer to the website managed by the *Office of Management and Budget* to government-wide IT spending: <https://itdashboard.gov>.

<sup>20</sup> Costs for O&M services are incurred in the phase of the development life cycle in which the asset is in operations and produces the same product or provides a repetitive service. This is also commonly referred to as "legacy" or "steady state."

## Management Objective 6: Organizational Risk Management

*Identify and proactively address risks and opportunities through systematic, evidence-based decision making.*

**Rationale:** This objective focuses on advancing and sustaining the agency's mission and effectiveness through systematic decision making that proactively anticipates, identifies, and manages risks and finds opportunities to improve the efficient and effective use of Peace Corps resources at all levels of the organization. The scope of this objective includes the safety and security of staff, Volunteers, and facilities, as well as the agency's credibility, emergency preparedness and response, risks to the IT infrastructure (cyber security), and financial risks. This objective is focused on creating an Enterprise Risk Management Council, revising agency policy concerning risk management, training agency leadership on risk management, and incorporating risk management into agencywide assessments and planning.

### **Strategies:**

- Develop and implement an agencywide risk governance structure.
- Develop and implement an agencywide risk profile and office-level registers to improve accountability and minimize interruptions and/or threats to the effectiveness of Peace Corps programs.

**Management Objective Leads:** Associate Director for Safety and Security; Director of Information Security, Policy and Governance in the Office of the Chief Information Officer; Chief Compliance Officer

### **FY 2019 Progress Update**

In FY 2019, the Peace Corps continued to make progress in establishing and implementing the agencywide risk governance structure. The agency now has an Enterprise Risk Management Council Charter, By-Laws, and policy. These documents were approved by the agency's policy-making body. In FY 2019, the council reviewed and voted on risk remediation strategies involved with moving the agency's headquarters to a new location. The council will meet more frequently as the risk management program is set up and implemented during FY 2020. The agency is in the process of developing its risk profile.

<b>Performance Goal 6.1: Establish an Enterprise Risk Management Process</b>							
<i>Establish a repeatable process for enterprise risk management and incorporate the agency risk profile into decision making.</i>							
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	Policy and procedures approved	Approval process for the new policy completed Agency risk profile produced	Agency risk profile produced	Overall risk rating score from the FY 2019 risk profile decreased
Results	NA	NA	NA	Policies and procedures drafted	ERMC Charter, By-Laws, and policy approved Agency risk profile in process		

This goal seeks to facilitate risk management across the agency by developing a clear enterprise risk management (ERM) policy. This policy establishes an Enterprise Risk Management Council (ERMC) to facilitate implementation and ongoing oversight of the risk management program. The council will develop an agency risk profile to capture operational risks and provide options for risk mitigation. This risk profile will provide a prioritized inventory of the most significant risks that have been identified in the office-level risk registers, informing forward-looking risk management strategies.

The agency expects to improve the effectiveness of risk management activities through staff training on risk management principles and the use and maintenance of risk registers. The milestone markers for this performance goal will allow the agency to track its progress toward creating a sustainable risk management environment.

Milestones for this performance goal include:

1. Obtain approval of agency-wide ERM policy.
2. Revise and approve related risk management policies.
3. Develop an agency risk profile.

### **FY 2019 Progress Update**

While the target was not fully met, the Peace Corps intends to have the risk profile developed by the end of FY 2020. The agency has obtained approval of an agencywide enterprise risk management policy, which was issued in FY 2019. The Peace Corps is now actively working towards creating an agency risk profile.

**Goal Lead:** Chief Financial Officer

**Data Source:** Administrative records

**Calculation:** Completion of the milestones listed above

**Performance Goal 6.2: Strengthen Risk Registers**

*All offices in the agency shall develop enterprise risk management assessments based on the agency risk profile by the end of FY 2021.*

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	-	-	100% of office points of contact trained	100% of selected offices have developed active risk registers	Active risk registers developed for three additional offices	100% of all offices have developed active risk registers
Results	NA	NA	NA	Training developed	Risk register is under development for OCIO		

Once an agreement has been reached on the agency policy as described in Performance Goal 6.1, the focus of the agency’s efforts will be to ensure that each office has a point of contact who has been trained on ERM and maintenance of office risk registers. The agency will then measure the percentage of offices that are using and maintaining their risk registers with up-to-date information and analysis. While the agency is committed to training staff from all offices in risk management principles, the FY 2019-2020 targets focus on developing and supporting risk registers for the selected offices with the greatest risks. In FY 2019, the priority was the Office of the Chief Information Officer. In FY 2020, the focus will be on developing active risk registers for the Offices of Health Services, Safety and Security, and the Chief Financial Officer.

Milestones for this performance goal include:

1. Train offices on enterprise risk management.
2. Map business processes within each office to inform development of the larger enterprise level register.
3. Establish and communicate risk registers to the ERMC, which will allow the agency to promote and implement principles on prioritizing agency resources and decision making in accordance with OMB Circular A-123.

**FY 2019 Progress Update**

The target for FY 2019 included development of risk registers for four major offices at headquarters. Some progress was made with the delivery of training, and initial steps were taken to develop the agency's overall risk register. The main stakeholder offices were trained on enterprise risk management principles, and a risk register for the Office of the Chief Information Officer is under development. Several offices in the agency are now developing the larger agencywide risk register. These offices include the offices of Safety and Security, the Chief Information Officer, and Health Services. These offices were selected because of their core operational functions.

**Goal Lead:** Chief Compliance Officer in the Office of the Director

**Data Source:** Administrative records

**Calculation:** Number of offices that have active risk registers divided by the number of offices selected for inclusion in this metric

## Appendix A

### Performance Management System

The goals, objectives, and strategies included in the FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan guide the Peace Corps' efforts to advance its mission. The Peace Corps' performance management system is rooted in an inclusive and participatory culture where staff and Volunteers at all levels are invested in improving the agency.

The Peace Corps Director oversees the agency's performance management efforts. The Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) is responsible for strategic planning and reporting. OSIRP works closely with offices across the agency to collect and analyze data to improve agency operations. The director of OSIRP serves as the performance improvement officer for the agency. The agency actively participates in the federal government's Performance Improvement Council to contribute to and stay current with government-wide performance improvement guidelines and best practices.

Several processes occur throughout the year to ensure that activities align with the goals in the strategic plan. For example, evidence and data are available and used by agency leadership, managers, and staff to inform program, policy, and budget decisions. In addition, opportunities for performance improvement are identified, tracked, and executed.

- **Annual Strategic Review:** In FY 2019, the Peace Corps' Director and Deputy Director convened a series of forward-looking meetings to develop the agency's FY 2021 annual performance plan. In preparation for these meetings, lead offices identified areas for revision in each of the Peace Corps' strategic and management objectives, including new and revised strategies and performance goals. This annual series of meetings is a key opportunity for collaboration and review of evidence as senior leaders from across the agency discuss long-term strategies, performance goals, and action plans.
- **Country Portfolio Review:** The Country Portfolio Review is a comprehensive review of active and potential Peace Corps posts that is conducted by the agency using external and internal data. The review focuses on the safety, security, and medical care of Volunteers; host country engagement with the Peace Corps; host country needs; programming and training; post management and costs; and congruence with U.S. government development priorities. The review includes data from a variety of external sources, including the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the U.S. Department of State, the World Health Organization, the International Food Policy Research Institute, the World Economic Forum, and the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Internal data sources include administrative and financial data, results from surveys of post and headquarters staff, and results from the Annual Volunteer Survey and the

Host Country Staff Survey. Beginning in FY 2018, this data was also prepared as a Field Research Dataset for use by posts and headquarters offices to support operational planning and management.

- **Quarterly Strategic Plan Performance Reviews:** The Peace Corps utilizes quarterly reviews, which are chaired by the Peace Corps Director, as the primary mechanism for monitoring and assessing performance throughout the year. In preparation for each review, goal leads determine the status of each performance goal in the strategic plan based on both quantitative and qualitative analyses. They provide a brief written summary of the progress-to-date, challenges, additional support that may be needed, and next steps to share with other senior agency staff. Then, during the quarterly reviews, key officials from across the agency discuss progress from the prior quarter and develop strategies to meet performance targets by the end of the fiscal year. This quarterly assessment of progress allows the agency to focus efforts on performance goals facing the greatest need for collaboration and opportunity for improvement.

## Appendix B

### Evaluation and Research

The Peace Corps remains committed to performance improvement through the use of high-quality data and evidence. Using rigorous evidence-based methodologies, the agency conducts studies to assess the impact of program practices and identify opportunities to strengthen programs or improve operational efficiency and effectiveness. These efforts allow the agency to draw conclusions from existing evidence and to develop new sources of data to better understand performance challenges and improve operations. Evaluations, surveys and other reporting can be found at: <https://www.peacecorps.gov/about/open-government/>. The Peace Corps Office of Inspector General also conducts a variety of audits and evaluations, which can be found at <https://www.peacecorps.gov/about/inspector-general/reports>.

The Peace Corps continues to expand its evaluation and research capabilities to satisfy a growing demand, both internally and externally, for evidence to support critical decisions, demonstrate impact, and maximize operational efficiency. Strategic Objective 11 (Measurement for Results) in the FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan strengthened the agency’s focus on evidence-based decision making, monitoring, and evaluation practices. Efforts to enhance the use of existing data and to build the Peace Corps’ evidence base are supported by the continued improvements in core agency resources that are outlined in Appendix C.



## Appendix C

### Verification and Validation of Performance Data

Data collection and reporting consistency are supported by the use of detailed operational definitions, data sources, and a comprehensive methodology for measuring each performance goal. The agency ensures that data are clean, complete and accurate. The Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning oversees and reviews all performance goals, focusing its efforts on continually improving data quality. The major data sources that are available to agency staff for assessing performance goals are detailed below.

#### Peace Corps Administrative Records and Databases

For some performance goals, the Peace Corps collects annual data on topics such as language proficiency interview scores, project framework reviews, vacancy gaps, and risk registers from records that are maintained in headquarters offices and overseas posts. For others, the agency relies on centralized database systems to collect information on Volunteers, programs, health services, finances, and human resources. In order to maintain data integrity and ensure that the appropriate data entry methodology is followed, only authorized staff who have been properly trained can access key systems. Routine reconciliation processes among agency units and internal, automated system checks enable users to verify performance data, isolate potential data entry errors, and correct discrepancies. The required level of accuracy to provide current and historical information is met through database rules and business processes on existing systems, as well as ongoing modernization efforts led by the Office of the Chief Information Officer. Where data limitations do exist, they will be noted in the appropriate section.

#### Volunteer Reporting Tool

Since FY 2008, Volunteers have been reporting on their work and the progress they are making toward their project outcomes through the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT). Volunteer reports are submitted to overseas post staff through the VRT on a quarterly or semiannual basis. Staff review all reports and work with Volunteers to verify data and correct anomalies prior to the analysis. VRT data are then used to report on Volunteers' contributions to agency strategic partners, such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and Feed the Future.

Since the development of the first version of the VRT, the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support has led the agency's efforts to enhance the user experience, reduce data entry errors, and improve reporting. The agency provides in-depth VRT training and support to Volunteers and staff to ensure that data are collected, analyzed, and reported properly. The agency has also developed data collection tools to standardize the methods that Volunteers use to collect data.

The primary data quality challenges that remain are ensuring that an adequate percentage of Volunteers report on the project indicators and that posts set realistic yet ambitious targets. The agency is addressing these challenges by working with overseas posts to train Volunteers in monitoring and evaluation and encourage Volunteer reporting. It is also documenting and considering reporting rates when conducting analyses. The agency is also working to design the next generation of the VRT based on newer technology that will be easier to maintain, allow more mobile reporting by Volunteers, and provide more support for robust data analysis.

### **Annual Volunteer Survey**

The Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) is a confidential, voluntary online survey of all currently serving, two-year Volunteers. This comprehensive survey provides Volunteers' assessments of the effectiveness of Peace Corps training, in-country staff support, their personal health and safety, and their overall service experience.

While the survey is typically completed each year by nine out of every ten Volunteers who have been in service for at least one month, it is important to note that the survey is not administered to a random sample of Volunteers who have been selected to represent all of them. As a result, the results are subject to potential bias if the responses from the Volunteers who chose to take the survey differ from the responses that would have been obtained if all Volunteers chose to respond. The high response rate, in combination with data verification and validation measures, minimize total survey error at the global level.

Survey respondents reflect the Peace Corps' overall composition by gender, age, geographic location, and length of service. Responses to all AVS questions are directly provided by the Volunteers in an external survey database. To ensure data quality, rigorous data cleaning procedures are applied to the dataset prior to analysis. The results are then used to inform agency leadership about the Volunteers' perspectives on key issues.

The AVS reflects the experiences and opinions of Volunteers at a fixed point in time and can be influenced by various factors, such as major external events or the ability to recall information. The agency takes into consideration both statistical and practical significance to account for variation in AVS results from year to year. The agency also reviews longer-term trends to account for normal, expected variations in responses.

### **Employee Viewpoint Survey**

The Employee Viewpoint Survey is administered to all U.S. direct hire staff annually. The survey measures employees' perceptions about how effectively the agency is managing its workforce. The agency uses the survey results to compare working conditions at the Peace Corps with other federal government agencies and to identify opportunities to improve workforce management.

The demographic profile of survey respondents is consistently representative of the U.S. direct hire staff. The survey is administered electronically, and most questions are identical to the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey fielded each year across the federal government by the Office of Personnel Management.

The survey is not administered to a random sample of Peace Corps employees; as a result, the survey is subject to nonresponse bias. Additionally, the survey represents the views of employees at a fixed point in time and can be influenced by external factors. The agency accounts for these data limitations by drawing conclusions from multi-year trends and by comparing the results with those of other federal agencies.

### **Host Country Staff Survey**

This survey has been fielded every year since FY 2014 to systematically gather perspectives from host country staff. It is a short, confidential, voluntary survey designed to learn more about the agency's impact in the posts where it operates by gathering input from host country staff, as well as achievements in the Peace Corps' Goals One and Two. The survey comprises questions covering diversity and inclusion, staff training, contributions to the Peace Corps' goals, development impact, job satisfaction, and comparability to other available jobs.

The primary data quality challenge with this survey is the development of the sampling frame. Identifying and contacting all host country staff is difficult due to the fact that some staff members in administrative or support positions do not have official email addresses. Due to this challenge, the sampling frame consists of the host country staff who can be reached via email. Additionally, while the Host Country Staff Survey is offered in English, French, Spanish, and Russian, limited literacy in those languages, as well as factors such as lack of computer access or familiarity with online survey tools for some staff, may contribute to nonresponse bias.

## Appendix D

### Stakeholder Engagement

#### Staff engagement in the development of agency goals

The Peace Corps developed or utilized a variety of types of evidence to inform the process of developing the FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan. This included activities with agency leadership and working groups.

- **Agency leadership:** The Peace Corps convened two meetings of senior leaders in FY 2017 to draft the initial elements for the strategic plan. These leaders reviewed the results from the FY 2016 Annual Strategic Review, input from posts, and other materials to develop the six strategic and management objectives in this plan. Once these initial topics were drafted, all Peace Corps staff in headquarters and the field were given an opportunity to provide input. That input showed broad agreement with the six strategic and management objectives.
- **Agency working groups:** The Peace Corps convened six working groups comprised of nearly 60 senior managers, technical specialists, and analysts from headquarters offices and overseas posts. These staff members applied their unique technical skills and personal experience with the Peace Corps to analyze performance challenges, identify and prioritize potential goals and objectives, and detail the strategies and activities needed to address agency challenges.

#### External engagement

The Peace Corps provided the draft framework for this strategic plan to Congressional stakeholders concurrent with the September 11, 2017 submission of the draft plan to the Office of Management and Budget. In addition, the draft FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan and FY 2020 Annual Performance Plan was posted on the Peace Corps' open government website for one month from December 2017 to January 2018 to collect feedback from external stakeholders and the American people.

## **Appendix E**

### **Acronyms**

AVS – Annual Volunteer Survey  
DME – Development, Modernization, and Enhancement  
DOS – Description of Service  
ERM – Enterprise Risk Management  
ERMC – Enterprise Risk Management Council  
FY – Fiscal Year  
GPRA – Government Performance and Results Act  
ICD&I – Intercultural Competence, Diversity, and Inclusion  
LPF – Logical Project Framework  
LPI – Language Proficiency Interview  
O&M – Operations and Maintenance  
OCIO – Office of the Chief Information Officer  
OPATS – Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support  
OSIRP – Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning  
PCMO – Peace Corps Medical Officer  
PG – Performance Goal  
PT&E – Programming, Training, and Evaluation  
RPCV – Returned Peace Corps Volunteer  
VIDA – Volunteer Information Database Application  
VRT – Volunteer Reporting Tool  
VT – Volunteer/Trainee  
WWS – World Wise Schools

*For comments and inquiries regarding this plan, please contact [OSIRP@peacecorps.gov](mailto:OSIRP@peacecorps.gov).*

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