

MS 683 Employee Resource Groups Program

Effective Date: August 15, 2016

Responsible Office: Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCRD)

New Manual Section

Issuance Memo (08/15/2016)

1.0 Purpose

This Manual Section establishes Peace Corps policy for the Peace Corps Employee Resource Groups (ERG) program.

2.0 Authorities

22 U.S.C. 2503; Executive Orders 13583, 13548

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are employee-led groups consisting of employees with a common set of interests and goals whose purpose is to assist the Peace Corps to achieve specific personnel and Volunteer recruitment and retention initiatives that will help to promote equal opportunity for protected classes under federal civil rights and non-discrimination laws and Peace Corps policies as well as diversity and inclusion. ERGs have no independent status except as a part of the Peace Corps.

3.2 Employee Affiliate Groups (EAGs) are employee-led groups consisting of employees with a common set of interests, activities and goals that may, but are not required to promote equal opportunity for protected classes under federal civil rights and non-discrimination laws and Peace Corps policies. Employee participation in EAGs is voluntary and shall happen on the employee's own time.

4.0 Policy

- (a) The Peace Corps supports ERGs that promote the agency's diversity and inclusion goals and values.
- (b) ERGs are to be organized to promote diversity and inclusion relating to protected classes under federal non-discrimination laws and Peace Corps non-discrimination policies.
- (c) The Peace Corps will not approve as an ERG a group organized around particular outside interests or activities, although EAGs may operate informally under different rules. The Peace Corps may, but is not obligated to, make facilities available for EAG meetings,

events, and communications. See MS 512 Facilities Management. No other support for EAGs is provided for under this Manual Section.

- (d) ERG membership is open to all Peace Corps employees, including PSCs.
- (e) The Peace Corps may limit the number of approved ERGs.
- (f) Each ERG must have a Leadership Liaison who provides guidance, support and mentoring to the ERG, as set out in section 6.3 below.

5.0 ERG Operations

5.1 Establishment and Renewal of an ERG

- (a) A group seeking formal ERG recognition must submit a petition to the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCRD) that includes the ERG name, the name of the Leadership Liaison, and the proposed charter of the ERG. The charter must include the group's purpose, membership, leadership structure, commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion, and governance provisions. (b) The Director of OCRD, in consultation with the Chief of Staff and the Office of the General Counsel (OGC), will either approve or disapprove the establishment of the new ERG within 60 days to the extent feasible. If a proposed ERG's petition is not approved, OCRD will provide a written explanation.
- (b) An ERG's charter is subject to renewal by OCRD every two years.
- (c) The Director of OCRD, in consultation with the Chief of Staff, has the authority to revoke the charter of an ERG for any reason, including the failure to comply with the policies in this Manual Section and accompanying procedures or lack of activity.

5.2 Attendance at ERG Meetings and Events

Supervisors are encouraged to promote reasonable employee involvement in ERGs when appropriate and consistent with workload demands. Employees must request administrative leave under MS 636 *Employee Volunteer Program* to attend meetings/events or otherwise participate in ERG activities when the meeting, event, or activity is in excess of two hours.

5.3 Peace Corps Facilities, Supplies and Funding

- (a) The Peace Corps may, but is not obligated to, make facilities, funding and supplies available for ERG meetings, events, and communications. See MS 512 Facilities Management.
- (b) Use of appropriated funds by ERGs are subject to approval by the Director of OCRD, in consultation with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) and OGC. Peace Corps funds are subject to rules on use of appropriated funds and are expected to provide a benefit to the Peace Corps and not solely the ERG or its members personally. ERGs should submit requests for use of appropriated funds to OCRD after obtaining clearance from their Leadership Liaison.

5.4 Logos and Identities

- (a) An ERG may develop an identity mark that does not incorporate or modify the Peace Corps name or logo, but the identity mark be approved by the Office of Communications. If an ERG wants to use or incorporate the Peace Corps seal in an identity mark, such usage of the seal must be approved by the Peace Corps Director. ERG use of its identity mark outside of the agency must be approved by the Director of OCRD and OGC.
- (b) Use of the Peace Corps logo by an ERG must be approved by the Office of Communications, in consultation with OGC.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Office of Civil Rights and Diversity

- (a) OCRD is responsible for managing the ERG program.
- (b) OCRD is not responsible for managing or supporting EAGs.
- (c) OCRD will, to the extent possible, provide the following support for proposed and approved ERGs:
 - (1) Assist prospective ERG groups through the organization process.
 - (2) Review ERG charters and related documents.
 - (3) In consultation with the Chief of Staff and OGC, approve or disapprove the establishment of individual ERGs.
 - (4) Approve and assist with placement of ERG information on the intranet.
 - (5) Offer coaching and guidance on ERG goals and activities.
 - (6) Provide technical assistance and training to build skills needed to accomplish ERG goals.
 - (7) Provide other appropriate support.
 - (8) In consultation with OGC, resolve ERG governance matters.
- (d) OCRD will monitor ERGs as follows:
 - (1) Maintain oversight of the operations of the ERGs.
 - (2) Conduct an annual review of all ERGs to ensure that they are operating in accordance with their charters and Peace Corps policies.

- (3) Submit an annual report to the Chief of Staff on the operation of the ERGs, including their accomplishments and contributions to the Peace Corps mission.
- (4) Review the annual work plans submitted by each ERG.
- (5) Determine whether to re-charter each ERG every two years.
- (6) To the extent that the Peace Corps provides funds for individual ERGs, track the budgets and approve expenditures for all ERGs.
- (7) The Director of OCRD must approve all ERG expenditures, in consultation with OCFO and OGC.
- (8) The Director of OCRD must approve all agency-wide or broadly distributed communications from ERGs.

6.2 Employee Resource Groups

Each ERG is expected to:

- (a) Work as part of the Peace Corps to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace, in recruitment for Volunteers and staff and in the Volunteer community. This includes consulting with the Office of Human Resource Management on activities relating to staff recruitment and retention, consulting with the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (VRS) on activities relating to recruitment of Volunteers, and consulting with the Office of Global Operations on activities relating to Volunteer service and retention.
- (b) Provide a forum for discussion of issues affecting the ERG constituency.
- (c) Provide advice and recommendations to Peace Corps management on diversity and inclusion for employees and Volunteers.
- (d) Plan at least three activities per calendar year that benefit its membership or the agency as a whole, which may include meetings or other opportunities for employee development, education, training, recruitment, or retention.
- (e) Notify OCRD of any change in ERG leadership, including the Leadership Liaison.
- (f) Create an annual work plan describing how it will support the goals of the Peace Corps.
- (g) Submit a request for a renewal of its charter authority every two years.
- (h) Comply with its charter and all Peace Corps policies and procedures.
- (i) Name one member of its leadership to serve on the Diversity Governance Council.
- (j) Serve as a resource for outreach events, such as recruitment efforts and special observance events.

6.3 ERG Leadership Liaisons

A Leadership Liaison is a senior Peace Corps employee who volunteers support for an ERG by providing consultation and guidance. The Leadership Liaison must be a current Peace Corps employee at the FP-2 or higher grade level, but may not be assigned to the immediate Office of the Director (including the Deputy Director or Chief of Staff), the Office of the General Counsel or the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity. Each Leadership Liaison will:

- (a) Represent the ERG in senior staff meetings where appropriate.
- (b) Act as a mentor for the ERG and its members.
- (c) Support the ERG's leadership in annual and strategic planning.
- (d) Offer guidance for the ERG's goals, programs and initiatives.
- (e) Participate to the extent possible in ERG meetings, programs and events.
- (f) Highlight and recommend targeted external connections and associated opportunities.
- (g) Review and clear all important ERG documents, such as agency-wide and broadly distributed communications and requests for use of appropriated funds.

6.4 Office of Human Resource Management

The Office of Human Resource Management may consult with ERGs on diversity and inclusion matters, as well as request assistance for outreach events, such as recruitment and retention efforts and special observance events.

6.5 Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

The Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection may consult with ERGs on diversity and inclusion matters, as well as request assistance for outreach events, such as recruitment efforts.

6.6 Office of Global Operations

The Office of Global Operations may consult with ERGs on diversity and inclusion matters relating to Volunteers.

6.7 Office of Staff Learning and Development

The Office of Staff Learning and Development may consult with ERGs on diversity and inclusion matters, as well as request assistance for outreach events, such as coaching practices, training, professional development, and mentoring efforts.

6.8 Other Agency Managers

Agency managers are encouraged to use ERGs as sounding boards on strategic diversity and inclusion issues.

7.0 Procedures

Procedures implementing this Manual Section, if determined to be necessary, must be approved by OCRD, the Human Resource Council and OGC.

8.0 Transition Provision

No later than September 30, 2016, each ERG shall (i) revise its charter to conform to this Manual Section, and (ii) submit the revised charter to OCRD for its approval.

9.0 Effective Date

The effective date is the date of issuance.