

PEACE CORPS DIVERSITY REPORT

APRIL 2022



Peace
Corps

<u>LETTER FROM THE TASK FORCE.....</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>IDENTIFYING THE GOALS.....</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>NORTH STAR GOALS</u>	<u>11</u>
GOAL 1:.....	11
GOAL 2:.....	11
GOAL 3:.....	12
<u>KEY FINDINGS</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>PRIORITY AREA SUMMARY STATEMENTS</u>	<u>13</u>
VOLUNTEER LIFECYCLE PART I: PRESERVICE	16
VOLUNTEER LIFECYCLE PART II: COUNTRIES OF SERVICE AND RPCVS.....	17
<u>UNPACKING LANGUAGE.....</u>	<u>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</u>
<u>THE EXECUTIVE ORDER.....</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>METHODOLOGY SECTION.....</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>MANUAL CONTENT ANALYSIS</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>TEXT ANALYSIS</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>ADDRESSED OR UNDERWAY</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>NEXT STEPS</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>APPENDIX A.....</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>APPENDIX B</u>	<u>37</u>
<u>TEXT ANALYSIS (A MORE DETAILED LOOK).....</u>	<u>38</u>
TABLE 1. TEXT ANALYSIS: FREQUENTLY USED WORDS IN LETTERS,.....	40
STAFF FOCUS.....	40
TABLE 2. TEXT ANALYSIS: KEY PHRASE IDENTIFICATION ANALYSIS, GENERAL FOCUS, STAFF	40
TABLE 3. TEXT ANALYSIS: WORDS THAT CO-OCCUR WITH FREQUENCY WITHIN TOPICS,.....	41
STAFF FOCUS.....	41

TABLE 4. TEXT ANALYSIS: FREQUENTLY USED WORDS IN LETTERS,.....	41
VOLUNTEER FOCUS.....	41
TABLE 5. TEXT ANALYSIS: KEY PHRASE IDENTIFICATION ANALYSIS, GENERAL FOCUS, VOLUNTEERS ..	42
.....	42
TABLE 6. TEXT ANALYSIS: WORDS THAT CO-OCCUR WITH FREQUENCY WITHIN TOPICS,.....	42
VOLUNTEER FOCUS.....	42
<u>APPENDIX C.....</u>	43
MANUAL SECTION (MS) 123.....	44
<u>APPENDIX D.....</u>	46
TASKFORCE MEMBERS	47

LETTER FROM THE TASK FORCE

Dear Peace Corps – Returned Volunteers and staff, past and present:

The Agency Task Force for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is profoundly grateful and indebted to each RPCV and staff member who came forward to share poignant stories, heartfelt concerns, urgent hopes, and insightful recommendations—all with the intention of fostering a more equitable and inclusive Peace Corps. We were profoundly impacted by the vulnerability and courage demonstrated in your letters. Your words were transformative, and alongside agency wide dialogue and reflection, they prompted our work and other actions.

Appointed and given our charge by the Director, throughout 2020-2021, our Task Force met to review and discuss your letters. We considered your suggestions and the context of the submission. We then analyzed the suggestions in the context of agency operations. Importantly, we also transmitted them to the appropriate leadership entity within Peace Corps to ensure further action. We worked carefully to identify themes, challenges, and recommendations applicable to the entire lifecycle of a Volunteer or staff member. Your letters documented longstanding and systemic issues that impact Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and members of other underrepresented groups that receive differential treatment. Your letters helped the Task Force recommend priorities which contributed to leadership's unwavering support of the need to expeditiously implement training of ALL staff on the topic of implicit bias. Indeed, your letters served as a potent reminder that as an agency we must continue to engage in a thoughtful, critical dialogue that reflects the needs and realities of our diverse stakeholders of Volunteers and staff—both past and present.

The Task Force report reflects hundreds of recommendations received, primarily unsolicited, from external stakeholders and staff. It serves as a call to action for agency leadership and every staff member to address structural, procedural, and policy-based issues. In many cases, recommended changes to advance diversity, equity, and inclusivity will require a cultural shift in the way the agency functions.

The Peace Corps has always had ambitious goals. Our mission of world peace and friendship is as inspirational today as it was 60 years ago. Your letters were catalysts that prompted profound reflection, and add to the library of information making up a roadmap for structural changes and accountability across our leadership and agency, which will allow all of us to carry out the Peace Corps mission better. After all, world peace and friendship is impossible unless everyone can contribute equitably; until everyone feels they fully belong.

Thank you for reflecting the best of what being a Peace Corps Volunteer or Peace Corps staff member means. As stewards of your words and sentiments, we, as Task Force members seek to create an institution worthy of your service and work. We hope this report reflects the spirit of your calls for change and illustrates Peace Corps' commitment to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the agency.

INTRODUCTION

The primary charge to the Task Force for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion was to review submitted recommendations that centered racial equity and inclusion. The recommendations in this report are based on over 600 recommendations gleaned from a collection of 47 documents that included recommendation letters, emails, reports, proposals, and notes from dialogues with internal staff groups and external stakeholders and stakeholder groups.

The Task Force was charged to identify within this collection of documents (as short hand, also termed ‘letters,’ throughout this report) critical actions the agency could take to eliminate barriers to volunteering and employment, and to improve the experience and opportunities of BIPOC Peace Corps Volunteers and staff in/with the agency. Understanding that DEI addresses the inclusion of many more groups including people with disabilities, religious minorities, LGBTQIA+, the recommendations in this report derive from unsolicited recommendations, notes from listening sessions, and emails solicited to go to a Task Force mailbox, all submitted to the agency between June and December 2020, and all centered around racial equity and inclusion as the focus for change.

UNPACKING LANGUAGE

This Task Force report is based on the review of a collection of documents that include recommendation letters, reports, proposals, and notes from dialogues with internal staff groups and external stakeholder groups. The documents focused largely on improving the recruitment, hiring, retention, and support of African American and Black identifying Volunteers and staff. In this report, the Task Force expands the recommendation focus to include individuals from historically marginalized Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) groups. With assistance from a data analytics and management team in the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP), Task Force members used a content analysis approach to make sense of the information in the collection of submitted documents, all of which focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and the Peace Corps.

The Task Force initially committed to editing the letters only minimally. However, due to repetition of content, the use of different terminology for the same concepts, and a vast number of prescribed ways problems should be tackled, the Task Force collapsed multiple recommendations into clear and actionable items. By reducing the number of prescriptive statements on how the agency should go about making cultural and structural changes, we acknowledge that some of this work requires navigating legislated statutory and budgetary authorities. The Task Force members strongly preferred to keep some of the recommendations in their original wording. We encourage leadership and the assigned units to work on taking the perspective of the person of color, perhaps even conducting focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of what might be at the crux of the recommendation before acting to resolve it.

Finally, just as the letter writers do, the Task Force members wish to emphasize an expectation that leadership will take advantage of the unleashing of courage and creativity exhibited by the people who offered suggestions on approaching the challenges the recommendations present. To this end, in the “Next Steps” section of this report, we highlight the importance of including ways to allow an accountability and reporting-out of progress.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For more than 60 years, the Peace Corps has helped strengthen the United States and promoted American ideals and ingenuity around the world by providing trained citizens to engage in grassroots work at the request of foreign governments. Since its founding in 1961, Peace Corps Volunteers and staff have proudly represented the diversity of the United States in 142 countries. They have demonstrated American creativity, compassion, and grit. Working alongside communities to tackle locally-prioritized projects, Peace Corps Volunteers represent the transformative power of building relationships and working together toward a common goal.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the simultaneous, public instances of racial and social injustice made the realities of systemic racism and injustices across our society glaringly clear. The killings of black Americans such as George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and Rayshard Brooks were tragic events of racial discrimination and oppression that formed the

context of letters written to Peace Corps leadership that primarily focused on recommendations for institutional change in how BIPOC Volunteers and staff are recruited and supported. For the very first time, many Americans began to grasp the unfair reality that centuries of oppression have produced. Subsequently, every sector, industry, and government entity reflected and created calls for action. This includes the Peace Corps. Many in the Peace Corps network asked what leadership at the agency was doing to understand this national reckoning better. Many asked what actionable steps could be taken to address the critical, historical moment within the context of Peace Corps. The greater Peace Corps community sent in scores of letters, made social media posts, and participated in Zoom conversations, which spurred the agency to create an agency Task Force on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, during this unprecedented time in national history.

Agency leadership has a strong sense of urgency to fully understand and address the institutional, structural, and daily implications of systemic racism. The letter writers ask that leadership further acknowledge and utilize their power to make concrete changes that disrupt deep-seated inequities and promote a future at the Peace Corps that is more just and equitable.

The Task Force surmises that the agency is being asked to take a holistic inventory of its systems—including how and whom is recruited, how Volunteers and staff are trained, how host communities are prepared, and how Volunteer and staff growth and development into the expectations of their work is supported—the grounding sentiment throughout the letters encourages the agency that it is critical to act and not just speak. As staff entrusted with this Task Force work, we know that the diversity, equity and inclusion work ahead will be hard, and we understand that some changes will take time to implement. We believe that the letter writers are asking the agency to commit to those longer-term goals even knowing that they will take time to see them enacted. However, there are also short-term goals, changes that are achievable in the near term. As the agency continues doing the hard work, we are sure that these efforts will result in a more just Peace Corps. It is possible and likely motivating in the long run for the agency to look to the quick wins as well as the longer-term ones.

With that in mind, this report includes short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations that will serve as a roadmap for establishing a clearer diversity, equity, and inclusion framework and response for the agency—particularly when looked at in concert with the agency response to Executive Order 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government and Executive Order 14035 on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce along with other Executive Orders and Memoranda focused on equity; the ongoing Barrier Analysis process, and the ICDEIA initiatives. The recommendations highlighted in this report are also reflected in the FY22-FY25 Peace Corps Strategic Plan. Strategic Objective Two, Advancing Equity codifies the agency’s commitment to building a Volunteer corps and workforce that reflects U.S. and host country diversity and create inclusive and equitable systems and programs.

This report provides actionable recommendations based on analysis by Task Force members who were divided into three working groups. One group focused on *staff*, one focused on all *preservice* activities taking place prior to leaving the U.S. and the other focused on all activities taking place in the *country of service* by Volunteers and staff, and the community of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCV).

As the agency prepares for the return to service, this report and its findings will help strengthen our systems and policies where people can exemplify our mission and goals.

IDENTIFYING THE GOALS

Differentiating Recommendation Sorting Rubric, and Organizing ICDEIA Framework

The first recommendation **sorting rubric** used by the Task Force was **by operational focus**: Staff; Volunteer Life Cycle Part 1: Preservice, Volunteer Life Cycle Part 2: In Countries of Service; and RPCVs. The work of reviewing and discussing the recommendations led to grouping recommendations around three topics: (1) Talent Management, (2) Training, Measurement and Evaluation, and (3) Policy, Practices, and Accountability.

With further discussion, the Task Force developed a critical organizing framework that establishes these three topics as the methods to use to achieve the higher level agency ICDEIA Goals of (1) Representation, (2) Inclusive and Enabling Culture, and (2) Equitable Systems. These topics fall under broader DEIA Goals, which the Task Force recommends form the basis of the agency's guiding ICDEIA framework that is, in essence, the North Star that will guide our ICDEIA efforts for years to come.

The Task Force recommended that leadership address several short-term recommendations that could yield high impact/results and fall under these North Star goals. The Task Force further recommended that the Agency Equity Council assist with accountability and follow-through on recommendations. The Council should work with the units assigned ownership of and responsibility for implementing individual recommendations under agency statutory and budgetary authority.

Initiatives that have already been implemented (or are firmly on the way to being implemented) in response to recommendations are highlighted later in this report and not included in this high-impact action list.

ORGAINZING ICDEIA FRAMEWORK: NORTH STAR GOALS

GOAL 1: Representation (ensuring the broadest representation of individuals and their talents with in Volunteer corps and Staff). From the pool of recommendations that were analyzed by the Task Force, it is suggested that this goal could be achieved through intentional talent management. Letter writers recommend that the agency:

- Establish a staff mentoring program
- Reexamine and revise policy on qualifications for PCV candidates to expand diversity in the volunteer pool
- Enhance marketing approach, recruitment, branding, and budget to more effectively engage BIPOC communities and increase knowledge of the Peace Corps
- Establish a student loan forgiveness program for Volunteers
- Be more candid about the challenges of volunteer service at all levels and be strategic and transparent in where, when, and how this information is shared
- Strengthen diversity recruitment efforts for both staff and Volunteers by building sustained relationships and outreach in underserved communities
- Create “diversity panels,” “equity…” or “bridge committees” that are supported by HQ resources and training at each post

GOAL 2: An inclusive and enabling culture that ensures all Volunteers and staff are provided the resources needed to perform to their full potential. From the pool of recommendations that were analyzed by the Task Force it is suggested that this goal could be achieved through intentional training, measurement, and evaluation. Letter writers recommend that the agency:

- Establish (self-other bridge) opportunities to facilitate dialogues, workshops, and training with HCN staff, PCVs & RPCVs to increase their ICDEIA skillset and community outreach capacities
- Create space/time for leaders and employees to discuss ICDEIA and EEO topics
- As a best practice, ensure that all staff and Volunteer recruitment efforts have a clearly outlined retention strategy tied to them
- Develop a standardized question or set of questions that focus on issues specific to Volunteers from underrepresented groups. Ask posts to use this question or set of questions during site development, on site visits, and while reviewing sites for safety and security so that these specific issues can be clearly articulated, evaluated, and tracked. Require that this information be included in site development and site history files, placement activities, and when matching Trainees/Volunteers with host families, work sites, and communities.

GOAL 3: Equitable systems. From the pool of recommendations that were analyzed by the Task Force it is suggested that this goal could be achieved through intentional policy, practices and accountability. Letter writers recommend that the agency:

- Develop and fully establish, or review and enhance if it exists, a clear agency anti-discrimination policy to emphasize especially in New Employee Orientation (NEO) and regularly thereafter
- Establish a transparent and equitable selection process for Temporary Duty Assignment (TDY) Expert and other Expert opportunities
 - Allow for personal pronoun preference in the Peace Corps Records Management (PCrm) System and have personal pronoun preferences codified widely throughout agency systems
- Revise boilerplate and other language across the agency, such as in the Job Specific Request (JSRs), with attention to modernization and ICDEIA lens

KEY FINDINGS

While analyzing the submitted letters, dialogue notes, and reports, some common themes emerged. One particularly strong theme was around the need for better staff training in ICDEIA issues and the way those impact BIPOC Volunteers and staff members. Clearly, there is a strong desire in the greater Peace Corps community to see staff learn, understand, and embrace the truths around ICDEIA. This need was seen in nearly every stage of both Volunteer and staff lifecycles, which points to a need for not just one stand-alone training, but a training series that, eventually, will become the backbone of a new culture at the agency.

Transparency in practices relating to staff hiring, Volunteer recruitment, and the retention of both staff and Volunteers was another clear theme. Ideas for becoming more transparent ranged from widening the pool of candidates for both staff and Volunteer positions, to implementing mentorship programs for staff, to expanding the internship programs as a method of introducing to the agency people who might not otherwise know what the Peace Corps does.

Finally, and perhaps most all-encompassing, was a theme around more creative thinking on the issues of ICDEI and how to retrofit agency culture and practices around those issues. Mentioned in this regard were, among other things, changing the perimeters of Volunteer service so that more people (non-college graduates, people with certain health issues, and people who can't serve abroad or serve for two years) can serve; screening applicants for ICDEIA competencies, and potentially requiring host country language capabilities before being accepted to serve as a Volunteer.

All in all, the suggestions were wide-ranging and very little ground was left uncovered. Nearly every aspect of the Volunteer and staff lifecycle was mentioned. On the following pages, the collected suggestions are laid out in further detail.

PRIORITY AREA SUMMARY STATEMENTS

The Task Force assessed that it would be helpful if certain recommendations listed in this report were also organized to fall under broader priority area summary statements. These broad priority statements map to the ICDEIA Organizing Framework and North Star Goals as short-term high impact recommendations as outlined above. Priority area summary statements are designed to offer the agency insight into the core focus of recommendations in each stakeholder area. Priority area summary statements indicate broad areas on which to focus enterprise-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion work for greatest effect moving forward. Quotes taken directly from letters submitted to the agency are provided in this section of the report to highlight related sentiments and ideals that the Task Force was engaged in reviewing and summarizing.

“Implementing a standardized hiring process in keeping with OPM best practices such as requiring diverse hiring panels including but not limited to race, gender, work experience, and national origin; requiring use of scoring rubric for evaluating applications; and holding structured interviews.”

Task Force Derived Priority statements Mapped to the ICDEIA Organizing Framework and North Star Goals

Staff Leadership – Hold leadership accountable for building a diverse, inclusive, and discrimination-free work environment.

Recruitment – Use data analytics and bold outreach, recruitment, hiring, performance evaluation, and professional support strategies to recruit, onboard, and retain a diverse and ICDEI-sensitive leadership and workforce.

Resources – Allocate sufficient resources (budget and staffing) for sustained support of ICDEI efforts focused on both U.S. direct hire and local staff, and Volunteers.

Hiring – Audit all staff diversity recruiting strategies and assess them against hiring outcomes at all levels of staff hiring. This will enable development of more informed strategies. Expand approach, networks, and increase transparency in hiring processes for greater effectiveness.

Mentorship – Ensure that all professional development opportunities and promotion protocols are transparent, and that there is equity in how these programs are implemented. Collect and follow utilization statistics for accountability.

Extension/Experts – Mitigate the unequal access BIPOC staff have to opportunities for career growth, including pathways to extensions and expert positions.

Locally Employed Staff -- Engage Host Country National staff more intentionally to participate in implementing our ICDEIA strategies and responses. Provide training and transparency in the ways these staff can report instances of discrimination and cultural insensitivity.

“Establish an agency-wide formalized mentoring program. Implement mentoring to funnel people towards leadership/USDH positions.”

“Empower African American employees at all levels of the agency; advocate for them; hire them because of innovation, genius, and courageousness.”

Temporary Duty Assignment – Establish and ensure a transparent, fair, and equitable set of policies and a system for announcing and selecting staff for TDY opportunities. This will mitigate the current environment where BIPOC staff feel they are disproportionately left out of these opportunities.

Workforce Profile/Diversity Data – Strive for greater functional use of agency workforce data and ensure transparency in reporting diversity demographics.

Staff Performance Management – Take an audit of ways that diversity, equity, and inclusion-related skills and responsibilities show up in performance plans and devise and implement a

standardized set of performance plan ICDEI expectations/responsibilities across all positions.
Consider position/area-specific expectations.

Staff Training & Development – Clarify and leverage all assets (units, positions, skill sets) to establish an enterprise-wide ICDEI training and development calendar/plan. Differentiate the needs of domestic and global staff. Budget and plan a sustained program for external and internally-facilitated training in ICDEI to support sustained professional and individual learning, growth, and accountability.

Task Force Derived Priority Statements Mapped to 3 Areas of Operational Focus

VOLUNTEER LIFECYCLE PART I: PRESERVICE

BIPOC Recruitment – Boldly diversify, enhance, and increase efforts to recruit from underrepresented communities.

Business Process – Audit, edit, and revise all agency policies, practices, and procedures to reflect an emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Ensure that Volunteer applicants from historically marginalized and underrepresented groups see where their perspective and needs are reflected in how we communicate expectations and set up processes.

Communication/Transparency – Communicate and operate so it is easy for leads, invitees, and applicants to consider the challenges of service and understand what benefits and support are offered, thereby bolstering openness and communication about the Peace Corps experience.

Monitoring/Evaluation – Broaden ways we use internal data to assess leakage in the application-to staging-to post Volunteer pipeline.

Partnerships – Expand external partnerships with entities that can assist us with increasing our reach to under-represented and BIPOC communities and institutions.

Staff Training and Development – Create a sustained and planned schedule for training to build a more knowledgeable and inter-culturally competent recruitment and placement staff. Incorporate a strategic ICDEI lens with the goal of increasing comfort levels and skills in implementing diversity recruitment, selection, and retention strategies.

Training Invitees – Engage invitees, to the extent possible, in agency efforts to establish a baseline understanding of the Peace Corps approach to ICDEI—including subtopics such as unconscious bias in the preservice space.

VOLUNTEER LIFECYCLE PART II: COUNTRIES OF SERVICE AND RPCVS

Agency Commitment to DEIA and Tone Setting -

The Peace Corps should set the tone for its commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) and to approaching its mission in a progressive, anti-racist environment through messaging, policies, procedures, and practices. Clarify expectations for staff, Trainees, and Volunteers alike to fulfill the agency mandate to create an organization that values, respects, and implements DEIA at all levels.

“Staff needs training on diversity and inclusion as well as how to handle BIPOC experiences and recognize that their experiences will be different from white volunteers.”

“Create a confidential ombudsman program with VAC, linked to the DEIA staff, and assist in all efforts to improve the work climate by providing mediation. Institute warnings for each complaint, additional training, and subsequent admin separation.”

Post Commitment to DEIA and Tone Setting – To

create an environment that values, respects, and stands in solidarity with all Trainees, staff, Volunteers, and the communities served, Peace Corps should commit to DEIA and to a progressive, anti-racist stance via messaging, policies, procedures, and practices. The agency should articulate this commitment in site

development, placement, and when matching PCT/V to families and sites, as well as commit to tracking race and other identity challenges within host communities.

Volunteer Support – Develop and sustain effective systems of support including in site ID processes, site development, Volunteer reporting, and exit interviews. All stakeholders—notably the communities in which the PCVs serve—should actively participate in these systems to ensure that ICDEI tenets are embedded in all core business processes. Systems should specifically outline which policies and practices will assist BIPOC groups and how.

RPCV Support – Use data to assess utilization of services by BIPOC Volunteers to detect barriers and increase access. Provide more extensive and better-coordinated assistance to Returned Peace Corps Volunteers through career support, medical, mental health, education, leadership, post-service insurance, and by extending non-competitive eligibility.

Partnerships – Establish, maintain, and leverage external and internal partnerships that can enable Peace Corps to better support the communities where Volunteers serve and the ones from which they come in the U.S.

Data Analysis and Use – Collect, analyze, interpret, disseminate, and act on relevant Volunteer demographic data disaggregated by multiple identities. This will allow Peace Corps to demonstrate transparency and accountability in efforts to recruit, train, and retain Volunteers. Include early termination rates to serve as a proxy measure of retention strategies. Develop and institute data governance strategies to intentionally investigate how demographic data correlates with challenges faced by PCVs of color without overstepping the privacy policy.

Anti-Racism Policy – Develop, provide training on, and enforce an anti-racism policy with defined reporting mechanisms and stated consequences for racist behavior directed towards staff, Volunteers, and host country national community members. Enforce consequences when the policy is breached, to ensure the Peace Corps is a culture where racism and micro-aggressions are not tolerated.

Training – Develop and institutionalize comprehensive training for staff, PCVs, host families, and counterparts to appropriately address issues regarding diversity, unconscious and implicit bias, inclusion, equity, harassment, and support for PCVs of all backgrounds.

THE EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (EO13985) and Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce (EO 14035) intersect with Task Force Priorities.

The materials reviewed to develop this report were gathered prior to the signing and issuance of the January 20, 2021 White House Executive Order 13985 and issuance of the June 25, 2021 White House Executive Order 14035. Even so, this report aligns with both EOs that establishes drawing from the full diversity of the Nation, the Federal Government must strengthen its ability to recruit, hire, develop, promote, and retain that talent and remove barriers to equal opportunity.

The EOs establishes our ICDEIA responsibilities as a Federal Government agency in areas that map directly onto the priority changes outlined by this Task Force. These areas are:

- Practice fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of personnel management
- Establish and sustain attention on an agency-wide ICDEIA strategic plan
- Eliminate barriers to equity in recruitment, hiring, background investigations, promotions, retention, performance evaluations and awards, professional development programs, mentoring programs or sponsorship initiatives, internship and fellowship programs, ERG programs, details and TDYs, pay and compensation policies, benefits, employee services and work-life programs, disciplinary or adverse actions
- Promote mechanisms for employees to report misconduct
- Promote a data-driven approach to increasing transparency and accountability
- Analyze the effect of agency programs, measure improvements, and issue agency reports on actions taken to meet ICDEIA objectives
- Make ICDEIA a priority component of the agency's management and strategic planning agenda
- Measure demographic representation and trends related to diversity in overall workforce composition, senior level, applications, hiring decisions, promotions, pay and compensation, professional development programs and attrition rates
- Protect privacy, safe-guard personally identifiable information, facilitate intersectional analysis, and reduce duplicative reporting requirements
- Promote paid internships
- Strengthen partnerships to facilitate recruitment of and employment opportunities for members of underserved communities
- Track demographic data relating to participation in leadership and professional development programs and development opportunities
- Train staff to have knowledge of systemic and institutional racism, bias against underserved communities, inclusion, harassment, accessibility, and implicit and unconscious bias

METHODOLOGY SECTION

The recommendations in this report are based on a collection of 47 documents that included recommendation letters, emails, reports, proposals, and notes from dialogues with staff groups and external stakeholders and stakeholder groups. These documents were sent to the attention of the Peace Corps Director and/or the Task Force for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion between June and December 2020. For example, the November 2020 NPCA Peace Corps Connect to the Future report was incorporated into the Task Force analysis.

The document analysis included a sorting process, which resulted in each Task Force working group compiling recommendations that fell under their stakeholder area into thematic buckets, (termed ‘priority areas,’ in this report).

After sorting the recommendations into the thematic buckets, they were further identified by the time-frame in which they could be accomplished, (short-, medium- or long-term) and, when possible, the agency office/unit that would likely be assigned to shepherd them through to completion. However, Task Force members recognize that leadership will be better positioned to know where these assignments should be made.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

Following the introductory section, this report presents 64 action recommendations by stakeholder area that were prioritized by the Task Force as important to address in the short-term. A detailed description of how this list was determined is also included.

THE NEXT SECTION OF THE REPORT INCLUDES 92 ACTION RECOMMENDATION DIVIDED INTO MEDIUM-(81) AND LONG-TERM (11) TIME FRAMES. THESE WILL BE SHARED WITH THE STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM FOR REVIEW AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, INCORPORATION INTO THE STRATEGIC PLAN.

MANUALLY REVIEWED AND INPUT CONTENT ANALYSIS

Task Force members were assigned up to eight letters or other documents each. They were asked to read each carefully and then manually input all specific recommended actions and barriers into the content analysis spreadsheet. The deep read and content analysis was accomplished through the following steps:

- Creation of standard stakeholder and office categories to ensure consistent attribution of recommendations
- Randomizing reader assignments to ensure objectivity
- Undergoing a deep/thorough reading,
- Transferring the exact wording of recommendation and barriers statements into a data base (excel spreadsheet) to enable analysis
- Synthesizing similar recommendations
- Reviewing, discussing, and confirming within subgroups the themes based on recommendations, (also taking opportunities to consult across subgroups)
- Presenting the draft findings to leadership.

Over 600 recommendations were gleaned from forty-seven recommendation documents. After data cleaning to group repeated statements, approximately 532 recommendation/barrier statements were analyzed to develop action recommendations for Peace Corps leadership. The first level of categorization by area of focus was:

- Staff (294 recommendations)
- Volunteer Life Cycle Part I: Preservice (163 recommendations)
- Volunteer Life Cycle Part II: Country of Service & RPCVs (90 recommendations)

TEXT ANALYSIS

To confirm that the Task Force's work truly reflected the ideas the authors of the recommendation documents presented, second data analysis strategy was used. The free, open source "R" software was approved for agency use and helped create computer algorithms to investigate paragraphs, sentences, and words within and across the same 47 recommendation documents. This analysis included the following steps:

- Extracting paragraphs and bucketing them by area of focus (into the staff or volunteer group)
- Conducting separate analyses on the two areas of focus
- Conducting word frequency analysis to show how common words were used across letters/recommendation documents
- Analyzing word association to inform context around frequently used words
- Identifying key phrases to guide the search for rich, relevant information around specific words or phrases in the letters/recommendation documents
- Analyzing single word sentiment polarity to assess the feelings expressed around certain words or topics

All readers assessed each recommendation to provide leadership with a possible time frame for accomplishing the change and to identify the office/unit in the agency most likely to shepherd the recommendation through to completion.

The Task Force considered and grouped together recommendation actions that could be accomplished in the short-, medium- or long-term according to the following definitions:

- Short-term: in time for arrival of first Volunteers back to post
- Medium-term: may take up to a year or two
- Long-term: may take up to four years or longer

This ‘unit assignment’ is a first level responsibility. Accountability would be at the level of the office/unit assigned in partnership with the Agency Equity Council.

ADDRESSED OR UNDERWAY

It is important to note that DEIA efforts were in process as the Task Force deliberated. Early Task Force reports on highly recurring recommendations contributed to that work. The full list of recommendations was examined and those that have either been ‘addressed (*),’ or are ‘underway in some form (**)’ are identified below and by asterisks in the Appendix Table of Recommendations.

Recommendations that have been addressed*:

- Create an office of the Chief Diversity Officer that includes a staff, a budget, and that holds authority to collaboratively work on helping the agency fulfill its DEIA commitment by engaging the entire agency,*
- Train all staff on implicit and unconscious bias (require),*
- Include ICDEI in the strategic plan in an intentional way to ensure action,* transparency and accountability,*
- Provide financial support to ease burden related to completing the medical clearance process.*

Recommendations that are underway:**

- Expanding our network of external contacts and relationships (from MOUs, to memberships, to other affiliations) that increase outreach into underserved/underrepresented communities so that it's possible to effectively create and nurture a talent pipeline over the long term,**
- Establishing paid internships that focus on BIPOC recruitment to offer agency experience and provide a pipeline for future increase in staff diversity,*
- Develop, or review and enhance if already in place, a universal anti-discrimination policy that is clear and that will be shared during New Employee Orientation (NEO) and thereafter on a regular basis**
- Develop a hiring process that is impartial, fair, and clearly incorporates DEIA strategies, for example**:
 - Ensure interview panels are always diverse
 - Require implicit bias in hiring training and refreshers for everyone involved in the hiring process
 - Develop DEIA relevant questions for interviews and have them approved by HR, OCRD, Chief Diversity officer, and GC
 - Provide resources/training about racism and discrimination to posts in an effort to help them empathically and operationally respond effectively when a Volunteer experiences racial discrimination and/or or harassment
 - Institute a menu of annual mandatory and self-paced training sessions and ongoing coaching for all staff on bias, racial equity, and the impact of these perspectives and related actions in collegial interactions, especially with colleagues and Volunteers from historically marginalized groups
 - Communicate alternatives to entering criminal justice facilities for applicants to obtain the required ink fingerprints needed to complete their pre-service paperwork requirements.

NEXT STEPS

The short-term action recommendations and priority area statements listed earlier in this report are meant to inspire dialogue and encourage looking beyond status quo approaches. They demand our courage, creativity, and ability to lean into this important moment. Both the departments/units assigned to address/shepherd short-term recommendations and the Strategic Planning team should note that RPCVs have not read the Peace Corps Act and generally do not know how Peace Corps works on an agency level. Therefore, many recommendations were written based on lived experience. As leadership and members of different units throughout the agency are called upon to move this agency forward in DEIA, they are encouraged to seek to understand the urgency and core structural, policy, and procedural issues driving recommendations that appear in this report.

1. Given the will and commitment exemplified by inclusion of advancing equity in the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, the Barrier Analysis, the building of an office supporting the Chief Diversity Officer, ongoing ICDEI work throughout every unit of the agency, and the collaboration and participation of senior and ERG leadership on the Agency Equity Council, we have at hand the ingredients for a powerful response to DEIA that will change this agency in meaningful ways. It is with this work in mind that we outline a few of the steps we will take following the submission of this final Task Force Report: A Senior Leadership team reviews and assigns tasks to relevant departments/units and provides Medium- and Long-term action recommendations to the Strategic Planning team.
2. Departments/Units analyze recommendations, suggest next steps and timelines, lead action process.
3. Agency Equity Council: Task Force holds one or more meetings with the Agency Equity Committee (AEC) and unit leads assigned recommendations. Task Force subgroups/working groups can offer deeper dive on recommendations. The AEC receives updates from departments, provides feedback to management.
4. Task Force Sunset: Acting Director/Director meets with and officially thanks and closes out the Task Force. Because leadership, the AEC, and the Strategic Planning team play key roles in moving agency DEIA efforts forward, Task Force members may be asked to remain available to consult on recommendations.

APPENDIX A

Task Force for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Table of Action Recommendations sorted by short-, medium-, and long term recommendations.

After sorting the action recommendations into the thematic buckets, they were further identified by the time-frame in which they could be accomplished, (short-, medium- or long-term) and, when possible, the agency office/unit that would likely be assigned to shepherd them through to completion. However, Task Force members recognize that leadership will be better positioned to know where these assignments should be made.

Each agency office/unit head will receive a list of one or more Short-Term Action Recommendations. The agency office/unit is asked to gather needed expertise from their unit and if necessary from outside of their unit. The unit will be instructed to develop a plan for shepherding it/them through a review process, followed by presenting a rationale for which items are actionable and if an item falls outside of the office/unit authority and other recommendations for addressing recommendations received.

Medium- and long-term recommendations will be forwarded to relevant Strategic Plan teams for review and incorporation into the ongoing work.

- Short-term: in time for arrival of first Volunteers back to post (up to 6 months)
- Medium-term: may take up to a year or two
- Long-term: may take up to four years or longer

SHORT-TERM ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Stakeholder Area: Staff

- *Creating an office of the Chief Diversity Officer that includes a staff, a budget, and that holds authority to collaboratively work on helping the agency fulfill its DEIA commitment by engaging the entire agency. (Office of the Director, Chief Diversity officer)
- Create and standardize ICDEI policies, practices, and job related competencies across the agency. (Office of the Director, Chief Diversity officer)
- Commit to and implement long-term, consistent diversity and inclusion trainings, including requiring further training for leadership and requiring new leadership to meet these agency standards. (Office of the Director, Chief Diversity officer)
- Develop a clear plan to continually monitor progress as an agency, tracking where we are improving, establishing feedback loops, for transparency and accountability.(Office of the Director, Chief Diversity officer)
- Communicate accountability data both internally and externally using full complement of resources including dashboards, social media, town hall and other engagement events. (Office of the Director, Chief Diversity officer)
- *Include ICDEI in the strategic plan in an intentional way to ensure action, transparency and accountability. Office of the Director
- Establish a policy for different offices to draft their own intentional ICDEI commitment and plan over and above the agency plan (given each has a different focus in the broader agency work) (Office of the Director)
- **Develop, or review and enhance if already in place, a universal anti-discrimination policy that is clear and that will be shared during New Employee Orientation (NEO) and thereafter on a regular basis (Office of the Director)
- Provide clear reporting resources for when employees encounter discrimination. (Office of the Director)
 - Make the reporting and resolution process clear and accessible to all employees, both in HQ and at post. Expand plan around dissemination of these and related existing policies to all employees (Office of the Director)
- More creatively approach frequency, approach, style, and bottom line purpose of message (explain application of the policy and how we strive for the EEO policy to be more than words or a rubber stamp) (Office of the Director)
- Assess the differential impact of medical and legal clearance processes such as revise and resubmit and wait periods before final employee hiring (or service in the case of Volunteer) decision on applicants from marginalized/historically underrepresented groups who stay in or drop out of the applicant pool. Develop solution if this assessment suggests it is a barrier to employment [or Volunteer service]. (Office of Human Resource)
- **Expanding our network of external contacts and relationships (from MOUs, to memberships, to other affiliations) that increase outreach into underserved /underrepresented communities, to effectively create and nurture a talent pipeline over the long term, for example:
- Use broad range of NCE and other HR, OCRD and GC approved rosters
 - Community affinity groups, institutions and organizations
 - ERGs across federal government
 - Tie ICDEI expectations to performance plans, which necessitates tying them to hiring (i.e., reviewing screening / interview questions). (Office of Human Resources, Office of Strategic Partnerships & Intergovernmental Affairs)
- Tie ICDEI expectations to performance plans, which necessitates tying them to hiring (i.e., reviewing screening / interview questions). (Office of Human Resources)

- **Establish paid internships that focus on BIPOC recruitment to offer agency experience and provide a pipeline for future increase in staff diversity. (Office of the Chief Financial Officer)
- **Develop hiring process that is impartial, fair and clearly incorporates DEIA strategies, for example:
 - Ensure interview panels are always diverse
 - Consider participant grade level requirement
 - Implicit bias in hiring training and refreshers for everyone involved in the hiring process
 - Develop DEIA relevant questions used by panels with HR, OCRD, Chief Diversity Officer and GC approval and clearance. (Office of Human Resources, Office of Civil Rights and Diversity, office of Staff Learning and Development)
- Establish an agency-wide, formalized mentoring program available to all staff. Implement mentoring to provide a more intentional pathway to agency leadership, including USDH positions, and federal and NGO agency leadership outside of PC. (Office of Human Resources, office of Staff Learning and Development)
- Provide structural support for a program where DPTs support, design, and implement a virtual mentorship program for current and aspiring DPTs (including RPCVs and non-RPCVs). This mentorship would be across all regions and HQ, with a particular focus on BIPOC recruitment. (Office of Human Resources, Office of Global Operations, Regions)
- Provide an avenue for HCN staff to directly report their experiences regarding diversity. (Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning)
- Establish (self-other bridge) opportunities to facilitate dialogues, workshops and trainings with HCN staff to increase ICDEI language skillset on racial identity development, history of colonization, and global anti-Black expression. Empower HCN staff to respond effectively and appropriately when witnessing/experiencing marginalization by Peace Corps staff or Volunteers. (Office of Programming and Training Support)
- Establish a transparent and equitable selection process for TDY Expert opportunities from HQ to posts and from one post to another post. (Office of Global Operations)
- Re-institute Diversity Dashboard and use it to hold leadership accountable. (Office of Civil Rights and Diversity)
- Institute several diversity metrics as mandatory tasks/required performance plan elements. (Office of Human Resources, office of Staff Learning and Development)
- The Chief Diversity Officer should play a lead role in collaborating on subject matter expertise needed to address ICDEI training for USDHs, HCNs, and Volunteers and synchronizing information. (Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Staff Learning and Development, Office of Human Resources)
- ** Provide resources/training about racism and discrimination to posts in an effort to help them empathically and operationally respond effectively when a Volunteer experiences racial discrimination and/or harassment. (Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Staff Learning and Development, Office of Human Resources)
- All staff need to be educated about the cultural and historical views of BIPOC in the country where they will be serving and should be trained in how to support BIPOC. (Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Staff Learning and Development)
- Implement mandatory trainings for Trainees, Volunteers, and staff (overseas and domestic) on U.S. racism and discrimination. Provide resources/trainings to posts about racism and discrimination so they can respond effectively and appropriately when a Volunteer experiences racial discrimination and/or harassment. (Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Staff Learning and Development)
- Training on the history of 'ism's in the host country should be established as a standard part of Trainee/Volunteer and staff training. (Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Staff Learning and Development)
- DC-based health coordinators should be trained in a trauma-informed approach of care to ensure that survivors (of sexual assault or any traumatic incident) can seek proper support and heal. The PCMO

and associated staff should have credentials or certificates in sexual assault counseling and administering trauma-informed care. (OHS/Behavior Health Office)

- ** Institute a menu of annual mandatory and self-paced choice training sessions and ongoing coaching for all staff on bias, racial equity, and the impact of these perspectives and related actions in collegial interactions, especially with colleagues and Volunteers from historically marginalized groups, the agency, mission and work.(Chief Diversity Officer, OSLD)
- When possible, establish targeted DEIA training tailored to particular job areas such as overseas USDH's, PCMOs, etc. where these skills in work with each other and Volunteers depends on intercultural competence (Chief Diversity Officer, OSLD)
- Create space/time for leaders and employees to have difficult conversations on ICDEI and EEO topics. Train regional leadership, the General Counsel, and the Office of Inspector General to respond to support requests proactively and with explicit acknowledgement of any racialized components of the issue. Invest in Equity and Inclusion Training for senior staff. All senior staff should participate in self-reflective training with an external facilitator experienced in addressing systemic racial and social injustice. (Chief Diversity Officer, OSLD)

Stakeholder Area: Volunteer Lifecycle I: Preservice

- Reexamine and revise policy on qualifications to be a PCV candidate to expand the diversity of the volunteer pool. (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Office of University Programs, Office of Global Operations)
- Clarify requirements in all communications so that the broadest range of individuals can see the possibility of serving when they review our information on how to qualify. (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Office of University Programs, Office of Global Operations)
- Host ICDEI-focused webinars with more college leaders/study abroad offices/Global Office campuses to further spread information about Peace Corps and reach more potential applicants. (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Chief Diversity Officer)
- Re-write Assignment Area descriptions to be more inclusive. (OGO, Posts)
- Rewrite boilerplate language across the agency, such as in the JSRs, with attention ICDEI lens. (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, OGO)
- Review the Volunteer Delivery System for blockages and barriers in achieving our ICDEI goals. (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, OSIRP)
- Enhance marketing approach, branding, and budget to more effectively engage BIPOC communities that are unaware of who we are (electronic ad space does have a cost) to knowing and understanding the Peace Corps. (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, OGO)
- Ensure that all recruiters are trained and capable of diversity recruitment, maintain and strengthen the specific role of Diversity Recruiters, and hire for these skills across both types of recruiters. (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Chief Diversity Officer)
- Increase number of diversity recruiters (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Chief Diversity Officer)
- Partner regional recruiters with diversity recruiters to leverage their diversity recruitment campaigns (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Chief Diversity Officer)
- Include diversity goals in performance goals (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Chief Diversity Officer, HR)
- Explore feasibility of establishing a student loan forgiveness program. Find ways to establish this kind of assistance that is within the Peace Corps Act and budgetary authority. (Office of the Chief financial Officer, Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection)
- Work with OHS to analyze Medical Non-Compliance (MNC) practices and MedSep trends which may affect Black and/or other underserved applicant groups more heavily (e.g., fibroids) (Office of Health Services)

- *Provide financial support to applicants in need in order to ease financial burden related to completing the medical clearance process. (Office of Health Services)
- **Communicate alternatives to entering criminal justice facilities for applicants to obtain the required ink fingerprints needed to complete their pre-service paperwork requirements. (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Office of Safety and Security)
- Office of Communications staff tasked with crafting messages on behalf of the agency should receive guidance and training on the realities of, and approaches to, addressing racial inequities. (Office of Communications)
- Work with agency leadership on connecting the overarching mission of peace and friendship to work that is foundational to that mission—including racial justice. (Office of Communications)
- Allow for personal pronoun preference in the Peace Corps Records Management (PCrm) System and have personal pronoun preferences codified widely throughout agency systems (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Office of Management, Office of the Chief Information Officer)
- Be more candid about the challenges of service throughout the recruitment process, for example (Office of Staging, Office of Global Operations)
- Provide invitees with resources curated by posts that educate on the historical social, economic, and cultural context of their country. Resources should include, but not be limited to, perceptions of power, privilege, and Americans. (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Office of Communications)
- Strengthen diversity recruitment efforts to intentionally reach out to the Black community. Efforts could include MOUS and a revival of diversity recruiters (HBCUs, HHSIs, Tribal Colleges and Universities etc.). Create and utilize a robust contacts database from this work. (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Office of Strategic Partnership and Intergovernmental Affairs)
- Incorporate increasing the number of Black PCVs and staff into Peace Corps' management strategy and policy development. Where recruitment is mentioned in all management and policy – add retention strategy. (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Office of Human Resources)
- Increase training among recruiters in the office of Recruitment and Diversity within VRS to ensure that all recruiters are skilled and comfortable with diversity recruitment strategies. Build diversity recruitment into their performance evaluation metrics. As a best practice, ensure that all staff and Volunteer recruitment efforts have a clearly outlined retention strategy tied to them (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Office of Human Resources)
- Screen applicants for demonstrated skill and/or ability to contribute to an agency culture of curiosity, celebrating difference, and commitment to ICDEIA (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Office of Global Operations)

Stakeholder Area: Volunteer Lifecycle II: Countries of Service & RPCVs

- The agency should take a stand against racism and reexamine how it supports its BIPOC Trainees, Volunteers, and staff members (Office of the Director)
- The agency should publicly acknowledge (in Director's Notes and Press Releases) traumatic race related events. This has the impact of simultaneously messaging support for historically underrepresented Volunteers who are differentially impacted by said events (Office of the Director)
- Develop written statement on how agency goals and mission align with efforts to address racial inequity. (Office of the Director, Communications)
- Assess need for an 11th Core Expectation, related to DEIA, or pursue the inclusion of an ICDEI framing into one of the current 10 Core Expectations. (Office of Global Operations)
- Require posts to evaluate and more clearly articulate and track post-specific considerations pertinent to what a BIPOC or Volunteers from other underrepresented groups might experience: require this

articulation during site development, placement and when matching a PCT/V with a host family, work site and community. (Office of Global Operations)

- Include standardized question or set of questions that allows consideration of the intersection of Volunteer's race, ethnicity, and community dynamics in the site development and site history form (Office of Global Operations)
- The diversity of Volunteers should be stressed with direct language during site identification meetings; there should be a DEIA section of the site ID forms that allows staff to address diversity and racism topics and challenges encountered with in the community. PCV feedback and suggestions provided as a part of their close of service process should be a standard part of every post's site history files. (Office of Global Operations, Regions)
- Staff should spend considerable time/effort to ensure that BIPOC Volunteers have safe sites and workplaces.
- All posts should have access to a menu of approved/possible responses to assist BIPOC Volunteers who experience racial harassment, including knowing when being moved is a necessary option.. Safety and Security Training for Trainees/Volunteers should include specific focus on identity, possible safety and security experiences related to identity and how to report. Staff should be trained on how to manage these reports and how to effectively respond to them. (Office of Global Operations)
- Conduct a review of current codes of conduct for Volunteers and staff and develop, train on, and enforce an agency wide policy for responding to all 'ism's including racism, sexism, ableism, etc., with defined consequences for when it is directed towards staff, Volunteer cohort members, and host country nationals. (Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Global Operations)
- Required ICDEI trainings should address implicit bias, anti-racism, saviorism, and social media etiquette. (Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Staff Learning and Development, office of Programming and Training Support, Posts)
- Ensure staff brief the host family/counterparts individually on vocabulary or behaviors that are considered offensive when hosting a BIPOC Volunteer. Designing approaches in collaboration with BIPOC Volunteers may be a worthwhile approach. (Office of Global Operations, Posts)
- Integrate stakeholder specific content into host country counterparts and host family training to include, ally ship and training on offensive vocabulary and behaviors; white savior complex; power and privilege dynamics ... what it is, how to recognize it, and how to address it. (OPATS, Office of Global Operations, Posts)
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MEDIUM-TERM ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Stakeholder Area: Staff

- More diversity represented in leadership, both headquarters and in the field. Look at race across pay grades and in high-level leadership positions (Expert and Political Appointee) and assessing the type of position (Office of the Director)
- Conduct an analysis of promotion to higher positions across racial and other demographic categories and adjust promotion practices accordingly if any barriers to advancement are discovered (Office of the Director)
- Reconsider five-year term limits. Given times have changed, investigate which current positions should be reconsidered as exempt from this rule for the benefit of our overall mission to maintain highly skilled staff that keeps Volunteers Trained, Safe and Health. (Office of the Director)
- Review 5 year rule staffing patterns to assess whether former BIPOC managers and leaders are differentially at a disadvantage as a result (Office of the Director)
- Recruit staff with targeted outreach to ensure a racially diverse candidate pool. Increase the racial diversity of the pool of potential staff recruits to reflect the racial diversity of the United States of America more closely. (Office of Human Resources, Office of Civil Rights and Diversity)
- Tie staff diversity recruitment to an understanding of university graduation and availability trends in related professions (IT, Psychology, Management, Finance, DEIA, Training, etc.) as comparator to diversity within different profession sectors within the agency (Office of Human Resources, Office of Civil Rights and Diversity)
- Recruit with an anti-racism lens to get to the heart of who is at the table when decisions are made as well as who influences the decisions that are not made. (Office of Human Resources, Office of Civil Rights and Diversity, Regions, Office of Global Operations)
- Conduct workload analysis with OVA team and grant a budget and increase in staff positions commensurate with the challenges of their staff roles. (Office of the Victims Advocate)
- Engage the OVA team to hold mandatory training sessions for OIG and other Peace Corps staff involved when Volunteers are traumatized, on BIPOC trauma-informed courses of action during consultations with Volunteers. (Office of the Victims Advocate)
- All OVA and Behavioral Health counselors, and PCMOs should receive annual training on the most up-to-date practices in sex- and gender-based violence, and the HQ medical office should be expanded to employ consultants and/or a team of mental health professionals specializing in sexual assault and BIPOC advocacy. (Regions, Office of Global Operations)
- Institutionalize and standardize at a baseline level that allows posts to also address unique context factors, Affinity Support for Black and BIPOC overseas USDH and HCN Staff. (Office of Global Operations, Chief Diversity Officer)
- Provide an Annual Affinity Conference or professional development opportunities for Black and staff of Color globally. (Office of Global Operations, Chief Diversity Officer)
- Commit to this investment for 5 consecutive years (at minimum) to gather data about the benefits and further needs for deeper levels of support. (Office of Global Operations, Chief Diversity Officer)
- Invest in an official position with role/responsibility, ideally within Chief Diversity Officer team, of helping Black staff find each other to form mentorship and support circles, manage other optional connection opportunities for staff, ensure that emerging issues are elevated to regional and agency leadership with anonymity. (Office of the Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Human Resources)
- Intentionally diversify Expert positions in P&T and elsewhere in the agency. (Regions, Office of Global Operations)
- Disseminate data of current demographics in Expert roles to recognize the disparity and address underrepresentation. (Regions, Office of Global Operations)
- An agency policy and procedure should be established to eliminate bias in the selection process.
- Clarify path to being an expert and create transparency. (Regions, Office of Global Operations)
- Increase Detail opportunities, and where possible, reduced use of extensions and experts, to give more junior employees more upward mobility/movement experiences and opportunities (Office of Human Resources)
- Provide training for LES/HCN staff to recognize the experience of minority Volunteers and trainees and to help them with strategies to support (Office of Programming and Training Support, Office of Staff Learning and Development)

- Support LES/HCN staff in contributing to program support by developing training on country specific diversity context, challenges and opportunities that USDH and Volunteers should understand a key to their success. (Office of Programming and Training Support, Office of Staff Learning and Development)
- Ensure LES/HCN staff framing in support of anti-colonization and anti-saviorism lens is supported (Office of Programming and Training Support, Office of Staff Learning and Development)
- Increase slots/opportunities for LES/HCN staff to participate in OST. (Office of Programming and Training Support, Office of Staff Learning and Development)

Stake Holder Area: Volunteer Lifecycle I: Preservice

- Waive/reimburse all financial costs related to the application process for Volunteer applicants who fall below an U.S. Government approved “low-income” category. (Pre0Service Unit, Office of Health Services)
- Legal clearance process for Volunteer applicants needs a thorough review by committee to find opportunities for reduced cost, easier access, and updated timelines. (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Office of General Counsel)

Stakeholder Area: Volunteer Lifecycle II: Countries of Service & RPCVs

- Appoint or hire staff member at post, to facilitate, manage and address challenges related to DEIA and organize (in collaboration with OPATS ICDEI team) training for staff. (Office of Global Operations, Regions)
- Establish processes that allows for/ensure inclusion of underrepresented groups such as BIPOC and LGBTQ+ in VAC and have VAC work with the ICDEI Bridge Committee or corollary to assist in improving work/life climate at post around DEIA (Office of Global Operations, Regions)
- Recruit, promote, and retain local staff at post that represents the diversity of the countries where we serve. This should include indigenous, marginalized, and underrepresented groups. Integrate common language for Equal Employment Opportunity in recruitment efforts. (Office of Global Operations, Regions)
- Clarify with HCN staff on an annual basis how PC EEO and other diversity policies apply to them (Office of Global Operations, Regions)
- Provide standard structure and policies for post to have affinity groups that allows them to function much like other Volunteer work committees. (Office of Global Operations, Regions)
- Because the unstructured approach is not working to the degree it can reduce ETs and other challenges, support a comprehensive 5-7 year pilot Affinity Support plan for volunteers at all stages of service (including funding) i.e. Regional/global conferences; Regional Representative for Black Volunteers to connect with on quarterly calls; Pre-departure Black Volunteer Affinity Quarterly group meetings. (Office of Global Operations, Regions)
- Peace Corps HQ should provide standardized guidelines to posts for standards of use, definition and participation guidelines for Volunteer Affinity Groups, i.e., purpose related to broader agency goals, bounds and limits of staff support i.e., travel reimbursements, accommodations. (Office of Global Operations, Regions)
- Strengthen mental health services for PCVs.
- Staff members and PCMOs should have training on counseling and providing culturally competent care to LGBTQ+ members, including confidentiality, nonjudgmental explicit acceptance, provision of appropriate and informed standards of care, counseling, support, and a welcoming environment. (Office of Health Services)
- Create safe spaces and trained facilitation/support if needed for LGBTQ+ Volunteers who are in training, particularly QTBIPOC to discuss/strategize how to navigate service. Online support would be a consideration. (Office of Programming and Training Support, Office of Behavioral Health)
- Establish more robust protocol for supporting BIPOC and other Volunteers who enter service without support from home.
 - For example: Engage NPCA to encourage RPCVs and Friends of Groups to establish appropriate support materials and opportunities for BIPOC and other Volunteers. Or, partner with RPCV-run NGO Adopt a Black Peace Corps Volunteer program to create a network of solidarity for Volunteers who might lack support from home. (Office of the Third Goal)

- Collaborate with NPCA to develop training to support the growth and development of these kinds of small business enterprises that in the long run help BIPOC Volunteers be successful in their service. (Office of the Third Goal)
- Extend Non Competitive Eligibility (NCE) to 3 years for RPCV federal employment, mirroring what PC staff receive when they leave the agency. (Office of the Director, Office of Human Resources)
- Consolidate and streamline access to resources to support RPCVs, coordinate this strategy with NPCA as current approach is confusing to PCVs finishing service. (Office of the Third Goal, Office of Global Operations)
- Consider new ways to connect all RPCVs (including eRPCVs) to NPCA. (Office of the Third Goal)
- Work with posts to collaborate with country-of-service affiliate groups more effectively, regional groups in the U.S. and workplace related groups. (Office of the Third Goal)
- The transfer of contact information for RPCVs from PC service to NPCA should be strengthened; instead of continuing confusing opt-in membership to NPCA, consider implementing opt-out membership thus increasing the chance that RPCVs will stay in; so they can seamlessly continue service at home, such as COVID-19 Response. (Office of the Third Goal, Office of Global Operations)
- Analyze Early Termination (ET) data to develop data/process-informed support for PCVs;
 - Include race in the anonymous end of service survey to collect accurate and candid data and provide disaggregate analysis of (ET) rates. Disseminate this data to all Peace Corps staff. Dissemination and transparency speaks to both acknowledgement, if there is a disparity, and a commitment to address the said disparity. (Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning, Office of Global Operations)
- Collect disaggregated data including impact assessments, stakeholder consultations, statistical and anecdotal analyses, AVS, ET data, post level evaluations, SIQ and demographic data, and Close of Service Interviews on the experience of BIPOC Volunteers with the intent of understanding the unique experiences of BIPOC volunteers to inform anti-racism initiatives/policies. (Office of Global Operations, Regions)
- Develop and clearly define terms for a racial incident reporting system (similar and possibly connected to safety and security systems and processes) to report and document racism experienced by HCNs on the part of PCV/Ts. (Office of Safety and Security, Office of Global Operations, Regions)
- Consider the impact of how confidentiality and immunity policies are discussed that create an environment where reporting can increase if experience of racism data is collected. (Office of Safety and Security, Office of Global Operations, Regions)
- The growing impact of racism and racial discord in social media must be addressed. Clarify whether Trainee/Volunteer Social media accounts are or are not monitored by staff and clarify why. (Office of Safety and Security, Office of Global Operations, Regions)
- Better train on the consequences of posting offensive and negative content both at the level of host country trust, and Trainee/Volunteer peer group and staff trust. (Office of Safety and Security, Office of Global Operations, Regions)
- Standardize and implement “diversity panels,” “equity,” or “Bridge Committee” at each post to serve as a safe place for Volunteers and staff to go to when, seeking strategies to navigate racism, discrimination, or other ‘ism’s, or where they can otherwise report and address issues of discrimination. (Chief Diversity Officer, OPATS)
- Post should keep a record of all DEIA feedback and complaints made by PCV/Ts, send confirmation of receipt, develop follow-up plan for identified staff member, share scrubbed Data/Process related to complaints with PCV/Ts to transparently demonstrate actions to address said challenges identified staff member, share scrubbed data related to complaints. (Office of Safety and Security, Chief Diversity Officer)
- Develop clear agency anti-racism policy, train on it annually and often, and execute related incident reporting system to report and document racism experienced by PCV/Ts on the part of HCNs.
- Develop clear and utilitarian systems to address and hold PCV/Ts and staff accountability for racially and other identity related disrespect, inappropriate language/behavior/practice (training, dialogue, mentoring, coaching, consequences, etc.) (Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Global Operations)
- Create and implement training for both PST staff and full-time staff to understand the experience of diverse identities of PCT/Vs (micro-aggressions, etc.) and to identify strategies they can use to validate and support them. (Office of Programming and Training Support, Post)

- Staff training should cover fostering a respectful workplace environment, behavioral guidelines and communication skills, emphasize accountability, how to give feedback, how to adjust negative behaviors, and address white saviorism. (Office of Programming and Training Support, Post)
- Acknowledge all the systems upon which inequality, inequity, discrimination and marginalization are built including (privilege, economics, race, etc.) in training and internally, educate what privilege is and how to recognize harmful manifestations of privilege. (Office of Programming and Training Support, Posts)
- Programming and training should continually address challenges faced by Volunteers of color; training on implicit bias and racism should be integrated; education on cultural and historical views of BIPOC in the country that they will be serving in, resources/trainings to posts about racism and discrimination to help them respond when a volunteer experiences racial discrimination and/or harassment in time for re-entry. (Office of Programming and Training Support, Posts)
- Institute more preparation materials and training in the pre departure space, making some ICDEIA training mandatory so that cohorts of Trainees arrive at post with a common beginning ICDEIA language to go with post expectations on how they will comport themselves related to ICDEI. (Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Global Operations)
- Improve cross-cultural competency development of Volunteers through mandating pre-reading on the country written from HCN perspective, emphasize respect for country norms and values that encourage Volunteer adaptability. (Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Global Operations)
- Review and integrate stakeholder specific content to include ally ship, integrate into language and culture training, content and resources related to discussing DEIA topics like US racial and ethnic diversity, which will better equip Volunteers to confidently engage in these types of conversations. (Office of Programming and Training Support)
- Training should provide substantial exposure and discussion of country history, anti-Black sentiments and structures, and similarities to those in the U.S., local pro-Afro and Indigenous terminology and material from current social justice movements for different social identities. (Posts)
- Considering that sexual assaults can occur in host family settings, host family assessments and final site reports should be carefully considered and analyzed for predatory behavior concerns. As a policy practice, decisions to place Volunteers in host families where sexual assault has occurred should be discouraged. (Office of Safety and Security, Office of Global Operations, Posts)
- Placing Volunteer in sites with a history of one or more sexual assaults should require a highly rigorous review that got to the level of Region and the HQ safety and security office. (Office of Safety and Security, Office of Global Operations, Posts)
- Implement a standard policy for all posts that host families and/or counterparts who exhibit inappropriate sexual and predatory behaviors must have their hosting privileges revoked. (Office of Safety and Security, Office of Global Operations, Posts)

LONG-TERM ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Stakeholder Area: Staff

- Provide additional benefits and avenues for advancement to locally engaged staff (Office of Global Operations)
- Institute Annual mandatory training sessions & ongoing coaching for all Region and post staff, on bias & racial equity & how that affects their day-to-day interaction with staff with diverse identities and interaction needs. from diverse (Office of Global Operations, Regions)

Stake Holder Area: Volunteer Lifecycle I: Preservice

- Expand and diversify outreach Peace Corps in Black communities, and Black students in colleges & universities (particularly HBCUs and affinity associations in traditional universities) and high schools. (Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection)
- Review all training materials using diversity, equity and inclusion lens for balance and accuracy. For example, ensuring race is not always equated to low socioeconomic status. (Office of Programming and Training Support, Office of Communications)
- Work with the necessary teams who can design and approve a training for invitees that introduces them to the Peace Corps ICDEI framework and how this framework relates to expectations applicants will experience throughout their service. (Office of Programming and Training Support, office of the Chief Diversity Officer)

Stakeholder Area: Volunteer Lifecycle II: Countries of Service & RPCVs

- Review and revise Peace Corps communications and messaging including revising language in the first goal from “helping” to “empowering” and ensuring more diverse, authentic, and ethical storytelling which gives voice to the lived experiences of diverse Volunteers and better communicates our impact. (Office of Communications)
- Lengthen the time that RPCVs have access to post-service insurance to include 6 months at their own expense; allow access to mental health support post-service with no red-flag; allow PCVs access to 10-mental health appointments and possible extensions. (Office of the Director, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of the Third Goal, Office of Health Services)
- Design and pilot a new Volunteer stream—a way for individuals who cannot take the traditional route to volunteer to assist communities where a Volunteer served and/or to play a supportive role from the U.S. to support where the Volunteer currently lives. This was also discussed as a ‘4th Goal,’ in several recommendation documents. (Peace Corps Response, Office of the Third Goal)
- Peace Corps can facilitate or work with NPCA to facilitate RPCV's engagement with diaspora groups from their countries of service. Members of diaspora groups in the U.S. may be engaged to help with recruiting prospective Volunteers to serve in their countries. Examples are families in U.S. who were exposed to the work of a PCV back in their country of origin, thus have an affinity for the Peace Corps. (Office of the Third Goal, Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection)
- Private sector partners should be leveraged for special Third Goal events and activities with RPCVs, hosted by or with Members of Congress, universities, mayors of towns and cities; with large RPCV delegations. (Office of the Third Goal, Office of Strategic Partnerships & Intergovernmental Affairs)
- Learning Space training modules to train PCV/Ts on DEIA related topics and tap already existing resources to fill the gap; evaluate PCVs' perception on race, diversity, and inclusion. This includes PCV interaction with Host Country Nationals (HCN) - program managers, training staff, counterparts, etc. - and PCV to PCV relations. Offer professional development in social justice so the PC community can be better leaders in our communities back home. (Office of Programming and Training Support)

APPENDIX B

TEXT ANALYSIS (a more detailed look)

Text analysis was presented as a logical means of checking that the Task Force’s manual review process was conducted objectively and that findings were as true to the letter writers’ intent as possible.

The act of text analysis follows two basic questions: Do the underlying topics that surfaced in the text analysis appear in the results of the manual review as similarly important or less important topics? If so, are there gaps in our understanding that the comparison across the manual review and the text analysis reveal? These are questions answered in this section of the Task Force report.

The text analysis approach utilized as a check against the manual (deep read) analysis approach used by the Task Force resulted in the six tables below.

The key phrase identification analysis was used to search the letters/recommendations for relevant information around specific words or phrases.

After all manual deep reading was complete, the findings of the text analysis were reviewed.

The primary finding is that the underlying topics unearthed by the text analysis were similar to key findings in the manual the Task Force members read. Phrasing identified in the manual read was given weight similar in importance to phrasing in the text analysis.

Seven of the eight topics uncovered in the text analysis focused on “Staff,”. These were determined to be key in the manual review by Task Force members.

All eight topics uncovered in the text analysis that focused on “Volunteers” were determined by Task Force members to be key in the manual review. While the Gender and Development Committee (GAD) was weighted heavily (due to the recurrence rate), the term “affinity group(s),” that co-occurs with the GAD term was more heavily weighted in the Task Force member manual review.

In sum, the Task Force for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion review of recommendation documents reliably surfaced and put forward recommendations that follow the main words and themes presented in the documents.

TABLE 1. TEXT ANALYSIS: FREQUENTLY USED WORDS IN LETTERS, STAFF FOCUS

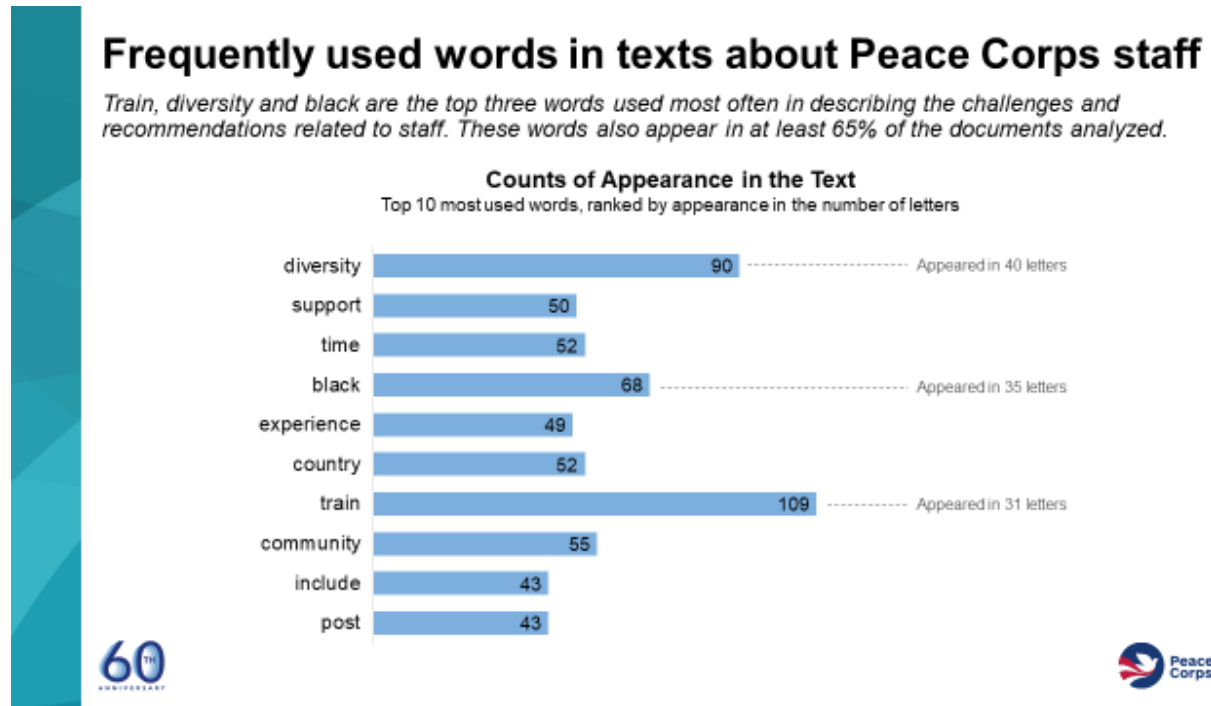


TABLE 2. TEXT ANALYSIS: KEY PHRASE IDENTIFICATION ANALYSIS, GENERAL FOCUS, STAFF

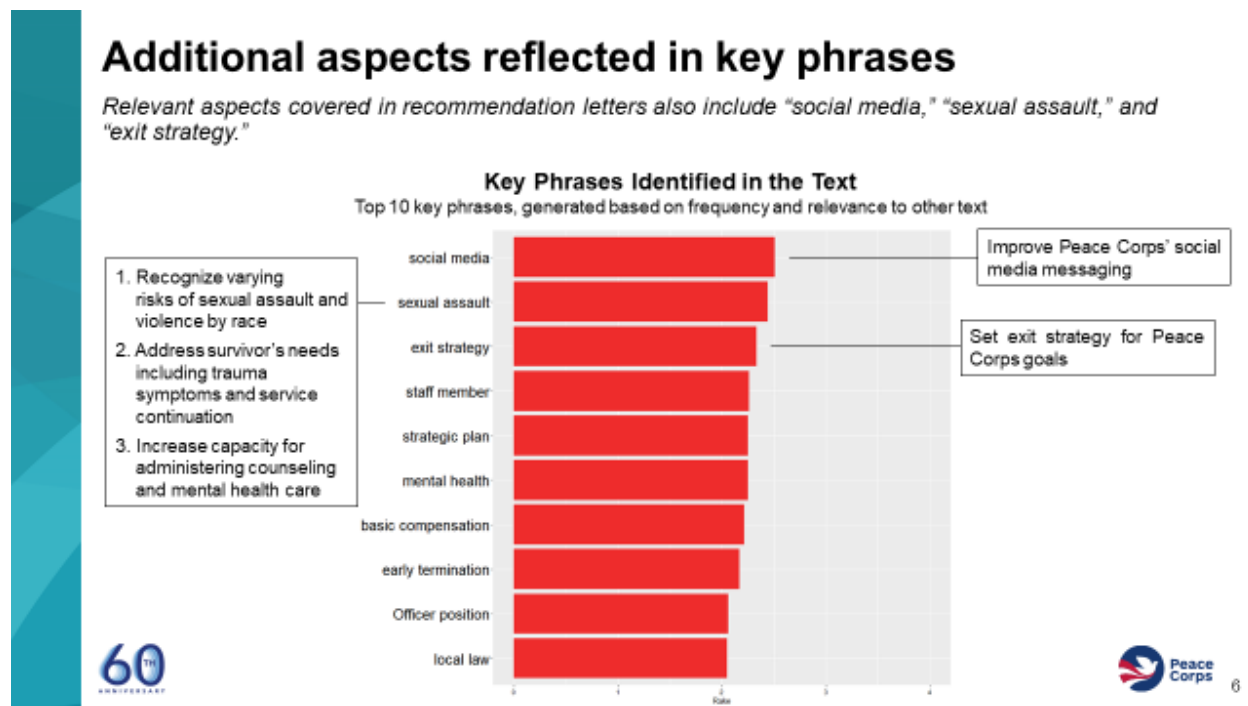


TABLE 3. TEXT ANALYSIS: WORDS THAT CO-OCCUR WITH FREQUENCY WITHIN TOPICS, STAFF FOCUS

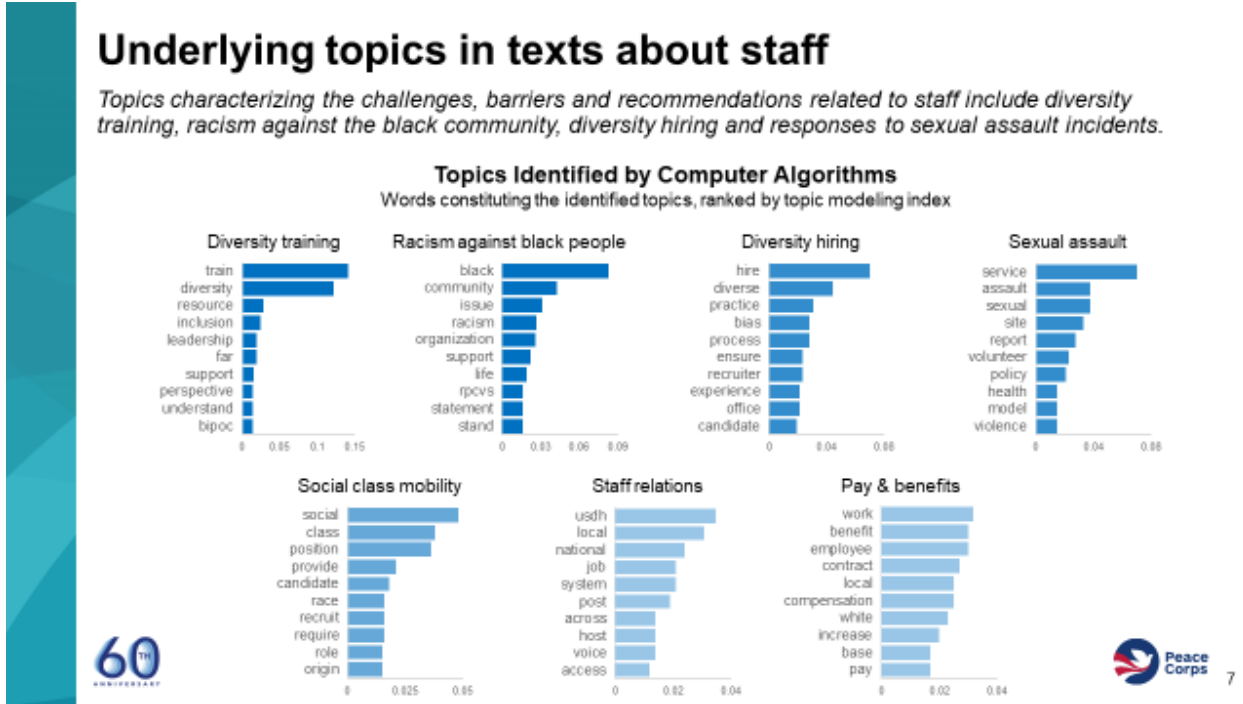


TABLE 4. TEXT ANALYSIS: FREQUENTLY USED WORDS IN LETTERS, VOLUNTEER FOCUS

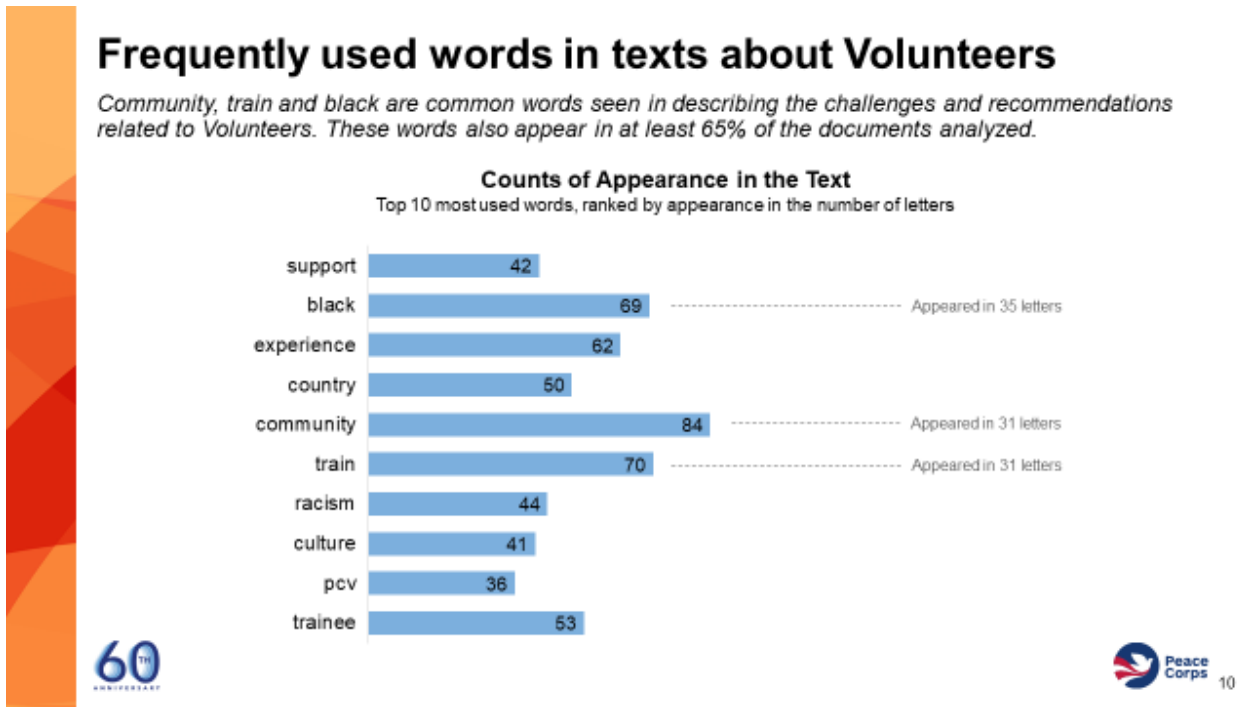


TABLE 5. TEXT ANALYSIS: KEY PHRASE IDENTIFICATION ANALYSIS, GENERAL FOCUS, VOLUNTEERS

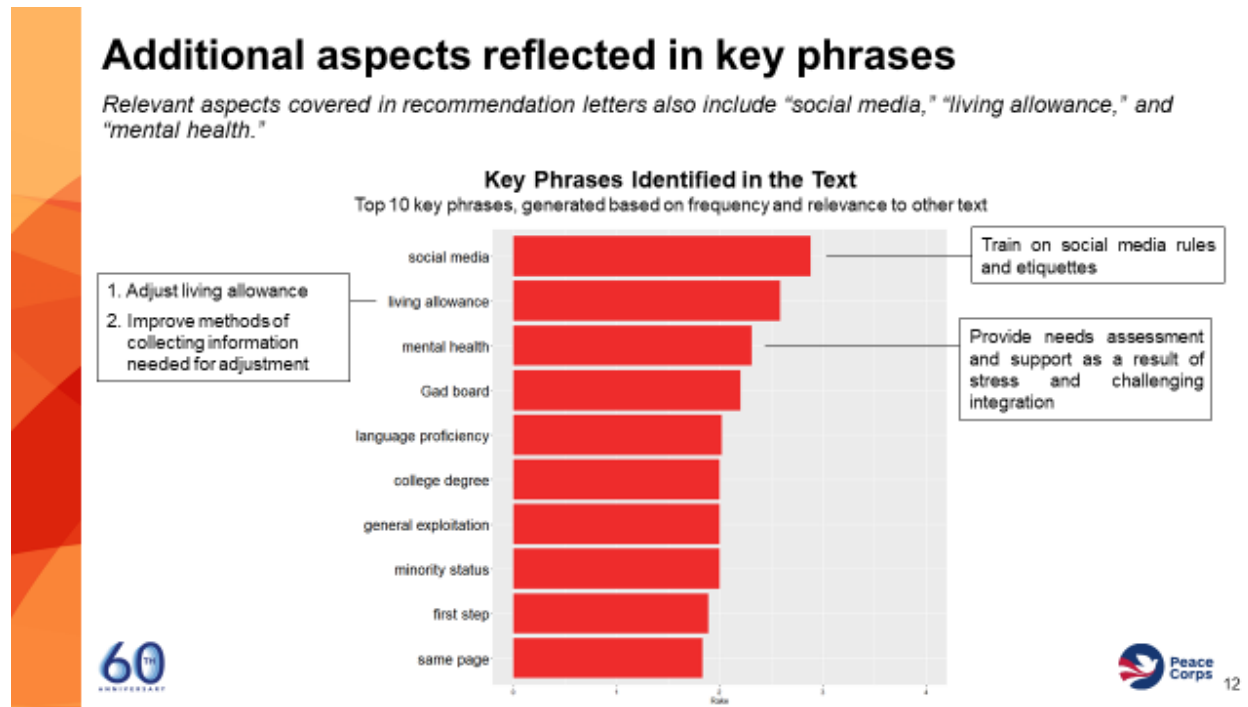
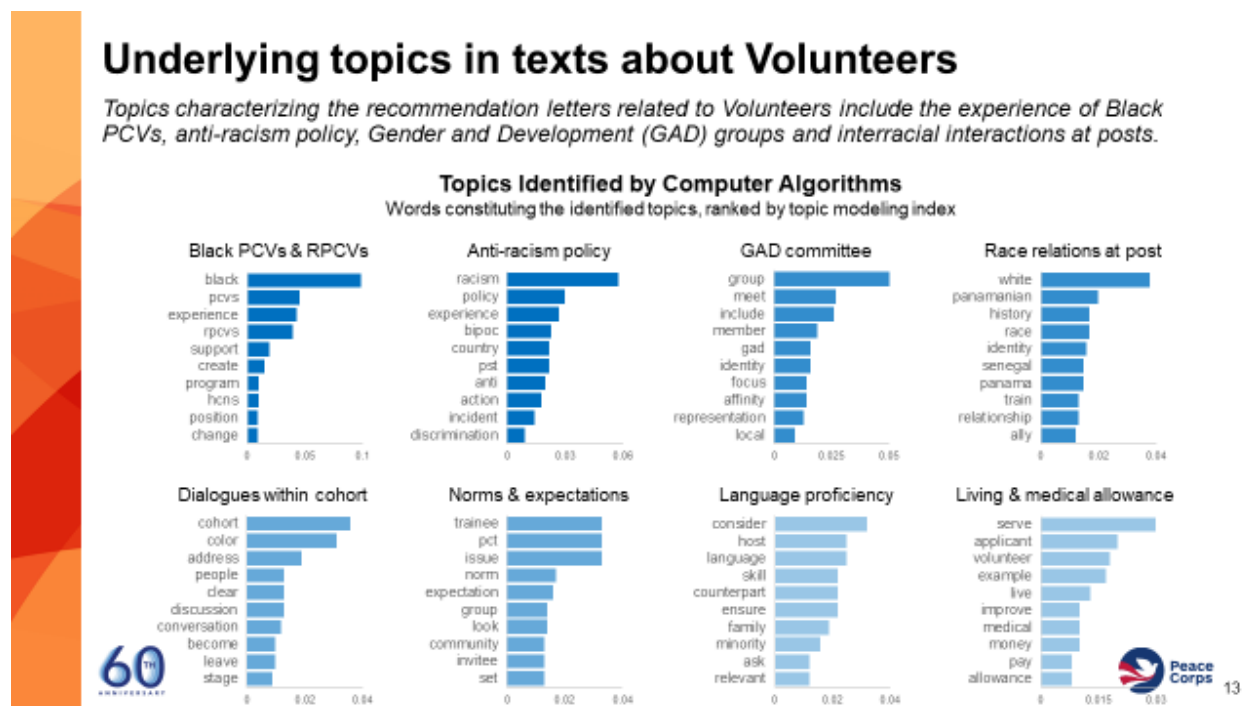


TABLE 6. TEXT ANALYSIS: WORDS THAT CO-OCCUR WITH FREQUENCY WITHIN TOPICS, VOLUNTEER FOCUS



APPENDIX C

Manual Section (MS) 123

Office of the Director

Attachment A

July 2021

Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement

Executive Order 13583 of August 18, 2011 establishes a coordinated government-wide initiative to promote diversity and inclusion in the Federal workforce.

Peace Corps recognizes that a central part of our success lies in honoring the voices and identities of our Volunteers, host country staff, and U.S. staff. As an agency, we need to ensure that diversity of thought, experience, and personal background is valued and encouraged. Such diversity within the workforce enhances the relevance and substance of our work and helps us adhere more closely to our mission.

Diversity is defined as the characteristics and attributes that make each one of us unique. Diversity has many dimensions, including race, gender, physical ability, ethnicity, national origin, nationality, religion, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identification, educational access, and age. More broadly, diversity includes—but is not limited to—geographic location, work experience, family status, socio-economic class, and diversity of political thought. Our goal is to leverage the varied experiences and ideas that each individual brings for the good of the agency and the communities that we serve.

We define inclusion as a culture that connects each employee to the organization; encouraging collaboration, flexibility, and fairness; and that leverages diversity throughout the organization so all individuals are able to participate and contribute to their full potential.

With fair and transparent policies and practices, clear communication, mutual respect, and a collaborative atmosphere that provides both professional and personal development

opportunities, Peace Corps offers an inclusive and welcoming workplace that values the efforts of all contributors.

In addition to having Diversity and Inclusion in our agency strategic plan, we are committed to holding ourselves accountable, and will use the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (DISP) and the Intercultural Competence Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan as roadmaps for our operations internationally and domestically.

APPENDIX D

Taskforce Members

Darlene Grant, Senior Advisor and
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Karla Wesley (D/OSLD)
Sonia Delman (AGC/OGC)
Sarah Watson (CDO/AF)
Tina Cruz-Hubbard (Chief Diversity
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Shelley Savage (Psychologist/OHS)
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James Ham (CD/AF)
Gentian Leka (TM/EMA)
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