



**Peace  
Corps**

**FISCAL YEAR 2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN  
FY 2020 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN AND  
FY 2018 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**



# FY 2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN FY 2020 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN FY 2018 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

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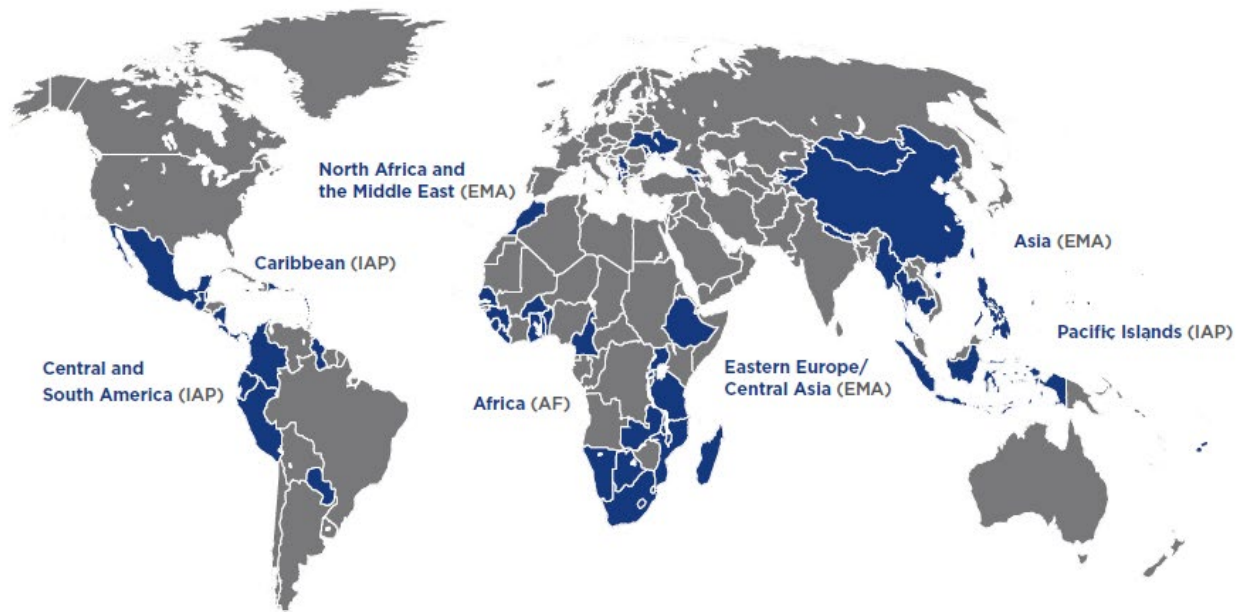
Promoting World Peace and Friendship since 1961

*Front cover: A Peace Corps Nepal Volunteer teaches handwashing techniques using singing and counting to help kids stay engaged.*

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

## WHERE PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS SERVED IN FY 2018



### Caribbean

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

### Central and South America

Belize  
 Colombia  
 Costa Rica  
 Ecuador  
 Guatemala  
 Guyana  
 Mexico  
 Nicaragua  
 Panama  
 Paraguay  
 Peru

### Africa

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

### North Africa and the Middle East

Morocco

### Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Albania  
 Armenia  
 Georgia  
 Kosovo  
 Kyrgyz Republic  
 North Macedonia  
 Moldova  
 Ukraine

### Asia

Cambodia  
 China  
 Indonesia  
 Mongolia  
 Myanmar  
 Nepal  
 Philippines  
 Thailand  
 Timor-Leste

### Pacific Islands

Federated States of  
 Micronesia  
 Fiji  
 Samoa  
 Tonga  
 Vanuatu

**AF:** Africa Region

**EMA:** Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region

**IAP:** Inter-America and Pacific Region

Countries with Volunteers during FY 2018

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## Mission

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

Since its establishment in 1961, the Peace Corps has been guided by a mission of world peace and friendship. The agency exemplifies the best of our nation's spirit by sending Americans to serve around the world, advancing development and building cross-cultural understanding. Today, the Peace Corps continues to build strong relationships between our country and the people of our partner nations while making a difference in overseas communities, in the lives of our Volunteers, and back home in the United States. More than 235,000 Volunteers have served in 141 countries since 1961, changing lives—including their own.

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

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

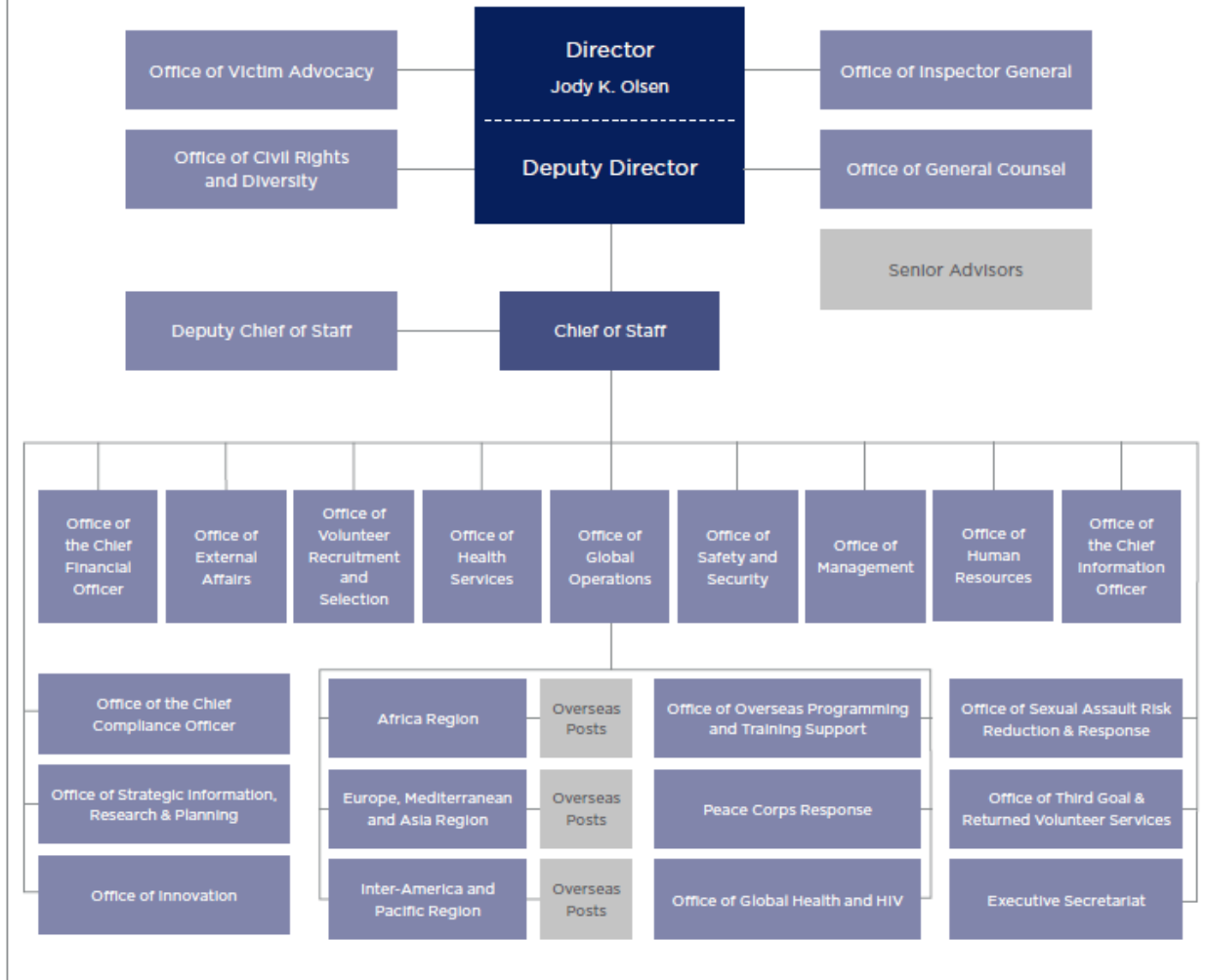
## Vision

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

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

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

## PEACE CORPS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## Core Values

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Plan Overview

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

The combined FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan and FY 2020 Annual Performance Plan includes the following components:

- **Strategic goals** reflect the broad, long-term outcomes the agency works toward to achieve the Peace Corps mission to promote world peace and friendship through community-based development and cross-cultural understanding.
- **Strategic objectives** break down the high-level strategic goals to express the specific focus areas the agency will prioritize in order to achieve the strategic goals.
- **Management objectives** communicate improvement priorities for functions that cut across the Peace Corps, such as human capital management, information technology, and financial stewardship.
- The **rationale** for each objective provides an overview of priority opportunities or issues to be addressed and the expected contribution of that objective to the agency's strategic goals.
- **Strategies** articulate the broad course of action or unifying approach that indicates how actions lead to outcomes.
- **Performance goals** state levels of performance, or "targets," to be accomplished within a specific timeframe. In this plan, two types of performance goals are used depending on whether the goal relates to a new agency process to be measured using milestones or a quantitative measure. In both cases, annual targets in terms of a milestone or a numeric target to be achieved are set through FY 2020. Actual results are provided for prior years when available. The agency uses performance goals both to assess progress on strategic goals and objectives and to drive performance improvement. Performance goals will be updated each year in the annual performance plan in conjunction with the budget formulation process.
- **A lead** is identified for each objective and performance goal with the title of the lead individual and the name of the office in the lead role. While it is recognized that several offices or overseas posts may be responsible for the individual strategies that advance progress on objectives and performance goals, leads are given the convening authority to coordinate agencywide efforts to develop, implement, and report on plans.

Appendices provide additional detail on the development of the FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan and FY 2020 Annual Performance Plan. Appendices include a summary of the Peace Corps' performance management framework (Appendix A), a description of how



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

### **GPRA Modernization Act of 2010**

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

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

## Strategic Goals

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

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

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

### Strategic Goal 1: Building Local Capacity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Strategic and Management Objectives

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Strategic Objective 1: Sustainable Change

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

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

### Strategies:

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

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

### FY 2018 Progress Update:

In FY 2018, the Peace Corps made substantial progress towards this objective, which enables posts and headquarters to synthesize multiple data sources for evidence-based planning and management. The agency continues to improve existing tools while developing new ones. During the past year, for example, staff from multiple offices began collaborating to design a new Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT) for reporting on project milestones and achievements. The improved reporting tool is being designed in parallel with the new programming and training alignment guidance that enables posts to develop project frameworks using evidence-based tools. The agency also made

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<sup>2</sup> Logical project frameworks are expected to be rolled out for all projects by FY 2021 as a systematic foundation for evidence-based program design, implementation, and evaluation.

substantial progress in defining additional metrics for agencywide reporting on project achievements in capacity building and skills development for sustainable change.

Another new tool in the final stages of development is the Post Management Tool, which contains approximately 60 indicators organized into nine areas of operation and management. This tool is expected to help posts identify operational best practices and pinpoint areas for improvement.

In FY 2018, examples of agency efforts to improve existing tools include overhauling the Administrative and Management Control Survey, a risk-based self-assessment tool for posts, to better capture all post management risks.

Another example was the completion of significant revisions to the Country Portfolio Review (CPR) to make the CPR a more transparent, rational, and repeatable process that strengthens the strategic allocation of Volunteers across Peace Corps posts. The agency balances a rigorous data-driven process with in-depth review from experts across the agency.

Priority programmatic and operational themes have been identified through consultation with stakeholder offices and advisory groups. The agency has initiated efforts to explore the Peace Corps' impact and effectiveness, including a large agencywide study investigating Volunteers' community integration—a pivotal element in the Peace Corps' participatory community development model. Interview data have been collected from a sample of posts where Volunteers report integrating easily, as well as a sample of posts where Volunteers report having more difficulty integrating. The comparison of results from these two groups of posts will help the agency identify practices among posts and Volunteers that result in easier, more rapid community integration.

Since Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) results indicate that strong counterpart relationships are positively correlated with Volunteer perceptions concerning success and effectiveness, a second study is planned for FY 2019 to investigate factors that enable Volunteers to develop strong and meaningful counterpart relationships.

In addition, the Peace Corps Small Project Assistance (SPA) Program—a joint initiative between the Peace Corps and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—completed an independent, third-party evaluation of SPA projects from FY 2013-FY 2017. The evaluation found that 96 percent of fieldwork projects were implemented successfully, with positive impact in partner communities. On average, each project directly increased capacity for 338 beneficiaries; continued to be supported by the community years after the grant ended; and led to increased local development activities. This type of community engagement and leadership is pivotal to sustainable change.

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

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

**Achievements on nineteen (19) standard indicators**

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	80%	85%	87%	89%	90%
Results	75%	76%	86% <sup>3</sup>	80% <sup>4</sup>		

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

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

The centerpiece of PT&E alignment is the new project design document, the Logical Project Framework (LPF). The LPF consists of two templates. The first is a logic model that articulates the project goals, objectives, and anticipated community benefits (outcomes). The activities in the LPF reflect both the Peace Corps' niche and evidence-based practices. The second template is a plan for monitoring, reporting, and assessment of project progress that defines indicators, data collection tools, and standardized measurement strategies. Each sector's Logical Project Framework and supporting materials reflect what Volunteers do to effect change.

Posts adapt these reference materials to design project frameworks that are tailored to local contexts. Posts also draw on the reference materials to strengthen identification of

<sup>3</sup> This result includes all data received by November 30, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> This result includes all data received by November 27, 2018.

sites and partner organizations, training, and reporting. Their project frameworks describe Volunteers' expected contributions to host community, organization, and government development goals. The calculations for this performance goal will be revised over time using a streamlined set of evidence-based standard indicators for the projects that have begun using these new logical project framework materials.

Beginning in 2019—as the new project frameworks are entered into the VRT and new cohorts of Volunteers are trained on their use—a new baseline will be constructed to transition from the current set of 19 standard sector indicators to a revised set of indicators from the PT&E guidance. This transition will happen progressively from FY 2019 to FY 2022 with the posts that are implementing new PT&E frameworks reporting on the new set of indicators while posts that are still in the process of changing their frameworks continue reporting against the current set of 19 indicators. By FY 2021, it is anticipated that projects in the vast majority of posts will have been developed using the new frameworks, and the current performance goal indicator will be discontinued. One or two new indicators for this performance goal measuring project-level achievements in capacity building and the development of improved knowledge, skills and behaviors will be formulated in FY 2019 for use through FY 2022.

### **FY 2018 Progress Update:**

The target was not met in FY 2018. Across the 19 standard indicators, 80 percent of the 91 projects passed the two thresholds used to measure achievement: (1) percent of Volunteers reporting and (2) percent of the post's annual target met. In FY 2018, the strongest results were seen in youth development with 92 percent of projects meeting or exceeding both thresholds followed by education (90%) and community economic development (87%).

Among the projects that did not meet the defined thresholds for this goal, the most common reason was that the percentage of assigned Volunteers reporting results was low. During the transition from the project frameworks developed in 2014 (on which this analysis is based) to new project frameworks, new standard indicators, and a new Volunteer Reporting Tool, posts will encourage Volunteers to track and report their achievements to better demonstrate Volunteers' contributions to community-based development.

It is important to note that many projects in the Peace Corps include cross-sectoral elements. For example, some youth development projects include health or education work, and some agricultural projects include economic development or environmental activities. For this reason, results were also analyzed at the level of the individual indicators as described below.

- The strongest results were seen in a Feed the Future indicator measuring the number of farmers who had applied new technologies or management practices as a result of their work with Volunteers. One hundred percent of the eight projects in which this indicator was used met or exceeded both thresholds.



- Strong results were seen in the community economic development indicator which assesses whether organizations with which Volunteers worked improved their project design and management practices. Of the 11 projects where this indicator appeared, 91 percent met or exceeded both thresholds.
- In 86 percent of 29 education projects, students working with Volunteers demonstrated improved English proficiency.
- In 89 percent of the 18 projects measuring life skills in leadership, Volunteers reported that youth were displaying evidence of an improved sense of self-esteem.



*A Peace Corps Volunteer serving in a South Africa Community HIV/AIDS Outreach Project holds an afterschool Grass Roots Soccer (GRS) session with students from 13-17 years old. Volunteers use programs such as GRS to educate and inspire adolescents in their communities to live healthier, more productive lives.*



*A Peace Corps Guatemala Volunteer in the agriculture sector and his counterpart check on a greenhouse seed bank they are developing for the surrounding community.*

In addition to the existing performance goal indicator, in FY 2018 agency staff began drafting new metrics to measure achievements in capacity building and the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and behaviors. In FY 2019, the agency will define a new list of selected indicators that represent the core programs and their logical project frameworks and develop a reporting baseline.

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

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

**Calculations:** *The number of projects that meet the two thresholds for a documented achievement on at least one of the selected standard sector indicators used for this goal divided by the number of projects that use one or more of the 19 selected indicators. The two thresholds are (1) at least 25 percent of the Volunteers assigned to the selected projects must report some results and (2) the combined total of all Volunteer results must be at least 25 percent of the annual target for the project.*

**Performance Goal 1.2: Assess the Peace Corps' Impact**

*Conduct one thematic study per fiscal year of a broad component of the Peace Corps' programming to assess its effectiveness and impact.*

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	List of proposed topics developed  Tools and approach developed	First study conducted  Second study planned	Second study conducted
Results	NA	NA	NA	List of proposed topics, tools, and approach developed	-	-

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

The studies will be conducted using a combination of desk reviews, existing administrative data from the VRT, and other materials that are related to the topic of the study. Possible topics include programs (e.g., girls' education, youth camps, malaria prevention, HIV/AIDS awareness, and/or Peace Corps' contributions to sustainable change in its host country programs) or operational topics (e.g., best practices in site development, working with local counterparts, and global and local partnerships; and/or mechanisms to engage communities in productive, collaborative, and inclusive relationships that foster development and strengthen cultural exchange).

The topic for the FY 2019 study is "Enabling Successful Community Integration." As the foundation of the Peace Corps' participatory community development model, community integration is integral to the agency's three goals, with direct implications for Performance Goal 2.4: Implement an Improved Site Management System. This study will focus on identifying evidence-based practices to inform post policies, procedures, and training for Volunteers. Additionally, findings will help strengthen the agency's capacity to establish expectations with recruits and invitees, support Volunteers' entry into their communities, prepare Volunteers to serve as citizen diplomats, and improve

the quality of information that Volunteers share about their country of service with other Americans.

### **FY 2018 Progress Update:**

The FY 2018 target was met. The Office of Global Operations developed a list of proposed topics and tools as well as an approach for conducting the first study. The first study is on Volunteer community integration. The ability of Volunteers to integrate into their communities is key to their success and safety. The primary aim of this study is to identify the best tools, policies, staffing, and practices for supporting Volunteer integration. The study was launched ahead of schedule during the summer of 2018, and significant progress has already been achieved. The study design uses a comparative case study approach. A sample of posts were identified in one of two groups: (1) those where Volunteers report easy, rapid community integration and (2) those where Volunteers indicate they have more difficulty integrating. Telephone interviews were conducted with post staff using a structured questionnaire to identify potential contributing factors that may explain why the two groups differ. In FY 2019, the data from the interviews will be cleaned and analyzed to complete this study.

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

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

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

## Strategic Objective 2: Volunteer Effectiveness

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

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

### Strategies

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

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



## **FY 2018 Progress Update:**

Significant progress has been made on the competency-based learning strategies for programming, training, and evaluation staff and Volunteers. Staff competencies in three of the five designated areas were developed through a participatory and iterative process, and benchmarked to industry standards. Volunteer competencies were developed for the technical areas in which Volunteers work as well as in the capacity development competencies Volunteers use at site to transfer knowledge, skills and attitudes. A Programming and Training Bridge was developed in each of the six sectors (Agriculture, Community Economic Development, Education, Environment, Health, and Youth in Development) to connect the tasks Volunteers perform with the necessary language skills to carry out those tasks.

The agency continues to make strides in improving overall Volunteer language learning and increasing the percentage of Volunteers who complete close of service language testing. This is particularly important as posts design and implement new strategies for language learning throughout service that are consistent with project frameworks. Results from FY 2018 were based on the most comprehensive data collected by the agency since language learning began to be used as a performance goal in FY 2015. The Peace Corps expects that as training systems and resources are developed, Volunteers' language proficiency in Level 3 and 4 languages will improve.<sup>5</sup>

The characteristics of effective site management were identified and definitions of common terms used in site management were developed. Site management includes site identification, counterpart identification, site preparation, and support. A scope of work for a management study was developed. The study will use a comparative case study approach among posts on effective site management and will be conducted in FY 2019.

This was the first year that a significant number of projects were endorsed based on the new Logical Project Frameworks, bringing the total number of endorsed projects to 30 out of 142 (21%). The agency's goal is to have 100 percent of projects endorsed by the end of FY 2021. In addition, user stories and functional requirements have been identified and prioritized to inform development of a new mobile data system for Volunteers to report their project activities and for staff to monitor, analyze, and evaluate impact. The agency approved funding for the new system in September 2018, and is planning to launch it in 2020. The goal is that by 2021, all projects will use endorsed Logical Project Frameworks and all Volunteers will report their activities in a mobile data system.

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<sup>5</sup> The Peace Corps categorizes language levels according to the system used by the Defense Language Institute. Languages at Levels 3 and 4 are more difficult for native-speakers of English to learn. Thus, Volunteers require more time to reach Advanced proficiency. For example, Chinese is a Level 4 language that is more difficult for speakers of English to learn than Spanish, a Level 1 language.

**Performance Goal 2.1: Optimize Staff Performance**

*Establish a competency-based learning strategy for overseas programming, training, and evaluation staff that supports targeted professional development throughout the employee lifecycle by the end of FY 2020.*

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY2020
Targets	-	-	-	Competencies developed	Competencies developed Resource plan developed Sequencing and mapping completed User interface on IT platform completed	Staff capacity in competencies built
Results	NA	NA	NA	Competencies developed	-	-

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

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

**FY 2018 Progress Update:**

The target for FY 2018 was met with the development of “competencies,” which are defined as measurable or observable knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to perform a critical job function. In total, the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS) developed nine competencies in the areas of instructional design, training facilitation, training assessment and evaluation, language training, and

intercultural competence, diversity, equity and inclusion. All competencies were developed by subject matter experts, benchmarked to industry standards in the public and private sector, and vetted with a representative group of Peace Corps' post staff through a participatory and iterative process. A similar process will be used to develop competencies for programming and evaluation in FY 2019.

Additionally, a site within the agency's intranet was developed to facilitate access to the PT&E competencies and supporting materials. The site facilitates collaboration between subject matter experts and stakeholders—at headquarters and posts—toward improved competency development.

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

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

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

<b>Performance Goal 2.2: Optimize Volunteer Performance</b> <i>Establish a competency-based Volunteer learning strategy that supports capacity building throughout the Volunteer lifecycle by the end of FY 2020.</i>						
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	Competencies developed	Global core competencies developed Resource plan developed Sequencing and mapping completed	Pre-departure environment standardized  User interface on IT platform completed
Results	NA	NA	NA	Competencies developed		

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

- Phase 1: Develop technical competencies in FY 2018. Additional competencies in the "global core" (which includes competencies related to resilience and adjustment challenges) will be developed in FY 2019.
- Phase 2: Identify, refine, develop and align resources that are mapped to the competencies.
- Phase 3: Sequence and map learning and development resources related to language acquisition, sector, and global core to the appropriate phases of the Volunteer lifecycle, beginning with the pre-departure environment.
- Phase 4: Establish a standardized approach, guidance, and content for the pre-departure environment.

- Phase 5: Roll-out Volunteer competencies and learning and development resources on an integrated and navigable IT platform that supports Volunteer learning.
- Phase 6: Build the capacity of Volunteers to use the learned competencies and related resources during their service.
- Phase 7: Update the performance goal to measure increased effectiveness among Volunteers who have participated in skills building.

### **FY 2018 Progress Update:**

The Peace Corps met the target set for FY 2018. Competencies for Volunteer Performance related to each of the six sectors—Agriculture, Community Economic Development, Education, Environment, Health, and Youth in Development—were developed. All competencies describe the measurable or observable knowledge, skills, attitudes that Volunteers need to perform a critical job function or carry out the activities in the project frameworks. In each sector, reference logic models were designed using a theory of change.<sup>6</sup> They include evidence-based activities drawn from the international development industry and vetted by a representative group of subject matter experts in Peace Corps posts through a participatory and iterative process. They also include sector-specific technical concepts and capacity development competencies.

As part of each sector resource package, partner offices in the agency produced a document referred to as the “Programming and Training Bridge.” This document describes the enabling tasks, performance expectations, learning expectations, and competencies required of Volunteers in order to implement the logical project framework in their sector. This document serves as the foundation for the agency’s competency-based approach to development.

Through a series of workshops, 12 offices across the agency collaborated to identify global core competencies for Volunteers. Representatives from each office will participate in the development and alignment of additional competencies and related resources in FY 2019. The new Volunteer Competencies Workspace site on the agency intranet will facilitate access to these materials and strengthen cross-agency collaboration.

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

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

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

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<sup>6</sup> As explained by Marjan Van Es, Irene Guijt, and Isabel Vogel in *Theory of Change Thinking in Practice* (The Hague, The Netherlands: Hivos. 2015: p. 12), people perceive and understand change based on their underlying beliefs about life, human nature, and society. Theories of change articulate these ideas and beliefs about how and why the world and people change.



### Performance Goal 2.3: Improve Language Learning

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

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

		FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	Level 1 and 2	-	-	-	-	84%	85%	85%
Results	languages	NA	81% <sup>1</sup>	82%	82%	82%		

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

		FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	Level 3 and 4	-	-	-	-	39%	40%	42%
Results	languages	NA	46% <sup>1</sup>	38%	38%	38%		

<sup>1</sup> *Italicized results are not comparable to later years due to changes in measurement.*

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

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

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

Advanced proficiency in a language that is classified as a Level 3 or Level 4 in terms of difficulty is more challenging and time-consuming than developing that level of

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

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

### **FY 2018 Progress Update:**

FY 2018 results were slightly below the targets set for both groups of languages. Language testing at the close of service was established as a requirement in FY 2015. While the FY 2018 result did not fully meet the target, it is important to note that these results were based on 87 percent of the 2,124 Volunteers who completed their service in countries where local languages were taught and tested in FY 2018. This is the most comprehensive set of results collected by the agency since this performance goal was introduced in FY 2015.

As reporting improved, the agency expected that the percentage of Volunteers achieving Advanced in Level 3 and 4 languages might decrease if Volunteers with lower proficiency had been opting out of taking the optional close of service language proficiency interview prior to this change. However, these results demonstrate that proficiency levels have remained stable over time as posts have come closer to 100 percent reporting of language proficiency interview scores at close of service. Posts now have a clearer picture of the language development of Volunteers and can use this information to strengthen support for language learning throughout service.

The efforts to develop more structured and robust language learning programs at posts are supported by guidance, resources, and training from the agency's language team. The development of competencies (as described in PG 2.2) for each of the Peace Corps' six sectors has enabled posts to clearly identify the tasks Volunteers need to perform in their local languages and begin developing learning resources. The agency expects that as more training resources are developed, the Volunteers' language proficiency in local languages will improve, particularly in the more difficult Level 3 and 4 languages.

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

**Data Source:** Peace Corps databases (VIDA<sup>7</sup> and SharePoint)

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

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

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

Phase 1: Use existing data to define parameters for successful site management.

Phase 2: Develop tools such as structured interview questionnaires to collect and analyze data.

Phase 3: Conduct structured interviews and case studies on site management practices at selected posts to compare and contrast the posts with the most and least success using the parameters defined in Phase 1.

Phase 4: Enhance existing site management guidance based on findings from the operational research conducted in Phases 1-3.

Phase 5: Develop guidance and tools for staff to use in the site management process to identify sites with shared programmatic goals and committed partners with whom the Volunteers can work.

Phase 6: Develop an integrated and navigable technology platform to capture and manage critical site management data.

Phase 7: Build the capacity of staff to implement guidance and tools.

<sup>7</sup> The Volunteer Information Database Application (VIDA) tool allows posts to manage data on Volunteers, sites, and Emergency Action Plans. Beginning in FY 2019, posts will use a new data collection tool on SharePoint to report this data.

## FY 2018 Progress Update:

The target was not met, but significant progress was made. Initial work centered on developing common definitions of terms used in site management and developing a consensus around the characteristics that an effective site management system should have. This effort concluded with a summary paper completed in May 2018.

Based on the summary paper, the agency developed a scope of work for the study to be conducted in 2019. It will use a comparative case study approach, categorizing posts by the effectiveness of their site management activities based on the characteristics that were defined in FY 2018. The most effective and least effective posts will be compared using various techniques including document reviews, individual and group interviews, and web-based surveys. The next step—development of these data collection tools—will be completed in FY 2019.

**Goal Leads:** *Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)*

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

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

<b>Performance Goal 2.5: Strengthen Project Planning and Management</b>						
<i>Develop logical project frameworks for all projects using PT&amp;E Alignment processes and tools by FY 2021.</i>						
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	35% of projects	68% of projects	84% of projects
Results	NA	NA	4% of projects	21% of projects		

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

## **FY 2018 Progress Update:**

The target was not met. The agency has set annual targets for the number of post projects using the new Logical Project Frameworks that are expected to be endorsed by regional offices, with the overall goal of reaching 100 percent of all projects by 2021. The FY 2018 target was 35 percent of projects endorsed. A total of 30 projects were endorsed during this fiscal year, reflecting 21 percent of the 142 Peace Corps projects. As of September 30, 2018 an additional 20 projects were nearing the end of the design process and will be endorsed in the first quarter of FY 2019.

This was the first year that a significant number of projects globally went through the full endorsement process. This process took longer than anticipated and required extensive support and guidance from multiple offices—including the three Regional Offices, the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS), and the Office of Global Health and HIV (OGHH)—as all stakeholders learned to use the new tools and processes. Lessons learned in terms of scheduling and structure will contribute to a more efficient process in future years.

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

**Data Source:** *Administrative records*

**Calculation:** *Number of active projects with an endorsed project framework divided by the number of active projects. The targets expressed above are based on a global total of 142 projects that are being developed or refreshed using the agency's PT&E process.*



## Strategic Objective 3: Volunteer Resilience

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

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

### Strategies

- Promote a suite of standardized products to inform core expectations, such as short videos, digital content, job descriptions, and post communications.
- Analyze the existing applicant interview questions, job descriptions, and country pages, including sections related to expectations of service and adaptation strategies; modify or update as needed to strengthen message targeting to prospective applicants.
- Identify methods and opportunities to inform resilience skill building at posts that is integrated with properly sequenced intercultural competence, diversity, and inclusion coaching and other training; use simulation and experiential learning techniques where appropriate.<sup>8</sup>
- Identify external research findings on resilience and incorporate the most relevant findings into Volunteer and staff skill building to enhance the Volunteer-support environment.
- Enhance the ability of post staff to address individual Volunteer adjustment challenges and/or resilience gaps.
- Advance a common understanding of Volunteer adjustment and resilience and its critical contributing factors across all elements of the agency engaged in Volunteer support, including the development of materials and activities for counterparts and host families.
- Build intercultural diversity and inclusion concepts, actions, and tools into core agency business processes.

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<sup>8</sup> One example of experiential learning is to let trainees experience a cultural setting where a shared value like respect is shown through different behaviors than the ones to which they are accustomed.

## **Strategic Objective Lead: Associate Director of the Office of Health Services FY 2018 Progress Update:**

Substantial progress has been made in this strategic objective in FY 2018. Supporting Volunteers' ability to manage the challenges of service improves their chances for success. Volunteers' innate resilience can be further enhanced by empowering staff at posts to support Volunteers' adjustment through the uniquely unfamiliar and challenging aspects of Peace Corps service. This approach enables Volunteers to gain life skills and experiences that contribute to their service and future civic engagement.

Volunteer resilience is closely aligned with clarity of expectations for service. The agency is looking system-wide at critical areas where there are opportunities to diminish any gap between applicant and invitee expectations and the realities of Volunteer service. The development of digital content that assists in the adjustment of invitee expectations is well underway and proving beneficial. One example is the development of a short video to orient invitees on health care services during service. The main public outreach components targeted for messaging to applicants are the Job Specific Requisition and Country Pages on the Peace Corps Website. With the identification of these two main focus areas, realistic expectations about Peace Corps service will be clarified for maximum impact.

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

Intercultural competence, diversity, and inclusion (ICD&I) are important factors to consider related to Volunteer resilience. Research shows that long-term immersion in unfamiliar environments can create stress as a result of the uncertainty presented by differing cultural norms and values. Understanding appropriate and effective behavior in a new context, as well as the values that inform those behaviors, can help mitigate stress and improve adjustment. Ensuring that diversity of experience before Peace Corps service is taken into account in core business practices will enable the agency to support resilience for all Volunteers including those from diverse backgrounds.

Finally, work in the ICD&I space includes, but is not limited to, training. Volunteer and staff training will enhance the ability of posts to address individual Volunteer adjustment challenges and/or resilience gaps. Delivering this training through experiential learning and other methodologies will help maximize its effectiveness in FY 2019. A proposal to develop staff training via a moderated online course is under review as a potential approach to expand upon the now-finalized Volunteer training modules.

**Performance Goal 3.1: Establish Realistic Expectations of Service**

*Ensure that all agency messaging is focused and consistent on internal and external platforms throughout the applicant life cycle to establish realistic expectations of service by FY 2020.*

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	Analysis of current messaging from HQ and post conducted	New resiliency content and adjustment standards developed	New content and standards approved and disseminated
Results	NA	NA	NA	HQ analysis underway; post analysis to be conducted in FY 2019		

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

Milestones for this performance goal include:

- Phase 1: Conduct an analysis of current messaging from headquarters that addresses resiliency as it relates to expectations of service.
- Phase 2: Conduct an analysis of current pre-departure messaging from posts.
- Phase 3: Create and disseminate agency content, standards, and messaging on challenges to expect during Peace Corps service.
- Phase 4: Review existing trainings in the agency's learning management system (LearningSpace), updating and creating content where needed.

**FY 2018 Progress Update:**

The FY 2018 target was not met, but substantial progress has been made. The agency is in the process of completing Phase 1 of the performance goal milestones: review of headquarters' messaging. A project lead was designated and initial meetings with stakeholders were completed. The team is summarizing the findings from those meetings and creating a proposal for next steps. Initial findings indicate that the agency should focus on the Job Specific Requisition and Country Pages section of the Peace

Corps website (Phase 2 of this work) as the main public outreach components that must be synchronized from recruitment to placement. This will ensure that prospective Volunteers understand the challenges they will face in service so that they arrive for training with realistic expectations. A major focus for the agency will be on improving how realistic service is presented in general marketing and social media campaigns.

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

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

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

<b>Performance Goal 3.2: Increase Management of Adjustment Challenges Outside the Clinical Environment</b>						
<i>Increase the range of individuals from whom Volunteers can seek support when facing adjustment challenges during service.</i>						
<b>Indicator 1:</b> Decrease Volunteer/Year rate of care seeking from Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMOs) for adjustment difficulties. <sup>1, 2</sup>						
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	6.2 cases per 100 VT years	6.0 cases per 100 VT years	6.0 cases per 100 VT years
Results	NA	6.7 cases per 100 VT years	6.4 cases per 100 VT years	6.3 cases per 100 VT years		
<b>Indicator 2:</b> Fully develop an ICD&I framework to build staff, Volunteer, and partner capacity to support Volunteer adjustment and resilience.						
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	Agency vision and strategy developed Peace Corps' status against key ICD&I benchmarks analyzed	Peace Corps' status advanced by one level on selected ICD&I benchmarks	Develop ICD&I benchmarks and/or reflection questions within the Administrative Management Control Survey
Results	NA	NA	NA	Vision completed; benchmarks under development		

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

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	Evidence-based resilience training modules field tested and finalized	10% of posts completed review of modules and incorporated materials into their training programs	20% of posts completed review of modules and incorporated materials into training programs for Volunteers and staff
Results	NA	NA	NA	Modules completed		

<sup>1</sup> An "adjustment difficulty" is defined as managing a new situation (related to work, living situation, culture, etc.) that requires support from the PCMO such as empathetic interactions and minor skill building. This does not rise to the level of diagnosable concern in that it does not impact functioning in a detrimental way, has not been present for a significant period of time, and does not require treatment from a licensed mental health provider. Rates are calculated using Volunteer-Trainee (VT) years to account for the number of Volunteers and the length of time they served.

<sup>2</sup> The FY 2016 rate relies on data reported through PCMEDICS from January-September 2016 only; data prior to January 2016 were unavailable or were not comparable to later months due to changes in the criteria for coding cases as "adjustment difficulty."

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

Given that a major element of resilience relates to cultural adjustment, Volunteers can be supported to enhance their own resilience through training that builds upon a framework of intercultural competence, diversity and inclusion (ICD&I). Posts that have conducted ICD&I training report that it is an effective approach. To further this work, the agency developed an ICD&I vision and strategy based on analysis of the agency's status against the benchmarks recognized by external experts in the field of intercultural competence, diversity and inclusion. The agency will seek to make progress by developing ICD&I benchmarks or reflection questions within the Administrative Management Control Survey (AMCS), a tool that is used by posts for their annual integrated planning and budgeting efforts. In this way, the ICD&I actions are integrated into a core agency business process, maximizing their effectiveness and sustainability.

In addition to the integration of ICD&I into core agency processes, the Peace Corps continues to develop training materials to enhance Volunteers' innate resilience by building life skills that promote adaptation, adjustment and acculturation. This training

helps them better withstand the challenges that are inherent in adapting to a new cultural and linguistic environment where many of their support systems are not present or need to be constructed anew. The training considers skills such as effective problem solving, social connectedness and empathy, emotional balance and flexibility, and building mental strength.

Milestones for this performance goal include:

Phase 1: Create guidance for skills building and resources to optimize the use of Volunteer leaders, peer support networks, affinity groups, post staff, and diversity committees at post so that Volunteers have other non-medical resources available to them.

Phase 2: Communicate the new guidance, resources, and tools at Peace Corps headquarters and plan for roll out to posts.

Phase 3: Roll out the new guidance, resources and tools for posts to review and incorporate into their business processes and training for staff as well as Volunteers.

In parallel with these developments, the agency will also explore ways to formulate a new Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) question to measure the extent to which Volunteers seek support from non-medical staff for adjustment challenges. This data will be analyzed across demographic groups to see if adjustment challenges are experienced more acutely by different groups and whether they perceive that Peace Corps staff and systems are positioned to support these adjustment challenges appropriately. This new data may lead to additional ways to refine staff capacity and/or standard operations in order to increase the range of individuals from whom Volunteers can seek support when facing adjustment challenges during service.

### **FY 2018 Progress Update:**

The number of instances of Volunteers seeking support from Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMOs) for normal adjustment challenges decreased during the past year; however, the target was not met. During 2018, PCMOs were trained to accurately code adjustment disorders during their annual Continuing Medical Education (CME) Conference. In addition, staff were informed of key messages concerning Volunteer self-help and counseling options during the CMEs and all overseas staff trainings. While the PCMO will always be the gatekeeper for mental health services and provide support, Volunteers also have a number of other sources for interpersonal support when adjusting to Peace Corps life including: friends, peer support networks, host country staff, and family. As the training continues, the agency expects the number of instances of Volunteers requesting support from PCMOs to further decrease, which will allow more time for PCMOs to focus their efforts on improving health services for Volunteers.

Although the target for Indicator 2 was not met, the agency established a vision for ICD&I and has successfully incorporated ICD&I considerations throughout the agency's FY 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. Multiple cross-office working groups are integrating ICD&I at the systems level. The aim of this approach is a collaborative process that shifts the



responsibility from a handful of individuals to the entire agency to ensure systematic, sustainable change. External benchmarks are currently being reviewed by the Peace Corps' General Counsel ethics team. A second set of the benchmarks—more tailored to field operations—are also being considered. Finally, feedback was obtained from the Field Advisory Board (a group of staff members that represent posts from around the world) to ensure that they are involved in the process and that their recommendations for integrating ICD&I into core business processes are considered.

The target for Indicator 3 was met. During 2018, substantial progress was achieved. The resilience modules were tested with a Volunteer population in South Africa. Using the Brief Resilience Scale<sup>9</sup>, post-training results were analyzed, and positive change was seen. Volunteers were invited to provide feedback on the modules, and the revised modules were then reviewed by selected HQ and field staff. The modules and proposed methodology for delivering this training was then socialized within the agency. At the end of FY 2018, agency staff decided that the delivery of the resiliency training modules for 2019 would be tested in five countries in the Africa region.

**Goal Leads:** *Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)*

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

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

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<sup>9</sup> The Brief Resilience Scale (Smith BW, Dalen J, Wiggins K, Tooley E, Christopher P, & Bernard J) was created to assess resilience as the ability to bounce back or recover from stress and may provide important information about people coping with health-related stressors.

## Strategic Objective 4: Building Leaders of Tomorrow

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

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

### Strategies

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

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

#### FY 2018 Progress Update:

The Office of the Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services renewed its focus on efficiency of core activities related to building leaders of tomorrow among returned Volunteers. In-depth analysis resulted in realignment of the strategies for this objective to improve collaboration across the agency and to more accurately reflect the work needed to achieve the performance goals. Two strategies, in particular, were removed as they were deemed non-essential in meeting the overall objective and because they were affected by reduced staffing levels in response to the President’s Management Agenda.

Inter-office collaboration has been instrumental to the success of this objective. One example of an important milestone achieved through collaboration was the completion of a framework for Volunteer leadership and intercultural competencies. Engagement with internal subject matter experts ensured that these competencies aligned with the competency-based learning strategies developed for Strategic Objective 2. These competencies will help Volunteers translate their service experience into marketable skills for potential employers in the public and private sectors.

The agency also streamlined several of its Returned Volunteer programs—including the Paul D. Coverdell Worldwide Schools programs and the Global Connections program—by automating services and providing new training to Volunteers. In addition, the Peace Corps continues to work with other agencies and partners through high-visibility events to market successes of returned Volunteers. All of these efforts ensure that the Peace Corps is more effectively supporting its Returned Volunteers and enabling them to be successful when they return from service.

<b>Performance Goal 4.1: Cultivate Leadership Skills</b> <i>Develop and share leadership and intercultural competency tools to support returned Volunteers as they transition from their service by FY 2020.</i>						
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	Map created of leadership and intercultural competencies that are developed during service (model)	Develop methodology to link leadership and intercultural competencies to activities in the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT)	Provide templates and other tools for posts to use in documenting competencies gained by Volunteers during service in their individual Description of Service (DOS)
Results	NA	NA	NA	Competency structure completed		

During Peace Corps service, powerful learning experiences provide practical opportunities to develop leadership skills and intercultural competencies. The competencies gained during service include participatory analysis, project design and management, coaching, and mentoring. These competencies enable Volunteers to be effective not only in their overseas communities and organizations, but also when they return home. Back home in the United States, returned Volunteers use competencies cultivated through Peace Corps service that contribute to a high-quality American workforce.

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

Volunteers develop competencies during service by engaging in activities identified in the posts' project frameworks and reported in the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT). Linking VRT activities to competency development clarifies how Volunteer activities enable posts to fulfill commitments to host countries. It also provides evidence to future employers of the ways in which Volunteers have demonstrated leadership and intercultural competencies. Options will be provided to posts to use the competencies as an incentive for Volunteers to more meaningfully engage in and report on VRT activities during their service.

The Description of Service (DOS) is the agency record that documents Volunteer achievements during service. The DOS can be adapted to include a standardized approach to documenting competencies gained by the Volunteers during their service. Strategies will be shared with post staff to facilitate the inclusion of information in the DOS, drawing on Volunteers' VRT reporting to document the acquisition of leadership and/or intercultural competency.

### **FY 2018 Progress Update:**

The target for this performance goal was met. The agency completed the creation of a map that organizes the leadership and intercultural competencies acquired by Volunteers during service. The leadership competencies<sup>10</sup> on the map include accountability (e.g., determines objectives, sets priorities, delegates work, and accepts responsibility for mistakes) and resilience (e.g., the ability to bounce back and learn from setbacks). Intercultural competencies include intercultural engagement; diversity, equity and inclusion; and relationship building (forging personal bonds across differences). The associated knowledge for both competencies includes self-awareness and interpersonal/group dynamics with the associated skills of evaluative listening, analytical observation, adaptability, and seeing other people's perspectives/worldviews. The attitudes that were identified as key to these competencies are respect, openness, curiosity, and valuing others.

These competencies were developed using the Office of Personnel Management's Executive Core Qualifications and UNESCO's Intercultural Competences framework.

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<sup>10</sup> A competency is defined as a set of measurable or observable knowledge, skills, or attitudes needed to perform a critical job function.

Through collaboration with the Peace Corps' Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS), the competencies were aligned and integrated with the framework developed for Performance Goal 2.2. The agency will continue to develop a methodology to ensure that competencies are linked to Volunteers' activity reporting in FY 2019.

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

**Data Source:** Agency administrative records.

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

<b>Performance Goal 4.2: Continuation of Service</b>						
<i>Increase the number of opportunities for returned Volunteers to engage in continued service to 3,000 by FY 2022.</i>						
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	2,500	2,500	2,600
Results	2,250	2,300	1,831 <sup>11</sup>	2,153		

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

### **FY 2018 Progress Update:**

The target was not met; however, the result was a significant improvement from FY 2017. The agency continues to foster opportunities for returned Volunteers to engage in continued service in FY 2018. Opportunities for further improvement include the Paul D. Coverdell World Wise School/Speakers Match Program, Peace Corps Response, and the Peace Corps Fellows Program.

Important programmatic changes were made in order to increase services, support, and opportunities for returned Volunteers. These changes include phasing out the Correspondence Match program<sup>12</sup> in favor of a new “Global Connections” program. The new program enables Volunteers to connect with classrooms, groups, and communities in the U.S. at any point in their service through multiple forms of technology including

<sup>11</sup> The FY 2017 result has been adjusted from 2,230 to 1,831 based on improvements in agency calculations.

<sup>12</sup> The Correspondence Match was a one-to-one matching system for the exchange of letters between Volunteers entering service and U.S. classrooms.

real time video chats, email, texting, and communicating via multimedia applications or platforms. The agency also automated two programs that match Volunteers and Returned Volunteers to groups in the U.S. where they have opportunities to talk about their service. These changes made it easier for Volunteers to complete Third Goal activities, cut staff time by 15 percent, and provided more time for feedback and follow-up with educators.

The agency continues to create resources for Third Goal and WorldWise School programming for posts to use during in-service training. This effort has increased awareness and led to more requests from Volunteers who wish to participate in these programs.

The agency also continues to work with other agencies through high-visibility events. For example, in FY 2018, the Peace Corps worked with NASA to provide an opportunity for a live video chat with an RPCV astronaut to educators in partner classrooms across America. The agency also worked with the Council of Chief State School Officers and Mandy Manning—a Returned Volunteer and National Educator of the Year—to promote the Peace Corps and Paul D. Coverdell WorldWise School programs.

Looking forward, in FY 2019, the agency anticipates developing a mechanism and procedure to collect data on opportunities for service that are posted to Career Link jobs board that is managed by the Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services as another data source.

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

**Data Source:** Agency administrative records

**Calculation:** Number of opportunities for returned Volunteers per fiscal year.

<b>Performance Goal 4.3: Consolidate Career and Transition Services for Returned Volunteers</b> <i>Increase the percentage of recently returned Peace Corps Volunteers who access the RPCV Portal to 75 percent by FY 2022.</i>						
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	45%	50%	60%
Results	NA	43%	38%	32%		

The agency can better serve returned Volunteers by developing a streamlined mechanism for RPCVs to identify, request, and access career and transition services. Centralizing these services to one location (the online RPCV Portal) will achieve several improvements in efficiency, including consistent marketing to RPCVs, streamlined access to services, a more user-friendly experience, and the standardization of all agency outreach to the RPCV community. Additionally, centralizing services and communication with RPCVs will increase efficiency and reduce the administrative



burden on Peace Corps staff providing these services as well as other offices that rely on returned Volunteer information for core business functions.

### **FY 2018 Progress Update:**

The agency did not meet the FY 2018 target. To improve performance in the future, multiple offices have partnered to review potential methods to optimize access to the RPCV Portal. The agency is analyzing options to best determine when and how Volunteers access the RPCV Portal. The Office of Global Operations will provide updated guidance on Volunteer close-of-service procedures, which may include adding a step to the close-of-service checklist that reminds departing Volunteers to create an account in the RPCV portal. This will enable Volunteers to access important career service information and update personal information. Guidance to posts will be distributed in FY 2019 to underscore the usefulness of the Portal accounts for RPCVs. Once a solution is successfully implemented across all posts, the agency expects to see a significant increase in the proportion of returned Volunteers establishing an account.

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

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

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

<b>Performance Goal 4.4: Fulfilling the Third Goal</b>						
<i>Identify and analyze existing internal and external sources of Third Goal data.</i>						
<b>Indicator 1:</b> Number of currently serving Volunteers participating in Peace Corps Partnership projects, Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools/Speakers Match Program, and Third Goal activities.						
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	-	5,600	5,700
Results	NA	5,512 <sup>1,2</sup>	5,803 <sup>3</sup>	5,190 <sup>4</sup>		
<b>Indicator 2:</b> Number of participants reported by currently serving Volunteers in Peace Corps Partnership projects, Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools/Speakers Match Program, and Third Goal activities.						
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	-	70,000	73,000
Results	NA	38,274 <sup>1,5</sup>	29,847 <sup>1,6</sup>	65,993 <sup>7</sup>		

<sup>1</sup> *Italicized results are not comparable to later years due to gaps in available data.*

<sup>2</sup> *This figure includes PCPP (919) and Third Goal activities (4,593). WWS data are not available.*

<sup>3</sup> *This figure includes PCPP (832), Third Goal activities (4,614), and WWS (357).*

<sup>4</sup> *This figure includes PCPP (695), Third Goal activities (4,086), and WWS (409).*

<sup>5</sup> *This figure includes PCPP (9,268) and Third Goal activities (29,006). WWS data are not available.*

<sup>6</sup> *This figure includes PCPP (9,673) and Third Goal activities (20,174). WWS data are not available.*

<sup>7</sup> *This figure includes PCPP (6,615), Third Goal activities (36,609), and WWS (22,769).*

The agency's Third Goal responsibility, as mandated by Section 2517 of the Peace Corps Act, states that the Director shall "...encourage, facilitate, and assist activities carried out by former Volunteers ... and the efforts of agencies, organizations, and other individuals to support or assist in former Volunteers' carrying out such activities." Various data sources, both internal and external to the agency, already record Third Goal activities carried out by Volunteers and RPCVs, but the agency has not made a sustained effort to compile and analyze this data. This new performance goal reflects a renewed commitment to capturing and reporting this information in order to demonstrate fulfillment of the Third Goal mandate to stakeholders.

### **FY 2018 Progress Update:**

This is a new performance goal, so no target was set for FY 2018. Baseline data were compiled and analyzed to inform the agency targets for FY 2019 and 2020.

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

**Data Sources:** *Gift, Grants and Management (Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP); Agency administrative records; Volunteer Reporting Tool*

**Calculations: Indicator #1:** *The number of Volunteers participating in reported activities that correspond to the Third Goal including the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP), the Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools/Speakers Match Program (WWS), and Volunteers reporting Third Goal activities in the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT). Indicator #2:* *The number of participants in reported activities that correspond to the Third Goal including community members that become Peace Corps Partnership Projects (PCPP) donors or who attend Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools/Speakers Match Program (WWS) and Third Goal activity participants reported in the VRT.*

## Management Objective 5: Foundational Business Management

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

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

### Strategies

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

### Management Objective Lead: Chief Human Capital Officer

#### FY 2018 Progress Update:

The Peace Corps has made substantive progress towards this objective during the past year. It has begun to align strategic, operational, and individual performance plans as well as laying out the foundation for better use of business intelligence through office dashboards. The development of the Human Capital Operating Plan is underway. Workforce planning and management process changes have been implemented.

One important process change was the establishment of quarterly agency workforce planning meetings. These meetings provide valuable information for the Human Capital Operating Plan. This initiative is an example of an important building block for increasing the Peace Corps' efficiency, innovation, and effectiveness.

In addition to these initiatives, the Peace Corps is achieving progress along other fronts to improve its core infrastructure. Since FY 2015, the Peace Corps has received approximately 20,000 applications each year, with one-quarter of these applicants being selected to receive an invitation to serve. Providing first-rate health care and

outstanding customer service in a cost-efficient way remains a top priority for the Peace Corps.

The agency's commitment to optimizing the ability of Volunteers to successfully navigate the challenges of service begins with ensuring that the strongest applicants receive invitations and continue progressing through the selection process to become Volunteers. With this goal in mind, the agency is improving its medical clearance process. This includes making greater use of technology to create a more efficient process for invitees, their health care providers, and Peace Corps staff during the medical clearance phase. Through a review of online documents, errors were reduced from 50 percent to 15 percent and the completion of the medical care compliance form by applicants was reduced from 33 days to 13 days.

In addition, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer made process changes during the past year to improve efficiency in financial and budget operations. One improvement was the streamlining of payment processing, which enabled the agency to reduce permanent positions while maintaining the efficiency of its compliance rate. The Office of the Chief Information Office (OCIO) deployed, replaced, or upgraded major information systems, including an improved Volunteer Information Database Application (VIDA), a new Learning Management System (LMS), a new identity and access management system (HSPD-12 or PIV), and an upgraded email system. The OCIO also reduced the size, complexity, and risk of the technology portfolio by removing software programs that are no longer used in the agency.

During the past year, the agency also created a Field Research Dataset, an innovative example of how the Peace Corps is leveraging data to further its evidence-based decision making. This dataset is a critical component of the agencywide Country Portfolio Review analysis—a transparent, rational, and repeatable process supporting the efficient optimization of Volunteers levels around the world. This set of approximately 180 data points from internal and external sources constitutes a valuable resource for post planning and management. It provides staff with a robust tool to identify opportunities for further improvement in core business systems.

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

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

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

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

### **FY 2018 Progress Update:**

The target was not met. During FY 2018, 9 out of the 12 selected offices established dashboards. Each office reported three or four key business metrics aligned with the agency's top priorities, and they identified three to five key customers to whom the office provides services and their major actions to improve customer service.

Three financial metrics are reported by each office: their cumulative budget through the reporting period, all expenses, and the ratio of expenses to budgetary resources. Four human capital metrics are reported for each office:

- Vacancy rate (percent of active positions that are unfilled on the last day of the reporting period)
- Days to select (calendar days from issuing the hiring certificate to selecting the hired candidate for all new staff hired during the reporting period)
- Days to hire (calendar days from issuing the hiring certificate to Enter-on-Duty (EOD) for all new staff hired during the reporting period), and
- Percentage of staff who are minorities (including staff who self-report as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, and those who report a combination of two or more of the above).<sup>13</sup>

Dashboards will be updated in conjunction with the agency's quarterly performance plan reviews. This balanced set of measurements over the next year will provide senior decision makers with timely, relevant, and accurate business information, focusing attention on the effectiveness, cost efficiency, and customer satisfaction of agency decisions. The remaining three offices will establish their dashboards during FY 2019 now that the new office-level leadership team is in place. Offices will continue assessing their performance as an iterative process, and adjust their dashboards as needed to support achievement of the strategic plan and other high priorities.

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

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

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

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<sup>13</sup> Data were available for all but about one percent of the staff who not to choose to self-report their race or ethnicity.

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

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

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	Individual performance plans developed and/or restructured to align with this goal	Performance plans aligned for 50% of senior leaders	Performance plans aligned for 100% of all Peace Corps employees <sup>14</sup>
Results	NA	NA	NA	New performance management system under development		

Linking the individual performance plans of leaders to specific performance goals and objectives in the strategic plan will provide line-of-sight throughout the agency on how the actions of individual offices are tied to the agency's overall strategic objectives. This will drive accountability and action on the business intelligence being utilized under Performance Goal 5.1. Additionally, it will build staff engagement through an increased understanding of how individual efforts align with agency goals. After plans are aligned, the Peace Corps will retire this performance goal. A new goal may then be identified based on the data available in the individual plans to further agency improvement efforts.

**FY 2018 Progress Update:**

The target for FY 2018 was not met. The Chief Human Capital Officer—a new position within the Peace Corps—joined the agency in May 2018. As one of her first priorities, she is reviewing and designing a new performance management system for direct hire Foreign Service Executives. The individual performance plans that are being crafted within this system are designed to strengthen the agency's focus on accountability, results, and leadership by aligning individual performance metrics with the Peace Corps' strategic plan and performance goals. The executive plans will cascade down to staff with continued emphasis on accountability. The first phase will involve drafting a new performance appraisal system for executives. The new plans will also increase the Director's flexibility to move towards a pay for performance system for senior leaders. All career executives will be put on the new plans in FY 2019.

**Goal Lead:** Chief Human Capital Officer

**Data Source:** Human Resources records

**Calculation:** Number of managers and directors (and above) with performance plans that meet criteria divided by the number of managers (and above) selected for inclusion in this metric.

<sup>14</sup> The FY 2020 target includes both career staff and political appointees.



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

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

**Indicator 1:** *Develop an agencywide human capital operating plan by the end of FY 2018 and update it annually thereafter.*

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

**Indicator 2:** *Decrease the average vacancy gap to 80 days by FY 2020.<sup>1</sup>*

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	100 days	90 days	80 days
Results	NA <sup>2</sup>	89 days <sup>3</sup>	132 days <sup>4</sup>	71 days <sup>5</sup>		

<sup>1</sup> The percent of employees hired within 80 days is consistent with the recommended timeframes on [hiring reform](#) published by the Office of Personnel Management.

<sup>2</sup> Data from the former application system (Avue) is no longer accessible.

<sup>3</sup> Career Connector is the Peace Corps' job vacancy management system that was utilized for the first time in January and February 2016; as a result, the FY 2016 data does not reflect the entire fiscal year.

<sup>4</sup> In FY 2017, the federal government hiring freeze impacted the agency's hiring process, resulting in delays in onboarding new staff until the freeze was lifted in August 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Reflects vacancy gap for domestic vacancies only.

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

## **FY 2018 Progress Update:**

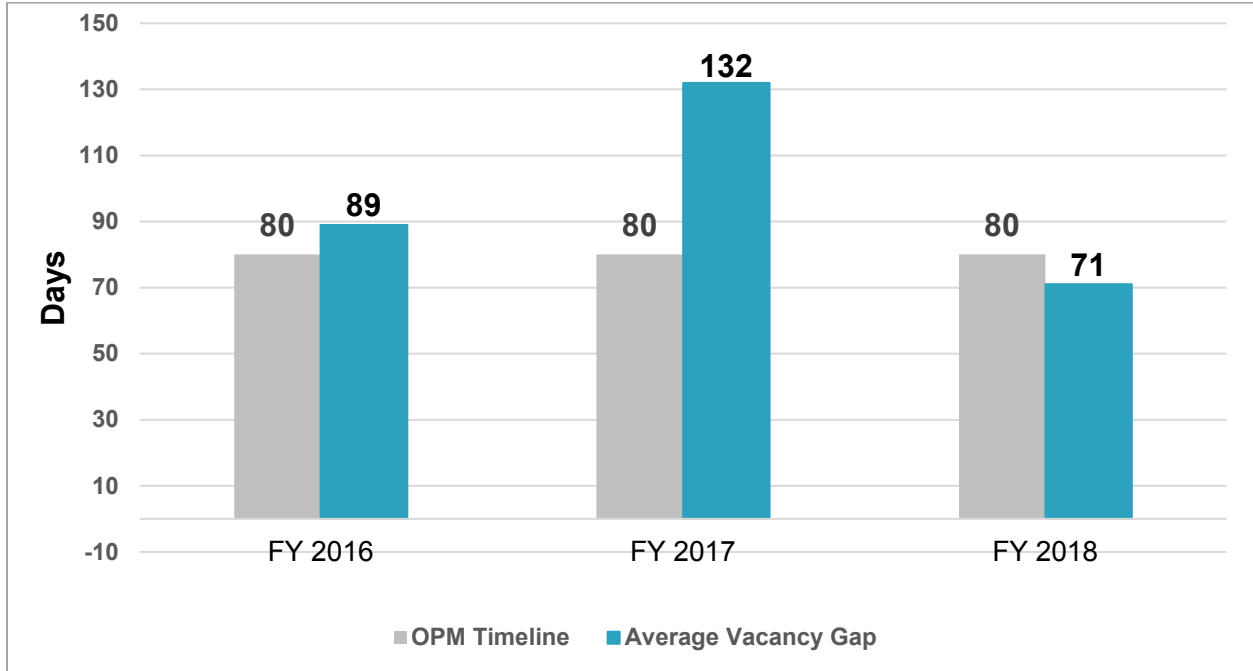
FY 2018 results were slightly below the target for Indicator 1. The target was met for Indicator 2.

The Peace Corps is making progress implementing a planning program to better forecast workforce requirements and reduce the time it takes to fill mission-critical positions. The agency is shifting its focus from a review of current positions to examining its future workforce needs. This shift includes revamping position descriptions, realigning work structures, reducing layers of supervision, and focusing on staff level positions to create a more balanced ratio between supervisors and staff. This shift will enable the Peace Corps to modernize its workforce, improve its mission delivery, and better serve Volunteers.

Individual offices across the agency are paying careful attention to human resource issues and focusing on increasing the efficiency of the current workforce. This includes examining office mission statements and aligning work with the agency mission and strategic priorities, while meeting the regulatory requirements of the Peace Corps. In addition, offices are streamlining their work processes by automating routine tasks and eliminating redundancies. These office-level activities are contributing to a more efficient agency workforce and the development of the agency human capital operating plan which will be completed in FY 2019.

The agency successfully reduced the average vacancy gap for domestic positions from 132 days in FY 2017 to 71 days in FY 2018. This is a significant improvement and meets the OPM benchmark of 80 days on average. This improvement was created through changes in Human Resource hiring policies. For example, the Human Resource policy related to the release of certificates of eligible candidates was modified so that certificates are released only after interview questions have been approved, a hiring panel has been confirmed, and specific interview dates have been reserved by the hiring office. This modification holds offices accountable for moving forward within the approved hiring timeframes. Based on these results, the agency plans to continue focusing on improving the overall human capital planning process.

### FY 2018 Results Compared to OPM's Recommended Timeline



**Goal Lead:** Chief Human Capital Officer

**Data Source:** Human Resources records

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

## Management Objective 6: Organizational Risk Management

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

**Rationale:** This management objective focuses on advancing and sustaining the agency's mission and effectiveness through systematic decision making that proactively anticipates, identifies, and manages risks and finds opportunities to improve the efficient and effective use of Peace Corps resources at all levels of the organization. The scope of this objective includes the safety and security of staff, Volunteers, and facilities as well as the agency's credibility, emergency preparedness and response, risks to the IT infrastructure (cyber security), and financial risks. This objective is focused on creating a senior risk assessment team,<sup>15</sup> revising agency policy concerning risk management, training agency leadership on risk management, and incorporating risk management into agency wide assessments and planning.

### Strategies:

- Develop and implement an agency wide risk governance structure.
- Develop and implement an agency wide risk profile and office-level registers.

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

### FY 2018 Progress Update:

The first component of the risk management strategy involves developing a risk governance structure for an agencywide risk management program. This effort began in early FY 2018 with the creation of a framework that addresses risk identification, communication, and management. The framework was finalized during the second quarter of FY 2018, while the policy and governance charter were drafted in the fourth quarter. The draft policy and charter will be approved in Q1 2019.

The second component of the strategy relates to developing office-level registers and an agencywide risk profile. The Peace Corps began the process of collecting risks from across the organization, which will be the basis for office risk registers as well as the overall agency risk profile.

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<sup>15</sup> The Senior Assessment Team was established by MS784 in 2007. This management objective will preserve that language for agency consistency.

**Performance Goal 6.1: Establish an Enterprise Risk Management Process**

*Establish a repeatable process for enterprise risk management and incorporate the agencywide risk profile into decision making.*

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	Policy and procedures approved	Approval process for the new Policy completed  Agency Risk Profile produced	Overall risk rating score from the FY19 Risk Profile decreased
Results	NA	NA	NA	Policies and procedures drafted		

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

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

Milestones for this performance goal include:

1. Obtain approval of agencywide Enterprise Risk Management policy.
2. Revise and approve related risk management policies.
3. Develop an agencywide enterprise risk profile.

**FY 2018 Progress Update:**

The FY 2018 result was slightly below target. Policies and procedures for an agency Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) process have been defined, drafted, and reviewed throughout the agency. The ERM policy and procedures establish a framework for implementation, scope, and governance of the agency's ERM program. As of the close of FY 2018, they had not yet been formally approved due to the transition of key personnel at the agency involved in the process. This target will, however, be met in FY 2019.

**Goal Lead:** Chief Financial Officer

**Data Source:** Administrative records

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

**Performance Goal 6.2: Strengthen Risk Registers**

*All offices in the agency shall develop enterprise risk management assessments based on the agencywide risk profile by the end of FY 2020.*

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Targets	-	-	-	100% of office points of contact trained	100% of selected offices have developed active risk registers	100% of all offices have developed active risk registers
Results	NA	NA	NA	Training developed		

Once agreement has been reached on the agency policy as described in PG 6.1 above, the focus of the agency's efforts will be to ensure that each office has a point of contact who has been trained on risk management and maintenance of office risk registers. The agency will then measure the percentage of offices that are using and maintaining their risk registers with up-to-date information and analysis. While the agency is committed to training staff from all offices in risk management principles, the FY 2019 target focuses on developing and supporting risk registers for selected offices with the greatest risks.

Milestones for this performance goal include:

1. Train staff on enterprise risk management.
2. Map business processes within each office.
3. Establish and communicate risk registers to the Risk Management Council.

**FY 2018 Progress Update:**

The FY 2018 result did not meet the target. The Peace Corps is fully committed to implementation of an organization-wide, holistic risk management program. Training materials for designated points of contact throughout the agency were developed in FY 2018, and the training itself will be implemented during the first quarter of FY 2019. The Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Council Charter and By-Laws were also developed in FY 2018 and will be formally approved in the first quarter of FY 2019. The Council is the senior advisory body to the Director regarding the agency's ERM process, and as such will be responsible for reviewing, evaluating, and monitoring opportunities and risks critical to achieving the agency's mission.

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

**Data Source:** Administrative records

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

## Appendix A: Performance Management System

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

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

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

- **Annual Strategic Review.** In FY 2018, the Peace Corps Director and Deputy Director convened a series of forward-looking meetings to develop the agency's FY 2020 annual performance plan. In preparation for these meetings, lead offices identified areas for revision in each of the Peace Corps' strategic and management objectives, including new and revised strategies and performance goals. This annual series of meetings is a key opportunity for collaboration and review of evidence as senior leaders from across the agency discuss long-term strategies, performance goals, and action plans.
- **Country Portfolio Review.** The Country Portfolio Review (CPR) is a comprehensive review of active and potential Peace Corps posts that is conducted by the agency using on external and internal data. The review focuses on the safety, security, and medical care of Volunteers; host country engagement with the Peace Corps; host country needs; programming and training; post management and costs; and congruence with U.S. government development priorities. The review includes data from a variety of external sources, including the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the U.S. Department of State, the World Health Organization, the International Food Policy Research Institute, the World Economic Forum, and the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Internal data sources include administrative and financial data, results from surveys of post and headquarters staff, and results from the Annual Volunteer Survey and the Host Country Staff Survey. Beginning in FY 2018, this



data was also prepared as a Field Research Dataset for use by posts and headquarters offices to support operational planning and management.

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

## Appendix B: Evaluation and Research

The Peace Corps remains committed to performance improvement through the use of high-quality data and evidence. Programmatic monitoring and some evaluation activities are conducted at overseas posts while larger-scale research and evaluation work occurs in a variety of headquarters offices. These efforts allow the agency to draw conclusions from existing evidence and to develop new sources of data to better understand performance challenges and improve operations. Evaluations, surveys and other reporting can be found at: <https://www.peacecorps.gov/about/open-government/>. The Peace Corps Office of Inspector General also conducts a variety of audits and evaluations, which can be found at <https://www.peacecorps.gov/about/inspector-general/reports>.

### Sources of evidence

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

## **Appendix C: Verification and Validation of Performance Data**

Data collection and reporting consistency are supported by the use of detailed performance goal data reference sheets, which include operational definitions, data sources, and a comprehensive methodology for measuring each performance goal. The agency ensures the data are complete and accurate through oversight and review by the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning. The major data sources that are available to agency staff for assessing performance goals are detailed below.

### **Peace Corps databases**

The Peace Corps maintains several database systems to collect Volunteer and program information. In order to maintain data integrity and ensure that the appropriate data entry methodology is followed, only authorized staff who have been properly trained can access key systems. Routine reconciliation processes among agency units and internal, automated system checks enable users to verify performance data, isolate potential data entry errors, and correct discrepancies. The required level of accuracy to provide current and historical information about programs and Volunteers is met through database rules and business processes. Where data limitations do exist, they will be noted in the appropriate section.

### **Volunteer Reporting Tool**

Since FY 2008, Volunteers have been reporting on their work and the progress they are making toward their project outcomes through the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT). The VRT is also utilized to report on Volunteers' contributions to agency strategic partners, such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and Feed the Future.

Since the development of the first version of the VRT, the agency has made numerous enhancements to improve the user experience, reduce data entry errors, and improve reporting. Volunteer reports are submitted to overseas post staff through the VRT on a quarterly or semiannual basis. Staff review all reports and work with Volunteers to verify data and correct anomalies prior to end-of-year analysis. The agency provides in-depth VRT training and support to Volunteers and staff to ensure data are collected, analyzed, and reported properly. The agency has also developed data collection tools to standardize the methods that Volunteers use to collect data.

The primary data quality challenge that remains is ensuring that an adequate percentage of Volunteers report on the project indicators. The agency is addressing this challenge by working with overseas posts to encourage reporting and by appropriately documenting and considering reporting rates when conducting analyses.

### **Peace Corps administrative records**

For some performance goals, the Peace Corps collects annual data on topics such as language proficiency, project framework reviews, risk registers, and vacancy gaps from

headquarters offices and overseas posts using several electronic databases. Data cleaning procedures are applied to the dataset prior to analysis. The data are independently reviewed by the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning, and anomalies are addressed to improve data quality. The agency is able to ensure a high level of accuracy by working with individual offices and posts to develop reliable data collection and analysis procedures.

## **Annual Volunteer Survey**

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

The 2018 AVS was fielded directly to all currently serving Volunteers, 90 percent of whom completed the survey. It is important to note that since the survey is not administered to a random sample of Volunteers who have been selected to represent all of them, the results are subject to potential bias if the responses from the Volunteers who chose to take the survey differ from the responses that would have been obtained if all Volunteers chose to respond. The high response rate, in combination with data verification and validation measures, minimize total survey error at the global level.

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

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

## **Global Counterpart Survey**

First launched in FY 2014, the Global Counterpart Survey was designed to provide information on the impact of Volunteers from the perspectives of the individuals with whom Volunteers work most closely. For this survey, the agency has defined counterpart as the Volunteer's primary work partner as reflected in post records for his or her primary project.

The second and third Global Counterpart Surveys in FY 2015 and FY 2016 consisted of short interviews administered by overseas staff to a randomly selected group of 400

host country counterparts. This randomly selected sample represented Volunteers' primary work partners across all posts. Globally, much has been learned from these surveys. In FY 2018 and beyond, the survey and guidance were provided to posts to allow them to collect data for post-level management interests. During FY 2019, the Peace Corps may collect information from posts to identify additional opportunities for assessing counterpart perspectives.

### **Employee Viewpoint Survey**

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

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

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

### **Host Country Staff Survey**

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

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

## Appendix D: Stakeholder Engagement

### Staff engagement in the development of agency goals

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

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

### External engagement:

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



*Indonesian students learn to make jack-o-lanterns from a Volunteer in their community who shared this American tradition as part of her efforts to promote cross-cultural understanding.*

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

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