FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN AND FY 2022 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN

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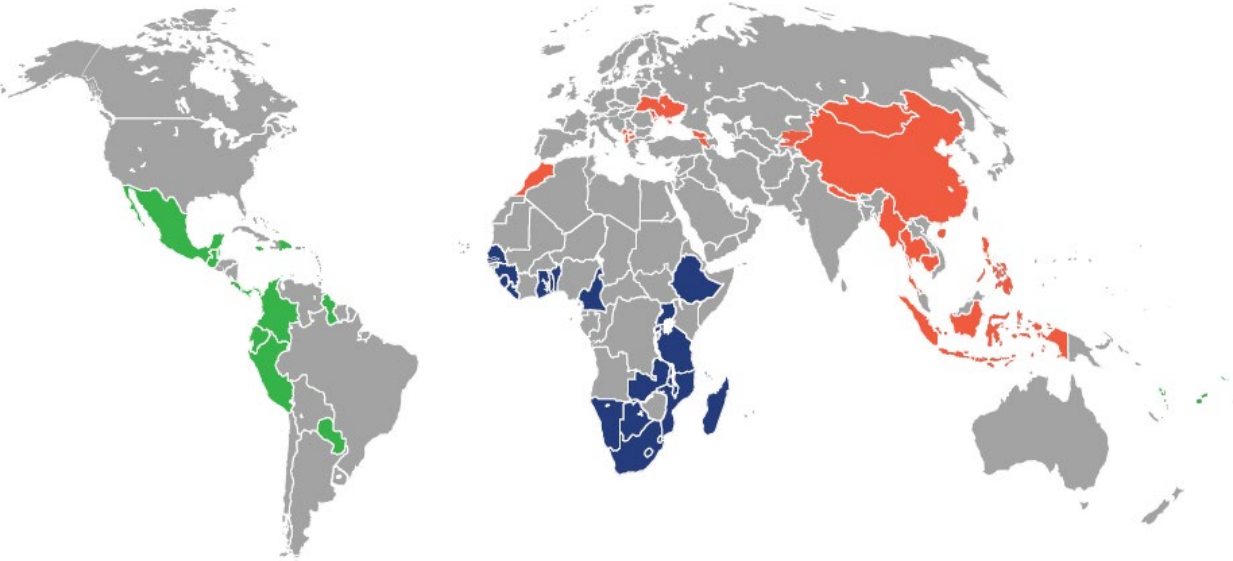
Promoting World Peace and Friendship Since 1961

Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Headquarters
1275 First Street NE, Washington, DC 20526

WHERE PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS SERVED IN FY2020

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

**Central and
South America**
Belize
Colombia
Costa Rica
Ecuador
Guatemala
Guyana
Mexico
Panama
Paraguay
Peru

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

**North Africa and
the Middle East**
Morocco

**Eastern Europe
and Central Asia**
Albania/Montenegro:
  • Albania
  • Montenegro
Armenia
Georgia
Kosovo
Kyrgyz Republic
North Macedonia
Moldova
Ukraine

Asia
Cambodia
China
Indonesia
Mongolia
Myanmar
Nepal
Philippines
Thailand
Timor-Leste

Pacific Islands
Fiji
Samoa
Tonga
Vanuatu

*Due to COVID-19, Peace Corps temporarily suspended
Volunteer operations at all Peace Corps posts in March
2020. China Volunteers evacuated in February 2020.*

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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 241,000[1] Volunteers have served in 143 countries since 1961. They have changed countless 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 in local communities and working alongside local people. This day-to-day interaction gives Volunteers a unique perspective and the opportunity to address development challenges while strengthening mutual understanding and learning from, and with, their host communities.

Peace Corps Volunteers are the face of our nation in communities around the globe. They build positive perceptions of the United States and share 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 Volunteers continue their service by promoting awareness of other cultures and global issues with friends, family, and the American people; maintaining relationships with colleagues and friends from the countries where they served; and sustaining their commitment to volunteerism and public service.

Vision

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

> *"The Peace Corps represents some, if not all, of the best virtues in this society. It stands for everything that America has ever stood for. It stands for everything we believe in and hope to achieve in the world."*
>
> *Sargent Shriver*
> *Founding Director of the Peace Corps, 1961–66*

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[1] This includes the number of people who served in each post. A person who served in two posts is counted in both posts. The number is rounded to the nearest thousand.

PEACE CORPS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Office of Victim Advocacy	**Acting Director** **Carol Spahn** **&** **Deputy Director**	Office of Inspector General
Office of Civil Rights and Diversity		Office of the General Counsel

Chief of Staff/ Deputy Chief of Staff

- Office of Third Goal & Returned Volunteer Services
- Office of Sexual Assault, Risk, Reduction Response
- Office of Health Services
- Office of Safety and Security
- Office of Global Operations

- Office of Innovation
- Executive Secretariat
- Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection
- Office of Management
- Inter-America and the Pacific
- Africa Region
- Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region

- Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning
- Office of the Chief Compliance Officer
- Office of External Affairs
- Office of Human Resources
- Overseas Posts
- Overseas Posts
- Overseas Posts

- Office of the Chief Financial Officer
- Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support
- Peace Corps Response
- Office of Global Health and HIV

- Office of the Chief Information Officer

Core Values

The following core values shape and guide decisions at all levels in the agency and are part of the 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 agency's top priorities.

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 continuing that commitment to service once they return.

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

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

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

Plan Overview

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

The combined FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan and FY 2022 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 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 time frame. In this plan, two types of performance goals are used. Use of each type depends on whether the goal should be measured quantitatively, or whether the goal relates to a new agency process being measured using milestones. In both cases, annual targets (either a milestone or a numeric target to be achieved) are set through FY 2022. When available, actual results are provided for prior years. The agency uses performance goals both to assess progress on strategic goals and objectives and to drive performance improvement. In conjunction with the budget formulation process, performance goals will be updated each year and included in the annual performance plan.

- **A lead** is identified for each objective and performance goal. The title of the lead individual and the name of the office in the lead role is noted. Although 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 agency-wide efforts to develop, implement, and report on plans.

Appendices provide additional detail on the development of the FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan and FY 2022 Annual Performance Plan. Appendices include a summary of the

Peace Corps' performance management framework (Appendix A), a description of how evaluation and research informed the development of the plan (Appendix B), data verification and validation standards for the performance goal indicators (Appendix C), a summary of the stakeholder outreach conducted (Appendix D), a description of the agency's plans to return Peace Corps Volunteers to service following the global Volunteer evacuation (Appendix E), and a list of acronyms used throughout this document (Appendix F).

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.

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.

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 ensure that the Volunteers' work 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 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[2], 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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[2] The Peace Corps assigns one or more "counterparts" to each Volunteer. Counterparts are the primary host community partners who aid Volunteers in community integration and work.

and conditions in their host countries. Over time, they build trust 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 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 they live and work among. 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 people in communities around the world engenders mutual understanding and trust which, in turn, increases respect and promotes human dignity in world affairs. 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 the public, nonprofit, and private sectors, where they share their global experiences and perspectives with colleagues, friends, and family. This, in turn, helps 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 units of analysis for assessing the agency's performance. These 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 agency processes and associated impediments to success in a common format to allow for prioritization of agency efforts toward achieving its 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.

Rationale: The Peace Corps' strength lies in promoting individual, community, and organizational development through effective engagement in local partnerships, evidence-based programs, and 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 seen as facilitators for increasing engagement and interaction with individuals and organizations with common objectives. In the short term, priority areas in this strategic objective include improving program outcomes and evidence-based decision making. In the end, successful engagement leverages resources and knowledge and strengthens both local ownership and sustainability of development efforts.

Strategies:
- Increase the capacity of posts[3] and headquarters offices to access and synthesize multiple data sources for evidence-based planning and management decisions.
- Develop an approach to, and tools for, gathering quantitative and qualitative data on host country partners' assessment of the Peace Corps' contributions to local development priorities outlined in logical project frameworks (LPFs) and designed to facilitate sustainable change in local organizations and communities.[4]
- Identify priority programmatic and operational themes to explore the Peace Corps' impact and effectiveness.

Strategic Objective Lead: Associate Director for Global Operations

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

[4] LPFs are expected to be endorsed for all projects by FY 2021 and rolled out to all posts for use in onboarding new Volunteers by FY 2022 as a systematic foundation for evidence-based program design, implementation, and evaluation.

Performance Goal 1.1: Advance Community-Based Results *Increase the percentage of projects with documented achievements in community-based development by FY 2022.*							
Indicator 1: Increase achievements on the selected set of 19 standard indicators.							

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	
Targets	-	80%	85%	87%	89%	90%	
Results[5]	75%	76%	86%	80%	76%	56%	

Indicator 2: Increase achievements of projects that use LPFs.

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets					Baseline data collection	Baseline data collection	Baseline data collection	Baseline data collection
Results[6]	NA	NA	NA	NA	Baseline data collected: 71%	Baseline data collected: 28%		

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

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

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[5] These results are based on all data received for the fiscal year reporting by November 30, 2017; November 27, 2018; November 22, 2019; and September 4, 2020, respectively. As part of the agency's multi-year plan to transition projects to the new LPFs under Indicator 2, the number of projects reported under Indicator 1 will decrease each year.
[6] Based on the baseline data collected, the percentage of projects that had documented achievements in FY 2019 and FY 2020 was 71 and 28, respectively.

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 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 reflect both the Peace Corps' niche and evidence-based practices. The second template is a plan for monitoring, reporting, and assessing project progress. This template defines evidence-based indicators, data collection tools, and standardized measurement strategies. Each sector's LPF and supporting materials reflect what Volunteers, in partnership with their counterparts, do to effect change.

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

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

The transition to Indicator 2 will enable the agency to more clearly evaluate project-level achievements across a range of Volunteer activities related to capacity building; improving knowledge, skills, and behaviors among project participants; and other priorities identified by posts. This transition will happen progressively from FY 2019 to FY 2022 with the posts that are implementing new PT&E frameworks reporting on their new indicators while results for projects in posts that are still in the process of changing their frameworks continue being analyzed using Indicator 1. By the end of FY 2021, it is anticipated that the vast majority of projects will have been developed using the new frameworks, and as Volunteers begin re-entering countries, they will work primarily on the new projects. Thus, Indicator 1 is being discontinued with FY 2020 reporting. Indicator 2 will continue to be used through FY 2022. The baseline data collection for Indicator 2 has been extended to FY 2022 because of the gap in available data in FY 2020 and FY 2021 resulting from the global evacuation of all Volunteers midway through FY 2020.

Goal Leads: *Chiefs of Programming and Training (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)*
Data Source: *VRT reporting against post project frameworks*

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

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 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	List of proposed topics, tools, and approach developed	First study conducted Second study planned	Two studies initiated	FY 2020 studies completed	Two additional studies begun
Results	NA	List of proposed topics, tools, and approach developed	Two studies completed: Community Integration and Site Management[7]	Language study completed; three studies initiated		

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 programming or operational topics that are common across a range of Peace Corps countries and are identified as priorities by the Office of Global Operations and agency senior leadership. Topics for annual 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 studies will assess the impact of evidence-based practices and programs globally and identify opportunities to strengthen programs or improve operational efficiency and effectiveness. The findings from these studies will be widely disseminated in order to promote learning and consolidate best practices across the agency.

The studies will be conducted using a combination of desk reviews, existing administrative data from the VRT, annual surveys of Volunteers, interviews with staff in Peace Corps' posts, and other materials that are related to the topic of the study.

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[7] The site management study also fulfills the FY 2019 target for Performance Goal 2.4: Implement an Improved Site Management System.

Possible topics identified for the FY 2018-2022 Strategic Plan 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).

In FY 2020, one study which focused on the use of technology in language learning was completed and is described in the progress update. A second FY 2020 study which focuses on understanding attrition between the time when applicants are invited to serve and when they enter on duty was initiated. The continuation of this study has been postponed to FY 2021 due to staff turnover and unforeseen events created by the global COVID-19 pandemic. A third study focusing on factors that contribute to building successful relationships with counterparts was also begun in FY 2020 and will be completed in FY 2021.

As a result of the pandemic, the Peace Corps made the difficult decision to temporarily suspend its operations globally and evacuate Volunteers and Trainees to the United States. The Peace Corps is capturing the lessons learned from this unprecedented experience as a fourth study. This study will highlight policies, processes, and procedures that worked and will identify opportunities for further improvement. The study will be completed in the first half of FY 2021.

Due to the agency's focus on the return of Volunteers to Peace Corps service, the study priorities for FY 2022 will be established in the second half of FY 2021 in consultation with agency stakeholders.

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 evidence-based methods, and using a systematic approach to site management. Volunteer learning must also be facilitated in order to ensure comprehensive intercultural competence, diversity, and inclusion (ICD&I) are integrated into all agency operations. Engaging and supporting host country partners in their roles is another critical element.

Strategies

- Develop a competency-based overseas staff learning strategy, focused on programming, training, and evaluation (PT&E) staff that targets resources for onboarding and ongoing professional development.
- Develop a competency-based Volunteer learning strategy that differentiates and targets learning and development resources through all stages of Volunteer service (with an emphasis on technical, ICD&I, and language training) that includes 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. These tools will enable staff to better place Volunteers with communities and partners that have the greatest potential to achieve development outcomes.
- Operationalize PT&E processes and tools (PT&E alignment) for project design and management so that all posts have logical project frameworks (LPFs) that articulate training, implementation plans, and the contributions Volunteers are expected to make to local development goals.
- Develop and implement a project-level monitoring and evaluation strategy and mobile data system to facilitate the real-time reporting and monitoring of Volunteer activities, outputs, and outcomes.

Strategic Objective Lead: Associate Director for Global Operations

Performance Goal 2.1: Optimize Staff Performance
Establish a competency-based learning strategy for overseas PT&E staff that supports targeted professional development throughout the employee lifecycle by the end of FY 2022.

	FY 2015-FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	Competencies developed	Competencies developed Resource plan developed Sequencing and mapping completed User interface on IT platform completed	Resource plan completed Sequencing and mapping completed Content on IT platform uploaded and organized	Staff capacity in competencies built	Assess increased capacity of staff in select competencies
Results	NA	Language, training, and ICD&I competencies developed	Programming and evaluation competencies developed	Resource plan, sequencing, and mapping completed. Content on IT platform uploaded but needs greater organization		

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

Phase 1: Develop competencies in language, training, and ICD&I in FY 2018. Develop additional competencies in programming and evaluation 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: Assess improved performance in select competencies among staff who have participated in skills building.

Goal Lead: *Director of the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support*
Data Source: *Agency records and administrative data*
Calculation: *Completion of the milestones listed above*

Performance Goal 2.2: Optimize Volunteer Performance *Establish a competency-based Volunteer learning strategy that supports capacity building throughout the Volunteer lifecycle by the end of FY 2022.*						
	FY 2015 - FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	Competencies developed	Global core competencies developed Resource plan developed Sequencing and mapping completed	Resource plan completed Sequencing and mapping completed	Content on IT platform uploaded and organized Pre-departure environment standards and guidance established Guidance and resources to support Volunteer capacity building developed	Volunteer achievement of competencies assessed
Results	NA	Technical competencies developed	Global core competencies developed	Resource plan, sequencing, and mapping completed		

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

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

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

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

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

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

Phase 6: Develop guidance and resources. Use those resources to build Volunteer capacity to use the learned competencies and related resources during their service.

Phase 7: Assess achievement of competencies among Volunteers who have participated in competency-based training.

Goal Lead: *Director of the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support*
Data Source: *Agency records and administrative data*
Calculation: *Completion of the milestones listed above*

Performance Goal 2.3: Improve Language Learning

Increase the percentage of Volunteers tested at close of service (COS) who achieve the "advanced" level or above on the language proficiency interview (LPI).

Indicator 1: Increase the percentage of Volunteers tested at COS who achieve the "Advanced" level or above in Level 1 and 2 languages.

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	-	-	84%	85%	85%	85%	85%
Results[8]	81%	82%	82%	82%	86%[9]	86%[10]		

Indicator 2: Increase the percentage of Volunteers tested at COS who achieve the "Advanced" level or above in Level 3 and 4 languages.

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	-	-	39%	40%	42%	42%	42%
Results[8]	46%	38%	38%	38%	44%[9]	43%[10]		

Developing local language skills is critical to 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 an advanced level of language proficiency indicates that the agency is supporting effective language training and independent language learning throughout Volunteer service.

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

Volunteers are taught and tested in key language(s) spoken at their site. Measuring language ability at mid-service and COS allows posts to assess the efficacy of their

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[8] Results prior to FY 2019 are not comparable to later years due to changes in measurement.
[9] These results include Volunteers (20 for Levels 1-2 languages, and 11 for Levels 3-4 languages) who tested at the "Advanced" level during their service and were thus not re-tested at COS.
[10] These results include Volunteers (25 for Levels 1-2 languages, and 16 for Levels 3-4 languages) who tested at the "Advanced" level during their service and were thus not re-tested at COS. Due to the global evacuation of Volunteers, results do not include Volunteers who COS'd in March 2020 or later. Results also do not include Volunteers who COS'd in China in February 2020 or later, as these Volunteers were evacuated one month prior to the global evacuation. Thus, the sample size is less representative and much smaller than in prior years.

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 classified as a Level 3 or 4 for difficulty is more challenging and time-consuming than developing that level of proficiency in languages classified as Level 1 or 2. Over time, the proportion of Volunteers serving at posts with more difficult languages has increased steadily (for example, from 51 percent of the Volunteers tested in FY 2015 to 57 percent of those tested in FY 2018 and 60 percent in FY 2019). Thus, this performance goal was revised from the goal used in the FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan to take into account the larger numbers of Volunteers being tested in 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.

One additional contextual factor impacting this performance goal is the fact that some Volunteers may receive training in more than one language during the course of their service. For example, some Volunteers may find they need to use one language while working on their primary assignment in their communities and another language while traveling to municipal hubs for grocery shopping or other personal matters. As a result, these Volunteers may experience more difficulty achieving advanced proficiency in each language. In light of this context, the Peace Corps is further refining language learning expectations and evaluations.

Furthermore, the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 led to the evacuation of Volunteers from all posts for the first time in the history of the Peace Corps. Plans began in the late spring of 2020 to determine how best to return Volunteers to service in FY 2021. The agency will begin returning Volunteers to Peace Corps service starting with a subset of posts as global conditions and operational needs allow. This will mean the variations in language difficulty by post will likely shift the LPI results, either toward or away from more difficult languages. The extent of this shift will be reported in FY 2021.

Goal Lead: Director of the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support
Data Source: Peace Corps databases (VIDA[11] and SharePoint)
Calculations: Indicator 1: The number of Volunteers who achieved an Advanced or Superior level score on their LPI for Levels 1 and 2 languages at COS divided by the number of Volunteers who were tested at COS. Indicator 2: The number of Volunteers who achieved an Advanced or Superior level score on their LPI for Levels 3 and 4 languages at COS divided by the number of Volunteers who were tested at COS.

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[11] The Volunteer Information Database Application (VIDA) tool allows posts to manage data on Volunteers, sites, and Emergency Action Plans. Beginning in FY 2019, posts use a data collection tool on SharePoint to report this data.

Performance Goal 2.4: Implement an Improved Site Management System
Define, design, and implement a comprehensive site management system by the end of FY 2021.

	FY 2015 - FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Targets	-	Parameters and hypothesis defined Data collection tools developed	Structured interviews and case studies conducted in selected posts	Existing site management guidance enhanced with research findings	Orient staff in all posts to the updated site management guidance
Results	NA	Scope of work and hypothesis defined	Research completed	Guidance enhanced	

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

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

Goal Leads: Deputy Director of the Office of Global Operations
Data Source: Agency administrative records
Calculation: Completion of the milestones listed above

Performance Goal 2.5: Strengthen Project Planning and Management

Develop logical project frameworks (LPFs) for all projects using programming, training, and evaluation (PT&E) alignment processes and tools by FY 2021.

	FY 2015 - FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	
Targets	-	-	35% of projects	68% of projects	84% of projects	100% of projects	
Results[12]	NA	4% of projects	21% of projects	54% of projects	83% of projects		

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

The process of developing new project frameworks began in FY 2017 and has continued each year as posts complete one six-year project and prepare to begin the next one using the new LPFs. The process of transitioning from one project to another culminates when the regional offices complete their final review of post plans and endorse the new project frameworks. In FY 2020 and FY 2021, posts continue to develop LPFs in preparation for Volunteers entering service.

Goal Leads: Chiefs of Programming and Training (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)
Data Source: Administrative records
Calculation: Number of projects with an endorsed project framework divided by the number of projects. The targets and results expressed above for FY 2017-FY 2018 are based on a global total of 142 projects that are being developed or refreshed using the agency's PT&E process. In FY 2019, with the suspension of programming in Nicaragua, the denominator decreased to 138 projects. For FY 2020, the number of projects shifted due to the closing of the post in China, planning for Volunteers entering service in Sri Lanka as the country re-opens from its FY 2006 closure, and changes to sector projects in Mongolia and Cambodia. Thus, results are based on 135 projects.

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[12] The total number of active projects included in the calculation of these results varies from year to year due to posts beginning and ending projects and suspending programs. The FY 2020 result includes all projects that were active up until the global evacuation starting February 2020 for China and March 2020 for all other posts.

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, and intercultural competence, diversity, and inclusion (ICD&I) 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. Individual Volunteers may experience and react to these stressors differently depending on their prior life experiences, identity, education, or other factors, including 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 Volunteers' ability to successfully navigate the challenges of service, from recruitment to close of service (COS), and throughout life beyond the Peace Corps.

Strategies
- Promote a suite of standardized products to inform core expectations, such as short videos, digital content, job descriptions, and post communications.
- Analyze the existing applicant interview questions, job descriptions, and country pages, including sections related to expectations of service and adaptation strategies; modify or update as needed to strengthen messages targeted to prospective applicants.
- Identify methods and opportunities to inform resilience skill building at posts that can be integrated with properly sequenced ICD&I coaching and other training by using simulation and experiential learning techniques where appropriate.[13]
- Enhance the Volunteer support environment by identifying external research findings on resilience and incorporate the most relevant findings into Volunteer and staff skill building.
- Assess key psychosocial factors in the COVID-19/post-COVID-19 environment at posts that could impact Volunteers and returned Volunteers. Implement strategies to mitigate impact. Increase awareness of potential factors and ensure staff, Volunteers, and returned Volunteers are prepared to cope effectively.
- Assess and adapt systems to respond to COVID-19/post-COVID-19 challenges that intersect with elements of diversity such as race, ethnicity, age, and disability. Put particular emphasis on how such challenges affect historically underrepresented groups so that the appropriate support systems are in place for

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[13] 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 ones they are accustomed to.

such groups during their Volunteer service. Support leads to greater resilience, which leads to more opportunity within the Peace Corps, because Volunteers with greater resilience tend to cope with stressors in a way that leads to less service disruption.

- Work in partnership with existing affinity groups to identify gaps and to develop appropriate resources to ensure equitable systems of support. Understanding how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting diverse Volunteers and staff will inform support mechanisms and help build greater resilience.
- Develop a globally supported, post-level mechanism or functional group that builds on the skills and experiences of local staff and underrepresented staff and Volunteers. This will help address perceived gaps of inclusion in expectations, behaviors, representation, and systems so that all Volunteers feel equitably supported throughout their service. The result will be that staff will improve mechanisms for supporting Volunteers in their adjustment to cultural changes and expectations regarding acceptable gender roles or identity, thereby increasing resilience in service.
- Utilize the intercultural engagement and diversity, equity, and inclusion competencies articulated in Strategic Objective 2 for staff and Volunteers.
- Enhance post staff's ability to address individual Volunteer adjustment challenges and/or resilience gaps.
- Advance a common understanding of Volunteer adjustment and resilience mechanisms and their critical contributing factors across all elements of the agency engaged in Volunteer support, including the development of materials and activities for counterparts and host families.
- Build ICD&I concepts, actions, and tools into core agency business processes.

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

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 lifecycle to establish realistic expectations of service by FY 2022.

	FY 2015-FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	Analysis of current messaging from headquarters and post conducted	New resiliency content and adjustment standards developed	New content for recruiters and stakeholders approved and disseminated	Reaching Generation "Z" and communicating new challenges of service	Research on readiness conducted with Volunteers entering service
Results	NA	Headquarters analysis underway; post analysis to be conducted in FY 2019[14]	Resiliency content and standards developed	New content approved and disseminated		

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

Milestones for this performance goal include:
- Phase 1: Conduct an analysis of current messaging from headquarters that addresses resiliency as it relates to expectations of service.
- Phase 2: Conduct an analysis of current pre-departure messaging from posts.
- Phase 3: Create and disseminate agency content, standards, and messaging on challenges to expect during Peace Corps service.
- Phase 4: Conduct research on Volunteer readiness when entering service as it relates to increased challenges and awareness that the COVID-19 pandemic and racial inequality may present.

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[14] Post analysis was not conducted in FY 2019 due to shifting targets.

Goal Leads: Associate Director of Volunteer Recruitment Services and Director of the Office of Communications
Data Sources: The Peace Corps website
Calculation: Completion of the milestones listed above

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

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

Indicator 1: Decrease and maintain the Volunteer/Trainee (VT) rate of care seeking from Peace Corps medical officers (PCMOs) for adjustment difficulties.[15]

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets				6.2 cases per 100 VT years	6.0 cases per 100 VT years	6.0 cases per 100 VT years	6.0 cases per 100 VT years	6.0 cases per 100 VT years
Results	NA	*6.7 cases per 100 VT years*[16]	6.4 cases per 100 VT years	6.3 cases per 100 VT years	7.2 cases per 100 VT years	8.5 cases per 100 VT years[17]		

[15] 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 VT years to account for the number of Volunteers and the length of time they served.

[16] The FY 2016 rate relies on data reported through PCMEDICS, the Volunteer Medical Record, from January-September 2016 only; data prior to January 2016 was unavailable or was not comparable to later months due to changes in the criteria for coding cases as "adjustment difficulty."

[17] This calculation represents a partial fiscal year of data due to the global evacuation of Volunteers. Therefore, the result is based on only five and a half months of data and does not factor in variations in cases reported at different months during the year. It is possible that reported cases fluctuate over different months of the fiscal year and these fluctuations would not be captured in this partial dataset.

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

	FY 2015 -FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	Agency vision and strategy developed Peace Corps' status against key ICD&I benchmarks analyzed	Peace Corps' status advanced by one level on selected ICD&I benchmarks	ICD&I benchmarks and/or reflection questions within the Administrative Management Control Survey (AMCS) developed	Resource list of ICD&I best practices across core business functions developed and distributed to regions	Create global accountability measures and systems ensuring post systems support historically under-represented populations
Results	NA	Vision completed; benchmarks under development	Management Directive 715 (MD-715) completed	Reflection questions developed		

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

	FY 2015 -FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	Evidence-based training modules field tested and finalized	10% of posts completed review of modules and incorporated materials into their training programs	20% of posts representing all regions completed review of modules and incorporated materials into training programs	Modules disseminated to posts	Amend modules and methods of delivery to meet emerging needs
Results	NA	Modules completed	19% of posts completed review	20% of posts completed review		

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

service, but Volunteers need the appropriate skills and resources to effectively utilize these broader networks.

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

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

In addition to complexities stemming from demographic diversity, Volunteers face new challenges and psycho-social stressors related to the COVID-19 pandemic that erupted in 2020. Many of these stressors will likely continue in the post-COVID-19 environment. These challenges will need to be assessed and mitigated through increased awareness, understanding, and associated training for Volunteers and staff.

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

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

To further this work organizationally, senior staff in the agency collaborated to analyze its status against benchmarks recognized by external experts in the field of ICD&I. The agency seeks to make progress on two fronts using existing tools, such as Management

Directive 715 (MD-715), which measures equal employment opportunity compliance, and by developing new, agency-specific ICD&I benchmarks and reflection questions within the AMCS. In this way, the ICD&I actions are integrated into core agency business processes, maximizing their effectiveness and sustainability to ensure that all Volunteers are receiving equitable support and that staff feel prepared to handle these complexities.

Milestones for this performance goal include:
Phase 1: Create guidance for skill building and resources to optimize the use of Volunteer leaders, peer support networks, affinity groups, post staff, and diversity committees at posts 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 and Volunteers. Amend and adapt modules to meet the needs of diverse Volunteer populations, with an additional focus on equipping all Volunteer populations and staff to understand and be supportive of experiences unique to underrepresented populations. Refine staff capacity and/or standard operations to increase the range of individuals from whom Volunteers can seek support when facing adjustment challenges during service.

Goal Leads: Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region), Associate Director of the Office of Health Services, and Chief Diversity Officer
Data Sources: PCMEDICS and post administrative data
Calculations: Indicator 1: Incidents of adjustment difficulty (or other behavioral health epidemiological codes) divided by VT years; Indicator 2: Completion of milestones listed above; Indicator 3: FY 2018: Completion of milestones listed above. FY 2019 and beyond: Number of posts that incorporate the modules for building resilience into their training programs divided by the number of posts with two-year Volunteers.

Strategic Objective 4: Building Leaders of Tomorrow

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

Rationale: Returned Volunteers 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 and effective returned Volunteer communication strategy, and gathering and strategically analyzing existing data on the Peace Corps' Third Goal.

Strategies

- Identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities gained during Volunteer service, particularly those related to leadership and intercultural competence. Develop training and tools that enable returned Volunteers to successfully translate those competencies into marketable skills after service.
- Expand the distribution of employment opportunities for returned Volunteers across sectors (public, private, and nonprofit) 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 (Returned Peace Corps Volunteer) Portal and peacecorps.gov website, to reduce staff administrative burden and deliver services efficiently.
- Promote civic engagement and cross-cultural exchange in U.S. communities by improving how online resources are organized and presented and by raising awareness of opportunities for returned Volunteers.
- Strengthen business procedures to efficiently manage returned Volunteer contact data.
- Expand continuation of service opportunities to Volunteers earlier and more frequently during service.
- Expand capacity to use virtual tools and platforms to engage and support returned Volunteers.
- Review existing processes and procedures to ensure diversity and equality in Peace Corps-provided returned Volunteer support.

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

Performance Goal 4.1: Cultivate Leadership Skills

Develop and share leadership and intercultural competency tools to support returned Volunteers as they transition from their service by FY 2022.

	FY 2015 - FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	Map created of leadership and intercultural competencies developed during service (model)	Methodology developed to link leadership and intercultural competencies to activities in the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT)	Templates and other tools developed for documenting competencies gained by Volunteers in their individual Description of Service (DOS)	Templates and related user guidance and training reviewed and approved	Policy updated

Training materials and templates disseminated |
| Results | NA | Competency structure completed | Methodology developed | Templates developed | | |

During Peace Corps service, powerful learning experiences provide practical opportunities to develop leadership skills and intercultural competencies. The competencies gained during service include participatory analysis, project design and management, coaching, and mentoring. These competencies enable Volunteers to be effective not only in their overseas communities and organizations but also when they return home. Back home in the United States, 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 re-entering the workforce or furthering their education. By making these transition resources available online and incorporating related curricula into regional and national programming efforts, the Peace Corps will be able to expand its reach to Volunteers regardless of their geographic location. Returned Volunteers continue to use and refine the competencies they gained abroad by reinvesting those skills back home in both their workplaces and communities.

Volunteers develop competencies during service by engaging in activities identified in the posts' project frameworks and reported in the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT). Linking VRT activities to competency development clarifies how Volunteer activities

enable posts to fulfill commitments to host countries. It also provides evidence to future employers of the ways in which Volunteers have demonstrated leadership and intercultural competencies.

The DOS is the agency record that documents Volunteer achievements during service. Peace Corps Manual Section (MS) 285 sets out the policy and procedures for documenting service and provides a sample DOS that posts can provide to Volunteers. This template—as well as other tools for documenting skills that Volunteers gain—is being updated to align with the new logical project frameworks (LPFs) and competencies outlined in Strategic Objective 2. It will include information that summarizes the activities that a Volunteer reported in the VRT. Developing these new tools requires collaboration with the Office of Global Operations, the Field Advisory Board, and the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support. Any new Volunteer training relating to the DOS will be submitted to the Volunteer Learning Council.[18] Once the templates and related user guidance and training materials have been approved by these stakeholders, they will be distributed to all posts. These revisions to the DOS will help highlight the employer-sought skills that Volunteers have gained through their service.

Goal Lead: Director of the Office of the Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services
Data Source: Agency administrative records.
Calculation: Completion of the milestones listed above

Performance Goal 4.2: Continuation of Service *Increase the number of opportunities for returned Volunteers to engage in continued service to 3,000 by FY 2022.*								
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	-	-	2,500	2,500	2,600	2,700	3,000
Results	2,250	2,300	2,230[19]	2,153	2,742	2,046		

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

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[18] This Council has been established to develop a balanced training plan that considers requirements for Invitees, Trainees, and Volunteers. The Council may consider a range of options including revisions, replacements, combinations, and/or changes in the approaches to training before making recommendations to the Director for incorporation into agency policy. The Council will also delineate clear guidelines for determining what is mandatory and what is optional within the Volunteer training portfolio.
[19] This number reflects what was reported in prior years. However, due to improved calculations, the FY 2017 result should be 1,831 instead.

competencies. This enables them to engage diverse communities through volunteerism and cross-cultural learning opportunities. The agency is committed to cultivating and expanding opportunities for returned Volunteers to reengage with the mission (e.g., Peace Corps Response[20] and the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program[21]) and to share their experiences.

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*

Performance Goal 4.3: Consolidate Career and Transition Services for Returned Volunteers *Increase the percentage of recently returned Volunteers who access the RPCV Portal to 75 percent by FY 2022.*								
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	-	-	45%	50%	60%	70%	75%
Results	NA	43%	38%	32%	49%	73%		

The agency can better serve returned Volunteers by developing a streamlined mechanism for them to identify, request, and access career and transition services. Centralizing these services to one location (the online RPCV Portal) achieves several improvements in efficiency, including: consistent marketing to returned Volunteers for events, streamlined access to services, a more user-friendly experience, and eventual standardization of agency outreach to the returned Volunteer community via the planned upgrades to the RPCV Portal. Additionally, centralization of services enables more efficient communication with returned Volunteers and reduces the administrative burden on Peace Corps staff providing these services, including Peace Corps Response, the Office of Health Services, and the Office of External Affairs.

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

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[20] Peace Corps Response is another pathway to Peace Corps service where returned Volunteers and other experienced professionals undertake short-term, high-impact assignments.
[21] The Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program is a graduate fellowship program that offers financial assistance to returned Volunteers.

Performance Goal 4.4: Fulfilling the Third Goal
Identify and analyze existing internal and external sources of Third-Goal data.

Indicator 1: Number of Volunteers participating in Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) projects, Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools (WWS)/Speakers Match Program, and VRT activities.

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	-	-	-	5,600	5,700	5,800	5,800
Results[22]	NA	5,512	5,803	5,190	4,954	3,655		

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

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	-	-	-	70,000	73,000	75,000	75,000
Results[23]	NA	38,274	29,847	65,993	91,862	44,726		

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 that Volunteers and returned Volunteers carry out, 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 to demonstrate fulfilment of the Third-Goal mandate to stakeholders. Several types of data are used including numbers of Volunteers and participants from PCPP projects, the WWS/Speakers Match Program, and Third-Goal activities reported in the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT); however, due to the global evacuation, all programs contributing to this objective have been impacted. PCPP projects, the WWS Global Connections program, and VRT-reported Third-Goal activities have all been suspended until Volunteers begin to return to service.

Goal Lead: Director of the Office of the Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services
Data Sources: Gift, Grants, and Management (PCPP); agency administrative records; VRT
Calculations: Indicator 1: The number of Volunteers participating in activities that correspond to the Third Goal including the PCPP, the WWS/Speakers Match Program, and Volunteers reporting Third-Goal activities in the VRT. Indicator 2: The number of participants in activities that correspond to the Third Goal, including people who become PCPP donors or attend the WWS/Speakers Match Program, and the number of community members in Volunteer-reported activities in the VRT.

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[22] FY 2016 results are not comparable to later years due to gaps in available data.
[23] FY 2016 and FY 2017 results are not comparable to later years due to gaps in available data.

Management Objective 5: Foundational Business Management

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

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

Strategies
- Improve the cost-effectiveness, speed, ease-of-use, transparency, and quality of services and the processes used to deliver business services to domestic and overseas staff.
- Support good decision making by ensuring agency leaders have access to timely, relevant, accurate, and easy-to-use business intelligence and are 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 Leads: Chief Human Capital Officer and Chief Information Officer

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

Increase the percentage of offices that maintain dashboards containing a combination of operational, financial, human capital, and customer service metrics to 100 percent of selected offices by FY 2020.

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

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

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

Goal Lead: Director of the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning
Data Source: Agency administrative records
Calculation: Number of offices with dashboards that meet criteria divided by the number of offices selected for inclusion in this metric.

Performance Goal 5.2: Align Office Performance with the Strategic Plan

Increase the percentage of agency leaders who have metrics in their individual performance plans that are linked to at least one performance goal or objective in the strategic plan to 100 percent by the end of FY 2022.

	FY 2015 - FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
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	Development, adoption, and implementation of a tiered performance management system that incorporates one or more agency strategic goals or objectives into performance standards	100% of Peace Corps employees have one or more agency strategic goals or objectives aligned into a performance standard in their performance plans
Results	NA	New performance management system under development	100% of performance plans for selected senior leaders aligned	100% of performance plans for all senior leaders aligned but not for all employees		

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.

As the Peace Corps continues to evaluate its Human Capital policies and procedures, the Office of Human Resources' policy team is also examining OPM's recommendations to improve the Peace Corps' current pass/fail rating system for end-of-year employee performance ratings. The Policy and Employee Relations teams are researching three-, four-, and five-tier rating systems, exploring updates to the current performance management manual section and procedures, and considering required training for supervisors. By engaging staff across offices, the agency expects to develop and implement a robust and effective performance management system.

Goal Lead: Chief Human Capital Officer
Data Source: Human Resources records
Calculation: Number of managers and directors (and above) with performance plans that meet criteria divided by the number of managers (and above) selected for inclusion in this metric. The FY 2019 target includes only career staff. The FY 2020 target includes both career staff and political appointees.

Performance Goal 5.3: Improve Human Capital Planning and Processes
Improve the agency's ability to strategically deploy its talent by strengthening advance planning and minimizing vacancy gaps by the end of FY 2022.

Indicator 1: Develop an agency-wide Human Capital Operating Plan.

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

Indicator 2: Decrease the average vacancy gap to 80 days.[24]

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	-	-	100 days	90 days	80 days	80 days	80 days
Results	NA[25]	89 days[26]	132 days[27]	71 days[28]	111 days[29]	94 days		

One of the most critical factors affecting the Peace Corps' ability to serve its Volunteers is its ability to maintain an engaged workforce, both domestically and abroad. Success depends on the agency's ability to strategically deploy talent—the right people, in the right place, at the right time. The development of a Human Capital Operating Plan should not only comply with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular 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

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[24] The percentage of employees hired within 80 days is consistent with the recommended time frames on the hiring reform published by OPM.

[25] Data from the former application system (Avue) is no longer accessible.

[26] Career Connector is the Peace Corps' job vacancy management system. It was utilized for the first time in January 2016; as a result, the FY 2016 data does not reflect the entire fiscal year.

[27] 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.

[28] Reflects the vacancy gap for domestic vacancies only.

[29] The lapse in appropriations and furlough from December 2018 to late January 2019 impacted the agency's hiring process, resulting in delays in onboarding new staff.

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 the 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 vacancy gaps indicates that human capital operations have been improved.

Goal Lead: *Chief Human Capital Officer*
Data Source: *Human Resources records*
Calculations: Indicator 1: *Completion of the milestones listed above.* **Indicator 2:** *Total number of days that domestic positions filled within the reporting period were vacant in Career Connector divided by the number of domestic positions filled within the reporting period.*

	FY 2015-FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Performance Goal 5.4: Modernize Agency Information and Communications Capabilities *Increase the percentage of agency investment on new information and communications capabilities to 40 percent of all IT spending by the end of FY 2022.*					
Targets	-	Baseline data collection	Baseline data collection	40%	40%
Results[30]	NA	Baseline data collected	Baseline data collected		

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

As technology changes over time, the cost of maintaining older systems increases. Newer technologies and delivery methods that focus on rapid, agile development, cloud-based storage, integrated architecture, and convergent platforms, are able to

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[30] In FY 2019, the agency collected preliminary baseline data on IT costs. During FY 2020, the Office of the Chief Information Officer and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer identified and analyzed all IT costs for the entire agency and categorized them using a methodology that was informed by Technology Business Management, or TBM—a value-management methodology to provide IT costs, consumption, and performance transparency.

deliver a lower-cost solution to the agency while increasing both information availability and security.

In FY 2020, the agency shifted its modernization focus from merely counting the number of outdated systems to be retired to emphasizing strategic investments in net new information and communications capability. To this end, the agency is measuring the proportion of IT funds invested in modern, integrated information systems compared to spending to maintain outdated legacy systems. For this goal, the agency will strive to meet, and eventually exceed, the average federal ratio of development, modernization, and enhancement (DME)[31] to operations and maintenance (O&M)[32] IT investment, currently measured at approximately 25 percent and 75 percent respectively across federal agencies. In preparation for launching this new goal, the agency worked to baseline its current DME:O&M ratio in FY 2020 and set targets for increasing the ratio.

Goal Lead: Chief Information Officer
Data Source: Agency administrative records
Calculations: Percent of IT funds spent on DME / Percent of IT funds spent on O&M

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[31] Costs for DME services are for projects and activities leading to new IT assets/systems and projects and activities that change or modify existing IT assets to substantively improve capability or performance, implement legislative or regulatory requirements, or meet an agency leadership request. For more information on these concepts, please refer to the website managed by OMB to government-wide IT spending: *https://itdashboard.gov*.
[32] Costs for O&M services are incurred in the phase of the development life cycle in which the asset is in operations and produces the same product or provides a repetitive service. This is also commonly referred to as "legacy" or "steady state."

Management Objective 6: Organizational Risk Management

Identify agency processes and associated impediments to success in a common format to allow for prioritization of agency efforts toward achieving its goals.

Rationale: This objective focuses on advancing and sustaining the agency's mission and effectiveness by identifying and managing risks while finding opportunities to improve efficient and effective use of Peace Corps resources at all levels of the organization. The scope of this objective covers risks across the agency in the categories of security, legal, fiduciary, IT, reputational, programmatic, human capital, and health. This objective is focused on creating an Enterprise Risk Management Council (ERMC), 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 to improve accountability and minimize interruptions and/or threats to the effectiveness of Peace Corps programs.

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

Performance Goal 6.1: Maturation of the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Program
Establish a repeatable process for ERM and incorporate the agency risk profile into decision making.

	FY 2015 - FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	Policy and procedures approved	Approval process for the new policy completed Agency risk profile produced	Agency risk profile produced	ERM integrated into the agency governance structure	ERM plays a formal role in resource allocation across the agency
Results	NA	Policies and procedures drafted	ERMC Charter, By-Laws, and policy approved Agency risk profile in process	Risk profile partially completed		

This goal seeks to facilitate risk management across the agency by further refining a comprehensive ERM policy and incorporating the ERM process and ERMC into the overall governance structure.

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. Regular ERMC meetings.
2. Incorporation of risk management policies into the agency governance structure including using the risk management process in prioritizing agency resource allocations and policy decisions.

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 ERM assessments based on the agency risk profile by the end of FY 2022.

	FY 2015 - FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Targets	-	100% of office points of contact trained	100% of selected offices have developed active risk registers	Active risk registers developed for three additional offices	100% of all offices have developed active risk registers	ERM risk registers are reviewed and updated annually
Results	NA	Training developed	Risk register is under development for the Office of the Chief Information Officer	Risk registers for two offices and one working group developed		

Once an agreement has been reached on the agency policy as described in Performance Goal 6.1, the focus of the agency's efforts will be to ensure that each office has a point of contact who has been trained on ERM and maintenance of office risk registers. The agency will then measure the percentage of offices that are using and maintaining their risk registers with up-to-date information and analysis. While the agency is committed to training staff from all offices in risk management principles, the targets focus on developing and supporting risk registers for the selected headquarters offices with the greatest risks. In FY 2019, the priority was the Office of the Chief Information Officer. In FY 2020, the focus has been on developing active risk registers for the Offices of Safety and Security, Health Services, and the Chief Financial Officer. In FY 2021, the agency's goal is to have risk registers completed for all offices. In FY 2022, these registers will be reviewed and updated annually.

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

Goal Lead: Chief Compliance Officer in the Office of the Director
Data Source: Administrative records

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 is responsible for strategic planning and reporting. The Office works closely with other offices across the agency to collect and analyze data to improve agency operations. The Office's director 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:** Each year, the Peace Corps Director leads forward-looking meetings in collaboration with senior leadership from across the agency. The purpose is to discuss the development of the next Annual Performance Plan. Prior to these meetings, lead offices identify challenges, opportunities, and possible realignments in order to advance strategic objectives. Revisions to strategies and performance goals are incorporated into the following year's Annual Performance Plan. These annual meetings are a key opportunity for senior leadership to collaborate and determine long-term courses of action that will maximize organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

- **Country Portfolio Review:** The Country Portfolio Review is a comprehensive review of active and potential Peace Corps posts that is conducted by the agency using external and internal data. The review focuses on the safety, security, and medical care of Volunteers; host country engagement with the Peace Corps; host country needs; programming and training; post management and costs; and congruence with U.S. government development priorities. The review includes data from a variety of external sources, including the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the U.S. Department of State, the World Health Organization, the International Food Policy Research Institute, the World Economic Forum, and the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Internal data sources include administrative and financial data, post and headquarters' staff survey results, and results from the Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) and the Host

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

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

Appendix B

Evaluation and Research

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

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

Appendix C

Verification and Validation of Performance Data

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

Peace Corps Administrative Records and Databases

For some performance goals, the Peace Corps collects annual data on topics such as language proficiency interview (LPI) scores, project framework reviews, vacancy gaps, and risk registers from records maintained in headquarters offices and overseas posts. For others, the agency relies on centralized database systems to collect information on Volunteers, programs, health services, finances, and human resources. In order to maintain data integrity and ensure the appropriate data entry methodology is followed, only properly trained and authorized staff 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. To meet the required level of accuracy and provide current and historical information, the agency uses database rules and business processes on existing systems and incorporates ongoing modernization efforts led by the Office of the Chief Information Officer. Where data limitations do exist, they will be noted in the appropriate section.

Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT)

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

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

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

Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS)

In accordance with the Kate Puzey Act mandate, as extended by the Sam Farr and Nick Castle Peace Corps Reform Act, the Peace Corps conducts the AVS, which is a confidential, voluntary online survey of all currently serving, two-year Volunteers. This comprehensive survey provides Volunteers' assessments of the effectiveness of Peace Corps training, in-country staff support, their personal health and safety, and their overall service experience.

While the AVS is typically completed each year by nine out of every ten Volunteers who have been in service for at least one month, it was not conducted in FY 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting global evacuation and close of service (COS) of all Volunteers. As a result, in FY 2020, the Peace Corps was unable to fulfill the Kate Puzey Act mandate to survey currently serving Volunteers. However, in June to July 2020, the agency conducted a special survey of the evacuated returned Volunteers that enabled them to provide feedback on agency operations.

The AVS is not administered to a random sample of Volunteers. Instead, it is sent to all Volunteers serving for at least 30 days at their sites (in FY 2020, a survey was sent to all Volunteers and Trainees who were evacuated due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Because of this, the results are subject to potential bias if the Volunteers who choose to respond have different viewpoints from those who choose not to respond. However, the high response rate and data verification and validation measures minimize total survey error at the global level.

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

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

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

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

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

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

Host Country Staff Survey

This survey has been fielded every year since FY 2014 to systematically gather perspectives from host country staff. It is a short, confidential, voluntary survey designed to learn more about the agency's impact in the posts where it operates by gathering input from host country staff and assessing the rate of achievement of reaching Peace Corps Goals One and Two. The survey includes questions covering staff training, diversity and inclusion, contributions to the Peace Corps' goals, development impact, and job satisfaction. For the FY 2020 survey, a section was added to obtain feedback on the global evacuation.

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 (e.g., drivers, janitors, and short-term staff) 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 other 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 used a broad array of evidence to inform the process of developing the FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan. This included activities with agency leadership and working groups.

- **Agency leadership:** The Peace Corps convened two meetings of senior leaders in FY 2017 to draft the initial elements of the strategic plan. These leaders reviewed the results from the FY 2016 Annual Strategic Review, input from posts, and other materials to develop the six strategic and management objectives in this plan. Once these initial topics were drafted, all Peace Corps staff in headquarters and the field were given an opportunity to provide input. That input showed broad agreement with the six strategic and management objectives.

- **Agency working groups:** The Peace Corps convened six working groups comprised of nearly 60 senior managers, technical specialists, and analysts from headquarters offices and overseas posts. These staff members applied their unique technical skills and personal experiences 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 and reach agency objectives.

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 OMB. In addition, the draft FY 2018–2022 Strategic Plan and FY 2020 Annual Performance Plan was posted on the agency's open government website for one month from December 2017 to January 2018 to collect feedback from external stakeholders and the American people.

Appendix E

Global Evacuation and Volunteer Return to Service

On March 15, 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic quickly spread across the globe, the Peace Corps faced a challenge never before seen in the agency's history and made the difficult decision to temporarily suspend Volunteer operations at all Peace Corps posts. Nearly 6,900 Volunteers and Trainees were brought safely back to the United States from 62 countries[33] worldwide, and their service closed as a result of the evacuation. For the first time since 1961, no Peace Corps Volunteers were serving in the field. In the days following the evacuation, the agency quickly shifted gears into devoting an enormous amount of time and resources to supporting the recently evacuated Volunteers and Trainees and laying out a process to position the agency to resume Volunteer operations as soon as it is safe to do so.

To meet this challenge, the Peace Corps Director outlined a plan and vision for resuming Volunteer operations. The plan identified five goals that need to be reached in order to reestablish global presence. Those goals include:

1. Resuming overseas operations as soon as it is safe to do so
2. Recruiting and preparing applicants for service
3. Communicating effectively across internal and external audiences
4. Supporting and expanding Third-Goal opportunities for returned Volunteers
5. Maintaining strong continuity of operations as the agency works within current global limitations posed by the pandemic

In order to reach these goals, the Director created a COVID-19 Task Force that consisted of five theme-based working groups, each oriented to address one of the goals listed above. The working groups drew upon broad expertise and experience from across the agency. More than 140 staff members provided input, and these staff represented 18 offices from both headquarters and the field.

During the first few months after the global evacuation of Volunteers and Trainees, the Task Force focused exclusively on developing the tools, procedures, and guidance needed to resume operations abroad. As it completed these tasks, the Task Force gradually shifted its focus to more in-depth monitoring and evaluation of both domestic and global conditions related to the pandemic. In the remainder of FY 2020 and into FY 2021, the Task Force worked, and will continue to work, with internal and external stakeholders to collect and synthesize information helpful to determining when conditions will be conducive to resuming Volunteer service. The agency is working diligently and assessing opportunities to get Volunteers back to service with the goal of gradually expanding to full Volunteer operations as soon as conditions permit. As

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[33] This number includes China and Mongolia, which started evacuating Volunteers prior to March 15, 2020.

always, the safety, security, and health of Volunteers will be the paramount consideration.

Looking beyond the Task Force, there are numerous lessons learned that will serve the agency long after the Task Force completes its work. Through this crisis and the agency's work, the Peace Corps has learned that the systems, procedures, and foundational elements of its operations have proven to be strong, resilient, and relevant in these incredibly challenging times. The agency was built on a strong foundation 60 years ago and that foundation continues to serve it well. Nevertheless, as the global COVID-19 pandemic has tested these systems in an unprecedented manner, the Peace Corps has learned valuable lessons it will use to strengthen operations and staff resiliency moving forward.

Appendix F

Acronyms

AMCS – Administrative Management Control Survey

AVS – Annual Volunteer Survey

COS – Close of Service

DME – Development, Modernization, and Enhancement

DOS – Description of Service

ERM – Enterprise Risk Management

ERMC – Enterprise Risk Management Council

FY – Fiscal Year

GPRA – Government Performance and Results Act

ICD&I – Intercultural Competence, Diversity, and Inclusion

LPF – Logical Project Framework

LPI – Language Proficiency Interview

O&M – Operations and Maintenance

OMB – Office of Management and Budget

OPM – Office of Personnel Management

PCMO – Peace Corps Medical Officer

PCPP – Peace Corps Partnership Program

PT&E – Programing, Training, and Evaluation

RPCV – Returned Peace Corps Volunteer

VIDA – Volunteer Information Database Application

VRT – Volunteer Reporting Tool

VT – Volunteer/Trainee

WWS – World Wise Schools