



**Peace
Corps**

FY 2016 Annual Performance Report & FY 2018 Annual Performance Plan

Promoting World Peace and Friendship since 1961

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WHERE PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS SERVE



THE CARIBBEAN

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

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

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

NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Morocco

AFRICA

Benin
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Comoros
Ethiopia
Ghana
Guinea
Lesotho
Liberia
Madagascar
Malawi
Mozambique
Namibia
Rwanda

Senegal
Sierra Leone
South Africa
Swaziland
Tanzania
The Gambia
Togo
Uganda
Zambia

EASTERN EUROPE/ CENTRAL ASIA

Albania
Armenia
Georgia
Kosovo
Kyrgyz Republic
Macedonia
Moldova
Ukraine

ASIA

Cambodia
China
Indonesia
Mongolia
Myanmar
Nepal
Philippines
Thailand
Timor-Leste

PACIFIC ISLANDS

Federated States
of Micronesia
Fiji
Palau
Samoa
Tonga
Vanuatu

AF | Africa Region

EMA | Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region

IAP | Inter-America and the Pacific Region

Countries with Volunteers as of September 30, 2016

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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 the American spirit by making it possible for Americans to serve around the world advancing development and building cross-cultural understanding. Through this unique approach to development, the Peace Corps is building strong relationships between our country and the people of our partner nations while making a difference in the overseas communities it serves, in the lives of its Volunteers, and back home in the United States. More than 225,000 Volunteers have served in 141 countries since 1961.

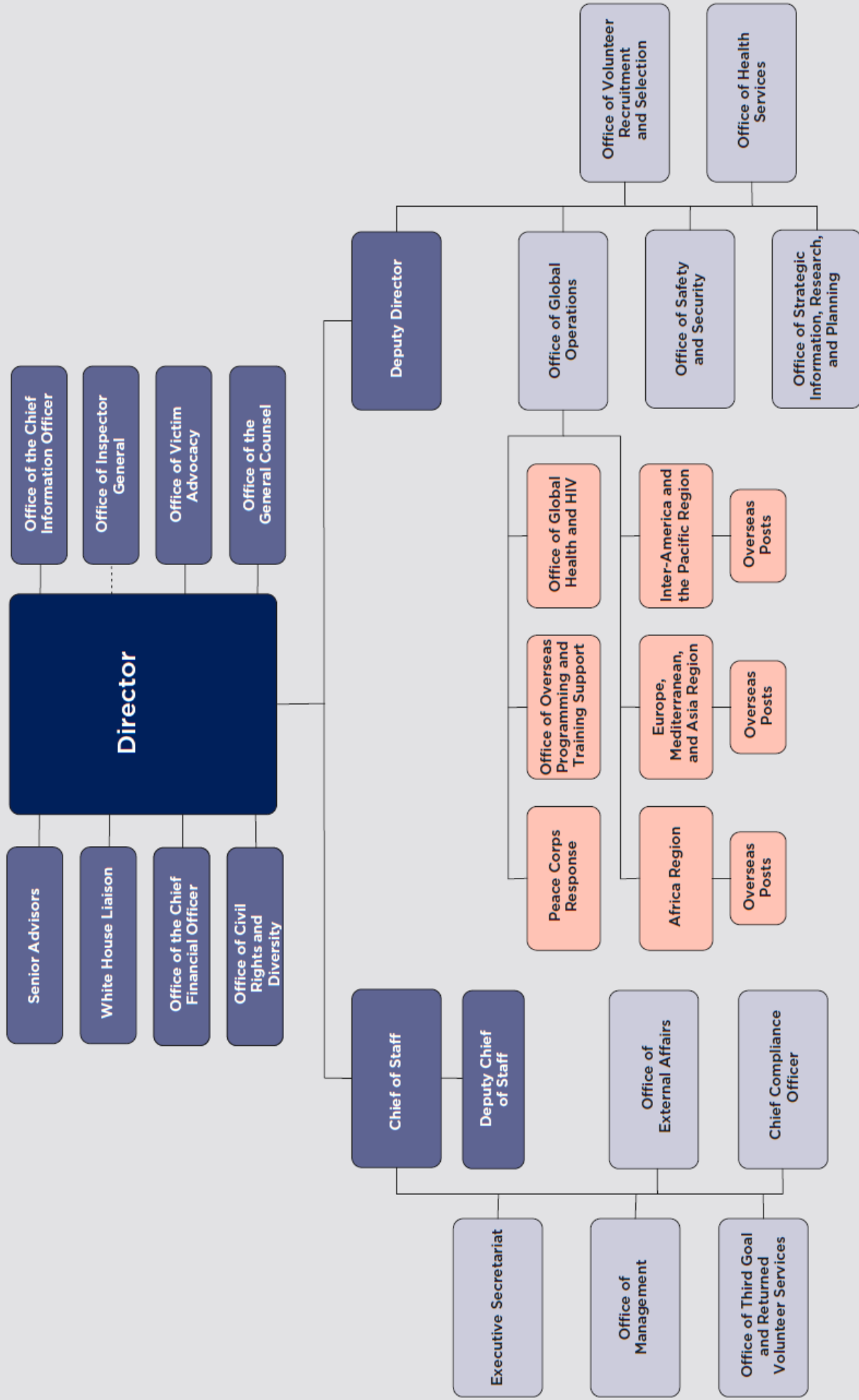
The Peace Corps advances its mission through the work of the Volunteers, both during and after their tour of service. Rather than providing monetary assistance to countries, the agency sends Volunteers to share their skills and experience while living and working alongside local individuals and communities.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

Peace Corps Volunteers are the face of our nation in communities around the globe, building positive perceptions of the United States and sharing American values with their communities. After Volunteers complete their service, they return to the United States with new sets of 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 public; maintaining relationships with colleagues and friends from the countries where they served; and sustaining their commitment to volunteerism and public service.

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

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

PEACE CORPS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Core Values

The following core values shape and guide decisions at all levels in the agency:

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 meaningful global presence.

Commitment to National Service: The Peace Corps seeks to expand opportunities for Americans to serve their country by volunteering their time in the service of others.

Diversity and Inclusion: The Peace Corps actively supports a culture of inclusion that builds on the strengths of the diversity of the American public and of the countries where we 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.

About this Report

The Peace Corps Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Annual Performance Report (APR) and FY 2018 Annual Performance Plan (APP) provide detailed performance information to the President, Congress, external stakeholders, domestic and overseas staff, and the American people. The report allows readers to assess the Peace Corps' FY 2016 performance, revisions to goals for FY 2017, and plans for FY 2018 relative to the agency's mission and strategic goals. This report follows the performance framework established in the Peace Corps FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan.

The four-year strategic plan lays out the long-term goals and objectives designed to advance the Peace Corps mission. The annual performance plan identifies the strategies and goal leaders employed to accomplish these goals and objectives, as well as the specific results the agency expects to achieve.

The combined FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan and FY 2018 Annual Performance Plan includes the following components:

Strategic goals reflect the broad, long-term outcomes the agency works toward to achieve the Peace Corps mission to promote world peace and friendship through community-based development and cross-cultural understanding.

Strategic objectives break down the high-level strategic goals to express the specific focus areas the agency will prioritize in order to achieve the strategic goals.

Strategies include the actions the agency intends to take to meet its goals and objectives.

Performance goals state quantitative levels of performance, or “targets,” to be accomplished within a specific timeframe. In the plan, annual targets are set through FY 2018. Targets and actual results are provided for prior years when available. The agency uses performance goals both to assess progress on strategic goals and objectives and to drive performance improvement. Performance goals are updated each year in the annual performance plan in conjunction with the budget formulation process.

Goal leads are identified for each performance goal with the title of the lead individual and the name of the office in the lead role. While several offices or overseas posts may be responsible for the individual strategies that advance progress on performance goals, goal leads are given the convening authority to coordinate agencywide efforts to develop, implement, and report on plans to achieve each performance goal within a specific timeframe.

Partner offices are listed for performance goals where individual strategies and activities are accomplished through specific collaborative efforts outside of those of the goal lead's

direct authority. Partner offices work in collaboration with the goal lead(s) to develop and implement strategies while also contributing to reporting on the performance goal.

Appendices provide additional detail on the development of the FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan and FY 2018 Annual Performance Plan. Appendices include a summary of the Peace Corps' performance management framework (Appendix A), a description of how evaluation and research informed the development of the plan (Appendix B), data verification and validation standards for the performance goal indicators (Appendix C), and a summary of the stakeholder outreach conducted (Appendix D).

GPRA Modernization Act of 2010

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

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

Strategic Goals

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

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

These three core goals continue to serve as the foundation for the Peace Corps' approach to development and the three strategic goals that guide the FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan:

Strategic Goal 1: Building Local Capacity

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

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

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

Strategic Goal 2: Sharing America with the World

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

Volunteers promote a better understanding of Americans among local people through day-to-day interactions with their host families, counterparts,¹ 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 community strengths and challenges and build trust with local partners, strengthening their project work.

¹ The Peace Corps assigns a "counterpart," or primary host community work partner, to each Volunteer.

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

Strategic Goal 3: Bringing the World Back Home

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

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

Public Benefit: Sustained interaction between Americans and other peoples engenders mutual understanding and trust, increasing respect and human dignity in world affairs at home and abroad. Additionally, through their overseas experiences, Volunteers develop language, intercultural, technical, and entrepreneurial skills that prepare them for jobs in the 21st century. They bring these skills with them to their work in both the public and private sectors, sharing their global experiences and outlook with their colleagues, friends, and family. This, in turn, helps to build a more competitive U.S. workforce.

Strategic Objectives

The 11 strategic objectives identified in this plan constitute the roadmap for advancing the Peace Corps mission and strategic goals. Strategic objectives are the primary unit of analysis for assessing the agency's performance and are measured through specific, time-bound performance goals.

1. Volunteer Well-Being

Enhance the safety, security, and health of Volunteers through rigorous prevention and response systems and high-quality medical and mental health services

2. Service Opportunity of Choice

Position the Peace Corps as the top choice for talented Americans interested in service by reaching a new generation of potential Volunteers and streamlining the application process

3. Development Impact

Advance community-based development by strengthening the capacity of local individuals and communities, focusing on highly effective technical interventions, and leveraging strategic partnerships

4. Cross-Cultural Understanding

Build a deeper mutual understanding of other cultures by developing meaningful connections between American and host country individuals and communities

5. Continuation of Service

Support returned Volunteers' continuation of service by fostering a vibrant alumni network, providing tools and resources to ease their transition after service, and offering opportunities for them to share their experiences

6. Diversity and Inclusion

Actively recruit, support, and retain a diverse workforce and Volunteer corps and build an inclusive culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness

7. Site Development

Establish an environment conducive to Volunteer success through an integrated approach to developing effective projects, preparing work sites, and successfully collaborating with local partners

8. Train Up

Develop a highly effective Volunteer corps through a continuum of learning throughout service

9. High-Performing Learning Organization

Cultivate a high-performing learning organization by investing in professional development for staff, improving staff retention, and strengthening institutional memory

10. Global Connectivity

Enable seamless communication and collaboration for all Volunteers and staff by modernizing and integrating information technology systems and leveraging the innovation of Volunteers and staff in the field

11. Measurement for Results

Advance the agency's ability to measure progress, improve performance, and demonstrate impact through integrated monitoring, reporting, and evaluation practices

Relationship between Strategic Goals and Strategic Objectives

Each of the Peace Corps' three strategic goals is supported by several strategic objectives. The table below indicates which strategic objectives support each strategic goal.

Strategic Objectives	Strategic Goal 1: Building Local Capacity	Strategic Goal 2: Sharing America with the World	Strategic Goal 3: Bringing the World Back Home
1. Volunteer Well-Being	●	●	●
2. Service Opportunity of Choice	●	●	●
3. Development Impact	●	●	
4. Cross-Cultural Understanding	●	●	●
5. Continuation of Service			●
6. Diversity and Inclusion	●	●	●
7. Site Development	●	●	
8. Train Up	●	●	
9. High-Performing Learning Organization	●	●	●
10. Global Connectivity	●	●	●
11. Measurement for Results	●	●	●

Performance Results by Strategic Objective

The Peace Corps' 11 strategic objectives, which contribute to the three strategic goals, will be assessed through 26 measurable performance goals during FY 2018. Each performance goal includes a quantitative performance level, or "target," to be accomplished in a specific time frame. No targets were set for three new performance goals added in the FY 2016–17 Annual Performance Plan. For these goals, the agency collected baseline data in FY 2016, which was used to inform performance goal targets for FY 2018 as well as updates to targets for FY 2017.

FY 2016 Results Legend:

Target met	<i>100 percent of the target set for FY 2016 was met</i>
Slightly below target	<i>95 to 99 percent of the target set for FY 2016 was met</i>
Target not met	<i>Below 95 percent of the target set for FY 2016 was met</i>
No target set	<i>No target set for performance goals in which baseline data was collected in FY 2016</i>

Strategic Objective	Performance Goal	Past Performance Results					FY 2016	
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Result	Target
1. Volunteer Well-being	1.1 Increase Volunteer Satisfaction with Safety and Security Support	73%	68%	71%	84% ¹	81%	80%	78%
	1.2 Reduce Volunteer Dissatisfaction with Medical and Mental Health Support	7%	7%	9%	9%	10%	10%	7%
	1.3 Increase Volunteer Personal Safety	--	--	--	--	--	0%	No target set
2. Service Opportunity of Choice	2.1 Volunteer Requests Met	97%	97%	90%	98%	97%	94%	96%–102%
	2.2 Increase Service Opportunities	9,095	8,073	7,209	6,818	6,919	7,213	8,800
	2.3 Increase Applications	12,206	10,091	10,118	19,151 ²	24,848	23,987	23,000
	2.4 Reduce Time from Application to Invitation	10 months	11 months	6 months	7 months	4 months	2 months	3 months

Strategic Objective	Performance Goal		Past Performance Results					FY 2016	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Result	Target
3. Development Impact	3.1 Advance Community-Based Development Outcomes		--	--	--	76%	75%	76%	80%
	3.2 Strengthen Local Capacity		--	--	--	--	83%	86%	84%
	3.3 Improve Feedback to Volunteers		39%	33%	38%	55% ¹	54%	57%	62%
4. Cross-Cultural Understanding	4.1 Greater Understanding of Americans		--	--	--	94%	90%	91%	95%
	4.2 Increase Cross-Cultural Connections		--	--	--	57%	57%	54%	63%
	4.3 Increase Intercultural Competence Learning Opportunities		--	--	--	--	--	98%	No target set
5. Continuation of Service	5.1 Support Returned Volunteer Career Transition		--	--	--	2,649	2,831	4,116	3,000
	5.2 Increase Returned Volunteer Engagement		--	--	--	9,754	10,866	15,426	12,000
6. Diversity and Inclusion	6.1 Increase Applicant Diversity		26%	27%	30%	33%	35%	36%	35%
	6.2 Build an Open and Inclusive Organizational Culture	U.S. direct hire staff	--	--	--	88%	83%	85%	90% ³
		Host country staff	--	--	--	89%	92%	90%	
		Volunteers	--	--	--	80%	76%	71%	
	6.3 Retain Applicant Diversity	Minority	--	--	--	--	67%	71% (Q1)	No target set
		Non-minority	--	--	--	--	71%	75% (Q1)	

Strategic Objective	Performance Goal		Past Performance Results					FY 2016	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Result	Target
7. Site Development	7.1 Improve Site Development		42%	41%	42%	59% ¹	59%	62%	64%
	7.2 Improve Counterpart Selection and Preparation		31%	32%	32%	53% ¹	51%	53%	57%
8. Train Up	8.1 Improve Language Learning		--	--	--	63%	63%	58%	60%
	8.2 Increase Effectiveness of Technical Training		44%	44%	50%	63% ¹	63%	64%	65%
9. High-Performing Learning Organization	9.1 Improve Staff Training	U.S. direct hire staff	50%	50%	57%	55%	52%	53%	58% ³
		Host country staff	--	--	--	62%	66%	69%	
	9.2 Increase Staff Tenure		--	3.5 years	4.5 years	4.0 years	4.2 years	3.3 years	4.0 years
10. Global Connectivity	10.1 Develop an Integrated Technology Platform		--	--	--	15%	45%	49%	50%
	10.2 Facilitate Knowledge Sharing		--	--	--	77%	78%	77%	82%
11. Measurement for Results	11.1 Conduct Baselines		--	--	--	0%	100%	100%	100%
	11.2 Increase Evidence-Based Decisions		--	--	--	68%	86%	95%	100%
	11.3 Using Evidence to Encourage Innovation		--	--	--	70%	43%	58%	75%

¹ Due to the improvements to the Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) in FY 2014, including modifying the response scales and reducing the length of the questionnaire by half, results from FY 2011–13 (italicized) are not directly comparable to results in FY 2014 and future years. However, year-to-year comparison of results from FY 2014 onward is possible.

² The definition of an application for Volunteer service was modified in FY 2014. Under the updated definition, an “application” occurs when a qualified U.S. citizen submits a completed application for either the Peace Corps Volunteer program (two-year) or the Peace Corps Response program (short-term). FY 2011–13 results are reported for Peace Corps Volunteer program applications only and are based on the application process used in that time period, which required that individuals submit both

an application form and a health history form. Peace Corps Volunteer program applications from FY 2014 onward only require the application form. Medical clearance now takes place later in the application process.

³*All listed population groups must reach the performance goal target in order for the goal to be shown as having met its target.*

Strategic Objective 1: Volunteer Well-Being

Enhance the safety, security, and health of Volunteers through rigorous prevention and response systems and high-quality medical and mental health services

Rationale: The Peace Corps advances its mission through the work of the Volunteers—the most important strategic asset of the agency. Volunteers dedicate themselves to serving their host country in local communities where the health-care infrastructure, security, and environmental conditions differ from those of the United States. While safety, security, and medical risks are an inherent part of Volunteer service, the Peace Corps continually seeks to minimize the risks to Volunteers wherever possible and to provide an effective and compassionate response when crimes do occur. Further, Volunteers may experience a range of emotions as they encounter unique stressors associated with living and working in local communities and the social and cultural complexities of development work. Providing support to enhance the well-being and resiliency of Volunteers helps ensure that they focus on their assignments, minimize risk-taking behaviors, and return home safely and in good health. Volunteer well-being is the shared responsibility of staff and Volunteers.

Strategies

- Ensure that the reforms from the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011 continue to guide agency policy and practice
- Train staff who interact with Volunteers on methods for mentoring, developing, and supporting Volunteers
- Improve the recruitment, retention, and support of Peace Corps medical staff and safety and security staff
- Encourage a comprehensive approach to Volunteer support through agencywide initiatives such as the Sexual Assault Risk-Reduction and Response program
- Expand mental and emotional health support to provide Volunteers with the tools to cope with the challenges of service
- Collaborate with other governmental and nongovernmental agencies on projects to improve Volunteer health outcomes
- Foster the development of Volunteer individual safety and security planning through the provision of additional training and materials

FY 2016 Status: Substantial improvements were made toward this strategic objective in FY 2016. The Peace Corps' Office of Health Services (OHS) launched the agency's electronic medical records system—PCMEDICS—worldwide. Peace Corps medical staff now have 24-hour access, regardless of location, to all Volunteer medical records. OHS has also developed several objective measures specific to the Peace Corps that will be used to better evaluate the health of Volunteers. The Office of Safety and Security initiated a data management system to track critical safety and security recommendations by posts and headquarters offices and to better plan specific crime reduction strategies. Training was provided to all safety and security

managers, and all post staff completed mandatory in-person sexual assault training and post-specific risk mitigation planning.

Performance Goal 1.1: Increase Volunteer Satisfaction with Safety and Security Support <i>Increase the percentage of Volunteers who report feeling satisfied¹ with safety and security support to 82 percent by FY 2018</i>						Target met		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015		FY 2016	FY 2017
Target	--	--	--	--	76%		78%	80%
Result	73%	68%	71%	84% ²	81%		80%	

¹ Includes the top two positive response options on a five-point balanced scale.

² Due to the improvements to the Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) in FY 2014, including modifying the response scales and reducing the length of the questionnaire by half, results from FY 2011–13 (italicized) are not directly comparable to results in FY 2014 and future years. However, year-to-year comparison of results from FY 2014 onward is possible.

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Safety and Security; Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

Partner Office: Office of Victim Advocacy

Data Source: Annual Volunteer Survey

Calculation: The number of Volunteers who responded to the following survey question with the top two positive responses (“satisfied” and “very satisfied”) divided by the total number of Volunteers who responded: *“How satisfied are you with the [safety and security] support provided by in-country Peace Corps staff?”* Respondents who selected the “not applicable/don’t know” response for this question are not included in this calculation.

Overview: The agency employs a rigorous Volunteer safety and security program to reduce risk and to respond to crime and security incidents. Volunteer satisfaction with safety and security support is a measure of the agency’s safety and security prevention and response systems.

FY 2016 Progress Update: The target was met in FY 2016 with results remaining similar to FY 2014 and FY 2015. This performance goal provides an assessment of the agency’s safety and security prevention and response program from the perspective of the end user—the Volunteer. The agency emphasizes effective Volunteer training as the cornerstone of a rigorous safety and security program. This training is designed to enable Volunteers to assess their own situations in order to reduce risk and respond to security incidents. Volunteers who felt they had learned personal security skills in their training were more satisfied with Peace Corps safety and security support overall than those who felt their training had been insufficient. The agency will explore new ways to analyze the relationship between the safety and security of Volunteers and the effectiveness of their training.

Performance Goal 1.2: Reduce Volunteer Dissatisfaction with Medical and Mental Health Support <i>Reduce the percentage of Volunteers who report feeling dissatisfied¹ with medical and mental health support to 7 percent by FY 2016 and maintain that level of performance through FY 2018</i>						Target not Met		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015		FY 2016	FY 2017
Target	--	--	--	8%	7%		7%	7%
Result	7%	7%	9%	9%	10%		10%	

¹ Includes the bottom two negative response options on a five-point balanced scale.

Goal Lead: Associate Director, Office of Health Services

Partner Offices: Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

Data Source: Annual Volunteer Survey

Calculation: The number of Volunteers who responded “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” to the following survey question divided by the total number of Volunteers who responded: “How satisfied are you with the following types of support provided by in-country Peace Corps staff? Medical.” Respondents who selected the “not applicable/don’t know” response option are not included in this calculation.

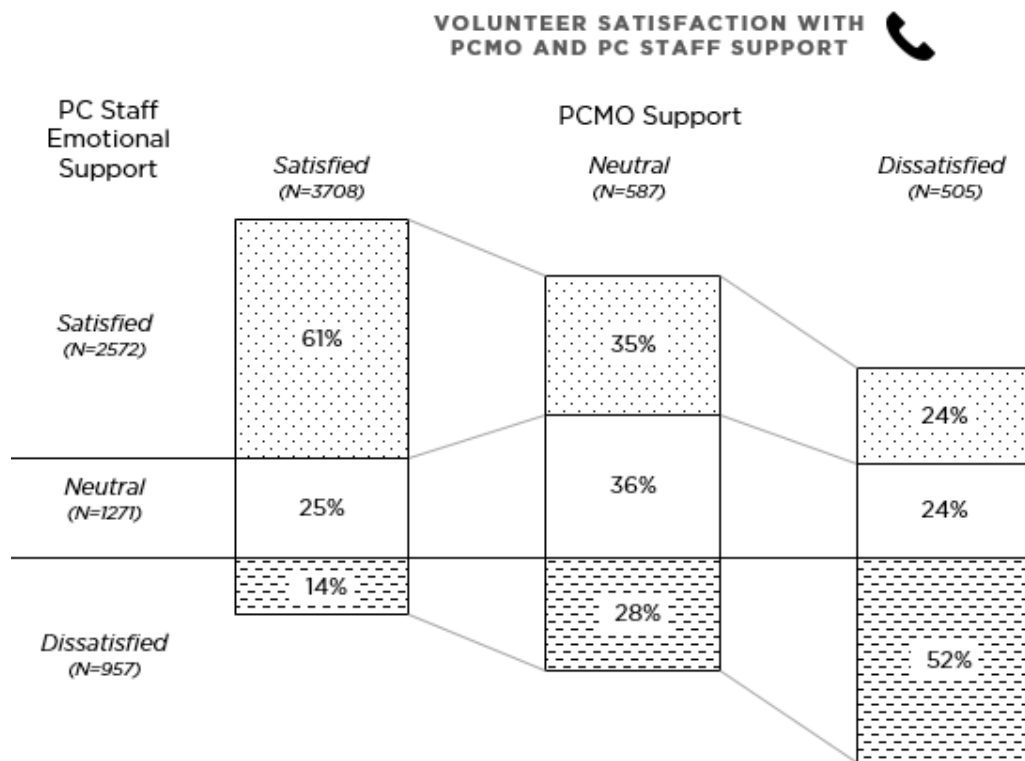
Overview: Medical and mental health support for Volunteers is provided primarily by Peace Corps medical officers (PCMOs) at each post. PCMOs are responsible for establishing and managing the in-country Volunteer health program and act as both program managers and clinicians. Where necessary, PCMOs or the Peace Corps’ Counseling and Outreach Unit (COU) may also refer Volunteers to external health care providers in their country of service for additional treatment or diagnostic testing, but this performance measure is focused on service delivery by Peace Corps staff. Health-care research suggests a strong relationship between patient satisfaction with health care and improved health outcomes. These results show that very few Volunteers are dissatisfied with medical and mental health support, placing the Peace Corps on par with the highest-performing U.S.-based health-care providers.

FY 2016 Progress Update: The results in FY 2016 are similar to prior years and continue to vary modestly from the ambitious target for this goal. This performance goal provides an assessment of the agency’s health-care support to Volunteers from their perspective as end users and focuses on maintaining very low dissatisfaction levels. Several factors may contribute to Volunteer satisfaction with the overall medical support they receive during service, including satisfaction with Peace Corps medical officers, disease incidence, the quality of local providers and medical facilities in their communities, as well as expectations of care and treatment that may differ from what is available in resource-restrained countries.

In order to supplement the subjective measure of Volunteer satisfaction with health services, OHS has developed a set of objective measures specific to the Peace Corps that will be used to

better evaluate the health of Volunteers. These measures are being fine-tuned through baseline data collection in FY 2017 and will be fully implemented in FY 2018.

Volunteer health is a combination of medical health and mental health, and the responsibility for supporting Volunteers' mental health arguably expands beyond PCMOs to include the entire staff at posts. Non-medical Peace Corps staff may interact with a Volunteer struggling to maintain a healthy mental state prior to a formal PCMO-Volunteer interaction. As a result, it is important to examine the correlation between Volunteer satisfaction with the emotional support provided by Peace Corps staff and Volunteer satisfaction with PCMO support. An analysis of 2016 survey results showed a clear correlation linking these two dimensions of health support. Of the more than 3,700 Volunteers satisfied with PCMO support, 61 percent were also satisfied with the emotional support provided by Peace Corps staff. Conversely, of the 505 Volunteers dissatisfied with PCMO support, more than half were also dissatisfied with Peace Corps staff emotional support. These findings suggest that further exploring ways to improve mental health support may contribute to a healthy and productive service for Volunteers.



Performance Goal 1.3: Increase Volunteer Personal Safety <i>Increase the percentage of posts that adopt Volunteer personal safety planning as part of the pre-service training package to 70 percent by FY 2018</i>						No Target Set; Baseline Data Collection		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	--	--	--	35%	70%
Result	--	--	--	--	--	0%		

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Safety and Security; Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

Partner Office: Office of Victim Advocacy

Data Source: Peace Corps administrative records

Calculation: The number of posts that have adopted personal safety planning as part of the standardized training package in Volunteers' pre-service training divided by the total number of open posts that have offered pre-service training sessions in the fiscal year.

Overview: Volunteers who engage in safety and security planning will be better prepared and able to respond to challenges to their well-being. Incorporating personal safety planning into the standard training provided to Volunteers is expected to enhance their knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy for managing day-to-day risks. This is a new measure; targets and results are not available for prior years.

FY 2016 Progress Update:

The materials and training to be adopted by posts will be completed by the end of the second quarter of FY 2017. Posts will begin implementing the new training and using the new materials by the end of the third quarter of FY 2017.

Strategic Objective 2: Service Opportunity of Choice

Position the Peace Corps as the top choice for talented Americans interested in service by reaching a new generation of potential Volunteers and streamlining the application process

Rationale: Increasing the quantity and quality of Volunteer applications is essential in order to achieve the agency's three strategic goals—all of which are completed through the work of skilled Volunteers. The Peace Corps strives to maintain its position as a leading service opportunity in an environment in which talented Americans have an increasingly wide array of service opportunity options.

Strategies

- Continue to improve the agency's tools for communicating service opportunities to prospective Volunteers, including the Peace Corps' newly redesigned website and the development of additional content for mobile devices
- Leverage paid and donated media to aid in recruitment communications and efforts
- Develop a customer relationship management system to track new applicants throughout the Volunteer lifecycle
- Implement strategies to retain all invitees and foster a seamless transition from invitation to departure
- Establish a cohesive agencywide approach to meeting posts' requests that includes clear guidelines for overfill potential and appropriate reserve levels for each post
- Expand the Peace Corps Response program to fill requests for highly skilled and experienced Volunteers
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the application and placement reforms in order to ensure that posts receive the most qualified Volunteers

FY 2016 Status: The agency has successfully sustained the historic changes to the Volunteer application and selection process made in FY 2014. These combined efforts have been continuously monitored and improved over the past three years. Results have been substantial and positive for the agency with regard to recruitment and public engagement.

On June 1, 2016, the Peace Corps launched the agency's largest rebranding initiative in over a decade, which included a new logo, visual identity, recruitment campaign, and a modern, responsive website (peacecorps.gov) that works on both desktop and mobile devices. Each country has its own section on which post staff can feature personalized content along with dynamic country-related stories, photos, Volunteer openings, and Peace Corps Partnership Program projects. The rebranding campaign resulted in dramatic increases in site traffic as well as a 13 percent increase in applications of the primary target population.

Moving forward in FY 2017, significant technology improvements to the application platform will strengthen the pre-departure environment and should result in a more innovative and streamlined process for communicating with invitees. A move to a new platform will establish

the functionality to facilitate online “communities” organized by training class and will allow both headquarters and posts to communicate with invitees in a unique and efficient way. Additionally, the agency plans to utilize a learning management system to deliver online training courses to invitees on topics such as Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and safety and security. Ultimately, these improvements will bolster the agency's efforts to retain invitees by increasing their level of engagement with the Peace Corps in the weeks and months prior to their departure.

Performance Goal 2.1: Volunteer Requests Met <i>Field 100 percent of the Volunteers requested by overseas posts each year</i>						Slightly below target		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	95%	95%	95%	100%	100%	96–102%	96–102%	96–102%
Result	97%	97%	90%	98%	97%	94%		

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection; Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

Partner Office: Office of Health Services

Data Source: Peace Corps database (DOVE/PCVDBMS)

Calculation: The number of trainees who have entered on duty divided by the number of Volunteers requested.

Overview: The ultimate outcome for the Service Opportunity of Choice objective is for the agency to fully meet overseas posts’ programming needs by meeting their requests for skilled Volunteers. The Peace Corps has enough qualified applicants to meet the requests made by posts, and the agency makes every effort to account for changes in posts’ needs and the availability of qualified applicants by inviting a higher number of applicants than the number of trainees requested by posts. In spite of these precautions, attrition between the final date for applicants to join a new training group and the group’s date of departure from the United States is still the primary challenge to reaching a 100 percent fill rate. Several causes of attrition during the period between invitation and departure—such as unanticipated developments in a candidate’s medical or legal process, family responsibilities, and changes to educational or professional plans—remain difficult to predict.

FY 2016 Progress Update: This performance goal monitors the fill rate, which is the number of trainees who have entered on duty at a post divided by the number of Volunteers requested at that post. In FY 2016, a thorough analysis of fill rate was conducted by the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection. The agency began using a percentage range as the target for this performance goal in recognition of the inherent complexity of predicting the exact extent of

attrition. The target range (96-102%) for FY 2016 – 2018, reflects a manageable level of variance of approximately one standard deviation from the optimal target fill rate. This level of variance reflects the posts' ability to adjust operational plans and programs to accommodate slight increases or decreases in the number of Volunteers that they receive. By continuing to analyze these data, the Peace Corps should be able to find causes of systematic attrition, which would lead to improved performance. Additionally, the agency will continue to pursue attrition mitigation strategies, such as strengthening the engagement of invitees during the pre-departure environment.

Performance Goal 2.2: Increase Service Opportunities <i>Increase the number of Volunteers serving annually to 10,000 by FY 2018</i>						Target not met		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	7,600	8,200	8,800	9,400	10,000
Result	9,095	8,073	7,209	6,818	6,919	7,213		

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection; Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

Partner Office: Peace Corps Response

Data Source: Peace Corps database (PCVDBMS/HRMS)

Calculation: The number of Volunteers comprising the agency's "on-board strength" (OBS), defined as the number of Volunteers and trainees—including Peace Corps Response Volunteers—from all funding sources who are serving anywhere in the world on September 30 of the fiscal year.

Overview: Per the Peace Corps Act, "It is the policy of the United States and a purpose of the Peace Corps to maintain, to the maximum extent appropriate and consistent with programmatic and fiscal considerations, a Volunteer corps of at least 10,000 individuals." Subject to the availability of sustained funding, building and maintaining an even larger Volunteer population would ensure that more Americans have the opportunity to serve—a high priority for the agency. Targets for this goal are set to increase the number of Volunteers serving annually in order to ensure stable and well-supported agency growth.

FY 2016 Progress Update: The Peace Corps' largest posts (located primarily in the Africa Region) have reached their maximum absorptive capacity. Growth beyond current levels for large posts—those that support 200 Volunteers or more—will require a strategic assessment of the risks and post needs associated with an increased trainee input. The Peace Corps will continue to utilize data from the annual Country Portfolio Review to inform decisions about

trainee input for future years. More information on the Country Portfolio Review can be found on page 75 in *Appendix A* of this report.

Performance Goal 2.3: Increase Applications <i>Increase applications for Volunteer service to 25,000 by FY 2018</i>						Target met		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	20,000	22,000	23,000	24,000	25,000
Result	12,206	10,091	10,118	19,151 ¹	24,848	23,987		

¹ The definition of an application for Volunteer service was modified in FY 2014. Under the updated definition, an “application” occurs when a qualified U.S. citizen submits a completed application for either the Peace Corps Volunteer program (two-year) or the Peace Corps Response program (short-term). FY 2011–13 results are reported for Peace Corps Volunteer program applications only and are based on the application process used in that time period, which required that individuals submit both an application form and a health history form. Peace Corps Response applications from FY 2014 onward only require the application form.

Goal Lead: Associate Director, Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

Partner Offices: Peace Corps Response; Office of Communications; Office of Strategic Partnerships

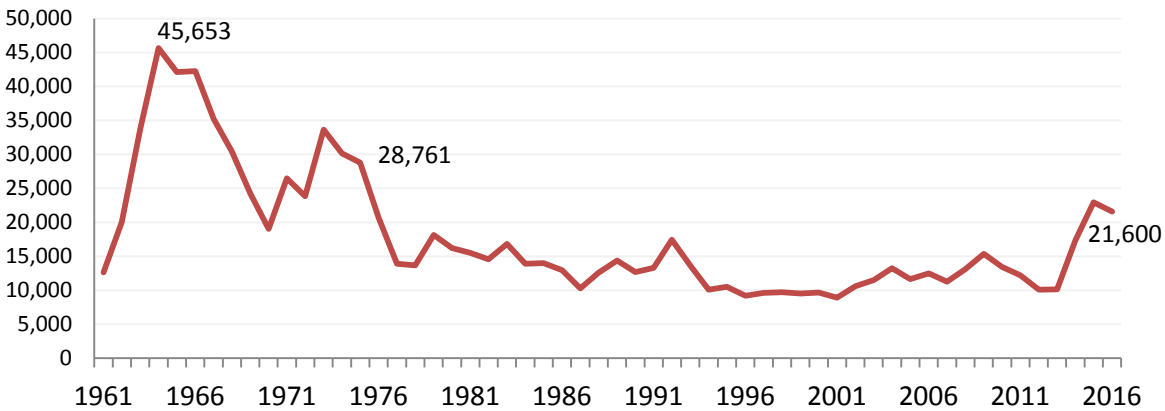
Data Source: Peace Corps database (DOVE/PCVDBMS)

Calculation: The total number of completed applications for the Peace Corps Volunteer program and the Peace Corps Response program from U.S. citizens who are at least 18 years old.

Overview: An increase in the number of applications for Peace Corps service is a clear indication of the competitiveness of the Peace Corps as a service opportunity of choice. The substantial increase in applications related to the Peace Corps’ updated policies and streamlined processes in FY 2014 is balanced by progressively higher targets for the remaining years in the strategic plan. The agency’s goal is to ensure that there are multiple applicants for each Volunteer request so that Peace Corps service is competitive and well-qualified candidates are placed in the field.

FY 2016 Progress Update: In FY 2016, the Peace Corps saw its second-highest number of applications for the two-year Volunteer program in 40 years—21,600 applications for Volunteer service (23,987 applications total, when including Peace Corps Response applications). As shown in the graph below, this is only 6 percent less than the record-breaking 22,956 applications (24,848 total, including Peace Corps Response applications) in FY 2015. The dramatic influx of high-quality applications over the past three years indicates a strong desire among Americans to volunteer for service abroad.

Two-Year Volunteer Applications (FY 1961-2016)



A transparent application process ensures that applicants are able to easily search Volunteer opportunities and find the opening that is best suited to their skill set and needs. Volunteer openings include detailed information, such as a comprehensive project description, program size, required and desired skills, country-specific language needs, and in-country living conditions. Prospective applicants can browse service opportunities by country, work area, language requirement, and departure date at peacecorps.gov/openings/.

Performance Goal 2.4: Reduce Time from Application to Invitation						Target met
Reduce the average time from application to invitation to no more than 3 months by FY 2016						
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Target	--	--	--	5 months	4 months	3 months
Result	10 months	11 months	6 months	7 months	4 months	2 months

Goal Lead: Associate Director, Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

Data Source: Peace Corps database (DOVE/PCVDBMS)

Calculation: The average number of months between (1) the date that an application package (Health History Form and Soft Skills Questionnaire) is completed and (2) the date that an invitation to serve is issued for all invitations generated in the fiscal year.

Overview: Prior to FY 2013, the application process was perceived to be much longer than those for other service opportunities and was cited as a major deterrent to completing the process. The infographic below depicts the current application process.

APPLYING TO THE PEACE CORPS



Connect with a recruiter.

Talk to a recruiter before you apply for insights into the process and help strengthening your application. Connect at peacecorps.gov/recruiters.



1 BROWSE

Search current openings and apply to up to three positions. Want to serve where you're needed most? Check out the "Featured Jobs."



2 APPLY

Filling out the online application takes about an hour.



3 HEALTH HISTORY

Provide your health history and learn which countries can support your medical needs.



4 INTERVIEW

If selected, interview via videoconference.



5 INVITATION

If chosen, accept your invitation to serve.



6 MEDICAL AND LEGAL CLEARANCE

Provide additional medical and legal information. Our medical team will certify that medical support for your specific needs can be provided.



7 ONBOARDING

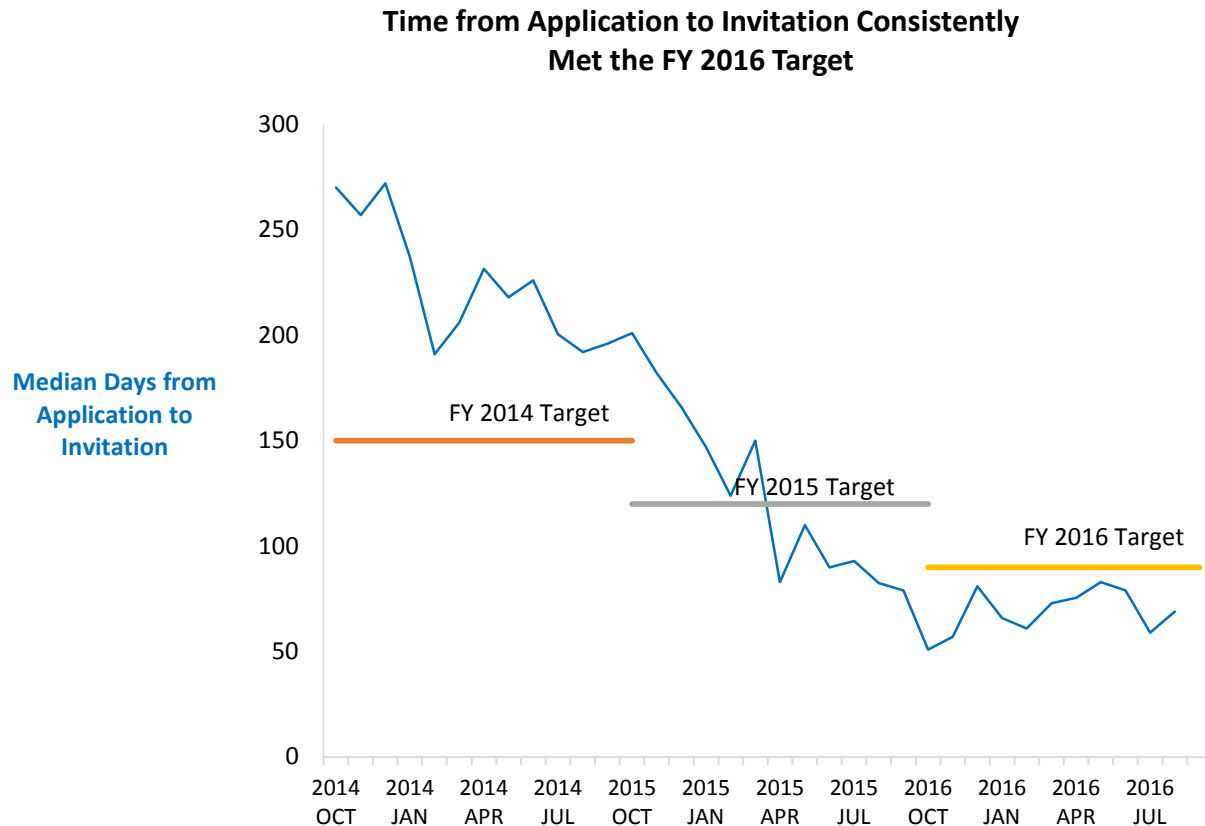
Two months prior to service you'll complete the online documentation required for departure.



8 DEPARTURE

Embark on your Peace Corps service assignment!

FY 2016 Progress Update: The target was met. This performance goal is a key efficiency measure as it directly captures administrative timeliness of the application process. The median time for FY 2016 was 2 months, a 70 percent decrease since FY 2014. As key improvements and successful automation of processes in the application process have been codified, the agency has accomplished this performance goal ahead of schedule and will retire the goal in FY 2016. The Peace Corps remains committed to ensuring a streamlined application process and will continue to regularly monitor the application cycle to ensure performance gains are maintained and continue.



Strategic Objective 3: Development Impact

Advance community-based development by strengthening the capacity of local individuals and communities, focusing on highly effective technical interventions and leveraging strategic partnerships

Rationale: The Peace Corps delivers development assistance to interested host countries through the work of its Volunteers. In conducting their work, Volunteers utilize effective technical interventions to share their skills and experience with local individuals and communities and work collaboratively to strengthen local capacity to address development challenges. In addition, the Peace Corps partners with other U.S. government, nongovernmental, and private sector development partners to leverage training, resources, knowledge, and skills to expand the reach of programs and to enhance Volunteers' impact.

Strategies

- Embrace new approaches (theories of change, logical frameworks) to develop more focused-in projects with fewer standard indicators
- Fully implement standardized technical training to ensure Volunteers have the skills required to meet community needs
- Establish clear baseline data and outcome measurements for the six-year project lifecycle model
- Provide monitoring and evaluation training to staff and Volunteers
- Train all posts on the use of the redesigned Volunteer Reporting Tool to support timely and high-quality feedback mechanisms
- Develop post standards on the frequency and quality of feedback provided to Volunteers on their work
- Provide guidance to posts detailing ways to improve the selection and cultivation of counterparts
- Expand counterpart training opportunities to provide counterparts and community members with tools to work effectively with Volunteers and to strengthen the capacity of host country individuals and communities
- Leverage agency strategic partners to provide Volunteers with additional technical training, tools, and resources

FY 2016 Status: This strategic objective demonstrated significant progress despite mixed results in performance goal metrics meeting their targets. In FY 2016, the Peace Corps developed "anchor activities" for each sector that had been identified as highly effective to further focus Volunteers and their counterparts on evidence-informed activities. In addition, the agency distributed guidance on developing logic models and theories of change, and on updating project frameworks to better assist posts in demonstrating contributions toward development goals. The agency also published a research report detailing the contributions of Peace Corps Volunteers and returned Volunteers to the global eradication of smallpox in 35 countries in the

1960s and 1970s as evidence of the impact that the Peace Corps can have in partnerships with other organizations.

Performance Goal 3.1: Advance Community-Based Development Outcomes <i>Increase the percentage of projects with documented gains in community-based development outcomes to 90 percent by FY 2018</i>						Slightly below target		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015			
Target	--	--	--	--	--	80%	85%	90%
Result	--	--	--	76%	75%	76%		

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

Partner Offices: Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support; Office of Global Health and HIV/AIDS; Office of Strategic Partnerships; Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning

Data Source: Volunteer Reporting Tool

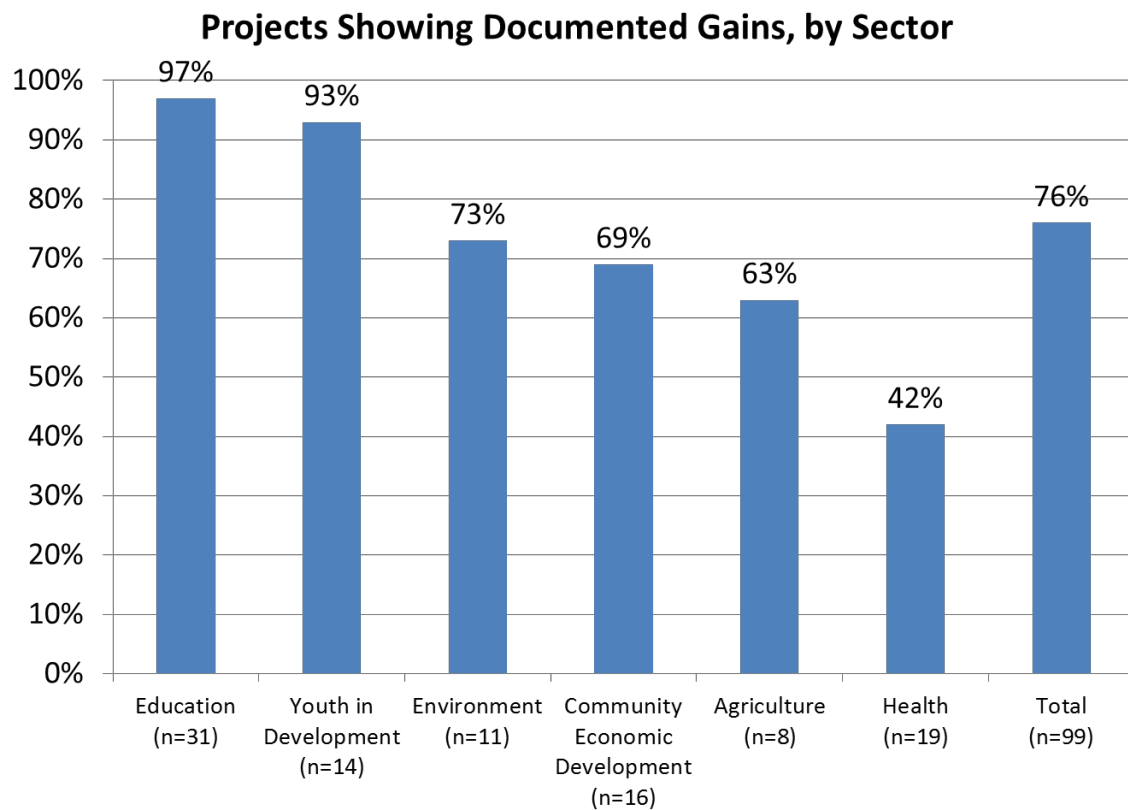
Calculation: The number of projects that meet two thresholds for a “documented gain” on at least one of the standard sector indicators used for this goal divided by the number of projects that include one or more of the 19 standard sector indicators. The two thresholds are (1) at least 25 percent of the Volunteers assigned to the selected projects must report some results and (2) the combined total of all Volunteer results must be at least 25 percent of the annualized targets for the project.

Overview: Community-based projects are undertaken by multiple generations of Volunteers serving for two years over a defined timeframe to advance the host country’s public benefit goal. Plans for each project are designed and executed alongside local partners. The plans define the project background and the implementation strategy. Project frameworks are used by the Peace Corps to operationalize the project plans by describing the goals, objectives, activity statements, and indicators of a project.

In order to measure this performance goal, 19 standard sector indicators representing all six of the Peace Corps’ sectors were selected. These indicators are based on industry standards and are outcome-oriented measures of changes in specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, or conditions that result from project activities. An increase in the percentage of projects with documented gains is used as evidence that Volunteers are contributing to community-based development.

FY 2016 Progress Update: The result for Performance Goal 3.1 was slightly below target in FY 2016 and is further analyzed by sector in the chart below. The results by sector were calculated

by dividing the number of projects with one or more indicators passing both thresholds (refer to the calculation above) by the total number of projects reported for that sector. The Education and Youth in Development sectors had the highest proportion of projects with documented gains (97% and 93%, respectively).



Performance Goal 3.2: Strengthen Local Capacity						Target Met		
Increase the percentage of counterparts who report increased capacity to 90 percent by FY 2018								
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	--	--	84%	87%	90%
Result	--	--	--	--	83%	86%		

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

Partner Offices: Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support; Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning

Data Source: Global Counterpart Survey

Calculation: The number of counterparts who ranked one of the following descriptions as the top Volunteer impact on their work divided by the total number of randomly selected counterparts interviewed by post staff: *“helped to improve day-to-day work skills of others,” “suggested new ways to meet goals,”* and *“motivated or inspired others to do better work.”*

Overview: Volunteers strengthen local capacity by working closely with community partners through all phases of their project. This goal measures the increase in the capacity of local counterparts—Volunteers’ primary community partners—from the perspective of the counterparts themselves. To measure this goal, counterparts are asked about the ways Volunteers impact their work and the work of their organizations. Many counterparts cite increased capacity within their communities, which may better position host country partners to achieve measurable and sustainable results.

FY 2016 Progress Update: This performance goal met its FY 2016 target. Utilizing a random global sample of 400 counterparts, the Global Counterpart Survey was designed to measure counterparts’ perception of the capacity building that resulted from working with Peace Corps Volunteers. For the second consecutive year, these results provided evidence that the Peace Corps was having a positive effect on both Strategic Goal One and Goal Two.

In order to minimize the potential for positive bias that might occur with a direct question on capacity development, the counterparts were asked to rank the importance of five Volunteer contributions to their work. Only the three responses noted in the calculation above were considered by the Peace Corps to be evidence of capacity development.

The following chart shows the relative ranking of concepts related to Volunteer impact, as perceived by surveyed counterparts and calculated using the maximum difference (Max Diff) analysis method. After ranking Volunteers’ greatest and smallest impact on their work, counterparts are given the last three responses to rank order. While only the top-ranked choice was used to calculate the result for this performance goal, this graph illustrates the global counterpart responses in more detail.

Volunteer Impact Based on Host Country Counterpart Opinion



Results are based on two survey questions: "Thinking of all of the Volunteers who you may have worked with, which of the following is the way in which those Volunteers have had the largest impact on your work?"; and "Which would you say is the way in which they have made the smallest impact?" (n=399) Aggregate scores are on a -100 to 100 scale and reflect the respondents' likelihood of selecting an item as having the highest or lowest impact.

Performance Goal 3.3: Improve Feedback to Volunteers Increase the percentage of Volunteers who report feeling satisfied ¹ with the timeliness and quality of feedback provided on their work to 68 percent by FY 2018						Target not met		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	40%	59%	62%	65%	68%
Result	39%	33%	38%	55% ²	54%	57%		

¹ Includes the top two positive response options on a five-point balanced scale.

² Due to the improvements to the Annual Volunteer Survey in FY 2014, including modifying the response scales and reducing the length of the questionnaire by half, results from FY 2011–13 (italicized) are not directly comparable to results in FY 2014 and future years. However, year-to-year comparison of results from FY 2014 onward is possible. Targets for FY 2015 and beyond were revised in view of the higher than projected FY 2014 results.

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

Partner Offices: Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support; Office of the Chief Information Officer

Data Source: Annual Volunteer Survey

Calculation: The number of Volunteers who responded to the following two survey questions with the top two positive responses ("satisfied" and "very satisfied") divided by the total

number of Volunteers who responded: “*How satisfied are you with the timeliness and quality of feedback from Peace Corps staff about your work?*” Respondents who selected the “not applicable/don’t know” option are not included in this calculation.

Overview: Volunteers live and work in local communities that are often far away from Peace Corps staff. When Volunteers receive timely, high-quality feedback on their work from staff via email, text messages, phone calls, responses to the Volunteer Reporting Tool, or other mechanisms, they are able to benefit from the experience and advice of staff, share successes, and address challenges. This interaction contributes to the ability of Volunteers to achieve their project outcomes.

FY 2016 Progress Update: The target was not met in FY 2016. Notably, 63 percent of the Volunteers who responded to the survey question were satisfied with the *timeliness* of the feedback they received, and 66 percent were satisfied with its *quality*. However, the FY 2016 result for this performance goal falls short of its target, as only 57 percent of the Volunteers reported feeling satisfied with both the timeliness *and* quality of the feedback they were given.

The Peace Corps has identified high-performing posts with results reaching over 80-percent satisfaction with the feedback they provide. The agency shared lessons learned from these high performers, including successful pilot programs that focused on the use of mobile technology and better standard operating procedures in utilizing the Peace Corps’ Volunteer Reporting Tool that focus on offering feedback on specific elements of the Volunteers’ reports, to help promote improvements at other posts.

Strategic Objective 4: Cross-Cultural Understanding

Build a deeper mutual understanding of other cultures by developing meaningful connections between American and host country individuals and communities

Rationale: Volunteers advance cultural understanding between the United States and the communities where they serve by living and working side by side with local partners and by sharing their experiences with family, friends, and the American public both during their service and when they return to the United States. Through comprehensive intercultural learning opportunities, Volunteers acquire skills that allow them to not only understand other cultures but to navigate among cultures appropriately, responsibly, and effectively. In this way, Volunteers create a cultural window that enables American and host country individuals and communities to have meaningful conversations, develop strong relationships, and sustain their interactions.

Strategies

- Develop intercultural competency standards and anchor activities to assist in community integration for Volunteers
- Coach post staff to utilize language training as a method for developing Volunteers' intercultural communication skills
- Develop measures to assess Volunteers' intercultural competence at multiple points during their service
- Incorporate age-appropriate, intercultural education into Third Goal activities
- Encourage currently serving and returned Volunteers to leverage new technology, including social media, to share their experiences in order to foster communication between Americans and host country individuals and communities (e.g., Blog It Home and video contests)
- Strengthen the Coverdell World Wise Schools Correspondence Match program with online platforms and expand educator access to information based on their curriculum needs

FY 2016 Status: Strategies and key milestones that support this strategic objective have been executed according to plan. In FY 2016, the Peace Corps published two significant pieces of research: Peace Corps Works: A Cross-Sectional Analysis of 21 Host Country Impact Studies and the 2016 Global Counterpart Survey Summary Report. Both reports present data and key observations on the Peace Corps' effectiveness in its Strategic Goal One (Building Local Capacity) and Goal Two (Sharing America with the World) and help inform opportunities to improve strategies related to cross-cultural understanding in FY 2017 and beyond. More specifically, these analyses examine counterpart perspectives on the success and sustainability of Peace Corps projects and the extent to which Volunteers changed counterparts' understanding of Americans. In addition, the agency plans to take steps to diversify the data sources informing this strategic objective moving forward, including the development of standard Goal Two indicators for Volunteer reporting.

Performance Goal 4.1: Greater Understanding of Americans <i>Maintain the percentage of counterparts who report a greater understanding of Americans after working with a Volunteer at or above 95 percent through FY 2018</i>						Slightly below target		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015		FY 2016	FY 2017
Target	--	--	--	--	--		95%	95%
Result	--	--	--	94%	90%		91%	

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

Partner Offices: Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support; Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning

Data Source: Global Counterpart Survey

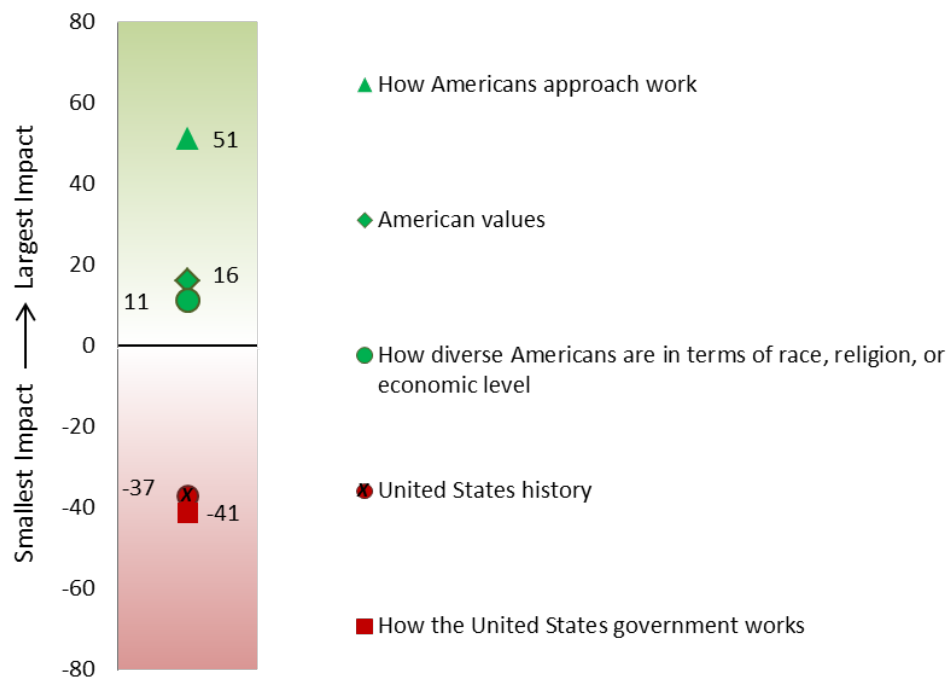
Calculation: The number of counterparts who reported learning about the United States or Americans divided by the number of randomly selected counterparts interviewed by post staff who responded to the following question: *“Have you learned anything new about the United States or Americans through your interactions with Peace Corps Volunteers?”*

Overview: Counterparts work closely with Volunteers. Their increased understanding of the United States as a country and of Americans as a people as a result of sustained day-to-day interactions with Volunteers indicates a successful partnership for building cultural understanding between the United States and the countries where Volunteers serve.

FY 2016 Progress Update: As in FY 2015, approximately nine in 10 Peace Corps counterparts in FY 2016 reported that they learned something new about the United States or Americans after working with Volunteers. Results from FY 2015 and onward are based on data collected from a globally representative random sample of counterparts and therefore have a lower margin of error than the census of counterparts that the agency attempted in FY 2014.

The survey included a supplemental question about the specific content (see graphic below) that counterparts reported learning through working with Peace Corps Volunteers. Counterparts reported that they learned most about how Americans approach work, followed by American values, then American diversity. These results are very similar to those found in 2015, with one exception: Although American values ranked second both years, its aggregate score fell 10 points between 2015 and 2016, ranking it closer to American diversity in FY 2016.

Increased Knowledge about the United States or Americans among Host Country Counterparts (n=365)



Results are based on two survey questions: “Which of the following is the thing that you have learned the most about through working with Peace Corps Volunteers”; and “Which is the thing that you have learned the least about through working with Peace Corps Volunteers?” Aggregate scores are on a -100 to 100 scale and reflect the respondents' likelihood of selecting an item as having the highest or lowest impact.

Performance Goal 4.2: Increase Cross-Cultural Connections <i>Increase the percentage of Volunteers who report that they facilitated direct interactions between Americans and host country individuals and communities to 70 percent by FY 2018</i>						Target not met		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	--	60%	63%	67%	70%
Result	--	--	--	57%	57%	54%		

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Director, Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support

Partner Office: Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services

Data Source: Annual Volunteer Survey

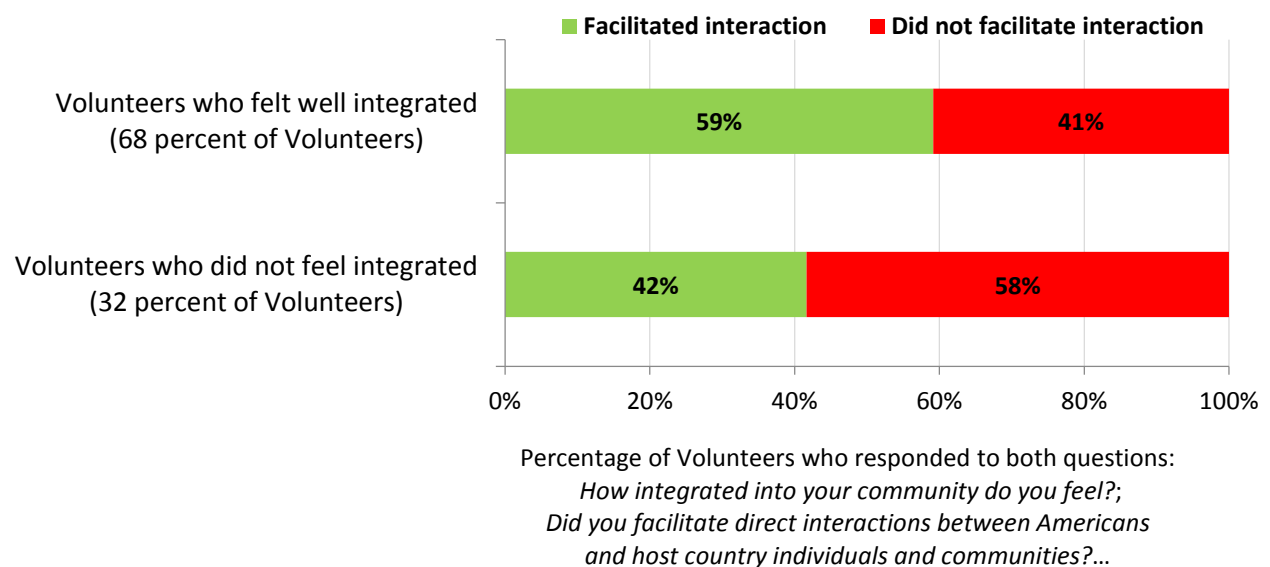
Calculation: The number of Volunteers who reported facilitating direct interactions between Americans and host country individuals divided by the number of Volunteers who responded to

the following question: *“Did you facilitate direct interactions between Americans and host country individuals in the last 12 months?”*

Overview: When Volunteers actively build strong connections between the United States and host countries, they are promoting mutual cultural understanding and contributing substantially to the Peace Corps’ foundational goals and mission. Direct interactions between Americans and host country individuals and communities include communication through visits, letters, social media, email, web conferences, and other mechanisms. Volunteers may facilitate these direct interactions independently or through Peace Corps-sponsored programs such as the Coverdell World Wise Schools Correspondence Match.

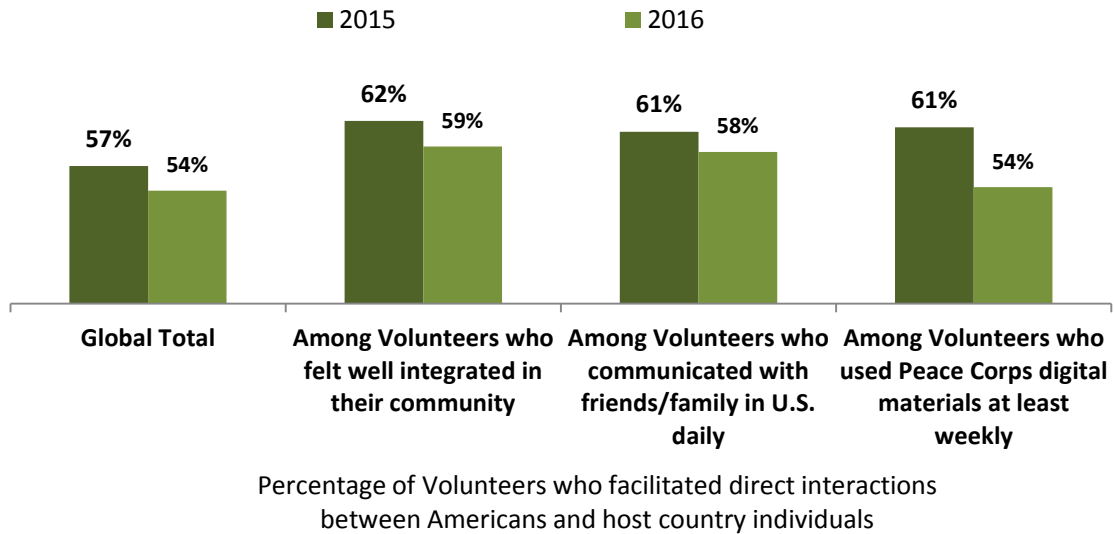
FY 2016 Progress Update: The target was not met. Volunteer facilitation rates decreased slightly relative to previous years. In FY 2015, the ability of Volunteers to successfully integrate into their host country communities was cited as a key enabler in their subsequent attempts to foster interactions between Americans and host country individuals. Specifically, well-integrated Volunteers were far more likely to facilitate direct interactions between Americans and host country individuals. This relationship was also observed in FY 2016 as indicated in the following graph.

Well-integrated Volunteers were more likely to facilitate direct interactions between Americans and host country individuals



Volunteers also need to maintain their contacts from home. For successful facilitation to occur, not only do Volunteers need to engage in their host country communities, but they must also have the will and ability to maintain their existing relationships in the United States.

Volunteers were more likely to facilitate cross-cultural connections when they felt well integrated *and* if they frequently communicated with American friends and family



The chart above demonstrates the impact of both integrating successfully in the host community and remaining connected to friends and family in the United States. Volunteers who successfully developed and maintained their ties to both groups were more likely to facilitate direct interactions between other Americans and host country individuals.

Finally, there is some evidence that the agency can further support the capacity of Volunteers to successfully facilitate interactions by encouraging the use of the Peace Corps' digital infrastructure, materials, and guidance. As shown in the chart above, in FY 2015, Volunteers who regularly used Peace Corps digital materials also facilitated interactions at higher rates than the global average. In FY 2016, however, the facilitation rate of Volunteers who utilized the agency's digital materials was no different from the global average. Given that the agency's digital resources are finite and often subject to change in a rapidly evolving environment, the Peace Corps will continue to explore how to maximize the potential of its digital tools in promoting interactions between Americans and host country individuals.

Performance Goal 4.3: Increase Intercultural Competence Learning Opportunities <i>Increase the percentage of posts that adopt timely and intentional intercultural competence learning opportunities for key stakeholders</i>						No target set; baseline data collection (Discontinued)
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Target	--	--	--	--	--	--
Result	--	--	--	--	--	98%

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Director, Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support

Partner Offices: Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

Data Source: FY 2016 Training Status Report

Calculation: The number of open posts with Volunteers that included intentional intercultural competence learning opportunities in their programming and training efforts divided by the total number of open posts with Volunteers during the fiscal year.

Overview: Intentional, well-designed interventions and training programs are critical components to enhancing the cultural self-awareness and skills of individuals to navigate between cultures and people who are different from themselves. As research in this field has broadened, the Peace Corps has strengthened its tools so that posts can integrate foundational concepts of intercultural competence into their programming and training efforts. Each of the Peace Corps' stakeholders—Peace Corps trainees, Volunteers, host country staff, U.S. direct hire staff, host families, and counterparts—who receive the newly designed intercultural competence tools will be better equipped to interact and communicate effectively and appropriately across cultures.

FY 2016 Progress Update: In FY 2016, 98 percent of posts integrated intercultural competence learning opportunities into at least one aspect of their programming and training efforts. These results show that the agency's efforts targeting intercultural competence and diversity significantly exceeded initial expectations in terms of adoption and scalability. The initial plan for measuring this indicator was for FY 2016 data to serve as a baseline with targets for continued expansion of the program in FY 2017 and 2018. However, given that this indicator has already reached 98 percent achievement, this performance goal will be discontinued after FY 2016 and targets will not be set for future years.

Strategic Objective 5: Continuation of Service

Support returned Volunteers' continuation of service by fostering a vibrant alumni network, providing tools and resources to ease their transition after service, and offering opportunities for them to share their experiences

Rationale: More than 225,000 Americans have served as Peace Corps Volunteers since 1961—a significant “domestic dividend” of skilled and dedicated individuals who continue serving the American public and the communities where they lived and worked abroad long after they return home. By providing tools and resources to Volunteers to ease their transition after service, such as career counseling and best practices for sharing their experiences and promoting service, the Peace Corps is positioning returned Volunteers to be active contributors to the agency’s Third Goal. The agency also encourages returned Volunteers to share their experiences with family, friends, and the public; build and maintain connections between Americans and host country individuals and communities; and recruit the next generation of Volunteers. Significant additional work to advance the Peace Corps mission is undertaken directly by the returned Peace Corps Volunteer community through returned Volunteer groups and the actions of individual returned Volunteers—independent of the agency. Notably, a significant number of returned Volunteers continue their service as international development or foreign policy specialists.

Strategies

- Leverage social media, email, and other online tools to effectively communicate and share knowledge with and among returned Volunteers
- Collect regular feedback from returned Volunteers through a survey to track their professional and academic progress and to inform the development of tools that will help them continue their service throughout their careers
- Expand returned Volunteer career services across the United States by centralizing tools and resources available to returned Volunteers through an expanded and easily accessible online job portal
- Develop a “Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services” curriculum to be included in pre-departure, pre-service, and close-of-service training for Volunteers
- Engage the American public through strong partnerships with businesses, schools, and government agencies to provide communication platforms for returned Volunteers, increase public understanding of other cultures, and generate a commitment to public service and community development

FY 2016 Status: The Peace Corps has consistently exceeded its performance goal targets for this strategic objective. The shift from live events and individual services to virtual communications with the returned Volunteer community has dramatically increased the quantity of interactions. In FY 2017, the Peace Corps plans to launch a research study on the effects of Peace Corps service on the lives, careers, and extended networks of Volunteers. The objectives of the study are to better understand the agency’s level of success in attaining Strategic Goal Three

(Bringing the World Back Home), identify the long-term value propositions of Peace Corps service, describe the variation in returned Volunteer career trajectories, and increase the understanding of how service affects the extended networks of Volunteers and returned Volunteers. The study is in the process of being designed and will likely follow Volunteers over an extended period of time.

Performance Goal 5.1: Support Returned Volunteer Career Transition						Target met		
Increase the number of returned Volunteers who access the Peace Corps’ career services to 3,500 by FY 2018								
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	2,500	2,750	3,000	3,250	3,500
Result	--	--	--	2,649	2,831	4,116		

Goal Lead: Director, Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services

Partner Office: Office of Strategic Partnerships

Data Source: Peace Corps administrative records

Calculation: The number of returned Volunteers (defined as individuals who have completed a tour as a Peace Corps Volunteer) who registered for or participated in agency-initiated career services during the fiscal year.

Overview: The agency provides returned Volunteers with top-notch career services, seminars, and transition tools upon returning from service. These services include career conferences and fairs, employer panels, employer information sessions, career-focused webinars, résumé reviews, mock interviews, and career service consultations provided at headquarters and regional recruitment offices. Providing the career and personal development tools necessary for returned Volunteers' success in both professional and service opportunities will ease their transition upon returning home and facilitate an environment where they can share their experiences and promote volunteerism and public service.

FY 2016 Progress Update: The agency served 4,116 unique returned Volunteers and conducted 9,288 career service activities in FY 2016 (an average of 2.3 activities for every participating returned Volunteer). Although the increase in demand for career services did lead to wait times for access to career development specialists, much progress was made in expanding career services for returned Volunteers overall. Returned Volunteer Career Services engaged a wide scope of employers in FY 2016, including Google, Apple, Microsoft, FINCA International, the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of the Interior, MorningStar, Engility, Maher & Maher, Mastercard, Tetra Tech, the Small Business Administration, NASA, the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, FEMA, PYXERA Global, and RTI International. Moving forward, the Peace Corps plans to expand its web resources for returned

Volunteers and further leverage the agency's customer relationship management system to better track employer engagement and hiring rates.

Performance Goal 5.2: Increase Returned Volunteer Engagement						Target met		
Increase the number of returned Volunteers who participate in agency-supported Third Goal activities to 16,000 by FY 2018								
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	8,000	10,000	12,000	14,000	16,000
Result	--	--	--	9,754	10,866	15,426		

Goal Lead: Director, Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services

Partner Offices: Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection; Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support

Data Source: Peace Corps administrative records

Calculation: The number of returned Volunteers (defined as individuals who have completed a tour as a Peace Corps Volunteer) who registered for agency-supported Third Goal activities during the fiscal year.

Overview: The agency facilitates a wide array of activities to provide returned Volunteers with opportunities to share their experiences, including events and programs that are directly sponsored by the Peace Corps and others that are jointly sponsored by the Peace Corps and its strategic partners. These events include the Coverdell World Wise Schools Speakers Match, recruitment events, and Peace Corps Week. The agency also develops materials for returned Volunteers to independently conduct Third Goal activities.

FY 2016 Progress Update: The Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services has consistently exceeded performance goal targets through an innovative, client-based approach to engaging returned Volunteers. Specifically in FY 2016, the agency met Volunteers online. By focusing opportunities for Third Goal activities using online platforms, such as Facebook and GovDelivery, the agency has reinvigorated Third Goal communications and engagement.

Strategic Objective 6: Diversity and Inclusion

Actively recruit, support, and retain a diverse workforce and Volunteer corps and build an inclusive culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness

Rationale: Volunteers serve as cultural ambassadors in the local communities where they live and work. To promote a better understanding of America, it is critical that Volunteers represent the rich diversity of the U.S. population. In addition, since many staff are drawn from the pool of returned Volunteers, a diverse Volunteer corps contributes to building a more diverse workforce. To harness and support the unique perspectives of a diverse workforce and Volunteer corps, the agency fosters an inclusive culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, fairness, and meaningful ongoing dialogue.

Strategies

- Train directors, managers, and supervisors to address diversity and inclusion goals and understand Equal Employee Opportunity policies and principles
- Expand collaboration among key stakeholders to integrate diversity and inclusion concepts and Equal Employee Opportunity policies and principles into core business practices and agency culture
- Collaborate with returned Volunteer groups, strategic partners, and local and regional groups aligned with underrepresented populations to support the recruitment of diverse applicants
- Support and monitor the implementation of the same-sex couples initiative, which allows same-sex couples to serve together as Peace Corps Volunteers
- Support employee resource groups to help recruit, retain, and foster a diverse workforce through the use of data-informed, resourceful, and innovative methods
- Provide tools and training for staff to increase their awareness and empower them to prevent the types of discrimination and harassment issues that can occur within a diverse environment
- Review and revise the eligibility standards for Volunteer service, including medical status eligibility standards, to ensure that applicants are not evaluated on the basis of any factor that is not relevant to the ability to serve effectively
- Develop a plan for a streamlined mentoring program to connect recently returned Volunteers with current Peace Corps applicants to improve retention

FY 2016 Status: In FY 2016, the Peace Corps maintained its results for this strategic objective. The agency took proactive steps to further commit to and advance its diversity and inclusion efforts and overall strategy. The agency's Senior Policy Committee established and approved a new Diversity Policy Statement. The Diversity Governance Council was officially chartered at the beginning of FY16 and meets quarterly to coordinate moving the agency forward on targets established in the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. The agency also supports nine Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and two Employee Affinity Groups (EAGs) that are directly

managed by diverse staff based on racial/ethnic groups, sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), religion, veteran status, and parental status.

Performance Goal 6.1: Increase Applicant Diversity <i>Increase applications for Volunteer service from individuals of minority racial and ethnic groups to 35 percent by 2016 and maintain that level of performance through FY 2018</i>						Target Met		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015		FY 2016	FY 2017
Target	--	--	--	32%	34%	35%	35%	35%
Result	26%	27%	30%	33%	35%	36%		

Goal Lead: Associate Director, Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

Partner Offices: Office of Communications; Office of Civil Rights and Diversity

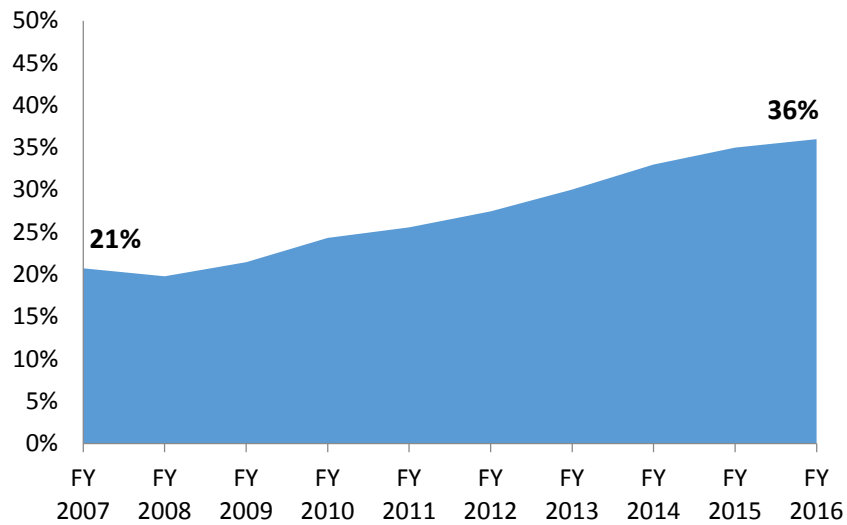
Data Source: Peace Corps database (DOVE/PCVDBMS)

Calculation: The number of completed applications from individuals belonging to minority racial and ethnic groups divided by the total number of completed applications for Peace Corps Volunteer service and Peace Corps Response positions. Applicants who did not provide their race or ethnicity are not included in this calculation.

Overview: Maintaining the number of applications from individuals of minority racial and ethnic groups—who are traditionally underrepresented populations—results in a Volunteer force that reflects the diversity of America. Given that Peace Corps projects generally require at least a bachelor’s degree level of education, the agency works to maintain a Volunteer population that reflects the diversity of the college-degreed U.S. population.

FY 2016 Progress Update: The target was met. Targets for this goal are based on diversity data from the college-degreed population of the United States. Minority racial and ethnic groups include the following designations on the Peace Corps application: Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian or Native Alaskan, and two or more races. Over the past ten years, the percentage of applications from minorities has steadily increased from 21 percent in FY 2007 to 36 percent in FY 2016. The two largest minority groups to apply in FY 2016 were Hispanic or Latino (14 percent) and Black or African American (12 percent).

**Percentage of Applicants from Individuals
of Minority Racial and Ethnic Groups**



Performance Goal 6.2: Build an Open and Inclusive Organizational Culture

Increase the percentage of Peace Corps Volunteers, U.S. direct hire staff, and host country staff who agree¹ that the agency has an inclusive organizational culture to 90 percent and maintain that level of performance through FY 2018

**Target
not
met**

		FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target ²		--	--	--	85%	88%	90%	90%	90%
Result	U.S. direct hire staff	--	--	--	88%	83%	85%		
	Host country staff	--	--	--	89%	92%	90%		
	Volunteers	--	--	--	80%	76%	71%		

¹ Includes the top two positive responses on a five-point balanced scale.

² Targets for FY 2015 and beyond apply to each of the three population groups. All three groups must reach 90 percent for the target to be reached.

Goal Lead: Chief Diversity Officer; Director, Office of Civil Rights and Diversity

Partner Offices: Office of Human Resource Management; Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support

Data Sources: Employee Viewpoint Survey (EVS) for U.S. direct hire domestic and overseas staff; Host Country Staff Survey (HCSS) for non-U.S. direct hire staff employed by the Peace

Corps at overseas posts as personal services contractors or foreign service nationals; Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) for Volunteers

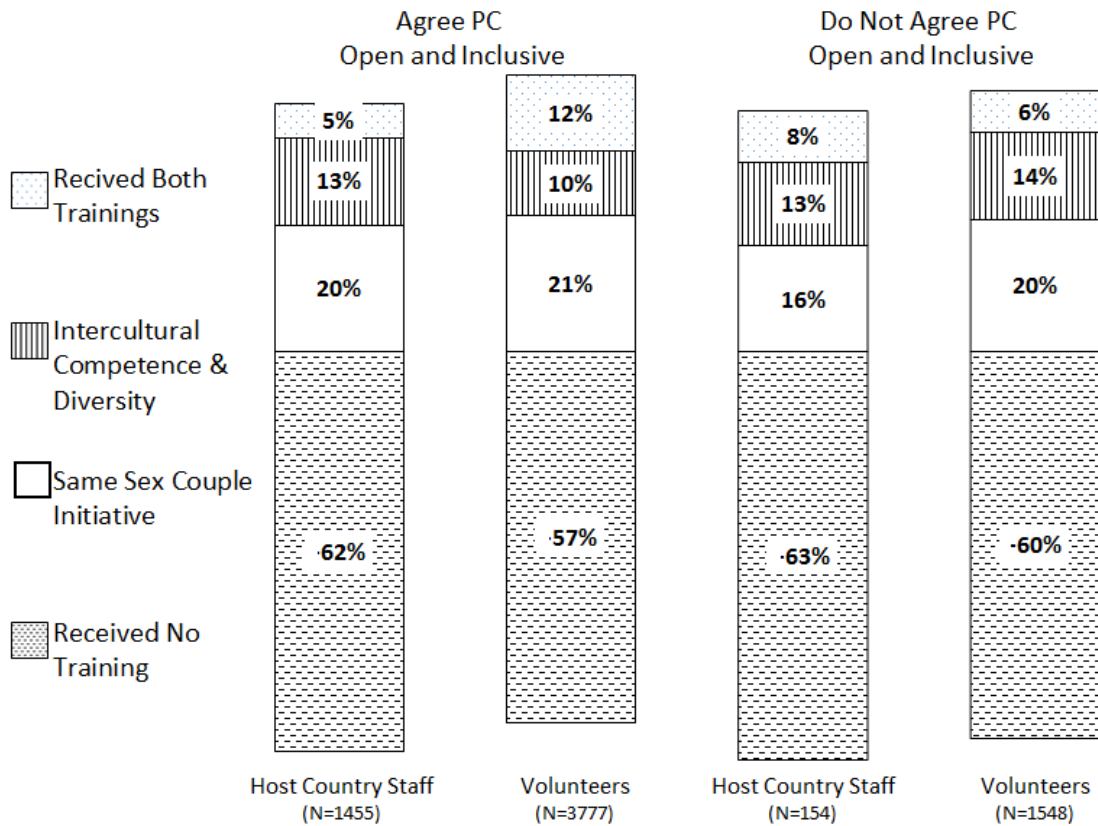
Calculation: For each data source (EVS, HCSS, and AVS), the number of individuals who responded to the following survey question with the top two positive responses (“agree” or “strongly agree”) divided by the total number of respondents: *“To what extent do you disagree or agree that the organizational culture of the Peace Corps (including staff and Volunteers) is inclusive of diverse people?”* Respondents who selected the “not applicable/don’t know” option are not included in this calculation.

Overview: This performance goal measures the openness and inclusion of the Peace Corps as perceived by post staff, headquarters staff, and Volunteers with respect to race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, family status, and gender identity or expression. This direct outcome measure can be used to evaluate how all groups perceive the agency’s culture of inclusion and to what extent employees and Volunteers feel valued.

FY 2016 Progress Update: The target was met among host country staff but not among U.S. direct hire staff or Volunteers. As a result, the overall target was not met. The three-year trend for this goal is holding steady for U.S. direct hire and host country staff while the result for Volunteers appears to be declining. Building on earlier success increasing Volunteer diversity and linking diversity and inclusion efforts with intercultural competence, the Peace Corps revised its training for directors, managers, and supervisors to address new goals in FY 2016. By August of 2016, staff at 19 posts had been trained on the same-sex couples initiative, and 13 posts had received the revised training on intercultural competence, diversity, and inclusion (ICD&I). Five posts received both of these trainings, and an additional five posts were scheduled to receive one or both trainings by the end of the year.

The agency analyzed 2016 survey responses from host country staff and Volunteers at posts where staff had been trained on the same-sex couples initiative and/or intercultural competence, diversity, and inclusion. While there is some variation in responses, training overall does not yet appear to have had a significant effect on perceptions of inclusiveness. However, a more robust number of trained staff is required to accurately determine a possible correlation between training and changes in perception. It may be that those newly trained in issues related to diversity initially judge their organization to be *less* inclusive based on their increased understanding of the topic, making perception a significantly lagging indicator.

Effects of ICD&I Training on Volunteer and Host Country Staff Perceptions of Peace Corps' Organizational Culture



Results are based on the following survey question: "To what extent do you agree that the organizational culture of the Peace Corps (including staff and Volunteers) is inclusive of diverse peoples."

Performance Goal 6.3: Retain Applicant Diversity							No target set; baseline data collection (Discontinued)
<i>Increase the percentage of minority applicants who complete the application process after accepting an invitation to serve</i>							
		FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
	Target	--	--	--	--	--	--
Result	Minority applicants	--	--	--	--	67%	71% ¹
	Non-minority applicants	--	--	--	--	71%	75% ¹

¹ Results calculated for the first quarter of FY 2016 only. Individuals who submitted a Peace Corps application after Q1 are not included as they have not had sufficient time to complete the application process.

Goal Lead: Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

Partner Offices: Office of Civil Rights and Diversity; Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection; Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support

Data Source: Peace Corps database (DOVE/PCVDBMS)

Calculation: The number of Peace Corps Volunteer applicants who complete the final application process divided by the total number of applicants who accepted an invitation to serve.

Overview: The Peace Corps devotes considerable efforts and resources to attract candidates who reflect the population of the United States. This performance goal was added in FY 2016 to ensure that the agency was able to retain the level of racial and ethnic diversity that had been achieved in the pool of applicants. Applicants are classified for this analysis according to the fiscal year in which they began the application process.

FY 2016 Progress Update: Due to the fact that the application process can last up to a year, the results for a given fiscal year cannot be computed until the full cohort of individuals who applied at any point during that year has had sufficient time to complete all stages of the application process from application to interview, invitation, acceptance of the invitation, final screening, and entry on duty in a country of service.

At the time of this report, the only full year of data was FY 2015. These results showed a minimal gap between the 67 percent of minority applicants and the 71 percent of non-minority applicants who completed the final medical stage of the clearance process after accepting an invitation to serve. This gap continued to the next stage of the Volunteer lifecycle: 64 percent of minority applicants and the 67 percent of non-minority applicants entered on duty.

In FY 2016, only individuals who submitted a Peace Corps application in the first quarter have had sufficient time to complete the application process. For those applicants, the results again

show only a minor difference of 4 percentage points between minority and non-minority applicants.

Given that this analysis revealed only a minor difference, the agency is discontinuing this performance goal, but it will continue to monitor these results on a quarterly basis to ensure that the gap between the minority and non-minority groups continues to be minimal.

Strategic Objective 7: Site Development ---

Establish an environment conducive to Volunteer success through an integrated approach to developing effective projects, preparing work sites, and successfully collaborating with local partners

Rationale: Before Volunteers arrive in their country of service, the Peace Corps works to ensure that each Volunteer will have meaningful work opportunities that meet the development needs of the local community and that there are local partners interested in working alongside the Volunteer. The agency also verifies that each work site can support the Volunteer's safety, security, and medical and mental health needs. This foundation allows each Volunteer to focus on building relationships and strengthening local capacity upon arrival in the community and throughout service.

Strategies

- Identify, prepare, and train host families, host agencies, and counterparts on how to live and work effectively with Volunteers, including setting clear expectations regarding the role of the Volunteer
- Establish well-defined and meaningful work opportunities for Volunteers by selecting sites with well-documented needs
- Ensure that project frameworks and sites are aligned with Volunteers' skills, experience, and the needs of local communities
- Explore key research questions and best practices on the standards and criteria conducive to effective site identification and development using Country Portfolio Review findings and other data sources
- Develop a mobile technology solution to track and document the effective selection, documentation, and preparation of sites
- Improve the technology platform for managing and mobilizing data on the development, monitoring, and history of Volunteer sites that is mobile, facilitates document sharing, and takes a modularized approach to integration
- Support posts in their implementation of regional site development and site monitoring standards and procedures

FY 2016 Status: Incremental progress has been made on this strategic objective in FY 2016. While all three regions have significantly improved their regional guidance on site development procedures, the Peace Corps is still developing an agencywide strategy to improve overall performance in a targeted and cohesive manner. This strategy will aim to align programming and site development by matching project frameworks and sites more strategically with Volunteers' skills, experience, and the needs of local communities.

The Peace Corps is currently standardizing many of these global processes through a new initiative, the Programming, Training, and Evaluation Alignment. The resulting agencywide site development strategies will be implemented gradually and deliberately with consideration for

post staff resources and existing country-specific site development procedures. The highest-performing posts have documented their site development processes in handbooks, which will be utilized in the coming year to inform global best practices.

Site development is a broad and resource-intensive process with complementary roles and responsibilities shared among post staff, headquarters staff, Volunteers, and Peace Corps Volunteer leaders (third-year Volunteers who have transitioned to a Volunteer-support role at posts). The agency plans to integrate monitoring and evaluation staff and administrative staff into the site development process as well in the coming year. Still, there is a need to include several programming elements to bridge the sizeable gap between the ideal scope and the practical realities of site development. The practical aspects include safety and security, the availability of meaningful work for the Volunteer, and housing criteria and standards.

Performance Goal 7.1: Improve Site Development <i>Increase the percentage of Volunteers satisfied¹ with site selection and preparation to 68 percent by FY 2018</i>						Slightly below target		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015		FY 2016	FY 2017
Target	--	--	--	44%	62%		64%	66%
Result	42%	41%	42%	59% ²	59%		62%	

¹ Includes the top two response options on a five-point balanced scale.

² Due to the improvements to the Annual Volunteer Survey in FY 2014, including modifying the response scales and reducing the length of the questionnaire by half, results from FY 2011–13 (*italicized*) are not directly comparable to results in FY 2014 and future years. However, year-to-year comparison of results from FY 2014 onward is possible. Targets for FY 2015 and beyond were revised in view of the higher than projected FY 2014 results.

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

Partner Offices: Office of Health Services; Office of Safety and Security

Data Source: Annual Volunteer Survey

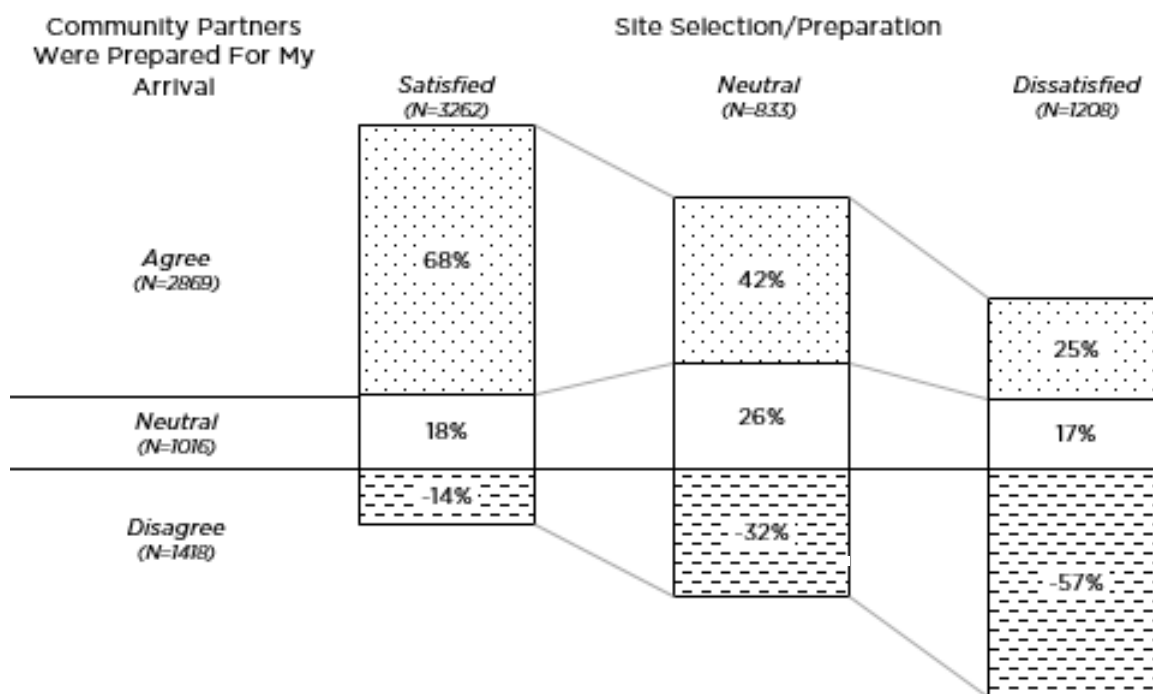
Calculation: The number of Volunteers who responded to the following survey question with the top two positive responses (“satisfied” and “very satisfied”) divided by the total number of Volunteers who responded to the question: “How satisfied are you with (Site selection/preparation) provided by in-country Peace Corps staff?” Respondents who selected the “not applicable/don’t know” option are not included in this calculation.

Overview: The quality of a Volunteer’s site, housing, and work assignment is a critical feature of a safe Volunteer experience. Each post must ensure that Volunteer sites, housing, and work assignments are appropriate and meet all Peace Corps and post-established criteria. Site development criteria address living arrangements, potential for integration, communication infrastructure, transportation, access to essential health care, and other support services,

security climate, vulnerability to natural disasters, the planned work role for the Volunteer, and cooperation of host authorities.

FY 2016 Progress Update: FY 2016 results were slightly below target. Through an analysis of survey data, the agency found that Volunteer satisfaction with the site selection and preparation conducted by Peace Corps post staff was significantly correlated to the perceived “level of preparedness” among host community members. Among the 3,262 Volunteers who were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with site development and preparation, 68 percent felt community members were prepared for their arrival. However, only a quarter of the 1,208 Volunteers who were “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” felt that community partners were prepared for their arrival. The Peace Corps will explore ways to focus efforts on community member preparedness as a key component of site development and preparation in the future.

Volunteer Satisfaction with Site Selection/Preparation and Community Support



Results are based on the following survey question: “How satisfied are you with the site selection/preparation support provided by in-country Peace Corps staff?”

Performance Goal 7.2: Improve Counterpart Selection and Preparation <i>Increase the percentage of Volunteers satisfied¹ with the community integration and project work support by their assigned counterpart to 61 percent by FY 2018</i>						Target not Met		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	34%	55%	57%	59%	61%
Result	<i>31%</i>	<i>32%</i>	<i>32%</i>	53% ²	51%	53%		

¹ Includes the top two response options on a five-point balanced scale.

² Due to the improvements to the Annual Volunteer Survey in FY 2014, including modifying the response scales and reducing the length of the questionnaire by half, results from FY 2011–13 (*italicized*) are not directly comparable to results in FY 2014 and future years. However, year-to-year comparison of results from FY 2014 onward is possible. Targets for FY 2015 and beyond were revised in view of the higher than projected FY 2014 results.

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

Partner Offices: Office of Health Services; Office of Safety and Security

Data Source: Annual Volunteer Survey

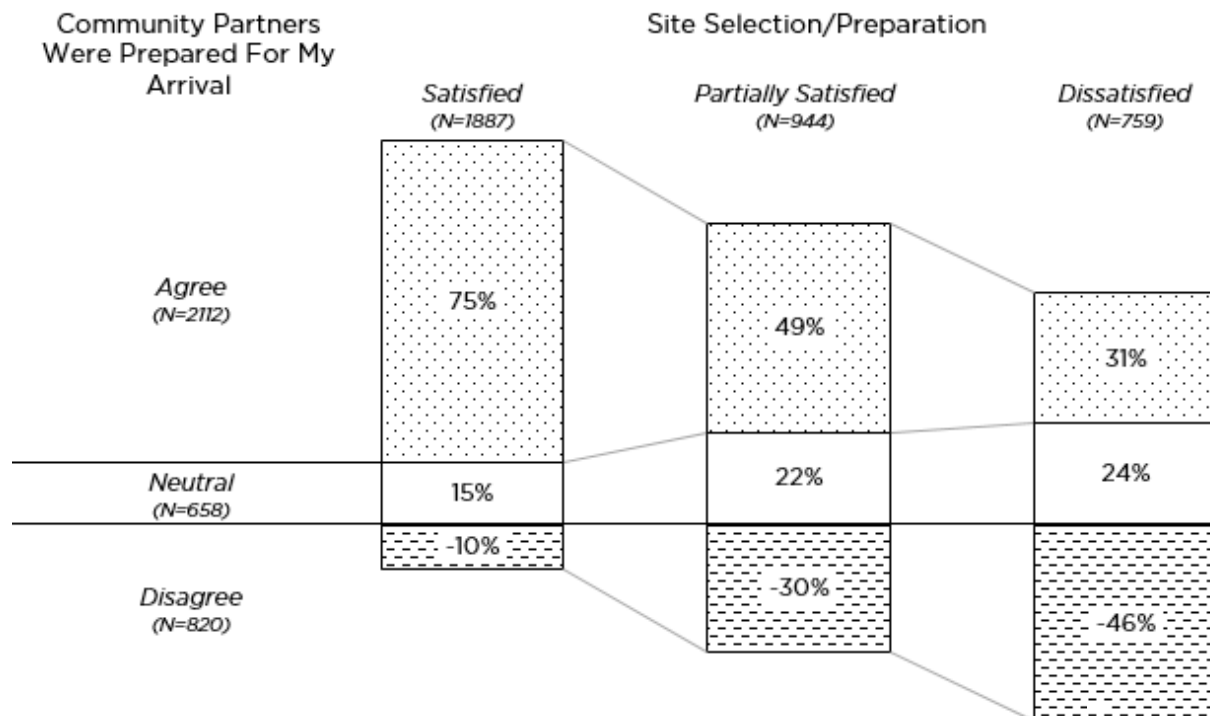
Calculation: The number of Volunteers who responded to the following two questions on the survey with the top two positive responses (“satisfied” and “very satisfied”) divided by the total number of Volunteers who responded to the two questions: “*How satisfied are you with the following aspects of working with your Peace Corps-assigned counterpart? a. Accomplishing your project work; b. Integrating into your community.*” Respondents who selected the “not applicable/don’t know” option are not included in this calculation.

Overview: While Volunteers work with a variety of local partners throughout their service, the Peace Corps selects and assigns local counterparts to Volunteers when they first arrive at their sites to help them to integrate into their communities and to serve as resources for their project work. The percentage of Volunteers who report being satisfied with the support from their assigned counterparts indicates the extent to which they are satisfied with the way posts are selecting and preparing local partners as a part of the site identification and preparation process.

FY 2016 Progress Update: Results for FY 2016 remain slightly below target. Once again, the perceived “level of preparedness” among host community members was highly correlated with the results on this goal. Three out of every four Volunteers who were satisfied with their assigned counterpart also agreed that community partners in general were prepared for their arrival. However, of the 759 Volunteers dissatisfied with their counterpart, only 31 percent agreed that community partners were prepared for their arrival. These findings suggest that one way to improve counterpart effectiveness is to provide that counterpart with additional support through other community partners who are well-prepared for the Volunteer’s arrival. Further analysis is needed to better understand how to shift Volunteers from being partially

satisfied to fully satisfied with the project work and community-integration support provided by their counterpart.

Volunteer Satisfaction with Counterpart Selection/Preparation and Community Support



Results are based on the following survey questions: “How satisfied are you with the following aspects of working with your Peace Corps-assigned counterpart: accomplishing your project work and integrating into your community?” The “partially satisfied” category for site selection/preparation is used for respondents who were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with one—but not both—of these aspects.

Strategic Objective 8: Train Up

Develop a highly effective Volunteer corps through a continuum of learning throughout service

Rationale: High-quality training is central to the success of Volunteers. The Peace Corps invests in technical training to ensure that Volunteers have the necessary skills to draw upon, contribute to, and support local capacity-building efforts. Training also focuses on building Volunteers' language skills and intercultural competence to advance technical work and to facilitate cultural integration and mutual understanding. Providing a continuum of learning throughout service ensures that Volunteers receive the tools and support they need.

Strategies

- Develop, refine, and evaluate training materials in accordance with the Programming, Training, and Evaluation Alignment strategy
- Share programming, training, and evaluation resources through an online knowledge-sharing platform
- Develop formal processes to document the training received, expertise and proficiency levels achieved, and certifications earned by Volunteers
- Fully implement mandatory close-of-service language testing and encourage posts to administer language exams to Volunteers at midservice
- Improve training and professional development for staff overseas with the development and implementation of a staff learning continuum
- Develop and implement a Volunteer learning continuum—from pre-departure to close of service—that emphasizes self-directed learning, utilizes coaching and mentoring, fosters communities of practice, and includes individual learning plans for Volunteers

FY 2016 Status: While both performance goals fell slightly below their targets, substantial progress was made on this strategic objective. Volunteer self-directed and peer-to-peer learning dramatically expanded with the launch of PCLive, the Peace Corps' online knowledge-sharing platform. PCLive has over 1,300 resources and more than 1,000 registered users—both Volunteers and staff—representing 63 countries. Overseas programming, training, and evaluation staff have received a number of new learning development opportunities including in-person skill-building workshops, synchronous distance events, and self-directed learning materials. Despite a 19 percent improvement in reporting on close-of-service language testing in FY 2016, technical issues have been identified with the Peace Corps' legacy reporting system. The technical reporting issue will be corrected when language test reporting is migrated to a new learning management system. The change will allow the Peace Corps to better assess Volunteers' language performance and identify necessary actions for improvement.

Performance Goal 8.1: Improve Language Learning <i>Increase the percentage of Volunteers tested at close of service who achieve the “advanced” level or above on the language proficiency interview to 70 percent by FY 2018</i>						Slightly below target		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015		FY 2016	FY 2017
Target	--	--	--	50%	55%		60%	65%
Result	--	--	--	63%	63%		58%	70%

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region); Director, Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support

Partner Office: Office of the Chief Information Officer

Data Source: Peace Corps database (VIDA)

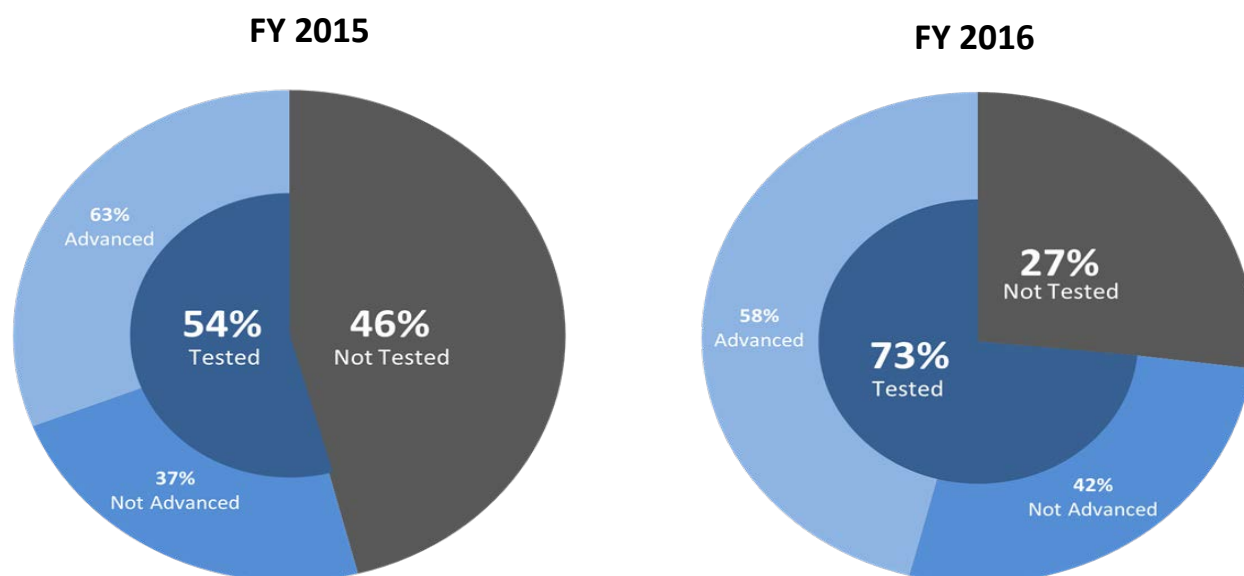
Calculation: The number of Volunteers who achieved an “advanced” or “superior” level score on their language proficiency interview at close of service divided by the number of Volunteers who were tested at close of service.

Overview: Developing local language skills is critical for Volunteers’ ability to integrate into their communities, work effectively, and maintain their safety and security. An increase in the percentage of Volunteers who achieve a high level of language proficiency indicates that the agency is providing effective language training and support throughout the Volunteers’ service.

Volunteers’ language ability is measured through the language proficiency interview, administered by agency-certified language testers. The language interview includes four proficiency levels based on the American Council for Teaching Foreign Languages proficiency guidelines: novice, intermediate, advanced, and superior. Volunteers are taught and tested in the primary language spoken at their site. Measuring language ability at close of service allows posts to determine the efficacy of their language-learning program and what types of activities Volunteers can reasonably be expected to perform in the local language(s).

FY 2016 Progress Update: Although FY 2016 results for this performance goal fell slightly below the established target, substantial progress was made in the quality of the calculation that underlies this result. In FY 2015, the result of 63 percent of Volunteers achieving the advanced level or above was calculated based on the 54 percent of Volunteers who were tested at their close of service. FY 2016 witnessed an increase to 73 percent of Volunteers receiving close-of-service language testing, 58 percent of whom achieved an advanced or superior level.

Percentage of Volunteers who are Tested and Percentage who Achieved an Advanced Level or Above



Performance Goal 8.2: Increase Effectiveness of Technical Training

Increase the percentage of Volunteers who report that their technical training was effective¹ in preparing them to work at their site to 67 percent by FY 2018

Slightly below target

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	52%	64%	65%	66%	67%
Result	44%	44%	50%	63% ²	63%	64%		

¹Includes the top two positive response options on a five-point balanced scale.

²Due to the improvements to the AVS in FY 2014, including modifying the response scales and reducing the length of the questionnaire by half, results from FY 2011 to FY 2013 (italicized) are not directly comparable to results in FY 2014 and future years. However, year-to-year comparison of results from FY 2014 onward is possible.

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region); Director, Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support

Data Source: Annual Volunteer Survey

Calculation: The number of Volunteers who responded to the following survey question with the top two positive responses (“effective” or “very effective”) divided by the total number of Volunteers who responded to the question: *“Please evaluate the effectiveness of your Peace Corps training in preparing you to perform technical aspects of your work.”* Respondents who selected the “not applicable/don’t know” option are not included in this calculation.

Overview: Effective technical training covers topics related to the work that Volunteers will do at their Volunteer site. It includes the instruction Volunteers receive during pre-service training, in-service training, and other post-sponsored events that cover work activities related to their assigned project framework. This training is a key component of the preparation Volunteers receive that enables them to engage with their counterparts and communities as true partners in development, strengthening the capacity of local individuals so that together they can have a positive impact on their organizations and communities. This training is critical for achieving the Peace Corps’ Goal One: Building Local Capacity.

FY 2016 Progress Update: FY 2016 results on this performance goal were slightly below target. In order to gather more data concerning the strengths and areas for improvement of technical training, the following additional questions and definition were added to the Annual Volunteer Survey in FY 2016:

“Technical training is aimed at imparting the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to perform work activities and achieve results relating to your primary sector. This training may be offered during pre-service training (PST), in-service training (IST), and/or mid-service training (MST).”

<i>To what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?</i>	<i>Percent of Volunteers who agreed:</i>
a. My technical training covered the <i>breadth</i> of subject matter that I needed to perform my primary sector work effectively.	63%
b. My technical training covered subject matter topics at the necessary <i>depth</i> that I needed to perform my primary sector work effectively.	53%
c. My primary sector technical training facilitator(s) was knowledgeable in the subject matter covered.	83%
d. My primary sector technical training facilitator(s) was able to effectively communicate subject matter to me.	78%
e. My technical training is relevant to the work that I do at my site.	69%

These results will be analyzed and reviewed in FY 2017.

Strategic Objective 9: High-Performing Learning Organization

Cultivate a high-performing learning organization by investing in professional development for staff, improving staff retention, and strengthening institutional memory

Rationale: The unique law limiting the majority of Americans working as Peace Corps staff to five-year appointments (“known as the “five-year-rule”) results in an influx of fresh ideas and innovation, but it also produces significant human capital and knowledge management challenges. Host country staff often serve longer than American staff and have very different professional development needs. To successfully advance the Peace Corps mission, the agency must be a high-performing learning organization that invests in staff development, retains employees to the fullest extent of the law, and draws from a deep institutional memory to learn from its past and circulate best practices among Volunteers and staff.

Strategies

- Develop a competency and skills assessment program for Peace Corps domestic and overseas staff
- Utilize an automated system to track training events in order to develop a more cost-effective training program
- Identify the core positions that suffer from frequent staff turnover and consider developing a narrowly focused request to seek legislative modification to the five-year rule
- Review and standardize the onboarding process for all staff and link it to learning and professional development opportunities
- Implement a mentoring and coaching program for all agency staff, including a component designed for host country staff that focuses on effective strategies for advancing their careers and for working with Volunteers
- Improve the off-boarding process by collaborating with federal government employers to place staff with noncompetitive eligibility
- Improve the retention of staff through a number of methods, including retention agreements for staff in specialized positions, cross-training, individual development plans, earlier consideration of extension requests, modification to the agency policy to enable managers to provide employees with earlier notification of extensions to their term appointments, and increased utilization of career ladders
- Collect and analyze data on the causes of early employee resignations and develop informed solutions to address the issue
- Expand the agencywide use of technological platforms and increase online training to expand learning opportunities for domestic and overseas staff

FY 2016 Status: Significant progress has been made on this strategic objective despite considerable challenges and both performance goal metrics falling below their targets in FY 2016. The Peace Corps’ Office of Staff Learning and Development has continued to plan and implement a number of programs improving supervisory training, onboarding, and overseas

staff training. In addition, the Peace Corps transitioned its new employee orientation to a one-day in-processing in conjunction with the launch of an onboarding framework that integrates coaching and mentoring sessions to improve employee readiness. A new executive onboarding program was implemented, resulting in 90 percent of participants reporting that peer mentoring was beneficial to understanding agency culture, and 87 percent responding that the program helped to get them up to speed quickly.

The agency's ability to expand online learning and improve the tracking of employee training has been hindered by the delay in acquiring a new learning management system due to evolving business requirements. While staff tenure has trended downward over the past year, the agency focused on this subject at its Fourth Quarter Strategic Plan Performance Review, laying out strategies for supervisors to better use employment extensions to fight the effects of the five-year rule.

Performance Goal 9.1: Improve Staff Training							Target not Met		
Increase the percentage of staff satisfied ¹ with the training they received to do their job to 62 percent by FY 2018									
		FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target ²		--	--	--	54%	56%	58%	60%	62%
Result	U.S. direct hire staff	50%	50%	57%	55%	52%	53%		
	Host country staff	--	--	--	62%	66%	69%		

¹ Includes the top two positive response options on a balanced five-point scale.

² Targets for FY 2015 and beyond apply to both population groups. In FY 2016, for example, both USDH staff and host country staff must reach 58 percent for the target to be reached.

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Management; Office of Staff Learning and Development

Partner Offices: Office of Human Resource Management; Associate Director, Office of Global Operations/Director, Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support

Data Source: Employee Viewpoint Survey (EVS) for U.S. direct hire domestic and overseas staff; Host Country Staff Survey (HCSS) for non-U.S. direct hire staff employed by the Peace Corps at overseas posts as personal service contractors or Foreign Service Nationals

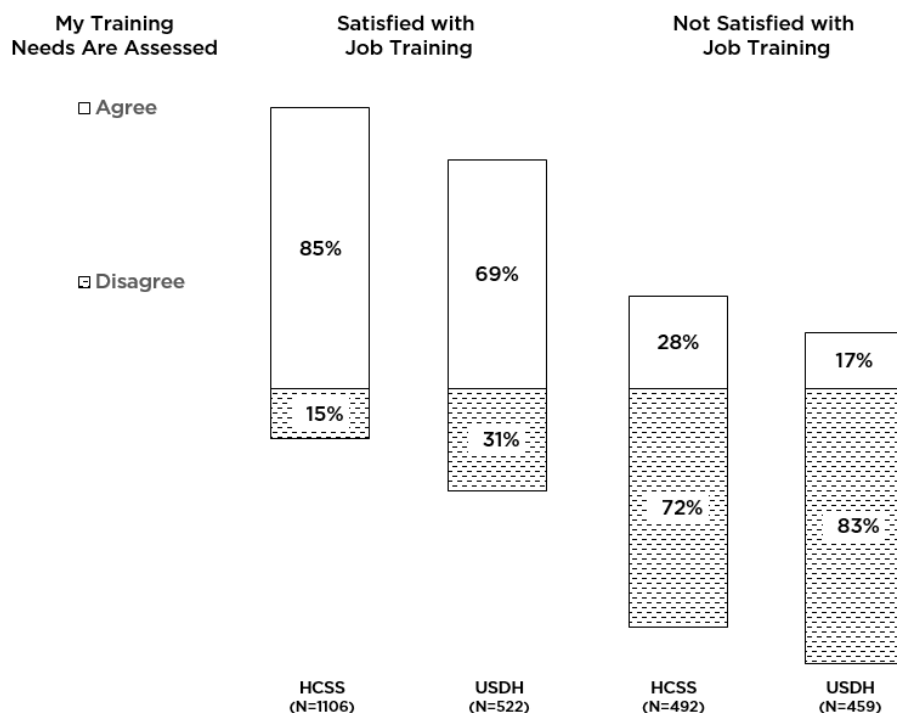
Calculation: For each population and data source (EVS and HCSS), the number of respondents to the following survey questions with the top two positive responses ("satisfied" and "very satisfied") divided by the total number of respondents for that survey question: "How satisfied are you with the training you receive for your present job?"

Overview: An increase in staff satisfaction with their training indicates that staffs are being provided the tools and training to do their jobs effectively and to develop professionally.

FY 2016 Progress Update: The target was met for host country staff but not for U.S. direct hire employees. As a result, the overall target was not met in FY 2016. Although a renewed commitment to improving staff training has been underway since 2014, a number of challenges still exist in meeting the proposed FY 2018 target of 62 percent of staff satisfied with the training they receive to do their job. Documented challenges include designating responsibility for the oversight of the agency's staff training program, implementing a training needs assessment process, creating a standardized training program for new overseas staff, and implementing an improved learning management system. However, continued analysis is required to better understand the factors influencing satisfaction with staff training.

For the FY 2016 analysis, the single most important factor influencing satisfaction with staff training was the assessment of training needs. Of the 459 U.S. direct hire staff who were dissatisfied with their job training, 83 percent disagreed that their training needs were assessed. Of the 492 host country staff who were dissatisfied with their job training, 72 percent also disagreed that their training needs were assessed. Similarly, staff who reported feeling satisfied with their job training were likely to report that their training needs had been assessed.

Satisfaction with Job Training Related to Needs Assessment



Performance Goal 9.2: Increase Staff Tenure <i>Increase the average tenure of U.S. direct hire staff to 4 years by FY 2016 and maintain that level of performance through FY 2018</i>						Target not met		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	--	--	4 years	4 years	4 years
Result	--	3.5 years	4.5 years	4.0 years	4.2 years	3.3 years		

Goal Lead: Director, Office of Human Resource Management

Partner Office: Office of Congressional Relations

Data Source: National Finance Center

Calculation: The median number of months of tenure (e.g., number of months from entry-on-duty to separation, departure, or retirement) averaged across all U.S. direct hire staff who left the agency in a given fiscal year.

Overview: Staffing at the Peace Corps is governed by the Peace Corps Act, which limits the appointments of most U.S. direct hire staff working in domestic and overseas offices to five years. The Peace Corps Act allows the Director to extend appointments for one additional year at her or his discretion and to offer an additional “tour” of 30 months for up to 15 percent of the U.S. direct hire staff. These additional appointments are generally offered to employees who have demonstrated an exceptional record of performance in order to achieve one of the following purposes: to promote continuity of functions in administering the Peace Corps; to permit individuals working at overseas posts to work in the United States; to permit individuals working in the United States to work at overseas posts; and to permit individuals working in a recruitment, selection, or a training role to serve in another capacity. Within the overall five-year limit, the agency works to retain high-performing employees for as long as possible in order to minimize staffing gaps.

The staff who are covered by this performance goal are U.S. direct hire staff working in domestic and overseas offices. Consultants and other employees who are exempt from the five-year rule are not included in the measurement. Experts are not included in the measurement for any time period that follows their transition out of a staff role into an expert appointment.

FY 2016 Progress Update: The FY 2016 result of a median of 3.3 years fell below the established target. An examination of exit interview data helps identify what the Peace Corps can do to better retain valuable employees. When asked, “If the five-year rule were not in place, would you choose to remain with the Peace Corps for a longer duration of time?” 146 departing employees answered this question, with 43 percent responding “Yes,” 32 percent “No,” 25 percent “I don’t know.” A number of strategies have previously been put into place to help increase the tenure of those “Yes” respondents who do see the five-year rule as a major

limiting factor, such as collaborating with other federal government agencies to place staff with noncompetitive eligibility. Assisting Peace Corps employees with finding their next position allows them to delay their job search to later in their five-year appointment. While the five-rule has a clear impact on staff tenure, the Peace Corps can also address these needs through employee engagement, increased training and professional development opportunities. This is a core principle of the agency's Employee Development Lifecycle as established by the Office of Staff Learning and Development.

Strategic Objective 10: Global Connectivity

Enable seamless communication and collaboration for all Volunteers and staff by modernizing and integrating information technology systems and leveraging the innovation of Volunteers and staff in the field

Rationale: Information technology (IT) is changing rapidly. Often, Volunteers in the field and their local partners are using a broader spectrum of technologies than the Peace Corps can support. At the same time, the agency maintains several legacy applications to manage information at headquarters and overseas posts that no longer meet the evolving needs of the Peace Corps. The confluence of these factors produces inefficiencies in how Volunteers and staff communicate and collaborate, inhibiting the agency's ability to advance its mission. A globally connected agency, supported by a flexible and secure network of IT systems and invigorated by field-based problem solving, will leverage modern technology to break down barriers to communication and collaboration. Achieving this objective while maintaining operational stability, security, and reliability in a complex global operational environment while also ensuring critical regulatory and policy mandates are met is a major IT challenge for the Peace Corps.

Strategies

- Build modern tracking, analysis, and reporting applications that enable easy database maintenance, data integration, and data access
- Modernize the Peace Corps Intranet to improve information sharing and collaboration among staff
- Create a consolidated Volunteer, returned Volunteer, and staff contact database to improve data quality and access to contact information
- Establish a clearly defined, transparent risk assessment strategy related to new IT projects and archive decisions for reference
- Provide guidance to staff on new methods of communication commonly used by Volunteers to facilitate communication and collaboration
- Design flexible systems, platforms, and processes to be compatible with evolving technology (e.g., social and collaborative networks, mobile devices, a unified data model, cloud-based technology)
- Support the development of Volunteer-driven solutions, to improve how the agency uses technology to deliver on its mission
- Encourage the use of PCLive as the Peace Corps' knowledge-sharing platform for Volunteers and staff to facilitate collaboration and communication through an interactive resource library and communities of practice.
- Develop a data management strategy that facilitates the use of open and authenticated data to inform real-time and long-term decision making
- Develop a strategy to move the existing data center to a co-located facility and to the cloud.

FY 2016 Status: The Peace Corps continued to make progress toward achieving this strategic objective during the past year. The agency met its target on its legacy systems retirement goal. It also made several improvements to its digital infrastructure and expanded content. One example was the launch of the new PCMEDICS system—the agency’s first electronic medical records system. The Peace Corps’ doctors and nurses can now provide better health management for all Volunteers. Other examples include the launch of a more user-friendly intranet that can function on mobile devices; updates to PCLive—the Peace Corps’ digital knowledge hub—which now offers 1,200 digital resources contributed by staff and Volunteers; the expanded adoption by posts of a shared cloud-based library system to digitally catalogue physical collections; and a new returned Peace Corps Volunteer portal that allows returned Volunteers to directly update their contact information, reducing the amount of time Peace Corps staff spend searching for returned Volunteers while improving the quality of the information. Working together, these improvements better enable Volunteers, returned Volunteers, and staff to communicate and collaborate.

In addition to these improvements to digital tools, the agency also established a Technology Advisory Board. This group is helping to set funding and modernization priorities for computer systems. As the Peace Corps continues to make progress on this strategic objective, it will need to continue to be vigilant against increasingly sophisticated cyber threats as it builds out its modernized systems and knowledge-sharing strategy.

Performance Goal 10.1: Develop an Integrated Technology Platform <i>Retire all legacy applications and consolidate functions into an integrated platform by FY 2018</i>						Slightly below target		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	10%	30%	50%	70%	100%
Result	--	--	--	15%	45%	49%		

Goal Lead: Chief Information Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer

Data Source: Peace Corps administrative records

Calculation: The number of legacy applications retired divided by the total number of legacy applications.

Overview: Through the OCIO’s IT modernization initiatives, legacy applications—defined as systems based on outdated technology that is no longer fully supported by the Peace Corps—are being retired and their functions consolidated into a common, integrated platform. The concept does not include systems that are mandated by Congress or critical to agency needs or operations. A full list of legacy applications that are scheduled to be retired is managed by the Office of the Chief Information Officer. Legacy applications are considered to have been “retired” when they have been de-activated, and any core functions have been consolidated into a central, integrated platform (e.g., Dynamics Customer Relationship Management system,

SharePoint). These initiatives improve data quality and facilitate increased access to data to meet the evolving information needs of the agency.

FY 2016 Progress Update: In FY 2014, the agency completed an audit of its applications. Through the audit, the agency identified 142 legacy applications, one-third of which were identified as low-impact applications that could be retired without replacement. By the close of FY 2016, 69 legacy applications of the original 142 had been retired. Although the Agency retired nine additional applications, the target was not met in FY 2016. Retaining and hiring quality IT professionals will be key to increasing momentum during FY 2017.

With the likely move of the Peace Corps' headquarters office to a new location in FY 2018, the Agency will be developing a strategy to move the current data center infrastructure to an offsite facility. This strategy will consider some of the forecasted infrastructure needs of a cloud-computing services model. By addressing the requirements for a shared, virtual infrastructure of storage, computer, and network resources with an infrastructure relocation strategy, the Peace Corps can position itself to transition the on-premises data center to mitigate any IT risks associated with the transition to a new building.

Performance Goal 10.2: Facilitate Knowledge Sharing <i>Increase the percentage of Volunteers who report that they use the digital materials provided by the Peace Corps in their work to 85 percent by FY 2018</i>						Target not met		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	--	80%	82%	84%	85%
Result	--	--	--	77%	78%	77%		

Goal Lead: Associate Director, Office of Global Operations/Director, Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support

Partner Offices: Office of the Chief Information Officer; Office of Digital Integration; Office of Innovation

Data Source: Annual Volunteer Survey

Calculation: The number of Volunteers who report using digital materials divided by the total number of Volunteers who responded to the question.

Overview: With the spread of internet and mobile technology to many of the communities where Volunteers serve, Volunteers are able to collaborate with peers across projects, communities, countries, and the world. Access to digital resources through knowledge-sharing platforms facilitates this collaboration by enabling both Volunteers and staff to store and search for specific project information. As a result, Volunteers and staff can build upon already-successful projects and strategies. PCLive is the Peace Corps' primary knowledge and information exchange platform for Volunteers and staff.

FY 2016 Progress Update: Although the Peace Corps fell short on this target in FY 2016, PCLive continues to grow in use both domestically and abroad. By the end of the fiscal year, there were over 1,800 registered users and nearly 600 new resources submitted to the resource library. The site itself averages more than 700 visitors per week. These metrics are poised to increase in FY 2017, with the forthcoming automatic enrollment of all Volunteers. The Peace Corps' learning management system (LMS) provides all Volunteers and staff access to structured course content. The LMS also supports participant knowledge sharing through discussion forums, reinforcing successful initiatives such as the Peace Corps TEFL Certificate Program across 22 posts. In addition to the agency's global platforms, information resource centers at some posts are transitioning from traditional physical library collections to digital resource hubs.

Strategic Objective 11: Measurement for Results

Advance the agency's ability to measure progress, improve performance, and demonstrate impact through integrated monitoring, reporting, and evaluation practices

Rationale: The Peace Corps has significantly expanded its emphasis on evidence-based decision making and has developed capacity in monitoring, evaluation, evidence-gathering, and analysis, both at posts and at headquarters. Monitoring, reporting, and evaluation practices are conducted at all levels of the agency. A coherent, integrated approach that combines training, regular reviews of ongoing programs, the collection of baseline data, and well-documented pilots will provide staff with rigorous, high-quality data. That data can then be used to inform decision making at both the program and agency level, identify promising practices, foster transparency, and advance performance improvement.

Strategies

- Identify agency-level evaluation priorities each fiscal year related to major management and performance challenges
- Fully implement the agencywide Evaluation Framework to provide guidance to posts and headquarters offices on monitoring, reporting, and evaluation practices, including piloting and experimentation parameters
- Provide monitoring, reporting, and evaluation training to Volunteers, overseas staff, and counterparts
- Develop the analytical skills of staff, counterparts, and Volunteers by providing project support and targeted training on analytical and/or survey-based competencies
- Collect or construct baseline data prior to new country entries and the initiation of new projects to assess Volunteer impact
- Expand access to timely and high-quality data through the development of new data sources, the improvement of existing data sources, and the simplification of reports and products
- Develop a communication strategy that identifies the products, formats, and dissemination plan for data collected and analyzed by the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning
- Increase transparency, strengthening the agency's focus on data and analytic quality
- Implement methods other than surveys for gathering and analyzing business intelligence
- Finalize, publicize, and implement the Monitoring and Evaluation Task Force recommendations

FY 2016 Status: The agency continued to advance its evidence base and ability to measure the results of its programming and operational activities in FY 2016. To ensure that program planning includes monitoring and evaluation functions from the outset, the agency began the development of evidence-based sector logic models. All project frameworks coming to the end of their lifecycle and expecting Volunteers beyond 2016 now have the mandate and resources to establish logic models in their next iteration. This will hone critical activities and indicators

relevant to their respective sectors, thereby enhancing the impact of the project. 2016 marked the third year of new and improved survey data sources, allowing initial trends to be drawn from key indicators. For the third consecutive year, the Peace Corps collected baseline data as it opened a new post. In addition, the agency has launched structured pilots in eight countries for the new Peace Corps TEFL Certificate Program, scaled up risk mitigation planning based on in-depth analysis of post crime data, and increased the number of Volunteers being formally tested for language proficiency. Finally, the agency is expanding its analytic capability as most posts and offices have had monitoring, evaluation, and data professionals for more than a year,

Performance Goal 11.1: Conduct Baselines <i>Increase the percentage of new country entries¹ and new Volunteer project frameworks where baseline data has been collected or compiled to 100 percent by FY 2016 and maintain that level of performance through FY 2018</i>						Target met		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	50%	75%	100%	100%	100%
Result	--	--	--	0%	100%	100%		

¹ The term “new country entries” includes both countries that the Peace Corps is entering for the first time as well as countries it is returning to after a sustained absence.

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

Partner Offices: Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning; Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support; Office of Global Health and HIV/AIDS

Data Source: Peace Corps administrative records

Calculation: The number of new country entries and new project frameworks for which baseline data was collected divided by the total number of new country entries and new project frameworks during the fiscal year. Calculations are based on the fiscal year in which Volunteers are scheduled to begin entering the communities where they will be serving. A baseline data collection effort in progress was considered to meet this goal as long as the study design and primary data collection are complete prior to the start of the interventions.

Overview: Conducting baseline surveys or compiling baseline data from partner organizations, when combined with post-based intervention measurements, will allow the agency to demonstrate with confidence the impact of Volunteers on specific projects. Baseline data is collected before project activities begin in order to establish a point of reference that will be compared to data collected later to determine the extent to which knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, systems, and conditions change over the life of the project. The two types of situations in which baseline data are collected include new country entries and new Volunteer project frameworks. For the purpose of this performance goal, a “new Volunteer project

framework” is defined as a project in a new sector for a country or a new project in an existing sector for a country that has been significantly redesigned.

FY 2016 Progress Update: The agency successfully completed baseline data collection in Timor-Leste—the one new country entry that received its first Volunteer input in FY 2016. The Volunteer project in Timor-Leste is a mixed project incorporating activities in health, community economic development, and agriculture.

Volunteers collected baseline data in their communities. Going house-to-house to ask residents about their lives using specific project indicators helped Volunteers engage with their communities early in their service and set a strong foundation for later integration. It also allowed them to gain some of the knowledge they needed about those communities to help focus their project activities. For example, while “strong financial management practices” was the indicator with the lowest achievement rate found within communities, Volunteers received little training on this element. Identifying this type of knowledge gap allows for Volunteers to better focus on priority areas for their training. Additionally, the agriculture element of the project was informed by the finding that the average household in the host communities grew between seven and 30 different crops for both sale and household consumption. By tracking the crop types, Volunteers identified the lack of a protein-rich food as a greater need for their communities than an increase in crop variety.

Performance Goal 11.2: Increase Evidence-Based Decisions <i>Increase the percentage of posts and headquarters offices that demonstrate the use of evidence in program, policy, and/or budget decisions to 100 percent by FY 2016 and maintain that level of performance through FY 2018</i>						Slightly below target		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	50%	75%	100%	100%	100%
Result	--	--	--	68%	86% ¹	95%		

¹ Due to the improvements to the data collection process in FY 2015, including shifting from qualitative data collection to a structured questionnaire, results from FY 2014 (italicized) are not directly comparable to results in FY 2015 and future years. However, year-to-year comparison of results from FY 2015 onward is possible.

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

Partner Offices: Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

Data Source: Peace Corps administrative records

Calculation: The number of posts and headquarters offices that demonstrated the use of evidence in policy, program, and/or budget decisions divided by the total number of posts and headquarters offices operating in the fiscal year.

Overview: For the purposes of this performance measure, “evidence” refers to a body of information that indicates whether or not a proposition is true and results from conclusions derived from the process of collecting, analyzing, and/or reporting programmatic, administrative, or financial data through formal or informal research and evaluation activities. Evidence may be collected to support decisions to redesign or discontinue programs, develop or revise policies, prioritize resources, or modify processes. An increase in the use of evidence in decision making will help posts and headquarters offices improve program performance and make more cost-effective decisions.

FY 2016 Progress Update: This performance goal is measured through an annual data call to all posts and headquarters offices requesting that they provide the best example they have of an evidence-based decision that their post or office made that fiscal year in the areas of program, policy, or budget. To be included in this result, a respondent must:

- (1) Identify a high-quality source of evidence used to make the decision, and
- (2) Assert that the evidence-based decision was expected to have at least a modest impact on their operations.

The following were considered to be sources of high-quality evidence: official agencywide surveys; a formal evaluation with a defined methodology and analysis plan; a logic model to inform a project’s plan and design; the agency’s Country Portfolio Review summary or dataset; in-depth interviews with a formal questionnaire; focus group discussions with a structured question guide; administrative data (such as language test scores, data on early terminations, or budget); and, data from established business processes or products (such as help desk tickets or numbers of applications).

Based on this analysis, a total of 93 percent of posts and 100 percent of headquarters offices demonstrated evidence-based decision making for an overall result of 95 percent. This represents significant progress from last year’s result of 86 percent.

Performance Goal 11.3: Using Evidence to Encourage Innovation <i>Increase the percentage of posts and headquarters offices that conduct structured pilots to test new approaches to advance programmatic goals and/or address management challenges to 100 percent by FY 2017 and maintain that level of performance through FY 2018</i>						Target not met		
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015		FY 2016	FY 2017
Target	--	--	--	--	50%		75%	100%
Result	--	--	--	70%	43% ¹		58%	

¹Due to the improvements to the data collection process in FY 2015, including shifting from qualitative data collection to a structured questionnaire, results from FY 2014 (italicized) are not directly comparable to results in FY 2015 and future years. However, year-to-year comparison of results from FY 2015 onward is possible.

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

Partner Offices: Regional Directors (Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region)

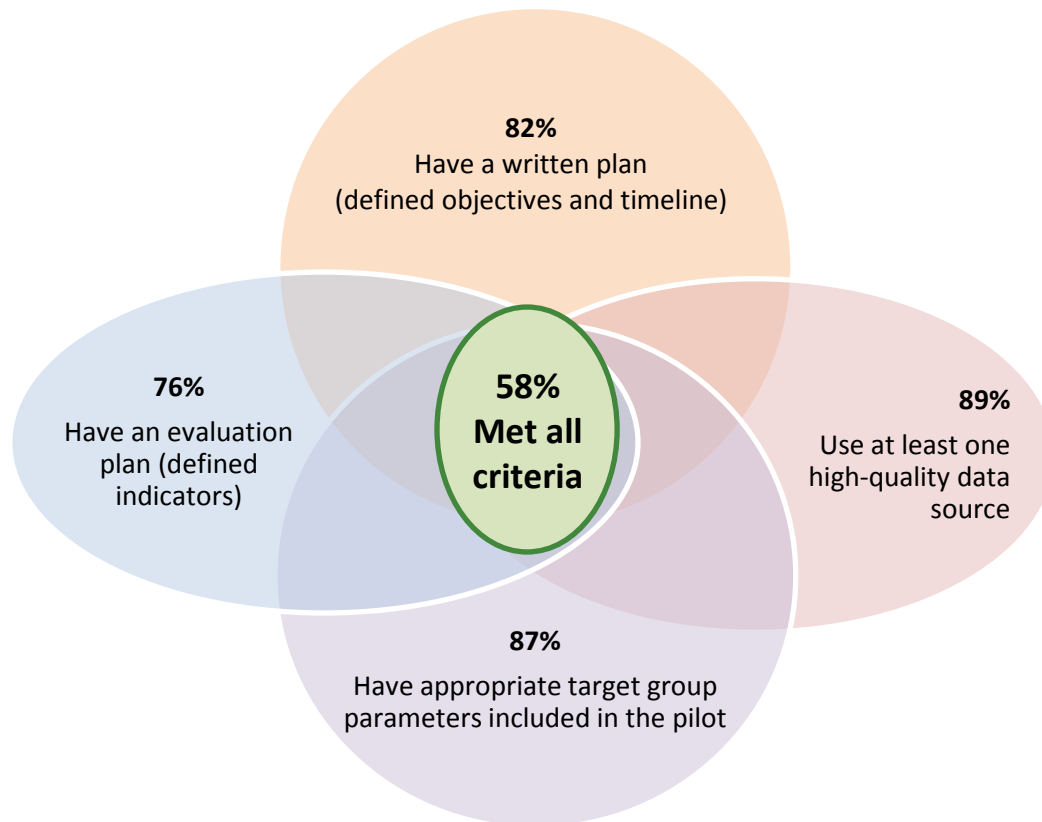
Data Source: Peace Corps administrative records

Calculation: The number of posts and headquarters offices that conducted pilots using structured monitoring and assessment divided by the total number of posts and headquarters offices that conducted pilots in the fiscal year.

Overview: Pilot testing and experimentation refers to the structured development of innovative solutions to enhance Volunteers' impact and to address persistent and emerging operational challenges. Pilot studies are conducted to test new approaches to program delivery prior to widespread adoption. The primary goal of a pilot study is to identify problems before resources are expended on full implementation. Structured pilots are conducted based on specific Peace Corps criteria that ensure the study is developed and executed in a manner that will provide the agency with evidence to inform the decision to expand, modify, or discontinue a new approach. The use of standard criteria and rigorous measurement will enable the agency to learn from these pilots and determine if the new approaches should be fully adopted. Those criteria were published in FY 2016 in the form of agencywide guidance.

FY 2016 Progress Update: This performance goal is measured through an annual data call to posts and headquarters offices. The data for this goal were measured as a proportion of the 23 posts and 15 offices that reported conducting a pilot in FY 2016. All responses were screened to ensure that they met all of the criteria below. Overall, 58 percent of the 38 organizational units conducting pilots met these criteria. All posts and offices that reported conducting a pilot during this time period were asked to indicate which elements of a structured pilot had been developed using a checklist that was provided to them. The results were analyzed to ensure that each pilot included a combination of the following elements, at a minimum: (1) defined indicators (measures of success or failure) and/or an evaluation plan; (2) a written plan for data

collection and analysis and/or key elements of the plan, including defined objectives and a timeline with a defined start and end date; and (3) at least one source of high-quality evidence. The sources of “high-quality evidence” for this analysis were the same as the ones cited in Performance Goal 11.2. Finally, to be considered a “pilot”—with the potential for scalability—the activity was expected to involve less than 60 percent of the target population. Posts that exceeded this percentage were seen as already implementing a revised practice or policy rather than conducting a pilot. While the issuance of strict pilot guidance in the second quarter of FY 2016 may have limited reporting of even greater adherence to structure, significantly more pilots met the criteria than in FY 2015.



Appendix A: Performance Management System

The goals, objectives, and strategies included in the FY 2014–18 Strategic Plan guide the Peace Corps' efforts to advance its mission. The Peace Corps' performance management system is rooted in an inclusive and participatory culture where staff and Volunteers at all levels are invested in improving the agency.

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

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

- **Annual Strategic Review.** Each year, the Peace Corps Director leads a forward-looking meeting with the active engagement of senior leadership from across the agency and staff at all levels. The goal is to inform the development of the next annual performance plan. Prior to the meeting, lead offices identify challenges, opportunities, and possible realignments for each of the Peace Corps' 11 strategic objectives. As part of this exercise, offices review quarterly performance data, Integrated Planning and Budget System submissions, and other information. The Peace Corps' senior leadership engages in a comprehensive performance review that informs annual planning and budget formulation, sets performance improvement areas for the year, and identifies potential evaluation topics to better understand the effectiveness of agency activities. Senior leadership disseminates proposed action steps that emerge from the day's discussions through a summary report and incorporates key strategies into the annual performance plan for the following year. This annual meeting is a key opportunity for senior leadership to take part in a comprehensive discussion of long-term courses of action that will maximize organizational collaboration and creativity.
- **Country Portfolio Review.** Each year, the agency conducts a comprehensive review of active and potential Peace Corps posts based on external and internal data in a process known as the Country Portfolio Review (CPR). The CPR is an evidence-based framework to guide strategic discussions and decisions regarding the allocation of trainees and resources, possible new country entries, and phase-outs. The review conducted in FY 2016 focused 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 included 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 included administrative and financial data, results from surveys of post and headquarters staff, and results from the Annual Volunteer Survey and the Host Country Staff Survey.

- **Integrated Planning and Budget System (IPBS).** Headquarters offices and overseas posts develop strategic and operational plans to ensure that their activities are aligned with and advance the agency's strategic goals and objectives. The initial stage of this effort focuses on office-level and post-level assessments of progress-to-date on key initiatives and a review of the most recent data from administrative sources and annual surveys. OSIRP then gathers input on major programmatic shifts and agencywide strategic planning for use in the Annual Strategic Review meeting. In the second stage, each office and post identifies its resource requirements and creates its IPBS plan during the agency's budget formulation process.
- **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 summary of the progress-to-date, challenges, additional support that may be needed, and next steps to share with other agency staff. Then, during the quarterly reviews, key officials from across the agency discuss select performance data from the past quarter and develop strategies to meet performance targets by the end of the fiscal year. Performance spotlights are used to highlight particularly noteworthy or innovative cases of data being used in program, policy, or budget decisions. This quarterly assessment of progress allows the agency to focus efforts on performance goals with the greatest need and opportunity for improvement.

Appendix B: Evaluation and Research

The Peace Corps is deeply committed to performance improvement through the use of high-quality data and evidence. Evaluation and research activities are conducted at overseas posts and in a variety of headquarters offices to draw conclusions from existing evidence and to develop new sources of data to better understand performance challenges and improve operations.

Evaluations and other reporting can be found at peacecorps.gov/about/open/evaluations/. The Peace Corps Office of Inspector General also conducts a variety of audits and evaluations, which can be found at peacecorps.gov/about/inspector-general/reports/.

The use of evidence in the development of agency goals

The agency employed an evidence-based approach throughout the process of selecting the goals and objectives in the FY 2014–18 Strategic Plan. The Peace Corps developed or utilized evidence to inform the process through the following activities:

- **Review of existing studies.** The agency reviewed more than 40 internal and external reports and studies—including the Comprehensive Agency Assessment, Host Country Impact Studies, and Peace Corps Office of Inspector General audits and evaluations—to identify recurring challenges facing the Peace Corps as well as promising opportunities for improvement.
- **In-depth interviews.** The Peace Corps conducted over 50 individual interviews with agency employees to identify common performance themes. The agency also held conversations with returned Volunteers and overseas staff during scheduled conferences.
- **Agency work groups.** The Peace Corps convened over a dozen working groups comprised of senior managers and technical specialists from headquarters offices, overseas posts, and regional recruitment offices. More than 100 employees applied their unique technical skills and personal experience with the Peace Corps to analyze existing data on performance challenges, identify and prioritize potential goals and objectives, and detail the strategies and activities needed to address agency challenges.
- **Fieldwork at overseas posts.** Staff conducted interviews, observed Volunteer and staff operations, and held focused discussions in Morocco, Senegal, El Salvador, Guatemala, Ukraine, and Panama to gather the perspectives of overseas U.S. direct hire and host country staff, Volunteers, and beneficiaries.
- **Analysis of existing Peace Corps data sources.** The agency utilized several internal data sources to develop agency goals. For example, the Peace Corps analyzed Annual

Volunteer Survey data—such as data on safety and security, health care, the site development process, access to communication technology, and Volunteer counterparts—to develop performance goals and inform strategies and activities to advance agency goals. Administrative data on posts’ use of standard sector indicators were utilized to determine which measures would best demonstrate the development impact of Volunteers. The agency analyzed data from a counterpart survey pilot to determine performance goals related to Volunteers’ contribution to local development and to the promotion of a better understanding of Americans. Advances in those data sources have augmented the agency’s approach to performance against the goals since the initial development of the plan. For example, improved metrics around the evidentiary basis for innovation allowed posts and offices to identify the one or two elements they were missing in order to improve performance on Performance Goal 11.3.

Enhanced sources of evidence

The Peace Corps continues to expand its evaluation and research capabilities to satisfy a growing demand, both internally and externally, for evidence to support critical decisions and to better demonstrate Volunteers’ impact and the effectiveness of agency operations. The agency’s evaluation framework, finalized in FY 2013 and amended with guidance on specific evaluation protocols in FY 2014, FY 2015, and FY 2016, provides the Peace Corps with a systematic framework for conducting evaluation and research activities across the agency. Strategic Objective 11 (Measurement for Results) in the FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan further demonstrates the agency’s focus on improving and expanding its monitoring, reporting, and evaluation practices. The hiring of over 40 new monitoring and evaluation staff, most of them at posts, supports both the expansion of data collection and validation and the strengthening of the global analytic capacity of the Peace Corps. Finally, the development of a programming, training, and evaluation alignment plan, as recommended by the agency’s Monitoring and Evaluation Task Force in FY 2015, was launched in FY 2016 and continues through FY 2017.

Efforts to enhance the use of existing data and to build the Peace Corps’ evidence base are supported by the continued increase in monitoring and evaluation staff and improvements in the training and tools available to Volunteers and staff. New evidence is being used to inform agency decisions through the existing performance management processes detailed in Appendix A.

Enhanced sources of evidence include the following:

- **Annual agencywide evaluation agenda.** Each year, the Peace Corps develops an agency-level evaluation agenda based on the results of the Annual Strategic Review, the identification of topics through Quarterly Strategic Plan Performance Reviews, the annual Country Portfolio Review, and agency priorities and interests. Efforts in FY 2016 included research on the contributions of Peace Corps Volunteers and returned Volunteers to the global eradication of smallpox; a statistical analysis of data from 21

project evaluations and the operational relationship between Peace Corps Goals One, Two, and Three; process evaluations of country director hiring and IT help desk ticketing; a pre-/post-testing of the utility of an applicant soft skills inventory; and the launch of the Programming, Training, and Evaluation Alignment plan, which includes the development of logic models based on proven sector-based interventions for all projects, enhanced project-based evaluation activities, and the hiring of a dedicated Programming, Training, and Evaluation Alignment manager.

- **Global Counterpart Survey.** In FY 2014, the agency conducted its first Global Counterpart Survey, designed to provide information on the impact of Volunteers on local communities from the perspectives of Volunteers' primary work partners. After reaching approximately 25 percent of counterparts globally in FY 2014's attempted census, agency leaders decided to administer future surveys as a random sample. In the surveys fielded in FY 2015 and FY 2016, the agency received 397 and 399 responses respectively from the 400 counterparts who comprised the random sample. With this simplified yet robust design, the agency now has two years of globally representative data that accurately captures the sentiment of Volunteers' partners in their host communities.
- **Host Country Staff Survey.** In FY 2015, the Peace Corps launched its second agencywide survey to systematically gather perspectives from host country staff. The survey included all questions asked in FY 2014 related to staff training and the degree to which the Peace Corps has an inclusive culture. Additionally, the FY 2015 survey posed several new questions about the agency's success in achieving its larger mission of community-based development and cross-cultural understanding. The FY 2016 survey featured new questions about Volunteers' strengths and weaknesses as well as reasons for working for the Peace Corps. In order to accommodate host country staff with limited English skills, this year's survey was professionally translated into French and Spanish.
- **Project evaluations.** The agency collected baseline data in Timor-Leste in FY 2016 following the model used in Comoros in FY 2015 and Kosovo in FY 2014. The baseline data collected on the primary project in Timor-Leste was the first that was not school-based or highly structured. Given that the data was collected by Volunteers in their assigned communities, baselining offered enhanced opportunities for Volunteers to integrate into their communities, identify the specific activities their communities needed within the wider project framework, and make requests to post staff for additional training. When coupled with endline data collected after host country individuals and communities have interacted with Volunteers for a sustained period of time, this baseline data collection effort will enable the agency to conduct a formal impact evaluation on the effect of Volunteers on local development outcomes and building a better understanding of Americans.
- **Volunteer Reporting Tool.** Since FY 2008, Volunteers have been reporting on their activities electronically through the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT). In conjunction with

the wholesale revision of Volunteer project frameworks through the Focus In/Train Up strategy, a major redesign of the VRT was completed in FY 2014. The redesigned VRT includes an intuitive user interface, allows for the global aggregation of Volunteer activity data, and provides for better data quality. As a result of the improved VRT and revision of Volunteer project frameworks, Volunteers are able to report on standard indicators for each sector that are consistent with and can contribute to the development indicators of the agency's strategic partners, such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and Feed the Future. When the redesigned VRT is fully implemented, more data will be collected on Volunteer activities and their outcomes, which can be more easily monitored, analyzed, and reported to demonstrate the impact of Volunteers. The establishment of Programming, Training, and Evaluation Alignment in FY 2016 and FY 2017 will further hone the indicators collected in the VRT.

Appendix C: Verification and Validation of Performance Data

Data collection and reporting consistency are supported by the use of detailed performance goal data reference sheets, which include operational definitions, data sources, and a comprehensive methodology for measuring each performance goal. The agency ensures the data are complete and accurate through oversight and review by the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning. The major data sources for performance goals in the FY 2018 Annual Performance Plan are detailed below.

Annual Volunteer Survey

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

In FY 2014, the agency substantially redesigned the survey questionnaire to improve data quality by reducing measurement error, strengthening respondent confidentiality, and shortening the survey by half. By maintaining these improvements through FY 2015 and FY 2016, the agency is well on its way to being able to provide truly comparable, multiyear trend data to internal and external stakeholders. As a result of these enhancements to the AVS, the agency has gained a more accurate understanding of the perspectives of Volunteers.

The 2016 AVS was fielded from June 6 to August 12, 2016, and 90 percent of Volunteers completed the survey. The high response rate in combination with data verification and validation measures minimize total survey error at the global level. The survey is not, however, administered to a random sample of Volunteers. As with other non-randomized surveys, the AVS is subject to non-response bias.

Survey respondents in FY 2016 reflected the Peace Corps' overall composition by gender, age, geographic location, and length of service. Responses to all AVS questions were directly provided by the Volunteers and housed in an external, electronic survey database. To ensure data quality, rigorous data cleaning procedures were applied to the dataset prior to analysis. The results were used to inform agency leadership about the Volunteers' perspectives on key issues.

It is worth noting that, as with any survey, 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. Thus, nominal percentage point movements may not be practically meaningful or significant. In using AVS results, the agency reviews longer-term trends to account for normal, expected variations in responses.

Global Counterpart Survey

First launched in FY 2014, the Global Counterpart Survey is designed to provide information on the impact of Volunteers from the perspectives of the individuals with whom Volunteers work most closely. The second Global Counterpart Survey was launched in FY 2015 and consisted of a short interview of Volunteers' primary work partners administered by overseas staff. The survey methodology used in FY 2015 was replicated in FY 2016.

The survey was administered either over the phone or in person from May 2 through July 1, 2016, by overseas staff. Global results are drawn from a randomly selected group of 400 respondents, 399 of whom were interviewed by post staff in 2016. Data quality challenges include potential interviewer error and ambiguity in the total survey population. The interviews are conducted by staff experienced in project fieldwork and counterpart communication but who may not have extensive experience in survey interviewing or data collection. Issues of translation, variation in interview styles, and accuracy of coding may have unpredictable influences on the results. The agency is addressing this challenge by providing extensive tools, training, and support to staff and by closely monitoring survey results to identify inconsistencies. Prior to initiating the interviews, three training sessions were conducted via WebEx for interested post staff. The agency also provided translations of the survey in French and Spanish.

Determining the survey population is a challenge. Since no direct sampling frame exists that lists all Volunteer counterparts at all posts, Volunteers are used as a selection proxy for the counterparts who make up the random sample. In this survey, the agency has defined counterpart as the Volunteer's primary work partner as reflected in post records for his or her primary project. In cases where a Volunteer no longer has any working relationship with their post-assigned counterpart, the Volunteer is asked to identify their primary work partner. It is assumed that each Volunteer will have one official counterpart and that results are globally representative.

Employee Viewpoint Survey

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

The demographic profile of survey respondents is consistently representative of the U.S. direct hire staff. The survey is administered electronically, and with very few exceptions (related to the Peace Corps' performance goals), 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 non-response bias. Additionally, the survey represents the views of employees at a fixed point in time and can be influenced by external factors. The agency accounts for these data limitations by drawing conclusions from multiyear trends and by comparing the results with those of other federal agencies.

Host Country Staff Survey

The Host Country Staff Survey 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 for two performance goals in the agency's strategic plan, as well as achievements in the Peace Corps' Goals One and Two. The survey was administered online from August 8 to September 9, 2016, and was completed by over half of the total host country staff population. The survey comprises 16 questions covering the following: diversity and inclusion, staff training, contributions to the Peace Corps' goals, development impact, job satisfaction and comparability to other available jobs.

As in 2014 and 2015, the primary data quality challenge with the survey in 2016 was the development of the sampling frame. Identifying and contacting all host country staff proved difficult; some staff members in administrative or support positions did not have official email addresses. Due to this challenge, the sampling frame consists of the host country staff who could be reached via email. Overall, 37 percent of all eligible host country staff responded to the survey in FY 2014. Improvements to the frame raised that number to over 50 percent in both 2015 and 2016. Additionally, while the Host Country Staff Survey was offered in English, French, and Spanish in FY 2015 and FY 2016, limited ability in those languages as well as factors such as lack of computer access or familiarity with online survey tools for some staff may have contributed to non-response bias.

Volunteer Reporting Tool

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

Since the development of the first version of the VRT, the agency has made numerous enhancements to improve the user experience, reduce data entry errors, and improve reporting. Volunteer reports are submitted to overseas post staff through the VRT on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. Staff review all reports and work with Volunteers to verify data and correct anomalies prior to end-of-year analysis. The agency provides in-depth VRT training and support to Volunteers and staff to ensure data are collected, analyzed, and reported properly. The agency has also developed data collection tools for the project indicators related to Performance Goal 3.1 to standardize the methods that Volunteers use to collect data.

The primary data quality challenge that remains is ensuring that an adequate percentage of Volunteers report on the project indicators related to Performance Goal 3.1. The agency is addressing this challenge by working with overseas posts to encourage higher reporting rates and by appropriately documenting and considering reporting rates when conducting analyses.

Peace Corps databases

The Peace Corps maintains several database systems to collect Volunteer and program information. In order to maintain data integrity and ensure that the appropriate data entry methodology is followed, only authorized staff who have been properly trained can access key systems. Routine reconciliation processes among agency units enable users to verify and test performance data as well as to isolate and correct data entry or transfer errors. Internal, automated system processes also ensure data is appropriately transferred among different applications. The required level of accuracy to provide current and historical information about programs and Volunteers is met through database rules and business processes. Where data limitations do exist, largely due to data-entry compliance in isolated systems, they are noted in the appropriate performance goal section.

Peace Corps administrative records

For some performance goals, the Peace Corps collects annual data from headquarters offices and overseas posts through an online data call (survey). Responses are housed in an external, electronic database. Data cleaning procedures are applied to the dataset prior to analysis. Staff in positions of leadership or designated delegates at all overseas posts and headquarters offices are required to complete the survey. The survey is designed with clear logic and data validation rules to minimize data entry error. The data are independently reviewed by the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning, and anomalies are addressed to improve data quality. Other data are collected from specific headquarters offices individually.

While these administrative records do not have the benefit of the verification and validation standards executed in Peace Corps database systems, the agency is able to ensure a high level of accuracy by working with individual offices and posts to develop reliable data collection and analysis procedures.

Appendix D: Stakeholder Engagement

The Peace Corps utilized a highly participatory and inclusive process to develop the FY 2014–18 Strategic Plan that included input from a wide array of key stakeholders. The agency conducted dozens of meetings, interviews, and focused discussions with key headquarters and field-based staff, host country staff, Volunteers, and beneficiaries to develop the goals, objectives, and strategies in the strategic plan. The agency also reached out to the returned Volunteer community and key strategic partners to ensure their inclusion in the consultative process.

The agency posted a preliminary draft of the FY 2014–18 Strategic Plan on its public website from November 8 to December 2, 2013, to collect feedback from returned Volunteers, the agency’s strategic partners, and the general public. The feedback from stakeholders was incorporated into the strategic plan as appropriate.

Congressional consultation

In September 2012, the agency conducted outreach to the appropriate congressional committees based on the FY 2009–2014 Strategic Plan. In October 2013, the draft FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan was sent to the Peace Corps’ authorizing, oversight, and appropriations committees for their review and comments. The agency engages in ongoing discussions with congressional offices on issues of policy and budget importance and takes the views of Congress into consideration in its strategic planning.