The Peace Corps

STRATEGIC PLAN | FY 2014–2018

AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN | FY 2016–2017

The Peace Corps

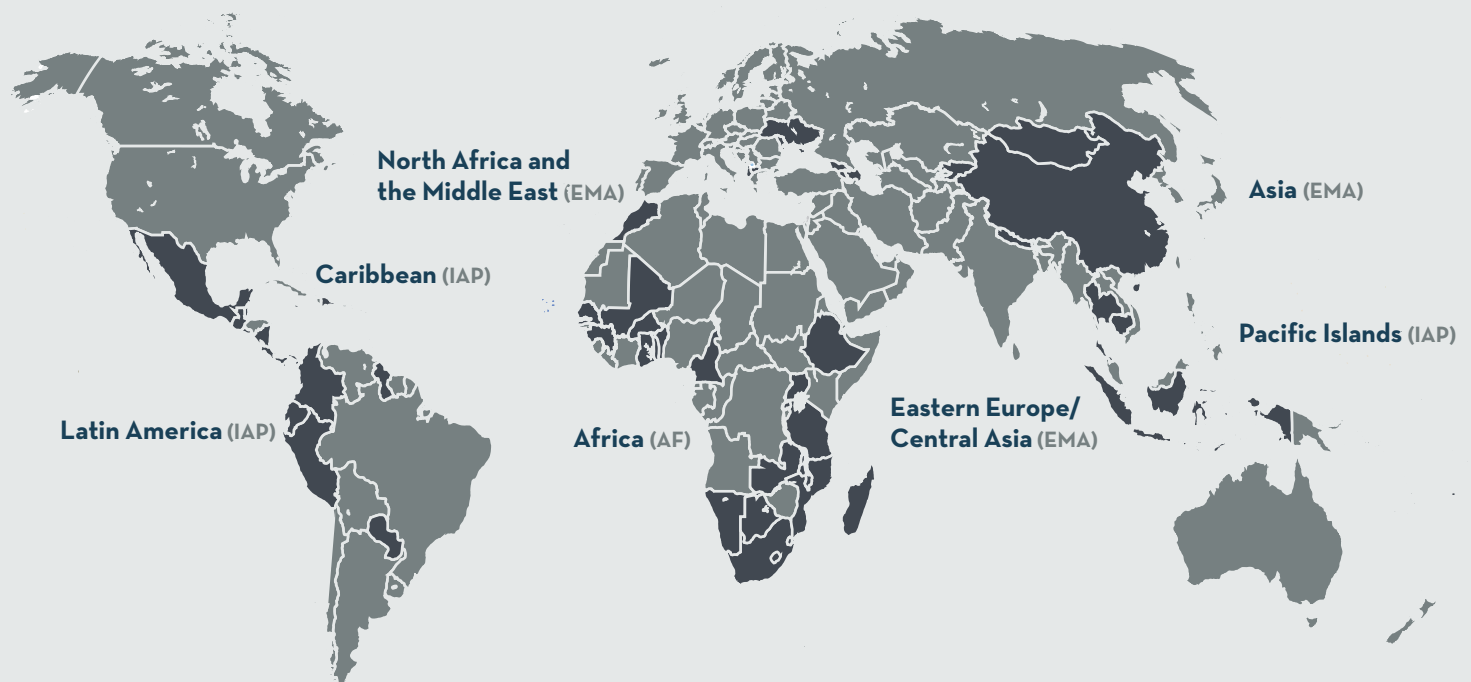# STRATEGIC PLAN | FY 2014–2018
AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN | FY 2016–2017

Where Peace Corps Volunteers Serve

North Africa and
the Middle East (EMA)

Asia (EMA)

Caribbean (IAP)

Pacific Islands (IAP)

Latin America (IAP)

Africa (AF)

Eastern Europe/
Central Asia (EMA)

Latin America (IAP)
Belize
Colombia
Costa Rica
Ecuador
El Salvador
Guatemala
Guyana
Mexico
Nicaragua
Panama
Paraguay
Peru

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

North Africa and
the Middle East (EMA)
Morocco

Africa (AF)
Benin
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Comoros
Ethiopia
Ghana
Lesotho
Liberia
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mozambique
Namibia
Rwanda
Senegal
South Africa
Swaziland
Tanzania
The Gambia
Togo
Uganda
Zambia

Eastern Europe/
Central Asia (EMA)
Albania
Armenia
Georgia
Kosovo
Kyrgyz Republic
Macedonia
Moldova
Ukraine

Asia (EMA)
Cambodia
China
Indonesia
Mongolia
Nepal
Philippines
Thailand
Timor-Leste

Pacific Islands (IAP)
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, 2015

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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 220,000 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.
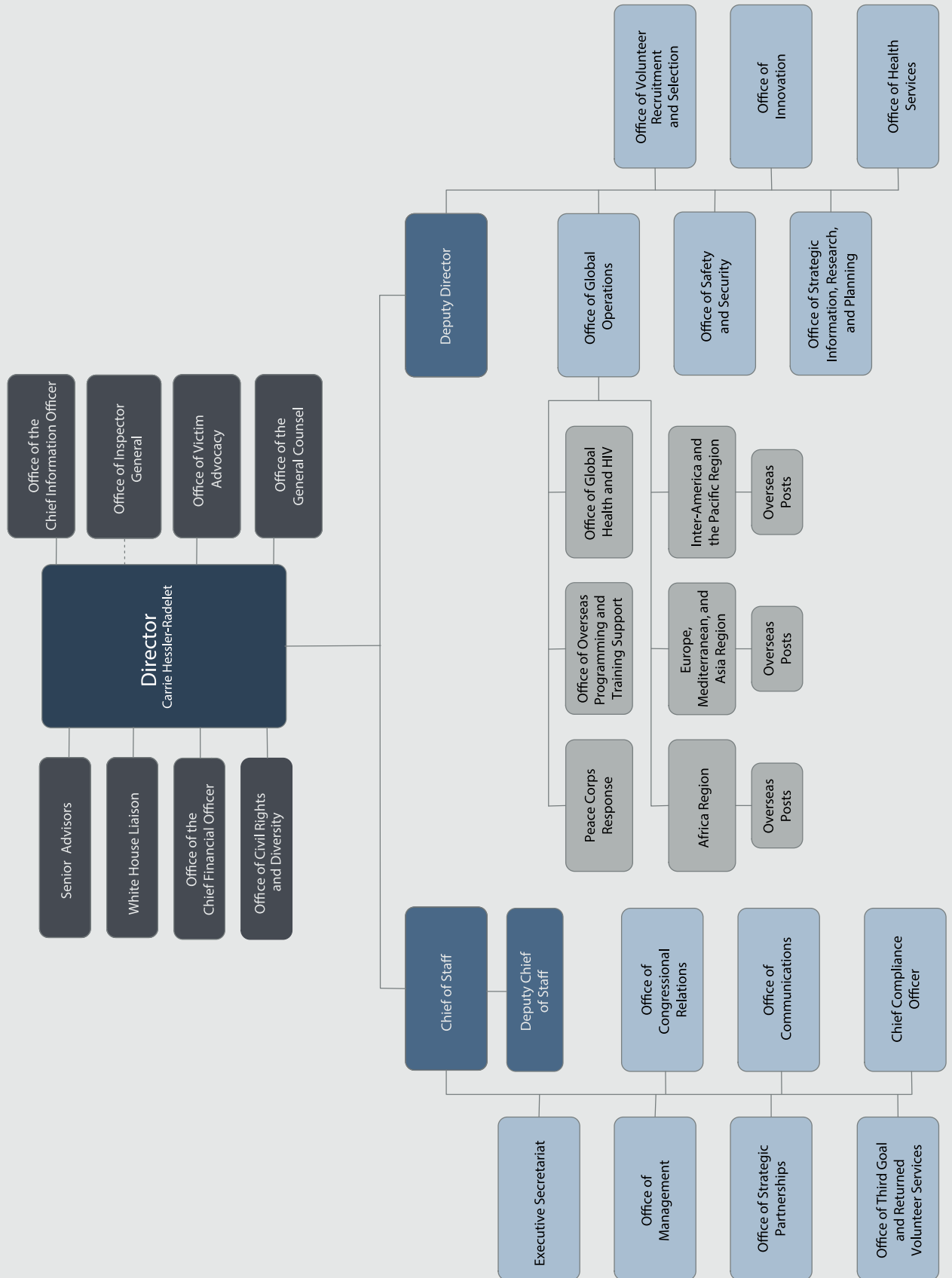
Peace Corps Volunteers are the face of our nation in communities around the globe, building positive perceptions of the United States and sharing American values with their communities. After Volunteers complete their service, they return to the United States with new sets of skills, deep knowledge of 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.

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*"The United States will join with our allies to eradicate such extreme poverty in the next two decades by connecting more people to the global economy; by empowering women; by giving our young and brightest minds new **opportunities to serve**, and helping communities to feed, and power, and educate themselves; by saving the world's children from preventable deaths; and by realizing the promise of an AIDS-free generation, which is within our reach."*

President Barack Obama
2013 State of the Union Address

Peace Corps Organizational Chart

Director
Carrie Hessler-Radelet

- Office of the Chief Information Officer
- Office of Inspector General
- Office of Victim Advocacy
- Office of the General Counsel

- Senior Advisors
- White House Liaison
- Office of the Chief Financial Officer
- Office of Civil Rights and Diversity

Deputy Director

- Office of Global Operations
- Office of Safety and Security
- Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning
- Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection
- Office of Innovation
- Office of Health Services

- Office of Global Health and HIV
- Inter-America and the Pacific Region
  - Overseas Posts
- Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support
- Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region
  - Overseas Posts
- Peace Corps Response
- Africa Region
  - Overseas Posts

Chief of Staff

- Deputy Chief of Staff

- Office of Congressional Relations
- Office of Communications
- Chief Compliance Officer

- Executive Secretariat
- Office of Management
- Office of Strategic Partnerships
- Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services

Core Values

The FY 2014–2018 Strategic Plan reflects the core values that 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.

"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

Plan Overview

The FY 2014–18 Strategic Plan establishes an ambitious five-year vision for the Peace Corps. The strategic plan strengthens recent far-reaching institutional reforms, focuses on addressing critical development challenges, and leverages promising opportunities to increase the impact of Volunteers and improve operations.

The strategic plan lays out the long-range goals and objectives designed to advance the Peace Corps mission. The FY 2016–17 Annual Performance Plan identifies the strategies and activities the agency will utilize to accomplish these goals and objectives, and the specific results the agency expects to achieve.

The FY 2014–18 Strategic Plan and FY 2016–17 Annual Performance Plan include 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 and activities 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 and activities 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 2014–18 Strategic Plan and FY 2016–17 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 plans (Appendix B), data verification and validation standards for the performance goals and indicators as well as recent revisions to key data collection tools such as the Annual Volunteer Survey (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 Modernization Act, 31 U.S.C. 1115(b)(10). The public can access the volume at whitehouse.gov/omb/budget.

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

Strategic Goals

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

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

These three core goals continue to serve as the foundation for the Peace Corps' approach to development and the three strategic goals that guide the FY 2014-18 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.

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.

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

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. The table below indicates which strategic objectives support each strategic goal.

Relationship between Strategic Goals and Strategic Objectives

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	●	●	●

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 and security environments differ from those of the United States. Further, Volunteers may experience a range of emotions as they address the complexities of development work and encounter unique stressors associated with living and working in local communities. Supporting the well-being and resiliency of Volunteers allows them to focus on their assignments and minimize risk-taking behaviors, helping to ensure that they return home safely and in good health. Volunteer well-being is the shared responsibility of staff and Volunteers.

Strategies and Activities

- Ensure that the reforms from the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011 continue to guide agency policy and practice
- Periodically evaluate individual experiences with health care and safety and security support
- Implement regionally specific and approved safety and security standards for site selection and monitoring
- 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
- Provide ongoing technical education and administrative support for Peace Corps medical officers and safety and security officers
- Expand mental health support to provide Volunteers with the tools to cope with the challenges of service and maintain emotional health and well-being
- Establish a data management system to track critical safety and security recommendations by posts and headquarters offices and to improve coordination and communication among key stakeholders
- Monitor the effectiveness of Volunteers' training related to safety, security, and health and make necessary adjustments
- Collaborate with other governmental and nongovernmental agencies on projects to improve Volunteer health outcomes
- Provide the agency, Congress, and the public with high-quality crime statistics
- Develop and standardize methods and materials to establish Volunteers' individual safety and security plans
- Train Volunteers and staff on the development of individual safety and security plans

External Factors: Volunteers encounter a broad range of social and environmental conditions during their service. 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.

Strategic Objective 1: Volunteer Well-Being

Performance Goal 1.1: Increase Volunteer Satisfaction with Safety and Security Support

Increase the percentage of Volunteers who report feeling "satisfied" or "very satisfied"[1] with safety and security support to 82 percent by FY 2018

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	--	76%	78%	80%	82%
Result	*73%*	*68%*	*71%*	84%[2]	81%			

[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) may not be directly comparable to results in FY 2014 and future years. However, year-to-year comparison of results from FY 2014 onward is possible.*

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 direct measure of the agency's safety and security prevention and response systems.

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 survey question with the top two positive responses cited above divided by the number of Volunteers who responded to the question. Respondents who selected the "not applicable/don't know" option are not included in this calculation.

Performance Goal 1.2: Reduce Volunteer Dissatisfaction with Medical and Mental Health Support

Reduce the percentage of Volunteers who report feeling "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied"[1] with medical and mental health support to 7 percent by FY 2016 and maintain that level of performance through FY 2018

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	8%	7%	7%	7%	7%
Result	*7%*	*7%*	*9%*	9%[2]	10%			

[1]*Includes the bottom two negative 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) may not be directly comparable to results in FY 2014 and future years. However, year-to-year comparison of results from FY 2014 onward is possible.*

Medical and mental health support for Volunteers is provided primarily by Peace Corps medical officers at each post. Medical officers are responsible for establishing and managing the in-country Volunteer health program and act as both program managers and clinicians. When necessary, medical officers or the Peace Corps' Counseling and Outreach Unit 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. Ensuring that the percentage of Volunteers who are dissatisfied with medical and mental health support does not exceed 7 percent will place the Peace Corps on par with the highest-performing U.S.-based health-care providers.

Goal Lead: Associate Director, Office of Health Services
Partner Offices: 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 to the survey question on satisfaction with their medical officer with the bottom two negative responses cited above divided by the total number of Volunteers who responded to the question. Respondents who selected the "not applicable/don't know" option are not included in this calculation.

Performance Goal 1.3: Increase Volunteer Personal Safety

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

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	--	--	--	35%	70%
Result	--	--	--	--	--	--		

Peace Corps safety and security training evaluations have provided evidence that prior planning and rehearsal can enhance a Volunteer's ability to respond to challenges to one's well-being. Volunteers who create safety and security plans will increase their self-reliance and build their confidence in implementing these plans and maintaining their own personal well-being. Incorporating training on developing these plans into the standardized package is expected to contribute to Volunteer safety. This is a new measure that has been added into this plan, so targets and results are not available for prior years.

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 pre-service training divided by the number of posts that have offered pre-service training sessions in the fiscal year.

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 position the agency to provide development assistance that is responsive to local community needs and to promote cross-cultural understanding between the United States and other countries through the work of skilled Volunteers.

Strategies and Activities

- Continue to implement an updated application platform that allows applicants to apply directly to the Peace Corps and Peace Corps Response positions of their choice
- Assess the efficacy of the waitlist system in ensuring that posts' requests for Volunteers are filled each year
- Act on recent market research to better access core prospects through understanding their goals, preferences, and motivators in implementing a national communications campaign leveraging paid and donated media
- Improve tools for communicating service opportunities to prospective Volunteers, including redesigning the Peace Corps website and developing additional content for mobile devices
- Implement a customer relationship management system to track new applicants throughout the Volunteer lifecycle
- Leverage strategic interagency, university, and public-private partnerships to increase the number of Volunteers serving annually and raise the profile of the agency
- Demonstrate a commitment to exceptional client relations by achieving and sustaining a high level of consistency and professionalism with all applicants and partners
- Utilize and expand the Peace Corps Response program to fill requests for highly skilled and experienced Volunteers
- Implement strategies to retain all invitees and foster a seamless transition from invitation to departure
- Continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the application and placement reforms and fill rates in order to make evidence-based decisions

External Factors: The Peace Corps must be a viable and attractive service opportunity in an environment in which talented Americans have an increasingly wide array of service opportunity options.

Performance Goal 2.1: Volunteer Requests Met

Field 100 percent of the Volunteers requested by overseas posts each year

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	95%	95%	95%	100%	100%	97–101%	97–101%	97–101%
Result	97%	97%	90%	98%	97%			

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. Beginning in FY 2016, the agency will use a percentage range as the target for this performance goal in recognition of the inherent complexity of predicting the exact extent of attrition. The agency will continue to improve upon attrition mitigation strategies—including researching ways to strengthen the engagement of invitees during the pre-departure environment—in order to meet the Volunteer requests of posts.

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.

Performance Goal 2.2: Increase Service Opportunities

Increase the number of Volunteers serving annually to 10,000 by FY 2018

	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			

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 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.

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.

Performance Goal 2.3: Increase Applications

Increase applications for Volunteer service to 25,000 by FY 2018

	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 (original definition)[1]	*12,206*	*10,091*	*10,118*	*17,336*	*22,956*			
Result (updated definition)[2]				19,151	24,848			

[1]*The definition of an application for Volunteer service was modified in FY 2014; results for FY 2011–13 are reported using the previous definition, which did not include Peace Corps Response and required that individuals submit both an application and a health history form. The agency received 15,404 applications in FY 2014 as measured by this definition. For comparison to the FY 2014 target, all applications from the two-year program (17,336) are reported.*

[2]*Under the updated definition, an "application" occurs when a qualified U.S. citizen submits a completed application for either the two-year Peace Corps Volunteer program or the short-term Peace Corps Response program. Under the new definition, the agency received 19,151 applications in FY 2014. Targets for fiscal year 2014 and beyond are set based on this new definition. FY 2015 results include applications from both the two-year program (22,956) and the Peace Corps Response program (1,892).*

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.

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 two-year Peace Corps Volunteer program and the short-term Peace Corps Response program from U.S. citizens who are at least 18 years old.

Performance Goal 2.4: Reduce Time from Application to Invitation

Reduce the average time from application to invitation to no more than 3 months by FY 2016 and maintain that level of performance through FY 2018

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	5 months	4 months	3 months	3 months	3 months
Result	10 months	11 months	6 months[1]	7 months	4 months			

[1]*In FY 2013, the application and medical review processes were modified; invitations are now offered prior to medical clearance. This resulted in a reduction of the average time from application to invitation.*

Prior to the application process reforms in FY 2014, prospective applicants perceived the process to be much longer than other service opportunities and cited this as a major deterrent to completing their applications.

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.*

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 resources, knowledge, and skills to expand the reach of programs and to enhance Volunteers' impact.

Strategies and Activities

- Periodically monitor community need through project advisory committees to ensure project activities address local development challenges appropriately
- 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 clearer baseline data and outcome measurements for the six-year project lifecycle model
- Identify the purpose and recipients—both internal and external—of data collected and reported by Volunteers
- 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

External Factors: Measuring the precise impact of Volunteers is complex given the nature of Peace Corps projects in which Volunteers work in close collaboration with local partners, organizations, and communities. For this reason, the Peace Corps measures this objective by analyzing the degree to which Peace Corps projects meet their targets.

Strategic Objective 3: Development Impact

Performance Goal 3.1: Advance Community-Based Development Outcomes

Increase the percentage of projects with documented gains in community-based development outcomes to 90 percent by FY 2018

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	--	--	80%	85%	90%
Result	--	--	--	76%	75%			

Projects are undertaken by multiple generations of Volunteers 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 (logic models) are used by the Peace Corps to operationalize the project plans by describing the goals, objectives, activity statements, and indicators of a project.

Nineteen standard sector indicators were selected from the most common indicators adopted by the Peace Corps. The standard sector indicators selected for this performance goal 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 suggests that Volunteers are contributing to community-based development.

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.

Performance Goal 3.2: Strengthen Local Capacity

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%			

Volunteers strengthen local capacity by working closely with community partners through all phases of their project activities. 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 increased knowledge and skills that they acquired from working with Volunteers. It is hypothesized that this increased capacity will better position these host country partners to achieve measurable and sustainable results in their communities.

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 capacity development or innovations divided by the number of randomly selected counterparts interviewed by post staff.

Performance Goal 3.3: Improve Feedback to Volunteers

Increase the percentage of Volunteers who report feeling "satisfied" or "very satisfied"[1] with the timeliness and quality of the feedback provided on their work to 68 percent by FY 2018

	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%			

[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) may not be 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.*

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.

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 survey question with the top two positive responses cited above divided by the number of Volunteers who responded to the question. Respondents who selected the "not applicable/don't know" option are not included in this calculation.*

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[2] 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 and Activities

- Develop intercultural competency training and tools for Volunteers and staff
- Coach post staff to utilize language training as a method for developing Volunteers' intercultural communication skills
- Assess Volunteers' intercultural competence at multiple points during their service
- Train Volunteers, host country staff, and counterparts on managing cultural differences
- 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)
- Incorporate age-appropriate, intercultural education into Third Goal activities
- Redesign the Coverdell World Wise Schools Correspondence Match program and expand educator access to information based on their curriculum needs
- Develop an assessment tool that teachers can use to evaluate the impact of Coverdell World Wise Schools' activities on their students' global competence

External Factors: The world is interconnected today in ways vastly different from when the Peace Corps was founded in 1961. There are new opportunities to utilize modern communication tools and technologies to better connect Americans and people in the countries where Volunteers serve both during and after a Volunteer's service.

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2 The term "intercultural" emphasizes the diversity found within groups and the complex multicultural context in which the Peace Corps operates.

Strategic Objective 4: Cross-Cultural Understanding

Performance Goal 4.1: Greater Understanding of Americans

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

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	--	--	95%	95%	95%
Result	--	--	--	94%[1]	90%			

[1]*The FY 2014 result represents responses from a low percentage of Volunteer counterparts (approximately 25 percent). While FY 2014 results are not globally representative, information gathered from other sources, including the Host Country Impact Studies conducted by the agency from FY 2008–12 (peacecorps.gov/open/evaluations), provides sufficient evidence to set targets for this performance goal for FY 2016 and beyond.*

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.

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 this question.

Performance Goal 4.2: Increase Cross-Cultural Connections

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

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	--	60%	63%	67%	70%
Result	--	--	--	57%	57%			

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.

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 this question.

Performance Goal 4.3: Increase Intercultural Competence Learning Opportunities

Increase the percentage of posts that adopt timely and intentional intercultural competence learning opportunities for key stakeholders to 70 percent by FY 2018

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	--	--	--	35%	70%
Result	--	--	--	--	--	--		

Recent research findings suggest that individuals learn to navigate between cultures appropriately and effectively when intentional, well-designed interventions or training programs are implemented to enhance their cultural self-awareness and skills in navigating interactions with people who are different from themselves. Since 1961, the Peace Corps has been a leader in cultural immersion. 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 during the appropriate timeframe will be better equipped to interact and communicate effectively and appropriately across cultures. This is a new performance goal in FY 2017, so targets and results are not available for prior years.

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Director, Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support
Partner Offices: Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region
Data Source: Peace Corps administrative records
Calculation: The number of open posts with Volunteers that included intentional intercultural competence learning opportunities in their programming and training efforts divided by the number of posts that have Volunteers in-country during the fiscal year.

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 220,000 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 and Activities

- Leverage email, social media, and other online tools to communicate more effectively and share tools and resources, such as career counseling, with returned Volunteers
- Improve the quantity and quality of returned Volunteer contact information by developing a contact database that allows individuals to easily update their information
- Collect regular feedback from returned Volunteers through a survey to track their professional and academic progress and inform the development of tools to 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 system for tracking, measuring, and evaluating the results of returned Volunteer career services
- Establish a competitive internship program where exceptional returned Volunteers can compete for year-long positions within the agency and with its strategic partners
- Actively promote the noncompetitive eligibility status of returned Volunteers to other federal agencies for expedited hiring
- 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
- Support the development of independent Volunteer alumni groups by providing materials on the promotion of the Third Goal and encouraging returned Volunteers to participate in such groups

External Factors: Much of the returned Volunteer community's contribution to the agency's Third Goal occurs organically and outside the control of the Peace Corps. The agency will explore opportunities to build upon the returned Volunteer community's continuing efforts to advance the Peace Corps mission.

Performance Goal 5.1: Support Returned Volunteer Career Transition

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			

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.

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.

Performance Goal 5.2: Increase Returned Volunteer Engagement

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			

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.

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.

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 and Activities

- 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 Volunteer training and culture
- Develop a marketing, communications, and outreach strategy to increase the diversity of the Peace Corps Volunteer and staff applicant pools
- 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
- Develop a system for post staff to recommend returned Peace Corps Volunteers who can serve as recruiters for underrepresented populations
- Engage the returned Volunteer community in recruiting underrepresented populations
- Monitor applicant drop-out rates by race/ethnicity, sex, age, and other demographic elements to identify potential barriers (e.g., economic, family commitments, student loans)
- Support employee resource groups to help recruit, retain, and support staff through the use of data-informed, resourceful, and innovative methods
- Pilot a mentoring program through employee resource groups as an internal professional development opportunity
- 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
- Building upon already existing programs, develop a plan for a streamlined mentoring program to connect recently returned Volunteers with current Peace Corps applicants to improve retention
- Analyze the retention and attrition rates throughout the Volunteer and staff lifecycles to identify any inequities in the Peace Corps' operations and organizational culture

External Factors: As the Peace Corps primarily attracts recent college graduates, efforts to increase the diversity of the Volunteer population are dependent in part on the diversity of individuals completing an undergraduate degree. Similarly, staff diversity is influenced by the diversity of both the Volunteer population and the U.S. workforce.

Performance Goal 6.1: Increase Applicant Diversity

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

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	32%	34%	35%	35%	35%
Result	26%	27%	30%	33%	35%			

Increasing the number of applications from individuals of minority racial and ethnic groups—who are traditionally underrepresented in the Peace Corps—will result in a Volunteer population that more accurately reflects the diversity of America. Moreover, as 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. 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.

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. Applicants who did not provide their race or ethnicity are not included in this calculation.

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 "agree" or "strongly agree"[1] that the agency has an open and inclusive organizational culture to 90 percent and maintain that level of performance through FY 2018

		FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target		--	--	--	85%[2]	88%	90%	90%	90%
Result	U.S. direct hire staff	--	--	--	88%	83%			
	Host country staff	--	--	--	*89%[3]*	*92%[4]*			
	Volunteers	--	--	--	*80%*	76%			

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

[2]*The FY 2014 target applied only to U.S. direct hire staff and was based on an estimate derived from contextual information from the Employee Viewpoint Survey. Based on the collection of baseline data from host country staff and Volunteers through the Host Country Staff Survey and Annual Volunteer Survey, respectively (italicized), targets for FY 2015 and beyond apply to each of the three groups. All three must reach 90 percent for the target to be reached.*

[3]*The FY 2014 Host Country Staff Survey was the first of its kind fielded by the agency; an estimated 37 percent of eligible staff participated that year (results italicized).*

[4]*In FY 2015, 52 percent of eligible staff participated in the Host Country Staff Survey (results italicized). As the survey develops in subsequent years to cover a greater percentage of host country staff, it is expected that it will better represent the opinions of that population.*

For this performance measure, an open and inclusive organizational culture constitutes a positive working environment as reflected in the interactions among members of the Peace Corps organization as a whole (e.g., Volunteers, post staff, and headquarters staff). This performance measure assesses the Peace Corps' level of inclusivity by analyzing the perception of openness and inclusion of these groups with respect to race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, family status, and gender identity or expression. This will provide a direct outcome measure that can be evaluated in detail to measure how all groups perceive the agency's culture of inclusion and to what extent employees feel valued.

Goal Lead: Director, Office of Civil Rights and Diversity
Partner Offices: Office of Human Resource Management; Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support
Data Sources: Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) for Volunteers; 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
Calculation: For each data source (AVS, EVS, and HCSS), the number of respondents with the top two positive responses cited above for the survey question divided by the number of respondents for the survey question. Respondents who selected the "not applicable/don't know" option are not included in this calculation.

Performance Goal 6.3: Retain Applicant Diversity

Increase the percentage of minority applicants who complete the application process after accepting an invitation to serve

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	--	--	No target set; baseline data collection	TBD	TBD
Result	--	--	--	--	--	--		

The Peace Corps devotes time, effort, and resources to attract candidates who reflect the population of the United States. Although this performance goal is focused on racial and ethnic diversity and the stage(s) of the application process that show the largest difference between minority and non-minority applicants, the agency will also monitor applicant drop-out rates by sex, age, and other demographic elements in order to identify potential barriers to service that should be addressed. Results for minority applicants will be benchmarked against the pool of candidates at the same stage of the application process. Retaining all applicants—throughout the applicant lifecycle—will then result in a diverse pool of people who go on to serve in a Volunteer population that more closely reflects the diversity of America. Major revisions to the application process were completed in July 2014. As the application process can last up to a year, targets cannot be set until applicants in the revised process complete all steps and this data subsequently becomes available.

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 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 two-year applicants who complete the final clearance process divided by the number of applicants who accepted an invitation to serve.

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 and Activities

- Develop and implement post-specific site development criteria, policies, and procedures; standardize specific criteria agencywide where appropriate
- Define key research questions around the implementation of standards, procedures, and criteria conducive to the identification and development of a meaningful site
- Improve the staff-to-Volunteer ratio to provide more staff capacity for site development and to meet Volunteer support requirements
- 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
- Utilize project advisory committees to regularly monitor projects to ensure they address local development needs
- 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

External Factors: Each host country and individual community provides unique infrastructure and cultural challenges that must be taken into account as the agency seeks to develop and apply common site development standards uniformly across all posts.

Performance Goal 7.1: Improve Site Development

Increase the percentage of Volunteers who report feeling "satisfied" or "very satisfied"[1] with site selection and preparation to 68 percent by FY 2018

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	44%	62%	64%	66%	68%
Result	*42%*	*41%*	*42%*	59%[2]	59%			

[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) may not be directly comparable to results in FY 2014 and future years. However, year-to-year comparison of results from FY 2014 onward is possible. Targets set for FY 2015 and beyond were revised in view of the higher than projected FY 2014 results.*

The agency has a responsibility to develop an environment for Volunteers' success by ensuring that sites are effectively selected and prepared for their arrival. 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 the planned work role for the Volunteer, potential for integration, living arrangements, vulnerability to natural disasters, communication, transportation, access to essential health care and other support services, security climate, and cooperation with host authorities. Each post also reviews the site history if there have been any prior Volunteer assignments. Evaluation of the site and satisfaction of site selection criteria must be documented by the post. This process ensures that the Volunteers are well-positioned for success during their service.

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 survey question with the top two positive responses cited above divided by the number of Volunteers who responded to the question. Respondents who selected the "not applicable/don't know" option are not included in this calculation.

Performance Goal 7.2: Improve Counterpart Selection and Preparation

Increase the percentage of Volunteers who report feeling "satisfied" or "very satisfied"[1] with the community integration and project work support provided by their assigned counterpart to 61 percent by FY 2018

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	34%	55%	57%	59%	61%
Result	*31%*	*32%*	*32%*	53%[2]	51%			

[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) may not be 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.*

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 receiving adequate 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 development process.

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 two questions on the survey with the top two positive responses cited above divided by the total number of Volunteers who responded to the two questions. The two questions related to satisfaction with the assigned counterpart helping them to (1) accomplish project work and (2) integrate into the community. Respondents who selected the "not applicable/don't know" option are not included in this calculation.

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 and Activities

- Continue to evaluate and refine the training materials developed through the Focus In/Train Up strategy
- Develop and implement a global Volunteer continuum of learning for the six project sectors—from pre-departure to close-of-service materials—that emphasize self-directed learning, utilize coaching and mentoring, foster communities of practice, and include individual learning plans for Volunteers
- Establish terminal learning objectives and measure Volunteers' progress toward achieving them at the end of pre-service training, during service, and at the close of service
- Share training and language-learning materials through an online knowledge-sharing platform
- Develop formal processes to document the training received, expertise and proficiency levels achieved, and certifications earned by Volunteers
- Continue to implement mandatory close-of-service language testing and encourage posts to administer language exams to Volunteers at midservice
- Pilot new approaches to the content, sequencing, and design of Volunteer training, including distance learning, counterpart involvement, and certification programs
- Improve language and cross-cultural facilitators' training and professional development
- Encourage U.S. direct hire post staff to learn the host country's language(s) as role models to Volunteers and as representatives of the Peace Corps
- Conduct a formal evaluation of technical training to assess effectiveness, identify primary drivers for success, and provide recommendations

External Factors: Delivery of critical safety and security training content limits the amount of time that can be spent on technical, language, and intercultural training. Additionally, trainers at some posts are temporary hires, and the retention of experienced trainers from year to year is challenging.

Strategic Objective 8: Train Up

Performance Goal 8.1: Improve Language Learning

Increase the percentage of Volunteers tested at close of service who achieve the "advanced" level or above on the language proficiency interview to 70 percent by FY 2018

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	50%	55%	60%	65%	70%
Result	--	--	--	63%	63%			

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 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).

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.

Performance Goal 8.2: Increase Effectiveness of Technical Training

Increase the percentage of Volunteers who report that their technical training was "effective" or "very effective"[1] in preparing them to work at their site to 67 percent by FY 2018

	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%			

[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) may not be 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.*

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.

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 survey question with the top two positive responses cited above divided by the number of Volunteers who responded to the question. Respondents who selected the "not applicable/don't know" option are not included in this calculation.*

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 results in a constant influx of fresh ideas and innovation. It also produces significant human capital and knowledge management challenges. At the same time, 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 and Activities

- Initiate the development of 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
- Develop strategies for improving staff retention (e.g., 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
- Establish an agencywide strategy for using technological platforms and increase online training to expand learning opportunities for domestic and overseas staff

External Factors: The law that generally limits staff to five-year appointments produces significant transaction costs as staff turn over and creates challenges to building a high-performing learning organization.

Performance Goal 9.1: Improve Staff Training

Increase the percentage of staff who report feeling "satisfied" or "very 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		--	--	--	54%[2]	56%	58%	60%	62%
Result	U.S. direct hire staff	50%	50%	57%	55%	52%			
	Host country staff	--	--	--	*62%[3]*	*66%[4]*			

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

[2]*The FY 2014 target applied only to U.S. direct hire staff and was based on actual results from the Employee Viewpoint Survey. Based on the collection of baseline data from host country staff through the 2014 Host Country Staff Survey, targets for FY 2015 and beyond apply to both U.S. direct hire staff and host country staff.*

[3]*The FY 2014 Host Country Staff Survey was the first of its kind fielded by the agency; an estimated 37 percent of eligible staff participated that year (results italicized).*

[4]*In FY 2015, 52 percent of eligible staff participated in the Host Country Staff Survey (results italicized). As the survey develops in subsequent years to cover a greater percentage of host country staff, it is expected that it will better represent the opinions of that population.*

An increase in staff satisfaction related to staff training indicates that staff are being provided the tools and training to do their job effectively and to develop professionally.

Goal Leads: *Associate Director, Office of Management; Associate Director, Office of Global Operations/Director, Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support*
Partner Offices: *Office of Human Resource Management; Office of Staff Learning and Development*
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*
Calculation: *For each data source (EVS and HCSS), the number of respondents to the respective survey questions with the top two positive responses cited above divided by the number of respondents for that survey question.*

Performance Goal 9.2: Increase Staff Tenure

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

	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			

Due to legislation that generally limits staff appointments to five years, the agency works to retain high-performing employees for as long as possible within the overall five-year limit and 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. For the purpose of this performance goal, "average tenure" refers to the median months between an employee's enter-on-duty date and separation date. 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.

Goal Lead: Director, Office of Human Resource Management
Partner Office: Office of Congressional Relations
Data Source: Peace Corps database (National Finance Center)
Calculation: The median number of months of tenure (e.g., number of months from entry-on-duty in the Peace Corps to separation, departure, or retirement) averaged across all U.S. direct hire staff who left the agency in a given fiscal year.

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 IT system and invigorated by field-based experimentation and problem solving, will leverage modern technology to break down barriers to communication and collaboration.

Strategies and Activities

- 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 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, training, and access to staff on new methods of communication commonly used by Volunteers, such as social media, 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, such as those from the Peace Corps Innovation Challenge and other crowd-sourcing activities, 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
- Re-establish the IT Investment Review Board, while accommodating a more agile IT software decision process for open source tools

External Factors: A major IT challenge for the Peace Corps is to utilize rapidly evolving technology, such as mobile technology, to increase communication and collaboration among Volunteers, posts, and headquarters while maintaining operational stability, security, and reliability in a complex operational and regulatory environment.

Performance Goal 10.1: Develop an Integrated Technology Platform

Retire all legacy applications and consolidate functions into an integrated platform by FY 2018

	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%			

Through the Platform Modernization project, legacy applications will be retired and their functions consolidated into a common, integrated platform. For the purposes of this performance measurement, a "legacy application" is defined as an interface built using technology that is no longer supported by the Peace Corps (e.g., Cold Fusion and Oracle Forms). 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 inactivated, and their core functions have been consolidated into a central, integrated platform (e.g., Dynamics Customer Relationship Management system). This project will improve data quality and facilitate increased access to data to meet the evolving information needs of the agency.

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.*

Performance Goal 10.2: Facilitate Knowledge Sharing

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

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	--	80%	82%	84%	85%
Result	--	--	--	77%	78%			

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.

Goal Leads: Associate Director, Office of Global Operations; Director, Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support
Partner Offices: Office of the Chief Information Officer; Office of Innovation
Data Source: Annual Volunteer Survey
Calculation: The number of Volunteers who report using digital materials at least once a month divided by the total number of Volunteers who responded to the question.

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 newly 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 within 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 and Activities

- 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
- Explore methods other than survey data for gathering and analyzing measurable sources of information
- Finalize, publicize, and implement the Monitoring and Evaluation Task Force recommendations
- Develop guidance on structured monitoring and assessment of pilot approaches to advance programmatic goals or address management challenges

External Factors: The federal government and the international development community have significantly expanded their emphasis on the use of research and evaluation for evidence-based decision making—supported by recent executive orders, the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, and directives from the Office of Management and Budget. Further, federal agencies are expected to clearly demonstrate the impact of their programs and their fiscally responsible use of federal funds.

Performance Goal 11.1: Conduct Baselines

Increase the percentage of new country entries[1] 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

	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%			

[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.*

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. A Volunteer project framework is a logic model used by the Peace Corps to operationalize the project plan by describing the relationships among the purpose statement, goals, objectives, activity statements, and indicators of a project. For the purpose of this performance goal, a "new Volunteer project framework" is defined as a project in a new sector for the country or a new project in an existing sector for the country that has been significantly redesigned.

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 into the communities in which they will be serving. For the purposes of this calculation, a baseline data collection effort in progress is considered to meet this goal as long as the study design and primary data collection are complete prior to the start of the interventions.

Performance Goal 11.2: Increase Evidence-Based Decisions

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

	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]			

[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) may not be directly comparable to results in FY 2015 and future years. However, year-to-year comparison of results from FY 2015 onward is possible.*

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.

Goal Lead: Director, Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning
Partner Offices: 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 number of posts and headquarters offices operating in the fiscal year.

Performance Goal 11.3: Using Evidence to Encourage Innovation

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

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Target	--	--	--	--	50%	75%	100%	100%
Result	--	--	--	*70%*	43%[1]			

[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) may not be directly comparable to results in FY 2015 and future years. However, year-to-year comparison of results from FY 2015 onward is possible.*

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 will be published in the form of guidance.

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

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 deputy director serves as the chief operating officer and oversees the agency's performance management efforts. The Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) is responsible for strategic and performance planning and reporting and 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 and the Small Agency Council's Performance Improvement Committee to contribute to and stay current with governmentwide performance improvement guidelines and best practices.

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

- **Annual Strategic Review.** Each year, the Peace Corps Director leads a one-day, forward-looking meeting with the active engagement of senior leadership from across the agency and open to 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 and engage Peace Corps senior leadership 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 incorporate select 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. The Country Portfolio Review informs decisions about new country entries, country graduations (closures), and the allocations of Volunteers and other resources. The review conducted in FY 2015 focused on Volunteer safety and security, medical infrastructure, host country need, development impact, cross-cultural impact, host country commitment and engagement, post management, congruence with U.S. government development priorities, and cost. The review included data from the following external sources: The World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, U.S. Department of State, Pew Research Center, Transparency International, the Emergency Events Database (International Disaster Database), and the World Health Organization. Internal data sources included administrative and financial data, results from surveys of post staff, and Annual Volunteer Survey results.

- **Integrated Planning and Budget System (IPBS).** Headquarters offices and overseas posts develop strategic and operational plans to ensure their activities are aligned with and advance the agency's strategic goals and objectives. IPBS plans are developed during the agency's budget formulation process; budgets are informed by the resource requirements of the IPBS plans. Through the IPBS, the agency is working to better link performance and budgeting processes to ensure that decision makers have the appropriate information to inform program, policy, and budget decisions.

- **Quarterly Strategic Plan Performance Reviews.** The Peace Corps utilizes quarterly reviews as the primary mechanism for monitoring and assessing performance throughout the year. During these reviews, which are chaired by the Peace Corps Director and open to all staff, key officials from across the agency discuss performance data from the past quarter and develop strategies to meet performance targets by the end of the fiscal year. In preparation for each review, the agency determines the status of each performance goal in the strategic plan based on both quantitative and qualitative analyses. A performance spotlight is identified during each quarterly meeting to highlight a particularly noteworthy use of data 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 are at peacecorps.gov/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/inspgen/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 agency 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 agency 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 agency 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 El Salvador, Guatemala, Morocco, Panama, Senegal, and Ukraine and 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 agency 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.

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 the 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 and FY 2015, provides the agency with a systematic framework for conducting evaluation and research activities across the agency. Strategic Objective 11 (Measurement for Results) in the FY 2014–18 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.

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 will be 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. Anticipated evaluation topics for FY 2016 include an evaluation of technical training delivered to Volunteers in support of Strategic Goal One, as well as performance evaluations on agency performance goals where insufficient progress has been made.

- **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 second-annual survey fielded in FY 2015, the agency received 397 responses from the 400 counterparts who comprised the random sample. With this simplified yet robust design, the agency now has a globally representative set of 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. In order to accommodate host country staff with limited English skills, this year's survey was professionally translated into French and Spanish.

- **Impact evaluations.** The agency collected baseline data in Comoros in FY 2015, following the model used in Kosovo in FY 2014. 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. The agency plans to continue to conduct similar baseline data collection activities in other new country entries and when posts introduce a new Volunteer sector. The agency will also conduct structured pilots to test new approaches to increasing the impact of Volunteers and to solving management challenges.

- **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.

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 2014–18 Strategic Plan and FY 2016–17 Annual Performance Plan are detailed below.

Annual Volunteer Survey

The Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) is an anonymous, 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 and reducing the survey length even further in FY 2015, 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 2015 AVS was fielded from June 8 to August 14, 2015, and 90.6 percent of Volunteers completed the survey. The high response rate from Volunteers and the data verification and validation measures utilized 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 2015 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.

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. In 2015, 96 percent of employees completed the survey. 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.

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.

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

The survey was administered either over the phone or in person from May 4 through July 3, 2015, by overseas staff. Global results are drawn from a randomly selected group of 400 respondents, of whom 397 were interviewed by post staff in 2015. Additional post-level results are provided to any post interviewing at least 75 percent of its Volunteers' counterparts, but the results reported in this document are based on the globally representative sample. These results provide key findings on how Volunteers' counterparts in host countries credit the Peace Corps with increased local capacity and a better understanding of American culture and diversity.

Counterparts are partners of the Peace Corps and, as such, have opinions about the agency's effectiveness. They also have multiple incentives to respond positively when asked to express their opinion of Peace Corps Volunteers and the work they do. There are various methods for reducing positivity bias in surveys, but one recommended method for measuring the relative importance of different concepts—particularly across multiple countries or cultures—is known as a "MaxDiff" or "best-worst scaling" approach. Using this method, respondents create a discriminating ranking of items by choosing their top and bottom choices from a list, then repeating the top and bottom ranking on the remaining items from the list until all items have been evaluated. These rankings can then be calculated into scores, scaled from -100 to 100, that show the relative importance of each item. This type of question prevents respondents from simply ranking everything at the top, thereby reducing positivity bias.

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 survey interviewing and data collection experience. 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 into 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 addition, there are multiple utilizations and interpretations of the title "counterpart" across the agency, which will influence the survey population. To address this, 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. For the purposes of Performance Goals 3.2 and 4.1, it is assumed that each Volunteer will have one official counterpart.

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 10 to September 11, 2015, and was completed by 52 percent of the total host country staff population. The survey comprises 14 questions covering the following: diversity and inclusion, staff training, contributions to the Peace Corps' goals, development impact, and job satisfaction. In future years, the agency expects to expand the survey to include additional questions to more fully capture the perspectives of host country staff on a range of topics related to post operations and support.

As in 2014, the primary data quality challenge with the survey in FY 2015 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 in FY 2014 only consisted of the host country staff who could be reached via email (approximately 2,050 out of 2,950 staff). Overall, 37 percent of all eligible host country staff responded to the survey in FY 2014. Additionally, while the FY 2015 Host Country Staff Survey was offered in English, French, and Spanish, 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.

Peace Corps databases

The agency 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. Regular reconciliation processes among agency units enable users to verify and test performance data 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

The agency collects data annually from headquarters offices and overseas posts that do not exist in a centrally managed database 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 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.

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 prior to entry into the VRT.

The primary data quality challenge that remains is ensuring 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.

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 2009–14 Strategic Plan. In October 2013, the draft FY 2014–18 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.

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