Summary: NPCA’s 2016 RPCVs of WI-Madison grant focused on two primary activities: funding the development and implementation of the Purpose-Driven Group webinar series, and developing tools and support to help affiliate groups join the new SilkStart database/website platform. We are happy to report that we exceeded our goals for both of these activities during the grant year.

Expanded Webinar Series
The NPCA affiliate group webinar series, supported by RPCVs of WI-Madison, featured 20 webinars between October 2016 and September 2017. We exceeded our goal to have an average of one webinar per month by almost 60%. In total, 173 participants attended the webinars outlined below, with the most popular webinar being Movement Builders – Help Bridge America’s Divides Through Service (January 26th, 2017). Please see the appendix for a complete listing of topics, along with descriptions and presenters (many of whom were other group leaders sharing their best practices). Links to all supporting material and recordings of each of the webinars are on the Affiliate Group Network page of our website here: http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/cpages/affiliate-network#webinar

Website Tools
In order to help onboard additional groups who want to use our website and shared database platform (SilkStart), we hired a Community Technology Systems Coordinator—Ella Dowell. She has been effective in helping affiliate groups launch on SilkStart, and she has improved everyone’s understanding of how the technology can be used effectively to support group membership, management, and engagement. Though originally hired as a consultant, the demand was so high, and her assistance so well-received, we decided to bring Ella on full-time. In its first year, with Ella’s assistance, we brought 20 affiliate groups onto the SilkStart platform. Based on current projections, we expect to have 25 affiliate groups using the SilkStart platform by the end of 2017.

Ella posted informational videos about SilkStart on our website, as well as several testimonial videos from affiliate groups that are currently using the platform. These videos help communicate the value of the SilkStart platform to interested affiliated groups. She also gave a virtual presentation (virtual because of a cancelled flight) during the yearly Affiliate Group Network Annual Meeting (AGNAM) at the Peace Corps Connect Conference and offered in-person office hours throughout the conference.

Lessons Learned and Adjustments Made
The webinar series proceeded as planned with a few minor exceptions:

- Many affiliate groups requested the use of the Zoom platform for their own meetings and webinars. The use of the Zoom service has become so popular that it became necessary to purchase a second account, which is reserved for affiliate group use. This service provides a high value to groups with little funding and limited means to connect in person.
- Over the last year, the use of the webinar platform has become more community driven. Affiliate groups are starting to schedule webinars on their own to discuss important topics with the entire Affiliated Group Network.
• In light of the recent federal budget proposal, where the House of Representatives and the White House proposed cutting $12 million from the Peace Corps budget, our advocacy staff and board directors began hosting weekly meetings with the advocacy coordinators of our affiliate groups in order to coordinate efforts to safeguard the Peace Corps budget. (These weekly updates are not included in the webinar totals above.)

**Next steps:** Many affiliated groups have expressed an interest in capacity-building and networking opportunities in addition to the annual AGNAM. To meet this need, we will host virtual town hall meetings over Zoom. These meetings will assist affiliate groups by allowing them to connect with each other and ideate together. They will also open a direct window to NPCA leadership and staff, providing a platform for AGN leaders to share valuable insight and community perspective. Our webinar program has been very successful, and we will continue to implement it. We plan to expand its use so that affiliate groups will be more capable of hosting their own webinars using the Zoom platform. Finally, for SilkStart, our goal is to expand its usage to 35 additional groups by the end of 2018.

Thank you to the RPCVs of Wisconsin-Madison for your support of our capacity-building resources for affiliate groups, helping us in our efforts to enable affiliate groups to thrive!

**Financial Report**

<table>
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<th>Expenses (RPCVs of WI-Madison)</th>
<th>Expenses (Individual contribution)</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Remaining Funds</th>
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<td>Materials Development and Project Management</td>
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Financial notes:
• We received a discount for paying for a full year of Zoom up front, instead of monthly, as budgeted. The report above includes the second Zoom account purchased for dedicated affiliate group use.
• Nine affiliate groups benefited from full subsidies and two from partial subsidies.
Appendix: Full Description of Webinars Presented

Tuesday, October 25: Building Affiliate Group Engagement in Support of Refugees
The crisis involving refugees and migrants in the world today is one of the defining issues of our time. Recently, a group of RPCVs formed a working group on these issues, with three areas of emphasis: direct assistance overseas, support for refugee resettlement efforts in the United States, and advocacy. In this session, following a brief overview of the work that individual RPCVs and NPCA affiliate groups are involved in to date, we will explore together how the Peace Corps community - particularly affiliate groups - can be further enlisted in this effort.

Tuesday, November 1: Rally Peace Corps Champions: Become a NPCA Advocacy Coordinator
Want to rally the RPCVs in your community to turn your members of Congress into Peace Corps champions? You can by becoming an NPCA Advocacy Coordinator. We'll walk you through everything. If you're driven, organized and sociable, please join us for this webinar. No experience necessary.

Wednesday, November 16: NPCA Meet and Greet
New to the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) or to your role with the leadership of an affiliate group? Welcome! NPCA is your hub for connecting to, informing and engaging with the wide Peace Corps community and our 160 affiliate groups. With a goal of helping members and affiliate groups thrive, we offer an array of resources and opportunities. Join in this monthly "meet and greet" with other affiliate group officers - and your NPCA staff host - to get the latest news, learn about those resources and garner tips on how you can capitalize on all this community has to offer. Bring your ideas and questions, too, as there will be lots of time for Q&A.

Note: Additional Meet and Greet webinars were held in December, January, February, March and July.

Tuesday, November 22: Advocacy Coordinator 101
Want to rally the RPCVs in your community to turn your members of Congress into Peace Corps champions? You can by becoming an NPCA Advocacy Coordinator. We'll walk you through everything. If you're driven, organized and sociable, please join us for this webinar. No experience necessary.

Tuesday, November 29th: Advocacy Coordinators Update
Advocacy Coordinators only. President-elect Trump and the Peace Corps and More.

Tuesday, December 20: Movement Builders – Help Bridge America’s Divides Through Service (Repeated on January 26, 2016)
NPCA is a proud partner of Service Year Alliance (SYA), an organization teaming up with advocates, communities, higher education, companies, and more to make service a common expectation and opportunity for all young Americans. At their official kickoff event in New York City in November, SYA Board Chair and General (Ret.) Stan McChrystal said, “After a political campaign that divided our nation, we need to be united, and it's always been at our core value as Americans to serve. It’s who we are, and it's who we’ve always been.”

SYA is now teaming up with NPCA and other leading national service bodies to mobilize communities across the United States to bridge barriers through service—and we need your help to do it.

Organized, experienced and dedicated, NPCA Affiliate Groups are perfect vehicles for spearheading this effort—and benefiting from it. If you're a group leader or an enthusiastic supporter of service, this could be just what you're looking for, and what your community needs.

If you're interested in finding common ground through service, join Laura Thompson from SYA and J.M. Ascienzo from NPCA for a webinar to learn more about becoming an SYA Movement Builder.

**Tuesday, January 24: National Days of Action Mobilization Update**

Help lead efforts to mobilize the Peace Corps community during our 13th annual National Days of Action in Support of the Peace Corps.

**Wednesday, April 19: Building an RPCV Support Network**

We believe that as an RPCV community, we have the ability to support each other in a variety of ways ranging from giving a ride to a doctor's appointment, sitting with someone as they fill out a FECA claim, to providing referrals to professionals who understand the complexities RPCVs face after service.

By supporting each other, we choose to be a part of the positive changes in the lives of individuals who have experienced hardships or need connected to different types of support. By making connections within our network, we are able to increase access to resources and opportunities in order to reduce the incidence of long term physical or mental health issues, increasing our ability to thrive in life.

Affiliate groups have successfully helped individuals feel connected to others who understand transitioning back to the states, provided short term housing, raised funds for individuals experiencing financial hardships, and have provided referrals to professional services that are more in tune with RPCV needs.

**Wednesday, May 3: Highlighting Your Group on the NPCA Website**

NPCA's new community builder platform is designed specifically to help affiliate groups thrive. In this webinar for current NPCA affiliate group board members, you'll learn some of the features of this new site, particularly how you can update and use your affiliate group's listing in the group directory to highlight your group's successes and recruit new members. All groups will need to review and update their listing this year, so get ahead of the game on this webinar.
Wednesday, May 17: Opportunities for Service in Support of Refugees

As new refugees continue to enter the United States, those individuals and families already here require our help.

Hear from Experienced Refugee Advocates; Advice from Service Representatives; Examples of Need and Opportunities to Help.

Tune in and learn more . . .

- Activities that have been effective
- Discussion of current needs
- Opportunities to help

Wednesday, June 21: Supporting our RPCV Community

Supporting each other is in! Help us launch the RPCV Peer Support Network! Interested in learning about the format and how you can get involved?

This webinar follows from the April 19 webinar on Building an RPCV Support Network. You may participate in this webinar whether you were on the April webinar or not!

Tuesday, September 26: Affiliate Group Sign-On Letter Q&A (Repeated on September 28th)

Thanks in large part to the efforts of NPCA Affiliate Groups—especially leaders and Advocacy Coordinators—the Senate has proposed level funding for the Peace Corps' fiscal year 2018 budget and the agency now has a much better shot at avoiding cuts. Though our efforts are still needed to #ProtectPeaceCorps for the fiscal year 2018, we are in the midst of efforts needed for the fiscal year 2019.

NPCA is currently conducting outreach to the White House and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regarding the Peace Corps' fiscal year 2019 budget request. As part of our outreach and as in years past, NPCA will submit a letter to the president and OMB testifying to the impact of the Peace Corps through the work of Affiliate Groups. The more signatures we can secure, the greater and more diverse community we can project to the Administration.

Wednesday, October 11: Supporting Women and Girls Around the World

Join us for a conversation between these two dynamic women whose efforts are supporting international grassroots programs supporting the needs of women and girls and learn about ways that you can get engaged in Dining For Women’s (DFW) program here in the U.S. DFW fosters global citizenship through education and advocacy addressing equality for women and girls living in extreme poverty. DFW has partnered with Peace Corps and is developing a partnership with National Peace Corps Association
(NPCA) in support of girls education and empowerment. DFW provides small grants to currently serving Volunteers working in these projects, including Girls Leading Our World camps.