The Role of African-Americans in the Post-Pandemic U.S. Peace Corps

Recruitment, Challenges, and Opportunities

Tuesday, September 15, 2020 | 6:00pm-8:00pm EST

Agenda

Welcome & Opening Remarks:
Melvin Foote, Founder & CEO, Constituency for Africa (CFA)

Keynote Speaker:
Honorable Congresswoman Karen Bass

Special Remarks:
Dr. Darlene Grant, Senior Advisor to Peace Corps Director

Increasing African-American Recruitment: “EACH ONE REACH ONE!”

Panel, Speakers, and Topics

PANEL I: African-American Peace Corps (PC) Recruitment

Panelists: Dwayne Matthews, Office of Peace Corps Diversity Recruiter
           Clintandra Thompson, Communications Professional; Creator, Adopt a Black PCV Exchange.
PANEL II: Why Peace Corps? Effects for Professional Development

Panelists: Dr. Anthony L. Pinder, Associate Vice President of Internationalization & Global Engagement| Harris Bostic II, Strategic Senior Advisor & Client Services.

PANEL III: Challenges & Opportunities in Transitioning Home from Peace Corps

Panelists: Marieme Foote, Advocacy & Admin; Support Associate in National PC Association| Rahama Wright, Founder & CEO of Shea Yeleen Health & Beauty Company.

Guest Speaker:

Questions & Answers (Q&A)

Final Remarks/Closing:
Melvin Foote—Where Do We Go From Here?

*(Note: All listed speakers are Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, except for Congresswoman Karen Bass).*
Congresswoman Karen Bass: Re-elected to her fifth term representing the 37th Congressional District in November 2018. She serves on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs as Chair of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations and the House Judiciary Committee as Chair of the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security. Congressmember Bass also serves as the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Prior to serving in Congress, Congressmember Bass made history when the California Assembly elected her to be its 67th Speaker, catapulting her to become the first African American woman in U.S. history to serve in this powerful state legislative role. Congressmember Bass served as Speaker during California’s greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression. In addition to helping to navigate the state through a very difficult time, she also championed efforts to improve foster care and quality healthcare for Californians. For her leadership during the worst recession California had faced since the Great Depression, she, along with the three legislative leaders that she worked alongside, were awarded the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award in 2010.

Before serving as an elected official, while working as a Physician Assistant and as a clinical instructor at the USC Keck School of Medicine Physician Assistant Program, Congressmember Bass convened local community organizers and founded Community Coalition (CoCo), an organization with a mission to help transform the social and economic conditions in South LA that foster addiction, crime, violence and poverty by building a community institution that involves thousands in creating, influencing and changing public policy.
Melvin P. Foote: Founder and President of the Constituency for Africa (CFA). He has worked on African issues for more than 35 years. Founded 25 years ago, CFA is a Washington, D.C.-based network of organizations, groups, and individuals committed to the progress and empowerment of Africa and African people worldwide. The mission of CFA is to build public and private support for Africa and to help shape U.S. policies toward Africa.

For ten years, he was Africare’s Director of Education and Constituency Development, which led to the founding of CFA. In 2002, he founded the African American Unity Caucus (AAUC), which works with a coalition of Americans of African descent to promote Pan-African cooperation in Western countries and the African Union (A.U.). He works as a consultant to the World Bank on African-related issues, advises the A.U.’s Ambassadors to the USA, and works with other Congressional and Senatorial members on African issues and policies (RPCV Eritrea and Ethiopia, 1973-76).

Dr. Darlene Grant: Senior Advisor to the Office of Peace Corps Director. She works with agency leadership to increase and champion a diverse staff and volunteer corps to increase inclusiveness. Also, she will seek to remove barriers for underrepresented groups and create a more just and equitable Peace Corps. She worked as a professor of social work at the University of Texas at Austin for 18 years. In 2009, she took a leave of absence from this position to serve as a PCV in Cambodia Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and teacher trainer. In 2012, she became Peace Corps’ country director in Mongolia and later served as country director in Kosovo (RPCV Cambodia, 2009-11).

C. D. Glin: President and CEO of the U.S. African Development Foundation (USADF). There he invested, provided grants, and worked directly with African grassroots organizations, entrepreneurs, and small and medium-sized enterprises. He annually oversees approximately $115 million in philanthropic and social impact investments in more than 1200 civil society nonprofits, grassroots organizations, and enterprises in Sub-Saharan Africa (RPCV South Africa 1997-99).
**Eldridge ("Skip") Gilbert, Jr.:** Educational Consultant and Instructor. He provides intervention programs and instruction at the middle, high school, and college levels. Formerly, he worked as a Recruiter, focusing on African American students, in the Peace Corps Office in Washington, D.C.; as Director, Teacher Corps Peace Corps Program at Lincoln University, Mo; and, as Country Representative for Africare in Malawi. Africare operated economic and rural development programs in Africa (RPCV Sierra Leone, 1967-69).

**Dwayne Matthews:** Diversity Recruiter for the Office of Peace Corps. He performed his P.C. service in Malawi, Africa, as a Community Health Advisor. His work with P.C. has been to help recruit the new generation of PCVs. His recruiting outreach has been at Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); other colleges; and community centers, near HBCUs. He is currently working on his Ph.D. at Howard University in the area of social justice (RPCV Malawi, 2013-15).

**Clintandra Thompson:** Communications and marketing professional in various public relations work experiences for over 15 years. She is also a web content manager with a Washington, D.C.-based foreign policy think-tank for local and international audiences. She created the Adopt a Black Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV) Exchange between current Black PCVs and RPCVs to provide support and connect their Peace Corps experiences. She has paired nearly 100 PCVs and RPCVs and organized social networking events for Blacks interested in PC (RPCV Senegal, 2012-14).
Dr. Anthony L. Pinder: Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs for Internationalization and Global Engagement at Emerson College in Boston, MA. He is responsible for managing and building on all of the College’s international and institutional operations throughout the globe, including over 15 institutional partnerships and agreements. His research and professional interests focus on the international components of higher education, including the internationalization of HBCUs. He served as the Small Enterprise Developer in Ecuador, Country Director in Equatorial Guinea, and National Director for Minority Recruitment with the U.S. Peace Corps in Washington, D.C. (RPCV Ecuador, 1987-1989).

Harris Bostic II: Strategic Senior Advisor and Client Services. He has worked with donors and social venture partners inside various domestic and global organizations in the areas of strategic and growth planning, community outreach, program and leadership development, philanthropy, and nonprofit administration. He has affected positive social impact in locales from Atlanta to Zimbabwe in multiple public and private sector agencies and companies (RPCV Guinea, 1988-90).
**Marieme Foote**: Advocacy & Administrative Support Associate and Community Outreach Specialist with the National Peace Corps Association. She was one of several thousand recently evacuated and returned to the USA by P.C. due to COVID-19. She also was an active participant with Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security and Conflict Transformation, and interned with Africare, U.S. House of Representatives (Congress), and the World Bank (RPCV Benin, 2018-2020).

**Rahama Wright**: Founder and CEO of Shea Yeleen Health and Beauty, a social impact company, which develops shea butter creams, balms, and soaps. The company creates jobs for women in the USA and overseas. Her products have been featured in such media outlets as The Oprah Magazine, Washington Post, MSNBC, and CNBC Africa. She promotes African women’s economic and business development in global markets. In 2014, she was appointed to the Presidential Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa (RPCV Mali, 2002-04).
Thank you for attending!

This program prepared by: