



Integrated Country Strategy

UZBEKISTAN

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The withdrawal of U.S. and coalition troops from Afghanistan and the ascendancy of the Taliban in the summer of 2021, and follow-on consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine reshaped the geopolitical landscape in Central Asia. U.S. strategic priorities in the region and our interest in a broader and deeper bilateral relationship with Uzbekistan are stronger than ever. We remain deeply committed to Uzbekistan's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity; we retain a strong national security interest in a stable Uzbekistan that will not become a source for terrorism and other transnational threats. And we continue to see a significant opportunity to support the comprehensive economic, social, and political reforms launched five years ago by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. If fully adopted and implemented, these reforms will promote broad-based and inclusive economic growth, a better quality of life for Uzbekistan's citizens through improved educational and health systems, and a more accountable and transparent system of governance, grounded in respect for basic human rights and the rule of law. These changes, in turn, will provide new and better opportunities for U.S. companies seeking to export to and invest in Uzbekistan, as well as a stronger long-term foundation for fruitful bilateral relations. In contrast to the role it often played as the main obstacle to regional cooperation during its first 25 years of independence, Uzbekistan over the past five years has become a catalyst for dialogue and economic integration, both among the five Central Asian states and between Central Asia and South Asia. It is in U.S. interests to continue encouraging this trend, diplomatically and through our assistance and exchange programs.

Uzbekistan's sovereignty depends on the country being able to ensure the security and well-being of its citizens without becoming overly dependent on any single external partner.

Uzbekistan wishes to choose its own economic, political and security relationships without undue pressure from its neighbors or regional powers. In pursuit of that goal, Uzbekistan needs partners, including the United States, willing and able to strengthen its ability to secure its borders and deal with threats from terrorists and transnational criminals. And since not all threats are primarily political or economic - as the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis

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have vividly demonstrated in recent years - the United States will also continue to bolster Uzbekistan's capacity to prevent and treat infectious diseases and mitigate the effects of climate change.

While the pace of Uzbekistan's historic reforms has slowed since the first several years of President Mirziyoyev's tenure, the transformation process continues. Many of the most fundamental reform challenges have already been dealt with, including such "low-hanging fruit" as making the currency fully convertible and the tax system simpler and more transparent. Even a few more complex reforms, such as the elimination of forced labor from the cotton sector, have been addressed. But as Mirziyoyev enters his second five-year term, the many reforms still requiring full implementation are extremely complex, often involving overcoming entrenched interests and making difficult trade-offs. These include – but are not limited to -- privatizing state-owned enterprises and state-owned banks; restructuring the energy sector; adopting sweeping judicial and law enforcement reforms; and a large-scale remaking of the country's educational institutions and health care delivery system. For the United States, this means many new, and ongoing, opportunities to support successful reform, aimed at helping Uzbekistan build a sustainable, inclusive, and equitable market-based economy, and a rule of law-based society, with a healthier and better educated citizenry.

At the same time, the United States will also be supporting Uzbekistan's stated goal of transitioning to a more accountable, transparent, and decentralized system of governance, anchored in respect for fundamental human rights, including freedom of speech, religion, and association. In everything it does, the U.S. Mission in Uzbekistan will keep democratic values of openness, accountability, tolerance and respect for different views and perspectives at the center of our efforts.

In its programmatic support for the Government of Uzbekistan's reforms, the U.S. Embassy will prioritize those areas where the United States has a comparative advantage in terms of know-how and relevant experience, and in sectors where it already has established relationships with governmental and non-governmental partners, as well as other international donors. Priority lines of effort in recent years that will continue under this ICS include border security and

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counterterrorism; education; health; agriculture; and rule of law. Other important areas where U.S. assistance will likely continue to be concentrated include support for entrepreneurship and women's empowerment; technical assistance related to trade policy, budget management and financial sector reform; and strengthening of civil society, including advocacy and social service-providing NGOs and independent media. The U.S. will also continue providing access to many resources for Uzbekistan's students and teachers, especially in English language learning and opportunities to study in the United States.

The U.S. Mission in Uzbekistan will also support U.S. economic interests by promoting the United States as a partner of choice for Uzbekistan's public and private sectors, with a goal of increasing trade and investment opportunities for U.S. companies. We will also seek to continue developing enduring people-to-people ties at all levels of U.S. and Uzbekistani society (between students, teachers, scientists, businesspeople, athletes, artists, public officials, and many others), thereby strengthening understanding of U.S. culture and values in Uzbekistan and building an enduring foundation for a mutually beneficial long-term relationship.

The primary vehicle for pursuing all these lines of efforts – political, economic, cultural, educational, scientific, or security-related – will continue to be the U.S.-Uzbekistan Strategic Partnership Dialogue. We will use this platform not just as a yearly one-off, but instead as a framework for bilateral cooperation throughout each year.

Meanwhile, Embassy management will help U.S. Mission Uzbekistan achieve all these goals by increasing the efficient and secure use of information technology resources. Management will also seek to recruit and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce capable of providing an agile logistics platform for the Embassy's work.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: A sovereign and resilient Uzbekistan that effectively responds to trans-national threats and regional opportunities.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Strengthen Uzbekistan's ability to address security and criminal threats, fortify regional stability, and increase cooperation. (Links to USAID Strategic Framework DO1: Effective Democratic Governance Strengthened).
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Bolster Uzbekistan's ability to address transnational health threats and mitigate the effects of the climate crises. (Links to USAID Strategic Framework DO4: Quality, People-centered, and Integrated Health Care Provision for Priority Disease Threats Expanded and DO3: Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth Enhanced).

Mission Goal 2: Advance Uzbekistan's democratic governance, economic reform, and delivery of public services.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Promote implementation of reforms that advance human rights, religious freedom, media freedom, rule of law, gender equity and equality, and democratic governance. (Links to USAID Strategic Framework DO1: Effective Democratic Governance Strengthened).
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Advance economic reforms that deliver a sustainable, inclusive, and equitable market-based economy. (Links to USAID Strategic Framework DO3: Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth Enhanced).
- **Mission Objective 2.3:** Improve the lives of people in Uzbekistan through improved public health and education services. (Links to USAID Strategic Framework DO4: Quality, People-centered, and Integrated Health Care Provision for Priority Disease Threats Expanded and DO2: Learning Outcomes and Skills of Children and Youth Improved).

Mission Goal 3: Expand U.S. opportunities in Uzbekistan by promoting the United States as a partner of choice for Uzbekistan's public and private sectors.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Increase trade and investment opportunities for U.S. companies. (Links to USAID Strategic Framework DO3: Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth Enhanced).
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Develop enduring ties by strengthening understanding and appreciation of U.S. culture and values.

Management Objective 1: Increase integration of information technology resources to ensure goals and objectives are met efficiently and securely.

Management Objective 2: Recruit and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce to provide an agile logistics platform.

Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: | A sovereign and resilient Uzbekistan that effectively responds to trans-national threats and regional opportunities.

Description: | This goal supports broader strategic engagement by strengthening the sovereignty and independence of Central Asian states.

Objective 1.1: | Strengthen Uzbekistan's ability to address security and criminal threats, bolster regional stability, and cooperation.

- **Objective 1.1 Justification:** | In a changing security environment, U.S. support for Uzbekistan is an important factor helping to prevent it from becoming a node for organized crime and extremist organizations which could threaten U.S. citizens and interests at home or abroad. The August 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan and social unrest in Kazakhstan demonstrate the need to ensure Uzbekistan maintains stability at home, not through coercion but rather through adherence to the rule of law and a government responsive to citizens' needs.
- **Objective 1.1 Linkages:** | This objective links to: Central Asia Strategy Policy Objective 1: Support and strengthen the sovereignty and independence of the Central Asian States, individually and as a region and Policy Objective 2: Reduce terrorist threats in Central Asia; State-USAID Joint Regional Strategy Objective 4.1: Strengthen the capacity of South and Central Asian allies and partners to independently manage their own security challenges and support a rules-based regional and international order, Objective 4.2: Strengthen the capacity of South and Central Asian allies and partners to counter and manage threats from violent extremist organizations, legitimate non-state actors, cyber-attacks, and protect the free flow of information, and Objective 4.3 Objective 4.3: Strengthen the capacity of South and Central Asian allies and partners' law enforcement, border security, and maritime security; and FY2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan Objective 1.4: Lead allies and partners to address shared challenges and

competitors; prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts; and promote international security and Objective 3.4: Promote a safe, humane, and orderly immigration and asylum system, address the root causes of irregular migration collaboratively with our partners, and enhance protections for refugees and displaced persons.

- **Objective 1.1 Risks:** | Without careful effort to maintain security and legitimacy, states in Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, create challenges for the United States, including flows of refugees, asylum seekers, and may induce regional competitors to intervene more actively in the region, often to the detriment of U.S. strategic interests.

Objective 1.2: | Bolster Uzbekistan's ability to address transnational health threats and mitigate the effects of climate crises.

- **Objective 1.2 Justification:** | The COVID-19 pandemic, multidrug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), air pollution and climate change are transnational health threats that Uzbekistan currently faces. The USG will support and build the GOU's capacity to prevent, protect against, control, and provide a public health response to the international spread of disease in ways that are commensurate with and restricted to public health risks. Uzbekistan is also extremely vulnerable to climate change with deficiencies in water resources, land degradation, air pollution, and frequent droughts. Consequently, the USG is looking into providing support in areas such as clean drinking water, biodiversity management, tree inventory, air pollution monitoring, renewable energy, and climate resilient economy.
- **Objective 1.2 Linkages:** | This objective links to: Central Asia Strategy Policy Objective 1: Support and strengthen the sovereignty and independence of the Central Asian States, individually and as a region; State-USAID Joint Regional Strategy Objective 1.1: Improve regional efforts and strengthen resilience to health challenges, Objective 1.2: Advance approaches to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis across sectors in collaboration with governments and partners, and Objective 1.3: Provide timely, critical assistance to prepare and respond to international disasters and humanitarian crises in the region; and FY2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan Objective 1.1: Strengthen global health security,

combat infectious disease threats, and address priority global health challenges through bilateral engagement and within multilateral fora and Objective 1.2: Secure ambitious climate mitigation and adaptation outcomes, including supporting effective Paris Agreement implementation. Finally, objective also links to the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE) and the USAID Climate Change Strategy 2022 – 2030.

- **Objective 1.2 Risks:** | Failure to address transnational health threats and mitigate the effects of climate crises would increase morbidity and mortality in Uzbekistan, pose significant challenges to livelihoods of individuals, result in average lost potential earnings and future annual household income due to premature death and a smaller workforce population, as well as a slowdown of the economy of Uzbekistan in general. If instability in the region spills into Uzbekistan, essential health service delivery, including COVID-19 response measures, and efforts towards climate change mitigation may be impacted.

Mission Goal 2: | Uzbekistan's democratic governance, economic reform, and delivery of public services are advanced.

Description: | This goal promotes U.S. investment in and development of Central Asia and helps reduce instability and terrorist threats.

Objective 2.1: | Promote implementation of reforms that advance human rights, religious freedom, media freedom, rule of law, gender equity and equality, and democratic governance.

- **Objective 2.1 Justification:** | Respect for human rights is an essential component of states that can add their support to the international system, grow their own economies, and are able to manage their own internal political tensions and an objective good. As demonstrated by the recent social unrest in Kazakhstan, when citizen concerns are not respected, political turmoil and even violent demonstrations can erupt quickly and destabilize the economy and security of a state in addition to inviting opportunistic states to insert themselves into the internal affairs of a country.

- **Objective 2.1 Linkages:** | This objective links to: Central Asia Strategy Policy Objective 1: Support and strengthen the sovereignty and independence of the Central Asian States, individually and as a region and Policy Objective 5 Promote rule of law reform and respect for human rights; State-USAID Joint Regional Strategy Objective 2.1: Reduce corruption; increase transparency, accountability, and efficacy in governance including legislative, judicial, and executive branches, Objective 2.2: Support the development, capacity, and resilience of civil society and independent media as safeguards of democracy, Objective 2.3 Promote and protect the rights of women and marginalized and underrepresented populations as members of an inclusive democratic society, and Objective 2.4: Strengthen democratic institutions of governance capable of withstanding authoritarian influence and pressures to undermine democratic processes; and FY2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan Objective 3.1: Promote good governance and defend strong, accountable, and resilient democracies that deliver for their citizens, and Objective 3.2: Advance equity, accessibility, and rights for all, Objective 3.3: Prevent, expose, and reduce corruption.
- **Objective 2.1 Risks:** | Failure to support human rights, religious freedom, media freedom, rule of law, and democratic governance weakens the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Uzbekistan and could serve as a rallying point for forces that would like to destabilize the country for their own benefit. By assisting Uzbekistan to follow through on its own commitments to human rights, we strengthen the bilateral relationship and decrease the chance for destabilizing social tension.

Objective 2.2: | Advance economic reforms that deliver a sustainable, inclusive, and equitable market-based economy.

- **Objective 2.2 Justification:** | An investment climate based on market principles and led by the private sector provides the best means for achieving sustainable, inclusive, and equitable economic growth and prosperity, which are the foundations of political stability. A welcoming investment climate is essential to attract U.S. firms to Uzbekistan. U.S. firms also serve as an example for Uzbekistani companies to become

more efficient and successful, contributing to economic growth. Economic prosperity creates greater trade opportunities for U.S. firms with Central Asia's most populous country.

- **Objective 2.2 Linkages:** | This objective links to: Central Asia Strategy Policy Objective 1: Support and strengthen the sovereignty and independence of the Central Asian States, individually and Policy Objective 6: Promote United States investment in and development of Central Asia; State-USAID Joint Regional Strategy Objective 3.1: Strengthen transportation, commercial ties, clean energy, and energy connectivity within the region by increasing cooperation, partnerships, and trade, Objective 3.2: Increase equitable labor force participation for women and marginalized communities above existing participation levels, Objective 3.3: Improve the policy-enabling environment to expand equitable economic growth and cooperation, and Objective 3.4: Facilitate the adoption of U.S. technological innovations to advance economic competitiveness and environmentally sustainable, equitable growth and FY2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan Objective 2.2: Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and opportunity for communities around the globe and Objective 2.4: Strengthen U.S. and global resilience to economic, technological, environmental, and other systemic shocks.
- **Objective 2.2 Risks:** | Failure to support an improved investment climate risks losing economic opportunities to the growing the influence of competitor states who do not support the rules-based system and market principles that are the bedrock of U.S. economic prosperity.

Objective 2.3: | Better the lives of the people of Uzbekistan through improved public health and education services.

- **Objective 2.3 Justification:** | The goal of public health is to prevent disease, promote health, and prolong life among the entire population. Therefore, public health initiatives and services are aimed at fostering conditions in which people can be healthy. The Mission supports the GOU to strengthen its health system to be better prepared to

prevent, detect, respond, and control the spread of common and emerging infectious diseases. This is done by strengthening the capacity of the health system - including but not limited to health human resource capacity, laboratories, supply chains, and health information systems - to deliver high quality services. The educational system in Uzbekistan remains entrenched in antiquated, Soviet academic models. This limits learning outcomes, their capacity to collaborate with U.S. institutions, and the readiness and competitiveness of youth for employment with local or U.S. businesses and organizations. USG investments in the education sector support GOU efforts to reform the education sector to ensure Uzbekistani citizens can acquire the skills necessary to succeed in both education and employment. By improving educational practices in Uzbekistan, the USG is also creating opportunities for greater cooperation and exchange with U.S. institutions.

- **Objective 2.3 Linkages:** | This objective links to: Central Asia Strategy Policy Objective 1: Support and strengthen the sovereignty and independence of the Central Asian States, individually and as a region; State-USAID Joint Regional Strategy Objective 1.1: Improve regional efforts and strengthen resilience to health challenges and Objective 3.2: Increase equitable labor force participation for women and marginalized communities above existing participation levels; and FY2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan Objective 3.5: Improve inclusive and equitable health, education, and livelihood services, especially for women, youth, and marginalized groups.
- **Objective 2.3 Risks:** | Failure to improve public health would increase morbidity and mortality in Uzbekistan, pose significant challenges to the livelihoods of individuals, result in average lost potential earnings and future annual household income due to premature death, as well as slow down the economy of Uzbekistan in general; and would allow other actors who may be hostile to U.S. regional interests to influence Uzbekistan's development and limit the viability of the local labor market for U.S. businesses. COVID-19 related restrictions continue to pose the risk of disrupting the implementation of activities. If instability in the region spills into Uzbekistan, essential health and education service delivery may be impacted. Failure to improve education

services will result in an increase in the already high number of students performing below the minimum threshold, making them unprepared to succeed in school, later in the workplace, and to ultimately be unable to contribute to Uzbekistan's development.

Mission Goal 3: | Expand U.S. opportunities in Uzbekistan by promoting the United States as a partner of choice for Uzbekistan's public and private sectors.

Description: | This goal promotes U.S. investment in and development of Central Asia, as well as promoting a better understanding of and appreciation for American values among the Uzbek public.

Objective 3.1: | Increase trade and investment opportunities for U.S. companies.

- **Objective 3.1 Justification:** | Increased U.S. trade with Uzbekistan leads to more U.S. jobs and exports and helps Uzbekistan diversify its trading partners and reduces undue influence from any single trading partner. Increased trade by Uzbekistan with its neighboring countries improves regional integration and binds Central Asian countries together to improve regional stability. Identifying and removing barriers to trade increases the efficiency and volume of Uzbekistan's trade with the United States and its neighbors.
- **Objective 3.1 Linkages:** | This objective links to: Central Asia Strategy Policy Objective 1: Support and strengthen the sovereignty and independence of the Central Asian States, individually and as a region and Policy Objective 6 Promote United States investment in and development of Central Asia; State-USAID Joint Regional Strategy Objective 3.3: Improve the policy-enabling environment to expand equitable economic growth and cooperation and Objective 3.4: Facilitate the adoption of U.S. technological innovations to advance economic competitiveness and environmentally sustainable, equitable growth; and FY2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan Objective 2.1: Promote a global economy that creates opportunities for all Americans, Objective 2.3: Support U.S. technological leadership, strengthen competitiveness, and enhance and protect the U.S. innovation base while leveraging technology to improve lives around the world, and 2.4:

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Strengthen U.S. and global resilience to economic, technological, environmental, and other systemic shocks.

- **Objective 3.1 Risks:** | A loss of trade dollars for U.S. citizens is the biggest near-term risk for failure here. Additionally, there are knock on effects if those trade dollars go to strategic competitors instead, further bolstering their ability to project power.

Objective 3.2: | Develop enduring ties by strengthening the understanding and appreciation of U.S. culture and values.

- **Objective 3.2 Justification:** | Enduring ties between the United States and Uzbekistan will support Uzbekistan's ongoing reform efforts in the areas of democracy and rule of law. Due to its shared history and language with Russia, Uzbekistan views Russian mass media products frequently, which may weaken U.S. influence and undermine policy objectives. By sharing our culture and expertise, the Mission will increase Uzbekistan's exposure to more accurate information about and positive experiences with the United States, including through increased presence in cultural events (speaking engagements, conferences, film screenings, concerts and more). This exposure will generate resilience against efforts to misrepresent and discredit the United States by giving the population first-hand appreciation and understanding of U.S. culture and values.
- **Objective 3.2 Linkages:** | This objective links to: Central Asia Strategy Policy Objective 1: Support and strengthen the sovereignty and independence of the Central Asian States, individually and as a region and Policy Objective 5 Promote rule of law reform and respect for human rights; and FY2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan Objective 1.5: Enhance foreign publics' understanding of and support for the values and policies of the United States, 5.1: Support and serve American citizens traveling or residing abroad, and 5.2: Advance U.S. interests by facilitating legitimate travel to and from the United States. This objective supports the March 2021 Interim National Security Strategic Guidance (INSSG), which stresses the United States' efforts to "reinvigorate and modernize our alliances and partnerships around the world." The objectives and key activities directly support that effort by sharing our commitment to strong democratic alliances, rule of

law, and partnerships. The INSSG states, “America’s interests at home are strengthened by improving lives globally”.

- **Objective 3.2 Risks:** | Inability to achieve this objective could lead to Uzbekistan’s increased reliance on other countries for assistance, expertise, training, and cultural content—ultimately making Uzbekistan less willing to cooperate with the United States on U.S. priorities. It could also lead to the spread of misinformation and disinformation, which seek to undermine and discredit the United States. Without U.S. support for reforms that promote democracy and the rule of law, Uzbekistan could also see its reform efforts backslide.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: | Increase integration of information technology resources to ensure goals and objectives are met efficiently and securely.

- **Objective 1 Justification:** | Technology is no longer simply the platform through which diplomacy is conducted; technology influences the implementation of policy, the culture of our organization, and the effectiveness of the overall mission. To meet the goals listed in the ICS, the Embassy must incorporate emerging technology into its cadre of tools to conduct diplomacy. The Embassy's current resources must be realigned to focus more on assisting Sections/Agencies to accomplish their objectives rather than solely on improving internal processes. The current cybersecurity threat landscape is more complex and hostile than ever. When formulating the projects and processes to meet Mission objectives, Sections/Agencies must integrate cybersecurity and records management during the planning stages to ensure that information is securely stored and in accordance with federal mandates.
- **Objective 1 Linkages:** | This objective links to the State-USAID Joint Regional Strategy Objective 6: Align personnel and manage resources to implement strategic priorities and to ensure effectiveness and accountability. This management objective also supports Secretary Blinken's Remarks on the Modernization of American Diplomacy, 10/27/2021 Pillar 4: Modernizing our technology, communications, and analytical capabilities, and Executive Order 14028 Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity - Section 3: Modernizing Federal Government Cybersecurity.
- **Objective 1 Risks:** | Failure to integrate the newest technology and platforms reduces the Mission's ability to create efficient processes, leading to wasted resources.

Management Objective 2: | Recruit and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce that provides an agile logistics platform.

- **Objective 2 Justification:** | Embassy Tashkent will recruit and retain a diverse workforce that values, encourages, and supports diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. By advancing principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) we will create a stronger workforce better positioned to engage in policy implementation and ensure continually improving operations. Encouraging wider celebration of mission staff diversity will create safer and more productive work environments and demonstrate that the Embassy is a model of an inclusive and diverse workplace, demonstrating the benefits of DEIA when engaging the GOU on this subject. Embassy Tashkent will also empower and better integrate the core logistics platform to achieve policy goals and objectives, providing more robust use of motor pool resources, proactive and comprehensive travel services, integration of customs and shipping with stakeholder efforts, integrated financial services to ensure the most efficient use of financial resources, and more integrated procurement services will deliver better results for the entire mission.
- **Objective 2 Linkages:** | This objective links to the State-USAID Joint Regional Strategy Objective 6: Align personnel and manage resources to implement strategic priorities and to ensure effectiveness and accountability. It also supports the Department of State DEIA Strategic Plan and the White House executive order on DEIA principals.
- **Objective 2 Risks:** | Failure to diversify hiring, whether USDH, EFM, EFM, or LE Staff, will communicate to employment candidates that Embassy Tashkent does not value diversity, making hiring more difficult and further limiting diversity, creating a loop of prejudicial hiring. The mission will commit, at all levels, to ensuring diversity is weighted equitably to other hiring attributes. Post will continue to demonstrate inclusiveness through acknowledgement of varied holiday and other cultural traditions, promotion of basic human rights for underrepresented groups, and engagement with underutilized elements of the staff.