

# THURSDAY LUNCHEON GROUP ACTION PLAN (2022-2024)

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## INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1973, the Thursday Luncheon Group (TLG) is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization and chartered employee organization at the U.S. Department of State. The first employee organization of the Department of State, TLG was founded to increase the participation of African Americans in the formulation, articulation, and implementation of United States foreign policy. This action plan outlines TLG's strategic priorities for 2022-2024 and provides a framework for the executive board's leadership.

## CONTEXT

The African American population is historically underrepresented in the Foreign Service. While African Americans constitute 13.4 percent of the U.S. population<sup>1</sup> and 13 percent of the U.S. labor force,<sup>2</sup> they constitute only 10.3 percent of Foreign Service Specialists and 6.2 percent of Foreign Service Officers. Blacks, including African Americans, represent 15.6 percent of the State Department's total workforce, including 24.9 percent of the Department's Civil Service.<sup>3</sup> Underrepresentation is even more stark at the senior and leadership (e.g., Chief of Mission, Deputy Chief of Mission, and Deputy Assistant Secretary) levels. African Americans represent 7.3 percent of the Department's Senior Executive Service and 3.7 percent of the Senior Foreign Service.<sup>4</sup>

Proportionally, the percentage of African Americans in the Foreign Service is no closer to being representative of either the United States population or the United States labor force than it was ten years ago; by some measures, it may be less representative. Addressing this lack of diversity and representation requires a focused effort by the Department of State, TLG, and fellow Employee Organizations.



<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census population estimates, July 1, 2021

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, November 2, 2021

<sup>3</sup> In 2021, Blacks, including African Americans, constituted 15.6 percent of the Department's workforce, including 24.9 percent of the Civil Service, 6.2 percent of Foreign Service Generalists, and 10.3 of Foreign Service Specialists, respectively. It is important to note the underrepresentation of Blacks in the Civil Service analysts and foreign affairs series.

<sup>4</sup> In 2021 African Americans, constituted 7.3 percent of the Senior Executive Service and 3.7 percent of the Senior Foreign Service.

# ACTION PLAN GOALS

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## GOAL 1

TLG WILL SUPPORT EFFORTS TO INCREASE REPRESENTATION, RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND PROMOTION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STATE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

By 2024, TLG will work toward increases of African American representation in the Foreign Service that correlate with the rate of African American participation in the labor force of the United States. TLG has actionable suggestions for more robust recruitment of African American Foreign Service candidates, as well as insights regarding retention of African American Foreign Service employees, especially African American women. TLG's executive board intends to engage senior leaders within the Department of State, AFSA, congressional stakeholders, and international affairs organizations on this issue.

### METRICS - GOAL 1

- TLG will support the Department's outreach to African American communities by assisting GTM with recruitment and awareness-oriented efforts, including outreach to HBCUs, colleges and universities with significant African American student populations, and Black-serving organizations/institutions such as the Congressional Black Caucus Institute.
- TLG will promote African American representation on hiring panels, promotion boards, and selection panels for entry-level employment programs such as the diplomatic fellowships (i.e., Pickering, Rangel, and FAIT) for Foreign Service and Pathways program for Civil Service.
- TLG will promote awareness of the contributions of African American employees to the State Department's foreign policy work by endorsing Bureau award recognitions for TLG recipients in line with Department promotion precepts and awards criteria.
- Throughout the year TLG will promote the contributions of African American employees to the State Department's foreign policy work and highlight the accomplishments of TLG members across the State Department's social media platforms and publications.

## GOAL 2

TLG WILL STRENGTHEN ITS EFFICACY THROUGH THE RENAISSANCE PLATFORM

By 2024, TLG will fortify its institutional structures to meet the demands of modern international affairs challenges. These fortifications are outlined in the Renaissance platform and include fostering stronger linkages between and among State and USAID diplomatic corps and Civil Service employees, and afro-centered foreign affairs organizations; and modernizing TLG's virtual and social media presence, membership engagement, and outreach to State Department recruits, interns, and fellows.

### METRICS - GOAL 2

- TLG will honor its predecessors' contributions while supporting and developing the State Department of the future through monthly messaging and programming, and by expanding programmatic partnerships.
- TLG will foster stronger linkages between and among State and USAID diplomatic corps and Civil Service employees, and afro-centered foreign affairs organizations through co-sponsored outreach and policy advocacy, as well as the promotion of professional development, mentoring, and fellowship opportunities.
- TLG will modernize its virtual and social media presence, membership engagement, and outreach to State Department recruits, interns, and fellows to increase membership and establish volunteer committees in support of strategic goals.
- TLG will convene key Department and external partners, allies, and friends to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2023 to pay tribute to its luminaries, underscore its enduring legacy, and highlight TLG's strategic vision for the future.
- TLG will leverage the momentum generated by the 50th anniversary in 2023 to achieve an ambitious goal of "50 for our 50th" seeking 50 new lifetime members to expand, diversify, and reenergize the membership base.