



Improving the Representation of Women and Racial/Ethnic Minorities Among U.S. Coast Guard Active-Duty Members

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About This Report

This report documents findings and recommendations from a project examining why women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups are underrepresented in the active-duty Coast Guard.¹ The researchers used a mixed-method approach to identify root causes of underrepresentation of these populations and made recommendations for strategies that the Coast Guard can adopt to improve its ability to reflect the racial, ethnic, and gender makeup of the United States, resulting in a more diverse Coast Guard.

The summary of this report, which highlights our key findings and recommendations, will likely be most useful for decisionmakers. Readers with more-detailed interests will find value in the chapters and appendixes, which provide detailed explanations of study findings, recommendations, and our methodology. This research was sponsored by the U.S. Coast Guard Office of Diversity and Inclusion (CG-127) and conducted within the Personnel and Resources Program of the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC), a federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) operated by the RAND Corporation.

About the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Section 305 of Public Law 107-296, as codified at 6 U.S.C. § 185) authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Under Secretary for Science and Technology, to establish one or more FFRDCs to provide independent analysis of homeland security issues. The RAND Corporation operates HSOAC as an FFRDC for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under contract HSHQDC-16-D-00007.

The HSOAC FFRDC provides the government with independent and objective analyses and advice in core areas important to the department in support of policy development, decisionmaking, alternative approaches, and new ideas on issues of significance. The HSOAC FFRDC also works with and supports other federal, state, local, tribal, and public- and private-sector organizations that make up the homeland security enterprise. The HSOAC FFRDC's research is undertaken by mutual consent with DHS and is organized as a set of discrete tasks. This report presents the results of research and analysis conducted under task order 70Z02319FPPE04500, Holistic Study and Analysis for Recruiting and Retention of Underrepresented Minorities.

¹ The Coast Guard refers to women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups as *underrepresented minorities* (URMs). We recognize that *minority* itself is often used as shorthand for *historically underrepresented* or *historically marginalized* rather than for actual numeric minority, but we use *URM* in this report in keeping with Coast Guard terminology.

Throughout this report, any designation of gender, race, or ethnicity is self-reported by personnel. In addition, in this report, we use a binary gender construct (men and women) because this aligns with Coast Guard personnel data collection.

The results presented in this report do not necessarily reflect official DHS opinion or policy.

For more information on HSOAC, visit www.rand.org/hsoac. For more information on this report, see www.rand.org/t/RRA362-2.

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Summary

U.S. Coast Guard leadership has committed to developing a diverse workforce and fostering a climate in which personnel of all backgrounds are included, valued, and respected. According to the commandant of the Coast Guard (CCG), “In order to remain the world’s best Coast Guard we must be the world’s most diverse and inclusive Coast Guard.”¹ Historically, however, the Coast Guard’s workforce has smaller proportions of people from underrepresented-minority (URM) groups (the Coast Guard’s term for women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups) than the country’s overall population has. Furthermore, the proportion of current active-duty Coast Guard personnel in URM groups declines as rank increases, ultimately resulting in a less diverse senior leadership. The objective of this study was to help the Coast Guard identify the root causes of underrepresentation of URM groups in the active-duty Coast Guard and to develop and recommend strategies to increase the Coast Guard’s diversity. To achieve these objectives, we conducted a barrier analysis to provide the Coast Guard with a baseline of these identified root causes.

How the Barrier Analysis Was Executed

We used a multidisciplinary approach to conduct the barrier analysis and executed six study tasks that focused on assessing potential barriers across the Coast Guard career life cycle, including recruiting and accessions, career development, advancement and promotion, and retention:

- Task 1 focused on establishing a baseline understanding of recruiting, career development, promotion and advancement, and retention factors.
- Task 2 focused on developing customized recruiting benchmarks for the active-duty Coast Guard, reflecting eligibility requirements and the propensity to serve in the military.
- Task 3 was a statistical analysis of workforce data to identify demographic trends and key factors that could explain demographic differences across the Coast Guard career life cycle.
- Task 4 involved conducting more than 100 focus groups with more than 600 URM personnel at six locations across the country to help identify barriers to increased representation.
- Task 5 was developing and administering a survey to 13,396 active-duty personnel.

¹ Commandant’s message in the Coast Guard’s diversity and inclusion (D&I) action plan (U.S. Coast Guard, 2020, p. 2).

- Based on the findings from tasks 1 through 5, task 6 identified potential changes to Coast Guard policies, practices, and programs to help improve the demographic diversity of the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard can use this report to meet the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2021 (Pub. L. 116-283) requirement for conducting a barrier analysis and as a baseline for future annual barrier analyses.

This report describes findings from these research tasks, identifies systemic challenges that the Coast Guard encounters across the career life cycle—recruiting, career development, advancement and promotion, and retention—and describes the workforce’s perceptions of leadership’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and the equal-opportunity (EO) complaint processes. To counter the systemic challenges identified in the study, we offer systemic, rather than narrow and endemic, recommendations that cover areas related to leadership and accountability, talent management across the career life cycle, and policies and practices for ensuring a supportive and inclusive workplace environment for all Coast Guard personnel regardless of their demographic backgrounds.

Findings and Recommendations

Recruiting and Accessions of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel Findings About Recruiting and Accessions of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

We compared the Coast Guard’s enlisted and officer accessions with two benchmarks:² (1) the eligible population who can meet recruiting requirements and (2) the eligible propensed (people who have a propensity to serve) population who meet recruiting requirements and are interested in military service.

We found that the Coast Guard outperforms benchmarks for Hispanic and “non-Hispanic other” men (e.g., Native American personnel and multiracial men) in both enlisted and officer accessions,³ eligible black men for enlisted accessions, and eligible propensed white women for accessions through the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and Officer Candidate School. However, the Coast Guard underperforms benchmarks for all groups of enlisted women except non-Hispanic other personnel and for women across some racial and ethnic officer groups. This finding implies that the Coast Guard fails to attract its share of young women in the

² In this report, any reference to *officer* alone (as opposed to *warrant officer* or *noncommissioned officer*) refers to a commissioned officer.

³ The term *non-Hispanic* is frequently used in population data as a descriptor (e.g., *non-Hispanic white*). In this report, we use the more common shorthand (e.g., *white*, *Hispanic*, *black*) with the exception of *non-Hispanic other*. All racial categories reported are non-Hispanic, and we do not break *Hispanic* into separate racial groups.

U.S. population who are eligible and have a propensity to serve in the military. We can draw a similar conclusion for Asian and Pacific Islander personnel. Also, the Coast Guard Academy is not drawing its share of eligible propensed black men.

We also found that eligibility requirements and propensity to serve in the military affect the representation of URM groups differently. For example, racial and ethnic minority youths tend to have lower scores on standardized aptitude tests (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, SAT, and ACT) and are less likely to be college graduates, hold U.S. citizenship, or meet height and weight standards. However, members of racial and ethnic minority groups are highly propensed to serve in the military. In contrast, women can meet eligibility requirements but are less propensed than men to serve in the military. Some of the recruiting eligibility requirements are by law, while some are Coast Guard-specific policies and practices. The Coast Guard's outreach and marketing strategies and practices shape the level of awareness and interest in the Coast Guard among American youths.

When asked why they joined the Coast Guard, focus group participants cited interest in military service in general, including the benefits (e.g., education, health care, steady pay, retirement savings), and the Coast Guard's mission and different types of job opportunities (e.g., law enforcement, environmental protection). They also mentioned barriers, such as a lack of familiarity with the Coast Guard prior to joining and not having recruiters close to home. Focus groups suggested that, to help recruit URM personnel, the Coast Guard increase outreach, advertising, and recruiting locations. They also noted that seeing Coast Guard personnel who looked like themselves in both advertising and among the recruiters was important—not only to themselves but also for building family support for joining the Coast Guard.

Recommendations to Improve Recruiting and Accessions of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

The research literature on military recruiting (Asch and Orvis, 1994), active-duty personnel's perspectives in focus groups, and our population benchmark analysis show that eligibility requirements determine the number of eligible youths, while outreach shapes awareness, propensity to serve, and the degree to which the Coast Guard capitalizes on eligible personnel in different URM groups. We designed our outreach and recruiting recommendations to help address each of these aspects of the Coast Guard's recruiting challenges.

Recommendation 1. Review current eligibility requirements to identify potential barriers for possible URM recruits, and validate that the requirements are necessary for performance in the Coast Guard.

Recommendation 2. Conduct a targeted study on brand awareness of the Coast Guard among URM communities, and implement improvements.

Recommendation 3. Develop, implement, and evaluate a long-term strategic plan for outreach to, and recruiting from, untapped locations and URM groups.

Recommendation 4. Link all the information (e.g., active recruiters, advertising metrics) to evaluate return on investment (ROI) and inform strategic planning.

Recommendation 5. Collect and analyze resource allocations for marketing, outreach, and recruiting efforts, and evaluate the ROIs.

It is important to learn where eligibility requirements have key impacts on operational effectiveness versus where decisionmakers have room to waive or revise the requirements if doing so helps them meet other personnel goals, as the Coast Guard did in 2020 when it revised *Tattoo, Body Marking, Body Piercing, and Mutilation Policy* for new accessions (Commandant Instruction [COMDTINST] 1000.1D). In implementing recommendation 1, the Coast Guard should review the extent to which eligibility requirements measure the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics associated with being a successful Coast Guard enlisted member or officer and identify how eligibility requirements differentially affect demographic groups.

The historical data show that the number of URM personnel—particularly women—who enter the Coast Guard each year has been stable, regardless of the overall recruiting goal. We recommend that, to increase URM recruit numbers, the Coast Guard adopt new marketing and recruiting practices and evaluate their implementation and effectiveness. The Coast Guard is already conducting a series of studies of marketing messages and locations targeting URM groups. Conducting a targeted study on awareness of the Coast Guard among URM communities aligns with these efforts and highlights the need for a long-term strategic plan for implementing improvements.

When implementing a strategic plan, the Coast Guard should establish recruiting goals based on the population benchmarks developed for this study (as shown in Chapter Two) and use these benchmarks to judge the effectiveness of the strategic plan. Establishing recruiting goals based on eligible-population benchmarks is also consistent with recent NDAA Section 551(a)(2)(vii) requirements. The Coast Guard could also consider leveraging and expanding the College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI) to target URM officer accessions. We recommend that, to support CSPI as a key URM recruitment tool, the Coast Guard adequately resource this initiative and ensure strategic and targeted engagement with minority-serving institutions coordinated through a dedicated officer corps of recruiters focused on this mission.⁴ URM officers commissioning through CSPI should be deliberately developed to ensure that they can compete with officers from other commissioning sources and are retained in their Coast Guard careers.

As the Coast Guard implements our recommendations to improve URM accessions, it is essential that it collect and analyze resource allocations for marketing, outreach, and recruit-

⁴ *Minority-serving institution* is a designation of an institution of higher education typically made based on the institution's history (e.g., founded to educate a particular URM group) or its percentage of enrolled students who belong to URM groups. The designation makes the institution eligible for certain categories of federal funding.

ing efforts and evaluate the ROIs as described in Schulker et al., 2020. With the rigorous assessment of ROIs, the Coast Guard can fine-tune its outreach and recruiting policies and practices.

However, the most-effective recruiting practices and resourcing strategies will not be discoverable without better information on historical resourcing and practices. To fill this gap, the Coast Guard should track resources used for each recruiting area, including active recruiters, their individual goals, key activities (e.g., events), and advertising intensity metrics. The data-enabled outreach and recruiting system could then link this information with accession results to inform strategic planning for future investments.

Career Development of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

Findings About Career Development of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

Career development is the next stage in the military career life cycle that affects the representation of URM groups (that is, the percentage of personnel who are in URM groups). To assess demographic differences in general development, we created a set of indicators to capture different dimensions of operational and leadership experiences based on members' rating, specialty, and assignment histories—indicators of the most-salient precursors to serving at increasing levels of leadership, according to discussions with Coast Guard subject-matter experts and our review of Coast Guard personnel policies and practices. We found significant group differences in career development indicators, but we did not find a consistent direction among the trends. Among enlisted personnel, URM personnel are overrepresented in the administrative group rating and underrepresented among personnel with operational ratings, personnel with afloat experience, and personnel in command positions. In the officer ranks, URM personnel are underrepresented in operational, command, and senior executive fellowship positions but overrepresented in special assignments in support of flag officers. Women are slightly overrepresented in positions held by O-6 officers and above, while racial and ethnic minority personnel are underrepresented in these positions.

Survey findings show that personnel prioritize factors unrelated to their race, ethnicity, or gender when making career choices. These choices were based primarily on personal interest, with secondary factors being transferability of skills to the private sector and the extent to which a job was challenging, adventurous, or ashore. Focus group and survey findings also show that URM personnel perceive distribution of developmental opportunities, such as educational, command, and special assignments, to be less fair than other personnel perceive it to be, with focus group participants noting that access to many career development opportunities is through one's social network and being in "the club."

Additional key factors that can affect development across a career include mentorship and assignment experiences. Focus group and survey findings highlighted that connecting with a mentor similar to oneself is important for some URM personnel and can create a challenge for effective mentorship connections. Survey findings also indicate that women and some racial and ethnic minority groups are less likely than their male or white counter-

parts, respectively, to believe that they are knowledgeable about the assignment system and that assignments are distributed fairly. Across focus groups, participants expressed a desire for more transparency in the assignment process and how decisions were made. Racial and ethnic minority personnel also raised issues with certain assignment locations where the local community can be hostile to them, and survey findings show a lack of knowledge about social climate incident policies designed to address these concerns.⁵

Recommendations to Improve the Career Development of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

As the Coast Guard increases URM accessions, it needs to develop URM personnel to ensure that they are competitive for career advancement or promotion. We designed five sets of development-related recommendations to help the Coast Guard address each of these aspects.

Recommendations to Deliberately Develop Underrepresented-Minority Personnel Throughout Their Careers

The first set of career development recommendations aims to enhance the deliberate development of URM personnel throughout their careers. (Recommendation numbers continue from those in the previous section.)

Recommendation 6. Designate specialty-community leaders to develop, maintain, and apply career guidelines, career paths, and professional standards.

Recommendation 7. Provide specialty career paths to promotion boards, and instruct them to consider specialty differences.

Recommendation 8. Identify and remove barriers for operational and command positions for URM enlisted personnel and officers.

Recommendation 9. Task rating force master chiefs (RFMCs) and specialty-community leaders with improving diversity in talent pipelines.⁶

We recommend that the Coast Guard use the Officer Specialty Management System, known as OSMS 2.0, as a tool for officer development by grouping similar specialties to establish career field communities with explicit career guidelines and professional standards. Then, the Coast Guard could use this structure to designate specialty-community leaders to establish and maintain these standards and manage personnel career development. Selection

⁵ *The U.S. Coast Guard Civil Rights Manual*, COMDTINST M5350.4E, defines *social climate incident* as “an action committed by a member or members of a community against Coast Guard military personnel, or their family members that is perceived as hostile, harassing, or discriminatory in nature.”

⁶ The RFMC is a senior member of an enlisted rating who provides input into force management initiatives and manages the structure of their rating’s workforce, including overseeing the establishment of competency standards and the development of advancement qualifications and professional development content (Work Force Management, undated).

boards could then be instructed to evaluate individuals based on career-specific milestones and accomplishments. This structure would also allow the human-resource system to understand and address the part of demographic disparities that is attributable to specialization versus the parts that are attributable to a lack of development within a specialty.

As we have documented, URM groups are underrepresented in operational and command positions. The root cause of these disparities likely goes back to early-career decisions and specialization patterns, so the Coast Guard should task RFMCs and specialty-community leaders with removing barriers and improving the diversity of the talent pipelines. These community leaders would then have the means to ensure that all personnel make informed career choices in light of the milestones while monitoring the diversity of their career fields and creating an inclusive environment for the members of their communities.

Recommendations to Improve Perceptions of How Developmental Opportunities Are Distributed

The second set of recommendations aims to improve perceptions of how developmental opportunities are distributed.

Recommendation 10. Ensure that all personnel are provided the same information on developmental opportunities and that transparent selection processes are used.

Recommendation 11. Ensure that career development programs and resources enhance personnel’s knowledge of career decisions to inform their choices from accession to retirement.

Focus group and survey findings highlight the perceived lack of transparency and fairness in how key developmental opportunities are distributed. The Coast Guard should review how developmental opportunities are communicated to personnel to ensure that all personnel are provided the same information. The Coast Guard should also review the current selection process to ensure that selection is standardized and transparent to personnel. This should include ensuring that there is clear feedback provided to personnel who are and are not selected about why the decision was made, how they can be more competitive for future opportunities, and what they can do to further develop their careers.

Recommendations to Resource and Expand Mentoring Efforts Targeting Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

The third set of recommendations suggests ways to resource and expand existing mentoring efforts that target URM personnel.

Recommendation 12. Because URM-focused mentoring activities are often grassroots efforts, provide resources to internal affinity groups to facilitate more mentoring-type programming for URM personnel to build connections.

Recommendation 13. Ensure that the new Coast Guard mentoring program is reaching URM personnel by actively engaging affinity groups and monitoring the program's impact on URM personnel's mentorship experiences.

Not only is mentorship beneficial to Coast Guard personnel; NDAA 2021 Section 571 also requires the Coast Guard to establish a “mentorship and career counseling program for officers to improve diversity in the military leadership.” The Coast Guard has recently taken steps in this direction with a new multifaceted mentoring initiative that was scheduled to launch in May 2021.⁷ In addition, the Coast Guard should leverage existing URM networks and resource affinity groups to help facilitate more mentoring-type activities for URM personnel at early career stages and then throughout their careers.

Recommendations to Address Fairness and Transparency in the Assignment Process
The fourth set of career development recommendations proposes that the Coast Guard transform the assignment process to address fairness and transparency concerns.

Recommendation 14. Consider adding elements from a market-based assignment system (e.g., the Army Talent Alignment Process) to improve the match of officers to positions while increasing transparency.

Recommendation 15. Capture all information to improve future assignments and provide feedback to all parties.

We recommend that the Coast Guard consider adjusting assignment processes informed by market-based models currently being explored by services in DoD. Under a market-based system, individual officers submit preferences for assignments, position owners submit preferences for officers, and the marketplace finds a solution that produces the best match of officers to positions. In addition to increased transparency, a marketplace approach to assignments can generate a wealth of new information for a data-enabled talent-management system (proposed in recommendations 37 through 40) on which to capitalize, including records of officers' special skills or requirements of the job, officer- and job owner-ranked preferences, and what types of assignments work well for officers given their backgrounds. All of these data would permit improvements that could help foster greater satisfaction and improved retention.

Recommendations to Ensure That the Social Climate Incident Policy Adequately Addresses Concerns About Racism

Our final set of career development recommendations focuses on ensuring that the social climate incident policy adequately addresses concerns about racism, particularly as reported in some locations.

⁷ See Coast Guard Mentoring Program, undated, for more information on the Coast Guard's mentoring initiatives.

Recommendation 16. Review policies for consistency and consider their impact on URM personnel; revise as necessary.

Recommendation 17. Educate all personnel on policies, clarify those policies' roles in the assignment process, and ensure that all stakeholders are informed (e.g., personnel, commands, detailers).⁸

Recommendation 18. Track and report incident trends to senior leaders, and communicate incident trends to personnel to promote transparency and address location perceptions.

We recommend that the Coast Guard review and revise relevant policies as needed—including the social climate incident policy contained in *U.S. Coast Guard Civil Rights Manual* (COMDTINST M5350.4E) and social climate assignment considerations contained in *Military Assignments and Authorized Absences* (COMDTINST M1000.8A)—to ensure that they are consistent and adequately address concerns about racism in local communities. Focus group and survey findings revealed a significant lack of knowledge about social climate incident policies, so the Coast Guard should ensure that all personnel, commands, and detailers are educated on these policies, their roles in the assignment process, and the procedures for addressing incidents of racism in local communities. We recommend that, to validate or invalidate perceptions of problematic locations for assignments, the Coast Guard communicate social climate incident trends to all personnel and regularly report such trends to senior leaders for monitoring.

Advancement and Promotion of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

Findings About Advancement and Promotion of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

Although gaps in career progression between URM personnel and their white male counterparts do exist, the results of our quantitative analyses suggest that the root causes of these gaps are upstream from the selection processes, rather than attributable to the processes themselves. For enlisted personnel in grades E-1 through E-4, we found that the vast majority of personnel *who remained in the Coast Guard* attained the grade of E-4 within the expected four years but that the Coast Guard would have roughly 1,100 more URM E-4s if they had advanced and retained at the same rates as white men had. Then, for advancement to grades E-5 through E-8, the single factor that tended to create the largest gaps between black and Hispanic personnel and their white male counterparts were differences in Service-wide Examination (SWE) points. This pattern emerges because black and Hispanic personnel

⁸ A detailer determines someone's next duty station (Health, Safety and Work-Life Directorate, undated).

earned fewer servicewide points, on average, toward promotion, which tends to be the factor with the largest impact on advancement rates because it receives the most weight in the calculation of the advancement final multiple.⁹ The underlying reasons for these differences in exam performance could relate to the exam content or to other differences in member characteristics, but the testing data necessary for identifying such factors were not available for analysis at the time of this study.

Women of all races and ethnicities also tended to earn fewer time-in-grade or -service points and fewer points for sea and surf time. For E-5 through E-8, women (and, to a lesser degree, racial and ethnic minority men) were likelier to meet eligibility requirements and take the SWE, yet, among those who competed, women had lower advancement rates to E-5, E-6, and E-8—although the gaps were smaller than at the more-junior grade levels and statistically insignificant. However, the net effect is that URM personnel are likelier to take advancement tests than other personnel, which tends to offset lower success prospects in the servicewide competition and produces similar rates of advancement at these levels overall.¹⁰

For officers, the results indicate that personnel in all groups generally had similar selection likelihoods after all available board-relevant information was considered. Differences between URM and white male officers in board inputs, however, contribute to large differences in selection rates. The most striking gap was the selection rate for URM officers' promotion to O-3 through O-5, which was at least 10 percentage points lower than that of white men, with differences of up to nearly 26 percentage points. The underlying promotion factors that contributed the most to these differences include promotion year, specialty experience, level of educational attainment, performance evaluations, military justice events,¹¹ and (for some boards) source of commission. Mitigating these large differences in selection outcomes, then, requires the Coast Guard to address the disparities in officer development and career decisions that take place many years before key promotion milestones.

According to our survey findings, a majority of respondents indicated believing that they understood the advancement and promotion processes, but fewer respondents indicated that they thought that the processes were fair. Additionally, women were significantly less likely than men to believe that the processes were fair. In focus group discussions, participants noted that URM personnel who struggled to get adequate support from leaders or mentors often found it tough to crack the code on what is required to get ahead.

⁹ Advancement is based on a weighted combination of merit factors, and the final weighted score is known as the *advancement final multiple*.

¹⁰ More specifically, we found that, in a given advancement cycle, time in grade-eligible URM personnel were likelier to have SWE test records. Whether someone took the SWE is a combination of his or her election to participate, along with whether they meet all prerequisites to compete for advancement. Group differences in who elects to participate in the SWE and is eligible could also influence the group differences in advancement rates conditional on participation. We discuss this dynamic further in the body of the report.

¹¹ A military justice event is any proceeding or action taken as part of the military justice system, such as arraignment, hearing, or trial.

Recommendations to Improve Equity and Transparency of Advancement and Promotion Processes

Our analysis showed that group differences in advancement and promotion are associated with differences in career history, exam scores, and promotion factors. The advancement and promotion processes appear to treat personnel with similar records the same. Therefore, mitigation actions for disparities in selection rates should include monitoring the factors associated with advancement and promotion and intervening earlier in personnel careers. Yet, we found that data limitations would prevent the Coast Guard from taking such actions. Our recommendations will help the Coast Guard ensure that URM personnel can develop competitive careers and that performance indicators reviewed by the selection board reflect personnel performance.

Recommendation 19. Develop a capability to monitor differences in performance indicators (SWE questions, enlisted or officer evaluation report text) by URM group.

Recommendation 20. Examine the validity and reliability of performance indicators and any disparate impact they might have on URM groups, and eliminate root causes of disparities.

Recommendation 21. Use monitoring capabilities to develop and implement mitigation efforts targeting the root causes of apparent disparities.

To implement these recommendations, the Coast Guard needs all performance indicators that play a role in advancement and promotion processes to flow into its central data systems to eliminate current system limitations. Without complete information, barrier analysis efforts will continue to fall short of the actionable information that decisionmakers desire. Armed with this new capability, the Coast Guard would be able to examine the validity and reliability of performance indicators currently used in the advancement and promotion processes.¹² More importantly, the Coast Guard could detect group differences in early-career performance that would translate into future disparities when these cohorts meet promotion boards that select on a best-qualified basis. Developing measures of accurate on-the-job performance to facilitate an assessment of criterion-related validity is difficult. Hence, some services have developed simulated environments to assess performance, such as the U.S. Army's ambitious Battalion Command Assessment Program, a four-day evaluation that also trains panelists to make unbiased and consistent assessments and implements procedures to prevent biases from seeping into the assessments. Even if a simulation is not desirable, the Coast Guard can still apply statistical models that can identify group differences in performance indicators after controlling for potential confounding factors, supplement the statisti-

¹² Validity is the extent to which an indicator measures what it intends to measure and is predictive of desired outcomes (e.g., performance). Reliability is the degree to which a measure is consistent (e.g., over time or across raters) and free from error.

cal analysis with qualitative information gathered from supervisors and reporting officers, and systematically collect data to monitor effectiveness.

Retention of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

Findings About Retaining Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

Prior Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center research has already established the general retention pattern for women in the Coast Guard (see Hall et al., 2019), so, in this study, we focused on racial and ethnic differences in continuation patterns. Retention profiles based on continuation patterns in 13 years of recent Coast Guard administrative data show relatively low retention for black personnel, among enlisted personnel, warrant officers, and commissioned officers. Personnel in other racial and ethnic groups have higher retention than white enlisted personnel and lower retention than white commissioned officers. Data on reasons for separation and other characteristics or career factors reveal that underlying differences in career progression and development could play a role in creating retention gaps.

Our analysis of administrative data on separations found that enlisted racial and ethnic minority personnel in general and black personnel in particular were much likelier to separate because of legal, disciplinary, or performance issues. Black officers and, to a lesser degree, other minority officers were likelier to separate because they failed to promote. Both patterns highlight that the racial and ethnic differences in retention patterns tie back to the evaluation, advancement, and promotion systems, suggesting that efforts to address advancement and promotion challenges could further improve overall career outcomes for URM personnel.

Survey findings show that the most common factor that has caused personnel to consider leaving the Coast Guard is a perception of poor quality of one's immediate leadership. We heard similar sentiments in our focus groups with URM personnel. Some additional factors that were commonly cited on the survey and were again consistent with the findings from our focus groups include the following:

- personal-life factors, such as difficulty meeting family commitments, lack of compatibility with a spouse's or partner's career, and the ability to meet children's needs
- work environment factors, such as lack of sense of community among Coast Guard personnel, lack of role models similar to oneself, and the personnel working in one's unit
- job-related factors, such as job stress, dissatisfaction with one's job, and assignment locations.

On the survey, higher proportions of women than of men reported family and child-care concerns as factors in their decisions, and URM personnel frequently indicated that work environment factors—such as lack of role models similar to them, limited opportunities to work with personnel of their same gender or same race or ethnicity, and negative treatment due to their gender or race/ethnicity—played a role in their retention considerations.

Overall, our findings suggest that retention patterns in the Coast Guard are intertwined with processes relating to recruiting and accessions, discipline, and advancement and pro-

motion and that differences in these other career factors push retention of racial and ethnic minority personnel lower than it would have been in the absence of these differences. Our focus group and survey results highlight that perceived leadership quality is among the most-common factors influencing retention across all demographic groups. In addition, the relatively high rates of conduct-related separation among early-career URM enlisted personnel significantly reduce the number of URM personnel who remain long enough to complete their initial enlistment terms. We have two recommendations related to retention that stem directly from these findings.

Recommendations to Retain Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

Recommendation 22. In keeping with the study on retaining women in the Coast Guard, expand opportunities for comprehensive leadership development training (see also recommendation 31).

Recommendation 23. Examine root causes of involuntary separations of URM enlisted personnel and develop mitigation strategies.

In keeping with a previous recommendation made in our women’s retention report (Hall et al., 2019), we recommend that the Coast Guard review current leadership training and look for ways to expand current training or make it more comprehensive to ensure quality leadership throughout the Coast Guard. Training should include skills needed for leading a diverse workforce and should help leaders understand how to develop an inclusive command and how to foster development and mentoring within a command. And the training should be frequent and consistent across personnel careers.

The Coast Guard’s data showing that black personnel and, to a lesser degree, Hispanic personnel are likelier to separate for conduct-related reasons are particularly challenging to understand and address because the disparities happen early in members’ careers when the human resource system knows little about them. Addressing these retention disparities, then, requires the Coast Guard to understand the root causes through additional data collection before it can determine an appropriate strategy or prevention program. The fact that this same pattern exists across the DoD military services suggests that it is not necessarily driven by policies specific to the Coast Guard, but effective interventions are necessary if the Coast Guard seeks to increase the share of URM personnel who are available to serve beyond the first term.

Active-Duty Personnel’s Perspectives on Coast Guard Climate

Findings About the Coast Guard Climate

The responses of the focus groups and survey respondents suggest that the Coast Guard could do more to promote DEI. In focus groups, we discovered issues with awareness of DEI strategies and practices and doubts about their efficacy. Others raised the importance of leadership accountability, support, and training regarding DEI, as well as having more leaders who

are in URM groups. Survey findings further showed that there is room for improvement in preparing personnel to take on greater leadership responsibilities and in teaching personnel how to lead others from diverse backgrounds. For example, only 40 percent of black enlisted personnel and 37 percent of black officers indicated that the Coast Guard taught them how to lead others from diverse backgrounds. In focus groups and the survey, URM personnel also indicated that they believed they were treated differently because of their gender or race/ethnicity, and, in focus groups, URM personnel relayed experiences with racism and sexism in their Coast Guard careers. Finally, in focus groups and on the survey, personnel indicated a lack of trust in the EO complaint process. Focus group participants also perceived that retaliation was a common response to personnel making allegations of discrimination.

Recommendations to Improve the Coast Guard Climate in Support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

For DEI efforts to endure, the Coast Guard must foster a climate in which diversity is recognized as enhancing the collective operational performance of the Coast Guard. Personnel must believe that the organization values diversity, that policies and practices are fair for all groups, and that top leaders are committed to supporting and acting on DEI principles. As research shows, perceptions of a positive climate for diversity can help improve outcomes, such as commitment, satisfaction, and retention, for underrepresented groups (see Dwertmann, Nishii, and van Knippenberg, 2016).

To help identify ways for the Coast Guard to foster a positive climate, we first looked to literature on culture change because culture reflects an organization's overall underlying values and influences the specific organizational climate that forms (see Ostroff, Kinicki, and Muhammad, 2012). *Culture* can be nebulous to define, so, informed by the literature on culture change, we adopt a practical definition of *culture* developed in Schein, 1990:

- (a) a pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group,
- (c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration,
- (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (e) is to be taught to new members of the group as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein, 1990, p. 111)

Schein's definition captures how culture is transmitted across generations. In 2017, a team of RAND analysts identified drivers that can bring about organizational culture and climate changes for the U.S. Army: goals, accountability, training, resources, and engagement (Meredith et al., 2017). Using the framework, we developed four sets of recommendations to help the Coast Guard address each of these aspects.

Recommendations to Improve Trust in and Perceptions of the Equal-Opportunity Complaint Process

The first set of recommendations aims to improve trust in and perceptions of the EO complaint process.

Recommendation 24. Review the EO complaint process to verify or refute negative perceptions of the process, and amend policies and practices as necessary.

Recommendation 25. Explore leaders' implementation of relevant EO policies and practices at the local level.

Recommendation 26. Address negative perceptions of the EO complaint process through strategic communication, transparency, and changes to policies and practices as needed.

Recommendation 27. Institute a trend analysis of EO data and reporting to leadership.

We recommend that, to improve members' trust in the EO complaint process, the Coast Guard explore whether URM personnel's negative perceptions are verified as problems with the process or are inconsistent with current policy and practice. This review should examine policies and practices for protection for anonymity; the integrity of the investigation process, including how investigators are assigned and trained to ensure impartiality and rigor; and outcomes of claims, including remedies for victims and consequences for guilty parties. The review should also explore new practices in the Sexual Assault Prevention, Response, and Recovery program that could be adapted for use to combat discrimination. When implementing this recommendation, the Coast Guard should consider not only the policies that are in place but also how these policies are being executed at the local level. If this review confirms URM personnel's concerns about the EO complaint process, the Coast Guard should modify policies accordingly and institute mechanisms to ensure appropriate execution of policies by leaders across the Coast Guard. We recommend that, regardless of the outcome of the review, the Coast Guard also address URM personnel's negative perceptions of the process through strategic communication, education, and transparency in the process. Finally, when implementing this recommendation, the Coast Guard should institute regular reporting of EO complaint trends to senior leaders.

Recommendations to Foster an Inclusive Climate for All Personnel

The second set of recommendations aims to foster an inclusive climate for all personnel to build trust and bring about lasting improvements. These recommendations will enable the Coast Guard to comply with NDAA 2021 Section 913, which requires that each service establish the positions of chief diversity officer and senior advisers for D&I.

Recommendation 28. Ensure culture change by holding leaders accountable, providing adequate resources for achieving implementation goals, and engaging formal and informal leaders and stakeholders.

Recommendation 29. Have CCG conduct one-on-one annual accountability reviews with senior leaders.

Recommendation 30. Resource and execute the Coast Guard D&I action plan with clear goals linked to CCG’s strategic vision.

Recommendation 31. Develop and implement diversity leadership training across all stages of career development (see also recommendation 22).

Organizational and cultural transformation requires accountability among senior leaders and transformational leadership at the top (see Meredith et al., 2017). We recommend that CCG initiate a system of accountability by personally conducting annual one-on-one accountability reviews with senior leaders (RFMCs and specialty-community leaders). To maximize the impact of these accountability reviews, the Coast Guard needs to implement recommendations 6, 7, 8, and 9 (those for deliberately developing URM personnel throughout their careers). In addition, CCG should conduct accountability reviews with the commanders of the Atlantic Area and the Pacific Area.

We also recommend that the Coast Guard develop and execute an implementation plan to create a more inclusive workplace with clear goals that are linked to CCG’s strategic vision, are specific, and are implementable at tactical/operational levels. Once the goals are established, the Coast Guard needs to hold leaders accountable for achieving and personifying them. Accountability involves developing metrics and benchmarks to measure and track organizational and cultural change. NDAA 2021 Section 551 requires the military services to develop rigorous and extensive metrics to track their D&I efforts and report annually to Congress and the public. We have developed metrics and benchmarks to serve as the rigorous baseline measures to monitor organizational change in the Coast Guard. By implementing recommendations 37 through 40 for data-enabled talent management (discussed at the end of this summary), the Coast Guard could go beyond the baseline and set new metrics for outreach, recruiting, career development, advancement and promotion, and retention, using the Military Leadership Diversity Commission’s (MLDC’s) description of good metrics as a guide. It is important to note that executing the Coast Guard’s new D&I action plan would strongly support the implementation of this recommendation in that it includes the development of a “dashboard” of metrics to review with senior leadership.

We recommend that, as the Coast Guard resources and executes its D&I action plan, the service develop and implement a different type of diversity *leadership* training across all stages of career development—training that is fundamentally different from the diversity training that organizations are offering to their employees. Diversity leadership training concentrates on “education in diversity dynamics and training in practices for leading diverse groups effectively” (MLDC, 2011, p. 21). The diversity leadership training should not be an addition to the current Coast Guard development training, instead being seamlessly integrated into leadership training at all levels—a recommendation we make that is consistent with the MLDC’s second recommendation (MLDC, 2011, p. 125).

Recommendations to Establish an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The third set of recommendations proposes establishing an office of DEI (ODEI) and describes its operational requirements. Implementing these recommendations would enable the Coast Guard to comply with NDAA 2021 Section 913.

Recommendation 32. Establish and resource an ODEI reporting directly to CCG.

Recommendation 33. Have the ODEI conduct ongoing barrier analyses.

Recommendation 34. Have the ODEI coordinate CCG's strategic communications associated with DEI policies and practices, including results of barrier analyses, policy changes, and their impact.

Recommendation 35. Consider existing structure, responsibilities, and capabilities encompassed by the proposed ODEI.

Recommendation 36. Explore ways to improve organizational alignment to comply with the NDAA and to support sustained DEI efforts.

NDAA 2021 Section 913 amended 10 U.S.C. Chapter 4 by adding a new Section 147 that reads, in part, “The Commandant of the Coast Guard shall appoint a Senior Advisor for Diversity and Inclusion for the Coast Guard” who “shall report directly to the Commandant of the Coast Guard” (NDAA 2021 § 913[a][2]). We recommend that, to comply with the law (and with best practices), the Coast Guard establish and resource the ODEI to enable the senior adviser for DEI to perform the duties of the ODEI.

The ODEI should coordinate and support the execution of barrier analysis and publish the results annually, as required by NDAA 2021 Section 551. A barrier analysis develops in five phases:

1. creation of a workforce management process map
2. construction of population benchmarks or representation goals
3. comparison of employee distribution with benchmarks or goals
4. if there are significant discrepancies, the identification of any potential barriers
5. removal and addressing of any identified barriers.

In this study, we executed the first four of these phases, and the results should serve as the baseline for the ODEI to conduct these analyses in the future.

In keeping with NDAA Section 551 requirements, the ODEI should coordinate strategic communications associated with DEI policies and practices, including results of barrier analyses and policy changes. In implementing these communications, the ODEI should explain how DEI efforts fit into Coast Guard values, earn trust through transparency, educate personnel on DEI principles, and celebrate improvements.

In establishing the ODEI, the Coast Guard should consider the current system's organizational structure, responsibilities, and capabilities that the new ODEI will be required to perform. We recommend that, if a reorganization is needed, the Coast Guard examine the impact of such a reorganization, which we did not examine in this study, and explore how to align the ODEI for enduring DEI impacts and legal compliance. Currently, the Coast Guard Civil Rights Directorate (CG-00H) reports directly to the vice commandant and is responsible for EO policies and discrimination complaints. The Coast Guard Civilian Human Resources, Diversity and Leadership Directorate (CG-12) includes the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (CG-127) and the data analysis capability of the Office of Strategic Workforce Planning and Human Resources Analytics (CG-126).

Recommendations to Improve Coast Guard Talent-Management Capabilities

The final set of recommendations involves improving the Coast Guard's talent-management capabilities. Many of our earlier recommendations follow a common theme: that the Coast Guard would benefit from better *general* talent-management capabilities in order to move toward the *particular* goal of representing the nation it serves. We recommend that the Coast Guard develop what we call a data-enabled system by implementing the following set of recommendations. Because moving in this direction would enable the Coast Guard to use analytics to allocate resources, improve efficiency, and evaluate all talent-management decisions, the potential benefits extend beyond improved racial/ethnic and gender diversity. In addition, if a data-enabled system is implemented, the Coast Guard would be able to comply with NDAA 2021 Section 551, which requires the military departments to prepare reporting that assesses measures of performance related to DEI efforts.

Recommendation 37. Preserve, assemble, and maintain an accessible enterprise data warehouse (EDW) that captures data from all stages of the career life cycle.

Recommendation 38. Mitigate the data issues documented in this report.

Recommendation 39. Continue to enhance the quality of data by collecting data associated with policy decisions.

Recommendation 40. Develop and foster a culture of data sharing, analysis, and data-driven decisionmaking.

We recommend that the Coast Guard assemble and maintain an EDW—a repository of large amounts of historical data from a variety of sources on which applications or analysts can draw for improved decisionmaking. The EDW, which would be distinct from the operational data systems that manage personnel transactions, would capture data from all stages of the career life cycle. As the Coast Guard establishes the data-enabled talent-management system, it could continue to enhance data quality by collecting metrics associated with policy decisions. During our project, we had to overcome various difficulties in identifying and acquiring quality data from various Coast Guard administrative units. To effectively imple-

ment this recommendation, the Coast Guard needs to build on this work. As the Coast Guard establishes a new personnel policy or changes an existing one, it should collect pre- and post-implementation data so that it can evaluate the impact of the policy. The process of determining the right metrics for policy effectiveness would provide further insight into additional information that the Coast Guard should regularly collect. Finally, the data-enabled talent-management system would endure only if organizations that are responsible for different aspects of the career life cycle are willing and able to share their data and use analytics in their decisionmaking process. The design of the EDW can support the culture of data sharing and analysis, but some culture change could be required to fully capitalize on new capabilities and avoid continuing legacy processes under a new system.

Implementation Considerations

There is no silver bullet or single quick-win solution to improve the representation of URM groups in the Coast Guard. We have identified systemic challenges across all stages of the career life cycle. The degree of difficulty in overcoming these challenges is high because they result from the voluntary actions of individual personnel over long periods of time, and these decisions are partially influenced by factors that are not within the immediate control of the Coast Guard. An additional challenge is that URM personnel have lower levels of trust than white and male Coast Guard personnel have in the leaders and the Coast Guard's antidiscriminatory policies and practices, according to focus groups and survey respondents. We designed our recommendations to enable the Coast Guard to make these systemic shifts for enduring change. To guide the Coast Guard's implementation of our 40 recommendations, we propose organizing them into two categories:

- tactical enablers, which address specific barriers identified throughout the phases of the career life cycle (recommendations 1 through 27)
- strategic enablers, which provide foundational conditions that are necessary for the tactical enablers to produce the Coast Guard's desired results. The establishment of a leadership accountability system (recommendations 28 to 36) and the development of the data-enabled talent-management system (recommendations 37 to 40) are strategic enablers.

The implementation of our recommendations will require resources and, in some instances, organizational changes. Adequately resourcing these reform efforts would demonstrate CCG's priorities and the institutional commitment to DEI efforts. To be successful in implementing the study recommendations, the Coast Guard should also engage both formal and informal leaders and stakeholders in its DEI efforts. Finally, the Coast Guard should implement these multilevel recommendations together to harness the desired results because DEI efforts need "to transform organizational systems, structures, and cultures, improve workgroup norms and practices, and strengthen the capacity of individuals to engage and manage social identity dynamics in the workplace" (Bernstein et al., 2015, p. 122).

Contents

About This Report	iii
Summary	vii
Figures and Tables	xxix
CHAPTER ONE	
Introduction	1
How We Executed the Barrier Analysis	4
Organization of This Report	7
CHAPTER TWO	
Improving the Demographic Diversity of Accessions Through Outreach and Recruiting	9
Developing Population Benchmarks for Coast Guard Accessions	10
Active-Duty Personnel’s Perspectives on Recruiting Policies and Practices	16
Conclusion and Recommendations to Improve Recruiting and Accessions of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel	19
CHAPTER THREE	
Improving Career Development of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel	23
Quantitative Trends in the Career Development of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel	23
Active-Duty Personnel’s Perspectives on Career Development	25
Conclusion and Recommendations to Improve the Career Development of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel	49
CHAPTER FOUR	
Improving the Advancement and Promotion of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel	57
Quantitative Trends for Advancement and Promotion of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel	57
Active-Duty Personnel’s Perspectives on Advancement and Promotion	72
Conclusion and Recommendations to Improve Equity and Transparency in Advancement and Promotion Processes	81
CHAPTER FIVE	
Improving Retention of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel	85
Quantitative Trends for the Retention of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel	85
Active-Duty Personnel’s Perspectives on Retention Decisions	91
Conclusion and Recommendations to Retain Underrepresented-Minority Personnel	102

CHAPTER SIX

Active-Duty Personnel’s Perspectives on Coast Guard Climate 105

 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategies and Practices 105

 Coast Guard Climate in Support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion..... 108

 Equal-Opportunity Complaint Process..... 116

 Conclusion and Recommendations to Improve the Coast Guard Climate in Support
 of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts..... 120

CHAPTER SEVEN

Implementation Considerations 135

APPENDIXES

**A. Demographics of Coast Guard Personnel Versus Department of Defense
 Military Personnel** 137

B. Potential Lessons Learned from Civilian Organizations..... 139

C. Quantitative Methods for Advancement, Promotion, and Retention Analyses..... 149

D. Coast Guard Administrative Data Sources and Data Gaps..... 159

E. Focus Group Methodology..... 161

F. Focus Group Protocol..... 175

G. Survey Methodology 181

H. Survey Instrument..... 197

Abbreviations..... 217

Bibliography 219

Figures and Tables

Figures

1.1.	Representation of Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups Among Enlisted Personnel and Warrant Officers, by Grade.....	2
1.2.	Representation of Women Among Enlisted Personnel and Warrant Officers, by Grade.....	3
1.3.	Representation of Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups Among Officers, by Grade.....	3
1.4.	Representation of Women Among Officers, by Grade.....	4
1.5.	Our Study Approach to the Barrier Analysis Was Comprehensive and Multidisciplinary	5
1.6.	The Military Career Life Cycle.....	7
2.1.	Numbers of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel Among Active-Duty Enlisted Recruits Between 2004 and 2019.....	10
2.2.	Numbers of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel Among Active-Duty Officer Accessions Between 2005 and 2019	11
2.3.	Environmental and Policy Factors Influencing the Number of Recruits	12
2.4.	Population Benchmark Analysis Compares Eligible Propensed Youths with Coast Guard Accessions	13
2.5.	Coast Guard Accessions Compared with Population Benchmarks.....	15
3.1.	Representation of Underrepresented-Minority Groups Across Key Career Development Metrics for Enlisted Personnel and Officers Between 2014 and 2019.....	25
3.2.	Self-Reported Knowledge About Developmental Opportunities, by Gender and Corps.....	34
3.3.	Self-Reported Knowledge About Developmental Opportunities, by Race/Ethnicity and Corps	35
3.4.	Perceived Fairness in Distribution of Developmental Opportunities, by Gender and Corps	36
3.5.	Perceived Fairness in Distribution of Developmental Opportunities, by Racial/Ethnic Minority Status and Corps.....	36
3.6.	Percentages of Respondents Reporting Various Perceptions of the Assignment Process, by Gender and Corps.....	42
3.7.	Percentages of Enlisted Respondents Reporting Various Perceptions of the Assignment Process, by Race and Ethnicity	42
3.8.	Percentages of Officer Respondents Reporting Various Perceptions of the Assignment Process, by Race and Ethnicity	43
3.9.	Percentages of Enlisted Respondents Reporting Knowledge of Coast Guard Assignment Policies, by Race and Ethnicity	45

3.10.	Percentages of Officer Respondents Reporting Knowledge of Coast Guard Assignment Policies, by Race and Ethnicity	46
3.11.	Percentages of Enlisted Personnel Reporting Likelihood of Responses to Hostile Experiences, by Race and Ethnicity	47
3.12.	Percentages of Officer Personnel Reporting Likelihood of Responses to Hostile Experiences, by Race and Ethnicity	48
3.13.	Percentages of Personnel Reporting Various Perceptions of the Colocation Process, by Gender and Corps	49
3.14.	A Notional Data-Enabled Marketplace Approach to Coast Guard Assignments	54
4.1.	Summary of Enlisted Advancement Processes, by Grade	58
4.2.	Selection Percentages Versus Underrepresented-Minority Representation for Officers Meeting O-3 to O-6 Promotion Boards	70
4.3.	Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Advancement and Promotion Processes, by Gender and Corps	74
4.4.	Percentages of Enlisted Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Advancement and Promotion Processes, by Race and Ethnicity	75
4.5.	Percentages of Officer Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Advancement and Promotion Processes, by Race and Ethnicity	76
4.6.	Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Enlisted and Officer Evaluation Report Processes, by Gender and Corps	78
4.7.	Percentages of Enlisted Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Enlisted Evaluation Report Process, by Race and Ethnicity	78
4.8.	Percentages of Officer Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Officer Evaluation Report Process, by Race and Ethnicity	79
5.1.	Cumulative Continuation Rates, by Race and Ethnicity, for Active-Duty Enlisted Personnel and Warrant Officers, Fiscal Years 2005–2018	86
5.2.	Cumulative Continuation Rates, by Race and Ethnicity, for Active-Duty Commissioned Officers, Fiscal Years 2005–2018	88
6.1.	Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Training Perceptions, by Gender and Corps	108
6.2.	Percentages of Enlisted Respondents Identifying Various Training Perceptions, by Race and Ethnicity	109
6.3.	Percentages of Officer Respondents Identifying Various Training Perceptions, by Race and Ethnicity	109
6.4.	Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of Treatment of Different Genders in the Coast Guard, by Gender and Corps	112
6.5.	Perceptions of Efforts to Prevent Gender Discrimination, by Gender and Corps	113
6.6.	Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of Safety to Report Gender Discrimination, by Gender and Corps	114
6.7.	Percentages of Enlisted Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of Treatment of Different Racial and Ethnic Groups	115

6.8.	Percentages of Officer Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of Treatment of Different Racial and Ethnic Groups	115
6.9.	Enlisted Personnel’s Perceptions of Efforts to Prevent Racial and Ethnic Discrimination.....	116
6.10.	Officers’ Perceptions of Efforts to Prevent Racial and Ethnic Discrimination ...	117
6.11.	Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of Safety to Report Racial or Ethnic Discrimination, by Race/Ethnicity and Corps	118
6.12.	Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Equal-Opportunity Complaint Process, by Gender and Corps	121
6.13.	Percentages of Enlisted Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Equal-Opportunity Complaint Process, by Race and Ethnicity	122
6.14.	Percentages of Officer Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Equal-Opportunity Complaint Process, by Race and Ethnicity	123
6.15.	Five Stages of Barrier Analysis.....	132
7.1.	A Typology of Our Recommendations and Their Desired Results	136
E.1.	Focus Group Participants, by Corps	164
E.2.	Focus Group Participants, by Pay Grade	165
E.3.	Officer Focus Group Participants’ Highest Education Levels	165
E.4.	Enlisted Focus Group Participants’ Highest Education Levels.....	166
E.5.	Focus Group Participants’ Marital Statuses	166
E.6.	Focus Group Participants’ Spouses’ Military Statuses	167
E.7.	Focus Group Participants’ Parental Statuses	167

Tables

2.1.	Eligibility Requirements for Enlisted and Officer Accessions.....	14
2.2.	Recruiting Goals as Percentages of Recruit Class, Based on Population Benchmarks	21
3.1.	Percentages of Personnel Identifying Various Reasons for Choosing a Rating or Specialty, by Gender and Corps	27
3.2.	Percentages of Personnel Identifying Various Reasons for Choosing a Rating or Specialty, by Race/Ethnicity and Corps	28
3.3.	Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Factors in Not Having a Mentor, by Gender and Corps	38
3.4.	Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Factors in Not Having a Mentor, by Racial/Ethnic Minority Status and Corps	39
4.1.	Percentages of Enlisted Personnel Accessed Between FY 2005 and FY 2015 Making Early-Career Advancement to E-4 Within Four Years, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender	59
4.2.	Percentages of Enlisted Personnel Accessed Between Calendar Year 2006 and Calendar Year 2018 Making Advancement to E-5 Through E-8, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender	61
4.3.	Effects of Advancement Factors on Racial/Ethnic and Gender Differences in Advancement Rates.....	63

4.4.	Observed Percentage Differences in Promotion Board Selection Rates.....	65
4.5.	Sample Sizes Available for Comparing Officer Selection Outcomes of Underrepresented-Minority and White Male Officers, 2006–2020 Promotion-Year Boards	66
4.6.	Estimates of Percentage-Point Promotion Board Selection Differences Between Underrepresented-Minority and Similar White Officers, 2006–2020 Promotion-Year Boards	68
5.1.	Percentages of Preretirement Separations from Fiscal Years 2005 Through 2018 Associated with Descriptive Reason Categories, by Race and Ethnicity.....	89
5.2.	Possible Relationships Between Other Characteristics and Retention Differences.....	90
5.3.	Influence of Other Characteristics on Retention Differences	92
5.4.	Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Personal-Life Retention Factors, by Gender and Corps	95
5.5.	Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Personal-Life Retention Factors, by Race/Ethnicity and Corps	96
5.6.	Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Work Environment Retention Factors, by Gender and Corps.....	97
5.7.	Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Work Environment Retention Factors, by Race/Ethnicity and Corps.....	98
5.8.	Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Job-Related Retention Factors, by Gender and Corps	100
5.9.	Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Job-Related Retention Factors, by Gender and Corps	101
A.1.	Percentages of the Active Component Who Belonged to Underrepresented- Minority Groups, July 2020, by Service	137
A.2.	Percentages of Active-Component Officers Who Belonged to Underrepresented-Minority Groups, July 2020, by Service.....	138
A.3.	Ratio of Senior-Level Representation to Junior-Level Representation, July 2020, by Service.....	138
B.1.	Organizational Characteristics for the Comparative Analysis.....	140
B.2.	Public Entities Benchmarked for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Trends	142
B.3.	Private Entities Benchmarked for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Trends	143
C.1.	Detailed Decomposition Results Showing the Percentage-Point Contribution of Each Characteristic to the Explained Component of Each Advancement Gap	150
C.2.	Influence of Other Characteristics on Retention Total Differences, in Percentage Points	153
C.3.	Estimates of Percentage-Point Promotion Board Selection Differences Between Underrepresented-Minority Personnel and Similar White Personnel, Promotion-Year 2006–2020 Boards.....	158
D.1.	Coast Guard Administrative Data Sources and Gaps	159
E.1.	Focus Group Participation Summary.....	163
E.2.	Focus Group Participants’ Races and Ethnicities	164

E.3.	Focus Group Coding Guide	169
G.1.	Genders and Races/Ethnicities of Survey Respondents	191
G.2.	Corps of Survey Respondents	191
G.3.	Pay Grades of Enlisted Survey Respondents	192
G.4.	Pay Grades of Officer Survey Respondents.....	192
G.5.	Ratings of Enlisted Survey Respondents	192
G.6.	Specialties of Officer Survey Respondents.....	193

Introduction

U.S. Coast Guard strategic planning documents state the service’s desire to attract, recruit, and retain a workforce from all segments of U.S. society while fostering a culture of respect in which personnel from diverse backgrounds are included, valued, and respected.¹ Historically, however, the Coast Guard’s workforce has not reflected the demographics of the nation it serves. In the current Coast Guard active-duty force, representation of women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups declines as rank increases, resulting in a less diverse senior leadership.² This trend holds for URM personnel in both the enlisted and officer ranks.³

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 show that representation of URM groups declines in higher pay grades among enlisted personnel and for warrant officers (WOs). Representation for all racial and ethnic minority groups is 28 percent at the E-1 level, increases to 35 percent by E-5, and then decreases steadily, to 18 percent at the E-9 level. Female E-1s make up 14 percent of the force but just 7 and 8 percent of E-8s and E-9s, respectively.

In the officer ranks, this downward trend in representation is more pronounced, as shown in Figures 1.3 and 1.4. Racial and ethnic minority personnel make up 27 percent of O-1s and 32 percent of O-2s. At the flag officer level,⁴ representation drops dramatically to 11 percent—just two of the 18 O-7s and O-8s and none of the four O-9s and two O-10s were in racial or

¹ For example, the message from the commandant of the Coast Guard (CCG) in the Coast Guard’s diversity and inclusion (D&I) action plan states, “In order to remain the world’s best Coast Guard we must be the world’s most diverse and inclusive Coast Guard” and that his “vision is a fully inclusive Coast Guard where all people are respected, empowered, and valued” (U.S. Coast Guard, 2020, p. 2).

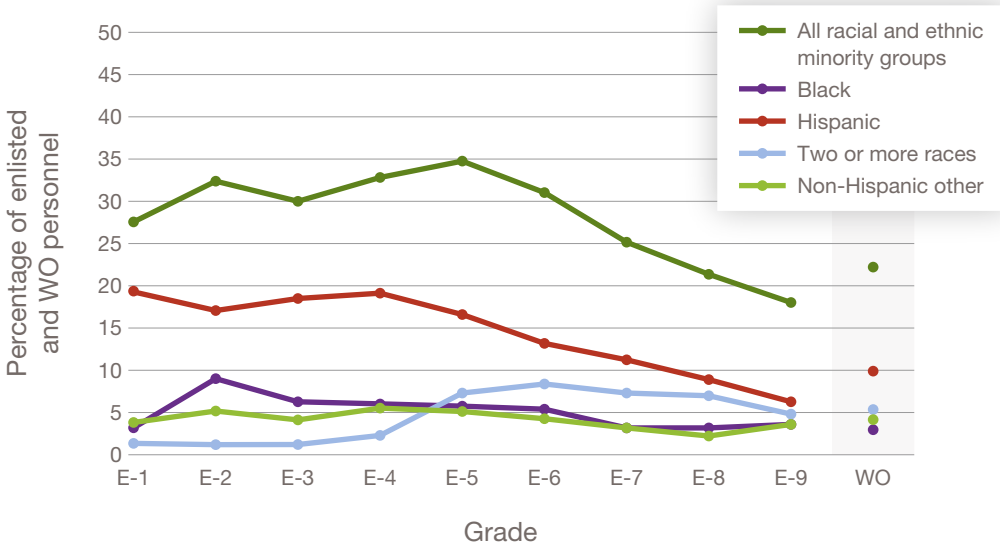
² The Coast Guard refers to women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups as *underrepresented minorities* (URMs). We recognize that *minority* itself is often used as shorthand for *historically underrepresented* or *historically marginalized*, but we use *URM* in this report in keeping with Coast Guard terminology.

Throughout this report, any designation of gender, race, or ethnicity is self-reported by personnel. In addition, in this report, we use a binary gender construct (men and women) because this aligns with Coast Guard personnel data collection.

³ Issues of lower representation of URM groups among senior leaders are not unique to the Coast Guard. Appendix A provides an overview of representation within the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) services.

⁴ *Flag officer* is a designation for officers in the top pay grades in the U.S. Coast Guard: O-7 through O-10.

FIGURE 1.1
Representation of Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups Among Enlisted Personnel and Warrant Officers, by Grade



SOURCE: September 2018 Coast Guard personnel data provided to the authors.

ethnic minority groups. The trend is similar for female officers: Women make up 33 percent of O-1s but just 11 percent of O-6s. Just six of the 42 flag officers are women.⁵

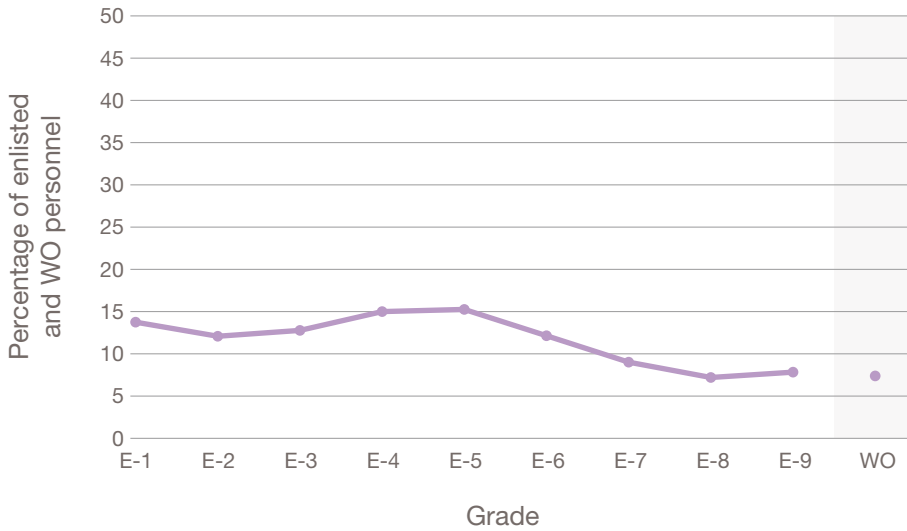
To better understand and address these trends, the U.S. Coast Guard asked researchers from the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC), a federally funded research and development center operated by the RAND Corporation, to identify the root causes of underrepresentation of these groups in the active-duty Coast Guard and to develop and recommend strategies to improve the diversity of the Coast Guard workforce.⁶ To achieve these objectives, we conducted a barrier analysis to provide the Coast Guard with a baseline of identified root causes of underrepresentation of these groups.⁷

⁵ For comparisons to demographic representation in the DoD military services, see Appendix A. For trends in civilian organizations related to demographic representation of senior leaders, see Appendix B.

⁶ We recognize the Coast Guard continues to make progress on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and we aimed in our study to bolster ongoing efforts supported by our findings.

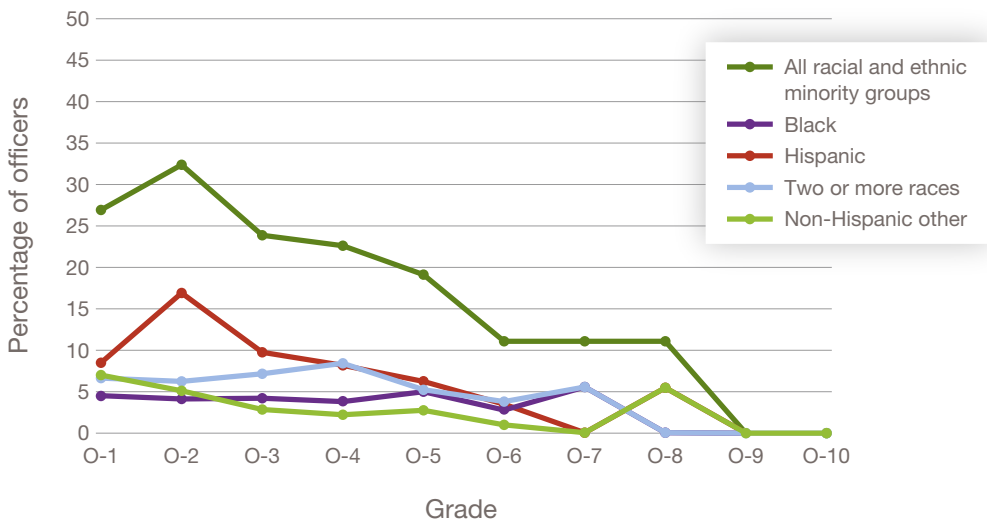
⁷ See Chapter Six for more detail about the stages of barrier analysis.

FIGURE 1.2
Representation of Women Among Enlisted Personnel and Warrant Officers, by Grade



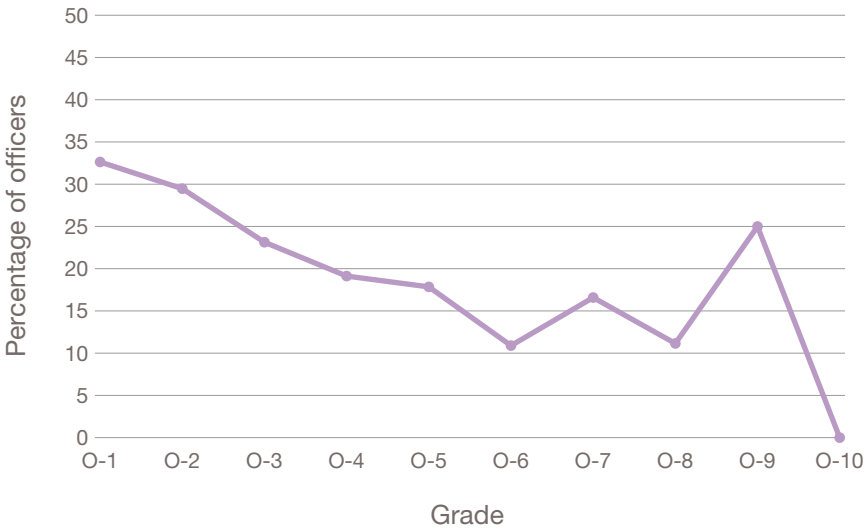
SOURCE: September 2018 Coast Guard personnel data provided to the authors.

FIGURE 1.3
Representation of Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups Among Officers, by Grade



SOURCE: September 2018 Coast Guard personnel data provided to the authors.

FIGURE 1.4
Representation of Women Among Officers, by Grade



SOURCE: September 2018 Coast Guard personnel data provided to the authors.

How We Executed the Barrier Analysis

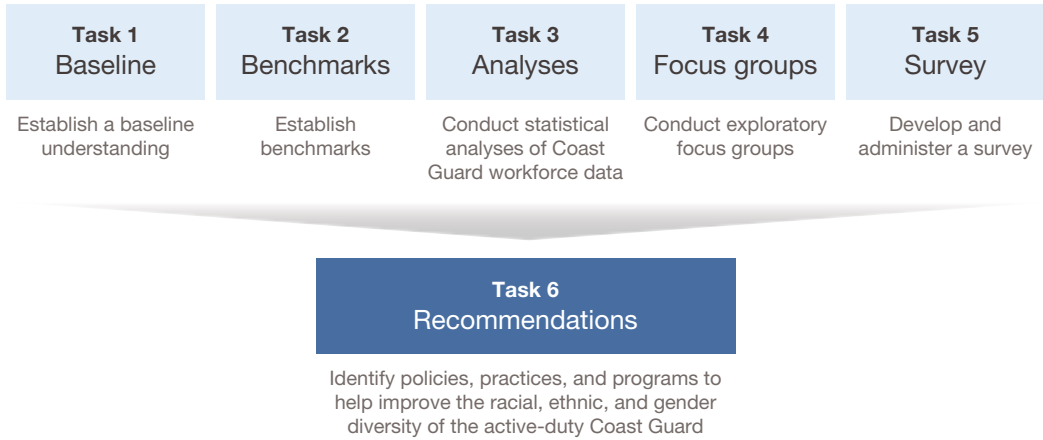
We used a multidisciplinary approach to conduct the barrier analysis and executed six study tasks, as shown in Figure 1.5. The Coast Guard can use this report to meet the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 (Pub. L. 116-283) requirement for conducting a barrier analysis and this study as a baseline for future annual barrier analyses.

Task 1 focused on establishing a baseline understanding of recruiting, career development, promotion and advancement, and retention factors—the elements that make up the career life cycle—that shape the current level of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in the active-duty Coast Guard to help inform data collection and analysis efforts for this study. Task 1 included reviewing relevant studies and survey data reports focused on URM groups in the Coast Guard and examining relevant policies and practices that could affect representation throughout the career life cycle. Additionally, to help us develop a comprehensive understanding of current policies and practices, task 1 involved conducting informational interviews with Coast Guard subject-matter experts in recruiting, career development, promotion and advancement, and retention, as well as experts in DEI and equal-opportunity (EO) issues.⁸ We also conducted informational interviews with members of the Coast Guard

⁸ Informational interviews with subject-matter experts included discussions with representatives of several Coast Guard organizations, including the Coast Guard Civil Rights Directorate (CG-00H), Enlisted Personnel Management, the Leadership Development Center, the Office of Military Justice, the Pay and

FIGURE 1.5

Our Study Approach to the Barrier Analysis Was Comprehensive and Multidisciplinary



Affinity Group Council to gain an understanding of URM personnel’s perspectives on key issues they faced.⁹

Task 2 focused on developing customized recruiting benchmarks for the active-duty Coast Guard reflecting eligibility requirements and propensity to serve in the military, in addition to general-population demographic benchmarks. Task 2 benchmarks also included examining DoD data to compare Coast Guard URM representation with that in the DoD services (see Appendix A). As part of task 2, we also explored lessons learned from civilian organizations by conducting a literature review and examining relevant publicly available data (see Appendix B).

Task 3 involved conducting statistical analyses of the active-duty Coast Guard workforce data to identify trends by race, ethnicity, and gender in the military career life cycle (recruiting, career development, promotion and advancement, and retention) and to identify potential factors influencing representation in the Coast Guard. To conduct these task 3 analyses, we assembled an analytical database using Coast Guard administrative databases to capture information about Coast Guard personnel’s individual background characteristics, educational attainment, training, assignments, awards, promotions or advancements, and reten-

Personnel Center, Officer Personnel Management (OPM), Recruiting Command, Training Centers Petaluma and Yorktown, and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy (USCGA).

⁹ Affinity-group interviews included representatives from the Academy Minority Outreach Team (AMOT), the Association of Naval Services Officers, Blacks In Government, Enlisted Professionals in Connection (EPIC), the Federal Asian Pacific American Council, the National Naval Officers Association, the Sea Services Leadership Association, Student to Officer—Always Ready (SOAR), and the Women’s Leadership Initiative (WLI). Additional affinity groups not interviewed (e.g., Federally Employed Women and Coast Guard Spectrum) had the opportunity to provide input via the study team’s engagement with the Affinity Group Council.

tion. In Appendix C, we provide more details on our quantitative methodology; in Appendix D, we highlight key gaps we identified in our analysis of administrative data.

Task 4 involved conducting exploratory focus groups with URM personnel in the active-duty Coast Guard to help identify barriers to increased representation. The HSOAC team conducted 108 focus groups with 610 active-duty Coast Guard URM personnel at six locations across the country. Focus groups discussed experiences across the career life cycle, as well as workplace climate, policies related to DEI, and the EO complaint process. The goal of these focus groups was not only to gather rich qualitative information about the experiences and perspectives of URM personnel but also to identify key topic areas that could be further assessed through a Coast Guard-wide survey in task 5.¹⁰ In Appendixes E and F, we provide more details on the focus group methodology, participant characteristics, and the protocol.

Based on the themes identified in the task 4 focus groups, task 5 involved developing and administering a survey to all active-duty Coast Guard personnel to estimate how prevalent the focus group themes were by determining demographic differences in the attitudes and experiences of Coast Guard personnel about different aspects of their careers. The survey was administered from July through October 2020, and a total of 13,396 active-duty Coast Guard personnel participated (a 33-percent response rate).¹¹ In this report, we highlight key survey findings that show significant gender and racial/ethnic group differences by enlisted and officer status.¹² In Appendixes G and H, we provide more details on the survey methodology, respondent characteristics, and survey questions.

Informed by the findings from tasks 1 through 5, in task 6, we identified potential changes to Coast Guard policies, practices, and programs to help enhance the demographic diversity of the Coast Guard and improve its ability to more closely reflect the racial, ethnic, and gender composition of the United States as a whole.¹³

¹⁰ Throughout the report, we include focus group participant quotes as examples to illustrate an issue or theme raised across multiple groups. “One-off” comments are not included in our findings; we report only those themes that emerged as key during our qualitative analysis, meaning that they were raised consistently across multiple focus groups. It is important to note that our findings and quotes include instances in which focus group participants’ experiences or perceptions do not align with current Coast Guard policies and practices. Although we note these discrepancies where possible, it was outside the scope of the study to reconcile all potential differences. Regardless, perceptions influence members’ behavior, so we have included these findings to provide insights to the Coast Guard regarding where policies might require improved communication to address misperceptions.

¹¹ See Appendix G for more details about response rates by demographic group.

¹² To more accurately reflect the Coast Guard population and to minimize potential bias from nonresponse among certain demographic groups, we present weighted results (see Appendix G for more details).

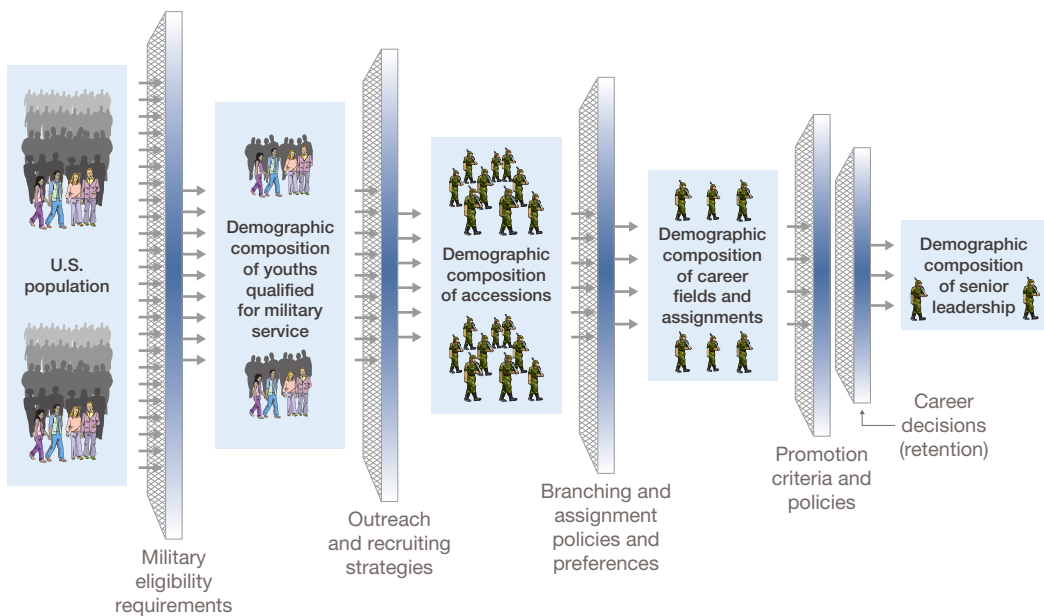
¹³ Of note is that much of the project work occurred prior to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Specifically, all focus groups with URM personnel and interviews with subject-matter experts (including those focused on Coast Guard recruiting practices, which might have shifted in response to the COVID-19 environment) were completed prior to March 2020. Notably, the survey of active-duty Coast Guard personnel was administered in summer and fall 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. However,

Organization of This Report

The demographics of today’s active-duty Coast Guard are largely the cumulative effect of its closed personnel system: Senior leaders are grown from within the organization. Therefore, improving the representation of URM groups will require decades of sustained effort across all stages of the career life cycle. Each stage of the life cycle that narrows the pool of potential senior leaders can contribute to or hinder demographic diversity, as shown in Figure 1.6.¹⁴

First, the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of future Coast Guard leaders is shaped by Coast Guard eligibility requirements that determine who can join the service, as well as the ability of outreach and recruiting efforts to reach and attract diverse youths. Career choices, such as rating and specialty selection, can affect members’ career paths and opportunities for upward mobility and career-enhancing assignments. Career progression in the Coast Guard is driven both by the promotion or advancement of personnel and by personnel retention decisions. URM personnel must promote or advance and must stay in the Coast Guard for senior leadership to be diverse. Because each phase of the life cycle contributes to the diversity

FIGURE 1.6
The Military Career Life Cycle



SOURCE: Adapted from MLDC, 2011.

survey questions were targeted to elicit feedback on broad career experiences, so we do not expect that responses were significantly affected by the COVID-19 environment.

¹⁴ Figure 1.6 represents the structure and approach used by the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC), which is aligned with the approach of this study.

of the workforce, a consistent and sustained effort is required to drive change and increase demographic diversity.

In the following chapters, we have organized our findings and recommendations to align with the stages of the military career life cycle. In Chapter Two, we outline our approach and conduct a benchmark analysis of the demographic diversity of the Coast Guard, including eligibility requirements that determine who can join, and of the outreach and recruiting efforts to reach URM groups. We then provide recommendations to address the barriers we identified related to outreach and recruiting. In Chapter Three, we examine the career development of URM personnel in the Coast Guard, including how they perceive the effects that their gender, race, or ethnicity can have on their opportunities for various ratings and assignments, and offer recommendations to address identified barriers to career development. In Chapter Four, we examine the gaps in advancement and promotion between URM Coast Guard personnel and their white male counterparts, assess contributors to those gaps, and provide recommendations to address barriers to advancement and promotion. In Chapter Five, we examine the extent to which the Coast Guard retains URM personnel and key factors in retention decisions and recommend actions to address retention barriers. In Chapter Six, we report on active-duty personnel's perspectives on Coast Guard diversity policies, climate, and the EO complaint process and provide recommendations to address identified barriers in these areas. Finally, in Chapter Seven, we conclude with implementation considerations for the study recommendations.

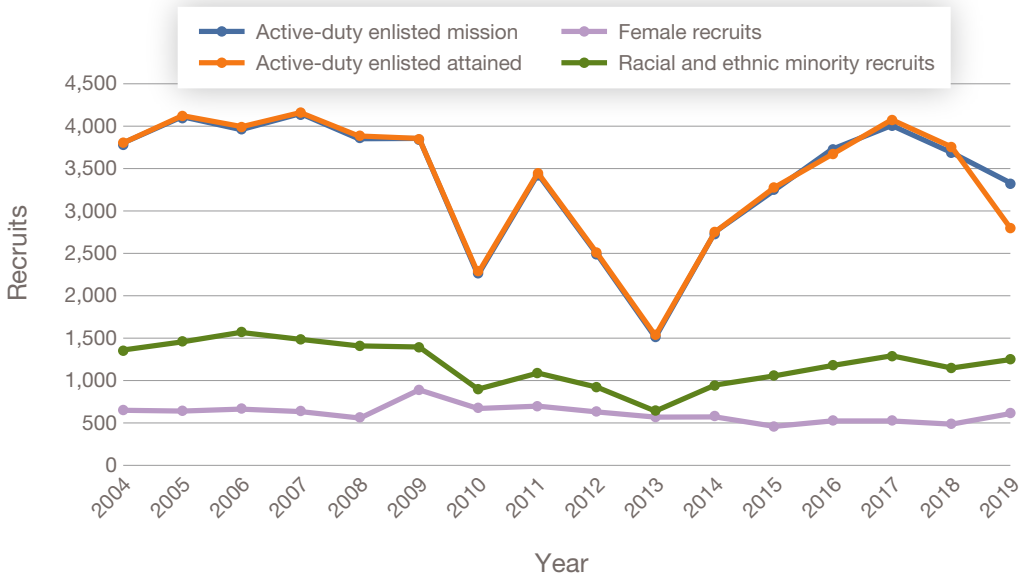
Improving the Demographic Diversity of Accessions Through Outreach and Recruiting

Because the active-duty Coast Guard promotes from within, the demographic diversity of accessions—the first phase of the military career life cycle—plays a major role in the representation of URM groups in the workforce. For each accession cohort, the number of URM personnel is the highest at the accession phase. The number declines as cohort members' careers develop because of the up-or-out promotion system and attrition. Therefore, improving demographic diversity among accessions is a critical step in improving the representation of URM groups in the active-duty Coast Guard.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the magnitudes of the potential challenges in improving the demographic diversity of accessions. The figure shows the numbers of URM personnel among active-duty enlisted recruits between 2004 and 2019. During this period, the recruiting missions fluctuated between 1,500 and approximately 4,000. Coast Guard Recruiting Command met the recruiting missions (targets) in all those years except 2019. Although the numbers of racial and ethnic minority personnel among recruits fluctuated loosely with the recruiting missions, the number of women was stable at around 600 (the average is 612) regardless of the recruiting missions.

The stability of the annual number of URM recruits, despite substantial swings in the overall annual recruiting mission, means that the resource inputs and prospecting activities employed to attract more recruits in high-mission years are likelier to draw non-URM youths. In the next section, we describe all of the environmental and policy factors that determine the number and mix of recruits in a given year. Moving URM totals above these historical “ceilings” will require the Coast Guard to change recruiting resources and practices in ways that increase the supply of URM youths (e.g., by advertising) or increase the eligibility rate of interested youths (e.g., through waivers). Previous recruiting research has shown that the effects of environmental factors (such as the Iraq War) and recruiting resources vary by racial and ethnic group but also can have the opposite effects for different services (Asch, Heaton, and Savych, 2009). This points to the need for an organic Coast Guard recruiting program to measure the effects of the factors discussed below on URM youth recruiting.

FIGURE 2.1
Numbers of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel Among Active-Duty Enlisted Recruits Between 2004 and 2019



SOURCE: Accessions Division, Coast Guard Recruiting Command, data provided to the authors.

In contrast to the enlisted population, numbers of URM personnel among officer accessions, shown in Figure 2.2, have increased more than 100 percent—from around 50 to around 100—since 2005. As the total number of officer accessions increased in recent years, the numbers of URM personnel rose as well. However, in 2017, the numbers of women seemed to plateau at around 116. During the same period, the numbers of racial and ethnic minorities nearly doubled, from 56 to 99.

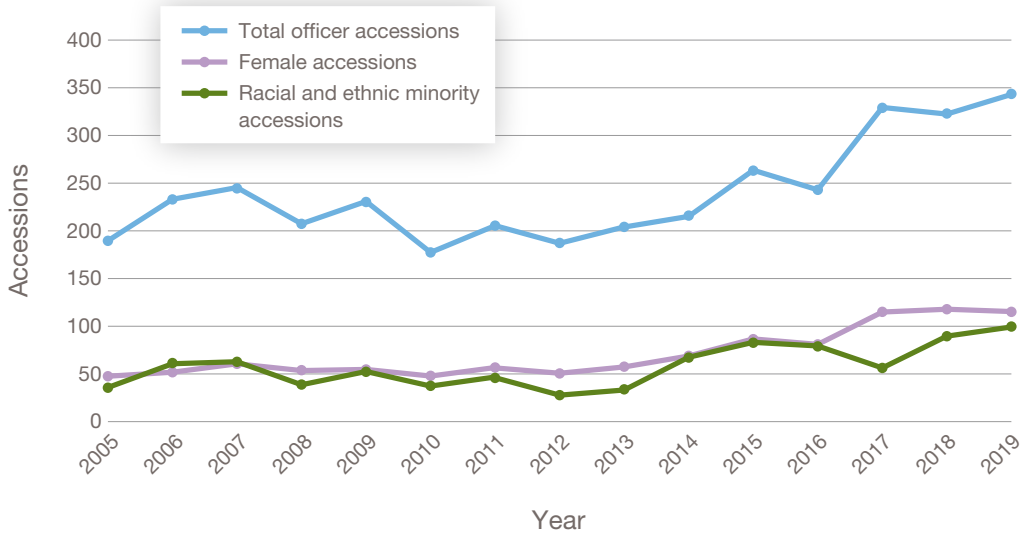
Developing Population Benchmarks for Coast Guard Accessions

Decades of RAND military personnel research (see, e.g., Asch and Orvis, 1994) have identified several environmental and policy factors that influence recruiting. As shown in the framework depicted in Figure 2.3, two sets of factors determine the number of recruits:

- The first set is environmental factors, such as demographic trends and labor market conditions, that are beyond the Coast Guard’s direct control.
- The Coast Guard has greater control over the second set of factors: public awareness and opinion toward the Coast Guard, recruiting resources, policies, marketing and recruit-

FIGURE 2.2

Numbers of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel Among Active-Duty Officer Accessions Between 2005 and 2019



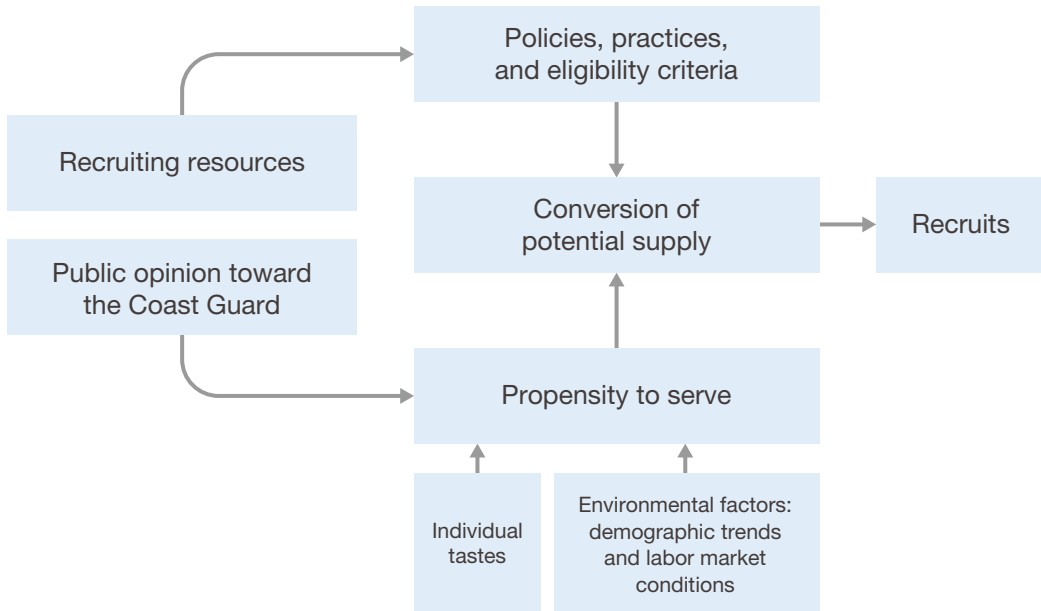
ing strategies and practices, and eligibility criteria. The Coast Guard can alter its marketing strategies and practices to change public awareness and opinions of its brand. Similarly, the Coast Guard can control how Coast Guard Recruiting Command selects, trains, manages, and incentivizes recruiters. Also, the Coast Guard can evaluate its eligibility criteria to ensure that they are based on the requirements of the jobs that personnel are expected to perform, to avoid the use of more-subjective factors in deciding an individual's eligibility.¹

To assess the impact that recruiting policies, practices, and eligibility criteria have on the demographic diversity of accessions, we constructed a set of population benchmarks for enlisted and officer accessions.

According to the framework in Figure 2.3, comparing the Coast Guard's active-duty workforce and the general U.S. population is neither valid nor informative to develop policy options for improving representation of URM groups among Coast Guard personnel. Not all Americans are eligible to join the Coast Guard, and not all Americans are interested in serving in the military. Therefore, as shown in Figure 2.4, the appropriate benchmarks to compare with enlisted and officer accessions are the eligible population (those who can meet the

¹ By policy, the Coast Guard expects recruiters to use their judgment in addition to eligibility criteria to evaluate whether accepting an applicant would be in the best interest of the service (Commandant Instruction [COMDTINST] M1100.2F).

FIGURE 2.3
Environmental and Policy Factors Influencing the Number of Recruits

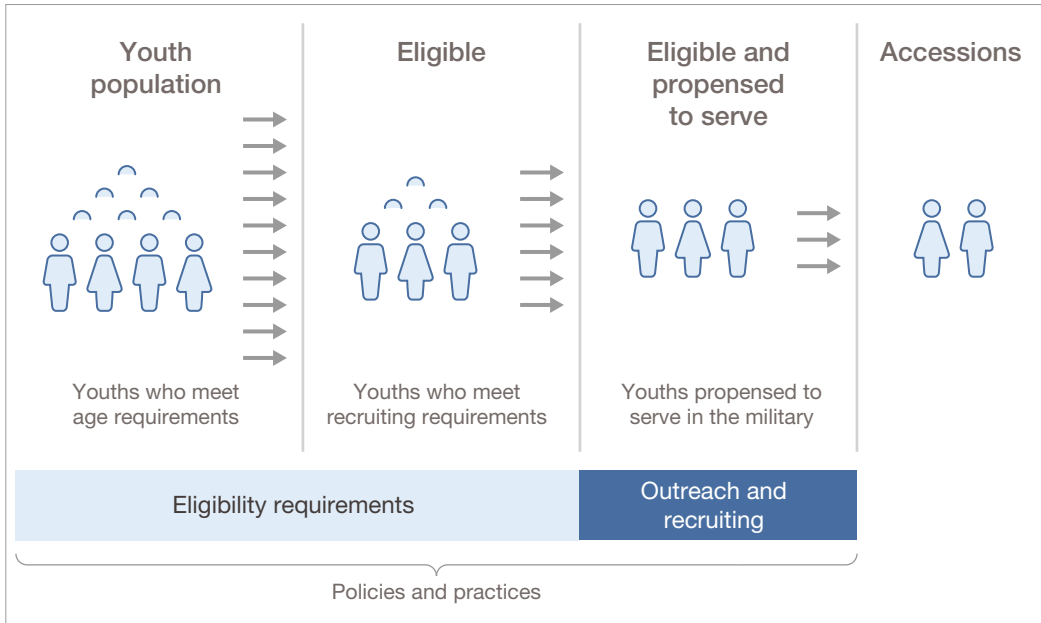


SOURCE: Adapted from Asch and Orvis, 1994.

recruiting requirements) and the eligible *propensed* population (those who can meet recruiting requirements *and* express interest in serving in the military). The Coast Guard’s recruiting policies and practices shape the demographic profiles of each population benchmark. The Coast Guard recruiting eligibility requirements can have differential impacts on demographic groups. Also, the Coast Guard’s outreach and marketing strategies and practices can influence awareness and interest among members of URM groups.

To estimate the eligible population, we started with data on youths, obtained from the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) population estimates (U.S. Census Bureau, undated). For enlisted personnel, we focused on those ages 17 through 31. We calculated eligibility rates by race/ethnicity and gender for a list of enlisted eligibility requirements (see the “Enlisted” column of Table 2.1). Using the 2018 ACS data, we also estimated the eligibility rates of the youth population who were U.S. citizens or resident aliens. Then, we estimated the eligibility rates of those who had high school diplomas. We also screened out those who had more than three dependents. Next, using data from the 2018 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) (National Center for Health Statistics, 2020), we estimated eligibility rates based on the body-weight requirement and the medical requirement. We then used the 2015 follow-up of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) 1997 (National Longitudinal Surveys, undated) to estimate the eligibility rates for aptitude, moral character, and drug requirements. Each rate was calculated to be conditional on meeting the previous eligibility requirement. Once all the conditional eligibility rates were calculated, we applied the rates to

FIGURE 2.4
Population Benchmark Analysis Compares Eligible Propensed Youths with Coast Guard Accessions



the youth population to obtain the share who were eligible to enlist. In order to estimate the eligible propensed population, in addition to applying all the requirements described above, we used data from the 2017 study *Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth* (MTF) (National Addiction and HIV Data Archive Program, undated) to estimate each demographic group’s propensity to serve in the armed forces. We used 2017 accessions because more-recent accessions had a large amount of missing information for race and ethnicity.

For officers, the eligibility requirements for Officer Candidate School (OCS) and for the USCGA are listed in the “Officer” column of Table 2.1. We applied the approach described above to calculate conditional probabilities of each eligibility requirement, then applied the rates to the youth population to estimate the eligible population for officers. To estimate the eligible propensed population, we again used the 2017 MTF to estimate each demographic group’s propensity to serve in the armed forces.

The process of creating benchmarks for each accession cohort is imperfect because the available data on youths do not perfectly align with the populations potentially eligible to join the Coast Guard. For example, MTF is a survey of eighth-, tenth-, and 12th-grade students, so, when the benchmarks used this information to calculate propensity, they implicitly assumed that the results from the survey population generalized to the youth population in the age ranges eligible to enlist. Despite these limitations, the benchmarks can still be quite

TABLE 2.1
Eligibility Requirements for Enlisted and Officer Accessions

Factor	Enlisted	Officer	Source
Age range, in years	17–31	For OCS, 21–31 ^a For the USCGA, 21–26 ^a	ACS 2018
Citizenship	U.S. citizen or resident alien	U.S. citizen	ACS 2018
Education	High school diploma	College degree ^a	ACS 2018
Dependents	≤3	For OCS, ≤3 and not a single parent For the USCGA, 0 and single	ACS 2018
Height and weight	Within Coast Guard requirements		NHIS 2018
Medical	No asthma, diabetes, heart disease, functional limitation, or disability		NHIS 2018
Aptitude ^b	AFQT score ≥ 36	SAT score ≥ 1120 or ACT score ≥ 24	NLSY 2015
Moral character	No felony convictions		NLSY 2015
Drug use	No prior use of hard drugs or marijuana		NLSY 2015

NOTES: AFQT = Armed Forces Qualification Test.

^a To ensure that the officer benchmarks aligned to O-1 accessions, we used age and education levels that equated to what was required at the time of commissioning.

^b The Direct Commission Officer programs do not have this requirement.

useful as a guide to understand the demographics of accessions and how different factors affect URM representation.

Comparisons to Benchmarks Are Mixed

Figure 2.5 shows our population benchmark results for enlisted and officer personnel separately. We compared the eligible population (columns labeled *E*) and the eligible propensed population (columns labeled *E&P*) with Coast Guard accessions, by demographic group. We report the officer results for the USCGA and OCS separately.

The results are color-coded: Green indicates where the Coast Guard outperforms the benchmarks; yellow and red indicate where the Coast Guard underperforms the benchmark. We used a 2-percent difference from the benchmark as a cutoff point to indicate the levels of underperformance. We picked 2 percent after reviewing the distribution of differences across different benchmarks. We explored different cutoff points and found that our summaries were not sensitive to such differences. In addition to color-coding, the figure includes two additional dimensions to inform the comparisons. First, the USCGA and OCS cohorts had very small numbers in most URM groups, which means that the percentages for these groups change substantially with every additional URM accession, so these comparisons could be misleading. We have marked these cells with dagger (†) symbols. Second, the figure includes

FIGURE 2.5
Coast Guard Accessions Compared with Population Benchmarks

		Enlisted		USCGA		OCS	
		Accessions versus		Accessions versus		Accessions versus	
		E	E&P	E	E&P	E	E&P
White	Male						
	Female	1,109	246	17		21	
Black	Male		48	1 †	2 †		
	Female	122	156	2 †	2 †	1 †	1 †
Hispanic	Male						
	Female	149	116	4 †	5 †		
Asian or Pacific Islander	Male	28	86	9 †	16 †	4 †	8 †
	Female	121	72	6 †	2 †	2 †	
Non-Hispanic other	Male						
	Female	12				2 †	1 †

■ Coast Guard outperforms
■ Coast Guard underperforms up to 2%
■ Coast Guard underperforms more than 2%
 † Fewer than 10 accessions

NOTE: E = eligible. E&P = eligible and propensed. We used 2017 accession data. The number in each cell represents the number of additional URM accessions that would be needed in that cell to bring the URM representation level in line with the benchmark (holding the total size of the accession cohort constant). The dagger symbols show where comparisons could be misleading because of the small numbers in USCGA and OCS cohorts from most URM groups.

a number in each cell to illustrate the number of additional accessions in each group that would bring the Coast Guard in line with the benchmarks.²

As the figure shows, the Coast Guard outperformed benchmarks for both Hispanic men and non-Hispanic other men (the latter category includes Native American accessions and accessions who indicated having multiple racial backgrounds). The representation of these groups was higher in Coast Guard accessions than in the benchmarks. This was true for both enlisted and officer accessions. Similarly, the Coast Guard outperformed benchmarks for black men who were eligible to enlist and white women who were eligible and propensed to enter the USCGA or OCS.

The Coast Guard also underperformed some benchmarks. As the figure shows, the Coast Guard underperformed the benchmarks for enlisted Asian and Pacific Islander personnel. Also, the Coast Guard underperformed the eligible benchmarks for all groups of enlisted women except non-Hispanic other women. For the officer accessions, the Coast Guard also underperformed the benchmarks for Asian and Pacific Islander accessions, black men for

² When finding these totals, we held the size of the accession cohort constant by assuming that each increased URM accession would be offset by decreases in white male accessions. Because percentages must add up to 100, any overrepresentation in one group means that there must be underrepresentation in another. This highlights the need to look at both numbers and percentages in assessing diversity among accessions.

the USCGA, and women across some racial and ethnic groups. However, we want to caution that officer accessions for most groups were too few to permit us to draw strong conclusions, as highlighted by the dagger symbols. A majority (26 out of 40 comparisons, or 65 percent) of comparisons had fewer than ten accessions. On the other hand, the numbers in the cells illustrate that relatively small changes in officer accessions would bring the Coast Guard in line with the benchmarks. For instance, two additional black men and two additional black women in the accession cohort for the USCGA would result in similar representation between accessions and the eligible-propensed benchmark. These mixed findings highlight areas of potential improvement that can be targeted for increasing the representation of URM groups in enlisted and officer accessions.

Active-Duty Personnel's Perspectives on Recruiting Policies and Practices

As stated earlier, although the Coast Guard cannot control environmental factors, such as labor market conditions, it can influence, through its marketing and recruiting strategies, public awareness and views about joining the Coast Guard. It was beyond the scope of this study to assess awareness of and propensity to join the Coast Guard among eligible individuals in the general public, but we did ask related questions in our focus groups with current active-duty Coast Guard personnel. We asked why they chose to join the Coast Guard, what other organizations they considered joining, and how they thought the Coast Guard could improve its recruiting strategies and practices to better recruit women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups.

In terms of reasons for joining the Coast Guard, participants often described being interested in military service in general, including the benefits (e.g., educational benefits, health care, steady pay, retirement savings). They found the Coast Guard more attractive than other services for a variety of reasons but cited the Coast Guard's mission in particular. As one racial or ethnic minority woman stated,

My dad is in the Air Force, and he said that, if he could do it all again, he would have joined the Coast Guard. I didn't want to be the one to drop bombs in war, so that turned me off from the other places.

Similarly, a white woman commented,

I picked the Coast Guard because the mission is different. We save people instead of killing people, and I also care about the environment.

Related to the mission, participants described the different types of job opportunities (e.g., law enforcement, environmental protection) associated with the mission as a key factor in their decisions. For example, one racial or ethnic minority woman stated,

I joined to be a marine science technician because I was doing a lot of pollution studies in college. So, in college, I thought I could actually do the Coast Guard studies instead of reading about them.

Similarly, a white woman commented,

I grew up in Florida, so I always knew about the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard was always on the news during rescues, so it seemed like a cool job . . . I wanted to do something to help people.

Despite these attractive aspects of a career in the Coast Guard, many focus group participants described not being as familiar with the Coast Guard prior to talking with recruiters or joining the service as they were with the other military services. In some cases, participants were not aware that the Coast Guard even existed until they stumbled across the website or were told about the Coast Guard as an option when looking into joining a different service. For example, one racial or ethnic minority man commented,

I was looking at the other four branches. I wanted to do combat engineering in the Army. A buddy asked if I had considered the Coast Guard. Other than knowing it existed, I'd heard nothing about it.

Similarly, another racial or ethnic minority man stated,

I was going to join the Marines. My dad was in the Navy. I was trying to be different. It was a toss-up between the Air Force and others . . . I never knew about the Coast Guard. I saw a big old banner on a helicopter hangar; I saw that and thought I'd try it.

Consistent with these personal experiences, one racial or ethnic minority woman described the lack of awareness she encountered when serving as a Coast Guard recruiter:

In general, people don't know that much about the Coast Guard. I went back to recruit at a high school in Oklahoma, and they thought that we were like the National Guard because we had "guard" in the name.

Some participants stated that they did not have access to recruiters close to home—an additional barrier to joining. In some cases, participants noted that they had to drive many hours to find a recruiter. For example, one racial or ethnic minority man commented,

When I see other armed forces recruiting us, their officers are out, but no Coast Guard anywhere to be seen. Folks never talked about it. There was a recruiting office close to my

house, but it closed halfway through my recruiting process . . . I had to drive an hour to go to a recruiting office and had to do that twice a month for the delayed-entry program. There are other people that drove four hours.

Similarly, another racial or ethnic minority man stated,

I had tried to join two different times. I had to drive 100 miles to join. If I wanted to join, I had to make it happen on my own.

When asked about potential improvements that the Coast Guard could make to help improve its recruiting strategies or practices to better recruit women and people from racial and ethnic minority groups, focus group participants mentioned addressing the lack of awareness through more outreach, advertising, and recruiting locations. In addition, they noted the importance of seeing Coast Guard personnel who looked like themselves in both advertising and among the recruiters. Two racial or ethnic minority woman commented as follows:

Recruiters should represent the people they are trying to recruit from. People are more comfortable if the recruiter looks like them.

Find some local person from the area, where it's a black neighborhood. There's instant comfort when you see something familiar going in; it's easier to start.

Having recruiters who were relatable was noted as important in building family support for joining the Coast Guard, particularly for candidates who might be first-generation Americans or whose families do not speak English as a first language. For example, one Hispanic woman commented,

My recruiter was a Hispanic guy. So even though the interview was in English, I could connect culturewise. You can relate. They talk in a way that you can understand and relate, so that would help.

We did not ask additional survey questions about outreach and recruiting given that the survey targeted active-duty personnel who had already chosen the Coast Guard. Furthermore, representatives from the Coast Guard Recruiting Command informed us that they already receive information on awareness and propensity of eligible people from other sources (e.g., Joint Advertising Market Research and Studies [JAMRS]). Coast Guard representatives noted that lack of awareness was one of the major issues they faced in recruiting, broadly, which was consistent with the findings from our focus groups. In addition, because the service is so small and resources so constrained, the number of locations where the Coast Guard can place recruiting offices is limited.

Conclusion and Recommendations to Improve Recruiting and Accessions of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

The results of the population benchmark analysis suggest that the Coast Guard faces varying challenges across demographic groups to improve their representation. The Coast Guard underperformed the benchmarks for all groups of enlisted women except non-Hispanic other women and underperformed for women across some racial and ethnic officer groups. This finding implies that the Coast Guard fails to attract its share of young women who are eligible and have a propensity to serve in the military in the U.S. population. We can draw a similar conclusion for Asian and Pacific Islander potential recruits. Also, the USCGA is not drawing its share of eligible propensed black men.

The research literature on military recruiting, active-duty personnel's perspectives in focus groups, and our population benchmark analysis show that eligibility requirements determine the number of eligible youths, while outreach shapes awareness, propensity to serve, and the degree to which the Coast Guard capitalizes on eligible people in different URM groups. We designed our outreach and recruiting recommendations to help address each of these aspects of the Coast Guard's recruiting challenges.

We recommend that the Coast Guard make adjustments in the following five areas of its outreach and recruiting policies and practices.

Recommendation 1. Review current eligibility requirements to identify potential barriers for possible URM recruits, and validate that the requirements are necessary for performance in the Coast Guard.

Recommendation 2. Conduct a targeted study on brand awareness of the Coast Guard among URM communities, and implement improvements.

Recommendation 3. Develop, implement, and evaluate a long-term strategic plan for outreach to, and recruiting from, untapped locations and URM groups.

Recommendation 4. Link all the information (e.g., active recruiters, advertising metrics) to evaluate return on investment (ROI) and inform strategic planning.

Recommendation 5. Collect and analyze resource allocations for marketing, outreach, and recruiting efforts, and evaluate the ROIs.

Given that racial and ethnic minority youths have a lower tendency to meet some eligibility requirements for accession, the Coast Guard should determine the justification for each requirement (review for reliability) and test its effectiveness in meeting that goal (validate). The purpose of this effort is to learn where eligibility requirements have important impacts on operational effectiveness versus where decisionmakers have room to waive or revise the requirements if doing so helps them meet other personnel goals. For example, the Coast Guard reviewed and revised the branding policy for new accessions in *Tattoo, Body Mark-*

ing, Body Piercing, and Mutilation Policy (COMDTINST 1000.1D) in 2020 (Nunan, 2020). In implementing recommendation 1, the Coast Guard should review the extent to which current eligibility requirements measure the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics that are associated with being a successful Coast Guard enlisted member or officer, as well as identify how eligibility requirements affect demographic groups differently.

The main recruiting requirements that reduce the supply of qualified URM youths are effective predictors of success, including education and test score requirements (for examples from other services, see Hardison, Sims, and Wong, 2010, or Orvis et al., 2018). Hence, lowering requirements might increase URM accessions but would also create future career disparities. When this is the case, the only option for expanding the eligible pool is to develop alternative screening methods and test their effectiveness. A good model for this approach is the Army's Assessment of Recruit Motivation and Strength program, an alternative to the historical recruit standards for weight and body fat. Because the Army implemented the alternative as a pilot test, research was able to reveal that the program increased male and female accessions without negatively affecting attrition (Loughran and Orvis, 2011).

The historical data show that the number of people in URM groups who enter the Coast Guard each year, particularly women, has been stable, regardless of the overall recruiting goal. We recommend that, to drive URM recruit numbers above this historical level, the Coast Guard adopt new marketing and recruiting practices and evaluate their implementation and effectiveness (recommendations 2 and 3). Through a series of studies of marketing messages and locations to target, the Coast Guard is already making efforts to better understand how to reach URM groups. The Coast Guard should conduct a targeted study on the brand awareness of the Coast Guard among URM communities and implement improvements as parts of a long-term strategic plan. This recommendation reinforces the importance of those efforts but also highlights the need for a long-term strategic plan. As part of the implementation of this plan, the Coast Guard should establish recruiting goals based on the population benchmarks developed for this study as shown in Table 2.2. The Coast Guard can use these benchmarks to judge the effectiveness of the strategic plan in stages. For example, the Coast Guard should initially begin focusing on achieving the eligible-propensed benchmarks and, if those are achieved, then beginning to focus on the eligible benchmarks (especially for women, who tend to have high eligibility rates but low propensity).

The establishment of recruiting goals based on eligible-population benchmarks is also consistent with recent NDAA Section 551(a)(2)(vii) requirements. When implementing a strategic plan, the Coast Guard could consider leveraging and expanding the College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI) to target URM officer accessions. The Coast Guard should also continue to explore strategies to increase racial and ethnic representation in CSPI. We recommend that, to support CSPI as a key URM recruitment tool, the Coast Guard adequately resource this initiative and ensure strategic and targeted engagement with minority-serving institutions coordinated through a dedicated officer corps of recruiters

TABLE 2.2
Recruiting Goals as Percentages of Recruit Class, Based on
Population Benchmarks

Race and Ethnicity	Gender	Enlisted		USCGA		OCS	
		E&P	Eligible	E&P	Eligible	E&P	Eligible
White	Male	45.3	32.6	54.0	38.2	54.7	37.6
	Female	14.6	37.0	14.1	35.9	16.0	39.7
Black	Male	6.7	3.7	2.2	1.2	2.0	1.2
	Female	4.8	3.9	1.5	1.8	2.0	1.6
Hispanic	Male	13.0	6.8	6.4	3.0	5.9	2.7
	Female	5.4	6.3	3.5	3.4	4.1	3.8
Asian	Male	4.8	3.3	11.0	7.5	8.2	5.6
	Female	2.4	3.7	3.5	5.7	2.9	4.6
Non-Hispanic other	Male	2.1	1.3	2.6	1.5	3.3	1.9
	Female	0.9	1.5	1.2	1.8	0.9	1.3

NOTE: Benchmarks are expressed as percentages and should be compared with corresponding percentages in the respective accession cohorts.

focused on this mission.³ The Coast Guard should ensure that training and development are essential components of the CSPI program. URM officers commissioning through CSPI should be deliberately developed to ensure that they can compete with officers from other commissioning sources and are retained in their Coast Guard careers. When implementing this recommendation, the Coast Guard should review and consider Zeita Merchant’s CSPI program research, which offers specific actions for institutionalizing CSPI recruiting efforts and a formal training curriculum to support CSPI scholarship recipients’ success and retention (Merchant, 2020).

As the Coast Guard implements our recommendations to improve URM accessions, it is essential that it collect and analyze resource allocations for marketing, outreach, and recruiting efforts and evaluate the ROIs as described in Schulker et al., 2020. With the rigorous assessment of ROIs, the Coast Guard can fine-tune its outreach and recruiting policies and practices. Given that the Coast Guard is so much smaller than other services, it has fewer locations and resources for outreach and recruiting. However, focus groups and interviews with Coast Guard representatives highlighted that a lack of awareness of the Coast Guard and its mission creates barriers to attracting broadly across the eligible U.S. population. The

³ *Minority-serving institution* is a designation of an institution of higher education typically made based on the institution’s history (e.g., founded to educate a particular URM group) or its percentage of enrolled students who belong to URM groups. The designation makes the institution eligible for certain categories of federal funding.

most-effective recruiting practices and resourcing strategies will not be discoverable without better information on historical resourcing and practices. To fill this gap, the Coast Guard should track resources used for each recruiting area, including active recruiters, their individual goals, key activities (e.g., events), and advertising intensity metrics. The data-enabled outreach and recruiting system could then link this information with accession results to inform strategic planning for future investments.

Improving Career Development of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

In Chapter Two, we established how eligibility requirements, the propensity to serve in the military, and public outreach could contribute to underrepresentation of women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups in the Coast Guard overall. Career development is the next stage in the military career life cycle that affects the representation of URM groups. In this chapter, we examine demographic differences in career development based on several key advancement-related metrics. We also asked focus group and survey participants several questions, including some about the factors they considered and why they ultimately chose their career paths, whether they felt their race/ethnicity or gender affected their career development opportunities, and whether they believed that career opportunities were distributed fairly.

Quantitative Trends in the Career Development of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

Our discussions with Coast Guard subject-matter experts and review of Coast Guard personnel policies and practices revealed that operational experience, leadership, and key positions were generally agreed-upon signals of high development. To assess demographic differences in general development, we created a set of indicators to capture different dimensions of operational and leadership experiences based on the person's rating, specialty, and assignment histories. These indicators do not perfectly overlap with the direct inputs into the advancement and promotion processes (these inputs are all covered in Chapter Four). Instead, these indicators serve as a dashboard of the most-salient precursors to serving at increasing levels of leadership.

First, we worked with Coast Guard subject-matter experts to use information on enlisted ratings and officer specialties to identify personnel in operational positions.¹ Similarly, we

¹ For enlisted members, some examples of large administrative and scientific ratings are storekeeper (SK), yeoman (YN), marine science technician (MST), and culinary specialist. Some examples of operational ratings, based on our scheme developed in concert with Coast Guard subject-matter experts, include boat-

worked to identify a set of command positions, which included commanding officer, officer in charge, special assignment in support of a flag officer, senior executive fellow, and executive officer (XO). We also reviewed positions and jobs that past cohorts of senior leaders (O-6 and above) held in lower pay grades. We categorized these positions and jobs as developmental positions (many of these naturally overlap with the command and operational positions, but they served as a useful check to our manual classification routine). Our assessment also included overall representation and trends in representation over time.²

As summarized in Figure 3.1, we found significant group differences in career development, but we did not find a consistent direction among the trends. The figure shows over- or underrepresentation for URM personnel for each career development metric in 2019. The column titled “Representation” in Figure 3.1 shows the direction and magnitude of the representation of URM groups compared to men and white personnel. We color-coded the cells to indicate the levels of over- and underrepresentation. Light green indicates overrepresentation of less than or equal to 5 percent, and dark green indicates overrepresentation by greater than 5 percent. Similarly, yellow indicates underrepresentation by less than or equal to 5 percent, and red indicates underrepresentation by more than 5 percent. We picked 5 percent as the cutoff after reviewing the distribution of differences.

We found that, among enlisted personnel, URM groups were overrepresented in the administrative and scientific rating group and underrepresented in operational, sea time, and command positions in 2019. Similarly, for officers, URM groups were underrepresented in operational and command positions and fellowships but overrepresented in special assignments (those that support flag officers) in 2019. Racial and ethnic minority groups were underrepresented in developmental positions, while women were overrepresented in these positions in 2019. Next, we looked for consistent trends in representation across time (2014 to 2019), and the up and down arrows in Figure 3.1 show whether representation consistently increased or decreased during this period. We found some consistent trends, but often they lacked a consistent direction. For example, underrepresentation of women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups in command positions either had no trend for enlisted or opposite trends for officers. Similarly, for officers, not all overrepresentations were increasing or decreasing over time.

swain’s mate (BM) and operations specialist (OS). For officers, we used a position-by-position classification developed with Coast Guard subject-matter experts. Most of the operational positions were in the afloat, aviation, prevention, and response sectors.

² We developed a regression model for each career outcome to examine the trend from 2014 to 2019. The regression models also included indicators for pay grades and URM groups.

FIGURE 3.1
Representation of Underrepresented-Minority Groups Across Key Career Development Metrics for Enlisted Personnel and Officers Between 2014 and 2019



Active-Duty Personnel’s Perspectives on Career Development

To provide additional insight into potential differences in career development opportunities for URM personnel, we asked current active-duty personnel who participated in our focus groups and survey about their experiences related to career choices, career development opportunities (e.g., training, command opportunities), mentorship, and assignments.

Career Choices

In focus groups, we asked participants what factors they considered when choosing their enlisted ratings or officer specialties. Not surprisingly, personal interest (e.g., wanting to be on a boat or an interest in marine science) was often cited as a dominant factor, including whether the rating or specialty could provide skills that would easily transfer outside of the Coast Guard. Other aspects of ratings and specialties cited in career decisionmaking included compatibility with a partner's career, the needs of one's children, and the desire for work-life balance (e.g., underway requirements, length of duty hours, overnight watch requirements). Compatibility with personal and family needs was more often discussed in our all-women focus groups, but all-men focus groups also raised the point, particularly related to the overall quality of life associated with particular ratings and specialties. In addition, participants mentioned being influenced by their initial tours—specifically, experiences with leadership, peers, and job demands.

Using the themes identified from the focus groups, as well as prior relevant surveys on this topic (see Appendix G), we created a list of potential reasons for choosing a rating or specialty and asked each respondent to indicate their main reasons for choosing their rating or primary specialty (respondents could check all that apply).³ Tables 3.1 and 3.2 show, by gender and race/ethnicity, the reasons that survey respondents cited for choosing their ratings or primary specialties. “Personal interest” was the most common reason indicated for selecting ratings and specialties, which is consistent with our focus group findings. Other common reasons were transferability of skills to the private sector and the extent to which a job was challenging, adventurous, or ashore. In the tables, we also bolded cells in which there was a 10-percent or more difference between men and women or between racial and ethnic groups on reasons that influenced their choices of rating or specialty. As the tables show, the most-often endorsed factors are fairly consistent across URM groups. However, we noticed gender variation between enlisted women and men in terms of the influence of fit with academic degree (20 percent of women and 10 percent of men) and between female and male officers in terms of desire for adventure (41 percent of men and 31 percent of women) and compatibility with a spouse's or partner's career (19 percent of women and 9 percent of men). Additionally, lower percentages of enlisted black personnel than of enlisted white personnel indicated that desire for a challenge (34 percent of black enlisted and 46 percent of white enlisted personnel) or adventure (16 percent of black enlisted and 34 percent of white enlisted personnel) was a factor in their career choice decisions.

As shown in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, considerations related to one's race, ethnicity, or gender in final rating and specialty decisions were not common, and survey findings show that personnel prioritized consideration of other factors when making decisions about their career choices. However, as part of our focus groups, we specifically asked participants whether race, ethnicity, or gender influenced career choices in any way. Some participants indicated

³ Any respondent who had not yet chosen a rating or primary specialty was asked to indicate factors they “were considering.”

TABLE 3.1
Percentages of Personnel Identifying Various Reasons for Choosing a Rating or Specialty, by Gender and Corps

Reason for Choosing Rating or Specialty	Enlisted		Officer	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Personal interest	63	62	67	65
Desire for a challenge	45	39	60	51
Transferability of skills to private sector	44	38	40	37
Desire for adventure	32	27	41	31
Desire to be ashore	26	29	29	38
Potential assignment locations	27	20	26	23
Ability to travel	24	23	26	25
Level of work–life balance	21	28	29	34
Previous experience with similar work	19	17	25	20
Influence from a mentor	18	16	22	20
Desire to be underway	17	14	17	13
Positive experience on initial tour	17	13	22	16
Available slots for A-school	14	14	N/A	N/A
Faster pace of advancement/promotion	13	15	6	6
Fit with academic degree	10	20	27	31
Ability to meet requirements	10	11	4	5
Bonus offered	10	9	3	1
Influence from a family member	9	8	7	6
Influence from a friend	8	6	6	6
Negative experience on initial tour	6	7	8	10
Desire for lower operational tempo	4	7	4	6
Compatibility with spouse’s/partner’s career	4	12	9	19
Compatibility with child(ren)’s needs	3	11	8	10
Influence from a recruiter	4	4	1	N/A
Desire to be with other personnel of my gender	1	2	N/A	3
Desire to be with other personnel of my race/ethnicity	1	1	1	N/A
Other	11	10	13	13

NOTE: A-school = advancement school, entry-level training for a rating. N/A = not applicable because there were fewer than 15 respondents. Respondents could check all factors that applied. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. Bold indicates a difference of at least 10 percent.

TABLE 3.2

Percentages of Personnel Identifying Various Reasons for Choosing a Rating or Specialty, by Race/Ethnicity and Corps

Reason for Choosing Rating or Specialty	Enlisted				Officer			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic Other	White	Black	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic Other
Personal interest	64	57	61	61	68	60	67	65
Desire for a challenge	46	34	42	41	60	54	59	52
Transferability of skills to private sector	42	46	45	43	38	40	42	46
Desire for adventure	34	16	29	27	40	34	41	31
Desire to be ashore	27	26	29	25	29	37	35	34
Ability to travel	26	19	20	22	26	23	28	25
Potential assignment locations	26	21	27	24	25	19	27	27
Level of work–life balance	21	28	27	25	30	33	29	34
Desire to be underway	19	11	13	16	17	11	13	15
Previous experience with similar work	19	19	17	21	24	20	26	23
Influence from a mentor	18	14	17	18	21	27	21	21
Positive experience on initial tour	17	13	16	18	21	14	22	15
Faster pace of advancement/promotion	13	15	12	14	6	14	7	5
Available slots for A-school	13	17	15	15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fit with academic degree	10	18	13	14	28	28	24	27
Bonus offered	9	11	10	12	3	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 3.2—Continued

Reason for Choosing Rating or Specialty	Enlisted				Officer			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic Other	White	Black	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic Other
Ability to meet requirements	9	10	11	12	4	N/A	7	5
Influence from a family member	8	8	9	13	7	N/A	6	7
Influence from a friend	7	5	8	11	6	7	4	6
Negative experience on initial tour	6	4	6	6	8	9	6	11
Desire for lower operational tempo	5	6	5	5	5	5	3	6
Compatibility with spouse's/partner's career	5	5	6	6	11	12	10	14
Compatibility with child(ren)'s needs	4	5	6	5	9	11	8	7
Influence from a recruiter	4	6	4	6	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Desire to be with other members of my gender	1	N/A	N/A	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Desire to be with other members of my race/ethnicity	N/A	4	1	N/A	N/A	8	N/A	N/A
Other	10	9	13	11	13	8	14	13

NOTE: N/A = not applicable because there were fewer than 15 respondents. Respondents could check all factors that applied. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. Bold indicates a difference of at least 10 percent.

that demographics did not play a role in their choices. Others reported feeling that it was important to be able to see people who looked like themselves to serve as role models and expressed a desire to be with people similar to themselves. We offer these focus group findings as additional context for how race, ethnicity, or gender could play a role for some URM personnel. For example, one racial or ethnic minority man put it this way:

When you are not represented and then you see representation, you are geared to them “Why are all the blacks there, and what are they doing?” . . . I think you kind of gravitate to what you see.

Similarly, another racial or ethnic minority man stated,

I was being steered toward SK, and someone told me that makes sense because I’m Puerto Rican. My first unit, the SKs were all Puerto Ricans.

Some participants also described feeling isolated because of their demographics or being treated negatively on their initial tours. Those experiences, they said, caused them to find ratings or specialties in which they could find people similar to them and feel more comfortable (i.e., felt that they had a better fit with the rating or specialty culture). For instance, one racial or ethnic minority woman relayed how her experience on a cutter deterred her from wanting to go afloat:

I was in Pascagoula, Mississippi, to be near my boyfriend. People asked me, “Did you want that and be on a boat? You know we can change that.” I would answer, “Yeah.” I got there and was instantly the odd man out. With my command, one outing was a rodeo. They were in Confederate T-shirts, and I was there with an afro. It was a very uncomfortable experience I don’t have anyone to talk to, relate to. This isn’t what I want [to] do.

Another racial or ethnic minority woman described learning about the negative experiences of other women in the BM rating, which discouraged her from pursuing that rate:

So, as a nonrate on a cutter, I had a few women BMs, and they shared all of the crap that they went through. BM is a male-dominated rate, and females are not treated the same.⁴

Career Development Opportunities

When asked to discuss ways in which the Coast Guard supported their career development, focus group participants relayed that access to and knowledge of opportunities could vary depending on certain factors. For example, participants discussed how a member’s leadership plays a big role in career development and could either support or impede access to career

⁴ *Rate* is synonymous with *rating*. A nonrate is an E-2 or E-3 who has not yet attended an A-school for a rate. For more information, see, e.g., Zilnicki, 2018.

development opportunities. One white woman described the support she received from her unit leadership to work on qualifications:

It is very dependent on a unit . . . For MSTs, there are a lot of qualifications that you have to get. My command supported me for the most part. I always felt like I had a backup, so I could work on my qualifications. They helped me, whether it was switching shops or learning a new skill. There was always somebody who was willing to help.

Unlike the previous commenter, a different white woman relayed a negative experience with leadership support related to career development:

I went to a smaller unit out of A-school, and they would tell me to go away when I was trying to get signed off on my qualifications. It was a combination of being too busy and piss-poor leadership.

Participants also commented that the onus was on personnel to advocate for themselves to access career development opportunities and that leaders often did not direct personnel to relevant opportunities.⁵ One racial or ethnic minority enlisted man put it this way:

I don't think [that the Coast Guard] does [support career development]. From what I've gathered, unless you find someone that cares, you are on your own . . . That's no fault of the Coast Guard—you can find all the information in the portal. But there is no supervisor trying to help you. They might help you sign something, but no one is showing you a good opportunity.

In terms of perceiving having an equal opportunity for career development, participant responses were mixed. Although some participants reported perceiving equal opportunity for career development, others said that they felt that race/ethnicity or gender had affected their access to these opportunities, even if in a subtle way. One racial or ethnic minority man described his perspective as follows:

Knowing you can apply for certain things is good, but, if that information is not shared, that's detrimental. I personally can't think of a way an opportunity was denied . . . I have suspicions but cannot pinpoint. But the fact that I have a lingering doubt says something about racism and discrimination. You think, "Am I crazy?"

⁵ For career counseling, officers can access Officer Career Management Branch, OPM, Office of the Assistant Commandant for Human Resources (OPM-4).

Other participants said that they felt more convinced that race/ethnicity had affected their career development opportunities. For instance, one racial or ethnic minority man commented,

Not always but sometimes [race or ethnicity affects access to career development opportunities]. When I applied for OCS, my accent was a big factor.

Some female participants, including the white woman commenting below, discussed limitations for sea time based on berthing restrictions and how that can hinder career development, an issue raised in previous research (Hall et al., 2019):⁶

As an MK [machinery technician], you need to have sea time. There are so few billets for females underway in general, let alone for the specific rates. I've known that women haven't been able to advance for things. The way that they converted the 210s made it really difficult for women to get billets on them.⁷

Participants also described a lack of transparency and fairness in how career development opportunities were awarded. Some personnel said that they felt that there was a “good ol’ boys” system or “in crowd” that gave some personnel—typically white men—preferential treatment for opportunities. For example, a racial or ethnic minority man noted,

If you are not in the in crowd, you don't get the same consideration [for career development opportunities]. You walk in and the in crowd is a bunch of white people . . . Unless someone tells you otherwise, you can feel like someone on the outside looking in.

A racial or ethnic minority woman stated,

Not everything is visible. It's how much time you want to put on an individual to help them shine. It's a good ol' boys' system . . . “I'm going to give this person a heads up, and this [other] one can figure it out.”

⁶ Although some female focus group participants raised the issue of berthing limitations restricting sea-time opportunities for women, Coast Guard leadership cited a commitment to increasing afloat opportunities for women and improvements that have been made to address this issue. However, many opportunities for women tend to be on larger cutters that deploy more often and for longer amounts of time than other deployments.

⁷ *The 210s* refers to 210-foot medium-endurance cutters, which the Coast Guard is replacing and have been undergoing renovations until replacements are delivered.

Another racial or ethnic minority man noted the mystery surrounding the selection process, including a lack of feedback:

Some of that stuff is not as transparent as you'd like. Some of the . . . process is very secretive. It creates an air of mystery or suspicion that they're picking people in their favor. If you're not selected, you're never told why you don't get it.

In addition, some participants described an inaccurate perception that certain roles outside their normal job duties (such as affinity-group roles or Leadership Diversity Advisory Council chair, which typically is given to a URM Coast Guard member) were redacted from evaluations so personnel would not receive credit for these roles as part of their career development, although this is not current Coast Guard policy. For example, a racial or ethnic minority woman commented,

I'm part of Women's Leadership Initiative group. Anything that had WLI on the OER [officer evaluation report] would be redacted and you aren't getting recognized. Any affinity group would be redacted . . . [We are] not getting credit.

Not only is this assertion that these types of positions were being removed from evaluations as a matter of policy incorrect, but also Coast Guard leadership noted that personnel are, in fact, encouraged to include these types of activities in evaluation reports, with a specific performance dimension intended to capture this type of activity. This misalignment of perception and Coast Guard policy suggests the need for better clarity and communication around such policies.

To further explore the extent to which these perceptions and attitudes were shared more broadly across the Coast Guard, the survey included three items to assess whether survey respondents felt they had a thorough understanding of how three key kinds of developmental opportunities were distributed in the Coast Guard:

- training opportunities and opportunities for school
- command opportunities
- special assignments.

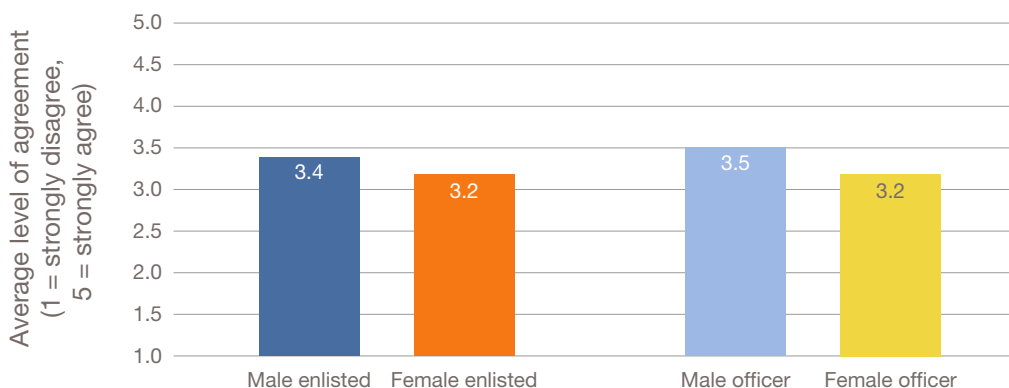
Respondents also received three corresponding survey items assessing the extent to which they perceived that each of these developmental opportunities was distributed fairly, regardless of race/ethnicity or gender. To assess perceptions of knowledge and fairness of how developmental opportunities were distributed overall, we created separate composite scores⁸ to represent each set of items—one representing general knowledge of how developmental

⁸ See Appendix G for more information on the development of the composite scores.

opportunities were distributed⁹ and one representing beliefs that developmental opportunities were distributed fairly, regardless of race/ethnicity or gender.¹⁰

Figures 3.2 and 3.3 show the average level of agreement regarding the extent to which survey respondents reported feeling that they had a thorough understanding of how developmental opportunities were distributed in the Coast Guard (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Overall, in no group did respondents indicate having a high level of understanding of how developmental opportunities were distributed, showing mean scores of 3.5 or less on

FIGURE 3.2
Self-Reported Knowledge About Developmental Opportunities, by Gender and Corps



NOTE: Analyses used 12,889 observations. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements, “I have a thorough understanding about how Coast Guard **developmental opportunities** are distributed. These include, for example, training opportunities and opportunities for school”; “I have a thorough understanding about how Coast Guard **command opportunities** are distributed”; and “I have a thorough understanding about how Coast Guard **special assignments** are distributed.” Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. We found significant differences between men and women ($p < .001$) and between enlisted personnel and officers ($p < .05$). We did not find a significant interaction between gender and corps, indicating that differences between men and women were similar for both enlisted personnel and officers.

⁹ Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) with the following three items:

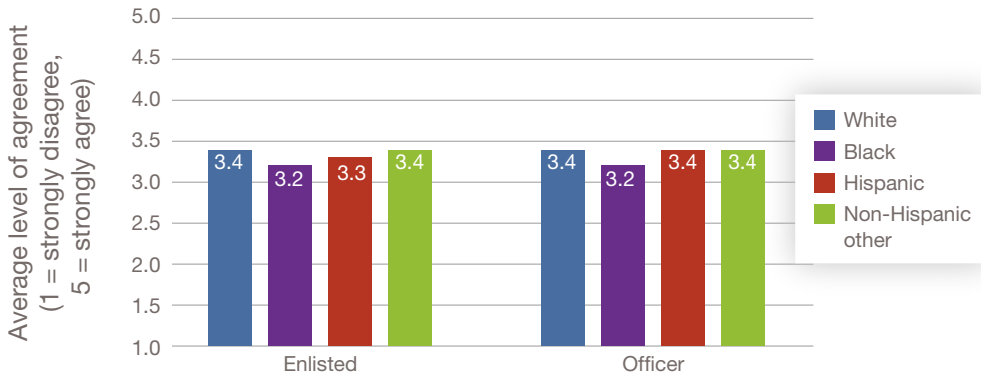
- I have a thorough understanding about how Coast Guard developmental opportunities are distributed. These include, for example, training opportunities and opportunities for school.
- I have a thorough understanding about how Coast Guard command opportunities are distributed.
- I have a thorough understanding about how Coast Guard special assignments are distributed.

¹⁰ Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) with the following three items:

- Within the Coast Guard, developmental opportunities are distributed fairly, regardless of race/ethnicity or gender. These include, for example, training opportunities and opportunities for school.
- Within the Coast Guard, command opportunities are distributed fairly, regardless of race/ethnicity or gender.
- Within the Coast Guard, special assignments are distributed fairly, regardless of race/ethnicity or gender.

FIGURE 3.3

Self-Reported Knowledge About Developmental Opportunities, by Race/Ethnicity and Corps



NOTE: Analyses for enlisted personnel used 8,561 observations, and those for officers used 3,731 observations. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements, “I have a thorough understanding about how Coast Guard **developmental opportunities** are distributed. These include, for example, training opportunities and opportunities for school”; “I have a thorough understanding about how Coast Guard **command opportunities** are distributed”; and “I have a thorough understanding about how Coast Guard **special assignments** are distributed.” Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. Among enlisted personnel, we found significant differences ($p < .05$) between white and Hispanic personnel, white and black personnel, and non-Hispanic other and black personnel. Among officers, we found a significant difference ($p < .05$) between white and black personnel. These significant differences remained when we controlled for gender.

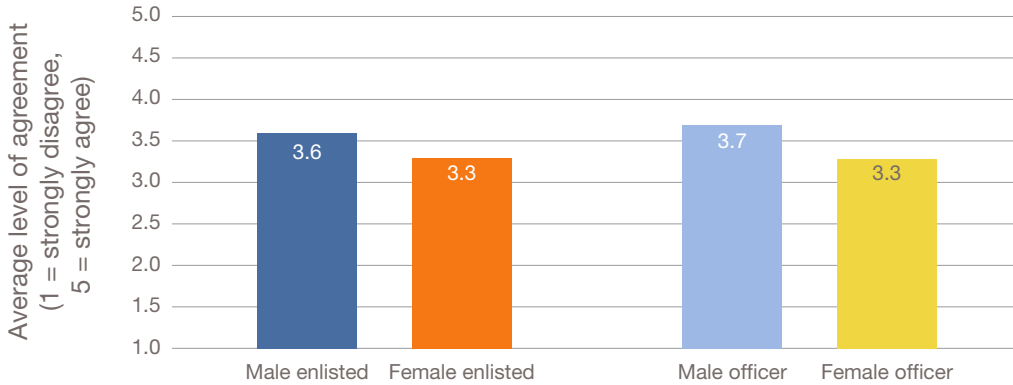
a five-point scale. In addition, men reported having a greater understanding of how developmental opportunities were distributed than women reported having, and white personnel reported having a greater understanding than black and Hispanic enlisted personnel and black officers reported, although the differences were small. Below each figure, we note any differences that were statistically significant and use the same format for similar figures throughout the remainder of this report.

Figures 3.4 and 3.5 show the average level of agreement about the fairness of how developmental opportunities were distributed (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Men reported higher levels of agreement than women did that developmental opportunities were distributed fairly. Similarly, white personnel reported higher levels of agreement than racial and ethnic minority personnel did that developmental opportunities were distributed fairly. Black personnel indicated the lowest levels of agreement that developmental opportunities were distributed fairly.

Mentorship

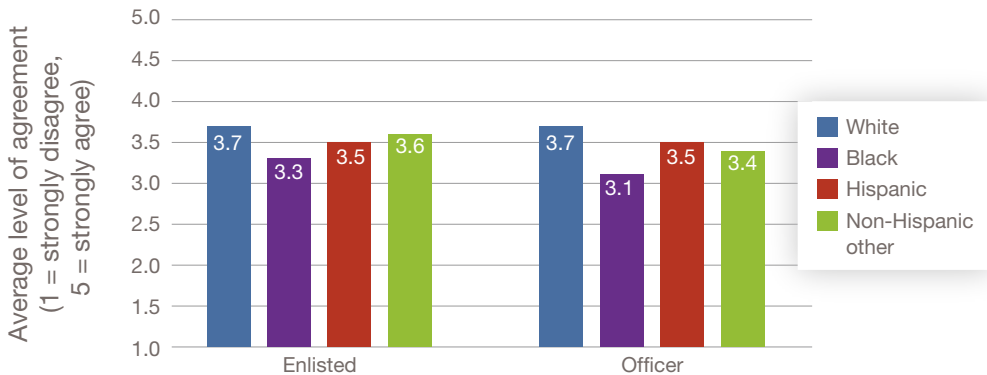
We also asked focus group and survey participants about their experiences with mentorship. The majority of survey respondents indicated having had at least one formal or informal mentor who advised them during their military careers (74 percent of enlisted personnel and

FIGURE 3.4
Perceived Fairness in Distribution of Developmental Opportunities, by Gender and Corps



NOTE: Analyses used 12,890 observations. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements, “Within the Coast Guard, **developmental opportunities** are distributed fairly, regardless of race/ethnicity or gender. These include, for example, training opportunities and opportunities for school”; “Within the Coast Guard, **command opportunities** are distributed fairly, regardless of race/ethnicity or gender”; and “Within the Coast Guard, **special assignments** are distributed fairly, regardless of race/ethnicity or gender.” Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. We found significant differences ($p < .001$) between men and women. We did not find a significant difference between enlisted personnel and officers nor a significant interaction between gender and corps, indicating that differences between men and women were similar for both enlisted personnel and officers.

FIGURE 3.5
Perceived Fairness in Distribution of Developmental Opportunities, by Racial/Ethnic Minority Status and Corps



NOTE: Analyses for enlisted personnel used 8,562 observations, and those for officers used 3,731 observations. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements, “Within the Coast Guard, **developmental opportunities** are distributed fairly, regardless of race/ethnicity or gender. These include, for example, training opportunities and opportunities for school”; “Within the Coast Guard, **command opportunities** are distributed fairly, regardless of race/ethnicity or gender”; and “Within the Coast Guard, **special assignments** are distributed fairly, regardless of race/ethnicity or gender.” Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. Among both enlisted personnel and officers, we found significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except non-Hispanic other and Hispanic personnel. These significant differences remained when we controlled for gender.

86 percent of officers).¹¹ However, focus group participants stated that mentorship was inconsistent over their careers, both in terms of quality and whether they had mentors at different points in their careers. In addition, most participants described experiences with informal mentors rather than with formal mentorship programs. Many participants stated a preference for informal mentorships and that there could be a lack of personal connection with formal mentors. For example, a white woman said,

I've never been part of [an] official Coast Guard mentorship program. As a third class, I was told I would be given a mentor, but that's not how I think it should work. I got given a mentor who I was not comfortable with and I didn't trust, and now I wouldn't do something like that.

In our focus groups, participants said that they found informal mentorship relationships that tended to develop organically through discussions about career goals to be the most useful, although some participants did note experiences with formal mentorship programs that had been beneficial. For instance, some described experiences with formal mentors through internal affinity groups, such as the WLI, AMOT, EPIC, or SOAR, which is focused on CSPI.¹²

Survey respondents who had had informal mentorship experiences indicated that those experiences had helped advance their military careers more than those respondents who had experiences in formal mentorship programs. This pattern was consistent with our focus group findings and across gender and race/ethnicity groups.¹³

¹¹ For enlisted members,

- 75 percent of men and 72 percent of women indicated having had mentors
- 76 percent of white respondents, 71 percent of black respondents, 70 percent of Hispanic respondents, and 75 percent of non-Hispanic other respondents indicated having had mentors.

For officers,

- 87 percent of women and 86 percent of men indicated having had mentors
- 86 percent of white respondents, 90 percent of black, 86 percent of Hispanic, and 85 percent of non-Hispanic other personnel indicated having had mentors.

¹² Survey results showed that 91 percent of officers who had participated in CSPI and 85 percent of officers who had not done so reported having mentors. Of racial and ethnic minority officers specifically, 87 percent who had participated in CSPI reported having mentors, compared with 81 percent of those who had not participated in CSPI.

In a review of the CSPI program, Merchant underscored the importance of mentoring for CSPI participants and recommended maintaining the CSPI mentoring program, which had declined in recent years, resulting in fewer CSPI students with connections to mentors (Merchant, 2020).

¹³ The survey item asked, "To what extent, if any, have the mentorship experiences below [experiences in a formal mentorship program, informal mentorship experiences] helped you to advance your military career?" (1 = did not help at all, 5 = helped to a very large extent). Experiences in a formal mentorship program received a mean rating of 3.3 for enlisted personnel and 3.2 for officers, compared with mean ratings of 3.7 for enlisted personnel and 3.9 for officers who had informal mentorship experiences.

We also asked survey respondents who indicated not having had mentors why they thought that was the case and presented a list of possible reasons (respondents could check all that applied). As Tables 3.3 and 3.4 show, the most common factor reported across all demographic groups was that “no one offered to mentor me.” However, 26 percent of female enlisted and 49 percent of female officers indicated that they “could not find a mentor I felt comfortable with,” and 23 percent of racial and ethnic minority enlisted personnel and 37 percent of racial and ethnic minority officers provided this response. In addition, 14 percent of female enlisted personnel and 23 percent of female officers who reported not having mentors indicated “there was no one of my same gender available to serve as a mentor” as a factor. Similarly, 13 percent of enlisted racial and ethnic minority personnel and 14 percent of racial and ethnic minority officers indicated “there was no one of my same race/ethnicity available to serve as a mentor” as a reason. In particular, this reason was cited by 34 percent of black survey respondents who indicated not having had mentors.

Some focus group participants discussed a desire for mentors who looked like them because they were more relatable and could sometimes better understand the unique challenges of belonging to a URM group in the Coast Guard, a desire that is consistent with our

TABLE 3.3
Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Factors in Not Having a Mentor, by Gender and Corps

Factor	Enlisted		Officer	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
No one offered to mentor me.	76	82	71	69
I could not find a mentor that I felt comfortable with.	17	26	29	49
I did not have time to participate in mentoring.	14	14	12	15
There was no one of my same gender available to serve as a mentor.	N/A	14	N/A	23
I did not have a desire to participate in mentoring.	18	11	24	16
I did not see any benefit to my career in having a mentor.	10	7	14	N/A
There was no one of my same race/ethnicity available to serve as a mentor.	5	6	3	N/A
I already had a mentor who was not in the Coast Guard.	5	3	4	N/A
My peers discouraged me from having a mentor.	2	2	N/A	N/A
Other	14	9	23	20

NOTE: N/A = fewer than 15 respondents. Respondents were asked, “What factors have contributed to you not receiving mentorship during your Coast Guard career?” Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population.

TABLE 3.4
Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Factors in Not Having a Mentor, by Racial/Ethnic Minority Status and Corps

Factor	Enlisted		Officer	
	Racial or Ethnic Minority	White	Racial or Ethnic Minority	White
No one offered to mentor me.	76	77	68	72
I could not find a mentor that I felt comfortable with.	23	16	37	31
I did not have time to participate in mentoring.	15	13	15	12
I did not have a desire to participate in mentoring.	15	17	20	24
There was no one of my same race/ethnicity available to serve as a mentor.	13	N/A	14	N/A
I did not see any benefit to my career in having a mentor.	9	9	7	13
I already had a mentor who was not in the Coast Guard.	4	4	N/A	5
There was no one of my same gender available to serve as a mentor.	3	3	N/A	5
My peers discouraged me from having a mentor.	2	2	N/A	N/A
Other	12	13	15	25

NOTE: N/A = fewer than 15 respondents. Respondents were asked, “What factors have contributed to you not receiving mentorship during your Coast Guard career?” Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. Because the sample of respondents to the question was so small, we collapsed these findings into racial/ethnic minority and white categories.

survey findings. Also, some participants noted that they perceived URM personnel as more willing to take the time to mentor them. One racial or ethnic minority man stated,

For me, [mentors have] been a career saver . . . I came in off the streets, knew nothing about anything. Eventually I got into a network that allowed me to do things that I wouldn’t have otherwise. Being a black kid, I was told I had to work harder than others. Mentors reinforced that and told me what I should do to outclass others, because we’re viewed differently. For me, it has helped tremendously, even if just to vent.

Another racial or ethnic minority man commented,

The ones that give back are usually women or black people. It’s weird. I think it’s a relating issue. There is a lot of relatability missing that gets you into certain pockets. When I go to a new unit I look around and see who I can relate to.

Participants noted that, because of their small numbers, finding mentors who are part of URM groups can be challenging. One racial or ethnic minority man stated,

You don't see a lot of mentees that are black or Hispanic because they don't have anyone that looks like them to be mentors.

One white woman described the lack of having a female mentor this way:

It would be nice to have a mentor that was similar to me. You can have a male mentor, but they don't understand some of the challenges that you face as a female.

Some participants relayed that they even felt a duty to help others coming into the Coast Guard who look like them. For example, a racial or ethnic minority man commented,

Leaders who are minorities—it is up to us to educate junior members on lessons learned. Like seeking advice, getting good mentors, and make the first step of reaching out to junior members to let them know.

Other participants expressed that having a mentor with similar demographics was not necessary. For instance, one participant stated,

The mentor doesn't have to be the same demographic, it's just good to have one.

Some, such as the racial or ethnic minority man commenting below, even sought out white male mentors to benefit from their perspectives as majority personnel in the Coast Guard:

I had to seek out a mentor that looked like me, and I specifically sought out one that did not. I want the dual perspective and diversity of thought. To find someone that is 100 percent down for you and looking out for you unselfishly that isn't a minority is hard, but I tried to do that, and it was very important to me, and I found someone.

Participants made the distinction between mentorship and sponsorship, explained by one participant this way:

Mentors show you the way, but sponsors get you in the right door at the right time.

Some participants noted that, despite having had some success in securing mentorship, sponsorship for URM personnel was still lacking. For example, one racial or ethnic minority man commented,

Definitely have a mentor, but the key is to have sponsors. I sit on quite a few boards, and I know who people are looking out for because they advocate for you. When you make sure you get everything someone needs—career counseling, verbiage [for] the board—I don't see it as much for nonwhites. I want to encourage you to keep working to get to the higher

level. If I walked into the board of ExxonMobil and it all looks the same, people would say that “something is wrong with this company.” So, it’s the same with this organization. How do we get different thoughts and mentalities in? Mentorship is important, but [so is] having the current folks in the right positions—from detailers to the board—to make sure we are representing each other.

Some URM participants noted feeling as though they had had fewer advocates during their Coast Guard careers than their white counterparts had.

Assignments

During our focus group discussions, we asked participants about their experiences with the Coast Guard assignment process. Across focus groups, participants expressed a desire for more transparency in the assignment process and in how assignment decisions were made.¹⁴ Because personnel perceived a lack of transparency in the process, some participants reported feeling that detailers gave priority to their friends for desired assignment locations over others. For example, one racial or ethnic minority man commented,

I know it’s the good ol’ boys’ system. If I say, “Hey man, can you help my boy out?” the assignment officer will put him wherever he wants to go. It’s who you know.

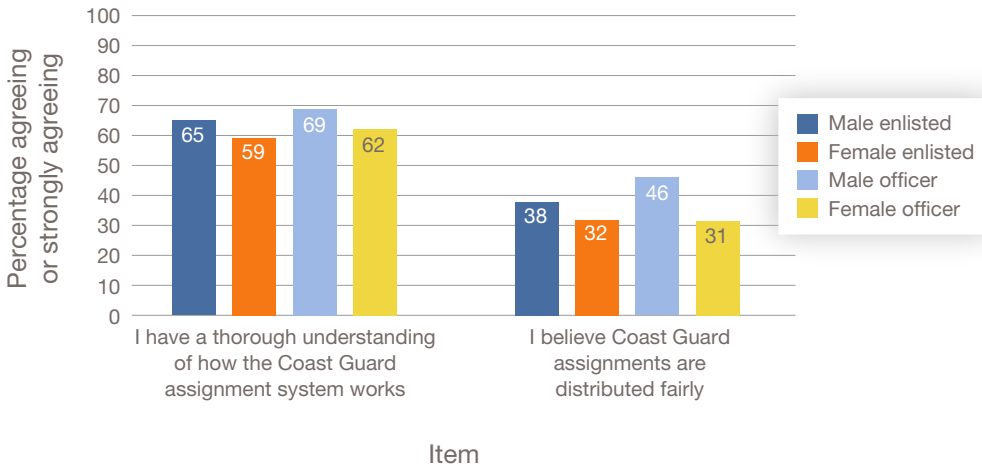
Another racial or ethnic minority man stated,

To me, it’s not transparent, and I hear supervisors tell people that they will advocate for them and help them out.

To assess how prevalent these perceptions were across the active-duty population, we included several survey items asking about the assignment process. Figures 3.6, 3.7, and 3.8 show the percentage of survey respondents, by gender, race/ethnicity, and corps, who agreed or strongly agreed that they had a “thorough understanding of how the Coast Guard assignments system works” and “believe Coast Guard assignments are distributed fairly.” Women were significantly less likely than men to agree that they had a thorough understanding of the assignment system and that assignments were distributed fairly; differences in perceptions of fairness were particularly pronounced for officers. We also found significant racial and ethnic differences for some groups. Black enlisted personnel in particular were less likely than their white counterparts to indicate that they had a thorough understanding of the assignment system and that assignments were distributed fairly. There were no significant differences between officer racial and ethnic groups’ understanding of the assignment system. However, non-Hispanic other officers were less likely than white officers to indicate that assignments

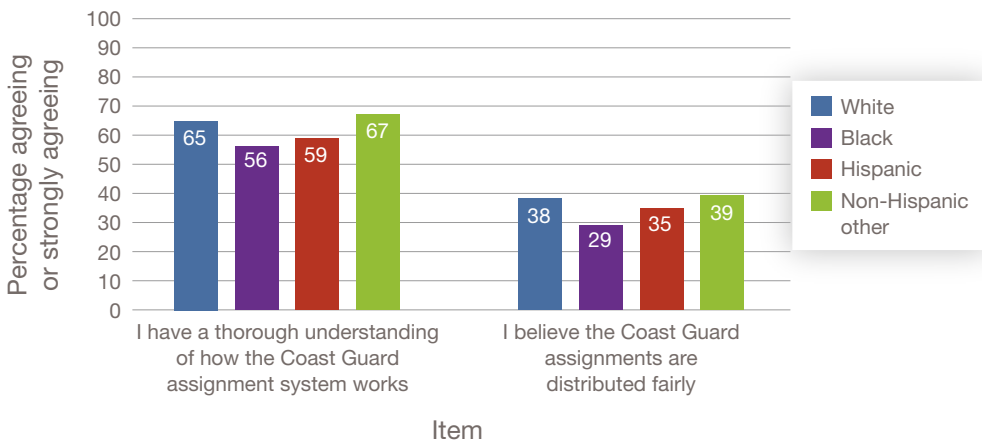
¹⁴ This finding is consistent with our findings from previous research on women in the Coast Guard (Hall et al., 2019).

FIGURE 3.6
Percentages of Respondents Reporting Various Perceptions of the Assignment Process, by Gender and Corps



NOTE: Analyses used 12,694 and 12,692 observations, respectively. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. There were statistically significant differences between male and female respondents in both perceptions of understanding how the Coast Guard assignment system worked ($p < .001$) and perceptions that Coast Guard assignments were distributed fairly ($p < .001$). There was also a statistically significant interaction between gender and corps for perceptions that Coast Guard assignments were distributed fairly ($p < .05$), showing larger gender differences for officers than for enlisted personnel.

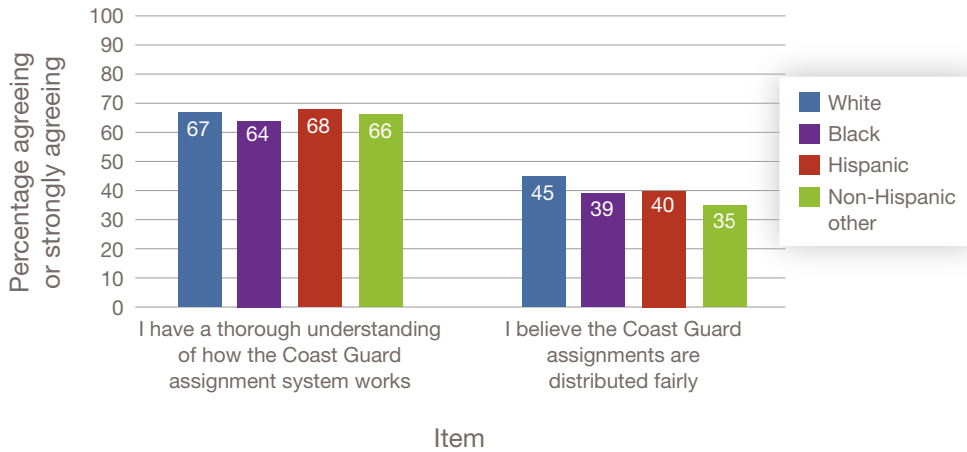
FIGURE 3.7
Percentages of Enlisted Respondents Reporting Various Perceptions of the Assignment Process, by Race and Ethnicity



NOTE: Analyses used 8,399 and 8,397 observations, respectively. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. In terms of understanding of the Coast Guard system, we found significant differences ($p < .05$) for all groups except (1) black and Hispanic personnel and (2) white and non-Hispanic other. For perceived fairness of distribution, we found fewer significant differences. Specifically, the only groups that were significantly different ($p < .05$) in their perceptions were (1) non-Hispanic other personnel and black personnel and (2) black and white personnel. The significant differences remained when we controlled for gender.

FIGURE 3.8

Percentages of Officer Respondents Reporting Various Perceptions of the Assignment Process, by Race and Ethnicity



NOTE: Analyses used 3,709 observations for both items. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. We found no significant differences across groups in perceived understanding. We found one significant difference ($p < .05$) between white and non-Hispanic other personnel in perceived fairness in the distribution of assignments. This significant difference remained when we controlled for gender.

were distributed fairly. Notably, far fewer than half the survey respondents overall indicated that assignments were distributed fairly.

In focus groups, racial and ethnic minority personnel also raised issues with certain assignment locations, stating that racial and ethnic minority personnel at some sites often experienced racism in the local community. As one racial or ethnic minority man explained,

I have a friend going to Oregon right now. He's the only person of color there. There are certain things you can't say or do. So, if California or Oregon is the choice, I'm going to California because I can relate to people there and it has the diversity.

Participants expressed particular concern about exposing their spouses and children to racism in these local communities. One racial or ethnic minority man noted,

I know my wife had to deal with some racism in North Carolina, working in a dental office. Some lady was like, "I don't want to get my teeth done by some wetback." My wife came home crying.

Another racial or ethnic minority man commented,

If you have kids, it changes things . . . When I went to Virginia and my kids experienced [racism], that's a thing. When the high school coach is racist . . . We always got to go to a progressive area because I'm not going to subject my kids to that.

Many racial and ethnic minority participants noted that these problematic assignment locations where racism can be prevalent in the local community are typically known by racial and ethnic minority personnel. For instance, one participant stated,

If you're a minority, you know about Yankeetown.

Similarly, another racial or ethnic minority man noted,

There was one time where I was voluntold to go to Sault Sainte Marie, and it's known you don't send minorities there. I was like, "I'm pretty sure I am not supposed to go there."

Another racial or ethnic minority man described his perspective on this issue:

There are areas on the map that people like me are not allowed to go because of the racial environment. There are places I can't go because of how the community will respond and how my family will be treated. But we will recruit from there. So, you don't want to send us there, but you will bring people in from there.

It is important to note that current Coast Guard policy does not restrict racial and ethnic minority personnel from being assigned to specific geographic areas, but the focus group findings revealed misconceptions about these policies. More details about the Coast Guard's policy on social climate incidents are included later in this section.

Some participants relayed experiences discussing these concerns about racism in particular communities with detailers, but other participants described not feeling comfortable raising these concerns as part of the assignment process. One racial or ethnic minority man commented,

It's easy to say, "Put comments for detailers," but it's easy to say this here in this room. When we go back to our units, we don't feel we can open up about things, about problems, because then people might think we're playing the race card.

Racial and ethnic minority participants reported that, when these concerns were raised during the assignment process, they had had mixed experiences working with detailers about these concerns and the degree to which detailers considered racial climate concerns when making assignment decisions. For example, one racial or ethnic minority man stated,

There are certain locations that, if you put a guy like me in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, or Sault Sainte Marie . . . you would not have a good experience. Some detailers will take these things into consideration. Others will not, and there is no standardization.

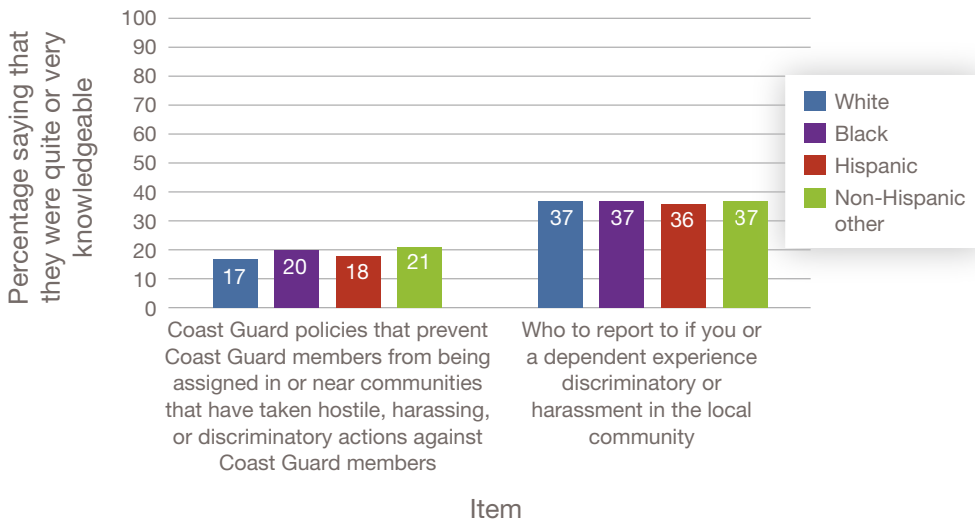
Another racial or ethnic minority man reported perceiving some detailers as not understanding concerns about racism in local communities:

One thing you also have to remember: A lot of detailers are white. They don't experience this. There are people who don't believe there's white privilege, so, if they don't believe that, they don't believe racism affects where you live.

There also seemed to be confusion among participants about how and whether policy governed assignments to locations with reported concerns about racism in the local community.

To further explore this issue, we included several items about the Coast Guard's social climate incident policy in our survey.¹⁵ Figures 3.9 and 3.10 show that most participants reported not feeling knowledgeable about policies and reporting practices regarding assignments to potentially hostile local communities, regardless of corps or racial/ethnic status.

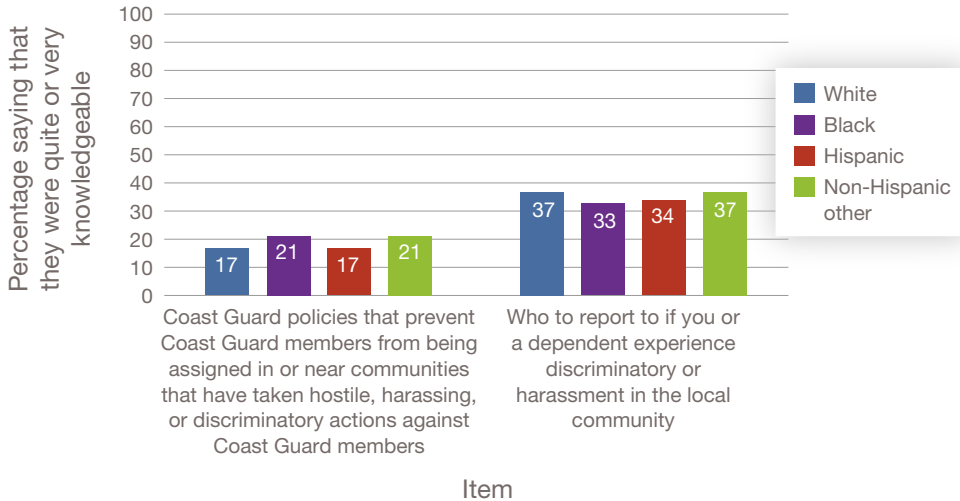
FIGURE 3.9
Percentages of Enlisted Respondents Reporting Knowledge of Coast Guard Assignment Policies, by Race and Ethnicity



NOTE: Analyses used 8,363 observations for both items. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. In terms of Coast Guard policies, we found significant differences ($p < .05$) across all groups except (1) black and non-Hispanic other personnel and (2) white and Hispanic personnel. These differences remained when we controlled for gender. For knowledge of whom to report to, we found no significant differences.

¹⁵ *The U.S. Coast Guard Civil Rights Manual*, COMDTINST M5350.4E, defines *social climate incident* as “an action committed by a member or members of a community against Coast Guard military personnel, or their family members that is perceived as hostile, harassing, or discriminatory in nature” (p. 7-1). COMDTINST M5350.4E outlines members’ roles and responsibilities in responding to social climate incidents, including incident reporting channels.

FIGURE 3.10
Percentages of Officer Respondents Reporting Knowledge of Coast Guard Assignment Policies, by Race and Ethnicity



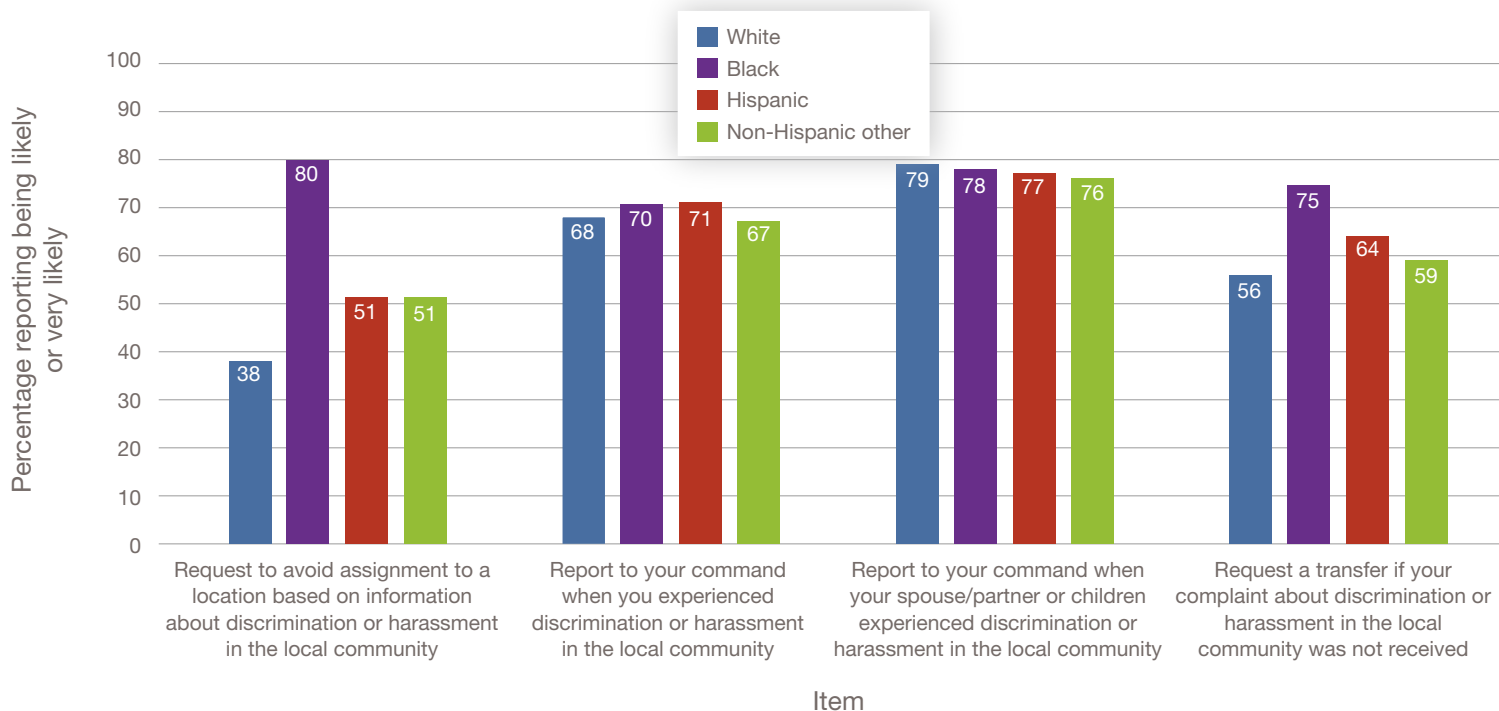
NOTE: Analyses used 3,701 and 3,702 observations, respectively. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. We found no significant differences among groups for officers in knowledge of relevant policies or whom to report to.

Figures 3.11 and 3.12 show survey respondents’ indicated likelihood that they would take various actions related to experiences of hostile local communities. As the figures show, compared with other racial and ethnic minority personnel, black personnel in particular reported being likelier to request a different assignment (enlisted and officers) or request a transfer (enlisted participants), but black officers indicated being less likely to report an incident against a spouse or partner or their children to their command.

Female focus group participants also raised additional issues about the assignment process concerning challenges with colocation, berthing limitations for women,¹⁶ and difficulties related to assignments in remote locations, particularly when very few other women were present. This is consistent with findings from previous HSOAC research examining retention of women in the Coast Guard (Hall et al., 2019). Therefore, we do not detail those findings in this report and refer interested readers to the previous report (Hall et al., 2019). However, as part of our survey for this study, we did ask respondents who were married to other active-duty Coast Guard members whether they felt that they had “thorough understanding of how the assignment process for collocations [sic] works” and the extent to which they believed that the “Coast Guard makes a reasonable effort to co-locate [sic] members in dual Coast Guard marriages” (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Overall, 66 percent of enlisted

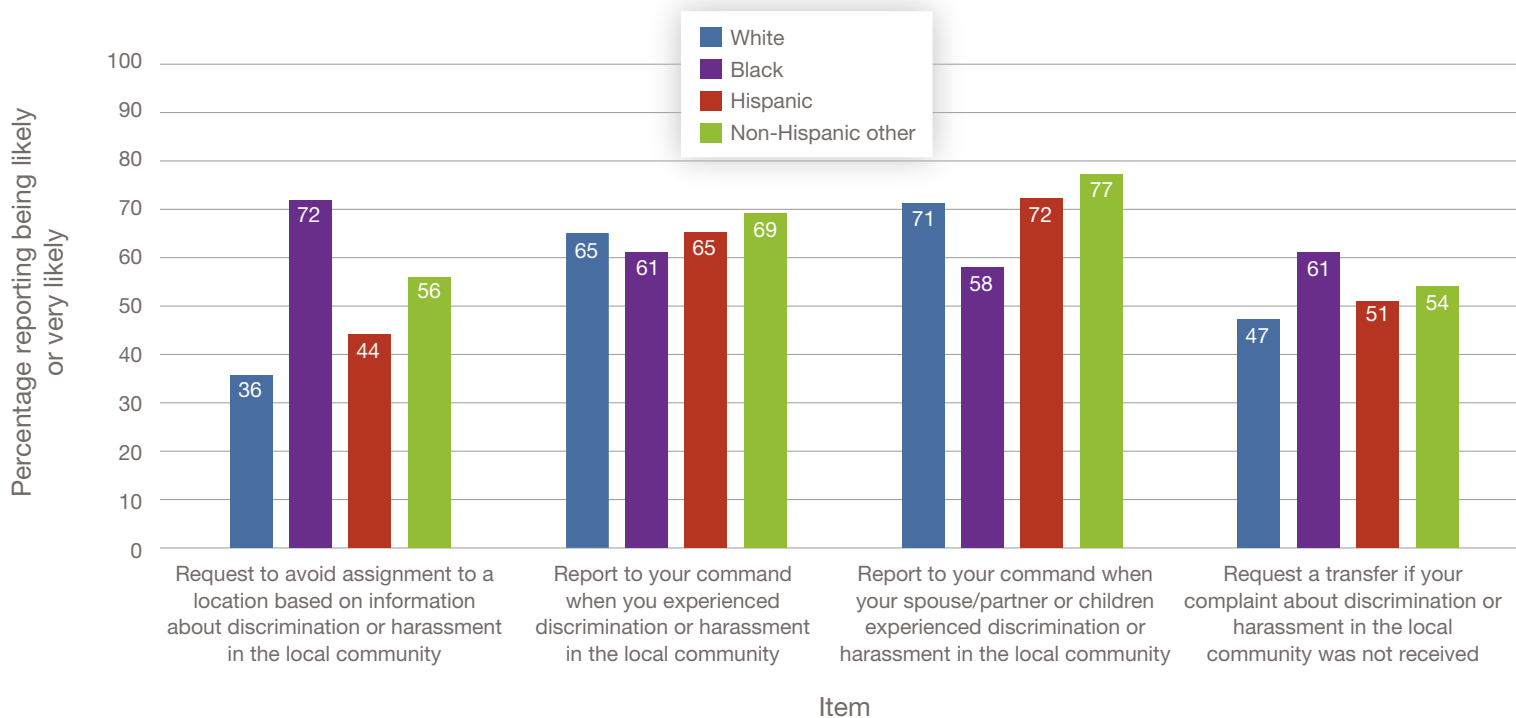
¹⁶ Enlisted Personnel Management reports more than 100 open spaces for women on ships currently. However, Hall et al. reported that, for enlisted members, sea time on cutters other than the high-endurance vessels (378s and National Security Cutters) was particularly limited for women.

FIGURE 3.11
Percentages of Enlisted Personnel Reporting Likelihood of Responses to Hostile Experiences, by Race and Ethnicity



NOTE: From left to right, analyses used the following numbers of observations: 8,309; 8,308; 6,549; and 8,308. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. In terms of requests to avoid certain assignments, we found significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except Hispanic personnel and non-Hispanic other personnel. For reporting to command on one's own experiences, we found significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except (1) black and Hispanic personnel, (2) Hispanic personnel and non-Hispanic other personnel, and (3) white and non-Hispanic other personnel. We found no significant differences between groups in reporting to command about the experiences of one's dependents. For requests to transfer if a complaint were not resolved, we found significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except non-Hispanic other and Hispanic personnel. Across all analyses, significant differences remained when we controlled for gender.

FIGURE 3.12
Percentages of Officer Personnel Reporting Likelihood of Responses to Hostile Experiences, by Race and Ethnicity



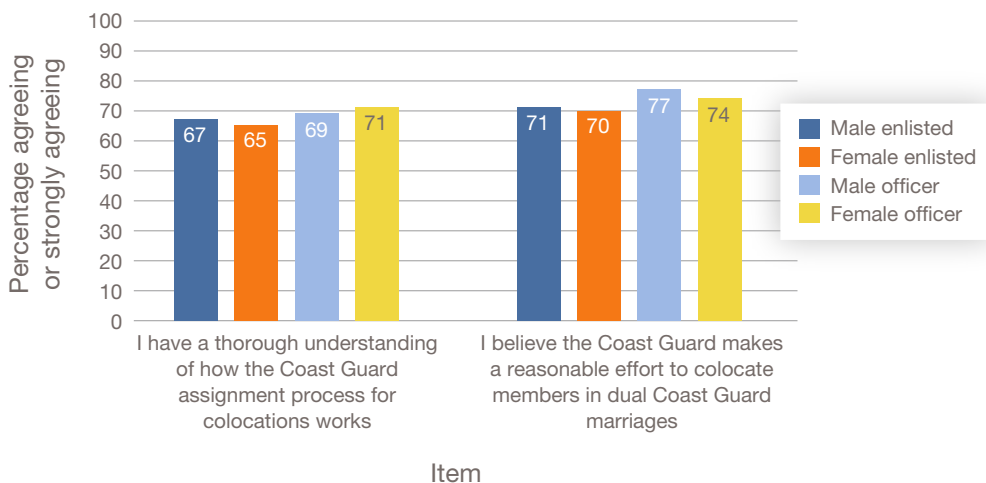
NOTE: From left to right, analyses used the following numbers of observations: 3,692; 3,691; 3,011; and 3,690. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. In terms of requests to avoid certain assignments, we found significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups. For reporting to command on one's own experiences, we found no significant differences. In terms of reporting to command about the experiences of one's dependents, we found significant differences ($p < .05$) between (1) non-Hispanic other and black personnel, (2) Hispanic and white personnel, and (3) black and white personnel. For requests to transfer if a complaint were not resolved, we found significant differences ($p < .05$) between (1) black and white personnel, (2) non-Hispanic other and white personnel, and (3) white and Hispanic personnel. Across all analyses, significant differences remained when we controlled for gender.

respondents and 70 percent of officers said that they understood the colocation process, and 70 percent of enlisted respondents and 76 percent of officers indicated believing that the Coast Guard made reasonable efforts to colocate personnel in dual marriages. Figure 3.13 shows the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with both of these items. There were no significant differences between men and women in either understanding the colocation process or beliefs that the Coast Guard made reasonable efforts to colocate personnel in dual marriages.

Conclusion and Recommendations to Improve the Career Development of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

As the Coast Guard increases URM accessions, it needs to develop URM personnel to ensure that they are competitive for career advancement and promotion. In our quantitative analyses of Coast Guard personnel data, we found inconsistent patterns and trends in the career development of URM personnel. Even though some of these career development indicators have no direct effect on career advancement or promotion, they do indicate senior leaders' assessments of individuals' performance, which directly affect advancement and promotion. Focus group and survey findings show that URM personnel reported perceiving less fairness in distribution of advancement opportunities, such as educational, command, and special assignments. Additionally, it appeared that most personnel (and particularly officers) had had at least one formal or informal mentor who advised them during their military careers.

FIGURE 3.13
Percentages of Personnel Reporting Various Perceptions of the Colocation Process, by Gender and Corps



NOTE: Analyses used 1,368 and 1,369 observations, respectively. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. There were no significant differences by gender or corps.

However, URM personnel were likelier than their white male counterparts to report being unable to find mentors with whom they felt comfortable—someone who looked like them and could understand their unique challenges—or even to find mentors at all. Finally, focus group and survey responses highlighted concerns about the assignment process, particularly for women and black enlisted personnel. Racial and ethnic minority personnel also raised concerns about assignments to hostile local communities, and survey results showed that most respondents were not familiar with social climate incident policies designed to address these concerns.

We designed five sets of development-related recommendations to help the Coast Guard address each of these aspects.

Recommendations to Deliberately Develop Underrepresented-Minority Personnel Throughout Their Careers

The first set of career development recommendations aims to develop URM personnel deliberately throughout their careers. (Recommendation numbers continue from the previous chapter.)

Recommendation 6. Designate specialty-community leaders to develop, maintain, and apply career guidelines, career paths, and professional standards.

Recommendation 7. Provide specialty career paths to promotion boards, and instruct them to consider specialty differences.

Recommendation 8. Identify and remove barriers for operational and command positions for URM enlisted personnel and officers.

Recommendation 9. Task rating force master chiefs (RFMCs) and specialty-community leaders with improving diversity in talent pipelines.

A unique challenge in addressing development disparities is that Coast Guard officer management practices have historically remained very flexible in order to meet the service's broad range of requirements with a lean officer corps. For instance, the Coast Guard does not classify officers into distinct occupational specialties or group them into functional areas for promotion consideration. Although the flexible structure of force management brings agility to meet the operational needs of the Coast Guard, it diffuses accountability and can fuel perceptions that career development decisions are opaque and subjective. In other words, it leaves the Coast Guard without a policy structure to mitigate instances of underdevelopment among URM personnel. Bringing additional definition to officer career paths and development milestones (without sacrificing flexibility) would help senior leaders monitor and steer career development in general, thus enabling the Coast Guard to address development gaps for URM officers.

Over the past several years, the Coast Guard has built a well-defined system for tracking specialized occupational skills among officers, culminating in 2019 with the release of the

updated Officer Specialty Management System, known as OSMS 2.0. We recommend that the Coast Guard use this structure as a tool for officer development by grouping similar specialties to establish career field communities¹⁷ with explicit career guidelines and professional standards. Then, the Coast Guard could use this structure to designate specialty-community leaders to establish and maintain these standards and manage personnel career development. For example, the U.S. Air Force designates career field managers (O-6s) and career field authorities (flag officers) to oversee its career fields. These senior leaders are responsible for managing the career field communities to meet the Air Force's mission. But this structure allows the human-resource (HR) system to understand and address the part of demographic disparity that is attributable to specialization versus the parts that are attributable to a lack of development within a specialty. A version of this structure that meets Coast Guard needs would position it to deliberately develop URM officers and then to instruct selection boards to evaluate people based on career-specific milestones and accomplishments.

As we have documented, URM groups are underrepresented in operational and command positions. To make sustained progress in improving the demographic diversity of the workforce and the senior leadership, the Coast Guard needs to identify any barriers for URM personnel to attain operational and command positions. The root cause of these disparities likely goes back to early-career decisions and specialization patterns, so the Coast Guard should task RFMCs and specialty-community leaders to remove barriers and improve the diversity of the talent pipelines. These community leaders would then have the means to ensure that all personnel make informed career choices in light of the milestones while monitoring the diversity of their career fields and creating an inclusive environment for the people in their communities.

Recommendations for Improving Perceptions of How Developmental Opportunities Are Distributed

The second set of career development recommendations aims to improve perceptions of how developmental opportunities are distributed.

Recommendation 10. Ensure that all personnel are provided the same information on developmental opportunities and that transparent selection processes are used.

Recommendation 11. Ensure that career development programs and resources enhance personnel's knowledge of career decisions to inform their choices from accession to retirement.

Focus group and survey findings highlight the perceived lack of transparency and fairness in how key developmental opportunities are distributed. To ensure that all personnel feel that they have the knowledge and equal opportunity for important developmental opportunities, the Coast Guard should ensure that all developmental opportunities are clearly com-

¹⁷ These communities would exist for developmental purposes only so that they would not limit the Coast Guard's ability to assign officers with multiple specialties where they are needed.

municated and use a standardized selection process. In implementing this recommendation, the Coast Guard should review how these opportunities are communicated to personnel to ensure that all personnel are provided the same information. The Coast Guard should also review the current selection process to ensure that selection is standardized and transparent to personnel. This should include ensuring that there is clear feedback provided to both selected and nonselected personnel about why the decision was made, how they can be more competitive for future developmental opportunities, and what they can do to further develop their careers.

Recommendations for Resourcing and Expanding Mentoring Efforts Targeting Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

The third set of recommendations suggests ways to resource and expand existing mentoring efforts that target URM personnel.

Recommendation 12. Because URM-focused mentoring activities are often grassroots efforts, provide resources to internal affinity groups to facilitate more mentoring-type programming for URM personnel to build connections.

Recommendation 13. Ensure that the new Coast Guard mentoring program is reaching URM personnel by actively engaging affinity groups and monitoring the program's impact on URM personnel's mentorship experiences.

Mentorship can help guide Coast Guard personnel in developing their careers in a deliberate way that prepares them for advancement and promotion. In addition, NDAA 2021 Section 571 requires the Coast Guard to establish a “mentorship and career counseling program for officers to improve diversity in the military leadership.” However, focus groups and survey findings showed that URM personnel said that they struggled to find mentors with whom they felt comfortable, expressed a desire for more mentors who looked like them, and reported less satisfaction with their mentorship experiences than their white male counterparts reported. To address this gap and help URM personnel be more competitive for advancement and promotion, the Coast Guard should cultivate mentorship connections for URM personnel. The Coast Guard has recently taken steps in this direction with a new multifaceted mentoring initiative that was scheduled to launch in May 2021, which includes a one-on-one mentoring program, peer-run mentoring groups through a “Communities Marketplace,” flash mentoring, and a new program that focuses on “empowering emerging leaders to share their insights and point of view in a group setting with senior leadership.”¹⁸

To further bolster mentoring opportunities for URM personnel, the Coast Guard should ensure that it is leveraging existing URM networks and engaging affinity groups as part of its mentoring initiatives. For example, focus group participants described positive experiences with mentorship through internal affinity groups, such as AMOT, the WLI, EPIC, and

¹⁸ See Coast Guard Mentoring Program, undated, for more information on the Coast Guard's mentoring initiatives.

SOAR.¹⁹ Currently, such mentoring efforts are often grassroots in nature and rely on group members to donate their time to sustain these efforts. The Coast Guard should also provide resources to internal affinity groups to facilitate more mentoring-type programming for URM personnel to build connections and institutionalize these efforts to ensure consistent engagement over time. Additionally, the Coast Guard should expand mentorship at early career stages and enable efforts to continue mentorship throughout people's careers.

Recommendations for Addressing Fairness and Transparency in the Assignment Process

The fourth set of career development recommendations would have the Coast Guard transform the assignment process to address fairness and transparency concerns.

Recommendation 14. Consider adding elements from a market-based assignment system (e.g., the Army Talent Alignment Process) to improve the match of officers to positions while increasing transparency.

Recommendation 15. Capture all information to improve future assignments and provide feedback to all parties.

We recommend that the Coast Guard consider adjusting assignment processes based on market-based models currently being explored by services in DoD. The DoD services are exploring ways to modernize the systems and processes that manage assignments in response to retention challenges because they recognize the significant effect that assignments have on individual job satisfaction. Assignment officers have limited capacity and find it challenging to factor in the needs and preferences of many people while also filling all required positions. Further, legacy assignment systems tend to be centrally managed with limited transparency on why particular people are tasked to fill new positions, and this structure could add to perceptions that personnel needs and preferences are not being adequately taken into account.

As a model for implementation, the Army and the Air Force have turned to market-based assignment systems to improve the match of officers to positions while increasing the transparency of the process. For example, the U.S. Army has implemented the Army Talent Alignment Process to offer “a decentralized, regulated, market-style hiring system which aligns officers with jobs based on preferences” (Army Talent Management Task Force, 2019).

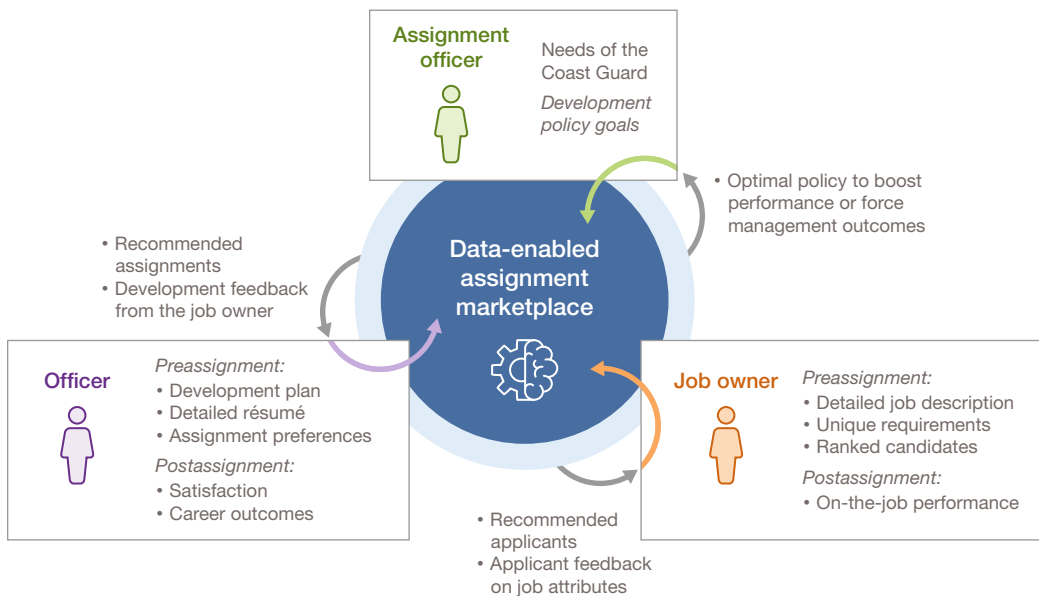
In brief, these market-based systems advertise open positions to individual officers who are due to move, who can then submit résumés that highlight key skills and experiences that are relevant to the positions. The systems encourage officers to contact the units that have open positions and coordinate directly so that officers can learn about the unique aspects of each assignment and position owners can collect information about which candidate would be the best fit. At the end, individual officers submit preferences for assignments, position

¹⁹ Although it was outside the scope of this study to explore the details of specific mentorship efforts, Merchant emphasized the importance of mentoring for CSPI participants and recommended supporting and maintaining the CSPI mentoring program, a focus of SOAR (Merchant, 2020).

owners submit preferences for officers, and the marketplace finds a solution that produces the best match of officers to positions. Initial assessments from the Army claim a high match rate of officers to preferred assignments, but, even without this feature, officers could be more satisfied with assignments because of the increased visibility into the unique aspects of each available position and how their preferences factored into the ultimate result.

In addition to the benefits of increased transparency, a marketplace approach to assignments can generate a wealth of new information on which the data-enabled talent-management system can capitalize (Figure 3.14). This element of the marketplace system is not a by-product of the current assignment system and has the potential to improve Coast Guard assignment processes. The current assignment process is primarily a conversation between two parties: the service member in need of an assignment and the service member’s detailer. The Coast Guard is small enough to enable assignment officers to achieve a high-quality match by holding in-depth discussions with eligible personnel, but this does not allow HR policymakers to easily learn from historical job postings and applicants, including records of special skills of the officer or requirements of the job, officer- and job owner–ranked preferences, or satisfaction with the final result. A Coast Guard version of the marketplace model could capture this information, which would create the possibility for feedback loops and automatic recommendations for the different stakeholders. Thus, a data-enabled approach to assignments would help the Coast Guard learn, over time, the long-term impact of the market-based assignment system, including what types of assignments work well for officers given their background, which would permit improvements that foster higher satisfaction and improved retention.

FIGURE 3.14
A Notional Data-Enabled Marketplace Approach to Coast Guard Assignments



Recommendations for Ensuring That the Social Climate Incident Policy Adequately Addresses Concerns About Racism

Our final set of career development recommendations focuses on ensuring that the social climate incident policy adequately addresses concerns about racism in some locations.

Recommendation 16. Review policies for consistency and consider their impact on URM personnel; revise as necessary.

Recommendation 17. Educate all personnel on policies, clarify those policies' roles in the assignment process, and ensure that all stakeholders are informed (e.g., personnel, commands, detailers).

Recommendation 18. Track and report incident trends to senior leaders, and communicate incident trends to personnel to promote transparency and address location perceptions.

First, we recommend that the Coast Guard review relevant policies, including the social climate incident policy contained in the civil rights manual (COMDTINST M5350.4E) and social climate assignment considerations contained in *Military Assignments and Authorized Absences* (COMDTINST M1000.8A). This review should ensure consistency across policies and their implementation and consider whether they adequately address URM personnel's concerns about racism in local communities. If necessary, the service should revise policies to ensure that the structures and procedures are in place to uniformly address these concerns. Focus group and survey findings revealed a significant lack of knowledge about social climate incident policies. Thus, we recommend that the Coast Guard ensure that all personnel are educated on these policies, including their roles in the assignment process and the procedures for addressing incidents of racism that personnel experience in local communities. Focus group participants cited mixed experiences when raising social climate concerns in the assignment process and a lack of a standardized approach to these issues among detailers. Thus, this educational effort should include not just URM personnel but all personnel, commands, and detailers. Additionally, focus group participants shared that URM personnel were well aware of specific locations to be avoided because of likelier experiences of racism in the community. However, it was unclear whether these perceptions were based on word of mouth or data on reported incidents. We recommend that, to validate or invalidate perceptions of problematic locations for assignments, the Coast Guard communicate social climate incident trends to all personnel. This would increase transparency and help URM personnel make informed decisions about assignments based on incident data. Additionally, we recommend that, to ensure that attention is paid to social climate incident trends at the highest

levels and consistently problematic locations are identified, these trends be regularly reported to senior leaders for monitoring.²⁰

²⁰ Enlisted Personnel Management now includes social climate incident reporting and social climate considerations in its assignment presentations.

Improving the Advancement and Promotion of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

In Chapter Three, we examined differences in career development that can affect advancement or promotion of URM personnel. In this chapter, we examine advancement and promotion patterns for URM personnel versus their white male counterparts. Because there are different processes for enlisted personnel and officers, we examined enlisted advancement and officer promotion separately, then used responses from the focus groups and survey to give the perspectives of Coast Guard personnel on whether race/ethnicity or gender contributed to gaps in career progressions between URM personnel and their white male counterparts.

Quantitative Trends for Advancement and Promotion of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

Monitoring and understanding career progression patterns in the Coast Guard are essential to improving representation of URM groups at all levels. As discussed in Chapter One, persistent differences in career progression will tend to diminish the size of the pool of URM personnel available to serve in leadership positions. Also, as we show in Chapter Five, differences in advancement and promotion patterns likely mean that URM retention is lower than it otherwise would be, which also tends to hinder URM representation at all levels of the Coast Guard.

The goals of the quantitative analysis of advancement and promotion were to determine the extent of career progression gaps between URM Coast Guard personnel and their white male counterparts and to further understand the factors that contribute to the observed gaps. The latter goal is particularly crucial to determining an effective policy response because racial/ethnic and gender differences in prerequisites and development can produce differences in advancement or promotion even if selection processes themselves are designed to be objective, fair, and unbiased (MLDC, 2011).

Enlisted Advancements

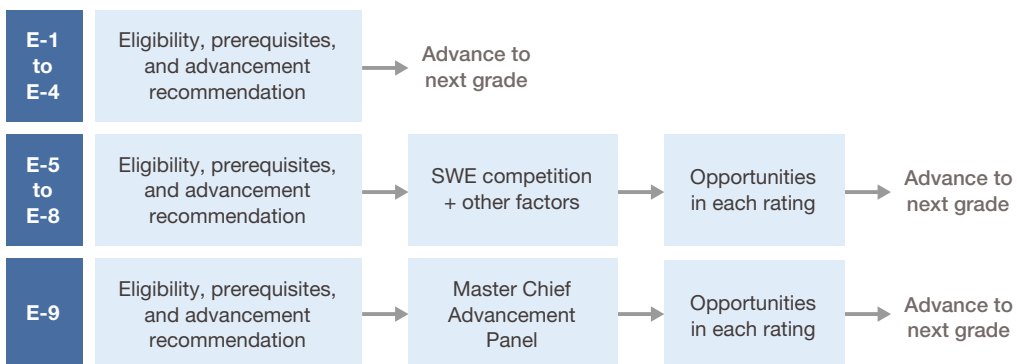
The overarching goal of the enlisted advancement process is to fill vacancies at all levels with the most-qualified and -proficient personnel. The selection processes vary depending on the grade level (Figure 4.1). From E-1 through E-4, someone with the required prerequisites can advance based on a recommendation from his or her commanding officer. From E-5 through E-8, the number of advancement opportunities depends on the number of vacancies at the next grade level in each rating. In these grades, personnel meeting all eligibility criteria compete with others in their ratings through a merit-based point system that factors in exam performance, evaluation records, time in service, time in grade, medals and awards, and sea and surf time (COMDTINST M1000.2C). Historically, E-9 advancement processes were similar to those of E-5 through E-8, but the Coast Guard shifted to a board process, known as the Master Chief Advancement Panel, starting in 2020.

Early-Career Advancement Gaps Are Most Pronounced for Black Personnel

Advancement from E-1 to E-4 is not as structured as advancement between other tiers of enlisted grades. It does not follow a centralized process that records a snapshot of merit factors but instead plays out as a continuous flow in which personnel complete initial training, begin work as nonrates, and eventually apply for further training at A-school. Further, a failure to advance during this period could mean that an administrative separation is imminent, so advancement rates calculated from personnel who remain in the workforce could miss important disparities.

To understand advancement flows from E-1 to E-4, we tracked the status of new Coast Guard personnel in the administrative data through their first four years. Table 4.1 summarizes these results for all racial/ethnic and gender groups. The first column shows that more than 90 percent of personnel from each group *who remained in the Coast Guard* attained the grade of E-4 within four years. The second column shows the overall conversion rate for

FIGURE 4.1
Summary of Enlisted Advancement Processes, by Grade



NOTE: SWE = Servicewide Exam.

TABLE 4.1
Percentages of Enlisted Personnel Accessed Between FY 2005 and FY 2015
Making Early-Career Advancement to E-4 Within Four Years, by Race/Ethnicity
and Gender

Race and Ethnicity	Gender	Made E-4		Left Prior to E-4		
		Retained at Least 4 Years	All Personnel	Because Commissioned	For Legal, Conduct, or Performance Reason	For Other Reason
White	Male	94.4	77.5	0.7	7.9	11.8
	Female	93.7	67.7	1.4	8.3	21.0
Black	Male	90.9	66.4	2.3	16.7	11.5
	Female	91.0	56.1	7.7	13.6	20.2
Hispanic	Male	92.4	73.7	1.7	9.7	12.5
	Female	93.2	68.7	3.3	8.0	17.9
Asian or Pacific Islander	Male	94.2	75.8	1.8	9.1	11.8
	Female	95.2	67.1	3.4	12.1	16.1
Non-Hispanic other	Male	93.6	75.0	1.3	8.7	12.9
	Female	91.4	63.6	2.9	9.8	22.9

NOTE: The results rely on FY 2005–2015 accessions to allow for at least four years of observation in the available data. As a result, we could not include the last two months of FY 2015 because our administrative data ended on August 1, 2019. Most separations in the “for other reason” category had no specific reason associated with them.

each group—that is, the percentage of all personnel who began enlisted careers in the Coast Guard and reached E-4 before the four-year mark. The results in the second column show large disparities between white male and URM personnel, with the largest gaps for black men and women. The final three columns show that URM personnel (particularly black women) were likelier to commission than to continue in enlisted service; URM personnel (particularly black personnel) were likelier to leave prior to E-4 for legal, conduct, or performance reasons;¹ and, finally, women of all races were likelier than men to separate for other unspecified reasons prior to reaching E-4.

Overall, during this period, 15,079 URM personnel began enlisted careers in the Coast Guard. A back-of-the-envelope calculation suggests that the net impact of these conversion-

¹ We did not have further data available on reasons or context associated with separations that would have allowed us to further explore potential reasons for these disparities.

rate disparities translates to about 1,077 fewer URM E-4s than if all personnel had the same advancement (and retention) patterns as white men.²

From E-5 Through E-8, Underrepresented-Minority Personnel Were Likelier Than White Male Personnel to Compete for Advancement but Less Likely to Succeed in the Servicewide Competition

To examine racial/ethnic and gender disparities in advancement to junior and senior enlisted grades, we combined information on the enlisted workforce from administrative data with records from the servicewide competitions from 2006 through 2018. The administrative records indicate which personnel meet minimum time-in-grade requirements, and the servicewide records reveal which personnel met all prerequisites and took the SWE, as well as personnel's point totals for the other advancement factors. SWE records do not capture which personnel were initially above the cutoff for advancement, so we used the grade changes in the administrative records to infer whether someone advanced in a particular cycle.³

Table 4.2 shows the overall results for E-5 through E-8 by grade and by racial/ethnic and gender group. Each grade column contains subcolumns showing the rates at which personnel took the SWE (meaning that they met all requirements and competed for advancement), as well as the advancement rate for personnel in each group who took the SWE. For each URM group, the cell colors reflect the direction and magnitude of the difference between that group and the rate for white men (shown in the first row).

The results indicate that eligibility requirements do not appear to limit URM personnel's participation in the servicewide competition. Women and, to a lesser degree, racial and ethnic minority men, are likelier to meet eligibility requirements and take the SWE than white men at all pay grades except for E-7.⁴ Advancement rates among personnel who took the SWE

² In FYs 2005–2015, 15,079 URM personnel began enlisted careers. Applying the white male rate of 77.5 percent to this number would have produced 11,691 URM E-4s. The URM conversion rates produced 10,614, for a difference of 1,077.

³ We started with a record for anyone with time-in-grade eligibility for each advancement cycle. From these records, we calculated the percentage of member-cycles in each group in which someone took the SWE. Someone was generally considered to advance if (1) there was a record that the person took the SWE that cycle and (2) the person advanced to the next pay grade by the terminal eligibility date, plus a four-month buffer (for E-6 and E-7, someone can advance either to the next enlisted pay grade or to W-2). Because E-5 and E-6 cycles happen twice per year, the windows when grade changes occur overlap. To prevent double-counting of selections (in which the same grade change is associated with multiple advancement cycles), we presumed that someone was not selected if they took the SWE again in the following cycle. If someone did not take the SWE and then advanced, we presumed that they had been awaiting selection if they had previously taken the SWE; therefore, we did not count them when calculating the rates at which each group competed in the servicewide process.

⁴ Further descriptive analysis of the data shows that rating-specific factors could explain a portion of these differences, in that all members in the ratings with the highest URM representation have a greater tendency to take the SWE. Requirements and testing norms differ by ratings. In the most extreme case, the Coast Guard has waived the testing requirement altogether for certain ratings—most notably, BM second class in recent years.

TABLE 4.2

Percentages of Enlisted Personnel Accessed Between Calendar Year 2006 and Calendar Year 2018 Making Advancement to E-5 Through E-8, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

Race and Ethnicity	Gender	E-5		E-6		E-7		E-8	
		Took Exam	Advanced in Cycle	Took Exam	Advanced in Cycle	Took Exam	Advanced in Cycle	Took Exam	Advanced in Cycle
White	Male	25.5*	39.7*	30.4*	20.2*	66.9	5.1*	20.0*	11.5*
	Female	7.3*	-6.4*	6.1*	-3.8*	-2.2*	-1.5*	5.7*	-3.9
Black	Male	2.4*	-3.5*	3.3*	-5.2*	-0.1	-1.5*	3.6*	-3.4
	Female	12.6*	-6.3*	8.3*	-8.1*	-2.3	-1.3	7.4*	-5.3
Hispanic	Male	1.3*	-3.4*	4.0*	-4.2*	0.9	-0.6	6.0*	-1.8
	Female	12.3*	-8.3*	11.0*	-6.5*	1.1	-0.7	7.2*	-2.2
Asian or Pacific Islander	Male	3.1*	-2.3	6.3*	-4.4*	2.8	-0.6	8.0*	-5.4
	Female	8.5*	-3.1	11.4*	-0.3	10.9*	-3.4	10.8	-11.5
Non-Hispanic other	Male	2.1*	-0.9	3.5*	-2.5*	1.1	-0.4	3.0*	-3.1
	Female	6.2*	-3.4	8.1*	-5.0*	0.6	-1.4	9.7*	-4.9

NOTE: * = statistical significance at the 5-percent level from a chi-squared test comparing each URM group to white enlisted men (and white enlisted men to all URM enlisted personnel as a single group), corrected within each column to control the false-discovery rate. Green cells indicate cases in which the URM rate is higher than the rate for white men, while yellow and red cells indicate cases in which the URM rate is lower than the rate for white men. We used ± 5 percentage points as the cutoff between light green and dark green, as well as between yellow and red. For URM groups, all statistically insignificant cells are shaded in gray.

show that URM personnel (particularly white women and black or Hispanic personnel of both genders) were less likely than white men to advance to E-5 and E-6. E-7 advancement rates were more similar across different demographic groups. The advancement rates for E-8 show a lower tendency for URM personnel to advance than for white men, but the gaps are smaller than those at the more-junior grade levels, and all are statistically insignificant. The results show that the net effect is that URM personnel were likelier than other personnel to take advancement tests, which tends to offset lower success prospects in the servicewide competition and produces similar rates of advancement at these levels overall.⁵

There is no subjectivity in determining someone's advancement multiple, so the selection rate for a given group is a direct result of the advancement factors and the vacancies in each rating at the time of the advancement cycle. To better understand why certain URM groups have lower success rates in the servicewide competition, we used a common statistical technique for understanding demographic differences in career outcomes⁶ to calculate the extent to which each advancement factor, member ratings, and timing of advancement cycles contribute to the gaps in Table 4.2. Just like the results in Table 4.2, these effects vary depending on the URM group and pay grade. Table 4.3 describes the most-consistent patterns, while Appendix C contains more-detailed results.

The most consistent finding is that black and Hispanic personnel tended to earn fewer exam points on average, which tended to have the largest impact on advancement rates of the different factors because it receives the most weight in the calculation of the advancement multiple. The underlying reasons for these differences in exam performance could relate to the exam content or to other differences in personnel characteristics, but the testing data necessary to identify such factors were not available for analysis at the time of this study. Women of all races and ethnicities also tended to earn fewer time-in-grade and -service

⁵ It is possible that the lower selection rates for some groups are related to the higher exam participation rates. For instance, one hypothesis could be that all groups are equally competitive but the higher testing rates for some groups indicate that less prepared personnel in those groups are likelier to test. We did not adopt this as the primary explanation for several reasons:

- First, opportunities are fixed for a rating in a given cycle but not for a demographic group, so a higher rate of testing for a demographic group does not guarantee a lower selection rate. For a demographic group, the selection rate depends on all the attributes of the people who decide to take the test.
- Second, the lower selection rates primarily affect black and Hispanic personnel, not Asian or other personnel with equally high testing propensity.
- Third, for testing propensity versus time in grade, we found that women were likelier than men to test at all time-in-grade levels, so the higher testing propensity is not simply a result of them testing earlier with less experience.
- Finally, in the advancement factors, even after correcting for time in grade or service, other factors (test scores and sea/surf time) had an influence on selection rates, but only for certain groups. This suggests that group-specific factors and not simply the testing propensity cause the differences in advancement rates.

⁶ The technique is known as a Blinder–Oaxaca decomposition, after Blinder, 1973, and Oaxaca, 1973. Our approach is very similar to the approach in Asch, Miller, and Weinberger, 2016, and Hall et al., 2019. Both of these reports contain appendixes describing the technical methods in more detail.

TABLE 4.3
Effects of Advancement Factors on Racial/Ethnic and Gender Differences in Advancement Rates

Advancement Factor	Contribution to URM Differences
Exam score	Black and Hispanic personnel tend to score lower on exams. This can contribute to greater advancement for white women.
Performance	This does not consistently affect male URM personnel. This can contribute to greater advancement for women.
Medals and awards	This does not consistently affect URM personnel.
Time in grade and service	This can contribute to higher advancement for black men. Women tend to be more junior.
Sea and surf time	There are no consistent racial or ethnic differences. Women have less operational experience.
Rating	Results are mixed, but this tends to contribute to higher URM advancement.
Timing of advancement cycle	URM personnel are likelier to be in recent than earlier cohorts, and recent cohorts have experienced lower promotion rates than previous cohorts, which have had fewer URM personnel.

points and fewer points for sea and surf time. Further, the gaps in Table 4.2 were largest for black and Hispanic women because all three of these effects (exam points, time-in-grade and -service points, and sea- and surf-time points) are at work in tandem among personnel in these groups. Finally, although URM personnel tend to cluster in different ratings from white men, it is important to note that this did not systematically contribute to lower advancement rates. At certain pay grades for certain groups, ratings contributed to lower advancement, but rating differences tended to aid URM personnel more often than they hindered them.

Officer Promotions

Our examination of URM officer career progression concentrated on promotions to pay grades O-3 through O-6. Promotion to O-1 and O-2 is on a fully qualified⁷ basis; as a result, roughly 99 percent of officers promote on time to these pay grades. An annual promotion board process governs officer promotions for O-3 through O-6. Officers competing in these promotion boards must meet eligibility requirements, such as time in their current pay grade, to compete. The promotion board receives records of each eligible officer’s education, assignments, and performance evaluations. A deliberative process within the board then results

⁷ A board that selects officers on a fully qualified basis has no prespecified limit on how many officers it may select and is free to recommend all officers who meet the standard for serving in the next grade.

in selections for promotion to the next pay grade. In contrast with the enlisted advancement process, in which the importance of different factors is explicitly quantified, promotion boards subjectively weigh the various factors contained in officer records. Thus, the officer analysis needed to address the following two questions:

- First, do the records of URM personnel have the same likelihood of selection as similar records of white men (i.e., does the subjective process appear fair)?
- Second, are there differences in promotion-relevant information between URM personnel and white male personnel that contribute to disparities in promotion?

To answer the first question, we examined promotion board results for promotion years (PYs) 2006 through 2020.⁸ Table 4.4 displays differences between the observed selection rates to each pay grade for each URM group and those for white men, between 2006 and 2020. The first row shows the actual selection rates for white men, while the subsequent rows show the difference between the selection rate for each group and the white male rate. In most cases, the observed selection rate for URM promotion to O-3 through O-5 was at least 10 percentage points lower than that of white men, with differences of up to nearly 26 percentage points. A large majority of these observed differences in selection rates were statistically significant. Observed differences in selection rates to O-6 were more mixed and mostly not statistically distinguishable from 0. The number of URM personnel who were ever eligible to meet an O-6 board was extremely limited, which is part of the reason that these differences do not meet the statistical significance threshold (Table 4.5).

The observed differences between URM and white male officers' promotion selection rates to O-3 through O-6, seen in Table 4.4, do not provide enough information to determine whether the disparities result from the promotion board process itself, because they do not account for all information relevant to promotion decisions. Differences in factors relevant to promotion between racial/ethnic and gender groups might produce differences in outcomes. For example, selection rates to an individual pay grade are not constant across years. If a particular URM group is overrepresented in years with lower selection rates than those of other years, that limitation in opportunity relative to that of other groups will influence aggregate selection totals across years. Similarly, differences across groups in qualifications and experience relevant to board consideration will influence selection outcomes.

⁸ All eligible officers over that span were included in our analyses, except for earlier cohorts in which data capture of OER scores was extremely limited. OER scores for officers separating prior to about May 2013 were very limited because of an update in the system. The OERs are a critical input to the promotion board deliberations. Our officer promotion analyses thus cover a 15-year span but are weighted more heavily toward more-recent experiences.

TABLE 4.4
Observed Percentage Differences in Promotion Board Selection Rates

Race and Ethnicity	Gender	O-3	O-4	O-5	O-6
White	Male	90.8	71.6	60.0	57.0
	Female	-4.1*	0.0	-2.6	-4.9
Black	Male	-12.3*	-18.3*	-20.7*	-3.5
	Female	-13.0*	-21.0*	-16.3	3.0
Hispanic	Male	-7.2*	-11.2*	-16.5*	-9.6
	Female	-8.5*	-14.0*	-9.1	9.7
Asian or Pacific Islander	Male	-15.2*	-13.0*	-25.9*	-7.0
	Female	-15.3*	-10.9	-17.9	42.0
Non-Hispanic other	Male	-2.1	-13.7*	-16.0*	-9.5
	Female	-14.5*	-8.9*	-15.9*	-27.6*

NOTE: * = observed differences are statistically significant at a type I error rate of 0.05. All statistically insignificant cells are shaded in gray. Yellow shading indicates a URM rate less than 5 percentage points lower than the rate for white male officers. Red shading indicates a URM rate more than 5 percentage points lower than the rate for white male officers. The table shows each group's percentage-point difference in observed outcomes from white male officers before PY 2006–2020 boards.

To answer the question of whether the records of URM personnel have the same likelihood of selection as similar records of white men, we used a two-step equivalent-group modeling process separately for each URM group:

1. First, white male observations were weighted to be as similar as possible to the URM observations on all available information relevant to promotion.
2. Second, we modeled the promotion outcomes for the URM personnel and the weighted white personnel, conditioning on all available information relevant to promotion, then compared the expected selection rates between the two groups.

This approach allowed us to consider whether the available information on experience and performance explained the observed differences in selection outcomes between the two groups or whether, after accounting for this information, unexplained differences between the two groups remained. This latter condition would evidence the possibility of bias in the promotion system. It is possible that unobserved factors or factors unavailable to our analyses could also account for the remaining difference. This two-step equivalent-group method for examining potential bias was used in Lim, Mariano, et al., 2014, to examine Air Force officer promotion boards and is discussed in greater detail in Appendix C.

The value of this equivalent-group modeling approach depends on the quality of information used to make any two groups of officers comparable. With our modeling approach, we endeavored to be as comprehensive as possible in including measures in both stages that are

TABLE 4.5
Sample Sizes Available for Comparing Officer Selection
Outcomes of Underrepresented-Minority and White Male Officers,
2006–2020 Promotion-Year Boards

Race and Ethnicity	Gender	O-3	O-4	O-5	O-6
White	Male	3,283	3,343	2,632	1,290
	Female	1,054	694	439	142
Black	Male	186	223	178	43
	Female	90	77	32	5
Hispanic	Male	439	344	241	76
	Female	147	78	51	12
Asian or Pacific Islander	Male	86	58	44	10
	Female	53	28	19	3
Non-Hispanic other	Male	444	395	227	80
	Female	177	110	68	17
Total		5,959	5,350	3,931	1,678

NOTE: In results shown later, we adopted a rule of thumb that fewer than 25 URM personnel was too small a group to permit trustworthy statistical inferences.

either available to the promotion board or known to be predictors of promotion board selection in prior promotion research (Asch, Miller, and Malchiodi, 2012; Lim, Mariano, et al., 2014). Included in the set of individual candidate information that the Coast Guard OPM provides to the promotion board are statements of service and sea service, OER, education, awards, and adverse-incident information (COMDTINST M1000.3). The variable types used in the officer promotion analyses are

- PY
- education
- OER scores and recommendation
- adverse incidents
- length of service
- zone reordering
- sea service
- commission source
- awards
- job information

- command experience
- marital status and dependents.⁹

For most variable types, more than one variable was included in the models. A full listing of all variables included in the models can be found in Appendix C. The job information in the modeling included a specialty variable that was derived by HSOAC researchers with the assistance of a Coast Guard officer with OPM experience. We classified assignment codes into 15 specialty groupings, such as engineering, intelligence, and afloat. One known piece of information provided to the promotion boards that was unavailable for these analyses was the narrative portion of the OER. Although all OER performance dimension scores and final recommendations were included in our modeling, the narrative information was unavailable for our consideration. This information will be valuable to future barrier analysis efforts once all portions of the evaluation are digitally captured for analytics.

Table 4.6 shows the same comparison of selection rates as Table 4.4 after adjusting the comparisons for all available promotion-relevant information. Each table cell represents the estimated difference in promotion board selection rates between the URM and similarly situated white officers, with negative values indicating a deficiency for the URM and positive values indicating a selection advantage.¹⁰ For example, consider Hispanic women competing for O-3. The entry -1.8 indicates that, after weighting white male officers competing for O-3 to mirror Hispanic female officers on all the variable topics listed above (first step of the two-step modeling process), and then accounting for the influence of each of those variables on the promotion board selection outcomes (second step of the two-step modeling process), the remaining difference in selection rates between Hispanic women and white men is almost 2 percentage points.

After adjusting for similar records and factors influential in selection, just seven differences in selection rates (out of 30 total comparisons with sufficient URM sample sizes) were statistically distinguishable from 0, as seen in Table 4.6. Of these seven, four differences are negative and three are positive for the URM. The strong negative pattern seen in the raw observed selection outcomes in Table 4.4 dissipated once the available information was considered. From these results, we concluded that systematic differences in selection board outcomes among similarly qualified candidates were not present and that, overall, when we considered the information available to the promotion boards, the boards appeared to be functioning equitably.

The seven individual cases in which differences remained are important and deserve additional examination. The presence of an unexplained difference here does not necessarily imply that bias is occurring in any one of these cases. Unobserved information not cap-

⁹ These variables are known from prior research to be predictors of promotion board selection (Asch, Miller, and Malchiodi, 2012; Lim, Mariano, et al., 2014).

¹⁰ Differences that are statistically significant from 0 are denoted by an asterisk and are color-coded for magnitude and direction. Appendix C provides *p*-values for each of the estimated differences in Table 4.6.

TABLE 4.6
Estimates of Percentage-Point Promotion Board Selection Differences
Between Underrepresented-Minority and Similar White Officers,
2006–2020 Promotion-Year Boards

Race and Ethnicity	Gender	O-3	O-4	O-5	O-6
White	Male	—	—	—	—
	Female	-0.4	0.6	-1.8	1.8
Black	Male	-0.4	-3.9	-3.0	25.3*
	Female	-11.0*	0.9	-1.7	N/A
Hispanic	Male	0.1	3.0	-0.5	11.9*
	Female	-1.8*	-2.4	3.2*	N/A
Asian or Pacific Islander	Male	0.2	-2.9	-9.6*	N/A
	Female	-0.3	-3.2	N/A	N/A
Non-Hispanic other	Male	0.5	-1.5	-3.8*	-3.0
	Female	-0.6	3.4	-0.3	N/A

NOTE: Table values are the differences in selection rates (outcomes) between each URM group and white men, statistically adjusted to have similar information related to promotions. * = difference is statistically significant at a type I error rate of 0.05. All statistically insignificant cells are shaded in gray. Dark green indicates a URM rate more than 5 percentage points above the white male rate. Light green indicates a URM rate less than 5 percentage points above the white male rate. Yellow indicates a URM less than 5 percentage points lower than the white male rate. Red shading indicates a URM rate more than 5 percentage points lower than the white male rate. N/A = the number of observations was below 25 and excluded from the analyses. White male rates are omitted from this table because the equivalent-group procedure produces a customized white male rate for each comparison.

tured in our modeling could explain the remaining differences. For example, according to the modeling results in Table 4.6, Hispanic women appear to have an advantage over white men when competing for O-5. It is possible that the OER narratives, which are furnished to the boards but not available for these analyses, would explain this remaining difference. More-careful examination of each of these cases could provide important additional context.

If similarly situated officers from different racial/ethnic and gender groups have similar outcomes in promotion boards, the observed differences in promotion rates in Table 4.4 can be attributed mainly to differences in the board inputs (and associated processes by which personnel obtain these inputs). To explore the second question of which differences in promotion-relevant information between URM and white male officers contribute to disparities in promotion, we looked for variables that were highly influential in both explaining the observed differences between the URM groups and white men and explaining the selection outcomes (i.e., variables that were important in both steps of the modeling). These variables

include PY, job classification, education, OER final recommendation, military justice events (O-3 boards only), and source of commission (O-5 and O-6 boards only).¹¹

Promotion Year

Figure 2.2 in Chapter Two shows how URM accessions have changed in recent years, and Table 4.5 illustrates that the number of URM officers competing for a given board over a 15-year period can be relatively small. It is thus unsurprising that the number of candidates from a given URM group competing within a board can fluctuate from year to year. For example, just nine Hispanic men competed for O-5 in 2012, versus 28 in 2018. Coupled with the variation in selection rates from year to year—for example, a 55-percent selection rate in 2012 versus a 48-percent selection rate in 2018—it would be expected that both the equivalent-grouping stage and selection outcome stage of our modeling would identify the importance of PY in reconciling differences in promotion opportunity between groups.

Specialty

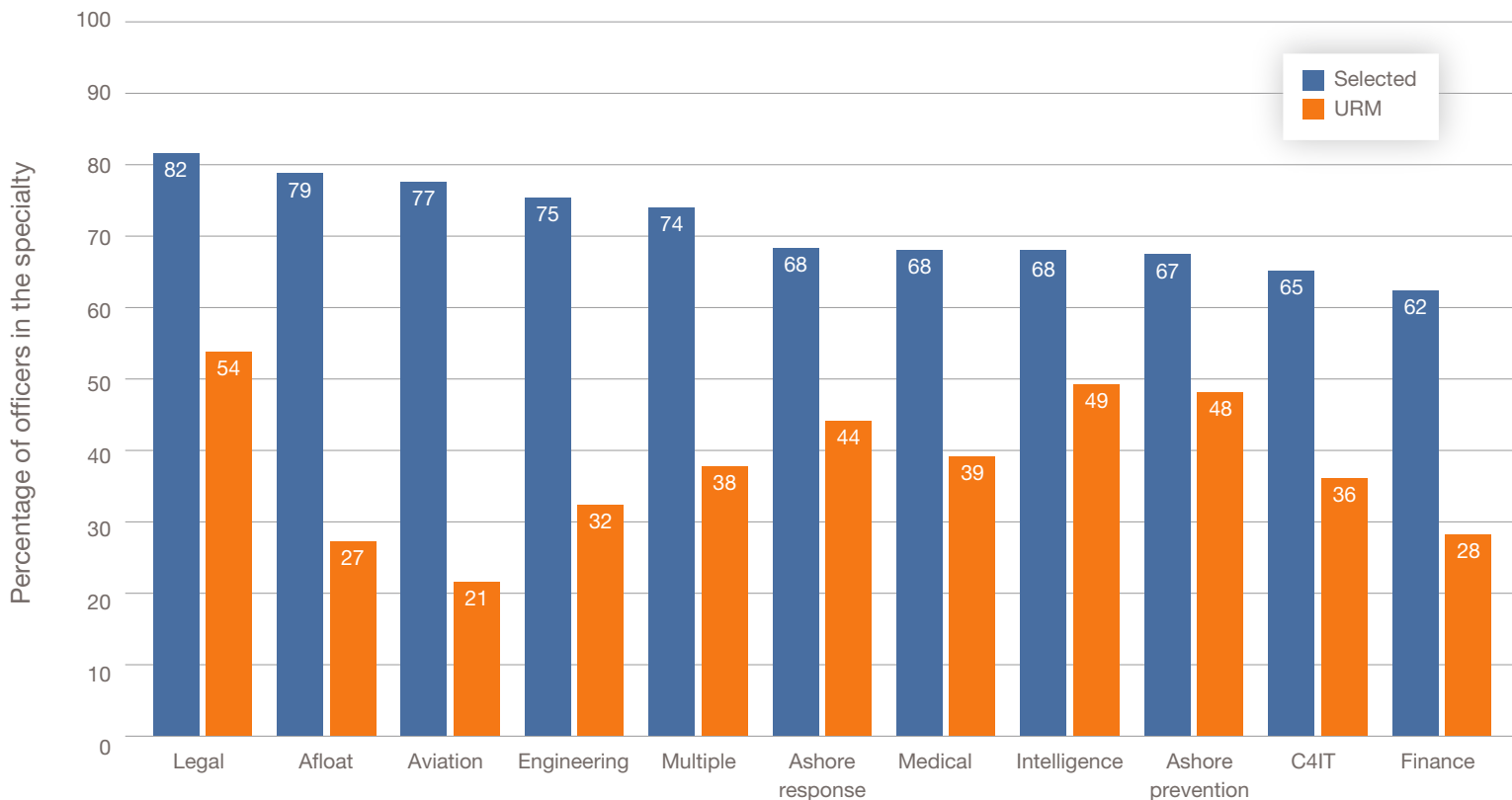
Although the Coast Guard does not lock officers into formal specialty communities, promotion boards recognize the importance of having “true professional competence in one occupational field,” along with some exposure to other fields as appropriate for the grade level (COMDTINST M1000.3). Figure 4.2 shows the most-common specialty categories from our analysis, along with the selection rate for each category’s personnel meeting O-3 to O-6 boards and the percentage of these same people who were in URM groups. These patterns reveal that URM representation is lower in specialties that have the highest selection rates (with the exception of the relatively small legal category), such as the afloat and aviation communities. URM officers tend to work in communities with lower selection rates, such as prevention, response, and intelligence. Mitigating these differences in selection rates, therefore, requires a more thorough understanding of the factors contributing to the racial/ethnic and gender differences in specialization. Previous research on the topic has identified similar patterns in the DoD services, attributing them to a combination of “structural” and “perceptual” barriers (MLDC, 2011). Chapter Three also provides additional insights from the focus groups and survey about factors that influence personnel career choices.

Education

Officers with master’s degrees or higher, particularly those who earned their degrees after accession, experience higher selection rates. Thus, the fact that white men were likelier to possess advanced degrees tended to contribute to group differences in selection rates. Education is a formal consideration in the promotion process, although Coast Guard manuals instruct boards not to emphasize education “disproportionately” because not all officers have the opportunity to complete education-focused assignments. However, even if education, in

¹¹ Other variables that also help explain differences between URM and white male outcomes include years of service (YOSs), time in grade, cumulative days deployed, and days on a high-endurance cutter.

FIGURE 4.2
Selection Percentages Versus Underrepresented-Minority Representation for Officers Meeting O-3 to O-6 Promotion Boards



NOTE: C4IT = command, control, communications, computers, and information technology (IT). *Afloat* here refers primarily to cutter operations, distinct from prevention and response operations that focus on, for example, ports, waterways, and coasts. Categories not shown in the figure include management, HR, response afloat, prevention afloat, and personnel whose duty histories did not permit clear specialty categorization.

itself, plays a minor role in the board process, it could act as a proxy for other merit factors not included in our analysis because education opportunities are awarded competitively. Understanding the root causes of disparities in opportunities for education is a necessary component of a strategy to minimize group differences in selection rates. Chapter Three provides additional context from the focus groups and survey about personnel perceptions of access to developmental opportunities, such as educational positions.

Officer Evaluation Report Final Recommendation

Although Coast Guard instructions deemphasize the role of education in selection decisions, they describe performance evaluations as a “significant” selection criterion. Our analysis included reporting officer final recommendations, which fall into one of seven categories, from a high of “best in grade” (a score of 7) to a low of “unsatisfactory” (a score of 1). Most scores in each pay grade fell into one of three categories: For the O-3 and O-4 boards, recommendation scores of 4, 5, and 6 were most likely to be observed. For the O-5 and O-6 boards, recommendations were most likely to be 5, 6, or 7.¹²

White male officers tend to be overrepresented in the highest-rated categories and underrepresented in the lowest-rated categories, relative to URM officers, although there were certain comparisons in which ratings for white men were comparable to personnel in certain URM groups (e.g., white men and Asian women had similar ratings for O-3 boards). The results suggest that these group differences in ratings contribute to differences in selection outcomes. Thus, gaining an understanding of why racial/ethnic and gender differences in OER recommendations exist is a key future point of interest in mitigating observed differences in selection rates.

Military Justice Events

The prevalence of military justice events among officers competing for O-3 differs by gender, and these events have a severely negative impact on selection likelihood. Across all racial and ethnic groups, between 0 and 2 percent of men considered by O-3 boards experienced such events. Black women also had a 0-percent rate, but 3 percent of white women, 4 percent of Asian women, and 10 percent of Hispanic women and non-Hispanic other women competing for O-3 experienced military justice events.

Source of Commission

USCGA graduates experience a higher rate of selection to O-5 and O-6 than officers from other commission sources do, even after considering all other factors used to model selection outcomes. Forty-seven percent of white men competing for O-5 are USCGA graduates

¹² A reporting officer must submit their “comparison scale” when completing an evaluation, which promotion boards receive so that they can benchmark final recommendation levels against the reporting officer’s history. If evaluation norms are different in specialty communities in which URM personnel are overrepresented (for instance, if everyone in a community with high URM representation tended to receive lower ratings), this practice could theoretically prevent this norm from influencing the promotion process.

versus 38 percent of URM officers, and USCGA graduates enjoy an O-5 selection advantage (66 percent) over those with other commissioning sources (48 percent). A similar pattern exists for O-6 boards. Commission source is not a formal criterion in the selection process, so it is likely a proxy for other merits and experiences that appear in officer records (but not in our data). Academy admission is a competitive process that seeks to select people with high potential to succeed as officers, and graduates also benefit from education and training that is customized for Coast Guard service. To fully address racial/ethnic and gender disparities in promotions, then, policies would need to unpack the attributes that drive the promotion advantage of USCGA graduates and determine the best combination of recruiting and development policies to mitigate gaps between white male and URM officers in these attributes.

Using a partial representation of promotion-relevant information from officer records, our results demonstrate that, in most cases, URM officers have similar selection likelihoods to those of similarly situated white male officers. The primary drivers of the large differences in selection rates between white male and URM officers, then, include the inputs into the promotion process, such as those discussed above. The only way for policies to mitigate the large differences in selection outcomes is to address the upstream disparities in the development of these and other factors.

Active-Duty Personnel's Perspectives on Advancement and Promotion

We asked focus group participants a set of questions intended to reveal what factors they felt led to Coast Guard personnel successfully promoting or advancing in their careers and whether they felt, as URM personnel, that they had opportunities for career mobility equal to opportunities available to other Coast Guard personnel. Participants consistently noted that promotion and advancement opportunities relied on both objective factors (e.g., test scores, assignment opportunities) and adherence to standard policies. They also discussed what they viewed as more-subjective factors, such as mentorship and networks, enlisted evaluation reports (EERs) and OERs, and how leadership implements policies. On paper, these features are designed to equally guide Coast Guard personnel career trajectories toward advancement or promotion. However, focus group participants said that they perceived that, in practice, biases introduced by the subjectivity in some of these areas put URM personnel at a systemic disadvantage.

Participant comments suggested that objective factors that influence advancement chances were not as objective as one might expect. Some enlisted personnel with whom we spoke did say that the servicewide boards were straightforward and fair. As one racial or ethnic minority man noted,

It's all about a test, so it's unbiased. It just depends on the marks.

However, the same participant acknowledged—and others agreed—that the role their supervisors play is important and that “a bad supervisor can put marks that’ll influence.” Others noted that personnel are not equally well positioned to prepare for the process; for example, we heard that “the servicewide is a little harder for ESL [English as a second language] people.” Language barriers could be an issue for personnel whose primary language is not English, who might be more than capable of conducting their missions but might have a difficult time articulating their answers on a written test. Additionally, URM personnel sometimes struggle to establish effective networks or find suitable mentors to help them prepare for what is to come. As one white enlisted woman observed,

At first, I thought the boards would be totally unfair, but the people they select are very impartial. *What happens before they get to the board is where it's broken.*¹³

The general sentiment was that there was a lack of transparency in the promotion process, including how to be competitive in the process and how and why selection decisions were made. Additionally, participants said that they felt that URM personnel who struggled to get adequate support from leaders or mentors often found it tough to crack the code on what is required to get ahead.

So that we could further examine these issues, the survey included several items addressing their knowledge and perceptions of the fairness of the advancement and promotion processes. As Figures 4.3 to 4.5 show, the majority of survey respondents agreed that they had a thorough understanding of the process and what was required. However, less than half of most groups agreed that the process was fair. Women were significantly less likely than men to indicate that they had a thorough understanding of the advancement or promotion process and what was required (for officers only) or to view the process as fair. There were fewer statistically significant differences between racial and ethnic minority personnel and their white counterparts.

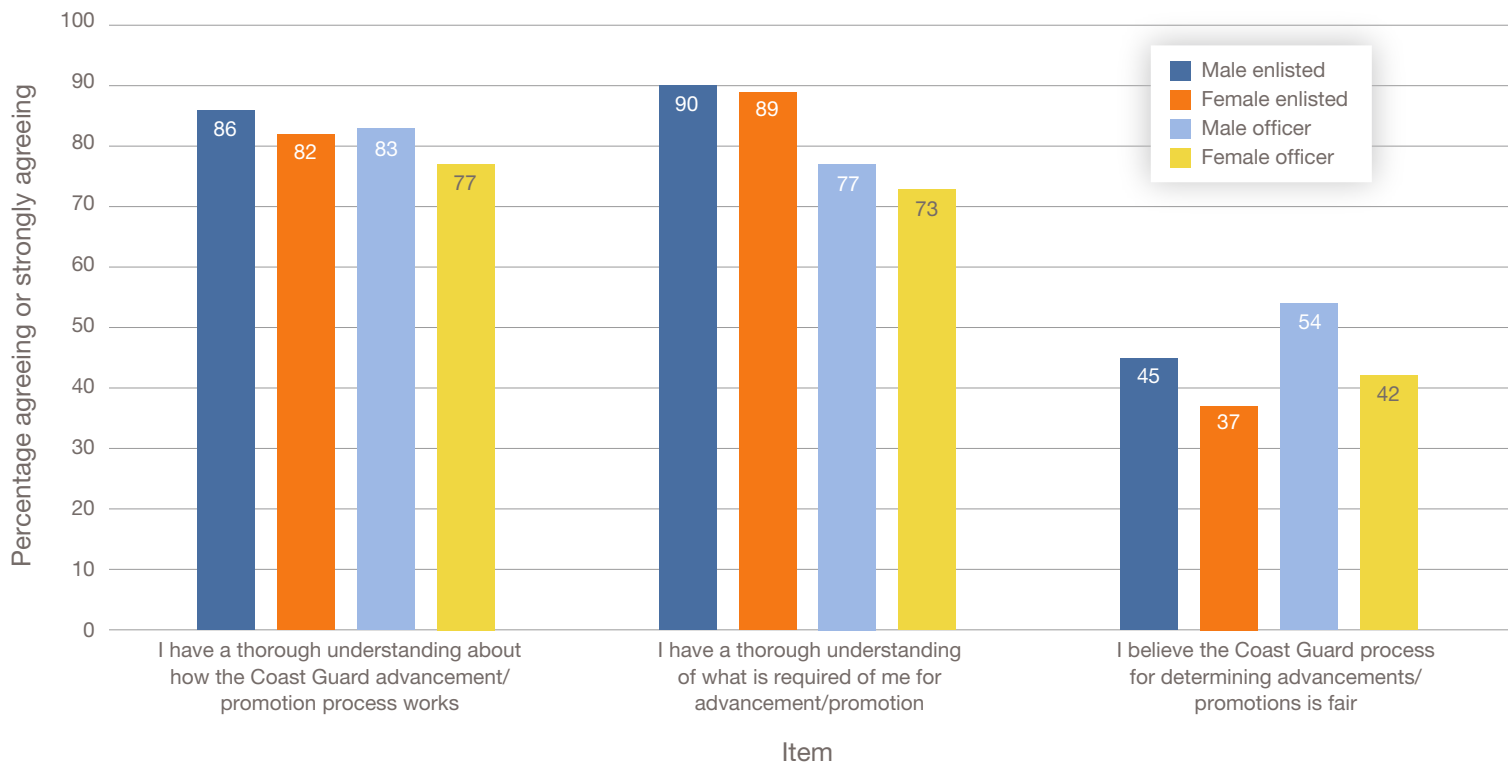
As part of the survey, we also asked any respondent who had served on a board an open-ended question about the factors he or she looked for in personnel records to help decide whether the person should advance or be promoted.¹⁴ The most-common responses were performance and leadership. Other factors listed included education, professionalism, potential, ability, and assignments.

Among respondents who reported serving on boards, 23 percent of enlisted respondents and 16 percent of officers indicated that, in their experience, “boards consider information about a member that is *not* included in their records as part of the promotion decision,” despite this being prohibited in Coast Guard policy. We asked the people who endorsed this

¹³ Emphasis added.

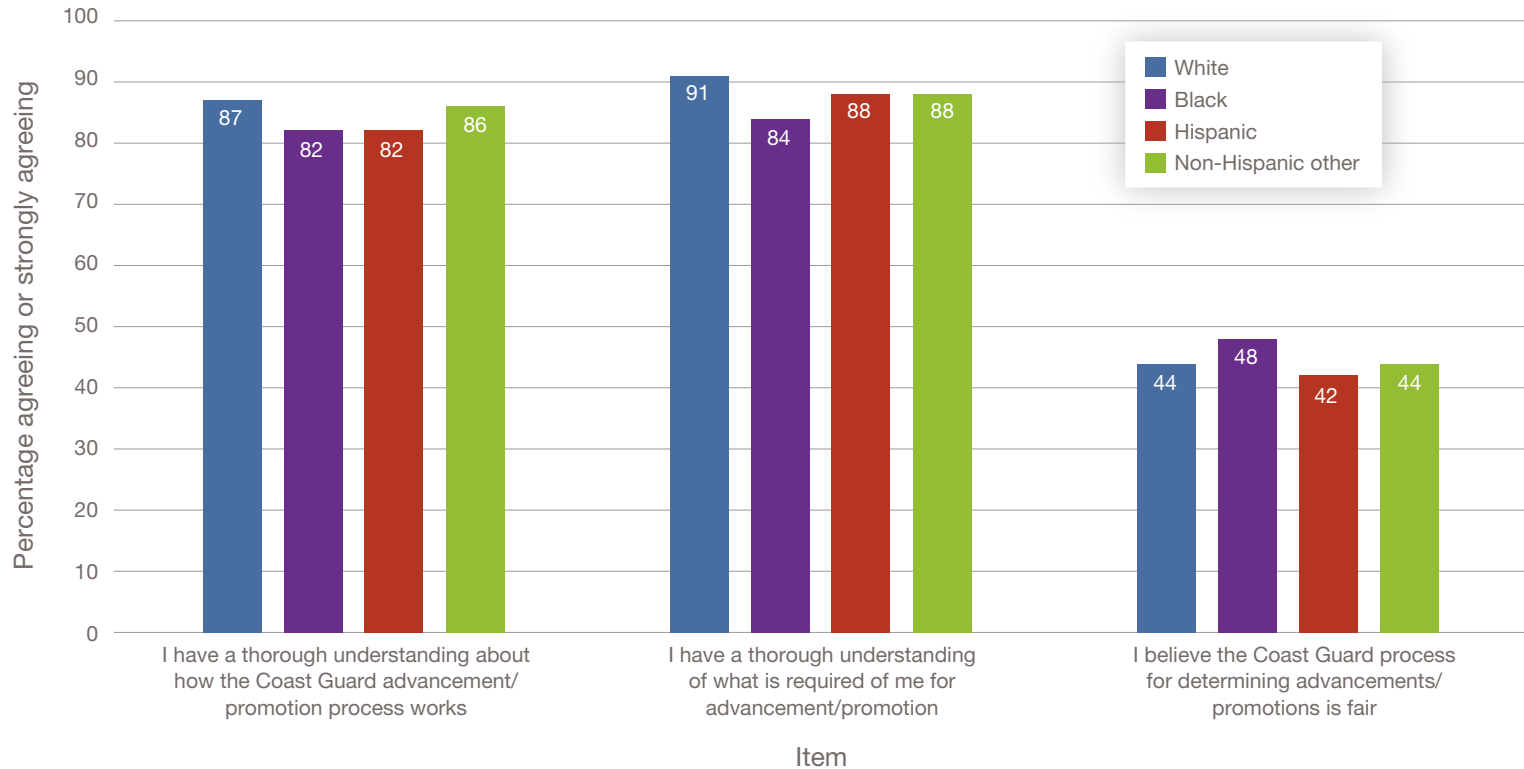
¹⁴ Survey respondents were asked whether they had served on any of the following boards: O-3 to O-6, flag officer, E-9, or WO. A total of 521 survey respondents indicated having served on a board at least once and responded to the open-ended question. More details on our analysis approach for open-ended responses are provided in Appendix G.

FIGURE 4.3
Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Advancement and Promotion Processes, by Gender and Corps



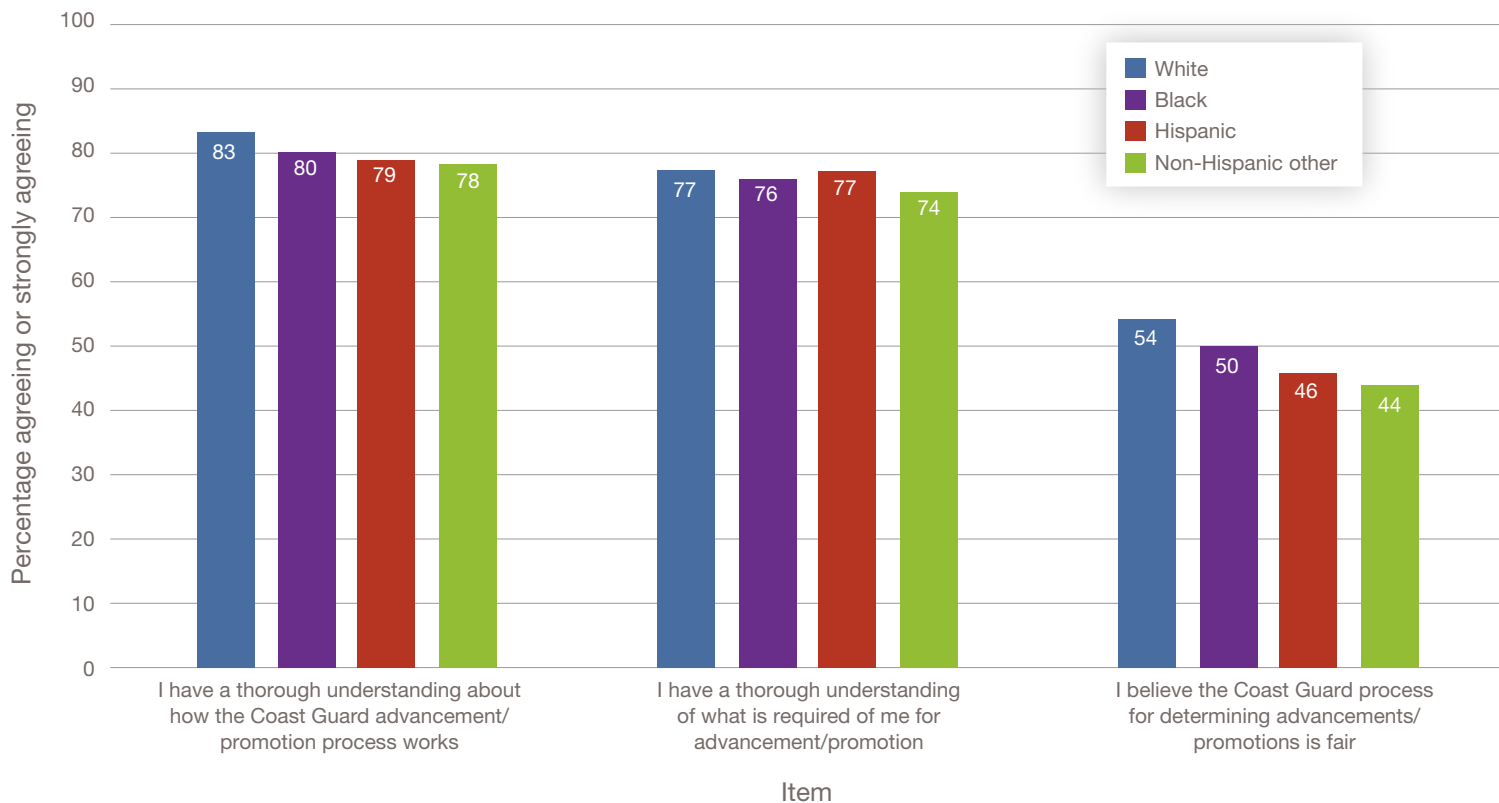
NOTE: From left to right, analyses used the following numbers of observations for each item: 12,507; 12,504; and 12,499. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. There were statistically significant differences between male and female respondents ($p < .001$) and between enlisted personnel and officers ($p < .05$) for all three items. There was also a statistically significant interaction between gender and corps for the item assessing understanding of what was required for advancement or promotion ($p < .05$); gender differences were present for officers on this item but not for enlisted personnel. We did not find significant interactions between gender and corps for the other two items. We were not able to examine gender differences across ratings because of limited numbers in certain cells/groups.

FIGURE 4.4
Percentages of Enlisted Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Advancement and Promotion Processes, by Race and Ethnicity



NOTE: From left to right, analyses used the following numbers of observations for each item: 8,257; 8,256; and 8,252. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. For understanding of the process, we found significant ($p < .05$) differences between (1) non-Hispanic other and Hispanic respondents and (2) white and Hispanic respondents. For understanding what is required, we also found significant ($p < .05$) differences between (1) non-Hispanic other and Hispanic respondents and (2) white and Hispanic respondents. In terms of perceived fairness of the process, we found one significant difference ($p < .05$) between black and Hispanic respondents. All significant differences remained when we controlled for gender.

FIGURE 4.5
Percentages of Officer Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Advancement and Promotion Processes, by Race and Ethnicity



NOTE: From left to right, analyses used the following numbers of observations for each item: 3,679; 3,678; and 3,679. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. We found only one significant difference between racial and ethnic groups among officers, which was between non-Hispanic other and white respondents for perceived fairness of the process ($p < .05$).

response to describe the types of information that would be considered but were not included in records.¹⁵ The most common type of information reported was past service with or knowledge of the candidate by reputation or direct experience (63 percent of respondents).

Our focus groups also raised performance evaluations as a related concern for URM officers. Performance evaluations are tools for leaders to provide feedback, set expectations for future job requirements, and recognize performance through promotion. Yet personnel expressed frustration with leaders who sometimes lacked adequate training on how to equitably conduct the evaluation process.¹⁶ To this point, participants mentioned that male evaluators might not know how to fairly evaluate the performance of women who were on maternity leave during the evaluation period (“OERs don’t reflect maternity leave”). Participants also explained that evaluations relied on leaders having a solid understanding of how personnel were actually performing. Much of this comes from personal interactions, however, and women reported having limited face time with male leaders who either (1) failed to provide constructive feedback for fear of being accused of being discriminatory or (2) shied away from engaging with female subordinates altogether to avoid the appearance that they might be fraternizing inappropriately.

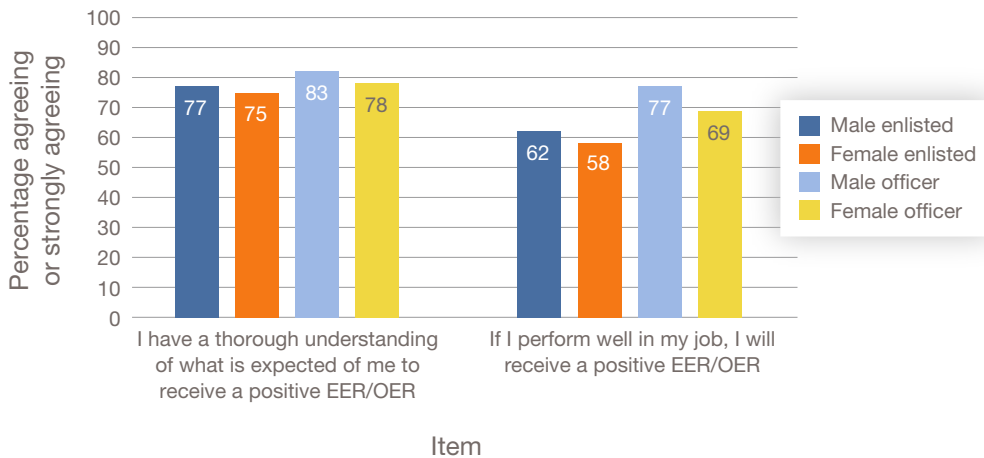
We assessed perceptions of the EER and OER process as part of the survey as well. As Figures 4.6 through 4.8 show, overall, the majority of survey respondents indicated that they were knowledgeable of what was expected of them to receive positive EERs or OERs and that they would receive positive EERs or OERs if they performed well. However, women were less likely than their male counterparts to say that they felt this way. There were fewer significant differences between racial and ethnic groups: Enlisted Hispanic personnel were significantly less likely than white personnel to indicate that they would receive positive EERs or OERs if they performed well, non-Hispanic other officers were less likely than white officers to indicate understanding what was expected, and black officers were less likely than white officers to indicate that they would receive positive EERs or OERs if they performed well.

Assignment opportunities, discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, were also described in focus groups as playing a clear role in determining career advancement and promotion chances, and most expressed that they shared the notion that the “Coast Guard values afloat experience and rewards that in promotions.” However, for a variety of reasons described in Chapter Three, many focus group participants with whom we spoke were in support or administrative assignments that could slow their promotions relative to others who sought out assignments with more opportunities to accumulate sea and surf time (a factor in the enlisted advancement multiple). For example, many women noted that family obligations

¹⁵ Just 82 respondents provided answers to this open-ended question. More details on our analysis approach for open-ended responses are provided in Appendix G.

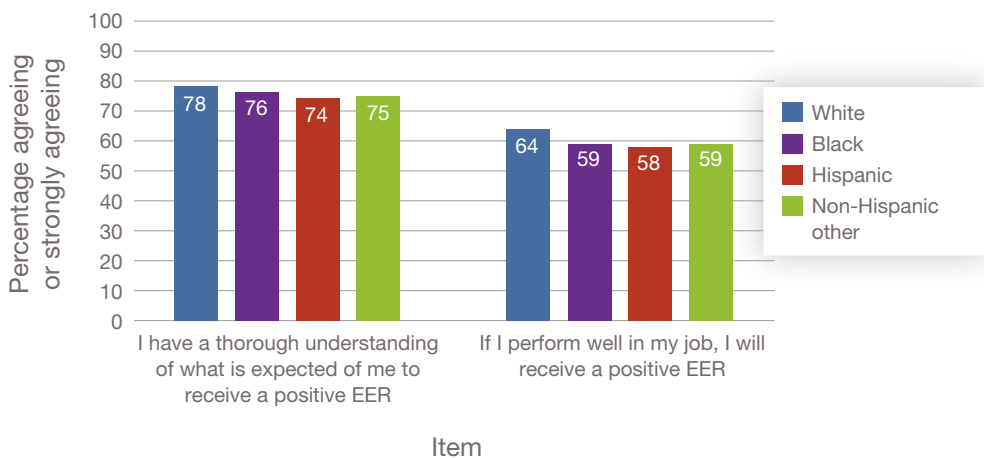
¹⁶ In the survey, 70 percent of enlisted respondents and 83 percent of officers indicated that they felt prepared to write performance evaluations for subordinates. Not surprisingly, there were significant differences by rank, with lower-ranking members indicating feeling less prepared than more-senior ranking members.

FIGURE 4.6
Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Enlisted and Officer Evaluation Report Processes, by Gender and Corps



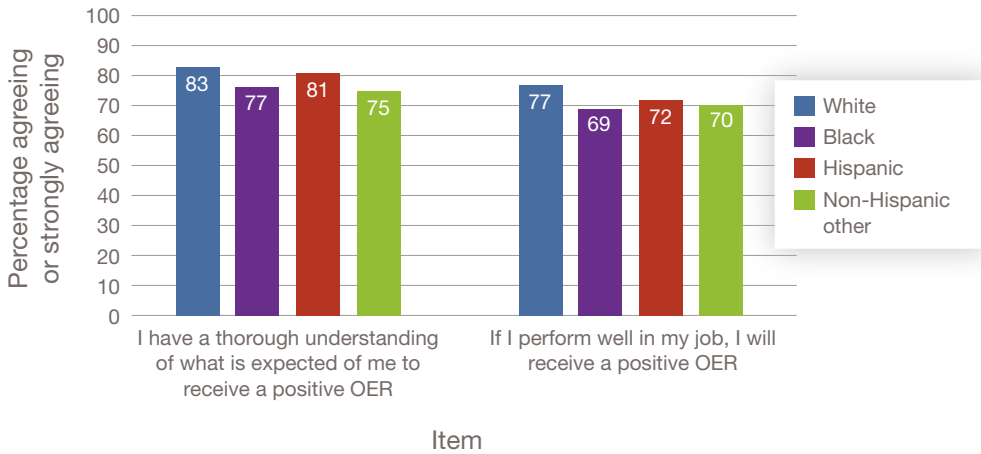
NOTE: Analyses used 12,499 and 12,503 observations, respectively. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. We found significant differences ($p < .001$) between men and women and between enlisted personnel and officers ($p < .05$). We did not find a significant interaction between gender and corps, indicating that differences between men and women were similar for enlisted personnel and officers.

FIGURE 4.7
Percentages of Enlisted Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Enlisted Evaluation Report Process, by Race and Ethnicity



NOTE: Analyses used 8,253 and 8,255 observations, respectively. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. Results showed no significant differences between racial and ethnic groups in understanding of what was expected and one significant difference ($p < .05$) between white and Hispanic enlisted respondents in beliefs about receiving positive EERs. This significant difference remained when we controlled for gender.

FIGURE 4.8
Percentages of Officer Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Officer Evaluation Report Process, by Race and Ethnicity



NOTE: Analyses used 3,677 and 3,678 observations, respectively. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. Results showed one significant difference ($p < .05$) between white and non-Hispanic other officers in understanding what was expected and one significant difference ($p < .05$) between black and white officers in beliefs about receiving positive OERs. This significant difference remained when we controlled for gender.

that typically fall on women limit career-enhancing opportunities, such as volunteering and taking on special assignments. Although enlisted personnel compete for advancement only with others in the same rating, many participants reported perceiving their less operational rating choices as a negative factor for advancement *and chose those ratings anyway*. For example, a white enlisted woman viewed a short stint in the Coast Guard as a stepping stone to a civilian career in culinary arts and recognized the trade-off in selecting a career path that had fewer opportunities to compete for awards that could lead to advancement:

As a cook, you aren't saving lives.

A white female YN expressed similar sentiment, saying that her desire to balance work and family life meant choosing an administrative position that she perceived left her less competitive than higher-profile positions afloat:

Cutters and pilots versus admin specialty. I'm never going to compete. One person just saved ten people or picked up \$20 million in cocaine, and my memos don't have errors.

Participants said that they perceived that differences in EER and OER marks stemmed from discretionary decisions made by leaders about whom to invest in and that URM personnel were passed over for high-visibility opportunities that can bolster one's chances for

promotion or advancement over time. For example, one racial or ethnic minority woman commented,

She would get all the [bad] jobs. He would get all the opportunities to brief the admiral, and she gets none.

When asked whether they felt that they had opportunities for promotion equal to those of other Coast Guard personnel, participants had mixed responses. Some personnel with whom we spoke had little faith that those in positions of authority always made decisions equitably. For example, some racial and ethnic minority men said that they felt that cultural stigmas pertaining to grooming standards could subconsciously and unduly influence decisions about promotions. Some participants also noted issues with perceived resentment from some majority personnel who said that they believed that URM personnel received special treatment rather than merit-based promotions and advancement. Participants also raised concerns about leadership discretion in executing policy.

A racial or ethnic minority man expressed resignation that his fate was in the hands of leaders whom he said might not interpret policies fairly:

No matter how bad the situation is, if you're following policy, you should be okay. But the people that are in charge of enforcing the policy and their perception may not be with the policy . . . It's a lot of power.

A racial or ethnic minority woman summed it up this way:

This is the problem with [the Coast Guard]. They make their policy very ambiguous and leave it to the commander to decide.

Participants mentioned strategies that they used to overcome some of these barriers. Some stated that being proactive, outspoken, and willing to push back on what they felt were unfair practices could help some. However, comments suggest that URM participants were often wary of the approach and skeptical that it worked equally in their favor. Instead, some cautioned to tread lightly when expressing their concerns to leadership for fear of being stereotyped as “the angry black man,” “crybaby,” or “whiny woman.” One racial or ethnic minority man described turning to friends rather than trusting leadership:

You talk things out with friends. You don't have the liberty to express things or . . . you're labeled as the angry black man. You have to think real hard about how you say things or else a storm might come up. Other people get away with it.

Policies intended to give personnel a voice can create uncomfortable workplace environments for those who fear being identified and negatively singled out. For example, participants reported being reluctant to raise concerns in command climate surveys:¹⁷

If I bring it up, I would get hammered on my eval. I can't bring it up on a survey because I am the only minority female. If you put any women's issues on there, they will know it's you because there's so few of us.

Conclusion and Recommendations to Improve Equity and Transparency in Advancement and Promotion Processes

Our quantitative analysis showed that group differences in advancement and promotion are associated with differences in career history, exam scores, and promotion factors. For instance, we found that high rates of conduct-related separations and SWE competition scores and experience levels hinder the career progression of URM enlisted personnel. However, we did not have data to more fully assess the potential reasons for the disparities in these factors. Among officers, we found no systemic differences in promotion after accounting for member experiences, specialty, performance indicators, and other board-relevant information. The advancement and promotion processes appear to treat people with similar records the same. Therefore, mitigation actions for disparities in selection rates should monitor the factors associated with advancement and promotion and intervene earlier in people's careers. Yet we found that data limitations would prevent the Coast Guard from taking such actions. Implementing our recommendations would help the Coast Guard ensure that URM personnel can develop competitive careers and that performance indicators the selection board reviews reflect people's performance. This is also important to address focus group and survey findings, which indicate that, although a majority of respondents reported believing that they understood the advancement and promotion processes, fewer respondents indicated thinking that the processes were fair. And focus group participants noted that factors that can influence advancement and promotion might not be as objective as one might expect.

Recommendation 19. Develop a capability to monitor differences in performance indicators (SWE questions, EER or OER text) by URM group.

Recommendation 20. Examine the validity and reliability of performance indicators and any disparate impact they might have on URM groups, and eliminate root causes of disparities.

¹⁷ The survey for this study was advertised as being conducted by an independent research organization. To help address potential respondent hesitancy in being open and honest on the survey, respondents were promised that results would be reported only for groups large enough that no one could infer what a certain person said.

Recommendation 21. Use monitoring capabilities to develop and implement mitigation efforts targeting the root causes of apparent disparities.

To implement these recommendations, all performance indicators that play a role in advancement and promotion processes should flow into the Coast Guard's central data systems. For example, system limitations currently prevent rating knowledge managers from viewing someone's historical performance on test questions, which prevents the Coast Guard from confirming the reliability and validity of the SWEs, including assessing differential item functioning, to see whether there are differences by demographic subgroups. As noted in focus groups, language barriers could be an issue for those whose primary language is not English, who might be more than capable of conducting their missions but might have a difficult time articulating answers on a written test. This is one area that should be examined on the SWEs. With this new capability, rating knowledge managers can confirm that their assessments predict performance at the next grade and flag questions for further review if they seem to affect URM personnel performance differentially. Similarly, addressing promotion disparities requires complete information on officer evaluations. Without complete information, barrier analysis efforts will continue to fall short of the actionable information that decisionmakers desire. Armed with this new capability, the Coast Guard can examine the validity and reliability of performance indicators currently used in the promotion process. More importantly, it could detect group differences in early-career performance that will translate into future disparities when these cohorts meet promotion boards that select on a best-qualified basis.

Developing measures of accurate on-the-job performance to facilitate an assessment of criterion-related validity (i.e., the extent to which these factors predict actual job performance) is difficult. Hence, organizations, including other services, have developed simulated environments to assess performance. One of the most ambitious attempts is the U.S. Army's Battalion Command Assessment Program (BCAP):

a four-day evaluation of more than 20 KSB-Ps [knowledge, skills, behaviors, and preferences], including communication skills, creativity, ethical leadership, and the ability to develop others. During the first three days candidates would undergo a physical fitness test, writing skill and argumentative essay examinations, cognitive and strategic talent assessments, psychometric tests, and a psychological interview. . . . The process would culminate on the fourth day with 30-minute interviews in which panels would evaluate candidates' oral communication skills and decide who was ready for command. (Spain, 2020, p. 6)

BCAP also trains panelists to make unbiased and consistent assessments and implements procedures to prevent biases seeping into the assessments. The procedures include creation of diverse panels, in-depth antibias training, calibration of grading, double-blind interviews, inclusion of input from people the candidates would lead, and opinions from peers and subordinates. An independent evaluation of BCAP is not available, and the long-term impact of

the program is unknown. But BCAP illustrates the level of investments needed to assess the true performance of personnel.

The Coast Guard might not want to adopt a similar assessment program but can assess the validity and reliability of performance indicators by applying statistical models of personnel career histories, performance assessment histories of supervisors and reporting officers, and job-specific characteristics. The results from the statistical models can help analysts identify group differences in performance indicators after controlling for potential confounding factors. The Coast Guard can supplement the statistical analysis with qualitative information gathered from supervisors and reporting officers to learn how they assess personnel performance. Informed by the findings, the Coast Guard can develop mitigation strategies to eliminate or reduce inconsistencies in the performance assessments. We recommend that, as the Coast Guard implements these mitigation strategies, it systematically collect data to monitor their effectiveness.

Improving Retention of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

In Chapter Four, we examined how advancement and promotion opportunities can affect the representation of URM groups in the Coast Guard. The next stage of the military career life cycle is the retention of personnel over the long term. In this chapter, we examine the differences in retention among URM personnel and their white counterparts and potential explanations for those gaps.

Quantitative Trends for the Retention of Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

It is important for policymakers to understand quantitative workforce retention patterns as part of forming a holistic strategy for improving URM diversity at all levels of the Coast Guard. If personnel in underrepresented groups are less likely to remain in the Coast Guard, they will be less represented in the workforce overall and less available to serve in more-senior positions. This general retention pattern applies to women in the Coast Guard (Hall et al., 2019). Conversely, if URM personnel had a higher tendency to remain than non-URM personnel had, their representation in the workforce and progression to the senior ranks would improve.¹

This chapter first summarizes racial and ethnic differences in continuation patterns. Then, we further explore whether racial and ethnic differences in other characteristics and career factors provide clues to understanding these patterns. Because the prior study (Hall et al., 2019) focused specifically on gender differences in retention, this chapter addresses racial and ethnic differences rather than the full intersection of race/ethnicity and gender.

¹ In a study of patterns in the DoD active-duty officer workforce, Asch, Miller, and Malchiodi found that black and Hispanic men had higher retention rates than white men had, which worked to offset lower promotion rates and increase the likelihood that members of these groups progressed to more-senior ranks (Asch, Miller, and Malchiodi, 2012).

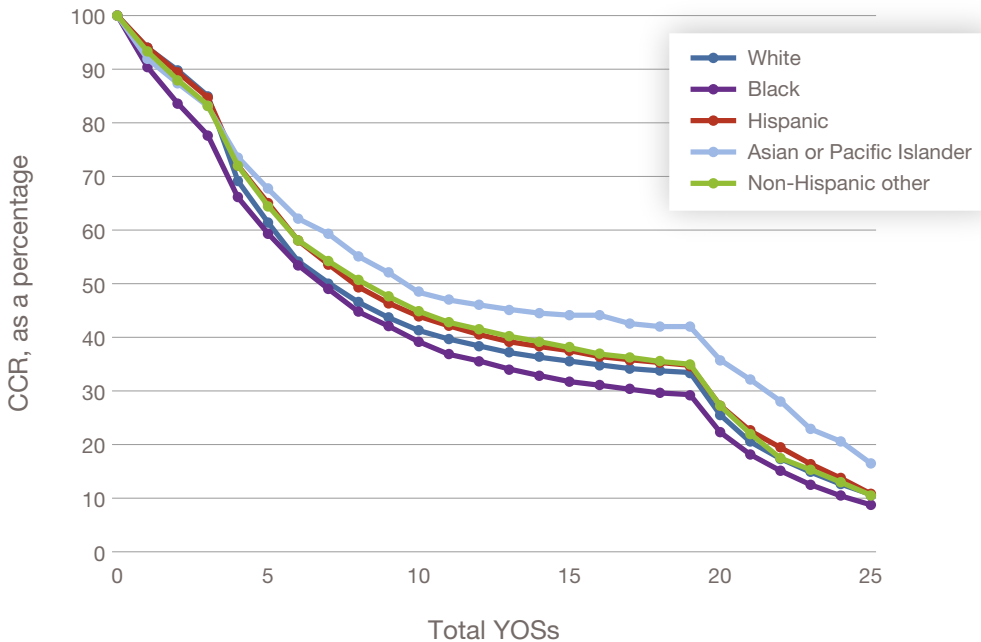
Descriptive Summary of Retention Differences

Because retention patterns vary over the course of the career life cycle, when assessing racial and ethnic differences in retention, it was essential that we compare Coast Guard personnel who were at similar career points. To visualize the group-specific patterns over the course of a career, we constructed a retention profile for each group. The profiles were based on continuation rates, which are the percentage of all personnel in each YOS who remained in the following year, from FY 2005 through FY 2018. To construct a profile, we multiplied the continuation rates of each year to calculate the cumulative continuation rate (CCR)—the cumulative percentage of personnel who would remain through each career year after the first year.²

Among Enlisted Personnel and Warrant Officers, Retention of Black Personnel Is Lower Than That of White Personnel

Figure 5.1 shows the retention profiles for enlisted personnel and WOs. These profiles show two notable “kinks” where the curves dip downward, indicating that losses are particu-

FIGURE 5.1
Cumulative Continuation Rates, by Race and Ethnicity, for Active-Duty Enlisted Personnel and Warrant Officers, Fiscal Years 2005–2018



² For example, if 50 percent of personnel leave in the first year and an additional 50 percent of remaining personnel leave in the second year, the CCR after two YOSs would be 25 percent, indicating that 25 percent of all personnel who began their careers would remain after two years.

larly high: The first, between the third and fourth YOSs, is the point at which many personnel complete their initial enlistment terms of service, and the second, between the 19th and 20th YOSs, is when someone becomes retirement eligible. Each curve gradually flattens out between the fourth and 19th YOSs, which reflects the fact that personnel in all groups become likelier to remain in the active-duty workforce as they approach retirement.

The profiles indicate that retention is highest for Asian and Pacific Islander personnel and lowest for black personnel. The CCRs suggest that 42 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander personnel who enlist would remain until retirement (i.e., in the workforce through at least YOS 19), compared with 35 percent of Hispanic personnel and non-Hispanic other personnel, 33 percent of white personnel, and 29 percent of black personnel. Further, the retention profile for black personnel shows several unique patterns. Their retention is lower than for white personnel in the first three YOSs, when Coast Guard enlistees would be under their initial contracts. Then retention of black personnel “catches up” to that of white personnel from YOSs 4 to 6, suggesting higher rates of reenlistment after the initial term. Finally, lower continuation rates for the remainder of the career life cycle led to a 6–percentage point gap at retirement relative to white personnel.

Retention for Black, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Other Officers Is Lower Than That for White and Hispanic Officers

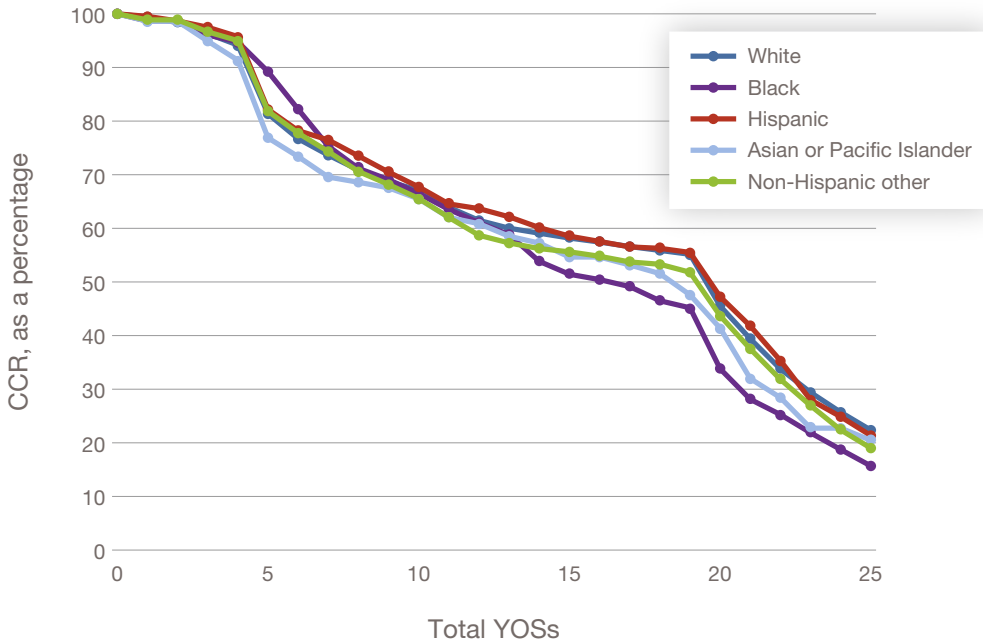
The Coast Guard administrative data show that officer retention is much higher than enlisted retention.³ Retention profiles for officers show that 55 and 56 percent of white and Hispanic officers, respectively, would remain through retirement, compared with 48 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander officers and 45 percent of black officers (Figure 5.2). Like with black enlisted personnel and WOs, the profile for black officers shows patterns different from those of other groups over the course of the career life cycles. After the first five years, retention for black officers is 8 percentage points higher than for white officers, but lower year-over-year continuation rates from that point on result in a gap of 10 percentage points between black and white officers at retirement.

Separation Reasons Indicate Relatively High Rates of Conduct and Promotion Issues for Racial and Ethnic Minority Personnel

The majority of separations from the Coast Guard occur under normal, voluntary circumstances, but, in any case in which someone separates as a result of an administrative process, the data associate that person with a separation reason. These reasons provide useful information about the mechanisms behind the racial and ethnic differences in the retention profiles. Table 5.1 summarizes the racial and ethnic differences in separation reasons as a percentage of all preretirement separations that occurred from FY 2005 through FY 2018.

³ Coast Guard CCRs also show higher retention than those in the DoD services, which tend to retain roughly 40 percent of their officers through retirement (MLDC, 2010).

FIGURE 5.2
Cumulative Continuation Rates, by Race and Ethnicity, for Active-Duty Commissioned Officers, Fiscal Years 2005–2018



The reasons for separation highlight two notable findings: First, enlisted racial and ethnic minority personnel in general and black personnel in particular have a much higher likelihood of separating because of legal issues (i.e., court-martial), conduct, or performance. This suggests that the relatively low early-career retention for black personnel relates to disproportionate rates of disciplinary actions. However, it was out of the scope of the current study to further explore the potential root causes for these disparities in disciplinary actions. Second, black officers and, to a lesser degree, other racial and ethnic minority officers tend to have higher rates of separation than white officers because of not being selected for promotion. Absent special circumstances, Coast Guard policy prescribes that an officer be discharged after the second failure to be selected for the next-higher grade (COMDTINST M1000.4). Both patterns highlight that the racial and ethnic differences in retention patterns tie back to group differences in promotion outcomes. For more about our analysis of the advancement and promotion systems, see Chapter Four.

How Other Characteristics Affect Retention Differences

Even in cases in which racial and ethnic minority personnel remain in the Coast Guard at similar rates to those of white personnel, it is important to understand how other character-

TABLE 5.1

Percentages of Preretirement Separations from Fiscal Years 2005 Through 2018 Associated with Descriptive Reason Categories, by Race and Ethnicity

Personnel	None	Nonselection for Promotion	Legal, Conduct, or Performance	Medical	Physical Standards	Other
Enlisted and WO						
White	65.3	0.0	19.0	6.0	4.3	5.3
Black	47.7	0.0	35.9	5.0	6.0	5.5
Hispanic	59.4	0.0	25.3	4.9	4.8	5.6
Asian or Pacific Islander	62.3	0.0	22.4	4.5	3.8	7.1
Non-Hispanic other	61.0	0.0	21.2	6.7	4.8	6.3
Commissioned officer						
White	73.7	17.5	5.5	2.3	0.8	0.2
Black	61.1	32.8	4.6	0.0	1.5	0.0
Hispanic	65.2	22.6	7.7	3.9	0.0	0.7
Asian or Pacific Islander	62.2	31.1	4.4	2.2	0.0	0.0
Non-Hispanic other	75.3	17.0	2.8	3.3	0.6	1.1

NOTE: The legal, conduct, or performance category includes all separation reasons associated with misconduct, court-martial, alcohol, and unsatisfactory or substandard performance.

istics (e.g., family status) and career factors (e.g., personnel tempo) relate to retention gaps for two reasons:

- First, if racial and ethnic minority personnel have less of a tendency than white personnel to possess retention-enhancing characteristics, one would expect retention of the URM groups to be lower than that of white personnel. If this were the case, similar overall retention rates would actually indicate that the Coast Guard outperforms the expectation in retaining URM personnel.
- Second, if policy changes seek to alter career factors for reasons other than retention (e.g., to address promotion gaps), it would also help to understand whether such changes are likely to affect URM retention.

A characteristic will affect retention for URM and white personnel differently if (1) the characteristic is strongly associated with retention and (2) URM personnel differ from white personnel in the tendency to possess the characteristic. If either of these conditions is not

present, the characteristic will not tend to create a gap between retention of URM versus white personnel even if it is very important to retention generally. Table 5.2 summarizes the possible effects that a personal characteristic or career factor could have on retention gaps. If URM personnel are likelier to have retention-enhancing factors, the factors will boost retention of URM personnel relative to that of white personnel. We refer to such characteristics as *mitigating* factors. If URM personnel are likelier to have characteristics that reduce expected retention, this pattern will tend to lower retention of URM personnel relative to that of white personnel. We refer to such characteristics as *contributing* factors.

Prior studies of race/ethnicity and gender differences in career progression in DoD (Asch, Miller, and Malchiodi, 2012; Asch, Miller, and Weinberger, 2016) and recent retention studies of the Coast Guard (Hall et al., 2019; Wenger et al., 2019) suggest some factors, including family characteristics, personnel tempo, and occupational specialties, that could relate to racial and ethnic differences in retention. We used a common statistical technique for understanding demographic differences in career outcomes⁴ to explore which factors contribute to racial and ethnic differences in retention, which mitigate them, and which do not relate to them. We compared retention outcomes for white personnel with those of URM personnel (as a single group) to identify the most-broadly applicable factors that consistently relate to racial and ethnic differences. Table 5.3 summarizes the results using the symbols from Table 5.2, while Appendix C contains the numerical results.

Several of the individual characteristics act as mitigating factors across multiple milestones. The most consistent mitigating factor is family status because URM personnel are

TABLE 5.2
Possible Relationships Between Other Characteristics and Retention Differences

Type of Characteristic	Relationship Between the Characteristic and Retention Differences
Retention-enhancing characteristic (for example, being a pilot)	
White personnel likelier to have it	Contributing factor (C)
URM personnel likelier to have it	Mitigating factor (M)
No group difference in characteristic	No effect (—)
Retention-reducing characteristic (for example, being passed over for promotion)	
White personnel likelier to have it	Mitigating factor (M)
URM personnel likelier to have it	Contributing factor (C)
No group difference in characteristic	No effect (—)

⁴ The technique is known as a Blinder–Oaxaca decomposition, after Blinder, 1973, and Oaxaca, 1973. Our approach is very similar to the approach in Asch, Miller, and Weinberger, 2016, and Hall et al., 2019. Both of these reports contain appendixes describing the technical methods in more detail.

likelier than white personnel to be married and to have children, which are both consistently associated with higher retention. URM officers are also likelier to be older at entry and to have advanced degrees at each decision point, and these features are also positively linked to retention. The reason that gender acts as a mitigating factor for retaining URM enlisted personnel is that URM personnel are likelier than white personnel to be male, while white personnel are likelier than URM personnel to be female, and women tend to remain at lower rates, all else being equal.

The contributing factors are more consistent for officers than for enlisted personnel. The average URM officer in the Coast Guard is likelier to be prior enlisted and to miss promotion in the early part of their career but less likely to commission through the USCGA or to be a pilot (a group with singularly high retention). These factors all tend to reduce retention of URM personnel relative to that of white personnel, except for prior-enlisted status, which becomes a mitigating factor after the first officer milestone.

The bottom row of Table 5.3 indicates whether the comparisons show that URM retention is worse than expected, *given the characteristics of the personnel*. The most prevalent value (“no”) means that, for most comparisons, the Coast Guard retains URM personnel at rates that are similar to or higher than those of white personnel after accounting for the other characteristics and career factors in the table. For instance, the fact that early-career officer retention is similar between URM and white officers (Figure 5.2) despite the presence of the contributing factors in the table means that URM officers tend to remain at higher rates than similarly situated white officers.

Active-Duty Personnel’s Perspectives on Retention Decisions

As part of our focus groups, we asked participants what factors they considered when deciding to stay in or leave the active-duty Coast Guard and the extent to which race, ethnicity, and gender influenced those retention decisions. The factors we heard, which were consistent with those encountered in previous HSOAC work on retaining women in the active-duty Coast Guard (Hall et al., 2019), fell into three broad categories:

- personal-life factors (e.g., wanting to have children, lack of compatibility with a spouse’s or partner’s career or job)
- work environment factors (e.g., poor leadership, negative treatment due to race/ethnicity or gender)
- job factors (e.g., assignment locations, frequent transfer, job stress).

Informed by themes identified from the focus groups, as well as prior surveys assessing retention within the armed forces (see Appendix G), we created survey items that asked respondents to mark which factors had caused them to consider leaving the active-duty Coast Guard at some point during their careers, to help us assess the extent to which the themes we heard were factors for the broader Coast Guard population. In the rest of this section, we present

TABLE 5.3
Influence of Other Characteristics on Retention Differences

Characteristic	Enlisted Milestone				Officer Milestone		
	Continue to Two Years	Complete First Term	Reenlistment	Complete Second Term	Continue to Five Years	Remain in Sixth Year	Continue to Nine Years
Family status	M	M	M	M	M	—	—
AFQT score	C	—	M	—			
Advanced degree	—	—	—	—	M	M	—
Gender	M	M	M	—	—	—	—
Entry age	—	—	—	—	—	M	M
Initial term length	C						
Entry FY	—	—	M	—	—	—	—
YOSs or grade level		C	—	C			
Rating category		C	M	—			
Personnel tempo		—	—	—	C	—	—
Pilot					C	C	C
Promotion status					C	C	—
Prior enlisted					C	M	M
USCGA graduate					C	C	C
Coast Guard underperforms?	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

NOTE: M = mitigates racial and ethnic differences in retention. C = contributes to differences. — = statistically insignificant. Blank spaces in the table indicate cases in which factors do not apply to particular milestones.

results from our survey, along with additional insight from the focus groups about factors identified as important in retention decisions.

Intentions to Remain in the Active-Duty Coast Guard

In the survey, we asked respondents about their current intentions related to remaining in the Coast Guard for at least 20 years.⁵ Overall, 65 percent of enlisted respondents and 74 percent of officers indicated that they probably or definitely would remain. However, women were less likely than men to indicate that they would remain. As would be expected, there were also significant differences by rank, with smaller percentages of junior enlisted personnel and officers expressing an intention to remain for at least 20 years (e.g., 38 percent of E-1–E-3 personnel indicated that they probably or definitely would remain, and 65 percent of O-1–O-3 personnel indicated that they probably or definitely would remain).

Personal-Life Factors

Tables 5.4 and 5.5 show the percentage of survey respondents, by gender and race/ethnicity, who indicated each personal-life factor as something that caused them to consider leaving the active-duty Coast Guard at some point during their careers (respondents could check all that applied). The tables also highlight differences of at least 10 percent between men and women and between racial/ethnic groups and white personnel. As the tables show, across the board, the most-common personal-life factors that caused personnel to consider leaving the active-duty Coast Guard included difficulty meeting family commitments, lack of compatibility with a spouse's or partner's career, the ability to meet children's needs, and the inability to develop a support network.

In our focus groups, participants who raised these as factors in their retention decisions discussed the importance of family in general, including the negative impact that frequent transfers, deployments, and long hours can have on family and children. Participants also discussed general challenges in having work–life balance in being able to meet the needs of their families and children. For example, one white woman commented,

And your kid gets sick, you have to leave your job. You have to choose if your job or your family is more important to you.

Another white woman said,

Every woman that's gotten out that I've known, it's because the Coast Guard is not working for their family anymore.

⁵ The item asked, "What are your current intentions toward remaining in the Coast Guard for at least 20 years?" (1 = definitely will *not* remain in the Coast Guard, 5 = definitely will remain in the Coast Guard; a respondent could also indicate that the item was not applicable to them if they had already completed 20 or more years).

In terms of the influence of one's spouse or partner, focus group participants described challenges with civilian spouses maintaining their own careers due to frequent moves and the locations of certain assignments and difficulties for dual active-duty couples in being colocated. For example, one racial or ethnic minority woman with a civilian spouse commented,

If I get stationed somewhere that isn't conducive to my husband's career, it becomes a challenge each time it's assignment season. What do I do?

Commenting on issues with collocation with another active-duty member, another racial or ethnic minority woman stated,

Colocation, which goes back to family. As you get to be a higher up, you are not guaranteed colocation. I already was a single parent once for the Coast Guard, and I am not willing to do that again. If I am not colocated with my husband, I may get out at 16 years.

Focus group participants also described challenges that come with being away from family members and others who can provide a support network. For example, when discussing retention factors, one racial or ethnic minority man said, "family support, external support is huge." Another white woman commented,

You don't have stability, and you're making connections with people—like, I don't have a family, so, when I move, I have to make new friends and everything. And that process gets draining.

As shown in Table 5.4, family and child-care concerns were reported by relatively large proportions of women. For example, 41 percent of enlisted women and 49 percent of female officers indicated that starting a family or wanting to have a child influenced their retention decisions. Spouse and partner considerations were also a factor, particularly for female officers, with 45 percent of female officers indicating that lack of compatibility with a spouse's or partner's career was a factor and 37 percent of female officers indicating that inability to colocate with a spouse or partner was a factor. These findings are consistent with previous HSOAC work that examined retention of women in the Coast Guard (see Hall et al., 2019). There was less variation by race and ethnicity in terms of the personal-life factors that influence retention decisions, as shown in Table 5.5).

Work Environment Factors

Tables 5.6 and 5.7 show the percentage of survey respondents, by gender and race/ethnicity, who indicated each work environment factor that caused them to consider leaving the active-duty Coast Guard at some point during their careers (the respondent could check all that applied). The tables also highlight differences of at least 10 percent between men and women and between racial/ethnic minority and white personnel.

As the tables show, across groups, poor quality of one's immediate leadership was the most commonly indicated work environment factor considered in retention decisions. In our focus groups, participants discussed the importance of good leaders in creating a supportive and

TABLE 5.4
Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Personal-Life Retention Factors, by Gender and Corps

Retention Factor	Enlisted		Officer	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Difficulty meeting family commitments	37	37	41	38
Lack of compatibility with spouse's or partner's career or job	26	29	34	45
Inability to develop a support network	29	38	30	40
Ability to meet my child(ren)'s needs	23	30	32	31
Starting a family or wanting to have a child	25	41	24	49
Potential requirement to leave family for a deployment	31	30	22	20
Inability to colocate with my spouse or partner	10	25	14	37
Lack of availability of child care	10	23	10	20
High cost of child care	13	22	10	16
Spouse's or partner's negative attitude toward the Coast Guard	9	8	10	8

NOTE: Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. Bold indicates a difference of at least 10 percent.

positive environment that fosters retention, while poor leaders can create a negative environment that leads to people wanting to leave. For example, one white woman commented,

Good leadership. At the end of the day, it's the people, even if someone doesn't like the job. I am sold only because I have such a good shop, and leadership is so important throughout your career. The second I am not happy, I will leave.

Similarly, when asked about factors that influenced retention decisions, a racial or ethnic minority man said,

Command climate. How leaders treat people is important. It's variable. I've been at terrible ones. Where I am now is amazing, and it has changed my perspective on the Coast Guard. It makes a huge difference.

URM survey respondents frequently indicated that work environment factors—such as lack of role models similar to them, limited opportunities to work with personnel of their gender or race/ethnicity, and negative treatment due to their gender or race/ethnicity—played a role in their retention considerations. In particular, 32 percent of black enlisted personnel

TABLE 5.5
Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Personal-Life Retention Factors, by Race/Ethnicity and Corps

Retention Factor	Enlisted				Officer			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic Other	White	Black	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic Other
Difficulty meeting family commitments	36	32	37	44	39	40	41	44
Lack of compatibility with spouse's or partner's career or job	26	19	24	31	38	29	31	39
Ability to meet my child(ren)'s needs	23	19	24	27	32	28	30	33
Inability to develop a support network	30	30	31	30	32	31	31	33
Starting a family or wanting to have a child	28	23	24	28	29	29	24	35
Potential requirement to leave family for a deployment	31	24	30	31	23	16	22	19
Inability to colocate with my spouse or partner	12	10	12	13	19	11	18	24
Lack of availability of child care	12	10	13	14	12	5	12	13
High cost of child care	14	13	15	17	11	10	11	15
Spouse's or partner's negative attitude toward the Coast Guard	9	4	8	10	10	5	7	8

NOTE: Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. There were no differences of at least 10 percent between racial/ethnic minority personnel and white personnel.

TABLE 5.6
Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Work Environment Retention Factors, by Gender and Corps

Retention Factor	Enlisted		Officer	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Poor quality of my immediate leadership	51	61	49	57
Lack of sense of community among Coast Guard personnel	30	39	21	26
Lack of role models who are similar to me	25	39	16	33
Personnel currently working in my unit	28	35	18	21
Lack of a mentor	19	28	12	18
Negative treatment in the Coast Guard because of my gender	3	37	2	34
Negative treatment in the Coast Guard because of my race or ethnicity	6	7	7	5
Negative experiences involving sexual harassment or sexual assault	4	30	3	20
Limited opportunities to work with personnel of my same race or ethnicity	4	6	4	6
Limited opportunities to work with personnel of my same gender	0	16	N/A	15

NOTE: Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. N/A = not applicable because there were fewer than 15 respondents. Bold indicates a difference of at least 10 percent.

and 37 percent of black officers, compared with 2 percent of their white counterparts, indicated that negative treatment because of their race or ethnicity was a factor in their retention considerations. Similarly, 37 percent of enlisted women and 34 percent of female officers, compared with 3 percent of enlisted men and 2 percent of male officers, respectively, indicated that negative treatment because of their gender was a factor in their retention considerations. Thirty percent of female enlisted personnel (compared with 4 percent of male enlisted) and 20 percent of female officers (compared with 3 percent of male officers) also indicated that experiences involving sexual harassment or sexual assault were retention considerations.

As part of our focus groups, we asked participants directly how, if at all, they thought gender or race/ethnicity influenced decisions to stay in the Coast Guard or leave it. Participants described sometimes feeling like they did not fit in the Coast Guard because they did not see others like themselves and wanted that sense of community. For example, one racial or ethnic minority man commented,

People don't feel a part of the Coast Guard. I've never been stationed with minorities, so it can be hard to fit in.

TABLE 5.7
Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Work Environment Retention Factors, by Race/Ethnicity and Corps

Retention Factor	Enlisted				Officer			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic Other	White	Black	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic Other
Poor quality of my immediate leadership	53	45	49	54	50	45	51	56
Lack of sense of community among Coast Guard personnel	30	34	34	34	19	35	27	32
Personnel currently working in my unit	29	21	28	28	18	15	17	26
Lack of role models who are similar to me	24	42	33	30	15	43	30	33
Lack of a mentor	18	25	27	22	12	13	18	20
Negative treatment in the Coast Guard because of my gender	7	10	6	7	8	6	7	10
Negative experiences involving sexual harassment or sexual assault	7	7	9	8	6	5	6	8
Limited opportunities to work with personnel of my same gender	3	4	3	2	3	N/A	3	3
Negative treatment in the Coast Guard because of my race or ethnicity	2	32	13	10	2	37	15	15
Limited opportunities to work with personnel of my same race or ethnicity	1	34	9	9	N/A	39	11	17

NOTE: Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. N/A = not applicable because there were fewer than 15 respondents. Bold indicates a difference of at least 10 percent.

Similarly, another racial or ethnic minority man said,

Whether you are being included or not. It's so tiny; it's like a clique. If you don't fit in or conform, you get out.

Discussing a lack of role models, a racial or ethnic minority woman commented,

I have never had a female warrant officer. Having a female supervisor has been extremely motivational and inspiring.

Focus group participants also discussed feeling like they were treated differently because of their gender or race/ethnicity. For example, one racial or ethnic minority man commented,

When you're the minority—there was a group of us, every single one of us more than our counterparts had more responsibilities, more hours, and would get lower marks, denied opportunities. Every single one got out, out of six of us, except for me. . . . our counterparts did worse things and not going through the same thing. No one helps you out.

Another racial or ethnic minority woman stated,

Being a minority woman in the Coast Guard and an officer . . . it was different when you could just do your job and go home. But to be in the spotlight, there's a target on me. I feel like there is no room for mistakes. I feel like, as I move forward, it just gets magnified.

Job-Related Factors

Tables 5.8 and 5.9 show the percentage of survey respondents, by gender and race/ethnicity, who indicated each job-related factor as something that caused them to consider leaving the active-duty Coast Guard at some point during their careers. The tables also highlight differences of at least 10 percent between men and women and between racial and ethnic minority personnel and white personnel. As the tables show, job stress was the most commonly indicated factor considered in retention decisions, followed by such factors as job dissatisfaction and assignment locations. There was also much less variation by gender and race/ethnicity in terms of job factors that influenced retention decisions than with personal-life and work environment factors.

In our focus groups, participants often discussed job stress and job burnout in general but also described feeling like they had to do more with less. For example, when asked about retention factors, one white woman stated,

One thing contributing to people leaving is that resourcewise [being] told that we need to do more with less.

TABLE 5.8
Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Job-Related Retention Factors, by Gender and Corps

Retention Factor	Enlisted		Officer	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Job stress	42	51	43	49
Dissatisfaction with my job	35	40	30	37
Assignment locations	32	32	33	32
Lack of advancement or promotion opportunities	26	26	18	17
High frequency of transfers	25	18	37	31
Lack of opportunities for professional development	24	28	19	22
High home-station tempo (long duty day or work schedule)	23	25	26	30
The amount of workload I have in the Coast Guard	23	24	33	35
Underway requirements	19	20	12	12
Long deployments	17	15	10	10
High number of deployments	13	9	11	8
Difficulty meeting weight standards	10	19	7	13
Physical demands of the job	8	9	5	4
Lack of opportunities for command	8	9	18	13

NOTE: Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. There were no differences between men and women of at least 10 percent for this table.

Similarly, a racial or ethnic minority man commented,

I’ve been at prior commands where I felt like you were run ragged at work. There is no consideration of work–life balance over everything else, and that runs people out. Why stick around when you don’t have to put up with that?

Focus group participants also raised the issue of assignments in retention decisions. Comments on assignments included the importance of spouse and partner compatibility (e.g., compatibility with civilian careers and colocation with a military spouse) as described when discussing the issue under personal-life factors but also just the importance of the location in general. For example, one racial or ethnic minority man commented,

Geographic location plays a part. If me and close friends weren’t going to have gotten big cities, we would have gotten out. Lucky to have good jobs, good places, good supervisors.

TABLE 5.9

Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Job-Related Retention Factors, by Gender and Corps

Retention Factor	Enlisted				Officer			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic Other	White	Black	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic Other
Job stress	43	42	40	48	44	43	42	48
Dissatisfaction with my job	36	34	34	36	32	20	31	36
Assignment locations	32	36	31	33	32	28	34	34
High frequency of transfers	26	10	22	22	38	18	30	35
Lack of advancement and promotion opportunities	25	22	28	26	17	19	21	21
High home-station tempo (long duty day or work schedule)	24	18	21	26	28	17	25	26
The amount of workload I have in the Coast Guard	23	20	22	24	35	22	30	37
Lack of opportunities for professional development	23	27	28	23	18	17	24	29
Underway requirements	19	19	21	23	12	14	10	16
Long deployments	16	16	17	19	11	11	9	11
High number of deployments	12	7	13	15	10	8	10	12
Difficulty meeting weight standards	11	11	11	13	8	9	6	9
Physical demands of the job	8	9	8	10	5	8	4	5
Lack of opportunities for command	8	5	10	7	17	21	18	18

NOTE: Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. Bold indicates a difference of at least 10 percent.

Commenting on the importance of location assignment, another racial or ethnic minority man said,

. . . lifestyle choices are like, “no, I don’t want to go to New York if my family is here, if certain areas have a higher cost of living.”

Conclusion and Recommendations to Retain Underrepresented-Minority Personnel

The retention levels of racial and ethnic minority personnel, which were the focus of our quantitative analysis,⁶ are often similar to or higher than those of similarly situated white personnel. However, our findings suggest that retention patterns in the Coast Guard are intertwined with processes relating to recruiting and accessions, discipline, and advancement and promotion and that differences in these other career factors push retention of racial and ethnic minority personnel lower than it would have been in the absence of these differences. Many of these career factors relate to prior recommendations in other areas of the career life cycle, so the implication of the retention findings is that, if the Coast Guard is able to address those disparities, better URM retention could be an added benefit. This finding is particularly true for officers, in that lower URM rates of commissioning from the USCGA, entering the pilot specialty, and promoting on time appear to depress retention of URM personnel relative to that of white personnel.

We have two recommendations related to retention that stem directly from retention-specific findings. First, our focus group and survey results highlight that perceptions of leadership quality are among the most-common factors influencing retention across all demographic groups. Second, the relatively high rates of conduct-related separation among early-career URM enlisted personnel significantly reduce the number of URM personnel who remain long enough to complete their initial enlistment terms.

Recommendation 22. In keeping with the study on retaining women in the Coast Guard, expand opportunities for comprehensive leadership development training (see also recommendation 31).

Recommendation 23. Examine root causes of involuntary separations of URM enlisted personnel and develop mitigation strategies.

As the survey and focus groups findings show, the perceptions of leadership quality are an important factor in retention decisions through its impact on work–family balance, development of a positive or negative command climate, and overall work life of Coast Guard person-

⁶ As a reminder, given that prior HSOAC work examined retention of women in the Coast Guard (Hall et al., 2019), we focused on racial and ethnic minority personnel for the quantitative analyses on retention in this report.

nel. Further, as has been discussed in previous chapters, leaders can play an important role in the development and mentoring of their subordinates. As is discussed in Chapter Six, our study findings also point to the importance of leadership in improving the overall command climate in support of D&I and highlight areas for improvement in leadership development training. We recommend that the Coast Guard review current leadership training and look for ways to expand or make current training more comprehensive to ensure quality leadership throughout the Coast Guard, a recommendation that is consistent with our recommendation from the study on retaining women in the Coast Guard (Hall et al., 2019). Training should include skills needed for leading a diverse workforce and helping leaders understand how to develop an inclusive command. Leadership training should also include a focus on how to foster development and mentoring within a command. The training should be more frequent and consistent across Coast Guard careers, another recommendation consistent with those from the study on retaining women in the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard's data show that black personnel and, to a lesser degree, Hispanic personnel are likelier to separate for conduct-related reasons, which is consistent with the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) analysis showing that these personnel are disproportionately likely to be the subject of military justice incidents (GAO, 2019). This pattern is particularly challenging to understand and address because the disparities happen early in people's careers, when the HR system knows little about them, and it was beyond the scope of the current study to conduct additional data collection efforts to better understand potential reasons for these disparities. Addressing these retention disparities, then, requires the Coast Guard to understand the root causes through additional data collection before it can determine an appropriate strategy or a prevention program. The fact that this pattern exists across DoD suggests that the pattern is not necessarily driven by policies specific to the Coast Guard, but effective interventions are necessary if the Coast Guard seeks to increase the share of URM personnel who are available to serve beyond the first term.

Active-Duty Personnel’s Perspectives on Coast Guard Climate

In the preceding chapters, we examined numerous factors that affect representation of URM Coast Guard personnel at each stage of the career life cycle—recruiting, career development, promotion and advancement, and retention. In this chapter, we examine Coast Guard climate, including DEI strategies and practices and complaint processes that affect representation across the entire career life cycle from the perspectives of our survey and focus group participants.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategies and Practices

Beyond experiences with the elements of the Coast Guard career life cycle, we asked focus group participants about their experiences with and perceptions of Coast Guard DEI strategies and practices. Specifically, we asked participants whether they felt that current Coast Guard policies and strategies adequately addressed DEI and how the Coast Guard could better support DEI in its workforce. Some participants were unfamiliar with current Coast Guard DEI practices and unclear about what the Coast Guard considered DEI-related policies. For example, when asked about Coast Guard policies and strategies that addressed DEI, one participant stated,

If you ask anyone here what the policies are, I don’t think they can tell you.

A few participants also conflated DEI strategies and practices with Coast Guard policies related to the EO complaint process. Additionally, some participants shared that they were aware of Coast Guard policies that addressed DEI but were unaware of any associated actions or activities. For instance, one racial or ethnic minority man noted,

I’ve seen the policies. But I don’t [know] what actually goes on anywhere. I don’t know what the diversity office is actually doing. I don’t know what the promotion office is actually doing. I know what they are legally doing. As far as celebrating certain months, everyone does that

Similarly, another racial or ethnic minority man commented,

I don't know what is happening behind the policy. The commandant says we should reflect society. So, what are we actually doing?

Participants who were aware of the DEI strategies and practices gave mixed responses about their efficacy. Although some said that they thought that the policies were adequate, most stated that they did not think that the policies adequately addressed DEI issues in the workforce. Many participants relayed that policies were in place but that the implementation was lacking and problematic. As one participant said,

The written word on the paper, yes. The execution is a “hell, no.”

Another racial or ethnic minority man noted,

I think the mechanisms are well intentioned, but the execution is off. It feels more like people do it half-heartedly.

Similarly, another racial or ethnic minority man stated,

A lot of words and not a lot of action. The documents allow people to maneuver around things. Most of the things I've read have no real markers of success based on the policy.

Although they were not asked directly about leadership accountability, participants raised its importance during focus group discussions about DEI. Participants said that they felt that some senior Coast Guard leaders had started to acknowledge and address DEI but that DEI was not fully supported or embraced across all Coast Guard leadership or the entire workforce. Some focus group participants also reported feeling that leaders and policies did not address the cultural changes that were necessary to improve DEI. For example, one racial or ethnic minority man stated,

In theory, [the policies] are there . . . but the culture is not there yet. It's not only race-related issues; it's sexism, nepotism—all of the isms in the world that exist in the Coast Guard. They want to change them by policy, but you can't—it's culture. It starts with our leaders. Everyone wants to rely on policy and training, but you can't. We need to press our chiefs, master chiefs, JOs [junior officers] to change culture on their boats or shops.

Another racial or ethnic minority man noted,

I think the Coast Guard culture has to change, and leadership has to show they mean it. Take a stand and don't make empty threats.

Additionally, some participants said that they believed that leaders often were not held accountable for supporting DEI within the workforce and stressed the importance of leaders driving DEI efforts in order to see change. As one racial or ethnic minority man commented,

Truthfully, it all starts from the top. The big guys with the shoulder boards. That is where it all starts. When you read the policy, it sounds amazing, but you need the people at the top to push this through.

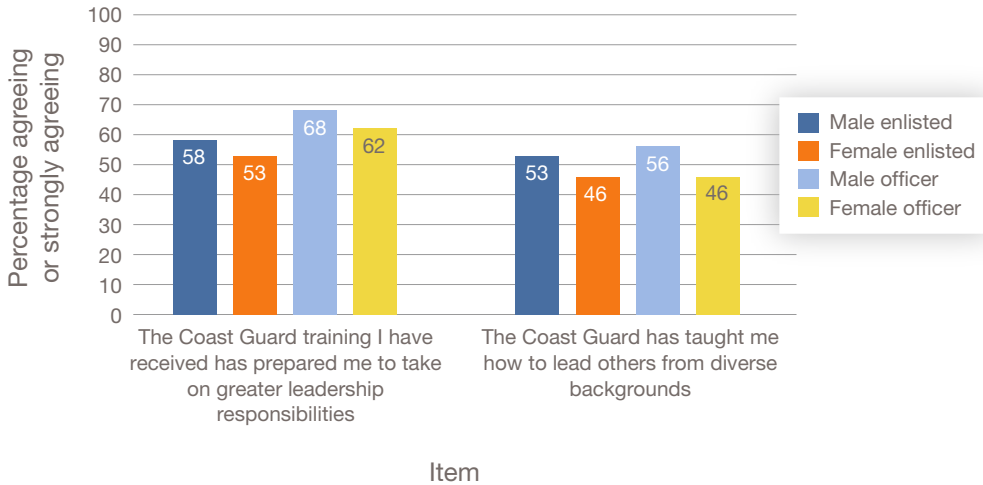
Another racial or ethnic minority man gave this take on the role of leadership:

It's a failure of leadership when places aren't succeeding and have discrimination. It's hard when people don't get held accountable until they get to a high rank.

Some focus group participants mentioned that having more-diverse leadership could help improve the Coast Guard's implementation of DEI efforts. Additionally, some participants reported feeling that personnel needed more-comprehensive leadership training, both earlier and more consistently throughout their careers, to better equip them to lead a diverse workforce and create an inclusive work environment.

As part of our survey, we included two questions on leadership training: (1) whether Coast Guard personnel felt that they had the training needed to take on greater leadership responsibilities and (2) whether they felt that the Coast Guard had taught them to lead others from diverse backgrounds (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Overall, 58 percent of enlisted personnel and 67 percent of officers indicated that the training they received prepared them to take on greater leadership responsibilities, and 52 percent of enlisted personnel and 54 percent of officers indicated that the Coast Guard had taught them to lead others from diverse backgrounds. Figures 6.1 through 6.3 show the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they had received the training they needed in these two areas, by gender and race/ethnicity. Women were significantly less likely than their male counterparts to indicate that they believed that they had received necessary training to take on greater leadership responsibilities and to indicate that the Coast Guard had taught them to lead others from diverse backgrounds. There were no significant differences between racial and ethnic groups in terms of whether they had received the necessary training to take on greater leadership responsibilities, but there were significant differences between some racial and ethnic minority groups on whether the Coast Guard taught them to lead others from diverse backgrounds. In particular, black respondents had significantly worse perceptions than other respondents, with just 40 percent of black enlisted personnel and 37 percent of black officers indicating that the Coast Guard taught them how to lead others from diverse backgrounds.

FIGURE 6.1
Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Training Perceptions, by Gender and Corps



NOTE: Analyses used 13,101 and 13,099 observations, respectively. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. We found significant differences ($p < .001$) between men and women on both items. We also found a significant difference between enlisted personnel and officers for training to take on greater leadership responsibilities ($p < .001$). We did not find any significant interactions between gender and corps ($p < .05$), indicating that differences between men and women were similar for enlisted personnel and officers.

Coast Guard Climate in Support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Focus group participants were also asked whether they believed they had been treated differently during their Coast Guard careers because of their race/ethnicity or gender. Focus group participants described feeling left out and not included in their peer groups, particularly in social activities, and not feeling the same level of camaraderie as white men. As one white woman commented,

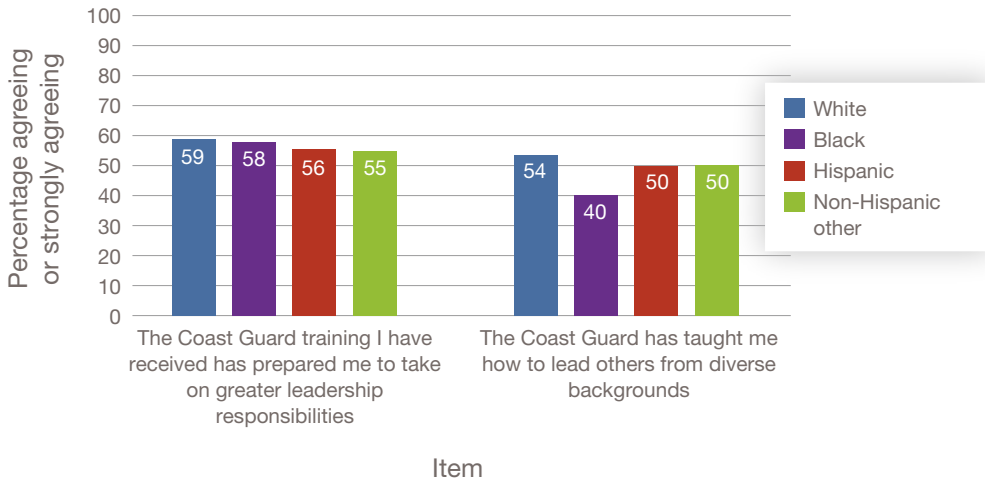
I feel like I'm always . . . No matter what—you are a girl and have male friends, but the camaraderie that they have with each other Guys start rumors. I live in this same environment as they do . . . No matter how much I am a part of them, I'm not one of them. Like, they can't be themselves around me.

A racial or ethnic minority man stated,

And being the raisin in the rice bowl—you're not included in a lot of stuff because of human nature. But come Black History Month, they've got a job for you.

FIGURE 6.2

Percentages of Enlisted Respondents Identifying Various Training Perceptions, by Race and Ethnicity



NOTE: Analyses used 8,728 and 8,727 observations, respectively. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. We did not find significant differences between groups in taking on greater leadership responsibilities. For leading others from diverse backgrounds, we found significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except (1) white and non-Hispanic other respondents and (2) non-Hispanic other and Hispanic respondents. These significant differences remained when we controlled for gender.

FIGURE 6.3

Percentages of Officer Respondents Identifying Various Training Perceptions, by Race and Ethnicity



NOTE: All analyses used 3,762 observations. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. We found no significant differences between groups in perceptions of preparation to take on greater leadership responsibilities. There were significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except (1) white and Hispanic respondents and (2) non-Hispanic other and Hispanic respondents in perceptions of leading others from diverse backgrounds. These significant differences remained when we controlled for gender.

Participants also talked about URM personnel standing out in the group and, as a result, their actions being scrutinized in a way that white men did not have to deal with. Female participants in particular described having to work harder than their male peers to prove themselves and feeling like they were not trusted as professionals in their jobs, a theme consistent with previous research (Hall et al., 2019). One participant noted,

I was told, “You are brown. You are female. You have to work harder than your male counterparts, and you can’t give up because you are the one that has to be a mentor to nonrates.” I get that, but why should I have to work harder than males that are here when we are saying the Coast Guard is all equal?

Some racial and ethnic minority male participants discussed feeling that they were not trusted and were under suspicion more frequently than their white peers when there was an issue of potential wrongdoing or an error. For example, one racial or ethnic minority man stated,

There’s the suspicion. A few years ago, I made a mistake: I didn’t lock a safe . . . It was my mistake; I went to mast for that. But there were four or five others involved, and somehow only the minorities went to mast for it. Somehow, there was a white chief who didn’t go. I take responsibility, always will, but in the years since, there’s that suspicion, especially in the OS world, when there’s an open safe or unlocked door.¹

Another racial or ethnic minority man noted,

I think the Coast Guard are quick to jump the gun, when [a member of a racial or ethnic minority group] is accused of doing something . . . “Such and such did this.” They’re pretty quick. It’s guilty till proven innocent.

Similarly, racial and ethnic minority participants reported feeling that they faced harsher consequences than their white peers in these instances. For example, one racial or ethnic minority man commented,

I was at a small-boat station, got qualified as a mid-watch . . . wake up at 10 and relieved at 8 o’clock. Another member made his watch and then went home. So, I went home, and, for some reason, they were looking for me. They asked why I went home, which was 30 minutes from the station, to sleep at home instead of sleeping in a dirty rack. They asked me to come back, and I explained someone else did it and I thought it was fine. They never explained why I got into trouble and he didn’t. I know it was race.²

¹ *Going to mast* means having a disciplinary hearing.

² This quote is not intended to comment on current policies at small-boat stations or requirements for staying at the station during rest periods after overnight duty. This quote is intended to demonstrate the

In terms of being treated differently, focus group participants also described dealing with racism and sexism in the Coast Guard. For example, a racial or ethnic minority man and racial or ethnic minority woman stated, respectively,

My first cutter, there were people calling me “molasses.” You have to speak up for yourself, and a lot of people don’t do that.

They tokenize me. They tell me I’m only in the spot because I am a minority.

A white woman commented,

I have two daughters and a son, and I am not sure if I want my two daughters to go to the Coast Guard Academy. I will sometimes call people out on deck if they say something like, “You acted like a girl,” for example. It doesn’t make you popular. For women in leadership, people think you are . . . a bitch, an air head, a lesbian, or a slut.

Some participants also described negative experiences and behavior based on cultural differences, as illustrated by comments from two racial or ethnic minority men.

I had a problem on a cutter. The XO had a problem with my accent. They then told me, “You’re not breaking in.” My supervisor told me my XO didn’t like my accent. I was completely outranked, so I didn’t think I could win, so I sat tight.

When I was on the cutter, it was a couple issues . . . I used to go to Cuba a lot and, growing up didn’t know I was going to catch Cubans. I wanted to be at the sea. I didn’t know it was in the job description . . . We were repatriating migrants, and it was kind of tough. I was targeted by two individuals on the boat because I was being too nice to [the Cuban migrants] . . . We were there as humanitarian services like caretakers. [The Cuban migrants] weren’t bad people; these people were doctors. And they don’t understand that. And how many times I had tried to voice my . . . opinions on the boat about the humanitarian service we were doing, and I was physically and verbally attacked on the cutter . . . It just sucked . . . The lack of understanding where other people come from and situations. They just say and do mean things because I was Cuban . . . The words that were said to me hurt, and I fought back. It happens. And it happened to me personally.

Sometimes these experiences were with overt negative behavior and sometimes involved subtler comments over time. As one racial or ethnic minority man put it,

There’s the subtle death by 1,000 cuts and then overt getting ran over by a train.

participant’s perception of being treated differently from another Coast Guard member and being singled out for punishment because of the participant’s race.

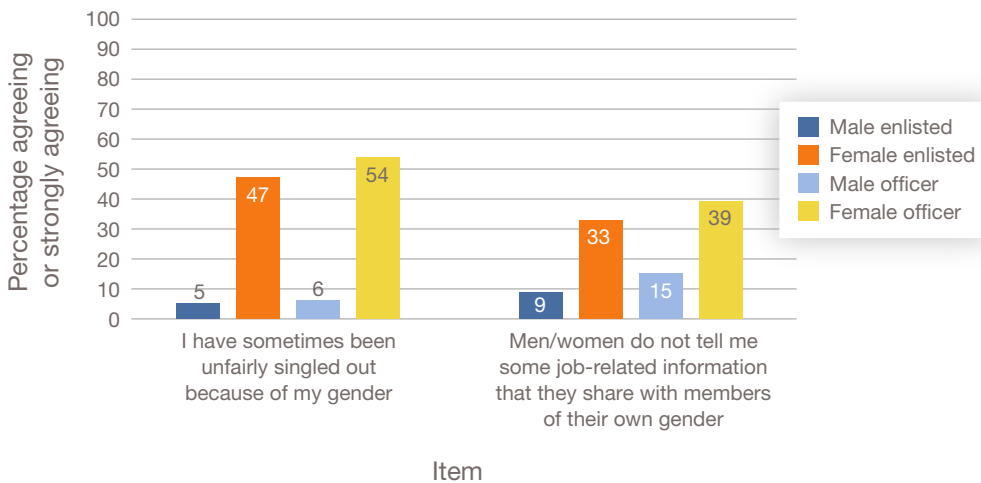
One racial or ethnic minority man shared an interesting perspective on his experiences with racism in the Coast Guard:

I present—or people assume I am—Caucasian, so, no, I haven’t been treated differently. But where it gets fuzzy . . . when certain things are said and you try to steer the conversation to a place where it is less offensive, it can have detrimental effects for you down the line. I have had people talk about their family affiliations with different white-power organizations. That is in the Coast Guard, and it is troubling. I would say to the commandant, the problems that we have, we just assume that, as society progressed, the Coast Guard would get better, so we don’t need to take actions to change things. This has not proven to be successful.

To provide further insight into these issues, we asked our survey respondents several questions about different aspects of their work environments, including whether respondents felt that they had been treated differently based on their gender or race/ethnicity, the extent to which they perceived that Coast Guard leaders made efforts to prevent gender discrimination and racial and ethnic discrimination, and the extent to which they would feel safe reporting experiences of gender discrimination or racial or ethnic discrimination.

Figure 6.4 shows the percentage of enlisted personnel and officers who indicated being unfairly singled out or not given job-related information because of their gender. Consistent with our focus group findings, women were likelier than men to indicate that they had been

FIGURE 6.4
Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of Treatment of Different Genders in the Coast Guard, by Gender and Corps



NOTE: Analyses used 11,934 and 11,928 observations, respectively. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. We found statistically significant differences between male and female respondents ($p < .001$) and between enlisted personnel and officers ($p < .05$) for both items. In addition, there was a statistically significant interaction between gender and corps for being unfairly singled out because of gender ($p < .001$), with slightly larger gender differences for officers than for enlisted personnel.

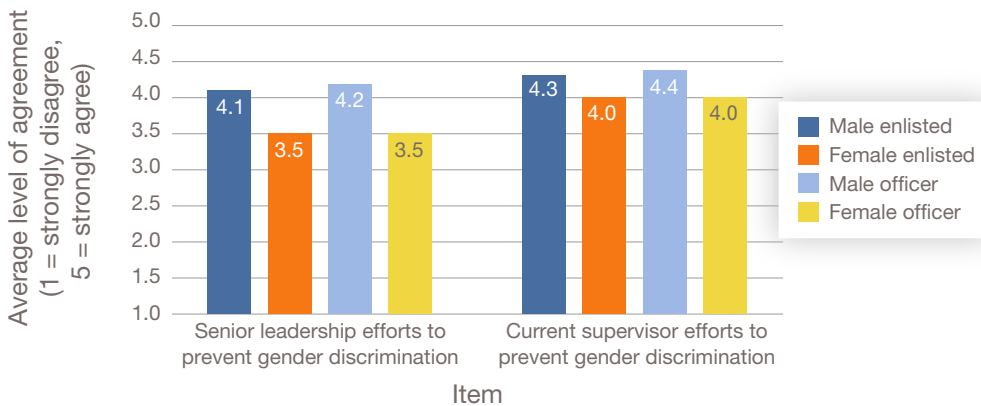
unfairly singled out because of their gender and that (male) peers did not tell them some job-related information.

As part of our survey, we also asked respondents about their perceptions of leadership efforts to prevent gender discrimination. We measured leadership efforts to prevent discrimination with three items using either “Coast Guard senior leadership” or “my current supervisor” as the stem (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree):

- “makes honest and reasonable efforts to stop gender discrimination”
- “takes reports of gender discrimination seriously”
- “actively supports gender diversity efforts” (this last item was asked only for Coast Guard senior leadership).

We aggregated these items together to create separate scale scores representing senior leadership efforts to prevent gender discrimination and current supervisor efforts to prevent gender discrimination. Figure 6.5 shows the mean scale scores for both senior leadership efforts and current supervisor efforts. As the figure shows, women were less likely than men to report perceiving that senior leadership and current supervisors made efforts to prevent gender discrimination. In addition, women were less likely than men to indicate feeling safe reporting an experience of gender discrimination (see Figure 6.6). Among women, perceptions of cur-

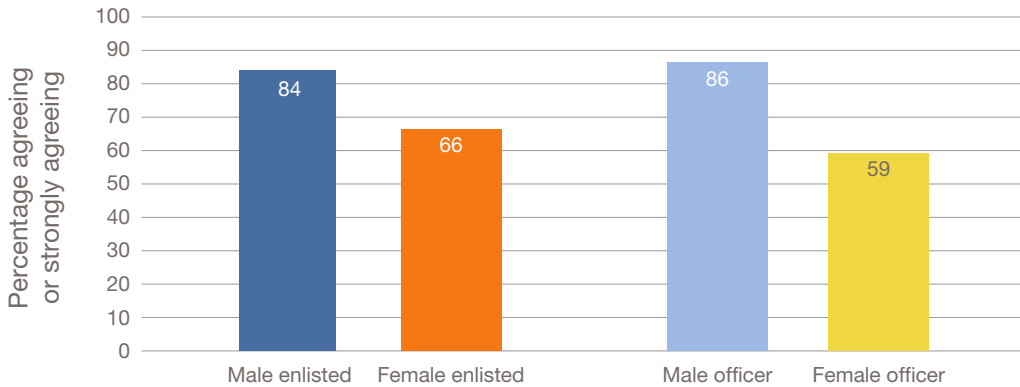
FIGURE 6.5
Perceptions of Efforts to Prevent Gender Discrimination, by Gender and Corps



NOTE: Analyses used 12,089 and 12,086 observations, respectively. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements using either “Coast Guard senior leadership” or “my current supervisor” as the stem: “makes honest and reasonable efforts to stop gender discrimination”; “takes reports of gender discrimination seriously”; and “actively supports gender diversity efforts” (this last item was asked only for Coast Guard senior leadership). Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. For both scales, there were statistically significant differences between male and female respondents ($p < .001$) and between enlisted personnel and officers ($p < .01$). There were also significant interactions between gender and corps ($p < .05$), with gender differences slightly larger for officers than for enlisted personnel.

FIGURE 6.6

Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of Safety to Report Gender Discrimination, by Gender and Corps



NOTE: Analysis used 12,085 observations. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, “I would feel safe reporting experiencing gender discrimination.” Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. There was a statistically significant difference between male and female respondents ($p < .001$) and between enlisted personnel and officers ($p < .01$). There was also a significant interaction between gender and corps ($p < .001$), with larger gender differences for officers than for enlisted personnel.

rent supervisors appeared to be more positive than perceptions of senior leadership, a finding that was also observed in workforces outside the Coast Guard (Farris et al., 2020).

Figures 6.7 and 6.8 show the percentage of enlisted personnel and officers who indicated being unfairly singled out or not told job-related information because of their race or ethnicity. Racial and ethnic minority personnel were likelier than their white counterparts to indicate that they had been unfairly singled out because of their race or ethnicity and that personnel in other racial or ethnic groups did not tell them some job-related information, with larger proportions of black personnel, in particular, agreeing with these statements.

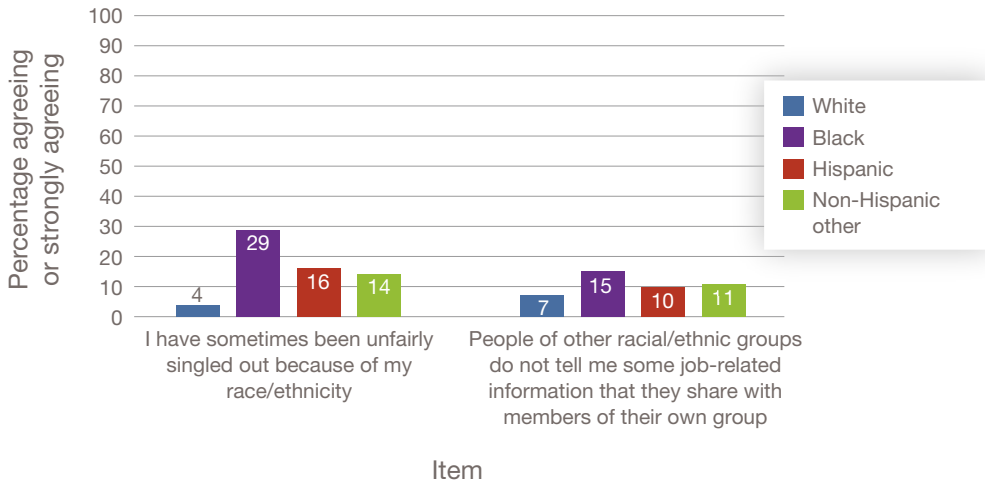
As part of our survey, we also asked respondents about perceptions of leadership efforts to prevent racial and ethnic discrimination. We measured leadership efforts to prevent discrimination with three items using either “Coast Guard senior leadership” or “my current supervisor” as the stem (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree):

- “makes honest and reasonable efforts to stop racial/ethnic discrimination”
- “takes reports of racial/ethnic discrimination seriously”
- “actively supports racial/ethnic diversity efforts” (this last item was asked only for Coast Guard senior leadership).

We aggregated these items together to create separate scale scores representing senior leadership efforts to prevent racial and ethnic discrimination and current supervisor efforts to prevent racial and ethnic discrimination. Figures 6.9 and 6.10 show the mean scale scores for both senior leadership efforts and current supervisor efforts. As the figures show, black per-

FIGURE 6.7

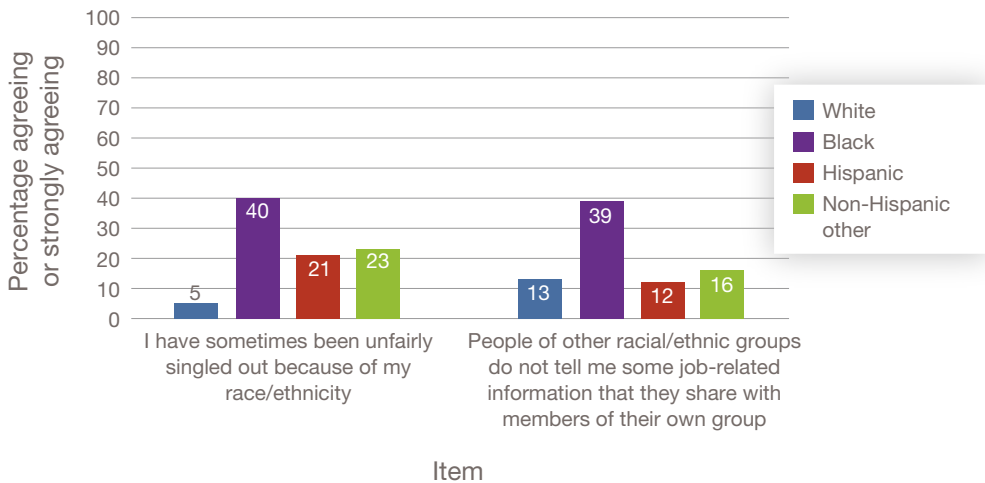
Percentages of Enlisted Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of Treatment of Different Racial and Ethnic Groups



NOTE: Analyses used 7,834 and 7,829 observations, respectively. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. There were significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except Hispanic personnel and non-Hispanic other personnel in being unfairly singled out and job-related information sharing. These significant differences remained when we controlled for gender.

FIGURE 6.8

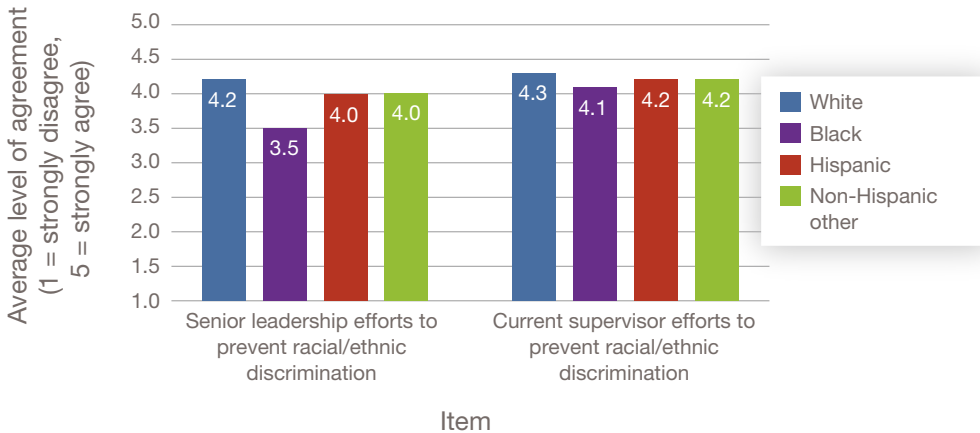
Percentages of Officer Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of Treatment of Different Racial and Ethnic Groups



NOTE: Analyses used 3,568 and 3,566 observations, respectively. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. There were significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except Hispanic personnel and non-Hispanic other personnel in being unfairly singled out. For job-related information sharing, there were significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups, except (1) Hispanic personnel and non-Hispanic other personnel and (2) Hispanic and white personnel. These significant differences remained when we controlled for gender.

FIGURE 6.9

Enlisted Personnel’s Perceptions of Efforts to Prevent Racial and Ethnic Discrimination



NOTE: Analyses used 8,031 and 8,030 observations, respectively. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements, using either “Coast Guard senior leadership” or “my current supervisor” as the stem: “makes honest and reasonable efforts to stop racial/ethnic discrimination”; “takes reports of racial/ethnic discrimination seriously”; and “actively supports racial/ethnic diversity efforts” (this last item was asked only for Coast Guard senior leadership). Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. There were significant ($p < .05$) differences between all groups except Hispanic personnel and non-Hispanic other personnel in perceptions of senior leadership efforts and perceptions of current supervisor efforts. These significant differences remained when we controlled for gender.

sonnel, in particular, were significantly less likely than personnel in other racial and ethnic groups to perceive that senior leadership and their current supervisors made efforts to prevent racial and ethnic discrimination. This difference was particularly pronounced in ratings of senior leadership. In addition, black personnel, in particular, were less likely than their white counterparts to indicate that they felt safe reporting an experience of racial or ethnic discrimination (see Figure 6.11).

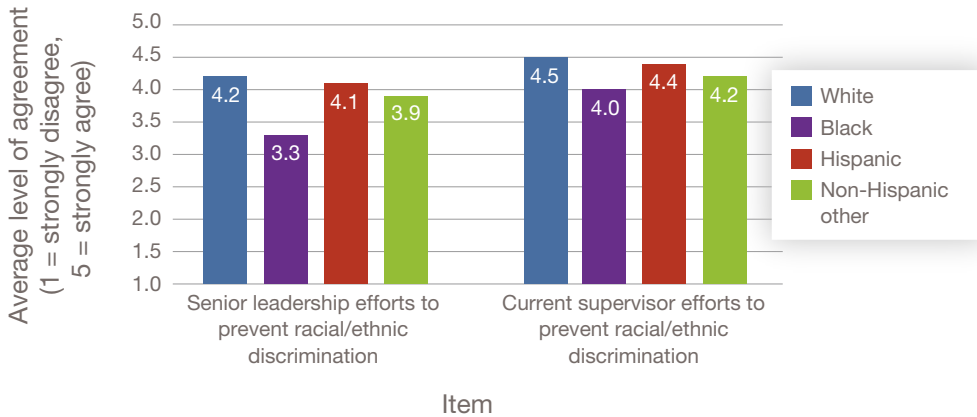
Equal-Opportunity Complaint Process

In addition to DEI strategies and practices, we asked focus group participants about their familiarity and experiences with the Coast Guard EO complaint process and their perceptions of the process.³ Most participants reported being familiar with the EO complaint process and how to report a complaint, but some more-junior personnel were not. Participants

³ According to *The U.S. Coast Guard Civil Rights Manual* (COMDTINST M5350.4E), personnel “who believe they have been subjected to unlawful discrimination have the right to access the complaint process.” Unlawful discrimination for active-duty Coast Guard personnel includes discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), and national origin. COMDTINST M5350.4E outlines the complaint process in more detail.

FIGURE 6.10

Officers' Perceptions of Efforts to Prevent Racial and Ethnic Discrimination



NOTE: Analyses used 3,624 and 3,623 observations, respectively. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements, using either “Coast Guard senior leadership” or “my current supervisor” as the stem: “makes honest and reasonable efforts to stop racial/ethnic discrimination”; “takes reports of racial/ethnic discrimination seriously”; and “actively supports racial/ethnic diversity efforts” (this last item was asked only for Coast Guard senior leadership). Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. There were significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups in perceptions of senior leadership. There were significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except white and Hispanic personnel in perceptions of current supervisor efforts. These differences remained when we controlled for gender.

stressed that junior personnel needed to be made more aware of the process of reporting an EO complaint.⁴

When asked whether they would feel comfortable reporting an instance of discrimination without fearing retaliation, most focus group participants relayed that, unfortunately, retaliation was a common response to reported allegations of discrimination. Often, they said, this is due to complaints not remaining confidential as intended.⁵ For example, one racial or ethnic minority woman commented on how the system might not be set up to support anonymity and impartiality because parties to the claim might know the mediators or investigators:

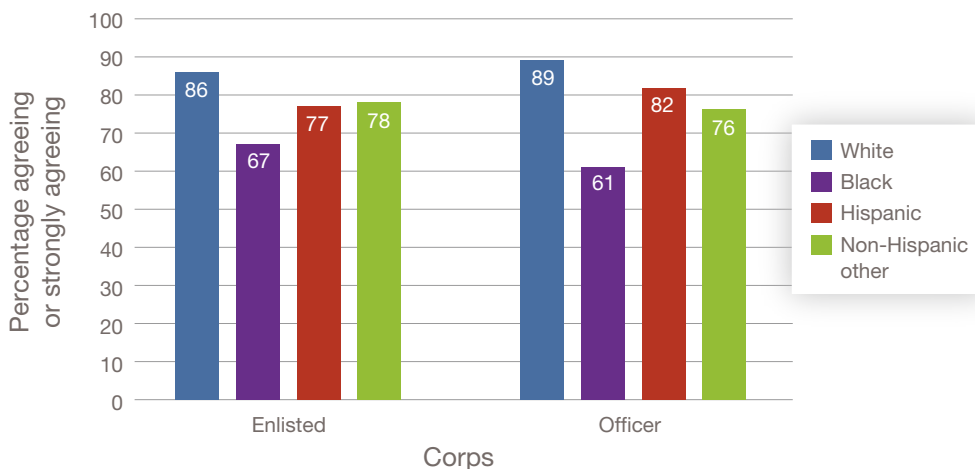
In addition to the EO complaint process, the Coast Guard operates a complaint process that personnel can access if subjected to prohibited harassment, governed by the Anti-Harassment and Hate Incident (AHHI) policy. According to COMDTINST M5350.4E, the AHHI complaint process is a “command-led process to stop harassing behavior and take corrective action.” Although the EO complaint process is managed by CG-00H, the command is responsible for the AHHI complaint process and its adjudication. We chose to concentrate our focus group and survey questions specifically on the EO complaint process, so findings reported in this chapter focus on that.

⁴ A representative from CG-00H shared that, every three years, all members receive civil rights training, which includes information about the EO complaint process.

⁵ This finding was not specific to professionals from the Civil Rights Directorate who were involved in the EO complaint process. Rather, participants commented broadly about confidentiality issues that are often related to rumors within a unit or confidentiality leaks at the local level.

FIGURE 6.11

Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of Safety to Report Racial or Ethnic Discrimination, by Race/Ethnicity and Corps



NOTE: Analyses for enlisted personnel used 8,028 observations, and those for officers used 3,619 observations. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, “I would feel safe reporting experiencing racial/ethnic discrimination.” Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. Among both enlisted personnel and officers, there were significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except non-Hispanic other and Hispanic personnel. These significant differences remained when we controlled for gender.

They say no retaliation, but they do. The Coast Guard is too small. We just had a sit-down with EO. We can now get a mediator, but I asked, “What if you know the mediators?” And she asked, “What does that have to do with anything?” If you are a mediator, you should know the reason why someone asks if the mediator knows anyone in the claim.

Participants noted that confidentiality breaches and retaliation can be more prevalent in insular Coast Guard communities, such as small units or on cutters. One racial or ethnic minority man stated,

On cutters, even when you say it’s anonymous, it doesn’t stick for more than five minutes. It gets out, and it isn’t even on purpose. People talk, and it moves all the way down the chain, and it leads to some sort of retaliation. Even if you plausibly deny it, it gets back to you. The whole exchange happens within 25 minutes.

Some participants noted that rumors and stigma related to filing an EO complaint often follow the complainant to their next assignment. Although this fear of retaliation and stigma can discourage people from reporting discrimination, some more-senior focus group participants stated that they would be more comfortable reporting instances of discrimination at their current ranks than they would have as junior personnel. There were also concerns about raising issues of discrimination when the alleged victim is the only woman or member of a

racial or ethnic minority category, leading to being ostracized by the group. For example, one racial or ethnic minority man commented,

If I'm the only minority and I speak up, I can be shunned from that group. If it takes me saying someone is mistreating someone else, I'd be worried about not belonging. People want to be part of the group, and, if that doesn't happen . . . I think it ultimately affects you.

When asked whether they believed that allegations of discrimination were dealt with fairly in the Coast Guard, participants raised the issue of the burden of proof required to corroborate instances of discrimination. They reported feeling that it was typically too difficult to prove that discrimination had occurred, so it was often not worth filing a complaint. Participants described how discrimination in the current environment could be subtle and cumulative over time and could be considered a gray area. For instance, one racial or ethnic minority woman stated,

It's harder [to prove] unless it's blatantly calling you out, like, "You stupid little Asian," or, "You can't do that because you're female." They don't do that anymore. It's the little things that they do that you see for yourself but other people don't get it because they don't get the same treatment. They aren't doing anything against what the book says. Even though you know yourself and know how they are treating you. You can't differentiate things between racism, sexism, orientation-related, etc. It's hard to say what it is because it's subtle things.

Participants described other reasons for not wanting to pursue EO complaints. They described a lack of transparency related to the complaint investigation process, and some relayed concerns about how investigators were assigned and trained. Some noted that the time required to resolve complaints discouraged many people from filing them in the first place. Some participants said that they did not think that accused personnel were held accountable and that complaints were rarely found to be substantiated. They described instances of accused personnel being transferred rather than being held accountable for discrimination complaints and sometimes even being promoted despite the claims. For example, participants told anecdotes about personnel being promoted despite several claims of discrimination across different assignments that were not tracked on their personnel records and that, as a result, "repeat offenders" were not flagged.⁶

Some focus group participants noted improvements in the handling of sexual assault cases in the Coast Guard and said that they hoped that efforts related to the discrimination process would be given the same rigor. They described elements of the Coast Guard Sexual Assault Prevention, Response, and Recovery (SAPRR) program—such as having well-trained victim

⁶ Although CG-00H does track EO complaints in a database, it is unclear whether focus group participants were referring to unsubstantiated or substantiated complaints or how these might have been connected to personnel records.

advocates at the unit level and having available, across the Coast Guard, rigorous, scenario-based training related to sexual assault⁷—as program efforts that should be replicated appropriately to address discrimination.

Informed by the findings from our focus groups, we included several items asking survey respondents about their understanding and perceptions of the EO complaint process. Findings from these questions are presented in Figures 6.12 through 6.14. Women and some personnel in racial and ethnic minority groups were less likely than men and white personnel, respectively, to indicate that they knew how to submit EO complaints, that they felt comfortable reporting allegations of discrimination without fearing retaliation, that allegations of discrimination were dealt with fairly, or that perpetrators who were found to have behaved inappropriately would face serious consequences. In particular, no more than 40 percent of female enlisted personnel and officers and no more than 40 percent of black enlisted personnel and officers agreed that allegations of discrimination were dealt with fairly or that perpetrators who were found to have behaved inappropriately would face serious consequences.

Conclusion and Recommendations to Improve the Coast Guard Climate in Support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts

The responses of the focus groups and survey suggest that the Coast Guard could do more to promote DEI. In focus groups, we discovered issues with awareness of DEI strategies and practices and doubts about their efficacy. Still others raised the importance of leadership accountability, support, and training on DEI, as well as having more leaders who were women or personnel in racial and ethnic minority groups. URM personnel indicated that they believed that they were treated differently because of their gender or race/ethnicity and relayed experiences with racism and sexism in their Coast Guard careers. Finally, personnel indicated a lack of trust in the EO complaint process and a perception that senior leaders could do more to help prevent discrimination.

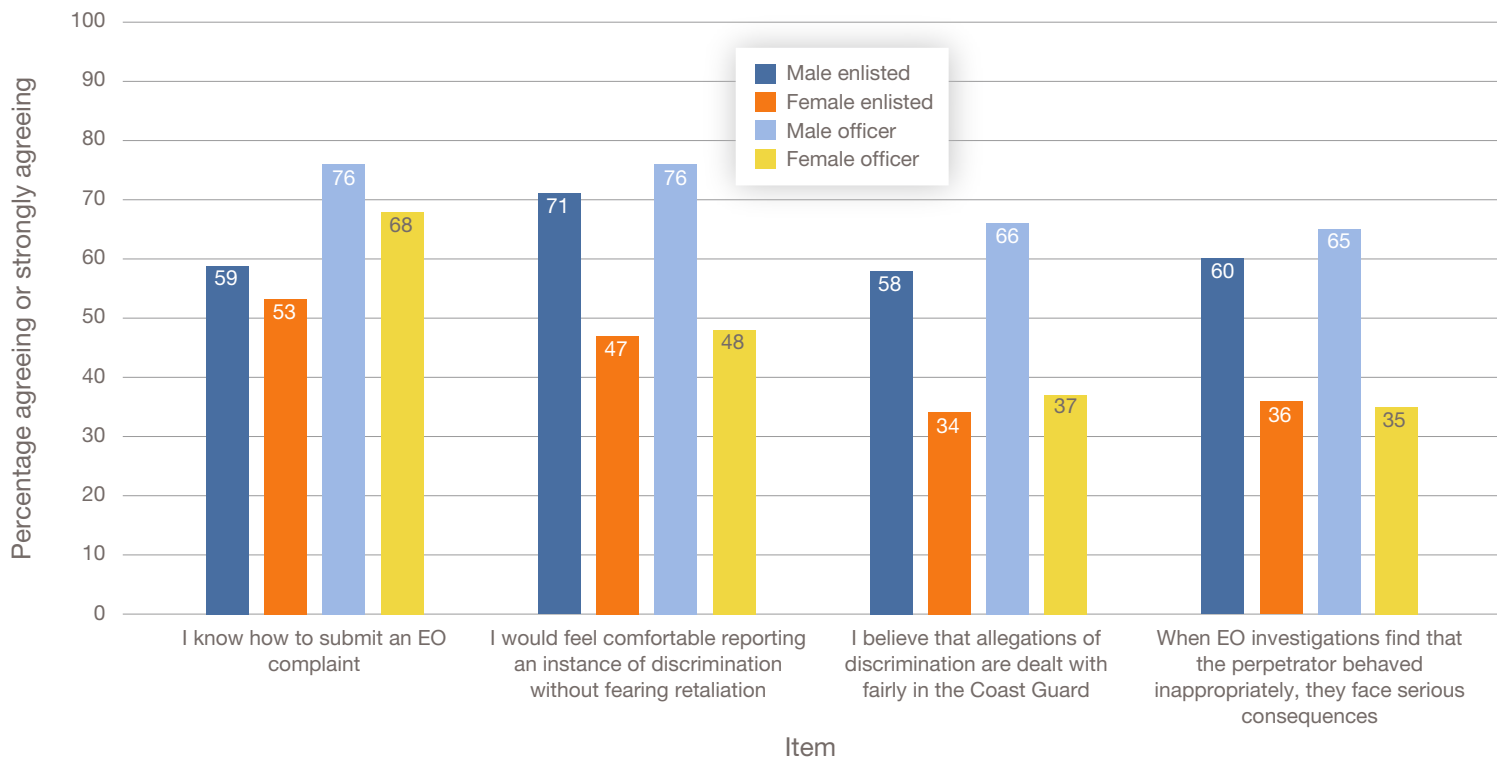
For DEI efforts to endure, the Coast Guard must foster a climate in which diversity is recognized as enhancing the service's collective operational performance. Personnel must believe that the organization values diversity, that policies and practices are fair for all groups, and that top leaders are committed to supporting and acting on DEI principles. As research shows, perceptions of a positive climate for diversity can help improve outcomes, such as commitment, satisfaction, and retention, for underrepresented groups (see Dwertmann, Nishii, and van Knippenberg, 2016).

To help foster a positive Coast Guard climate that supports DEI, we first looked to literature on culture change because culture reflects the overall underlying values of the organiza-

⁷ CG-00H does provide in-person training for all personnel every three years, and CG-00H reports that civil rights awareness training currently contains scenarios.

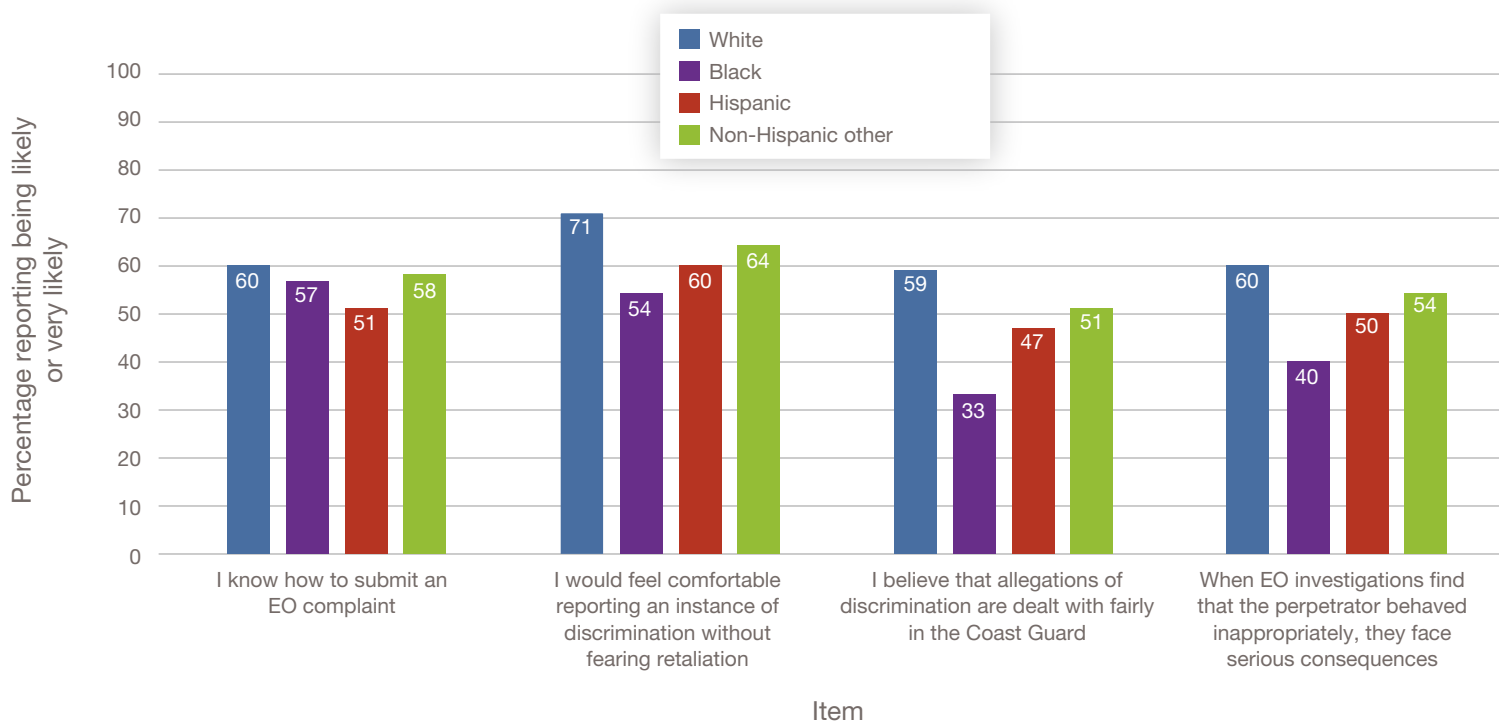
FIGURE 6.12

Percentages of Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Equal-Opportunity Complaint Process, by Gender and Corps



NOTE: From left to right, analyses used the following numbers of observations: 11,906; 11,904; 11,905; and 11,895. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. For all items, there were statistically significant differences between male and female respondents ($p < .001$). For the first and third items (from left to right), knowing how to submit an EO complaint and believing that allegations of discrimination were dealt with fairly, there were significant differences between enlisted personnel and officers ($p < .01$), but these differences were not observed for other items. There was also a significant interaction between gender and corps for comfort reporting an instance of discrimination ($p < .05$), showing larger gender differences for officers than for enlisted personnel; this interaction was not observed for the other items.

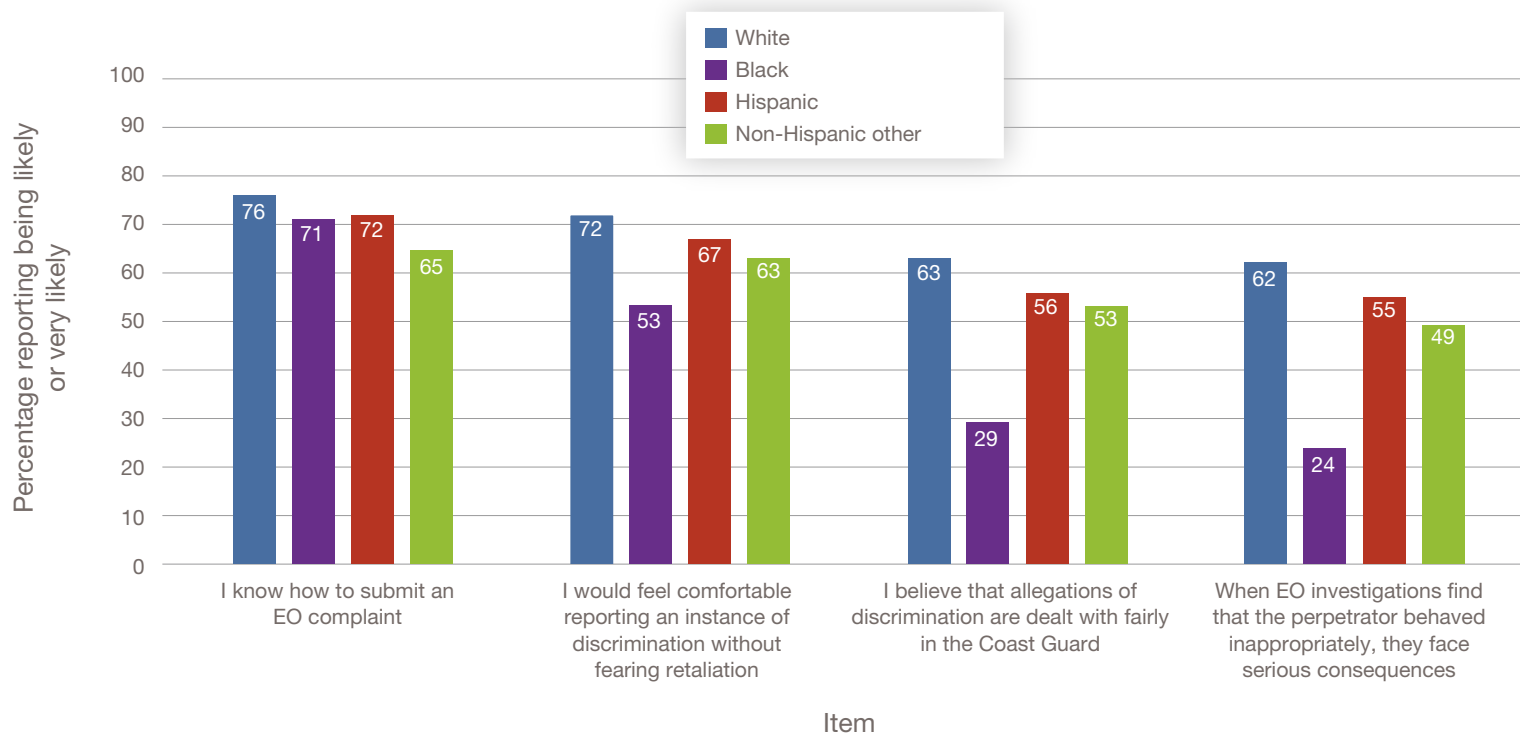
FIGURE 6.13
Percentages of Enlisted Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Equal-Opportunity Complaint Process, by Race and Ethnicity



NOTE: From left to right, analyses used the following numbers of observations: 7,813; 7,814; 7,812; and 7,803. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. In terms of reported knowledge of how to submit an EO complaint, there were significant differences ($p < .05$) between white and Hispanic respondents, non-Hispanic other and Hispanic respondents, and black and Hispanic respondents. In comfort reporting, there were significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except non-Hispanic other and Hispanic respondents. In beliefs about allegations, there were also significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except non-Hispanic other and Hispanic respondents. For consequences of EO investigations, we found significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except white and non-Hispanic other respondents and between Hispanic respondents and non-Hispanic other respondents. All significant differences remained when we controlled for gender.

FIGURE 6.14

Percentages of Officer Respondents Identifying Various Perceptions of the Equal-Opportunity Complaint Process, by Race and Ethnicity



NOTE: From left to right, analyses used the following numbers of observations: 3,559; 3,557; 3,559; and 3,558. Results represent weighted analyses to better match the demographics of the full active-duty population. In terms of reported knowledge of how to submit an EO complaint, there was one significant difference ($p < .05$) between white and non-Hispanic other respondents. In comfort reporting, there were significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except (1) white and Hispanic respondents and (2) non-Hispanic other and Hispanic respondents. In beliefs about allegations, there were also significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except white and Hispanic respondents. In addressing consequences of EO investigations, we found significant differences ($p < .05$) between all groups except (1) white and non-Hispanic other respondents and (2) Hispanic respondents and non-Hispanic other respondents. All significant differences remained when we controlled for gender.

tion and influences the specific organizational climate that forms (see Ostroff, Kinicki, and Muhammad, 2012). *Culture* can be nebulous to define, so, informed by the literature on culture change, we adopted a practical definition developed in Schein, 1990:

- (a) a pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (e) is to be taught to new members of the group as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein, 1990, p. 111)

Schein's definition of *culture* captures its origin and how it is transmitted across generations. Therefore, the culture change requires concerted efforts to intervene in the transmission of undesirable assumptions. In 2017, a team of RAND analysts identified drivers that can bring about organizational culture and climate changes for the U.S. Army (Meredith et al., 2017). The RAND team developed a framework of culture change driven by five factors: goals, accountability, training, resources, and engagement.

Using the framework, we developed four sets of recommendations to help the Coast Guard address each of these aspects.

Recommendations for Improving Trust in and Perceptions of the Equal-Opportunity Complaint Process

The first set of culture-change recommendations aims to improve trust in and perceptions of the EO complaint process.

Recommendation 24. Review the EO complaint process to verify or refute negative perceptions of the process, and amend policies and practices as necessary.

Recommendation 25. Explore leaders' implementation of relevant EO policies and practices at the local level.

Recommendation 26. Address negative perceptions of the EO complaint process through strategic communication, transparency, and changes to policies and practices as needed.

Recommendation 27. Institute a trend analysis of EO data and reporting to leadership.

The Coast Guard EO complaint process is designed to protect personnel against discrimination, yet, in focus groups and surveys, URM personnel reported having negative percep-

tions of the process and not having confidence in the system.⁸ To improve personnel trust in the EO complaint process, we recommend that the Coast Guard review the EO complaint process to explore whether negative perceptions held by URM personnel are verified as problems with the process or are inconsistent with current policy and practice. Among other areas, this review should examine policies and practices for protection for anonymity, the integrity of the investigation process (including how investigators are assigned and trained to ensure impartiality and rigor), and outcomes of claims (including remedies for victims and consequences for guilty parties).⁹ The review should also explore new practices in the SAPRR program that could be adapted for use to combat discrimination.

When implementing this recommendation, the Coast Guard should consider not only the policies that are in place but also how these policies are being executed at the local level. If this review confirms URM personnel concerns with the EO complaint process, the Coast Guard should modify policies accordingly and institute mechanisms to ensure appropriate execution of policies by leaders across the Coast Guard. Regardless of the outcome of the review, the Coast Guard should also address URM personnel negative perceptions of the process through strategic communication, education, and transparency in the process. Finally, when implementing this recommendation, the Coast Guard should institute regular reporting of EO complaint trends to senior leaders.

Recommendations for Ensuring Culture Change

The second set of recommendations aims to ensure culture change in support of DEI efforts. Implementing these recommendations will enable the Coast Guard to comply with NDAA 2021 Section 913 requiring the services to establish positions of chief diversity officer and senior advisers for D&I.

Recommendation 28. Ensure culture change by holding leaders accountable, providing adequate resources for achieving implementation goals, and engaging formal and informal leaders and stakeholders.

⁸ In addition to the EO complaint process, the Coast Guard operates a second distinct complaint process that personnel can access if subjected to prohibited harassment, governed by the AHHI policy. According to *The U.S. Coast Guard Civil Rights Manual* (COMDTINST M5350.4E), the AHHI complaint process is a “command-led process to stop harassing behavior and take corrective action.” Although the EO complaint process is managed by CG-00H, the command is responsible for the AHHI complaint process and its adjudication, meaning that command makes the determination as to whether the complaint is substantiated and, if it is, any resulting actions taken. Although this process was not the focus of our findings, because the two processes are so closely related and personnel’s trust in processes designed to protect against harassment is critical to improving workforce climate, we recommend that these complaint process policy and practice reviews include AHHI.

⁹ Of note, study findings related to confidentiality concerns were not specific to professionals from the Civil Rights Directorate who are involved in the EO complaint process. Rather, participants commented broadly about confidentiality issues that are often related to rumors within the unit or confidentiality leaks at the local level.

Recommendation 29. Have CCG conduct one-on-one annual accountability reviews with senior leaders.

Recommendation 30. Resource and execute the Coast Guard D&I action plan with clear goals linked to CCG’s strategic vision.

Recommendation 31. Develop and implement diversity leadership training across all stages of career development (see also recommendation 22).

The Coast Guard cannot establish and sustain DEI efforts unless it builds on and follows through with its current efforts focused on organizational and culture change in support of DEI. It is also critical that these efforts continue to be implemented and supported from the top. The MLDC wrote, “organizational change is a top-down process, and creating a powerful coalition of leaders to manage and maintain the change process is a critical component of success” (MLDC, 2011, p. 24). The MLDC continued, “Persons in top leadership positions are the ultimate drivers of change because they have both the authority to initiate new methods of operation and the final responsibility for ensuring the methods’ success” (MLDC, 2011, p. 24).

CCG can initiate the establishment of the accountability system by personally conducting annual accountability reviews, in keeping with recommendations made in MLDC, 2011. CCG can conduct accountability reviews with senior leaders (RFMCs and specialty-community leaders) who have responsibility for the health of career fields (ratings and specialties), maintaining fair and equitable personnel policies and practices, and providing an inclusive work environment for all Coast Guard personnel. To maximize the impact of these accountability reviews, the Coast Guard needs to implement recommendations 6, 7, 8, and 9 proposed in Chapter Three. In addition to reviewing career field community leaders, CCG should conduct accountability reviews with the commanders of the Atlantic Area and the Pacific Area because the effectiveness of DEI efforts depends on the active engagement of these senior leaders.

As the MLDC described, because these accountability meetings are personal, not administrative, the format is informal and private. In these meetings, CCG has a chance to directly communicate their vision to senior leaders and learn their unfiltered responses. But we recommend that the Coast Guard standardize the preparation for the meetings to ensure that the discussions cover all aspects of DEI efforts. (We recommend below that the newly created office of DEI [ODEI] coordinate this preparation.) The preparation should include the following elements:

- diversity profiles of the workforce (total force, active duty, reserve, and civilians) at different organizational levels (e.g., the Coast Guard, career field community)
- diversity profiles at each stage of the career life cycle: accessions, career development, advancement or promotion, and retention

- diversity of talent pipelines, including diversity profiles of high-potential or emerging leaders
- patterns and trends of EO complaints and incidents of undesirable or problematic behaviors, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, unlawful discrimination, substance abuse, suicide, and hazing or bullying (Marquis et al., 2017)
- DEI activities and initiatives and their ROIs.

Although CCG's accountability reviews ensure the engagement of senior leaders in DEI initiatives, we recommend that the Coast Guard develop and execute an implementation plan to create a more inclusive workplace with clear goals linked to CCG's strategic vision. The implementation plan should include clear goals, aiming to create a more inclusive workplace that provides

equal opportunity for members of socially marginalized groups to participate and contribute while concurrently providing opportunities for members of non-marginalized groups, and to support employees in their efforts to be fully engaged at all levels of the organization and to be authentically themselves. (Shore, Cleveland, Sanchez, 2018, p. 177).

The implementation goals need to be specific and implementable at tactical and operational levels.

Once the goals are established, the Coast Guard needs to hold leaders accountable for achieving them. Accountability involves establishing behavioral standards and ensuring that leaders personify the standards. A RAND report on culture change states, "when a behavior change is sought, in some cases undesired behaviors should be expected and seen as learning opportunities for honest feedback" (Meredith et al., 2017, p. 34). However, the study team cautioned that "zero error tolerance is an unforgiving standard that may cause people to game the reporting system rather than truly change behavior" (Meredith et al., 2017, p. 34).

The most important part of accountability is the "actual execution of existing policy" (Meredith et al., 2017, p. 35). Failure to effectively execute DEI policies fuels cynicism and diminishes a sense of belonging among personnel. It is important to note that perspectives from active-duty personnel revealed that URM personnel lacked trust in leadership accountability to DEI in the Coast Guard. Focus group participants shared that, although DEI policies existed, their implementation by Coast Guard leaders was lacking and not fully embraced, in that leaders were often not held accountable for supporting DEI within the workforce. Accordingly, the survey revealed that black personnel reported less positive perceptions of leadership efforts to stop racial and ethnic discrimination than their counterparts from other racial and ethnic groups and that female personnel reported less positive perceptions than male personnel reported of leadership efforts to stop gender discrimination. Addressing these perceptions through building structures to promote leadership accountability to DEI is an essential component of creating an inclusive workforce.

Accountability also involves developing metrics and benchmarks to measure and track organizational and cultural change. Reflecting the importance of metrics to drive change,

NDAA 2021 requires military services, including the Coast Guard, to develop rigorous and extensive metrics to track their D&I efforts and report annually to Congress and the public. For example, NDAA 2021 amended 10 U.S.C. § 113 to require annual reports from military services to include

strategic goals related to diversity and inclusion in the armed forces, and an assessment of measures of performance related to the efforts of the armed forces to reflect the diverse population of the United States eligible to serve in the armed forces. (NDAA 2021 § 551)

In addition, NDAA 2021 states,

the Secretary of Defense in coordination with the Secretary of the Department in which the Coast Guard is operating, shall establish metrics to measure efforts to reflect across all grades comprising the officer and enlisted corps of each armed force the diverse population of the United States eligible to serve the armed forces. (NDAA 2021 § 551)

We have developed metrics and benchmarks that the Coast Guard should use as rigorous baseline measures to monitor organizational change. By implementing a data-enabled talent-management system (proposed in recommendations 37 through 40, discussed later in this chapter), the Coast Guard can go beyond the baseline metrics. For example, data-enabled talent management will allow the Coast Guard to set new goals and develop new metrics for outreach, recruiting, career development, advancement and promotion, and retention. The Coast Guard can use the MLDC description of good metrics as a guide. MLDC, 2011, p. 104, specifies the characteristics of good metrics:

- developed with an end state in mind and systematically linked to strategic goals
- clearly stated to be easily understood and communicated
- value added by providing information on key aspects of performance
- actionable to drive improvement
- tracked over time
- verifiable.

It is important to note that executing the Coast Guard's D&I action plan (2019–2023) will strongly support the implementation of this recommendation. The action plan includes, among other initiatives, development of a “dashboard” of metrics to review with senior leadership. The execution of this action plan is an important step that the Coast Guard should take to support the creation of a more inclusive workforce.

As the Coast Guard resources and executes its D&I action plan, it should develop and implement a different type of diversity leadership training across all stages of career development. Training is one of the levers that organizations use to bring about cultural change. Training can transit new knowledge and skills and reinforce messages for an overall change effort (Armenakis, Brown, and Mehta, 2011). Diversity training is the most common fea-

ture of DEI efforts across organizations. The training can include a wide variety of topics and objectives, such as compliance with EO laws, inclusion of marginalized groups, countering stereotypes, and mitigating continuous and unconscious biases (Bezrukova et al., 2016, p. 1227). Despite the popularity of such training, scientific studies have shown mixed results (Bezrukova et al., 2016; Kalinoski et al., 2013; Dobbin and Kalev, 2015). In some cases, the training is modestly effective in changing diversity-related skills and knowledge but is less likely to bring about lasting attitude change. More importantly, in some cases, the training can result in backlash and more-prejudiced attitudes. For instance, Dobbin and Kalev reported that mandating diversity training leads to resentment for “being forced to attend the training” and defensiveness for being perceived as “part of the problem.” They reported that organizations that implemented mandatory diversity training experienced significant declines in the representation of Asian American personnel and black women in their workforces (Dobbin and Kalev, 2016, p. 9).

Informed by the literature and effective practices, we recommend that the Coast Guard develop and implement diversity leadership training across all stages of personnel career development. The diversity leadership training we recommend is fundamentally different from the diversity training that organizations are offering to their employees generally. Diversity leadership training concentrates on “education in diversity dynamics and training in practices for leading diverse groups effectively” (MLDC, 2011, p. 21). Effective diversity leadership training enables the leader to

- recognize the “differences” that exist within the group
- both understand the dynamics that can cause those differences to have negative effects (e.g., loss of cohesion, communications difficulties, conflict) and create opportunities for those differences to have a positive effect on organizational performance
- apply leadership practices that can neutralize the potential negative effects and, if possible, leverage differences in support of the mission. (MLDC, 2011, p. 22)

Diversity leadership training aims to instill concrete skills and competencies in leaders. In keeping with the MLDC’s recommendation 2, diversity leadership training should not be an addition to the current Coast Guard developmental training. It should be seamlessly integrated into leadership training at all levels. Therefore, unlike commonly offered diversity training, diversity leadership training spans people’s careers. Notably, focus groups and the survey revealed a need for additional leadership training, beginning earlier in people’s careers, with a particular focus on diversity leadership skills. Additionally, training should be evaluated after implementation to ensure that it is achieving the intended outcomes.

Recommendations for an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The third set of recommendations proposes establishing an ODEI and describes its operational requirements. Implementation of these recommendations will enable the Coast Guard to comply with NDAA 2021 Section 913.

Recommendation 32. Establish and resource an ODEI reporting directly to CCG.

Recommendation 33. Have the ODEI conduct ongoing barrier analyses.

Recommendation 34. Have the ODEI coordinate CCG's strategic communications associated with DEI policies and practices, including results of barrier analyses, policy changes, and their impact.

Recommendation 35. Consider existing structure, responsibilities, and capabilities encompassed by the proposed ODEI.

Recommendation 36. Explore ways to improve organizational alignment to comply with the NDAA and to support sustained DEI efforts.

Research on effective DEI practices has shown that organizations need to designate a senior leader or executive who reports directly to the top leader, to monitor, coordinate, and communicate DEI efforts (Dobbin and Kalev, 2015; MLDC, 2011). Reflecting this effective practice, NDAA 2021 Section 913 amends 10 U.S.C. Chapter 4 by adding a new Section 147 that reads, in part, “the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall appoint a Senior Advisor for Diversity and Inclusion for the Coast Guard” who “shall report directly to the Commandant of the Coast Guard” (NDAA 2021 § 913[a][2]). The NDAA describes six specific duties for the senior adviser for D&I:

- Provide advice and guidance, and coordinate “all matters related to diversity and inclusion”
- Advise in the establishment of training in diversity dynamics and training in practices for leading diverse groups effectively.
- Advise and assist in evaluations and assessments of diversity.
- Develop a strategic DEI plan.
- Develop strategic goals and measures of performance “related to efforts to reflect the diverse population of the United States eligible to serve in the Armed Forces”
- Perform any additional duties that CCG prescribes.

We recommend that, to comply with the law, the Coast Guard establish and resource an ODEI to enable the senior adviser for DEI to perform the duties of the ODEI. The ODEI should coordinate and support the execution of barrier analysis and publish the results annually.¹⁰

NDA 2021 Section 551 requires that the Coast Guard

conduct a barrier analysis to review demographic diversity patterns across the military life cycle, starting with enlistment or accession . . . in order to identify barriers to increasing diversity, develop and implement plans and processes to resolve or eliminate any barriers to diversity; and review the progress of . . . previous plans and processes to resolve or eliminate barriers to diversity.

As shown in Figure 6.15, a barrier analysis develops in five phases (Matthies, Keller, and Lim, 2012; Matthews et al., 2018):

1. Map workforce management processes.
2. Construct population benchmarks or representation goals.
3. Compare employee distribution with benchmarks or goals.
4. If there are significant discrepancies, identify any potential barriers.
5. Remove and address any identified barriers.

In this study, we executed all of these stages and delivered results from all the elements of the barrier analysis, including data, methodology, potential barriers, and mitigation strategies to remove those barriers. Our findings should serve as the baseline for the ODEI to continue conducting these analyses in the future. The results of our barrier analysis and the status of mitigation strategies would be two of the core elements of the ODEI annual report that we recommend and that are required by NDA 2021 Sections 551 and 913.

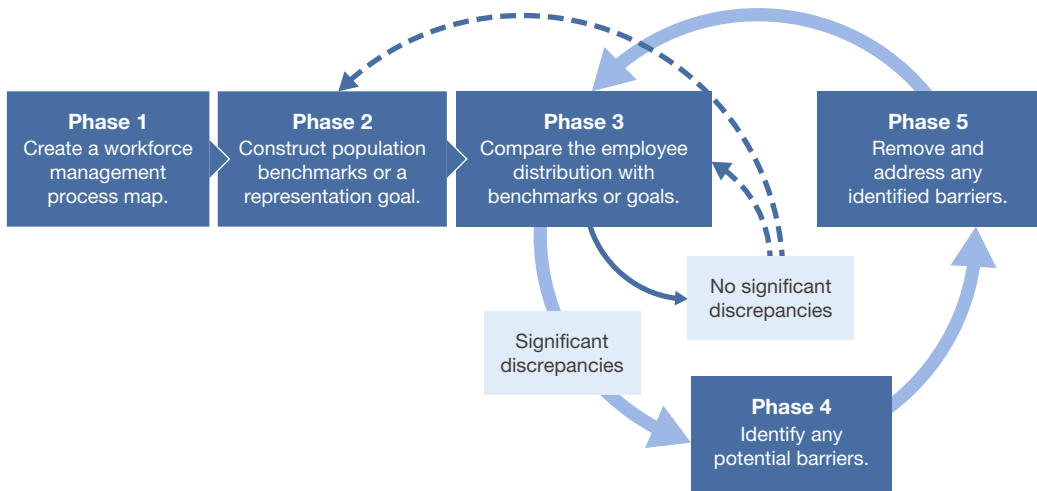
In keeping with NDA Section 551 requirements, the ODEI should coordinate strategic communications associated with DEI policies and practices, including results of barrier analyses and policy changes (Lim, Haddad, and Daugherty, 2013, p. xix). In implementing these communications, the ODEI should explain how DEI efforts fit into the Coast Guard values, earn personnel trust through transparency, educate them on DEI principles, and celebrate DEI improvements.¹¹

In establishing the ODEI, the Coast Guard needs to consider the current system's organizational structure, responsibilities, and capabilities. Currently, CG-00H reports directly

¹⁰ See Appendix B for key takeaways from our assessment of civilian organizations, which include having the organizational processes in place for evaluation related to DEI. This includes repeated processes, such as barrier analysis, supported by relevant metrics. The accountability structures we recommend also address a finding from our review of civilian organizations that a lack of consistency and focus on DEI can reverse progress on organizational DEI efforts.

¹¹ See Appendix B for key takeaways from our assessment of civilian organizations, which emphasize the importance of strategic communications and transparency to make improvements on DEI in organizations.

FIGURE 6.15
Five Stages of Barrier Analysis



SOURCE: Matthews et al., 2018.

to the vice commandant and is responsible for EO policies and discrimination complaints. The Coast Guard Civilian Human Resources, Diversity and Leadership Directorate (CG-12) includes the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (CG-127) and the data analysis capability of the Office of Strategic Workforce Planning and Human Resources Analytics (CG-126). The proposed new ODEI will be required to perform these functions to comply with NDAA 2021 Section 551. The Coast Guard should examine the impact that such a reorganization could have on its broader organization and explore ways to best improve organizational alignment for enduring DEI impacts and legal compliance.

Recommendations for a Data-Enabled System

We now review our final set of recommendations. Many of our earlier recommendations follow a common theme, which is that the Coast Guard requires better *general* talent-management capabilities in order to move toward the *particular* goal of representing the nation it serves. Because of the many interconnected challenges that the Coast Guard faces, meeting this standard will require extensive experimentation and robust business intelligence in order to drive incremental progress within the constraints of the military personnel system. In support of improving the Coast Guard's talent-management capabilities, we recommend that the Coast Guard develop what we call a data-enabled system by implementing the following set of recommendations. Because moving in this direction would enable the Coast Guard to use analytics to allocate resources, improve efficiency, and evaluate all talent-management decisions, the potential benefits extend beyond improved racial/ethnic and gender diversity. In addition, the Coast Guard will be able to comply with NDAA 2021 Section 551, which requires

the military departments to prepare reporting on measures of performance related to these efforts to reflect the population eligible to serve.

Recommendation 37. Preserve, assemble, and maintain an accessible enterprise data warehouse (EDW) that captures data from all stages of the career life cycle.

Recommendation 38. Mitigate the data issues documented in this report.

Recommendation 39. Continue to enhance the quality of data by collecting data associated with policy decisions.

Recommendation 40. Develop and foster a culture of data sharing, analysis, and data-driven decisionmaking.

The first recommendation in this set suggests that the Coast Guard should assemble and maintain an EDW, distinct from the operational data systems that manage personnel transactions, to capture data from all stages of the career life cycle. An EDW is a repository of large amounts of historical data from a variety of sources on which applications or analysts can draw for improved decisionmaking (Kimball et al., 2008). Our work in this study shows that the Coast Guard has already made a significant investment in maintaining a centralized personnel data system, and we validated this progress by collecting data from all stages of the career life cycle and creating an analytical file that the Coast Guard can continue to expand and maintain.

The Coast Guard faces two main obstacles in building an EDW:

- First, current systems do not capture critical information that influences the career life cycle, as several examples from our findings can illustrate (for easy reference, Appendix D lists all of the data sources for this study and associated information gaps). Making progress on recruiting challenges requires detailed information on recruiting resources and activities and their results. Addressing advancement disparities requires a granular breakdown of SWE test questions so that rating knowledge managers can confirm that their assessments predict performance at the next grade and flag questions for further review if they seem to differentially affect URM performance. Addressing promotion disparities requires complete information (including narrative comments) on officer evaluations. Without more-complete information, barrier analysis efforts will continue to fall short of the actionable information that decisionmakers desire.
- The second obstacle to building an EDW is data “stovepiping,” or the isolation of databases at locations where they are used for only a particular purpose rather than being accessible to a broader architecture (Kimball and Ross, 2002). The best example of stovepiping is our experience constructing the analytic data for the advancement and promotion analysis. The personnel records in Direct Access contain some information that is relevant to advancement and promotion, but they do not have information on the SWE advancement factors (housed at the Pay and Personnel Center) or officer promo-

tion boards (maintained by OPM). Incorporating the additional data requires customized data pulls, transformation, and linkages before it can be analyzed. Advancement and promotion information is essential to understanding the senior leader pipeline and therefore should ultimately reside in an EDW.

As the Coast Guard establishes a data-enabled talent-management system, it should continue to enhance the quality of data by collecting metrics associated with policy decisions. During our project, we encountered difficulties in identifying and acquiring quality data from various Coast Guard administrative units. We overcame these difficulties by merging and matching data across different administrative units. In addition, we developed new metrics designed to capture data to answer specific policy questions, such as our categories for job specialties and particular types of assignments. To effectively implement this recommendation, the Coast Guard needs to build on this work. As the Coast Guard establishes a new personnel policy or changes an existing one, it should collect pre and post data so that it can evaluate the impact of the policy. The process of determining the right metrics for policy effectiveness will provide further insight into additional information that the Coast Guard should regularly collect. For instance, when the Coast Guard implements a policy designed to improve quality of life or job satisfaction among its personnel, having associated metrics from before and after the policy is implemented is necessary to assess the effectiveness of the efforts. Decisionmakers might then decide that there is value in continuously collecting these metrics, in which case they could collect them regularly and store them in the EDW.

For data-enabled talent management to endure, the Coast Guard needs to develop and foster a culture of data sharing, analysis, and data-driven decisionmaking. As we stated above, we encountered challenges to gathering data needed for our analysis because Coast Guard administrative units do not routinely collect and share data. The data-enabled talent-management system can endure only if organizations that are responsible for different aspects of the career life cycle are willing and able to share their data and use analytics in their decisionmaking processes. The design of the EDW can support the culture of data sharing and analysis, but some culture change might be required to fully capitalize on new capabilities and avoid continuing legacy processes under a new system.

Implementation Considerations

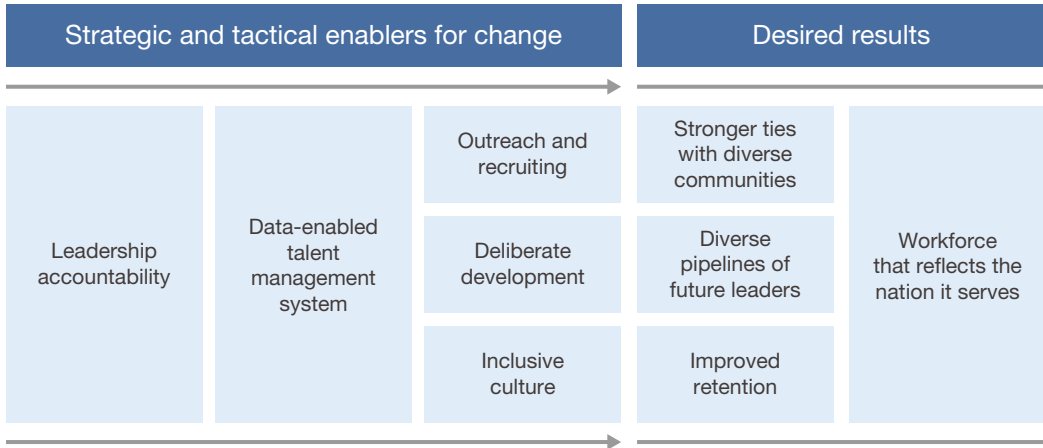
There is no silver bullet or quick-win solution to improve the representation of URM groups in the Coast Guard so that it reflects the nation it serves. We have identified systemic challenges across all stages of the career life cycle. The degree of difficulty in overcoming these challenges is high because they result from the voluntary actions of individual personnel over long periods of time, and these decisions are influenced by factors that are not within the immediate control of the Coast Guard. An additional challenge is that focus group comments and survey responses indicate that URM personnel have lower levels of trust in leaders and the Coast Guard's antidiscrimination policies and practices. We designed our recommendations to enable the Coast Guard to make these systemic shifts for enduring change.

To guide the Coast Guard's implementation of our 40 recommendations, we propose organizing them into two categories: strategic enablers and tactical enablers. Strategic enablers provide foundational conditions that are necessary for the tactical enablers to produce the Coast Guard's desired results. As shown in Figure 7.1, the establishment of a leadership accountability system (recommendations 28 to 36) and the development of the data-enabled talent-management system (recommendations 37 to 40) are strategic enablers, while tactical enablers address specific barriers identified throughout the phases of the career life cycle (recommendations 1 through 27).¹

Without a robust and visible accountability system, the Coast Guard will not get full engagement from leaders across the organization, earn greater trust from URM personnel, and foster an inclusive organizational culture and climate. However, leadership accountability *will not be credible* unless the Coast Guard has the capacity to prescribe the actions that leaders should take and measure their effectiveness. Our previous recommendations illustrate that many of the desired actions that leaders should take to mitigate career disparities are unknown. Therefore, without a well-resourced data-enabled talent-management system, the Coast Guard cannot discover and execute initiatives for recruiting and development that will overcome the entrenched patterns in the career life cycle that the recent workforce data reveal.

¹ Recommendations 1 through 5 focus on outreach and recruiting; recommendations 6 through 23 focus on deliberate development; and recommendations 24 through 27 focus on fostering a positive climate in support of DEI. Leadership accountability also drives culture, so recommendations in this area will also contribute to fostering a positive climate in support of DEI.

FIGURE 7.1
A Typology of Our Recommendations and Their Desired Results



The implementation of our recommendations will require resources and, in some instances, organizational changes. The literature emphasizes the importance of resource allocations to bring about culture change (Meredith et al., 2017). Adequately resourcing these reform efforts demonstrates CCG’s priorities and the institutional commitment to DEI efforts.

To be successful in implementing the study recommendations, the Coast Guard should engage both formal and informal leaders and stakeholders in its DEI efforts. As Schein’s definition of *culture* suggests, the Coast Guard organizational culture is a set of communal assumptions about what the Coast Guard values that are developed, accepted, and shared across generations of personnel. Therefore, efforts to change the culture must be a communal effort by influencers (e.g., formal and informal leaders at all levels) across the institution. The literature defines *leader* as encompassing everyone from the top leader to front-line supervisors to “change champions who may or may not hold a formal position” in the organization (Meredith et al., 2017, p. 36). By engaging leaders and stakeholders at all levels early and meaningfully, the Coast Guard can get a reality check and encourage buy-in for its efforts (Plaut et al., 2011). Finally, the Coast Guard should implement these multilevel recommendations together to harness the desired results because DEI efforts need “to transform organizational systems, structures, and cultures, improve workgroup norms and practices, and strengthen the capacity of individuals to engage and manage social identity dynamics in the workplace” (Bernstein et al., 2015).

Demographics of Coast Guard Personnel Versus Department of Defense Military Personnel

URM representation in the Coast Guard tends to lag behind the active components of the DoD military branches in certain respects. URM personnel make up 41 percent of the Coast Guard active force, while the DoD services range from 44 percent (Marine Corps) to 54 percent (Navy). The Coast Guard has the lowest level of racial and ethnic minority representation of any branch (31 percent, compared to an average of 42 percent in the DoD services) but tends to represent white women at relatively high levels, particularly in the officer corps. Seventeen percent of Coast Guard officers are white women, while the level in the next-closest service is 15 percent (Air Force) and the lowest level in DoD is 6 percent (Marine Corps). Finally, URM representation in all military services tends to be lower in the senior ranks than in the junior ranks, but this pattern is slightly more skewed in the Coast Guard than in DoD. For example, the level of racial and ethnic minority representation in the Coast Guard among senior enlisted grades (E-7 to E-9) is 72 percent of the level in the junior enlisted grades (E-1 to E-3), while the average level of this same figure in DoD is 89 percent. The level of racial and ethnic minority representation among Coast Guard officers in grades O-5 and above is 57 percent of the level among grades O-1 and O-2, whereas the average level of this figure in DoD is 67 percent. Tables A.1 through A.3 contain the full tabulated results of our comparisons of URM representation in the Coast Guard to representation in each DoD branch.

TABLE A.1
Percentages of the Active Component Who Belonged to
Underrepresented-Minority Groups, July 2020, by Service

Gender	Racial or Ethnic Minority	Coast Guard	Army	Air Force	Navy	Marine Corps
Women	Yes	4.9	9.6	9.8	11.3	4.8
	No	10.2	5.8	10.9	8.5	4.2
Men	Yes	25.7	35.2	26.8	34.0	35.0
	No	59.2	49.4	52.5	46.1	56.1

TABLE A.2
Percentages of Active-Component Officers Who Belonged to Underrepresented-Minority Groups, July 2020, by Service

Gender	Racial or Ethnic Minority	Coast Guard	Army	Air Force	Navy	Marine Corps
Women	Yes	6.3	7.6	6.4	6.8	2.7
	No	17.0	11.6	15.2	12.8	5.9
Men	Yes	17.6	20.2	14.6	19.5	20.3
	No	59.1	60.6	63.8	60.9	71.1

TABLE A.3
Ratio of Senior-Level Representation to Junior-Level Representation, July 2020, by Service

Corps	Comparison	Coast Guard	Army	Air Force	Navy	Marine Corps
Enlisted	Gender	0.53	0.72	0.87	0.51	0.68
	Race and ethnicity	0.72	0.89	0.75	0.93	0.99
Officer	Gender	0.54	0.69	0.67	0.56	0.48
	Race and ethnicity	0.57	0.80	0.66	0.62	0.59

NOTE: For enlisted, *senior level* is defined as grades E-7 to E-9, and *junior level* includes grades E-1 to E-4. For officers, *senior level* includes grades O-5 and above, while *junior level* includes grades O-1 and O-2. As an example, the first ratio of 0.53 for the Coast Guard enlisted gender comparison arises because women made up 17.7 percent of personnel in grades E-1 to E-3, compared with 9.3 percent of personnel in grades E-7 to E-9 (9.3 divided by 17.7 results in a ratio of 0.53).

Potential Lessons Learned from Civilian Organizations

The active-duty Coast Guard competes with public- and private-sector civilian entities for diverse talent who can help meet its mission requirements. This appendix explores how the entities that we examined—individual public agencies, private companies, and selected industrial sectors—are approaching DEI. Having a clear picture of the challenges, successes, and strides made by other entities in the public and private sectors can serve as a guidepost for Coast Guard DEI policies and practices.

We drew common themes from our review through benchmarking. For the purposes of this work, benchmarking is the process of evaluating an organization’s peer entities to make comparisons on a topic of shared interest (e.g., DEI). Common benchmarking objectives are to (1) determine what and where improvements are called for, (2) analyze how other organizations achieve high performance levels, and (3) use this information to improve performance (O’Mara and Richter, 2017).

Our Benchmarking Methodology

To better contextualize the Coast Guard’s experiences with DEI and what options exist for future remediation, we searched for and examined publicly available information from a variety of public- and private-sector entities to identify points of similarity and divergence. Initial efforts began in the early months of the study and prioritized using Google Scholar and Microsoft Academic as search engines. However, we soon identified simplistic search queries from more-general, nonacademic platforms (e.g., Google search engine) as yielding equally fruitful information. Common search terms and phrases applied first to Google Scholar and subsequently to other engines and browsers were “diversity in private sector organizations,” “diversity and inclusion in private sector,” “diversity management in public sector organizations,” and other variations of these word sets. As our searches produced results, we developed a process to whittle down our list of private- and public-sector entities.

Our selection criteria for doing so focused on the organizational characteristics of these entities that would yield an informed and useful comparative analysis for the Coast Guard.

Table B.1 provides the range and description of the organizational characteristics that we chose.

We sought to benchmark DEI strides and challenges made by public- and private-sector entities that shared these characteristics. Identifying organizations that shared multiple characteristics proved somewhat difficult, particularly for the private sector. However, this did not obviate the usefulness of benchmarking such companies as Walmart and United Parcel Service (UPS), which offered unique insights on approaches to DEI despite the absence of many of these characteristics.

Choosing Benchmark Candidates

Informed by the characteristics in Table B.1 and publicly available information, we selected 14 public- and private-sector entities for our benchmarking analysis. DEI documents from these entities contained a variety of information types, making explicit one-to-one compari-

TABLE B.1
Organizational Characteristics for the Comparative Analysis

Organizational Characteristic	Description
Closed system	The Coast Guard operates as a closed system in which almost all personnel enter at the lowest levels of a hierarchy and then work their way up.
Law enforcement duties	A major component of the Coast Guard's mission revolves around various law enforcement activities.
Up-or-out promotion policy	The Coast Guard has an up-or-out promotion policy that limits the time someone can spend at a given grade level.
Physical requirements	The Coast Guard has physical fitness requirements and expectations that are applicable to all personnel.
Maritime setting	The Coast Guard operates primarily in a maritime setting.
High commitment	The Coast Guard, like other military services, is an institution that requires a large amount of time, loyalty, and energy, sometimes at the expense of other commitments (Segal, 1986).
Required geographical mobility	The Coast Guard has many locations throughout the United States and generally requires its personnel to change stations approximately every three years.
Hierarchical structure	The Coast Guard is a highly structured organization with clear authorities, positions, and responsibilities. This can create different challenges from those found in flatter organizations.
Multitrack configuration	Within the Coast Guard and other military services, personnel can progress along several "tracks," such as the officer or noncommissioned-officer tracks.
Profession-specific training	Many professions, including those in the Coast Guard, have formal training requirements specific to them. For example, the Coast Guard has a general introductory 53-day boot camp followed by technical training of various lengths of time.

sons between entities and the Coast Guard difficult. For example, although we had hoped for in-depth discussion of such issues as recruitment, onboarding, retention, promotion, retirement, separation, workplace culture, equity, and best practices, these topics were seldom addressed in DEI documents. Nor were the majority of documents particularly rich in statistical information that allowed crosscutting comparisons. Together, however, they contributed to our understanding of how entities other than the Coast Guard have approached and continue to approach DEI-related concerns.

We were able to discern trends across documents that can inform Coast Guard DEI efforts. In sum, we reviewed 25 documents from the 14 identified public and private entities (Tables B.2 and B.3, respectively).

Trends from Public-Sector Entities

Public-sector entities face many of the same DEI challenges that the Coast Guard does. In general, the public-sector entities we examined have made modest improvements in recruiting URM personnel in recent years, although some did report setbacks. For example, in its FY 2015 report, the Department of Veterans Affairs noted that its Diversity Index had increased for the seventh consecutive year, indicating an increase in the agency's aggregate workforce diversity by race, gender, and ethnicity when compared with the relevant civilian labor force (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015). The agency also reported that people from URM groups made up more than 53 percent of all 2015 hires and 75 percent of all promotions in FY 2015 (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015).

Challenges remain, however, for some public-sector entities to sustain their gains. A frank 2015 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) study reported that “[t]he Agency’s workforce is not diverse” and that recruiting and retention of personnel from underrepresented groups began backsliding around 2004 (CIA, 2015, p. 13). Between 1984 and 2004, increasing proportions of officers promoted to the Senior Intelligence Service were black, but that progress reversed somewhat because of a lack of consistency and focus on diversifying senior levels of the organization. Similarly, in the three decades prior to that report, white women began making up a larger share of the CIA’s senior leadership and began approaching parity in the overall workforce, but racial and ethnic-minority women did not experience similar gains. Additionally, between 2008 and 2014, the CIA hired a smaller share of personnel from underrepresented groups than existed in its workforce, indicating that a pipeline of diverse candidates into and within the agency did not exist (CIA, 2015, pp. 17–19). Prior progress was attributed to (1) the willingness of senior leaders to support the careers of talented racial and ethnic-minority officers; (2) focused action from leadership resulting from an understanding of the importance of diversity; and (3) the effectiveness of formal and informal networks among racial and ethnic-minority officers (CIA, 2015, p. 17).

Other challenges to DEI in the public sector include those related to the advancement and long-term retention of a diverse workforce. Development and engagement of URM personnel—through, for example, formal and informal mentoring—have been deprioritized

TABLE B.2
Public Entities Benchmarked for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Trends

Characteristic in Common with the Coast Guard	Agency			Industry or Community		
	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	CIA	U.S. Department of Justice	Law Enforcement	Fire Service	Intelligence Community
Closed system						
Law enforcement duties			x	x		
Up-or-out promotion policy						
Physical requirements			For some	x	x	Some
Maritime setting						
High commitment		x			x	x
Required geographical mobility		x				x
Hierarchical structure	x		x	x		
Multitrack configuration		x				
Profession-specific training		x	x	x	x	
Documents reviewed	2	1	1	10	1	1

SOURCES: Banks et al., 2016; CIA, 2015; Donohue, 2020; Evarts and Stein, 2019; Intelligence Community Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Office, 2017; Maciag, 2015; Morin et al., 2017; Morison, 2017; Mostyn, 2019; Reaves, 2015; Scheer, Rossler, and Papania, 2018; Shjarback and Todak, 2019; Todak and Brown, 2019; U.S. Department of Justice and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2016; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015.

in some agencies. The CIA report notes that, “Despite the findings of numerous prior studies . . . the record clearly suggests that the senior leadership of the Agency is not committed to diversity” (CIA, 2015, p. 2). A Department of Justice report similarly notes that “individuals from underrepresented communities may face difficulties in the promotion process due to a lack of transparency about the process, as well as a scarcity of role models, mentoring relationships, and professional development opportunities” (U.S. Department of Justice and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2016, p. iii).

TABLE B.3
Private Entities Benchmarked for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Trends

Characteristic in Common with the Coast Guard	Company		Industry or Sector					General or Other
	UPS	Walmart	Architecture	Law ^a	Social Impact or Development	Technology	Environment	
Closed system								
Law enforcement duties								
Up-or-out promotion policy				x				
Physical requirements								
Maritime setting								
High commitment			x	x				
Required geographical mobility								
Hierarchical structure								
Multitrack configuration								
Profession-specific training			x	x				
Documents reviewed	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2

SOURCES: American Institute of Architects, 2015; Atlassian, 2018; Office of Access and Inclusion, 2019; Quantum Impact, 2018; Society for Human Resource Management, 2017; Taylor, 2014; R. Thomas et al., 2018; UPS, 2018; Walmart, 2018.

^a Our proxy for this sector was the California State Bar Association.

Further, the lack of an inclusive culture in a workforce can be traced to a lack of accountability for managers and supervisors to create and maintain an inclusive workplace. A CIA survey indicated that 40 percent of supervisors and 55 percent of nonsupervisors disagreed with including a performance report objective aimed at encouraging respect for D&I; bonus criteria in 2014 at the organization also did not include expectations for inclusive behaviors. Employees felt that senior leaders communicated the importance of diversity but that the message was lost somewhat among supervisors and managers (CIA, 2015, p. 25).

There are also issues of opportunities for underrepresented groups and their comfort in the workplace. Underrepresented groups—including people with disabilities and those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer or questioning—might feel that they have to hide some aspect of their identity in order to be successful. Some also said that they felt that they were not given the same opportunities as their majority-group counterparts to be successful within their organizations. The issue of opportunities can extend beyond being passed over for a particular role to not being aware of it in the first place, both within an employee's organization and beyond it. A Department of Justice report notes that lack of awareness of career opportunities among people in underrepresented groups was a barrier to diversity in the law enforcement sector and perhaps in others (U.S. Department of Justice and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2016, pp. ii–iii). The same report summarized some other barriers to recruitment, hiring, and retention, including the following (U.S. Department of Justice and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2016):

- Strained relations and a lack of trust of law enforcement can deter personnel from underrepresented groups from applying to law enforcement jobs.
- Reputations and practices (both perceived and real) of law enforcement agencies could dissuade applicants from underrepresented communities from pursuing careers in law enforcement.
- Using inadequately tailored examinations as part of hiring screening processes could have an unintended consequence of excluding qualified people from underrepresented communities.
- Some law enforcement agencies might be limited in their ability to modify hiring or selection criteria.
- People might face difficulties adjusting to an agency's organizational culture.
- People from underrepresented communities might face difficulties in the promotion process because of a lack of transparency about the process, as well as a scarcity of role models, mentoring relationships, and professional development opportunities.

Research has suggested that increased diversity in law enforcement can make those agencies more open to reform and to cultural and systemic changes and more responsive to those

they serve. Some “promising practices” were suggested in the Department of Justice’s report, including

- engaging internal and external stakeholders to help create a workforce that reflects the community
- being willing to reevaluate criteria, standards, and benchmarks to ensure that they are tailored to skills needed to succeed and to attract, select, and retain the most-qualified and -desirable officers
- adopting mentoring and leadership training programs for new officers, particularly for those who are in underrepresented groups, which can be critical to providing people the support, guidance, and the resources they need to succeed, enjoy their careers, and earn promotions (U.S. Department of Justice and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2016, pp. ii–vi).

Finally, in the agency reports that we examined, senior leadership—supervisors and Senior Executive Service equivalents—were often far less diverse than the overall workforce and did not represent the workforce either in a particular agency or in society.

Trends from Private-Sector Entities

Broadly speaking, private-sector agencies have improved gender representation but have made less progress on racial and ethnic diversity. For example, in 2018, Walmart reported that women made up 55 percent of associate employees, 43 percent of management, and 30 percent of corporate officers. Meanwhile, people in racial and ethnic minority groups made up about 44 percent of associates, 32 percent of management, and just 20 percent of corporate officers. Walmart did, however, report gender parity in new hires, and 54 percent of new hires were in racial or ethnic minority groups (Walmart, 2018, p. 8).

A report on the state of diversity in environmental organizations showed that racial diversity in that field was troubling but slowly improving. The report pointed out that racial and ethnic minority personnel in the environmental field were typically concentrated in lower ranks and rarely occupied powerful positions and that the only manager position that was likelier to be filled by a racial or ethnic minority employee than a white employee was that of diversity manager (Taylor, 2014, p. 4). Environmental organizations had made significant improvement on gender diversity; at the time the report was published, women made up 60 percent of new hires in conservation and preservation organizations and dominated the executive director position in grantmaking foundations, but gains were mostly among white women. Further, men were still likelier to occupy the most-powerful positions, such as presidencies and board chairs, in many organizations (Taylor, 2014, p. 3).

Some sectors, such as the architectural and technological fields, have either drastically fallen behind in most diversity measures or remained homogeneous. A 2018 study on DEI in the U.S. tech sector shows that, despite widespread agreement on the importance of DEI, companies struggled to implement initiatives, showing little to no progress. Additionally,

representation, retention, and a sense of belonging among underrepresented groups remain below 30 percent. The study also described a discrepancy between belief and action, with participation in DEI initiatives falling across the board despite expressed support for improvements (Atlassian, 2018, pp. 2–4). In 2015, the American Institute of Architects found that personnel from underrepresented groups remained underrepresented in the field. Research participants from underrepresented groups reported feeling that they were not treated the same as their white male counterparts and were paid less; women said that they felt that they were encouraged to pursue more design-related fields; and people in racial and ethnic minority groups reported being less likely than their white counterparts to be hired straight out of school (American Institute of Architects, 2015, pp. 11–25).

Further, gaps between DEI values and action remain in various private-sector entities. As mentioned above, support in the tech industry for diversity programs lagged behind actual participation. In a 2018 survey of people working in the tech industry, 45 percent said they were open to their companies having formal DEI programs, but only 36 percent reported having participated in discussions about diversity in the industry and just 33 percent took part in diversity working groups (Atlassian, 2018, p. 6).

There is also a growing body of literature that documents the disinterest, resistance, and exhaustion directed toward diversity research, diversity management, and the implementation of diversity programs. For example, in “The Psychology of Diversity Resistance and Integration,” Wiggins-Romesburg and Githens claimed that even well-intentioned DEI programs could produce negative emotions among participants, such as divisiveness, shame, or feelings of being unfairly blamed for societal injustices that they did not create (Wiggins-Romesburg and Githens, 2018, p. 181).

Diversity backlash can take other forms. One such overt form is symbolic bias, which includes people denying that inequality exists while exhibiting anger toward those who propose policy options for remediation. Another is modern bias, in which people actually support policies that afford white male individuals a strategic advantage over URM individuals. Finally, ambivalent bias results when “individuals satisfy their egalitarian self-perception by balancing perceived negative traits (i.e., women are less competent) with positive traits (i.e., women are better at cultivating relationships)” (Wiggins-Romesburg and Githens, 2018, p. 183). Diversity backlash or resistance can also take an organizational stance characterized by broad-based silence, inertia, defiance, or manipulation that the organization employs to strategically and actively resist diversity change (Wiggins-Romesburg and Githens, 2018, p. 185).

Key Takeaways from Benchmarking Analysis

Assessing other public- and private-sector entities yielded several takeaways that could help the Coast Guard better understand the level of effort required to improve DEI, learn other organizations’ best practices, and gain a more holistic understanding of the challenges ahead. For one, strategic messaging is important, and accurate terminology and transparency are

foundational to setting a committed tone that can help improve DEI. It is also important to have processes in place for organizational and cultural self-examination. These processes can be top-down, appointed commissions aimed at developing recommendations to improve the organization, similar to DoD's Diversity and Inclusion Board, formed in summer 2020. They can also be well-communicated, repeated processes, including receiving updated data on certain metrics and external outreach to underrepresented communities through established institutions. Finally, the Coast Guard will have to manage barriers that could emerge. Diversity backlash is a real phenomenon: Discriminatory and xenophobic expressions have increased in recent years (Wiggins-Romesburg and Githens, 2018, p. 179) and should be carefully guarded against and monitored.

Quantitative Methods for Advancement, Promotion, and Retention Analyses

Decomposition Methodology for Advancement and Retention

We use the Blinder–Oaxaca decomposition method (Blinder, 1973; Oaxaca, 1973) to measure the contribution of demographic differences in other characteristics and career factors on advancement and retention disparities. The first phase of this method measures the relationship between each characteristic and the outcome (e.g., advancement to E-5) using a regression model. The second phase then uses the regression results to calculate how much of the gap is attributable to average differences between the groups in each characteristic. We used linear regressions for these decompositions, in line with prior work (Hall et al., 2019; Asch, Miller, and Weinberger, 2016). Enlistment advancement under the servicewide process is a linear function of the input factors, so these linear regressions are appropriate and explain the outcomes well. For retention outcomes, the true relationships are likely more complex, but we used linear models as an exploratory technique because of their ease of interpretability and because prior work suggests that the results are not sensitive to the form of the regression model.

Table C.1 reports the results from 36 decompositions for enlisted advancement—one for each URM demographic group, separately by pay grade, for grades E-5 through E-8. For each comparison, the table shows the total average difference between the white male advancement rate and the URM rate (conditional on taking the SWE), and then the contribution of each advancement factor to this gap. A large positive value associated with an advancement factor indicates that that factor is an important contributor to the difference in advancement rates. For example, the first column (E-5) in the results for white women shows a difference of 6.40, indicating that the advancement rate for white men who took the SWE for E-5 was 6.4 percentage points higher than the rate for white women. The largest contributing factors for this difference are time in grade or service (2.4 percentage points) and sea and surf time (2.03 percentage points). These values mean that 4.43 percentage points ($2.4 + 2.03$) of the original 6.4–percentage point gap stem from the fact that women have lower levels of time in grade/service and sea/surf time on average when competing for advancement. Negative values indicate factors that are advantageous to the URM group. In the E-5 advancement comparison for white women, the value of -1.32 indicates that this group received more per-

TABLE C.1
Detailed Decomposition Results Showing the Percentage-Point Contribution of Each Characteristic to the Explained Component of Each Advancement Gap

Race or Ethnicity	Gender	Advancement Factor	Advancement to Grade . . .			
			E-5	E-6	E-7	E-8
White	Female	Total difference	6.40 ^a	3.85 ^a	1.50 ^a	3.94 ^a
		Exam score	0.31	-0.56	-0.14	-0.88
		Medals and awards	0.40 ^a	0.90 ^a	0.01	0.01
		Performance	-1.32 ^a	-0.54 ^a	-0.35 ^a	-0.07
		Rating	0.19	-0.59	-0.31	0.20
		Sea and surf time	2.03 ^a	2.41 ^a	1.32 ^a	2.70 ^a
		Time in grade and service	2.40 ^a	2.24 ^a	0.48 ^a	0.56 ^b
		Timing of advancement cycle	1.25 ^a	0.31	0.20 ^a	0.85 ^b
Black	Female	Total difference	6.29 ^a	8.11 ^a	1.31	5.29
		Exam score	3.86 ^a	3.96 ^a	1.42 ^a	3.42 ^b
		Medals and awards	0.67 ^a	0.89 ^b	-0.05	-0.05
		Performance	0.01	0.25	-0.05	0.71
		Rating	-1.72	1.72 ^a	0.71 ^b	0.26
		Sea and surf time	1.81 ^a	2.43 ^a	1.38 ^a	1.19
		Time in grade and service	1.37 ^b	1.15 ^a	-1.15 ^a	-1.06
		Timing of advancement cycle	0.82	-0.70	-0.61 ^a	-1.01
Black	Male	Total difference	3.49 ^a	5.17 ^a	1.50 ^a	3.41 ^b
		Exam score	7.07 ^a	5.15 ^a	1.98 ^a	3.03 ^a
		Medals and awards	0.32 ^a	0.14	0.03	-0.05
		Performance	0.40 ^b	0.28 ^a	0.20 ^a	0.94 ^a
		Rating	-3.41 ^a	0.24	-0.30	1.69 ^a
		Sea and surf time	-0.48 ^a	-0.52 ^b	0.23 ^b	-0.59
		Time in grade and service	-0.12	-0.71 ^a	-0.91 ^a	-0.89 ^b
		Timing of advancement cycle	0.20	0.65	-0.04	-2.08 ^a
Hispanic	Female	Total difference	8.26 ^a	6.47 ^a	0.70	2.20
		Exam score	3.79 ^a	0.70	0.46	0.40
		Medals and awards	0.34 ^a	0.92 ^a	0.08	0.17
		Performance	-1.41 ^a	-0.97 ^a	-0.39 ^a	0.00

TABLE C.1—CONTINUED

Race or Ethnicity	Gender	Advancement Factor	Advancement to Grade . . .			
			E-5	E-6	E-7	E-8
Hispanic	Male	Rating	0.19	0.24	-0.78	1.46
		Sea and surf time	1.94 ^a	2.77 ^a	1.72 ^a	3.42 ^a
		Time in grade and service	1.89 ^a	2.38 ^a	0.43 ^b	0.81
		Timing of advancement cycle	2.50 ^a	2.27 ^a	0.32 ^b	2.78 ^a
		Total difference	3.40 ^a	4.18 ^a	0.62 ^b	1.82
		Exam score	3.89 ^a	2.61 ^a	1.01 ^a	1.44 ^a
		Medals and awards	-0.07	0.12	0.03	0.03
		Performance	-0.22 ^b	-0.13 ^b	-0.06	-0.14
		Rating	-1.01 ^a	-0.52 ^b	-0.57 ^a	0.50
		Sea and surf time	-0.37 ^a	0.26	0.36 ^a	0.79 ^b
Asian or Pacific Islander	Female	Time in grade and service	-0.18	-0.12	-0.16 ^b	-0.31
		Timing of advancement cycle	1.53 ^a	1.52 ^a	0.28 ^a	1.01 ^a
		Total difference	3.13	0.31	3.41 ^a	—
		Exam score	3.33	-0.96	0.16	—
		Medals and awards	0.36	0.78	0.23	—
		Performance	-0.88	-0.45	-0.53 ^b	—
		Rating	-4.23 ^b	-1.23	-0.06	—
		Sea and surf time	2.11 ^a	2.77 ^a	1.63 ^a	—
		Time in grade and service	2.49 ^a	2.15 ^a	0.11	—
		Timing of advancement cycle	2.44	-1.02	1.13 ^a	—
Asian or Pacific Islander	Male	Total difference	2.28	4.41 ^a	0.63	5.38
		Exam score	3.11 ^a	0.85	0.97 ^b	1.72
		Medals and awards	0.32 ^b	0.63 ^a	0.27 ^a	0.07
		Performance	-0.29	-0.09	-0.04	-0.52
		Rating	-1.88 ^b	-1.22 ^b	-0.50	0.48
		Sea and surf time	-0.16	0.67 ^b	0.22	0.84
		Time in grade and service	0.99 ^a	0.75 ^a	0.61 ^a	0.56
		Timing of advancement cycle	2.53 ^a	3.57 ^a	0.55 ^a	2.88 ^a

TABLE C.1—CONTINUED

Race or Ethnicity	Gender	Advancement Factor	Advancement to Grade . . .			
			E-5	E-6	E-7	E-8
Non-Hispanic other	Female	Total difference	3.42	4.99 ^a	1.36	4.87
		Exam score	1.57	0.31	0.24	0.82
		Medals and awards	0.33 ^b	0.79 ^a	0.01	0.04
		Performance	-0.36	-0.07	-0.31 ^a	0.47
		Rating	0.58	0.78	0.05	1.42
		Sea and surf time	2.27 ^a	2.29 ^a	1.43 ^a	1.62 ^b
		Time in grade and service	1.52 ^a	1.94 ^a	0.69 ^a	0.21
		Timing of advancement cycle	-2.69 ^b	-0.34	0.18	0.48
Non-Hispanic other	Male	Total difference	0.86	2.48 ^a	0.37	3.12 ^b
		Exam score	1.05 ^b	0.64	0.45 ^a	0.38
		Medals and awards	-0.21 ^b	0.30 ^a	0.01	0.01
		Performance	0.02	-0.11	-0.06	0.13
		Rating	1.24 ^b	-0.16	-0.36 ^a	0.32
		Sea and surf time	-0.21	0.29	0.35 ^a	0.31
		Time in grade and service	-0.87 ^a	0.39 ^a	0.02	-0.13
		Timing of advancement cycle	0.82	1.23 ^a	0.19 ^a	1.04 ^a

NOTES: This table contains the overall difference in advancement rates conditional on taking the SWE between each group and the white male group, as well as the contribution that average group differences in each factor makes to the portion of this gap that is explained by the characteristics. Values are in percentage points. The analysis includes each member each time they tested for promotion within a single grade. The regression model is a linear probability model, with cluster-robust standard errors to account for error correlation within individuals.

^a Statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

^b Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

formance points, on average, than white men and that this difference reduced the potential gap between the two groups by 1.32 percentage points. In other words, the 6.4–percentage point overall difference would have been 1.32 percentage points larger if not for the fact that white women had better performance evaluations than white men.

Table C.2 presents some limited decomposition results that amplify Table 5.3 in Chapter Five. In these decompositions, we expanded the analysis from Hall et al., 2019, to the race and ethnicity dimension by comparing white personnel and racial and ethnic minority personnel at each early-career milestone. The early-career retention patterns for racial and ethnic minority personnel tend to be similar to those of white personnel, and, in some cases, retention of racial and ethnic minority personnel is higher than that of white person-

TABLE C.2

Influence of Other Characteristics on Retention Total Differences, in Percentage Points

Characteristic	Enlisted Milestone			Officer Milestone			
	Continue to Two Years	Complete First Term	Reenlistment	Complete Second Term	Continue to Five Years	Remain in Sixth Year	Continue to Nine Years
Rate							
White	92.2 ^a	85.9 ^a	70.7 ^a	90.5 ^a	94.6 ^a	85.5 ^a	90.9 ^a
Racial or ethnic minority	91.5 ^a	84.7 ^a	74.4 ^a	88.9 ^a	93.6 ^a	84.7 ^a	92.7 ^a
Explanatory factor for rate difference							
Family status	-0.3 ^a	-0.7 ^a	-0.8 ^a	-0.2 ^b	-0.6 ^a	-0.2	0.0
AFQT score	0.5 ^a	0.2	-0.4 ^a	-0.2			
Advanced degree	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2 ^b	-0.3 ^a	-0.2
Gender	-0.1 ^a	-0.1 ^a	-0.1 ^a	-0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Entry age	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.0	0.3	-2.5 ^a	-3.1 ^a
Initial term length	0.1 ^a						
Entry FY	0.0	0.0	-0.2 ^a	0.0	0.0	-0.2	-0.2
YOSs or grade level		0.6 ^a	-0.1	1.4 ^a			
Rating category		0.3 ^b	-0.3 ^b	0.1			
Personnel tempo		0.0	-0.1	0.0	0.6 ^a	0.1	0.2
Pilot					0.3 ^a	0.4 ^a	0.6 ^a
Promotion status					0.5 ^b	2.3 ^a	0.0
Prior enlisted					1.2 ^b	-3.0 ^a	-2.5 ^a

Table C.2—Continued

Characteristic	Enlisted Milestone			Officer Milestone			
	Continue to Two Years	Complete First Term	Reenlistment	Complete Second Term	Continue to Five Years	Remain in Sixth Year	Continue to Nine Years
USCGA graduate					1.5 ^a	7.9 ^a	7.4 ^a
Gap remaining after characteristics	0.6	1.0 ^b	-1.7 ^b	0.6	-2.6 ^b	-3.7 ^a	-4.0 ^b

NOTES: The report refers to factors with negative values as those that mitigate racial and ethnic differences in retention, whereas factors with positive values contribute to total differences. Blank spaces in the table indicate cases in which factors do not apply to particular milestones. If the gap remaining after characteristics are accounted for in the last row is positive and significant, this means that racial and ethnic minority personnel retain at lower rates than similarly situated white personnel, to which we refer in the report as underperforming.

^a Statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

^b Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

nel . Still, this analysis is useful to identify factors that tend to reduce retention of racial and ethnic minority personnel relative to that of white personnel, and vice versa. The final row in Table C.2 shows the retention gap that remains after accounting for all characteristics in the table, and a positive value in this row would indicate that racial and ethnic minority personnel were retained at lower rates than comparable white personnel (which we describe in Chapter Five as “underperforming” in retaining racial and ethnic minority personnel). Only one milestone—completion of the first term—revealed a statistically significant difference after accounting for personnel characteristics.

Officer Promotion Methodology

We implemented the method described in Lim, Mariano, et al., 2014, which established an equivalent-group framework for considering disparate treatment in military promotion board outcomes across race and gender. We present an overview here; please see Lim, Mariano, et al., 2014, for a more in-depth discussion of the methodology.

As noted in Chapter Four, the goal was to address whether two officers, one a member of a URM group and one a white man, with equal records competing at the same promotion board have equal probability of being selected. The same two-step equivalent-group modeling process was implemented separately for each URM group:

1. The first step is used to create a white male comparison group with records that mirror the URM group as closely as possible on relevant available variables informative of selection promotion.
2. In the second step, we modeled the promotion outcomes for the URM personnel and their white male comparison group to determine whether the comparisons with similarly situated records have the same probability of promotion or, instead, an unexplained difference in outcomes between the URM group and their comparison group remains.

We accounted for the following variables in the analysis:

- PY
- OER final recommendation
- OER leadership dimension scores
- OER performance dimension scores
- USCGA graduate indicator
- prior-enlisted indicator
- indicator of an in-promotion zone reordering in the PY
- above-promotion zone indicator
- education (categorical variable capturing at entry and at time of board)
- time-in-service total

- days-deployed total
- number of medals
- military justice indicator (ever had any events)
- command experience indicator
- cutter assignment (current) indicator
- high-endurance cutters, cumulative months assigned
- medium-endurance cutters, cumulative months assigned
- all other cutters, cumulative months assigned
- job specialty
- currently serving in an operations or support position
- number of jobs predictive of promotion to O-6 the officer has held
- number of jobs predictive of promotion to O-7 or higher the officer has held
- component (regular or reservist on active duty)
- time-in-grade total at O-1
- time-in-grade total at O-2
- time-in-grade total at O-3 (O-4 and higher boards only)
- time-in-grade total at O-4 (O-5 and higher boards only)
- time-in-grade total at O-5 (O-6 boards only)
- skipped pay grade O-1 indicator
- skipped pay grade O-2 indicator (O-4 and higher boards only)
- skipped pay grade O-3 indicator (O-5 and higher boards only)
- skipped pay grade O-4 indicator (O-6 and higher boards only)
- age
- marital status
- number of dependents.

Step 1 was accomplished by fitting a propensity score model and then assigning weights to the comparison officers. For a given URM group being compared to white men, a model was generated to predict the probability that someone with a given set of values over the available relevant variables was a member of the URM group. This predicted probability, p_i , for individual officer i , called the propensity score, was used to weight the white male comparison group to look as similar as possible to the URM group. Each member of the URM group received a weight of $w_i = 1$, and each white man received a weight of

$$w_i = \frac{p_i}{1 - p_i},$$

which is the odds of that officer being a member of the URM given their individual values on all the relevant variables (e.g., McCaffrey, Ridgeway, and Morral, 2004). The propensity score model was estimated using a generalized boosted model (a.k.a., a gradient boosting machine) (Ridgeway, Madigan, and Richardson, 1999), a flexible nonlinear machine learn-

ing model utilizing tree-based methods to identify the optimal functional form. Each individual's propensity score was generated by feeding their set of values for the variables into the fitted model, yielding the predicted propensity result. Whether an individual officer was actually a member of the URM group was, of course, already known; the value in the exercise of predicting the probability that they were a member of the URM group was simply a means of identifying a comparison group that was most similar to the URM group. Those white men with values on the relevant variables that were most similar to those of the URM personnel received the greatest weight, while those with limited similarity were down-weighted. The propensity score modeling was implemented such that the final set of weights provides as strong a balance as possible between the URM group and the weighted control group on the distribution of each relevant variable. In our analysis, the propensity score model did not always achieve complete balance on all variables, but it greatly improved the similarity between the groups in all cases.

In step 2, we used weighted logistic regression to model the promotion outcomes for the URM group and the weighted whites. We then compared the probability of selection between the two groups to examine whether equally qualified officers from each group had equal probability of promotion. All variables included in the propensity scoring models for step 1 were also included here, thus further conditioning upon those variables that did not reach complete balance. Logistic regression models produce regression coefficients on the log-odds scale. To compare the probability of selection, we recoded all the URM officers as white and predicted their probability of selection (i.e., we generate a counterfactual prediction for what the selection outcomes would have been for the URM officers had they instead been white men). The mean of these counterfactuals was subtracted from the selection rate of the URM group to examine whether any differences remained.

These estimated remaining differences are illustrated in Table 4.6 in Chapter Four, and Table C.3 is a more comprehensive version of that table, including *p*-values. Remaining differences that are statistically significant could indicate cases in which promotion boards rated URM records differently from how they rated equivalent white male records. However, these differences could also result from differences in important selection factors that were omitted from the model, such as OER narratives. In the case of black women, specifically, it could also reflect the fact that we did not achieve a complete balance on all factors in the first step, which means that, with this technique, we could not find a set of white male records that was truly equivalent to the set of black women in our O-3 sample.

TABLE C.3
Estimates of Percentage-Point Promotion Board Selection Differences
(Adjusted Outcomes) Between Underrepresented-Minority Personnel and
Similar White Personnel, Promotion-Year 2006–2020 Boards

Race and Ethnicity	Gender	O-3	O-4	O-5	O-6
White	Female	-0.4 ($p = 0.236$)	0.6 ($p = 0.640$)	-1.8 ($p = 0.298$)	1.8 ($p = 0.407$)
Black	Male	-0.4 ($p = 0.164$)	-3.9 ($p = 0.052$)	-3.0 ($p = 0.248$)	25.3* ($p = 0.005$)
	Female	-11.0* ($p < 0.000$)	0.9 ($p = 0.360$)	-1.7 ($p = 0.068$)	N/A
Hispanic	Male	0.1 ($p = 0.349$)	3.0 ($p = 0.184$)	-0.5 ($p = 0.433$)	11.9* ($p < 0.000$)
	Female	-1.8* ($p = 0.008$)	-2.4 ($p = 0.129$)	3.2* ($p = 0.029$)	N/A
Asian or Pacific Islander	Male	0.2 ($p = 0.292$)	-2.9 ($p = 0.391$)	-9.6* ($p < 0.000$)	N/A
	Female	-0.3 ($p = 0.144$)	-3.2 ($p = 0.341$)	N/A	N/A
Non-Hispanic other	Male	0.5 ($p = 0.929$)	-1.5 ($p = 0.119$)	-3.8* ($p = 0.027$)	-3.0 ($p = 0.107$)
	Female	-0.6 ($p = 0.625$)	3.4 ($p = 0.512$)	-0.3 ($p = 0.878$)	N/A

NOTE: The value in parentheses in each cell represents the p -value for the hypothesis test of whether the estimated selection differences are distinguishable from 0. * = observed differences are statistically significant at a type I error rate of 0.05. All statistically insignificant cells are shaded in gray. Dark green indicates a URM rate more than 5 percentage points above the white male rate. Light green indicates a URM rate less than 5 percentage points above the white male rate. Yellow indicates a URM rate less than 5 percentage points lower than the white male rate. Red indicates a URM rate more than 5 percentage points lower than the white male rate. N/A = the number of observations was below 25 and excluded from the analyses.

Coast Guard Administrative Data Sources and Data Gaps

Table D.1 lists our data sources, data providers, date ranges covered in the data received, and the gaps we identified in the data that need to be closed.

TABLE D.1
Coast Guard Administrative Data Sources and Gaps

Data	Data Provider	Dates of Data Received	Description	Data Gaps to Close
Monthly workforce snapshots	Workforce Forecasting and Analysis	July 1999–July 2020	Monthly workforce snapshots containing administrative information, such as service dates, demographics, pay grades, units, and skills and experiences	Full EERs and OERs (including narrative text); reasons associated with nonadministrative separations; narrative detail associated with conduct-related separations; point-in-time sea and surf time
Enlisted advancement records	Pay and Personnel Center	PYs 2006–2019	Records of all personnel who took the SWE for each advancement cycle and the point values each test taker received as part of the advancement process	Indicator of which personnel were initially above the cut for advancement; records of personnel responses to exam questions; records of SWE prerequisite completion (i.e., completion of rating performance qualification standards and enlisted professional military education standards prior to testing)

Table D.1—Continued

Data	Data Provider	Dates of Data Received	Description	Data Gaps to Close
Officer promotion board records	OPM	PYs 2006–2020	Records of all personnel who met promotion boards and what the outcome of each board was	None
Major-cutter movements	Office of Requirements and Analysis	October 1988–June 2020	Records of daily cutter activities and operational states (e.g., in home port, deployed away from home port)	None
Records of new recruits	Recruiting Command	Calendar years 2011–2019 (enlisted); calendar years 2008–2019 (officer)	New-recruit demographics, education levels, and standardized test scores	Granular data on active recruiters in each locale; areas of responsibility; local advertising impressions; other operational recruiting activities (e.g., events and air shows), and associated costs
USCGA	USCGA	Some files include class years 1987–2023, while others go back to only 2010	USCGA graduate demographics; graduation dates; standardized test scores; performance measurement; class rank; and awards	None
UCMJ nonjudicial punishment	Office of the Judge Advocate General	FYs 2013–2020 (UCMJ); January 2000–February 2020 (nonjudicial punishment)	Associated dates; charges and infractions; and results of UCMJ incidents involving Coast Guard personnel	None

NOTE: UCMJ = Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Focus Group Methodology

Focus Group Design

To understand perspectives and experiences of URM personnel in the Coast Guard and to identify themes for the study's survey, we conducted focus groups with active-duty URM Coast Guard personnel from December 2019 through February 2020.¹ All active-duty URM personnel (including reservists on contracts for extended active duty [EAD] or active duty for operational support [ADOS]) were eligible to participate in the focus groups. In consultation with our study sponsors, we selected Coast Guard locations for focus groups that the sponsor identified as having substantial numbers of active-duty URM personnel assigned to the location. To solicit participation, we emailed all active-duty URM personnel, as identified by race/ethnicity and gender captured in Coast Guard personnel data, in the surrounding areas of the designated locations asking for focus group volunteers.

To encourage candid conversations with personnel about the unique experiences of URM personnel, we held separate focus groups with racial and ethnic minority men, racial and ethnic minority women, and white women.² We also separated groups further by officer and enlisted status because these groups have distinct personnel management systems.³ To the extent possible given the availability and demographics of focus group volunteers, we grouped participants of similar ranks together to encourage them to feel comfortable sharing candid feedback in a group of their peers rather than in front of their superiors.

We began each focus group by providing background information about the study, answering participants' questions, and obtaining informed consent for participation, which emphasized the voluntary nature of participation and that the research team would keep any personally identifiable information confidential. Focus groups were approximately 90 minutes in length and typically aimed to include six or seven participants, although this varied by participant availability and attendance. One research team member facilitated the focus group discussion, and one research team member captured notes from the discussion. Focus

¹ Focus groups were conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, so any changes to the Coast Guard work environment or culture that might have resulted are not captured in our focus group findings.

² Once someone volunteered, we confirmed the focus group type to which he or she wanted to be assigned.

³ Because there are so few WOs, we were not able to hold separate groups for them. Instead, WOs who volunteered were asked to choose between participating in officer and enlisted focus groups.

group discussion topics covered recruiting, career choices, career development and assignments, advancement or promotion, retention factors, and DEI policies and the EO complaint process (see Appendix D for the full focus group protocol).

Focus Group Participants

Between December 3, 2019, and February 6, 2020, we conducted 108 focus groups with 610 Coast Guard URM personnel in six locations across the country: Sector New York, Base Alameda, Base Miami Beach, Base New Orleans, Base Portsmouth, and Coast Guard Headquarters.⁴ Focus group participants included representation across ranks, officer specialties, and enlisted ratings.

Table E.1 summarizes the locations and dates during which focus groups were held, the number of male and female participants who were invited, the number of male and female participants who actually attended, and notes about how many focus groups were held at each location, broken down by male and female groups.

At the conclusion of a focus group, each participant was asked to complete a background sheet asking for their race and ethnicity, gender, rank, rating or primary specialty, education level, marital status, and parental status. The compiled responses from these background sheets, describing our focus group participant sample, are detailed in Table E.2 and Figures E.1 through E.7, all of which summarize the demographic data we collected.

Table E.2 shows the racial and ethnic breakdown of the male and female focus group participants. Participants who identified as being of another race or ethnicity, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or two or more races were aggregated into a single “other” category. Overall, 159 of participants identified as Hispanic or Latino; 361 participants identified as Asian, black, or white; 89 participants were grouped under the “other” category; and only one participant did not wish to answer.⁵

Figure E.1 contains the breakdown across all focus groups by officer, enlisted, and WO status.

Figure E.2 shows the distribution of pay grades across all focus groups. All pay grades, E-2 through E-9, O-1 through O-6, and W-2 through W-4, were represented. All participants except one disclosed their pay grades.

⁴ As indicated in Table E.1, at Coast Guard Headquarters, the number of volunteers for certain types of focus groups exceeded the spaces available. Once the maximum number of participants that could be accommodated by the research team was reached, additional volunteers were placed on a waitlist and contacted if another volunteer was no longer able to participate.

⁵ In general, focus groups with racial and ethnic minority members included participants across different racial and ethnic minority groups. However, when sufficient participant numbers by subgroup were present in a location and participant schedules aligned, the research team put members of the same racial or ethnic minority group together in a focus group.

TABLE E.1
Focus Group Participation Summary

Location	Date	Invited			Attended			Focus Groups		
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Sector New York, N.Y.	December 3–5, 2019	182	78	260	13	13	26	3	4	7
Base Alameda, Calif.	December 10–12, 2019	526	328	854	46	62	108	9	12	21
Base Miami Beach, Fla.	January 14–16, 2020	471	192	663	32	30	62	6	6	12
Base New Orleans, La.	January 21–23, 2020	247	211	458	26	49	75	6	9	15
Base Portsmouth, Va.	January 28–30, 2020	552	594	1,146	58	97	155	9	17	26
Base National Capital Region Washington, D.C. ^a	February 4–6, 2020	615	545	1,160	65	119	184	9	18	27
Total		2,593	1,948	4,541	240	370	610	42	66	108

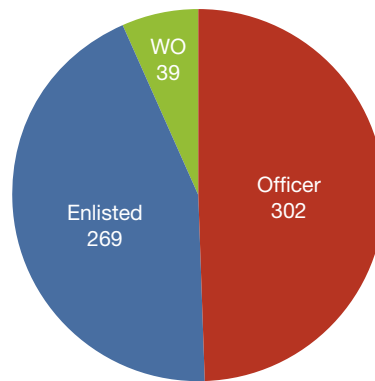
^a There were short waiting lists for white female officer groups, racial and ethnic minority male officer groups, and racial and ethnic minority male enlisted groups.

TABLE E.2
Focus Group Participants' Races and Ethnicities

Race and Ethnicity	Male	Female	Grand Total
White	0	187	187
Black	84	57	141
Hispanic or Latino	96	63	159
Asian	19	14	33
Other ^a	41	48	89
Do not wish to answer	0	0	1
Total	240	370	610

^a Includes non-Hispanic other, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and two or more races.

FIGURE E.1
Focus Group Participants, by Corps



Focus group participants also represented a wide variety of officer specialties and enlisted ratings. Among officers, prevention and response ashore were the most-frequently reported specialties, with 19 percent and 11 percent of officer participants, respectively. Almost a quarter of enlisted focus group participants had YN ratings, and 14 percent had SK ratings.

Figures E.3 and E.4 show the breakdown for highest level of education achieved by focus group participants.

Finally, Figures E.5 through E.7 summarize data about participants' familial relationships, including their marital status, spouse's military status, and whether they reported having children. Nearly 70 percent of participants reported being married. Of those who were married ($n = 424$), close to half ($n = 191$) of their spouses were civilians. Across all participants, more than 60 percent reported having children.

FIGURE E.2
Focus Group Participants, by Pay Grade

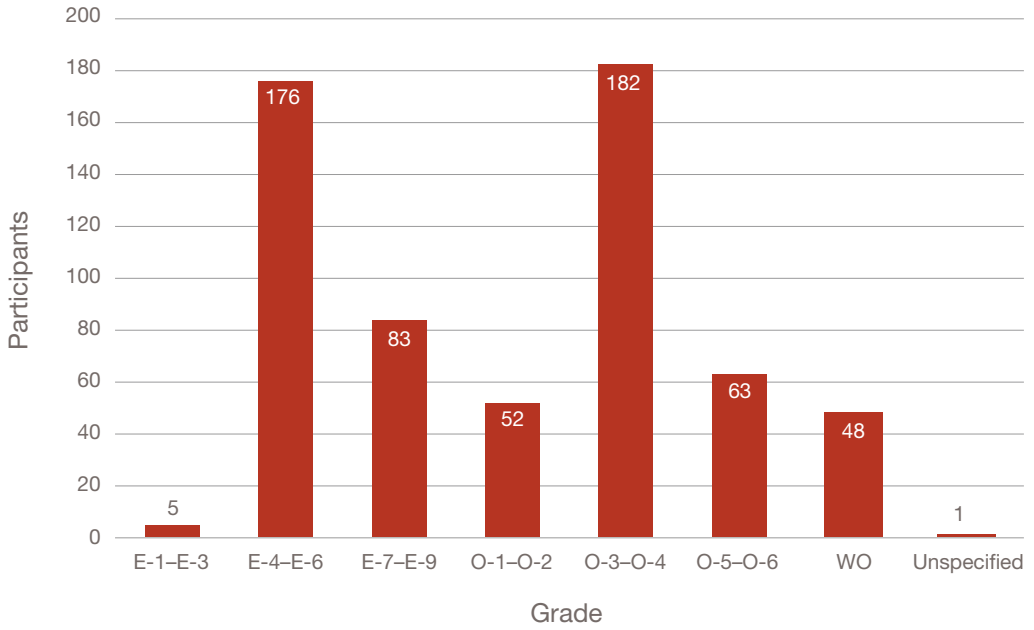


FIGURE E.3
Officer Focus Group Participants' Highest Education Levels

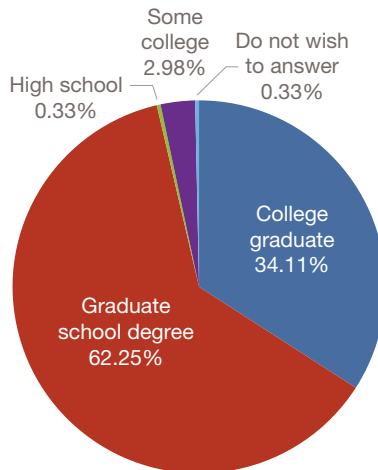
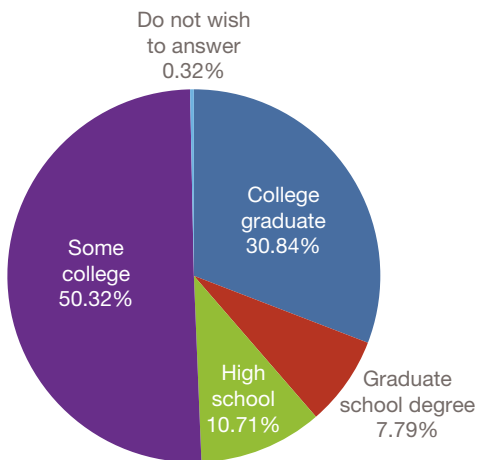


FIGURE E.4
Enlisted Focus Group Participants'
Highest Education Levels



NOTE: WOs are included in this figure.

FIGURE E.5
Focus Group Participants'
Marital Statuses

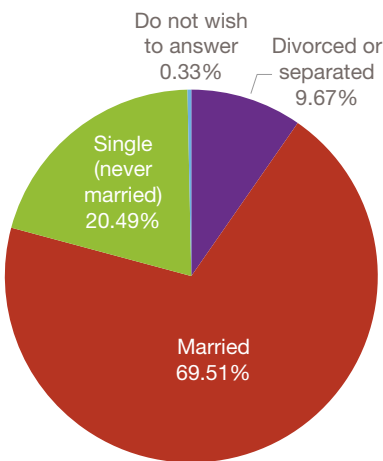


FIGURE E.6
Focus Group Participants' Spouses' Military Statuses

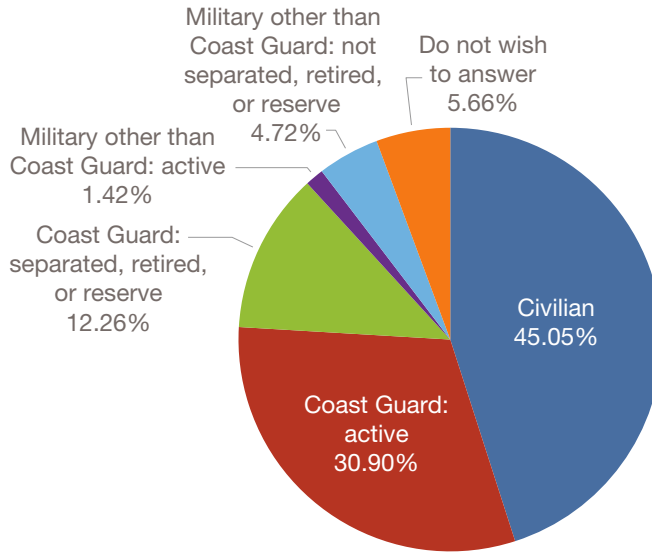
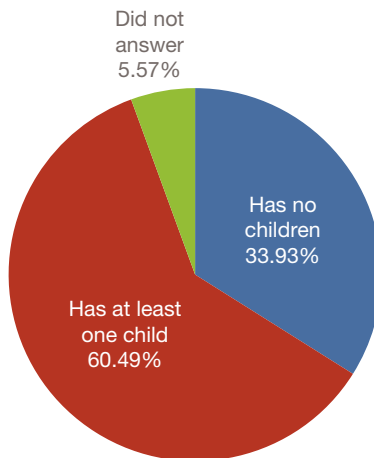


FIGURE E.7
Focus Group Participants' Parental Statuses



Qualitative Coding Approach

After conclusion of all focus groups, the research team uploaded detailed focus group notes into NVivo qualitative data coding software. The team then coded focus group notes in two phases to identify key themes and trends:

1. Phase 1 of coding involved team members coding notes based on group background characteristics to allow identification of trends by these characteristics.
2. For phase 2 of coding, research team members coded focus group notes for content and developed codes derived primarily from protocol questions.

Throughout the coding process, research team members met regularly to ensure that code definitions were clear and being applied in a uniform manner across the focus group notes. Any questions or potential discrepancies were discussed and resolved by the coding team to promote coder consistency. At the completion of phase 2 of coding, the research team analyzed coded data to identify key themes and trends.

Coding Guide

In this section, we reproduce the language from our coding guide.

Focus Group Characteristic Codes

Coders will first code all focus group notes by the background characteristics of the group: focus group location, whether the group included officer or enlisted personnel, and whether the group included minority men, minority women, or white women.

Content Codes

After background codes are captured for each set of focus group notes, coders will code focus group data for content. This coding will not focus on the individual participant level, but the discussion content in general. Code all text that addresses the topics as defined below. Make sure coded text captures enough of the discussion to provide necessary context for comments made. Corresponding protocol questions are provided for reference, but coder should code text on each theme throughout the notes, not just in response to the corresponding protocol question. In many instances, a question may not specifically be asked because the theme emerged organically in the discussion. Level 1 codes are the broadest codes and Level 2 codes allow for more specificity. Coders should code at the most specific level of code possible and code as many content codes as are relevant to the comment. [See Table E.3.]

TABLE E.3
Focus Group Coding Guide

Level 1	Level 2	Description	Corresponding Protocol Question(s)
Recruiting			
	Why joined CG [Coast Guard]	Comments about reasons joined Coast Guard	Why did you join the Coast Guard?
	Other orgs [organizations] considered	Comments about other organizations participants considered when deciding to join the Coast Guard	Were there other organizations (e.g., another military service, a private sector organization) that you were also considering but chose the Coast Guard over? If so, why did you choose the Coast Guard over these other organizations?
	Improvements to recruiting	Comments about ways the Coast Guard can improve recruiting for racial/ethnic minority communities and women	How could the Coast Guard improve its recruiting strategies or practices to better recruit [insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: racial/ethnic minorities and/or women]?
Career Choices			
	Why chose specialty or rating	Comments about reasons for choosing specialty or rating	What factors did you, or if you don't have a specialty [officers] / rate [enlisted] yet, are you considering when choosing your primary specialty [officers] / rating [enlisted]?
	Influence of demographics on choice	Comments about ways demographics influence specialty or rating choice	How, if at all, do you think [insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: race/ethnicity or gender] factor into which specialty [officers] / rating [enlisted] people choose?

TABLE E.3—CONTINUED

Level 1	Level 2	Description	Corresponding Protocol Question(s)
Career Development and Assignments			
	Ways CG [the Coast Guard] supports career development	Comments about ways the Coast Guard supports personnel career development (e.g., tools, resources, training)	In what ways does the Coast Guard support your career development? For example, what tools, resources, training, or other developmental opportunities are available?
	Feedback	Comments about feedback participants had received about their Coast Guard career options and career potential	How would you describe the quality and amount of feedback you have received about your career options and career potential in the Coast Guard?
	Mentorship	Comments about participants' experiences with mentorship in the Coast Guard	Do you have, or have you had, a mentor during your Coast Guard career? If so, how and when did you find that mentor? What impact, if any, did your mentor have on your career?
	Equal opportunity for career development	Comments regarding whether participants felt that they had an equal opportunity for career development in the Coast Guard and any influence of demographics on career development opportunities	In general, do you think that you have an equal opportunity for career development compared to other active-duty Coast Guard members? Do you think [insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: gender or race/ethnicity] influence career development opportunities? If so, how?

TABLE E.3—CONTINUED

Level 1	Level 2	Description	Corresponding Protocol Question(s)
	Assignment process	Comments about participants' experiences with the assignment process in the Coast Guard and any impacts of demographics on participants' preferences or assignment opportunities	How would you describe your experience with the assignment process throughout your Coast Guard career? How, if at all, does your [insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: race/ethnicity or gender] factor into which assignments you personally prefer? In general, do you think [insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: gender or race/ethnicity] influence assignment opportunities?
	Improvements to career development and assignments	Comments about ways the Coast Guard can improve career development or assignment opportunities	How could the Coast Guard improve your career development and assignment opportunities?
Promotion or Advancement			
	Factors for promotion	Comments about factors participants felt supported promotion or advancement in the Coast Guard	In general, what factors do you think lead to Coast Guard members successfully getting promoted or advancing in their career?
	Equal opportunity for promotion	Comments regarding whether or not participants felt that they had equal opportunity for promotion or advancement in the Coast Guard and any influence of demographics on promotion or advancement opportunities	In general, do you think that you have an equal opportunity for promotion compared to other Coast Guard members? Do you think [insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: gender or race/ethnicity] influence opportunities for promotion/advancement? If so, how?
	Improvements to promotion	Comments about ways the Coast Guard can improve opportunities for promotion or advancement	How could the Coast Guard better support your promotion/advancement?

TABLE E.3—CONTINUED

Level 1	Level 2	Description	Corresponding Protocol Question(s)
Retention			
	Factors for leaving or staying	Comments about factors that influence participants' decisions to stay in or leave their Coast Guard careers	In general, what factors do you think contribute to members deciding to leave the Coast Guard? In general, what factors do you think contribute to members staying in the Coast Guard?
	Influence of demographics on retention	Comments about ways demographic influence participants' retention decisions, both to stay in or to leave their Coast Guard careers	How, if at all, do you think [insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: gender or race/ethnicity] influence members' decisions to leave the Coast Guard? How, if at all, do you think [insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: gender or race/ethnicity] influence members' decisions to stay in the Coast Guard?
	Improvements to retention	Comments about ways the Coast Guard can improve participants' retention	How might the Coast Guard better assist members with the factors that you've mentioned as influencing members' decisions regarding leaving or staying in the Coast Guard?
Diversity and EO			
	Diversity policies and improvements	Comments about the Coast Guard's current DEI policies and strategies and ways they can be improved	Do you believe current Coast Guard policies and strategies adequately address diversity and inclusion in the Coast Guard? Please explain. How could the Coast Guard better support diversity and inclusion in its workforce?

TABLE E.3—CONTINUED

Level 1	Level 2	Description	Corresponding Protocol Question(s)
	EO complaint process and improvements	Comments about the Coast Guard’s EO complaint process and ways it can be improved	How familiar are you with the Coast Guard’s EO complaint processes? Would you feel comfortable reporting instances of discrimination without fearing retaliation? Please explain. Do you believe that allegations of discrimination are dealt with fairly in the Coast Guard? Please explain. How might the Coast Guard improve its processes to combat and respond to discrimination in the workplace?
Treated Differently		Comments describing ways participants had been treated differently in the Coast Guard because of their race/ethnicity or gender	Do you believe you have been treated differently during your Coast Guard career because of your [insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: gender or race/ethnicity]? If so, how?
Miscellaneous Improvements		Comments about improvements the Coast Guard can make that do not fall under codes for improving recruiting, career development and assignments, promotion or advancement, retention, DEI policies, or the EO complaint process	Finally, do you have any additional suggestions for changes that can be made that could improve the Coast Guard’s ability to recruit and retain members or to improve the career and work environment more generally? Any other final thoughts?
For discussion		Use when unsure how a comment should be coded	None
Quote/Of Note		Particularly pertinent comment or excellent quote. Use sparingly.	None

NOTE: N/A = not applicable.

Focus Group Protocol

In this appendix, we reproduce the content of our focus group protocol.

Provide Study Overview and Administer Consent

General Background Questions

We are first going to begin with questions regarding the characteristics of this group.

[Facilitator Note: Go around the group and ask each individual to respond to the below two questions.]

1. What is your current rank?
2. What is your primary specialty [officers]/rating [enlisted]?

Recruiting

[Facilitator Note: Starting with this section, you should open up the remainder of questions to the group instead of requiring each participant to respond.]

I now want to open the questioning up to the group as a whole and ask some general questions on recruiting. So, anyone who wants to respond should feel free to do so.

3. Why did you join the Coast Guard?
4. Were there other organizations (e.g., another military service, a private sector organization) that you were also considering but chose the Coast Guard over? If so, why did you choose the Coast Guard over these other organizations?
5. How could the Coast Guard improve its recruiting strategies or practices to better recruit [insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: racial/ethnic minorities and/or women]?

Career Choices

I now want to ask you some questions about your career choices.

6. What factors *did* you, or if you don't have a specialty [officers]/rate [enlisted] yet, *are you considering* when choosing your primary specialty [officers]/rating [enlisted]?

7. How, if at all, do you think [*insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: race/ethnicity or gender*] factor into which specialty [officers]/rating [enlisted] people choose?

Career Development and Assignments

I'm now going to ask you about your experiences and thoughts on career development and the assignment process in the Coast Guard.

8. In what ways does the Coast Guard support your career development? For example, what tools, resources, training, or other development opportunities are available?
9. How would you describe the quality and amount of feedback you have received about your career options and career potential in the Coast Guard?
10. Do you have, or have you had, a mentor during your Coast Guard career? If so, how and when did you find that mentor? What impact, if any, did your mentor have on your career?
11. In general, do you think that you have an equal opportunity for career development compared to other active duty Coast Guard members?
 - a. Do you think [*insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: gender or race/ethnicity*] influence career development opportunities? If so, how?
12. How would you describe your experience with the assignment process throughout your Coast Guard career?
 - a. How, if at all, does your [*insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: race/ethnicity or gender*] factor into which assignments you personally prefer?
 - b. In general, do you think [*insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: gender or race/ethnicity*] influence assignment opportunities?
13. How could the Coast Guard improve your career development and assignment opportunities?

Promotion/Advancement

Now, I want to ask you about your promotion/advancement experiences.

14. In general, what factors do you think lead to Coast Guard members successfully getting promoted or advancing in their career?
15. In general, do you think that you have an equal opportunity for promotion compared to other Coast Guard members?
 - a. Do you think [*insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: gender or race/ethnicity*] influence opportunities for promotion/advancement? If so, how?
16. How could the Coast [G]uard better support your promotion/advancement?

Retention Factors

I would now like to discuss decisions regarding staying in or leaving the Coast Guard. We are interested in hearing about your own thoughts with regard to your career as well as what you know regarding why your fellow peers have chosen to stay or leave.

17. In general, what factors do you think contribute to members deciding to leave the Coast Guard?
 - a. How, if at all, do you think [*insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: gender or race/ethnicity*] influence members' decisions to leave the Coast Guard?

18. In general, what factors do you think contribute to members staying in the Coast Guard?
 - a. How, if at all, do you think [*insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: gender or race/ethnicity*] influence members' decisions to stay in the Coast Guard?

19. How might the Coast Guard better assist members with the factors that you've mentioned as influencing members' decisions regarding leaving or staying in the Coast Guard?

Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity

I now am going to ask you some questions regarding diversity and inclusion, in general, as well as the EO complaint process.

20. Do you believe current Coast Guard policies and strategies adequately address diversity and inclusion in the Coast Guard? Please explain.
21. How could the Coast Guard better support diversity and inclusion in its workforce?
22. How familiar are you with the Coast Guard's EO complaint processes?
 - a. Would you feel comfortable reporting instances of discrimination without fearing retaliation? Please explain.
 - b. Do you believe that allegations of discrimination are dealt with fairly in the Coast Guard? Please explain.

23. How might the Coast Guard improve its processes to combat and respond to discrimination in the workplace?

Closing Questions

I'd now like to ask you a couple of final questions to wrap up the discussion.

24. Do you believe you have been treated differently during your Coast Guard career because of your [*insert wording to reflect focus group demographics: gender or race/ethnicity*]? If so, how?
25. Finally, do you have any additional suggestions for changes that can be made that could improve the Coast Guard's ability to recruit and retain members or to improve the career and work environment more generally? Any other final thoughts?

Background Sheet Provided to All Focus Group Participants

26. Are you Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Do not wish to answer
27. What is your race? *Mark one or more races to indicate what race you consider yourself to be.*
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian (e.g., Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese)
 - Black or African American
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (e.g., Samoan, Guamanian)
 - White
 - Other (*Please state:* _____)
 - Do not wish to answer
28. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other (*Please state:* _____)
 - Do not wish to answer
29. What is your current rank (e.g., E-4 or O-3)?
30. If you are an officer, what is your primary specialty?
If you are enlisted, what is your primary rating?

31. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 - High school
 - Some college
 - College graduate
 - Graduate school degree (e.g., law degree, master's degree, M.D., Ph.D.)

32. What is your marital status?
 - Single (never married)
 - Married
 - Divorced or separated
 - Widowed

33. If you are married, what is your spouse's military status?
 - Coast Guard, active
 - Coast Guard, separated/retired/Reserve
 - Military (not Coast Guard), active
 - Military (not Coast Guard), separated/retired/Reserve
 - Civilian, not a current or former military service member

34. Do you have children?
 - Yes
 - No

Survey Methodology

As a key task for this study, the Coast Guard asked HSOAC to administer an online survey to active-duty Coast Guard personnel. This appendix describes the design, administration, and analysis of that survey.

Survey Design

To design the survey, HSOAC researchers engaged in a multistep process, which we describe in this section.

Review of Currently Administered Surveys

We first collected information on relevant items in recently administered surveys addressing Coast Guard personnel's perceptions of and experiences during their Coast Guard careers. Our intent in reviewing these surveys was to reduce the extent to which items in a new survey replicated items already addressed in other survey efforts. Specifically, we reviewed the following surveys:

- 2018 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members (WGRA) Survey (Sadler et al., 2019)
- 2017 Workplace and Equal Opportunity Survey (WEOS) (Daniel et al., 2019)
- 2018 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey (Davis et al., 2019)
- 2017 Coast Guard Organizational Assessment Survey (data provided by the Coast Guard)
- 2018 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2019)
- 2019 Leadership Assessment Survey (U.S. Coast Guard, undated)
- Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) (Office of People Analytics, 2019)
- Coast Guard Career Intentions Survey (U.S. Coast Guard, 2019)
- U.S. Office of Personnel Management 2017 Senior Executive Service exit survey (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2017)
- DoD 2015 Health Related Behaviors Survey (Meadows et al., 2018).

In reviewing these surveys, we created a workbook with a separate worksheet for each survey. Each worksheet listed each relevant survey item, response options for that item, the survey section in which the item was listed, and the topical area each item appeared to address. We then reviewed which topical areas were already thoroughly assessed across these surveys.

Review of Academic and Private-Sector Instruments

We subsequently reviewed previous survey instruments that had been administered to other populations. We focused on measures, written in English, administered to individuals ages 18 years and older. We limited our review to literature published between 1990 and 2019. Our goal in conducting this review was to identify commonly used measures that addressed elements of the career life cycle. To do so, we conducted searches in Google Scholar. We used several combinations of search words and phrases. For example, to identify racial and ethnic harassment and discrimination measures, we used the following: (race* OR racism OR racist OR racial OR ethnic* OR minorit*) AND (discriminat* OR harass* OR behavior* OR hassl* OR slur* OR insult* OR insensitiv*) AND (instrument* OR measur*OR scale* OR survey* OR questionnaire* OR empirical OR inventor*).

Feedback from Focus Groups

To determine final draft content for the survey, we drew on the themes identified in our focus groups with the goal of ensuring that survey questions could help provide insight on the extent to which focus group themes were prevalent across the active-duty Coast Guard population. For those themes for which there were not established or published items or scales, the study team developed items unique to this survey.

Feedback from U.S. Coast Guard Stakeholders

After developing a draft of the survey, we collected feedback from several U.S. Coast Guard stakeholders, including the sponsoring office (CG-127), senior leadership in the Coast Guard, and Affinity Group Council members. We gathered feedback on the face and content validity of the survey, the tone of items, and the suitability of the terminology used in items for administration to U.S. Coast Guard personnel. We incorporated their suggestions, as appropriate.

Survey Items

As part of the survey design, we sought to address each stage of the respondent's career life cycle. In this section, we discuss each section of this design.

Screening

After entering the survey, each respondent first received an informed-consent form that described the content and nature of the survey. After indicating that they had read the form and agreeing to continue, the respondent was presented with two screening questions addressing (1) whether they were currently a member of the active-duty U.S. Coast Guard and (2) whether they were a reservist on an EAD or ADOS contract. Any participant who responded “no” to both questions was screened out of the survey.

Background Items

Each respondent first received items asking whether they were male or female, their ethnicity, their race, and their Coast Guard status (i.e., enlisted, officer, or WO). We included these items to facilitate analyses by different demographic groups, and the item wording and response options matched those provided in recently administered DoD surveys, including the WGRA and WEOS.

Each respondent who indicated that they were an officer was then asked to indicate whether they had received their commission from the USCGA. If they indicated not being commissioned from the USCGA, the respondent was asked whether they participated in the CSPI program. These items were developed for this survey. Respondents who indicated that they were enlisted personnel or WOs were not presented with these items.

Next, the respondent was asked to provide their pay grade, years of active-duty Coast Guard service, current marital status, and, if married, their spouse’s military status. The respondent was also asked whether they had children under the age of 18 for whom they were legally responsible. We included these items to facilitate analyses by different demographic groups, and the item wording and response options matched those provided in recently administered DoD surveys, including the WGRA, WEOS, and the Health Related Behaviors Survey.

Career Choices

Next, the respondent received items addressing their rating (if enlisted) or primary specialty (if an officer). A WO respondent was asked to provide only their specialty. The response options for these items were developed for this survey based on a review of the ratings and specialties in Coast Guard personnel records and with feedback from active-duty U.S. Coast Guard personnel.

After that, the respondent was asked to provide the main reasons they chose their rating or primary specialty. They were provided with a list of potential reasons and asked to mark all that applied. Then, they were presented with all reasons they had selected and asked to choose the top reason they chose their rating or specialty. These items were developed based on focus group responses to a similar question and from review of similar survey items that have been included in previous iterations of the DoD’s JAMRS new-recruit survey (JAMRS, undated).

Next, the respondent was asked, when choosing their rating or specialty, how knowledgeable (1 = not at all, 5 = extremely) they were about five aspects of the rating or specialty:

- the advancement or promotion potential
- the leadership opportunities
- the deployment requirements
- the work schedule
- the assignment locations.

These items were developed for this survey. They showed high internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.91$), so they were aggregated into a single scale score.

Career Development

After receiving items on their career choices, the respondent was next presented with items on their career development. They first received three items addressing training and education. These items addressed the extent to which they agreed (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) with statements that they received the Coast Guard training that they needed to carry out their job duties effectively, their Coast Guard training had prepared them to take on greater leadership responsibility, and the Coast Guard had taught them to lead others from diverse backgrounds. These items were developed for this survey, and, rather than being aggregated, the items were analyzed separately.

Next, the respondent was asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) with six items about career opportunities in the Coast Guard. These items were developed for this survey, and a principal component analysis with varimax rotation suggested two factors:¹

- One factor contained three items and addressed perceived fairness of the distribution of developmental opportunities, command opportunities, and special assignments ($\alpha = 0.83$).
- The second factor contained three items and addressed understanding of how developmental opportunities, command opportunities, and special assignments were distributed ($\alpha = 0.84$).

The items for each factor were aggregated into separate scale scores, one for each of the two factors.

¹ A principal-component analysis assists with improving interpretability of results by reducing data dimensionality, and a varimax rotation clarifies relationships among identified factors.

Mentoring

After receiving questions on career development, the respondent received items on mentoring. The mentoring items were designed to assess key themes that arose from the focus groups. In developing items, we also reviewed and adapted items presented in the 2017 WEOS but for which results were not widely available at the time of this research. The respondent was first asked whether they had a formal or informal Coast Guard mentor who advised them on their military career. If they did, they were asked the extent (1 = did not help at all, 5 = helped to a very large extent) to which these experiences helped to advance their military career. These items were analyzed individually.

Any respondent who reported having a mentor was also asked the extent to which any of their Coast Guard mentors helped them with six aspects of their career (1 = not at all, 5 = very large extent):

- developing mission-critical skills
- helping them advance their career
- encouraging them to stay in the Coast Guard
- helping them enhance their own mentoring skills
- helping them creatively resolve conflicts between work and nonwork
- providing sponsorship or contacts to help them advance their career.

These items demonstrated high internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.88$) and were aggregated.

Any respondent who reported having a mentor was also asked the extent to which they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the mentorship they received during their Coast Guard career (1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied). Any respondent who did not report have a mentor was presented with a list of factors that might have contributed to them not receiving mentorship during their Coast Guard career and asked to mark all that apply.

Assignment Process and Locations

The respondent also received several survey items addressing the Coast Guard assignment process and locations to which personnel might be assigned. Specifically, three items asked them how satisfied or dissatisfied (1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied) they were with the number of assignment opportunities made available to them, the types of assignment opportunities made available to them, and the locations to which they had been assigned in the Coast Guard. These items were designed for this survey and demonstrated high internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.85$), so they were aggregated into a single scale score.

The respondent was next asked the extent to which they agreed (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) with statements about their knowledge of and perceived fairness of Coast Guard assignments. These items were designed for this survey and addressed whether the respondent believed that they had a thorough understanding of how the Coast Guard assignment process worked and whether Coast Guard assignments were distributed fairly. For Coast Guard personnel who indicated in the background questions that their spouses were

active-duty Coast Guard personnel, they also received two items assessing whether they had a thorough understanding of how colocation works and whether they believed that the Coast Guard made reasonable efforts to colocate personnel in dual-Coast Guard marriages. These items were all analyzed separately.

Next, based on focus group findings, the survey included several items assessing knowledge of policies and experiences related to potential discrimination or harassment in local communities. The respondent was asked how knowledgeable (1 = not at all knowledgeable, 5 = very knowledgeable) they were about (1) Coast Guard policies that prevented Coast Guard personnel from being assigned in or near communities that had taken hostile, harassing, or discriminatory actions against Coast Guard personnel and (2) whom to report to if they or a dependent experienced discrimination or harassment in the local community. These items were designed for this survey based on focus group findings and analyzed separately. The respondent then received four items addressing how unlikely or likely (1 = very unlikely, 5 = very likely) they would be to perform certain behaviors. Specifically, they were asked the likelihood of requesting to avoid assignment to a location based on information about discrimination or harassment in the local community; reporting to their command when they experienced discrimination or harassment in the local community; reporting to their command when their spouse, partner, or child experienced discrimination or harassment in the local community; and requesting a transfer if their complaint about discrimination or harassment in the local community was not resolved. These items were designed for this survey and were analyzed individually.

Promotion and Advancement Opportunities

The respondent next received items addressing the extent to which they agreed (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) with items about their experiences with and perceptions of promotion or advancement within the Coast Guard. Four items addressed their level of understanding about how the Coast Guard advancement or promotion process worked, what was required for advancement or promotion, what one can do to obtain leadership positions in the Coast Guard, and their belief that the Coast Guard process for determining advancements or promotions was fair. These items were designed for this survey and were analyzed individually. In addition, two items addressed EERs and OERs. Specifically, these two items addressed whether the participant felt that they had a thorough understanding of what was expected of them to receive a positive EER or OER and whether they believed that they would receive a positive EER or OER if they performed their job well (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). These items were also designed for this survey and were analyzed individually. The respondent was then asked how prepared they felt to write performance evaluations for subordinates (1 = completely unprepared, 5 = completely prepared). This item was designed for this survey.

The respondent was also asked how many times they had served on a promotion board. Those who had participated in one or more boards were each to indicate any promotion

boards on which they had served (O-3 through O-6, flag officer, E-9, or WO boards). They were also asked whether boards considered information about personnel that was not included in their records as part of promotion decisions. Any respondent who had served on a promotion board then received two open-ended questions about promotion boards. They received an open-ended item addressing factors they “look for in members’ records” to determine who should be promoted. If they indicated that boards considered information about personnel that was not included in their records, they were also asked to describe the type of information that was not included in personnel records but factored into promotion board decisions. All items on promotion boards were designed specifically for this survey.

Retention

The respondent then received several items addressing their intention to remain in the Coast Guard. These items were designed based on themes and retention factors from focus groups, as well as a review of items addressing retention intentions from the U.S. Air Force’s *2018 Military Exit Survey* (U.S. Air Force, 2018).

The respondent was first asked how they would rate their overall satisfaction with their Coast Guard career (1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied). Then, they were asked their current intentions toward remaining in the Coast Guard for at least 20 years (1 = definitely will not remain in the Coast Guard, 5 = definitely will remain in the Coast Guard).

Next, the respondent was presented with a list of ten factors involving their personal life (e.g., difficulty meeting family commitments) that might have caused them to consider leaving the active-duty Coast Guard at some point during their career, and they were asked to select all that applied. After that, they received a list of ten work environment factors (e.g., poor quality of their immediate leadership) that might have caused them to consider leaving the active-duty Coast Guard at some point during their career, and they were asked to select all that applied. Then, they received a list of 14 job factors (e.g., assignment locations) that might have caused them to consider leaving the active-duty Coast Guard at some point during their career, and they were again asked to select all that applied. Finally, they were presented with all factors they had selected from these three lists and asked to indicate which most caused them to consider leaving the Coast Guard.

Work Climate

After receiving questions on retention, the respondent received items on their workplace climate designed to align with focus group themes. Items addressing race/ethnicity and gender were based on survey items presented in the 2017 WEOS but for which results were not widely available at the time of this research. These items were slightly modified to allow greater specificity to the Coast Guard context.

Race and Ethnicity

The first eight items addressing workplace climate focused on racial and ethnic discrimination and diversity. The respondent provided their level of agreement (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) with statements about Coast Guard senior leadership making honest and reasonable efforts to stop racial and ethnic discrimination, taking reports of racial and ethnic discrimination seriously, and actively supporting racial and ethnic diversity efforts. These items showed high internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.91$) and were aggregated into a single scale score.

The respondent also received two items addressing whether their current supervisor made honest and reasonable efforts to stop racial and ethnic discrimination and would take a report of racial or ethnic discrimination seriously. Because these items showed high internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.88$), they were aggregated into a single scale score.

Each respondent also received two items addressing whether they would make honest and reasonable efforts to stop racial and ethnic discrimination and would encourage someone who had experienced racial or ethnic discrimination to report it. These items showed good reliability ($\alpha = 0.75$) and were aggregated. The last item that respondents received in this section addressed whether they would feel safe reporting experiencing racial or ethnic discrimination, and it was analyzed as an individual item.

Next, the respondent was asked to indicate how acceptable (1 = never acceptable, 5 = always acceptable) it would be to them to see or hear someone in their Coast Guard workplace performing each of nine different behaviors (e.g., telling racial or ethnic jokes). These items showed high reliability ($\alpha = 0.91$) and were aggregated.

Gender

After responding to items about race and ethnicity, the respondent was asked to respond to items about gender. These items were ordered and worded similarly to those addressing race and ethnicity. The respondent provided their level of agreement (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) with statements about Coast Guard senior leadership making honest and reasonable efforts to stop gender discrimination, taking reports of gender discrimination seriously, and actively supporting gender diversity efforts. These items showed high internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.94$) and were aggregated into a single scale score.

The respondent also received two items addressing whether their current supervisor made honest and reasonable efforts to stop gender discrimination and would take a report of gender discrimination seriously. Because these items showed high internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.92$), they were aggregated into a single scale score.

Each respondent also received two items addressing whether they would make honest and reasonable efforts to stop gender discrimination and would encourage someone who had experienced gender discrimination to report it. These items showed acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.66$) and were aggregated. The last item that the respondent received in this section addressed whether they would feel safe reporting experiencing gender discrimination, and it was analyzed as an individual item.

Next, the respondent was asked to indicate how acceptable (1 = never acceptable, 5 = always acceptable) it would be to them to see or hear someone in their Coast Guard workplace performing each of nine different behaviors (e.g., telling sexual jokes). These items showed acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.90$) and were aggregated.

Family

Each respondent received seven items that addressed topics involving their family and work life (L. Thomas and Ganster, 1995). These addressed how often, in the past two months, their immediate supervisor had supported them (1 = never, 5 = very often), such as “juggled tasks or duties to accommodate my family responsibilities.” The items showed acceptable reliability and ($\alpha = 0.70$) were aggregated into a single scale score.

Treatment Based on Race/Ethnicity or Gender

Next, the respondent received three items addressing treatment of people in the Coast Guard based on race and ethnicity. They indicated the extent to which they agreed (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) with the following statements: “I have sometimes been unfairly singled out because of my race/ethnicity”; “In the Coast Guard, all people are treated the same, regardless of their race/ethnicity”; and “In the Coast Guard, people of other racial/ethnic groups do not tell me some job-related information that they share with members of their own group.” These items did not show good internal reliability and were analyzed separately. Each respondent also received three similar items on gender, which were also analyzed separately.

Equal-Opportunity Complaint Process

The last section of the survey addressed the Coast Guard EO complaint process. The respondent received four items addressing the extent to which they agreed (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) with the following statements: “I know how to submit an Equal Opportunity (EO) Complaint”; “I would feel comfortable reporting an instance of discrimination without fearing retaliation”; “I believe that allegations of discrimination are dealt with fairly in the Coast Guard”; and “When Equal Opportunity (EO) investigations find that the perpetrator behaved inappropriately, they face serious consequences.” These items were analyzed separately.

Survey Administration and Respondent Characteristics

The online survey was administered to all active-duty Coast Guard personnel from July 15 through October 13, 2020.² The extended time frame was intended to increase participation, particularly to help personnel who might have been afloat or were not in jobs that pro-

² This includes reservists on EAD or ADOS contracts.

vided frequent computer access. Everyone on active duty was sent an initial email invitation requesting their voluntary participation in the survey. The email included a unique survey link that took the respondent to the online survey consent page, which provided an overview of the study and asked for their voluntary participation. Periodic reminders requesting voluntary participation were sent to any Coast Guard member who did not complete the survey, until the survey closed.

A total of 13,396 active-duty Coast Guard personnel participated in the survey (11,966 completed surveys and 1,430 partially completed surveys),³ for a final response rate of 33 percent (including partially completed surveys). In Tables G.1 through G.6, we provide an overview of the characteristics of the survey sample, including how respondents compared with their representation in the overall active-duty population. We also provide an “estimated response rate” for each demographic group. To protect the anonymity of our respondents, we did not have demographic information on who chose to respond and not respond to the survey. Therefore, we provide an estimated response rate that reflects the number of survey respondents compared with their number in the total active-duty population; we note that there might be some minor differences because our total potential survey sample and total active-duty population represent different snapshots in time.

Table G.1 shows the breakdown of survey respondents by gender and race/ethnicity. Table G.2 shows the breakdown of survey respondents by enlisted, WO, and officer status. As the table shows, the estimated response rate for WOs and officers is higher than for enlisted personnel.

Table G.3 shows the pay-grade breakdown for enlisted respondents. As the table shows, the estimated response rate for senior enlisted personnel is higher than for lower-ranking enlisted personnel. Table G.4 shows the pay-grade breakdown for officers. As the table shows, there is a higher estimated response rate for officers in higher pay grades than for those in lower grades.

Tables G.5 and G.6 show the breakdown of enlisted respondents by rating and of officer respondents by primary specialty. Because there are many specific ratings within the Coast Guard, we present enlisted ratings in higher-aggregated groups. For officers, personnel records do not have specific specialties similar to those provided in the survey. Therefore, we were not able to compare to their representation within the Coast Guard or to provide an estimated response rate for officers by primary specialty.

Survey Analysis Approach

Given the objectives of the study, our analysis focused on examining demographic differences in responses by gender and race/ethnicity. When examining racial and ethnic differences,

³ A partially completed survey was one in which a respondent who had completed the initial screening items subsequently completed at least one item in the survey.

TABLE G.1
Genders and Races/Ethnicities of Survey Respondents

Characteristic	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents	Percentage in the Active-Duty Coast Guard	Estimated Response Rate, as a Percentage
Gender				
Men	10,568	79	85	31
Women	2,825	21	15	45
Race or ethnicity				
White	9,341	70	66	35
Black	545	4	5	26
Hispanic	1,792	13	15	30
Asian	249	2	2	36
Native American or Alaskan Native	80	1	2	12
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	102	1	1	27
Two or more races	721	5	5	35
Other or unknown	566	4	5	30

NOTE: Three respondents did not indicate gender.

TABLE G.2
Corps of Survey Respondents

Corps	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents	Percentage in the Active-Duty Coast Guard	Estimated Response Rate, as a Percentage
Enlisted	8,487	63	78	27
WO	933	7	4	53
Officer	3,976	30	17	56

we broke survey responses down into the following categories: white, Hispanic, black, and non-Hispanic other. Because of sample-size limitations, we were not able to include separate racial and ethnic categories for all racial and ethnic groups, so we collapsed racial and ethnic categories with fewer respondents into a non-Hispanic other category, which includes Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander respondents and respondents indicating two or more races. Given different personnel management processes and potential perceptions and attitudes that might exist by enlisted and officer status, we present all findings separately for enlisted personnel (including WOs) and officers. To examine demographic differences in survey responses, we conducted analyses in SAS using the GLM (general linear model) procedure. For analyses involving racial and ethnic groups, post

TABLE G.3
Pay Grades of Enlisted Survey Respondents

Grade	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Enlisted Respondents	Percentage of the Enlisted Active-Duty Coast Guard	Estimated Response Rate, as a Percentage
E-1–E-2	28	<1	2	4
E-3	474	6	14	11
E-4	1,293	15	22	18
E-5	1,949	23	25	24
E-6	2,343	28	21	35
E-7 and above	2,369	28	15	50
Missing	31	<1	N/A	N/A

TABLE G.4
Pay Grades of Officer Survey Respondents

Grade	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Officer Respondents	Percentage of the Officer Active-Duty Coast Guard	Estimated Response Rate, as a Percentage
O-1	281	7	12	34
O-2	414	10	14	42
O-3	1,254	32	33	54
O-4	999	25	21	66
O-5	661	17	13	70
O-6 and above	346	9	7	74
Missing	21	<1	N/A	N/A

TABLE G.5
Ratings of Enlisted Survey Respondents

Rating Group	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Enlisted Respondents	Percentage of the Enlisted Active-Duty Coast Guard	Estimated Response Rate, as a Percentage
Engineering	2,958	35	35	27
Nonrated	384	5	16	8
Operations	2,765	33	29	30
Service support	2,206	26	20	35
Other	61	1	N/A	N/A
Missing	113	1	N/A	N/A

TABLE G.6
Specialties of Officer Survey Respondents

Specialty	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Officer Respondents
C4IT	189	4.8
Engineering	387	9.7
Finance	45	1.1
HR	73	1.8
Intelligence	165	4.1
Legal	142	3.6
Management	26	<1.0
Medical	37	<1.0
Prevention afloat (i.e., aids to navigation, ice operations)	121	3.0
Prevention ashore	671	16.9
Response afloat	533	13.4
Response ashore	724	18.2
Response aviation	675	17.0
Non-active duty promotion list	22	<1.0
Other	125	3.1
Missing	41	1.0

hoc analyses were conducted using Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) test, and sensitivity analyses were also conducted, controlling for gender.

In the main body of the report, we do not report every result from the survey. We highlight those findings that show key significant differences, by gender and race/ethnicity, and findings that identify a key barrier the Coast Guard should address.

Survey Weighting

Calibrated survey weights were derived to provide a weighted sample of people that more accurately reflected the Coast Guard population and to minimize potential bias from varying levels of nonresponse among demographic groups. For example, we found a low response rate among grade E-1–E-2 personnel, so those respondents were given greater weight to account for this underrepresentation.

Weights were calibrated such that the weighted total number of survey respondents matched known population totals for four groups of demographic variables: gender (two levels), race and ethnicity (eight levels), rating (five levels), and pay grade (13 levels). Because

officers do not have defined specialties in personnel records similar to the categories in our survey, we were not able to weight data based on officer specialty—only enlisted ratings. We performed calibration with raking, which uses an iterative process to weight each unique demographic pattern in the survey such that they match the known marginal population totals. The survey was a census of the whole Coast Guard, so we did not need to adjust the weights for sampling probabilities. We did not find any demographic patterns with extreme underrepresentation, so we did not need to trim outlier weights.

Analysis of Open-Ended Comments

The survey included three open-ended questions that allowed text responses. Two questions focused on the promotion board process: (1) “When serving on a promotion board, what factors do you look for in members’ records to help you decide whether they should be promoted?” and (2) “Please describe the type of information that is not included in members’ records but factors into promotion board decisions.” The third open-ended question came at the conclusion of the survey: “Thank you for participating in the survey. If you have comments or concerns that you were not able to express in answering this survey, please enter them in the space provided.”

To analyze open-ended responses, our planned approach was to do topic modeling on all three questions, but the first two promotion questions did not have enough text to create a satisfactory topic set. For the third question, which allowed respondents to provide general comments, we had sufficient responses and text to analyze, but respondents answered the question in such varied ways that we could not pull out clear, discrete topics from the text just using the usual topic-modeling procedure. Therefore, we took a hybrid approach tailored to the sample size limitations and nature of responses for each question.

When serving on a promotion board, what factors do you look for in members’ records to help you decide whether they should be promoted?

There were 521 unique responses to this open-ended question. Because responses tended to be one- or two-word descriptions of factors into which promotion boards look, we did an analysis of word frequency, with punctuation and certain nonmeaningful words removed (e.g., articles, common verbs). Key findings from this analysis are described in Chapter Four.

Please describe the type of information that is not included in members’ records but factors into promotion board decisions.

There were 82 unique responses to this open-ended question. The smaller sample is expected given that only respondents who had served on boards and indicated that the boards considered information that was not included in members’ records in their decisions were asked to respond to this question to provide more detail on the type of information not included. Given the small number of responses for this question, we coded responses manually by reading through the text and looking for themes across responses. Key themes from this analysis are described in Chapter Four.

If you have comments or concerns that you were not able to express in answering this survey, please enter them in the space provided.

There were 3,240 unique responses to this question. Because this question had more responses than feasible to analyze through manual coding, we first tried to conduct topic modeling. However, we were unable to extract clear topics because of the variety of responses with such a broad, open-ended question. Therefore, we decided to calculate the most-commonly found words in the question responses and then reviewed a random sample of responses to better understand and identify related themes.

After extracting the most-common keywords, we identified two common “axes” of keywords. First, common keywords associated with gender or race discrimination, such as “diversity,” “gender,” “discrimination,” “female,” “sexual,” and “male.” The second axis was associated with leadership and included such words as “junior,” “leadership,” “supervisor,” and “officer.” We then sampled 50 responses from those respondents that mentioned at least one keyword in each axis, respectively, and manually coded 100 responses to extract common themes for each axis.

As mentioned previously, we found that answers to this question were varied. Therefore, it was difficult to identify key themes for which we can report clear percentages. For example, some responses were off-topic, such as listing frustrations with the COVID-19 response. Many respondents in both axes also took the opportunity to express frustrations with being discriminated against because of efforts to reduce discrimination (i.e., discrimination against white men through affirmative action or similar policies [a theme in both the discrimination and leadership axes]).

For the types of responses on the discrimination factor, examples included concerns for discrimination against racial and ethnic minority personnel and female personnel but, as noted earlier, also included statements of frustration about being discriminated against because of efforts to reduce discrimination (i.e., discrimination against white men through affirmative action or similar policies). Respondents also described characteristics other than race or gender that they felt were the basis of discrimination, including being single (e.g., not being selected for a desired assignment because someone else had family issues to consider), religion, being transgender, and pregnancy. Some responses also discussed subconscious bias in written reports or due to listed names (e.g., female-sounding names being visible in the promotion process). Some respondents also noted the importance of command and that they might feel accepted in one command but discriminated against in another.

On the leadership axis, there were also many different topics discussed, with no one overarching theme. The most common leadership-related theme was a lack of transparency, speed, or forcefulness in senior leadership’s actions to combat discrimination. For example, there was discussion of the lack of action on the Confederate flag. Respondents also described witnessing a lack of action when an EO dispute was reported and wanting leadership to do a better job self-policing offensive behavior. Some responses also mentioned a lack of diversity in leadership specifically, including race but also in terms of graduation from the USCGA in the types of jobs that led to senior leadership. Other responses discussed the importance of

the level of leadership, commenting that racial and gender discrimination was a bigger problem among midlevel leadership than at other levels.

Survey Instrument

In this appendix, we reproduce our survey instrument.

Coast Guard Career Perspectives Survey

Invitation to Participate in Survey on Active Duty Coast Guard Members' Career Perspectives

Before continuing, please read the following information about the purpose of the 2020 Career Perspectives Study and why it's important for you and for the U.S. Coast Guard.

WHAT IS THIS SURVEY ABOUT? You are being asked to complete a survey of active duty U.S. Coast Guard members, authorized by the U.S. Coast Guard. The survey contains questions addressing members' career perspectives and experiences; including those on development, advancement/promotion, retention, and workplace climate. In addition to questions addressing thoughts and experiences across your career, the survey also addresses gender, racial, and ethnic issues.

WHY IS THIS SURVEY BEING CONDUCTED? It is important for U.S. Coast Guard senior leadership to understand members' career perspectives. One of the best ways to learn about U.S. Coast Guard careers and workplaces is by asking members to share their own experiences and thoughts. The survey results will help to inform recommendations regarding U.S. Coast Guard policies and practices.

WHO IS CONDUCTING THIS SURVEY? This survey is being conducted on behalf of the U.S. Coast Guard by HSOAC, a federally funded research and development center operated by the RAND Corporation. The RAND Corporation is a non-profit research institution and is authorized to collect this information on behalf of the U.S. Coast Guard pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 301; 10 U.S.C. § 2358; and 14 U.S.C. § 93. Commandant; general powers.

HOW WAS I CHOSEN? All active duty U.S. Coast Guard members (including Reservists on extended active duty [EAD] or active duty for operational support [ADOS] contract) are being asked to participate in order to ensure that the U.S. Coast Guard has a full understanding of all active duty members' perspectives and experiences.

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION INVOLVE? The web-based survey is expected to take 25 minutes to complete. Depending on your responses, it may take you more or less time.

DO I HAVE TO PARTICIPATE? The survey is completely voluntary, and you may stop at any time. There is no penalty if you decide not to complete the survey or choose not to respond to certain questions within the survey. The survey asks some sensitive work climate questions that may cause you to feel upset or distressed but you can skip any of these questions you wish. You have been asked to participate because the study findings will inform crucial decisions regarding U.S. Coast Guard policies and practices. In addition, U.S. Coast Guard leaders are very interested in understanding your views.

WILL MY RESPONSES BE KEPT PRIVATE? Yes, your individual responses on this survey will not be linked with your name or identity. Your responses will be combined with information from other respondents, and we will only report the survey results for groups large enough that no one can infer what a certain individual said on the survey. Comments from open-ended (write-in) questions may be reported word for word, but never with identifiable information. No one in your unit or any other U.S. Coast Guard officials will see your survey responses, nor will any data be released that could identify you to anyone in your unit, any U.S. Coast Guard officials, or anyone else.

C1. I have read the information, and I want to continue.

Yes **1**

No **2**

[Programming note: Those who respond No, 2, to C1 should proceed to Exit Screen 1. All others should proceed to S1]

For more information about this project, please contact USCGstudy@rand.org.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you can contact RAND's Human Subjects Protection Committee toll-free at (866) 697-5620 or by emailing hspcinfo@rand.org.

[New Screen: Exit Screen 1]

We appreciate you reviewing the information about this survey and considering participating. If you have questions about this project, please contact the research team at USCGstudy@rand.org or the Coast Guard office sponsoring the study at 2019randurmstudy@uscg.mil. Thank you very much for your time.

[New Screen]

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this important study. Please answer each question thoughtfully and truthfully. This will allow us to provide an accurate picture of the different experiences of active duty U.S. Coast Guard members.

If you prefer not to answer a specific question for any reason, just leave it blank. Please note, there are a few background questions that require a response. These questions are noted with an asterisk *.

[Programming note: Items S1 and S2 require a response]

S1. Are you currently a member of the active duty U.S. Coast Guard?*

Yes **1**

No **2**

S2. Are you a reservist on extended active duty [EAD] or active duty for operational support [ADOS] contract?*

Yes **1**

No **2**

[Programming note: If respondent responds 'No,' 2, to S1 AND responds 'No,' 2 to S2, they should proceed to Exit Screen 2. All others should proceed to B1.]

[New Screen: Exit Screen 2]

Thank you very much for your interest in the study. This survey is for current active duty U.S. Coast Guard members only. Therefore, we are not able to include you in this survey at this time.

[New Screen]

Your Background

[Programming note: Items B1 through B4 require a response]

B1. Are you...?*

Male **1**

Female **2**

B2. Are you Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?*

No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino? **1**

Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino **2**

B3. What is your race?* *Mark one or more races to indicate what race you consider yourself to be.*

White **1**

Black or African American **2**

American Indian or Alaska Native **3**

Asian (for example, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, or Vietnamese) **4**

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (for example, Samoan, Guamanian, or Chamorro) **5**

Other [Programming note: include single line text box – allow up to 100 characters] **6**

B4. Are you an officer or an enlisted member?*

Enlisted **1**

Officer **2**

Warrant officer **3**

[New Screen]

[Programming note: If B4 is 1 (enlisted) skip to question B5a. If B4 is 2 (officer), proceed to question B4a. If B4 is 3 (warrant officer), skip to question B6.]

B4a. Did you receive your commission from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy?

Yes **1**

No **2**

[Programming note: If B4a is 2 (No), proceed to question B4b and then skip to question B5b. If B4a is 1 (Yes), skip to question B5b.]

B4b. Did you participate in the College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI) program?

Yes **1**

No **2**

[Programming note: If B4 is 1 (enlisted) proceed to question B5a and then skip to question B6. If B4 is 2 (officer), skip to question B5b and then proceed to question B6. If B4 is 3 (warrant officer), skip to question B6.]

B5a. What is your pay grade?

E1-E2 **1**

E3 **2**

E4 **3**

E5 **4**

E6 **5**

E7 and above **6**

[Programming note: B5b only asked if B4=2 (officer). All else skip to B6]

B5b. What is your pay grade?

O1 **1**

O2 **2**

O3 **3**

O4 **4**

O5 **5**

O6 and above **6**

B6. How many years of active duty Coast Guard service have you completed? To indicate less than one year, enter "0".

[Programming note: This should be a text box, number entry only; allow 2 digits] Years

[New Screen]

B7. What is your current marital status?

Married **1**

Single, never married **2**

Cohabiting (living with fiancé(e), boyfriend, or girlfriend but not married) **3**

Separated **4**

Divorced **5**

Widowed **6**

[New Screen]

[Programming note: If B7 is 1 (Married), proceed to question B7a. All else (B7 is 2 (single, never married) or 3 (Cohabiting) or 4 (Separated) or 5 (Divorced) or 6 (Widowed)), proceed to B8.]

B7a. What is your spouse's military status?

Active duty Coast Guard **1**

Active duty military (not Coast Guard) **2**

Separated/Retired/Reserve Coast Guard member **3**

Separated/Retired/Reserve or National Guard military (not Coast Guard) member **4**

Civilian, not a current or former military service member **5**

[New Screen]

B8. Do you have children under the age of 18 you are legally responsible for?

Yes **1**

No **2**

[New Screen]

Career Choices

The next set of questions address your career choices within the Coast Guard.

[Programming note: If B4 is 1 (enlisted) proceed to question CC1 and then skip to CC4 [Do not ask CC2 or CC3]. If B4 is 2 (officer), skip CC1 to go to question CC2, and then proceed to CC4 [Do not ask CC1 or CC3]. If B4 is 3 (warrant officer) skip to question CC3 and then proceed to CC4 [Do not ask CC1 or CC2]]

CC1. What is your rating?

[Programming note: provide drop-down list of the below]

Airman **1**

Aviation Maintenance Technician **2**

Aviation Survival Technician **3**

Avionics Electronical Technician **4**

Boatswains Mates **5**

Culinary Specialist **6**

Damage Controlman **7**

Diver 8
Electricians Mate 9
Electronics Technician 10
Fireman 11
Gunners Mate 12
Health Services Technician 13
Information Systems Technician 14
Intelligence Specialist 15
Investigator 16
Machinery Technician 17
Marine Science Technician 18
Maritime Law Enforcement Spec 19
Musician 20
Officer Candidate 21
Operations Specialist 22
Public Affairs Specialist 23
Seaman 24
Storekeeper 25
Yeoman 26
Other 27 [Programming note: include single line text box – allow up to 100 characters]

[Programming note: Those who receive question CC1 should then skip to CC4.]

CC2. What is your primary specialty?

[Programming note: provide drop-down list of the below]

C4IT 1
Engineering 2
Finance 3
Human Resources 4
Intelligence 5
Legal 6
Management 7
Medical 8
Prevention – Afloat (i.e., Aids to Navigation (ATON), Ice Operations) 9
Prevention – Ashore 10
Response – Afloat 11
Response – Ashore 12
Response – Aviation 13
Non-Active Duty Promotion List 14
Other 15 [Programming note: include single line text box – allow up to 100 characters]

[Programming note: Those who receive question CC2 should then skip to CC4.]

CC3. What is your specialty?

[Programming note: provide drop-down list of the below]

Aviation Engineering Warrant 1
Bandmaster Warrant 2
Boatswain Warrant 3
Diver Warrant 4
Electronics Warrant 5
Finance & Supply Warrant 6

Info Systems Management Warrant 7
Intelligence Systems Specialist 8
Investigator Warrant 9
Marine Safety Spec Resp 10
Marine Safety Specialist Deck 11
Marine Safety Specialist Engineering 12
Maritime Enforcement Spec 13
Material Maintenance Warrant 14
Medical Administration Warrant 15
Naval Engineering Warrant 16
Ops Systems Spec Warrant 17
Personnel Administration Warrant 18
Public Information Warrant 19
Weapons Warrant 20
Other 21 [Programming note: include single line text box – allow up to 100 characters]

[New Screen]

[Programming note: If respondent responds 1 (enlisted) OR 3 (warrant officer) on question B4, they should receive “rating” in CC4. If respondent responds 2 (officer) on question B4, they should receive “primary specialty” in in CC4. If they did not respond to B4, they should receive “rating/specialty,” not in brackets, for question CC4.]

[Programming note: If respondent responds 1 (enlisted) OR 3 (warrant officer) on question B4, response option 26 (Available slots for A-school) for Question CC4 should be included in the list of options. If respondent responds 2 (officer) on question B4, response option 26 (Available slots for A-school) should NOT be included in the list of options.]

CC4. What were your main reasons for choosing your [rating/primary specialty]? If you have not yet chosen your [rating/primary specialty] what factors are you considering as you decide? Mark all that apply.

Desire for adventure 1
Desire for a challenge 2
Desire for lower operational tempo 3
Ability to travel 4
Desire to be underway 5
Desire to be ashore 6
Personal interest 7
Fit with academic degree 8
Previous experience with similar work 9
Transferability of skills to private sector 10
Potential assignment locations 11
Faster pace of advancement /promotion 12
Compatibility with spouse’s/partner’s career 13
Compatibility with child(ren)’s needs 14
Level of work-life balance 15
Bonus offered 16
Desire to be with other members of my gender 17
Desire to be with other members of my race/ethnicity 18
Influence from a mentor 19
Influence from a family member 20
Influence from a friend 21
Influence from a recruiter 22
Ability to meet requirements (e.g., testing, medical standards) 23
Positive experience on initial tour 24

- Negative experience on initial tour **25**
- Available slots for A-school **26**
- Other [Programming note: include single line text box – allow up to 100 characters] **27**

[Programming note: If CC4 is blank or has only one response, skip to CC6. Otherwise, include ONLY selected reasons in CC5.]

[Programming note: If respondent responds 1 (enlisted) OR 3 (warrant officer) on question B4, they should receive “rating” in CC5, CC6. If respondent responds 2 (officer) on question B4, they should receive “primary specialty” in CC5, CC6. If they did not respond to B4, they should receive “rating/specialty,” not in brackets, for question CC5, CC6.]

CC5. Please review the reasons you selected for choosing your [rating/specialty]. Of these, which was the number one reason that you chose your [rating/specialty]? Mark only one.

- Desire for adventure **1**
- Desire for a challenge **2**
- Desire for lower operational tempo **3**
- Ability to travel **4**
- Desire to be underway **5**
- Desire to be ashore **6**
- Personal interest **7**
- Fit with academic degree **8**
- Previous experience with similar work **9**
- Transferability of skills to private sector **10**
- Potential assignment locations **11**
- Faster pace of advancement /promotion **12**
- Compatibility with spouse’s/partner’s career **13**
- Compatibility with child(ren)’s needs **14**
- Level of work-life balance **15**
- Bonus offered **16**
- Desire to be with other members of my gender **17**
- Desire to be with other members of my race/ethnicity **18**
- Influence from a mentor **19**
- Influence from a family member **20**
- Influence from a friend **21**
- Influence from a recruiter **22**
- Ability to meet requirements (e.g., testing, medical standards) **23**
- Positive experience on initial tour **24**
- Negative experience on initial tour **25**
- Available slots for A-school **26**
- Other **27**

[New Screen]

CC6. When choosing your [rating/specialty], how knowledgeable were you about the following:

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Extremely
CC6a. the <u>advancement/promotion potential</u> of this [rating/specialty]?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
CC6b the <u>leadership opportunities</u> available in this [rating/specialty]?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
CC6c. the <u>deployment requirements</u> of this [rating/specialty]?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
CC6d. the <u>work schedule</u> of this [rating/specialty]?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
CC6e. the <u>assignment locations</u> of this [rating/specialty]?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

[New Screen]

Career Development

The next set of questions address your Coast Guard career development.

CD1. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the below statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
CD1a. I have received the Coast Guard training that I need to carry out my job duties effectively.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
CD1b. The Coast Guard training I have received has prepared me to take on greater leadership responsibilities.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
CD1c. The Coast Guard has taught me how to lead others from diverse backgrounds.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

CD2. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the below statements regarding opportunities.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
CD2a. Within the Coast Guard, developmental opportunities are distributed fairly, regardless of race/ethnicity or gender. These include, for example, training opportunities and opportunities for school.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
CD2b. I have a thorough understanding about how Coast Guard developmental opportunities are distributed. These include, for example, training opportunities and opportunities for school.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
CD2c. Within the Coast Guard, command opportunities are distributed fairly, regardless of race/ethnicity or gender.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
CD2d. I have a thorough understanding about how Coast Guard command opportunities are distributed.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
CD2e. Within the Coast Guard, special assignments are distributed fairly, regardless of race/ethnicity or gender.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
CD2f. I have a thorough understanding about how Coast Guard special assignments are distributed.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

[New Screen]

Mentoring

The next questions address your experiences with mentoring in the Coast Guard.

M1. Have you had a formal or informal Coast Guard mentor who advised you on your military career? Select one.

Yes, I have had at least one formal mentor (e.g., assigned/provided to you as part of a formal mentorship program) **1**

Yes, I have had at least one informal mentor **2**

Yes, I have had both a formal and informal mentor **3**

No, I have not had a mentor **4**

[Programming note: If M1= 1, ask M2a. If M1=2, ask M2b. If M1=3, ask M2a and M2b. Remove “not applicable” option for M2a and M2b. If M1 = 4, skip to M5.]

[New Screen]

M2. To what extent, if any, have the mentorship experiences below helped you to advance your military career?

	Did not help at all	Helped to a small extent	Helped to a moderate extent	Helped to a large extent	Helped to a very large extent
M2a. Experiences in a formal mentorship program	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
M2b. Informal mentorship experiences	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

M3. To what extent, if any, did your Coast Guard mentor(s)...

	Not at all	Small extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	Very large extent
M3b. ... help you develop mission critical skills?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
M3c. ... help you with advancing your career?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
M3d. ... encourage you to stay in the Coast Guard?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
M3e. ... help to enhance your own mentoring skills?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
M3f. ...help you to creatively solve conflicts between work and nonwork?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
M3g. ...provide sponsorship/contacts to help advance your career?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

[New Screen]

M4. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the mentorship you have received during your Coast Guard career?

- Very dissatisfied 1
- Dissatisfied 2
- Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied 3
- Satisfied 4
- Very satisfied 5

[Programming note: If respondent responds ‘Yes,’ to M1 [1, 2, or 3], they should skip M5. If respondent responds ‘No,’ 4 to M1, they should receive M5.]

M5. What factors have contributed to you not receiving mentorship during your Coast Guard career? Mark all that apply.

- I did not have time to participate in mentoring 1
- I did not have a desire to participate in mentoring 2
- I did not see any benefit to my career in having a mentor 3
- No one offered to mentor me 4
- I could not find a mentor that I felt comfortable with 5

- There was no one of my same gender available to serve as a mentor **6**
- There was no one of my same race/ethnicity available to serve as a mentor **7**
- I already had a mentor who was not in the Coast Guard **8**
- My peers discouraged me from having a mentor **9**
- Other **10**

[\[New Screen\]](#)

Assignment Process and Locations

We would now like to ask you about your assignment process and assignment locations in the Coast Guard.

APL1. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the below?

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
APL1a. The number of assignment opportunities made available to you in the Coast Guard?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
APL1b. The types of assignment opportunities made available to you in the Coast Guard?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
APL1c. The assignment locations to which you have been assigned in the Coast Guard?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

[Programming note: If respondent responds that their spouse is an active duty Coast Guard member (1) to question B7a, respondents should receive items APL2c and APL2d. All other respondents should not receive APL2c or APL2d.]

APL2. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the below statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
APL2a. I have a thorough understanding of how the Coast Guard assignment system works.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
APL2b. I believe Coast Guard assignments are distributed fairly.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
APL2c. I have a thorough understanding of how the Coast Guard assignment process for collocations works.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
APL2d. I believe the Coast Guard makes a reasonable effort to collocate members in dual Coast Guard marriages.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

[\[New Screen\]](#)

APL3. Some assignment locations could be in or near local communities in which civilians have taken hostile, harassing, or discriminatory actions against Coast Guard members or their families. Please indicate how knowledgeable you are about each of the below.

How knowledgeable are you about...	Not at all knowledgeable	A little knowledgeable	Somewhat knowledgeable	Quite knowledgeable	Very knowledgeable
APL3a. ...Coast Guard policies that prevent Coast Guard members from being assigned in or near communities that have taken hostile, harassing, or discriminatory actions against Coast Guard members?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
APL3b. ...who to report to if you or a dependent experience discrimination or harassment in the local community?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

APL4. Please indicate how likely or unlikely you would be to perform each of the below behaviors.

How likely or unlikely is that you would...	Very unlikely	Unlikely	About as likely as not likely	Likely	Very likely
APL4a. ...request to avoid assignment to a location based on information about discrimination or harassment in the local community?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
APL4b. ...report to your command when you experienced discrimination or harassment in the local community?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
APL4c. [PROGRAMMER: Only ask APL4c if: B7=Married (1) OR Cohabiting (3); AND/OR B8 = Yes(1)]...report to your command when your spouse/partner or children experienced discrimination or harassment in the local community?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
APL4d. ...request a transfer if your complaint about discrimination or harassment in the local community was not resolved?	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

[\[New Screen\]](#)

Promotion/Advancement Opportunities

The next set of questions address your experiences with and perceptions of promotion/advancement within the Coast Guard. If you are a warrant officer, please answer the following questions based on your experience with the enlisted advancement process.

[Programming note: If respondent responds 1 (enlisted) OR 3 (warrant officer) on question B4, they should receive “advancement” in PA1a-d and “EER” in PA1e-f. If respondent responds 2 (officer) on question B4, they should receive “promotion” in in PA1a-d and “OER” in PA1e-f. If they did not respond to B4, they should receive advancement/promotion, not in brackets, and EER/OER, not in brackets, for questions PA1]

PA1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
PA1a. I have a thorough understanding about how the Coast Guard [advancement/promotion] process works.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
PA1b. I have a thorough understanding of what is required of me for [advancement/promotion].	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
PA1c. I have a thorough understanding of what I can do to obtain leadership positions in the Coast Guard.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
PA1d. I believe the Coast Guard process for determining [advancements/promotions] is fair.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
PA1e. I have a thorough understanding of what is expected of me to receive a positive [EER/OER].	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
PA1f. If I perform well in my job, I will receive a positive [EER/OER].	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

PA2. How prepared do you feel to write performance evaluations for subordinates?

- Completely unprepared 1
- Somewhat unprepared 2
- Neither unprepared nor prepared 3
- Somewhat prepared 4
- Completely prepared 5
- Not applicable 9

PA3. How many times have you served on a promotion board? If never, enter 0.

[Programming note: Please include text box to enter number. If PA3 is greater than or equal to 1, proceed to PA3a. If PA3 is 0, skip to Retention section R1.]

PA3a. Which promotion board(s) have you served on? For promotion to which paygrade(s)? Mark all that apply.

- O3 1
- O4 2
- O5 3
- O6 4
- Flag officer 5
- E9 6
- Warrant officer (W2, W3, W4) 7

PA4. When serving on a promotion board, what factors do you look for in members' records to help you decide whether they should be promoted?

[Programming note: Please include large text box for this question.]

PA5. In your experience, do boards consider information about a member that is not included in their records as part of the promotion decision?

- Yes, information that is not included in members' records factors into promotion decisions 1
- No, only information included in members' records factors into promotion decisions 2

[Programming note: If PA5 is 1 (Yes), proceed to PA5a. If PA5 is 2 (No), skip to Retention section R1.]

PA5a. Please describe the type of information that is not included in members' records but factors into promotion board decisions.

[Programming note: Please include large text box for this question]

[New Screen]

Retention

The following questions ask you about your attitudes toward being a member of the active duty Coast Guard.

R1. Considering everything, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with your Coast Guard career?

- Very dissatisfied 1
- Dissatisfied 2
- Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied 3
- Satisfied 4
- Very satisfied 5

R2. What are your current intentions toward remaining in the Coast Guard for at least 20 years?

- Definitely will NOT remain in the Coast Guard **1**
 - Probably will NOT remain in the Coast Guard **2**
 - Undecided **3**
 - Probably will remain in the Coast Guard **4**
 - Definitely will remain in the Coast Guard **5**
 - Not applicable, I have completed 20 or more years **6**
- [\[New Screen\]](#)

R3. Which of the following *personal life factors*, if any, have caused you to consider leaving the active duty Coast Guard at some point during your career? Select all that apply.

If none of these options apply, please click the "next" button, and then click "next" a second time. That will allow you to skip this question.

- Starting a family/wanting to have children **1**
- Ability to meet my child(ren)'s needs **2**
- Lack of availability of childcare **3**
- High cost of childcare **4**
- Difficulty meeting family commitments **5**
- Potential requirement to leave family for a deployment **6**
- Lack of compatibility with spouse's/partner's career/job **7**
- Spouse's/partner's negative attitude toward the Coast Guard **8**
- Inability to collocate with my spouse/partner **9**
- Inability to develop a support network **10**

[\[New Screen\]](#)

R4. Which of the following *work environment factors*, if any, have caused you to consider leaving the active duty Coast Guard at some point during your career? Select all that apply.

If none of these options apply, please click the "next" button, and then click "next" a second time. That will allow you to skip this question.

- Lack of role models who are similar to me **1**
- Lack of a mentor **2**
- Limited opportunities to work with members of my same gender **3**
- Limited opportunities to work with members of my same race/ethnicity **4**
- Poor quality of my immediate leadership **5**
- Personnel currently working in my unit **6**
- Negative treatment in the Coast Guard because of my race/ethnicity **7**
- Negative treatment in the Coast Guard because of my gender **8**
- Lack of sense of community among Coast Guard members **9**
- Negative experiences involving sexual harassment or sexual assault **10**

[\[New Screen\]](#)

R5. Which of the following job factors, if any, have caused you to consider leaving the active duty Coast Guard at some point during your career? Select all that apply.

If none of these options apply, please click the "next" button, and then click "next" a second time. That will allow you to skip this question.

- Assignment locations **1**
- High frequency of transfers **2**
- Underway requirements **3**
- High number of deployments **4**
- Long deployments **5**
- High home station TEMPO (long duty day/work schedule) **6**
- The amount of workload I have in the Coast Guard **7**
- Physical demands of the job **8**
- Difficulty meeting weight standards **9**
- Job stress **10**
- Lack of opportunities for professional development **11**
- Lack of advancement/promotion opportunities **12**
- Lack of opportunities for command **13**
- Dissatisfaction with my job **14**

[\[New Screen\]](#)

R6. You indicated that the below factors have caused you to consider leaving the Coast Guard. Which of the below have MOST caused you to consider leaving the Coast Guard?

[Programming note: Insert selections from R3, R4, and R5 as response options]

[\[New Screen\]](#)

Work Climate

Our next questions address additional aspects of your Coast Guard career not previously covered.

WC1. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Race/Ethnicity refers to such terms for people as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and White. A person can belong to one or more racial/ethnic groups.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
WC1a. <u>Coast Guard senior leadership</u> makes honest and reasonable efforts to stop <u>racial/ethnic discrimination</u> .	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
WC1b. <u>My current supervisor</u> makes honest and reasonable efforts to stop <u>racial/ethnic discrimination</u> .	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
WC1c. <u>I</u> make honest and reasonable efforts to stop <u>racial/ethnic discrimination</u> .	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
WC1d. <u>Coast Guard senior leadership</u> takes reports of <u>racial/ethnic discrimination</u> seriously.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
WC1e. <u>My current supervisor</u> would take a report of <u>racial/ethnic discrimination</u> seriously.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

- WC1f. I would encourage someone who has experienced racial/ethnic discrimination to report it. 1 2 3 4 5
- WC1g. I would feel safe reporting experiencing racial/ethnic discrimination. 1 2 3 4 5
- WC1h. Coast Guard senior leadership actively supports racial/ethnic diversity efforts. 1 2 3 4 5

[New Screen]

WC2. Below, we list different behaviors that one might see while on-duty. Rate the extent to which each behavior would or would not be acceptable to you if you were on-duty and saw someone in your Coast Guard workplace performing the behavior. "Someone in your Coast Guard workplace" could be a supervisor, someone above or below you in rank, or a civilian employee/contractor. They could be in your unit or other units.

Race/Ethnicity refers to such terms for people as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and White. A person can belong to one or more racial/ethnic groups.

- How acceptable or unacceptable would it be to you if you saw or heard someone in your Coast Guard workplace...**
- | | Never acceptable | Rarely acceptable | Sometimes acceptable | Often acceptable | Always acceptable |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| WC2a. Telling racial/ethnic jokes? | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC2b. Using an offensive racial/ethnic term? | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC2c. Claiming that their race/ethnicity is better than others? | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC2d. Insulting another racial/ethnic group? | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC2f. Using a stereotype about another racial/ethnic group?
Stereotypes are beliefs about the characteristics of group members—for example, that they tend to be cheap, aggressive, or shy. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC2g. Making a comment about the way people in another racial/ethnic group talk? | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC2h. Showing someone a lack of respect because of their race/ethnicity? | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC2i. Excluding someone from an activity because of their race/ethnicity? | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

[New Screen]

WC3. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

- | | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| WC3a. <u>Coast Guard senior leadership</u> makes honest and reasonable efforts to stop <u>gender discrimination</u> . | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC3b. <u>My current supervisor</u> makes honest and reasonable efforts to stop <u>gender discrimination</u> . | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC3c. I make honest and reasonable efforts to stop <u>gender discrimination</u> . | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC3d. <u>Coast Guard senior leadership</u> takes reports of <u>gender discrimination</u> seriously. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC3e. <u>My current supervisor</u> would take a report of <u>gender discrimination</u> seriously. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

- WC3f. I would encourage someone who has experienced gender discrimination to report it. 1 2 3 4 5
- WC3g. I would feel safe reporting experiencing gender discrimination. 1 2 3 4 5
- WC3h. Coast Guard senior leadership actively supports gender diversity efforts. 1 2 3 4 5

[New Screen]

WC4. Below, we list different behaviors that one might see while on-duty. Rate the extent to which each behavior would or would not be acceptable to you if you were on-duty and saw someone in your Coast Guard workplace performing the behavior. “Someone in your Coast Guard workplace” could be a supervisor, someone above or below you in rank, or a civilian employee/contractor. They could be in your unit or other units.

- | How acceptable or unacceptable would it be to you if you saw or heard someone in your Coast Guard workplace... | Never acceptable | Rarely acceptable | Sometimes acceptable | Often acceptable | Always acceptable |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| WC4a. Telling sexual jokes? | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC4b. Suggesting that a Coast Guard member (man or woman) does not act like people of their gender are supposed to act? | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC4c. Making sexual gestures or sexual body movements (for example, thrusting their pelvis or grabbing their crotch)? | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC4e. Asking questions about the sex lives or sexual interests of people in your Coast Guard workplace? | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC4f. Making sexual comments about the appearance or bodies of people in your Coast Guard workplace? | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC4g. Taking or sharing sexually suggestive pictures or videos of people in your Coast Guard workplace? | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC4h. Making repeated attempts to establish unwanted romantic or sexual relationships with someone in your Coast Guard workplace? | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC4i. Saying that people of a certain gender should be prevented from having a particular Coast Guard job? | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

[New Screen]

The following questions ask about topics involving your family. For these items, family includes one’s spouse or partner and children (if applicable), and family also includes one’s parents, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other close familial relationships.

- | WC5. In the past two months, how often has your immediate supervisor engaged in the following behaviors... | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very Often | Not applicable |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| WC5a. Switched schedules (hours, overtime hours, vacation) to accommodate my family responsibilities. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> | 9 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC5b. Listened to my problems. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> | 9 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC5c. Was critical of my efforts to combine work and family. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> | 9 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC5d. Juggled tasks or duties to accommodate my family responsibilities. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> | 9 <input type="checkbox"/> |

- WC5f. Held my family responsibilities against me. 1 2 3 4 5 9
- WC5h. Was understanding or sympathetic. 1 2 3 4 5 9
- WC5i. Showed resentment of my needs as a working parent. 1 2 3 4 5 9

[\[New Screen\]](#)

[Programming note: If B1 is 1 (male) “women” should be shown in WC6f. If B1 is 2 (female), “men” should show in WC6f.]

- WC6. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:**
- | | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| WC6a. I have sometimes been unfairly singled out because of my race/ethnicity . | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC6b. I have sometimes been unfairly singled out because of my gender . | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC6c. In the Coast Guard, all people are treated the same, regardless of their race/ethnicity . | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC6d. In the Coast Guard, all people are treated the same, regardless of their gender . | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC6e. In the Coast Guard, people of other racial/ethnic groups do not tell me some job-related information that they share with members of their own group. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WC6f. In the Coast Guard, [men/women] do not tell me some job-related information that they share with members of their own gender. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

Equal Opportunity (EO) Complaint Process

The following questions ask about the Coast Guard’s Equal Opportunity (EO) complaint process. Please note that the Equal Opportunity (EO) complaint process is the military equivalent of the civilian Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint process, which prohibits unlawful discrimination based on protected categories (e.g., race, color, sex, national origin).

- Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:**
- | | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| EOCP1. I know how to submit an Equal Opportunity (EO) Complaint. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| EOCP2. I would feel comfortable reporting an instance of discrimination without fearing retaliation. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| EOCP3. I believe that allegations of discrimination are dealt with fairly in the Coast Guard. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| EOCP4. When Equal Opportunity (EO) investigations find that the perpetrator behaved inappropriately, they face serious consequences. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

[\[New Screen\]](#)

F1. Thank you for participating in the survey. If you have comments or concerns that you were not able to express in answering this survey, please enter them in the space provided. Please do not enter personally identifiable information. Your feedback is useful and appreciated.

[Programming note: Please include large text box for this question]

[New Screen]

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY

Abbreviations

ACS	American Community Survey
ADOS	active duty for operational support
AFQT	Armed Forces Qualification Test
AHHI	Anti-Harassment and Hate Incident
AMOT	Academy Minority Outreach Team
BCAP	Battalion Command Assessment Program
BM	boatswain's mate
C4IT	command, control, communications, computers, and information technology
CCG	commandant of the Coast Guard
CCR	cumulative continuation rate
CG-00H	Civil Rights Directorate, U.S. Coast Guard
CG-127	Office of Diversity and Inclusion, U.S. Coast Guard
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COMDTINST	commandant instruction
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CSPI	College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative
DEI	diversity, equity, and inclusion
D&I	diversity and inclusion
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
EAD	extended active duty
EDW	enterprise data warehouse
EER	enlisted evaluation report
EO	equal opportunity
E&P	eligible and propensed
EPIC	Enlisted Professionals in Connection
FY	fiscal year
HR	human resource
HSOAC	Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center
IT	information technology
JAMRS	Joint Advertising Market Research and Studies
MK	machinery technician
MLDC	Military Leadership Diversity Commission
MST	marine science technician

MTF	Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NHIS	National Health Interview Survey
NLSY	National Longitudinal Survey of Youth
OCS	Officer Candidate School
ODEI	office of diversity, equity, and inclusion
OER	officer evaluation report
OPM	Officer Personnel Management
OS	operations specialist
PY	promotion year
RFMC	rating force master chief
ROI	return on investment
SAPRR	Sexual Assault Prevention, Response, and Recovery
SK	storekeeper
SOAR	Student to Officer—Always Ready
SWE	Servicewide Examination
URM	underrepresented minority
USCGA	U.S. Coast Guard Academy
WEOS	Workplace and Equal Opportunity Survey
WGRA	Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members
WLI	Women’s Leadership Initiative
WO	warrant officer
XO	executive officer
YN	yeoman
YOS	year of service

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The U.S. Coast Guard seeks to attract, recruit, and retain a workforce that represents all segments of U.S. society. However, in the current active-duty Coast Guard, representation of women and of members of racial and ethnic minority groups declines as rank increases, ultimately resulting in a less diverse senior leadership. These demographics are largely the cumulative effect of the service's personnel system in which the pool of potential senior leaders narrows at each stage of the career life cycle, along with the number of candidates from underrepresented groups.

To identify the root causes of the underrepresentation of women and of members of racial and ethnic minority groups in the Coast Guard, researchers used a mixed-method approach involving literature reviews, analysis of personnel data, interviews with subject-matter experts, focus groups, and a survey of active-duty personnel. The team examined the factors that shape representation at each phase of the military career life cycle—recruiting, career development, promotion and advancement, and retention—and identified facilitators of and barriers to improving diversity in the Coast Guard. The report includes recommendations to help the Coast Guard achieve its ultimate goal of a workforce that looks like the nation it serves.

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