# FLAG VOICE #545

## U. S. Coast Guard Instruction on Leadership and Diversity Councils
## 22 April 2021

I am pleased to announce the release of the updated Commandant Instruction on Leadership and Diversity Councils, COMDTINST 5350.9A. This updated Instruction reestablishes the Leadership, Excellence and Diversity (LEAD) Council to become a conduit for diversity issues and concerns from the field directly to the Commandant and renames it as the Inclusive Leadership Excellence and Diversity (ILEAD) Council to highlight the Coast Guard's focus on inclusion as a leadership concept.

Deputy Commandant and Area co-chairs will manage the ILEAD Council and this role will alternate between DCO and PACAREA, and DCMS and LANTAREA every two years. This change empowers the ILEAD Council to drive solutions and organizational change more directly to operational and support commanders.

The ILEAD Council will engage the Leadership and Diversity Advisory Council (LDAC) network to develop and prioritize recommendations, as well as to share best practices, lessons learned, senior leadership direction and feedback. Additionally, the ILEAD Council will assess operational risks to leadership, diversity and inclusion (D&I); identify instances where policies and practices work counter to D&I goals; and provide command climate improvement and leadership development recommendations to the Commandant semi-annually.

The updated instruction provides commands with guidance on the appropriate designation of command LDAC Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary positions via administrative remarks to ensure reflection in an individual's official record.

COMDTINST 5350.9A will be posted on the Resources tab of CG Portal. Please encourage your personnel, especially subordinate commands and LDACs, to read through the instruction for updated guidance. Talking points and FAQ's are attached to this Flag Voice.

Any questions should be directed to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at HQS-SMB-CG-127-Info@uscg.mil.

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## U.S. COAST GUARD ILEAD COUNCIL POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT

**Background**

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion continues to implement the Coast Guard Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP).  These materials will help Coast Guard leaders inform employees of recent programmatic enhancements to the LEAD Council.

This information should be shared during an all hands or other applicable command gathering.

**Changes to the former LEAD Council include:**
- Reestablishing and renaming the Coast Guard's Leadership, Excellence and Diversity (LEAD) Council to the Inclusive Leadership, Excellence and Diversity (ILEAD) Council.
- Clarifying and describing an enhanced network of Leadership and Diversity Advisory Councils (LDACS) to support and extend the work of the ILEAD throughout the Service.
- Demonstrating the Coast Guard's ongoing commitment and implementation of critical DIAP initiatives, including improving processes, structure, and resources accessibility.

**Overarching Communication Themes**
- Renaming and reestablishing the ILEAD Council demonstrates systematic improvements, continued commitment, and success in implementing the DIAP.
- Clarifying the roles of the ILEAD Council and LDAC improves awareness and access, allowing total force participation in inclusive leadership practices and D&I.
- Changes initiated to engage field personal in leadership and D&I more directly.

**Additional Commander Resources:**
Given the current climate of incidents with the Asian American Pacific Islander, Black/African American, and LGBTQIA+ communities, managers/unit leaders can access the following diversity and inclusion resources to facilitate workplace discussions:
- <u>Leadership Guide for the D&I Action Plan Rollout</u> includes Techniques for Leaders to Engage in D&I Conversations.
- <u>D&I Command Resources</u> contains several D&I command best practices as resources for leaders.

### ILEAD Policy Leadership Talking Points:

- During the recent State of the Coast Guard briefing, the Commandant outlined several initiatives to ensure that the Coast Guard remains a service of choice, retaining a ready, diverse and highly skilled workforce.

- These new programs will ensure that we have a Mission Ready Total Workforce, where all of our employees have the opportunity to achieve their full potential while contributing to the Coast Guard mission.

- The Coast Guard's ability to respond to emerging threats in a fast-paced, ever-changing world requires that we engage and maximize our workforce's full potential.

- In the coming weeks, we are launching a mentoring program and new D&I training programs that will directly improve professional development opportunities and working environments throughout our Service.

- We are equipping our leaders with new resources and tools to improve our working culture and environment, including focusing specifically on creating a more inclusive and diverse workplace.

- Inclusion is paramount to improving productivity, performance, innovation, job satisfaction and achieving mission excellence.

- Inclusivity ensures mission success, representation and engagement of diverse talent, strengthens leadership accountability. Diversity and inclusion embody the Coast Guard Core Values of honor, respect and devotion to duty.

- This week, the Commandant issued new guidance that impacts the ILEAD Council and LDACs.

- The ILEAD Council provides a forum for identifying and sharing challenges, solutions, programs, and practices that effectively enhance diversity and inclusion throughout our workplace culture.

- Program enhancements include:
  - Renaming the LEAD Council to the ILEAD Council to recognize the importance of inclusion as a leadership concept.
  - Establishing field unit co-chairs for the ILEAD Council, which will alternate between DCO and PAC, and DCMS and LANT.
  - Establishing new ILEAD Council responsibilities to more fully incorporate engagement and communications with field LDACs. ILEAD Council responsibilities include assessing operational risks to leadership, diversity and inclusion and identifying instances where policies and practices work counter to D&I goals.
  - Briefing the Commandant at least twice annually to present recommendations specific to policy and process that work counter to leadership, diversity and inclusion objectives.
  - Requiring DCMS, DCO, LANTAREA, PACAREA, District Commanders, and Commanding Officers with 50 or more personnel to establish a unit Leadership and Diversity Advisory Council (LDAC). Additionally, Commands must document the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary of each LDAC via Administrative Remarks.

- These changes allow us to drive solutions and organizational change at the unit level and throughout our total force.

- Every Coast Guard employee is represented by an LDAC and has the opportunity to communicate to senior leadership through the LDAC network to the Coast Guard's ILEAD Council. Everyone is encouraged to attend and participate in LDAC meetings.

- Mention Unit LDAC Contact or have them stand up in the all hands event.

- I rely on the LDAC to advise me on our organizational culture.  These programs will only work if we all engage, communicate and participate. It's our LDAC–we make the process meaningful.  So, once again, I encourage you to participate and seek out opportunities to work with the LDAC and ILEAD Council.

- The LDACs is an additional tool we can all deploy, along with our Affinity Groups, mentoring programs, and professional development opportunities to ensure we all embody the Coast Guard Core Values as we serve our Nation.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

Q:  What kinds of problems, issues, or concerns does the ILEAD Council address?
A:  The Coast Guard's ILEAD Council assesses the command climate and leadership development of the total workforce and provides recommendations to the Commandant.

Q:  How can I get in contact with the ILEAD Council?
A:  Your unit LDAC provides you a direct link to the ILEAD Council.  Additionally, the ILEAD Council portal page and website are being updated and will be available for future communications.

Q:  How does the ILEAD Council work with the Leadership and Diversity Advisory Councils (LDACs)?
A: The ILEAD Council and LDAC network spans from headquarters to the unit level, empowering members to:
   ▪ Take an active role in promoting inclusion and diversity within the Coast Guard.
   ▪ Suggest best practices or issues to address that impact organizational climate.
   ▪ Engage with their local community to establish relationships and model leadership.
   ▪ Specifically, LDACs provide direct feedback to the ILEAD Council on D&I and leadership challenges that are being encountered at the unit level.

Q:  How are the members of the ILEAD Council and LDAC selected?
A:  The LDACs are made up of unit volunteers.  Anyone is able and welcome to join their unit's LDAC.
The ILEAD Council membership is set forth in COMDTINST 5350.9A and each representative is selected by their respective organizations.

Q:  Why is the Coast Guard focusing on diversity and inclusion?  How does this directly impact our operational mission?
A:  To remain the world's best Coast Guard, we must be seen as an employer of choice. Talent management is one of the greatest challenges and opportunities facing our Service. Within two tours, supervisors at all levels of the organization-including the next Commandant-will face a vastly different social landscape to build our future force. The Coast Guard needs the best people our Nation has to offer to defend our freedoms, ensure prosperity, and save those in peril. Our complex operating environment makes it critical that we harness the full power of the background, experience, and thought of every member of our workforce. Diverse teams demonstrate higher levels of innovation and creativity—precisely the attributes our Service needs to address a future of increasingly sophisticated and complex operations.

Q:  Where can I get additional information on diversity and inclusion programs and resources?

A:  For additional information about D&I Programs please access the CG-127 Portal site  at: CG-127 - Home (uscg.mil)  or the CG-127 website at: Office of Diversity and Inclusion (CG-12B) | U.S. Coast Guard (uscg.mil)


Q:  How are Coast Guard Affinity Groups a part of the ILEAD or LDAC Councils?
A:  The ILEAD Council is an internal organization, compromised of field representatives, that reports directly to the Commandant on diversity initiatives and concerns. Their work is informed by our unit level LDACs which are local diversity support for commanding officers. Affinity Groups are external organizations that partner with the Coast Guard to achieve organizational leadership, diversity and mentorship goals. Affinity Groups, the ILEAD and LDACs work together to support both local and Coast Guard wide diversity initiatives and dialogues.

Q:  What is the definition of inclusion?
A:  A dynamic state of operating in which diversity is leveraged to create a fair, healthy, and high-performing organization or community. An inclusive environment ensures equitable access to resources and opportunities for all. It also enables individuals and groups to feel safe, respected, engaged, motivated, and valued for who they are and for their contributions toward organizational goals.

Q:  Isn't focusing on diversity issues creating reverse discrimination and separating us rather than unifying us?
A:  The Coast Guard's Diversity and Inclusion Program is founded on creating an organization for everyone serving in the Coast Guard and draw top talent across the spectrum of American society to rise to the challenges of today and tomorrow. We do this by fostering intersectionality and looking holistically at our current and potential active duty, reserve, civilian and auxiliary members and not just a single dimension. Our goal is to ensure all of our members have a voice and a home with the Coast Guard.


Q:  Do the ILEAD Council and LDAC address concerns of Coast Guard civilian and auxiliary members?
A:  Yes, the Coast Guard's ILEAD Council assesses the command climate and leadership development of the total workforce.