

# IMPACT IN ACTION

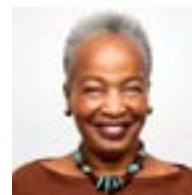
**REFLECTING ON APA'S STRATEGIC PLAN AND PROGRESS TO-DATE**



**AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION**

*Shared with the APA Council of Representatives*

**FEBRUARY 2023**



## PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

In 2019, APA's Council of Representatives (Council) adopted a new strategic plan for the organization—only the second in its nearly 130-year history. The strategic plan was developed over the course of a year in a highly engaging and inclusive process, and was intentionally viewed as a means to an end—a widely agreed upon set of principles and strategies that guide the work we do and how we do it, ultimately enhancing APA's impact on the field of psychology and broader society.

Since the strategic plan was adopted, APA has been regularly gathering information to assess progress in advancing its short-and long-term goals. Rooted in our organizational foundation of science and our belief in data-driven decision making, we ask questions that probe the effectiveness of APA's transformation in accomplishing our mission and achieving impact. Four years into the implementation and evaluation of this strategic vision, the data show we are generating noticeable momentum as an association. This progress is possible because of the teamwork and collective efforts of APA's elected and appointed leaders, staff, and broader membership.

**This report, which is not exhaustive, serves three primary aims:**

- Providing an understanding of the many organizational strategies and approaches used to generate momentum in APA's transformation;
- Offering examples of how APA's work has advanced the goals of the strategic plan since Council adopted it in 2019; and
- Describing early indicators of impact and key challenges before us as a membership association and field.

More detail and supplementary data can be found in the attached appendices.

With this growing momentum, we find ourselves at a pivotal point in the association's history. Council, as APA's policymaking body, plays a unique and valuable leadership role in ensuring the organization's effectiveness and viability. As APA takes on the process of revisiting and revising its strategic plan this year, I hope that this report provides a sense of how Council's strategy has guided the collective impact of APA's elected and appointed leaders, members, and staff. I hope that it sparks dialogue regarding new approaches and ideas. And, most importantly, I hope it energizes you as, together, we lead APA and the field of psychology forward.



**Arthur C. Evans, Jr., PhD**

Chief Executive Officer and Executive Vice President  
American Psychological Association and APA Services, Inc.

## INITIATING APA'S TRANSFORMATION

As APA approached its 125-year anniversary in 2016, leadership determined that the association needed to develop a new strategic plan to guide APA's initial steps into its next 125 years. By the time Arthur C. Evans, Jr., PhD arrived as the new CEO in 2017, there was already strong consensus around this idea, and he was charged by the Board of Directors to operationalize this decision. **Early on, there was also agreement that APA needed to view its strategic plan as transformative, rather than additive.** This meant not seeing the strategic plan solely as a mechanism for adding new activities to the association's existing portfolio, but instead, using the new strategy as a lens through which APA would determine its priorities and view all of its work.

In 2017, prior to the adoption of the strategic plan, the Board of Directors created budget priorities to provide strategic guidance for the organization as the new strategy was being developed (**APPENDIX A**). Importantly, these priorities would align almost exactly with what the broader membership developed during the subsequent formal strategic planning process and allowed the organization to begin laying the foundation for the strategic work ahead.

The strategic plan's development throughout 2018 was **designed to be a highly inclusive and iterative process.** From individual interviews with Council members to focus groups to member-wide surveys, we heard from members—as well as non-members—through multiple feedback channels and included as many diverse voices as possible (**APPENDIX B**). The consensus reached on APA's strategic goals and objectives is due in large part to the thoughtfulness and time that members, non-member psychologists, and staff put into these conversations and activities.

As the strategic plan was being built, we simultaneously laid the groundwork for its implementation as part of the broader organizational transformation (e.g., building capacity in key areas, identifying challenges that exist in APA's organizational culture, etc.).

**In February 2019, Council overwhelmingly voted to adopt the new strategic plan,** and by doing so, set a strong and ambitious direction for the organization for the next decade.

## USING APA'S NEW STRATEGIC PLAN TO DRIVE IMPACT

The priorities, objectives, and principles in APA's strategic plan all funnel toward one overarching goal: impact (**APPENDIX C**). Every component of the plan is meant to support APA's ability to achieve its mission and enhance the impact APA and psychology have on the field and broader society.

As part of our transformative approach, APA has advanced the implementation of the strategic plan across three domains:

- » **Organizational Content** (*i.e., the "what"*) The substance of the plan and the activities on which we focus. Programs, resources, and materials that we develop and disseminate. For example, APA has been increasingly focused and targeted when developing content, ensuring that information across a range of topics and for varied purposes is packaged and shared to reach specific and diverse audiences most effectively.
- » **Organizational Capacity** (*i.e., the "how"*) Skills, processes, and infrastructures needed to support APA as a learning organization that is constantly improving. For example, APA has centralized different components of its work, like communications and advocacy, to help streamline execution and maximize efficiency.
- » **Organizational Culture** (*i.e., the "context"*) Shared values and principles that are infused into how APA views and carries out its work. For example, APA is intentionally focused on achieving outcomes, rather than outputs, positioning the association to have a more meaningful impact on issues.

The work described requires members of governance, elected and appointed leaders, members, and staff to play important complementary roles in order to achieve APA's strategic goals (**APPENDIX D**). APA's relationships with its 54 divisions and with the state, provincial and territorial psychological associations (SPTAs) across the nation are another critical component of the association's work. The wealth of expertise that lies in our divisions—ranging from psychopharmacology, to the history of psychology, to child and family policy and practice—is a large part of how APA ensures that our advocacy, programs, and products are informed by a broad range of perspectives in psychology and the latest science. The SPTAs are essential partners in a variety of areas, particularly advocacy, helping to facilitate a strong bidirectional connection between APA's work at the national level and the grass-roots efforts of SPTAs to address state-level issues. SPTAs often surface important insights about their local challenges and opportunities, which help APA better tailor and disseminate resources to support SPTAs' work in their own communities.

**The remainder of this report highlights examples of these collective efforts.**

## **Utilize psychology to make a positive impact on critical societal issues.**

*From gun violence to chronic stress, from climate change to systemic racism, there are a seemingly countless number of important issues that psychology touches. APA's challenge is not identifying issues to which psychology can contribute, but ensuring we remain focused and committed to make a difference on those various health, social, economic and environmental issues.*

*To do this, we first ask ourselves:*

- *What are the issues to which APA and psychology can make an important contribution?*
- *Among those issues, what are the unique and/or critical contributions of psychology?*
- *Given those contributions, how can APA most effectively operationalize and execute this work?*

## **Key Lesson Learned**

One of the most important strategies we have discovered in our work to advance this strategic priority has been around framing issues. **Complex problems are too often framed by the public in ways that omit the human element**—human cognition, emotion and behavior—which inadvertently renders psychological knowledge irrelevant. We saw this play out in real time when vaccines were being developed and distributed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The nation's attention turned immediately to the logistics of vaccine dissemination, failing to reflect the science of human behavior and missing the opportunity to use psychological science to promote vaccine uptake, particularly for communities that have historically been wary of our health care system.

As another example, in collaboration with member experts, we are helping policymakers understand climate change as more than a meteorological phenomenon, but also as a crisis driven by collective human behavior. In March 2020, using a highly collaborative approach, APA's elected and appointed leaders crafted a climate change resolution that was adopted by Council in March 2020. In doing so, a strong policy foundation was laid from which APA has done more focused and impactful work, including offering guidance for subsequent climate change reports and recommendations. By incorporating the human element into how we frame complex issues like these, the public will better recognize psychology's relevance to a broad set of issues and be more likely to turn to our field for solutions.

## **Examples of Strategies in Action**

Another strategy involves APA **embracing its role as an important scientific association** and using psychology's scientific foundation to position the association as a unique voice on a range of complex societal issues. In fact, there have been several instances where media outlets or members of Congress have explicitly noted that they reached out to APA for expertise *because* the knowledge we provide is rooted in science. One example involves APA's engagement with President Biden's COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force. Led by 2021 president Dr. Jennifer F. Kelly and a delegation of members, APA was the only organization invited to present to the Task Force on three separate occasions. This was due, in large part, to the type of information we provided—a wealth of psychological science on issues like the neuropsychological implications of Long COVID, the importance of disaggregated data in reducing disparities—that was organized within a larger population health framework to guide their work.

**APA's strong foundation in science is setting psychology apart in other arenas as well**, like the state and federal courts. Since 1962, our Amicus Brief program has filed over 250 science-based briefs on topics like LGBTQ+ rights, eyewitness testimony, and the death penalty, and is the epitome of what it means to apply psychological knowledge—from neuroscience to social psychology—to the major issues facing society. APA briefs have been cited in 46 court decisions, with one Supreme Court justice noting the scientific basis of APA's briefs as a clear and distinctive strength. The amicus program should get stronger going forward as we work with expert panels of psychologists to perform environmental scanning for upcoming cases.

One of the greatest challenges across all this work is **striking the balance between efficiency and meaningful impact**. A recent example of this constant tension is the association's work around advancing racial equity. Since October 2021 when Council adopted an apology to people of color for APA's role in promoting, perpetuating, and failing to challenge racism, racial discrimination and human hierarchy, the organization has been mapping out a plan that both pushes quickly for action *and* sustains the work over a long period of time. APA's relationships with the Ethnic Psychological Associations (EPAs) are essential to advancing our work around racial equity as well as in numerous other areas. In fact, APA is working to strengthen its partnerships with the individual EPAs to better ensure that their expertise and experiences are elevated and incorporated throughout our work.

With many important areas of racial equity, APA will have to develop additional capacity and skills to address them. For this reason and because we want our work to be as inclusive and impactful as possible, APA is taking a very thoughtful, systematic, and iterative approach to advancing racial equity (**APPENDIX E**). Guided by our EDI Framework, this approach involves building off the extensive racial equity work previously done by APA's elected and appointed leaders and soliciting input in numerous ways from members, psychologists of color and other racial equity advocates to inform the association's path toward reconciliation, repair, and renewal.

Even with all the value that psychology brings—to issues of racial equity, human rights, and so many more—APA could not have substantial impact on issues without strategic partnerships. To help implement Council's strategic vision, the association has **fostered more diverse and robust partnerships** that include and extend beyond mental health and health care, enabling psychology to reach broader audiences more effectively and improve people's lives. See



**APPENDIX F** for examples of major alliances that APA has formed or reimagined for greater impact. We have also been more **intentional about bringing a global perspective** to our partnerships and exploring the unique impact we can have with our psychology colleagues from around the world. With over 60 current MOU partners, a leadership role in the Global Psychology Alliance (facilitated by APA and developed during the pandemic), and a Global Psychology Learning Leader Institute, APA is strengthening its international ties, sharing resources, and learning valuable lessons from the work of psychology and experiences of psychologists in other countries.

### **Indicators of Progress and Key Challenges in Advancing Our Strategy**

At this point in the strategic plan's implementation, there are several indicators of APA's progress in advancing this organizational priority. As one might expect in this phase of addressing significant and complex issues, many indicators revolve around process-oriented measures (e.g., engagement of member experts, media hits, etc.) and anecdotes. These broader indicators are interpreted in conjunction with metrics for specific APA initiatives to inform the association's subsequent steps. With time, we expect these indicators to shift more towards outcomes.

As one example, APA is **receiving more invitations to work with key decision-makers** than it historically has, suggesting that our enhanced focus on impact is garnering external attention. From the World Health Organization, to members of Congress, to the Surgeon General, individuals and organizations are increasingly turning to APA for science and information across a host of major issues, like youth mental health and the factors that affect it, like social media. Another example is the **growing number of organizations looking to APA to help inform their positions on important issues**. For instance, the nation's mental health and substance use crises are driving people to look for new behavioral health solutions, and APA is using this opportunity to promote the need for a population approach. Thanks to Council's leadership in adopting a February 2022 resolution on population health for the association, a growing number of organizations are echoing APA's calls for an expanded approach that works to promote health across the full continuum of behavioral health needs (i.e., a whole population approach).

With these indicators of impact come some significant challenges. Here are three key examples:

#### **PRIORITIZATION**

With invitations and requests for APA and psychology's expertise growing—but with limited resources—how can APA, as the “big tent” of psychology, most effectively triage and sequence the work? Over the course of the pandemic, we saw the importance of flexibility as societal needs evolved. In fact, APA's ability to pivot and respond earned national recognition. We are using lessons learned during the crisis of the pandemic to sustain this type of responsiveness and adaptability.

#### **CAPACITY**

To take on new activities, we first must create the ‘strategic space’ needed to consider them. This has been historically challenging for APA, but it will be critical for our continued success and for ensuring that the organization remains focused on advancing the strategy that Council has adopted. Also important is the need for APA's elected and appointed leaders, staff, and even the broader membership to work together to facilitate this alignment. Examples of capacity building include streamlining and centralizing organizational functions (e.g., communications), building up key infrastructure (e.g., Office of Applied Psychology), and strengthening staff skillsets, like project management.

#### **HISTORICAL FOCUS ON OUTPUTS.**

As an organization, APA is shifting from an emphasis on outputs to one more focused on outcomes. This means consistently adopting an approach where the goal we are trying to achieve—not the tactic we want to use—drives our work. Doing a large set of activities does not equal impact. How can we be more disciplined in asking ourselves what impact our work will have and assessing whether we have reached our goals?



## **Elevate the public's understanding of, regard for, and use of psychology.**

*Whether in a classroom or around the kitchen table, APA's ability to have a positive impact on critical societal issues is tied to the public's understanding of psychology. Greater public awareness and respect for psychology means more individuals, organizations, and systems will be turning to psychology for guidance and answers. This broader desire for psychological knowledge fuels the field's ability to have an impact on a greater number of issues.*

## Key Lesson Learned

In our work to raise the visibility of psychology, we have learned that one of the most critical strategies involves **connecting the dots for the public between the issues they face and relevant psychological knowledge**. This approach often affords opportunities to expand others' understanding of what psychology is and what it looks like in action. For example, the rise of misinformation and disinformation in recent years requires solutions grounded in psychology. However, because much of the public perceives psychology as related only to mental health, APA has had to be explicit in noting psychology's relevant contributions to this burgeoning issue. From pinpointing social influences to flagging cognitive biases, psychological science can help people better recognize and 'inoculate themselves' against misinformation. Additionally, APA is supporting psychologists' efforts to connect the dots themselves. For instance, in partnership with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), APA is funding several grant proposals that use the science of human behavior to inform our understanding of mis- and disinformation.

## Examples of Strategies in Action

At a glance, advancing this strategic goal requires two overarching approaches: 1) elevating 'between groups' differences—how health service psychologists (i.e., clinical, counseling and school psychologists) are distinct from other mental health professionals—and 2) highlighting 'within groups' differences—that psychology is a broad field, including and extending beyond mental health.

APA utilizes both approaches in our ongoing efforts to **elevate in the media the research published across our 90 journals and the diverse work of our members**. We not only pitch our members and their work to major media outlets, but also provide members with tools that empower them to lift up psychology for the public in their own arenas (e.g., APA trainings with the Alan Alda Center for Science Communication).

The future of work is one specific area where APA has been active in elevating the critical role of psychology, **calling on our members to bring their expertise to different settings and audiences**. Frequently asked for guidance on this issue, APA is pushing applied psychology into the spotlight, helping others understand its relevance to workplace and workforce dynamics. From Industrial-Organizational (I/O) to consulting to occupational health psychology, our members are helping CEOs be more transparent and

empathic leaders, reimagining how offices can be designed and used, and offering science-based principles that foster more psychologically healthy workplaces.

The notion of a psychologically healthy workplace has received great attention from the business community. APA's Work and Wellbeing Survey and other national polls continue to show high levels of employee distress, so by compiling a business case, we are using our science to help others create safe and supportive workplaces. For instance, in partnership with the National League of Cities, American Public Health Association, YMCA of the USA, and the International City/County Management Association, APA has encouraged CEOs from over 160 organizations to commit publicly to improving their organizational culture around mental health. In line with Council's population health policy, we are highlighting the work environment as an arena that can *positively* influence people's wellbeing. Members of APA's applied divisions have provided invaluable assistance with this, gathering the latest research, best practices, and real-life examples across settings—from health care, to city governments, to Fortune 500 companies. For example, several of our applied psychologist members were integral to shaping the Surgeon General's Framework on Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing, which ensured that psychological science was woven into the model. As APA works with the Surgeon General on implementation of this framework, we continue to bring forward different areas of psychology (e.g., dissemination and implementation science).

Another strategy we use to elevate the public's understanding is **to package psychological science in engaging and useable ways**. As valuable as we consider knowledge from our field to be, it must be translated for the public to understand and utilize it—see APA's award-winning podcast and magazine as examples of this. How we translate the science must be informed by the diverse audiences and communities we are trying to reach. For instance, led by APA's Div. 38 (Health Psychology), we have shared the science on coping with stress with health care workers during the pandemic. By developing brief, practical, research-based exercises that health care workers can use throughout their hectic days and disseminating these resources through their professional associations, useable information reached tens of thousands of people in the places they already were.

**Even with APA's longstanding initiatives, we seek ways to elevate their visibility with the public and increase their effectiveness**. For instance, the tumultuous nature of the pandemic prompted APA to move temporarily from an

annual *Stress in America* survey to more frequent, focused surveys that better captured societal changes in real time. This approach has also enabled us to incorporate more targeted science-based coping strategies from our members in the reports.

### **Indicators of Progress and Key Challenges in Advancing Our Strategy**

There are several high-level indicators that, taken together, suggest the strategies noted above are elevating the visibility of psychologists and, more critically, helping the public better understand the breadth of psychology and its relevance to their daily lives.

#### **MORE PSYCHOLOGY IN THE MEDIA**

From 2018 to 2022, APA saw an incredible 945% increase in the number of media clips featuring APA, our members, and research published in our journals. Additionally, we find ourselves fielding more interview requests for psychologist experts from major media outlets, including, but not limited to NBC Nightly News, Today Show, Fox News, The New York Times, The Washington Post, USA Today, U.S. News and World Report, Bloomberg, The Wall Street Journal, Fast Company, BBC News, NPR, Time, and the Associated Press. APA's updated internal member referral system is positioning the organization to more readily and systematically identify APA members with relevant expertise and connect them to reporters.

#### **GREATER PUBLIC PRESENCE OF PSYCHOLOGY**

APA's *Speaking of Psychology* (SoP) podcast has demonstrated steady growth in listenership, with more than 10.3 million downloads since it was reimaged in 2017 and more than 3.4 million downloads in 2022 alone. From why people develop 'imposter syndrome' to the neuropsychological benefits of sleep, SoP is bringing psychological knowledge to the public in engaging ways and garnering broader attention as a result. In fact, between SoP and APA's *Monitor on Psychology* magazine, APA has earned ASAE's Gold Circle Award and five Excel Awards from the prestigious Media & Publishing Network over the last three years.

#### **MORE INVITATIONS WITH BROADER FOCUS**

Whether to provide testimony to Congress, requests for information from the Administration, or partnership agreements with other organizations, APA is receiving a greater number of invitations across an increasingly broad range of issues—from artificial intelligence, to maternal mental health, to the opioid crisis. In several cases, APA is the only voice at the table representing behavioral health and using psychological science to expand the perspectives of leaders and decision-makers.

It is important to celebrate these monumental strides upward in APA and psychology's visibility; at the same time, we must recognize the challenges before us that can hinder our effectiveness. For one, there is often a **strong tension that exists between APA's efforts to be both inclusive and nimble**. Press releases, task force reports, and white papers each come with different levels of urgency and needs for review and scrutiny. Being inclusive of different perspectives does not always equate to being exhaustive in reviewing APA materials. We are exploring how we can infuse the expertise of as many members as possible into APA's scientifically grounded work, while ensuring that APA's voice and content are still relevant and timely.

This alludes to another challenge, which is **APA's ability to engage our members at scale consistently**. The wealth of knowledge and diversity of experience that lies in our "big tent" of over 146,000 members, affiliates, and students is incredible. To ensure we can find the best subject matter experts during what is often a very quick turnaround period, we are continuously trying to improve how we collect data about the profession and our members' individual areas of expertise, helping our members more easily share their preferences and receive targeted resources they want, and helping APA identify member experts working in various arenas.

## **Prepare the discipline and profession of psychology for the future.**

*What has gotten us this far will not necessarily get us where we still need to go as an organization. APA is using a multipronged approach to ensure that the field of psychology is ready for the future and all the changes that come with it. This work involves:*

- *Supporting the current profession and discipline with their wide range of existing needs;*
- *Helping the field evolve, adapt to emerging challenges, and capitalize on new opportunities; and*
- *Embracing and seeking out diversity, broadly speaking, to ensure the long-term viability of our field.*

## Key Lesson Learned

An important learning as we prepare the field for the future has been that the mental model, or mindset, we hold around being a psychologist can inadvertently constrain our ability to have impact. In other words, **ensuring the long-term viability of our field requires us to expand how we think about our professional roles and contributions.** For instance, when Council adopted a [resolution on psychology's role in advancing population health](#) in February 2022, it committed the organization to using a population health approach in our work and details how this expanded paradigm can improve the lives of millions. By adopting this critical policy, Council has given APA a foundation from which we—as an organization and as individual clinicians, researchers, and educators in the field—can think about the goals of our work with respect to improving the health of the population. This work will require practicing psychologists to use the broad set of skills that comes with their training (e.g., utilizing non-clinical skills); researchers to increase their efforts to translate research findings into policy and programs; and applied psychologists to help establish models for optimizing translational work. It will also affect our approach to early psychology training, such as by exposing high school students to the full range of subfields within psychology and ensuring young people have diverse role models to look up to and learn from.

## Examples of Strategies in Action

As a related but separate strategy, **APA is helping people outside the field of psychology to broaden their mental models**—to recognize the multifaceted nature of psychologists' work and acknowledge the full scope of psychologists' training. Take the [issue of integrated care](#), for example. APA has led efforts to promote a variety of evidence-based approaches, particularly in light of some quarters of the field equating the Collaborative Care model with integrated care. We, for example, showcase the value of the Primary Care Behavioral Health (PCBH) model, which includes a licensed behavioral health professional as a core member of the primary care team—a model that allows psychologists to practice at the highest level of their training. Working closely with consumer organizations and nearly 60 psychologists across 21 states, APA presented data to Congress and advocated for the need to expand adoption of all evidence-based integrated care models. As a result, we are seeing promising signs of change, including acknowledgement of a range of models and explicit recognition of the PCBH model in proposed draft legislation.

For the discipline and profession to thrive in the future, current professional needs must be met. APA is **developing and providing tools and resources for members to support them in their roles as clinicians, applied scientists, researchers, and educators.** This collective work is bidirectional, with APA gathering members' thoughts through surveys and other mechanisms, and then building, refining, and sharing content to meet those needs. One example of this in action involves telehealth. When the pandemic struck, APA quickly built and launched an [online information hub for clinicians](#) with resources and tools to help navigate these changes. Simultaneously, our members, divisions, and the SPTAs played a pivotal role in advocating for expanded and extended telehealth coverage (e.g., audio-only services). This multi-pronged approach led to psychologists being reimbursed—for the first time ever—for providing care via videoconferencing or telephone, enabling them to practice to the full extent of their training and reach more people. APA continues to push for the flexible coverage of telehealth services as one mechanism for addressing disparities in health, particularly in rural communities.

APA has a long history of being responsive to members' needs and reactive to environmental demands that impact those needs. Over the past few years, **the organization has become more proactive in key areas**, like health care financing and reimbursement. For instance, with guidance from a [member-led health care financing advisory group](#), APA is developing new codes to support reimbursement for psychologists working with caregivers and providing consultation to other health professionals. We are now seeing greater member engagement and advocacy on these issues, like a 30% increase in comments from 2021 that psychologists submitted in response to CMS' proposed physician fee schedule.

**Preparing the profession and discipline for the future means ensuring that the entire field is being adequately supported.** APA is being intentional about attending to the needs of our basic and applied researchers and ensuring that scientists—as well as clinicians—see APA as their professional home. Using multiple approaches, we are more thoughtfully communicating with our scientist members, raising the visibility of their work, and actively forming and engaging in scientific partnerships and coalitions. Examples include our [Science Spotlight](#) newsletter with over 75,000 subscribers; our [Essential Science Conversations](#) series, featuring a broad array of APA member experts; and [Science Training Sessions](#), focused on integrating new tools and techniques into psychological research. We also created and piloted three [Science Summits](#) at APA 2022, with topics ranging from decision making, to youth development, to racism.

Because all psychologists are trained to use science in their research and/or practice, regardless of their specialty area, **APA views science as undergirding all that we do and a critical component of the value our members offer in their respective arenas.** For instance, supported by funding from the CDC, APA helped to develop and widely disseminated a set of videos addressing classroom management—one of the most challenging set of skills that teachers need to master. Our members' expertise was critical to ensuring that the resources were informed by psychological science and evidence-based, with supporting strategies that, when planned and practiced, lead to increased student engagement and reduced disruption.

Today's students are tomorrow's psychologists, so **APA's strategies center both on supporting students currently in psychology programs and drawing in the best and brightest minds to the field.** There are several ways that we seek to improve the educational experience of current psychology majors and graduate students. For example, APA works to address barriers that psychology students face (e.g., student debt), expand available training opportunities (e.g., [Graduate Psychology Education \(GPE\) program](#)), and help strengthen the content taught in psychology courses (e.g., [Academic Writer](#)). Council has played a leading role in this work, adopting policies that support current students and attract diverse minds to psychology. For instance, Council's decision to adopt as APA policy the [Student Learning Outcomes for Introductory Psychology](#) is informing the alignment of Introductory Psychology courses and increasing the chances that the 841,000+ students receiving high school psychology credit will go on to take Introductory Psychology in college.

## **Indicators of Progress and Key Challenges in Advancing Our Strategy**

We are encouraged by several signs that APA's strategies are effectively preparing the field of psychology for the future.

### **CONTINUED GROWTH IN APA MEMBERSHIP**

While many professional associations have seen declining membership over recent years, APA has now achieved a fifth consecutive year of growth. From 114,436 members at the end of 2017, we have grown to over 146,000 members as of December 31, 2022. Data from member surveys indicate that there are a range of reasons for this growth, including APA products, services and experiences of members. The willingness to join APA and renew one's

membership is also driven by a strong appreciation for the advocacy and work of the association on critical societal issues, the scientific information APA disseminates on news and trends across psychology, and a desire for APA's career and professional development opportunities.

### **TAKING ON MAJOR THREATS TO THE FIELD**

After more than 70 years of debate within APA and the field, Council voted to take on the issue of master's-level training and [pursue accreditation of master's-level health service psychology programs](#) in 2018. While several factors (e.g., access to care, concerns about other organizations' accreditation standards applied to master's-level psychology programs) contributed to this action, we see increased willingness among APA's elected and appointed leaders to challenge complex issues that impact the profession and discipline.

### **MORE STUDENTS PURSUING PSYCHOLOGY**

From 2019 to 2022, the number of degrees awarded at the doctoral, master's and bachelor's level in psychology (across all subfields) increased by approximately 500, 2,687 and 10,427, respectively. These data illustrate a growing interest in psychology and suggest high school and introductory psychology as critical touchpoints for engaging curious minds and bringing them into the field.

Several challenges must also be addressed if the field is not just going to survive, but thrive, in the future. First, **how do we challenge the notion that inaction is an inherently safe option?** With the world around us constantly changing and societal issues begging for new and innovative solutions, psychology cannot afford to work from the perspective that what we have always done will always work in the future. Across every issue, let us ask ourselves whether sticking with the status quo will move us forward or unintentionally hold us back.

Another challenge we face is the perceived 'competition' between different areas of the field. Too often there is a misconception that if APA devotes resources to one area of the field, it means that another area of the field is receiving less. How can our common identity in psychology unite us? The diverse swath of elected and appointed leaders on APA's boards and committees makes clear how essential it is to bring together the minds of researchers, clinicians, and applied scientists to have an impact on major issues.

## **Strengthen APA's standing as an authoritative voice for psychology.**

*Being the leading scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the U.S. comes with important responsibilities, like setting standards for the field and speaking loudly and strongly on behalf of psychology and psychologists. To do this, APA continuously looks for more effective ways to advocate—in traditional arenas, like Capitol Hill and federal agencies, but also in other sectors, like industry, and among other key stakeholders, like philanthropic foundations. Our approach involves consistently grounding our positions in psychological science and using that foundation to distinguish the standards and guidelines that we develop for the field and beyond.*



## **Key Lesson Learned**

APA's authoritative standing and voice is strengthened tremendously when we lean on the authority of our members and support them as psychologist leaders in their own communities. Members, through the diverse roles that they hold, play a pivotal role in amplifying APA's voice for psychology—from those serving as department chairs and deans at universities, to those leading companies, to those holding seats in local and state governments. Thus, a critical learning has been the **uniquely valuable role that APA can play in helping to position and support psychologists as leaders in different domains**. For example, the Leadership Institute for Women in Psychology (LIWP), initiated in 2007 by APA's Committee on Women in Psychology, has prepared, supported, and empowered nearly 400 women psychologists as leaders across settings. The Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) provides research training, mentoring and career development for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and early career professionals of color with the goal of enhancing psychological and behavioral outcomes for communities of color. APA's newly created Leadership Development Institute will not only help to elevate and grow the great work of these legacy programs, but enable APA to develop new complementary leadership programs as well.

## **Examples of Strategies in Action**

There are several ways that we are elevating the authority and credibility of APA and psychology—ensuring we are not only being invited to various tables, but helping to set those tables from the start. One strategy to accomplish this has been to **build greater capacity for more effective advocacy**, which includes changes to organizational infrastructure as well as our definition of advocacy engagement. Initiated by the historic actions of Council in 2018 to modify the association's 501c(3) and 501c(6) structure, a new integrated model has helped to establish a pathway toward a robust advocacy agenda that includes issues relevant to the entire field. By speaking with one unified voice on Capitol Hill, with the Administration and in federal agencies—and venturing into new advocacy arenas (e.g., mobility efforts for applied psychologists)—we are elevating the full breadth of psychology for policymakers and helping to protect and advance the interests of all our members.

An essential part of this work is **forming partnerships and engaging with coalitions to advocate on various issues**. APA is currently represented in more than 85 advocacy coalitions (**APPENDIX G**). The increase in this number over time represents not only others' growing interest in working with APA and psychology, but the incredible range of issues APA covers as an organization. These alliances better position psychology to have impact on any one of our advocacy priorities, determined annually by APA's membership through a highly engaging process led by the Advocacy Coordinating Committee. APA is also finding new ways to partner with its divisions and SPTAs in the advocacy arena—trying to provide training, resources, and guidance around federal-level issues and simultaneously learn from our colleagues doing this work at the state and local levels. **This bidirectional approach to advocacy is helping to strengthen and echo psychology's voice across the nation**, growing the number of members engaged in advocacy. For example, APA's advocacy summits have focused on engaging a broader swath of our membership—about 1,000 members have participated to-date across 35 divisions and 50 SPTAs. Also, in response to the desire of many divisions to be more engaged with APA around advocacy, we introduced our Division Advocacy Partner Program in 2022. This effort is helping to strengthen long-term bidirectional channels between APA and divisions, while also helping divisions build more meaningful relationships with their members through advocacy.

Another strategy we are using is to advance this goal is **ensuring that the guidelines and standards we produce are consistently high-quality and based in psychological science**. For instance, APA Style Journal Article Reporting Standards (JARS) provide standards for quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods researchers to better communicate important and relevant aspects of their research. Since its development in 2018, JARS has been adopted by 97% of APA's authors—a promising step toward greater research transparency in psychology and the behavioral and social sciences. Some types of APA guidelines, like our standards for psychology training, have been in existence for years and updated multiple times to ensure relevance and accuracy. Others introduced more recently, like APA's EDI Inclusive Language Guidelines, are being highly utilized (i.e., over 35,000 unique views to-date) and helping to bring APA's voice to new listeners, including those outside of psychology.

## **Indicators of Progress and Key Challenges in Advancing Our Strategy**

There are several signs that our collective efforts to strengthen APA's standing as an authoritative voice are working and that the influence of psychology's voice is increasing.

### **GREATER FUNDING FOR THE FIELD**

We are seeing rising levels of funding for psychological research, training, and services. For example, we have seen a \$10M increase for NIH's Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, suggesting greater attention from an agency that is largely biomedically-focused. Funding for the Graduate Psychology Education (GPE) program, recently reauthorized by Congress through fiscal year 2027, increased by \$5M from fiscal year 2022, creating dozens of positions for psychology trainees in integrated care settings. The Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) program received a \$50M increase in the same period, and funding for the Minority Fellowship Program has also increased (currently \$19.4M). In addition to these quantitative metrics, we also use more qualitative ones to better understand the influence of our advocacy on policy-makers (**APPENDIX H**).

### **INVITATIONS TO REPRESENT THE SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES**

On numerous occasions, APA has been invited to speak as the sole representative of the social sciences and/or behavioral health in a particular forum, from panels to private meetings. These are particularly critical opportunities to insert psychological knowledge into the conversation. For example, APA testified before Congress about the nation's opioid crisis as the only voice outside of medicine, which enabled us to showcase psychology's unique role in nonpharmacological approaches to pain management.

There are also several significant challenges that have the potential to slow or derail our progress. For one, **our field needs to get more comfortable sharing psychology's voice and translating our work for the public**. While some psychologists routinely do this, as a field we tend to talk about our work primarily amongst ourselves. In addition to generating scholarly knowledge and publishing in reputable journals, we need to bring that knowledge off the pages to the communities and decision-makers who can benefit from it.

Another challenge, often raised in the context of conversations about APA's clinical and professional practice guidelines, is the **balance between the need for highly controlled versus more qualitative experiential research**. Without a doubt, we must pursue the rigor of psychological science if we want to be viewed rightfully as a STEM discipline. At the same time, we need our research to hold up outside of a laboratory and across diverse populations, and to have our research questions and methods informed by the realities of people's lived experiences. As an association, we look to our elected and appointed leaders to help the field find this tricky 'middle point' and to promote multiple ways of knowing, as appropriate.

## **CLOSING THOUGHTS**

Guided by the audacious strategy that Council adopted for the association—and by extension, the field—APA is transforming to take on complex societal issues, support our growing membership, and accomplish our mission in more effective and meaningful ways. As the world around us rapidly changes, this strategy has enabled the organization to navigate challenges and even accelerate APA's transformation during times of uncertainty. This would not be possible without the collective efforts of APA's Council of Representatives, Board of Directors, elected and appointed leaders, staff and the broader membership, a partnership that is required for psychology to have the level of impact that we desire. With so many critical issues facing our field and broader society, the need to generate, teach, and apply psychological knowledge has never been greater. Thank you for doing this work through the APA and for building psychology's capacity by engaging in this work in your own communities. The world needs psychology and psychologists now more than ever.

## **APPENDIX A**

### *2017 Board-Created Organizational Budget Priorities*

#### **1. Increase Visibility of APA & Continue to Build and Improve APA's Mission-Driven Brand**

- Social and societal issues
- Collaborate with the international community of psychologists
- Improve our capacity to effectively communicate to the public, the members and the field
- Ensure Ethics and our moral compass are central in all of our activities

#### **2. Increase Visibility of Basic, Applied & Clinical Science/Increasing Number of Scientist Members**

- Promote application of psychological science to health and other critical areas
- Increase the public's knowledge base in psychological science and how it can be applied
- Promote advances in scientific methods and reporting
- Ensure scientific approaches and APA's values are foremost in all APA communications

#### **3. Prepare APA Organizationally for the Future**

- Provide a scan of Association's use of technology and plans for moving forward
- Implementation of APA Workforce 2025
- Business technology and innovations
- Diversity implementation plan
- Cultural diversity
- Continuing movement on Good Governance recommendations
- Revisit organizational structure as necessary

#### **4. Prepare Psychology as a Discipline for the Future**

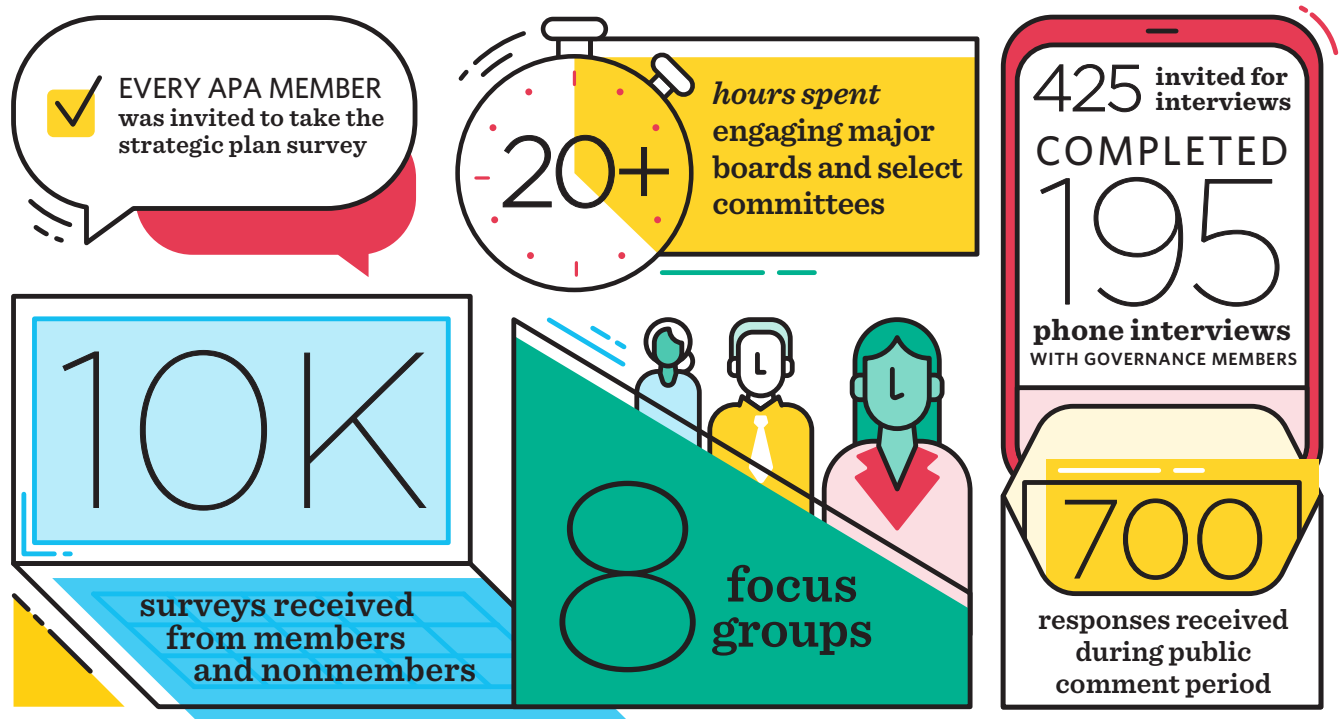
- Influence and shape the markets of the future in which psychologists can play a significant role
- Develop psychologists from high school through life-long learning to adapt and prepare for a continuously changing environment in which they need to work
- Prepare for and create new roles of the future for psychology and psychologists
- Leadership development
- Economic viability of the future workforce
- Cultural diversity

#### **5. Expand APA's Advocacy Capacity and Effectiveness**

- Development of a broader 501 C6 companion organization
- Plan for new budget model for APA and APAPO  
Focus on advocacy at the legislative and regulatory levels
- Maintain and develop strategic partnerships for advocacy and effectiveness
- Fundraising
- Ability for rapid response
- Ability to mobilize psychologists at the state level for non-practice issues
- Plan for new budget model for APA and APAPO

## APPENDIX B

### Key Points From the 2018 Strategic Plan Development Process



APA's 100th Anniversary Series: Strategic Plan & Strategic Planning

## APA Impact

Periodic updates on implementing the Strategic Plan



**NEW: Advancing APA's strategic priorities within a COVID-19 reality**  
By Sarah L. Shulman, PhD, and Arthur C. Evans, Jr., PhD  
April 24, 2020



**Strategic communications paving the way toward impact**  
By Arthur C. Evans, Jr., PhD  
Feb. 26, 2020



**2019 as a milestone**  
By Arthur C. Evans, Jr., PhD  
Dec. 12, 2019

## **APPENDIX C**

*APA/APASI Strategic Plan Adopted by Council in 2019*

*[apa.org/about/apa/strategic-plan/impact-apa-strategic-plan.pdf](http://apa.org/about/apa/strategic-plan/impact-apa-strategic-plan.pdf)*

# IMPACT

## **APA AND APA SERVICES, INC. STRATEGIC PLAN**

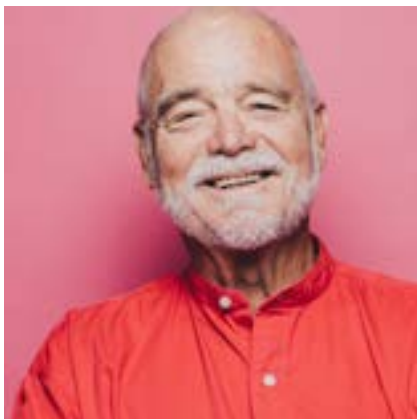


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I am very proud to be a psychologist. Most in psychology chose this field for the pursuit of knowledge and to make an impact, and I've seen firsthand how psychology affects practically every aspect of our society. We live in a world that is constantly changing, and psychology is at the heart of solving some of the world's most seemingly intractable problems. How will psychology impact the future? And how will the future impact psychology?

As the leading scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States, the American Psychological Association is positioning our field to play a leading role in addressing the grand challenges of today and the future. Approved by APA's Council of Representatives, this new strategic plan enables us to focus the association's efforts toward maximizing the impact we can have on complex issues facing the field of psychology and broader society.

The plan was built on a strong belief that a new vision for the association should be co-created. Our more than 118,000 members were invited to provide input into a transformative path forward that addresses the needs and interests of the different segments that make up the field. For example, applied psychologists expressed a need for outreach that helps people understand their contributions to a variety of settings. Educators and trainers cited the need to strengthen support for graduate education and diversify the psychology pipeline. Clinical practitioners voiced their needs related to reimbursement and scope of practice. Scientists highlighted their need for more research funding and effective channels for disseminating their findings. And many psychologists across work settings emphasized the need to apply psychological knowledge to address large societal challenges, like the opioid crisis.

I am immensely proud of the new strategic plan that our APA/APA Services, Inc. has co-created and believe that APA is positioned to have a truly significant impact in benefiting society and improving lives. Our implementation of the plan will be transformational for APA, with the association realigning itself and refocusing its work in concert with its companion organization and the new strategic priorities. Working together, we can ensure that psychology realizes its true potential as a force for a better world.



**Arthur C. Evans Jr., PhD**

Chief Executive Officer and Executive Vice President  
American Psychological Association and APA Services, Inc.



## VISION

*The change APA aspires to create in the world.*

**A strong, diverse, and unified psychology that enhances knowledge and improves the human condition.**

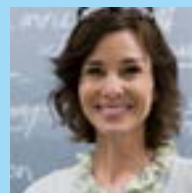


## **MISSION**

*APA's unique role in creating that change.*

**To promote the advancement,  
communication, and application  
of psychological science and  
knowledge to benefit society  
and improve lives.**





## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*The core values that must inform and infuse everything APA does. They apply equally across all areas of psychology including practice, basic and applied research, applied psychology, and education and training.*

- » **Build on a foundation of science.** Ensure that the best available psychological science informs policies, programs, products, and services.
- » **Advocate for psychology and psychologists.** Demonstrate an unwavering commitment to promoting the field while supporting and unifying those who make it their profession.
- » **Champion diversity and inclusion.** Further the understanding and appreciation of differences and be inclusive in everything we do.
- » **Respect and promote human rights.** Focus on human rights, fairness, and dignity for all segments of society.
- » **Engage with and deliver value to members.** Provide resources, opportunities, and networks that help all members at every stage of their careers.
- » **Lead by example.** Serve others, model integrity, and demonstrate the highest ethical standards in all our actions.

## OPERATING PRINCIPLES

*How all parts of APA will work together to execute the plan.*

- » **Make an impact.** Focus on efforts with the scale and scope to significantly advance the interests of the public, the field, and psychology professionals.
- » **Embrace a global perspective.** Advance psychology globally through international engagement, association efforts, and meaningful collaborations.
- » **Build a stronger association.** Collaborate across APA to align resources, decision-making, and the contributions of governance, advisory groups, staff, and the broader membership with the strategic plan.
- » **Increase organizational effectiveness.** Focus on the future, make data-informed decisions, invest in strategic priorities, create capacity for new initiatives, and emphasize outcomes.

# STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

*Goals are the high-level descriptions of what APA must achieve to be successful. To some degree, they are aspirational in that they are wide-ranging, complex, and ongoing. Objectives are more specific and address the component pieces of each goal.*

## Utilize psychology to make a positive impact on critical societal issues.

- Employ psychology to improve population health, increase access to services, and reduce disparities.
- Promote the application of psychological science to the development and adaptive use of new technologies that affect people's lives.
- Use psychology to improve the functioning of public and private institutions, organizations, systems, and communities.
- Increase the influence of psychology on policy decisions at the international, national, state, and local levels.
- Foster the advancement of human rights, fairness, diversity, and inclusion through the application of psychological science.

## Elevate the public's understanding of, regard for, and use of psychology.

- Expand the public's perception of psychology to accurately reflect the full breadth of the field.
- Influence educational systems to foster lifelong appreciation and application of psychology.
- Make psychological science accessible and understandable to the public and key decision makers.
- Distinguish psychology's unique contributions in health, health care, and human welfare.
- Become a go-to organization for the public regarding the quality and effectiveness of psychology-related products and services.

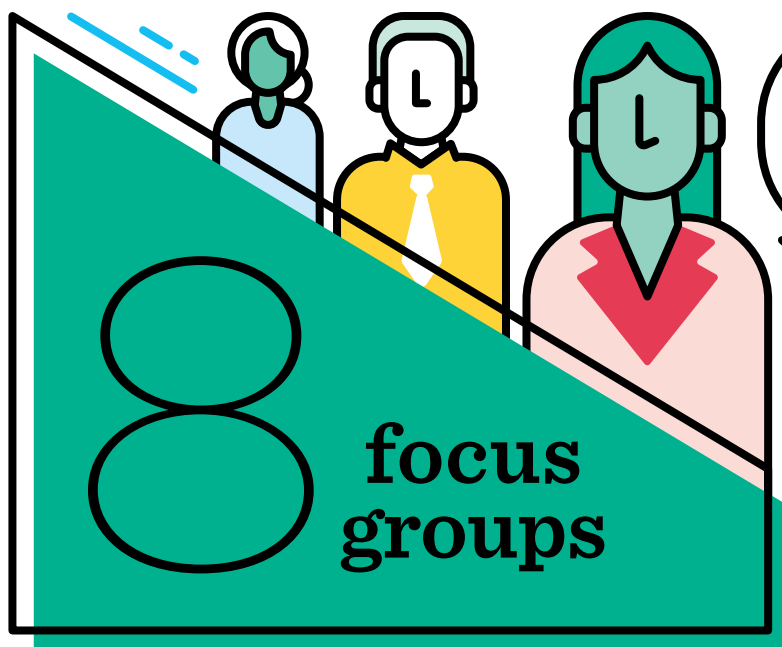
## **Prepare the discipline and profession of psychology for the future.**

- Attract, diversify, develop, and support the next generation of psychology professionals.
- Protect and increase funding for applied psychology, education, practice, basic, applied, and clinical research, and training.
- Facilitate greater alignment between the science and practice of psychology.
- Promote the adoption of new technologies and methodologies in psychology and guide their integration into the discipline and profession.
- Ensure that psychology functions as a hub of interdisciplinary collaboration.

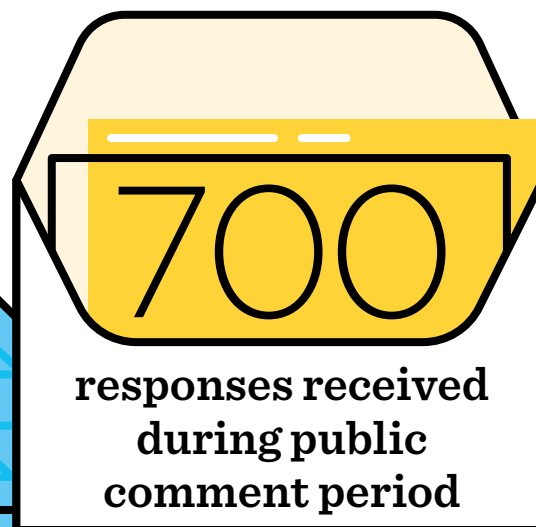
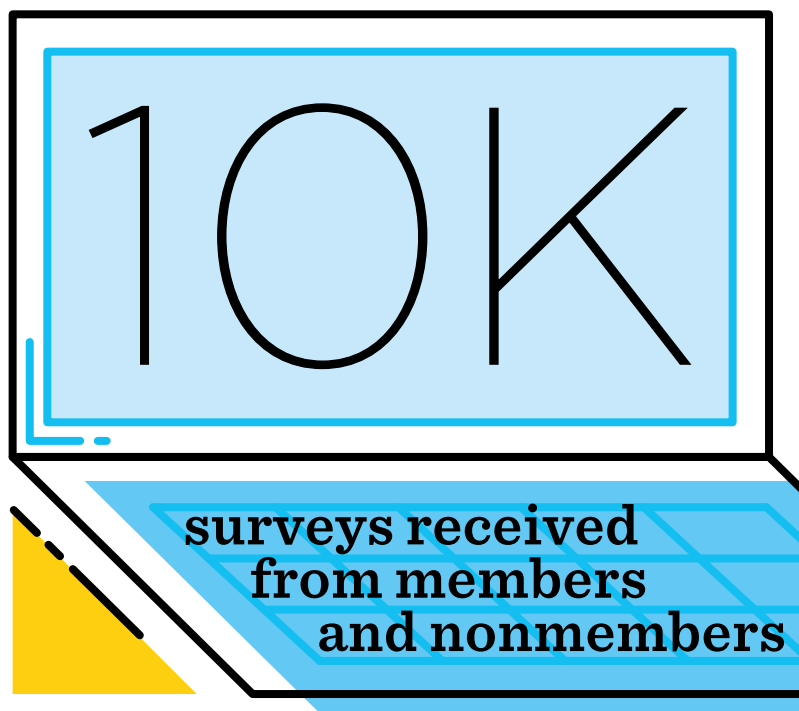
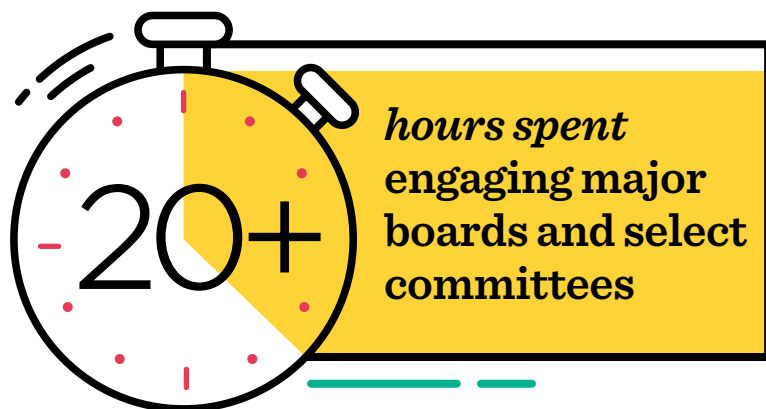
## **Strengthen APA's standing as an authoritative voice for psychology.**

- Expand APA's position as a premier provider of science, practice, education, and career resources for psychology.
- Establish, uphold, and embody the ethical standards for the profession and discipline nationally.
- Increase the impact of APA's legislative, regulatory, marketplace, and social welfare advocacy.
- Serve as a leading resource for standards and evidence-based guidelines for the field.





✓ EVERY APA MEMBER was invited to take the strategic plan survey



## DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

As an organization that represents the entire field of psychology, APA must focus on overarching issues that affect the discipline and profession and engage in activities that have broad impact.

APA's new strategic plan—only the second in the association's 126-year history—is a three-to-five-year blueprint that reflects the best thinking of its governance, members, collaborators, and staff on how to succeed in the current environment and thrive in the coming years.

It is intended to be a living document that is flexible and responsive to the emerging needs of society, as well as APA's diverse constituencies. Rather than being an endpoint, the plan is the first step in a process designed to ensure that APA becomes an even more relevant, effective, and sustainable voice for psychology.

From the outset, the development of APA's new strategic plan has been driven by the idea that, in order for the association to be successful, the plan itself must be co-created by its members and staff, with input from the broader psychological community. To achieve this dynamic, APA intentionally sought the input of every member of the association.

In practice, this meant that APA invited every member of Council and its Board of Directors, as well as all division presidents, board and committee chairs, APA past presidents, and presidents and executive directors of affiliated state, provincial, and territorial psychological associations to participate in phone interviews to discuss the key issues and opportunities facing the organization.

APA also conducted eight focus groups with APA/APA Services, Inc. members and non-members and conducted a survey completed by over 10,000 members and non-members. APA solicited staff input through focus groups, surveys, and town hall meetings.

In addition to gathering information from stakeholders, APA interviewed leaders of nonprofit and commercial organizations to glean insight into how these organizations handle a variety of issues ranging from strategic planning to diversity and inclusion. APA also analyzed trends across key areas including research funding, health policy, and emerging technologies, to better understand the environment the association will be operating in over the life of the plan.

Based on this feedback, APA developed draft versions of the strategic plan, which were shared with the APA/APA Services, Inc. Board of Directors, Board of Scientific Affairs, Board for the Advancement of Psychology in the Public Interest, Board of Educational Affairs, Board of Professional Affairs, Membership Board, Policy and Planning Board, Council Leadership Team and an ad-hoc advisory group made up of members from across the association. Feedback from these groups was also incorporated into the plan.

APA staff then presented the plan to members and governance groups, including the Council, through a series of webinars. Further adjustments were made to the plan to reflect their comments.

APA posted the plan for public comment from December 19, 2018, through January 19, 2019. APA received more than 700 responses, the clear majority of which supported the plan as written.

The plan was adopted by the APA Council of Representatives on February 15, 2019, with an overwhelming 96.3 percent supporting the motion. This vote marks the start of a new chapter in APA's history.

The implementation process of the plan will be transformative and comprehensive, with the association realigning itself and refocusing its work in concert with the new strategic priorities. During the implementation stage, APA will again seek input and feedback from APA members and stakeholders on defining the programs and activities the association undertakes, as well as concrete outcomes within each set of goals and objectives.



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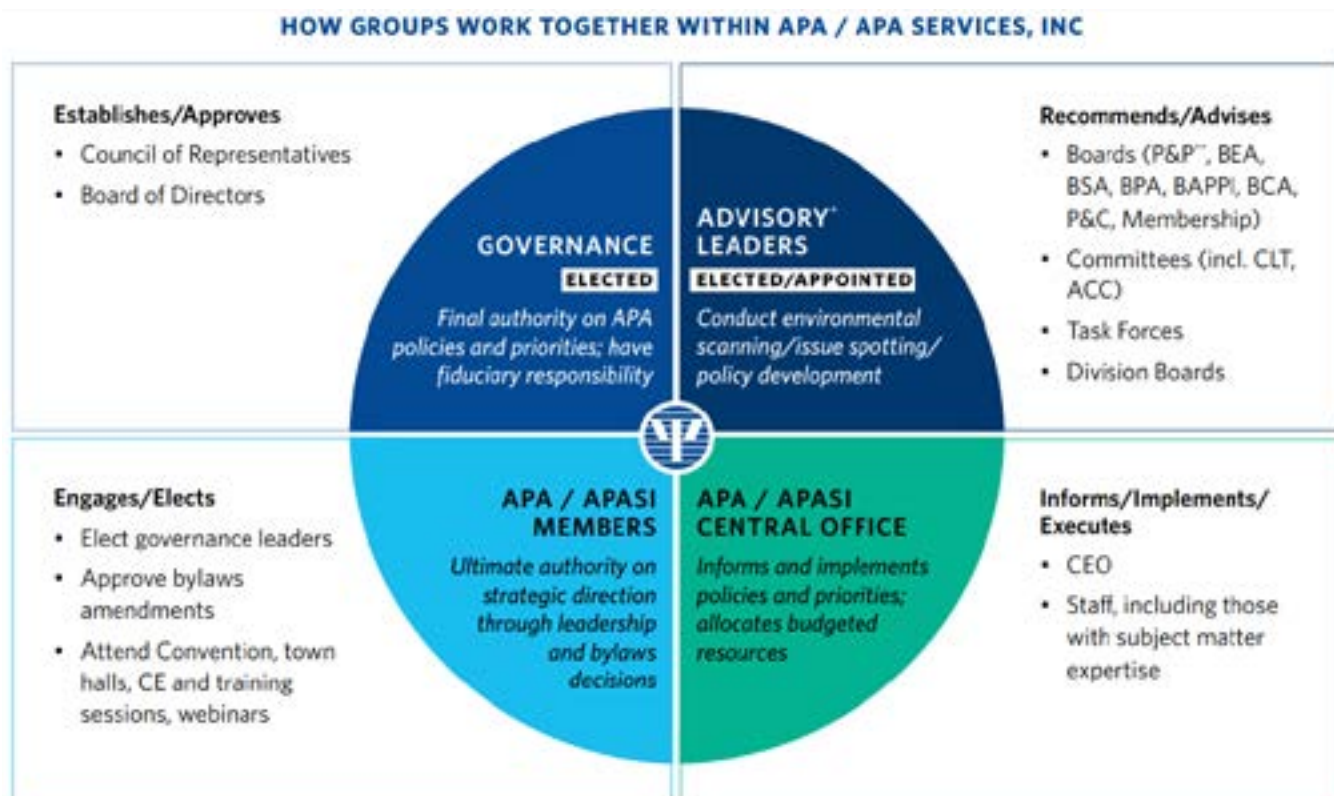
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## APPENDIX D

### How Groups Work Together Within APA/APA Services, Inc.



\*This chart does not address the regulatory authority of APA's educational accreditation body, the Commission on Accreditation.

\*\*One of the Association boards, the Policy and Planning Board, also has the unique authority to bring bylaws amendment recommendations to the membership.



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## APPENDIX E

*APA Racial Equity Action Plan*  
[apa.org/about/apa/addressing-racism/racial-equity-action-plan.pdf](https://www.apa.org/about/apa/addressing-racism/racial-equity-action-plan.pdf)

## PSYCHOLOGY'S ROLE IN DISMANTLING SYSTEMIC RACISM

# Racial Equity Action Plan



ACHIEVING  
RACIAL EQUITY

This report is being issued by the APA Board of Directors and  
Chief Executive Officer, Arthur C. Evans, PhD on July 15, 2022.

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Psychologists of color, students, and racial equity advocates who participated in the  
“Psychology’s Role in Dismantling Systemic Racism”—Think Tank and Virtual Summit  
including members of:

APA Divisions

APA Boards and Committees

APA Council of Representatives

Ethnic Psychological Associations

EDI Advisory Board to Council

**PSYCHOLOGY'S ROLE IN  
DISMANTLING SYSTEMIC RACISM**

**RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN**

In October 2021, the American Psychological Association issued a formal apology to communities of color for its role in promoting, perpetuating, and failing to challenge racism, racial discrimination, and human hierarchy in the United States. In the apology, APA acknowledged that the organization failed in its role leading the discipline of psychology, was complicit in contributing to systemic inequities, and hurt many through racism, racial discrimination, and denigration of people of color, thereby falling short on its mission to benefit society and improve lives. APA accepted responsibility for and owned the actions and inactions of APA itself, the discipline of psychology, and individual psychologists who stood as leaders for the organization and field.

At the direction of APA's Council of Representatives, APA's CEO offers this set of organizational priorities to Council for its consideration. This document details the strategic and collaborative processes APA underwent to develop these priorities, with the ultimate goal of advancing racial equity in the field of psychology and our broader society. If approved by Council, these priorities will guide this work going forward. Throughout this process, it has become clear that equity, diversity, and inclusion must live in the fabric of the organization in order to advance APA's mission. We are committed to that vision.



## BACKGROUND

### EDI Framework

In June 2018, APA began developing an **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Framework** to guide the association's future EDI planning, as well as the work of the Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). The creation of the EDI Framework consisted of multiple rounds of input from staff, elected and appointed leaders, and experts across the association's membership. The evolving EDI framework draws on APA's 2005 diversity policy, its 2007 diversity plans and reports, and best practices from the field of organizational EDI. APA's EDI framework reflects the view that equity, diversity, and inclusion are vital to the progress of our association, the field of psychology, and society. The Framework provides the foundation for the next phase of EDI strategic planning, including the development of a road map consistent of iterative goals and metrics. APA is committed to engaging in an inclusive and transparent process that systematically and comprehensively advances EDI, our strategic priorities, and the association's vision and mission.

### Definitional Resolution on Dismantling Systemic Racism

The first phase of EDI strategic planning is focused on dismantling systemic racism. In February 2021, APA's Council of Representatives adopted a resolution on **Harnessing Psychology to Combat Racism: Adopting a Uniform Definition and Understanding**. This definitional resolution on racism provided guidance to psychologists and APA to consider four levels of racism—internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural—in an effort to counter racism among individuals and across societal systems. The resolution also mandated that the APA “undertake an analysis of psychology's history, with the goal of understanding the harms that marginalized racial groups have experienced and the actions necessary to create a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive association, discipline, and society going forward.”

### Historical Chronology

APA sought a historical review of how psychology and APA have harmed people of color since the formal institutionalization of U.S. psychology in the late 1800s. The goal of the review was to document the long history of harms done to these communities, and to provide a resource that could inform APA's work on an apology.

### Apology and Commitment to Dismantling Racism

Building on this earlier resolution, and taking into account the documented historical harms, on October 29, 2021, the APA Council of Representatives passed a trio of resolutions focused on the dismantling of racism, including:

- **Apology for the Role of the American Psychological Association in Promoting, Perpetuating, and Failing to Challenge Racism, Discrimination, and Human Hierarchy in the United States** focuses on acknowledging and apologizing for the roles of psychology and APA in promoting, perpetuating, and failing to challenge racism, and for the harms that have been inflicted on communities of color as a result.
- **Psychology's Role in Dismantling Systemic Racism in the United States** delves more deeply into methods by which psychological science can be used to remedy harms in practice, education, criminal justice, training, and other domains.
- **Advancing Health Equity in Psychology** begins the targeted work in centering race/ethnicity and racism as the key drivers of health inequities and making recommendations for psychological science, education and training, practice, public policy, and legislative advocacy.

Together, these resolutions commit APA to continuing to work on dismantling racism and set forth long-term actions that the association will take to create real and sustainable structural change. This imminent work requires a collaborative approach to systematically examine, acknowledge, and chart an equitable path forward.

## Audit of Current Activities and Efforts

During the February 2022 Council meeting, APA released a comprehensive inventory of current EDI and racial equity efforts. The intent of the [Racial Equity Audit Report](https://on.apa.org/racial-equity-audit-report) was to better understand the association's ongoing equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives focused on dismantling institutional racism and advancing racial equity within APA, the field of psychology, and society. The audit also examined the racial and ethnic representation of elected and appointed leaders and APA staff. The inventory report documented activities across the association and identified areas to improve including:

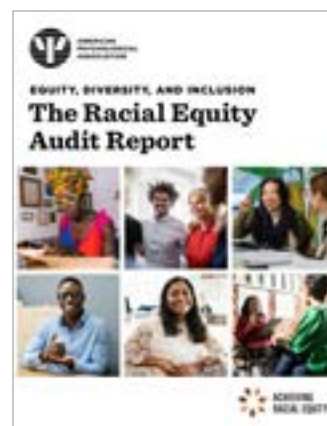
- **Enhancing coordination.**

APA-wide (boards, committees, divisions, and staff) is engaged in a wide array of racial equity activities, but the work lacks coordination.

- **Expanding representation.**

APA has an opportunity to enhance diversity and representation among staff, elected and appointed leaders, governance, and the psychology field.

The *Racial Equity Audit Report* serves as a baseline to help APA establish a path forward, and evaluate the progress necessary to demonstrate sustainable impact. The data gathered will help inform APA goals around expanding representation and determining priorities for the association's work on dismantling racism and advancing racial equity.



[on.apa.org/racial-equity-audit-report](https://on.apa.org/racial-equity-audit-report)



APA's ongoing work toward dismantling systemic racism continues to be informed by the components of an apology outlined in *The Warrior's Path Report*, including outlining (a) what was done, (b) an acknowledgement of the impact, and (c) what steps will be taken to ensure the behavior does not continue. The process of developing the Racial Equity Action Plan has been iterative, collaborative, and informed by the foundational documents referenced above.

# EDI Engagement to Build and Achieve Consensus on APA's Racial Equity Priorities

OVER **200** Leaders

Gain input on APA's approach and direction to dismantle systemic racism.

- ✓ EDI Experts
- ✓ Appointed and Elected leaders
- ✓ Executive Leadership Team
- ✓ Board of Directors
- ✓ EDI Advisory Board to Council
- ✓ Task Force for Strategies to Eradicate Racism, Discrimination and Hate



**500+** hours of meetings

*Meetings held between February and June 2022.*

Engagement allowed for the opportunity to discuss APA's commitment to advancing racial equity. Specific stakeholders within the association discussed coordination and alignment of current racial equity efforts.



## GAINING INTERNAL CONSENSUS

Agreement among apa's leadership, prior to broader engagement efforts.

## ENGAGING WITH EXPERTS

Sessions spurred creative thinking, discussion and reflection to help shape, define, and prioritize racial equity actions.

**36** Think Tank Participants

including:

- Students
- Psychologists of color
- Racial equity advocates



were assigned to **5** strategic work groups to help shape and define the racial equity actions

**171** Virtual Summit Participants

including:

- APA Divisions
- Boards and Committees
- State, provincial and territorial psychological associations (SPTAs)
- Council of Representatives
- APA Board of Directors
- Ethnic Psychological Associations



were assigned to **10** work groups to strengthen and begin to prioritize the racial equity actions

## OBTAINING ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

Opportunities for further refinement of racial equity actions.

**100**

survey responses

provided the opportunity to further refine the racial equity actions, assess level of agreement, and the likelihood that these actions will lead to institutional and structural change toward dismantling systemic racism



**150**

elected and appointed leaders

listening sessions and a town hall provided opportunities for further discussion and input before the August 2022 council meeting



## BUILDING AND ACHIEVING CONSENSUS ON STRATEGY

### Outlining Areas of Focus

In March 2022, APA began engaging in conversations to build consensus on the association's strategy for advancing racial equity, including to what extent APA's current efforts align with the priorities outlined in the Apology resolution. APA developed an initial outline consisting of areas of focus utilizing its strategic plan, the EDI Framework Guiding Principles, 'Therefore' statements from the October 2021 APA racism resolutions, and the Executive Summary of the Listening Sessions developed by Jernigan & Associates. Broad themes were identified to illuminate areas of redundancy.

### Guiding Conversations with Elected and Appointed Leaders, Psychologists of Color, and Racial Equity Advocates and Experts

The association initiated a series of discussions with APA elected and appointed leadership including the APA Council Leadership Team, Board of Directors, the Task Force for Strategies to Dismantle Racism, Discrimination, and Hate, and the EDI Advisory Board to Council to begin building consensus around the following points of consideration:

- **Do the focus areas begin to lead APA down a path where real structural and institutional change can be realized?**
- **Does APA have the capacity to effectively drive meaningful change in the proposed areas?**
- **How can we inspire unity throughout this process to ensure inclusivity for everyone?**

Simultaneously, the association engaged with racial equity advocates and experts, and psychologists of color across the field and APA member groups, including 14 boards and committees, 17 APA divisions, and 19 State, Provincial and Territorial Psychological Associations (SPTAs) between March and June 2022. The purpose of these discussions was to keep member groups abreast of APA's work toward developing a racial equity plan. It also allowed for the opportunity to discuss coordination and alignment of current racial equity efforts and to garner feedback on the association's proposed strategies to dismantle systemic racism.

### “Psychology’s Role in Dismantling Systemic Racism”—Think Tank and Virtual Summit

A group of interdisciplinary thought leaders and experts gathered in Washington, D.C., May 25 and 26, for a Think Tank aimed at curating an environment to spur creative thinking, discussion, and reflection to help define and prioritize APA's action steps to advance racial equity. This collaborative space focused on the discussion of psychology's role in dismantling systemic racism. The Think Tank engaged 36 experts, including students, psychologists, and racial equity advocates, in strategic workgroups focused on the five proposed domains of racial equity work. The efforts of the Think Tank participants led to a first draft of the racial equity priority actions intended to inform APA policy focused on repair, reconciliation, and healing for communities of color.

On June 6 and 7, APA then hosted a Virtual Summit to engage a wider group of stakeholders in critical conversations concerning the implementation of APA's goals to dismantle systemic racism. The Virtual Summit brought together more than 100 participants representing multiple constituencies across the association, including divisions, boards and committees, state, provincial, and territorial psychological associations, the APA Council of Representatives, APA Board of Directors, and ethnic psychological associations. Email invitations were extended to all participants through member listservs. Participants were randomly assigned to one of 10 working groups. There were two groups focused on each domain area (e.g., Knowledge Production, Health, Training of Psychologists, APA/Psychology Workforce, and Education). Participants engaged in the small groups for critical conversations focused on the perceived strengths and concerns of the proposed racial equity actions. These conversations led to feedback on the proposed racial equity priority actions that were derived from efforts of the Think Tank workgroup members. The suggested feedback from the Virtual Summit participants was reviewed and analyzed by the EDI Executive Office and resulted in revisions to the racial equity priority actions for further consideration by APA leadership.

## Gathering Input and Data for Further Refinement of Priority Actions

Following the Virtual Summit, participants were invited to complete a survey designed to assess their level of agreement with the proposed priority actions. Qualtrics, Provo, UT—an online data collection platform—was used to design and administer the survey. Participants were first asked to identify the domain area that was the focus of their small-group discussions (e.g., Knowledge Production, Health, Training of Psychologists, APA/Psychology Workforce, and Education). Then, participants rated the following on a five-point Likert scale:

- **Prior to this meeting, how would you rate your existing knowledge of the [domain] in general?**
- **How impactful do you think this planned work for the [domain] would be to advance racial equity?**
- **How likely is [priority action] to advance racial equity in [domain]?**

In addition, volunteers from each of the 10 virtual summit working groups (e.g., two groups designated for each domain area) transcribed qualitative data focused on the following:

- **Please list the overall strengths of the planned work that were discussed for the [domain] to advance racial equity.**
- **Please describe the concerns that were discussed for [priority action] in [domain].**

These data were used to further refine the racial equity priority actions. The association then sought feedback from the Think Tank participants as experts and advocates in the proposed domains of racial equity work. The goal was to ensure that the revised priority actions maintained the integrity of those developed in the Think Tank work groups, while also addressing the reported concerns of APA members. Again, utilizing Qualtrics, Provo, UT, the Think Tank participants were first asked to identify the domain area that was the focus of their small-group work. Then, they were invited to rate the following on a five-point Likert scale:

- **Is the revised [priority action] better or worse than the previous one?**

Participants were given the opportunity to provide specific recommendations for improving the revised priority actions. Using the data, final revisions to the racial equity priority actions were made.

## SURVEYS

*Feedback sought from all participants from both the Think Tank and Virtual Summit:*



### EXPERTISE SOUGHT ON

- Knowledge Production
- Health
- APA/Psychology Workforce
- Training of Psychologists
- Education

### PARTICIPANTS RATED THE FOLLOWING

- Existing knowledge of domain areas
- Potential to bring about structural change
- Likelihood to advance racial equity

*Follow-up survey sent to Think Tank participants to elicit feedback on revised actions:*

### PARTICIPANTS RATED THE FOLLOWING

- Agreement with revised actions

## Council Listening Sessions and Town Hall

To provide opportunities for further discussion, input, and to share in collaborative thinking, the association offered a series of listening sessions designed to cultivate a collaborative space for engagement with elected and appointed leaders, who have demonstrated a commitment to embracing EDI principles and advancing racial equity. The listening sessions intended to offer space for participants to freely share feedback, to be heard by APA's leadership, and to build consensus around the proposed language for the association-wide racial equity priorities. Each of the four designated listening sessions was facilitated by a member of APA's leadership team.

<b>JUNE 14</b> 12:00 pm–1:00 pm EST	<b>Dr. Frank C. Worrell</b> APA President
<b>JUNE 14</b> 7:00 pm–8:00 pm EST	<b>Dr. Jennifer F. Kelly</b> APA Past President
<b>JUNE 22</b> 12:00 pm–1:00 pm EST	<b>Dr. Thema S. Bryant</b> APA President-Elect
<b>JUNE 28</b> 6:00 pm–7:00 pm EST	<b>Dr. Arthur C. Evans, Jr.</b> APA Chief Executive Office/Executive Vice President

## CONTENT DOMAINS AND PRIORITY ACTIONS

*From all of these various inputs and feedback, five key domains emerged. These domains provide a framework to guide the association's work going forward. They represent not just priorities, but pillars of a new way of operating—not only for the association, but ideally for the field of psychology.*



**Knowledge Production**



**Health**



**APA/Workforce**



**Training of Psychologists**



**Education**



### **EDI MISSION STATEMENT**

**To advance EDI through psychological science that champions thought leadership, innovation and excellence.**





## Knowledge Production

*Integrate the use of equitable and inclusive approaches to advance racially-conscious knowledge production and scholarship.*

### Priority Actions

- Elevate the discipline's understanding of, and regard for epistemic diversity and affirm that the body of psychological science centers the experiences of people of color and empirical work that aims to broaden our epistemology by evaluating diverse approaches such as indigenous knowledge, research, and a range of methodologies conducted across the epistemological continuum.
- Ensure equitable representation of scholars of color in scientific and scholarly leadership positions including, but not limited to, peer review panels and editorial boards.
- Redesign traditional methodologies used to conduct, review, communicate, disseminate, and report psychological research to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion, including expanding ways that the psychology community documents scientific, scholarly, and social impact.



**Social Impact and Innovation:** Influence the profession to center racially-conscious community-engaged scholarship and promote research that utilizes innovative, culturally-informed methodologies (e.g., indigenous healing, eastern medicine, faith-based practices)



## Health

*Utilize the full breadth of the field of psychology to promote, contribute, and advance health equity in communities of color.*

### Priority Actions

- Disseminate and promote the use of race-conscious, trauma informed mental health information with community stakeholders including, but not limited to frontline workers, grassroots community organizations, and advocates.
- Advocate with federal research funding agencies (e.g., NIH, NSF, HRSA, PCORI) and private foundations for dedicated, sustained, and increased funding for research on community-driven holistic, whole person care.
- Influence curriculum development to incorporate qualitative, participatory, and socially engaged research, concepts of liberation psychology, systemic racism, and population health into the psychology curriculum across all levels of training.
- Promote education and training to improve literacy, knowledge, and awareness of systemic racism among healthcare professionals, as well as their responsiveness to structural racism.
- Elevate the value of community-engagement by cultivating partnerships and coalitions with community-based organizations, professional organizations, and policymaking organizations to address health inequities in communities of color.



**Social Impact and Innovation:** Support the development and expansion of models for integrating racially conscious psychological practice in communities of color.



## APA/Workforce

*Efforts that promote an equitable, diverse, and inclusive work environment within APA staff, the association at-large, and the broader psychology workforce, and serve as an exemplar for using EDI principles as foundational to fostering psychologically healthy workplaces.*

### Priority Actions

- Model a culture and climate of psychological safety and belongingness throughout APA to fully include and support people of color at all levels of the organization.
- Increase collaboration and encourage connectedness within APA and among its membership to promote allyship and engage in organizational culture shifts that fully support people of color at all levels of the organization.
- Increase representation of people of color at all levels of APA and the psychology workforce and advocate for support structures, mentorship, professional development, and retention and recruitment of psychologists of color in leadership positions.
- Improve the psychology workforce talent pool by advocating for inclusive recruitment, hiring, pay equity, and promotion practices that attract, retain, and advance racially and ethnically diverse people.
- Generate and disseminate scientific knowledge based on the psychology of human behavior to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace and across sectors and settings in society.



**Social Impact and Innovation:** Promote the development and adoption of innovative technologies and qualitative and quantitative methods to systematically evaluate the status of equity, diversity, and inclusion and continued progress and growth toward healthy workplaces.



## Training of Psychologists

*Efforts that promote racially conscious and equitable training in order to open pathways for students of color to successfully pursue careers in psychology.*

### Priority Actions

- Implement efforts that mitigate barriers to the entry and completion of graduate training programs, improve psychology graduate education and training to include diverse, non-Western cultural perspectives, and enhance the visibility of psychologists of diverse backgrounds.
- Reimagine graduate training curriculum to promote epistemological justice by centering diverse, non-Western cultural perspectives in U.S. based training programs.
- Use psychological science to develop racial equity practices for entry and completion of training requirements (admissions, degree requirement, and continuing education) to support a successful transition into the field of psychology for students of color and expand the pathway for recruitment and retention.
- Advocate for greater investment and funding of psychologists from racially minoritized communities to increase pathways to the profession.



**Social Impact and Innovation:** Cultivate psychological safety and accountability in training programs by creating approaches to develop and regularly evaluate the culture and climate for equity and inclusion.





## Education

*Efforts that work to address racial inequities within education environments, [including early childhood development, K-12 schools, and undergraduate and graduate programs].*

### Priority Actions

- Utilize APA's role in the field and its resources to promote racial equity in educational institutions.
- Encourage and endorse the teaching of the history of racism in the U.S. to prepare all preschool to higher education students to think critically about identity, community, and civics.
- Advocate for psychologically safe and inclusive educational environments through the development of resources and policies for educators designed to raise awareness about all aspects of privilege and mitigate biases that negatively affect learning and development among students of color.
- Partner with key stakeholders, inclusive of communities of color, and education to advocate for policies that foster equity for students of color across learning environments in an effort to close the opportunity gap.
- Promote equitable reviews of applicants in higher education institutions that balance soft skills in addition to technical skills inclusive of psychology.



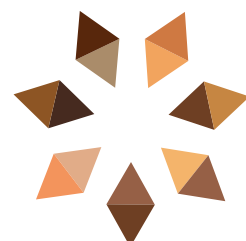
**Social Impact and Innovation:** Foster a healthier school climate and culture through the promotion of resources that address equity and holistic well-being, including intervention and assessment services aimed at improving the success rates of students of color.

## **NEXT STEPS**

These five content domains—developed collectively by elected and appointed leaders across the association, subject-matter experts, and key stakeholders—provide a set of aspirational ideals to guide APA’s racial equity work. To be successful, APA must be both methodical and planful as well as adaptable and responsive to the realities of the world around us. This includes continuing to build consensus among the broader APA membership, determining APA and psychology’s unique contributions to these domains, and developing organizational infrastructure and processes to sustain this work over the long term.

The issues before us are longstanding and complex. APA comes to these issues with a brain trust of passionate and committed individuals, a broad wealth of psychological knowledge, and a long-term organizational commitment to move this work forward. Taken together, these facets will enable APA to advance our collective goal of achieving racial equity, improving not only the lives of communities of color, but our broader society.







**AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION**

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[on.apa.org/addressing-racism](https://on.apa.org/addressing-racism)



**ACHIEVING  
RACIAL EQUITY**

## **APPENDIX F**

### *Partial List of APA Partnerships (Engagement Between 2019–2023)*

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)  
American City Business Journals  
American Public Health Association (APHA)  
Aspen Institute  
Born This Way Foundation  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
Civic Alliance  
EcoAmerica  
Health Action Alliance  
Inteleos  
International City/County Managers Association (ICMA)  
International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership (IIMHL)  
National Association for State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)  
National Football League Players Association (NFLPA)  
National League of Cities (NLC)  
National Parent Teacher Association (PTA)  
National Volunteer Fire Council  
Primary Care Collaborative (PCC)  
Psych Hub  
Research!America  
Sesame Workshop  
Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)  
The Atlantic  
The Conference Board  
The Kennedy Forum  
U.S. Surgeon General  
ViacomCBS/MTV  
YMCA of America

## APPENDIX G

### *Partial List of Advocacy Coalitions in Which APA/APA Services Inc. Is Represented*

American Assoc. of Publishers/Open Access Coalition	Defend DACA Coalition
Act 4 Juvenile Justice	Defense Health Research Consortium
Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research Funding	Education Big Table
American Brain Coalition	Elder Justice Coalition
American Council on Education Friday Group	Eldercare Workforce Alliance
American Indian/Alaska Natives Health Partners	Family Planning Coalition
APA Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health Workgroup	Federal AIDS Policy Partnership
APA Immigration Workgroup	Federation of Assocs. in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Minority Fellowship Program Workgroup	Federation of Assocs. of Schools of the Health Professions
Behavioral Health Information Technology Coalition	Firearm Data Infrastructure Workgroup
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids	Friends of HRSA
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coalition	Friends of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Child Trauma and ACEs Policy Working Group	Friends of the Institute of Education Sciences
Children and Adolescent Mental Health Coalition	Friends of the National Center for Health Statistics
Children's Health Group	Friends of the National Health Service Corps
Climate Science Working Group	Friends of the National Institute of Child Health & Human Development
Coalition for Health Funding	Friends of the National Institute on Aging
Coalition for Whole Health	Friends of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
Coalition for National Science Funding	Friends of the National Institute on Drug Abuse
Coalition for National Security Research	Friends of the National Institute of Mental Health
Coalition for Patients' Rights	Friends of the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research
Coalition on Human Needs	Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA)
Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness	Giffords Gun Violence Health Associations Working Group
Coalition to Promote Research	GVP Research Roundtable Meeting
Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose	Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition
Committee for Education Funding	Healthy Air Partners coalition
Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities	
Consortium of Social Science Associations	
Criminal Justice Workgroup (NCJA-led)	

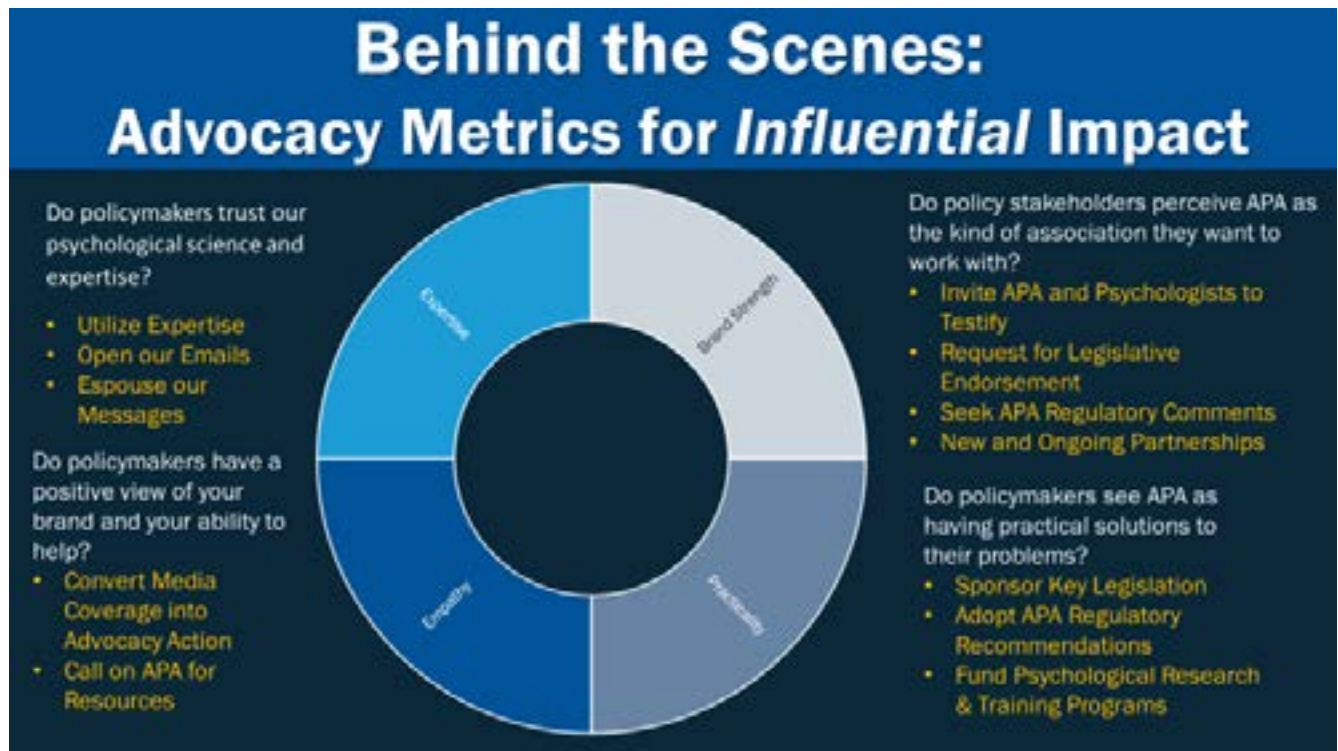
*Partial List of Advocacy Coalitions in Which APA/APA Services Inc. Is Represented*

Higher Education Mental Health Alliance  
Homework Gap Coalition  
Injury and Violence Prevention Network  
Medicaid in Schools  
Medical Expense Deduction Coalition  
Mental Health Liaison Group  
Mental Health Workforce Coalition  
National Alliance of Specialized  
Instructional Support Personnel  
National Association for Biomedical Research  
National Child Abuse Coalition  
National Coalition for LGBT Health  
National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging  
National Education Association Immigration Coalition  
National Violence Prevention Network  
National Work and Family Coalition  
Obesity Action Coalition  
Patient Access to Responsible Care Alliance (PARCA)  
Primary Care Collaborative  
Public Affairs Council  
Public Service Loan Forgiveness Coalition  
Research!America  
Student Aid Alliance  
Student Debt Big Table  
Title IV-A Coalition  
Title IX Rapid Response (NWLC-led)

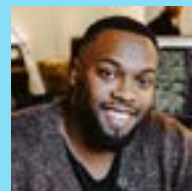


## APPENDIX H

### *Examples of Qualitative Metrics to Assess Influential Advocacy Impact*









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