



U.S. Air Force Rated Diversity Improvement Strategy

March 2021

Today’s Air Force presents the most capable and lethal airpower in world history, but air superiority is not our birthright. We must increase efforts in outreach programs, recruiting, training, and retention to develop a diverse Air Force which capitalizes on our nation’s strengths to meet the challenges of tomorrow. The United States has not faced an existential national security threat from another great power for many years, and it is essential we continue to build an Air Force to maintain our competitive advantage.

The 2018 National Defense Strategy indicates we “are emerging from a period of atrophy, aware that our competitive military advantage has been eroding.” Maintaining our strategic advantage in joint, all-domain operations requires the agility of a diverse workforce to tackle challenges from different perspectives.

“We must place value in multi-capable and adaptable team builders, and courageous problem solvers that demonstrate value in diversity of thought, ingenuity, and initiative.”
– General Charles Q. Brown, Jr.,
Chief of Staff of the Air Force

A diverse workforce is particularly important in our rated community, where we need strategically-minded, complex problem-solvers who can thrive in dynamic operating environments. Diversity within our service is a warfighting imperative which increases our ability to find creative solutions.

We have a distinguished heritage built by highly skilled and dedicated Airmen soaring to new heights, breaking barriers, and leading airpower dominance. We are the Tuskegee Airmen. We are the Women Airforce Service Pilots. Diversity is in our blood and we must continue to strive for an inclusive Air Force reflective of the rights we all swear to defend. When we leverage our diversity, it enhances our ability to effectively “Fly, Fight, and Win.”

Diversity and inclusion enriches the wealth of ideas the Air Force draws upon and is a force multiplier. This Strategy provides a clear flight plan for our Rated Diversity Improvement efforts and the initiatives specifically designed to meet this challenge.



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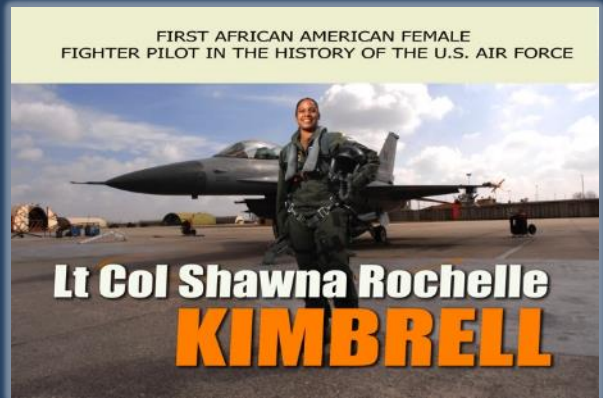
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The 2018 National Defense Strategy directs the Department of Defense to build a more lethal force; this requires each Service to recruit, develop, and retain a high-quality, diverse workforce. Our leaders must “out-think, out-maneuver, out-partner, and out-innovate” any potential threat actors. Today’s complex global challenges require leaders who can deliver creative solutions by leveraging a diversity of talent that cultivates creativity and innovation. The U.S. Air Force has proven its ability to recruit and retain the best of America’s diverse talent pool, and it will continue to strengthen that ability.

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-7001, *Diversity & Inclusion*, broadly defines diversity as “a composite of individual characteristics, experiences, and abilities consistent with the Air Force Core Values and the Air Force Mission. Air Force diversity includes, but is not limited to: personal life experiences, geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds, cultural knowledge, educational background, work experience, language abilities, physical abilities, philosophical and spiritual perspectives, age, race, ethnicity, and gender.” The Air Force increases its warfighting capabilities and lethality by attracting talent from a diverse body of applicants and leveraging their unique characteristics, experiences, and abilities.


Harnessing a new generation of diverse talent is accomplished by the deliberate incorporation of skilled individuals from all segments of society. The inclusion of these high-performing and brilliant people enables us to exploit our adversaries’ vulnerabilities in an increasingly complex battlespace.



INCLUSION DEFINED:

“The process of creating a culture where all members of an organization are free to make their fullest contributions to the success of the group, and where there are no unnecessary barriers to success.” -- AFI 36-7001





FIELD A ROBUST AND
INNOVATIVE RATED OFFICER
CORPS WITH DIVERSE
BACKGROUNDS THAT CAN SOLVE
TOMORROW'S GLOBAL
CHALLENGES BY PROVIDING
COMBAT AIR LETHALITY WITH
AGILITY AND RESOLVE.

The Rated Diversity Improvement Strategy is the Air Force’s flight plan to strengthen diversity within the rated career fields, through three overarching goals:

G1

Attract and recruit the best talent from diverse backgrounds to cultivate a high performing and innovative Air Force reflective of the best of our nation.

G2

Develop and retain the Air Force’s best rated aircrew by harnessing diversity as a force multiplier and fostering a culture of inclusion.

G3

Optimize diversity advancement efforts by leveraging data driven approaches.

OUTCOME: An agile and diverse workforce that approaches challenges from varying perspectives resulting in a more lethal Air Force to retain our competitive advantage.

STRATEGY: Synchronize Air Force messaging and strategic communication to intentionally create an environment and conditions favorable to the advancement of all rated diversity initiatives. These initiatives are collaborative, deliberate, and focused, cooperating with the Total Force recruiting enterprise, aerial demonstration teams, affinity groups, and other community organizations to cultivate youth engagement. All efforts are targeted to increase awareness of aviation careers in various underrepresented segments, broaden our community outreach to attract diverse candidates, and strengthen our internal support infrastructure. Consistent with Federal law and AFI 36-7001, no numerical goals are set for accession or promotion on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or sexual orientation; nor will race, color, national origin, religion, sex or sexual orientation be a basis for admission to any training or development program.



GOAL 1: Attract and recruit the best talent from diverse backgrounds to cultivate a high performing and innovative Air Force reflective of the best of our nation.

OBJECTIVE 1.1: ATTRACT TALENTED AND DIVERSE YOUTH



STRATEGY: Increase awareness of rated careers with a compelling and multi-layered outreach and messaging campaign designed to inform, influence, and inspire youth from underrepresented populations and their community influencers (family, educators, and aerospace).

ENGAGEMENT: Build upon existing Air Force Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (AFJROTC) and Civil Air Patrol programs and networks and forge new relationships with organizations serving youth from underrepresented groups (URG) to promote awareness and interest in Air Force rated career fields. Effectively use social media and marketing platforms to promote awareness of aviation careers and flying opportunities amongst diverse populations. RDI organizations executed 74 outreach events in FY19 and 75 outreach events in FY20. AFJROTC Flight Academy had 120 slots available in FY18.

METRIC: Increased number of URG youth events and engagements 300% by FY25. Increase the number of AFJROTC Flight Academy slots to 500 by FY23. Increase attendance of unaffiliated youth at AFJROTC Flight Academy to 25% by FY23.

Status	Initiative Description
Action	Generate a list of established networks and identify unaffiliated affinity and youth organizations throughout selected areas of the US
Action	Expand rated diversity strategic messaging and marketing campaign focused on attracting diverse candidates

OBJECTIVE 1.2: RECRUIT DIVERSE AND TALENTED CANDIDATES

STRATEGY: Support outreach and recruitment programs to maximize the ability to recruit a broad spectrum of applicants from various untapped geographic regions and academic sources. Expand recruitment at educational institutions with large minority populations and affinity-based professional organizations to attract talented candidates. Network with science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) groups in underrepresented minority areas to provide exposure to Air Force rated careers. Create more accessible pathways into rated careers and deliver mentorship programs to inspire, engage, and recruit a diverse pool of candidates.

ENGAGEMENT: Network and attend career fairs at Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) to attract URGs to include: Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU), American Indian Alaska Native Serving Institutions (AIANSI), and eligible Asian American and Native American Pacific Islanders Serving Institutions (AANAPISI). As of July 2020, there are 774 listed MSIs.

METRIC: Increased number of engagements at colleges and universities serving higher population of URGs 30% annually through FY25. Conduct a Senior Leader led visit to every MSI by FY25.

Status	Initiative Description
Action	Identify and develop new strategic relationships with STEAM organizations serving URGs
Action	Establish long-term and recurring engagements with MSIs



GOAL 2: Develop and retain the Air Force’s best rated aircrew by harnessing diversity as a force multiplier and fostering a culture of inclusion.

OBJECTIVE 2.1: DEVELOP RATED CANDIDATES

STRATEGY: Focus on mentorship and development of minority and female candidates in preparation for accessions and the training pipeline. Synchronize mentorship programs across accession sources, flying training sites, and organizations which engage diverse populations.

ENGAGEMENT: Increase opportunities for minorities and females pursuing rated careers from the Undergraduate Flying Training (UFT) Board and the three commissioning sources: Air Force Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (AFROTC), U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA), and Officer Training School (OTS). Establish a mentorship program with rated officers targeting, but not restricted to URGs, to support candidates preparing admissions packages for rated programs.

METRIC: Increased number of minority and female applicants to better reflect the demographics of the eligible, qualified American population by FY25.

Status	Initiative Description
Action	Increase awareness of pathways to accessions and rated career fields
Action	Create a mentorship program targeted to minority and female rated applicants



OBJECTIVE 2.2: RETAIN A DIVERSE RATED FORCE

STRATEGY: Retain a diverse rated force by reinforcing a culture of inclusion.

Intentionally improve the flight training experience for students by addressing barriers and hindrances to cohesion among students and instructors. Appropriately accommodate the unique perspectives and needs of candidates to ensure mission readiness throughout an Air Force career.

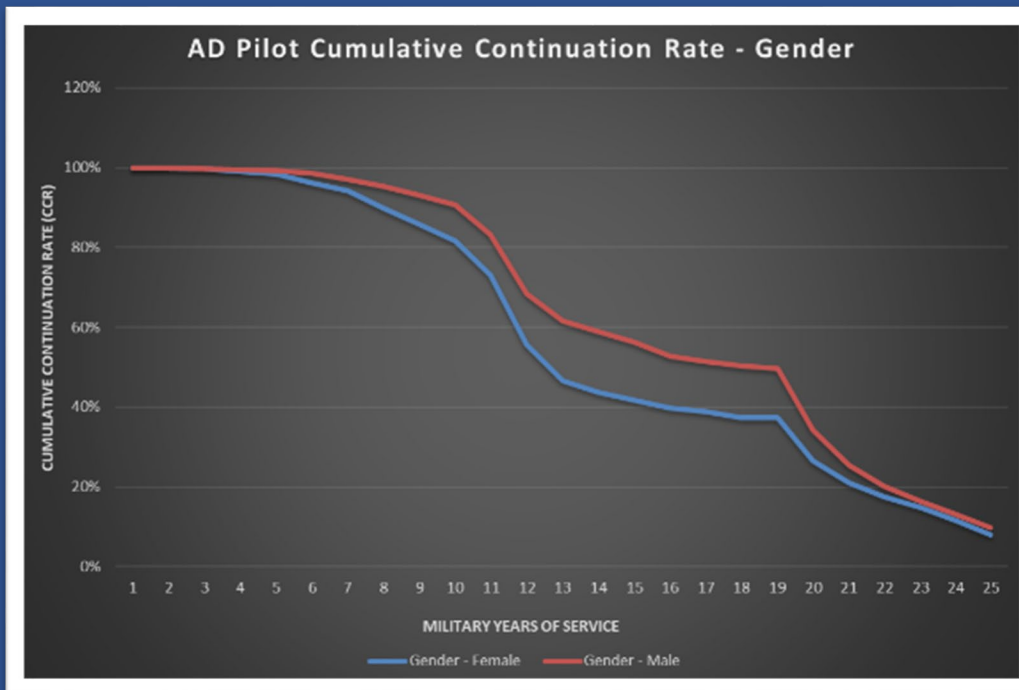
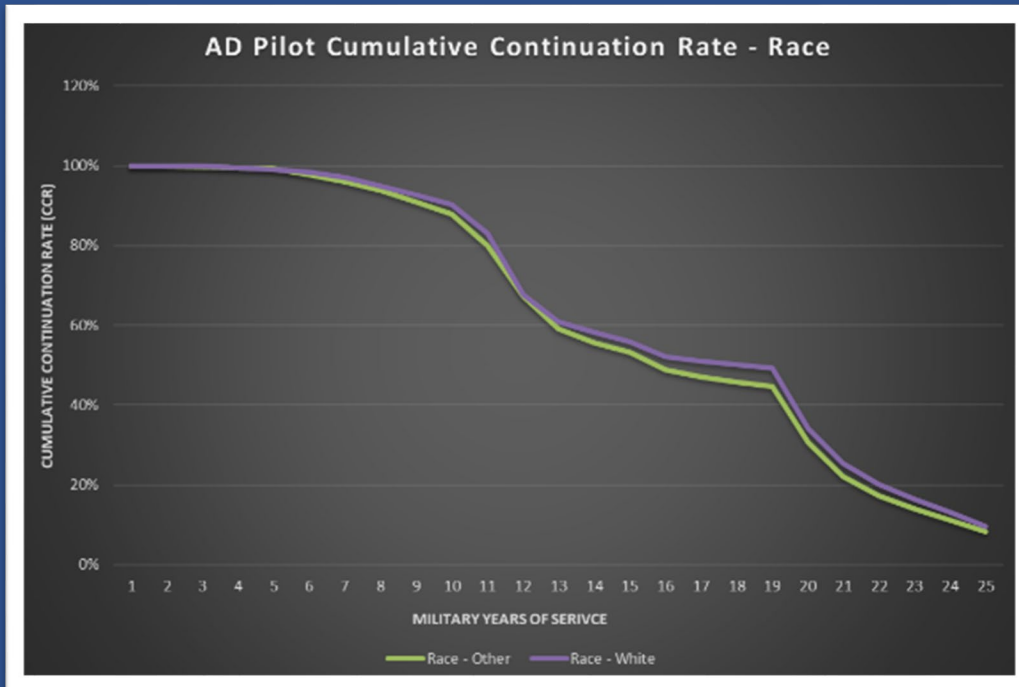


ENGAGEMENT: Allow assignment flexibility to help promote programs providing continued service and mentorship for minority and female rated officers. Encourage Senior Leaders to support rated officer participation in affinity group and professional events to promote career-broadening and networking. Develop and implement strategic coaching and mentoring programs across continuum of service.

METRIC: Raise and maintain cumulative continuation rate of minority and female rated officers remaining in the USAF beyond the end of initial rated commitment to within 2% of white males by FY30.

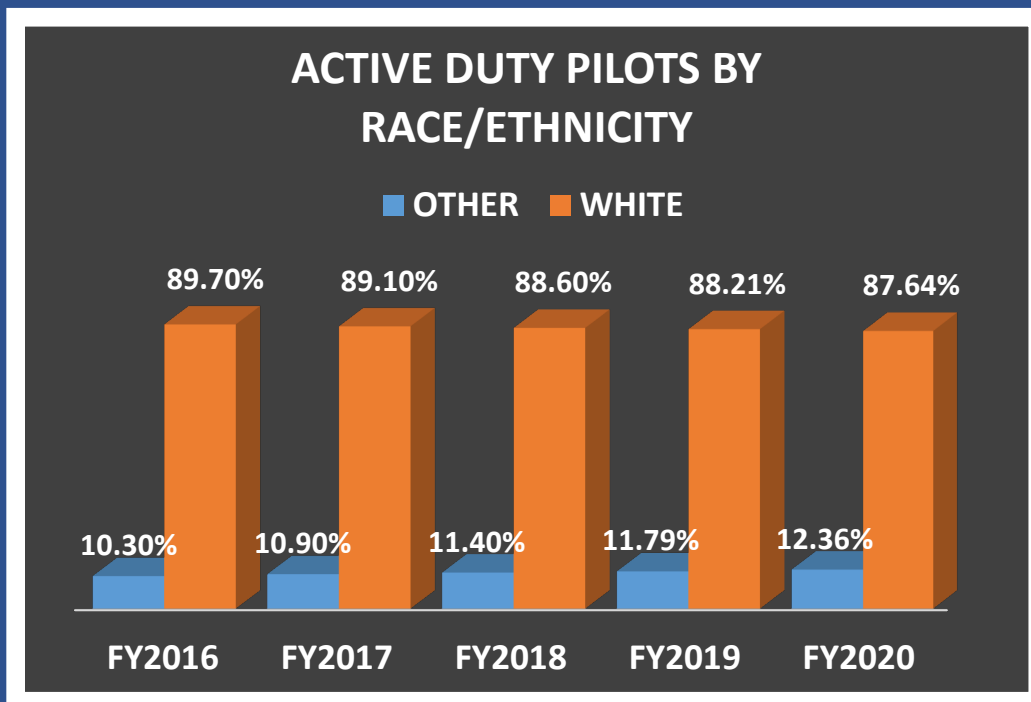
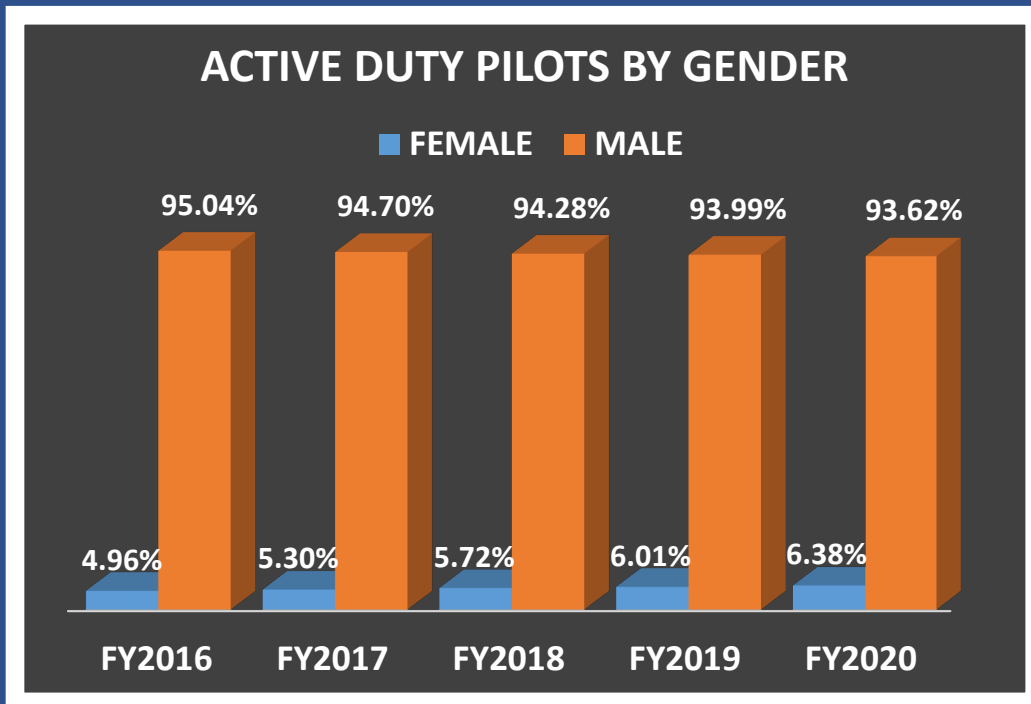
Status	Initiative Description
Action	Ensure diverse rated officers are actively highlighted when examining potential barriers to their success and establishing a culture of inclusion
Action	Partner with the Air Force Barrier Analysis Working Groups (AFBAWG) to remove rated minority and female aircrew integration and retention barriers

Active Duty Pilot Cumulative Continuation Rate (CCR) by Race and Gender



Military Years of Service (MYOS) is based on the Total Active Federal Military Service Date. CCR is the percentage of the starting population that, based on historical retention behavior, are expected to reach each MYOS. Source: Air Force Personnel Center, June 22, 2020

Active Duty Pilot Demographics



Source: Air Force Personnel Center, October 29, 2020

*OTHER in Race/Ethnicity includes declined to respond

GOAL 3: Optimize diversity advancement efforts by leveraging data driven approaches.

OBJECTIVE 3: Establish Data Driven Approaches.

STRATEGY: Integrate comprehensive and measurable data driven approaches to provide senior leaders with accurate and relevant diversity and inclusion data for the rated officer corps. Use qualitative analysis to develop program initiatives to improve minority and female inclusion from initial engagement and recruitment through retention. Use data decision support program initiatives to craft a roadmap and drive both immediate progress and sustained impact.

ENGAGEMENT: Establish measurable goals within each separate initiative and leverage data analytics to drive decision making. Streamline, structure, and prioritize existing efforts to enhance diversity and inclusion across rated officer career fields. Gather program specific details on failed efforts from past initiatives to better vector toward future success.

Metric: Create a consolidated database by FY22 to track the demographics of rated candidates across all selection methods from entry in the rated candidate selection process through retirement. Publish a quarterly report of rated candidate demographics that presents current RDI metrics, along with recommended updates to diversity initiatives.

Status	Initiative Description
Action	Define clear and specific measurable objectives within each program effort
Action	Create a standardized process to use when capturing data on individual initiatives
Action	Analyze current program efforts to streamline or restructure according to new rated diversity and inclusion program priorities

Air Education and Training Command (AETC) is the lead for Rated Diversity Improvement. The AETC Commander (AETC/CC) champions the Rated Diversity Improvement Strategy and is responsible for integrating, synchronizing, and ensuring implementation of this strategy across the Air Force. The AETC/CC will provide periodic updates to the SecAF and CSAF ensuring top level focus and oversight.

Action Officers (AO) will conduct monthly synchronization meetings and provide quarterly progress updates to Senior Leaders. The Rated Diversity Quarterly Synchronization Meeting is a General Officer (GO) level forum chaired by the AETC/CD. The Quarterly Synchronization Meeting shares its progress at the Air Force Diversity & Inclusion Council (established by AFI 36-7001), at the Aircrew Summit, and at other venues as directed. The Rated Diversity Monthly Goal Synchronization Meeting is an AO forum chaired by an AETC O-6/GS-15 to monitor progress, integrate initiatives, and elevate issues as necessary. AOs, goal leads, as well as all Initiative Offices of Primary Responsibility (OPRs) will attend.

Funding for Rated Diversity Improvement began in FY19 with \$5.5 million followed by \$12.1 million in FY20. In the FY21 Program Objective Memorandum, RDI was programmed at \$18 million annually through FY25 (\$91 million across the Future Years Defense Program). AETC will provide fiscal oversight for the sustainment and improvement of the overall program and will seek any additional funding through the normal AETC and Air Force corporate processes. Finally, AETC will monitor and report return on investment for all current and future Rated Diversity Improvement Programs.

U.S. Air Force Rated Diversity Improvement

While the U.S. Air Force is the most capable and lethal airpower in the world, there is still opportunity to improve the diversity amongst the rated corps. An imperative exists to grow a more robust rated force to face the challenges articulated in the National Defense Strategy. The Air Force's Rated Diversity Improvement Strategy requires actions to innovate the ways we recruit and develop aviation talent by adopting data driven approaches aimed at attracting diversity in every possible way. Additional actions must deliberately engage our current and future diverse Airmen, while collaborating with agencies both inside and outside the Air Force to demonstrate the Air Force's emphasis on diversity as a warfighting imperative.

This strategy establishes a flight plan for attracting, accessing, and retaining diverse and talented Airmen to strengthen the incredible rated aviation corps that exists today. In doing so, the Air Force builds more innovative, adaptive, and effective leaders with varied backgrounds, perspectives, and capabilities. The future force, comprised of a rated corps both technically proficient and lethal in their craft, will be ready to fly, fight, and win!



