

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations from Resolutions Northwest (RNW) are based on the question: "How can JVC Northwest maximize the benefits of its programming, minimize the potential unintended harms to the communities it aims to benefit, and be a true partner in creating "empowerment and positive change" in the Pacific Northwest?" The recommendations are informed by all we have learned through the assessment process, highlighting especially the voices and experiences of JVs and staff of color.

### **(Quotes Omitted)**

The following recommendations are neither a checklist of steps to reach equity, nor a menu of options to choose from. Many simultaneous shifts will be necessary at JVC Northwest in order to make any real advancements in equity. The recommendations are presented here in the order in which they should, more or less, build upon one another; though, should JVC Northwest decide to embark on a real transformation, it will certainly not be a linear journey.

#### **1. Make an Explicit Organizational Commitment to Racial Equity**

JVC Northwest should

- Engage in a collaborative process with stakeholders, especially the most impacted, to revise its mission statement to
  - include an explicit commitment to racial equity, and
  - clarity about who is centered in its services and why.
- Incorporate considerations of racial equity in every organizational choice point if you are not explicitly working to combat interpersonal and structural racism, you are contributing to it.
- Require an understanding of structural racism and commitment to racial equity as part of the job description for every JV, staff and board position.

### **(Quotes Omitted)**

- Collect demographic information about its board, staff, JVs, partner agencies, including race, age, ability status, LGBTQ+ status, etc. at all levels of the organization to establish a baseline and measure progress towards goals of improving racial representation in its programming and staffing.

#### **2. American Restorative Inquiry with Alaska Native and Native American Communities**

In order to decide if and how to continue partnerships and JV placements in Alaska Native and Native American communities, JVC Northwest must engage in direct dialogue with the

communities in question. JVC Northwest should contract with a Native Alaskan researcher or organization to conduct a thorough review of JVC Northwest's history, impacts and relationships in Alaska Native and Native American Communities, and gather input and ideas from the communities themselves about how best to support the development of local community capacity and interrupt the historical and ongoing patterns of colonialism, appropriation and assimilation connected to Catholic missionaries, boarding schools, and JVC Northwest. This process should not rely solely on input from current and/or long term partner organization representatives, but should seek to hear as many community voices as possible in culturally appropriate and relevant formats.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

### **3. Recruit and Retain Board Members, Staff, and JVs from the Communities Being Served**

JVC Northwest should recruit for positions at all levels of the organization from the communities in which JVs serve, especially people from Alaska Native and Native American communities.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

#### **3a. Staff of Color**

Recruiting and retaining more staff of color is essential for making real organizational shifts towards equity and for providing appropriate and adequate support for JVs of color. **JVC Northwest should work to increase the diversity and retention of staff who support JVs by**

- Eliminating the preference currently given to former JVs in the hiring process.
- Increasing staff salaries
- Providing additional training in identifying and supporting JVs with mental health issues.
- Adjusting workloads /structures to support healthy work—life balance

**(Quotes Omitted)**

As in JV communities, staff of color report that being the only, or one of the only POC on staff is an isolating and oppressive experience. Staff of color need affinity as well in order to cope with and combat the dominant white culture that is so prevalent within JVC Northwest.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

#### **3b. JVs of Color**

As previously discussed, JVs of color also benefit from the opportunity for transformational personal growth and resume building experience that JVC Northwest offers. They are also more likely share a cultural or other background with clients, allowing them to better connect with and

provide culturally appropriate services to clients being served by partner agencies. Increasing the number of JVs of color would likely address the historical inequities at JVC Northwest in a number of ways, including:

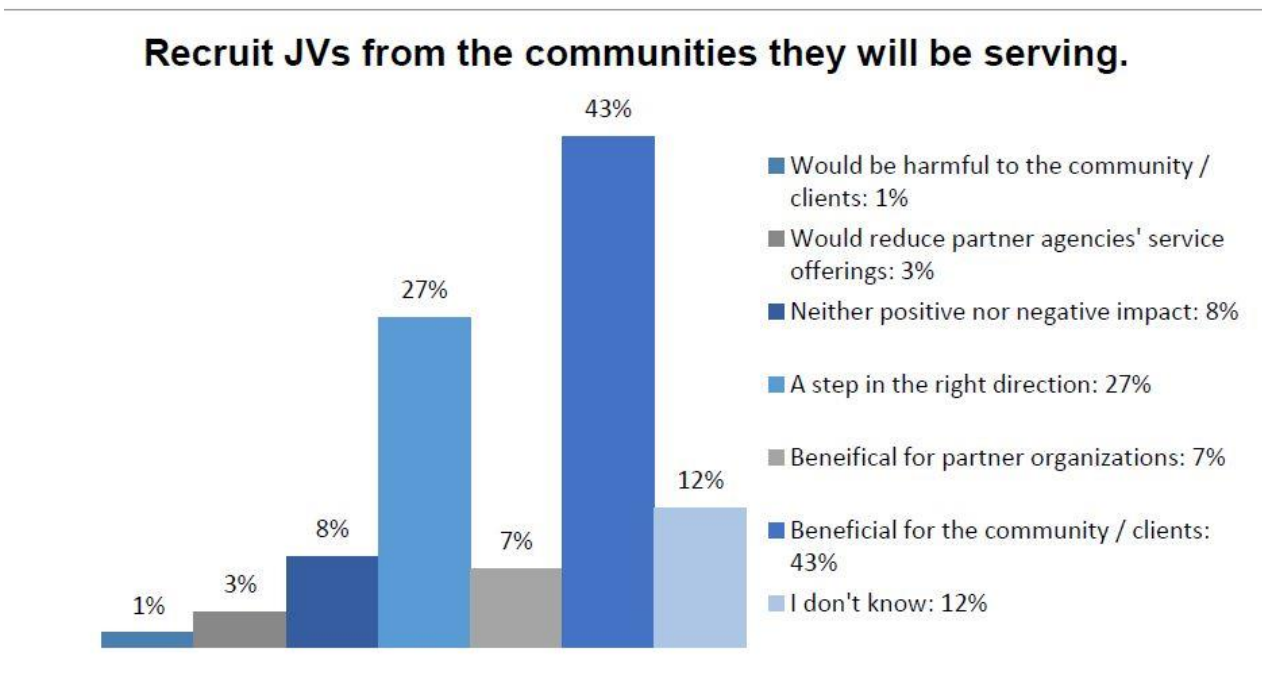
- Providing more of the valuable personal benefits of JV service to individuals who have more unearned social disadvantages than the traditional highly privileged white JV.
- Increasing the ability to place JVs in affinity within their houses, thereby increasing opportunities for mutual support and mitigating some of the negative experiences past JVs of color have faced in isolation.
- Providing more culturally appropriate service to partner agencies and clients and reducing the likelihood of replicating patterns of racial and class oppression between privileged white volunteers and marginalized clients of color.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

In order to recruit more JVs of color and those with other intersecting identities, JVC Northwest will need to alter its recruitment strategies and JV selection criteria as discussed further in the additional recommendations below.

**4. Recruit and Place JVs Locally**

Rather than importing privileged "white saviors in training" from across the country, JVC Northwest should work to support the development of local capacity, by recruiting from and placing JVs in the communities being served. Nearly 3/4 of survey respondents agreed that local recruitment and placements of JVs would be "a step in the right direction" (27%) or "beneficial for the community / clients" (43%).



**(Quotes Omitted)**

Some respondents did voice concerns about this option, most importantly, noting the importance of engaging in conversation and shared decision—making with the partner agencies and communities being served.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

Others were concerned that it would be exploitative to ask locals to commit to a year of service, that a local person's ties would be a problem for the partner agency or the work,

**(Quotes Omitted)**

and would negatively impact the community living aspect of the program.

Although many of these concerns appear to come from a sincere concern and desire not to place additional burdens on impacted communities and individuals, many of them are also paternalistic and demonstrate the inherent white savior attitude observed by so many JVs of color.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

Communities being served and partner agencies receiving JV placements should most definitely be engaged in dialogue and shared decision—making with JVC Northwest as programmatic changes are implemented. However, these concerns should not deter JVC Northwest from attempting the proposed structural changes. These concerns are primarily justifications for keeping things the way they are—which will continue to replicate the current outcomes, impacts and inequities within JVC Northwest's structures. None are sufficient justification for denying the opportunity to apply to people who will likely still benefit from the experience and be in a better position to make effective long term contributions to their local community.

Table 16: Local Placement Concerns

Concern	Response
JVC Northwest won't find enough "qualified" individuals in the locale.	JVC Northwest can still recruit outsiders, if necessary, but should give priority to local applicants. JVC Northwest should also revise and clarify applicant qualifications and selection criteria, prioritizing local knowledge and technical capacity over 4-year degrees and experiences of privilege (internships).

<p>It might not be appropriate / or might be a conflict of interest for a local person to serve their community</p>	<p>Aren't the regular employees of the organization local residents?  Clients are likely to receive better service from someone who knows the community and clients' circumstances, and will likely remain in the community and maintain relationships after their year of service.</p>
<p>It's not fair to exploit locals</p>	<p>No, it's not. Full compensation would be best, but if it's not available, local people should not be denied the opportunity to apply for a JV service year that may provide them with opportunities for job experience and personal growth they may not otherwise be able to access. Many local people are doing unpaid social justice work in their communities already, and will continue to do so, whether JVC Northwest offers them an opportunity to do it as a JV, or not.</p>
<p>It will negatively impact the JV experience.</p>	<p>The community living experience has primarily benefitted and centered the experiences of highly privileged, white JVs. JVs of color have often found community living to be one of the most difficult and oppressive parts of their JV experience. Increasing diversity, improving the experience of JVs of color, and improving services to clients should all take priority over maintaining the traditional JV community living experience.</p>
<p>It isn't fair for local JVs to have access to resources other JVs don't.</p>	<p>Though it may take several years, JVC Northwest should work to fill a majority of JV placements with local volunteers. Local volunteers are likely to have less economic advantage than imported volunteers, and would likely need additional support to make it through the year with the current simple living stipends and restrictions. JVC Northwest should also create other strategies for equitably addressing JVs' vastly differing access to external resources.</p>

To successfully make this shift, JVC Northwest would need to engage in conversations and strategizing with the partner agencies and communities being served,

**(Quotes Omitted)**

and make several other concurrent changes, including shifting recruitment strategies, prioritizing lived experience in JV selection, and providing more support for these new non-traditional JVs.

**4a. Shift Recruitment Strategies**

JVC Northwest will need to alter its recruitment strategies, focusing on local recruitment within partner agencies' locales, rather than recent college grads from Jesuit Universities.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

#### **4b. Prioritize Lived Experience in JV Selection**

Local recruitment would require significant shifts in how JVs are recruited, as well as in the criteria by which JVs are selected and placed. Lived experience with the communities being served and with multiple intersecting oppressed identities must be prioritized over formal education and white-dominant cultural notions of "professionalism" and "perfectionism" in applicant screening and selection.

Respondents of color were significantly more likely to support this idea, with 92% agreeing that it would be beneficial, along with 77% of white respondents. 6% of white respondents were worried this might negatively impact the program or clients, but not a single respondent of color shared their concern.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

#### **5. Color Increase Organizational Support for JVs of Color**

**(Quotes Omitted)**

Simultaneous adjustments in JV support structures must also be made to mitigate barriers for JVs of color and the potential "non-traditional" JVs that would enter the program through local recruitment efforts and prioritizing lived experience and cultural knowledge in the selection process. Additional support should include more staff of color and continued efforts to place JVs in affinity within communities, as discussed above; as well as increased local support, additional affinity spaces within the JV program, mitigating financial barriers to participation, and equitable strategies for supporting JV mental health and self-care.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

#### **5a. Recruit Additional Support People from Locales**

JVC Northwest should recruit and pay/provide stipends to support people from local communities who are not former JVs, particularly in Native American / Alaska Native communities and communities of color to provide more cultural orientation for volunteers and support for JVs of color in particular.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

## **5b. Affinity Spaces**

JVC Northwest should continue placing JVs in communities (houses) with other JVs who share their core identities and seek to ensure placements in which JVs with marginalized identities are placed are supportive and inclusive. Additionally, JVC Northwest should seek to provide additional opportunities for affinity spaces within its programming. FJV mentors, affinity spaces at orientation and retreats, regular calls or a couple of retreats specifically for JVs of color during the year, etc.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

## **5c. Improve Organizational Responses to Experiences of Racism and Oppression**

As described above, the most important step in providing adequate support for JVs of color is hiring and retaining more staff of color. Additionally, JVC Northwest should improve its organizational policies and practices for responding to incidents of racism and oppression, especially within JV communities (houses).

**(Quotes Omitted)**

## **5d. Mitigating Financial / Logistical Barriers**

As discussed throughout, JVs of color are likely to come from less affluent backgrounds, and all JVs with multiple oppressed identities experience more challenges than the average highly privileged, white JV. The majority of former JVs agreed that increasing the monthly stipend by \$100 would be beneficial,

**(Quotes Omitted)**

however, applying an across the board increase in the monthly stipend is an equality measure. A more equitable approach may be to consider other forms of support to respond to specific needs of JVs with access to fewer resources. Potential support mechanisms could include contingency funds for

- travel home for family emergencies and/or between a 1st and 2nd year of service,
- support to maintain long—distance relationships
- access to mental health services,
- access to self—care resources in response to incidents of racism or other
- oppression
- etc.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

And, of course, these strategies should be piloted with significant input and feedback from the most impacted JVs.

## **6. Consider Hiring Staff Locally**

JVC Northwest should consider hiring/locating program coordinators in the locales/states being served. Although the financial and logistical implications of this recommendation would need additional consideration, locating staff around the region could have many potential benefits, including

- Improving PC ability to support JVs,
- Reducing travel requirements and associated burnout and turnover in PC positions,
- Strengthening relationships with local partner agencies and increasing JVC Northwest's institutional knowledge of locales /communities in which JVs serve,
- Supporting local recruitment efforts.

### **(Quotes Omitted)**

Local staff would also be in a much better position to support efforts to recruit and place JVs locally, although this would likely entail some significant shifts in responsibilities that are currently divided between PCs and recruiters.

## **7. Consider Increasing JV Commitment to 2 years for Specific Placements**

JVC Northwest should consider piloting and increased service commitment of 2 years for specific placements, especially in Alaska Native and Native American communities, rural locales and for highly technical placements (with input and collaboration from those communities, of course). More than half of survey respondents agreed that a 2— year service commitment would be beneficial for partner agencies and/or clients/communities.

### **(Quotes Omitted)**

Only 9% of survey respondents thought there might be potential negative impacts to communities or clients, however, the majority of survey comments reflected concerns that an increased commitment would make it harder to recruit JVs and fill placements.

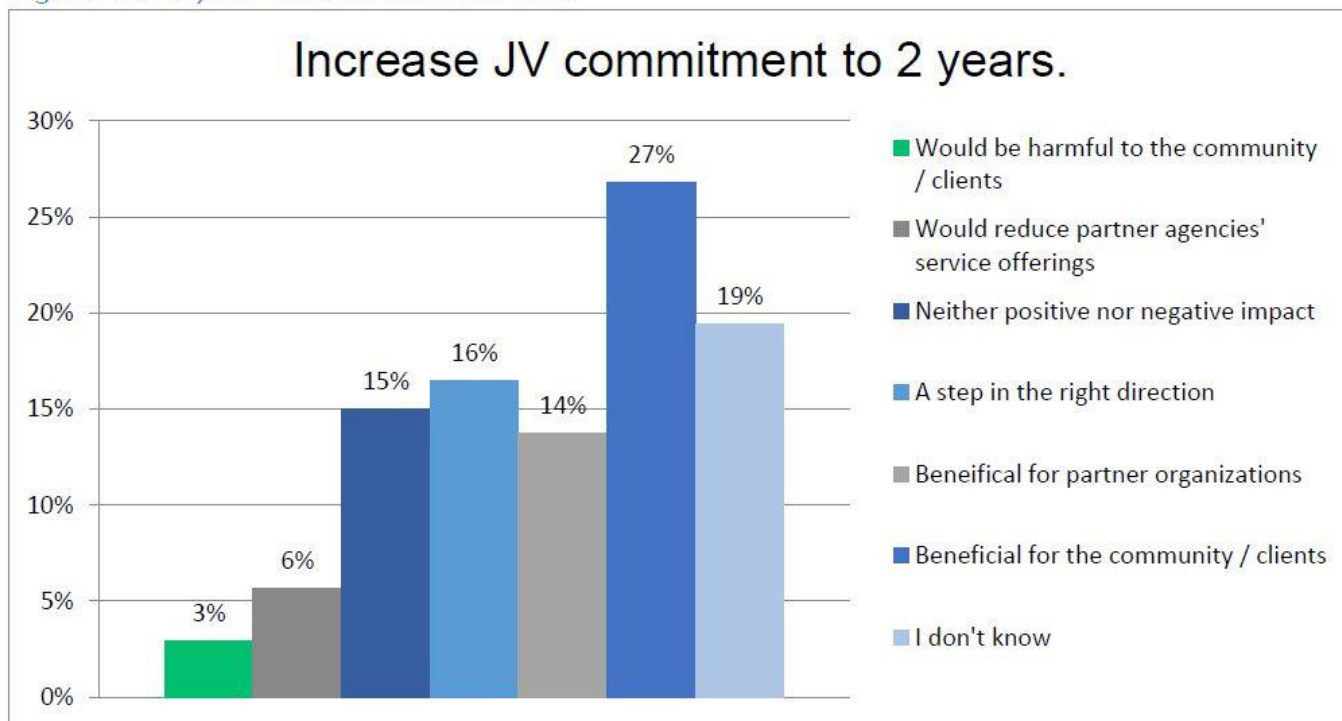
### **(Quotes Omitted)**

The financial implications of doubling the service commitment could also create an additional barrier for JVs from low—income backgrounds.

### **(Quotes Omitted)**



Figure 16: 2 year service commitment



However, some of that impact could be mitigated by recruiting local JVs who would have more local support networks and resources to help them through a 2-year commitment.

Extending the service commitment should be piloted at specific locales with significant feedback from JVs of color and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, along with piloting companion strategies for mitigating those potential barriers.

A few comments worried about potential negative impacts of a JV or placement that were not a "good fit" or of JVs actually doing harm in their placements.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

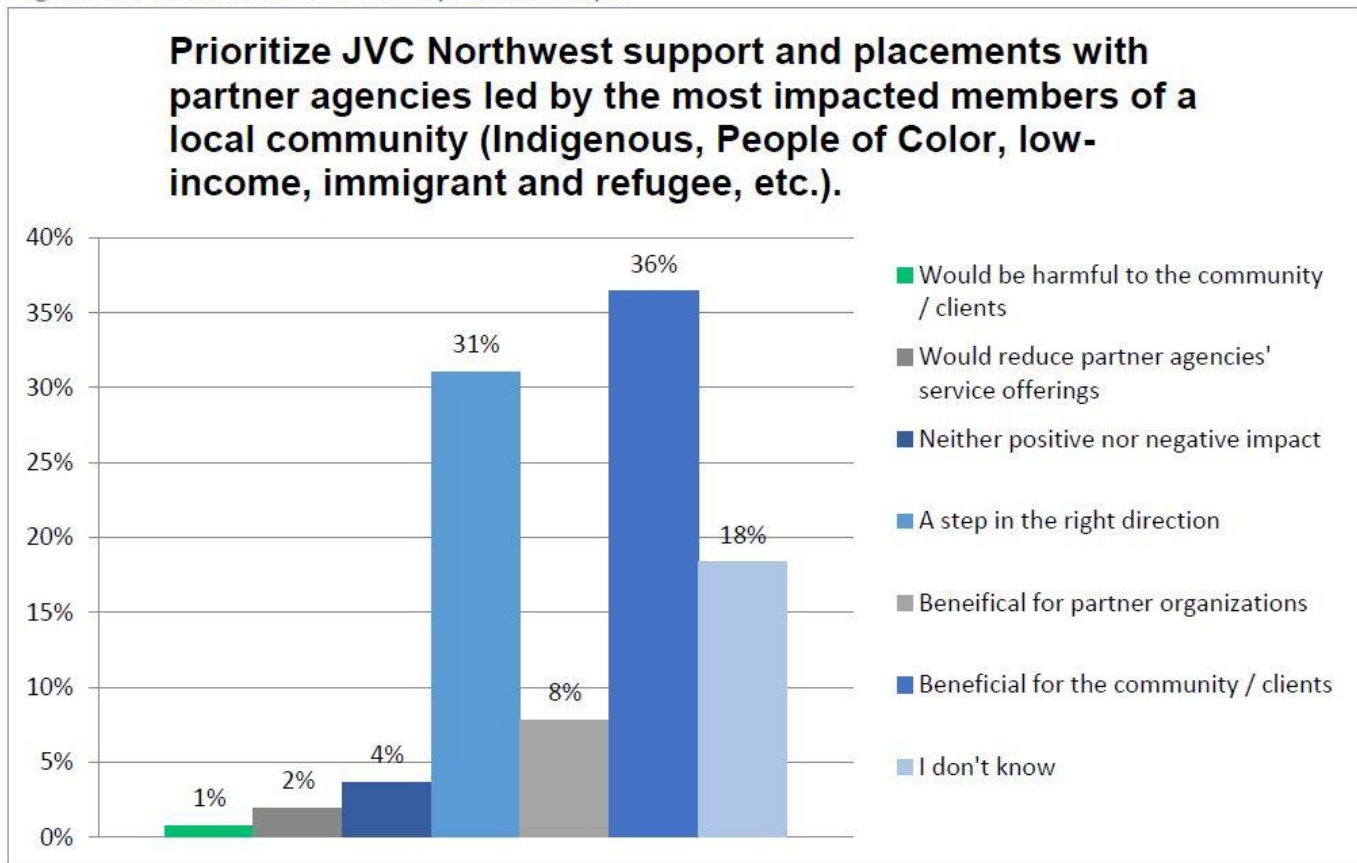
Regardless of service length, JVC Northwest should have policies in place to identify and remove any JV who is actively causing harm to their community or in their placement.

**8. Partner with Organizations Led by the Most Impacted**

To interrupt the white savior complex, JVC Northwest should prioritize building/strengthening partnerships with organizations led by "the most impacted," including Alaska Native and Native American led organizations, agencies led by other People of Color, and others with significant representation from their client base in leadership positions.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

Figure 17: Prioritize POC led partnerships



3/4 of survey respondents agreed that this strategy would be beneficial, including 90% of white FJVs and 100% of FJVs of color.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

### 9. More Training . . . for Everyone

No amount of training will turn JVC Northwest, in its current state, into an anti—racist organization. However, in addition to the previous recommendations, and as changes are being implemented, JVC Northwest should provide all JVs, staff, board members, and support people with substantial and continued opportunities to systematically unpack structural racism, colonialism, whiteness, white privilege, the white savior complex, and anti—racism strategies. There is no evidence that JVC Northwest currently possesses adequate organizational or staff expertise or capacity to provide this kind of training directly to either its JVs or partner agencies. JVC Northwest should serve as a convener and seek and dedicate resources to contracting with organizations with

**(Quotes Omitted)**

#### 9a. Alaska Native and Native American Communities

As recommended above, JVC Northwest should engage in a sincere inquiry into its past, present and future in Alaska Native and Native American communities and consider adjustments in

if/how to continue to engage in these communities based on what they learn from the communities themselves.

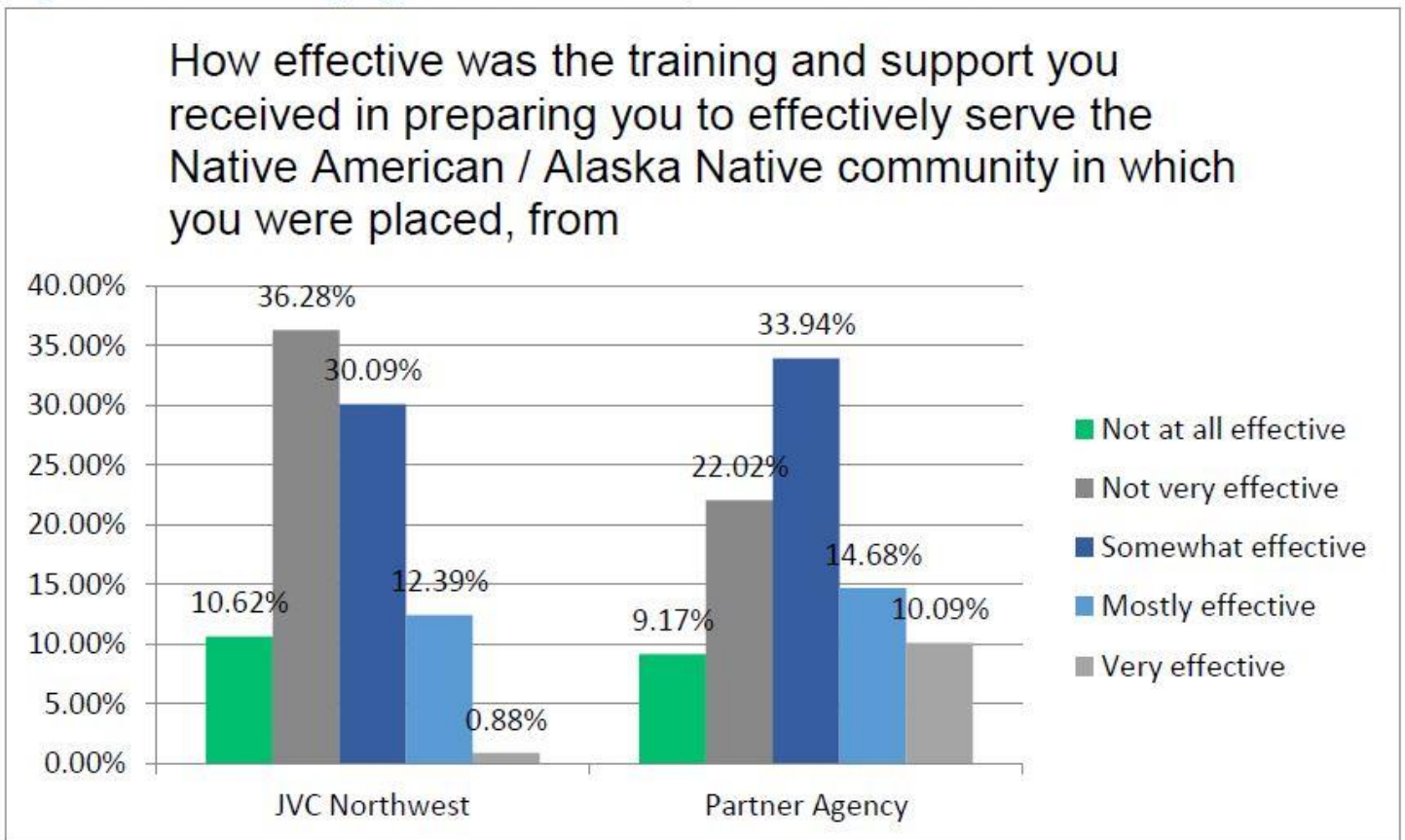
**(Quotes Omitted)**

It would also not be responsible or ethical to simply withdraw JVs from longstanding placements with partner agencies in these communities, so, as changes are being implemented, it is safe to assume that white JVs will continue to serve in Alaska Native and Native American communities in the immediate future. However, it's worth noting that one staff offered the proposal to mitigate unintentional harms by

*Just put POCs in these communities.*

Until and as JVC Northwest works to make equitable improvements in placements and service in these communities, JVC Northwest should work to improve and expand training for JVs serving in Alaska Native and Native American communities— in collaboration with local communities and partner agencies.

*Figure 18: Training Effectiveness - NA/AN Communities*



47% of JVs who served in Native Alaskan or Native American communities did not consider the training they received from JVC Northwest adequate in preparing them to effectively serve. 25% of JVs who served in Native Alaskan or Native American communities felt that the training they

received from their partner agency was "mostly" or "very" effective, and nearly 1/3 did not feel like they received adequate training from either JVC Northwest or their placement site.

**(Quotes Omitted)**

**9b. JV EnCorps**

JV EnCorps is a self-selected, self-funded program for older adults (age 55+) who engage in volunteer activities and meet monthly to share and process their experiences and build community. JV EnCorps is a much smaller program than the main JV program, and is much less racially diverse: currently 100% of JVEs are white. JVEs, the JV EnCorps program, and clients served by JVEs would also benefit from the explicit commitment to racial equity recommended for JVC Northwest overall, from introspection into why all current JVEs are white, what barriers are preventing older POCs from engaging with JVE, and centering conversations at community building nights in the themes and topics discussed above, including, structural racism, colonialism, whiteness, white privilege, the white savior complex, and anti-racism strategies.

**Conclusion**

JVC Northwest has 2 options for next steps:

- 1) Keep doing what you've been doing. Outcomes and impacts will remain the same (see the previous 100 pages).
- 2) Make an explicit organizational commitment to racial equity, honestly and deeply acknowledge the history and impacts in Alaska Native and Native American communities, prioritize recruitment and retention of People of Color, especially Alaska Native/Native American and Latinx individuals, at every level of the organization, then listen to them and follow their lead.

If social justice is truly the core value and central mission of the organization, the choice is clear.

