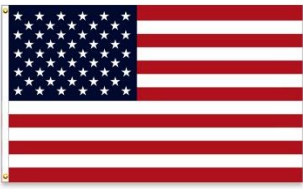




Explanation of Our VMG Flags



The **U.S.** flag stands for our nation and the shared history, pride, principles, and commitment of its people. It has been honored by generations of Americans fighting for our Democracy to be "of the people, by the people and for the people" with "Liberty and Justice for All."

On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress passed an act establishing an official flag for the new nation. Between 1777 and 1960 Congress passed several acts that changed the shape, design & arrangement of the flag and allowed stars to be added with the admission of each new state. Today the flag consists of 13 horizontal stripes, seven red alternating with six white. The stripes represent the original 13 Colonies and the stars represent the current 50 states. The colors of the flag are symbolic as well; red for hardiness and valor, white symbolizes purity and innocence, and blue represents vigilance, perseverance and justice.

Our hope is that all VMG visitors believe that engagement in social activism and lawful and civil citizen participation in our Democracy is patriotic and promotion of inclusivity and diversity is at the center of the American idealism.



The **Progress Pride** flag was developed in 2018 by American designer, Daniel Quasar. Based on the iconic rainbow flag created by Gilbert Baker in 1978, the redesign celebrates the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community and calls for a more inclusive society.

Baker's 'original' flag was embraced internationally as the symbol of the LGBTQ+ community and inspired the creation of other flags including the light blue, white and pink transgender flag, created by Monica Helms in 1999. Today, the number of pride flags illustrates the many identities that fall under the umbrella of the LGBTQ+ community. Because some subgroups are more visible than others, recent redesign projects have sought to increase the representation of discriminated minority identities within the LGBTQ+ community. For Quasar, the light blue, pink and white stripes represent trans and non-binary individuals and the brown & black ones represent marginalized People of Color communities. The black stripe has a double meaning, as it is also, intended for "those living with AIDS and the stigma and prejudice surrounding them, and those who have been lost to the disease". Quasar's design not only sought to improve the flag, but also place minorities at the forefront.



Black Lives Matter (BLM) began with a hashtag that initially focused on treatment of racial minorities by police, but over time the phrase has garnered international attention and is connected to collective efforts to mitigate racism and build a more equitable society.

In 2013, three women – Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi – posted the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter in response to a jury's decision to acquit George Zimmerman in the death of teen Trayvon Martin. BLM became nationally recognized following the 2014 deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and Eric Garner in New York City. BLM returned to national headlines and gained further international attention in 2020 during the global George Floyd protests following his murder by a Minneapolis police officer.

A decade later, we acknowledge that racism, still exists in everyday life, including the health care sector. It's critical to recognize the harmful impact on patients, caregivers, and health care providers who are marginalized by racism. In health care, we believe All Lives Matter. However, it is important to demonstrate Black Lives Matter too as Anti-blackness disproportionately disrupts the lives of black and brown people with individual and institutional racism & violence. Flying a Black Lives Matter flag is one step that VMG is taking to reinforce that we still have work to do before we can say we are truly equitable and inclusive.

At VMG, we are committed to listening, learning, and advocating for the delivery of safe, equitable care for all, and we are grateful to be part of a community that stands united in its commitment to continue working for equity, for all.