



Recommendations for the Civilian Climate Corps Based on Decades of Experience



On [January 27, 2021](#), President Biden established a Civilian Climate Corps Initiative to “mobilize the next generation of conservation and resilience workers and maximize the creation of accessible training opportunities and good jobs.” The order calls for the delivery of a strategy to the Climate Task Force by [April 27, 2021](#), to be carried out within existing appropriations.

The Corps Community is positioned to utilize our existing infrastructure, capacity and experience as a foundation from which to launch the new Civilian Climate Corps (CCC). We stand ready to immediately engage tens of thousands of young adults in conservation and climate-related project work. We strongly believe that, with a direct investment in the existing network of Service and Conservation Corps, 250,000 young people over five years can complete resilience, clean energy, conservation, and sustainable infrastructure projects that will improve communities and also place them on the path to family-supporting careers.

There is a [network of 130+ Corps](#) with over 20,000 diverse young adults participating yearly. These Corps operate across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories and in a wide variety of communities and service areas (rural, urban, and backcountry). Some Corps focus on specific populations, intentionally engaging young people of color, including Black, Latinx, and Tribal youth. Other Corps run programming specifically for young people with disabilities, LGBTQ people, returning citizens, and recent veterans.

What these Corps share in common is that they develop a service ethic in our young people; build and support diverse, inclusive and equitable American communities; provide education and vocational training; promote leadership and citizenship; complete significant amounts of high-quality work in communities and on our public lands and waters, and prepare participants to advance to a career path of family-supporting work.

Poised for Action

The existing Corps Community is the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps, and has been growing in size and impact since the late 1950s. **Corps today are committed to racial equity and are effective in providing meaningful service opportunities, quality workforce development programming, and impactful environmental project outcomes.**

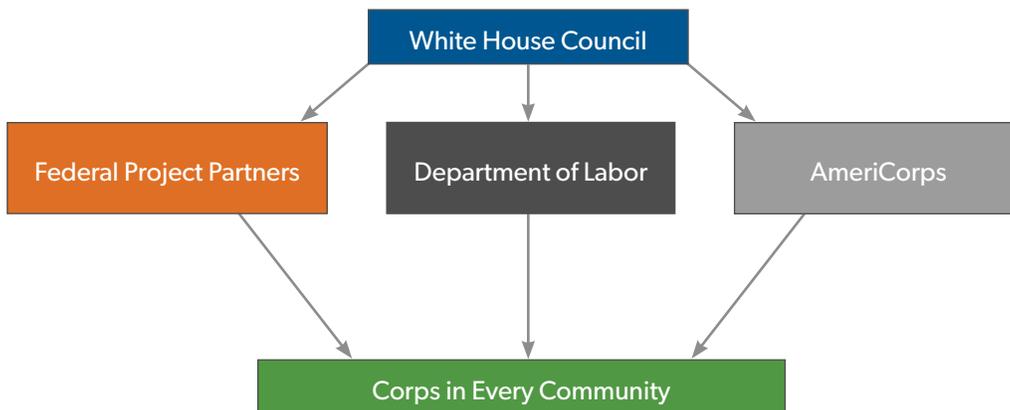
The opportunity to expand under the Biden Administration is primed by the fact that **Corps already operate through existing appropriations across an array of operational accounts.** Over the last five years, nearly **125,000 Corps participants** (Corpsmembers) have accomplished just over **\$314 million** in agency-identified community improvement, resilience, and conservation projects across our country. The Public Lands Corps, as authorized in the National and Community Service Trust Act, has been facilitating partnerships between Corps and the United States Department of Interior and the United States Forest Service since 1993.

There is also a strong and growing foundation of Corps in our cities that, if given the investment, could be leveraging their expertise to have more partnerships with the United States Departments of Energy, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation and others. The combined Corps Community **has the capacity to do much more work and to engage many more people.** Equally important, as Corpsmembers do this work, they are also training to be the American workforce of the future for unions, federal, state and municipal agencies, and private sector jobs.

The New Civilian Climate Corps

With trained leaders, years of experience developing the next generation of service and conservation leaders, a presence across the country in urban and rural areas, and a proven track record of getting quality work done safely and effectively, [The Corps Network](#) and the Corps Community are confident that we can anchor and augment the broader Civilian Climate Corps initiative by both combating climate change and administering high-quality work-based learning experiences that prepare and place participants onto career pathways. We propose the following structure for the Civilian Climate Corps.

Proposed Structure



Structural Elements Overview

■ White House Council

The White House should establish a position or office to coordinate a Council, which will include representatives from all the departments and agencies listed below as federal partners. This Council will oversee the effective implementation of the CCC initiative, including data collection and reporting.

■ Federal Partners in the CCC Initiative

The January 27 Executive Order specifically references the Departments of Interior and Agriculture as leading the development of the CCC Initiative, along with other heads of relevant agencies. The Corps Community is capable of accomplishing a variety of climate related conservation projects. Corps have strong, historic partnerships with the Departments of Interior and Agriculture, but we believe that the Departments of Energy, Housing, Labor, and Transportation, as well as the EPA, FEMA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA, and the Corporation for National and Community Service, should be partners in the CCC Initiative. These departments and agencies are needed if the new CCC Initiative is to be equitable, inclusive, and achieve its stated goal to “mobilize the next generation of conservation and resilience workers and maximize the creation of accessible training opportunities and good jobs.”

■ Department of Labor

The Department of Labor should establish and manage a competitive grant program to provide Corps the funding, resources, and support to administer comprehensive youth and workforce development programs for the CCC participants. Grants will support the development and implementation of curricula and training, including pre-apprentice and apprenticeship programs. These grants can also be used to support organizational capacity building.

■ Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps)

AmeriCorps should administer a grant program to enable the enrollment of CCC participants in AmeriCorps, thus giving CCC participants the opportunity to develop an ethic of community service and environmental stewardship, gain leadership skills, and earn an Education Award to help pay for college or additional training.

■ Corps Programs

Qualified Corps should administer the program in communities across the country. There is a need to invest in existing Corps and establish new programs to ensure the presence of Corps in every community. Existing Corps and The Corps Network can provide expertise to assist with establishing new programs. Each Corps can recruit locally, provide workforce development programming appropriate for local labor market needs, and partner with local resource management agencies to complete projects identified as important by the community.



Principles

1. Use the existing network of qualified and accredited Service and Conservation Corps as the foundation for the new Civilian Climate Corps.
2. Provide funding and support for capacity building and infrastructure of existing and new Corps programs.
3. Engage a wide range of federal, state, and local land and resource management and community development agencies to ensure CCC projects occur in all communities, particularly those that have experienced underinvestment and environmental injustice.
4. Target recruitment and enrollment efforts in low-income and environmental justice communities, with an emphasis on engaging young people of color and other underrepresented and underserved populations.
5. Adequately support Corpsmembers with opportunities to advance their education, obtain critical workforce readiness skills and work experience, support services, and a \$15 minimum wage or stipend (recommended average cost per Corpsmember: \$40,000).
6. Facilitate alignment and partnerships with strategic industry partners, unions, apprenticeships, community colleges and other postsecondary education programs.

Action Items

1. Direct the federal land and resource management agencies (DOI, USDA, NOAA) and community development agencies (DOE, DOT, HUD...) to identify existing and readily available funding streams (CDBG, GAOA, RTP...) and programs (Brownfields, WAP...) to support CCC projects.
2. Direct the federal youth and workforce development agencies (CNCS and DOL) to identify existing funding for participant wages/stipends, training, and support services.
3. Develop and implement a simplified and streamlined grant application and project agreement process.
4. Amend authorizing legislation, like the National and Community Service Act and the Housing and Urban Development Act, to remove barriers to the engagement of diverse participants and project work.
5. Waive any matching requirements associated with authorities or funding used for the Civilian Climate Corps to allow for the rapid expansion of programs, projects, and participants.
6. Expand and increase use of the Public Lands Corps Hiring Authority for CCC participants.
7. Authorize and appropriate \$2 billion a year for five years (total: \$10 billion) to engage 250,000 CCC participants by 2026.