

21ST CENTURY CONSERVATION SERVICE CORPS FULL REPORT September 5, 2012



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September 5, 2012

Secretary Ken Salazar
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

It is a great honor and privilege to submit to you the report of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) Federal Advisory Committee.

When you chartered the Committee in November 2011 you asked the Committee to provide recommendations on how to create a 21CSC. This followed the first recommendation of the America's Great Outdoors report, which was to "catalyze the establishment of a 21CSC to engage young Americans in public lands and water restoration." The Committee engaged in an intensive six month process to solicit input from the American people and formulate a series of recommendations to establish the 21CSC as a bold national effort to put thousands of America's young people and veterans to work protecting, restoring, and enhancing America's great outdoors.

Our country faces a myriad of critical issues: unemployment rates among America's youth and returning veterans stand at record highs; many public lands, waters, natural resources, and cultural and historic treasures need maintenance and restoration to fulfill their full value as natural and cultural resources and as national recreation assets; and, many Americans, particularly children and youth, are disengaged and disconnected from the outdoors leading to growing emotional and physical health issues. The 21CSC is a solution to these issues and will result in service, training, education and employment opportunities for thousands of young Americans and veterans, and significant work accomplishments that preserve, protect, and promote America's greatest natural and cultural treasures. Most important, the 21CSC will help develop a generation of skilled workers, educated and active citizens, future leaders, and stewards of natural and cultural resources, communities and the nation.

We look forward to working with you and your colleagues and staff to enact these recommendations and establish the 21CSC. On behalf of the members of the 21CSC Federal Advisory Committee, we thank you for this opportunity to put forth recommendations to establish such an important national initiative as the 21CSC.

Sincerely,

Harry Bruell
Chair, 21CSC Federal Advisory Committee

“The Department of the Interior emphasizes not only the importance of nature to youth but also the importance of youth to nature. We hope that Corps members not only find a job but also a connection to the Great Outdoors and a career in the emerging Clean Energy Economy.”

- US Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, February 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CALL TO ACTION

President Obama launched the America’s Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative on April 16, 2010 to develop a 21st century conservation and recreation agenda. After 51 listening sessions and over 105,000 comments, the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Chair and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator delivered the AGO Report to the President on February 7, 2011. The Report’s first recommendation is to “catalyze the establishment of a 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) to engage young Americans in public lands and water restoration.” In late 2011 Secretary Salazar established a Federal Advisory Committee (“Committee”) charged with “providing recommendations to the AGO Council through the Secretary of the Interior on how to create a 21CSC.”

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

Establish the 21CSC by October 2012 by engaging the AGO Council agencies in a coordinated effort to:

1. encourage natural resource management agencies to engage 21CSC programs to accomplish high priority work;
2. quickly identify FY 2012 year-end carryover funds where possible, FY 2013 funds, and other resources to seed and launch the initial 21CSC implementation (both operations and projects);
3. include a 21CSC presentation in the FY 2014 budget request;
4. support simplified agreement mechanisms that recognize the 21CSC’s multiple benefits;
5. support an accreditation process; and
6. sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as soon as possible to establish a 21CSC National Council.

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Establish the 21CSC and Operate it through Partnerships.

Establish a 21CSC and operate it through partnerships with accredited non-profit, higher education, local, state, tribal and federal conservation corps. Support an accreditation process to ensure that partners who operate 21CSC programs have significant expertise, experience and capacity to operate high quality programs.

Recommendation 2: Employ an Innovative Funding Strategy.

Support the 21CSC principally with project-based funding from existing and new public sources leveraged and supported by private funds. Raise other funds and resources through a broad array of public and private sources. Streamline, coordinate, and create consistency among the application and granting processes of current and potential federal funding sources for 21CSC-affiliated programs.

Recommendation 3: Support the 21CSC to Promote Growth and Quality.

Provide for ongoing management and oversight by establishing a permanent National Council for the 21CSC along with a Federal Advisory Committee for the 21CSC. Together, charge these bodies with bringing the 21CSC to scale, demonstrating national impact, and promoting high-quality programs and participant experiences as well as pathways to careers.

Recommendation 4: Rapidly Increase the Scale and Presence of 21CSC.

Double the current number of conservation corps participants and implement a two-phase plan for growing the 21CSC to 100,000 participants by 2018. Also, assess gaps and take steps to intensify the presence of 21CSC to match the needs of young people, natural resources, and communities so as to demonstrate and ensure national impact.

MISSION AND GOALS (AS RECOMMENDED BY THE COMMITTEE)

Mission: The 21CSC is a bold national effort to put young Americans and veterans to work protecting, restoring and enhancing America's great outdoors.

21CSC goals:

- Put Americans to work. The 21CSC will provide service, training, education and employment opportunities for thousands of young Americans and veterans, including low income and disadvantaged youth.
- Preserve, protect, and promote America's greatest gifts. The 21CSC will protect, restore and enhance public and tribal lands and waters as well as natural, cultural, and historical resources and treasures. With high-quality, cost-effective project work, the 21CSC will also increase public access and use while spurring economic development and outdoor recreation.
- Build America's future. Through service to America, the 21CSC will help develop a generation of skilled workers, educated and active citizens, future leaders, and stewards of natural and cultural resources, communities and the nation.

INNOVATIVE PROJECTS-BASED APPROACH

The 21CSC builds on the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the other federal and non-federal conservation corps efforts that followed. There are two important distinctions that make the 21CSC a program designed for the 21st century:

- Most of the previous federal government efforts were operated directly by the federal agencies. The Committee recommends that the 21CSC be operated primarily by non-federal partners.¹
- The funding for most previous federal government efforts went directly to the program operators. The Committee recommends, as a principal but not exclusive strategy, that funding for the 21CSC go to natural resource managers who would engage 21CSC programs to complete specific projects. The results of these partnerships would include both project accomplishments and participant benefits.

This unique 21CSC approach would allow land and water management agencies to direct 21CSC programs to the highest need projects, capitalize on the significant existing infrastructure and 30+ years of history of existing corps, reduce costs, and engage local communities through local partnerships. The Committee recommends that the 21CSC also explore other types of innovative approaches on the federal, tribal, state and local level.



¹ The Committee recognizes that some 21CSC programs may continue to be federally-run programs, such as the YCC, Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers, and NCCC.

21CSC IN OPERATION

The Committee recommends that the 21CSC operate through partnerships with accredited non-profit, higher education institution, local, state, tribal and federal conservation corps. The Committee is developing specific accreditation models that would serve to define 21CSC programs as well as promote and ensure high quality. These models would include opportunities for existing programs to expand and new programs to participate.

Among many other programmatic and operational standards, the Committee recommends that accredited 21CSC programs:

- engage 15-to-25-year-old Americans, including low-income and disadvantaged youth, as well as veterans up to age 35, in compensated work and service in comprehensive, limited term programs;
- complete significant projects for the public benefit while providing participants with job skills, training, education and professional development; and
- demonstrate the highest quality program, fiscal and risk management practices.



FUNDING AND OTHER RESOURCES

The Committee recommends, as the principal funding strategy, that land and water management agencies with allocations for conservation, restoration and historic preservation projects employ a project-based approach that engages accredited 21CSC programs. This approach is modeled on a similar strategy that the National Park Service recently initiated after it found that engaging corps results in a 56%² cost savings. Additional funding for this approach could come from private sources as well as new appropriations to land and water management agencies for high priority projects to be accomplished by accredited 21CSC programs.

Other funding strategies would include leveraging Federal Work-Study Program funds at colleges and universities, increasing the Corporation for National and Community Service's (CNCS) support for 21CSC programs, giving preference to 21CSC programs in grant-making agencies, and tapping into natural resource restoration or mitigation funds. The Committee also recommends that the 21CSC build partnerships to raise private funds and generate other forms of support such as volunteers, in-kind equipment, and post-program opportunities for program graduates (e.g., scholarships, internships, mentors, jobs, etc.)

MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT

The Committee recommends a management and oversight approach for 21CSC that recognizes the key enabling roles of federal agencies, and provides for substantial non-federal input and support. The management and oversight would involve two main components:

The National Council for the 21CSC would be established through an MOU signed by the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce, as well as the EPA Administrator, CEQ Chair, CNCS CEO and Assistant Secretary for the Army (Civil Works). The core membership of the National Council would include the leaders of the departments, bureaus, and agencies that are committed to and engaged in 21CSC implementation. Additional federal agencies would serve as affiliate members. The National Council, in close coordination with the Committee, will perform a number of specific tasks including: marshaling funding and other resources, ensuring high quality programs, removing barriers to supporting 21CSC programs, supporting participant pathways to careers, facilitating technical assistance, developing and supporting partnerships, coordinating messaging, demonstrating impact and ensuring national representation.

The Federal Advisory Committee for the 21CSC will advise the National Council on the development of the 21CSC and be comprised of representatives from a wide variety of non-federal-government stakeholders and constituency groups. The committee would have a subcommittee comprised of youth. The existing Committee would perform the functions of the Federal Advisory Committee for the 21CSC until such time as that body is constituted.

² National Park Service presentation, "Utilizing Youth Programs to Accomplish Cyclic Maintenance at National Parks." July 6, 2011



IMPLEMENTATION

The Committee recommends that the 21CSC launch in October 2012 and that the 21CSC set a target of doubling the current number of conservation corps participants using existing public resources and new leveraged resources, including private funds. Further, the Committee recommends that the National Council – in partnership with land and water management agencies, other relevant departments and agencies, and private supporters – implement a two-phase plan for growing the 21CSC to 100,000 participants per year by 2018.

The Committee recommends establishing the 21CSC by October 2012 by engaging the AGO Council agencies in a coordinated effort to: 1) encourage natural resource management agencies to engage 21CSC programs to accomplish high priority work; 2) quickly identify FY 2012 year-end carryover funds where possible, FY 2013 funds, and other resources to seed and launch the initial 21CSC implementation (both operations and projects); 3) include a 21CSC presentation in the FY14 budget request; 4) support simplified agreement mechanisms that recognize the 21CSC's multiple benefits; 5) support an accreditation process; and 6) sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as soon as possible to establish a 21CSC National Council. The Committee intends to continue working on supporting these efforts and making additional recommendations that support bringing the 21CSC to scale.

OUTCOMES

The 21CSC will result in service, training, education and employment opportunities for thousands of young Americans and veterans, and significant work accomplishments that preserve, protect, and promote America's greatest natural and cultural treasures. Most important, the 21CSC will help develop a generation of skilled workers, educated and active citizens, future leaders, and stewards of natural and cultural resources, communities and the nation!



California Conservation Corps members learn electrical skills that prepare them for professional careers.

“The team members have rebuilt trails and bridges, installed erosion-control features, restored habitat for the imperiled Houston toad, cut down dangerous trees and limbs that posed safety hazards for visitors and engaged in a multitude of difficult but necessary tasks needed to put the park back on solid footing. In short, they have undoubtedly made their predecessors from the old CCC companies 1805 and 1811 mighty proud.”

*- Carter Smith,
Texas Parks and
Wildlife Director*

CALL TO ACTION

President Obama launched the America’s Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative on April 16, 2010 to develop a 21st century conservation and recreation agenda. After 51 listening sessions and over 105,000 comments, the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, CEQ Chair and EPA Administrator delivered the AGO Report to the President on February 7, 2011. The Report’s first recommendation is to “catalyze the establishment of a 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) to engage young Americans in public lands and water restoration.”

The AGO Report stressed the importance of economic opportunities related to protecting and restoring the outdoors and stated that “In these economically challenging times, increasing opportunities for training and employment in America’s Great Outdoors can put people back to work and produce lasting benefits. These opportunities can strengthen local and regional economies, improve individual health and welfare, and build a lasting stewardship ethic among the American people.” In late 2011 Secretary Salazar established a Federal Advisory Committee charged with “providing recommendations to the AGO Council through the Secretary of the Interior on how to create a 21CSC.”

The Committee met four times between February and June 2012 and reached consensus on a broad array of recommendations to establish a 21CSC. This full report includes these recommendations as well as more detailed information in the appendices on accreditation and data collection.

Historically, the deep connection Americans have felt to the land has led many to volunteer in support of “friends of” groups, land conservation trusts, trail clubs, and other related grassroots organizations. These volunteer efforts have helped close the widening gap between the workload demands of caring for America’s lands and waters and diminishing resources for maintenance, operations, and protection of public and tribal lands and waters. The Committee recognizes the importance of these volunteer efforts in the stewardship of our public and tribal lands and waters.

The 21CSC fills a unique niche by providing opportunities for young people and veterans to make a significant, intensive, relatively short-term contribution to accomplishing high priority projects through compensated work while at the same time receiving the professional and personal development and training to move into stewardship careers and become lifelong supporters of our nation’s natural and cultural treasures. The 21CSC represents a significant resource both for completing high priority projects and for helping promote a new generation of active citizen conservationists, especially among underrepresented communities. Projects such as preventing wildfires by reducing fuel load accumulations are just one example of workload of the highest priority and of a scale that exceeds current workforce.

The Committee anticipates that the 21CSC will result in employment, service, training, and education opportunities for thousands of young Americans and veterans, and significant work accomplishments that preserve, protect, and promote America's greatest natural and cultural treasures. Most important, the 21CSC will help develop a generation of skilled workers, educated and active citizens, future leaders, and stewards of natural and cultural resources, communities and the nation!

MISSION AND GOALS

The 21CSC is a bold national effort to put America's youth and veterans to work protecting, restoring and enhancing America's great outdoors.

The 21CSC addresses the following national needs:

- Unemployment rates among America's youth and returning veterans stand at record highs, while at the same time U.S. employers cannot fill critical jobs for lack of a skilled workforce. The 21CSC will provide service and employment opportunities for more than 100,000 young Americans and veterans per year, with a focus on the demographics with the highest unemployment rates.

Unemployment rates for young people between the ages of 16 and 24 are the highest they have been in more than 60 years. At the peak of Summer 2011, just 25 percent of teens were employed and only 14 percent of African-American teens and 20 percent of Latino teens had jobs.³ In addition, more than 30 percent of young returning veterans are unable to find work.⁴ At the same time, up to 40 percent of employers say they cannot find workers with the necessary skills.⁵ This has serious implications for the future of our workforce and the health of our economy.

- Many public lands, waters, natural resources, and cultural and historic treasures need maintenance and restoration to fulfill their full value as natural and cultural resources and as national recreation assets. Insufficient resources exist to care for these resources over the long term, impeding economic growth in many rural and urban communities. 21CSC will provide an excellent and cost-effective opportunity to accelerate progress in providing quality experiences to citizens, supporting the economy and by maintaining our natural assets and treasures.

Outdoor recreation, such as hunting, fishing, hiking and camping, contributes an estimated \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy and supports more than 6.5 million jobs. Urban green spaces support healthy lifestyles, the urban environment and economic growth in cities and suburbs across the country. However, pollution, wildfires, natural disasters, erosion and invasive species degrade public lands, spaces, and waters and limit access to opportunities for outdoor recreation. Meanwhile, federal land management agencies report an aggregate of more than \$75 billion in backlogged maintenance projects. State and local agencies could add billions more to this total. Restoring and protecting natural and national resources will enhance the enjoyment and prosperity of future generations.

3 Bureau of Labor Statistics, Sept 2011
4 Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 2012
5 Manpower Group, Jan 2012

“The experience will change the way people see our world and the need to protect the environment. Just like the original conservation corps. Working within nature builds stronger people in both environmental stewardship and their relationships with themselves and the community around them.”

- Southwest Conservation Corps Alum

- Many Americans, particularly children and youth, need active engagement with the outdoors. Two primary objectives of the President’s America’s Great Outdoors Initiative are to: reconnect Americans, especially children, to America’s rivers and waterways, landscapes of national significance, ranches, farms and forests, and parks; and to advance job and volunteer opportunities related to conservation and outdoor recreation. The 21CSC will put young people and veterans to work conserving and protecting natural resources and improving recreational experiences. In the process, participants will learn and share the importance of conservation and natural resource stewardship in their communities.

Busy lives and limited access to clean, safe, open spaces discourage many Americans from taking part in outdoor activities, especially the nearly 80 percent of Americans who live in or near cities. The disconnect between Americans and the outdoors is greatest amongst children, who now spend only half as much time outside as their parents did, and instead spend an average of seven hours a day interfaced with electronic devices. The 21CSC will help build a new generation of outdoor enthusiasts, natural and cultural resources professionals, and community and national stewards.

THE 21CSC WILL STRIVE TO ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING GOALS:

Put Americans to work. The 21CSC will provide service, training, education and employment opportunities for thousands of young Americans and veterans, including low income and disadvantaged youth.

The 21CSC will engage young people and veterans from all parts of the country in enhancing and improving public lands and waters in their own regions, tribal lands, states, territories, and local communities. The 21CSC will strive to represent the great diversity of today’s American youth and veterans – ethnic, socio-economic, demographic, etc. It will ensure that eligible young people and veterans from all backgrounds and all states, tribal lands, and territories of the United States may apply to participate in the 21CSC.

Preserve, protect, and promote America’s greatest gifts. The 21CSC will protect, restore and enhance public and tribal lands and waters as well as natural, cultural, and historical resources and treasures. By producing high-quality, cost-effective project work, the 21CSC will also increase public access and use while spurring economic development and outdoor recreation.

- The 21CSC will ensure that the activities and expertise of the 21CSC and its accredited programs should be accessible to public, non-profit, and tribal agencies responsible for the stewardship of public and tribal lands and waters (and private lands and waters where there is a public benefit) located in all 50 states, tribal lands, and territories of the United States (the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U. S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).

Build America’s future. Through service to America, the 21CSC will help develop a generation of skilled workers, educated and active citizens, future leaders, and stewards of natural and cultural resources, communities and the nation.

CCC LEGACY

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) employed six million young men between 1933 and 1942 who planted nearly three billion trees and constructed more than 800 parks. Subsequent federal efforts built on the CCC model include Peace Corps (1961), Job Corps (1964), Youth Conservation Corps (1971), Young Adult Conservation Corps (1977), and AmeriCorps (1994). In addition, numerous state and non-profit groups launched similar efforts beginning with Student Conservation Association in 1957 and followed by the California Conservation Corps in 1976.

INNOVATIVE, PROJECT-BASED APPROACH

The 21CSC builds on the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps and the other federal and non-federal conservation corps efforts that followed. There are two important distinctions that make the 21CSC a program designed for the 21st century:

- Most of the previous federal government efforts were operated directly by the federal agencies. The Committee recommends that the 21CSC be operated primarily by non-federal partners.⁶
- The funding for most previous federal government efforts went directly to the program operators. The Committee recommends, as a principal but not exclusive strategy, that funding for the 21CSC go to natural resource managers who would engage 21CSC programs to complete specific projects. The natural resource managers would identify the projects while the program operators would engage and mobilize participants and complete the work. The results of these partnerships would include both project accomplishments and participant benefits.

This unique 21CSC approach would allow land and water management agencies to direct 21CSC programs to the highest need projects, capitalize on the significant existing infrastructure and 30+ years of history of existing corps, reduce costs, and engage local communities through local partnerships. The Committee recommends that the 21CSC also explore other types of innovative approaches on the federal, tribal, state and local level.



⁶ The Committee recognizes that some 21CSC programs may continue to be federally-run (e.g., the Youth Conservation Corps, Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers, and National Civilian Community Corps).



LA Conservation Corps member leads community volunteers in 9/11 National Day of Service events.

21CSC IN OPERATION

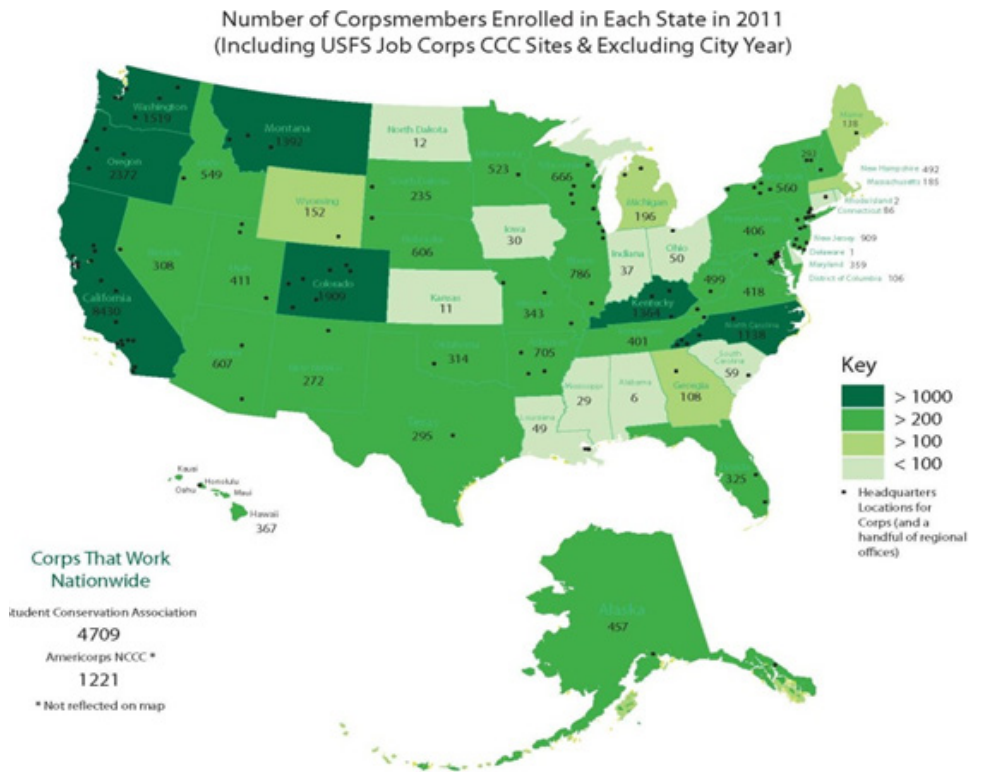
“BOOTS ON THE GROUND, WADERS IN THE WATER”

The Committee recommends that the 21CSC operate through partnerships with accredited non-profits, higher education institutions, and local, state, tribal and federal conservation corps.

Recommendation 1: Establish the 21CSC and Operate it through Partnerships.

Establish a 21CSC and operate it through partnerships with accredited non-profit, higher education, local, state, tribal and federal conservation corps. Support an accreditation process to ensure that partners who operate 21CSC programs have significant expertise, experience and capacity to operate high quality programs

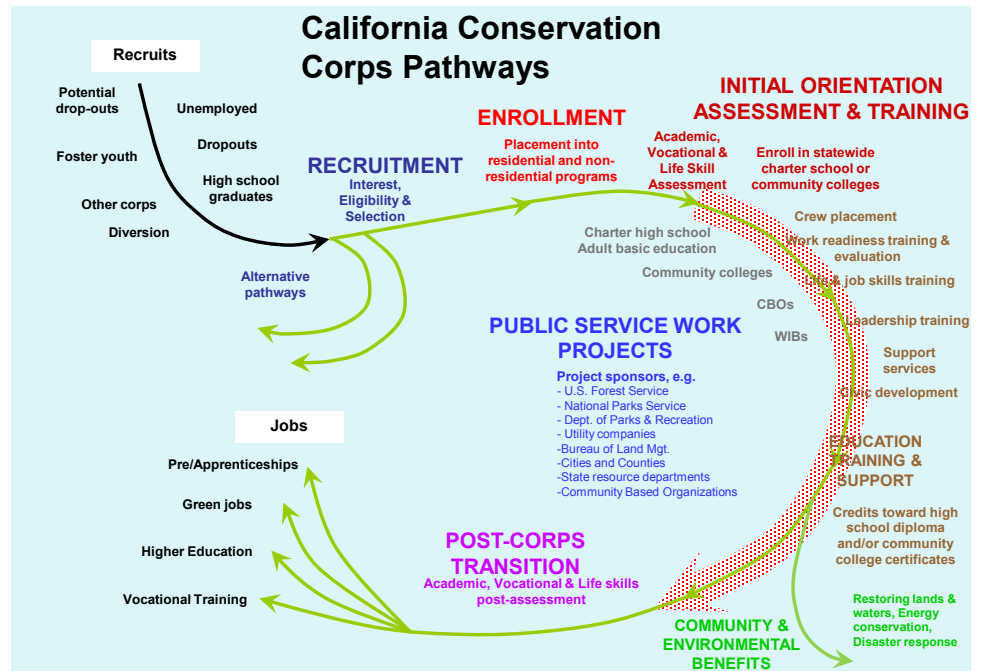
More than 100 conservation corps programs currently operate in all 50 US states, with a widely varying concentration of effort. In total, these programs engage approximately 20,000 young people per year in conservation projects, with some 15,000 engaged in projects on federal lands and waters. The duration, sponsorship, and experiential nature of conservation service programs vary considerably as well – strengths of the current network. 21CSC represents an opportunity to leverage the experience and demonstrated competence of existing corps, and to spread corps activity where additional needs exist.



A SECOND CHANCE

The Corps Network reports that many corpsmembers come to the corps looking for a second chance to succeed in life. “Guided by adult leaders, who serve as mentors and role models as well as technical trainers and supervisors, crews of 8-12 corpsmembers carry out a wide range of conservation, urban infrastructure improvement and human service projects. In return for their efforts to restore and strengthen their communities, most corpsmembers receive: 1) a living allowance; 2) training to improve basic competencies and, in some programs, to secure a GED or high school diploma; 3) experiential and environmental service-learning based education; 4) generic and technical skills training; 5) a wide range of supportive services; and 6) in many cases, an AmeriCorps post-service educational award.”

Each corps program has a specific program model and participant pathway that, while adhering to a broad standard corps model, is tailored to meet the specific needs of the participants and communities served. An example of the California Conservation Corps’ crew-based pathway is below:



In addition to the work crews, some models place individual participants at partner organizations, typically public or tribal land or water management agencies.

Recent innovative models include small teams of university students who serve full-time in the summer and part-time in the academic year. Overall, the 21CSC is meant to engage young people and veterans in a variety of different program types while consistently ensuring a dual benefit of getting important service work accomplished while providing professional and lifeskills development, work experience and training for participants.

21CSC: SHAPING LIVES AND LANDS

On the way to a favorite destination, if you should come across a crew of young Americans working hard rebuilding the trail, you would have witnessed first-hand the essence of the 21CSC. You might come across such a crew in the Rocky Mountains rebuilding the Continental Divide Trail, restoring salmon habitat in a rain-swollen tributary of the Pacific, thinning brush and trees in the mountains ringing Los Angeles to prevent a catastrophic wildfire from destroying a nearby residential area, building a fitness course in a recently restored streamside community park, or responding to a flood or wildland fire emergency.

From their hard hats to their boots and the packs on their backs this crew is obviously designed to work outdoors. The worn work gloves and coating of dirt is clear evidence that this crew's experience shares much more in common with past generations of Americans than with the virtual realities of their own. Those fortunate enough to get to know this crew would learn it is composed of young women and men from urban metropolises and small towns, from all racial, economic, and educational backgrounds. For many this is their first job and their first experience earning a day's wages for a day's work. Some are veterans recently returned from the Middle East gaining the skills to transition into a good resource management job. The crew describes the bridges they've built, the retaining walls that now hold back an unstable slope, the stream habitat assessment they completed in partnership with a sportfishing group, and the rainwater capture system they installed to irrigate a city park and save water and money. They take great pride in being of service, producing something of lasting value and utility and of the skills they learned under the leadership and expertise of their crew supervisor and other professionals.

Though the work is hard, they are thankful for the opportunity; their ascendance into the workforce, always a difficult transition, made much more so by the lack of jobs in this economy. Those familiar with the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps might have heard similar stories from former corps members now over 90 years old; stories of a corps job at a time in life when it was most needed and one that shaped a lifetime.

Unlike the federally-run CCC of the 30's, this crew is part of a local conservation corps that receives federal, other public, and private support. Located throughout the country, these corps meet common quality assurance accreditation standards but provide a wide variety of work, training, and educational experiences designed to move a broad diversity of young people toward their goals and into the workforce and continuing education. Part new, part as timeless as the great outdoors, this is the essence of the 21CSC.

ENSURING QUALITY THROUGH ACCREDITATION

The Committee recommends instituting an accreditation process for 21CSC programs in order to: 1) define 21CSC programs; and 2) promote and ensure high quality. The accreditation process should be inclusive with opportunities for new programs to emerge and participate.

Supporting Recommendation 1.1: Accreditation. The National Council should adopt and implement an accreditation process to define and promote high quality of 21CSC programs using the standards and process described in this report.

Among many other programmatic and operational standards, the Committee recommends that accredited 21CSC programs:

- engage 15-to-25-year-old Americans, including low-income and disadvantaged youth as well as veterans up to age 35, in compensated work and service in comprehensive programs ranging from 140 to 3,500 hours in duration;
- complete significant projects for the public benefit while providing participants with job skills, training, education and professional development; and
- demonstrate the highest quality program, fiscal and risk management practices.

[See the chart and additional information in Appendix B for detailed information about the accreditation standards.]

An accreditation process for 21CSC should incorporate the recommended accreditation standards and adhere to the following guiding principles:

1. The Accreditation Process is specific to the 21CSC program and is transparent and objective.
2. Program quality is the focus.
3. The experience and development of participants is a critical and core component of program quality.
4. High standards of project management are required including safety, training and experience with type of project performed.
5. The process is inclusive and open to any service and conservation corps programs that are interested in pursuing accreditation (higher education, private, local, state and federal government).
6. New organizations are encouraged and supported.

The Committee recommends that a comprehensive accreditation process follow a three phased approach.

PHASE 1 (October – December 2012)

Expedite the accreditation process by conducting a preliminary or partial accreditation during this initial phase. Identify a member agency or independent partner to manage the preliminary accreditation process. AGO Council participating agencies should enter into a Memorandum of Understanding which stipulates that all agencies recognize and honor provisional or temporary accreditation status granted.

The National Council (or the AGO Council if the National Council has not been organized), in consultation with the Advisory Committee, should adopt the necessary accreditation standards for 21CSC programs to be used on a provisional or temporary basis by the identified agency or partner managing accreditation. The 21CSC Principles (Appendix A) should serve as the standards for a provisional or temporary accreditation.

PHASE 2 (Calendar Year 2013, depending on when the National Council is established)

The 21CSC National Council should issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an independent organization to operate the accreditation process. The selected entity will administer the accreditation and data reporting for participating organizations. The MOU among the AGO Council participating agencies should provide that the participating agencies recognize and honor the full accreditation status granted by the independent organization.

The identified agency or partner that is temporarily managing accreditation should develop a provisional or temporary accreditation process for new, emerging, or non-traditional programs. The Committee will provide recommendations on the criteria for this new accreditation process and provide to the identified agency and 21CSC National Council (or the AGO Council if the National Council has not been organized) by October 1, 2012. AGO Council participating agencies should enter into a Memorandum of Understanding which stipulates that the participating agencies recognize and honor this provisional / temporary accreditation status granted by the identified agency or partner.

PHASE 3 (Starts once the independent accreditation organization commences operations)

All organizations that received provisional or temporary accreditation must go through the full accreditation process established by the 21CSC National Council, and will then move onto a three-year review and renewal cycle. The 21 CSC accreditation criteria listed in this document (Appendix B) should serve as the standards for full accreditation. Any corps program that received provisional or temporary accreditation will have 12 months to meet the full accreditation standards. The MOU among the AGO Council participating agencies also should provide that the participating agencies recognize and honor the full accreditation status granted by the independent organization.



Members of the Mile High Youth Corps help maintain public land infrastructure, ensuring safety and accessibility for all.

FUNDING AND OTHER RESOURCES

The Committee recommends that project-based funding from existing and new public sources, leveraged and supported by private funds and non-financial partnerships, constitute the principal sources of support for the 21CSC. This recommended approach builds upon the example provided by the National Park Service's recent review of the significant potential, and potential 56% cost savings, of utilizing corps to complete cyclic maintenance projects.⁷

The Committee estimates that there are currently approximately 20,000 participants each year serving on public lands (15,000 of whom serve on federal public lands), supported by approximately \$60M from the Departments of Agriculture and Interior and supplemented by significant additional federal, state, local and private resources. Significantly increasing these numbers will require ramping up support from federal agencies with substantial experience hosting corps – initially from existing funds -- and enlisting a range of additional federal resource management and grant-making agencies as well. It should include new appropriations to land and water management agencies for high priority projects to be accomplished by accredited 21CSC programs.

Additional strategies include leveraging Federal Work-Study Program funds at colleges and universities, increasing the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)'s support for 21CSC programs, giving preference to 21CSC programs in federal grant-making agencies, and tapping into compensatory restoration or mitigation funds. For this project-based approach to be optimally efficient and effective at the federal level, federal partners will also need to streamline and coordinate the application and granting processes of their divisions, offices, and bureaus that support 21CSC programs.

The Committee also recommends that the 21CSC build partnerships to raise private funds and generate other forms of support such as volunteers, in-kind equipment, and post-program opportunities for program graduates (e.g., scholarships, internships, mentors, jobs, etc.) In addition to leveraging and support roles, private funding will prove useful for functions such as helping launch new corps where needed; expanding corps and youth leadership opportunities in high need areas such as urban America, tribal lands, large landscapes, and coastal areas and waters; and supporting high-profile signature and local projects.

Recommendation 2: Employ an Innovative Funding Strategy.

Support the 21CSC principally with project-based funding from existing and new public sources leveraged and supported by private funds. Raise other funds and resources through a broad array of public and private sources. Streamline, coordinate, and create consistency among the application and granting processes of current and potential federal funding sources for 21CSC-affiliated programs.

⁷ National Park Service presentation, "Utilizing Youth Programs to Accomplish Cyclic Maintenance at National Parks." July 6, 2011

Supporting Recommendations: Private Partners

Supporting Recommendation 2.1: Establish Partnerships for Non-Federal Support. The National Council and Advisory Committee, in collaboration with the Partnership for America's Great Outdoors, should build partnerships with a range of stakeholders from the private, philanthropic, and higher education sectors to raise non-federal funds, leverage investment, and generate other forms of support such as volunteers, in-kind equipment, college credit, and post-program opportunities for program graduates (e.g., scholarships, internships, mentors, jobs).

Some private fundraising efforts should go toward creating a Youth Innovation Fund to support 21CSC programs and projects, in cooperation with the four Congressionally-chartered foundations as feasible.

Supporting Recommendation 2.2: Develop Strategic National and Regional Partnerships. The National Council, Advisory Committee, and other national partners should seek out national and regional level partnerships that can support, enhance and grow the 21CSC.

Examples could include:

- Partnerships with employers who agree to support the transition of 21CSC graduates to employment.
- Partnerships with post-secondary institutions that agree to provide college credit and/or scholarships for 21CSC participants.
- Partnerships with national corporations, associations, foundations, media and others who agree to provide support (funding, gear/tools/uniforms, in-kind) to support 21CSC programs and operations.

Supporting Recommendations: Multiple Federal Agency Partners

Supporting Recommendation 2.3: Initiate Budget and Legislative Actions. The AGO Council, in consultation with the Advisory Committee, should initiate budget and legislative recommendations to incorporate implementation of the 21CSC within existing priority performance goals, and include a 21CSC presentation in the Administration's FY 2014 and FY 2015 budget requests based on the initial goal of doubling the scale of participation. In addition, the budget for the agency that will house the 21CSC National Council should provide for staffing and operations of the 21CSC National Council. The AGO Council should recommend that OMB request the participating agencies to develop a cross-cut budget for FY 2014 and FY 2015 for 21CSC.

Supporting Recommendation 2.4: Conduct 21CSC Opportunity Review and Implement Partnership Growth Strategies – Federal Resource Management Agencies. The Secretaries of Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Army should review existing budgets, programs, project profiles, and policies to identify opportunities for creating or expanding partnerships with 21CSC programs, and should establish and implement partnership growth strategies where feasible. Such reviews should also identify, and facilitate where possible, programmatic and policy changes that would contribute to meeting 21CSC goals.

“This was a great experience to show local high school students the benefit to giving back to their community through stewardship and trails projects.”

*- Peter Brown,
Gallatin Valley
Land Trust, MT*

For the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, this will include reviews and partnership growth strategies within bureaus and offices that provide state and local funding or technical assistance, and of a broader suite of programs to include Pitman-Robertson, Dingell-Johnson, Wallop-Breaux, LWCF, UPARR, the North American Wetlands Act, and other grant programs.

Supporting Recommendation 2.5: Adopt a Consistent Approach and Agreement Structure. Federal agencies should eliminate procedural and institutional barriers by establishing a consistent and efficient approach to creating agreements and partnerships between and among agencies and 21CSC programs. Federal agencies should also employ an agreement structure that values and expresses the public purpose served, the substantial involved role of the federal partner agency, and the value of the resulting youth development.

The experience of existing corps is that operating under cooperative agreements, rather than contracts, is an effective and cost-efficient business practice in implementing youth projects.

Supporting Recommendation 2.6: Cooperative Agreements. To the extent practicable, the relevant Departments should implement youth projects through federal financial assistance procedures, participating agreements, or cooperative agreements rather than through contracts and the Federal Acquisition Regulations. These projects should be administered whenever possible through Federal Financial Assistance Officers to take advantage of their expertise.

Bureaus of the Department of the Interior use various approaches to implement youth programs that can create confusion for managers, especially in the use of cooperative agreements, and result in some agency staff concluding that working with a corps is just not worth the effort.

Supporting Recommendation 2.6.1: Develop a DOI-Wide Agreement Template. The Department of Interior should consider developing a Department-wide agreement and provide agreement templates to the Bureaus to achieve more consistency, for the purposes of developing and implementing the 21CSC.

Some agency personnel view their current use of corps as exclusively a fee-for-service arrangement with the only end product being the work accomplished. Even though there are times when it is appropriate to accomplish youth projects through competitive bidding processes, the unfortunate result has been a tendency to view corps and other youth-serving conservation organizations as contractors and vendors rather than as partners working together for a shared goal. Therefore, there must be more criteria for making awards than which group has the lowest bid because the result has too often been either a low quality work product, or an inferior youth experience. The ability to perform quality work while providing superior participant experiences should be the determining criteria.

WORKING TOGETHER

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) constitutes an example of how fund transfer authority helps implement multi-agency initiatives. GLRI's enabling legislation authorizes the EPA Administrator to transfer up to \$300,000,000 of funds appropriated for GLRI to the head of any Federal department or agency, with the concurrence of such head, to carry out activities for several purposes. These include supporting the GLRI and Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement programs, projects, or activities; entering into an interagency agreement with the head of such Federal department or agency to carry out these activities; and making grants to governmental entities, nonprofit organizations, institutions, and individuals for planning, research, monitoring, outreach, and implementation in furtherance of the GLRI and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

Supporting Recommendation 2.7: Institute and Consistently Apply Expansive Project Rating Review Factors. Each relevant Department should acknowledge, through its agreement process, that the purpose of youth conservation service is about more than the work alone. When determining whether to engage with 21CSC accredited youth organizations to perform prioritized projects, the Departments should include project rating "review factors" that take into account, in addition to price, factors such as a youth organization's relevant experience and expertise, overall capacity, and demonstrated youth outcomes.

Supporting Recommendation 2.8: Conduct 21CSC Opportunity Reviews – Federal Grantmaking Agencies. The Secretaries of Labor, Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and the EPA Administrator should review existing programs, projects, and policies to identify and implement opportunities to include 21CSC preference and priorities language (e.g., Transportation Enhancements, Community Development Block Grants, and Clean Water Act Section 319 grants).

Not all federal agencies have the legal authority to transfer funds to corps or the ability to transfer funds to other agencies.

Supporting Recommendation 2.9: Broaden Fund Transfer Authority. To facilitate implementation of 21CSC across all participating agencies, the Advisory Committee urges giving authority – likely via legislation -- to those federal agencies without it to transfer funds among federal agencies and to a non-federal entity, competitively or non-competitively, using a cooperative agreement.

Supporting Recommendation 2.10: Link Natural Resource Restoration and Mitigation to 21CSC Programs. The relevant Secretaries and the Attorney General of the United States should systematically review and pursue opportunities to encourage partnerships with 21CSC programs when completing restoration required under law to compensate or mitigate for losses to natural resources.

Supporting Recommendation 2.11: Promote YCC/Non-profit Partnerships. The Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture should clarify that land- and resource-managing agencies can work in partnership with non-federal 21CSC programs to manage or operate Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) activity and encourage them to do so, where appropriate.

Many existing corps have difficulties raising the 25% match required by most Agreements. This issue could be exacerbated with an increase in federal support for 21CSC programs that requires programs to raise more match.

Supporting Recommendation 2.12: Clarify Match Requirements. The Departments should broaden the recognition of the many sources of in-kind matches including the value of the volunteer contribution.

Supporting Recommendations: Specific Federal Agency Partners

Supporting Recommendation 2.13: Federal Work-Study Priority / Matching Requirements. The Secretary of Education should establish conservation and environmental service projects as a primary strategic priority for use of Federal Work-Study funds, and waive any matching requirements for Federal Work-Study funds used to support student participants in accredited 21CSC programs. Precedents include the successful America Reads and America Counts programs.

Supporting Recommendation 2.14: Corporation for National and Community Service Priority, Operating Grants, and Education Awards. The Corporation for National and Community Service should give preference and priority to 21CSC goals in order to increase the availability of operating grants for accredited 21CSC programs, and the number of AmeriCorps Education Awards for 21CSC participants.

Supporting Recommendations: State and Local Partners

Recommendation 2.15: Conduct 21CSC Opportunity Reviews - State and Local
The National Council and Advisory Committee should encourage a range of state and local officials to review and identify opportunities for creating or expanding partnerships with 21CSC programs – including through programs supported with federal, state, and local funds for land and water projects, youth and veterans employment, community development, and compensatory restoration or mitigation -- and where appropriate, incentivize implementation of partnership growth strategies.



MANAGEMENT, SUPPORT AND OVERSIGHT

The Committee recommends a management and oversight approach for the 21CSC that recognizes the key enabling roles of federal agencies, and provides for substantial non-federal input and support.

Recommendation 3: Support the 21CSC to Promote Growth and Quality. Provide for ongoing management and oversight by establishing a permanent National Council for the 21CSC along with a Federal Advisory Committee for the 21CSC. Together, charge these bodies with bringing the 21CSC to scale, demonstrating national impact, and promoting high-quality programs and participant experiences as well as pathways to careers.

Specifically, working with accredited 21CSC Programs that engage 21CSC participants, complete 21CSC projects and operate 21CSC programs, management and oversight should involve two main components:

The National Council for the 21CSC, in close coordination with the Federal Advisory Committee, should perform a number of specific tasks including:

- marshaling funding and other resources
- promoting high quality programs through support of an accreditation process
- removing barriers to supporting 21CSC programs
- supporting participant pathways to careers
- facilitating technical assistance
- developing and supporting partnerships
- coordinating messaging
- demonstrating impact, and
- ensuring national representation

The Federal Advisory Committee for the 21CSC should advise the National Council on the development of the 21CSC and be comprised of representatives from a wide variety of non-federal-government stakeholders and constituency groups.

The 21CSC management and oversight structure is based upon the models of the National Council for Invasive Species and the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation.



Supporting Recommendation 3.1: Establish a Dual Management & Oversight Structure. In order for the 21CSC to function as intended, establish two separate, complementary, and inter-dependent management and oversight entities: a National Council for the 21CSC and a Federal Advisory Committee:

National Council for the 21CSC

The Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce, the EPA Administrator, CEQ Chair, Corporation for National and Community Service CEO and the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Civil Works (for the Army Corps of Engineers) should sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishing the National Council for the 21CSC and should convene once annually to assess the progress of the 21CSC.

There should be two levels of membership in the National Council:

- Core Membership should include heads of bureaus and agencies that are committed and engaged in 21CSC implementation: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Surface Mining, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, US Forest Service, and the Office of Personnel Management. In addition, MOU signers that are not represented at the Bureau/Agency level – such as EPA, CEQ and CNCS – could appoint a representative to serve in the Core Membership.
- Affiliated Members should include agencies that can support 21CSC operations including the Departments of Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs.

A Core Membership Member of the National Council should serve as Chair of the National Council for a 12-month term.

Federal Advisory Committee for the 21CSC

In order to assure that the Council has ready access to useful operational and programming information from those with experience and knowledge about conservation service programs, as well as from among other levels of government, the Secretary of Interior should charter a FACA advisory committee comprised of representatives from state, city and tribal governments; established youth corps; participating private, non-profit, youth-serving organizations; participating colleges and universities, including representatives of such institutions substantially serving African-American, Hispanic and Native American youth; current and former youth corps participants, participating vocational and technical schools, and representatives of the outdoor recreation industry, public land conservation, and historic preservation. The existing 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Advisory Committee should perform the functions of the Federal Advisory Committee for the 21CSC until such time as that body is constituted, or at the discretion of the Secretary may simply be extended.

Supporting Recommendation 3.1.2: Provide for Council & Committee Staff and Office. The National Council should appoint an executive director, either through an intergovernmental personnel action (IPA) or after a national all-sources search

“I want to be a hot-shot or a smokejumper with the Forest Service. This job is what inspired me.”

- YCC Alum

that adheres to federal hiring procedures, and duty-station a small initial staff from among participating agency donated personnel to serve the Council and support the work of the Advisory Committee. Initially, the Department of Interior should provide 21CSC staff with office space. Within the first 24 months, the National Council should determine the permanent location for housing for the staff and office.

Supporting Recommendation 3.1.3: Hold Regular Council and Committee Meetings. The Council and Advisory Committee should meet together at least semi-annually until the 21CSC is fully operational. The FACA should also convene with the Council as needed to encourage coordination between the bodies. Agency personnel should staff Council and Advisory Committee meetings. In subsequent years, the Council and FACA should meet as needed, for purposes such as formulating budgets and evaluating program status.

Supporting Recommendation 3.1.4: Set Goals under Government Performance & Results Act. Each operating agency (land and water management agencies) that participates in 21CSC should establish a GPRA goal (Government Performance and Results Act) – as applicable – that expresses the agency’s particular role in expanding opportunities for youth conservation service under the 21CSC initiative.

The Funding section of this report describes the ways and means by which the National Council will marshal funding, partnerships and other resources for 21CSC and address barriers. Likewise, the Partnership section of this report describes the National Council’s role in the accreditation process. Additional Supporting Recommendations just below address Council roles in creating participant pathways, demonstrating impact, and messaging.

Creating Participant Pathways to Careers

For the 21CSC goal of putting young Americans to work to be fully met, the Committee makes the following recommendations to ensure that high-quality 21CSC participant experiences will include career pathways leading to long-term opportunities for permanent employment and continuing education.

Supporting Recommendation 3.2: Create and Support Participant Pathways to Careers. The National Council should assist 21CSC participants to continue their career development post-21CSC – broadly defined to include education, training, work, and related pursuits. Several additional supporting recommendations speak to ways the Council can fulfill this role.

Supporting Recommendation 3.2.1: Create and Grant a Certificate of 21CSC Participation. To unify and recognize the experience of those participating in accredited 21CSC programs, the National Council should issue a Certificate of Participation to all participants who successfully complete a term of service as defined by the program provider, and which meets the minimum participation requirements as defined by the National Council. The Certificate of Participation should be tied to the 21CSC broad outcomes including job skill development and community skill

“The quality as well as volume of work completed was beyond our expectations. Their work completed will have a positive impact on the Ironwood National Monument for years to come.”

- Phil Westcott, BLM

development as well as the intended outcomes of the individual programs, such as technical and vocational skills training, educational readiness, career readiness or youth development.

Supporting Recommendation 3.2.2: Coordinate with Federal Pathways Programs. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management should assist Federal agencies to formulate workforce planning and hiring guidance, so as to utilize the pipeline of talent generated from 21CSC programs for optimal participation in Federal Pathways Programs (Interns and Recent Grads).

The time consuming and complex security background checks required of interns placed with the federal government so that they can access facilities and their computer systems can complicate, delay, and sometimes cancel project deployment.

Supporting Recommendation 3.2.3: Facilitate Background Checks. The Departments should develop guidance to facilitate effective and immediate implementation nationwide regarding background checks for 21CSC interns serving in agencies.

Tracking Data and Conducting Evaluation

The Committee offers several recommendations for data tracking, reporting and program evaluation, in order to demonstrate the efficacy and the accomplishments of the 21CSC. Standard metrics can demonstrate accomplishments and successes of the 21CSC programs, so as to attract new partners, funders, participating corps, and future participants. In addition to tracking data and reporting on the milestones and accomplishments, external evaluation can validate program impact. Tracking and analyzing data will also permit identification of geographic, demographic, and project type gaps in programming, to inform efforts to ensure national representation. In general, 21CSC programs will collect data as a requirement of accreditation and submit data reports to the National Council for analysis, aggregation, and reporting. Appendix C details specific data points to track.

Supporting Recommendation 3.3: Track, Analyze, and Make Data Available. The National Council should track, analyze, and make data available to the public regarding operations and impact of 21CSC programs. Quantitative and qualitative data categories for collection and analysis include program and participant outcomes; participant demographics; program information; and safety and compliance.

Supporting Recommendation 3.3.1: Establish a National Database. The National Council should identify a system to track data either through an existing or a new on-line database to measure performance and ensure accountability of 21CSC participants and programs.

Supporting Recommendation 3.3.2: Conduct External Program Evaluation. The National Council should develop a mechanism for independent third party program evaluations to demonstrate the effectiveness of the 21CSC.



Veterans Green Corps members gain new, marketable skills that assist in their transition to civilian employment.

Establishing a Presence and Brand, Enabling an Information Flow

The Committee makes the following recommendations to ensure that the 21CSC will be a high-profile, well-coordinated, and mutually-supportive national network of programs and participants whose impacts are easily and widely disseminated to the general public and the 21CSC programs and stakeholders.

Supporting Recommendation 3.4: Establish a Presence and Brand for 21CSC and Enable a Strong, Nationwide Flow of Information. As another key function, the National Council should take steps to establish a nationwide presence for 21CSC, and enable an ongoing information flow for participants, programs, and the general public.

Supporting Recommendation 3.4.1: Develop Information Tools to Establish and Support a National Effort. The National Council should establish a national brand and plan to organize, promote, and communicate the opportunities and accomplishments of this national effort by developing a logo, tagline and other messaging and marketing materials.

Supporting Recommendation 3.4.2: Create and Staff an Online 21CSC Platform. To support, enhance and unify 21CSC programs and their participants, the National Council should create and staff an online platform to keep information up-to-date and answer specific questions or provide direct resources to those seeking to grow the 21CSC movement. Features of the online platform could include, for example:

- A listing of Certification Standards and Best Practices for existing and aspiring 21CSC providers.
- A Clearinghouse for educational and employment resources, including further training programs, scholarships and specific job opportunities.
- A Social Network for 21CSC providers, participants and alumni.
- An Accomplishments Tracker to compile and display common measures with which to publicize program impact.



NATIONWIDE IMPLEMENTATION AND SCALING

Launching the 21CSC, and bringing it to an appropriate scale and presence as a national initiative, constitute the focus areas for the fourth major Committee recommendation. The Call to Action, above, lists a number of immediate steps. The National Council, agencies, and other stakeholders need to give near-term attention to several additional steps and planning activities.

Recommendation 4: Rapidly Increase the Scale and Presence of 21CSC. Double the current number of conservation corps participants and implement a two-phase plan for growing the 21CSC to 100,000 participants by 2018. Also, assess gaps and take steps to intensify the presence of 21CSC to match the needs of young people, natural resources, and communities so as to demonstrate and ensure national impact.

Supporting Recommendation 4.1: Grow the 21CSC to 100,000 participants by 2018. The National Council – in partnership with land and water management agencies, other relevant departments and agencies, and private supporters – should implement a two-phase plan for growing the 21CSC to 100,000 participants per year by 2018.

The Committee based the scaling recommendations on two underlying cost assumptions:

- Average cost per hour of 21CSC project work: \$24 (wages, supervision, program and operating costs as a loaded cost/hour of work). Based on a survey of approximately 20 corps, the average cost of participant project work is \$24 per hour of work. This reflects participant wages, program and operational costs (e.g., supervision, transportation, training, insurance, etc.) and includes in-kind and alternative funding sources.
- Average cost per participant: \$10,000. Using \$24 per hour of project work as the basis, the average cost per participant is approximately \$10,000. This number is based on a wide range of levels of engagement (from low-skilled work to highly technical work) and on a wide range of term lengths (from 140-1700 hour/annual terms) with the average being an approximately 450 hour annual term, typical for a 10-12 week seasonal corps program.

The Committee recommends a two-phased approach where the 21CSC first scales up to 50,000 participants per year using primarily existing infrastructure and program models and currently appropriated funding. The second phase would grow the 21CSC from 50,000 to 100,000 participants per year using new models with new investment. Depending on availability of funding these two phases could overlap. Additional information on the two phases follows.

Phase 1: 50,000 participants per year utilizing existing programs, models, and funding.

The Committee recommends that the 21CSC increase its engagement from the 20,000 participants currently enrolled to an enrollment of 50,000 participants per year at a total cost of approximately \$500 million (\$481 million) per year by 2015. Based on the capacity of existing corps programs (approximately 20,000 participants supported by approximately \$200 million in funding from a wide variety of public and private sources), their projected ability to grow, and the projected ability to start new corps programs in currently underserved areas, the Committee assumed growth at a rate of an additional 10,000 participants per year for three years, to reach 50,000 participants per year by 2015 (see Chart #1).

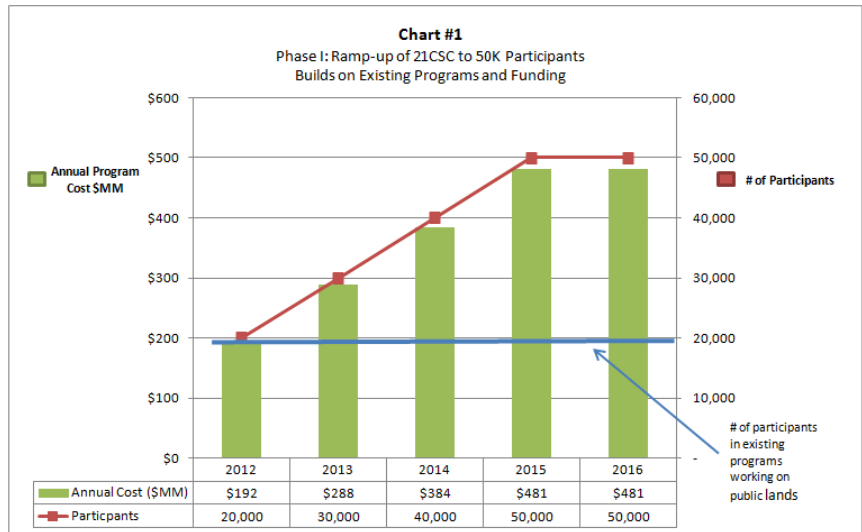
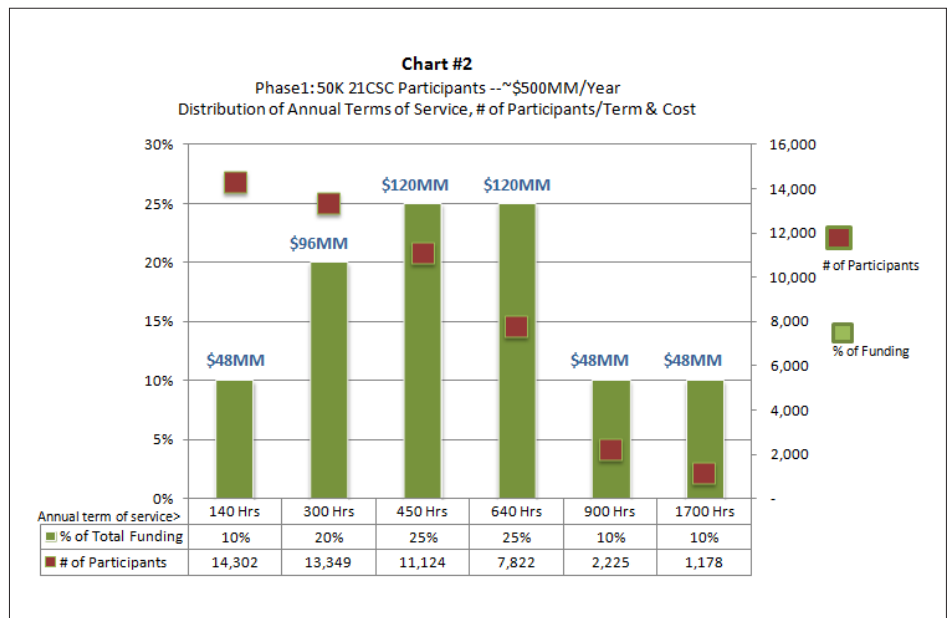


Chart #1 illustrates the ramp up of the 21CSC to 50,000 participants by 2015, building on the existing infrastructure of partnerships between public land management agencies and youth programs and the current level of investment estimated at about \$192 million coming from a wide variety of federal, state, local and private sources. The green columns show the total cost (in millions). The red line shows the number of participants increasing from 20,000 to 50,000.

Chart 2 assumes a total number of participants of 50,000 at an average cost of \$10,000/participant and a total cost \$481 million. The chart illustrates how participants might be distributed across programs of different lengths of service, ranging from a summer program of 140 hours to full-time programs of 1,700 hours/year. The red dots show the number of participants in each of the different lengths of service. The green column shows the percentage of funding that would be allocated to fund this distribution of participants. For example, 14,302 participants would serve in terms of 140 hours, requiring 10% of the funding, or \$48 million.



Phase 2: 100,000 participants per year utilizing new models with new investment.

The Committee recommends that the 21CSC enroll 100,000 participants per year (including the 50,000 Phase 1 participants described above) at a cost of approximately \$1 billion (\$961 million) per year by 2018, dependent on new funding and program models (see Chart #3).

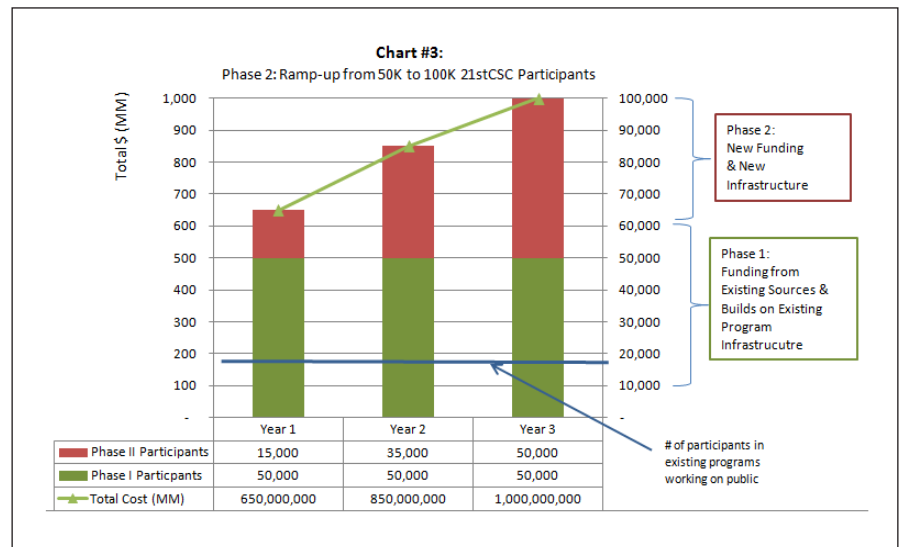
Phase 2 projections assume the following:

- Starting from a baseline of approximately 20,000 participants per year in existing corps programs, the maximum ability for growth by both existing and new corps programs utilizing existing program models will be to approximately 50,000 participants per year.
- The additional 50,000 participants can best be engaged utilizing a program model similar to the one utilized by the original CCC (i.e., large residential camps). These camps could be established to engage participants in large and labor-intensive projects, such as restoring the Everglades and the Gulf Coast, responding to beetle kill issues in the Intermountain West, forest fuel reduction or invasive species removal in the West, completing huge historic preservation projects at places such as Prince William Forest Park, or large scale tree planting or energy conservation projects in urban areas.
- For this type of engagement, which is more uniform than those described in Phase 1, the average term length would still be approximately 450 hours of project work at an approximate cost of \$10,000 per participant.

“The crews were courteous and friendly, also hard-working. The leaders, as always, were professional, businesslike, and yet friendly and personable. Everything was well-organized and the crew efficiently tackled each job that was assigned. I highly commend the Conservation Corps for its dependable and dedicated work crews and leadership.”

*- Bonnie Swarbrick,
US Fish & Wildlife*

Chart 3 illustrates the current number of participants (blue line). Phase 1 expansion to 50,000 participants is represented by the green columns. Phase 2 expansion is shown in red. In Year 1 of Phase 2 expansion, 15,000 participants would be added, 20,000 added in Year 2 and 15,000 added in Year 3 to achieve a total of 100,000 participants. The cost is shown, in millions, on the left. Overall, between three to five percent of total funding should be utilized to support the National Council to oversee the accreditation process, the provision of technical assistance, and a national evaluation. These supporting recommendations provide more detail on implementation timelines and other considerations.



Supporting Recommendation 4.2: Launch 21CSC in October 2012. The 21CSC should have an official launch in October 2012. This will necessitate signing the MOU to establish the National Council, assigning the initial staff, approving a logo/ message and accrediting an initial group of 21CSC programs.

In steps that anticipate more comprehensive action later, the Committee identified several short term actions in order to launch by October 2012. The Committee urges establishing the 21CSC by engaging the AGO Council agencies to: 1) encourage natural resource management agencies to engage 21CSC programs to accomplish high priority work; 2) quickly identify FY 2012 year-end carryover funds where possible, FY 2013 funds, and other resources to seed and launch the initial 21CSC implementation (both operations and projects); 3) include a 21CSC presentation in the FY14 budget request; 4) support simplified agreement mechanisms that recognize the 21CSC’s multiple benefits; 5) support an accreditation process; and 6) sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as soon as possible to establish a 21CSC National Council.

Supporting Recommendation 4.3: Analyze and Ensure National Representation. Conduct an analysis of current conservation corps member enrollment and activity, public/tribal land distribution, and factors such as ethnic representation and youth unemployment nationwide in order to identify high-need areas in terms of future corps expansion and/or new corps development. Also, institute responsive efforts to ensure appropriate representation.

Supporting Recommendation 4.3.1: Conduct Data Analyses. Consistent with the data tracking recommendations of this report, the National Council should utilize data collected on corps participant profiles as well as program/project types and geographic distribution to conduct an analysis of gaps in the demographic representation of corps participants, as well as the types and the geographic distribution of accredited and emerging corps program/projects.

Supporting Recommendation 4.3.2: Provide Technical Assistance. The National Council should facilitate the provision of technical assistance to support the expansion of existing 21CSC programs and the development of new and emerging 21CSC programs. A component of this technical assistance program should support addressing identified gaps in demographic representation of participants as well as program/project types and geographic distribution. The National Council should strongly consider engaging, through an RFP process, outside providers who have significant experience in these issues.

Supporting Recommendation 4.3.3: Provide Resources to Address Gaps. Consistent with the analysis of gaps, the National Council should encourage federal agencies and private funders to support accredited and emerging corps programs that address identified gaps in demographic representation of participants as well as program/project types and geographic distribution.





Members of Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa expand existing recreation corridor with new sections of trail.

LIST OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRIMARY MEMBERS

Mary Ellen Ardouny, Vice President, The Corps Network
Myra Blakely, EPA
Harry Bruell, CEO, Southwest Conservation Corps (Chair)
Michael Collins, Vice President, Recreational Equipment, Inc.
Mary Coulombe, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Quenton Dokken, Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Foundation
Meryl Harrell, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Laura Herrin, Director of Program Innovation, Student Conservation Association
Destry Jarvis, President, Outdoor Recreation and Park Services, LLC
Na'Taki Jelks, Manager for Education and Advocacy Programs, National Wildlife Federation
Justin Johnson, Office of Personnel Management
Melissa Koenigsberg, U.S. Department of the Interior
Asim Mishra, Corporation for National and Community Service
Andrew Moore, Senior Fellow, National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families
David Muraki, Director, California Conservation Corps
Glenn Odenbrett, Project Director, Great Lakes Innovative Stewardship Through Education Network (GLISTEN)
Brian Pawlak, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Daniella Pereira, Deputy Director, GreenApple Corps
Jerrad Schendel, Founder, Green Development Coalition
Dana Valdez, Community Program Director, City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks
Chas Van Genderen, State Park Director, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Carol Wren, Director, Cook Inlet Tribal Council

ALTERNATE MEMBERS

Brendon Barclay, Director, SUVOAC
Daniel Basta, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
William (Bill) Bryan, Director of State Parks, Missouri State Parks
Heather Burke, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Gail Ann Cooper, Environmental Protection Agency
James Ekins, University of Idaho
Jennifer Freeman, Executive Director, Colorado Youth Corps Association
Stacie Gilmore, Executive Director, Environmental Learning for Kids
Lauren Hermley, Maritime Heritage Development Officer, State of North Carolina
Ruth Lampi, Corporation for National and Community Service
Sophia Leiter
Jason McClellan, National Account Manager, Monster
Beth Nordlund, Executive Director, Anchorage Park Foundation
Jeff Parker, Executive Director, Northwest Youth Corps
Leonard Price, Executive Director, Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa

“I got good training, and the experience hooked me up with lots of resources that I could utilize. It prepared me for being out in the wilderness and gave me good life skills.”

- Veterans Green Corps Member

Olga Romero, Corporate Spokesperson, Southwest Airlines
Will Shafroth, U.S. Department of the Interior
Judith Silverberg, Wildlife Education Programs Supervisor, New Hampshire Fish & Game Department
Parc Smith, CEO, American YouthWorks
N. Malik Walker, Office of Personnel Management
Scott Weaver, Senior Vice President for Government and Agency Affairs, Student Conservation Association
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Lisa Young, U.S. Department of the Interior, Designated Federal Official



APPENDIX A – 21CSC PRINCIPLES

The following list of 21CSC Design Principles comes directly from the first section (“Capacity/Format Standards”) of the 21CSC Accreditation Standards, which are included in Appendix B.

1. **Population served.** Program serves young people ages 15-25 and/or military veterans up to age 35. Program could serve young people up to age 29 in an advanced capacity.
2. **Participant Eligibility.** Participants must be a US citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States, meeting the same citizenship requirements as those for serving in AmeriCorps and Public Lands Corps.
3. **Emphasis on Diversity and Inclusion.** Participant recruitment should make deliberate outreach efforts to traditionally underserved communities, including low-income and disadvantaged populations.
4. **Term of Service.** Program minimum term of service of: 140 hours of on-the-ground, hands-on direct service for full time students and summer only participants; or, 300 hours of on-the-ground, hands-on direct service for non-full time student participants. Program maximum term of service of 3,500 hours of on-the-ground, hands-on direct service, with a limited exception for program elements that require more than 3,500 hours to achieve highly advanced outcomes.
5. **Organization of Work.** Program organizes its participants as either: a) crew-based where participants work collectively and intensely together directly supervised by trained and experienced crew leaders or conservation professionals; or b) individual or small team-based where participants work individually or in coordinated teams under the direction of conservation professionals on initiatives that require specific skills and dedicated attention.
6. **Types of Work.** Projects include significant outdoor activity and/or includes “hands-on” direct impact and/or helps young people connect with America’s Great Outdoors. As a limited exception, some programs may include work that is primarily indoors, that has a clear and direct benefit to public cultural and historical resources.
7. **Participant Outcomes.** Program provides: a) job skill development to prepare participants to be successful in the 21st century workforce; b) community skill development to help participants acquire an ethic of service to others and learn to become better resource and community stewards; and c) connection to the natural environment where participants acquire a greater understanding of the value and management of our natural resources.

“Excellent program due to the quality and commitment of the youth providing the work.”

*- Mike Oldham,
US Fish & Wildlife*

APPENDIX B - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON ACCREDITATION

See chart on the following pages and text that follows.

The overarching purpose of accreditation is to ensure that 21CSC programs meet or exceed a prescribed standard of excellence.

Accreditation provides resource management agencies and other partners the assurance that programs and projects have a high level of competency and quality. Resource managers will know that by partnering with an accredited 21CSC program, that they are getting a high level of experience and expertise. Accreditation also ensures that the member experience is valued and that member development is a key component of a 21CSC program.

- The guiding principles behind accreditation are as follows:
- The Accreditation Process is specific to the 21CSC Program and is transparent and objective.
- Program quality is the focus.
- The experience and development of the member is a critical component of program quality.
- High standards of project management are required including safety, training and experience with type of project performed.
- The process is inclusive and open to any service and conservation corps program that is interested in pursuing accreditation (private, local, state and federal government).
- New organizations are encouraged and supported.

CAPACITY/FORMAT STANDARDS

Population Served:

- The 21CSC engages a diverse generation of outdoor enthusiasts and young conservation professionals in the stewardship of America’s public and tribal lands and waters. 21CSC participants:
- will be 15 to 25 years of age. Programs may engage specific subsets of this population depending on the particular model they are implementing.
- will be 26 to 29 years of age if they are serving in an advanced role or capacity within the 21CSC (e.g. Crew leaders, GIS technicians, resource specialists) that will lead to a specific job or career opportunity after the 21CSC experience.
- can be military veterans up to age 35 serving in a participant or advanced role capacity, making the transition to the civilian workforce. Veterans aged 30-35 entering a 21CSC program must serve in a Veteran Specific program model that is focused on the particular skill development needs of veterans.

Metrics for evaluation:

1. Participant job descriptions with age designations.
2. Participant demographic information from previous two years.

21st Century Conservation Service Corps Accreditation Standards

The 21CSC Accreditation standards are designed to ensure programs have the capacity to meet the desired outcomes for the participants as well as meet the quality and production requirements of resource management partners. The standards listed below illustrate the commitment of the 21CSC to high-impact programming that directly addresses the needs of our communities.

Category	Standard	Definition/Qualifier	Rationale
Universal Standards: Each 21CSC program applicant must meet all standards listed below and at least one of the endorsement categories to become accredited. These standards may be accomplished in-house or via committed and intentional partnerships.			
Capacity/Format Standards			
Population served	Youth ages 15-19, and/or	Participant capacity	YCC model
	Young adults 18-25, and/or	Participant or advanced capacity	PLC model
	Young adults 26-29, and/or	In advanced capacity only	age limits at time of entry
	Military veterans of recent conflicts up to age 35	Participant or advanced capacity. Veterans ages 30-35 entering a 21st CSC program must serve in a Veteran Specific program model that is focused on the particular skill development needs of veterans.	age limits at time of entry
	Citizenship	Participants must be a US citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States	
Emphasis on Diversity and Inclusion	21st CSC opportunities are intended for all young Americans. 21st CSC programs should promote opportunities to low-income, disadvantaged and underserved populations	Participant recruitment should make deliberate outreach efforts to traditionally underserved communities, including low-income and disadvantaged populations	Further description in appendix
Term of Service	Minimum of 140 hours of on the ground, hands-on direct service for full time students and summer only participants.	May include other activities, but 140 hours must be in direct, on-the ground service	Further described in appendix with examples
	Minimum of 300 hours of on the ground, hands-on direct service for non full time student participants	May include other activities, but 300 hours must be in direct, on-the ground service	
	Maximum of 3,500 hours of on the ground, hands-on direct service	21st CSC opportunities are transitional and time-bound, not career positions	Further rationale in appendix
	Exceptions	Some program elements require more than 3,500 hours to achieve highly advanced outcomes	Exceptions are outlined in appendix
Organization of Work	Crew/Team based; and/or	Groups of participants working collectively and intensely together. Crews/teams are directly supervised by trained and experienced Crew leaders or Conservation professionals	Further described in appendix with examples
	Individual or small team based	Participants working individually or in coordinated teams under the direction of conservation professionals on initiatives that require specific skills and dedicated attention	Further described in appendix with examples
Types of work	Includes significant outdoor activity, and/or	Significant amount of the service takes place in the outdoor environment	Examples in appendix
	Includes "hands - on" direct impact, and/or	Results in direct service, or has direct benefit to public or tribal lands or waters	Examples in appendix
	Include projects that help young people connect with America's Great Out Doors	Direct service results in the outreach or education of young people to the benefit of public land and water	Examples in appendix
	Limited Exception	May include work that is primarily indoors, that has a clear and direct benefit to public cultural and historical resources.	Examples in appendix
Participant Outcomes	Job skill development	Prepares participants to be successful in the 21st century workforce	Explanation in Appendix
	Community skill development	Participants acquire and ethic of service to others and learn to become better resource and community stewards	Explanation in Appendix
	Connection to the natural environment	Participants acquire a greater understanding of the value and management of our natural resources.	Explanation in Appendix

21st Century Conservation Service Corps Accreditation Standards

Infrastructure Standards			
See Appendix for clarification on demonstrating Infrastructure compliance			
Program Management	Incorporates institutional best practices	Includes organizational governance, accountability structure, staffing, and hiring standards	Further described in appendix
Financial Management	Financial Policies and Procedures reflect general accepted accounting principles	Includes financial P&P's, insurance coverage, audit history, and overall financial strength	Further described in appendix
Sustainability	Demonstrate Organizational experience.	Programs must be have two years of corps operating experience. New programs, and existing programs with less than 2 years experience can be accredited in a provisional status, with an emphasis to help them achieve a sustainable model.	Further rationale in appendix
Need	Program must demonstrate a need in the area	Each accreditation applicant will be asked to provide a statement of need for the geographic area they wish to operate. The National Council will consider this statement of need and emphasize accreditation for programs emerging in underserved areas and/or focusing on underserved populations.	Further rationale in appendix
Risk Management	Risk Management Policies reflect industry standards and best practices	Includes safety P&P's, comprehensive trainings, and incident reporting	Further described in appendix
HR and Administration	Committed Human Resource and Administrative assets	Includes HR polices, accurate file keeping, compliance with applicable employment laws	Further described in appendix
Commitment to Program Quality	Commitment to meeting the needs and purpose of the 21st CSC	Includes program designed to put young Americans to work on conservation projects, provides a pathways for participant development, and encourages a new generation of outdoor enthusiasts	Further described in appendix
Commitment to Project Quality	Ability to meet the technical and logistical needs of 21st CSC resource management projects	Includes organizational capacity, properly trained supervisors, and appropriate participant training and support	Further described in appendix
Accountability and Reporting	Will comply with all 21st CSC compliance and reporting requirements	Includes signing a Memorandum or shared mission statement that illustrates alignment with the core values of the 21st CSC.	Further described in appendix
<p>Pathway Endorsements: Each Accredited 21CSC operator must meet all standards listed above and at least one pathway endorsement criteria below for their participants. Any particular organization may meet separate endorsement criteria for specific program models, but each 21CSC participant must receive the benefit of one of the four listed endorsement pathways. These pathways can be accomplished in-house or via committed and intentional partnerships.</p>			
Technical/Vocational Pathway Endorsement	Program offers an industry recognized technical or vocational certification	Examples include certifications in Chainsaw, Wildland Fire Fighting, Emergency Medical, disaster response, etc.	
Educational Pathway Endorsement	Program offers high school or college credit to participants for their service. Also includes opportunities to earn tuition award for post-secondary education.	Successful completion results in the award of academic credit or a tuition award to help participant achieve academic goals.	
Career Pathway Endorsement	Program includes job shadowing, apprenticeships, job coaching, and/or direct placement/case management for participants	Successful completion leads directly to post-program job and/or career opportunities.	
Youth Development Pathway Endorsement	Program achieves intensive and transformational youth development outcomes	Increase in core life skills development; communication, critical thinking, judgment, leadership.	

All 21CSC participants must be U.S. citizens or have legal resident status: An individual is eligible to serve in the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps if the accredited organization responsible for the individual's supervision certifies that the individual is a citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States. The following are acceptable forms of certifying status as a U.S. citizen or national:

1. A birth certificate showing that the individual was born in one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, or the Northern Mariana Islands.
2. A United States passport
3. A report of birth abroad of a U.S. Citizen (FS-240) issued by the State Department
4. A certificate of birth-foreign service (FS 545) issued by the State Department
5. A certification of report of birth (DS-1350) issued by the State Department
6. A certificate of naturalization (Form N-550 or N-570) issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service
7. A certificate of citizenship (Form N-560 or N-561) issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service

The following are acceptable forms of certifying status as a lawful permanent resident alien of the United States:

- Permanent Resident Card, INS Form I-551
- Alien Registration Receipt Card, INS Form I-551
- A passport indicating that the INS has approved it as temporary evidence of lawful admission for permanent residence
- A Departure Record (INS Form I-94) indicating that the INS has approved it as temporary evidence of lawful admission for permanent residence

Metrics for evaluation:

1. Signed agreement to comply.
2. Random sample of participant personnel files illustrates compliance.

EMPHASIS ON INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The 21CSC expands opportunities for all eligible young Americans by mobilizing young people of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds, and especially aims to increase the involvement of young people:

- from low-income and disadvantaged background and those from urban, underserved, and/or tribal communities
- who are unemployed or underemployed
- with disabilities and special needs
- with little previous exposure to the outdoors
- from rural America, including working farms, ranches and forests and
- veterans transitioning from recent military service

Metrics for evaluation:

1. Recruitment materials and website show diverse participants.
2. Demonstrated recruitment plan that emphasizes inclusion and diversity.
3. Participant demographic data that reflect the demographics of the area of operation.

“I am extremely impressed with the crew’s attitude, work ethic, land ethic, and productivity. This experience has renewed my faith and interest in the caring for the land by a young group of adults. Working with the Corps has been one of the best experiences of my career, which spans 30 years!”

- Jim Sparks, BLM

TERM OF SERVICE

21CSC positions are transitional and time bound. Participants engage in service activities to achieve specific resource management or youth development outcome(s) within a specified start and end date to their service. Therefore, a typical term of service should:

- have a minimum of 140 hours of “on the ground, hands-on” work for fulltime students and “summer only” participants, in order to achieve basic project and training outcomes
- have a minimum of 300 hours of “on the ground, hands-on” work for participants who are not full time students or enrolled in a “summer only” 21CSC program.
- have a maximum of 3,500 hours to ensure the successful transition of participants to further education, training, and/or employment.

In limited cases, exceptions are provided for an extension beyond 3,500 hours when participants are engaged in transitional/career related experience such as: specialized training, work experience, education and/or an apprenticeship program that requires a longer period to achieve a degree and/or industry recognized certification.

Metrics for evaluation:

1. Participant job descriptions with terms of service listed.
2. Participant completion and retention data from previous two years.

ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK

21CSC programs can be structured in various ways to effectively accomplish tangible conservation, restoration and other 21CSC project outcomes and deliver education, training and supervised work experiences to participants. Program design and structure considers: the type of the work to be performed; the seasonal nature of the work; the location of the corps, projects and/ or sponsoring agency; and, in some cases, the background and experiences of participants. However, all 21CSC programs will organize participants in either of two ways described below as Model 1 and Model 2. A 21CSC program can use one, both, or a combination, of these models. With few exceptions, programs must encompass a significant component of work/activity in the outdoors.

Model 1: Participants Working on Directly Supervised Crews

Groups of participants working collectively and intensively together to accomplish hands on conservation, restoration, and preservation objectives for the benefit of one or more public, tribal, or public interest resource management partners. Crew-based activities are directly supervised by trained crew leaders and/or conservation professionals. Participants may constitute residential crews, who temporarily live close to their work assignment, or non-residential “day-crews” who access their work collectively each day and return to their personal living quarters during non-work hours. Crew-based participants usually receive paid compensation for their work, and can serve full-time, part-time, seasonally, year-round, or a combination thereof.



American YouthWorks members build trail structures that mitigate erosion, and reduce user impact, preserving habitat and extending the life of the trail.

The crew-based structure can be modified around a variety of program models that are designed to achieve specific goals, meet specific needs and engage specific populations. Some examples of these program models include:

- Youth Conservation Service Corps: Engages high school aged youth (15-18) working in a crew-based format and supervised by a trained Crew leader.
- Young Adult/Public Lands Conservation Service Corps: Engages young adults (19-25) working in a crew-based format and supervised by a trained Crew Leader. Usually focused on completing necessary work through physical labor. Teams can be specialized to do specific types of work, such as firefighting, invasive species removal, and watershed restoration.
- Community/Urban corps: Engages young people (15-25) working in a crew-based format and supervised by a trained Crew Leaders on public lands and spaces in their own communities.
- Veterans Green Corps: Similar to Young Adult Model but engages recently returned veterans of the Armed Forces.
- Alternative Education Corps: Engages young people (15-25) who are not enrolled in school and do not have a high school diploma or GED in a program that combines conservation service with opportunities to advance academically.
- USFS's Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers: 28 USFS centers which engage 16-25 year olds in a program combining hands-on forestry and natural resource work with related skill training and high school completion and career preparation.

Model 2: Participants Working Independently and on Coordinated Teams

Participants working independently or in coordinated teams under the direction of conservation professionals to accomplish conservation, restoration, and preservation objectives for the benefit of natural, historical, and/or cultural resource management partners. Participants may serve together or in separate locations performing the same or similar types of work, and have multiple and diverse work assignments requiring specific skills and/or dedicated attention focused on a conservation or restoration goal. Participants may receive paid compensation and/or post-secondary academic credit for their work, and can serve full-time, part-time, seasonally, year-round, or a combination thereof. Independent placements and coordinated teams can also be configured around specific program models, including but not limited to:

- Summer or year-long internship program: Engages individuals working alone or as part of a team and sponsored by a resource management agency and/or conservation organizations
- University-Based Corps: Engages undergraduates serving as liaisons between their campuses and community-based environmental organizations for which they - and the college service learners whose activities they coordinate - provide direct conservation-related service

Metric for evaluation:

1. Publicized program descriptions (print and/or internet) which clearly document the program structure.

TYPES OF WORK

All 21CSC projects will accomplish necessary conservation, restoration, construction, and rehabilitation work of and/or enhance accessibility to natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or scenic resources on public and tribal lands, waters, and other natural and public trust resources, as well as private land when a direct public benefit exists; and:

- include significant outdoor activity
- be 'hands-on', which results in 1) direct service, or 2) a product/activity that has a direct impact on or benefit to public or tribal lands or water, or 3) a product/ activity that directly results in the outreach and engagement of young people to the benefit of public lands and waters.

Limited exceptions to requiring significant outdoor activity are allowable for work that is done primarily indoors, which has a clear and direct benefit to public cultural and historical resource projects.

Examples of 'hands-on' work/service projects include:

1. field-based service, such as trail building, fire-fighting, removing invasive species;
2. field-based research, such as archaeological digs, GIS mapping, habitat surveys, etc.; and
3. management of conservation preservation projects, such as developing and implementing stewardship plans, recruiting and deploying volunteers for field-based projects, developing guides for cultural and natural resources

Below is a list of specific example of types of work. This list is not exclusive, but is designed to illustrate the spirit of the work of 21CSC programs.

Protect Wildlife and Preserve Public Lands and Waters (Ecological Restoration) by:

Decommissioning old trails and roads

Installing and maintaining irrigation systems

Performing erosion control measures, including soil and shoreline stabilization

Preserving and restoring stream bank and riparian habitat

Preserving and restoring waterways, coastlines and fish habitat

Preserving and restoring wetlands, prairies and savannahs

Inventorizing and removing invasive weeds and other species; applying herbicide with certified/trained participants

Providing range management

Installing and/or removing fencing

Constructing wildlife openings, food plantings and cover patches

Building nesting boxes and platforms, fishing piers, boat docks and fish cribs

Conducting population studies and GIS inventories

Monitoring cultural resources

Conducting boundary surveys and marking

Mapping resources, monitoring species, collecting and assessing data

Researching, planning, and designing projects

Prepare Communities for Disasters and Respond When Needed by:

Stabilizing mud slides and protecting levees
Undertaking erosion and flood control
Supporting– and, at times, providing – fire crews
Removing debris and hazardous trees
Structure protection

Enhance Recreation on Public Lands and Waters by:

Constructing, maintaining and designing sustainable trails
Building, restoring and painting cabins and structures
Constructing and repairing stone and log retaining walls, bridges, water bars and erosion control measures
Installing signage and interpretive stations
Building, restoring, and maintaining campgrounds and other recreational facilities
Surveying trails and recreational facilities for ADA compliance
Conducting visitor use surveys and GIS mapping
Monitoring visitor safety and risk management
Maintaining and restoring road corridors including tree/brush/rock removal and re-vegetation

Protect Communities and Public Lands from the Devastating Effects of Wildfire by:

Implementing controlled burns
Removing hazardous fuels
Implementing timber stand improvement projects
Constructing fire breaks

Preserve Historic Structures by:

Renovating historical buildings and sites
Preserving artifacts
Stabilizing foundations
Completing masonry repair work
Stabilizing pre-historic sites
Constructing interpretive displays
Decommissioning outdated structures

Enhance Neighborhoods and Community Public Spaces by:

Constructing and maintaining community/neighborhood gardens, green spaces, and parks
Landscaping public spaces
Planting grasses, trees, seedlings, and shrubs; collecting seeds
Maintaining and removing trees and shrubs
Building, restoring, and maintaining playgrounds
Removing litter and graffiti
Installing recycling containers and administering recycling programs
Building and maintaining bike and walking paths, both hard and soft surface including trails that meet ADA standards
Recovering Brownfield sites

Mitigating and responding to air, land, and water pollution
Cleaning and restoring abandoned lots
Cleaning, restoring, and protecting urban waterways
Installing rainwater collection systems
Constructing, maintaining and improving park shelters, kiosks, cabins, etc.
Installing signage

Engage Americans in America's Great Outdoors by:

Developing, coordinating and supervising hands-on large and small scale service projects for volunteers and other volunteer events
Engaging youth in America's Great Outdoors through outreach and educational activities

Metrics for evaluation:

1. Participant job descriptions and recruitment material that shows type and place of work to be completed.
2. Program promotional information (print and internet) demonstrating types of work.
3. List of project accomplishments from previous two years.

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

While each 21CSC program may vary in terms of its format/participants, organization, and process for delivery; all 21CSC programs will provide certain universal outcomes and experiences for the participants. Designed to share the dual mission of developing young people and accomplishing needed and important work, all 21CSC programs will combine work experience with other opportunities for young people to increase their educational, technical, life and leadership skills, develop a sense of community and purpose and acquire other experiences designed to prepare them for the 21st Century workplace.

The primary outcomes for all 21CSC participants can be summarized as increased job skills, better understanding of the value and management of our natural resources, and community engagement skills. At the completion of their service, 21CSC participants will have become stronger, more skilled, and employable workers and informed and active citizens. Accredited programs will provide experiences such as real work, guidance from expert supervision and adult mentors, education, applied training, working with people from diverse backgrounds, and exposure to a dynamic and challenging environment - the outdoors.

Job skills that will be acquired by participants include a strong work ethic, dependability, punctuality, problem-solving, physical fitness as well as job specific certifications. Participants will also gain community engagement skills including understanding of the value of public service and volunteering, their own ability to contribute to the greater good, an ethic of service to others, and knowledge about being a steward of resources, land, and communities. Increased understanding of the role and management of our natural resources will increase participants' appreciation for and connection to the natural environment.

Metric for evaluation

Participant program evaluations designed to gauge program impact and participant outcomes.

INFRASTRUCTURE STANDARDS

The infrastructure standards set forth below are designed to demonstrate program capacity and commitment to quality. These standards are not designed to limit entry into the 21CSC, but rather to encourage high-impact programming by all accredited 21CSC programs. It can be expected that each 21CSC program will have differing organizational structures and engage unique partnerships to achieve these standards. Infrastructure standards can be met by an individual program, or a parent or partner organization. For example, a state run Youth Corps program could demonstrate that the program has risk management policies by state statute, agency directive, or at the program level. Likewise, a non-profit run program with public or private partners needs to demonstrate that only the pertinent partner meets the accreditation standard; (e.g. if one partner handles payroll and another partner handles program management, the accrediting body will look to the pertinent partner for competency, not both). The burden of proof will be on the individual program or organization to show the connection between partner roles and responsibilities.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

These standards ensure that accredited 21CSC programs operate a program consisting of competent, proven operational systems and infrastructure.

- Programs maintain a standard form of governance and accountability structure.
- Programs have sufficient staff to manage a 21CSC program.
- Programs have development and succession plans for key staff.
- Program leaders meet hiring/enrollment standards.
- Program members and staff are easily recognizable through uniforms and insignia.

Metrics for evaluation

1. An organizational chart that demonstrates adequate layers of supervision.
2. Job descriptions for key staff that show accountability and oversight.
3. Bios for key staff which illustrate pertinent experience.
4. Clearly defined staff development process.
5. Documented training curricula.
6. Human resource policies on file.
7. Non-discrimination policy on file.
8. Employee handbook which clearly articulates organizational policies and procedures.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

These standards ensure that accredited 21CSC programs exemplify financial integrity and transparency that results in competent management and the best protection and service to their corps members.

1. Programs utilize financial controls and generally accepted accounting principles.
2. Programs have a demonstrated ability to manage and comply with government contracts.
3. Programs maintain [a determined acceptable level] of liability and worker's compensation insurance.
4. Programs report a regular audit history. (A-133 where applicable).

Metrics for evaluation:

1. Current Annual Report.
2. List of current and past year's government contracts/agreements.
3. Proof of liability insurance.
4. Year-end balance sheets for prior two years (organization or program)
5. January 1 through December 31 profit and loss for prior two years (organization or program).
6. Financial policies and procedures that meet GAAP.
7. Most recent independent audit or financial review with a letter from auditor confirming adequacy of financial policies, procedures, and reporting.
8. Copy of A-133 single audit, if required.

SUSTAINABILITY

These standards ensure that programs maintain a minimum threshold of 21CSC opportunities and illustrate a commitment to sustainable operations and longevity.

1. Programs must have two years of corps operating experience.
2. New programs and existing programs with less than 2 years' experience can be accredited under a provisional status, with an emphasis on helping them to achieve a sustainable model.

Metrics for evaluation:

1. Demonstrate origin of program through articles of incorporation, historical documents, or other verifiable method.
2. Demonstrate a plan for sustainability through documents such as program goals and objectives, business plan, or strategic plan.

RISK MANAGEMENT

These standards ensure that accredited 21CSC programs are proactive and thorough in their efforts to mitigate and manage the inherent risks to their corps members as well as maintain efficient, effective crisis management response systems.

- Programs maintain written Policies and Procedures that meet industry standards.
- Staff and members are appropriately trained to meet the risk management needs of their programmatic scope.
- Program maintains insurance coverage as required by federal, state, and local law.
- Program operations embrace transparency in reporting.

Metrics for evaluation:

1. Clearly defined safety policies and procedures.
2. Established risk management and safety training curriculum for staff and participants.
3. Log of staff safety trainings for the prior year.
4. Schedule of participant safety training for the prior year.
5. Proof of workers compensation coverage.
6. Compliance with state and federal OSHA requirements.
7. Agreement to share incident reporting with National Council.
8. Staff hiring process includes criminal background and driving background checks (if driving is a requirement of the position).
9. Program's governing body has appropriate policies and a process for assuring a drug-free workplace.
10. Program has established response, communication, and documentation guidelines pertaining to field emergencies, missing persons, natural disasters, and severe weather.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION

These standards ensure that accredited 21CSC programs have the appropriate administrative systems and management capacity to meet the needs of their corps members.

- Programs have either dedicated HR staff or other staff with demonstrated HR experience and expertise.
- Programs maintain written HR policies and procedures.
- Programs have payroll systems in place and have stipend management experience.
- Programs maintain accurate files and records.
- Programs are in compliance with applicable employment laws and funding/contractual agreements.

Metrics for evaluation:

1. Organizational chart identifying positions with HR responsibilities
2. Documented HR policies and procedures
3. Employee handbook identifying HR policies, procedures, benefits, disciplinary process
4. Personnel files compliant with hiring requirements
5. One month of payroll records
6. Disclosure of unfair labor claims during the previous three years

PROGRAM QUALITY

These standards ensure that accredited 21CSC programs maintain alignment with the mission of the 21CSC and focus on achieving the goals of developing young people and accomplishing needed and important work.

- Program’s mission and activities are focused on conserving or developing natural and cultural resources and enhancing and maintaining environmentally important areas.
- Member development (including education and experience) is a key component of the program model.
- Program models include complete description of program structure and additional components, e.g. crew-based and/or team-based/individual placement.
- Length of program is adequate and appropriate to meet mission and provide meaningful experience for the member.

Metrics for evaluation:

1. Publicized mission statement, core values, and/or guiding principles reflect a commitment to achieving the goals of the 21CSC.
2. Recruitment materials clearly illustrate the components and expectations of the program.
3. Program model description clearly identifies compliance with 21CSC universal standards as well as at least one pathway endorsement.
4. Participant development curriculum is geared to achieve 21CSC participant outcomes.
5. Program practices the principles of Leave No Trace.

COMMITMENT TO PROJECT QUALITY

These standards ensure that accredited 21CSC programs are striving to achieve excellence in project management from initial development through to completion.

- Programs have capacity and experience to complete specific work projects.
- Program staff has appropriate training and credentials to lead specific projects.
- Members receive appropriate training to complete specific work projects.

Metrics for evaluation:

1. List of work projects by type and sponsor from the previous two years.
2. List of project accomplishments from the previous two years.
3. Evaluations or recommendations from resource management partners that support program commitment to project quality.
4. The program is committed to striving toward best practices as described by the 21CSC governing body.
5. Staff bios that list areas of expertise and experience.
6. Documented training modules that address specific project types.
7. Adequate tool and equipment inventory to accomplish high quality work.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING

These standards ensure that accredited 21CSC programs demonstrate and maintain a full commitment to 21CSC accreditation standards.

Metrics for evaluation:

1. Programs sign an agreement to collect and share the universal project and participant outcome data that the 21CSC Steering Committee requires.
2. Programs are in compliance with all federal and other grant and contract requirements.
3. Components of accreditation are implemented and followed as demonstrated in annual evaluation.

PATHWAY ENDORSEMENTS

Every 21CSC participant will enter the Corps at a different stage of educational or career readiness. Based on their stage of development and desired outcomes, 21CSC participants may need varied levels of guidance and support to be successful. In addition to the basic participant outcomes, programs will also offer at least one additional pathway for each 21CSC participant. These pathways include; youth development, educational advancement, technical/vocational, and career development. Each Accredited 21CSC program must meet all of the universal accreditation standards and provide at least one pathway endorsement criteria for their participants. Pathway Endorsements may be accomplished in-house or via committed and intentional partnerships.

Technical/Vocational Pathway

Recognizing the decline in vocational training opportunities for young Americans today, the 21CSC represents a unique opportunity for young adults to gain valuable training and certification in specific technical and vocational trades. Vocational and technical training that participants receive will help advance their future job opportunities and earning potential. Programs which are accredited using the Technical/Vocational Pathway will provide opportunities for participants to earn an industry-recognized technical or vocational certification that will help them secure future employment. Examples include Wildland Firefighter certification, Chainsaw operator certification, CDL driver's license endorsement, and welding or other industry recognized trade certifications.

Educational Advancement Pathway

In 1973, nearly a third of the nation's 91 million workers were high school dropouts, while another 40 percent had not progressed beyond a high school degree. Thus people with a high school education or less made up 72 percent of the nation's workforce. The Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University projects that the US economy will create some 47 million job openings over the 10 year period ending in 2018. Nearly two thirds of these jobs will require that workers have at least some post-secondary education. The Center projects that 14 million job openings – nearly half of those that will be filled by workers with post-secondary education – will go to people with an associate's degree or occupational certificate. (Pathways to Prosperity, 2011)

Programs accredited using the Educational Advancement Pathway will integrate work and academic advancement. Participants advance by setting educational

“I gained knowledge in more ways than one. As I practiced concrete skills in the woods, I observed the implications of initiative, patience, and perseverance in force.”

-Montana Conservation Corps Alum

goals, obtaining or working toward a high school diploma or GED, and/or participating in credit bearing classes leading to a two- or four-year college degree. Some programs will provide these services as part of their internal offerings, while others will work with partnering organizations to provide instruction. Still other corps may assist their members in transitioning into continuing education after their term of service is concluded by offering tuition awards at program completion.

Building the partnerships and the capacity of the 21CSC to deliver high school and certificated career technical education represents an opportunity to put into motion the MOU signed by Interior Secretary Salazar and Education Secretary Arne Duncan on February 8, 2012. That MOU establishes a formal, long-term collaboration and calls on DOI and ED to leverage their respective strengths and develop joint initiatives to achieve mutual educational goals. Strengthening the integrated work/learn programs opens up new pathways into the workforce especially for those who have dropped out of high school and for those who need to continue their education to achieve their career goals.

Career Pathway

Many young Americans will enter the 21CSC having already achieved academic success and are looking for real-world experience to give them access to career opportunities. The scope and breadth of 21CSC projects requires a labor force of young people ready for advanced and specialized positions. Programs accredited with the Career Pathway Endorsement will directly connect participants to job shadowing or apprenticeship opportunities, career coaching, or direct job placement and case management, and/or demonstrate they develop specific skill sets in participants that are transferable to the 21st Century job market. These services, provided directly by the program or through partnering organizations will help launch successful 21CSC graduates directly into a career pathway.

Youth Development Pathway

Learning and innovation skills are what separate young people who are prepared for increasingly complex life and work environments in today’s world and those who are not. Additionally, today’s life and work environments require far more than thinking skills and content knowledge. The ability to navigate the complex life and work environments in the globally competitive information age requires young people to pay rigorous attention to developing adequate life and career skills. Programs accredited with the Youth Development Pathway Endorsement must incorporate training and development of these core life skills into their project work and training programs. They include:

Learning and Innovation Skills:

- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication and Collaboration

Life and Career Skills:

- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Initiative and Self-Direction
- Social and Cross-Cultural Skills
- Productivity and Accountability
- Leadership and Responsibility



California Conservation Corps members install woody debris, increasing viable aquatic habitat.

APPENDIX C – EXAMPLES OF DATA TO COLLECT

Examples of data to collect could include:

Basic description of the specific program: program location, program duration, demographics served, types of projects, special certifications, years the program has been active, amount of work done with volunteers, etc.

- Participant Information: number of program participants, population served (demographics: gender; race; age; number receiving public assistance; number transitioning from foster care; felony/misdemeanor records, unemployment rates and per capita income through participant zip code), education levels: TABE testing scores, if appropriate; less than high school; some high school; high school diploma; GED; some college/vocational (no degree attained); Vocational; Associate's; Bachelor's; Post Graduate degree; unreported).
- Participant Outcomes: number of participants that completed the program, number of hours of service completed by each member, number of participants who resigned, number of participants terminated, number of high school students who demonstrate increased academic engagement (if appropriate), number completed employment skills, number completed special certifications (CDL, chainsaw, etc.), GED and/or High School diplomas earned, post-secondary education completed, number of internship placements, number of job placements, number enrolled in college.
- Program Outcomes: number of volunteers from outside the program who engaged in projects and their volunteer hours, number of partners engaged (monetary and/or in kind investment of partners), impact on federal backlog, monetary value of projects if known, project outcomes (such as number of trail miles maintained, acres of invasive species removed, number of historic structures renovated, etc.)
- Post program: a minimum requirement to collect qualitative success stories of graduates who continue on into jobs and/or education because of the program. If it can be accommodated, quantitative tracking including length of time members were retained in internships, jobs and/or post-secondary education.
- Qualitative data: changes in attitude towards personal health; self-responsibility, teamwork, leadership, environmental activism; attitude towards public lands and waters; community engagement; life aspirations; interest in natural resources education and work, etc.