

# WEBINAR

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## Communicating About Climate Change: Messaging About Your Organization's Work

**DATE:** May 29, 2024

**TIME:** 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. ET



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# Welcome!

- Thank you for joining us today
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## Friendly Reminders

- **Please stay on mute** until Q&A
- If you have questions during the session, **drop them in the chat**
- **Captioning is enabled**
- Session will be **recorded**
- Stay for important **reminders at the end**
- Don't forget to take our post-event **survey**



## Today's Topic

### Communicating About Climate Change: Messaging About Your Organization's Work

- Learn tips for how to message about climate change to different audiences.
- We'll be joined by presenters from Data for Progress





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# **Communicating About Climate Change**

**May 2024**

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# Key Findings

- **Climate change** may have some partisan polarization associated with the term, but voters across the electorate are *still concerned* about the impacts of climate change and related issues, like **air and water pollution** and **extreme weather events**.
  - Young people in particular have **strong appetites** for climate action, but they also express **uncertainty about their personal ability to make a difference** on climate change.
- Young people and voters **strongly support the new national service program** – the American Climate Corps – and a majority would consider **taking a service year** after reading descriptions of both terms.
- Thinking about reasons to join the American Climate Corps, or a public service organization in general, voters’ top motivations to join include that earning a **living wage**, making a **difference in a community**, gaining **job training**, being able to **protect nature**, and being able to make communities **more resilient to climate change**.
- Voters strongly support a **new national service organization** that focuses on **conservation, sustainability, public works, and green infrastructure**, regardless of whether or not it is described as the “American Climate Corps” or a “new national service program.”
- More than half of voters (53%) say national service organizations **can and should fill the urgent need to address climate change**, instead of not focusing on the issue.

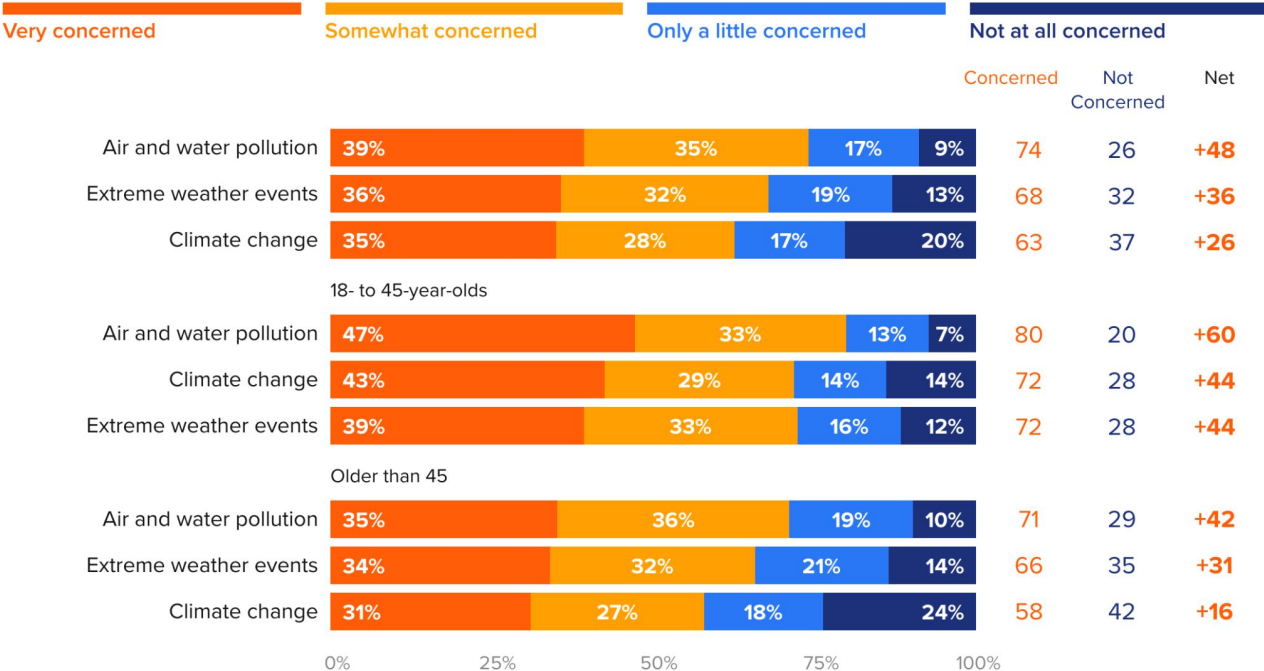


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# Public Opinion on Climate Change and the American Climate Corps

# Voters Are Broadly Concerned About the Impacts of Air and Water Pollution, Extreme Weather Events, and Climate Change

How concerned, if at all, are you about the impacts of each of the following on your community?



When talking to someone who doesn't care as much about climate change in particular, what will resonate for this audience?

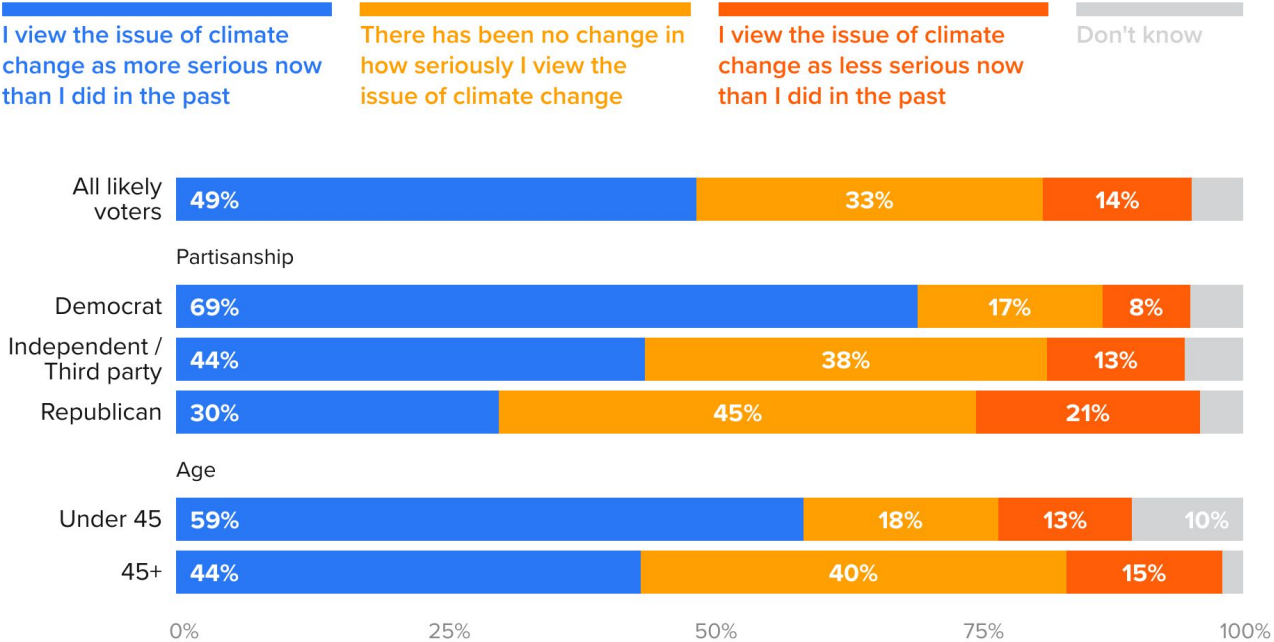
Voters across the electorate and age are deeply concerned about air and water pollution, as well as extreme weather events. These issues are associated with climate change and can be good for framing the impacts of your work without saying "climate."





# Nearly Half of Voters Say They View Climate Change as More Serious Now Than in the Past, Including a Majority of Voters Under 45

Thinking about the past five years, which of these statements best describes your view, even if neither is exactly right?

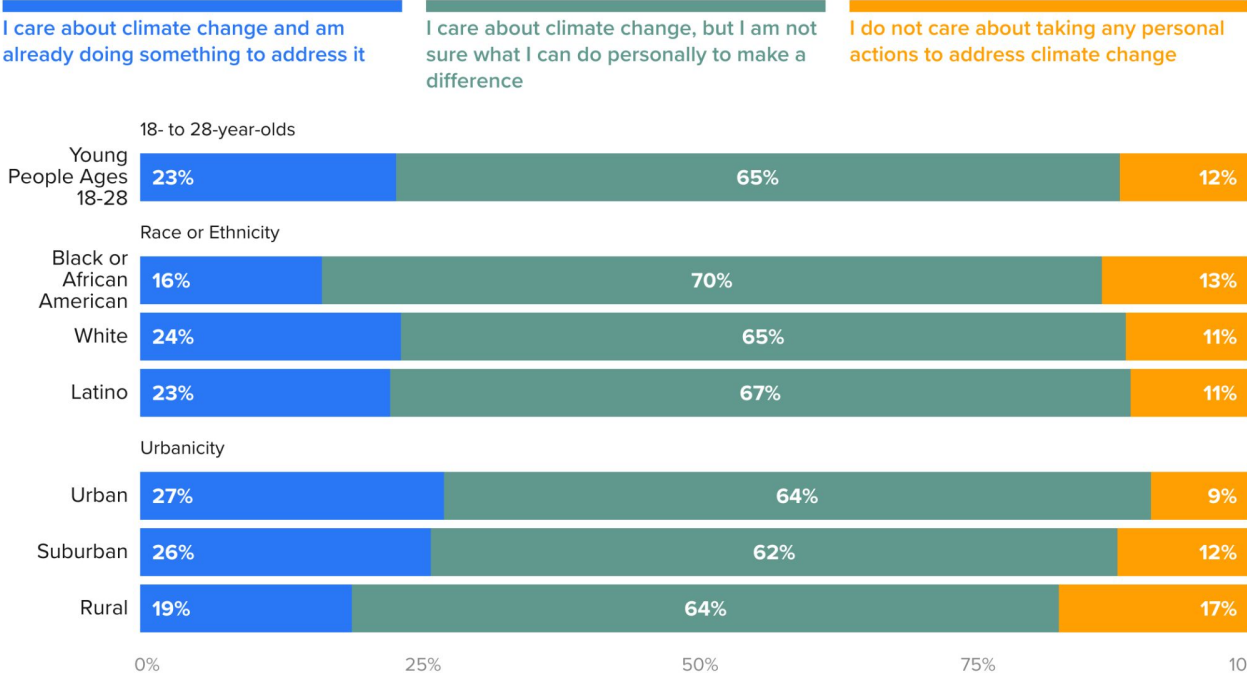


Among voters as a whole, nearly half view climate change more seriously now than they did in the past. Democrats and voters under 45 in particular report they have taken a more serious view of the issue than in the past than other groups, but notably 30% of Republicans also say they view climate change more seriously.



# Young People Care About Climate Change, But Lack Certainty About How They Can Have an Impact

Which of the following best describes the actions you are taking in your own life to address climate change?

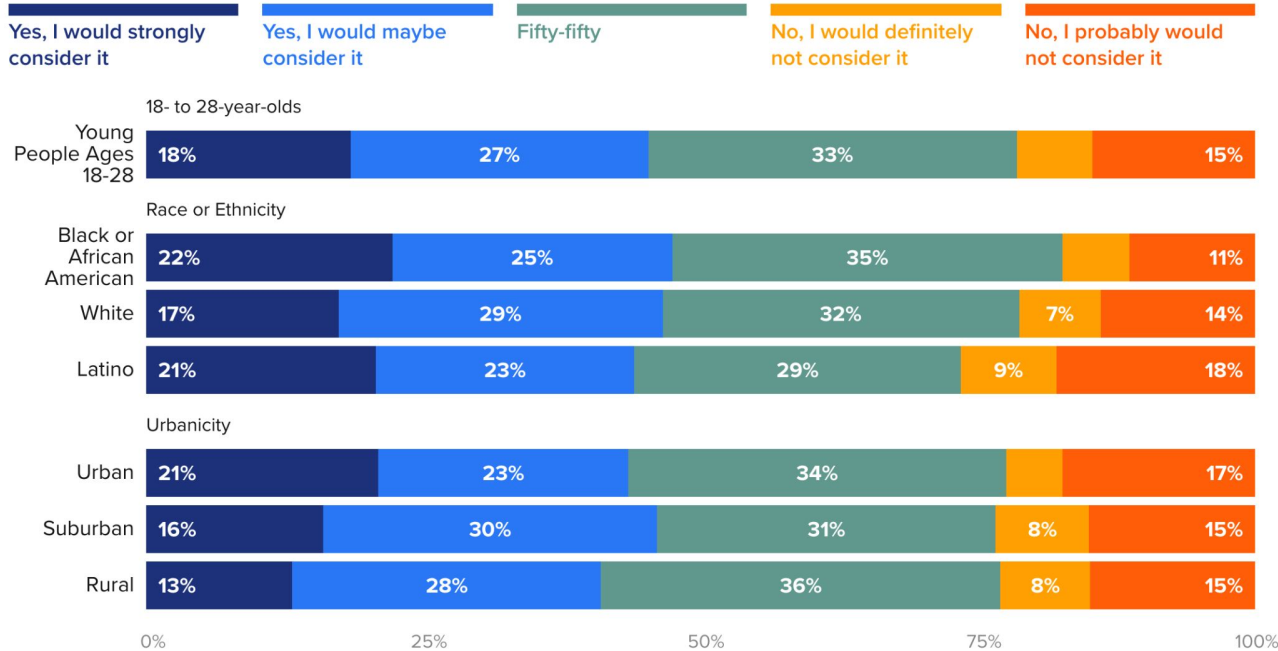


Young people overwhelmingly care about climate change (82% overall), but of those who care about climate change, only around a quarter feel like they are doing something already to address it, while 65% are unsure how they can make an impact.

January 21 to 26, 2022 survey of 711 18- to 28-year-olds

# More Than Three-Quarters of Young People Would Consider Participating in a Service Year

Would you ever consider participating in a service year — a paid opportunity to develop real-world skills through hands-on service?



More than three-quarters of young people say there are at least fifty-fifty odds about their willingness to considering participating in a service year (78%). Meanwhile, among this group, 45% say they would maybe or somewhat consider participating in this opportunity.

January 21 to 26, 2022 survey of 711 18- to 28-year-olds



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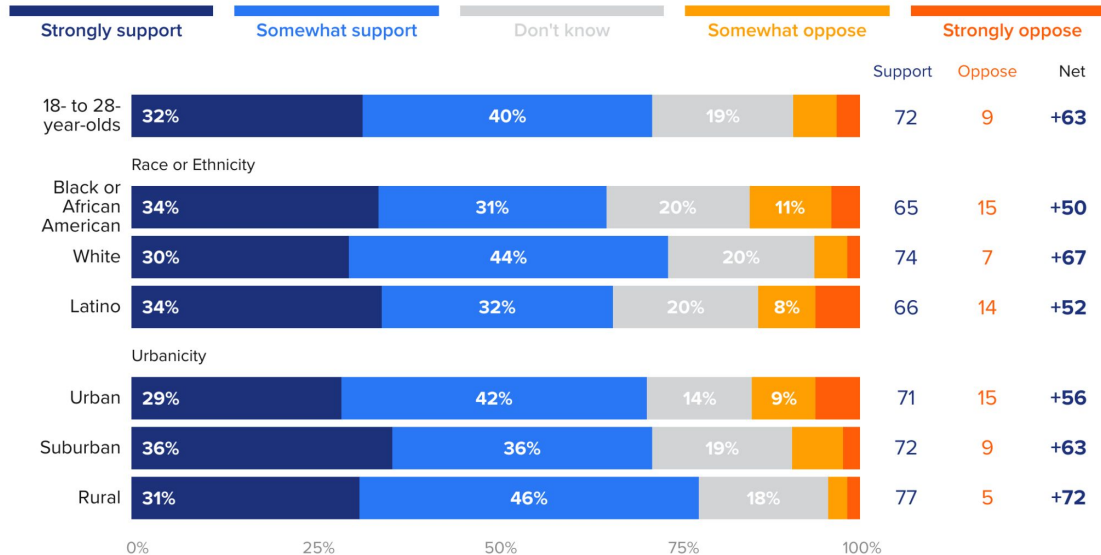


# People Ages 18 to 28 Strongly Support a Proposed Civilian Climate Corps

Some lawmakers in Congress have proposed a new program called the Civilian Climate Corps (CCC). Members of the CCC will spend one year working on conservation, sustainability, public works, green infrastructure projects, and other climate-related efforts. Some of the benefits of the CCC include:

- Earning at least \$15 an hour with full benefits, including health care
- On-the-job training opportunities
- Assistance paying for school or student loans

Do you support or oppose the Civilian Climate Corps?



Prior to the announcement of the American Climate Corps, respondents were shown a description of the proposed Civilian Climate Corps, which closely matches the ultimate format that the ACC took. At the time, nearly three-quarters of respondents indicated support for the CCC, including stronger support among rural youth (77%).

# When Asked About Personal Reasons for Joining the American Climate Corps, Protecting Nature and Earning a Living Wage Are Most Important

If you were considering joining the American Climate Corps, please select what aspects of this work would be **most important** to you when making this decision. You may select up to **three** reasons.



Among reasons why someone might personally consider joining the American Climate Corps, voters indicate that helping protect nature and earning a living wage are the two most important reasons they would consider joining, followed closely by being able to make communities resilient to extreme weather.



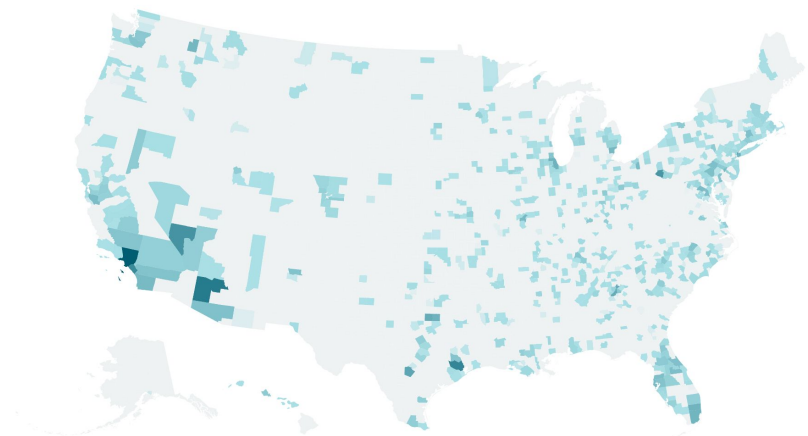
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# New Survey Data on Public Service and Climate

# Methodology

From May 17 to 19, 2024, Data for Progress conducted a survey of **1,213 U.S. likely voters** nationally using web panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, race, geography, and voting history. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is  $\pm 3$  percentage points.

## Respondents by County



May 16 - May 18, 2024 survey of 1213 likely voters in National

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53% **Female** | 47% **Male**

11% **Black** | 71% **White** | 8% **Latino**

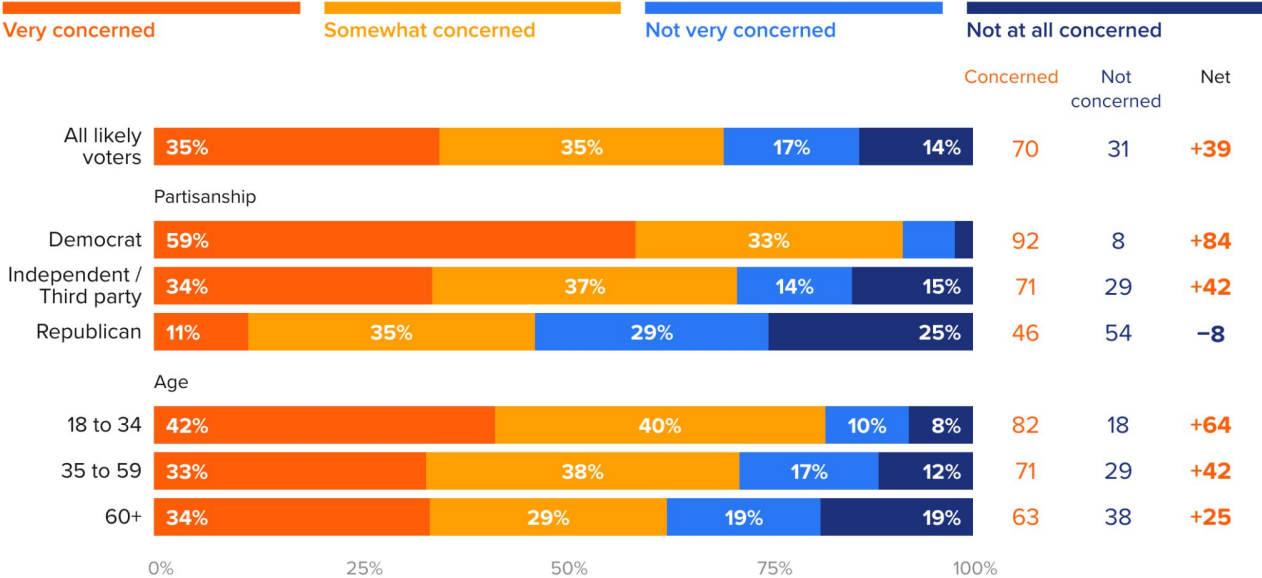
36% **College** | 64% **Non-college**

34% **Under 45** | 66% **Over 45**

37% **Democrat** | 26% **Independent** | 37% **Republican**

# Climate Change May Have a Partisan Reputation, But Concerns About the Issue Exist Across the Party Lines, Age, and Other Key Demographics

How concerned or not concerned are you about climate change?



Concerns about climate change are increasingly bipartisan, with nearly half of Republicans sharing they are at least somewhat concerned about the issue. Younger voters also express considerably more concern about climate change than older voters.

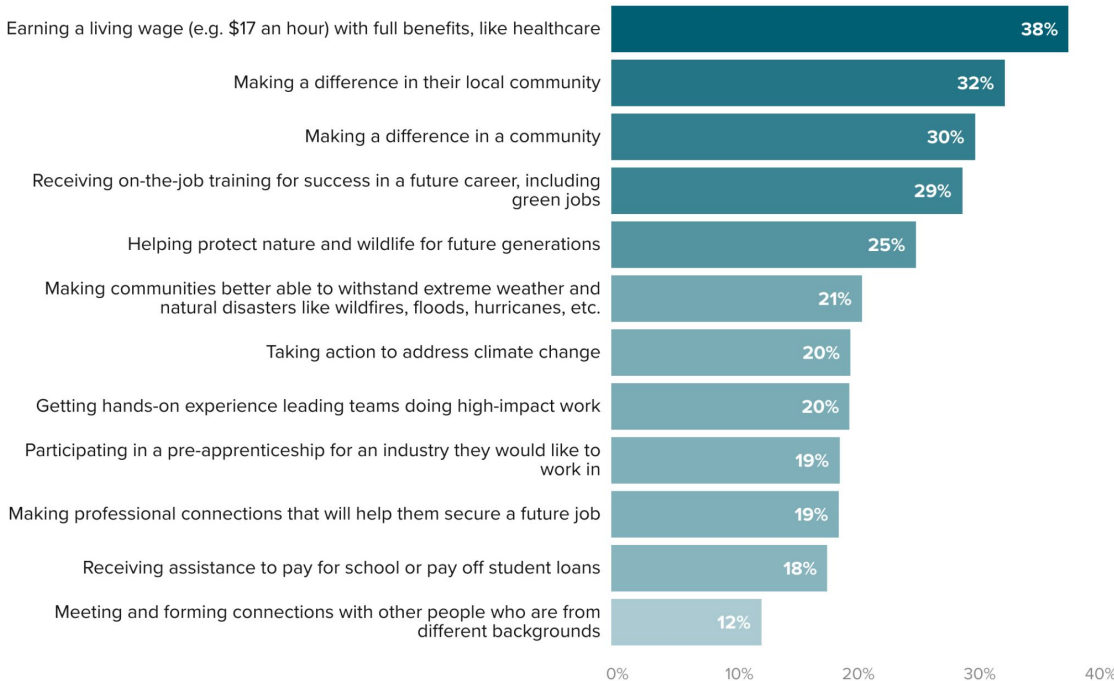
May 17-19, 2024 survey of 1,213 likely voters





# Voters Believe Fair Wages, Community Impact, and Job Training Are Some of the Most Important Reasons to Join a Public Service Organization

There are a number of different programs designed to put Americans to work in various kinds of public service. Thinking about some of the reasons why people may be interested in joining a public service organization, please say which **three** you think are **most** important.



The top reasons that voters think people may want to join a public service organization include earning a living wage, making a difference in their own or another a community, and receiving on-the-job training.

Voters ages 18-34 share the same top two preferences, with on-the-job training being third most important, followed by protecting nature and getting hands-on experience doing impactful work.

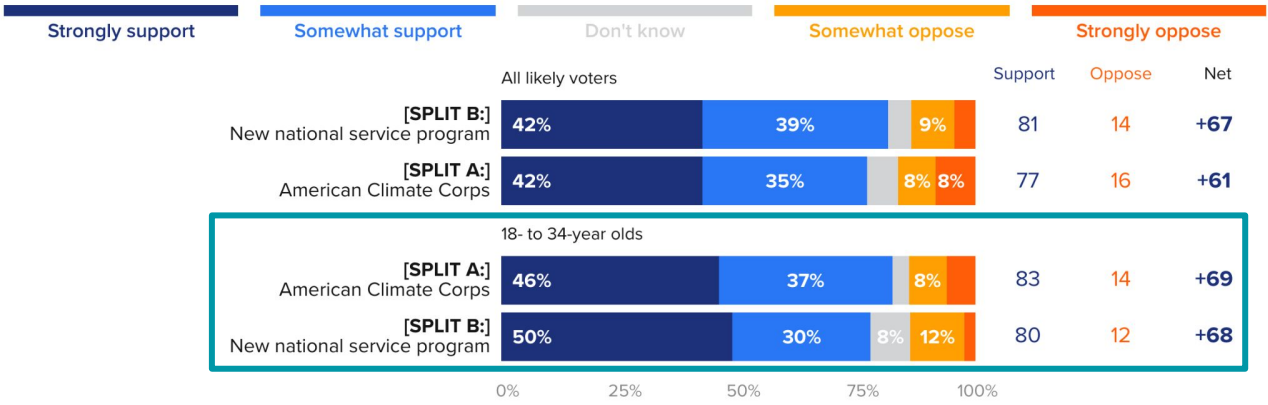


# In a Split Test, Voters Strongly Support the New National Service Program or the American Climate Corps

Recently, lawmakers created the [SPLIT A]/[SPLIT B]. Members of the program will be paid to spend one year working on conservation, sustainability, public works, green infrastructure projects, and other related efforts. This program will hire **20,000** Americans over its first year. Some of the benefits of the program will include:

- On-the-job training opportunities
- Assistance paying for school or student loans
- Pathways into civil service and clean energy jobs

Do you support or oppose the [SPLIT A]/[SPLIT B]?



After reading a description of a new national American service program – the American Climate Corps – more than three-quarters voters across both halves of a split test favor the program.

There are slight differences in preference by age, with 18- to 34-year-olds in stronger support when “climate” is used in the description.

May 17–19, 2024 survey of 1,213 U.S. likely voters



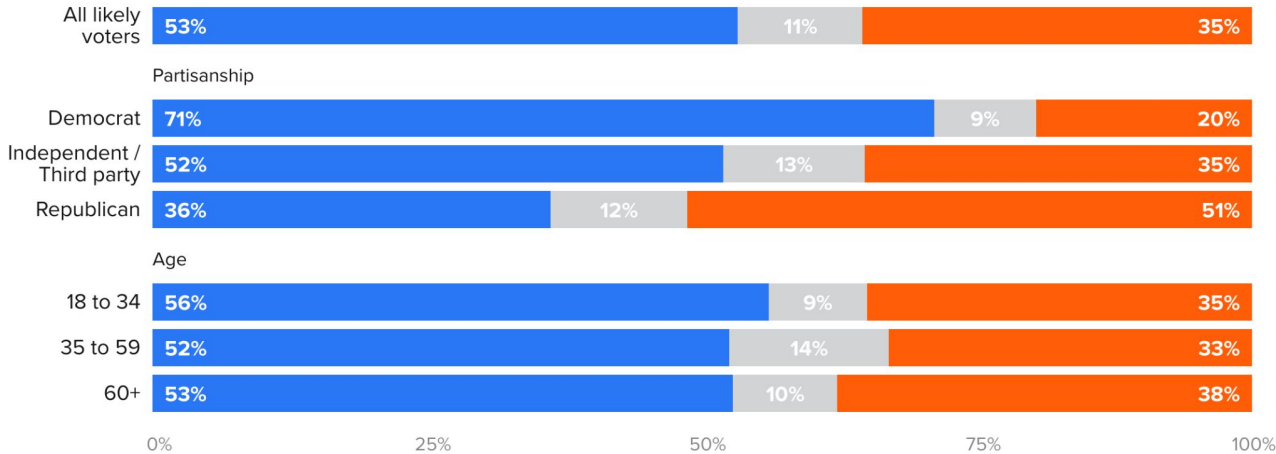
# More Than Half of Voters Agree National Service Organizations Can Fill the Urgent Need to Address Climate Change

Which of the following statements best describes your view, even if neither is exactly right?

**Just like the Civilian Conservation Corps put thousands of young people to work during the Great Depression, our national public service organizations can fill the urgent need to address climate change and pollution now, while giving young people the opportunity to serve local communities.**

Don't know

**Our national public service organizations should not focus on addressing climate change when our local communities already face so many other immediate challenges, like underfunded education systems, that could benefit more from young people working in public service.**



Finally, when asked to choose whether public service organizations should prioritize climate change or addressing other issues, over half of voters say national service organizations can fill the urgent need to address climate change.

Majorities of Democrats (71%), Independents (52%), and all age groups agree more with this argument.



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# What We've Learned About Talking About Climate – Message Testing

# Messaging Recommendations

## Ground:

- Talking about how public service work is poised to play a role in mitigating climate change – through grounding the conversation in the impacts that voters and young people are **most concerned about in their daily lives**.
  - E.g. Describing how conservation practices in land management throughout Appalachia can have downstream effects on **water pollution** and **protecting wildlife** while offering a **future career pathway** for participants.

## Link:

- Link the issues to voters: **Why should they care; what's at stake here?** It's important to identify what's top of mind to voters and the extent to which this issue figures into it.
  - Young voters have a vested stake in ensuring their **communities are healthy and resilient** both now and in the future, but often don't know what they can do on their own about it. **Public service organizations put young people in the driver's seat** to tackle climate change in a way that is **sustainable** and **impactful**.

## Spotlight:

- Having identified the stakes, **who gains or stands to gain from action?** Define the key actors and make the case for voters using a simple spotlight.
  - “As Corpsmembers, **young adults and veterans** make a positive impact in their lives and in their communities through **meaningful, hands-on service projects that protect communities** from the impacts of **pollution** and **climate change**, while gaining **work experience** and developing **in-demand skills**.”

# Takeaways

- Voters **across party lines are concerned about climate change**, with nearly half of Republicans sharing they are at least somewhat concerned about the issue. Younger voters also express **considerably more concern** about climate change than older voters.
- Voters strongly support a **new national service organization** that focuses on **conservation, sustainability, public works, and green infrastructure**, regardless of whether or not it's described as the “American Climate Corps” or a “new national service program.”
- Voters believe **fair wages, community impact, nature protection, and job training** are some of the most important reasons to join a public service organization.
  - Voters **ages 18-34** share the same top two preferences, with **on-the-job training being** third most important, followed by **protecting nature** and getting hands-on experience doing **impactful work**.
- More than half of voters (53%) say national service organizations **can and should fill the urgent need to address climate change**, instead of not focusing on the issue.
  - Majorities of **Democrats** (71%), **Independents** (52%), and **all age groups** agree that service organizations should address climate change.
- Messaging that seeks to **ground in reality, link to audience priorities, and spotlight key actors** can be effective for talking about the relationship between public service organizations and the climate.



# DATA FOR **PROGRESS**

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Data for Progress is a progressive think tank and polling firm which arms movements with data-driven tools to fight for a more equitable future. DFP provides polling, data-based messaging, and policy generation for the progressive movement, and advises campaigns and candidates with the tools they need to win. DFP polling is regularly cited by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *MSNBC*, *CBS News*, and hundreds of other trusted news organizations.

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For inquiries, please reach out to:

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## **Demonstrating Climate Impact using Corps Data**

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**May 2024**



## TCN Data/Literature Review

- Much of the data that Corps collect already tell the story of Corps' climate impact.
- What is often missing is the context of the work.
- How can you engage with project partners to both provide the research and the context for projects' climate impacts?
- Assessing impact on Corpsmembers and community members is an important aspect of your Corps' climate impact.
- Cater your data story to your audience.



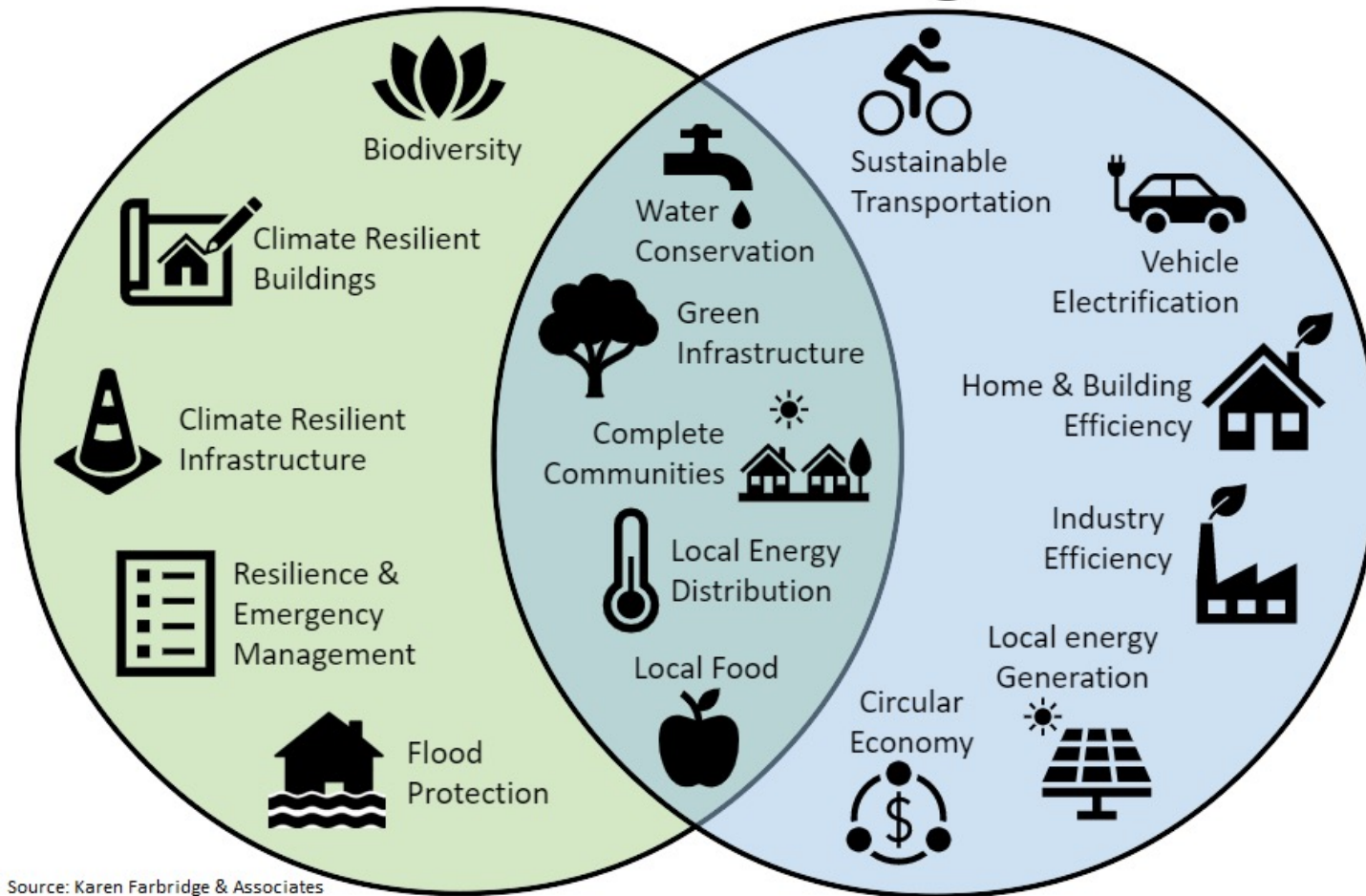
## Mitigation – Adaptation

**Mitigation:** actions or changes taken to reduce or eliminate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and/or to remove GHGs from the atmosphere to prevent significant adverse climate effects.

**Adaptation:** a variety of actions that are meant to reduce or compensate for or adapt to the adverse impacts that arise from changes in the Earth's climate.



# Adaptation Mitigation



Source: Karen Farbridge & Associates

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# Forestry & Habitat Restoration

## Metrics

- Trees planted
- Acres of invasive species treated
- Acres of land treated for hazardous fuels
- Fires responded to
- Acres of habitat restored
- Acres of erosion control
- Miles of trail maintained
- Community public spaces maintained or constructed

## Climate Impact

- Absorbing carbon dioxide and mitigating the urban heat island effect.
- Urban Forestry provides social benefits, contributing to the overall resilience and adaptation capacity of cities.
- Controlled burns reduce wildfire fuel, rejuvenate forest ecosystems facing climate stressors.
- Healthy ecosystems are a central component to nature-based solutions to climate change.

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# Construction & Building retrofits

## Metrics

- Energy audits performed
- Households informed of energy efficiency or water conservation practices
- Buildings weatherized or retrofitted
- Solar panels installed
- Number of households with decreased energy or water usage

## Climate Impact

- Home hardening and creating defensible spaces, protect properties from fires and contribute to fire mitigation efforts.
- Green roofs and gardens contribute to carbon sequestration and raise heat resistance in urban areas.
- Downspout disconnection, rainwater harvesting, rain gardens, and permeable pavements can control flooding and enhance urban water quality.
- Weatherization and Energy Efficiency are crucial as they can reduce a home's energy consumption by up to 50%.

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# Green Infrastructure & Coastal Restoration

## Metrics

- Miles of waterways maintained or restored
- Acres of invasive species treated
- Pounds of debris removed
- Number of native species planted
- Community public space maintained or constructed
- Acres of green space maintained or constructed
- Gallons of stormwater diverted

## Climate Impact

- Coastal habitats are vital for carbon sequestration, accounting for around 30% of Earth's carbon sequestration.
- Coastal vegetation and living shorelines preserves coastlines by dissipating and buffering the impacts of rising sea levels.
- Green infrastructure helps divert stormwater from overburdened sewer systems facing increasingly powerful storms.
- Green infrastructure and stormwater system maintenance reduces flood risk.

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# Capacity Building

## Metrics

- Number of organizations that received services
- Number of organizations that increased effectiveness, efficiency, scale or reach
- Project-based deliverables:
  - Climate action plans
  - Research projects
  - Funding secured
  - Maps generated
  - etc.
- Downstream effects

## Climate Impact

- Provides necessary resources, knowledge, and technical skills, supporting organizations in climate resilience and mitigation efforts.
- Allows for the expansion of climate programs and initiatives to communities that might otherwise lack access to them.
- Identifies capacity gaps, promoting the development of relevant tools and methodologies.
- Encourages the monitoring and evaluation of climate action efforts, which is crucial for their improvement and advancement.

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# Corpsmember Outcomes

## Metrics

- Credentials received (specific to climate-related workforce)
- Job placement at exit and six-months post-exit (specific to climate-related workforce)
- Corpsmember perceptions pre- and post-service
  - Ability to contribute to climate solutions
  - Interest in pursuing a career in a climate-related industry.
  - Interest in additional climate service.
  - Interest in engaging family, friends, or community members in climate service.

## Climate Impact

- Increased awareness of possible climate solutions and one's role as a participant in those solutions.
- Creating a trained workforce for industries and firms implementing either technological or nature-based climate solutions.
- Increased interest in engaging others in possible climate solutions through service or other means.



## What to do next?

- Discuss with project partners the climate context of your projects so you can communicate that to Corpsmembers and community members.
- Assess if/where your service activities fall within the mitigation – adaptation framework. How does your impact data prove that placement?
- Keep tabs on new and existing research
  - AmeriCorps Climate Change Bundle Evaluation
  - Public Lands Service Corps 5.0 Evaluation
  - [The Corps Network's Evaluation Catalog](#)
- Are you evaluating programmatic impact on Corpsmember awareness of climate solutions?



# CONTACT



## Speakers:

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**More sessions to be  
announced soon.**

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# REMINDERS



**June 14**

[TCN Great Outdoors Day of Service](#)  
[National Service and Conservation Corps Day](#)

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