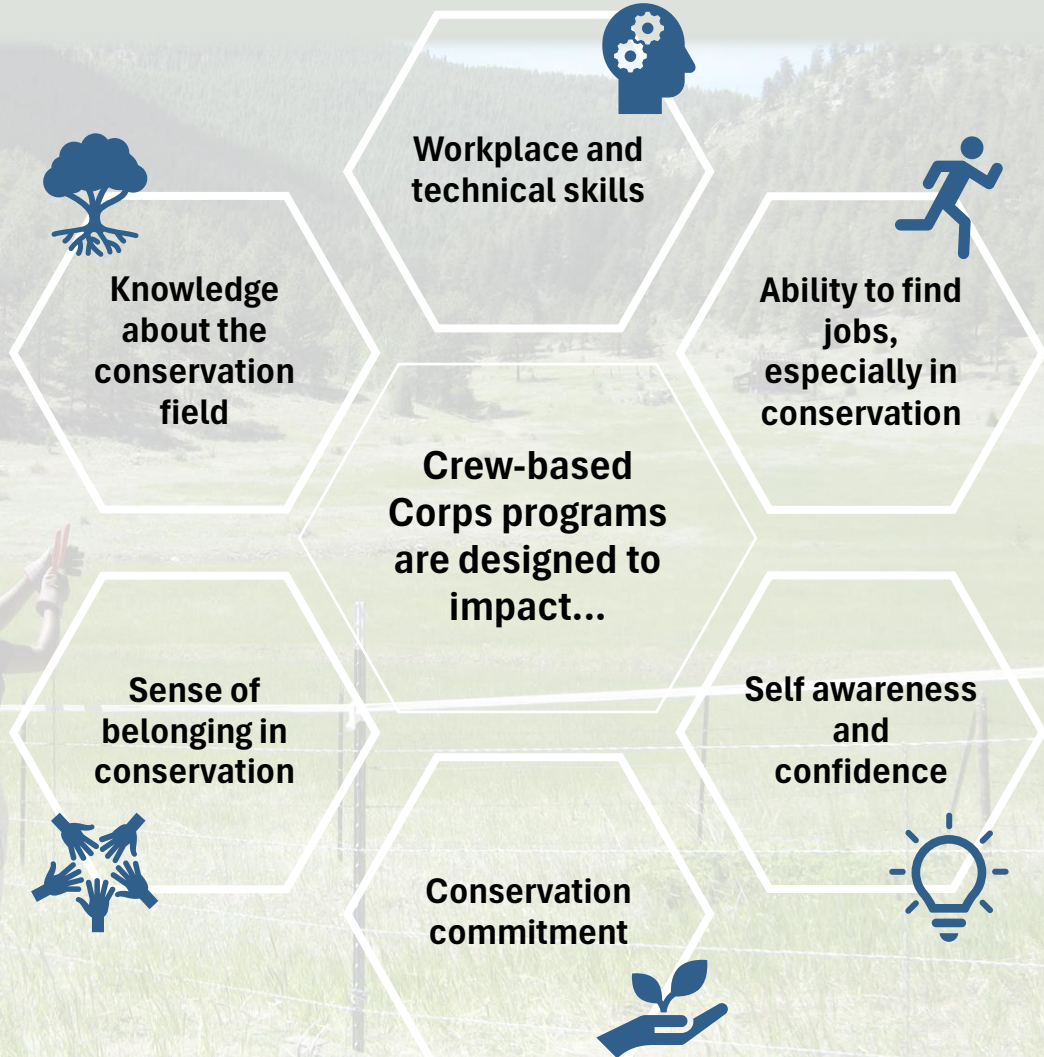


# Service Corps National Evaluation

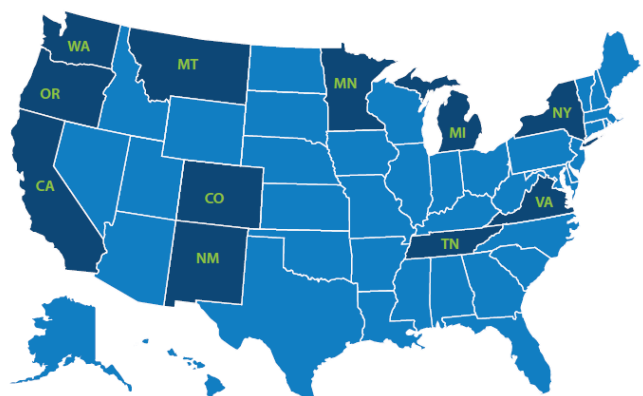
## Executive Summary



Service Corps (“Corps”) programs use public service opportunities to foster personal growth, provide meaningful work experience, and enhance conservation commitment among young adults.



Starting in 2022, over 400 Corps members participated in RTI International’s national evaluation of 16 crew-based programs.



### Study Goals

- Understand and document member outcomes up to 1-year post-program
- Understand experiences of members typically excluded from conservation, such as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) to inform broadening of participation in the field

Researchers followed members up to 1-year after service using surveys, interviews, and photovoice methods.



## Improved readiness for jobs, especially in conservation

**9 out of 10** alumni felt the program was useful for improving clarity about their career path.

**Two-thirds** of alumni were in conservation-related jobs or education programs one-year later.

“Serving in the corps highlighted the parts of the green sector that were valuable to me. I learned how to get involved at the community level and **it inspired me to focus on conservation and go to school.**”



### Amplified impacts

BIPOC-identifying members were **more likely to report gains** in their understanding of the conservation field and their ability to obtain well-paying, stable employment relative to other members.



## Enhanced workplace skills

Almost all alumni felt the Corps experience was useful for improving the following skills:

**98%** Communicating with others

**94%** Managing workplace conflict

**93%** Working with others through personal difference



## Improved confidence

Alumni felt the crew-based model, team-building activities, and/or opportunities to try new activities provided venues for individual growth.

“The quality people and environment provided allowed for me to become more aware of myself, my desires, and my future... **For the first time in my life I have genuinely felt confident** in taking control of my life and future.”



## Experiences with inclusion and support in the Corps



- 94%** felt like they belonged in their Corps program
- 99%** had someone they trusted who they could talk with about a serious issue.
- 97%** of members who reached out for support reported receiving meaningful support.

## Members representing historically excluded identities felt welcomed in the Corps

- Survey results indicated no statistical differences in sense of belonging across social identities.
- RTI interviewed 22 members who identified as a woman, non-binary, and/or BIPOC. Though some experienced incidents of discrimination and/or microaggressions, all members saw the Corps programs as inclusive, welcoming, and supportive because programs signaled to members that they valued inclusion and equity.

**94%** of members felt their program had a **strong commitment** to diversity, equity, and inclusion.



## How programs created inclusive spaces

- ✓ Offering explicit educational opportunities required of all members on the importance of inclusion and how to engage inclusively.
- ✓ Having diverse crews and partners reflecting members with historically excluded identities.
- ✓ Providing member spaces organized around a specific social identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, or gender based).



## Better awareness and understanding of the conservation field.

Member awareness and understanding expanded by doing different conservation-related tasks and having opportunities to meet professionals working in the field.

**67%** improved understand of the 'ins and outs' of the conservation field.

**52%** clearer understanding of related career opportunities.

## Continued conservation commitment



Members were engaged with the conservation before the Corps program. After the program, most expressed a continued commitment and connection.

**9 out of 10** alumni felt comfortable in the conservation community at large.

**4 out of 5** alumni felt they were stewards of the land after the program.

**93%** felt their wellbeing was tied to the environment.

**93%** reported one-year after the program that they were likely to take actions to mitigate climate change.

## KEY FINDINGS

- One-year later, Corps alumni continue to engage in conservation-related activities, including jobs and education.
- Corps programs improve member knowledge of and interest in conservation-related careers.
- Corps programs help members develop skills to help them succeed in life and the workplace.
- DEI-focused programming helps members representing historically excluded identities feel welcomed and supported during the Corps program.
- Additional research is needed to understand longer-term impacts and the outcomes of other types of Service Corps programs, such as internships.

