



IN BRIEF

Strengthening Service-to-Career Pathways
Amplifying Successful Practices From The Corps Network

Overview

The "Corps to Careers" research partnership launched in 2024 with financial support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Led by Jobs for the Future (JFF), The Corps Network, the Brookings Institution, and the Urban Institute, the goal of this partnership is to:

- Assess labor market needs in fields related to Corps programming.
- Evaluate Corps' capacity to prepare Corpsmembers for jobs in these fields.
- Identify promising practices at Corps as well as opportunities to deepen or expand Corps' workforce development offerings.

Scan the QR code above to access the full report, ***Strengthening Service-to-Career Pathways***

Each partner in this collaborative has explored different aspects of the role Corps can play in workforce development. Starting in late 2024, JFF reviewed Corps data, conducted a survey of more than 50 Corps across the country, and analyzed curricula and other training materials from more than a dozen Corps. Their research unearthed **key findings about the value of service to career pathways and informed the creation of a set of promising practices and strategies that can be adopted at Corps and similar programs to connect more young people to additional workforce training, initial jobs, and long-term careers.** The full report – *Strengthening Service-to-Career Pathways: Amplifying Successful Practices From The Corps Network* (September 2025) – can be found at bit.ly/JFFTCN25 or by scanning the QR code above. See reverse side for a summary of key findings.

Jobs for the Future – For more than 40 years, JFF has partnered with organizations to design solutions, scale best practices, influence policy and action, and invest in innovations that expand economic opportunity for all and strengthen the workforce of the future. jff.org

The Corps Network – the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps – advocates for and provides access to funding, project work, and training and technical assistance to 150 Corps that operate in every state, DC, and the territories and annually engage approximately 22,000 young adults in service and workforce development. corpsnetwork.org

Key Findings

Finding: Current curriculum and training materials demonstrate a clear effectiveness in helping young people build and develop the technical and employability skills needed to access a range of career pathways post-service.

Suggestions for putting these findings into practice:

- Clearly define within curriculum and training materials how different aspects of personal and professional development are being delivered
- Develop precise, measurable learning objectives
- Utilize assessments to help young people understand their progress
- Design interactive learning approaches that accommodate diverse learning styles and build on past experiences
- Ensure that curricula supports opportunities for credit or credential attainment

Finding: Training and service programming strongly aligns with multiple career pathways in clean energy, natural resource and water management, and disaster response and preparedness, positioning young adults for entry into a range of jobs post-service.

Suggestions for putting these findings into practice:

- Clearly identify the occupational pathways service experiences connect to and document them in training curriculum
- Articulate how service experiences prepare young people for these pathways
- Offer career exploration navigation and support
- Engage with diverse workforce and education partners to validate training and expand post-service opportunities

Finding: Strong employer engagement practices that inform training design and create clear connections to employment for young adults exist across several programs. Expanding these practices to more programs across the network can increase employer and industry partnerships, strengthen alignment with industry needs, and scale positive outcomes for young people.

Suggestions for putting these findings into practice:

- Work with employers, industry partners, and workforce boards to identify and deliver industry recognized credentials
- Ensure that credentials and certifications support direct entry and long-term mobility in the workforce
- Remove financial and academic barriers to credential and certification attainment
- Establish systems to track credential completion and use data to demonstrate value to employers and funders.

Finding: Young adults can access a variety of connections to high-quality apprenticeships and other earn-and-learn opportunities. There is an opportunity, however, to strengthen and expand relationships across the network with pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs, and with community and technical colleges.

Suggestions for putting these findings into practice:

- Identify local RA programs that align with service and training focus areas
- Work with RA sponsors, employers, and education providers to support entry into earn-and-learn pathways
- Align training and programs with DOL's elements of pre-apprenticeship
- Establish employer advisory committees to guide curriculum development and support connections to post-service employment