

DEVELOPING, EXPANDING, AND ENHANCING SERVICE YEAR PROGRAMMING:

CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

A GUIDE FOR STATE SERVICE COMMISSIONS, CURRENT SERVICE YEAR PROGRAMS, AND ORGANIZATIONS SEEKING TO LEVERAGE NATIONAL SERVICE RESOURCES

Climate & Environmental Resilience



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At Service Year Alliance, we strive to make a year of paid, full-time service – a service year – a common expectation and opportunity for all young Americans. Central to this mission is our belief that a service year should be a transformative experience for both the corps member and the community they are serving. With Congress' historic investments to support climate and environmental resilience (C&E resilience) through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act, we are at a pivotal moment to ensure that, through service, young people have an opportunity to leverage their unique talents to uplift community resilience while also gaining the skills and experience they need to successfully secure careers within the growing green economy.

To ensure these objectives are met, Service Year Alliance formed a multi-year partnership with the Cisco Foundation to launch a Climate Project that intentionally examined how service year programming can be further leveraged as a human capital solution to effectively combat the impacts of climate change and develop the next generation of leaders to advance C&E resilience efforts. Through hosting over 70 targeted conversations with national service programs, green sector employer associations, workforce development partners, and other organizations and agencies advancing C&E resilience, Service Year Alliance identified a high level of alignment between service year programming and the effort to address climate change. As a result, this guide was developed with two primary goals:

(1) Provide new resources that will enable stakeholders to expand and enhance service year programming in areas that present particular opportunities for growth

(2) Elevate strategies for how service year programming can be effectively leveraged to increase the number of talented and diverse young individuals who are able meet the workforce needs of a variety of industries associated with the green economy.

HELPFUL TIP

Check out the Climate Project Overview Webinar to explore the learnings that resulted from each key component of the Climate Project, including our Landscape Analysis, Partnership Development, Recruitment Marketing Research, and our Community of Practice

To achieve these goals, this guide was developed to support the following audiences:

- **Organizations and agencies** wishing to explore how to leverage national service resources to assist in meeting their C&E resilience goals and developing a qualified talent pipeline
- **State service commissions** looking to expand C&E resilience programming in their state
- **Current service year programs** seeking to expand or enhance their C&E resilience programming

The Guide links to Program Model Roadmaps (Roadmaps) that can be leveraged to help create, expand, or enhance C&E resilience programming within three service year model types: Energy Efficiency, Community Capacity Building, and Rural Resilience. These Roadmaps will first highlight a program framework that uplifts top recommendations that surfaced as part of the landscape analysis and will also guide you through each major component of programming that you will want to consider. Second, each roadmap contains an appendix which provides a menu of options that will allow you to also consider and adopt alternative programming that may best suit the unique needs and opportunities that exist within your community. The appendix can also be leveraged by existing service year programs that seek to gain a more in-depth understanding of strategies for expanding or enhancing their current program model. In summary, these Roadmaps will expedite the process of standing up new quality service year programming or expanding and enhancing current models by highlighting successful practices, partners, and funding options.

Finally, I encourage you to reference Strategies States are Advancing to Expand Climate and Environmental Resilience Programming to further explore innovative tactics that states and state service commissions are advancing to expand widespread C&E resilience service year programming.



Kristen Bennett
CEO, Service Year Alliance

GETTING STARTED WITH SERVICE YEAR PROGRAMMING

The Program Model Roadmaps contained in this resource provide in-depth background on the strategies, partners, supports, and funding options that are available to assist you in advancing service year programming related to climate and environmental resilience. However, the Roadmaps are not intended to be comprehensive program start-up guides. If you are new to service year programming, we encourage you to reference the following resources that can further assist you in determining which type of service year programming may be most effective for meeting your needs, how to apply for national service funding, and how to gain further awareness regarding the rules, regulations, provisions, and expectations for operating a service year program.

Resources Published by Service Year Alliance

- How to Apply for National Service Resources
- Guide to Creating a Service Year Program

Resources Published by the AmeriCorps Agency

- New Program Startup Guide

Resources Available from the The Corps Network

- Starting a Corps

Resources Published by Farallon Strategies with Support from America's Service Commissions

- Climate Programming Decision Making Framework
- Climate Service Resource Library (Highlights, Tools, Legislation, Research and more)

Courses Developed by On3Learn

- Course offerings

FURTHER INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM MODEL ROADMAPS

KEY TERMS

Capacity Building Service: Rather than providing a service directly to an individual, group, or community, corps members provide indirect service that broadly assists with meeting a community need. For example, data collection, research, developing new programming, etc.

Cost-Share: Service year programs that place corps members to serve with a specific agency or organization typically require those host site partners to contribute towards the cost of supporting that corps member position.

Crew-Based Conservation Corps: Crew-based conservation corps organize corps members into teams that complete service projects traditionally focused on land stewardship, such as building trails. The Corps Network has served as a leader for producing tools and resources most applicable to supporting crew-based conservation corps models.

Direct Service: Direct service activities generally refer to activities that provide a direct, measurable benefit to an individual, a group, or a community. For example, providing energy conservation education to a homeowner.

Employability Skills: Common skills, including professional and technical skills, that will likely be developed and enhanced during a service year.

Host Site: A host site is any entity that directly supervises a corps member. A host site is typically not the managing entity of the service year grant, instead the host site enters into a cooperative agreement with the service year program in order to gain the opportunity to leverage one or more of their corps members to assist in achieving mutual goals.

Single Member Placement Model: Single member placement is a type of structure for how corps members are deployed. In a single member placement model, corps members are placed at a variety of sites, typically in groups of 1-3, and commonly work on unique projects. This placement model juxtaposes with a crew/team-based model where corps members are placed at sites in larger groups.

Preferential Hiring Status: Preferential hiring status for service year corps members and alumni can take many different forms, which can include: receiving additional points on an application to public or private sectors positions, receiving a guaranteed interview, receiving hours towards an apprenticeship program, or an organization, agency or business specifically marking open positions to service year alumni.

Project Sponsors: An organization hosting corps members to advance a time-bound project. Typically project sponsors provide financial resources to help support program operating costs.

Registered Apprenticeship Program: The Department of Labor (DOL) defines an apprenticeship as an "industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally-recognized credential. Apprenticeship programs include both structured on-the-job learning and mentorship as well as a supplementary education component.

Weatherization Assistance Program: The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), funded by The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), reduces energy costs for low-income households by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes, while ensuring their health and safety. The program supports 8,500 jobs and provides weatherization services to approximately 35,000 homes every year using DOE funds that are primarily allocated to states through a formula process.

As the team at Service Year Alliance advanced the Climate Project, we had the pleasure of learning about the many remarkable ways in which service year programming is being used to combat climate change and help communities become more resilient. Our work with partners from both inside and outside of the service year ecosystem helped us identify the three diverse program model types that we feel provide significant opportunity for further expansion: Energy Efficiency, Community Capacity Building, and Rural Resilience. These program models were selected based on five primary factors:

(1) The opportunity to provide new information and resources regarding models that generally fall outside of traditional crew-based conservation corps programming

(2) Increased opportunity for expansion as a result of additional climate-related funding being allocated through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act

(3) Focus areas that have limited existing programming, but can be supported by existing federal and state funding streams

(4) Ability to serve as an initial starting point for urban and rural communities to explore ways to utilize national service resources to increase their ability to advance C&E resilience initiatives

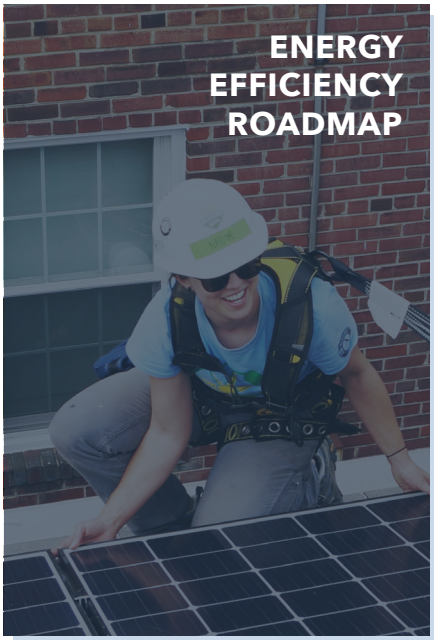
(5) Present strong opportunities to establish post-service pathways for corps members

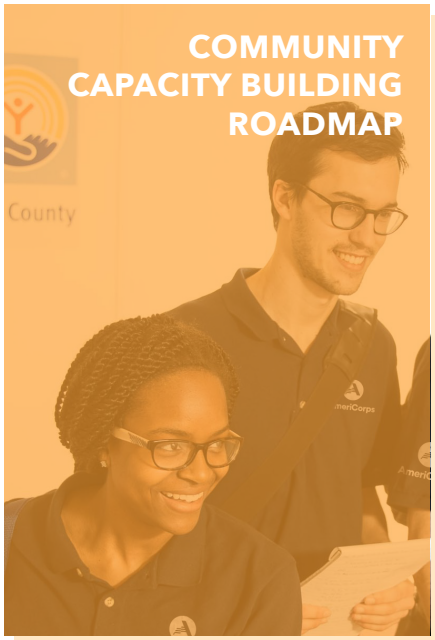
After identifying the three program models that would be the focus of our Climate Project, Service Year Alliance established a learning community of eight stand-out service year programs that are advancing programming in these focus areas across the country. Members of the C&E Resilience Learning Cohort included:

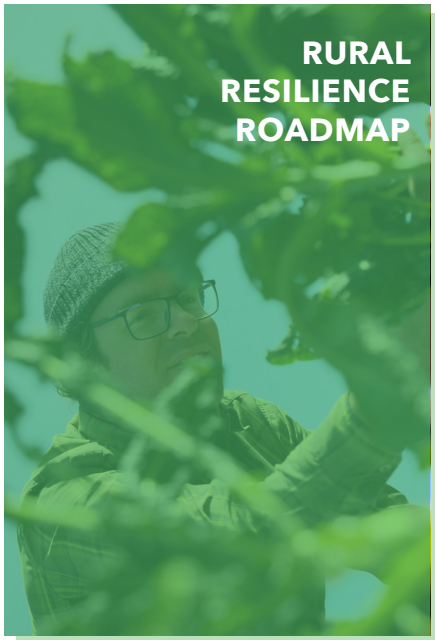
- Ampact's Climate Impact Corps (Minnesota)
- CivicSpark (California, Colorado, and Washington)
- Green Iowa AmeriCorps (Iowa)
- Mile High Youth Corps (Colorado)
- PowerCorps PHL (New York and Pennsylvania)
- Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (Oregon)
- Rural Action's Appalachian Ohio Restore Corps (Ohio)
- The Sustainability Institute (South Carolina)

In addition to having an intentional opportunity to learn from one another, these program partners assisted Service Year Alliance in defining key components of program design and implementation that have been shown to produce successful programs and achieve a high level of impact for both corps members as well as the communities being served. These learnings were then consolidated into our three Program Model Roadmaps.

CHOOSING YOUR SERVICE YEAR PROGRAM MODEL







Choosing your service year program model starts with exploring the various service year model types highlighted in each Roadmap as well as the spotlights of service year programs currently advancing each model. Once you have determined which model may be best suited to meet the C&E resilience needs of your community and stakeholders, you can use the hyperlink included at the end of each description to take you directly to the full Roadmap associated with that model.

Once you have determined the Roadmap that best suits your needs, you will also want to review the three fundamental components of programming that were elevated by the C&E Resilience Learning Cohort as being critical for ensuring program success across all three featured program model types

ENERGY EFFICIENCY ROADMAP

Energy Efficiency programming typically engages service year corps members in service activities that are intended to reduce energy consumption in either residential housing or public buildings. Service activities can be both direct (e.g. installing insulation, replacing inefficient lighting, providing education to residents, etc.) or capacity building (e.g. developing an energy reduction plan, coordinating partners, conducting community outreach, etc.) in nature. Programming can also be advanced through either a team-based model or single-member placement model.

The Energy Efficiency model oftentimes produces multi-layered impact results that can:

- lead to cost savings for residents and/or taxpayers through both the weatherization/retrofit services that are provided as well as through the education components of the program;
- positively impact the health and safety of residents and the community as a whole;
- reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) and greenhouse gas emissions that impact the broader environment;
- address workforce development needs; and
- reduce strain on energy production facilities.

Service year corps members who participate in energy efficiency programming often benefit from seeing the immediate impact of their service through direct energy and cost savings. Furthermore, corps members can gain valuable experience and certifications that equip them to enter into careers in energy conservation, green construction, education, renewable energy, HVAC, and even real estate, architecture, and engineering. Additionally, corps members are also better prepared to enter into these career fields having gained perspective on equity and centering community voices in their work.

Some Common Challenges

Organizations that seek to advance energy efficiency programming can, at times, experience challenges in partnering with local and state agencies that are the recipients of federal Weatherization Assistance Program funding, which primarily arises from these organizations not fully understanding the variety of ways that partnering with service year programs can increase their ability to serve more families. Additionally, training and service activity restrictions associated with AmeriCorps regulations can sometimes serve as a barrier to success. For example, providing energy efficiency services to a family who rents can be interpreted as providing financial benefit to a landlord These challenges and suggestions for how to navigate them are further discussed throughout this Roadmap.



EXPLORE THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY ROADMAP



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:
Advancing an Energy Efficiency Model

Mile High Youth Corps' Energy & Water Conservation Program (Colorado) engages 18-24 year old corps members who provide free in-home energy and water audits and upgrades to low-income residents. Corps members, working on small team-based crews, provide one-on-one client education and coaching for conservation behavior and act as a community resource agent while visiting households. This approach compounds the impact of each home visit by informing and connecting residents to additional resources and services. While serving, corps members earn industry-recognized certificates such as the International Society of Sustainability Professionals' (ISSP) Sustainability Excellence Associate and the Building Performance Institute's Building Science Principles certificate – both which arm them with specialized training for pathways after their service year. Mile High Youth Corps provides corps members with robust wraparound support services to mitigate barriers to success such as childcare, housing, and transportation.

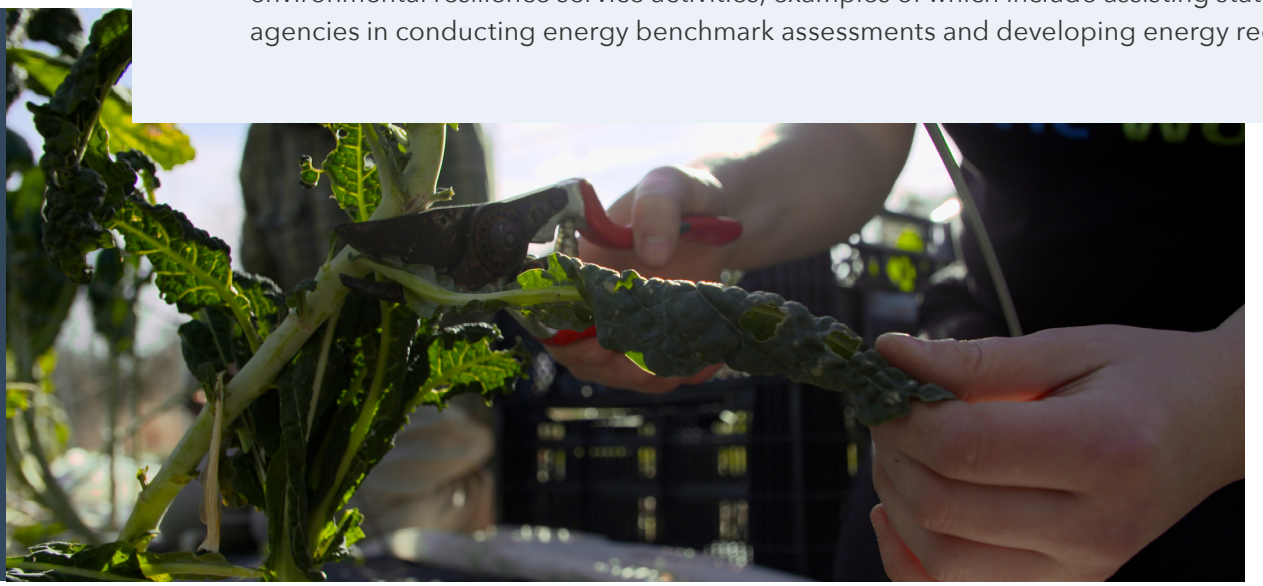
PowerCorpsPHL (New York and Pennsylvania) is powered by Education Works out of the City of Philadelphia. Each year, PowerCorpsPHL engages between 100-125 un- or under-employed Black and Latinx Philadelphians (ages 18-30) in an immersive 4- to 24-month program. Graduates of the program earn preference points in the City's Civic Service process, automatically receive a lifetime professional network, including alumni career services, and, if they choose, earn industry-driven credentials. PowerCorps PHL's Solar & Electrical Academy operates in partnership with the Philadelphia Energy Authority (PEA) and is designed to train young people for careers in water operations, traditional electrical work, or solar. This academy aims to support their graduates with employment in high quality jobs.

Green Iowa AmeriCorps (Iowa) is a state-wide program that was founded in 2009 to address sustainable usage of energy resources. The program is composed of 3 branches: Energy and Community, Sustainable Schools, and the Land & Water Stewards. Corps members in the Energy and Community branch are trained to conduct free energy audit services on residential homes to assess a variety of factors contributing to a home's monthly energy bill. As part of the free audit process, they assess things like water usage, electricity usage, and air quality and flow. Corps members in this branch also put together environmental education programs and events in partnership with their host sites and other local organizations. Additionally, corps members organize and execute community service projects to engage volunteers in hands-on opportunities to make a difference in their communities doing things like home repairs. Service terms vary from 1,700-hour to 300-hour positions. Green Iowa is a model in the field for its impressive staff retention, range of professional development opportunities for corps members, and strong state level support.

The Sustainability Institute (South Carolina) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to empower the region's most vulnerable communities to achieve housing security, equity, and climate resilience. The Sustainability Institute's AmeriCorps members address the energy burden for low-income, underserved communities while receiving job training and conservation experience. AmeriCorps members are trained as energy auditors and home performance contractors and learn to lead weatherization projects. They are involved in diagnosing home performance issues and opportunities and also performing the weatherization repairs and energy efficiency upgrades. Corps members also facilitate and teach community workshops on energy and water conservation, empowering families to conserve energy and reduce their utility expenses.

Ampact's Climate Impact Corps Home Energy Initiative (Minnesota) places members with Weatherization Assistance Program service providers such as Community Action Agencies. The program started with the assistance of the Minnesota Department of Commerce (MDOC), which helped with strategy, training, program design, and identifying applicable funding streams from the beginning. Corps members serve in 1,700-hour terms and facilitate a variety of activities that include supporting home energy audits, household member energy education, remote solar opportunity assessments, and community outreach. All Home Energy corps members participate in a wide variety of trainings and also have the opportunity to enroll in an online Building Performance Institute Building Analyst course and take the written and field examination. The Building Analyst certification is provided to corps members at no cost makes them immediately employable for home energy auditor positions after their term of service.

Minnesota GreenCorps (Minnesota), coordinated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, aims to preserve and protect Minnesota's environment while training a new generation of environmental professionals. Corps members serve in 1,700-hour terms at their host sites, which include cities, counties, tribal nations, public schools, universities, watershed districts, and nonprofit organizations. Corps members are able to participate in a variety of climate and environmental resilience service activities, examples of which include assisting state and local agencies in conducting energy benchmark assessments and developing energy reduction plans.



EXPLORE THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY ROADMAP

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING ROADMAP

Community Capacity Building programming entails service year programs placing a small contingency of corps members (typically 1-3) to serve with partner organizations or affiliated sites (commonly referred to as host sites) to facilitate service activities that align with the mission of the program, therefore the climate and resiliency impacts can be quite expansive. Host site partners typically include municipalities, nonprofits, institutions of higher education, school districts, tribal nations, and faith-based organizations.

The Community Capacity Building model has been used to advance both direct (e.g oversee a community garden, provide climate and environmental education to students or community members, etc.) and capacity building (e.g. collect community feedback, provide research/data analysis, develop new programs or initiatives, etc.) service activities. The model is considered to be an effective strategy for infusing the support that service year corps members can provide to organizations and communities that may not have the resources or staffing necessary to host a full service year program on their own. The single-member placement model can also be used to help host sites gain initial exposure to service year programming and build a network among other host sites doing similar work that can infuse additional experience and expertise into their own programming.

The nature of the Community Capacity Building model also tends to create strong opportunities for corps members to gain professional-level experience as a result of becoming ingrained and valued within their host site – oftentimes leading to post-service employment.

Some Common Challenges

This model typically requires a high level of administrative responsibility, given the need to maintain and ensure quality partnerships with a variety of host sites. Some specifics include:

- The need to maintain a high level of corps member satisfaction as a result of corps members often not serving as part of a direct team of peers
- Reduced control over the service environment at host sites and the need to ensure a safe and quality service experience by properly vetting and selecting host sites as well as having open and active communication with supervisors.
- Ensuring consistency and reliability of impact data/measurement being reported from each corps member and host site partner.



EXPLORE THE COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING ROADMAP



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:
Advancing a Community Capacity Building Model

CivicWell/CivicSpark (California, Colorado, Washington) was born from the California Governor's Initiative AmeriCorps program that is dedicated to building capacity for local governments – and has since expanded to state agencies, nonprofit organizations, Tribes, and universities – to address environmental and social equity resilience challenges such as climate change, water resource management, and mobility. The program is administered by CivicWell and mobilizes 135 Fellows serving throughout California, Colorado, and Washington state working in local government agencies and community organizations usually in groups of 1-3 Fellows. The CivicSpark model allows each agency to define their own project needs within environmental or social "resilience capacity building." CivicSpark has a strong alumni strategy, engaging a 9-person Alumni Board that helps to advise the program, support the CivicSpark alumni network, and build leadership skills beyond their term of service.

The Greenest Region Corps (Illinois) is a partnership between Chicago's Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and AmeriCorps that started in 2018 and pairs corps members with Greenest Region Communities (GRC) to lead local sustainability projects. Corps members serve directly with a GRC on projects that result in greater environmental awareness and stewardship. Communities choose local projects that align with the goals of the GRC, and help further the region's commitment to sustainability. Corps members provide 1700-hours of critical service to many communities that do not have the capacity or resources to dedicate significant staff time to sustainability issues. Corps members receive training and mentoring from technical experts at the US-EPA Region 5 Office in Chicago and academic partners at the University of Illinois. Members additionally have the opportunity to connect with one another throughout their terms of service to share experiences and learn from one another's projects. Corps members also receive training in sustainability, environmental science, and other topics that will benefit the host community.

Conservation Legacy's Stewards Individual Placement (Nationwide) provides individuals with service and career opportunities to strengthen communities and preserve natural resources. Corps members serve with federal agencies, tribal governments, and nonprofits building institutional capacity, developing community relationships, and supporting ecosystem health. The program engages both AmeriCorps VISTA and AmeriCorps State and National (S/N) corps members. VISTA members serve in a full-time capacity and focus on nonprofit leadership development by building capacity through grant writing and partnership development, conduct outreach and education, promote economic development, and foster environmental stewardship. AmeriCorps S/N members can serve in terms ranging from 300 to 1700-hours and focus on direct service activities such as GIS mapping, invasive species inventory, preservation, and more.

ECO AmeriCorps (Vermont) ECO AmeriCorps' focus is to provide capacity for organizations to complete projects around the state of Vermont within water quality, waste management, and conservation fields. This is accomplished through supporting corps members by providing professional development, mentoring, and a sense of community. The program partners with local municipalities, conservation districts, solid waste management districts, various state departments, and nonprofits to host 1700-hour AmeriCorps members. The organization has prioritized diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and asks each organization that applies to host a corps member to detail their strategy for their own DEI goals and commitments, which are significantly weighted as part of the program's host site selection process.



EXPLORE THE COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING ROADMAP

RURAL RESILIENCE ROADMAP

The Rural Resilience program model can entail a wide array of both direct (e.g. delivering sustainable agriculture workshops, installing electric vehicle charging stations in rural communities, etc.) and capacity building (e.g. identifying funding sources to help advance local environmental resilience efforts, bringing together community stakeholders, etc.) corps member service activities, yet all are geared toward the needs of rural communities. The Rural Resilience program model is commonly advanced through a single-member placement model; however, opportunities also exist to engage service year corps members in a team-based approach as well.

Rural Resilience programming can be an effective method for infusing the support that service year corps members can provide to smaller organizations and project sponsors located within rural communities. Additionally, the Rural Resilience model also commonly emphasizes building strong connection and communication between both corps members and professionals linked to the program, which allows the program to serve as a knowledge hub for rural communities with limited networking opportunities. As the name suggests, the service activities advanced by this model are often geared directly toward helping rural communities become more resilient in the midst of climate change. These resilience activities can take various forms related to agriculture/food security, green economic development, disaster preparedness, energy, land use, etc. These activities are further outlined in the full roadmap, which paints a picture of how corps members can be leveraged to advance both direct and capacity building initiatives.

The Rural Resilience model also typically has a strong focus on developing young leaders from within local communities that can then leverage their service year experience to advance in related career fields and become the next generation of climate and environmental stewards in their hometowns. Corps members who are recruited locally also typically find value in having the opportunity to serve the needs of their home community.



EXPLORE THE RURAL RESILIENCE ROADMAP

Some Common Challenges

The program model commonly relies on increased operating costs since corps members are spread out across a large geographic area and many host sites have limited ability to provide cost-share support to the program. The model also commonly requires a high level of administrative responsibility given the need to maintain and ensure quality partnerships with a variety of host sites and/or project sponsors. Some of these are outlined below.



- Programs recruiting from beyond the local community oftentimes have an increased need of providing high quality cultural competency training to both their corps members and placement site partners via regular and direct engagement with staff and fellow corps members

- Reduced control over the service environment at host sites and with project sponsors makes it critical that proper vetting and selection of partners, as well as open and active communication with supervisors, is needed to ensure a safe and quality service experience

- Ensuring consistency and reliability of impact data/measurement being reported from each corps member and partners

EXPLORE THE RURAL RESILIENCE ROADMAP



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:
Advancing an Rural Resilence Model

Green Iowa AmeriCorps (Iowa) has been operating from the University of Northern Iowa's Center for Energy & Environmental Education department since 2009. Green Iowa is the largest environmental program in Iowa, engaging over 114 corps members each year in one of three service branches: Energy & Community, Sustainable Schools, or Land & Water Stewards. The program offers a variety of service terms including 1,700-hour, 1,200-hour and 300-hour, all of which work toward empowering Iowa's communities to make environmental and conservation-minded decisions and improvements. Corps member host sites include conservation districts, municipalities, public schools, community colleges, and various nonprofit partners. Green Iowa is a model in the field for its staff retention, range of professional development opportunities for members, and strong state level support.

Grizzly Corps (California), founded in 2020, is an AmeriCorps program built out of Project Climate at UC Berkeley's Center for Law, Energy, and the Environment. Grizzly Corps recruits 35 recent graduates to participate as full-time corps members in their program. Each corps member is placed at a host site, ranging from conservation districts to research centers. Every project focuses on agri-food systems and fire and forestry resilience in rural communities. During the 11-month term, corps members participate in various activities, including research on USDA grants and outreach to farmers who are eligible to enroll in those programs. Corps members, along with their host site supervisors and program staff, receive diversity, equity, inclusion, and restorative justice trainings. The program also provides its corps members with a small stipend to support individual professional development opportunities.

Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) (Oregon) AmeriCorps program has been operating out of the University of Oregon and across the state of Oregon for 29 years. The RARE program recruits corps members to live and work in local communities for 11 months. The service is dependent on location, but generally includes assisting communities and agencies in the development and implementation of plans for achieving a sustainable natural resource base and improving rural economic conditions. During their service, corps members learn new leadership skills in building community. RARE has had over 29 years of building state partnerships and has over 600 alumni of which they engage intentionally through a mentor program, monthly regional gatherings, and social events.

Rural Action Appalachian Ohio Restore Corps (AORC) (Ohio) mobilizes 70 AmeriCorps members throughout Appalachian Ohio to perform direct service in communities of need. Projects through AORC include watershed restoration, zero waste, environmental education, local tourism, public lands access, sustainable forestry, sustainable agriculture, support of local entrepreneurs, asset and gap mapping, workforce development, and sustainable solutions. AORC explicitly takes an asset-based approach when it comes to service. While there is great need in Appalachian Ohio related to food insecurity, substance use disorders, and lower rates of graduation, the region boasts acres of public land, temperate forests and water all year long, agricultural and medicinal knowledge, and strong family networks. AmeriCorps members receive training to approach the community with these assets in mind and get a unique community organizing training to learn how service with, not for, a community looks like. The organization also engages 10 AmeriCorps VISTA members that further support climate and environmental resilience efforts through providing capacity building support to rural communities.



EXPLORE THE RURAL RESILIENCE ROADMAP

FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENTS TO ACHIEVE PROGRAM SUCCESS AND MODERNIZE THE CORPS MEMBER EXPERIENCE

Regardless of the C&E resilience program model type that you are seeking to advance, there are three fundamental components of program design that should be kept at the forefront of programming in order to produce a successful and impactful program. These three elements – **Corps Member Recruitment, Belonging and Inclusion, and Post-Service Pathways** – were elevated by members of the C&E Resilience Learning Cohort, and as such, were included as primary sections of this core guide and can be leveraged in support of all three Roadmaps.

Key Strategies to Meet Corps Member Recruitment and Enrollment Goals

Ask just about any service year program staff person about what keeps them up at night, and you will likely find that corps member recruitment is by far the most common answer. Whether you are considering standing up a new service year program, or expanding your existing model, it is critical to intentionally incorporate strategies that can best set your program up for recruitment success. After all, if you cannot successfully fill your service year positions, all of the other impact goals will likely go unrealized.

There are many elements that encompass a robust recruitment marketing strategy and this roadmap does not incorporate an exhaustive list; however, Service Year Alliance has published several other resources that can be leveraged to augment your recruitment during your program design or expansion efforts.

Service Year Alliance Recruitment Resources

- Recruitment Toolkit, re-published April 2023
- Recruitment Plan Guide, published January 2020

For the purposes of this resource, we will focus on the specific element of corps member recruitment that surfaced in relation to our Climate Project: developing effective messaging strategies.

Effective Messaging Strategies

2022 Market Research

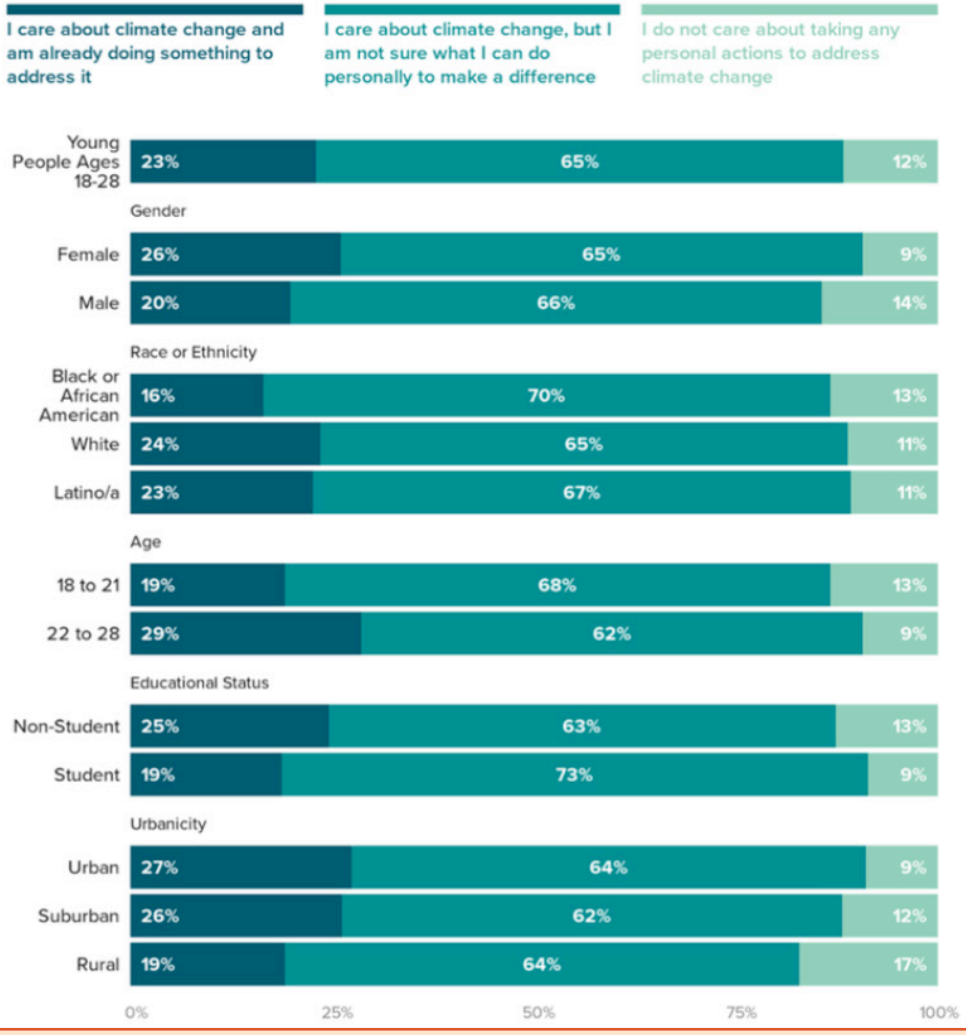
As part of Service Year Alliance's Climate Project, our team partnered with two polling and market research firms, Data for Progress and Strategies 360, to learn more about what motivates young people to serve in C&E resilience-related service year programming. We aimed to equip existing and emerging programs with data-driven messaging strategies to increase their ability to successfully meet their corps member enrollment goals. Service Year Alliance leveraged learnings from this market research, as well as years of research and recruitment testing from our national recruitment and awareness campaign, to launch new messaging and campaign concepts that we tested in early 2022. We recommend programs consider incorporating the following key learnings that emerged from this body of work into your recruitment marketing strategies.

Learn more about Service Year Alliance's market research and lessons learned in our Climate Recruitment Webinar.

DATA FOR PROGRESS CLIMATE SERVICE YEAR POLL

A summary of Data for Progress' poll results is available here.

In January 2022, we engaged with Data for Progress to poll 711 people ages 18-28. The poll aimed to understand young people's attitudes towards climate service years and workforce development, and gauge interest in serving in a climate-related service year. The poll incorporated representative samples from urban, suburban, and rural voters and oversampled Black, Latino, and individuals ages 18-21.



The following key learnings and takeaways from the poll's findings can be leveraged to further inform marketing strategies for service year positions related to C&E resilience, including:

- 65% of young people indicated that they care about climate change but are not sure what they can do personally to make a difference. Hence, young people want to take action on climate change and service year programs should specifically message their positions as a tangible way to do that.
- 45% of young people say they would "strongly" or "maybe" consider participating in a climate-related service year. This indicates that there is potential to move people from supportive of climate-related service to interested in participating in these positions if key selling points are clearly communicated by your program.
- Personal benefits are the most important factor for individuals considering a service year, and framing even altruistic benefits – like fighting climate change – as personal gains can help to center the individual in messaging efforts.
- The most convincing reasons besides pay or benefits to participate in a climate-related service year was taking action to address climate change and receiving assistance to pay for school or pay off student loans. Therefore, be sure to prominently feature the education award, if applicable, as part of marketing efforts, particularly when marketing to students.
- Surprisingly, the least convincing reason for considering a service year among the demographic surveyed was meeting and forming connections with young people from different backgrounds. While this may still be a benefit of your program, it is less of an appealing reason for youth to actually participate.
- The poll results also indicated that young people need more information on where they can serve and the types of projects that are available, both near their hometowns and in communities across the country. Clarifying where opportunities are and what exactly corps members will be doing during their service is important and should be clearly shared in recruitment materials.
- As one would assume, platforms that center video are important for marketing service years (YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat), especially for reaching younger audiences. Not only do they perform better on many of the social media platforms, but the content is often more engaging and offers a deeper look into the actual service being done.

HELPFUL TIPS

- *Message your service years as a tangible way to impact climate change*
- *Frame altruistic benefits like fighting climate change as personal gains (i.e. You can fight climate change through a service year.)*
- *Prominently feature the education award in recruitment materials, if applicable, particularly when marketing to students*
- *Clarify in marketing materials where opportunities are located and what exactly corps members will be doing during their service year*
- *When trying to reach younger audiences, prioritize video content and marketing on platforms that center videos]*

Following the poll and building off those learnings, Service Year Alliance then worked with Strategies 360 to conduct a qualitative focus group to gain a further understanding of the poll results and gather feedback on climate messaging and concepts, example ads, and overall learnings on recruitment for service years. The focus group included twenty three 16-28 year olds, offering a range of perspectives from high school students to college graduates to individuals early in their career exploration.



Building upon the poll findings, our focus group resulted in the following key learnings and takeaways that can further inform marketing strategies for your climate-related service years:

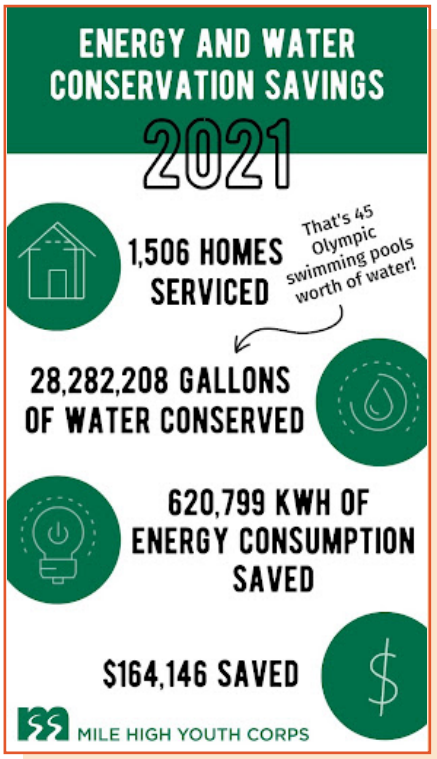
- Most focus group participants liked the idea of being able to help people and feel involved with the community. Service year programs should ensure that their recruitment messaging paints a clear picture of how their service year experience directly supports the needs and aspirations of the local community.
- Second to benefits, the most compelling reasons sighted by focus groups participants for considering serving was the ability to gain new skills and experience and the ability to make an impact and drive change. Moreover, some participants cited the potential for a service year to disrupt someone's career path. This information highlights that many young people feel like they cannot simply think of a service year as a gap year, and need the experience to clearly help them in progressing to their next stage in life. This lends itself to the importance of service year programs intentionally infusing post-service pathway strategies into their program and clearly communicating those portions of the model to potential applicants.

*"**Increasing the Value Proposition by Prioritizing Post-Service Pathways**" on **page 32** of this roadmap provides tips for incorporating post-service pathways into your program model.*

- The group also vocalized concerns about the lasting impact of climate-related service years and their value as being too small when compared to an issue like climate change that requires structural and systemic solutions. To help combat this concern, programs can incorporate items such as infographics into their marketing campaigns that help draw the connection between member service activities and direct impact such as carbon reduction or sequestration, waste reduction, environmental preservation etc. Programs can also frame their messaging in a way that makes clear that service, although impactful in itself, is just one component of the numerous interventions necessary to combat climate change.

- General concerns about safety, health, and pay also arose in the focus group, along with trepidations about possibly moving to a new place and adjusting both to the location and new relationships. Programs should consider highlighting the support structures they offer to help corps members navigate these types of concerns.





Examples for how service year programs can visualize their impact and address concerns about the ability of a service year to make a lasting impact on climate change.

HELPFUL TIPS

- *Paint a picture of how a service year with your program directly supports local community needs*
- *Intentionally infuse post-service pathway strategies into your program and communicate those efforts to potential applicants in marketing materials (i.e. If corps members earn a certification or if they're regularly recruited into specific industries, make that clear in recruitment materials.)*
- *Draw the connection between member service activities and direct impact on climate-related issues*
- *Acknowledge that climate change is a massive challenge that requires multiple interventions to address*
- *Highlight support structures that your program has in place to ensure corps members feel safe, supported, and connected to a community*

Historical Recruitment Learnings

Along with the new learnings from our 2022 market research, Service Year Alliance continues to draw from years of learnings from our national recruitment and awareness campaigns. The following learnings continue to be validated and inform messaging and recruitment campaign concepts that we recommend service year programs adopt in their recruitment efforts when relevant:

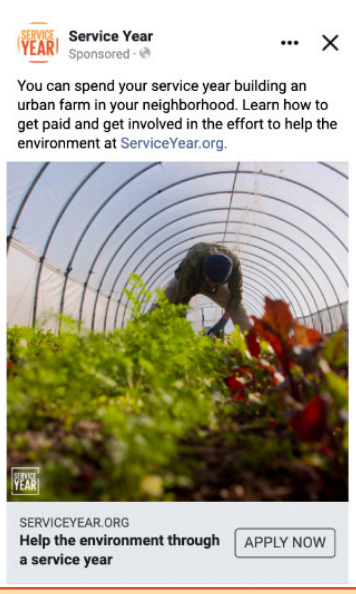
- Our tagline at Service Year Alliance is **"A Better You, A Greater Us."** Messaging that follows a similar format and highlights both personal gain and the community impact of a service year consistently drives the best engagement and is the basis of our definition of a service year. Programs should continue to combine personal and community impact in their recruitment messaging and marketing materials.
- Messages relating to immediate concerns (e.g. addressing hurricanes and/or wildfires) typically drive more interest than generic messaging (e.g. responding to natural disasters or helping communities). More specifically, messaging that leverages topical news headlines related to hurricane or wildfire relief generates even more interest (e.g. support wildfire recovery in California).
- Marketing materials that feature images of outdoor service, disaster response, and natural resources have experienced the most success in past campaign testing.

Turning Messaging into Campaign Concepts

As part of this Climate Project, Service Year Alliance leveraged learnings from our 2022 market research, as well as our years of messaging and advertising best practices, to develop new campaign concepts focused on recruiting young people into climate-focused service years.

Campaign concepts that emerged from the poll results, focus group discussions, and previous learnings included:

#1 WHAT ROLE WILL YOU PLAY?



#2 YOU - BENEFITS/ PROJECTS



#3 WANT TO HELP?



#4 OUR PLANET CAN'T WAIT



- **CONCEPT #1**: What role will you play? This concept highlights the specific types of projects or roles someone. can play when serving
- **CONCEPT #2:** YOU: This concept centers the individual in the message to highlight what a climate service year allows an individual to do – both the benefits and the actual project
- **CONCEPT #3:** Want to help but don't know how? This concept acknowledges that climate change is a big problem and gets at the topline finding from our polling – that youth want to make a difference but it's not clear how – and then aims to position a service year as a way to help
- **CONCEPT #4**: Our planet can't wait: This concept combines a need for urgency with the idea that future generations need us to step up to save the environment

Campaign Concept Results & Takeaways

The "YOU" campaign was the top driver of applications from Facebook and Instagram, and swipe ups on Snapchat. Building off this campaign's success, Service Year Alliance has adapted the campaign to highlight additional issue areas across the service year ecosystem and leaned into highlighting the various benefits of a service year for the individual as well – both adaptations of the campaign continue to drive low cost applications on ServiceYear.org and are effective for recruiting young people into service years. Learn more about the YOU campaign and how your program can adapt it for your recruitment efforts here.

The "Our Planet Can't Wait" campaign had the highest engagement – the most comments on Facebook and most impressions on Snapchat, validating our poll results that young people care about climate change and want to make a difference to help future generations. The urgency of climate change catches the attention of our target audience and this message resonates well.

The "Want to help but don't know how?" campaign had the highest number of post saves on Facebook, suggesting that this concept could work well to build initial interest in service years and create an audience for remarketing.

Final Recruitment Takeaways

We encourage existing and emerging service year programs, especially in the climate and environmental resilience sector, to utilize the learnings gleaned as part of Service Year Alliance's message testing and recruitment campaigns to inform their upcoming recruitment seasons.

As seen from our poll results, focus group, and campaign concept testing, climate and environmental resilience are clearly issues that young people care about, and they are interested in knowing how they personally can be empowered to make an impact. This presents a lot of opportunity in how you can frame a service year with your program as a way for them to make an impact on an issue they care about and in a tangible and real way.

When developing your position description, recruitment materials, messaging, and campaigns for social media, think about how you can incorporate visuals and messages that highlight for prospective corps members what their day-to-day service will look like, and how your messages and marketing materials can help paint the picture of the impact they will make during their service year.

First and foremost, though, it's important to keep in mind that while climate and environmental resilience is an issue young people care about, they also need to understand the benefits and key details, such as available service locations, of a service year up front. This is key to helping them determine if doing a service year is a viable option for the next step in their lives.

Suggestions for Messaging Each Program Model to Various Audience

In addition to incorporating messaging best practices into your corps member recruitment strategies, it can also be equally important to consider how to best communicate your program to additional stakeholders such as community members, funders, elected officials, etc. Fortunately, each of the three program models highlighted in the Roadmaps can positively impact climate, communities, and participants in a variety of ways, which allows you to emphasize different elements of each model depending on the audience that is being engaged. On the following page, you will find a few examples of the different elements of each program model that can be prioritized, especially when speaking to an audience that may not be overly concerned with the impacts of climate change.

HELPFUL TIPS

Service year programs commonly engage their corps members in storytelling workshops to help them develop practices for how they can effectively communicate their service to different audiences. Eco America's Let's Talk Climate Guide is one resource that programs have used to help develop this type of training for their corps members.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY ROADMAP

Highlight the model's ability to serve as a workforce development tool to help industries such as construction, energy, and infrastructure gain access to the quality talent pool they need in order to spur further economic development. Additionally, most areas of the country have experienced, or are concerned about, widespread power outages due to the increasing strain placed on energy production facilities to keep up with demand. Therefore, it can be advantageous to also highlight the model's ability to reduce energy consumption as well as monthly costs for homeowners.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING ROADMAP

It can be effective to highlight the model's ability to help support municipal efforts to prepare to capitalize on growing industries such as renewable energy. Furthermore, you can also consider highlighting the model's ability to increase capacity for municipalities to advance initiatives that will ultimately save taxpayers and families money – such as helping cities adopt a fuel efficient fleet of vehicles.

RURAL RESILIENCE ROADMAP

It can be effective to highlight the model's ability to help communities become more resilient to extreme weather events or resource depletion that is clearly observed by members of the community (i.e. flooding, fires, extreme heat, water conservation etc.). Additionally, you can also highlight economic resilience and focus on how the model helps support municipal efforts to prepare to capitalize on growing industries such as renewable energy and reskill workers to enter into associated career fields. Furthermore, economic resilience can also take the form of providing education and support services to help stakeholders such as farmers produce greater crop yields through adopting sustainable agricultural practices.

HELPFUL TIPS

Although there is a perception that a significant portion of the U.S. population is opposed to supporting climate action initiatives, studies have shown that the belief is much less prevalent than many may think. Check-out this great interactive Climate Opinion tool developed by Yale University to learn more

CENTERING PROGRAM DESIGN AND CULTURE AROUND BELONGING AND INCLUSION

Research demonstrates that groups with a greater level of diversity make better decisions and develop more innovative ideas. Additionally, retention rates are also generally higher for managers that embrace diversity. Moreover, during Service Year Alliance's engagement with green sector employer associations, a common priority that surfaced among most sectors was a commitment to diversifying their workforce in meaningful ways.

> ***According to The Corps Network**, which supports over 150 service and conservation corps, in 2022, approximately 43% of Corpsmembers identified as a person of color.*

There are advantages to prioritizing recruiting for diversity as a central part of your program model, however, recruitment is only a small element of ensuring that your service year program effectively embraces corps members across all backgrounds. To effectively engage a diverse corps, you first need to ensure that all elements of your program design are centered in creating an environment of belonging and inclusion. To assist in embedding essential elements of promoting belonging and inclusion into your program model, we have highlighted effective strategies and resources that emerged from the Climate Project.

Create formal opportunities for continually advancing inclusive practices:

- Your program design should incorporate committed spaces for staff, and ideally corps members and alumni, to develop and advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. This oftentimes will entail affinity groups coming together on a regular basis to develop strategies such as ensuring program policies, procedures, and onboarding practices are culturally inclusive. CivicSpark's Racial Equity Action Plan is a good example of initiatives that your program may choose to work toward to improve inclusive practices.

- When developing your program's staffing structure, consider incorporating staff positions that are either fully or significantly devoted to advancing DEI initiatives. If this is not possible for your program, you can also consider working with the grantmaking agency supporting your service year program to determine if unexpended grant funds at the end of your program year can be used to support contracting with DEI consultants to help advance your program's goals.

Ensure that there is a strong investment in corps member support throughout your program design:

- **Wrap-around supports**: Quality service year programs provide their corps members with a variety of additional supports that not only increase their ability to grow personally and professionally, but also enhance their ability to provide quality service. Many C&E resilience programs offer their corps members the following support services that can be infused into your program design:

    - **Career readiness assistance** - Providing resume support, career aptitude tests, guidance on assessing job suitability, job search support, how to dress for an interview guides, etc.

    - **Transportation assistance** - Offering bus or subway passes, shared transportation to service sites (e.g. leased vans), etc.

    - **Identification support** - Assisting corps members in securing important personal identification documents such as birth certificates, social security cards, state-issued identification, etc.

    - **Food security** - Providing a list of food banks serving the area or guidance and supporting documents that will assist corps members in securing SNAP benefits, etc.

    - **Childcare** - In additional to ensuring that full-time AmeriCorps members fully understand the process for securing child care assistance through the federal service provider, consider providing part-time corps members with guidance regarding outside resources that can assist them in securing child care assistance (2-1-1 or your state's department of social services can oftentimes be helpful)

    - **GED support** - If your program will be engaging corps members that do not yet possess high school credentials, consider partnering with organizations, such as local libraries, that can offer GED support services to those corps members.

    - **Mental health and self care** - Prioritizing corps member mental health and self care by ensuring that regular one-on-one check-ins between corps members and program staff are incorporated into your program design. These check-ins should go beyond discussing topics related to performance and service activities and should also incorporate opportunities for corps members to share if they are in need of any additional support or are struggling with anything during their service year. To help provide this type of support, consider incorporating affordable and quality resources such as Americas Service Commission's Member Assistance Program or exploring opportunities to partner with organizations that can provide your corps members with mental health first aid courses.

- **Housing** can be a major challenge for corps members serving in both urban (finding affordable options) and rural (housing availability) communities. Consider incorporating the following strategies into your program design to ease housing challenges for your corps members:

    - **Affordable housing partnerships** - Strategically partnering with host sites that, as part of their partnership agreement, can offer or assist in locating affordable housing options. Examples of host sites that have been cited as occasionally providing housing options include: the U.S. Forest Service, state conservation districts, postsecondary education institutions, city and county governments, and faith-based institutions.
    - **Housing inventory** - Create an inventory of affordable housing options in the area and include distribution of this resource to applicants seeking to serve in your program. Check out this example from AmeriCorps Central Texas.
    - **Subleasing** - Consider renting affordable housing units and subleasing to your corps members. If your program chooses to advance this option, your sublease contract should include clear terms regarding policy violations that can lead to eviction and how that relates to a corps member's ability to continue in their term of service. Inversely, the contract should also have a clear policy that outlines how a corps member's lease will be affected in the event that they were to quit or be terminated from the service year program.
- **Establishing a mentorship opportunity** as part of your program design can be an effective strategy to help support all corps members throughout their term of service.

    - **Diverse mentors** - Intentionally seeking-out mentors who represent the demographic makeup of your program can be particularly effective within the field of C&E resilience which traditionally has lacked diversity and can cause some corps members from underrepresented populations to feel like they do not belong.
    - **Mentorship programs** - C&E resilience programs have cited that coordinating mentorship programs can be very time consuming for staff, but typically produce a high return on the time investment in terms of corps member recruitment and retention.
    - **Engage alumni in mentorship programming** - In addition to encouraging alumni to serve as mentors, consider tapping alumni to assist staff with coordinating the mentorship program itself.
- **Unexpected financial challenges** often arise during a corps member's term of service that can necessitate them dropping out of the program if there is not a support strategy in-place.

    - **Emergency funds** - Consider developing a fundraising strategy that will allow your program to establish an emergency support fund that can be used to offer limited financial assistance to corps members who experience unexpected financial challenges.

Service Year Alliance has assisted several of its Impact Communities in establishing emergency support funds. Please contact partnerships@serviceyear.org if your organization would be interested in learning more about best practices regarding emergency funds.

Provide inclusive personal and professional development opportunities:

- **Prioritize incorporating multiple touchpoints** into your program design that will allow corps members to share input and feedback regarding what professional development opportunities would provide the most value to them and what entities may be able to provide well-rounded support in those areas of interest.
    - **When engaging outside speakers and trainers,** ensure that the program intentionally draws from a diverse array of individuals and partners who represent different backgrounds, perspectives, and lived experiences

Identify partners who share the program's values:

- **Design your host site selection process** to allow more opportunity for a diverse set of partners to apply and successfully host your corps members. Some effective strategies include:
    - **Leveraging corps members and program alumn**i to help cultivate new community relationships
    - **Keeping corps member service activity options as flexible and broad** as possible to allow the opportunity to meet more potential host site partners where they are in regards to their C&E resilience initiatives (i.e. overly prescribing service activities can unintentionally lead to boxing-out small organizations that are working to stand-up new climate interventions.)
    - **Awarding additional selection points** for organizations that will serve environmental justice-impacted communities
    - **Offering cost-share waivers** to host site applicants that assist the program in meeting its DEI priorities. Members of the C&E Resiliency L earning Cohort cited success with partnering with local community foundations and universities to provide cost-share support for underrepresented organizations.

- **Incorporate a robust strategy** for screening, training, and maintaining ongoing dialogue with your potential and existing host sites regarding the program's DEI commitment and strategies.
    - As part of the host site application process, programs often ask potential host sites to either agree to supporting the program's key DEI initiatives or comment on their organization's value alignment with these goals.
    - Additionally, it is a best practice to incorporate both initial and ongoing check-in and training opportunities with host site partners to further discuss these commitments and where improvements can be made. These engagement opportunities commonly include program staff or program partners leading trainings on topics such as restorative justice, undoing racism, avoiding unconscious bias, and more.

Again, because belonging and inclusion is consistently cited by C&E resilience service year programs as an essential element needed to achieve a high level of program success —- across multiple programming elements – we highly recommend that a belonging and inclusion lens be applied to all elements of program design at the forefront, and not as an afterthought.

These outlined strategies and resources merely scratch the surface regarding all the ways your program should embrace a culture of belonging and inclusion. Additional external resources that can help include:

- The Corps Member Curriculum developed by Service Year Alliance to better engage individuals after high school in service years provides several plug-and-play resources that are designed to help programs easily incorporate trainings and supports that can help advance topics related to creating a belonging culture. Additionally, the asset-based framework contained as a part of the curriculum includes some great tools that can be used to help identify the strengths that each corps member (and supervisors) brings to the table.
- The Corps Networks's Moving Forward Initiative contains a resource library, as well as recorded training videos, that can be leveraged by service year programs to help advance a variety of topics related to DEI.
- The Inclusion and Belonging Task Force out of Harvard University published Pursuing Excellence on a Foundation of Inclusion, which provides a framework for pursuing four inclusion-focused goals including: broad access in recruitment pipelines, supporting the flourishing of individuals in the community, creating pedagogic and mentoring pipelines that uphold mutual respect, and growing from and transcending the institutional history.
- FSG, a global nonprofit consulting firm, hosts a database of diversity, equity, and inclusion resources. Their DEI Blog Series and Equity Resources could be helpful to programs in understanding these terms with fidelity and operationalizing DEI practices.

INCREASING THE VALUE PROPOSITION BY PRIORITIZING POST-SERVICE PATHWAYS

As was demonstrated by the market research conducted by Service Year Alliance, a primary component needed to ensure that a service year program can effectively recruit young talent is to ensure that the program's design incorporates a robust corps member training and development curriculum that meaningfully enhances post-service pathways for its corps members. As such, our team met with a variety of C&E resilience service year programs, workforce development partners, and green sector employer associations to learn more about the workforce needs as well as the skills development, supports, tools, training, and credentials that can assist in building a strong training and development plan to enhance corps members' ability to enter into green sector career paths.

Minimal dedicated workforce funding was included in the Inflation Reduction Act to support the influx of climate funding into states and local communities and therefore, there is immense opportunity for service year programs to prioritize efforts to provide on-ramps to higher education and careers for the next generation and ensure young people from marginalized communities across the country have access to C&E resilience careers. Although approximately 25,000 young people serve in a variety of corps related to C&E resilience annually, there is a great need for additional service year opportunities to help meet the growing and significant workforce needs of climate-adjacent industries. In 2021, the Environmental and Energy Studies Institute highlighted the below climate current workforce opportunities, however it is estimated that an additional nine million C&E resilience-related jobs will be created over the next decade as a result of the Inflation Reduction Act alone. There are also countless emerging green sector jobs related to industries such as regenerative agriculture, sustainable forestry, and green infrastructure, and more.

Environmental and Energy Study Institute

Fact Sheet

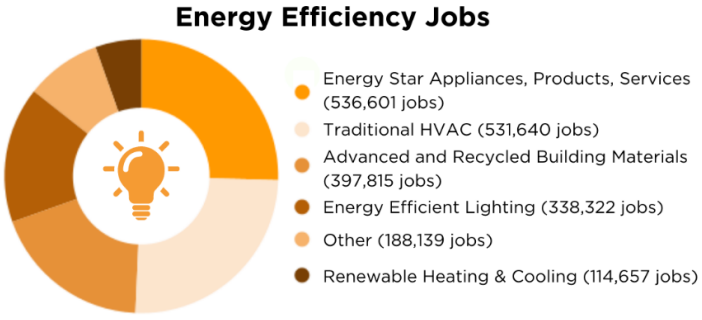
Climate Jobs

September 2021

Responding to the climate crisis provides an immense opportunity for job creation. Those jobs—jobs that help mitigate and adapt to climate change—are climate jobs. In recent years, climate jobs have been on the rise in the United States.[1] However, the economy-wide impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic affected climate employment: eight percent of climate jobs were shed in 2020.[2] Despite this, employment in some climate industries increased in 2020, and many climate jobs are expected to recover in 2021.[2] In total, there were **well over 4.1 million climate jobs in 2020**.

Energy Efficiency Jobs

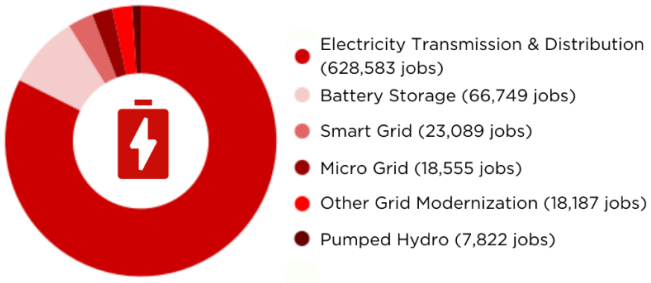
Energy efficiency supported 2.1 million jobs in 2020.[2] This includes people who design, install, distribute, and manufacture energy-efficient products and services. The states with the most energy efficiency jobs in 2020 were California (283,800 jobs), Texas (152,100), New York (121,000), and Florida (108,900).[3] While energy efficiency jobs fell 11.4 percent in 2020, they are expected to increase 10.1 percent in 2021.[2]



Source: U.S. Energy and Employment Report, 2021. Graph by Emma Johnson, EESI

Energy Transmission, Distribution, and Storage Jobs

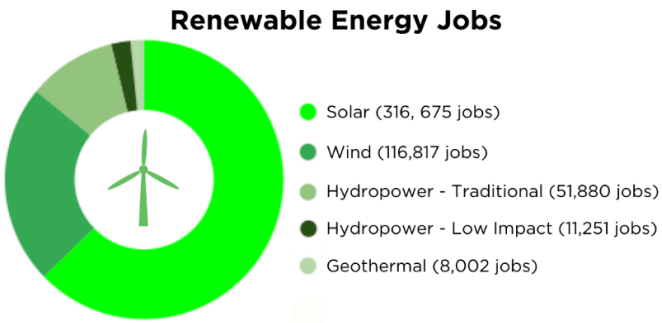
Energy transmission, distribution, and storage supported 763,000 jobs in 2020.[2] The sector overall lost three percent of its jobs in 2020, but battery storage added 800 jobs.[2] California had the highest energy storage and grid employment (22,600 jobs), with Texas (12,400) and Nevada (9,200) following.[4] In the coming years, transmission, distribution, and storage employment will likely grow to support increased renewable energy connecting to the electric grid.[5]



Source: U.S. Energy and Employment Report, 2021. Graph by Emma Johnson, EESI

Renewable Energy Jobs

Renewable energy supported 504,600 jobs in 2020.[2] Employment in the sector decreased by six percent in 2020, but wind energy added 2,000 jobs.[2] Significant job growth in renewable energy is anticipated; wind turbine service technicians and solar photovoltaic installers are projected to be the fastest and third-fastest growing occupations, respectively, across the entire economy in the coming decade.[6]



Source: U.S. Energy and Employment Report, 2021. Graph by Emma Johnson, EESI

Clean Transportation Jobs

Clean vehicles supported 261,300 jobs in 2020.[2] This includes about 119,700 jobs in hybrid electric vehicles, 83,700 jobs in electric vehicles, 47,800 jobs in plug-in hybrid vehicles, and 10,000 jobs in hydrogen/fuel cell vehicles.[2] Despite the economic impacts of COVID-19, employment in the hybrid electric and electric vehicle industry increased six and eight percent, respectively, in 2020.[2]

Renewable fuels supported 103,000 jobs in 2020.[2] This includes about 33,500 jobs in corn ethanol, 19,500 jobs in other ethanol fuels, 32,400 jobs in woody biomass, and 17,600 jobs in other biofuels.[2]

Public transportation agencies supported 435,000 direct jobs in 2018, and every $1 billion invested in public transportation can yield 50,000 jobs.[7]

Adaptation and Resilience Jobs

Climate adaptation and resilience are rapidly emerging areas of employment as a result of climate change impacts. The American Society of Adaptation Professionals (ASAP), the sector's main professional association, represents 38 organizational members that employ over 100,000 people.[8] ASAP reports that at least 1,000 professional-level adaptation jobs were hired for in 2019 and another 1,200 in 2020.[9] Adaptation jobs exist in all 50 states, with the most opportunities in California, Washington, D.C., and New York.[9] Adaptation and resilience are incorporated into existing jobs and also result in new jobs. In fact, job creation in this sector is expected to accelerate, especially with additional federal investment in adaptation and resilience. For example, it is estimated that for every $1 billion invested in flood resilience, 40,000 jobs would be created, mostly in construction and retail.[10]

Further investment in adaptation and resilience workforce tracking, such as revisions to the Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) system managed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, would aid analysis of employment in this sector. To learn more about adaptation jobs, check out EESI's explainer.

The Future of Climate Jobs

There is significant potential for job creation in the climate sector. It is estimated that achieving 50 to 70 percent renewable energy by 2030 could create 500,000–600,000 jobs in solar, wind, and battery storage.[11] Other climate policies—such as a national Clean Electricity Payment Program that could create 7.7 million job-years* over the next decade—could further boost the climate workforce.[12] Another emerging area of climate employment, plugging orphaned and abandoned oil and gas wells, could also create thousands of jobs with federal investment.[13] Several other types of climate jobs exist; for example, ecological restoration supported 126,000 jobs in 2015.[14] While millions of these climate jobs already exist, millions more could be created through federal efforts focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate impacts.

The jobs that make up the green economy are extremely wide ranging and span across sectors and industries. As such, the learnings, strategies, and resources associated with how service year programs can best position their corps members to successfully enter into associated professions have been consolidated into three general categories:

- Employer Engagement and Additional Corps Member Supports
- Career Paths in the Skilled Trades
- Administrative and Office-Based Career Paths

Regardless of the service year program model that you are advancing, we encourage you to review all three categories for post-service career pathways to determine which strategies and resources may be most applicable to your program design.

Employer Engagement and Additional Corps Member Supports

Forming intentional relationships with green sector employers who value the skills your corps members have gained during their service year is critical to increasing your program's value proposition for potential applicants. As such, employer engagement should be incorporated as a strategic element of your program's corps member development plan.

Recognizing that many service year program staff may not have direct experience with employer engagement, Service Year Alliance published the Connecting to Employers Guide for Program Staff to assist staff in the process of establishing mutually beneficial relationships with employers and workforce development boards. As a supplement to the resource, the following engagement strategies, which have proven successful for service year programs advancing C&E resilience programming, can also be leveraged once potential employer partners have been identified:

- Engage employers in speaking events that provide them an opportunity to inform your corps members about their company, culture, positions, and hiring processes

> *Programs have cited that engaging actual company employees in these types of events rather than HR representatives typically produces greater results.*

- Invite employers to site visits so they can see corps members directly participate in service projects related to their business operations (e.g. corps members installing solar panels, etc.)
- Consider providing your corps member with opportunities to job shadow or participate with key employers. Note: If the employer is a for-profit entity (e.g. ineligible to receive national service resources) it is likely that your corps members can only observe during their engagement with the employer as they cannot provide services that could provide a benefit to a for-profit entity.
- Organize career fairs for employers to participate in and for corps members to attend
- Partner with employers to host mock interviews with corps members
- Once you have formed a successful relationship with an employer who has hired and retained several of your program's alumni, consider asking that employer to provide preferential hiring status to your alumni.

> *When working toward establishing partnerships with employers, it can be helpful for you to understand what supports the employer is able to offer to their employees to help you determine if partnership is the right fit for your corps members. PowerCorpsPHL developed a helpful tool to help identify the best employers partners.*

Career Paths in the Skilled Trades

Significant workforce shortages currently exist among many skilled trade positions related to the green economy, and, due to recent legislation, many of these same sectors are also poised for significant growth which will further exacerbate the need for these industries to build robust talent pipelines.

Additionally, many climate-related industries such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, and green construction are relatively new employment fields and are still working toward developing robust training programs and partners. Furthermore, there is a great need within these same industries to increase the general population's knowledge of what career paths exist within these fields and the skills that are needed to excel in these opportunities.

Many skilled trade industries related to C&E resilience are also overly represented by white males; however, there seems to be a strong interest by many employers to diversify their workforce in meaningful ways.

Finally, although there are certainly many positions that require specific certifications and education requirements, a common theme that emerged during conversations that Service Year Alliance hosted with partners is that many employers have a strong need and interest in attracting talent that can simply demonstrate that they possess basic employability skills. The general sentiment is that if an individual has had the opportunity to refine their employability skills, through opportunities such as a service year, it provides the employer with a level of confidence that the applicant would be able to successfully complete training provided by the employer that would equip them with the specific technical skills they need to be successful in a position.

Given these findings, the following strategies should inform the development of a quality corps member training and development plan for your program that can feed into green sector skilled trades:

- First, it is important to realize that the very nature of a service year experience already sets programs up to be a powerful workforce development opportunity for the young people who serve. This means that there does not have to be a dramatic shift in program design in order for service year programs to serve as an effective pathway to green sector careers. Several bodies of research, such as Service Year Alliance's Pathways After Service Report, The Corps Network's Public Land Service Corps Report, as well as the findings that emerged from Climate Project Landscape Analysis, show that well-designed service year programs already effectively provide corps members with the opportunity to gain the employability skills that are valuable to green sector employers.



- The following employability skills, which were highly valued by green sector employers, should be taken into account not only when designing your program's corps member training and development plan, but also when thinking through the development that will occur as part of your corps members' day-to-day service activities:

    - Communication
    - The ability to serve as part of a cohesive team
    - Critical thinking and the ability to problem solve
    - Experience serving in inclement weather and varying conditions
    - Work ethic and etiquette, particularly dependability and punctuality
    - Ability to learn and follow instructions
    - Tool use
    - Safety
    - Data collection

- To support your efforts to enhance corps members' skills development throughout their service year, Service Year Alliance developed this Skills Mapping Development Tool, which contains helpful worksheets as well as guidance for how your program can help corps members document and share their acquisition of these skills post-service.

- Additionally, the Skills Attainment Curriculum that was developed as part of Service Year Alliance's Postsecondary Pathways project also contains additional tools and resources that can further assist your efforts. Creating Rubrics, for example, is an online training that will lead you through developing rubrics that will assist corps members in documenting skills attainment and growth throughout the service year. This training also includes a Blank Rubric Template for skills that are unique to your program model.

*The following **"on-the-job" skills** are frequently incorporated into to many C&E resilience service year programs:*

- *Tool safety*
- *Navigating local government structures and policies*
- *Site safety*
- *Energy auditing practices*
- *Data collection and submission*
- *Calendaring and scheduling*
- *Communication*
- *Social media*
- *Graphic design*
- *Community outreach*
- *Partnership development*
- *How to set an agenda and lead a meeting*
- *Environmental justice*
- *Multi-stakeholder collaboration*
- *Policy analysis*

- The following off-the-shelf trainings, also from Service Year Alliance's Postsecondary Pathways curriculum, can be infused as part of your program's training and development plan to supplement the experience corps members are gaining in relation to these highly valuable employability skills:
    - Work Ethic and Work Etiquette Corps Member Training
    - Communication, Organization, and Attention to Detail Corps Member Training
    - Teamwork, Collaboration, and Customer Service-Mindset Corps Member Training

- Alternatively, your program could also consider adopting an approach similar to Green Iowa AmeriCorps's innovative and foundational approach, "Pillars of Service."

- Some C&E resilience programs have found success using systems such as LNRG or Badgr (this platform offers free options), that can help document and demonstrate corps member skills attainment to prospective employers through online badging. Other programs simply incorporate online badging concepts into their design, such as assisting corps members with developing a portfolio of projects that can be used to demonstrate skills attainment to prospective employers.

- Incorporating industry-recognized credentials into your program's training and development plan can also be an incredibly valuable way to further position your corps members for post-service success. That said, incorporating credentials and certifications can be expensive and it is often difficult for these costs to be completely covered by the resources provided through an AmeriCorps-support grant. To alleviate this challenge, programs have had success partnering with host site partners such as utility companies that benefit from corps members being provided with certain certifications in order to add legitimacy to the service being carried out by the members under the name of the utility company. Additionally, the new Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act provide millions in new funding, particularly within the energy efficiency sector, to increase training and credentialing efforts.

HELPFUL TIPS

Review each individual roadmap for resources to help you determine if your program may be able to tap into the funds flowing into your state or local community.



Trainings, Credentials and Certifications

To further support embedding trainings and certifications into your service year program model, C&E resilience service year programs cited multiple key credentials as effective at advancing service activities associated with skilled trades:

A LOW-COST TRAINING THAT COST BETWEEN $0-$100 PER MEMBER

Association Mapping Standards Certification

BPI Building Science Principles Certificate

BPI will soon be releasing a free online course that will prepare participants to take the certification exam

BPI Building Analyst

Citizen Science Education Workshop certification

Core Skills Mastery

Cornell Small Farms: Business Planning course certificate

CPR/First Aid

Department of Energy Certifications

- *HEP Job Task Analysis (JTA)*
- *Standard Work Specifications (SWS)*
- *Retrofit Installer Job Aids*
- *Retrofit Installer Badges Toolkit*
- *3D House*
- *Weatherization Standardized Curricula*
- *Building Science Education Solution Center*
- *Building Science Education Series*
- *Building America Solution Center*

Driver Safety Training

Energy Practitioners Certification

FEMA:IS-0700 intro to NIMS

GIS Data Formats, Design and Quality

Advanced GIS

Herbicide Applicator

ICLEI Clear Path Greenhouse Gas Emission Software Operation

ISSS Sustainability Excellence Associate Certificate

OSHA 10

OSHA 30

Corps members can find OSHA trainings to be a bit boring. Programs have cited having success with identifying local trainers who are engaging presenters.

North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (multiple certifications offered)

North American Invasive Species Management

Project Wet

Project Wild

Roots of Success Pre-Apprenticeship (Environmental Specialist)

Sexual Harassment Training

S-110 Basic Wildland Fire Orientation

S-212 or Equivalent Chainsaw Training

Strategic Doing 301

Serve Safe Food Certification

Tree Keeper

Various LEED Certifications

Wilderness First Aid

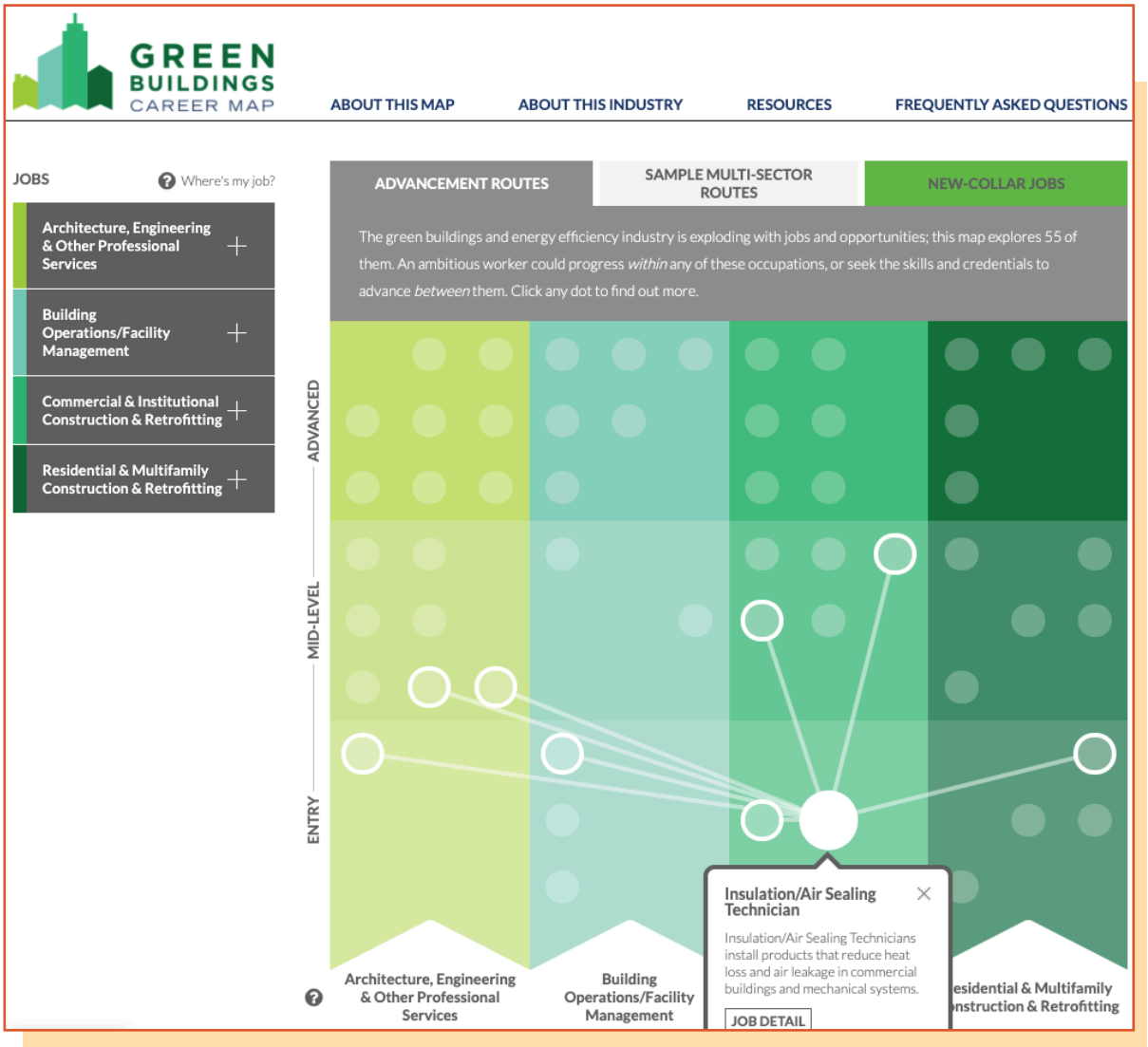
Wilderness First Responder

Career Mapping Tools

After infusing intentional skills attainment, documentation, and credentialing into your program design, it's important to consider how to provide corps members with knowledge regarding related career paths that they may want to consider post-service. There are many helpful green sector career mapping tools that can be incorporated into mid-service training events, including:

Sunrise Movement's Green Career Quiz is a great tool that can help corps members assess what type of green career path that may be of most interest to them.

Interstate Renewable Energy Council's Career Maps - These highly interactive maps for green building, solar, and climate control technology career paths demonstrate the breadth of each industry, critical occupations, and the multitude of advancement routes between jobs within each sector. These maps also includes a section on "new-collar" jobs within these industries – jobs that don't require a traditional four-year degree, but rather rely on gaining skills through "on-the-job training" such as a service year, high school technical education, on-the-job apprenticeships, vocational schools, technical certification programs, community colleges, the military, and internships. In addition to visualizing job options and advancement pathways, corps members can also click on each job type to access a full description of the job, typical salary ranges, and educational requirements.



Wisconsin's Vocation Schools' developed a collection of clean energy career videos that corps members can watch to gain a better sense of their aptitude towards certain renewable energy careers.

The National Wildlife Federation's EcoLeaders Career Planning Tool can be used to help corps members walk through the career exploration and planning process from self-assessment through self-actualization. The tool covers a wide range of career paths related to C&E resilience such as consumption and waste, education and awareness, food and agriculture, habitat and wildlife, outdoor recreation, transportation, and water resources. *Note: To access these resources, your program and/or corps members will need to register for a free EcoLeaders account.*

Charts such as those illustrated on pg. 13 of the following MIT Policy Report, Launching a Successful Civilian Climate Corps to Build Career Pathways, can be embedded in corps member trainings presentations to provide a succinct visual representation of potential green sector career paths that their service can help equip them to pursue. habitat and wildlife, outdoor recreation, transportation, and water resources.



The National Renewable Energy Laboratory's report, Education, Training and Career Pathway Opportunities for Buildings Energy Efficiency Programs Within the Corps Network, was specifically developed to help service year programs consider how their corps members can become well-positioned to secure careers in energy efficiency.

The Building Performance Institute's Jobs Insights tool allows corps members to enter a wide range of green sector positions into the search bar and will, in turn, generate information regarding pay ranges, typical duties performed, expected career growth, etc. Some positions also feature short videos that further highlight typical job responsibilities.

Finally, in part due to incentives contained in the IIJA and IRA that strongly encourage many green sector employers to move towards adopting registered apprenticeships as a part of their workforce development strategy, some C&E resilience programs are formalizing the corps member training and development plans into a pre-apprenticeship curriculum. In short, adopting a pre-apprenticeship curriculum incorporates many of the strategies listed above, but also intentionally exposes corps members to one or more registered apprenticeships that aligns well with the program's model. To provide further guidance to C&E resilience programs that wish to explore the integration of pre-apprenticeship programming, Service Year Alliance partnered with Jobs for the Future and Next100 to issue the Pre-Apprenticeship and National Service Field Report.

Administrative and Office-Based Career Paths

The workforce needs of the growing green economy go well beyond just the skilled trades, as there is also strong demand for individuals who can support a vast array of administrative and professional-level functions to advance the sector as well.

In addition to industries like renewable energy, energy conservation, and green construction having a high need for hiring administrative, technical, and professional level positions to advance new projects, we are also seeing similar needs in local, state, and federal government agencies as well as in school districts, institutions of higher education, and nonprofits. These organizations are typically tasked with identifying opportunities related to C&E resilience and developing strategies for how to leverage resources and funding that support the priorities in their community.

Strategies to consider incorporating into your program design to increase the ability for corps members to pursue these types of post-service career opportunities include:

Securing Employment with Host Sites

Corps members should think of their experience as a 10-month job interview. As such, one of the most obvious and effective ways in which corps members secure post-service careers within the green economy is through securing employment with their host site. It can be helpful for service year models to not only partner with a wide-array of host sites, but to also intentionally target agencies and organizations that either have a high level of hiring needs or that will have growing hiring needs in the future. Additionally, when bringing on host sites, consider whether or not preferential hiring status for program alumni can be built into host site agreements. When selecting host sites, it is important to ensure that the host site shares common values with your program. Common values can range from ensuring overall alignment to your organization's mission (e.g. the host site/employer is not causing environmental harm), to offering robust corps member/employer supports (e.g. offering access to mental health services, etc).

PowerCorpsPHL's Careers Pathways template is a helpful tool for thinking through shared values with potential host sites.



Alumni Engagement

Developing an alumni engagement plan can also be an effective strategy for increasing post-service career success. One of the most significant challenges cited by programs for effectively engaging alumni can lie within the capacity of program staff to devote enough time and effort to maintain contact with alumni and to keep them engaged. For this reason, consider whether or not your program can utilize a small portion of one or more of your corps members' service time to assist with alumni engagement. This can take form in a variety of ways:

- Assisting with alumni outreach and tracking (e.g. emailing, calling, or texting recent program graduates and logging information such as place of employment, or the skills/trainings that helped them to secure employment, etc.)

> **HELPFUL TIPS**
> *Check out Service Year Alliance's Alums page to learn about the resources that are available to assist with communicating and supporting your alumni network.*

- Assist with developing, scheduling, and coordinating professional development trainings and touchpoints for the corps throughout the year where alumni can share information about how they leveraged their service year experience to enter into their career path

> **HELPFUL TIPS**
> *To help ensure success, service year programs should start very early on in informing their corps members that one of the very best ways to continue to give back to the program after graduating is by determining ways to best connect their future employer to the program.*

- Developing a quarterly, bi-annual, or annual alumni newsletter. These newsletters should not only provide information regarding recent program activities, but also provide specific information on how alumni can stay involved (e.g. sharing their employer's open positions and offering to make referrals, provide job shadowing opportunities, engage in professional development trainings for current corps members, etc.)

Visibility into Green Sector Career Paths

Providing corps members with visibility regarding the vast array of green sector career paths that can be considered post-service can be just as important for corps members who are interested in pursuing office-based careers. For this reason, consider incorporating the Career Mapping Tools featured in the Skilled Trades section of this roadmap into your program's corps member training and development plan. Additionally, it can be helpful to highlight specific green sector job sites such as:

- Department of Energy's Clean Energy Corps - Hiring for a wide range of positions, including but not limited to, communications, grants/contracts management, legislative affairs, research, program and portfolio management, project management, occupational health, and more
- Climatebase - Explore jobs and organizations shaping a climate-positive future
- American Society of Adaptation Professionals (ASAP) - ASAP curates climate change adaptation jobs, as well as opportunities and events

- Brown Girl Green - Green Jobs Board - Harnesses the power of social media to bridge the gap between employers and diverse candidates
- Work on Climate supports an innovative online community where members help each other find their dream jobs in climate, build climate startups, and that employers use to hire great people to grow their teams. Corps members can join the Work on Climate community to connect with other community members through events, mentorship programs, and a Slack community!

Incorporating Corps Member-Driven Professional Development and Networking into Program Budgets

To supplement internal training and development, many service year programs are observing the effectiveness of incorporating corps member-driven professional development and networking into their program budget. Typically, service year programs advancing this strategy will budget between $150-$500 per corps member to allow them to use those funds to participate in a professional development opportunity of their choosing during their term of service. Corps members oftentimes use these funds to participate in in-person or online training or certification courses, become members in professional organizations, or attend conferences and networking events related to green industries that they are interested in. The Career Mapping Tools can assist corps members in identifying certifications that could be helpful for them to pursue to advance in particular green sector career paths. Some additional professional development networks that can be helpful include:

HELPFUL TIPS

Because of the diversity of the Community Capacity Building and Rural Resilience program models and the member service activities that corps members can participate in, it can be particularly effective to implement this strategy as it is difficult to identify trainings and certifications applicable to the entire corps.



- American Society of Adaptation Professionals
  - Corps members can join ASAP to connect with peers, grow their career, and build the field of climate change adaptation. Membership fee is $150 annually.
  - ASAP Mentorship Program: The ASAP Mentorship Program connects emerging climate resilience and adaptation professionals with accomplished ASAP members. The program provides ASAP Members a nine-month framework for engagement focused around the needs of the mentee/corps member, and gives the mentor an opportunity to share their professional knowledge, experience, and network.
  - ASAP Peer Learning Groups: ASAP Member-Led Interest Groups are virtual groups that are convened for the purpose of connecting ASAP members interested in discussing and advancing adaptation topics and seeking support from one another.
  - ASAP Professional Guidance Resources and Training Opportunities: ASAP provides essential resources and training that can help corps members meet their professional goals and maximize alignment with promising practices in the adaptation field. Most resources and opportunities are virtual or hybrid.

- Urban Sustainability Directors Network
  Hundreds of USDN members work together in Peer Learning Groups, Collective Action Groups, and other projects tackling dozens of topics. Examples include:
  - Expanding support and funding streams for bike sharing
  - Integrating climate resilience planning into city departments
  - Exploring the benefits of neighborhood scale approaches
  - Building urban food systems
  - Improving communication about sustainability
  - Implementing best practices for tracking and reporting of metrics and outcomes

- Aspen Institute's Future Leaders Climate NOW! Network
  The purpose of this group is to help future leaders broaden their professional network, identify potential career paths in the energy and sustainability industries, and engage with each other on professional development activities. Each week, a digest is sent featuring exciting career opportunities. Each month professional development webinars and workshops are facilitated, and there are additional networking opportunities that are made available to the network.

A THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

Service Year Alliance would not have been able to develop this resource without the help and dedication of the service year programs and climate partners who closely supported the project. Thank you to:

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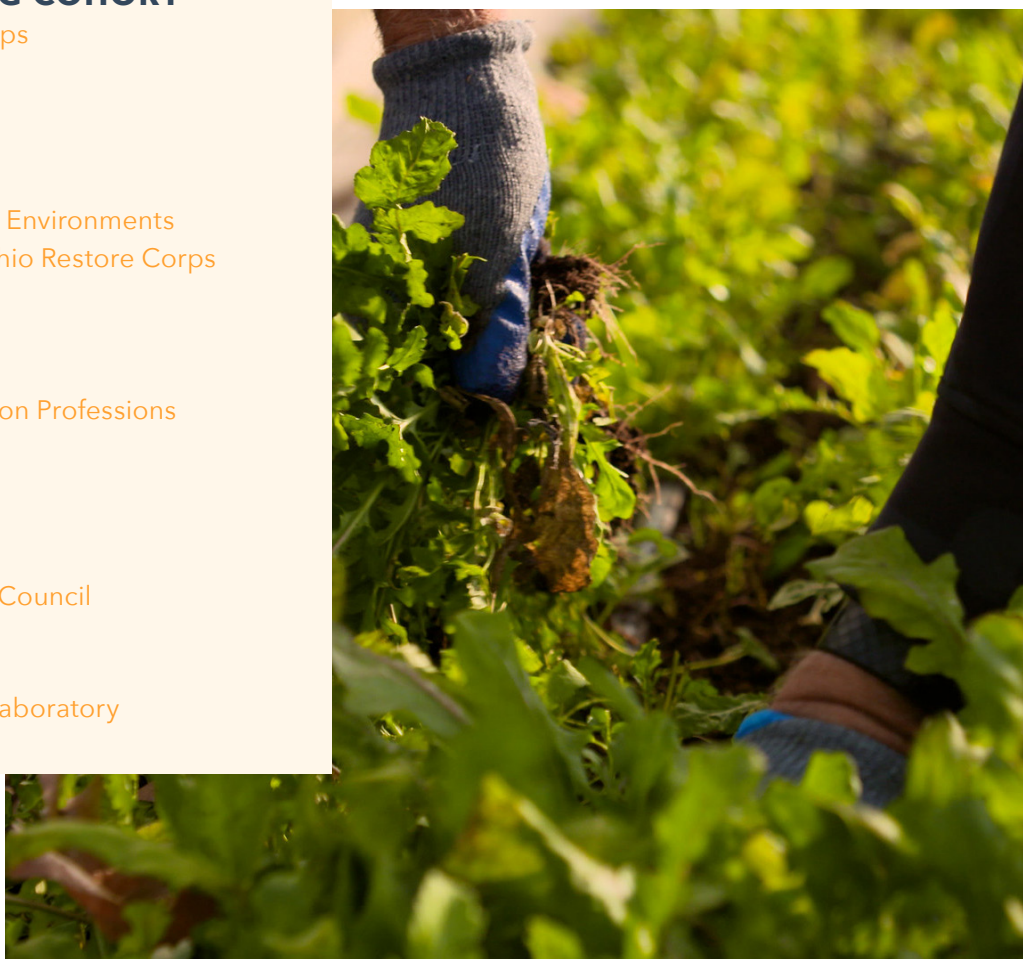
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ABOUT SERVICE YEAR ALLIANCE

Service Year Alliance is working to make a year of paid, full-time service – a service year – a common expectation and opportunity for all young Americans.

We envision a future in which national service – including civilian, military, and public service – is part of growing up in America. To reach this vision, national service must exist at scale, engaging at least one million young Americans in civilian national service annually. It must address America's unmet needs, bridge divides, be an opportunity for all, and build pathways to long-term success for individuals who serve.

As we enter a new era for national service fueled by recent investments in AmeriCorps, we are focused on ensuring these expansions are successful and set the stage for future growth of the field. We identify opportunities for shared recruitment and data systems to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing our sector.

Finally, we foster collaborative approaches to demonstrate the impact of service years as an experience that transforms lives, strengthens communities, and fuels civic renewal at scale.

Learn more at ServiceYearAlliance.org.


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