

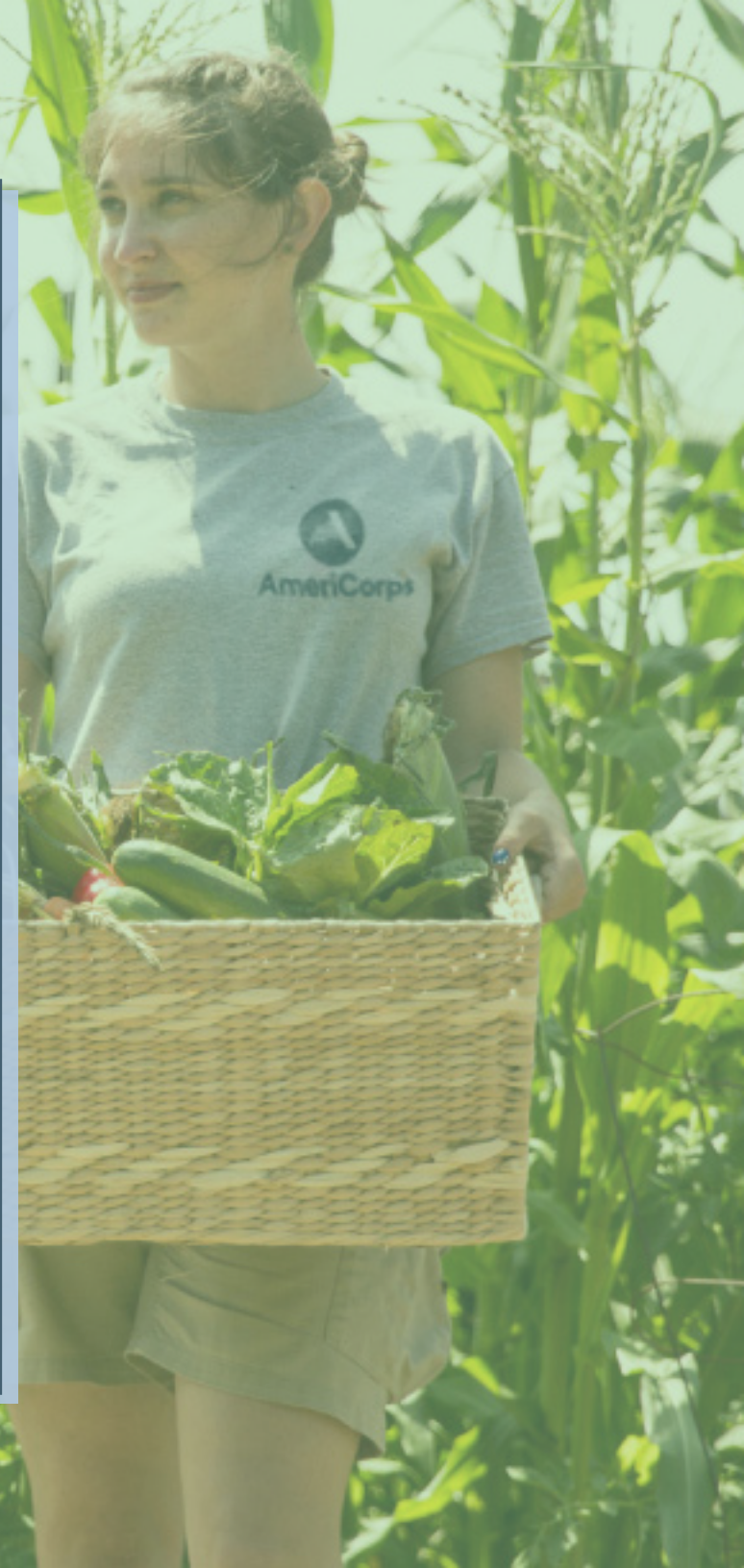


# RURAL RESILIENCE

*Service Year Program  
Roadmap*

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# INTRODUCTION

This roadmap provides guidance to help you visualize the primary components of a rural resilience service year program design. Within each component, you will find a highlighted framework that uplifts top programming recommendations that surfaced during Service Year Alliance's Climate Project.

This Rural Resilience Service Year Program Roadmap specifically highlights a program model focused on **Rural Economic Resilience**, though examples of other programming options are also included in the appendix for consideration.

The following guidance has been divided into four separate visuals:

## VISUAL #1: PROGRAM COMPONENTS

This visual provides a concise illustration of the key programmatic components of the Rural Economic Resilience program framework

## VISUAL #2: OPERATIONAL COMPONENTS

This visual concisely highlights key components related to program operations that have helped to support the highlighted framework.

### HELPFUL TIPS



*Utilize this [blank template](#) of these visuals to help further develop a program model that will meet the unique needs of your community.*

## VISUAL #3: SAMPLE CORPS MEMBER POSITION DESCRIPTION

This visual offers a sample corps member position description that further highlights the corps member service year experience

## VISUAL #4: DETAILED OVERVIEW OF THE RURAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

This visual provides a more in-depth overview of the highlighted framework and includes additional details regarding each component of program design



## 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 with a specific agency or organization typically require those host site partners to contribute towards the cost of supporting that corps member position.

**Direct Service:** Direct service activities generally refer to activities that provide a direct, measurable benefit to an individual, a group, or 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.

**Preferential Hiring Status:** Preferential hiring status for service year corps members and alums 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 for service year alums.

Recognizing that all components of the Rural Economic Resilience framework highlighted here may not fully align with the unique needs and stakeholders specific to your community, we have also included resources within each component that will direct you to additional programming options to consider. These resources can be leveraged by organizations looking to stand-up new service year programs, or by existing service year programs that are seeking to gain a more in-depth understanding of strategies for expanding or enhancing their current program model.

## RURAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

### Visual #1 - Programmatic Components

NEED THE NEED THAT WILL BE ADDRESSED	ACTIVITIES THE CORPS MEMBER SERVICE ACTIVITIES THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS ADDRESSING THE NEED	IMPACT HOW IMPACT WILL BE INCREASED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the economic resilience of rural communities by leveraging opportunities to participate in the emerging green economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist communities in leveraging resources that can help to advance economic opportunities related to environmental resilience</li> <li>• Promote and facilitate innovative economic development activities centered around the growing green economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of organizations that increase their effectiveness, efficiency, and/or scale/reach</li> <li>• Number of individuals with improved job readiness</li> </ul>

### Visual #2 - Operational Components

STRUCTURE HOW CAN THE PROGRAM BE ADMINISTERED	RESOURCES PARTNERS AND FUNDING THAT WILL BE LEVERAGED	CORPS MEMBER SUPPORTS TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORTS THAT WILL EQUIP CORPS MEMBERS FOR SUCCESS BOTH DURING AND AFTER SERVICE	COSTS STANDOUT EXPENSES THAT WILL BE INCORPORATED INTO THE PROGRAM OPERATING COSTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose to operate your own program</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with an existing national service program that has an interest in expanding programming to include Rural Economic Resilience</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A not-for-profit or public agency that has experience engaging a diverse range of partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AmeriCorps State or National grant funds</li> <li>• Engage state agencies and philanthropy to secure funding to increase diversity of host sites</li> <li>• Engage regional commissions and philanthropy to support corps member training and development opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize practices that will create a culture of belonging and inclusion</li> <li>• Intentionally develop and document Employability Skills=</li> <li>• Intentionally position the program to serve as a regional knowledge hub connecting corps members, host sites, and subject matter experts</li> <li>• Provide financial support to assist corps members in pursuing professional development and networking opportunities specific to areas of interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support host site management personnel</li> <li>• Competitive corps member living allowance</li> <li>• Significant general operating costs: mileage and travel, corps member training and credentialing, recruitment costs</li> </ul>

### Rural Economic Resilience Corps Member Position Description

**Service Position Type:** Full-Time 1700 hours

**Term of Service:** 10 months

**Average Weekly Service Hours:** 40 hours

#### ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY

Our organization's AmeriCorps program offers a unique opportunity for individuals that are passionate about enhancing rural resilience to build professional experience through national service. By building capacity for small towns and cities to leverage resources that will assist community members to participate in the growing green economy, corps members create a lasting impact in local communities while building a robust network of peers and gaining technical and leadership skills.

#### MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- Be at least 17 years of age or older
- Have or working towards a high school diploma or its equivalent
- Be a citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States
- Possess basic computer skills, including the ability to navigate online systems and email
- Ability to serve in both a professional virtual/office setting
- Possess strong communication (both verbal and written) and teamwork skills
- Desire and ability to engage with people from different backgrounds and demographics
- Satisfy the National Service Criminal History Check eligibility criteria pursuant to 45 CFR 2540.202
- Positions that require driving will require a valid driver's license and the ability to pass a driving record check
- Although past experience in areas such as workforce development, community outreach and public communication is valued, the program's training and development curriculum will fully prepare you to successfully fulfill the responsibilities of the position

#### ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

##### Assisting Rural Communities in Leveraging Climate and Environment Resilience Resources

- Researching public and private training, technical assistance, and funding opportunities
- Determining eligibility for participation in state and federal programs
- Collecting public input and feedback
- Participating in research, data collection, and coordination efforts to assist with pursuing support and funding opportunities
- Drafting grant applications to private entities
- Developing impact measurement and reporting strategies



## Rural Economic Resilience Corps Member Position Description

### Promoting and Facilitating Green Sector Economic Development Activities

- Building community connections and relationships to foster a network of local champions and outreach partners
- Assisting in the development and facilitation of programming that will support reskilling workers to green sector opportunities, including assisting with establishing and coordinating internship opportunities
- Promoting green sector job opportunities and workforce development programs via online and in-person marketing efforts
- Assisting in the development and facilitation of programming that will support local entrepreneurs in pursuing green business opportunities
- Coordinating community outreach and education initiatives
- Assisting with in the cultivation of local and sustainable jobs and businesses
- Promoting sustainable tourism initiatives
- Assist Energy Auditor Technicians with completing weatherization and retrofit installatios

### Additional Responsibilities:

- Follow all required safety procedures
- Report data in online systems in a timely and accurate manner; follow protocols in reporting on duties and/or tasks completed, including impact to the greater community
- Participate in training sessions and meetings, as required
- Participate in September 11th Day of Remembrance and/or Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service events that may occur on the weekend or during holidays and include activities outside of the scope of typical day-to-day functions

### Benefits:

- The living allowance for this position is \$25,500 distributed on a bi-weekly basis
- Access to no-cost medical coverage provided by the program
- Eligibility to receive childcare assistance provided through AmeriCorps
- Professional development, training, and networking opportunities, which include a \$500 personal allowance to engage in self-selected professional development opportunities
- Forbearance on existing qualifying student loans and payment of interest accrued during service term
- This position is eligible for an Education Award up to \$6,495
- Please visit <https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/segal-americorps-education-award> for additional information on the education award.

This program is available to all, without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, genetic information, and military service. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform essential functions.

# 1. NEED

## IDENTIFYING THE NEED(S) THAT YOUR SERVICE YEAR PROGRAM WILL ADDRESS

Clearly defining the need or needs that your service year program will seek to address enables you to identify relevant justifying data that will assist in attracting the programmatic and financial support you will need to successfully operate the service program. Furthermore, defining the need(s) as step one of the program design process will help ensure that the corps member service activities, program partners, training and support, and measurement strategies are all developed with the focused intent of addressing the defined need(s).

### Rural Economic Resilience Framework Needs:

The need to increase the economic resilience of rural communities by increasing capacity to leverage opportunities to participate in the growing green economy.

IIJA and IRA provide historic opportunities for rural communities to infuse green technology into aging infrastructure and create opportunities for residents to transition into emerging green sector industries, but small towns across the nation are fighting harder than ever to do more with less. As workforce challenges emphasize the need for talent attraction and retention, these communities often find themselves in direct competition with larger metropolitan areas, which often have greater resources, and the ability to leverage staff time toward identifying resources and planning and delivering projects. In rural areas, organizations and agencies serving the community are often too busy addressing urgent critical needs to have the capacity to devote adequate time to identify new opportunities that have been presented within IIJA and IRA as well as coordinate the processes needed to equip their community to take advantage of these new resources. Service year programming provides the opportunity to infuse the additional human capital needed for rural communities to fully participate in these opportunities.

### More Information and Additional Strategies:

We encourage you to reference the [Community Needs and Corps Member Service Activities](#) section of the appendix to gain further insight on how Rural Resilience service year programming can be leveraged to infuse additional capacity into rural stakeholder networks. This section also uplifts additional needs that Rural Resilience service year programming has been leveraged to address. Examples include food security, increasing regenerative agriculture and sustainable forestry practices, disaster preparedness and response, waste reduction, natural resource management, reducing energy consumption, etc.



## 2. ACTIVITIES

### DEVELOPING CORPS MEMBER SERVICE ACTIVITIES THAT WILL ADDRESS THE IDENTIFIED NEED(S)

Your corps members' service activities should either enhance current programming or infuse additional capacity to stand-up new programming that will help address the need(s) you've identified. Corps member activities can include a wide array of both direct and capacity building services. Keep in mind that if you are advancing an AmeriCorps funded service year program, there are certain [restricted activities](#) that you should be aware of and that should not be incorporated into your program design.

#### Rural Economic Resilience Framework Activities:

##### *Assisting Rural Communities in Leveraging Climate and Environment Resilience Resources*

- Researching public and private training, technical assistance, and funding opportunities
- Determining eligibility for participation in state and federal programs
- Collecting public input and feedback
- Participating in research, data collection, and coordination efforts to assist with pursuing funding and support opportunities
- Drafting grant applications to private entities
- Developing impact measurement and reporting strategies

##### *Promoting and Facilitating Green Sector Economic Development Activities*

- Building community connections and relationships to foster a network of local champions and outreach partners
- Assisting in the development and facilitation of programming that will support reskilling workers to green sector opportunities, including assisting with establishing and coordinating internship opportunities
- Promoting green sector job opportunities and workforce development programs via online and in-person marketing efforts
- Assisting in developing and facilitating programming that supports local entrepreneurs in pursuing green business opportunities
- Coordinating community outreach and education initiatives
- Assisting with in the cultivation of local and sustainable jobs and businesses
- Promoting sustainable tourism initiatives

#### More Information and Additional Strategies:

Additional examples of the wide variety of direct and capacity building service activities that Rural Resilience corps members can engage in can be found in the [Community Needs and Corps Member Service Activities](#) section of the appendix.

## 3. IMPACT

### DETERMINING A STRATEGY FOR MEASURING AND REPORTING YOUR PROGRAM'S IMPACT

It is important for your service year program to have strong systems in place that will not only allow you to accurately measure and report on the impact the program is making towards addressing the identified need(s), but also to communicate the impact that your program is having in regards to corps member development. These systems will allow you to accurately communicate the program's return on investment to key stakeholders and ensure the long-term sustainability of the program.

Typically, service year programs measure impact through a structure of capturing outputs (e.g. # of services provided, individuals engaged or products produced) and associated outcomes (e.g. resulting improvement) related to primary corps members service activities.

#### Rural Economic Resilience Framework Impact:

##### ***Number of organizations that increase their effectiveness, efficiency, and/or scale/reach***

Rural resilience models operating as AmeriCorps programs tend to select the following [national performance measures](#) to report the impact the program is having in increasing the capacity of their partners to advance initiatives related to climate and environmental resilience.

- G3-3.4 (output) - Number of organizations that received capacity building services
- G3-3.10A (outcome) - Number of organizations that increased their effectiveness, efficiency, and/or program scale/reach

##### ***Number of individuals with improved job readiness***

Because the highlighted Rural Economic Resilience framework is specifically geared towards engaging members of the public in experiences intended to increase their ability to take advantage of green sector economic opportunities, the following performance measures are also recommended to help capture the impact the program is having on individuals.

- O1A (output) - Number of individuals served
- O21 (outcome) - Number of individuals with improved job readiness

#### More Information and Additional Strategies:

The [Measuring and Reporting Impact](#) section of the appendix include sample tools shared by members of the Climate and Environmental Resilience Learning Cohort that can assist you in developing strategies for measuring impact at the organization and individual level. Within this section you will also find additional impact measurement recommendations associated with energy consumption reduction, job placement, and environmental education.

## 4. STRUCTURE

### IDENTIFYING THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE FOR YOUR SERVICE YEAR PROGRAM

When seeking to advance a service year program it is important to identify the type of organization or agency that may be best equipped to successfully administer the project. The appropriate administrative strategy for your program will be highly informed by the need(s) and corps member service activities that have been identified.

#### Rural Economic Resilience Framework Structure:

##### ***Choosing to administer your own AmeriCorps program***

A [service year](#) program provides paid opportunities for individuals to develop real-world skills through hands-on service and can be administered independently or by accessing federal national service resources. To be successful in administering a service year program, your organization should have robust accounting, payroll, grant management, human resources, recruitment, and training systems in place. Additionally, your organization will also need to develop the partnerships needed to support corps member project placements.

If seeking to administer the project with the support of national service resources, like AmeriCorps, you will also need to ensure that your organization is eligible to apply for funding (eligible organizations include: Indian Tribes, institutions of higher education, local governments, nonprofit organizations, states, and US Territories). Additionally, your organization will also need to develop a strong understanding of federal and state rules, regulations, and provisions governing national service programming.

OR

##### ***Consider partnering with an existing service year program***

The path of least resistance for establishing new service year programming can often be to first explore partnering with an existing service year program that may be interested in expanding their activities to include energy efficiency programming.

- Many service year programs are supported by their state service commissions. [This tool](#) from America's Service Commissions can help you identify your local service commission and explore the various service year programs they support. Service year programs that currently administer an intermediary model where corps members are placed at a variety of partner organizations, particularly those located in rural communities, but may currently administer programming that falls outside environmental stewardship can be a great fit for hosting climate-focused rural resilience programming.
- Some national service year programs are open to allocating corps member positions or establishing new operating sites as well. One example is [Conservation Legacy](#).

OR

##### ***A not-for-profit or public agency that has experience engaging a diverse range of partners***

If you are representing a state service commission or an organization that is interested in supporting the advancement of a rural resilience service year program, but may not be in a position to directly administer the program yourself, consider identifying a partner with experience in engaging a diverse range of partners to serve as the administrative agency/program. Examples include: Regional council of governments; local government agencies such as a county government; local, regional, and statewide nonprofits; associations or organizations that convene partnership networks (such as conservation district associations); state agencies; and institutions of higher education (especially land grant institutions managing cooperative extension offices).

#### More Information and Additional Strategies:

To find specific examples and learn more about the advantages and disadvantages of administering rural resilience programs within different types of not-for-profit and public agencies, please refer to the [Partnerships to Advance Programming](#) section of the appendix.

## 5. RESOURCES

### IDENTIFYING PARTNERS AND FUNDING STREAMS THAT WILL SUPPORT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Funding sources, such as AmeriCorps grants, that are commonly leveraged to support service year programming typically only cover around 50% to 75% of total program operating costs. For this reason, you will need to also develop strategies and form partnerships that will enable your program to secure the additional funding necessary to successfully administer your service year program.

### RURAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK: NATIONAL SERVICE RESOURCES

#### *AmeriCorps State and National*

AmeriCorps State and National grants provide resources to support corps members primarily engaging in direct service activities, but can also be used to support corps members participating in capacity building activities if those activities help lead to direct service being provided. AmeriCorps State and National grants are a good fit to support the highlighted rural economic resilience framework as corps members will primarily engage in direct services, which ultimately infuse additional capacity into communities.

### RURAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK: GENERATING MATCH THROUGH COST-SHARE AND FEE-FOR-SERVICE CONTRACTS

Rural Resilience models operating as AmeriCorps programs typically secure about 50-65% of their total program operating budget through their AmeriCorps grant. The remaining 50-35% is primarily secured through cost-share agreements with host sites, which can range from as low as \$800/member to as high as \$25,000/member. Common host sites for a rural economic resilience model include: city and county offices (particularly those charged with community planning or economic development); local councils, alliances, and community resource organizations; and tourism offices.

### RURAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK: SECURING FUNDING TO DIVERSIFY CORPS MEMBER HOST SITES

Rural resilience program models have successfully partnered with both state agencies (such as state economic development offices) and philanthropic partners (such as community foundations) that have been willing to provide funding to offset or waive cost share requirements for host site partners. This allows for rural resilience programs to bring on additional and more diverse host site partners. As a result of many Rural Resilience program models having a low cost-share requirement, philanthropic partners secured by the service year program can make a significant impact in diversifying corps member host sites by making relatively small financial contributions to the program.

### RURAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK PARTNERS SECURING FUNDING TO SUPPORT CORPS MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:

Rural Resilience programs have cited that both philanthropic partners and [Regional Commissions](#) have been particularly interested in funding the workforce development components of programming and have provided funds to support corps member training and development expenses.

### More Information and Additional Strategies:

If you are new to service year programming and would like to learn more about how to tap into national service resources that can help support your program, please be sure to check out the Getting Started with Service Year Programming section of the [Climate and Environmental Resilience Guide](#). To learn more about partnership options, please review the [Host Sites](#) section of the appendix.

Be sure to also check out the [Funding to Support Project and Training Costs](#) section of the appendix to learn more about generating fee-for-service and cost-share resources and to review additional opportunities that exist for your program to tap into new and existing federal, local, and private financial support.

## 6. CORPS MEMBER SUPPORTS

### ESTABLISHING A TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT PLAN THAT EQUIPS CORPS MEMBERS FOR SUCCESS BOTH DURING AND AFTER SERVICE

To operate a successful service year program, you will not only need to infuse training and development activities into your program that will adequately prepare your corps members to facilitate their service activities, but you will also need to create a supportive environment that will help increase the overall value proposition of serving with your program.

#### Rural Economic Resilience Framework Supports:

##### ***Create a Culture of Belonging and Inclusion***

Centering program design around [establishing a culture of belonging and inclusion](#) is an essential element of establishing a successful and impactful service year program and has been strongly uplifted by organizations that have been engaged in multiple bodies of work advanced by Service Year Alliance, including the Climate Project.

##### ***Emphasize the Development and Documentation of Employability Skills***

A common theme that emerged during conversations 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 and demonstrate their employability skills – through opportunities such as a service year – it provides the employer with a level of confidence that the applicant will be able to successfully complete their internal training programs.

##### ***Position the program to serve as a regional knowledge hub connecting corps members, host sites, and subject matter experts***

Rural Resilience service year programs often intentionally connect their network of host sites, corps members, and other topic area experts associated with the program via online networking systems. By enabling these networks to be formed, the service year program empowers corps members and the rural communities being served with the ability to leverage the knowledge base of other partners within the network.

##### ***Provide Financial Support for Individualized Training, Development, and Networking***

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. Corps members often 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.

##### ***Prepare Corps Members for Life After Service***

The need to provide corps members with a clear vision of the career paths that are available to them after participating in a service year arose as a priority component needed to ensure post-service success. Providing career readiness assistance as well as establishing preferential hiring agreements with project partners are also strategies that can produce a high level of results.

#### More Information and Additional Strategies:

There are many elements that contribute toward designing a service year program that will create a strong culture of belonging and inclusion. Practices and resources that can help you incorporate these essential components into your service year program can be found in the “Centering Program Design and Culture around Belonging and Inclusion” section of the [Climate and Environmental Resilience Guide](#). Additionally, you can also leverage the “Increasing the Value Proposition by Prioritizing Post-Service Pathways” section of the Guide to:

- access resources that will assist your program in incorporating and tracking skill development;
- view a comprehensive list of professional credentials that are commonly infused into climate adjacent service year programming; and
- get information on the strategies that can be incorporated into your program to support career mapping and post-service success.



## 7. COSTS

### DETERMINING STANDOUT EXPENSES THAT SHOULD BE INCORPORATED INTO THE PROGRAM OPERATING COSTS

There are distinct costs that are typically associated with different types of service year programming. Ensuring that your organization is properly budgeting for standout expenses associated with the type of program model that you seek to advance will help ensure that your program is adequately supported from day one.

#### Rural Economic Resilience Framework Costs:

##### ***Personnel***

It is common for Rural Resilience programs to have a staff-to-corps member ratio of about 1 to 15 that commonly includes support personnel who are specifically tasked with host site management.

##### ***Corps Member Living Allowance***

To be competitive within local job markets, most Rural Resilience programs are striving to establish a corps member living allowance that equates to at least \$15/hr. Additionally, offering a competitive corps member living allowance is an important factor to help ensure that host site communities view the program as adding value and opportunity to the area.

##### ***Significant General Operating Costs***

Significant costs to anticipate when running a Rural Resilience service year program include: mileage and travel expenses to support host sites across large geographic regions, corps member training, credentialing, and online education management tools, and corps member recruitment.

#### More Information and Additional Strategies:

When advancing any service year model, there are many costs that must be considered and incorporated into your operating budget. The [AmeriCorps State and National Detailed Budget Instructions](#) (see pages 22-37) can be a helpful resource to assist you in thinking through typical expense categories as well as common costs that must be factored into most service year program models. You can also reference the [Budget Considerations](#) section of the appendix to find additional details regarding each budget category listed above. The appendix below also provides further insight regarding the typical Rural Resilience program staffing structure as well as outlines additional insight for budgeting for alternative Rural Resilience programming models.


# APPENDIX

## *Additional Information and Alternative Options*

# COMMUNITY NEEDS AND CORPS MEMBER SERVICE ACTIVITIES

The following inventory explores a comprehensive list of community needs that service year programs advancing an energy efficiency program model commonly seek to address. Service year programs should not be designed around addressing each and every community need listed, but rather, these needs should be considered when determining how the program model can be designed to meet the unique opportunities and challenges in the communities being served.

NEED	FURTHER DESCRIPTION AND ASSOCIATED CORPS MEMBER SERVICE ACTIVITIES
<b>Agriculture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisting with carbon farm plan development</li> <li>• Supporting conservation planning</li> <li>• Native species, hedgerow, and cover crop planting</li> <li>• Irrigation and vegetation management</li> <li>• Promoting sustainable grazing and rangeland management</li> <li>• Supporting the implementation of the healthy soils program implementation</li> <li>• Increasing access to sustainably grown, in-season, and local foods</li> <li>• Advancing the development of community gardens</li> <li>• Providing meal delivery and promoting food access</li> <li>• Promoting and providing education on the benefits solar installation on farms</li> <li>• Educating farmers on eligibility to tap into USDA resources</li> </ul>
<b>Forestry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the sustainable management of biomass/biochar</li> <li>• Promoting forest health practices</li> <li>• Forest inventory reporting</li> <li>• Vegetation monitoring</li> <li>• Supporting forest management planning</li> <li>• Removing invasive species</li> <li>• Building or maintaining nature trails to help support sustainable tourism</li> </ul>
<b>Wildfire Resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating in fire restoration activities</li> <li>• Assisting to create defensible spaces</li> <li>• Assisting with prescribed burn activities</li> <li>• Reforestation after wildfires</li> <li>• Serving to reduce forest fire fuels</li> </ul>

NEED	FURTHER DESCRIPTION AND ASSOCIATED CORPS MEMBER SERVICE ACTIVITIES
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producing online/print messaging materials</li> <li>• Helping to facilitate an outdoor summer camp</li> <li>• Distributing citizen science pamphlets and running citizen science projects</li> <li>• Facilitating workshop and trainings</li> <li>• Facilitating youth development and education programs focus on advancing C&amp;E resilience</li> </ul>
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection and analysis</li> <li>• GIS mapping</li> <li>• Grant support</li> <li>• Report development</li> <li>• Field surveying</li> <li>• Soil sampling and Analysis</li> <li>• Assuring local policies and codes support sustainability</li> <li>• Determining eligibility for participation in state and federal programs</li> </ul>
Community Outreach and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting facilitation</li> <li>• Landowner research</li> <li>• Coordinating short-term volunteer projects</li> <li>• Securing long-term volunteers who can help ensure C&amp;E resilience initiatives and programs are sustainable</li> <li>• Field day event planning</li> <li>• Assisting with social media and communications</li> <li>• Engaging the community in climate change mitigation and adaptation activities</li> <li>• Cultivating a conservation ethic in the community</li> </ul>
Waste and Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting sustainable material management</li> <li>• Working to divert waste from landfills</li> <li>• Researching policies that support sustainable material management</li> <li>• Supporting recycle materials across all sectors</li> <li>• Engaging the community in waste reduction and recycling</li> </ul>
Identifying Funding to Support Identified Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researching public and private funding opportunities</li> <li>• Participating in research, data collection, and coordination efforts to assist with pursuing funding opportunities</li> <li>• Drafting grant applications to private entities</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="609 1299 2005 1461"> <p><b>HELPFUL TIPS</b> </p> <p>Check out the USDA Rural Development section of <a href="#">Emerging Federal Accounts that can Support Climate Service Year Programming</a> for highlights of existing accounts that offer opportunities for Rural Resilience programming expansion.</p> </div>



NEED	FURTHER DESCRIPTION AND ASSOCIATED CORPS MEMBER SERVICE ACTIVITIES
<b>Disaster Mitigation and Response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing disaster preparedness education materials</li> <li>• Coordinating partners</li> <li>• Developing volunteer engagement and response plans</li> <li>• Assisting with research and data collection to help inform decisions</li> <li>• Assisting with hazard mitigation plan development</li> </ul>
<b>Economic Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting innovation and a competitive workforce related to the green economy</li> <li>• Cultivating local and sustainable development of jobs and businesses</li> <li>• Promoting sustainable tourism</li> <li>• Supporting local entrepreneurs in pursuing green business opportunities</li> <li>• Establishing or supporting internship programs that support individuals moving into green sector career paths.</li> </ul>
<b>Mobility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting safe and effective active transportation</li> <li>• Maintaining a diverse, safe, and efficient transportation network</li> <li>• Supporting efficient transportation that uses resources wisely</li> <li>• Integrating sustainability into transportation policies, programs, and regulations</li> <li>• Promoting public and sustainable transportation choices</li> <li>• Installing electric vehicle charging stations in rural communities</li> </ul>
<b>Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting strategies to distribute water efficiently</li> <li>• Working to protect and improve water quality</li> <li>• Managing water system assets sustainably</li> <li>• Optimizing the use of natural and build systems to manage stormwater</li> <li>• Researching policies to protect water resources</li> <li>• Practicing stewardship of water resources</li> <li>• Engaging the community in water stewardship</li> </ul>
<b>Identifying Funding to Support Identified Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing strategies for using energy for buildings and facilities efficiently</li> <li>• Developing or supporting clean energy initiatives</li> <li>• Engaging the community in clean energy practices</li> <li>• Providing energy consumption reduction education</li> <li>• Providing direct weatherization or retrofit services to low income families</li> </ul>



NEED	FURTHER DESCRIPTION AND ASSOCIATED CORPS MEMBER SERVICE ACTIVITIES
Green Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisting municipalities with implementing critical repair programs for low income families that emphasize green construction techniques</li> </ul>
Local Leadership Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Placing an emphasis on recruiting corps members from local communities</li> <li>Implementing a robust corps member training and development curriculum intended to equip corps members to become the next generation of C&amp;E Resilience professionals and stewards in their hometowns</li> <li>Establishing a network of host site partners that can serve as professional resources to one another</li> </ul>
Green Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging strategic development that upholds sustainability</li> <li>Supporting network of accessible, well-used, and enjoyable parks</li> <li>Achieving greater livability through supporting sustainable land use and housing policies</li> <li>Sustaining beautiful landscapes that provide ecosystem services</li> </ul>



# CORPS MEMBER SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Rural Resilience programming can be designed to engage corps members in a wide array of service activities designed to address a variety of community needs associated with C&E resilience. These activities can generally be classified within two categories:

**DIRECT SERVICE:** Refers to activities that provide a direct, measurable benefit to an individual, a group, or a community. For example, coordinating community garden services and distributing food yields to the community.

**CAPACITY BUILDING:** Rather than providing a service directly to an individual, group, or community, the corps member provides indirect service which broadly assists with meeting a community need. For example, data collection, research, developing new programming, etc.

Rural Resilience programs can also engage corps members in activities intended to meet the needs outlined above by either implementing a crew-based approach or a single member placement approach.

- A crew-based approach entails the service year program directly engaging corps members in teams to facilitate direct service activities in partnership with a project sponsor (e.g. fire fuel reduction services, EV charging station installation, providing weatherization assistance, etc.)
- A single member placement approach entails the service year program placing a small contingency of corps members (typically 1-3 corps members) with a host site for the duration of their service year to support either direct or capacity building activities.

When partnering with host sites under a single member placement approach, Rural Resilience programs typically administer one of the three following strategies to identify the specific service activities that corps members will advance while serving at the site.

- (1) Provide predetermined positions description (see further below for sample Rural Resilience position descriptions) and ask the site applicant to choose which position(s) their corps members will function under. The site is usually asked to certify that their corps members will not participate in activities outside of the scope of their position description unless those activities are first cleared by the service year program. This method is a good way to ensure that corps members serving with host sites stay in compliance with rules, regulations, and grant requirements.

(2) Host site applicants are provided with a menu of options (similar to the table listed above) that includes the needs that corps members may seek to address and the service activities that are commonly associated with addressing those needs. The host site is then asked to identify the need(s) that their corps members will be serving to address. This method provides a bit more flexibility than method one, but also helps ensure that corps members and sites are not participating in unallowable activities. - Here is a sample host site position description template that can help you visualize this option.

(3) Host site applicants are asked to describe the climate and environmental resilience needs of their community and then the service year program will assist in developing a corps member position description that can serve those needs within the limits of their national service grant agreement. This process allows for significant flexibility and for communities to play a more direct role in framing how the program can best meet existing needs. Additionally, this process allows for the service year program to meet prospective host sites where they are at in regards to their C&E resilience initiatives and can help lead to a more diverse pool of organizations serving as host sites.

To further identify ways in which the Rural Resilience model can most effectively be used to serve the needs of your community, the following four overarching goals surfaced as “sweet spots” for Rural Resilience programming during the Climate Project:

(1) **Workforce/Leadership Development:** Many Rural Resilience programs' primary value proposition is to inform the career trajectory of young people and assist local communities in developing professionals and environmental stewards who continue serve their hometown post-service.

(2) **Promoting Economic Resilience:** Assisting rural communities to be economically resilient as the country continues to transition to a new green economy is often a centerpiece of Rural Resilience programming. For example, Rural Resilience models can leverage corps members to assist communities in identifying funding resources that can help support efforts to develop renewable energy industries, enhance agricultural yields in a sustainable way, or to help develop workforce development programs geared towards reskilling individuals to enter into green careers.

(3) **Developing Professional Networks:** A great byproduct of the Rural Resilience model is that it often creates an opportunity to form networking groups between the program, host site, project sponsors, and corps members. By enabling the formation of these networks, the service year program empowers rural communities with the ability to expedite and enhance their C&E resilience efforts as a result of having the ability to learn from and leverage the knowledge base of other partners within the network.

(4) **Ensuring Programming Sustainability:** Regardless of the needs that corps members are addressing, Rural Resilience programming typically has a significant emphasis on ensuring that corps members' efforts are sustainable past their service term. This often entails corps members recruiting long-term community volunteers to serve as ongoing champions and coordinators of the work. Corps members are also tasked with clearly documenting and disseminating the information regarding the initiative that they advanced during their term of service.

## RESTRICTED ACTIVITIES

If you are advancing an AmeriCorps program, your corps members cannot participate in [prohibited or unallowable activities](#) that have been established by the legislation governing AmeriCorps. Specifically applicable to the energy efficiency programming, corps members cannot:

- Replace, supplant, or prevent the future hiring of professional staff. In summary, AmeriCorps members should be used to expand or enhance current services or to advance new services.
- Supervise other corps members (e.g. a non-AmeriCorps supervisor should be assigned to all corps members/teams)
- Lead professional level administrative, operational, or finance support for organizations or agencies.
- Engaging in partisan political activities or lobbying. If your program will have corps members engaged in public policy issues, a clear line will need to be established for both your corps members and host sites to define the difference between providing neutral research, education, or coordination services vs supporting partisan recommendations. Your state service commission can help you determine whether or not a service activity is allowable.
- Directly lead efforts for applying for federal funding; however, corps members can provide support services such as research, data collection, coordination, etc.
- Participate in fundraising initiatives that do not directly support their service or that generate unrestricted profits for their host site. For example, it may not be appropriate for corps members to help facilitate the sale of produce from a community garden unless those profits directly support their service. Corps members also cannot typically participate in fundraising activities in association with events facilitated by their host site. That said, corps members can attend these events to educate guests on the service that they are providing to the community.

## HELPFUL TIPS



*There are many examples of where service to a private entity can produce a community good, such as reducing water pollution by installing erosion control features on private property. Your [state service commission](#) can help you determine whether or not a service activity is allowable.*

## SAMPLE CORPS MEMBER POSITION DESCRIPTION

Service Year Alliance has developed [this sample corps member position description](#) to further assist you in developing the service activities that your corps members will participate in.

### Rural Economic Resilience Corps Member Position Description

Service Position Type: Full-Time 1700 hours  
Term of Service: 10 months  
Average Weekly Service Hours: 40 hours

#### ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY

Our organization's AmeriCorps program offers a unique opportunity for individuals that are passionate about enhancing rural resilience to build professional experience through national service. By building capacity for small towns and cities to leverage resources that will assist community members to participate in the growing green economy, corps members create a lasting impact in local communities while building a robust network of peers and gaining technical and leadership skills.

#### MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- Be at least 17 years of age or older
- Have or working towards a high school diploma or its equivalent
- Be a citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States
- Possess basic computer skills, including the ability to navigate online systems and email
- Ability to serve in both a professional virtual/office setting
- Possess strong communication (both verbal and written) and teamwork skills
- Desire and ability to engage with people from different backgrounds and demographics
- Satisfy the National Service Center history Check eligibility criteria pursuant to 45 CFR 2540.202
- Positions that require driving will require a valid driver's license and the ability to pass a driving record check
- Although past experience in areas such as workforce development, community outreach and public communication is valued, the program's training and development curriculum will fully prepare you to successfully fulfill the responsibilities of the position

#### ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

##### Assisting Rural Communities in Leveraging Climate and Environment Resilience Resources

- Researching public and private training, technical assistance, and funding opportunities
- Determining eligibility for participation in state and federal programs
- Collecting public input and feedback
- Participating in research, data collection, and coordination efforts to assist with pursuing support and funding opportunities
- Drafting grant applications to private entities
- Developing impact measurement and reporting strategies



**Caution** - Rural Resilience programs should be particularly careful about listing a bachelor's degree as a minimum qualification on their position postings, as it can limit the number of individuals with lived experiences and knowledge of their hometown from applying to serve with the program

# PARTNERSHIPS TO ADVANCE PROGRAMMING

## PROGRAM/LEAD ORGANIZATION

Service year programs that advance Rural Resilience services are administered by a variety of organizations and agencies that can bring different strengths to the table. These entities commonly include:

- Regional Commissions or Council of Governments like [Resilient Iowa Communities](#) or the [Metropolitan Mayors Caucus/Greenest Region](#) that can allocate corps members to local governments that participate in the council.
- Local Government Agencies such as a mayor's office that can place corps members to assist various city departments to boost their C&E resilience activities. Although it is not solely focused on C&E resilience programming, the [City of Charleston's VISTA program](#) is an example of this type of model.
- Local, regional, and statewide nonprofits, such as [Rural Action](#) that can onboard other partners in their service area who can serve as corps member host sites. Additionally, there seems to be an opportunity for more foundations that have existing networks of nonprofit partners to serve as intermediary Rural Resilience service year programs.
- Associations or organizations that convene partnership networks, such as state association of conservation districts, that can place corps members with organizations that are part of their network.
- State Agencies, such as [Minnesota Pollution Control Agency](#) that can place corps members with their affiliate offices or other outside partners such as tribal communities or nonprofits.
- Institutions of Higher Education, like the example seen at the [University of Oregon](#). In particular, there seems to be a strong opportunity for more Rural Resilience programming to be housed within university cooperative extension offices, which commonly have affiliated offices in each county of their state that could serve as corps member host sites. Additionally, being based in an "academic center" housed within a university system can provide service year programs a higher level of flexibility in comparison to being housed within an academic department.

There are a few overarching organizational qualities that you should likely look for when determining what type of organization could serve as the program/administrative lead for Rural Resilience programming. These organizational qualities include:

- Experience with establishing, managing, and maintaining strong partnership networks

### HELPFUL TIPS

*Organizations that administer a service year program must ensure that their host sites remain in compliance with state and federal rules and regulations. Organizations advancing a Rural Resilience model should consider how this could potentially alter the existing nature of their relationship with their partners that may become corps member host sites.*



## MORE ABOUT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SERVICE YEAR PROGRAMMING

Service year corps members and programs hosted within institutions of higher education often receive robust administrative support as well as access to helpful software, resources, research, professionals, and partnership networks. Some service year programs operating C&E resilience programming out of universities are also able to award their corps members with in-state tuition rates or with credit hours towards an associated graduate degree program in recognition of the knowledge and skills that are obtained during their service year.

Although service year programs housed within higher education institutions can also realize some corps member recruitment benefits, the benefits are oftentimes only realized by programs that are engaging corps members in minimum term models, such as 300-hours positions, as it is typically challenging for students to participate in service terms that require a higher time commitment.

As a downside, a higher level of bureaucracy is typically associated with higher education institutions and can lead to slowdowns in hiring, obtaining supplies and equipment, delays in reimbursement payments, etc. Fundraising restrictions can also present challenges for service year programs that are associated with a large institution of higher education.

- Willingness to support a diverse array of service interventions and outcomes across a diverse range of geographic locations
- The ability to develop strong corps member and site supervisor training and support strategies that will produce cohesion between corps members and their host sites (See the Belonging and Inclusion section of the Climate Guide for suggestions)
- Adequate administrative, human resources, and financial capacity that is capable of administering contract agreements, member payroll, corps member benefits, etc. across a network of host sites
- A willingness to establish a strong corps member recruitment support system that will enable both the program and individual host sites to reach their corps member enrollment goals

As you can see, there are a lot of areas of expertise that must be actualized for an organization to successfully administer a Rural Resilience program model. If you are considering standing-up a new program, you may want to first consider exploring options to partner with an organization that has already established expertise in managing the various components of service year programming. Oftentimes these organizations have the ability to subgrant service year corps member slots or even establish affiliated operating sites in your state. Some Rural Resilience service year programs that have the ability to form these types of partnerships include [Ampact](#), [CivicWell](#), and [Conservation Legacy](#).

## HOST SITES

In addition to ensuring that a potential host site's values align with the mission and values of your service year program, it is important that there is buy-in from both host site leadership, as well as the staff that will be directly supervising corps members in order for your Rural Resilience program to run optimally. Below is a list of the types of organizations that typically serve as host sites for corps members participating in Rural Resilience programming.

- **Nonprofits** - All types, but particularly nonprofits that may not have the capacity to administer a full service year program on their own, are a good fit. Examples include: environmental centers, food distribution organizations, arboretums, educational gardens, and Future Farmers of America program sites.
- **Tribal Nations or Nonprofits** - MN GreenCorps offers good examples of this type of partnership.
- **Local Municipalities** - City and county government departments such as parks and recreation, environmental and sustainability offices, waste management, planning, public works, transportation, etc. Members of the C&E Resilience Learning Cohort also cited that it can sometimes be beneficial to explore the option of placing corps members with nonprofits that can work closely with municipal offices, rather than directly placing corps members within a local government department. This strategy helps eliminate contracting challenges that can arise when attempting to place corps members directly with government agencies.
- **Local Councils, Alliances, and Community Resource Organizations** - Some examples include Lake County Community Resources, Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council, and Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Regional Tourism Alliance.
- **State Government** - Examples include conservation districts, waste management districts, transportation offices, departments managing natural resources, state energy offices, and disaster management offices, etc.
- **Federal Agencies** - Such as US Forest Service Districts, Bureau of Land Management offices, or county extension offices of a state land grant university.
- **Schools and School Districts** - There are examples of corps members that participate in full service year terms with school districts and advance projects such as establishing energy reduction plans, greening school infrastructure, and providing C&E resilience education services to students, but many Rural Resilience programs tend to partner with schools on a shorter-term basis and infuse corps members to provide limited C&E resilience programming to students.
- **University Cooperative Extension Offices** offer a great opportunity for host site placement sites, as many land grant institutions have faculty and staff placed within the majority of counties within a state.
- **Community Colleges** have hosted corps members to promote sustainability initiatives amongst academic departments, campus operations, and student dorms. Additionally, some Rural Resilience programs have experienced success with placing corps members to serve with community colleges who are then able to provide C&E resilience programming to K-12 school districts in which the college has existing partnerships.
- **Faith-Based Organizations** - There are opportunities for faith-based organizations to host service year corps members as long as those corps members will not engage in religious proselytization or instruction.

## PROJECT SPONSORS

Rural Resilience programs that engage project sponsors in fee-for-service contracts are typically programs that incorporate a crew-based model as part of their programming. Fee-for-service contracts are commonly established to engage corps members in supporting projects that generally fall under the following three categories:

- **Land Management** - Typical project sponsors include federal, state, and local land management agencies as well as nonprofits and municipalities that have an interest in establishing, maintaining, or preserving public lands and green spaces.
- **Community Planning** - Some state agencies have contracted with service year programs to assist local communities in advancing community plans related to C&E resilience. These contracts may take the form of providing dollars for each assessment conducted, community forum hosted, etc.
- **Energy Efficiency/Weatherization** - A variety of organizations and agencies have partnered with service year programs to provide energy efficiency and weatherization services. Please reference the funding section of the [Energy Efficiency Roadmap](#) to learn more.

## CORPS MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Rural Resilience programs that engage project sponsors in fee-for-service contracts are typically programs that incorporate a crew-based model as part of their programming. Fee-for-service contracts are commonly established to engage corps members in supporting projects that generally fall under the following three categories:

- **Community Colleges and Technical Schools** - Rural Resilience programs have found success in partnering with community colleges or technical schools to pursue joint training and professional development funding opportunities. These partnerships can result in corps members and college students coming together to gain specific credentials or certifications.
- **Government Agencies, Universities, and Public Libraries** - Rural Resilience service year programs have expressed having success with a variety of public agencies or university departments being willing to provide training and professional development and services to corps members as an in-kind contribution. These training partnerships can cover a wide array of topics ranging from natural resource

# FUNDING TO SUPPORT PROJECT AND TRAINING COSTS

## NEW AND EMERGING FEDERAL FUNDS

With recent historic investments in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), there are a significant number of emerging opportunities to expand service year programming to meet key climate and environmental resilience priorities. To assist in identifying new and expanded federal funding accounts that present opportunities for service year programs, Service Year Alliance collaborated with [Partnership for the Civilian Climate Corps](#) to produce an account inventory that highlights these opportunities as well as showcases specific examples of programs that are currently advancing eligible activities. Furthermore, the C&E Resilience Learning Cohort convened by Service Year Alliance was also leveraged to provide additional insights regarding the strategies that may be most effective for service year programs to access these resources as well as to identify the accounts that are well-positioned to support the energy efficiency, community capacity building, and rural resilience programming. Explore [Emerging Federal Accounts that Can Support Climate & Environmental Resilience Service Year Programming](#) to access these insights.

## ADDITIONAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the information collected during the Climate Project, crew-based rural resilience models operating as AmeriCorps programs typically secure between 50-65% of their total program operating budget through their AmeriCorps grant. Below is a list of entities that rural resilience service year programs have partnered with to help support the remaining 35-50% of their overall operating costs. Partnerships between these entities can take many different forms including:

**Grants:** Financial grants are typically secured by energy efficiency programs to provide initial seed money to assist with planning and startup costs, provide training, development or professional credentialing to corps members, or to support community education and outreach activities.

**Cost-Share:** Based on the information collected during the Climate Project, Rural Resilience models primarily secured the funding beyond their national service grant that is needed to operate through cost-share agreements with host sites, which can range from as low as \$800/member to as high as \$25,000/member. Because rural communities typically have limited philanthropy and corporate funding that can be accessed by host site partners, most Rural Resilience programs try to keep their cost-share rates as low as possible, and raise them only as a last resort. On the other hand, since Rural Resilience programs typically run on a shoestring budget, it can cause significant financial difficulties for a program when corps members drop-out before their term of service is complete and they must refund a portion of the cost-share agreement back to the host site. This risk highlights the importance of providing a strong corps member experience throughout their program design.

**Fee-for-Service:** Many service year programs establish fee-for-service contracts to help their partners achieve their goals. For example, a program may establish a contract with a utility company that will pay a fixed amount for each low-income home that receives weatherization services from the program.

## STATE AGENCIES

Rural Resilience program models have successfully partnered with state agencies that are willing to provide funding that can offset or waive cost-share requirements for host site partners. This allows for Rural Resilience programs to bring on additional and more diverse host site partners. Rural Resilience programs also have a successful track record of partnering with their state energy office to provide weatherization and energy efficiency services to low income families in rural communities and are not eligible to participate in utility-sponsored energy efficiency programs. Additionally, Rural Resilience programs have partnered with state economic development offices that were able to provide financial support to place corps members with local municipalities seeking to develop climate action and greenhouse gas reduction plans

### HELPFUL TIPS



*Though passed in 2009, unexpended American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds have been used by state agencies to support some of these types of projects*

## UTILITY COMPANIES/ENERGY TRUSTS

Many public, private, and cooperative utility companies are mandated to facilitate activities to support a reduction in energy consumption in their service area. Rural Resilience programs have received funding, often in the form of fee-for-service contracts, from these utility companies to provide energy efficiency services to customers in rural communities that meet particular income and eligibility requirements. Occasionally, utility companies may also be interested in providing funds to support corps members being placed within rural government agencies to assist with developing community-wide energy reduction plans.

**Regional Commissions** are often involved in advancing a variety of priorities related to both environmental and economic resilience. Some Rural Resilience programs have been successful in securing grants from their regional commissions that provide the financial support needed to deliver high quality training and professional development opportunities to their corps members.



## POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Many colleges and universities are involved with advancing climate and environmental resilience initiatives and, in many cases, have established specific educational departments or centers to support these objectives, such as the Energy Transition Lab at the University of Minnesota. Service year programs have been successful in securing grants from these institutions that have been used to support direct service and capacity building service as well as support corps member training and development. In some cases, universities have also provided funding to offset cost-share requirements for host sites.

## PHILANTHROPY

Members of the C&E Resilience Learning Cohort shared that their philanthropic partners have expressed particular interest in funding the workforce development components of the program model. Additionally, philanthropic partners have also provided value in the form of connecting service year programs to their trusted network of partners who can serve as host sites, providing in-kind conference and training space, and also supporting professional development initiatives such as providing funding for corps members to attend conferences and training events

### HELPFUL TIPS

*Although there is currently a very limited number of philanthropies that have a devoted focus toward supporting rural communities, philanthropy can make a significant impact in the rural resiliency space as a result of cost-share agreements with host sites typically being very low with the Rural Resilience model (See Budget Considerations for more info). By making small investments, philanthropy can offset cost-share requirements that can allow more rural organizations to leverage service year corps member support.*



# MEASURING AND REPORTING IMPACT

Rural Resilience models operating as AmeriCorps programs most commonly select [national performance measures](#) that track the program's ability to infuse capacity support into their host site network. That said, some Rural Resilience programs do track environmental impact that results from providing direct service

## HELPFUL TIPS



*When Rural Resilience programs choose to only report on environmental performance measures, it typically results in a high percentage of the corps members' service not being reported as part of impact reports. Missed elements can include capacity building activities as well as environmental practices that fall outside of national performance measures such as food distribution.*

- **G3-3.4 (output)** - Number of organizations that received capacity building services
- **G3-3.10A (outcome)** - Number of organizations that increased their effectiveness, efficiency, and/or program scale/reach

## HELPFUL TIPS



*[Here is a sample tool](#) used to measure outputs and outcomes associated with capacity building measures.*

The Economic Opportunity national performance measures most commonly utilized include:

### ***Number of individuals with improved job readiness***

- **O1A (output)** - Number of individuals served
- **O21 (outcome)** - Number of individuals with improved job readiness (typically into emerging green sector jobs or career paths)

The national environmental stewardship performance measures that are most commonly utilized include:

- **EN3 (output)** - Number of individuals receiving education or training in environmental stewardship and/or environmentally-conscious practices

There are two possible outcome choices associated with this performance measure:

- **EN3.1 (outcome)** - Number of individuals with increased knowledge of environmental stewardship and/or environmentally-conscious practices

OR

- **EN3.2 (outcome)** - Number of individuals reporting a change in behavior or the intent to change behavior to better protect the environment

### HELPFUL TIPS

Here is a [sample tool](#) used to measure outputs and outcomes associated with environmental education. You should also keep in mind that your measurement tools may need to be adjusted based on the recipients of the service (e.g. young audiences may need to be asked to draw a picture about what they have learned).

AND/OR

- **EN4 (output)** - Number of acres of public parks or other public and tribal lands that are treated
- **EN4.1 (outcome)** - Number of acres of public parks or other public and tribal lands that are improved

AND/OR

- **EN1(output)** - Number of housing units or public structures weatherized or retrofitted to improve energy efficiency
- **EN1.1(outcome)** - Number of housing units or public structures with reduced energy consumption or reduced energy costs

### HELPFUL TIPS

Please see the “Measuring and Reporting Impact” section of the [Energy Efficiency Roadmap](#) for more information and best practices for leveraging EN1 and EN1.1.

Some service year programs have also used the option to develop “applicant determined” performance measures in association with their AmeriCorps grant to track impact, such as carbon sequestration. Below is one example of an applicant determined performance measure structure.

- **Output** - Trees managed (inventoried, planted, managed).
- **Outcome** - Pounds of carbon sequestered (5.87 lbs carbon per tree planted)

### HELPFUL TIPS

Although it can be challenging to accurately measure outcomes such as carbon sequestration you can leverage online tools such as [i-Tree](#) to assist you in the process

## SOME ADDITIONAL OPTIONS FOR MEASURING PROGRAM IMPACT

Although funders and state commissions tend to encourage Rural Resilience programs to measure climate related outcomes such as carbon sequestration and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, oftentimes the most impactful components of the Rural Resilience model are the activities that fall outside of this category. As such, it is important to consider the following when establishing what metrics to measure and track:

- It is important to understand and communicate the impact that results from the corps member training, development, and support that occurs as part of the program model. Service years can equip corps members to enter into careers in which they will be able to make a positive impact on the climate and environment for many decades to come. Consider utilizing the structure of the following National Performance Measures to establish systems for tracking corps members' post-service outcomes and pathways.
  - **O1A(output)** - Number of individuals served
  - **O10 (outcome)** - Number of individuals who secure employment

### HELPFUL TIPS



*It can be challenging to collect post-service data, such as employment, from alumni; therefore, if you choose to incorporate this measurement, you will want to develop robust procedures for maintaining contact and collecting data from your program alumni. Service Year Alliance encourages service year alums to register on [ServiceYear.org](https://www.serviceyear.org) to stay connected with their program, state service commission, and the larger network of service year alums*

- Many municipalities are seeking opportunities to engage members of the community in tangible C&E resilience activities and the Rural Resilience model is a great way to add capacity to allow municipalities to do so. Providing these types of service and educational experiences can lead to some of the most sustainable and long-term results. For this reason, consider tracking the number of community engagement activities facilitated, number volunteers managed, and hours served by those volunteers.
- Because the impact of the economic resilience aspects of the Rural Resilience model are not able to be clearly communicated through national capacity building performance measures, consider specifically tracking and reporting service activities related to economic development, job skills training or support, and sustainable tourism.

# BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

When advancing any service year model, there are many costs that must be considered and incorporated into your operating budget. [The AmeriCorps State and National Detailed Budget Instructions](#) (see pages 22-37) can be a helpful resource to assist you in thinking through typical expense categories as well as common costs that must be factored into most service year program models. To further assist you in developing a budget that will adequately support a successful Rural Resilience service year program, we have also included key insights and information collected from members of the Climate Project's Rural Resilience working group below.

## PERSONNEL

The average Rural Resilience program has a staff-to-corps member ratio of about 1 to 15. Common staff roles that are seen within the program model include:

- Director - Overall program operations, staff management, strategic vision, partnership development, fundraising and contracting, grant reporting.
- Corps Member Managers - Provide a variety of support, training, technical assistance to corps members. These positions can also take on technical roles depending on the type of service that the program is facilitating. Technical leads typically hold industry-recognized credentials/certifications and provide corps members with technical support while facilitating projects such as wildfire mitigation work involving chainsaws, trail building, home weatherization projects, etc.
- Host Site Managers - Manage relationships with host site partners, and provide them with training and support services. These positions are also typically responsible for conducting host site compliance monitoring
- Recruitment - Seasonal or year-round recruitment marketing and applicant interviewing and selection. Sometimes also responsible for collecting corps member enrollment paperwork and entering corps member information into various enrollment/employment/benefits software systems.
- Training and Development Support Leads - Coordinate corps member orientation and ongoing training and development, including planning and preparing for life after service. Often also responsible for ensuring that the corps members are having an overall enriching experience. Coordinating wraparound support services for corps members can also sometimes fall under this position type, but can also take the form of a standalone position.
- Administrative - Can include data collection, compliance, grant reporting, corps member enrollment, etc. Administrative positions can also provide support to initiatives that can improve the quality of the corps member experience, such as coordinating alumni engagement and mentorship initiatives that can lead to increased corps member retention.



## SIGNIFICANT GENERAL OPERATING COSTS

- Travel and mileage reimbursements can be a significant cost as a result of many Rural Resilience models having corps member host sites spread across a large geographic area. Program staff commonly travel to host sites to facilitate support and compliance visits, while corps members typically travel to multiple in-person trainings or service events throughout their term of service.
- For Rural Resilience programs that incorporate crew-based service activities, the costs associated with maintaining a fleet of vehicles can also be a significant expense, as corps members often travel as part of small teams to project sites that can have a wide geographic distribution. Cost can include vehicle purchase/lease, mileage, maintenance and repair, and vehicle insurance.
- Some Rural Resilience programs operate online learning management tools to provide their corps members with essential information and training. These systems can be expensive, but can ultimately produce cost savings by reducing the need for corps members to travel to in-person trainings. Online learning tools also allow training to be utilized over the course of several years.
- Workmans compensation and liability insurance can be more expensive for Rural Resilience programs that engage their corps members in direct service activities that require tool use. Programs have successfully helped to keep these costs at a reasonable level by adopting safety protocols and trainings that help reduce injuries and accidents.
- Providing industry-recognized trainings and credentials can be a very important component of a Rural Resilience program, but they can be expensive. Please reference the “Increasing the Value Proposition by Prioritizing Post-Service Pathways” section of the Climate Guide for further details.
- Because corps member recruitment has been exceptionally challenging in recent years, all service year programs should incorporate adequate funding into their program budget to support recruitment costs such as posting on multiple online job boards, running social media ads, producing print materials, purchasing physical advertising space, offering recruitment referral incentives, etc

### HELPFUL TIPS



*ServiceYear.org can also be a powerful recruitment tool for programs. [Learn more here.](#)*

## CORPS MEMBER LIVING ALLOWANCE

Service year programs often struggle to meet their enrollment goals and recruit a diverse and vibrant corps if they are only providing the minimum AmeriCorps living allowance to their corps members. To be competitive, most service year programs are striving to establish a corps member living allowance that equates to roughly \$15/hr. If your program will be advancing a VISTA program, where there is a predetermined stipend rate, you will likely want to consider budgeting for additional benefits that can help offset the cost of living such as providing housing or a housing allowance. Additionally, it is important for rural communities to view the service year program as a financial addition to the community and not a financial strain. For this reason, members of the C&E Resilience Learning Cohort recommend leaning towards administering a smaller corps if it will allow the program to pay those corps members more.

With a Rural Resilience model, there can also be a large discrepancy between the cost of living experienced by corps members serving across a large geographic region. For this reason, you may want to consider linking corps member living allowance rates to cost of living indexes of where each corps member will be serving.



# CLOSING AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We hope you have found this service year program model roadmap to be a helpful tool to assist you in designing a new Rural Resilience service year program or in enhancing and expanding your current programming.

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