

# Creating Access to Opportunity Webinar

Strengthening Transportation Career Pathways &  
Youth Workforce Development Partnerships Through Service

US Department of Transportation (DOT)  
Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)



Corporation for  
**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE** 

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# Overview

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) have partnered to encourage the use of youth service and conservation corps to perform appropriate transportation related projects. This webinar will provide an overview of transportation youth workforce opportunities and highlight best practices.



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# Agenda

- Introduction
- Benefits of Utilizing AmeriCorps
- Eligible Activities & Authorizing Statutes
- Overview of Transportation Opportunities
- Bridging the Connections
- State examples
- Resources
- Q and A



# Benefits of Utilizing AmeriCorps

- **National service is a effective strategy that can**
  - Help increase the capacity of a State to meet its transportation needs
  - Expand economic opportunities for young adults
- **AmeriCorps is a national service program that places mission-driven young adults into intensive service positions to:**
  - Improve lives
  - Strengthen communities
  - Foster civic engagement
- **Partnerships between the DOT, CNCS, and States create opportunities to:**
  - Focus service initiatives on State-specific transportation needs
  - Create effective methods and more efficient leveraging of funds
  - Create active citizenship and economic opportunities for young adults



# Benefits of Utilizing AmeriCorps (con't)

- Success in recruiting youth from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds.
- Able to recruit from a national pool of applicants to create a diverse work force.
- Develops hard and soft skills that translate directly to the work force, enhancing labor participation.
- AmeriCorps provides each member with a post-service education award
- AmeriCorps members may have access to child care, health care, and student loan deferment.



# Youth Service, Conservation Corps and AmeriCorps

- **How are they connected?**
  - AmeriCorps funds some participants in youth service and conservation corps.
  - AmeriCorps members who serve on youth service and conservation corps are part of a larger community of national service.
  - Participants who are also AmeriCorps members are entitled to all the benefits afforded AmeriCorps members.
- **How are they different?**
  - Not all youth service and conservation corps participants are AmeriCorps members.
  - Not all youth service and conservation corps meet the eligibility for AmeriCorps (e.g. age).



# Authorizing Statutes

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) requires USDOT to "...encourage the States and regional transportation planning agencies to enter into contracts and cooperative agreements with qualified youth service or conservation corps ... to perform appropriate projects eligible under sections 162, 206, 213, and 217 of title 23, United States Code, and under section 1404 of the SAFETEA-LU."

## **MAP-21 §1524 defines the use of Youth Service or Conservation Corps:**

- Defines qualified youth service or conservation corps.
- Living allowance or rate of pay (account for prevailing wage rates).
- Exempts contracts and cooperative agreements with Corps from highway program contracting requirements: allows Sole Source.
- §1524 supersedes TAP Treatment of Projects requirement.
- §1524 applies at the *project* level, not the *program* level.

# Eligibility Qualifications

Qualified youth service or conservation corps include any program established by a State or local government or by a nonprofit organization that—

- is capable of offering meaningful, full-time, productive work for individuals between the ages of 16 and 25, inclusive, in an urban or public works or transportation setting;
- gives participants a mix of work experience, basic and life skills, education, training, and support services; and
- provides participants with the opportunity to develop citizenship values and skills through service to their communities and the United States.



# Eligible Activities

- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities and amenities to improve mobility, access, or safety, including ensuring compliance with accessibility requirements
- Safe Routes to Schools projects and programs
- Conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails
- Scenic turn-out and overlook construction
- Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities
- Vegetation management
- Environmental mitigation related to stormwater
- Restore or maintain wildlife connectivity
- Landscaping and streetscaping to complete transportation projects



# Transportation Program Highlights

There are many USDOT programs and eligible activities that support youth workforce development to include:

- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
  - Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
  - Safe Routes to School (SRTS)
- Surface Transportation Program (STP)
- On-the-Job Training & Supportive Services (OJT/SS)
- FTA Innovative Transit Workforce Development Program



# Transportation Alternatives Programs (TAP)

## The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

### Eligible Projects include:

- Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized transportation.
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.
- Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities.
- Vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control.
- Environmental mitigation activity, to address stormwater management, reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.



# TAP: Recreational Trails Program Overview

The **Recreational Trails Program (RTP)** provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses.

## **Eligible Projects** include:

- Maintain and restore existing trails (and bridges).
- Develop and rehabilitate trailside and trailhead facilities.
- Purchase and lease trail construction and maintenance equipment.
- Construct new trails (limits on Federal lands).
- Acquire easements or property for trails.
- Trail assessments for accessibility and maintenance.
- Trail safety and environmental protection education.
- State administrative costs.



# TAP: Safe Routes to School Overview

To enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school; to make walking and bicycling to school safe and more appealing; and to facilitate the planning, development and implementation of projects that will improve safety, and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

## Eligible Projects include:

- Planning, design, and construction of projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school.
- Sidewalk improvements, traffic calming and speed reduction improvements, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements;
- Traffic education and enforcement in the vicinity of schools;
- Student sessions on bicycle and pedestrian safety (e.g. “Train the Trainer”)
- Safe Routes to School Coordinator
- Since SRTS is eligible under TAP, SRTS projects are also eligible under STP and HSIP.



# Surface Transportation Program (STP)

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) provides funding that States and localities may use for projects to preserve and improve any Federal-aid highway, bridge and tunnel projects on any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects, including intercity bus terminals.

## **Eligible Projects** include:

- Construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, resurfacing, restoration, preservation, or operational improvements for highways.
- Bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways, including compliance with accessibility requirements.
- Installation of safety barriers and nets on bridges.
- Environmental restoration and pollution abatement.
- Control of noxious weeds and establishment of native species.
- *Workforce development, training, and education activities are an eligible use of STP funds.*

# On-the-Job Training & Supportive Services (OJT/SS)

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) On-the-Job Training (OJT) Program requires the State transportation agencies (STAs) to ensure prime contractors working on federally-assisted projects make full use of apprenticeship and training programs targeted to move women, minorities, and disadvantaged individuals into journey-level positions. These programs ensure a competent workforce is available to meet current and future highway construction hiring needs and address the historical under-representation of members of these groups in highway construction skilled crafts. *Eligible programs include jobsite mentoring and post-graduation follow-up.*

## **Youth Service Nonprofits can partner with STAs to—**

- Develop OJT workforce plans that identify immediate and anticipated demographic and workforce gaps.
- Assist in developing a "workforce development compact" with the STA, the State workforce investment board & other agencies with existing programs to create effective training that leads to careers in the transportation industry.

# Innovative Transit Workforce Development Program

Approximately \$9M will be made available in cooperative agreements to transit agencies and other entities to promote innovative nationally and regionally significant public transportation workforce development models and programs that invest in America's economic growth and help build ladders of opportunity into the middle class for American Workers. *Eligible applicants include nonprofits.*

**FTA is prioritizing applications that focus on one or more of the following areas:**

- Targeting areas with high rates of unemployment; helping persons in local communities to directly benefit from employment opportunities created by the construction and operation of new transit capital projects or other public transportation activities within their region;
- Providing career pathways that support the movement of targeted populations (e.g., new transit entrants and other underserved populations) from initial or short-term employment opportunities to sustainable careers;
- helping to increase through outreach and training
  - addressing gaps in areas with current or projected workforce shortages in fields related to public transportation;
  - pre-employment training/ preparation/tracking; and/or recruitment and hiring.



# Bridging the Connection

- Federal law(MAP-21 Section 1524) provides the framework to engage with youth service and conservation corps.
- AmeriCorps provides States with the capacity and infrastructure to implement MAP-21 Section 1524.
  - AmeriCorps State and National
  - AmeriCorps NCCC
  - State Service Commissions
  - Sponsoring of national youth service and conservation corps
- AmeriCorps, Youth Service, and Conservation Corps members can perform a range of DOT-eligible activities.



# Bridging the Connection: Partnership Highlights

- **The Corps Network** represents the 100+ Service & Conservation Corps (Corps) that enroll 25,000+ youth each and work in every state and DC.
- Corps enroll diverse Corps members which last year included 60% from below the poverty line, 55% unemployed, 30% not in school and had no High School Diploma/GED, and nearly 20% formerly incarcerated or court-involved. In addition, 48% of Corpsmembers were minorities and 35% were women.
- Corps follow a model of adult mentors (Crewleaders) guiding crews of youth (16-25 & veterans) which perform service and conservation projects in communities or on public lands.
- Tied to those projects, Corpsmembers workforce development, and supporti



**The CorpsNetwork**  
Strengthening America through  
service and conservation

# State Partnership Highlights: California

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) developed criteria to give priority in selection of projects to sponsors using corps. It requires transportation planning agencies, county transportation commissions or authorities and congestion management agencies to use specified criteria when selecting candidates for TE projects that partner with corps. It also allowed Caltrans to enter into cooperative agreements with local conservation corps for TE projects.

## ***Benefits of Partnering with the California Conservation Corps (CCC) :***

- Transportation projects become pathways for young adults to successfully enter the workforce
- Crews work in and are located in many disadvantaged communities

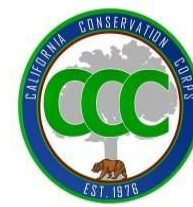
## ***What the CCC Offers:***

- Supervised crews of 10-15 young adults
- Trained in safety, tool use, landscaping, irrigation and other public works skills

## ***CCC Project Examples:***

Sidewalk repair, removal and re- placement  
Sign installation Irrigation Landscaping  
Demo and deconstruction  
Tree planting  
Median Maintenance

Trail construction  
Urban park construction  
Graffiti removal  
Bike locker & bike rack installations  
And more . . .



# State Partnership Highlights: W. Virginia

## Citizens Conservation Corps of West Virginia (CCCWV) – West Virginia

The Citizens Conservation Corps of West Virginia (CCCWV) operates a statewide Courtesy Patrol of WV's major roadways. The Courtesy Patrol Corps members assist stranded motorists, removes hazards from the roadways, provide gas or directions, change flat tires and, in general, enhance safety on highways. Corps members assist law enforcement and other highway personnel with freeway incident management associated with construction, accidents, and other related incidents.

In addition, CCCWV also has AmeriCorps members who work on its Trails and Development projects which are funded through RTP, also administered by the West Virginia Department of Transportation via Division of Highways. These projects include trail work, building, and maintenance for both motorized and non-motorized trails.

**Funding:** Contract with WVDOT, WV Division of Tourism, and WV State Service Commission

# Opportunities for Partnership

**USDOT and CNCS encourage the use of AmeriCorps members for transportation-related projects.** Suggested opportunities for partnership include:

## **Develop relationships among key stakeholders in your State or region**

- RTP funds usually are administered through a resource agency, and not a transportation agency. Include both agencies.
- Metropolitan planning organizations representing large urbanized areas select projects for a portion of TAP funds.
- **Collaborate between key stakeholders—essential** for an effective engagement strategy.

# Opportunities for Transportation Authorities

- **Meet with governor-appointed State Service Commission staff to:**
  - Learn how national service can be a cost effective, community-building strategy in solving transportation challenges.
  - Learn how AmeriCorps members can perform DOT-eligible activities.
- **Develop a strategy to give preference to grant applicants who partner with youth service and conservation corps**
  - Legislative action
  - Preference or competitive priority
  - Interagency agreements and contracts
  - Other
- **Reach out to State transportation authorities who have already engaged youth service and conservation corps to glean lessons learned.**



# Opportunities for State Service Commissions

- **Meet with State transportation officials to:**
  - Familiarize yourself with your State's Federal-aid highway program, particularly TAP, RTP, STP, HSIP, CMAQ.
    - What does the competitive process entail?
    - Who is eligible to apply?
    - What activities is your State prioritizing?
- Help educate State transportation officials on the benefits of AmeriCorps and what DOT-eligible activities AmeriCorps members can perform.
- Notify organizations in your network of potential funding available through the Federal-aid highway program and provide support for them to access funds.
- Reach out to State Service Commissions who have already engaged youth service and conservation corps to glean lessons learned.



# Opportunities for Youth Service and Conservation Corps

- Reach out to State Service Commissions who can help facilitate the process.
- Help educate State and Federal transportation authorities on the benefits of utilizing AmeriCorps members in DOT-supported projects.
- Share realistic expectations with key stakeholders on your capacity to perform DOT-supported project work.
- Share research and evaluation data that show the impact of service on participants and communities.





# Resources

## Transportation

- [MAP-21 §1524 Questions and Answers](#)
- [Transportation Alternatives Program](#)
- [Recreational Trails Program Administrators](#)
- [Transportation Alternatives Data Exchange](#)
- [State Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinators](#)
- [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#)

## National Service

- [State Service Commissions](#)
- [AmeriCorps](#)

## Youth Service and Conservation Corps

- [Corps](#)

# Questions

