

# Policy Perspectives on Infrastructure

MIT School of Architecture and Planning

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## ***Launching a Successful Civilian Climate Corps to Build Career Pathways and Resilient Urban Communities.***

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### **Summary**

As momentum gathers in Washington to establish a Civilian Climate Corps (CCC), this paper outlines ways to achieve two key goals: First, to create career paths for young people; and secondly, to improve the U.S.' ability to counter, and adapt to climate change, especially in communities that have suffered from environmental injustices. Advancing these interdependent goals will create physical, economic, and social resilience while building more just, resilient, and sustainable communities across America. This paper describes how this can be done relatively quickly, by building off the AmeriCorps program, and provides recommendations that apply to a fully developed CCC. Key recommendations include 1) funding the full cost of corpsmembers and building on the expertise of organizations experienced with the range of activities required for successful corps programs; 2) planning intentional career pathways for corpsmembers; and 3) forming partnerships around corps organizations to fund, design, plan, implement and evaluate visible and impactful projects. The paper concludes with case studies of existing programs that highlight the challenges and opportunities of a CCC.

### **Challenge and Opportunity**

The Civilian Climate Corps offers the United States a once-in-a-generation opportunity to connect young people to careers and confront the climate crisis head on and at scale. This effort's success is tied to our ability to engage these crises as a whole. How can we ensure it succeeds?

A successful CCC will provide an opportunity for quality employment to young Americans facing record unemployment levels<sup>1,2</sup> and create green cities in concert with building and urban planning initiatives. Operating at the nexus of physical, social, economic and ecological resilience, it will systematically transform U.S. infrastructure, economic and social systems to mitigate environmental harm, strengthen community resilience, restore environmental justice, remediate pollution, and sequester carbon. This work is necessary — throughout the economy and in every city and town across the country. It is urgently needed in America’s urban, low-income, Black, Indigenous and brown communities. Key to the program’s success will be the CCC’s ability to:

1. Bring a diverse group of young people – notably Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) and low-income Americans – into green career pathways through a CCC experience;
2. Catalyze transformational change in communities by improving environmental and health systems, reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, eliminating unequal environmental burdens, and building resilient and sustainable physical and social infrastructure in disadvantaged communities as defined by the White House Justice40<sup>3</sup> Initiative (hereafter referred to as environmental justice (EJ) communities<sup>4</sup>).

This reimagined CCC will only be successful if it builds on historical expertise. That means working with existing service and conservation corps organizations (*hereafter: corps*<sup>5,6</sup>) to rapidly expand their programs at scale and inform program design and physical impacts on communities. It means supporting green economic growth across industries instead of competing with and crowding out the private market by working with employers as stakeholders to meet their hiring needs. It means working systemically to tackle problems at their root. It is enabled by communities who engage in, co-design, and participate in CCC programs. It is accomplished in partnership with institutions to convene, plan, measure, and evaluate this work.

The reimagined CCC can provide a continuum of experiences, meeting participants where they are, from pre-pre-apprenticeship level to entry-level work. Individuals would graduate from the

1 *One in 4 Young Adults were out of school and out of work in 2020*, Jobs First NYC, August 2021

2 The Center for Law and Social Policy. “Youth Data Portal 2020,” 2020. <https://www.clasp.org/why-we-cant-wait-economic-justice>.

3 Young, Shalanda D., Brenda Mallory, and Gina McCarthy. “Interim Implementation Guidance for the Justice40 Initiative,” July 20, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/M-21-28.pdf>.

4 See also, “Frontline Communities” defined in I.S. 4315, 116th Congress <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BILLS-116s4513is/html/BILLS-116s4513is.htm>

5 “What Is a Corps?” The Corps Network. Accessed August 1, 2021. <https://corpsnetwork.org/about-us/what-is-a-corps/>.

6 The Corps Network, founded in 1985, and representing a diversity of programs (urban, rural and public lands, AmeriCorps and non-AmeriCorps) defines “corps” as follows, “Corps are locally-based organizations that engage young adults and recent veterans in work-based service projects that address conservation and community needs. Through their service, Corps participants – or “Corpsmembers” – gain hands-on job experience, earn certifications, and develop valuable skills in leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork.” Service Year. “The Corps Network,” n.d. <https://serviceyear.org/thecorpsnetwork/>

CCC having gained experience, foundational training and exposure to potential career paths. By scaling the work of existing corps and incentivizing the creation of new corps with funding and technical assistance, the CCC can provide communities with the environmental services and programs that, while not profit-making, support the growth of the private green economy.

Organizations already exist to serve the dozens of industries across the green economy (see [Fig. 1: Green Career Pathways](#), appendix), but they need to be expanded and address their barriers to growth (see case studies). Consistent resources across participating CCC programs (AmeriCorps, DOL, etc.), will result in a diversity of projects, initiatives, and innovative strategies.

Proposals for a new CCC cite the objective to mobilize as many as 1-1.5 million participants over 5 years. Currently, there are roughly 20,000 members in conservation corps, of which about one third are AmeriCorps members (there are a total of 75,000 AmeriCorps Members annually). To expand tenfold and reach 200,000 people, the U.S. needs a multi-pronged staged approach. American cities have a central role to play in recruitment. They are home to an estimated 6 million 16-24 year olds disconnected from work or school<sup>7</sup> and represent scalable CCC implementation sites with their huge stocks of housing, energy, food, and transportation infrastructure that must be made resilient and sustainable. Although we advocate for a widely accessible CCC, the program can be particularly impactful by intentionally recruiting BIPOC and low-income young adults in environmental justice communities who are disproportionately disconnected and underrepresented in AmeriCorps service today.

## Recommendations

To build a strong foundation towards the deployment of hundreds of thousands of individuals, and many thousands of interconnected, impactful projects, we must rely on America's hundreds of existing corps. These organizations have decades of experience in designing impactful projects in urban and rural settings and recruiting a diversity of young adults including BIPOC and low-income people from EJ communities. They have expertise working with communities to build partnerships with public agencies and community-based organizations, designing service-learning programs, providing in-demand technical and hard skills training and supportive services and career coaching, and working with employer partners to launch graduates on new career pathways. For years, these corps have modeled what a CCC can accomplish at the local level and their expertise and growth will be critical to the CCC's success.

Corps, and The Corps Network (TCN), which is a national association of service and conservation corps, have a tradition of non-partisanship. A March 2021 Data for Progress survey<sup>8</sup> found that 77% of overall likely voters support a renewed CCC (65% Rep., 87% Dem.), reflecting the potential for the program to unite Americans through common purpose. A successful new CCC will build on the existing foundation of TCN's 130+ member corps to deliver impact for people, communities and climate; current programs will grow from serving hundreds to reaching thousands or tens of thousands of people annually.

<sup>7</sup> Lewis, Kristen. Rep. *A Decade Undone: 2021 Update*. Measure of America, July 2021. <https://ssrc-static.s3.amazonaws.com/moa/ADecadeUndone2021Update.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Deiseroth, Danielle. *Federal Investments in Clean Energy, Infrastructure, and Innovation Enjoy Bipartisan Support*. Data for Progress, March 2021. <https://www.filesforprogress.org/memos/clean-energy-enjoys-bipartisan-support.pdf>.

AmeriCorps, as the country's established national service program oriented towards young people, offers a channel for early-stage CCC implementation. While AmeriCorps should ultimately be one of multiple means through which the CCC is administered, it offers the foundation for a successful launch.<sup>9</sup> AmeriCorps embodies and promotes an ethic of service to country and community, a tradition of public-private partnership for innovation, and a connection to ongoing learning post-corps through education awards. At the same time, many aspects of AmeriCorps must be updated and adapted for relevancy to low-income young adults and communities, and to create focused impact on physical and economic resilience. To align AmeriCorps for success in the CCC's launch, we recommend that Congress:

1. **Increase corpsmember pay and funding to implementing organizations** to reach a more diverse population of participants and recruit more people into tested programs;
2. **Build an intentional service-to-green-career pathways model** that delivers the experience and training required to launch participants into careers that will impact communities and the built environment over the coming decades;
3. **Fund quality, visible and impactful projects with measurable outcomes** for climate and communities, with impacts at the intersection of wealth, health, and resilience.

### **(1) Increase Corpsmember Pay and Corps Funding to Recruit a Diverse Corps**

#### *Challenge:*

- An AmeriCorps stipend below the national minimum wage makes service programs inaccessible to Americans without savings or other support, forming a barrier to equitable recruitment.
- AmeriCorps' fragmented funding model stands in the way of growth. AmeriCorps provides only a fraction of the funds needed to support corpsmembers, requiring organizations to piece together funding from different levels of government and philanthropic sources (see [Fig. 2 Current Funding Map](#), appendix). Costs of engaging a corpsmember in a quality service experience ("people funding" on Fig. 2) include recruitment, orientation, deployment in teams with supervision, counseling and referral services, stipend or wage, uniform, travel, training and certifications. This excludes hard costs like materials needed for the projects that corpsmembers complete ("project funding" on Fig. 2). Piecemeal funding severely limits program reach based on availability, timing, and funding longevity, and requires corps to juggle applications and programmatic and administrative requirements on separate time frames.

#### *Recommendations:*

- Require a minimum of \$15/hr in both AmeriCorps and non-AmeriCorps CCC programs.

<sup>9</sup> In a letter to the President, TCN published recommendations informed by their member corps for an effective CCC implementation strategy across multiple agencies, including but not exclusively through AmeriCorps. (The Corps Network. Letter to The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, August 2021. [https://corpsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/CCC-Sign-on-letter-to-White-House\\_8.6.2021\\_02.55.pdf](https://corpsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/CCC-Sign-on-letter-to-White-House_8.6.2021_02.55.pdf).)

- Fund corps at \$40,000 per person per term, as recommended by corps practitioners,<sup>10</sup> to transition from stipends to a minimum wage and let corps focus on implementing quality programs for more members – rather than on complex and continuous fundraising.
- Use a combination of AmeriCorps, DOL, and agency-based funding through cooperative agreements to directly support existing corps' growth – and help to seed new corps. An investment of \$2 billion in existing corps could reach 40,000 Americans in green service corps annually or 200,000 over five years, doubling the annual number in CCC-relevant service.
- Create a line item for The Corps Network to expand their established role of intermediary and technical assistance provider.
- Grant multi-year renewable contracts with corps that offer organizations the stability to build capacity by hiring staff, planning new projects, and forming partnerships to support high-quality corpsmember experiences serving EJ communities.
- Keep funding per person consistent across AmeriCorps and non-AmeriCorps CCC programs, particularly if AmeriCorps, non AmeriCorps placements, and a federal employment program coexist, to ensure coherent implementation and that programs will not compete with each other.

## **(2) Build a Service-to-Career Pathways Model**

### *Challenges:*

- AmeriCorps is not designed as a workforce development initiative, but has been leveraged by corps as an entry point for young adults to gain work exposure and transferable skills.<sup>11</sup> However, a 20% cap on corpsmember training time limits corps' ability to provide skills-oriented training and align with industry needs.
- AmeriCorps funds a term of service, but not ongoing work with alumni and with employer partners. The contract-to-contract nature of much work in the emerging industries of the green economy is a barrier to building careers. Corps do the work of recruiting young talent, working with industry partners to align curricula, working with program graduates over years to ensure that a corps experience turns into a career, identifying new job placements, and upskilling alumni to advance along an industry path or transfer to another.
- Individual corps have success in transitioning graduates to union apprenticeships but this needs to be systematized for success, as unions have an important role to play in the family-supporting careers envisioned..

### *Recommendations:*

- Lift the 20 percent limit on training in AmeriCorps. Design the CCC, for both AmeriCorps service and non-AmeriCorps based work, to use a sectoral<sup>12</sup> skills-building framework at

10 The Corps Network. *Recommendations for the Civilian Climate Corps*, May 2021.

[https://corpsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/TCN-CCC-Proposal\\_2021.FINAL\\_.pdf](https://corpsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/TCN-CCC-Proposal_2021.FINAL_.pdf).

11 Service Year Alliance, "Pathways After Service: Education and Career Outcomes of Service Year Alumni" [https://www.serviceyearalliance.org/pathways\\_after\\_service\\_report](https://www.serviceyearalliance.org/pathways_after_service_report)

12 <https://www.mdrc.org/publication/sector-strategies-success>

the pre-pre-apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship<sup>13</sup>, apprenticeship, and entry-level, leading to intentional career ladders post-corps.

- Take an inclusive view of the industries that a CCC can feed into. [Fig. 1: Green Career Pathways](#) illustrates how the CCC needs to be intentionally mapped onto industry pathways.<sup>14</sup> Hands-on experience and training from CCC service should be designed to develop transferable skills and provide exposure to career pathways. GridAlternatives' Tribal Program and Solar Corps Fellowships<sup>15</sup> are an example of how AmeriCorps can be intentionally deployed to build clean energy economies.
- Align with principles and approaches recommended by the Heartland Alliance<sup>16</sup> for equity-oriented subsidized work programs for young adults. Provide funding for ongoing workforce development activities.
- Establish a Green Careers Network in line with Evergreen Action recommendations<sup>17</sup> to strengthen collaborations across corps, agencies, and employers to address barriers that CCC graduates will face in accessing career pathways in the green economy. It will also work to align with related equity-oriented environmental and youth employment policy.<sup>18</sup> This includes working with organized labor to hire CCC graduates and aligning service term curricula for accreditation as pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship programs with direct entry into union apprenticeships.

### **(3) Fund Quality, Impactful Projects with Measurable Outcomes**

#### *Challenges:*

- To build public support and ensure impact in EJ communities, projects must be designed to serve those locations, center people's lived experience through community co-design or participation, and have measurable and tangible outcomes for workforce development, climate and environmental health and justice.
- AmeriCorps funding is for personnel, and does not cover the costs of project planning, implementation or evaluation.
- Quality AmeriCorps programs give corpsmembers a sense of collective agency and a shared ethic of service. How will these attributes be designed into projects?
- The Depression-era CCC is remembered for its economic impact – but also for its physical and ecological impact on America's communities and landscapes. The opportunity for today's CCC, in mobilizing large numbers of people, is in building community-wide systems that reach all residents equitably and ensure a more resilient and sustainable future. These systems can support a range of needed areas such as energy efficiency, urban forestry, community composting, resource recovery, healthy

13 Department of Labor. "Pre-apprenticeship: Pathways For Women Into High-wage Careers," n.d. [https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/apprenticeship/pdfs/Pre\\_Apprenticeship\\_GuideforWomen.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/apprenticeship/pdfs/Pre_Apprenticeship_GuideforWomen.pdf).

14 For example, the International Renewable Energy Council created this solar career map: International Renewable Energy Council. "Solar Career Map," 2021. <https://www.irecsolarcareermap.org>.

15 <https://gridalternatives.org/what-we-do/tribal-program>

16 Framework for an Equity-Centered National Subsidized Employment Program  
Jan 12, 2021 by Caitlin C. Schnur Chris Warland Melissa Young

17 Evergreen Collaborative. "Building the Civilian Climate Corps: Evergreen Collaborative," 2021. <https://collaborative.evergreenaction.com/policy-hub/building-civilian-climate-corps>.

18 See the example of Emerald Cities Collaborative [emeraldcities.org](http://emeraldcities.org)

food access, urban agriculture, public housing, community energy systems, and coastal resiliency.

*Recommendations:*

- Utilize CCC projects to accelerate existing strategic and climate action plans that represent years of collective work by local agencies, organizations and coalitions to ensure that CCC initiatives are impactful and informed by stakeholders. Across the country, cities must transition to sustainable and resilient infrastructure; a CCC can accelerate this process, making lasting change.
- Focus on priority places for early CCC implementation including fifteen to twenty smaller, mid-sized, and large cities. This could engage anywhere from 500 to 10,000 members to reach 100,000 people annually.
- Map environmental justice indicators, areas of high unemployment, organizations with expertise, and models and plans that are ready for implementation to bring stakeholders together and build shared visions and metrics.
- Build on multi-stakeholder partnerships – including existing corps’ networks where they exist – to design, plan, implement, and evaluate visible and impactful projects. The exact nature of these partnerships will be place-based and their alignment with existing local initiatives will be determined by each corps.
- Prioritize projects in EJ communities, particularly areas of high youth unemployment to effectively and tangibly address environmental injustice and immediately impact neighborhoods and residents’ quality of life. The Justice40 interim guidance<sup>19</sup> provides methods for determining environmental benefits while using a comprehensive approach to advancing equity. CCC projects will align with Justice40 goals, with project costs covered through cooperative agreements, and relate to high priority needs in priority places, led by members of the communities served.
- Center communities in projects, in line with Justice40 guidance, by requiring community engagement in the project planning process, and supporting the establishment of new corps by community-based organizations through incubation grants and technical assistance.
- Include evaluation and research institutions in project partnerships from the outset to expand capacity for planning and evaluation, and help inform the design of innovative social and environmental solutions in partnership with local actors.

We believe that these recommendations will enable the rapid expansion of a successful CCC that builds on the foundation of AmeriCorps and the experience of existing corps, liberates America’s poorest communities from economic hardship, and transforms our physical environment, social, health and environmental systems for the 21st century climate. Early successes will be key to attract recruits, identify pain points and enable iterative problem-solving for strong foundations.

<sup>19</sup> Young, Shalanda D., Brenda Mallory, and Gina McCarthy. “Interim Implementation Guidance for the Justice40 Initiative,” July 20, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/M-21-28.pdf>.

With adequate resources and intentional design, the CCC will form a system of existing and new institutions that integrate climate and economic action on a path to resilience and equity and become the lever for stronger green careers and partnership-based systems approaches to climate mobilization. The CCC has the potential to bring Americans together in common cause and engage a wide range of people through everyday action. By targeting investments in the people and places where they are acutely needed – informed by economic and workforce research, modeling, and forecasting – the new CCC can have the greatest impact on careers and climate. A decentralized launch strategy that grows existing corps will enable flexibility to be responsive to local conditions. An iterative program design informed by learnings from existing corps program evaluations can set the CCC on a path to success.

In closing, we present six case studies of existing or proposed corps that illustrate challenges that these recommendations will enable the CCC to overcome. The case studies highlight just a sample of the existing corps that are poised for major growth in support of CCC expansion, along with the barriers in the current system that prevent growth.

## Case Studies

1. Funding: Los Angeles Conservation Corps
2. Career Pathways: PowerCorps PHL
3. Projects: Green City Force
4. Federal Hire: Unis-Cité and Le Service Civique
5. Academic Partnership: Boston City-level Conservation Corps
6. Partnering for Growth: Kupu 'Āina Corps

### Funding: Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC)

LACC<sup>20</sup>, founded in 1986, is the largest urban conservation corps in the country, employing young adults ages 18-24 to do environmentally focused work in their communities and creating opportunities for career exploration and further education. Corpsmembers participate in work related to urban forestry, habitat restoration, community cleaning and beautification, recycling, urban landscaping, emergency response, affordable housing construction, and environmental remediation. Corpsmembers participate in a one-month onboarding program, 5 to 18 months gaining basic work experience and earning a high school diploma, and an up to one year "Springboard" period of career exploration and transition services. During this period, corpsmembers can participate in LACC's Green Career Pathways program, which currently has tracks in construction, conservation, and energy. Finally, alumni of the program have access to continued career and support services.

Although LACC's current funding is 97% governmental, it is pieced together from numerous sources broken out as follows for FY21-22: 6% Federal (\$1,458k), 32% State (\$4,462k), 14% County (\$1,210k), and 48% City (\$8,016k). According to Executive Director, Wendy Butts, LACC "... [struggles] to put [funding] together here at the LA Conservation Corps. We are a little over \$20 million a year organization and a large part of that ... \$15 to \$16 million is cobbled

20 LA Conservation Corps. Accessed August 1, 2021. <https://www.lacorps.org/>.



together by going out and looking for grants and securing contracts that provide environmentally focused work experiences for our young people and it's a lot of work. At any given time, we have like 100, and some years 150, open contracts that our corpsmembers are going out and working on. So to have a dedicated funding source from a state or federal agency that we can count on year after year would be a much better situation for us."<sup>21</sup> LACC has not used AmeriCorps funding in over 10 years, outside of their YouthBuild program. According to Wendy Butts, LACC would consider using AmeriCorps funds if it were \$40K per person (covering the full cost of corpsmembers, staff, and a federally approved Indirect Cost Rate of 18.2%).

### **Career Pathways: PowerCorpsPHL**

PowerCorpsPHL<sup>22</sup> is a green workforce development initiative in Philadelphia focused on providing opportunities for BIPOC young adults, including returning citizens, by utilizing AmeriCorps and other funding together. The corps was founded by the City of Philadelphia in partnership with EducationWorks to jointly address high rates of youth unemployment, act as a form of violence prevention, and contribute to the city's climate action initiatives.

PowerCorpsPHL's model includes a 4-month "Foundations" phase, with a curriculum focused on readiness skills as well as basic skills in, and exposure to, a number of sectors. Participants can then choose one of several "Industry Academies," become an Assistant Crew Leader, or be placed in paid internships with employer partners in other fields. The Academy options are built with employers from the start and currently include green infrastructure, created as a pre-apprenticeship to Philadelphia Water's apprenticeship program; electrical & solar, created with the Philadelphia Energy Authority who serves as an industry convener; and, urban forestry, created to fill a gap with tree and land care companies. PowerCorpsPHL is also developing academies in masonry with the local union and a pre-apprenticeship for Philadelphia's Park Ranger Apprenticeship.

### **Projects: Green City Force**

New York City-based Green City Force<sup>23</sup> (GCF) is an AmeriCorps program that exclusively recruits young adult public housing residents to lead large-scale, intentionally designed climate and health-oriented initiatives across public housing communities in NYC. Eco-Hubs powered by GCF are multi-benefit sites through which AmeriCorps members, supervised by graduates of the program on staff, with community input from residents, grow and distribute organic produce, organize and promote community-based composting, and educate residents about sustainability and health. With the New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA) 302 developments housing one in 15 New Yorkers, the GCF Eco-Hub model, developed in partnership with MIT, has the potential – if adequately resourced through a national CCC – to grow from its current 5 sites, 100 members and 5 alumni staff supervisors, to create 4,320 corps positions and 302 permanent crew leader positions for graduates of the corps, additionally supporting local partners and experts, and serving NYCHA's majority BIPOC community.

21 Wendy Butts, pers. comm., December 21, 2020.

22 PowerCorpsPHL. Accessed August 1, 2021. <https://powercorpssphl.org/>.

23 Green City Force. Accessed August 1, 2021. <https://greencityforce.org/>.

GCF's service-to-careers model also illustrates how AmeriCorps and national service, through intentional design, can be leveraged to prepare young adult residents of public housing for employment on large-scale public housing retrofits that are a critical component of reaching NYCHA's and NYC's climate goals. GCF's outcomes include producing a larger pool of low-income community members having the training to be competitive for employment for other climate-oriented projects in public housing such as community solar installations, urban forestry, and HVAC systems upgrades across NYC's public housing. GCF is working with peer workforce organizations, city agencies, and industry partners through the emerging NYC Green Economy Network to address challenges in building consistent sectoral career paths GCF can't address alone, including making effective partnerships with organized labor.

### **Federal program: Unis-Cité and Le Service Civique**

France's Service Civique<sup>24</sup> was created in 2010, inspired by the convincing experience of a non-profit called Unis-Cité. From 10,000 members in the first year, the program engaged 132,000 in 2020 and is committed to serve 245,000 in 2021 after France decided to double the number of placements after the COVID crisis. The Service Civique employs civilian youth service members 16-25 years old (and up to 30 for young adults with physical or mental disabilities), through a direct or indirect employment model, for a period of 6 to 12 months (average being 8). Unis-Cité experimented with the model for 10 years before it was recognized and funded by the State. Its service model, inspired by City Year<sup>25</sup>, is team-based and emphasizes quality. It recruits a diverse corps, working in teams for 8 months; trains, orients, supervises, and supports members in developing a civic consciousness; and plans for post-corps service, cultivating "esprit de corps".

Unis-Cité designs impactful service projects with a range of public and private partners in all social and environmental fields, monitoring quality, conducting evaluations, and showing how young people in service can help meet major social and environmental needs. The advent of the Service Civique enabled Unis-Cité to go from serving hundreds at a small number of sites in 2010 to over 10,000 at 90 sites in 2020, in partnership with 200 local governments, diverse national ministries, and 1,000 nonprofit partners. It also acts as an intermediary for corps placements at over 450 additional organizations. While Unis-Cité projects are not exclusively focused on climate, this organizational model is an example of how existing corps have a critical role to play in partnering for the success of a scaled CCC.

### **Academic Partnership: Boston City-level Conservation Corps**

Following multiple proposals within Boston City Council for a city-level conservation Corps, the City of Boston recently included \$500,000 for Zero Waste and Green Jobs Training in the FY2022 budget.<sup>26</sup> This money has the potential to fund a corps that would join the city's already

24 Service Civique. Accessed August 1, 2021. <https://www.service-civique.gouv.fr/>.

25 City Year is an AmeriCorps program launched in Boston in 1988 that now serves 29 US cities. <https://www.cityyear.org/>

26 City of Boston. "FY22 Climate and Open Space Priorities." Boston.gov, July 1, 2021. <https://www.boston.gov/departments/budget/fy22-climate-and-open-space-priorities>.

robust, yet disconnected, landscape of green workforce development organizations and programming. Funding through the CCC has the opportunity to provide Boston with technical assistance for community-engaged program design and implementation that will strengthen and connect this existing landscape, ensure corpsmembers receive a living wage and pathways to green jobs, and lead to transformational climate action.

MIT has the potential to serve as a valuable partner to the City of Boston in their effort to successfully develop and scale this corps. Research<sup>27</sup> through the Department of Urban Studies and Planning has already provided in-depth ecosystem mapping of relevant existing public, private, and non-profit initiatives and programming as well as potential partners and career pathways. This research offers an example of the potential role for institutions of higher education in other cities: analysis and mapping of the existing and potential green workforce development ecosystems, identification of and partnerships with relevant community organizations, and analysis of potential place-based green career pathways.

### **Partnering for Growth: Kupu 'Āina Corps**

Kupu<sup>28</sup>, founded in 2007, is a nonprofit organization that provides multiple training programs for young adults to contribute to creating a more sustainable Hawai'i and gain experience in green careers. Building on their existing youth conservation corps, individual leadership programs, and AmeriCorps VISTA program, Kupu used \$3 million of funding from the CARES Act to create the Kupu 'Āina Corps<sup>29</sup> in 2020.

Kupu 'Āina Corps was created as a rapid response to the unemployment crisis in Hawai'i caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The corps placed over 360 displaced workers and recent graduates in paid positions with 150 local farms and natural resource organizations doing work related to conservation, sustainability, and agriculture. Participants completed over 89,000 hours of service and helped treat and manage over 21,000 acres of land in Hawai'i; Kupu estimates that the Kupu 'Āina Corps had a positive economic impact of over \$6.5 million. Following the program 6 out of 10 participants found employment or pursued higher education or national service.<sup>30</sup> Based on the success of this program, the State of Hawai'i recently passed legislation to establish a new state program called the Green Job Youth Corps.

According to Kawika Riley, Senior Director of External Affairs at Kupu, "The State of Hawai'i's new Green Job Youth Corps could be a model for how state and local governments get a head start on doing the kind of work that the Civilian Climate Corps will eventually allow us to scale significantly. Here are three important elements that are in place in Hawai'i: First, Hawai'i's Green Job Youth Corps is a long-term initiative that provides structure and certainty, and allows our state to learn how to do this work more effectively every year. Secondly, it's designed to run

27 Costantini, Winn. Thesis. Integrating Climate, Economic, and Racial Justice through a Boston FutureCorps, 2021. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aXjNLqA2fwiS8bZSwoZBIJZoz3xPCzt/view>.

28 Kupu. Accessed August 1, 2021. <https://www.kupuhawaii.org/>.

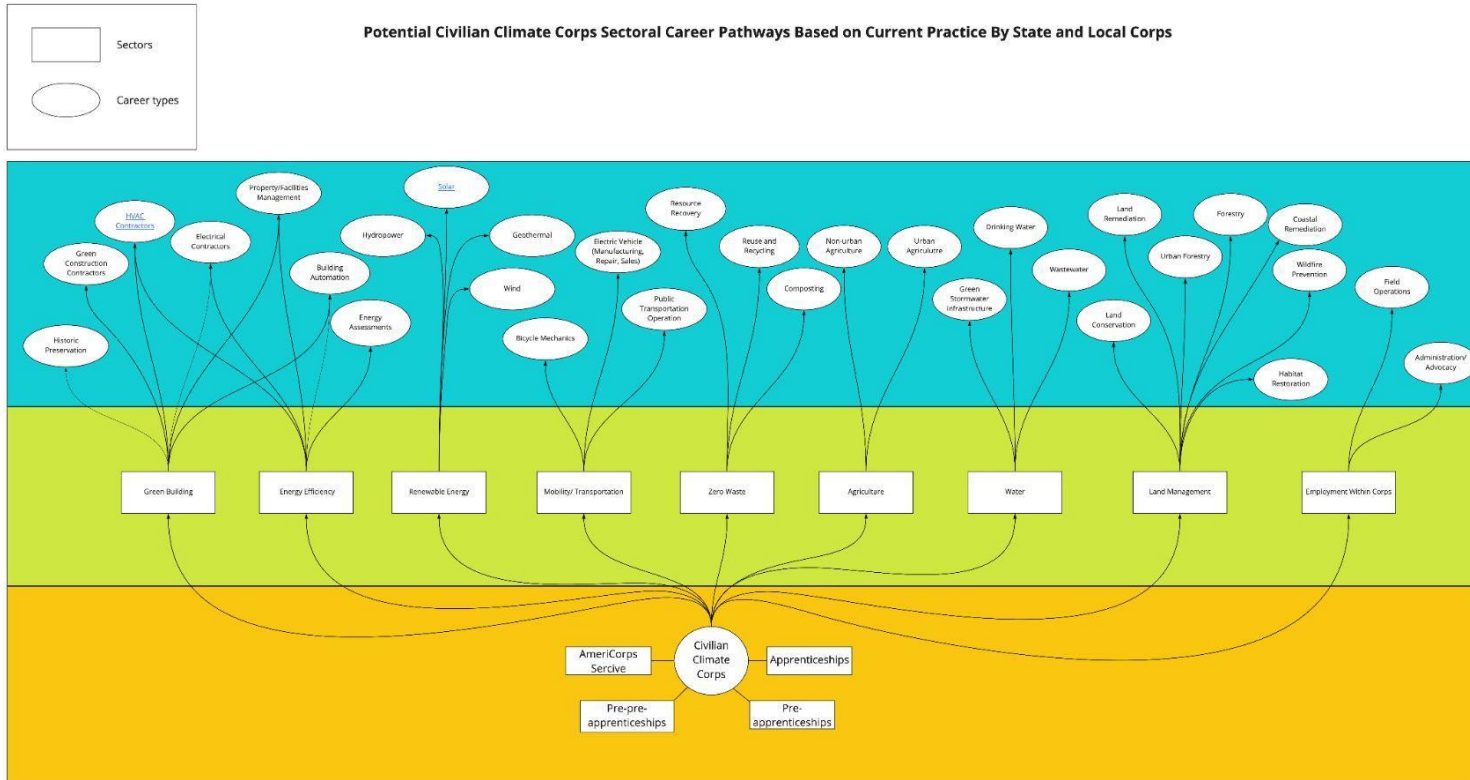
29 Kupu 'Āina Corps. YouTube, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WymrCqGXRe4>.

30 Kupu. "The Corps Network 2021 National Conference." In Corps as a Vehicle for Economic Revitalization, 2021.

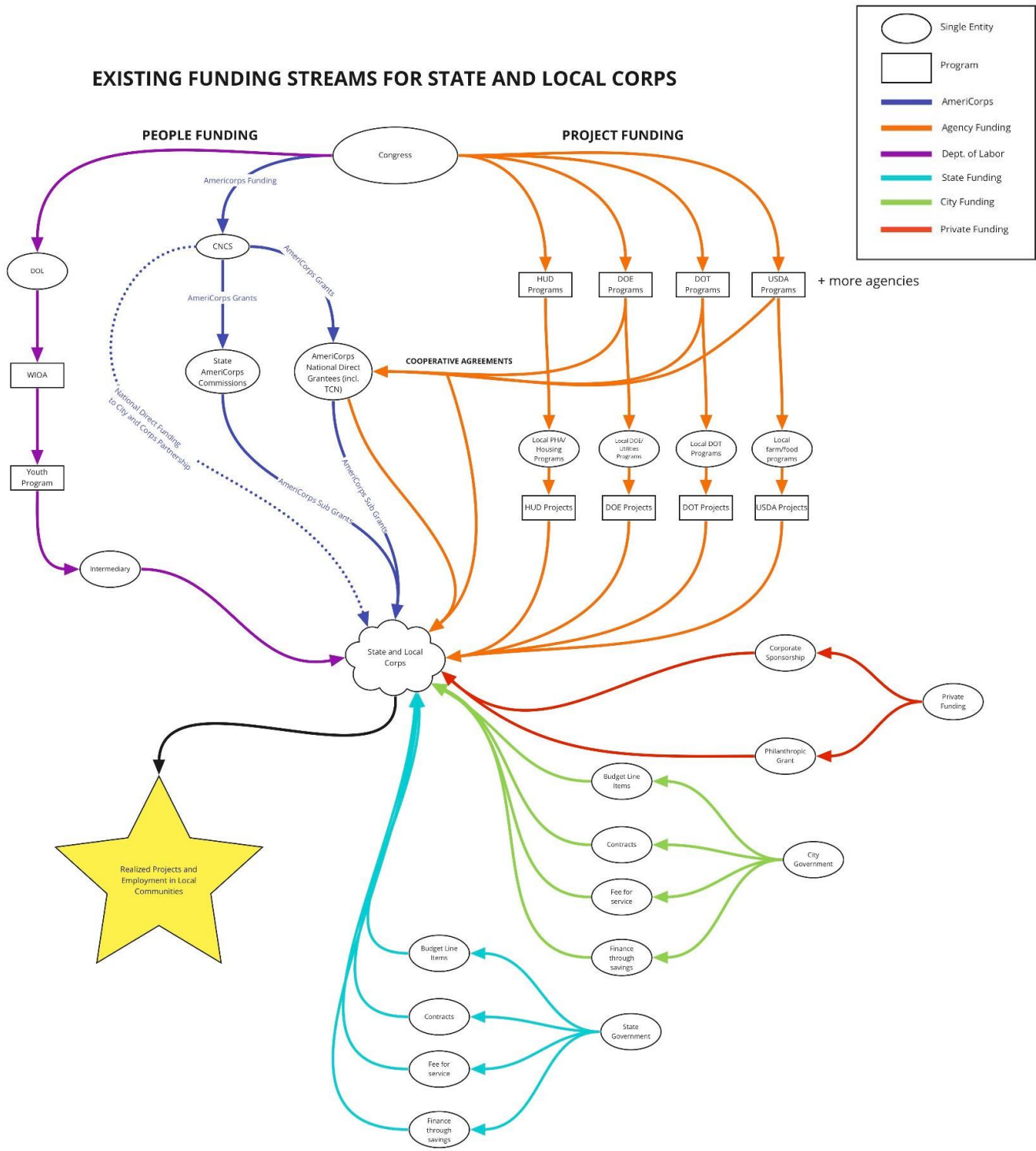
as a partnership, with the state government overseeing the program and an experienced community partner administering it. Third, it is structured in a way that allows the program to receive federal funding, so that the future CCC can be channelled into this pre-existing, statewide partnership based model that works with an existing service corps and not against it."<sup>31</sup>

31 K. Riley, pers. comm., August 24, 2021.

**Figure 1: Green Career Pathways in the Civilian Climate Corps**



**Figure 2: Current Corps Funding Map**



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**Bahij Chancey** is a recent graduate of the MIT Master in City Planning program who develops and researches environmental policy and systems. He focuses on the intersection of social equity and the infrastructures of pedestrian and bicycle mobility, waste management, and energy. He was formerly Senior Manager of Development and External Relations Green City Force. Bahij is an AmeriCorps alum, a board member of Transportation Alternatives, a Van Alen Institute Neighborhood Design Fellow, and an organizer at Mechanical Gardens Bike Co-op. He has a BFA in Architecture from Yale.

**Winn Costantini** is the Community Climate Resilience Manager at Green Building United in Philadelphia and holds a Master in City Planning from MIT. Prior to his time at MIT, they worked at Ceres, a Boston-based sustainability non-profit, engaging with institutional investors working on environmental, social, and governance issues through the Ceres Investor Network. He was also an outreach and education fellow at the Center for EcoTechnology, where he worked with households and small businesses to address energy efficiency and waste management challenges. As an undergraduate, they studied Psychology and Environmental Studies at Williams College. His current work focuses on equitable and socially just climate change solutions, participatory planning, and the role of workforce development in climate, economic, and racial justice movements.

**Lisbeth Shepherd** is a believer in the power of young people to change their lives and the world. She co-founded Green City Force (GCF) in 2009 with Erika Symmonds and Lucian Cohen to address the dual imperatives of youth unemployment and climate change and served as founding Executive Director until 2020. Lisbeth previously coordinated the Clean Energy Corps working group at Green for All, and co-founded Unis-Cité, the leading national youth service program in France. She is an Echoing Green alum, Draper Richards Kaplan Fellow, Audubon “Woman Greening the City,” White House Youth Jobs+ Champion of Change, Yale graduate and mother of two.

**Nicholas de Monchaux** is Professor and Head of Architecture at MIT. He is a partner in the architecture practice modern, and a founder of the design technology company Local Software. Until 2020 he was Professor of Architecture and Urban Design, and Craigslist Distinguished Chair in New Media at UC Berkeley, where he also served as Director of the Berkeley Center for New Media. De Monchaux is the author of *Spacesuit: Fashioning Apollo* (MIT Press, 2011), an architectural and urban history of the Apollo Spacesuit, winner of the Eugene Emme award from the American Astronautical Society and shortlisted for the Art Book Prize, as well as *Local Code: 3,659 Proposals about Data, Design, and the Nature of*

*Cities* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2016). His design work has been exhibited widely, including at the Biennial of the Americas, the Venice Architecture Biennale, The Lisbon Architecture Triennial, SFMOMA, the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, the Storefront for Art and Architecture and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. His work has been supported by the MacDowell Colony, the Santa Fe Institute, the Smithsonian Institution, the Hellman Fund, and the Bakar Fellows Program. He is a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome.

**Christopher Zegras** is Professor of Mobility and Urban Planning and Head of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) at MIT. He serves on the Executive Board of the BRT+ Centre of Excellence and on MIT's Climate Nucleus. From 2015-2020 he was the Lead Principal Investigator for the Future Urban Mobility research group, sponsored by the Singapore MIT Alliance for Research and Technology. His research spans interrelated areas critical to tackling metropolitan mobility challenges: human behavior, digital transformation, and strategic planning techniques and technologies. He has consulted widely for a diverse range of organizations, including the International Energy Agency, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Canadian, German, US, and Peruvian Governments, and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. Prior to becoming a Professor, he worked for the International Institute for Energy Conservation in Washington, DC and Santiago de Chile and for MIT's Laboratory for Energy and the Environment. He holds a BA in Economics and Spanish from Tufts University, a Master in City Planning and a Master of Science in Transportation from MIT and a PhD in Urban and Regional Planning, also from MIT.