

Scorecard AmeriCorps



AmeriCorps

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About AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through national service and volunteerism. Through our nation's most trying times, AmeriCorps has come together to help those in need.

This page provides information on how **AmeriCorps** is working to advance environmental justice for communities across America. It is part of Phase One of the Biden-Harris Administration's Environmental Justice Scorecard.

Justice40 Initiative

As part of President Biden's [Justice40 Initiative](#), the federal government is working toward the goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments reach disadvantaged communities that are marginalized and overburdened by pollution and underinvestment. In particular, the President's Justice40 Initiative applies to federal investments that address climate change, clean energy and energy efficiency, clean transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and workforce development, remediation and reduction of legacy pollution, and the development of critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure.

This Phase One Scorecard provides an update on initial progress made by **AmeriCorps** implementing the Justice40 Initiative. Future versions of the Environmental Justice Scorecard will provide updates on progress made by other federal agencies. [Share your feedback](#)

Scorecard will provide additional information and updates on the benefits of Justice40 covered programs.

For more information on AmeriCorps's Justice40 covered programs, please contact partnerships@cns.gov.

Phase One Scorecard metrics and highlights in Fiscal Year 2022 include:

- **5** Justice40 covered program(s)
- **20** funding announcement(s) covered under the Justice40 Initiative
- **Over \$630 million** in funding made available from Justice40 covered programs¹
 - The Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 AmeriCorps State and National Notice of Funding Opportunity prioritized investments in environmental stewardship, including supporting communities to become more resilient through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve land and water, increase renewable energy use and improve at-risk ecosystems, especially in underserved households and communities.
 - FY 2022 AmeriCorps NCCC focus areas included environmental stewardship and conservation, with service activities including planting trees; addressing climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience; and facilitating environmental education for youth. The FY 2023 AmeriCorps VISTA program priorities included anti-poverty initiatives that focus on environmental stewardship and climate change in low-income communities, including building community resilience and connecting underserved populations to renewable energy and energy efficient practices.
 - In FY 2022, AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP released a continuation Notice of Funding Opportunity for projects awarded through an FY 2021 competition that prioritized increased energy and water efficiency, renewable energy use, or improved at-risk ecosystems, with a focus on activities that benefit economically disadvantaged communities.
- Made program modifications for Justice40 covered programs such as:
 - When deploying American Rescue Plan funds, AmeriCorps Seniors FY 2022 demonstration program prioritized applications actively engaged in removing structural racial inequities and increasing opportunity to achieve sustainable change.
 - The AmeriCorps VISTA program is designed to support organizations that address poverty. In 2022, the program explicitly prioritized investment in rural communities, Indian Country, and areas of deep poverty, with additional priority given to projects that address racial equity.
 - In FY 2022, AmeriCorps Seniors, AmeriCorps State and National, and AmeriCorps VISTA increased the volunteer stipend and member living allowance to make service opportunities more available to people from disadvantaged communities.

¹ This funding amount describes examples of the funding that was made available in Fiscal Year 2022 through Justice40 covered programs. The amount does not represent the total funding that benefits disadvantaged communities. The funding was made available through grants, notices of funding opportunity, and other funding announcements. These funding announcements were from Justice40 covered programs that were funded through discretionary and mandatory appropriations, as well as

supplemental appropriations, such as those enacted under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Pub. L. 117-58). The Justice40 Initiative sets a goal that 40 percent of overall benefits from certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities.

AmeriCorps' Highlights

In FY 2022, AmeriCorps invested \$117 million in environmental stewardship and disaster services projects, a 20 percent increase over the previous year.

Green City Force, an AmeriCorps State and National grantee in New York City, enlists and trains young people from low-income public housing communities to make public housing communities stronger, greener, and healthier by weatherizing buildings, maintaining urban farms to grow organic produce for local residents, and educating residents on sustainability and energy efficiency.

The City of Honolulu's Office of Climate Change, Sustainability, and Resilience was awarded an AmeriCorps VISTA project to protect and improve the lives of O'ahu's residents by accelerating the shift to an equitable and renewable energy and transportation system, and helping communities prepare for the impacts of climate change. In addition, VISTA members served with the Hawaii Climate Commission, whose mission is to promote ambitious, climate-neutral, equitable, and culturally responsive strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation. AmeriCorps NCCC teams have supported Mount Hood National Forest in Oregon by conducting fuels reduction near communities at risk of wildfires, providing firefighting capacity and emergency services to residents, addressing deferred maintenance of Forest Service seed orchard facilities, and carrying out reforestation efforts.

AmeriCorps Seniors invested in Rebuild Upstate RSVP, a program that supports home repairs, including energy efficiency improvements, for low-income households in Anderson County, SC. RSVP of Humboldt and Del Norte counties in California received AmeriCorps resources to recruit AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers to promote the health of the Mattole River watershed, which traverses Humboldt County, where nearly one in four residents' lives below the federal poverty level. Volunteer activities include grasslands restoration and sustainable forest management.

Environmental and Civil Rights Protection

AmeriCorps' Highlights

AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers restore parks and public lands, protect watersheds, support wildland fire mitigation, conduct energy audits, weatherize homes, install renewable energy systems, create and maintain city parks and greenspaces, improve stormwater management, maintain urban farms, and engage in other activities to help communities become more just and climate resilient. In 2021, AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers improved more than 400,000 acres of parks and public lands; treated 14,500 miles of trails or rivers; weatherized or retrofitted more than 7,000 homes or public structures; protected or restored nearly 1,000 structures after natural disasters; and provided education and training in environmental stewardship to more than 200,00 individuals.

Federal agencies are advancing environmental justice by carrying out their responsibilities under the law to identify and address disproportionate and adverse public health and environmental, climate-related, and cumulative impacts on communities with environmental justice concerns. Agencies are working to ensure that all communities experience the protection of our country's bedrock environmental laws. The following information reflects some of the environmental and civil rights work **AmeriCorps** has done from January 2021 to September 2022.

For more information, please visit [AmeriCorps' Strategic Plan](#) .

Centering Environmental Justice in Decision-Making

Federal agencies work to ensure that the voices, perspectives, and lived experiences of communities are heard and reflected in the priorities, policies, and decision-making of the federal government. Agencies also take steps to respect Tribal sovereignty and ensure government-to-government consultation on federal policies. The following information highlights work **AmeriCorps** has done from January 2021 to September 2022 to center environmental justice in its decision-making.

Community Input and Engagement

Phase One Scorecard metrics and highlights include:

- **21** technical assistance outreach event(s) in Fiscal Year 2022
 - All programs that support environmental justice activities offer training and technical assistance calls and webinars to share information with



prospective applicants. Additionally, program representatives and field staff conduct outreach events to spread the word about available resources.

- **8** public process(es) related to environmental justice, e.g., requests for information or listening sessions
 - AmeriCorps leadership engaged in listening sessions to receive input from stakeholders on agency initiatives and strategies related to climate change, equity, and environmental justice. This included America's Service Commission Regional Training Conferences, the Climate Action Summit, National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters Annual Conference, and the AmeriCorps Symposium. These engagements helped shape the agency's 2022-2026 strategic plan.

Consultation and Partnership with Tribal Nations

Phase One Scorecard metrics and highlights include:

- The AmeriCorps Tribal Consultation policy is inclusive of environmental justice.
- **5** internal training(s) on Tribal Consultation or working with Tribes and Indigenous Peoples to advance environmental justice

Institutionalizing Environmental Justice

Since the start of the Biden-Harris Administration, federal agencies have been working to embed environmental justice into all aspects of their work, including by implementing [Executive Order 12898](#) and [Executive Order 14008](#). The following information shares some of the work **AmeriCorps** has done from January 2021 to September 2022 to institutionalize environmental justice.

Phase One Scorecard metrics and highlights include:

- **Does not have** an environmental justice strategic plan that **has been** updated in the past 5 years
 - AmeriCorps' internal Climate Action Plan includes a section on Partnering with Communities to Advance Racial and Economic Equity and Environmental Justice. The agency will take steps to encourage meaningful engagement and participation by low-income communities and communities of color, and to advance racial and economic equity by ensuring AmeriCorps is accessible to people of all socioeconomic backgrounds.
 - AmeriCorps' Climate Action Plan was created in the last 5 years and the agency's Sustainability Plan has been updated in the past 5 years.
 - AmeriCorps does not have an environmental justice office, but the agency's climate change team includes 1 staff member who works on environmental justice as part of broader environmental efforts.
- **1** staff that work on environmental justice, either in a full- or part-time capacity
- **9** internal training(s) for staff on environmental justice

- **1** new or strengthened internal working group(s), steering committee(s), council(s) on environmental justice
- AmeriCorps has a cross-agency working group focused on environmental justice issues called the "Climate Change Working Group." In 2020 the agency provided cultural competency training to about 90 staff, which included land-, environment-, and justice-based components. In November 2022, the agency hosted a Native American Heritage Month and Climate Literacy crossover event for staff that included environmental justice topics. The agency's Field Collaborative for staff interested in or working with Tribal Nations and Native-led non-profit organizations considers environmental justice issues. Since February 2022, AmeriCorps hosted 6 monthly climate literacy sessions to educate staff about the role of national service in addressing climate change and addressing environmental justice.

AmeriCorps' Highlights

AmeriCorps participates in multiple interagency working groups related to climate change and environmental justice (America the Beautiful, Coastal Resilience, Urban Waters Federal Partnership, Nature-Deprived Communities). AmeriCorps was one of 10 agencies that signed the "United States Government Interagency Memorandum of Understanding on Promoting Equitable Access to Nature in Nature-Deprived Communities" to strengthen investments in nature-deprived communities in pursuit of ensuring all Americans have the benefits of safe parks, natural areas, and waterways where they live, work, and play.

AmeriCorps' work also focuses on encouraging participation by individuals in low-income communities and communities of color in AmeriCorps programming related to climate change, and aims to advance racial and economic equity by ensuring AmeriCorps is accessible to people of all socioeconomic backgrounds.

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