



Volunteer Maine

The Maine Commission for Community Service
A Stronger Maine Through Volunteerism



2024 Maine Climate Corps: Annual Review and Future Options

Report to
Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future

Respectfully submitted by Volunteer Maine
The Maine Commission for Community Service
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Introduction

This report provides an update on the current status and recent accomplishments, of the Maine Climate Corps, spanning 2022-2024, including the types of projects Corps members are engaged in and outcomes. The report describes how the Maine Climate Corps can support the long-term workforce needs to meet the State's climate goals.

Maine Climate Corps Policy Background

In 2020, [Maine Won't Wait, the State's Climate Action Plan](#)¹, recommended creating a Maine Climate Corps for climate-related workforce development. In 2021 the Legislature passed LD 722 requesting Volunteer Maine to study the establishment of the Maine Climate Corps. That study was published in January, 2022 and this report provides a status update on recommendations made. Based on the January 2022 study the Maine Legislature passed LD 1974, officially creating the Maine Climate Corps in statute.

In September, 2023, President Biden created the American Climate Corps by Executive Order. The American Climate Corps did not release any new funding to support Corps programming, however it did bring attention and momentum to the Climate Corps movement nationwide. Several of the Maine Climate Corps Network programs meet the American Climate Corps criteria and have joined the initiative since it launched in April 2024.

At the time of this report's publication, the Maine Climate Council is actively assessing recommendations for an updated State Climate Action Plan. The need for the Maine Climate Corps is evident as Climate Council working groups have discussed the demand for workforce development, increased education and communications to Maine people, and investments in the psychological resilience of Mainers. As described in the 2022 study, voluntary citizen engagement in community life is a strong indicator of resilience and ability to thrive. Volunteerism has many co-benefits for individuals and communities at all stages of life, and can help Maine not only meet workforce goals, but also community and personal resilience goals.

¹ All links can be found in Appendix B: Resources

List of Acronyms

ACC	American Climate Corps
ARP	American Rescue Plan
DACF	Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection
CCAC	Campus Climate Action Corps
CEJEST	Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, a mapping tool to determine which communities are considered “disadvantaged” by the Biden-Harris Administration’s Justice40 initiative
DCP	Downeast Community Partners
IRA	Inflation Reduction Act
GOPIF	Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
MSF	Maine Service Fellows
MCC	Maine Conservation Corps
MCCN	Maine Climate Corps Network
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OSHA	US Occupational Safety and Health Administration
RFA	Request for Applications
USFS IRA	United States Forest Service Inflation Reduction Act
VISTA	Volunteers in Service to America (an AmeriCorps program)

Re-cap on 2022 Report: Eight Recommendations and Status

In January, 2022 Volunteer Maine published a report, [Maine Climate Corps: Inspired by History. Designed for Today](#), describing proposed program structure, existing, foundational service programs, and proposed public and private partnerships to accomplish the initiative's goals. The report was based on dozens of interviews with experts in Maine and from around the country. Several scoping meetings were held to receive additional feedback on the priority focus areas.

The report recommended eight action items to implement the Corps, and since January 2022 some actions have been completed while some are still in progress.

Recommendation One: Maine Climate Corps be structured as a set of programs.

In the summer of 2023, [the Maine Climate Corps Network \(MCCN\)](#), was formally launched. MCCN is structured as a set of programs because climate actions cover such a wide-ranging set of activities. Member programs demonstrate the attributes of high-quality service corps programs and are the only entities authorized to use the name and logo, *Maine Climate Corps Program*. Programs are invited to apply to join MCCN, and then they sign an MOU with Volunteer Maine and commit to meeting quarterly and submitting reports to the Maine Climate Corps Coordinator.

There are many workforce and volunteer programs in the environmental sector; the structure and requirements of MCCN creates clear delineation between Maine Climate Corps and other programs. MCCN is also a community of practice that serves to build ties between program staff, allows program and Volunteer Maine staff to tackle challenges together, and enables programs to collaboratively leverage resources.

The Maine Climate Corps Network was invited to be an implementing partner of the American Climate Corps (ACC) in the Spring of 2024. Not all programs in MCCN meet the criteria of the ACC, however several do and have opted into the national program. The well-defined scope of the MCCN made it easy to invite programs to the ACC, while other states that may have multiple environmental stewardship service programs were less sure about which programs to invite to the ACC.

In September 2024 there are nine programs in MCCN and two applications pending.

Recommendation Two: Any program operating as part of Maine Climate Corps will be proposed by a coalition of organizations committed to the program's priority for action and a member of the coalition takes responsibility for administering the program as the lead sponsor.

Ultimately, a requirement for any Maine Climate Corps program to operate as a coalition of organizations with a lead sponsor, was not a requirement in the [Maine Climate Corps](#)

[statute](#). While the coalition model is most beneficial to small organizations that are unable to stand up a program on their own, it can be a barrier to rapid program development and deployment due to the need to develop partnerships.

Small organizations and communities in need of additional support routinely reach out to Volunteer Maine and referrals are made to the MCCN programs.

Recommendation Three: Authorize programming in eight climate-related areas to give Climate Corps the greatest latitude in tackling climate impacts with proven tactics.

The [Maine Climate Corps statute](#) authorizes programs to operate in the following climate-related areas:

- Transportation
- Energy
- Housing
- The State's coastal zone as defined under the United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's coastal zone management program
- Public health
- Land and fresh water preservation
- Community resilience
- Climate-related education

Recommendation Four: Based on current science and expressed need of Maine communities, prioritize for action 11 project areas.

1. Community Resilience Planning

Community resilience planning projects contribute to *Maine Won't Wait's* goals to help communities adapt to and prepare for the impacts of climate change.

Municipal or regional government bodies partner with a Climate Corps to implement community-based and data-driven climate planning, vulnerability assessments, and flooding assessments, while building local capacity.

Two programs that pre-date the Maine Climate Corps focus on community resilience planning: the AmeriCorps Resilience Corps and the Island Institute Fellows. The Maine Service Fellows also provides these services.

Most of these programs have place-based constraints, and generally, there is more demand than the programs can accommodate based on current funding.

2. Energy Education and Outreach

Under the guidance of advising partners, Climate Corps members would educate community residents and organizations about energy use (conservation and management), new sources of energy, and reliable consumer guidance. Tactics would aim to empower residents to take action in their own homes and make informed energy choices both personally and in collective decision-making.

The pilot State-funded DCP Climate Corps (program further described on page 13) focused on energy education and outreach by attending public events, creating a podcast about climate change, and delivering weatherization services with DCP clients.

The Campus Climate Action Corps delivers energy education and outreach to help advance public knowledge and increase motivation to conserve energy and reduce carbon emissions.

A need for “energy navigators” or “energy coaches” remains throughout Maine. Beyond general awareness and education, residents need one-on-one coaching to understand the options available to them, and understand how to navigate rebates, tax credits, government program, contractor options, new technology and more.

3. “Lead by Example”

Maine local, county, and regional governments, as well as nonprofits, have buildings that need to be made energy efficient. Climate Corps projects that address this need would upgrade the structures and give Corps members opportunities to demonstrate skills valuable to future employment.

No programs to date have addressed this need and opportunities remain for local, county, and State governments to increase their capacity.

4. Home Energy Conservation and Management

This project would focus on the weatherization of low-income homes throughout Maine. This could include but would not be limited to window inserts, energy audits, and light weatherization and energy efficiency improvements, such as weather stripping and LED lightbulbs.

The pilot State-funded DCP Climate Corps (program further described on page 13) also focused on weatherization services for DCP clients.

The WindowDressers Community Build Program (program further described on page 19) builds window inserts that cut down on drafts, reduce emissions, and helps residents save money.

5. Emergency Management Community Assistance

No programs to date have a major focus in this area, however, the Island Institute Fellows were in a position to pivot their projects after major winter storms in 2023-2024. Fellows quickly transitioned and supported municipal staff with federal and State emergency management coordination.

There remain significant needs in Maine communities for emergency management planning, public engagement focused on vulnerable populations, and natural hazard mitigation planning.

6. Healthy Soils and Regenerative Agriculture Outreach and Education

There is a significant amount of carbon sequestering potential for farmers and woodlot owners in Maine. Members engaged in this Climate Corps project would conduct outreach, education, and technical assistance to develop and transition to regenerative practices that maximize carbon sequestration.

There are no Maine programs focused on healthy soils or outreach to farmers/woodlot owners. However, a new national direct program, the Working Lands Climate Corps, will place members in Maine in the Fall of 2024. These placements were made after a referral by the Maine Climate Corps Coordinator. The Working Lands Climate Corps members will focus on projects to engage woodland owners in climate smart forestry.

7. Local Foods Program

Maine has a goal of sourcing 30% of food consumed within the State from local producers by 2030. Climate Corps members would partner with communities to plant and maintain community food forests, engage in public outreach to localize the food system, and build gleaning and preservation programs.

There are no Maine Climate Corps programs focused on local food. However, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (DACF) operates the Ending Hunger Corps VISTA program, part of the State's strategy to implement Everyone at the Table: Maine's Plan to End Hunger by 2030.

8. Community Solar Projects

In collaboration with communities, Corps members would gather information and data required to successfully site and install community solar projects across Maine.

There are no programs focused on siting community solar projects.

9. Invasive Species Monitoring & Management

Maine Climate Corps members would engage in invasive species monitoring and management, train the general public to carry out these activities as citizen scientists, build upon the invasive species inventory, and grow the network of volunteers in the field.

While some Maine Conservation Corps members and many watershed organizations may focus on invasive species management with volunteer support, there is no program exclusively focused on invasive species.

10. Shoreline Monitoring & Stabilization

Members would expand current shoreline monitoring and stabilizing projects, including living shoreline stabilization, green infrastructure, culvert monitoring and repair, and road vulnerability assessments.

The State has received a significant amount of funding from the NOAA Climate Challenge grant that will help create the “Shore Corps” in partnership between MCCN, the Maine Conservation Corps, DEP, and DACF. Members will be placed in state parks, municipalities, and community-based organizations to implement nature-based solutions as demonstration projects for the public. They will also assess private properties and provide guidance to landowners on shoreline stabilization best practices.

11. Green Schools

In collaboration with K-12 schools, Climate Corps members would lead groups of students in school-based sustainability initiatives that they would then bring into the greater community.

There is no program focused on green schools though there remains significant interest in climate education. During the winter of 2024, Volunteer Maine convened scoping meetings with staff from State government and four leading environmental organizations with expertise in education. The program model for green schools was further refined and there was enthusiasm for the concept. The participating organizations were willing to contribute their expertise and in-kind resources to implement the program, but no organization was willing to be the sponsor and project applicant. Organizations expressed concerns that the AmeriCorps grant would not sufficiently fund program management nor the total cost of an equitable living allowance for members. The organizations expressed a need for a significant amount of lead time to develop partnerships to implement a successful program.

Recommendation Five: The Maine Climate Corps be created in statute as an amendment to the Maine Commission for Community Service (Volunteer Maine) statute in order to ensure the purpose, structure, standards, and responsibility for coordination are clearly established.

The 130th Legislature passed LD 1974 that formally created Maine Climate Corps ([State Statute](#)).

Recommendation Six: A Climate Corps Coordinator at Volunteer Maine provide State leadership.

The Maine Climate Corps Coordinator position was created and filled in May 2022 as a limited period position funded by AmeriCorps agency ARP funds. In the Fall of 2024 action was taken to create a permanent Program Officer for Special Service Programs and Climate Corps Coordinator duties were incorporated into the position. An on-going General Fund appropriation covers 78% of the position cost. The gap funds were secured only for fiscal year 2025.

Recommendation Seven: Direct State agencies to coordinate climate-related funding for projects so that the human resources Climate Corps brings to bear can be paired with federal project financial resources to maximize scale and scope of those funds.

While there has been no formal direction for State agencies to coordinate with the Maine Climate Corps, the State has successfully leveraged significant federal project financial resources and some of these opportunities have included a workforce component.

Some successful cross-State agency collaborations include:

- The Maine Forest Service was awarded a USFS IRA Urban and Community Forestry grant that supported an expansion of the Maine Conservation Corps to provide Community Tree Stewards for Justice40 communities to implement community forestry and support volunteer engagement.
- GOPIF was awarded the NOAA Climate Resilience Challenge grant which included funding for both the Maine Service Fellows to focus on community resilience and funding for the Maine Conservation Corps to expand the Shore Corps focused on nature-based solutions.

There remains a significant opportunity for State-led applications for federal assistance to include a workforce development component that leverages the Maine Climate Corps. The pending creation of the Maine Office for Community Affairs may be an excellent opportunity to better align federal funding requests with the Maine Climate Corps.

Recommendation Eight: Leverage the federal Climate Corps resources that will flow through AmeriCorps by appropriating State funding for corps programs' leadership (a local match expense) and supporting the State corps, Maine Service Fellows, so it can help rural communities do the essential planning and preparation for successful Climate Corps action.

Funding for the Civilian Climate Corps was not included in the Inflation Reduction Act. President Biden created the American Climate Corps in September of 2023, but this also did not provide any new funding and there has been minimal new programming in Maine as a result of this executive order.

In fact, AmeriCorps has cut the number of total positions available resulting in more competition for existing funding.

Funding for adequate corps program staffing remains a concern as AmeriCorps programs do not cover the full operational cost of the program. Many small organizations and communities express interest in the Maine Climate Corps, but are unable to raise the additional financial resources to be successful with the AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps grants cover, at the minimum, 90% of the support costs for a "member year of service", all other costs must be provided from sponsor-obtained resources, including any additional funds to provide a higher living allowance.

Additionally, while Volunteer Maine was successful in securing limited period federal funding for the Maine Service Fellows, the federal funding is narrow in scope (climate resilience) and communities have needs for climate mitigation and energy projects.

Ongoing Engagement

Volunteer Maine has continuously engaged stakeholders. Three scoping meetings were held since 2022: an Energy Efficiency scoping meeting to guide the 2022 RFA development, a Green Schools scoping meeting to envision a climate education program, and the 2024 "Climate Corps Summit" to reflect on the 2022 goals and progress to date. Additionally, the Climate Corps Oversight Task Force meets monthly to provide feedback and guidance on the Maine Climate Corps.

Volunteer Maine has engaged with the Maine Climate Council by participating in the Community Resilience Working Group. At the National level, Volunteer Maine participates in the America's Service Commissions working group for state climate corps programs, the Partnership for the Civilian Climate Corps, and in meetings with the American Climate Corps staff from the White House and the AmeriCorps agency. Other states routinely reach out to Maine staff for guidance on how to launch a similar program; for example, a New Hampshire Legislative Committee is exploring a similar initiative for their state and the Maine Climate Corps Coordinator was invited to provide information about the program in Maine.

The Maine Climate Corps Coordinator has engaged with a wide range of audiences through national and state conferences, municipal and community meetings, and with community-based organizations.

Recent Accomplishments:

Pilot State-funded Maine Climate Corps Program

The 130th Legislature provided pilot funding for the Maine Climate Corps of \$201,310 to support four Corps members and one Supervisor/Trainer. In the Summer of 2022 Volunteer Maine released an RFA for a pilot Maine Climate Corps Program. The awarded grantee was Downeast Community Partners.

In the RFA Volunteer Maine prioritized applications focused on Energy Efficiency and Home Energy Management and Conservation (number two and four from the list of priority projects). This area was prioritized due to the global energy crisis in 2022 that contributed to dramatic increases in energy costs. Due to the limited amount of funding Volunteer Maine determined it would be most beneficial to narrow the scope of potential projects.

The purpose of the grant was to implement a pilot Maine Climate Corps program. In addition to providing direct service, this was an opportunity for the grantee to plan for future Climate Corps funding or AmeriCorps State competitions.

Downeast Community Partners in Ellsworth proposed to have four Climate Corps members serve for seven-month terms to conduct energy audits of clients' homes, to provide energy efficiency education to community residents, and analyze data from homes audited and weatherized. They would receive extensive training in weatherization to earn credentials in Building Science Principles, Building Analyst Technician, and Building Analyst Professional.

Program Impact

The DCP Climate Corps recruited four Corps members and retained three members. They chose to extend these members' terms for a total of nine months and all members opted to extend their service.

The program was very successful in developing their members and providing training. All the members received the Building Analyst Professional credential and were successful in passing their tests on the first try. This is a testament to the supportive environment for learning cultivated by the program. In addition to the proposed credentials, members also received credentials in: Wings (Weatherization Tech training), OSHA 10, and LEED Green Associate.

In an end of service survey, all the members indicated there was “some change” or “significant change” in what they learned re: new technical skills, detailed understanding of new issues, career interests, and to use technology or other tools. Also, in the end of service survey, all the members were “somewhat satisfied or very satisfied” with training received in the program. All the members indicated they were very satisfied with the relationship with their supervisor.

Community outreach was driven by member’s ideas and creativity. Members were motivated to engage their community despite challenges in rural areas and thus decided to create a podcast about climate change. They produced 12 podcast episodes. In addition to learning about best practices in podcasts, they did extensive research about the local impact of climate change and interviewed local leaders for inclusion in the podcast.

Members highlighted their service activities as important learning opportunities, in addition to the benefits of the formal training they received, members described that working alongside staff when doing audits was incredibly valuable for observing professional customer service. They recognized that just showing up and applying their technical skills was not enough; they needed to be friendly and warm to the clients and that building a rapport and positively engaging the client was a vital part of the visit. They also described the value of the community outreach activities and that they learned a lot about small rural communities as they organized their events. They also greatly increased their local and specific knowledge about the impacts of climate change by conducting research for their podcast.

One success story from an audit: The Corps members were conducting an audit and discovered that a past contractor had removed part of the ceiling unintentionally when installing a new furnace. The Corps members brought this to the attention of staff and it was fixed. When the auditors returned to the home for a post-weatherization audit, the homeowner was very appreciative of their keen observation and resulting upgrades.

One member Luna Salazar, shared in her exit survey that, “This [program] needs to be scaled up!”.

Community served: All beneficiaries of the program were from underserved and low-income communities according to the CEJST tool. Additionally of the homes served housed either an elder or a child. Services were delivered in several towns including the Justice40 communities of Beals, Bucksport, and Cherryfield.

A goal of the pilot program was to build systems and capacity for a new service program that would persist into the future. The sponsor did greatly improve their systems for volunteer management. They were awarded an AmeriCorps grant in the summer of

2023 to continue the Climate Corps programming. However, shortly after the award was made they returned the grant citing concerns about organizational capability.

At the end of the program, one Corps member was hired on the DCP weatherization crew leveraging his training received in the Corps, and one Corps member secured employment with the Jordan Pond House as a Sustainability and Accounting Coordinator, leveraging her communications skills developed as part of the Corps.

Maine Service Fellows

The Maine Service Fellows (MSF) program, managed by Volunteer Maine, was established to help rural communities by assigning someone to devote full-time effort to a critical need. It recognizes that some communities do not have the municipal or nonprofit staff available to research solutions, secure resources, and manage a project. They need one more set of hands to accomplish their goals.

Eligible communities are in these counties: Aroostook, Franklin, Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, and Washington. Towns in Penobscot County that are outside the Greater Bangor region and have populations under 5,000 are also eligible to participate.

In addition to supporting rural, underserved communities, the mission of MSF is to increase the opportunities for recent college graduates to use their skills to make a difference; attract and retain people with a passion for public service, especially in rural areas; and strengthen civic engagement and community resilience by involving community residents as well as Service Fellows in volunteer-based solutions.

The program was authorized by the Legislature in 2022 and projects can span needs related to climate action, Covid-19 recovery, housing including eviction prevention, workforce development, substance use prevention and recovery, and public health including mental health.

To date, three individuals have become Maine Service Fellows. State public funding has supported two of the positions. Additionally, the Maine Volunteer Foundation has raised private funds to support one Maine Service Fellow. Every host community to date has submitted a climate action project for the Fellow to complete. This program is not eligible for monies from AmeriCorps or American Climate Corps programs.

Currently, one Fellow has completed service and two Fellows are in-service. Volunteer Maine anticipates bringing on at least five additional Fellows in 2025 with funding from NOAA.

The Sipayik Resilience Committee, a community group focused on climate action and resilience serving the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik, was the first host site ready to have a Maine Service Fellow. Sam Gilbert, a graduate of the University of Maine at

Augusta, began service in June 2023. His assignment was focused on energy efficiency for homeowners. In addition to organizing and managing an early fall window-insert build for over 40 households, Sam was asked to help Eastport with a similar program and thus strengthened ties between the communities. Back in Sipayik, he brought information about other energy saving programs to the community and helped homeowners identify which programs fit their needs, what the application process is for each, and what agency oversees each program.

Upon completion of service, Sam was grateful for the opportunity to help his community by improving their energy literacy. He shared, "It was a rewarding experience to see my community and neighboring communities work together to help each other. I used to count on just myself, but now I see we can get more accomplished if we work together as a team." Upon completion of his service, Sam had a new-found interest in energy efficiency and weatherization and pursued technical training to receive certifications and licensure to conduct energy audits. He has an interest in serving his local community as an entrepreneur.

James Fagan, a graduate of the University of Southern Maine, is the second Maine Service Fellow. The Commons Energy Collaborative in Dover-Foxcroft is the host organization and its project for James also focuses on energy efficiency initiatives and engaging volunteers in climate action. James started service in January. Some highlights of his service to date include writing a report about the impact of climate change on the Piscataquis region; working with the new warming/cooling emergency shelter committee to create policies; organizing climate conversation events including for Earth Day; and attending local events like the Black Fly Festival in Milo to recruit participants to their energy efficiency programs.

The third Maine Service Fellow serves with the Center for an Ecology-based Economy and will support local communities engaged in the State's Community Resilience Partnership. These communities are at various stages of climate action planning and the Fellow will assist with needs assessments, launching and coordinating local committees, seeking funding, and implementing projects.

Member demographic data has been collected for Maine Climate Corps and Maine Service Fellows who have finished service, however, due to the small sample size of members to date, Volunteer Maine will keep this data confidential. We can share that all participants to date have resided in Maine at the time of their application.

2024 Maine Youth Climate Corps Small Grants

In the Spring of 2024, three organizations received grants to implement corps programming for youth under age 18 in the land and freshwater preservation focus area. Two of the grantees described below are Youth Conservation Corps. Maine has an impressive tradition of Youth Conservation Corps, primarily sponsored by lake associations and watershed organizations, but also sponsored by parks and land organizations. These organizations previously were funded by state and federal programs and when public funding ceased the communities have continued to fund them privately because they are so valuable. Notably, very few of the programs are in Justice40 communities.

This is also an important age group to support because youth under 17 are not eligible for AmeriCorps programs, yet this is a group that is highly motivated to take action on climate issues.

Augusta Teen Center Summer of Service

The Augusta Teen Center's Edge program for justice-impacted youth focuses on programming for teens to access the wider world of work. During the Summer of Service, teens traveled on Mondays to local natural areas (including a community garden) to support natural resource staff on projects such as trail building and repair, gardening, clearing invasive species, etc. The program began in May with the growing season, (after-school), continued as a full day program in the summer, and continues through the last frost after-school. In past years they had to limit participation, but this additional funding allowed up to 40 youth to participate, because funds expanded transportation to service sites.

Friends of the Cobboosee Watershed Youth Conservation Corps

FoCW Youth Conservation Corps completed shoreline erosion control projects on lakefront property in the Cobbossee Watershed. This is a long-standing program, a legacy of past federal Youth Conservation Corps and Maine Conservation Corps programs. Ten high-school aged youth completed shoreline erosion projects; this year they dealt with significant storm damage after the winter storms. Members served 30 hours a week for eight weeks.

Thompson Lake Environmental Association Youth Conservation Corps

TLEA Youth Conservation Corps completed projects on lakefront property in the Thompson Lake Watershed. This is a long-standing program, a legacy of past federal Youth Conservation Corps programming. Three high-school aged youth completed 25 shoreline erosion projects. Members served 35 hours a week for eight weeks.

Maine Climate Corps Network

In addition to the State-funded Maine Climate Corps programs and the Maine Service Fellows, there are six additional programs in the Network. Three are AmeriCorps programs and another is a past AmeriCorps State subgrantee. All Maine Climate Corps programs leverage additional financial support to operate including State, federal, local, and philanthropic resources.

AmeriCorps Resilience Corps

The GPCOG AmeriCorps Resilience Corps program supports Greater Portland local government agencies, nonprofits, and regional initiatives focused on regional resilience. Twelve Resilience Corps Fellows bring additional, much-needed capacity to projects which advance municipal and regional capacity for community and environmental resilience, with specific focus on climate change adaptation and mitigation. Through their service, Fellows support environmental stewardship by providing education, outreach, and training to residents in Cumberland and York Counties on climate impacts and vulnerabilities, solutions, and environmentally conscious practices and increasing volunteer recruitment and retention. Each Fellow is placed with a Host Organization with a well-scoped role to enhance the organization's capacity to improve community environmental resilience.

The members' service involves data collection and analysis, mapping, research, report writing, community engagement, and project management -- all of which will help build municipal capacity to complete resilience planning processes.

Campus Climate Action Corps

The Campus Climate Action Corps (CCAC) Project is a Campus Compact initiative that aims to build the capacity of higher-education campuses and their community partners to create change that leads to increased energy efficiency and improvements for at-risk ecosystems they collectively implement local solutions for underserved households and communities. CCAC AmeriCorps Members host community environmental education events, conduct home energy assessments, including home energy assistance referrals, and implement low-tech home energy interventions to help advance public knowledge and increase motivation to conserve energy and reduce carbon emissions. CCAC Members will also implement projects in underserved communities that enhance ecosystem health and leverage local volunteers to support CCAC environmental stewardship activities.

This is a nationwide program with three host sites in Maine. The program was piloted in Maine as an AmeriCorps State program.

Island Institute Fellows Program

This program aims to build capacity within island community-based organizations, build leadership skills within the program participants, and create a network that attracts and keeps young people living and working in Maine. Island Institute Fellows live and work

in community on community identified projects such as comprehensive planning, historical archiving, education, community-based programming, etc. Island Institute Fellows was funded by AmeriCorps State until 2015 and is now independently funded by private and public sources.

Maine Conservation Corps

The mission of the Maine Conservation Corps is to accomplish conservation initiatives that inspire people and enhance communities. The Maine Conservation Corps AmeriCorps members accrue marketable skills and experiences, while completing vital environmental stewardship and capacity building activities. Team-based placements focus on trail rehabilitation and construction as well as habitat restoration; individual placement members be engaged in host site specific objectives, such as ecological monitoring, environmental education, community engagement, and expanding volunteer management practice.

WindowDressers Community Build Program

WindowDressers provides affordable window weatherization and community-building opportunities to Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont residents of all income levels, ages, and abilities. WindowDressers warms homes, builds community, and helps the environment by manufacturing low-cost, high quality, interior, insulating window inserts through local, volunteer-run Community Builds. The program also offers a “rewrap” service, to repair damaged inserts.

WindowDressers staff supplies, trains, and supports the local volunteer teams that manage their regional program. Everyone who receives inserts participates by helping to assemble inserts at the Community Build. The staff train the team on how to conduct outreach in their local community, communicate insert benefits, and plan and conduct a Community Build. WindowDressers supplies custom software to the teams and teaches them how to utilize the computerized system to input orders, assess program progress, and manage their team. WindowDressers also trains the volunteers in how to recruit and train local volunteers to measure windows and assemble the inserts. The organization supplies the volunteer teams with all of the materials, supplies, gear and custom jigs to complete the inserts that are built to the exact measurements of each window.

Maine Climate Corps Network Accomplishments

Below is a selection of Maine Climate Corps Network successes in the past year:

AmeriCorps Resilience Corps

Lots of exciting news about program alums. A former member 2020-2021 was named Planner of the Year by Maine Association of Planners. A member from 2021-2022 was accepted to UPenn to get their master’s in urban planning (fully funded) and another from the same program year accepted into the Yale School for the Environment for their

Environmental Management Master's program. A member from the 2022-2023 year took a role with the Department of Energy through their State and Communities Division as a Community Energy Advisor with the Confederated Tribes of Oregon in Burns, Oregon.

Island Institute Fellows

Successes include:

- A Village Plan and mapping outreach initiative for the Sunrise Trail Coalition development;
- An online, statewide cohort of Climate Ambassadors trained;
- Building partnerships across island communities to support water quality testing;
- Community Led Action Grant to upgrade lights to LED
- Successful community visioning sessions as part of strategic planning processes;
- 100+ oral history interviews conducted and archived with a special focus on fishing.

Chebeague Island recently hired a programs person for the recreation center who is stepping into a role that an Island Institute Fellow created last year. This sort of capacity building is exactly the impact Island Institute wants the program to have.

Maine Conservation Corps

In March, Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) welcomed the first Community Tree Steward of 2024, Matt Galvin. The Community Tree Steward program is a multi-year project funded by the US Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program. Matt spent his initial three and a half weeks in training with MCC before transitioning to his service site with the City of Portland. There, Matt collaborates with city personnel and community groups to lead urban forestry management projects at a municipal scale. Key objectives include strategically increasing the tree canopy in less forested neighborhoods through plantings and developing a forest pest management plan to address Emerald Ash Borer infestations. Additionally, Matt will serve as a community liaison, increasing knowledge and awareness of tree biology and health.

WindowDressers

WindowDressers is on track to have another successful Community Build season this fall (2024) with as many as 56 Builds across their service area of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. Twenty-six of those builds will be in Maine. The program continues to recruit new teams in Maine and to explore opportunities for partnership with community organizations and institutions to make the program more long-lasting in communities. We have recently been developing partnerships with local Habitat for Humanity chapters to support our service of providing free or reduced cost inserts to low-income households.

Maine Won't Wait, long-term workforce needs, and the Maine Climate Corps

Maine Climate Corps programs are a tremendous opportunity to address workforce challenges, strengthen Maine communities, and benefit the people who serve.

Climate service programs are very attractive to applicants, as indicated by national surveys of youth that indicate 65% of young people care about climate change but are not sure what they can do personally to make a difference. In the same survey, 45% of young people said they would strongly or maybe consider doing a service year².

Anecdotally, service programs with a focus on the environment, sustainability, and the climate have long been very popular with applicants. At the February 2024 University of Maine Career Fair, students were lining up to speak to the staffer about Maine Climate Corps; many students had no or very little knowledge of the program but were very interested in learning about opportunities. In the Summer of 2024, the Maine Service Fellows received 17 applications for 1 open position focused on climate action.

Maine Climate Corps is also a tremendous opportunity to recruit young people to rural Maine; Maine's aging population is central to its economic and workforce challenges. While Maine Climate Corps or service years are not exclusively for young people (some successful programs have specifically engaged retired individuals for example), historically the programs have commonly been populated by individuals in their early 20s with some college or bachelor's degrees. Volunteer Maine surveys of existing AmeriCorps members demonstrate that about half of members are from out of state. In 2021, 56% of respondents were NOT from Maine, and an additional 22% had only been in the State for one year. After service, 37% of those members decided to stay in Maine for work, education, or to serve another year. Of the members who were from Maine, 67% planned to remain in Maine after their service was complete³.

There are many stories of alumni, such as the Island Institute Fellows, choosing to stay in their host communities to start families and fill local jobs. In addition to their contributions to the workforce, service year alumni tend to be highly, civically engaged individuals and often go on to serve in other capacities such as on local committees, in elected office, or with community non-profits. Volunteerism and service is a vital part of communities in Maine. Additionally, the three Maine Service Fellows were residing in Maine and eager to find opportunities allowing them to stay in their community.

The AmeriCorps program has demonstrated benefits for workforce development. Eighty percent of AmeriCorps alumni say that AmeriCorps benefited their career path and 42% of alumni employed within six months of service found a job through a connection made

² January 2022 Service Year Alliance survey of American youth aged 18-28, conducted by Data for Progress. Oversample of Black and Latino respondents and 18-21 year olds.

³ Volunteer Maine. 2021 Annual Report

in AmeriCorps⁴. AmeriCorps members report that during service they were able to perform “real world” activities that positively influenced the development of their career goals. Almost 70% of members report that they figured out their professional next steps, and over 60% figured out their educational next steps. Some of the skills that AmeriCorps members (over 80%) honed during service: meeting deadlines effectively, setting priorities for multiple tasks, working on a team, working independently, solving unexpected problems, and finding better ways to do things. Seventy percent of members used skills of negotiating and compromising with others and gathering and analyzing information during their term of service⁵.

Finally, service programs provide a unique workforce development experience because they include the development of both specific, technical workforce skills needed to complete the service project (energy audits of homes, communication and education tactics to inform people about sustainability, etc), as well as soft skills in community engagement and people management. In addition to technical skills, several climate sectors identify the need for leadership and management skills (see Appendix A). All service programs are community-driven and engage local volunteers in the project giving members a holistic view of the challenge being addressed. Many members must develop their communications skills to effectively engage people of different backgrounds in the project.

Triple Bottom-line of Service

All Maine Climate Corps programs demonstrate the traits of high-quality service programs. These traits include community-driven solutions, local volunteer engagement, intensive service by the Corps members to externally address the issue, training for members to prepare them to complete their service AND for life after service, as well as fostering civic engagement to they are prepared to be active citizens post-service. These qualities contribute to the “triple-bottom line of service”. All programs strive to: professionally and personally develop the members who serve both (provide credentials, deliver leadership training, etc), solve the community problem (weatherize more homes, plant more trees, etc), and improve community resilience by increasing civic engagement (residents serve on an advisory committee, local students volunteer to help the corps members, etc).

The triple-bottom line of impact means that multiple partners must come together to design and implement a program. A strong program proposal answers two separate, but related questions, what is the *climate need* that the program will address, and what is the *workforce need* that the program will address. Many Maine organizations and communities have a tremendous need for additional capacity that a member could

⁴ AmeriCorps Office and Research Evaluation fact sheet on AmeriCorps and workforce development: <https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/AmeriCorps-Pathways-Employment-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

⁵ AmeriCorps Office of Research and Evaluation report on Post-Service Plans and Life and Career Skill Development of AmeriCorps Members based on member exit surveys 2017-2022. https://www.americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/MES_Life_and_Career_Analysis_4.12.24.508.pdf

provide (conduct energy audits of clients' homes, write grants for resilience projects, educate people about electric vehicles, etc). However, the workforce development need for Maine organizations and communities is a separate question; how will the service experience prepare the member for future employment in Maine? In many sectors there are numerous jobs that are going unfilled. In some sectors and communities, while the need for added capacity exists, there is no financial resource available to pay for employees nor local people with the appropriate skills. Ideally a strong service program both fulfills a local unmet need AND prepares the member for a real opportunity in a good-paying job that leads to career advancement.

Maine Won't Wait and Workforce Needs

Maine Won't Wait, the 2020 State Climate Action Plan, identifies both the tremendous opportunities to grow good-paying jobs in the climate sector and the need to grow the workforce to meet our ambitious goals. While the Plan does not provide details about all the potential workforce opportunities, when considering the recommend investments and policies, and the definition of a climate job below, the potential need for workforce investments is significant.

[Work on Climate](#), a nonprofit dedicated to building the climate workforce describes a climate job as:

“...One where your primary occupation is...

- Largely focused on work that helps fix or adapt to climate change (e.g. solar installer, sustainability analyst, climate scientist, climate justice organizer)
- Any role at a company whose primary mission is to fix or adapt to climate change (e.g. an accountant at a renewable energy company, human resources at an environmental non-profit)
- Any role where 50%> of your clients/customers are for companies/projects focused on fixing or adapting to climate change.”⁶

The Plan sets a specific goal for 30,000 clean energy jobs by 2030. Growing clean energy and other climate jobs is an opportunity to attract new workers to Maine and to grow the economy. Not only have there been job losses in the declining manufacturing sector, climate change is also a threat to existing jobs in fishing, forestry, agriculture, and hospitality.⁷ The Plan identifies opportunities to reverse negative workforce trends despite our aging workforce and demographic challenges in alignment with the 10-year Economic Development Plan.

⁶ Work on Climate. “How to Attract People into Working on Climate”, March, 2024.

⁷ MCC STS. 2024. Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine - 2024 Update. A Report by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STS) of the Maine Climate Council (MCC). Augusta, Maine. 268 pp.

The 2020 10-Year Economic Development Strategy included a goal to grow Maine's workforce, which is a vital strategy for the State's economy as a whole as well as the climate sector; Maine needs an additional 83,000 workers. In the 2024 Strategy Reset, the goal to grow the workforce was reaffirmed. Maine has seen real wage growth since the plan was released, as well as increased in-migration, however the goal to increase labor participation has not yet been met. Labor participation is lower than in past decades, and certain populations tend to be left out of the labor market including Native Americans, people with disabilities, people of color, formerly incarcerated individuals, veterans, and people of diverse sexual orientations.

Potential Maine Climate Corps Program Models to address workforce and climate action needs:

Maine Climate Corps Priority Program Models

The following program models respond to needs identified in the State Climate Action Plan and other workforce reports. See Appendix A for a detailed description of need in each sector.

Land and Water Preservation

Water Corps

This program responds to the workforce shortage in local government for water systems operators.

Service Activity: Members conduct water quality sampling and implement erosion control projects in the shoreland zone. Members also engage volunteers in the water sampling and educate community members about the impact of extreme weather on stormwater run-off.

Member Development: Members receive formal training in: Non-point source/erosion control (required for any contractors working in the shoreland zone); and Introduction to Wastewater Treatment. Alternatively, programs could offer a pre-apprenticeship curriculum preparing members for a Registered Apprenticeship in water management. Members would also have the opportunity to tour wastewater treatment plants and to meet professional mentors.

Specific Occupation: Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators

Existing Models: [X-cel Conservation Corps](#) in Boston, Massachusetts recruits Corps members for a 10 week term serving 2 days a week (this is a paid opportunity). One day a week is an outdoor component in partnership with agencies such as local watershed groups and parks programs. Members conduct water sampling and implement water conservation projects. This model is well-suited for a summer term, or after/in-school projects. Youth ages 17-25 would be a strong target for this programming.

Notes: This model could build upon existing Youth Conservation Corps and Maine Conservation Corps programming in the State. Several corps programs are very effective at implementing erosion control projects to improve water quality. Adding a more robust training and certification program for members would help these programs even effectively prepare youth for climate careers. Programs should target communities of underemployed or out of school/out of work youth. This occupation only requires a high school diploma.

Making connections to the impact of this work on larger watersheds and the coast would be helpful in recruitment because the coastal zone is one of the most attractive focus areas for Maine youth.

Coastal Zone

Engineering Corps

This program responds to the need for expertise in engineering, planning, and permitting to restore and protect the working water and other vulnerable infrastructure.

Service Activity: Current college and graduate students conduct vulnerability assessments and other analyses of the working waterfront and other essential infrastructure threatened by extreme weather. This model is well-suited for a semester service-learning or summer term project. Higher ed students of all ages would be strong candidates.

Member Development: Members are current students receiving degrees in engineering or related professions. All members will engage with municipal or other partners in the projects. Members will receive education about permitting requirements and funding opportunities to better understand how to move a project from a proposal to implementation. This real world experience and networking with practitioners in the field will expose students to careers in municipalities and better prepare them to work on public projects.

Specific Occupation: Engineers, Planners, Municipal Administrators

Existing Models: The University of Connecticut (UConn) [Climate Corps](#) is an example of what a community-based service-learning opportunity within higher education. In this program, students spend one semester in a course related to climate change, local government, and local climate problems, and then serve their community in the second semester. In the latter, individuals are placed within an organization or municipality build and then implement a plan. Most of this work is done remotely to assure that students can continue their other courses during the semester, which allows students to work all over the State and allows a wider breadth of students to participate in the program, as it does not require transportation. While the first semester of this program offers some background and training, much training in building and implementing plans is done throughout the second semester, with the assistance from the University.

Notes: This model could build on existing capstone project requirements for University of Maine engineering students. Building stronger partnerships with municipalities to provide career awareness and networking for current students would further support workforce development. Municipalities also have tremendous need for additional capacity and some communities may be able to support a student's project in lieu of hosting a full-time Fellow.

Invasive Species Corps

This program would provide opportunities for youth to learn boat handling skills that would prepare for them for positions in the fishing and aquaculture industries.

Service Activity: Members implement invasive species control measures such as harvesting green crabs and members survey waters for the presence of invasive plants. Members engage volunteers in their survey efforts and educate the community about invasive species prevention. This model would be well-suited for a full-time commitment as long as a summer season and up to a year. A more intensive commitment is necessary to have plenty of time to practice and refine skills.

Member Development: In addition to training in invasive species identification, prevention and removal strategies, members would be trained on boat handling and practice under supervision, with an emphasis on safety. Members will complete a Boater Safety and Education course.

Specific Occupation: Fisherman/Sternman/Deckhand, Captain/Mate/Pilot of Vessels

Existing Models: Many AmeriCorps members are engaged in invasive species control both in terrestrial and aquatic. One team dedicated to aquatic invasive species is the [NY-NJ Trail Conference Conservation Corps](#). The team maps existing invasive species, assists with outreach and events, participates in removal, and inspects boats for invasive hitchhikers at boat launches.

A program that includes a boater's safety component is the [New England Science and Sailing's AmeriCorps](#) program. The program has a focus on STEM education and delivers programming through sailing, kayaking, and other outdoor education. Members get extensive training to provide a safe experience for the students.

Notes: Many watershed and conservation organizations and the Maine Conservation Corps have experience in invasive species. It would be possible to replicate these programs in the marine environment. Intentionally incorporating boat handling and marine safety, and recruiting from communities that would otherwise have little access to the coast or boats, would open new career pathways in the fishing industry to these participants. While there is a tremendous interest in the coastal zone and marine biology, many young people do not have any exposure to boating skills. Targeting women and New Mainers for participation would be an excellent opportunity for a safe and positive experience for individuals to expand their skills.

Housing

Home Repair & Homebuilding Corps

This model would give youth experience in construction, carpentry, and the trades.

Service Activity: Members complete home repair to prepare buildings for weatherization services. Members complete light weatherization such as air-sealing. Members engage volunteers in home repair activities. This model would be well-suited for a full-time commitment as long as a summer season and up to a year. A more intensive commitment is necessary to have plenty of time to practice and refine skills.

Member Development: Members complete a pre-apprenticeship such as the North American Building Trades Union's Multi-craft Core Curriculum. This curriculum provides exposure to multiple trades and career pathways with an emphasis on fundamental skills and safety training. Members also complete Building Science Principles which is foundational knowledge for the energy sector.

Specific Occupation: Carpenters, Electricians, Painters, Plumbers, Building Inspectors

Existing Models: Many AmeriCorps programs are engaged in home building or weatherization programs, often in partnership with YouthBuild or Habitat for Humanity. One specific program is the [Habitat Build & Repair Corps](#) (Massachusetts). Members learn skills in demolition, framing, carpentry, drywall, landscaping and more.

Notes: There are multiple, small, grassroots home repair groups across Maine. Many are all-volunteer run and may not have the capacity to manage a Corps program, however, they would be valuable partners in identifying clients in need of home repair. A Corps could also help reach regions of the State in need of home repair that do not already have a dedicated group.

Energy

Community Solar Corps

This program would provide pathways to jobs in the solar industry, one of the fastest growing sectors in the climate sector.

Service Activity: Corps members conduct outreach and education to communities on opportunities for solar siting and solar installations. They map where best to place a project, build community capacity, and facilitate community engagement. Members also assist with the installation, inspection, and/or permitting of community solar projects. This model would be well-suited for a full-time commitment up to a year. A more intensive commitment is necessary to have plenty of time to practice and refine skills.

Member Development: Members will receive training in photovoltaics in preparation for the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners® associate certification exam.

Specific Occupation: Solar installer

Existing Models: [Grid Alternatives' Solar Corps](#) is a national fellowship with several tracks within the solar industry. Fellows focus on: construction, outreach, or workforce development. Members serve for an 11-month term with a host site contributing to projects such as solar installation for a low-income community, outreach to homeowners regarding solar options, or training students in solar installation and supporting students.

Notes: The State's recent award of a Solar for All grant may create more opportunities for a service corps program to engage with Mainers who otherwise have not been able to benefit from the rapid expansion of solar.

Lead by Example

This program would provide career pathways to jobs in the energy efficiency sector.

Service Activity: Corps members complete energy audits of public buildings including State and local government, schools, and non-profits. Members conduct light weatherization and air sealing activities. Members engage community volunteers in these activities.

Member Development: Members receive training in Building Science Principles and complete coursework in preparation for the Building Analyst Technician exam.

Specific Occupation: Energy auditors, Building/Construction Inspector.

Existing Models: The [California Conservation Corps' Energy Corps](#) implements energy efficiency and renewable energy projects for public and non-profit agencies.

Notes: The DCP Climate Corps was successful in providing this training to their members. Vital to the success of this program would be connections to public sector buildings that would be interested in receiving services from the Corps program.

Education

Climate Career Exploration Corps

A theme in climate workforce reports across multiple sectors is the desire for increased engagement with middle and high school students in Maine to increase awareness of opportunities. This program would use Corps members to implement career awareness programming.

Service Activity: Members are placed in schools or other educational organizations to deliver lessons related to climate career exploration, coordinate service-learning activities to give students real climate experience, and coordinate professionals to visit schools and connect with students. Members would serve half-time to full-time for a least an academic school year.

Member Development: The primary workforce goal is focused on the youth beneficiaries of the program. However, there is also a tremendous shortage of

educators at all levels and this program could provide the opportunity for members to earn teaching credentials.

Specific Occupation: Teachers

Existing Models: We are not aware of a specific Corps program exclusively focused on career exploration for students, however education is the most common focus area of AmeriCorps programs nationwide. Many members are embedded in schools or community-based organizations to support students. There are many curricula that incorporate green job awareness.

Notes: For a program to be successful, it would be vital for industry organizations to support the program and encourage professionals to volunteer and engage Corps members and youth.

Materials Management

Reuse and Repair Corps

This program model would allow members to gain entrepreneurial, management, and customer service skills that would support them in a number of climate sectors.

Service Activity: Members organize and manage a local repair or reuse shop in response to local interest in reducing waste and reusing materials. Much like managing a small business start-up, members will be responsible for creating a business plan, building partnerships, and recruiting and managing materials. Members would serve for at least nine months and up to two years in a full-time capacity to invest the needed time in developing a new enterprise or program.

Member Development: Members will receive volunteer (HR) training, leadership development, how to create a business plan, fundraising and grantwriting, and marketing.

Specific Occupation: Manager

Existing Models: There are many AmeriCorps members engaged in repair and re-use, such as supporting Habitat Restores. Many of the positions are VISTA, with a specific focus on poverty alleviation. These positions often incorporate economic opportunity and workforce development for communities in need.

Notes: There is a tremendous amount of interest in materials management throughout Maine.

While the above program priorities are examples of potential new projects, the existing programs should be supported in their continued implementation and expansion as relevant. Also, while these are suggested priorities for the Maine Climate Corps, local

communities may generate program ideas that meet the goals of Maine Won't Wait, workforce development and the needs of their local community.

Appendix A

Below are some specific workforce opportunities or needs as described by each of the 2024 working group of the Maine Climate Council. Some sectors have detailed reports describing needed workforce development to grow the sector which are described below.

Buildings, Infrastructure and Housing

The Building, Infrastructure and Housing working group recommends adoption and compliance with climate-friendly building codes and standards, specifically the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code. Training and upskilling existing workers in the new codes is needed, but additionally it's estimated that over 800 new jobs in construction, over 30 years, will be created. In general, labor shortages are a major challenge in the construction and housing sectors.

Coastal and Marine

The Coastal and Marine working group recommends increasing the resilience of public and private working waterfront infrastructure to climate change; and maintaining and expanding equitable access to cultural, traditional, emerging, and heritage industry and infrastructure.

The first goal is hindered by labor shortages in marine construction, physical coastal resilience work, and the engineering, planning, and permitting components of these projects. There is an opportunity to develop more pathways into these roles and to increase the number of people with appropriate skills and experiences. The extreme winter storms in January 2024 unfortunately laid bare workforce and capacity challenges to re-build the working waterfront.

The second goal is necessary to diversify the economic opportunities for natural resources dependent communities and is an opportunity to connect underserved communities with good jobs that provide financial security, pay living wages, and provide pathways for advancement. This in turn creates resilience in small, rural communities that have a primarily natural resources-based economy.

In 2023, SEAMaine published a workforce needs assessment for the Maine Marine Living Resources Economy. Occupations that are in-demand include sternman/deckhand and captain/fisherman, as well as customer service, management, and sales positions. Successful candidates need skills in boat handling, navigation, and fishing skills, as well as skills transferable across sectors such as management, communication, leadership, customer service, and sales. The report cites a need to

increase career awareness in schools and to build partnerships with the workforce development sector.⁸

Community Resilience

The Community Resilience working groups continues a recommendation from 2020 to strengthen public health prevention, and specifically recommends investing in urban forestry as a strategy for minimizing the impacts of extreme heat in underserved and disadvantaged communities. Investing in workforce development in the community and urban forestry sector has a dual benefit of creating climate resilience and providing access to good paying jobs.

A new strategy of the working group is to address mental health and psychological resilience for climate leaders, service providers, and the public. It's noted that there is a need for workforce development in mental health support services due to a general shortage of providers.

Anecdotally, the Maine Climate Corps Coordinator has heard it is challenging to hire experienced planners. Additionally, the availability of adaptation professionals is uneven across rural parts of the State. Maine municipalities must lead and implement many community resilience strategies; a current challenge is lack of staffing in municipal positions as varied as town and city managers, public safety, and public works.

Energy

The Energy working group again recommends the goal to support 30,000 clean energy jobs in Maine by 2030. In 2022, there were over 15,000 jobs in the sector.

In the 2020 plan, in addition to energy efficiency work needed in new and existing buildings, there are goals to source 100% of Maine's electricity by 2040 from renewable generation, including off-shore wind; to modernize the grid and increase energy storage; and reduce emissions in the industrial sector. All of these recommendations will create new jobs.

The Governor's Energy Office published the Maine Clean Energy Workforce Analysis Report in 2022. This report identifies that more than half of the current clean energy jobs are in the energy efficiency sector. However, solar photovoltaic installers experienced the second largest percentage increase in employment between 2015 and 2021, of all occupations, not only within the energy sector.

Many clean energy employers project job growth, and the majority anticipate at least maintaining the same number of workers. Ninety percent of employers report that hiring is very or somewhat difficult. The small applicant pool is the greatest challenge to hiring. Positions that are difficult to fill are managers and supervisors, HVAC and field or repair technicians, installation positions, and engineering positions. Employers cite lack of

⁸ SEAMaine. Workforce Needs Assessment for the Maine Marine Living (MLR) Economy. December 2023.

experience or industry-specific knowledge and insufficient non-technical skills as a challenge when hiring⁹.

Natural and Working Lands

The Natural and Working Lands working group focused on the existing goal to permanently conserve 30% of Maine's land. Specific actions recommended include promoting climate-friendly forest management practices; investing in permanent land conservation; and improving data collection and monitoring of forest carbon.

Conserved woodlands and farmlands create jobs for farmers, loggers, truckers, and others and are vital to supporting the State's outdoor recreation economy. Additionally, climate-friendly forest management and carbon programs have the potential to keep forests as forests, ensuring jobs for loggers, foresters, and other service providers are viable. Currently, the lack of workforce capacity is a barrier to adequately monitoring forest carbon and investments would create jobs.

The working group also recommends workforce training to help natural resource workers adapt to a changing climate and diversify their economic opportunities.

In 2021, FOR/Maine published the Forest Opportunity Roadmap for Maine Workforce Development Strategy. Due to an aging workforce, there is a significant need to recruit new workers to the sector. Harvesting (loggers) has an immediate need for about 300 replacement workers. Pulp and paper manufacturing have a need of approximately 1,500 workers into 2030-2035. The transportation workforce (primarily heavy truck transport) will need to replace up to 400 workers. With new innovations in the forest product sector the need for hundreds of additional workers is possible. Anecdotally, it's reported that there is a shortage of licensed foresters and the average age of current professionals is quite high.¹⁰

Transportation

The Transportation working group recommends accelerating the transition to electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid vehicles and reducing vehicle miles traveled by increasing transit ridership. The recommendations do not specify any workforce opportunities and needs but they do acknowledge that the potential workforce implications of a transition to EVs is unknown and is being studied nationwide. Additionally, the working group recognizes and supports transit employees as part of the clean energy workforce.

In recent years, multiple transit agencies have been hampered by a lack of bus drivers including the Kennebec Valley Community Action Program bus service in the Augusta area, the Acadia National Park Island Explorer, and the Ogunquit-Kennebunk trolley service.

⁹ Governor's Energy Office. 2022 Maine Clean Energy Workforce Analysis Report.

¹⁰ FOR/Maine. Forest Opportunity Roadmap for Maine Workforce Development Strategy. April 2021.

One of the current strategies in *Maine Won't Wait*, is to reduce vehicle miles traveled by expanding broadband access to 99% of Maine homes by 2030. The Maine Connectivity Authority published a Broadband Workforce Strategy in 2023. The top occupations that have shortages include customer service representatives, construction laborers, software developers, and sales representatives¹¹.

Materials Management

The Materials Management working group is a newly created working group in 2024. This group recommends investing in the circular economy and increasing opportunities for reducing waste and consumption, repurposing, or repairing items that would otherwise go to waste. Repurposing and repairing creates more jobs than recycling, and recycling creates more jobs than disposal. Two hundred times as many jobs are created when repurposing and repairing versus disposal.

The working group recommends investing in workforce development in the circular workforce to support investments in this sector.

¹¹ Maine Connectivity Authority. Maine Broadband Workforce Strategy. March 2023.

Appendix B

External Resources

America's Service Commissions. State Climate Corps Resource Hub. <https://climate-corps-hub.notion.site/State-Climate-Corps-Toolkit-921ab44ac12f4e36859922ea5c670dad>

California Conservation Corps' Energy Corps. <https://ccc.ca.gov/what-we-do/conservation-programs/energy-corps-2/>

Governor's Energy Office. 2022 Maine Clean Energy Workforce Analysis Report. <https://www.maine.gov/energy/sites/maine.gov.energy/files/inline-files/2022%20Maine%20Clean%20Energy%20Workforce%20Report.pdf>

FOR/Maine. The Forest Opportunity Roadmap for Maine Workforce Development Strategy. https://formaine.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/FORMaine-Workforce-Report-Final_Revised_06.2021.pdf

Grid Alternatives' Solar Corps. <https://gridalternatives.org/what-we-do/workforce-development/solarcorps-fellowships>

Habitat Build & Repair Corps. <https://berkshirehabitat.org/build-corps/>

Jobs for The Future, Next100, and Service Year Alliance. Advancing Pre-Apprenticeship Programming Through National Service: https://assets.nationbuilder.com/serviceyear/pages/5461/attachments/original/1696941770/Pre-Apprenticeship_Report_-_Final.pdf?1696941770

Maine Climate Council. *Maine Won't Wait*. https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020.pdf

Maine Connectivity Authority. Maine Broadband Workforce Strategy. <https://www.maineconnectivity.org/workforce>

Maine State Legislature. LD 1974: An Act To Establish and Fund the Maine Climate Corps Program Pursuant to Recommendations in the Report Required by Resolve 2021, Chapter 25. https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?PID=1456&snum=130&paper=&paperld=l&ld=1974

New England Science and Sailing's AmeriCorps Program. <https://nessf.org/ness-sea-ameri-corps-program/>

NY-NJ Trail Conference Conservation Corps. <https://www.lhprism.org/aquatic-invasive-species>

SEAMaine. Workforce Needs Assessment for the Maine Marine Living Resource (MLR) Economy. <https://www.seamaine.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/FINAL-Phase-II-REPORT-04.12.2023.pdf>

Service Year Alliance: Developing, Expanding, and Enhancing Service Year Programming: Climate and Environmental Resilience Guide. https://assets.nationbuilder.com/serviceyear/pages/5703/attachments/original/1682953262/Climate_Guide.pdf?1682953262

Service Year Alliance. Creating a Service Year Program. <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sy-resources/SY-handbook.pdf>

UConn Climate Corps. <https://ecorps.initiative.uconn.edu/>

Volunteer Maine. Maine Climate Corps: Inspired by History. Designed for Today. https://volunteermaine.gov/sites/default/files/2024-07/Maine%20Climate%20Corps_%20Inspired%20by%20History.%20Designed%20for%20Today..pdf

Volunteer Maine. Maine Climate Corps Network Webpage. <https://volunteermaine.gov/programs/climate-corps-network>

Work on Climate. “How to Attract People Into Working on Climate”. March 2024. <https://workonclimate.org/reports/>

X-cel Education Conservation Corps. <https://www.x-celeducation.org/cons-corps-components>