

Conservation Corps Minnesota Overview

Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee

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Mark Murphy

Executive Director



conservationcorps.org



conservationcorps.org

Mission

To engage youth and young adults in meaningful service, leadership development, and environmental stewardship.

Vision

A world where everyone has equitable access to nature, is equipped to succeed in career and life, and is empowered to make a difference in conserving natural resources.

Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit AmeriCorps organization that engages over 430 youth and young adults, ages 15 to 25, in programs and projects that improve access to outdoor recreation, provide habitat restoration on public lands, restore and protect water quality, and respond to natural disasters.

Values

- Safety
- Service
- Respect
- Equity
- Community



2019-2020 Impact



Resources Restored

- **59,563 acres** improved and restored, including:
 - **28,136 acres** in prescribed burns
 - **29,662 acres** in exotic/invasives removal
 - 7 acres of rain garden installation
- **3,492 miles** of trail maintenance
 - 2,614 miles of water trail improvement
- Over **10,378 hours** of surveying & data collection, including:
 - **203,601 acres** mapped
 - **11,223** of AIS/user/plant/wildlife surveys and water quality site assessments
- **117,454** trees and shrubs planted

Lives Changed

714 corpsmembers engaged

593,065 hours of service completed

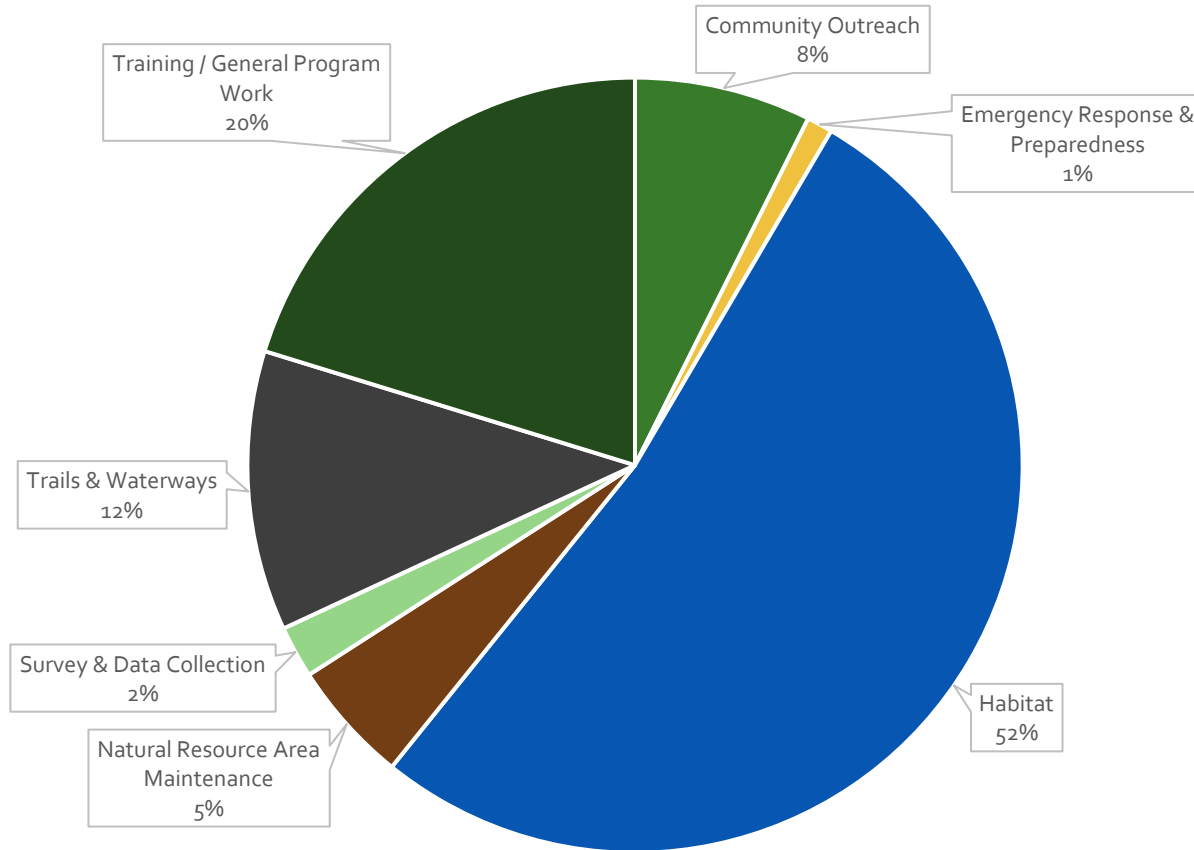
81% Are better prepared for their next job

89% Have developed workforce readiness skills

92% Are more knowledgeable about the environment

Note: 2020 field outputs were significantly lower than usual as a result of covid-19 reductions to in-person field service opportunities.

2019-2020 Minnesota Service Activity

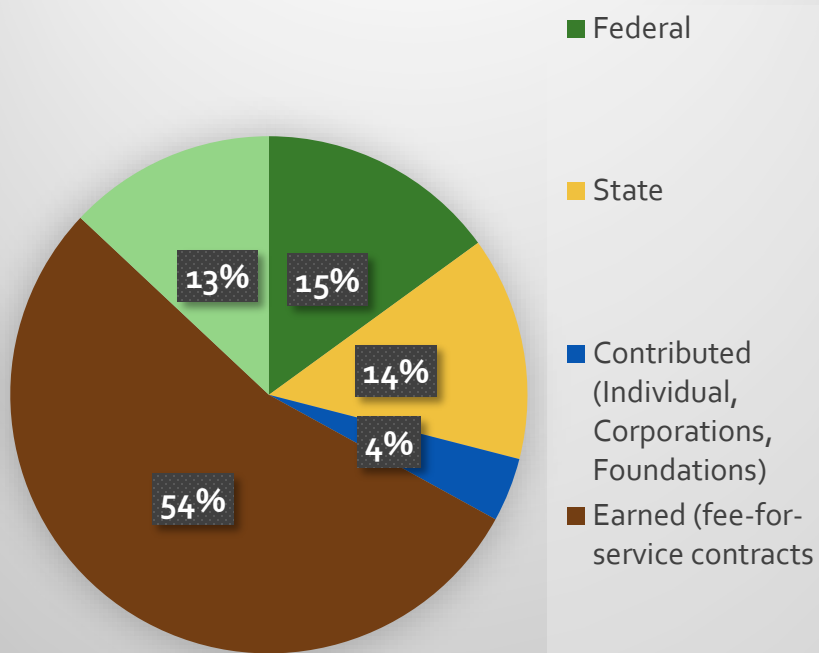


*Served **446,964** total hours in Minnesota
Completed service in **132 of 134** Legislative Districts*

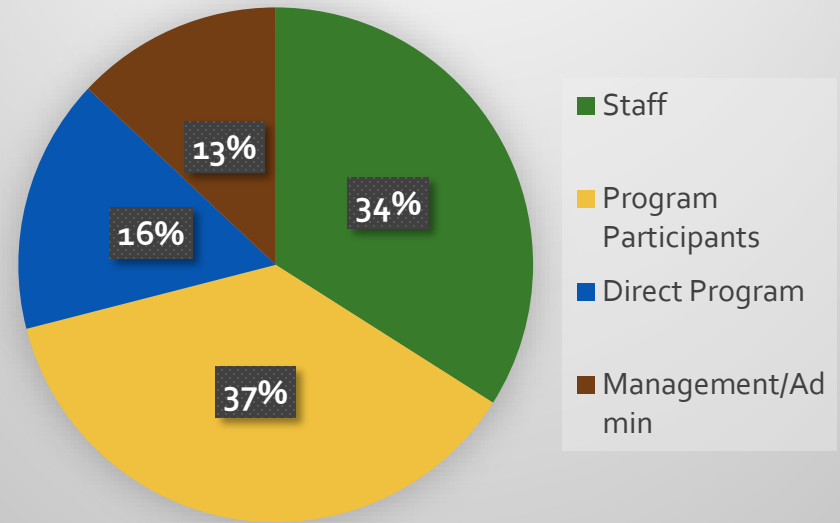
Financial Summary 2020



Revenue \$8,507,000



Expenses \$7,476,000



*2020 Results pending audit



State of Minnesota appropriations

General Fund Appropriation

- **\$455,000** / fiscal year for **general operating expenses** to support Conservation Corps programs in Minnesota

Natural Resources Dedicated Funds

- **\$490,000** / fiscal year via the **Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)**. Supports work in specific areas such as Water recreation, OHV, Snowmobile, State parks, Aquatic Invasives etc.

2008 Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment Funds

- **\$1,000,000** / fiscal year appropriated through the **MN Department of Natural Resources / Division of Parks and Trails** to contract with CCMI for project work assigned at our established fee-for-service rates.
- **\$500,000** / fiscal year appropriated through the **Board of Soil and Water Resources** to contract with CCMI for project work assigned at our established fee-for-service rates.

NOTE: CCMI fee-for-service contract rates

- Hourly rates in 2020 were \$24.50/hr for Young Adult crews and \$17.50 for Youth crews. An interim 4.5% Covid Surcharge was added to contracts starting in the summer of 2020 to help alleviate Covid-related costs.

2022-2023 Priorities

1. Ensuring operating **resiliency** in the ongoing pandemic
2. Improving Corps member **recruitment** through mitigating barriers to participation
3. Increasing equitable **access** to our programming for more under-represented communities
4. Meeting the **increasing needs** of our partners who are affected by the impacts of COVID and the changing climate
5. Creating new **partnerships** to enhance service opportunities for the youth and young adult corps members



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APPENDIX

Additional Background Slides

Our Programming: Environmental stewardship & work force readiness

Improving access to outdoor recreation

Build and maintain trails, boardwalks, campsites, facilities, structures.

Restoring habitat on public lands:

Remove invasive species removal, conduct prescribed-burns, plant native trees.

Protecting water quality:

*Improve shorelines and buffers, clear waterways of debris and pollutants,
and develop and build rain gardens.*

Responding to natural disasters:

Support relief and recovery efforts regionally and nationally

Our Programs



- **Field Crew Program** - engages young adults (ages 18-25) in year-round or seasonal natural resource and emergency/disaster response work through Minnesota and Iowa.



- **Individual Placement Program** – directly places young adults (ages 18-25) with nonprofit and government agencies focused on energy, natural resource management, and community outreach. Summer placements are made with Soil & Water Conservation Districts.



- **Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC) Program** - engages current college/university students pursuing STEM degrees and interested in a career in natural resources in a fellowship, mentorship, and internships.



A partnership between Conservation Corps and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).

Our Programs



- **Youth Outdoors Program** – connects Twin Cities youth (ages 15-18) to the natural environment through hands-on conservation and neighborhood beautification projects. Youth are led by AmeriCorps members (ages 18-25) who are passionate about leading youth in educational and service-learning activities. AmeriCorps members serve as Field Crews when not leading youth.



- **I Can Camp! and I Can Paddle! (Sub-program of Youth Outdoors)** – engages young adult AmeriCorps members (ages 18-25) as teachers/trainers for the public to learn canoe/kayak paddling and camping skills. I Can! is a program of the Minnesota DNR, which contracts with Youth Outdoors as a service provider to conduct the program. I Can! educates the public about local ecology and natural resources.



- **Summer Youth Corps** – connects youth (ages 15-18) to the outdoors through paid hands-on conservation work during this summer residential program based in St. Croix State Park. Youth are led by AmeriCorps members (ages 19-25) who are passionate about leading youth in conservation and service projects while living outdoors.



Financial Summary



	2020*	2019	2018	2017
Revenue	\$8,507	\$8,431	\$9,211	\$9,401
➤ Federal	15%	15%	11%	12%
➤ State	14%	12%	7%	10%
➤ Contributed (individuals, corporations, foundations)	4%	3%	2%	2%
➤ Earned (fee-for-service contracts)	54%	69%	81%	75%
➤ PPP	13%			
Expense	\$7,476	\$8,650	\$9,594	\$10,459
➤ Staff	34%	31%	25%	24%
➤ Program Participants	37%	39%	43%	43%
➤ Direct Program	16%	18%	19%	21%
➤ Management/Admin	13%	12%	12%	12%

* 2020 Results are not audited



Our Sources of Revenue

- Federal (AmeriCorps grants)
 - **Direct grants** awarded to CCMI from AmeriCorps
 - **State Commission grant awards** (Federal AmeriCorps funding awarded to us through ***ServeMN*** and ***Volunteer Iowa***)
 - **The Corps Network (TCN)** provides funding for the education awards (scholarships) awarded to AmeriCorps members via the Education Award Program (EAP)
- State of Minnesota appropriations - Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)
- State of Minnesota Legacy Amendment funds
- State of Minnesota Grants (e.g. LCCMR; DEED, etc.)
- Contributed (individuals, corporations, foundation)
- Earned Revenue (fee-for-service contracts with government agencies, non-profits)



Federal AmeriCorps Grants

- AmeriCorps funding is administered by AmeriCorps, formerly known as the Corporation for National and Community Service.
- We receive AmeriCorps awards through three primary means:
 - 1) **Direct grants** awarded to CCMI from AmeriCorps
 - 2) **State Commission grant awards** (Federal AmeriCorps funding awarded to us through ***ServeMN*** and ***Volunteer Iowa***)
 - 3) **The Corps Network (TCN)** provides funding for the education awards (scholarships) awarded to AmeriCorps members via the Education Award Program (EAP)
- AmeriCorps members are eligible for benefits including the education award, student loan forbearance, health insurance, and childcare assistance.



Earned Revenue: Fee-For-Service

Young Adult and Youth Programs contract with partners for projects – parks and trails maintenance, habitat restoration, waterway and watershed protection - based on requests that meet our goals and schedules,

Hourly rates for contracts being signed starting in 2020 were \$24.50/hr for Young Adult crews and \$17.50 for Youth crews. A 4.5% Covid Surcharge was added starting in the summer of 2020 to help recover some of the added Covid related costs.

Rates historically have varied greatly across programs, and between Minnesota and Iowa.

Rate inconsistencies are continually being addressed but will remain a challenge due to economic realities facing government and non-profit partner budgets, and rural vs. urban economies.

Contributed Revenue



- Gifts from individuals (includes Annual Campaign, Evergreen Circle, & year-end stock gift)
- Grants from foundations, corporations, and government agencies (includes McNeely Foundation, Otto Bremer Trust, DEED, etc.)
- Sponsorships and matching gifts from corporations (includes Wells Fargo, Travelers, 3M, etc.)

Summary – 2018-2020			
Gift Type	2018	2019	2020
Individual giving	\$34,415	\$41,810	\$38,332
Foundation & Corporate Grants	\$186,279	\$167,303	\$289,712
State Grants – Minnesota DEED	\$44,868	\$85,971	\$50,000 (Ext. to FY21)
Corporate giving	\$6,750	\$10,594	\$4,490
TOTAL	\$272,312	\$305,678	\$332,534



2019-2020 Impact

Restoring Resources

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- **3,492 miles** of trail created/maintained, including:
 - 2,614 miles of water trail improvement
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Note: 2020 field outputs were significantly lower than usual as a result of covid-19 reductions to in-person field service opportunities.



2019-2020 Impact

Changing Lives

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Key Strengths

- **Long-standing and Loyal Partners** – State and Federal agencies, SWCDs, Municipalities, Ed. institutions, Non-profits
 - Over 350 project hosts
 - 99 % of which report interest in partnering with the Corps again
- **Corps Member Satisfaction** – Consistently high ratings from corps members
- **Stable demand for services** – More opportunity than capacity.
- **Fee-for-Service Model** – Sound however revenue dependent on robust recruitment .
- **CCM Brand reputation and recognition is good** – Within the sector and field
- **Keen interest in Climate Change and the Environment** – Among key segments of youth and young people who we serve and target

Strategic Framework 2020-2023

OUR GOALS

Valued Experience

Service Satisfaction

Secure & Enduring Resources

Relevant Programming & Work

OUR STAKEHOLDERS

Participants

Partners

Associates & Supporters

Communities We Serve

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PRIORITY 1:

Build Leadership Capacity and Skills

Instill and strengthen leadership capacity in our people and organization. Recruit and retain top talent.

PRIORITY 2:

Strengthen Management and Operational Systems

Better use our systems and processes to improve service and experience for partners, participants, and supporters.

PRIORITY 3:

Renew and Strengthen Our Programming

Seek innovative ways to make our programs more relevant, equitable, inclusive, and valuable to participants.

PRIORITY 4:

Attract and Retain a Diverse Pool of Participants

Improve our ability to attract a competitive pool of diverse candidates who are committed to our core values.

PRIORITY 5:

Develop and Foster Strategic Relationships

Build and expand upon existing channels for support and collaboration.



END