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Conservation Corps Minnesota

Agency Profile 1

AT A GLANCE

Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa (CCMI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, provides youth (ages 15-18) and young adults (ages 18-30) with hands-on service-learning opportunities that improve access to outdoor recreation, restore habitat, protect trails and waterways, and respond to natural disasters.

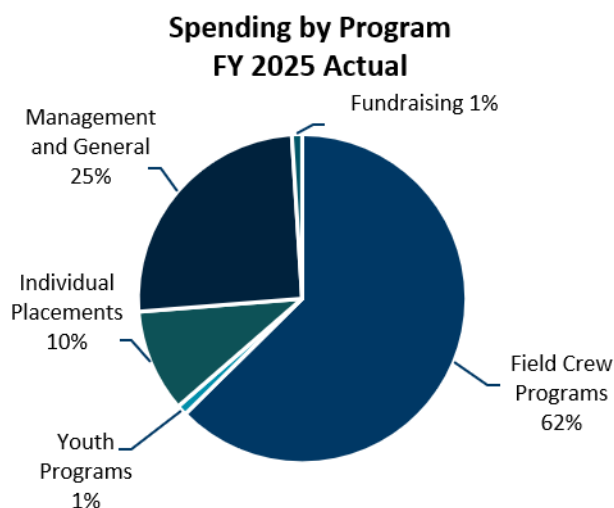
In 2025, 217 Corpsmembers served across CCMI's Field Crew, Individual Placement, and Youth programs, providing 287,739 hours of service in partnership with 74 project partner agencies.

PURPOSE

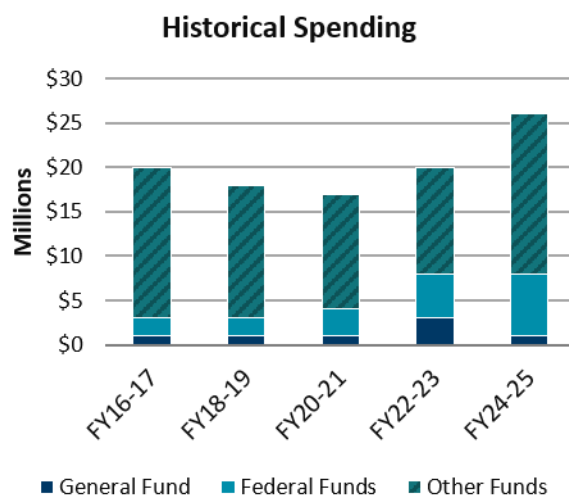
Conservation Corps Minnesota's purpose is to help young people from diverse backgrounds become more connected to natural resources and the environment, promote their equitable access to nature, equip them to succeed in career and life, and empower them to make a difference in conserving natural resources.

Conservation Corps Minnesota's mission is to cultivate a community of emerging leaders in service to people and the planet. The organization provides training to members in natural resource management, technical skills, and job readiness, and helps develop personal responsibility and a strong work ethic.

BUDGET



Source: Conservation Corps' Audited Financial Statements



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CCMI has a diverse funding base, with partner support (fee-for-service) revenue supporting more than 62 percent of Conservation Corps' total expenses in FY25, by far the organization's largest funding source. Federal and total state grant revenue recognized by CCMI declined in FY25 relative to FY24, reducing their combined share of total expenses from roughly 47 percent to 34 percent; direct state appropriations remained the same in state FY24 and FY25. Youth programs also derive revenue from fee-for-service contracts but rely more heavily on individual giving, private foundations, corporate contributions, and government grants. Fee-for-service partners include federal, state, local, and nonprofit partners. General funds include state appropriations and grants. Federal funds include grants awarded through AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Other funding also includes fee-for-service revenue, various local grants and funding, private foundation, corporate and individual giving, and miscellaneous.

STRATEGIES

Throughout CCMI's core program areas, young people are involved in hands-on, service-learning activities that protect and enhance natural resources and promote workforce skills and readiness.

- Field Crew Program engages young adults, ages 18-30, in natural resource management and disaster response work from February to December, including nonresidential crews in northern, central, and southern Minnesota and central Iowa. Seasonal trail crews spike camp for week-long stretches while improving trails in northern forests and state and national parks. AmeriCorps members receive a monthly stipend, health insurance, and an education award for college expenses. In addition to career and work skills training, members receive certifications in wildfire suppression, defensive driving, chainsaw safety, and first aid.
- Individual Placement Program places young adults, ages 18-30, as natural resource and community outreach specialists at natural resource agencies and nonprofit organizations from February to December, including summer placements with Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Individual Placement AmeriCorps members receive a monthly stipend, health insurance, and an education award for college expenses.
- Youth Program engages youth ages 15-18, along with young adult members ages 19-20, in environmental restoration field crew work on public lands during the summer season, through either a residential program or a community-based program. Both provide environmental education, workforce skill development, and career exploration opportunities. Youth earn a training wage, and those in the residential program receive room and board. AmeriCorps members serving as Youth Leaders receive a monthly stipend, health insurance, and an education award for college expenses.
- Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC) engages college students pursuing STEM degrees who are interested in a career in natural resources. Established in 2018 and initiated in 2019, through partnership between the Conservation Corps, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, students participate in fellowships, mentorships, and paid internships. The program targets students from backgrounds typically underrepresented in natural resource careers, including women, people of color, and individuals with disabilities. Participants receive a fellowship payment to support academic expenses for the school year.

All CCMI programs devote a substantial share of program time to technical skills training, career building skills such as resume writing and interviewing, and educational activities focused on environmental science and technology. Using scientific inquiry and experiential learning, CCMI helps young people learn more about the world around them and think critically about the impact of their personal choices on the environment.

RESULTS

Part A: Performance Data

Measure	Measure type	Measure data source	Historical trend	Most recent data (FY2025)
Hours of education/training provided to program participants	Quantity	Time tracking system; 2025 Impact Report	2022: 35,296; 2023: 41,279; 2024: 49,693. Education and training hours increased substantially from 2022 through 2024 and remained at approximately the same level in 2025.	49,213
Acres of habitat restored	Quantity	Field reports submitted daily and reviewed by managers; 2025 Impact Report	2022: 29,857; 2023: 28,869; 2024: 29,268. Acres restored remained relatively stable at approximately 29,000 annually from 2022-2024 before increasing to 37,379 in 2025.	37,379
Miles of trail restored	Quantity	Field reports submitted daily and reviewed by managers; 2025 Impact Report	2022: 765; 2023: 624; 2024: 397. Trail miles declined from 2022 through 2024, followed by a modest increase to 415 miles in 2025.	415
Percent of project partners who would partner again with the Corps	Quality	Project partner evaluation	2023: 99%. The most recent comparable prior MMB measure was 99%; the 2025 result of 97% continues to indicate consistently high project-partner satisfaction.	97%
Percent of young people who would recommend the program to others	Quality	Participant exit surveys	2023: 95.5%. The 2025 result of 96% is essentially unchanged from the most recent comparable prior MMB measure and indicates consistently high participant satisfaction.	96%
Number of college-age participants, from underrepresented communities, provided fellowships, mentorships, and paid internships served through IDEC program	Result	Programs database	2022: 26; 2023: 31; 2024: 37. IDEC participation increased from 2022 through 2024 before declining to 16 participants in 2025.	16
Percent of young people who gained workforce readiness skills	Result	Participant exit surveys; 2025 Impact Report	*2022: 94%; 2023: 85.1%; 2024: 91%. ** Results have varied year to year but remained high overall, increasing to 96% in 2025.	96%

Measure	Measure type	Measure data source	Historical trend	Most recent data (FY2025)
Percent of young people who gained/improved technical skills	Result	Participant exit surveys; 2025 Impact Report	2023: 96.5%. Technical-skill outcomes have remained very high, increasing to 98% in 2025.	98%
Percent of young people who reported a stronger sense of on-the-job safety	Result	Participant exit surveys; 2025 Impact Report	2023: 93.9%. The measure has remained consistently strong, increasing modestly to 95% in 2025.	95%

Performance measures follow the calendar year in alignment with CCMI's program schedule and fiscal year.

Part B - Evidence of Effectiveness

No evidence-based practices identified. CCMI's program model is a broad service-learning and workforce-readiness experience that has not yet been studied by randomized control trial or quasi-experimental design, though it draws on established youth development and workforce-readiness principles.

The legal authority for the Minnesota Conservation Corps is found in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 84, Section 991 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=84.991>).