

THE CORPS NETWORK: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SERVICE AND CONSERVATION CORPS

The Corps Network:

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- Bobby Tillett

Northwest Youth Corps:

- Jeff Parker

USACE:

- Heather Burke, HQUSACE
- Wendy Jones, NWP
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December 10, 2025



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US Army Corps
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FY26 Rec Strategy: Partnering with Youth Conservation Corps



- USACE FY26 NRM Strategic Staffing & Operations Plan sent out by Director of Operations, Mr. Hill on 22 October
- Purpose: Outlines flexible strategies to allocate resources and sustain USACE Rec operations during FY26.
- Priorities: Safe public access, public health and safety, and supporting the local communities and economies
- Objectives: Increase operational efficiencies, keep recreation areas open with blended workforce, prioritize essential services, expand capacity through partnerships
- **Goal: Increase Conservation Corps student participation by 25% for FY26.**

Cooperative Agreement Authority

33 USC 2339, WRDA 2000, Section 213a: Assistance Programs, as amended by WRRDA 2014, Section 1047(e)

- To further training and educational opportunities about water resources development projects
- May enter into cooperative agreements with non-Federal public and nonprofit entities
- For services relating to natural resources conservation or recreation
 - Delegation of authority provided down from the Secretary of Army to ASA (CW), DCW, MSC Commanders, District Commanders in spring 2015
 - Allows district grants officers to enter into local cooperative agreements under this authority
 - Similar to a contract, but provides more flexibility in the scope of work that often results in more getting done than through a contract
 - Career pipeline to participants, larger pool of prospective employees



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Strengthening America through
service and conservation



Partnership Opportunities with Corps *Presentation to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*

December 10, 2025



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5



“We Can Do More” (2025)

<https://youtu.be/BeZnrH3nSVA>

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6

What is a Corps?

- Based on model of **Civilian Conservation Corps**
- Operated by **nonprofits** or units of **state or local government**
- Engage in **public-private partnerships** on service projects focused on stewardship, community improvement
- **Service and workforce development programs**
(some Corps also offer GED, high school diploma or college preparatory programs)





What is a The Corps Network

- National Association of Service and Conservation Corps
- Based in Washington, DC
- Founded in 1985

What does The Corps Network do?

- A national convener
- Access to funding and project opportunities
 - Project scoping
- Training and technical assistance
- Accreditation process
- Starting and expanding Corps
 - Piloting new models
- Data collection and evaluation
- Events and communication
- Voice in Washington, advocacy
- Range of association benefits for members



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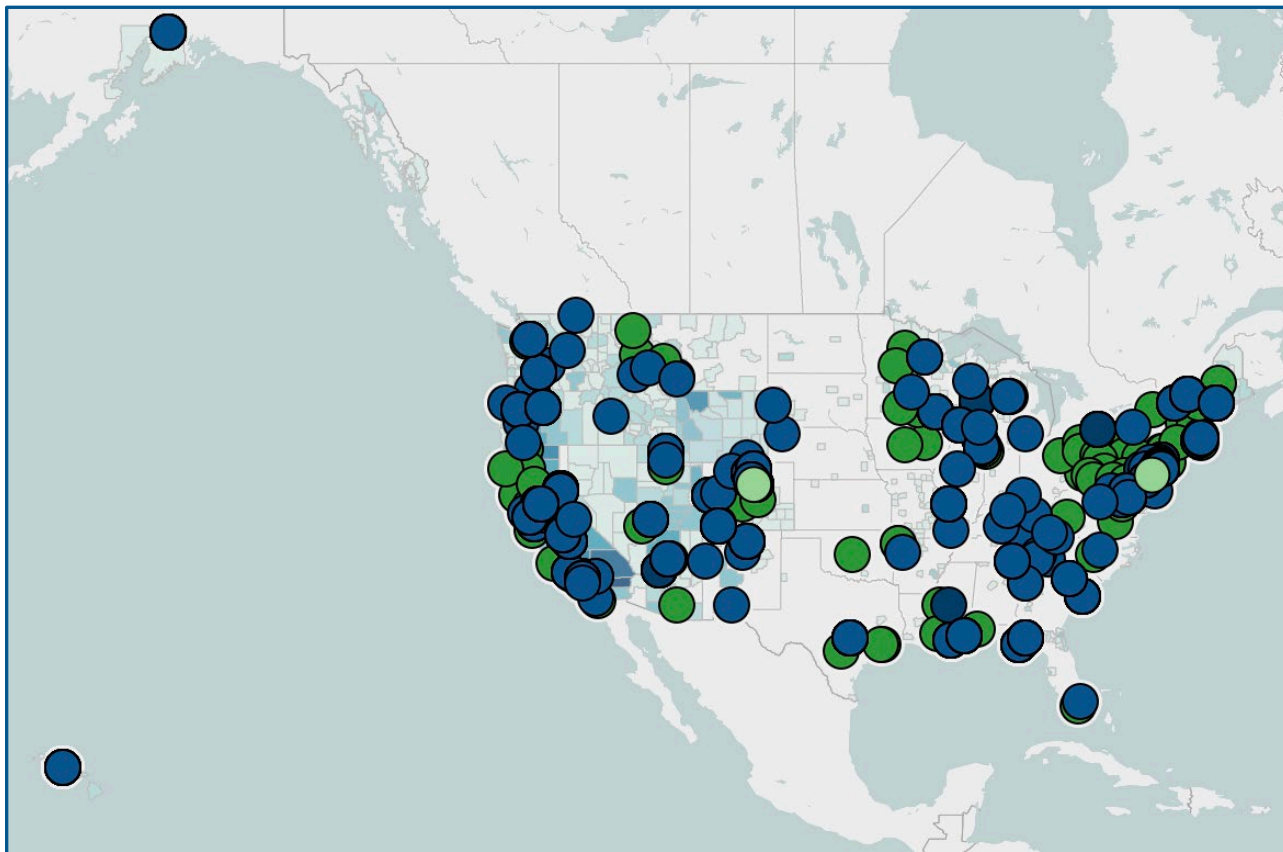
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8



Corps across the country

corpsnetwork.org/locations

~150 member Corps
across the country (+ Affiliates)

Corps based in
cities, towns, rural areas

Member Corps collectively enroll
~22,000 participants annually



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9

Funding for Corps

Most Corps receive funding from a range of sources. There is no federal line item for Corps.





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10

Public-Private Partnerships

Corps collaborate with wide range of local, state, federal government entities and organizations to:

- **Address pressing projects**
(partner with public land and municipal agencies; e.g. U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, state park agencies, local government)
- **Provide hands-on work experience to students and young professionals**
(partner with colleges, apprenticeship programs, unions)
- **Provide pathway to jobs and education**
(partner with school system, workforce boards)





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11

What do Corpsmembers gain?

- Job training (credentials, certifications)
- Hands-on work experience
- Stipend / living allowance
- Build essential skills in leadership, communication, conflict resolution
- Develop civic responsibility, respect for a hard day's work, confidence in one's own abilities

Some Corps also offer

- AmeriCorps Education Award (scholarship)
- High school diploma, college prep
- Wraparound support services





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12

Crews versus Internships

Crews:

Most Corpsmembers serve alongside peers on crews of up to 10 people, overseen by a skilled Crew Leader.

Individual Placements/Internships:

Some Corps offer opportunities for young adults to hone their skills in internship-like positions. Common projects include working with resource managers on data collection and monitoring, visitor education, volunteer management, research, social media management, photography, etc.





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13

What projects can Corps do?

Just a few examples...

- Boardwalk and foot bridge construction
- Campground infrastructure maintenance and improvement
- Data collection
- Disaster response / debris removal / rebuilding
- Fencing installation
- Invasive species removal / reintroduction of native species
- Masonry
- Trail construction and maintenance
- Tree planting / arboriculture
- Visitor education
- Water quality monitoring
- Wildland fire mitigation
- Wetland and coastal restoration





884,489

Trees planted



375

Disasters responded to



96,845

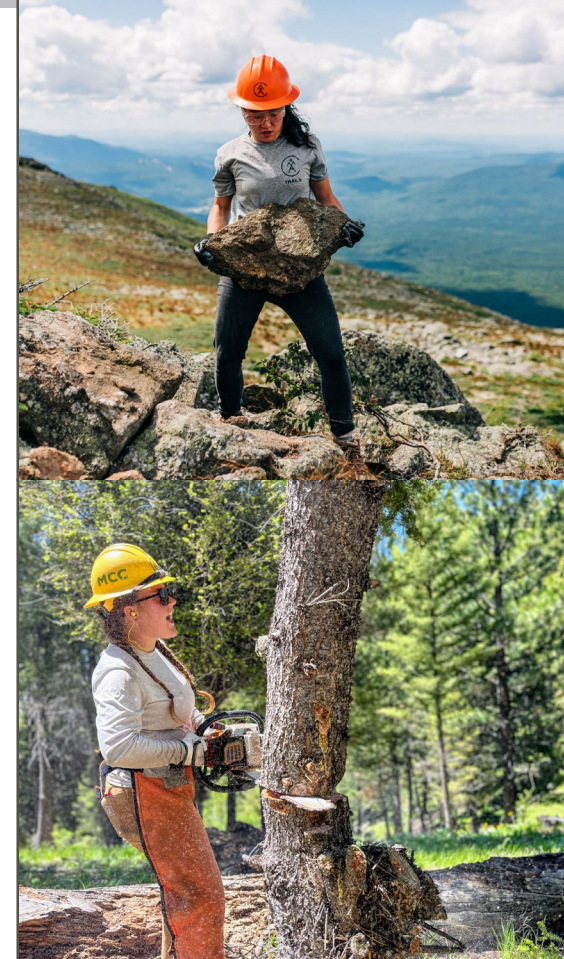
Acres of hazardous fire
fuels treated

19,662

Miles of trail built or
improved

411,068

Acres of habitat
restored



108,425

Acres of invasive
species treated





49,082

Pounds of produce grown to support those in need



4,181

Historic structures preserved

658

High school diplomas/GEDs earned by Corpsmembers

1,422
Miles of waterway restored

14,304
Tons of waste recycled, properly discarded

17,544
Certifications earned



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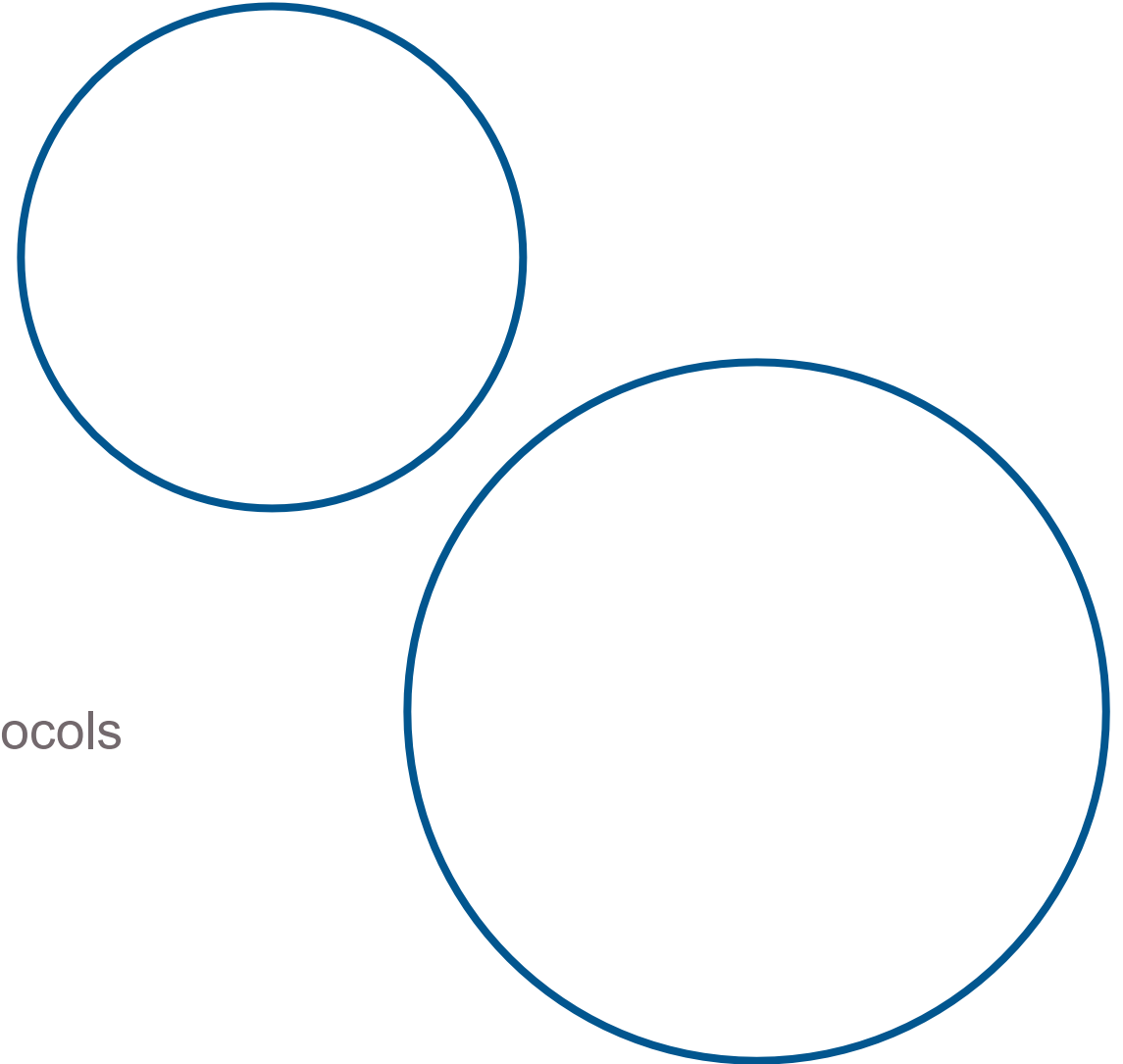
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16

Why partner with Corps?

- Provide crews that are self-contained units
 - Recruitment, training, onboarding
 - Supervision
 - Transportation
 - Most tools and equipment
 - Insurance
 - Back-end support
 - Technical expertise
- Adhere to industry-leading risk management protocols
- Flexibility
- Cost effectiveness





Cost Estimates

- **Cost will vary based on number of factors**
 - Size of the crew
 - Duration of engagement
 - Availability of housing
 - Skill of Corpsmembers (e.g. chainsaw trained/certified)
 - Geographic region
- **Cost could include such items as ...**
 - Corpsmember stipends, supervisor staff time, transportation meals, tools, uniforms, protective equipment, lodging, training, back-end support
- **Corps are required to provide cost match**
 - Match can include cash and in-kind
 - In-kind might include the educational and professional development components for the project and/or the value of the volunteer labor contributed



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18

Corps

- Recruit and onboard Corpsmembers.
- Provide relevant trainings and certifications.
- Provide most supplies, tools, gear.
- Provide transportation.
- Provide insurance, risk management, back-end support.
- Provide project funding match.

USACE Location

- Identify projects.
- Secure project funding.
- Provide basic direction and logistical support.
- Provide opportunities for Corpsmember' educational enrichment.

Collaborate on education and training.

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- Assistance with finding an appropriate Corps.
- Assistance with project scoping.
- Assistance with reporting, payment processing.



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Location
1275 K St, NW – Suite 1050
Washington, DC 20005





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Northwest Youth Corps and Army Corps of Engineers Northwest Division

- In 2025, NYC partnered with ACOE to complete:
 - 22 weeks of work, involving 9 crews
 - 3,200 service hours by 5 interns
- **General types of work completed:**
 - Campground maintenance
 - Trail maintenance
 - Invasive plant removal
 - Thinning/chipping of fuels
 - Fence construction
 - Sign installation
 - Facility painting and general upkeep
 - Intern-specific technical work





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Crew Project Spotlights

USACE – Portland

Project highlight:

- 78 acres of invasives removed

Educational Highlight: USACE staff provide educational talks on dam hydropower and fish passage, give in-depth tours of the dam, and discuss USACE career paths

USACE – Walla Walla

Project highlights :

- 5 miles of trails maintained
- 360 hours of thinning and hazard tree removal

Educational Highlight: Crew participated in the restoration of quail nests, which was a new and unique educational opportunity





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Intern project spotlights

In 2025, 5 interns served at John Day, Dalles, and Bonneville Dams

- Interns completed:
 - Wildlife and botany surveys
 - GIS mapping projects
 - Developed interpretive programming
 - Maintained trails
 - Performed building maintenance and construction
 - Removed invasive species
 - Planted native species and pollinator gardens

Intern impact highlight:

- 65,000 Sq. Ft. of native seed dispersed
- 72 wildlife surveys conducted



"This was an amazing experience, and I was surrounded by awesome people!"

- Jackson, 2025 Intern





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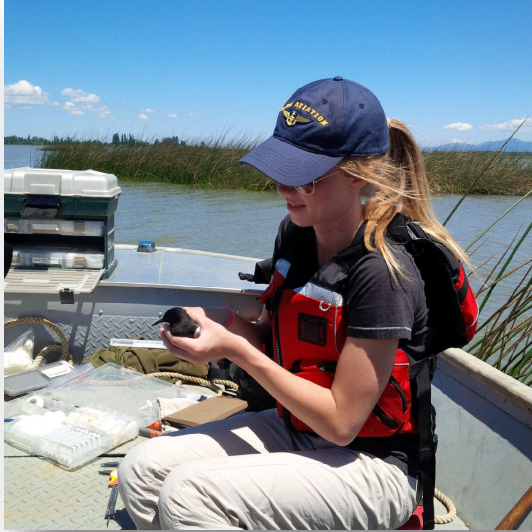
NWP & Northwest Youth Corps



- Started as an agreement for the Willamette Valley Project, administered by Portland District grants officer.
- Now a District-wide agreement for 20 Operating Projects in OR and WA.
- Individual intern placement (~3 months)
 - Survey and monitoring: botany, wildlife, archaeology
 - Boundary/monument surveys, trail maintenance, outreach
- Youth crews (1-2 weeks)
 - Invasive species management
 - Vegetation removal



NWP & Northwest Youth Corps





NC Youth Conservation Corps

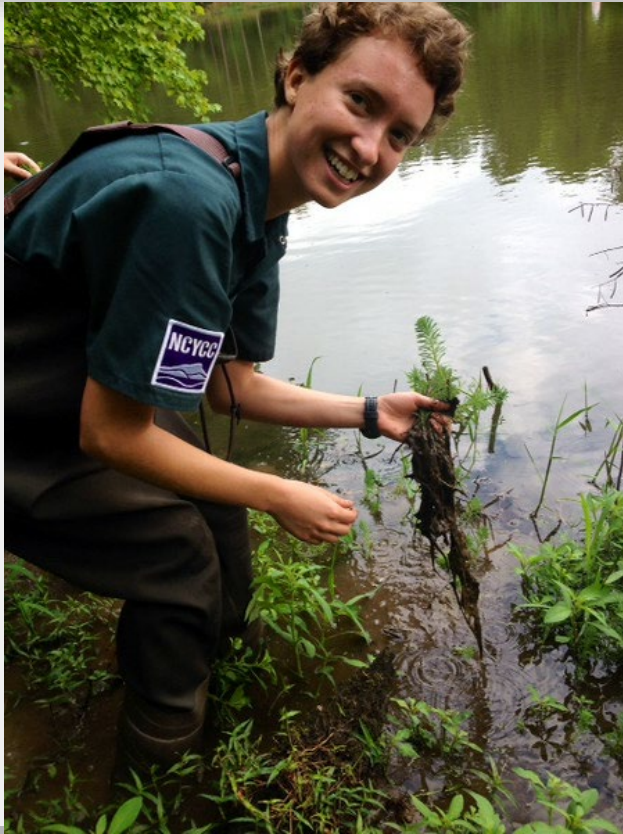
- Regional agreement administered by Jacksonville District grants officer. YCC crews worked at Falls Lake, Jordan Lake, and Philpott Lake in the Wilmington District in VA and NC (SAW).
- Comprehensive youth development program using nature to teach:
 - Job and leadership skills
 - Community service
 - Environmental stewardship
 - Personal responsibility

SAW had a lot of success with the program but struggled to find a grants officer to manage the agreement and complications with the timing of available funds led to our second 5-year agreement terminating early.





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Cooperative Agreement Process

27



- National Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) published on Contracting Policy page and updated April 2020
- Provides step by step instruction to set up a cooperative agreement.
- Collaborative process between Operations, Contracting (Grants Officer/Specialist), and Counsel from pre-award through closeout.



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Cooperative Agreements
Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)
The Directorate of Contracting
April 2020

Table of Contents

1.0	Purpose.....	2
2.0	Applicability.....	2
3.0	References.....	2
4.0	Definitions.....	3
5.0	Roles and Responsibilities.....	6
6.0	Regulatory Requirements	11
7.0	Pre-award Procedures.....	11
8.0	Post-award Procedures.....	22
9.0	Close-out Procedures.....	27
10.0	Appendices of Required Documents and Sample Templates.....	29

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JILL E. STIGLICH
Director of Contracting

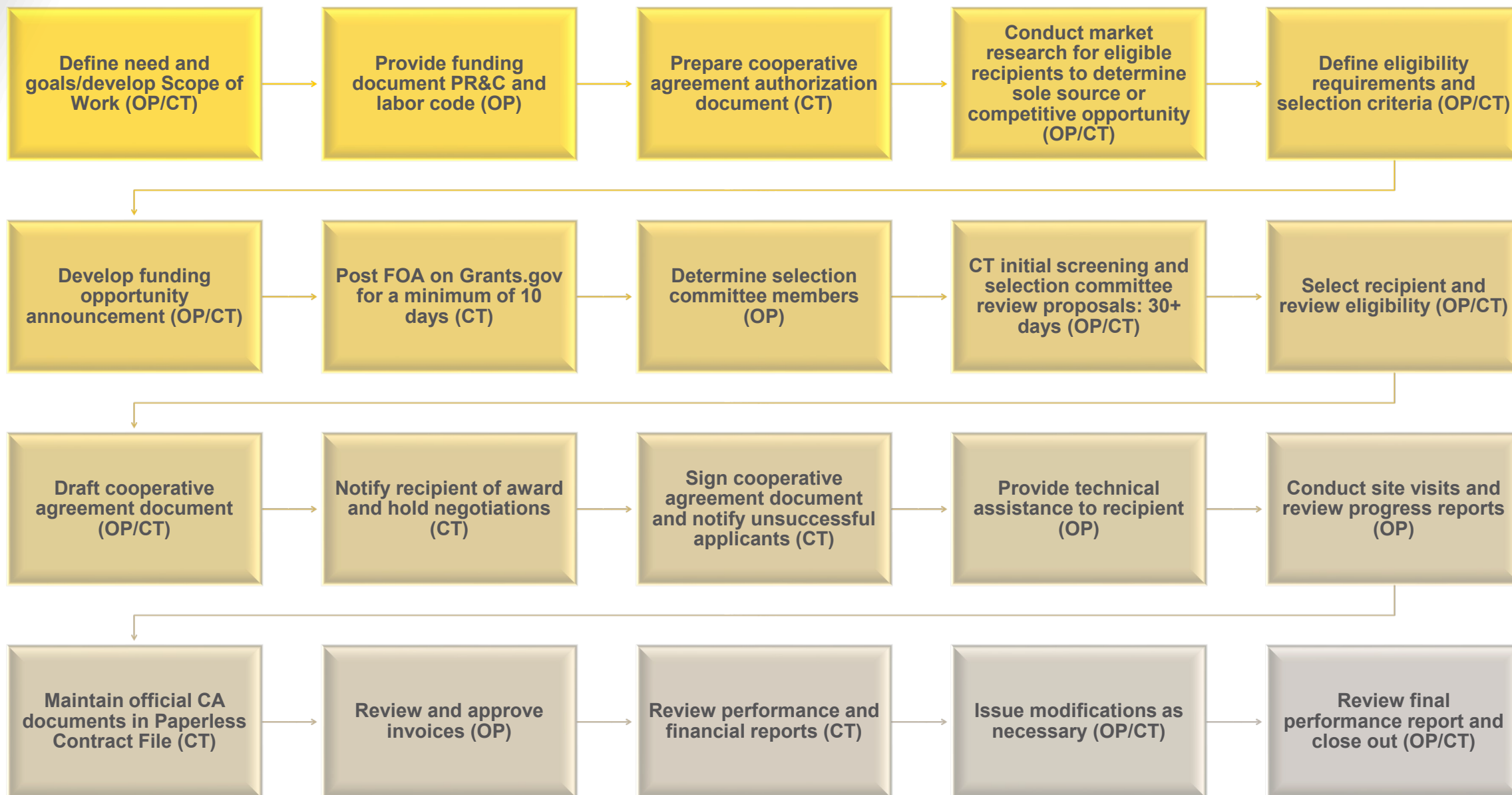


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28



Cooperative Agreement Process –Steps





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District Grants/ Agreements Officers

29



Division	District	Point of Contact First Name	Point of Contact Last Name	Email	Phone	Grants Officer or Specialist	Warrant \$ Value
LRD	LRB	Jeff	Ernest	jeffrey.g.ernest@usace.army.mil	716-879-4173	Officer	Unlimited
	LRC	None					
	LRE	None					
	LRH	None					
	LRL	None					
	LRN	None					
	LRP	None					
MVD	MVK	Zavien	Beal	zavien.t.beal@usace.army.mil	(601) 634-3962 (601) 940-2470	Officer	\$5M
	MVP						
	MVR						
	MVS						
NAD	NAB	Jeff	May	Jeffrey.B.May@usace.army.mil	410-962-5617	Officer	Unlimited
	NAE	None					
	NAP	None					
NWD	NWK	Lacy	Kay	lacy.kay@usace.army.mil	816-389-3509	Officer	Unlimited
	NWO	Lee	McCormick	lee.m.mccormick@usace.army.mil	402-995-2084	Officer	Unlimited
		Stephanie	Rostermundt	stephanie.a.rostermundt@usace.army.mil	402-995-2083	Officer	Unlimited
	NWP	Melanie	Barrett	melanie.a.barrett@usace.army.mil	(503) 808-4617	Officer	\$1M
		Suzanne	Hunt	suzanne.w.hunt@usace.army.mil	(503) 919-8669	Officer	\$100M
	NWS	Monique	Paano	monique.a.paano@usace.army.mil	(206) 764-6084	Specialist	--
		Sandy	Hutchins	casandra.a.hutchins@usace.army.mil	(206) 947-7916	Specialist	--
		Cam	Allen	camilla.allen@usace.army.mil	206-764-4481	Officer	\$10M
	NWW	Victoria	Conway	victoria.l.conway@usace.army.mil	(509) 527-7449	Specialist	--
		Brooke	Moore	brooke.n.moore@usace.army.mil	(509) 527-7913	Officer	\$50M
POD	POA	Michelle	Mandel	Michelle.R.Mandel@usace.army.mil	(907) 753-2502	Officer	\$50M
		Pamela	Iverson	pamela.iverson@usace.army.mil	(907) 753-2555	Specialist	--
	POH	None					



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District Grants/ Agreements Officers

Division	District	Point of Contact First Name	Point of Contact Last Name	Email	Phone	Grants Officer or Specialist	Warrant \$ Value
SAD	SAJ	Griselle	Gonzalez-Aquino	Griselle.Gonzalez@usace.army.mil	(904) 232-3972	Officer	\$10M
	SAM	None					
	SAS	None					
	SAW	Ed	Boddie	edward.a.boddie@usace.army.mil	910-251-4804	Officer	\$5M
SPD	SPA	Karen	Irving	karen.k.irving@usace.army.mil	(505) 342-3356	Officer	\$10M
	SPK	Rachel	Kinney	rachel.kinney@usace.army.mil	(916) 717-7532	Officer	\$10M
	SPL	None					
	SPN	None					
SWD	SWF	Paige	Poorman	paige.e.poorman@usace.army.mil	(817) 886-1124	Officer	\$100M
		Cheryl	Vendemia	cheryl.r.vendemia@usace.army.mil	(817) 253-3341	Officer	\$7.5M
		Robin	Prince	robin.g.prince2@usace.army.mil	817-357-7073	Officer	\$20M
	SWG	None					
	SWL	None					
	SWT	None					
ERDC	ERDC	Derek	Howard	derek.a.howard@usace.army.mil	(601) 634-3310	Officer	\$5M
		Allison	Hudson	allison.b.hudson@usace.army.mil	(601) 634-5337	Officer	\$10M
		Tracey	Lowe	tracey.m.lowe@usace.army.mil	(601) 634-4883	Officer	\$10M
		Zavien	Beal	zavien.t.beal@usace.army.mil	(601) 634-3962	Officer	\$5M
		Melissa	Lynn	melissa.k.lynn@usace.army.mil	(601) 920-9176	Officer	\$50M
		Andrea	Thomas	andrea.j.thomas@usace.army.mil	217-373-6746	Officer	\$5M
HNC	HNC	Katrena	Winchester	Katrena.H.Winchester@usace.army.mil	(256) 895-1145	Officer	\$50M
		Eric	Horcick	Eric.S.Horcick@usace.army.mil	(256) 895-8247	Officer	\$50M
Updated Nov 2025							



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31



Resources: NRM Gateway

<https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/coopagree/coopagree.cf>



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Natural Resources Management Gateway

to the future . . .

Home Visitors Lake Discovery Recreation Env Compliance Env Stewardship Partners
News/Events People Forums Learning GETS Tools New Postings Submit Index/Search ?

Cooperative Agreement

[Headquarters POC](#)

The [Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977 \(FGCAA\)](#) sets forth the requirements for using cooperative agreements and grants to transfer funds to non-federal entities. However, use of cooperative agreements must be specifically authorized, and the FGCAA does **not** provide such authority. There is no general authority for the Corps to use cooperative agreements.

A cooperative agreement is a legal instrument as described by 31 USC 63, the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act where funds are being transferred to a partner, which is used to enter into the same kind of relationship as a grant, except that substantial involvement is expected between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the partner when carrying out the activities within the agreement. Substantial involvement may include collaboration, participation, or intervention in the program or activity to be performed under the cooperative agreement. These agreements must be executed by a certified grants officer. Procedures for administering these agreements must comply with Department of Defense Directive 3210.06 (Defense Grant and Agreement Regulatory System (DGARS)).

USACE authority for cooperative agreements is limited to the following specific types/purposes:

- Management of Undesirable Plants
- Educational and training activities
- Research and development
- Agreements with Indian Tribes
- Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU)

● [Policy & Procedures](#)

● [Authorized Cooperative Agreement Types](#)

● [Cooperative Agreement Forms and Templates](#)

● News / Current Issues

● [Existing Cooperative Agreements](#)

● [District Grants and Agreements Officers](#)

Cooperative Agreement
Task Force



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USACE Points of Contact

32



- Heather Burke, HQUSACE, (678) 972-3824, heather.d.burke@usace.army.mil
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- Francis Ferrell, Jordan Lake, Wilmington District, (919) 846-9332 X 2224, francis.e.ferrell@usace.army.mil



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- Candace Bacchus, Director of Programs, chollingsworth@corpsnetwork.org
- Hannah Traverse, Director of Communications, htraverse@corpsnetwork.org



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Northwest Youth Corps Point of Contact

34



- Jeff Parker, President and CEO, jeffp@nwyouthcorps.org, (541) 349-7500

