

Mission

The mission of the Pennsylvania Conservation Corps is to develop the workplace skills, life skills and self-confidence of corpsmembers; instill an ethic of citizenship; accomplish significant conservation and historical work; and carry out other projects of public benefit. The Corps is committed to a comprehensive approach that fosters a spirit of teamwork and advances the concept of individual empowerment through community service.

Participants

Corpsmembers are Pennsylvania residents between the ages of 18 and 25 (16- and 17-year-olds may participate in special circumstances). Corpsmembers are offered a one-year term of service, with the possibility of an additional six or 12 months. They are paid \$7.25 an hour to start, and get a 10-percent increase after six months on the job. Corpsmembers who complete a year of service receive a cash bonus of \$1,000 and may qualify for an education award of up to \$4,725. Education awards — which are provided by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service — may be used for future schooling or to pay off existing student loans.

Nearly 15,000 young Pennsylvanians have served as corpsmembers. Most were economically disadvantaged when they joined the Corps, and many had less than a high school education. About one-third of all corpsmembers move directly into other jobs after leaving the PCC. Others join the military or re-enter school. PCC corpsmembers work in crews under the guidance of crewleaders who have experience in the building trades and are skilled in motivating and training young adults.

Corpsmember Development

During their enrollment, corpsmembers gain valuable work experience while completing substantial and needed projects. Depending on the work they are doing, they receive on-the-job training in carpentry, masonry, landscaping and other trades. Corpsmembers also are offered out-service training, which may include adult literacy tutoring, life skills instruction, vocational education, college courses, job-search workshops and the chance to earn an equivalent high school diploma. Training is tailored to the needs and desires of individuals. Most classes are paid for by the PCC, and corpsmembers are usually paid while attending them.

The PCC mentoring program allows corpsmembers with at least eight months of service to gain experience in potential career fields by working a few hours each week for businesses or skilled tradespersons in their communities. To date, about half of all participants in the mentoring program have moved into full-time jobs at their mentoring locations.

Projects

Agencies eligible to sponsor PCC projects include local political subdivisions; the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency; the Game, Fish & Boat, and Historical & Museum commissions; and the departments of Aging, Corrections, Education, Public Welfare, Military & Veterans Affairs, Community & Economic Development, and Conservation & Natural Resources.

Since 1984, the Corps has undertaken more than 1,300 projects in urban, suburban and rural areas statewide. Accomplishments include the improvement of 107 miles of streams, 7,100 acres of wildlife habitat, and 23,000 acres of forest lands; the construction or renovation of 700 picnic areas, 721 cabins and lodges, and more than 10,100 miles of trails; the rehabilitation of 387 historical buildings; and the planting of more than 1 million seedlings and trees.

Emergency Work

The Pennsylvania Conservation Corps Act allows the Corps to respond in times of emergency. The Corps has mobilized on a large scale for a number of in-state disasters: a tornado in 1985; floods in 1985, 1986 and 2006; and snowstorms and flooding in 1996. In addition, corpsmembers are often used on a project-by-project basis to assist with fire suppression, search and rescue operations, and the clearing of storm debris. Disaster-relief operations are not limited to Pennsylvania: In February 1993, 20 PCC corpsmembers and crewleaders spent two weeks in Homestead, Fla., helping to rebuild in the wake of Hurricane Andrew. In July 1994, 12 corpsmembers and crewleaders traveled to Kansas and spent a week repairing structures damaged in the devastating floods of the year before. In 2005, 16 corpsmembers and crewleaders spent nearly a month in the Florida Keys, helping residents recover in the aftermath of Hurricane Wilma.

Recognition

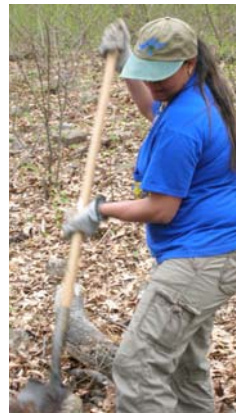
The Pennsylvania Conservation Corps has won recognition from the Take Pride in Pennsylvania competition, the Searching for Success program, the Chesapeake Bay Program, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, and The Corps Network.

For More Information

Write to: Pennsylvania Conservation Corps, 651 Boas Street, Room 1405, Harrisburg, PA 17121. Or call us at (717) 783-6385. Within Pennsylvania, you can call us toll free at (888) 577-4722. You can also e-mail us at pcc@state.pa.us. Additional information is available on our Web site: www.dli.state.pa.us.

"This has given me a shot at a whole new life."

—PCC corpsmember



*Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.
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