

AMERICAN CLIMATE CORPS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
AMONG THE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE [AMERICORPS]

This memorandum of understanding (MOU) governing the Biden-Harris Administration’s American Climate Corps Initiative (ACC) is entered into by the United States Departments of Commerce, the Interior, Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, Energy, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps), hereinafter collectively referred to as “the Parties.”

I. BACKGROUND

The Biden Harris Administration’s American Climate Corps Initiative (ACC) draws inspiration from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Civilian Conservation Corps, a popular New Deal program that put millions of young men to work addressing the twin environmental and economic crises of the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression. Decades later, the Obama-Biden Administration established the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC), a public-private partnership which provided a blueprint for a new generation of Americans to enter careers in conservation, while working to make America’s public lands and waters and the wildlife that depend on them more resilient to the effects of climate change. The 21CSC engaged hundreds of partners and thousands of youth, veterans, and individuals experiencing barriers to employment, including those from disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution, to work on projects safeguarding public lands and waters from the impacts of climate change. The ACC will build on these foundational efforts while putting at least 20,000 young people in the initiative’s first year on career pathways aligned with high-quality employment opportunities in industry sectors or occupations, including apprenticeship readiness and Registered Apprenticeship Programs, in the growing fields of climate resilience and clean energy in both the public and private sectors.

The ACC will work under existing authorities and in coordination with existing programs administered by or with Federal agencies, Tribes, state and local governments, territorial governments, labor unions, and nonprofit organizations – and with new community partners and stakeholders from a variety of sectors – to advance climate resilience, tackle climate change and to further the goals in this MOU. The ACC will improve the lives of individuals and communities throughout the nation and its territories while helping the United States face intersecting challenges, including the catastrophic and disproportionate impacts of climate change and unequal access to training, higher education, and high-quality careers.

To meet these intersecting challenges, the ACC shall be guided by and seek to further the following principles:

- a. Reflect a comprehensive approach to tackling climate change, including by focusing on areas such as natural and cultural resource and ecosystem restoration and conservation, conservation and recovery of protected species and their habitats, urban agriculture, reforestation, protection and restoration of waterways, recycling and waste recovery, energy conservation, a wide range of clean energy deployment, energy efficiency, weatherization, coastal and climate resilience, economic development support for energy communities, heat island cooling, disaster preparedness and recovery, fire resilience, preparedness and response, equitable outdoor access and resilient recreation infrastructure, and environmental education, research, and outreach.
- b. Build upon and expand existing partnerships and initiate new partnerships to implement cross-sector and cross-industry collaboration that engage Federal, Tribal, territorial, state, and local governments, labor unions, nonprofit entities, the private sector, and philanthropic organizations to leverage Federal investments and maximize community and participant engagement and impact.
- c. Compensate ACC members by aiming to ensure that ACC members are provided financial compensation and benefits sufficient to meet their basic needs, so that participation and success in the initiative is accessible to people of any socio-economic background, and inclusive of ACC members that serve in existing national service programs like AmeriCorps and the Public Lands Corps. To the extent permitted by law, ACC programs will offer a range of compensation and benefits such as housing, transportation, health care, child care, educational credit, scholarships and student loan forgiveness, stipends, non-financial services and benefits that address barriers to employment and job retention, and other benefits as determined by specific program and participant needs.
- d. Provide a pathway to high-quality employment through execution of proven training strategies for broad-based, industry-valued skills and expansion of workforce development pathways that are aligned with high-quality employment opportunities in industry sectors or occupations in the growing fields of climate resilience and clean energy. Through partnerships with labor organizations, apprenticeship readiness and Registered Apprenticeship Programs, educational institutions, service partners, and other organizations, and to the extent permitted by law, the ACC will build the base of talented, skilled, certified, and apprentice-ready workers eligible for high-quality, family-sustaining careers with mobility potential in public or private sectors.
- e. Look like America by expanding workforce pathways in and led by disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution with the aim of leveraging the talents of all members of our society, including Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and

other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; persons exiting incarceration or involved in the criminal legal system; persons otherwise adversely affected by poverty or economic barriers to employment; veterans; and young Americans seeking vocational and educational opportunities, including opportunity youth.

- f. *Serve all of America's communities* by improving climate resilience, public health, energy security and by creating high-road economic opportunity in urban, rural, and suburban communities and wilderness remote areas through partnerships with Tribal, territorial, state, and local governments, labor unions, and community-based organizations. The ACC will prioritize locally identified projects and projects that help meet the Biden-Harris Administration's Justice40 goal of ensuring that 40 percent of the overall benefits of Federal investments in addressing climate change flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, overburdened by pollution, and experiencing disproportionate impacts of climate change.

II. PURPOSE

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes an American Climate Corps Executive Committee ("Executive Committee") to provide leadership and consultation, working in coordination with an American Climate Corps Interagency Working Group ("Working Group") to carry out the charge of the Executive Committee across the Federal Government. Other Federal agencies may participate in this MOU at any time while it is in effect.

a. *Membership.*

- i. The Executive Committee will consist of the following parties:

- (1) Assistant to the President and National Climate Advisor.
- (2) CEO of AmeriCorps.
- (3) Secretary of Commerce.
- (4) Secretary of the Interior.
- (5) Secretary of Agriculture.
- (6) Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
- (7) Secretary of Labor.
- (8) Secretary of Energy.
- (9) Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency
- (10) Other agencies and departments as determined by the Executive Committee.

- ii. Membership in the Working Group includes each of the agencies, as appropriate, that are a party to this MOU and is open to all other Federal agencies relevant to the ACC or critical to its success.

b. *Mission and Work.*

- i. The Executive Committee will convene representatives of Federal agencies from across the Federal Government, as determined by the Executive Committee, to inform implementation of the ACC.
- ii. The Executive Committee and Working Group will coordinate and expand participating Federal corps programs and partnerships under a common ACC framework to ensure a new generation of workers are given the training and tools to enter high-quality careers in the clean energy and climate resilience economies, including through AmeriCorps, other national service, conservation and workforce development and training programs, and apprenticeship readiness programs that articulate to Registered Apprenticeship Programs.
- iii. Within 30 days of signing this MOU, the Executive Committee will convene.
- iv. The Working Group will implement the following actions, and others, as needed to achieve ACC goals:
 - (1) Convene listening sessions with key stakeholders, including but not limited to potential applicants; current corps partners; workforce development organizations; labor unions; Tribal, territorial, state, and local governments; nonprofit and philanthropic organizations; educational institutions; and relevant Federal Advisory Committee Act committees across the Federal Government to understand current interests, assess capacities, and explore opportunities.
 - (2) Finalize a set of standards for all Federal ACC programs to coordinate and align ACC efforts across Federal programs to achieve high-quality job opportunities, informed by Department of Labor's Good Jobs Principles and framework, and equitable workforce development, including but not limited to compensation guidelines, minimum term of service, benefits, and other services, including non-financial services and benefits that address barriers to employment and job retention.
 - (3) Collaborate with partners to expand and develop outreach, recruitment, and retention strategies and partnerships to effectively engage underserved, disadvantaged, and underrepresented communities.
 - (4) Launch a centralized ACC website and associated recruitment platform to promote ACC opportunities.
 - (5) Explore opportunities for further workforce and professional development certifications, e.g., coordinate training and professional development opportunities, connect ACC programs to apprenticeship readiness programs, Registered Apprenticeship Programs, and other proven training models,

- enhance the use of specialized hiring authorities, and collaborate with the private sector on high-quality employment pathways and opportunities.
- (6) Undertake a Federal Government-wide review of Federal statutes and hiring authorities, and align those authorities across Federal agencies to remove barriers and expand corps opportunities nationwide.
 - (7) Explore interagency and public-private cooperation to streamline systems, reporting mechanisms, programs, and contract and grants administration, and to improve accessibility in those areas across the Federal Government.
 - (8) Establish performance goals and objectives, reporting metrics, evaluation criteria, and resource requirements to assess ACC accomplishments.
 - (9) Ensure tracking of ACC participant hours and project accomplishments through a common reporting portal to support career pathways into Federal service.
 - (10) Collaborate to increase awareness of Federal funding and partnership opportunities, including multi-agency funding opportunities where appropriate.

c. *Administration.*

- i. The Executive Committee may be supported by an ACC (Hub) at AmeriCorps, subject to the availability of dedicated capacity for the Hub to advance the ACC.
- ii. Executive Committee agencies may seek additional staff capacity in their own agencies to work in coordination with the Hub.

III. AUTHORITIES

Authorities for the respective Parties to execute and implement activities carried out as part of this MOU include:

- Section 192A(g)(10)(B) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended (42 U.S.C. §12651b(g)(10)(B)).
- Section 4 of the Flood Control Act of 1944, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 460d).
- Federal Water Project Recreation Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. § 4601).
- Section 313 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1990 (33 U.S.C. § 2320).
- Section 225 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1992, (33 U.S.C. § 2328).
- Section 213 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (33 U.S.C. § 2339). National Forest System Lands, Organic Administration Act (16 U.S.C. § 551).
- Public Lands, Federal Land Policy and Management Act (43 U.S.C. § 1701 *et seq.*).
- National Park Service Organic Act (16 U.S.C. Chapter 1).
- Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. § 1721 *et seq.*) as amended by John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act (Pub. L. No. 116-9, 133 Stat. 580).
- Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (Pub. L. No. 117-58, 135 Stat. 429).
- Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (Pub. L. No. 117-169, 136 Stat. 1818).
- John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (Pub. L. No. 116-9, 133 Stat. 580).

- Youth Conservation Corps Act of 1970 (16 U.S.C. § 1701 *et seq.*).
- Take Pride in America Act (16 U.S.C. §§ 4601-4608).
- National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (16 U.S.C. § 668dd).
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. § 1801 *et seq.*).
- Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. § 1361 *et seq.*).
- National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. § 1431 *et seq.*).
- Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. § 1531 *et seq.*).
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. § 661 *et seq.*).
- Fish and Wildlife Act (16 U.S.C. § 742a *et seq.*).
- Coral Reef Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. § 6401 *et seq.*).
- Coast and Geodetic Survey Act (33 U.S.C. § 883a *et seq.*).
- Hydrographic Services Improvement Act (33 U.S.C. § 892 *et seq.*).
- Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. § 1451 *et seq.*).
- Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. § 3951 *et seq.*).
- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (42 U.S.C. §§ 9601 *et seq.*).
- Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 (16 U.S.C. § 1451 note).
- Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act of 2006 (33 U.S.C. § 1954)
- Oil Pollution Act (33 U.S.C. § 2701 *et seq.*).
- National Sea Grant College Program Act (33 U.S.C. § 1121 *et seq.*).
- RESTORE Act (33 U.S.C. § 1321).
- America COMPETES Act (33 U.S.C. § 893).
- The National and Community Service Act (42 U.S.C. § 12501 *et seq.*).
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. §§ 3191-3212)
- The National Apprenticeship Act (29 U.S.C. 50 *et seq.*)
- Title XXVI of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (25 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3507).
- Subtitle D of Title IV of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. § 17211 *et seq.*).
- Section 1011 of the Energy Act of 2020 (Division Z of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021).
- Sections 632-639 of EISA (42 U.S.C. §§ 17211-17218), as amended by Section 3001 of the Energy Act of 2020 (Division Z of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021).
- Section 103 of the Clean Air Act (42 USC 7403).
- Section 104 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1254).
- Section 8001 of the Solid Waste and Disposal Act (42 USC 6981).
- Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 (12 U.S.C. § 1701u).
- Sections 501 and 502 of the HUD Act of 1970 (12 U.S.C. §§ 1701z-1, 1701z-2).
- Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5301, *et seq.*).

- Titles I through V of Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4101, et seq.).
- Executive Order 13985, Advancing Race Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Throughout the Government.
- Executive Order 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad.
- Executive Order 14035, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility within the Federal Workforce.
- Executive Order 14031, Advancing Equity, Justice, and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.
- Executive Order 14041, White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity Excellence and Economic Opportunity Through Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- Executive Order 14045, White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics.

VIII. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- a. This MOU is neither a fiscal nor a funds obligating document. Nothing in this MOU may be construed to obligate the Parties to any current or future expenditure of resources in advance of the availability of appropriations from Congress. Nor does this MOU obligate the Parties to spend funds on any project or purpose, even if funds are available. Any endeavor involving reimbursement, contribution of funds, or other transfer of anything of value among the Parties will be handled in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures, including those applicable to Federal Government procurement and printing. These endeavors will be addressed in separate MOUs or other appropriate interagency agreements that will be executed by representatives of the Parties and that will be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority. This MOU does not provide that authority.
- b. The Parties will handle their own activities and use their own resources, including the expenditure of their own funds, in pursuing the objectives enumerated in this MOU. In implementing this MOU, each Party will be operating under its own laws, regulations, and policies and will be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.
- c. This MOU is not intended to, and does not create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, that are enforceable at law or equity against the United States, its agencies, its officers, agents, and employees, or any other person.
- d. No member of or delegate to Congress may benefit from this MOU either directly or indirectly.
- e. This MOU in no way restricts any of the Parties from participating in similar activities with other public or private agencies, organizations, and individuals.

IX. DURATION OF AGREEMENT, AMENDMENTS AND TERMINATION

This MOU supersedes the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps MOU signed December 19, 2012, and is effective immediately upon signature of all listed Parties and shall remain in effect

until it is superseded or terminated, whichever occurs first. This MOU may be modified or terminated at any time by mutual written consent of the Parties. Modification or termination of this MOU must be in writing, and documentation of the modification or termination must be signed and dated by all Parties. Any Party may withdraw from this MOU by providing 60 days written notice to all other Parties. This MOU will remain in effect as to all other Parties until superseded or terminated in accordance with this paragraph.

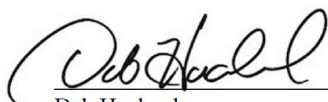
XII. SIGNATORIES



Gina M. Raimondo
Secretary
Department of Commerce

December 8, 2023

Date



Deb Haaland
Secretary
Department of the Interior

12/06/2023

Date



Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary
Department of Agriculture

December 12, 2023


Date



Julie A. Su
Acting Secretary
Department of Labor

December 14, 2023

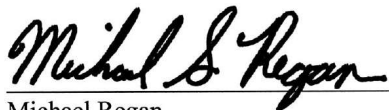
Date



Jennifer M. Granholm
Secretary
Department of Energy

December 09, 2023

Date



Michael Regan
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency

DEC - 8 2023

Date



Michael Smith
Chief Executive Officer
AmeriCorps

December 6, 2023

Date



Adrienne Todman
Acting Secretary
Department of Housing and Urban Development

September 19, 2024

Date