

BRIEFING STATEMENT

BUREAU: National Park Service (NPS)
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BACKGROUND

The John D Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act (Public Law 116-9 March 2019) establishes the John S. McCain III 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Act (21 CSC) that amends and expands the Public Lands Corps Act. Contained within the 21 CSC Act is the establishment of the Indian Youth Service Corps within the Public Lands Corps Program. “Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act, the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with Indian tribes, shall issue guidelines for the management of the Indian Youth Service Corps, in accordance with this Act and any other applicable Federal Laws.”

PURPOSE

Develop the operating guidance and framework for the establishment and management of the Indian Youth Service Corps Program within the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), and Interior.

FOCUS

This program is designed to provide a direct benefit to Native Americans and Tribal nations. Additionally, the projects conceived and developed through the IYSC Program will provide meaningful and quality educational and employment opportunities its’ participants.

OVERVIEW

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS CORPS

(1) IN GENERAL

There is established in the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Commerce a corps, to be known as the “Public Lands Corps”.

(2) NO EFFECT ON OTHER AGENCIES

Nothing in this subsection precludes the establishment of a public lands corps by the head of a Federal department or agency other than a department described in paragraph (1), in accordance with this subchapter.

(b) PARTICIPANTS

The Corps shall consist of individuals between the ages of 16 and 30, inclusive, and veterans age 35 or younger who are enrolled as participants in the Corps by the Secretary. To be eligible for enrollment in the Corps, an individual shall satisfy the criteria specified in paragraphs (1), (2), (4), and (5) of section 12591(a) of title 42. The Secretary may enroll such individuals in the Corps without regard to the civil service and classification laws, rules, or regulations of the

United States. The Secretary may establish a preference for the enrollment in the Corps of individuals who are economically, physically, or educationally disadvantaged.

(c) QUALIFIED YOUTH OR CONSERVATION CORPS

(1) IN GENERAL

The Secretary is authorized to enter into contracts and cooperative agreements with any qualified youth or conservation corps to perform appropriate conservation projects referred to in subsection (d).

(2) PREFERENCE

(A) In general

For purposes of entering into contracts and cooperative agreements under paragraph (1), the Secretary may give preference to qualified youth or conservation corps located in a specific area that have a substantial portion of members who are economically, physically, or educationally disadvantaged to carry out projects within the area.

(B) Priority projects

In carrying out priority projects in a specific area, the Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, give preference to qualified youth or conservation corps located in that specific area that have a substantial portion of members who are economically, physically, or educationally disadvantaged.

(d) PROJECTS TO BE CARRIED OUT

(1) IN GENERAL

The Secretary may utilize the Corps or any qualified youth or conservation corps to carry out appropriate conservation projects which the [Secretary](#) is authorized to carry out under other authority of law on [public lands](#).

(2) PROJECTS ON INDIAN LANDS

Appropriate conservation projects may also be carried out under this subchapter on [Indian lands](#) with the approval of the [Indian tribe](#) involved and on [Hawaiian home lands](#) with the approval of the Department of [Hawaiian Home Lands](#) of the [State](#) of Hawaii.

(3) DISASTER PREVENTION OR RELIEF PROJECTS

The [Secretary](#) may authorize [appropriate conservation projects](#) and other appropriate projects to be carried out on Federal, [State](#), local, or private land as part of a Federal disaster prevention or relief effort.

(e) PREFERENCE FOR CERTAIN PROJECTS In selecting [appropriate conservation projects](#) to be carried out under this subchapter, the [Secretary](#) shall give preference to those projects which—

(1)

will provide long-term benefits to the public;

(2)

will instill in the enrollee involved a work ethic and a sense of public service;

(3)

will be labor intensive;

(4)

can be planned and initiated promptly; and

(5)

will provide academic, experiential, or environmental education opportunities.

Hiring Authorities

- The PLC Program contains two special hiring authorities (The Public Lands Corps Non-Competitive Hiring Authority and the Resource Assistant Direct Hiring Authority)

PROPOSED INDIAN YOUTH SERVICE CORPS (IYSC) PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

*Meant as a starting point for discussion, debate and revision.

Participants

- Preference to members of nationally recognized tribal nations
- Preference to participants from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

Program Intent

- Advance the conservation of natural and cultural resources on Federal public lands and Tribal lands through maintenance, research, recreational and educational projects.
- Promote Native American self-determination.
- Promote economic development on Tribal lands.
- Provide non-Federal employment opportunities for youth and young adults with goal of developing gainful careers for the program participants.

Partner Organizations

- Indian Tribal nations
- Qualified youth or conservation corps should have representative leadership from participating tribal nations in coordinating and managing IYSC programs and projects.

IYSC PROGRAM MODELS

Traditional Service and Conservation Corps Model

- Episodic conservation crew team projects on public lands and within tribal nation boundaries. 4-12-week project durations
- Focus on natural and cultural resource conservation and preservation and maintenance.
- At least 10% of all participant project activity contains a structured educational component
- Types of projects can include but not limited to:
 - Cyclic maintenance
 - Restoration and rehabilitation of facilities

- Field-based service such as trail building/restoration, removing invasive species and habitat restoration
- Protecting wildlife and preserving lands and structures
- Enhancing recreation opportunities
- Preserving historic structures/artifacts

Individual Internship (Resource Assistant) Model

- Individual placement positions can include but are not limited to:
 - Research such as scientific, historic, archival, archaeological digs, oral histories, historic preservation, and habitat surveys etc.
 - Support management of natural and cultural resources such as developing and implementing resource stewardship plans, developing educational and informational materials for park visitors
 - Enhancing recreation opportunities
 - Preserving historic structures/artifacts
 - Technologically based natural and cultural resource educational programs and communication outreach
 - Visitor education
 - Interpretation of natural and cultural resources
 - Development of educational resource materials for visitors
 - Administrative project/program support
 - Cultural tourism

Participants are enrolled in high school or accredited higher education undergraduate and/or graduate programs or are recent graduates (2 years).

Vocational Skills Immersion (Apprenticeships)

- Programs and projects that focus on developing vocational trades skills in the areas of construction, electrical, plumbing and other appropriate trades.
- Projects/Programs have a duration between 4-12 months with set curriculum standards and industry recognized certifications for participants who have successfully completed the program requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

DOI Organization

- Establish a DOI IYSC Coordinator who can monitor the development and implementation of the program across the bureaus and support programs hosted by the Department of Agriculture and Commerce.
 - Serve as a facilitator for bureau and other Federal agency interaction with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Indian Education.
 - Facilitate reporting and coordination with participating Tribal nations.

Program Development

- Each DOI Bureau and participating Federal agency should have the flexibility to develop IYSC programs and projects that align their respective missions.
- Require annual IYSC reporting
- Develop dedicated funding sources for the IYSC Program.
- Make sure that IYSC programs and projects do not conflict with existing statutory regulations with Tribal nations.

CONSULTATION AND NEXT STEPS

- Establish tribal consultation process
- Establish an IYSC Program Advisory Council
- Establish compensation and terms of service standards
- Establish IYSC Guidance timelines for completion.

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