

**ARIZONA  
CLIMATE  
RESILIENCE  
CORPS**



# Our Center

- “Intermediary” -- we get and manage the grants, handle background chores; our partner sites focus on the programming
- Three AmeriCorps Seniors programs
- Five AmeriCorps programs
  - Environmental Literacy Corps/Arizona Climate Resilience Corps
  - Arizona Ready for College and Career
  - Public Health AmeriCorps
  - Arizona Teacher Residency
  - VISTA



Center for Service  
and Volunteerism

# ELC/AZCRC

- **Environmental Literacy Corps/Arizona Climate Resilience Corps**
  - Direct service such as environmental education
  - Tie to building resilience or addressing climate crises
  - Work in classrooms, non-profits, National Parks and Forests, local governments
  - 8 week to yearlong positions
  - FREE to host sites
  - High living allowances (at least \$19/hour)



# Our Pitch



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## SUMMARY:

The Center for Service and Volunteerism at Northern Arizona University will launch a climate corps initiative in Arizona to help mitigate our climate crisis. Members will work with a wide range of partners on environmental education, outreach, and volunteer coordination projects across Arizona. We will build on a foundation already in place from our Environmental Literacy Corps and expand into a full-fledged climate corps by offering higher stipends and providing AmeriCorps members to our partners at no cost to them.

## GROUNDWORK:

Environmental Literacy Corps (ELC) started in 2021 after a full year of planning and community organization, taking care to design our program around local goals and needs. In our first two years of operation, we built a strong network of partners and receive multiple applications for every corps member position we post. We work with our partners to design great experiences for our members, evidenced by a strong retention record and tendency for our partners to offer their members professional staff positions, which helps fulfill a workforce need and strengthens our connections with those partners. ELC's successes will serve as excellent underpinnings for a pilot climate corps program, tuned carefully to help mitigate the climate crisis in Arizona and make our communities more resilient.

Our experience running ELC has taught us that environmental work in Arizona happens at the ground level and is tailored to each community -- people living in downtown Phoenix are going to need very different invitations to participate in this movement than people ranching on the Navajo Nation or growing lettuce in Yuma County. Our partners are a wide assortment of local governments, nonprofits, subunits of federal agencies, and university departments, who each bring with them an intimate knowledge of their own communities and environments, and readily enlist others in advancing their missions. Through this partner network, we have the projects and the people we need to launch a climate corps.



- Arizona ranks 3rd in biodiversity nationally and is home to 6 distinct biomes.
  - 3 National Parks and 6 National Forests are located in the state.
  - Climate hazards including heat waves, wildfires, flooding, and water shortage put all of Arizona at risk, but especially our more vulnerable and marginalized populations.
- Arizona residents also have strong shared public values around the environment – 92% agree action is needed to preserve and protect our rivers, natural areas and wildlife; 85% want regulations put in place to protect rural water supplies; 85% think we should increase spending and measures to prevent forest fires on state land.\*



## LAUNCHING A CLIMATE CORPS IN ARIZONA:

With a broad consensus in Arizona's environmental values, our large and diverse set of partners at NAU, a solid member recruitment base, thoughtful planning and community organization from the ELC program, and a clear charge from the Governor's Office, a climate corps movement is ready to grow. This past year, our ELC program hosted 19 AmeriCorps members with 14 partner organizations. Many more partners have expressed interest in supporting members and have great projects, but many cite the required cost share in the grant as a stubborn obstacle.

Looking to our Public Health AmeriCorps (PHA) program, we find a ready solution: providing members to host sites at no cost. When we started PHA, we were able to quickly grow and engage 64 members and 28 partners in its first year. The most salient difference between the two programs is that PHA is free to partners and ELC is not. Research compiled by Headwaters Economics shows that match requirements create barriers to rural and low-capacity communities and could prevent them from accessing climate resilience funding.\*\* AmeriCorps members – particularly where they could count as in-kind match on partner sites' applications for other funding -- would help build real momentum for climate resilience projects in direct and practical as well as financial ways. Further, this initial yearlong pilot can serve as proof of concept for partners and funders looking to provide enduring support for this work.

Clearing the match obstacle for our partners will result in more opportunities for our members, whose experiences will be further enriched by better stipends and a larger cohort. We already see more applicants than positions in our ELC program; many of our existing partners have been willing to spend extra on their members in the form of higher stipends, professional development funds, and even rent support. Raising the stipend for our members to the equivalent of \$30,000 (prorated down for shorter terms at \$17.65/hour) would draw even more members to these programs and enhance equity in access to these opportunities. We will invite partners to bring their own investments to our members' experiences, expanding funding for professional development, rent support, or other benefits. There's also something to be said for a critical mass – with many more members working on different projects all over the state, our members will have a ready network of peers and collaborators to share with and learn from, and who can work their way up through the ranks together as they begin careers in climate resilience.

The prospect of starting a climate corps has been enticing to everyone we've talked to, from academic units at NAU to the University of Arizona's Cooperative Extension Service and Arizona State University's Sustainable Cities Network; to the US Forest Service and National Park Service to public school systems in Flagstaff and Phoenix; and to City and County government divisions including open space, housing, water conservation, sustainability, and more. Projects would be as diverse as our partner agencies, but all would focus on environmental education, outreach, or coordination – essentially, where environmental issues meet the social fabric of Arizona, which will play a foundational role in our efforts to mitigate climate crises and build resilience.

## PARTNERS:

- University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Service
- Arizona State University Sustainable Cities Network
- The Nature Conservancy
- City of Flagstaff
- Coconino National Forest
- Kaibab National Forest
- Flagstaff Area National Monuments
- Flagstaff Unified School District
- NAU School of Earth and Sustainability
- NAU Sustainable Communities
- NAU School of Forestry
- NAU Center for Science Teaching and Learning
- Southwest Fire Science Consortium
- Grand Canyon Trust
- Flagstaff Junior Academy
- Mountain Charter School
- Terra BIRDS
- Coconino County Sustainable Housing Projects

*Note: More sites across Arizona would quickly come online with this climate corps funding.*



## PROJECTS:

- STEM/Environmental Education
- Sustainable Building Specialist
- Home Electrification Specialist
- Fire Ecology Educator
- Fire Adapted Communities Network Coordinator
- Forestry Curriculum Specialist
- Neighborhood Outreach Specialist – Invasive Species
- Summer Camp Counselors/Environmental Educators
- K-12 Community Educator – Food, Water, Energy
- Emergency Management Assistant



References:  
\*[https://www.arizonafuture.org/media/unfojhmh/cfa\\_arizona\\_we\\_want\\_the\\_decade\\_ahead\\_digital.pdf](https://www.arizonafuture.org/media/unfojhmh/cfa_arizona_we_want_the_decade_ahead_digital.pdf)  
\*\*<https://headwaterseconomics.org/equity/match-requirements/>

# Funding

- Foundation funding for one year -- \$945k
  - Flexible, private philanthropy
  - California Volunteers Fund
  - Contributors include Aileen Getty Foundation, Eleven Eleven Foundation, Susie and Mark Buell, and Waverley Street Foundation.
- Funding from the Governor's Office for year 3 of ELC -- \$474k
  - Currently in a recompetete round
- Allows us to waive cost shares and pay members well
- Plug for Headwaters Economics article about match requirements
  - <https://headwaterseconomics.org/equity/match-requirements/>

# '23-'24 Outlook

- 75 members expected
  - Up from 19 in '22-'23
  - Main barrier has been match
- Reasons to expect success
  - PHA no match model success
  - “Oversubscribed” in CA
  - Strong track record for environmental position recruitment
- 47 interested partners
  - Still collecting site applications
  - Large January cohort

# Position Types and Member Benefits

Slot Type	Cost to Host Site	Weeks	Weekly Hours	Total Stipend	Education Award	Member Receives
1200 Hour Short	<b>FREE</b>	32	35-40	\$24,640	\$5,177	\$29,817
Long	"	40	30-32	"	"	"
900 Hour Short	<b>FREE</b>	26	35-40	\$17,600	\$3,698	\$21,298
Medium	"	36	25-30	"	"	"
Long	"	50	18-20	"	"	"
675 Hour Short	<b>FREE</b>	22	30-32	\$13,376	\$2,817	\$16,193
Long	"	32	20-22	"	"	"
450 Hour Short	<b>FREE</b>	14	32-35	\$9,152	\$1,956	\$11,108
Medium	"	24	18-20	"	"	"
Long	"	36	10-15	"	"	"
300 Hour Short	<b>FREE</b>	8	37-38	\$7,392	\$1,565	\$8,957
Medium	"	12	23-26	"	"	"
Long	"	16	18-20	"	"	"
Extra Long	"	30	10-12	"	"	"



**NAU** NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY



**Thank you!**

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