

**Serve Learn Earn**  
**Interim Report for Forest Parks and Recreation**  
**Submitted by VT Youth Conservation Corps**  
**Reporting period: 7/1/22-12/31/22**

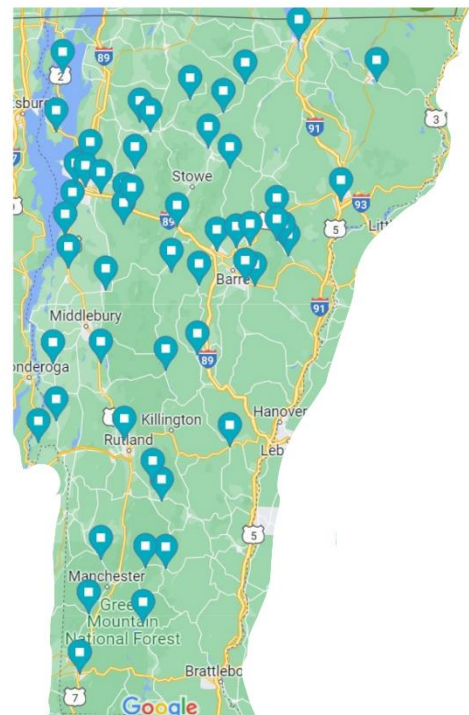


## Introduction

Now in our second year of funding, Serve Learn Earn continues to meet or exceed expectations. Since July of 2022 we have offered paid training and service opportunities to 299 participants who have completed 1,674 weeks of service. These figures **represent an increase of over 18% in paid service learning opportunities compared to this time last year.**

We are in an exciting phase of our collaborative where we are growing the investment in Serve Learn Earn. We are enrolling more participants and expanding our programming to include training in more critical job areas, such as renewable technology. Our geographic reach is expanding to all corners of the state. With new programs located as far away as Newport and Bennington, Serve Learn Earn is one of the few state-wide partners in workforce development.

We are building on the strong foundation built by our four organizations. Together, we are creating pathways for Vermonters, and those eager to move to Vermont, to serve and learn in their communities, and gain valuable skills and credentials that will lead to meaningful employment. We continue to focus our training on high-priority areas in the trades, construction, conservation, food security, outdoor recreation and education, as well as green construction and weatherization. We are proud of what we have accomplished and grateful for the significant state support for our collaboration and work. Support from the State of Vermont is allowing our organizations to build the systems necessary to increase access to, and the impact of, our workforce development programs. Additionally, there are a growing number of employers benefiting from this collaborative and our pipeline of skilled workers, and whose guidance and feedback is critical for this work. Without employer perspective and engagement, we would be unprepared to fully address workforce development challenges and shortages will continue to persist.



*Map of Serve Learn Earn program locations in 2022.*

## High Level Accomplishments

- Since July 2022, partners have offered paid training experiences to 299 participants who have completed approximately 1,674 service weeks. 83 of these participants are AmeriCorps Members, unlocking an additional Segal Education Award for each member.
- Provided participants with over \$1,151,800 in wages and compensation; an increase of \$428K compared to last year at this time. This is in addition to the value of training and certifications many participants earned.
- Completed a broad array of high-priority Conservation, Carpentry, Food Security, and Outdoor Recreation and Education projects that all Vermonters benefit from.
- Created new opportunities to address high-priority workforce needs by hosting additional sections of established training programs, as well as the creating new training intensives in renewable energy and green construction.
- In March we hired the first director of Serve Learn Earn, Kate Gluckman. Funding for this position came through multi-year capacity-building private philanthropy, an investment that reflects the ability of the Serve Learn Earn coalition to leverage our partnership and state funding to catalyze other sources of funding and support.



*VYCC Crews hard at work harvesting rows and rows of leafy greens!*

*Feedback from VYCC Health Care Share Recipient: "It has dramatically increased our vegetable intake and made me more mindful of what I'm feeding myself and my family. It also helped us stretch our food budget further."*

In addition to these broader accomplishments, a detailed snapshot of progress to date can be seen in Appendix A – Performance Metrics – SERVE LEARN EARN

The accomplishments in Appendix A reflect the priorities of organizations that are always working to find new and innovative solutions that support Vermonters. Each organization has made significant progress toward – and in some cases already exceeded – program goals. This can be seen in the following summaries of organizational accomplishments.

## VYCC

- VYCC provided a total of 190 paid positions to participants who completed 668 service weeks; 83 of these participants were AmeriCorps Members. This is an increase in paid positions of 32% over last year at this time.
- Significantly increased weekly pay from 2022. Corps members earned over \$300K more than in the previous reporting period.
- Provided training for 18 participants who completed 31 service weeks on state land parks. Park infrastructure and trail projects in Stillwater State Park, Groton State Forest, and Molly's Falls were completed, making these parks a more enjoyable experience for visitors.

- Over 400 families were provided fresh produce each week for over four months through the Health Care Share program; 69 participants served for over 470 weeks to manage and run this program.
- 93 participants served for 158 weeks learning and serving on projects in outdoor recreation, water quality and conservation, forestry, and carpentry.
- Completed the most complex building project in the history of VYCC with the hut project at Grout Pond; a 2-story, 4-season structure that was built by VYCC crews from foundation to finishing touches.
- Launched a Pro Crew in Forestry in 2022 and worked with FPR staff on highly technical tree felling projects in Groton State Forest.
- Provided mental health support to each member and each crew
- Provided one-on-one career counseling to each member and crew



*Celebrating at the entrance to the completed Grout Pond Hut!*

## ReSOURCE

- ReSOURCE provided paid service-learning positions to 54 participants who completed 767 service weeks.
- 15 Full-time AmeriCorps positions entered a year of service.
- 22 Weatherization and Construction Intensive trainees earned one or several professional development skill certifications.
- 22 of 31 Intensive and YouthBuild participants earned an industry-recognized certification including OSHA-10 or NCCER. Most of the remaining 9 are still working toward credentials. Some trainees earned more than one credential—52 credentials were awarded.
- 23 participants graduated while 19 remain active.
- 12 of 23 graduates were employed within 3 months of completing the program with an average hourly wage of \$19.02.
- ReSOURCE has more than doubled the planned Industry Certified 101 Trainings to now include HVAC and Certified Logistics Associate Training in addition to continued expansion of Weatherization and Construction 101 offerings all around the state.
- 21 Service Projects completed ranging in size from a unit of affordable housing rehabilitated by YouthBuild team, several public facility infrastructure projects, to construction of outdoor furniture for nonprofit agencies.



*Youth Build participants learning basic carpentry skills by building benches for local nonprofit organizations. Youth Build is located in Barre and Burlington VT.*



## Vermont Works for Women

- Two Trailblazer cohorts completed the program; one in the construction trades and one in renewable energy and green construction. Programs were held in Rutland and South Burlington.
- 18 women total participated, completing 80 weeks of service and one service project with community partners.
- 12 completed work intern experiences, with 13 employers across VT and 631 hours of services to employers.
- 18 employers completed Gender Equity training with VWW staff.
- 4 Trailblazer graduates were offered full or part-time employment with their internship hosts.
- As of the end of 2022, we have trained 92 Trailblazers and of those, 41 (or 45%) have gone on to work in nontraditional jobs.



*"It [Trailblazers] has given me the opportunity to explore an area of personal potential that I would not otherwise have been able to explore. The internship introduced me to a completely different kind of work experience than I had had before, which was a valuable and broadening experience in and of itself, AND led to ongoing work opportunities."*

*-Graduate in Rutland 2022*

## Audubon Vermont

- Audubon Vermont offered 37 paid service learning opportunities for teens and young adults. Those opportunities included positions as Counselors-In Training (CIT), Summer Camp Educators, AmeriCorps Members, Conservation Techs, and Internships. Combined, these positions worked a total of 5,558 hours or 159 weeks. Young adults in these roles directly engaged 1,126 children in outdoor education.
- For the second summer in a row we were able to offer our Counselors-In-Training (CITs) pay to work alongside our professional education staff and our Camp Instructors at our summer day camps. For most of these teens, being a CIT was their first paid job experience. We increased the number of these positions from 9 to 11, a 20% increase from last year.
- Four AmeriCorps members participated in our program helping us to build program capacity and expand our programming outside of our typical service area. Our Community Science and Chapter Engagement member engaged 44 people in volunteer bird monitoring efforts.



*Junior Conservation Techs with tools to help manage trails at the Audubon Center.*

- Audubon hired a total of six interns, one Education Intern, two Conservation Interns, two policy interns and one Forest Conservation Intern. Our interns worked closely with an Audubon staff person who served as their mentor. Our Education Intern led programs for 171 children visiting the Audubon Center on field trips, outreach programs at a local library and working with Audubon's summer camps. Conservation Interns helped to monitor Common Tern chicks on Poppasquash Island on Lake Champlain, learned to band birds and visited farms to learn from Audubon's Conservation Biologists about how farming practices can be improved to provide healthy pollinator and bird habitat. Our Forest Conservation Intern worked with Audubon's forester to conduct forest bird habitat assessments for private landowners.
- Audubon Vermont continues to work with an evaluation consultant, PEER Associates in Richmond, Vermont. PEER is currently helping Audubon to analyze data collected through program participant surveys to develop a marketing piece for Audubon's Youth Leadership program. All youth participants continue to participate in exit interviews and/or post program surveys to help Audubon understand the impact their programs are having on Vermont's youth.



*"Helping evaluate the forest conditions of private landowners looking to participate in the Bird-friendly Maple project was a hands-on learning experience in forest health that I will never forget." (BF Conservation Intern, Jacob)*

*Jacob Crawford worked as a Bird-Friendly Maple Conservation Intern with Audubon VT in the summer of 2022 and then applied to be a full-time Community Science and Chapter Engagement AmeriCorps member with Audubon. He is now serving in that 11-month role.*

## Challenges

With the new director in place we are now building more robust coordination between organizations. Our organizations are already working more closely: recruitment, programming, and joint fundraising efforts are proving successful. We now want to explore more integrated programming, administrative efficiencies, and collaborative outreach. We are working to secure private funds that will allow us to build SLE infrastructure and marketing resources, as well as allow partners to commit more staff time to these projects.

Recruitment remains an on-going challenge. It is no small thing to hire almost 300 participants in under six months. Strong and inspiring organizational cultures, relevant missions, creativity, organized teams, and financial resources are all paramount; as is housing. Our staff continue to struggle to find housing in the communities we serve and in some unfortunate situations, are unable to accept positions due to the lack of housing.

We are also finding that some of our trainees want to accept job offers, but need additional post-program support to be able to seize these opportunities. Many applicants, especially women, still struggle with childcare and transportation challenges, making it difficult to accept job offers.

**Summary:** Looking forward, we are working to enroll additional participants. We expect we will exceed most of our targets identified in scope of work agreement for this year. Programmatically, we are beginning conversations regarding designing SLE pathways between organizations to increase the scope and breath of training available to participants, and to create longer engagements leading to expanded career readiness.

We are proud of the accomplishments above and are grateful for the continued support from the State of Vermont. We have the momentum to meet or exceed all of the specific goals set in our grant agreement. As we enter the next phase of this collaboration, with an increased focus on systems building and resource development, we are demonstrating that paid learning-service opportunities are part of the broad systemic change that needs to occur in Vermont. Together we are addresses a nexus of challenges facing our workers, communities, and climate.



*A participant learns how to blow cellulose insulation during the Weatherization 101 Intensive in Barre, VT during the October 2022 session.*

**APPENDIX A – PERFORMANCE METRICS – SERVE LEARN EARN**

\*\* Many outcomes are affected by the interim nature of this report and by the timing of programming and participant tracking. Current data such as graduation rates, job placements, project completion, and credentials earned only reflect what has happened during the reporting time period, and do not reflect the on-going and future programming planned for the remainder of the granting cycle. \*\*

	<b>Target Metric</b>	<b>Progress to Date: 7/1/22-12/31/22</b>
<b>VYCC Work on Public Lands</b>		
	<b>VYCC</b>	
	Perform construction activity under the direction of State onsite construction work supervisor	18 positions completing 31 service weeks.
	Campsite and Lean-to Improvements – Stillwater, Brighton, Little River, Maidstone State Parks, Kettle Pond	At Stillwater State Park a VYCC AmeriCorps crew resurfaced 2000 square feet at a waterfront pavilion and installed a charcoal grill.
	Kettle Pond Universal Accessible Trail-boardwalk replacement and ADA upgrades	A VYCC crew returned to Kettle Pond State Park to complete the construction of the accessible boardwalk started in 2021. Another 88' of boardwalk was deconstructed and rebuilt by the VYCC AmeriCorps Crew at 5' wide.
	Remote Site Development at Molly's Fall's, Green River Reservoir and Waterbury Reservoir	A VYCC AmeriCorps crew spent much of their season working on the remote campsites around the newly established Molly's Falls Pond State Park. There they cut and constructed 3 composting toilets to add to the remote campsite infrastructure. Composting toilets concentrate and contain waste and keep from contaminating the pond and campsites.
	Cabin Renovation and moldering toilet repair at Coldwater Brook	Coldwater Brook Cabin Restoration: a VYCC AmeriCorps crew had the amazing opportunity to work on the historic Coldwater Brook cabin in Groton State Forest. 2022 was the first year of three phases of restoration on the cabin. This year's work included jacking up the cabin, replacing sill logs and footings, repairing the stone wall enclosing the cabin's crawlspace, and splicing in new logs in a wall damaged by fire.

	Tree management project with VT State Parks	A small VYCC Pro Forest crew removed hazard trees in campgrounds within Groton State Forest. The crew worked closely with FPR staff to fell 58 Hazard Trees before, limbing, and bucking to firewood size. The felling of snags is a highly technical project, and this was a great opportunity for this crew to take the tree felling skills they developed throughout the 2022 field season
<b>Additional Project Performance Measures</b>	<b>Target Metric</b>	<b>Progress to Date: 7/1/22-12/31/22</b>
<b>Diversified Agriculture and Food Security</b>		
	<b>VYCC</b>	
	73 positions completing 616 service weeks	69 paid members completed 479 service weeks
	6 months of weekly Health Care Share for 400 families	414 Health Care Share Member Families 12-17 weeks of food deliveries; 930 individuals benefit
	90% of Health Care Share Members report increased health/nutritional knowledge	88% of Health Care Share Members report increased health/nutritional knowledge
<b>Outdoor Recreation</b>		
	<b>VYCC</b>	
	32 paid positions completing 42 service weeks	58 paid positions, 69 service weeks
	27 miles of trails improved	16 miles of trail improved
	106 new drains to be added to trail tread	75 new drains installed
	292 existing drains maintained in trail tread	93 drains maintained
<b>Water Quality</b>		
	<b>VYCC</b>	
	17 paid positions completing 25 service weeks	12 Paid Positions, 20 service weeks
	123 acres impacted/mitigated	24 acres impacted
	65 erosion control structures installed	77 erosion control structures installed
	2,600 riparian trees maintained/planted	1,260 trees planted, 532 native plants planted, 3,395 trees maintained
	1,200 water chestnuts removed from Lake Champlain and tributaries	54,355 water chestnut rosettes removed
<b>Forestry</b>		



	<b>VYCC</b>	
	10 paid positions completing 20 service weeks	10 paid positions, 21 service weeks
	60 acres of forest treatments	35 acres of forest treatments (Timber stand improvements including: crop tree release, patch cuts, sapling release, invasive control.)
	75 acres of invasive plant removal	11.75 acres of invasive plant control
<b>Carpentry</b>		
	<b>VYCC</b>	
	36 paid positions completing 36 service weeks	23 paid positions, 48 service weeks
	11 distinct projects, including privies, bridges, sheds, etc.	11 distinct projects including: 2-story structure build, privy build, boardwalk build, kiosk build,
	800 feet of boardwalk installed	541 linear feet of boardwalk constructed
	<b>ReSOURCE AmeriCorps</b>	
	12 trainees completing 552 weeks of service, 22,080 hours of service	15 Trainees enrolled/retained for 310 service weeks completing 10,389 hours of service
	13 community service construction projects completed	4 community service projects completed
	<b>ReSOURCE Construction and Weatherization Intensives</b>	
	78 Trainees enrolled/retained for 312 weeks, completing 9750 hours of service & 30 public structures built	30 Trainees enrolled/retained for 158 service weeks completing 5,090 hours of service, and 7 public structures built
	15 NCCER, OSHA-10, or First Aid Certifications achieved	22 NCCER, OSHA-10, or First Aid Certifications achieved
	70 Employer placements in 1st quarter after exit	12 Employer placements in 1st quarter after exit
	\$17.25/hour wage of trainees placed in employment	\$19.02/hour wage of trainees placed in employment
	30 public facility construction projects completed	7 public facility construction projects completed
	13 Intensive Cohorts	5 Intensive Cohorts
	<b>ReSOURCE YouthBuild</b>	
	25 Trainees enrolled/retained for 1150 weeks, completing 18,400 hours of service & 35 public structures built	9 Trainees enrolled/retained for 299 service weeks completing 6,347 hours of service, and 2 units of affordable

		housing rehab, 4 public facility projects, and 4 other public structures built
	38 NCCER, OSHA-10, or First Aid Certifications achieved	No NCCER, OSHA-10, or First Aid Certifications have been achieved yet, as all students enrolled have not yet received training that will take place in the Spring of 2023
	18 Employer placements in 1st quarter after exit	No placements have been made, as all students remain active in training
	\$15/hour wage of trainees placed in employment	Wage data will be reported once students have been placed in employment following completion of training
	<b>Vermont Works for Women - Trailblazers</b>	
	40 Trainees enrolled/retained for 220 weeks, completing 3 service projects in partnership with community partners	18 trainees enrolled/retained for 80 weeks, completed 1 service project in partnership with community partners
	35 NCCER Certifications achieved	10 OSHA-10 certifications
	25 Employer partners	20 Employee partners
	<b>Vermont Works for Women - Youth@Work</b>	
	10 Participants Enrolled/retained	Program has been redesigned to be a one-week intensive for the same population occurring in June 2023. Now called LIFT.
<b>Conservation &amp; Education</b>		
	<b>Audubon Vermont</b>	
	74 paid positions providing 356 weeks of service	37 paid positions provided 159 weeks of service.
	3,000 Children ages 2-13 served through education programs	1126 Children were engaged in outdoor education.
	200 volunteers engaged in community science projects and special events	44 volunteers engaged in bird monitoring efforts.