



Conservation Service Corps Grants

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and the Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) are pleased to announce the release of the 2024 Conservation Service Corps grant cycle **with up to \$1.2 million in funding** for outdoor recreation, stewardship, and restoration projects completed by conservation service corps members. The goal of these funds is to employ youth and young adults (ages 14-25) throughout the state on critical outdoor recreation and natural resource stewardship projects using the network of conservation service corps accredited by CYCA.

BACKGROUND: Colorado's iconic public lands and natural resources are essential for communities across the state. The U.S. Department of Commerce found that outdoor recreation in Colorado contributed \$11.6 billion to the national gross domestic product and generated more than 125,000 jobs. However, the relatively low unemployment in our state belies that youth and young adults lag behind these circumstances and suffer longer-term impacts on their economic circumstances.

Just as young people are ready and eager to work, our public and protected lands require constant maintenance to ensure they remain accessible. 92% of Coloradans participate in some form of outdoor recreation activity every year—5.2 million people—and 64% recreate outdoors once a week. This growing engagement is matched by increasing challenges to our iconic resources. Our outdoor recreation infrastructure, such as trails and campgrounds, need more expansion and/or maintenance than ever. Climate change is producing conditions conducive to wildfires and the spread of invasive species threaten riparian areas and critical water flow.

Conservation service corps in Colorado engage more than 1,600 members annually to perform land, water, and energy projects to conserve resources and steward public lands. These efforts help mitigate the threat of natural disasters, such as flooding and wildfire; return delicate ecosystems back to balance; and maintain recreation infrastructure so they remain accessible for all.

ABOUT US: Since 1992, GOCO has been investing a portion of Colorado Lottery proceeds to help preserve and enhance the state's parks, trails, wildlife, rivers, and open spaces. Our independent board awards competitive grants to local governments and land trusts and makes investments through Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Created by voters, GOCO has committed more than \$1.4 billion in Lottery proceeds to more than 5,600 projects in all 64 counties without a single dollar coming from taxpayers' pockets. For more information, please visit www.GOCO.org.

CYCA is a statewide coalition of 8 conservation service corps that employ and train youth, young adults, and veterans on land, water, and energy conservation projects. Corps are a proven strategy for engaging young people in service to their communities and stewardship of their environment while cultivating in them valuable skills to meet the challenges of the 21st century. For more information about conservation service corps, or to find the accredited conservation corps that serves your region, please go to www.CYCA.org.

General Guidance and Grant Information

IMPORTANT DATES: Applicants must submit applications to CYCA **no later than 4:00pm on Wednesday, July 26th, 2023.** ***We strongly encourage early submissions to avoid missing the application deadline.*** The GOCO Board will make grant awards **in early December.** Successful applicants shall have **one** year from the award date to complete the proposed project and submit final documentation.

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS: After receiving an application, CYCA partners with GOCO staff and outside peer reviewers to review applications, assess the merits of each project based on the applicant submission, and develop a consensus on which projects to fund. The proposal review committee reserves the right to request additional or clarifying information; and/or request revisions on any component of the application.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY: This program is open to the following entities eligible to receive GOCO open space and/or local government funds:

- a) Colorado municipality or county
- b) Political subdivision of the State of Colorado that includes in its mission the identification, acquisition, or management of open space and natural areas
- c) Title 32 special district eligible to receive distributions from the Conservation Trust Fund
- d) 501(c)(3) non-profit land conservation organization that includes in its mission the identification, acquisition, or management of open space and natural areas, e.g., land trusts

PROJECT/PROPERTY ELIGIBILITY:

- a) Applicants must apply for a minimum of **two weeks of conservation service corps work.** One week of work consists of a minimum of 320 hours of labor (8 people for 40 hours each, for example) inclusive of one-way travel and 4-5 hours per week of on-site education activities for the crew.
- b) The project's primary objective must consist of enhancing/restoring open space, wildlife habitat, or other ecosystem (e.g. noxious weed removal, forest health, fire recovery, flood recovery, riparian restoration, etc.) or constructing/enhancing/restoring trails or other passive recreational infrastructure including signs, fences, tent pads, etc.

Please note: We welcome forest health projects with impacts beyond defensible space where outcomes enhance or restore open space, wildlife habitat, or improve other ecosystem considerations.

- c) The project must occur on land owned or controlled by a:
 - i. municipality, county, or other political subdivision of the state;
 - ii. land trust or other private party when the land is permanently protected by a conservation easement or other permanent use restriction; or
 - iii. federal agency

Please note: while federal agencies are not an eligible applicant, projects that occur on federally-managed land are permissible if they are to perform stewardship or restoration projects; or develop improvements for or stewardship of passive recreation, e.g. soft surface trails. The applicant must be a local government or open space organization and they must clearly demonstrate how their community will benefit from the project—such as demonstrable impact on the local economy, improvement of an interconnected riparian area, etc.

- d) Projects must provide a public benefit and comply with any conservation easement, other use restriction, or government policies or procedures concerning management of the property's resources.
- e) Applicant must demonstrate capacity to host a conservation service corps crew, and coordinate closely with the corps in advance of submitting a proposal, to ensure the project is appropriate.

TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION: Successful applicants must complete the proposed work within one year of the grant award date. Applicants must respond to a CYCA-generated project evaluation upon completion of the project. GOCO may deauthorize a grant if the project is not completed within that time, or by any extended period of time authorized by staff or the board.

COSTS AND MATCH: The table below provides a brief description of available crews and the weekly rates for each crew. Please only include requests for conservation service corps labor; materials, equipment, staff time, and any other costs are ineligible for funding but may serve as match. Please discuss any potential project expenses with GOCO to determine the eligibility of those expenses prior to applying. Applications require a minimum of 10% match, 100% of which can be in-kind and may be from the applicant, the conservation service corps, or other contributing project partners. If the applicant is unable to meet this match requirement, please reach out to CYCA to discuss a match waiver justification.

Weekly Crew Rates:		
Day Crew	crews go home each night and travel to the project daily	\$8,600/week
Camping Crew	crews camp at or near the project, sponsors should work with the conservation service corps to help secure free camping	\$9,350/week
Chainsaw and/or Herbicide Application Crew	includes day crew and camping crews, 80% of the crew is chainsaw trained, or meets state herbicide application compliance requirements	\$11,100/week

WORKING WITH A CONSERVATION SERVICE CORPS:

From project planning to completion, it is easy to use a conservation service corps. Corps are high-capacity organizations that are well-prepared; they arrive with the equipment, skills and supervision to succeed. After talking with a potential sponsor, the conservation service corps will match the right type of crew for the project.

Typical projects include:

- constructing and maintaining Colorado’s trail system
- improving outdoor recreation amenities such as playgrounds and parks
- forest health
- restoring wildlife habitat
- installing and dismantling fences
- mitigating and removing invasive species

Shared Project Responsibility

Hosting a conservation service corps requires cooperation, communication, and shared responsibility. Many sponsors ask, “what do I need to provide?” The chart below details how corps generally share responsibility. Of course, a project may require a different breakdown of responsibilities which you can discuss with corps staff as you plan the project.

Conservation Service Corps Responsibilities	Project Sponsor Responsibilities
Pre-project walk-through with sponsor’s staff	Project planning
Adult supervision	Pre-project walk-through with corps staff
Youth/young adult crew (at least 8 people and 320 hours of labor)	Specialty tools (if necessary)
Basic tools	Sponsor staff person available to answer questions and check work regularly
Transportation	Complete an end-of-project evaluation

Camp equipment & food (if necessary)	Access to free camping (if necessary)
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What Conservation Service Corps Are

- Youth, young adult and veteran workforce development programs
- Programs focused on developing youth and young adults through service
- Programs focused on providing veterans experience for post-service conservation careers
- Programs focused on environmental education and ethic of stewardship

What Conservation Service Corps Are Not

- Professional contract-work crews
- Volunteer programs
- Recreation or summer camp programs
- Court-ordered or juvenile-offender diversion programs
- Wilderness therapy or mental health counseling

PROJECT PROMOTION: Applicant must agree to promote a funded project using social and traditional media.

CONTACT: We encourage you to thoroughly review all application materials and to discuss any questions or concerns that arise throughout the process in advance of submitting your proposal. We look forward to working with you!

Please direct questions about applicant or project eligibility to:

Sammie George

GOCO Program Officer

720.576.4112

sgeorge@goco.org

For all other inquiries, please contact:

Scott Segerstrom

Executive Director

303.863.0604

ssegerstrom@cyca.org

To locate and contact the conservation service corps serving your area, please visit

<https://www.cyca.org/hire-a-corps/>

Submit the following documents to Nancy Weil, nweil@cyca.org. CYCA strongly encourages submission via email but please contact CYCA if you wish to submit via an alternative means, e.g. fax, standard mail, FedEx, in-person, etc.

Document 1: Full Project Proposal

Please submit a single document (PDF preferred) comprised of the following **in the order listed**:

- Summary Form
- Proposal Narrative *Please include the HEADINGS with your answers; limited to THREE (3) pages*
- Proposals should include at least **TWO** (2) maps: 1) a project location map showing the general location and surrounding context, and 2) a detailed map for each discrete project location showing the specific project area and components in sufficient detail. Please label the maps and appropriately reference them in the narrative proposal. Format maps for 8 ½" x 11" paper.
- Assurance and Signature Page
- Letter of authorization from holder of the conservation easement or other use restriction that indicates that the anticipated work does not violate the easement/use restriction (**IF APPLICABLE**)

Please note that CYCA will not accept CDs, DVDs, videos, brochures, or any other additional attachments.

Applicants will be provided a receipt upon submission to CYCA.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name: _____ **Title:** _____
Organization Name: _____
Organization Type: Select an Organization Type
Phone: _____ **Email:** _____
Partnering Conservation Service Corps: Select a Youth Corps

TECHNICAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact person for coordination of technical aspects of project (if different from applicant, above)

Name: _____ **Title:** _____
Organization Name: _____
Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: _____
Property Name: _____
Landowner Name: _____
Property Type: Select a Property Type
County/Counties: _____
What entities will facilitate the required 4 hours of education per week: (check all that apply)
 Applicant
 Conservation service corps
 External facilitator
 Other:

BUDGET INFORMATION

Select from the pulldown menu the type of conservation service corps crew requested and number of weeks for that crew type:

<i>Example</i>	<i>Crew Type:</i>	<i>Camping Crew - \$9,350/wk</i>	<i>Weeks:</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Total \$:</i>	<i>\$17,200</i>
Crew Type:	Select a Crew Type		Weeks:		Total \$:	
Crew Type:	Select a Crew Type		Weeks:		Total \$:	
Crew Type:	Select a Crew Type		Weeks:		Total \$:	
Crew Type:	Select a Crew Type		Weeks:		Total \$:	
Crew Type:	Select a Crew Type		Weeks:		Total \$:	

TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED:

MATCH INFORMATION

Please input the matching funds provided, cash or in-kind (if applicable):

Item	Source	Calculation	Cost
<i>Example: Chipper</i>	<i>Trees R Us</i>	<i>4 weeks at \$1,000/wk</i>	<i>\$4,000</i>

TOTAL MATCH PROVIDED:

BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In the box below, provide a brief summary/overview of your proposal (100 words or less):

Answer each of the following Selection Criteria questions: Three (3) pages maximum, 11-point type, 1-inch margins. Please include the question title (**not the entire question**) and answer each question.

1. **PROJECT OVERVIEW, NEED, and BENEFITS:** Describe in detail the work activities that will be performed during this project. Include the expected outputs of the project, such as miles of trail built, acres of invasive species to be removed, acres of forest thinned, etc.

How this project is a priority for your community? Describe the specific needs being met by this project, who will directly benefit from this project, and the impacts and outcomes if this project is not undertaken.

2. **PLANNING & READINESS, and SUSTAINABILITY:** Describe the planning process for this project, including who was involved in the project development. Are all approvals, permits, and other required components in place? If not, describe the status of those components. Are there any barriers to completing the project by December 31, 2024?

Describe the sustainability of this project and its impacts, and who will be directly responsible for those activities. For example, consider the following when reflecting on the long-term stewardship plans for your project:

Specific to invasive species projects: describe the upstream contamination and how that will impact this project's sustainability. Describe the downstream contamination and how this project may impact those areas. Who will provide monitoring? Who will eradicate re-growth? What resources are in place to commit to those efforts in future years?

Specific to trail construction projects: describe what the planned maintenance for this trail will be in future years, based on use, location, weather, etc. Who is committed to performing this monitoring and maintenance? What resources are in place to commit to those efforts in future years?



ASSURANCE, AUTHORIZATION, & SIGNATURE FORM

ASSURANCE

I certify that I am authorized to sign on behalf of the applicant and that, if awarded a grant for this project, the applicant will comply with the grant administration requirements of both GOCO and CYCA. I further certify that the applicant collaborated on this proposal with the conservation service corps indicated and that the conservation service corps is fully aware of and agrees to the scope of the project, budget, and timeline.

Name and title of conservation service corps staff consulted on this proposal:

Name:

Title:

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE FUNDS

Applicant recognizes that it will not receive payment from GOCO. By its signature below, applicant hereby authorizes GOCO to make payment on its behalf directly to CYCA in the event this project is chosen for funding.

SIGNATURE

(electronic and pdf signatures are accepted)

Name:

Title:

Organization Name:

Signature:

Date:
