



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Youth Corps
Partner Toolkit
FY 2025





Meet the

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

About Us

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) is the only federal government agency whose primary responsibility is to manage fish and wildlife resources for current and future generations. FWS is one of 11 bureaus within the Department of Interior. Our employees work to fulfill our mission on more than 560 National Wildlife Refuges, 70 National Fish Hatcheries, and numerous regional and field offices on thousands of active conservation projects across the country.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is committed to recruiting and hiring a highly qualified, diverse and inclusive workforce.

Organizations that provide youth employment opportunities may partner with a variety of programs throughout the Service. Interns and fellows serve on National Wildlife Refuges, National Fish Hatcheries, or at regional offices and field stations. Areas of focus range from habitat restoration and invasive species management to environmental education and community engagement.

Through partnerships, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service leads the way in developing community-driven conservation solutions that reap ecological and economic benefits for fish, wildlife and people.

Our Mission:

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

Our Purpose:

To protect the natural world so current and future generations can live with, live from, and find awe in lands, waters, and wildlife.

Our Programs

- National Wildlife Refuge System
- Fish & Aquatic Conservation
- Ecological Services
- Science Applications
- Migratory Birds
- Office of Conservation Investment
- Office of Communications
- Office of Law Enforcement
- Joint Administrative Operations
- International Affairs

Our Vision:

We envision a future where people and nature thrive in an interconnected way and where every community feels part of and committed to the natural world around us.

Youth Corps Partner Toolkit

FWS Youth Corps

What is the Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) Youth Corps?

The FWS seeks partners to work collaboratively under the **Public Lands Corps Act (PLC)** within its **FWS Youth Corps**. This membership allows partners to provide **non-competitive federal hiring eligibility** to qualified youth.

To implement PLC projects, partners must enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or a cooperative agreement under the **Youth Engagement, Education, and Employment (15.676) Assistance Listing**. Most FWS Public Lands Corps Act projects are funded by local field stations using federally appropriated funds from their annual budget allocations. **Partners are required to provide a minimum 25% cost share from non-Federal sources** in the form of either cash or in-kind services (labor, facilities, materials, and/or equipment). No cost share is required for PLC projects carried out on Tribal lands or Hawaiian home lands.

To request membership in FWS Youth Corps, organizations must obtain a **Request for Membership** from their region's FWS point of contact.

What types of internships & fellowships are typically offered?

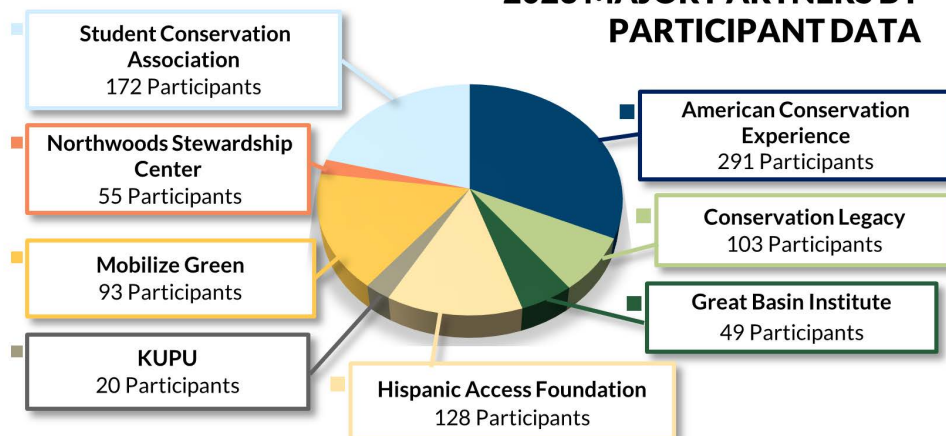
The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and its partners work together to provide extensive and diverse opportunities for youth in areas of interest such as:

- Education & Community Outreach
- Habitat & Wildlife Restoration
- Digital Media & Data Management
- Climate Action & Resilience
- Land & Water Conservation
- Infrastructure & Maintenance
- Refuge & Fisheries Management

With whom is the Service currently partnering?

Nearly 40 organizations currently work with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to provide youth employment across the country. These organizations range in size, mission, and location. The top eight providers by funding and number of participants are indicated below.

2023 MAJOR PARTNERS BY PARTICIPANT DATA



Habitat restoration at Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR

Credit: Ian Shive / Tandem

What is the Service looking for in its Youth Employment Partners?

- Conduct effective **targeted recruitment** to help meet the agency's goal of building a diverse and inclusive workforce, particularly with those who may be **economically, physically, or educationally disadvantaged**
- Employ participants ages 16-30 and/or veterans up to age 35
- Provide **meaningful work** and training opportunities with a living allowance
- Ensure that participants complete an appropriate project with a **minimum of 640 hours, with at least 120 hours on or in support of public lands**
- May be a State or local government entity, the governing body of any Indian tribe, a nonprofit organization, or an accredited institution of higher education
- Are or will become members of the **Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) Youth Corps**



National Points of Contact

Headquarters - Region 9

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Regional Intern & Fellow Coordinators

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Region 2 - Southwest

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Region 7 - Alaska

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Region 8 - Pacific Southwest

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Wood duck banding at Reelfoot NWR

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

<https://www.fws.gov>

October 2024



Path to Partnership

1

Make Contact

Contact your local [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service \(FWS\) field station](#) to discuss how your organization may partner to provide Public Lands Corp Act internship opportunities.



2

Establish a Relationship

Establish a formal relationship with an FWS station or region through a **cooperative agreement** or **memorandum of understanding**.



3

Develop a Project

Collaboratively develop projects with the funding station and regional Intern and Fellow Coordinator to define the scope of your youth employment opportunity. Project considerations may include:

- A summary of expected **project duties**
- **Numbers** of crews or participants
- **Location(s)** or work sites
- **Timelines** and start dates (allow for 120-day lead time)
- **Career training** and development opportunities
- **Minimum applicant qualifications**
- **Funding sources** from a station, region, grant, or partners such as Friends groups
- **Housing** at station, with a partner organization, or via a housing stipend
- **Pay** commensurate with a living wage
- **Project length** and **structure** to meet Public Lands Corps Act eligibility



4

Submit a Partnership Application

New FWS Youth Corps Partners are required to submit a partnership application through the annual Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) posted in Grants.gov. Be sure to apply for the Youth Engagement, Education, and Employment Announcement. Additional information regarding requirements will become available in the full Notice of Funding Opportunity posted annually after October 1st. Existing FWS Youth Corps Partners may skip this step.



5

Submit a Project Application

Submit your project application, also known as a master agreement task order, through GrantSolutions.gov. Reference the Project Application Instructions for a complete listing of required content.



Youth Corps Partner Toolkit

Financial Assistance Guidance

Notice of Funding Opportunity for New Partners

A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is an official document issued by an agency to accept applications for partnership or project funding. In prior years, the Youth Engagement, Education, and Employment (15.676) NOFO allowed applications for project funding.

In Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25), the NOFO will instead serve as an application for new partner membership in the FWS Youth Corps. Please refer to the “Path to Partnership” for further information. Current members of FWS Youth Corps are not required to reapply under the FY25 NOFO. Search Grants.gov after November 2025 to view the FY25 NOFO.

Project Development and FY25 Master Agreements

FWS Public Lands Corps projects are developed through a collaborative process between the FWS Youth Corps Partner and a funding FWS Program, region, local field station, refuge, or hatchery.

In FY25, FWS will move to a **Master Agreements** structure. Each funded project will be housed within a Master Agreement and organized by program and/or activity type (fire management, biology, fisheries, visitor services, etc). Each Master Agreement will include all FWS Youth Corps Partners participating in that program or activity type. Individual partners may be represented on multiple Master Agreements which by themselves, carry no monetary commitment.

Requirements of Cooperative Agreements/Task Orders

Youth Corps Partners must work with their respective FWS field station to define specific project considerations. A suggested list of considerations may be found in Step 3 of the Path to Partnership. The Financial Assistance Team will then rate and evaluate such project considerations according to the following criteria:

- Does the project meet PLC requirements?
- Will the intern gain training and experience to prepare them for an FWS position
- Does the project include adequate funding?
- Does the organization have the capacity to manage & implement the project?
- How do the methods of recruitment meet targeted recruitment goals?

Funded projects are referred to as **cooperative agreements (task orders)**. All financial awards under the Authority of the Public Lands Corps Act must be cooperative agreements. The only exception may be Indian Youth Service Corps which may be a grant.

Grants do not require substantial involvement on the part of FWS. Cooperative agreements, however, require that FWS is substantially involved in development and funding. Project-specific substantial involvement such as FWS-provided housing, training, and supervision must be detailed on the (NGA) Notice of Grant Award.

Compliance with Public Lands Corps Act requires that all task orders:

- Provide a minimum 25% cost share from non-Federal sources as either cash or in-kind services. In-kind services may include labor, facilities, materials, and/or equipment. No cost share is required for PLC projects carried out on Tribal lands or Hawaiian homelands per PLC guidance
- Include a detailed explanation of how cost share is achieved in the Budget Narrative of the application. Failure to do so may result in loss of PLC hiring authority eligibility for interns employed under that task order.

If approved by a FWS Grants Management Officer, unrecovered indirect costs can be used to meet Public Lands Corps Act cost share requirements. Unrecovered indirect cost is the difference between the amount charged to the Federal award and the amount which could have been charged to the Federal award under the non-Federal entity's approved negotiated indirect cost rate.

FY25 Directed Announcement for Existing Youth Corps Partners

FWS Youth Corps Partners and their respective FWS collaboratively developed projects must submit project applications in GrantSolutions through either the FY25 Directed Announcement or the Small Grant process.

Directed Announcement

The directed announcement will only be visible to FWS Youth Corps Partners. Each Partner's Unique Entity Identifiers (UEI) will be associated with this directed announcement. It will not be specific to individual project but will be for all FY25 projects. The directed announcement will include application requirements such as SF-forms, Program Binder (Small Grants only).

Small Grants

FWS is currently implementing a new Small Grant process to assist FWS Youth Corps Partners who require additional support in systems registration and application submission. The Small Grants Process is designed to positively impact recipients by streamlining the application process, enhancing accessibility, reducing the documentation burden, and by providing dedicated technical assistance. Eligible organizations include Indian Tribes, targeted partnerships with minority serving institutions, Youth Corps, and community-based youth serving institutions. Awards made under this new process cannot exceed \$200,000, must be for a period of performance of less than 3 years, and must support habitat and species management, workforce development, outreach, or education. Organizations interested in the Small Grants process should consult with their FWS Project Officer prior to the submission of a funded project.

Task Order Application

Task Order Application must include:

- Required forms specified in Directed Announcement
- **Project Narrative:**
 - a. Project title: Should include information on type and number of placement(s), position identifier, and FWS host location of project.
 - b. Description of entity(ies) undertaking the project: Information should include contact information for FWS Project Officer.
 - c. Summary of position objectives, estimated start date, duration of placement in weeks, and expected number of PLC project hours. Position objectives must meet the requirements of an appropriate conservation project. An appropriate conservation project means any project for the conservation, restoration, or rehabilitation of natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or scenic resources, in accordance with 16 USC 1722.
 - d. Summary of training, safety, housing, and transportation project contributions.
- **Budget Narrative** - Budget Justification should explain and justify the per participant/unit costs of the project. Describe the specific costs that are included/covered by the per participant/unit costs. The Budget Justification must include a breakdown of how the required 25% Public Lands Corps Act share is calculated.
- **Required Statements** - There are several required statements that are potentially required for each award. In addition, there are several required statements that are required on an annual basis during the Risk Assessment process.
- **Indirect Cost Statement and NICRA** – only if there has been a change. You should have provided your Indirect Cost Statement and NICRA at the time of your annual Risk Assessment.
- **Pre-award cost request**

Task Order Award Notice/Notice of Grant Award (NGA)

Task Orders will be issued on a rolling basis throughout FY25 until all program funds intended for FWS Youth Corps projects are expended.

- NGA will be issued when award application has been approved through Sufficiency Review and obligated in GrantSolutions by a FWS Grants Management Officer and all procurement actions have been completed. (In a typical year, the FWS deadline for financial assistance procurement actions will be July 1st)
- NGA will be e-mailed through GrantSolutions as well as e-mailed to recipient Project Officer by the Grants Management Officer.

Annual Risk Assessment: Year End Reporting

At the end of each Fiscal Year (ending September 30), recipients must submit the following information by December 31st of each year:

1. A Program Narrative that provides a description of each of your programs, including any new programs. Please include biographical and contact information for key personnel.
2. A copy of your current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA).
3. Proof of Insurance
4. Youth Required Statements
5. A year-end PLC Participant Report:
 - a. The report shall include the total number of project sites, hours, weeks, and number of interns and other participants.
 - b. Diversity of students placed, including demographics and age, to the extent that such information has been voluntarily provided by participants to the recipient.
 - c. Demographics will be reported as an aggregate to ensure that recipient complies with confidentiality requirements regarding individual participant's demographic data.
 - d. Summary of FWS participation.

Submit all information to fwhqnwrsfa@fws.gov

Key Contacts in the Grants Office

Region 9 - Headquarters

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Region 7

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Map of Regions

Youth Corps Partner Toolkit

Public Lands Corps Process

This document outlines the responsible parties and the steps required to issue Public Lands Corps Hiring Authority (PLC). For assistance, contact the regional Intern & Fellow Coordinator for your locality listed on the next page.

Roles & Responsibilities

FWS Youth Corps Partner	FWS Supervisor	Participant (Intern or Fellow)
• Manage targeted recruitment and hiring of Participant • Ensure Participants are aware of their eligibility for PLC at the time of onboarding • Verify, certify, and compensate Participant for hours served	• Select a candidate from a recruitment pool • Provide oversight, daily task management, and meaningful work on or in support of public lands • Ensure Participants are aware of their eligibility for PLC at the time of onboarding	• Meet eligibility requirements • Satisfactorily complete an appropriate project and serve a minimum of 640 hours • Track and report all hours served

Steps for PLC Issuance

1

PLC Participant completes an appropriate project and earns a minimum of 640 hours. At least 120 of these hours must be on or in support of Federal lands, Tribal lands, or Hawaiian homelands while engaged with a qualified partner organization(s) under an FWS agreement.

2

PLC Participant works with the **FWS Supervisor** and **FWS Youth Corps Partner** to document, validate, and sign the Work Hours Verification Form. If relevant, **PLC Participant** provides copies of all Work Hours Verification Forms from previous PLC projects used to meet hour requirements.

3

FWS Supervisor forwards the complete Work Hours Verification Form(s) to the regional **FWS Intern and Fellow Coordinator** in a timely fashion.

4

FWS Intern and Fellow Coordinator reviews Work Hours Verification Form(s) to ensure they are properly completed, signs Certification Memo for Non-Competitive Eligibility, and sends copies to the qualifying **Participant**, **FWS Youth Corps Partner**, and **FWS Supervisor**.

5

FWS Youth Corps Partner, **FWS Supervisor**, and **FWS Intern and Fellow Coordinator** maintain copies of the Work Hours Verification Forms for all projects the participant has served or in accordance with Privacy Act requirements.

6

PLC Participant provides a copy of the Certification Memo for Non-competitive Eligibility when applying for PLC-eligible permanent, temporary, or term vacancies advertised on www.USAJOB.S.gov.

Youth Corps Partner Toolkit

Public Lands Corps Process

National Points of Contact

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Regional Intern & Fellow Coordinators

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<https://www.fws.gov>

October 2024



Youth Corps Partner Toolkit

Targeted Recruitment Recommendations

Diversity & Inclusion Goals

The Public Lands Corps Special Hiring Authority provides the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) with an opportunity to help meet the agency's goal of building a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the ethnic, age, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, and language diversity of contemporary America. Specifically, women and racial and ethnic groups including Black/African American, Hispanic, Indigenous, Asian, and Pacific Islanders are underrepresented within the FWS permanent workforce.

As legislated by Title 16 USC Sec. 1721-1726; Public Law 109-154, Public Lands Corps Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2005, the FWS 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.** FWS Youth Corps Partners are encouraged to conduct targeted recruitment to attract such candidates.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The Service has an ongoing obligation under equal employment opportunity laws, executive orders, and other standards to prevent discrimination on the bases of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, retaliation/reprisal, disability, sexual orientation, parental status, and genetic information; FWS is also obliged to eliminate barriers that impede free and open competition in the workplace.

FWS conducts an annual self-assessment to monitor progress and identify areas where barriers may exclude certain groups. In conducting this assessment, the Service compares internal participation rates with corresponding rates in the relevant Department of Labor's Civilian Labor Force (CLF) as points of reference.

Targeted Recruitment Methods

- Evaluate surrounding demographics with the [US Fish and Wildlife Service Socioeconomic Indicators Tool](#) to locate and identify communities of highest need in which to recruit.
- Recruit directly from local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AAPISIs). A full listing of these programs is available on the [NASA Minority Serving Institutions Exchange](#).
- Work directly with university student groups that maintain partnerships with the Department of Interior, including [The League of United Latin American Citizens \(LULAC\)](#) and [The National Society for Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources, and Related Sciences \(MANRRS\)](#).

Best Practices for Diverse Recruitment

- Communicate and collaborate with trusted community organizations to share internship opportunities. Work with FWS stations to expand your focus to groups with strong relationships in targeted communities (e.g. cultural affinity groups, advocacy groups for people with disabilities, etc.).
- Consider candidates from underrepresented pathways such as: JobCorps, vocational training high school programs, community colleges, engineering schools, non-conservation-based degree programs, etc.
- Limit qualification requirements to the competencies that are absolutely necessary for the specific role. Keep in mind that internships and fellowships are developmental opportunities, meant to train and equip early career professionals.

Youth Corps Partner Toolkit

Vacancy and Hiring Notification

How to Submit an Internship Vacancy Announcement

Open the [FWS Youth Corps Partner Internship Reporting Form](#), click 'Start now' and answer the following questions:

1. **Your email** – A contact email in case follow-up is necessary
2. Answer **"What do you want to do?"** and select **"Post an internship vacancy"**
3. **Internship Title** – Matches the title on your organization's website and includes the word "intern or fellow" at the end, if necessary.
 - a. If the position is Remote or Traveling (i.e. across multiple states or large areas), indicate in the internship title in brackets. For example "Monarch Butterfly Monitoring Intern [Remote]" or "Visitor Survey Intern [Traveling]"
4. **FWS Youth Corps Partner** – Select your organization from the dropdown list. If it is not listed, select "Other".
5. **Relevant Dates** – Please pay close attention to the format and answer all date details.
 - a. **Posting Date (MM/dd/yy)** – When to post announcement to FWS website (typically, today's date).
 - b. **Expiration Date (MM/dd/yy)** – When the announcement should be removed from FWS website. It can be well into the future if this is an ongoing open vacancy.
 - c. **Anticipated Start Date (MM/dd/yy)** – When the internship is expected to start.
 - d. **Anticipated End Date (MM/dd/yy)** – When the internship is expected to conclude.
6. **Link to Apply** – The link for applicants to submit their application. This link should lead DIRECTLY TO THE SPECIFIC POSITION on your organization's application portal and not a general link to the application portal.
 - a. If your organization does not have an application portal, and instead has digital flyer for applicants to apply via email, upload the flyer to this [shared folder](#). The file will then appear in the FWS Youth Corps Partner [Internship Flyers FileShare](#) folder. Next, open the file from that folder and copy/paste the link from your browser's URL bar into the form.
7. **FWS Hiring Manager Email** – The email address of the FWS supervisor or hiring manager in case follow-up is necessary
8. **FWS Region** – The region in which the intern will work. This question narrows the next list of field stations. Reference our [list of FWS Field Stations](#) for more information on regions.
9. **FWS Field Station** – The location where the intern will work from the alphabetized [list of FWS Field Stations](#).

How to Submit an Internship Hire

Open the [FWS Youth Corps Partner Internship Reporting Form](#), click 'Start now' and answer the following questions:

1. **Your email** – A contact email in case follow-up is necessary
2. Answer **"What do you want to do?"** and select **"Submit a new intern hire"**
3. **New Intern Selectee Name** – The new intern hire's first and last name
4. **New Intern Personal Email** – The new intern hire's personal email address
5. **Internship Title** – e.g. "Monarch Butterfly Monitoring Intern"
6. **FWS Youth Corps Partner** – Select your organization from the dropdown list. If it is not listed, select "Other".
7. **FWS Hiring Manager Email** – The email address of the FWS supervisor or hiring manager in case follow-up is necessary
8. **FWS Field Station** – The location where the intern will work from the alphabetized [list of FWS Field Stations](#).
9. **FWS Region** – The region in which the intern will work. This question narrows the next list of field stations. Reference our [list of FWS Field Stations](#) for more information on regions.

Issues with submission form?
Email: brianna_amingwa@fws.gov

Public Lands Corps Requirements

Purpose

This document describes the overall process and minimum requirements for organizations partnering with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) to become members of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Youth Corps (FWS Youth Corps). FWS Youth Corps membership is a necessary prerequisite for organizations to provide the benefit of non-competitive hiring eligibility through the Public Lands Corps Act.

The FWS Youth Corps

Membership in the FWS Youth Corps is solely for the purpose of partnering with FWS to engage youth in Public Lands Corps (PLC) projects. Membership does not imply or constitute a partnership; it is merely a requirement to engage in such partnerships that confer this benefit upon eligible youth. Requesting membership does not constitute a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a promise to issue an RFP in the future. This request for membership does not commit the Government to contract for any supply or service whatsoever.

Non-membership in the FWS Youth Corps does not preclude participation in any future RFP, if any is issued, or in partnering with FWS for purposes other than engaging youth in PLC projects. If membership in the FWS Youth Corps is granted, the Partner Organization's interns may be eligible under the Public Lands Corps Act for non-competitive hiring authority for permanent competitive positions with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, assuming they meet the requirements outlined in the following section.

The Public Land Corps (PLC)

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service seeks partners with the ability to hire qualified youth or conservation corps, and with the organizational capacity and unique qualifications necessary to work collaboratively with the FWS to develop projects under the Public Lands Corps Act as authorized by Congress under Title 16 U.S.C. Sec. 1721-1726; Public Law 109-154, Public Lands Corps Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2005, as amended in the National Park Service Centennial Act of 2016, Pub. L. 114-289; and, as amended in the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, Recreation Act of 2019, Pub. L. 116-9, and all subsequent amendments.

The purpose of the PLC is to provide work and educational opportunities for youth in the areas of natural and cultural resource conservation, development, and scientific research. Youth perform work on our nation's public lands that cannot be carried out by Federal agencies at existing personnel levels.

The PLC allows the Service to enter partnerships with organizations to employ youth in PLC projects and internships through two types of agreements: a financial assistance/cooperative agreement or memorandum of understanding. PLC participants who complete program requirements will be eligible for non-competitive appointment to federal positions for which they qualify.

The PLC's goals are to:

- Perform, in a cost-effective manner, appropriate conservation projects on eligible lands where such projects will not be performed by existing government employees.
- Assist governments and Indian tribes in performing research and public education tasks associated with natural and cultural resources on eligible lands.
- Establish projects in partnership with 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.
- Expose young people to public service while furthering their understanding and appreciation of the Nation's natural and cultural resources.
- Stimulate interest among the Nation's youth in the FWS and conservation careers by exposing them to conservation, scientific research, and professionals in the FWS, and offering them non-competitive hiring eligibility for federal positions for which they qualify upon completion of all program requirements.
- Allow PLC Participants the opportunity to seek forbearance on Stafford loans.

The Public Land Corps - Eligibility

Department of the Interior (DOI) Personnel Bulletin (PB) 21-09 establishes the policy and procedures for administering the PLC within the Department. This policy identifies eligibility requirements for participants and partner organizations and outlines the process for granting non-competitive hiring status.

Eligible participants must:



- Be between the ages of 16 and 30 years (veterans up to the age of 35) inclusive, when the term of service begins.
- Meet eligibility requirements, directly related to the tasks to be accomplished, as established by the program.
- Be a U.S. citizen or legal resident.
- Possess or agree to pursue a high school diploma or its equivalent and did not drop out of an elementary or secondary school to enroll in the program, or is enrolled in an institution of higher education on an ability to benefit basis and is considered eligible for funds under Title 20 USC; sec 1091.
- Satisfactorily complete an appropriate project with a minimum of 640 hours of service, 120 of which was on or in support of Federal lands, waters and facilities owned or administered by the United States, or on Indian lands, or Hawaiian homelands.

Eligible partner organizations must:



- Be a State or local government entity, the governing body of any Indian tribe, a nonprofit organization, or an accredited institution of higher education.
- Be members of the FWS Youth Corps.
- Maintain financial policies and procedures that reflect generally accepted accounting principles.
- Maintain risk management policies that reflect industry standards and are proactive and thorough in mitigating and managing risk to PLC Participants.
- Hold a contract or financial assistance agreement (or MOU) with the Service that clearly identifies both organization's roles and responsibilities for implementing the PLC program, or have documentation (e.g. organizational charter or similar documentation) that they have performed conservation work on federal, state, tribal, local or private lands and utilized young people between the ages of 16 and 30 years of age, and veterans up to age 35.
- Provide liability insurance.
- Contribute a minimum of 25% of the total costs of the project or internship program either as direct funds or qualified in-kind services unless the project is carried out on Indian lands or Hawaiian homelands.

Additionally, these organizations must have an **established program** that:



- Offers meaningful, productive work for PLC Participants in a natural or cultural resource setting.
- Provides a mix of work experience, basic and life skills, education training, and support services.
- Provides PLC Participants with the opportunity to develop citizenship values and skills through service to their community and the United States.
- Provides PLC Participants with a living allowance, stipend, or wages.

Successful Completion of PLC Requirements

Former Public Land Corps participants may be granted non-competitive hiring status for permanent competitive positions within the Department of the Interior, provided both they and the partner organization meet the above requirements. Non-competitive hiring status is granted through an approved FWS process and allows the recipient to apply and compete for vacant positions open to those with special hiring authorities or for merit promotion. The former PLC participant also must be selected from a non-competitive selection certificate and appointed within two years of the candidate's completion of PLC service qualifying them for the non-competitive hiring authority.

PLC & Workforce Diversity & Inclusion Goals

This special hiring authority provides the FWS with an opportunity to help meet the agency's goal of building a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the ethnic, age, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, and language diversity of contemporary America.

As legislated by Title 16 USC Sec. 1721-1726; Public Law 109-154, Public Lands Corps Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2005, the FWS 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.

Specifically, the FWS permanent workforce is underrepresented with **women** and **racial and ethnic groups** including Black/African American, Hispanic, Indigenous, Asian, and Pacific Islanders.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The Service has an ongoing obligation under equal employment opportunity laws, executive orders, and other standards to prevent discrimination on the bases of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, retaliation/reprisal, disability, sexual orientation, parental status, and genetic information; FWS is also obliged to eliminate barriers that impede free and open competition in the workplace.

FWS conducts an annual self-assessment to monitor progress and identify areas where barriers may exclude certain groups. In conducting this assessment, the Service compares internal participation rates with corresponding rates in the relevant Department of Labor's Civilian Labor Force (CLF) as points of reference.

FWS Public Lands Corps Contacts

Questions about PLC?

Questions regarding Public Lands Corps hiring authority may be directed to **Brianna Amingwa**, National Youth Employment and Education Coordinator, National Wildlife Refuge System at brianna_amingwa@fws.gov.

Questions may also be directed to your **Regional Intern and Fellow Coordinator**:

- **Pacific Northwest and Islands Region - R1**
(WA, OR, ID, GU, AS, MP, HI)
Chelsea McKinney,
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- **Southwest Region - R2**
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- **Midwest Region - R3**
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- **Mountain-Prairie Region - R6**
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- **R7: Alaska Region - R7**
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