



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2026 Draft Work Plan

General Information

ID Number: 2026-085

Staff Lead: Tom Dietrich

Date this document submitted to LCCMR: October 30, 2025

Project Title: Community Resiliency through AmeriCorps

Project Budget: \$3,312,000

Project Manager Information

Name: Jessica Ayers-Bean

Organization: ServeMinnesota

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Web Address: serveminnesota.org

Project Reporting

Reporting Schedule: April 1 / October 1 of each year.

Project Completion: June 30, 2029

Final Report Due Date: August 14, 2029

Legal Information

Legal Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Appropriation End Date: June 30, 2029

Narrative

Project Summary: Over three years, we will deploy 150 AmeriCorps members statewide to build community capacity and conduct projects that align with LCCMR and ENRTF's Resiliency goals.

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

Communities across Minnesota face capacity challenges ranging from urban tree canopy preservation to habitat restoration. Without additional capacity, critical functions remain unaddressed, jeopardizing the health of forests, waters, and lands that define Minnesota. ServeMinnesota proposes to address LCCMR Funding Priority (A) Resiliency by implementing and developing collaborations & networks to share innovative management practices. We will equip municipal departments, soil and water conservation districts, and local nonprofits across Minnesota with trained AmeriCorps members to get things done for their communities.

Our ML-2023, ENRTF-funded project demonstrates our capacity to effectively partner with local organizations statewide to systematically address these challenges. From the City of Ely to the City of Austin Parks, Recreation & Forestry, we have deployed more than 200 AmeriCorps members, with 50 more scheduled for the year ahead. Last year alone, these members inventoried 47,000 trees, marked 6,000 hazardous trees for removal, and supported the planting of more than 20,000. Community feedback – illustrated in the attached letters of support – confirms the remarkable value of this work as well as the continued need for a responsive approach that empowers community-led solutions.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.

We will recruit, train, and deploy 150 AmeriCorps members over three years to serve at approximately 40 statewide partner organizations. Members will conduct critical environmental work including trail maintenance, tree inventory and care, habitat restoration, invasive species management, natural recreation resource management, and public education. Our model is responsive to community needs without duplicating or displacing existing work. Prospective site partners will apply to host members annually to pursue critical work that would otherwise remain unaddressed. We will accept applications from municipalities, soil and water conservation districts, nonprofits, and other agencies implementing projects that align with LCCMR and ENRTF's Resiliency funding priority. Current year partners span 19 counties, including Hennepin, Olmsted, Ramsey, St. Louis, Rice, Stearns, Mower, and Douglas.

Before and during service, members receive comprehensive training in adaptation management practices and outreach techniques so that each member can address the specific needs and context of their host site.

AmeriCorps members also build organizational capacity by improving internal systems and records, supporting volunteer management, and developing informative resources that persist beyond their service term.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

Conservation Corps will deploy 150 AmeriCorps members (50 annually) at 40+ sites statewide to implement community-driven activities that support LCCMR and ENRTF. Examples include improving trail safety, stormwater education, updating local data (e.g., tree inventories, GIS maps of natural resources), as well as conserving and restoring rural and urban landscapes (e.g., planting native species and responding to invasive pests like Emerald Ash Borer). We expect 70% of partner organizations will demonstrate measurable increases in their operational capacity—expanding their reach to new areas or populations, improving efficiency of processes, or enhancing the effectiveness of their services.

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Statewide

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Statewide

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Recruit, train, and deploy 150 AmeriCorps members in communities across Minnesota

Activity Budget: \$1,104,000

Activity Description:

This activity establishes the foundation for statewide impact through strategic recruitment, comprehensive training, and targeted deployment of AmeriCorps members focused on community resiliency. Each year, we will recruit 50 AmeriCorps members through established pathways including campus outreach, job boards, and digital recruitment. Members will be placed at statewide host sites, spanning diverse sectors including municipal governments, soil and water conservation districts, nature centers, tribal organizations, and neighborhood associations, with specific attention to social and geographic context of community-specific needs.

Our training curriculum prepares members to address a full spectrum of community resilience needs while maintaining our successful foundation in environmental stewardship activities including: training covering relevant science, community and environmental data for decision-making, risk assessment and resilience planning, and systems thinking; technical skills including tree assessment, data collection methodologies, and community engagement techniques; and professional certification pathways such as Minnesota Tree Inspector certification for forestry-focused positions. Our cohort-based training methodology is particularly effective in building a strong sense of community as participants feel connected to and supported by their peers. Members will also be trained on strategies to ensure continuity and lasting impacts of capacity building improvements.

In addition to training, members receive a living allowance, health insurance, and ongoing

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
First year – recruit, train, and deploy 50 service members	January 31, 2027
Second year – recruit, train, and deploy an additional 50 service members	August 31, 2027
Third year – recruit, train, and deploy an additional 50 service members	August 31, 2028

Activity 2: Implement and monitor community-specific projects

Activity Budget: \$1,104,000

Activity Description:

This activity reflects anticipated outputs directly associated with members deployed to enhance Minnesota's resilience. Building on the success of our previous forestry and stewardship initiatives, projects address multiple LCCMR resilience priorities including tree inventory and care, habitat restoration, invasive species management, stormwater interventions, and waste reduction initiatives. Annually, members will complete a combined total of at least fifty projects; projects will have quantifiable outputs related to tree care, habitat restoration, invasive species management, stormwater management, waste reduction, and other activities that ensure Minnesota's environment, natural resources, and communities are resilient. We will provide impact evaluation support to track, monitor, and report on implementation including both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
First year – 50 site-specific projects completed	June 30, 2027
Second year – 50 site-specific projects completed	June 30, 2028
Partner with 40 sites each year to deploy AmeriCorps members	June 30, 2029
Third year – 50 site-specific projects completed	June 30, 2029

Activity 3: Measurably improve operational capacity

Activity Budget: \$1,104,000

Activity Description:

This activity focuses on building lasting organizational capacity and meaningful community engagement to support long-term community resilience. Our program improves the operational capacity of partner sites working toward improved resiliency as discussed in the Six-Year Strategic Plan for Expenditures Recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources from Minnesota's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. AmeriCorps members support their sites as they broaden implementation of effective adaptation management practices for natural resources.

Members develop site-specific service projects that address one of six capacity-building areas: community engagement, data collection and analysis, process improvement, volunteer management and mobilization, workforce development, and coordination of direct service. For example, members may develop informational resources such as factsheets, improve data sets, manage volunteers, conduct community outreach, provide technical assistance, and disseminate innovative practices. Our adaptable approach enables even small organizations with limited resources make meaningful progress toward their objectives and statewide goals.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
First year – 50 projects contributing to site-level capacity increases as rated by site supervisors	June 30, 2027
Second year – 50 projects contributing to site-level capacity increases as rated by site supervisors	June 30, 2028
Third year – 50 projects contributing to site-level capacity increases as rated by site supervisors	June 30, 2029
70% of sites reporting an increase in their organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and/or program scale/reach	June 30, 2029

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
City of Austin	City of Austin	Site Partner	No
City of Bloomington	City of Bloomington	Site partner	No
City of Edina	City of Edina	Site partner	No
City of Ely	City of Ely	Site partner	No
City of Le Sueur	City of Le Sueur	Site partner	No
City of Lakeville	City of Lakeville	Site partner	No
City of Roseville	City of Roseville	Site partner	No
City of Saint Peter	City of Saint Peter	Site partner	No
City of Winona	City of Winona	Site partner	No
Mississippi Park Connection	Mississippi Park Connection	Site partner	No
Rochester Parks & Recreation	Rochester Parks & Recreation	Site partner	No
Tree Trust	Tree Trust	Site partner	No
City of Belle Plaine	City of Belle Plaine	Site partner	No
City of Crystal	City of Crystal	Site Partner	No
City of Eagle Lake	City of Eagle Lake	Site Partner	No
City of Eden Prairie	City of Eden Prairie	Site Partner	No
City of Fridley	City of Fridley	Site Partner	No
City of Maplewood	City of Maplewood	Site Partner	No
City of West St. Paul	City of West St. Paul	Site Partner	No
City of South St. Paul	City of South St. Paul	Site Partner	No
College of St. Benedict	College of St. Benedict	Site Partner	No
Creative Enterprise Zone	Creative Enterprise Zone	Site Partner	No
Douglas County	Douglas County	Site Partner	No
Frogtown Green	Frogtown Green	Site Partner	No
Greater East Side / District 23 Community Council	Greater East Side / District 23 Community Council	Site Partner	No
Hamline-Midway Coalition	Hamline-Midway Coalition	Site Partner	No

Lake County SWCD	Lake County SWCD	Site Partner	No
MN Dept. of Natural Resources	MN Dept. of Natural Resources	Site Partner	No
Ney Nature Center	Ney Nature Center	Site Partner	No
Project Sweetie Pie	Project Sweetie Pie	Site Partner	No
Ramsey County Parks and Rec / SWCD	Ramsey County Parks and Rec / SWCD	Site Partner	No
River Bend Nature Center	River Bend Nature Center	Site Partner	No
Saint John's University	Saint John's University	Site Partner	No
UofM Extension NE Regional Sustainable Development Partnership	UofM Extension NE Regional Sustainable Development Partnership	Site Partner	No
Urban Roots	Urban Roots	Site Partner	No
Vibrant and Safe Downtown	Vibrant and Safe Downtown	Site Partner	No
Wabasha SWCD	Wabasha SWCD	Site Partner	No
Washington Conservation District	Washington Conservation District	Site Partner	No

Dissemination

Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines. Results and accomplishments will be shared in several accessible ways with the public and stakeholders (all communications and outreach activities will appropriately acknowledge ENRTF support as recommended by the LCCMR):

PR/media interactions – results may be included in media pitches or press releases to media outlets 1-2 times per year around Minnesota.

Annual impact report – program results and highlights will be included in our public impact report to be shared with stakeholders, legislators, partners, program alumni, and funders. This report will also be published on our website and shared in our digital communications.

Digital communications (website, email newsletters, and social media) – accomplishments will be shared throughout the year on our digital platforms.

Video – we may share program accomplishments and testimonials in short videos to be published on our YouTube channel, social media platforms, and in digital communications.

Results may also be shared in a one-page report with legislators and partners, and in public presentations.

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund will be acknowledged for all dissemination work through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the ENRTF Acknowledgment Guidelines.

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?

In conjunction with philanthropic funding, LCCMR funds will allow us to leverage matching funds from the federal government to bring an additional \$2.5 million for this project. Ongoing efforts will be sustained by federal AmeriCorps funding, local philanthropic support, and community investment.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Community Forestry AmeriCorps	M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 07a	\$1,500,000

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Impact & Improvement Evaluator		ServeMinnesota Impact and Improvement Evaluators use data design and systems development expertise to capture relevant program activities that inform what we know about whether our programs work, how to make them better, and which measures are most significant in respect of the intended program impacts.			23%	1.08		\$40,220
Special Initiatives Project Manager		Special Initiatives Project Manager manages evaluation projects to support development and refinement of program theories of change. For this project, they will manage communication between ServeMinnesota and Conservation Corps and will facilitate planning and documentation to ensure we maintain high-fidelity records of intended and actual impact.			23%	1.35		\$43,800
Chief Impact Officer		The Chief Impact Officer owns responsibility for strengthening program management and demonstrating measurable outcomes across ServeMinnesota's portfolio of programs. This includes supporting high quality impact assessments as well as communicating with partners to understand genuine community and opportunities for AmeriCorps to meet those needs locally. For this project, the Chief Impact Officer will support the strategic direction of this project to ensure Conservation Corps is able to track, meet, and report on developed metrics.			23%	1.2		\$86,980
							Sub Total	\$171,000
Contracts and Services								
Conservation Corps	Subaward	Directly supports cost of deploying AmeriCorps members statewide to enhance Minnesota's resilience. Funds \$20941 toward total of \$38338 per AmeriCorps member FTE. Monthly personnel costs: living allowance \$2300, health insurance \$576, and FICA approx. \$175. Other per member costs: uniforms				150		\$3,141,000

		and personal protective equipment \$900; orientation and advanced training \$1025.						
							Sub Total	\$3,141,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$3,312,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	Federal AmeriCorps Funding	ServeMinnesota is the state's administrator of AmeriCorps State funds. We bring federal AmeriCorps dollars into our state and local communities to support initiatives and projects that serve the interests of Minnesotans. In order to activate these funds and earn federal investments, it is necessary that we show local buy-in and traction within our community; we must generate non-federal, financial contributions in order to leverage Federal AmeriCorps funding. This funding supports programming expenses including member training, compliance, program management, member health insurance, FICA, mileage, education award, and the remainder of member living allowances not funded by ENRTF funds (\$17,397 per member X 50 members X 3 years).	Pending	\$2,609,500
			Non State Sub Total	\$2,609,500
			Funds Total	\$2,609,500

Total Project Cost: \$5,921,500

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [4360ab37-478.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Handout summarizing focus and scope of Climate Impact Corps during the 2023-2024 program year....

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Independent Audit	a9671bdb-1e8.pdf
990	6b20eca5-485.pdf
Secretary of State Certificate	4a11f0dc-4cf.pdf
Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation/Annual Renewal	647a6cab-455.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Board Resolution and Letter	5e7d0435-b03.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Letter - Abazs - NERSDP	95ead38e-8b4.pdf
Letter - Bonk - Douglas Co	75a4da33-3aa.pdf
Letter - Sehon - Austin	362e2889-44a.docx
Letter - Wise - Moorhead	4fb50ddb-c76.pdf
Letter - Lipstein - Ramsey	4ae0caa7-26a.docx
Letter - Geissler - St.John's University	c1588e0a-c36.pdf
Letter - Hong - Washington Conservation District	f0296cf5-6ca.docx
activities and milestones tracking template	628013ba-b85.xlsx

Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage

Oct 6, 2025

1. Added Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation/Annual Renewal as proof of good standing
2. Added additional detail about Impact & Improvement Evaluator, Special Initiatives Project Manager, and Chief Impact Officer roles
3. Added additional detail about how subaward funds are intended to be spent
4. Added spreadsheet template for reporting on milestone progress

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Aug 15, 2025

1. Implementation Partner - Earlier this summer, ServeMinnesota transitioned to Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa

(CCMI) as our implementation partner for this grant. CCMI brings 22 years of experience in natural resource stewardship and is prepared to implement project activities. We updated the work plan and accompanying budget (including personnel) to reflect this change.

2. Project Manager - The project manager role has been transferred to Jessica Ayers-Bean to ensure oversight and continuity of reporting requirements. This change will facilitate effective coordination between ServeMinnesota and CCMI, maintaining accountability for grant deliverables and ensuring seamless management of all project components.

3. Budget - We updated the budget to reflect the proposed funding level.

4. Dissemination Plan - We added detail to the dissemination section regarding how we will share project results and acknowledge ENRTF support as recommended by the LCCMR.

5. Added Secretary of State certificate.

Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

The following are acknowledgements and conditions beyond those already included in the above workplan:

Do you understand and acknowledge the ENRTF repayment requirements if the use of capital equipment changes?
N/A

Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?

N/A

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?

No

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?

No

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this project:

David Williams, ServeMinnesota; Jessica Ayers-Bean, ServeMinnesota

Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements

N/A