



Conservation Service Corps Grants

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and the Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) are pleased to announce the release of the 2026 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: Conservation service corps in Colorado engage more than two thousand members annually to perform land, water, and energy projects to conserve resources and steward public land. 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 5,700 projects in all sixty-four counties without a single dollar coming from taxpayers' pockets. For more information, please visit goco.org.

CYCA is a statewide coalition of eight 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 stewarding 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 cyca.org.

General Guidance and Grant Information

IMPORTANT DATES:

Initial:

- **Application Submission:** Wednesday, July 30th, 2025, **BY 4:00pm**
- **Funding awards granted:** December 2025 GOCO Board Meeting
- **Project Completion:** December 31, 2026

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS:

Initial:

CYCA partners with GOCO staff and outside peer reviewers to review applications, assess the merits of each project, and develop a consensus on projects to fund. The review committee reserves the right to request additional information; and/or request revisions on any component of the application.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY:

Initial:



- Colorado cities, towns, and counties
- Title 32 special districts **eligible to receive Conservation Trust Fund distributions**
- Political subdivision of the State of Colorado whose mission is to identify, manage, or acquire open space and natural areas
- Land conservation organizations that support open space and natural area acquisitions
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife

PROJECT/PROPERTY ELIGIBILITY:

Initial:

- Applicants must apply for a minimum of **two weeks of conservation service corps work**.
 - One week = a minimum of 320 hours of labor (*e.g., 8 people for 40 hours each*) inclusive of one-way travel and 4-5 hours per week of on-site education activities for the crew.
- The primary objectives must consist of:
 - enhancing/restoring open space, wildlife habitat, or other ecosystems (*e.g., noxious weed removal, forest health, fire recovery, flood recovery, riparian restoration*)
 - **ONLY forest health projects with impacts beyond defensible space that enhance or restore open space, wildlife habitat, or improve other ecosystem considerations are eligible for funding.**
 - constructing/enhancing/restoring trails or other passive recreational infrastructure including signs, fences, tent pads, etc.
- The project must occur on land owned or controlled by a:
 - municipality, county, or other political subdivisions of the state
 - land trust or private party with a conservation easement or other permanent use restriction in place
 - federal agency
 - Projects occurring on federally managed land are permissible **ONLY** to perform stewardship or restoration work 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 must clearly articulate local community benefits from the project (*e.g., demonstrable impact to the local economy, improvement of an interconnected riparian area*).
- Projects must provide public benefit and comply with any conservation easement, other use restrictions, or government policies or procedures concerning management of the property's resources.



- Applicants 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:

Initial:

Work must be completed **within one year** of the grant award. Applicants must respond to a CYCA-generated project evaluation upon project completion. GOCO may deauthorize a grant if the project is not completed within that time, or by an authorized extended period.

COSTS AND MATCH:

Initial:

Only request funding for conservation service corps labor; materials, equipment, staff time, and other costs are ineligible for funding but may serve as match. Discuss potential project expenses with GOCO to determine eligibility of those expenses prior to applying. **A minimum 10% match is required**, 100% of which can be in kind and may be from the applicant, the conservation service corps, or other project partners. If the applicant is unable to meet this match requirement, contact CYCA to discuss a match waiver justification.

Weekly Crew Rates		
Day Crew	crews go home each night and travel to the project daily	\$13,800/week
Camping Crew	crews camp at/near the project, sponsors should strive to help conservation service corps secure free camping	\$14,100/week
Chainsaw and/or Herbicide Application Crew	includes day/camping crews, 80% of crew is chainsaw trained or meets state herbicide application compliance requirements	\$14,800/week
Chipper	chipper provided by corps	\$1,250/week

WORKING WITH A CONSERVATION SERVICE CORPS:

Initial:

From project planning to completion, 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 and restoring wildlife habitat
- installing and dismantling fences
- mitigating and removing invasive species

SHARED PROJECT RESPONSIBILITY:

Initial:



Hosting a conservation service corps requires cooperation, communication, and shared responsibility. The chart below details how corps share responsibility. 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 (<i>at least 8 ppl & 320 hours of labor</i>)	Specialty tools (<i>if necessary</i>)
Basic tools	Staff available to answer questions & check work regularly
Transportation	Complete an end-of-project evaluation
Camp equipment & food (<i>if necessary</i>)	Access to free camping (<i>if necessary</i>)

What Conservation Service Corps Are:

Initial:

- 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:

Initial:

- 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:

Initial:

The applicant agrees to promote funded project using social and traditional media.

CONTACT US:

We encourage you to review all application materials and discuss any questions or concerns that arise throughout the process **before** submitting your proposal.



Please direct questions about applicant or project eligibility to:

SAMMIE TROTTER

GOCO Program Officer

720.576.4112

strotter@goco.org

For all other inquiries, please contact:

TOM DILLOW

Associate Director – CYCA

(303)717-5659

tdillow@cyca.org

Application Checklist

Submit the following documents to Nancy Weil by email: nweil@cyca.org

- CYCA strongly encourages submission via email but please contact CYCA if you wish to submit via alternative means (*e.g. fax, standard mail, FedEx, in-person, etc.*)

FULL PROJECT PROPOSAL:

Submit a single PDF document comprised of the following **in the order listed**:

- ☐ Summary Form
- ☐ Proposal Narrative (*include question headings*): **Limit THREE (3) pages**
- ☐ At least TWO (2) Maps (format maps for 8 ½" x 11" paper):
 - Project Location: map showing location in larger context, including labeled towns and numbered highways.
 - Detailed map for each discrete project location showing specific project area and components of proposed scope of work.
 - **Maps should be labeled and referenced in the narrative proposal.**
- ☐ Assurance and Signature Page



- ☐ Authorization Letter (*signed by holder of conservation easement or other use restriction*) indicating that anticipated work does not violate the easement/use restriction (*IF APPLICABLE*)

NOTE: CYCA will not accept CDs, DVDs, videos, brochures, or any other additional attachments.

NOTE: Applicants will be provided with a receipt upon submission to CYCA.

Initial:



Summary Form

Applicant Information

NAME:

ORGANIZATION NAME:

PHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

CONSERVATION SERVICE CORPS: Choose an item.

Technical Contact Information

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

NAME:

ORGANIZATION NAME:

PHONE NUMBER:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

Project Information

PROJECT TITLE:

PROPERTY NAME:

NAME:

PROPERTY TYPE: Choose an item.

Other (if applicable):

COUNTY/COUNTIES:

ENTITIES FACILITATING EDUCATION *(required 4 hours per week – check all that apply):*

- ☐ Applicant ☐ Conservation Service Corps ☐ External Facilitator
☐ Other:

Project Description

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



Budget Form Budget Information

STEPS FOR FILLING IN BUDGET INFORMATION: REQUEST AMOUNTS

- 1) Select the desired "CREW TYPE/WEEKLY RATE"
- 2) Select the appropriate "RATE" (**NOTE: RATE MUST MATCH LISTED RATE IN 1st COLUMN**)
- 3) Select the desired "# of WEEKS"
- 4) Manually multiply (RATE x WEEKS) & enter in "TOTAL" column > PRESS TAB
- 5) "TOTAL REQUEST AMOUNT" should automatically calculate

CREW TYPE/WEEKLY RATE	RATE	# of WEEKS	TOTAL
Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
TOTAL REQUEST AMOUNT			\$0.00

Match Information

STEPS FOR FILLING IN BUDGET INFORMATION: MATCH AMOUNTS

- 1) Manually input "SOURCE OF MATCH" listing the partner organization providing match
- 2) Manually input "MATCH DESCRIPTION" describing what is being provided as match
- 3) Manually input "TOTAL" providing the value of the match item
- 4) Manually calculate "TOTAL REQUEST AMOUNT" by adding "TOTAL" column & enter on last row

SOURCE OF MATCH	MATCH DESCRIPTION	TOTAL
TOTAL MATCH AMOUNT		\$0.00

Total Project Cost



TOTAL REQUEST AMOUNT	\$0.00
MINIMUM10% REQUIRED MATCH	\$0.00
TOTAL MATCH AMOUNT	\$0.00
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$0.00

Have you met the minimum 10% match requirement (YES/NO)?

** if you have not met the minimum 10% match requirement, and are unable to, contact CYCA to discuss a match waiver justification.*



Proposal Narrative

Address each of the following selection criteria below: Three (3) pages maximum, 11-point type, 1-inch margins. Include the subject heading for both sections within your narrative.

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 thinned forest, etc.
- ☐ How is this project a priority for the community?
- ☐ Describe the specific needs 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, including who participated in 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, 2026?
- ☐ Describe the long-term sustainability of this project and its impacts, and who will be responsible for those ongoing activities.
- ☐ Consider the following when reflecting on the long-term stewardship plans for your project:

Specific to invasive species projects:

- ☐ Describe upstream contamination and how that impacts this project's sustainability.
- ☐ Describe 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 will be in future years, based on use, location, weather, etc.
- ☐ Who is committed to performing ongoing monitoring and maintenance?
- ☐ What resources are in place to commit to the sustainability of this project in the future?

Initial:



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 on this proposal:

NAME:

TITLE:

CONSERVATION SERVICE CORPS: Choose an item.

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE FUNDS

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

SIGNATURE

(electronic and PDF signatures accepted)

date.

DATE: Click or tap to enter a

NAME:

TITLE:

ORGANIZATION NAME: