



Cooperative Partnership

New Mexico Youth Conservation Corps Commission (EMNRD) + Serve New Mexico Commission (NMDWS)

Overview

The New Mexico Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) and the Serve New Mexico Commission, housed within the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions are launching a \$400,000 - \$700,00 collaborative pilot to expand Service-to-Career pathways for New Mexico's youth and communities. This initiative aligns YCC's conservation and community stewardship mission with Serve New Mexico's workforce development approach, providing participants with hands-on experience, career exploration, and opportunities to earn credentials. **The YCC Commission has approved this partnership.**

Program Model

The collaboration is rooted in the YCC model, which places youth ages 14-25 at community organizations to complete meaningful conservation and community-focused projects. This model emphasizes structured work experience, skill-building, and youth mentorship. To enhance career pathways, the partnership incorporates elements of the Serve NM "New MexiCorps" placement approach, such as regular cohort engagement, leadership development, and additional workforce readiness supports. Serve New Mexico provides training coordination, supplies, and participant support, while host sites supervise daily activities and guide participants' learning. A unique aspect of this approach is that participants will be employees of the State of New Mexico at the Department of Workforce Solutions.

Training and Credentials

Participants receive layered training opportunities, including:

- Self-paced online modules through NMDWS's Bridge Course system
- Weekly webinars from the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals
- Wilderness First Aid certification
- Site-specific safety and career training
- Planned partnerships with UNM, NMSU, and Master Gardener programs to build stackable credentials in agriculture, sustainability, and related fields

Program Focus

The partnership aims to create meaningful service-to-career pathways by pairing hands-on work with mentorship and credential attainment. Projects will address community needs while helping participants gain transferable skills. Serve New Mexico will work closely with the Office of New Americans and the Migrant Farm Worker Program to support efforts in sustainable agriculture education, worker rights awareness, and resource navigation. The program is designed to be bilingual and inclusive of youth connected to farmworker families.

Conclusion

This partnership represents a unique opportunity for two state agencies to collaborate and leverage the strengths of two long-standing programs with closely aligned missions. By combining the YCC model with New MexiCorps-informed career supports, the initiative strengthens youth development, workforce readiness, and community engagement across New Mexico. It expands high-quality opportunities that build skills, support local organizations, and contribute to a strong and resilient future workforce.