

# HOPE Crew Brief

## **New historic restoration program launched**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and The Corps Network have launched an initiative to train more young people and veterans in preservation crafts while helping to protect historic cultural sites on public lands. Named “HOPE Crew” for “Hands-On Preservation Experience,” the program links preservation projects to the national youth corps movement. It brings the potential for thousands of crew members to work on hundreds of sites, learning preservation craft skills while restoring historic places.

## **National Trust provides preservation expertise**

To enable the youth and veteran corps to successfully complete rehabilitation projects at historic sites, the Trust will coordinate support from its broad network of partners and preservation experts. This will meet two vital needs: The first need for most projects is finding a preservation advisor who can help guide the project by answering preservation-related questions as well as helping the crew members understand and appreciate the historic significance of the project. The preservation advisors will work on a pro bono basis. We also expect that preservation experts within the National Park Service will help fill this role.

The second need is to source preservation crafts expertise for specific projects to help train the youth corpsmembers on techniques



such as repointing, carpentry, and window restoration. We expect these craftspeople to be paid from the project’s budget. The Trust will play a role in filling this need by building a database of preservation crafts people that can be sourced by the youth corps.



Little Big Horn Battlefield National Monument (all-veteran crew)

## **Corps Network provides ready access to Crew members**

To launch this program, the Trust is partnering with The Corps Network, an association of 127 youth and service corps operating in all states and the District of Columbia. They are a direct descendant of the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps, which mobilized about

three million young people to dramatically improve the nation's public lands while receiving food, shelter, and education. Each year, youth corps collectively engage over 27,000 corps members and provide 13.5 million hours of service. Corpsmembers are paid a stipend during their training program. This new partnership will help focus youth corps skills training on preservation projects. This is an area of interest to youth corps because their graduates can find higher paying jobs when they have preservation craft skills. This work experience and skills training can be the first step toward future employment.

Corpsmembers are aged 16-25 and include many returning veterans; 53% are people of color, (30% African American, 20% Latino and 3% Native American), 61% come from families living in poverty, and 31% have dropped out of high school.

### **What Corpsmembers do**

Corpsmembers learn both technical and leadership skills which can help set them on a career path. Many youth and veteran corps members join the U.S. Forest Service, for example, to continue their service to public lands. Others will join trade apprenticeship programs. Some are college bound. Today, approximately 20 youth corps programs offer preservation services including these types of skills:

- Foundation stabilization
- Re-pointing
- Masonry
- Painting and refinishing
- Log replacement
- Roofing
- Carpentry

### **The financial model for HOPE Crews**

Corps act as contractors on projects and provide the labor, tools, training, room and board, insurance, and materials. As a result, the projects are approached in the same manner as a commercial contractor would. From a cost standpoint, corpsmembers are typically paid minimum wage while in the training program. A study done by Booz Allen commissioned by NPS showed that youth corps could do the work at 50% the cost of a commercial contractor. Corps receive a substantial part of their funding from Federal grants which support workforce development.

### **How to learn more**

Visit the HOPE Crew website:  
[www.preservationnation.org/HOPECrew](http://www.preservationnation.org/HOPECrew)

Or email:  
[HOPECrew@savingplaces.org](mailto:HOPECrew@savingplaces.org)

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Shenandoah National Park