



## Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (JEDI) 2024 Progress Report

The JEDI Committee was established in 2018 to embrace CCMI’s vision of “a world where everyone has equitable access to nature, is equipped to succeed in career and life, and is empowered to make a difference in conserving natural resources.” The committee upholds this vision by setting annual organizational goals to help improve the experience and lives of staff and corpsmembers. *To avoid setting lofty goals, patting ourselves on the back, and carrying on with business as usual, the JEDI Committee publishes a progress report each year to reflect and share how our goals were executed throughout the organization.*

Below, you will find updates from staff across the organization regarding the JEDI initiatives they worked on to help the JEDI Committee achieve our 2024 goals. *A huge shout out to CCMI leaders, staff, and corpsmembers for helping us turn our goals into reality!*



April All Staff Retreat, 2024



## **JEDI Goal 1: Use equity as a lens for all the work we do and the decisions we make.**

### **Administration and Operations**

Administration and Operations staff introduced a technology onboarding curriculum for new employees (which can be modified depending on an individual's skill level). They also offered a training workshop to ensure all staff have equal access to technological information.

### **Central Crews**

Central program staff made time to emphasize that access to the outdoors is a right for all and ensured that new and returning corpsmembers understood the meaningful impact their service has on the greater community and making the outdoors more accessible to people from all walks of life.



South Crew Tree Planting, 2024



## Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC)

IDEC program staff continued to alleviate the financial barriers of underrepresented STEM college students by providing financial assistance to all Fellows via the IDEC Emergency Fund. The IDEC program also collaborated with a variety of facilitators from different backgrounds and ages, including Indigenous community members, to lead professional development trainings for the Fellows during the school year and summer.



IDEC Fellows Measuring Fish, 2024

## North Crews

North program staff held monthly meetings to discuss general JEDI topics. Program staff selected a topic or article to read and offered group discussion. This time was used to explore how JEDI principles relate to the North corpsmembers. When creating 2024 program plans, the North program staff made it a priority to consider corpsmember access to transportation, learning styles, personal commitments, financial stress, etc.

## Recruitment

Recruitment staff reviewed and revised AmeriCorps position descriptions to ensure the use of inclusive, non-gendered language. They also removed qualifications that could unintentionally create barriers for individuals. Recruitment and program staff aimed to hire a balance of youth and corpsmembers from a vast demographic including factors such as race, socioeconomic status, gender, age, ability, etc.





MECC Crew Planting Trees, 2024

### **Summer Youth Corps (SYC)**

SYC program staff, with its historical American Sign Language (ASL) program, hired crews entirely dedicated to learning ASL and deaf culture alongside their deaf and hard of hearing peers. SYC program staff also created an environment among all youth crews to learn ASL and engage in cross-cultural sharing during their time in the program. In 2024, SYC program staff implemented "voice-off" mealtimes, which required everyone to engage in learning ASL. Over the course of the summer, SYC program staff witnessed the transformation of teens and young adults who initially knew little to no ASL, leave the program with conversational skills and a newfound excitement to continue learning the language and culture of their new friends.



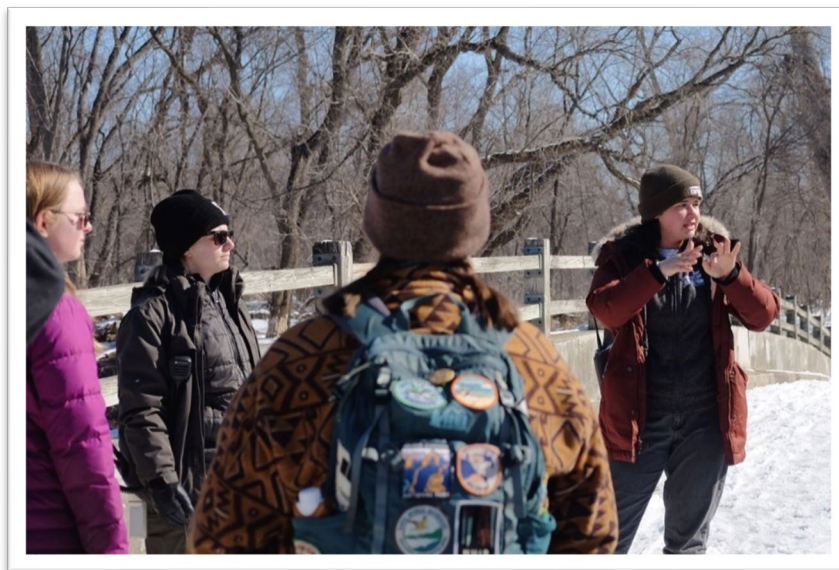
## **JEDI Goal 2: Build a shared vision surrounding Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion goals with our partnering organizations and communities.**

### **Administration and Operations**

Administration and Operations staff prioritized sourcing catering services from BIPOC and women-owned businesses within the community. Administration staff switched from Custom Ink to Spectrum Designs to create CCMI's end of year sweatshirts. Spectrum Designs is a custom apparel non-profit that employs those on the Autism spectrum to promote meaningful vocational training and work opportunities.

### **Central Crews**

Central program staff emphasized the importance of the corpsmember experience to all project hosts. They encouraged project hosts to give crews work that is inclusive and respectful not only to themselves, but the community. Project hosts were also encouraged to create a space that is safe for learning new skills and to provide extra guidance to corpsmembers when necessary. Central program staff also partnered with the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community for an education day. Corpsmembers learned about the history, structure, language, and natural resources projects of this local Indigenous community.



Individual Placement Fort Snelling Tour, 2024



## Finance

Finance staff researched potential vendors that would fit CCMI's JEDI goals. This is an ongoing, long-term project that will make it easier to work with more diverse and equitable vendors in the future.

## Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC)

IDEC program staff discussed expectations for upholding and promoting JEDI values throughout the summer with 25 state staff (employed at the DNR, PCA, or BWSR) during the annual internship supervisor orientation and presenter training.

## Iowa Crews

Iowa program staff partnered with the Minnesota Monarch Festival to support their community outreach initiatives with various underserved populations.



Central Crew River Revetment, 2024

## South Crews

South program staff partnered with Prairie Island, which has allowed them to educate current corpsmembers about the past struggles faced by this local Indigenous community. Program staff dedicated time to discussing the impact crew project work has on the land.



### Summer Youth Corps (SYC)

SYC program staff clearly explained CCMI's JEDI values to all project partners. If corpsmembers reported troubling behavior on behalf of project partners, program staff swiftly contacted the partner to either resolve the issue or dissolve the partnership. Additionally, SYC program staff consistently worked to adjust communication with project partners to meet their needs as well. Through several years of relationship building, the SYC program has secured several supportive project partners that seek to aid the program in accomplishing their JEDI goals and ensure a positive experience for all youth and corpsmembers.



North Crew Truck Check, 2024



## JEDI Goal 3: Provide an equitable training environment and high-quality programming to all our participants.

### Administration and Operations

Administration staff began the process of improving CCMI's survey questions on the corpsmember evaluation forms. They plan to implement the updated survey in 2025 and complete a final round of edits in 2026. Operations staff offered a wide range of inclusive size options for uniform shirts (distributed to incoming corpsmembers and staff). They also ensured that all new corpsmembers received an adequate supply of uniform shirts for their specific project requirements.



HQ Staff Tie-Dye Shirt Activity, 2024

### Central Crews

Central program staff offered additional leadership roles and opportunities to Field Specialists. For example, they helped deliver orientation and lead hands-on skill training throughout the year. This was a successful effort to build Field Specialist's personal confidence, management skills, and leadership skills. It also encouraged Field Specialists to form stronger bonds with the incoming corpsmembers.





## Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC)

IDEC program staff held JEDI conversations once a month during the school year to help Fellows develop their discussion and communication skills. These conversations also served as an opportunity for Fellows to reflect on why JEDI is needed within natural resource work. Fellows also engaged in (5) JEDI activities during the summer to promote hands-on group learning. These activities included documentaries with group Q&A, panelist discussions, meeting local Indigenous and POC leaders, and field trips.



IDEC Fellows Collecting River Specimens, 2024

## North Crews

North program staff used previous corpsmember feedback and prioritized making smaller training groups, include more hands-on opportunities during training, and implemented a post-training feedback survey which will be used to help staff develop better trainings for future crews.





Iowa Crew Building a Bridge, 2024

### **South Crews**

South program staff utilized time each day to host crew conversations so corpsmembers can discuss the global, national and local decisions and/or events that are currently impacting them and their communities. Having a daily discussion space has been a great tool to increase corpsmember engagement. South program staff also collaborated with the National Park Service to establish an Intertribal Crew for Indigenous community members at Pipestone National Monument.

### **Summer Youth Corps (SYC)**

SYC continued to use sign language interpreters during training, consulted with external expert professionals to facilitate conversations the program staff were unqualified to discuss with the youth, and created a safe and supportive space where corpsmembers and youth feel comfortable engaging in conflict management and developing communication skills.





SYC Crew, 2024

## Looking Forward

CCMI recognizes that building an equitable Corps takes hard work, time, and accountability. The JEDI Committee and CCMI leaders will continue setting annual goals, listening to feedback, and working with staff, board members, corpsmembers, alum, and community partners to create a more just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive future for our organization and communities. If you would like to learn more about the JEDI Committee, please visit <https://conservationcorps.org/about/jedi/>.

