

# Los Angeles Conservation Corps

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The primary mission of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps is to provide at-risk young adults and school-aged youth with opportunities for success by providing them with job skills training, education, and work experience with an emphasis on conservation and service projects that benefit the community.

The LA Conservation Corps was founded in 1986 by former U.S. Secretary of Commerce and Trade Ambassador, Mickey Kantor. Since 1986, they have become a national leader in youth and workforce development and alternative education for inner-city youth/young adults. The LA Conservation Corps is currently the largest urban conservation corps in the nation with a full-time staff of over 150 employees who serve over 17,000 young people each year. The environmental workforce component was added to the Corps in 2005.

The LA Conservation Corps was first funded in 2005. They successfully re-competed in 2007, and again in 2009. They received a stimulus grant for \$500,000 also in 2009, and were awarded \$200,000 in 2012. Each grant award was among the best proposals of the 70 to 120 grants submitted under each grant cycle.

A large number of cleanup sites, refineries, and labor organizations together with the city's extensive use of first-source hiring practices makes this program a real asset to community residents. LA Conservation Corps' latest effort focused on the Northeast San Fernando Valley, although any resident in the Los Angeles area can participate in the program.

## Overview of the LA Conservation Corps' environmental workforce program

### Demographics and target population:

- Underemployed and unemployed young adults living in the Pacoima District of the San Fernando Valley
- Residents ages 18-24

### Active partners:

- WorkSource California
- IQ
- Aero
- City of Los Angeles Brownfields Program
- Pacoima Beautiful

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services
- Los Angeles Community Development Department
- Los Angeles Housing Department
- Los Angeles Trade-Technical College
- Northeast San Fernando Valley WorkSource Center

Core training program:

- 7 weeks
- 7 a.m.–3 p.m. daily
- 82 hours of environmental training
- EPA mandatory training
  - 40-hour HAZWOPER
  - Lead abatement
  - Asbestos abatement
  - Refinery safety
  - CAL OSHA

Participants also offered additional 59 hours of training guided by employers' needs:

- Innovative remediation cleanup
- Detection methods
- Wastewater treatment
- UST leak prevention
- Landfill remediation capping
- Soil sampling and analysis
- Chemical safety and stewardship

Additional curriculum:

- Extensive life skills training including:
  - Resume writing
  - Money management
  - Budgeting
  - Anger management
  - Career goals

Training objectives:

- 2 training cycles per year (cycle begins in August for fall graduation, and February for spring graduation)
- 25 participants per cycle with a goal of placing 21. The LA Corps has continually attained their goals.

Placement and tracking:

- Track graduates for multiple years
- Monthly calls to graduates
- Graduation events coupled with career nights
- Extensive use of labor organizations for training and placement
- The Northeast San Fernando Valley WorkSource Center

Student recruitment:

- Extensive use of graduates and referral
- Referral from the Northeast San Fernando Valley WorkSource Center

Student screening and support:

- 18-24 years of age
- High school diploma or GED
- Drug and alcohol free
- Drug test
- Fitness test
- Driver's license not required