

NFFE News



NFFE and Forest Service CCC Leadership Attend NJCA Summit to Secure the Future Success of Job Corps

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National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) Executive Director Steve Lenkart attended the National Job Corps Association (NJCA) leadership summit in Alexandria, VA last week, joining U.S. Forest Service Job Corps National Director Jerry Ingersoll and Nancy Chapman, Program Coordinator for Integration at the Job Corps National Office. The two-day summit focused on enhancing the effectiveness of the NJCA and the efficacy of the national Job Corps program that operates through the Forest Service and the Department of Labor (DOL).

The NJCA is a nonprofit organization that represents Job Corps center operators on behalf of the private sector centers (through DOL) and the centers operated by the federal government through the Forest Service Civilian Conservation Centers (CCCs). NFFE represents federal workers at 20 of the 24 CCCs located on national forest lands throughout the country. Next year will mark the 60th anniversary of the program.

The NJCA is a critical partner for NFFE to ensure that the CCCs receive adequate annual funding and sufficient operational authority. This empowers the CCCs to meet their goals of preparing young people for future employment and providing placement assistance to Job Corps students after graduation. Every tax dollar spent on the Job Corps program yields a return on investment of thousands of tax dollars back into the Treasury through a lifetime of gainful employment by Job Corps graduates. Because the program offers vocational certificates in more than 30 trades, and because students earn real world working experience through the Forest Service, CCC students in particular are equipped with the education and experience to succeed in life.



*From left to right:
Nancy Chapman, Steve
Lenkart, Jerry Ingersoll*

In 2019, NFFE, the NJCA, and Forest Service leaders worked together to reverse a decision by the former presidential administration to close the CCCs permanently as a precursor to closing the entire Job Corps program. A fierce education campaign ensued for months, engaging with stakeholders and congressional leaders to buttress support for the CCCs and Job Corps, demonstrating how the program pays for itself and improves the lives of thousands of young people each year. Ultimately, wiser minds prevailed and the CCCs became the center of attention, visited by dignitaries and politicians who sharply turned their support toward full funding with the hope that the program will expand.

“The leadership summit was very productive, and I really enjoyed spending time with Jerry and Nancy talking about our common vision for the future of the CCCs and Job Corps,” stated NFFE Executive Director Steve Lenkart. “Even though the Job Corps program and the CCCs change lives for the better each day while providing a return on investment to the taxpayer, it amazes me how hard we have to work to keep the program funded every year. Fortunately, NFFE enjoys a strong relationship with Forest Service Job Corps leadership so we can focus our energy on supporting the staff, the centers, and the program itself to help the students thrive in life.”

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