



National Partnership Office, Workforce Development Partnerships Service Hub

Public Lands Corps Implementation Guide *for Forest Service Partners*

Purpose: Ensure that partners have a clear understanding of the PLC eligibility requirements, PLC certificate issuance process, and points of contact in the Forest Service.

Public Lands Corps Background

Public Lands Corps (PLC) is a work and education program established by the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993. Through PLC partnerships, young adults and veterans contribute to the conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of public lands while gaining paid work experience and job training in a variety of resource management fields. After 640 hours of service under an eligible PLC agreement, participants earn a 2-year non-competitive hiring authority.

Indian Youth Service Corps (IYSC) was established in 2019 via an amendment to the Public Lands Corps Act. IYSC mirrors PLC requirements and benefits, with a focus on engaging Indian young adults through partnerships with Tribes and indigenous communities.

Eligibility Requirements

- Age: Participants must be aged 16-30 (inclusive) and veterans up to age 35
- Citizenship: Participants must be U.S. citizens, nationals, or permanent residents
- Education: Participants must have received their high school diploma or equivalent

Benefits

- Complete 640 hours of project work under an eligible agreement to earn a 2-year non-competitive hiring authority.
- Living stipend, allowance, or wage.
 - Some positions may also offer an AmeriCorps Education Award upon successful term completion.
- Gain direct experience and training in a variety of natural and cultural resource management career fields.
- Work alongside Forest Service staff to conduct priority land management projects.
- Develop technical, interpersonal, and applicable job skills.

Project Type Examples

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail maintenance and construction • Wildfire risk mitigation, fuels reduction, and prescribed burning • Wildlife habitat restoration • Reforestation, tree planting, and seed collection • Invasive species management • Climate change monitoring and mitigation • Rehabilitation and maintenance of facilities and campgrounds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation of historic structures and cultural resources • Conservation education, visitor services, and outreach • Public affairs, communications, and digital media • Legislative affairs and policy assessment • Forestry products laboratory research • National Environmental Policy Act projects • Mapping and geographic information systems, and more. |
|---|--|

Partnering with the U.S. Forest Service

What criteria must a partner meet to enter into a PLC or IYSC partnership agreement with the U.S. Forest Service?

PLC partners may be any nonprofit organization, state or local government, or governing body of any Indian Tribe that:

- Offers meaningful, full-time, productive work in a natural and cultural resource setting through conservation projects
- Provides a variety of work experience, life skills, education, training, and support services
- Provides participants with the opportunity to develop citizenship values and skills through service to their community and the United States
- Provides participants with a living allowance, stipend, or wages

How to Request PLC Certificates for Participants

1. Complete a [PLC Verification Form](#) for each eligible participant to request a Public Lands Corps certificate of eligibility for non-competitive hiring authority (hereafter referred to as PLC certificate). Include all required fields, including basic participant information and hours completed at each project location with corresponding dates and agreement numbers.
 - a. Verify that the participant has met all of the PLC requirements before signing the PLC Verification Form.
 - i. **Age:** Participants must be aged 16-30 (inclusive) and veterans up to age 35
 - ii. **Citizenship:** Participants must be U.S. citizens, nationals, or permanent residents
 - iii. **Education:** Participants must have received their high school diploma or equivalent
 - iv. **Hours:** Participants must have completed at least 640 hours of appropriate conservation projects¹ on eligible service lands², with at least 120 hours occurring on National Forest System lands or Indian lands.
 - v. **Agreement(s):** The agreements under which the hours were performed include 25 percent partner match. This is a statutory requirement per Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 as amended (16 USC 1723).
2. Submit the form to your local Forest Service point-of-contact. If you are unsure of who to submit the PLC Verification Form to, you may reach out to the lead point-of-contact for the geographic region, station, or area where your PLC participant completed their service term. See list [here](#), under “Contact Information”.
3. The Forest Service will confirm that all requirements have been met, ensure the PLC certificate is signed by the appropriate line officer, and email both the participant and partner the signed PLC certificate as a PDF.
4. Note: Please request PLC certificates promptly after the participant completes their term of service. PLC certificates may be requested earlier - for example, after the participant reaches the 640 hours requirement - if their goal is to apply for jobs during the remainder of their term and transition into a permanent position without a gap in employment.
5. See Appendix for example of completed PLC Verification Form.

¹ Appropriate conservation projects are defined as any project for the conservation, restoration, construction or rehabilitation of natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or scenic resources.

² Eligible service lands include public lands (inclusive of federal lands managed by other federal agencies, as well as state, county, local and municipal lands), Indian lands, and Hawaiian homelands.

PLC Frequently Asked Questions

What are the PLC hours and location requirements? Can PLC hours be completed on state, county, local, and municipal public lands?

In order to receive their PLC certificate, participants must have completed at least 640 hours of appropriate conservation projects on eligible service lands, with at least 120 hours completed on National Forest System lands or Indian lands.

Eligible service lands include public lands (inclusive of federal lands managed by other federal agencies, as well as state, county, local and municipal lands), Indian lands, and Hawaiian homelands.

Appropriate conservation projects are defined as any project for the conservation, restoration, construction or rehabilitation of natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or scenic resources.

Can a participant work across multiple land jurisdictions (Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, etc) under our organization to reach 640 hours?

Yes. The participant must have completed at least 120 hours under an eligible PLC or IYSC Forest Service agreement. The rest of the hours may have been worked on other federal, state, or locally managed public lands; Indian lands; Hawaiian homelands. All PLC requirements must be met on the non-FS agreements (e.g., 25% partner match).

Can a participant work multiple terms under our organization over the course of several years to reach 640 hours?

Yes. We encourage partners to bring back participants for a second term to reach 640 hours if those participants are interested in gaining the PLC hiring authority.

Can a participant combine hours across multiple organizations to reach 640 hours?

Yes. Please have the participant work with the other organization(s) to complete separate PLC verification form(s) for each organization. Submit all forms to the Forest Service or the agency where the participant completed the most hours.

For example: A PLC participant completed 480 hours under your organization this summer. All 480 hours took place on the Lincoln Ranger District, Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest (National Forest System lands) under a Forest Service PLC agreement. Last summer, the participant completed 160 hours of conservation project work under a different organization at Glacier National Park (National Park Service-managed lands). Now that they have reached 640 hours, they want to see if they may qualify for a PLC certificate, issued by the Forest Service.

You would complete and sign a PLC Verification Form for the participant, documenting the hours completed under your organization (480 hours) and confirming that the participant meets the PLC eligibility requirements. The participant would need to work with the other organization to confirm that their work there was eligible under the PLC Act authority and have a PLC Verification Form signed by that organization's staff person. You would then submit both PLC verification forms to the Forest Service.

A participant completed their PLC term a while back but we never requested their PLC certificate. Can we request a certificate now?

Yes. Participants may have completed their term a while back, not realizing at the time that they were eligible for a PLC certificate, or they may have decided later that they wanted a PLC certificate. You as the partner organization can go back and request a PLC certificate for them as long as you are still able to verify that participant met the PLC eligibility criteria and minimum hours via the PLC Verification Form. The participant must still be under the age of 30 (or 35 if a veteran). The PLC certificate issued will be valid from 2 years of when the certificate was signed, not 2 years from the date that the participant completed their term.

How long does a participant have to use their PLC certificate?

They must be onboarded into their position within 2 years of when the PLC certificate was signed and before their 33rd birthday (or 38th birthday if you are a veteran). Because the federal application and selection process can take several months, it is highly recommended that they begin searching and applying for positions well before their certificate is set to expire.

How do I support participants interested in pursuing federal employment using their PLC hiring authority?

We recognize that not all PLC participants will be interested in pursuing a natural or cultural resources career path. However, one key approach to support those who are is to frame participants' PLC term as a job training and professional development experience from the outset – one which may lead to a permanent position with a federal land management agency like the Forest Service. Partners and Forest Service staff counterparts implementing PLC programs may consider working together to:

- Provide participants with initial information (e.g., during crew training and orientation) on what it looks like to earn a PLC certificate and the benefits conferred by the PLC hiring authority in terms of applying for permanent federal positions.
- Integrate career exposure opportunities into the 4+ month PLC term to broaden participants' awareness of the diverse range of career paths within the Forest Service (e.g., meeting with or completing short projects with different resource specialists to learn about their work).
- Provide follow up information during season wrap up on the PLC certificate (and how to request a PLC certificate under your organization), how to use the PLC certificate to apply for federal positions, and potentially other topics such as how to prepare a federal resume and navigate USAjobs.gov.
- Direct them to the U.S. Forest Service [Hiring and Recruitment website](#), which lists upcoming hiring events. During these hiring events, hundreds of positions - with duty locations across the country - may go live on USAjobs.gov in a single announcement. Many positions will be geared towards entry-level professionals.
- Share these helpful resources:
 - [Public Lands Corps hiring authority frequently asked questions](#) (Previously recorded webinar)
 - [PLC Resource Guide for Participants](#) (Comprehensive guide)
 - [How to create a USAjobs profile](#) (Previously recorded webinar)
 - [Understanding hiring eligibilities and qualifications](#) (Previously recorded webinar)
 - [How to write a federal resume](#) (Previously recorded webinar)

Who can I contact if I have further questions about PLC?

Please reach out to the PLC point-of-contact within your geographic region, station, or area. See list [here](#), under “Contact Information”.



Workforce Development Partnerships Service Hub | National Partnership Office

Public Lands Corps Verification Form

Instructions

This form is to be completed by the partner organization. Please provide the following information about the Public Lands Corps participant to certify their hours of service under your organization, verify that all PLC requirements have been met, and request issuance of a PLC noncompetitive hiring authority certificate of hiring eligibility.


Participant Information

Full name (First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name)		U.S. citizen or permanent resident? (Yes/No)	
Age		Received a high school diploma or equivalent? (Yes/No)	
Email			

Public Lands Corps Service

If the Public Lands Corps participant served at multiple locations, please fill out additional tables accordingly.

Location of service		Location of service (if applicable)	
Number of hours completed		Number of hours completed	
Dates of service		Dates of service	
Agreement number		Agreement number	
Was this a wildfire suppression incident response?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Was this a wildfire suppression incident response?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Location of service (if applicable)		 Location of service (if applicable)	
Number of hours completed		Number of hours completed	
Dates of service		Dates of service	
Agreement number		Agreement number	
Was this a wildfire suppression incident response?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Was this a wildfire suppression incident response?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No



Location of service (if applicable)		Location of service (if applicable)	
Number of hours completed		Number of hours completed	
Dates of service		Dates of service	
Agreement number		Agreement number	
Was this a wildfire suppression incident response?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Was this a wildfire suppression incident response?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No



Location of service (if applicable)		Location of service (if applicable)	
Number of hours completed		Number of hours completed	
Dates of service		Dates of service	
Agreement number		Agreement number	
Was this a wildfire suppression incident response?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Was this a wildfire suppression incident response?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Total Completed Hours

Hours completed on National Forest System land or Indian lands (Must be at least 120 hours)	
Hours completed on other public lands	
Total completed hours (Must be at least 640 hours)	

Signature	<i>Jane Supervisor</i>	Name		
	<i>Partner Contact Signature</i>		<i>Partner Contact Name (Print)</i>	
Partner Organization		Email		
Date of Signature	<input type="text"/>			
	MM DD YY			

**For Internal USFS Use Only. USFS point-of-contact will click submit button.*

