

Dane County: Partners with Operation Fresh Start to develop Dane County Civilian Climate Corps

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Today, County Executive Joe Parisi announced the Dane County Office of Energy and Climate Change will partner with Operation Fresh Start to develop plans for the Dane County Civilian Climate Corps. County Executive Parisi included \$93,000 in his 2022 budget for Operation Fresh Start to create a plan that provides emerging adults with hands-on opportunities to mitigate climate change in the Dane County community, with an emphasis on addressing environmental equity. The program will be modeled after Dane County's highly successful Dane County Conservation Crews.

"The Dane County Civilian Climate Corps will help our community reduce carbon emissions and increase renewable energy consumption, all while giving our younger residents opportunities to gain work experience and learn about potential careers in the green energy sector," said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "We are excited to take this next step in developing the Civilian Climate Corps program and thank Operation Fresh Start for their continued partnership."

Over the course of 2022, Operation Fresh will start to engage a Core Team, as well as an Advisory Group, in developing an implementation-ready program that identifies specific hands-on training opportunities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions or mitigates the effects of climate change. The program plan will include engagement strategies for low-income emerging adults to access hands-on experience and career pathways in green industries, while developing a list of potential program partners, an annual operating budget, and estimated environmental impact of emission reductions and energy savings.

The Core Team is comprised of leaders from nonprofits, academia, and businesses who are actively engaged in climate change, climate change mitigation, and environmental quality. Their input will help steer pathways for program participants and shape the program direction. Advisory Group members are representatives from nonprofits, academia, climate change, environmental equity, and emerging adult employment and training. With their input, the Advisory Group will provide general direction and feedback on plan development.

“Operation Fresh Start is excited about leading our community’s effort to develop a local Civilian Climate Corps,” said Operation Fresh Start Executive Director Greg Markle. “As an organization, Operation Fresh Start works with emerging adults at the crossroads of conservation and community. We are most excited to include the voice of our young people in this discussion. This is an opportunity for the next generation to impact our climate today and into the future.”

With the County Executive’s \$93,000 budget allocation, the aim is to have a Dane County Civilian Climate Corps that is ready to receive federal, state, or local funding to operate.

Core Team:

- Tony Abate, Groundswell Conservancy
- Mel Askay, Dane Co. Office of Energy and Climate Change
- Dean Bossenbroek, Briarpatch Youth Services
- Maria Hart, Nomad Planners
- Laura Hicklin, Dane Co. Land & Water Resources Dept.
- Amy Klusmeier, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and Volunteer Board Member, Southern WI Trout Unlimited
- Greg Markle, Operation Fresh Start

Advisory Group:

- Kathyne Auerback, Movin’ Out, Inc.
- Robert Beattie, Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, UW-Madison
- Carrie Breunig, Groundswell Conservancy Board Chair and Goodman Community Center LOFT Teen Program Manager
- John Charles Newman, Friends of Starkweather Creek, Volunteer Organizer – Troy Community Gardens
- Abigail Corso, Elevate

- Heather Crowley, Dane County Human Services
- Gabrielle Dahl, UW-Milwaukee Alumna
- Heidi Deininger, Goodman Community Center
- Madeline Dumas, City of Madison Engineering Division
- Jen Everson, Reach Dane; Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture, UW-Madison
- Deb Gilpin, Madison Children's Museum, Aldo Leopold Nature Center & Nature Preschool
- Breanna Grow, United Way of Dane County
- Sherrie Gruder, Energy Strategist
- Micah Kloppenburg, Community Member active in youth environmental education and native habitat restoration
- Jim LaGro, Landscape Journal: Design, Planning, and Management of the Land
- Robin Lee, Serve WI
- Robin Lisowski, Slipstream
- Brian McMahan, Operation Fresh Start
- Kyle Minks, Dane County Land and Water
- Shane Otto, Dane County Parks
- Michelle Regier, RISE Wisconsin
- Cory Rich, Operation Fresh Start
- Dick Rideout, Retired, WI DNR, former State Urban Forestry Coordinator and UF Policy & Partnership Specialist
- Kelly Ruppel, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Madison
- Nathan Scultz, Project Home
- Pedro Salazar, Dane County Department of Human Services
- Joleen Stinson, Dane County Parks
- Scott Williams, Wisconsin Energy Institute, UW-Madison