



For Immediate Release

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Investing in Young People as Contributors in Climate Change Efforts

As momentum grows for service and job opportunities in a green economy, Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP) undertakes efforts to promote engaging young people in green service and applauds the US Congress for its promising legislative support for the Clean Energy Corps.

Climate change, and efforts to combat it, remains a frequent topic addressed by all sectors; from grassroots organizations in the developing world to world leaders at the G-20 meetings in Europe in April. Citizens throughout the world are being encouraged to mobilize to shift economies and lifestyles toward greater sustainability. Young people, in particular, can be actively engaged in the movement to address climate change through opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to make a significant contribution in mitigating climate change in the coming years.

In recent legislation, the Obama Administration and Congress demonstrated a commitment to engaging Americans in addressing the effects of climate change and rebuilding the economy through provisions for green service, green jobs and green energy.

President Obama told a gathering of clean-energy entrepreneurs and researchers in March that, "Innovators like you are creating the jobs that will foster our recovery and creating the technologies that will power our long-term prosperity."

Early in 2009, Congress speedily passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, providing almost \$800 billion in stimulus funds intended to spur the economy in the short run and lay the basis for future growth. The stimulus package included \$5 billion for the Energy Department for weatherization, almost \$4 billion for the Department of Labor, including \$1.2 billion for youth activities and \$500 million for Green Jobs. The significant investment in engaging Americans, especially young people, in activities to adapt to climate change exemplifies the prognosis that this is a promising area of development to help rebuild the economy.

Clean Energy Corps

Following support of the Recovery Act, the Congress passed, with significant bi-partisan support, the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act in late March. The Serve America Act reauthorizes and strengthens the programs of the Corporation for National and Community Service, putting AmeriCorps on the path to grow from its current level of 75,000 to 250,000 members per year. It prioritizes programs that address educational, health and environmental needs, and creates service opportunities for veterans.

Of particular note, the Act provides funding for new innovative programs, including a Clean Energy Service Corps (CESC) and Summer of Service programs. The CESC is one of four priority corps in the Act (education, health and veterans are the others).

The CESC is an environmental national service initiative that will create pathways for young people, from full-time, stipended service experiences to ongoing workforce education and training, ultimately creating a new, green workforce. The CESC will capitalize on the unique role of service to engage young people in their community's needs, prepare them for careers and build paths to prosperity for low-income people and communities via opportunities in the green collar economy.

The CESC is one component of a larger Clean Energy Corps (CEC) that strives to match the people who most need work with the work that most needs to be done by combining job creation, service and training to combat global warming. In February, ICP and others in the CEC Working Group (which includes representatives of the Apollo Alliance, Center for American Progress Action Fund, Green For All and others) publicly unveiled the CEC in a full white paper available on the ICP website.

"The beauty of the Clean Energy Corps is that it doesn't just create jobs," said Green For All founder Van Jones in an article for Environmental News Service, "but it also creates pathways out of poverty." Among other things, the CEC will focus its community work on retrofitting, or improving the energy efficiency of residential buildings, which account for 40 percent of US energy use and carbon emissions.

Through state and local partnerships, the CEC will bring about social and environmental change. In the next five years alone, the CEC hopes to create at least 600,000 living-wage, career-track jobs in green industries, train people for them, and directly engage millions of Americans in diverse service-learning and volunteer work related to climate protection. For more on the CEC, including the white paper and a list of endorsers, please visit the CEC page on ICP's website at <http://www.icicp.org/greenservice>.

ICP's Green Service Initiative

As the momentum for civic engagement in the climate change arena grows, it has become clear that young people are particularly capable of acting on the issue in their communities and schools. In response to this momentum, ICP is launching a global, multi-year Green Youth Service initiative to highlight the significant contribution young people can and are making in addressing global climate change through voluntary service, and to expand quality opportunities

for young people to become engaged in the issue of climate change through voluntary service.

“Service is an effective strategy for engaging young people in the issues and needs that most affect their lives and communities, like environmental sustainability,” said Susan Stroud, Executive Director of ICP. “Through this initiative, ICP seeks to build the capacity for organizations and governments throughout the world to give young people a voice and role in this important movement.”

ICP will undertake a series of integrated initiatives seeking to build the knowledge base in the field, connect people and organizations, encourage greater investment in green youth service and build the organizational capacity of green youth service programs.

While the focus of this project is on generating opportunities for young people in green service, ICP will also use its expertise to encourage green service opportunities for all people, young and old, through service learning and national youth service.

As part of its Green Youth Service initiative, ICP is developing an online resource center to disseminate information and resources and to build a collaborative and interactive environment for green youth service programs. As ICP contributes to the knowledge base and builds resources for youth service and climate change, it will conduct research and develop publications.

Look for a publication highlighting service as a strategy for addressing global climate change to be released on or near Earth Day, April 24, 2009. For more information about ICP’s initiative, please visit: www.icicp.org/greenservice.

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Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP), based in Washington, DC, is a global leader in the field of youth civic engagement. ICP’s mission is to facilitate the generation of opportunities for young people to improve their communities and build essential skills for future success through civic engagement. ICP works with individuals and organizations around the world to support the development of innovative approaches to two civic participation strategies: national youth service and service learning. Founded in 2001 by Susan Stroud through a multi-year grant from the Ford Foundation, ICP grew out of Ms. Stroud’s 30 years of experience in designing programs and policies and building networks that result in many more young people being given the opportunity to engage in civic activities. Since 2001, the team at ICP has worked to expand opportunities for tens of thousands of young people throughout the world to engage in service.