



Environmental
Defense
Fund

CLIMATE CORPS

Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) Climate Corps® is an innovative fellowship program that trains talented and passionate graduate students and pairs them with companies and public institutions that are committed to meeting climate goals.

EDF established the Climate Corps fellowship program in 2008 to foster climate leadership by equipping professionals with the connections and skills necessary to drive progress. Fellows spend 10-12 weeks of the summer designing tools and recommendations that help companies reduce emissions by mapping climate commitments, reducing energy consumption, procuring renewable energy, electrifying fleets and/or engaging suppliers.

Climate Corps is building and mobilizing a diverse climate workforce equipped to have an exponential impact on the climate crisis. Fellows work with industry-leading organizations in the U.S., China and India, three countries crucial to addressing the global climate crisis. So far, Climate Corps fellows have identified opportunities to avoid more than two million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions — equivalent to taking nearly half a million cars off the road for a year. Their long-term impact is even greater; over 80% of Climate Corps alumni have gone on to work on climate or energy issues as part of their full-time job, including several who have founded sustainability-focused companies. This global network of trained and connected climate leaders will advocate for and advance climate solutions that help put business on a path to reach net zero emissions by mid-century and mitigate the worst effects of climate change.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND CLIMATE CORPS CYCLE



The above diagram of the Environmental Defense Fund Climate Corps cycle illustrates each step of the fellowship program across a year. The colors on the right indicate which stakeholders engage in each step of the progress.

The following pages showcase the fellow, alumni, and host organization experience at each step of the Climate Corps cycle illustrated above.

- Fellows:** Each fellow's journey begins at recruitment and they officially join the Climate Corps alumni network at the fall Summit, an annual celebration of the fellowship.
- Fellowship Alumni:** Alumni engage at multiple points in the annual fellowship cycle, adding value to the program while advancing their own careers. Some alumni go on to engage with the program in a whole new way by supervising Climate Corps fellows hosted at their companies.
- Host Organizations:** Dozens of new host organizations join the program annually, after being identified through alumni network connections and/or direct Climate Corps program outreach. After seeing the value of the program firsthand, many Climate Corps hosts choose to participate year after year.
- Inactive Periods:** Certain phases of the fellowship cycle are not applicable to one or more of the stakeholders.



ORGANIZATIONAL OUTREACH

One of the first steps in the Climate Corps cycle is to enlist influential organizations to host impactful fellowships that align with EDF goals and expertise. The Climate Corps team reaches companies and organizations across sectors and industries by leveraging existing relationships, conducting widespread outreach, and cultivating new partnerships. Each year, an average of 130 organizations partner with Climate Corps to host a fellow, and more than 80 companies have partnered with Climate Corps for five or more years. Since 2008, Climate Corps has worked with over 650 organizations, including over 40% of Fortune 100 companies.

- Climate Corps builds partnerships with influential organizations across industries to maximize impact in the public and private sectors.
- Climate Corps fellows serve as a valuable resource, boosting the work of ambitious but capacity-strapped sustainability teams.
- Public sector partnerships advance environmental and climate justice initiatives in government and nonprofits across the U.S.
- Climate Corps invites the most impactful organizations to host fellows and supports each fellowship from project ideation to completion.



*Pictured, left:
2018 fellow
Daniel Powell
onsite at Google*



FELLOW RECRUITMENT

While seeking host organizations, Climate Corps simultaneously recruits talented graduate students from a wide range of backgrounds to grow a diverse climate workforce. Climate Corps engages directly with prospective applicants and university staff by hosting and attending recruitment events throughout the fall. As a result, the program receives more than 1,000 applications from graduate students each year.

- The Climate Corps team visits career expos, fairs, conferences, and universities to connect directly with prospective applicants.
- There is a wide variety of programming available for prospective applicants to learn more about the fellowship.
- Dozens of Climate Corps alumni volunteer to support recruitment efforts by speaking at presentations, meeting with candidates, and providing application support.



FELLOWSHIP PLACEMENTS

After a rigorous, three-step assessment process, each fellow is matched with a company, public sector agency or nonprofit organization to advance climate goals.

- Applications are carefully reviewed for the skills and experiences that make a successful fellow, including project management and leadership experience, communication skills, and a passion for solving environmental challenges.
- The Climate Corps team speaks with hundreds of candidates to learn more about their goals, skills, and problem-solving ability.
- In a multi-step process, EDF hand-matches each project with the best candidate, based on the host organization's needs and the fellow's skills and interests.



**or recently graduated for the India program.*

FELLOWSHIP PREPARATIONS



MARCH - APRIL
Confirmation of Fellowship



APRIL
Drafting Fellowship Workplan with Fellow and Host



EARLY MAY
Registering for Fellow Training Sessions and Kick-off Call



LATE MAY
Fellow Training

Once accepted into the program, fellows and hosts are paired with an EDF team member to guide them throughout the fellowship experience. Years of tailored outreach and concierge-level support have enabled Climate Corps to forge strong relationships with host organizations — including more than 80 partnerships that have exceeded five years.

- Prior to the fellowship, the EDF team directs fellows in building a workplan that establishes their scope, timeline, and goals.
- The EDF team member then facilitates a kick-off call at which the fellow and host review the workplan together to ensure that their goals for the fellowship align and that all onboarding requirements are met.
- The Climate Corps team groups projects into thematic cohorts so that fellows can connect with and learn from peers working on a similar issue.
- Once fellows are accepted, and throughout the fellowship season, Climate Corps sends out a weekly fellow newsletter with helpful reminders on next steps, fellowship tips and event invitations.
- Fellows are also invited to connect via a closed LinkedIn group and Climate Corps Connect, a private networking site for fellows and alumni, prior to the start of their fellowships.



FELLOW TRAINING

The Fellow Training program is intended to prepare fellows for success in their fellowships and in their future careers as climate leaders. Training is backed by EDF science and includes two components: 1) a series of recorded training sessions and pre-readings designed for independent learning, to prepare fellows to dive deeper into Training Week content; and 2) the live Training Week itself. During this week, fellows gain hands-on practice with essential corporate and public sector climate topics and begin to build a climate network that will serve as a resource across their careers. Trainers include EDF experts and experienced climate practitioners, including Climate Corps alumni who work as climate professionals in a variety of industries.

- EDF continuously updates and improves the training structure and content to serve the skills and knowledge needs of that year's projects, boost interactivity, and enhance learning outcomes.
- EDF facilitates case study workshops, panel discussions, and guided conversations during the live Training Week, to encourage fellows to think critically and apply what they are learning.
- Fellows can continue to access these training materials and recordings throughout the summer.

2024 U.S. TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS

21

live training sessions

37

trainers

16

networking opportunities



START OF FELLOWSHIP

Once the training is complete, the hosts onboard their fellows, and they begin to implement the previously agreed workplans. Each project's assigned EDF team member checks in regularly to serve as a resource.

- Each fellow kicks off their project workplan with the support of their host organization.
- Hosts onboard the fellows to their organization with a regionally appropriate compensation as agreed in advance with EDF. EDF supports public-sector host organizations with funding for fellow salaries and the option to administer payments through EDF or an EDF-contracted third-party.
- EDF team members are accessible throughout the fellowship period to ensure a smooth fellowship start, conduct midpoint check-in calls, and address questions as they arise.



Pictured, right:
2022 Fellow
Santiago Toral
onsite at Amy's
Kitchen



ALUMNI GIVE BACK

With over 80% of alumni working on energy or climate as a component of their full-time jobs, our fellows have access to a talented global network of connected and empowered climate leaders. Program alumni have an affinity for EDF, thanks to their career-launching fellowships, and many go above and beyond to support the program's growth. As their careers advance, alumni engage with the program, serving as host supervisors and high-level sponsors for new Climate Corps fellows, and helping to expand our reach with host organizations. Our engaged alumni support every aspect of the program, from fellow recruitment to fellow mentoring.

- Our summer mentorship program pairs alumni mentors and fellows together for more support during the fellowship. Alumni mentors not only offer fellowship advice, but also provide tailored career advice, conduct mock interviews, review resumes, and share other job-seeking resources as fellows begin to think about the next steps after their fellowship.
- Alumni also provide peer-to-peer job-seeking support to other alumni by sharing job openings with members of the alumni network and by connecting directly with job seekers.
- Climate Corps offers networking events throughout the year, open to both fellows and alumni in our global community. This would not be possible without the local alumni who help to organize and serve as the point of contact for in-person networking opportunities.
- Some alumni give back to EDF as regular donors, and others have joined EDF as employees, contributing subject-matter expertise gained through their fellowships to advance EDF's mission.
- Alumni share testimonials and data to enrich program reports and other materials.
- Alumni participate in the professional development events offered to network members, such as topic-specific webinars and workshops. Their on-the-job expertise keeps these offerings current in this ever-evolving field.



SUMMER SUPPORT

The learning opportunities and project support that fellows were introduced to during Training Week are accessible to fellows throughout the summer. In the U.S., each fellow is placed in one of several project-focused cohorts, such as Renewables and Energy Efficiency, Zero-Emission Vehicles, Greenhouse Gas Measurement and Management, Climate Commitments, or Sustainable Value Chains. Cohort advisors include subject-matter experts from EDF, the Climate Corps alumni network, and our community of professional trainers; many advisors were once fellows themselves and have a deep understanding of the challenges that fellows may face.

- U.S.-based fellows meet within their cohorts several times throughout the summer, where expert advisors lead specialized training and provide support tailored to their project type. By formalizing a forum for networking and peer-to-peer learning, cohorts serve as the primary space for fellows to build impactful collaborations with one another.
- In addition to receiving support from an advisor with expertise in the relevant field, fellows work together on the unique challenges that arise throughout their fellowships.



FELLOWSHIP COMPLETE



As the fellowship wraps up, each fellow completes their final deliverables and is expected to produce both an end-of-fellowship presentation and a final report that describes the deliverables of their fellowship workplan. These results are submitted both to EDF and to the host organization at the end of the fellowship.

- Fellows outline their methodology and results, such as energy efficiency savings tactics, methods of integrating zero-emission vehicles into their delivery process, and/or recommendations to improve programs' climate equity.
- Fellows showcase their work to the broader public by writing a summary of their recommendations which EDF publishes online after host approval.
- Fellows compile metrics from their fellowship and submit them to EDF for review. EDF uses this aggregated data to measure the impact of each fellowship season.
- EDF seeks feedback about fellows' experiences via an end-of-fellowship call with the host and fellow, and via an annual survey, which informs program improvements the next year.

ANNUAL SUMMIT



To celebrate the successful completion of the fellowship season, EDF hosts an annual Climate Corps Summit, a conference with tailored events offered for fellows in each of the three program geographies: the U.S., India, and China. The culmination of each fellowship season, these regional summits provide an opportunity for our network of recent fellows and alumni to connect, network, share sustainability and climate solutions, and showcase recent fellowship projects.

- Each summit features fellow presentations, fellow and alumni awards, and a keynote speaker.
- Fellows officially graduate into alumni during the event, so the summit also serves as a launching point for the alumni network's peer mentoring groups and offers networking opportunities that help alumni build professional relationships.



ALUMNI NETWORKING & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Unlocking the power of the 3,300+ member network of fellowship alumni, hosts and other partners from more than 40 countries is key to Climate Corps' long-term success. Climate Corps alumni have an outsized impact across their careers and consistently demonstrate leadership in their fields; over 90% actively advocate for or otherwise work to advance climate solutions. Each year, Climate Corps hosts a range of events to provide members with the ongoing support necessary to excel in an ever-evolving field. EDF constantly tailors the professional development opportunities that are offered in response to feedback received in previous years' surveys of fellows and alumni. Support from EDF equips this network of changemakers with the skills, knowledge, and connections that they need to help shift the balance of power across sectors in a way that centers climate in decision-making — and helps to create a vital earth for everyone.

- The network offers virtual and in-person networking opportunities for alumni.
- EDF connects U.S.-based alumni for key climate events and conferences, such as New York Climate Week.
- EDF delivers multiple customized professional development opportunities across the year, such as advocacy trainings, career skills workshops, and networking events. In the U.S., these offerings include support for job seekers (job coaching, webinars, alumni-to-alumni introductions facilitated by Climate Corps network staff), skills-building workshops, and Lunch & Learn events with EDF +Business teams or alumni working in various sectors and industries.
- EDF nominates eligible alumni for industry awards, such as GreenBiz's 30 Under 30.

3,300+

members of the
alumni network

40+

countries across
the globe

90%

working or advocating
to advance climate
solutions

