

# Capital Corps Concept Paper

A Pathway to Belonging, Service, and Shared Prosperity

“Serve your city, Serve our Nation’s Capital”

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## **Executive Summary**

The Capital Corps will be a citywide civic service initiative that empowers Washingtonians to serve their communities, gain education and job training, and strengthen the city’s social fabric. Members of the corps will commit to weekly training, defined hours of service, and a clear code of conduct. In return, they receive education benefits, professional development, and pathways to careers. By combining education, employment, and service, the Capital Corps will build pathways to lifelong purpose and opportunity, and transform how our city uses its most valuable resources: its people and its places.

The Capital Corps will build a pipeline of prepared, purpose-driven residents by creating a mission-based civic corps across multiple branches of service. Participants complete standardized training, and serve in specialized roles that support the District's most essential systems: education, healthcare, public safety, STEM innovation, senior support, civic works and neighborhood equity.

Through a structured service, the Capital Corps will:

- Develop a skilled, civically engaged workforce
- Strengthen community institutions
- Provide structured pathways for youth and adults
- Create a culture of shared responsibility and pride across all eight wards

This is how D.C. builds belonging, purpose, and opportunity, one corps member at a time.

## **Vision**

Service to others is essential to developing a society that benefits all. Washington, D.C. deserves a civic infrastructure that is strong and organized. The Capital Corp will offer Washingtonians a pathway to serve their city, receiving training, mentorship and career preparation, while contributing real, measurable value to the community. Service is not episodic, it is discipline. The Capital Corps will give residents a place to serve, grow and belong through structured commitment, shared mission and personal development.

## **Mission**

The mission of the Capital Corps is to make structured civic service a defining pillar of life in the District of Columbia, connecting residents with meaningful work that strengthens our schools, healthcare systems, neighborhoods, and public safety networks. Through weekly commitments, rigorous training, and branch-specific service assignments, members gain the skills, credentials, mentorship, and real-world

experience needed to advance their education, build careers, and develop lifelong purpose. The Capital Corps serves the city and prepares its members to thrive long after their service is complete.

## **Core Structure**

### **1. Branches of Service (Corps Units)**

Each branch operates like a service track with branch specific training, branch specific assignments and advancement opportunities. Members apply for a branch, complete an introductory training academy and then begin their service in their respective branch. Branch specific training and requirements will vary by both branch and assignment.

#### **Health & Medical Corps**

Supports hospitals, clinics, and public health programs, including vaccination drives, community wellness, and telehealth assistance.

#### **Education Corps**

Assists in classrooms, after-school programs, literacy efforts, and tutoring with mentorship opportunities for D.C. youth.

#### **STEM & Innovation Corps**

Promotes technology education and digital equity. Members will help teach coding, robotics, data literacy, and green technology in schools and community centers. The branch will also support small businesses and nonprofits with digital transformation and cybersecurity training.

#### **Public Safety & Law Enforcement Support Corps**

Partners with MPD, Fire & EMS, and violence prevention programs, emphasizing community trust, de-escalation, and restorative justice.

#### **Elder Care Corps**

Provides companionship, transportation, and assistance for seniors, ensuring they remain active, safe, and connected.

#### **Early Childhood Development Corps:**

Supports daycare centers, pre-K classrooms, and early learning hubs to build strong educational foundations.

#### **Civic Works & Infrastructure Corps**

Maintains parks, green spaces, and community facilities, contributing to neighborhood pride and sustainability.

## Financial Literacy & Neighborhood Equity Corps

Empowers residents with tools to build individual and community wealth. Members will assist with budgeting, saving, managing debt, understanding credit, entrepreneurship, small business development, and investing. The branch will partner with local banks, credit unions, CDFIs, and universities to deliver workshops and one-on-one coaching, helping families stabilize finances and fostering equitable neighborhood growth. Financial institutions may also co-sponsor or fund service fellows as part of their Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) commitments.

## 2. Commitment, Flexibility and Accessibility

Participation is flexible in scheduling but firm in expectation and accountability.

### Service Commitment

- Minimum weekly service requirement (e.g., 8–12 hours/week or 900 hours/year)
- Participation in weekly “Corps Day” — structured training, leadership development, and teamwork
- Code of conduct and service standards
- Branch-specific skills labs and certifications

### Participation Tracks

- Part-time track: similar to ROTC commitment structure
- Gap year / full-year service track
- After-school and youth tracks
- Diversion and re-entry pathway: structured, supervised service replacing punitive approaches

### Member Benefits:

- Monthly stipends
- Tuition support or education credits
- Transit passes
- Uniform components and identification
- Access to training, mentorship, and career placement

## 3. Education & Training Partnership

The Capital Corps operates like a civilian service academy network:

- **Foundational Training Academy:** orientation, discipline, civic leadership, CPR, conflict resolution, digital literacy
- **Branch-Specific Academies:** technical skills, certifications, field exercises
- **University Partnerships:** UDC and D.C. universities provide credit-bearing coursework linked to corps commitments

- **Leadership Progression:** squad leaders, branch leaders, and senior corps positions
- **Career Pipelines:** apprenticeships, certifications, and credential pathways

UDC serves as the central training and academic hub, but branches operate across community sites citywide.

### **Community Benefits**

- Provides clear pathways for youth, adults, and returning citizens
- Strengthens healthcare, education, and senior services
- Expands the city's skilled workforce
- Reinvigorates civic pride and trust
- Reduces recidivism through structured engagement
- Creates a shared citywide culture of service

### **Economic Impact**

The Capital Corps is not just a civic service program, it is a workforce engine of residents trained in high-demand sectors. It is also an economic development strategy for the District that strengthens both human and physical capital. Each branch of service contributes directly to the city's economy: the STEM & Innovation Corps builds a digitally skilled workforce; the Health and Early Childhood Corps reinforce essential care systems that enable parents to work; and the Civic Works Corps revitalizes public assets and vacant spaces that attract local investment.

Through structured academies and university pathways, residents earn credentials and experience that directly lead to family sustaining D.C. careers. Vacant buildings become training halls, service hubs and learning centers, transforming underused spaces into civic infrastructure.

### **Implementation & Funding Framework**

#### **Phase 1: Pilot & Infrastructure (Years 1–2)**

- Establish the Capital Corps under the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED).
- Create a foundational training academy program.
- Define pilot branches and branch specific training and assignments.
- Develop weekly schedules and standardized curricula.
- Activate existing community assets including schools, UDC campuses, and vacant or underutilized commercial properties.
- Public Launch Campaign: 'Serve your city, Serve our Nation's Capital'.
- Launch branch specific placements in pilot branches.
- Implement stipends, education credits and progression pathways.
- Create KPIs to ensure proper measurements and tracking for ROI analysis.

#### **Phase 2: Expansion & Integration (Years 3–5)**

- Scale across all branches.
- Create Service Academies within UDC and partner universities.
- Expand academic credit, certification, and apprenticeship pipelines.
- Expand Diversion Program with the Office of the Attorney General and DYRS.
- Integrate Capital Corps into after-school, senior, and healthcare programs.
- Publish annual DC Service Report with ROI analysis.

**Phase 3: Institutionalization (Years 6–10)**

- Pass legislation to create the Capital Corps Trust Fund.
- Integrate service with graduation, scholarship, and public service credits.
- Build international partnerships through Sister Cities and the State Department.

**Funding Strategy**

- Reallocate existing city programs under DMPED: MBSYEP, DCIA, DOES, and ONSE.
- Leverage AmeriCorps, Department of Labor, and federal innovation grants for matching funds.
- Create the Capital Corps Trust Fund supported by property transfer tax and workforce levy.
- Establish a Fellows Endowment and explore Social Impact Bonds.
- Redirect savings from reduced recidivism, unemployment, and health costs.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>City Funding</b>	<b>External Match</b>	<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>Cost/ Participant</b>	<b>Key Milestones</b>
1	100	\$3M	\$2M	\$5M	\$50,000	Capital Corps Office established under DMPED
2	300	\$7M	\$5M	\$12M	\$40,000	Vacant space partnerships expanded
3	500	\$9M	\$6M	\$15M	\$30,000	Elder Care & Early Childhood branches added
5	1,000	\$11M	\$7M	\$18M	\$18,000	Full eight-branch operation
10	5,000	\$28M	\$17M	\$45M	\$9,000	Trust Fund active, program institutionalized

**Governance & Accountability**

- Advisory Board with representatives from universities, nonprofits, businesses, and communities.
- Annual Reporting with transparent dashboards and Council briefings.
- Independent Evaluation by Georgetown’s McCourt School or UDC’s School of Public Policy.

## **Conclusion**

The Capital Corps is not just a program, it is a civic movement. It embodies the principles of education, shared prosperity, and collective purpose.

***“Every Washingtonian deserves a place to serve, a path to grow, and a reason to stay.” —  
Gary Goodweather***