

# WHAT WORKS IN WORKS PROGRAMS:

# BUILDING EQUITY IN THE AUSTIN CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORP

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# What Works in Works Programs: Building Equity in Austin's Civilian Conversation Corp

## A LIVED-EXPERIENCE DATA BLACK PAPER

### ABOUT MEASURE

MEASURE, an Austin-based nonprofit, works to empower people impacted by social disparities and the accompanying narrative. MEASURE believes that, when used strategically, data provides a common language upon which community members can meet and increase their knowledge about the causes and work together to create equitable change and increase awareness.

### ABOUT ACCC

Austin Civilian Conservation Corp (ACCC) is a program from the City of Austin designed for people who live in the Austin area to access jobs and grow careers in environmental and sustainability-related fields.

ACCC is inspired by the original Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which in Texas employed 50,000 people to create what would become the Texas State Park System among other projects.<sup>1</sup> the Austin City Council approved Resolution No. 20200507-061 on May 7, 2020. This resolution created ACCC to employ Austinites experiencing economic distress as a result of COVID-19.

Born out of the Innovation Office, the ACCC program engages multiple city departments and partner community organizations. The program will soon be moving over to Parks and Recreation, with support from the Economic Development Department.

### WHAT DOES AN EQUITABLE JOB TRAINING AND ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM LOOK LIKE?

The Office of Innovation came to MEASURE with a problem: given the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on low-income populations and communities of color, how do we ensure that all aspects of the program-- including outreach, recruitment, community partnerships, compensation, and the delivery of the program itself is equitable and is built to prioritize the needs of those most impacted by economic hardship and COVID-19?

MEASURE believes that programs for the community should be designed by the community. Through a series of paid focus groups and a paid survey, MEASURE collected input from the community to inform the design and delivery of ACCC.

The history of racism and discrimination is embedded in infrastructure, policies, and practices throughout the City of Austin. Providing an equitable program requires systematic dismantling and accounting for these realities.

The participants in the focus group and survey provided clear insight into what they need, what they want, and the barriers they face to access and long-term benefits from programs like ACCC. This report lays out those insights and a path forward for how to take action on them.

## THE HISTORY OF ENVIRONMENTALISM & RACISM IN AUSTIN

ACCC CARE Model | April 2021



Source 2-12

### DEEPENING THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ACCC

When viewed from the perspective of community impact, the historical timeline above paints a picture of the relationship between progress, policymaking, and the changing nature of systemic racism. What began as overtly discriminatory policy-making evolved into policy-making conducted in the absence of representation by the communities most impacted, with the impacts compounding over time. It's for this reason that we should look more closely at the history of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The concept for ACCC was inspired by the original Conservation Corp, which, in Texas, employed tens of thousands and established our state park system. Tempering this inspirational history, however, is the parallel history of systemic racism that not only permeated the CCC but was perpetuated within it as well.

Segregation and other forms of systemic racism were core components of the New Deal. The New Deal, established in 1933, set into motion Social Security, the Federal Housing Administration, and several federal works programs, including the Civilian Conservation Corps. While these programs did benefit communities of color, they also discriminated against them.

Consistent with redlining policies of the 1920s the Federal Housing Administration initially subsidized developers on the contingency that the homes not be sold to African Americans. Projects available to African Americans were segregated and typically of less value. This was based on erroneous assumptions (that were later proven false) about the impact of integration on property values. **13**

While the Civilian Conservation Corps did employ 200,000 African Americans and 80,000 Native Americans, the program also segregated white and Black workers, with the vast majority of programs led by white men. This dynamic limited the experience and advancement of program participants.

In his 1991 analysis “African-American Youth in the Program of the Civilian Conservation Corps in California, 1933-42: An Ambivalent Legacy,” Olen Cole, Jr. addresses a number of issues related to racial discrimination in the CCC.

Going beyond segregation, he reviews the feedback given from CCC program participants of the benefits received. Cole’s analysis does highlight many benefits of the CCC, including the positive experience of its participants, who cited the financial difference it made for them as well as the valuable job experience they received. However, the survey suggests that while participants did benefit in some ways, they were not inspired to pursue careers in conservation, and did not receive training in transferable skills. Cole concludes that the program was never more than a short-term solution. 16



Source: History.com

14



Source: CoreNetwork.org

15

**"A wider-ranging program of vocational education rather than work relief would have been vastly preferable. In the CCC, corpsmen gained no long-term job training. Once their corps duty was over, they returned home without new skills that would qualify them as workers in an increasingly industrial and technological world. Beyond that, these men's attitudes toward nature, or even the sense that they needed to have an attitude toward nature, was apparently completely unaffected by their experience in the CCC. This failure, critical then, remains a failure of many environmental organizations today."**

**- OLEN COLE, JR. 1991**

The perspectives reflected in the focus groups and surveys we analyzed support the concerns Cole addresses. The insights provided by the voices of those impacted most by COVID-19 and previous hardship could assist ACCC in shaping a truly remarkable program that is a departure from the past. To do so, ACCC must be willing and ready to operationalize these insights from the community as they address their planning, budgeting, leadership, and implementation of the program.



## METHODOLOGY

The MEASURE Certified Measure Educators used equity-focused focus groups and an online survey to better understand the needs, desires, and barriers experienced by the communities most impacted by the pandemic in order to improve the Austin Civilian Conservation Corps (ACCC) Program. The equity focus groups informed and guided the development of the online community survey and the creation of the community impact metrics.

## EQUITY-FOCUSED FOCUS GROUPS

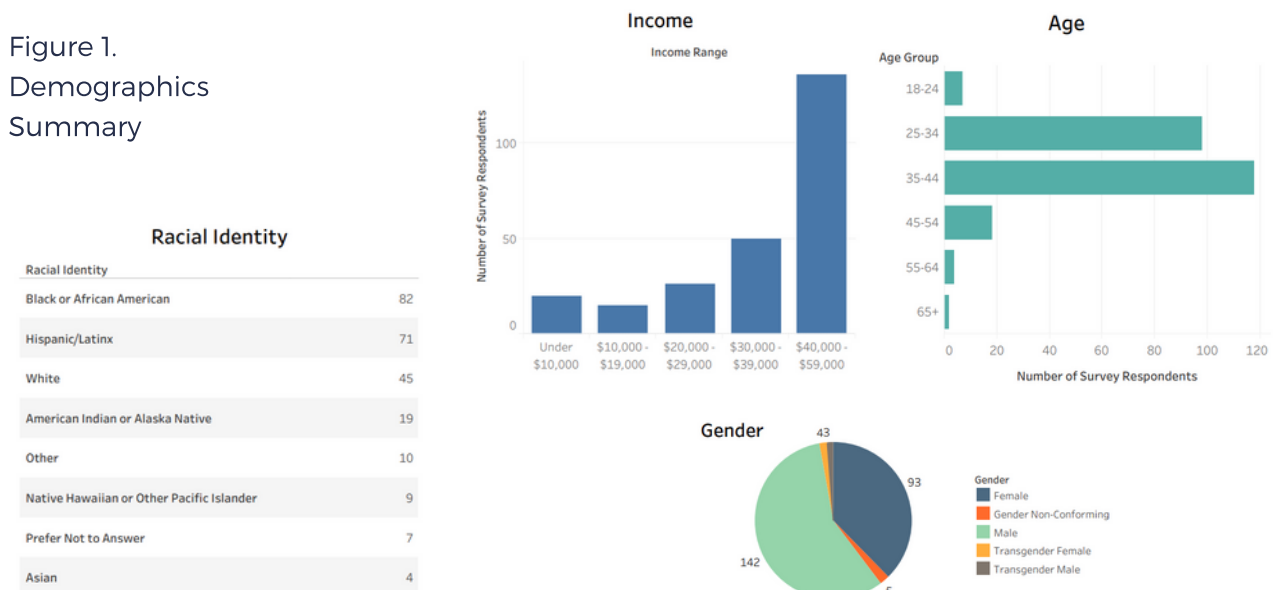
An equity-focused focus group approach allows those who are historically and systematically impacted by disparate social outcomes to make up the majority of the focus group and leads to an elevation of rich data, showcasing the lived experience of focus group participants. Four remote equity-focused focus groups were conducted with community members who identified as being financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Two focus groups included current and previous ACCC Program participants and two focus groups included non-ACCC participants. The equity-focused focus groups took place in April and May 2021 using a web-based video conferencing tool called Zoom. We requested that all participants use their cameras if possible. Each session lasted 90 minutes and covered the following activities: Core Values & Biases Assessment, Define the Problem, Historical Timeline, Equity-Focused Questions, and Wrap Up & Closing Remarks.

The participants were recruited by ACCC Partner Programs and community partners of MEASURE. Each focus group included between 2 and 8 participants based on community availability. Focus group participants spoke both English and Spanish. One focus group session included a Spanish interpreter. There were a total of 18 focus group participants. Described here is the demographic mix of the equity-focused focus groups participants. 44% of participants were previous or current ACCC Program participants and 56% of participants were non-ACCC participants, who represented those that are eligible to participate in the program. There were two primary reasons that community members decided to participate in focus groups: 33% of participants were interested in a green job and 61% of participants were interested in finding a stable income/job. 72% of the participants had been economically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in that they lost a job, were laid off, furloughed, or reduced work/income. The racial distribution of focus group participants was 33% identified as Black, 50% identified as Hispanic/Latinx, and 11% identified as White. One participant did not prefer to answer the race-related demographic question. From an age perspective, 61% of the participants were between the ages of 18-34, 22% of the participants were between the ages of 35 and 54, and 11% of the participants were 55 and over years old. In terms of gender, 39% of the participants identified as female, and 61% of respondents identified as male. As it relates to income, all participants made less than 60K with 22% participants earning less than \$10K, 39% participants earning between \$10K - \$29K, 28% participants earning between \$30K - \$49K, and 11% participants earned between \$50K - 59K.

MEASURE partnered with El Buen Samaritano, Austin Urban Technology Movement (AUTM), Farmshare Austin, Proyecto Teatro, and Mission Capital's Nonprofit Network to recruit participants to participate in the online community needs assessments survey. The online community survey was provided in English & Spanish and administered via SurveyMonkey between July 1- 25, 2021. The purpose of the survey was to further validate the learnings from the equity-focused focus groups and help the City of Austin improve the Austin Civilian Conservation Corps Program in supporting residents to earn income, serve their community, and gain skills that can lead to strong new careers. The survey gathered input from the Travis County community on topics related to the ACCC program, the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, current job situations and priorities, and job training and advancement needs. Eligible community members who completed the survey were compensated with a \$10 electronic VISA gift card.

The number of total participants in the survey was 247. Of the 247 survey participants, Just under 8% were people outside of the target area who had heard about, applied to, or participated in ACCC programs. We excluded out-of-area respondents who had not heard of ACCC. Described here is the demographic mix of the survey participants (Figure 1). Approximately 16 percent of respondents had participated in one of the ACCC programs. In terms of gender, 38% of the respondents identified as female, 57% of respondents identified as male, .3% transgendered, .2% identified as gender variant/non-conforming. As for age, roughly 3% of the participants were between the ages of 18-24, 40% of the participants were between the ages of 25 -34, 48% of the participants were between the ages of 35 -44, 7% of the participants were between the ages of 45 -54, and 2% of the participants were 55 and over. As it relates to annual income, roughly 8% of participants earned less than \$10K, 37% of participants earned between \$10K - \$39K, 55% earned between \$40K - \$59K, Approximately 65% of the respondents had a full-time job, 14% had a part-time or seasonal job, 12% were unemployed, 7% were self-employed, and 2% were retired. The racial distribution of focus group participants had 33% identifying as Black, 8% identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native, 2% identifying as Asian, 4% identifying as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 18% identifying as White, and about 6% identifying as other or preferring not to answer. From an ethnicity perspective, 29% of participants identified as Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin.

Figure 1.  
Demographics  
Summary



**EQUITY-FOCUSED FOCUS GROUPS INSIGHTS**

The equity-focused focus groups helped to better understand the needs, desires, and barriers for Travis County community members who are historically and systematically impacted by disparate social outcomes and financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The transcripts from focus groups were reviewed to identify patterns. Then an initial set of codes that represented the patterns were created and grouped into themes. The following themes emerged from the four equity-focused groups: 1) not getting paid enough, 2) mission-driven, 3) job type, 4) transferable skills, 5) career pathways, 6) job placement, 7) barriers, 8) program accessibility, 9) mental health, and 10) meeting the community where they are.

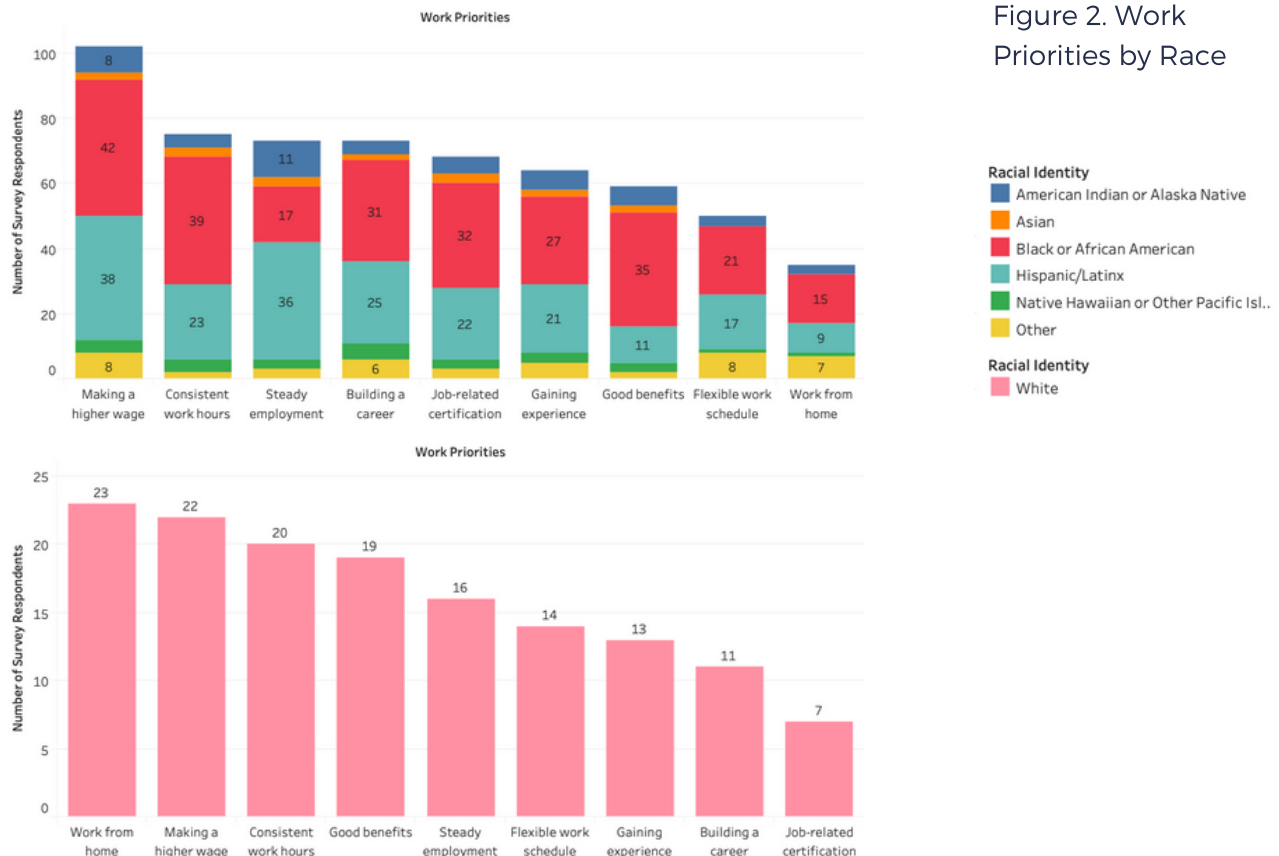
ACCC programs paid \$15 which is the City of Austin's living wage. We discovered that both ACCC and non-ACCC participants did not think that the current pay rate was enough to support a single individual (no dependents) or a family. They recommended increasing the rate to at least \$17 for program participants who are single (no dependents) and \$25 for participants that support a family. One participant left the program to return to their old job because it paid more. The ACCC program mission was the main reason why community members decided to participate in the program. They were motivated by the mission of beautifying and improving the city. Non-ACCC community members did not think the job options offered through the ACCC program were suitable for all. Particularly women were concerned about their safety. In addition, community members wanted access to more transferable skills that may be limited by the current type of jobs offered through the ACCC program. The community members who were in the program did not know what they were going to do after the program ended. They liked the skills they were learning but needed more career guidance, networking opportunities, career planning workshops, and career coaching that provided a good career pathway. For participants that had finished their ACCC program, they highlighted how they appreciated the networking opportunities that had led to another job or how their program provided job placement. Focus group participants expressed how they wanted to support in finding permanent job placement at the end of a job training and advancement program. We learned that word of mouth, television (KXAN), and social media were how most participants found out about the program. The ACCC program was not easy to find; in fact, it was not listed on the City of Austin Employment Opportunities website. Also, information shared about the program was inconsistent.

We learned that COVID-19 had a major impact on how people learn about job opportunities. Community members were not able to go to community centers, libraries, and churches, which were common places they used to find out about what was happening in the community, especially for those that did not have access to computers. The focus group revealed that the ACCC program has eliminated barriers such as the age limits that other programs (i.e. Americorps) have and limitations on those formerly incarcerated. However, there are still other barriers that need to be addressed to make the ACCC program equitable and accessible to the community members, including the following: language, needing an address, digital divide, mobility (transportation), lack of trust in the City of Austin, and feeling neglected by the City of Austin. Community members wanted the City of Austin to listen to them and identify their values and needs before fully developing a program. The COVID-19 pandemic was not the only issue the community members were dealing with; some were struggling financially before the pandemic. They were looking for jobs that could not only help them cope financially but also mentally so they could bring their best selves to work, as they were not psychologically stable given the conditions they faced. It is important to meet the community where they are and identify ways to connect with the community in a way that is effective for them. These insights helped to inform the questions included in the online community survey to further understand the job training and career advancement needs of Travis County.

## ONLINE SURVEY INSIGHTS

### WORK PRIORITIES

The top three work priorities were 1) Consistently making a higher wage, 2) Better and/or more consistent work hours and 3) Steady employment. From a racial perspective, we did notice a shift in work priorities in that for Black/African American survey respondents' top three priorities are 1) Consistently making a higher wage, 2) Better and/or more consistent work hours and 3) A job with good benefits. For Hispanic/Latinx survey respondents, the top three working priorities are 1) Consistently making a higher wage, 2) Steady employment, and 3) Building a career/career advancement. White survey respondents' top three priorities included 1) Ability to work from home, 2) Consistently making a higher wage, and 3) Better and/or more consistent work hours. Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and White survey respondents overlapped with at least two of the overall top three priorities. The results show that there is a difference in priorities from a race perspective. For example, one of the top five priorities for the underrepresented (non-White) population is obtaining a career- or job-related certification or training, and the same priority is ranked last for the White survey respondents. The ability to work from home was the first priority for White survey respondents and ranks last for the underrepresented (non-White) population. To address these differences, the ACCC program cannot be designed from a one-size-fits-all perspective and should identify ways to show how the program meets the needs of a diverse audience. Talking to individual program participants is vital. The survey also showed that wage growth is the main priority that was consistent across all race/ethnicity groups and should be considered one of the metrics used to measure the success of the ACCC program. The wage growth finding aligns with one of the themes identified in the focus group.





The survey participants that self-reported an income less than \$30K, top three priorities included 1) Consistently making a higher wage (11.7%), 2) Steady employment (10.9%), and 3) A job with good benefits (10.9%), which may be explained by the fact that they are making less money. While there was a change in work priorities for survey respondents with income between \$30K-\$59K with the following top three priorities 1) Consistently making a higher wage (39.7%), 2) Better and/or more consistent work hours (24%), and 3) Building a career/career advancement (27.1%). The latter two priorities possibly can lead to growth in wages. Ultimately, we see that wage growth is important to survey respondents regardless of income.

### BARRIERS TO FINDING STABLE JOB/INCOME

The number one barrier to finding a stable job/income is level of experience followed by certification/training and education when analyzing the data across all the survey respondents. It is critical that ACCC programs are not too restrictive around requiring a level of experience, training, and education. Program success depends on ensuring that these three areas are real benefits of participating in the program and communicating to the community how ACCC will help them in these three areas. Childcare and transportation are among the top five barriers to finding a stable job/income across all survey respondents. Transportation and having something for children were also mentioned during the focus groups. The ACCC program should consider increasing access by offering childcare and transportation as benefits. When analyzing the data from a racial perspective, there is a shift in the top three barriers as shown in Figure 3, which shows the top ten barriers by race. One of the top five barriers to finding a stable job/ income for Black/African American survey respondents (n=24) was not having a home address. Not having a home address is another theme from the focus group. It is critical for ACCC to ensure that programs find a way for people that do not have a home address to still qualify for the program. The top three barriers remain the same, but the order changed in that education became the number one barrier for the Black/African American community. Transportation became the second-highest rank barrier to finding a stable job/ income for the Hispanic/Latinx community. For the White community, age limitations and eldercare were listed within the top five barriers. The racial differences continue to highlight that the ACCC program cannot be designed from a one size fits all perspective and race has a major impact on providing an equitable program.

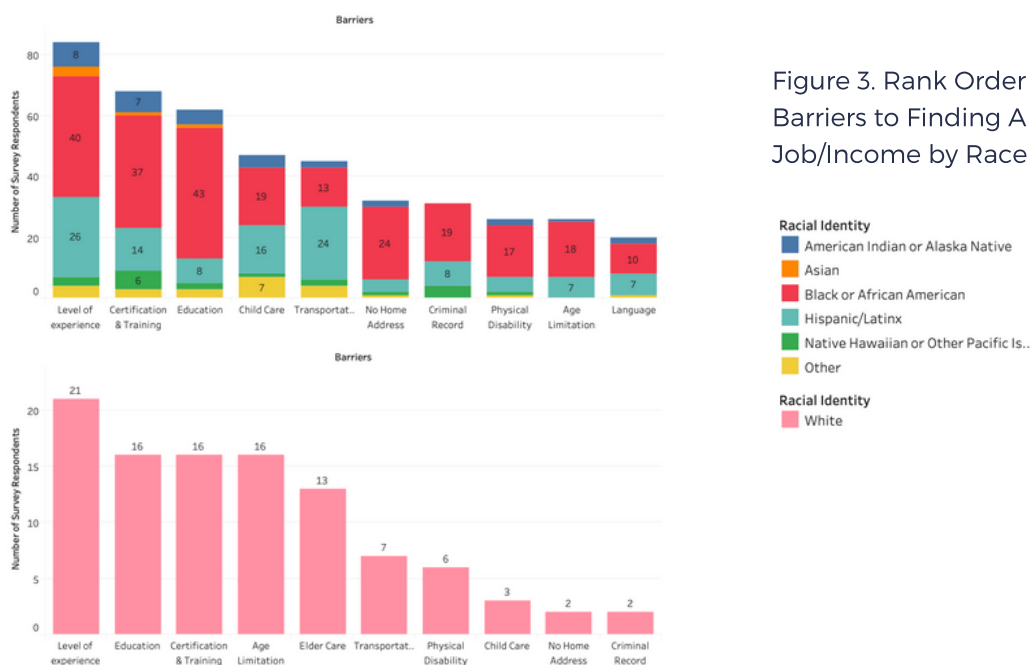


Figure 3. Rank Order of Barriers to Finding A Stable Job/Income by Race

## EXPECTED PAY RAY FOR JOB TRAINING & ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

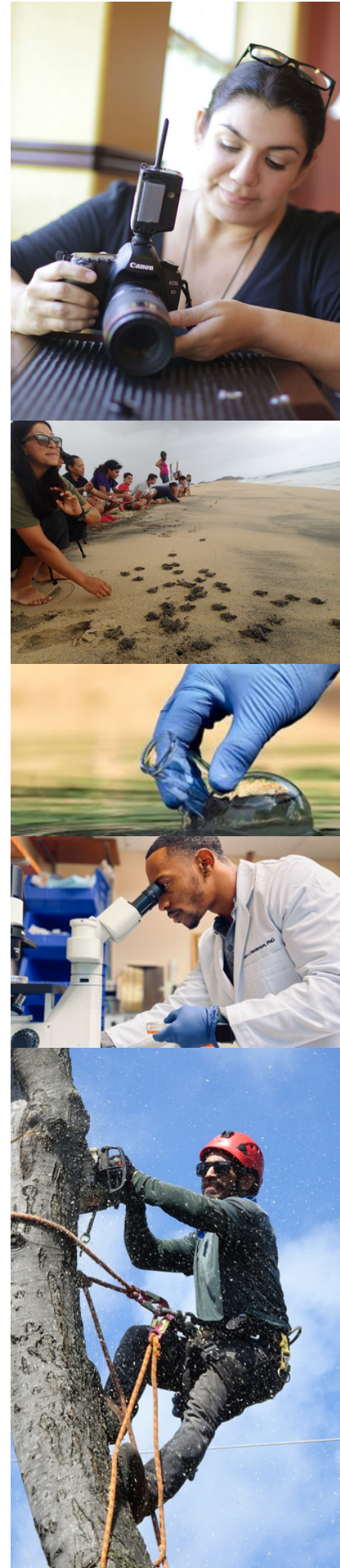
Over 50% of the survey respondents are expecting a pay rate between \$19-\$21 (n=78) and \$21-\$23 (n=68) to participate in a program that includes job training and advancement. The results show that participants want more than a 25% increase to what the ACCC program pays today. This was also true of current ACCC participants (as shown in Appendix 2), the majority of whom placed the suggested minimum between \$21/hr and \$25/hr. This could be due to the fact that some participants are currently receiving more than \$15 in their current job. The finding highlights one of the participants in the focus group who said they left the ACCC program because their old job paid more. The survey results also showed a difference between Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx in which about 17% more Blacks are expecting \$19-\$21 (n=29) and more than 50% more Hispanic/Latinx are expecting \$21-\$23 (n=33) to participant in a job training and career advancement program.

## LEARNING ABOUT JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Learning about the ACCC program was an issue that was highlighted during the focus groups. In the survey, the following six channels were selected as the best way to communicate about job opportunities with word of mouth (36%) being number one followed closely by resource fairs (33%) and community organizations (32%). Word of mouth and television (29%) were the two main mediums that people found out about ACCC programs this round, which both made the list. The results also suggest that it is critical for ACCC to participate in local resource fairs and partner with community organizations to help distribute information about the ACCC program opportunities when they are available. The city government website (30%) is definitely a medium that should be used to communicate about the ACCC program. Several ACCC program participants mentioned how surprised they were that the program was not advertised on the City's website. The survey results further prove the need to include these opportunities on the City's website to help make the jobs more accessible.

Figure 4. Communication Channels for Job Opportunities

Communication Channels	
Word-of-mouth	89
Resource Fairs	81
Community Organization Announcements	80
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	75
City government website	75
Television	73



## MOTIVATION FOR JOINING A JOB TRAINING AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

Survey respondents that self-reported making less than 30K are motivated to join a program with job training and career advancement to 1) Increase income (15%), 2) Stable Income (14%), and 3) Gain experience in a new field (11%). While survey respondents who self-reported making 30K – 59K are motivated to join a program with job training and career advancement to 1) Increase income (34%), 2) Safer job (33%), and 3) Stable income (28%).

## ENVIRONMENTAL & OCCUPATIONAL INTERESTS FOR JOB TRAINING AND ADVANCEMENT

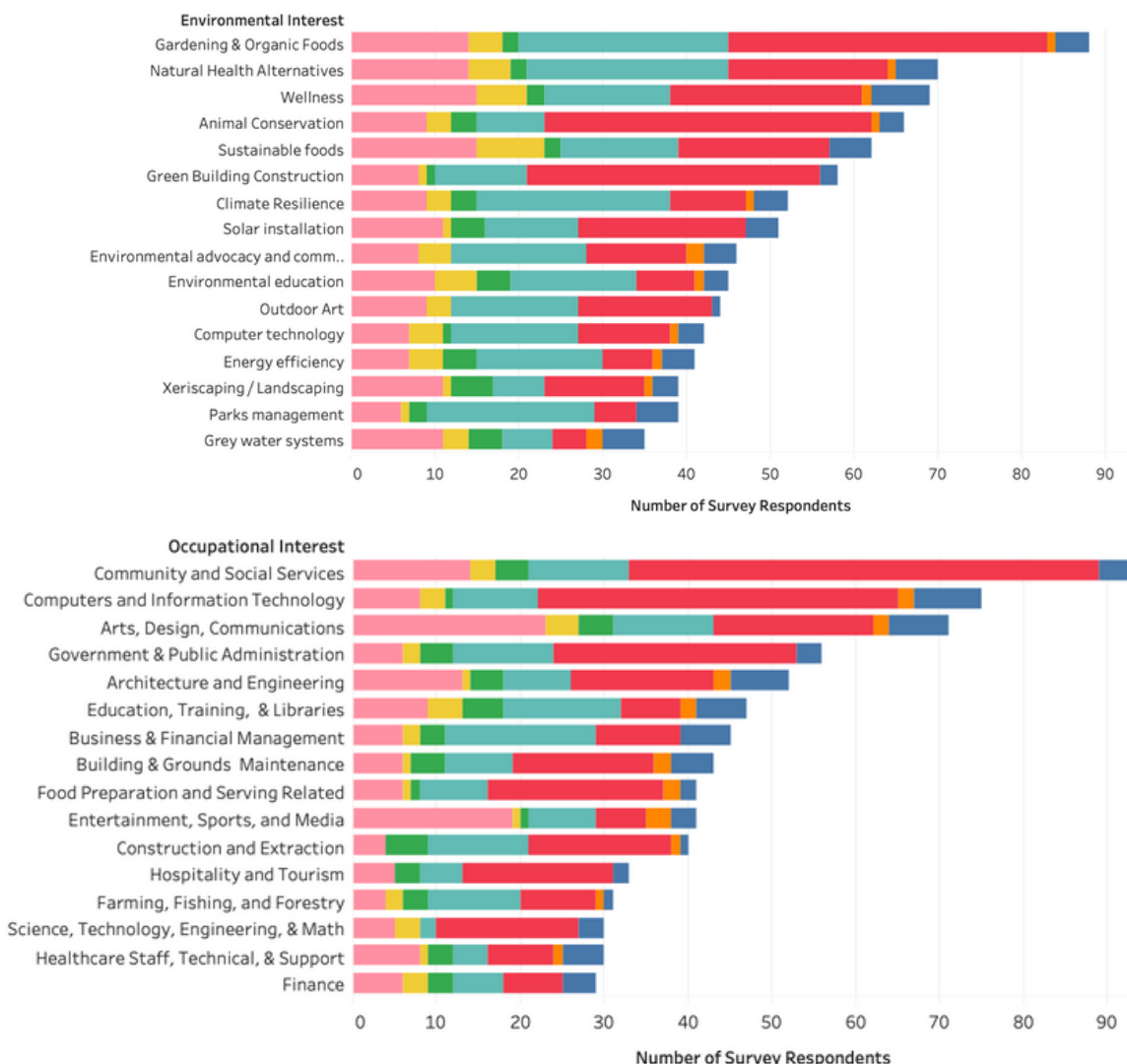
There is a shift in priorities for environmental and occupational interests between multiple races as displayed in Figure 5. These findings in identifying the areas of occupation and environmental topics that were important to the survey respondents confirm what we heard in the focus groups related to the need for more jobs that are suitable for all and transferrable skills. The differences in environmental and occupational interests emphasize the need for a variety of job types and must be considered in the expansion and development of an equitable ACCC program.

Figure 5. Environmental Interest vs Occupational Interest by Race

**Racial Identity**

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific..
- Other
- White

The full list of occupations can be found in Appendix 3





## LIVED-EXPERIENCE DATA & STORYTELLING



I've been really excited about the work that we've been doing. Especially like going forward maybe towards the end of the year... being able to revisit some of the projects that we've had, and for the rest of the city to enjoy the things that we've been doing."

- ACCC Participant

"Many times, the programs are good. The intentions are good from the part of the City. But they don't reach us. ...They don't really reach the point where they have to start from... They are looking at life through a different color lens than the one we look through, and when I say we, I mean the Latin people."

- Focus Group Participant

"You know (that saying) "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." ...The problem is when you apply that community, it only seems that way because you don't hear the community when they say that something is broken. The voices of the community, the voices in the community, aren't heard as a whole. It's easy to say something isn't broken when you're not looking directly at the problem, or if you don't live in the area where the problem exists,"

- Focus Group Participant

"(I was suffering) when I first tried to join the workforce, because I just spent 19 years in a penitentiary, nobody would hire me for my trade, which was a, a civil drafter. Nobody was hiring. Nobody would even call me in for an interview. I ended up, going through the ACCC program through the carpenter's union."

- ACCC Participant

our experience  
makes us  
**EXPERTS**



## THEMES & RECOMMENDATIONS

### EQUITABLE PROGRAM DESIGN

**#1 Pay a higher wage.** While the City of Austin defines a living wage as \$15.00/hour, this determination lacks situational context. According to MIT's Living Wage Calculator, for example, while \$15.42/hr is considered a living wage for a single adult with no children living in Austin, Texas, they define living wage as anywhere from \$17.08 to \$49.98 for adults with children, depending on the number of children and the number of working adults in the household. This reality was reflected both in our focus groups and in the survey responses. Capping the pay at \$15.00 is counter to the program's goals of going beyond serving predominantly young adults. <sup>17</sup>

**#2 Ensure programs offer sick leave and paid time off.** According to the Center for Law and Social Poverty, paid time off is critical for low-wage workers. <sup>18</sup> Our participants identified this as a top need as well.

**#3 Strengthen job placement support.** Focus group participants and survey participants alike shared that increased income and income stability were top priorities. Notably, beautification ranked last. Like the original Civilian Conservation Corps, ACCC combines the city's environmental and beautification goals with economic recovery goals. While these goals are not mutually exclusive, it is important for any public program to put community needs first when designing, budgeting, and managing the program components.

### MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

**#4 Build more relationships with community organizations.** One of ACCC's current strengths is its reliance on partner organizations for program delivery. Local organizations tend to have trusted relationships with the communities they serve, which in turn elevates the experience of the program participant. However, ACCC's relationships with community organizations are currently limited to a relatively narrow set of partners. There is a wide variety of organizations serving East Austin whose constituents could benefit from ACCC programs and would make excellent outreach partners. Many of these organizations also have programs that would be a good fit for ACCC program delivery.

**#5 Offer more programs based on interest.** People's interests in environmental topics varied, with wellness, gardening, and animal conservation toward the top of the list. While green building, solar installation, and outdoor art (currently reflected in ACCC programs) ranked in the top half of environmental interests, parks management ranked 15th in the list. Moving forward, with the ACCC program under the Parks umbrella, it's critical to continue expanding the variety of programs available. Computer-related jobs should also be considered, as this ranked top in occupational interest.

## INCLUSIVE PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP

**#6 Implement case management and make career advancement a structured part of the ACCC program.** Track participant goals and support community partners in connecting program participants with industry networks and job opportunities. Establish effective case management practices to support the overall success of participants in gaining valuable job training and progressing towards their career advancement goals.

**#7 Include representative program participants and members of the targeted community in planning meetings.** Planning for the community without representation from the community leads to missed opportunities, disproportionate priorities, and unsupported goals. Including the community in the process will vastly improve program design, outreach, and delivery.

**#8 Program leadership should be able to relate to the population served.** Ideally, ACCC program leadership should have experienced in-depth anti-racist training (such as that offered by the People's Institute in partnership with the Equity Office) and also share a lived experience of racism and/or systemic discrimination. Considering the historical context, along with the complexities involved in balancing environmental goals with community interests, we strongly recommend that the ACCC program be coordinated by someone who is well trained in diversity, equity, and inclusion and can relate personally and powerfully to the population served.

**#9 With their input, re-evaluate the role of program partners.** The experience of participating programs should be included in program re-design. Their challenges, ideas, and insights are vital to include when planning. Consistency among partners should be included in the evaluation, such as application processes and training.

## EQUITABLE MEASUREMENT

**#10 Community Impact Metrics should reflect community interests.** Based on input from focus groups and the survey, we identified several measurements that, if tracked, would help move the ACCC program in a direction of mutual community benefit and true economic recovery. Notably, environmental goals are not the priority, despite the fact that the program is designed to forward work that improves, beautifies, or protects the environment. This is because equitable programs meet people where they are first, and while respondents did value the benefits of the program, income and income stability were top priorities. Failing to match that prioritization could easily erode the long-term success of the program.

The metrics we identified and recommend tracking include:

- % of participants making \$21+/hr within 6 months of exiting the program
- % of participants expressing satisfaction with their wage growth after exiting
- Number of participants placed in a permanent job within 6 months of exiting
- Number of certifications/ new marketable skills acquired
- Number and diversity of total participants in the program
- Number of different jobs offered

## CONCLUSION: LIVED EXPERIENCE MUST INFORM CHANGE

People experiencing the impacts of systemic racism and significant barriers to economic mobility **can achieve career advancement through holistic and human-centered work programs**. This requires 1) paying an evidence-based living wage; 2) fully accounting for barriers to participation and 3) providing application-to-job placement support that prioritizes equitable outreach and inclusion to those most impacted. **This is the theory of change that emerged from listening to the community** and exploring ACCC's mission.

The ACCC program offers many benefits to community members, including paid work, skills training, certifications, and in some cases, job placement support. The benefits the program offers answer a growing need in the community as the health-related, social, and financial impact of COVID-19 continues to disproportionately impact vulnerable communities. ACCC stands to make an important difference in offsetting these impacts. In order for ACCC to fully realize this potential, however, the program must be re-designed with community needs at the center, or risk repeating mistakes from past works programs.

**You cannot design successful programs for the community without the community at the table.** Community representation is key to every aspect of the success of the program moving forward, and meeting the community where they are is vital to that process. For ACCC to fully address wage growth, job security, and dignified access to work, community needs and wants must be prioritized. While environmental and beautification goals can and should stay central to the selection of programs offered, community priorities and interests should take center stage in determining program offerings, outreach strategies, and program delivery.



## ENDNOTES

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## APPENDIX 1

### City of Austin Innovation Office ACCC Survey

The City of Austin Innovation Office and MEASURE are working together to better understand the needs, desires, and barriers experienced by the communities most impacted by the pandemic in order to improve the Austin Civilian Conservation Corps (ACCC) Program. ACCC is a program that includes a job and training designed for people who live in Austin to access jobs and grow new careers in environmental and sustainability-related fields. The program helps Austinites earn income, serve their community, and gain skills that can lead to strong new careers.

Your survey responses will help the City of Austin to establish a cultural identity that attracts, affirms, and advances innovative talent from diverse backgrounds and build an ACCC Program that better serves you.

All responses will be anonymous. We are using SurveyMonkey to collect and store answers to this survey. Please see SurveyMonkey's privacy policy and security statement for further details about how they store and protect data.

As a thank you for completing this survey, you will receive a \$10 gift card and the option to be added to a listserv that will provide you with updates about upcoming ACCC programs and application opportunities.

MEASURE will collect and analyze all responses and then share the findings with the community. If you have questions about this survey and how data will be used, please contact MEASURE at [hello@wemeasure.org](mailto:hello@wemeasure.org).

### Proposed Survey Questions

How would you like to receive your gift card?

1. Mail
2. Email
3. Email Address
4. First Name
5. Last Name
6. How would you like to receive your gift card?
  - Email
  - Mail
7. In order to receive a \$10 gift card for completing the survey, please provide your name and an email address. If you have selected to receive your gift card through the mail, you will receive an email requesting your mailing address and the gift card will be mailed to the address provided.
8. Would you like to be added to a listserv that provides you with updates about upcoming ACCC programs and application opportunities?
  - Yes
  - No
9. Racial Identity: How would you describe yourself?
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Black or African American
  - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - Asian
  - White
  - Other (please specify)
  - Prefer Not to Answer
10. Ethnicity: Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin?" (Ethnicity)
  - Yes
  - No
11. Gender: To which gender identity do you most identify?
  - Female
  - Male
  - Transgender Male
  - Transgender Female

- Gender Variant/Non-Conforming
  - Prefer not to say
  - Prefer to self-identify (please specify)
12. Age: What is your age?
- 18-24
  - 25-34
  - 35-44
  - 45-54
  - 55-64
  - 65+
13. Level of Education: What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? (If you're currently enrolled in school, please indicate the highest degree you have received.)
- Less than a high school diploma
  - High school degree or equivalent (e.g. GED)
  - Some college, no degree
  - Associate degree (e.g. AA, AS)
  - Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS)
  - Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd)
  - Professional degree (e.g. MD, DDS, DVM)
  - Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD.)
14. Employment Status: What is your current employment status?
- Full time
  - Part time
  - Not working, retired
  - Seasonal
  - Self-employed
  - Unemployed, looking for work
  - Unemployed, not looking for work
15. Income: What is your current annual household income?
- Under \$10,000
  - \$10,000 - \$19,000
  - \$20,000 - \$29,000
  - \$30,000 - \$39,000
  - \$40,000 - \$59,000
  - \$60,000 - \$79,000
  - \$80,000 - \$99,000
  - \$100,000 - \$124,000
  - \$125,000+
16. Income Source: What types of income do you have? (Check all that apply)
- No Income
  - Child support
  - Salary or wages from an employer
  - Self-employment
  - Family/Friends
  - Kindness of strangers
  - Pension/Retirement
  - Social Security (SS)
  - Supplemental Security Income/ Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI)
  - Student grants/loans
  - TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
  - Unemployment benefits
  - Veteran Affairs
  - Other (please specify)
17. Marital Status: What is your marital status?
- Single (never married)
  - Married or in a Domestic Partnership
  - Widowed
  - Divorced
  - Separated

- Prefer not say
  - Other (please specify)
18. Dependents: If you have children or other dependents under your direct care: What is your family situation? (Check all that apply)
- Single mom
  - Single dad
  - Two parents
  - Raising own children and children of others
  - Raising children of other family members (I am a grandparent, aunt, etc.)
  - Raising someone else's children, not family
  - Foster parent
  - Shared custody
  - Elder dependent (parent(s), grandparent, extended family member, etc.)
  - I don't have any dependents.
  - Other (please specify):
19. Zip Code of Your Primary Address
- (Open-ended response)
20. Housing Status: What is your housing status?
- Live in a house or condo I/we own
  - Renting
  - Staying with family or friends
  - I have no home
  - Other (please specify)
21. Have you heard about and/or participated in an Austin Civilian Conservation Corps (ACCC) program?
- I have heard about ACCC but did not participate in a program.
  - I have not heard about ACCC or its programs.
  - I participated or am participating in an ACCC program.
  - I applied to an ACCC program but did not get accepted.
22. ACCC programs beautify, protect and conserve our community. What type of improvements or programs would you like to see in your neighborhood or the public spaces you visit? (One example would be improving parks)
- (Open-ended question)
23. Which ACCC program did you (or are you) participating in?
- The Other Ones Foundation Workforce First Crew
  - Gulf Coast Carpenters and Millwrights Training Trust Fund Green Building
  - Creative Action Art Responders
  - Creative Action Austin Safely Creates
  - American YouthWorks Texas Conservation Corp Crew
  - Raisin in the Sun #BeWellATX
24. How have you been economically (financially) affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? (Check all that apply)
- Not affected
  - Reduced work/income
  - Lost job / laid off / furloughed
  - Reduced work/income due to safety
  - Left job due to safety concerns
25. Were you struggling financially prior to the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, please select the number of years that apply.
- I did not financially struggle prior to the COVID-19 pandemic
  - Less than a year
  - 1-2 years
  - 3-5 years
  - 5-10 years
  - Longer than 10 years
26. Are you currently using, or have you ever attempted to use, any of the following City of Austin support services? For each of the below, please select the answer that best describes your experience of each.
- Eviction prevention or legal representation in court
  - Tenant/landlord counseling or mediation
  - Tenant relocation services (moving, storage, finding a new apartment)
  - Home repair grants and loans
  - Utility assistance
  - Homelessness assistance

- I need another type of support service (please specify)
27. What is your current and/or most recent area of occupation?
- Education, Training, and Libraries
  - Installation, Maintenance, and Repair
  - Architecture and Engineering
  - Arts, Design, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications
  - Personal Care and Services
  - Construction and Extraction
  - Healthcare Practitioners, Technical, and Support
  - Finance
  - Community and Social Services
  - Entertainment, Sports, and Media
  - Government & Public Administration
  - Farming, Fishing, and Forestry
  - Computers and Information Technology
  - Food Preparation and Serving Related
  - Human Services
  - Manufacturing
  - Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance
  - Legal
  - Protective Services
  - Hospitality and Tourism
  - Marketing, Sales, and Service
  - Business and Financial Management and Administration
  - Other (please specify)
  - Office and Administrative Support
  - Management
  - Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
  - Public Safety, Corrections, and Security
  - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
  - Advocacy / NonProfit Management
  - Other (please specify)
28. What was your rate of pay in your most recent job?
- Less than minimum wage
  - \$7.50/hr - \$10.00 per hour
  - \$10.00 - \$15.00 per hour
  - \$15.00 - \$20.00 per hour
  - \$20.00 - \$25.00 per hour
  - \$25.00 - \$30.00 per hour
  - More than \$30.00 per hour
29. In general, what are your top work-related priorities and/or desires? (Check all that apply)
- Steady employment
  - A job with good benefits
  - Consistently making a higher wage
  - Better and/or more consistent work hours
  - Gaining experience and/or skills in a specific field of work
  - Obtaining a career- or job-related certification (please specify which certification):
  - Building a career/career advancement
  - Flexible work schedule
  - Ability to work from home
  - Other (please specify):
30. What are barriers or obstacles to you finding a stable job/income? (Check all that apply)
- Language
  - Transportation
  - Level of experience
  - Education
  - Certification/Training
  - Prior Criminal Record
  - No Home Address



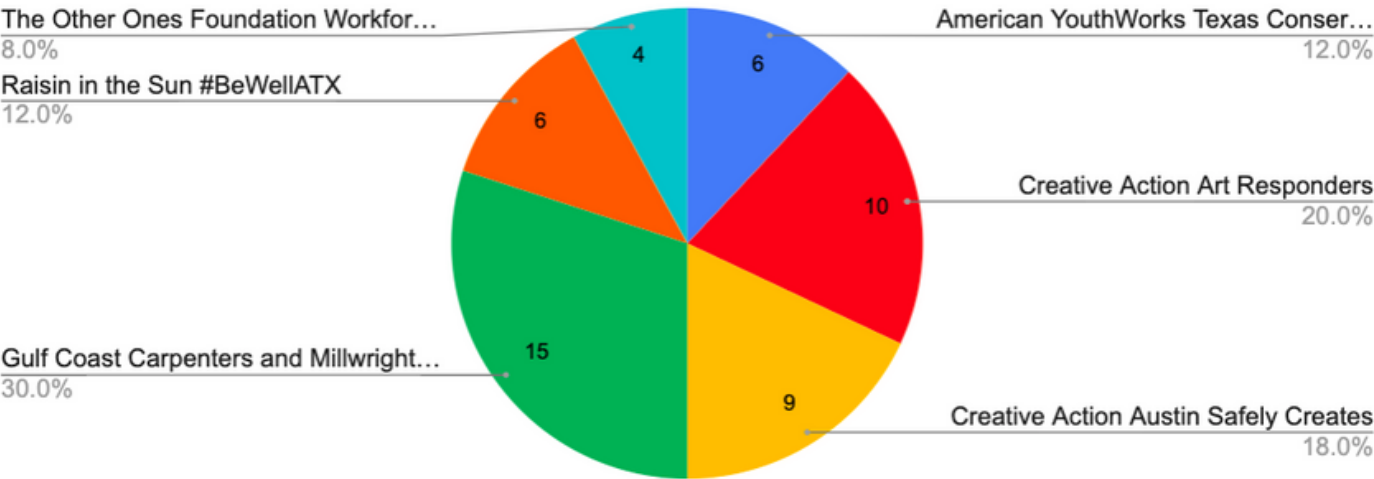
- Age Limitation
  - Physical Disability
  - Child Care
  - Elder Care
  - Immigration Status
  - Other (please specify)
31. How do you usually travel to get to work? (Applies to those who has employment status of full-time, part-time, or seasonal.) (Check all that apply)
- Personal Car
  - Walk
  - Someone else's car
  - Bus or Rail
  - Carpool
  - Bike
  - RideShare (Uber, Lyft, etc)
  - Other (please specify)
32. How do you learn about job opportunities? (Check all that apply.)
- Newspaper
  - Calling 311
  - Word-of-mouth
  - Community Organization Announcements
  - Religious Institution/Church
  - Resource Fairs
  - Community Gatherings
  - Television
  - City government website
  - Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
  - Group Text (WhatsApp, FB messenger, etc)
  - Radio
  - Other (please specify)
33. Do you have access to the Internet in your household?
- Yes
  - No
34. Do you or any member of your household own or use any of the following types of computers? (Check all that apply)
- Desktop or laptop
  - Smartphone
  - Tablet or other portable wireless computer
  - Some other access to a computer (computer at church, library, community center, etc). Please specify:
  - No one in my household has regular access to a computer or smartphone.
35. What are your goals for participating in a program with a job training and advancement program? (Check all that apply)
- Stable income/job
  - Safer job
  - Career change
  - Increase income
  - Gaining experience in a new field
  - Placement into a permanent job
  - Career plan
  - The opportunity to network or meet new people
  - New Certification(s)/Training
  - Wrap-around support (i.e. connection to mental health resources, food access, transportation, etc.)
  - Beautification, conservation, and/or community resilience
  - Other (please specify)
36. How long would you expect a program that includes a job and training to last?
- Less than 3 months
  - 3-6 months
  - 6-9 months
  - 9-12 months
  - Longer than 12 months

- I don't have any expectations for the length of the program
37. What minimum hourly rate of pay would you need or expect to receive from a program that includes job and training and advancement?
- \$15.00-\$17.00
  - \$17.00-\$19.00
  - \$19.00-\$21.00
  - \$21.00-\$23.00
  - \$23.00-\$25.00
  - Other (please specify)
38. What type of benefits do you need as a part of a program that includes a job and training? Please check all that apply, and on a scale of 1-5, please rank how important each benefit is to you.
- Healthcare
  - Dental Care
  - Sick Leave
  - Paid Holidays
  - Paid Personal Time Off
  - Wellness (mental health/self-care courses, yoga, gym, therapy, etc)
  - Children & Youth Enrichment Program (i.e. tutoring, sports, arts, STEM, youth leadership programs, college prep, career exploration/mentoring, etc.)
  - Transportation Assistance
  - 401K / Retirement savings
  - Access to Support Services (i.e. legal assistance, eviction prevention, tenant/landlord counseling, utility assistance, homelessness assistance, etc.)
  - Other (please specify)
39. What area of occupation are you interested in for job training and advancement? (Check all that apply)
- Architecture and Engineering
  - Arts, Design, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications
  - Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance
  - Business and Financial Management and Administration
  - Community and Social Services
  - Computers and Information Technology
  - Construction and Extraction
  - Education, Training, and Libraries
  - Entertainment, Sports, and Media
  - Farming, Fishing, and Forestry
  - Finance
  - Food Preparation and Serving Related
  - Government & Public Administration
  - Healthcare Practitioners, Technical, and Support
  - Hospitality and Tourism
  - Human Services
  - Installation, Maintenance, and Repair
  - Legal
  - Management
  - Manufacturing
  - Marketing, Sales, and Service
  - Office and Administrative Support
  - Personal Care and Services
  - Protective Services
  - Public Safety, Corrections, and Security
  - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
  - Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
  - Advocacy / NonProfit Management
  - Other (please specify)
40. Which of the following Environmental Topics/Areas of work (if any) are you most interested in learning about in a program that includes a job and training? (Check all that apply)
- Climate Resilience
  - Xeriscaping / Landscaping
  - Animal Conservation

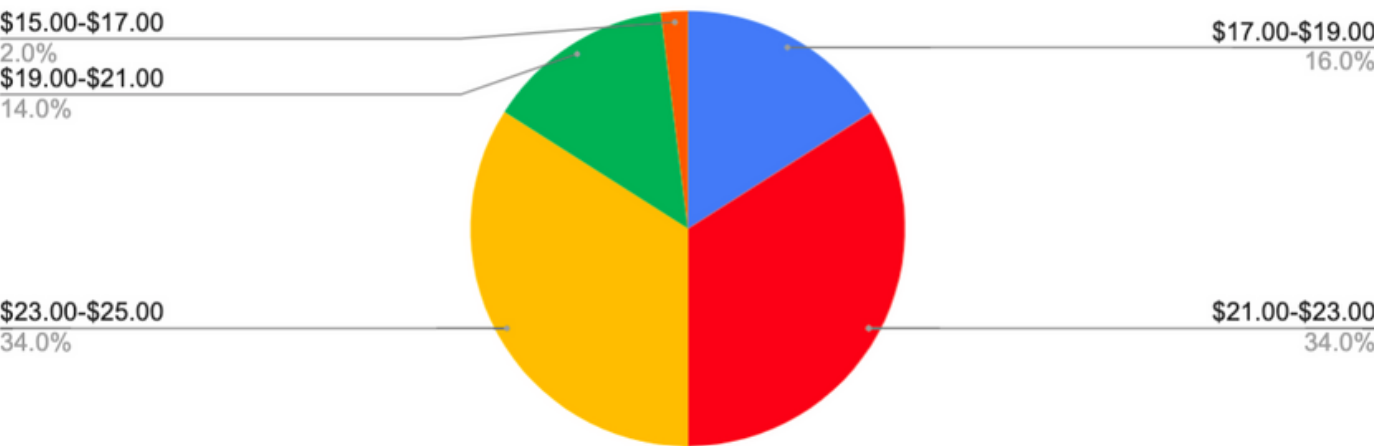
- Greywater systems
- Solar installation
- Gardening & Organic Foods
- Natural Health Alternatives
- Wellness
- Energy efficiency
- Sustainable foods
- Environmental advocacy and community action
- Environmental education
- Environmental/social justice
- Computer technology
- Parks management
- Green Building Construction
- Outdoor Art
- Xeriscaping / Landscaping
- Wildlife Conservation
- Greywater systems
- Recycling and Reuse management
- Medical assistance training
- Electric Transportation
- Wind Energy
- Sustainable Retail & Fair Trade
- Not interested in any Environmental Topics/Areas
- Other (please specify)

APPENDIX 2

50 Survey Participants Had Participated in ACCC Programs



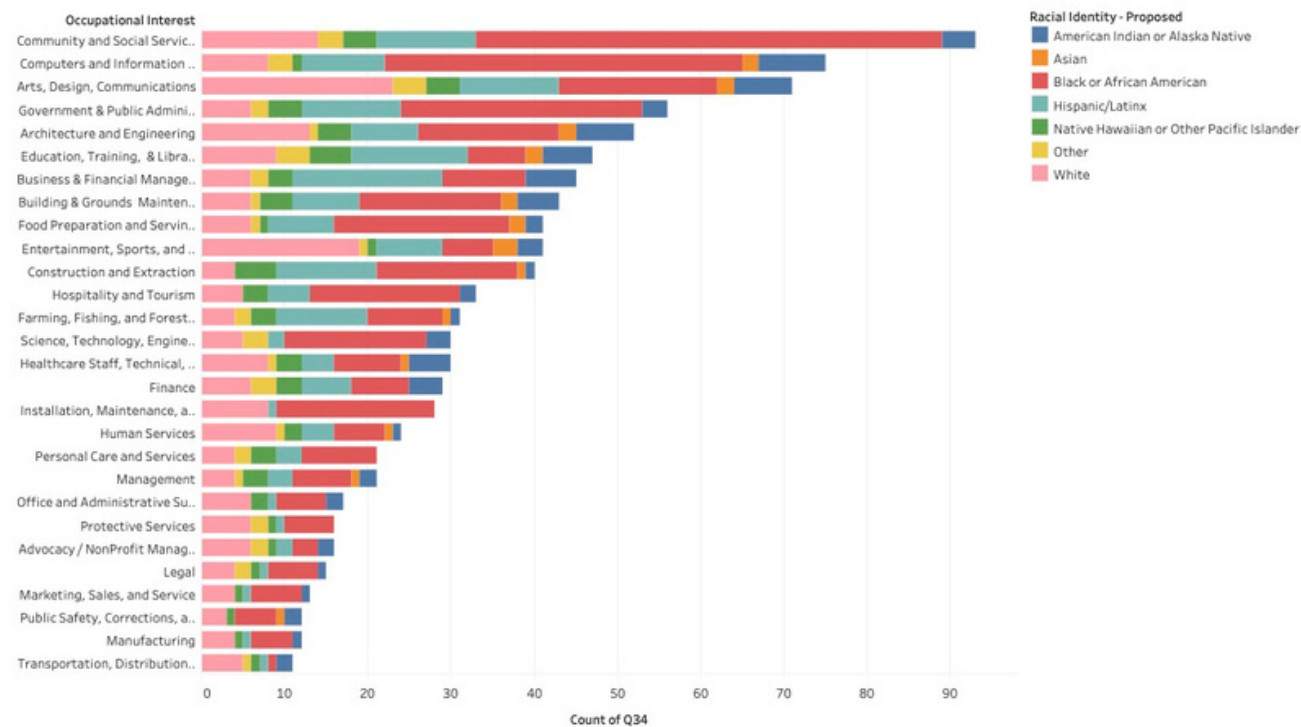
Majority of ACCC Participants Placed the Suggested Minimum Hourly Pay Rate Between \$21 and \$25.





APPENDIX 3

Occupational Interest by Race



Environmental Interest by Race

