



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 ► 2025

**SAN JOSE  
CONSERVATION  
CORPS+CHARTER  
SCHOOL**

# STRATEGIC PLAN

service to **self** service to **community** service to **environment**

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# SJCC+CS STRATEGIC PLAN

# INTRODUCTION

## FRAMEWORK

To ensure the most effective use of resources and alignment among staff, board, and community partners, San Jose Conservation Corps + Charter School (SJCC+CS) is guided by a strategic framework that articulates our mission, vision, values, priorities, and goals. In late 2021, we began a rigorous process to assess our operating environment, identify elements of our strategic framework, and set goals to guide us over the next several years. It has been an energizing, inclusive and thoughtful process resulting in this strategic plan document.

As the strategic planning process unfolded, several key data points emerged which guided our strategic thinking about SJCC+CS' current situation and future options. These include:

## NEED

SJCC+CS has long aimed to serve system-impacted opportunity youth of color, generally from San Jose's East Side, through a high school diploma program and paid job training in conservation. While this intention earned our organization a spot in the Opportunity Youth-serving ecosystem, the needs of young adults have changed, and the Corps must continually evolve to meet those needs. The cost of living in Santa Clara County is astronomically high. According to the Insight Center for Community Economic Development's Family Needs Calculator, in 2021 the cost of living for a single adult in Santa Clara County was \$57,034. Though young people find ways to defray housing costs, we can safely assume that \$50,000, or \$24 per hour, is an approximate self-sufficiency wage for a single adult in Santa Clara County. This is 32.5% greater than the current City of San Jose minimum wage, which is \$16.20/hour. Therefore, SJCC+CS must focus its efforts on preparing corpsmembers for jobs that provide wages well above the minimum. One key to obtaining those jobs is post-secondary education. Santa Clara County is one of the most highly educated communities in the nation, and a high school diploma alone is more likely than not to lead to poverty wage work. Essentially, the high school diploma holds little or no value in the Santa Clara County labor market. SJCC+CS must increase its efforts to prepare corpsmembers for post-secondary education and develop ways to support members during their initial time in post-secondary programs so that they succeed.

## OPPORTUNITY

There is an opportunity for the Corps to leap forward to become a leading social impact organization in the Opportunity Youth space in Santa Clara County. SJCC+CS stepped up to play a critical role during the COVID-19 pandemic, tripling in size to recruit and train young adults to fill roles as essential and emergency response workers to help meet the community's most basic needs. As a result, the organization has become more visible and understood in the last 2+ years, with an unprecedented level of financial support and good will from local, state, and federal government. We can build upon that foundation to ensure we have the necessary resources and capacity to produce measurable and enduring good in the lives of participants. Concurrently, the larger network of national Conservation Corps is in a moment of reimagining the movement to help catalyze transformational progress in the lives of young adults and the way they are served. SJCC+CS has an opportunity to significantly contribute to this process and to serve as a model for the field through our innovative programs such as the Resilience Corps and Tiny Homes.

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Issues of systemic racism, white privilege, the equity gap, employment, housing discrimination, incarceration, and immigration are at the forefront of the community's collective consciousness. Powerful commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion have been made by a spectrum of institutions, businesses, and nonprofits across the country. SJCC+CS has made its own commitment to this work including a DEI organizational assessment and integration of DEI goals throughout this strategic plan.

## OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

The pandemic significantly stretched our organization over the past 2+ years. At the same time, the opportunities in front of us and the infusion of new talent has created a culture of unbridled optimism. The factors described above, and more, point to a need for SJCC+CS to remain flexible and responsive in serving the community and fulfilling our mission. We recognize in implementing our plan that we must allow time for our staff and partners to recover from more than two years of intense work as key collaborators in the pandemic response so that we remain strong going forward.



OUR MISSION

San Jose Conservation Corps and Charter School develops young adults to create transformational change for our community and our planet.



OUR VISION

A hopeful and sustainable community that nurtures the aspirations of all young people.

OUR MOTTO

service to **self**  
service to **community**  
service to **environment**

# ORGANIZATIONAL COMPASS



## OUR CORE VALUES

**RESPECT:** We welcome each individual's perspective and background and treat others with a high value of professionalism.

**EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT:** We prioritize the continual development of personal, professional, and academic skills.

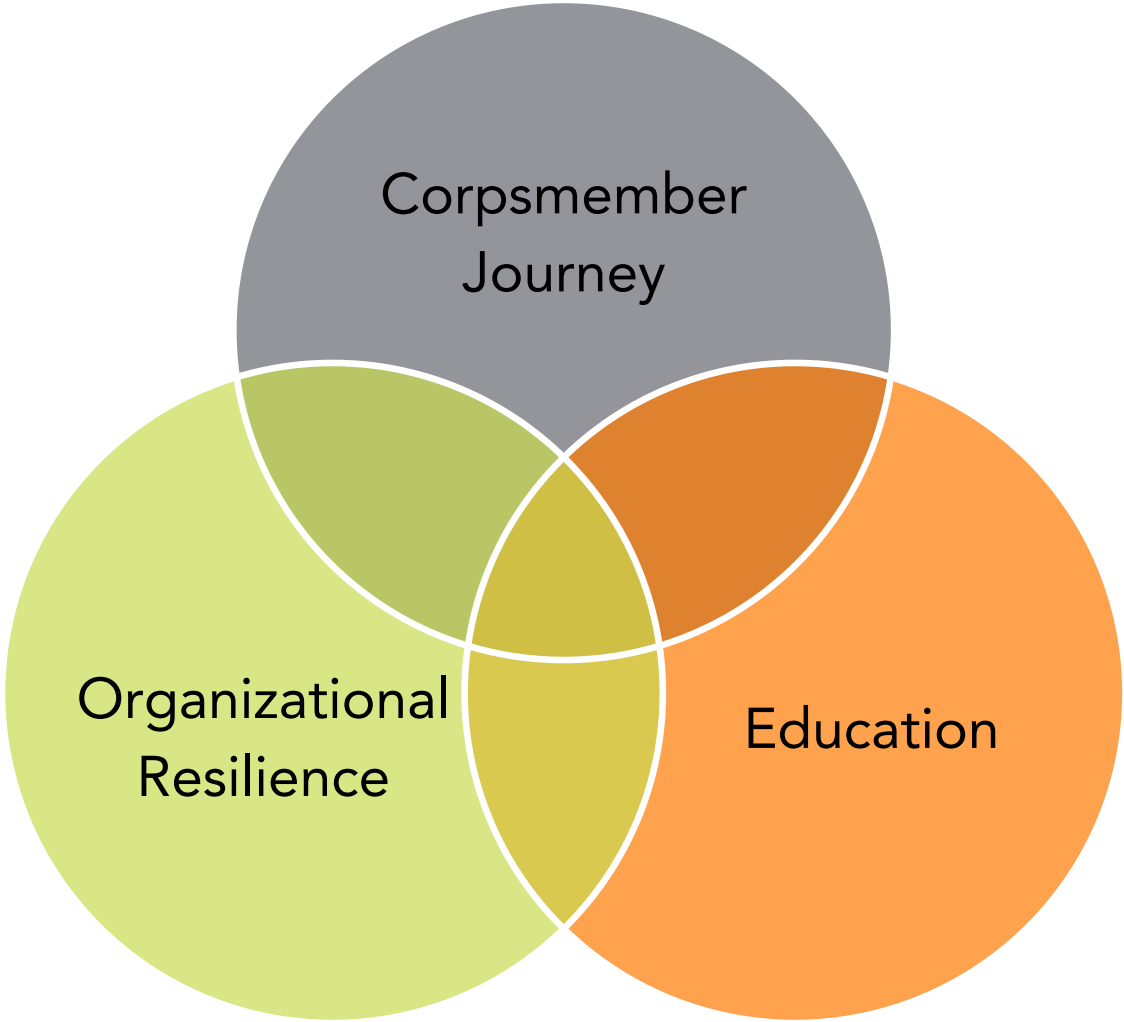
**SAFETY:** We implement practices and create spaces that ensure the emotional and physical safety of our community.

**EMPATHY:** We value the resilience within our community, recognize the strength of our stories, and connect with compassion.

**EQUITY AND INCLUSION:** We actively engage and amplify the diverse voices in our community and consistently work to foster a welcoming environment where all can thrive.

SJCC+CS STRATEGIC PLAN

# OUR PRIORITIES



## OUR FOCUS

In evaluating our strategic position, SJCC+CS has concluded that there are three strategic priorities we need to address in the next three years. The three priorities are not in any order because they are interconnected and interdependent – success in one area will directly impact the success in all others.

Overarching and embedded in all of SJCC+CS’s work and goals are diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). DEI must be central and explicitly integrated into every SJCC+CS decision, policy, practice, program, and budget. DEI is both a product and a process, guiding our organization in the development of strategies and actions that reduce systemic inequities. We pledge to listen to and include the young adults and communities we serve in our work, and to respond where bias and inequities appear. We will confront oppression and poverty by developing solutions that are community-driven, honor a diversity of needs, and value everyone.

# THE CORPSMEMBER JOURNEY

## Goal:

Strengthen corpsmembers' career readiness and connections in preparation for fulfilling and financially sustaining careers.



Note: The word corpsmember refers to all program participants across the organization, whether they are enrolled in our Charter School, our workforce development program, or dual-enrolled in both.

# THE CORPSMEMBER JOURNEY

## Strategic Objective #1:

Align our organization by focusing on the “Corpsmember Journey” and defining measurable core outcomes for all our corpsmembers.

- ▶ Provide post-Corps support
- ▶ Define core outcomes for all corpsmembers
- ▶ Create the support, courses and trainings necessary to implement the journey
- ▶ Engage corpsmembers in a human-centered design process to design their journey and outcomes

## Strategic Objective #2:

Recognize and respond to corpsmembers’ needs for continuous stabilization and support in consistent and individualized ways.

- ▶ Build out the Support Services department to provide individualized services for all corpsmembers
- ▶ Establish and implement short-term housing strategy and independent living skills training
- ▶ Explore and create a long-term housing strategy

# EDUCATION

## Goal:

Increase the number of corpsmembers who are engaged with post-secondary programs.



### **Strategic Objective #3:**

Ensure that all corpsmembers are post-secondary ready through the completion of academic credentials and mastery of necessary skills

- ▶ Create individualized academic plans for all corpsmembers that results in post-secondary placement
- ▶ Strengthen the Charter School in providing enriched academic preparation
- ▶ Plan for the School's future using a youth-led human-centered design process to dream up the school that supports their educational needs
- ▶ Develop the political will for charter renewal in 2024

### **Strategic Objective #4:**

Provide post-secondary bridging and at least one year of support to ensure post-secondary persistence and success for all corpsmembers.

- ▶ Provide individualized informed transition counseling to all corpsmembers
- ▶ Create and implement Corps-to-College programming with all corpsmembers
- ▶ Develop a plan for 1st year post-secondary support, leveraging resources at academic institutions where appropriate

# ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

## Goal:

Improve the organizational effectiveness of SJCC+CS, integrating a youth-centered culture with a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion.



# ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

## Strategic Objective #5:

Ensure high-performing, diverse, engaged, supported, and inspired staff with appropriate staffing levels, professional development opportunities, and strong teams.

- ▶ Ensure facilities meet staff and corpsmember needs for work and support spaces
- ▶ Strengthen existing staff skills, experience and performance by aligning staff development, training, evaluations and compensation with organizational goals
- ▶ Create a system for onboarding new staff, building culture and connection, sharing necessary basic knowledge, and defining the norms and behaviors that integrate the Positive Youth Development framework

## Strategic Objective #6:

Create a data-informed culture that helps to ensure equitable practice and service to corpsmembers and provides the objective information necessary for continuous improvement.

- ▶ Create a database network that meets the organization's needs, is accessible, and interfaces easily with one another
- ▶ Create strong data practices and staff training
- ▶ Staff the data management function

# ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

## Strategic Objective #7:

Invest in core operations to create a robust operating infrastructure, deep stewardship of public and philanthropic resources, strong internal communication, and consistency across departments/divisions.

- ▶ Grow the Administration and Community Impact divisions (HR, facilities, finance, fund development, data and programmatic compliance)
- ▶ Develop a DEI lens to guide all decisions and actions
- ▶ Create and implement a Board orientation that mirrors what staff and corpsmembers experience

## CONCLUSION

Fully realizing our mission and vision will involve continued risk-taking, bold experimentation, and flexibility. SJCC+CS will need to embrace change and new ways of doing business, while building and improving structures, systems, and processes. We will ask more of our corpsmembers and at the same time, provide greater support for them to stabilize and improve their lives. We will focus our job-training and education efforts on opportunities that lead the young adults we work with to post-secondary programs (educational or vocational programs) and better-paying jobs with ongoing growth potential. Success will require broader community engagement and increased financial support.

This strategic plan was developed with an extraordinary level of cooperation between the Board and staff, resulting in a shared sense of responsibility for its implementation and success. SJCC+CS is grateful to all the members of the staff, the Board of Directors, corpsmembers, and its stakeholders who contributed to this plan.