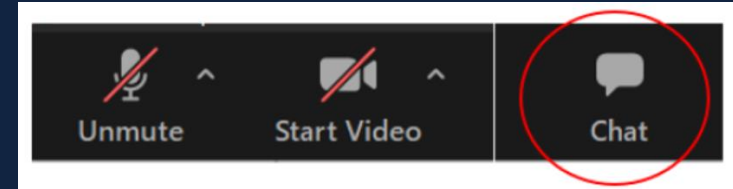


# Virtual Meeting Tips & Best Practices

## Rules of Engagement



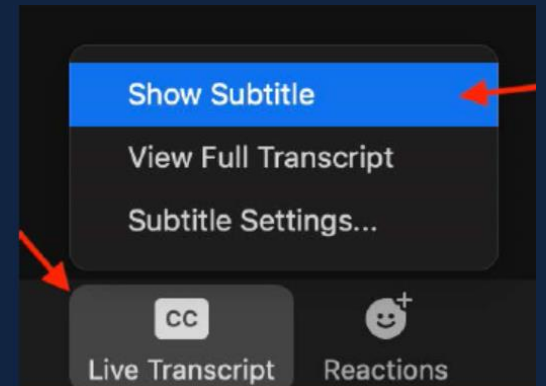
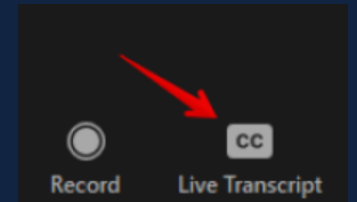
Participant microphones are automatically muted, and cameras disabled upon entry to limit background noise, unintentional feedback, or interference with the Webinar.

Use the in-app features, including the **Chat** box, to ask a question, share feedback, or request technical assistance from Webinar Support Team.



Use the “**Raise Hand**” feature located under “reactions” to be recognized to come off mute and ask a question during the Q&A portion of the Webinar.

**The Webinar Support Team will monitor the chat for the duration of the Webinar.**



# Community-Based Research as a Vehicle for Civic Engagement and Community Impact

April 26, 2023

Office of Research and Evaluation



# Welcome & Introductions

Andrea Robles, PhD

Research and Evaluation Manager, AmeriCorps



# To support AmeriCorps' mission, the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE):



**Identifies  
national service  
and  
volunteering  
trends**



**Conducts  
research and  
builds scholarship  
on civic  
engagement**



**Measures  
national service  
impact**



**Promotes  
evidence-  
based models  
and program  
expansion**

**Knowledge and evidence can be used to improve the service  
experience, and strengthen organizations and communities**

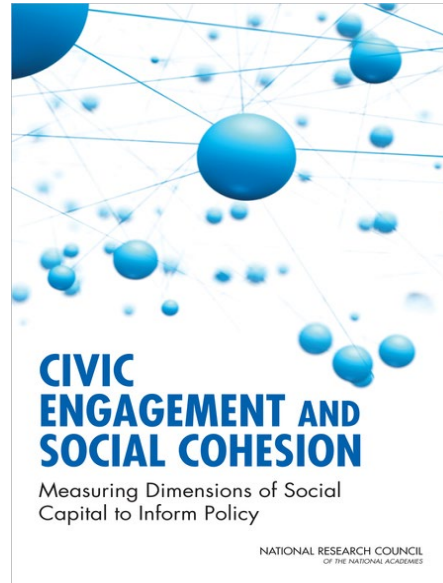
# Conducts research and builds scholarship on civic engagement

**National level  
civic engagement  
and volunteering**

United States®  
**Census**  
Bureau

In 2002,  
AmeriCorps  
sponsors a  
volunteering  
supplement in the  
Current Population  
Survey

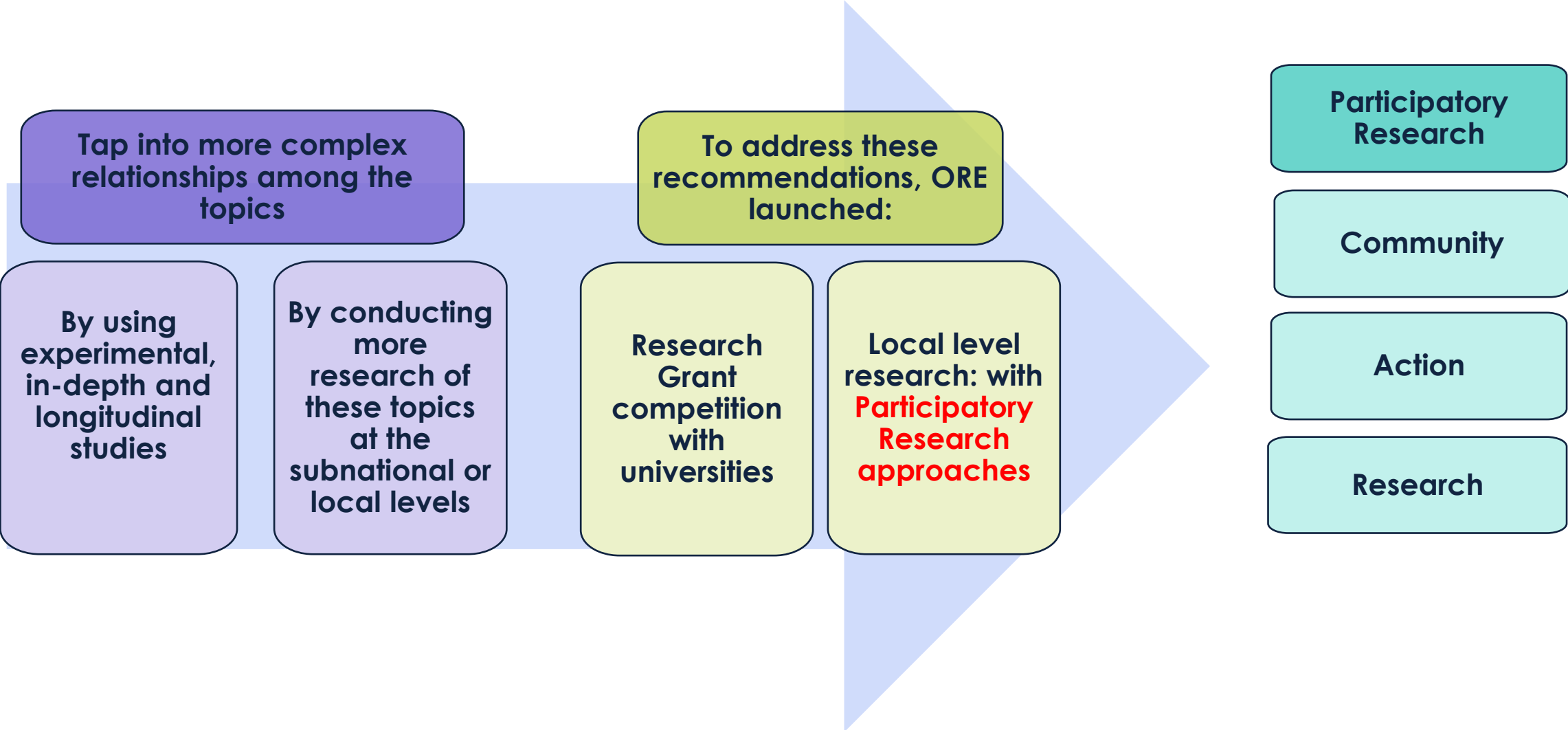
**National  
Academies of  
Science (NAS)**



**Recommendations:  
Use different  
measurement  
approaches to  
improve the  
understanding of  
civic engagement,  
social cohesion  
and social capital**



# Different measurement approaches...



Tap into more complex relationships among the topics

By using experimental, in-depth and longitudinal studies

By conducting more research of these topics at the subnational or local levels

To address these recommendations, ORE launched:

Research Grant competition with universities

Local level research: with **Participatory Research approaches**

Participatory Research

Community

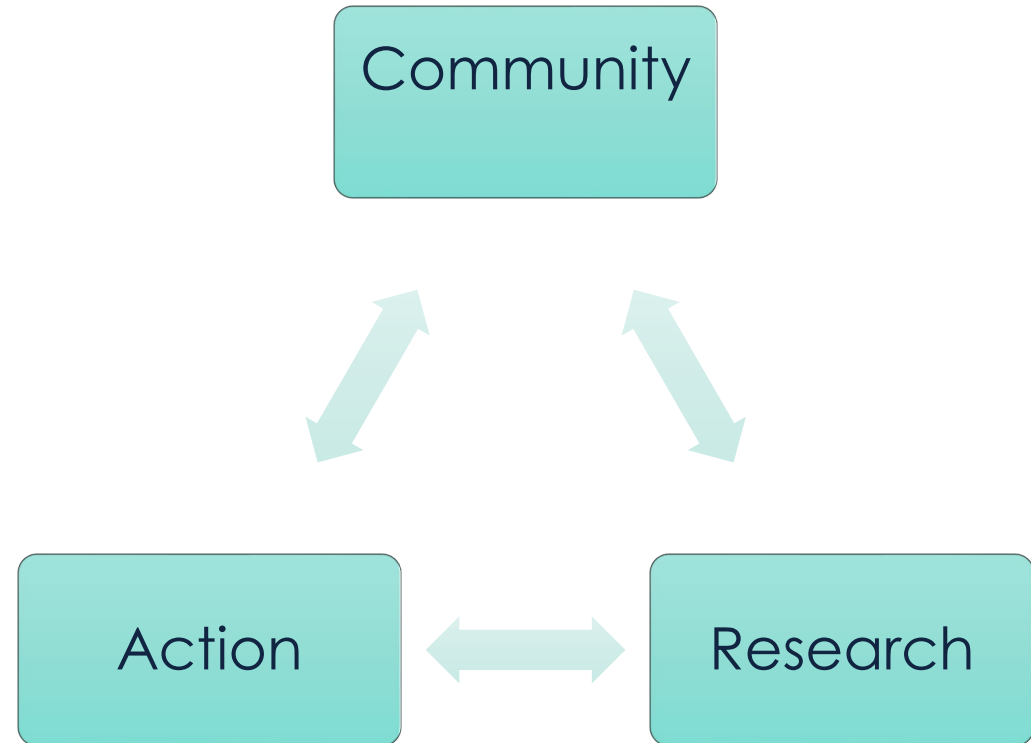
Action

Research



# Why does this participatory research suit AmeriCorps?

Mission: To improve lives,  
strengthen communities,  
and foster civic  
engagement through  
service and volunteering



# Today's speakers:

- Melissa Gouge, PhD, Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE), research analyst, AmeriCorps
- Jennifer Willet, PhD, Project Director and Researcher
- Najeh Abduljalil, former youth scientist, currently undergraduate student at Cornell University
- Tanya Gipson-Nahman, Region Director, AmeriCorps NCCC Pacific Region
- **Q&A Facilitator:** Emily McDonald, ORE, research analyst, AmeriCorps



# Perspectives from the Field

Melissa Gouge, PhD  
Research Analyst, AmeriCorps



# Participatory Research: Roots



Participatory Research is an approach or orientation to research not a methodology

- What does this mean?

## Theoretical Roots

- Places this approach emerges from



# Participatory Research: Branches



- Community Building
- Community Building with a Research Team
- Research Design and Execution
- Collaborative Data Analysis and Interpretation
- Presenting Findings and Developing Action Plans



# Three pillars participatory research



## COMMUNITY

Community members are actively involved in the research



## RESEARCH

The research team systematically gathers information on community-identified issues



## ACTION

Community stakeholders take actionable steps based on research findings

## Community Participation Research Action

### Additional Resources

- [ORE video](#)
- [ORE one pager](#)

# Perspectives from the Field

Jennifer Willett, PhD

Project Director and Researcher



# Making the Invisible Visible Project

Jennifer Willett, PhD

Former Program Director

# Project Overview and Origins

- Community-based participatory action study
- On climate and environmental injustice in Nevada
- In partnership with youth likely to live in impacted neighborhoods
- Project was a combination of Co-Researchers passions and experiences
- 2019-2022



# Design of Project with Partners

- Researchers set parameters
  - Researching climate and environmental injustices
  - Recruited youth at Title 1 schools through partnerships with Upward Bound
  - We used photovoice to collect data
- Youth took over once trained
  - Focus on research within the bounds of climate and environmental injustice
  - Actions
  - Researchers would nudge youth in directions and offer more training when needed





# Brief Overview of Findings

# Problem: Dumping in Low Income Areas



# Problem: Lack of Infrastructure for Climate Resilience



# Problem: Impacts on Homelessness



# Partners- Support Youth on their Research and Actions

- Upward Bound
- NCCC and Nevada Volunteers
- Community organizations, groups, and people who wanted to help



# Our Completed Actions

- Built relationships with supporters and groups we wanted to support
- Spoke at public events
- Met with Governor's staff and spoke at Governor listening tours
- Met with local government officials including the General Improvement District, School Board, and Sheriff's Office
- Raised money and donations for homeless youth
- Organized and distributed survival kits to local homeless populations



# Our Primary Team Goal: Hosting a NCCC Team

- NCCC, Upward Bound, Nevada Volunteers, local churches and supportive organizations
- Organize community clean-up day
- Build infrastructure like sidewalks
- Canceled due to COVID
- Unable to replicate due to housing



The local government in Sun Valley suggested this sidewalk, which goes to a school, as a pilot for a NCCC team.

# Big Lessons Learned

- Local impacted people are the experts about their situation. Don't just partner-help them learn to lead.
- It takes a village. Use your strengths but find other partners.
- AmeriCorps has significant resources across the different programs and offices. Use them all!
- The work will continue past the project.
  - Updates on team members
- Have fun!



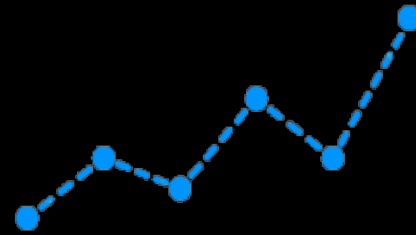


# Perspectives from the Field

Najeh Abduljalil

former youth scientist, currently  
undergraduate student at Cornell University





RESEARCH  
4  
CHANGE  
SCNY

YOUTH LED RESEARCH TO ACTION PROGRAM

# Research for Change NV



R4C-SCNY is an iteration of R4C-NV, where high-school students in Reno, NV were recruited to identify harmful practices in their communities and incite change to solve those problems.

R4C-SCNY will adopt a similar methodology, with a focus in wasteful demolition practices and climate injustice.

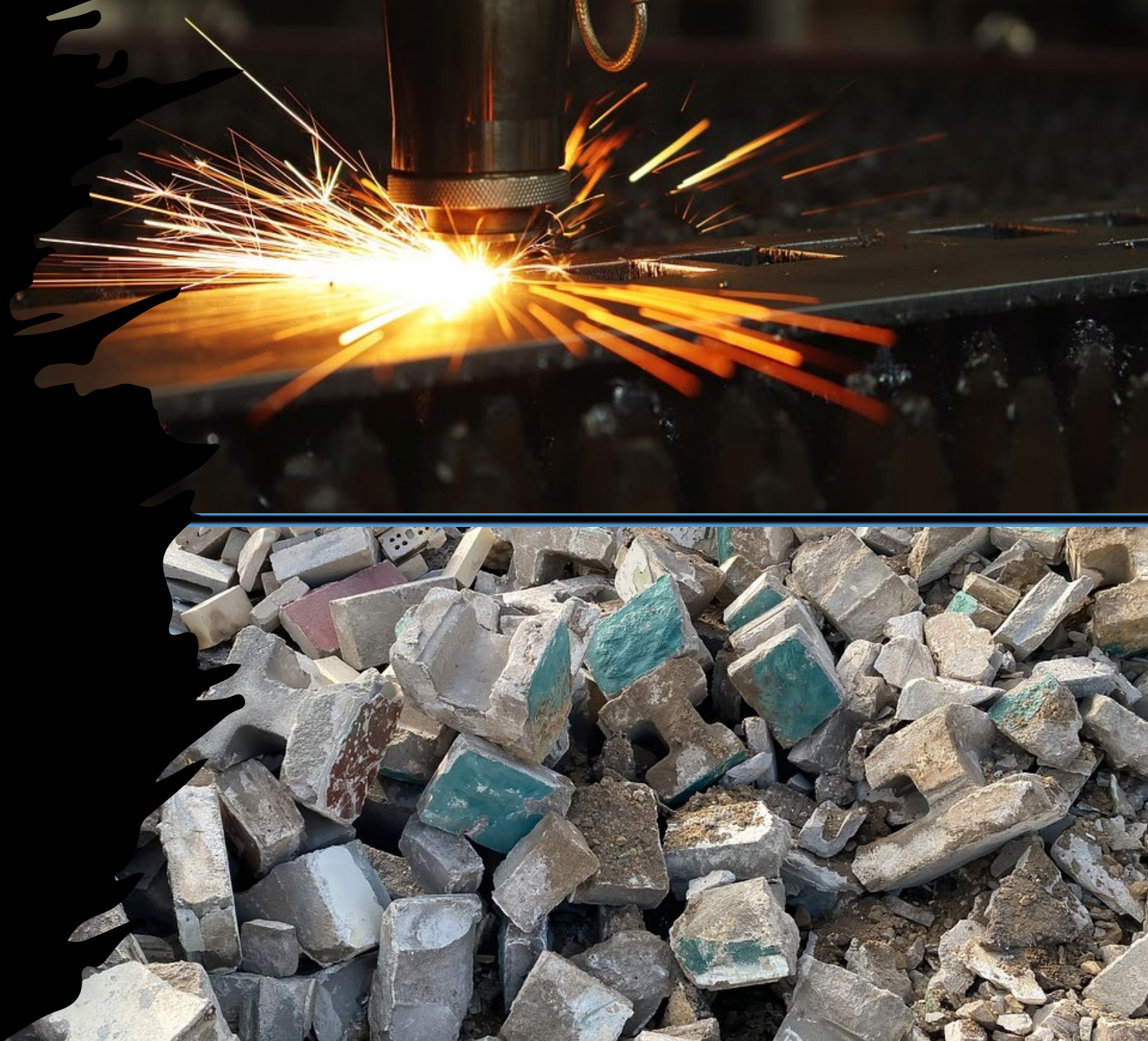
# Research for Change NV issues and actions

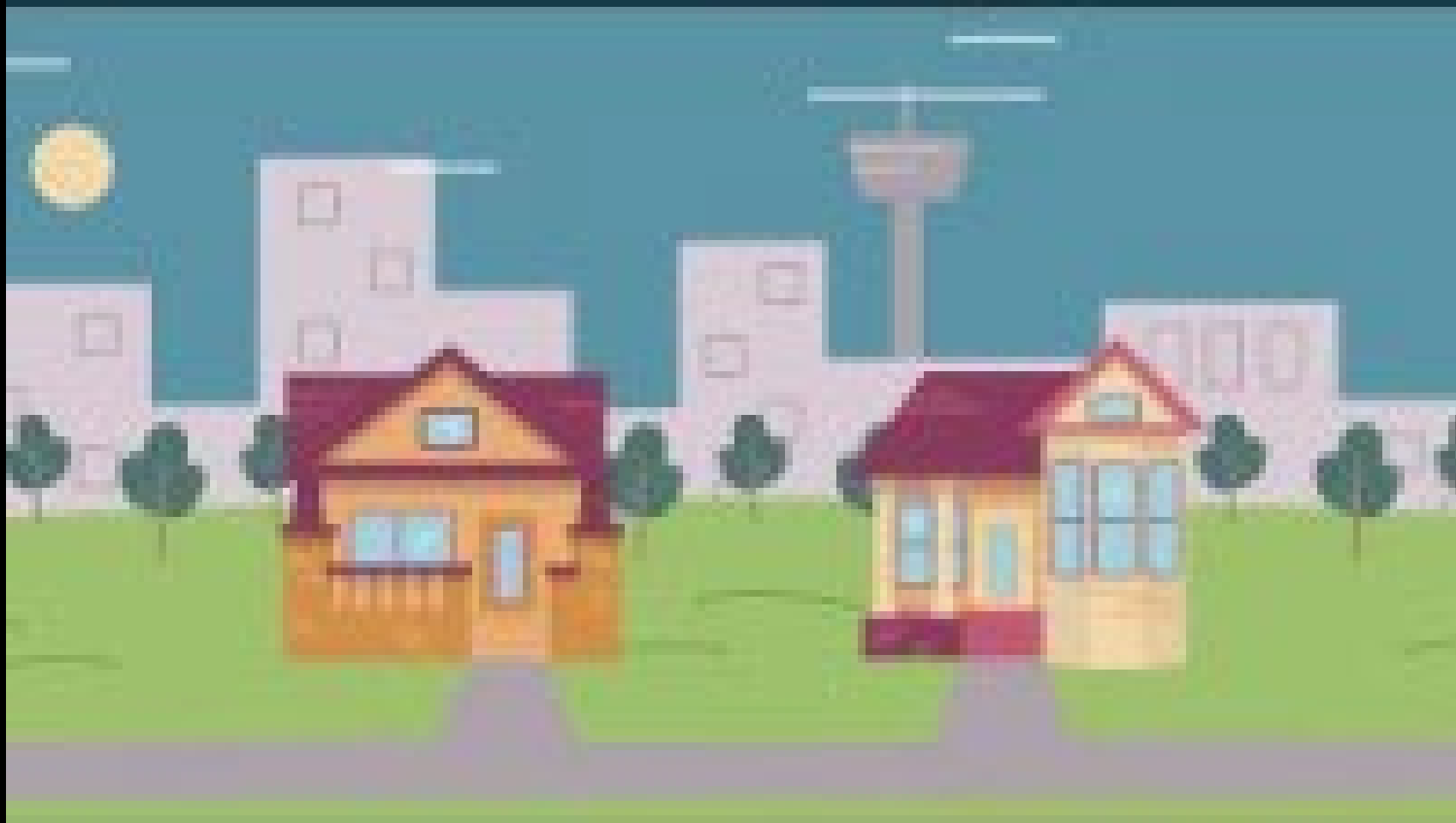


R4C-NV joined the movement to advocate for sidewalks in Sun Valley a historically neglected neighborhood. Prior to the sidewalks being built, residents felt unsafe walking to their destinations because the ditches were filled with harmful materials such as broken glass and needles. Residents began walking in the road to avoid the ditches which resulted in two accidents, one of which was fatal.

R4C-SCNY's  
philosophy:  
The threefold  
problem of  
waste

Space—Energy—Emissions





“Deconstruction: The Story of Two Homes,” YouTube (The City of San Antonio, June 22, 2021), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0R2sbpsUKPU>.

Webinar: Produced and published at US taxpayer expense.

# Building reuse, deconstruction and preservation—space

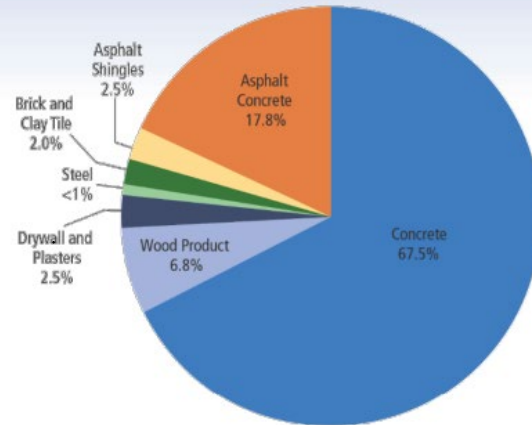
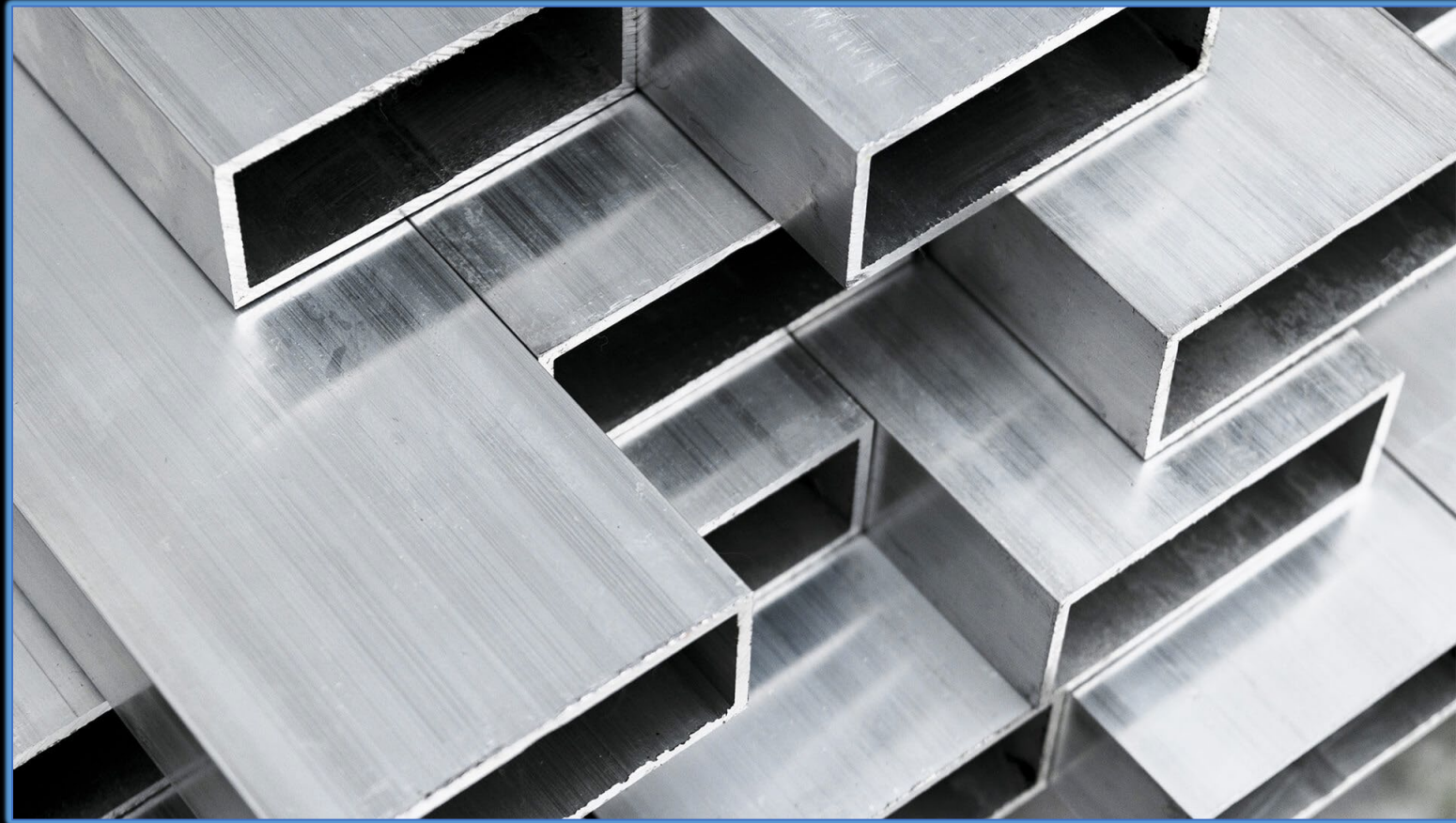


Table 6. C&D Debris Generation by Material and Activity, 2018 (in millions of tons)

|                            | Waste During Construction | Demolition Debris | Total C&D Debris |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Concrete                   | 24.2                      | 381.0             | 405.2            |
| Wood Products <sup>7</sup> | 3.4                       | 37.4              | 40.8             |
| Drywall and Plasters       | 3.9                       | 11.3              | 15.2             |
| Steel <sup>8</sup>         | 0                         | 4.7               | 4.7              |
| Brick and Clay Tile        | 0.3                       | 12.0              | 12.3             |
| Asphalt Shingles           | 1.2                       | 13.9              | 15.1             |
| Asphalt Concrete           | 0                         | 107.0             | 107.0            |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>33.0</b>               | <b>567.3</b>      | <b>600.3</b>     |

# Building reuse, deconstruction and preservation—energy

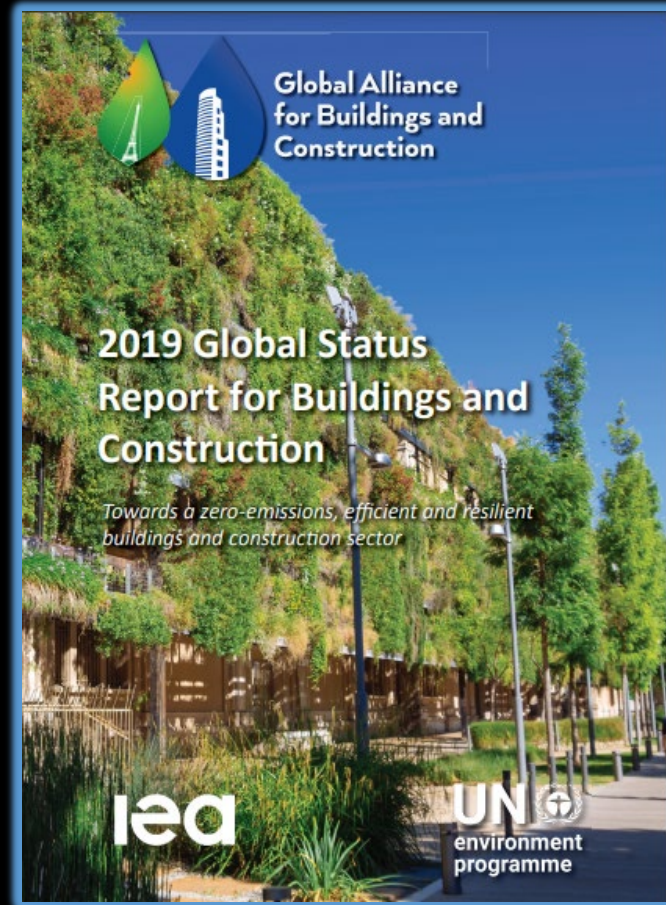
“The reuse of aluminum, which could be recycled from buildings, needs only 5% of the energy originally required for its production.”





# Building reuse, deconstruction and preservation—emissions

11% of 2018's Carbon emissions resulted from the production of building materials.



# The solution R4C-SCNY

- “...bring(s) together [8-10] high-school students in South Central New York to conduct an evaluation of [wasteful] demolition practices in their communities and collaborate in designing policy solutions.”
- ...students will use PhotoVoice and act by **reaching out to local changemakers and the public**
- students will evaluate **community integrity loss, waste produced, public health** and other examples of endangerment
- students **will not be left behind in the aftermath of the program** they will be supported in their transition

# AmeriCorps Reflection

Tanya Gipson-Nahman

Region Director, AmeriCorps  
NCCC Pacific Region



# AMERICORPS NCCC

National Civilian Community Corps

Pacific Region  
Sacramento, CA



**AmeriCorps**

# THE BASICS



## 18-26 YEARS OLD

Age limit for Corps Members. No upper age limit for Team Leaders.



## 10-11 MONTHS

Corps Members serve 10 months; Team Leaders serve 11 months



## TEAM BASED

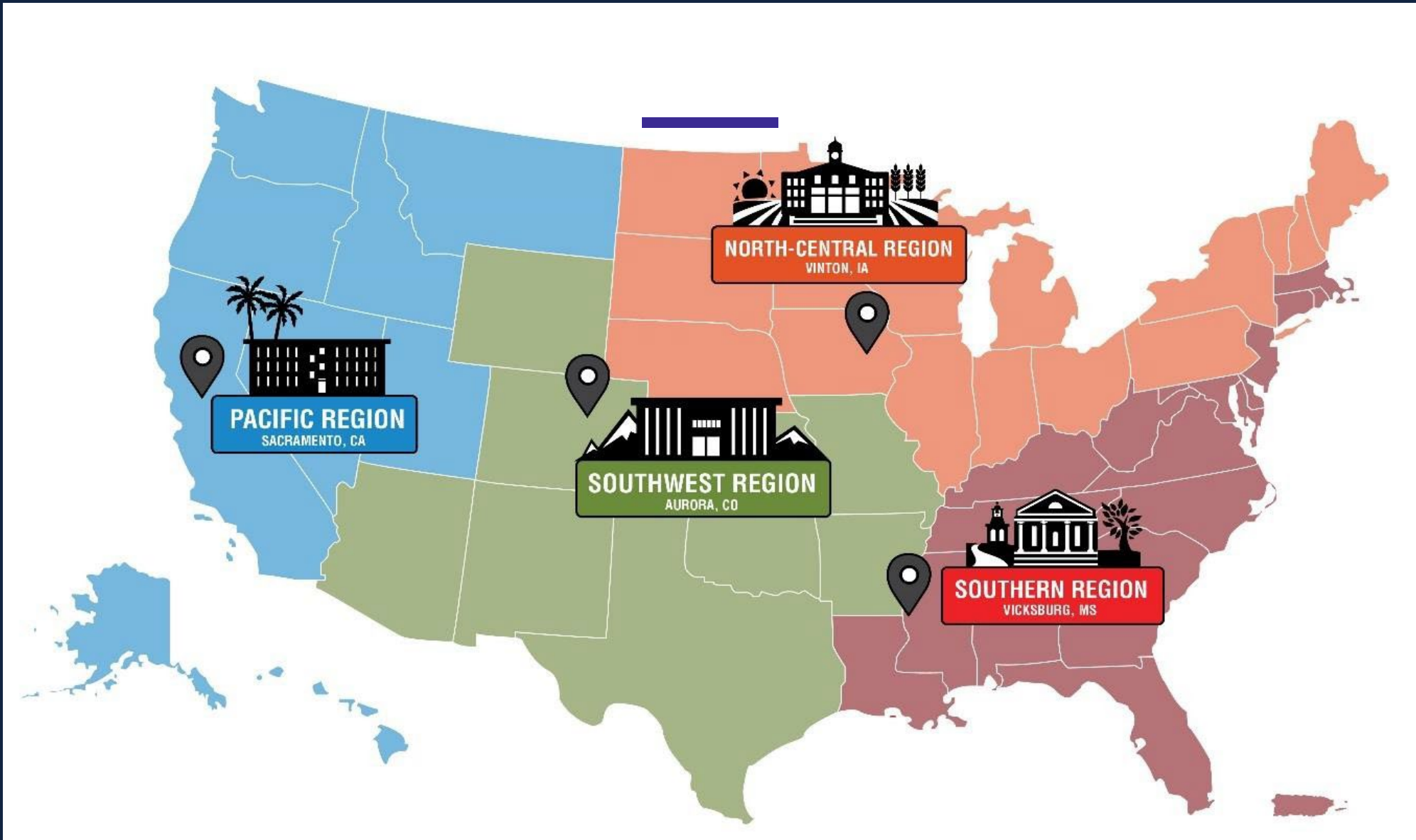
Members are assigned a team of 8-12 members with one Team Leader. Work, live, travel together.



## 4 CAMPUSES

Members are assigned to one of 4 regional *campuses* which is a *home base* between each of their 3-6 service projects.

NCCC Mission: *Strengthen communities and develop leaders through team-based national and community service*



# NCCC project development



- NCCC provides *people power* for high-impact, short-term projects; Communities define the need
- ‘Sponsoring’ organization provides housing, training, and supervision to an NCCC team
  - Housing is the biggest barrier
- NCCC supports 9 states in the Pacific Region; 3 staff dedicated to outreach and project development for the entire region
- Needs, priorities, and organizational capacity vary by state
- Nevada has historically been an underserved state by NCCC in the Region

# Reno/Sparks Community Project



- NCCC provided funding for participatory action research projects across the country
- NCCC/ORE staff traveled to Nevada to meet with youth scientists
- University of Reno staff/youth scientists provided insight into the state and community
- NCCC staff did outreach to other community-based organizations
- Lots of support from Nevada Volunteers, the state service commission
- Invited youth scientists to NCCC campus in Sacramento
- Ultimately the pandemic interrupted the ability for NCCC to send a team; continue to build upon relationships





# Q&A Panel Facilitator

Emily McDonald, PhD  
Research Analyst, AmeriCorps



# Q & A Panel Discussion:

- *Melissa Gouge*, PhD, Research Analyst, AmeriCorps
- *Jennifer Willett*, PhD, Project Director and Researcher
- *Najeh Abduljalil*, former youth scientist, currently undergraduate student at Cornell University
- *Tanya Gipson-Nahman*, Region Director, AmeriCorps NCCC Pacific Region



# Thank you for attending today's webinar

The recording and support materials will be provided in the next two weeks. Those items will be located on the AmeriCorps Impact Webinar page at:

<https://americorps.gov/webinar/community-based-research-vehicle-civic-engagement-community-impact>

To inquire about the work presented in this webinar, please reach out to [Evaluation@cns.gov](mailto:Evaluation@cns.gov)

The next webinar in this series will be on 6/8/2023 from 3pm to 4:30pm EST. Registration will be available in the coming weeks on the AmeriCorps Impact and Evidence Webinar Page

