Speaker 1 ([00:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2.36)):

I'm Troy Christensen and this is the FEMA podcast.

Speaker 1 ([00:11](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=11.73)):

In the wake of large disasters across the country, FEMA responds with its employees and with assets from across the federal government to help communities recover. In addition, FEMA has its own branch of AmeriCorps called FEMA Corps to help bolster our disaster response. It is a program designed to provide young adults with training in emergency management while helping disaster survivors all across the country. Today we are joined by Jack Connelly and Arianna French, two FEMA core team leads, to discuss the program.

Speaker 1 ([00:44](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=44.35)):

And be sure to stick around. At the end of the episode when we speak with four FEMA Corps members working in the Public Assistance branch in Minnesota. We will talk about their work and how they work as a team to help communities throughout the state recover from flooding.

Speaker 1 ([01:01](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=61.41)):

I'm here with Arianna French and Jack Connolly, two FEMA Corps team leads currently stationed in Minnesota. Jack and Arianna, thank you so much for being here.

Speaker 3:

Thank you.

Speaker 2:

Thanks for having us.

Speaker 1:

Tell me a little bit about FEMA Corps. If you were giving somebody an elevator pitch, what would you tell them about the program?

Speaker 2 ([01:17](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=77.27)):

Yeah, so FEMA Corps is a national service program. It was created in 2012 and it is a partnership with AmeriCorps, NCCC and FEMA. So basically how the program runs is that young Americans from the ages of 18 to 24 sign up to do ten months of service. And the service basically comes down to working with FEMA. What that looks like could range from a wide variety of things. Mainly, FEMA Corps members get deployed to active disasters across the country. A lot of the divisions that they work in can be Logistics or Public Assistance, Individual Assistance. So that's some of the divisions that FEMA Corps members are gonna work in. And they do it for ten months and you're a team-based program. So you're living with the people you're working with. You know, you gotta be able to get comfortable with each other. But you become your own family in some sense of the word. You are, you know, the people that you rely on and you're traveling together. You're working together. So far it's been a wonderful experience. So if I had to sum up FEMA Corps in a quick, you know, sound bite, that's what it looked like.

Speaker 1 ([02:34](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=154.79)):

And Arianna, so tell me how many teams are there? You guys mentioned that you're Topaz and Sapphire correct?

Speaker 3:

Yeah.

Speaker 1:

As the team names? Tell me about that. How did that come about?

Speaker 3 ([02:46](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=166.371)):

Sure. So the basic structure is that there are three separate units for the Pacific region campus FEMA Corps program. We have Topaz, Sapphire and Jade. There are usually about eight teams per unit. I believe right now we're sitting at 22, if I can remember correctly off the top of my head. So we have 22 separate teams who are currently deployed across the country, and we have one in Guam and one in Saipan right now.

Speaker 1 ([03:11](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=191.23)):

Well, what's life like on the road? I mean a lot of people have these visions of, you know, FEMA and FEMA Corps going from disaster to disaster, but what is it life actually like when you're out at a disaster?

Speaker 3 ([03:22](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=202.5)):

Sure. So it varies greatly. It really depends on which region you're going to and what type of situation you're going into. A lot of the times when teams are being deployed to active disasters, again, what your experience is like varies greatly for us. Technically we are in an active disaster and we're staying, you know, at a relatively nice hotel in a very nice city. Whereas there've been teams who get deployed to places like Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria and have to stay offshore on a ship and, you know, in that kind of situation. So it really depends on where you're going and what the response is looking like. They basically tell us to be prepared for anything and everything. We do deploy out with cots and things like that in case we do need them. And it's not unusual for teams to end up staying long term at places like YMCA camps, churches, places like that. Or, you know, you can get as nice as we did and end up in a pretty decent hotel. So it really just depends on where you're going and what you're going for.

Speaker 1 ([04:27](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=267.11)):

And how long are the terms? You guys mentioned the ten-month terms. When does that start and when does that end?

Speaker 3 ([04:32](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=272.671)):

So for us - for the team leaders - we always go in a month early because we get a month of training and then our Corps members come. So for us, we started in July. Everyone will be done at the end of May. I believe that they are turning the program into an actual full-year program starting with the next FEMA Corps round, which will be with the Southern region campus. And that starts in March. So they should be going March to March I believe.

Speaker 1 ([04:58](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=298.05)):

And tell me about how you guys got into these positions. I mean, you obviously have your own FEMA Corps stories probably before you were even team leads. So Jack, I'll have you start. What's your FEMA Corps story? What got you interested in the program?

Speaker 2:

Yeah, so I graduated from college in May of 2018 and I joined AmeriCorps, but I joined their state and national program. And so I did a service year at a host site in New York City. And the agency that I worked for was the New York City Office of Emergency Management. So that's kind of where I got my first exposure to emergency management at the local level. You know I loved it there. I had a great amount of knowledge that I gained from everybody who worked there. And so once my service year was coming to an end, I was kind of looking for, you know, that next step - that next opportunity.

Speaker 2 ([05:49](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=349.71)):

And I wanted to gain response experience. I think that's one of the most crucial perspectives you can gain as an emergency manager is going to an active disaster. You know, living there, working there and solving the problems there. So once, I think I was just doing some research online and I heard about FEMA Corps and then I looked more and more into it and, you know, the stars kind of aligned. You know, it really lined up to what I wanted to do. You know, I wanted to deploy to a disaster. I wanted to, you know, live and work where, you know, the people need you and where the community needs you. So FEMA Corps came across my desk. I jumped right on it. You know, to be a team leader: it's a pleasure. It's a privilege to, you know, lead a young group of people, you know, into a disaster to try to solve problems. So I know I've loved it ever since we've been… I think me and Arianna have been a part of this for six months now? I think so. You know, we're about halfway through our service year and I can safely say that I've thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Speaker 1 ([06:50](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=410.4)):

So were you guys both team members at one point before the leader role? Or was the leader role your first role was FEMA Corps then?

Speaker 3 ([06:57](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=417.61)):

For me it was the first role I had with FEMA Corps and with AmeriCorps in general. I just graduated this past May from college and kind of in March got to the point where it was like, “Oh yeah, I'm graduating, I should probably try to get a job.” And my background's in public health and disaster adaptation. So I was kind of looking for something that would be a good intro into the world of federal level emergency management and just stumbled on FEMA Corps. I think it was on USA Jobs, honestly. So, a great resource turns out. Yeah. And so that was kinda my introduction into it. But prior to that I literally had no idea what this program was. I had no idea what even just the entirety of AmeriCorps and NCCC was. I had never heard of it. But it's turned out great. And I think it's something that hopefully will be broadcast more to more people across the country.

Speaker 1 ([07:54](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=474.44)):

And you guys both mentioned you are essentially halfway through your tenure as FEMA Corps team leads. You know, when people ask you what some of your favorite moments or what some of your memorable moments have been so far, what would you tell them?

Speaker 2 ([08:11](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=491.17)):

I think I could say… I can give a serious one and I can give a funny one. I think a serious one is, you know, as team leaders, you know, we have Corps members who we manage and who we try and develop. And I think, you know, one of the most memorable moments for me was seeing my Corps members and seeing my team members step up into the role of being Program Delivery Managers for the first time in the history of the FEMA Corps program. You know, I am so proud of them. You know, the work that they have accomplished. To see their growth and see their development, you know, it's inspiring to me. It's an absolute privilege to be their leader and you know, they are… you know, I'm just so proud of them.

Speaker 2 ([08:56](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=536.13)):

So that's like a consistent kind of moment for me. You know, I'm the proud dad, so to speak. But on the other end some of the fun things that you get to do. We got to - me and Arianna - we took our teams from a road trip from Sacramento, California - which is our base camp - all the way to Minneapolis, Minnesota. So you're going to have some memories on the road. You know, everyone's in those 15-passenger vans and, you know, you got to learn to make each other laugh to get through it. So definitely road tripping for me.

Speaker 3 ([09:27](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=567.8)):

Yeah. I think my… I guess serious memories, very similar to Jack’s with the fact that, you know, our members are the first in the program's history to be acting as these roles and it's a pretty serious responsibility where they are handling applicant's grant applications for FEMA to get the money that they need in order to fix their communities or whatever's gone on. And so just knowing my Corps members and knowing that, you know, they were nervous for it but they were ready to step up and take it on and do the best that they can, made me really proud as a team leader. And I think that's probably one of the more memorable things was I guess finding out that we were going to be doing this and kind of getting our thoughts in order about how we felt about it and then actually seeing them step up, take it on, and really be pretty fearless about it was very memorable. And then as far as good memories, the road trips are always great and there's certainly no shortage of good memories that come along with it. But I think one of the, like really distinct ones for me was when we were stationed in Marshall working on this same disaster. Just all my Corps members - I think we were all in one of our hotel rooms at one point - and they all just kinda dogpiled at each other on the bed. And it's just, it's a little thing, but it makes me really happy as a team leader to know that, like my team, they back each other up. They hold each other up and they're there for each other when they need to be. And just to see them bond like that I think was a really great experience for me as a leader.

Speaker 1 ([10:56](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=656.15)):

And what's that like? I mean you're starting out with a bunch of people that don't know each other, from different backgrounds, different experiences all coming together. You know, from your experience, how easy was it to build that team?

Speaker 3 ([11:08](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=668.99)):

From my own experience, you know, it had ups and downs. I mean certainly anytime you're throwing a bunch of people who have literally never met each other and had no idea what team they were going to be on before coming to campus. But I think just, I mean part of it is just the nature of the program where you literally don't have a choice but to spend almost 24/7 with each other. So you either figure out, you know, how to get along pretty quickly or you're going to just keep having problems. And so for me, fortunately for the most part, my team figured out quickly how to get along with each other, but also to learn how to take, you know, how to figure out when they needed time from each other when they just needed to take a break away from the rest of the team.

Speaker 3 ([11:50](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=710.81)):

And all of that's perfectly fine. And I think it's a really good learning tool for them to figure out, you know - okay, I have to be invested. But sometimes you can't always give 100% to, you know, your team or whatever. And that's okay. It's okay to take a step back and recalibrate essentially and come back. So it can be difficult. I won't lie. I don't think anyone would be surprised to hear that. But just, yeah, through the nature of the program and what it asks of you and knowing that that is what is going to be asked of you coming in, it definitely makes a big difference.

Speaker 1 ([12:27](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=747.73)):

And Jack, so what are the motivations for a lot of the folks that are coming in and want to be part of FEMA Corps? Is it wanting to give back to the community? From your experience, what have you found?

Speaker 2 ([12:39](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=759.5)):

From my experience, what I've found is that a lot of the Corps members coming in to FEMA Corps are fired up. You know, they want to help out, you know, the communities that need it the most. And you know, majority of the time that happens after a disaster and, you know, you see it on the news, you know, you see, you know, how disasters kind of play out, you know, the events that unfold and the damage that's done. And if there's any one sole motivating factor that I found, is that Corps members just want to help people and they just want to do the best job that they can. And, you know, as a team leader, you know, once you have Corps members who come in and who want to join your team and, you know, are fired up and ready to go, in my opinion, you know, that's all I can ask for. So it's really awesome to work with them. You know, you see how they interact with people who have been through disasters and you see the empathy and the genuine care that they have for other people and it's really inspiring.

Speaker 1 ([13:35](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=815.92)):

And you guys mentioned that FEMA Corps members can be used in so many different capacities when they're out in the field and at a disaster. And here in Minnesota, one of the things that they're doing is working in with the PA program - the Public Assistance program. From your experiences, what are some of the other programs that often utilize FEMA Corps team members when you're out in the field? So what are some of the more popular ones?

Speaker 3 ([14:01](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=841.49)):

Well yeah, so PA being one of the bigger I think sectors of what FEMA does. By just virtue of that, there tend to be a lot of PA teams coming out of FEMA Corps. But we also have teams that are trained in Logistics. We have one Environmental Historical Preservation team. We have a couple of Individual Assistance teams and even in this office, since we've come back, we have two members working in Hazard Mitigation, one in EHP and one in Logistics. So I mean it's kind of interesting the way that the program works is, you know, each team does get their specialty training and whatever FQS they are selected for. So we were both trained as PA teams. That doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to get on a project and be working as a PA team. It really just depends on what the need of FEMA is for that particular area or disaster.

Speaker 1 ([14:53](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=893.75)):

And Jack, I'll ask you this question. So what would you tell people who are interested in joining FEMA Corps in the future? If they hear this podcast or they see a FEMA Corps advertisement, you know, what would you tell them?

Speaker 2 ([15:06](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=906.54)):

You know, I'd tell them if they want the opportunity to really challenge themselves. And if you wanted to figure out, you know, who that person was in the mirror that you're looking at, you know, a program like this will really set you up for that. It's one of the most uncomfortable programs you can be in. You know, you're away from home. You're with a bunch of strangers, you know, living in the same hotel rooms and you're all going to work together and you're working, you know, for a disaster. You know, you're working with FEMA staff. And a lot of the times - I think early on in the service year - I had no clue, you know, what was happening and I had no idea, you know, who was what and you know, what division was this for FEMA and, you know, you're living with, you know, these people you just met. But through that experience, the amount of growth that I have felt myself being able to express myself and be comfortable, you know, leading a team of strangers that I'd never met before. You know, if you want to, you know, really challenge yourself, really put yourself out there and really figure out who you are, FEMA Corps is one of the best avenues to do so.

Speaker 1 ([16:14](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=974.95)):

Is there anything you would add Arianna?

Speaker 3 ([16:16](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=976.88)):

I agree with Jack. It can be a very uncomfortable program just for the amount of new that is being thrown at you. But I will say if you are interested in FEMA Corps, just be prepared. It is team-based, it is residential, and you get out of it what you put into it. So if you're there, you know, giving your all every day and being willing to work through, you know, differences - whether that's with your own team or just getting adjusted to an office environment - things like that - then absolutely this is a program that you should look into. And just, I think the ability to kind of spend a year giving back to communities across the country really does make a big difference. I think in the way that we perceive communities that we're not familiar with or just the way that different disasters can impact different areas of the country.

Speaker 3 ([17:06](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1026.35)):

Obviously we all grow up in very different areas and what we experience is not necessarily what other people experience. So getting to travel across the country and really do make a difference in those communities. It's - you can't really - I dunno, you can’t put that into words I guess. But it is an incredibly valuable experience and really I think it's a great way for young people to get involved with giving back. If there's someone listening to this who is thinking about doing FEMA Corps, there will be times where you question why you're here and what the heck you're doing with your life. But I will say that one, overall it's so worth it and two, even the, you know, not so great things - you can either make a difference in making them better for, you know, for future FEMA Corps members or using it as a development experience.

Speaker 3 ([17:57](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1077.96)):

And fundamentally that is what the program is. It is a professional and personal development program and you definitely will learn a lot of things about yourself. Maybe sometimes things that you don't necessarily want to learn but you do. And it's just something that you get to kind of take with you at the end of the year and think about how you've developed since starting on campus to all the disasters that you work on or all the offices that you get to work with. It's just, it is really something that has a profound impact, I think, on your life and you get to take that with you and do good with it.

Speaker 1 ([18:31](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1111.14)):

And so what are your plans for the future then and how did FEMA Corps play into it?

Speaker 3 ([18:36](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1116.881)):

For myself, I'm currently maybe looking at grad school. Not really sure yet, but I definitely would like to stay with disaster response or emergency management. And FEMA has definitely given me a better idea of what that looks like just on the government side and what the federal government specifically does with that. So for me, I mean, working for FEMA would be an amazing opportunity or working for another federal agency that does, you know, disaster response or emergency management. That would also be really great for me.

Speaker 2 ([19:09](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1149.31)):

And I can attest to that too for Arianna. I mean, she's honestly a rock star in my opinion. And if FEMA doesn't pick her up at the end of the service year, I don't know what's going to happen there. You know, for me personally, I want to work in emergency management. You know, exactly where, exactly for who, you know, I don't know. And I kinda, you know, I kinda like that a little bit. So wherever I feel as if, you know, the skills that I can present, you know, wherever I can give back the most, that's where I want to end up. You know, it could be with FEMA, it could be with a local emergency management agency, you know, who knows? But we'll see at the end of the year.

Speaker 1 ([19:47](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1187.18)):

Thanks for staying with us for our bonus episode. We are joined by four FEMA Corps members today discussing their experiences working during a flooding disaster in Minnesota. We are joined by Sam Geverdt, Ian Shirk, Teddy D’Atri, and Amy Dennison.

Speaker 1 ([20:06](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1206.25)):

All right, so I'm here with Sam, Ian, Teddy and Amy. And they are all FEMA Corps team members stationed in Minnesota. We're here in Minnesota talking to them because they have a very special mission that has never been done before by FEMA Corps. Sam, I'll start with you. Tell me a little bit about why your team is here in Minnesota and what you guys have been doing.

Speaker 4 ([20:28](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1228.491)):

We're here in Minnesota kind of to show them what FEMA Corps can do. As you said before, there's haven't really been a FEMA Corps team here in a long time. So our goal going into this in our first round and now in our second round is to kind of show them what we can do, who we are, and how can we help this program. As you said before, they've never actually had us doing some of the things that we've been doing. So we're taking the role of PDMG work, taking the role of EHP and then Mitigation. We have people all over these branches helping and then we're proving to them how much we can do and what we can handle.

Speaker 1 ([21:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1262.72)):

And are you guys all working in the PA program then?

All:

Yes.

Speaker 1:

So Ian, tell me a little bit about the PDMG role. You mentioned it's a Program Delivery Manager for PA. So you're working a lot with the individual communities that that saw damage from the disaster that happened last year?

Speaker 5:

Yeah, so we work with various communities in Minnesota - mostly in the Southern part of the state - and we're doing the direct applicant work. So they come in and they apply for reimbursement for their projects for their towns. And we work with a number of them from start to finish. So we do the first phone call, the first meeting, and then we work with them until their until their projects have been obligated to funding so that we make sure that they get all the help they need to get, which is not a thing FEMA Corps usually does.

Speaker 1 ([21:59](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1319.84)):

Before this - I know you guys are about halfway through your FEMA Corps terms. Were you guys deployed elsewhere doing a different job?

Speaker 6:

We were here.

Speaker 1: You guys were here the whole time?

Speaker 6:

We've been here the entire time.

Speaker 1:

So you're almost Minnesota residents then?

Speaker 6:

Yeah, it's cold here. No. So our first place, yeah, we started out in Bloomington and then the two teams, - we have two FEMA Core teams here in Minnesota right now - we split off. One went to Marshall, Minnesota and then one went to Moorhead.

Speaker 1:

So Amy, you mentioned that you also are working in the Public Assistance program at this disaster. Has it sparked your interest in PA? Is it something that you hope to do in the future - work with the communities?

Speaker 7:

Yeah, it's honestly really interesting. I think personally for me, my view of FEMA beforehand was more along the Individual Assistance lines. I just kind of thought about like the door-to-door going and helping people get the shelter, whatnot. So I've really enjoyed it from this perspective. Being able to work with like the actual townships or the counties. Yeah, I've really enjoyed that part so far.

Speaker 1 ([23:24](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1404.32)):

You guys basically have been brothers and sisters with each other now for five months.

Speaker 4 ([23:29](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1409.77)):

Yeah. Give or take. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

So tell me about tell me about how that's going with your brothers and sisters.

Speaker 4:

Personally, I room with Ian. So I haven't been away from him for probably more than 24 hours for a long time. We're around these people all the time every day. For meals, when we work out, when to wake up, when we go to sleep. There's not really much we do without them. So I mean we're pretty much like family by now and by the time we're done with this, I can only imagine how much farther along we'll be. And there's just a whole ‘nother adventure right there.

Speaker 7 ([24:06](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1446.67)):

Well I guess alongside what Sam was saying, you spend like every second together. So it's important that you try to get along, even if you really don't. You work together. You like literally have to sleep together. You work out together. You go grocery shopping together. So there's a lot of like forced closeness. I know it was hard for me. Like I'm an introvert, but it's really great when you have like people on your team that you actually get along with.

Speaker 1 ([24:34](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1474.94)):

From what you know now about the program and your future career goals - you know, how does FEMA Corps fit in and where do you see your future?

Speaker 4 ([24:45](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1485.04)):

I'm straight out of high school, so I took this year as a gap year almost between high school and college. I have no idea what I want to do. So I'm taking this chance to get some work experience before I go to college next year. And then if I do come back and work for FEMA at some point in the future, it's great to make these connections and to network this way. But it's definitely a stepping-stone into something else. I don't really know what I want to do, but it's a great experience and it's taught me a lot about what a workplace looks like, what it looks like to work with a team and to be a part of something a lot bigger than I am and to work towards that goal.

Speaker 5 ([25:23](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1523.491)):

So I graduated college about two years ago. Yeah, two years ago. And I've always been interested in public service. So I thought this would be a good chance to get some experience directly in that field. And if I get a job out of it, that'd be great. I would not be upset with getting a real job at the end of the FEMA Corps term.

Speaker 7 ([25:49](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1549.31)):

Yeah. So I honestly - this has been a great experience for me. Originally my plan was to pursue a career in FEMA. Still a possibility - I'm considering it - or going like the military route. But either way it kind of proved to me that like, I could do this, that I could just like up and leave my home and go do a real job, I guess. And like Sam said, it's been really great to like experience this kind of work environment and make these connections with people here. There have been some really great people.

Speaker 5 ([26:30](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1590.25)):

So for me, yeah I plan on continuing on with FEMA. I kind of view it as I now know that I'm capable of doing the work and if I'm set up in a position to where I can further my life and stabilize myself further from this and I'm already gonna know what I'm doing, I don't see the point in why I wouldn’t.

Speaker 1:

Do you guys have anything individually to add?

Speaker 5:

Well, I definitely think that the partnership between FEMA and AmeriCorps NCCC is a great opportunity for people just out of high school or college or who really anybody who fits within the age range who just doesn't quite know what they need to be doing with their lives. I think this is a good way to figure it out. Even if you decide that it's not for you or that you want to go on to grad school or something else, it looks really great on a resume and it's a great way to meet people both professionally and just to make friendships that'll last.

Speaker 1: For more information about FEMA Corps, visit careers.fema.gov/fema-corps. The deadline to apply for this year’s class is March 31st.

Speaker 1 ([27:25](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/Jwf7lZaPfzRqoQVJXbTWWxaNS5UQlKiZWPAFFBX8xG6HBlIrbcuXQj4qnbZiYXxDTDAXHqxTH0MW9jouArNgm1QXHZM?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1645.74)):

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