



Vermont Youth Conservation Corps
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CORPS MEMBER GUIDE

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps

Community Crews

Welcome and congratulations!

You have been chosen to help us make a difference, and we are thrilled that you will be joining the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC)! You have been selected because we know you have what it takes to work hard and contribute positively to your crew. Though VYCC is a real job where results matter, we also make sure that we have a lot of fun.

I urge you to jump into the VYCC experience with both feet. Working with a small crew, you will help preserve state parks, maintain and build recreation trails, and work on important sustainable agriculture projects. It's a tough job, but if you give it your all, you'll walk away stronger, tougher, smarter, and ready for anything life throws your way!

VYCC is a nonprofit organization made up of small crews that are diverse and represent a wide variety of social, economic, and educational backgrounds. One of the biggest challenges of working for VYCC is learning to work and communicate well with people from different backgrounds. This is an important skill to develop, though – just imagine what this world would be like if everyone learned to do this! And, you'll find that time spent outdoors brings people together in ways you would have never imagined.

While most of our work is focused in Vermont, we also have crews in several eastern states. These projects are both vehicles to serve and opportunities to learn. Our goal is to serve our communities and learn as much as we can. And, we hire amazing leaders to guide our crews. Leaders are there to help you adjust to working in a new situation. They will teach you new ideas and new skills, from using new tools, to cooking in the rain, and achieving personal goals. Before you know it, you will find yourself honing your own leadership skills.

Last, I encourage you not to be afraid of new challenges and new experiences. Along the way, there will be long days, deep mud, hot sun, and pesky bugs. But, with help from your crew, you'll rise to the occasion just as so many VYCC have done before you. These challenges will allow you to strengthen physically and mentally and to grow into the person you most want to be.

Best of luck to you as you embark upon your season!

Breck Knauft

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Breck Knauft". The signature is stylized, with a large, looped "B" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Executive Director

Farm Crew Overview

As a member of a Community Crew, you will work with fellow Corps Members and be guided by Crew Leaders on a daily basis. You will work during the day, Monday through Thursday, on community-based agriculture projects and return home in the evening. You will also work periodic, pre-scheduled Saturdays with your Crew Leaders and a small group of Corps Members during the season. Your crew will meet in the mornings and work together on an important project called the Health Care Share by planting, weeding, harvesting, washing and packing produce for Vermont families in need. You will also work with farm animals, learn new culinary skills in the kitchen, and share homemade meals with your fellow Corps Members and Crew Leaders. This is your chance to make a lasting difference in your community.

There are also two educational elements incorporated into the crew experience: Food & Finance and WoRD. Food & Finance is a weekly opportunity for Corps Members to develop skills in two areas, personal finance and personal nutrition. As a crew, Corps Members learn basic concepts of money management, discussing topics that range from financial goal setting to budgeting and spending the season's hard-earned wages wisely. Your crew will also spend time in the kitchen, testing recipes, working with new foods, and sharing a meal together.

WoRD is an acronym for Writing, Reading and Discussion. Everyone is issued a WoRD book, a collection of articles that cover a range of current local and global issues. Together, your crew will read an article, discuss it, and journal every day. WoRD is a special part of the VYCC experience, and is often one of the most important ways that Corps Members learn to share ideas and opinions with one another.

Daily Schedule

The standard Farm Community Crew daily schedule is as follows; **however, it is subject to change based on the nature of your project.**

7:00 a.m.	Crew Leaders arrive at the crew base (a selected location in your community)
8:00	Circle Up; check in with each other and review day's tasks and begin work
12:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00	Continue work
4:30	End of work day, Crew heads home.

VYCC Expectations

The VYCC experience is both challenging and rewarding! The following policies exist to ensure that our crews are safe and respectful, and run as efficiently as possible. We strive to ensure all Corps Members have a successful experience. As a VYCC employee, you must follow the policies below.

Immediate Dismissal Policies

Any Corps Member who breaks an Immediate Dismissal Policy below will be asked to leave the program immediately. Corps Members under the age of 18 will need to call their parents to arrange

to be picked up.

- Possession, use, suspicion of use, or being in the presence of tobacco, alcohol, and/or drugs
- Physical intimacy
- Violence or threats of violence
- Stealing
- Harassment

General Crew Policies

Your conduct as a Corps Member should meet the following General Crew Policies:

- Arrive on time
- Keep a positive attitude
- Participate in all activities
- Be a consistent member of the team
- Use appropriate language
- Use tools and equipment properly
- Bring all safety gear
- Avoid exclusive relationships
- Follow supervisor/Crew Leader directions
- Work hard and to fullest potential
- Follow crew-specific policies
- Maintain a professional appearance

First Offense: The first time a Corps Member does not meet the expectations listed in the General Crew Policies, he or she will receive a written warning from his or her Crew Leader, and the warning will be documented in the Corps Member's discipline record. The Crew Leader will then meet with the Corps Member to explain why he or she has received the warning.

Second Offense: The second time a Corps Member does not meet the expectations listed in the General Crew Policies, he or she will be given a second written warning. The Corps Member will meet with a Crew Leader to create and sign a written plan that details the steps the Corps Member will take in order to successfully meet the expectations listed in the General Crew Policies.

Third Offense: If the Corps Member again does not meet the expectations listed in the General Crew Policies or in the Corps Member's written plan, the incident or behavior will be documented in the Corps Member's discipline record **and he or she will be dismissed immediately.**

Training Week: Training week is an adjustment period that occurs during the first week of the crew. During the first week of the session, Corps Members can receive one *verbal* warning for violation of General Crew Policies. Corps Members can be dismissed during the first week if they break an Immediate Dismissal Policy or if they are written up three times for not following General Crew Policies.

What to Bring

Please see the enclosed gear list for items that you will need to bring to make your VYCC experience safe and comfortable. If you do not own something that is on the list, we recommend that you borrow it from a friend or family member rather than purchase it. If you have questions, or have trouble finding any items, please let us know and we can help.

Please look over the required identification you will need to bring with you on your first day in order

to complete your I9 form. If you do not have the required identification in hand on your first day you will not be able to join your crew. If you see this as a difficulty please contact us prior to your first day of work so we can help create a plan for you to get the proper identification and have it ready to go.

What NOT to Bring

The following items are not allowed on VYCC farm crews during work hours:

- Cell phones (even for use as a camera or alarm clock)
- iPods/music players/portable radios/etc.

The following items are never allowed on VYCC crews:

- Laptop computers/tablets/gaming consoles
- Personal tents or tools
- Weapons or large knives (folding knives or multi-tools with blades shorter than 4 inches may be permitted only upon approval by a Farm Crew Supervisor)

Visitors

We encourage visits that are planned and approved by supervisors. Your family is invited to volunteer with us and will be given a volunteer waiver in the event of their pre-planned visit.

Receiving School Credit

Many Corps Members have received academic credit for their participation on a VYCC Crew. If you are interested in receiving credit for your crew experience, please speak with your school advisor and then contact us.

Statement of Participation

Your participation in the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps depends on timely and continued funding of the VYCC, as well as your compliance with the reasonable and valid policies, and conditions of participation as described in this Guide. You are responsible for keeping the VYCC informed of changes in your employment status, address, or any other conditions that affect your ability to participate in the VYCC.

Corps Member Rights

Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment

VYCC is an equal employment opportunity employer. This means that VYCC is committed to giving equal opportunities to all qualified persons in accordance with federal and state law. All VYCC employment decisions are made without regard to any legally-protected class.

Harassment is a type of discrimination and is also absolutely prohibited. VYCC is committed to maintaining a work environment in which employees at all levels of the organization are able to devote their full attention and best efforts to their jobs. Harassment, either intentional or unintentional, has

no place in your work environment at VYCC. VYCC does not authorize and will not tolerate any form of unlawful harassment of, or by, its employees, regardless of whether the offending person is a co-employee or a related organization.

The term "harassment" includes, but is not limited to, offensive language, jokes, or other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct which would make a reasonable person experiencing such harassment uncomfortable in the work environment or which could interfere with the person's job performance. "Unlawful harassment" is harassment based on, or related to, any legally-protected class.

Political Activities

You cannot be asked, nor will you be permitted, to participate in activities designed to assist, promote, or deter any political activity that involves your participation in, or employment by, the VYCC in any way. No organizations are allowed to solicit VYCC crews during working time.

Sectarian Worksites

You will not be asked to work on the construction, operation, or maintenance of any facility used for sectarian instruction or religious worship.

Confidentiality

The names of VYCC participants are considered public information and may therefore be disclosed. Your permission will be required prior to the release of any information to persons other than authorized VYCC Headquarters staff or governmental agencies as necessary for the administration of law. Your signed Corps Member Agreement, however, gives the VYCC permission to use photos, video, and voice recordings of which you are a part as well as your quotes in VYCC marketing, public service announcements, printed, electronic, promotional, or other materials.

A Final Word

This program will change you in many ways. The tasks you take on will be demanding. You will have the opportunity to practice new skills, become a better communicator, and learn to be a highly-skilled team player.

The VYCC will ask a lot of you. We expect you to work long hours, to finish the job, to be safe, and to help other Corps Members. We take pride in what we do, and the projects we complete are built to last. This job will, in turn, offer you a lot. You will gain new friends, tremendous satisfaction, respect, confidence, and new skills. Before you begin your crew, take the time to truly commit to the adventure you are about to embark on. Prepare yourself for the challenges and the rewards. If you let it, the VYCC will change your life in a profound way.

Welcome to our team!

The only limit to your success is your own imagination!

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The VYCC is an equal opportunity employer and offers all persons the benefit of participation in its programs and employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other legally-protected factors.