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What is the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps?

Mission
Teaching young people personal responsibility through meaningful work that connects us to the land, community, and one another

Core Values
Personal Responsibility – This is a bedrock value of VYCC. If we all take personal responsibility for our actions, communities will be stronger, healthier, and more resilient.

Conservation – We must first instill deep and personal appreciation for the natural world in future generations of leaders. Be it in a working landscape, an urban center, or in the high wild spaces, immersive outdoor experiences are central to the VYCC experience.

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Teamwork – Everyone’s contributions matter. Completing high quality projects requires Corps Members to draw on skills and experiences greater than any one individual. Working alongside and living with diverse crewmates sparks collaboration, appreciation, and a great deal of fun.

History
The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) was established in 1985 by the Vermont State Legislature with a one-dollar appropriation. Thomas Hark, a Camp Director with the Minnesota Conservation Corps, was hired to direct this new program. Under Thomas’ direction, the program was housed in the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation (FPR) and encompassed the dual goals of providing young people with valuable training and education and completing high-priority conservation work on Vermont’s public natural areas and recreation lands. Without a desk or a phone and with a minimal budget, Thomas secured initial funding and assembled a crew of six Vermont teenagers. The crew spent that first summer working on conservation projects throughout the state.

In 1988, education became truly integrated into the conservation work of the crews when the innovative education curriculum WoRD (Writing, Reading, and Discussion) was developed. Through this collection of thought-provoking articles that discuss topics of great interest to young people, Corps Members began to read, discuss, and write about current issues on a daily basis. Since then, WoRD has been revised several times, most recently in 2015.

In 1989, the VYCC became a private 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Legislation was passed that solidified the relationship between this new nonprofit and FPR. Under this arrangement, public lands continue to receive several hundred thousand dollars’ worth of conservation, park, and natural resource work each year from the VYCC at no cost to Vermont taxpayers.
Today the VYCC is a growing non-profit organization that operates via a strong partnership with FPR and the US Forest Service, as well as other partners that have developed over the years. Private sector support for the VYCC has grown from a single donation to an amount equal to roughly 20% of the organization’s overall budget. Most importantly, young people from every county and nearly every town in Vermont have been hired into the program and several million dollars’ worth of priority conservation work has been completed.

**Roots and Philosophy**
The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps in many ways is based off of the 1930s Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) model. The CCC was a public works program that put over three million young men and adults to work during the Great Depression of the 1930s and 1940s in the United States. Members of the CCC planted trees, built public parks, drained swamps to fight malaria, restocked rivers with fish, worked on flood control projects, and a range of other work that helped to conserve the environment. Work completed by the CCC can still be seen throughout Vermont specifically at Elmore State Park and Hapgood Pond.

The philosophy of the VYCC is simple and powerful. As Founder Thomas Hark liked to say, "Our goal is for the program to 'ooze' with education." The conservation projects completed by the VYCC crews are important and, like the original Civilian Conservation Corps’ projects, will last for decades. These projects, however, are simply the vehicle used to accomplish our mission of teaching people to take personal responsibility for all of their actions.

**Diversity and Teamwork**
The VYCC employs a diverse group of people. The VYCC seeks Crew Leaders and Corps Members of varied interests and talents, representing many social, economic, and geographical backgrounds. On every VYCC Crew you can find Crew Leaders and Corps Members from a variety of locations, from a number of different high schools and colleges, and with a wide range of life experiences. This diversity results in a dynamic group environment that is critical to the development of both individuals and the team as a whole.

Living and working together on a diverse crew is an intense experience. Problems occur, rules are challenged, and emotions rise. These things are natural and expected. The VYCC uses these experiences as an avenue to pursue improved communication and understanding. It takes a great deal of work, but over the course of a summer, you will experience tremendous personal growth as you build a community out of a disconnected group of strangers. The end result is extraordinary.

**Public Relations**
Public relations are a critical element of all VYCC crews. We expect every stranger and friend to be met in a friendly, courteous way. You and your crew should always be ready to go out of your way to: 1) introduce yourself; 2) describe the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps; 3) describe the work project; and 4) direct people to our website, [www.vycc.org](http://www.vycc.org), or toll-free number, 1-800-639-8922, for more information. VYCC Development Staff can tell you countless stories of
individuals who donate to us simply because they, “ran into a great crew”
out in the field and wish to help support all the work we do here at the
VYCC. You are always a very important part of our public image.

Our Primary Partners
Vermont Department of Forest, Parks, and Recreation (FPR)
FPR serves as a primary project sponsor for a number of our crews in the
Conservation Program. As VYCC’s roots are in FPR, this partnership is
our longest standing and while it has changed in scope and magnitude
over the years, it remains strong to this day.

US Forest Service (USFS)
The US Forest Service serves as the primary partner for a number of our
crews both in Vermont and in North Carolina. The VYCC has a standing
five year cooperative agreement with both the Green Mountain and Finger
Lakes National Forest (VT and NY) and with the National Forests of North
Carolina. Our partnership with the Forests in North Carolina has allowed
us to successfully launch the North Carolina Youth Conservation Corps in
2013 and resulted in a solid project for the first session of one of our 10
month crews. All projects will involve hands-on work related to
management of a large parcel of the US Forest system.

Our Programs
The VYCC is comprised of two programs, both of which lend themselves to the organizational mission of
Teaching young people personal responsibility through meaningful work that connects us to the land, community, and
one another. These programs are the Conservation Program, and the Farm at VYCC.

Regardless of the crew type, the recipe for a successful VYCC experience is generally the same: we hire small diverse groups
of young people to work on high-priority, meaningful projects with professional leadership teams. High expectations, hard
work, and crew-oriented activities rich with educational experiences draw people from a variety of backgrounds together
to live, work, and recreate as a tight-knit community. People that may not normally spend time together form strong bonds,
understand new perspectives, and learn from each other as much as they learn from mentors they work alongside.

Conservation Program
The Conservation Program engages youth in paid and service work. Crews of Corps Members, led by Crew Leaders,
complete projects including trail building, forestry, habitat restoration, riverbank stabilization, and park restoration.
Each year, the VYCC fields over 20 crews of up to eight Corps Members and two experienced Crew Leaders. Crews worked
in partnership with organizations and agencies such as the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation; Vermont
Agency of Transportation; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; National Park Service;
U.S. Forest Service; and The Nature Conservancy; as well as towns, local conservation commissions, and watershed groups.
Crews work on projects scattered across Vermont in settings ranging from town centers to Green Mountain alpine ridge
tops. An array of specialized crews includes all-female, leadership development, technical skills, parks restoration,
community based, and summer crews. The Conservation Program serves nearly 200 individuals every year, half of whom
were young women, and approximately half of whom came from low-income backgrounds.
Farm at VYCC
The Food and Farm Program empowers youth to unite with their community to address the complex issues of hunger, nutrition, food access, sustainable agriculture, and responsible land use. Corps Members plant, grow, harvest, and deliver organic vegetables and poultry. While the Farm at VYCC is the primary work site, crews also grow and glean crops on partnering farms. The Farm offers paid positions, internships, credit-bearing opportunities and a gap semester program for high school graduates. All of these experiences allow young people to get their hands dirty and learn how to grow food.

VYCC Staff Overview

Corps Members
Corps Members are the most important people in the VYCC. They are the participant representatives of all VYCC programs and are expected to demonstrate pride, skill, and responsibility. They are responsible for full participation in all VYCC activities, proper and safe use of all tools, and observation of all policies. Each Corps Member is responsible for the safety, health, and well-being of the whole crew. Corps Members are supervised by and work closely with Crew Leaders.

Assistant Crew Leaders
Assistants are responsible for helping the Crew Leaders with training, motivating, and supporting Corps Members. They assist with designing and leading educational activities under the guidance of the Leader. They also assist with the completion of conservation projects. They are excellent role models and help enforce all VYCC policies. Assistants work closely with and take direction from Leaders and learn valuable leadership skills firsthand. Not all crews have Assistant Crew Leaders.

Crew Leaders
A Crew Leader wears many hats: trainer, boss, mentor, teacher, and friend. They are none of these exclusively, yet their role incorporates some aspects of each. Crew Leaders bring a diversity of past experiences and skills with them to the VYCC and serve as the link between the organization, program sponsors, and the crews on the ground.

Headquarters Team
VYCC is fueled by an energetic team of talented individuals. With backgrounds in education, agriculture, backcountry survival, the Peace Corps, and more, the staff at VYCC holds a skillset as diverse as the youth we mentor. Visit our website to learn more about each staff member: http://www.vycc.org/about/our-team/

The VYCC Board of Directors
The Board of Directors is the chief policy development and governing body of the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps. Through the Executive Director, the Board coordinates, communicates, and sets up working and legal agreements with various agencies and organizations to carry out the VYCC’s mission. In addition to supervising the Executive
Director, the board establishes policy and direction for the organization, broadly oversees fiscal management of organization, and assists staff in raising funds to carry out the various programs.

**Work Project Sponsors**

Work Project Sponsors vary greatly. Some are State Foresters who have worked with us for over a decade and others are town officials who are just beginning to learn about us and the work we do. Some of the money that pays for the costs of the crew comes directly from the Project Sponsor. They should be greeted in a friendly and respectful manner and with excellent customer service. Typically they will visit the project site to ensure quality work and support Crew Leaders with project logistics.

**The VYCC Education Overview – “The Core of the Corps”**

The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps is known for its high-quality conservation work. Just as trails, bridges, and parks have an immediate and lasting impact in our communities, so will you. **We believe that our real product is the people that we work with.** We believe in the power of each individual to contribute meaningfully to the community through work - to change the world in important ways. We believe that you are needed as the next generation of leaders.

The recipe is simple: small groups of diverse people completing important work projects under the leadership of caring and competent leaders. In a nutshell, the model is **Work-based Learning**—learning happens through the work that we do. On each of our crews, the work is real and important; the experience is richly educational by design.

Education in the VYCC experience is the learning that comes from important work that we do—working together to accomplish a seemingly difficult project, while working effectively with people with different opinions, values, and histories. A "top shelf," high-quality project is one demonstration of your success as a Corps Member. The growth of your community, both individually and as a group, is the other.

**It’s Personal.**

In a world where many people don’t take personal responsibility for their words and actions, where students blame teachers for their failure, and businesses shirk responsibility for environmental problems, the community expectations of a VYCC crew – where each person is taught to take responsibility for their own actions and to work within a defined set of expectations – can be a big shock. Yet this expectation and the way that we uphold it is the single most powerful part of a VYCC crew.

Personal responsibility. It’s easy to recognize, sometimes hard to do, and perhaps even more difficult to teach. So how do you do it?

We ask you, as Corps Members, to teach personal responsibility by setting effective boundaries, communicating and role modeling community norms, and supporting each other’s efforts. In a world of few concrete consequences, it appears that we ask a lot from you. Our program can be interpreted by some as too structured, with expectations that are unreachable and unreasonable. **In reality, these policies and expectations are no different than in any entry level job.**

Through the use of Member Evaluations (ME’s) your Crew Leader will provide direct and honest feedback, address challenges, and provide one-on-one support, goal-setting, and mentorship with each person on your crew. Through their
support and continual feedback, they are preparing you to meet new leadership opportunities, step up to the season’s challenges, and grow exponentially during your time with the VYCC.

The discipline procedures are in place to assure the safety and productivity of your crews’ work. Just as it is your job to practice personal responsibility, it is the job of the Crew Leader to effectively and consistently use the discipline procedures when expectations are not met. In most cases you can receive three write-ups before you are dismissed from your position. We always welcome you to apply for another position in the future, and the door is not closed if the desire for growth is there. It is important that we are straightforward yet supportive in our discipline style. Our mission is to teach personal responsibility, not just to expect it.

**It’s Bigger than You.**
The VYCC heavily relies on the crew model. The experience of working with a diverse group of peers to accomplish an important project is challenging by design and necessity. On a tight-knit crew, the impact of our words and actions are magnified and reflected back to us, sometimes in difficult truths that provide the “meat” for personal and community growth. A VYCC crew teaches personal development and personal responsibility through an intense community experience.

Throughout your entire VYCC experience, the “Spirit of the VYCC” emerges from the routines and traditions that you and your crew establish together. Circle-ups, crew meals, community meetings, and working together to accomplish community chores are regular activities that build community. Teambuilding can reframe challenges, individual roles, and community process. Policies unite your crew with a common set of community expectations and norms.

As your crew progresses through their VYCC experience, you will build a tremendous community. Your Crew Leaders will facilitate and mediate when challenges arise and celebrate when things are humming. They will provide you with a greater understanding of the importance of your work in the communities, natural environments, and parks where you work. They will facilitate relationships between the Project Sponsors and community members that invest in their projects. At the end of the season the program closure will be a culmination of your experience, a sharing of process, success, and place. It provides the context, time, and space for you to celebrate and reflect.
Your life, your community, your world.
By the end of your time with the VYCC, your crew may feel like the world to you. Inside jokes, crew stories, and projects mark your time together as a crew. However, the tools that you will learn are universal and powerful and will allow you to change the world – at least your corner of it.

The values that you will learn under the leadership of your Crew Leaders – to respect and work with different people, to value the learning process, to persevere toward seemingly impossible goals, to think deeply, and challenge long-held beliefs – will take you far in life. The work skills that defined the boundaries of your position with the VYCC will form a solid foundation for successful work experiences in your future – whether in a factory, farm, company, or nonprofit. If the ethic of personal responsibility touches your life as it has most that have crossed paths with the VYCC, it will resonate in the relationships with your families, workplaces, and communities.

This intentional layer of the VYCC Educational Curriculum is designed to develop future leaders by providing individuals with the tools, experience, and inspiration to change the world. We ask you, as a Corps Member, to be aware of this during your entire crew experience. In the VYCC, policies are not "just rules" and we don’t ask for compliance "because we say so." In the VYCC, the work of personal development, achieving goals, and taking responsibility is very real and not unlike the work of the rest of your life – you just may not get as dirty doing it. But we hope you do.

AmeriCorps Conservation Program in Detail

Overview
The Conservation Program is a program that offers Corps Members the ability to step up their level of commitment and gain valuable, real life job skills in natural resource management work.
The VYCC worked in partnership with other corps organizations through The Corps Network (TCN) to secure a three year grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to offer AmeriCorps Positions. The collaborative effort is called the Opportunity Youth Service Initiative (OYSI). An OYSI Corps Member is an AmeriCorps National Direct position.

Because AmeriCorps positions are federally sponsored there are certain requirements that must be met to fully take advantage of the benefits offered. Corps Members must complete a set amount of work hours and are limited by the types of work they are legally allowed to complete. These limitations correspond with those of all federal employees.

All OYSI participants will clearly identify themselves as AmeriCorps Members. Starting with recruitment materials, the AmeriCorps logo will also be present on hiring and other necessary paperwork. Each member will attend a comprehensive AmeriCorps Orientation Workshop during which policies and expectations are reviewed and discussed in a facilitated presentation. During all service projects, crew members will wear uniforms which will have an AmeriCorps logo and will help to both foster a sense of community with the larger OYSI community and reinforce the value of working as team. We hope you are proud to be a part of this larger national community and embrace this opportunity in the spirit of service!

The AmeriCorps Crew Experience

The VYCC experience is an educational journey that is centered on teaching a strong work ethic, effective communication, collaboration with team members, leadership, community service, job readiness and personal responsibility. VYCC Crew Leaders use their skills and training to create and individualize an experience that is rich with education and opportunities for growth.

As a member of a Conservation AmeriCorps Crew, you may travel while living out of “spike” camps in the back and front country and completing high-priority conservation projects. Crews will work throughout Vermont and other eastern states and will interact directly with the public and with community interest groups. Many crews will visit local farmers markets, walk in a parade, or volunteer on a farm in exchange for fresh produce. Crew Leaders are trained to assist crew members to effectively and professionally present themselves and the organization during these frequent interactions.

Each day on a Conservation AmeriCorps Crew, there will be work that needs to be done to maintain the camp and your crew. Everyone will participate equally in the chores to keep the camp clean and make sure that healthy meals are prepared for your hungry crew.
Schedule

Typical Daily Schedule
During a typical work week, your work day will last approximately 8 hours. Corps Members must take a half hour lunch break each work day. The following is a rough idea of the Daily Schedule of a work day, but will change to accommodate both your project needs and your crew’s preference:

5:30 a.m.  Cooks wake up and prepare breakfast
6:00  All others rise and shine
7:15  Crew ready; loads tools and equipment
7:30  Drive to worksite and hike to project
8:00  Tool check and begin work (8 a.m. sharp!)
11:50  Tool check
12:00 p.m.  Lunch
12:30  Crew Education and/or Training
1:00  Continue work
4:20  Tool check
4:30  Leave worksite
5:00  Everyone cleanup, change, etc.
5:30  Cook dinner or free time for some
6:30  Dinner and clean-up
8:00  Evening activities (participation required) or FreeTime
9:30  All Corps Members in tents

Evenings, Weekends, and Time Off
In the evening you will be involved in many activities. Some people will be responsible for cooking a hearty feast, while others are building a campfire or getting water. Everyone will use some of this time to make sure the tools are sharp and equipment is in good working order for the next day.

[11]
If all other group tasks are finished and you are not cooking, you will have free time. You may decide to explore the area, practice your tree identification, play cards, play music, or read a book. You may also participate in night hikes and learning activities organized by your Crew Leaders. (Participation is generally required for all group activities. Remember that this is part of the experience!)

On crew weekends, you and your crew will have the opportunity to do a variety of activities together: go on recreational trips, participate in educational activities, help maintain the camp and the tools, and possibly do laundry. During these trips and activities all VYCC policies apply. Your participation in these weekend events is an exciting part of the experience.

During recharge weeks, you and your crew will have the opportunity to spend part of your time off however you like. Often Corps Members will choose to go on trips together to explore the unique state of Vermont, or you may find that you just want to spend a few days relaxing and recharging around the AmeriCorps quarters at HQ (wall tents on platforms will be provided for folks to stay at during recharge weeks if they choose). If you do decide to stay on VYCC property during your recharge weeks, please note that all VYCC policies will apply. As with any position, you will be expected to arrive back at HQ promptly at the agreed upon time before your next session. Any tardiness will impede the functionality of your crew.

Education on an AmeriCorps Crew

A big component to the VYCC, as well as the AmeriCorps Member positions, is education and training. You will have a variety of opportunities to learn, grow, and develop new skills that will all count towards your hours and ultimately Education Award at the end of your service completion. Here are some specifics:

- Education happens daily. Roughly one hour of the work day is appropriated for education.
- There is flexibility in how you use this hour, they are not to be saved up and used for extended periods of time not working.
- Education hours are tracked on your timesheet.
- Education can be one hour of the work day, but should not be more. Be in touch with both your supervisor and your project sponsor about how education can play into your time at work. Some sponsors need for education to happen while they are not present so as to maximize their time on the project. Others will want to participate!
- There are several different types of education that our AmeriCorps Crews participate in. They will be facilitated by both your Crew Leaders as well as you and the other Corps Members on the Crew.
  - WoRD – Writing, Reading, Discussion
  - Leadership Development Curriculum
  - Member Generated Lessons

VYCC Expectations

The VYCC experience is both challenging and rewarding! The following policies have been established to ensure that our crews are safe, respectful, responsible for their own actions, and run as efficiently as possible. We strive to ensure our Corps Members have a successful experience overall. As a VYCC employee or AmeriCorps member, you must follow the policies below.

Immediate Dismissal Policies

Any Corps Member who breaks an Immediate Dismissal Policy will be asked to leave the program immediately.

- 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**
Corps Member conduct should meet the following General Crew Policies:

• Keep a positive attitude
• Be a consistent member of the team
• Work hard and to full potential
• Maintain punctuality
• Bring all safety gear
• Use tools and equipment properly
• Maintain a professional appearance
• Use appropriate language
• Follow Crew Leader’s directions
• Participate in all activities
• Avoid exclusive relationships
• Follow crew-specific policies

**Discipline Process**

**First Offense:** The first time a Corps Member does not meet the expectations listed in the General Crew Policies, they 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 they have received the warning.

**Second Offense:** The second time a Corps Member does not meet the expectations listed in the General Crew Policies, they will be given a second written warning. The Corps Member will meet with a Crew Leader to create and sign a written plan which 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 they will be dismissed immediately.

**Training Week:** During the first week of their term of service, Corps Members can receive one 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.

**Compensation**

**Stipend**
AmeriCorps Members in the Conservation Program receive a taxable weekly living allowance as outlined in their Offer Letter. The living allowance is paid on a bi-weekly basis. AmeriCorps members receive a pro-rated living allowance if they serve a partial week at the beginning or end of a service term. For example, if a member begins service on a Wednesday, then they receive 3/7 of their living allowance since our pay period runs Sat-Fri.
Room and Board
AmeriCorps Members in the Conservation Program will have room and board expenses covered during the required crew days while employed by the VYCC. Days off during recharge weeks will be at the individual’s expense. Wall-tents on platforms may be used, but all VYCC policies apply.

Education Award
Upon completion of your service hours you will be eligible for an AmeriCorps Education Award. This award will be credited to your account with the CNCS. You will not see a check or cash, rather you will have access to an account that can be used to pay off existing student loans or pay for future schooling. For full details on using your AmeriCorps Education Award, visit the AmeriCorps website at:


The CNCS has set up a website to help you conveniently access your Education Award called MyAmeriCorps. From this website you can view your balance, request forbearance, request payment, complete interest accrual forms and manage your AmeriCorps profile. To access your MyAmeriCorps page log onto https://my.americorps.gov/mp/login.do

Workers Compensation
The VYCC provides Workers Compensation insurance for all employees and AmeriCorps members, to cover work related injuries. Work related injuries should be reported to your Crew Leader and HQ as soon as possible.

Reaching Your Service Hours

Total Hours
Your position requires you to complete a specific amount of hours of service work over your term of service. **Eligible work hours include all training, education, service, work, community and team building activities that you will participate in with the VYCC.** Once you have completed the required hours of service you will have met the minimum federal requirement to receive the AmeriCorps Education Award. To be fully qualified for your Education Award you must successfully complete all components of your position with the VYCC, including working to your expected end date.

Hours Tracking
Your AmeriCorps service hours will be tracked on timesheets that will be mailed into the VYCC headquarters. It is your responsibility to track the hours that you spend completing AmeriCorps activities. Take special care to **accurately record** your training and service hours, then sign, date, and turn them in to your supervisor.

Hours Completion
To complete the required service hour commitment by the end of the program term, absences must be held to a minimum. Some flexibility is built into the calendar to accommodate sick and personal leave; however, these hours do not count toward service accomplishment. All sick leave and personal leave from service or training must be made-up in accordance with the Make-Up Policy.

Pre-Approved Time Off
Aside from scheduled days off, other situations may arise that require you to seek approval for temporarily leaving the crew. Some of these situations include:
Medical/Emergency Leave Time
AmeriCorps Members can take medical or emergency leave time as needed. However, Corps Members are responsible for fulfilling their AmeriCorps hour commitment by the end of the program. Hours missed for medical or emergency leave need to be completed in accordance with the Make-Up Policy.

Holidays
Holidays are considered service days in the Conservation Program because of the nature of the work that we are completing. Corps Members should expect to work their normal weekly schedule for all holidays including Independence Day and Labor Day.

Jury, Military, Citizen Duties
Leave time for jury, military, and other civil duties (such as voting) will be considered on a case by case basis in accordance with VYCC and AmeriCorps policy. If you have questions about this situation you should consult with your Crew Leaders.

Make-up Policy
Completion of the required service hour commitment necessary to obtain your education award is your responsibility. The VYCC has scheduled enough time in the program to attain this without cause for concern. If you fall behind in hours due to illness or other unexpected circumstances and do not reach your commitment by the end of the program you are expected to organize and complete projects following your service term with VYCC and obtain prior VYCC approval before doing so. Members may make up hours on time off or during scheduled program breaks if necessary.

Make-up time is to be served with a community or environmental program focused on environmental stewardship or other interest parallel to the VYCC’s guiding principles. You should discuss make-up time with your supervisor. Make-up forms/logs are turned in with timesheets for the week in which the make-up time was completed.

Voluntary Resignation or Termination
Any member who resigns or is terminated from the program before the completion of their service term without obtaining a release for ‘compelling personal circumstances,’ is considered released for cause or quit and will not be eligible for any portion of their education award or interest accrual payments. Loan forbearance and health insurance will be discontinued. Members are not eligible for unemployment benefits.

Release from Participation
The member can be released from service in two ways:
1.) For Cause by:
   • Failing to complete the required number of service hours in the time allotted.
   • Violating the Program’s discipline policy.

   In the event that the Member is released For Cause, the Member receives no portion of the Education Award.

2.) For Compelling Personal Circumstances
   Eligibility for release for a Compelling Personal Circumstance is determined by the Program with input from VYCC. However, a Compelling Personal Circumstance is generally a serious family or life issue such as sickness or death, which precludes the Member from completing her/his service.
Other Details

Mail
Friends and family are encouraged to send letters to their corps members. Please consider that packages need to be transported to a campsite, often along with tools, equipment, etc. Mail is delivered once a week to the crew.

All mailed items must include the Corp Member’s name to reach the proper destination! Please keep the size of the package small and manageable. Of course, things that can be shared are best!

Send packages and letters to this address:

[Corps Member Name]
VYCC
1949 East Main Street
Richmond, VT 05477

Visitors
Visitors are discouraged at all VYCC crew sites because of the crew schedules and the logistical challenges. We have also found that visitors distract the Corps Members from community building with their crews and can diminish the overall experience for the Corps Members. The best time to visit with friends and family is during official time off.

Equal Opportunity Employer
The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The VYCC does not discriminate in program admission based on race, color, sexual orientation, military discharge, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic unrelated to the ability to perform the essential functions or basic tenets of the program, or any bona fide occupational qualifications.

The VYCC will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities, as long as the accommodation does not impose an undue hardship on the VYCC. This policy governs all aspects of the program, including selection, placement assignment, compensation, and access to benefits and training.

The VYCC makes every effort to ensure that its placement agencies have similar non-discrimination policies. Any member with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in their placement or workplace is encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor, superior, and/or Program Director.

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 Press Release Waiver, 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.

Alumni Connections
To keep in touch with VYCC friends and to receive updates about VYCC events, subscribe to our e-newsletter, join us on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter! Contact VYCC development staff for more information at (802) 434-3969 ext. 113
Statement of Participation
Your participation is temporary and, is expected to last a specified amount of time stated on your Program Dates Sheet. 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 manual. You are responsible for keeping the VYCC informed of changes in your enrollment status, address, or any other conditions that affect your ability to participate in the VYCC.

VYCC Corps Member Rights

Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment
VYCC is an Equal 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.

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.

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 experience 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!
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.