



Youth Conservation Corps Reference Manual



About this Reference Manual:

This reference manual is intended only to improve the internal management of the NPS and is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person. It lacks the force and effect of law.

RITA MOSS

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Core Objectives of the Youth Conservation Corps:



WORK LEARN PLAY GROW

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Authority

The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) will be administered in accordance with Director's Order #26: Youth and Young Adult Programs, Public Law 93-408, and the interagency Letter of Cooperation found in the 1999 YCC Interagency Reference Manual. Note that the YCC is hosted by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The organization and management of individual YCC projects will be guided by program objectives, available budget, and guidelines established by the National Park Service (NPS). Within these objectives, individual program operations, public information, and community relations concerning YCC will be the responsibility of the host site.

Program Eligibility

The law states the program "shall be open to youth from all parts of the country, of both sexes, and youth of all social, economic, and racial classifications, with all Corps members receiving compensation consistent with work accomplished, and with no person being employed as a member of the Corps for a term in excess of ninety days" during any calendar year. The minimum eligibility requirements are as follows:

1. Must be at least 15 years of age before or on the first day of work and must not have reached 19 years of age during the duration of

the program at the host site where they are employed.

2. Must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States, its territories, its trust territories, or possessions.
3. Must possess a Social Security number and have a work permit (if required) before the first working day as a YCC member.

Youth selected for future YCC seasons after a successful first year may be employed as YCC Youth Peer Leaders and paid a 15% higher hourly wage than regular YCC members.

YCC Objectives

The stated purpose of the YCC is to further the development and maintenance of the natural resources of the United States by America's youth. In doing so, the program prepares youth for the ultimate responsibility of maintaining and managing these resources for the American people. **There are three equally important objectives as reflected in the law:**

1. Accomplish needed conservation work on public lands.
2. Provide gainful employment for our nation's youth.
3. Develop in the participating youth an understanding and appreciation of the nation's natural environment and heritage.

These objectives are accomplished in ways that offer YCC members an opportunity to increase their knowledge and leadership skills. Participants

establish a work ethic, learn how to relate to peers and supervisors, and work with others. The specific design of each YCC program may vary depending on the location. **The following are requirements for every YCC program:**

- ❖ All YCC members, including YCC Youth Peer Leaders, must be hired through the NPS Federal Personnel Payroll System (FPPS).
- ❖ YCC Crew Leaders and YCC staff responsible for program implementation may be hired in various ways, including as NPS employees, from a friend's group, or using a task agreement under one of the vetted 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) Program – Youth Engagement and Development cooperative agreement holders (see [Building YCC Partnerships](#)). View a [current list of active 21CSC Master Cooperative Agreements](#). At least one YCC staff needs to be an NPS employee to supervise the youth.
- ❖ The program's organization follows the model below.
- ❖ YCC may be structured as day programs or overnight programs.
- ❖ For further guidance on setting up a YCC program at your site, you can contact WASO_Youth_Programs@nps.gov.

Types of Programs

Day Programs

Day programs provide paid daytime work activities. YCC members live in their own offsite lodging and commute to the site each day.

- ❖ Daytime paid work projects are conducted by the YCC program on NPS lands, or in partnership with another YCC program that may or may not be part of the National Park System
- ❖ YCC members report to the NPS site to begin the workday and onsite supervision must be provided during non-work hours by the implementing site for any youth under age 18.

- ❖ Projects may include periodic overnight work assignments to other locations, such as in wilderness areas, where there may be a need to set up a temporary camp site. Overnight stays must include onsite supervision and provision of meals to YCC members.

Overnight Programs

Overnight programs provide lodging and meals to YCC members four to seven nights per week. YCC members typically live in group housing and are paid for daytime work activities.

- ❖ Federally owned facilities may be used to house YCC members for overnight programs.
- ❖ Food, lodging, and laundry expenses may be included in program costs and incurred by the YCC program, not by the YCC members.
- ❖ Onsite supervision must be provided during non-work hours by the implementing site for any YCC members under age 18.
- ❖ YCC members may bring—and be responsible for maintaining—their own bedding, towels, toiletries, and other personal items for use during the program.

YCC OPERATIONS, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Note that this list is not exhaustive. There may be responsibilities that a site determines is needed beyond the ones provided below. Other responsibilities are also mentioned in later sections, so a careful read of the entire reference manual is necessary to understand the complexities of the program.

U.S. Department of the Interior

- ❖ Is authorized to approve the required forms that need to be maintained and updated (i.e., YCC OMB application and medical history forms, etc.).
- ❖ Maintains an interagency agreement with

the U.S. Department of Agriculture and all the agencies involved (located in the 1999 Interagency Reference Manual).

- ❖ Consolidates the procurement of materials via a central webstore, such as patches, hats, jackets, and t-shirts, which allows for greater efficiency. Sites may also procure items locally.

Washington Area Support Office (WASO) YCC

- ❖ Is authorized to approve and disseminate guidance for NPS sites involved in setting up or managing YCC programs.
- ❖ Plans, develops, and monitors NPS YCC policies and procedures.
- ❖ Provides guidance and technical assistance on YCC programs to regions and NPS sites.
- ❖ Serves as a member of the U.S. Department of the Interior Interagency YCC Committee.
- ❖ Initiates and coordinates efforts to provide YCC opportunities to the public.
- ❖ Collects data on the costs and benefits of YCC programs from regions and sites and submits an annual report to the U.S. Department of the Interior.
- ❖ Represents the NPS in dealings with other federal, state, private, and non-profit organizations on matters related to the planning, coordination, and management of the YCC program.
- ❖ Highlights YCC program stories and successes on social media, nps.gov, and in newsletters through photos, videos, and testimonials.

Regional YCC

- ❖ Provides general support to the operations of the YCC programs in the respective region.
- ❖ Ensures YCC goals, objectives, policies, and guidelines are adequately and clearly communicated to NPS sites and regional office staff.
- ❖ Provides guidance and technical assistance

on YCC programs to regional staff and NPS sites.

- ❖ Regularly evaluates regional program accomplishments and prepares required reports.
- ❖ Regularly evaluates YCC programs in the region to ensure consistency and compliance, and that program goals are being met.
- ❖ Supports funding through various sources.

YCC Site Program Manager

- ❖ Effectively uses YCC services to complement and enhance site operations and programs.
- ❖ Provides general and specialized (where applicable) training to YCC staff to safely implement the program.
- ❖ Is familiar with the procedures for contacting local emergency services.
- ❖ Ensures that YCC members are informed of anti-harassment policies and procedures, understand how to and to whom they can report incidents, and receive the relevant contact information to register complaints.
- ❖ Checks that necessary reasonable accommodations are provided for YCC members who have disabilities, in accordance with the regulations in 43 C.F.R Part 17.
- ❖ Supervises and supports YCC staff.
- ❖ Plans projects and secures funding approval.
- ❖ Documents daily work progress, challenges, and safety concerns.
- ❖ Handles matters relating to YCC uniforms, equipment, and transportation.
- ❖ Develops and implements educational goals.

Other Responsibilities Delegated by the YCC Site Program Manager (these duties may be filled by one or more people)

- ❖ Provides necessary information and training for the completion of projects.
- ❖ Communicates frequently with the YCC supervisor/Crew Leader to ensure YCC members are meeting project goals and objectives.
- ❖ Provides feedback on work quality.
- ❖ Develops YCC work plans.
- ❖ Obtains photos, videos, and testimonials from YCC members for annual reporting and posts about the site's YCC program on social media, nps.gov, and in newsletters.

YCC Staff (one or more individuals, i.e., YCC Crew Leader)

- ❖ Ensures YCC members are informed of anti-harassment policies and procedures and that they know how and to whom they can report and are provided with the relevant contact information to register complaints.
- ❖ Manages one or more YCC members in the completion of their assigned duties.
- ❖ Conducts daily educational, technical, and safety training for YCC members.
- ❖ Communicates the management and educational objectives of each project to YCC members.
- ❖ Leads the completion of projects in accordance with the established work plan.
- ❖ Selects and loads equipment and food for overnight work assignments; tools for work projects; and safety equipment, such as hard hats, gloves, and first aid kits.
- ❖ Is familiar with the procedures for contacting local emergency services.
- ❖ Reports unsafe conditions and equipment.
- ❖ Fosters a safe work environment daily through tailgate safety sessions, and prior to each new project.
- ❖ Ensures YCC members' physical safety.



- ❖ Supports mental and emotional well-being, and achievement of personal and program goals through teamwork and on-the-job training.
- ❖ Completes job performance evaluations of YCC members and makes recommendations for program improvements. The site can identify the frequency. Regular check-ins may be helpful in addition to formal job performance evaluations.
- ❖ Maintains YCC equipment and equipment sheds.
- ❖ Completes a Work Accomplishments Report.
- ❖ Offers formal and/or informal recognition. The site can determine what this looks like.

YCC Admin Staff

- ❖ Enters YCC members into FPPS and maintains timesheets (if the YCC Crew Leader is hired through a partner organization, an NPS staff with FPPS and QuickTime approval access must be identified).
- ❖ Documents daily work progress, challenges, and safety concerns.

- ❖ Supports YCC members with administrative procedures (i.e., onboarding, travel)

YCC Youth Peer Leader

- ❖ Selected returning YCC member (does not serve as a YCC Crew Leader).
- ❖ Sets an example for other youth.
- ❖ Provides leadership to other YCC members.
- ❖ Assists program staff with project supervision and program operations.
- ❖ Wears a YCC uniform (see Program Identification).

YCC Member

- ❖ Attends all training sessions.
- ❖ Shows up on time and is ready for work with required equipment.
- ❖ Wears a YCC uniform (see Program Identification).
- ❖ Completes work assignments as directed.
- ❖ Always follows safety procedures.

PROJECT PLANNING

YCC staff should develop a YCC project statement and justification for their site that explains how the funding will be used for the YCC program, how it contributes to the NPS mission, and what the benefits are to the public. When planning a YCC program, check that you have a work project plan, which is an internal planning document that assists in the development of work projects, environmental awareness planning, risk assessments, and job hazard analysis. Work project plans are the foundation for all planned activities, and include project costs, supplies, and youth hours.

A site's YCC program can have one or more projects. Work project plans may also be reviewed at the regional level to ensure they are appropriate and planned with safety in mind. The YCC staff must complete Work project plans for all YCC members. Some regions may require that a work

plan be completed for each project and reviewed or entered into the Project Management Information System (PMIS); however, it is also possible to complete one work plan for the entire YCC program at that specific site. YCC is typically an 8- to 18-week program (if full-time). It cannot exceed more than 90 workdays (which can be non-consecutive) in a calendar year. Use estimates from the previous year's Work Accomplishments Report as a reference, if one is available.

Regular performance monitoring is essential, and consistent communication is especially important when using cooperative agreements with partner organizations to hire the YCC Crew Leaders. Over time, a site can develop a standard list of YCC projects that can be accomplished year after year (e.g., grounds maintenance for public use facilities, vehicle washing, basic trail maintenance, invasive species removal, visitor services, interpretation programs, historic preservation, fence building, etc.). In addition to these standard projects, the YCC Site Program Manager and other management staff, including (but not limited to) Facility Maintenance Managers, Resource Biologists, and Recreation Planners, should discuss new projects that can be accomplished by YCC members that are appropriate for the season they are working in (e.g., summer, fall, winter, spring). Final approval of YCC projects is determined by each site.

A daily or weekly log can be used for day-to-day recording of YCC activities. This log can aid in the preparation of the Work Accomplishments Report and the Annual Report (see Annual Reporting and Evaluation) at the end of the season.

Because work projects should clearly reflect the NPS' mission, they are a crucial way to educate youth not only on the value of the work to their immediate environment but also on the reason for that site's existence and its relationship to its surrounding communities and other land management agencies. Whether a YCC program is run solely by the site or in cooperation with a partner organization, there needs to be the same quality of understanding of the NPS' mission area,

as well as a range of opportunities provided within the U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Agriculture, and other public lands.

Note, if a YCC member wants to participate in an activity outside the scope of the site's approved workplan and is not part of the YCC supervisor's planned activities for the entire YCC group, this needs to be done outside the YCC program work hours. If volunteering, it needs to be separate from the person's role as a YCC member. Contact WASO_Youth_Programs@nps.gov and VIP_Support@nps.gov for further guidance.

YCC Project Assignments

Acceptable YCC Services

YCC members can be used in almost any capacity (with the exceptions noted below) to complement or supplement existing work, or to complete projects that otherwise would not be completed. Projects that expose YCC members to a variety of conservation, heritage, natural, cultural, research, and resource-related areas will provide broader opportunities for service learning and career path consideration.

Prohibited YCC Services

YCC members are subject to state and local laws and regulations. The NPS provides no legal assistance for misconduct or other violations of the law. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to arrange for legal services on behalf of individuals under 18 years of age. Individuals 18 years of age or older will need to arrange these services themselves.

- ❖ YCC members shall not be used in or assigned to regulatory or active law enforcement activities. They are not permitted to issue citations or carry firearms associated with law enforcement activities; however, they may observe and report problems to host site staff.
- ❖ YCC members shall not be assigned to hazardous jobs, such as firefighting and operating heavy equipment. The use of mechanized tools or hazardous chemicals that require specialized training, such as



chainsaws and lead-based paints, is strictly prohibited.

- ❖ Any use of YCC members for tasks that involve safety risks must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the YCC member's training to perform such work. Special care must be exercised when using YCC members younger than 18 years of age. In these cases, provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as it addresses child labor, apply, as do state and federal labor laws. Adolescent workers are protected by two laws enforced by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL): **The Fair Labor Standards Act** and the **Occupational Safety and Health Act**. Each state has child labor laws that must be taken into consideration (see [Risk Management Policies and Regulations](#)). The Occupational Safety and Health Field Manual provides more in-depth guidance on safe work practices and procedures, and how to identify and report unsafe conditions. This guide is available in electronic format. To obtain a copy, please contact risk_management@nps.gov.
- ❖ YCC members will not collect fees or handle money on behalf of the U.S. government.
- ❖ YCC members will not represent themselves as official spokespersons of the U.S. government or the NPS.

Managing Inside Work

YCC members may be hired to work for a period of time in an office or indoor environment as long as all criteria for the program are being met. They may also work indoors for health and safety reasons at any time, even if they usually work outdoors. If YCC members are primarily working indoors, every effort must be made to enable the youth to connect with their surrounding environment. This helps the YCC members develop a better understanding of the communities they are part of and their roles within those communities. When youth are physically immersed in the outdoors, mental well-being and service-learning that is place-based education naturally occurs.

Building YCC Partnerships

Working with a partner organization can enhance and expand a YCC program. Sites hosting YCC programs can use non-profit organizations to provide program supervision and supplement site staff members. **As a reminder, partner organizations cannot be used to hire YCC members through the use of cooperative agreements.** Working with a partner organization allows participants to gain a broader understanding of how the work connects to other conservation efforts outside the NPS, and it demonstrates the value of working with other conservation groups and how they help wildlife, the environment, public lands, and the American people. Some partnership programs assist state and local governments and non-profit organizations in protecting conservation areas and providing recreational opportunities. Consult with your regional office to determine what partnerships already exist. If there are questions about the financial assistance process, please contact the Financial Assistance office at FA_Strategy@nps.gov for more detailed information on how to enter into and maintain these partnerships.

YCC RECRUITMENT AND PROCESSING

Recruitment

When recruiting for YCC members and YCC Youth Peer Leaders, it is important to consider who your audience is. Determine whether this is a local program, if there will be any travel, and how you will recruit.

Recruitment Period

Recruitment should last several weeks, which allows ample time for selection and notification prior to the start of the program. A [list of current YCC opportunities](#) will be updated on the national Youth Conservation Corps website on NPS.gov each year.

Recruitment Sources

- ❖ Local schools
- ❖ Job fairs
- ❖ News releases
- ❖ Radio/television announcements

Recruitment Tools

- ❖ Social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, X, etc.)
- ❖ NPS.gov
- ❖ Exhibitions and displays
- ❖ Program information shared via mail, e-mail, or newsletters
- ❖ Flyers/rack cards, etc.

Communicating the Value of the YCC Program

Quantitative data that shows how many YCC members participated, total hours worked, and other statistics are important for responding to data calls. Additionally, capturing the qualitative data is equally important to visually show the impact and benefits of the program. Use the photos, videos, and testimonials you have obtained over the years to help show the value of your YCC program and why people should apply. You can also use this [recruitment video](#). Having



content readily available to share with potential stakeholders and leadership also helps. If this is your first time putting together a program, seek guidance from existing sites that have a YCC program. Join the [YCC Community of Practice](#) and brainstorm with one another. This program helps meet the NPS mission and increase public land stewardship. Reach out to [WASO Youth Programs@nps.gov](mailto:WASO_Youth_Programs@nps.gov) for further support.

Waiting List/Alternate Applicants

If one or more selected applicants decline the offer to work, fail to report for duty, or leave the program early, alternate applicants from the waiting list may be selected. To enroll alternates as quickly as possible when needed, all hiring paperwork should be completed in advance.

Applications

NPS sites are required to use the approved DI-4014 OMB Form (YCC Application Form) and DI-4015 OMB Form (YCC Medical History Form). Applicants must complete and submit these forms to the host site of interest either by e-mail or mail. They are available on the national [Youth Conservation Corps website](#) on NPS.gov.

Application Form: This is the initial form completed by a YCC applicant during the recruitment period. All YCC members (including YCC Youth Peer Leaders) must complete this form to be considered.

Medical History Form: This form must be completed by the YCC applicant once selected and prior to onboarding. It is kept at the NPS site in case medical attention is required during the program period. This form is private and should be treated accordingly. YCC supervisors will review all Medical History Forms and inform YCC staff of any allergies or physical disabilities the applicant may have. Refer to Director's Order #57A: Medical Standards Program for more guidance about medical history.

Participation is voluntary; however, consent of the parent or legal guardian is required for all applicants under 18 years of age. Applications from such individuals must have a signature by the applicant's parent or legal guardian.

Selection

In accordance with Public Law 43-908, YCC members may be selected "without regard to civil service or classification laws, rules, or regulations, for purposes of developing, preserving, maintaining the lands and waters of the United States." YCC members "shall not be considered federal employees other than for the purpose of" Chapter 171 of Title 28, United States Code (Tort Claim), and Chapter 81 of Title 5, United States Code (Workers' Compensation), and the System of Records of Notice known as OPM/GOVT- 10 (Employee Medical File System Records).

Nepotism: The relatives of NPS employees may apply to and be selected for the YCC program provided that they receive no special consideration when recruiting and making selections. They must be treated in the same manner as other applicants. YCC supervisors may not have youth supervised by their relatives.

The NPS sites will determine start and end dates and may have different application deadlines based on timing.

After selection, youth should be notified and given the opportunity to accept or decline. If YCC members are terminated or drop out after the program begins, then the vacant positions should be offered to others on the alternate list in the order of the original selection.

Youth Peer Leaders

Youth Peer Leaders are YCC members who have participated as YCC members for at least one season. They may be reselected in subsequent years, as long as they still meet the age requirements, but every reasonable effort should be made to ensure Youth Leaders are returning from the previous season to step into a leadership role. Their payroll process is the same; however, they will be paid 15% more per hour than regular YCC members. Please refer to the YCC pay table that is available through the Interior Business Center and posted on the [YCC SharePoint site](#) each year.

Required Forms Prior to the Start Date

- ❖ YCC Application Form DI-4014
- ❖ YCC Medical History Form DI-4015
- ❖ W-4 (if requesting that taxes be removed)
- ❖ I-9, YCC Enrollee Form, Direct Deposit Form
- ❖ NPS Photo/Video Release Form
- ❖ Any other forms required by HR, IT, or the site

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Listed below are the administrative procedures for the YCC program.

Term Length

Each YCC member should be offered between 320 hours (40 full days) and 720 hours (90 full days) of work during the YCC program calendar year. They can also work less than 40 hours a week, as long as all requirements are met. If a program is less than 320 hours, prior written approval from the WASO YCC Program Manager is required. No

program can be more than 90 workdays (720 hours) in a calendar year, per the law, though these days can be non-consecutive.

Hours

Work hours may be scheduled in any manner, as long as they conform to local and federal youth employment regulations. If the host site is using an alternative work schedule, YCC members may work according to the established schedule as long as they do not violate child labor laws. For example, YCC members who are 15 years of age are prohibited from working more than 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week. YCC members who are 16 years of age or older may work up to 10 hours per day and up to 50 hours per week. **If youth who are 16 through 18 years old work more than 40 hours per week, they must be paid at the overtime rate.**

YCC Member Processing

Host sites must submit time and attendance in accordance with current payroll instructions. Refer to the Interior Business Center guides on how to enter YCC into FPPS and QuickTime that are located on the [YCC SharePoint site](#).

YCC staff must ensure appropriate documents are provided to the designated requesting office so that the individual can input and establish a personnel/payroll master file. Each YCC member needs to be entered into FPPS by the designated appropriate site employee. Note that an administrative employee who has access to FPPS for regular NPS employees will need to request special access to the YCC section of FPPS by contacting the human resources office or the Interior Business Center. In cases in which direct deposit is not practical, checks will be distributed to the YCC member. **All selected youth must have a Social Security number prior to being employed.** See below for more details on time and attendance, leave, pay, background checks, and records.

Time and Attendance

The YCC Site Program Manager or YCC Crew Leader, as appropriate, should record and enter time and attendance of YCC members:

- ❖ YCC staff should work with their site admin staff to enter YCC members into the payroll system as “enrollees.”
- ❖ The system will automatically place all youth in a TAX-EXEMPT status. If the YCC member wants taxes deducted, then the individual must complete a W-4. Remember, claiming “single” with zero exemptions will deduct taxes from pay.
- ❖ If a YCC member is injured on the job, consult the human resources office for guidance on workers’ compensation paid by the U.S. Department of Labor.
- ❖ Leave and Earnings Statements are produced for youth who are paid through FPPS and are available through Employee Express (EEX). YCC members can create a login.gov account to access their pay information. Wages paid on a supplemental check will appear in the adjustment area of the statement when these hours are calculated through the system.
- ❖ Leave and Earnings Statements should automatically be mailed to the YCC member’s official correspondence address unless manually turned off.
- ❖ Designate an alternate contact person for time and attendance processing should the YCC Crew Leader or YCC supervisor be absent during the pay period cycle. For questions, reach out to QuickTime_HelpDesk@nps.gov.

Leave

YCC members are paid at an hourly rate. They are not eligible for any type of leave, including Leave Without Pay, since they are not federal employees. However, a YCC Site Program Manager can allow them to take unexpected leave on a case-by-case basis, but only actual hours worked should be entered into QuickTime. Youth will be paid for



federal holidays if they are in pay status either the day before or the day after the holiday. Those who are required to work on a federal holiday will receive compensatory time or be paid overtime.

Pay

YCC members are paid at least the federal or state minimum wage, whichever is higher, though it is strongly encouraged to pay them higher to be competitive with internships and other paid opportunities. When requesting to offer a pay rate that is higher than the minimum amount, the site should consider local competitive wages for similar entry-level type positions and cost of living. This request needs to be made to the Regional Youth Programs Coordinator to ensure there is budget availability and the wage rate is appropriate. YCC Youth Peer Leaders are paid 15% higher than the regular YCC members.

DOI Payroll Operations also conducts an annual webinar typically in May on YCC payroll processing procedures. For scheduled webinars and further support, contact payroll_helpdesk@ios.doi.gov.

Background Checks

In accordance with the [2015 memo](#), below are the requirements for YCC members and YCC staff

(see the decision tree on page 3 to determine the type of background check needed). Refer to the memo for additional details on the guidance. Contact psimg_inbox@nps.gov with questions.

For YCC Members

There is a difference between a background check and background investigation.

Background check – All YCC members who are working 60 days or more and are 16 and up need to complete a background check. If they are working less than 60 days (includes non-workdays), it is up to the discretion of site leadership to determine if background checks need to be done.

It may take up to 72 hours to process a background check after the individual enrolls and electronic fingerprints are submitted. The YCC supervisor needs to follow up with the incoming YCC member on completing the required enrollment and NBIS (National Background Investigation Services) e-application (as required). The YCC supervisor completes the NPS 10-152 form and submits it to PERSEC or enters it directly into DOI Access, and the YCC applicant completes OF-306. A background check is used to provisionally approve someone to work, which allows them to start working. If they are a repeat YCC member, the personnel security team looks at the OF-306 to review any previous background investigation (if one was accomplished). The Tier 1 background investigation is the full investigation.

Tier 1 Background Investigation – Required for individuals who need a PIV card and who have **unsupervised** access to the following:

- ❖ Unsupervised federally controlled space/buildings
- ❖ Fees or other Government monies
- ❖ DOI networks, applications, or data systems
- ❖ Unsupervised access to children

These checks are required for anyone who will be representing the NPS and are for the safety of all individuals in the YCC program, NPS staff, and NPS visitors. YCC members may not use federal computers if they do not have a PIV card.

For NPS YCC Staff

All federal employees who are YCC staff must go through a minimum Tier 1 background investigation with a childcare background check. The childcare check needs to be completed and provisionally adjudicated prior to them engaging with YCC members. Both checks need to pass in order for the staff to engage with the YCC members. These checks can take up to 120 days or more to complete.

Records

All records are confidential and should be made available to authorized personnel only. YCC Site Program Managers and other employees handling records should be aware of their responsibilities for providing physical and technical safeguards to ensure confidentiality and security, as specified under the Privacy Act of 1974. YCC member records should be maintained in accordance with 36 CFR Chapter 12 Subchapter B and 43 CFR 2.22371. The primary purpose in retaining these records is to ensure coverage of the YCC member in case of tort claims or personal injuries. They must be kept for at least three years.

TRAVEL FOR YCC MEMBERS

Local and Invitational Travel

YCC members are allowed to travel to different sites for day or overnight trips to perform the work depending on the criteria outlined in the DOI TDY policy for local and Temporary Duty Travel (TDY). For both types of travel, a YCC member must be issued a vendor number for any FBMS actions and in order to be set up as an invitational traveler in Concur for a travel authorization (where applicable). Contact AOC_Payment_Inquiries@nps.gov for questions.

Local travel (less than 50 miles) - Does not meet the requirements of TDY travel because of the close distance of the location and typically occurs during normal duty hours. Individuals performing local travel are not entitled to per diem

reimbursement. Travelers should refer to 347 DM 200, DOI FTR Implementing Instructions for DOI's local travel policy.

Invitational Travel in lieu of Temporary Duty travel (more than 50 miles) - Any official travel that is farther than 50 miles from both the individual's official duty station and residence. An official duty station can be a large contiguous area defined by a boundary that is designated as a location that an individual regularly maintains or patrols and would not be limited to a 50-mile radius when determining an official TDY travel. An NPS employee will need to enter the YCC members into Concur as "invitational travelers" and submit "invitational travel" authorizations on their behalf, since they are not federal employees.

Spike Camps

Spike camps are considered service-related work assignments. If a project will require several days of work and is located a considerable distance from the YCC member's residence, the YCC Site Program Manager may arrange for spike camps. Parental or guardian approval for YCC members under 18 years of age must be obtained.

Youth working in the backcountry or camping overnight at their home site are not considered "in travel status" if they are fewer than 50 miles from the host site and do not need a travel authorization. If they are at their home site, the YCC staff should, however, always maintain a backcountry travel itinerary that includes the names of the YCC Crew Leader(s) and YCC members, their locations, and any means of communication (e.g., two-way radios, satellite phone). If you have questions concerning these procedures, please contact the Regional Youth Programs Coordinator or the Regional Accounting Operations Center.

Spike camps may not extend more than 10 consecutive days. A four-day break must be provided between each 10-day camp.

Host sites will provide necessary camping equipment and supplies. A determination will be made by the host site on a camp-by-camp basis as to whether YCC members will be reimbursed for

food and lodging costs or be provided with food and lodging. If YCC members pay for their food and lodging, they may be reimbursed for actual costs incurred.

A backcountry itinerary should be issued to the NPS employee in charge of travel. The itinerary should list all YCC members participating in the spike camp. An advance may be obtained by the NPS employee for the entire group. **No YCC member will receive an advance directly.** *Upon completion of the assignment, the NPS employee will submit a claim for reimbursement on behalf of the entire group. The cost of lodging and food for the YCC members will be reimbursed in the exact amount incurred, and no additional funds will be paid to the YCC members.* Refer to the reimbursement section for more information.

Audit Requirements for Reimbursement

YCC reimbursements (considered invitational travel under the Federal Travel Regulation) follow the same audit requirements as TDY travel. Reimbursements for YCC members made under 54 USC 102301(b) must be claimed on a completed OF-1164 and include the following information:

- ❖ The statement "YCC reimbursement" on the OF-1164
- ❖ An itemized listing of expenses, the date each expense was incurred, description of each expense (e.g., mileage on July 1 from the home site to the temporary site), and the amount of reimbursement being requested.
- ❖ The YCC member's signature and the parent/guardian's signature if under 18 years of age.
- ❖ The signature of an authorized approving official.
- ❖ A receipt for each expense claimed for reimbursement.
- ❖ A copy of the YCC member's itinerary.

For the purpose of reimbursement, each itinerary should include the following information:

- ❖ The YCC member's name.

- ❖ The YCC member's permanent home address or, if the YCC member's permanent home address is a mobile home, the statement, "YCC resides in a mobile home."
- ❖ The address of the YCC member's site.
- ❖ The date(s) that the individual will be participating in the spike camp or travelling.
- ❖ A statement indicating whether the YCC member is authorized to be reimbursed for expenses under 16 U.S.C. 1703 (a)(4).
- ❖ If being reimbursed under 54 U.S.C. 102301(b), a listing of what expenses may be reimbursed to the YCC member and any limitations to the reimbursement.
- ❖ The following statement: "I agree that I have not accepted, and will not accept, duplicate reimbursement for relocation expenses from public or private sources. Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge, no third party has accepted duplicate reimbursement for my relocation expenses."

Reimbursement Policy

The NPS has the authority, and limited funds, to reimburse YCC members for actual out-of-pocket costs incurred during YCC activities. These reimbursements are meant to offset the personal costs of YCC participation and should be authorized on a case-by-case basis. As each site must use great discretion to determine which reimbursements will be authorized, it is strongly recommended that each site create a local reimbursement policy. Parks, programs, and/or regions may establish reimbursement rates lower than federal locality rates.

Additionally, all reimbursements must be made in accordance with current IRS guidelines. The NPS may not create a "taxable liability" that would result in the need to issue the YCC member a 1099. To ensure a taxable liability is not created, reimbursement must be made in line with the YCC member's travel status (e.g., not away from home vs. away from home).

Not Away from Home

YCC members are considered "not away from home" if they live within 50 miles of the work site and can reasonably commute daily without overnight stays. Otherwise, they are considered "away from home" and may be eligible for additional reimbursements. When "not away from home," YCC members may only be reimbursed for mileage (per IRS rates) and actual transportation costs (e.g., tolls, ferries). Meals and lodging are not reimbursable, except in rare cases where government-provided arrangements are necessary (such as backcountry work).

Away from Home

For reimbursement purposes, YCC members are considered "away from home" when their residence is greater than 50 miles from the work site, and they cannot reasonably commute daily to and from the work site without requiring overnight travel or stopping for substantial sleep or rest. When "away from home," YCC members may be reimbursed for mileage (per IRS guidelines), actual transportation costs (e.g., tolls, ferries), and meals (if overnight).

Claiming Reimbursement

There are two ways to provide reimbursement to YCC members, depending on whether they are considered "away from home" and the type of reimbursement process. Reach out to the respective [regional travel help desk](#) with questions.

Form OF-1164 may be used to reimburse YCC members who are "not away from home" or "away from home" while travelling, during spike camps, or for overnight assignments, which should be submitted to their YCC supervisor. YCC reimbursements should be coded in accordance with the Budget Object Code guidance provided by the NPS Accounting Operations Center (AOC).

YCC members may be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses if they submit original itemized receipts. These expenses can include food but cannot include alcohol or tobacco products. The site may set a cap (not-to-exceed amount) on what a YCC member may claim, but for food, it must be below the local per diem rate. The YCC member

must be “away from home” overnight (according to the IRS definition) to claim food reimbursement. Whenever possible, purchases should be made through the government procurement process rather than directly by the YCC member. In all cases, accurate and current records of expenditures must be maintained.

If the YCC member does not have a U.S. bank account, the individual may apply for an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) waiver. Ask your budget staff for an EFT waiver form. The reimbursement process otherwise remains the same. However, instead of a direct deposit, AOC will issue a treasury check.

This guidance allows the YCC supervisor to pay for crew meals and lodging while YCC members are performing work in backcountry areas, and these transactions require special handling.

The following applies to the purchase of YCC member meals:

- ❖ Every receipt for a meal must be documented with the meal that was purchased (i.e., breakfast, lunch, or dinner).
- ❖ Every receipt must be documented with the first and last names of the individuals for whom the meal was purchased.
- ❖ All receipts for meals and lodging must include the first and last names of each YCC member covered and the dates of purchase.
- ❖ The total costs of all meals purchased for any single individual for the day must not exceed the daily allowance for meals.
- ❖ Alcoholic beverages may never be purchased using a YCC supervisor’s travel card, either as part of a meal or separately.

The following applies to the purchase of crew lodging:

- ❖ Every receipt for crew lodging must be documented with the first and last names of the individuals for whom the lodging was purchased and the date(s) of the lodging.
- ❖ The costs of the lodging for each person must not exceed the maximum lodging

allowance by the locality per diem rate published by the General Services Administration.



ETHICS AND CONDUCT

All participants and staff involved with YCC programs should conduct themselves in accordance with the guidelines found in the Ethics Handbook. To obtain a copy of the handbook, please contact your human resources office.

Program Identification

YCC members are required to wear apparel that clearly identifies them as YCC participants. Items bearing the YCC insignia, such as hats, t-shirts, jackets, and patches, should be made available to the participants by the site. Such materials provide YCC program group identification and promote the safety and well-being of YCC members. These materials may be purchased with federal appropriations or other host site funds. The items must be an accurate reproduction of the official

YCC insignia. YCC apparel and products can be procured through the [YCC webstore](#) on the National Service Gear site. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also has access to purchasing items from here. YCC members must not wear an NPS volunteer uniform or any piece of the official NPS uniform.

Termination

A parent or legal guardian should be contacted prior to the disciplinary discharge of YCC members under 18 years of age. Termination must be accomplished by sending a memorandum and supporting documentation to the site with a notification to the Regional Youth Programs Coordinator and the WASO YCC Program Manager. Documentation must include the YCC member's name, termination date, host site name, and reason for termination (e.g., end of program, fighting, drug or alcohol use, foul language, sexual misconduct, voluntary separation) as soon as the termination date is known. If it is necessary to discharge a YCC member for disciplinary reasons, the YCC supervisor must ensure the action has been fair and unbiased. The following reasons may lead to termination, though efforts to address the issues should be documented in writing first and demonstrate appropriate levels of concern:

1. Repeated tardiness or absenteeism.
2. Continued harmful behavior to oneself and/or others.
3. Failure to perform satisfactorily, or to perform safely.
4. Violation of any federal, state, or local law or regulation, including, but not limited to, drugs, alcohol, or firearms.

A YCC supervisor must obtain approval from the second line supervisor in writing before taking any disciplinary action against a YCC member, as such actions should not be taken lightly. Both the YCC member and the supervisor's superior must be notified prior to an action being taken. The Regional Youth Programs Coordinator must also be notified and kept informed of potential developments.

YCC MEMBER CHALLENGES

YCC member grievance procedures and discrimination complaint procedures must be posted prominently in the workplace. See below for further guidelines and procedures in response to YCC member grievances, disciplinary actions, and complaints of discrimination.

Grievance Procedures Policy

All YCC members should be provided with a fair mechanism and timely procedures to register grievances associated with their participation in the program. These guidelines provide for the prompt, fair, and impartial consideration of all YCC members' grievances concerning any procedure or working conditions, including adverse actions, enrollment, and upgrading, by which any YCC members are personally affected.

YCC members' grievances must be presented in writing and directed to the designated YCC supervisor. The designated YCC supervisor's decision will be presented in writing to the YCC member(s) within five working days of receipt of the grievance.

Decisions relating to grievances will be final and without review by higher authority, except when the YCC members exercise their rights to an appeal.

Appeals

When YCC members feel they have cause for an appeal of the YCC supervisor's decision, they may petition it in writing within two business days to request that the case be reviewed by a higher authority.

The YCC supervisor will forward the case, within 24 hours, to the appropriate human resources office, and send copies to the appropriate parties and to the WASO YCC Program Manager. The regional official will review the case and make a decision within seven calendar days after receipt of the appeal. The decision will be final unless the regional official is the one against which the complaint is being filed. In such



instances, the appeal will be reviewed and decided at the Washington Office level.

Discipline Policy

YCC members must conduct themselves in accordance with the rules, regulations, expectations, and goals of the YCC program. Any deviation will constitute grounds for disciplinary action. All disciplinary actions must be documented. Any criminal involvement on the part of a YCC member must be reported to law enforcement authorities.

Discrimination Complaint Procedures

In accordance with Title 29, C.F.R Part 1614, YCC members who believe they have been discriminated against based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, or reprisal for protected Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) activity may file an EEO complaint. Names and phone numbers of EEO counselors and the Regional Equal Opportunity Manager must be posted in a prominent place easily accessible to YCC members.

Bureaus are responsible for processing EEO complaints in accordance with Title 29, C.F.R Part 1614.

If a YCC member reports to any supervisor that they believe they are being discriminated against or harassed by, the supervisor must act, even if the YCC member requests confidentiality. Find more on anti-harassment procedures below.

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Director's Order 16E defines harassment and employee and supervisor responsibilities and the Reference Manual 16E details the precise step-by-step instructions to implement the policy and clearly defines who must be contacted when, the timeframes for responding to an allegation of harassment, what materials must be given to individuals, and how decisions will be made and by whom.

Please note that the anti-harassment policy covers people of all ages and provides for protection for additional groups that are not covered under EEO statutes.

Furthermore, the NPS will not tolerate offensive sexual or nonsexual harassing behavior against any NPS employee, intern, volunteer, contractor, visitor, or other member of the public. The NPS also will not tolerate adverse treatment of employees because they report harassment or provide information related to such complaints. Therefore, the goal of DO #16E is to address any harassing conduct at the earliest possible stage. Supervisors must address any inappropriate and unprofessional behavior as soon as it emerges, so it does not escalate to harassing conduct.

Unlike when reporting to an EEO counselor, supervisors have a duty to act. Supervisors aware of harassing conduct or who are told about harassing conduct must implement the procedures in RM-16E even if the YCC member requests confidentiality.

YCC Program Supervisor/YCC Crew Leader Responsibilities

- ❖ Make every effort to provide a work environment free of harassment.
- ❖ Act promptly and effectively to stop harassing conduct that has been brought to their attention.
- If the YCC Site Program Manager/Crew Leader is not a supervisor, they must report allegations to any supervisor or Employee Relations Specialist who will start the intake process.
- If the YCC Site Program Manager/YCC Crew Leader is a supervisor and they receive a report of harassing conduct, they must start the intake process by documenting the complaint and notifying the appropriate officials as defined in RM-16E. If you are a supervisor, you must take action even if the YCC member requests confidentiality.

All employees and YCC members who believe they have experienced harassment are encouraged to tell the person engaging in harassing conduct that the behavior is unwelcome and unwanted and report it to any NPS supervisor, any Employee Relations Specialist, or the Office of the Inspector General.

RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All safety regulations pursuant to YCC activity will be in accordance with applicable department policy. Supplemental guidance concerning these specific areas of YCC policy may also be developed, as necessary.

Safety Requirements

Job Hazard Analysis (JHA)

As stated in Director's Order 50B, "The National Park Service has a continuing concern about the occupational safety and health of our employees and others who work in the parks as volunteers,

contractors, concession employees, or in any other capacity... We hold the safety and health of our employees, concessioner employees, volunteers, and other Federal, state, and local stakeholders working on lands under NPS jurisdiction to be a core value of the NPS." Refer to this policy for more guidance.

Director's Order 50B clearly outlines safety duties at the WASO, regional, unit, and site level. Superintendents, safety officers, youth supervisors, and youth must adhere to the actions outlined in their respective 50B sections.

Occupational Safety and Health Program

The YCC supervisor must document that they have considered the risks for their program and mitigated the risk appropriately. A variety of risk management tools may be used to determine the level of risk and appropriate mitigation. The tools include but are not limited to a Green Amber Red (GAR), Severity Probability Exposure (SPE), job hazard analysis (JHA), job safety analysis (JSA), or equivalent approved tool may be used to determine the level of risk and appropriate mitigation. Completing this process meets the "risk assessment" requirement on the OF301a form. Tools, templates, and training are available from the designated safety officer for the park, region, or program.

The YCC supervisor is responsible for evaluating the specific job, outlining the potential hazards/injury sources and identifying actions, procedures, and safety equipment to mitigate safety risks to the youth involved in the program. Failure by the program supervisor to provide adequate supervision or appropriate safety training and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) not only violates federal mandates but also increases the risk to the participants. It also may increase NPS exposure to potential violation notices of OSHA regulations, violate existing labor-management agreements, escalate the number of workers' compensation claims, and heighten the potential of tort liability for supervisors' acts of omission. The YCC supervisor is also responsible for continued communication

around safety and risk management, beyond the initial onboarding of the YCC member.

YCC members must observe the same safety regulations, policies, and procedures, and use the same safety equipment and PPE as paid employees. YCC members will be provided all necessary training prior to commencing work in the park or program. When specialized operational and/or safety training is needed, the YCC members will not be allowed to perform the job until all training is completed, the YCC supervisor understands the individual's work capability, and the participant understands the job and its hazards.

All employees, including youth, must not perform work for which they are not qualified or have not been adequately trained, work that they do not feel comfortable doing or do not willingly agree to do, or work that is not part of the service description.

Supervision

The YCC Site Program Manager and YCC Crew Leader are responsible for the safety and health of YCC members assigned to their host site and must ensure compliance with their supervisory responsibilities.

Minimum requirements for supervisors are as follows:

- ❖ Youth must be supervised by at least **one** host site staff member for every ten YCC members assigned at all times while on duty or, if participating in an overnight or hybrid YCC program. YCC Crew Leaders may leave youth in the care of other host site or governmental (i.e., Forest Service) officials if pre-arranged by the YCC Site Program Manager, or in the case of an emergency.
- ❖ Individual YCC Crew Leaders should never be alone with a single YCC member. One-on-one interactions between a YCC Crew Leader and YCC member should be conducted within sight of at least one other YCC member or YCC program staff. When camping, Crew Leaders may not tent with youth, and youth must sleep in same-sex

tents. Crew Leaders must camp within hearing distance of all YCC member tents. A curfew must be set each night and strictly enforced. Camp boundaries may also be set if deemed necessary.

- ❖ YCC Crew Leaders and YCC supervisors must possess a valid state driver's license.
- ❖ YCC supervisors must be knowledgeable of accident/illness prevention methods and procedures for outdoor work activities, and NPS procedures for reporting accidents and related injuries and illnesses.
- ❖ Prior to beginning work activities, the YCC supervisor must instruct YCC members in safe operating procedures for the specific activity, check that those procedures are practiced, and ensure appropriate PPE is available and used by YCC members, if applicable. YCC members must be made aware of proper usage of the PPE and its limitations. JHAs should be used for this purpose.
- ❖ YCC supervisors must be thoroughly familiar with host site safety plans.
- ❖ If the YCC supervisor is not currently certified in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), each work location, area, or group must have one other individual available who is currently certified in both.
- ❖ YCC supervisors must be familiar with risk management tools for YCC activities.



First Aid

- ❖ OSHA regulations state that “first aid supplies should be readily available in the workplace” and cites the American National Standard (ANSI) Z308.1 “Minimum Requirements for Workplace First-aid Kits.” Find more guidance on what type of first aid kit might be needed and the supplies required. Ensure adequate first aid kits are accessible to all YCC supervisors. YCC supervisors must be trained in bloodborne pathogen protection per 29 CFR 1910.1030 in case they will be required to provide care.
- ❖ First aid kits must include equipment for protection from bloodborne pathogens as required by Occupational Health and Safety Act, 29 CFR 1910.1030.
- ❖ Other items, such as creams or lotions for prevention of sunburn, plant poisons, insect bites, and other irritants must be included in first aid kits.

Orientation

All YCC members must receive a safety orientation from the host site. This should be done in collaboration with site staff and/or partners providing technical expertise, such as the Trails Supervisor or the Lead Park Ranger. While YCC members without PIV cards will not have access to internal government systems, the YCC supervisor should take the necessary trainings and cover the points in their YCC orientation. YCC members should also be made aware of the safety plan and procedures that must be followed in the event of emergencies. Procedures need to include methods of requesting emergency assistance from remote locations. Evacuation plans shall be developed, and regular drills need to be conducted to ensure the process of exiting a building or area during an emergency situation (known as emergency egress) is understood.

The *Occupational Safety and Health Field Manual* provides basic guidance across a broad range of topics, including safe work practices and procedures and reporting unsafe conditions. Refer

to the Occupational Safety and Health SharePoint site for guidance on required and recommended trainings, policy links, templates, JHA forms, and Safety Management Information System (SMIS) reporting procedures. As a reminder, YCC members are entitled to rights from the Federal Employees Compensation Act and Tort Claims Act, as detailed below.

Federal Employees Compensation Act

The Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) is a workers’ compensation law administered by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (OWCP). The FECA provides compensation and medical benefits to civil service employees of the United States for disability due to personal injury or occupational disease sustained while in the performance of federal duty. FECA also provides payment of benefits to survivors should the injury or disease result in the employee’s death. YCC members are considered federal employees for purposes of FECA but are not entitled to Continuation of Pay (COP) in the instance of filing a CA-1 (Federal Employees Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/Compensation).

- ❖ YCC members are entitled to immediate first aid. Medical care, including hospitalization, diagnostic testing, and pharmaceuticals, are covered upon acceptance of the claim by the U.S. Department of Labor. Form CA-16, Authorization for Examination and/or Treatment, should be completed by the YCC supervisor to authorize immediate medical treatment.
- ❖ Job-related injuries should be reported on Form CA-1, Federal Employees Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/Compensation electronically in the ECOMP system. YCC members are not entitled to Continuation of Pay (COP-HC160). Job-related illnesses should be reported on Form CA-2, Federal Employees Notice of Occupational Disease and Claim for Compensation electronically

in the ECOMP system.

- ❖ The YCC supervisor submits an NPS Serious Incident Report to the Emergency Incident Coordination Center (EICC).
- ❖ YCC staff report all incidents to the YCC Site Program Manager and Regional Safety Officer and logs the incident into the Safety Management Information System (SMIS).
- ❖ The YCC supervisor should initiate an accident investigation, Root Cause Analysis, and/or debrief of incident, if warranted.
- ❖ After arrangements have been made for first aid or other medical care for the injured or ill YCC member, the YCC supervisor should determine exactly what caused the accident and what can be done to avoid a similar occurrence. The appropriate forms, including the Occupational Safety & Health Administration Form (OSHA 301), should be completed and sent to your Regional Safety Officer. Provide a copy to the Regional Youth Programs Coordinator.
- ❖ If computer access is available, the OWCP and OSHA forms should be completed in the Safety Management Information System (SMIS) to expedite filing and benefits. This is where injuries and accidents are initiated. OWCP forms should be submitted within 10 days (five days for the supervisor and five days for the YCC Workers' Compensation Coordinator) to the U.S. Department of Labor. OWCP claims must be submitted in the Employees' Compensation Operations & Management Portal (ECOMP).
- ❖ View more information about Workers' Compensation on the SharePoint site.

Federal Tort Claims Act

The Federal Tort Claims Act provides a mechanism for people to make claims against the U.S. government for damage, loss, injury, or death caused by negligent or wrongful acts or omissions of any employee of the government while acting in

the performance of their duties. YCC members and staff acting on behalf of the NPS are considered government employees for purposes of this act. Regional Safety Managers should be able to direct the YCC supervisor to the proper contact concerning all tort claims. Sites should also have someone who is delegated the responsibility for tort claims.

Child Labor and Fair Labor Standards Act

The Fair Labor Standards Act requires that participants be a minimum age of 18 years in any nonagricultural occupations that the Secretary of Labor “shall find and by order declare” to be particularly hazardous occupational activities for minors between 15 and 18 years of age, or detrimental to their health and well-being. Other federal and state laws may have higher standards. When these apply, the more stringent standard must be observed. All states have child labor laws and compulsory school attendance laws.

The U.S. Department of Labor prohibited and hazardous occupations for minors in effect either apply on an industry basis, specifying the occupations in the industry that are not covered, or on an occupational basis regardless of the industry in which it is found. YCC member activity is restricted in accordance with specific orders.

The orders in effect deal with the following:

1. Manufacturing and storing explosives
2. Motor vehicle driving and outside helper
3. Coal mining
4. Logging and sawmilling
5. Power-driven woodworking machines
6. Exposure to radioactive substances
7. Power-drive hoisting apparatus
8. Power-driven metal forming punching, and shearing machines
9. Mining, other than coal mining
10. Slaughtering, or meatpacking, processing, or rendering
11. Power-driven bakery machines
12. Power-driven paper product machines
13. Manufacturing brick, tile, and kindred

- products
14. Power-driven circular saws, band saws, and guillotine shears
 15. Wrecking, demolition, and shipbreaking operations

Preparation

Staff Training

The YCC program requires its staff members to participate in training before the youth begin work. YCC staff must be trained in how to recognize and mitigate hazards associated with the work they will be performing before they are exposed to those hazards. It is paramount that the YCC staff who will be overseeing the operations, and the YCC Crew Leader should have a good understanding of the hazards associated with the work the YCC members will perform. The YCC staff training should be revised annually with the input of appropriate staff. YCC supervisors are responsible for the safety and health of YCC members assigned to the host site and must ensure compliance with their responsibilities.

YCC Member Training

All YCC members are required to receive proper training during the program. It is essential that they also be trained in how to recognize and mitigate hazards associated with the work they will be performing before they are exposed to those hazards.

The goal of the risk management portion of the orientation is to prepare the YCC staff and YCC members to maintain personal and group safety while working, recreating, and learning in an outdoor environment. It includes an introduction to the work projects, proper tool use, PPE, emergency protocol, vehicle safety, environmental hazards, basic self-care and hygiene, and backcountry camping. Leave-No-Trace practices are also good to share.

Tailgate Safety Sessions

For YCC members working indoors, it is important to go over any safety concerns that might arise for that particular day or project. For

YCC members primarily working outdoors, the first 30 minutes of each workday should be dedicated to an overview of safety procedures. Comprehensive stretching exercises and a discussion of job hazards should be included in the session.

Stretching is an important part of the preventative safety program for YCC members. It is important to stretch before working, hiking, and recreating. Forgetting to stretch can lead to preventable muscle injuries or worse.

Identifying hazards and safety concerns each day before work begins goes a long way towards developing truly safety-conscious individuals.



Additional Training

All YCC Crew Leaders will be required to have at a minimum a current First Aid and CPR Certification. Note that most of these training courses now cover Bloodborne Pathogens training.

Ongoing Training

Youth often begin YCC with little to no prior field experience. Although a thorough YCC member training occurs at the beginning of the season, every situation and skill cannot be covered during training, and YCC members will need reminders on how to properly perform certain tasks. It is the YCC Site Program Manager's and YCC Crew Leader's responsibility to understand the skill level of each YCC member in the crew in relation to all

aspects of the field. This is accomplished through a weekly (and sometimes daily) check-in with the YCC members and supervision of all activities. If a task is new to youth or is being executed improperly, the YCC Crew Leader must take the time to train the youth in that task. **No youth or employee may partake in a work activity without first being trained.** Sometimes training will have to be conducted multiple times a day or week. The proper and safe execution of a task always takes priority over finishing the job.

Ongoing Risk Assessment

As with training, not all risks can be planned for ahead of time. Risk management is an ongoing process, requiring staff (and youth) to continually reassess risk. YCC Crew Leaders must be trained on how to assess risk in a more formal fashion using the Operational Leadership Principles and the Operational Risk Assessment Process (with SPE/GAR). Refer to the Operational Leadership (Risk Management) Tools for more guidance, including the Operational Leadership training required for all NPS staff, and the “Risk Assessment Overview.” If a situation is deemed too risky to continue, YCC Crew Leaders can make immediate changes to mitigate the risks, including taking a crew out of the field. Weekly meetings give YCC Crew Leaders and YCC staff an opportunity to review risks encountered in the field, develop new procedures for mitigating risks, and address potential risks for the upcoming week. YCC Crew Leaders should empower YCC members to speak up if they have a concern or question so that risks can be mitigated.

Before Each Season

1. Review the risk management section of the reference manual, which provides risk assessment tools that can be used to be prepared.
2. The safety plan and safety trainings must be reviewed and revised as needed by the YCC Site Program Manager.
3. All equipment (including PPE) must be examined to determine that it is in good

condition. Damaged or expired PPE must be removed from service and replaced.

Before Each Project

1. The YCC Site Program Manager must develop a list of local emergency resources and phone numbers, a description of the project and related hazards, safety updates, travel routes, and a list of necessary equipment and tools.
2. The YCC supervisor will develop an agreement with any partners/in-field contacts that should include the emergency response protocol, contact information for the crew, travel plans, and project details.
3. All YCC Crew Leaders must review the risk management tools for their specific project(s) and should complete a new risk assessment or re-assess risk using existing risk assessments when necessary.
4. The YCC Crew Leader must develop an emergency response plan and complete a travel plan. The YCC Crew Leader will also complete a vehicle check and resolve any problems before operating the vehicle.

Communications

YCC Crew Leaders will be provided with reliable communication devices. For example, a portable radio with an extra battery, a cell phone, a satellite phone, a SPOT or in-Reach device. Communication devices must be kept with the crew at all times. At the start of each project, the following items should be given to each YCC Crew Leader: an emergency communications card explaining how to use each device; a list of important phone numbers; radio call numbers; radio channel designations; maps; and addresses for their work area, including emergency response and medical facility contact information.

Vehicle Safety

Use of private vehicles by YCC members for government business is prohibited, and the government will not assume liability for accidents in YCC members' private vehicles. Transportation from the YCC member's residence to the assigned

reporting area will generally be the responsibility of the YCC member. However, if circumstances warrant (i.e., if there is an extensive commuting distance between the work site and the nearest recruitment area), transportation may be provided for members as a group, if approved by the YCC supervisor. Note, these are typically 12-passenger vehicles or fewer. Read more about [Motor Vehicle Operations](#) on the Occupational Safety and Health SharePoint site. The following criteria will apply:

- ❖ YCC members are provided transportation from a pick-up site chosen by the YCC Site Program Manager. From that point, a YCC staff member will provide YCC members transportation to (and from, where applicable) the work site in a government vehicle.
- ❖ YCC members are on duty during the time when they are being transported in a government vehicle to and from the assigned pick-up site to the work site.
- ❖ Each person in the vehicle must have and use a seat belt.
- ❖ All vehicles used for transportation of YCC members must be official government vehicles, and regulations concerning retaining vehicles at private residences overnight must be followed.

YCC members 18 years of age with a valid State Driver's License (no Beginner's License or Permit) may operate a government vehicle at the discretion of the YCC supervisor. If an 18-year-old is permitted to drive a government vehicle, this does not mean that any type of motorized equipment can be operated. A road test on each piece of equipment is required unless prior experience is presented in writing to the host site. If regional policy allows, other motorized service equipment may be operated by 18-year-old YCC members after satisfactory completion of a local training course and a road or field test, at the discretion of the YCC supervisor.

In the case of an accident involving a vehicle operated by a YCC member, the host site must use operational funds to settle any claims resulting from this type of accident, including tort claims.

The following criteria will apply in regards to governing the use of transportation for YCC activities:

1. An understanding and adherence to all traffic laws is required, and YCC members must comply with all applicable state traffic laws and executive orders, including the use of cellular phones and texting while driving.
2. Drivers of federal vehicles must always have a valid license with them while driving. If an authorized driver's license is suspended, revoked, or restricted, the YCC member must immediately notify the YCC supervisor and cease operations of all motor vehicles until such time that the license has been reinstated.
3. Personal use of federal vehicles is prohibited.
4. Any site staff member who may be driving YCC youth is required to take a defensive driving course (or show proof of completion of such a course) before driving with any youth in a vehicle. Defensive driving courses (NSC Defensive Driving II) are available at no cost through the General Services Administration Fleet Drive Thru program.
5. When possible, all steps should be taken to limit YCC members' need to operate a vehicle while on duty. In general, YCC members should not operate government-owned vehicles, but exceptions may be made depending on the nature of the work. If a YCC member must drive a vehicle, a completed defensive driving course through the GSA



Fleet Drive Thru program or through the National Safety site's must be taken first. Please contact your site's Park Safety Officer or Regional Safety Manager for more details regarding how to access this course.

Professional Conduct/Emotional Safety

Most youth and young adult programs emphasize physical safety, and in order for any program to successfully engage its participants, they also need to feel a sense of community as well. One important step towards achieving such community is to create an emotionally and psychologically safe environment.

- ❖ YCC programs and activities should have clear rules for dealing with bullying and other forms of physical violence and verbal abuse.
- ❖ Adults need to model appropriate strategies for dealing with anger, frustration, conflict, and other negative emotions.
- ❖ Youth need to have opportunities to try out new activities without fear of criticism.

Everyone involved in the YCC program must treat one another with respect. Each person has the right to feel safe in expressing their beliefs and ideas. An initial clear structure with consistent open communication fosters a safe and productive environment for youth.

Below are some guidelines for communications.

Make sure communication is clear: YCC members should have a clear understanding of the program rules and structure on their first day of orientation or prior to beginning the program. YCC staff should make it clear that they are open to questions or concerns about the program's rules and structure.

Be consistent, personal, and open: Once youth understand what they are expected to contribute to their work environment, consistent check-ins with each YCC member should occur. A good example is "Friday Feedback." This is a time dedicated to a personal conversation with each YCC member. Each week, YCC Crew Leaders and

YCC members have the opportunity to ask questions and receive feedback on the YCC members' progress. Although this should be a personal, one-on-one conversation, it should take place within sight of other YCC staff or YCC members. It is important to give each YCC member some time without interruption to provide an open and honest environment.

For resources on wellness and resilience for YCC staff and YCC members, visit the [Wellness & Resilience Portal](#), or contact waso_wellness_resilience@nps.gov. It also includes important numbers to call if you or someone you know is in crisis or is being harmed. If you see something, say something before it is potentially too late.

If there is concern of child abuse or neglect, this is often a mandatory requirement to report for most states. Refer to local and state laws for further guidance.

Physical Work Safety

1. While working on maintenance projects, YCC members and YCC Crew Leaders are required to wear PPE. Other controls to abate the risk, such as engineering and administrative controls, should be considered, since there are limitations to PPE. The site must assess the hazards expected in the workplace and ensure all required PPE is available, in good condition, adequate for the intended task, and is used in the correct, prescribed manner for the job. All personnel must be taught how to properly use and maintain PPE before using it. Below is guidance for physical work safety:
 - Appropriate footwear (leather boots whenever using swinging/digging tools, near swinging/digging tools, or near tripping, falling hazards)
 - Hard hat and long pants (whenever using swinging/digging tools, near swinging/digging tools, or near tripping, falling hazards)
 - Gloves (whenever using swinging/digging tools, near swinging/digging tools, or near noticeable hazards)

- Safety glasses (whenever near metal striking wood, metal striking metal, or metal striking rock, or whenever there is a risk of flying debris)
 - Hearing protection (around power tools)
2. Under no circumstance is a YCC member to operate a chainsaw.
 3. Tools must be used in a safe manner and must be transported properly to and from the field and to and from the work site.
 4. Thirty-minute safety sessions (see **Tailgate Safety Sessions**) should be administered by the YCC Crew Leader daily prior to work.

Office or Indoor Work Safety (see **Managing Indoor Work**)

Consider the following safety concerns when managing YCC youth in an office or indoor work environment. This list is not exhaustive. The risk assessment or JHA should address these common issues and how to mitigate them:

- ❖ Hand and wrist-related injuries
- ❖ Dangerous walking surfaces
- ❖ Lifting heavy items
- ❖ Falling objects
- ❖ Hazardous office equipment

Recreation, Camping, and Off Time

Most injuries that take place as part of the YCC program occur during recreational activities, not during work. Often this is due to decreased situational awareness during “down time” by both staff and youth. To mitigate this risk, YCC members are required to do a tailgate safety session before any recreational activity. Restrictions on recreational activities include the following:

- ❖ Youth are not allowed to climb higher than six feet.
- ❖ Youth are not allowed to be alone while hiking, working, or at a camp site.
- ❖ Youth are not allowed to swim without a completed swimming ability proficiency form. At least one staff person must be by the water acting as a “spotter.”

- ❖ Any atypical recreational activities must be pre-approved by the YCC Site Program Manager.

Medication Distribution

YCC Crew Leaders or the YCC Site Program Manager are responsible for making medications available to YCC members, when needed, and must record the date, time, and dosage of all medications taken.

By law, YCC staff are not allowed to administer medications, even over-the-counter medications, to youth. Although YCC Crew Leaders maintain possession of medications and make them available when needed, youth must self-administer their own medications.

The monitoring of YCC member medications ensures there is no abuse or sharing of medications within the program, and that YCC staff are made aware if a YCC member has decided to self-regulate medication without prior approval from a parent/guardian or medical care professional. The abuse, sharing, or unplanned discontinuance of prescription (and sometimes nonprescription) medication can endanger the individuals involved and the entire crew. If any of these circumstances occur in the field, the YCC member(s) involved should immediately be taken off the project and the YCC staff and YCC Site Program Manager should be notified. From there, the parents/guardians of the YCC member(s) should be contacted.

YCC Top 10

YCC Crew Leaders should be familiar with these 10 categories of incidents. They are the most common problems encountered (in no particular order). Refer to the Field Manual 51 for more information on the EMS protocols:

1. Blisters
2. Cuts/Abrasions
3. Strains/Sprains
4. Smashed Digits
5. Bone Injury
6. Head/Back/Neck Injury
7. Medical Emergency (Asthma, Food Allergy,

- Insect Sting)
- 8. Environmental Emergency (Hypothermia, Heat Stroke/Exhaustion, Dehydration)
- 9. Illness
- 10. Health History (Heart, Diabetes, Allergies)

Minor Injury/Illness

The YCC Crew Leader will often be the first on scene for some injuries/illnesses that may be encountered in the field, such as blisters, headaches, and small cuts. In the field, especially the backcountry, infection is the greatest risk for most minor injuries. Careful cleaning and monitoring are key to successful treatment.

Reporting protocol includes noting injuries/illnesses and treatment in your journal and relaying them to the YCC Site Program Manager upon return to the YCC site.

Crisis Leadership

When faced with a debilitating or perhaps life-threatening injury or illness, the YCC Crew Leader is responsible for both caring for the hurt participant within the level of training taken and leading the rest of the crew. Therefore, the YCC Crew Leader must take charge of the situation in a firm, calm way. Ensure YCC Crew Leaders have the skills and resources to act quickly, effectively, and responsibly in stressful situations.

Medical Incidents and Emergency Protocol

It is the responsibility of the YCC Site Program Manager to ensure all YCC staff and YCC crews have proper emergency response training and equipment. YCC Crew Leaders will need to use their best judgment to determine which resources will provide the quickest medical response. The entire crew must develop an emergency response plan at the beginning of each work week and upon changing conditions in the field. An emergency response plan is the responsibility of the local Chief Ranger or Senior Law Enforcement Officer. It is required per Reference Manual 9.

What An Emergency Response Plan Includes

1. A review of available emergency response resources in the area (medical facilities, Search and Rescue teams, life-flight, unit staff, backcountry cabins, equipment, etc.).
2. A list of available communication devices and instructions on how to use them.
3. A review of evacuation criteria and resources.
4. A chain of command and an explanation of the delegation of responsibilities.
5. A contingency plan.
6. If a work-related injury or illness requires professional medical assistance and is not life-threatening, every effort must be made to notify the YCC Site Program Manager or YCC Crew Leader before obtaining this assistance. If the supervisors are unavailable, the human resources office may be contacted for medical treatment authorization. Youth are eligible for worker's compensation benefits, except for COP benefits.

First Aid for Minor Medical Incidents

In the case of an injury that requires care in the field but does not require professional medical attention, YCC Crew Leaders are responsible for administering first aid, monitoring the patient, and documenting the incident. Except in the case of minor scrapes or bruises, the YCC supervisor should be contacted as soon as possible. Depending on the severity of the incident, parents may be contacted by the YCC Site Program Manager or YCC staff. Please see the following list of protocols for responding to minor medical incidents:

1. Administer first aid.
2. Record all first aid given, and complete paperwork if necessary.
3. Monitor the patient.
4. Contact the YCC Site Program Manager as soon as possible.
5. Provide details for the completion of the accident investigation report, if necessary.



Non-Emergency Medical Response Protocol

For medical incidents that require professional medical attention, the YCC Site Program Manager must consult with the parent or guardian for those under 18, unless immediate treatment is required (see above). A CA-1 or CA-2 and a CA-16 must be filled out whenever professional medical treatment is received. Forms can be found in the YCC Crew Leaders' first aid kits. The YCC Site Program Manager or YCC staff will contact the parent/guardian of the patient for all incidents that require professional medical treatment.

Front-Country Emergency Response Protocol

Front-country emergencies are those for which professional medical care can be obtained in less than an hour. In the case of a medical emergency in the front country, Crew Leaders should immediately call 9-1-1 and then administer first aid to the patient, if needed, until emergency units arrive. Please see the following list of protocols for responding to a front-country emergency:

1. Call 9-1-1 or the closest advanced medical resource.
2. Administer first aid until professional care arrives.
3. Proceed to the nearest medical facility, if required.
4. Contact the YCC Site Program Manager, YCC Crew Leader, and parent/guardian/emergency contact as soon as possible.

5. Record all medical treatment given.
6. Fill out necessary paperwork, including a CA-1 or CA-2 and/or CA-16.
7. Provide details to complete the accident investigation report (see [Steps for Reporting Medical Incidents and Accidents](#)).

Backcountry Emergency Response Protocol

Responding to a backcountry emergency is not as simple as calling 9-1-1 and waiting for help to arrive. Rescuers must often respond creatively and develop a more complex emergency plan that may involve long-term care and/or evacuation of the patient. According to the Wilderness Medical Institute, four factors differentiate backcountry, or "wilderness," medicine from front-country medicine:

1. **Time:** The patient is often more than one hour from definitive care, and changes may occur over time to the patient's conditions and needs.
2. **Environment:** Environmental conditions may exacerbate injuries or incidents.
3. **Improvisation:** Treatment, equipment used, and evacuation methods may need to be improvised.
4. **Communication and Decision Making:** Communication with outside assistance can be limited, and rescuers may need to make decisions without advice from medical professionals.

In the Case of a Backcountry Emergency

1. Provide immediate medical attention if the problem is compromising the patient's airway, breathing, or circulation.
2. Mobilize an emergency response team.
3. Administer wilderness medical care and monitor the patient (refer to Wilderness Medicine Field Guide).
4. Develop an evacuation plan (see below).
5. Evacuate the patient.
6. Contact the YCC Site Program Manager or YCC staff as soon as possible.
7. Record all medical treatment given.
8. Fill out necessary paperwork, including a CA-

- 1, CA-2, and/or CA-16.
9. Provide details to complete the accident investigation report (see **Steps for Reporting Medical Incidents and Accidents**).

Evacuations

YCC Crew Leaders will determine whether to evacuate a patient based on a combination of the following:

- ❖ The recommendation from an emergency medical professional.
- ❖ The recommendation from the Wilderness Medicine Field Guide.
- ❖ The risk posed to others in the group.
- ❖ Their best judgment based on the specific circumstances of the situation (e.g., risk posed to others, distance to road, difficulty of terrain, group strength and abilities, outside assistance, and severity of the injury).

Documenting and Reporting Medical Incidents and Emergency Protocol

YCC Crew Leaders are responsible for documenting and reporting to the YCC Site Program Manager all job-related incidents they witness or are involved with as soon as possible, as described below. All incidents will be investigated by the YCC Site Program Manager, YCC staff, and/or Safety Officer.

Reportable Incidents

1. Injury, occupational illness, or death connected with the performance of work duties by employees or other personnel under unit jurisdiction.
2. Public injury, death, and/or property damage related to NPS operations or facilities.
3. Any loss involving equipment, structures, or contents of any property under unit control.
4. Property damage, regardless of the amount of damage, and/or any injury resulting from the operation of unit, GSA, privately owned, or commercially leased vehicles and equipment used for official business.
5. Other property under site control that is

damaged by accident, regardless of the value of damage, regardless of whether it is to be repaired or replaced, and regardless of who caused the damage.

6. Guidance for the above types of incidents are found in RM-50B. They are reported in SMIS and include injury, occupational illness, near-misses, property damage, and occupational exposure. Disciplinary incidents that require punitive actions are not covered by RM-50B.

Steps for Reporting Medical Incidents and Accidents

Contacting Parents/Guardians

The YCC Site Program Manager or YCC staff is responsible for contacting parents/guardians, when deemed appropriate. They must be contacted for all incidents that require professional medical care. Unless authorized by a YCC supervisor, YCC Crew Leaders and YCC members should not contact parents/guardians directly.

Serious Incidents

YCC Site Program Managers must immediately report any serious incident affecting either youth or the YCC program under their jurisdiction.

Serious incidents are the following:

- ❖ Death or serious injury, for which hospitalization is required of youth or staff or of other people resulting from the actions of youth or staff. Death must be reported to OSHA within eight hours by calling the local area office or the 24-hour hotline at 1-800-321-6742. Loss of an eye, amputation, or in-patient hospitalization must be reported to OSHA within 24 hours.
- ❖ Medical emergencies threatening the lives of youth or staff, such as the outbreak of life-threatening diseases.
- ❖ Natural disasters threatening the lives of youth or staff.
- ❖ Serious civil disturbances involving youth in which lives are threatened.

- ❖ Other major incidents that, in your judgment, may result in immediate adverse media attention or public reaction to the YCC program.

Other incidents should be reported at the discretion of the YCC Site Program Manager.

The YCC Site Program Manager must report the incident by telephone to the Regional Safety Manager and Regional Youth Programs Coordinator within 24 hours. The Regional Youth Programs Coordinator must report the incident by telephone immediately to the WASO YCC Program Manager. A written report must follow.

ANNUAL REPORTING AND EVALUATION

Annual Work Accomplishments Report

Upon completion of the program, each NPS site must prepare a YCC Work Accomplishments Report and submit it to the Regional Youth Programs Coordinator as part of the annual reporting requirements from the WASO Youth and Young Adult Programs Office.

Annual NPS Report

Each region should incorporate the accomplishments report into the annual youth and young adult programs report that gets sent to the Washington Office comprised of consolidated information from the site-level Work Accomplishments Report.

The report consists of data obtained from the YCC Work Accomplishments Report, payroll records, accounting records, and a narrative that highlights program accomplishments and challenges.

The following information should be included from the data available:

- ❖ Dollar amounts expended at various locations.
- ❖ Cost per YCC member.
- ❖ Cost-benefit ratio.

- ❖ YCC members, staff, program direction and other costs associated with the program, which are recorded on payroll documents.
- ❖ Types of projects as listed on the YCC work accomplishments report.
- ❖ Total number of applications received, and medical history forms received.

The narrative should consist of project descriptions (with pictures of the youth engaged in the program, youth reactions to the program, and ideas for improvement of any aspects of the program). Photos should include photo credit and consent for release and show youth involved in work, learning, or recreation. Regional reports should include the total number of applicants who applied for the YCC program in the respective region for that given fiscal year and should also note the total number of YCC members who participated in the program for the region.

The need to note what was accomplished during the program cannot be overemphasized. This information is used for data requests from Congress and to support the continuation of the program (see [Communicating the Value of the YCC Program](#)). Email WASO_Youth_Programs@nps.gov with questions.

Upon completion of the program, the YCC supervisor must ensure each YCC member receives a program evaluation, which may be adapted from the standard YCC member program evaluation form. The evaluation provides feedback to the YCC member on their performance, provides the YCC member with a work reference when applying for other positions, and aids in the selection of Youth Leaders in the future.

YCC Program Feedback

Once the program season has been completed, the YCC supervisor should provide each YCC member with a YCC program feedback form for completion. The feedback received will inform future program planning at the site, region, and WASO level.



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