
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS

2016 Annual Program Report





Youth Employment in Parks is a unique employment opportunity for teens. It is made possible by cooperation between the Anchorage Park Foundation, a non-profit which advocates for urban parks and trails in Anchorage, the Municipality of Anchorage's Parks and Recreation Department, and the support of generous funders.



WHAT IS YEP?

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS IS A SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FOR ANCHORAGE YOUTH THAT ENGAGES A NEW GENERATION OF DIVERSE YOUNG LEADERS AS CONSERVATION STEWARDS OF PUBLIC LANDS AND THE ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THROUGH MEANINGFUL JOB TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT, AND EDUCATION.

Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) is a joint program of the Anchorage Park Foundation and the Municipality of Anchorage's Parks and Recreation Department.

Since 2007, YEP has hired over 275 Anchorage youth to complete park improvement projects during the summer. The teens learn valuable natural resource management job skills by building trails, restoring stream banks, and a variety of other park improvement projects. Additionally, as part of the YEP program, teens engage in relevant educational opportunities to increase their civic engagement, environmental awareness, recreational activity, and leadership skills. At the end of the program, Mentorship Week links their new skills to future careers.

Each year, about 25 teens are selected from more than 100 applicants to be enrolled in the award-winning YEP program. The YEP summer program lasts for ten weeks and coincides with the Anchorage School District schedule to ensure opportunities

are available to area youth without interfering with school calendars. For the duration of the summer, these teens work full-time on park and trail improvement projects.

Funding for the teens' wages and project overhead comes from a variety of grants and contributions, both public and private.

YEP IN ACTION

- **YEP creates** employment opportunities and highlights career paths for youth to work in natural resources fields.
- **YEP inspires** youth to embrace nature while encouraging healthy lifestyles.
- **YEP prepares** youth to become effective, contributing citizens and employees through character development and community action skills training.
- **YEP contributes** to the community by improving parks and recreation spaces.



THE YEP CREW

The YEP program provides Anchorage youth an opportunity for employment that allows them to build social and leadership skills to use in their community and their careers.



YEP ACCREDITATION

THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS PROGRAM IS EXCITED AND HONORED TO BE ACCREDITED BY THE CORPS NETWORK.



Anchorage's Youth Employment in Parks was accredited in 2014 by The Corps Center of Excellence. This esteemed honor is granted to highly rated youth development programs that provide participants with opportunities for leadership skills,

job training, community improvement, and the development of environmental stewardship.

The Corps Center of Excellence is a leader of the corps movement. They provide an example for corps programs nationwide to harness the power of young adults to solve some of the nation's greatest challenges-- often while transforming their own lives in the process.

Youth Employment in Parks is proud to have been granted accreditation by this leading organization. This accreditation assures partnering agencies and donors of the quality of the YEP program; further, the YEP program joins a group of nationwide youth development and service programs that have been evaluated to the highest degree.

SKILL-BUILDING

YEP crew members participate in park improvement projects like stream bank restoration and trail building.



PROGRAM STRUCTURE

PROGRAM DESIGN

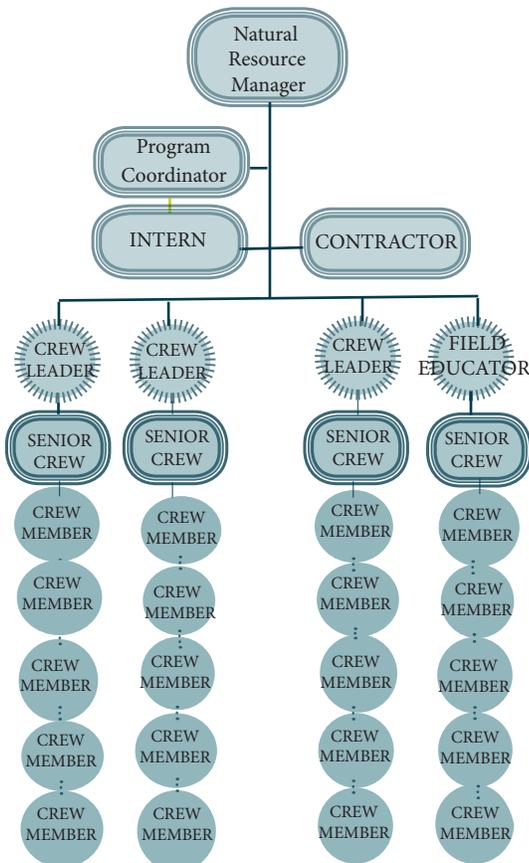
Youth Employment in Parks is modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) program of the 1930s. The YEP program is designed as a service learning program which balances the work product with job skills training, recreational activities, civic engagement, and environmental education.

The YEP program employs staff to design and implement relevant service learning activities that will help their youth realize the meaningfulness of the work and become engaged citizens.

YEP PROGRAM GOALS

1. Create a meaningful first employment experience and career pathway for diverse youth to work in outdoors and natural resources fields.
2. Expose youth employees to the outdoors and connect them with nature to support a healthy lifestyle.
3. Provide youth employees with community action skills and character development so they may become effective citizens.
4. Build community through enhanced recreation opportunities, parks, and public spaces.

2016 STAFF STRUCTURE



Youth Employment in Parks requires a variety of skills and a high degree of organization in order to accomplish its goals. Administrative duties are assigned to a handful of staff members, while project supervision and execution are carried out by the structured crews.

In 2016 the YEP staff divided into four field crews consisting of five youth crew members, a youth senior crew member, and an adult crew leader. An on-site professional trail building contractor managed the project and ensured professional quality work. Along with managing a crew, the field educator also manages the service learning and educational components for the program. Both the natural resource manager and the program coordinator work year round coordinating projects for the upcoming YEP program.

WE REFLECT ANCHORAGE

ANCHORAGE FEATURES A DIVERSE ETHNIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC POPULATION. THE TEENS EMPLOYED THROUGH THE YEP PROGRAM REFLECT THAT DIVERSITY.

In 2016, the YEP program hired 25 diverse Anchorage youth as crew members, senior crew members, and an intern. In addition, YEP hired three crew leaders, and a field educator. To qualify as YEP crew members, applicants must be a resident of Anchorage Municipality, be between 16 and 19 years old, and be enrolled in high school, GED education, or possess a diploma.

The YEP program coordinates with local recreation centers, hiring centers, and the Anchorage School District to attract applicants. Because Anchorage features such a diverse ethnic and socioeconomic population, YEP participants have a wide range of backgrounds.

Interviewers select applicants for the YEP crew that will benefit the most and make the best use of the opportunity. This way, all of the money that goes into YEP supports not only our parks and trails, but family needs and educational pursuits of YEP employees.

Nearly all YEP teens report a very positive, and sometimes life-changing, experience as a YEP crew member. Youth Employment in Parks aims to set teens on a path toward success in future careers, which many of our past crew members have accomplished. In addition to work and social skills, friendships are formed among YEP crew mates that last for years to come.

2016 YEP PROGRAM NUMBERS:

24/3

**CREW MEMBERS/
CREW LEADERS**

8

**HIGH SCHOOLS
REPRESENTED**

9

LANGUAGES SPOKEN

45

**% SPEAK A LANGUAGE
OTHER THAN ENGLISH
AT HOME**

13

FIRST JOB EXPERIENCES

67/25/8

**% MALE/FEMALE/
NON-BINARY**

9

**AVERAGE HOURS/
MONTH YEP MEMBERS
SPENT VOLUNTEERING**

ETHNICITY:

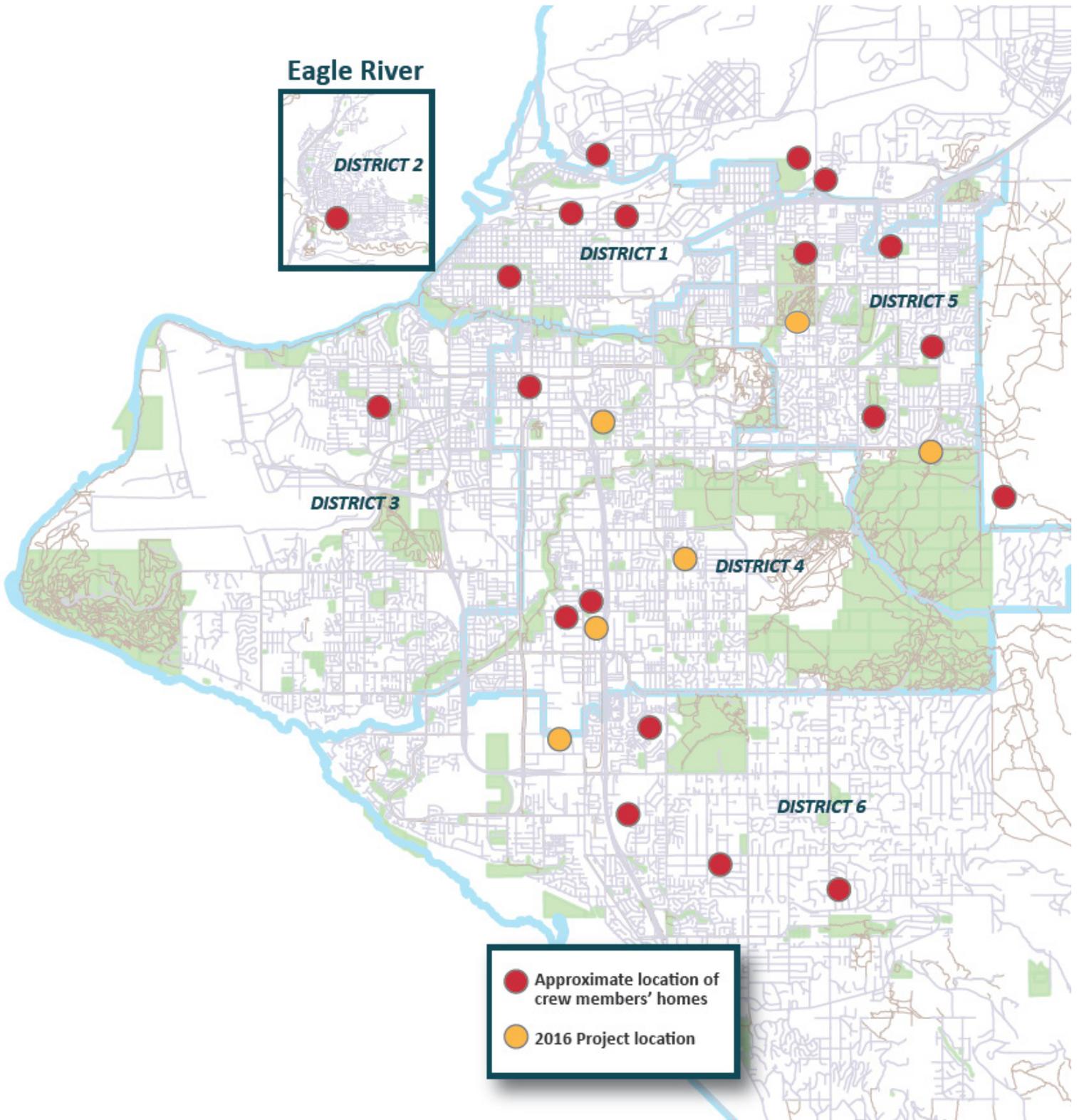
- 40% - White/Caucasian
- 21% - Hispanic/Latino
- 15% - Black/African American
- 9% - American Indian/Alaska Native
- 15% - Asian

FAMILY:

- 28% - have families that are considered low income
- 28% - are from military families
- 28% - live in a single parent home
- 12% - are members of Alaska Native tribes
- 4% - have parents who are unemployed

EARNINGS:

- 40% - will save part of their earnings
- 31% - will spend earnings on clothing and food
- 9% - will spend earnings on basic household expenses
- 20% - will spend earnings on tuition



YEP REFLECTS ANCHORAGE

The teens that make up the YEP crews each summer represent the diverse culture of Anchorage, come from all over the city, and work on projects in many communities.

EDUCATION

THE YEP PROGRAM IS NOT JUST ABOUT BUILDING TRAILS AND PLANTING TREES. YEP TEENS HAVE A WEEKLY EDUCATION AND RECREATION DAY THAT TEACH A VARIETY OF SKILLS TO HELP THEM HAVE SUCCESSFUL CAREERS, BECOME COMMUNITY LEADERS, AND HAVE FUN!



While park improvement work is a major aspect of the YEP program, the program also incorporates a strong education and recreation element.

Youth Employment in Parks gives crew members the tools and stamina to stand out amongst their peers as skilled and reliable employees, stewards of their community, and leaders of their future.

On weekly education and recreation days, and sometimes during daily breaks, YEP crew members engage in group activities and discussions that are tied directly to the projects on which they are working. These sessions cover a variety of topics which emphasize civic engagement, job skills, environmental awareness, and healthy recreation. Crew members have hands-on opportunities to serve the community, apply new skills, and learn about a variety of different occupations, all while having fun! Youth Employment in Parks encourages teens to become leaders and create positive impacts wherever they go.



VALUABLE SKILLS

The YEP program not only teaches the value of hard work, but equips teens with the skills to stand out from the crowd as dependable employees and contributing community members.



EDUCATION AND RECREATION

The Anchorage Waterways Council joined the YEP crew at their work sites to discuss issues relevant to the projects the teens were working on. The teens learned about the problems associated with feeding wildlife, monofilament, water quality, macroinvertebrates, and cleaning up after our pets.



"When Tom talked to us about the effects of goose poop, that really helped me understand why our work at Cuddy Family Midtown Park was important." - Emma Korosei



"I enjoyed learning about native and invasive species." - Holly Reddington



"We learned a lot about habitats and how to protect them." - Ceaser Quiroz

"At the fish hatchery we learned what fish need to live, about their life cycles, and habitat restoration." - Paul Shin



"I liked learning about macroinvertebrates." - Ferris Allen



YEP PROJECTS: 2016

A SUMMER IN REVIEW: YEP CREWS COMPLETED 6 PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS OVER THE COURSE OF 10 WEEKS.

RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK

Neighborhood Trail Connector



Funding:

MOA Funds: \$26,000

Private Funding: \$3,500

Project Scope:

YEP teens spent their first week learning about tools and trail building. For their first project the teens worked on improving a social trail that will provide residents with year-round access to Russian Jack Springs Park and the trail system.

The project consisted of:

- Clearing a 4' wide trail: removing tree stumps, roots, and other vegetation
- Hauling 45 tons of D1 aggregate
- Raking and compacting 500 feet of trail

Project Dates:

June 6-10

CHUGACH FOOTHILLS CONNECTOR TRAIL

Neighborhood Connector Trail



Funding:

MOA Funds: \$51,000

Private Funding: \$41,000

Project Scope:

YEP worked for two weeks on Phase 1 of a two year project that will connect the Chugach Foothills community to the trail system and Far North Bicentennial. The crews helped build 0.7 miles of trail through 1,200 feet of wetland including two stream crossings.

The project consisted of:

- Grubbing existing vegetation along 0.7 miles of an existing social trail
- Laying geo-synthetic woven textile
- Hauling 515 tons of gravel
- Building a 12 ft. sustainable fiberglass decking, timber framed footbridge

Project Dates:

June 13 - 25

MEADOW PARK CONNECTOR TRAIL

Schools On Trails (SOT) Connector Trail



Funding:

MOA funds: \$26,000

State RTP Grant: \$ 34,000

Private Funding: \$4,000

Project Scope:

The German school, Rilke Schule, raised funds for a new trail to be constructed through the wetlands connecting the school to Meadow Street Park. The loop trail will provide the school with access to experiential learning along with physical education opportunities including Nordic skiing, running, walking, and after-school programs. YEP crews grubbed and improved the trail corridor using hand tools to remove vegetation, roots, and stumps. They graveled a 5' wide, 1,190 foot trail and constructed three small footbridges over anadromous fish streams.

The project consisted of:

- Hauling 170 tons of gravel
- Building 1,190 feet of gravel trail
- Building three 12 foot timber framed footbridges

Project Dates:

June 27- July 1

CUDDY FAMILY MIDTOWN PARK BANK RESTORATION



Funding:

MOA funds: \$26,000

Private Funding: \$ 6,000

Project Scope:

The pond at Cuddy Family Midtown Park is home to a large number of waterfowl who have become year round residents. The number and duration of these residents have had adverse effects on the health of the pond ecosystem. In an effort to help with water quality, restore eroding banks, and discourage the feeding of waterfowl, YEP helped the municipality Parks and Recreation Department plant 253 Dogwood and Potentilla shrubs and 113 Iris plants. The area around the pond was fenced off to allow the plants to establish, and educational signs were installed by the Anchorage Water Ways Council to educate the public on environmental issues associated with feeding wildlife.

The project consisted of:

- Planting 253 Dogwood and Potentilla shrubs, and 113 Iris plants
- Bank improvements

Project Dates:

July 6-8

TAKU LAKE PARK

TRAIL MAINTENANCE AND BANK RESTORATION



Funding:

MOA funds: \$51,000

Alaska State Legislative Grant: \$33,000

Project Scope:

Taku Lake offers area residents lake access for fishing and paddling as well as trails for hiking, running, biking, and wildlife viewing. It is located in the Campbell Creek corridor which supports anadromous fish populations and provides nesting grounds for migratory waterfowl. The high volume of pedestrian traffic at this park has led to bank erosion and caused a section of the paved trail to denude into the lake. YEP participated in a two day streambank and habitat restoration class with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game which included a hands on restoration project. Teens helped increase fish habitat while restoring eroding banks, pulled invasive plants, weeded the rain garden, picked up trash around the park, planted native plants around the restoration sites, and graveled 1,200 feet of trail.

The project consisted of:

- Restoring 3 eroding sections of the Lake bank
- Hauling 150 tons of gravel
- Removing over 1,000 invasive European Bird Cherry saplings
- Planting 70 rose bushes, 22 highbush cranberry bushes, 60 birch trees, 15 white spruce trees
- Rain garden Maintenance
- Litter pick up

Project Dates:

July 11-22

SOUTH ANCHORAGE SPORTS PARK

TRAIL MAINTENANCE



Funding:

MOA funds: \$51,000

Alaska State Legislative Grant: \$38,000

Project Scope:

South Anchorage Sports Park is a 65 acre, underutilized green space in South Anchorage. The Parks and Recreation Department put together a master plan, and employed YEP to help out with Phase 1 of the project. The crew worked on a new 2,000 foot gravel trail for the future dog park. They grubbed existing vegetation and smoothed out the tread, laid down geotextile fabric, wheelbarrowed D1 aggregate, and compacted the trail to create a 5' wide loop trail. YEP also worked on salvaging existing PVC piping from the old remote control (RC) track and formed a 7,500 square foot pad for the user group to shape the future RC track on.

The project consisted of:

- Hauling 275 tons of Gravel
- Compacting 2,000 LF of Gravel Trail
- Forming a 7,500 sq ft pad for new RC track
- Waste pick up

Project Dates:

July 25-August 5



"I'm proud of the Taku Lake project because we helped protect fish habitat for future generations." -Ka Young

"I liked working at Taku Lake because I got to do bank restoration and I felt like I was directly helping the fish and the environment." - Sarah Nunes



"I learned to take care of our parks because it brings community together and protects the environment and our ecosystem." - Esmeralda Santos

"The most important lesson I learned was how to communicate and work well with different people. It was satisfying working as part of a team." - Florence Mbabazi



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The YEP program has a positive impact on local youth and our parks. You can support their work by becoming a funding partner.

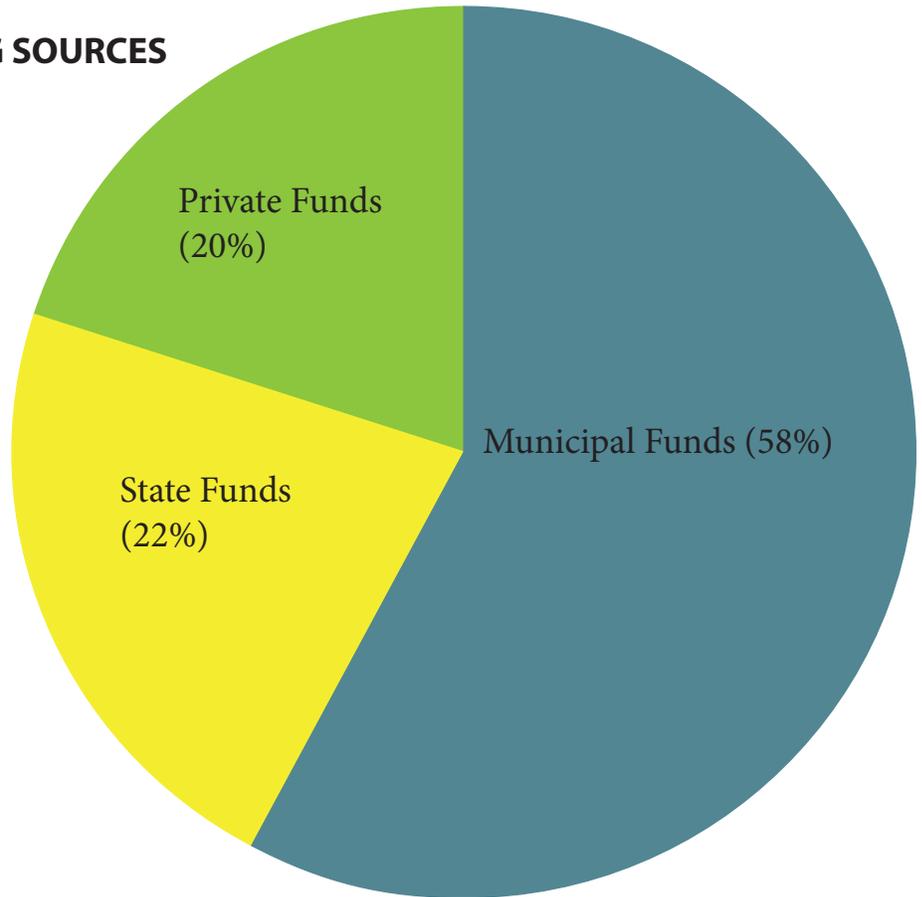


YEP FUNDING

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS IS MADE POSSIBLE BY A COMBINATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING.

2016 PUBLIC-PRIVATE FUNDING SOURCES AND FUNDING BREAKDOWN

- Private Funds - \$92,000
- Municipal Funds- \$267,000
- State Funds - \$105,000
- Total Funds = \$464,000



THANK YOU!

We are grateful to these funders of the 2016 YEP program who have made a difference in the lives of 25 youth and thousands of community members through Anchorage parks and trails improvements.





To learn more about supporting Anchorage's Youth Employment in Parks program, please contact the Anchorage Park Foundation:

☎ 907-274-1003

💻 www.anchorageparkfoundation.org

✉ 3201 C Street, Suite 110
Anchorage, AK 99503

📄 YEP Employment Information

YEP will be accepting applications for the following positions on the following approximate dates:

YEP Field Educator, Jan 16-Feb 13 (1 position)

YEP Crew Leader, Jan 16-Feb 20 (4 positions)

YEP Senior Crew Member, Jan 16-Feb 20 (4 positions)

YEP Crew Member, Jan 16-March 19 (20 positions)



