
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS

2014 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 by 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 225 Anchorage youth to complete park improvement projects during the summer. The teens learn valuable natural resource management job skills by building trails and restoring stream banks. In addition, YEP youth engage in relevant educational opportunities to increase their civic engagement, environmental awareness, recreational activity, and leadership skills. At the end of the program, a Mentorship Week links their new skills to future careers.

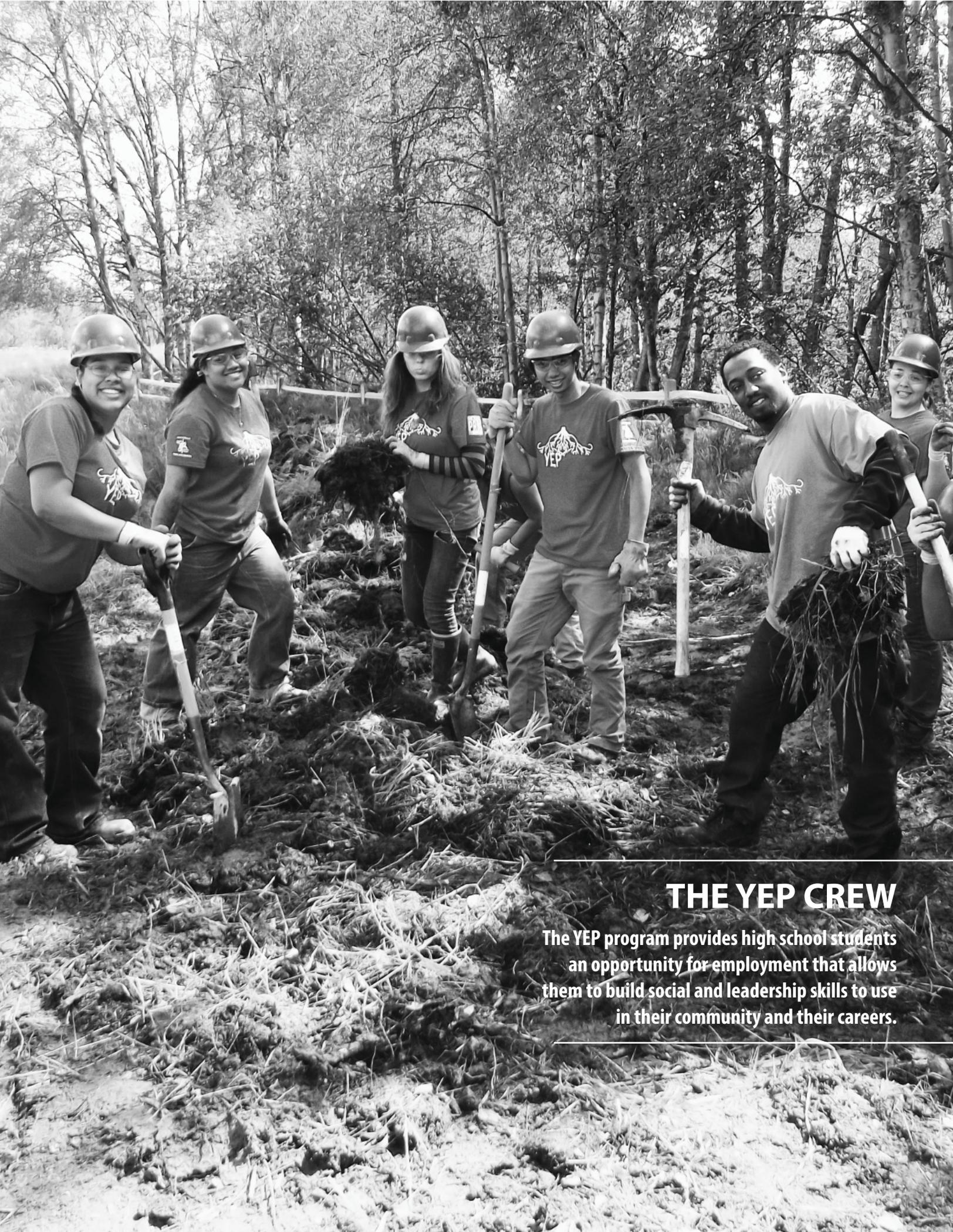
Each year, about 25 teens are selected from over 100 applicants to be enrolled in the award-winning YEP program. The YEP summer program lasts for ten weeks and coincides with the Anchorage School District schedule to ensure opportunities are

available to area youth without interfering with school calendars. For the duration of the summer, these teens work full-time on park and trail maintenance 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 high school students an opportunity for employment that allows them to build social and leadership skills to use in their community and their careers.



YEP ACCREDITATION

OUR YEP PROGRAM IS EXCITED AND HONORED TO BE THE FIRST CORPS IN THE NATION TO BE ACCREDITED BY THE CORPS NETWORK.



In 2014 Youth Employment in Parks became the nation's first corps program to be accredited by The Corps Center of Excellence. The Corps Center of Excellence provides leadership to youth development

programs that support their participants with leadership skills, job training, community improvement, and environmental stewardship.

The Corps Center of Excellence is a leader of the

corps movement, providing an example for corps nationwide to harness the power of young adults to solve some of the nation's greatest challenges while transforming their own lives.

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.

Youth Employment in Parks now join a group of nationwide youth development and service programs that have been evaluated to the highest degree for job training, academics, and leadership building.

A black and white photograph showing two workers in a forest. They are wearing hard hats and pushing wheelbarrows. They are walking under a large, curved wooden structure that appears to be part of a stream bank restoration project. The structure has a corrugated metal roof. The background is filled with trees and dense vegetation.

SKILL-BUILDING

In addition to weekly educational programs, YEP crew members participate in parks projects like stream bank restoration and trail building.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

PROGRAM DESIGN

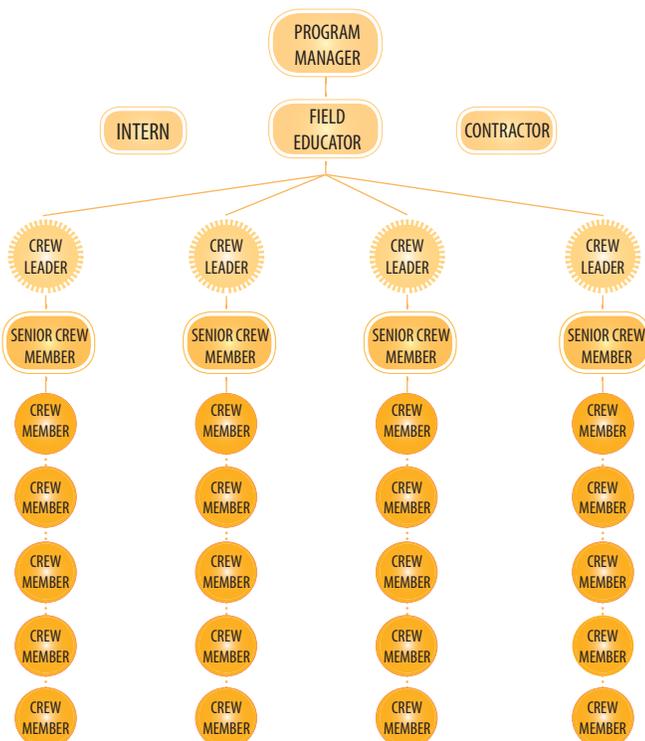
Youth Employment in Parks is modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) program of the 1930s. The YEP program is designed as a service learning program which balances the work product with job skills training, recreational activities, civic engagement, and environmental education.

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.

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.

The YEP staff is divided into four field crews that are made up of five youth crew members, a youth senior crew member and an adult crew leader. An on-site professional trail building contractor manages the project and ensures a professional quality of work. The field educator manages the service learning and educational components for the program, while the program manager works year-round coordinating projects for the upcoming YEP program.

WHO IS YEP?

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

In 2014, the YEP program hired 24 diverse Anchorage youth as crew members and senior crew members. In addition, YEP hired six adults as crew leaders and program staff. 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 or GED education.

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.

2014 YEP PROGRAM NUMBERS:

24/6

CREW MEMBERS/CREW LEADERS

9

HIGH SCHOOLS REPRESENTED

10

LANGUAGES SPOKEN

44

% SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH AT HOME

11

FIRST JOB EXPERIENCES

48/52

% MALE/FEMALE

8

AVERAGE HOURS/MONTH YEP MEMBERS SPENT VOLUNTEERING

ETHNICITY:

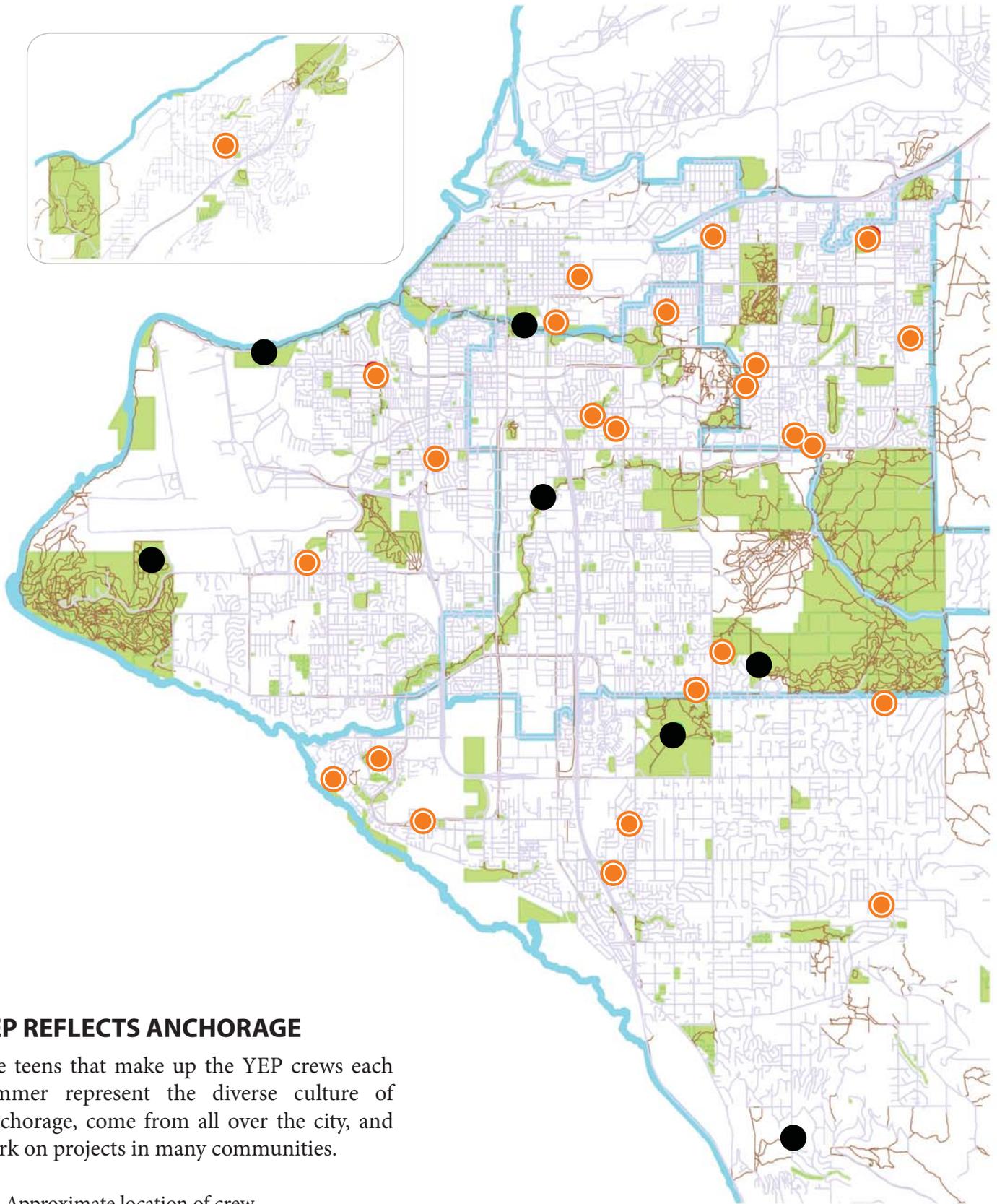
- 40% - White/Caucasian
- 24% - Hispanic/Latino
- 20% - African American
- 16% - American Indian/Alaska Native
- 12% - Asian
- 4% - Pacific Islander
- 16% - Identify with more than 1 ethnic background

FAMILY:

- 32% - have families that are considered low income
- 28% - are from military families
- 16% - live in a single parent home
- 12% - have parents who are unemployed
- 8% - are members of Alaska Native tribes

EARNINGS:

- 64% - will save part of their earnings
- 32% - will spend earnings on clothing and food
- 20% - will spend earnings on basic household expenses
- 16% - 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.

- Approximate location of crew members' homes (2014)
- Project sites (2014)

EDUCATION

THE YEP PROGRAM IS NOT JUST ABOUT BUILDING TRAILS AND PLANTING TREES. YEP TEENS HAVE WEEKLY EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS THAT TEACH A VARIETY OF SKILLS TO HELP THEM HAVE SUCCESSFUL CAREERS AND BECOME COMMUNITY LEADERS.



While park improvement work is a major aspect of the YEP program, the program also incorporates a strong educational 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 educational 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.

YEP PROJECTS: 2014

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





Project Scope:

The Campbell Creek Streambank Restoration project involved planting native shrubs and trees along the bank of Campbell Creek in an effort to stabilize and strengthen the area.

Project Funding:

- APF US Fish & Wildlife Service Grant - \$19,000
- Municipality of Anchorage - \$16,000

Project Date:

June 6, 2014

CAMPBELL CREEK @ New Seward Highway STREAMBANK RESTORATION

CAMPBELL CREEK ESTUARY NATURAL AREA TRAIL CONSTRUCTION



Project Scope:

Youth Employment in Parks crews distributed gravel on-site to create a walking trail. The crews also created drainage ditches along the wettest part of the trail to alleviate water ponding issues.

Project Funding:

- APF Rasmuson Foundation Grant - \$10,000
- Municipality of Anchorage - \$16,000

Project Date:

June 7 - 13, 2014

Project Scope:

The YEP crews improved the walking trail with gravel, and stabilized 140 feet of the lake's bank.

Project Funding:

- APF Little Campbell Lake Legislative Grant - \$36,000

Project Date:

June 17 - 20



**LITTLE CAMPBELL LAKE
TRAIL REHABILITATION & BANK STABILIZATION**

Project Scope:

Trail maintenance included clearing sight lines for increased visibility, and removal of hazardous materials from trail. Drainage was also improved to prevent water pooling along the trail.

Project Funding:

- APF Rasmuson Foundation Grant - \$19,000
- Municipality of Anchorage - \$28,000

Project Date:

June 23 - July 3



**FAR NORTH BICENTENNIAL PARK
TRAIL MAINTENANCE**



RUTH ARCAND PARK TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Project Scope:

Youth Employment in Parks crews replaced failing culverts and provided tread improvements along the equestrian trails.

Project Funding:

- APF Ruth Arcand Legislative Grant - \$57,000

Project Date:

July 7 - July 18



MOEN PARK NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

Project Scope:

Youth Employment in Parks crews cleared vegetation to create 2100 feet of class 2 trail. These crews cleared brush, removed roots, and ensured the trail drained properly to prevent standing water.

Project Funding:

- APF Rasmuson Foundation Grant - \$5,500
- APF Moen Park Challenge Grant - \$6,000
- Municipality of Anchorage - \$16,000

Project Date:

July 22 - August 1

SCA'S YEP ALUMNI CREW PROJECTS



The Student Conservation Association (SCA) provides college and high school-aged members with hands-on conservation service opportunities in virtually every field imaginable, from tracking grizzly bears through the Teton Range to restoring desert ecosystems to teaching environmental education at Washington, D.C.'s Urban Tree House.

This year YEP once again partnered with SCA to give YEP alumni an opportunity to take their experience a step further. The SCA recruited YEP alumni to use skills gained in YEP on more challenging projects with experienced crew leaders on city lands and parks.

SCA Projects in Anchorage:

- Russian Jack Springs Park bridge and bridge approach repairs
- Campbell Creek Estuary Natural Area trail construction
- Far North Bicentennial Park boardwalk construction





MAKING A DIFFERENCE

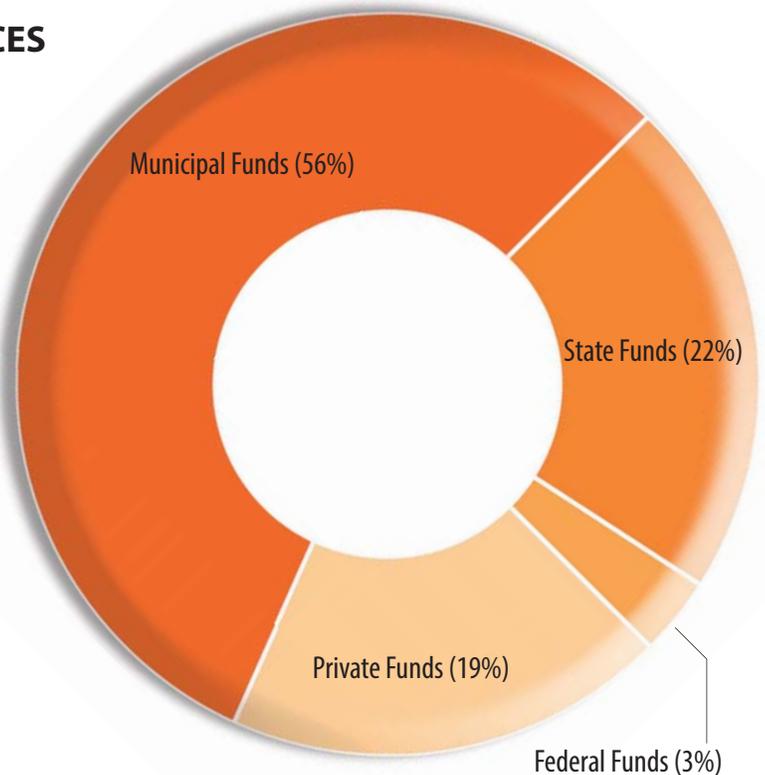
The YEP program has a positive impact on local youth and our parks. You can support their work by becoming a funding partner.

YEP FUNDING

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

2014 PUBLIC-PRIVATE FUNDING SOURCES AND FUNDING BREAKDOWN

- Private Funds - \$71,283
 - Municipal Funds - \$206,813
 - Federal Funds - \$11,709
 - State Funds - \$81,339
- Total Funds = \$371,144**

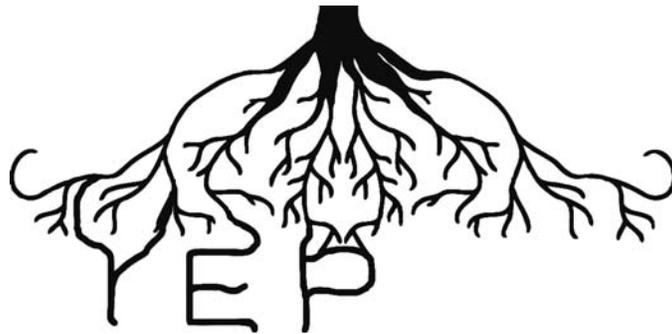


THANK YOU!

We are grateful to these funders of the 2014 YEP program who have made a difference in the lives of 24 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

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