

Northwest Youth Corps & Idaho Conservation Corps: Youth Pre-Orientation Packet

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Program FAQ

What is the Youth Corps Camping Program?

Youth Corps Camping programs combine education and job skill training with outdoor adventure. With the guidance of experienced field staff, youth crew members work on conservation, reforestation, and recreation projects, while developing leadership skills and learning how to work as a team. Crews camp in the field for their entire session, traveling to a new project each week and recreating on the weekends. Participants make new friends, learn new skills, explore the Northwest's wildest places, challenge themselves, and have an awesome summer!

What is the Northwest Youth Corps mission?

Northwest Youth Corps offers a challenging education and job-training experience that helps youth and young adults from diverse backgrounds develop the skills they need to lead full and productive lives.

What is the Idaho Conservation Corps?

Idaho Conservation Corps (ICC) is a state-wide program of Northwest Youth Corps.

What types of projects do crews complete?

We work on a wide variety of projects. The most common project types are trail maintenance and invasive species removal. Other project types include new trail construction, tree planting, restoration site maintenance, historic preservation, fencing, and campground clean up.

Is Northwest Youth Corps a Wilderness Therapy Program?

No. Northwest Youth Corps/Idaho Conservation Corps is a youth and job skills development program which carries out conservation service projects with multiple project partners, such as the National Park Service and US Forest Service. Some youth members do experience positive, therapeutic effects from our program (likely due to the rigorous physical activity and natural environment), but our staff are not trained to carry out any therapeutic techniques. See our disciplinary policy for more details on our behavior management policies.

Can I join NYC/ICC if I have never camped before?

Yes! Northwest Youth Corps/Idaho Conservation Corps participants come to us with a variety of experiences in the outdoors. If our program will be your first time camping, please reference the information on page 14 of this packet, and feel free to speak with one of our Community Engagement representatives.

What are the expectations for conduct in the youth programs?

During the application process, all participants sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining rules of conduct before beginning the program. We also go over the MOU during participant orientation. We take these rules very seriously. If an infringement is serious and involves crew member safety, immediate removal may occur. If a rule is broken that does not endanger a participant or other participants (physically or emotionally), we will institute a written contract to improve behavior and give the participant another chance; a second occurrence can result in removal from the program.

Memorandum of Understanding

Joining a Northwest Youth Corps/Idaho Conservation Corps program means becoming a member of a community. This means you must respect everyone else in that community, pull your share of the load and accept responsibility for your actions. You must be able to trust the members of your team and we must be able to trust you!

During my Service with Northwest Youth Corps/Idaho Conservation Corps, I agree and promise that while engaged in Service activities; camping, direct service or service related travel, I will not:

- Possess or use drugs or alcohol.
- Smoke on the work site or in any undesignated area.
- Possess or use firearms, fireworks or unapproved knives or other types of weapons.
- Participate in an unauthorized leave, absence or swim activity.
- Engage in fighting, threats of violence, or be verbally abusive.
- Steal, vandalize, or damage the property of others.
- Engage in racial or sexual harassment of any kind.
- Participate in sexual activity of any kind.
- Demonstrate a hostile or uncooperative attitude.

What are the sleeping arrangements like when camping?

Youth members sleep in communal 'white-wall' tents or 'back-country' tents depending on their location. These tents are provided by NYC/ICC, and tents are arranged based on self-identified gender. Northwest Youth Corps and Idaho Conservation Corps welcomes members of all gender identities, and strives to make reasonable accommodations for any member who feels unsafe with this sleeping arrangement.

What qualifications are Leaders required to have?

Leaders at Northwest Youth Corps/Idaho Conservation Corps are 21 years of age or older, pass a criminal history background check, have a clean driving record, and are Wilderness First Aid certified. Leaders are recruited nationally and are required to attend NYC's comprehensive leader training, which covers topics such as:

- Leadership
- Paperwork and Documentation
- Behavior Management
- Psychological First Aid
- Medical Policies and Emergency Procedures
- Driver's Training
- Education and the SEED Curriculum
- Weekend Expectations
- Front and Backcountry Camp Set Up
- Time Management and Communication
- Trail Construction and Maintenance
- Cross Cut Saw Use
- Chainsaw Use
- Invasive Species

Leaders are primarily responsible for participant safety. They also help youth master skills they need to complete each project. Leaders likewise assist their team in becoming a hard working community skilled in leadership, collaboration and communication.

Tuition and Compensation

Why does NYC/ICC charge a tuition fee?

NYC is a non-profit organization. NYC programs are supported by project partners, grants from foundations, donations from the business community and gifts from individuals and parents. Our main revenues come from the work that we do for various agencies such as the Forest Service. The tuition helps to cover the educational and recreational costs of our program. On the weekends and after work hours, we are not generating revenue but we still need to provide supervision for the corps members, as well as providing trained and skilled staff to lead educational sessions and recreational activities. In addition, tuition fees help offset the program expenses including liability insurances, the expense of maintaining and fueling vehicles, sufficient tools and equipment for all corps members, including replacing old, damaged or broken field tools and equipment, paying entrance fees to recreational activities and other incidental expenses.

Please keep in mind that full tuition is due 2 weeks before the start date of the program. Tuition must be paid in full at this time.

Are there scholarships available to help with tuition costs?

NYC has developed a financial aid program to assist youth in cases where fees, tuition, or equipment costs create barriers. Scholarships and financial aid are awarded to participants based on financial need. Call the Community Engagement Team for information, (541) 349-5055.

What is your refund policy?

It is our objective to offer the NYC/ICC experience to as many youth as possible. In the event your plans change, we have the following refund policy:

- 29 or more days prior to program: Full refund|
- 22 or more days prior to program: 50% of fee refunded
- 15 or more days prior to program: 25% of fee refunded
- Fewer than 15 days prior to program: No refund

Cancellation notices received after 5:00 PM (Pacific Standard Time) are considered to have been received the next day. To notify us of a cancellation e-mail us at info@nwyouthcorps.org or phone NYC's Youth Services Department at (541) 349-5055. Please allow four to six weeks for refunds to be processed.

In the event of an injury or a family emergency that prevents a participant from attending his/her NYC/ICC session on short notice, we require documentation of the situation from the participant (doctor's note/bill, letter describing family crisis, etc.) and we will evaluate these on a case-by-case basis. No refunds are given for voluntary withdrawals after the refund deadline, no-shows, or dismissals.

How and when do I get paid?

At graduation you will receive an educational stipend check that includes compensation for all weeks of your program. Approximately 2-4 weeks after graduation you will receive your bonus check consisting of bonuses you may have earned.

Any 'draws' made by a participant during their program are deducted from the final educational stipend check. These draws could include, but are not limited to, charges for laundry, store purchases, or any unpaid balances for tuition or gear. Final checks are mailed to the address provided in a participant's online application. If you need to update the address provided, please contact Community Engagement Staff. ***Do not update the address online!***

What is a bonus? How do I earn them?

In addition to the educational stipend, participants have the **opportunity to earn up to \$50 in bonuses a week** for safety and reliability during the program. Bonuses are paid upon completion of the program session.

- \$25 per week for **reliability** (working all hours in the week).
 - This is awarded one week at a time. If you lose it for a week, you can still earn it for the other weeks.
- \$25 per week for **safety**
 - This is awarded one week at a time. If you lose it for a week, you can still earn it for the other weeks.

By being an active, hardworking member of the crew for all weeks of the program, you will earn your *reliability bonus*. If you do not complete all your hours for any reason during the week you will not earn your *reliability bonus* for that week. By acting in a professional and safe manner on and off the job site, you will earn your *safety bonus* each week.

All bonuses are given on a weekly basis. If a participant leaves the program early (unless a return-to-school occurring in the final days of the last week of the program has been coordinated ahead of time with Community Engagement), they will not earn any bonuses.

Will I have to pay taxes on my stipend?

Youth Members are participating in an educational program for which they are receiving an educational stipend. They are not employees and therefore, do not have taxes deducted from their stipend checks. Once in a while, NYC may receive grant funding that requires us to deduct taxes from stipend checks. When that occurs, we attempt to inform our participants in advance.

Can I set up Direct Deposit?

No. Unfortunately, due to the quantity of members who participate in our programs each year, and the short duration of those programs, direct deposit services are not an available option at this time. All compensation for service will be provided in the form of a printed check.

What happens if I leave early?

Members who decide to leave the program early will be compensated for their time spent serving on projects. NYC/ICC will assist in arranging suitable transportation; any expenses incurred will be the responsibility of the participant. Those who exit early may not receive the following potential benefits:

- Bonus Payments
- Academic Credit
- Positive Evaluation

If any member needs to leave our program early due to a compelling personal circumstance adjustments to the above policy will be considered.

Those that are beyond the participant's control, such as, but not limited to:

- A participant's disability or serious illness
- Disability, serious illness, or death of a participant's family member if this makes completing a term unreasonably difficult or impossible
- Conditions attributable to the program or otherwise unforeseeable and beyond the participant's control.

What to bring

What forms of Identification do you accept?

Youth members are required to provide proof of authorization to work in the United States. Participants will need to bring one document from List A OR one document from List B AND one document from List C. Please refer to our Work Authorization Identification List below and contact Community Engagement if you have any questions about acceptable IDs. For example, all you would need to bring is a passport. You could also bring a school ID and a social security card.

LIST A Documents that Establish Both Identity and Employment Authorization	OR	LIST B Documents that Establish Identity	AND	LIST C Documents that Establish Employment Authorization
1. U.S. Passport or U.S. Passport Card		1. Driver's license or ID card issued by a State or outlying possession of the United States provided it contains a photograph or information such as name, date of birth, gender, height, eye color, and address		1. A Social Security Account Number card, unless the card includes one of the following restrictions: (1) NOT VALID FOR EMPLOYMENT (2) VALID FOR WORK ONLY WITH INS AUTHORIZATION (3) VALID FOR WORK ONLY WITH DHS AUTHORIZATION
2. Permanent Resident Card or Alien Registration Receipt Card (Form I-551)		2. ID card issued by federal, state or local government agencies or entities, provided it contains a photograph or information such as name, date of birth, gender, height, eye color, and address		2. Certification of report of birth issued by the Department of State (Forms DS-1350, FS-545, FS-240)
3. Foreign passport that contains a temporary I-551 stamp or temporary I-551 printed notation on a machine-readable immigrant visa		3. School ID card with a photograph		3. Original or certified copy of birth certificate issued by a State, county, municipal authority, or territory of the United States bearing an official seal
4. Employment Authorization Document that contains a photograph (Form I-766)		4. Voter's registration card		4. Native American tribal document
5. For a nonimmigrant alien authorized to work for a specific employer because of his or her status: a. Foreign passport; and b. Form I-94 or Form I-94A that has the following: (1) The same name as the passport, and (2) An endorsement of the alien's nonimmigrant status as long as that period of endorsement has not yet expired and the proposed employment is not in conflict with any restrictions or limitations identified on the form.		5. U.S. Military card or draft record		5. U.S. Citizen ID Card (Form I-197)
		6. Military dependent's ID card		6. Identification Card for Use of Resident Citizen in the United States (Form I-179)
		7. U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Card		7. Employment authorization document issued by the Department of Homeland Security
		8. Native American tribal document		
		9. Driver's license issued by a Canadian government authority		
		For persons under age 18 who are unable to present a document listed above:		

When does my ID need to be submitted by?

Youth members need to submit copies of their IDs upon arrival at Orientation. Members are also encouraged to fax or scan and e-mail copies ahead of time.

What do I need to pack for my program?

You can find everything you need to know about packing in your program's respective gear list! Please refer to the gear attached to your welcome e-mail.

Do I need to bring money?

Most members enjoy having additional spending money to use during visits to the store on weekends. Members will also need some money to pay for laundry services during their program. NYC/ICC recommends members budget \$10-15 per week in the form of either cash or card. If you prefer, the cost of laundry can be covered by a payroll draw instead of having extra cash.

Please note that NYC is not responsible for any personal belongings that become lost, damaged, or stolen during the course of our programs.

Can I store unneeded items at the NYC/ICC office?

Yes! Small items such as IDs, phones, and keys can be stored securely at our office during your program. Other personal items, such as luggage and extra personal items that may be superfluous can be labeled and stored during your program. For additional items, please contact the Community Engagement team before your orientation to insure there is available storage space.

When storing personal items at Northwest Youth Corps' office, the member is responsible for collecting those items at the end of their program. NYC can only hold onto those items for a limited time, and cannot be held responsible for their protection after a program ends. For members who may need to exit a program early, personal items can be shipped to you. Please call or e-mail our Community Engagement Team in order to request shipment of your items.

Items are stored at NYC/ICC at the participants' own risk.

What happens if my belongings are lost or stolen?

Northwest Youth Corps and Idaho Conservation Corps do not claim responsibility for any personal items that become lost, stolen, or damaged during the course of our programs both in the field and at the office. However, we will strive to ensure any items entrusted to our care during a program are stored securely away from any risk of damage or theft.

Transportation

How do I get my son/daughter to the NYC/ICC program they have chosen?

Travel plans should be communicated in advance to NYC's Community Engagement team and enable participants to attend orientation. Many members choose to get dropped off at orientation by a family member or friend. Members may also choose to take public transportation to orientation. For those arriving by bus, train or plane, a shuttle pick up can be pre-arranged for your arrival. Please

communicate all travel arrangements to a Community Engagement team member at least two weeks prior to orientation.

Does NYC/ICC offer a shuttle service?

Yes! NYC/ICC shuttles are available for youth members on Orientation and Graduation day. If your travel plans involve a bus, plane, train, or hotel, we can give you a ride. Shuttles are provided for programs starting and ending in the following locations:

Eugene, OR - 2621 Augusta St, Eugene, OR 97403

Lake Wenatchee, WA - 22976 Lake Wenatchee Highway, Leavenworth, WA 98826

Boise, ID - 5657 Warm Springs Ave, Boise, ID 83716

Exact shuttle times will be communicated via e-mail about one month before your orientation. Please inform the Community Engagement Team if you anticipate the need for a shuttle **2 or more weeks** in advance, if possible.

Health/Safety

Can I bring medication to the camping program?

Yes. It is vital that you thoroughly complete the Medication Form on your application. All prescriptions, except for, birth control, inhalers, and epi pens, are held and distributed by leaders. All participants must be responsible for self-administering prescriptions.

Over the counter medications will also be held by leaders for youth members. Youth members must be responsible for asking leaders for those medications as needed and understand that immediate access to that medication is not always guaranteed. For safety reasons, it is important that our crew leaders are aware of all medication that their participants have in their system. Please discuss your specific needs with your Crew Leader at Orientation.

Will there be any animal encounters while out on the camping program?

Common animals seen while camping: birds, deer, squirrels, chipmunks. Larger animals such as bear and cougar will typically avoid the area you are camping/working in due to the noise and human presence, however, occasionally, we get to see larger animals from a distance.

Do I have to fill out the Medical History Form?

Yes. In order to ensure participant and crew safety throughout the duration of our programs, we require that you fill out the Medical History Form on your applications honestly and comprehensively. This information will be stored securely with crew leaders, and handed over to Emergency Medical staff in the event of an emergency.

Fire Safety at Northwest Youth Corps & Idaho Conservation Corps

Wildfires are an integral part of the northwest forest ecology. However, these fires can be extremely dangerous to anyone that spends time working or recreating in the forests of the Northwest. For this

reason, Northwest Youth Corps/Idaho Conservation Corps has proactively developed a number of methods to help keep -our crews safe.

Youth are taught to respect fire and all safety rules are applied to our activities. Fire safety is taught as a part of our SEED (Something Educational Every Day) curriculum. Safety measures include those required by land management agencies such as shovels and water is located nearby, all fire precaution levels are recognized and followed, and all fires are kept to a minimum size and appropriate for the activity. Our crew locations and activities are monitored closely by administrative staff and the land management agencies for which we work. Each time a wildfire breaks out fire managers assess the location of all agency personnel as well as all Northwest Youth Corps/Idaho Conservation Corps crews.

This assessment also includes plans for notifying and evacuating any crews or personnel who might be at risk. In this way, crews are always moved well before any crew is at risk.

If you would like further information about fires in the northwest (or anywhere in the US) please visit http://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/fireInfo_main.html or you may contact our office @ (541) 349-5055 **If your question is not answered here, please call Community Engagement at (541) 349-5055, ext. 233 (paperwork and general questions) or ext. 236 (money, transportation, gear).**

Hygiene

What should I bring with me to keep clean while not being able to shower every day?

While hiking and doing physical labor, you will inevitably be sweating each day. It's important to bring enough pairs of underwear to get you through up to five days without showering. This will limit chafing and exposure to bacteria. Unscented baby wipes or menstrual wipes are also a good way to get rid of bacteria and to make you feel more comfortable.

You might also bring biodegradable, unscented, travel sized shampoo and conditioner for personal use. The opportunity to use these is dependent upon your camp location, and is not guaranteed.

You might also want to pack unscented baby powder or dry shampoo alternative for hair care if desired.

I'm not comfortable going to the bathroom outside - what do I need to know?

First things first, don't hold it! If you have to go to the bathroom, find a private area and relieve yourself. Holding your pee could lead to a UTI or bladder infection.

If you have to poop and there is no established bathroom, you will practice Leave No Trace principles to make sure you are properly disposing of waste. Oftentimes, this involves digging a "cathole" of at least inches wide and 6-8 inches deep. Keep in mind that you need to *always pack out your toilet paper!* Bringing a sealable plastic bag with you is a good way to make sure that you're able to pack this out.

Odds are you're not the only one on your crew who isn't used to going to the bathroom outside! Although it might feel really awkward at first, remember that it's all part of the adventure and you'll be pooping in the woods like a pro before you know it!

What is a cathole? What are the steps I need to take to successfully dispose of my waste this way?

1. Pick your spot, at least 200 feet away from any body of water, trail, or campsite.
2. Dig a hole at least 6-8 inches deep and about 4-6 inches wide.
3. Make your deposit. Most commonly, catholes are for pooping. Period waste from a menstrual cup can also be disposed of this way.
4. Wipe away. Pack out all of your wiping material - *do not bury it!*
5. Fill in your cathole completely with soil.
6. WASH YOUR HANDS!

At camp, when there are no established bathrooms, crews will often make a 'crew bathroom' (called a 'latrine') for everyone to use collectively. Cat holes will not be necessary when there are latrines or established restrooms to use.

How do I dispose of tampons/pads when I am camping or working without a bathroom?

At NYC, we practice Leave No Trace principles. If you pack it in, you pack it out! We suggest bringing a sealable plastic bag (Ziplocs work well) to collect your used tampons, pads, toilet paper, and/or wipes in. When you get to a place that has a garbage, you can toss it out there.

Another option to consider is using a menstrual cup when you are on your period. This cuts down on waste. Menstrual cups can be reused and can be left in place for up to 12 hours. If using this option, make sure to note that you will have to dispose of waste in a cathole - similar to pooping when there are no established bathrooms.

Some people find that due to all the hiking and hard physical work they do at NYC/ICC, they skip their period entirely during the program. As long as you're taking care of yourself (staying hydrated, well-fed, and rested) and feeling good, this is nothing to worry about - just a normal part of your body adjusting to a big change.

Are bears or other animals more likely to stop by camp or even attack when I'm having my period?

The idea that animals, including bears, are more likely to attack those on their periods is actually an urban (or more like backcountry!) legend. A [recent report](#) by Yellowstone National Park showed that there is no evidence that grizzly and black bears are more interested in menstrual blood or related hygiene products than any other odor. It's much more likely that animals and pests would be attracted to food or scented products, so as long as you follow regular food storage protocols and opt for unscented products where you can, you won't have anything extra to worry about!

I don't want to drink a lot of water, because I'll have to pee more frequently. What should I do?

Drinking water is one of the most important ways you can stay safe while hiking and working. If you aren't hydrated, you aren't taking proper care of your body. Menstrual wipes or unscented baby wipes are a great way to make you feel more comfortable when peeing outdoors. Just remember to pack out your wiping material.

How will I wash my hands?

Hand washing is something that we incorporate into every camp setup. We will have a hand washing station, as well as alcohol-based hand sanitizer on site. It is mandatory to wash your hands before meals and after going to the bathroom!

Academics

Can I earn high school credit by participating in NYC/ICC's programs?

Yes! NYC/ICC programs include structured, accredited educational sessions called SEED (Something Educational Every Day). NYC/ICC does not grant school credit to participants, but we can help participants earn credit by providing information to a participant's school. Our recommendation is based on national education standards and suggests graduates receive 1 full Physical Education credit and $\frac{1}{4}$ Natural Resource Education credit. Ultimately, it is up to the school to decide how to apply school credit, and vary in different states. Please check with your school's counselor or registrar for more details.

To request a letter of recommendation for academic credit after completing the program contact a Community Engagement Staff member and provide the following information:

- a. Participant's Name
- b. Participant's Program
- c. School Counselor or Registrar's Name
- d. School Counselor or Registrar's E-mail Address
- e. Optional: School Name, Address, Phone Number

Processing of SEED Scores and preparation of these letters can take several weeks from the end of an applicant's program. We suggest speaking with your school counselor or registrar as soon as possible so that you can plan your yearly course load accordingly, and they can be on the look-out for a letter from us!

Communication

How can friends and family reach me?

Typically every Friday crew members use NYC/ICC cell phones to make one five minute phone call. Note: this is not available for crews such as the BLP program or other crews that may be working in remote areas for multiple weeks. Weekly updates will be posted to our website with crew location information and a description of the project they are working on.

If there is an emergency and you need to contact a crew member, call the Community Engagement Team at 541-349-5055, and they will get in contact with that crew to get information into the field as quickly as they can. Please know that it may take time to reach participants who are serving in remote locations.

What is a family weekend?

Guardians, family, and friends can visit on the Visitor Weekends, which are typically the second and/or third weekends of a program. Because these weekend sites remain subject to change until the last

minute (especially during fire season), the exact date and location will generally not be announced until the week prior. We understand that this can be inconvenient for planning your visit and invite you to check our [Field News](#) Call headquarters at 541-349-5055 for the most up-to-date information during the program.

Where do I address mail to an NYC/ICC participant?

Washington Programs

Corps Member's Name
Session Name
c/o Northwest Youth Corps
General Delivery
Leavenworth, WA 98826

Oregon Programs

Corps Member's Name
Session Name
c/o Northwest Youth Corps
2621 Augusta Street
Eugene, OR 97403

Idaho Programs

Corps Member's Name
Session Name
c/o Idaho Conservation Corps
PO Box 5839
Boise, ID 83705

Youth Corps Camping: A Day in the Life.

5:30-6:00 AM - Wake up! Eat breakfast and get ready for the day

6:30 AM - Everyone ready to go (either in vehicle or on trail) to commute to worksite

7:00 AM - Once you've arrived at the worksite, it's time for stretch and safety circle. This is the time for everyone to talk about today's plan and any potential safety hazards.

7:15 AM - Work starts for the day. Examples of conservation projects could include: trail maintenance or building new trail, removing invasive plant species, planting trees, constructing bridges, or land boundary projects

10:30 AM - First break (15 mins)

12:00 PM - Lunch break (30 mins)

2:00 PM - Second break (15 mins)

3:30 PM - "Tool count" time! Everyone brings all of the tools together to cache (leave at worksite) or bring back to camp/the vehicle with them.

4:00 PM - Arrive back to camp. Evening chores begin, including: writing crew journals, cooking dinner, tool maintenance, etc.

5:00 PM - Eat dinner and do the dishes!

6:00 PM - SEED ("Something Educational Every Day") lesson, where topics range from the water cycle, to outdoor skills, to plant identification, to career skills

7:00 PM - Free time or crew bonding activities

9:00 PM – Lights Out. Bed time.