

SONOMA COUNTY SUMMER YOUTH ECOLOGY CORPS

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP • YOUTH EMPLOYMENT • ECONOMIC STIMULUS

You can launch your own Summer Youth Ecology Corps!

The Sonoma County Summer Youth Ecology Corps (SYEC) is a new effort, conducted in the summer of 2009 and supported by a partnership of the Sonoma County Water Agency, the Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board and Youth Council, the Sonoma County Office of Education, New Ways to Work, and a number of governmental and private non-profit organizations with educational or environmental missions. The SYEC employed more than 300 youth ages 14-24 to work in crews on habitat restoration, flood protection, and conservation-related projects for six weeks over the summer.

How do I start a Summer Youth Ecology Corps in my area?

To get started, simply contact New Ways to Work, the facilitating partner for the SYEC, and they will work with the Sonoma County Water Agency, the Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board, and the Sonoma County Office of Education to help identify and connect with potential partners in your area.

How do I pay for the Summer Youth Ecology Corps?

Communities can explore leveraging existing funding sources or apply for new funding to support a SYEC. In Sonoma County, the effort was supported by water district flood maintenance funding, Workforce Investment Act funding (ARRA Summer Jobs allocation), and local contributions. You can also explore other youth or ecology focused funding, along with economic development and workforce development sources focused on green jobs, or public funds targeted to assist disadvantaged individuals.

Who do I involve in the Summer Youth Ecology Corps effort?

The SYEC is a partnership effort, leveraging the common ground found in the missions of a number of key partners. Core partners include your local Water Agency, the Workforce Investment Board and Youth Council, and the County Office of Education. Identifying a visible and respected civic leader with a strong ecological and/or youth work background to take the lead on launching the SYEC is invaluable, as is engaging a facilitating intermediary to help coordinate the partners and support the program. Key to implementation are other ecological or conservation-related organizations and agencies and youth workforce development organizations. Elected officials, other community leaders, and representatives from education, probation, juvenile justice, social services, foster care, gang diversion, and other youth-focused institutions should be engaged to elicit their support and involvement early in the process.

Why are the Summer Youth Ecology Corps partners willing to help you?

There is strength in numbers. The SYEC team is looking for partners in other California communities to join us in our efforts to secure a stable funding base for SYEC programs across the state, provide meaningful summer employment for youth and young adults, and interest a new generation in working in our field.

Where do I go to learn more?

New Ways to Work is compiling a start up guide for agencies interested in launching a SYEC in their community. New Ways is also available to provide technical assistance and direct support to those interested in implementing a Summer Youth Ecology Corps program.

For more information, please contact:

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