



U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

Youth Employment Guide



PLAY
OUTDOOR RECREATION



LEARN
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



SERVE
VOLUNTEERISM



CAREERS IN CONSERVATION



WORK
ENTRY-LEVEL



WORK
TRAINING



WORK
DISCOVERY





The mission of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Guide to Youth Employment Programs

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Growing the Next Generation of Wildlife Stewards

A variety of initiatives within the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS, Refuge System), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS, Service), and the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI, Department) are focused on engaging diverse youth in wildlife conservation and public land management. Multiple recommendations outlined in *Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation* strive to enhance the relevance of the Refuge System and the Service to wider demographics—specifically, audiences that are more racially, ethnically, geographically, and socioeconomically diverse. The Service Directorate’s diversity and inclusion efforts also highlight diversity and engagement of youth. Secretary of the Interior Jewell and her predecessor made engagement of the nation’s youth a Department priority.

These initiatives have compelled front line project leaders and supervisors in the Service to contend with an array of new programs and regulations. The resulting complex collection of hiring authorities, financial assistance agreements, and budget line items vary widely from region to region—initially without detailed national guidance offered. This guide is designed to provide that guidance and help navigate these complexities to more efficiently and effectively grow a diverse and competitive workforce poised to take on the conservation challenges of the future.

Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation

Engaging diverse youth in a meaningful way at a program level in the Refuge System is addressed in many of the recommendations made in the *Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation*, an updated vision for the future of our National Wildlife Refuge System. Developed in 2011 by Service employees in partnership with stakeholders, this vision charts the course for the Refuge System’s next decade.

The third chapter of *Conserving the Future*, “Leading Conservation into the Future,” is devoted to leadership and organizational excellence. It endorses “deliberately developing a diverse, inclusive, competent, and caring workforce that will commit to conservation, embrace the responsibility of public service, and succeed in realizing this in effective, efficient, and innovative ways.” The document also emphasizes reaching new audiences in urban communities and through our volunteer and partnership activities. For example, the goal of the Urban Wildlife Refuge Program is to engage surrounding urban communities in wildlife conservation as partners. Engaging youth from the communities surrounding an existing urban refuge or through an Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership are both excellent paths that may lead to becoming an asset to the community, developing relationships with diverse populations, and fostering a conservation ethic in both youth and their families.

Diversity and Inclusion Efforts

The FY 2015-2019 Diversity Plan provides clearer strategic activities and action items to guide our efforts in making the Service a leader in attaining and sustaining a high-performing inclusive workforce that embraces diversity and empowers all employees to achieve their full potential. I want to reemphasize my personal commitment to provide the ongoing resources of time, money, and human resources needed to ensure that diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity become an integral part of the way we conduct our day-to-day activities.

[Diversity & Inclusion Implementation Plan FY 2015-2019](#)

Department of the Interior Youth in the Great Outdoors Initiative

Started in 2010 by the previous Secretary of the Interior and expanded by Secretary Sally Jewell, the DOI Youth in the Great Outdoors (YGO) initiative continues to be a critical strategy for achieving the Service's mission. Secretary Jewell has identified four key goals for youth programming under the initiative (see below), all of which are in line with the efforts the Service is pursuing to meaningfully engage America's youth in the outdoors.

1. **Play:** Develop and/or enhance outdoor recreation partnerships in 50 cities over the next four years to create new, systemic opportunities for outdoor play for more than 10 million young people.
2. **Learn:** Provide educational opportunities to at least 10 million of the nation's K-12 student population annually. In addition to welcoming students into nature's classroom, Interior is developing and strengthening new online education resources, to reach more students.
3. **Serve:** Engage one million volunteers annually on public lands, effectively tripling the numbers currently within the DOI. In order to achieve the volunteer goal, The Department of Interior will place a renewed emphasis on volunteer coordination and management.
4. **Work:** Develop the next generation of lifelong conservation stewards, and ensure our own skilled and diverse workforce. DOI will provide 100,000 work and training opportunities to young people within its bureaus and through public-private partnerships.

This guide primarily focuses on the "Work" component of the Youth in the Great Outdoors initiative.

References

[Youth in the Great Outdoors 2013 Annual Report](#)

Youth Engagement Continuum

The elements of the DOI Youth in the Great Outdoors Initiative—play, learn, serve, work—are presented below in a conceptual view of the programs the Service strategically uses to grow a diverse and inclusive workforce. Starting on the left-hand side, Play, Learn and Serve activities encourage children, families, and youth to engage as early as possible in nature-based activities. Starting on the right, through three types of Work opportunities, young people, particularly from diverse backgrounds, can develop the skills and experience necessary to gain permanent employment. Youth interested in conservation careers may start their journey at any point along this continuum, and regardless of where they enter our programs need to be integrated to help us and them find their unique place in wildlife conservation.



Play/Learn/Serve

The Service offers an array of Play, Learn, and Serve programs that may spark youth into pursuing a career in wildlife conservation. These experiences are typically hands-on learning or service experiences targeted at school-aged children (K–12), schools, community groups, and families. A few examples include: 4-H, Boy Scouts, Eagle Scouts, Girl Scouts, work-study programs, school visits, environmental education programs, service learning programs, special school projects, Friends groups, and volunteer opportunities.



Play – Outdoor Recreation

Offering outdoor recreation opportunities to new youth audiences allows the Service to help spark an interest in nature and encourages children to develop an academic interest in natural resources to help prepare them for wildlife careers. A few Service programs representing the Play component of the youth ladder, which are sparking new audiences using innovative ways, are spotlighted below.



Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership

The Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership, born out *Conserving the Future*, combines program elements of the youth ladder and presents them to urban audiences. Here's an example that shows how one partnership is incorporating the Play aspect of the initiative.

Forest Preserves of Cook County Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership (Chicago, IL): This partnership focuses on creating a ladder of nature learning and engagement opportunities that starts in urban neighborhoods and expands to the forest preserves, and ultimately, to refuges. It connects to its target audiences with nature-based presentations (birds and habitat restoration), guided bird and nature walks, field trips, outdoor activities, and restoration workdays. The partnership is assisted by hiring youth from target communities to conduct outreach activities and work in restoration projects.



Other partners include [Forest Preserves of Cook County](#), [Audubon Chicago Region](#), and [Eden Place Nature Center](#). More partnerships are listed on the [Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership website](#).



Hands-on Nature Anarchy Zone (Ithaca, NY)

With seed money from the Service in 2012, 2013, and 2014 [Earth Play Design](#) in Ithaca, NY created a hands-on nature area for the community. The Hands-on-Nature Anarchy Zone invites visitors to “take it to the next level” and dig for worms, play with water sand, and clay, build forts out of straw bales and stumps, climb trees, and more. In the process visitors get muddy, wet, and dirty while exploring their connection to nature.



Play-Outdoor Recreation Resources

Outdoor Nation
Urban Hub



Learn – Environmental Education

The Learn component of the youth ladder encompasses all our environmental education programs targeted at school children from kindergarten to high school. These programs not only typically provide outdoor experiences, but they help build the cognitive and stewardship skills necessary for youth to understand and tackle current and future wildlife conservation challenges. A few Learn component programs are listed here.



Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Air, Land, and Sea)

AIR: The refuge offers Morningbird banding demonstrations at its visitor center in Fremont, CA. At these demonstrations, led by biologist Cheryl Strong, the group surveys neotropical migrants by using mist nets. Children (and the general public) can learn how to carefully handle birds and learn why the Service and other wildlife agencies band birds.

LAND: Staff at the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR provides youth with five tools they can use to find signs of the elusive gray fox. By the time the children finish walking the trail with refuge staff or volunteers, they are able to distinguish paw prints in the mud and scat on the boardwalk, identify the marking of the gray fox, and gain insight into the fox's nature and behavior.

AND SEA: Microbiologist Wayne Lannier, PhD, leads hands-on learning tours into the LaRiviere Marsh ponds after a brief presentation. The youth sample and view some of the most ancient creatures on earth, microbes. They learn how the microbes produce oxygen that humans breathe and how microbes take up carbon dioxide we produce. The youth also discover how the ocean tides shape these vital communities. Subscribe to [Tidelines](#) for more information.

Cherokee Youth Explore Heritage

North Carolina's Tuckasegee River Valley was once dotted with Cherokee settlements. Today, the basin is still home to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and it offers reminders of the Cherokee's historic presence, including a remnant stone fish weir—a downstream-pointing, V-shaped stone pile that was used to direct fish into a basket. Each year, the Asheville Ecological Services Field Office helps the local watershed group, Watershed Association for the Tuckasegee River, work with Cherokee youth. One way in which they teach the youth about the river is recreating a traditional fish harvest. Here, students line up across the river and wade downstream, driving fish into the weir, and then into a fish basket at the weir's tip. For more information, contact: Gary Peeples, Gary_Peeples@fws.gov.



Cherokee youth takes a closer look at a stonefly. Credit: Gary Peeples



Serve – Volunteerism

Volunteerism is already one of the most used and popular youth engagement tools in the Service. Youth passionate about fish and wildlife and eager to gain unique job experience flock to field stations looking for opportunities to volunteer their services. For example, supervisors for some volunteer field biology positions in Alaska regularly receive over 50 volunteer applications. Although youth are coming to us, the Service should seek out new volunteers by building a diverse and inclusive workforce. Below are just a few of the many ways the Service is reaching out to new volunteer audiences.



Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity

The Service signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. to engage young African American males (ages 8 to 18) to conserve America's wildlife through outdoor recreation on public lands through "Let's Move Outside." The intent of the MOU is to promote the pursuit of biological sciences careers through stewardship and the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEP) program, and to engage Sigma as a voice on conservation issues. In line with the Whitehouse program, "My Brother's Keeper," young men will be engaged in "citizen science" activities alongside Sigma members and Service scientists to follow in the footsteps of conservationist, botanist, and inventor, George Washington Carver. You can learn more about the Sigma and its partnership with the Service at the Division of Partner and Intergovernmental Affairs website, [Proud to Partner with Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity](#) page.



Island Keepers of Connecticut

At the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge in Connecticut college students and other young adults volunteer in the refuge's Island Keeper program. Throughout the summer volunteers do field work on Calf, Chimon, and Outer Islands in Long Island Sound. A few of the more memorable volunteer duties is on Falkner Island are banding Common and Roseate Tern chicks and studying their production. All of the volunteers attend two weeks of training where they learn about boat safety, accident prevention, and the Service. Volunteers work a full-time schedule and are reimbursed to offset the cost of food and other supplies. These young people often express that their greatest motivational factor in making this commitment is to get valuable experience and to accomplish meaningful nature-based work that they enjoy. The refuge gains immeasurable benefit from the passion and hard work of these young volunteers.





Work – Discovery, and Training and Entry-Level Experiences

Work or employment experiences are organized into three levels starting with Discovery Experiences then Entry-Level, and finally Training. The youth continuum is meant to ensure that the Service is providing the appropriate amount of mentorship, orientation, and supervision to the widest possible audience. It allows all youth the opportunity to learn and engage, regardless of any prior experience with the Service.



Work – Discovery Experiences

Discovery experiences are the Service's entry-level of paid opportunities for youth, targeted at high school-age and early college-age youth. These programs are typically very structured and include direct hires like Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) and partner hires like the Student Conservation Association (SCA). All programs in this category help introduce youth to the mission of the Refuge System and the basic functions on refuges. These experiences typically are designed for over the course of a field season, for a minimum of two weeks and up to around 12 weeks.



Career Discovery Internship Program (CDIP)

CDIP started in 2008 in regions 3 and 5, and expanded to regions 4 and 7 in 2010. Through this partnership, the SCA specifically recruits undergraduate program candidates from historically Black colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions. Host field stations are identified at the regional level and commit to providing the student a meaningful work experience for 12 weeks. Field stations should also note that candidates for the program come from a variety of backgrounds and academic interests that may be significantly different than the Service's traditional applicant pool. Work experiences for CDIP participants should be developmental in nature, with a focus on introducing students to the mission and goals of the Service. Since its inception, this program has successfully transitioned 24 students into Service employment. [Go to more about CDIP.](#)



Sunia Coral Reef Conservation Summer Internship Program

For the second year in a row the Service's Southeast Region partnered with the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, the DOI's Office of Insular Affairs, U.S. Department of Agriculture–Natural Resources Conservation Service, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, and the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico to hire student interns as part of the Governor Tauese P.F. Sunia Coral Reef Conservation Summer Internship Program. The Sunia Internship recognizes the late Governor of American Samoa for his outstanding leadership and contributions to the conservation of U.S. coral reef ecosystems. Sunia Coral Reef Conservation Summer Internship Program contributes to a broad project to expand habitat restoration efforts in Puerto Rico's Rio Loco/Guánica Bay watershed and adjacent areas,



Sunia interns Mariana C. León Pérez and María Cristina López at a restoration site.

including refuge lands. Their recent projects included developing and implementing restoration/planting plans and developing a story map to visually present restoration efforts the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), state, and federal agencies are conducting in the Rio Loco/Guánica Bay watershed.



Work – Entry-Level

Entry-level experiences are usually permanent or term appointments targeting youth that have moved up the experience ladder. These positions require increased self-sufficiency and diversity of experience to be successful. The focus shifts from on-the job training to formal training and mentorship for the youth, fostering retention and employee growth.



Public Affairs Specialist (Hadley, MA) –

SCEP/Pathways Program

Tylar Greene started her career with the Service through the partnership between Student Conservation Association in the Career Discovery Internship Program and the which is a program designed to put under-represented students on a solid, “green” career track. (See Tylar’s [video account of that experience](#), which still draws raves.) This internship led Tylar to a Student Career Experience Program/Pathways Program internship. Today, Tylar continues to work in the outdoors and introduces others to the wonders of wildlife as a Public Affairs Specialist in Hadley, MA. [Here’s her story, in her own words.](#)



Work – Training

Training experiences are paid opportunities for both partner and direct hires, typically targeting juniors and seniors in college or graduate school. Training requires a big commitment from the youth and the Service. Training experiences also require more responsibility from the youth, offering a wider understanding of Service operations.



Visitor Service STEP (Illinois River National Fish and Wildlife Refuge)

To insure inclusiveness on non-traditional youth, its important to go the extra mile. Jasmine Garner is a young African American woman who came to work as a Temporary Pathways employee for Visitor Services in the summer of 2011. Jasmine was recruited through the national Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences ([MANRRS](#)) conference earlier that spring and at that time was the president of the MANRRS chapter at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

The Illinois River NFWR Project Leader Lee Albright made a conscious effort to welcome Jasmine. Prior to her arrival, Lee discovered faith community to which Jasmine belonged and then reached out to a local pastor of that same faith community. The pastor and his wife invited Lee and Jasmine over for dinner. During her first few weeks on the job, Lee brought Jasmine around to service stations, grocery stores, the library, etc. and personally introduced her to all the community leaders. He went out of his way to set up an environment in which Jasmine could be successful.

And it didn't stop at her first few weeks. Lee continued to make Jasmine feel valued throughout her tenure at Illinois River. For example, when he realized that Jasmine would spend her birthday at the regional office's annual student workshop, Lee reached out to regional staff, who in turn surprised Jasmine with a birthday cake and an impromptu serenade the morning of her birthday. What could have been a disastrous field season turned out to be a very successful one—in large part because the staff went out of its way to make this employee feel valued.

Recruitment

Recruitment is about finding the best sources for diverse top talent and identifying the best candidates who can contribute to the Service's mission and culture. Recruiting consists of two components: recruiting applicants and conducting outreach to attract recruits. The recruiting process is set up to ensure fair treatment. The goal of conducting outreach for recruitment is to build and continuously present a positive and inclusive image of the Service and its mission for potential candidates, the people who influence the candidates, and the communities in which they live. The [Service Director's Diversity Objectives and the Service's Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan](#) outline the goals and strategies that would promote increased diversity and inclusion in our workforce.

The Service employs Diversity Employment Specialists in each region to assist with these outreach and recruitment efforts. See the [Recruiter Contact Information web page](#) for a list of recruiters. Below are a few tips to get you started on recruitment.

- Consult with the regional recruiter as well as the Human Resources specialist before announcing vacancies. This results in better feedback on the available hiring authorities to fill vacancies. It would also allow supervisors/hiring officials to share with recruiters what they need and allow for better coordination of and focus on recruitment efforts.
- Develop a professional relationship with the recruiter. Regional office supervisors should invite recruiters to attend workforce planning meetings and/or monthly staff meetings. Invite the recruiters to attend project leader meetings, retreats, and town hall meetings at regional and field offices. This allows recruiters to meet supervisors as well as employees and allows the recruiter to gain an understanding of the skills needed when conducting outreach.
- Stay informed about various outreach initiatives that promote the importance of diversity and inclusion; keep in contact with your recruiter as well as your Division of Diversity and Civil Rights office.
- Project leaders and selecting officials have been tasked with reaching out to a broader audience for hiring and recruiting. However, one challenge that the Service continues to face is not having an applicant pool that is robust and inclusive of people who are from groups that are underrepresented in the Service. Is the Service reaching out to the right audiences? Is the Service leaving out specific recruitment techniques? Working alongside the regional recruiter, these additional recommendations may address these questions and assist in recruitment efforts:
 - Maintain regular communication between the regional Human Resources office and hiring officials to distribute information about and implement regionally specific strategies.

- Develop or strengthen a central and standard way of sharing recruitment plans and efforts across programs and regions, and make it easy to access. This could potentially assist others who are trying to fill similar positions or are looking for additional ideas on recruitment. It could also increase the likelihood of the resource being used.
- Check the recruitment period to ensure that it is long enough to increase the size of the applicant pool.
- Look at all the factors that could contribute to paving the way for a stronger candidate pool.
- Post vacancy announcements during the peak period of student interest, such as in the fall.
- Explore ways the Service can bring people on board more quickly.



FWS Student Ambassador Program

The FWS Student Ambassador Program provides a tool for the Service to strengthen its targeted recruitment and outreach efforts on university campuses by employing students who have had experience working at Service facilities. These Student Ambassadors advocate for the Service as an employer of choice, providing students with information about employment and intern opportunities available through Service programs.

Process

Regions will independently sponsor the Student Ambassador Program in their region. Project leaders interested in sponsoring a student should contact their Regional Diversity and Civil Rights Office/Regional Recruiter. Each region will recruit interns that have held a prior paid or volunteer position in the Service. To be considered for the Student Ambassador Program, applicants must apply using the application form and submit it directly to the Regional Recruiter.

The Student Ambassador Program pays \$2,000 per student for a complete school year. One thousand dollars will be paid to the Student Ambassador after successfully completing each semester. If the student is a current Pathways Program student, the student will be paid his or her hourly wage up to \$1,000 per semester, for a total of \$2,000. Additional costs may include official travel for job assignments. Costs related to participating in College Career Fairs.

Mentorship/Retention

Supervision and associated formal and informal mentorship of youth employees are key to the success for the youth in the work experiences, retaining talent, and creating an inclusive work culture.

Mentoring Complete Program (Private Contractor)

Since 2009, the Southeast Region has sponsored a formal mentoring program to support new Service employees in the region. The goals of the Southeast Region's E⁴ Mentoring Program are:

- To provide an opportunity for employees to share knowledge, experience, and expertise while exposing them to different ideas, perspectives, values, and norms in their organizations.
- To offer support, to challenge, and to help instill patience, passion, and enthusiasm to participants as mentorees experience new levels of competence in career planning.
- To help develop or enhance mentoring, coaching, and leadership skills.
- To promote the development and retention of a diverse workforce by expanding and encouraging collaboration across different demographics.

The Mentoring *Complete* Program tool was first implemented during 2009–2010 to assist mentors and mentorees achieve their desired goals. It has been used annually to assist the region in the development and strengthening of their workforce to meet current and future needs. Mentoring *Complete* is a web-accessed management tool that does the following: (1) collect information from each applicant; (2) match mentor–mentoree pairs after mentorees are first randomly selected; (3) provide group training and individualized guidance for program participants; (4) facilitate a scheduled feedback mechanism that helps mentors and mentorees remain on course; and (5) conduct a close-out session for participants that helps the Service to measure the effectiveness of the mentoring program.

In 2014, the Southeast Region reached the end of their five-year contract with the Mentoring *Complete* Program. Before entering into another contract, the region is embarking upon a 1½ year formal assessment of the tool, to include focus groups and surveys of program participants.



Midwest Region Intern Workshop

The Midwest Region annually hosts a very popular student intern workshop at the end of the field season. At the week-long workshop, student employees from around the region give a short presentation on their Service work experience, while also meeting and hearing from representatives from a variety of Service programs, including Fisheries, Ecological Services, Migratory Birds, Law Enforcement, and Refuges. The workshop agenda also includes a panel discussion on the Pathways Program, field trips to a local refuge and the regional office, and division-specific breakout sessions.

Training

The National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) offers a variety of web-based training on youth mentorship, which are listed below. More formal programs are also available at NCTC.

Webinar: [Supervising Young Adults in Conservation: OUT8045](#)

Supervising young adults in seasonal and internship positions can be a new and challenging experience for even the most seasoned of supervisors. This recorded webinar, led by Student Conservation Association & U.S. Forest Service staff, will relate critical thinking and problem solving to common issues and situations often faced by supervisors working with young adults aged 16-25.).

Webinar: [Mentoring: Getting Started with Your Mentee: OUT8081, DOI-Learn](#)

In this course mentoring experts provide tips and techniques based on their experience. The self-paced training focuses on mentoring fundamentals, including tools, job aids, and skills needed when meeting with a mentee for the first time. Receive 2 ½ hours credit annual diversity training upon course completion. This course is a prerequisite for Mentoring the Next Generation: Voices of Experience OUT8050-ELEARNING, an Archived Webinar.

Webinar: [Mentoring: The Next Generation – Voices of Experiences: OUT8050](#)

Hear the ins and outs of mentoring as a panel of experienced mentors and mentees answer questions and provide suggestions for ensuring a productive mentor–mentee relationship. This archived webinar (eLearning) training builds on the mentoring prerequisite OUT8081 and focuses on trouble-shooting challenges in a mentoring relationship. Participants will apply the insights they’ve gained to their personal mentoring practices to build a more open, inclusive, and trusting relationship with their mentee(s). Receive 2 ½ hours credit annual diversity training upon course completion.

Resources

[MentoringComplete Program tool](#)

[Chronus mentoring software and programs](#)

[Essentials of Developing a Mentoring Program](#)

[Association for Talent Development:](#)

[Essentials of Developing-a-Mentoring-Program](#)

[Millennial Branding: Retention rates in the private sector](#)

Choosing a Youth Employment Tool – Decision Tool

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Use the following series of question to help you choose which youth employment tool will best fit the needs of your station, the needs the project, and the needs of the Service.

1. What is the need at the field station:
 - a. Nature of the work?
 - i. Biology Administrative
 - b. Length of the position?
 - i. 12 weeks to 1 year
 - c. Degree of complexity?
 - i. Guided to Independent

2. How much funding is required for this project/position(s)?
 - a. \$1500 to \$25000

3. When is the estimated start date for this position?
 - a. 1 month to 6 months

4. How do identify your pool of potential candidates?
 - a. Targeted Recruitment
 - b. Are any of the candidates considered “youth” (ages 15 to 25)?

5. Are any of the youth a student?
 - a. Yes or No

6. Are any of the youth a veteran or a person with disabilities?
 - a. Yes or No

7. Will you be working with a partner (University, NGO, Tribal, etc.)?
 - a. Yes or No

Youth Employment Tools

FWS Hiring Authorities

The Service has a number of direct hiring authorities that allow us to employ youth.



Pathways Program

The Pathways Program is comprised of three separate components: *The Internship Program (Temporary and Career)*, *The Recent Graduates Program*, and *The Presidential Management Fellows Program*.

Collectively, these programs are geared to give current students and recent graduates (including those who have Veteran Status), practical and hands-on job experiences that can eventually lead to established careers within the government service.

Interns

The Pathways Internship Program is a streamlined program that replaces the Student Educational Employment Program (SEEP); that is, the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) and the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP). Each year the Service employs over 150 youth in this program. The program is designed to attract students enrolled in a wide variety of educational institutions or settings (high school, vocational and technical, undergraduate and graduate). It gives students the opportunity to explore career options and earn income in the federal civil service while still in school, providing meaningful developmental work at the beginning of their careers, before their careers paths are fully established.

Audience

Primarily undergraduate and graduate students, but any current student in an accredited high school, college; professional, technical, vocational, and trade school; advanced degree programs, or other qualifying educational institution.

Permanent Employment Conversion Requirements

An agency may convert an intern noncompetitively from the Internship Program to a term or permanent position in the competitive service, provided that all the terms of [5 CFR §362.204](#) are met and there is an available position. However, conversion is not mandatory or guaranteed. Interns must be U.S. citizens to be eligible for conversion and meet the following requirements:

- Complete at least 640 hours of work experience acquired through the Internship Program,
- Complete their degree or certificate requirements,
- Meet the qualification standards for the position to which the intern will be converted,
- Meet agency-specific requirements as specified in the Participant's Agreement, and
- Perform their job successfully.

Career or Indefinite/Permanent Interns

Career interns were previously enrolled in the Student Career Experience Program or (SCEP). Once accepted as a Career Interns they receive benefits, appeal rights, and a more firm commitment to find a permanent placement once they complete the program.

Temporary/ Not to Exceed (NTE) Intern

The flexible nature of the Pathways Program accommodates the need to hire students to complete temporary work or projects, perform extensive tasks not requiring subject matter expertise, or to work traditional “summer jobs” as Temporary interns. These interns do not receive benefits and have no appeal rights. These temporary appointments are for a period not to exceed one year, the ending date of which must be specified in the Participant Agreement with the intern. These appointments may be extended under [5 CFR §213.104](#).

Process

1. *For Career*- Contact your regional youth employment coordinator and/or area supervisor if you would like to host a Career Pathways intern, as the intern counts against the full-time equivalent (FTE) threshold in each region.

For Temporary - Use discretion if hosting a Temporary Pathways intern at your field station. Temporary Pathways interns do not count against the FTE threshold in each region. Define the Temporary Pathways student on your organization chart if you are considering a permanent placement after graduation.

2. Select or draft an approved Student Trainee Position Description. Note that although Temporary/NTE and Career Pathways interns have the same job series, they have different PDs. Carefully read the narrative associated with each PD to determine which one serves your intended purpose.
 - a. Intern positions are to be classified to an appropriate student trainee GS-xx99 series for occupational groups in the General Schedule (GS) or a pay-banded system and xx01 series for occupational groups appropriate for the Federal Wage System (WG).
 - b. Currently classified PDs can be located at the Service’s [Human Capital intranet website](#).
3. Complete and submit a Request for Eligible personnel action to the Human Resources office with the following materials: signed PD and an org chart identifying the position. Be sure to indicate “Career/Permanent/Indefinite Internship OR “Temporary/Not to Exceed Internship”
4. Post and advertise on USAJOBS.
5. Interview and select student(s).
6. Complete the required paperwork for the Temporary/NTE Pathways intern onboarding, which includes:
 - o signed selection memo,
 - o SF-87,
 - o SF-85,

- OF-306,
- official college transcript(s),
- verification of future school enrollment (e.g., course registration for proximate semester), and
- signed Student Partnership Agreement.

Note that the OF-8, org chart, and Student Partnership Agreement need to be updated whenever the Temporary/NTE Pathways student changes duty stations.

7. *For Career-* Identify or define a student trainee position on your station's organizational chart, and start to plan for a placement after completion of the program.
8. Treat the orientation and training process for Pathway interns like all entry- level permanent positions; complete the plans for their training and development, which include:
 - a. Individual Development Plan Templates- [See Appendix](#)
 - i. [Visitor Services Student Trainee](#)
 - ii. [Biological Student Trainee](#)
 - b. Submit Progress Reports annually to Human Resources.
 - c. Complete supervisor evaluations at end of each work period.

Tips

- Student means an individual accepted for enrollment or enrolled and seeking a degree (diploma, certificate, etc.) in a qualifying educational institution or program, on a full- or half-time basis (as defined by the institution in which the student is enrolled). Students need not be in actual physical attendance, so long as all other requirements are met. An individual who needs to complete less than the equivalent of half an academic/vocational or technical course-load immediately prior to graduating is still considered a student for purposes of this Program.
- Break in program. A break in program is defined as a period of time when an intern is working but is unable to go to school, or is neither attending classes nor working at the agency. An agency may use its discretion in either approving or denying a request for a break in program. See "[Excepted Service, Career and Career-Conditional Employment; and Pathways Programs](#)" for details.
- Interns can be placed in term positions and may subsequently be noncompetitively converted into permanent competitive service positions.

Resources

For students: [USAJOBS](#),
[Pathways for Students & Recent Graduates to Federal Careers](#)
[Pathways Transition & Implementation Guidance](#)
[APPENDIX: Pathways Forms and Resources](#)



Pathways Programs – Recent Graduates Program

The Recent Graduates Pathways Program offers developmental work experiences in the federal government intended to promote possible careers in the civil service to individuals who have recently graduated from qualifying educational institutions or programs. Successful applicants are placed in a dynamic, developmental program with the potential to lead to a civil service career in the federal government. The program lasts one year (unless the training requirements of the position warrant a longer and more structured training program).

Audience

Recent graduates who have completed, within the previous two years, a qualifying associates, bachelors, masters, professional, doctorate, vocational or technical degree or certificate from a qualifying educational institution.

Veterans unable to apply within two years of receiving their degree, due to military service obligations, have as much as six years after receiving their degree to apply.

Process

1. Contact your regional youth employment coordinator and/or area supervisor if you would like to host a Recent Graduate Pathways student, as they count against the FTE threshold in each region.
2. Define the Recent Graduates Pathways student on your org chart considering a permanent placement after graduation.
3. Select or draft an approved PD. Note that there is no specially designated PD for Recent Graduates. They work under a standard PD.
 - o Currently classified PDs are located at the Service's Human Capital intranet website.
4. Complete and submit a Request for Eligibles (indicate Recent Graduate) personnel action to the Human Resources office with the following materials: signed PD and an org chart identifying the position.
5. Post and advertise on USAJOBS.
6. Work on targeted recruiting.
7. Interview and select student(s).
8. Complete the required paperwork for Recent Graduate Pathways Intern onboarding, which includes:
 - o signed selection memo, SF-87, SF-85, OF-306, official college transcript(s), verification of future school enrollment (e.g., course registration for proximate semester), and signed Student Partnership Agreement.

Note that the OF-8, org chart and Student Partnership Agreement need to be updated whenever the Recent Graduate Pathways student changes duty stations.

Tips

- Recent graduates hired for the Program must receive an orientation at the beginning of the program and mentorship throughout the Program.
- Recent graduates' supervisors must complete an Individual Development Plan to create and track the employees' career planning, professional development, and training activities.
- Recent graduates must receive at least 40 hours of formal, interactive training each year of the Program.
- Recent graduates' positions should offer opportunity for career advancement.

Resources

[USAJOBS, Pathways for Students & Recent Graduates to Federal Careers](#)



Pathways Program – Presidential Management Fellows Program

The Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program is the federal government's leadership development program for advanced degree (e.g., Masters or Professional Degree) candidates. The program is for those who have received a qualifying advanced degree within two years of applying.

The PMF Program attracts individuals of exceptional management potential to the federal government from a wide variety of academic disciplines. To be eligible, the candidate must have completed a course of study at an accredited college or university, be nominated by the institution's Dean or Academic Program Director, complete an assessment process administered by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and be selected by OPM as a PMF Program finalist.

OPM is responsible for managing the PMF program, including nationwide recruitment, orientation training, and a graduation program. The DOI is the liaison with the OPM and coordinates the PMF Program by establishing the policies, procedures, and activities across the DOI. OPM requires a reimbursement fee to cover costs associated with managing the PMF Program. The cost to bring on an individual through the PMF Program is \$7,000 plus his or her regular salary, which is typically GS 9 and above. For more information on this program contact Headquarters Human Resources.

Process

1. Contact FWS Headquarters Human Resources to obtain access to the database of resumes.
2. Identify the GS level for the position in which the candidate will be placed.
 - A PMF Program appointment is an initial two-year excepted service appointment.
 - Based on the PMF qualifications, the initial appointment may be made at the GS-9,11, 12 levels.
3. Supervisors must have an approved full-time position at the time the selection is made.
4. Establish an Individual Development Plan for the candidate.
5. Make a decision to convert PMF Program person to permanent appointment in the competitive service based on satisfactory completion of the program and certification by the DOI executive.

Resources

[Presidential Management Fellows Program](#)

[Presidential Management Fellows Program FAQs](#)



Youth Conservation Corps (YCC)

YCC is a summer employment program for young people ages 15 to 18 who work and learn as a team, while engaged in meaningful environmental stewardship experiences on public lands. Each year the Refuge System hires over 500 YCC youth. The YCC focuses on: youth development, natural resource stewardship and conservation, creating positive community involvement, and career exploration. Programs are typically eight weeks long and are held from June through August. Participants gain a variety of experiences from biological monitoring to facilities maintenance and visitor services. See the [Service's Opportunities for Youth webpage](#) for details.

Audience

Young men and women, 15 through 18 years of age, who are citizens of the United States, and its territories are eligible for employment without regard to social economic, racial, or ethnic backgrounds. Must be at least 15 years of age before or on the first day of work and not have reached 19 years of age during the duration of the program at the host site where they are employed.

Process

1. Recruit YCC candidates at local high schools.
2. Provide candidates with a [standard application](#), and collect the completed applications.
3. Select enrollees:
 - a. Make random selections that incorporate social, economic, ethnic, and racial diversity.
 - b. Ensure that the enrollees consist of 50 percent males and 50 percent females.
 - c. Conduct the selection process in a public forum.
4. The program manager of each host site makes final selection of enrollees.
5. Complete all on-boarding forms and processing:
 - o [YCC 2014–W4](#)
 - o [YCC Medical History Form](#)
 - o [Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9](#)
 - o [Direct Deposit Sign-Up Form 1199A](#)
 - o [Ethnicity and Race Identification](#)
 - o [Self-Identification of Disability](#)

Resources

[Youth Conservation Corps Reference Manual \(1999\)](#)
[240 FW9 – Safety for Volunteer and Youth/Collegiate Program Participants](#)
[Timekeeping Information for YCC Enrollees](#)
[YCC Travel Guidance for YCC Enrollees](#)



2014 Alaska Maritime Youth Conservation Corps (Homer and Sand Point, AK)

At the far reaching Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, which spans a string of islands following the Aleutian island chain, YCC enrollees are recruited both from the headquarters in Homer and from the primarily Unangan or “Aleut” Alaska Natives who live throughout these remote island communities. Two of the multicultural crew in 2014 hailed from the small village of Sand Point and the town of Homer. The Sand Point crew flew into Homer for training and worked alongside headquarters staff teaching education programs and providing visitor services. The crew also had the rare opportunity to work alongside the scientists and deck crew on the Service’s only research vessel, the Tiglax.



Temporary

Temporary positions can be found by searching the [USAJOBS](#) or [YouthGO](#) websites. YouthGO lists jobs that specifically target youth participants. Job projects are determined by the needs and goals of the assigned field office. Most of these jobs involve work in wildlife- or visitor service-related fields that may include: monitoring and assessing threatened/endangered species and habitats, developing and implementing visitor service programs, general field office maintenance and management, or cultural/historical resource management.

Process

See your regional Human Resources office for policies and procedures.

Tips

- Let your Youth Coordinator or Recruiter know when you might have positions that youth would be suitable for, so they can help with recruitment.



Forestry Technician (GS-0462) and Range Technician (GS-0455) are two entry-level positions that bring youth into the Service, generally in seasonal positions in the fire program. Youth without college degrees are hired at the GS-2/3 level, and those with degrees can be hired at the GS 4/5 level. Both positions require that the applicant be at least 18 years old and in good physical conditions to handle the arduous duties of firefighting. The valuable experience that forestry technicians and range technicians gain can spike their interest in the Service and help them gain valuable experience and contacts. Both of these positions are hired through OPM. Resource: [Fire Careers, Adventures for Your Life](#)



Youth Conservation Corp Group Leader is hired as Social Services Aids GS-0186 at the GS-4 and 5 levels. Although group leaders can be any age, most are young because of the physical nature of the work and the entry-level pay of the position. The group leader is responsible for supervising the work of 4 to 12 YCC enrollees on specific projects in habitat improvement and natural resource conservation. In many regions, individual refuges can hire the person directly at the refuge by working with the regional Human Resources office (see below for an example of position description from Deer Flats NWR).

Resources

[Position Classification Flysheet for Social Services Aid and Assistant Series, GS-0186](#)



Other Special Hiring Authorities

Schedule A

Audience

Schedule A, 5 CFR §213.3102(u), is used for hiring people with severe physical disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, and intellectual disabilities. Individuals hired under this excepted authority may qualify for conversion to permanent status after two years of satisfactory service. Severe physical disabilities include but are not limited to blindness, deafness, paralysis, missing limbs, epilepsy, and dwarfism.

Process

1. Applicant provides documentation of the disability.
 - In order to be eligible for employment through the Schedule A noncompetitive process, documentation of the disability is required.
 - The documentation is used to verify that the individual being hired is indeed a person with a severe physical disability, psychiatric disability, or intellectual disability.
2. Applicant submits the documentation to the hiring agency.
 - This must be done before an individual can be hired.
 - Documentation of eligibility for employment under Schedule A can be obtained from a licensed medical professional (e.g., a physician or other medical professional certified by a state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory to practice medicine); a licensed vocational rehabilitation specialist (i.e., state or private); or any federal agency, state agency, agency of the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory that issues or provides disability benefits.
3. Upon hiring, the individual with a disability or the Service's Human Resources office should complete the Standard Form 256.
 - SF-256 includes the legal definition of disability and lists various disabilities, including several that are considered targeted disabilities.

[The ABC's of Schedule A For the Hiring Manager](#)
[Disability Employment \(OPM website\)](#)

Veterans Hiring Authority- Schedule A

Though not specifically for veterans, the [Schedule A \(external link\)](#) authority for Persons With Intellectual Disabilities, Severe Physical Disabilities and Psychiatric Disabilities, 5 CFR 213.3102(u), is an excepted authority that agencies can use to appoint eligible veterans who have a severe physical, psychological, or intellectual disability.

[Special Hiring Authorities for Veterans](#)

AmeriCorps/Peace Corps

Returned Peace Corps and AmeriCorps Volunteers are awarded one year of noncompetitive eligibility (NCE) under [Executive Order 11103 \(5 CFR, § 315.605\)](#). Noncompetitive eligibility permits, but does not require, U.S. federal government agencies to hire a returned Volunteer for a position without having to go through the formal competitive hiring process (including posting a vacancy announcement, screening or interviewing candidates, or going through the other steps in the standard recruitment process). To use noncompetitive eligibility to hire an Returning Volunteer, an agency must recognize NCE and have an open position for which the candidate meets the minimum qualifications. The decision to hire a returned Volunteer is at the discretion of the federal hiring agency, not the Peace Corps or AmeriCorps.

Direct Hiring Authority (DHA)

Under the DHA the Secretary of the Interior may appoint directly a candidate or candidates without competing in a competitive examination or competing with career and career-conditional employees under internal merit staffing procedures for any position(s) for which they are eligible in a land management agency. Veteran's preference does not apply. Candidates applying under this authority *will be considered with other noncompetitive candidates*. This authority cannot be used after the end of the two-year period beginning on the date the candidate completed his or her undergraduate or graduate degree. This two-year timeframe cannot be extended.

The DHA applies to the land managing bureaus and offices of the DOI. Consideration will be provided to individuals who are enrolled in an institution of higher education or are recent graduates from an institution of higher education, with particular attention given to ensure full representation of women and participants from historically Black, Hispanic, Asian Pacific Islander, and Native American schools or other schools with diverse student populations.

The Secretary can appoint "former resource assistant(s)" as defined in the Public Land Corps Act of 1993 who:

4. Completed a rigorous undergraduate or graduate summer internship with a land managing agency,
5. Successfully fulfilled the requirements of that internship program; and
6. Subsequently earned an undergraduate or graduate degree from an accredited institution of higher learning.

Internship programs may be established in any one or more of the following career fields necessary to the effective management of public lands and resources:

- Park/Refuge/Monument management and administration
- Natural resources management
- Environmental policy and management
- Environmental/civil engineering/urban planning
- Historic and/or cultural resources management

- Business management and administration
- Public policy/administration and management

The Service is currently piloting the Directorate Fellows Program (DFP) to provide internships for qualified candidates using the Public Lands Corps authority. Successful completion of this program will qualify applicants for direct hire authority. See below for additional information on the DFP.

Public Lands Corps Hiring Authority (Non-Competitive and Direct Hire Authority)

The purpose of the Public Lands Corps (PLC) Program is to provide work and education opportunities for youth in the areas of natural and cultural resource conservation, development, and scientific research. Youth will perform work on our nation's public lands that cannot be carried out by federal agencies at existing personnel levels. The PLC Program allows the Service to enter into partnerships using a contract or financial assistance/cooperative agreement with partner organizations to employ youth in PLC projects and internships. PLC members who complete program requirements will be eligible for noncompetitive or direct hiring status for federal positions.

There are two types of PLC members: "participants" and "resource assistants." PLC participants can be hired noncompetitively using the Public Land Corps Hiring Authority (see [DOI Personnel Bulletin No. 12-13](#)). Resource assistants can be hired noncompetitively using the Direct Hire Authority (see [DOI Personnel Bulletin No. 12-15](#)). There are separate eligibility and program requirements for each type of PLC member.

PLC Participants:

- Individuals between the ages of 16 and 25 years inclusive,
- U.S. citizens or legal residents,
- Possess or agree to pursue a high school diploma or its equivalent and did not drop out of an elementary or secondary school to enroll in the program,
- Formally enrolled into the PLC Program once they begin work on a PLC project for the Department of Interior.
- NOT required to be enrolled in an academic institution,
- Members of an eligible partner organization (see Section III for eligibility requirements) that has a formal contractual or financial assistance agreement with the DOI,
- Can be enrolled in the program without regard for the civil service and classification laws, rules, or regulations of the United States,
- Work on PLC projects as part of a work team/crew or as an individual, as outlined in Section IV of this guidance, and
- Eligible for noncompetitive hiring status for federal positions upon completion of 640 hours of service, 120 of which must be on certified PLC Projects (certified PLC projects are those carried out on federal lands, waters, and facilities owned or administered by the United States, Indian lands, or Hawaiian home lands).

PLC Resource Assistants:

- Individuals who are at least 17 years of age,
- U.S. citizens or legal residents,

- Formally enrolled into the PLC Program once they begin work on a PLC internship program for the DOI,
- Enrolled in an accredited institution of higher education or be a recent graduate from an accredited institution of higher education (a recent graduate is defined as two years from their graduation date, or within two years of 10 July 2012—whichever date is most recent),
- Members of an eligible partner organization that has a formal contractual or financial assistance agreement with the DOI,
- Work on PLC internship programs as outlined below, and
- Are eligible for direct hiring upon completion of the PLC internship program and the requirements of his or her degree program.

Process

1. PLC former member meets the following criteria:

- Served as a qualified youth on an appropriate conservation project completing a minimum of 640 hours of satisfactory service that included at least 120 hours on certified PLC projects*.
- Meet OPM qualification standards and any other qualification requirement(s) stated in the vacancy announcement for the position for which they are applying.

An individual's eligibility for noncompetitive hiring status under this authority shall not exceed 120 days after completion of his or her last PLC project that provides him or her a total of 640 hours of which 120 hours were performed on a certified PCL project or projects as a PLC member. The 120 day timeframe cannot be extended—the appointment must be effected within this 120 day timeframe.

*Certified PLC projects are those carried out on federal lands, waters, and facilities owned or administered by the United States, Indian lands, or Hawaiian home lands.

- ### 2. Hiring official then may appointed PLC member to a General Schedule (GS) or Federal Wage System (WG) positions. Selectees will be subject to a probationary period consistent with other competitive service positions. Individuals who meet the OPM's minimum qualifications requirements may be noncompetitively referred to the selection official in accordance with established competitive hiring procedures.
- ### 3. The candidate must provide a copy of the "Certificate of Eligibility for Noncompetitive Hiring Based on PLC Service" with the application in order to considered under this hiring authority. The Service's Human Resources office must also ensure agency and interagency career transition programs are appropriately cleared prior to appointment. All appointments will be subject to DOI Reemployment Priority List, Career Transition Assistance Plan and Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan provisions. Appointments under this authority can be made for temporary, term, or permanent positions as appropriate.

Director's Resource Management Fellow Program (DFP) (Administered by NCTC)

The DFP is designed to provide a fellowship opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to participate full-time for 11 weeks on projects that meet the qualification of a rigorous internship program. Fellowship opportunities for the DFP may be established and approved at the Service's Headquarters, Regional Offices, or field levels. Regional recruiters will be responsible for recruiting students whose education, experience, background, and interest best match the needs of the position identified by the program supervisor.

Undergraduates or graduates selected for the DFP will be referred to as "Fellows" and employed as non-federal employees; that is, volunteers. Participation in the DFP will offer the selected Fellows an opportunity to demonstrate to supervisors and managers their potential for success in an administrative or professional career field in the Service. Management may request approval from the Director to directly hire a DFP Fellow who has successfully completed the fellowship program and requirements for his or her degree program.



Partner Hires

Each year the Service partners over 150 organizations across the country to hire nearly 1,300 youth to do amazing wildlife conservation work.

These programs are targeted at high school-aged to post college-aged youth. These partnerships range in scope and complexity from working with a local youth corps to do a small trail project, to full-time internships that last up to a year. The supporting formal agreement (MOU's, Grants, Cooperative Agreements, Friends Partnership Agreement) will typically outline the scope of these relationships. In some cases the partner agency covers recruitment and travel while the Service provides project specification and on-site supervision. Many of our partners are Public Land Corp eligible organizations so their members could be eligible for the Public Land Corps non-competitive hiring authority.

National Networks

The Service works frequently with both private and quasi-government organizations to bring on partner youth hires. A few of the larger networks are listed below.



AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is a civil society program supported by the federal government, foundations, corporations, and other donors engaging adults in intensive community service work with the goal of "helping others and meeting critical needs in the community." Members commit to full-time or part-time positions offered by a network of nonprofit community organizations and public agencies to fulfill assignments in the fields of education, public safety, healthcare, and environmental protection. The program is often compared to the Peace Corps as its domestic counterpart.

AmeriCorps administers a partner hire program called VISTA. [AmeriCorps VISTA](#) members live and serve in some of the nation's poorest urban and rural areas. With passion, commitment, and hard work, they create or expand programs designed to bring individuals and communities out of poverty. Each VISTA member makes a year-long, full-time commitment to serve on a specific project at a nonprofit organization or public agency.

Public, private, or faith-based nonprofit organizations as well as local, state, or federal agencies can become an AmeriCorps VISTA sponsor. Applications for VISTA projects are handled through [Corporation for National and Community Service \(CNCS\)](#) state offices. Project sponsors are not required to provide a financial match but must be able to direct the project, supervise the members, and provide necessary administrative support to complete the goals and objectives of the project. Learn more at the [Sponsor a VISTA Project web page](#).



The Corps Network

The Corps Network a network of organizations dedicated to comprehensive youth development programs that provide their participants with job training, academic programming, leadership skills, and additional support through a strategy of service that improves communities and the environment. Over 120 Corps are found across the country, mostly concentrated in the western states, and are often referred to as a modern day Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The Service directly partners with many of the organizations on trail projects, visitor facility enhancement projects, and habitat restoration.

Organizations typically come with a leader who facilitates and supervises the work of the crew. Sometimes crew leaders are not much older than their crews and are not necessarily technically trained, so often times Service personnel act as project leaders and direct the crew in accomplishing work.

Tips

- Frequently, a station's partner hires SCA interns, or Corp Networks members are awarded [AmeriCorps education awards](#) for tuition or loan repayment. If interns at your station are receiving an AmeriCorps education award they may be restricted in the types of service activities in which they can participate. For example, interns are not allowed to work in nature stores or sell items. These stipulations will be outlined in your financial assistance agreement with the partner.
- The Refuge System is currently in the process of developing an umbrella agreement with the Corps Network and hope to have in place by 2015.
- The Service is working in collaboration with other bureaus in the DOI to adopt a new Youth Partners Tracking System (YPTS) that will allow us to monitoring our corps members (participants and resource assistants) progress in meeting noncompetitive eligibility requirements. Our goal is to have the YPTS alert Service staff of the current list of eligible candidates for noncompetitive appointments.



Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units

The Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) Network is a national consortium of federal agencies, tribes, academic institutions, state and local governments, non-governmental conservation organizations, and other partners working together to support informed public trust resource stewardship. The CESU Network includes [358 partners](#), including [14 federal agencies](#), in [17 CESU](#) representing biogeographic regions encompassing all 50 states and U.S. territories. The CESU Network is well positioned as a platform to support research, technical assistance, education, and capacity building that is responsive to long-standing and contemporary science and resource management priorities.

National or Regional Youth Partner Hire Agreements

Over the years the Service has cultivated partnerships with a couple national organizations. The National Wildlife Refuge System Visitor Services Program manages these agreements and negotiates terms with these partners. These national agreements simplify the Financial Assistance process for bringing on youth hires.



The Student Conservation Association (SCA), National Agreement for Interns and Trail Crews

SCA is a non-profit organization who works to recruit and support youth in a wide range of internship and or crew experiences on public lands. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has had a formal relationship through a national cooperative agreement for over a decade. Supervisors have a variety of youth hire programs for a variety of ages and lengths of time available to them. These programs include: Conservation Interns,

Conservation Corps, Conservation Crews and other special programs. For more information about specific programs you can visit [The SCA Solution Menu](#).

Cost

Insert information here

Process of Interns and Trail Crews on National Agreement

Stations can join the national agreement, which is located under Program-Specific Guidance at <https://inside.fws.gov/go/post/FAPO-NewAwards>.

Process

1. Contact the Regional SCA representative to obtain the following information:
 - price estimate,
 - SCA Project number (required to submit Purchase Request (PPR) into FBMS), and
 - project description.
2. Submit a Purchase Request in FBMS for a (GRANT), which must include the following:
 - Filled out with signatures. Two things that need to be addressed: choose the radio button for "Funded" on the hard copy and when submitting through FBMS, choose the option "Funded Grant." WBS will start with FGRSXXXXXXXXXXXX and the UPC is 411C0000.
 - Attachments:
 - **Completed Checklist for a New Financial Assistance Award** (completed by Service requestor using these [instructions](#)).
 - **Signed SF 424, Application For Federal Assistance** (completed by SCA).
 - **Project Specific Narrative.** (can be drafted by FWS with SCA input). This is a typed Word document that details in a paragraph or two what the field station hopes to accomplish. Below the paragraph, put a line that states what the Service's share (in dollars) will be for this intern. On another line state what the SCA share (in dollars) will be using the "In Kind Fund" amount provided on the SCA budget quote.
 - **Project Specific budget** based on current Schedule of Costs (prepared by SCA)
 - **Draft of SCA Notice of Award Letter** (in Word, completed by the Service requestor) This can be found on the [Financial Assistance Policy and Oversight \(FAPO\) website](#). Change the highlighted sections to your specific field station and upload this as a Word document so the grant assistant or contracting officer can make changes as well.
 - **Request Memo**, comes from the rep at SCA.

Tips

- All SCA awards must be issued as cooperative agreements following the steps of the Service's [Issuing a New Financial Assistance Award Guidance posted on the intranet](#).

- **Do not process SCA awards as purchase orders!** If any SCA award is mistakenly processed as a purchase order, it must be de-obligated and re-obligated as a cooperative agreement.
- For FY 2014 SCA interns are no longer considered volunteers. This means you no longer count SCA intern hours for RAPP, and SCA interns DO NOT complete and Volunteer Services Agreement. Details are located [here in the form of an e-mail](#).



SCA – Career Discovery Internship Program

Regional Agreements in 3,4,5, and 7

The Service has partnered SCA to provide over 50 internships for first & second year college students from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds since 2008.

Audience: Underrepresented youth groups, with potentially no exposure to the field of wildlife conservation. Participants are college freshman and sophomores, the program is designed to introduce these underrepresented groups to careers in wildlife conservation.

Process

1. Each year in October and November each Region will send out a call of intern requests. This request comes from your regional Diversity and Civil Rights office or regional youth coordinator.
2. 50% or 100% of funding for these interns is typically covered by Regional Offices.
3. Once you request an intern, your request will be turned over an SCA contact who will work with you to post and recruit for the opportunity.
4. The field station/program works with SCA to identify how many students are requested and the time period, and SCA provides candidates to the field supervisor.
5. The supervisor(s) interview and select participants.
6. New CDIP interns are required to take a 1 week orientation where they are introduced to mentors and work learn the basic mission of the FWS.
7. Interns then travel to stations for a 12-week work/learning experience on a station.
8. As part of the program the students must blog or create a capstone video about their experience.

To learn more about this program you can check out their video capstone projects on the [USFWS YouTube Channel](#).



Wilderness Fellows (*American Conservation Experience*)

The Wilderness Fellows initiative was established by the Service, the U.S. National Park Service, and the U.S. Forest Service to advance wilderness stewardship while providing an opportunity for wilderness advocates and young professionals to gain valuable career experience. The Wilderness Fellows initiative provides on-the-ground support to help permanent staff integrate wilderness character into monitoring, planning, and management. For each wilderness, Fellows collect and compile data to produce baseline assessments of local wilderness character that address the special and unique qualities of each wilderness and assist Service staff improve wilderness stewardship.

Process

1. Wilderness Fellows have been SCA interns funded and coordinated through national agreements by the National Resource Program Office in Ft. Collins, Colorado. For more information about this program, contact the Service's Wilderness Coordinator, Nancy Roeper

National Wildlife Refuge System and National Fish Hatcheries Friends Groups

Regional and by Field Station level Agreement

Friends groups closely associated with Hatcheries and Refuges can be an important partner for youth hires. Depending on the Friends group they could offer funding for these positions, recruitment, and supervision.

Tips

- Ensure than when drafting or updating your Friends groups Partnership Agreements you should identify themselves as a Public Land Corps partner, so students who work with the Service through Friends can be eligible for the PLC's non-competitive appointment eligibility.
- If the Service will be granting funds for the youth hire you will have to ensure you follow the proper financial assistance processes.

Regional Youth Coordinators

[Link to Service Youth Coordinator Contacts](#)

Appendix A: Youth Play, Serve, Learn, Work Contact Directory

USFWS Youth Coordination Team
Recruiters
Regional Youth Coordinators
NCTC

Appendix B: List of Youth Hire Partners by State

State	Partner Name
ALABAMA	Greening Youth Foundation
ALASKA	American Conservation Experience
	Anchorage Park Foundation YEP
	Barrow Arctic Science Consortium
	Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District
	Student Conservation Association
	Kuskowim Native Association
ARIZONA	American Conservation Experience
	Student Conservation Association
	University of AZ
	Northern AZ University
ARKANSAS	Student Conservation Association
CALIFORNIA	San Joaquin Regional Conservation Corps
	Humboldt State
	River Partners Inc.
COLORADO	American Conservation Experience
	Arrupe Corporate Work Study Program
	Groundwork Denver
	Mile High Youth Corps
	Southwest Conservation Corps
	Student Conservation Association
CONNECTICUT	Northwoods Stewardship Center
DELAWARE	University of Delaware
FLORIDA	Ding Darling Wildlife Society
	Merritt Island Wildlife Association
	Student Conservation Association
	Greening Youth Foundation
	Friends of Arthur R Marxhall Loxahatchee NWR
	Friends of Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge
	Friends of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee NWR
	Panama Ecological Partner Organization
	Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation
GEORGIA	Student Conservation Association
	University of Georgia
HAWAII	AmeriCorps
IDAHO	Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge
	Salmon Valley Stewardship
ILLINOIS	AmeriCorps
	Student Conservation Association
	McHenry County Conservation District
	Iowa Natural Heritage
INDIANA	Student Conservation Association
	Oregon State University

	Texas Tech University
	University of South Florida
IOWA	Student Conservation Association
	Friends of Neal Smith NWR
KANSAS	Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa
	Student Conservation Association
LOUISIANA	American Conservation Experience
	Student Conservation Association
	Greening Youth Foundation
	Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute
MAINE	AmeriCorps
	National Audubon Society
	Student Conservation Association
	University of Maine, Sparrow Research
	USDA APHIS Wildlife Services
	The Nature Conservancy
	University of Maine
	Maine Audubon
MARYLAND	AmeriCorps
	Student Conservation Association
	Delmarva RC&D
	National Aquarium and Living Classroom Foundation
	Western Maryland Research and Conservation Development Council
MASSACHUSETTS	Student Conservation Association
	Vermont Institute of Natural Science
MICHIGAN	Seney Natural History Association
	Student Conservation Association
MINNESOTA	American Conservation Experience
	Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa
	Student Conservation Association
	Refuge Friends Inc
	Friends of the Rydell Refuge Association
	Itasca Community College
	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
	Viterbo University
	Minnesota State University Mankato
	Conservation Corps of Iowa and Minnesota/Americorps
	U of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
	Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa
	Great River Greening
MISSISSIPPI	Student Conservation Association
	Greening Youth Foundation
MISSOURI	Student Conservation Association
	City of Columbia Missouri

	National Great Rivers and Research Educational Center
MONTANA	Montana Conservation Corps
	Student Conservation Association
NEBRASKA	Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa
NEW HAMPSHIRE	Northwoods Stewardship Center
	Student Conservation Association
	Audubon Society of NH
NEW JERSEY	Student Conservation Association
NEW MEXICO	American Conservation Experience
	Student Conservation Association
	National Park Service
NEW YORK	Saint Michaels College
	Student Conservation Association
	SUNY Buffalo
	Buffalo State College
	SUNY Brockport
	Canisius College
	SUNY Fredonia
	University of North Carolina Wilmington
NORTH DAKOTA	Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa
	Student Conservation Association
OHIO	Student Conservation Association
OKLAHOMA	American Conservation Experience
	Student Conservation Association
	Murray State College
	Southwestern Oklahoma State University
OREGON	American Conservation Experience
	Friends of Ridgefield
	Northwest Youth Corps
	Shoreline Education for Awareness
	Friends of Willamette Valley
	OR Watershed Enhancement Board
	St. Joseph the Worker Corp
	YMCA of Klamath Falls
	Friends of Malheur NWR
PENNSYLVANIA	Student Conservation Association
RHODE ISLAND	Student Conservation Association
	Providence Department of Parks and Recreation and Partnership for Providence Parks
	Providence Department of Parks and Recreation
SOUTH CAROLINA	American Conservation Experience
	Student Conservation Association
SOUTH DAKOTA	Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa
TENNESSEE	Student Conservation Association
TEXAS	AmeriCorps

	Student Conservation Association
	Job Corps
	Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Internship
	Southwestern OK St Univ.
	Texas A&M
	New Mexico State University
	Stephen F. Austin State University
	Cochise College
	NM State University
UTAH	Student Conservation Association
	Utah State University
VERMONT	Student Conservation Association
	The Wildlife Society
VIRGINIA	AmeriCorps
	Student Conservation Association
	Princeton University
	Fairfax Families 4 Kids
	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
WASHINGTON	AmeriCorps
	Friends of Ridgefield
	Northwest Youth Corps
	Student Conservation Association
WEST VIRGINIA	AmeriCorps
WISCONSIN	AmeriCorps
	Student Conservation Association
	University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point
	Northland College
	Bayfield County Land and Water Conservation Dept
	UW-Stevens Point and Friends of St Croix WMD
WYOMING	Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa
	Student Conservation Association
PUERTO RICO	Student Conservation Association

Appendix C: Pathways Resources

EXAMPLE – SUPERVISORS EVALUATION OF THE PATHWAYS CAREER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Student's Name Work Period Dates:
Location:

Rating Scale: (Place a rating number in the block beside each rating element below. Use the space below each element to explain the rating. Include recommendations for improvement, if appropriate. If possible, please type your responses.

1= Outstanding 2=Excellent 3=Satisfactory 4=Marginal
5=Unsatisfactory 6=No Opportunity to Evaluate

1. Student uses good judgment interpreting and following policies; recognizes when there is a need for departures from usual procedures. Rating: _____
2. The student had good liaison with colleagues; assists others whenever appropriate; gives competent and complete assistance; gains the confidence of others; pleasant and courteous. Rating: _____
3. Student exhibits effective communication skills; is responsive to requests for help; gets the point across professionally and cordially; asks questions when necessary to understand instructions. Rating: _____
4. Student is not afraid to make decisions and learn from failures; decisions are based on facts or sound judgment; accepts responsibility for decisions made. Rating: _____
5. The student obtains the necessary information to write effective, concise communications; reader can follow the thoughts and come to the intended conclusion. Rating: _____
6. The student acts timely on all assigned tasks; willingly does assignments to the best of his/her abilities. Rating: _____
7. The student readily accepts new or different tasks and adapts to new situations; knows when to seek assistance or support. Rating: _____
8. The student's work is neat, well arranged, easy to follow; manages time efficiently and effectively. Rating: _____
9. The student sees relationships among factors and comes up with good and workable ideas; cuts through procedural obstacles; develops workable end-products. Rating: _____
10. All the assigned tasks to the student were completed by the date agreed to by student trainee and supervisor. Rating: _____

11. The student meets the quality standards agreed to by the student trainee and supervisor.
Rating: _____

12. The student shows dedication to fish and wildlife resource management. Rating:

Is the student completing his/her last work assignment before graduation?
NO _____ (complete Sec. A below) Yes _____ (complete Sec. B below)

A. Do you recommend this student be retained in the Pathways Internship Program?

If yes, do you have any recommendations for future assignments, training, or academic study that would better prepare the student for future positions within the service? Identify specific strengths and weaknesses.

B. Does this student trainee have the potential to become a successful career service employee in the selected occupational field?
Yes _____ No _____ (Please explain why or why not)

This evaluation has been discussed with the student:

Student Signature Date

Supervisor's Signature Date

Youth Coordinator Signature Date

EXAMPLE: REGION 3 PATHWAYS TEMP INTERN EVALUATION

TO: RATING OFFICIAL

Please evaluate the student employee's performance for each of the listed areas which are applicable. The evaluation helps determine whether or not the student should be retained or considered for future opportunities under the Pathways Program. To the extent appropriate, discuss the evaluation with the student and furnish them with feedback. The completed evaluation should be included with the other nomination materials, and forwarded to your Refuge Supervisor with a copy also sent to the Regional Youth Coordinator.

Rate **overall performance**: Rate: 1^{Poor} through 5^{Excellent} (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Briefly Explain:

EMPLOYEE NAME: _____

EMPLOYEE POSITION: _____

EMPLOYEE Grade Level: _____

OF FWS FIELD SEASONS EMPLOYEE HAS HAD (THIS APPT. INCLUDED): _____

EMPLOYEE Projected Graduation Date: _____

DATE OF THIS WORK PERIOD: FROM _____ **TO** _____

STATION: _____

SUPERVISOR: _____

1. Employee has a strong work ethic and completes assigned tasks in a timely manner. Employee also takes initiative on tasks that have not been directly assigned, but need to be completed.

Rate: 1^{Poor} through 5^{Excellent} (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) N/A

Briefly Explain and/or Provide Examples:

2. Participates fully as part of the refuge team in a variety of disciplines and work effectively with co-workers, partners, and the public.

Rate: 1^{Poor} through 5^{Excellent} (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) N/A

Briefly Explain and/or Provide Examples:

3. Ability to effectively communicate.

Rate: 1^{Poor} through 5^{Excellent} (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) N/A

Briefly Explain and/or Provide Examples:

4. The degree in which this person learned and developed over the course of this appointment.

Rate: 1^{Poor} through 5^{Excellent} (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) N/A

Briefly Explain and/or Provide Examples:

5. Would you rehire this individual? yes no

Briefly Explain:

Is nominee a veteran? Yes No Don't know

Do you believe the selection of this individual would help R3 meet its diversity goals? For more information on R3 diversity goals, please refer to the attached R3 Diversity Scorecard.

Yes No Don't know

Briefly explain:

Would you recommend this person to a temporary or career Pathways internship? If so, please check the appropriate box below. If they are not ready for Pathways, please explain areas that they may need to focus on for improvement below. If you are recommending them for a career Pathways internship, you must submit a written justification signed by the Project Leader (*Attach to this evaluation*).

	Temporary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Career	
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Things to keep in mind when recommending an individual for Pathways:

- Is the student highly proficient at teamwork, willingness to try new things, initiative, enthusiasm, motivation, positive attitude, work ethic, problem solving skills?
- Are they enrolled in school at least half-time (as defined by the school)?
- What year are they in school?
- Will they have enough time to complete the required 640 hours of field work?
- Do they have good grades?
- Are they in an accredited school?
- What career do they see themselves in?
- Do they envision a career in the Fish and Wildlife Service?
- Are they willing to be mobile, especially in the first stages of their career?
- Do they want to be in Pathways?

Briefly explain what your candidate should focus on to be ready for Pathways:

I have discussed this evaluation with the individual.

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

DATE _____

PROJECT LEADER SIGNATURE

DATE _____

Route to:

Individual Development Plan for SCEP students

The attached information should be used by the supervisor and SCEP as the Individual Development Plan and to provide 'teaching moments.' All items included may not necessarily be completed at the station due to lack of opportunity. Additionally, not all activities will be appropriate or pertinent to a student's field of study. However, supervisors should strive to work with the SCEP to expose them to as many types of work as possible. In some cases, this objective may only be accomplished by providing opportunity to travel off-site.

The responsibilities of the SCEP and the supervisor are as follows:

SCEP Employee:

- Take responsibility for career and personal development, particularly pertaining to coursework needed for a permanent Service position in their chosen field
- Communicate expectations and goals to immediate supervisor
- Understand the guiding principles of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS)
- Understand the missions of the NWRS and the Fish and Wildlife Service
- Provide your supervisor a written review of your experiences and perspectives at the end of each field season
- Provide updated transcript and student status information to Human Resources in a timely fashion when requested
- Attend SCEP workshops

Supervisor:

- Maintain communications with the SCEP employee and clearly articulate expectations
- Serve as a mentor to the employee
- Work with the employee to ensure a well-written IDP is completed
- Model behavior demonstrating commitment to the Service and NWRS missions
- Offer the employee opportunities for training, temporary assignments, and details to other field stations and offices to enhance development
- Objectively evaluate the employee's performance and suitability for conversion to the Service workforce

Pathways Participant Agreement

Appendix D: Youth Web Resources

<http://youthgo.gov/>

<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/youth/index.html>

<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/youth/ycc.html>)

Appendix E: Recruitment Fliers for Youth Programs