

# Youth For Change Program Handbook

February 2019

Duration: This handbook is effective until superseded or removed.

Approved: Hans Keifer -Director Date Approved: 22/2/2019

## **About Youth For Change:**

The goal of our program is to equip participants with life skills and work experience by employing them in a variety of projects. Some of those projects include:

Constructing, maintaining or repairing hiking trails, restoration of natural areas, park construction or repair, trash removal and general clean up of natural areas.

## **Program Mission:**

is to provide young adults with opportunities for success through job skills training, education, teamwork and work experience with an emphasis on conservation and projects that benefit the community and the environment.

## **About this Reference Handbook:**

The goal of this Handbook is to provide consistency between Trails For Change NGO staff, the agencies and partners responsible for implementing the Youth For Change (YFC) Program and to provide guidance in the establishment and operations of the YFC Program throughout these partners.

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## **1. YFC Objectives**

The objectives of the Youth For Change program (YFC) are to:

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1. Accomplish needed conservation work on public and private lands in Armenia and Artsakh.
2. Provide gainful employment for 18- through 26-year old males and females in Armenia and Artsakh.
3. Develop an understanding and appreciation of the Nation's natural environment and heritage in participating youths.
4. The program will consist of 2- 6-week sessions beginning in 2019.
5. Each session will have 8-10 participants with one supervisor and one assistant.

## 2. Policy

Provide YFC members with opportunities to enhance self-dignity, promote self-discipline, and build lasting cultural bridges between youths from various social and economic backgrounds and of varying physical abilities while fostering knowledge of the environment and natural resources conservation. The YFC program shall partner with various public agency or organization or any private non-profit agency or organization. The YFC program includes an environmental education component and are open to diverse youth, and provide paid natural and cultural resources hands-on work experience.

## 3. Responsibility

Trails For Change NGO has the overall responsibility for the Volunteers and Service program of work, including YFC.

## 4. Project Managers and Camp Directors

It is the responsibility of the Project Manager or Camp Director to implement all project activities, including the supervision of staff personnel. If the YFC program is to will be conducted through a partnership agreement, representatives of the partner organization may perform these functions with oversight by Trails For Change NGO staff.

## 5. Program Financing

The program is to be funded through grants, sponsors, donors, and paid projects.

## 6. Program Structure and Implementation

YFC programs will be structured either as non-residential or residential. Non-residential programs provide paid daytime work activities with members living in their own lodging and commuting to the project sites. Residential programs offer accommodation and meals to enrollees 4 to 7 nights per week, typically in a group living arrangement such as a homestay or camping, as well as pay participants for daytime work activities.

1. Trails For Change NGO will conduct the non-residential programs. Partner organizations at times may take responsibility for the non-residential programs.
  - a. Members live locally, providing their own lodging.

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Daytime paid work projects are conducted by the YFC program or partner organization.

c. Members report to the YFC crew lead or the partner organization to begin the workday.

e. Projects will include overnight “spike” camp situations if warranted by project location, such as in remote villages and wilderness areas. Overnight camping must consist of on-site supervision and provision of meals to members.

2. Trails For Change NGO will conduct the residential programs. Partner organizations at times may take responsibility for the residential programs.

Private owned facilities can be utilized for residential programs.

Cost of food and lodging will be included in program costs.

c. On-site supervision must be provided during non-work hours by Trails For Change NGO or partner organization.d. Meals must be provided, or food provided if cooking facilities are available in the residential facility. Cost of meals/food will be included in program costs.

e. YFC members may bring and be responsible for maintaining their own bedding, towels, toiletries, and other personal items for use during the program.

## 7. YFC Partnerships

Trails For Change NGO may partner with government entities, private parties, and non-profit entities to conduct, expand, or enhance their YFC program. Program funding can be leveraged with partner cost-sharing.

## 8. Outreach and Recruitment

Thoughtfully planned and executed outreach and recruitment activities at the National, Regional, and local levels are essential to the implementation of the YFC program. Market the YFC program broadly to constituents in the communities that host YFC programs. Partnerships with other local youth-serving agencies and programs will leverage additional resources while increasing awareness about YFC opportunities. Trails For Change NGO leadership and staff are advised to adhere to the following guidelines to maximize cooperation with our many stakeholders and achieve priorities relative to Cultural Transformation and youth employment.

1. For economy and efficiency, where partners share a common recruitment area, local Program Managers should work to combine recruitment efforts and jointly select the YFC members.

Carry out coordinated recruitment efforts within the area of existing projects or camps through local school systems, , and other local resources.

Ensure the YFC program is open and made known to all eligible youth within the project area and outreach efforts generate a diverse pool of YFC applicants.

Outreach and recruitment should generally be conducted January through April 15 to ensure extensive outreach occurred and selected YFC members are on-boarded and engaged on vital projects in mid-spring and summer months. Regional leadership may adjust scheduling to accommodate unique needs or circumstances.

## 9. Selection

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1. YFC applicants must:

- a. Be at least 18 years of age when enrolled in the program.
- b. Be citizens or permanent residents of Armenia or Artsakh
- c. Have no history of serious criminal activity or other antisocial behavior that might jeopardize their safety or that of others.
- d. Be able to participate fully in the activities of the YFC program. Include youth with disabilities who can attend with or without reasonable accommodations.
- e. Be willing and able to participate for the duration of the local YFC program.

Not be considered for enrollment if they previously enrolled in the program, unless they are selected as crew leaders or an exception to the selection criteria has been granted.

In sparsely populated areas, if it is difficult to find enough eligible applicants who have not previously been in the YFC program. In this case, past members may apply for a second term.

## 10. Pay

Schedule YFC members for up to a 40-hour work week. The typical work week will be 5- 8 hour days, but in some cases, members may work 4- 10 hour days per week.

Pay YCC members minimum wage.

Pay YCC members for the actual hours worked and for holidays. Crew leader shall record all absences from work for personal reasons or illness in the weekly time-sheets.

Pay crew leaders assigned additional responsibilities an additional 15 percent above the selected rate.

## 11. Work Program and Environmental Awareness

1. Plan YFC projects to accomplish needed resource work and to provide approximately 4 hours of environmental and cultural learning per week. Follow a local work-planning document for planning and approving YFC work activities. Expand project plans to include environmental and cultural learning objectives. Environmental learning hours per week can instead take the form of one full day per two weeks of the program.

2. Upon completion of the YFC program, YFC members should understand the work projects and their overall benefits and impacts on the natural resource environment and understand the interrelation of the social, cultural, and environmental elements.

3. Keep YFC members together in crews when possible to help maintain program character and identity; however, YFC members may be assigned to other teams when there are fewer than four YFC members in a project crew. Encourage integration of YFC members into diverse work projects. When practical and beneficial for the YFC members and the project integrate YFC members into plans with other youth-oriented program participants if available.

4. Supervision ratio of YFC members to Supervisor shall be no greater than 8 YFC members to 1 Supervisor.

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Document accomplishments, YFC member hours engaged on project activities by project area, and the costs expended to implement each YFC project including matching funds if the program is operated through a partnership agreement.

## **12. Safety**

Safety is the highest priority for enrollees and staff on YFC projects. All enrollees will receive appropriate safety equipment and training before beginning any project or new task, and crew leaders will assure that enrollees work carefully throughout the project. Partner YFC organizations shall adhere to safety standards and document safety practices for their program.

1. Prioritize and emphasize safety in the YFC program.
2. Provide all YFC members a safe work environment, appropriate training, adequate sanitary facilities, and the personal protective equipment required for the work to be done.

## **13. Uniforms and Program Materials**

1. The following materials may be distributed but are not required:
  - a. YFC brochures.
  - b. Tee shirts
  - c. Water bottles, other safety items.
  - d. YFC patches.
  - e. Leader bar patches.
  - f. Decals.

End