

STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

GRANT APPLICATION 2025

YOUTH INCLUSION INITIATIVE (YII)

Announcement Date: January 9, 2025 Questions Due Date: January 23, 2025 Informational Webinar: January 30, 2025 Application Due Date: February 20, 2025



YOUTH INCLUSION INITIATIVE (YII) Request for Application – 2025

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A. NAME OF GRANT APPLICATION

Youth Inclusion Initiative (YII)

B. PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) offers the YII to support building a diverse and inclusive green workforce. The YII provides opportunities for underrepresented and underserved youth, aged 16-20 with a desire to learn about the protection and conservation of New Jersey's air, land, and water. YII focuses on communities that have limited access to open space and natural lands, furthering DEP's intentional approach to diversity and inclusion efforts. DEP is also offering the YII to advance key elements of the Council on the Green Economy's Green Jobs for a Sustainable Future report. The YII provides a partnership opportunity for Community Host Organizations (CHO) to recruit, supervise, and provide youth with professional development services and a stipend while the DEP exposes youth to hands on interactive activities and indoor introduction to various careers (which can include PowerPoint presentation and speakers) activities which aim to provide guidance for environmental career pathways. While the youth will be learning during the program, this is not a summer camp but, a stipend job opportunity for the youth to participate in. Additionally, the DEP partners with private, public, and nonprofit entities that volunteer their time to the youth to provide additional points of exposure. By offering this program with all our partners, the DEP seeks to develop technical skills and awareness for careers in environmental protection, conservation, and sustainability for youth across the state.

C. AVAILABLE FUNDING

DEP's maximum grant award per CHO is \$100,000 (including \$5,000 for Community Based Project). DEP will select a maximum of 10 CHOs for this year. While the primary goal of this program is to engage and educate youth in overburdened communities, DEP must also be good stewards of State funding. As such we are seeking application costs that are reasonable and appropriately allocated to the administration of the program.

D. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Qualifications/Experience: The CHO should include information relevant to their qualifications and ability to perform the work required under this Grant. Any experience administering similar programs should be highlighted. The CHO should have experience in providing job training, academic enrichment, and/or workforce development initiatives. The CHOs should describe in detail the community project they plan on completing with the youth. The cohorts can be tailored to youth at any educational level from high school to college students.

Environmental Justice Considerations: It is required the CHO location and Youth Participation outreach areas target one of New Jersey's overburdened communities that meets at least two of the three overburdened community criteria: 1) percentage low income, 2) minority and 3) limited English proficiency. In addition, the location must be an Urban Aid Municipality. Please see <u>Attachment 1</u> for a listing of qualified municipalities.

E. PROGRAM SERVICES

Starting in 2021, the YII was inspired by the Civilian Conservation Corps to reach youth through environmental conservation skills development in DEP's Parks program. Now going into the 5th summer, the YII has expanded to include nearly every DEP program area, in addition to partnering

with the New Jersey Department of Labor. Participating youth, aged 16-20, learn about environmental management and regulation, tour facilities, engage in hands-on activities; each day is crafted individually to demonstrate careers in DEP program areas. New Jersey's DEP includes programs from the Federal agencies of EPA and Department of Interior, which translate to DEP program areas including Air, Energy and Materials Sustainability Program, Site Remediation and Waste Management, Watershed and Land Management, Community Investment & Economic Revitalization, Water Resources Management, State Parks, Forests & Historic Sites, and Fish & Wildlife. So, each day has a separate and distinct experience for the youth's exposure; these points of exposure include touring a water treatment plant; monitoring community air quality, participating in the urban fishing education program, immersing themselves in water monitoring and stream assessments, and identifying invasive plant species.

F. PROCEDURES FOR ELIGIBLE ENTITIES TO APPLY

- Submit a complete application through the NJDEP electronic grants management system known as the System of Administering Grants Electronically or SAGE. The SAGE portal can be found here: <u>https://njdepsage.intelligrants.com</u>. The application found in SAGE will include the following pages, all of which must be completed in their entirety, or the system will not allow you to submit the application.
 - a. CHO Information
 - i. This is where you will provide information about your organization including location and the appropriate points of contact.
 - b. Program Proposal
 - i. This form includes several open-ended questions to include:
- **Outreach Area:** It is required the CHO location and Youth Participation outreach areas target one of New Jersey's overburdened communities that meets at least two of the three overburdened community criteria: 1) percentage low income, 2) minority and 3) limited English proficiency. In addition, the location must be an Urban Aid Municipality.
- Qualifications/Experience: The CHO should include information relevant to their qualifications and ability to perform the work required under this Grant. Any experience administering similar programs should be highlighted. The CHO should have experience in providing job training, academic enrichment, and/or workforce development initiatives. The CHOs should describe in detail the community project they plan on completing with the youth. The cohorts can be tailored to youth at any educational level from high school to college students.
- Approach: The CHO should indicate how they intend to meet the requirements of the Grant; Outreach, Recruitment, Dedicated supervisory support services, Professional job training, and post-program employment opportunities for the youth. The CHO's understanding of the Grant intended objectives, specifically the nature of the required work and the level of effort necessary to successfully complete the contract. Please note a majority of the draft curriculum is provided below, and suggestions can include additional programming and events, but the actual curriculum will be determined by conversations between the DEP Program Coordinator and the CHO Site Coordinator. The CHO plan should also include dedicated supervisor commitment and reliable transportation.

- Youth Recruitment Plan NJ residents between the ages of 16-20 with a desire to learn about the protection and conservation of New Jersey's air, land, and water. (youth must be 16 by first day of the program) The participants will be compensated via a stipend to participate in the 6week program. CHOs are encouraged to recruit youth from recommendations of local schoolteachers who know what youth might be a good fit for the program. The youth should be curious and willing to learn new things and comfortable being photographed during the program. While there is not a maximum number of youths that can participate in the program, CHO's should be aware of the maximum budget per region and ensure their application reflects a reasonable management and administration strategy for their proposed number of youth participants. Each CHO will have varying limitations on the number of youths they can effectively manage. While the recommended group size is 10 youth, the permissible range is between 8 and 12 youth per CHO. Any youth who has already participated in the YII program in the previous years will not be allowed to participate again. Media consent is mandatory for all youth to participate in this program (form). The youth and their parent (if they are minor) must be informed of this during the hiring process as photos or videos of the youth are taken throughout the entire program and are shared via social media and other potential media exposure and website use. The youth final presentations will also be live streamed for DEP employees to watch. Additionally, CHOs are recommended to hold Orientation Day prior to July 7 where they review CHO employee handbook in addition to DEP Code of Conducts requirements (section H) so the youth are aware of the expectations they will need to meet to participate in this program.
- **Community Project:** \$5,000 of the grant award will be reserved for CHOs to choose and work with youth on community-based projects related to physically improving the environment. In your proposal, the project scope must be thoroughly detailed. This includes specifying the implementation site, whether it be your own property or through partnerships with schools, municipalities, or local parks departments. Clearly outline the particulars of any partnerships you have established. Additionally, ensure that the project is conducted in a municipality where the majority of the youth reside. Some examples of the projects are **rain gardens, storm water drain painting, community gardens, community clean-up, etc. planting in the community,** etc. These projects will be the full responsibility of CHOs and the youth; however, the DEP can offer environmental guidance. In the application, please include a detailed plan using the following format:
 - Project Goal and Description
 - Address(es) of the project
 - List of supplies and their estimated costs
 - Project Plan
 - Community Days Plan for Weeks 2 through 6
 - For each Monday indicated what do you expect to do and what needs to be completed to stay on track?
- **Cost Considerations:** While the primary goal of this program is to engage and educate youth in overburdened communities, DEP must also be good stewards of State funding. As such we are

seeking application costs that are reasonable and appropriately allocated to the administration of the program. DEP's maximum grant award per CHO is \$100,000 (including \$5,000 for Community Based Project).

- Lunch and Breakfast for Youth: DEP does not provide meals to the Youth Participants. CHOs must provide meals (breakfast and/or lunch) for the Youth Participants and include the estimated cost for such meals here. A specific amount of funding is allocated for breakfast and lunch. CHOs have the option to combine these funds to purchase one meal and snacks or smoothies for the entire day, if they prefer. Site locations are typically distant from take-out food options, and healthy pre-made options are preferred. Lunch must be brought to the location at the start of the day, so the day is not interrupted with ordering and picking up lunch during the short lunch break. CHOs and youth cannot expect to use DEP microwave to warm up their food and should arrange for this accordingly (ex: purchasing/renting a hot box). CHOs are encouraged to talk to the youth and develop a meal plan that works for all the youth. The youth must be fed every day to ensure their safety and well-being during the participation of the program is maintained.
- Flexibility: The driving company should be informed in advance that field visit locations may change due to weather or safety concerns. While DEP aims to minimize changes, some adjustments are sometimes necessary for safety reasons. Transportation accommodation should be prepare as needed. Costs included under this category will only be wages paid to a driver(s). Additional transportation expenses (gas, tolls, and vehicle maintenance) are allowable and can be included as part of the Travel Allowance budget category. Transportation vehicles and their drivers must be available for transport for the full day for the following days: July August. Additional Information below.
- **Travel Allowance:** CHO's have the option to provide their own transportation for the Youth Participants. This budget category considers the cost of transportation including gas, tolls, and vehicle maintenance. When determining the travel allowance, please note it should be based off the federal General Services Administration (GSA) mileage rate, which for 2024 is 67 cents per mile. The mileage rate may change for 2025, which will be reflected in the budget.
- Organization Overhead (Indirect Costs): Organization Overhead or Indirect Costs are those costs that will be incurred for common or joint objectives and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective. Examples of organization overhead include administrative salaries, leadership salaries, unexpected expenses, building rental expenses, miscellaneous materials and supplies for youth (ex: clothing, shoes, electronics, water bottles, sun hats, etc.), accounting and legal expenses, and office expenses. For the purposes of the YII, organization overhead/indirect costs should be no more than 10% of the total of all budget categories and it cannot include \$5000 dollars allocated for Community Project.
- Attend Mandatory Supervisory Training and Weekly Check-ins: CHOs leadership will ensure all supervisors and assistant supervisors attend one day of mandatory in-person training (not virtual) and another half day of virtual training during the month of June which is provided by DEP. All supervisors and team leaders are required to check-in with DEP Program Coordinator on Professional Development Days.

- **Professional Development Day:** CHOs provide resume writing, cover letter writing assistance, journal prompts, tools and supplies needed for the youth to work on their final projects, and other professional development materials. CHOs are encouraged to bring in their own guest speakers depending on the interest of their youth, which can include speakers who hold resume and cover letter workshops, speaker who addresses softer communication skills development, financial literacy workshop, etc. If you are planning on bringing your own guest speakers, this should be described in the application.
- CHO Site Supervisor: This person will be the central point of contact at the CHO for the YII project during the 6-week summer program period. The supervisor will be the site supervisor during DEP program days and will work directly with the DEP Program Coordinator. It is expected that the person selected for this role will be in place for 8 weeks. They will have to attend mandatory in-person training for one day in June 2025 and are responsible to maintain good communication with the DEP Program Coordinator throughout the program and for regularly scheduled check in calls. This person should be a dedicated person who is able and willing to provide positive mentorship, supervision, and encouragement throughout the program. This person should be organized to provide a proper structure the youth need for this program to be fully successful. CHOs should carefully select supervisors who will serve as positive leaders for the youth. It is essential to have contingency plans for addressing any issues with supervisor behavior or interactions with DEP. DEP reserves the right to request the removal of a supervisor who is not aligned with the program's goals.
- **Communication and Program Evaluation:** After the completion of the program, meet with DEP to provide feedback on the overall program so DEP can build upon successes and learn from challenges identified during the program.

• Deliverables

CHOs must follow the below schedule for deliverables as part of the grant award.

- Supervisor Full Names, Email Address, and Cell Phone number Deadline June 2, 2025
- Youth Full Names Deadline July 2, 2025
- Mandatory Youth and Supervisor Media Consent Form uploaded to DEP designated folder Deadline July 7, 2025
- Upload Resume to DEP designated folder End of day July 25, 2025
- Upload Cover Letter to DEP designated folder End of day August 1, 2025
- Youth Electronic Survey and Journaling Due Fridays for Weeks 1 through 5
- CHO Supervisor Upload photos to DEP designated folders Due Fridays for Weeks 1 through 5
- Post Images on social media regularly and tag DEP Ongoing throughout Week 1 through 6
- Please read Section J and incorporate your level of understanding and commitment to the items listed in Section J in your application. For instance, if you have ideas for professional development day that do not include DEP provided guest speakers, journal prompts, etc. please include alternative plans for professional development day.

G. EVALUATION CRITERIA

For evaluation purposes, CHOs will be ranked from lowest to highest based on the total application submitted in response to this grant. Our assessment will focus on the balance between cost and the services offered, rather than merely distinguishing between high and low bids. CHOs will be evaluated based on their qualifications/experience, approach, youth recruitment plan, supervisor recruitment plan, and budget.

H. CODE OF CONDUCT

Participants in the YII are expected to adhere to the following Code of Conduct set by DEP. As part of our commitment to fostering an inclusive, productive, respectful, and safe environment, we have established a Code of Conduct that all participants are expected to adhere to throughout the duration of the program. This Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behavior we expect, if any youth, supervisor, or driver fails to comply with the Code, DEP may request the CHO to terminate the participant or supervisors' employment.

Youth Code of Conduct

- **Substance Use:** Participants must refrain from vaping, using marijuana or other drugs, or smoking while actively participating in the program. This policy applies to all areas, including state parks, bathrooms, partner locations, and during transportation.
- **Cell Phone Usage:** Excessive cell phone use is not permitted during speaker presentations and activities. While taking photos is allowed, disrespectful usage—such as web browsing, personal calls, excessive texting, or excessive social media use—is unacceptable. CHOs should inform participants during the hiring process that phones may be collected during activities and returned at lunchtime if usage is not controlled.
- **Punctuality:** Being on time is crucial for ensuring that field visits and other scheduled activities run smoothly. Since this is a paid position, punctuality is essential.
- Attendance: Frequent absences or failure to show up for scheduled shifts can lead to termination.
- **Respectful Environment and Language:** A respectful environment must be maintained throughout the program. This includes showing respect to peers, CHO supervisors, DEP staff, and guest speakers. Derogatory behavior, foul language, or insults directed towards any protected class of citizens will not be tolerated.
- **Communication:** Regular and effective communication with the CHO supervisor is required. Failure to communicate properly, resulting in disruptions to the program, may be grounds for termination.
- **Engagement:** Participants are expected to be actively engaged, ask questions, listen, and participate in all activities during DEP field visits. The success of the program depends on participants' interest in the material, active listening, willingness to participate, and openness to new experiences.

Supervisor Code of Conduct

• Maintaining a respectful environment is crucial throughout the program. This respect extends to interactions among the youth, DEP staff, guest speakers, and when collaborating with other CHOs, their youth, and their drivers. Derogatory behavior is not acceptable.

- Supervisors must ensure that all youth are accounted for during field visits and do not linger in hallways, bathrooms, or outside buildings.
- They should also model the behavior expected from the youth, including minimizing phone use, being respectful and punctual, staying present, actively listening, asking questions, willing to try new things, avoid excessive phone usage, and avoiding foul language.

Driver Code of Conduct

- CHO's are responsible for arranging transportation for Youth Participants. The CHO should ensure that their drivers adhere to the following guidelines:
 - **Idling:** Drivers must be instructed not to idle illegally on any state or federal property. Per NJDEP regulations vehicles are not allowed to idle for more than three minutes if they are not in motion, as a general rule.
 - Conduct: Drivers must maintain a respectful demeanor and avoid causing disturbances at DEP-hosted locations. Additionally, they should ensure they do not distract youth participants.
 - **Timeliness:** Punctuality is crucial to ensure that youth are able to participate in NJDEP days and arrive to locations on time. CHOs should have a contingency plan in place for transportation in case the driver is unavailable due to illness or an emergency.

I. APPLICATION DEADLINE

In order to be considered for an award, applications must be submitted to NJDEP through SAGE by 5 p.m. on February 20, 2025. Interested applicants can submit written questions to <u>Priya.Ratanpara@dep.nj.gov</u> by January 23, 2025, and the answers will be posted on YII website on

January 30, 2025. DEP will hold an informational webinar on January 30, 2025, at 3 p.m., and afterwards a recording of the webinar will be posted on YII website. More information regarding the webinar can be found dep.nj.gov/yii/grant/.

J. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This below information is for your knowledge only and nothing needs to be done by the applicant at this time. The below information is to provide additional information about the YII; however, DEP reserves the right to add/remove any of the items in this section as needed.

Program Coordination with each CHO:

DEP will coordinate with each CHO to tailor the experience for each cohort. DEP will provide different activities scheduled for the youth for 6 weeks, which include DEP Scheduled days and Professional Development days.

For DEP Scheduled Days, typically Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, DEP will provide:

Weekly Curriculums which include activities from the following programs:

- 1. Parks
- 2. Fish & Wildlife (F&W)
- 3. Water Resource Management (WRM)
- 4. Air, Energy, Material and Sustainability (AEMS)

5. Community Investment and Economic Revitalization (CIER), Site Remediation (SR) and Water and Land Management (WLM)

For Professional Development Days DEP will provide:

- Guest Speakers
- Journal Prompts
- Human Resources Tips and Tricks
- Weekly touch point calls with Program Coordinator and CHO site supervisor
- Weekly surveys for youth

SCHEDULE:

April to June 2025

CHO leadership begins to work with DEP Program Coordinator and full-time staff at DEP to finalize program logistics. Each CHO may have different itineraries for their participants. This time will be used to work out the program details with the DEP Program Coordinator.

In addition, CHOs are required to hire one Site Supervisor dedicated to YII for the entire program. The Site Supervisor is also mandated to attend one day of in-person training and attend half a day of virtual training in the month of June. The in-person training will be at DEP Headquarters in Trenton. Training is provided to explain their roles and responsibilities within the program and to ensure its effectiveness. CHO leadership is required to hire youth and arrange transportation for the entirety of the program.

Recommended: CHOs to meet with youth to set expectations and explain logistics for reporting, time sheets, and other coordination prior to the start of the program.

Orientation Days (July 7 and 8)

July 7 – The paired CHOs will host an interactive activity for youth and supervisors of both organizations to get to know each other. On this day, the youth and supervisor(s) will also fill out mandatory media consent forms.

July 8 – Orientation for Youth participants. Sample sessions during orientation may include:

- Overview of DEP from Department's senior executive team.
- Key workshops for prohibiting discrimination, sexual harassment, and other key personnel material.
- Preparatory training in skills such as invasive species identification and health and safety overview.
- Overview of programs and projects.

Weeks 1-5: (Weekdays from July 9 to August 7)

Mondays will be reserved for "Community Project Days". The youth in partnership with the CHOs will work on one group community project of their choosing.

Each host organization will have a tailored program for the youth participants and their CHO site supervisor which will follow the below schedule:

- 3 days a week will be spent with DEP program areas which can include half day to full day with any of the below listed program areas on a given day. DEP reserves the right to add/remove any of the below program areas, as needed.
 - Air, Energy and Materials Sustainability Program (AEMS)
 - Site Remediation and Waste Management (SR)
 - Watershed and Land Management (WLM)
 - Community Investment & Economic Revitalization (CIER)
 - Water Resources Management (WRM)
 - State Parks, Forests & Historic Sites (Parks)
 - Fish & Wildlife (F&W)
 - o Climate Change
 - Geographic Information System (GIS)
 - Environmental Justice (EJ)

The youth and supervisors will need transportation for the entire day. CHOs are required to make sure the youth and their supervisor are at the designated locations for the entirety of the planned day, which can start as early as 8 a.m. and finish as late as 3:30 p.m. Travel time can be up to 2 hours each way.

Fridays (Weeks 2 to 4)

Fridays will be reserved for "Professional Development Days". Each Friday is dedicated to specific activities. However, all extra time should be spent on journaling, reflection, social media photo organization, and final projects.

- July 18 Guest Speaker and time to brainstorm on final projects.
- July 25– Resume development for youth and potential guest speakers. At end of the day, resumes must be sent to DEP and printed out for youth and time to work on final projects.
- August 1 Cover Letter development for youth and potential guest speakers. At end of the day, cover letters must be sent to DEP and printed out for youth and time to work on final projects.
- August 8– Potential guest speakers and time to work on final projects.

Professional Development Day activities will be at the host organization's locations and services will be provided as partnership by DEP and CHO.

Week 6: (August 11 to 15)

Monday (August 11)

This final Monday will be reserved for finalizing their community project.

Tuesday & Wednesday (August 12 & 13)

- Final Presentation rehearsal
- Group Mock-interview with Human Resources
- Career Fair with Human Resources

- Resume/Cover letter Review
- State Application Fill out
- Career Advice
- Guest Speakers

Thursday (August 14)

This day, the youth and community host organizations will reflect on the overall program, finish up any outstanding items and finalize their projects at the community host organizations.

Friday (August 15) Final Day

Youth participation concludes with culminating activity and closeout ceremony.

• AM

The youth will prepare one tabletop display either as a group or individual to be displayed in the Science Fair setting during the morning part of the day. Additionally, the youth will be given a chance to interact with DEP employees that they may have spent time with throughout the YII program CHOs, allowing additional time to network and learn about employment opportunities. Youth will be presented with various opportunities to continue their journey in career exposure after the program completion, including introductions to 2/4-year colleges, certificate programs, and vocational schools.

• PM

The final ceremony will include speeches by DEP leadership and an opportunity for youth to present their group presentation, highlight lessons learned and share their community project. The ceremony will conclude with a graduation ceremony. Supportive guests of the youth are invited, including parents/guardians and schoolteachers.

A sample schedule for the YII Program is shown below.

	CHOs Group 1 and 2	CHOs Group 3 and 4	CHOs Group 5 and 6	CHOs Group 7 and 8	CHOs Group 9 and 10	
Monday July 7	CHOs Orientation Day - Fill out forms and youth socializing activity (CHOs managed) - Must be joint activity with paired CHOs.					
Tuesday July 8	DEP Headquaters Orientation Day					
Wednesday July 9	F&W	WRM	Parks	AEMS	HPO+GA	
Thursday July 10	F&W	WRM	Parks	AEMS	SR + CIER	
Friday July 11	F&W	WRM	Parks	GIS+EJ+Climate Change	WLM	
Monday July 14	Previous week reflection and Community Project Day					
Tuesday July 15	HPO+GA	F&W	WRM	Parks	AEMS	
Wednesday July 16	SR + CIER	F&W	WRM	Parks	AEMS	
Thursday July 17	WLM	F&W	WRM	Parks	GIS+EJ+Climate Change	
Friday July 18	Professional Development Day					
Monday July 21	Community Project Day					
Tuesday July 22	AEMS	HPO+GA	F&W	WRM	Parks	
Wednesday July 23	AEMS	SR + CIER	F&W	WRM	Parks	
Thursday July 24	GIS+EJ+Climate Change	WLM	F&W	WRM	Parks	
Friday July 25	Professional Development Day					
Monday July 28	Community Project Day					
Tuesday July 29	Parks	AEMS	HPO+GA	F&W	WRM	
Wednesday July 30	Parks	AEMS	SR + CIER	F&W	WRM	
Thursday July 31	Parks	GIS+EJ+Climate Change	WLM	F&W	WRM	
Friday August 1	Professional Development Day					
Monday August 4	Community Project Day					
Tuesday August 5	WRM	Parks	AEMS	HPO+GA	F&W	
Wednesday August 6	WRM	Parks	AEMS	SR + CIER	F&W	
Thursday August 7	WRM	Parks	GIS+EJ+Climate Change	WLM	F&W	
Friday August 8	Professional Development Day					
Monday August 11	Community Project Day					
Tuesday August 12	DEP Headquarters - HR Activities and Final Project Rehearsal Day					
Wednesday Aug 13	DEP Headquarters Guest Speakers Day AM + HR Activities					
Thursday August 14	CHO Location - Time to reflect on the program					
Friday August 15	YII Final Day					