



Seattle
Parks & Recreation

A Path to Green Jobs for Youth

Healthy Environment Stories



Helping Seattle's youth grow up to be happy, healthy and productive adults has always been central to Seattle Parks and Recreation's (SPR) mission. Today, several programs for young people combine this focus with work on projects that provide benefits to the environment and encourage youth to follow a path to "green" jobs. The emphasis of several programs is on providing job skills and experience to youth of color, low-income youth and LGBTQ youth who are underrepresented in jobs that support the environment.

The **Youth Engaged in Service (YES) Program** provides 45-70 youth between the ages of 13 and 19 opportunities to learn about the world of work, to build skills, and to complete a project. The 12-week program, conducted after school and on Saturdays, requires that participants complete 65 hours of service, of which 30 can be used to fulfill the Seattle School District's service learning requirement, while the other 35 earn the participant a \$150 stipend.

Leadership in Equity, Environment and Facilitation (LEEF) is a unique environmental leadership program that provides teambuilding skills and environmental awareness to low-income youth, youth of color, and LGBTQ youth. This paid opportunity instills in the participants the importance of engaging with nature and caring for the environment. Youth navigate and then facilitate the use of SPR's 4H Challenge Course at Camp Long. The course uses a series of cables, platforms, posts, and ropes for personal development and team building. They also learn about social equity, public speaking, and leadership. Camp Long Education Program Supervisor Sheila Brown says, "We want to build a cadre of young leaders and increase their skills so they can find paid positions at other environmental education organizations."

One example is Tino Martinez, who completed the course and competed successfully for a Recreation Attendant position at SPR. "A teacher in a challenge course encouraged me to apply for LEEF, so I did," said Martinez. "The program, between the life skills training and the actual challenge course, showed me you're always able to grow as a person." Martinez is now a certified 4H low challenge course facilitator.

STEP (Student Teen Employment Preparation) is a summer program that provides teams of youth aged 14 to 19 the opportunity to respond to community needs. Many projects have taken place on SPR's golf courses. Participants who successfully complete the 120 hours receive a \$599 stipend. Between 30 and 60 youth complete the program annually.

The **Youth Green Corps** is a nine-month program that combines classroom training with hands-on work maintaining Seattle's trails. Many of the participants, who are between the ages of 18 and 24, are unemployed, low-income, youth of color, or youth otherwise disengaged from the community. They learn about tool safety, native and invasive plants, and environmental stewardship. They also learn life skills that help them get permanent jobs, including at SPR.

Learn more

www.seattle.gov/parks/about-us/work-for-us/job-opportunities-for-teens