

# State of Oregon



## **OREGON YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS 2019-2020 COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP CORPS**

Request for Grant Applications (RFA)

Date of Issue: February 11, 2019

Application Due on: March 11, 2019

For questions, clarifications, or if you need this material in a different format, please contact OYCC at: [oycc.info@oregon.gov](mailto:oycc.info@oregon.gov).



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The State of Oregon, acting by and through the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), is issuing this Request for Grant Applications for the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (OYCC) 2019-2020 Community Stewardship Corps.

OYCC's mission is, "Empowering youth by providing outdoor work and stewardship experiences throughout Oregon." The vision is that Oregon's at-risk youth are successful community members engaged in work, stewardship, and lifelong learning. OYCC Community Stewardship Corps (CSC) programs focus on hands-on, integrated, alternative education involving natural resource conservation and community stewardship. Programs funded by OYCC provide program participants with meaningful education and job skills training. A successful CSC program involves the collaboration of many community organizations. It is essential that CSC programs be connected to the school system and that a method of awarding credit is established. Academic Content Standards must also be incorporated into the program. Visit the Oregon Department of Education's website for more information on Academic Content Standards <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/Pages/default.aspx>.

CSC programs are educational/school year programs that have a heavy workforce development component. Eligible participants may earn tuition vouchers (explained below). Besides the vouchers, OYCC does not require that students be paid. If grantees choose to pay students for their participation in field work, all tax laws need to be followed. HECC/OYCC will not be held responsible for any tax liability.

Please note that if you choose to pay the Corpsmembers, the student relationship becomes an employment relationship and all BOLI rules/laws apply (<http://egov.oregon.gov/BOLI>).

HECC/OYCC anticipates awarding Grant Agreements (the Agreement/s) for up to \$20,000 each.

The allowable cost period for each Grant is expected to be from August 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020.

OYCC funds should first be used to pay Crew Leader/Teacher salaries. Should a program choose to use these funds for any other purpose, it must be approved in the application process.

## 2. OYCC OVERVIEW

OYCC has the responsibility of implementing ORS 418.650 through 418.663, the general purposes of which are:

- To establish a disadvantaged and at-risk youth work program in order to perform conservation work of public value in the most cost-effective manner;
- To utilize such a program as a means of needed assistance to protect, conserve, rehabilitate and improve the natural, historical and cultural resources of the state; and
- To utilize such a program to increase educational, training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged and at-risk youth for the purpose of improving work skills, instilling work ethic and increasing employability.

The goals of the OYCC CSC are:

- Increased work skills
- Increased stewardship and enhancement of the environment

- Increased community involvement
- Academic progress and success
- Engagement in lifelong learning
- Safely completed projects
- Positive Youth Development (PYD)

PYD is defined by the *Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs* and used by OYCC as: “*An intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youths' strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.*”

### 3. GRANT INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

OYCC has a significant role to play in the education of Oregon’s youth. Experiences such as: contextual learning, demonstrating proficiencies, portfolio completion, internship preparation, apprenticeship preparation and service-learning are central to Corpsmembers’ educational planning and to OYCC.

Applicants applying for a CSC operating grant must have demonstrated expertise in operating such a program. School and youth-serving agencies are encouraged to partner with natural, social, cultural, and historical resource agencies to ensure a variety of projects and technical expertise.

The educational component for participants should be progressive in that they are receiving credits or taking GED tests, etc. and include life and employment skills. Examples of this may include participants’ enrollment in a public or private school, an alternative education program, pursuit of a GED, higher education and/or vocational training that leads to a certificate.

Over the course of a typical school year (September-June), programs must incorporate field experiences. OYCC leaves the percentages of time to be spent in the classroom and the field up to the individual grantees. While there is no set minimum ratio of time spent in the classroom vs. time in the field, it is important that the field experiences are consistent, frequent, and integrated. The frequency and integration determine if the experiences are true field components of the curriculum vs. being on a field trip or participating in a one-time activity.

Classroom and field experiences must be linked and integrated, not approached as separate program components.

Eligible Students successfully completing a CSC program shall receive a tuition voucher. Tuition vouchers can be used at any accredited institution. Vouchers expire five years after the student receives the voucher. Tuition vouchers are awarded through the Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC).

Maximum tuition voucher awards should be earned over multiple years as there are only nine months in a school year.

Criteria:

- Students must be age 16 or older
- Students must successfully complete a minimum of one quarter or one semester (must coincide with the school's academic calendar)
- Once the minimum timeframe has been completed, the students earn \$125/month in tuition voucher awards (can be retroactive)
- The maximum tuition voucher award is \$1,500 per participant
- Students can receive up to \$1,125 in tuition voucher awards in one school year (\$125/month x 9 month school year). The remaining \$375 can be earned the following year
- All other successful completion requirements (attendance, grades, behavior, etc.) can be determined by each program. Programs will be asked to explain the criteria used for determining successful completion when filling out the application

Grantees are required to pay 35% of the total vouchers cost. These Grant funds may be used for this. OYCC, through OSAC, covers the remaining 65%. This percentage may change without notice depending on current usage rates.

Staff for the Applicant should include a combination of a Crew Leader, teacher, and a project funding development person. Someone with the time to develop projects and funding sources will enhance the program measurably. OYCC considers a crew to be no less than 4 youth (preferably at least 5) working together to achieve a common goal.

#### Target Population:

- Local Oregon youth ages 16 – 24 (Corpsmembers who will turn 25 during the course of the school year are not eligible).
- Special emphasis shall be placed on high school dropouts and those currently at risk of dropping out.
- OYCC is committed to diversity in the crew setting. The crew makeup will reflect the local community and include a gender, ethnic, cultural, and social mix.
- 75% of youth served must meet OYCC's disadvantaged and at-risk definition: "Those who may be unable to achieve the educational, economic, or social expectations of their community."

Applicants must include educational/enrichment activities, defined as supplemental discovery and exposure to new knowledge and ideas. These activities must be intentional and go beyond the normal skill-building opportunities that are gained in day-to-day work activities. Examples include, but are not limited to: ropes course, journaling, plant and animal ID, first aid, CPR, food handler's card, canoe/rafting trips, camping trips, guest speakers, museum tours, college tours, hiking/backpacking, nutrition classes, taxes/money management, map/GPS reading, and certifications.

Applicants must develop safety, work site, orientation, education, and emergency plans in compliance with state and federal law. These plans must be in place prior to operating a CSC crew. Full time supervision by a trained Crew Leader/Teacher is mandatory. Crew Leaders/Teachers must be First Aid/CPR certified, and EpiPen certification is highly recommended.

In addition, successful Applicants will be required to complete online surveys as well as provide a final project report to OYCC. Final report categories include but are not limited to Corpsmember

information, Crew Leader information, hours worked, educational outcomes, project outcomes, budget detail, and photos. These components will be described in detail in the Grant Agreements.

Crew Leaders, teachers, and/or Applicant staff must attend an OYCC-sponsored Midyear In-Service in February 2020 at the 4H Center in Salem.

**Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:**

- Rangeland conservation, rehabilitation, and improvement;
- Endangered species and other wildlife habitat conservation, rehabilitation, and improvement;
- Historical and cultural site preservation and maintenance;
- Recreational area development, maintenance, and beautification;
- Road and trail maintenance and improvement;
- Soil conservation work, including erosion control;
- Stream, lake, and waterfront improvement;
- Fish culture and habitat maintenance and improvement;
- Some fence maintenance and construction, at OYCC's discretion;
- Planting, tending, and harvesting a community garden or farm; and
- Energy conservation projects, as described in ORS 418.660(1)(n)

The projects being completed should have a meaningful impact on the community. Projects cannot exceed 20% of time spent on repetitive up-keep projects (e.g. cleaning bathrooms, mowing lawns). Fence and trail maintenance may be exempt from this requirement, at OYCC's discretion.

Projects on private land are not encouraged, but are allowed under certain circumstances. Projects completed on private land must meet all three of the following guidelines:

- Corpsmember work skills and education objectives are increased;
- Public benefit is clearly defined, and;
- Public benefit is greater than any benefit to the private landowner.

**HECC/OYCC will not fund:**

- Individual placements
- Capital projects
- Third party beneficiaries in which grants are sub-granted or contracted out
- Lobbying
- Work completed outside of Oregon

As per ORS 418.663, projects cannot displace currently employed workers, impair existing contracts, substitute jobs, or replace laid off workers.

#### **4. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

All submissions shall be sent electronically to [oycc.info@oregon.gov](mailto:oycc.info@oregon.gov).

Submissions received after March 11, 2019 may not be accepted.

Please submit:

- A completed Application Form

#### **5. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Grants will be awarded based on:

- Past performance,
- Timeliness and completeness of Application Form,
- Number of Applicants
- How well the program meets the Grant's purpose and guidelines

#### **6. PUBLIC RECORDS**

All information and records submitted to HECC are subject to disclosure under the Public Records Law, ORS 192.311 to 192.478. If Applicant believes that any information or records it submits to HECC may be a trade secret under ORS 192.345(2), or otherwise is exempt from disclosure under the Oregon Public Records Law, Applicant must identify such information with particularity and include the following statement:

“This data is exempt from disclosure under the Oregon Public Records Law pursuant to ORS 192, and is not to be disclosed except in accordance with the Oregon Public Records Law, ORS 192.311 through 192.478.”

If Applicant fails to identify with particularity the portions of such information that Applicant believes are exempt from disclosure, Applicant is deemed to waive any future claim of non-disclosure of that information.