

AMERICORPS MEMBER RECRUITMENT

Host site information

OVERVIEW

1. Project Background and Description

Using Project Venture (www.niylp.org) as the primary intervention, the AmeriCorps Resilient Alaskan Youth (RAY) program aims to address the high rates of youth substance abuse and suicide in rural Alaska through positive youth development and experiential learning. Project Venture, an evidence-based model recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) and the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP), will be implemented to program fidelity in 22 communities across rural Alaska. Project Venture uses outdoor activities and American Indian traditional values to help youth develop positive self-concepts, effective social skills, a community service ethic, resiliency, and increased decision-making and problem-solving skills. Comprised of classroom-based problem solving activities, adventure-based experiential learning, service learning, and culturally based leadership, Project Venture actively engages youth in developing life skills while reinforcing traditional Native values such as family, service learning, and appreciation for the natural world.

Utilizing a Strength-based approach, Project Venture is built upon the concept that the indirect, positive approach of experiential learning is one of the most powerful and culturally appropriate means of education and development for American Indian youth. Project Venture has demonstrated success in reduction of risky behaviors, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, violence, depression, and anxiety; and increase in positive youth development indicators including those related to competency, connection, character, caring, confidence, and contribution.

2. Project Scope

Twenty-two AmeriCorps members, recruited locally, will serve as Project Venture facilitators. Activities will take place in four settings: In-School, After-School, Out-of-School, and Multi-Day outings. Youth ages 10-17 will be recruited to participate. This project will engage predominantly Alaska Native youth. Communities are defined as remote, rural, and severely under-served.

AmeriCorps members (facilitators) will host approximately 27 In-School sessions. In-School sessions range from 45-60 minutes in length and are essential for group development, teaching skills and establishing group behavioral norms that frame the entire program.

After-School and Out-of-School sessions build in the intensity and challenge of activities. Group dynamics are solidified, communication is depend, problem-solving skills are practiced, and healthy relationships are developed through the planning and execution of service learning and cultural activities. Sessions typically run two and eight hours, respectively. AmeriCorps members will host approximately 22 After-School and 12 Out-of-School sessions. Examples of sessions include traditional dancing and singing; language revitalization and preservation; traditional storytelling; environmental activities which demonstrate the traditional value of taking care of and respecting the land; cooking classes utilizing traditional recipes and food preparation techniques; traditional tool, trap and net making; community gardening; and traditional art in the form of beading, carving, sewing fur/skins, or mask making.

Approximately three Multi-Day outings will be hosted during the program year. Multi-Day outings are comprised of wilderness immersion, healthy relationship refinement, cultural learning, and service learning. Skills and concepts that have been introduced in the In-School, After-School, and Out-of-School sessions are tested, practiced, and refined. Examples of Multi-Day outings include subsistence food activities such as fishing, hunting or berry-picking; culture camp – a traditional gathering where a community unites for two or more days to celebrate and impart the cultural knowledge of traditional customs and values; wilderness survival; and boating, water, or ice safety.

3. Host Site Requirements

The host school, tribe, or city must provide the following:

- Access to a computer, fax and internet
- Office space
- Meeting space/area for youth engagement
- Complete application that includes letter of support
- Supervision of AmeriCorps members

4. Deliverables

- Community Engagement
- In-School and Out of School Youth Engagement with region wide partners
- Increased youth engagement in schools and their community
- Partnerships between youth, their parents and the school
- Classroom based problem solving skills

5. Contacts

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www.americorpsalaska.org

www.ruralcap.com

6. Deadlines

Host site and Applicant application due July 31, 2018 however applications will be taken until September 3,2018.