



# Corps Member Handbook

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# What is the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps?

## Mission

Take action and build community by working and learning together with the land.

## Program Principles

- Safety and Health: Foster a safe working and living environment.
- Support: Have care for self and others.
- Community: Create a culture of belonging.
- Grit and Resiliency: Lean into challenge and learn from failure.
- Accountability: Be accountable to yourself and your crew.
- Professionalism: Have pride in your work and model professionalism.

## History

Please see the VYCC history here: <https://www.vycc.org/about/history/>

## VYCC Member Roles Overview

**Headquarters (HQ) Employee** are full time staff who support Crew Leaders and Members. Visit our website to learn more about each employee at <https://www.vycc.org/team/>

**Corps Member** is an inclusive term we use for both leaders and members.

**Day Crews** are not with their crew overnight, and they do not camp at their project site.

**Camping Crews** camp together near their project site, spending the whole work week together as a crew. Each weekend, camping crews return to headquarters for time off.

**Crew Members** are members serving as a crew. They engage in hands-on projects, working as a team, with support from Crew Leaders and HQ employees.

**Youth Crew Members** are 15 – 17 years old.

**AmeriCorps Crew Members** are at least 17 years old and serve on crews funded by SerVermont or The Corps Network.

**Crew Leaders** are experienced leaders, facilitators, project managers, and community builders. They are responsible for creating a safe, inclusive, supportive, and productive crew.

**Advanced Crews** focus on a specific project initiative such as forestry, carpentry, or trails. Projects are generally more complex and require more advanced techniques.

**Farm Leaders** are experienced leaders, facilitators, project managers, and community builders. They are responsible for creating a safe, inclusive, supportive, and productive crew. Farm Leaders are either focused on farm production, food distribution, or food and nutrition.

**Crew Supervisors** mentor and support Crew Leaders and Members. They support Corps Members in skill development, problem solving, and project completion.

**Project Managers** coordinate conservation projects. They work with conservation Corps Members and external project partners to ensure that projects are completed to specification. They also teach technical skills and support Crews in the field.

**The Board of Directors** is the governing body of the VYCC. The Board coordinates, communicates, and arranges working and legal agreements, broadly oversees fiscal management, and helps to further VYCC's mission.

## **VYCC Programs**

The VYCC is composed of two programs, the **Conservation Program** and the **Food and Farm Program**.

### **Conservation Program**

VYCC's Conservation Program engages young people in hands-on projects that benefit Vermont's environment and communities. Corps Members work and serve outdoors to improve access to recreation, and make forests, wildlife habitat, and watersheds healthier. They work with stone, wood, and earth to build trails, maintain park infrastructure, prevent erosion, and complete forest health projects. Through training and practice, Members become familiar with hand tools and power tools like pick mattocks, rock bars, circular saws, and chainsaws, while gaining skills, experience, and credentials. VYCC offers a variety of crews that meet each Member's level of experience and desired challenge.

### **Food and Farm Program**

VYCC's Food and Farm Program is a youth development, diversified agriculture and food security initiative. We believe in the power that food has to connect us with the land, our community, and each other. On the farm, young people engage in organic farming and culinary education. The produce grown by Corps Members is distributed to more than 400 families through the Health Care Share project—a public health initiative that connects Vermont families to locally-grown produce through their medical provider. Patients who may have diet-related illness or have barriers to accessing fresh produce receive a weekly share of fresh food. We also raise laying hens for eggs, and additional vegetables, flowers, and herbs that we vend on campus at our vibrant farm stand.

In addition to the work and service Corps Members do in the farm fields, they also spend time in the kitchen learning cooking skills. Working with the food they've grown, they explore different recipes and help prepare a daily lunch that is shared with all farm crews.

### **VYCC AmeriCorps Program**

AmeriCorps is a national service program whose mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. By engaging more than 75,000 young people each year, AmeriCorps members make a positive impact on communities throughout the US. VYCC works in partnership with SerVermont, Vermont's State Service Commission, and The Corps Network (TCN).

### **Camping Crew Experience**

Camping crews live, work, and serve outdoors for the duration of their VYCC participation. Crews work and serve at project sites during the day, camping together nearby at night. On weekends, camping crews return to the VYCC headquarters for time off.

### **Day Crew Experience**

Day Crews work and serve during the day, Monday through Thursday or Friday, at project sites and return home each evening. The crews meet in the mornings and, if needed, travel together to project sites. Farm Day Crews work and serve on the Farm at VYCC located in Richmond.

## **Enrichment**

Personal and professional growth is an important part of the VYCC experience. Learning and growth happens through work and service, in finding a creative solution to a problem or figuring out how to work effectively as a team. We also provide time and space for learning that allows Corps Members to reflect on not just the task but the service, themselves, and their community.

As such, crews participate in education and training each week. This can take on various forms, including presentations from Project Sponsors or HQ employees, technical skill training, personal skill building, and other thoughtful enrichment throughout the season. For AmeriCorps Members, these hours will count towards their service hours and their Education Award.

## **Receiving College Credit**

All VYCC Crew Leaders are eligible for up to 12 free credits through the Community College of Vermont after successfully completing VYCC's Crew Leader training and the field season. Credits will be awarded after the season, and no extra work is required other than the tasks described in the VYCC position description for Leaders. Again, these credits are free of charge.

## **Weekends and Break Weeks**

### **Our Facilities**

Our headquarters is an active office space during the week, and at times a public event venue. There is often access to showers and device charging, but there is no laundry available onsite. Storage for personal belongings is very limited and we cannot guarantee secure, water/animal proof spaces. If you have a car, parking is available on campus.

### **Camping Crews**

During pre-season training and orientation, Corps Members stay at the VYCC campus. Once projects begin, crews will be in the field for the work week and return to campus for the weekend. Weekend time is off and Corps Members are not obligated to spend time together as a crew, though they are of course welcome to do so. On-campus housing is limited to camping in 3-sided lean-tos with limited or non-existent amenities, and there will be times when there is no access to indoor facilities. Due to the rural location of the VYCC campus and limited weekend support, we encourage Corps Members to explore the surrounding region during time off. Any time Corps Members camp on the VYCC campus, all VYCC policies and principles apply.

During break week for summer-through-fall crews, most Corps Members leave VYCC for any number of reasons (visiting friends and family, traveling around Vermont, resting and recharging). VYCC policies do not

apply if Corps Members are not staying on the VYCC campus. Corps Members may choose to stay at the VYCC campus, but we highly recommend that Corps Members leave during their break week due to the rural, isolated location. As such, it is highly beneficial to have access to a vehicle. If a Corps Member does choose to stay on the VYCC campus during break week, all VYCC policies and principles apply. At the end of break week, Members are expected to arrive back at the VYCC campus promptly at the agreed upon time.

## **Day Crews**

Day Crew Members are responsible for arriving at the designated meetup location at 8:00 AM and ending the day at 4:30 PM. June through August, Farm Production Crew Members have a shifting schedule, where they work two days from 6:30am-3:00pm, two days from 9:30am-6:00pm and Fridays from 8:00am to 3:00pm. Exceptions outside these hours may occur. Transportation is available to and from the Richmond Park and Ride for crews based in Richmond. Day Crew Members have evenings and weekends off. Exceptions to this schedule occur during the season and include the following events: Member Trainings/Orientations, Crew Engagement Events, and Closure Events.

## **Communication and Cell Phone Practices**

VYCC recognizes that screens have become a major part of our everyday life. We also recognize that the VYCC experience is centered on face-to-face community building, hands-on work, service, learning, and engaging with the natural world. Balancing time on screens with time in-person in the field is meant to enhance the VYCC experience.

### **Day Crew Members**

Day Crew Members will keep their phones out of sight (preferably in backpacks) during the workday. If a Crew Member needs to use their phone during the workday, they must check with their Crew Leader regarding the best time and place for that use to occur.

### **Camping Crew Members**

Camping Crew Members will keep their phones out of sight during the workday. It is also preferred to keep phone usage to a minimum at camp to stay present and engaged with your crew. Many camp or work locations may not have cell phone signal, so Corps Members should account for this when making plans to communicate with friends and family. Additionally, VYCC cannot guarantee that your phone will stay safe or dry while in the field.

Every Camping Crew is equipped with multiple communication devices. HQ employees know the best way to get in touch with each crew and, in the event of an emergency, have multiple methods of communicating with them.

Friends and family are encouraged to send letters and mail to Corps Members on Camping Crews. Please consider that packages need to be transported to a project or camp site by hand so it may not be possible to transport a heavy, large package. Mail is delivered on average once a week to the crew. All mailed items must include the Corps Member's name.

Packages and letters can be sent to this address:

Corps Member Name

Crew Name

c/o VYCC

1949 East Main Street

Richmond, VT 05477

## Visitors

### Conservation Camping Crews

Personal visitors, like friends and family, are not permitted during VYCC programming. Exceptions require prior approval from the VYCC Program Director. No personal visitors are permitted at VYCC campsites. Personal visitors distract from community building and create inequities among the crew. The best time to visit with friends and family is during official time off. Please talk with your supervisor for more information on visitors.

### Day Crews

Day Crews sometimes host community events. These typically happen once per crew, per season and they are a great way to share a VYCC experience with friends and family.

## VYCC Dismissal Policies

VYCC's Dismissal Policies have been created to keep crews safe, happy, and healthy. They are the result of decades of feedback from Corps Members, project sponsors, community members, and HQ employees.

*Dismissal Policies: Behavior that results in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal*

- Physical/emotional violence or threats of violence to others
- Harassing behavior based on protected status
- Physical intimacy with another Corps Member while engaged in VYCC programming
- Possession, use or suspicion of use of alcohol, nicotine, or federally illegal drugs on a VYCC program site

All policies and principles apply to all members of the VYCC community.

### Assessment and Improvement Plan

Dismissal Policies are a tool to address any activity or behavior that severely jeopardizes the health and safety of Corps Members and are, therefore, grounds for immediate dismissal. VYCC takes these policies seriously and will investigate any reports of Dismissal Policy violations.



Principles and Practices serve as guidelines, helping crews establish a safe and healthy culture that reflects VYCC, crew, and individual values. If a Corps Member is struggling with behavior detracting from general crew health, they have opportunities to correct their behavior by sitting down with their Leaders and co-creating an Assessment and Improvement Plan (AIP).

If an AIP is required, Corps Members will document the specific broken principle or practice, the behavior that needs to change, how the changes will be measured, when the changes need to occur, and what resources either the Crew Member or Leader need. A pattern of principle or practice violations can lead to a dismissal.

## **Health & Vaccinations**

### **VYCC Employee Vaccination Policy**

VYCC highly encourages all employee and Corps Members to get vaccinated against COVID-19. As of November of 2023, the CDC recommends that everyone five years of age and older should receive one dose of an updated COVID-19 vaccine to protect against serious illness from COVID-19. For more details about approved vaccines and dosages, visit the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html>

In addition to vaccine recommendations, VYCC has several other tools that can be used to keep HQ employees and Corps Members safe and healthy. Masking, proper hygiene, improved ventilation and air flow, testing, and isolating/staying home when you are sick are equally important tools in limiting the spread of COVID-19.

## **Prohibited Activities**

Due to the non-profit status and public support of the VYCC and VYCC programs, certain activities are prohibited as they could jeopardize our non-profit status or public funding sources. HQ employees and Corps Members are restricted from certain political activities while performing any duties funded by AmeriCorps or other state and federal grants. AmeriCorps members can find a list of Prohibited Activities in their Member Service Agreements.

## **VYCC Organizational Policies**

These are policies and procedures taken from the “VYCC Employee Handbook.” All HQ employees of VYCC must accept these policies, read through them and abide by them. Please contact the VYCC Administrative Manager if you want a copy of the VYCC Employee Handbook or if you have more questions.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity**

VYCC is committed to being an inclusive organization for all employees, volunteers, and community members. VYCC is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. VYCC strives to cultivate a work and service environment that encourages fairness, teamwork, and respect among all HQ employees and Corps Members. We are firmly committed to maintaining a work atmosphere in which people of diverse backgrounds and lifestyles may grow personally and professionally.

VYCC complies with the requirements of applicable Federal and State laws in providing equal employment opportunities including, but not limited to, recruitment, selection, training, promotion, compensation, benefits, termination, and other terms and conditions of employment.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

As required by State and Federal laws, VYCC will provide reasonable accommodation for a qualified individual with a disability unless such accommodation creates an undue hardship for VYCC. Employees' questions or concerns should be referred to the Administrative Manager and/or the Chief Finance Officer.

### **Workplace Harassment**

VYCC is firmly committed to prohibiting unlawful discrimination throughout the employment process against individuals because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, national origin, ancestry, place of birth, disability, health coverage status, genetic information, including traits for sickle cell or hemoglobin C, HIV status, veteran or military status or any other legally protected status. All HQ employees and Corps Members are entitled to a workplace/service site free of discrimination, including harassment based on any of the above factors. We will not tolerate such conduct at VYCC. If an HQ employee or Corps Member believes that they have been subjected to unlawful discrimination or harassment, the reporting procedure outlined below for complaints of sexual harassment should be followed. Harassment is generally defined as any behavior that is: offensive, threatening, demeaning, belittling, hurtful, or embarrassing.

### **Sexual Harassment**

VYCC prohibits sexual harassment of its employees. Sexual harassment is unlawful under state and federal statute. We are committed to providing workplaces free from this unlawful conduct.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. submission to that conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; or
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a component of the basis for employment decisions affecting that individual; or
3. the conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or living environment.

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to the following, when such acts or behavior come within one of the above definitions:

- either explicitly or implicitly conditioning any term of employment (e.g. continued employment, wages, evaluation, advancement, assigned duties or shifts) on the provision of sexual favors;
- touching or grabbing a sexual part of a person's body;
- touching or grabbing any part of a person's body after that person has indicated, or it is known, that such physical contact was unwelcome;

- continuing to ask a person to socialize on or off-duty when that person has indicated they are not interested;
- displaying or transmitting sexually suggestive pictures, objects, cartoons, or posters if it is known or should be known that the behavior is unwelcome;
- continuing to write sexually suggestive notes or letters if it is known or should be known that the person does not welcome such behavior;
- regularly telling sexual jokes or using sexually vulgar or explicit language in the presence of a person if it is known or should be known that the person does not welcome such behavior;
- referring to or calling a person a sexualized name if it is known or should be known that the person does not welcome such behavior;
- retaliating for complaining about sexual harassment;
- retaliation of any kind for having filed or supported a complaint of sexual harassment (e.g. ostracizing the person, pressuring the person to drop or not support the complaint, adversely altering that person's duties or work environment, etc.);
- derogatory or provoking remarks about or relating to a person's sex or sexual orientation;
- harassing acts or behavior directed against a person on the basis of their sex or sexual orientation;
- off-duty conduct which falls within the above definition and affects the work environment.

Retaliation against an HQ employee or Corps Member for reporting sexual harassment or for cooperating in an investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment is unlawful and will not be tolerated. It shall be a violation of this policy for any HQ employee or Corps Member who learns of the investigation or complaint to take any retaliatory action which affects the working environment of any person involved in the complaint or investigation. HQ employees and Corps Members who believe they are being retaliated against should follow the complaint procedure outlined below.

### **Harassment Complaint Procedure**

VYCC is committed to taking action, and is required by law to take action, when it learns of potential sexual harassment or workplace harassment. VYCC is required by law to take action if it learns of potential sexual harassment, even if the aggrieved person does not wish to formally file a complaint. Any employee who feels that they have been the victim of or have been made privy to knowledge of sexual harassment or workplace harassment, should communicate with a supervisor immediately.

Care will be taken to protect the identity of the person with the complaint, as well as the accused party or parties, except as may be reasonably necessary to successfully complete an investigation. It shall be a violation of this policy for any person who learns of an investigation or complaint to take any retaliatory action which affects the working environment of any person involved in this investigation. If the allegation of sexual harassment is found to be credible, VYCC will take appropriate corrective action.

VYCC will inform the complaining person and the accused person of the results of the investigation and what actions will be taken to ensure that the harassment will cease, and that no retaliation will occur. Any employee, supervisor, or outside party found by the employer to have committed harassment will be subject to sanctions appropriate to the circumstances, ranging from a verbal warning up to and including dismissal. If the

allegation is not found to be credible, the person with the complaint and the accused person shall be so informed, with appropriate instruction provided to each, including the right of the complainant to contact any of the state or federal agencies identified in this policy.

### **What to do if You Believe You Have Been Harassed**

If the person subjected to the harassment does not wish to communicate directly with the alleged harasser or harassers, or if direct communication has been ineffective, then the person with the complaint is encouraged to report the situation as soon as possible to their supervisor, or to the following people.

- Breck Knauft, Co-Executive Director, 802-598-6386 [breck.knauft@vycc.org](mailto:breck.knauft@vycc.org)
- Leah Mital, Co-Executive Director, 802-238-8679, [leah.mital@vycc.org](mailto:leah.mital@vycc.org)
- Wendy Nunez, VYCC Board of Directors, Chair, 802-999-5504, [wendyknunez@gmail.com](mailto:wendyknunez@gmail.com)

Although HQ employees and Corps Members are encouraged to file their complaint of sexual harassment through the aforementioned complaint procedure, the following agencies also process complaints of sexual harassment:

Vermont Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Unit, 109 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05602, tel: (802) 828-3171 (voice/TDD).

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, John F. Kennedy Federal Building, 475 Government Center, Boston, MA 02203, tel: (800) 669-4000 (voice), (800) 669-6820 (TDD).

Vermont Human Rights Commission, 14-16 Baldwin Street Montpelier, VT 05633-6301, email: [human.rights@vermont.gov](mailto:human.rights@vermont.gov), tel: 1-800-416-2010 (Toll-Free VT) or 1-802-828-1625 (voice), (Only if you are employed by the State of Vermont). Complaints must be filed within 360 days of the adverse action.

### **Harassment by Third Parties**

Any harassing or otherwise discriminatory behavior by customers, vendors, or any other third parties should be reported to the VYCC Administrative Manager as soon as possible so that appropriate corrective action may be taken.

### **Confidentiality**

All employees must maintain the strictest levels of confidentiality concerning sensitive or confidential information learned via any participant's application, medical form, or private conversations. Only a valid concern for the health and safety of an individual or group would be considered an acceptable reason for sharing such confidential information.

### **Mandatory Reporting**

All VYCC HQ Employees and Corps Members over the age of eighteen (18) are Mandated Reporters. If any VYCC employee or Corps Member is over eighteen (18), they are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Vermont Department of Children & Families (DCF) within twenty-four (24) hours. Mandated Reporter obligations cannot be delegated to another VYCC HQ Employee or Corps Member. Any VYCC HQ Employee or Corps Member who qualifies as a mandated reporter is required to make the report. Supervisors must be notified immediately of any and all reports made to DCF. It is VYCC's policy to cooperate with investigative bodies during any investigation regarding suspected abuse or neglect within the limits of the law, VYCC policy, and according to VYCC's legal counsel. VYCC also reserves the right to conduct an internal investigation in conjunction with investigative agencies.

### **Open-Door Policy**

VYCC believes that HQ Employee and Corps Member concerns are best addressed through informal and open communication among all levels of management. Our open-door policy encourages productive and positive relationships within the organization. All HQ employees and Corps Members are encouraged to express their opinions, concerns, and suggestions regarding the workplace directly to their supervisor or any person of the VYCC staff whom they feel can help them. VYCC is eager to assist in the resolution of HQ employee and Corps Member concerns, and to consider ideas for making our organization even better.

VYCC will attempt to keep all such expressions of concern, any required investigation, and the terms of resolution confidential. In the course of investigating and resolving concerns, however, some dissemination of information to others may be appropriate. No HQ Employee or Corps Member will be disciplined or otherwise penalized for raising a concern in good faith.

### **Whistleblower Policy**

VYCC requires directors, officers, HQ Employees, and Corps Members to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. Employees and all representatives of VYCC must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

### **Reporting Responsibility**

This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns internally so that VYCC can address and correct inappropriate conduct and actions. It is the responsibility of all board members, officers, employees, Corps Members, and volunteers to report concerns about violations of VYCC's code of ethics or suspected violations of law or regulations that govern VYCC's operations.

### **No Retaliation**

It is contrary to the values of VYCC for anyone to retaliate against any board member, officer, HQ Employee, Corps Member, or volunteer who in good faith reports an ethics violation, or a suspected violation of law, such as a complaint of discrimination, or suspected fraud, or suspected violation of any regulation governing the operations of VYCC. An HQ Employee, paid participant, or Corps Member who retaliates against someone

who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

## **Compliance**

The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that all complaints about unethical or illegal conduct are investigated and resolved. The Executive Director will advise the Board of Directors of all complaints and their resolution and will report at least annually to the Finance Committee on compliance activity relating to accounting or alleged financial improprieties.

## **Accounting and Auditing Matters**

The Executive Director shall immediately notify the Finance Committee of any concerns or complaint regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls or auditing and work with the committee until the matter is resolved.

## **Acting in Good Faith**

Anyone filing a written complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

## **Confidentiality**

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation. Whenever possible the anonymity of the complainant will be maintained.

## **Handling of Reported Violations**

The Executive Director will notify the person who submitted a complaint and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation. All reports will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation. If the person filing the complaint is not notified that the complaint was received by the Executive Director, that complaint should be filed a second time directly with the President of the Board.

## **Worker's Compensation Insurance**

All HQ Employees and Corps Members are protected by our worker's compensation insurance policy while employed and serving at the VYCC. The policy is available at no cost to HQ Employees and Corps Members and covers injury or illness arising or resulting from legitimate work and service activities. By law, VYCC is required to report injuries covered under worker's compensation within forty-eight (48) hours. An on-the-job injury must be reported to a supervisor or the Administration Manager immediately. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring the proper completion, submission, and reporting of an Incident Report.



A leave of absence due to a disabling work-or-service-related illness or injury will run concurrently with leave to which the employee may be entitled under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Vermont Parental and Family Leave Act (VPFLA). VYCC will follow the provisions of all applicable laws governing leave.

Complete information about worker's compensation and on-the-job illnesses or injuries is available from the Administration Manager and/or the Chief Financial Officer.

### **Ownership, Confidentiality and Access of Electronic Mail, Voice Mail, and Computer Files**

VYCC owns the rights to all data and files in any computer, network, or other information system used in the organization. VYCC reserves the right to monitor computer and e-mail usage, both as it occurs and in the form of account histories and their content. VYCC has the right to inspect any and all files stored in any areas of the network or on any types of computer storage media in order to assure compliance with this policy and state and federal laws. The organization will comply with reasonable requests from law enforcement and regulatory agencies for logs, diaries, archives, or files on individual computer and e-mail activities. VYCC also reserves the right to monitor electronic mail messages and their content. Be aware that the electronic mail messages sent and received using organizational equipment are not private and are subject to viewing, downloading, inspection, release, and archiving. It is a violation of VYCC policy for any HQ Employee, including system administrators and supervisors, or Corps Member, to access electronic mail and computer systems files to satisfy curiosity about the affairs of others. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

### **Social Media**

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by HQ Employees and Corps Members of the VYCC. For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation: blogs, wiki's, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, X, Reddit, Instagram, TikTok, Flickr, and YouTube. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the internet. VYCC employees are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy.

We encourage everyone to be themselves, but only if done so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory. Corps Members should use their best judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed by them are that individual's alone and do not represent VYCC or AmeriCorps.

### **Speaking to the Media**

Please refer all inquiries from reporters for the media to the supervisor. It is the VYCC's goal to give the press clear, consistent, and up-to-date information about the organization and its programs. Because information about activities changes often, it is especially important not to give the press information that is inaccurate or misleading.

## **Compensation and Payroll**

The VYCC work week is Saturday through Friday. VYCC payroll is bi-weekly, paid every other Friday. Employees and Corps Members are paid for work and service completed through the previous Friday. VYCC will withhold federal, state, and local taxes, as required by law, as well as the required FICA (Social Security) and Medicare payments from a paycheck.

If any employee has a question about their paycheck, or Corps Member about their stipend or living allowance, they should report the concern to payroll immediately so that compliance with the law can be assured. VYCC will investigate the problem within two weeks and will promptly make any appropriate corrections.

### **Direct Deposit**

Payments will be electronically deposited directly into one or more checking or savings accounts designated by each HQ Employee and Corps Member. Accounts must be established with financial institutions, such as banks or credit unions that support direct deposits. Pay stubs will be issued electronically to all paid participants, employees, and Corps Members with direct deposit.

Temporary exceptions to this policy may be made for new hires, to provide adequate time to set up a direct deposit account. Exceptions may also be made for HQ Employees and Corps Members who provide evidence that they cannot obtain an account at a financial institution offering direct deposit.

NOTE: It is each HQ Employee's and Corps Member's responsibility to review their payroll stub for accuracy of personal information and payment information. HQ Employees and Corps Members must immediately notify the Finance Department if there has been an overpayment of wages. HQ Employees and Corps Members are not entitled to keep wage overpayments and VYCC may recoup overpaid amounts from future payments.

NOTE: HQ Employees and Corps Members must notify the Finance Department when there is any change to bank accounts that affect direct deposit.

### **Crew Leader and Member Compensation**

#### **Living Allowance**

AmeriCorps Members and Leaders receive a taxable weekly living allowance as outlined in their Offer Letter. The living allowance is paid on the same bi-weekly basis as stated above.

#### **Stipend**

Stipend (Non-AmeriCorps) Crew Members and Leaders are paid a weekly stipend, an amount that depends on their crew type and days/week worked. All details of the stipend and bonuses will be outlined in their offer letter given at the time of hire.



## **AmeriCorps Education Award and Reaching Service Hours**

Please reference the Member Service Agreement.

## **Personal Leave Policy**

Some positions at VYCC are eligible for personal leave time. This time varies depending on the position. Please see the field manual for a detailed explanation of personal leave.

AmeriCorps members and leaders are responsible for completing their AmeriCorps hours by the end of their term of service in order to receive their Education Award successfully. For more information about organizing a plan to “make-up” hours due to personal, medical or emergency leave, AmeriCorps members may contact the AmeriCorps Program Grants Manager.

## **Holidays**

Corps Members are expected to work and serve their normal weekly schedule for all holidays including Independence Day and Labor Day.

## **Jury, Military, Citizen Duties**

Leave time for jury, military, and other civil duties (such as voting) will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with VYCC and AmeriCorps policy. If there are any questions pertaining to any of these situations, consult with your Supervisor.

## **AmeriCorps Voluntary Resignation or Termination**

Any AmeriCorps Member who resigns or is terminated from the program before the completion of their service term without obtaining a release for ‘compelling personal circumstances’ is considered released for cause or quit and will not be eligible for any portion of their education award or interest accrual payments. Loan forbearance and health insurance will be discontinued. Members are not eligible for unemployment benefits.

## **Statement of Participation**

Participation with the VYCC is temporary and, is expected to last a specified amount of time stated in the Offer Letter. Participation in the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps depends on timely and continued funding of VYCC, as well as compliance with the reasonable and valid policies, and conditions of participation as described in this manual. Corps Members are responsible for keeping VYCC informed of changes in their enrollment status, address, or any other conditions that affect their ability to participate in the VYCC.

### Position Classification and Benefits Overview

|  |              |            |                  |                |
|--|--------------|------------|------------------|----------------|
|  | Compensation | Simple IRA | Health Insurance | Personal Leave |
|--|--------------|------------|------------------|----------------|

|  |                                      |  |  |   |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Paid Participants<br>Stipend Members and Leaders | 'compensation'<br>'stipend'          | Eligible once have earned \$5k in a previous year, and expected to earn \$5k in a next year<br><br>Form 5304 | No Health Insurance coverage or reimbursement offered  | Personal Leave time in proportion to length of service term   |
| Paid Participants<br>Year-Round Crew Leaders     | 'compensation'<br>'stipend'          | Eligible once have earned \$5k in a previous year, and expected to earn \$5k in a next year<br><br>Form 5304 | *reimbursed for health care premiums up to <b>\$608.30/month</b> . Not eligible if still a dependent on a parents plan or covered on a partners plan. No Cash in lieu option if covered elsewhere. Folks will submit a monthly receipt to be reimbursed by VYCC. | <b>Personal Leave Time</b> in proportion to length of service term (see <b>Personal Leave Time</b> policy below)<br><br>Set schedule of unscheduled leave (sick/personal), In-season personal leave, VYCC scheduled time (break weeks).<br><br>Nov Break Week |
| HQ<br>Fully benefitted year-round employees      | 'pay'<br>'salary'                    | Eligible once have earned \$5k in a previous year, and expected to earn \$5k in a next year<br><br>Form 5304 | Employer plan with contribution or Cash in Lieu.<br><br>File HC-2 if opting out.   | Accrued PTO<br>Accrued Sick Time<br>Nov Break Week  |
| AmeriCorps Members & Leaders                     | 'living allowance'<br>'compensation' | Not eligible as AmeriCorps members   | Must have insurance to participate in AmeriCorps, other resources available.   | Personal Leave time in proportion to length of service term   |

Personal Leave Time policy for Year-Round Crew Leaders

- 23 total days of leave (plus staff break week, mid-season break week, and reduced week in between spring/summer crew)
- Of this, 2 weeks (10 days) scheduled ahead of time, in late December
- Remaining 13 days flexibly scheduled by leaders, with supervisor approval.
  - Not during certain blackout dates (training, first/last week of season, etc.), on project board
  - Max of 3 days per "crew" (spring/summer/fall)
  - Cap of 2 days consecutive

Sick Time

- 10 sick days

# Recognition of Receipt of the Corps Member Handbook

By signing this document, you are recognizing you have received this manual and read all the policies therein.

Printed Name

Date

Signature