

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION YOUTH CORPS' "URBAN GATEWAY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM"

Program Background / Purpose

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) established its Youth Corps' "Urban Gateway Enhancement Program" in 1998. The youth corps initiative is a community service project designed to partner NJDOT with local government agencies, not-for-profits, community-based organizations or other entities with established youth programs to carry out transportation-related community projects. In addition, because the program was established to coincide with the State of New Jersey's ongoing urban initiatives, cities and municipalities targeted by the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority and designated as Empowerment Neighborhoods are encouraged to apply.

The NJDOT program targets youth and young adults between the ages of 16 and 25 who are economically or socially disadvantaged and who have experienced barriers to employment (e.g., the lack of a high school diploma, homelessness, teen parenting, being physically or mentally challenged, or an ex-offender). Program participants will receive on-the-job training while working on transportation-related community projects. They will also have an opportunity to learn the basics of urban forestry, landscaping, fabrication and installation of amenities on recreational trails, horticulture, restoration of historic structures, construction inspection and materials testing. Youth participants also receive training in life skills, safety and technical skills. To date, at least 35 states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands have initiated urban youth corps projects using their Federal-aid highway funds.

Program Benefit

One of the fundamental benefits of this program is funding for youth employment. Participants gain valuable work experience through employment. They receive job training, educational instruction and supportive services preparing them to succeed in the workforce and in life. They also gain a sense of community pride by engaging in paid, productive community service projects. Moreover, the program will partner the NJDOT with community and youth organizations to accomplish enhancement projects that will improve the appearance of State roadways in urban areas.

Program Description

The NJDOT solicits community based or other local organizations with youth programs to participate in its program. During the application process, the youth organization/applicant (hereinafter referred to as "Urban Youth Corp or UYC")

with the aid of its city officials and the NJDOT will select a minimum of three gateways to improve (not all will need to be improved). It is important that the specific locations of these gateways be within the city's boundaries, owned by the State of New Jersey or the local government, and located on or near a State roadway. Ideal locations are those that are a frequent cause of aesthetic complaints due to excessive litter, graffiti, high grass, trees or shrubs. The target location list will be submitted (in the application) to the NJDOT for review and approval.

All work must be approved by the NJDOT before commencing project activities. Once approved and program activities commence, the Urban Youth Corps will be responsible for delegating its team of youth participants to provide enhancements (described in its application) to the selected and approved location(s). Examples of work include landscaping design, landscaping beautification, streetscape and pedestrian enhancements. Other activities considered incidental work include clean up, ongoing maintenance, anti-graffiti initiatives, etc. Emphasis should be placed on beautification and improvement.

The UYC will also be responsible for developing a plan for maintaining the final project. This plan may include participation in future NJDOT enhancement activities and should include how the targeted areas will be serviced on a rotating schedule. An important component of the plan may be the Urban Youth Corps' maintenance and subsequent use of equipment in the approved locations.

The NJDOT program will run for approximately six to eight weeks. The UYC will provide the program's primary structure and supervision and will also provide the youth participants with training in life skills and ensure that appropriate safety measures are taken during the project activity phase. Each team will feature at least six youths and a supervisor provided by the Urban Youth Corps. The UYC or city administration will assume liability for the participants and program.

NJDOT will partner with the UYC by providing guidance and oversight, training and funding (@ \$32,000 per project). The funding provided by the NJDOT can be used for the following: employing at-risk youth and/or young adults, a local supervisor, incidental equipment and supplies and training/support services. The participants must be between the ages of 16 and 25 and should be able to work four to six hours per day for up to eight weeks. A cap of \$32,000 will be placed on each project. Following is a typical budget/cost breakdown for the program funding:

Breakdown Example

Supervisor 40 hours per week x \$15.00/hr. = \$600 per week for
8 weeks.....\$ 4,800

Youth Workers 10 each x 6 hrs. work per day = 60 hours per day
60 hrs. x 5 days x \$7.25 = \$2,175 per week
\$2,175 x 8 weeks\$17,400

		COST
Equipment <small>(purchase or rental)</small>	1 20" push lawn mower	_____
	2 Weed Whackers	_____
	3 Shovels	_____
	3 Brooms	_____
	2 Pruning Shears	_____
	1 Case of Trash Bags	_____
	2 Fuel Cans	_____
Supplies	Anti-graffiti paint	_____
	Graffiti Removal Tools	_____
	Shrubs	_____
	Flowers	_____
	Soil	_____
	Paints	_____
Incidentals	Truck Rental	_____
	Bottled Water	_____
	Tent	_____
	Bug Repellent	_____
	Gloves	_____
	Masks	_____
	Garbage Bags	_____
	Protective Glasses	_____
	Training Speaker	_____
	Close-out Program	_____
Total Cost		\$_____

PLEASE NOTE that the NJDOT Youth Corps Program is a reimbursable expense program and, therefore approved program expenses will be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$32,000, upon the submittal of proper documentation of expenses. At least 50 percent of the budget must be allocated to the youth participants in earnings, training and/or supportive services.