

# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT OUTDOORS PROGRAM



## PROJECT SUMMARY

The Anchorage Park Foundation (APF) project aimed to support and facilitate program planning to launch a Youth Outdoors (YO) Program. The transformative program will be implemented during the summer and is designed for 14- and 15-year-old teens. It is a unique initiative aimed at building essential job skills through a blend of service learning, outdoor experiences, and a focus on personal health and well being.



### \$20,000 FUNDED

from the Children's Healthy Living Food Systems pilot projects award



### 2024

Funding was utilized to support planning efforts from January through December 2024.

## BACKGROUND

The YO program fosters job skills, promotes service learning, and enhances the well being of participants. Opportunities for teens are sparse and are potentially lacking in providing substantive experiences and skills needed for teen career development. The program incorporates schools, school gardens, nutrition education, physical activity, and civic engagement. Teens will enhance their connectedness to community and leadership skills, which provides a holistic approach to teen development.



## SOLUTION

The YO Program is designed to identify, engage, and prepare youth participants for meaningful outdoor experiences that promote mental health, physical wellness, and environmental stewardship. This program focuses on inclusivity, skill-building, and personal growth. Youth with an interest in outdoor recreation, environmental education, or community service will be recruited. Key partners include University of Alaska Cooperative Extension, Alaska Master Gardener, Anchorage School District, RurALCap Gardening, and the Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District.

## MEASURING IMPACT

The funding received supported the development of key program materials and deliverables for implementing a successful YO program. The project developed the YO curriculum, recruitment and training guide, program manual, and partnership agreements. These materials will be utilized to support APF in securing program funding and the successful implementation of the program.

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## 20+ PARTNERS ESTABLISHED

including Alaska Pacific University for curriculum development and Anchorage School District for school gardens. Others include the Anchorage Parks & Recreation Department, Anchorage Health Department, and the Alaska Food Policy Council.



## 10+ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

APF conducted partnership meetings, site visits, and partner recruitment over the project period, which assisted them in planning the YO program.



## PROGRAM MATERIALS

APF worked with partners to develop ready-to-use materials for the YO program, including a curriculum, evaluation plan, program policies and procedures, program strategies, and recruitment and training plan.



## 2 GRANT APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

APF submitted for grant funding during the project planning period. They are currently working to secure funding to implement a pilot summer YO program.

“Working together, we CAN give young people the skills they need for a healthy life, while making a difference in our communities.”

- Amelia Sikes, Alaska Project Coordinator, UAF Institute of Agriculture, Natural Resource and Extension



## CONTACT

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