

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2020 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 129-C

450 Underserved, Diverse Youth Gain Environmental Education

Category: C. Environmental Education

Sub-Category:

Total Project Budget: \$ 428,250

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: June 30, 2023 (3 yrs)

Summary:

Increase opportunity for 450 underserved, diverse teens, from urban and first-ring suburbs, to experience and connect to environmental sciences in the natural world through YMCA canoeing/learning expeditions with experienced counselors.

Name: Beth Becker

Sponsoring Organization: YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities

Job Title: Director of Grants & Foundation Relations

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Location:

Region: Statewide

County Name: Statewide

City / Township: Minneapolis

Alternate Text for Visual:

Expeditions leave the city for one of the three YMCA base camps where the adventure begins

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity	_____ Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ TOTAL _____%



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) 2020 Main Proposal Template

PROJECT TITLE: 450 Underserved, Diverse Youth Gain Environmental Education

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities is for Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility. We were founded in St. Paul in 1856 and are a trusted partner in communities from the northern border to Rochester. Our trained staff have taken young people on wilderness trips for decades and currently take 300 diverse teens on weeklong canoe trips, in small groups (up to 12 or as few as 4), using a special curriculum to coach leadership skills and environmental stewardship.

We propose to EXPAND this leadership and environmental education program to an additional 450 disadvantaged teens (most from YMCA after-school and teen programs) who, without funding, might never see the Minnesota wilderness. Youth will live immersed in nature with goals that they gain an appreciation of the Minnesota Wilderness and then use their knowledge and future leadership to use and preserve outdoor spaces.

The program was born of a recognition that youth were facing an equity gap in the cities and not participating in outdoor activities, and had little access the true Minnesota wilderness. A survey conducted in 2013 of youth through non-profit organizations in the cities indicated that 89% of youth stated they did not participate in outdoor activities, but they wanted to. In 2015 the YMCA began operation of this program to give underserved, diverse youth experiences in the wilderness. Today the program has grown to serve over 300 teens each summer, and is the second largest YMCA program of its kind in the nation.

Providing this opportunity for urban teens will advance the understanding of environmental ethics in our diverse communities and build community-wide integration of conservation, as well as ongoing participation in stewardship of Minnesota's natural resources.

We are expanding this program because many any underserved youth are unaware of the value of our Minnesota wilderness, or how the loss of habitats will affect their future lives. They have had little or no experience in the outdoors. These at risk and underserved kids do not have the means to travel in nature without financial assistance.

On these expeditions youth will have some fun and an opportunity to experience nature firsthand, and see the world that exists beyond the sights, sounds, and smells of the city. Using the YMCA curriculum, they will:

- Learn camp craft and how to leave a small footprint in nature.
- Study wildlife and its natural habitat.
- Learn about native plants as pollinators and food sources.
- Learn about careers in natural resources, ecotourism, and environmental science.
- Gain experiences that will inspire further support, study, and volunteer service for the preservation of Minnesota wilderness.
- Develop lifelong leadership skills.

Expanding this program for an additional 450 underserved youth ages 12-17 will allow a total of 750 youth to camp and canoe through the natural laboratory of Minnesota's lakes, rivers, and forest areas investigating bio-systems and seeing firsthand both pristine and environmentally impacted areas.



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) 2020 Main Proposal Template

Minnesota benefits as youth participants from underserved communities, who would not have this opportunity without financial aid, will understand the impact they have on the environment and gain a lifelong conservation ethic.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1 Title: YMCA outdoor education for urban teens.

Our goal is to expand our program to add an additional 450 teens who have few opportunities to experience nature, camping, or gain knowledge of Minnesota's wilderness. These youth would not be able to participate without financial assistance.

ENRTF BUDGET: \$428,250

Goal: *An additional 450 youth from underserved communities will access and explore Minnesota wilderness.*

Outcome	Completion Date
YR 1: 150 urban teens each year <i>Outcomes: 1) Indicate increased understanding of ecosystems, pollution and their effect on habitats, and food sources. 2) Indicate increased conservation values and environmental stewardship behaviors through understanding their own footprint in the wild, and learning campership skills. 3) Gain knowledge of opportunity for careers, and volunteer service in natural resources, environmental sciences, and ecotourism, that will inspire life-long conservation endeavors.</i>	12/1/2021 12/1/2022 12/1/2023

Outcome Measurement: Before the trips, participants will be asked to put in writing what they expect, and hope, to learn. After their weeklong, curriculum-based wilderness immersion they will be asked, "What did you learn?" Trip leaders will also watch for, and record, examples of leadership development and environmental education. Our goal is to develop youth who are lifetime advocates of our Minnesota outdoors.

III. PROJECT PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS:

We work with numerous partners (none of whom will be funded by ENRTF): Learning Works, Hiawatha Academies, Venture Academy, LEAP High School, EmpowHer (Northfield based), Bolder Options, Project Success, Hmong American Partnership, St. Paul Police Athletic League, Minnesota Public Schools: Minneapolis, St. Paul, Brooklyn Center. These partners will refer youth and provide chaperones to accompany youth to and from base camp, providing a smooth transition for teens who have never experienced nature before and many who have never been away from home overnight.

As this program continues to develop and grow, it has the support of the YMCA staff, the Peter J. King Family Foundation and dedicated volunteers who serve on our community Advisory Boards who ensure that all teens have the opportunity regardless of their background or ability to pay.

IV. LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:

Program outcome evaluation will provide the YMCA a solid basis for leveraging sustainable funding going forward. The YMCA will use the outcome data to engage funders through foundation and corporate grants, annual giving, events and sponsorships to help sustain this program at the greater capacity.

Attachment A: Project Budget Spreadsheet
 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
 M.L. 2020 Budget Spreadsheet
 Legal Citation:
 Project Manager: Kurt Simer
 Project Title: BOLD & GOLD Camp Director
 Organization: YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities
 Project Budget: \$428,250.00
 Project Length and Completion Date:
 Today's Date: 03/29/2019



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Budget	Amount Spent	Balance
BUDGET ITEM			
Personnel (Wages and Benefits)		\$ -	
Program Coordinator, 1 FTE @ \$35,000 x 3 years + Fringe @25% @\$8,750 x 3 years; provides program support year-round for information/questions, registration, organization of transportation, financial aid, acquisition of supplies, coordinates chaperones, trip details and base-camp arrangements, coordination of counselors and communications with Director and staff, special needs of campers, and assistance with issues/emergency that may occur.	\$ 131,250.00		\$ 131,250.00
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment/Tools/Supplies			
Capital Expenditures Over \$5,000			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Fee Title Acquisition			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Easement Acquisition			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Professional Services for Acquisition			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Printing			
Travel expenses in Minnesota			
Other			
450 underserved youth @ \$110/day x 6 days = \$297,000 Direct expenses: food, consumables (maps, fi	\$ 297,000.00	\$ -	\$ 297,000.00
COLUMN TOTAL	\$ 428,250.00	\$ -	\$ 428,250.00

SOURCE AND USE OF OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT	Status (secured or pending)	Budget	Spent	Balance
Program Director, Kurt Simer, (Annual Giving, grants, corporate sponsorship, fees)	Pending	\$ 213,750.00		\$ 213,750.00
Trained Counselors (Annual Giving, grants, corporate giving)	Pending	\$ 210,000.00		\$ 210,000.00
Non-State: Canoes, paddles, camping equipment, tents, first and last day at base-camp, (secured by annual giving contributions)	Pending	\$ 52,000.00	\$ -	\$ 52,000.00
In kind: Base Camp Day 1 X 450 teens, training facilities, 1 meal @ \$50 (secured by annual fund contributions, supported by base camps budget)	Pending	\$ 22,500.00	\$ -	\$ 22,500.00
Transportation of youth to base-camps	Pending	\$ 763,200.00		\$ 763,200.00
Marketing Outreach (grants, annual giving)	Pending	\$ 6,000.00		\$ 6,000.00
SOURCE, OTHER FUNDS TOTAL		\$ 1,215,450.00		

State:		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Program Coordinator (requesting capacity building addition)	Pending	\$ 131,250.00		\$ 131,250.00
450 underserved youth over 3 years @110.00/day x 6 days - \$297,000 (requesting c	Pending	\$ 297,000.00		\$ 297,000.00
STATE TOTAL		\$ 428,250.00		

Other ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS AWARDED IN THE LAST SIX YEARS	Amount legally obligated but not yet spent	Budget	Spent	Balance
None		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -



YMCA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION BY CANOE



Engaging urban teens from the 7-county Twin Cities area to experience outdoor learning to build life-long conservation ethics.





YMCA Project Manager Qualifications

The Project Manager for this program is Kurt Simer, Camp Director. Kurt directly hires and oversees all staff for this program. Kurt has worked with YMCA Camps for more than 8 years. He implemented the Boys Outdoor Leadership Development (BOLD) and Girls Outdoor Leadership Development (GOLD) programs at the YMCA and has been the driver for bringing our underserved communities into nature and providing life-changing experiences.

Kurt is a graduate of Hamilton College with a degree in economics. Realizing that outdoor education was his passion, the YMCA hired him from a stint as an instructor for the National Outdoor Leadership School to Direct Camp Widjiwagan, and then lead our BOLD/GOLD program

YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities Organizational Description

The YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities (YMCA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization which has served Minnesota for over 160 years. Our vision is to serve relentlessly until all can thrive in each stage of life. We carefully chose the word “relentlessly,” and it is central to our work: We are here for good. , the YMCA provides life-strengthening services across 12 counties of the Greater Twin Cities metro region; Rochester, Minnesota; and Hudson, Wisconsin. Our 28 YMCA branches and program sites, 8 overnight camps, 10 day-camps, and more than 90 child care locations serve 340,000 members annually. The YMCA is also steward of 3,719 acres of land, 680 acres of this owned by the YMCA through use agreements with property owners and municipalities. Our care of these resources remains priority as we strive to provide bring children, adults and families over decades access and understanding of the importance of our pristine wilderness.

The mission of the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities is "to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all." Our vision is to serve relentlessly with our community until all can thrive in each stage of life. The Y has a longstanding reputation for providing care that reflects compassion, integrity, and respect for all individuals and cultures regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status or status with regard to public assistance.