



WELD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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NEWS RELEASE

Date: 06/16/14

Contact: Jennifer Finch, 970-336-7203

Re: Weld County Youth Conservation Corps

WELD COUNTY YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS RECEIVES GRANT TO CONTINUE PROGRAM FOR AT-RISK YOUTH

WELD COUNTY, CO – The Weld County Youth Conservation Corps (WCYCC) was recently awarded a \$130,000 grant from the Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) to help support its Americorps program for at-risk youth in Weld County.

The WCYCC engages its corps members in meaningful community and conservation service projects throughout Weld County, offering opportunities for at-risk youth to gain useful work experience, obtain skills to use in the workforce and work to obtain their GED.

"These funds will allow us to recruit members for a term of service," said Tami Grant, Special Programs Manager — Youth. "The program gives them a leg up, and for some, this is their first opportunity in the world of employment."

The WCYCC serves about 40 young adults per year in different capacities. If program members complete their terms of service, which can vary from 300, 450, 900 or 1,700 hours, they are eligible for an educational award. Members receive a monthly living stipend and then receive the education award, up to \$5,550. The educational award can be used at any accredited university and remains available for seven years. The award can also be used to pay back student loans.

"It's great to see these youth progress through the program," Grant said. "We have one young man who actually came through another program at the Department of Human Services, and was pre-identified as gang affiliated. He got into our program and is now in his third year with us; he's going to be a junior at the University of Northern Colorado. He comes back every year and the education award helps pay for his school."

Those in the program go out into the community and perform services to help meet community needs, including taking referrals from United Way and partnering with Weld Weeds. The grant will be effective January 1 of next year.

"Ultimately the grant means we can help more young adults gain those essential employment skills and hopefully help them to be successful in Weld County," Grant said.

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