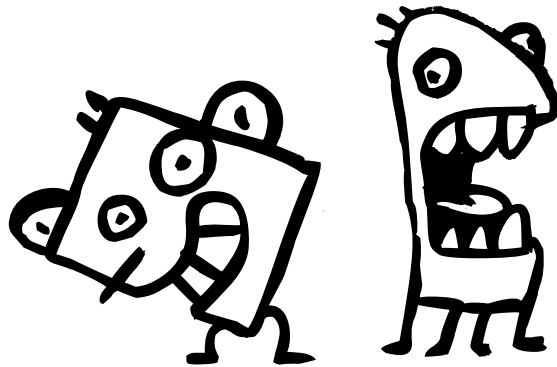


how to get a great youth work job



Produced by the Youth Action & Policy Association

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Other Useful Documents

Award Pay Rates

Go to the NSW Department of Industrial Relations website www.dir.nsw.gov.au to access the latest information on award pay rates. Simply click on the Award Pay Rates link and scroll down to the link for the *Social and community services employees (state) award*.

Duty of Care

Read the YAPA fact sheet *Duty of care* at www.yapa.org.au/facts/dutyofcare.pdf and other related publications at www.yapa.org.au/pubs .

Training

YAPA runs a 2 day course for new youth workers and those looking to get a youth work job: *A Survival Guide for Youth Workers*. Details available from www.yapa.org.au

Reporting Children at Risk

A Guide for Making a Report to DOCS about Children and Young People at Risk of Harm : This pamphlet is available by calling DOCS on 02 9716 2255. It may also be available on the DOCS website www.community.nsw.gov.au .

What types of youth work jobs are available?

There are lots of different types of jobs in youth work. Some of the different types of jobs can be drop in and school holiday activities, recreational and sports activities, creative arts and music, counselling, employment or education programs, street outreach, family support, accommodation, health programs, crisis support and youth development

There are also many different organisations you can work for ranging from community based youth centres, neighbourhood centres, charities, religious organisations, councils, health centres, migrant resource centres, police community youth clubs or performing arts companies.

Youth services are funded by a variety of different funding programs, so each job will have a different role and responsibility and work with different types of young people.

Where to look for jobs

Most jobs are advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald each Saturday or in local papers. Look under Y for Youth or under C for Community. You can also look for jobs over the internet. A good site to look at is www.ncoss.org.au.

Getting an information package

Once you have found a job you are interested in you will need to phone the organisation for an information package. Its really important to do this. The organisation will send you an information package which will contain a job description and other important information to help you apply for the job.

How to apply

Your application should include a resume/curriculum vitae (CV) and also a statement addressing the selection criteria – see the next page for an explanation of how to do this. Make sure that your application is sent to the organisation by the closing date specified in the ad.

What to include in a resume /curriculum vitae:

Personal details : Include your name, address and contact phone number

Education : Include your final level reached of schooling, any uni or tafe qualifications and any relevant courses or workshops you have attended

Experience : List all of your relevant voluntary and paid experience. Start from your most recent experience. Details should include where you worked, your job title, the dates you worked there and the major tasks you did as part of the job.

Referees : Include 3 referees with their name, their position and organisation and contact details. Make sure you ask them first if its OK to be a referee.

How to address selection criteria

What is selection criteria ?

“Selection criteria” is a list of desired skills, experiences and attributes required to perform a certain job.

How do I find out what the selection criteria are?

The selection criteria are normally listed in the job description and sometimes also in the job advertisement. The selection criteria are often divided into “essential” and “desirable”.

Why do community organisations have selection criteria?

It is very common for youth and community organisations to have a list of selection criteria for advertised positions. The list has been developed after a great deal of discussion and a formal agreement between the management of the service, the funding body and the selection committee.

The selection committee can ONLY employ someone who has the skills, experience and attributes listed. The way they find out who has those skills is by seeking applications which outline how they meet this criteria, and then by interviewing based on this criteria.

If you do not address the criteria you will almost certainly not be offered an interview, regardless of your application, experience or skills.

What does it mean to “address the selection criteria”?

This means to write the heading of each criteria in your application and then at least a paragraph underneath saying how you have that experience or skill.

For example,

Excellent communication skills

Through my past experience I have developed excellent written and verbal communication skills. For example at my position as youth worker at XYZ I was required to prepare written reports, media releases, funding proposals, give speeches at a number of conferences.

Driver’s license

I have a driver’s license.

What if I don’t have the experience or skill required?

If you do not have the experience requested write down the experience you do have. If you do not have the skills or knowledge requested you can still write that you are keen to learn.

Typical selection criteria

This is a typical list of selection criteria for youth work jobs. As practice try writing a short paragraph on each of them.

1. Relevant experience

2. Relevant qualifications

3. Relevant skills

4. Good teamwork skills

5. Good communication skills

6. Ability to relate to young people

7. Knowledge of youth issues

8. Knowledge of youth services in local area

9. Ability to advocate and lobby on behalf of young people

Questions you could be asked in the interview

These are some questions you might get asked in an interview. Practice answering each of them.

1. Why have you applied for this job?
2. Why should we employ you for this job?
3. Why do you want to work for us/ in this job?
4. Please tell us about your previous experience
5. What are your strengths?
6. What are your weaknesses?
7. What are important components of teamwork?
8. What are important components of communication?
9. How would you consult young people?
10. How would you involve young people in the running of the service?
11. What is your knowledge of other services in the area?
12. Do you have any special skills or talents, ie guitar playing?
13. What ideas do you have for activities for young people?
14. What is your understanding of community based management committees?
15. What do you see as the main issues for young people living in the local area?
16. What would you do in this position to address these issues?
17. How would you advocate and lobby for young people in the local area?
18. What are your admin skills
19. How would you advertise programs to young people, involve more young people from the broader community?
20. What hours would you be willing to work?
21. How would you go about building a positive profile for young people in the local community?

In the interview you may be asked about your knowledge about the local area.
Do some research on these questions before you go to the interview.

What are the most important issues for young people in the local area?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

What other youth services exist in the local area and what do they do?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Scenarios

What would you do in the following situation?

It is quite common for interviews to include scenarios of what could happen in a job. Think about what you would say to each of these and talk to other people about what you could do in these situations.

1. You are working by yourself at night running a drop-in program and a group of older boys come in – they are obviously drunk and are threatening other young people. A fight is about to break out.

2. A young person aged 14 tells you that they are being abused by their parent but they don't want you to tell anyone

3. A young person aged 15 tells you that they have run away from home. They have nowhere to stay and they do not want you to tell their parents.

4. A group of young people turn up to the youth centre in a stolen car

5. A young person makes a pass at you

6. A group of young people are at the centre and start making racist or sexist comments towards another young person

7. You become aware that a young person you know has been using drugs or alcohol on a regular basis.

Words you should know about

Your interview may include questions on the following terms. You should do a bit of research before the interview so that you can summarise what each term means and how it would apply for the job. We have attached some additional information to help you do this.

Social Justice =

Occupational Health and Safety =

Duty of Care =

Mandatory reporting =

Pay rates

Most youth work jobs are paid according to the NSW Social & Community Services Award. The pay rate is normally written in the job advertisement. See attached for the current pay rates.

Other things to help you get a job

There are a number of other things you can do to help you prepare for a job as a youth worker.

This includes :

- Doing volunteer work at your local youth service. Volunteer work can help you develop your skills and knowledge as a potential youth worker. As a volunteer you should also receive support and mentoring from a more experienced youth worker and often free training as well.

In many cases volunteer work will lead to paid employment at the organisation. To find your local youth service ring your local Council and ask to speak to the youth or community worker. They will help you find a local youth service.

- Joining a management committee of your local youth centre or neighbourhood centre. Most community services are run by a local committee which meets each month. By joining this committee you can learn more about how a community service is run.
- Letting local youth services know if you are available for casual work or for school holiday programs.
- Doing training in youth/welfare work at tafe or uni.
- Doing workshops or courses. YAPA has a variety of courses and conferences that youth workers can do. Visit our website for details ww.yapa.org.au

Social Justice

Components of Social Justice

1. **Equity** = Services should be allocated on the basis of need.
2. **Access** = Services should be available to everyone who is entitled to them and should be free of any form of discrimination irrespective of a person's country of birth, language, culture, race or religion.

Access barriers can make it difficult for some people to know about, use or participate in a service. These can include physical barriers, language barriers, attitudes, cost and appropriateness.

3. **Participation** = Those people who use a service should be able to have a say in decision making processes that affect their lives. Their views should be valued and they should be able to influence the outcome of a decision.

Social Justice means that

- there is fairness in the distribution of resources
- rights are recognised and promoted
- people have fair access to the economic resources and services essential to meet their basic needs and improve their quality of life
- people have opportunities for genuine participation and consultation about decisions affecting their lives.

“Social justice is what faces you when you get up in the morning. It is awakening in a house with an adequate water supply, cooking facilities and sanitation. It is the ability to nourish your children and send them to a school where their education not only equips them for employment but reinforces their knowledge of and appreciation of their cultural inheritance. It is the prospect of genuine employment and good health : a life of choice and opportunity, free from discrimination”.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, First Report, 1993, page 10

Occupational Health & Safety

Occupational Health & Safety legislation aims to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees, volunteers, visitors and people who use community services.

OH&S legislation applies not only to the office of the organisation but to every event that the organisation runs.

To comply with OH & S legislation, services must :

- Provide or maintain equipment and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health.
- Ensure that equipment and substances are used, stored and transported safely and without risks to health.
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision that ensures the health and safety of employees and others.
- Maintain the workplace(s) in a safe condition
- Ensure the health and safety of visitors and clients to the workplace.

What is risk management?

All employers, including community services, have an obligation to identify and assess foreseeable hazards. If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk, the employer must take steps to control the risk.