

Just the Job

Information Sheet

Job title: Youth Worker

Alternative titles:

- Rangatahi Development Worker
- Youth Leader
- Youth Advocate
- Youth Pastor/Minister
- Youth Support Worker

Job description:

Youth Work is carried out in many different contexts/settings and thus the job descriptions of Youth Workers vary from context/setting to context/setting. An example of this is a Youth Worker who works in a Youth Centre will have a different job description than one who runs a club or youth group. There is however some common purposes of Youth Work that would be carried out in the different contexts/settings. They would be:

- Form a quality relationship with the young person where the Youth Worker seeks to tip the power balance in favour of the young person
- Build on the strengths of the young person and their self confidence
- Help the young person to develop the ability to manage personal and social relationships
- Create learning and opportunity to develop new skills
- Encourage positive group environment
- Build the capacity of a young person to consider risk make reasoned decisions and take control
- Develop a world view which widens horizons and invites social commitment.
- Create an environment that is fun and the person can relax and meet and make friends

Key tasks that Youth Workers may carry out are:

- Engage and maintain quality relationships with young people/person
- Support young people/person to connect or stay connected to their Family/Whanau, Peers, Community, and Education/training/employment
- Provide support, information and resources to young people/person
- Plan and deliver programmes/events/activities for young people/person
- Train and support volunteers and other staff
- Write reports and prepare applications for funding
- Manage budgets

Qualifications required:

For a school student who is still at school subjects that will assist are the core subjects maths, English and Te Reo as a language, Physical Ed. and IT. Additional to this would be advisable to have good social skills and a confident personality with a sense of humour and a willingness to be flexible and creative.

At training/tertiary level there are The 3 national Youth Work Qualifications, PRAXIS our Christian based Youth Work training provider, and other Youth Work related qualifications at university level such as Youth Studies, Maori studies, Recreation and Sport.

The age restrictions probably exclude under 16s, however there are some younger people carrying out youth leadership as volunteers in Church youth groups and holiday programmes who maybe younger than 16.

Training costs:

The training costs vary from course to course and depend on the training provider.

Location of job:

Youth Workers work in Youth Centres, community facilities and offices, schools, churches, marae and government agencies. They may also work outdoors for activities such as camping and sports.

Many Youth Workers travel locally to meet at places convenient to the people they work with. They also may travel nationally to attend conferences and workshops for professional development.

Career path:

Most people getting into Youth Work start as a volunteer for a Youth Service in their local community. This can sometimes lead to employment with that particular Youth Service if the person shows a commitment and stays as a volunteer for a long period of time, displays the skills personality for the job and the Youth Service can manage to get funding for a wage.

There are 2 national Youth Work certificates that a person could achieve. One is a level 3 for the younger person who wants to become a Youth Leader and they would need to work under supervision. There is a certificate level 4 qualification for people who have had some experience – could be volunteer or paid Youth Worker.

Salary range:

Salaries vary, but most Youth Workers earn between \$20,000 and \$38,000 per year. Managers who run a Youth Service may earn more than this and those who work for Government or Local Government may also earn more than this.

Other careers this profession could lead to:

Youth Workers may move into social work, counselling or teaching with further training or they may become trained supervisors of Youth Workers (Professional Supervision) or Work place assessors through the ITO.

Tips on how to increase the chances of successfully entering this industry:

Start engaging with young people through volunteering at a local Youth Service or peer support leader at school. The more experience you gain in working with young people the more chances you have of gaining employment. Read books on adolescent development and Youth Culture, google 'Youth Work'.

Places/websites to source information about this job:

Libraries, Book shops, web sites to check out are:

www.youthworkers.net.nz

www.youthlinks.co.uk

www.nya.org.uk

www.infed.org.uk

www.tkaito.co.nz

Any other relevant points:

Youth Workers are increasingly being employed to focus on positive youth development. They have traditionally worked with activity groups such as Scouts or church youth groups, or with young people who are experiencing problems or at risk. However their role is growing to include work in schools and facilities designed for young people such as drop in centres and skateboard parks.

The trend reflects changes in youth development theories, which have in turn influenced Government policy on youth development. For example the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa launched by the Ministry of Youth Affairs in 2002, shifted the focus from addressing youth problems to building on young peoples assets and advocated the provision of more holistic youth development services.