



ARCTIC YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Strategic Plan 2022-2027

Our Mission

Advance an international movement to steward northern landscapes, communities, and ways of life by supporting a growing coalition of youth from the Arctic and expanding youth influence and leadership opportunities.

Our Vision

Bring lasting change to the world and stewardship of the Arctic through dedicated leadership and influence of Arctic youth.

Our Values & Guiding Principles

Community

We create ***impactful, lasting, supportive networks*** among AYA Ambassadors and with other youth groups, mentors, and partners.

Culture

We celebrate and elevate Arctic ***Indigenous People's traditions and practices***.

Dignity

We help instill and grow ***pride and self-respect*** in AYAs.

Well-Being

We recognize and support all aspects of AYA Ambassador ***personal, professional, and educational growth***.

Empowerment

We encourage and foster ***initiatives and projects led by youth***.

Equity

We create spaces that support ***diverse youth, mentor, and partner representation and engagement*** in AYA.

Self-Representation

We support youth from a mix of rural and urban communities, cultural backgrounds, and life experiences to effectively ***share their stories, perspectives, and unique expertise***.

Stewardship

We support all Ambassadors as stewards of the lands, waters, plants, fish, and wildlife of Alaska and the Arctic, ***respecting and honoring all ways of knowing***.



Our Goals & Objectives

- 1. Have a sustaining positive impact on youth's personal, professional, and educational goals.**
 - a.** Better prepare youth entering the AYA program for roles and responsibilities in the program.
 - i. Create and expand programs for youth between high school and career.
 - b.** Facilitate lasting connections between youth and local, regional, national, and international conservation leaders and policymakers.
 - i. Foster connections between the AYA program and other Arctic youth entities, such as Arctic Youth Leaders of the Permanent Participant Organizations, Arctic Youth Network and Arctic Council working groups.
 - ii. Foster connections between the Ambassadors and partner organization staff.
 - iii. Expose youth to different career paths and mentors working in their areas of interest and affecting their issues of interest
 - c.** Facilitate lasting connections between Ambassadors, AYA program staff, and leadership.
 - i. Add several networking and reunion events per year to cultivate ongoing relationships between alumni, staff, and partners.
 - d.** Create opportunities to learn about and participate in career paths of interest to Ambassadors, ranging from policymaking and conservation community wellness and Indigenous practices.
 - i. Meaningfully connect Ambassadors to partners – USFWS, WWF, ACF – missions, programs, and staff.

- ii. Build connections for participating Ambassadors and recent graduates for internships and entry-level jobs in Tribal governments, Alaska Native Organizations, partner agencies and conservation and policy organizations.
 - iii. Share opportunities and encourage participation/service on boards, councils, advisory groups, and steering committees.
- e. Help youth develop specific and valuable skills to meet their personal, professional, and educational goals. Example skills and activities include:
 - i. Identify their story and interests, public speaking, storytelling, valuing all forms of expertise, cross-cultural communication, advocating for youth and communities, and network-building.
 - ii. Assist with public outreach for all partner organizations, developing storytelling and media projects to help raise awareness of the rapidly changing Arctic.
 - iii. Participate in projects and initiatives with CAFF and other working groups of the Arctic Council.
 - iv. Meet in-person with Arctic policymakers and community leaders for knowledge exchanges.
 - v. Engage youth in Indigenous led stewardship such as the Indigenous Sentinels Network, Indigenous Guardians Network, Tribal Conservation Districts, and others.
 - vi. Help create opportunities to have youth speak at conservation-focused events.

2. Elevate and promote the lived experience, Indigenous Knowledge, and leadership of youth from Arctic communities.

- a. Work with youth from the Arctic to understand the challenges and consider innovative solutions to problems facing the Arctic.
- b. Increase opportunities for youth to work in their communities and assist with meaningful projects.
- c. Increase capacity for AYA participants to speak out and make an impact on issues that are most important to them (becoming involved with advocacy organizations and movements).
- d. Showcase youth stories to inspire more and different audiences to care about the Arctic.
 - i. Embrace Ambassadors' lived experience in collaborations with partnerships, social media, news media and AYA program materials.
 - ii. Expand partnerships to include collaboration with art and cultural institutions.
- e. Provide youth with international opportunities and educational resources relevant to the rapidly changing Arctic.
 - i. Increase travel opportunities to Arctic communities, in Alaska and other Circumpolar North countries and communities.

- f. Create cross-cultural connections in rural and urban Alaska, international communities and with conservationists from different backgrounds and generation

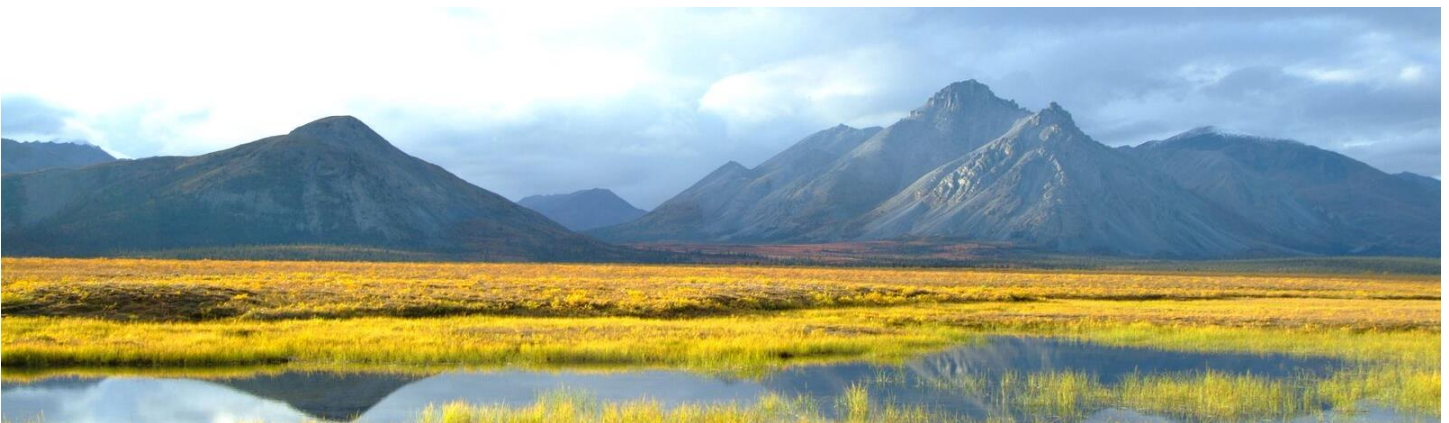
3. Grow and adapt the AYA program to engage more youth and partners, and expand communities represented in the program.

- a. Consistently and clearly communicate with the broad base of program partners and supporters about program and Ambassador activities
 - i. Expand written and in-person program updates throughout the year with core partners.
 - ii. Develop a newsletter, video blog, or other communications format for partners, supporters, and alumni.
 - iii. Strengthen social media updates to include more frequent program highlights, youth voices, and relevant news.
- b. Consider expanding the program to two years to allow more robust engagement and meaningful outcomes for participants, mentors, and partners.
- c. Consider expanding the age range of participants.
- d. Develop a strategy to increase alumni influence on the direction of the AYA program, such as establishing an alumni advisory board.
- e. Continue soliciting feedback and evaluations from AYAs to help inform and improve upon the program.
- f. Integrate growth positions and formal roles with AYA for alumni through paid internships, jobs, increasing leadership roles and working for other similar programs.
- g. Diversify funding with foundation support, donor opportunities and strategic business sponsorships.



Our Measures of Success

- **Program Awareness & Outreach:** Increase outreach to Arctic communities and organizations to inform more potential applicants and partners of the program.
- **Program Participation & Representation:** Continue to expand the number of Alaska communities and regions represented by AYA participants and staff.
- **Program Participation & Representation:** Increase capacity for AYA participants to speak out and make an impact on issues that are most important to them.
- **Participant Employment & Educational Opportunities:** Increase the number of Ambassadors participating in paid internships or other opportunities during the program.
- **Participant & Alumni Employment Opportunities:** Increase paid opportunities at core AYA partner organizations for AYA participants and alumni through stipends, small contracts, grants, and paid staff positions.
- **Alumni Engagement & Participation in AYA:** Expand the number of alumni involved in AYA through formal roles as mentors, staff members of partner organizations, AYA program staff, contractors.
- **Alumni Engagement & Participation in AYA:** Continue and expand the network of ambassadors who remain involved formally and informally (e.g., through continuing travel, speaking, networking, volunteering, and staying in touch with each other).
- **Alumni Education & Employment Opportunities:** Increase the percent of program graduates enrolled in education programs or working in jobs related to Arctic policy, cultural stewardship, or natural resource stewardship within two years of graduating the program.
- **Funding:** Increase and diversify program funding to sustain a cohort of 15 current Ambassadors and a growing network of alumni with opportunities for international, domestic, and Alaska connections and projects they lead and assist with.
- **Funding:** By 2024 secure a new flagship funding source to leverage and compliment core funding from FWS, WWF, and ACF.





Partner Roles and Responsibilities:

Core partners—US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Alaska Conservation Foundation (ACF), and World Wildlife Fund (WWF)—all collaborate on this program, sharing in some responsibilities, and complementing each other for others with a lead or supporting role. See below for a more detailed description of responsibilities.

- Strategic direction, setting program priorities and funding needs, and annual work plans: All core partners
- Outreach, recruitment and mentoring prospective, current and alumni AYAs: All core partners
 - Recruitment of prospective AYAs: ACF leads, with FWS and WWF support
- Internal and public communications: All core partners
 - Website: FWS to host main webpage, with partners supporting complimentary pages
 - Social Media: ACF to lead coordination of social media, with all core partners contributing to strategy and content. WWF and FWS amplify and share social media content where possible.
 - Media and Congressional engagement: FWS leads in most cases, with WWF as lead when topic/approach dictates.
 - Communications training and support for AYA-led communications: ACF leads coordination of training and support, with expertise and connections from FWS and WWF.
- Building connections, networks, and partnerships for AYAs and program goals: All core partners
- Identification, support, and execution of projects: All core partners
- Logistical coordination, including planning, program implementation, and travel: ACF leads, in close consultation and collaboration with and support from all core partners
- Fundraising and management of funding: ACF and WWF to lead fundraising, ACF to manage program funding.