

Sioux YMCA's Long Term Volunteer/Internship Program

Thank you for your interest in the Sioux YMCA's long term volunteer and unpaid internship program. Long term volunteers and interns are a valuable asset to our team. While you will be under direction from our staff, our program gives you freedom to develop service projects and community outreach programs as well.

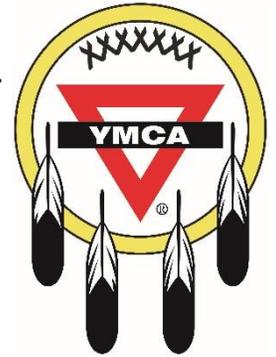
As part of the team, be prepared to wear many hats! The Sioux YMCA is a very small organization with many responsibilities and programs within communities throughout the reservation. The Sioux YMCA believes in working *with* community members rather than *doing for*. By working with community members we establish sustainable programs and change; we can empower. With this in mind, your work will inevitably grow slowly. Don't expect change fast. Be patient and open to new ideas. Even more importantly, be flexible.

This experience is whatever YOU make it. Every day will bring something new. These are a few of the roles you may take on:

- Youth Programmer: assisting with our summer program, teen, tween, after school, and adult programs
- Counselor: talking with and advising children and teenagers in various communities and schools
- Community Programmer: assisting with physical and structural maintenance of community and YMCA buildings and starting classes and family programs in rural communities. This may include traveling to tribal schools or a community placement
- Administrative assistant: aiding the executive director and book keeper with office tasks. Examples include receipt keeping, grant writing, writing policies, putting together our newsletter etc.



As a community volunteer you will become a part of the community and will be working on "community time." This means you will not have a simple Monday-Friday 9 am-5pm schedule. Additionally, don't be surprised if kids from the community come to your house or the YMCA looking to play or hang out with you on the weekends. Don't be afraid to say "no." Setting boundaries and creating personal space for yourself is the key to maintaining your sanity and not getting burnt out.



Working on the reservation may be intense at first. You may be unfamiliar with the culture, economic status, and rural location of the community. You will be tested, but you will grow immensely. It's amazing how powerful a small group of individuals can be, even with limited resources, if they work with passion. The Sioux YMCA has a profound effect on the community. The Y is a safe place where the kids can learn, grow, and have fun. You will be rewarded in ways you could never imagine volunteering with the Sioux YMCA.

FAQs

Where is the Sioux YMCA located?

The Sioux YMCA is located in Dupree, SD on the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Reservation, which is home to four bands of the Lakota people. It is approximately two and a half hours from Rapid City and the Badlands National Park and about an hour and forty-five minutes from Pierre, SD. Dupree is in Ziebach County, which is consistently one of the two poorest counties in the US. Unemployment and underemployment ranges from 75-90% while 70% of children who live on the reservation live in poverty.



When can I start?

Our program is flexible in that you can choose your start and end dates.

How long can I volunteer for?

The Sioux YMCA requests that long term volunteers commit for a minimum of three months and a maximum of one year.

What language do they speak on the reservation?

Everyone speaks fluent English on the reservation. Some people speak Lakota, but you won't hear it in every day conversation. The Lakota are working hard to revitalize their language.

Where will I live?

The Sioux YMCA provides housing, including utilities, for long term volunteers. Y housing is fully furnished including dishes, sheets and bedding, furniture, and laundry. It is possible that you may be sharing a room with other volunteers or staff, especially during the summer months. Housing is within minutes walking distance of the YMCA, the bank, and the grocery store in town.



Where will I be working?

You will be primarily working on site at the Sioux Y in Dupree. Opportunities may arise where you could work at our resident summer camp on the Missouri River or out in other reservation communities and schools, depending on need and if you feel comfortable with these placements.

Will I receive a stipend or other benefits?

Volunteers will be provided with a weekly food stipend. The Sioux YMCA does not provide benefits such as insurance for its long term volunteers.

Will I receive training?

The Site Director will provide training on games, arts and crafts, activities, how to work with children, and cultural experiences.

Where are the nearest medical facilities?

There is a health clinic in Faith (approximately 20 miles away) and a hospital with an emergency department in Gettysburg (90 miles). You may also visit the Indian Health Services hospital in Eagle Butte, which is about 20 miles away. The closest pharmacies are located in Faith and Eagle Butte.



Is there cell and internet service?

All Y houses have Wi-Fi. There is an AT&T and Verizon cell tower in Dupree. Phones on other carriers will not get service. Service is spotty or non-existent in the more isolated reservation communities.

What should I bring? What shouldn't I bring?

Bring:

- Casual and conservative clothes and shoes you don't mind getting ruined
 - Both winter and summer clothes—temperatures can range from below 0 to 100 depending on the time of year—plan on layers
- A journal
- Books
- A bath towel
- Personal hygiene products
- Water bottle
- Travel money

Don't bring:

- Valuable jewelry
- Clothes or shoes you don't want dirty or ruined
- Apparel that feature Native American stereotypes
- Pets
- Drugs

Optional, but handy:

- A car
- A laptop (for personal use)



So we have this mud called “gumbo”...

What are some things to do in my spare time?

The Badlands and the Black Hills are within a two and a half hour drive from Dupree and make excellent day or weekend trips. The river in Pierre also makes a great hangout spot in the summer. Additionally, the surrounding communities on the reservation have their own events in summer. Each community has a big weekend with a powwow and rodeo. Dupree's "Pioneer Days" is usually the second weekend in July. Powwows also occur year round out in the reservation communities. Neighboring Eagle Butte has a gym and cultural center. You can also attend sporting events at the local high schools throughout the year.



Where can I find more information on the Sioux YMCA?

Friend us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/sioux.ymca> or follow us on twitter @SiouxYMCA. Our website is siouxymca.org.

