

# National Hispanic Environmental Council



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## FACT SHEET

### THE 6<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL NHEC NEW YORK CITY MINORITY YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING INSTITUTE “4 Days of Learning, A Lifetime of Experience” National Hispanic Environmental Council November 11-14, 2011 • New York, NY

#### SUMMARY

**The National Hispanic Environmental Council (NHEC) is accepting applications from New York area teens**, aged 16–18, to attend its upcoming 6<sup>th</sup> annual “New York City Minority Youth Environmental Training Institute”.

The Institute is an intensive, science-based, and highly educational 4 day environmental program to be held November 11–14, 2011, in the Audobon Center located in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, New York.

Using classroom and outdoor settings, **the Institute is designed to help create the environmental leaders and professionals of tomorrow** by educating, engaging, and inspiring youth, especially Latinos/other minorities, on a range of environmental, natural resource, cultural, and historical topics.

The Institute is also designed to give information on the **many different college and career opportunities in the environment**—and to strongly urge students to pursue these careers in the future.

**The NYC Institute is being funded by the USDA National Resources Conservation Service and the U.S. Dept. of Energy**, in conjunction with NHEC, which is the only national Latino environmental and natural resource organization in the country. Our sponsors and NHEC are working closely together on the planning and implementation of this program in New York. However, NRCS and NHEC are not new to each other—each year, NRCS supports NHEC’s national “Minority Youth Environmental Training Institute”, held every August in northern New Mexico. **The upcoming NYC Institute is a regional version of NHEC’s national Institute in New Mexico.**

Students should note that **if selected, NHEC will provide a scholarship that will cover your major costs** to attend the 4 day Institute, including 3 meals a day, materials, science equipment, and more. There is no fee to apply, and only a \$15 registration fee if you are accepted.

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## APPLICATION PROCESS, SELECTION, AND THE INSTITUTE SCHOLARSHIP

**The Institute is open to all students** aged 16–18, and all are welcome to apply, although Latino youth are especially urged to do so, given the severe under-representation of Latinos in environmental fields. Applications will be evaluated as they are received, **so applying as soon as possible is strongly encouraged**. See the attached “Application Form” and other documents for more information on how to apply. Students can also call or write NHEC for application materials, or go to our web page at [www.NHEC-MinorityYouthEnviroInstitutes.org](http://www.NHEC-MinorityYouthEnviroInstitutes.org). However, while students can obtain application forms from our web site, **you cannot apply on-line** because you must include documents like your transcripts. Completed applications must be mailed to NHEC.

Applicants from across the New York area will be competitively selected for the Institute scholarship, based on a variety of criteria. Selection criteria includes (but is not limited to): 1. students’ maturity and seriousness of intentions; 2. students’ academic background, including GPA; 3. ability to show a strong and genuine interest in the environment or related field, especially as a future career—and especially with a federal environmental agency; 4. proven experience in some environmental activity or job; 5. extracurricular and/or community activities; and 6. diversity by age, gender, race, ethnicity; geography, environmental experience, and other factors.

**A one page essay is also required**, where applicants in their own words describe their qualifications, their interest in the environment, their future career goals, and how they can make a difference to our environment now and in the future. **This essay will be especially important in selecting students to the Institute.**

If selected, students will have all major Institute costs covered by NHEC through a scholarship. NHEC will also waive the \$15 registration fee for any student who is accepted into the Institute but is unable to pay the fee due to proven financial hardship.

## CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION

The Institute will begin on Friday, Nov. 11 and end at 7 pm on Monday, Nov. 14. There will be approximately 22 students in the Institute. Once accepted, students will be mailed materials before the start of the Institute.

**Following Breakfast, the Institute will begin at 9 am each morning, and will continue throughout the day, with breaks for lunch and dinner. The Institute hours are 9am–6pm each day.** The Institute will operate like school. Students will be expected to arrive on time; to be prepared; to participate fully in the classroom and outdoor field activities; to be respectful of the Instructors, role models, and fellow students; and to follow instructions, especially regarding safety.

The curriculum, to be taught by NHEC’s Instructors (who are skilled environmental educators) will begin by covering basic principles in environmental/conservation topics, and then progress to more advanced concepts, as each day builds on the day before. The Institute combines classroom instruction with science-based field work (such as water and soil testing) that complements the classroom lessons. Students will also be taught in teams—the Institute emphasizes team building and leadership skills, through group challenges and individual responsibility.

The Institute will also include sessions on the **many different careers** in the environment, and provide students with opportunities to see up-close—through interaction with role models—how these jobs are performed in the real world.

Once again, the NYC Institute will be held at the Audubon Center in Prospect Park, in Brooklyn. On Friday, Nov 11, the Institute will begin with presentations/classwork by NHEC instructors at the Audubon Center on a number of environmental topics. Following presentations, students will take a guided tour of key natural areas of Prospect Park by park naturalists as well as NHEC instructors and role models. Role models will be intermixed throughout the day; they will speak about their careers, personal environmental journeys, and how students can follow in their footsteps.

On Saturday, Nov. 12, students will again go to the Audubon Center in Prospect Park, and the morning hours will feature more presentations on environmental topics, as well as learning the scientific principles of conducting “field studies”. After lunch, accompanied by NHEC instructors, students will begin their field work, including birding, plus water, soil, and air testing; students will use professional-grade, high-tech equipment. New role models will participate as well, intermixed throughout the day; they speak about their environmental jobs, personal environmental journeys, and internship/career opportunities.

On Sunday, students will report to the Audubon Center at Prospect Park, for further presentations/classwork. Role models who are present will speak and continue working with students. At noon students will board a chartered bus to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, where they will continue their field studies. Students will return to Prospect Park in the late afternoon and then depart for home.

On Monday, Nov 14, students will report to the Audubon Center for more presentations that morning. Then students will board a chartered bus to a nearby waste water treatment plant, near Prospect Park. After touring the facility, students will board the bus to Manhattan for a tour of marine life and related environmental issues on a ship owned by the green group called “The River Project”, Role models will be present and will speak. After the River Project site visit, students will board a boat for a two hour cruise on the River to continue learning about these topics. At 6 pm the Institute will end and students will depart for home from that location.

Helping to teach the curriculum **will be many Latino/minority “role models”**, and their participation is a key element of the Institute. These “role models” are working environmental and other types of professionals from many different fields—park rangers, wildlife biologists, environmental engineers, foresters, plant scientists, lawyers, administrators, geologists, law enforcement officers, historians, and many more. These role models are volunteering to spend time at the Institute to help teach the students. **There will be a variety of role models each day at the Institute.**

Thus, students will have their “own” to interact with, to be inspired by, to learn from, and who have a success story to tell. In this way, the message to the students will not only be clear, but believable—**“I made it in this field, and so can you”**.

We do wish to be clear with students—**the Institute is an academically challenging, intellectually serious program for mature students** with a deep and genuine interest in the environment. You will have definitely have fun, but you will have work to do too. But if you are sincerely interested in learning more about the environment, and especially in learning about internship opportunities with federal environmental agencies, then we promise you will have one of the best experiences of your life. **All of our students in past Institutes will tell you that it is truly “Days of Learning, A Lifetime of Experience”.**

Through supervised field trips to parks, wildlife refuges, as well as walks through streams, trails, forests, beaches, and more, students will experience the excitement of the outdoors. During the Institute, students will encounter a diversity of views and experiences, especially from fellow students. This diversity will ensure that they learn as much from each other as from the coursework.

## POST INSTITUTE CONTACT AND FOLLOW-UP WITH STUDENTS

NHEC and our Institute are about building the next generation of environmental leaders and professionals. To do this, **NHEC must contact students after the Institute.** Thus, there is a post-Institute component to the Institute, and you need to know and agree to this component, before you apply.

Post-Institute follow-up will take the form of occasional emails (or if necessary, a phone call) from NHEC that will ask you to fill out a short questionnaire, such as your progress in school, your GPA, and what you may be doing as to environmental activities or an environmental career. We ask for your cooperation in this process. It will help us, help you, and help students that follow you in future Institutes.

NHEC will also keep you informed, by email, of other opportunities for Institute graduates. This includes information on our annual environmental Conference and Career Fair; our High School Environmental Career Awareness Program; our Minority Hiking Program; and our other National and Regional Institutes. We will also keep you posted on environmental jobs, internships, and scholarship opportunities, with Federal agencies.

## SAFETY FIRST – ALWAYS

The Institute is designed to not only be high educational and enjoyable, but also safe. NHEC has a “safety first” ethic, and safety considerations are paramount for NHEC’s Instructors throughout the Institute.

## INSTITUTE CODE OF CONDUCT

Once accepted into the Institute, **all students must follow the Institute “Code of Conduct”**. This Code is a set of reasonable rules that govern student behavior at the Institute, including with Instructors, role models, and fellow students. NHEC requires appropriate behavior at all times during the Institute, and **the Code is definitely enforced**. All students and their parents must read and sign the Code prior to the Institute, and agree in writing to abide by its terms.

Failure to follow the Code can result in a number of penalties, including being dismissed from the Institute and sent home. Students and parents should also know that when on federal land (such as national parks) students are governed by federal law, and can also be prosecuted for any violations of civil and/or criminal violations.

The Code of Conduct is a necessary tool for a group of teens in a program like the Institute. Thus, NHEC—like your high school—definitely uses and enforces a Code of Conduct, and students must follow it. **If you have a problem following reasonable rules, then the Institute is not for you, and you should not apply.**

## ABOUT THE NATIONAL HISPANIC ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

The National Hispanic Environmental Council (NHEC) is a national, non-profit membership-based organization founded in 1997 and headquartered in Alexandria, VA (just outside Washington, D.C.). With over 5,000 members, **NHEC is the only national Latino environmental** and natural resource organization in the country, and runs programs, like the Institute, that furthers our mission.

NHEC seeks to educate, unite, and engage the Latino and minority community on environmental and sustainable development issues; encourage Latinos and others to actively work to preserve and protect our environment; provide a national voice for Latinos before federal and other key environmental decision-makers; and actively assist our community to pursue the many career, educational, and policy opportunities in the environment. **Our guiding credo is: “because it’s our environment too”.**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON NHEC

Call or write us at:

National Hispanic Environmental Council  
106 N. Fayette Street  
Attention: NYC Minority Youth Institute  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: 703-683-3956

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Or visit our website at [www.NHEC-MinorityYouthEnviroInstitutes.org](http://www.NHEC-MinorityYouthEnviroInstitutes.org)

**For more Institute information, contact the NHEC Programs Coordinator, Juan Rodriguez, at: [jrodriguez@nheec.org](mailto:jrodriguez@nheec.org)**