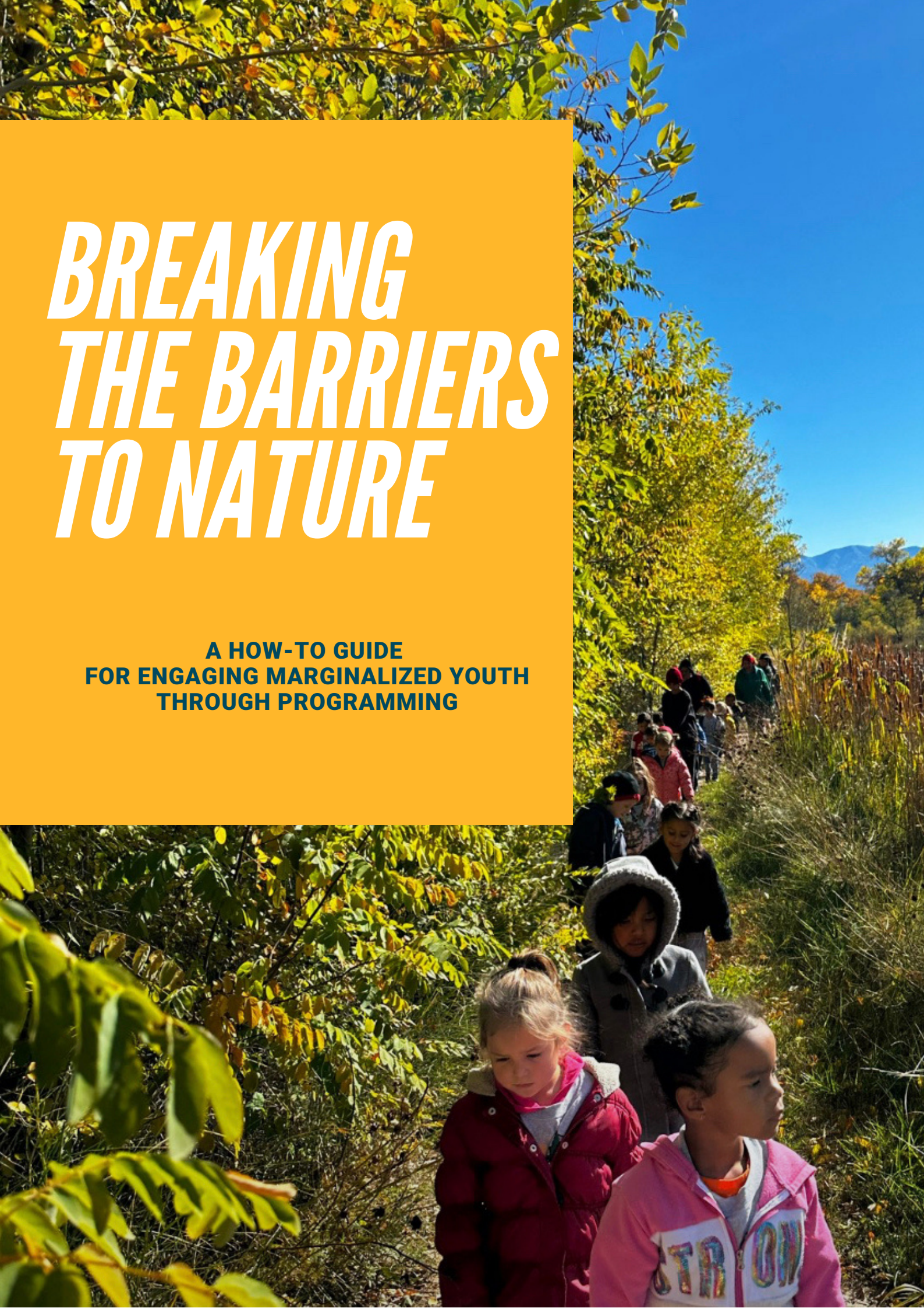


BREAKING THE BARRIERS TO NATURE

**A HOW-TO GUIDE
FOR ENGAGING MARGINALIZED YOUTH
THROUGH PROGRAMMING**



Young people are crucial to the future of conservation in the United States.

State wildlife agencies rely on the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation for **over \$33 billion** in funding for conservation projects since its inception in the late 19th century. This model requires states to direct revenues from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses back to wildlife agencies. As the numbers of individuals with licenses decrease, the urgency to engage young people is on the rise.

Research suggests those who participate in activities like hunting and fishing as youth are more likely to continue those activities as adults. In response, the New Mexico Wildlife Federation and affiliates have embarked on initiatives to increase youth engagement in the outdoors including activities related to hunting and fishing. The Multistate Conservation Grant Program funded a project to hear from the region's field experts on how they are engaging marginalized youth in their programs.

Hunting and angling are not the only ways to experience and interact with nature. The New Mexico Wildlife Federation youth program, Nature Niños, introduces children to all aspects of our world to help spark a passion about and compassion for our changing world.

This guide is for any program aimed towards youth. It will help develop existing programs or how to create one from the start. We hope your program can grow and all of our youth will have the opportunity to connect with nature.



Created by the New Mexico Wildlife Federation and Nature Niños youth program
with Bugeisha Education Consulting, LLC
Refer to our report, "Engaging Marginalized Youth in Hunting and Angling: Identified
Best Practices and Opportunities"
2022

All photo rights belong with the New Mexico Wildlife Federation. They may not be used
by other parties without consent.



TABLE OF CONTENTS



4 BUILDING

5 PARTNERSHIP

6 EQUITY

7 FUNDING

8 TRANSPORTATION

9 THE COMMUNITY

**10 RESOURCES &
ABOUT US**

11 NOTES

BUILDING

IDENTIFY

What needs have been identified (or need to be identified) in your community that your organization will work to meet? What does your organization focus on? (Types of activities, ideas & values, age group, etc.)

BUILD CONTENT

Find resources, curriculum, and hands-on activities which fit your program. This could include Project WILD, Leave No Trace, Project Learning Tree, and others.

MENTORSHIP

Find someone who has the experience to get guidance in various aspects of program establishment. (Community connections, marketing, strategy, capacity building, fundraising, research, etc.)

BUILD YOUR TEAM

Find like-minded individuals/groups who are passionate about your program to balance responsibilities. Build a team of staff, mentors, & volunteers to move the work forward.

ASK QUESTIONS

Ask questions of your community to better identify needs. Reach out for technical assistance, such as to Nature Niños New Mexico, to get answers through the process of establishing or growing your program. You are not alone!

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!

Remember that as your program forms there will be a need to be flexible in the vision and direction of your program to ensure you are serving the community's interests. Opportunities may be presented to you or challenges may arise.

What type of programming will you focus on?

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Schedule meetings with leaders of local non-profits, city, and state organizations. See how your programs align and work together on events which can mutually benefit each other's goals and expectations. Local partnerships may support you by sharing their location spaces to be used for your program's needs.

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Initiate conversations with local school teachers, administrators, and staff to gauge interest and implement programming to enrich in-school experiences outside the classroom.

BEYOND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Reach out to local charter schools, early childhood centers, and homeschool collaboratives to gauge the need and desire for partnership with your program.

HIGHLIGHT YOUR COMMUNITY

Feature and tag your partners in your newsletters, social media posts, and other media outlets. Highlighting your partner's work (not only your own) in the community is a great way to show dedication to the collaboration.

SHOW APPRECIATION

Remember to thank your partners with more than words, such as supporting their events and requests or with tokens of appreciation like gift cards, a partner/volunteer appreciation dinner, or other forms of gratitude.

MAINTAIN COMMUNICATION

Keep your partners up-to-date with relevant event opportunities, program developments, and contact changes.

Which organizations, groups, schools, or people should I reach out to?

FORM A DIVERSE COHORT & TEAM

Assemble a group of local adult Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and opinions interested in the program development to contribute to mindful growth and improving inclusivity.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Contemplate and implement initiatives to overcome barriers which may prevent people from participating in programming. Examples of barriers include lack of transportation, cost, language accessibility, and others. The barriers of your community can be identified with community questionnaires, feedback, and event surveys.

EXAMPLES:

- Ensure all program materials are offered in community-appropriate languages.
- Offer gas cards to events when appropriate.
- Offer free programming by integrating participant costs into your budget planning.
- Provide necessary equipment for activities, such as archery bows, fishing rods and bait.
- Include meals into programming for participants.

BUILD YOUR COMMUNITY

Be an enthusiastic and genuine supporter of your community. This means taking the time to talk and listen with program youth and adults. The idea is to create a community of people who feel connected to the program and the people behind it. A community within a community.

What barriers most affect my community?

MITIGATE PARTICIPANT COST

Build costs that are usually passed to families into organizational budgets. Partner with outside organizations/businesses to decrease cost barriers like transportation or material costs (such as in-kind donations). Build a sliding scale payment structure for program affordability or other alternative payment options.

RESEARCH FUNDING

Search the web & utilize your network to find public and private funding sources - government, private funders, foundations, etc.

EXAMPLES:

- Your state's "Division of Outdoor Recreation" department
- Local community foundations
- National, state, and local education organizations, such as the state education departments, a statewide early childhood organization, various local conservation organizations, or other program relevant organizations
- Private foundations

CREATE AN EQUIPMENT LIBRARY

Establish or connect to a "gear library" that allows youth & families to borrow equipment needed to participate in hunting and angling (tents, fishing rods, sleeping bags, etc).

What are some specific options to fund my program?

TRANSPORTATION

NEARBY NATURE OPPORTUNITIES

Nature is right outside our door! Make sure to highlight places immediately near the neighborhood, school, or site. This will ensure programming opportunities can occur on a more consistent basis.

MEET STUDENTS WHERE THEY ARE

Bring hands-on and interactive activities via classrooms, nature in the park, etc. to engage students' learning deeper into the concepts.

IN-PROGRAM TRANSPORTATION

Integrate transportation needs into the organizational budget and program planning. Partner with organizations/schools that offer transportation, write transportation into grants, and teach programs that can be easily accessible to youth like yoga in the park, cleaning up the river, etc.

What other ways can my program ease transportation needs?

Which partners have transportation already?

What opportunities and locations are near our sites?

EASE FEARS

Communicate program schedules, goals, and expectations clearly. For activities like hunting or fishing, remember that perceptions and experiences vary.

SHOW & ENFORCE SAFETY

Be clear about your safety protocols and participant responsibilities when marketing your program. Make sure all staff and volunteers are properly trained.

REMEMBER YOUR AUDIENCE

Adults, high school youth, middle school youth, and other age brackets are interested in programs for different reasons. Participants who are beginners will need different content than more advanced participants. Remember the target audience when creating marketing materials.

TAILOR YOUR MESSAGE

Market your events properly with phrases like “No previous experience necessary”, and “Introduction to Archery class” for beginner-level events and adjust with the skill needed.

HIGHLIGHT YOUR EXPERTISE

Note credentials, certificates, and licenses held by instructors and staff relevant to skill training and classroom education.

Who is my target audience?

RESOURCES



READ THE RESEARCH

- *Engaging Marginalized Youth in Hunting & Angling: Identified Best Practices and Opportunities*
- *Nature Ninos Logic Model & Case Study*

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & MENTORSHIP

Reach out to the New Mexico Wildlife Federation and their Nature Ninos youth program at natureninos@nmwildlife.org.



Nature Niños was created in 2019 as a youth initiative of the New Mexico Wildlife Federation. For over 100 years the New Mexico Wildlife Federation has protected our waters and wildlife, ensured access to public lands, and provided opportunities to pursue the outdoor traditions that make New Mexico unique. The Federation believes strongly that the future of our public lands, our wildlife, and our democracy lies in the hands of our future generations. As the Federation's youth initiative, Nature Niños is an entry point. We expand access to the outdoors, share all it has to offer, and invite youth and families who might not readily access the outdoors into a safe, inclusive, and welcoming community where we build skills and grow the next generation of conservationists, land stewards, and recreationalists.

ABOUT US

NOTES

Nature is one of the best places for children to learn and grow - When a child catches



backcountry trail, they light up, they learn something new, they connect.

Connecting the next generation to the natural world.

LET'S GO WILDLIFE!



3620 Wyoming Blvd NE, Suite 222
Albuquerque, NM 87111

www.nmwildlife.org
www.natureninos.org
natureninos@nmwildlife.org

@nmwildlife 
@natureninos  