

HOST FAMILY INFORMATION 2026

What is Northern Youth Abroad (NYA)?

NYA is a non-profit organization that enables youth living in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories to gain leadership, cross-cultural awareness, individual career goals, and global citizenship through life-changing volunteer work and travel experiences in southern Canada and abroad. Participants receive high school credits and gain new skills and confidence through NYA. Part of the NYA's Canadian Program is a 5-week placement in southern Canada where Participants volunteer at a workplace while experiencing life outside of their home communities.

When would you be hosting?

During the summer for just over 4 weeks, **from June 20th–July 21st, 2026.**

Who would you be hosting?

Each Host Family is matched with two youth aged 15-20. When we match Hosts with Participants, NYA considers Host Family structure, location, preferences, the youth's needs, ages, personalities, and many other factors, to ensure the *best possible fit*. Each NYA Participant is chosen among hundreds of applicants across the North. We look for youth who can benefit the most from the experience, including those with limited previous travel experience, potential for growth and leadership capacity, and in need of positive experiences to help direct their lives. Each Participant is required to get references, work with a community-based mentor, and submit a Medical Form and a Criminal Background Check (for those aged 18+). We share important information with Host Families prior to travel.

What makes a good Host Family?

NYA Host Families can be based anywhere in southern Canada (in any of the provinces) and come from a variety of backgrounds and make-ups: from single individuals, to couples, to families with young children, older children, or no children at all. **The most successful Host Families are those who set clear boundaries but are also accepting of cultural differences and receptive to the needs of teenagers.** Host Families must be able to spend time with the youth, help them acclimatize to life 'down south', and accommodate the two NYA participants in their home by providing each of them with their own bed, although they can share a room with each other. All members of selected Host Families aged 18 and older must submit Vulnerable Sector Checks to NYA prior to hosting.

What do Host Families do?

Host Families act like a home away from home for Participants. Participants volunteer in the host community for 35 hours per week to earn high school credits. Work placements are arranged by NYA staff (although we love receiving suggestions of volunteer opportunities from Host Families!) and can vary from sports & recreation camps, cooking and baking, working with animals, mechanic shops, libraries, science centres, and more! Evenings and weekends are free to spend with your Participants, do activities, sight-see, and have fun! Participants also have Summer Assignment Packs to complete (kind of like homework) and may need your assistance with them. Above all, enjoy the experience! While in southern Canada, many previous Participants have enjoyed taking part in weekends at the cottage, going to concerts, going to the mall and restaurants, and even a trip or two to see nearby attractions. It's fun to see your community through the Participants' eyes and help them experience things for the first time!

What are the responsibilities?

As a Host Family, we ask that you help make the two youth feel comfortable by including them in your regular activities and allowing them to experience the same opportunities as other teenagers in your community. Try to care for the youth as members of your family and not as guests: give them household responsibilities and structure, show them around your community, be open and honest with them, ask for their input, and allow them time to adjust to their new surroundings. Host Families are responsible for providing meals for the Participants, as well as showing them how to take public transit to get to work. In rural areas with no public transportation, Host Families must be available to drive the participants, especially if biking or walking is not an option.

What is the compensation?

This is a volunteering opportunity; however, NYA Host Families will receive a modest stipend for hosting the two Participants to help offset some of the costs of room and board. There are additional funds available for sports and recreation, as well as work placement expenses such as bus passes, clothing, and equipment.

Sound like something you'd be interested in?

For more information or to apply, please visit our website at www.nya.ca/host

or contact **Kira Zanyk Davey** at kira@nya.ca