HKNC Helen Keller NATIONAL CENTER for DeafBlind Youths and Adults

Summer Youth Vocational Program (SYVP) 2027 – FAQ for Families & Students



When and Where Does the Fun Happen?

- **Dates:** July 5 – July 30, 2027
- **Location:** Helen Keller National Center (HKNC), Sands Point, NY
- **Application Deadline:** May 21, 2027
- **Bonus:** Want more? Add two extra weeks for deeper career readiness training!

Why Should I Join?

- Want to surf, explore the outdoors AND learn job skills? ✔
- Curious about cooking, tech, or leadership? ✔
- Ready to make friends and meet inspiring mentors? ✔
- SYVP is your chance to explore careers, build independence, and have an unforgettable summer.

What's Included?

- **STEAM Projects:** Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math activities
- **Adaptive Surfing:** Hit the waves at the beach with expert instructors
- **Motivational Speakers & Leadership Workshops:** Learn from inspiring role models
- **Real-World Work Experiences:** Practice job skills in authentic settings

- **Outdoor Adventure:** Explore adaptive recreation and teamwork

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Do Students Get Paid?

Participants are not paid during their work experience. The work experience component is designed as a learning opportunity to help participants explore careers, develop workplace skills, build confidence, and gain hands-on experience in a supportive environment.

General FAQs about Helen Keller National Center (HKNC)

1. Where is HKNC located?

HKNC is in Sands Point, New York, on Long Island. It's close to New York City but not in NYC, offering a quieter, suburban environment while still being accessible to the city for outings and activities.

2. What is the residential setup like?

HKNC has a separate residence building from the main training center. Each participant has their own private room, ensuring comfort and privacy during their stay.

3. Is staff available in the residence building?

Yes. HKNC provides around-the-clock dorm staff, including awake staff overnight, to ensure safety and support at all times.

4. Are there activities outside of training hours?

Absolutely! HKNC offers after-hours activities designed to promote socialization, recreation, and community engagement. These may include group outings, game nights, and other leisure activities tailored to participants' interests.

5. How many participants will the SYVP host?

The Summer Youth Vocational Program will host up to 11 participants.

6. What are the age requirements for SYVP?

Participants must be between 16 and 24 years old to join the Summer Youth Vocational Program.

What Will Students Gain? (The Cool Stuff!)

Q: Will I learn about different jobs?

A: Absolutely! You'll explore careers in recreation, culinary arts, tech, and more. Meet professionals and discover what sparks your interest.

Q: Will I practice real workplace skills?

A: Yes! Teamwork, time management, and professional behavior are all part of the experience. You'll learn by doing, whether it's helping in a kitchen or joining a tech squad.

Q: Can I learn to speak up for myself?

A: Definitely. We'll teach you how to advocate for your needs, request accommodations, and feel confident in any setting.

Q: Will I learn life skills too?

A: You bet! From planning transportation to managing schedules, you'll practice skills that make adult life easier.

Q: What about getting ready for a job?

A: We've got you covered: resume building, mock interviews, and workplace etiquette are all part of the program.

Q: Is technology part of this?

A: Yes! You'll explore assistive tech, learn how to adapt tools for success, and even try cool projects like 3D printing and tactile graphics.

Special FAQs: Surfing & outdoor Rec activities

Q: Do I need to know how to surf?

A: Nope! Surf Camp is designed for beginners and adaptive surfers. Instructors from *Surf for All* will guide you every step of the way. Safety and fun come first!

Q: Where does Surf Camp happen?

A: At beautiful Long Beach, NY. You'll enjoy the ocean while building confidence and physical strength.

Q: What will I learn from surfing?

A: Surfing isn't just fun. It teaches independence, physical confidence, and vocational skills. Each participant will strengthen executive functioning, communication, problem-solving, advocacy, collaboration, and emotional regulation. You'll also practice punctuality, teamwork, and adaptability, essential skills for any job!

Q: Why is outdoor education part of SYVP?

A: To Build Confidence. Explore Careers. Discover the world of adaptive sports and wellness while developing leadership skills. You'll help plan and co-teach a lesson, an opportunity to lead and inspire! Learn about careers in adaptive recreation, education, and health/wellness, with exposure to roles like adaptive sports instructors and program coordinators. Get hands-on experience by assisting with equipment setup and activity coordination, simulating real job tasks and preparing you for future opportunities.

Job Exploration

Students will discover a variety of career paths through hands-on experiences and exposure to professionals in fields like adaptive recreation, culinary arts, technology, and community services. They'll learn what different jobs involve and start identifying their own interests and strengths.

Workplace Readiness

Participants will practice essential skills for success in any job, such as teamwork, time management, and professional behavior. Through real work experiences, like helping in a kitchen, assisting with adaptive sports, or joining a tech squad, they'll learn how to follow schedules, meet deadlines, and collaborate effectively.

Self-Advocacy

Students will gain confidence in speaking up for their needs and understanding their rights in the workplace. They'll learn how to request accommodations, communicate clearly with supervisors, and advocate for themselves in professional settings, skills that empower independence.

Independent Living Skills

Managing life outside the classroom is key to employment success. Students will practice planning transportation, organizing daily schedules, and problem-solving real-world challenges. These skills help them transition smoothly into adult life and work environments.

Career Preparation

From creating resumes and cover letters to practicing mock interviews, students will build the tools they need to apply for jobs confidently. They'll also learn workplace etiquette and how to present themselves professionally, critical steps toward future employment.

Technology & Accessibility Skills

Students will explore assistive technology and learn how to adapt tools for success in the workplace. They'll discover strategies to maximize vision and hearing, troubleshoot common tech issues, and even experiment with accessible design through STEAM activities like 3D printing and tactile graphics.

Contact your Regional Representative to find out how you can apply:
www.helenkeller.org/hknc/nationwide-services