

Welcome to Sierra Service Project's 2019 Adult Counselor Training



We are so excited you will be joining us at Sierra Service Project (SSP) in service this summer. Adult counselors are a vital part of this transformative experience for youth. We hope you will find yourself transformed as well in the process. The goals of this training are:

- To ensure each counselor understands the mission and purpose of SSP.
- To make sure all counselors have a good idea of what to expect at SSP.
- To make sure each counselor knows what SSP expects of them.
- To expand on specific information from the [2019 Summer Prep Packet](#) that will help you understand your responsibilities.

PART ONE: About SSP

1. SSP Mission and Theology (page 2)
2. Sierra Service Project 101 (page 3)
3. The SSP Staff (page 5)

PART TWO: What to Expect

4. What Will Happen at SSP (page 6)

PART THREE: Safety & Expectations

5. Safety at SSP (page 10)
6. Goals for Healthy Eating (page 12)
7. Living in Community (page 14)
8. Culture in Host Communities (page 16)
9. What SSP Expects of Adult Counselors (page 17)
10. 2019 Summer Sites (page 20)

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PART ONE: About SSP

1) SSP Mission and Theology

SSP Mission Statement

“Building faith and strengthening communities through service to others.”

This mission statement reflects SSP’s work during the summer and throughout the year, in Native American, urban and rural communities, with youth and young adults.

SSP Theology Statement

We know God to be a giver of wonderful gifts. The work we do at Sierra Service Project is an extension of the Divine Invitation into a relationship with God. Like God, Sierra Service Project can only invite but cannot control the response of those invited. Like grace, Sierra Service Project offers service freely without judging if the receiver merits our love. We as participants in Sierra Service Project’s work are the receivers of God’s grace. We extend that same grace to our hosts by putting our faith into action repairing homes.

We respond to God’s invitation to open ourselves up to the possibility of a transformational experience. In community, we begin to recognize our dependence on God and interdependence on each other. As a community, we strive to grow in being led by the Spirit. We choose to serve, believing that through our humble acts of love, we can learn about God’s character and love for us. We seek to accept people as they are from the moment they stand before us, as the first step toward relationship. We seek to remain open – an openness of hand and of heart that we might give, receive and understand.

Through our acts of service, we allow the grace of God to flow into and through our lives. We understand that all people are valuable, carefully fashioned in God’s image and we are freed to accept the essential humanity of each person we meet. In reaching out to others, we follow the example of service set forth by Jesus Christ.

As with Christ, we serve people whose lives will benefit from our service. We believe that God lives with us and the work we do with our hands and heart. We realize that, despite the differences in culture, values, history and geography, we are all brothers and sisters of worth. Let us accept the Sierra Service Project invitation. “Let us rise up and build.”

SSP Inclusion Statement

SSP is an affirming and welcoming community that celebrates the lives and love of all people. We welcome LGBTQ+ individuals who have too often been excluded from communities of faith.

As people of faith, we strive to live in tandem with creation, rather than in opposition to it. To do so means welcoming all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender, or its expression. Our passion for justice, love, and equality has no limits. Together we seek to be bearers of goodness, so we might truly open minds, hearts, and doors.

2) Sierra Service Project 101

Who Participates

- As many as 75 youth and adult counselors participate each week at SSP.
- That number might be made up of several large youth groups, many small youth groups, or a combination.
- Individual high school youth are encouraged to participate in SSP.
- Over 120 groups will be sending over 1,600 participants to our five sites this summer.
- Most groups are churches from California, where SSP's roots are, but there are groups from Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, and Utah who also attend.
- Most churches who participate are historically United Methodist, but we also have groups from Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Catholic, United Church of Christ, and Non-Denominational churches. Non-church groups, such as families or high school classes, also participate.
- Some groups will be on their first SSP adventure, but many go every year. A few churches have been participating in our programs for more than three decades.
- In 2014, SSP began a program for individual youth to attend during the summer. Since then, more and more youth who aren't able to attend with their church or school sign up each summer to serve.

Where We Work

- Four of our five sites are in rural locations.
 - Spokane, WA and Tsaile, AZ are on Native American Reservations.
 - Chiloquin, OR and Smith River, CA may serve with the local tribe, but our services are open to anyone in the community.
- Our urban site is in the Imperial Beach neighborhood of San Diego, CA.
- Our community is usually housed in a school or church for the week. We eat, sleep, worship and play there.
- Facilities are different at each site.
 - Sometimes we may use other facilities for meals and showers.
 - Some sites may have Porta-Potties.
 - Some sites have indoor dining facilities, while others will be dining outdoors.
- All volunteers, both youth and adults, sleep on the floor, separated by gender. SSP welcomes non-binary and gender fluid volunteers, and our staff are prepared to make sleeping and shower accommodations as needed.
- Lastly, some worksites may be up to a 45-minute drive from where volunteers stay, but most are closer.

How do we decide which homes to work on?

At the beginning of the summer our construction staff members work with the tribal or community leaders to determine which homes we should work on. They go through each home and determine which jobs we will do based on skills needed, safety and cost.

Each job is chosen carefully. We look for a project that...

- Involves all members of a work team.
- Can be done safely at the worksite.
- Can be completed during the summer. *(Note: the average SSP project takes multiple weeks to complete. Help guide your work team and set reasonable expectations of what you will accomplish during your week so youth are not disappointed by an incomplete project after putting in so much hard work!)*
- Is doable within SSP's budget.

Please do not discuss other projects that come up at your worksite with the homeowners before talking to the construction team member about the problem or job. There may be several reasons the job isn't on our "to do" list.

What kind of jobs does SSP do?

Roofing

Exterior and interior painting

Stairs and awnings

Sheds

Drywall

Floors

Decks

Awnings

Wheelchair ramps

NO Plumbing or Electrical work



Remember, no experience is needed! We will teach you what you need to know.



3) The SSP Staff

Sierra Service Project Headquarters: SSP's year-round staff works out of Sacramento, California.

- **Jake Bailey** is our **Office Manager**. Jake manages SSP's finances, employee paperwork, and oversees many other office duties.
- **McKenna Culbertson** is our **Summer Program Manager**. She manages SSP's social media, trains construction staff, and oversees two summer sites.
- **Veronica Russell** is our **Director of Volunteers & Outreach**. Veronica recruits and prepares groups for SSP trips, writes our newsletters, and trains and oversees Spiritual Life Coordinators during the summer.
- **Adam Vargyas** is our **Development Director**. He processes donations, submits grant proposals, and cultivates donor relationships.
- **Megan Walsh** is our **Executive Director**. Megan oversees all SSP operations, preps sites for the summer, reviews construction projects, and trains and oversees Food Service Coordinators during the summer.

Summer Staff

Each year SSP hires about 40 young adults who dedicate up to ten weeks of their summer to working with the volunteers that attend SSP. Most of them attended SSP themselves when they were youth, and more than half have served as staff before.

- ✓ **Site Director**
Oversees the operation of the entire site and leads the staff team. The Site Director is the primary liaison with SSP Headquarters in Sacramento.
- ✓ **Spiritual Life Coordinator**
Organizes all of the programs and activities. This includes team building, evening programming, cultural exchanges and all other spiritual components of the week. The SLC is also the spiritual leader for the staff.
- ✓ **Food Service Coordinator Team**
Each site has two staff members dedicated to the food service piece of the SSP experience. This team purchases and prepares all the fabulous food for up to 80 people each week. They recruit and oversee volunteers that want to help out in the kitchen.
- ✓ **Construction Team**
Each site has three staff members that are dedicated to the construction part of the SSP experience. They select projects, purchase and organize supplies, teach construction skills, offer ongoing support to the teams and oversee the projects from start to finish.

Staff Training

Although each staff member has a specific job, they all work very closely together to make each week great! Prior to heading out to the summer sites, all staff members gather for ten days in Sacramento for training in:

- Job-Specific Skills
- Youth Ministry and Leadership
- Conflict Resolution and Cultural Competency
- Finances and Defensive Driving
- All are First Aid and CPR certified
- Each Food Service Coordinator has a Food Handlers Card

Board of Directors

SSP is also supported by a volunteer Board of Directors. This team is made up of a cross section of backgrounds, faiths, and professional expertise. They devote their time and money to SSP year-round. The Board also includes three youth members who serve for one year.

PART TWO: What to Expect

4) What Will Happen at SSP

Sunday is a Very Busy Day at SSP!

1. Arriving at SSP

Upon your arrival to the SSP site, your group will be met by our enthusiastic staff. The staff will show you around and help you unpack and settle into your home for the week. The Site Director will collect all medical and youth forms at this time. After you are settled, the drivers will be given a short opportunity to relax after the drive. The staff will begin getting to know the youth quickly and the youth will also get to know each other. There will be opportunities for icebreaker games on Sunday so all participants can become comfortable in their new setting.

2. Arrive between 2:00 – 4:00 PM

The staff team organizes each Sunday afternoon for the groups to arrive between 2:00 – 4:00 PM*. Arriving before 2:00 doesn't allow the staff their full 28 hours of preparation time between volunteer weeks. Arriving after 4:00 means the Sunday evening schedule doesn't get started on time, pushing us later into the evening than desired, especially after a long day's drive. The official business doesn't start until all groups arrive. Please coordinate your travel plans so that you can arrive on time, but if you foresee a problem making it in this window, call the office at (916) 488-6441. **Remember, the Arizona site is on Mountain time.*

3. Welcome & Orientation

The staff will go over the schedule, policies, expectations, and other important information with the entire group.

4. First "Staff/Counselor" Meeting

While the youth and staff are getting to know each other, the Site Director, adult counselors and the construction staff will have their first meeting. During this time, staff will cover:

- Introductions and check-in
- Confirm work team plans (construction staff arrange these prior to your arrival)
- Information and instructions for emergencies
- Hygiene, food issues, and safety guidelines for behavior when working with youth
- The week's theme and the goals of SSP's spiritual program
- First-time adult counselors will have a brief additional orientation following this meeting. You are invited to ask questions and share any expectations you might have.

5. A fabulous dinner will follow the first Staff/Counselor meeting!

6. Songtime & Evening Program

Work teams meet, get to know each other, and learn about their week's project and who the homeowners are.

7. Bed Prep & Reflection

After everyone has met their work team and finished with evening program, everyone gets ready for bed. Staff lead an Evening Devotional to end the first day!

8. Bedtime

It's off to bed at 10:00. Lights out!

What are Work Teams?

Each team is typically made up of 1-2 adults and 4-6 youth, blended together from different groups attending to enhance the community-building aspect of SSP. While these are typically 7-8 people, group sizes may vary depending on the work project and total number of youth and adults attending.

Each team will have their own project, at their own worksite. Groups need to bring vehicles with enough seatbelts for 7-8 people, for travel to and from the work site. Just traveling to and from the work site can be lots of fun. Work teams usually get very close by the end of the week!

Creating work teams: SSP staff will contact your group liaison a week prior to arrival to discuss the below information. When you arrive on Sunday, they will confirm these details below to make any adjustments needed to the planned work teams:

- 1) If you are a new counselor. Staff do their best to pair first-time adult counselors with another experienced adult when possible, and to ensure no first-time adult counselor leads a work team alone.
- 2) Any prior construction experience that might be helpful for that week's work projects. Remember, no experience is needed, but if you have any we'd like to know!
- 3) Who is driving which vehicle, and how many seat belts there are in each.
- 4) Anyone who shouldn't be on the same work team (best friends, siblings, parents, and romantically involved youth). If a certain youth needs to be with a certain adult, please let us know.

Adult counselors remain on the project site with their team throughout the work day, and facilitate a positive and empowering service environment for youth volunteers. SSP construction staff provide instructions and guidance, but will not remain on site with you for the full work day, as they visit several project sites each day.

Attending a combined middle and high school session (incoming 6th grade – graduating 12th grade)?

Youth at combined sessions are split into younger and older work teams to promote peer-level collaboration. If you have a strong preference for leading either the older or younger age groups, let our staff know.

Attending an intergenerational session (6th grade and older)?

Work teams will be created by age cohort: youth, young adults, and adult teams. Some adult volunteers may be placed as a leader of a youth work team, while others might be on an all-adult work team. If you feel more equipped to participate with a specific age group, let our staff know.

What to expect on your work team:

- Sunday evening, work teams meet for the first time to get to know each other.
- Work teams do just about everything together during the week – their projects, other opportunities to serve, and evening program activities.
- Work teams are given a set of lunchtime conversation topics, called a “Spiritual Sandwich,” related to the day's theme.
- Work teams also give “Site Reports” each day to share about their project and its progress with other volunteers.



HIGH SCHOOL, COMBINED, & INTERGENERATIONAL

Typical Daily Schedule Monday – Friday

7:00 AM	Wake up – Per SSP tradition, staff wake up volunteers with a song
7:30 AM	Spiritual awakening – Optional short morning program
8:00 AM	Breakfast
8:30 AM	Community service opportunities (chores); Teams make lunches, pack up supplies
9:00 AM	Work teams at work sites
– 4:00 PM	– Includes driving time to and from sites (some site have long drives; 30-45 minutes) – Lunch (PB&J), Spiritual Sandwich (thoughtful mid-day discussion)
4:00	Showers and free time
5:00	Staff/counselor meeting – Adults and staff discuss plans for the next 24 hours. This time is vital to go over logistics, but also a great chance to de-stress, share highs and lows, and be with peers.
5:45	Dinner
6:30	Community service opportunities (chores)
7:00	Song time and evening program – Team building activities, handing out mail work site reports, and spiritual programming related to the summer theme. – We encourage groups to ask parents, friends, and supporters to write to youth at SSP. Participants sing a silly song to receive mail. – Site reports are a way to share about your work day with the entire group. – Program may take place off site some days.
9:00	Jammification – Set up sleeping bags, get into PJs, and all other pre-bedtime personal hygiene.
9:30	Evening devotional – The Spiritual Life Coordinator works with one work team to prepare a short worshipful experience. These usually include singing, personal sharing and prayer.
10:00	Lights out – Per SSP tradition, staff may close with a bedtime story

Typical Weekly Program Schedule

Some high school, combined, and intergenerational sessions end one day early. Activities during these weeks may be combined to accommodate a shorter session.

Sunday night sets the stage for the week, with staff introductions, an orientation to SSP rules and the site, and icebreakers. Staff and adult counselors meet after all groups arrive to discuss plans for the week.

Monday night, work teams report to the rest of the community about their project and homeowners.

Tuesday night typically is a time to get to know the community we are serving better. Speakers from the hosting tribe or community may share about their culture and history. There may be other cultural activities throughout the week.

Wednesday is “Adventure Wednesday.” Most locations spend the morning in service learning activities with local organizations. Teams then caravan to a water spot in the early afternoon to swim, play games, sing, and relax. Any site not near a body of water will have an afternoon BBQ with activities such as a hike, games, or team building.

Thursday night is traditionally in an outdoor off-site location and a very powerful part of the week. Participants are given a spiritual opportunity to focus on where they are on their faith journey.

Friday night is a time for reflecting on and celebrating the week. Each person will have an opportunity to affirm the value of each person present, and share thoughts from the trip. Individuals and groups will also take a moment to look ahead at how they might carry their positive experiences from the week into their home environment.

Saturday morning we pack, clean up, and eat, before photos and goodbyes. Groups leave by 10AM.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Typical Daily Schedule Monday - Thursday

7:00 AM	Wake up – Per SSP tradition, staff wake up volunteers with a song
7:30 AM	Energizers and morning program
8:00 AM	Breakfast
8:30 AM	Community service opportunities (chores); Teams make lunches, pack up supplies
9:00 AM	Work teams at work sites
– 3:00 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Includes driving time to and from sites (some site have long drives; 30-45 minutes)– Lunch (PB&J), Spiritual Sandwich (thoughtful mid-day discussion)
3:00 PM	Showers, planned activities, and free time
5:00	Staff/counselor meeting – Adults and staff discuss plans for the next 24 hours. This time is vital to go over logistics, but also a great chance to de-stress, share highs and lows, and be with peers.
5:45 PM	Dinner
6:00 PM	Community service opportunities (chores)
6:30 PM	Song time and evening program – Team building activities, handing out mail work site reports, and spiritual programming related to the summer theme. <ul style="list-style-type: none">– We encourage groups to ask parents, friends, and supporters to write to youth at SSP. Participants sing a silly song to receive mail.– Site reports are a way to share about your work day with the entire group.– Program may take place off site some days.
8:00 PM	Jammification – Set up sleeping bags, get into PJs, and all other pre-bedtime personal hygiene.
8:30 PM	Evening devotional – The Spiritual Life Coordinator works with one work team to prepare a short worshipful experience. These usually include singing, personal sharing and prayer.
9:00 PM	Lights out – Per SSP tradition, staff may close with a bedtime story

Typical Weekly Schedule

Sunday night sets the stage for the week, with staff introductions, an orientation to SSP rules and the site, and icebreakers. Staff and adult counselors meet after all groups arrive to discuss plans for the week.

Monday night, work teams report to the rest of the community about their project and homeowners.

Tuesday night typically is a time to get to know the community we are serving better. Speakers from the hosting tribe or community may share about their culture and history. There may be other cultural activities throughout the week.

Wednesday is the last full work day.

Thursday is a half day of service (either on the work site or with community organizations), afternoon water games, BBQ dinner, and evening slideshow of the week.

Friday morning is time to pack up, clean up, and eat up, before photos and goodbyes. Groups leave by 10:00 AM.

PART THREE: Safety & Expectations

5) Safety at SSP

Hands-on Safety Presentation

Before anyone leaves for the worksite on Monday morning, the staff will give a presentation about practicing safety at the worksite. Work teams will then rotate through stations where the staff will teach the youth how to properly use power tools.

The hands-on safety presentation allows volunteers to gain experience using tools in a safe place, before starting the work project. For some, this may be the first time they've ever held a power tool. It also provides youth that are placed on a painting project with experience using power tools they may not otherwise use on their project.

Creating a Safe Environment

Sierra Service Project is committed to creating and maintaining safe environments for young people and the adults and staff who work with them. This responsibility includes maintaining spaces in which youth are protected from emotional, physical, and sexual exploitation and harassment of any kind.

SSP staff are mandated reporters of abuse or neglect to minors, and are trained, "if you see something, say something." **Adult volunteers at SSP are not mandated reporters, unless** they already are through their occupation.

Over the years, Sierra Service Project has developed a set of policies and practices aimed at creating safe environments and reducing risk for participants and staff. The following are selections from our policies. For complete copies of the policies, please contact Sierra Service Project at 916-488-6441.

Counselor Screening and Orientation

It is the responsibility of participating groups to select mature, committed and responsible adults to accompany their youth as counselors at SSP. Sierra Service Project will enforce the following policies with regard to adult counselors:

1. All counselors must be **at least 23 years old** unless they have been specifically approved by the SSP Office. In approving exceptions to this policy, SSP will verify the counselor is actively involved with the youth and a mature adult. For insurance reasons, no one under 23 is allowed to drive youth during the SSP week.
2. All adult counselors must submit to a criminal **background check**, to be completed by SSP, the local group, or the counselor's employer. To be valid, background checks must be completed **within two years** of the SSP program the adult attends. Individuals convicted of violent crimes, sexual crimes, serious drug offenses, and crimes involving children will not be allowed to participate as counselors. Individuals with driving-related offenses may be allowed to attend, but will be considered a non-driver and abstain from transporting youth.
 - a. Instructions completing a background screening are in the [2019 Summer Preparation Packet](#).
3. All adults are strongly encouraged to carefully review counselor expectations with your group. This is your training, but you should gather beforehand with your liaison as well to discuss any questions or concerns.
4. At the beginning of each week at SSP, counselors will be given a presentation on SSP's Non-Harassment Policy and our safe behavior policy.

Safety Measures at Our Project Sites:

The Open Space Rule

At Sierra Service Project we want to eliminate situations where abuse is possible, as well as any situation that may make an allegation of abuse possible. The Open Space Rule involves the following:

1. All gatherings of small groups of individuals will take place in open areas which are **clearly visible** to people not involved in the activity.
2. Private conversations involving one adult and one youth **will always** take place in an open area clearly visible to other people.
3. **Rule of threes:** A single adult (staff or counselor) will not transport a single youth unless there is another youth or adult present.

Sleeping Arrangements & Showers

Youth and adult counselors are required to sleep in different sleeping areas, separated by gender. At some sites, this may mean everyone sleeps in the same large room, with a dividing space between each side.

Arrangements are made at each site so that youth and adults do not share group showers. Some of our sites use community showers, such as a YMCA facility.

SSP will make arrangements as needed for non-binary and gender fluid volunteers. Contact us with any questions.

Guidelines for Appropriate Physical Contact

Appropriate and loving physical contact is very important to the healthy development of young people, and is a powerful way to affirm youth. Teens are very often starved of this kind of contact. Therefore, this is encouraged at SSP. Examples of appropriate physical contact between adults and young people are:

1. Shaking hands
2. High-fives
3. Sideways shoulder hugs
4. Touching the back, arms, hands and elbows
5. Hugging that is loose – touching shoulders, not chests and hips

The following kinds of contact between adults and children are inappropriate, can be offensive, and can easily lead to misunderstandings. These kinds of behaviors are not acceptable:

1. Touching on the chest, legs or behind
2. “Butt slapping”
3. Lap sitting
4. Kissing
5. Patting on the head
6. Any physical contact that an individual has expressed any level of discomfort with

These rules regarding touch apply regardless of the genders involved. Any instances of misconduct should be relayed to the Site Director as soon as possible. Don’t hesitate to contact the office at (916) 488-6441 with any concerns.

6) SSP's Goals for Healthy Eating

Meals

Cooking meals for up to 80 people twice a day is very challenging!

- The kitchens at our sites vary from small kitchens no larger than a one in a typical household to commercial kitchens outfitted for serving meals to large groups. Menus vary from site to site, based on what items are available to our Food Service Coordinators at each location.
- Our goal is healthy eating for the week, so we strongly discourage providing junk food.
- Since SSP is an experience of living in a community where people often have less than we do, our food is respectfully simple.
- Our Food Service Coordinators (FSC's) strive to offer plenty nutritious tasty food, prepared and given out of love.
- We try to accommodate everyone with special dietary needs. Please communicate any special dietary needs to the Site Director prior to your arrival so the FSC's can do any necessary shopping.
- We will have vegetarian options available at every meal.
- Helping out in the kitchen is encouraged. SSP kitchens are a place for creating great food with lots of love and laughs!

Taking Care of our Bodies

There is a growing trend in schools and camps nationwide to promote healthy diets and to restrict access to low-nutrition foods. We have taken measures to significantly curb the purchasing and consumption of junk food at our sites.

As we all know, the consumption of junk food has exploded in the past few decades. For teenagers, this creates a whole host of problems, including obesity, diabetes, eating disorders, and reduced attention spans. Taking care of our bodies at SSP goes hand-in-hand with using our bodies to serve others.

Traditions

While we prioritize healthy eating at SSP, it is not our goal to deny participants treats during the week! SSP traditions include providing yummy goodies to volunteers during the week, such as homemade cookies ("FREDs"), otter pops on a hot afternoon, and root beer floats.

Steps toward healthier eating at SSP

1. Each afternoon during free time, the SSP staff provides a healthy array of snack foods for all counselors and youth. This consists of items like fresh fruit, cheese sticks, crackers, trail mix, carrots with hummus, and others.
2. Work teams are asked not to make stops to purchase snacks at local markets during their trips to and from worksites and showers. Rewarding youth with sweets and junk food for hard work or for reaching a goal sets up a habit that is hard to break, and creates bad feelings when one work team does it and others don't.
3. Groups are asked not to arrive at SSP with large quantities of junk food in their vans. Food is not allowed in the sleeping areas, for hygiene purposes and to prevent rodent problems. Groups that arrive with junk food will be encouraged to box it up for the trip home, and leave it safely with SSP staff. Junk food should not be left in the vans during the week.
4. We request that SSP liaisons encourage parents not to send packages containing low-nutrition foods to their youth. Care packages are very welcome, but should contain healthy snacks like granola bars, mixed nuts and dried fruit. Groups will be able to eat these during afternoon snack time, or take them out to the worksite for lunch and snacks.
5. SSP Food Service Coordinators will provide good food in ample quantities for both breakfast and dinner, and will be happy to make more if people are still hungry.
6. Traditional SSP lunches consist of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and are augmented with fresh fruit and salty snacks to help replace sodium that is lost through sweating. Alternative options are available to anyone with allergies. This is a simple meal and lunch time is a good time to reflect on how blessed we are to have food and to be eating a meal with friends.

What Will We Ask You To Do?

We are counting on all adult counselors to help the youth understand and get on board with these plans. This means we need counselors to:

- Explain the expectations to the youth (and their parents, if you are the group liaison).
- Explain the reasoning behind our strong commitment to healthy eating.
- Work to see that your whole team supports what we are trying to do. Ask them to support it with good humor and grace – it's only for one week!

Sports Drinks

Groups have asked if they can bring sports drinks for the hot days on the worksite. Absolutely! Please bring Gatorade powder for work teams to use in their water jugs. Most jugs are 5 gallons, so the standard 1-lb canister of powder works great. Please do not bring individual plastic bottles. Reusable bottles are ideal! SSP strives to be environmentally friendly and avoid unnecessary waste where possible.

You should plan to bring one or two 5-gallon water jugs for each vehicle with you to SSP for the work day.

7) Living In Community

SSP is all about creating community, with our fellow volunteers and the people we have come to serve. We are guests of the local community and facility where we stay. We want to maintain SSP's great reputation in these host communities so we will be invited back to serve as long as there is need.

Living in a community of 50-80 people means that everyone has to make sacrifices in the interest of the community. It means everyone is expected to participate in all activities, and be on time. These guidelines help us support one another so that all SSP participants can focus more on God and service, and less on our individual desires.

The Dress Code

We expect everyone to honor the dress code in all scheduled community activities each day.

The intention of the SSP dress code is to maintain standards of:

- **Professionalism:** We are all representatives of SSP.
- **Safety:** Make sure everyone brings and wears the proper clothing for the hard work we do.
- **Cultural Modesty:** Be respectful and reflective of dress standards in our host communities, which may be more conservative than our own.

The dress code is **not** intended to be used as a tool for body-shaming. In the event you need to ask someone to adjust their dress, please frame the request using one of the above three standards.

Guidelines for Dress

- Sleeveless tops, tank tops, halter tops, and half or crop tops are not allowed during the day. Tank tops and shorts are acceptable for sleeping.
- Clothing must not display slogans or artwork which includes alcohol, tobacco, or obscenities.
- No short shorts. Shorts should be mid-thigh length or longer.
 - Decorate jeans cut off at mid-thigh with permanent markers for pre-trip fun.
- Pants must not "sag" or sit below the waistline, exposing undergarments.
- Skirts should fall below the knee. Skirts are not allowed at the worksite, and are discouraged in the evening because participants spend much of the time either running around or sitting on the floor.

Work Site Clothing

- **Closed toe shoes** like work boots or tennis shoes must be worn at the work sites. No sandals or open toed shoes are allowed on the work site.
- **Long pants** are not required at the work site, but are encouraged and generally more comfortable when sitting on roofs or the ground.
- **Hats and bandanas are good protection from the sun!**

Things that are off limits at SSP

Tobacco, Alcohol, Firearms, Illegal Drugs, and Pyrotechnics are forbidden.

Electronic gadgets (other than cameras) are not allowed at SSP. This includes cell phones, laptop computers*, tablets, MP3 players like iPods, and handheld video game consoles. These devices encourage volunteers to isolate themselves, rather than engage in the community we hope to form during the week. Please do not use DVD players in vans during your week at SSP.

**We understand many adult counselors take time off work to attend SSP. While our first priority is preserving the sense of community that happens at SSP, we are also willing to accommodate if an adult has extenuating circumstances they must attend to during the week, such as work-related calls or emails. Please notify the SSP office in advance of any needs you might have, so we can prepare the Site Director to plan for any accommodations that must be made.*

Counselors should keep their own cell phones during the week for safety and communication with SSP staff.

Community Service Opportunities

- Kitchen Patrol/Party (KP): Before and after each meal
- Bathroom Patrol/Party (BP): Bathrooms and showers must be cleaned and floors must be swept and mopped twice daily
- Everyone helps with these chores, which are assigned to work teams on a rotating basis.
- Hygiene is very important at SSP, so there are very specific instructions on how to do all these jobs.
- Frequent hand washing is also an important SSP hygiene practice!

Youth Covenants

As part of the paperwork submitted prior to the summer, all youth, parents, and adult counselors sign covenants agreeing to fully take part in the SSP community. The covenant includes acknowledgement of SSP's electronics, healthy bodies, and hygiene policies.

8) Culture in Host Communities

Cultural Experiences

Tuesday night typically is a time to get to know the community we are serving better. A member (or members) of the hosting tribe or community come to share about their culture and history, and may also share stories about the current happenings. It is a wonderful opportunity for our guests to share with us, and a true gift for us to learn from them.

Each community has different ways of bringing their story to us:

- Some guests are singers and dancers
- Some bring hand-made crafts and foods
- Some teach the group words or songs in their native language

There is always time for questions and answers. There may also be other activities throughout the week in addition to Tuesday night that offer cultural insight into the location you are serving.

Homeowners and Community Organizations

The interaction between work teams and homeowners can vary from site to site. Some homeowners work during the day and cannot be present during SSP work hours, while others are mostly at home.

You are encouraged to take time to visit with the homeowners. Please feel free to share in any food that is offered! This is a way many of our hosts like to show their appreciation.

Homeowners are welcome to join us for dinner throughout the week, and often gather as part of SSP community dinners, which are hosted weekly at each site. Please ask your Site Director for more information.

Groups will receive a short historical introduction to the tribe or community at the beginning of the week, but we also strongly encourage groups to seek out more information about the community before arriving at site. Some of the communities we work with have their own websites, which you can find on the SSP website: SierraServiceProject.org/Locations

Becoming Advocates

A unique and vital part of the SSP experience is exposing youth to cultures different from their own. We hope volunteers continue learning and expanding their worldview after the week is over!

To that end, we encourage volunteers to continue partnering with our host communities by becoming advocates for issues important to them. Visit SierraServiceProject.org/Advocate for resources and information.

9) What SSP Expects of Adult Counselors

Adult counselors are an essential part of the SSP experience – they transport youth volunteers, assist with all site activities, and serve as role models to both youth and staff.

Above all, adult counselors are expected to work closely with SSP staff members to create an environment of trust and mutual respect.

All SSP staff members are trained experienced in SSP policies and procedures. Counselors are expected to:

- Model good communication skills and help work out conflicts quickly and without drama.
- Discuss problems with the Site Director, rather than participate in divisive discussions with youth or other adults.
- Keep youth positive when things aren't going as planned.
- Set an example by adhering to and enforcing the dress code, healthy bodies policy, and the other rules presented by the SSP staff.
- Be present for the entire week. Youth and counselors are not allowed to arrive late or leave early.
- Participate in ALL activities (this includes singing, housekeeping duties, and all other program activities) and help your youth to be involved as well.
- Take responsibility for the youth from your group, being sure that they uphold the rules and policies as well. Be sure that youth are not skipping meals and are getting to sleep at night.
- Participate on the work site in a way that is "leader" appropriate – ensuring that all youth assigned to your work team are part of the action.
- Build self-esteem through affirmation and praise, and refrain from put-downs.
- Ensure the safety of the youth under your care at all times. Do not carry more passengers in a vehicle than it is designed to carry, and make certain that you do not drive away in a vehicle until everyone is secured by a seatbelt. Obey the speed limits.
- Refrain from sexual harassment, abusive language or behavior, and discrimination. This includes profanity, suggestive or crude hand gestures and off-color jokes or comments. Assist SSP staff by policing youth on this as well.
- Be appropriate in all physical contact with youth. Examples of inappropriate behavior are hitting, spanking, pinching, lap sitting, laying on or being laid upon, resting head in youth's lap or vice versa. Remember that youth in your own group may be used to more physical contact than youth from other groups. Respect personal space boundaries. This is as much for your protection as for theirs.

Top 10 Ways to Succeed as an Adult Counselor

In summary, here are some tips on how to make the most of your SSP experience this summer:

1. **Promote a positive and affirming environment for all.**
2. **Communicate openly with and support SSP staff.**
3. **Model respect for the host community.**
4. **Set the example by being fully engaged in SSP activities.**
5. **Be fully present with youth.**
6. **Empower youth volunteers to challenge themselves.**
7. **Invite “discovery” of new perspectives, recognizing that all members of the SSP community have their own unique journey.**
8. **Take care of your individual needs, and share how others can support you.**
9. **Stay flexible and extend grace.**
10. **Keep the mission in mind: build faith, strengthen community, serve others.**



Resources for Adult Counselors

We believe in equipping counselors for the SSP experience as best as we can! To that end, we hope you find the below prompts and resources, which our staff are trained in, useful as you prepare for your trip.

Conflict Resolution

You may hear SSP staff refer to the 5 styles of conflict management during the week. These can be useful in identifying areas of miscommunication and moving towards situationally appropriate solutions:

- **Accommodating “Teddy Bear”**
- **Avoiding “Turtle”**
- **Compromising “Fox”**
- **Competing “Shark”**
- **Collaborating “Owl”**

Each person will have a natural primary and secondary style to resolving conflict, although each style can be useful in different situations. Various tests exist to help you identify which style you may lead with. Contact the SSP office for recommended resources to learn more about your style!

Leadership

As you enter your SSP week, consider these questions regarding leadership style:

- What is my definition of leadership?
- What strengths do I bring to the table?
- How can I grow as a leader? In what ways will the SSP experience stretch me?

Contact the SSP office for recommended resources on developing your own leadership style.

Mutual Invitation

To support youth work teams, adult counselors are frequently called upon to guide small group discussions. SSP encourages using the “mutual invitation” method to facilitate group discussions. The purpose of mutual invitation is to promote inclusion, facilitate listening, and ensure all voices have an opportunity to be heard. To learn more about mutual invitation, take a look at [Eric Law’s writings](#).

Cultural Humility

It is important all volunteers engage responsibly with the host community. To model cultural humility for youth, adult counselors should do their best to learn about the history and cultural context of the [location](#) where they are serving, and be prepared to learn alongside youth for the duration of the SSP week. Resources to learn about each SSP site are available on our website.

10) 2019 Site Information

Below you will find brief descriptions of SSP's site plans for the summer. Each site offers opportunities for either high school youth, middle school youth, or both to participate. For details on our combined, high school, and middle school programs, visit SierraServiceProject.org/Current-Availability. For up-to-date information on each site, site specific study guides, and links to various tribal and community websites, please visit SierraServiceProject.org/Locations.

Spokane, Washington

SSP has been working in Wellpinit, Washington since 2016 with the Spokane Indian Reservation, which is home to about 2,700 tribal members. Summer temperatures are in the low to mid 80's. We expect a mix of carpentry, painting, and minor repair work. Volunteers in Spokane sleep, eat, and have program in the tribe's PowWow Grounds. This site will host high school only and combined groups across five weeks.

Navajo Nation, Arizona

SSP has a long history of working in the Navajo Nation, and we are looking forward to returning this year. Volunteers will be staying in traditional hogans at Dine College in Tsaile, Arizona. Expect warm days, cooler nights, and an unforgettable experience. This site will host high school only, combined, and intergenerational groups across six weeks.

San Diego, California

In 2015, we opened a summer site in San Diego, and now serve in the neighborhood of Imperial Beach. This site offers collaboration with a variety of local organizations and non-profits, and dynamic opportunities to experience a bi-national culture. Depending on accessibility, volunteers may have the opportunity to take an optional day trip to Tijuana. This site will host high school only, middle school only, and combined groups across seven weeks.

Chiloquin, Oregon

We began working in Chiloquin in 2012, and look forward to being warmly welcomed into the community again. Groups will do a mix of roofing, carpentry, and painting projects for individual homeowners. Our work here is done with the entire community, not just the native population. Volunteers eat meals at the Chiloquin United Methodist Church, and sleep and have program at the school gym across the street. This site will host high school only and combined groups across six weeks.

Smith River, California

This summer, we will return to the far northern coast of California. The area is beautiful and at times the weather can be cool-to-cold! The community has been extremely welcoming since 2013, and we are excited to return this year. Volunteers stay in the Smith River United Methodist Church. We work throughout Del Norte County in Smith River and Crescent City, with a variety of local nonprofits and individual homeowners. This site will host high school only and combined groups across seven weeks.

