



February 1, 2018

Dear SSP Liaison,

We are excited you will be attending one of our five summer sites this year. Your group, along with 106 other registered groups, will make a big difference in each of these communities!

Please read this packet thoroughly. It includes detailed information vital to getting your group ready for SSP. Outside this packet, you can find current information about the summer on our website at www.sierraserviceproject.org.

For the second year, we are excited to implement **ELECTRONIC VOLUNTEER FORMS**. Most youth and adult forms will be collected via [MySSP](#) in advance of the summer. The exception is all **Medical History & Release Forms**, which should be turned in upon arrival to site. You'll find details on how to complete these farther along in the packet.

Your group can also stay current with what's going on at SSP by following us on Facebook ([Sierra Service Project](#)) and Instagram ([@SierraServiceProject](#)). Each summer site also has its own Instagram, where staff post project updates:

Smith River: [@SSPsmithriver2018](#)

Spokane: [@SSPspokane2018](#)

San Diego: [@SSPsandiego2018](#)

Tsaile: [@SSPtsaile2018](#)

Chiloquin: [@SSPchiloquin2018](#)

If you have additional questions, call or email me. We want to help you prepare for your trip as best as possible! We are grateful to be on this journey of service with you.

Many blessings,

Veronica Russell

Veronica Russell

Director of Volunteers & Outreach

veronica.russell@sierraserviceproject.org

Sierra Service Project
*Building faith and strengthening
communities through service to others.*



SierraServiceProject.org
P.O. Box 13009, Sacramento, CA 95813
Phone (916) 488-6441, Fax (916) 484-0917



Sierra Service Project Preparation Packet Summer 2018

Important Information for:

- Trip Liaisons
- Adult Counselors
- Youth Participants
- Parents



Table of Contents

Trip Liaison Timeline & Checklist	4
Adult Counselors	6
Transportation Plan	7
Trip Expenses	8
FAQ	9
High School, Combined, & Intergenerational Typical Schedule	10
Middle School Typical Schedule	11
Meals at SSP	12
Work Teams & Typical Projects	13
Expectations & Rules for Living in Community	14
Dress Code	15
Packing List	16
Medical & Insurance Information	17
Youth Forms	
Letter to Youth & Parents	18
Youth Medical History & Release Form	19
Counselor Forms	
Letter to Adult Counselors	21
Adult Medical History & Release Form	23



Trip Liaisons: Timeline & Checklist

To Do Now

- Apply for scholarships.**
- Recruit youth and counselors. Meet with youth, parents, and counselors to review this packet and due dates.
- Enter volunteer details** into the [MySSP](#) roster. Be sure to spellcheck your entries.
 - **Adult counselors:** Name, email address
 - **Youth volunteers:** Name, parent/guardian name, parent/guardian email address
- Arrange your transportation plan to and from the site. Please note the vehicles you bring will also be used throughout the week to transport youth to and from worksites (see page 7).

Due March 1

- Submit Second Payment.** Download your [invoice](#) and pay online via credit card, or send a check in the mail (preferred). Payments not received by this date will be charged an additional late fee.

April 1

- SSP will start sending emails to parents and adult counselors.** Any volunteer that has been entered to the roster by this date will begin receiving reminders to complete their electronic forms.

Due May 1

- All volunteer rosters should be entered by the liaison by this date.** Remind parents and adult counselors to complete their electronic forms via the emails sent to them from SSP.
 - **T-shirts** are ordered using the information parents and adults enter to the roster. We order T-shirts on June 1; be sure volunteers complete electronic forms before that date to receive the correct size.
- Online counselor training** will be emailed to first-time adults (required for first-time adults only; due June 30).
- Finalize transportation plan, including rental and/or borrowing of vehicles needed.

Due June 1

- Submit Final Payment.** Download your [invoice](#) and pay online via credit card, or send a check in the mail (preferred). Payments not received by this date will be charged an additional late fee.
- All Electronic Forms due at 3:00 PM PDT on [MySSP](#).** This includes background screenings and verifications for adult counselors. If your group needs to substitute an adult counselor after June 1, please call 916-488-6441 for SSP office approval.
 - We order T-shirts on this date using details from the electronic forms. Anyone who has not completed these by this date will not be guaranteed the correct T-shirt size.
- Check in with first-time adults to ensure they are completing online counselor training (due June 30).



Two Weeks Prior to Your Session

- The liaison will receive an email to schedule a call with your SSP Site Director.
- Confirm all participant information is correct and complete in your group's roster on [MySSP](#).
- Collect at least one five-gallon water jug and one first aid kit for each vehicle.
- Collect **Medical History & Release Forms** from all participants. **Bring two copies for each youth and adult volunteer with you to site** (original and copy).

One Week Prior to Your Session

- The liaison will receive a call from the SSP Site Director. On the call they will confirm your roster information, vehicle plan, and share site specific information concerning your week at SSP. Please make sure your contact information on [MySSP](#) is accurate.

Sunday of Your Week

Please plan to arrive on Sunday between 2:00 and 4:00 PM. Our Tsaiile, Arizona site is on Mountain Time. This means that during the summer, groups going from the West Coast to Tsaiile lose one hour. Please plan accordingly.

Bring these items with you to site:

- Medical History & Release Forms** from youth and adult counselors. Bring two copies of each volunteer's form with you to site (original and copy).
 - Separate these copies into two groups. We will collect both sets when you arrive. It is also a good idea to carry a third set in each of your vehicles, in case of emergency.
- Maps and directions to your SSP site
- First aid kits (one per vehicle)
- Five-gallon water jugs (one per vehicle)

Your SSP Week

Fellowship, Serve, Learn, Reflect, Pray, and Play!

Last morning of Your SSP Week

Eat breakfast, receive bookmark with website to take our online evaluation survey, group photos, closing circle, and depart by about 10:00 AM.



Adult Counselors

The most important decision you make as a group liaison is the adults you choose to send with your youth. **These counselors play a vital role!** They transport youth, ensure safety at the work sites, facilitate group conversations on faith and social justice, help enforce our rules and guidelines, and motivate youth to learn and practice social skills. Your adult counselors should know the youth's names and have had some experience interacting with them, as well as be suitable to work with youth in general. Adult counselors should be youthful in spirit, because SSP is a high energy experience! **Adult counselors must be at least 23 years old**. Contact the SSP office to approve any exceptions.

Counselors need to be identified to the SSP office through [MySSP](#) roster by **May 1** so they can complete their electronic forms, online training, and start the background check process.

Please give prospective counselors a clear picture of what they are signing up for. They should be prepared to participate in all aspects of SSP, and know there is not a lot of down time. Counselors are expected to drive youth to and from the work site, some off-site program locations, and showers (if off-site) each day. Every part of the SSP experience is done in community. Adults will **sleep on the floor** in a room with teenagers, **eat the meals** SSP provides, and **use group showers** at some locations (youth and adults shower at separate times).

Counselor Forms and Background Screenings

SSP requires that all counselors have successfully undergone a National Criminal Background Check **within the past two years** of the program they are attending. This can be completed either by having SSP run a screening for them, or verifying a screening that has already been completed.

If an adult has been background checked since July 2016, they **do not** need to be screened again, but **do** need to have the screening verified. There is a section in their electronic forms that asks them to enter the contact information for the person who can verify their screening (usually a pastor or administrator). That person will then receive an email that will allow them to verify that the adult's screening was completed in the appropriate time frame. *As with any request for a recommendation, be sure to give this person adequate time to respond before the forms are due.*

If an adult counselor has **not** been checked since July 2016, their church or employer can run a background check on them, or SSP can. SSP partners with IntelliCorp, which is less expensive than other screening agencies, alleviates concerns about sending personal information through the mail, and eliminates most processing work for our office staff. Screenings start at \$19.95 and may have additional costs based on which county records must be pulled.

To complete a screening through SSP, a counselor can log onto SierraServiceProject.volunteerportal.net. The password is **counselor**. Please inform your adults they must undergo a background check for this summer if they haven't been screened since July 2016.

In order to protect the youth that we serve, **we require adult counselors to complete a set of electronic forms, which are sent to the email address provided by the liaison in [MySSP](#)**. All electronic forms are due by 3:00 PM PDT on June 1, to give us ample time to process them prior to volunteers' arrival on site. *Please allow plenty of time to complete all these items prior to the due date, as background screenings often take several weeks to be run, verified, and processed.*

Be sure all electronic volunteer forms – for both youth *and* adults – **are completed by 3:00 PM PDT on June 1**. Please do not submit any **Medical History & Release Forms** to the office. These should be turned in upon arrival at site.



Transportation Plan

Planning Your Trip to SSP and Back

Determine your driving times, route, and distances, making allowances for food and bathroom stops. Arrange overnight stays if needed. Many SSP churches open their doors to groups traveling to their SSP site. [Contact the office](#) to find an SSP-friendly church that may be able to host you along your route. For the return trip, let parents know when you plan to return, and arrange for a phone tree or group text if needed once you are close to home.

Arriving at SSP on Sunday

All groups must plan the trip so you arrive at SSP between **2:00 and 4:00 PM** on Sunday. Please **do not** arrive before 2:00 or after 4:00 PM. If you are early, our staff won't be ready for you. Summer staff only have a 28-hour break between sessions, and need that time to prepare and rest. If you arrive late, it is difficult to fit in all the preparation information you'll need to get started on Monday. **The staff are not able to start until all groups have arrived.** It is frustrating for those who arrive on time to wait for a late group, then stay up late to complete orientation after a long day of driving. When you arrive at site, cars will be unpacked and there will be some free time to get settled after the drive.

***IMPORTANT!** The Tsale, Arizona site is on Mountain Time. During the summer, you will lose an hour when traveling from the West Coast. Please plan accordingly.*

Departure

High school, combined, and intergenerational sessions end Saturday morning, and **middle school** sessions end Friday morning. The last morning is a time for clean-up and goodbyes. Everyone should be there until the last dish is washed, last picture taken, and last song sung. Groups leave between **9:00 and 10:00 AM**. Plan your travels accordingly.

In an effort to improve our programs, we ask all volunteers to complete an **online survey** after their SSP experience. Adults will complete the online survey before leaving the site. Youth are given a bookmark with a link to the survey, which they can complete on a phone during the trip home, or on a computer at home.

Vehicles

Groups must provide their own transportation for the week, including to and from the work site. For this reason, parents should not drop youth off for the week. Work teams are made up of seven to nine people, so minivans and trucks work best. 15-passenger vans are very unsafe; please do not use these. Seatbelts are required for **all** occupants.

Van Rental Information

SSP has a special rate with [Enterprise Rent-A-Car](#) for groups in California to arrange vehicle rental for your trip. However, this may not reflect the least expensive rental option for your region. We encourage you to investigate rates with other companies as needed. Make reservations early, as vans are in high demand in summer months.

To use SSP's Enterprise rate, visit [enterprise.com](#). Enter your group's trip **dates**, pickup/dropoff **location**, and SSP's **Corporate Account Number: 30C2900**. This will show you the availability and rate for all vehicles. You may also instead call 1-800-Rent-A-Car (1-800-736-8222) and refer to our Corporate Account Number to make your reservation.

If you do take advantage of this rate, remember the arrangement is between you and Enterprise. SSP cannot take responsibility for reservations or other problems that may arise. Regardless of where you rent your vans, we **strongly advise** you call one week ahead of your pick-up date, as well as the day before, to verify your reservation is intact and your vehicles are available.



Trip Expenses

When estimating your overall total trip expenses, remember to include the cost of rented vehicles, fuel for vehicles to site and throughout the week, overnight lodging and meals to and from site, and any extra spending money.

Second and Final Payments

Second payments are **due March 1**, and final payments are **due June 1**. See the table below to determine the amount your group owes for each. You can download your invoice and pay by credit card on [MySSP](#), or send a check in the mail (preferred). Any scholarships your group is awarded will be split evenly between your second and final payments.

Location	Program Type	Second Payment Amount: March 1	Final Payment Amount: June 1
Smith River, San Diego, Tsaile, Chiloquin	High School, Combined, Intergenerational	\$200 per participant	\$125 per participant
Spokane	High School, Combined	\$185 per participant	\$100 per participant
Smith River, Chiloquin	Middle School	\$175 per participant	\$100 per participant

Scheduling a Youth, Parent, and Adult Counselor Meeting

Meeting with all participants and parents is essential to ensuring everyone is well informed and prepared for the trip. At this meeting, you should plan to do the following:

1. **Notify youth and adults they will receive an email link to complete required forms** for the SSP summer. Show an example of this process if necessary using the liaison or adult counselor's roster entry and email.
2. **Distribute Medical History & Release Forms.** These should be completed and returned to you, the liaison, to bring with you to your summer site. *These are the only forms we will not collect electronically.*
3. Discuss the SSP experience, the daily and weekly schedules, types of work projects, and work teams.
4. Go over the rules for living in community and being a guest in the local community.
5. Go over the packing list (page 16).
6. Discuss your trip plans, including added costs (travel, overnight stays, etc.).
7. Discuss and plan fundraising.

T-Shirts

Every year, SSP produces a custom-designed T-shirt for each participant. We collect T-shirt orders via the volunteer forms your youth and adults complete electronically. In order to print and sort T-shirts before the start of the summer, **all electronic volunteer forms** – for youth *and* adults – **must be completed by 3:00 PM PDT on June 1**. If not, they will not be guaranteed the correct T-shirt size.



Frequently Asked Questions

Who can attend?

As an interdenominational Christian service program, SSP encourages middle and high school youth groups, adult groups, families, and individuals to participate. SSP fosters affirming spaces and welcomes volunteers of all backgrounds, races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, and abilities. *The only requirements to attend SSP are a willingness to serve and openness to new experiences.*

Who is in charge of SSP?

SSP is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, ultimately run by a Board of Directors and full-time office staff. During the summer, SSP is operated by seven to eight energetic and welcoming young adult [staff](#) persons at each site, who are eager to serve alongside you!

What does it cost?

If all deadlines are met, the cost for an SSP trip runs between \$325 and \$375 per person. This fee is all-inclusive and covers food, lodging, building materials, tools, and a staff team for the week. All meals are covered from Sunday dinner to breakfast the last morning. See [program costs](#) on our website.

What are the facilities like?

SSP will operate in five [locations](#) across the Western United States. Each offers a unique setting and host facility. Facilities vary by location, but each site has separate sleeping areas by gender. SSP is gender inclusive and seeks to accommodate separate sleeping areas as needed for non-binary or trans volunteers.

Can I leave SSP early or arrive late?

All participants, youth and adults, must remain at SSP for the entire session! The experience is based on a tight-knit community that serves and fellowships together. Arriving late, leaving early, or otherwise can interrupt the overall SSP experience. If your group has extenuating circumstances, please call our office.

Where does SSP find people to serve with?

Local community organizations, tribes, and churches who are most aware of people's needs in the area help us connect with those who may need our services.

Will my group have direct interaction with local community members?

Yes! Many homeowners enjoy spending time with the teams working on their homes. Some work during the day and will not be present. Each site also has at least one cultural speaker, and varied activities with local organizations or community centers.

Are the worksites safe?

Our trained staff visit each worksite ahead of time and oversee the projects during your week. All volunteers learn basic safety precautions and safe tool usage on the first day. Adult counselors guide each work team, and SSP construction staff check in at every project site at least twice each day.

How are we divided into work teams?

Each participant is placed on a work team of about seven to nine people. Each team will ideally have two adult counselors. We will do our best to pair first-time adults with an SSP-experienced adult on work teams. We form teams by mixing groups, ages, and genders. You will be in a work team with people from a variety of groups. We want you to get to know new people, so you might not be on the same team as other members of the group you arrived with.

Do I have to have construction experience?

No experience is required! It can be helpful when volunteers are experienced in construction, but we are eager to host those who are new to such skills. Our staff are trained in drawing plans, teaching teams how to complete projects, and assessing a project's quality.

Will my work team complete our project?

On average, an SSP project spans three weeks. Your team may see the beginning, middle, or end of a project. We will not leave a summer site without completing **all** projects we begin.

I have a question that hasn't been answered...

Feel free to contact the SSP office if you have further questions or concerns. Call us at 916-488-6441, or email veronica.russell@sierraserviceproject.org.



High School, Combined, & Intergenerational Typical Schedule

Daily Schedule

7:00 AM	Wake up and get ready (the day may start earlier depending on the site and heat index).
7:30 AM	Spiritual awakening (optional) to get centered for the day.
8:00 AM	Breakfast
8:30 AM	Community service opportunities, lunch crew packs sandwiches, teams head to work site.
9:30 AM	Arrive at work site, begin service work.
Noon	Lunch and spiritual sandwiches (group discussion) at work site.
1:00 PM	Resume service work.
4:00 PM	Return to site, clean and store tools, shower, free time. Free time is spent at the location where we are housed and includes sports, crafts, cards, snacks, and hanging out!
5:00 PM	Staff/counselor meeting – adults meet with staff to discuss joys, concerns, and plans for the next 24 hours.
6:00 PM	Dinner
6:30 PM	Community service opportunities (cleaning kitchen and bathrooms, etc.).
7:00 PM	Song time and evening program – team building activities, mail, sharing work site reports, and spiritual programs related to our summer theme. At least one evening is always devoted to learning about the local community.
9:00 PM	Free time. Volunteers prepare for bed.
9:45 PM	Evening devotional led by a work team.
10:00 PM	Lights out. Sleeping areas are separated by gender. The work we do is hard labor and everyone needs to get a good night's sleep.

Weekly Schedule

Sunday:	Arrive between 2:00-4:00 PM, orientation , staff/counselor meeting, assign work teams.
Monday:	Safety presentation and hands-on tool training, half day service at work site, evening program.
Tuesday:	Service at work site all day, cross-cultural evening program .
Wednesday:	Adventure Wednesday: community service activity as a full group or activities to learn about the site location, recreation in the afternoon, BBQ dinner, evening program.
Thursday:	Service at work site all day, off-site evening program .
Friday:	Service at work site all day, closing celebrations .
Saturday:	Pack up, clean site, receive bookmark with website to take online evaluation survey, breakfast, closing circle, depart.

Note: There will be several opportunities during your week at SSP to reconnect with everyone from the group you are attending with, even if they are not on your work team. The time this takes place will vary by location, due to program and community limitations at each site.



Middle School Typical Schedule

Daily Schedule

7:00 AM	Wake up and get ready (the day may start earlier depending on the site and heat index).
7:30 AM	Energizers and morning program , which includes reflections by staff, energizing singing, and group building activities.
8:00 AM	Breakfast
8:30 AM	Community service opportunities, lunch crew packs sandwiches, teams head to work site.
9:30 AM	Arrive at work site, begin service work.
Noon	Lunch and spiritual sandwiches (group discussion) at work site.
1:00 PM	Resume service work.
3:00 PM	Return to site, clean and store tools, shower, free time. Free time is spent at the location where we are housed and includes sports, crafts, cards, snacks, and hanging out!
4:00 PM	Staff/counselor meeting – adults meet with staff to discuss joys, concerns, and plans for the next 24 hours.
5:00 PM	Song time, work site reports, and handing out mail.
5:45 PM	Dinner
6:15 PM	Community service opportunities (cleaning the kitchen and bathrooms, etc.).
7:00 PM	Evening program – team building activities and spiritual programs related to our summer theme. At least one evening is always devoted to learning about the local community.
8:00 PM	Free time. Volunteers prepare for bed.
9:00 PM	Evening devotional led by a work team.
9:30 PM	Lights out. Sleeping areas are separated by gender. The work we do is hard labor and everyone needs to get a good night's sleep.

Weekly Schedule

Sunday:	Arrive between 2:00-4:00 PM, orientation , staff/counselor meeting, assign work teams.
Monday:	Safety presentation and hands-on tool training, half day service at work site, evening program.
Tuesday:	Service at work site all day, cross-cultural evening program .
Wednesday:	Service at work site all day, evening program
Thursday:	Adventure Thursday : half day of service, afternoon water play, BBQ dinner, slide show.
Friday:	Pack up, clean site, receive bookmark with website to take online evaluation survey, breakfast, closing circle, depart.

Note: *There will be several opportunities during your week at SSP to reconnect with everyone from the church or youth group attending with you, even if they are not on your work team. The time this takes place will vary by location due to program and community limitations at each site.*



Meals at SSP

SSP makes a real effort to provide balanced, nutritious, and appealing meals throughout the week. When cooking for 60 or more people in a small kitchen on a budget, this can be hard to do. Therefore, **it is essential volunteers notify SSP of any special dietary needs** in advance so we can do our best to accommodate them. There is a section in each volunteer's electronic forms in [MySSP](#) to indicate dietary needs, which should be completed **by June 1**. The week prior to arrival, our staff will verify the needs listed in the rosters with your liaison. Please note it can be difficult for our staff to accommodate special dietary needs on short notice. However, they are trained to prepare vegetarian, vegan, dairy free, gluten free, nut free, and other meals with dietary needs, with enough notice to purchase the ingredients.

SSP Food Service Coordinators provide **quality food in ample quantities** for both breakfast and dinner, and will be happy to make more if people are still hungry. Traditional SSP lunch consists of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, augmented with fresh fruit and salty snacks to help replace sodium lost through sweating. Lunch time is a good time to reflect on how blessed we are to be eating a meal in fellowship together. An alternative to PB&J will be available for people with allergies.

In addition to each day's meals, the SSP staff provides a **healthy snack** for all counselors and youth each afternoon. This consists of things like fresh fruit, veggie sticks, oat balls, popcorn, and other snacks.

During your week at SSP, you will be strongly encouraged to **avoid junk food** and celebrate the opportunity to eat simple and healthy food. Adult counselors are asked **not** to make stops to purchase snacks at local markets during trips to and from worksites and showers. Rewarding youth with junk food for hard work or 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.

For hygiene reasons and for rodent control, food is not allowed in the sleeping areas. Church groups will be asked not to arrive at SSP with large quantities of food in their vehicles. Groups that arrive with junk food will be asked to box it up for the trip home.

Parents are encouraged to send **care packages** containing *healthy snacks* like granola bars, mixed nuts, and dried fruit. Groups will be able to eat these snacks at the work site and during afternoon snack time. Keep in mind SSP sites can only receive mail via the US Postal Service (not FedEx or UPS), so be sure to send these far enough in advance so they will arrive while the volunteers are still participating at SSP.

We also encourage groups to bring **powdered sports drink mix** for hot days on the worksite. Please bring powdered drink supplements (such as Gatorade canisters), rather than individual bottles. Canisters create less waste and are easier to dispose of than bottles, as recycling is not always available. Most water coolers used at SSP are five gallons, and a standard one-pound canister of powder works great.

Disabilities & Other Accommodations

SSP is committed to making its programs **accessible** for any youth who wants to attend. To that end, we do our best to accommodate all disabilities or other needs on site. In order to do so, we ask that volunteers notify SSP in advance of any disabilities or other restrictions by entering the pertinent information on their electronic volunteer forms in [MySSP](#). Group liaisons should be aware of these and any other dietary, physical, emotional, or relevant needs, and confirm them with the site director prior to arrival.



Work Teams & Typical Projects

Work Teams

Prior to your group arriving, the SSP construction staff use volunteers' electronic forms to assign them to a project for the week, as part of a work team of typically seven to nine people. They will consult with the adult counselors upon your group's arrival on site to ensure all special needs are met, and those with special construction skills are put to use the best they can.

- We intentionally mix groups into different work teams, combining your volunteers into teams with people from other groups. This helps everyone get to know each other, enhances the site's overall community atmosphere, and discourages exclusivity, encouraging youth to get to know people from many groups.
- Work teams meet on Sunday evening for the first time.
- Ideally two adult counselors will serve as the on-site leaders for each work team. Some teams may have one or three adult counselors.

SSP construction staff provide plans and instructions for every team and every job. The construction staff rotate between work sites, and will not be present with your group for the entirety of the day. You can expect a staff member to be present two to three times per day, as well as check in before and after the work day.

Typical Work Projects

Although SSP can't tell you in advance what specific repair projects your group will be doing, the repair work most often falls under these categories:

- Building stairs, porches, awnings, decks, and wheelchair ramps
- Repairing roofs
- Installing (or repairing) drywall and insulation
- Repairing flooring
- Painting, both interior and exterior

On average, an SSP project spans three weeks. Your team may see the beginning, middle, or end of a project. We will not leave a summer without completing all projects we begin. Your team most likely will not start and finish a project.

Most SSP projects are done on homes, but some projects are for community organizations. These types of projects allow SSP to serve the entire community, rather than just one family. Examples of these projects range from working in community gardens, to painting schools and churches.



Expectations & Rules for Living in Community

Each week, SSP becomes an intentional Christian community comprising of all volunteer participants, our staff, and the community we serve. Remember we are guests of the local community, and of the facility where we stay. The following rules and guidelines help us support one another so all SSP participants can focus more on God and service, and less on our individual needs.

- All participants are expected to be present for the entire week. Because late arrivals or early departures are very disruptive, exceptions to this rule are very rare, and must be approved in advance by the SSP office.
- The SSP summer staff has overall responsibility for all activities of the site. Please show respect and cooperate with all instructions and requests from staff.
- Adult counselors are responsible at all times for the physical, emotional, and spiritual safety of the youth placed under their care.
- We expect everyone at SSP, including adult counselors, to participate in all activities during the week. Adult counselors are assigned to guide their teams in various activities to keep the facilities clean and functioning smoothly.
- **Only** adult counselors 23 and older are allowed to drive vehicles at SSP, and are expected to follow all traffic laws, including speed limits. **Seatbelts are REQUIRED** for all passengers at all times.
- **All** participants are expected to eat the three daily meals that SSP provides. Hard work requires well fueled bodies; SSP is not a time for dieting. Volunteers should enter all dietary needs in their electronic volunteer forms so our staff are prepared to accommodate them.
- SSP does not tolerate sexual harassment, abusive language or behavior, or discrimination of any type.
- Sleeping areas are separated by gender. No activity is allowed after “lights out.” Every site’s sleeping arrangements are different, but will accommodate separate sleeping areas as needed for non-binary or trans volunteers.
- Taking pictures or recording video or audio of the host family or community representatives may be done only with their permission. Staff will inform you of local customs.
- General work hours for high school, combined, and intergenerational sessions are from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Work hours for middle school sessions are 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM. Breaks for safety and rest, as well as for lunch, are very important. If one member leaves a work site for any reason, all members must also leave.
- Visitors aren’t common during the week. All visitors must be approved in advance by the SSP office: 916-488-6441.
- SSP has the right to send any youth home who does not adhere to the SSP rules. Adult counselors and parents are responsible for arranging transportation home for anyone who is asked to leave before the end of the week, at the expense of the parent.



Immunizations

Sierra Service Project strongly encourages youth and staff to come to SSP with up-to-date immunizations.

Adolescent and adult immunization schedules are available at: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html

Vaccines protect more than just you or your child: they protect the entire community. Having up-to-date immunizations helps protect those who are too young to be vaccinated, and those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons. Coming to SSP with complete and up-to-date immunizations will protect participants, as well as ensure our volunteers and staff do not expose vulnerable populations to preventable disease.

The Dress Code

SSP seeks to maintain a somewhat modest and conservative dress code in order to be respectful of the homeowners and community organizations we work with. The dress code is also intended to foster a comfortable, affirming environment where all youth feel welcome, regardless of how they look or the type of clothing they own.

The following are not allowed:

- Sleeveless tops, tank tops, halter tops, half or crop tops. Bare midribs are not acceptable. This includes tying up T-shirts in the back. Please leave sleeveless shirts at home. Skirts are also not a good idea at SSP, since we spend a lot of time sitting on the floor.
- T-shirts must not be offensive or display any slogan or artwork which includes alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or obscenities.
- No short shorts. Thrift store jeans cut off at mid-thigh work great, and are more protective when sitting on hot roofs and the ground. Shorts must not “sag” either.

Please remember to bring swimsuits for water day and showers. At many sites we use group locker room showers, and many youth feel more comfortable wearing swimsuits. Every site’s shower setup is different, but SSP will accommodate private showers as needed for non-binary or trans volunteers.

Ways to make the dress code more fun:

- Use permanent markers to write on new or used inexpensive T-shirts. Decorate one for each work day.
- Design group logos to put on white T-shirts, and then tie-dye the shirts at a pre-trip gathering.
- Draw on or tie-dye cut-off jean shorts.

At our sites, we empower youth and adult counselors to promote opportunities for young people to make good decisions, and minimize the amount of policing that our staff has to do, which can detract from community building. In the event of distracting dress, our staff will ask an adult counselor to speak with the youth privately.



Packing List

- Sleeping bag and pillow
- Air mattress, pad, or cot for sleeping on the floor
- Long-sleeve shirts and sweatshirts (nights can be cool)
- Short-sleeve shirts (days can be warm)
- Long pants (multiple pairs in case they get dirty)
- Shorts (days can be warm; keep length appropriate)
- Socks, multiple pairs
- Work boots or tennis shoes (for the work site)
- Additional pair of shoes (for wear at home site); shower shoes recommended
- Work gloves that fit the user
- Hat, bandana, and sunglasses
- Toiletries
- Towel and swimsuit (showering and water day)
- Sunscreen
- Mosquito repellent (for evening outdoor activities)
- Backpack for personal items
- Water bottle

Suggested:

- Musical instruments are encouraged!
- Camera (disposable or digital – no camera phones for youth)
- Bible, journal, and writing instrument
- Camp chair for adult counselors (we sit on the ground a lot!)
- Gatorade powder canisters (drink supplements for the work site)

Garments at the Work Site

- Be sure to bring layers of clothing and work gloves. Long pants are not required at the work site, but will be more comfortable and protective for many jobs that require sitting on a hot roof or on the ground.
- Hats and bandanas are useful for keeping cool and avoiding sunburn.
- Closed-toed shoes (work boots, tennis shoes) must be worn at the work site; no sandals or open-toed shoes.

Smith River: *The Northern California coast is very cold, especially compared to other SSP sites. This is not your typical California summer weather! Please bring lots of layers and a rain coat. Knit hats and scarves provide extra warmth.*

Electronics

We ask that the week be electronics free (other than digital cameras) for youth. This helps us build community and focus on the service work. Adults should collect youth's electronics upon arrival, or discourage them from bringing them at all. The staff will keep them secure for the week. Adults should keep their cell phones for emergency use.

After the week, we encourage youth and adults to follow SSP's Instagram accounts (page 1) and use the hashtags **#SSP2k18**, **#ExploreBuildGrow**, and **#volunteerSSP** when posting photos online.



Medical & Insurance Information

We are pleased that in over forty years of operation, SSP has had few participant injuries. Our staff is CPR and First Aid trained, and safety and health conscious. A number of measures are in place to preserve the health and safety of all participants. Sierra Service Project has an Accident and Illness Prevention Plan, which includes procedures in case of an emergency. Staff and volunteers all have responsibilities to keep everyone safe and in good health. Once the groups arrive at site, directions and phone numbers to nearby medical facilities will be distributed to counselors.

- In spite of these precautions, we need to be prepared in case of an emergency. Your answers and signature on the **Medical History & Release Form** will help us deal with an emergency appropriately. *This is crucial – any participant arriving at site without a signed medical release will not be allowed to work until a form is received.*
- In the event that medical treatment is necessary, you or your guardians will be financially responsible.
- The assisting Sierra Service Project staffer or adult counselor will use the insurance information provided by you to pay for you or your child's treatment. SSP volunteers are not covered by Worker's Compensation.

If the volunteer is not covered by insurance:

Sierra Service Project purchases supplemental **accident** insurance coverage for all participants. The *maximum* accidental medical expense benefit is \$3,000 for approved claims. For individuals with personal insurance, Sierra Service Project's coverage will be applied in excess of benefits provided by any other plan.

Volunteers will be covered while:

- In regular attendance in our program.
- Taking part in regularly scheduled, approved activities.
- Traveling to/from site activities in properly scheduled, supervised groups.
- Traveling directly between home and the SSP site, as long as that travel does not extend beyond 48 hours prior to or after the volunteers are in regular attendance at the program.

Letter to Youth & Parents



Dear Youth and Parents,

We are excited you have decided to spend a week at (or send your child to) [Sierra Service Project](#) this summer! We are busy finalizing plans, gathering work projects, and preparing staff so you have the best experience possible on site. There are a few things we ask of you as you prepare for your SSP trip:

Prior to Attending

- **Complete your electronic forms.** These must be completed and signed *by* the parent/guardian, with the youth present to review the information. We will send a link to complete these to the email address your liaison provides us. These are **due by 3:00 PM PDT on June 1** to ensure you receive the correct T-shirt size!
- The only form not available online is the **Youth Medical History & Release Form** (pages 19-20). Please complete and submit this to your group liaison. It will be turned in to SSP staff upon your **arrival at site**.
- Pack appropriate clothing for SSP (page 16). Be sure to have closed-toed shoes for the worksite.
- Be ready for a challenge, and be ready to have fun!

While Attending SSP

- Have a positive attitude, and help out where needed.
- Take photographs – lots of them!
- Be adventurous. Try something new every day. Make new friends.

Ways Parents Can Support

- Send mail! We will post mailing addresses on our website by June 1. Packages should be sent via USPS.
- Be ready for transformation! We hope your youth return home energized after a week of serving others.

Stay current with SSP via Facebook ([Sierra Service Project](#)) and Instagram ([@SierraServiceProject](#)). Each site location has its own Instagram account as well:

Smith River: [@SSPsmithriver2018](#)

San Diego: [@SSPsandiego2018](#)

Chiloquin: [@SSPchiloquin2018](#)

Spokane: [@SSPspokane2018](#)

Tsaile: [@SSPtsaile2018](#)

Many blessings,

Veronica Russell

Veronica Russell

Director of Volunteers & Outreach

veronica.russell@sierraserviceproject.org

Sierra Service Project
*Building faith and strengthening
communities through service to others.*



SierraServiceProject.org
P.O. Box 13009, Sacramento, CA 95813
Phone (916) 488-6441, Fax (916) 484-0917



Youth Medical History & Release Form

Liaison: Bring two copies of this form with you to site for each youth (original and copy).

CONTACT INFORMATION

Church/Group Name: _____

Youth Name: _____ Gender: _____ Grade in fall: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Phone: () _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Parent/Guardian 1: Name: _____ Employer: _____

Primary Phone: () _____ Secondary Phone: () _____

Parent/Guardian 2: Name: _____ Employer: _____

Primary Phone: () _____ Secondary Phone: () _____

If parents/guardians can't be reached in an emergency, please contact:

Name: _____ Relationship to Volunteer: _____

Primary Phone: () _____ Secondary Phone: () _____

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Health Insurance Co.: _____ Policy No.: _____

Family Physician: _____ Phone: () _____

Does your insurance carrier require a second opinion before emergency procedures are undertaken?

Yes No

The following information is required to ensure that your youth's individual needs are met while attending SSP. Information is confidential and will be made available only to staff, your group liaison, adult counselors, and medical professionals, i.e., those people who are directly responsible for your child's well-being. In the event of an emergency, every effort will be made to contact the parents or designated individual. For their safety and well-being, no child will be allowed to attend without a completed and signed Medical Release and Permission.

Date of youth's last tetanus shot: _____

List any physical or behavioral conditions that staff and adult counselors should be aware of (sleepwalking, epilepsy, diabetes, fainting, depression, eating disorders, asthma, etc.) Be specific so we can provide the best care for your child:

Continued on next page.



Youth Medical History & Release Form Cont.

Liaison: Bring two copies of this form with you to site for each youth (original and copy).

Is your youth allergic to any medication or insect bites? Yes No

If yes, please list particular allergy and probable reaction: _____

Is your youth currently taking any medication? Yes No

If yes, please list all medications that your youth will be bringing, including complete instructions for administering: _____

Unless absolutely necessary, do not change your youth’s prescription before their time at SSP. Since we don’t know his/her normal behavior, we are less likely than you to detect negative reactions to changes in medication.

May the staff/adult counselor administer to your youth:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Aspirin: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Motion sickness medication: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Aspirin substitutes: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Laxative or anti-diarrhea medication: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Eye ointments: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Antibacterial or antibiotic ointment: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Antihistamine or decongestant: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Insect bite or poison oak ointment: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Specific directions: _____

*Note: If your youth requires special care or you would like to expand on any of your explanations here, please contact us as soon as possible **prior to arrival** so that necessary arrangements can be made 916-488-6441.*

Your signature here confirms that the information on these two pages is complete and correct as far as you know, and that you are giving permission to staff and adult counselors as noted.

Parent/Guardian’s signature

Date

MEDICAL RELEASE AND PERMISSION

(Youth’s name) _____ has my permission to attend Sierra Service Project. I understand that the program involves construction and recreational activities, and I acknowledge that reasonable measures will be taken to safeguard the health and safety of all participants. I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Sierra Service Project, its officers, agents and employees from any and all claims, damages, expenses or injuries arising out of or incident to my participation in this Project, unless such loss or injury results directly from the neglect or willful act of an officer, agent or employee of Sierra Service Project acting within the scope of his/her employment. In case of a medical emergency, I hereby authorize calling a physician at my expense to provide whatever medical or surgical treatment is necessary. I understand that I will be notified as soon as possible in case of any emergency affecting my child. I have read and understand page 17 entitled “Medical & Insurance Information” and the foregoing paragraph.

Parent/Guardian’s signature

Date

Letter to Adult Counselors



Dear Adult Counselors,

Thank you for signing up to participate as an adult counselor with [Sierra Service Project](#). We could not do the work we do without dedicated adults like you! We realize many of you are using vacation time to attend, and hope this is a rewarding experience for you as well. Part of our job is ensuring you feel prepared to serve and lead alongside our staff. Following are some expectations we have for your role as an adult counselor at SSP.

- Model respectful behavior and language
- Participate in all SSP activities, and encourage youth to do so as well
- Assume a leadership role for youth
- Build an affirming environment that helps youth take healthy risks
- Respect the authority of SSP's young adult staff
- Be safety conscious
- No prior convictions of:
 - Sexual assault or harassment
 - Physical abuse
 - Any crime against children
- Within the last seven years:
 - No driving-related convictions
 - No drug-related convictions
- No recent history of alcohol or drug abuse

Counselor Forms – Due by 3:00 PM PDT on June 1

In order to protect the youth we serve, we require adult counselors to complete a set of forms. The majority of these forms must be completed electronically. We will send a link to the email address your liaison provides us. These forms are **due by 3:00 PM PDT on June 1** to ensure you receive the correct T-shirt size, as well as give our office time to process your paperwork. *Please allow plenty of time to complete all these items prior to the due date, as background screenings often take several weeks to be run, verified, and processed.*

Counselor Background Screenings – Due June 1

SSP requires that all counselors have successfully undergone a National Criminal Background Check within the past two years of the program you are attending. If you have been background checked since July 2016 and cleared to work with youth, you do not need to be screened again, but do need to have your screening verified by a pastor or administrator from your group. There will be a section in your electronic forms that asks you to enter the contact information for this person to verify your screening. *As you would with any request for a recommendation, be sure to give this person adequate time to respond before your forms are due.*

If you have not undergone a screening since July 2016, you can either have your church, employer, or SSP run a background check on you. SSP partners with IntelliCorp, which is less expensive than other screening agencies, alleviates concerns about sending personal information through the mail, and eliminates most processing work for our office staff. Screenings start at \$19.95 and may have additional costs based on which county records are required to be pulled. You can log onto SierraServiceProject.volunteerportal.net to complete a background check. The password is **counselor**. You must undergo a background check by June 1, 2018 if you haven't been screened since July 2016.

Online Counselor Training – Due June 30

All first-time adult counselors must complete Online Counselor Training. First-time adults will be emailed a link and instructions for this training in the month of May.

Sierra Service Project
*Building faith and strengthening
communities through service to others.*



SierraServiceProject.org
P.O. Box 13009, Sacramento, CA 95813
Phone (916) 488-6441, Fax (916) 484-0917



Letter to Adult Counselors Cont.

Due Upon Arrival On Site

In addition, all adults must complete the Medical History & Release Form (pages 23-24) and bring two copies with you to site (original and copy). Give these to your liaison before you depart on your trip so they can make copies if needed.

While Attending SSP

- Adults are expected to participate as a member of the SSP community, which means having fun and growing closer in your relationship with God. Activities include games, devotions, leading and participating in discussions, and songtime.
- Be a positive role model. You are expected to set a positive and mature example for the youth. Participating in all SSP activities, and encouraging youth to do so as well, is a part of this!
- Work together with the staff. Counselors are considered partners with SSP staff, and your leadership is also needed, whether that is to enforce safety at site, follow direction from the staff, or help facilitate activities.
- Remember each person is on his or her own journey. When facilitating conversations about faith and other topics, be respectful to both youth and other adults – cultivating community means working *well* alongside people who are different from ourselves!

Feedback

Adults are encouraged to contact our office with questions or concerns you may have concerning your week at SSP, whether before or after the trip. At the end of the week, every participant is asked to complete an online evaluation. Adults will be asked to complete the evaluation before leaving the site, and youth will be given a bookmark with a QR code and link to the evaluation, which they can complete on their phone in the car, or on a computer at home. We also welcome and value any additional feedback you may want to share with us after you've gone home! To do so, please email veronica.russell@sierraserviceproject.org.

SSP Work Site

Once you arrive at SSP, you will be assigned to a work team. Our construction staff works hard to plan and help facilitate your work project. Please be sure to empower each youth to participate, and make sure everyone gets a chance to get their hands dirty and try new things!

Above all, we ask that adults be flexible. Although we, along with the staff, schedule the week in great detail, it's inevitable for challenges and unexpected circumstances to arise. Remember to be open-minded, go with the flow, support the staff, and enjoy yourself. Thank you for your service, and have a wonderful summer experience at SSP!

Many blessings,

Veronica Russell

Veronica Russell

Director of Volunteers & Outreach

veronica.russell@sierraserviceproject.org



Adult Medical History & Release Form

Liaison: Bring two copies of this form with you **to site** for each adult counselor (original and copy).

CONTACT INFORMATION

Church/Group Name: _____

Adult Counselor's Name: _____ Gender: _____

Primary Phone: () _____ Date of Birth: _____

Secondary Phone: () _____ Employer: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Emergency Contact:

Name: _____ Relationship to Adult Counselor: _____

Primary Phone: () _____ Secondary Phone: () _____

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Health Insurance Co.: _____ Policy No.: _____

Physician: _____ Phone: () _____

Does your insurance carrier require a second opinion before emergency procedures are undertaken?

Yes No

Date of last tetanus shot: _____

Please list any physical or behavioral conditions that the staff should be aware of (sleepwalking, epilepsy, diabetes, fainting, depression, eating disorders, asthma, etc.) Please be specific:

Continued on next page.



Adult Medical History & Release Form Cont.

Liaison: Bring two copies of this form with you to site for each adult counselor (original and copy).

Are you allergic to any medication or insect bites? Yes No

If yes, please list particular allergy and probable reaction:

Are you currently taking any medication? Yes No

If yes, please list all medications:

If you need to further explain your needs, please call the SSP office at 916-488-6441.

MEDICAL RELEASE

I understand that the SSP program involves construction and recreational activities, and I acknowledge that reasonable measures will be taken to safeguard the health and safety of all participants. I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Sierra Service Project, its officers, agents and employees from any and all claims, damages, expenses or injuries arising out of or incident to my participation in this Project, unless such loss or injury results directly from the neglect or willful act of an officer, agent or employee of Sierra Service Project acting within the scope of his/her employment.

Adult Counselor Signature

Date

Information contained herein is confidential and will be made available only to staff, your group liaison, adult counselors, and medical professionals as necessary.