December 9, 2021

Dear Group Leaders, Volunteers, and Parents,

We’re so glad you’re interested in volunteering with SSP in the summer of 2022! Much has changed in the world and our community since our last in-person summer of service in 2019, and we hope to offer a safe and fulfilling service learning experience for you.

We plan to host six weeks of service learning experiences across three partner communities. Across the summer, there will be opportunities for middle school groups, high school groups, young adults, adult or intergenerational groups, and individuals to participate.

The summer program schedule was published in early November, after priority placements were made. We anticipate some changes as the year progresses, based on local community safety guidelines and volunteer interest. All groups will be notified as soon as possible of any changes to program details. This packet contains information about available program details, safety policies, payment schedules, and how to register.

How to register: Complete this Google Form. To register, you’ll need your group type; number of youth, young adult, and adult volunteers; and session selection. Please review the current availability at your session of choice before registering, to ensure we have sufficient space to accommodate your group. The $60 per person deposit is due on November 30 (or at the time of registration, if after this date). Registration is first-come, first-served, though we are always happy to put groups on a waitlist as needed.

If your group is new to partnering with SSP, please complete a New Group Login Request to access our volunteer database (MySSP). If your group already attends SSP but needs to change liaisons, email us to update your information and gain access to your group’s account. Our MySSP volunteer database is undergoing substantial changes this year, so stay tuned for a more user-friendly platform! In the meantime, the portal will be accessible, but we will use more manual processes in the 2022 season while updates are made.

Scholarships are available! A key part of SSP’s mission has always been to make our programs accessible to anyone who wants to take part. We are committed to ensuring the inclusion of all people and reducing financial barriers. We have plentiful scholarships for all volunteers, with specific funds dedicated to low-income volunteers from Arizona, California’s Contra-Costa and Alameda counties, and the Central Valley. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, though we begin distributing awards February 1, and continue awarding funds as they are available.

Please do not hesitate to call us at (916) 488-6441 with any questions. As we move through the next year together, we are here to support you, and look forward to serving with you!

Veronica Russell
Director of Engagement & Impact
Veronica.Russell@SierraServiceProject.org

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

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General Information

SSP is an affirming and welcoming community. Our work has long been centered around home repairs that help residents safely age in place and empower volunteers to grow in service learning.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to build faith and strengthen communities through service to others. Common to all SSP programs is service to the elderly, poor, and marginalized. Our service is offered without strings attached, with an attitude of respect, collaboration, and humility.

Inclusion Statement

SSP is an affirming and welcoming community that celebrates the lives and love of all people. We welcome LGBTQ+ individuals and people of color who have too often been excluded from leadership and full participation within traditional communities of faith. We are rooted in the unique experiences and identities of all members of our community, which form the foundation of our work.

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 to be a part of our community as their authentic selves, regardless of race, socio-economic status, gender and its expression, sexual orientation, or ability. 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.

Theology Statement

We know God to be a giver of wonderful gifts. 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 extend grace by putting 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 with each other. As a community, we strive to grow, 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 acts of service, we allow the grace of God to flow into and through our lives. We understand all people are valuable, carefully fashioned in God’s image, and 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.

As with Christ, we serve people whose lives will benefit by our service. We believe God lives with us and the work we do with our hands and heart. We realize despite differences in culture, values, history and geography, we are all siblings of worth. Let us accept the invitation to rise up and build.
Sierra Service Project’s History

SSP was founded in 1975 by two young United Methodist pastors, originally as part of Appalachia Service Project. For much of SSP’s history, our week-long home repair projects have been in partnership with Native American tribes throughout the Western United States. SSP has worked with over forty tribes and non-native rural and urban communities.

SSP is aware we have many areas to grow in our expression of anti-racism. Our leadership is, and has historically been, primarily white. We continue to work towards fostering inclusive and BIPOC-elevating spaces. We hope to be transparent in our ongoing efforts to create equitable and safe spaces as a network of helpers, justice-seekers, healers, people of faith, and community builders. Join us in seeking to be bearers of goodness in every way, so we might truly open minds, hearts, and doors.

- In 1979, SSP incorporated as an independent nonprofit.
- In 1993, SSP hired its first full-time Executive Director.
- In 2004, we hosted our first urban site in South Los Angeles.
- In 2006, we began hosting custom year-round service learning experiences for youth, young adults, and intergenerational groups.
- In 2008, we offered our first Middle School program to welcome younger volunteers at SSP.
- In 2010, we hosted our largest summer of volunteers to date, with 2,071 participants across 7 partner communities.
- In 2014, we began offering Combined middle and high school sessions. We also began hosting individual volunteers.
- In 2016, we began hosting local volunteers in Sacramento for Days of Service.
- In 2017, we began hosting Intergenerational groups during the summer, to offer service learning experiences to a wider range of volunteers and promote cross-generational understanding.
- In 2020, we celebrated our 45th year and shifted our programs online due to COVID-19, with a stronger service learning emphasis. We maintained connections with our partner communities through direct financial support, purchasing PPE and hygiene supplies in the Navajo Nation, subcontracted home repairs in Sacramento, creating a community quilt for the Imperial Beach Neighborhood Center, and sending letters to seniors in San Diego and Del Norte Counties.
- In 2021, we launched SSP’s first-ever Community Advisory Council and Youth Advisory Council, which is accepting sign-ups for the 2021-2022 council on a rolling basis. We also led volunteers in advocacy work as a part of Community Crossing learning opportunities with our partners. SSP supporters raised funds for two community partners, and purchased school supplies to fill a community request of 300 backpacks for students grades 1st through 12th in Lukachukai, AZ.
People: Who Volunteers?

Each summer, volunteers from a variety of backgrounds serve with SSP. While our program has its roots in the United Methodist Church and hosts mainly volunteers from progressive Christian denominations, we are open to anyone, and welcome people of all faiths and belief systems. We welcome volunteers local to the communities where we serve.

“**Youth who never talk to each other in the real world get to know each other quickly at SSP. It also pushes youth to overcome their fears on the worksite.**”

People of many ages are welcome at SSP. Though our programs are historically youth-centered, we have begun hosting intergenerational experiences, to allow adults and young adults to focus on their own journey of service learning. This works well for churches without youth, families, young adults, and churches seeking robust connections within their congregation.

Groups of any size can attend (within the maximum size set for that session). On average, groups typically each comprise 7-12 volunteers. Some churches send multiple groups to partner with SSP over the summer due to schedule limitations, and some volunteers attend as school, family, or intergenerational groups. Our doors are also open to individual volunteers!

Work: Types of Service

Volunteers mostly work on individual homes, but teams may also work with local nonprofits, community gardens, churches, or schools. SSP staff or community partners guide each step of the project. Many projects are accessibility or weatherization-related, and may include stairs, wheelchair ramps, painting, roofing, or other general repairs. Most projects take over a week to complete, so volunteers may only see the beginning, middle, or end of a project. Volunteers do not need construction experience to participate, but please share any experience you might have!

Safety & Supervision

Safety of every type – physical, spiritual, emotional – is our top priority. This is one reason we require all volunteers and SSP staff participating in our 2022 summer program to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19.

We want each volunteer to have the best experience possible, and strive to create an environment of safety, adequate rest, nutritious meals, and emotional and spiritual support. Each week begins with a thorough hands-on tool training before anyone begins service work, led by our young adult staff. Additionally, adults at all sessions undergo a national criminal background screening prior to arrival.

Youth-centered groups must bring adult counselors (23 or older), in a ratio of one adult to every four youth (1:4) at High School and Intergenerational weeks, and one to three (1:3) at Middle School and Combined weeks. Adult counselors lead work teams, supervise youth, and drive youth during the week.

For intergenerational sessions, not all adult volunteers present need to actively lead youth. At all sessions, any adult under 23 will be a non-driver due to vehicle insurance limitations.
Youth & Community Empowerment at SSP

Completing hands-on service work, including home repairs that allow residents to safely age in place, is central to what happens at SSP. However, there is much more that takes place to empower youth and foster connection and relationships within our partner communities.

Developing An Ethic of Service in Youth

Our goal is to meet everyone right where they are, and offer a loving environment that is conducive to learning. When given the opportunity to be trusted and make a difference, youth experience joy, gain valuable social skills, and grow in self-esteem. SSP’s programs encourage volunteers of all ages to discover their unique faith journey through the shared service learning experience. We invite volunteers to explore their connection to the divine at their own pace.

To quickly build community at SSP, volunteers are mixed from different groups together to create work teams. The new friendships youth establish in their work teams have proven to be some of the most valuable aspects of a week with SSP, and can last far beyond the end of the week. Placing youth with new peers also provides an opportunity for their unique skills and talents to shine. There are several opportunities during the week to reconnect with the group you are attending with, even if they are not on your work team. The time this takes place will vary by location.

Evenings are spent singing, learning about the culture of the community we are serving with, and participating in activities to explore spirituality. These evening activities allow youth and adults to embrace their childlike sense of play and connect the week’s experiences to their lives at home. Historically rooted in United Methodist teachings but open to all expressions of faith, our spiritual program is modeled around the biblical model of loving our neighbors in word and deed.

When youth are exposed to communities and cultures different than their own, this can grow into an expression of advocacy once volunteers develop a connection to a partner community. Staff are prepared to engage volunteers in discussions about what it means to advocate alongside a community, and invite all volunteers to be open to new ideas, learning with one another during the week. As we all learn to become better advocates together, we can elevate the voices of the traditionally unheard, impact public discourse, and lead solution-oriented change.

We hope volunteers continue learning and expanding their worldview after the week is over! To that end, we encourage volunteers to partner with our host communities by becoming advocates for issues important to them. Links will be shared after the week with volunteers with resources to continue to learn and grow as advocates: SierraServiceProject.org/Advocate.
Asset-Based Community Development

One of the objectives of the SSP experience is to build bridges of collaboration with our partner communities, beyond just providing direct service. As an organization, we are committed to integrating community understanding and reciprocal learning throughout the week. SSP volunteers should gain a better understanding of the host communities’ unique strengths by the end of their week with SSP.

Listening to and advocating alongside historically marginalized populations and communities are important forms of service, connected to the home repairs we do. Many of our partner communities are prevented from accessing platforms to speak and be heard by those who can effect change. As partners with these groups and individuals, we must be careful not to speak over, or for, them.

Silver Nez Perry, community partner, shares about Diné (Navajo) culture with SSP volunteers in Tsaile, AZ.

SSP does not refer to our work with our partner communities as a ‘mission trip.’ Mission trips have a history of a one-direction, transactional relationship between a giver and receiver of service. At SSP, we believe the service experience is reciprocal, and the communities we work with bring countless assets in partnership. Prior to participating in SSP’s summer program, we encourage volunteers to engage in discussion with their group, friends, and family about the meaning of the work we will do together. We will provide additional volunteer training and opportunities for dialogue as the summer nears!
2022 Summer Program

We will offer **four types of session** across **six weeks** and **three partner communities**:

### 2022 Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Starting Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>July 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>July 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>July 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>July 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>July 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>August 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** We will host both 6-night and 5-night sessions, based on volunteer interest. Shorter sessions have lower participation fees.

### Session Types & Who Can Join

**Middle School Only:** Incoming 6th grade through incoming 9th grade, plus adult counselors

**High School Only:** Incoming 9th grade through graduating 12th grade, plus adult counselors

**Combined:** Incoming 6th grade through graduating 12th grade, plus adult counselors

**Intergenerational:** Incoming 6th grade and older, including young adults and adult volunteers, plus adult counselors.

**Note:** All 2020 or 2021 high school graduates are welcome at any program open to high schoolers. Individual participants can sign up for any session that includes their age range.

### Program Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1: Starts July 3</th>
<th>Week 2: Starts July 10</th>
<th>Week 3: Starts July 17</th>
<th>Week 4: Starts July 24</th>
<th>Week 5: Starts July 31</th>
<th>Week 6: Starts August 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Combined (5-night, starts Sunday)</td>
<td>Combined (5-night, starts Sunday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith River</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>High School Intergenerational (5-night, starts Monday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsalle</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Intergenerational (5-night, starts Sunday)</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>Intergenerational</td>
<td>Intergenerational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

San Diego Week 6: This session is currently open to any group type. The first group to register can determine the session type and length of the week.

### Key:

**Middle School Only:** Orange
- No sessions currently scheduled, but we may be able to incorporate by request!

**High School Only:** Blue
- All sessions are 6-night, Sunday-Saturday.

**Combined:** Green
- Both 6-night (Sunday-Saturday) and 5-night (Sunday-Friday) sessions available.

**Intergenerational:** Yellow
- Both 6-night (Sunday-Saturday) and 5-night (Sunday-Friday or Monday-Saturday) sessions available.

The **2022 summer** program schedule was determined by sign-ups in the priority registration period.
**Partner Communities**

**Del Norte County, CA**

Based in Smith River, we have partnered with the Del Norte County community since 2013, and previously in the 1990s. Since 2014, we have worked closely with the Tolowa Dunes Stewards to host Adventure Wednesday activities, removing invasive European beach grass. In Del Norte County, two thirds of our work is with homeowners, and one third with community based organizations.

**San Diego County, CA**

We have partnered with various communities within San Diego County since 2015, but are now focused in Imperial Beach and the border region between Tijuana and San Diego. Since 2017 we have worked closely with the Imperial Beach Neighborhood Center. In San Diego half of our work is with homeowners, and half with community based organizations.

**Navajo Nation, AZ (Tsaile Wheatfields & Lukachukai)**

Based in Tsaile, we have partnered with the Tsaile Wheatfields and Lukachukai Chapters of the Navajo Nation since 2013, and have served with various Chapters in the Navajo Nation since 1994. In the Navajo Nation the majority of the work we do is for elders. The type of work includes roofing, building wheelchair ramps, stairs, awnings, porches, wood sheds, and other general home repairs.
# Program Types Overview

SSP programs are designed to make volunteering as accessible as possible to many age groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle School Only Program</th>
<th>High School Only Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth entering the 6th through 9th grades.</strong> Groups should have at least one adult per three youth (1:3).</td>
<td><strong>Youth entering 9th through 12th grades, and 2020 - 2022 high school graduates.</strong> Groups should have at least one adult per four youth (1:4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle school groups can also participate during Combined and Intergenerational programs. Groups must be open to collaborating with the ages these programs host.</td>
<td>High school groups can also participate during Combined and Intergenerational programs. Groups must be open to collaborating with the ages these programs host.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum session size:</strong> 55</td>
<td><strong>Maximum session size:</strong> 65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combined Program</th>
<th>Intergenerational Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Youth entering 6th through 12th grades, and 2020 - 2022 high school graduates.** Groups should have at least one adult per three youth (1:3). | **Anyone entering 6th grade and up may attend.**  
  Adult groups, young adult groups, staff alumni, families, youth groups, and more are welcome. Groups bringing youth should have a minimum of one adult per four youth (1:4).  
  Work teams are created by age cohorts, based on volunteer needs and interests. Adults passionate about youth development will lead youth teams, while others may be placed on all-adult teams.  
  Historically, Intergenerational programs have about a 1:1 ratio of youth to adult volunteers. |
| Groups that comprise only middle or high school youth are also welcome, with the understanding that there will be a mix of many ages present. | **Maximum session size:** 65                                                              |
| Most Combined programs have about one-third middle school and two-thirds high school youth.     |                                                                                          |
| **Maximum session size:** 60                                                                     |                                                                                          |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2020 &amp; 2021 High School Graduates</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| All 2020 and 2021 high school graduates are welcome at any program open to high schoolers. We will create work teams specific to this age cohort if the volunteers wish, but are also able to blend these groups with other ages of participants. | Individual youth can attend any program open to their age bracket. Individual adults can attend any Intergenerational program. This program works well for volunteers who:  
  ● Are not connected with a group  
  ● Have scheduling conflicts with their group  
  ● Are local to the SSP partner community  
  ● Are staff alumni or young adults who want to stay connected |
| Adults at all programs undergo a national criminal background screening prior to arrival, including 2020 and 2021 high school graduates. |                                                                                          |
Daily & Weekly Schedules

Each partner community and staff team will have their own flavor of the day and week with SSP. In general, here is what you can expect for the daily and weekly schedule:

A Typical Day:

7:00 AM  Wake up and get ready. *The day may start earlier depending on the site and weather.*
7:30 AM  **Spiritual awakening** (optional) to get centered for the day.  *Middle school sessions have energizers (activities to get us all moving).*
8:00 AM  **Breakfast**
8:30 AM  Community service opportunities (cleaning the kitchen and bathrooms, etc.).
9:00 AM  Arrive at work site, begin service work.
Noon  Lunch and **spiritual sandwiches** (group discussion) at work site.
1:00 PM  Resume service work.
3-4:00 PM  Return to site, clean and store tools, shower. **Free time** at accommodations. There will be optional guided games and activities for youth.  *Middle school teams return from the worksite earlier than high school or adult teams.*
5:00 PM  **Staff/counselor meeting** – adults meet with staff to discuss joys, concerns, and plans for the next 24 hours.
5:45 PM  **Dinner**
6:30 PM  Community service opportunities (cleaning the kitchen and bathrooms, etc.).
7:00 PM  **Song time and evening program:** Team building activities, work team site reports, spiritual programming, handing out mail, learning from community partners.
8:30 PM  Free time. Volunteers prepare for bed.
9:00 PM  Optional **evening devotional** led by a work team.  *Middle school sessions have lights out at this time.*
9:45 PM  Lights out. Earlier bedtimes are allowed if folks are tired. We have separate sleeping areas by gender, and honor the identities of transgender and gender nonconforming volunteers.  *High school sessions have lights out by 10:00.*

A Typical Week:

Sunday  Arrive 2:00 to 4:00 PM, **orientation**, staff/counselor meeting, assign work teams
Monday  **Hands-on tool training**, half day at work site, evening program
Tuesday  Service at work site all day, **community partner activities**
Wednesday  **Adventure Wednesday:** Immersive service activity as a full group or activities to learn about the community, recreation in the afternoon and **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, breakfast, closing circle, depart

*Weekly schedules for 5-night programs will vary by site. This may mean typical Monday - Friday activities will be adjusted to accommodate the shorter week.*
Registration Information

Participation Fees & Payment Timeline

To host impactful service learning experiences, SSP incurs real year-round costs as we prepare for the summer program. This includes employing four long-term SSP staff, renting office and warehouse space and utilities, vehicle maintenance, and acquisition and repair of tools. This is in addition to the direct costs of our summer program which include program staff pay, building materials, food, facility use fees, vehicle rentals, T-shirts, community speaker honoraria, and more.

Additionally, with substantially increased costs budgeted for building materials of $60 more per person, we face three years of inflation since running our most recent in-person program in 2019. The true cost of running the summer program this year, when all is said and done, comes out to about $900 per person. Donations cover just over half of the cost of running our programs, while the rest comes from participant fees and scholarships. SSP is committed to making the service learning experience accessible to anyone who wants to participate. We work to keep participation fees as low as possible, and provide ample scholarship funds.

5-Night Per Person Fee for Groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Installment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Amount Due*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deposit</td>
<td>November 30, 2021 (priority period) OR upon registration (after priority)</td>
<td>$60 per participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Payment</td>
<td>April 1, 2022</td>
<td>$230 per participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Payment</td>
<td>June 1, 2022</td>
<td>$135 per participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Due</strong></td>
<td><strong>June 1, 2022</strong></td>
<td><strong>$425 per participant</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6-Night Per Person Fee for Groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Installment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Amount Due*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deposit</td>
<td>November 30, 2021 (priority period) OR upon registration (after priority)</td>
<td>$60 per participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Payment</td>
<td>April 1, 2022</td>
<td>$240 per participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Payment</td>
<td>June 1, 2022</td>
<td>$155 per participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Due</strong></td>
<td><strong>June 1, 2022</strong></td>
<td><strong>$455 per participant</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individual Participant Fee: Individual participant fees are a bit higher to cover administrative costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Installment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Amount Due*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deposit</td>
<td>November 30, 2021 (priority period) OR upon registration (after priority)</td>
<td>$60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Payment</td>
<td>April 1, 2022</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Payment</td>
<td>June 1, 2022</td>
<td>$165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Due</strong></td>
<td><strong>June 1, 2022</strong></td>
<td><strong>$475</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: All payments may be made via mailed check or debit/credit card online. Group credits may also be applied to any payment as the liaison sees fit.
Scholarships

We are committed to ensuring the inclusion of all people and reducing financial barriers. A key part of SSP’s mission has always been to make our programs accessible to anyone who wants to take part. One way we live this out is through our scholarship fund for participants!

In 2019, SSP awarded over $80,000 in scholarships to almost 500 participants in need (over 30% of the summer’s volunteers). We hope to continue providing substantial scholarships for youth with financial need to participate in our programs.

In addition to our general scholarship fund, we also receive donations from generous family foundations that support low-income teens in specific geographies across the Western United States. These regional funds include:

- **Central Valley District Scholarship Fund**
  - **Serves**: All volunteers from Central Valley District churches in the California-Nevada United Methodist Conference

- **Halle Scholarship Fund**
  - **Serves**: Low-income youth from the state of Arizona

- **Lowell Berry Scholarship Fund**
  - **Serves**: Youth from California’s Alameda and Contra-Costa counties

- **LITFF Scholarship Fund**
  - **Serves**: Ethnically diverse youth volunteers from West District churches in the California-Pacific United Methodist Conference

How to Apply:

Scholarship applications are accepted on a rolling basis. We will begin awarding scholarships on February 1, and will offer awards leading up to the summer as funds are available.

If you represent a volunteer group, complete the Group Scholarship Application to explain your group’s needs. Anyone signed up as an individual participant (not connected to a group) is also invited to apply, using the Individual Scholarship Application. Both will be available on SSP’s scholarship page:

SierraServiceProject.org/Scholarships
Priority Registration Details

The Registration Process:

- **NOVEMBER – JUNE:**
  - After priority placements, registration will be **first-come, first-served**
  - Sign up **as space is available**
  - Submit deposit upon registration
  - REGISTER VIA GOOGLE FORM: [bit.ly/SSP2022]

*October 1-31 was our priority registration period, during which groups submit their top three to five choices of sessions and preferred program type. Groups received placements in early November, and have flexibility to change their registration by 11/30 without incurring deposit fees.*

Participation & Fee Policies:

Groups with financial needs are encouraged to apply for scholarships!

- **Changing Participant Numbers:** After registering, liaisons may add or drop spots from their group, as space is available. If a session is full, you can place spots on a waitlist. Please make changes to your registration prior to a payment due date to avoid being charged for dropped spots.

- **Fees for Dropped Spots:** Payments previously paid for dropped spots are forfeited unless they can be filled, and cannot be applied towards the remainder of a group’s balance. Groups that decrease in size after a payment due date still owe the payments for those dropped spots, and will be charged the full balance incurred as of the due date.
  - Scholarships applied toward dropped spots may be redistributed across the group’s balance, as long as it does not exceed the amount owed.

- **All payments may be made** via mailed check or debit/credit card online. Group credits may also be applied to any payment as the liaison sees fit.

- **All payments are nonrefundable and nontransferable,** including, but not limited to:
  - Reducing group size or cancellation due to scheduling conflicts on the part of the volunteer or liaison
  - Reducing group size or cancellation due to illness
  - Credits applied toward a payment balance for a dropped spot or cancellation

- **Any payments not received by the listed due date will incur a 5% late fee,** added to the balance.

*Exceptions: We understand some circumstances are out of the volunteer’s control. In cases of volunteer cancellation due to an emergency, please contact the SSP office.*
COVID-19 Related Fee Policies:

SSP is unable to refund any fees paid toward spots that are dropped by a group or volunteer due to COVID-19. To mitigate any financial hardship due to COVID-19 cancellations, drops, or other contingencies, SSP strongly recommends all participating groups procure traveler’s insurance in case of last minute cancellations. Additional details on traveler’s insurance will be shared in our preparation packet, published in the spring.

In the event SSP cancels a session, our fee policy for each payment installment is as follows:

- **Deposit:** Non-refundable and nontransferable (no change)
- **2nd payment:** 50% refundable or credited toward a future program
- **Final payment:** Fully refundable or credited toward a future program

We will publish a separate packet with additional safety-related information as the summer approaches.

Additional Terms & Conditions:

Prior to registering, we want to ensure all groups are on board with our preparation process and expectations for the service learning experience! You’ll have an opportunity to review terms and conditions in full on the registration form. In addition to the policies listed in this packet, terms include:

- Reading and sharing SSP’s Safe Community Policy with volunteers and parents.
- Agreeing to receive SSP’s liaison or participant newsletter for important program details, as well as to keep up to date with other email and phone communications.
- Liaisons should be prepared to communicate program information from SSP to all other participants in the group and any parents.
- Please notify staff as soon as possible of any changes to your registration.
- All volunteers and staff must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19.
- Understanding SSP reserves the right to change our program details and requirements as needed to abide by CDC, local, state, and federal safety guidelines, and ensure a safe environment for all participants and our partner communities.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

We can’t wait for you to join us next summer! As you prepare your group to register, here are a few frequently asked questions that come up during the registration process.

1. **How late can I register?**
   We accept registrations right up to the time the program takes place! However, we recommend registering well in advance of June 1 - the date we order T-shirts and review paperwork for all volunteers. This both helps SSP with our preparations, and also allows you to spread out your payment installments, make travel arrangements, and collect important information from each volunteer.

2. **How long does it take for space to open if I have spots on a waitlist?**
   Space opening from a waitlist can vary, and there is no real guarantee that it will open up. However, we often see shifts in group numbers within the month surrounding payment due dates (April 1 and June 1).

3. **My group will have a hard time with the payment timeline or installments. What options do I have?**
   If you anticipate needing an alternative payment plan to what is listed, just **let us know**! We can work with your group in advance to set up a plan that works for you.

4. **When will we know details on site accommodations?**
   Because SSP borrows facilities from our local partner communities, we often do not have these confirmed until the spring, when we do site visits to each location. As soon as information is confirmed, we will publish details on housing, mailing addresses, shower information, and more on the website.

5. **Will SSP make any exceptions to its COVID-19 vaccine policy?**
   As SSP staff are not medical experts, we have assembled a Medical Advisory Council of medical professionals familiar with SSP’s programs. The council has determined that due to the voluntary nature of the program and our work in medically underserved communities, we are unable to consider any exceptions to the vaccine policy. Please see the Council's full statement and reach out with any questions at [MAC@sierraserviceproject.org](mailto:MAC@sierraserviceproject.org).

We anticipate plenty of changes and new information as we navigate re-opening our in-person overnight programs for the first time since the onset of the pandemic. **Thank you for your patience and flexibility as we prepare as best we can for this next season!**

If there are any questions you have which haven’t been answered in this packet, please reach out! We look forward to serving alongside you.