



Volunteer Art Instructor: Frequently Asked Questions

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APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

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1. WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT QUALITIES OF AN ART INSTRUCTOR WORKING AT HAPPY ISLES ART & NATURE CENTER?

Serving as a volunteer in Yosemite National Park, a World Heritage Site, is an honor and a privilege. Our volunteers recognize this and take pride in representing Yosemite, the National Park Service, and Yosemite Conservancy. They enjoy working with people and serving the public. They work congenially with each other, the park's partners, and Conservancy employees. They have excellent communication skills and a strong desire to support the mission of the Conservancy and the National Park Service. They abide by the rules and regulations of both agencies and put the needs of others above their own.

Youth Art Teachers should have experience teaching art to kids ages 4 to 11. Extensive knowledge of art or science education is helpful, as all art classes are nature-themed and teach kids about Yosemite. Teachers must have a passion and interest in connecting youth to Yosemite's landscape and ecology through art. They should know how to teach a diverse range of ages and experience adapting projects to different participant ages is important.

Our volunteers are passionate about Yosemite and have personal experience with trails and activities to share with visitors. They come with a commitment to work for the park rather than as an opportunity for a vacation. They work as part of a team and are flexible when schedule changes are needed. They are in good health with strong stamina. Whether camping, working, or enjoying time off, they are committed to helping visitors get the most out of a visit to Yosemite.

2. DO I HAVE TO BE A U.S. CITIZEN TO PARTICIPATE?

U.S. citizenship or possession of a green card is required.

3. WHAT IS THE AGE REQUIREMENT?

Our participants must be a minimum of 18 years old. Anyone under 19 must be accompanied by a parent/guardian who also volunteers.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

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4. WHAT IS THE SCHEDULE OF DATES AND LOCATIONS FOR THE SEASON?

This is a one-month position, dates are determined by the schedule posted on the website. The Director of Art Programs will hire a Volunteer Youth Art Instructor for August. Please note that the minimum requirement is a month-long commitment.

Once hired as a month-long volunteer, please make sure to put that on your calendar as a commitment. We rely on your commitment of one month as it is very difficult to get substitute instructors at the last minute.

5. IS THERE A JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THIS POSITION?

The job description can be found on the [Volunteer Youth Art Instructor page](#).

6. HOW DO I APPLY?

The application can be found on the [Volunteer Youth Art Instructor page](#) during the application period.

7. WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS, AND WHEN SHOULD I APPLY?

To apply, fill out the online form on our website. Please note the date at the top of the form. We often recruit during the beginning of the year for the August position. The date at the top of the form will let you know what year we are hiring for. Please see timeline below for details:

November: Application period begins

February: Application period ends, and review process begins

March: Candidates are interviewed, and a selection is made

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

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8. ARE THERE WAITING LISTS?

If you are not selected for a Youth Art Teacher position, you may ask to be put on a waitlist or cancellation list. We will reach out if additional positions become available.

9. CAN I VOLUNTEER FOR LESS OR MORE THAN A MONTH?

To provide consistent and quality programming volunteers are asked to stay the entire month of their commitment and may not stay longer.

10. DO I HAVE TO BE A DONOR TO APPLY?

While your work as a volunteer is a wonderful contribution to Yosemite, the administration of this award-winning volunteer program is funded by donations. Yosemite Conservancy relies on the generosity of our donors to support projects and programs that protect Yosemite's grandeur through the ages. We encourage all participants to make a monetary donation to the Conservancy.

11. HOW DO I MAKE A DONATION?

Please visit yosemite.org/giving for details!

VOLUNTEER LOCATIONS

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12. WHERE IN THE PARK DOES THE YOUTH ART INSTRUCTOR TEACH DAILY ART CLASSES?

The volunteer Youth Art instructor teaches their classes in Yosemite Valley at the Happy Isles Art & Nature Center in Yosemite Valley. Yosemite Valley sits at about 4,000 feet in elevation.

13. WHAT IS THE WEATHER LIKE IN YOSEMITE VALLEY?

The weather can shift suddenly. July and August are in the 90s and occasionally reach the 100s. Though skies are usually clear, thunderstorms can occur during summer afternoons. Usually forming at higher elevations, they arrive suddenly and provide intense but brief downpours, lightning, thunder, hail, and gusty winds. Typically, skies are clear again by nightfall.

DUTIES AND TRAINING

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14. WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF THE VOLUNTEER ART INSTRUCTOR?

The Youth Art Teacher will work a minimum of four days per week, 8 am to 4:30 pm. The exact days and schedule each week will be determined by the Director of Art Programs. Duties include both engaging visitors in conversation and sharing Yosemite Conservancy messaging in group situations. The volunteer will have their weekends to explore the park and enjoy Yosemite.

15. WHAT ARE THE SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED FOR THIS POSITION?

Experience in classroom management and childhood education is preferred. Experience with and understanding of different art mediums and teaching art is required. Strong communication skills and an understanding of different age-appropriate art media are also needed.

Conservancy volunteers are friendly, approachable, and enjoy engaging with visitors. They are knowledgeable and experienced with Yosemite. They are also committed to promoting Yosemite Conservancy's mission of education and stewardship in the park and are committed to carrying on the long tradition of art classes in Yosemite. They are outgoing, coachable, and professional with the ability to work both independently and as team members. They are also comfortable camping in communal campsites and interested in Yosemite Conservancy's art programs.

16. WILL I RECEIVE TRAINING?

We make every effort to provide our volunteers with the resources needed to perform professionally. All participants complete a mandatory, comprehensive orientation and training program. Online training prior to arrival followed by training and orientation after arrival is provided by the Conservancy and the National Park Service.

A detailed manual is provided to each volunteer for reference while in service. Ongoing assistance and support are available as needed.

Orientation to the Art Center, its materials, and supplies are provided by the Art Programs staff. Volunteers will also receive a review of appropriate art projects, outdoor locations, and interpretive training with Yosemite-specific information.

CAMPING

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17. WHAT KIND OF ACCOMMODATIONS WILL I HAVE?

Participants share group campsites in Yosemite Valley. Most volunteers camp in tents, and everyone brings their own camping gear. They also bring their own food and do their own cooking —, storing food and scented items in shared bear-proof food lockers. There is a large dining canopy with picnic tables set up for group dining. There are no hookups or showers in campgrounds and restrooms have cold water only. Free hot showers are available nearby. Previous camping experience is recommended. and no pets are allowed.

Campground quiet hours for our volunteers are from 10:00 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. Volunteers are expected to be respectful and courteous to teammates and the public and fellow volunteers camping adjacent to their sites. Music must not be played loudly.

Smoking should occur away from the camping area with smoking materials collected to prevent litter and fires. Valuables should not be left in the campground during the day. It's expected that while staying in park provided campsites, volunteers must adhere to a code of conduct that mirrors the stature of the National Park Service and cooperate with team leaders, NPS, Aramark, and Conservancy employees.

Camping in Yosemite includes the possibility of bear activity, which requires diligent adherence to bear-proof food locker regulations. There are occasions when a late-night bear patrol may come through camp, which can disrupt sleep. Protective wildlife and tree regulations must be followed. For example, ropes for clotheslines or hammocks cannot be tied directly around trees without placing cardboard or other protective material under ropes.

18. CAN I BRING MY RV OR CAMPER?

Tent camping is preferred, as RV and camper space is limited. Prior approval from the Conservancy is required to bring RVs and campers, and the maximum length is 25 feet for an RV and 18 feet for a camper trailer.

19. CAN I USE A GENERATOR?

Campgrounds have specific hours when generators can be used. For the most up-to-date information, please review the [Yosemite Campgrounds Regulations page](#).

CAMPING

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20. HOW DO I KNOW WHAT TO BRING?

A packing list is provided.

21. CAN I ARRIVE EARLY OR EXTEND MY STAY IN THE PARK?

If you wish to arrive early or extend your stay, you must make your own camping/lodging arrangements.

22. CAN I PARK MY CAR IN THE CAMPGROUND?

The NPS requirement is two vehicles per campsite in all campground locations. Any additional vehicles must be parked at the overflow parking — either at Curry Village or the Yosemite Valley Trailhead parking lot nearby. This is strictly regulated by the Conservancy as well as NPS.

23. HOW WILL I STORE MY FOOD AND SCENTED ITEMS?

All items with a scent — including canned goods, drinks, cleaning supplies, and toiletries — must be stored in bear-proof food lockers (available at all campsites). These lockers must be closed and latched at all times — even while at your campsite. Following these regulations and precautions decreases personal injury/property damage and keeps Yosemite's bears wild. As a Yosemite Conservancy volunteer, you are expected to practice proper storage as a means of ensuring that wildlife stays wild. Please visit the [NPS page](#) for extensive details on properly storing scented items (including food).

24. WHAT SIZE ARE THE BEAR-PROOF FOOD LOCKERS?

Lockers vary in size with the smallest 47" wide x 22" high x 38" deep. Ice chests must be able to fit in these containers, which are shared by two volunteers.

25. WHAT BEAR PRECAUTIONS SHOULD I TAKE?

Please visit the [Yosemite National Park bear information page](#) for complete details.

26. CAN I BRING MY PET OR HAVE MY PET VISIT ME?

Pets are not allowed at volunteer stations or to be left in tents, RV/campers, or tied up unattended in camp. Therefore, we require that pets be left at home at all times.

BENEFITS

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27. WHAT BENEFITS WILL I RECEIVE AS A CONSERVANCY VOLUNTEER?

Participants in the program gain work experience in one of the world's most beautiful places. They receive free park entrance passes, campsites, shower passes, free theater attendance, and use of select swimming pools and a Wellness Center. Discounts at Yosemite Conservancy retail locations and select Aramark food concessions are also provided.

An added benefit is the opportunity to participate in one educational Outdoor Adventure course within a year after volunteer service at no cost. This benefit is based on space availability with the possibility of being bumped by a paying customer. Participation in these classes should not be scheduled while volunteering in the park

28. WHAT ARE THE DISCOUNTS?

The Conservancy provides a 30% discount at all its retail stores. Volunteers also enjoy free admission to the Yosemite Village Theater when space is available. The park concessioner, Yosemite Hospitality, provides discount cards (subject to change at their discretion).

UNIFORMS, MEALS AND HYGIENE

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29. WILL I WEAR A UNIFORM?

Complimentary Yosemite Conservancy name tags and hats will be provided for the artists to wear while teaching. As volunteers of Yosemite Conservancy, instructors are expected to maintain a professional appearance. Volunteers must wear: Plain t-shirt or collared shirt in solid color with nametag

- Plain t-shirt or collared shirt in solid color with nametag
- No sleeveless shirts or tank tops
- Solid color pants or shorts:
 - No NPS green
 - No tight leggings
 - Shorts are OK, length to be no shorter than 5" above the knee
- Closed-toed flat shoes.

30. WHAT ARE THE MEAL/GROCERY ARRANGEMENTS?

Artists are responsible for their own meals. They store their own food in bear-proof food lockers. Ice chests must fit in these lockers. Volunteers can store their ice packs in the Happy Isles freezer during the day.

Yosemite Hospitality has [various restaurants](#) and a [grocery store](#) to purchase food inside the park.

31. ARE THERE ALCOHOL RESTRICTIONS?

Alcoholic beverages are not allowed for volunteers under 21 years of age. Drinking is not allowed while on duty. The Conservancy expects those who drink alcohol to act responsibly, not drink and drive, and be able to do required work each day.

32. WILL I BE ABLE TO DO LAUNDRY?

There are coin-operated laundry facilities located in Yosemite Valley.

33. WILL I HAVE ACCESS TO SHOWERS?

There are no showers in any of Yosemite's campgrounds. However, there are showers nearby for volunteer use free of charge.

TIME OFF

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34. WHAT DO VOLUNTEERS DO ON THEIR TIME OFF?

Free time is used to relax, meet friends, catch up on personal chores, or make the most of park activities. Activities include hiking, backpacking, fishing, scrambling, rock climbing, rafting, swimming, horseback riding, playing golf, making art, and visiting locations in the park or nearby towns.

In the afternoons and evenings, after teaching, many volunteers simply relax and enjoy the camping experience. Some utilize their free time to continue painting at different locations in the park. Volunteers may enjoy free [Naturalist Walks](#) and should coordinate with Art Programs Staff to make sure they are properly registered.

Volunteers should also check the [Yosemite Guide](#) for current activities and programs offered. Some may opt to get dinner out at one of the in-park restaurants or enjoy lounges at the Ahwahnee and Curry Village. Volunteers can also catch sunset at different park locations and take an opportunity to stargaze!

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

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35. CAN MY CHILDREN ACCOMPANY ME/MY FAMILY STAY WITH ME WHILE I VOLUNTEER?

Volunteer campsites are provided by the National Park Service free of charge. For this reason, the sites are for volunteers only. A spouse or family member must also volunteer to camp with you. The volunteer visitor policy provides for family/friends on a very limited basis (see below).

36. HOW LONG CAN FAMILY AND FRIENDS STAY WITH ME?

Volunteering is not a means of providing a campsite for family and friends. Visitors must be approved by the campground team leader before arrival. Volunteers must be present during a visit — they cannot loan their site and leave. Approval is subject to campsite impact.

If scheduling allows, each volunteer can have up to six *person nights* of guests per month. A *person night* is equivalent to one person for one night. For example, if two guests stay for three nights each, that equals six *person nights*. On the other hand, if one guest stays for four nights (four person nights) and two other guests stay for one night (two person nights), that also equals six *person nights*.

Additionally, volunteers cannot host more than three guests at one time, and no guest can stay more than four nights in a row. This limit does not apply to people visiting you if they are staying at their own campsite or lodging. Visitors must place their tent adjacent to their host and share the host's bear locker space as well. In addition, in Yosemite Valley visitors must park their vehicles in the Curry Village parking lot at all times.

Violation of this policy results in an immediate vacating of the campsite by visitors and jeopardizes a volunteer's eligibility to participate in the program

COMMUNICATION AND BANKING

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37. HOW WILL MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS BE ABLE TO CONTACT ME?

Generally, volunteers will be able to call and text their friends and family while in Yosemite. Most AT&T and Verizon customers will find service in various parts of Yosemite Valley, though Yosemite Village tends to have the most reliable service. Volunteers can also connect to the Wi-Fi network at Happy Isles Art & Nature Center outside of business hours to catch up and correspond with friends and family.

38. WHAT IS THE EMERGENCY CONTACT PROCEDURE?

In the case of an emergency involving you, we will contact — if you are unable to do so — the person you designated as your emergency contact in the online registration form. Emergency contact information is treated as protected information that is only available as needed by the Conservancy and Park Service.

Depending on your service provider, there is limited cell phone coverage in the park. In case of a serious, life-threatening family emergency, your family can reach you by calling the Park Service dispatch center at (209) 379-1992. Callers should state the emergency, provide your name and campsite location, and request a relay of a message to you. Please use this procedure for emergencies only as the dispatch center services more than one national park.

39. WILL I BE ABLE TO USE A CELL PHONE?

Service is available in and near Yosemite Village for AT&T, T-Mobile, and Verizon customers. Verizon has limited service in Big Oak Flat and Tuolumne Meadows.

40. WILL I BE ABLE TO CHARGE BATTERIES AND MY CELL PHONE?

You may charge any devices and batteries at Happy Isles Art & Nature Center at the designated charging station.

41. WILL I HAVE WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS?

Internet access is available outside of business hours to the Volunteer Art Instructor at Happy Isles Art & Nature Center. There are also other locations throughout Yosemite Valley with public Wi-Fi.

COMMUNICATION AND BANKING

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42. WILL I BE ABLE TO CASH A CHECK OR WITHDRAW MONEY FROM MY BANK ACCOUNT?

There is an ATMs in Yosemite Valley at the Village Store.

43. HOW CAN I REACH YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY'S PROGRAM MANAGERS??

Emily Brosk, Director of Volunteer Programs

209 379-2317; ebrosk@yosemite.org

USPS: P.O. Box 230, El Portal, CA 95318

FedEx or UPS: 5020 El Portal Road, El Portal, CA 95318

Lora Spielman-Dell Isola, Director of Art Programs

209-372-0631; lspielman@yosemite.org

USPS: P.O. Box 230, El Portal, CA 95318

FedEx or UPS: 5020 El Portal Road, El Portal, CA 95318

TRANSPORTATION

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44. HOW DO I GET TO YOSEMITE USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION??

For information visit [Yosemite Public Transportation](#).

45. WHAT DO I DO ABOUT CAMP GEAR IF I'M TRAVELING BY AIR?

Gear can be shipped (at the volunteer's expense) to Yosemite Conservancy's El Portal Office if you do not want to travel with your camping gear. Because we are located in a rural area, please allow two weeks for delivery in time.

Yosemite Conservancy
5020 El Portal Road
El Portal, CA, 95318
Attn: Art Program

46. WHAT TRANSPORTATION IS AVAILABLE IN THE PARK?

In Yosemite Valley, bikes (free bike share and paid rentals) or the free shuttle are available.



TRANSPORTATION

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47. HOW DO I GET FROM ONE PART OF THE PARK TO ANOTHER USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION?

The seasonal Tuolumne Meadows hiker bus connects Yosemite Valley to Tuolumne Meadows and stops at various trailheads on Tioga Road.

Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) provides service between Yosemite Valley, Wawona, and Tuolumne Meadows for a fee. For more information visit [Yosemite Public Transportation](#).

48. HOW DO I GET TO THE PARK?

From San Francisco/Bay Area:

- Distance: 195 mi /314 km; time: 4-5 hours
- Take I-580 east to I-205 east to Highway 120 east (Manteca) or Highway 140 east (Merced)

From Sacramento Area:

- Distance: 176 mi/283 km; time: 4 hours
- Take Highway 99 south to Highway 120 east (Manteca) or Highway 140 east (Merced)

From Los Angeles:

- Distance: 313 mi/504 km; time: 6 hours
- Take I-5 north (or I-405 north to I-5) to Highway 99 north to Highway 41 north (Fresno)

There can be vehicle restrictions and reservations required to enter the park. Please see the [Yosemite National Park website](#) for details.

