

How to Become an Instructor?

Most Frequently Asked Questions



THE BASICS:

I. How do I become a class instructor?

The first step is to complete the Program Proposal Form and submit it to rec@scparks.com or drop it off at the County of Santa Cruz Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services (County) at 979 17th Simpkins Swim Center, Santa Cruz, CA, 95062.

II. Am I responsible for handling my own class registration?

No, class registration of participants is handled by the County. Participants can register for classes over the phone, online through the ActiveNet registration system or in-person at 979 17th Simpkins Swim Center, Santa Cruz, CA, 95062.

III. Do I have to provide my own facility?

No, classes may be held at one of the many County facilities with prior approval. You also have the option of hosting it at your place of business if available.

IV. Once I turn in a completed class proposal, what is the next step?

Your application will be routed to the appropriate staff member who will contact you regarding the status of your proposal. If the class is determined to be a good fit for the community in the County, you have sufficient qualifications to teach the class, and the class is marketable, a meeting will be scheduled with you to further discuss your proposal.

V. If I become an Instructor, does that mean I am a County employee?

No, completion of the Program Proposal Form is not an application for employment. Instructors are independent contractors. Instructors facilitate specialized classes on behalf of the County but are not a vested County employee, and therefore not entitled to any employee benefits.

VI. Do I have to sign a contract?

Yes, this is to ensure that the County and the instructor agree with the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of both parties. Once a mutual agreement is made between the County and the independent contractor, the staff liaison will develop an agreement. The contract will need to be signed and processed prior to teaching your class.

HOW IT WORKS:

I. I have submitted my class proposal. You have accepted it. Now what?

Congratulations! Now, the work begins. You will need to work with your County staff liaison to finalize the class dates, times, fees, and location. Then you will need to proof your class submission in the Activity Guide, which comes out two times per year—Winter/Spring, and Summer/Fall. We will market the class through our marketing outlets. Lastly, you are invited to help market the program to the community through your marketing outlets if you wish.

II. Do I need to register as a Vendor with the County?

Yes, this process requires vendors to submit a [Vendor Application](#) online and submit a W-9 form. Upon completion, please notify your County staff liaison of the submission so that we can link up your class proposal, contact with the vendor number appointed to you. *In the vendor application, please put your contact information under "Vendor Contacts". Also, under commodities, please select **RECREATIONAL SERVICES** from the menu provided. Also, you will need to submit a W-9 form when you register as a vendor.

III. How do I set fees for my class?

Working with the County staff liaison, you will come to an agreement regarding what fee(s) you should charge. Take into account your competition competitive fees. What are they charging? What are customers getting for the class fee? Can you justify a higher fee? Be careful about pricing a class too low. Also, are you covering your expenses? In short, you will need to find the right price point for your program(s). Keep in mind of the mixed demographics of our community.

IV. How does the County pay independent contract instructors?

Once an invoice is generated by your staff liaison, payment is then issued within 30 days and a payment is issued by the County Auditor's office.

V. How do you decide what is my take? What is the average rate?

The following is taken into account when deciding what the percentage of payment will be:

- i. **Class fee:** Be aware, the higher the fee, the larger share the instructor will receive.
- ii. **Location:** Are you using a County facility or your own? If you are using a County facility, your take home percentage will be lower than if you use your own.
- iii. **Marketing:** Do you have a built-in marketing network? Are you going to be doing most of your own advertising? Or are you relying on County to get the word out?

VI. I am the one teaching the class. Why should the County get a cut of the fee?

The cost of doing business allows the County to offset its program costs for administration, registration, facility usage, utilities, maintenance, facility insurance, promoting the class on County social media outlets and printing of the seasonal Activity Guide.

VII. What are the deadlines?

Once you are a confirmed instructor (i.e., all paperwork is completed), your staff liaison will contact you with the Activity Guide publication schedule. Depending on where the Activity Guide is in process, you may have days, weeks, if not months to submit your schedule. After your classes are featured in one guide, you will typically have a month or so to submit a schedule to your staff liaison.

VIII. Do I need to carry liability insurance? Workers' compensation?

Yes, regardless of the type of class you are planning to teach, all instructors are required to have insurance. The County is not responsible for obtaining your insurance. You will need to submit proof of liability insurance and an insurance endorsement page. Typically, depending on the risk of your activity, the County requires \$1 million of per incident coverage and \$1 million annual aggregate. Additionally, if you have employees who will be teaching or working with you to facilitate a class, you will need to submit proof of Workers' Compensation Insurance.

IX. Do I need a business license? What if I already have one?

You do not need a business license when conducting business in the Santa Cruz County incorporated areas.

X. What other forms do I need to complete?

You will need to be fingerprinted. All instructors, assistant instructors, and volunteers who teach classes must be fingerprinted. Instructors will obtain a Live Scan application and information sheet from their County staff liaison. Potential instructors will be asked to go in person to the Santa Cruz County Personnel Department and pick up a fingerprint packet. Upon picking up the fingerprint packet in person, they must call or go online to make an appointment with **Live Scan** at 841 Cedar St. Santa Cruz, CA 9506. Payment for fingerprinting will be covered by the County if you go to the location provided. Appointments are 15 minutes long. A valid photo I.D. must be presented along with the Request for Live Scan Service form

provided by the County Personnel Department. Receipt of completion will be required to submit back to the Personnel Department.

Otherwise, you as the instructor will need to cover the cost of the fingerprint if you go to a different location. Costs have been around \$52.

Other Questions You May Have:

- I. **How does the marketing work? Who is responsible for it?**
Both parties. The surest way to ensure your class will have better than expected enrollment is to advertise your program. The City will include your class information in the Activity Guide, which will likely have the greatest impact in recruiting potential participants. The City also includes class information on its own Facebook page and monthly e-newsletter. However, in many instances, it is not enough promotion to fill a class. We offer hundreds of programs. How will yours stand out? You can do this through various channels—social media, speaking at civic organizations, schools, or churches, taking out advertisements online or in the Dispatch and so on. Speak to your staff liaison for more ideas.
- II. **You offer a youth scholarship program. How does that affect my payment?**
The use of scholarship will not financially impact or negatively affect the revenue or percentage owed to you, the instructor.
- III. **What if I am sick and cannot teach a class within a session? Can I use a sub?**
If you are unable to teach your class, it is your responsibility to notify your staff liaison prior to the class and arrange for a substitute instructor or for a makeup date. ***The sub should have already been cleared through fingerprinting*** with our Department. You will be responsible for contacting students and informing them that class is cancelled or if it needs to be rescheduled.
- IV. **If I have not reached my minimum number of enrollees, can I cancel the class? How much time do I have before it begins?**
Yes, but we prefer at least 1week’s notice prior to the first day of class. You shall communicate with your staff liaison to discuss the status. The class will be cancelled if it does not meet minimum enrollment standards (indicated in the proposal). Class cancellations should be mutually agreed upon by both the contractor and your staff liaison prior to cancellation.
- V. **How do I know who is in my class?**
You will be provided with a class roster a week before your class begins. However, if you would like to know the status beforehand, you can either check it on the public ActiveNet registration system online (we’ll show you how) or reach out to your staff liaison for an update. Unfortunately, we will not be able to grant access to our registration database.
- VI. **What if my class keeps getting cancelled because no one signs up?**
It’s unfortunate, but sometimes it does happen. New programs will have two seasons to meet minimum enrollment requirements before being pulled from the Activity Guide offerings. This is why promoting the class beforehand is extremely important.
- VII. **What if a student attends my class but he/she is not on the roster?**
Only registered participants (children or adults) should be attending your programs. Children of participants (as well as your own) should not come to class unless they are registered participants. By making sure that each person attending your class is registered, this ensures that you, the Contractor, and the County, are protected from liability issues.