



Environmental Living Program Program Summary

Thank you for your interest in the Environmental Living Program (ELP) at Sutter's Fort State Historic Park. This is a very special program that has been educating and entertaining children since 1976. The program allows students, along with their teacher and trained parent assistants, to spend 24 hours having a day/night experience at Sutter's Fort. The participants portray characters from 1840's California and participate in the various activities, trades, and entertainment of the era. The program is highly flexible, giving teachers the ability to create their own unique experience; the program requires strong parent support and participation; and is a fabulous teaching tool based on students learning through first-hand interaction and hands-on experiences.

Requirements and Restrictions

- The program is available to public, private and home school groups.
- The program is limited to elementary school students. Middle and high school students can assist in the program but cannot be the primary participants.
- The program is limited to a maximum of 100 student participants; however, we recommend that in order to optimize the experience of participating students, the number of students be kept between 30 and 70. There is also only indoor sleeping for 70 students, plus 10 adults; the remaining students and adults must sleep outside on the lawn within the fort walls. Modern tents are allowed after evening activities are completed.

Application and Selection Process

- An application completed by a teacher is required to participate in ELP.
- Applications are only accepted November through June for the following school year.
- Please submit only one application per number of days you plan to participate; if you have two classes but want them to come on the same day, please only submit one application.
- Because of the popularity of ELP, more applications are usually submitted than the number of spaces available; as a result, applications are selected by a random lottery draw.
- The lottery process is as follows: by mid-June, Sutter's Fort staff compiles all the submitted applications and, through a random drawing, creates a numbered list of the applications. Those schools whose applications are numbered between 1 through ~55 are guaranteed a place in the program (there are roughly 55 open slots for ELP, although it can vary slightly by year). The remaining schools (55 through 80 for example, if 80 applications were submitted) are placed on a waitlist. Then, at the Teacher Workshop in August, teachers choose their ELP day according to their place on the list (number 1 chooses first, number 55 chooses last).





- If a teacher at any point withdraws from the program, their application is withdrawn and all other applications above it in the list move forward one space. If a teacher does not attend the August Workshop, they forfeit their place on the list and again, all other applications move up one space.
- Available ELP days are most Tuesdays and Thursdays from November to early June.

Cost

- The program participation fee is \$600.
- A nonrefundable \$75 deposit is required by the time of the first workshop in order to secure your place in the program.
- There are other costs (food, project supplies, wagons, entertainment, etc.) that you will incur.
- The full amount of these additional costs depends on what you decide to do with your ELP; for example, some groups may hire musicians for their evening entertainment while other schools may simply choose to do skits, or provide their own skilled musicians.
- Although the total cost can vary greatly, most schools end up spending between \$1,500 and \$4,000 total.

Training Workshops

- There are five ELP workshops throughout the year, one Teacher Workshop and four Parent/Teacher Workshops.
- The Teacher Workshop will be held on a Saturday in August. It is MANDATORY for teachers who wish to participate in ELP to attend; if the teacher, or an assigned representative, is not present, the spot is forfeited.
- The Teacher Workshop will give the teachers more information on the program, how it is run and what stations they can choose to have for their ELP day. This is also the day that teachers choose their ELP date.
- The Parent/Teacher Workshops are held on Saturdays throughout the rest of the school year. Schools do not need to come to more than one of these and will be assigned a specific one depending on their chosen ELP date.
- At the Parent/Teacher Workshop, teachers will continue to learn about the program and how best to prepare for their ELP day. Parents will be trained by Fort docents on the stations to which they have been assigned by teachers. It is MANDATORY that a parent be trained at every station you plan to operate on your ELP day.





Participation

- The program starts at 8:00am and ends by 9:00am the following day.
- On an ELP day, the children arrive in the morning, usually by wagon, dressed in period clothing. They spend the day in small groups rotating every half hour or so between various stations run by their parents. At the stations they learn about and participate in many of the jobs that would have been performed at the Fort between 1839 and 1850.
- At night, groups take turns keeping a night watch, while the others are comfortably asleep.

We appreciate your interest in the Environmental Living Program. If you have any questions, please contact us at (916) 323-7627 or Jared.Jones@parks.ca.gov. Applications are available at the Fort or online at www.parks.ca.gov/suttersfort and www.suttersfort.org under the Environmental Living Program heading.

