

ACES Essential Eligibility Criteria 2020

Aspen Center for Environmental Studies (ACES)'s mission is to educate for environmental responsibility. ACES Community programs are one-day or multi-day field excursions and programs with the goal of inspiring environmental stewards.

Our priorities are to provide high-quality programs and for the health and well being of our program participants and staff. ACES strives to provide age appropriate activities that depend on the specific details of the program. If you have questions about what you or your child will be doing, please email or call ACES for more information.

ACES works to accommodate a wide range of abilities in programs. ACES works to make reasonable accommodations with individuals and program leaders to create an accessible learning environment, when appropriate and feasible.

All ACES Naturalist and Education staff have basic First Aid training. All lead educators in wilderness environments have either Wilderness First Aid or Wilderness First Responder training. ACES staff are trained to respond to basic medical emergencies in the context of ACES programming that they facilitate. You and your doctor are responsible to decide if you or your child can adequately participate in this program.

ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION IN ACES PROGRAMS

These requirements are not intended to be exclusionary, but to honestly identify the basic and fundamental elements of participation which are integrally tied to risk management considerations. The Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC) are applicable for all ACES program participants. A qualified person is one who can meet the EEC for participation in the program activity.

Dietary Restrictions and Food Allergies

ACES works to accommodate dietary needs in programs. ACES will work with individuals and program leaders to make reasonable accommodations to reduce the potential for exposure to food allergens; however, ACES cannot provide an allergen-free environment.

Description of Physical Demands

Each participant must:

1. At minimum, be able to travel over and negotiate through varied terrain. Travel conditions may include, but are not limited to, human made and animal made dirt or gravel trails; uneven terrain, grass, and off-trail forested terrain. Buildings at both ACES Hallam Lake and Rock Bottom Ranch Field Studies Centers are connected by gravel and dirt trail systems that students and participants must be able to navigate independently; and,
2. Be able to cover at least 1 mile throughout the day, up and down hills, over uneven terrain under their own power; and,

3. Carry the gear that they need for the day in a backpack, ranging from 5-20 pounds depending on the program. The season in which field learning occurs will determine the mode of travel. During the months with no snow, students and participants will hike, and when there is snow on the ground, students will snowshoe; and,
4. Tolerate being outside for 6 hours a day.

If addition, when hiking and/or backpacking, each participant must:

1. Carry 5-15 pounds daily for day hiking and 20-40 pounds daily for backpacking, for outdoor/wilderness trips ranging from several days to several weeks, depending upon the program; and,
2. Competently and independently navigate a variety of uneven and challenging outdoor/wilderness terrain with travel distances ranging from 1-10 miles per day for several days, depending upon the program, that may involve ascents of mountain peaks up to 13,000 feet in elevation; and,
3. Possess the strength, fitness, balance and agility to accomplish the above tasks; and,
4. Be comfortable with using the bathroom in an outdoor setting; and,
5. Be able to move about a campsite in order to attend class, attend to toilet needs, and contribute to camping tasks as necessary.

Actions and Behavior

Each participant must:

1. Be willing and able to follow the rules and obey authority figures (such as ACES educators and naturalists); and,
2. Independently perceive, understand, and follow the directions and instructions given by others to be able to successfully execute appropriate and perhaps unfamiliar activities; and,
3. Recall and understand the hazards and risks previously explained by educators; and,
4. Be able to effectively alert and warn others of potential or impending dangers such as falling rocks, aggressive animals, or other environmental hazards; and,
5. Act reliably around above stated hazards to minimize risk even when not directly supervised; and,
6. Stay alert and focus attention during the length of the program; and,
7. Handle varying degrees of stress response throughout their ACES Program. Substantial increase in stress typically result in heightened physiological and mental health conditions. ACES is not intended to be a therapeutic program provider, and ACES educators are not trained mental health professionals.

Elevation and Distance to Medical Care: Field learning activities primarily occur at our field studies centers or on National Forest lands surrounding Aspen and Basalt, Colorado. In the event of a medical emergency at our field studies centers emergency personnel may arrive within 10-20 minutes. In the event of a medical emergency on an overnight program, it may take several hours to reach definitive medical care due to the remote nature of these areas and challenging weather. Additionally, the elevation of these areas is about 8,000 ft. and exercising at a higher elevation than one's home location can exacerbate medical conditions.

