YOUTH
OUTSIDE

Outdoor Educators Institute 2021 FAQ

Q: Given COVID-19 public health guidelines and limitations around convening outdoors in large groups, how many people can I expect to be in a cohort? What other COVID-19 precautions will be in place during the program?

A: In keeping with COVID-19 public health guidelines, we will be limiting each cohort to no more than eight participants to allow for two staff to be present. We're following guidelines stringently in order to ensure as safe and healthy an environment for participants as possible. This includes staggering in-person gatherings to no more than once every two weeks, with the explicit aim of mitigating risk. Additionally, mask-wearing and six-foot distancing will be required. There is also a mandatory bi-daily temperature check that staff and participants must do on top of other precautions. We will avoid situations that pose unnecessary risk of infection, especially in small, enclosed spaces with minimal air circulation such as tents and cars. We will continually manage risks based on best practices and the latest science.

Q: If the areas where OEI cohorts are operating need to return to "shelter-in-place" at some point during the program, will OEI be cancelled?

A: No, we're committed to running the Spring 2021 cohort between February 6 and May 9, 2021. If "shelter-in-place" returns, we'll adjust accordingly and move our programming online. Though we hope we'll be able to facilitate all outdoor trainings as planned, we are currently working with our program delivery partners to develop alternative scenarios, in the event that we need to convene virtually.

Q: If I identify as white, can I still apply to OEI?

A: Yes, while we prioritize BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) applicants, given our larger goal of furthering racial equity in the outdoors, we take a multitude of factors into consideration when reviewing applicants, including personal commitment to challenging systemic oppression. We do, however, invite potential applicants who identify as white to think critically about whether OEI is the right fit for them, and how their participation may impact BIPOC participants. For more information on the idea of BIPOC affinity spaces, we invite you to read this essay:
https://arrow-journal.org/why-people-of-color-need-spaces-without-white-people/

Q: What is the all-womxn cohort?

A: We created the all-womxn cohort as a space for people whose lived experiences include the joys and struggles that come with moving through the world in a body that others identify as female, and we hold this space in acknowledgement of the unique challenges faced by people who are gendered as such in the outdoor/environmental field. When deciding whether or not to apply to this cohort, we leave it to each applicant to decide if their lived experience and the way they move through the world aligns with this frame.

Q: Why do you use the term "womxn" instead of "women"?

A: Adapted from Womxn of Color Weekend (https://wocw.org/faq/):

We use the spelling "womxn" because we want to be more inclusive of trans-, non-binary, and genderfluid people. "Womxn" encompasses a broader range of gender identities than "women" — or even older feminist terms such as "womyn." "Womxn" is one of a few similar lexical and social phenomena, including the adoption of "x" in naming LGBTQ and non-gender-binary people. "Womxn" is a departure from patriarchal linguistic norms as "women" and "woman" originate from Old English, where "man" was used as a genderfluid pronoun much like "one" and "they" have turned into today. "Womyn" is considered a white, liberal-feminist concept and, thus, the term "womxn" was created to broaden the scope of womanhood by including "womxn-of-color," "trans-womxn," and other groups. "Womxn" is aligned with terms such as "Latinx" which includes people of Latin American descent whose gender identities fluctuate along different points of the spectrum, from agender or nonbinary to gender non-conforming, genderqueer, and genderfluid.