



Chapter 3- Commuter Crew: Pre Program

Chapter 3 provides information about student selection and placement; reviews the communication process between Crew leaders and Crew Members.

How Participants are Selected

Our goal is to assure the most qualified participants on your Crew and to increase our customer service to participants, Crew Leaders and agencies while serving communities where we work. Funding is generated for this program through both philanthropy and partnerships. Some funding comes with eligibility requirements for participants. Primarily, these requirements address residency and/or income. SCA staffers address recruiting with these requirements in mind.

Participant Application Deadlines

SCA accepts applications for the Commuter Crew Program beginning in the early spring. This process officially begins with the posting of Summer Crew positions directed by each regional office. Selection begins in late April and early May depending on the program timing. There is an online application option for the Commuting Crew Program; the standard application fee of \$25 is waived.

Participant Screening

SCA staff remain responsible for applying SCA's medical screening protocols in order to assure the physical, mental, and emotional health of Crew Members while on the program. All candidates must submit a 5-page medical history form as well as a fitness assessment form from a licensed physician. Every application and medical certificate will be pre-screened by SCA's High School staff. This process includes:

- Review of participant application forms.
- Follow-up on missing information and forms.
- Follow-up on overdue medical certificates.
- Thorough and confidential review of medical certificates
- Recommend accommodations for participant involvement in the program (i.e. frequent breaks throughout the day, etc)
- Identify and follow-up conversation with parents on with any medical concerns.
- Work directly with the National Director on medical issues flagged in applications.

Placement

Participants are selected and assigned to Crews in a rolling admission process. Once as student is placed on a Crew, they will be sent a letter with information on their program. The materials distributed to Crew Members will be provided to you. Crew Members are also required to attend an orientation session with a parent or guardian. It is advisable that all Crew Leaders attend this orientation. At these sessions, led by SCA staff, Crew Members are given an overview of the Crew experience, including;

- SCA rules
- Absentee and tardiness policies
- Required dress
- Lunch procedures
- Meeting point locations
- Distribution of educational stipends (paychecks)
- General introduction to the type of work they will be doing

- Explanation of the environmental education and outdoor recreation aims of the program (if applicable)
- Reiteration of the workforce preparation and leadership development aims of the program

Admissions Process Outline

The following is a chronological outline of the admission process.

1. Crew Member applicants will submit their applications and the Regional high school staff will review the applications
2. Once an application is received, a medical certificate will be sent to the applicant.
3. Parent orientations take place prior to the program beginning. Parents will need to have detailed information about what is expected of their child and the consequences associated with violating rules. Parents also need to have clear information about paperwork, schedules for the work day and what will happen if the program is canceled for the day. It is recommended that crew leaders follow up with parents by phone to introduce them as the primary contact once the crews have been selected.
4. After the medical forms are screened, the students will be placed in a program (i.e. a Crew). Each region has its own *formula* for summer commuter crews meaning that from region to region the number of: crew positions, weeks of work for each crew and locations where those crews work vary. This will be determined by the SCA staff working in the region.
4. A note about youth stipends in the Commuter Crew Program. Unlike our National Crew Program, youth who participate in the Commuter Crew Program receive a stipend for their service. This is a summer job for these youth and a valuable learning experience about expectations they will encounter when they enter the workforce. Please refer to Chapter 6 for more information about Payroll.
5. SCA staff in the region will then complete the final stages of paperwork to confirm the youth as a member of a Commuting Crew. This paperwork includes: medical history form, participant waiver, and other medical information specific to this youth's needs. This information is attached to each Member's profile in MAX (online database) and is used in case of emergency. Once assigned to a Crew, Crew Leaders take over most contact with the Crew Members.

Corresponding With Your Crew

Once students accept positions for a Crew, they will begin getting excited about their upcoming SCA summer. As a Crew leader hired for a specific program, you will be given the contact information for those students so that you may begin to communicate with them and answer many of their planning, equipment, and general curious questions.

SCA's regional staff will provide Crew Leaders with their list of students and access to their profiles on SCA's online database, MAX, at rm.thesca.org. After Crew Member orientation (which Crew Leaders will ideally attend), Crew Leaders will take over most contact with the Crew Members.

The First Contact

Once you have been assigned a Crew of youth Members, you should make a phone call to introduce yourself to the youth and their parents. This will usually occur around mid June. You will be provided a 'script' that will include key things to communicate to parents are Members during crew leader training.

Parents appreciate a phone call and sometimes need some extra information so plan to spend some time speaking with them. When you speak to the parents on the phone (and you should make a proactive effort to do so) converse with them in a way that provides them a high level of confidence in you in your role of their child's guardian for the summer. Parents are also your best allies in getting your participants prepared for their program.

Items To Include in the first conversation with parents:

- A description of the working conditions in the parks. Explain if the work project and program dates and locations are different from those given during the orientation, sometimes they are.
- Confirm the daily travel arrangements to the pick up site where Members will be meeting you, the Crew Leader, each day and are being dropped off at each afternoon. This location is typically accessible by public transportation or is a central landmark in the community. It is helpful to include specifics like exactly where to meet you and what to do if they have troubles or are running late.
- A clothing list tailored to your specific program. This list will guide their preparations for the summer crew. Take into consideration local weather extremes, geography, and work conditions. Do not send this list verbatim, as you will need to modify it to meet the specific conditions of your program.
- Instructions to buy boots if they do not already own them. Each regional office will have local information about where to get all leather boots for Crew Members. You should direct them to begin wearing their boots immediately, old or new.
- Something about yourself. Again, it is helpful for parents to know that you are a responsible adult who has worked in the outdoors and/or with youth in the past. Emphasis on safety is a must during this conversation.
- Your contact information including phone number and/or email. Encourage them to call collect (if necessary), then reimburse yourself out of your budget if they do.
- Ask if they need to borrow any SCA equipment, but suggest that borrowing from friends or family is the preferred option.
- Ask if they have special dietary needs or food preferences.

What SCA Sends

All the forms participants need to return to SCA, including the liability waiver and emergency contact info/parental permission to treat form are together in the packet, along with the time lines required for their return. And finally, the participants receive information on basic equipment, the role of crew leaders, our agency partners, SCA's emergency contact procedures, and how programs are financed and supported by SCA's Members and sponsors.

SAMPLE EQUIPMENT LIST FOR SCA PROGRAMS – Covered during Parent Orientation

Your SCA program will probably expose you to a variety of weather conditions. The clothing you bring each day will need to keep you comfortable, warm and mostly dry for your work day, and during our recreation trip. If you bring everything on this list, you will be amply equipped for your SCA adventure.

You do not need to spend tons of money on new gear and clothing. You probably already have many of the items listed here. If you need to buy things, there are many good sources for cheap camping gear, including local second hand stores, Salvation Army, Goodwill and Army/Navy surplus stores. You can also try to find gear online. Sometimes campmor.com and sierratradingpost.com have cheap and closeout prices. For the larger items, you should first see if you can borrow things from friends or neighbors.

If your program consists of a Recreation Trip it will be necessary for Crew Members to borrow equipment. **SCA has a limited amount of backpacks, sleeping bags, and sleeping pads to borrow for the recreation trip if applicable to your program.**

Once you've gathered all your gear, check to make sure you have everything and WRITE YOUR NAME ON EVERYTHING with permanent marker.

Work Attire

As a work site leader, you must adhere to the following SCA policies related to the physical safety of the crew. If you explain and adhere to these policies from the first day forward and never relent, you will be less likely to run into a work attire problem later on.

- Footwear – LEATHER BOOTS THAT COVER THE ANKLE ARE THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE FOOTWEAR. If a crew member does not have leather boots, they cannot work, please check before departing the pick up site that all members have their boots. If they do not have the appropriate footwear please send them home to retrieve them.
- Clothing – T-shirts and long pants must be worn at all times. **Tank tops, t-shirts with the sleeves cut-off, t-shirts containing offensive language, symbols or logos, and sweat pants are not allowed.** Jeans or cotton work pants are the only option. One-piece “jumper suits” are also ok, as long as they are worn correctly (i.e. no sleeves tied off at the waist). Also, please discourage the crew members from wearing super baggy clothes or pants, they're both hot and cumbersome.
- Gloves – Work gloves must be worn at all times on all projects.
- Hard Hats – SCA policy states that anytime a crew members as a tool in their hand they must be wearing hard hats. The crew will complain that the hard hats are too hot or do not fit properly, but they do not have a choice. (Please note that we cannot reproduce or publish any work site picture in which a crew member(s) does not have on a hard hat and gloves).

