



KSS School Programs Overview - What is it like being a Program Instructor at KSS?

Our Program

The Keystone Science School offers a wide variety of programs including one day, residential overnight, and camping based programs. The majority of our programs (approximately 90%) are 3-day residential programs facilitated here on the Keystone Science School campus. We have a small 23 acre campus. In addition to our campus we will use the White River National Forest as our classroom. We are the largest permit holder in the Dillon Ranger District and will visit a variety of trails throughout Summit County via 15-passenger vans. It is important for all of our applicants to be over the ages of 21 and have a clean driving record (for insurance purposes) to drive our vans.

Curriculum

We teach by academic theme which means that students will study earth science, forest ecology, aquatic ecology, or snow science for the duration of their experience. We will occasionally blend academic themes but that is rare. It is the responsibility of our instructors and interns to take a series of learning goals established by the KSS Lead Instructor for the program and the lead teacher from the visiting school and create a curriculum which meets those goals and flows throughout the course of the program.

Teaching Approaches

Keystone Science School has three main teaching approaches.

1. Research – Along with the goals associated with the academic theme instructors/interns also have to teach research practices and the scientific method. This is done through the creation of a student driven research project.
2. Environmental Issues – A goal of the environmental issues is to teach the idea of ‘collaboration not competition.’ This is done by providing the students with a guiding question such as, “how should we manage the water in Colorado?” Each student is then assigned to represent a stakeholder such as *County Commissioner, Water Commissioner, or US Forest Service*. Students then study the academic theme associated with the guiding question and the given environmental issue. At the closing of the program students participate in a ‘Town Hall Meeting’ in which they are to assume the ideals of their assigned stakeholder and work together as a stakeholder group in the creation of policy recommendations.
3. Exploration Option – This is an approach which provides the instructors/interns with the most freedom. The lessons are focused solely on the academic theme without a secondary focus of research or the environmental issue.



Students

The students come to KSS from a variety of locations. Primarily groups are from Colorado. We have a great relationship with our local Summit School District so there are several programs which combine classroom teaching with a field based experience. There are also a few groups who come from other states.

The students come from traditional public schools, charter/magnet schools and private schools. KSS offers a great deal of scholarships (approximately 25% of School Programs revenue is scholarships) to ensure we have a well rounded student body from various socioeconomic and ethnic populations.

KSS Instructors/Apprentices

We host instructors/apprentices from a variety of locations throughout the US. We strive for diverse backgrounds in our instructors/apprentices so that we can teach each other when we have opportunities for professional development. Typical instructor/apprentice experiences include summer camp, residential environmental education, formal education, expedition/trip leading, and environmental research.

KSS Room & Board

KSS offers instructors/apprentices housing onsite. The housing is either within a house which includes one room with a shared bathroom and community room open to everyone on campus. The other option is a stand alone cabin which has no indoor plumbing. It is a short walk outside (approximately 20-50yards) to the nearest restroom facility.

Food is available through our kitchen. We have what we call an 'open kitchen.' This means that instructors/apprentices open the refrigerator/freezer and cook whatever is available. It is also an option to eat what our chef has prepared for students. There is a whiteboard in the kitchen where instructors/apprentices can write down food requests for our chef to purchase. There are budgetary constraints surrounding the food purchase but there is always ample fresh produce and other tasty treats. There is a deduction of \$200 for anyone except apprentices for room and board.

KSS Salary & Benefits

KSS offers a monthly salary based on experience in the field and longevity with KSS ranging from \$1262-1400 per month. There are medical, dental, vision benefits, 401K, and professional discounts for outdoor gear. A deduction is made each month for medical, dental, and vision based on the chosen plan. Also included in the benefit package is paid vacation & accrued sick time.



KSS Workload & Schedule

KSS strives to help every employee maintain balance between the professional and personal life. We always strive to maintain a 40 hr/week work week. It is understood that this is not always perfect but we do everything possible to create a balanced schedule.

Instructors/apprentices are scheduled for two main duties – teaching a school or support staff. Teaching means that you are the primary instructor for the school group during the hours of 9:30a-5p. Teaching includes both lesson planning and program facilitation. Support staff includes a wide variety of duties including facilitating meals, dishes, teaching evening program, and too many other tasks to be listed. Instructors/interns are scheduled to teaching a school approximately 75% of the time and support staff the remaining 25% of the time.

Summit County

Summit County is primarily a tourist community although there is a passionate full time year round community. All interested applicants must have the ability to live in a primarily cold climate situated at over 9000ft in elevation. There are several world class ski resorts and about 80% of Summit County is public land managed by the US Forest Service. This provides a variety of opportunities for hiking, backpacking, mountain biking and other outdoor activities. For more information check out the Summit County Chamber of Commerce or the local newspaper, Summit Daily.