

Vida Verde Instructor Position

with Housing & Camp Caretaker Work

School Year 2024-2025



Educational Equity in the *Outdoors*

MISSION STATEMENT

Vida Verde is a nonprofit that promotes educational equity by providing free, overnight, environmental learning experiences for students who don't otherwise get the opportunity.



We are a small, tightly-knit, and exciting organization. Our jobs are the BEST, and so are the people who work here!

Vida Verde has a long history of achieving remarkable results through high-quality programs delivered free of charge for 4th-6th grade students. Students interact in the outdoors with their peers and teachers, and they engage in activities that nurture positive interpersonal connections, instill a sense of belonging and connection to the natural world, and offer exposure to new and exciting environments and ideas. Vida Verde's programs serve historically marginalized populations and are free for all participants and schools.

With equity as a cornerstone of Vida Verde's mission, we intentionally and actively engage in Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) work with an understanding and agreement that this work is critical in helping young people access high-quality, culturally relevant and inclusive nature education experiences that translate to positive outcomes in their traditional classrooms. (See our full JEDI statement below.)

Vida Verde has a strong culture and values around supporting staff and providing fair pay, quality housing, and generous benefits. The well-being of our staff members is paramount. We encourage and provide funding for professional development opportunities, and help individuals to grow in their roles over time according to their interests and talents. See the next page for compensation and benefits details.

The **instructor position** is well suited for folks with experience in outdoor education, classroom teaching and/or engaging and supporting low-income and students of color.

We are looking for someone who wants to be challenged and work hard towards educational equity and who can handle a lot of responsibility and details. The position is best suited for a driven, positive and independent worker.

Compensation

- 1st Year regular pay is \$20/hour (plus housing) for those holding (CDL) Commercial Drivers License (38-45 hours/week, approx. \$800/week).
[1st Year regular pay is \$15/hour (plus housing) until you get your CDL (38-45 hours/week, approx. \$600/week).]
- Housing provided, a large private bedroom in a three-bedroom staff house or yurt. (Closet, storage space, washer/dryer, shared living room/kitchen/bathrooms.) Access to community hot tub, trail, creek. Secluded rural setting.
- \$200 monthly contribution towards group Health, Dental & Vision insurance.
- Full-time staff at Vida Verde are eligible for retirement benefits (Vida Verde matches up to 5% of your salary) after nine months of employment. Vida Verde's contributions are applied retroactively upon completion of nine months of work, and are vested over a five-year period.
- Pro Deals (deep discounts on products from: Smartwool, Patagonia, Chaco, and others)
- Paid Instructor and Caretaker Training (6-7 days)

Instructor Responsibilities

This is a full-time, school-year (late August-early June) position

General Program Expectations

- Be committed to the Vida Verde mission and vision; embody the Vida Verde values at work (see values below)
- Manage student groups to success utilizing Vida Verde's positive-reinforcement group management techniques. Create an awesome space and team each week with a classroom of high-potential human beings.
- Lead games and activities, practice conflict resolution, be a role model.
- Collaborate with the instructor team to develop an emotionally safe and supportive learning environment for the students
- Ensure students' physical safety
- Respect and engender understanding for the diversity of our staff and students
- Connect with and understand students as individuals, take time to learn about them and their communities
- Facilitate safe and positive interactions between students
- Embrace a culture of feedback via peer-to-peer observations, teacher evaluations, video recordings, team debriefs, monthly meetings with your manager and quarterly goal setting
- Drive safely and learn the particulars of driving & attending to the Vida Verde vehicles
- Interact positively and professionally with donors and site visitors
- Be willing to take on responsibility for unexpected challenges and opportunities that arise
- Arrive on-time to all work engagements, including program shifts, meetings, etc
- Support and direct classroom teachers & chaperones
- JEDI work: Contribute to an inclusive culture and commit to the org's JEDI statement. Work to achieve goals outlined in the Org-wide JEDI plan which are applicable to your position



Traditional Overnight Program Work

All of the below is describing our in-person, 3-day and 2-night camp program

Program Work is three consecutive & long days per week (Tues-Thurs)

- Instruction includes leading six core programs: (1) Goat Milking & Cheese Making (2) Redwood Hike (3) Tidepool, Marsh & Beach Exploration (4) Organic Farm Activities (5) Campfire (6) Night Hike
- Cook & facilitate meal prep/cooking with students (instruction provided)
- Perform first aid for students in the case of injury or illness
- Lead games, songs & stories intermittently throughout week
- Facilitate two camper's choice activities per week (1 hour and 2 hours)
- Set up, tidily maintain, cleanup & takedown camp each week
- Work outside in varying weather conditions
- 90%+ work time on feet. Hike/walk up to 4 to 6 miles in a day.
- Lift heavy objects up to 50 lbs
- Long work days during program days (**~10-12hr workdays**)

Outside of Program Work

Typically Mondays and Fridays:

- Participate in weekly, half-day student management/professional development workshops
- Participate in and prepare for fundraisers, donor events, and site work days
- Teambuilding and communication: attend staff meetings, professional development, and proactively keep up with work communications (email, etc.)
- Support Vida Verde in its ongoing efforts to create and implement the org JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) plan

Camp Caretaker Work*

Instructors will be responsible for a subset of the following Farm and Facilities chores (typically completed Mondays and Fridays).

- Raking pasture for compost and feeding farm animals
- Cleaning chicken coop and maintaining chicken flock
- Hot tub maintenance
- Program and farm shopping in town
- Recycling and trash runs
- Restroom cleaning
- Possible garden/landscaping work
- Vehicle maintenance/cleaning

*Each weekend, one instructor is on animal/greenhouse duty for about three hours/weekend, on a rotating basis (approximately one weekend/month).

Required Certifications

- Obtain and or Maintain Current Commercial (Class C) Drivers License with Passenger Endorsement and Drive 20-passenger shuttle bus (training provided). Getting the license typically takes 5 days worth of work strategically spread over 3 months. License needs to be in place by Jan 1st.
- Current First Aid & CPR Certifications
 - Potential for extra paid opportunities for people holding a current Wilderness First Responder certification.

Term of Work

Late August-Early June

- The program operates during the school year from September-November and January-June, with about 33 weeks of program (If we have a cancellation in our schedule, additional caretaking/facilities work will be provided during non-program weeks as available.)
- On the job training for instructor work will happen during the first two weeks of program work / the first two weeks of employment
- There is caretaker training (1-2 days) the first two Mondays of work, and additional caretaker work commitments outside of program weeks (for example, over winter break during late November and December).
- There is a break in late December/early January and a spring break in March.

Qualifications of a Strong Applicant

- Inspired by and committed to the mission of the organization
- Strong individual and group student support and management skills
- Experience in outdoor education, classroom teaching and/or engaging low-income and students of color
- Desire to work in a small, values-driven nonprofit organization
- Experience in trauma-informed, culturally relevant and culturally responsive teaching
- Comfortable working independently and as part of a strong team
- Positive attitude, commitment to excellence, great communicator, full of integrity
- Enthusiastic about participating in an improvement-driven and supportive management system. Comfortable giving and receiving feedback and regularly setting/tracking goals.
- Current Commercial Class C Driver's License with Passenger Endorsement **(Obtain immediately upon hire and be certified by January 1. Resources and financial support available.)**
- Appreciation and comfort leading and teaching students in the outdoors in all types of weather

- Ability and willingness to work flexible hours (evenings and some weekends)
- Comfort and composure when dealing with adversity and conflict.
- Willingness to participate in community-building exercises and strive for positive and open communication in regards to living in a shared/communal environment, and working with a small and close-knit team.
- Current First Aid/CPR certification
- Adaptable
- Organized
- Desire to engage in personal and org-wide JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) and anti-racism work.

Bonus Qualifications

- Bilingual (Spanish and English)
- Comfortable playing guitar or other instrument during songs/campfire
- Handy

Vida Verde Location

Farm /office/ housing sites are in San Gregorio, CA
One hour from San Francisco, 45 minutes from Santa Cruz. We are along the creek
between the Redwoods and the Coast. 20 minutes from Half Moon Bay

Application Procedure/Timeline

Send a video of yourself teaching young people*, letter of interest, resume, and three references. Send by **email only** to all three of the following.

Daniel Rodriguez, Shawn Sears, and Arturo Cervantes

Daniel@vveducation.org , Shawn@Vveducation.org, Arturo@vveducation.org

*A teaching video is a requirement for a complete application to Vida Verde. If you are not currently working with young people, or if there are restrictions on recording where you are teaching, it is requested that you take creative measure to create some kind of teaching video.

More information about our organization and traditional overnight program can be found on our website:

www.Vveducation.org

Values of Vida Verde

The Mission First

We are a mission-centric organization. We make every decision with the kids' benefit and the mission as our guide. We specifically tailor the program to meet the unique needs of the kids we serve, with deep respect for students and their communities.

Persistent Improvement and Our Best Practices

We are driven to continually improve and reach the highest standards across the organization for the benefit of the kids we serve. From program quality to healthy communication, from strategic goal setting to prioritization: we are detail-oriented, reflective, and strive to serve as a model. We balance our best practices and lessons from our history with innovation and inspiration for improvement.

The Environment and Natural Resources

We practice responsible and long-term thinking regarding land stewardship facility management, building, and design. Using resources wisely, we value the earth's resources over convenience and cost, and share that value with the greater community.

Relationships and Community

People are at the heart of this work. We strive to create long-lasting relationships with our staff, supporters, students, and teachers. We believe that by honoring and including diverse perspectives, our organization is stronger and more sustainable. We believe in love, not hate.

We help different people see each other and all that we share in common, as well as what we can learn from each other.

Making It Happen

We overcome outrageous obstacles and successfully achieve ambitious goals by using a combination of resourcefulness, a positive mindset, and our team's diverse set of skills and experiences, without compromising our work/life balance and well-being. We know that beliefs lead to actions, which lead to results. We "make it happen" even when circumstances would lead most to think progress impossible.

Vida Verde JEDI Statement

We acknowledge that:

Everything is not okay.

We live in a world and society with personal, structural, and institutional injustice based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other differences. This is affecting the lives of the Vida Verde students and the Vida Verde community in myriad profound ways.

We see our role as:

We have a deep commitment to examining, understanding, and working intentionally, every day, and for the long run to do our small part in dismantling the pieces of institutional injustice that we are able to. Vida Verde is one of the few outdoor education organizations that is focused on educational equity, and is dedicated to engaging Bay Area youth from low income families and communities who do not have free access to outdoor education experiences. Even though equity is a cornerstone of Vida Verde's mission, intentionally and actively engaging in Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) work more holistically will only continue to support these young people in accessing quality culturally relevant and inclusive nature education experiences that translate to positive outcomes in their traditional classrooms.

Why?

- Culturally relevant outdoor programs better engages students, and supports them in developing necessary critical thinking skills, improving their health and wellness, and more meaningfully connecting them to the land and food, and often fostering a passion and interest in the outdoors.
- The future of the environment is tethered to connecting the diverse youth of today to the outdoors.
- Research shows diversity in staff, an inclusive workplace culture, and culturally responsive practices lead to both better experiences and outcomes for students, and better attraction and retention of talented staff.
- Vida Verde aspires to serve as a blueprint/model for other values-aligned organizations (especially outdoor education organizations) who are looking for a exemplenorth star in JEDI work.

Our vision:

We envision a future where all people have access to quality experiences in the outdoors, which have the power to profoundly impact hearts, minds and bodie