

Essential Eligibility Criteria

This document containing Essential Eligibility Criteria is meant to serve as an overview for potential participants to help them understand what will be expected of them if they are accepted into Higher Ground.

These Essential Eligibility Criteria do not include everything that may be expected of Higher Ground participants, but rather provide a general overview for potential participants. Potential participants and parents should review these criteria to determine whether Higher Ground would be a good fit for them.

Higher Ground reserves the right to not accept any student, and, if necessary, remove any student, that we determine does not meet the Essential Eligibility Criteria. Please note that Higher Ground is a Christian experiential program. Higher Ground is not a therapeutic program or program for adjudicated youth and is unable to accept students who require regular ongoing therapy or other services that are beyond the scope of practice of our staff.

I. General

All participants must:

1. Abide by Higher Ground's policies, and contract of commitment.
2. Treat themselves and all others with respect, including but not limited to Higher Ground students, staff, local contacts, and others they encounter while traveling regardless of race, gender, age, sexual identity, and religion.
3. Be capable and responsible for appropriately managing their mental, emotional and physical health
4. Listen to and respond to instructions given by staff
5. Be able to go weeks at a time without having access to personal cell phone and Wi-Fi
6. If taking prescription medication, be capable and responsible for the management, administration, and security of a sufficient supply of all prescription medication needed for the duration of the program.
6. Be welcoming of a facilitated gap year experience that includes oversight and mentorship coming from Higher Ground staff and partnering organizations

II. Physical

All participants must:

1. Be able to maintain a level of personal responsibility toward general safety and awareness of one's surroundings

2. Be able to travel for periods of up to 7 days in a physically tiring, remote, backcountry environment
3. Be able to carry all of their own gear on their back
5. Be able to share living and sleeping space with other students in the program
6. Immediately discuss any medical issues that arise with their program leader or director
7. Disclose any physical limitations or health concerns that would impact their ability to fully participate in the program.
8. Appropriately manage their physical health independently, including but not limited to; hydration, general nutrition, exercise, and hygiene

III. Emotional

All participants must:

1. Be able to participate in group meetings where they will practice active listening and openly express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas to others.
2. Communicate openly and honestly with their peers, program leaders and directors.
3. Commit to creating a safe environment at Higher Ground, and will not threaten others physically or verbally in any circumstance
4. Be able to cope with any stress or anxiety in a healthy manner
5. Be able to discuss and work through any social and emotional issues that may arise during the program with program leaders or directors
6. Agree to not pursue, engage in, or give the appearance of a romantic relationship with other Higher Ground students or staff

IV. Mental Health

All participants must:

1. Fully disclose mental health history and learning disabilities during the application process.
2. If requested, provide a reference from a mental health professional to help identify a student's ability to meet the Essential Eligibility Criteria.
3. Be able to go the duration of the program without regular professional and/or therapeutic support

V. Spiritual

All participants must:

1. Express a desire or willingness to have dialogues about their personal faith journey as a core component of the program
2. Have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
3. Have beliefs and actions that are in line with God's Word
4. Have a desire to grow and is committed to becoming more like Jesus
5. Be willing and eager to serve others, and disciple others in helping them grow in their faith
6. Have a positive attitude and mindset, and strive to live without complaining or arguing (Phil 2:14-15)
7. Commit to sharing their gap year journey through blogging or social media as a way to reflect and invite others into what God is doing and how He working.

