

Water 101 Academy

2023 Syllabus



Photo: Scientists use non-hazardous green dye in a tracer study at the Budd Avenue Percolation Pond in Campbell.



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Photo: Biologists capture and relocate steelhead trout from Coyote Creek before the drawdown of Anderson Dam. .

Objectives

The Water 101 Academy is a program for community members who want to gain an understanding of local water issues, existing opportunities and challenges in the water industry, and current or future projects going on in their local communities.

This program aims to educate, inspire, and empower a diverse group of community members who will advocate clean and safe water issues and promote environmental stewardship within their neighborhoods and local communities.

Graduates of this academy will become Water Ambassadors, a network of well-informed, community advocates who serve as neighborhood liaisons/leaders to engage Valley Water's diverse communities in ongoing water and environmental stewardship dialogue and help raise public awareness on important water issues, available resources, and address misinformation.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, participants will:

1. Understand regional and state water challenges.
2. Understand role of Valley Water (mission/pillars)
3. Gain broad understanding of critical Valley Water projects
4. Understand the organizational structure and people behind their water.
5. Identify critical water issues in their communities.
6. Understand how they can help advance water dialogue in their communities.

Our Assumptions

It is the belief of Valley Water that participants selected to be part of the Water 101 Academy cohort are genuinely interested in learning about local and state water and environmental issues with the purpose of helping us give their community a voice in the conversations.

Format

The academy will be facilitated mostly online, and program staff will communicate important session information via email. Participants will need reliable access to a computer and the internet.

Sessions are scheduled every two weeks on Thursdays from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise stated. Sessions 1-4 will be conducted via Zoom while Session 5 and Graduation will be in-person.

Course materials will be available electronically via Egnyte:

Egnyte link: N/A

Password: N/A

Participants are expected to:

- Be on time for sessions.
- Have cameras on during online sessions.
- Check their email regularly and respond when needed.
- Notify staff of any technical difficulties as soon as possible.

Accommodations

In compliance with equal access laws, we are available to discuss reasonable accommodations that may be required by participants. We encourage you to reach out early to Valley Water staff to discuss your needs.

Requirements

In order to receive a certificate of completion and graduate as a water ambassador, participants are expected to meet the following requirements:

1. Session attendance: Participants are expected to attend each of the two-hour sessions in their entirety.
2. Course material: It is the responsibility of each participant to review provided materials as part of their Water 101 Academy experience.
3. Networking Sessions: Participants are expected to engage and contribute during networking sessions. Please see the Networking Sessions section on page 6.



Photo: Water flows over the Uvas Reservoir spillway after the January 2023 winter storms.

Guiding Principles

We understand that our members represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. Valley Water is committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects and reflects diversity. While working together to build this community we believe:

- Leadership can be a catalyst for change and can help advance us toward a more equitable world.
- Everyone is capable of leadership and positive influence regardless of race, gender, ethnicity and other socio-economic factors.
- Helping participants understand local and regional water issues and the ongoing work allows them to become active contributors in the conversation on water issues in their communities.
- Leadership is a shared responsibility that requires collaboration, diversity of thought and is best experienced in the context of community.
- Community leaders are critical and can serve a key role as liaisons between the community and Valley Water, ensuring all segments of our community have a voice at the table.
- Valley Water has a responsibility to ensure our community has access to relevant and accurate information and resources so that individual members of our community can make informed decisions about water/environmental issues impacting them and their communities.

Schedule

Session	Topics
Session 1 April 6 Value of Water: Water Challenges in California and Silicon Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program overview • Introductions • California State Water Project • Valley Water Speakers Bureau
Session 2 April 20 Where does your water come from?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water utility overview • Budget and rate setting • Water supply planning and conservation
Session 3 May 4 Watershed Works in Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watershed overview • Coyote Creek Project • Safe, Clean Water & Natural Flood Protection Program
Session 4 May 18 Water is Life: Securing Our Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency planning • Drought and conservation • Purified Water Project • Public Affairs efforts
Session 5 June 3 (Saturday) 8:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. Let's get WET (Water Education Tour)	In-person Water Education Tour (subject to change) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Llagas Creek Flood Protection Project • Anderson Dam Tunnel Project • Grants Project Site • San Francisco Bay Shoreline Project • Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center
June 15 Graduation	In-person at Valley Water headquarters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduation ceremony • Networking mixer

Networking Sessions

Sessions 1-4 will include time to network with other people from your district. As you share ideas, keep in mind this overarching goal of Water Ambassadors: Advance water and environmental initiatives in my community. How can you help your fellow future Water Ambassadors achieve this goal?

Discussion topics:

- All sessions:
 - Discuss key takeaways from the day's presentations. Are there questions you'd like to bring to the whole group?
- Session 1:
 - Introduce yourself and your background.
 - Identify your community, aka your target audience.
- Session 2:
 - What are the needs of your community?
 - Which of those needs align with your interests?
- Session 3:
 - How can you feasibly meet the needs of your community?
- Session 4:
 - What are the next steps in making your idea a real initiative?