

# Financing your Tuition for ELIP

The Ecological Literacy Immersion Program (ELIP) is an investment in your curiosity, understanding of the natural world, connection to place and community, knowledge, skills, and experience —that can be applied to your life, relationships, work and future studies. By developing our thinking and awareness, new solutions, renewed purpose, and creativity emerge assisting us as we address personal, societal, and planetary challenges.

## Our Commitment & Your Help

ELIP is very closely tied to the mission work of the Omega Center for Sustainable Living (OCSL), and Omega has therefore underwritten a portion of the program costs to keep the tuition as low as possible for this 4-week residential course.

Even still, we understand that funding your participation in ELIP can take some planning. We don't have the capacity to supply full scholarships to the program, and work to stretch our scholarship funds to assist several applicants a year. We therefore strongly encourage participants to actively pursue self-funding opportunities to help make their own participation possible.

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## Getting Started

There are countless, creative, and fun ways to raise and save money for ELIP. Many people have found that working on self-financing can have an added benefit of getting them more involved within their own communities, and that learning about fundraising proves to be an important skill.

Asking for help can feel intimidating, but you will likely find that your family, friends, and neighbors want to support you in gaining new skills that increase your abilities and have direct benefits in your life, and within your community.

Here are some common ideas to help you get started, and some that you may not have thought of before. We will continue to collect examples and post ideas from ELIP alums and others as we come across the successes that people have had in raising funds.

- **Budget & Save.** Set a realistic goal of how much you need to save a day, a week, or a month to build up to your tuition costs. Even a little bit at a time adds up. You may want to eat out less and make it more special. You may have fewer impulse buys since you'll have a reason to save. Also remember that we will feed you for 4 weeks while you are at Omega, so your normal food budget for July can be redirected.
- **Barter your time.** Think of your skill set and how that can translate into exchanges for funding. Maybe you can help a family member fix his or her computer, take a friend's dog for walks, or babysit – what else can you offer in exchange for financial support towards ELIP?

- **Redirect Gifts.** Do you have a birthday or other holiday coming up? Ask your friends and family to donate towards ELIP in exchange for gifts they might otherwise purchase for you.
- **Host an Event.** Set up a fundraising event such as a 5k run/walk, a garage sale, an auction, a raffle, a community meal, or other social event to raise money
- **Crowd Source Your Tuition.** Create a crowd funding campaign on a platform like Indegogo, Kickstarter, GoFundme or Patreon to request support from friends and family remotely. This will compel you to make a strong case for why you want to participate in the program, what you feel you will gain, and how you plan to give back afterward. Be creative in the gifts that you offer to your supporters.
- **Rent Out Your Space.** Sublet your room or house for the month of ELIP.
- **Sell Your Wares.** Sell unnecessary belongings, crafts, art or veggies/flowers/herbs you grow and/or process in your local farmers markets, community events, yard sales, or on websites such as Etsy, Craigslist and EBay.
- **Design a T-Shirt.** Are you artistic or creative? Everyone loves a really nice shirt, bag, mug, hand dyed scarf, or other fashionable/useful item that they enjoy wearing or using and can feel good about purchasing. Create or commission something that has a color, image, design, esthetic and/or practicality that you would love to wear or find very useful yourself and others will want one too.
- **Pick Up A Side Job.** There are many short term opportunities to make a few extra bucks!
- **Use Your College Financing.** In some cases students are able to use ELIP as an independent study at their own school, or use student loans or other money earmarked for education by taking the 3 credits for ELIP offered by SUNY ESF.
- **Look into a Tax Deduction.** Your tuition may be tax deductible as an education expense if you itemize taxes or file as a small business. If you are claimed as a dependent on someone else's taxes and they help finance your tuition it may be a deduction for them.
- **Ask for Professional Development Funding** from your workplace. Some past participants have come fully funded by their employers.
- **Share What You Learn.** Ask your community or organization if they would support you in return for a presentation, mentoring, or a workshop, after the course on what you learned during the experience.
- **Bring a Friend or Colleague.** Would your community support a 2<sup>nd</sup> person? If you come with a family member, friend or colleague you will have someone to share and amplify the experience and perspective for future shared endeavors.

If you have any other fundraising ideas, please let us know at [ocslscholarships@eomega.org](mailto:ocslscholarships@eomega.org) so we can add them to our evolving list of suggestions.

By generating your own funding, we hope you will feel empowered, self-directed, and better equipped for your future projects and endeavors.