

Why pursue kayak instructor certification?

What does it take to get and maintain certification?

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**Who has received paddling instruction from an ACA - certified instructor?**

**What made that instruction different?**



If you have received good instruction,  
you understand the value of good instructors.



# Benefits to the kayak instructor...

- It's fun!
- Learn what you don't know
- It will make you a better paddler (Empowering)
- Safer
- Give back to the paddling community





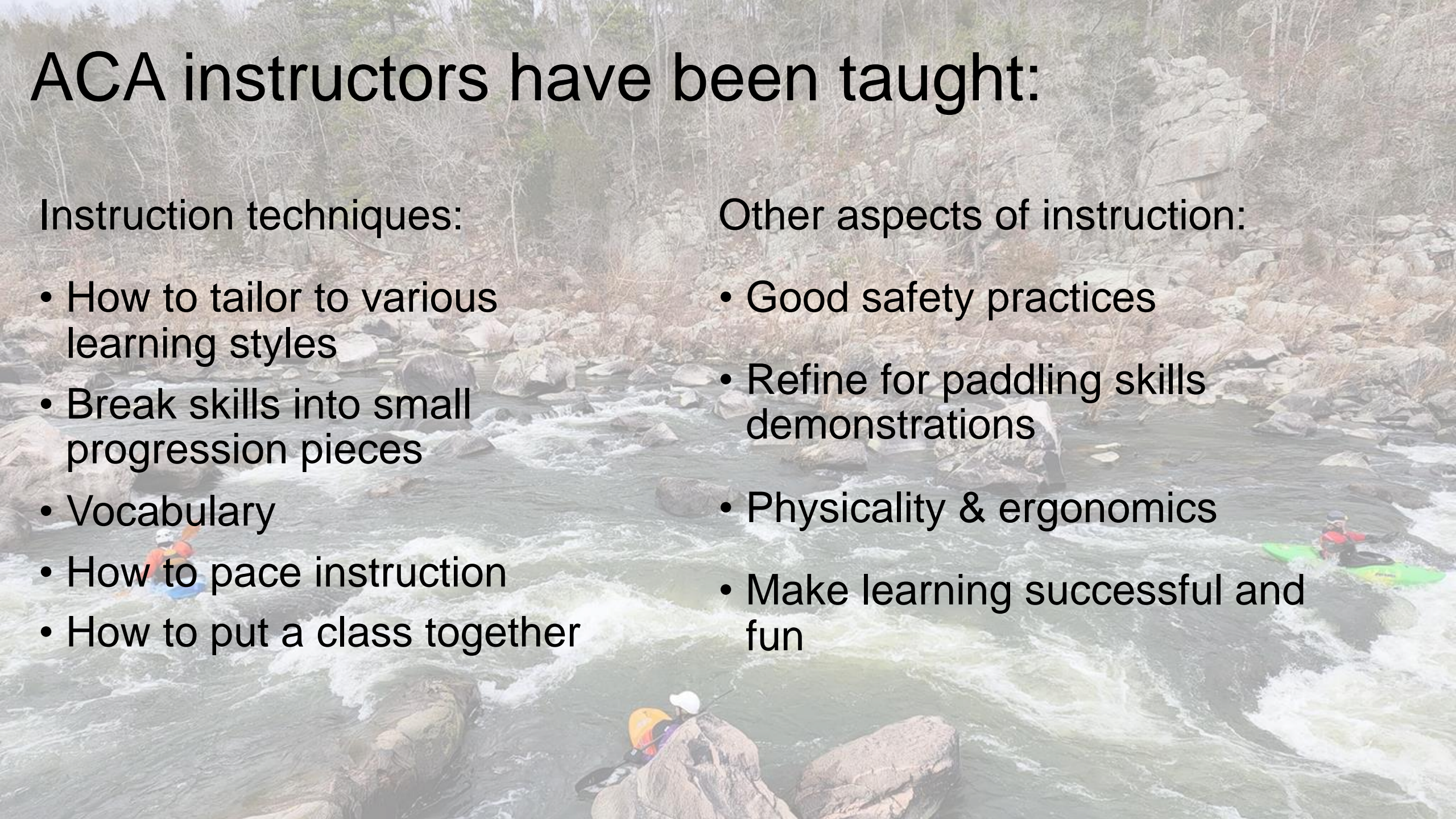
# ACA instructors have been taught:

## Instruction techniques:

- How to tailor to various learning styles
- Break skills into small progression pieces
- Vocabulary
- How to pace instruction
- How to put a class together

## Other aspects of instruction:

- Good safety practices
- Refine for paddling skills demonstrations
- Physicality & ergonomics
- Make learning successful and fun





# Who credentials kayak instructors?

The American Canoe Association (ACA) - founded in 1880.

- ACA Instructors working to an established level of quality.
- ACA instructor certification is the “gold standard” for instruction.





# Other benefits of instructors' ACA affiliation

- ACA Safety & Rescue committee
- Instructors can use ACA insurance
- Pro-Deal pricing with many vendors (gear)





# ACA offers a variety of instruction curricula (see [Types of ACA Paddlesport Courses](#)):

- Skills courses (many)
- Skills assessments
- **Instructor certifications**
- Endorsements
  - E.g.: [Adaptive Paddling](#); SUP Yoga; River Kayaking Day Trip Leading, etc. ([Course Curriculum – ACA](#))
- Instructor Trainers (Instructors may not certify other instructors)



# Steps to becoming a kayak instructor

Learn how to paddle (separate from instructor certification)

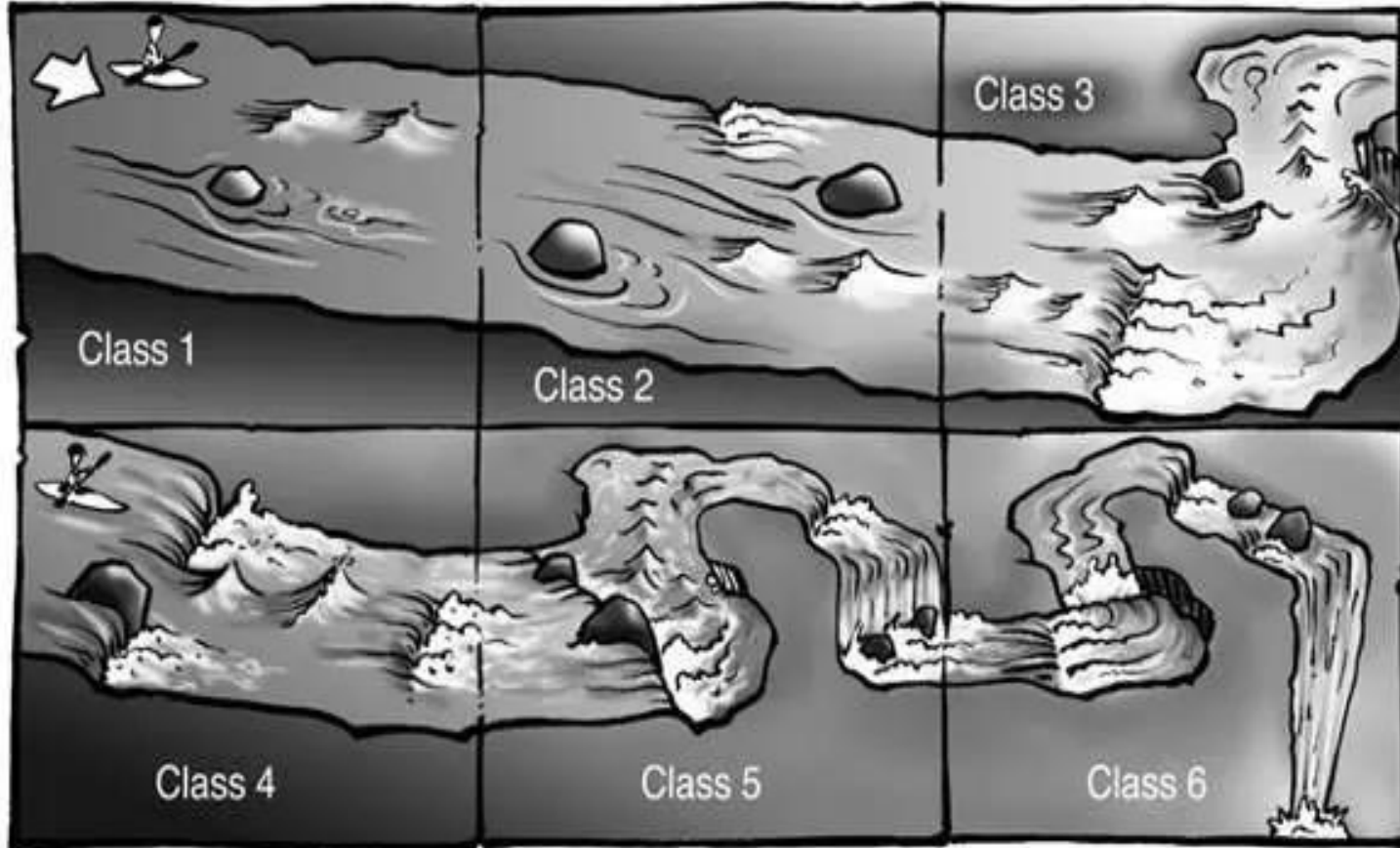
1. **ACA Skills assessment**
2. **ACA Instructor Certification (IC) training**
3. Receive endorsed training in
  - **CRP**; and
  - **First Aid** (or Wilderness First Aid, depending on teaching venue)





# ACA Levels of River Kayaking skills

## instruction - [Course Curriculum - ACA](#)



- [Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking](#) - beginner paddlers. (Suggested 8< hours of instruction).

- [Level 3: River Kayaking](#) – skills for rivers rated class I-II. (8< hrs instruction).

[Level 4: Whitewater Kayaking](#)  
- for moving water on rivers including class II-III sections. (2 days; 16< hrs).

[Level 5: Advanced Whitewater Kayaking](#) – for class III-IV whitewater.



# 1. ACA Skills Assessment Course

Designed to evaluate your ability to perform all of the skills listed:

- [Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking](#)
- [Level 3: River Kayaking](#)
- [Level 4: Whitewater Kayaking](#)

An ACA Instructor at desired level or <  
Can tutor on skills = teaching.





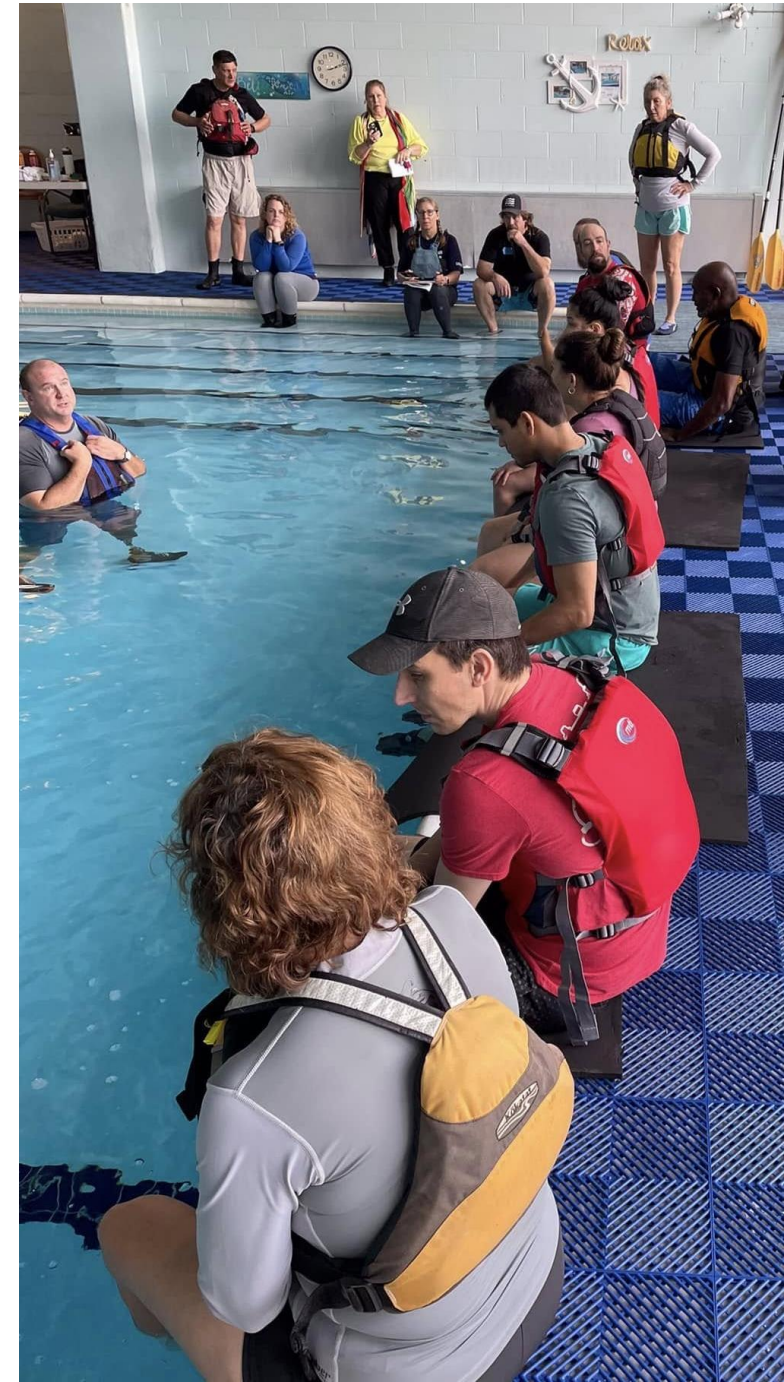
# ACA Instructor Certification Course (ICC)

Focused on learning kayak instruction (vs paddling skills).

Content to be covered in each level of ICC is available on the web:

- [Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking](#) – min. 24 hours (3 days)
- [Level 3: River Kayaking](#) – 32 hrs (4 days)
- [Level 4: Whitewater Kayaking](#) – 40 hrs (5 days)

Describes an instructor's scope of practice.





# ACA Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking – after ICC, Instructor Demonstrate...

- Knowledge of ACA administrative processes
  - Knowledge of and model teaching and learning theory
  - “Soft skills”: Positive interpersonal skills; Group management skills; Ability to choose an appropriate venue / class site
- Ability to teach and model techniques and concepts...
- Paddling efficiently and comfortably in the venue
  - Basic kayak paddle strokes and maneuvers
  - Safety and rescue
  - Swimming and wading
  - Kayak-based rescue
  - Throwable floating aid or throw rope
  - The following: American Whitewater Safety Code; Water reading and paddling in current; Eddies, eddy turns, and peel outs; Front ferry; Weather reading; Cold water shock; River signaling; Float plan; Kayak nomenclature; Paddle; Safety equipment;
  - Paddle and perform rescues



# Steps to Finalizing & Maintaining kayak instructor credential

1. ACA Skills assessment
2. ACA Instructor Certification training
  - Your instructor trainer document your completion of ACA Instructor Certification Course (ICC) & the level.
3. Maintain from a nationally recognized provider a hands-on training of:
  - CRP
  - First Aid (or Wilderness First Aid, depending on level of remoteness of your teaching venue)

Document completion with ACA.





# Maintenance of Instructor Certification:

- Valid through December 31 of the 4<sup>th</sup> full year following certification (12/31/30 for people certified during 2025).
- Within each 4-year certification period, ACA instructors:
  - a. Maintain annual **ACA membership and Safety Education and Instruction Council's (SEIC) registration.**
  - b. Teach and properly report **2 classes every 4 years.**
  - c. Successfully complete an “ACA **Instructor Update Course**” during the certification period (or assist an IT).





# ACA Kayak Instructor Costs

\$ 25	ACA Assessment, min (if a club member offers)
\$ 450	<a href="#"><u>MWA Kayak Instructor Certification, ACA L2 course, three-day (24-hour min) course, 05/30/2025 – 06/01/2025.</u></a>
	<a href="#"><u>\$600 - MWA Kayak Instructor Certification, blended ACA L3 &amp; L4 course, five-day (40-hour min) course, 04/09/2025 – 04/13/2025.</u></a>
\$ 40	ACA Individual <b>Annual</b> Membership
\$ 30	Safety Education and Instruction Council's (SEIC) <b>Annual</b> Dues
\$ 40	CPR (cost varies), approx. 1.5 hours, <b>2 years</b>
\$ 40	First Aid (cost varies), approx. 1.5 hours, <b>2 years</b>
	\$220 Wilderness First Aid (WFA) (cost varies), 2-day (16 hours min) course
<b>\$ 625</b>	<b>min. in Year 1 (min \$920 for 4 years)</b>
\$ 200	Recertification / Update, 16-hour course, due 4 years after initial instructor certification.



# Why do some groups cover these fees?

## **Creating a culture of skilled paddlers.**

Many paddling clubs make money from training.

Level 2 & 3. 5 : 1 Ratio (5 Participants : 1 Instructor); with an additional qualified assistant, the ratio can be 10 : 2.

- MWA's skills clinic April 26-27, 2025

MWA Member (\$85) & Non-member (\$100) = possible \$425 in tuition per instructor.

- Arkansas Canoe Club Whitewater School, May 2-4, 2025

\$125 = possible \$625 in tuition per instructor.

- MRWTA Intro to Paddling, June 7, 2025, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

\$25 = possible \$125 in tuition per instructor.

# Paddling Groups & Reimbursement

- MWA & Arkansas Canoe Club (ACC) - reimburse members for instructor certification (& other trainings / expenses).
- MRWTA - paid the instructor trainer (IT) to train a group.
- Team River Runner (TRR) - national VA grant to cover veterans' ACA tuition.







Discussion?

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# Criteria of an ACA Instructor:

(Safety Education and Instruction Council Policy Manual)

- Knowledge of and advocacy for ACA, and Safety Education and Instruction Council's (SEIC) with positive representation
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria
- Promote safe, effective, and efficient practices
- Selection of appropriate teaching venue
- Organizational skills, including time management
- Data - Course Management System (CMS)
- Evaluation skills
- Integrity
- Student centered learning
- Debriefing and reflective skills
- Utilization of educational resources
- Utilizes a variety of current educational best practices and teaching theory
- Positive interpersonal skills:
  1. Solution oriented
  2. Active listening
  3. Self-awareness and self-assessment
  4. Collaboration and adaptability
  5. Empathy and compassion
  6. Humility and vulnerability
  7. Encouraging and enabling creativity
  8. Ability to hold boundaries