



Flagship Niagara Sailing Program

Flagship Niagara League, Inc. ♦ 150 East Front Street, Suite 100, Erie, PA 16507 ♦ 814.452.2744 ♦ www.flagshipniagara.org

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION for SSV Niagara Students

Please read the following carefully. You will have little free time upon arrival to the ship because of the intensive orientation schedule; therefore, please consider your preparations well in advance. Any additional information concerning your trip will be sent approximately a month before the program begins.

I. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AND FORMS

The documents listed below must be reviewed carefully and returned to the FNL Office according to the following schedule:

Documents Requiring Your Review:	Schedule for Returning Forms to the FNL Office:
1. Preliminary Information	Keep this document for your reference.
2. Student Enrollment Application Form	Fully complete and submit application to join the Flagship Niagara Sailing Program. Remember to include a \$350 payment for the application processing fee (\$50) and the non-refundable deposit (\$300).
3. Preliminary Accommodations Form	Submit with the Student Enrollment Application Form
4. Student Contract	Submit with the Student Enrollment Application Form
5. Medical Record	Submit no sooner than 90 calendar days, nor later than 30 calendar days prior to your scheduled date of arrival onboard.
6. Packing Guidelines	Keep for your reference.
7. Welcome Aboard Form	Submit no later than 14 calendar days prior to your scheduled date of arrival onboard.
8. International Travel and Guardianship Authorization Form	If the student applicant is a minor (under age 18), this form must be submitted with the Welcome Aboard Form above.
9. Welcome Aboard Packet (Final Instructions, Captain's Introductory Letter, and Crew Handbook)	Keep for your reference. Don't forget to bring the Crew Handbook with you to when you join the vessel!

Application for Enrollment: Read carefully the “*Preliminary Information*” and “*Student Contract*” documents. Complete and sign the “*Flagship Niagara Student Enrollment Application Form*”, “*FNL Preliminary Accommodations Form*”, and the “*Student Contract*”, and submit them ASAP and at least 90 days prior to the program start date. Remember to submit a \$350 payment for the application processing fee (\$50), and the initial tuition deposit (\$300) with the application documents listed above. Submit to:

Flagship Niagara League, Inc
150 E. Front Street, Suite 100
Erie, PA 16507
Attn: Julie Wagner, Sailing Program Coordinator

Contact Julie Wagner at (814) 452-2744, x222 if you have any questions about the application process, required documents, payment, or the Flagship Niagara Sailing Program in general.

Within two weeks of our receipt of your application, we will conduct a criminal history background check. Students must have no criminal history in order to participate in the FNL/ Flagship Niagara Sailing Program. Within three weeks, we will provide you with confirmation of your enrollment or the reason you were not accepted for enrollment.

Upon your enrollment, you will receive a Confirmation Letter indicating your acceptance into the program. This acceptance is contingent upon passing a physical examination as described in the “*Medical Record*” form. Applicants who do not meet the medical fitness requirements described in the Medical Record form are entitled to a refund of all tuition, including the initial \$300 deposit.

The confirmation letter will include instructions on how to download, print, complete, and return the “*Medical Record*” form. Also, included with the Confirmation Letter will be an invoice for the next payment due and a payment schedule for the remaining tuition and fees.

**Properly completed application forms (as described above), the \$50 application fee, initial \$300 deposit, and continued payment for tuition and fees according to the payment schedule are required to secure and maintain the reservation of your space onboard.*

Preliminary Medical Accommodations Form- It is extremely important to communicate any need for special accommodations on the *FNL Preliminary Accommodations Form* and submit it to FNL with the *Student Application Form* and application fee. Required special accommodations must be carefully reviewed by our staff to identify any potential safety concerns involved and determine the appropriateness of the student’s participation in the Flagship Niagara Sailing Program.

Student Contract. This is a very important legal document, which includes information about risk, required consent, and a waiver of liability. Read it carefully, and keep a copy for your records. This document must be signed by the applicant (and by the applicant’s parent/guardian if under age 18) and submitted with the Student Enrollment Application.

Medical Record: After your Student Enrollment Application is processed as approved, you must obtain a physical examination by a licensed physician, document it on our “Medical Record” form, and submit it to the address above no earlier than 90 days prior to, nor later than 30 days prior to the start of your program. You must be cleared by your physician AND by our Medical Review Officer to participate in an FNL/SSV Niagara Sailing Program. Return the entire Medical Record form, properly completed and signed by you (and your parent/guardian if under age 18) and by a licensed physician by no later than 30 days prior to your arrival on the ship. Submit these forms to FNL, ATTN: Sailing Program Coordinator.

IMPORTANT: All medical issues must be brought to the attention of FNL. Without proper authorization, a medical officer or doctor may be unable to render vital treatment ashore or at sea. Please notify us if you have been exposed to a contagious disease, or if any change in your health occurs between the time of your physical exam and the beginning of your program.

Be sure to consult your doctor and FNL if there is any possible medical reason that would prevent you from engaging fully in activities underway or ashore. If you require regular medication, bring an adequate supply and store with the medical officer while on board ship. There is **not** a physician on board the SSV Niagara, but we do have access via satellite telephone (presuming it is functioning properly) to seek medical advice from an emergency medical physician on shore. The ship’s medical officer onboard is trained and certificated as Medical Care Provider and Medical Person in Charge in accordance with the provisions of the International Maritime Organization’s Standards for Certification and Training of Watchkeepers. This training focuses on basic emergency life support and first aid, and is similar to “EMT-B”, such as would assist a Paramedic in an ambulance onshore.

Insurance Verification. FNL does not carry medical insurance for students and accepts no liability for medical costs. You **MUST** have coverage for sickness, accident and hospitalization on shore as well as at sea. Because the United States and Canadian border crosses most of the Great Lakes, **it is imperative that your coverage extends to Canada, unless sailing exclusively in Lake Michigan.** Be sure the information provided on your FNL Student Medical Record is current and complete, and notify the FNL prior to boarding the ship of any changes that occur to your health insurance or medical condition, including any medications you begin taking after the FNL Student Medical Record is submitted.

Passports and Travel in Canada. The captain could decide to seek safe harbor in a Canadian port, even if the Canadian port is not a scheduled stop. Therefore, it is **imperative** that you have a passport. Non-US citizens/ resident aliens may also require a B2 Tourist Visa. Contact the Julie Wagner, Sailing Program Coordinator if you are not a US Citizen. You need to **mail us a copy of your passport** along with your “Welcome Aboard” form prior to arrival. If you do not have a passport, apply immediately as it takes 4-6 weeks to process.

II. PROGRAMS ORIGINATING OR TERMINATING IN ERIE, PA:

When in Erie, all students are expected to live onboard the ship, unless excused to stay ashore by the Captain. At least one crewmember will be on duty aboard the ship at all times while in Erie and will function as the Captain's representative to watch over the ship, the crew, and the students. Please take note of the following:

- Meals in Erie, PA will be prepared and served from the kitchen and dining room in the Erie Maritime Museum. The cost of food is included in the cost of the program.
- There is one washing machine and one dryer, which are accessible in the Erie Maritime Museum basement at no charge to students for laundry. However, it may be inaccessible often, as there is only one of each type of machine. We will send out laundry at least once every 10-14 days, so pack according to our recommended "Packing List".
- No Pets.
- Students may bring their vehicles to the Erie Maritime Museum and park for free. A bicycle may be helpful to have during the time spent in Erie, but cannot be taken onboard the ship.

III. TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Getting to/from Erie, PA. The Erie Maritime Museum is located at 150 East Front Street, Suite 100, Erie, PA 16507, roughly equidistant between Cleveland, OH and Buffalo, NY on the southern shore of Lake Erie. You may use either the Erie International Airport (ERI), Cleveland Hopkins International Airport (CLE), or the Buffalo Niagara International Airport (BUF) to fly into the region. The BUF and CLE airports are approximately 95 miles from Erie. The Erie International Airport is typically a bit more expensive than the larger city airports, but is most convenient. The Erie Int. Airport is located about 6.6 miles west of the Erie Maritime Museum. Contact Erie Yellow Cab at 814-455-4441.

Bus. There are 7 buses each day that run from the Greyhound Downtown Station in Cleveland to Erie starting at 6:50am until 10:45pm. There are 7 buses each day that run directly from the Buffalo Niagara Int. Airport to Erie starting at 8am until 11pm. For more information, and exact departure times, contact Greyhound in Erie at 814-453-2171. The Erie Greyhound station is located at 208 East Bayfront Parkway in the Intermodal Transportation Center, about 100 yards East of the Erie Maritime Museum and Niagara's berth.

Getting from Cleveland Hopkins Int. Airport to Cleveland Greyhound Station. Take a taxi (\$30-\$40), but the cheapest way is to take the RTA (Rapid Transit Authority) to Tower City. From there, take a taxi to the Greyhound Downtown Station (about 2 miles). From there, take the bus to Erie, PA Intermodal Transportation Center.

Joining the ship. Students should plan to join the ship at the designated time and date. Please make every effort to arrive on time, as scheduled. Shortly after arrival you will participate in a 2-hour Vessel Familiarization Orientation, and will then be assigned a sea-bag, hammock, and berthing location assignment. Plan to transfer your belongings from

your bags into the ship's sea-bag before the end of your first day onboard. Note: you will not be allowed to sign aboard unless you have passed the physical examination, paid your tuition, and submitted to FNL the required forms noted above.

Itinerary. The precise itinerary and intermediate ports of your cruise may depend upon weather conditions, vessel maintenance or repair needs, the unpredictable timing of educational projects, etc. Though scheduled arrival and departure times are normally met, they are subject to change or delay.

Port Calls. On the average, three to four days are spent in port during each scheduled port visit. While ashore, including Erie, PA you are guests in the community. The dictates of common sense and courtesy should be followed - presentable appearance, politeness, respect for local laws and customs, and mature behavior.

Leaving the Ship. Prior to your departure from the ship, you will be required to transfer your belongings from the ship's sea-bag into your own bags. Utilize your time in port responsibly to insure that you have time to stow your hammock and sea-bag properly for the next arriving student.

Tickets. Tickets for travel to and from the ship should be secured in advance, only after your application is accepted and you are medically cleared by our Medical Review Officer. You will receive detailed information specific to your voyage prior to program start. Return tickets may be deposited with the Captain for safekeeping during the cruise.

IV. CURRICULUM

Students participate in a Niagara-specific sail training program while onboard the ship, which is designed to marry with any academic curriculum offered by our partner institutions. That said, the sail training curriculum combined with an academic curriculum can be demanding of time, and exhaustive in content. Typically at sea, the sail training component is taught throughout the day and night during the ship's watch schedule, and the academic curriculum (typically) is taught during daily afternoon class from 2pm to 4pm. Frequently academic practicum is performed intermittently during the student's watch period. See the Flagship Niagara Crew Handbook for daily watch schedule details.

Transcripts. Official transcripts for accredited academic programs are available from our partner institutions supplying the credit upon completion of the program. FNL does not provide transcripts, but can provide a Certificate of Seetime upon request and at the end of or shortly after the cruise.

Library, Computers, and Personal Electronic Devices. The Erie Maritime Museum has several IBM PC's available for student use. Limited internet access is available from these computers. There is a computer lab in the public library next door to the Erie Maritime Museum. The Sailing Program Coordinator can provide students with a letter indicating your residence onboard Niagara, which will allow out-of-town students to obtain a library card. The SSV Niagara also has limited wireless access onboard the ship, but it is only available in port and when not conducting public tours as a museum ship/ attraction vessel.

In general, personal electronic devices should be left at home or only used while on shore. There is a very limited capacity for charging personal electronic devices onboard the ship.

V. INSTRUCTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Physical Conditioning. Get in shape before joining the ship. You will enjoy the cruise more and be a healthier, more effective participant. You will also be less subject to stress and injury.

Diet. FNL is unable to arrange for special diets or eating habits. Students may not bring food or cook their own individual meals aboard ship. Vegetarians and people accustomed to health foods must be cautioned that canned and processed foods are used frequently at sea. Life aboard ship can be strenuous. Consult your doctor for further advice. Inform FNL of dietary restrictions if necessary.

Money. You will require money for expenses while traveling to and from the ship. Most students bring extra cash to make small purchases in port, experience local cuisine, etc. The ship cannot cash checks. Money may be deposited with the Captain in the ship's safe.

Mail. We generally encourage students to make arrangements so that the receipt of mail is not necessary for programs of 3 weeks duration or less. However, correspondence and packages, especially for longer programs, may be sent to:

**SSV Niagara
Flagship Niagara League, Inc.
150 East Front Street, Suite 100
Erie, PA 16507
Attn: "Your Name- Student"**

Occasionally we have access to a mailing address in our anticipated ports of call, contact the Sailing Program Coordinator for more information. PLEASE NOTE: Rarely are we able to forward letters (never packages) to you in other ports; but in any case, all letters received for you during your program will be delivered to you at your final point of departure or mailed to your home address.

Telephone. While in Erie, PA the crew lounge telephone extension in the Erie Maritime Museum is available for contacting you from the outside. The extension there is x204. Long distance calls may be made with a calling card. While sailing upon the Great Lakes, the ship maintains a daily email or satellite telephone communication schedule with the FNL office.

Routine personal messages will not be transmitted; however, important/ urgent messages may be passed through the FNL Office to the ship. The primary means of contacting students for important or urgent reasons while they are onboard the ship is through the office (call 814-452-2744, x222) and the student will receive the message as soon as is practicable.

Emergency Contact: For immediate family of students onboard only, these numbers are to be used in an EMERGENCY SITUATION ONLY. Know the name of the captain, which will be in command onboard the ship during your program. If there is a serious emergency at home while you are sailing onboard Niagara, your family will need to inform you ASAP. Instruct your parents/ spouse/ next of kin to contact the captain which is NOT sailing on the ship. He can contact the ship directly via satellite telephone. The office communicates via email or telephone with the ship daily. However, messages are typically delivered to the ship within 24-hours or by mid-day on Monday for messages delivered over the weekend.

Emergency contact information for the ship's captains is as follows:

Captain Wesley W. Heerssen's mobile telephone: (814) 823-3744

Senior Captain Walter Rybka's mobile telephone: (717) 574-8278

Carrying Valuables, Cash, and Traveler's Checks. FNL recommends that students travel with an ATM/ MAC card to access cash in ports. If this is not feasible, bring traveler's checks. If a student is bringing more than \$250 in cash, we recommend depositing a portion or all of the cash in the Captain's safe for withdrawal later when in port. Small valuables such as important documents and jewelry can be deposited in the Captain's safe for safe keeping, but students are strongly discouraged from bringing any valuable items such as precious jewelry onboard.

Communication with Family. As a courtesy please try to keep your family informed of your activities and whereabouts. They will appreciate telephone calls and letters. Upon final departure from the ship making them aware of your travel plans/itinerary becomes mandatory!

Communication with FNL. Be sure to call or write the Sailing Program Coordinator's Office – Julie Wagner –x222 (jwagner@flagshipniagara.org) if you have any questions. Please keep us informed of any changes in your plans prior to the beginning of your class (including address and phone changes).

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ONBOARD NIAGARA!