



SERENITY RIDGE SERVICE-BASED RESIDENCY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Serenity Ridge Retreat Center (“Serenity Ridge” or “Center”), thirty minutes south of Charlottesville, Virginia, offers virtual and in-person retreats throughout the year. The Center is a part of, and the headquarters of, Ligmincha International, a non-profit organization dedicated to sharing meditation and spiritual practices from the Bön Buddhist tradition of Tibet.

Serenity Ridge supports meditators and spiritual seekers through group and individual retreats, day-long activities, online programs and opportunities for service. The center can house up to 70 people in dormitories, guest rooms and campsites, and seat as many as one hundred and fifty people per event. Our kitchen provides up to three vegetarian, vegan and gluten free meals per day during retreats. The center consists of 75 acres of forest and 18 acres of open land on a ridgeline.

We are committed to providing a welcoming atmosphere for all guests to explore the teachings of Bön and other spiritual traditions, cultivate self-knowledge, and discover their own true nature. As a community we value diversity and inclusiveness and the potential of all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment.

Serenity Ridge’s Residency Program

Service as a sacred act is a powerful tool for self-transformation. At the Center, our Residency Program emphasizes service as a spiritual practice in its own right while also giving time and space for formal practice. A limited number of positions are open to those with a deep commitment to spiritual practice as a way of life, as well as at least six months of experience with a regular daily practice. Applicants should also have a spiritual focus on or interest in the Bön Buddhist tradition, as well as a desire to do service (20 hours per week) on behalf of our community and as an expression of their own practice for a period of one to 12 months.

Our main goal with this program is to build community through practice and service. Serenity Ridge and its staff work to provide Residents a safe and supportive environment for personal study, spiritual practice, and selfless service.

Residency Benefits

The benefits of the program to the Resident generally consist of the following:

- A safe and supportive space and community for spiritual practice
- Dedicated time for daily practice
- Opportunity for support from Lamas and Senior Instructors (seasonally available)
- Opportunity for service to the Ligmincha community of practice, Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and our resident lamas and teachers
- Free participation at Serenity Ridge hosted retreats by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche or our resident lamas, that do not have unmet prerequisites. This excludes training programs and outside rental groups.
- Use of sacred spaces for meditation when not in use by programs: the gumpa (main meditation hall) and Garuda House shrine room
- Access to nature trails and the pool (when seasonally open)
- Onsite housing
- 20 percent discount at the bookstore
- Meals provided during retreats (see food options below during non-retreat times)
- Laundry machines are available for use.

Please note that a Resident Lama is not available at all times throughout the year. If this aspect of the program is important to you, please check with us to determine the availability of a Resident Lama on site prior to submitting your application.

Prerequisites

To be considered for the Residency Program, an applicant should have the following qualifications:

- A deep devotion to spiritual practice as a way of life, as well as at least six months of experience with a regular daily practice.
- An interest in exploring the teachings and practices Bön tradition, and a willingness to engage with Bön practices during the time of one's tenure.
- Prior retreat experience, either at a retreat center or in solo retreat.
- Applicants should be self-motivated and with a strong self-directed practice for times when there is not a Lama or teacher in residence.
- Three references who can speak to practice experience and/or character, including at least one person with whom you have worked.
- Review and agree to abide by Ligmincha's Code of Conduct. *Please note that the [Code of Conduct](#) states that residents may not bring non-prescription/recreational drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products on campus in any shape or form. This includes THC based products and its derivatives.*
- Agree to a background check before the start of a residency at Serenity Ridge..

Applicants for the Residency Program who lack one or more of the below may still be considered for the program, but only with the expressed consent of Serenity Ridge administration. We try to accommodate and meet the needs of those with disabilities or health issues that may prohibit certain forms of service.

On a practical level, Residents must be able to:

- Able to live and engage on projects in community and in solitude
- Engage in a variety of environments (outdoors, kitchen, light building maintenance and housekeeping), both independently and with others
- Lift up to 30 pounds
- Maintain clear communication with their supervisor and other residents. WhatsApp is the program most often used, and so a cell phone is necessary during one's residency
- Follow instructions and complete tasks assigned by the manager
- Provide one's own means of reliable transportation to and from the center as needed
- Be comfortable living in a rural environment
- Have health insurance

Program Structure

Residencies are generally from 1 to 12 months, though it is possible to renew one's application for up to an additional six months in some circumstances, if approved by the Retreat Center Manager. Residencies may not extend beyond 18 months.

Service

In order to allow for sufficient time for practice, a limited amount of service is expected per day.

- *20 hours per week* (generally 4 hours per day, 5 days per week; this may be adjusted during retreat times).
- ***Residents are responsible for their own food and cooking, except during retreats, when meals are provided (except for rare, special occasions) . See below.***

Residents are expected to provide 60 minutes of community caretaking each week in "common" areas such as the kitchen, laundry area, Garuda House lounge, the Resident Lounge, and any other area frequently used.

General Program Framework

Sample Daily Schedule of Activities

7:00 – 8:00 a.m.: Practice

8:15 – 9:30 a.m.: Individual time for Breakfast

10:00 a.m. –12:00 p.m.: Service (may meet with supervisor)

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.: Lunch

1:00-3:00 p.m.: Service

3:00 pm–10:00 p.m. Practice/Free time

10:00 p.m.–6:00 a.m. Quiet Hours

NOTE: This is a sample schedule and may not be the schedule of all Residents.

Service

Residents will be assigned a 5-day schedule for service, usually (but not necessarily) with two consecutive days off per week. Generally, this schedule will be Monday through Friday, but during retreat periods or when larger numbers of Residents are onsite, the schedule may be changed to expand across weekends or with longer days. Residents will be given a primary area of responsibility, but may occasionally be moved temporarily depending on the needs of the center.

During Retreats

During retreats at Serenity Ridge retreats (not rental retreats), every effort is made to lighten the schedule of service and ensure that participation is possible. Residents will generally perform two hours of service on retreat days while attending all teachings and at least one practice session each day.

Emergency On-Call (EOC)

Each Resident not in their Provisional Period will be scheduled on a rotating basis for this role. This task cannot be replaced with another task. When a Resident is scheduled to be On-Call, they must remain on property during the times of 7 pm the night they are scheduled until 7 am the next morning, and be the point person for emergencies. The On-Call person is infrequently asked to respond to an emergency. This task is important to the safety of the center. Refusal to accept and perform this task will result in immediate dismissal from the program. Details are outlined in the [Emergency On-Call Policy](#). This is not part of the 20 hours of service required per week.

Food

Please note: Serenity Ridge is an entirely vegetarian eating environment. The cooking of meat is not permitted at any location on premises. However, residents may bring in pre-cooked meat and warm up in the microwave in the kitchenette on the main floor of Kunzang Khang.

See Residency Options, above for meal options.

When retreats are not in progress and meals not provided, residents are provided a kitchen to prepare their own meals, implementing proper and safe preparation, and thorough clean-up of all dish- and kitchenware. Residents share use of a designated kitchen. Time spent on meal preparation is not a part of service hours.

“Borrowing” of another retreatant’s food or unauthorized access to Ligmincha International/Serenity Ridge food inventories is considered theft, and may be subject to immediate dismissal from the program and request to depart Serenity Ridge.

Housing

Residents will be assigned a bunk in a bunk room, potentially with a roommate/s. Even if a room to oneself is initially assigned, at times, it may be necessary to share the room with another resident or

guest. Other lodging arrangements may be possible based on availability, schedule and Resident needs. Please enquire of the Serenity Ridge Retreat Center Manager to discuss such possibilities.

Departure: Residents agree to clean their rooms and other spaces they have used prior to their departure. **A \$150 deposit is required prior to the start of occupancy.** This deposit will be returned upon the successful completion of an inspection of the bunk room. Barring any damage by the resident, the deposit will be returned in full. 24 hours prior to departure, the Retreat Center Manager will do a walk through of their room. Residents are responsible for the cost to repair any damage they have done to their room.

Provisional Residency Period

The Provisional Residency is meant as a time for both the Resident and Serenity Ridge to get to know one other. To that end, all Residents must begin with a 30-day provisional period. There will be weekly check-ins to discuss how the Residency is working out from the perspective of both the Center and the Resident. During the provisional period, either party may terminate the relationship for any reason. The Center will provide at least one week advance notice if a Resident's position is terminated during this time period.

Termination of Residency for Cause

The principles of the Bön tradition include respect, kindness, and civility to all, at all times. Individuals found in violation of these principles, or who are in violation of Ligmincha International's Code of Conduct or other Serenity Ridge policies may be required to leave immediately.

Application Process for the Residency Program

Interested individuals may apply to the Residency Program by [clicking here](#). Please communicate any special requests for participation in the program in the application. And, please note that animals are not allowed on campus. Applicants will be notified upon receipt of application. On acceptance into the program, Serenity Ridge administration will work with you to set a start date, review the specifics of the program, and create a mutually beneficial plan. Upon acceptance, applicants will sign a Residency Agreement outlining terms of stay.