

# Program for Avocational Archaeological Certification

## Mini Guide to PAAC

The Program for Avocational Archaeological Certification (PAAC) is a beneficial educational program designed for the avocational archaeologist. Initially established by the Office of the State Archaeologist of Colorado (OSAC) and the Colorado Archaeological Society (CAS), the program has granted certifications since 1978. PAAC allows anyone with an interest in the archaeological record of Colorado to receive training outside of an academic degree program.

### What is it?

PAAC is a statewide certification program designed to build a community of individuals trained to help record, preserve, and serve as responsible stewards of and advocates for cultural resources in Colorado. PAAC participants have the opportunity to gain experience in many facets of archaeology. The program facilitates the contributions of its participants to research, public service and outreach, preservation and management, and stewardship of the archaeological record of Colorado. PAAC complements but does not replace existing university and governmental training programs.

### Why take PAAC Classes?

PAAC certification is a formal recognition of the achievement of differing levels of technical training. It is not a substitute for a degree from an accredited academic institution, nor is it a license to dig, collect artifacts, or perform other unsupervised archaeological tasks. PAAC participants are often welcome to participate in ongoing professionally supervised projects as volunteers, field assistants and laboratory assistants.

### PAAC Restructuring

Currently, PAAC is undergoing a major restructuring of the certification program. The newly restructured PAAC emphasizes flexibility in the participant's progression through the program. The participant may achieve increasing levels of certification, called Certification Tiers, based on cumulative credit hours taken. There are five different class types: CAS Seminar Lecture (0.5 credit hours), Weekend Course/Workshop (2 credit hours), Weekend Field/Laboratory Workshop (4 credit hours), Multi-day Course (6 credit hours), and PAAC Field Experience (8 credit hours). All class types are taken as pass/fail.



## Upcoming PAAC Class Offerings

**Site Stewardship Workshop** (Weekend Workshop, 2 credit hours): This one-day workshop provides an introduction to archaeological advocacy through site stewardship. Participants will learn about the principal mission of preservation and primary activities of a site steward including the observation, documentation, and reporting of the condition of cultural resources in Colorado. This course is being offered in collaboration with South Park Site Stewards. Hybrid, Saturday, Oct 28, 2023. 10 am–4 pm MDT. Instructor: Beth Parisi, South Park Site Stewards.

**State & National Register Nomination Workshop** (Weekend Workshop, 2 credit hours): This one-day workshop will walk participants through the process of preparing nominations for the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties and the National Register of Historic Places. In the morning session, participants will learn about the State and National Registers and how to evaluate eligibility of archaeological resources for nomination. In the afternoon, participants will practice their new skills hands-on with a mock-archaeological site and learn how to write up parts of a nomination. This course is being offered in collaboration with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office. Hybrid, Saturday, Nov 18, 2023. 9 am–4 pm MST. Instructor: Eric Newcombe, National and State Register Historian, Colorado State Historic Preservation Office.

## FAQs

**How do I join PAAC?** Joining PAAC is simple! Contact the PAAC State Coordinator/Assistant State Archaeologist ([sarah.allaun@state.co.us](mailto:sarah.allaun@state.co.us)) to request a form or fill out the form online at <https://www.historycolorado.org/paac-program-introduction>. Completion of this form will add you to an email distribution list where all PAAC information will be sent. A Class Fee may be required when you enroll for some PAAC classes, but is not due with the PAAC Candidate Application.

**How do I enroll in a class?** Check out the Class Offerings online at <https://www.historycolorado.org/class-offerings-and-communications> to learn more about upcoming class offerings and register for classes. You can also contact your Local PAAC Coordinator for more information.

**Do I have to be a member of the Colorado Archaeological Society (CAS) or History Colorado (HC) to join PAAC?** Membership in these or any other organization is not required. Anyone interested is welcome to join PAAC!

**Do I get to dig or do other field work in PAAC?** Archaeological excavation (a “dig”) is not a formal part of PAAC training. However, PAAC Field Experience classes offer participants the opportunity to learn about archaeological field methods such as pedestrian survey and excavation. PAAC participants will be placed on an email distribution list and notified of ongoing and future volunteer opportunities that may involve professionally supervised archaeological excavation but are not formally associated with the PAAC certification program.

For more information on PAAC, visit [www.HistoryColorado.org/paac](http://www.HistoryColorado.org/paac)  
or contact Sarah A. Allaun, Assistant State Archaeologist  
Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
History Colorado, 1200 Broadway, Denver, CO 80203  
303-866-5746 | [sarah.allaun@state.co.us](mailto:sarah.allaun@state.co.us)