

Teaching Basketry: Compensation, Contracts & More

This document and its recommendations are the result of discussions over the past few years by the NBO Teachers Zoom group. This group meets regularly, and together has sourced the information and recommendations that follow. The information in this document is updated periodically. NBO is pleased to share this resource.

Teaching basketmaking is a fun and rewarding way to make a living, but it's hard work too. There are many variables for you as the instructor to consider:

- how many students can you handle in one class;
- how many hours are needed for a project;
- how will you get paid;
- what about expenses, and on and on.

Payment methods will vary. Hourly pay + materials fees is one method. Venues might offer a flat amount for the teaching period depending on the number of students who sign up for your class. Others might expect you to state a fee that covers all your expenses. The following will take a closer look at things to consider.

Instructor Pay:

Pay Method and Variables: When calculating your hourly or daily rate for instructing, or considering the rate being offered, please keep in mind this is a profession. Be mindful of the community of teachers who make their living teaching and charge fairly, not undercutting others.

Who is setting the pay scale? Whoever is hiring you may have their own pay structure set in place. On the other hand, you might be asked what you're charging. Let's look at some variables.

Instructor fee payment methods vary across the country. What the hiring entity can afford or what the socioeconomics can bear also play a part. Here are some examples of methods that might be used:

- \$35 - \$75 per teaching hour (variable - can depend on things such as instructor experience, or budget of the hiring entity);
- Additional ½ hr. paid time at the beginning & ½ hr. at end of class for set-up might be offered;

- \$50-\$80 per student, per day of instruction (based on 6-7 hours of instruction *and* based on the minimum number of students you require);
- \$400 - \$800 per teaching day (based on 6-7 hours instruction time);
- 5-day classes might range from \$800 - \$1,500 per day.

Some hiring organizations might use a sliding scale for instructor fees, dependent on enrollment. For example:

Pay is X per hour (or day) for 4-7 enrolled students; Y per hour (day) for 8-10 enrolled students; or Z per hour (day) for 11-12 enrolled students. As enrollment increases, so does compensation.

Most craft schools, art centers, events and guilds take care of registrations for your class. Be certain there is a clear understanding of what *your minimum* registration needs to be. It may not be affordable for you to teach if registration numbers are too low.

There is also a matter of material fees. Are *they* collecting your materials fee in advance, on your behalf (preferred), or will you collect the material fee in class? Also, be sure there is a clear understanding of how ‘no-shows’ will be dealt with.

- Potential Pros - Someone else is taking care of collecting material fees.
- Potential Cons – You are out of pocket for material fees until you are paid for the full class and materials.

Be aware that unanticipated inflationary impacts can happen, particularly when a proposal is for a workshop several months out. Example: reed has one price in January for a class you proposed for September, but a spike in price occurred by the time you purchase your materials to prepare for the class. When calculating your material fee, provide yourself some leeway.

Instructor Sets the Class Fee: The hiring organization charges a small registration fee (or no fee) for event attendance and manages registrations. The instructor determines the *class fee* per student. The class fee is a lump sum of teaching fees, expenses (travel, food, accommodations) and material fee.

Here is a simple example:

You have identified all your expenses (see next section regarding calculation of expenses) and you know the method of ‘instructor fee’ payment will be set by you as a *class fee*:

○ Instructing fee/day (6-7hr.)	\$ 320.00
○ Travel	\$ 450.00
○ Lodging/Food	\$ 300.00
○ Extra expenses	<u>\$ 50.00</u>
	\$1,120.00

- The class has a minimum enrollment of 6 students.
 $\$1,120/6 = \$186/ \text{student}$.
- There is a separate material fee of *\$45.00 ea.*

$$\$186 + \$45 = \underline{\$231 \text{ per student fee registration}}$$

In some situations, materials fees will be charged separately.

Virtual Teaching: The instructor rate of compensation might be the same as in person (or more to compensate challenges presented with online teaching). An additional fee for a co-host to help with things like: manage the chat box, or mute a student, keep an eye on time, help with technical issues, etc. might be an additional cost to consider. Materials and expenses (i.e. shipping) should be collected in advance by the hiring organization and paid in advance to the instructor. Again – good communication can be everything. *Shipping is another area to be aware that unanticipated inflationary impacts happen.*

Instructor Expenses:

When deciding what you need to be paid for a class, you need to look at all your expenses. This can get complicated. Expenses need to be estimated at the time you prepare a class proposal, recognizing that prices may change between proposing and the class date.

The hiring organization might not provide for travel, food, lodging, time for materials prep, etc. If they are not covered, you will need to recoup these expenses somehow. Adding a proportional amount (total expenses divided by the number of students) to the materials fee is a way to recapture those expenses. Using the minimum number of students you will accept will ensure you cover your costs.

Regardless of how your expenses might be recaptured, you first need to identify them.

Here are some expenses likely to be encountered:

- Shipping - Do you need to send a sample of your work with your proposal, or ship materials in advance of the class (in person or virtual)?
- Travel
- Food
- Lodging
- Is a donation expected from you as an instructor to the event (perhaps a piece of your work)?
- Are you required to be a member of an organization to qualify to teach?
- Time and development of instructions or a pattern/recipe.
- Cost of material/kits themselves, including harvesting, dying, preparation.
- Tool usage fee (if providing tools for students to borrow during class).
- Sales tax collection (clarify with the local authority as to what is required).
- For a virtual class, is there a platform being provided or are you expected to have your own account (i.e. Zoom)?
- Cost of Internet connection for platform used for on-line class.
- Is there special equipment needed that you might need to rent?
- Inflation.

Identifying all your expenses will help you be financially successful. And once again, *be aware that unanticipated inflationary impacts happen.* You might be proposing for a class a year or more into the future.

A note regarding material fees:

If material is all pre-cut and ready to go, or harvested and prepared material, have you provided reimbursement of your time? This might be thought of as a hidden expense. It isn't necessarily obvious that there is a cost attached to our preparation time. Also take into account the preciousness of materials. You might be working with plant material that is becoming extinct.

Think about how far in advance of a class you are proposing. Have you thought about allowing for potential inflation of costs and access to materials. Sometimes unforeseen things happen. If the event is several months out, consider a bit of a buffer of your material costs to not shortchange yourself.

You might also want to check with suppliers to find out what might qualify you to purchase product wholesale.

Contracts:

Contracts are good things. They put into writing the commitments of, and on both parties. If a contract is not provided, it is a good idea to write your own.

Read it thoroughly. If you are not comfortable with any aspect of a contract, ask for changes to be made. Explaining why you are asking for a particular change demonstrates your commitment and can help educate entities that are not so familiar with basketry, like community education programs (i.e. the need for weaving materials to be acquired X number of weeks in advance to allow for preparation prior to class).

Details to pay attention to include:

Does the payment method meet your needs? Will you need to set up an account with their payment system? Some organizations include materials fees in 1099's, if that matters to you, inquire in advance.

What is the minimum and maximum number of students? Are you comfortable with those numbers? Are they asking you to teach more people than you are comfortable with? Can you cover your expenses and teaching fee based on the minimum number for students?

What expenses are or are not covered.

Critical timelines: When does enrollment open? How will they promote the class? Social media? When will you know if the minimum student enrollment has been met or if the class needs to be cancelled? When will enrollment close so you have time to order and prepare weaving materials. Do you need to ship materials to students? Is a shipping timeline accounted for?

Some entities might require you be there perhaps an hour in advance of class. You might need access to the space the day or evening prior to class. Can that be arranged? How much time do you have for tear-down and clean-up of the space? Does the host take care of setting up and taking down tables and chairs for you, or is that expected of you? Do you charge a fee for that time? Be specific about expectations that might be beyond teaching the class.

Some locations might have a set lock-up time; a time you and your belongings must be out. If someone is not finished, can you stay a little longer?

What is the policy for ‘no-shows’ or last-minute student cancellations? How does that impact your materials fee? The collecting of a material fee in advance of the class provides some security for the instructor. If a material fee is due and payable at class and someone doesn’t show up or cancelled at the last minute, how is this to be handled. Look for cancellation language in a contract. Is there a mechanism that safeguards your costs and expenses.

If your contract is for a *virtual class*, what are the contractual obligations? Will you allow the students to record any live sessions; or will the hiring entity be recording the session and making it available only to students? Who is responsible if a recording is to be made available? Is the recording going to be a limited time? If you do allow your students to record the sessions, be aware that you will no longer control those recordings.

Is there an inclement weather policy? Or do they even have one? Does it involve re-scheduling? How might that impact your schedule? Is it even possible? How might deposits you have already paid be dealt with?

Inquire about sales tax. Some States require payment on the *course fee itself*, not just materials. Side note: If you don’t have sales tax information for the location of the

class, the organizer(s) might be able to provide a website or phone number for you to make inquiry of what you are obligated for regarding sales tax.

There is much we have learned from experiencing a pandemic. For in-person teaching during a pandemic- what procedures is the organization or venue using to ensure your safety and the safety of students? What are you expected to do differently? What is expected from the students?

Both parties should sign a contract. Request a signed copy to be sent back to you.

READ contracts carefully & keep a copy in your files! As you read through, if a question comes to mind, write it down. It may be addressed further into the contract, or you may want to make inquiries.

It is OK to set your boundaries. Negotiate contracts so you feel fairly treated. Set a tone that basket weaving instructors are professionals, with professional expectations. This can be of benefit to future instructors too.

Is a formal business structure necessary:

There are different ways to approach this and each person's situation may be different. This is definitely a question to seek professional advice from your tax preparer, or a professional accountant, or perhaps an attorney. This document is definitely not providing any legal or financial advice.

Which every way you chose, know that you might want to consider protecting your personal assets if you were ever sued. Also understand the pros and cons to one scenario over another in so far as income tax, and/or sales tax.

Additional thoughts:

Repeat teaching at the same venue: If you teach at the same venue regularly, each time you teach you should consider if your costs have increased and increase your fees accordingly. It may be easier to raise your fees a *small* amount on a regular basis rather than wait and then need to make a significant increase in your fees all at once.

Create a “recipe card” for classes you teach regularly, with lists of all the costs of materials and *the tools students will need for the class*.

How does the group or venue promote classes? Don’t be afraid to ask how your class will be promoted, and offer to provide additional information about yourself or the class. Will there be social media posts, or email blasts that you can share?

Take multiple quality photos of class projects. They can be useful if you are teaching the same project again and perhaps no longer have the sample. They can also be useful for social media posts. Consider visiting the NBO website for good tips on photographing (**Capturing Your Work With Photography**).

When communicating what tools are needed for class, you might want to email a photo in addition to a list. They might be things students are not familiar with or when size might make a difference.

Do you have class handouts? Consider emailing them vs printing. Some handouts may not be needed during the class and are more useful as a reference material.

Will you share tools with students? It’s a good idea to have a tool list and check that all tools have been returned before students leave at the end of class.