

Summer Camp Employment Information



CampStaffUSA is a site specifically designed to bring eligible and screened international and domestic students, teachers, coaches and youth workers to one location where US camp employers can easily review and consider applications for summer employment. It is the only site created by multiple J1 designated sponsors, recruiters and camp directors who work together to give you the opportunity to live and work in US summer camps.

Enjoy the Many Benefits:

- *Valuable Work Experience*
- *Safe and Secure Working Environment*
- *Cultural Exchange*
- *Networking*
- *Great Fun & Friendships*
- *Travel Opportunities*

Why work at a US Summer Camp?

Working at a US summer camp can be one of the most rewarding, exciting and memorable experiences of your life! Although, US summer camps vary widely in location, program, activities, philosophy, facilities, and camper population they all share a common goal – to provide each camper with a safe and rewarding summer they'll never forget!

There are many benefits to working in a camp environment.

- **Valuable Work Experience** – Planning on pursuing a career in childcare? Teaching? Psychology? Culinary Arts? Office Management? Working at a summer camp can provide you with the ideal environment to put your skills to the test and to gain hands-on experience to build your resume in most all service fields. You will work along side experienced professionals who will guide you and support you through the program so as you are promoting growth and confidence in campers, you too are growing in your own skills and confidence.
- **Safe and Secure Working Environment** – Summer camp provides a family-like atmosphere in a safe and secure environment. No need to sort out details or to coordinate where you will stay and how you will eat. It is taken care of for you. All meals and accommodation are included as part of your compensation. *
- **Cultural Exchange** – Most US summer camps employ not only Americans, but also welcome staff from all over the world. This diversity provides the ideal opportunity to share information and experiences relating to culture, history and appreciation of countries across the globe. International staff and campers learn more about America while American's benefit from understanding the world from a personal perspective.
- **Networking** – In the age of greater communication access, working at a summer camp opens up endless possibilities. You will meet people from all over the US and in most cases, the world. It is a great opportunity to establish friendships and develop an international network of friends and contacts.
- **Fun** – Camp is not only good for your resume.... Working at camp means you'll experience the excitement of living and working in a new environment, possibly in a new country. Most camps are located in beautiful locations on or near lakes and have extensive facilities that staff can enjoy during their time off. While your position at camp is important and your role must be taken seriously, camps also encourage campers and staff to have fun, to play, and to be silly.
- **Maximize your Opportunity to Travel** – Many staff become close friends during their time shared at camp and plan times to travel together. Many international students and their American friends plan post-camp time to travel together and to visit popular US sites. International staff on the J1 camp counselor and summer work travel visas are permitted and encouraged to travel around the US for up to 30 days after their last day of work. American staff also often reciprocate and plan visits to foreign countries, meeting up with their international friends!

Season & Duration

The US summer camp season runs from late May through mid to late August with average employment between 9-11 weeks. Salary structure is based on contracts issued up to 63 days with additional pay per day worked thereafter. Some pre-camp and post-camp work opportunities are available.

There are different roles and positions of employment in a camp environment.

Summer camps offer two general employment categories: Camp Counselors and Support Staff. There are visas for international staff in both categories for eligible candidates. Both visa programs have a minimum of 3 weeks and a maximum of four months duration and may not be extended.

Understand that many camps are located in rural areas throughout the US with beautiful scenery. You should be prepared for possibly being in an isolated location where outside of camp social activities may be limited during time off. Rustic conditions and "uninvited wildlife" including bugs, mosquitoes, and spiders are commonplace at camp. You should also be aware that in order to ensure that camp is a safe and nurturing environment, various rules and regulations are in place. These include curfews and restrictions on alcohol consumption, smoking and mobile phone/internet usage. Camp employees and staff work as a team and everyone joins in when necessary to ensure its success. You may occasionally be asked to do a job or assist in an area other than the one you were assigned to initially. Flexibility and teamwork is key at camp.

* Camps not exempt of minimum wage may deduct accommodation fees as permitted by state and federal mandates.



Camp Counselors

Obtaining a job as a camp counselor is the best way to meet diverse people in the US and build an impressive resume. It's ideal for teachers and coaches interested in summer employment or students who are pursuing degrees in teaching, counseling, coaching, physical therapy, athletic training, sports psychology, etc. or who simply love working with youth and want a summer job that feels like play. Camp Counselors interact directly with groups of American and international youth, overseeing camp activities and ensuring the general welfare of the campers throughout the summer.



As a counselor you will work with campers ranging from 7-16 years old. You have the responsibility of being a friend, a leader and a positive role model regardless of the type of counseling position you accept. If you have the right personality and a positive attitude, you will have lots of fun! You'll eat meals with the campers, entertain them, sing with them, laugh with them, and even cry with them (on the final day of camp!). It's hard work and can be physically and emotionally draining at times. While you have the support from your co-counselors and other staff, you must LIKE and want to work with children to have a successful experience.

- **General Counselors.** These individuals are invaluable staff members who spend their whole day with one group of campers. They are role models who assist and motivate campers whether they are trying to learn a new skill or they have concerns about an issue or idea. Throughout the day general counselors monitor and participate in the group's activities and do everything in their power to make each of their campers' summer the most memorable yet. General counselors must be fun-loving, patient and genuinely concerned for the welfare and development of youth.
- **Activity Counselors.** Activity counselors are hired both on their merit in a specific teaching area and their experience or desire to work with children. Most activity counselors will either lead or assist in a particular activity during scheduled instructional periods during the day and will live and work with a designated group of children during the rest of the day and in the evenings.
- **Activity Specialists.** Specialists are individuals who are hired for their abilities and experience in leading particular areas of interest in the camp's instructional offerings.

CampStaffUSA identifies three (3) levels of a counselor's skill and position that are determined based on certifications, and experience in teaching and leadership.

1. General Skills (general counselor, activity counselor or combination based on camp need)
2. Advanced Skills (counselors with American Camping Association certified skills in areas such as Ropes, Life Guarding, WSI, etc. or possess years of experience with success in a variety of areas)
3. Key Staff (staff who accept leadership positions to oversee a particular program, health and welfare of campers and other staff)

Applicants for Counselors must:

- Be a mature adult over the age 18.
- Possess strong English language skills
- Willing to work long hours with kids and some prior experience
- Possess two or more camp related skills that you can teach or assist in teaching to kids at camp – the stronger your skills and application, the better the chance of a placement at camp
- Be open minded, energetic, flexible & prepared to work long hours!
- Have no criminal record
- Have sufficient funds to pay for flights and all additional costs
- Be independent and self-motivated. You are required to be pro-active in the application process, to research your employment position, location and travels fully. It is important to understand that living and working in a new living environment will be challenging at times and is a learning and life experience, not simply a holiday.

**International applicants must meet the eligibility for the J1 Camp Counselor Visa:*

<http://j1visa.state.gov/programs/camp-counselor/>

Support Staff

Support Staff at US summer camps encompass all of the other areas of the summer camp operations. Positions typically include a variety of culinary level posts from food prep to bakers to chefs, maintenance and grounds work, office assistance, secretary, housekeeper, laundry, security, etc. There are a myriad of summer camp support staff positions available that require a variety of skill sets and many schools offer credit hours upon completion;



- **Culinary/Dining Hall Staff.** Cooks, bakers, food preparation, dishwashers, and servers will work alongside seasoned professionals. They will serve an integral part of a small to large volume food service facility. This type of role requires applicants to be energetic and willing to work on a team with others. It is one of the hardest, most demanding roles in that work teams are responsible for the preparation and clean up of each meal and hours may span much of the day with breaks in between. Previous food service experience will most likely be required.
- **Housekeeping.** Housekeeping staff work in small teams to maintain cleanliness of facilities throughout camp, including such tasks as: cleaning and disinfecting restrooms, shower facilities and floors, washing windows, dusting, sweeping, and laundering.
- **Maintenance.** Assistants maintain camp properties by helping to prepare camp facilities for opening, repairing, cleaning, and maintaining sites and facilities as directed and may include general duties related to daily refuse pickup, grounds work (leaf & brush removal), landscaping, grass cutting, moving equipment, painting, plumbing, electrical repair, animal care.
- **Office:** General office assistants and drivers may focus on one or more of the following duties: answering telephones, taking messages, light secretarial duties that keep the office running, keeping files organized and up-to-date, routing mail, processing documents, operating basic office machinery, greeting visitors, scheduling tours, typing letters and documents, creating events notices, driving camp vehicles to run assigned errands, etc.

As support staff your work may vary but all roles are important in making the summer a success for the campers and staff. Keep in mind, that although you are hired to perform one job, you may be asked to fill a variety of support staff roles as needed by the camp.

CampStaffUSA identifies three (3) levels of a support staff skill and position that are determined based on certifications, and experience, workmanship and leadership.

1. General Skills
2. Advanced Skills (support staff with exceptional education or experience in culinary arts or other field that directly relates to the camp position as determined by account managers)
3. Key Staff (staff who are accepted or experienced in leading a team in the kitchen as a head chef or assistant chef or the maintenance staff as a campus management)

Applicants for Summer Camp Support Staff must:

- Be a mature adult over the age 18
- Possess strong English language skills
- Willing to work long hours
- Be open minded, energetic, and flexible
- Have no criminal record
- Have sufficient funds to pay for program fees, flights and all additional costs
- Be independent and self-motivated. You are required to be pro-active in the application process, to research your employment position, location and travels fully. It is important to understand that living and working in a new living environment will be challenging at times and is a learning and life experience, not simply a holiday.

**International applicants must meet the eligibility for the J1 Summer Work Travel Visa:*

<http://j1visa.state.gov/programs/summer-work-travel/>



Additional Information for International Applicants

Exchange Visitor Programs are designed to promote cultural exchange and understanding between countries by allowing eligible foreign nationals to live and work in the United States (“US”) with the purpose of engaging in cultural exchange while offsetting travel costs through employment. The US Government allows certain organizations to provide the visa sponsorship necessary to participate in these programs. CampStaffUSA provides information to sponsors that are designated by the Department of State. The camp counselor and summer work travel exchange visitor visas cover all camp employment.



Camp Counselors

Through the Camp Counselor program, American staff and campers have the chance to experience foreign cultures, while foreign participants increase their knowledge of American culture. For those who enjoy working with youth it is a wonderfully rewarding experience that provides invaluable insight and practice in working with youth through leadership roles. Camp counselors require a camp counselor visa.

For more information about the program, click here. [Camp Counselor](#)

Support Staff

Foreign support staff participate under a different visa category called Summer Work Travel. Under this program you are permitted to work in a variety of areas in camp and can even secure secondary employment outside of camp after finishing your camp contract so long as you do not work outside of your home country's program dates, you submit proper employer documentation to your sponsor for approval and you return home in time for the beginning of the university term. Although there are a variety of positions you may fill in a summer camp, you cannot, however, accept a role as a camp counselor, Au Pair or any other prohibited position as outlined by the Department of State.

It is important to verify the summer work travel dates established by your home country. Camp support staff are governed by the summer work travel program and as such are subject to the summer work travel permitted dates as established by their home country. Dates are subject to change. [Summer Work Travel Program Date Chart](#).

For more information about the program and required visa, click here. [Summer work Travel](#)

J1 Employment

Your employment site is approved by your sponsor and is registered in SEVIS. Any changes in employment positions, even minor changes, must be updated with your sponsor. If employment is initially facilitated through CampStaffUSA, you must complete the initial job offer from the initial employer unless your sponsor agrees to a transfer to another approved camp. Your sponsor will work with you to resolve issues should they arise and to insure that the employer is meeting the agreed upon employment contract. Early departure or work termination of that job offer may result in program termination or end of program should US laws be broken or Participant behavior be detrimental to the Exchange Visitor Program.

For more information see <http://j1visa.state.gov/basics/common-questions/>



What is the Two-Year Foreign Residence Requirement?

Participants may be subject to a Two Year Home-Country Physical Presence Requirement. This means that the exchange visitor must reside and be physically present in the country of nationality or last legal permanent residence for an aggregate of at least two years following the departure of the US before the exchange visitor is eligible to apply for an immigrant visa or permanent residence, a nonimmigrant H visa as a temporary worker or trainee, or a nonimmigrant L visa as in intracompany transferee, or a nonimmigrant.

Are you subject to the two-year foreign residence requirement?

An exchange visitor (EV) may be subject to the two-year foreign residence requirement of Section 212(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), for one or more of the following reasons:

- The EV's participation in an exchange program was funded by the United States Government, EV's own government, or an international organization.
- The education, training, or skill the EV is pursuing in an exchange program appears on the Exchange Visitor Skills List (1997 Amendment) for EV's country.
- The EV acquired J-1 status on or after January 10, 1977, for the purpose of receiving graduate medical education or training.

If you are subject, what does that mean?

If you are subject to the two-year foreign residence requirement, you may not change your status to that of H, L, or K, or to immigrant or legal permanent status until you have fulfilled the two-year foreign residence requirement by going back to your home country or receiving a waiver of this requirement.

What if I am not sure if this applies to me?

If you are not sure whether the INA 212(e) two-year foreign residence applies to you, you may make a written request for an advisory for the applicability of INA 212(e) to your situation. The advisory opinion request should include legible copies of every/all DS-2019/ IAP-66 ever issued to you, along with a self-addressed envelope, and should be sent to: INA 212(e) Advisory Opinion Request The Waiver Review Division, CA/VO/L/W SA-1, L-603 U.S. State Department 2401 E Street, NW Washington, D.C. 20522-0106

More information can be found on the website for the Department of State, US Consular affairs;
http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/info/info_1288.html.