Summer Staff Pre-Application Guide

NEW JERSEY 4-H CAMP



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
New Jersey 4-H Camp
L.G. Cook 4-H Youth Center
for Outdoor Education

NJ4HCAMP.RUTGERS.EDU | STOKES STATE FOREST | 973-948-3550

A SUMMER AT 4-H CAMP

Working at 4-H Camp is far more than just a job - it's an immersive experience and a summer-long lifestyle.

Camper Focused

Summer Camp exists to provide our campers a safe, fun, transformative experience. The 4-H Camp standard is to endeavor to give every camper the best week of their summer where they can make new friends, gain confidence, and become the best version of themselves. We trust our counselors to be commited to this mission for every camper, every day, all summer long.





A Summer-long, 24 Hour-a-day Commitment

There's a reason they call it going AWAY to camp. It's akin to studying abroad...on another planet. That planet just happens to be summer camp.

Communal Living

Summer staff live on site at Camp for the duration of the summer. This means our staff team doesn't just work together - they live together too. Almost all space is shared, and staff are expected to care for that space as well as look after themselves and be considerate of one another.



WHAT 4-H CAMP LOOKS FOR IN ITS COUNSELORS

Campers First

More than anything, a 4-H Camp counselor is expected to put the needs of their campers first. Counselors who pour their all into constructing an environment that is safe, fun, creative and caring for our campers find success here.

Positivity

A postive attitude DOES NOT mean ignoring issues or failing to acknowledge challenges. It DOES mean that we choose to make the best out of whatever situation we happen to be in.



Creative Problem Solving

When creating a community from a large group of people, problems are always sure to arise. Instead of dwelling on difficulties, we expect our summer staff to actively search for solutions.

Physical, Emotional, and Mental Endurance

The camp environment is a demanding one - we look for our staff to have the resilience to give our campers individualized attention, provide leadership and energy for their cabins and classes, navigate campers throughout our 108 acres of forest and lake playing games and singing songs - and then wake up and do it all again the next day.



Teamwork

In the Camp Community, we don't work on any project or face any challenge alone. We look for our staff to support each other, contribute to the common goals as best we can, and always ask for help.

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Foster a Safe Environment For Children

Everything we do rests on the foundation of 4-H Camp being safe for our campers. Counselors are expected to exercise good judgement in their behavior, language and conversation, as well as ensuring the campers that they are monitoring to do the same. Of course, 4-H Camp is a drug and alchohol free facility for the entirety of the summer season.

Tech-Free

Core to the environment we create is that 4-H Camp is TECH-FREE - for our staff as well as our campers. Phones are prohibited when staff are at work, and can not be kept on person or in cabins during session. Phones are stored in a staff area and can only be accessed during time off.

Sound Decision Making

Each Camp day holds countless choices and crossroads. We expect our staff to approach these decisions thoughtfully, carefully, and with their campers best interests in mind.

Supervison and Attention

To succeed in putting our campers first, counselors are expected to be constantly supervising the campers in their care to ensure physical and emotional safety and to notice any problem, ideally before it even happens..

Make the Fun

Once we're all together in the woods, we look for our counselors to interject every situation with their positivity, humor, creativity and pure campy-fun.



ROLES

For Summer 2027, counselor salary will be $4500 for their 9-week contract ($500 per week.)

Cabin Counselor

The majority of our summer team is made up of our Cabin Counselors, who reside in our cabins with the campers and are responsible for almost every aspect of their summer camp experience. In the cabin, counselors facilitate friendships, create an inclusive and caring community, construct an environment that is fun and supports individual growth and responsibility, as well as getting to know each and every camper personally so as best to tailor the camp experience to their needs. In addition to their roles and responsibilities as cabin leaders, Cabin Counselors also teach classes in one of our Course Areas, and particpate in and run virtually all Camp Activities.



Course Areas

Environmental Recreation
Creative Arts
Waterfront (Red Cross Lifeguard Certification Required)



Kitchen Counselor

Kitchen Counselor is a great role for applicants who want the summer camp experience, but are interested in spending part of the day working behind the scenes. Kitchen counselors work 4-5 hours each day in the kitchen helping with food prep, meal service, and clean-up. In addition, they are assigned to a cabin to support and help build our camp communities and help with All-Camp games and other activities. Kitchen Counselors reside in our staff unit apartments.

Senior Staff

Our Senior Staff are the administrative and supervisory staff for our summer season. They design lesson plans and oversee all programs, as well as being responsible for Camp-wide quality control. Applicants must be 21 years of age, and previous overnight summer camp experience is heavily preferred.

SUMMER SCHEDULE

The camp lifestyle is active and social. Days are long and demanding - but in working to make some of the best days of our campers' whole year, our counselors often find the best days of their year as well.



Living Arrangements

Cabin counselors reside in our cabins all summer long with one or two other staff. Restrooms are located in a separate, centralized facility.

Staff living in our staff units will share a two bedroom/one bath unit with up to 5 other staff members.

All meals are provided during the Camp session. On weekends, left-over meals are available for staff to prepare for themselves. Laundry facilities are available for Staff to utilize during time off.

Daily Schedule

7:00 - Wake Up
8:00 - Breakfast
9:30 - 2 Activity Periods
12:15 - Lunch
1:00 - Rest Hour
2:00 - 3 Activity Periods
6:00 - Dinner
7:30 - Evening Activity
9:15 - Prep for Bedtime
10:00 - Taps

Time-Off

Time all the way "off" at Camp is few and far between. A key to success at Camp is for counselors to find time to relax, refresh and have fun throughout time "on" at Camp: having conversations with campers in the cabin during rest hour, sitting with a group in the shade by the lake, enjoying a meal around a Dining Hall table or leading a favorite summer time activity during choice recreation.

Daily, staff have roughly two hours off each day, one during the program and one in the evening after lights out.

In between sessions, Camp Staff have off from Saturday afternoon until Monday morning.

Before the BIG Session, staff have an extended weekend - within the BIG Session there are extended time-off periods.



<u>Summer 2027</u>
Staff Training - June 20th - June 25th
Lantern BBQ - June 27th
Session 1: Pirates of Lake Shawanni - June 28th - July 3rd
Session 2: Whodunnit? - July 5th - 10th
Session 3: Broken Time Machine - July 12th - 17th
Session 4: Campandemonium - July 19th - July 24th
Session 5: Mystery Box - July 26th - July 31st
Mid-Season Training - August 3rd
BIG Session - August 4th - 21st
(The BIG Session is 18 straight days of Summer Camp!)

APPLICATION PROCESS

Apply Online

The application process is entirely online and available at nj4hcamp.rutgers.edu under the Staff tab.

Interview

Applicants who may potentially be a good fit for our Summer Camp team will be invited to interview. The interview, which is held over Zoom, will include questions and discussion about child-care and camp experience, philosophies, and goals. Summer Staff expectations will be further expressed, and applicants will be encouraged to ask any and all questions to be sure that in addition to the applicant being the right fit for 4-H Camp, 4-H Camp is the right fit for them.

Further Details

Hiring is dependent on applicants providing three professional references and completing a background check. In addition, before summer employment staff will be expected to complete Rutgers University Protection of Minors Training.



Staff Training

The first week of a Staff member's summer contract will be Staff Training. The goal is to give all staff, including those brand-new to 4-H Camp, the tools to succeed when the campers arrive. It will consist of training and sessions in child-care, youth support, managing campers and groups, and supervising games and activities. There will also be specific training in Course Areas or Kitchen, and CPR/First Aid/AED certification. Training will run full "summer camp day" schedule, from 7am to 10pm to familarize the staff with long days and the rhythm of the summer camp lifestyle.

Call the Camp Office

As this document has hopefully made clear, a summer at 4-H Camp is a huge commitment and we want to be sure all of our applicants know exactly what they're getting into! If you have questions about the expectations of the role or would like to have a discussion about summer employment here, please reach out to us at the Camp Office, 973-948-3550. We'd be happy to dive into everything there is to know about working at 4-H Camp.