



New Jersey 4-H Camp Junior Counselor Expectations and Responsibilities

The Junior Counselor Program at L.G. Cook 4-H Camp is a volunteer opportunity designed for graduates of our Counselor in Training Course who have aged out of the Summer Camp program.

The goals of the Junior Counselor are to help move participants from the “camper phase”, where they are beneficiaries of the 4-H Camp program and community, toward a “counselor phase” where their focus is shifted to what they can give to support the experience of others. The JC program aims to bolster participant’s responsible decision-making, positive problem-solving, communicative teamwork, and ability to positively impact youth. This is achieved via 4-H’s “learn by doing” philosophy, where, in a safe and scaffolded environment, Junior Counselors are able to work while contributing to almost all aspects of making 4-H Camp happen.

Junior Counselors are assigned to help support campers in a specific cabin, as well as assisting in classes in one of our Course Areas . In addition, they have the opportunity to design and run their own Choice Recreation Activities and participate in facilitating our All-Camp games. Junior Counselors are supported and lead through daily meetings and guidance from our Community Coordinator team and Counselor mentorship program.

Another integral part of the Junior Counselor program is to learn the “behind the scenes” tasks that are crucial to the operation of 4-H Camp, and to support the daily completion of these tasks. This includes working on the dish crew for 4-H Camp’s classic Hobart industrial dishwasher, assisting with meal preparation and Dining Hall set-up, and evening cleans of our camper bathrooms (to name a few.)

Junior Counselor’s reside in our JC platform tent village. Tents include raised wooden floors, feature cots/beds, and are designed to be a comfortable space to spend a week at 4-H Camp - however it will be a rustic experience.

In the BIG Session, Junior Counselors will rotate between residing both in the JC platform tents and within the cabins assisting the campers and counselors with all aspects of the summer camp day.

Junior Counselors are selected via a competitive application process. Factors include but are not limited to a candidate’s previous CIT performance, application, group Zoom interview, and conduct during our Leadership Weekend training sessions.

Junior Counselors will support positive youth development in our cabins and aid with running activities and classes, but at no point will be sole supervisors of youth or independently responsible for child welfare. Junior Counselors are never alone with a group of campers. Junior Counselors will help observe/address issues, but will never handle a situation without the aid and guidance of our trained staff team.

Junior Counselors are required to go through our application process, Rutgers University Protection of Minors training, and Leadership Weekend Training Sessions (or virtual substitutes.) They are also required to participate in Pre-Camp preparation Zoom meetings, read and respond to all emails and expectation documents, and partake in in-session meetings and one-on-one performance evaluations. Participants who do not comply with program expectations and standards are subject to dismissal.

The standards are high for our Junior Counselors, and 4-H Camp demands they take their job as role models working toward positive youth interactions seriously. The camp days are long and the sessions are demanding, requiring physical, mental, and emotional endurance from candidates. The Junior Counselor program can be a step toward eventually joining full summer camp staff, or simply the fruition of a 4-H campers long-held goal of being a camp counselor. Regardless, we hope the role results in being hugely beneficial for the development of participants and for the success of our 4-H Camp program as a whole.