
U.S. Department of State

Camp Counselor Exchange Program

Bringing the world directly to U.S. summer camps

Key program elements

- International students, youth workers, teachers, and other qualified individuals interact directly with American youth by overseeing their activities in a camp setting.
- Camps provide a **quintessential American cultural experience** for their international counselors.
- International camp counselors...
 - ...**expand the global view of American campers** and expose them to new cultures, customs, and languages.
 - ...are selected to be **role models and role-modifiers for American campers**, and return to play the same role in their home countries, creating a **powerful multiplier effect**.
 - ...are at least 18 years old, and their program is limited to a max of 4 months.
- Participants come on privately funded programs, **at no cost to the taxpayer**.

A uniquely American cultural experience

Summer camp is high on the list of truly American cultural traditions: cabins, campfires, and s'mores; songs, games, horseback riding, and water sports; camp Olympics, camp vocabulary, and camp cuisine... it all combines to create a truly memorable and unique American experience for international camp counselors.

Whether nationally-known, family-owned, non-profit, or independent; whether sports or arts-themed, language learning-focused, or serving disadvantaged campers or those with special needs—all camps feature a community of diverse personalities, abilities, and cultures. International camp counselors return home with long-lasting friendships, an improved command of the English language, advanced leadership skills, and a deep understanding of American culture and customs, especially the tradition of American camping. It's an experience that frequently has a tremendous positive impact on them, as well as on the Americans they meet, counsel, and befriend and who often go on to visit them in their home countries—a truly international cultural exchange.



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Creating leaders and partners for the future

Over the course of a summer, international camp counselors develop skills and qualities that will serve them well in their future careers. They gain new perspectives on community building, problem solving, leadership, and teamwork. Counselors learn flexibility, patience, and compassion, and become global citizens. These skills and qualities—combined with their deepened understanding of American values and culture—make these young leaders, many of them from countries critical to U.S. foreign policy and national security interests, strong partners for the United States as they move into careers in a variety of sectors.

Helping American camps succeed with increased expertise

The camp counselor program greatly expands the level of expertise available to U.S. camp directors. International camp counselors bring not only their own cultures; they also bring their often-considerable skills and expertise—sporting, outdoors, and otherwise. International participants come highly enthusiastic and motivated to succeed, adding that extra dimension to camp life that enriches the lives of campers and camp staff in many different ways.