



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**  
College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences & Family and Consumer Sciences



## Georgia 4-H Base Programming

### Georgia 4-H Summer Camping Camp Counselors

#### Description of Learning Experience:

Georgia's 4-H summer camping program, administered through the county offices of University of Georgia Cooperative Extension, offers a 4-H summer camping experience unparalleled in the nation. Over 8,000 children annually attend camp at one of Georgia's unique 4-H centers, which open their doors to campers looking for an exciting summer experience.

Georgia's enthusiastic and well-trained camp counselors are critical to the experience we seek to provide our campers. Most of our counselors were 4-H campers themselves, positively influenced by a counselor and seeking to pass that experience on to younger 4-H'ers.

While most of our counselors have been among the most active and involved 4-H members in Georgia for many years and, for many, selection as a counselor culminates a successful 4-H career, counselor selection is an employment process and counselors are employees of Georgia 4-H. Being a Georgia 4-H camp counselor may be an honor, but at its most basic level it's a job.

#### Application:

Applications to serve as camp counselors are submitted in the fall. Applicants without prior experience in the Georgia 4-H summer camping program submit an application Form A, which is normally due in mid-November. This application asks essay questions and inventories certain skills important to success as a counselor. Three references are required and extension professionals who have worked with the applicants must also submit a reference form.

Applicants with prior experience in the Georgia 4-H summer camping program are asked to complete an application Form B, which is typically due in early to mid-October and primarily asks for the applicants' preference for placement if selected to return as a counselor.

#### Selection:

Applicants without prior experience are asked to attend a Selection Weekend in early January, where they are interviewed by four separate panels and placed in a recreational setting to observe peer interactions and measure their response to the physical demands of the job. An objective scoring system determines which of these applicants will be offered employment.

Applicants with prior experience are offered employment based on the observation and evaluation by counselor leadership, peers, customers and professional staff of their previous work in the program.

#### Training:

If selected to be employed as a counselor in the Georgia 4-H summer camping program, counselors serving at all five Georgia 4-H Centers undergo training in risk management, youth development, and are certified by the American Red Cross in CPR and First Aid. Training weekends are held at each Center in the spring to familiarize the staff with local facilities and policies. Lifeguard certification is held for waterfront counselors and special training for counselors at centers with high adventure (ropes) elements is also held.

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State Contact: Charlie Wurst, 706-484-2843 or [cwurst@uga.edu](mailto:cwurst@uga.edu)

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4-H helps young people experience: An increased desire to make a difference in their communities - High levels of leadership, self esteem, public speaking, communication and planning skills - Improved School Performance - Motivation to help others - Overall improvement in civic identity and civic engagement.