

Counselor – In – Training Program

Recommendations

CITs (also known as counselors-in-training, leaders-in-training, staff-in-training) are usually between the ages of 14-15. A council's summer camp Counselor-in-Training Program should be designed to offer qualified young people an opportunity to prepare for positions as summer camp staff.

As with all your camp employment practices, any CIT program that you develop should be reviewed by your local employment attorney to ensure compliance with your state labor regulations.

There are many ways to offer a CIT program at your council camp! Here are a few reminders and recommendations as you design your CIT program.

CITs are members of your camp staff. As such, they must meet the requirements of NCAP standards SQ-401-402. In addition, RP-459 provides some recommended practices in providing a CIT program. This includes providing your CITs with a formal job description, a letter of agreement, expectations and training they are expected to take.

CIT programs vary. Regardless of how you facilitate your CIT program, the overall goal should be to provide a young person with the opportunity to learn and experience what it may be like to serve on camp staff. CITs can spend time learning about your camp operation, program and leadership skills and putting them into practice.

Here are a few recommendations on how to best design and host CITs:

Management

- Please review the [DOL guidance](#) for youth ages 14-15 regarding what job functions they cannot perform.
- Consider charging a program fee for your CIT program. This nominal fee allows you to invest in this key future staff development opportunity.
 - CIT programs that charge a nominal fee allow an individual to be considered a program participant. Doing so may decrease confusion related to workers compensation, employment status and more.
 - More importantly, the fees provided by individuals participating in your CIT program may allow a dedicated staff leader to provide oversight to your CITs (see RP-459).
- CITs should “work” no more than 40 hours per week and no more than 8 hours per day. Depending on the time of year of camp, most summertime programs can have CITs work between the hours of 7am-9pm (between June 1 and Labor Day). Please review all federal and local employment laws to ensure your camp(s) complies.

- Track each CITs hours and scheduling. The sign in sheet should require the CIT's initials in their own handwriting to show when they are "on the clock" and cannot be manipulated. Ensure the CIT signs in and out on this sheet to track hours and breaks. When CITs are not working, encourage them to remove their staff shirt so they can integrate into other program areas and alongside other campers.
- As with all staff under the age of 18, ensure that CITs have adult supervision and leadership provided to them. All of Scouting's Barriers to Abuse must be in place. For example, remind CITs to utilize the buddy system.

Program

- Your CITs experience should be a curriculum-based program with an organized schedule.
 - Ensure your CITs can work directly with campers.
 - A strong CIT programs should teach a CIT to work efficiently and effectively—to show up every day and accomplish things, to set goals and see them through.
 - Your CIT program should provide leadership opportunities for everyone.
 - A quality CIT program and schedule can provide a CIT the opportunity to boost their self-esteem, build confidence and independence.
- CITs should be encouraged to participate in your staff training week to help them feel part of the overall camp staff.
- Your CIT program should allow flexibility in the number of weeks an individual is assigned at camp. As a first exposure to a summer camp staff experience, an extended summer camp season may prove too long for a CIT.
- The schedule allows CITs to experience several program areas. CITs could have the opportunity to request program areas based on their specific interests.
- Offer opportunities for individual advancement for the CIT.
- Reflect on your camp(s) traditions. Look closely at traditions that involve CITs. Do they align with BSA and your camp(s) policies and values? If they don't, adapt the tradition or retire it.

Resources

- [Department of Labor](#)
- [2024 NCAP Standards](#)
- Questions? Email Outdoorprograms@scouting.org