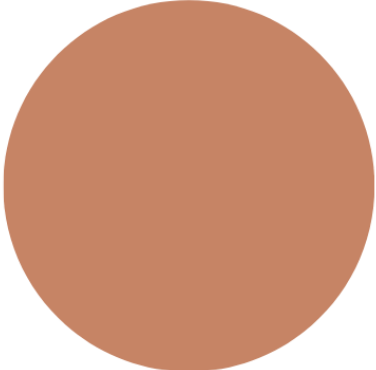




Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America



ELCA

INTERNATIONAL CAMP COUNSELOR PROGRAM



Program Overview 2026-27

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Welcome!

For over three decades, the **ELCA International Camp Counselor Program** has been inviting young adults from around the world to work as camp counselors at ELCA-affiliated summer camps in the United States. This program gives ELCA campers and camp staff the opportunity to experience the gifts of our global partners, and it provides transformative leadership development experiences to young adults from partner churches. Together we are bringing global perspective to outdoor ministry and facilitating intercultural exchanges that have a lasting impact.

This program is rooted in the principles of accompaniment -- a way of working together as churches that is rooted in mutuality, inclusivity, empowerment, and shared resources. By facilitating impactful intercultural exchanges, the program deepens the relationships and shared learning between the ELCA and partner churches around the world.

The International Camp Counselor Program is a collaboration between the ELCA churchwide organization, global companion (partner) churches, and ELCA summer camps. Each year, companion churches nominate excellent young people with skills in children & youth ministry to apply to the program. The ELCA program team processes applications and makes placement recommendations to participating summer camps. The ELCA also provides U.S. visa sponsorship, manages travel logistics, and offers extensive training for incoming participants. Summer camps hire participants to work as camp counselors, providing a supportive working and learning environment with many opportunities for intercultural exchange.

What does it mean to work as a camp counselor?

In the U.S. context, spending time at summer camp is a common activity among children and youth during the school holidays. Summer camps are organizations that offer highly structured programs of recreation, learning, and community building for children and youth, with a focus on outdoor activities. In the ELCA, we are lucky to have [a large network of summer camps that are affiliated with the church](#). Although the camps are usually independent organizations, they have historic ties to the ELCA and typically offer programming that is rooted in a Lutheran theological and faith practice lens. ELCA summer camps are located across the United States in a wide variety of settings, and each camp has its own unique size, characteristics, physical environment, and programming focus.

Camp counselors are a critical part of every camp's staff team (though some camps may use a different job title to refer to this role). Camp counselors are usually hired on a seasonal basis, and they work for one specific camp for an entire summer season. Camp counselors are responsible for taking care of the children and youth who participate in camp (children/youth participants at camp are often called "campers"), and they spend most of their time leading and facilitating a wide variety of activities with campers. Normally, camp counselors will be assigned a small group of campers who are their responsibility for about one week at a time, and that small group is often called a "cabin." The camp counselor is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of their cabin, and

they are also responsible for creating a fun and joyful environment where campers can learn and grow.

Working as a camp counselor means you will spend most of your time with children and youth, in an outdoor environment. You will participate in fun activities with your campers, share meals with them, engage in faith formation like worship and Bible study together, and you will even sleep in shared housing accommodations with your campers. Examples of common activities that camp counselors do with campers include outdoor games, sports, arts and crafts, nature activities, hiking, Bible study, devotions, worship, swimming, music, and more (but keep in mind that each camp's programming is different). Camp counselors share many positive moments with their campers, and they also provide caring support when campers face challenges like homesickness or conflict. For many campers, going to summer camp is the longest amount of time they've spent away from their parents/guardians, and so camp counselors have an important role to play in helping campers feel safe and cared for.

When you work at summer camp, you also live at camp throughout the summer. The camp provides lodging and meals for its employees throughout the summer, at no extra cost to the camp counselor. An important part of working at camp is living in close community with coworkers. It's also important to know that the living accommodations at camp are often basic/rustic. You will definitely share your living space with other coworkers and with campers throughout the summer, so privacy and alone time will be limited. Depending on the camp's specific programming, you may sleep in a cabin, cottage, dormitory-style housing, or even occasionally in a tent. Applicants to the program should be comfortable with these basic and shared types of housing. Also, the food at camp will probably be somewhat different to your regular diet in your home context, so you should be prepared to eat new foods and to adjust to the weekly meal schedule of camp. Camps can accommodate most dietary restrictions with advance notice.

Being part of this program means that you will be *employed* as a camp counselor. This is a job and is not a vacation or casual volunteer experience. The camp counselor work schedule is very fun and rewarding but also very intense. Camp programming typically runs one week at a time, with a group of campers arriving at the beginning of the week and staying for 5 to 6 days. While campers are present, the camp counselor is on duty for 22 to 23 hours a day (this includes time spent sleeping in shared living quarters with campers). The exact schedule is different at each summer camp organization, but you can expect to have only one or two hours of time off each day, plus one or two full days off during the weekends. Summer camps expect their staff to commit fully to the schedule and to bring a positive attitude to the workplace environment. This job requires a lot of energy and dedication, and it is probably not a good match for those who expect to have time commitments like work or school responsibilities during the summer.

The camp counselors are not the only employees of the summer camp. Most camps have several types of employees, which include directors (year-round camp leaders who are the supervisors of seasonal summer staff), program specialists (staff who teach specific activities like arts and crafts, high-adventure activities, environmental education, etc.), dining services staff,

maintenance/facility staff, and more. The job of camp counselor is highly collaborative, and so you can expect to work very closely with a team of coworkers. You will receive extensive training and support from the camp directors, who are your supervisors.

Camp programming usually runs one week at a time. For the majority of the summer season, camp counselors can expect to lead “on-site” programming, which is the standard camp programming that happens at the camp’s location. It’s also common for camp counselors to participate occasionally in “off-site” programming, which could include day camp (similar to vacation Bible school) in a nearby community, or high-adventure programs like backpacking, rafting, etc. (all of this varies by camp). It’s normal for camp counselors to occasionally rotate into other camp duties and temporarily help with the kitchen team, maintenance team, etc.

Below is a sample weekly schedule of the camp program. *Please note, this is only a very general sample, and the exact details of the camp schedule can vary widely depending on the summer camp.*

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8:00 am	Time off & rest	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
9:00 am		Bible study	Bible study	Special activity (hiking, water activity, etc.)	Bible study	Bible study	Goodbyes
10:00 am		Activities	Activities		Activities	Activities	Worship
12:00 pm	Campers arrive	Lunch	Lunch		Lunch	Lunch	Campers depart
1:00 pm		Activities	Activities		Activities	Activities	
6:00 pm	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner		Dinner	Dinner	Time off & rest
8:00 pm	Worship	Worship	Worship	Worship	Worship	Worship	
10:00 pm	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	

**Camp counselors typically get 1 to 2 hours of time off each day, Monday through Friday. Camp counselors typically get at least 24 hours (or more) of consecutive time off each weekend, though this can vary.*

Who is a good fit for this program?

The ELCA International Camp Counselor Program works specifically with youth and young adults who are nominated by a church body that has an established partnership with the ELCA. (If you’re not sure whether your church is eligible to nominate applicants, you can email us at intcampaounselors@elca.org to find out.) This program is a great fit for people who have experience working with children and youth, and people who are excited about intercultural exchange.

Successful applicants to the program are:

- Between the ages of 18 and 30.
- Available to travel to the United States from late May to mid-August (U.S. summer months).
- Experienced as a youth worker, student or teacher, or specially skilled at working with children and youth.
- Highly responsible, dependable and trustworthy — especially in settings with children and youth. Camp counselors will spend most of their time working with children and youth and must have a history of responsible engagement with children.
- Flexible, resilient, open to new experiences.

- Proficient in the English language (details of this requirement are below).
- Willing to work in an outdoor environment that may be rural and/or far from city areas. Camp counselors spend most of their days working outdoors in wilderness environments.
- Willing to experience the challenges of summer camp work. Counselors will be asked to share their gifts in Bible study, worship, music, recreation, and any specific skills they might bring. They will be asked to share their faith perspectives and their culture with campers and coworkers. Participants should understand that this work is physically, emotionally, and spiritually demanding, and also very rewarding.
- Committed to returning to the home country after the program concludes.

What does the ELCA provide to program participants?

The ELCA serves as a bridge between global companion churches and ELCA summer camps. As the designated visa sponsor, the ELCA takes the lead for many pre-summer preparation processes.

The ELCA provides:

- Recruitment and screening of applicants from partner churches around the world
- Placement of accepted applicants at participating camps
- Sponsorship of the needed J-1 visa for entry into the U.S., including advising during the visa application process
- International and domestic air travel arrangements at the beginning and end of the summer
- Stipend provided directly to the participant through a loadable debit card (exact stipend amount varies from year to year, and details will be provided in the acceptance letter)
- Health and accident insurance as required by visa regulations
- In-person orientation event in Chicago at the start of the summer
- Ongoing advising and program support for counselors and camps throughout the summer
- Payment of U.S. income taxes owed due to taxable compensation, plus assistance in completing the required tax documents

What do camps provide to program participants?

Participants in the program work as seasonal employees of their assigned summer camp. As the employer, the summer camp provides important benefits and support to participants:

- Ground transportation from and to a nearby airport at the beginning and end of the summer
- Lodging and food throughout the summer (though occasional weekend meals may be the participant's responsibility)
- Training and supervision alongside other summer staff members
- Bedding and towels for use throughout the summer

- Frequent cross-cultural experiences and opportunities for the counselor to share about their home context and culture
- Access to internet (but internet access may be limited and only available periodically)
- Enthusiastic hospitality and interpersonal support

What are camp counselors expected to provide?

Although participants receive extensive support throughout their time in the program, there are also clear expectations that participants must meet. Keep in mind that program participants are employees of the summer camp, and they are required to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of their position. Each camp will provide its own personnel policies and job descriptions to its staff members. Generally speaking, camp counselors are expected to provide:

- Supervision and guidance for children/youth campers, ensuring a safe and fun environment for learning
- A commitment to supporting the physical, emotional, and spiritual safety of campers
- Accountability to the camp counselor working schedule, with a commitment to bringing positive energy to the camper experience
- Expertise and perspective from the home context and home church
- A commitment to openness, flexibility, courage, and respect – especially when encountering differences in identity, background, perspective, and culture
- Regular communication with the ELCA and with the home church
- Participation in cross-cultural exchange with campers, coworkers, and other parts of the ELCA
- Compliance with all policies and guidelines, including ELCA policies, camp policies, U.S. visa regulations, and applicable laws
- Excitement to return home to apply learnings to their leadership in the home church

Program timeline

October	Application forms become available and are sent to each invited partner church body
December	Due date for completed applications (normally December 15, but refer to the application documents for exact due date)
January-February	ELCA team reviews applications and screens for applicant eligibility. Applicants who meet basic program requirements are interviewed by the ELCA team. The ELCA team works with participating summer camps to make matches between each eligible applicant and a compatible summer camp. Most summer camps will interview prospective applicants prior to finalizing a placement. All applicants and endorsing churches will be informed of the final application result (accepted or declined). Applicants

	who are accepted will receive information about which summer camp has offered them a position. Applicants can choose to accept or decline the offer to participate in the program.
February-May	Accepted applicants prepare for travel to the U.S. This includes: • U.S. visa application (<i>an approved J-1 visa is required in order to participate in the program</i>) • Required criminal and global watchlist background check • Pre-summer virtual training • Booking international flights • Communication between participant and summer camp – <i>Prior to the summer, the camp will often collect additional employment documentation, which may include an employment contract/agreement, a health form, etc.</i>
Late May	Participants attend required in-person ELCA orientation in Chicago. After orientation, participants travel to their respective summer camp locations. (<i>In some cases, there may be a short gap of time between when Chicago orientation ends and when the camp staff training begins, since each camp has its own unique summer schedule. Camps provide hosting during this time as needed.</i>)
Late May & early June	Participants attend required in-person staff training provided by the summer camp.
June through July/August	Participants work as camp counselors. The ELCA team conducts required check-in calls with each participant.
July/August	Camp ends, and participants return home. Each camp has its own end date, which is specified in the acceptance materials before the summer. (<i>The J-1 visa allows for a grace period of up to 30 days after the end date of camp employment, during which visa holders can remain in the U.S. to do tourism/personal travel. Using the grace period is completely optional, and the ELCA does not require and does <u>not</u> organize any grace period travel. Participants who wish to use the grace period for personal travel must plan and pay for that travel on their own.</i>)

Application process

In order to be considered for the program, prospective participants must submit completed applications by the December due date. Incomplete applications cannot be considered, as many of the application components are required to be considered for visa sponsorship.

The application forms are not available publicly but are distributed through partner church bodies that can nominate applicants to apply. Each year, the ELCA team sends the application forms along with a letter of invitation to partner churches who are eligible to endorse applicants. If a prospective applicant has questions about how to access the application forms, they can email the ELCA team at intcampcounselors@elca.org.

The application has seven components:

Name	This item is completed by...	Description
Participant application	Applicant	The primary application form is to be completed by the individual who is applying to participate. The link to the online form is sent to nominating church bodies each year.
Proof of English language proficiency	Applicant	The U.S. J-1 Exchange Visitor Program requires us to evaluate the English language proficiency of applicants. Strong proficiency in the English language is important for a positive experience in the camp counselor role. Applicants can show English language proficiency in one of the following ways: a. Signed documentation (transcript or other grade report) from an academic institution or English language school that shows that the applicant has taken at least four English language courses (or other subjects taught in English), and received a passing grade or higher in each course b. Duolingo English Test (DET) score of 80 or higher c. Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of 3 or higher (equivalent to score of 55 or higher on the previous scoring system) d. International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) band score of 5.0 or higher e. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) equivalency of B1 or higher All eligible applicants will be interviewed by the ELCA team, and the interview is also used to evaluate English language proficiency. <i>*The ELCA may pay for the test fee for one Duolingo English Test attempt, with advance approval. Please email our team if you are unable to pay this fee and need to request support.</i>
Copy of passport ID page	Applicant	A valid passport will be required to apply for a U.S. visa and to travel internationally. The passport must not expire earlier than March in the year after participation (at least six months of validity after the end of the program). Individuals without a valid passport can apply to this program, but they must obtain a valid passport no later than January.
Reference form	Current or former employer or teacher	The reference form must be completed by a current or former employer or teacher of the applicant. <i>The reference form must be completed by a different person than the church endorsement form.</i>
Church endorsement form	Endorsing church official	The church endorsement form must be completed by an authorized official of the endorsing church body. This is normally the bishop, general secretary, council member, or other high-level official.
Third party agreement form	Endorsing church official	The third party agreement form must be signed by an authorized official of the endorsing church body. This form outlines the agreement made by the church regarding participation in this program.
Interview form	Endorsing church official	The endorsing church must interview all applicants to the program in person and then submit the provided interview form to summarize the interview results.

Applications are reviewed by the ELCA team and also by the director staff of prospective summer camps. The ELCA conducts an interview with all applicants who meet basic eligibility requirements, and most summer camps also conduct an interview with prospective camp counselors. Applicants are considered on the basis of their alignment with the eligibility criteria listed earlier in this document.

In making application decisions, the ELCA team respects the humanity of people of all backgrounds and identities, including but not limited to people of any sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, social and economic class, educational level, color, language, immigration status, sex, age, size, family status, political belief, religion, and mental and physical ability.

Cost of participation

The program is designed to be accessible to participants from a wide range of financial circumstances. Unlike many other camp counselor visa sponsoring agencies, this program does not charge a participation fee to camp counselors, and the ELCA covers most participation expenses upfront. Each participating summer camp pays a program fee to the ELCA rather than paying wages directly to the individual participant. Although participants in this program receive their compensation in a way that differs from their domestic counterparts, we ensure that the total compensation package is commensurate (and often exceeds) the average camp counselor wage among participating summer camps.

The ELCA directly provides the following compensation to participants:

- Full cost of required international and domestic air travel
- Full cost of required U.S. health and accident insurance
- Payment of U.S. income taxes owed because of taxable compensation
- Full cost of required background check
- Full cost of the SEVIS I-901 fee (required as part of the visa application)
- Full cost of stay in Chicago for the orientation event
- Stipend provided directly to the participant through a loadable debit card (exact stipend amount varies from year to year, and details will be provided in the acceptance letter)

The ELCA and the summer camp collaborate to cover all of the expenses listed above, which replace and collectively have a comparable value to the standard camp counselor salary. Instead of being paid directly by the camp, the participant is compensated through all of the benefits listed above, and the total compensation is commensurate with the average camp counselor wages among participating camps. The program is designed this way to reduce financial barriers for those who may not be able to cover these expenses upfront. You do not have to pay any additional fee to the ELCA in order to participate in this program.

The ELCA does not cover the expenses listed below, and so participants and their supporting churches should be prepared to cover these costs:

- Purchase of clothing and equipment – The ELCA and the summer camp will provide suggested packing lists for participants. In general, the dress code at camp is more casual and aligned with comfort for outdoor activities. Participants may need to acquire some clothing and equipment prior to the summer.
- Passport application fees
- Expenses related to family members of the participant (note that participants may not bring family members to the U.S. as part of this experience)
- Excess checked baggage fees for air travel (at least one checked bag is always included)
- Travel within the home country
- Visa application fees and expenses other than what is listed as provided above (*however, applicants with expressed financial need can make a special request for consideration of additional financial support for the visa application fee and associated domestic travel*)

The U.S. visa application process

General information for prospective J-1 visa applicants can be found at the U.S. Department of State website here: <https://j1visa.state.gov/participants/>

It is necessary to have an approved *J-1 exchange visitor visa in the camp counselor category* in order to participate in this program. A very significant part of the pre-summer preparation phase is completing the visa application process. Even if you are accepted into the program, there is no guarantee that your visa application will be approved. The decision about visa issuance is made solely by the U.S. Department of State, and the ELCA has no influence over that decision. Especially in recent years, it is sadly common for a portion of accepted applicants to receive visa denials. As *you make plans for your participation, please keep in mind that your ability to be part of the program is not guaranteed until your U.S. visa is issued*. You should consider your participation to be tentative until that point in the process.

The J-1 visa application process is very extensive, and it requires that the applicant first be sponsored by an organization that is designated to do so. The ELCA serves as the designated J-1 visa sponsor for accepted participants in this program. As the visa sponsor, the ELCA provides the documentation that is needed to begin the visa application, and our team also provides extensive advising to individuals as they navigate the visa application process. Participants should be prepared to dedicate a significant amount of time to the visa application process, beginning immediately after receiving notification of acceptance to the program from the ELCA.

At a high level, the visa application process involves the following steps (participants should not begin these steps until notified by the ELCA team):

1. ELCA issues Form DS-2019, Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status, which permits the participant to begin the application process. ELCA pays the SEVIS I-901 fee.
2. Participant completes and submits the Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application - Form DS-160.
3. Participant pays the visa application fee (in 2026, the fee amount is \$185 USD). *[Applicants with expressed financial need can make a special request to the ELCA for consideration of additional financial support for the visa application fee.]*
4. Participant schedules a visa interview at the applicable [U.S. embassy or consulate](#) (normally in the applicant's home country, though this can sometimes vary).
5. Participant attends the visa interview at the U.S. embassy or consulate and is interviewed in-person by a consular officer. The consular officer decides the result of the visa application. The visa application may be denied, approved, or held for additional processing. Currently, it is very common for consular officers to require additional administrative processing after the interview, including checks of the applicant's social media profiles.
6. If the visa application is approved, the embassy/consulate requires a processing period (usually at least one week) to apply the visa to the passport and then return the passport to the applicant.

The visa must be approved no later than early/mid-May in order for an applicant to participate in the ELCA program. Applicants without timely approved visas will not be able to participate in the program and are often invited to consider applying again in a future year.

***Important note: The information contained in this document is a general overview of the visa application process and should not be considered as official visa advising or legal advice. There are many details of the visa application process that are not explained here. Accepted program participants will receive extensive guidance from the ELCA team on how to complete the visa application process.*

Some common challenges to consider

We hope that participants in this program will have an overwhelmingly positive experience during their time in the U.S., and we work hard to help participants feel prepared for the joys and challenges that come with working as a camp counselor in a cross-cultural environment. However, it is inevitable that participants will experience some normal and manageable challenges. Any immersive cross-cultural exchange will come with difficulties, and our team is available to support participants as they experience those challenges.

Over the years, we have learned from participants that the most common challenges they experience include:

- Homesickness

- Adjusting to the very busy (and sometimes exhausting) work schedule
- Navigating cultural differences with coworkers and campers
- Navigating differences in racial identity (in some cases, participants may not be around many other people who look like them)
- Adjusting to new or unfamiliar foods
- Communicating across language differences
- Lack of alone time
- Loneliness
- Adjusting to different weather and temperatures
- Trying new or unfamiliar activities (camping, high-adventure activities, hiking, water activities, etc.)
- Staying in basic/rustic living accommodations that are shared with coworkers and/or campers
- Living in a rural or isolated area, often far from a large city
- Limited access to internet and cell phone

It's important to note that participants will have limited access to the internet and to their cell phones. Many summer camps are in rural and isolated areas and have limits on internet connectivity. Internet may not be available at all times while at camp. Additionally, all camps have policies that limit the use of cell phones and other devices when campers are present. It is common that camps allow staff to use their cell phones only during break times and time off. In most cases, cell phone plans from other countries will not work on U.S. networks (though some participants choose to purchase a temporary U.S. mobile phone plan). In all cases, participants should be prepared to have limited access to communication, and they should also prepare loved ones at home for this reality. Participants can typically access their devices during break times, and especially during time off on weekends.

ELCA theological and social perspectives

The International Camp Counselor Program is stewarded by the [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#), one of the larger Christian denominations in the United States and a member church of the [Lutheran World Federation](#). The program is a collaboration with ELCA-affiliated summer camp organizations, which are connected to the church through a national association called [Lutheran Outdoor Ministries](#). There is a wide diversity of lived experience, theological perspective, and faith practices across members of the ELCA and across participating summer camps. Participants in this program are warmly invited to experience various expressions of ELCA faith community, which will vary depending on where they work. The ELCA also benefits from this relationship, by receiving the unique gifts and perspectives of program participants and the many partner churches they represent.

Although all applicants to this program must be nominated by a church body that has an established partnership with the ELCA, we do not have a specific faith identity requirement of individual applicants. The summer staff of ELCA camps come from a variety of backgrounds, and not all of them are Lutheran. We welcome people from many faith backgrounds, including those who have questions or doubts about their own faith identity. It is important to know that all participants in the program will be asked to lead children and youth in Christian faith formation activities that are rooted in the Lutheran tradition, and so openness to and experience with this type of leadership are important. The application form gives an opportunity to share more about your faith identity, which helps us match you with a fruitful summer camp experience.

Each ELCA-affiliated summer camp has its own unique characteristics, including the role that faith practices play in camp programming. Many camps have daily faith practices like worship and Bible study woven into their programs. Some camps have a more general focus on spiritual wellbeing and include fewer specifically Christian faith practices in the daily schedule.

No matter which camp you work at, you will have the opportunity to experience some of the theological and social teachings of the ELCA (and the many diverse individual perspectives of your coworkers and campers, not all of whom will be Lutheran). Some of these perspectives will be the same or similar to your home church body, and some will be different. Camp counselors are invited to participate in the theologies and faith practices of the ELCA, but we do not expect or require participants to have exactly the same theological and social perspectives as the ELCA. If you want to learn more about the ELCA's official theological and social teachings (including topics like education, environment, gender justice, health, human sexuality, race, human rights, immigration, etc.), you can find extensive information on the ELCA website at <https://www.elca.org/about-the-elca/who-we-are/our-purpose/social-teachings>

The ELCA program and each participating camp have policies and expectations about how camp counselors interact with their coworkers and with campers. The primary purpose of these policies is to care for the holistic wellbeing and safety of each person at camp, by asking each participant to behave in ways that always show respect for others. Because this program operates within U.S. cultural contexts, these policies are rooted in what is considered “respectful” in the U.S. summer camp context, specifically. The ELCA team and camp directors will help international staff understand these policies and expectations. At their core, the policies require participants to respect the humanity of people of all backgrounds and identities, including but not limited to people of any sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, social and economic class, educational level, language, immigration status, sex, age, size, family status, political belief, religion, and mental and physical ability. Acceptance and compassion are particularly important when working with children and youth.

One policy area that is a common point of conversation in the program is the ELCA program's expectations related to LGBTQIA+ identities. We recognize that there is a wide variety of theological and social perspective on the topic of LGBTQIA+ identities, between our churches and within the ELCA itself. *Participants in the ELCA camp counselor program are required to act in a way that*

respects the full dignity of LGBTQIA+ people. Discriminatory or harmful behavior toward LGBTQIA+ people is not permitted. Promoting any perspectives that oppose the dignity and rights of LGBTQIA+ people (including biblical or theological perspectives that oppose or harm LGBTQIA+ people) is unacceptable while participating in this program. It is very likely that program participants will be in community with LGBTQIA+ coworkers and campers during their time at camp, and so adherence to this policy is important to maintain positive and supportive relationships in the workplace. *We do not ask participants to change their own deeply held beliefs, but we do require participants to maintain behavior that shows compassion and respect to people of all sexualities and gender identities.* Our team is available to answer any specific questions about how to navigate differences on this topic while working at camp.

The ELCA program and participating camps enthusiastically welcome members of the LGBTQIA+ community to apply to the program. Most participating summer camps openly welcome and celebrate employees and campers who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community. The ELCA's application process does not discriminate based on an applicant's identification with the LGBTQIA+ community, and applicants are never required to disclose information about sexuality as part of the application process. (We do ask applicants to disclose information about gender identity because most summer camps assign camp counselors to work with campers of the same gender identity, so that information is often needed for work assignment purposes. People of all gender identities are eligible to participate in this program.) Any applicants who have questions about this topic may contact us confidentially at intcampcounselors@elca.org.

Contact us

The ELCA team is available to answer questions about the program and application process. The best way to reach us is by email at intcampcounselors@elca.org.

Thank you for your time and interest!