

# Seasonal Employment in Recreation

## **Commitment: (from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary)**

: a promise to do or give something

: a promise to be loyal to someone or something

: the attitude of someone who works very hard to do or support something

This is a very important factor considered when hiring our employees and when evaluating past and current employees.

## **FAQ's**

### GENERAL QUESTIONS:

**How old do I have to be to work for the Parks & Recreation Dept?** In order to be employed (and earn wages), workers must be at least 14 years old unless otherwise stated. Any worker between the ages 14-18 must obtain working papers which **must** be completed and processed BEFORE the worker can start. Applicants need to understand that some 14 year-olds may be more mature than others. Just because someone is 14 chronologically, it does not mean that they are necessarily mature enough to handle the responsibilities of a specific job.

**When do I apply for employment consideration?** We have two key dates for seasonal employment: 4/1 & 10/1 each year. The bulk of our positions are considered in mass around these two deadlines. Traditionally, we hire a larger number of seasonal employees to help with the following programs: Recreation/Travel Basketball Programs, our Summer Rec Camp, and lifeguards at Stirling Lake. There are other programs that we also hire seasonal help for that are announced during the year as the need arises. However, these two programs account for the majority of the seasonal employees we recruit. For fall and winter program staffing, our application deadline is 10/1 (Recreation/Travel Basketball Program, etc.). For our spring and summer program staffing, our application deadline is 4/1 (Summer Rec Camp/Lifeguards, etc.).

**How do I apply?** There is a "recreation-specific" employment application linked on the website ([www.longhillnj.gov](http://www.longhillnj.gov) under Departments/Parks and Recreation). Please indicate the position applicant would like to be considered for at the top of the application. The form must be downloaded and completed. It is not an interactive electronic submission. Once completed,

attach any other materials required along with the application (noted in the job posting), and send form into the Parks & Recreation Department in accordance with the deadline.

**Do I have to live in Long Hill in order to work in the programs?** No. The applicant's address is not a pre-qualifying factor. However, employees will need to demonstrate that they can get themselves to and from work in a prompt and timely fashion.

**What if I have questions regarding the hiring process?** Applicants can contact the Parks & Recreation Director directly during business hours. The phone number is: 908.647.8000 x219. Parents—please refrain from asking questions that should be asked by the applicant. For many applicants, working in recreation may be one of their first jobs. I know they might be nervous, and may not realize what questions they need to ask. Please understand that your Parks & Recreation Director is also a parent as are many of our supervisors who are doing the interviewing. We “get it”. Applicants are better-served by showing us that they can handle the application process, the interview, and the questions by doing it themselves. For many young applicants, we have to make judgment calls on the maturity levels of our applicants. If they cannot speak to their employer and go through the process on their own, we will have concerns about whether or not they can handle the responsibilities of the job if selected for a position. Parents—please trust that the counseling and parenting you have been doing for all of their young lives have prepared them to take on this task.

**What happens after I submit an application?** All applications are date-stamped and filed when received. Soon after the deadline (again usually 4/1 & 10/1), the Parks and Recreation Director and the supervisor(s) of the program where candidates are being considered for, will meet and review the applications. Following that meeting, we will usually hold an Open House Interview Session when we have a lot of applications, and we are hiring a large number of applicants.

**What's an “Open House Interview Session”?** Typically, we will contact those candidates who have submitted qualified applications for a specific position in the Parks & Recreation Dept. once the application deadline has passed. Keep in mind that because of the large number of applications we receive, we do most of our communication through e:mail. We will announce a date for the Open House and invite all applicants who do not have prior work experience in the program to come for an interview. The Open House will usually span 3 hours or so, and we have the program supervisor(s) conduct the interviews. Applicants are asked to sign in when they arrive, and they are interviewed in the order they arrive.

**What if I can't make the Open House Interview Session?** Applicants are encouraged to make every effort to make the Open House Interview Session when it is held. We announce the date(s) for the interview session(s) well in advance. Often times we have 3-4 times the number of applicants for the position we are trying to fill. For someone just starting out without a lot of

work experience, we will usually fill the openings from the Open House Interview Session(s). Also, given that the session(s) is held over a period of several hours, applicants are usually able to make some portion of the session(s). We will only make an attempt to contact applicants not able to attend the Open House if openings still exist after the Open House has been held.

**If I worked for the Parks and Recreation Dept. in the past, am I guaranteed a position in the future?** No...much like life, there are no guarantees. Obviously, someone with good job performance in the past and an understanding of the responsibilities of the position will usually be considered a more qualified job candidate than an “unknown” and unproven candidate. They are typically given preference, just not a guarantee.

**If I’ve worked in a program in the past, will I automatically be considered for future positions?** No. All applicants must re-apply (submit a new application by the deadline) each time they would like to be re-hired. Often, we will extend a courtesy and contact former employees that have worked in a specific program in the past (provided their contact information on file is still current) to remind them to apply and gauge interest. However, the applicant should not rely on this and should still understand that it is their obligation to contact us if interested.

**If I have worked for the Parks & Recreation Dept. in the past, do I still need to complete new working papers?** Usually—YES. Working papers need to be processed every calendar year and for each “new” job. For example, if you have worked for the basketball program and then come back to work in the Summer Rec Camp—that’s two different jobs and requires two different sets of working papers. Anyone who is aged 14 – 17 years and 364 days, must complete working papers BEFORE they can start working in Parks and Recreation. (Note: volunteers do not need working papers.)

**How do I get my working papers?** Contact the local high school. Applicant completes Section A and then brings the working papers into the Parks and Recreation Director to complete Section B. Then the applicant must have the remaining sections completed, turn it into the HS for submission to the state, and return the top copy to the Parks and Recreation Director. (AND yes, in the back of my mind when my children are turning 18, I often reflect and wonder how they got to be “so old” which is usually replaced by the happy thought that they no longer have to obtain working papers.)

**Even though I’m applying for a seasonal part-time position, will my performance be evaluated formally?** Yes. The process is not as extensive or as all-encompassing as some performance evaluations might be with full-time, year-long employment opportunities, but there usually is some procedure that will be followed. Your supervisor can cover this with you once hired. Parents should know that performance evaluations will be shared with the

employee only. If the employee has a question regarding the evaluation of their work, only the employee should ask those questions.

**Why do we define the word “Commitment” at the top of this document?** Many times during the interview process and (if hired) during employment with us, your level of “commitment” will be evaluated. Most of the hiring we do is to support programs that we run. During the interview process, we will ask you about your availability during a certain time frame. When an employment offer is made, we will ask you to “commit” to work a certain work schedule during the entire program. If hired, we will expect that you are available to work when you “committed” to work (understanding that there can be unexpected emergencies). For many, a job working in the Recreation Dept. may be their first job ever. So why are we so strict and inflexible with employees on this issue?

It has a trickle-down effect. When a resident registers and pays for a Recreation program, they expect the program to run for the entire time it is advertised—that’s our “commitment” to our clients. If an employee accepts a position and “commits” to it and then does not follow through on their “commitment”, it leaves the Recreation Dept. with a hole to fill in order to deliver a program we “committed” to do. If you “commit” to work for us for the duration of a program and then do not follow through on your “commitment”, you must understand that we will reflect upon that level of “commitment” when considering you for future positions.

#### JOB-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

##### LIFEGUARD

**What type of training/certification do I need to be a Lifeguard at Stirling Lake?** The following certifications are needed: American Red Cross (or equivalent) Lifeguarding Certification; American Red Cross (or equivalent) Community First Aid & Safety, and American Red Cross (or equivalent) CPR/AED (Professional Rescuer). *American Red Cross (or equivalent) “Waterfront Training”, American Red Cross (or equivalent) “Blood borne Pathogens” Training are pluses, but not required.* (Copies of certifications should be attached to the application.)

**Can I still apply to be a Lifeguard before my training is completed/updated?** YES, but your certification (and re-certification to current status) must be completed before any lifeguard can start working. In cases like this, please make sure you note the date your certification(s) will be complete on the application.

**How old do I have to be to be a Lifeguard?** We follow the United States Lifeguard Standards Coalition guidelines developed by the following organizations: American Red Cross, United

States Lifesaving Association, and the YMCA. The minimum age is 15; however, the guidelines also point out that “teenagers seem to present various levels of maturity between the ages of 15 and 17 years”. During the interview process, we do explain this to our applicants, and we ask questions to try and determine their ability to handle different situations. If hired, we do make continued judgment calls on maturity while we watch those performing lifeguarding duties and during drills.

**Do I get certified to be a Lifeguard through the Parks & Recreation Dept?** No. Courses are offered year-round by many local organizations. The Parks & Recreation Dept. posts information we are aware of on upcoming local classes being offered on the Recreation bulletin boards located at Town Hall. However, an online search will usually yield many different options to consider.

**Will the Parks & Recreation Dept. pay the cost for me to get certified?** No. The department does not have a budget to cover either initial certifications or re-certifications. Those associated costs are the responsibility of the applicant, and it is the responsibility of the applicant to keep their certifications current. We will require copies of certifications to be kept on file.

SUMMER RECREATION CAMP/ ( also applies to a limited number of hires for PRE-SCHOOL CAMP)

**What types of jobs are there in the Summer Recreation Camp?** Each year we hire a Camp Director, Site Supervisor(s), Assistant Site Supervisors, Arts & Crafts Coordinator(s), and Camp Counselors. Applicants that have prior solid work experience with us will be given preference in the hiring process when returning.

**What is a CIT?** “Counselor in Training”. Each year, we try to take on a few CIT’s. These are generally applicants who would like to work in the program and are strong candidates for future counselor positions but were not offered paid counselor positions. CIT’s choose to work on a volunteer basis and shadow other counselors to learn the job. CIT’s hope that they can prove themselves volunteering for a summer in the hopes of coming back the following year and being offered a paid counselor position. HOWEVER, being a CIT for a summer is not a guarantee of future employment and should never be considered as such. Even excellent CIT’s can only be offered a position in the future if the position exists.

**If a CIT is a “volunteer position”, why don’t you take any and all that apply?** Generally we do not like to take on more than 10 CIT’s at the most. There are several reasons for this, but primarily it is because there is also a responsibility on our part to supervise/coach/train the

CIT's in addition to supervising the campers the counselors are primarily responsible for. In addition, CIT's are the applicants we see the most potential in to become counselors at a future date. This is a great way for us to evaluate them for future positions and for the CIT's to make sure this is a job they might want to do in the future. Sometimes, applicants become CIT's and find that being a counselor isn't really what they thought it was, and they decide it's not the career path for them.

**How old do I have to be a CIT?** Since this is a volunteer position (not paid), there really is no minimum age. However, to be in a position of authority over campers who are in grades K-8, our CIT's need to be older than our campers. Having "said" that, there are other factors we consider which relate to future possibilities in hiring given age requirements for child care supervision. Given that, we will generally only consider CIT applicants who are 15 and older. See related question below.

**How old are counselors?** Counselors are all different ages. However, we follow the New Jersey Youth Camp Standards as part of our framework when making hiring decisions to staff the program. We look to staff the program with a number of counselors (based on enrollment) who are 18 years old or older. Beyond that, we then hire a number of counselors (again based on enrollment and break-out of the groups) who are 16 years and older. Any counselors under the age of 16, are not considered when factoring in required supervision ratios. Applicants who are under 16 years of age are hired on an as-needed basis to assist when several factors are evaluated: enrollment, budget, and the qualifications of the applicant.

**Is it okay if counselors take vacation during the weeks of camp?** Generally, no. When we hire counselors, a pre-requisite in the hiring process is that prospective counselors will be available to work during all of the weeks camp is in session. Unless an extremely rare exception is granted, the only excused absences are those due to illness and/or college visits with supervisor approval. (For CIT's, we are a little more flexible with this rule.)

**What qualifications do I need to be considered for a counselor position?** Ideal candidates will need to want to work with children and will be able to demonstrate an ability to work with children well. First aid training, prior experiences as a camp counselor, and babysitting experiences are all pluses. Prior employment in a supervisory role also a positive, as is prior work history within our other recreation programs. Summer Rec Counselors must be able to commit to work all weeks of the camp program.

## RECREATION/TRAVEL BASKETBALL

**What job opportunities are there within recreation during the basketball season?** To support our Basketball programs (both Rec & Travel), we will hire individuals as timers, scorekeepers and referees to help build basketball skills with the students in grades 1-8.

**How old do I have to be?** Applicants must be at least 14 years of age and in 9<sup>th</sup> grade or higher. Please note that an applicant's level of maturity will be scrutinized. Although 14 is the minimum age, it is a very mature 14 year old that we are looking for.

**What qualifications do I need?** Ideal candidates will be able to demonstrate an ability to work well with children and will have a complete understanding of the sport of basketball. First aid training a plus. Applicants must be available weeknights and on Saturdays.

**Can I still work in the basketball program if I am also playing basketball on the HS team?** Yes and no. Few employees have made it work. Most find the balancing act between the HS coach's demands for practices and games, homework, and the job requirements too difficult to juggle. For this reason, we are cautious when considering an applicant who also plays on the HS team. We will discuss these concerns with applicants that still want to be considered.