

American Camping Association® ACA Professional Development Portfolio

A professional portfolio is a career planning tool to help you analyze your competencies and document your professional development experiences. It should contain information commonly included in a resume including such items as:

- career goals,
- previous job experience,
- completed degree programs,
- courses, seminars, and workshops specific to the camping industry,
- participation in other educational events,
- self-study,
- a regularly updated needs assessment,
- ACA leadership and volunteer experiences,
- other experiences relevant to the profession.

ACA's Professional Development Plan includes a body of knowledge that is categorized into 14 core areas.



ACA National Courses and Professional Development Seminars

ACA has developed a progression of courses to address different levels of experience and competencies in the administration of camps and conference centers. ACA recognizes that people enter the field with different competencies and should be able to assess their own needs for professional development.

ACA National Courses	Completion Date and Location
New Director Orientation is an 8 hour course designed for new directors, late hires or seasonal directors, assistant directors or staff that will be in administrative positions in the coming summer.	
Basic Camp Director Course is a 4 day course for directors with less than 6 years experience. The course is designed to provide a basic understanding of the organized camp body of knowledge, stimulate an exploration of management practices in 13 core areas and expand and develop a community of peers.	
Core Area Seminars are one to two day long events for persons that have at least 3 years of experience in camping or are a specialist in the core area. The content will pick up where BCDC ends and be based on the common ground issues directors and specialists need to know.	
Standards Course is a course offered at the section level for directors preparing for accreditation visits.	

ACA National Conference use the core areas and management categories as tracks for the national conference program interest sessions, workshops, and seminars.

Attended the following conferences:

Year	Location	Sessions of special interest attended

Books or Articles Written or Workshops Given

Year	Location	Title

Leadership or Volunteer Positions

Year(s)	Position held

**American Camping Association®
Portfolio Self Assessment**

ACA Core Areas

Evaluate each of the core areas using the rating scale below. Assess yourself by rating yourself (0-5) in each of the areas and date the year self assessment was done. Since this is intended to cover a career in camping, most directors in their first 3 to 5 years will have ratings of 0 to 3. This self assessment can be used yearly or periodically throughout your career to identify additional educational sessions or self study needed.

Rating

Prescribed Criteria

- 5 I have been called upon at least twice by professional peers to lead/instruct or consult in this area and their requests are justified due to my extensive training, experience, and qualifications in this area which enable me to apply my expertise to ANY camp or constituency.
- 4 By virtue of my extensive training, experience and qualifications, I could be called upon to lead/instruct or consult in this area applying my expertise to ANY camp or constituency.
- 3 I lead/instruct my current staff and/or perform functions in my current operation in this area without any additional assistance or need for additional resources.
- 2 I lead/instruct my current staff and/or perform the operational functions in this area, but require the aid of additional personnel or resources.
- 1 I have adequate knowledge/ability to identify immediately the necessary resources in this area but must secure personnel to lead/and/or perform related job functions in my current operation.
- 0 I have insufficient knowledge in this area to readily recognize and secure the necessary resources/personnel.

Strategic Planning. Ability to develop a strategic plan for achieving the future vision and mission in a world of constantly changing expectations and requirements.

Working knowledge of:	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____
• how to analyze the organizations current status and condition and key risk factors both from within the organization and from outside.					
• techniques to determine a vision of what the organization or camp will be in the future.					
• factors critical to successfully achieve the mission or vision.					
• methods to determine the short term realistic goals, timelines and action plans to achieve the long term vision					
• Other:					

Mission/Outcomes. Ability to articulate your own philosophy and the philosophy of the camp, and identify desired goals and outcome objectives.

Working knowledge of:	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____
• history of camping, current issues and the implications for the development of a camp mission, goals and outcome objectives.					

• definitions " mission, philosophy, goals, and outcome objectives" and formulation of clearly stated goals and outcome objectives.					
• your camp's mission and philosophy and ability to articulate it to parents, staff and backers/funders.					
• the relationship between camp goals and outcome objectives and camp organization.					
• the outdoor setting as a unique environment for human growth and development.					
• evaluation techniques for measuring success at reaching goals and outcome objectives					
• Other:					

Participant Development and Behavior. Ability to identify the characteristics and needs of the population served by your camp.

Working knowledge of:	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
• model characteristics of human life-stages of campers					
• techniques for gathering information about persons to be served					
• group dynamics					
• theories of human development necessary for describing, organizing, and managing the human experience for the purpose of program planning, personnel management, and human growth					
• behavioral characteristics of various age groups and methods for dealing with inappropriate behavior					
• Other					

Target Populations/Diversity. Ability to deal with the needs of diverse populations in a camp setting.

Working knowledge of:	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
• external and internal statistical information on demographics of target population(s)					
• common characteristics and needs of persons from various backgrounds, cultures or with physical, intellectual, and emotional disabilities					
• implications for camp program and facilities of specific different experiences and abilities					
• principles of activity analysis, selection, and modification as applied to differently abled persons					
• providing staff information and training in working with the target population(s), common stereotypes and effects of integrating diverse populations					

• agencies and resources available for providing services to target populations					
• Other					

Leadership. Ability to assess your knowledge of the leadership role of a camp director and your personal strengths and weaknesses.

Working knowledge of:	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____
• techniques for the assessment of personal physical, emotional, social, and mental strengths and weaknesses					
• leadership styles, ethics, and the impact of the camp director on the camp community					
• the role and functions of the camp director					
• the relationship of camp directors to their philosophy and objectives					
• techniques for doing task analysis, setting priorities, and delegation					
• methods for assessing one's relationship to and influence on one's own and other professions					
• Other					

Program Design and Activities. Ability to design a organizational structure for the camp program that is appropriate for persons to be served, the camp's philosophy, goals and objectives; and the environment to be utilized.

Working knowledge of:	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____
• various organizational models and components of camp programming.					
• the relationship between the needs and interests of the persons to be served, the organizational design and camp programming.					
• the relationship of operating philosophy, organizational design and staff organization.					
• the relationship between the organizational design, program and the physical environment.					
• activity analysis and utilization in camp programming.					
• Other:					

Human Relations. Ability to recruit, train, and supervise staff to implement the camp program and the operations.

Working knowledge of:	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____
• legal aspects of employment, including contractual arrangements and personnel policies.					

• staff role or function analysis and its relationship to job descriptions and staff organization systems					
• methods of recruiting and interviewing camp staff.					
• principles and techniques of staff training including assessment of training needs.					
• techniques for supervision of staff including a system of individual supervision and appraisal plans					
• factors affecting staff morale, motivation, and growth.					
• Other:					

Marketing. Ability to develop a plan for interpreting the values of a camp to prospective campers and their parents.

Working knowledge of:	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
• the benefits of the organized camping experience to customers and consumers and writing key messages.					
• public reactions and marketing principles.					
• steps in market analysis and sourcing strategies					
• marketing and public relations techniques, methods, and materials.					
• the benefits of camps to employees and to the local community and region.					
• Other:					

Health and Wellness. Ability to develop a comprehensive camp health and safety system.

Working knowledge of:	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
• varying physical and emotional needs of campers and staff.					
• resources for federal, state, and local laws and ACA Standards related to health and wellness.					
• comprehensive planning for health and wellness including the scope and limits of services provided and authority of health care administrator.					
• camp health and wellness policies and procedures needed for the camp's total operation.					
• techniques necessary to analyze the effectiveness of a camp's comprehensive health and wellness program.					
• Other:					

Food Service. Ability to develop and implement a plan for camp food service management.

Working knowledge of:	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____
• basic nutritional needs, food values and options for meeting special dietary needs.					
• resources for federal, state, and local laws and ACA Standards related to food service and food handling.					
• various food service management options including purchasing, selection and control.					
• various types of food service equipment and facilities.					
• food service styles and the relationship of food/food service to the total camp operation and goals.					
• Other:					

Risk Management. Ability to analyze risk exposures and develop and implement a risk management plan.

Working knowledge of:	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____
• how to identify the organizations assets and analyze risk exposures to humans, financial resources and property resources					
• techniques for evaluate, reduce, prevent or control loss of resources from risk exposures					
• aspects of criminal or civil law that apply to the camp’s operation and the legal exposure from actions and nonactions of officers, directors, employees and others acting of its behalf.					
• the standard of care expected or duty owed by the person in charge when acting <i>in loco parentis</i>					
• procedures needed to handle emergencies, analyze incidents and develop and evaluate the effectiveness of a crisis management plan.					
• Other:					

Transportation. Ability to make decisions about transporting campers and staff.

Working knowledge of:	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____
• liability issues related to transportation					
• the advantages and disadvantages to various forms of transportation					
• procedures for maintaining vehicles, selecting drivers, handling emergencies and controlling on-site traffic					
• Other:					

Business and Finance. Ability to develop a camp business and finance system.

Working knowledge of:	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____
• business management systems and office procedures.					
• various patterns of ownership and financial arrangements.					
• resources for federal, state, and local laws, and ACA Standards and self assessment items related to camp business management.					
• various types of insurance coverage and risk management plans.					
• a camp business program which is supportive of the camp program.					
• Other:					

Site and Facilities. Ability to develop a comprehensive plan for site and facility management.

Working knowledge of:	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____	Year _____
• principles of site planning and long-range development.					
• camp's relationship to the natural environment.					
• principles of preventative construction and maintenance.					
• resources for federal, state, and local laws, and ACA Standards related to site and facilities.					
• resources for site and facility maintenance and development.					
• Other:					

Name _____ Phone _____ Date first completed _____

Camp _____ Position/yr _____

Additional Self Assessments completed:

Date completed _____ Camp _____ Position/yr _____

Date completed _____ Camp _____ Position/yr _____

Date completed _____ Camp _____ Position/yr _____

Date completed _____ Camp _____ Position/yr _____

Date completed _____ Camp _____ Position/yr _____