



# **CHARACTER AT CAMP GRANT PROGRAM**

Planning Grant Application Packet

Spring 2026

Dear Camp Leader,

Welcome to ACA’s Character at Camp Grant Program! Whether you are a seasoned camp leader or new to the field, we are glad you are considering applying for a grant to support character development at camp. This packet includes important background information about character and the grant program, details about eligibility and how to apply, and the Planning Grant Application questions.

The purpose of this program is to provide financial support, training, and technical assistance for organizations starting new character development programs or projects, those enhancing or expanding existing programs, and those celebrating character at camp through communications, development, and/or community partnerships. By the end of the Character at Camp initiative, we anticipate camps in the US will represent one of the largest and most potent contexts for character development in the learning and development ecosystem.

Eligible organizations can apply for a Planning Grant, an Implementation Grant, or a Network Implementation Grant. To help you decide which is right for your organization, here is a quick overview of each grant pathway:

Pathway	Planning Grant	Implementation Grant	Network Grant
<b>Who Should Apply?</b>	Organizations that need a year of planning, training, and capacity building before they can develop and implement a full character program or project.	Organizations that have a specific character program or project in mind and sufficient capacity to successfully implement that program or project starting in January 2027	Organizations that serve as the coordinating entity for 6+ camps that are eager to plan and implement a character program or project with their on-site program teams
<b>Duration</b>	One year	Two or three years	One year for planning (if applicable); three years for implementation
<b>Funding Amount</b>	Up to \$50,000	Up to \$200,000 for a two-year grant Up to \$300,000 for a three-year grant	Up to \$300,000 for a three-year Network Implementation Grant

The information that follows outlines the **Planning Grant** application process. You can find the packets specific to the Implementation Grant program and the Network Grant program on the [Character Grant Program](#) web page. After determining your organization’s eligibility to apply for a Character at Camp grant, you should carefully consider which grant pathway is the best fit and apply for that grant. You’ll find additional details on each grant pathway as well as resources — such as recordings of informational webinars, FAQs, grant program timeline, and access info for office hours with ACA’s grantee success team — on the [Character Grant Program](#) web page.

On behalf of ACA’s Character at Camp Grant Team, thank you for the work you do to support character development among the campers and staff you serve. Whether you apply for and receive a grant or expand your understanding of Character at Camp through ACA’s [Character Academy](#), we are glad you are joining us in this work. Only together can we reach our ambitious goal of elevating camp as an expansive and effective context for character development.

Onward,



Brian Massey  
Director of Innovation  
American Camp Association

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## Background

The American Camp Association (ACA) represents a community of camp professionals who share in the mission to create quality camp experiences that build a world of belonging and growth. Our work includes a national accreditation program, in-person and virtual opportunities for professional development and connectedness, research, and support for local, state, and federal advocacy — all fueled by a vast community of volunteers, thought leaders, affiliate partners, and collaborators. The [Character at Camp Grant Program](#) is part of a six-year initiative funded by Lilly Endowment, Inc. that is designed to increase and expand character development programs at camps in the United States.

For over a century, day and overnight camps in the US have fostered character among young people through a diverse array of programs, facilities, and camper populations. While each camp is unique, most share common features such as an immersive setting, supportive relationships with peers and adults, opportunities for fun and challenging activities, and support for reflection and personal growth. ACA's [National Camp Impact Study](#) demonstrated that, together, these features promote campers' growth in ways that last over time and transfer to other settings, such as school and early work experiences. What's more, findings from ACA's recently released [Economic Impact Study](#) suggest the size of the camp industry — which exceeds 20,000 day and overnight camps — is more expansive than previously thought.

We also know that young people today are experiencing loneliness, isolation, and divisiveness within their schools and communities, which is why opportunities for young people to contribute to and thrive within these places are more important than ever before. Fostering character development in young people is increasingly important, and camps in the US are well positioned to do this. Thus, the Character at Camp Grant Program provides grant support for starting, improving, expanding, and celebrating character development initiatives at camp.

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## What Is Character?

Character itself can be defined in different ways, but one commonly used definition in the field of youth development is best stated by [Character Lab](#): “The intentions and actions that benefit both the individual and others.” With this example of a broad definition of character in mind, we encourage organizations interested in applying to the grant program to think about the specific character strengths they are focused on, such as strengths of heart (e.g., empathy, kindness), strengths of mind (e.g., curiosity, creativity), and strengths of will (e.g., grit, self-control), and to submit proposals that focus on one or more specific strengths. While applicants will not be prioritized based on the character strengths they choose to focus on, we see a particular need for opportunities for young people to practice and cultivate honesty and integrity and thus encourage camps to consider if/how their camp might be positioned to focus in this area.

When considering if your organization should apply and what specific initiative you should request funding for from the Character at Camp Grant Program, we encourage teams to ensure they understand how character is defined and developed in youth development contexts like camp. To learn more about character development, we encourage applicants to check out any of the following widely used character resources:

- The [Jubilee Center for Character and Virtues](#) is a leading research center focused on character, virtues, and values in the interest of human flourishing. They've created [frameworks](#) for character education that can be used by all educators, and they produce influential [research](#) that shapes how institutions think about character development.

- [Character.org](#) is an organization comprised of educators, researchers, and business and civic leaders who advocate for character. Their [11 Principles Framework](#) is a guide to cultivating character in your organization. They [support educators](#) of all kinds to help them develop comprehensive character initiatives.
- [Character Lab](#) connected researchers with educators to create greater knowledge about the conditions that lead to social, emotional, academic, and physical well-being for young people throughout the country. Their [playbooks](#) are research-based guides to cultivating character, including recommended curricula, videos, and books. Their [tips](#) give actionable advice that all educators can use to enhance their work. While Character Lab has concluded their research, their existing resources continue to be available through their website.
- The [VIA Institute on Character](#) has developed the ground-breaking [Character Strengths Survey](#), a scientifically validated assessment designed specifically to measure the 24 core character strengths in individuals. Nearly 35 million surveys have been taken around the world, and VIA supports the advancement of character science through research, personalized reports, books, and more.

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## Who Is Eligible to Apply for a Character at Camp Grant

Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations that are physically located in the United States and are exempt from tax under Internal Revenue Code (Code) section 501(c)(3) or are a government/municipal organization. Organizations that are exempt from tax under Code section 501(c)(3) must also be public charities under Code section 509(a)(1) (which incorporates Code sections 170(b)(1)(A)(i)-(vi)), 509(a)(2), or (509)(a)(3) Type I or Type II). Tax-exempt religious organizations (e.g., churches and church-related entities) are eligible to apply so long as they are Code section 501(c)(3) public charities.

Additionally, applicants must represent an organization that currently offers day and/or overnight camp programming, which means that **all** the following criteria must apply:

- The organization delivers camp programs consistent with [ACA's mission and values](#). Organizations operating at multiple sites and organizations offering camp programming on rented or leased sites are eligible to apply.
- The organization is currently offering programs and/or services that serve campers for at least one full session of three or more consecutive days during summer and/or nonsummer months. Camps can apply for funds to start new programs if they serve campers according to these criteria in some other capacity. Camps offering sessions in a format other than three or more consecutive days are welcome to apply if you can justify in your application why it makes sense for your population for the camp session to be shorter and that you can still accomplish your proposed outcomes in that time.
- The organization is based in the US, and the camp programs for which the applicant is applying are primarily run in the US.
- The camp program(s) for which the applicant is applying for a grant has a primary audience of campers five years and older. Applicants proposing projects that focus on adult participants must demonstrate the developmental focus (e.g., character programming for adult participants with special needs, or character programming for families attending a family camp) of the adult-serving program.

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## Planning Grant Program Overview

The Character at Camp Planning Grant Program is designed for organizations seeking to increase capacity to support the development of a Character at Camp Implementation Grant proposal. This could include, for example, a request for funding for programs or projects focused on improving or expanding existing character-focused programs, expanding access to and belonging within character-focused programs, and/or celebrating camp as an important and effective context for character development. Planning Grant funds can be used for activities and/or personnel to support, for example:

- Strategic planning related to character development at your organization.
- Planning related to starting a new character-focused program at your organization.
- Evaluating current offerings to identify areas in which to add a character-focused program.
- Travel to conferences, training, or building relationships with potential program partners (e.g., schools or community organizations).
- Other activities and/or personnel that will support the development of a Character at Camp Implementation Grant proposal.

Organizations can request up to \$50,000 for a one-year Planning Grant that can be used to build capacity to develop a character-focused project.

Organizations selected to receive a Planning Grant will work with the ACA's Character at Camp Grant Team throughout the grant period. At the end of their one-year Planning Grant, organizations will be encouraged to complete and submit a Character at Camp Implementation Grant proposal. Planning Grant recipients must submit a final narrative and budget report at the end of the grant period.

*Organizations that receive a Character at Camp Planning Grant are not guaranteed to receive a Character at Camp Implementation Grant.*

**You should apply for a Planning Grant if you represent an organization that** offers camp programs and/or facilities – either as part of an array of programs/services or as the primary mission of the organization – and that:

- Does not yet have a clear idea of how you would address a need related to character at your camp
- Does not have significant experience writing grant proposals and/or receiving grants, and/or
- Needs additional capacity, in terms of number of people and/or expertise, to successfully develop a Character at Camp Implementation Grant proposal.

You should consider applying for a **Character at Camp Implementation Grant** if your organization has a specific character program or project ready to implement and, if selected, the capacity and experience to carry out the activities. Those representing a network organization that includes six or more camps should apply for a **Character at Camp Network Implementation Grant**.

Funding is limited, and this is a competitive grant program. Not all applicants will receive awards.

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## Timeline for Planning Grants

*(Note: all dates subject to change)*

May 1, 2026	Planning Grant application opens in ACA's grant portal, Foundant
October 1, 2026	Planning Grant application closes in ACA's grant portal, Foundant
December 2026	Applicants notified of grant award decisions
January 2027	Grant awards announced, fund distribution and planning activities begin
Fall 2027	Implementation Grant application opens for Planning Grant recipients

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## Planning Grant Requirements

If selected to receive a planning grant, organizations will be required to:

- Complete all necessary paperwork at the start of the one-year grant period
- Complete a final narrative and budget report at the end of the one-year grant period.
- Use grant funds in accordance with the approved budget and promptly report any anticipated or unanticipated changes to proposed spending.
- Maintain ACA camp membership and individual membership for both grant leads (Free one-year membership will be provided by the ACA).
- Designate two members of your organization's leadership/program team to serve as grant leads. These individuals should be the people at the organization who are directly responsible for the success of the grant and will be actively involved in the grant activities.

We recognize that many camps depend on volunteers primarily or entirely. In this case, at least one of the two individuals assigned to this project should be the camp director/executive director, the chair of the board of directors, or whomever in the organization is responsible for the success of the program.

Additionally, there will be optional (but encouraged) grant-related opportunities, including:

- Training and technical assistance sessions offered by ACA to support the development of the implementation grant application.
- In-person meetups at ACA regional and national events (travel funding can be written into the proposed budget).

We also understand that staffing and capacity may evolve over time. If selected to receive a grant, grantees should inform the ACA of any changes so we can work together to determine appropriate adjustments to the requirements outlined above.

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## Planning Grant Application Instructions

This application is designed to be completed by members of your organization's leadership and/or program team. Before completing the application, we recommend convening your team to discuss your proposed activities and develop a clear overview of what you aim to accomplish during the Planning Grant period.

While the online grant portal [GLM by Foundant](#) saves your responses as they are entered, we recommend that you prepare your answers in advance in a separate document. You will use unique Foundant login credentials to log in (not your ACA website credentials). Multiple individuals from your organization can log in and access an application. Additional information and tutorials of Foundant can be accessed [here](#).

You must submit the following documents in Foundant to complete your application:

- IRS determination letter and eligibility criteria form.
  - If your organization does not have an IRS determination letter (some governmental/ municipal organizations and church organizations may not be required to obtain an IRS determination letter), you may still be eligible for this grant. Please reach out to [character@acacamps.org](mailto:character@acacamps.org) to discuss what alternative documentation may be accepted.
- Your organization's most recently filed IRS Form 990.
  - If your organization does not file a 990, you may still be eligible for this grant. Please reach out to [character@acacamps.org](mailto:character@acacamps.org) to discuss what alternative documentation may be accepted.
- Board roster
  - Provide a current board roster that lists each board member's name, role or officer position (if applicable), professional affiliation, and term dates.
- Organizational chart
  - Provide an organizational chart that outlines your current staff structure, clearly identifying key roles, reporting relationships, and any positions that will support or be supported by this grant.

# PLANNING GRANT APPLICATION

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## Camp Information

1. **What is the name of the organization submitting this application?**

If the camp name is different than the organization name, please enter that as well. Otherwise, type your organization name again. Please enter only the camp(s) for which you intend to use these funds, especially if your organization operates more than one camp at different locations or with different names.

Organization name:

Camp name:

Camp website:

Affiliation, if applicable (e.g., Girl Scouts of the USA, Salvation Army, Camp Fire, SeriousFun Children's Network, YMCA, faith-based organization, college or university):

2. **Does the organization submitting this application have current status as a tax-exempt organization under Code section 501(c)(3) or government/municipal or religious entity?**

Yes

No

Please upload documentation verifying your camp's nonprofit or government/municipal entity status (i.e., IRS Determination Letter): [Upload]

3. **What is the organization's primary mailing address?**

Street address:

City:

State:

Zip code:

4. **What is the camp location (if different from the organization mailing address)?**

Street address:

City:

State:

Zip code:

5. **What is the name and contact information for the organization's leadership (CEO, executive director, etc.)?**

First name:

Last name:

Job title:  
Email:  
Phone:

6. **Is the organization leader identified above aware and fully supportive of this grant application?**

[check box]

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## Executive Summary

7. Please provide a brief executive summary of your application. Your executive summary should include the following information:

- **Organization overview:** Name of your organization and a brief description of your mission, camp(s), program(s), and details of the campers and communities served.
- **Character planning project:** A short description of the character-focused planning project you propose to undertake through this grant.
- **Rationale:** Why this project is needed at this time and why your organization chose to pursue these activities.
- **Funding request:** The total amount of Planning Grant funds requested.

[Text Entry – 3000 characters]

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## Planning Grant Design & Rationale

In this section, you will be asked to reflect on your organization's experience with character and provide details of the planning activities your organization will undertake during the grant period.

You do not need to have a fully developed Character at Camp Implementation program or project to apply for a Planning Grant. However, you should have a clear outline of the steps and activities you will undertake during the grant period and clearly articulate an actionable plan for how your organization will use the Planning Grant period and funds (if awarded) to develop a future Character at Camp Implementation program or project. Your plan should align with your organization's mission, strengths and limitations, and demonstrate how the use of the grant funds will prepare your organization for future character-focused programs or projects.

8. **What is your organization's mission? Please provide the organization's mission statement in the space below.**

[Text Entry – 1000 characters]

9. **Describe your organization's prior experience with character-related initiatives and how character is currently incorporated into your camp's mission, programs, or organizational practices.** If character has not yet been formally integrated, please share any related efforts or areas of exploration. Please include specific examples of character activities, practices, or initiatives.

[Text Entry – 3000 characters]

10. **Describe your organization’s identified needs or areas for growth related to character development.**

*You are welcome to reference learnings from our optional organizational self-assessment tool, or any other process of institutional reflection and assessment.*

[Text Entry – 3000 characters]

11. **As part of this Planning Grant, what are the character strengths that your organization is interested in exploring or deepening?** Identify (up to) three character strengths that your organization plans to cultivate through the character-focused efforts that this grant would support. The options below do not constitute an exhaustive list of all possible character strengths. If necessary, write in an additional character strength under “Other.”

- |                           |                   |                      |
|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Kindness                  | Integrity         | Judgment             |
| Respect                   | Honesty           | Spirituality         |
| Confidence                | Perseverance      | Responsibility       |
| Teamwork                  | Gratitude         | Resilience           |
| Appreciation of diversity | Autonomy          | Independence         |
| Leadership                | Critical thinking | Community-mindedness |
| Compassion                | Self-control      | Other [Text entry]   |
| Curiosity                 | Volunteering      |                      |
| Creativity                | Motivation        |                      |
|                           | Humility          |                      |

12. **Please describe the rationale and reason for selecting these character strengths.**

[Text Entry – 3000 characters]

13. **Why is your organization seeking a Planning Grant rather than applying for an Implementation Grant?** Please describe how a Planning Grant would strengthen your organizational readiness, grant management capacity, or program development efforts, and address any gaps that make this planning period necessary.

[Text Entry – 5000 characters]

14. **Describe how you will use the 12-month Planning Grant period.** Include key activities, a detailed timeline, and the outcomes or deliverables you expect to complete by the end of the grant period, including how these specific activities will move your organization closer to an Implementation Grant program or project.

[Text Entry – 5000 characters]

15. **What existing supports or structures does your organization currently have in place that will contribute to the proposed planning activities?** Please include any relevant staff capacity, partnerships, systems, or resources, and note where additional support may be needed.

[Text Entry – 5000 characters]

16. One goal of the Character at Camp Initiative is to increase the accessibility of character-development opportunities for all campers, staff, families, organizations, and communities, including those who are currently underrepresented within the camp industry. **If the planning activities you are proposing help to achieve this goal, please detail how and why you believe they will do so.**

*Please note that answering this question is not required to complete this application or to be considered for a grant. If you do not wish to answer, please skip to the next question.*

[Text Entry – 3000 characters]

## Budget

The budget is a critical component of your proposal and should clearly reflect the resources required to implement your proposed planning grant activities. Through developing and justifying your budget, you demonstrate the feasibility of your plan and the alignment between proposed activities and requested funds. Your budget should be realistic and align with the scope of work described in your application.

Applications exceeding the maximum award amount or category caps will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed.

17. **What is the total amount of Planning Grant funds that you are requesting?**

[text entry]

18. **Please provide a budget that details and breaks down the total amount of grant funds requested for your proposed planning activities.**

Please include all funding requested to implement the proposed project. You are not expected nor required to have expenses in every category. There are no set budget category limits for Planning Grants. Take care to ensure that the category totals add up to the "Total Request" number you entered for the previous question.

The Budget Narrative below should explain why each expense is necessary and how it directly supports the proposed Character at Camp Planning Grant activities.

### Budget Summary

Budget Category	Planning Grant Year 2027
Personnel*	\$
Consultants	\$
Materials & Supplies	\$
Travel	\$
Capital Expenses**	\$
Other Direct Costs	\$
Indirect (General Operating) Costs***	\$
Total	\$

## Budget Narrative

Provide a detailed Budget Narrative explaining each expense included in your total request for each Budget Category. Clearly describe how each cost is necessary and aligns with the planning grant activities.

[Text Entry – 3000 per category]

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## Grant Team

While the successful implementation of any proposed Planning Grant activities relies on many hands to get the work done, leadership is critical to the Planning Grant's success. The following section requests background information on the two grant leads most responsible for carrying out the grant activities as well as the key personnel required to implement the grant activities.

**19. Who is the first grant lead at your organization who will oversee the grant award and the planning activities described in this application?**

First name:  
Last name:  
Role/Job title  
Email:  
Phone:

**20. What best describes this person's employment at the organization?**

Full-time year-round  
Part-time year-round  
Full-time seasonal  
Part-time seasonal  
Volunteer  
Other, please describe:

**21. Who is the second grant lead at the organization who will oversee the grant award and the planning activities described in this application?**

First name:  
Last name:  
Role/Job title:  
Email:  
Phone:

**22. What best describes this person's employment at the organization?**

Full-time year-round  
Part-time year-round  
Full-time seasonal  
Part-time seasonal  
Volunteer  
Other, please describe:

23. **What systems, processes, or institutional supports are in place to ensure the Planning Grant could be managed and completed successfully in the event of a change in grant team leadership?**

[Text Entry – 3000 characters]

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## Organizational Capacity

This section will help us understand factors that will help you to achieve your desired outcomes in the future programs or projects you design. This will include information about your organization's finances and structure.

24. **What is your organization's total operating budget?** If camp programs represent only a portion of your organization (e.g., a university or community center), you may provide the annual operating budget for the camp program(s) only.

[Text Entry]

25. **Please upload your organization's most recent board-approved financial statement.** The statement should include major revenue and expense categories, reflect assets and liabilities, and net income or loss.

[Upload]

26. **Please upload a copy of your organization's board roster.**

[Upload]

27. **Please upload a copy of your organizational chart.** You can use free templates in [Creately](#), Google Slides, or Microsoft PowerPoint if you do not have an organizational chart already.

[Upload]

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## Application Review Criteria

In the review process, we will evaluate and make decisions based on the following aspects of each individual application:

- Self-Reflection and Need
  - We will be looking for organizations that articulate a clear and accurate view of themselves and that demonstrate a clear need for a planning grant based on their capacity and level of expertise.
- Planning Activities
  - We will look for a clear outline of the activities that will take place during the Planning Grant period and how these efforts will effectively position your organization to submit a strong Implementation Grant application at the conclusion of the grant period, or support future character-focused programs or projects within your organization or camp.
- Budget and Outcome Alignment
  - We will be looking for organizations that clearly articulate how they will use grant funds to meet their stated plans and needs. All expenses should be directly connected to character-related activities.
- Overall Assessment
  - We will be looking for all aspects of the application to be clear, realistic, and warrant confidence that a Planning Grant will be used in an impactful and effective way.

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# Appendix - Evaluation Guidelines and Expectations

## Character at Camp Evaluation Core Overview

The ACA has partnered with the [University of Utah Outdoor Education and Youth Development Lab](#) to support the evaluation of the [Character at Camp Grant Program](#). This work is designed to help the ACA and participating camps better understand what works in character education, how these efforts impact youth, and how camps can strengthen and sustain high-quality character development programs.

A key goal of this initiative is to build a shared understanding of character outcomes across the camp field. Through this Evaluation Core, the ACA will develop practical tools and resources that will help redefine how character is measured and understood in summer camps. These tools and insights will be shared broadly with the field, benefiting not only participating grantees but the entire camp community.

Participation in the Evaluation Core is required for Implementation Grantees and Network Implementation Grantees, and **optional for Planning Grantees**. Camps that participate will receive individualized data reports — including access to an interactive camper data dashboard — that can be used to strengthen programs, communicate impact, and support future funding and grant opportunities.

We recognize that camps vary widely in size, structure, population, and capacity. The Evaluation Core is intentionally designed to be flexible. The tools and approaches outlined below are a starting point, and ACA staff and evaluation partners will work closely with each participating camp to ensure the evaluation plan fits their unique context. This may include adapting tools for different age groups, translating materials into necessary languages, or adjusting timelines for camps that operate outside of the summer season.

**ACA also understands that some camps may not be able to implement every component of the Evaluation Core due to capacity or other constraints. A camp's ability to fully implement all evaluation elements will not impact its application status or standing if selected as a grantee.**

Ultimately, this effort is intended to support, and not burden, camp's work. By participating, camps will gain meaningful data to improve their programs, demonstrate impact, and contribute to a larger movement to advance character development across the camp field.

## Evaluation Implementation Team

All Implementation grantees are asked to designate a small team to support Evaluation Core activities. This team will coordinate and carry out the evaluation efforts at your camp. Roles may be combined, and many camps find that a team of 2 staff members can successfully manage these responsibilities, often as part of their grant leadership roles. Larger teams may choose to distribute responsibilities more broadly.

We ask that the following key functions are covered:

- Overall grant leadership (e.g., 1–2 grant leads)
- A primary evaluation point of contact
- Support for self-assessment activities
- Coordination of staff surveys
- Coordination of camper/CIT surveys
- Any additional support needed for data collection

ACA staff will work with each grantee to ensure roles and responsibilities are structured in a way that fits your camp's size, staffing model, and capacity.

## Training and Technical Assistance

ACA and its partners provide a series of required and optional learning opportunities to support implementation of the Evaluation Core. These sessions are designed to build confidence, clarify expectations, and help camps make the most of their evaluation efforts. Specific dates and details will be shared each January, and we anticipate offering two sessions in the spring and one in the fall each year.

### Required Trainings

- **Preparing for the Evaluation Core (Spring):**  
An overview session to help grant leads plan for and manage evaluation activities. The University of Utah team will review key components, timelines, and answer questions.
- **Self-Assessment Orientation/Training (Spring):**  
Required for designated assessors only. This session prepares staff to complete the self-assessment of character practices during the summer.
- **Making Meaning of Data (Fall):**  
A session focused on understanding and using collected data. Camps will receive customized reports and guidance to support continuous improvement efforts.

### Optional Support

Optional office hours will be available to provide additional guidance, answer questions, and help camps align Evaluation Core activities with any existing or planned evaluation efforts. ACA and University of Utah staff are available to support camps in streamlining their approach.

## Required Evaluation Core Data Collection Components

The Evaluation Core includes several data collection activities designed to capture camper, staff, and organizational experiences. Camps will be supported in their implementation of these components in ways that best fit their setting and population.

### Camper/CIT Survey

A 10–15 minute survey for youth ages approximately 8–15, focused on opportunities to practice character strengths (Curiosity, Teamwork/Leadership, Kindness, Community-Mindedness) and experiences (Belonging, Engagement, Camper–Counselor Relationships, Voice, Safety). The survey should be administered to at least **one session of campers** at the end of their session, either online or on paper.

### Staff Survey

A 10–15 minute online survey for staff who work directly with campers (e.g., counselors, activity leaders). This survey should be administered during the summer.

### Camp Leadership Survey and Follow-Up Interview

A 30-minute online survey for the staff member most familiar with how character is integrated into camp programming and operations. The survey should be completed prior to the summer season and will be followed by a virtual 30–60 minute interview with a member of ACA's evaluation team.

### Self-Assessment of Character Practices

An assessment tool designed to capture the use of character practices at the point of service. This is completed by 1 or 2 designated staff members at two points during the summer. Ideal assessors are staff who understand day-to-day programming and work closely with camp leadership. This represents an approximately 8-hour commitment, including pre-summer training, two assessment periods, and a post-summer debrief.

**Table 2. Data Collection Elements for Evaluation Core**

Core Element	Participants	Format	Time Commitment	Timing
Camper survey	At least one session of campers	Online or paper	10-15 minutes	Summer
Staff Survey	Staff who work directly with campers	Online	10-15 minutes	Summer
Camp leadership survey and follow-up interview	Director or other member of the leadership team	Online	30 minutes for survey; 30-60 minutes for interview	Survey pre summer, interview flexible
Self-assessments and debrief	2 camp staff trained as assessors	Online	1-2 hours per assessment; 2-hour debrief	Assessments mid- and late summer; debrief post summer