

February 15, 2021

As camp professionals, we are always preparing for the unexpected, often not knowing what will come. We are resilient. We care deeply, and we laugh freely. We work hard — because we know the impact camp makes. Last year we were consumed by the unexpected, yet have maintained resilience and passion. Many of our colleagues spent much of the year displaced from what they love — camp — yet as camp professionals do, together, we have walked through this shared experience.

I recognize the sacrifices and adjustments camp professionals have gone through "to make camp a reality" for their campers and staff over the last year. Thank you. However, as the pandemic continues to challenge us all, ACA's Accreditation Program has also had to devise new paths and embrace fresh opportunities to be creative and flexible.

This past fall, it was evident that ACA needed to look forward to the 2021 accreditation season and consider "what if." In September 2020, the National Standards Commission (NSC) requested that a task-group recommend options for conducting 2021 accreditation visits. These camp professionals from different parts of the country, all ACA accreditation volunteers, were challenged to be innovative, intentional, and flexible as they took a hard look at the accreditation site-visit process. Priority was placed on the ACA Accreditation Program and process rigor, integrity, and education while balancing the pandemic's realities and the different challenges that camps face throughout the country.

I am pleased to share the NSC's thoughtful approach to 2021 accreditation visits. The accreditation process remains as described in the *Accreditation Process Guide v.2019* and in the Accreditation Process Workshop. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NSC has approved adaptations for 2021 to the site visit, one vital component of the accreditation process. ***In addition to the in-person site visit, virtual and hybrid site-visit options are available for camps being visited in 2021.*** These options all:

- Prioritize camp and ACA volunteer health and safety
- Maintain consistency, rigor, and integrity to the accreditation peer-review process and secure accreditation's value
- Allow camps to continue with the accreditation cycle and meet criteria

I invite you to review the ACA web page [ACAacamps.org/2021visits](https://ACAacamps.org/2021visits), which contains detailed information on 2021 accreditation visits; we will be adding resources for camps and ACA volunteers in the coming weeks. Additionally, the staff member who supports camps and volunteers in your local area will be in touch with camp directors and volunteers soon. Please reach out to your area [accreditation and standards staff member](#) with questions.

The ACA Accreditation Program has a well-established legacy that dates to 1935. Thank you for being an essential part of the American Camp Association's history, present, and future.

Yours in camping,



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Director of Accreditation