ACA Core Competencies

Competency Content Area	Core Competency Descriptor**	Competency Aspiration[+]
Youth and Adult Growth and Development	Understand and apply to the camp experience how all youth and/or adults learn and develop in physical, social, emotional, and cognitive domains	Adopt a systematic approach to embrace inclusive positive youth and adult development practices in the camp experience
Learning Environment and Curricula	Create an environment that provides learning experiences that meet each individual's needs, capabilities, and interests in ways that complement developmental tasks in all domains	Provide support for the development of learning skills that complement individual learning styles to minimize learning loss, increase learning readiness, and acquire specific content knowledge appropriate to the camp's mission and goals
Program Planning	Design and implement appropriate youth/adult programs that engage and empower participants	Provide programs/curricula that support mission, goals, and desired intentional outcomes of the camp experience
Participant Observation, Assessment, and Evaluation	Observe, assess, and evaluate to document that program/curricula meets the needs of the participants as well as the stated goals of the program	Implement systems for observation, assessment, and evaluation as a way to benchmark program practices, improve program quality, and document participant growth and learning
Professionalism and Leadership	Serve youth/families/adults in a professional manner and participate in the community as a representative of the camp profession	Serve youth/families/adults in a relevant, up-to-date, and ethical manner that demonstrates a strong sense of professionalism through evidence-informed professional practice
Health and Wellness	Establish and maintain an environment in which program and management practices support the physical and emotional well-being of the camp community	Establish a camp community that fosters wellness as well as encourages healthy lifestyle choices
Risk Management	Establish and maintain an environment in which risk assessment and management practices are implemented	Establish and maintain proactive risk management practices that address safety within the camp experience and environment for staff and participants

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Cultural Competence	Create an environment that builds capacity within the camp community to understand, accept, value, and honor the unique contributions of all people	Maintain an inclusive camp community that eliminates stereotypes, bias, and bullying based on differences that include but are not limited to age, gender, ability, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual identity, and socio-economic status
Families and Community Connections	Understand the role of the family and community in the development and growth of participants	Maintain connectedness and civic engagement within communities by linking camp processes and outcomes to external communities
Nature and Environment	Establish a learning environment that capitalizes on the experiential opportunities offered within the camp setting to facilitate an emotional connection to — and stewardship of — nature	Build participants' appreciation of nature as well as model practices that promote stewardship and sustainability
Business Management and Practices	Develop and implement sound business practices that include fiscal responsibility, marketing, e-business, and other technological applications	Develop a business model and practices that are implemented in an ethical and responsible manner and adhere to legal policies and practices resulting in customer satisfaction and organizational sustainability
Human Resources Management	Design and administer policies and practices focused on staff recruitment, selection, training, and retention that align with organizational goals	Develop systematic personnel policies and practices to promote professional development, diversity, organizational behaviors, and leadership development that support all staff needs

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Site/Facility Management	Develop and maintain infrastructures of the program site to support sustainable and safe operations that follow sound environmental management practices	Develop and maintain structures, spaces, and properties in safe, well-maintained, and inviting conditions that promote the well-being of participants and the camp setting as well as encourage organizational sustainability

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