2026 Harrison County 4-H Camp Counselor's Process Guide

(AKA Get All of These Dates in Your Calendar Now!)

Eligibility: Individuals with a 4-H age of 13-18 who have interest in serving as cabin leaders for 4-H camps in the summer of 2026. Must possess leadership skills and the personal characteristics of coachability, kindness, and adaptability. Though Junior Camp is the most popular option, some leaders will train to serve in specialty camps (e.g. Shooting Sports). Position description is on pg.2.

Important Junior Camp 2026 Notes:

- *Dates for the 2026 Harrison County Junior Camp is July 14th-17th 2026*
- *New Counselors: Though we will still expect behavior that is consistent with an adult 4-H Advisor, you are no longer required to complete a background check (unless you turn 18 this season).*
- *Youth with a 4-H age of 13-14 who fall "in-between" camper & counselor will be categorized under "CIT" and are still welcome to apply and interact with planning!!*
- *Additional training dates set by the state (see below) to fulfill hours & camp planning necessities.*

TO-DO LIST FOR ALL COUNSELORS/CIT'S :

Step 1: Complete the Counselor Application and have it returned to the Harrison County Extension Office by **APRIL 1ST , 2026.** Applications will be accepted via post mail and/or email at romshak.4@osu.edu

Step 2: ALL Counselors will fill out the **Harrison County Camp Counselor Application**. Full application will be available online at *harrison.osu.edu* or by requesting the application packet from our office.

Step 3: When you turn in your volunteer application, all first year counselors ***must*** schedule an interview. It will last approximately 15-20 minutes. Heather has Caity's calendar and can help you select a time that works for all schedules. Interviews should be completed between April 2-17. Zoom interviews will be available upon request.

Step 4: Based on your historic service, growth as a young leader, and/or the interview process, you will receive your **counselor acceptance** or denial letter the last week of April. If you have changed your mind for some reason, please let Caity know immediately that you are no longer able to serve.

Step 5: **Camp Trainings**. Dates are located within the application and in the 2026 Harrison 4-H Calendar. At these trainings, we will select the camp theme, games, roles, etc. You can miss this if you have a compelling reason, but you'll probably feel a little lost and sad ☹(and so will your 4-H Educator) There is a minimum 24 hours of training that is mandatory for all counselors. Those who fall short of that requirement may not be counselors for the 2026 season.

Step 6: You MUST submit a health form packet by the first day of Junior Camp 2026.

Step 7: **Mandatory on-site training** at 4-H Camp Piedmont for last minute planning and community service activity. Date: July 13th at 4p-July 14 at 1p.

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Step 8 Final Step: Time to shine! Serve your role during **junior camp**. Dates: July 14th-17th, 2026

Position Description: 4-H Camp Counselor

Eligibility: Individuals with a 4-H age of 13-18 who have interest in serving as cabin leaders for 4-H camp(s) and who have completed the annual training process. Must possess leadership skills and the personal characteristics of coach-ability, kindness, and resilience. Though Junior Camp is the most popular option, some leaders will train to serve in specialty camps such as Shooting Sports. See general job description below.

Duties:

65% Cabin Management

- Ensure the safety and well-being of youth entrusted to your care.
- Work cooperatively with other staff.
- Provide a positive social experience.
- Create an environment of "home away from home" where youth can successfully change clothes, use the restroom, eat, relax, etc. without fear or anxiety.
- Prevent behavioral challenges through a best practices approach.
- Respond effectively to common camp emergency situations.

25% Teaching (small group)

- Provide for a safe and enjoyable non-formal education event in such common small-group activities as crafts, archery, canoeing, dancing, etc.
- Work cooperatively with other staff.
- Ensure that all youth are actively participating to the best of their abilities.
- When requested, provide an accurate evaluation report to the 4-H Educator.

10% Activity Leadership (large group)

- Provide for a safe and enjoyable non-formal education event in common large-group activities such as water olympics, ballfield games, campfire, group singing, etc.
- Work cooperatively with other staff.
- Ensure that all youth are actively participating to the best of their abilities.
- When requested, provide an accurate evaluation report to the 4-H Educator.

Scope of Role:

Each camp your roles and responsibilities will be clearly designated. In general, you will work cooperatively with other peers. In addition, you will fall under the supervision and guidance of appropriate camp staff, selected adult leaders, medical personnel, and the 4-H Educator.

Skills/Proficiencies:

Through the overnight training event and subsequent "on the job" instruction, the 4-H Educator will help to build your competencies in the following fifteen areas: Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge; Communication; Cultural Awareness; Health, Wellness, and Risk Management; Personal Commitment; Professional Development; Professionalism; Program Planning; Role Model; Self-Direction; Supportive Relationships; Teaching and Facilitating; Teamwork and Leadership; Thinking and Problem Solving; and Understanding of Organizational and Camp Environment. We operate in a continuous improvement environment, such that your growth will be consistently encouraged.

4-H EVENT/OPPORTUNITY: 4-H Camp Counselor at Harrison County Junior Camp July 14th-17th 2026 **DATE / DEADLINE:** Applications are due to the OSU Extension Office no later than April 1st, 2026 by 4:00 p.m.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:
The 4-H Camp Counselors are a group of 4-H teens selected to assist in being responsible for campers completing grades 3 – grade 7 during 4-H camp. As a result of participation, counselors will develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and aspirations needed for adult success, and the Harrison County 4-H program will be strengthened and expanded. Roles and Responsibilities of 4-H Camp Counselors include:

- Attend required trainings prior to camp
- Conduct self in an appropriate manner before, during, and after camp while serving as a role model to campers and peers
- Assist staff and other counselors with camp activities; work as a team to implement the activities
- Know and understand all safety guidelines, including emergency procedures, associated with the camp and program areas
- Assure for safety of campers at all times including in cabins, sessions, and large group activities
- Be aware of child protection regulations and report any child abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect in accordance with university policy
- Ensure campers' health and hygiene, e.g., brushing teeth, eating meals, taking medication, etc.
- Promote camper participation during camp
- Lead and supervise campers in activities at camp including but not limited to songs, teambuilding challenges, group activities, challenges, etc.
- Teach and lead campers at workshops or during other components at camp (table setting, song leading, etc.)
- Mentor and give guidance to campers to encourage positive youth development and enhancement of life skills

REQUIREMENTS:

- Must be at least 13 years old by January 1, 2026.
- Must be able to get transportation to meetings and events as needed.
- Must complete a minimum of 24 hours of training. (2 of these hours must be on-sight for first time counselors).
- Must complete Child Abuse Awareness training.
- Must Sign Standards of Behaviors, complete the Code of Conduct form, and have a current Ohio 4-H Health History form on file.
- If the individual is 18+ year old at least two months prior to camp, the individual must have their background check conducted.

MEETING DATES/TIME/FREQUENCY/TRAINING

- **4-H Camp Counselors meet the following dates throughout the year: 4/23, 5/13, 5/19, 5/27, 6/2, 6/10, 6/18, 6/30, 7/7**
- Counselors are expected to notify the Extension Office if an absence is unavoidable.
- 4-H Camp Counselors will be trained on topics such as the camp counselor core competencies; risk management, including active shooter guidelines, emergency protocols, and child abuse recognition.

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4-H CAMP COUNSELOR APPLICATION

Name _____

Age (January 1) _____ Date of Birth _____ (00/00/0000)

Home Address _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Email _____ Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ Is texting an option? (circle) Yes No

In case of injury or accident, notify:

Name _____ Relationship _____ Phone _____

Why do you want to be a camp counselor? _____
_____
_____
_____

What traits, skills, or special experiences do you have that would benefit you in this position? (Please include experiences working with children and youth.) _____
_____
_____
_____

What skills or contributions will you add to the counselor team in making sure camp is successful? (such as First Aid, Babysitter's Course, Recreation, etc.) _____
_____
_____
_____

What hobbies and/or special interests do you have that you would like to share? _____
_____
_____
_____

Please list 2 of your strengths. _____
_____
_____
_____

If selected, what event/activity at camp would you want to oversee or give leadership to?
_____
_____
_____
_____

Standards of Behavior for Minor Participants Participating in Activities and Programs with Minor Participants

Minors participating in activities and programs with minor participants sponsored by Ohio State are required to conduct themselves according to the following standards of behavior. These standards operate in conjunction with the guidelines and regulations of the specific activity or program.

Minor participation expectations:

- Be responsible for own behavior and uphold high standards for the group and accept consequences for inappropriate behavior
- Support and abide by the group's designated leader
- Practice good citizenship, leadership and self-control
- Follow the direction of activity or program staff and/or leaders
- Demonstrate positive sportsmanship and attitudes at all times which is becoming of a leader
- Show respect to others, be courteous and respectful
- Use appropriate language at all times

The following behaviors and actions are not permitted at The Ohio State University in activities or programs with minor participants:

- Unsportsmanlike conduct, unethical, immoral conduct
- Improper language, e.g., profanity
- Possession or consumption of alcohol and illegal drugs, including the use of tobacco by a minor
- Possession or use of harmful objects with the intent to harm or intimidate others, e.g., weapons, fireworks
- Boys in girls' rooms/restrooms and vice versa
- Destruction of property
- Violation of established curfew, when applicable
- Disrespect of adults, other participants, volunteers, staff and/or those in leadership positions
- Belittling others/putting others down and being disrespectful of individuals' differences
- Aggressive physical behavior, e.g., fighting
- Taking property that belongs to others
- Other conduct determined to be inappropriate for youth development by the event chair or designated Ohio State faculty/staff

Violations of the standards of behavior will be handled as follows:

1. If a chaperone is present for the minor involved in the violation, this person will be made aware of the violation.
2. The parents will be notified of the incident and actions taken. When necessary, arrangements will be made to remove the minor from the activity or program.
3. The minor can/may be barred from participating in future Ohio State activities and programs with minor participants.
4. When warranted (e.g., violation of law) the situation may be turned over to the appropriate law enforcement authority.

I, _____, as a participant in an activity or program with minor participants, 4-H Camp,
(name of minor, print) (name of activity/program, print)

have read these standards of behavior and agree to accept and follow them. I also accept the consequences for my actions if I choose not to follow the standards of behavior.

_____
Minor signature Date

I, we_____ have read the standards of behavior and support my minor's participation in the
(parent/guardian, print)
activity/program.

_____
Parent/guardian signature Date

4-H CAMP COUNSELOR CODE OF CONDUCT

I, _____ agree that if selected, I will participate in the 4-H Camp Counselor Training Program. I understand that this is a training period and only once I complete my certification am I permitted to be a counselor at 4-H Camp.

I understand that I am taking on a different role at camp. I am applying to serve other, not to go purely for my own enjoyment. By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and agree to abide by the above responsibilities if selected as a camp counselor. I understand and agree that I will be asked to call my parents/guardian immediately to pick me up if I conduct myself in an irresponsible manner, which includes being out of my cabin after hours and/or the possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs or fireworks.

I will be expected to:

- ✓ Attend the required number of counselor training sessions. I understand I will be dismissed if I am not able to complete the required training.
- ✓ Abide by the No Cell Phones at Camp Policy (note: unless otherwise authorized by Extension staff)
- ✓ Treat other peers with respect.
- ✓ Not bully fellow counselors or participate in roughhousing, horse-play, or hazing.
- ✓ Conduct myself as a positive role model and be responsible.
- ✓ Set a good example by not using profanity or telling off-color jokes, and stories.
- ✓ As a 4-H member, not have in my possession tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs.
- ✓ Not have possession of harmful objects without specific authorization from the camp director, including but not limited to: knives of any kind (pocket, utility, etc.), lighters, matches, fireworks, explosives, firearms, weapons, etc.
- ✓ No pornography or other sexually oriented materials including nudity in visual or written materials including similar content.
- ✓ Be a responsible cabin counselor and ensure campers are provided guidance towards a safe and fun week.
- ✓ Ensure that all campers are supervised by counselor staff at all times. Be sure that all campers know that they must remain on the camp grounds at all times and are responsible for their behavior at all times.
    - Get to know each of the campers personally and by name.
    - Have all campers, including myself check in any of their medications with the nurse.
    - Make sure each camper uses personal hygiene.
    - Make sure that all of my campers are familiar with camp facilities and camp rules
    - See that all campers are involved in all activities. Make sure no one is excluded.
- ✓ Check for illness or injury, but don't make much of a "fuss" about minor things. Go with hurt or sick campers to the nurse no matter how minor the ailment.
- ✓ Follow guidelines for lights out, and cabin supervision. Be in my cabin with my campers at all times between the hours of "Lights Out" and "Rise and Shine."
- ✓ Never discipline a camper by ridicule or physical punishment; patience and understanding works best.
- ✓ Urge safety at all time. Take time to explain how and why to do something safely.
- ✓ Work as a team to plan, organize and conduct all camp activities.
- ✓ Be flexible with counseling and adult staff.
- ✓ Participate in camp promotion.
- ✓ Follow leadership of camping program through adult advisors/volunteers/staff.

I certify that the all the information being submitted is correct, and understand that failure to comply with these rules could result in probation, or loss of counseling position for the year.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date ____/_____/_____

Parent/ Guardian Signature _____ Date ____/_____/_____

REFERENCE FORM

_____ is applying as a camp counselor at 4-H Camp this summer. The camp counselor selection committee would like your input about the qualities and ability to fulfill the responsibilities of a counselor. The information you include will not be shared with the applicant. Please complete this reference form based on *your* knowledge and/or observations. Thank you for your help.

1. Please mark how you would evaluate the applicant's qualities, using this scale:

	Excellent	**Good**	**Fair**	**Poor**	**Not Known**
Responsibility					
Communication skills					
Respect for others					
Dependability					
Enthusiasm					
Flexibility					
Patience					
Initiative					
Resourcefulness					
Ability to work with children (age 5-10)					
Ability to work with children (ages 11-14)					
Ability to work with other teens					
Ability to work with adults					

2. Please write any additional comments here:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Relationship to Applicant: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Please return no later than APRIL 1ST, 2026
OSU Extension, Harrison County
Address: 538 N. Main Street, Cadiz, Ohio 43907
E-mail: romshak.4@osu.edu

Please note: Please submit in a sealed envelope. For questions contact the OSU Extension Office.