

ACA CAMP RESEARCH 2007 CAMPER ENROLLMENT AND STAFF RECRUITMENT

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Highlights from the ACA 2007 Camper Enrollment and Staff Recruitment Survey

As part of the continuing effort to conduct key research in the area of camp business operations, the American Camp Association® (ACA) sponsors an annual survey to document actual camper enrollment and staff recruitment information from participating camps. For the fall of 2007 a total of 622 camps (23% response rate) completed the online survey that was open to all camp directors of accredited camps. This survey asked directors to respond to camper enrollment questions such as total camper weeks; enrollment trends by gender, age, and race; scholarship support; and return rates. Staff recruitment questions centered on staff size, volunteer/paid staff numbers, ease of staff recruitment, and return rates. In addition to general camp demographic information, directors were also asked to provide general information about capacity and their perception of five-year trends in enrollment.

Camper Enrollment Highlights

- Over half the camps (55%) identified the 2007 summer as one of their best in the past five years. Of these camps, 21% said 2007 was higher than most of the past 5 summers while 34% said the 2007 summer was the highest enrollment. Only 7% said the 2007 summer was the lowest of the past five summers.
- Fifty-three percent of the directors said that compared to last year (2006) camper enrollment had increased while only 22% said it had decreased. Most increases (55%) were in the range of 1%-7%, but 25% said enrollment had increased by greater than 10%.
- Fifty percent of the directors said they reached 90%-100% total capacity for the 2007 summer. Over 71% of the directors said they had reached 90%-100% of their targeted capacity.
- When asked about enrollment based on specific camper characteristics, most camps again said that 2007 was a summer of increases. For example, more than 40%

of the directors said that compared to 2006, they had increased numbers for boys and girls and all age groups. More than half (54%) said they had between 50%-74% camper return rates, which was about the same as 2006. Most directors (73%) indicated that the number of minority campers had stayed about the same in 2007. Only 23% said their minority camper numbers had increased in 2007.

- When asked about interest in specialized programs, 37% of the directors said the interest was about the same as in 2006. However, 21% said they experienced more interest in specialized activities in 2007. (Note: 29% said they offered no specialized activities.)
- Over half the camps (55%) had about the same number of financially supported campers as in 2006, but 26% had more than a year ago. Over a quarter of the directors (27%) said their financial support for campers was over \$50,000.

Camp Staff Recruitment Highlights

- Most camps operate with small staffs. Over 23% had staff sizes of less than 25 while another 28% hired 25-49 staff. Most staff are in paid positions augmented with a few volunteers.
- The need for specialized staff stayed about the same as in 2006 (74%), but 20% of the directors said they hired more staff than in 2006.
- Hiring difficulties were mixed with 51% saying staff hiring challenges were about the same as last year. However 23% thought hiring was easier while 27% thought it was more difficult.
- Ages of staff hired in 2007 were similar to 2006 (57%) while 25% of the directors said their staff were younger.
- Most directors had good returning staff rates with 32% of them indicating that return staff rates ranged within 25%-49% while another 38% of the directors said their return staff rates were within 50%-74%. Half of the directors said these rates were similar to 2006.

For more detailed information, visit www.ACAcamps.org/research/camprecruitment.php.