



JOHN AUSTIN  
CHELEY FOUNDATION

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# CAMPERSHIP MENTOR GUIDE

*Changing kids' lives through transformative summer camp experiences*

~A Thousand Summers' Mission Statement



**Dear Campership Mentor,**

Welcome to A Thousand Summers' volunteer team who have dedicated their time to providing the camp experience to underserved youth.

Mentoring a child to attend a summer residential camp is a life-changing event not only for the child but for you as well. In order to prepare you for that adventure, we have mapped out a path for you so you understand what will be required of you in the role of Mentor.

It is our firm belief that we are changing the lives of children by providing them with this opportunity to attend a summer residential camp. Thank you for helping us achieve our important mission.

You are welcome to contact me with any questions you may have along the way. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

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# **Campership Mentor Program Description**

## **WHAT IS AN ATS CAMPERSHIP MENTOR?**

A Mentor is a person with youth development experience that provides support to the Applicant/Camper Family throughout the Campership process. The Mentor plays an essential role in the 'check and balance' system ATS has developed to ensure we are serving those children for which the campership was designed.

Mentors may be veteran volunteers for the foundation that have worked in a particular region of the country, personnel within a partnering youth services agency or school or a person selected by the Camper who is willing to become a volunteer for A Thousand Summers.

All ATS Mentors must be screened and approved by ATS by completing an [ATS Volunteer Application](#).

## **WHAT ARE THE KEY MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES?**

- Complete the ATS Volunteer application to receive ATS Volunteer vetting
- Complete a Mentor Statement (provided by ATS office) on behalf of Applicant
- Actively support the Applicant and Family through the Campership Application process (form completion, securing two References, making camp preference designation, etc.)
- Assist the successful candidate with camp enrollment and preparation for camp (acquire needed gear, equipment, and clothing and plan transportation to and from camp or airport).
- Advise Camper through Capstone Service Project when applicable (*See Capstone Mentor Guide and Capstone Program Guide in Resources*)
- Meet with Camper and Family after camp to assist with post-camp requirements
- Meet with Camper and Family to complete a renewal application, if desired.

## **WHO CAN BECOME A MENTOR?**

- Mentors will be at least 21 years old with current professional experience or prior background in education, youth development, counseling, coaching, ministry or youth related fields
- Mentors will live in the Applicant's geographic hometown
- Mentors will give one to two hours per month to support the Applicant/Camper Family
- Mentors will commit to Mentoring the camper for the 'life-span' of the camp experience
- Mentors may NOT be related to the applicant

## **WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF ONGOING MENTOR COMMITMENT**

Once an Applicant receives an ATS Campership, they are eligible to reapply for funding throughout their lifespan as a camper. Therefore, a Mentor commitment may be for multiple years. Providing this continuity paves the way for Campers to realize the potential life-changing youth development opportunity that multiple years at Camp offers.

### **WHAT IS A CAMPSHIP AND WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE?**

A Campership is a scholarship to one of the ATS recognized Associate Camps, and it includes:

- Partial Tuition for one 2-4 week camp term per summer
- Transportation Assistance (if requested)\*
- Equipment Assistance (if requested)\*
- Camp Store Assistance\*
- Support from the Mentor throughout the campership application process, camp enrollment process, Capstone Service Project (when applicable)
- Potential to reapply for funding throughout the lifespan of the camper

\*Available to applicants enrolled in the Full Support Program. Not available to those in the Partial Support Program. (See [Income Eligibility-Family Contribution Table](#))

### **HOW MANY APPLICANTS/CAMPERS CAN ONE PERSON MENTOR?**

Serving as a Mentor for a Campership Applicant/Camper could take a couple of hours per month. (See *Mentor Responsibilities/Timeline* below). We recommend that first year Mentors work with one Applicant Family. Veteran Recruiters may submit TWO new applications each year in addition to any renewals unless otherwise advised by ATS staff. Partnering Youth Organization Mentors may work with the number agreed upon between their organization and ATS staff.

### **WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR A CAMPSHIP APPLICANT?**

- Applicants will be **10 years old or older** by June 1<sup>st</sup>
- Applicants will be able to be away from home for up to 4 weeks
- Applicants will be from a family with income generally not exceeding 500% of Federal Poverty Guidelines. (See [Income Eligibility-Family Contribution Table](#) )
- Applicants will have the potential toward or openness to grow in the areas of Friendship Skills, Independence, Teamwork, Family Citizenship, Perceived Competence, Interest in Exploration, Responsibility, Affinity for Nature and Problem-Solving Confidence
- Applicants will contribute in positive ways to the Camp community
- Applicants must reside in the contiguous United States of America

# **Mentor Responsibilities/Timeline**

## **SEPTEMBER 1<sup>st</sup>**

- [Campership Application](#) is available online. Contact the ATS Campership Programs Director to obtain an offline copy.

## **LATE SUMMER/EARLY FALL**

- First time Mentors complete the [ATS Volunteer Application](#)
- Returning Mentors update contact information with Campership office
- Mentors meet with Applicant and Family to:
  - interview Applicant to complete the Mentor Statement
  - view [Camp Directory](#) to identify camp and term preferences
  - assist with Applicant or Family Campership Application forms as needed
  - monitor Campership Application deadlines to ensure timely submission
  - review [Capstone Program](#) Requirements and [Capstone Program Guide](#) with Capstone applicants when applicable.

## **OCTOBER 15<sup>th</sup>**

- Capstone Campership Applications due

## **NOVEMBER 1<sup>st</sup>**

- Renewal Campership Applications due

## **DECEMBER 1<sup>st</sup>**

- First Summer Campership Applications due
- A rolling deadline for First Summer and Renewal applications will continue until all campership funding has been awarded.

## **NOVEMBER - JANUARY**

- Applications will be reviewed by the ATS Application Review Committee
- Campership Award Letters along with a Campership Agreement distributed to the Campership Applicant and Family as well as copied to the Mentor.
- Campership Denial letters distributed to the Campership Applicant and Family as well as copied to the Mentor.
- Mentor follows up with awarded Camper and Family to ensure the Campership Agreement is signed and returned to the ATS Office by due date on letter.

### **Campership Agreement includes:**

- camp assignment, term assignment and camp dates
- transportation assistance
- financial responsibility of all parties
- instructions to review, sign and return Campership Agreement to the ATS office by due date on letter

## **JANUARY**

- Campers and Family begin the camp enrollment process on the camp website.
- Mentor advises Camper Family to create a savings plan or set up payments with ATS to ensure **Family Tuition Contribution is paid in full to ATS by April 1st.**

## **FEBRUARY**

- Mentor assists Camper Family with camp Packing List. (*See [Equipment Assistance Guidelines in Resources](#)*)

## **MARCH**

- Airline transportation for qualifying applicants (if requested) is reimbursed by ATS. (*See [Transportation Assistance Program Guidelines in Resources](#)*)
- Mentor follows up with Camper Family to verify all Camp enrollment forms, including a health physical (required by all camps), are returned to the Camp by May 1st.

## **APRIL 1st**

- Family Tuition Contribution due to ATS.

## **APRIL**

- Mentor confirms with Camper Family that all travel arrangements are in place.

## **MAY 1st**

- All enrollment forms due to the Camp.

## **MAY**

- If camp requires luggage to be shipped, Mentor assists Camper Family with packing luggage to take to UPS/FedEx for ground shipping 10 days before camp start date. (*See [Baggage Assistance Guidelines in Resources](#)*)

## **JUNE-AUGUST**

- Mentor contacts Camper and Family one week before camp start date to review details.
- Mentors may send letters to the Camper while they are at camp.
- Mentors will be notified by the ATS Office on a “need to know” basis if the Camper leaves Camp early or of any circumstance which may impact the Camper’s participation at Camp.

## **JULY-AUGUST**

- Mentor meets with Camper and Family to assist with Post Camp requirements due to the ATS office within 10 days of Camper returning from Camp (even if the Camper does not intend to reapply for a future Campership).
- Post Camp requirements are available in camper’s account online at [www.athousandsummers.org](http://www.athousandsummers.org) and include:
  - Camper Survey
  - Camper Thank You Letter
  - Parent/Legal Guardian Survey
  - Counselor Letters/Reports (provided by camp via mail or online)

- Action picture(s) of Camper while at camp. **Email directly to [photos@cheleyfoundation.org](mailto:photos@cheleyfoundation.org)** with the camper's name in the subject line of email.

## SEPTEMBER 1<sup>st</sup>

- Reapply for next season campership funding.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **WHAT FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY DOES THE MENTOR ASSUME?**

There are **no financial responsibilities** expected of the Mentor.

### **WHAT DOES ATS CONTRIBUTE TOWARD FINANCIALLY AND WHAT DOES THE CAMPER FAMILY CONTRIBUTE TOWARD FINANCIALLY?**

**Camp Tuition:** The Camper Family is required to contribute a portion of camp tuition as outlined in the ATS Income Eligibility-Family Contribution Table. ATS will fund any tuition not covered by the family contribution. Camp Tuition fees to be paid by Camper Family must be paid directly to the A Thousand Summers by April 1st. Any unpaid balance after April 1st could result in forfeiture of campership. (See [Income Eligibility-Family Contribution Table](#) in Resources)

**Camp Bank Expenses:** For campers whose Family Income falls within the posted range for 'Full Support' on the ATS Income Eligibility-Family Contribution Table, ATS will credit the Camp Bank in the amount outlined in the Campership Agreement. Any camper charges to camp bank over the amount deposited by ATS is the responsibility of the Camper Family and collectible by the Associate Camp.

For campers whose Family Income falls within the posted range for 'Partial Support' on the ATS Income Eligibility-Family Contribution Table, deposits into the camper's Camp Bank account is the responsibility of the Camper Family. Any camper charges over the amount deposited by the family is the responsibility of the Camper Family and collectible by the Associate Camp.

ATS is not responsible for any unresolved Camp Bank or any other accrued expenses due to Associate Camp. Families must settle all Associate Camp balances prior to reapplication for ATS funds.

**Transportation:** For campers whose Family Income falls within the posted range for 'Full Support' on the ATS Income Eligibility-Family Contribution Table and for whom request is noted on the ATS Campership application form, ATS will reimburse qualifying travel costs to include airfare, baggage fees, UM fees, shuttle fees to and from destination airport for camper only. Transportation fees for family members and/or Mentors will not be covered. (See [Transportation Assistance Program Guidelines](#) in Resources)

For campers whose Family Income falls within the posted range for 'Partial Support' on the ATS Income Eligibility-Family Contribution Table, all travel and travel related expenses (including, but not limited to flights, shuttle, unaccompanied minor and baggage fees) will be the responsibility of the Camper Family.

**Equipment:** For campers whose Family Income falls within the posted range for 'Full Support' on the ATS Income Eligibility-Family Contribution Table, ATS offers Equipment Assistance with pre approval by the ATS Campership office. All other equipment as listed on Camp's Packing List are the responsibility of the family. (See [Equipment Assistance Guidelines in Resources](#))

For campers whose Family Income falls within the posted range for 'Partial Support' on the ATS Income Eligibility-Family Contribution Table, all equipment as listed on Camp's Packing List is the responsibility of the family.

**Camp Clothing:** Camper Family is responsible for providing all clothing for the Camp experience as listed on Camp's Packing List.

**Health and/or medical insurance coverage:** Camper Family is required to carry health/medical insurance for the time the Camper is at Camp (as required by the Camp). Health and/or medical insurance is the responsibility of the family.

**Medical Expenses:** Any medical expenses charged by the Camp will be the responsibility of the Camper Family.

#### **WHAT DOES ATS NOT CONTRIBUTE TO FINANCIALLY?**

**Health and/or Medical Insurance Coverage or Medical Expenses:** ATS will not fund or reimburse for health and/or medical insurance, medical expenses or medications.

**Transportation:** ATS will not fund or reimburse for transportation to and from the Camper's home to their home airport or car travel to and from camp. ATS will not fund or reimburse for family members or Mentor transportation fees. If a Camper is sent home or chooses to come home before the end of the camp term, ATS will not fund or reimburse the cost for any transportation from camp to home, including ticket change fees.

**Clothing and Personal Items:** ATS will not fund or reimburse for camper clothing or personal items as listed on Camp's Packing List.

#### **WHAT IS THE CAMP BANK?**

The Camp Bank is a fund from which a Camper may draw during their time at Camp to cover items like daily snacks, shampoo, stamps, or a camp logo sweatshirt. The Camp Bank eliminates the need for the Camper to keep track of, or carry money while they are at Camp. Any charges that exceed the agreed upon contribution by ATS are the responsibility of the Camper Family. Renewal Campers with outstanding balances at the Associate Camps from the prior year will not be considered by ATS for renewal until the balance is paid in full.

## WHAT FORMS MUST THE MENTOR COMPLETE?

The following forms are to be completed by the mentor:

1. [ATS Volunteer Application & Forms](#) provide information enabling ATS to vet volunteers to include a background check and references. It is to be completed and approved *before* the Mentor can begin working with a Campership Applicant as a representative of ATS. The ATS Volunteer Application only needs to be completed the first year of service. A background check will be completed each subsequent year of service.
2. **Mentor Statement** is provided to Mentor by ATS Campership office upon applicant beginning Campership Application. It assesses the Mentor's recommendation regarding the Campership Applicant's readiness for camp. The Mentor Statement is to be completed according to the Campership Application due date schedule.

## WHICH CAMPERSHIP APPLICATION SHOULD THE APPLICANT COMPLETE AND WHEN IS IT DUE?

The **First Summer Campership Application** is for a Campership Applicant who is applying for ATS funding for the first time. **First Summer Campership Applications are due December 1st.**

The **Capstone Campership Application** is for the 15 year old returning camper that desires to give back to their community. Capstone Campers will complete a service project under their Mentor's direction during the school year as part of their campership experience. *The Capstone program is not mandatory but is highly encouraged.* For more information about the [Capstone Program](#) see the [Capstone Mentor Guide](#) and the [Capstone Program Guide](#). **Capstone Campership Applications are due October 15<sup>th</sup>.**

The **Renewal Campership Application** is for a Campership Applicant who is re-applying for funding following receipt of one or more Camperships. NOTE: If a Campership Applicant will be 15 years of age by the time of camp and are interested in completing the Capstone Service Project, they are highly encouraged to select the 'Capstone Campership Application'. **Renewal Campership Applications are due November 1st.**

## HOW DOES THE APPLICANT SELECT A PREFERRED CAMP AND TERM?

The Mentor should familiarize themselves with the Camps that are available for selection by viewing the [Camp Directory](#) on the ATS website and Associate Camp websites. The Mentor then meets with the Applicant and Family to review the program descriptions and websites in order to guide the selection.

If the Mentor attended one of the Associate Camps, it is important NOT to show preference or bias for this particular camp. Talk about the attributes of attending a summer residential camp in general terms and consider the best fit for the Applicant.

ATS makes every effort to place Campership Applicants at their preferred choice of Camp. However, placement depends upon space availability and best use of campership funding. With this in mind, Mentors should emphasize that **NO** child is guaranteed a Campership, and he or she may not receive their preferred Camp selection.

### WHAT IF A CAMPERSHIP IS NOT AWARDED?

Occasionally an application is submitted that is not a good fit or the Family income exceeds the Financial Eligibility Guidelines threshold. When this occurs, the Applicant and Family are notified that he or she did not receive a Campership. The Mentor will also be notified of the decision.

### WHAT IF AN APPLICANT IS PLACED ON WAITLIST?

If an Applicant is approved but all Camperships have been awarded, he or she has the option to be placed on a Waitlist. As Camperships become available, the Waitlist Applicant and Family, as well as the Mentor will be notified.

Applicants on the Waitlist who are not accepted may reapply for future funding.

### WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTOR AND ATS IN HELPING THE CAMPER ACQUIRE EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING FOR CAMP?

The Mentor should review the Camp's Packing List with the Camper and Family. Note items needed and assist with acquiring those items by:

- Check with the Camp for availability of loaner or rental equipment.
- Ask friends or colleagues for any equipment that the Camper may be able to borrow
- Visit local thrift shops, flea markets and second hand stores (i.e., Goodwill, Play It Again Sports)
- Visit local stores' 'scratch and dent' sales or 'Garage Sales'
- Visit online camp equipment stores (*See Equipment & Clothing Resources in Resources*)

If a Camper is in need of required equipment as listed on the Camp's Packing List (riding boots, sleeping bag, backpack, etc.), the Camper Family may apply for Equipment Assistance. With demonstrated need and preapproval from the ATS Office, a portion of select items may be reimbursed. (*See [Equipment Assistance Guidelines](#) in Resources*)

### HOW DOES A MENTOR HELP A CAMPER IDENTIFY ADEQUATE EQUIPMENT FOR CAMP?

The following equipment is generally required for a summer at Camp. However, for a more detailed list refer to the Camp's specifications and recommendations or contact the camp directly.

- **Sleeping bag:** Discuss the importance of a warm sleeping bag for residential camping. A cotton bag is not appropriate for cold overnights.
- **Hiking Boots:** Quality hiking boots with good ankle support should be acquired several months ahead of time so they can be 'broken in' before having to be worn at camp to prevent blisters.
- **Riding Boots:** English or Western riding boots are required for participation in horseback riding.
- **Backpacks:** Campers will need a quality day pack or large outcamping pack, depending on the Camper's level of interest.

### HOW DOES A MENTOR ACCESS THE VOLUNTEER APPLICATION?

To access the [ATS Volunteer Application](#):

1. Visit [www.athousandsummers.org](http://www.athousandsummers.org)
2. Click on SUPPORT then VOLUNTEER
3. In the New Volunteer section, click on APPLY HERE

Once the initial application is complete, continue to the Forms and Documents section to e-sign the required release and authorization forms. The Volunteer Application is not complete until all required forms are signed.

If a Mentor does not have access to the internet, please contact the ATS Programs Director to obtain an offline ATS Volunteer Application Form.

### **HOW DO APPLICANTS ACCESS ATS CAMPERSHIP APPLICATION?**

To access the [ATS Campership Application](#):

1. Visit [www.athousandsummers.org](http://www.athousandsummers.org)
2. Click on CAMPERS then APPLY OR SIGN IN
3. NEW FAMILIES will create a new account by clicking APPLY HERE
4. RETURNING FAMILIES will sign in to an existing account by clicking SIGN-IN

Once the initial application is complete, continue to the Forms and Documents section. The Campership Application is not complete until all required forms are completed.

If a Campership Applicant and Family do not have access to the internet, please contact the ATS Campership Programs Director to obtain an offline Campership Application Form.

### **DOES THE MENTOR HAVE ACCESS TO THE ONLINE CAMPERSHIP APPLICATION?**

In an effort to maintain a high standard of confidentiality, only the Campership Applicant and Family have access to their online application. Campership Applicants and Family can grant Mentor access to their account at their discretion. For insight into the structure and expectations of a Campership Application, visit the ATS website Campership Application page. Contact the ATS Campership Program Director to obtain an offline Campership Application Form.

## **Resources**

Offering the following resources does not express or imply an endorsement of specific services or companies, nor is it a recommendation or guarantee of the quality of services. Providing this information is a courtesy only.

### **CAMPERSHIP INCOME ELIGIBILITY - FAMILY CONTRIBUTION TABLE**

Available on our website at [www.athousandsummers.org](http://www.athousandsummers.org) on the Programs page in the Resource Section. Contact the ATS Campership Program Director to obtain an offline copy.

### **CAPSTONE PROGRAM**

See the Capstone Mentor Guide and the Capstone Program Guide available on our website at [www.athousandsummers.org](http://www.athousandsummers.org) on the Programs page in the Resource Section. Contact the ATS Campership Program Director to obtain an offline copy.

### **EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING RESOURCES**

Equipment and clothing discount stores or websites:

- Sierra Trading Post  
<http://www.sierratradingpost.com/>
- Campmor  
<http://www.campmor.com/>
- Recreational Equipment, Inc  
<http://www.rei.com>
- Backcountry.com  
<http://www.backcountry.com>
- Play It Again Sports  
<http://www.playitagainsports.com>
- Shepler's  
[www.sheplers.com](http://www.sheplers.com)

### **EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Available on our website at [www.athousandsummers.org](http://www.athousandsummers.org) on the Programs page in the Resource Section. Contact the ATS Campership Programs Director to obtain an offline copy.

### **SHORT TERM HEALTH INSURANCE OPTIONS**

- State Children's Health Insurance program (SCHIP)  
<http://www.insurekidsnow.gov/>

## **TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Available on our website at [www.athousandsummers.org](http://www.athousandsummers.org) on the Programs page in the Resource Section. Contact the ATS Campership Programs Director to obtain an offline copy.