

CAMP STABILIZATION TOOLKIT

Overview

Your camp may be facing a major period of financial stress and uncertainty. You likely spend nearly the entire year preparing for the summer season, and disruption in revenue at any point in the planning can have a lasting and disastrous impact. Fundraising may be impacted for many months, and your camper families may find it difficult to pay fees.

Relief is needed to overcome sharp losses and steady this period of upheaval. You need to establish a reliable revenue source to prevent disruption to the 2021 season. With your revenue severely disrupted, perhaps from spring and fall operations as well as summer, relief is needed to get through the rest of the year.

You should already be looking for longer-term recovery support to improve your business outlook and output and open planning and operating schedules in the fall. Preparation means projecting and adjusting budgets for the next year and looking at fixed and variable costs. No one knows what the public health and business climate will be for the next year, so building in contingency plans is vital. You may find it necessary to provide educational information about your camp's unique business cycle to state and local officials who are tasked with decision-making around reopening and establishing guidelines.

Resources for Federal, State, and Local Funding and Advocacy

This document is a resource for state and local funding and advocacy. A source for details about federal relief and recovery programs can be found on the American Camp Association (ACA) website COVID-19 page for Camp Business Resources: [ACAcamps.org/resource-library/coronavirus/camp-business-resource](https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/coronavirus/camp-business-resource).

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loans
- Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
- Main Street Lending Loans
- Other federal legislation activities
- Also be aware of other national information sources such as:
 - [SBA.gov](https://www.sba.gov)
 - [GrantSpace.org](https://www.grantspace.org) (specific sections for nonprofits and small businesses)
 - [Councilofnonprofits.org](https://www.councilofnonprofits.org)

Often federal money is accessed directly through your banking institution or a federal agency. Sometimes that money is directed to a state and access to the funds are through the state.

This resource is designed to help you search, advocate, and access potential financial support by:

- Monitoring and advocating for state legislation that includes relief that could help camps in the form of grants, loans, tax relief, etc.
- Monitoring and advocating for any kind of financial relief that might come from the Governor's offices through Executive Orders
- Gathering information about positive happenings in other states and jurisdictions that could be introduced in your state
- Positioning camp for a seat at the table in decisions affecting camp operation

This resource contains:

1. Overview
2. A Discussion of Potential Solutions
3. Guide to Monitoring Other Jurisdictions and Organizations
4. Using Social Media to Help Position Camp
5. Developing Local Data Resources
6. Addendum
 - General Advocacy Hints for Camp (short overview adapted from ACA Government Affairs training in 2019)
 - Templates for educating public officials about camp and the current situation (sample document that can be personalized with local data to present to decision makers for use by individual camps or local advocacy teams)



A DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Do Your Homework

In making decisions about potential funding solutions, research the types of funding and their impact on your camp. Whether looking at existing funding streams, working to access money allocated but not disbursed, or attempting to influence new solutions, consider what is unique about your business model and operation.

Common state-focused funding available is:

- State-level loans or grants

- CARES Act funding (or future federal funding) allocated to states

One of the first places to look in your state is to money already allocated but not disbursed.

As an example, here is a current list of the states and the funding they received from the Coronavirus Relief Fund (\$150 billion) in the CARES Act:

- home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Payments-to-States-and-Units-of-Local-Government.pdf

Here is a resource about how the funds can be used:

- home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf

- Childcare funding through the CCDF: acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/ccdf-faqs-in-response-to-covid-19 Child care funds can be paid while students are in remote and virtual education.
- Other special funding in your state

Be creative in searching for information. Watch for funds in your state/county directed to specific agencies/departments for disbursement.

- Children, youth, and families
- Education
- Health services
- Outdoors
- Community development
- Parks and recreation

Always look for anything specific to camp, but also look for funds directed to related fields. For example:

- Small business
- Environmental education
- Education utilizing outdoor space
- Lunch/food programs
- STEM
- Physical fitness
- Special needs populations
- Childcare (be careful and research any specific requirements if your camp is not regulated by the childcare agency in your state or you have not been designated an essential childcare provider)

A DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

There are common questions you might ask about potential funding. These same questions could apply to advocacy for new ideas. How could access be designed to include camps? Advocate for what is going to help the most. Consider what would happen if you are not allowed to open due to public health policy. Is there protection or consideration built into the funding for such an occurrence?

Loans/grants

- Does your camp or business meet the requirements and priorities governing this funding source?
 - Is there a staffing minimum or maximum?
 - Is there a revenue/asset limit?
 - Is there a seasonal component or would your seasonal situation cause undue pressure?
 - Is there a location requirement?
 - Is there an incorporation status designation such as for-profit vs. nonprofit?
 - Is it a loan or grant or both, and is the trigger a reasonable condition to meet for your camp?
- Is the lending interest rate workable for your operation?
- Are funding priorities of the funding source a match for your operation?
- Is the range of funding amounts applicable to your operation?
- What are both the short- and long-term impacts of accepting this funding source?
- Does any of your current funding disqualify you from consideration?
- Does this source have a specific target (could be program subject, demographic, etc.) and does your program meet it?
- Are you required to provide matching funds?
- Would this source fund an existing program or would you be required to adapt it or design something new?
- Can the funds only be applied to certain parts of your operation such as salaries, equipment, capital projects, etc.?

Tax relief/tax credits

- Does your incorporation status affect the potential relief?
- Who gets the relief — employer, employee, camper families, others?
- Does the timing of the relief fill your need?
- How does that relief impact your bottom line?
- Does the proposed relief allow your new/existing expenditures to qualify?

Monitoring what is happening in your state as well as other jurisdictions is an important part of this advocacy. Information changes rapidly and funds may be distributed quickly. Monitoring, collecting information, and finding a way to maintain and disseminate it is vital.

If you need to consider advocacy action, check “Advocacy Hints for Camps” in the addendum of this resource, which includes information on the use of Voter Voice. Working with others is always the best approach, so reach out to your colleagues. A strong, consolidated message gets more attention. Establishing relationships with government officials, funders, and related organizations is essential to success. For example, the ACA, New England affiliate facilitates regularly held meetings with State Association leadership regarding legislative action within the six New England states. These meetings have now been expanded to discussions and information sharing about relief and recovery solutions.

A DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Examples of Shared Information about Action/Potential Solutions

- **Colorado** has established [The Energize Colorado Gap Fund](#), which will provide more than \$25 million in small business loans and grants to boost small businesses impacted by COVID-19. Sole proprietors, businesses, and nonprofits with less than 25 full-time employees can apply for up to a \$15,000 grant and a \$20,000 loan for a possible combined total of \$35,000 in financial assistance.
- **Maine** Summer Camps has hosted a back-to-public-school collaboration forum for local school districts and camps being considered as supporting and supplemental. Topics discussed included school lunch program alternatives, transportation, indoor classroom space, outdoor classroom space, outdoor recess, and Wi-Fi access.
- **Maine** has allocated \$200 million of CARES Act funds for economic recovery for small businesses and nonprofits. One question regarding eligibility is the requirement that the *business employ a combined total of 50 or fewer employees and contract employees*. We believe this refers to full-time employees but are awaiting clarification from the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) Office.
- **Massachusetts** passed a \$3 million relief package specific to camps that were open to compensate for some personal protective equipment (PPE) that was required as an additional expenditure.
- **Michigan**, in response to the economic impact of COVID-19, has allocated \$100 million of CARES Act funding to implement the Michigan [Small Business Restart Program](#) to support the needs of its state's businesses directly impacted by the pandemic.
- **New Hampshire** Camp Directors Association (NHCDCA) has established itself as a relevant voice with the Governor's advisory committee for economic relief and recovery (GOFERR). Thus far, grants totaling \$3 million (to for-profit) and \$8 million (to nonprofit) have been allocated to New Hampshire youth recreation camps.
- **Rhode Island** allocated \$7.5 million to camps who opened as supplemental childcare facilities, deemed as essential.
- **Vermont** completed a \$45 million economic recovery grant program through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD). Some camps completed the eligibility process and qualified for the grant distribution at the \$50,000 maximum limit.
- **Washington State** camps are partnering with the Washington Outdoor School Consortium to gather information from camps on COVID-19 impacts and approach the government for urgent action to protect critical physical and human resource assets.

Related Issues to Watch

- Insurance relief — watch for potential legislative and/or regulatory action that could impact camps
 - Business interruption insurance current status/cost of policies and exemption clauses
 - Business liability insurance and COVID-19 infections
 - Workers compensation insurance and COVID-19 infections
- PPP debt forgiveness
 - Debt forgiveness grant money through the PPP and Small Business Administration (SBA) is not FED taxable. However, it may be STATE and or MUNICIPAL taxable in some states.

MONITORING OTHER JURISDICTIONS

What is happening with camp funding in other parts of the country? There is a need for a broad collection and sharing of information about funding sources, uses of federal and state funds, legislative approaches, coalitions, and much more. One way to gather this information is to establish and maintain contact with a network of other camp-related organizations to share information about funding solutions and action. Collective advocacy is always the best approach, so reaching out to others will also strengthen your influence.

Some groups have started to create databases to collect and monitor information and make that information available to larger audiences. Databases could be posted and even set up to allow multiple contributors. Requirements and contact information for funding sources could be listed. Potential legislative and regulatory solutions could be included with any needed advocacy.

Information gathering might include:

- Overview of purpose including scope and eligibility
- Summary of provisions
- Status
- Sponsors, sponsoring organizations, and contact information
- Action timeline (kept up to date)
- Support and/or oppose position statements or list of points
- Name of contributor and date of posting

Networking organizations could include groups such as the following. **This list is not complete but includes suggestions to help you get started.** Also consider networking with other organizations in related fields such as parks and recreation, education, and childcare.

Independent Camp Associations

- [Camp Owners and Directors Association \(CODA\)](#)
- [Midwest Association of Independent Camps](#)
- [Western Association of Independent Camps \(WAIC\)](#)

State Camp Associations (independent organizations separate from ACA)

- [Association of Alabama Camps](#)
- Colorado Camps Network
- [Connecticut Camping Association](#)
- [Maine Youth Camping Foundation](#)
- [Massachusetts Camping Association](#)
- [New Hampshire Camp Directors Association](#)
- [New York State Camp Directors Association](#)
- [North Carolina Youth Camp Association](#)
- [Rhode Island Association of Camps](#)
- [Vermont Camp Association](#)

Faith-based groups

- Christian Camp and Conference Association (CCCA)
- Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC)
- Catholic Youth Organization (CYO)
- The Salvation Army
- Episcopal Camp and Conference Centers
- Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association
- United Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministries

Nonprofit groups

- YMCA
- Jewish Community Center Association of North America
- Girl Scouts of the USA
- Boy Scouts of America
- 4-H
- Camp Fire
- Boys and Girls Clubs

Coalitions focused on camp, outdoor education, youth development, etc.

- California Collaboration for Youth
- Ten Strands (CA)

USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO HELP POSITION CAMP

Sharing information about the benefits of camp as well as the economic impact of your current situation can be very useful. Sharing content online on a regular basis will increase the reach of our collective camp messaging and help inform decision makers about your work and your needs. Post 2–3 times weekly or more on your social media accounts.

The focus should be on positive press. Use your platforms to subtly get your message across **about the impact of camp and the need for funding to continue your work**. You can show an urgent need while still communicating a positive message. Don't focus on what went wrong. Focus on what was still OK and why it could be better in the future. Talk about:

- The benefits of attending camp, whether you operated a core program this summer or not
- Your summer and focus on what you learned
- Looking to your future, including any programs you are offering
- What your campers most enjoyed this summer
- What your campers most missed this summer and why you want to provide it in the future
- Your biggest surprises from this summer

Make use of:

- Data
- Photos
- Videos
- Stories
- Testimonials from campers, parents, staff, alumni

Common platforms:

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Pinterest

Create a hashtag

Consider creating a common hashtag with other camps in your area.

- Support a cause — funding and camp.
- Help track your impact.
- Limit the number of hashtags you use — too many make it cluttered and spammy.
- Be sure your accounts are public, or they won't be seen by non-followers.

Create a blog

Blogging has quickly become one of the most popular ways of communicating and spreading information. A blog can provide more detailed thoughts as well as testimonials. Promote your blog using teasers on social media.

BE CREATIVE AND BE POSITIVE!

DEVELOPING LOCAL DATA RESOURCES

Statewide Profile of Camp

Some of this information is available in ACA membership reports or can be extrapolated from ACA research — [ACAcamps.org/research](https://www.acacamps.org/research)

- How many camps within your state — even a subset number is helpful, such as number of ACA-accredited camps
- Percentage of day vs. overnight camps, independent vs. agency camps, etc.
- Number of campers served
- Economic impact information specific to your state

Impact Scope from 2020

ACA's website can be very helpful — check research pages and COVID-19 pages.

Impact of overall camp industry

- Camp is more than a \$20 billion industry.
- There are 15,000 camps in the US — more than 9,200 are overnight and more than 6,100 are day camps.
- Each year more than 26 million children, youth, and adults attend camp in the US.
- Each year camps provide over 1.2 million jobs.
- Camps contribute over \$26 billion to local economies and businesses.

2020 camp overview COVID-19 impact

- More than 19.5 million individuals, mostly youth, were not served
- More than \$16 billion lost in direct revenue
- Approximately 900,000 camp jobs lost
- More than \$20 billion in indirect economic benefit to businesses and communities lost

State impact

- List any special conditions in your state that contributed to your economic situation.

Your camp's story

- Clientele description
- Number of campers/groups usually served
- Number of campers/groups not served in 2020
- Revenue impact
- Budget impact
- Impact on future operation

DEVELOPING LOCAL DATA RESOURCES

Data Collection

If you don't have recent data on the conditions in your state/local area, consider doing a quick online survey with camps. Working in partnership with related camp organizations will increase the scope.

Sample Questions/Concepts for Local Camp Surveys

Basic Information

- Location (often easiest by zip code): camp, headquarters
- 2020 status:
 - Open
 - Open with variation
 - Remote/virtual
 - Other alternatives (explain)
 - Suspended
- Programming: number of persons served in 2020, 2019
- Staff:
 - Staff full-time equivalents 2020, 2019
 - Staff seasonal full-time equivalents 2020, 2019
- Gross revenues:
 - 2020 anticipated increase or percent decrease compared to 2019
 - 2019 gross revenue

Supplemental Information

You could add many other questions when talking about a more robust Economic Impact Survey. It depends on the depth of information you want to share and your resources. Examples:

- Funding
 - What relief attempts have been undertaken?
 - What relief help would be most beneficial (short-term cash flow)?
 - What help would be most beneficial for longer-term recovery?
 - What relief would support camp reopening (PPE, HVAC upgrades, etc.)?
- Local impact
 - Payment in property taxes
 - Estimated expenditures directed toward local business (food suppliers, fuel, contractors, and hardware and building suppliers)
 - Identification of local products and services your camp utilizes
 - Number of seasonal and full-time workers who come from your local community
 - Amount of payroll attributable to local employees
- Extended impact on tourism
 - Number of families you bring into the region on visitors' days, arrivals, and departures
 - Number of out-of-area employees you bring into the community for the summer

ADDENDUM

ADVOCACY HINTS FOR CAMPS

Gathering Information

- Learn how your legislature works and how a bill becomes law.
- Learn about the agencies that impact camp operations.
- Learn about agencies that support business.
- Learn about groups that support youth, the environment, education, and special program focuses you provide.
- Talk to everyone you can.

Identifying Friends

- Inventory other camp-related groups already working in this area in your state, such as CODA, WAIC, CCCA, YMCA, Girl Scouts of the USA, state associations, other national or regional groups.
- Identify camp friends in decision-making/important roles — support camp, have gone to camp, send their kids to camp:
 - State and local legislators and staff
 - Business leaders
 - Foundation staff
 - Youth and outdoor advocates
 - Celebrities
 - Others
- Form relationships with agencies impacting camp — think out of the box on who they might be, like the Small Business Administration or labor-related groups.

Working with Committees and Coalitions

- What groups are making the news and why?
- Who shares the same mission? Seek people who work in the outdoors, youth development, mental health, physical fitness, etc.
- What messages are you seeing that could be adapted to include camp or a special focus you provide through your demographics, program activities, unique contribution to your community, etc.?

Monitoring Possible Solutions

- Watch for the introduction of bills in your local legislature and other state legislatures, as well as federally. Sometimes what's happening in another part of the country can provide ideas and models.
- Monitor funding sources; look for key words that may apply to your situation.

ADDENDUM

ADVOCACY HINTS FOR CAMPS

Using Research

Research can document that camp is a positive force in youth development with lasting impact on both campers and staff, as well as present economic impact camp has on the community. Learn more about research on the ACA research page — ACAcamps.org/research

- Cite youth development research data.
- Tell the impact story — economic, camper participation rates, number of jobs, etc.
- Use statistics creatively, but be factual.
- Add the specific impact on your camp.

Designing Talking Points

- Talking points are a set of clear, easily remembered phrases that outline a proposal, project, or idea.
- They are simple but not superficial.
- Talking points should:
 - Be designed to reflect the intended audience
 - Identify your mission or message
 - Outline two to three points
 - Provide specific examples
 - Emphasize a win-win solution
 - End with a call to action
 - Provide contact information, if applicable

Voter Voice

[Voter Voice](#) is a direct advocacy tool for grass roots advocacy campaigns. To use this tool, work with your ACA staff member.

- Tool for personal call to action
- Use as part of a total campaign
- Know your overall campaign goal
- Know the specific goals for Voter Voice actions
- Can be set as wide or as narrow in scope as you need
- Uses a prewritten message
- Automatically matches advocates to legislators by address/zip code
- Links to call-to-action messages and background information that may include other options