



PO Box 7067, Denver, CO 80207 | 303.447.1076 | www.CottonwoodInstitute.org

Variable Hour Field Instructor Position

Location: Denver Metro / Arvada Gear Pick-up

To Apply: Email resume and cover letter to dru@cottonwoodinstitute.org

About Cottonwood Institute

Cottonwood Institute (CI) is a 501(c)3 non-profit on a mission to connect middle and high school students to nature and inspire them to protect it. CI partners with local schools and youth organizations to engage students in the outdoors through environmental education programs and service learning projects. We lead classes and day programs in Boulder, Denver, and Aurora and overnight trips throughout the Colorado Front Range.

Job Description

Cottonwood Institute is looking for inspiring and passionate field instructors to lead outdoor programs throughout the year. CI partners with local schools and youth organizations to connect students to the outdoors through low impact camping and service-learning projects. Most programs operate in base camp settings throughout the Front Range, however, several programs involve backpacking into backcountry areas throughout Colorado. Please read the [CAP class](#) section of our website to get a sense for our flagship program. As a field instructor, you will be working with our CAP instructors to take their classes on field days and overnights as part of their courses' culminating experience.

We need a field instructor that can work these specific programs:

- Friday, February 10, 10:25-11:20am: Middle School Sub
- Tues-Wed, April 11-12: Middle School Overnight
- Tues-Wed, April 18-19: High School Overnight
- Wed-Thurs, May 10-11: Middle School Overnight
- Monday, May 15 - Friday, May 19: Middle School Overnight
- Fri, May 26 - Sun, May 28: Middle School Overnight
- Future programs as agreed upon by both parties

Paid services will include training and onboarding plus the following (per program):

- Pre-trip meeting and planning with co-instructors (2 hours)
- Pick up rental vehicle from Enterprise (1 hour)
- Packing at our gear room the day before each program (3 hours)
- Field program (Variable - we pay for all awake hours)
- Gear deissue the night of or day after each program (2-4 hours)
- Virtual debrief the day after each program (1 hour)
- Written blog post (30 mins)

Position Responsibilities and Expectations

- Co-instruct 1-5 day outdoor experiences for middle and high school students
- Facilitate the development of positive group dynamics with and among teens through team building
- Teach and model exemplary interpersonal skills such as leadership, communication, and expedition behavior
- Teach and support outdoor skills development such as camp craft, outdoor cooking, fire building, and LNT
- Teach and support environmental awareness and connection, including leading hikes and place-based activities
- Implement CI's Risk Management Plan during programming and be responsible for the safety of all participants

- Drive students to and from sites in company and/or rental vehicles, including 15-passenger vans
- Document program experiences with pictures, videos, and participant quotes

Minimum Qualifications

- Must be 21 years or older
- Must have experience leading middle or high school student groups
- Must have a valid driver's license by the start date of this position, pass a Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) check, and complete driver training including online 15-passenger van training and behind the wheel training.
- Must pass a background check and a registered sex offender check
- Current certification in Wilderness First Aid and CPR or ability to obtain by the start of this position; Wilderness First Responder preferred.

Required Competencies

Outdoor Trip Leading Experience

- Familiarity facilitating group camping and field logistics with teens or significant personal outdoor experience
- Experience leading, instructing, or teaching teens in the outdoors
- Competency using and maintaining basic camping gear and equipment, including tents and stoves

Communication and Teamwork:

- Ability to collaborate effectively and respectfully with adults and teens
- Written and verbal skills in English, primarily for emailing and scheduling with staff and partners
- Willingness to be flexible with dynamic conditions and program demands

Cultural Awareness

- Experience working respectfully with students from a variety of cultural and economic backgrounds
- Personal commitment to advancing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Commitment to expanding outdoor access and belonging for historically underrepresented groups

Passion for education and the environment!

- Excitement for service-learning, environmental education, and outdoor education
- Personal environmental ethic and awareness

Preferred Competencies

Spanish Language

- Fluency communicating in Spanish with participants and families (we give a bonus for Spanish proficiency!)

Environmental and Outdoor Education Expertise

- Extensive experience with outdoor trip leading in an overnight camping context
- Extensive experience teambuilding and facilitating teen leadership development in an outdoor setting
- Extensive knowledge of local environmental issues such as fire ecology, water issues, plant/animal identification

Compensation & Benefits

This is a variable hour, non-exempt position. We are committed to providing a thrive-able wage for our staff, and we reevaluate our compensation structure regularly. Here is our pay structure:

- Every instructor starts as a Level 1 Instructor at a base hourly rate of \$18 per hour: 0-9 lifetime CI Field Days Worked
- + 2% of base rate (\$.36/hr) for Level 2 Instructor: 10-19 lifetime CI Field Days Worked
- + 4% of base rate (\$.72/hr) for Level 3 Instructor: 20-29 lifetime CI Field Days Worked
- + 6% of base rate (\$1.08/hr) for Level 4 Instructor: 30-39 lifetime CI Field Days Worked
- + 8% of base rate (\$1.44/hr) for Level 5 Instructor: 40-49 lifetime CI Field Days Worked
- + 10% of base rate (\$1.80/hr) for Senior Instructor: 50+ lifetime CI Field Days Worked
- + 2% of base rate (\$.36/hr) for returning CI Instructor (5+ days worked with CI in previous school year: August - July)
- + 5% of base rate (\$.90/hr) for 3+ years paid guiding experience outside of CI. Because this past experience can be

subjective, CI will review this on a case-by-case basis and values paid experience over volunteer experience.

- + 2% of base rate (\$.36/hr) for Wilderness First Aid
- + 4% of base rate (\$.72/hr) for Wilderness First Responder/EMT
- + 5% of base rate (\$.90/hr) for College Degree
- + 5% of base rate (\$.90/hr) for K-12 Teaching Certification
- + 10% of base rate (\$1.80/hr) for Master's Degree
- + 10% of base rate (\$1.80/hr) for functional Spanish proficiency (able to speak with and write to students and parents/guardians if necessary)

CI pays for all time directly working with students during field programs, and employees are eligible for overtime at time and a half for more than 12 consecutive hours and for more than 40 hours in a work week.

Other perks:

- Access to industry pro deals
- Free access to CI gear during non-program hours
- Paid professional development opportunities and ongoing trainings
- Mileage reimbursement for personal vehicle trips over 50 miles per day
- Reimbursement for the cost of Wilderness First Aid after 6 field days worked per year for 2 years

Benefits: All CI employees are eligible for Sick Leave benefits in accordance with the Healthy Families and Workplaces Act of Colorado. Employees are eligible for Worker's Compensation if they are injured while leading a program.