When is the Best Time to Start Your Summer Rec Program Staff Search?

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Spring!

Planning for your town's summer recreation programs for next year starts ***in the spring.*** VLCT is here to help you with **resources for hiring lifeguards and day camp staff** that are packed with proven strategies to attract, train, and retain the dedicated team your community needs.

Retention matters - recruitment for next summer begins this summer! The most successful summer programs start their hiring process months in advance. Jumpstart your staff search with these actionable recruitment strategies:

1. Career Fairs & School Outreach

- Attend local high school and college career fairs to present lifeguard and camp staff opportunities.
- Bring eye-catching brochures, posters, and flyers that showcase the benefits, training, and impact of these summer jobs.
- Set up interactive displays or Q&A tables to engage potential candidates.

2. Partner with Swim Teams and Coaches

- Collaborate with local swim teams and aquatic clubs to recruit skilled swimmers interested in lifeguarding.
- Offer info sessions during swim meets or practices to connect with prospective candidates.

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3. Community Engagement & Events

- Host open house events at your pool or camp facility. Invite the community to meet staff, watch lifeguard demonstrations, and learn about training and certification.
- Organize free community workshops on water safety and CPR—these not only serve residents but also introduce new faces to summer job opportunities.

4. Network and Spread the Word

- Encourage current staff to refer friends and family. Consider offering referral bonuses or other incentives for successful hires.
- Engage with local community groups, youth organizations, and recreation centers. Post flyers and announcements in libraries, gyms, and youth clubs.
- Foster a positive, supportive workplace culture—happy staff are your best recruiters!

5. Promote Lifeguard Training & Certification

- Organize lifeguard certification classes and promote them as an employment pathway.
- Offer introductory sessions or scholarship programs to make lifeguard training accessible and appealing.

6. Connect with Local Businesses

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- Partner with gyms, sports stores, and local businesses to display recruitment materials or co-host community events.

7. Action Steps for Your Recreation Department:

- Schedule visits to career fairs and swim meets this fall and winter.
- Design engaging recruitment materials that highlight job perks and skills development.
- Plan at least one open house or workshop to build community interest.
- Establish a referral bonus program to reward staff who help recruit new hires.
- Reach out now to local businesses for partnership opportunities.

Some towns find success by offering flexible scheduling and covering training costs, making it easier for students and first-time staff to join. Others build strong alumni networks, inviting past staff to return for another rewarding summer.

By combining outreach, incentives, and community engagement, your summer programs can attract a diverse and enthusiastic team — ensuring a safe, fun, and memorable season for everyone!

This document was created in part with artificial intelligence and was reviewed by a human subject matter expert.

Publication Date

06/24/2025

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Current as of: 11/8/2026