



Work Experience Program | Program Guide

February 24, 2022

Introduction: Many Christian Scientists have the opportunity to work at Christian Science (CS) camps and organizations across the country; yet the opportunities don't often extend to loved ones with developmental special needs because CS camps and organizations are not equipped with the specialized staff, training and support needed to make the experience successful for all parties.

CS camps typically do not have staff who are trained to work with individuals with special needs, nor do they have experience modifying the work environment so it is accessible to individuals with developmental special needs. Because of this, the camps miss out on the blessing of having these dear individuals contribute to their communities, and our loved ones miss out on the benefit of working alongside fellow Christian Scientists in an uplifting, loving atmosphere.

We wondered: What support, services, training, and staff are needed in order for our loved ones to be included and thrive in a CS camp or organization workplace?

Program Summary: Responding to this need, RVRN developed a Work Experience Program that offers wrap-around services for the trainees that include both job- and life-skills training in addition to “off-hours” chaperoning. Additionally, RVRN prepares the environment with tools such as visual schedules and task lists as a way to increase independence and work productivity. By providing this level of comprehensive support, trainees can shine their light in the camp community while they learn and grow alongside their peers in a loving, supportive environment.

Purpose: To increase the inclusion of Christian Science loved ones with developmental special needs in the Christian Science community workplace.

Signature qualities:

- Inclusion
- Independence
- Interdependence

Description: Trainees in the Work Experience Program function as a family unit—working and spending off-hours time together—under the direction of the Program Director and supervision of job coaches. The program includes orientation and training, regular work days, debriefing sessions, and planned recreation and group outings. Throughout the program trainees will:

- learn **technical skills** needed to perform job-related tasks
- practice essential **interpersonal skills** needed in every work environment

- engage in **life skills** activities such as routine personal care (i.e. grooming and laundry)

Eligibility: Christian Scientists who are 18 year of age or older, who are interested in developing job- and life-skills in a Christian Science workplace environment and who can safely demonstrate the skills necessary for the particular job. Loved ones are required to complete an application form and, in some cases, engage in an interview as part of the process.

Activities: Activities for this program are job specific and also include life-skills and recreational activities during downtime such as hiking, swimming, and exploring/touring the area.

Duration: The duration of this program is determined by the specific job. For example, if hired to work in the dishroom at one of the CS summer camps, the duration is a summer camp session, plus 1–3 orientation/training and debrief days (a total of approximately 20 days).

Frequency of shifts: Based on the size of the crew and time needed to complete tasks.

Format: In-person

Staffing and training: The RVRN program director and job coaches will work directly with the trainees. They will also collaborate with other camp/organization staff who work with our group. Job coaches are required to participate in orientation sessions prior to working with RVRN trainees, as well as debrief sessions after the program concludes.

Compensation: Trainees are paid equitable wages for the work performed. Understanding that wages may impact other federal or state benefits trainees already receive, trainees have the option to volunteer their services.