



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

Position: Community Adventure Program (CAP) Instructor

Location: AXL Academy - Aurora, CO

Start Date: Dependent on candidate availability, as soon as mid-May.

Status: Full-Time, Non-Exempt, eligible for overtime (40 hours/week)

Compensation: \$26.20 per hour + overtime, comparable to \$54,500 per year

To Apply: Please fill out our [application here](#) ASAP. Interviews will take place on a rolling basis. If you have any trouble with the application, please send your resume and cover letter to maeve@cottonwoodinstitute.org.

About Cottonwood Institute

[Cottonwood Institute](#) (CI) is a 501(c)3 non-profit that is on a mission to connect middle and high school students to nature and inspire them to protect it. CI partners with local middle schools, high schools, and youth organizations to offer programs that engage students in environmental education, outdoor skill development, and service learning. We lead programs in Boulder, Denver, and Aurora and trips throughout the Colorado Front Range.

About Aurora Expeditionary Learning (AXL) Academy

Aurora Expeditionary Learning (AXL) Academy is a PK-8 Expeditionary Learning school and serves 400 students from Aurora. Cottonwood has partnered with AXL for the past 10 years and has a long history of successfully offering CAP Class. AXL student demographics include 78% free and reduced lunch rates, 41% Hispanic, 29% Black/African American, 20% white, and 3% Asian, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander.

Community Adventure Program (CAP) Instructor Position Description

Cottonwood Institute is looking for an inspired and passionate educator to teach our [CAP Class](#), an innovative elective that blends service learning, community building, and environmental and outdoor education. During CAP, students develop outdoor skills and connect with themselves, each other, and the natural world on field days and overnight camping trips. Students also explore solutions to local environmental issues, choose a challenge to address as a class, and collaborate with local organizations to design and implement a student-directed Action Project in their community. As a CAP Instructor, you will:

- Design and lead engaging, hands-on lessons on environmental issues, outdoor skills, and community action.
- Create a positive space for teenage students to learn from and connect with one another.
- Facilitate student-led service projects focused on positively addressing local environmental issues.
- Provide individualized support to ensure students and families are well prepared for their trip experiences.
- Collaborate with co-instructors to facilitate positive field day and overnight camping expeditions.

Job Duties

School Year Instructing (August through June)

We are currently hiring a CAP instructor for our AXL Academy partnership. In addition to the program times listed below, CAP Instructors will have approximately two paid hours of planning time for each paid hour of class time.

- Grade level: We currently offer one 7th grade class and one 8th grade class per trimester.
- Program Days: 2 classes per day, 4-5 days per week, Monday-Friday, with at least 2 field days & 2 overnights per trimester. We also may be offering extra field days once a month on Fridays when students don't have class.
- Working hours: Class times will be scheduled ahead of each school year and occur during the school day (7:45 am - 3:10 pm) other work duties typically occur during Cottonwood's standard work day (8:00 am - 5:00 pm)

- Anticipated hours per week: 40 hours per week, with additional paid hours for trips, trainings & other duties

Summer Instructing (June through August)

During the summer, we offer short-term and topic specific programming. CAP instructors act as lead instructors on a variety of summer programs. We work with instructors to build a summer schedule based on your skills, interests, and availability.

Other Duties As Assigned (Year Round)

The duties listed below are examples of other priorities we need support with throughout the year and we will designate official responsibilities upon acceptance of the position based on your capacity, skills, and interests:

- Aurora Coalition Development: Helping to build our network of partnerships in Aurora as we work to grow our programs in this community.
- Donor Communication: Reaching out to a segment of donors throughout the year via email to share Blog posts, Cottonwood news, to help build community, and to invite them to specific events

Required Competencies

Interpersonal Skills

- Communicates openly, honestly, and in a timely manner with staff, co-instructors, and school partners
- Accurate awareness of personal strengths and areas for development; initiative to learn and grow
- Models strong equity and inclusion practices in their work with students, families, and partners
- Maintains a calm, focused, and positive attitude when faced with challenges; shows personal resilience

Educational Skills

- Experience planning and leading engaging and culturally relevant lessons with groups of teens
- Confidence facilitating student-centered learning, including team building, outdoor, and environmental activities
- Ability to build authentic and trusting relationships with students from all cultural and economic backgrounds
- Skills to intentionally foster safe and inclusive group dynamics with and between students

Outdoor Trip Leading/Technical Skills

- Capacity to execute on-course program logistics, including transportation, gear, food, and medical administration
- Experience managing physical, environmental, and social risks in dynamic environments
- Comfort with outdoor skills, including cooking, camp set up, and personal outdoor hygiene
- Possess a current Wilderness First Responder/Wilderness First Aid certification before programs begin

Preferred Competencies:

These are nice-to-haves or things you can learn with us!

- Strongly preferred: fluency speaking and writing Spanish to connect with parents and participants
- Strongly preferred: familiarity with the Aurora community
- Classroom management experience, especially with middle-school-aged students
- Extensive experience leading, instructing, or teaching teens in the outdoors
- Deep knowledge of environmental issues such as wildfire, water issues, ecology, or animal issues

Compensation and Benefits

This is a full-time, hourly, non-exempt position. We are committed to providing a thrive-able wage for our staff and reevaluate our compensation structure regularly. CI pays for all time directly working with students during field programs. This is an hourly position at \$26.20 per hour and is eligible for overtime at \$39.30 per hour. Employees are eligible for overtime at time and a half for more than 12 consecutive hours in a work day and for more than 40 hours in a work week. The hourly rate for full-time CAP instructors is calculated from an annualized rate of \$54,500 per year / 2,080 hours per year.

Employee Benefits

- Full-time employees are eligible for a pay increase of \$500 per year at employment anniversary

- Eligible for 5% company performance bonus
- CI matches up to 3% of gross salary in SIMPLE IRA retirement contributions
- Full-time employees working 40 hours/week are eligible for insurance benefits. CI covers 75% of health, dental, and vision insurance and 100% of group life and long-term disability insurance.
- Monthly reimbursements for business use of personal cell phone (\$50/month)
- Parking/travel reimbursement for business use of personal transportation (\$50/month)
- 15 days of Paid Time Off (PTO) + 15 paid holidays + 6 sick days
- Mileage reimbursement for qualified travel expenses
- Industry pro deals and free access to CI gear
- Paid professional development opportunities and ongoing trainings
- CI will pay for a Wilderness First Aid or Wilderness First Responder course. The hours during the course will be paid and considered part of their work week, including overtime if eligible.

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement: Cottonwood Institute (CI) strives to create an inclusive and inspiring environment for all our students and staff. We actively value and support folks of every age, race, sex, colors, creed, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, disability, marital status, military status, veteran status, political service, or affiliation. *We aim to build a staff that reflects the communities we serve. If you are an aspiring outdoor/environmental educator who identifies as a person of color, woman/non-binary, LGBTQIA+, we highly encourage you to apply!*

To Apply: Please upload your resume and cover letter to our [application form here](#). Please don't hesitate to reach out to Maeve at maeve@cottonwoodinstitute.org if you have any questions!