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**Position:** Community Adventure Program (CAP) Instructor

**Location:** Westwood Neighborhood, Denver, CO

### **About Cottonwood Institute**

Cottonwood Institute (CI) is a 501(c)3 non-profit whose mission is to connect students to the outdoors and inspire them to become leaders, problem-solvers, and changemakers in their communities. CI partners with local middle schools, high schools, and youth organizations to offer programs that focus on environmental education, outdoor skill development, and service learning. We lead programs in Boulder, Denver, and Aurora and trips throughout the Colorado Front Range.

We aim to have an organizational 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 even if you don't think you meet all of these qualifications!**

### **Position Description**

Cottonwood Institute is looking for an inspired and passionate educator to teach our award-winning CAP Class, an elective class that blends service learning, environmental education, and outdoor education. During CAP, students explore inspiring solutions to local environmental issues, choose an issue to address as a class, and collaborate with other local organizations to design and implement a student-directed Action Project. Students also develop outdoor skills and connect with themselves and the natural world on hikes and overnight camping trips. The individual chosen for this position will receive training in how to successfully implement the CAP curriculum.

**We are currently hiring CAP instructors for our STRIVE Prep Westwood School partnership.** In addition to the program times listed below, CAP Instructors will have two paid hours of planning time for each paid hour of class time.

Program Days: Wednesday, Thursday & Friday

Times: Class time is flexible based on candidate availability, but will be from 8-8:50 AM, 11:50-12:45 or 1:48-2:36

Contract Length: January 4 - June 2, with paid training in December

Anticipated hours per week: ~9 hours per week, with additional paid hours for overnight & day trips & other duties

**Compensation:** This is a variable hour, non-exempt position. Compensation will be based on experience starting at \$18 - \$20/hour for approximately 5 months at minimum 9 hrs/week. 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. Additional field programs are available as schedules permit.

**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.

## About STRIVE Prep – Westwood

[STRIVE Prep – Westwood](#) is a charter public middle school in Denver's Westwood neighborhood. STRIVE schools operate with the goal of closing historic achievement gaps in Denver, emphasizing achievement, justice, and perseverance. STRIVE Prep – Westwood student demographics include: 16% second language learners; 97% free and reduced lunch rates; 93% Hispanic; 3% Black/African American; 1% white; 0% more than one race; and 3% Asian American, Indian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

## Position Responsibilities and Expectations

- Teach CAP at partner schools on dates and times listed in contract
- Complete job activities, responsibilities, and pre/post course logistics outlined in the Instructor Training Manual
- Communicate clearly with CI Administration, Co-instructors, and Partner Organizations
- CAP requires classroom-based and outdoor trip components. Responsibilities include:
  - Create a physically and emotionally safe space for teenage students to connect with one another
  - Design and facilitate lessons that meet educational objectives, informed by CI curriculum resources
  - Facilitate student-led service projects focused on positively addressing local environmental issues
  - Provide in-class guidance to ensure student and family preparedness for trip experiences
  - In addition to regular class, facilitate positive field day and overnight camping trips with a co-instructor
- Attend Cottonwood Institute Instructor Trainings 2x per year and participate in bi-weekly instructor meetings
- Teach and model exemplary camping, leadership, communication, and expedition behavior skills
- Implement CI's CI's Risk Management Plan during programming and be responsible for the safety of all participants
- Drive students to and from sites in company vehicles
- Document program experiences with pictures, videos, and participant quotes

## Minimum Qualifications

- Must be 21 years or older
- Must have a valid driver's license by the start date of this position and good driving record
- Experience teaching and facilitating middle and high school student groups
- 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. *For more information about how to obtain this certification, contact CI's Curriculum Manager at [chelsea@cottonwoodinstitute.org](mailto:chelsea@cottonwoodinstitute.org).*

## Required Competencies

### *Teaching and Leading Experience*

- Proven classroom and group management skills
- Experience leading groups in outdoor and/or camping settings, especially teenagers
- Ability to connect with teen students and build trusting relationships in a professional manner
- Confidence to plan and facilitate team building activities; lead overnight trips & field days; teach students about local environmental issues; guide students through an environmental action project; lead meaningful reflections

### *Communication and Teamwork*

- Ability to collaborate well with adults and teens
- Written and verbal skills in English, primarily for emailing and scheduling with staff and partners
- Willingness to be flexible with changing 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** - these are nice-to-haves or things you can learn with us!

*Spanish Language*

- Fluency with speaking and writing Spanish to communicate with parents and participants.

*Outdoor & Environmental Education Expertise*

- Extensive experience with trip leading, teambuilding, and teen leadership skills
- Competent using and maintaining camping gear and outdoor equipment
- Experience leading, instructing, or teaching teens in the outdoors including: outdoor cooking, Leave No Trace (LNT), backpacking, and general wilderness living skills
- Experience facilitating environmental education programming

*Local Knowledge*

- Familiarity with Denver-metro area (particularly Westwood), urban green spaces, and/or Front Range trails
- Knowledge about local flora, fauna, and environmental issues

**Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement:** Cottonwood Institute (CI) strives to create an inclusive and inspiring environment for all of our students and our staff. We value 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.

**Cottonwood Institute COVID-19 Vaccination Policy:** As a condition of employment, CAP Instructors must comply with the vaccination and/or testing requirements of our partner schools. [All Denver Public Schools employees & contractors must be fully vaccinated](#), and proof of vaccination must be provided upon hiring. For more information about our vaccination policy, please contact [dru@cottonwoodinstitute.org](mailto:dru@cottonwoodinstitute.org).

**To Apply:** Fill out this [Google Form](#) to apply. Interviews will begin December 7th and will continue until the position is filled. Please don't hesitate to reach out to Chelsea Tossing at [chelsea@cottonwoodinsitute.org](mailto:chelsea@cottonwoodinsitute.org) if you have any questions!