



## Social Issues

This document reflects 2023 Camp Insights Survey responses related to the following societal trends:

- Focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion for LGBTQ+ people
- Growing prominence of social and racial justice issues
- Growing levels of anti-Semitism
- Growing polarization of political beliefs among Americans
- Climate change impact on facilities and operations

You will find the ratings for each of these trends where each trend is discussed in this document. Note that respondents rated each societal trend using the following prompt - **Please rate the extent to which the societal trend below creates significant opportunities or challenges for your camp over the next 5 years** – using a 1 to 5 scale where **1 = Not Significant** and **5 = Very Significant**. *The full list of trends and their ratings can be found in the appendix of the full [2023 JCamp 180 Camp Insights Report](#).*

In addition, respondents were asked to share areas of both strength and growth in their efforts related to each of these trends. This document summarizes the responses camps reported – we hope these ideas help other camps as they determine how to best respond to these societal trends.

### Focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion for LGBTQ+ people

Focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion for LGBTQ+ people 3.3

Over the prior three surveys, the focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion for LGBTQ+ people steadily rose in rankings each year, peaking in the last survey as the #6<sup>th</sup> ranked trend. The trend ranked lower this year (#12), perhaps reflecting the commitment and initiatives undertaken by camps last year and subsequently.

As outlined below, camps are continuing to take action in areas such as education and training, facilitation of discussion and activities, cabins and bathroom, and staffing and governance.

#### *Education and Training*

- “Bringing in experts from the LGBTQ+ community to talk more about gender during staff training”
- “Training for staff”
- “Doing extensive training with summer staff and year-round staff members”
- “Staff week includes DEI training”

### *Planning Discussion and Activities*

- “Discussions about how to best handle the needs of individual campers”
- “Discussions prior to the summer session”
- “Pronoun shares are a part of introductions at camp. We are thinking about ways to visually tell the story of our growing diversity without tokenizing individuals.”
- “Demonstrating acceptance and discussing these issues directly as activities”
- “Hosting a LGBTQ+ Family Camp”

### *Cabins and Bathrooms*

- “Implementing all-gender cabins”
- “Opt-in all gender cabins”
- “Investment in all gender bathrooms.”

### *Staffing and Governance*

- “We try to build a staff that mirrors the diversity we have or hope to have at camp.”
- “Started an Inclusion Committee at the board level to discuss ways to bridge inclusion and modern orthodoxy.”

## **Growing prominence of social and racial justice issues**

Growing prominence of social and racial  
justice issues

2.9

As in prior years, the growing prominence of social and racial justice issues scored relatively low, but those responding did indicate a number of approaches their camps are taking. As noted below, this includes establishing a Working Group, adding staffing and consulting resources, operating a family camp, providing education and training, creating space for discussion of the issues, proactively recruiting and running a family camp.

### *Working Group*

- Having a standing DEI working group to support the Director of DEI

### *Staffing*

- Hiring a full-time Director of DEI

### *Consulting and Funding*

- “We are hiring someone to help us navigate this and just finished an 18-month-long program about systematically changing our organization.”
- “We're currently seeking funding to better support our BIPOC campers and staff, design retreat programming for multiracial families, and train our staff -- and other communal organizations -- on how to continue centering more deeply in our work.”

### *Education and Training*

- “New speakers, focus during staff orientation”
- “Going through many staff trainings”
- “One of the approaches we may take is pre-summer education for our white campers, and then an opening program this summer about racial issues among our community”
- “Participating in a social justice/racial justice fellowship”

### *Space for Discussion*

- “Forums for discussion. This includes discussing politics, antisemitism and other injustices being carried out.”
- “Listening to campers and staff”
- “Creating spaces where conversations and discussions can happen at appropriate times and ages”

### *Recruitment*


- “Trying to recruit more people of color to our programs”
- “We're also working with our system on outreach to increase the diversity of our staff and camper population”

### *Family Camp*

- “Having a Family Camp for Jews of Color and their families

## Growing levels of anti-Semitism

Growing levels of anti-Semitism 3.1



As in prior years, the growing levels of anti-Semitism ranked relatively low. Responding camps indicated they were pursuing approaches to increase security and combat antisemitism.

### *Security*

- “As a camp always focused on children from small Jewish communities, we are well-suited for campers facing these challenges”
- “Camp...no longer publishes its field trip schedule”
- “Increased collaboration with Secure Communities Network”
- “Certainly spending much more for security”
- “Safety and security”

### *Combating anti-Semitism*

- “We are putting more effort into providing resources to help combat anti-Semitism.”
- “Providing resources to help parents”
- “We are considering being more aggressive in our camper recruitment and fundraising efforts to highlight antisemitism as reasons to send campers to camp or contribute financially”

## Growing polarization of political beliefs among Americans

Growing polarization of political beliefs  
among Americans

2.5

As in prior years, the growing polarization of political beliefs among American ranked relatively low. Responding camps indicated they were pursuing approaches to promote tolerance/safe space for camper to discuss ideas – as well as reinforcing the camp’s value system and/or marketing the camp’s emphasis on family values. Actions include the following.

- “Keep teaching tolerance and kindness”
- “This is really tricky and Covid showed us that the virus was actually about much more than safety but about belief/government control/etc. I think that the best we can try to do is create a safe space for campers to discuss ideas while making sure that staff are not trying to indoctrinate.”
- “Just reinforcing our value system, making sure its a living/breathing document and infused into everything we do at camp”
- “Marketing ourselves as a camp that emphasizes family values”

## Climate change impact on facilities and operations

Climate change impact on facilities and  
operations

2.7

Camps indicated a number of areas of action to respond to climate change, including those to address hot temperatures, reduce energy usage, create indoor spaces, plan for contingencies, manage evolving insurance approaches in this area, respond to extreme weather conditions, and manage expectations with families regarding necessary cancellations.

### *Address hot temperatures*

- Adding air conditioning in more spaces
- Air conditioning in cabins
- Upgraded ventilation in the dining hall and AC in the kitchen. Looking at bringing AC to some smaller buildings if the power grid can handle this.
- Adding heat in more spaces
- Adding more shade, HVAC, etc.

### *Reduce energy usage*

- Cutting back on winter rentals
- Considering what we can do about energy usage at camp
- Making sure staff and campers are aware of and practice lighting protocols

### *Create indoor spaces*

- Implementing more indoor space use for contingencies, modifying formerly outdoor programs to be run indoors when necessary, and action plans to respond to severe weather.
- “We don't have good solutions because we rent a facility and are unable to build more indoor spaces. It's quite problematic.”

#### *Plan for contingencies*

- Preparing for worst case scenarios for facilities and operations
- “We are working with a master planner to fortify our infrastructure.”
- “Working closer with other camps in our area to form a community we can rely on instead of government support. Trying to enhance relationships with local government and emergency services to protect our community and property.”

#### *Manage insurance*

- “Capping the amount we are paying for property insurance and having some buildings at camp go uninsured.”

#### *Respond to extreme weather*

- “We have fires, snow and flood. Feels too biblical. We have over 6' of snow and expecting more that closed down the mountain. Eventually, it will create flooding with roads that access the camp being washed out. We have fires every season that have also closed the mountain and twice threatened the existence of camp. We've gone from 1 or 2 inches of rain a summer to 7 to 9 inches of rain that create erosion around the camp. Again, no quick solutions for any of these.”
- Working on forestry issues to prevent damage from wildfire.

#### *Manage expectations with families regarding cancellation*

- “Being clearer to families that they will not receive refunds from [camp] if sessions are cancelled due to smoke or wildfire (and encouraging them to purchase trip insurance)”