

NRHS RAILCAMP

2026 Programs Application Package

Welcome to the National Railway Historical Society (NRHS) RailCamp 2026 Program! The NRHS and our partner organizations are very proud of this unique introduction to railroad operations which has hosted hundreds of young people over the last 25 years. The following pages include all the details of applying to attend one of the two programs in 2026.

RailCamp East: June 21 – June 27, 2026

Headquartered at the University of Delaware in Newark, DE
and

RailCamp Northwest: June 21 – June 27, 2026

Headquartered at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA

Each camp will offer hands-on experiences for young people interested in railroading, its colorful history, and promising future. Frequent postings of camp events and news will be posted on www.NRHS.com and the RailCamp Facebook page.

To complete an application, select the camp you wish to attend (only one, please) and fill out **ALL** the appropriate documentation. Applications with missing information will not be accepted. Both the prospective camper and the parents have items to sign and the potential camper has a bit of writing to do. Please use your computer to complete the application and return to railcampnrhs@yahoo.com. No hand-written applications will be accepted. **Do not** mail the completed application.

The Reference Release forms must be signed and given to your references. Make a copy of each and send them with the application. Two attempts will be made to contact your references. If calls are not returned you will need to supply another reference. A financial assistance form is included which may be used if a need exists, otherwise it need not be returned.

Camp Tuition is \$1,575. Scholarships are available from several sources, including the NRHS and many of its chapters and other organizations. See Page 12 for financial assistance.

Our staff will review the applications and request any further information needed. You may submit applications immediately, but the **FINAL DEADLINE for submissions is April 1, 2026**. Don't wait too long – places fill up fast. RailCamp East will accept 24 campers, and RailCamp Northwest will accept 12 campers. You will be notified of acceptance as soon as possible, but not later than April 30, 2026.

When your application materials are **complete**, return them to: railcampnrhs@yahoo.com.

PURPOSE OF RAILCAMP

RailCamp is an educational experience for young people who have an interest in railroads and railroading. It gives them an appreciation of what railroads have meant to the history, development and economy of our country and how revolutionary technical changes in modern railroading affect today's business. Occupations in the rail industry are unique and this opportunity introduces these young people to the motivation and commitment necessary to pursue a railroad career. The intent is to inspire them to become involved with the many aspects of railroading; hobby, volunteering, working for an historical museum or tourist operation or a career in the rail industry. It encourages them to engage in the future of railroads.

RAILCAMP ADMISSION POLICY

APPLICATION

All individuals interested in participation in RailCamp must complete the application provided by the NRHS.

Additionally, the Applicant's parent(s) must complete an affidavit attesting to the accuracy of the information on the application and grant permission for the NRHS to contact any references listed on the application.

The NRHS will accept RailCamp Applicants after a complete review of the application.

SCHOLARSHIPS

RailCamp participants may receive scholarships. The NRHS provides a limited number of scholarships to participants based on financial need. The number of scholarships varies from year to year depending on contributions from NRHS members, Chapters and other sources.

NRHS Chapters and Interested Entities may sponsor campers. The Chapters or Interested Entities grant the sponsorship on an individual basis to applicants who meet all the admission criteria established by the NRHS. Chapters or Interested Entities may add criteria of their own so long as those criteria are non-discriminatory.

Final acceptance of a candidate is solely at the discretion of the RailCamp Committee. The NRHS, at its sole discretion, may share the name of individual Applicants with sponsors, and may share the sources of sponsorships with individual Applicants.

APPLICATION PROCESS

RailCamp Management will publish a specific schedule for each year. This schedule will only apply to the RailCamp Programs being offered in that year.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

The NRHS will decide on an Applicant based on the information provided in the application, the affidavit submitted by the parent and any information the NRHS obtains from the references. The NRHS does not discriminate against any Applicant in its admission process based on race, religious affiliation or lack thereof, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, or disability. Membership in NRHS is not a prerequisite to attend RailCamp.

RailCamp is a learning program requiring participation using operating railroads that need focused attention and the ability to follow instructions without oversight.

RailCamp is open to persons aged 14 – 18 who will enter ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth grade, or have graduated from high school in the year of the camp

Preference will be given to first time attendees, but RailCamp management, at its sole discretion, may admit an applicant who attended a previous RailCamp.

NOTIFICATION and FINAL TUITION PAYMENT

Upon notification of an award of a position in the RailCamp program, the Applicant has thirty (30) days to submit the tuition for the respective RailCamp program. If an Applicant fails to meet this requirement, the NRHS may award the position to another Applicant.

REFUNDS

If an Applicant is accepted for RailCamp and he/she is unable to attend due to a family emergency, the NRHS will refund the tuition paid upon submission of requested documentation.

In the event the NRHS cancels a session of RailCamp, the NRHS will refund any tuition paid by the Applicant or Sponsor.

Should an Applicant be prevented from attending a RailCamp program because of war, natural disaster, or some other emergency not involving the immediate family, the NRHS will refund any tuition paid by the Applicant or Sponsor.

In the event an Applicant accepted for RailCamp cannot attend a RailCamp program for a reason this policy does not anticipate, the RailCamp management, in its sole discretion, may review the circumstances and refund any tuition or portion thereof as it deems appropriate.

NRHS RailCamp Application

Final Application Deadline: April 1, 2026
Decision Notifications Sent Periodically
Final Notifications by April 30, 2026

SELECT ONE: ☐ East: Wilmington, DE, June 21 – June 27, 2026
 ☐ Northwest: Tacoma, WA June 21 – June 27, 2026

ATTENDEE INFORMATION

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip Code: _____

Country: _____

Home Phone: (____)_____-_____ Cell Phone: (____)_____-_____

Email: _____

ALL correspondence will be via email to applicant with copy to main contact.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTACT INFORMATION

Main Contact: (Person to whom all payment information and program details will be sent)

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: (____)_____-_____ Cell Phone: (____)_____-_____

Email: _____ Relationship to Camper: _____

Additional Contact:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: (____)_____-_____ Cell Phone: (____)_____-_____

Email: _____ Relationship to Camper: _____

REFERENCES

Provide the names and telephone numbers of three individuals who can serve as references. Two of your references must be teachers who have had you in class. If this is a problem, please contact us at: railcampnrhs@yahoo.com.

1. Name _____	Current teacher: _____
Phone: (____)____-_____	Best time to call: _____
2. Name _____	Current teacher or staff: _____
Phone: (____)____-_____	Best time to call: _____
3. Name _____	How does this person know you? _____
Phone: (____)____-_____	Best time to call: _____

Complete and sign pages 13, 14, 15. Make a copy of each signed form and return them with your application. Make certain that your references are willing to speak to the Review Panel.

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT

Applications will NOT be reviewed without this statement. On a separate piece of paper, please write two or three paragraphs which tell why you want to attend RailCamp. What do you expect to learn at RailCamp?

ATTENDANCE ELIGIBILITY

As of June 18, 2026, I will have completed ☐ twelfth ☐ eleventh ☐ tenth ☐ ninth ☐ eighth grade.

PARTICIPATION FACTORS

Do you have any disabilities or current medical conditions which would impact your participation in RailCamp?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain. Use another sheet if you need more space: _____

Have you ever participated in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) while in school?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain. Use another sheet if you need more space: _____

Have you ever had an Education Service Agreement (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act) while in school?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what accommodations have you received as a result of the IEP or 504? Use another sheet if you need more space: _____

TRAVEL PLANS

If you are accepted to the RailCamp Program, we will contact you for specific information about your travel plans. **RailCamp East** - Limited Pickups can be arranged for the Amtrak Station in Wilmington or the Philadelphia Airport. All campers MUST be in camp no later than 1:00 p.m. no exceptions.

RailCamp Northwest - Pickups can be arranged at the Amtrak Station in Tacoma or SeaTac Airport in Seattle. All campers MUST be in camp no later than 4:00 p.m. Keep these times in mind when booking travel plans.

It is your responsibility to arrange your own transportation to and from the RailCamp locations. *In the event of an unforeseen cancelation of RailCamp, the NRHS will incur no financial liability where you have secured non-refundable transportation.*

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The NRHS has limited funds available to provide financial assistance on an as-needed basis. Would you like the NRHS to consider you for RailCamp financial assistance? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please fill out the separate financial assistance page entitled "RailCamp Financial Assistance Application."

If no, are you being sponsored by an NRHS Chapter or other Interested Entity? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Sponsor Name: _____

Sponsor Contact Name: _____ Email Address _____

Phone: (_____) _____ - _____ Best time to call: _____

If you have any questions, contact RailCampNRHS@yahoo.com.

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Please make check or money order only payable to **"NRHS"** and note on the memo line **"RailCamp" plus the name of the attendee**. Mail to: RailCamp NRHS, P.O. Box 1481, Lockport, New York 14095. **Do not mail to the National Office.**

FINAL PAYMENT

If application is approved, final payment of \$1,575 is due 30 days from acceptance and not later than May 30, 2026.

If you apply for RailCamp and the NRHS offers admission and you subsequently refuse to attend, any payments made are non-refundable. Should the NRHS need to cancel RailCamp, NRHS will refund any payments made.

PARENT/GUARDIAN STATEMENT

I am the parent/guardian of, _____ and I have the legal right to sign documents about participation in RailCamp. I have reviewed the information on this application form and attest to its accuracy. This statement may be signed online or printed. Understand that it has the same force and effect of a hand-written signature.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

RailCamp Participation Requirements

The NRHS RailCamp program is not the average summer camp. It is intended to provide the participants with a realistic experience dealing with the activities railroad personnel experience every day. Certain government regulations, company policies and procedures govern these activities and it is critical that each attendee be aware of and capable of observing them.

The NRHS RailCamp Program is designed to further an individual's knowledge of railroading's contribution to the history of our country by providing a hands-on experience of what it was like to operate a railroad transportation system prior to the technological advances that have automated much of that system and reduced its labor force. RailCamp also addresses present day railroading and some aspects of future railroading with activities during the week. In these instances, attendees will meet and work with experienced railroad employees. The RailCamp Experience includes learning the skills of railroading as they were (and in some cases, still are) practiced with actual hands-on participation. A major key to success for any student is to show they can participate in team activities. This is accomplished by actual participation in train operations and facilities maintenance. Attendees should come away with new appreciation of what it took, and in many ways, *still* takes, to be a railroader.

The nature of railroad operations requires close cooperation and understanding among many groups of skilled persons. This means each person needs adequate verbal communication skills as well as an agreement on several non-verbal signals and commands to be understood by all participants. The Federal Railway Administration (FRA) and the several State Public Utilities Commissions (PUC) oversee standards of communications and safety rules, not only for currently operating common-carrier rail systems in the United States, but for railroads at many museums and tourist operations which are maintained as operating historic artifacts. Thus, many RailCamp activities are subject to FRA and state regulations, and those regulations *must* be followed explicitly.

RailCamp participation requires certain skills and a level of performance that will make the experience safe, meaningful and yet a fun learning experience for all. All RailCamp participants must be able to understand and follow directions. They must be able to focus to lectures, discussions and activities while sitting or standing for long periods in various settings which may contain many distractions. They must be able to understand verbal communications as well as several non-verbal signals and commands. They must be able to climb and lift heavy objects. RailCamp participants will get dirty and possibly perform assigned duties in wet or very hot weather. RailCamp teaches railroad heritage and practice through an active, physical, multi-day experience participating in the operation and maintenance of both modern and historic equipment and facilities.

Physically, attendees can expect to be exposed to loud noises such as locomotive horns and power equipment as well as complex activity including moving railroad trains at any time. Attendees should be comfortable lifting at least 25 pounds. Most locomotives and many other facilities are accessed by ladders with safety grabs requiring the use of both hands. Volunteers cannot provide special personal services for any camper. Federal and State safety codes for railroads require certain functions of all working personnel including volunteers; all participants must be capable of learning and then implementing these rules and procedures to insure the safety of all participants just as real railroaders do.

Safety and other necessary equipment required to participate in railroad activities will be issued by RailCamp. Such equipment includes but is not limited to earplugs, hard hats, gloves and safety goggles. Once provided, attendees are expected to have this equipment with them and available at the appropriate times after notification by staff. Other equipment will be provided if required for a specific task at the time the task is to be performed. Clothing and appropriate footwear are the responsibility of the attendees. You will receive a separate NRHS document with guidelines for what kind and quantity of clothing to bring.

An attendee who is unable or unwilling to deal with the restrictions as outlined here or demonstrates special emotional needs after a period of time in camp may be required to leave the camp. An attendee causing disruptions which inhibit the experience of RailCamp for other attendees or pose safety risks for themselves or the group will likewise be sent home. A camper being sent home is the responsibility of the parents. A return ticket must be arranged, or parents can pick-up the camper before the next day's activities begin at 7:00 am. Remember; while RailCamp is intended to be fun and educational, a camper who cannot interact successfully with the group, maintain situational awareness and observe the necessary rules of safety while doing so becomes a danger not only to himself/herself but to others as well. Railroading requires team effort; each attendee is part of the team.

A NOTE ABOUT PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT - Parents are welcome to visit the venue in which RailCamp is held but may not participate in RailCamp activities or assist a camper with any camp activity, including meals and evening social functions. Attendees are expected to stay in the provided housing facilities with their peers. The group interaction must not be circumvented for safety and other reasons; this is part of the camp objectives. We learn that safety is a group activity and each attendee's attention should be confined to the group and its activities during RailCamp week. Parental interference cannot be tolerated. Safety requires everyone's full and undivided attention.

Agreement

I have read and understand the above Participation Requirements and guidelines and indicate this by signing below. This form can be signed online or printed. Understand that this has the same force and effect of a hand-written signature.

Signature Camper: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

SAFETY OF YOUR CHILD AND OTHER CAMPERS IS OUR PRIMARY CONCERN.

The NRHS does not discriminate based on race, religious affiliation or lack thereof, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, or disabilities. RailCamp can make some reasonable accommodations to meet the needs of attendees, but the staff needs to know the extent of any disability and the program modifications that a special needs child may require. RailCamp needs your full and complete responses to the following questions:

Does your child have special needs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe: _____

In addition to the “special needs” category, are there any other issues of which we need to be aware (sleepwalking, anxiety attacks, anger or frustration situations, etc.)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe: _____

Does your child have Individualized Education Plan or Educational Service Plan? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, would you be willing to discuss it with RailCamp management? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does your child have any special dietary needs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe: _____

Does your child have any allergies, either food born or environmental? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe: _____

Does your child have sensitivity to sudden loud noises and/or bright flashing lights? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes to either situation, please describe: _____

Is your child's weight and height within normal limits for a child of his/her age? ☐ Yes ☐ No

RailCamp Medical Information Sheet

Emergency Medical Authorization Form

ATTENDEE INFORMATION

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip Code: _____

Country: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address (if different than above): _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: (____)____-____ Cell Phone: (____)____-____

Relationship to Camper: _____ Custodial Parent: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Place of Business: _____ Phone: (____)____-____

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address (if different than above): _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: (____)____-____ Cell Phone: (____)____-____

Relationship to Camper: _____ Custodial Parent: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Place of Business: _____ Phone: (____)____-____

In the event the Attendee listed above is not residing with the custodial parent, please complete the following information:

Custodial Parent's Name: _____ Phone: (____)____-____

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Person to contact in the event we cannot contact one of the above-named persons:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: (____)____-____ Cell Phone: (____)____-____

ATTENDEE'S MEDICAL INFORMATION

Please detail any facts about the Attendee's medical history including allergies, medications taken and any physical or mental impairment of which RailCamp staff and/or a treating physician should be aware of:

[illegible]

If your child requires daily medication, he/she must be able to take all medications without assistance. Furthermore, if the camper fails to take the medication as prescribed, the parents will be advised to come pick up their child.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

RailCamp Financial Assistance Application (Optional)

This application is for possible financial assistance for RailCamp provided by the National Railway Historical Society (NRHS). The information on this application will be used to determine your entitlement to financial assistance, so make sure the information is accurate. This form is to be filled out by the parents or legal guardian of the RailCamp attendee.

The information on this form is confidential and will not be released to anyone but the NRHS and will only be used to determine the eligibility of the RailCamp Attendee to receive financial assistance.

Attendee Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Parent/Guardian's occupation: _____ Full-time: ☐ Part-time: ☐

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Attendee's occupation, if any: _____ Full-time: ☐ Part-time: ☐

Income data - please supply the following information from the parent(s)/guardian last 3 years federal tax returns.

	Number of Exemptions	Taxable Income
Last Year	_____	_____
2 Years back	_____	_____
3 Years back	_____	_____

How much of the RailCamp tuition could parent(s)/guardian reasonably pay? _____

Other extenuating or special circumstances that we should be aware of: _____

The information provided in this application for financial assistance to the NRHS RailCamp Program is true to the best of my knowledge and I have not withheld relevant data requested on this application.

Signature of Camper: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

PERMISSION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION FROM RECORDS

This release is to be given to a current teacher. Make certain this teacher will speak to our review people. No applicant will be accepted until all interviews are complete.

The student listed below has applied to be a Camper at the National Railway Historical Society, Inc. (NRHS) RailCamp program in 2026.

RailCamp is a program of the NRHS whereby male and female students aging between 14 and 18 can experience the history of railroading, its purpose and how it accomplishes its purpose. This experience takes the campers into actual participation in train operations and facilities operation. The campers must be able to perform safely in all weather conditions in a group learning process that involves performing specific duties in the various jobs by those employed in rail service which includes classroom education, climbing equipment, lifting heavy objects, standing for long periods, etc. The child must be able to work within a group and able to adhere to ALL Safety rules and regulations that are strictly enforced by Federal Agencies, Railroads and Museums for their own safety and the safety of other campers and railroad personnel and equipment.

School: _____ Grade: _____

Student's Name: _____

The Purpose of this release is to facilitate acceptance into RailCamp program.

Information to be released:

Academic, Discipline, Attendance, Socialization and Extra Activities

The information indicated above is to be released to:

The National Railway Historical Society, NRHS RailCamp program

Teacher to be contacted: _____

Phone: (_____)_____-_____ Best time to call: _____

This release is to be in effect until _____ (Date).

I am aware that the parent/legal guardian/student if over 18 may review and challenge the records prior to their release.

I hereby grant permission for the release of the above record(s).

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

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Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

REFERENCE RELEASE

This release is to be given to another reference (not a relative). Make certain this person will speak to our review people. No applicant will be accepted until all interviews are complete.

Parent/guardian - complete and sign – give a copy to the reference and send a copy with your application.

I, _____ give permission for _____ to
(Parent/Guardian) (Reference)

release information requested concerning _____.
(Camper)

Phone: (_____)_____-_____ Best time to call: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____