

ZOO TEEN PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

What age do I have to be for the ZooTeen program?

Ages 13 (entering 8th grade in the fall) through 17 (entering 12th grade).

*Must be 13 years old by September 1. Cannot be 18 before September 1. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

If you are under the age of 13 and would still like to be a volunteer, visit the [Family Volunteers](#) and read about our “Family Zoo Ambassador” position.

What do ZooTeen volunteers do?

As a ZooTeen, you will work to educate Zoo Boise guests while raising awareness and funds for the conservation of wildlife worldwide. ZooTeens provide informal educational presentations for guests, assist in the operation of seasonal exhibits, assist with summer camps for children, and support Zoo Boise’s wildlife conservation mission.

What is the time commitment required for ZooTeens?

- One ZooTeen info hour (new teens and their parents/guardians)
- One ZooTeen orientation day (new and returning teens)
- One ZooTeen practice day (new teens)
- Weekly shift
 - Shift times: 9:30AM - 1:00PM or 12:45 - 4:15PM
 - Minimum 13 shifts within June, July, and August (approximately four shifts per month)
 - 13 shifts must include one special event or after-hours rental during ZooTeen season (June - August)
- ZooTeens who would like to assist with camps are required to volunteer for the full duration of the weeklong camp. Most camps run Monday-Friday, from 8:00AM - 5:00PM.

How do I apply?

- Fill out the online portion of the application prior to **5:00PM on January 31**.
 - The ZooTeen online application must be completed in one session. Please allow at least 30 minutes to complete the process. Only one entry per applicant will be accepted.
 - Once you have completed the online application, you will receive an e-mail with a reference letter form attached. This must be completed and submitted to the Zoo Boise Volunteer Department by **5PM on February 28**.
- You and a parent/guardian must attend a virtual LIVE ZooTeen Info Hour to learn more and ask questions about the program. Attending will help you make the decision on whether or not this program is right for you and will help keep your parents informed. Teens that do not attend an info hour will not be eligible for an interview and will not be accepted into the program.
- Applications have three parts and are not considered complete unless all parts are submitted on time. The three parts include:
 1. Complete online application with all fields completed
 2. Submit a reference form. If you do not receive an e-mail with the reference form after submitting the online application, please check your spam folder or [e-mail us](#).
 3. Attend one ZooTeen Info Hour.

ZOO TEEN PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

What happens after I apply?

- Based on quality of applications, applicants will be chosen for an interview. If applications do not meet standards for an interview, you will not be contacted to schedule an interview. All interviews take place in April. Interviews must be in person. Requests for phone or online interviews will not be granted.
- After all interviews are complete, applicants will be contacted by e-mail on or before March 31 regarding acceptance into the ZooTeen program.

What happens if I am accepted into the ZooTeen program?

If accepted as a ZooTeen, you will be expected to:

- Participate in all aspects of the program including reaching the 13 shifts minimum, which includes one special event/rental.
- Attend and participate in all mandatory training sessions. See the calendar to view options for scheduled days.
- Pay a \$125 tuition fee (**non-refundable, due at orientation**). [Scholarships are available](#).
- Wear the Zoo Boise ZooTeen uniform: Khaki/grey/black pants or shorts (no shorter than mid-thigh and no denim), a watch, and provided ZooTeen T-Shirt. Closed-toe and closed-heel shoes are required. No sandals or flip-flops.
- Submit a medical form (this will be emailed in acceptance letter; due at orientation).
- Submit a negative tuberculosis (TB) test (**due at orientation**). Keep in mind TB testing requires you to return to test site 48 hours after the initial visit.

What does the tuition fee cover?

- Daily mentoring and supervision of ZooTeens by skilled Zoo Boise staff members
- Initial orientation and continuous daily training in:
 - Professionalism and job skills
 - Leadership
 - Public speaking
 - Communication skills
 - Animal biology, wildlife habitats, and ecology
 - Wildlife conservation
- Program supplies & materials:
 - One Zoo Boise uniform shirt
 - End-of-summer party
 - Orientation and training
- Opportunities for FUN!

What if the program is not a fit for me?

- If you feel like this program is not the right fit for your needs, visit zooboise.org/volunteer for more information on our other volunteer positions.

ZOO TEEN PROGRAM

Orientation

New ZooTeens

- Attendance is mandatory for either Saturday or Sunday of ZooTeen Orientation (see available dates on program calendar).
- Practice day is mandatory for either Saturday or Sunday of ZooTeen Practice Day (see available dates on program calendar).
- Teens unable to attend both one orientation and one practice day will not be able to participate in the ZooTeen program. See program calendar for dates and times.

Returning ZooTeens

- Attendance is mandatory for either Saturday or Sunday of ZooTeen Orientation (see available dates on program calendar).
- Practice day is recommended but not required for returning ZooTeens.
- One orientation day will be required for all returning ZooTeens. Teens unable to attend orientation will not be able to participate in the ZooTeen program. See program calendar for dates and times.

A Note to Parents / Guardians

The ZooTeen program at Zoo Boise provides a fun and educational activity for your teen. We make every effort to maintain a quality program which also requires assistance from you. We emphasize to all students that they are making a commitment to Zoo Boise and it requires your support for them to fulfill their commitment. Please encourage your teen to take the application and interview seriously as it will assist Zoo Boise in selecting applicants.

As a part of teaching professional development skills, we also ask you to encourage your teen to complete application materials and communicate with Zoo Boise staff with minimal input from you.





ZOO TEEN PROGRAM

Teen Testimonials

“The most enjoyable aspect was simply learning about animals and being surrounded by people who have the same passion for nature and wildlife as I do!”

“It’s really helped me grow and become more comfortable interacting with people I’m not familiar with. In that respect, it’s also been a huge confidence boost.”

“I most enjoyed positive interactions with people my age. It was a great way to work on my lackluster social skills and bond with people who shared my similar interests.”

“I can’t begin to describe the positive impact this program has had on my life.”

“I think the ZooTeen program has a huge impact on how I view the wild and conservation. I know now that, even as a kid, my voice can make a difference.”

“The ZooTeen Program has taught me both people skills and job skills, and now I can be prepared for future jobs. I have gotten to meet so many awesome people! I also love animals and get to work at a place that is full of them! Thank you so much for creating this program!”

“The Zoo Teen Program has a big role at the zoo. It contributes by bringing attention to conservation to visitors and teaching them about animals all over the world. I helped with animal encounters and talking about conservation at every station that I did.”

“I feel like this opportunity has made me better at speaking to people I don’t know, and because of this I feel significantly more confident when I meet strangers. Before this, I also had little experience being in a leadership role, and being a returning teen I really have had to start to develop those skills in mentoring and teaching others.”

“This year I gained a lot not just as a volunteer but as a person by being involved in the ZooTeen program, it’s difficult to explain but helping out with special events and especially camps were all very emotionally uplifting experiences that will stick with me for a long time.”

“I have really loved being a ZooTeen this year. It has helped me be more confident talking to people. Parent comment- The ZooTeen program has been a great experience for my daughter. The program is very well [run] and easy to help my daughter schedule shifts. Thank you so much for giving her this opportunity and making it so positive!”

“I don’t have much to say other than I can’t wait till next year to be a part of this program again! I think that everyone should experience this opportunity at least once in their life.”

