

ZOO TEEN PROGRAM 2026

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 outside of these ages (under 13 years old or 18 years or older), visit our website for other [volunteer opportunities](#).

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?

- Self-paced, online orientation
- One ZooTeen practice day (first and second year teens)
- Weekly shift
 - Shift times: 9AM - 12:30PM or 11:45AM - 3:15PM
 - Minimum hours within June, July, and August (approximately one shift per week)
 - *First and second year teens - 35 hours (equivalent to 10 shifts)
 - *Third and fourth year teens - 28 hours (equivalent to 8 shifts)
 - *Fifth year teens - 21 hours (equivalent to 6 shifts)
- For ZooTeens who would like to help with summer camps, an additional training will be required after acceptance to the program.

How do I apply?

- Fill out the online portion of the application prior to **5:00PM on Friday, February 13, 2026**.
 - The ZooTeen online application must be completed in one session. Please allow at least one hour to complete the process. Only one entry per applicant will be accepted.

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 late February/early March. 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 Thursday, March 12 regarding acceptance into the ZooTeen program.

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Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

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 35 hour minimum.
- 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. [E-mail us for details.](#)
- Wear the Zoo Boise ZooTeen uniform: Khaki/grey/black/blue pants or shorts (no rips or holes, 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, ecology
 - Wildlife conservation
- Program supplies & materials:
 - One Zoo Boise uniform shirt
 - End-of-summer party
 - Orientation and training
- Opportunities for FUN!



Orientation

New ZooTeens

- Completion of online training materials is mandatory.
- One ZooTeen Practice Day is mandatory.
- Teens unable to complete online orientation and attend one practice day will not be able to participate in the ZooTeen program. See program calendar for dates and times.

Returning ZooTeens

- Online and/or in person training will be required for all returning ZooTeens. The type of orientation required will vary based on years of experience in the program. Teens unable to attend an orientation will not be able to participate in the ZooTeen program. See program calendar for dates and times.

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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.

Teen Testimonials

“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.”

“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.”

“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!”

“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!”

“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.”

