

Frequently Asked Questions

I need 20 hrs of community service, will this apply?

No. In an effort to only accept teens whose motivations reflect the VolunTEEN mission, Volunteer hours will not be applicable towards school credit or community service hours until the TEEN's second summer. However, opportunities outside required VolunTEEN hours will occasionally arise to help fulfill those needs.

Can I work more than the required hours?

In the summer each group has different responsibilities, so the requirements differ. For the Trailblazers, one day a week is required.

For returning TEENS, 1 day a week and/or 2 full weeks per summer is required. If you would like to work more than the required time you may work up to 2 days per week or 5 full weeks for Junior Counselors. We realize that you are busy and that this may not be the only commitment that you have. In an attempt to avoid conflicts with summer jobs, vacations, school events, extracurricular activities etc., we have chosen this limit. Plus, this allows us to accommodate more VolunTEENS.

Outside of the summer you may help at the zoo on weekends as much as you would like. 6 hours/month is the minimum.

My family takes long vacations, how will that affect my volunteer schedule?

We understand that vacations are a big deal, particularly in the summer. VolunTEENS are allowed 2 absences a summer, with a 2 week advance notice. TEENS should arrange to make up missed days by the end of the summer.

I will be an 8th grader in September; can I apply this January as a 7th grader?

All youths, at the time of application, MUST be in the 8th grade. The bulk of the VolunTEENS' hours start in the summer at which time you would have graduated from the 8th grade and be considered a freshman.

I am a senior, can I apply for the program?

Unfortunately, no. The VolunTEEN year is based on the calendar year NOT the school year. As a senior, you would be preparing to go to College at the time your VolunTEEN hours would be starting. However, if you applied as an 11th grader, you may remain in the program through the summer of your senior year.

I am interested in working with animals. Will there be opportunities to do so?

The emphasis of the VolunTEEN program is education and conservation. As you progress through the program there may be opportunities that arise where working directly with animals may be an option. However, you must first earn this privilege.

Do I need to apply every year?

Once accepted into the program, you do not have to reapply. However, yearly evaluations will determine if you are invited to remain in the program. We reserve the right to release VolunTEENs from the program, if we feel it is not a good fit for the individual or the Zoo.

I am homeschooled and do not have a teacher/counselor that is not related to me. How do I handle the teacher/counselor recommendation form in the application packet?

For homeschoolers, please have an additional community leader or unrelated adult authority figure fill out the teacher/counselor form. Be sure to cross out “teacher/counselor” and write “homeschooled” next to it, so that we understand the change. Please remember that recommendation forms from relatives will not be accepted.

For more information or questions, please email us at teenvolunteer@fotzkc.org.