

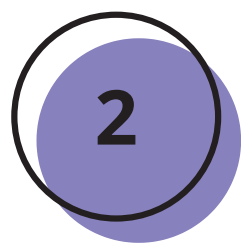
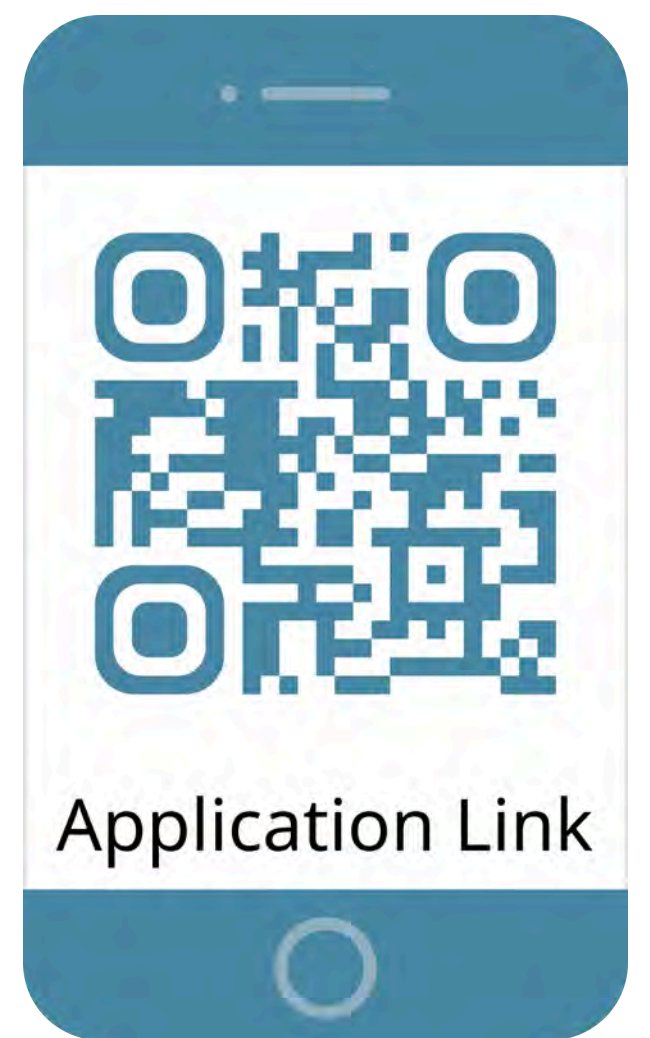
YMCA CAMP ERNST

Teen Program Application Process



COMPLETE AN ONLINE APPLICATION

- Create a new account using your own email address (We do not recommend using a school email address because our emails often get blocked).
- Select the Teen Program Application (please note: applications must be completed by the Teen Program candidate only- not the parent).



CHECK YOUR EMAIL FOR NEXT STEPS

All applicants will receive an email within two weeks of submitting your application. If you are selected to continue with the interview process, you can expect to complete the following:

SUBMIT A WRITTEN RESPONSE FORM

The next steps email will include a written response form that you will upload to your Camp Brain account prior to your virtual interview.

SUBMIT REFERENCES



You will receive a separate email from Checkster asking for the names and email addresses of your references. Please complete the reference submissions within two weeks of receiving the email:

- You need to provide at least five references (two relatives and three non-relatives), but you are welcome to add more.
- Checkster will contact your references via email, and they will complete the form electronically. Kindly notify your references to anticipate an email from Checkster.



ATTEND YOUR VIRTUAL INTERVIEW

The email with next steps will also include the date, time, and link for your virtual interview. Interviews are group style over zoom and consist of breakout rooms with interview questions, a teamwork session, and scenario-based questions.



AWAIT A RESPONSE

All applicants will receive an email with a decision according to the following timeline:

- Applicants who apply and interview by November 30th for early action can expect a response by December 15, 2025.
- Applicants who apply and interview by January 15th for Priority can expect a response by February 1, 2026.
- Applicants who apply during the Rolling Application period can expect a response two weeks after their completed interview.

ABOUT OUR TEEN PROGRAM

Each summer, YMCA Camp Ernst hires almost 200 teen program participants who help support our overnight camp programs by keeping campers safe and healthy, serving as positive role models, helping campers learn and grow, cultivating friendships and belonging, and creating a culture of fun.

E-teamers, typically those going into their Junior Year of High School next year, are responsible for running the camp activities under the supervision of their Unit Leader. Each session is comprised of approximately 40 E-teamers who all live in a cabin together called the Casa. The E-team is led by a group of college-age or older leaders who train, supervise, and assist E-teamers during their session.

Junior Counselors, typically those going into their Senior Year of High School next year, live in and assist a camper cabin under the supervision of their Cabin Counselors, Unit Directors, and JC Unit Leader. Junior Counselors will complete training and have hands-on experience to help them learn the necessary skills to be a cabin counselor.

Teen Internships are available for candidates entering their Junior or Senior year of High School next year. Teen Interns get extra leadership experience in Aquatics, Media, or Office.

TEEN PROGRAM POSITIONS



E-TEAM: GENERAL ACTIVITIES TEAM

Be at the center of camp fun! Help lead archery, slingshots, sports, fishing, arts & crafts, nature adventures, and more. Every day brings something new — you'll get to share your energy and creativity while making activities safe and exciting for campers.



E-TEAM: LIFEGUARD TEAM

Spend your summer by the water! Rotate between the pool, lake, and creeks while keeping campers safe and having fun. You'll also help with swimming and waterfront activities, so every splash counts. (Lifeguard certification required prior to start date).



E-TEAM: RANCH TEAM

Saddle up for a summer at the barn! Assist with trail rides, arena lessons, and horse care while teaching campers the ropes of ranch life. From feeding and grooming to joining trail rides, you'll help campers connect with horses in a safe and fun way.



E-TEAM: ROPES TEAM

Take adventure to new heights! Help run our high ropes course and low ropes challenges while cheering campers on as they climb, swing, and soar. You'll be part of the team that makes the camp's most thrilling activities both safe and unforgettable.



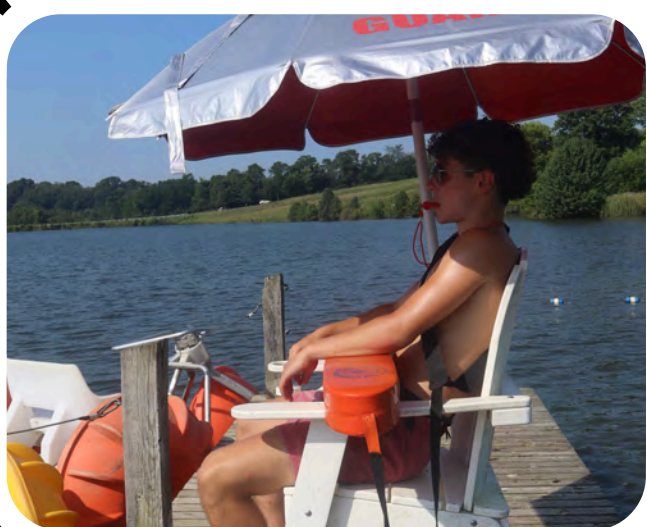
JUNIOR COUNSELOR

Jump into cabin life and help make camp magic happen! Live with a cabin, assist your counselors, lead games, support campers, and grow your skills as a future counselor. You'll get real hands-on training and be part of the action all session.



RANCH JUNIOR COUNSELOR

Love horses? Combine barn life with cabin life! Live in the cabin, support your counselors, and spend a good chunk of your days learning the ins and outs of ranch care—trail rides, lessons, horse handling, and all the fun barn stuff.



TEEN AQUATICS INTERN

Dive in behind the scenes! Help oversee pool operations, support swim in-services, assist with safety and programming at the waterfront, and get a front-row view of how camp water fun happens.



TEEN MEDIA INTERN

Be our story-sharer! Snap daily camp photos, upload them, and help run our social media. You'll help share the camp's magic visually and keep everyone connected to the magic of camp.



TEEN OFFICE INTERN

Be behind the scenes in our command center! Assist with organizing camper paperwork, sorting mail, answering phones, supporting programs, and keeping things running smoothly.



TEEN PROGRAM VOLUNTEER

Schedule make it complicated to do a full session? Join our team as a teen program volunteer. Assist with our day camp programs from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM on select days, Monday through Friday.



INTERNATIONAL TEEN PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

In accordance with Visa regulations, teens ages 16-17 may spend a session as program participants and will be assigned responsibilities within the teen program where they will receive proper training and adequate supervision. A fee is required to participate.

SESSION BREAKDOWN

Priority is given to applicants who are able to commit to the full session schedule.

Teen Program members work a total of three weeks, beginning with a mandatory two-week session, followed by one individual week that does not have to be consecutive. There may be an opportunity to add additional individual weeks depending on availability.

All Teen Program Participants go home Saturday mornings and come back Sunday afternoons of each session they're scheduled for.

MANDATORY SESSION OPTIONS:

- SESSION 1: June 7-20, 2026
- SESSION 2: June 21-July 4, 2026
- SESSION 3: July 5-18, 2026
- SESSION 4: July 19-August 1, 2026

ADDITIONAL WEEK ADD ONS:

- Week 3: June 21-27, 2026
- Week 4: June 28-July 4, 2026
- Week 5: July 5-11, 2026
- Week 6: July 12-18, 2026
- Week 7: July 19-25, 2026
- Week 8: July 26-August 1, 2026
- Week 9: August 2-8, 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

*Teen Program Participants need to be able to commit to working from 12 PM Sunday to 10:30 AM Saturday each week they are scheduled to work. Please do not plan for early departures for vacations, sports, etc.

STIPEND OPPORTUNITY

Our Teen program participants who are 16 or older during their time at camp receive a stipend for their participation. Due to state labor restrictions for minors, those who are 15 can earn service hours and participate as a teen program volunteer.

STIPEND RATES:

- E-team- General Activities Team, Ranch Team, Ropes Team: \$180/week
- E-team- Lifeguard Team: \$250/week
- Junior Counselor and Ranch Junior Counselor: \$250/week
- Teen Interns: \$180-\$250/week



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

APPLICATION PROCESS

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE TEEN PROGRAM?

Rising juniors and seniors in high school can apply. Previous camp experience is not necessary.

WHO SHOULD COMPLETE THE APPLICATION?

It is vital that candidates fill out their own application. Each applicant should register with their own email address, separate from their parents'. While some communication with parents may occur, we want the teen program candidate to take ownership of the process, which includes submitting the application, preparing for the interview, emailing inquiries, and meeting deadlines.

CAN I APPLY FOR MORE THAN ONE SESSION?

Teen Program members have the opportunity to participate in multiple sessions. Applicants can indicate all the dates they are interested in on their application.

HOW CAN I INCREASE MY CHANCES OF GETTING HIRED?

We encourage all applicants to list ****all**** availability and ****all**** positions they are interested in. Given the high number of applicants for each role, having multiple options may increase your chances of securing a position. Although there is no specific deadline, we recommend applying early, as some sessions tend to fill up faster than others. Applicants who complete the steps in a timely manner, respond to emails, and demonstrate commitment along with the necessary skills for the role will also enhance their chances of joining the team.

WHEN ARE APPLICATIONS DUE?

While there isn't a fixed deadline for applications, candidates can refer to the following dates:

- Early Action Decision: Apply and interview by November 30, 2025
- Priority Decision: Apply and interview by January 15, 2026
- Rolling applications accepted based on availability after January 16, 2026

DO ALL APPLICANTS COMPLETE AN INTERVIEW?

While we aim to offer as many candidates as possible the chance to work with us, it is essential that we hire individuals who understand our mission and the commitment needed for this role. Not every applicant will be granted an interview slot.

A small percentage of returning E-team members from the previous summer may also be invited to advance in the hiring process without a virtual interview, based on their exemplary job performance and recommendations from leadership staff.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED IF I'VE BEEN OFFERED A SPOT?

All employment offers will be sent via email directly to the candidate using the same email they applied with by the following timeline:

- Applicants who apply for early action can expect a response by December 15, 2025.
- Applicants who apply for Priority can expect a response by February 1, 2026.
- Applicants who apply during the Rolling Application period can expect a response two weeks after their completed interview.

It is the candidates responsibility to make sure all steps in the application process are completed on time.

Missing items, such as references or written response form will delay decisions.

TRAINING

WHAT TYPE OF TRAINING IS REQUIRED BEFORE MY SESSION?

All members of the Teen Program are required to complete a series of virtual trainings in the spring. These trainings cover essential topics such as New Employee Orientation, Child Abuse Prevention, Personnel Policies and Emergency Procedures.

Additionally, an in-person training session will be scheduled in late spring for each camp role. This session aims to ensure that every member has a clear understanding of their responsibilities, provides hands-on training for the activities they will lead, and allows for any questions to be addressed before the session begins. Please note that failing to complete these trainings by the deadline may result in the loss of weeks.

ARE THERE SPECIFIC TRAININGS REQUIRED FOR MY ROLE?

Most positions will complete all the trainings outlined in the "What Type of Training Is Required Before My Session?" section.

For those assigned to the Lifeguard Team, it is mandatory to obtain certification before the session starts. Candidates are responsible for enrolling in their own lifeguard course. The Cincinnati YMCA offers lifeguard courses at no cost for Camp Ernst employees. Alternatively, certification from the American Red Cross or StarGuard is also accepted.

WHILE YOU ARE AT CAMP

WHEN DO I NEED TO ARRIVE TO CAMP? WHEN ARE WE FINISHED?

Teen Program participants should plan to arrive around 12pm on the Sunday of their first session. Staff are permitted to leave after camper check out is complete and a closing meeting, typically around 10:00-10:30am on Saturdays. All teen program participants must go home on the Saturday in between all sessions.

CAN I DRIVE MY CAR TO CAMP?

Yes. All cars must be parked in the staff parking lot located next to the dodgeball court. You will not be able to access your car until Saturday.

WHERE DO WE SLEEP?

E-team members will stay in the Casa, situated near the soccer field in the valley behind Wallace Lodge with the E-team leaders. Junior Counselors will be assigned to sleep in a camper cabin, where they will assist in supervision and program implementation during the each week.

WHAT DO I NEED TO PACK FOR CAMP?

Staff should pack comfortable, casual clothes for active days, including shorts, t-shirts, long pants, and a long-sleeve shirt for cooler evenings. Bring pajamas, undergarments, sturdy closed-toe shoes, and sandals or flip-flops for showers or pool. Pack basic toiletries, sunscreen, insect repellent, a reusable water bottle, and any personal medications. Bring bedding (pillow, sheets, blanket, or sleeping bag) and towels. A full packing list of suggested items will be sent out in Spring.

WHAT DOES A DAY LOOK LIKE AT CAMP?

E-Team members start their day by eating breakfast together before heading out to their assigned activity areas, where they help lead activities for rotating cabin groups throughout the morning. After lunch in their designated dining hall, they return to activities in the afternoon, taking on more responsibility for program leadership under staff supervision. In the evenings, E-Teamers enjoy a balance of work and fun: they have a short break and then join in all-camp activities, participate in special E-Team nights, or spend time with their assigned cabin to learn firsthand what it's like to be a counselor.

Junior Counselors live and work directly with a cabin group, supporting their cabin counselor in guiding campers through the daily schedule. They eat meals alongside their campers, help supervise cabin groups as they rotate through activities, and play a key role in building cabin community. Junior Counselors also help explain rules, maintain safety, lead games, and facilitate activities, giving them meaningful hands-on experience in leadership while forming close connections with their campers.

Ranch Junior Counselors split their time between the barn and cabin life, giving them a unique camp experience. During the day, they work alongside the ranch staff, assisting with riding lessons, helping lead trail rides, and pitching in with daily barn chores to keep things running smoothly. This hands-on work allows them to gain valuable skills in animal care and instruction while supporting campers in their riding experiences. In the evenings, Ranch JCs transition to cabin life, joining their assigned cabin group for meals, evening programs, and nightly routines. Just like traditional Junior Counselors, they help guide campers, encourage participation, maintain safety, and build connections within their cabin community.

Teen Interns spend their days gaining behind-the-scenes experience in their assigned internship area, which might include aquatics, media, office, or another specialized program. They assist staff with daily tasks, projects, and responsibilities that keep camp running smoothly while developing leadership and job skills in their focus area. In the evenings, Teen Interns branch out into camper life by either joining the E-Team for group activities or spending time with an assigned cabin, allowing them to experience both the operational and community-building sides of camp.

WHAT EXPECTATIONS DO YOU HAVE OF TEEN PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS?

Teens in our leadership programs make the important transition from being campers—where the focus was on their own experience—to stepping into the role of staff, where their priority is creating that experience for others. We encourage our teen staff to embrace a servant leadership mindset, finding joy in helping others and looking for ways to support campers and fellow staff throughout the day. By putting campers first and approaching each task with care and dedication, teens not only make a positive impact on the camp community but also develop valuable skills, form lifelong friendships, and discover the personal rewards of serving others.

HOW AM I ASSIGNED MY JOB FOR THE WEEK?

A schedule will be shared that details your assignments, specifying when and where you need to be throughout the week.

AM I ALLOWED TO LEAVE CAMP DURING THE WEEK OR ON OFF TIME?

No, participants in the Teen Program must stay on camp property during the week. Please arrange all appointments outside of your assigned sessions.

AM I ALLOWED TO HAVE A CELL PHONE?

Yes, you can carry a cell phone. However, it should only be used during scheduled free time or for program-related activities. It's a good idea to bring a watch to help you monitor the time.

WHO DO I TALK TO IF I NEED HELP?

The E-team leaders are a fantastic resource for all E-team members. At least six college-aged leaders will be available to assist with any questions or concerns.

Junior Counselors can seek support from their Cabin Counselors, Unit Leadership Staff, and the Junior Counselor Coordinator. They are there to help with inquiries, assist in camper situations, and guide you in becoming the best counselor possible.

It's essential to ask questions or seek help early on. We encourage all staff to connect with the leadership team to ensure a positive camp experience. Megan, Eli, and the rest of the program and senior administrative staff are also here to support you.

WHAT DO I DO IF I CAN NO LONGER WORK THE SESSION THAT I WAS ASSIGNED?

If your schedule changes and you need to switch sessions, please reach out to the camp as soon as possible. We will do our best to accommodate you in a different session, depending on availability.

If you are unable to fulfill your assigned session or week, please inform the camp promptly. Remember, this is a job, and your presence during your scheduled time is essential. We expect you to take responsibility for your role, so please communicate directly in writing rather than through your parents.