



# Partners in Fieldwork 2026-2027 Program Application

Program application for high school  
(grades 8-12) science teachers in the  
city of Chicago



**LINCOLN PARK ZOO®**  
**Partners in  
Fieldwork**

# Partners in Fieldwork

## 2026–2027 Program Application

### Program Overview

Throughout the course of the program, students will:

- Conduct authentic science projects aligned with zoo research through data collection experiences, data analysis, and dissemination.
- Connect with nature and urban wildlife in their communities and at Lincoln Park Zoo.
- Gain awareness about the diversity of Chicago wildlife.
- Be encouraged to explore nature in their communities.
- Build empathy for urban wildlife.

Throughout the course of the program, teachers will:

- Gain experience using inquiry in their science classroom.
- Incorporate information about conservation and human impacts on the environment into their curriculum.
- Increase their own understanding and confidence when applying the scientific process.

This **free** program incorporates an educational model that includes observation, data collection and analysis, and research dissemination on school grounds as well as at the zoo. The program will culminate in a special event held at Lincoln Park Zoo in spring of 2027, during which some students will present their final research projects.

Due to high demand and limited availability of spots, we want to make sure that teachers who are chosen to participate will be able to fulfill all requirements of the full program. **Teachers must teach a high school-level science course in the greater Chicago area, with preference given to teachers within Chicago Public Schools and its affiliates.** (Please note: The participating teacher should be the primary science teacher in ALL participating classes.) The program begins with a required Teacher Workshop on August 22. Student involvement with the program will begin at the start of the school year. Please review the program with your school administrator and return this application by **5 p.m. on June 10**.

Partners in Fieldwork is primarily offered in English. Written materials prepared by the start of the school year will be available in English and Spanish. The facilitator speaks both English and Spanish and can conduct bilingual lessons if needed. If new materials are

produced by zoo staff during the school year, the zoo cannot guarantee they will be available in any language other than English. If you have students who speak languages other than English or Spanish, it will be the responsibility of the school to provide translation.

Partners in Fieldwork program content is written as a comprehensive general high school curricular extension. It will be the responsibility of the school to provide differentiation for students who need modifications. We cannot provide customized supports for individual schools.

### Program Components

#### Two Professional Development Workshops

**Time Commitment:** Two full days

**Projected Time Frame:** Saturday, August 22, and Saturday, January 9, 2027

During these interactive workshops, the teacher will receive an overview of the program and its components, information about student research expectations, materials to carry out program components, time to collaborate with fellow participants, and a chance to learn more about the animals and research at the zoo.

**Attendance at both workshops is required.** The zoo will also provide continuing professional development units, parking, a light breakfast, and lunch for the scheduled workshops.

A stipend of \$300 will be paid at the end of the school year to teachers who have completed all components of the program, including attending both workshops, participating in all four classroom visits, completing at least one field trip, engaging in the PIF Teen Conservation Expo, and submitting the final teacher survey.

#### Classroom Visits From a Zoo Facilitator

**Time Commitment:** Four science periods over the course of the school year for each participating class

**Projected Time Frame:** Spaced throughout the school year from September–April

Each classroom visit will entail a zoo facilitator visiting the participating school, free of charge, to work directly with the teacher and students. All supplies for the visits will be brought by the zoo facilitator. Teachers are asked to arrange their class periods into a single day for each

# Partners in Fieldwork

## 2026–2027 Program Application

classroom visit when possible. Zoo staff will make accommodations if necessary.

The classroom visits will focus primarily on building inquiry-based research skills (e.g., observation, data collection/analysis, and dissemination) and learning more about conservation issues and solutions. Students will have the chance to connect what they have learned in class with their own wildlife observations from the schoolyard and surrounding neighborhood. Each classroom visit is an opportunity for the zoo facilitator to provide background information on research techniques, model how to conduct research, provide support to the classroom teacher, and engage in dialogue on how to support student success throughout the program.

Teachers will coordinate with the zoo facilitator to determine days for their classroom visits that best fit their schedule. Teachers are expected to be present in the class during visits from the zoo facilitator. One week's notice will be required for any schedule changes or cancellations.

### Two Field Trips

**Time Commitment:** Two one-day field trips for each participating class; teachers may need to attend on multiple days to accommodate multiple class sections

**Projected Time Frame:** One trip in the fall and one optional trip in the spring

All participating high school students will visit the zoo once (required) and a local natural area once (optional) to conduct research. Each visit will give students an opportunity to conduct biodiversity surveys utilizing various research methods.

Participating schools will receive buses for each field trip and additional funds to cover an external substitute for the participating teacher.

Teachers will select specific days for their field trips that work with their schedule. If a teacher has more than three classes, they will need to schedule multiple days for their field trip to accommodate all of their students, and the participating teacher must attend all days of the field trip.

One week's notice will be required for any schedule changes or cancellations. Due to the limited dates available for field trips, there may not be time to reschedule trips that are cancelled after the deadline. Therefore, if a teacher needs to reschedule after the deadline, the visit may be subject to cancellation.

### Ongoing Student Learning, Research, and Conservation on School Grounds

**Time Commitment:** At least two to four hours of class time per month per class

**Projected Time Frame:** September–May, ongoing

Teachers will use Lincoln Park Zoo resources and curriculum to engage students in learning about and conducting authentic science research. Students will conduct ongoing research and analysis at school using these tools. Two to four hours of class time per month are required to focus on research, analysis, and a final project. Individual data collection outside of school hours is encouraged but not required.

Teachers will receive practical support and necessary materials for leading research and analysis during the professional development sessions and through the online portal (Google Drive). Teachers will also receive support in aligning this research with existing science curriculum.

Teachers will guide students in completing an authentic research project. The goal of the project is to focus on urban wildlife in their neighborhood and recognize a conservation issue faced by wildlife. The specific focus of the project will be informed by the classes' ongoing research. All participating students will complete a final project/presentation to present to their peers and classmates.

### Conservation Expo

**Time Commitment:** One evening for participating teacher and selected students

**Projected Time Frame:** May

We will celebrate participating students' success with a culminating event in spring of 2027. Each participating teacher will be able to bring a percentage of their students to present their project(s) at the event (number of projects will be set by zoo staff). The program provides one bus to bring the teacher and students to the zoo. The event will conclude with a catered reception. The zoo will assist with materials needed for students to present.

These Conservation Expos are opportunities for students to share their discoveries with each other and with zoo staff.

## Partners in Fieldwork 2026–2027 Program Application

### How to Apply

If you would like to participate in Partners in Fieldwork with your classes, please complete the program application and return to us no later than **5 p.m. on June 10**. Applications should be emailed to [pif@lpzoo.org](mailto:pif@lpzoo.org). During the selection process, preference is given to those from schools that are part of Chicago Public Schools and CPS affiliates.

If you have any questions, please contact us at [pif@lpzoo.org](mailto:pif@lpzoo.org).

# Partners in Fieldwork 2026-2027 Program Application

## Part I: School Information

School Name \_\_\_\_\_ CPS Network \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

Neighborhood \_\_\_\_\_

School Phone \_\_\_\_\_ School Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Minutes, per day, that each student receives science instruction \_\_\_\_\_

Grade levels to participate (check one or multiple)     8     9     10     11     12

Number of classes to participate \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of participating classes \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about Partners in Fieldwork?     Teacher Workshop or Event     Email     Social Media     Colleague or Administrator

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part II: Teacher Information

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

School Email \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Email \_\_\_\_\_

Illinois Educator Identification Number (IEIN) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell/Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number where you can be reached during the summer \_\_\_\_\_

Are you the primary science teacher of all participating classes?

Yes             No (If you check "No" please explain your teaching situation below)

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# Partners in Fieldwork

## 2026–2027 Program Application

Please explain any unique aspects about your teaching responsibilities or situation (e.g., co-teachers, split grade levels, alternative learning opportunities, inclusion of another teacher’s class, etc.):

Why do you want to participate in the Partners in Fieldwork program? How do you anticipate your students will grow or benefit by participating in PIF?

Please explain how Partners in Fieldwork will fit into your broader curriculum for the year.

How many years have you been teaching science?

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Have you received science endorsements?

Yes       No

Are you highly qualified in science?

Yes       No

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# Partners in Fieldwork 2026-2027 Program Application

## Part III: Commitment to Program

By initialing/signing below, you confirm that you have reviewed the program components and time commitment and agree to participate in the Partners in Fieldwork program for the 2026-2027 school year.

- Two (2) professional development workshops: **Saturday, August 22, and Saturday, January 9, 2027**
- Three to four (3-4) classroom visits from a zoo facilitator
- One or two (1-2) classroom visits facilitated by participating teacher
- Two field trips: one to the zoo (required) and one to a natural area (optional)
- Ongoing learning and research on school grounds
- Participation in the Conservation Expo
- I understand that Partners in Fieldwork is primarily offered in English with written materials in English and Spanish. I understand that if students in my classes speak languages other than English, it is my school's responsibility to make accommodations.
- I understand that Partners in Fieldwork is intended for students learning at the high school level.
- Lincoln Park Zoo may discontinue its partnership with a teacher and/or school if significant changes occur with participating classes, making it difficult to administer the program, or if substantial progress through the program is not being demonstrated. Discontinuing the partnership could include revoking all supplies provided by Lincoln Park Zoo.
- Lincoln Park Zoo is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of discrimination. Accordingly, the zoo will not tolerate any form of harassment, unlawful discrimination, or intimidation against our employees by anyone, including managers, supervisors, co-workers, executives, members, vendors, clients, customers or third parties. Under this policy, harassment is verbal, written, or physical conduct that represents an unwanted sexual advance and/or denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, or any other characteristic protected by law, or that of their relatives, friends, or associates, and that: a) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, b) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, or c) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities. In the event this policy is violated by a participant or participant's school, Lincoln Park Zoo reserves the right to immediately discontinue partnership with the participant or participant's school.

Teacher Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

- YES, as the school administrator, \_\_\_\_\_ has my support to participate in the program. I have reviewed the program components and time commitment and will provide the needed support for my staff and students to participate in all aspects of the program. I understand that as part of this program, I am allowing data collection equipment, including a field camera and bat monitor, to be set up on school grounds.

School Administrator Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

School Administrator Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*In lieu of a signature, you may forward an email to [pif@lpzoo.org](mailto:pif@lpzoo.org) from a school administrator stating their support for implementation of the program.*

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# Partners in Fieldwork

## 2026-2027 Program Application

### Part IV: Submit Materials

Please email completed application forms to [pif@lpzoo.org](mailto:pif@lpzoo.org). You may take a picture and email it as long as we can read everything on the application. You may also type your name into the signature lines to make it easier to save and send as an email attachment.