



In-Person or Virtual Camp?

Tech Trek California and the AAUW branch will determine what camps, locations, and dates (whether in-person, virtual, or both) are available to local students. Teachers will be advised of the options during the nomination process.

Key similarities:

Both in-person and virtual camps offer:

- Hands-on STEM experiences.
- Interactions with women role models.
- Inspiring speakers from STEM fields.
- Group activities with like-minded girls.
- Activities with computers and technology.
- Field trips (off-site or virtual).
- Coaching and counseling by near-peer Tech Trek graduates.
- 1:10 adult to camper ratio.
- The role of Tech Trek Ambassador for five years.
- Life-changing awareness of personal potential and career opportunities.
- **IMPACT!** Surveys of students in both programs indicated significantly stronger interest in taking more STEM classes and a greater awareness of STEM’s impact on their daily lives.

Key differences:

Camp Feature	In-Person	Virtual
Housing	“Sleep away” on a college campus	Home-based
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Volunteer adult directors, lead counselors, and dorm monitors (stipend) ● Minor Tech Trek alumnae peer counselors (no stipend) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Volunteer adult and minor alum Build, Social, and Workshop coaches (stipend)
Schedule	Sunday – Saturday (7 am - 10 pm)	Monday – Friday (9 am – 9 pm)
Camp Size	80-120	Unlimited
Class Size	< 25 (4-6 classes)	< 10 per breakout room
Medical Records	MMR, Covid, other forms	Only ADA
Non-STEM Workshops	Varies by camp	Career workshop, college prep workshop, parent workshop
Alum Staff Eligibility	3 years after camp, or age 16 by camp start	1 year after virtual camp or age 14, otherwise the same as in-person.



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FAQ

● Is getting assigned to an in-person camp ‘better’ than the virtual camp?

1. ‘Better’ is a judgment call that differs based on personal circumstances. Both offer a developmental experience that results in similar longer-term outcomes for the participant, but the virtual camp does offer earlier post-camp volunteer opportunities for alums as camp staff the year after camp, instead of having to wait three years for a role as a peer counselor.
2. Participation as a camper at Tech Trek may look the same on college applications, but being able to show that the applicant volunteered for all four years of high school may add more value, as many institutions are now including volunteer service in their criteria.
 - While an alumna from either can earn service hours while volunteering, only virtual coaches can earn up to \$500 in 40 hours of volunteering at camp each year before age 18.
 - Alums who stay engaged with Tech Trek have higher visibility to camp and state leadership, giving them better access to opportunities and recommendations.
3. In-person camps engage 8-12 peer counselors each year; virtual camps engage 40-60 or more coaches each year, depending on how many campers are signed up.

● Is virtual camp a ‘consolation prize’?

Virtual camp was created using the same curricular and mission-driven objectives as the campus program, with the biggest differences being that

- All campers do the same core class in a combination of engineering and robotics, whereas the in-person camps typically have 4-6 different STEM core classes they may be assigned to.
- Virtual camps have daily professional speakers during lunchtime Inspiration Hour, from astrophysicists to STEM business leaders and entertainers, whose sole purpose is encouragement.
- Virtual field trips can go ANYWHERE: inside a hydrogen fusion reactor, operating room, or the other side of the world, and campers and coaches can participate from wherever they are with internet!
- Students who have health challenges that would normally prevent them from participating can do so through virtual camp.

● Where do virtual campers ‘go’ to attend camp? When does camp start each day?

While in-person campers start their day in campus residence halls between 6 and 7 am, virtual campers start their day FROM HOME at 9 am.

Class runs for both until around noon, then breaks for lunch, with virtual campers rejoining at 12:30 for the daily Inspiration Hour, followed by two afternoon hands-on workshops, then breaking again



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for dinner with family at 5. In-person follows a similar routine after lunch and may also include a field trip to a local STEM attraction or company.

After dinner, both offer workshops designed to help with planning their future, social emotional learning (SEL) activities, and sessions with women professionals from various industries such as healthcare, engineering, education, and others.

Virtual campers attend two or more evening workshops that end between 8:30 and 9 pm, while in-person campers attend everything after dinner, with their 'lights out' at 10, to be repeated each day.

- **Can virtual alums volunteer as counselors at in-person camps? Can in-person alums volunteer at virtual camp?**

In short, yes to both. After three years out of virtual camp, alums may also apply to volunteer as a peer counselor at an in-person camp. In-person alums may apply for a coaching role at virtual camp one year after an in-person camp, noting that preference may be given to virtual alums or in-person alums whose core class involved robotics with Arduinos for the build and social coaches. However, as many of the afternoon and evening workshops are similar to those at in-person camps, these coach roles are usually available for in-person alums.