



The ancestral home of the Shoshone-Bannock people, Boise lies in an area the Farmer’s Almanac calls the Intermountain Region, as it lies between Cascades Mountains to the west and the Rocky Mountains to the east. White people arrived in the early 1800s and the name Boise is derived from a French word for “woods.” In 1863, Boise incorporated as a city and thrived as a booming mining area. Currently, as the State’s capital, and the only major city within 300 miles in any direction, Boise enjoys educational, cultural, medical, and sports amenities far beyond what its population (226,000 in 2017) might otherwise warrant. Boiseans are four-season outdoors people, and JVs enjoy a strong local support network. JVs have served in a variety of roles since 2008.

Unfortunately, Boise’s quality of life is threatened by the same suburban sprawl that has plagued every other large western city. Idaho is in the bottom 5% of the nation in spending for early childhood education, mental health, and social services. Additionally, Idaho ranks 13th lowest in terms of per capita spending as reported by domestic violence shelters and programs. Boise’s agricultural economy in adjacent counties is supported by migrant laborers who live with inadequate wages and fear of Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids that shatter lives and splinter families.

Joys of being a JV in Boise

Known as “The City of Trees”, outdoor recreation is abundant inside and outside city limits. The 25-mile Boise River Greenbelt (which conveniently passes not far from the JV house) provides a scenic path for biking, walking, and running. Boise JVs have enjoyed perusing art and having their works exhibited in Boise’s Freak Alley, an outdoor venue for murals, graffiti, and public art. “It is said to be the largest outdoor gallery in the Northwest, and has been a Boise institution since 2002.” Additionally, “numbering about 16,000, Boise’s Basque community is one of the largest such communities in the United States.” There are many opportunities to engage with Basque culture in the Basque Block. Further, at Boise Bicycle Project, JVs live into the values of simple living and social and ecological justice by learning about bike maintenance and repair.