

Volunteer Opportunities

So What Can You Do At The Zoo?

We have different opportunities to fit everyone's interest, from animal keeping to public speaking. The following are a few of the opportunities available at the Peoria Zoo. All of the jobs require an interest in animals!

Department: Education

Qualifications: Excellent public speaking and listening skills are essential (these can be learned!) This volunteer must be comfortable in front of crowds, be able to present information in a smooth confident manner, and must be able to project his/her voice in a loud, positive manner. Additionally, these volunteers must have the ability to manage groups of adults and/or children.

All of these skills can be worked on and developed through this program. All volunteers will be thoroughly trained in the area(s) assigned before independently volunteering.

Duties: Under general supervision, volunteers will be expected to work both independently and with Educators. Hours are flexible, depending on the assignment. There are many opportunities open in the Education department, such as:

Special Events- Under general supervision, volunteers will help with set up and take down as well as with the actual event (such as Howl-Zoo-Ween, the Easter Egg Hunt, Brunch w/ Santa and Party for the Planet). It helps to have a general knowledge of the zoo.

Requirements: Must be able sit/stand for up to 4 hours, have general manual dexterity and able to communicate and interact effectively with visitors of all ages.

Average shifts last 3-4 hours.

Summer Camps, and Natures Niños classes -Volunteers will assist in supervision of the children during crafts, games and activities.

Requirements: Must be able sit for up to 1 hour, walk/stand for up to 1 hour, have general manual dexterity, able to communicate and interact effectively with campers.

Average shifts last 4-6 hours

Volunteers interested undergo one on one training and may then become:

Interpretation Stations- Opportunity to share knowledge regarding a specific species of animal, engage in discussions about conservation efforts, and answer questions from visitors.

Requirements: Excellent public speaking skills are essential (these can be learned!) Volunteer must be comfortable in front of crowds, be able to present information in a smooth confident manner, and must be able to project their voice in a loud, positive manner.

Critter Chats- Learning how to handle and present selected ambassador animals to use in programs and during talks in the Zoo.

Requirements: Must be able to stand/sit for approximately 1 hour, have general manual dexterity and able to communicate and interact effectively with visitors of all ages.

Average shift lasts approximately 1 hour. **Must complete 5 sessions of interpretation stations before moving on to critter chats.**

Department: Animal

Classification: Assistant Zookeeper

Qualifications: A strong desire to be near animals. “Near animals” does not necessarily mean touching the animals. For the most part there will not be direct contact with the animals. Assistant zookeepers must be mature, responsible people who are willing to “get dirty” during their duties.

Duties: Assistant zookeepers will volunteer under the direction of the Zoo’s professional zookeepers. Volunteers will assist in the cleaning of animal displays, windows, floors and other items as necessary. Volunteers start at level 1 and after 5 positive evaluations from keepers, are able to move up to the next level. Shifts run from 9:30-1:00 normally, but can end earlier.

Requirements: Must be able to stand for up to 1 hour, walk across uneven terrain, lift and carry up to 35 pounds, able to operate hand tools (rake, hose, broom), have general manual dexterity, and able to interact effectively with visitors and staff.
Average shift lasts approximately 3 hours

Assistant zookeepers are under the supervision of a keeper at all times. Dress for the weather. Requests of areas to work in or people to work with will be considered but cannot be guaranteed. If there are concerns of certain animals, we will try to work around those.

Classification: Behavioral Enrichment and Enhancement Program (BEEP)

Qualifications: A desire to volunteer around animals. A creative interest in animal behavior is essential.

Duties: Under the supervision of the Education Department, BEEP volunteers will design and institute enrichment activities for the animal collection. BEEP volunteers may also be responsible for collecting data on enrichment activities (observing the animals after the BEEP item has been placed in the enclosure).

Requirements: Must be able to stand/sit for up to 2 hours, have very good manual dexterity, follow instructions precisely, and able to interact effectively with visitors and staff.
Average shift lasts approximately 2 hours

Department: Maintenance

Classification: Maintenance Assistant

Qualifications: A desire to volunteer around animals. Some experience in maintenance, building repair or gardening desired.

Duties: Under general supervision, Maintenance Assistants will help in cleaning and repairing the zoo facilities. Also includes planting and gardening on Zoo grounds.

Requirements: Must be able to stand for up to 1 hour, walk across uneven terrain, use hand tools (drills, saw etc), and able to interact effectively with visitors and staff.
Average shift lasts approximately 2 hours.

Department: Gift Shop

Classification: Visitor Services

Qualifications: Good customer service skills

Duties: Under general supervision, volunteers will assist in the gift shop. Duties may include stocking shelves, cleaning, and assisting customers. During special events volunteers are needed to help sell tickets and supervise visitors at designated areas around the zoo.

Requirements: Must be able to stand for approximately 1 hour, have general manual dexterity and able to communicate and interact effectively with visitors of all ages.

Average shift lasts approximately 2 hours

Department: Peoria Zoological Society

Classification: PZS

Qualifications: Good customer service skills and basic clerical skills.

Duties: Under general supervision, volunteers will work with PZS to help with mailings, filing and special events (such as Zootini & Uproarious).

Requirements: Must be able to sit/stand for approximately 2 hours, have general manual dexterity and able to communicate and interact effectively with visitors of all ages.

Average shift lasts approximately 2 hours

Department: Registrar

Qualifications: Basic clerical skills

Duties: Under the supervision of the Assistant Director/Curator of Collections, volunteers will help with clerical work such as computer entry and filing.

Requirements: Must be able to sit/stand for approximately 1 hour, have general manual dexterity, basic computer skills and able to communicate and interact effectively with visitors of all ages.

Average shift lasts approximately 2 hours