

**POSITION AVAILABLE****DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION EDUCATION AND LEARNING ENGAGEMENT****Basic Purpose and Responsibility**

The Director of Conservation Education and Learning Engagement at the Buffalo Zoo is responsible for overseeing and developing comprehensive educational programs that promote environmental awareness and conservation practices, leading and managing staff, coordinating onsite/outreach initiatives, and engaging varied audiences to inspire action towards protecting wildlife and natural ecosystems. The ideal candidate will possess the skills and experience to lead a creative education department into the future - emphasizing the development and implementation of innovative conservation education programming, interactive exhibit elements, and engaging experiences in order to achieve the Buffalo Zoo's mission. We seek someone who understands that they are not just leading a department, but are engaged in how education shows up in every aspect of the Zoo. The right person has excellent team leadership and communication skills as well as extensive knowledge of multiple learning systems. This individual will work closely with Zoo leadership on continuing to develop and implement a bright future for the Buffalo Zoo. This position reports directly to the President & CEO and is a member of the Buffalo Zoo's leadership team of department directors.

**How to Apply**

To apply, please send Resume and Cover Letter in **Word document or PDF using subject line: Director of Conservation Education** by email no later than March 28, 2025 to: [buffalozoojobs@buffalozoo.org](mailto:buffalozoojobs@buffalozoo.org)

No telephone calls please. Position open until filled.

For more information about the Buffalo Zoo, please visit our website by using the following link:  
<http://www.buffalozoo.org>

**Compensation and Benefits**

This is a full-time, exempt position. Annual salary range is: **\$65,000-73,000** (commensurate with experience).

Full-Time benefits available include health plan, HSA/HRA, FSA, life insurance, long term disability, dental, vision, 403B retirement plan, annual leave time, holiday time, and sick time. Benefits are available after the successful completion and passing of an introductory probation period review at 60 days of work (sick time available upon hire).

**The Buffalo Zoo**

As one of the crown jewels of Western New York's cultural and recreational attractions, the Buffalo Zoo welcomes 400,000+ guests on an annual basis. The Zoo sits on 23.5 acres and is home to over 750+ animals, supports many conservation programs, and is a highly regarded educational facility. Being the third oldest zoo in the country, the Buffalo Zoo is proud to have several buildings of historic significance on its campus. The Zoo is operated by the Zoological Society of Buffalo, Inc., under a lease agreement with the City of Buffalo. Since 2000, more than \$50 million worth of capital improvements to habitats and infrastructure have been completed, with an additional \$14+ million worth of projects currently under construction. Our mission of **Building Community → Creating Connections → Saving Wildlife** is guiding our masterplan that was recently developed. This masterplan will guide the growth and development of the Zoo for the next twenty years.

**Essential Functions**

*The Buffalo Zoo reserves the right to revise or change job duties and responsibilities as the need arises.*

**Leadership and Management:** Recruits, trains, mentors, and manages a team of educators, program coordinators/specialists, animal ambassador care specialists, and volunteers including but not limited to full-time, part-

time and seasonal staff, docent interpreters/docent program, and interns. Oversight of these positions includes providing guidance, performance feedback, hiring and training, and scheduling.

**Conservation Education Program Management:** Oversees the day-to-day operations and long-term strategies for the education department (onsite and outreach), including staff scheduling, budget development and management, program/activities development and evaluation, and quality control. Oversees the supervision of Education Department resources such as the Living Tree House space, Children’s Resource Center, education offices, and biofacts/artifacts room. Oversees offices, classrooms, work areas, and ensure that all resources are maintained in a safe, clean, and organized manner. Works with team to produce revenue generating mission fit programming, grant funded programming, and value-added programs such as tours, animal conservation focus day programs, docent quest programs, etc.

**Animal Management:** Oversees the care, training, enrichment, handling, and welfare of the Education Department’s ambassador animal collection including the acquisition and disposition of animals; leads and/or oversees ambassador animal care personnel allocation and work activities, and the resolution of animal health issues, enclosure/exhibit cleaning and maintenance, safety and other operations. This includes two educational farm areas, and multiple ambassador animal holding and display spaces. May be asked to oversee development of internal ambassador animal and externally contracted onsite animal shows. Oversees all animal outreach programs with ambassador animals.

**Community Outreach:** Develops targeted substantive partnerships on behalf of the Zoo utilizing a collaborative approach when appropriate. These may include partnerships with schools, community organizations, and local businesses to expand the reach of conservation education and learning engagement initiatives. This position is expected to have visibility and presence in Buffalo and Western New York and will work with various organizations in the community.

**Zoo Staff Outreach:** Coordinates conservation education and learning engagement for staff through various department initiatives including but not limited to creating a conservation message-based orientation session for new staff, coordinating lunch and learn opportunities, and teaching interpretation concepts to keepers and other communication/interpretive strategies. Will work with the Animal Care Department to ensure quality keeper talk programming and in-house production of animal demonstrations.

**Curriculum Development:** Designs and implements engaging educational programs for various age groups, including school field trips, public workshops, teacher trainings, and community events, aligning them with Zoo mission/vision, conservation goals, and current environmental issues.

**Public Speaking and Presentations:** Will deliver and coordinate day-to-day presentations and workshops to varied audiences on environmental topics, including but not limited to conservation science, wildlife ecology, and sustainable practices. In coordination with the Advancement Team, may help coordinate a conservation speaker series on behalf of the Zoo.

**Marketing and Communications:** In conjunction with the Marketing and Communications team - develop marketing materials and promote educational programs through various channels like website, social media, and publications.

**Grant Writing and Fundraising:** Collaborates with other teams and departments to secure the appropriate visibility, funding, and implementation of initiatives. Specifically, in conjunction with the Advancement/Development team, will identify funding opportunities and write grant proposals to support conservation education programs and activities.

**Data Analysis and Reporting:** Track program effectiveness through data collection and evaluation, utilizing agreed upon metrics to measure impact and inform future programming.

**Interpretive Signage/ Interactive Exhibit Program:** As part of a cross-department team, leads and coordinates interpretive signage through the Zoo including research, copywriting, production and installation. Develops interpretive/interactive components for new exhibitry and oversees revisions/repairs to existing exhibit interpretive components.

**Other**

- Schedules, attends, and participates in regularly scheduled department and all-staff meetings.
- Participates in interdepartmental committees/meetings and with select professional organizations such as AZA.
- Performs general office duties as necessary.
- Maintains brand standards in all official appearances and educational presentations.
- Able to always deal courteously and effectively with the public and to represent the organization at the highest standard of professionalism.
- Able to collaborate, establish, and maintain effective and professional working relations with local partners including school districts, co-workers, and other department personnel.
- Able to lead, manage, and follow Buffalo Zoo policies and procedures in accordance with the Employee handbook, safety manual, and other important documents.
- Contributes to local conservation through reduction of waste, water and energy use, and inspires guests and team members to take conservation actions.
- Ability to effectively promote the organization.
- A strong and effective communicator and supportive team player.
- Possess a can-do attitude, be resourceful, and communicate respectfully with everyone.
- Interact with courtesy, professionalism, and respect to staff, volunteers, and guests consistent with the organization's mission and core values.
- Verbal and written ability to communicate with Zoo staff, Board members, Government officials, and other stakeholders. Able to interact positively with a variety of individuals from varied socioeconomical backgrounds frequently.
- Performs other duties as assigned by the President/CEO.

**Education/Experience**

To perform at a proficient level and be fully qualified, a person is expected to have:

*Education (Minimum Desired):*

- Four-year degree in education, one of the natural sciences, environmental science, biology, zoology, or a closely related field.

*Experience (Minimum Desired):*

- Proven leadership/supervisory experience and team management abilities (5+ years).
- Deep understanding and passion for environmental education, science, biology, zoology, and/or conservation principles.
- Experience in curriculum development and instructional design.
- Excellent communication (written and verbal) and public speaking skills.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively with a variety of stakeholders.
- Experience building solid relationships and partnering with community-based institutions and other organizations serving children, adults, and families in various settings.
- Experience in formal or informal education settings, developing and implementing programs for everyone - toddlers through adults.
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team, a supervisor, and a mentor.

*Specialized Knowledge Needed for Performance of Job:*

- A broad-based knowledge of AZA education initiatives and their direct application in an informal learning environment.

**Knowledge / Skills / Other Competencies**

- Experience using computers, audiovisual, related sound equipment, and distance learning is desired.
- Knowledge about and implementation of digital media signage, interactive interpretation and similar is desired.

- Will be required to work a flexible schedule including evenings, weekends, and holidays as needed.
- Must be able to respond to departmental emergencies as needed.
- Position is a member of the emergency weather team and is expected to report to work when the Zoo is closed due to weather.
- This position is a full-time, in-office position. Occasional remote work may be requested or assigned limitedly.
- Must possess or be able to obtain within 30-days of employment a valid New York State driver's license and have an average or better driving record based on the evaluation process of our insurance company. Retention of position is contingent upon maintaining required license. Must upgrade to classification appropriate to requirements (non-CDLC or CDL class).
- Must support Buffalo Zoo's Vision, Mission and Core Values.
- Successful completion of a post-offer pre-employment general medical screen and drug test.
- Successful completion of a post-offer pre-employment background check.
- Must understand the requirements, essential functions and duties of the position as per the job description and certify such by signing the job description prior to first day of work.
- Must be able to operate a computer, two-way radio, telephone system, and software on computer, printer, etc. after training.
- Must be willing to comply with department's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) policies and procedures.
- Must provide proof of negative TB test at hire (test within the last 12 months). TB test conducted annually by the Zoo and participation in the TB screening program is required.
- Regular attendance and punctuality are essential functions of the position.

### Physical Demands

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the following have been identified as physical requirements of the job:

- While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to stand; walk; use hands; reach with hands and arms; stoop, kneel, crouch, and/or crawl.
- Use computer hardware and software for extended periods of time (repetitive motion).
- Sitting for long periods of time.
- Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, peripheral vision, depth perception and ability to adjust focus.
- The employee is required to work on a desktop computer and office equipment.
- While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to write, type, talk, and/or listen.
- Ability to walk and/or stand for periods of time.
- Ability to lift and move up to 25 pounds.
- A large percentage of the job functions are performed in an office atmosphere.
- Employee may be exposed to a variety of weather conditions or temperatures. Work may be required both indoors and outdoors in various weather and temperature conditions, ranging from rain, wind, snow, cool to cold weather, and extreme heat and humidity. The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate.
- Is exposed to the environment around animal exhibits and animal holding areas. Will be working around animal excrement, smells, and other debris. Ability to follow animal safety protocol, and treat the animals with care, respect, and dignity.

*The Buffalo Zoo is an at Will employer and all Buffalo Zoo employees are subject to employment eligibility and background security checks as well as testing for illegal substance use as allowed by law.*

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**