



DENVER ZOOLOGICAL FOUNDATION KEY VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS ADULT YEAR ROUND VOLUNTEERS



1. Age

Participants in the year-round volunteer programs must be at least 18 years old.

2. Time Commitment

- a. Volunteers must work a minimum of 50 hours per calendar year.
- b. Volunteers must attend a minimum of four general meetings per year. Participants are strongly encouraged to attend all 9 general meetings (monthly except January, April, and July).
- c. Individuals who do not meet the minimum time requirements or do not attend a minimum of five general meetings in a calendar year will be removed from the program.
- d. Volunteers sign up to fill work assignments in most cases. Once committed to **any** activity, volunteers are required to locate their own substitutes should they be unable to fulfill the commitment. A volunteer roster (phone #s, skills) is provided to all volunteers to aid in locating substitutes.
- e. Volunteers receive a schedule based on their availability, interests and zoo needs for certain activities such as Zoo Presenters. They must notify the zoo staff if unable to meet an assigned shift.

3. Work Environment

- a. Most volunteer tasks require extensive public interaction. Volunteers must be comfortable speaking with small and large groups of all ages.
- b. Denver Zoo volunteers work with people of diverse backgrounds and special needs. Volunteers are expected to interact with everyone in a fair and respectful manner.
- c. THE ZOO IS OPEN EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR. Volunteer activities take place in all weather conditions (heat, cold, rain, snow, etc.)
- d. Volunteer activities can require lifting, climbing, reaching, carrying, walking and standing for extended periods in all environmental conditions, both indoors and outside.
- e. The main role and purpose of Denver Zoo volunteers is to work with zoo guests. VERY FEW VOLUNTEER TASKS INVOLVE DIRECT WORK WITH ANIMALS.
- f. **Ambassador** volunteers facilitate many aspects of the zoo's effort to provide high quality service to all guests (e.g. Main Gate Ambassador, office help, special events, building monitor, general visitor assistance, horticulture assistance), as well as provide support to a number of community outreach programs (e.g. off-site festivals).
- g. **Guide** volunteers assist Denver Zoo by performing basic interpretation with zoo guests using pre-designed and prepared interpretive kits and materials. In most cases, Guides work in pairs at predetermined Guide Station locations throughout the zoo. After successfully performing as a Guide, these volunteers may choose to become a Docent.
- h. **Docents** (volunteer educators) interpret the zoo's animal collection for visitors and disseminate a vast array of information on wildlife, animal and plant husbandry, and conservation through an assortment of on-grounds and off-grounds outreach educational programs, especially, but not limited to, touring and "ASK-ME".

4. Training and Continuing Education

The Department of Education and Volunteer Services offers extensive training and continuing education programs to prepare year-round volunteers to perform tasks with skill and confidence.

Year-round Volunteers

- a. Zoo U Orientation: All volunteers must satisfactorily complete this three day orientation class. Day one explores the zoo's mission, history and future, general information about the animal collection, docent-led tours of the zoo, customer service, public relations, and zoo operations information. Day two includes an orientation to the Volunteer Organization and the Education and Volunteer Services Department, volunteer involvement in zoo programs, uniform details and additional docent-led tours of the zoo grounds. Day three includes tours of the Volunteer Center and Gates Education Building, workplace safety and some job-specific training. Classes meet from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm. There is \$25 training fee for materials.
- b. All volunteers who complete Zoo U Orientation training are Ambassador volunteers, eligible to sign up for any Ambassador activities for which they are trained.
- c. After completing Zoo U Orientation, participants may complete additional job specific training programs and may elect more advanced training opportunities. Completion times range from a few hours of on-the-job training to weekly classes. Ambassador volunteers are also eligible to proceed to Guide training.
- d. All Guide volunteers must attend a three day training class. Guide training includes basic interpretation skills, how to use the interpretive kits, their content and process and Guide station procedures. Guide training classes also include mentored practice. Classes meet from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm. There is \$25 training fee for materials. Guides are eligible to participate in both Guide and Ambassador activities.
- e. Docent training is offered annually. Only volunteers who have trained and worked as Guides are eligible to attend.
- f. *Continuing Education:* Periodic continuing education programs are offered to volunteers. Participation is determined by the volunteer's particular interests and/or zoo needs. Occasionally, attendance will be required.
- g. Volunteers are expected to remain current on all zoo and volunteer program policies. Guides and Docents must maintain accurate information on animals in the zoo collection.
- h. Newly trained volunteers serve on probationary status for a period of one year. After completion of the first year, a decision will be made to either discontinue probationary status or remove the volunteer from the program.

5. Uniform and Public Demeanor

- a. Uniform: Volunteers are required to purchase the official khaki volunteer vest. Volunteers are required to wear an approved solid green long- or short-sleeved shirt with khaki slacks, shorts (walking length) or skirt; khaki vest and name badge. Some jobs require an alternate uniform. From Memorial Day through Labor Day volunteers may wear either a solid green or white short-sleeved shirt. Volunteers may choose to omit the vest as long as their shirt has the Denver Zoo logo.

- b. Volunteers are public service ambassadors for the Denver Zoo. Volunteers are expected to be friendly, courteous, and represent the zoo in a positive, professional and supportive manner at all times.
- c. Smoking, use of illegal drugs, or consumption of alcohol is NOT permitted while on zoo grounds and in uniform.
- d. Children and other family members or friends are not allowed to accompany volunteers while performing volunteer duties, attending classes or meetings unless they are also members of the volunteer organization.
- e. *Evolution Policy:* The Denver Zoo is a scientific organization which supports the view that species evolve. The zoo recognizes that many people have alternative positions. We do not force the theory of evolution upon our visitors, but, if asked, volunteers must be comfortable representing the zoo's official position.

6. Nature of Work Relationship

- a. Volunteers are not considered an employee for any purpose. No health, accident, or worker's compensation benefits are provided.
- b. Selection of individuals for the Denver Zoological Foundation's volunteer program is not influenced or affected by race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.
- c. Volunteering should not be considered as a step toward zoo employment.
- d. Volunteers who elect to participate in programs which require working with live animals assume all risks, including the possibility of injury when handling zoo animals.
- e. Volunteers who perform duties within the scope of assigned responsibilities are protected from certain types of civil liability by Federal and State of Colorado statutes. Volunteers are not protected from liability for acts performed outside the scope of responsibilities, criminal acts, or civil rights violations.
- f. Volunteers are required to abide by the Denver Zoo Volunteer Operating Procedures, and to sign the Volunteer Agreement (sample of Agreement attached) and the Computer Usage Policy.
- g. All volunteers are subject to informal evaluation and their work also may be evaluated formally.

7. Financial Commitment

- a. Volunteers are required to be members of the Denver Zoological Foundation.
- b. *Training and Recognition:* There is a \$25 fee to cover the cost of materials needed for Zoo U Orientation classes, Guide training, topic-based Continuing Education classes, name tags, and awards.
- c. *Uniforms:* Volunteers are responsible for the cost of volunteer uniforms.

8. Limited Availability of Positions

Applications to the Denver Zoo Volunteer Program exceed the number of available positions in each training class. All applicants are required to complete a criminal background check form as part of the interview process. The selection of new volunteers is based on a negative background check and matching applicants with current zoo needs.