



Internship Program



Animal Care Specialist Intern: Animal Ambassadors

This dynamic internship program offers participants the opportunity to immerse themselves in the world of wildlife at Brookfield Zoo in Chicago, where they will work closely with an impressive array of species, including birds, mammals, reptiles, and invertebrates. Our diverse team encompasses nearly 70 species, such as southern tamanduas, binturongs, Cape porcupines, African servals, Linnaeus's two-toed sloths, prehensile-tailed porcupines, tawny frogmouths, golden conures, pink cockatoos, leopard tortoises, ball pythons, Chilean rose hair tarantulas, and Polish chickens.

Interns will engage in hands-on experience, assisting with daily animal care while gaining insights into animal management within a professional environment. Key focus areas will include monitoring health, implementing training techniques, enhancing enrichment, ensuring proper nutrition, designing exhibits, maintaining records, studying behavior, and managing populations. Interns will acquire essential skills necessary for success in a modern zoo setting.

Furthermore, interns will have the opportunity to participate in engaging keeper talks and contribute to animal presentations at schools, libraries, and television studios.

Each intern will undertake a project involving the research, design, and creation of a behavioral enrichment item for an animal within our department. Collaboration with other zoo teams will be encouraged, particularly in areas related to animal health, nutrition, and enrichment. Additionally, with the approval of their mentor, interns may pursue supplementary projects of interest.

AT A GLANCE

PAY RATE: Unpaid

HOURS/WEEK: Full Time (35+ hours/week)

COMMITMENT: 10-12 weeks

LOCATION: Onsite at Brookfield Zoo Chicago

PREREQUISITE: At least 1 year of college credit & experience

COLLEGE CREDIT: Available upon request



Position Details: Animal Ambassadors

Physical Requirements

Animal Care Specialist positions are physically demanding, and interns may be subjected to a variety of physical demands and environmental factors and exposures. Candidates must have the ability to perform essential functions with or without reasonable accommodations, such as:

- Ability to stand, walk, kneel, or squat for extended periods.
- Ability to lift up to 50 pounds regularly
- Comfort working outdoors in varying and extreme weather conditions, including inclement weather, extreme heat, and cold temperatures.

All interns, regardless of proximity to animals, must have an up to date TDAP (Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis) vaccination (booster within the last 10 years) and test negative for TB (Tuberculosis) within the last 12 months.

Scheduling Expectations

Brookfield Zoo Chicago operates 365 days a year. Schedules vary by position, but may include weekends, holidays, early mornings, and evenings. Successful interns exemplify a positive attitude, strong work ethic, an eagerness to learn, and an ability to work effectively both in a team and independently. Given the competitive landscape of professional animal care, candidates should be mindful of the following scheduling requirements:

- Must be willing to commit to 10-12 weeks in a term, not to exceed 480 total hours.
- Availability is required for the full internship term, including weekdays, weekends, holidays, early mornings, and evenings.
- Schedules may change based on animal and departmental needs, with advance notice provided whenever possible.
- Any anticipated scheduling conflicts should be disclosed during the interview process.

Preferred Qualifications

- Preference is given to those who have completed at least 2 years of college.
- Multilingual ability, Spanish fluency a plus.