

JOB TYPE Seasonal

DEPARTMENT Engagement

EXPERIENCE 0+ Years

POSTED January 16, 2026

FLSA Classification: Exempt Nonexempt **Salary Grade:** To Be Determined

Reports to: Education
Manager Department: Engagement

The Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines, Iowa is a non-profit organization and home to more than 2,800 animals representing nearly 240 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish, and is fully accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The mission of the Blank Park Zoo is to inspire an appreciation of the natural world through conservation, education, research and recreation.

Position Purpose

The primary responsibility of an Interpretive Guide is to provide world-class interpretation and guest interactions throughout Blank Park Zoo. Interpretive Guides will promote the Zoo's mission, goals and objectives; create a positive learning experience for people of all ages. This is a 3-month seasonal position from Memorial Day-Labor Day. Employees must be available to work a flexible schedule between 28-40 hours per week including evenings and weekends.

Essential Functions

Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform these essential functions.

- Interact with Blank Park Zoo guests as they visit exhibits.
- Facilitate play-based learning and provide educational information to guests of all ages.
- Train with live animals to demonstrate science-based concepts to guests
- Assists with clean-up and maintains awareness of guest activity to ensure the safety and well-being of animals in exhibits and surrounding areas
- Utilize developmentally appropriate practices that inspire conservation action
- Gain in-depth knowledge of materials available for programming including, but not limited to: Ambassador Animals, biofacts, zoo exhibits, staff and other zoo resources
- Work with and supervise volunteers
- Other Duties as required

Competencies

- Resourceful - Understanding of or can research all applicable topics as they relate to conservation education
- Flexible – Ability to handle a flexible workload with a variety of assignments while also maintaining composure in an environment that can be stressful.
- Independent – Must be able to operate independently, exercise initiative and demonstrate capacity for detail and follow-up.
- Positive – Must be a positive, effective team member and be able to establish professional working relationships.
- Communicator – Communicates clearly, both verbal and written. Effective listening skills.
- Critical Thinker – Ability to make decisions while under pressure or solve complex problems that arise daily.
- Innovative – Ability to propose solutions to areas of concern.
- Efficient – Ability to complete tasks in a thorough but quick manner.
- Customer-oriented – Always exercises professional customer service skills. Interacts with many different types of people and situations.
- Team Player – Collaborates with supervisors and team to achieve common goals.

Work Environment

While performing the duties of the job, the incumbent is required to work both indoors and outdoors with exposure to seasonal weather conditions.

Physical Requirements

The physical requirements described are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to successfully perform the essential functions.

Ascending or descending ladders, stairs, scaffolding, ramps, poles and the like.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Moving self in different positions to accomplish tasks in various environments including tight and confined spaces.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Remaining in a stationary position, often standing or sitting for prolonged periods.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Moving about to accomplish tasks or moving from one worksite to another.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Adjusting or moving objects up to 25 pounds in all directions.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Communicating with others to exchange information.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Repeating motions that may include the wrists, hands and/or fingers.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Operating machinery and/or power tools.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Operating motor vehicles or heavy equipment.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Assessing the accuracy, neatness and thoroughness of the work assigned.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Driving.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Stooping, kneeling, crouching, or crawling –

Never Occasionally Constantly

Reaching with hands and arms.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Tasting or smelling.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Vision

Close vision; Distant vision; Color vision; Peripheral vision; Depth perception; Ability to adjust focus

Lifting Requirement.

> than 50 pounds Up to 50 pounds Up to 40 pounds Up to 25 pounds Up to 10 pounds

Required education and experience

- Willingness to learn new information. Knowledge of the principles of zoology is a plus.
- Public speaking experience is preferred.
- Bilingual applicants are strongly encouraged to apply.

Additional eligibility requirements

- Must be 16 years old or older.
- Able to pass a background check.
- Proof of negative TB test.
- Able to work hands on with animals including snakes and birds.
- Able to maintain work hours that will serve the needs of the Blank Park Zoo.
- Able to maintain calm and act professionally in all situations such as emergencies and guest interactions.

Licenses/Certifications

- First Aid/CPR training preferred

Other Duties

Please note this job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee for this job. Duties, responsibilities, and activities may change at any time with or without notice.

Affirmative Action/EEO statement

Blank Park Zoo is an equal opportunity employer and give employment and promotional consideration without regard to race, color, sex, religion, age, disability, disabled veterans, veterans of the Vietnam era, and any other protected class as required by local, state, or federal law. We seek applicants for

employment who are dedicated, hardworking and seek fulfilling employment. In return Blank Park Zoo offers competitive income, benefits, and an excellent working environment.

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