

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY, & INCLUSION

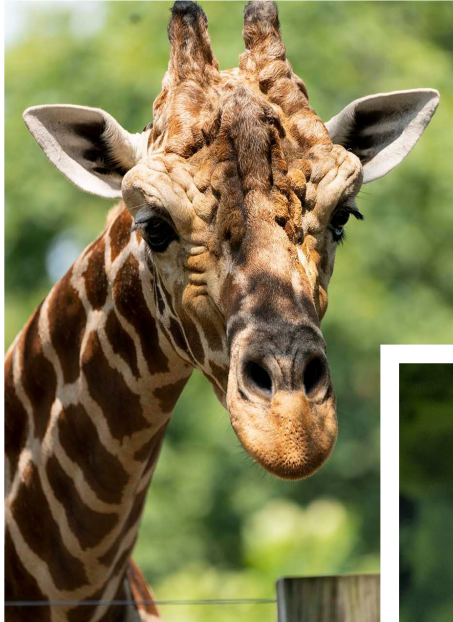
Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center
2023-2025

topeka zoo
& conservation center

DEAI VISION

Purpose:

The purpose of this plan is to demonstrate and initiate progress by the Topeka Zoo and Conservation Center towards the social and business initiatives surrounding Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion.



“We are committed to ensuring everyone feels welcome and valued by striving to create an environment that is as diverse as the wild spaces we are trying to protect.”

- DEAI Statement

Committee:

The Topeka Zoo and Conservation Center's DEAI Committee will be a leadership committee comprised of a cross-section of staff from various departments and levels and should also include representation from part-time or seasonal staff. The current committee consists of the following individuals.

Wrylie Guffey: Co-chair	Animal Curator	Animal Care
Rachael Rost-Allen: Co-chair	Education Program Manager	Education
Brendan Wiley	CEO	Administration
Fawn Moser	Director of Operations	Administration
Jared Bednar	Director of Admin and Creative	Administration
Shanna Simpson	Animal Curator	Animal Care
Kay Reece	Finance Manager	Administration
Adrienne Miller	Zoo Keeper	Animal Care
Alexandria Granados	Digital Content Coordinator	Marketing
Amber McCabe	Zoo Keeper	Animal Care
Cass Smith	Education Specialist	Education
Quin Deiter	Guest Service Team Member	Guest Services
Taylor Miller	Marketing Assistant	Marketing
Cynthia McCarvel	Director of Development	Development
Kennzie Duncan	Education Specialist	Education



CORE VALUES

Our core values are our highest priorities, deeply held beliefs and our core, fundamental driving forces. They are the heart of what our organization and our employees stand for. They form the foundation on which we perform work and conduct ourselves. In May of 2022, the zoo's core values were modified to include tenants of DEAL.

Create

We have a culture that welcomes all. We build equitable experiences and relationships with our guests and team. We are innovative with education, wellness, and conservation. We cultivate memories, experience, and empathy.

Adapt

We listen and include others. We are flexible to accept change and changing priorities. We accept responsibility and we work well with others even in difficult circumstances.

Steward

We care for tomorrow today. We set good examples. We are honest in our communications and lead others well. We value diversity. We keep our promises. We provide education to our team and guests while we continue to educate ourselves. We protect our animals, our guests and our team.

Transparent

We share information timely and accurately. We are trusted with confidential information. We have high ethical standards. We are authentic. We believe that transparency is the foundation for building trusting relationships. We value diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion.

DIVERSITY

Definitions & Goals

The respect and appreciation of what makes people different in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, and national origin.



Short-Term Diversity Goals:

1. Identify groups we are not engaging with.

- Goal Champion - Board committee & staff input
- Related SDG(s)
SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities

2. Through an internal survey, create a list of DEAI topics on which our team desires training then schedule additional trainings.

- Goal Champions - Wrylie, Jared and Fawn
- Related SDG(s)
SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities

3. Identify why certain community groups are not applying for our openings or making it through our screening process.

- Goal Champion - Jess and Brea
- Related SDG(s)
SDG #4: Quality Education
SDG #8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

4. Include more diversity in our marketing.

- Goal Champion - Taylor
- Related SDG(s)
SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities

5. Implement continuous DEAI training for staff, including bias, race and cultural understanding training

- Goal Champion - Rachael
- Related SDG(s)
SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities
SDG #17: Partnership for the Goals

Long-Term Diversity Goals:

1. Establish community partnerships with organizations who can guide us in increasing greater cultural awareness.

2. Add DEAI training to our on-boarding process and orientation packet.

3. Implement cultural zoo events and outreach.

4. Address options to increase diverse applicants.

5. Continuous DEAI training for staff. Include bias, race and cultural understanding training

EQUITY

Definitions & Goals

The fair and just treatment of all members of a community. This includes providing the opportunity for equal experiences with the understanding that differing resources may be needed for different people to achieve those equal experiences.

Short-Term Equity Goals:

1. Evaluate the fee and adequacy of availability for accessible tools like motorized wheelchairs.

- Goal Champions – Jared and Kay
- Related SDG(s)
SDG #1: No Poverty

2. Evaluate professional development opportunities for all staff. How are we going to advance our people to advance our organization.

- Goal Champions: Fawn and Kay
- Related SDG(s)
SDG #4: Quality Education

3. Financial insecurity related to staff size, pay, and benefits.

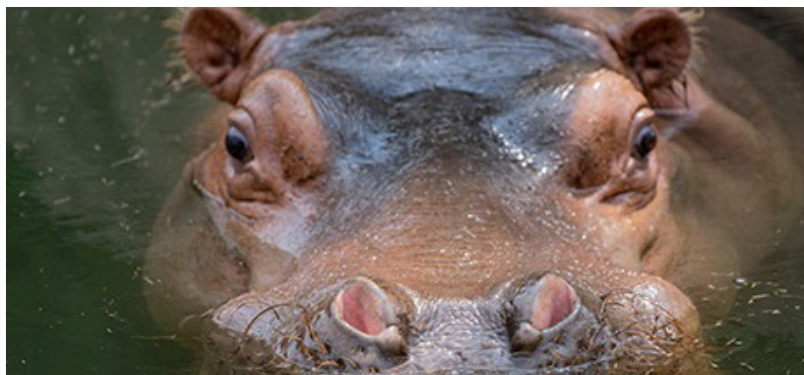
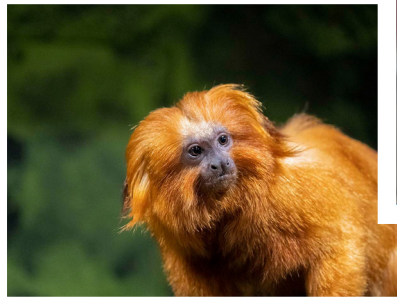
- Champions: Board DEAI Committee
- Related SDG(s)
SDG #8 Decent Work & Economic Growth
SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities

4. Evaluate options to implement a paid internship program.

- Goal Champion(s) – Shanna
- Related SDG(s)
SDG #8 Decent Work and Economic Growth
SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities

5. Implement an apprenticeship program whereby inexperienced people can enter our workforce and over time receive complete training to work in a role. When successful training is completed, a permanent position is awarded to the apprentice.

- Goal Champion: Brendan and Wrylie
- Related SDG(s)
SDG #8 Decent Work and Economic Growth
SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities



Long-Term Equity Goals:

1. Help provide resources for individuals and families who need financial assistance to get to the zoo.
2. As zoo grows, evaluate staff increases and salary increases.
3. Take our programming to low-income areas.
4. Increase professional development year over year.
5. Graphics for all.
6. Add glass viewing windows in some fence areas so that views are not obstructed for guests in wheelchairs and strollers.

ACCESSIBILITY

Definitions & Goals

Easily used or accessed by people no matter their abilities, socioeconomic status, background, and personal circumstances.

Short-Term Accessibility Goals:

1. Provide sensory bags and sensory inclusive training for staff by December 2022.

- Goal Champions: Wylie and Fawn
- Related SDGs
 - SDG #3: Good Health and Well-being
 - SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities
 - SDG #11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

2. Review requirements for our positions.

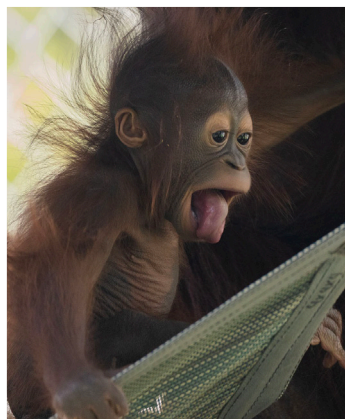
- Goal Champion: Management Team & Consultant
- Related SDGs
 - SDG #5: Gender Equality
 - SDG #8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
 - SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities

3. Increase options for individuals and families with lower socioeconomic status to gain admission to the zoo.

- Goal Champion – Jared and Kay
- Related SDGs
 - SDG #1: No Poverty
 - SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities

4. Determine if we need to increase the number of motorized wheelchairs.

- Goal Champion – Jared and Kay
- Related SDGs
 - SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities



Long-Term Accessibility Goals:

1. Create signage to meet the needs for visual, language and auditory barriers.
2. Provide closer parking for staff and volunteers.
3. Increase access to public transportation to the zoo.
4. Provide more in-depth training on what accessibility is.

INCLUSION

Definitions & Goals

The act or practice of including and accommodating people. The intentional, ongoing effort of providing equal access, value, and respect to all people.

Short-Term Inclusion Goals:

1. Establish a safe and authentic work environment for all.

- Goal Champion – DEAI Committee
- Related SDGs:
 - SDG #5: Gender Equality,
 - SDG #8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
 - SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities
 - SDG #16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

2. Identify locations for sensory spots, safe spaces and more for differing audiences with physical and mental needs.

- Goal Champion – Wrylie and Amber
- Related SDGs:
 - SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities

3. Increase simple team-building activities (authentic, casual) at times when more can participate.

- Goal Champion – Cass, Adrienne and Shanna
- Related SDGs
 - SDG #5: Gender Equality
 - SDG #8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

4. Increase training on how to respectfully interact with each other.

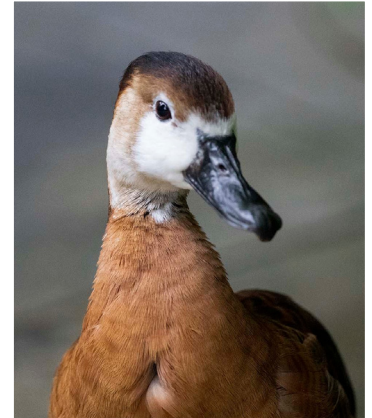
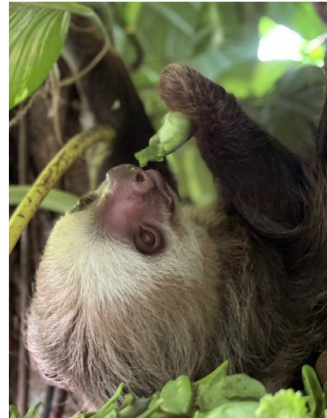
- Goal Champion – Rachael
- Related SDGs
 - SDG #5: Gender Equality
 - SDG #8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

5. Ensure that staff feel included and heard in decision-making process (especially if impacts them).

- Goal Champion – Joe and Brea
- Related SDGs
 - SDG #8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

6. Create a baseline community survey to identify who is and is not using zoo.

- Goal Champion – Board
- Related SDGs
 - SDG #4: Quality Education
 - SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities
 - SDG #16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions



Long-Term Inclusion Goals:

1. Increase more programs and visitation by community members we don't normally see. This could include us taking the zoo to them.

2. Increase staff involvement in decision-making process at some point early in the decision process.

3. Develop more comprehensive engagement with people with disabilities and identify barriers to their zoo experience.

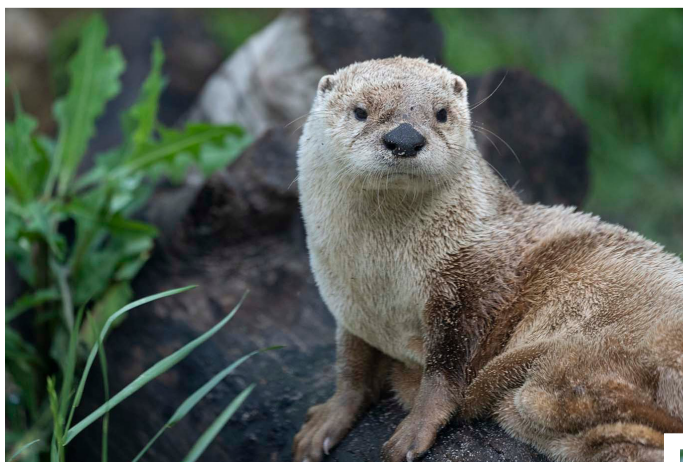
4. Grow the composition of our staff, Board and DEAI Committee to be more representative of our ideal.

THE PLAN

Guiding Principles

The Topeka Zoo and Conservation Center will (from Accreditation Standard 7.9) follow a written diversity, equity, access, and inclusion program. The program will be proactive and transparent, with measurable goals for assessing progress. The Topeka Zoo and Conservation initiatives will be led by a staff committee with an appointed chair or co-chairs. The committee will be responsible for the oversight of the program.

The Topeka Zoo and Conservation Center's DEAI Program must reflect recognition of the important connection between mission and diversity, and present an on-going effort to enhance diversity, equity, access, and inclusion. Our efforts must address areas including paid and unpaid staff, guests/audience, and supplier diversity. Our program must be evaluated at least annually for effectiveness and content, and refinements made as needed.



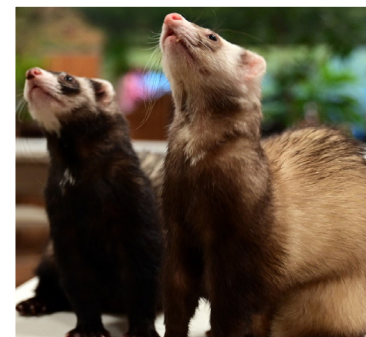
Consultants, Advisors, & Mentors

The Topeka Zoo and Conservation Center has hired Canopy Strategic Partners (formerly Zoo Advisors) to serve as a consultant to guide this process. Canopy has outlined a 12-month plan that will be a combination of virtual and in person sessions that will begin in 2023.

To help establish our framework, the zoo's DEAI Committee has worked with representatives from the Birmingham Zoo, BNSF Railway and Washburn University. Those relationships remain open.

Cost to Implement Plan

Over the three-year plan, it is estimated that implementation will cost between \$150,000 and \$225,000 with additional funds allocated to staff costs and professional development line items. Beginning in budget year 2023, DEAI initiatives will be designated to a separate budget line so that fiscal progress to this goal may be monitored monthly by the Board of Directors thereby creating an avenue for accountability.



Program Evaluation

As program evaluation is a continuous process, the DEAI Committee is empowered to update goals and directions as needed and propose changes to practice and policy throughout the year. Not less than annually, the Topeka Zoo and Conservation Center's DEAI Committee will be tasked with evaluating the zoo's DEAI Program.

This evaluation must include feedback from paid and unpaid staff and include an update on the DEAI Plan goals. Upon completion of the evaluation, a presentation should be made at an all-staff meeting and to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall consider the annual evaluation in the performance review of its Chief Executive Officer.