

IDEA

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility
at the Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center

2024 PLAN

topeka zoo
& conservation center





CURRENT GOALS:

COMMUNITY

- 1) Engage with groups we are not already engaging with in the community
- 2) Provide outreach classes for at risk areas
- 3) Work together with community organizations to help fight food insecurity

TEAM

- 1) Provide training on DEAI topics to staff
- 2) Communicate from DEAI Committee out to staff
- 3) Ensure equitable practices in hiring and employment

GUESTS

- 1) Admission options for guests/families with less expendable income
- 2) Develop a checklist of accessibility for new build projects
- 3) Analyze current exhibits for barriers to viewing by guests of different heights



AT A GLANCE

2022

- Added 3 automatic or push to open doors
- Sensory Inclusive Certified through Kulture City
- Implemented paid keeper internship program

2023

- Free Day to celebrate 90th birthday
 - **3,754 attendees**
- Started Keeper Apprenticeship Program
- Staff Training on Neurodiversity

2024

- Participating in Museums for All Program
- Hosted Abilities Day with Capper Foundation
- Participated in Capper's Abilities Awareness Training





DEAI VISION

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

The Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center's DEAI Committee is a leadership committee comprised of a cross-section of TEAM members from various departments who will serve a term, allowing equity for diverse leadership.

This committee works in conjunction with the Friends of the Zoo board's Community Engagement Committee. Each meet routinely with chairs for each committee sitting on both.



"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*



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.

Transparency

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.

Create

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.

Adapt

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.

Steward

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.





THE PLAN

Definition & Goals

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

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



Consultants, Advisors, & Mentors

The Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center hired Canopy Strategic Partners to serve as a consultant to guide this process. Canopy has outlined a 12-month plan that was a combination of virtual and in person sessions that completed in 2024. 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.

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 & Conservation Center's DEAI Committee will be tasked with evaluating the zoo's DEAI Program.



topeka zoo

& conservation center

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Mission Statement

To enrich the community through wildlife conservation and education.

DEAI Statement

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.