



Chicago Zoological Society

***College Experiential
Learning Opportunities
(C.E.L.O.)***

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Introduction

The mission of the Chicago Zoological Society is to inspire conservation leadership by connecting people to wildlife and nature. Our vision is to be the pre-eminent zoological institution working with people to achieve a more sustainable and harmonious relationship with nature. In so doing, the Society provides for the recreation and education of the public, the conservation of wildlife, and the discovery of biological knowledge. The Society pursues this mission mainly through its management of Brookfield Zoo for the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

About the Organization

Brookfield Zoo (officially the “Chicago Zoological Park”), located in Chicago's western suburbs, is managed by the Chicago Zoological Society, a private, non-for-profit organization which was founded in 1921. The land and facilities of the zoological park are owned by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. Brookfield Zoo is accessible by public transportation and is approximately a ½-hour drive from Chicago's downtown loop area. The Society employs over 400 full-time employees and, during its peak season, hires from 800-1,000 seasonal workers. In addition, the zoo's membership base reached 80,000 member households as of year-end 2006.

The Chicago Zoological Society has been a leader in shaping the way zoos around the world have evolved. Recognizing the need for people to develop more sustainable relationships with nature, the Chicago Zoological Society has continued to focus on its role as a conservation center for the public. The Society recently completed a major, year-long strategic planning effort outlining critical outcomes for the next 10 years and has developed a number of key strategies for carrying out its important conservation mission. These include developing new models for conservation, providing life-changing nature experiences for people, providing hallmark animal care, and enhancing institutional advancement and support. The continuing evolution of the Society and Brookfield Zoo can be seen through continuing changes and improvements in exhibits, animal care resources, educational programs, research, guest experience, and more.

Over the past several years, the Society has also initiated many changes to continue to shape a values and mission-driven organization culture, with a focus on the guest experience and service excellence. The institution serves an ethnically and financially diverse audience and is committed to responding to the needs of its visitors and providing them with tools, information, and inspiration to encourage more environmentally friendly actions and lifestyles.

Targeted institutional values include: innovative animal care and well being, achieving measurable impact, training and human capital, diversity, scientific excellence, programmatic alignment and integration, and establishing mutually beneficial partnerships. Every employee, member, volunteer, intern, and professional participant affiliated with the Society, is viewed as a partner and as ambassador of the organization and is expected to promote and live out the high values of the Society. Through our strong commitment to these values and the creative utilization of resources, we intend to maintain a leadership role as a pre-eminent institution and conservation center with a demonstrably superior quality of service for the community we serve.

With roughly \$50 million in gross revenue, the Society receives approximately 30% of its funding from the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, with the balance of its budget coming from gate admissions, in-park merchandising, ticket sales, food services, memberships, corporate and private donations, and government grants.

The C.E.L.O. Program

The Chicago Zoological Society has a nationally recognized student internship program. We have expanded student learning opportunities into College Experiential Learning Opportunities or C.E.L.O. (“see-low”). C.E.L.O. provides a variety of hands-on, experiential learning opportunities to students in a number of areas and fields through a unique association with a cultural institution that is respected locally, nationally, and internationally. The C.E.L.O. program focuses on providing practical experience, skills, and knowledge to students to encourage interest in and pursuit of careers in the zoological and conservation fields. Students are able to work side-by-side with dedicated professionals to learn about their field of interest and to apply their training in a practical, hands-on setting.

The Chicago Zoological Society has a complex workforce. Positions include both union and non-union positions. Union positions include zookeepers, groundskeepers, craftsman, and custodians. Non-union positions include administrative and office staff, marketing and public relations, fundraising and development, human resources, accounting and finance, hospitality and food services, science and research, education, security, and other areas.

All of our staff strive to provide a great learning experience for all C.E.L.O. participants. The goal is to help each participant develop his or her skills and abilities as a student and to provide useful job experience as a potential future employee and as an individual interested in conservation. The ideal C.E.L.O. participant is one who works hard, is eager to learn, and is productive.

C.E.L.O. provides **work-study, student researcher and internship** opportunities for interested and qualified students. The table below helps to illustrate the differences between these types of opportunities.

	Work-Study (Horticulture only)	Student Researcher (Animal Programs only)	Internship (Animal Programs and other disciplines)
G.P.A.	Minimum G.P.A. 2.5/4.0	Minimum G.P.A. 2.5/4.0	Minimum G.P.A. 2.5/4.0
Coursework	Interest or coursework in applied horticulture; enrolled in college at an accredited institution	Interest or coursework in biology/zoology/psychology; minimum 1 year college completed at an accredited institution	<i>Majoring</i> in the area where an internship is being considered; minimum 2 years of college completed at an accredited institution
Focus	<i>Career-readiness focus:</i> Provides work experience	<i>Academic focus:</i> 85% research 15% keeper shadow/run work	<i>Academic focus:</i> Animal Programs—Husbandry College credit awarded
Age	Minimum applicant age--18 years	Minimum applicant age--18 years	Minimum applicant age--18 years
Other assignments	No reflective journal or project required	Completion of reflective journal or project required	Completion of reflective journal or project required
Duration	12 weeks; may be longer if desired based on mutual agreement between student and work area.	12 weeks; hours may vary from a 40 hour week	12 weeks; approximately 40 hours/week
Compensation	Paid	Paid	Zookeeper--unpaid Other areas paid or unpaid—see specific internship descriptions (*Need-based monetary awards are available for unpaid <i>non-zookeeper</i> internships)

Students who wish to be considered for any of the C.E.L.O. opportunities must submit a completed application packet which includes:

- A completed C.E.L.O. Application and Authorization for Consent for Release of Information form
- Two professional letters of recommendation that include a candid assessment of the candidate's aptitude, qualifications, background, and suitability for the program.
- An official copy of the applicant's most recent transcripts for all colleges or universities attended.
- A cover letter with a three to four-page essay answering C.E.L.O. application questions (see p. 8).
- A current resume detailing education and other qualifications, including work history and any other relevant experience such as military or volunteer service.
- If applying for a monetary award, a completed monetary award application.
- Optional EEO Information form.

Background checks are conducted on all final candidates for internships or work-study program participation. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. All applications are reviewed, and applicants being considered will be contacted for an interview.

Application Deadlines

Completed applications must be submitted by the deadlines listed below. Please note, internships and work-study opportunities may not be offered in all areas every year.

	Term Date Range	Submission Deadline Date		Notification Date	
Internships					
		Zookeepers	All Other	Zookeepers	All Other
Summer Term	May 15 – Aug. 31	Feb. 1	March 31	By April 30	By Apr. 30
Fall Term	Sept. 1 - Dec. 31	Aug. 1	June 1	By August 31	July 15
Winter Term	Jan. 1 – Mar. 31	Dec. 1	Oct. 1	By November 30	Nov. 15
Other opportunities					
		Student Researcher	Horticulture Work-study	Student Researcher	Horticulture Work-study
Summer Work Study	May 15 – Aug. 31	Feb. 1	March 31	By Apr. 30	By Apr. 30
Fall Work Study	Sept. 1 - Dec. 31	Aug. 1	Not available	By August 31	N/A
Winter Work Study	Jan. 1 – Mar. 31	Dec. 1	Not available	By November 30	N/A

The Chicago Zoological Society offers a limited number of monetary awards to students pursuing an *unpaid non-zookeeper internship* who demonstrate financial need. Priority consideration for such awards is given to students with demonstrated financial need. Please contact Dana Murphy at 708-688-8452 for additional information.

C.E.L.O. Opportunities

Zookeeper Internships (unpaid)

Zookeeper internships are a positive experience for anyone who is interested in working with animals directly or even those people who are interested in related conservation fields. Zookeepers must be willing to commit to a 12-week full-time internship of 40 hours per week. These internships offer experience and insights into the science involved in caring for animals at the Zoo—from health and nutrition, to behavior and hormones, to animal physiology and environments, to demography and genetics. Animal husbandry, which involves caring for the animals' basic needs and overall welfare, is a big part of the program, and past interns have really benefited from the hands-on experience they have gained at Brookfield Zoo. Some of the keepers at Brookfield Zoo, many of whom have been at the zoo for many years, have plenty of insight on the “tricks of the trade,” and they are more than willing to share their experience and that wealth of information with interns. There is a world of knowledge about animal management to be gained at the Brookfield Zoo. The majority of participants agree that completing the program reaffirmed their plans of pursuing a career with animals.



The fact that zookeepers are responsible for animal care and feeding may create a stereotype that they are only responsible for basic care, like cleaning the cages and feeding the animals. Few people realize that a zookeeper's job is much, much more. It includes things like training the animals to do things like stepping on a scale for a medical checkup or teaching an animal, such as a gorilla, maternity skills so that they can better care for their young. These important responsibilities and more are also an integral part of a zookeeper's job and help the keepers to assure the best care for the animals. When working with the animals, participants also learn a great deal about animal behavior. Participants learn environmental enrichment techniques, ways that the zookeepers help to enrich the animals' surroundings to encourage natural behaviors, and assure optimal physical and mental health of the animals. This learning can be applied to other professions, as well as to everyday life. Things like training and environmental enrichment lead to personal interactions and connections with the animals.

A zookeeper intern is expected to provide excellent care to assure the wellbeing for all the animals in our care, as is expected of all zookeepers at Brookfield Zoo. In doing so, the participant develops an array of skills, including teamwork, communications, time management, and responsibility. These types of skills can be applied across the board in every profession. We hope that upon the completion of the internship program, the intern will have gained both knowledge and skills beneficial to his or her future academic and career endeavors. An intern is expected to maintain a reflective journal, or complete a project if required by the area, in order to provide evidence of academic growth in the area.

Student Researcher Program (paid)

Qualified students from accredited educational and technical institutions are eligible to participate in the student researcher program. Student researcher participation provides students with valuable experience in behavioral observation and research (see table above). *There are a very limited number of these positions available for any given term.* If selected, the individual is hired as an employee of the Society. Students are paid at a rate no higher than the entry-level rate of pay for a seasonal zookeeper position.



The time commitment involved with a student researcher participant varies based on the needs of the student, the Society, and the area assigned. Dates and length of participation may also vary. Students who participate as part of a student researcher program are afforded experience and insights into how behavioral research is conducted in a zoo setting. There is also exposure to animal care and husbandry at the Zoo. Participants also learn a great deal about animal behavior, environmental enrichment techniques, ways that the zookeepers help to enrich the animals' physical and mental health, and how to encourage natural behaviors.

A student researcher completes new hire orientation and training and is held to the same standards as all Society employees, and is expected to provide excellent care to assure the wellbeing for all the animals.

Applied Horticulture Work-Study Program (paid)—Summer only

Students with a strong interest in horticulture may pursue a work-study opportunity in applied horticulture. As a work-study participant, you will assist our professional staff as they beautify and maintain the extensive zoo grounds and exhibits for the enjoyment of our two million guests each year. This program provides a way to gain the valuable work experience necessary to qualify for a better job upon graduation. Students are paid at a rate *no higher* than the entry-level seasonal pay rate for a groundskeeper position.

The horticulture work-study positions are part of a program designed to give students an opportunity to work with a wide variety of plant materials: plant and water annuals, prune shrubs and trees, divide perennials, maintain a greenhouse and tropical plant exhibits, maintain plants in our butterfly exhibit, and much more.

Horticultural positions can be physically demanding and involve repetitive tasks, frequent bending, stretching, kneeling, or working in awkward positions. Tasks may occasionally be strenuous, and students must be able to lift a minimum of 50 pounds. Assignments involve work outdoors in the summer and students, therefore, must be able to tolerate extreme heat and humidity. Students may be subjected to a variety of environmental and other exposures. The time commitment involved with a work-study participant varies based on the needs of the student, the Society, and the area assigned. Dates and length of participation may also vary.

A horticulture work-study participant completes new hire orientation and training and is held to the same standards as all Society employees. Students gain valuable job skills that will help them as they pursue their chosen professions.

Many other College Experiential Learning Opportunities, both paid and unpaid, await at Brookfield Zoo!

Brookfield Zoo operates in many ways like a small city. Professional staff work in a wide variety of departments with training and backgrounds in many fields, from Food Services to Conservation Science to the Brookfield Zoo Police Department, which is on duty around the clock.

There are both paid and unpaid *internships* in a variety of areas such as:

- Conservation Science
- Membership
- Education
- Public Relations
- Plant and Facilities
- Communications Research
- Administration
- Culinary Arts

C.E.L.O. experiences provide participants with work experience necessary to be successful in the workplace once they have completed their academic requirements. An applicant who has taken relevant coursework and is working on his or her degree or certification in a field that is relevant to a particular department at the zoo may be considered for an internship opportunity in that area.

Ultimately, the Society wants to offer experiential learning opportunities in every department where students may express an interest, but this is not always possible. *Whether or not a C.E.L.O. opportunity is offered, depends on department needs and constraints, including the time of year and associated departmental workloads.* However, we strive to provide opportunities whenever possible. C.E.L.O. participants are expected to work with the staff at the Chicago Zoological Society to provide positive, quality guest experiences and to engage our guests through one-on-one interactions.

C.E.L.O. participants are also expected to help to improve the quality of life of our animal ambassadors by providing an environment that helps to inspire conservation leadership by connecting people with wildlife and nature.

The time commitment for an internship, whether paid or unpaid, is 40 hours per week for 12 weeks.

*A limited number of monetary awards are available for students with demonstrated financial need who are pursuing unpaid **non-zookeeper** internships. A monetary award form, included as the last page of these materials, must be completed and included with the application to be considered for the award.*



College Experiential Learning Opportunities Application Checklist

Students who wish to be considered for an internship or for participation in the work-study program must submit a completed application packet which includes:

- € A completed C.E.L.O. Application Form and signed Authorization and Consent for Release of Information
- € Two professional letters of recommendation that include a candid assessment of the candidate's aptitude, qualifications, background, and suitability for the program.
- € An official copy of the applicant's most recent transcripts for all colleges or universities attended.
- € A current resume detailing education and other qualifications, including work history and any other relevant experience such as military or volunteer service.
- € A cover letter with a three to four-page essay answering C.E.L.O. application questions (see below).
- € If applying for monetary award, a completed monetary award application.
- € Optional EEO Information form
- € Submit completed application packet to:

For non-zookeeper opportunities:
Ms. Dana Murphy, C.E.L.O.
3300 Golf Road
Brookfield, IL 60513

For zookeeper opportunities:
Zookeeper Internships/Student Researchers
3300 Golf Road
Brookfield, IL 60513

C.E.L.O. Essay Questions

To be considered for the C.E.L.O. program for an internship or for work-study, you must submit an essay responding to each of the following questions.

- What attracts you about Brookfield Zoo as a workplace?
- What do you think you will gain from an experiential learning opportunity considering your future endeavors and career choices?
- What qualities do you possess that you feel would make you an asset to this institution?
- Considering that the Chicago Zoological Society is a worldwide leader in conservation, what life experiences have you had that you believe have caused you to have an appreciation for animals, nature, the environment, and/or conservation?

Note: Failure to provide any of the required application materials will disqualify you from consideration. It is much preferred that all application materials be submitted as one complete package.

How did you hear about the C.E.L.O. Program? *(if through a school, please specify which school)*

Have you been convicted of a crime (other than a minor traffic violation) in the past seven years? (You should not disclose any conviction for which the record has been sealed or expunged.) ρ Yes ρ No

If “Yes,” please explain in detail: _____

Please note: A conviction does not necessarily eliminate you from consideration. Factors such as the time since conviction, seriousness of the crime, and nature of the crime relative to the C.E.L.O. opportunity for which you are applying will be considered. Failure to disclose a conviction may disqualify you from consideration.

I certify that the information provided herein is current, complete and accurate. I understand that any falsification or misrepresentation of any of the information contained herein will disqualify me from consideration or participation in the Chicago Zoological Society’s C.E.L.O. Program.

Applicant Signature

Date

***The Chicago Zoological Society is an Equal Opportunity/
Affirmative Action Employer – M/F/V/D***

NOTIFICATION AND AUTHORIZATION TO OBTAIN
CONSUMER REPORTS AND INVESTIGATIVE CONSUMER REPORTS

Date: _____

To: All Applicants
From: The Chicago Zoological Society
Human Resources Department

This is to notify you that, in connection with your application for employment, volunteer assignment, or internship, and at any time during your employment or volunteer or internship assignment, the Chicago Zoological Society may request a consumer report and/or an investigative consumer report from a consumer reporting agency in order to obtain information about you for employment purposes, including consideration for an internship or volunteer assignment. The report may include written, oral and other information provided by a consumer reporting agency about your character, general reputation, personal characteristics and/or mode of living, which will be used (or expected to be used) in making employment, internship, and volunteer assignment decisions.

If an investigative consumer report is ordered and you provide us with a written request, we will advise you of the nature and scope of the information requested no later than five days after receipt of your written request or five days after the information is requested, whichever is later. A summary of your rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act is attached to this form.

Your employment or assignment is contingent upon your signing this document acknowledging your authorization to obtain such reports. A copy of this Notification and Authorization will be maintained on file. You should keep a copy for your records.

By signing below, you authorize the Chicago Zoological Society to obtain a consumer or an investigative consumer report from any consumer reporting agency in order to obtain information about you for employment purposes.

Signed: _____

Print Name

Date: _____

