



Seasonal Education and Outreach Specialist Job Description

Reports To: Education & Conservation Manager

Department: Education & Conservation

Salary: \$16/hour – paid biweekly

Job Status: Seasonal Full Time, Non-Exempt, May 21st – September 2nd

Union Status: Yes

Position Scope: The Seasonal Education and Outreach Specialist is a dynamic educator and conservation ambassador responsible for delivering high-impact, mission-driven programming that inspires environmental stewardship across diverse audiences. This position plays a key role in advancing the Zoo's Education & Conservation initiatives through engaging, standards-aligned outreach experiences both on-site and throughout New York State.

The Specialist must be adaptable, audience-focused, and confident in presenting live ambassador animals while upholding the highest standards of animal welfare, safety, and professionalism. The successful candidate will demonstrate expertise in inquiry-based learning, conservation messaging, and positive reinforcement training techniques, while collaborating cross-departmentally to support Zoo operations and strategic goals.

The "on" season runs from early April through late September; the "off" season runs from early October through early April.

Essential Functions:

Education & Program Delivery

- Facilitate dynamic outreach and on-site programs using the Zoo's ambassador animal collection and biofacts.
- Continuously assess audience engagement and adapt delivery style, pacing, and content to ensure programming is developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and impactful.
- Present conservation-focused messaging that connects audiences to real-world environmental issues, threats, and solutions.
- Lead interactive experiences, including camps, school programs, public presentations, special events, and community outreach initiatives.
- Serve as a professional representative of the Zoo at schools, community events, libraries, and partner organizations.
- Support interpretation efforts across Zoo grounds as needed.

Date Revised: 02/27/2026

Seasonal Education and Outreach Specialist Job Description

Curriculum Development & Educational Design

- Collaborate with the Education team to design, refine, and evaluate high-quality, inquiry-based environmental education curriculum.
- Develop lesson plans aligned with NYS Learning Standards and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).
- Create structured schedules, hands-on activities, crafts, multimedia presentations, and assessment tools to support program objectives.
- Contribute creative ideas for new programs, seasonal offerings, and conservation campaigns.
- Maintain organized program materials and assist in inventory management of educational supplies and biofacts.

Animal Handling & Welfare

- Maintain Utica Zoo Animal Handling Certification and strictly adhere to established animal handling, transportation, presentation, and safety protocols.
- Demonstrate knowledge of positive reinforcement training techniques and choice-and-control principles.
- Prepare animals and materials for programs while ensuring their safety, health, and well-being.
- Collaborate with Animal Care staff to ensure seamless coordination of animal ambassador scheduling and care.
- Accurately complete required animal usage, transport, and incident documentation.

Program Evaluation & Impact Measurement

- Assist in implementing evaluation strategies to assess program effectiveness using quantitative and qualitative methods.
- Collect participant feedback and contribute to reporting metrics related to educational reach and conservation impact.
- Participate in continuous improvement processes to enhance program quality and engagement outcomes.

Operations & Logistics

- Safely and independently drive long distances within New York State to conduct outreach programs.

Date Revised: 02/27/2026

Seasonal Education and Outreach Specialist Job Description

- Maintain outreach vehicles, transport carriers, and program equipment in clean and organized condition.
- Support setup, breakdown, and logistical coordination for events and special programming.
- Assist with cross-departmental initiatives and special projects as assigned.

Professional Conduct & Team Collaboration

- Maintain a positive, inclusive, and respectful environment for participants, colleagues, and volunteers.
- Model professionalism, adaptability, and strong communication skills in all interactions.
- Participate in staff meetings, training sessions, and professional development opportunities.
- Serve as a collaborative and supportive member of both the Education and Animal Ambassador teams.
- Perform other duties as assigned to support departmental and organizational goals.

Requirements:

- Comfort working in proximity to wild and domestic animals in a zoological setting.
- Experience handling, training, or working with animals.
- Experience developing and implementing curriculum.
- Strong public speaking and interpersonal communication skills.
- Demonstrated ability to work with diverse audiences across ages and learning levels.
- Familiarity with Social-Emotional Learning, Next Generation Science Standards, and New York State learning standards.
- Excellent organizational, time management, and multitasking skills.
- Ability to work independently while contributing positively to a team environment.
- Valid, current driver's license with a clean driving record.
- Must successfully pass a background check.

Education / Experience:

- Bachelor's degree in Life Sciences, Conservation Biology, Environmental Education, Interpretation, or related field preferred; equivalent experience considered.
- Experience working with early childhood, K-12 students, and/or adult learners.
- Experience in informal education settings (zoos, nature centers, museums, camps) strongly preferred.
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Physical Requirements:

- Ability to lift 50 lbs. and participate in physical activities required of the position
- Ability to sit and stand for up to two hours at a time

Benefits:

- Employee assistance program

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- Employee discount
- Flexible schedule
- Retirement plan

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy: The Utica Zoo provides equal employment opportunities to all current employees and all applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, natural origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws.

Employee signature below indicates the employee's understanding of the requirements, essential functions and duties of the position.

Employee Print _____ **Date** _____

Employee Signature _____