



# LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY:

## Vice President of Education

### Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium

## MISSION

To inspire, educate and engage people to serve as lifelong stewards for the conservation of animals and their habitats.



Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium (OHDZ&A) seeks candidates for its **Vice President of Education** role. OHDZ&A is nationally recognized and has been ranked as the #1 Zoo in the country by USA Today and the top tourist destination in Nebraska. It is beloved in the city, region, and state, and benefits from incredible community support.

The VP of Education is a member of the Executive team, reporting to the CEO, and provides the vision, strategy, and leadership necessary for OHDZA to deliver on its mission through its ground-breaking educational programs and initiatives. The VP of Education collaborates with other members of the Executive team to advance organizational strategy, planning and decision-making.

The VP develops and implements plans for all aspects of the Zoo education programming at both the Omaha Zoo campus and the Lee G. Simmons Wildlife Safari Park (WSP) in Ashland, NE. These activities include formal education in partnership with local school districts and informal education to integrate the on-site guest experience with OHDZA's conservation and education mission. The VP of Education leads departmental programs that include (but are not limited to) the OHDZA Zoo academy, elementary school students, high school students, outreach, homeschooling, campouts, interns, volunteers, guest experiences, interpretative messaging and graphic content, and the Omaha STEM Ecosystem.

With a focus on the collaborative and people-focused culture of OHDZA, there is a strong effort to work cohesively across all teams. The VP of Education will be a key figure in supporting this work, actively contributing to building and supporting the culture of well-being and teamwork across OHDZA. Closely aligning the educational programs with the conservation programs, animal collection, and marketing & communication campaigns is an important goal for this position.



# CANDIDATE STRENGTHS, SKILLS, AND QUALITIES

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## ARE YOU?

Collaborative  
executive

Informal  
education  
innovator

Strategic thinker  
and executor

Inclusive leader

Mission-driven  
entrepreneur

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Successful candidates for the Vice President of Education role will be **big thinkers** and show a commitment to OHDZA's mission and be able to **craft a vision** for how OHDZA can be a **leader in conservation education**. **Excellent communication skills** and the ability to **build and foster relationships and partnerships** across the organization is required to help create understanding, buy-in, and appreciation for the complex programs OHDZA manages. Candidates should have a demonstrated ability to **build a strong and dynamic organizational culture** and model **innovative thinking** to lead the team through the continual development of programming. The ideal candidate will be a **collaborator and relationship builder** to continue to expand the reach and impact at OHDZA.

Candidates should have a strong background in **interpretation, conservation and conservation education, sustainability and environmental education** and familiarity with the concepts of **environmental literacy, nature connection, natural history, wildlife conservation, and empathy**. Having clear knowledge of both **formal and informal educational programs** is essential. An understanding of **local and national educational systems** and accrediting bodies will be key for managing the breadth of programs for OHDZA. Experience and knowledge about best practices for **program evaluation** are also necessary for success. Additionally, candidates should have the **financial understanding** to manage a ~\$2M budget with experience in identifying and securing the resources needed for financial sustainability.

Candidates must possess a Bachelor's degree (B.A. or B.S.) in education, biological sciences or applicable field; master's or doctorate degrees are preferred.

In addition to the qualities and skills listed above, candidates must be able to demonstrate the ability to successfully take on the responsibilities listed here and others that typically encompass a Vice President of Education role.





# EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

- Actively participates as a member of the OHDZA's executive leadership team, providing perspective, strategic direction, and input into collaborative decision making.
- Leads a team of eight direct reports, representing over 200 team members, approximately 800 volunteers, and a \$2 million operating budget which includes \$1.6 million in earned revenue by providing vision, strategy, and direction.
- Ensures integration of conservation message into public, school, family programs, and other appropriate OHDZ&A departments.
- Develops and manages visitor studies to enhance public learning and the visitor experience.
- Works collaboratively with OHDZA science and conservation departments to maximize conservation impact and creatively expand on mission-centric conservation education efforts.
- Represents program and OHDZ&A on international, national, and local committees, task forces, boards, and conferences.
- Compiles and prepares annual budget for the education department, monitors expenditures and is responsible for meeting budget expectations.
- Collaboratively manages, updates and refines the Zoo-wide interpretive plan.
- Collaboratively facilitates development and implementation of organization-wide and exhibit-specific interpretive and graphic material, in alignment with Zoo interpretive plan.
- Solicits, prepares and secures grants to support programs, and meets grant reporting expectations.
- Develops and maintains strategic partnerships to support and advance the mission of OHDZA.
- Assigns duties and monitors quality of work; assures staff conforms to organizational policies and procedures and government regulations.
- Actively seeks and develops opportunities and initiatives to advance conservation education efforts and increase alignment with organization-wide conservation efforts.
- Works collaboratively and creatively with other OHDZ&A leaders to support mission and revenue-generating initiatives
- Works collaboratively with the Omaha Zoo Foundation to jointly advance the mission of the OHDZ&A.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

- Actively seeks opportunities to maximize accessibility to educational programming as a resource to the local community and under-served audiences.
- Jointly manages the Omaha STEM ecosystem initiative in partnership with the University of Nebraska – Omaha, including goal setting, expectations, and oversight of the program director.



## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

- Provides oversight to the concepts, plans, development and implementation of academic curriculum, educational standards, and quality of programs.
- Leads all existing education programs by working with specific managers and educators, including but not limited to curriculum development, conceptual development, and expansion, with a long-term focus on best practices in conservation education.
- Ensures curriculum meets state and national standards for informal and formal education, and is in compliance with all relevant laws, regulations, standards and best practices.
- Leads evaluation efforts of programs by developing priorities and facilitates implementation of tools to measure the effectiveness and impact of the education programs.
- Uses evaluation results and feedback to critically refine program priorities and offerings.
- Develops and implements short and long-range plans and expectations for Zoo education programs (outreach programs, scout programs, campout programs, classes, distance learning, teacher professional development, formal education, and volunteer programs).
- Leads and guides the volunteer and internship programs to support the OHDZ&A's mission.

## ABOUT THE ZOO

Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium is an Omaha gem, trusted and supported by dedicated members and strong community ties. It has established itself as a leader in educational programming, particularly the intersection of formal and informal education. OHDZA has robust programming for K-12 students, including the unique and long-running Zoo Academy for high schoolers.

OHDZA has a history that dates back to 1895. Over the past 128 years, it has had its fair share of "firsts" and "largest" milestones; accolades & awards for breeding, exhibitry, and conservation successes; and innovative approaches to zoological parks and wildlife education that have influenced and shaped modern zoos and aquariums.

OHDZA includes the 160 acre zoo as well as the 440 acre Lee G. Simmons Wildlife Safari Park which opened in 1998. Collectively, OHDZA manages over 36,000 animals across over 1,000 species and welcomes 1.5 visitors per year.

## ABOUT OMAHA

With a metro population just under 1 million, Omaha has a small-to-medium city feel with many of the amenities of a big city. With over 90 restaurants in the downtown area, foodies have their choice of cuisine. MTV ranked Omaha #2 for an emerging music scene, and the city has been home to the NCAA Men's College World Series for baseball since 1950.

The Old Market Entertainment District boasts a variety of boutiques, pubs, and restaurants. Other points of interest in the city include a number of art museums and centers, the Lauritzen Gardens (100 acres to roam including a 20,000 square foot conservatory), and the Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum (home to the largest collection of Cold War military artifacts). The downtown area has had \$8 billion of investments, creating a vibrant restaurant, retail, entertainment, and recreation experience for residents and convention attendees.

The Omaha airport is ranked #1 among medium-sized airports with non-stop service to more than 30 major airports. Being relatively centrally located, many popular US destinations are less than three hours by plane.



TO APPLY: Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium has retained Canopy Strategic Partners to manage this search. To be considered for this excellent opportunity, please forward a single PDF document that includes your detailed resume and a cover letter to Lauren David at [ldavid@canopysp.com](mailto:ldavid@canopysp.com). Questions about the role can be directed to David Walsh at [dwalsh@canopysp.com](mailto:dwalsh@canopysp.com).

