



Palm Desert / Indian Wells - 47-900 Portola Avenue - Palm Desert, CA 92260

Adult Volunteer FAQs

What makes volunteering at The Living Desert Zoo & Gardens different from other volunteer or service-learning opportunities?

- The Living Desert Zoo & Gardens offers volunteers a unique opportunity to learn about desert plants and animals from around the world. Volunteers of The Living Desert get to learn new skills while working in a collaborative and fun learning environment!
- Our volunteers have the opportunity to hear about special zoo updates before the general public and practice skills that will help support their interests

What are the steps to apply to become a volunteer?

1. Complete and submit the online Volunteer Application
2. Attend a New Volunteer Orientation session- The Living Desert 101
3. Complete all required paperwork and uniform orders
4. Attend any required trainings
5. Activate an account through VicNet to schedule volunteer shifts

When is the best time to apply?

- We work on a rolling application process
- We accept volunteer applications throughout the year and host regular volunteer orientations

What are the Requirements to be a volunteer at The Living Desert?

- Complete and submit the Volunteer Application
- Attend an orientation session
- Have availability for a minimum one-year commitment

What volunteer opportunities can I participate in as a new volunteer?

- We offer several volunteer tracks for new volunteers based on interest and experience. Within each volunteer track there are a variety of volunteer positions to choose from.
 - **Animal Area Support-** *These hands-on positions help support our guests at interactive animal experiences. Available volunteer opportunities include positions that assist at the Petting Kraal, Australia Adventures, and other interactive animal areas.*
 - **Guest Service and Interpretation-** *Share your passion for animals, conservation, and desert habitats with our guests. Available opportunities include guest interpretation positions in our Wildlife Hospital, Discovery Center, and Welcome Center*
 - **Plants and Gardens-** *Volunteers with experience in gardening can get involved with our Gardens and Conservation departments to help educate guests about the importance of native plants and plant conservation*
 - **Bighorn Railroad Model Train Exhibit:** *Our dedicated team of volunteers supports the Bighorn Railroad Model Trains with daily operations, maintenance, special projects, and other duties.*
 - **Office Assistance-** *Volunteers can help our administrative and office staff with phone calls, data input, spreadsheets, filing, and other related tasks*
- In addition to our volunteer tracks there are also special seasonal volunteer opportunities you can support:
 - **Zoo Camp:** *Go wild by volunteering in Zoo Camp where you will make the best camp ever through assisting the camp counselor in games, crafts, STEM activities and even special behind-the-scenes experiences.*
 - **Special Events:** *From Wild Lights to Howl-O-Ween and more, we love to have our volunteers help with special events to make sure every guest walks away with a WOW moment.*
 - **Special Projects:** *These projects are available on an as-needed basis and offer unique opportunities that can include conservation projects like data collection and analysis, field work, organizational projects, or animal observations.*

How do I get involved with opportunities that involve more animal interactions?

- After the fulfillment of minimum one year of service, volunteers who have demonstrated a strong desire to grow and lead will be invited to continue with the next year of service in an expanded role with more responsibilities.
- These increased responsibilities may include: animal care, animal handling, gardens, trails, giraffe and rhino interpretation

Do I need to be a member of The Living Desert?

- Yes. Membership is required to volunteer at The Living Desert

Is there a uniform or dress code as a volunteer?

- Volunteers will be required to purchase a volunteer shirt and wear their provided Living Desert name badge while on shift. Closed-toed shoes and non-denim, neutral colored (such as khaki) bottoms are also required.

Can I apply to be a volunteer with a friend?

- You are welcome to apply with a friend, spouse, or family member who meets the requirements, but we do not guarantee placement of both applicants
- Depending on availability, ability, and needs, we do not guarantee placement into the same duties on grounds
- As part of the program, we encourage our volunteers to work together collaboratively

Do I need to commit to the full length of service and/or hours?

- Volunteers are expected to adhere to the service requirements and commitments
- Service requirements can be fulfilled through a number of different means including some virtual volunteer opportunities. If you find that you are unable to fulfill your service requirement, speak to an Education Staff member.

What is The Living Desert Scholarship Fund?

- The Living Desert Scholarship Fund is our volunteer-organized scholarship program for local graduating high school students and military veterans aspiring to continue their education in natural science and conservation.
- Graduating Zoo Teens and military veterans are given preference to scholarship funds