

Applicant Information

The EMA has developed a program that will provide elephant keepers the opportunity to expand their knowledge and husbandry experience. This program has been designed to enable elephant keepers to work at other institutions to familiarize themselves with different management styles. Due to the professional nature of this program, it is only available to Professional- or Associate-level EMA members.

The EMA has selected facilities with different management styles to maximize the potential for enhancing participants' expertise. EMA hopes that participating institutions will take this opportunity to share their trials, tribulations, triumphs, and successes with their professional colleagues. At this time, participating host institutions are the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, Houston Zoo, White Oak Conservation, Fresno Chaffee Zoo, and ABQ BioPark. The concept of this program is quite simple, but EMA feels it is an invaluable tool for expanding the skills of elephant keepers by providing them the opportunity to work alongside colleagues and learn the nuances of that institution's husbandry practices.

Approval process: Participating keepers must not only have their institution's authorization, but also agreement to pay their wages for the duration of their participation. The institution's approval requires that the employee is covered by their workers' compensation program and will provide documentation of personal health insurance. This provides assurance that the host institution will not be liable to cover medical costs.

Submission process: Completed application should be sent to the Keeper Professional Development Chairperson, Adam Felts:

adam.felts@columbuszoo.org
4850 Powell Road
PO Box 400
Powell, OH 43065

Institutional Information

Responsibilities of the keeper's home institution: It will be the responsibility of the keeper's institution, or the keeper themselves, to cover any expenses including travel, housing (if necessary), and food. The keeper's supervisor must complete the section of the application regarding workers' compensation and the employee's medical coverage. As instructed in the application, please include any additional documentation that the home institution may require to participate in this program.

Responsibilities of the host institution: The EMA simply asks the host institution to be willing to let interested and approved applicants work alongside their professional staff. EMA would like each institution to allot a time frame that they can offer this program to interested individuals at let EMA know any specific details or circumstances. Each facility's time allotment will dictate the amount of time available and subsequently the number of keepers that can participate in this program. EMA would also like to solicit input from institutions regarding options that may be available in terms of housing, in order to reduce the expense to participant keepers. EMA also asks that host institutions provide any additional documentation that may be required so that these actions may be completed in a timely manner. The final decision regarding an applicant's participation in the program is based on input from the host institution. A candidate can be rejected for the program by the host institution, even if they have already received approval from their home institution and/or EMA. The host institution will not be responsible for the participating employee's wages during keeper professional development at their facility.