

PRESS RELEASE

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Media contact: Gigi Allianic, Meghan Sawyer
206.548.2550 | woodlandparkzoopr@zoo.org

Woodland Park Zoo to reduce workforce and senior salaries due to COVID-19 pandemic

SEATTLE—The nonprofit Woodland Park Zoo announced workforce reductions that will impact 23% of the zoo's 361 employees through temporary furloughs, permanent layoffs or temporary pay cuts. The difficult decision was made in response to lost revenues due to the impacts of COVID-19.

Effective July 6, 2020, the zoo will temporarily furlough 43 employees and lay off 27 employees. Additionally, the zoo will institute a temporary 10% pay cut for non-operations critical employees who make more than \$100,000 annually. The zoo had already instituted executive savings in May, including a 25% pay cut for CEO, 15% pay cut for executive leaders and 10% pay cut for some senior leaders.

Woodland Park Zoo closed to the public on March 12, 2020 in response to COVID-19 and in compliance with state regulations. As the first accredited zoo in the country to close as a health and safety precaution to slow the spread of the disease, Woodland Park Zoo has since sustained \$6 million in lost revenue from the closure and event cancellations. The revenue shortfall is projected to continue through 2020 due to sustained economic impacts of COVID-19.

To minimize necessary workforce reductions, in March the zoo identified \$6 million in non-salary expense savings. In April, the zoo secured a Paycheck Protection Program loan to cover payroll and benefits for all staff in full through June 30, 2020.

All affected employees have been given more than 30 days' notice. Furloughed and laid off employees will be eligible for unemployment benefits, including the retention of health benefits for furloughed employees.

In workforce planning, the zoo prioritized investing in animal care and the maintenance of critical physical and business infrastructure. The community's contribution to the zoo's [emergency Relief Fund](#) is helping to assure uncompromised care of the zoo's nearly 1,000 animals. Almost 3,000 donors have given more than \$830,000 to the fund since March.

"The zoo never really closes. We will always have animals to care for, endangered wildlife to save and people to inspire," says Alejandro Grajal, PhD, Woodland Park Zoo President and CEO. "Our employees are incredibly passionate and dedicated, and I am so sorry that we've come to this point. To all our staff, thank you for the way each and every one of you has touched our mission and forever advanced our conservation cause."

Throughout the closure, community members have been staying connected with the nonprofit zoo and its mission through the zoo's popular social media, website, and news features reaching millions of impressions, including [Super Snack Time on Facebook Live](#) every Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. and [Zoo to You](#) education resources online. The zoo is working with city, county, and state health authorities to plan for a reopening this summer with enhanced health and safety protocols.

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