

INTERNATIONAL RHINO KEEPER ASSOCIATION

Keeper Professional Development

Program Guidelines

APPLICANT INFORMATION

***General:***

The International Rhino Keeper Association (IRKA) has developed a

program that will provide rhino keepers the opportunity to expand their

knowledge and husbandry experience. This program has been designed to

enable rhino 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 members.

The IRKA has selected facilities with different management styles to

maximize the keepers’ potential for enhancing their expertise. It is the hope of

the IRKA that the institutions participating in this program will take this

opportunity to share their trials, tribulations, triumphs and successes with their

professional colleagues. At this time, the hosting institutions are: Busch Gardens

Tampa, Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Gardens, The Wilds, Fossil Rim, African Rhino Protection Initiative,

White Oak Conservation Center, San Diego Zoo Safari Park, and Denver Zoo. The concept of the

program is quite simple, but we feel it is an invaluable tool for expanding the

skills of rhino keepers by providing them the opportunity to work alongside their

colleagues and learn the nuances of that institution’s husbandry practices.

***Approval process:***

The keeper participating in this program must not only have their

institution’s authorization, but agreement to pay their wages. The institution’s

approval requires that employee is covered by their institution’s workmen’s

compensation and will provide documentation of personal health insurance. This

will provide assurance that the hosting institution will not be liable to cover

medical costs.

When application has been approved, there will be a fee of $10 to be

contributed to the IRKA scholarship fund.

Submission criteria:

Completed application should be sent to Keeper Professional Development

Chairperson, Joe Hauser

E-mail Address: Joe.Hauser@TxRhino.org

***Funding program:***

• Requires completion of a funding application available through our website

• There is a limited reimbursement funding program available for expenses

incurred during this program.

• Applications must be received by January 1st through June 1st for program

participation occurring in the first six months of the year and June 2 through

December 1st for program participation during the later part of the year.

• Funding applications will not be kept on file

• Individuals receiving financial support from IRKA, will be required to submit a

brief summary of their experiences, etc. to organization newsletter, The

Crash, for inclusion in future issue.

***INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION***

Responsibilities of the keeper’s institution:

It will be the responsibility of the keeper’s institution, or the keeper him/

herself, to cover any expenses including travel, housing (if necessary) and food.

The keeper’s supervisor must complete the section of the application in regards

to workman’s compensation plan and information in regards to employee’s

medical coverage. As stated in the application, please include any additional

documentation your institution may require to participate in this program.

***Responsibilities of the hosting institution:***

The International Rhino Keeper Association would simply ask the hosting

institution to be willing to let interested and approved applicants work alongside

their professional staff. We would like each institution to allot a time frame that

they could offer this program to interested individuals and let the association

know their specific details. Each facility’s time allotment will dictate the amount

of time available and subsequently the number of keeper(s) that could participate

in this program. We would also like to solicit input from institutions regarding

options that may be available in regards to housing in an attempt to reduce the

expense(s) to the participants. We would also ask that these institutions provide

any additional documentation that might be required so they can be completed in

a timely manner. The final decision regarding applicant’s acceptance into the

program is based on input by the hosting institution. A candidate for the program

can be rejected by the hosting institution, even though they may have already

received approval from their institution and/or IRKA. Hosting institution will not

be responsible for employee’s wages during keeper professional development at

their institution.