



# AAZK Chapter Resources: Chapter Formation

*Produced by the AAZK Resource Committee*



*This document was produced to help answer common questions faced by AAZK Chapters. The goal of this resource is to act as a guideline that completely and systematically answers common chapter questions with the understanding that all chapters are run differently. This information may serve as a companion, but not as an alternative, to the AAZK National Operations Manual.*

## **How is an AAZK Chapter formed?**

### **Gauge interest and set goals <sup>1</sup>**

- Reach out to fellow keepers, educators, and other staff to gauge interest in forming an AAZK Chapter
- Inquire with staff at nearby zoological facilities to see if they would like to join a multi-institutional chapter
- Talk to your manager/curator at your facility and ask if your institution would be interested in supporting an AAZK Chapter as a “host institution/facility”
  - Explain what the goals of the chapter would be and how that would benefit the institution
    - Outline what chapter support may be required from the institution
      - Examples: meeting space, storage, advertisements on grounds
    - The chapter may provide alternate funding for professional development for chapter members
    - Provide volunteers for the facility’s local conservation projects
    - Run conservation or enrichment activity booths at facility events

### **Determine goals for starting a chapter <sup>1</sup>**

- Each chapter will run differently and have its own set of goals.
- Examples of Goals:
  - Fundraise for AAZK conservation projects such as Bowling for Rhinos or Trees for You and Me and/or other non-profit organizations or registered charities
  - Professional development for chapter members
  - Networking with AAZK members and chapters and/or other zoological facilities
  - Fundraise for host facility animal enrichment funds or enrichment workshops for chapter members
  - Educate the public about conservation issues or the zoo keeper profession
  - Social events for chapter members
  - A combination of any or all of the above

**When you’re ready to begin the process, contact the National AAZK office about starting a chapter by emailing [Ed.Hansen@aazk.org](mailto:Ed.Hansen@aazk.org) <sup>1</sup>**



## Formal Steps to the Creation of a Chapter <sup>1</sup>

- Apply to AAZK Administrative Office for a *Chapter Charter*
- Application should include:
  - Letter of Inquiry to form an AAZK Chapter
  - Formal (proposed) name of the chapter
  - Contact information of proposed chapter (Mailing address, phone, and email)
  - Primary (parent) facility associated with the chapter
  - A letter of support from the Host Facility (optional)
  - List of proposed chapter officers and their titles
- Applications from Students for a Chapter have additional requirements <sup>1</sup>
- Application Process will take approximately 30 days <sup>2</sup>
- It is mandatory that no one in the organizing group, publicly or officially represent themselves or the group as an official chapter of AAZK until the application has been approved
- Once the application is approved you will receive an official chapter formation packet from National AAZK

## Elect Chapter Officers and Select Titles

- Upon the ratification of the *Chapter Charter* by the AAZK Board of Directors all Chapter Officers shall be members of AAZK in good standing
- Typically includes President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer
  - *See the Chapter Executive Duties section for more details on each position*
- The officers are responsible for the annual chapter re-charter, financial reporting, and maintaining communication with National AAZK

## Review model AAZK Chapter Constitution and Bylaws <sup>1 & 2</sup>

### *AAZK Chapter Constitution*

- AAZK will provide a “boilerplate” document from which the Chapter will create their Constitution
- Officers will decide on a chapter name to be written into the Chapter Constitution
- All AAZK Chapters must create their AAZK Chapter Constitution or may adopt and abide by bylaws of National AAZK <sup>1</sup>

### *Chapter Bylaws <sup>1</sup>*

- AAZK will provide a “boilerplate” document from which the Chapter will create their Bylaws
  - Bylaws can be customized or amended to meet the needs of the chapter
- Amendments to bylaws require a vote by a quorum of chapter members (the minimum number of members that must be present at meetings to make the proceedings of that meeting valid)
  - Any additional proposed amendments should be presented in writing to the Chapter 30 days prior to voting
- Amendments to chapter bylaws cannot affect the content of the AAZK Chapter Constitution

### *National Association Bylaws can be found in the AAZK Operations Manual*

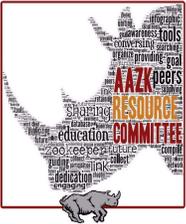
- The manual can be found after logging in to the members section of the website
  - Select publications and forum tab



- Select Operations Manual
    - The AAZK Operations Manual is updated infrequently. The current version of an AAZK Policy may be obtained by contacting AAZK Administrative Offices at [Ed.Hansen@aazk.org](mailto:Ed.Hansen@aazk.org)
- 

## **Citations**

1. AAZK Operations Manual (8.01-8.05)
  2. AAZK website: [www.aazk.org](http://www.aazk.org)
- 



The AAZK Resource Committee’s Chapter and Networking Resource Team is responsible for the content and production of this document.

For questions, clarification, or suggestions for future resources, contact: [arc@aazk.org](mailto:arc@aazk.org).