



# AAZK Resource: How to Form an AAZK Chapter



*The goal of this resource is to act as a guideline that completely and systematically answers common questions for interested AAZK members in forming an AAZK Chapter, 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.*

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## **Eligibility to Form an AAZK Chapter<sup>1</sup>**

### **Gauge interest and set goals**

- 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.

## **Chapter Formation Guidelines<sup>2</sup>**

### **Determine Goals for Starting a Chapter**

- 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.

### **Formal Steps to the Creation of a Chapter**

- 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.
- Application Process will take approximately 30 days.
- 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.

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<sup>1</sup> AAZK Operations Manual | Section 8.01 | Chapter Eligibility Policy

<sup>2</sup> AAZK Operations Manual | Section 8.01-2 | Chapter Formation Guidelines

## **Chapter Standardization**<sup>3</sup>

### **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**

#### *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.

#### *Chapter Bylaws*

- 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*

- AAZK.org/Members Login
  - Resources
    - AAZK Operations
      - 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

**When you're ready to begin the process, contact the National AAZK office by emailing [Ed.Hansen@aazk.org](mailto:Ed.Hansen@aazk.org)**

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<sup>3</sup> AAZK Operations Manual | Section 8.01-3 | Chapter Standardization

*The American Association of Zoo Keepers & The AAZK Resource Committee 2018*

*For questions, clarifications, or suggestions, contact [arc@aazk.org](mailto:arc@aazk.org)*