



Public Programs Manager

Department: Education

Supervisor: Education Director

Supervises: 1-4 part-time Teacher Naturalists

Schedule: Full-time exempt; variable schedule Wednesday – Sunday

Compensation/Benefits: \$45,000 annually. The position offers health insurance including medical, dental, and vision; paid vacation and sick leave; paid holidays; and a 403(b) retirement fund-matching program.

Application Deadline: August 21, 2026

Summary

Ljams Nature Center is seeking a driven, knowledgeable, passionate Public Programs Manager to help shape the future of public education at the nature center. This full-time position is responsible for managing, developing, delivering, and evaluating engaging nature programs for a wide variety of audiences, including partnerships with community organizations, grant-funded programs, cohort-based education programs, professional education workshops, ticketed public programs, and special events. This position leads staff and volunteers in robust community science efforts including operating a songbird banding station, hosting City Nature Challenge, and designing conservation monitoring efforts. This position serves as a key leader on the Education Team, by serving as the direct supervisor of 1-4 part-time and seasonal staff and being an active voice within the organization as it pertains to public program development.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Lead the planning, implementation, and evaluation of public education programs, including partnerships with community organizations, grant-funded programs, cohort-based education programs, professional education workshops, ticketed public programs, and special events.
- Develop new educational experiences and programs that support Ljams Nature Center's mission and vision.
- Oversee the coordination, staffing, and operation logistics for evening, weekend, and seasonal education programs.
- Coordinate program calendars and staffing plans to ensure successful delivery of a variety of programs throughout the year.
- Provide excellent customer service to nature center visitors, program participants, team members, and volunteers.

- Assist collaboratively within Education Department and Ijams Nature Center programming to support initiatives led by Early Learning Programs, Youth Programs, fundraisers, and special events.
- Train and handle captive ambassador animals and facilitate educational animal encounters.
- Work closely with the Volunteer Manager to train and manage volunteers to carry out community science initiatives in alignment with Ijams Nature Center's conservation management efforts.
- Lead, mentor, and manage 1-4 part-time and seasonal educators, including hiring, training, supervision, and performance evaluation.
- Foster a positive, collaborative work environment that promotes autonomy, accountability, and professional growth.
- Under the guidance of the Education Director, assist in development of budgets and resource allocation.
- Participate in professional development opportunities including animal care and use, environmental interpretation, environmental education, and non-profit management.
- The employee may be assigned other duties, in alignment with Ijams' vision and mission.

Minimum Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree (or equivalent experience) in environmental education, environmental science, interpretation, wildlife conservation, or related field.
- 3+ years of experience in educational programming, preferably in a nature center, municipal, state or national park, or similar environment, with at least one year of supervisory and leadership experience.
- Strong leadership skills with experience supporting teams and managing projects.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to present information effectively to a variety of audiences.
- Experience developing effective curriculum and lesson plans.
- Excellent organizational and time management skills.
- Experience in developing and reporting on grants.
- Ability to work evenings, weekends, and holidays as needed.
- Valid driver's license and ability to be insured and operate facility vehicles.
- First Aid/CPR certification (or the ability to obtain certification upon employment)

Preferred Qualifications

- Master's degree (or equivalent experience) in environmental education, environmental science, interpretation, wildlife conservation, or related field.
- 2+ years of leadership experience leading diverse, dynamic teams
- Demonstrated experience operating a songbird banding station or songbird bander certification
- Animal-handling experience

- Wilderness First Aid or Wilderness First Responder Certification
- Ability to speak, read, and/or write Spanish

Physical Requirements

- The position works in both indoor and outdoor environments with the public, in varying weather conditions. Conditions may include heat and humidity, rain, biting/stinging insects, and muddy trails.
- Ability to lift and carry or otherwise move up to 50 pounds, regularly performing physical tasks.
- Ability to traverse over uneven or irregular terrain, including rocky, slippery trails.

About Ijams Nature Center

Ijams Nature Center is a nonprofit nature center located on the banks of the Tennessee River near Knoxville's urban center. Its mission is to encourage stewardship of the natural world by providing an urban greenspace for people to learn about and enjoy the outdoors through engaging experiences. Ijams Nature Center provides access to the public through over 335 acres of land with more than 14 miles of trails, Visitor Center, Mead's Quarry lake, mountain biking trails, river access, and gardens. Visit ijams.org for current program information.

Equal Opportunity Employment

Ijams Nature Center is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against employees or job applicants on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national origin, mental or physical disability, veteran status, or any other status or condition protected by applicable state or federal laws. These anti-discrimination policies also apply to volunteers and program recipients. Ijams Nature Center provides reasonable accommodations to all applicants and employees. Applicants with disabilities may request reasonable accommodation at any point in the employment process.

To Apply

Send a resume, cover letter, and three professional references (*will not be contacted without notice*) to Paige Crane, Ijams Education Director, at education@ijams.org.