

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

# Introduction

Lincoln Park Zoo is a historic, 49-acre zoo located in the heart of Chicago and the nation’s only privately-managed free admission zoo. It has approximately 294 fulltime and seasonal employees. Lincoln Park Zoo cares for nearly 200 species and welcomes 3.6 million visitors annually from around the world. It is committed to the Chicago communities, offering camps, programs and events year-round.

# Overview

A Chicago tradition for many families since 1995, ZooLights is Lincoln Park Zoo’s holiday light show, and it’s our favorite and our best attended event with around half a million guests annually.

ZooLights consists of around 200 displays punctuating a winter wonderland of lit trees across our central grounds. ZooLights welcomes around 600,000 guests per year. Its main installations are on the Main Mall (big, densely-lit displays) and the South Lawn (animated light show). We have also historically hosted visits with Santa in Helen Brach Primate House and installed a 25’ tall tree inside the Great Hall of Pepper Family Wildlife Center. Beyond that, we are able to be flexible with placement of other displays and lights. Our goal is always to produce the event with a neighborhood/community feel and plenty of “wow” and shareable moments.

For many years, ZooLights was free for all to attend. However, after our temporary closures during the Covid-19 pandemic, we had to update the model. Now, ZooLights costs $5 for guests to attend from Tuesdays through Sundays. It remains free on Mondays. This cost is significantly less than many other holiday light shows, and it limits our budget somewhat to produce the event. But, in line with our commitment to keep the zoo free for daily visits, it remains important to Lincoln Park Zoo to remain accessible to as many people as possible while still funding the event and raising enough money to help keep the zoo free for daily visits during the rest of the year.

ZooLights typically begins the Friday before Thanksgiving and runs for approximately 40 days. The event is from 4:30-10 p.m. nightly. All displays, lights, and special activations must be on by 4:15 p.m. nightly, and zoo relies on contractor to turn lights on daily and/or to work with zoo to plan otherwise. All displays, lights, and special activations must be installed and working on or before the Tuesday before Thanksgiving in time for a full walk-through with zoo management and contractor. Contractor must provide a technician to staff the event nightly in the event that any issues need fixing. In the event that the Contractor operates out of state, a locally based third-party technician may be considered. This person should plan to be on-site throughout the duration of the event each night.

# Project Scope

Lincoln Park Zoo is seeking an experienced firm to design, acquire/fabricate, install, maintain, and store all aspects of lighting, displays, and illuminated activations at ZooLights at Lincoln Park Zoo. We are willing to consider multiple firms who are experts in one or more of these areas, so proposals to cover some but not all aspects of the above will also be accepted. For example, if your company only wants to install the lights but not design the concepts, you may bid on installation only.

The zoo is looking to award a five-year contract for this work.

This request for proposals seeks a firm or firms to assist Lincoln Park Zoo in updating (and potentially reimagining) ZooLights while maintaining its neighborhood charm and continuing to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of animals in our care. The firm or firms will help zoo staff and stakeholders with lighting concepts and design, finding new ways to incorporate our historic facility into the experience, enhancing accessibility and inclusion at the event, and refreshing the overall experience to offer something new—or, at minimum, with new standout elements—each year. Ideally, candidates will also be able to handle logistics, installation, and breakdown of the event as well. We are especially interested in a firm or firms that have a current inventory of light displays that can help us change up what we offer year over year, and who have the ability to deliver/remove/store in the off-season all elements used for the activation.

Bidders should also be ready to work with several different teams at the zoo; while the central relationship will be with the Events team, our partner will also get to know Animal Care, Horticulture, Operations, and Guest Services, among others.

Please note Lincoln Park Zoo currently owns our inventory of holiday lights, including LED strands used to wrap trees and displays ranging from large structural elements to mini lanterns. We have 3D and 2D displays, a couple hundred feet of LED or RGB light tunnels, and still and moving displays. A full inventory of working ZooLights elements will be available to bidders following our 2022 season (we are conducting a new inventory this year to ensure we can provide bidders with the most current information). Bidders will be expected to use at least some elements of this inventory as they are traditional elements of the event, but we are also open to new activations and products. New lights/displays must fit within and be paid using the annual budget. We are also open to leasing/renting displays from firms who have them available. Finally, we would be open to discussing the sale or rental of our inventory for other displays if a bidding firm is interested in expanding your collection and has other elements that could be used at Lincoln Park Zoo.

The Lincoln Park Zoo Events team is available to meet with prospective partners for informational or exploratory conversations between October 10 and December 9. Bidders are welcome and encouraged to attend ZooLights 2022 and walk the event with LPZ Events staff to learn more about our facility, layout, and current activations. ZooLights 2022 begins on November 19 and runs through January 1.

A timeline of the proposal process is below.

The zoo’s budget for this project is $450,000/year, flexible if the overall proposal adds value. As a nonprofit institution, we cannot guarantee we will be able to fund overages.

Appendices:

[Appendix A](#AppendixA): Additional Context for Working with Lincoln Park Zoo

[Appendix B](#AppendixB): Tree and Display Lighting Information

[Appendix C](#AppendixC): Sample list of contract duties

[Appendix D](#AppendixD): Sample ZooLights site plan

This document is meant to serve as a set of guidelines for proposals and should not necessarily be considered inclusive of all work needed, or exclusive of other options bidders may have available. While we are not open to changing the branding of the event, we are open to ideas to evolve what ZooLights looks and feels like.

# Logistics

Project Schedule:

RFP Released: November 2022

Lincoln Park Zoo team available to host interested bidders at 2022 ZooLights: November 28-December 30, 2022

Proposals Due: September 29, 2023 by 5:00 p.m. (late submissions not accepted)

Interviews: Weeks of October 16 and 23, 2023

Decision communicated: Early November, 2023

Kick Off: May vary according to proposal/partnership; in general during ZooLights 2023

Submission Requirements

* Overview of the company’s organization and capabilities:
  + Experience developing holiday events: number of years and/or events
  + Company ability to deliver holistic, themed, immersive experience utilizing décor, tree wrapping, production lighting, A/V etc
  + Inclusion of immersive photo opportunities, RGB technology, interactive exhibits etc, as applicable\*
  + Opportunity for décor specifically themed for Lincoln Park Zoo\*
  + Company approach to planning, design, install, maintenance, removal, and storage of event, including information on in-house ability to repair and otherwise maintain displays and lights
  + How company works with clients and manages the project.
  + Ability to show renderings for each year’s event
  + Ability to grow and evolve event for a new experience each year
  + Commitment to sustainability: what type of lights? Any other considerations? Energy efficient lights, such as LEDs, are preferred.
  + Skills, services, certifications, licenses, tools, equipment, philosophies, processes or any other information that might differentiate your company from others
* Information regarding bidder’s status as an MBE Minority-, WBE Woman-, or DBE disabled veteran-owned business, and company diversity statement, as applicable.
* Information on liability, vehicular, and worker’s comp insurance
* A summary of the company’s training program for employees, as well as number of FT and PT employees that would be assigned to the zoo. Successful bidders must comply with the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act.
* Detailed timeline for planning, design, install, maintenance, removal, with associated budget and pay schedule
* A list of current and past references from company’s clients that have similar requirements to those of Lincoln Park Zoo.
* Any other information that will help the zoo assess the potential relationship.
* Any other information pertinent to Schedule A.

Submission Inquiries and Delivery

* The preferred format is PDF.
* If you have any questions between now and September 29, 2023, please email Gretchen Kirchmer at gkirchmer@lpzoo.org.
* Please submit your proposals to Gretchen Kirchmer by September 29, 2023 by 5:00 p.m. in PDF format. Late submittals will not be accepted.

**Appendix** **A: Additional Context for Partnership with Lincoln Park Zoo**

**General Maintenance**

This project requires contractor to design, build, install, and maintain all pieces of equipment related to ZooLights. Typically, ZooLights is a year-round endeavor and Lincoln Park Zoo relies on contractor to research new ideas and pricing, as well as maintain equipment throughout the year.

All work must be done within zoo regulations and policies, and contractor must ensure the health and safety of staff, guests, animals, and gardens (note the majority of work is often done when the zoo is open to the public, so safety is our top priority). Our partner may need to communicate with multiple teams at the zoo, including Animal Care, Facilities, and Guest Services in addition to Events. Working in the early morning, evening, and in cold weather is also likely necessary.

**Storage**

Lincoln Park Zoo agrees to allow our ZooLights partner to use:

* Up to six (6) parking spaces in the zoo’s parking lot from August 1 through March 31 for each season of ZooLights.
* Up to 3 shipping containers (20x8x8) for sole purpose of storing contractor-owned items used solely at Lincoln Park Zoo, as needed
* If contractor uses zoo-provided storage for storage or as a work area, contractor is responsible for maintaining that space just as you would if you stored off-site.

**Equipment**

* In the past, contractors needed the following equipment to install ZooLights  
  (1) 65’ articulating and telescoping 4x4 aerial lift
* (5) 42’ articulating and telescoping bucket trucks
* (2) 8’ golf carts
* 5,000 amp mig welder
* 20 gallon air compressors
* (6) high-grade paint guns
* Complete mechanic's chest of tools
* Complete carpenter's chest of power tools
* Complete electrician's chest of tools
* Complete welder's chest of tools
* Complete rigger's chest of tools
* 80 miles of electrical cabling
* (20) 3 phase, 100 amp - outdoor rated (3r panels) panels with 40 individual, 20 amp circuits per panel, painted green
* 3,000’ of 2.5, marine rated cable with (40) Hubbell ends to match
* Other items may be necessary as well

**Ap****pendix B: Tree and Display Lighting Information**

Contractor will light as many trees as possible within budget, electrical capacities, and tree’s ability to support the lights. Trees are wrapped rather than decorated with lights swagged through trees. Colors options include clear, red, green, blue, orange, yellow, pink, purple, and multi. Below is an estimate of trees in each area.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Area** | **# of trees** |
| Ice Carving | 5 |
| East Gate | 8 |
| AT&T Endangered Species Carousel | 6 |
| Pepper Family Wildlife Center | 6 |
| Main Mall | 8 |
| Landmark Café | 16 |
| Lionel Train Adventure | 5 |
| McCormick Swan Pond | 5 |
| Regenstein Small Mammal-Reptile House | 3 |
| Kovler Seal Pool | 5 |
| Pritzker Family Children's Zoo | 25 |
| Park Place Café | 25 |
| Helen Brach Primate House | 3 |
| Regenstein Center for African Apes | 32 |
| Camel & Zebra - West | 26 |
| Camel & Zebra - South | 14 |
| Camel & Zebra - East | 13 |
| Café Brauer (Patio, trees in circle drive, tree trunks by gardener's cottage) | 16 |
| West Gate Tree | 1 |
|  |  |
| **Total** | **235** |

# http://www.lpzoo.org/slideshows/zoolights-2012/images/ZL2012_3.jpg

[](http://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CAcQjRw&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lovechristmaslights.com%2Fblog%2Fhow-to-hang-christmas-lights&ei=MsrcVL-AO42VyATrvIKgBg&bvm=bv.85761416,d.aWw&psig=AFQjCNFwTnJYJDN-hu5q79rPE8ANEd1PeQ&ust=1423842179180948)

YES

NO

**Displays**

The below list provides a rough inventory of the major displays the zoo has on hand. Contractor may suggest using these or not, and zoo is open to discussion of donating some displays to contractor in lieu of additional budget.

Over seventy (70) 2D and 3D still and animated displays are spread across zoo grounds. Each has lights and wire on them and needs to be maintained/repaired before they are installed. This process is lengthy and time-consuming as pieces must be transported throughout the zoo. Strict guidelines must be followed to ensure work is being done safely for our animals, staff and guests.

Each display is tested and assessed to see what needs fixing that year. Many displays get remanufactured (sanded, primed, painted and rewired with all new C7/C9 wire). After this process, displays will go back into custom-built storage so as to preserve them for as long as possible.

For display installation, currently a special trailer with custom built racks is required to move them without causing any damage. Zoo event staff works with contractor on exact installation locations, if a design consultant is not part of the contract. Often installation locations are very difficult and need additional support or building of platforms to ensure stability (i.e. use of sandbags).

**Light Tunnels**

The zoo has approximately 100 feet of LED light tunnel, and another 100 feet of RGB light tunnel (new in 2022). Each tunnel requires a different style of mini light installation (in total, almost 1,000 sets of lights), as each set of lights is controlled by computer programming.

**South Lawn Light Show**

This involves over 3,000 sets of lights, 40 different moving pieces, thousands of feet of cable, 2 sound systems, weeks of programming, and weeks of installation and tear down. It is currently the most involved display at the zoo.

**Seal “Wall”**

This project features seals that "swim" along the wall. The main element is the “water” which consists of more than 400 sets of blue lights custom programmed using over 6 LOR controllers.

**Sea Monster**

This display shows a “Loch Ness Monster”-style sea creature lit to appear as if it is half in, half out of the water. It is usually the only display installed in the Nature Boardwalk area.

**Dragon**

This display features a large arch as a “dragon neck” with the dragon breathing fire. This is an animated display that is often used in combination with large swaths of lights to enhance its size and scope.

**Snow Carriage**

The carriage is a pre-made, steel structure that requires seasonal maintenance including sanding, painting, tapping and dyeing the screw holes, buying new hardware to put it together and re-canvasing the top. Once it is put together, it must be decorated with custom pieces and a special snowflake grid suspended in the ceiling.

**“Cathedral”**

The Cathedral is really a set of four half-arches, each about 20’ high. They can be combined in various ways to create unique structures.

**Snowy’s Spirits & S’more**

Bird’s Eye Bar & Grill transforms into a holiday pop-up during ZooLights. An LED grid is installed and programmed in the ceiling as an anchor of the holiday decor.

**Light Maze**

Foreman Pavilion hosts a light maze annually. 4’ net lights are installed along zoo-provided fencing, and floor-to-ceiling lights provide the east edge. Zoo punctuates lights with holiday décor within maze.

**Large Trees**

These trees are close to entry points and each receives the LED snow tube light treatment. Requires a 65’articulating and telescoping aerial lift. Lights are connected in series and programmed by computer controllers. These trees are located at the East Gate, Café Brauer, and West Gate.

**Rope Lights**

Throughout the zoo, half inch, warm white rope light is used to illuminate pathways, railings and areas that receive very little light. Wrapping the railings is time consuming and at the end of every season, the rope light needs to be cut out and recycled if it cannot be reused (reusing is preferable).

**Icicle Lights/Net Lights**

Throughout the zoo, ½ inch icicle lighting is used to illuminate pathways, railings and areas that receive very little light.

**Light Trees/Leekos/Gels/Bulbs/Par Cans**

Gobos project sponsor logos and must be be custom ordered every year. In addition, there are light trees to be positioned in various locations on different days to illuminate tents, cars, etc. Lifts and special rigging equipment is required. Colored gels are added to many existing light fixtures throughout the zoo, as well as par cans and other lighting fixtures.

**Appendix** **C: Sample Contract Duties**

**Contract Duties**

Vendor shall provide skilled services to LPZ as hereinafter set forth. At all times Vendor shall collectively use its knowledge, experience, and expertise to expeditiously and cost effectively deliver the optimal mix of skills and resources to evaluate, develop, design, and execute solutions which support LPZ’s business and operational requirements.

Vendor is tasked with installing, taking and reporting inventory, co-producing and breaking down/storing ZooLights at Lincoln Park Zoo for the contracted seasons. This includes, but is not limited to:

* Partnering with zoo staff on layout and design of ZooLights
* Install lights on approximately 230 trees at LPZ, for density of lit trees to meet Vendor and LPZ satisfaction standards.
* Install approximately 200 displays at LPZ according to layout/design plans.
* Install all necessary fixtures with sponsor logos/recognition.
* Install temporary power across grounds.
* Install and program all lightboards, dimmer packs, and other necessary equipment for light shows at LPZ including the South Lawn show, Snowy’s Spirits & S’more, Main Mall and other light tunnels, and nightly “Light Up the Lawn” activation. Vendor agrees not to drive trucks, carts, or any other vehicle or heavy machinery on South Lawn during install or breakdown.
* Install all fixtures and displays for various concepts to activate ZooLights concepts throughout Zoo grounds.
* Install fresh concepts for Main Mall.
* Light entire area around Camel/Zebra area
* Light entire area around Rhino/Polar Bear/Penguin
* Light entire area around Pepper Family Wildlife Center
* Light Main Mall/Carousel /East Side of Seal Pool / Landmark Café area
* Light area around Foreman Pavilion and Small Mammal-Reptile House, and other areas not covered by specific animal listings above
* Light East and West gates as main visitor entrances, light Bus Drop-Off and Brauer gates as secondary entrances
* Light Bird’s Eye Bar & Grill to activate Snowy’s Spirits & S’more concept
* Light area surrounding Café Brauer (patio trees, posts on patio, and 3 trees in parking circle) and path to Farm-in-the-Zoo
* Provide a sensory-friendly concept and program (no music, no blinking lights) for one full night.
* Install stage lighting on ice carving stage
* Install “Happy New Year” sign on stage trellis between Dec. 26 and 28
* Install Light Maze at Foreman Pavilion
* Conduct walk-throughs at key points throughout install to update zoo staff on progress.
* Maintain and troubleshoot displays through event dates.
* Upon completion of ZooLights 2022, complete inventory of zoo- and vendor-owned assets and deliver inventory to zoo staff.

Vendor will provide all electrical distribution, cabling, and other necessary equipment.

Vendor will provide all necessary lifts, vehicles, and fuel.

Vendor will provide all labor for installation, maintenance, and removal within an approved schedule.

Vendor will provide personnel with appropriate qualifications and provide necessary training to perform the required Contract Duties. Vendor will maintain a staffing schedule that is responsive to LPZ’s operating schedule and maintenance needs.

Contract does not include emergency fixes that are not the fault of Vendor. If Vendor does damage zoo property in install, activation, or breakdown of event, Vendor agrees to notify LPZ immediately and fix.

**Dates & Times of Agreement**

July 1, YEAR through March 31, YEAR

**ZOOLIGHTS Sample Schedule**

Setup for this event cannot start until or after August 1, YEAR. All items must be removed from grounds and/or stored safely in an appropriate location by April 15, YEAR, or as mutually agreed upon in writing.

ZooLights dates and times subject to change

General Event Dates (4:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.)

* November 2022: 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30
* December 2022: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31
* January 2023: 1

Special Events (times vary)

November 17 – CEO preview 7-8 p.m.

November 18 – Member and Staff preview 4:30-10 p.m.

Date TBD – Sensory-friendly night 4:30-6:30 p.m

December 1 – BrewLights, 6-10 p.m.

December 14 – Members Only night 4:30-10 p.m.

December 15 – Adults Night Out: Holidaze 6:30-10 p.m.

December 31 – Zoo Year’s Eve, 10 p.m.-12:30 a.m.

By November 15, 2022, 95 percent of the event setup should be completed and the South Lawn music/light show should be in working condition. Vendor crews are permitted to continue work for maintenance and enhancement once ZooLights begins, however be aware of guest traffic at all times the zoo is open.

By November 17, 2022, 100 percent of the event should be completed and all pieces functioning.

**Terms of Payment**

Payments will be made in installments and based on select “milestones” within the project lifecycle. Budget must cover all purchases, labor, and other work/needs from Vendor. Any overage must be approved in advance in writing.

Payment 1: Vendor to invoice LPZ for deposit to be paid to Vendor within 30 days of both parties signing this contract.

Payment 2: When Vendor has completed placement and successful power connection of all special event panels around event space, Vendor must notify LPZ and schedule a walk-through to ensure completion. When LPZ approves this phase, Vendor will invoice LPZ for this amount and receive payment on terms Net30.

Payment 3: This will be paid out within 30 days following successful lighting installation in all the trees around the event space, but before completion of the special projects. Vendor must notify LPZ and schedule a walk-through for approval, then invoice LPZ.

Payment 4: Balance will be delivered after the event has been completed, all projects have been broken down, and all materials have been removed from the event space/job site. This requires LPZ approval of cleanliness of storage areas and repacking containers. Vendor may invoice LPZ upon LPZ approval.

Any additional lighting maintenance for special events will be invoiced separately to Meg Hein or Gretchen Kirchmer for approval before payment.

Important Notice: As a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization in the state of Illinois, LPZ is not required to pay any form of state sales tax on purchases of materials used by the LPZ. To make purchases as an agent of LPZ, and on its behalf Vendor may be asked to supply a tax exemption letter. A copy of this letter can be obtained from LPZ management upon request. LPZ will not reimburse sales tax if charged for any items associated with the Project.

LPZ will provide complimentary parking, within reason, during install, activation, and tear-down of the event. LPZ does not reimburse vendors for any parking fees associated with parking or utilizing the LPZ parking lot when parking dates/times fall outside of official business requirements.

**Miscellaneous**

1. Any special needs or arrangements, including electrical, must be approved by LPZ staff.

2. Vendor will not be allowed onto zoo grounds or inside venue before prior to pre-arranged time. All equipment must be delivered the day of event and removed at the end of the function unless otherwise approved by LPZ staff.

3. Venue must be fully cleaned by the Vendor after use (pertaining to Vendor’s area and involvement). Inadequate cleaning will result in a cleaning fine.

4. While on site at event, Vendor assumes the responsibility of acting as a representative of

LPZ. Adult content and excessive inappropriate language and/or behavior will not be tolerated and will be fined and/or could lead to a voided contract.

5. LPZ has the right to require Vendor to remove from its work force assigned to the Property, any employees deemed incompetent, careless, or otherwise objectionable, or whose actions are deemed contrary to public interest or inconsistent with the best interest of the Property.

6. Vendor assures action shall be taken promptly, and all cases within 24 hours, to resolve any complaints which the LPZ may have regarding Vendor's performance.

7. Vendor assures that its employees are properly trained and equipped for the tasks it is responsible for.

8. Vendor agrees to use only those vendors listed on the Approved Vendor List. Sub-contracting of nonapproved vendors must be approved by LPZ.

9. Vendor is expected to supply its staff with all needed tools, uniforms, equipment, cell phones and additional communications equipment to execute tasks as defined in the Contract Duties. Use of LPZ’s tools, vehicles and equipment for Contract Duties will be provided at the LPZ’s discretion.

10. Vendor shall prepare, maintain, and make available to LPZ records and documentation of the operation and maintenance of the Property.

11. Vendor will report on a daily basis any defects, damage or irregularities to LPZ property or equipment for which it is responsible to service and maintain. The report will be delivered to LPZ management for entry into work order system.

12. Vendor may elect to use proprietary or commercially available software to accomplish its record keeping and reporting requirements. Vendor is responsible for purchasing, acquiring and maintaining such software and resulting data in its most currently available edition. Vendor is responsible for acquiring and maintaining all hardware necessary for the proper operation of its implemented software. All records and reports prepared by Vendor shall be the property of LPZ and shall be turned over to LPZ in digital format where available upon the expiration or termination of the Agreement. All software/ hardware the Vendor purchases is not reimbursable by the LPZ and is considered part of the overhead costs associated with performing the Contract Duties.

13. LPZ reserves the right to choose vendors, substitute similar products and place large items out for bid.

14. If the Vendor employs a subcontractor for specific services, Vendor must identify the subcontractor and its tasks to LPZ. Vendor must cause the subcontractor to provide the LPZ with insurance certificates complying with no less than the same requirements as Vendor prior to the commencement of its work.

15. Vendor shall not receive any bribes, rebates, compensation, kick back, bounce back, etc. from any outside contractor that the LPZ decides to hire whether or not the Vendor suggested and influenced the decision to use that Sub-Contractor or Vendor.

16. Vendor may be called upon from time to time to act as liaison between the LPZ and the Chicago Park District personnel, City of Chicago personnel, Chicago Police Department, other Vendors, and others. Vendor will act in the LPZ’s best interests to facilitate communications, establish performance standards, and coordinate work performed by such external resources.

17. Complimentary parking, within reason, will be granted during the install, maintenance and breakdown of this event.

**Appendix** **D: Zoo Map**

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