



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Zoo Ball: Wild Everest
Catering

Introduction

Lincoln Park Zoo is a historic, 49-acre zoo located in the heart of Chicago. One of the most popular cultural destinations in Illinois and the only privately managed free zoo in the United States, Lincoln Park Zoo cares for 175 species, employs approximately 300 full-time and seasonal workers, and welcomes 3 million visitors annually from across the globe.

Overview

The mission of the Women's Board of Lincoln Park Zoo is to actively raise funds to keep the zoo free while supporting its capital, conservation, and education efforts. We serve as ambassadors to the community, celebrating Chicago's most treasured wildlife experience.

The Women's Board works to provide funds and volunteer services to Lincoln Park Zoo. Members are civic, social, and business leaders from Chicago and surrounding suburbs, comprised of approximately 115 members. Since its privatization in 1995, the Women's Board has raised millions of dollars for the zoo and has contributed significantly to key capital projects. Zoo Ball is the zoo's largest fundraiser, having been hosted by the Women's Board since 1977.

Project Scope

We are seeking an experienced catering company to provide food, beverage, and labor. The company will also manage equipment and linen rentals for the Women's Board's annual gala, Zoo Ball.

The event has historically had an attendance of approximately 700 guests. It occurs annually on the second Friday of July and has a reputation of being “the party of the summer” in Chicago. This proposal should include all food, beverage, and service components of this event.

Work shall be done in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations, and proper certificate of insurance should be provided.

Budget

Please provide a proposal that does not exceed \$172,000.

Requested Donation Considerations:

- 75 boxed dinners for Zoo Ball volunteers, staff, and vendors.
- A catered dinner for 12 guests to be offered as a package in the Zoo Ball Silent Auction

Logistics

Project Schedule:

RFP Released: February 15, 2024

Proposals Due: March 15, 2024

Decision communication date: March 25, 2024

TBD: Tasting

Installation date: Friday, July 12, 2024 (event date)

Breakdown/load out: Immediately following the conclusion of the event (at midnight)

Submission Requirements

The 2024 theme is Wild Everest, celebrating animals that are native to cooler climates such as snow leopards, red pandas, and takins.

The event will begin at 6:30 p.m. with cocktail hour, followed by dinner in satellite dining areas and dancing under a large tent.

Please include itemized pricing for:

- Full bars for cocktail, dinner, and post-dinner/dancing (standard soft drinks, tonic water, and juices will be donated via the zoo’s beverage partner, so do not include those; approx. 5.5 hours)

- Bars will be located in the cocktail area and post-dinner/dancing area and in each dining area
- Passed hors d'oeuvres
- Two-course plated dinner options
- Tableside wine service with dinner
- Passed or station dessert (in the post-dinner/dancing area)
- Passed or station late-night savory food item (in the post-dinner/dancing area)
- Individual table bar carts as optional add-ons

Please note:

- The event has a hard stop at midnight—please estimate your staff and charges accordingly. No overtime or other charges will be paid without prior authorization from the zoo.
- Lincoln Park Zoo is tax-exempt.
- No gratuities or service charges will be paid.
- If there are any additional charges anticipated in the final bill (e.g., a fuel surcharge), please note in your proposal.
- No additional charges will be paid without prior written authorization from the zoo.
- Certain components of this event may be outdoors.
- Please outline delivery and set-up timelines, requirements, and suggestions.
- All seafood must be on the “best choices” list of the Monterey Bay Aquarium Sustainable Seafood Guide.
- Nuts should not be included in any menu items and please limit other high-allergen foods. Propose options that are gluten-free.
- Please avoid suggesting any meat with a “bone-in” presentation.
- Dumpsters and recycling bins will be provided for your kitchen waste. Anything that does not fit within these receptacles should be taken with you at the end of the evening.
- Please itemize costs of individual components of food, beverage, and labor, offering as comprehensive of a price structure as possible. *Linen and equipment rentals are not included in this budget.*

Submission Inquiries and Delivery

- If you have questions, please email Development Events Manager Elizabeth Janicki Smith at ejanicki@lpzoo.org.

- Please submit your proposals to Director of Purchasing Marla Molinelli via email at mmolinelli@lpzoo.org and Development Events Manager Elizabeth Janicki Smith via email at ejanicki@lpzoo.org by March 12. Late proposals will not be accepted.

Selection Criteria

Selection criteria will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Qualifications and experience
- Current and previous similar projects
- Timeline and budget
- Creativity with theme