

PROJECT BRIEF



Project Name: Gage Park Development - Giraffe and Friends

Grant Program: BASE 1.0

Project Date: March 2022 - June 2025

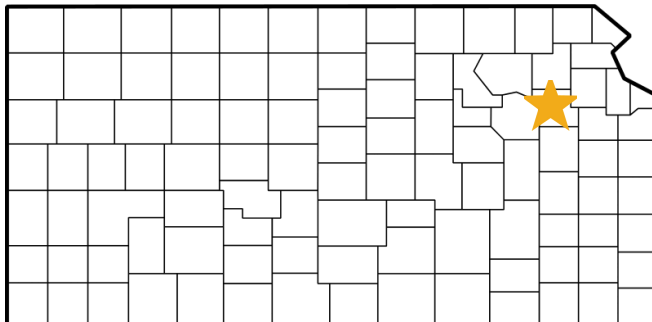
Project Summary

The Topeka Zoo received BASE funds to support the Giraffe and Friends Project, a transformative initiative aimed at revitalizing the Zoo's oldest and most outdated animal habitat—the giraffe enclosure, originally built in 1966. This project aligns with the Zoo's Master Plan to modernize infrastructure and enhance wildlife conservation and education efforts.

The Zoo is a key driver of regional tourism and economic activity. The Giraffe and Friends Project is projected to generate an additional \$44.6 million in economic impact from 2022–2029.

Location

Topeka, Kansas



Grantee Information

The Topeka Zoo and Conservation Center is a leading cultural and educational institution in Northeast Kansas, known for its commitment to wildlife conservation, community engagement, and immersive guest experiences.

Goals and Objectives

Goal: Implement the Topeka Zoo's Master Plan to replace old and outdated infrastructure.

Objective: Replace the giraffe enclosure with a modern enclosure and state-of-the-art visitor experiences.

Budget Overview

- Grant amount: \$3,000,000.00
- Match amount: \$2,083,327.40
- Total project amount: \$5,083,327.40

Expense Categories

- Construction: \$5,083,327.40

Please note, the BASE grant funded only a portion of the project. The overall project budget was \$8.3 million.

Target Population

The target population for this grant are residents in Northeast Kansas who will benefit from the increased tourist activity in the region, as well as visitors themselves who will have access to new immersive guest experiences through indoor viewing decks, and multifunctional event spaces.

Sustainability

- Modernized infrastructure designed for efficiency reduces long-term maintenance and utility costs.
- The new event lawn, with AV capabilities, encourages increased group visits, rentals, and special events, helping offset operational costs through additional income.

Activities and Timeline

BASE funds supported construction costs between Q1 2022 and Q4 2022 while the overall project schedule progressed as follows:

- 2020 - project designs finalized
- June 2021 - ground breaking
- March 2023 - ribbon cutting ceremony and grand opening

Outcomes

The project significantly enhanced the animal welfare and guest experience by creating a modern, spacious habitat for giraffes and African hoof stock, complete with indoor viewing platforms, shaded outdoor areas, and interactive feeding zones. It also improved operational efficiency and visitor access through new infrastructure including animal holding buildings, service areas, and a dedicated group entry plaza, while integrating seamlessly with the existing Camp Cowabunga exhibit to expand educational and recreational opportunities.

Contact Information

For any queries or additional information, please contact

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