

SOUTH FLORIDA WILDLIFE CENTER

PUBLIC RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT INTERNSHIP CURRICULUM

Program Length: 12 Weeks

Commitment: 24 Hours Per Week (288 Hours Total)

Department: Development Department & Executive Leadership

Program Overview

The Public Relations & Development Internship provides hands-on experience in nonprofit communications, public relations, fundraising, donor stewardship, and community engagement. Interns work closely with the Executive Director and Development Department to support organizational messaging, fundraising campaigns, donor communications, media relations, special events, and conservation storytelling.

This internship is designed for students interested in careers in public relations, communications, nonprofit management, fundraising, marketing, community relations, and environmental advocacy.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the internship, participants will be able to:

- Develop professional nonprofit communication skills
- Create compelling stories that support wildlife conservation efforts
- Understand donor engagement and stewardship strategies
- Assist with fundraising campaigns and special events
- Draft media releases and public communications
- Support community partnership development
- Analyze public relations and marketing initiatives
- Understand nonprofit leadership and organizational operations
- Build professional writing, presentation, and networking skills
- Demonstrate ethical communication practices within a nonprofit organization

Weekly Curriculum

Weeks 1–2

Introduction to Nonprofit Communications

- SFWC mission and organizational structure
- Role of public relations in conservation organizations
- Introduction to fundraising and development
- Donor stewardship fundamentals
- Executive leadership shadowing opportunities

Weeks 3–4

Conservation Storytelling and Content Development

- Writing for nonprofit audiences
- Conservation messaging strategies
- Blog writing and impact stories
- Donor-focused communications
- Creating content that supports fundraising initiatives

Weeks 5–6

Fundraising and Donor Relations

- Annual giving programs
- Donor recognition and stewardship
- Sponsorship development
- Grant and fundraising research
- Campaign planning and execution

Weeks 7–8

Media Relations and Public Outreach

- Press releases and media advisories
- Community partnerships
- Public engagement strategies
- Brand management
- Crisis communication fundamentals
- Media Kit Creation

Weeks 9–10

Special Events and Community Engagement

- Event planning and logistics
- Fundraising event support
- Volunteer appreciation and donor recognition events
- Community partnership development
- Sponsorship engagement

Weeks 11–12

Leadership and Nonprofit Management

- Executive leadership insights
- Strategic planning
- Organizational sustainability



- Career pathways in nonprofit leadership
- Professional networking and development

Internship Completion Requirement

As part of the successful completion of the South Florida Wildlife Center Wildlife Nursery Internship Program, interns must complete the following:

1. End-of-Internship Survey

Complete the official South Florida Wildlife Center End-of-Internship Survey to provide feedback regarding your internship experience and help improve future educational opportunities.

2. Final Reflection Project

Choose ONE of the following options:

Option A: Internship Reflection Blog Post

Write a 500–1,000 word blog post discussing:

- Why you chose the internship
- Experiences and skills gained during the program
- Challenges and successes encountered
- Neonatal wildlife care concepts learned
- How the experience contributed to your academic and professional goals
- Advice for future interns

OR

Option B: Professional Presentation

Prepare and deliver a 10–15 minute presentation on nursery operations, orphan care, developmental milestones, species encountered, or lessons learned throughout the internship experience.

Evaluation Criteria

Attendance and Reliability – 25%

Professionalism – 20%

Practical Skills and Participation – 35%

Final Reflection Requirement – 10%

Supervisor Evaluation – 10%