

Financing Municipal Recreation and Parks



A Resource Guide for Recreation, Parks and Conservation
Second Edition

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Authored by Susan E. Landes, CPRE

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
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Preface

Local parks are gathering places for the community. They are where our children learn the value of teamwork while playing. They are where we all learn to appreciate the beauty of our natural environment. They are where neighbors come together to make an impact on their community or to simply enjoy one another's company.



During tough economic times, local recreation and parks services play a greater role in family well being. For example, when money is tight, going out to dinner or taking an expensive vacation may be put off. But parents are unlikely to sacrifice a child's sport because of its perceived value to them. Baseball for their nine-year-old son is seen as a necessity. Parks become even more important as close-to-home, affordable locations for people of all ages looking to spend quality time together, and residents focus on free and low cost community recreation programs.



Family purse strings aren't the only ones being stretched today. Pennsylvania

municipalities are facing very serious economic challenges. As municipal budgets shrink, recreation and parks departments are competing against police, fire and public works departments for crucial funding. Recreation and parks departments are forced to rethink operations as their budgets are slashed.

For municipalities to grow their tax base and increase their budgets, jobs have to be created. For jobs to be created, a community has to be attractive to new or expanded businesses. When businesses decide to locate or grow in a community, one of the primary attributes they look for is quality of life. Quality of life involves things like parks, trails, entertainment and events, activities for families and young adults, and so on – the 'things to do' that every active community needs. These are the very things that local recreation and parks departments do.



Studies show that during tough economic times the public doesn't always favor cutting taxes for recreation and parks. Cutting quality of life services is the wrong approach to offsetting local budget deficits. Doing so deprives citizens of a whole range of inexpensive, healthy and educational activities.

Local facilities and programs provide affordable recreation for working families, and provide opportunities to teach our children about community, sportsmanship and the great outdoors.

In difficult economic times, when personal, business and governmental budgets are being stretched to the limit, focus on the benefits that our local municipal recreation and parks services offer to the community. Now more than ever, it's time to build upon our strength, to do what we do best: deliver quality of life.

Those of us who are responsible for the management of public recreation and parks services work in a monetary environment that's become increasingly more complicated. A day doesn't pass where we don't talk about money... especially the need for more and how to better manage what we have.

This resource guide is designed to help staff and volunteers responsible for managing municipal recreation and parks services wade through the maze of financing possibilities. Whether you are a rookie or an experienced veteran, this publication will be helpful.

The major financing source for Pennsylvania municipal government is taxes. In some Pennsylvania communities, tax dollars fund 100 percent of the costs to provide municipal recreation and parks. In others, citizens are battling just to get some small share of tax dollars to begin recreation and parks services. Many municipalities fall somewhere in between.

While a base of tax funding is essential, local government recreation and parks can greatly expand its funding sources beyond tax dollars. Being aware of the sources available is the first and the easiest step. Learning how to make them work for your community is much harder. It takes time, it takes people...and it takes

money. In other words, "You have to spend money to make money." While this statement is common knowledge in the business world, it's a foreign concept for many Pennsylvania local governments.

Financing recreation and parks is a complex process that extends far beyond obtaining funds, paying bills and generating financial reports. It also concerns the proper mix of revenue sources, making difficult choices between competing resource demands and delivering services effectively and efficiently.

Much of what you will read about in this resource guide has been successfully implemented in communities across Pennsylvania, from the largest to the smallest. There are excellent concepts here that can be adapted to work in any size community. What's important is giving them a try. As the saying goes, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained."



Introduction

There is no magic formula for financing recreation and parks that works for every community. Across Pennsylvania, boroughs, townships and cities located side-by-side with common borders may finance and provide public recreation and parks services very differently. Part of the reason is Pennsylvania's large and fragmented local government system. Our state's large number of very small municipal governments creates many challenges for financing recreation and parks, and the extent of municipal involvement in recreation and parks varies widely across the state. Pennsylvania has some very large, full-service recreation and parks departments, but it has many more municipalities with no municipally-funded recreation services at all. Many municipalities are simply too small to finance recreation facilities and services on their own. Also, municipal boundaries aren't walls. Most of the activities affecting citizens don't follow municipal boundaries. Citizens may live in one municipality, work in a second and shop in a third. Many municipalities provide park areas and recreation services that are enjoyed by residents of neighboring municipalities where these services aren't provided.

Also contributing to the financing puzzle are the many different entities involved in local recreation and parks services. In any Pennsylvania community, recreation services aren't all provided by local government. A wide variety of organizations exist whose purpose includes providing recreation opportunities to their members or to the general public. These agencies include civic and service groups, religious organizations and churches, athletic and cultural groups, youth serving agencies and commercial businesses. Local government is just one of these providers and complements the array of recreation services available in each community.



Where does local government recreation and parks fit in this mix? Our role is to provide public parkland, recreation facilities and recreation programs that guarantee quality recreation experiences for residents. Local government recreation and parks services assure that close-to-home recreation opportunities are accessible and available to every citizen, not just those with the financial and transportation means to pay for and travel to privately-sponsored facilities and activities.

Tax dollars support these public services, but aren't able to finance them alone. Municipalities work in partnership with a range of groups that play a role in offering recreation opportunities and providing and expanding funding for municipal recreation and parks. Understanding the role of each sector in your community – private, non-profit, public – in providing recreation and parks, helps to clarify what your municipal funding should be spent on.

Financing public recreation and parks services is a big subject. Consequently, organizing the text of this publication was a challenge. The basic concepts are presented in each chapter. In many cases, we only scratch the surface of the topics. Sources of assistance and financing resources are included in the appendix for more in-depth information.

Chapter One covers strategies to develop community support for maintaining and increasing funding for recreation and parks. Identifying and communicating the individual and community-wide benefits of recreation and parks is a critical factor in developing financial support. Equally important is how well you quantify and share the impact of your recreation and parks services to your residents and to your elected officials.

Chapter Two presents an overview of the operating and capital budgeting processes and discusses how to present your budget to elected officials and monitor it throughout the year. Guidelines to make budget preparation a useful planning process are also covered.

Pennsylvania's most common non-tax funding source for recreation and parks, fees and charges, is covered next in Chapter Three. The types of fees, pros and cons of charging fees and pricing strategies are reviewed.



Chapter Four discusses the many recreation facilities that produce revenue, from the

traditional outdoor swimming pool to the state-of-the-art recreation center. The use of feasibility studies and enterprise funds are presented.

In Chapter Five, we offer techniques to involve the community, expand revenue sources and increase the amount of income municipalities can generate. Support foundations, friends groups, adoption programs and gift catalogs are covered. Ways to tap the skills and experience of the business sector and solicit business sponsorships are presented in detail.

Government and foundation grants fund land acquisition and park development, recreation programs, planning studies and more. Chapter Six covers where the grants are for recreation and parks and how to get them.

Financing capital projects is covered in Chapter Seven. The use of capital reserve funds, debt financing/borrowing, municipal authorities and lease agreements are overviewed. Because purchasing land is such an expensive undertaking, ways to acquire parkland and open space are also covered.

Financing isn't just about bringing in revenue; equally as important is spending the money in a cost-effective, efficient way. This requires an internal examination of all aspects of your recreation and parks department. Chapter Eight gives you realistic approaches to better manage your finances and improve your operations.

Pennsylvania's municipal recreation and parks agencies have traditionally relied on the general fund to finance their operations. The general fund is an unrestricted fund where most municipal government revenue is placed. Recreation and parks competes with all other municipal services for its share of the funds. As recently as the 1960s, earning revenue to fund recreation and parks services wasn't important.

General fund dollars paid for the services, which were offered to citizens at no charge. In the 1970s many Pennsylvania municipalities were still offering free recreation programs and no cost use of park facilities. By 1990, a survey of Pennsylvania's full-time recreation and parks agencies showed that 95 percent were charging fees for recreation programs.

Municipal government gets its revenue for the general fund in three major ways:

- *Tax Dollars* - Property, earned income and realty transfer taxes provide an average of 45 percent of municipal revenues. Pennsylvania municipal tax revenues automatically increase as incomes, population and the value of real estate increase.
- *Intergovernmental Revenues* - Intergovernmental revenues are funds transferred from the state and federal government to municipal governments. These make up about 10 percent of municipal revenues in Pennsylvania. More than half of this revenue is state liquid fuels funds, which are distributed to municipalities under a formula based on population and the miles of municipal streets and roads. Use of these funds is restricted to highway and bridge construction and maintenance projects.
- *User Fees and Charges* - About 45 percent of Pennsylvania municipal revenues are generated by the fees charged for municipal services. Examples include water, sewer, electric, trash collection and parking. Also in this category are recreation programs, permits, fines and facility rentals.

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Fiscal Management Handbook



Along with being creative and supplementing tax dollars with non-tax revenue sources, it's important to insure recreation and parks services gets a piece of the general fund "pie."

Tax dollars support those municipal services that benefit the entire community and can't be rationally allocated to individual users. These include services like police and fire protection, road maintenance *and* recreation and parks, where open space, trails and playgrounds are for the use and enjoyment of all citizens.

What type of services should local governments provide and or assist with tax dollars? If the answer is "public" services, then what are they? Economists classify services into public, merit and private services based on whether they benefit everyone in the community or only the individual receiving the service.

The differences among these categories are summarized in Table 1. The classification provides the underlying guidelines to make decisions about tax support and user fee pricing for recreation and parks services. Recreation facilities and programs categorized as public services may be free or mostly subsidized by tax dollars. Merit service facilities and programs may be mostly or partially supported by taxes and private services may be fully covered by user fees.

Table I		
Types of Service		
Public Service	Merit Service	Private Service
Who Benefits?		
All people in the community	Individuals who participate benefit most, but all members of the community benefit somewhat	Individual who participates
Who Pays?		
The community through the tax system – no user charges	Individual user pays partial costs	Individual user pays full costs
Feasibility of Pricing		
Not feasible: individuals cannot be charged and/or it's undesirable that they should be charged	Feasible and desirable: individuals can be charged	Feasible and desirable: individuals can be charged

Source: Marketing Government and Social Services

Viewing private and public services as opposite ends of a spectrum is helpful in understanding the essential differences between them. Private services exclusively benefit participating individuals rather than the community at-large. It's possible to exclude people who aren't willing to pay for the service. Exclusion is the key factor that differentiates private from public services.

When someone receives a direct service from government it seems only fair and logical that he or she should pay for it. If the benefits from such a service don't apply to other citizens in the community, then it's reasonable to expect the users to pay all of the costs. A service like this is classified as a *private service*.

A *public service* is equally available to all citizens in a community. Often this is because there isn't a way to exclude individuals from enjoying the benefits of the service. Because individuals can't be excluded, it's not possible to implement a user pricing system unless such a system relies on voluntary payment. Unfortunately, when payment is voluntary, some individuals will take a free ride without paying. To prevent this abuse public services are financed by mandatory payment through the taxation system. Police protection and municipal parks are examples of public services.

Merit services lie somewhere between public and private services. They are private services that have been endowed with the public interest and have some public service characteristics. That is, part of the benefit is received by the individual and part is received by the public in general. Although it's possible to charge user prices for merit services, it's not reasonable to expect users to cover all costs because the spill-over benefits are received by the whole community. Users are subsidized to the extent that benefits to the whole community occur. Many types of recreation programs are classified as merit services.



Some government services may be able to exclude people and charge a user price, but are offered as public services instead. These services are perceived as contributing to the physical health, mental health, cultural knowledge or welfare of all citizens in the community. The rationale is that everyone benefits when no one is starving, when children participate in structured recreation activities and when everyone receives a high school education. Contributions like these are an investment in people that benefit everyone.

Imposing user charges is sometimes undesirable even when it's technically possible to do so, such as when it excludes lower income people. This is often true for recreation programs. Through fees, the support for recreation programs comes primarily from the user rather than tax dollars. By charging fees for recreation programs, property taxes aren't increased to offer the services. Not increasing property taxes helps poorer residents, but the fees often shut them out of recreation programs or severely limit their participation. Imposing this hardship on the poor runs completely counter to the goal of serving all residents of the community. Recreation programs need to be available and accessible to residents regardless of people's ability to pay for them. Providing financial assistance based on need is a good option when fees are charged.

Location can also make a difference in whether a service is viewed as a public or private one. A tennis facility in a high-income neighborhood may be perceived as a private service from which only participants benefit, so all costs incurred are covered by user fees. The identical tennis facility located in a low-income neighborhood may be perceived as a purely public facility. In this case, the whole community benefits from providing wholesome activity for its citizens; from improving the living environment, which increases the value of all property; or from the



psychological satisfaction of knowing that the less wealthy are provided with recreational opportunities that they couldn't otherwise afford.

Appendix B includes a pyramid pricing model based on establishing user fees commensurate with the benefits received by individuals and the community as a whole. The foundational level of the pyramid represents the public recreation and parks programs, facilities and services that benefit the entire community. Most of the tax support for recreation and parks supports this level of the pyramid.

Municipal budgets strain to support public safety, public works and all other local government services, including recreation and parks. To offer the recreation and parks services citizens are asking for, we have to use the general fund as a foundation to build on and explore additional ways to generate revenue. To expand public recreation and parks services, we have to become more like the nonprofit and for-profit sectors in terms of revenue sources. Table 2 illustrates the differences.

As with all publications like this, the contents are for guidance only and don't constitute a legal reference. Where points of law are in question, consult the appropriate municipal codes, tax laws or other legal sources. Seek the advice of your solicitor to answer questions which have unresolved legal implications.



Table 2
Comparison of Revenue Sources

Sector	Primary Objective	Primary Revenue Sources (in order of importance)	Audience	Basis of Financing Decisions
Public	To provide park areas, recreation facilities, programs and other opportunities to enrich the quality of life	Tax dollars Intergovernmental funds User fees Other sources	Tax base population	Meeting needs of community/value to society/greatest good for the greatest number
Nonprofit	To provide recreation facilities, programs and services for a defined purpose	Membership dues Gifts and donations Sale of goods and services Other sources	Members and targeted populations	Break-even or partial-cost recovery/value to members and targeted groups
For-profit	To make money for owners and shareholders	Sale of goods and services Investor funds Dividends/interest	Whoever will pay	Maximum profit that can be made/fulfilling needs of customers

Source: Management of Park and Recreation Agencies, National Recreation and Park Association

Chapter 1 - Developing Financial Support for Recreation and Parks

The key to developing on-going financial support for recreation and parks is to build the most positive reputation possible for your services, regardless of the size of your community, how many parks exist or the number of recreation programs your agency offers. To do this, you need a well-planned approach. There are many elements to consider and coordinate to make municipal recreation and parks services something that your citizens, including your elected officials, value – and are willing to support financially.

Effective Service Provision = Financial Support

Funding influences both the quantity and quality of recreation opportunities provided for residents. It helps to determine what park areas and recreation facilities will be built, updated or renovated; the extent of maintenance that's provided, and the recreation programs and special events that are offered in each community.

In Pennsylvania, the majority of funding for local government recreation and parks comes from the municipal general fund that's supported primarily by taxes. Recreation and parks must compete with every other municipal service for tax dollars. To get a fair share of your local dollars, it's necessary to budget well and provide services efficiently and effectively.

These are difficult financial times. Today, community recreation and parks is faced with a balancing act just to maintain current services, let alone expand them.

Is financing recreation and parks only about the money? The answer is a resounding “no!” Financing is more about how effectively we provide recreation and parks services in our communities than it is about the actual funds we have for those services. If your services are valued by your residents – if your residents are utilizing parks and participating in recreation programs – and if they are satisfied and happy with their experiences – your residents become supporters. This concept works whether your municipality has one small park or over a dozen parks, or offers a handful of recreation programs or hundreds of them.

Any provider of a service, public or private, needs supporters to stay in business. Supporters include the participants who select your services in the market place, volunteers who help deliver your services, elected officials who fund your operations, taxpayers who vote for elected officials and community leaders who help expand your resources.

Effective provision of recreation and parks services gains you those supporters, and those supporters gain you financial support to maintain and expand your services.



Positioning Your Recreation and Parks Services to Maintain and Increase Funding

Of course, you want to provide the best recreation and parks services you possibly can for your residents. That means you have to work on obtaining the financial resources you need to make that happen.

The present position of recreation and parks services is that it's frequently perceived to be a relatively discretionary, non-essential government service. It's nice to have if it can be afforded. Positioning is about moving up the ladder of what the public considers to be important. There are nine key strategies to position your recreation and parks services to maintain and increase its funding. These are methods you can employ to achieve financing success.

Helping to Solve Community Problems

What community problems and challenges can recreation and parks help to alleviate or address? On a daily basis, elected officials and community leaders deal with lots of problems. Economic development, crime, unemployment, school drop-outs, youth violence, low rates of home ownership, rising taxes, declining downtown business sections and struggling families are on the problem lists of many Pennsylvania communities, small and large.

Providing recreation and parks services often lacks political clout. To be worth funding, recreation and parks has to show more tangible benefits. Recreation and parks services gain real political clout when they have value in meeting community challenges and issues important to decision makers and community members.

We need to position recreation and parks services so that they are perceived to be a central

contribution to alleviating the major problems in a community. Recreation and parks can accentuate its relevance by aligning with and addressing community issues. Pick one or two issues that resonate in your community and build the case around them.

The big idea associated with positioning is that public funds are invested in solutions to a community's most pressing problems. The term "invested" suggests a positive, forward-looking agenda with a return to the community. Elected officials usually have no mandate to fund programs; their mandate is to invest resources into solutions.



For example, for children's recreation programs, talk about investing funds in:

- Facilitating healthy lifestyles
- Alleviating deviant behavior
- Raising levels of educational attainment

Become a part of the solution to social problems by developing new services or restructuring existing services so they better contribute to addressing community issues. Do your elected officials understand the values of recreation programming as related to social concerns? Show them how recreation programs can alleviate problems such as:

- Chronic diseases
- Obesity
- Inadequate child care
- Poor nutrition
- Substance abuse
- Low high school graduation rates
- Mental health issues
- Teen pregnancy
- Homeless citizens
- Gang activities
- Domestic abuse

Ways to position recreation and parks as a part of the solution to community problems include offering family-oriented community events, maintaining your park areas to high standards, expanding after school programs for children, opening your school gyms in the evening, keeping teenagers involved in positive activities, promoting your downtown area with special events, and joining task forces and committees that focus on community needs.

Communicating the benefits to non-users of recreation and parks services is also important. Focusing on community benefits gets tax support and community-wide support. Research shows that recreation programs can make a difference in solving community problems. Also, grant dollars follow social issues, so grant funds may be available to offer recreation programs focused on community problems.

Overall, elected officials and citizens need to be reminded that recreation and parks services are a key factor in creating a safer, healthier, more economically stable community.

Planning for the Future

Planning helps elected officials make well-informed decisions and invest tax dollars in the most efficient way. Planning also allows you to access grant funds and obtain your share of local tax dollars for recreation and parks

services. Municipalities are involved in these basic types of planning for recreation and parks: comprehensive recreation, park and open space plans; park master plans, recreation facility feasibility studies, and strategic plans. These plans are in-depth studies that focus on developing and improving your municipal recreation and parks facilities, programs and services. They are created with significant public input and cover a number of years to give you guidance and direction to make sound financial decisions.

Finding out what services residents want helps you to focus your efforts and provide the structure and strategies needed to develop a quality recreation and parks system that best serves your residents.

Increasing Citizen Involvement

As a recreation and parks volunteer it's gratifying to see the benefits residents derive from parks and programs and know you helped to make them happen. When you volunteer in recreation and parks, you feel a stake in and take pride in your community. You also develop a better understanding of what recreation and parks is and how it improves the quality of life in your community.

Real support, understanding and enthusiasm come from involving citizens and community leaders in special events and recreation programs. A family involved in a summer of baseball is going to have something positive to say if they're provided with a positive experience. People support recreation and parks services because of personal commitment and interest. Getting your residents to help maintain park areas and provide recreation programs develops a feeling of ownership for them.

Local recreation and parks services are strengthened in a number of important ways when residents are involved. First, you get more help, meaning you get more work done in less time at no cost. No recreation and parks service ever has enough money to do its job right. Most important though, when it's budget time you'll have residents who value recreation and parks and will support providing funds to keep it intact and even expand local services.

Forming More Partnerships

Your residents expect and deserve quality services. At the same time, your municipality has fewer financial resources, staff and volunteers.

How can partnerships help you be more successful in obtaining adequate funding for recreation and parks? Joining forces with other groups and organizations makes you more aware of what's happening in your community, gains you resources to better meet your community's needs, and more importantly, adds many more people to your list of supporters for recreation and parks.

To obtain the necessary financial support to provide quality public facilities and programs, it's critical to cooperate with all of the entities who provide recreation and parks services within your community.

Across Pennsylvania, service clubs and businesses financially support park maintenance. Youth soccer clubs provide funds to build and maintain fields. Conservancies and land trusts purchase parkland, open space, greenways and trails. Financing municipal recreation and parks isn't solely the responsibility of local government. When you have varied community groups and agencies who are involved in funding, local services are strengthened.

The most effective recreation and parks systems involve the entire community in their operations. Who are they working with? The list can be a long one. Partners include youth sports groups, churches, public schools, private schools, commercial businesses of all types, chambers of commerce, police departments, service clubs, civic groups, non-profits, hospitals, retirement communities, social service agencies, and on and on.

Offering programs in cooperation with other groups and agencies can bring you the money needed to purchase supplies, volunteers, program location, the skills to conduct the program, promotional help and lots more. Partner with agencies that are linked to solving social problems such as obesity or juvenile crime. Again, this helps to position recreation programs so that they are perceived to be a part of the solution. Plus, you are linked by association with established and valued social service providers and gain lots of additional supporters for recreation and parks.

Being active in the community and partnering with organizations to meet community needs builds and reinforces a positive reputation and public image for municipal recreation and parks services. Community groups and associations play an increasingly important role in municipal government by identifying issues and helping



to improve municipal services. By establishing relationships with community organizations you learn of issues and can respond to them before they become problems. Communicating frequently with special interest groups and concerned individuals can also help to keep the public informed about recreation services. Your municipality must thoroughly understand the value of community groups and come up with ways to involve them in your park areas and recreation programs.

Our constituency in municipal recreation and parks includes an extensive list of different groups who want to use, complain about, praise and request the elimination, modification or addition of facilities and programs that we maintain. Figure 1 lists some of the common groups.

Figure 1
Community Groups and Associations

Parent-Teacher Organizations
Churches
Youth and Adults Sports Organizations
Volunteer Fire Companies
Veteran's Groups
Chambers of Commerce
Business and Professional Groups
Unions
Service Clubs (Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Optimist)
Women's Clubs
Fraternal Clubs (Elks, Moose, Masons)
Neighborhood Groups
Recreational Clubs (Biking, Running, Chess, Hiking, Canoe)
Friends Groups
Employee Associations
Senior Citizen Groups

Increasing the Public's Awareness of Recreation and Parks

Providing community recreation and parks services requires money, even if your

municipality has no staff to pay. Community recreation and parks is a citizen service funded in some way by tax dollars. The support of your residents who pay these taxes is essential to obtain the funds to maintain your current level of service and to increase it. To obtain this support, your municipality needs to work on increasing the public's awareness of your recreation and parks services.

Your reputation in your community is built over time, in every aspect of what you do. Building public confidence in and increasing public understanding of municipal recreation services involves every person within or connected with your municipality. The handshake of the director, the voice answering the phone, the job done by the volunteer coach, all establish relationships with the public which contribute positively or negatively to public opinion about your municipality.

Don't assume that elected officials and citizens understand the role recreation and parks plays in making your community a better place to live. Spending time and resources on marketing and promotion lets residents know about your parks and programs, have a great experience and tell others.

Support for your recreation and parks services depends on the public's use of them. Elected officials support services financially when they see that an active constituency exists for them. So, building a base of supportive citizens is essential. Extend a helping hand to youth sports groups, especially in the areas of promotion, securing playing fields and training coaches. Seek partnerships with other agencies and work on building alliances with community groups and businesses. Be active and visible in your community by joining service clubs and civic groups. Offer a strong series of recreation programs that successfully serve lots of people of all ages. Include a variety of active and



passive areas in your park system. Offer special events at your parks to get citizens out to see the facilities available to them.

Keep your political leaders informed. Whenever possible, involve them in recreation activities and get them out to your parks. Give them a volunteer job alongside other citizens. Elected officials can't fully support what they've never seen or don't understand. Have citizens speak for you at public meetings to share their positive experiences. Share thank you notes and praises with elected officials, so that they can see that your recreation and parks services are appreciated. Have your elected officials honor your special volunteers, program participants, winners and others involved in recreation and parks at their public meetings.

Communicating the Benefits of Recreation and Parks

How do you improve your local economy, conserve your natural environment, strengthen your community and, at the same time, enhance the well being of your residents? You provide public park areas, recreation facilities and recreation programs.

People don't intrinsically understand how recreation and parks services benefit them or the community as a whole. They may only see the costs associated with building and maintaining parks and offering recreation programs. Some residents may not see the need to spend any public funds on recreation and parks. Many decision makers are unaware of the far-reaching benefits of recreation and parks.

An important component in developing financial support is how well you identify and communicate the individual benefits and the community-wide benefits of your recreation and parks services to your residents and to your elected officials. We know that our efforts involve much more than fun and games. Recreation and parks is an essential community service that benefits individuals and strengthens communities in numerous ways. How do you communicate this to position recreation and parks as a vital service to fund in your local community?

Inform your residents about how your recreation program or facility will benefit them and meet their needs. Communicate the vision and value of recreation and parks to allied professionals, the media and policymakers to develop partners and allies. Talking about the benefits of involvement in your services helps to build public support for them. Use benefits like those in Figures 2 and 3 to create your promotional materials.

Parks and recreation facilities and programs are an integral part of our communities. They provide benefits in the following ways:

- They help our youth choose rewarding paths to adulthood by providing programs and opportunities to build physical, intellectual, emotional and social strength.

- Children exposed to natural areas at an early age gain a better awareness of the environment and become better stewards of our world as they grow into adults.
- Parks provide children with opportunities for organized and spontaneous play. Play is critical in the development of muscle strength, coordination, language and cognitive abilities.
- Parks help improve everyone's health by providing fitness facilities, programs and space to enjoy fresh air and exercise. Studies have determined the large economic burden related to physical inactivity. Recent research suggests that access to parks and linear greenways can help increase the level of physical activity for all.
- Exposure to nature in parks, public gardens and natural areas can improve psychological and social health. Studies show that when people can't reach parks, they often go without exercise. This is especially true of low-income people who can't afford private gym memberships.
- Recreation programs and special events help build and strengthen ties among community residents by bringing people together, including those who are otherwise divided by race or class. Parks and recreation services offer opportunities for people of all ages to communicate, compete, interact, learn and grow.
- Numerous studies indicate that parks help maintain and in some cases increase the value of neighboring residential property. Growing evidence points to a similar benefit for commercial property value.
- The availability of parks and recreation facilities is an important quality of life factor for individuals and families choosing a place to live.
- Sometimes a young person's world can be complex and troubling. There are way too many kids that end up on the wrong path and enter the juvenile justice system. One year of incarceration can cost \$45,000. Providing children with recreation and parks opportunities that help keep them out of jail is a valuable and essential service.
- Many people struggle to maintain their health and independence as they get older. The cost to care for a senior in a nursing home can average \$50,000 per year. Providing older adults with recreation and parks services that help keep them independent and healthy is a valuable and essential service.

Quantifying the Impact of Services— Demonstrating and Documenting Results

Given the choice, even in good economic times, elected officials don't always support recreation and parks. Many believe that services such as police, fire and public works are more important to the community. And during tough economic times they often cut funding to recreation and parks first.

The problem with cutting funding to recreation and parks is that it may not be what the public really wants. You need to document what the public wants. Use scientific techniques such as polling, surveying and public meetings to make the will of the public heard.



Figure 2
The Important Roles of Community Recreation and Parks

Strengthening Community Image and Sense of Place – Parks, recreation facilities, recreation programs and community events are key factors in strengthening community image and creating a sense of place.

Supporting Economic Development – Parks, recreation facilities and recreation programs attract and retain businesses and residents, as well as attract tourists and increase property values. Parks and recreation provides jobs and generates income for the community and for local businesses.

Strengthening Safety and Security – Recreation and parks professionals provide safe environments for recreation and design facilities, programs and services specifically to reduce criminal activity.

Promoting Health and Wellness – Participation at parks and in recreation programs improves physical, psychological and emotional health.

Fostering Human Development – Recreation and parks services foster social, intellectual, learning, physical and emotional development.

Increasing Cultural Unity – Recreation and parks services increase cultural unity through experiences that promote cultural understanding and celebrate diversity.

Protecting Natural and Cultural Resources – By acquiring, protecting and managing valuable resources as open space, such as rivers, streams, greenways, view sheds, forests and other habitat areas, and culturally important assets, these resources are protected and the habitat required for the survival of diverse species is preserved.

Facilitating Community Problem Solving – Recreation and parks professionals have skills in facilitation and leadership that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues.

Providing Recreational Experiences – Programmed and self-facilitated recreation achieves a variety of benefits to individuals and society. Recreational experiences also are important as an end in themselves for personal enjoyment.

Figure 3
Benefits of Public Recreation and Parks Services

Meeting the Basic Needs of Your Residents	Improving Your Local Economy	Enhancing Your Natural Environment	Strengthening Your Community
Improve health and fitness	Attract business relocation and expansion	Encourage preservation and conservation of the environment	Encourage a sense of cohesion, unity, belonging, pride and appreciation for your community's traditions and heritage
Enhance creativity and cultural growth	Serve as a catalyst for tourism by bringing visitors to spend money and time in your community	Preserve plant and animal wildlife habitats	Build stronger families
Build relationships among people	Contribute to healthy and productive work forces	Foster community pride in natural resources	Reduce loneliness and alienation
Develop character	Enhance real estate values	Provide accessible places to enjoy nature	Promote ethnic and cultural understanding and harmony
Reduce stress	Bring increased revenue for services with new home construction caused by business expansion	Protect natural resources and open space areas	Allow people to meet their neighbors and develop friendships
Provide experiences that meet people's needs for belonging, identity, relaxation, happiness, recognition, achievement, affection, social approval, adventure, excitement and competition	Reduce the high repair cost and unsightly look of vandalism	Enhance air, water and soil quality	Provide citizen involvement opportunities that build leadership skills for tackling other community concerns
Provide experiences that help people grow, develop self-confidence and increase self-esteem	Aid financial stability in families by providing affordable activities	Provide buffers between residential and industrial areas	Provide alternatives to self-destructive behavior
Offer diversion from routine	Help supplement citizen income through part-time employment opportunities	Link parks, schools and other places with trails and greenways	Help prevent crime
Provide life-long learning and self-discovery opportunities		Provide safe places for biking and walking to cut down on traffic congestion	Keep children out of trouble

Source: National Recreation and Park Association

Gather facts and statistics about the impact your recreation and parks services have on the community. For instance, can you show property value increases along a rail-trail? Can you show a decrease in gang involvement for children involved in your activities? Can you quantify better school grades for kids involved in youth sports? When quantified and shared with community leaders, these kinds of facts and figures gain your recreation and parks services real credibility.

In particular, measure the economic impact of recreation and parks in your community. It can be how much people are spending to participate in your programs, the financial effect of bringing a tournament into town or the increased value of properties adjacent to parks or facilities. There are many, many facets to our economic impact. Recreation and parks plays an important role in enhancing the property tax base of communities. Recreation and parks contributes to attracting tourists and businesses, retaining affluent retirees and alleviating health care costs. While recreation and parks can stimulate the economy, programs and services also provide cost savings to society. Crime prevention, physical activity and health care savings each contribute to community economies as well.

Financing success rests upon how well we can answer questions like these: Are we serving our citizens well? What does our community get in return from our services? How do we quantify the costs and benefits of our services? How are we communicating the value of our services to our residents and elected officials? Demonstrating and promoting those values and benefits is critical if we are to maintain and even expand our financing sources.

To gather and influence public opinion and policy, conduct research utilizing universities and colleges that specialize in outcome-based results to demonstrate and document the local

value of recreation and parks in meeting issues and challenges that are critical to the quality of life and livability of your community. Recreation and parks agencies provide an outstanding return on investment for quality-of-life gains within a community. A goal in tough economic times isn't to cut funding, but to evaluate major decisions a bit more closely than in past years and understand the value of research to gain an understanding of the impact of recreation and parks services and what the public wants. Elected officials have some very difficult financial choices to make. It's our job to provide them with the information and tools to make those decisions.



Identifying the Key Services to Provide – Services that are Essential to Your Citizens

Another important element in developing financial support is to provide “essential” services. An essential service is something taxpayers won’t do without. Public safety services like police and fire protection are perfect examples. The more essential your recreation and parks services are to your citizens, the more support you’ll receive from them. Two examples of essential services are an outdoor swimming pool and a youth soccer league. People definitely value the community pool in the hot summer months, and many parents want their grade school kids to experience the fun of playing on a soccer team. Identify the most important services you offer and keep them strong. Your citizens will speak up and support those services at budget time.

Building and Maintaining Park Areas, Recreation Facilities and Recreation Programs to High Standards

Do the best quality job possible when constructing new recreation facilities or renovating existing facilities. When you have popular, well-visited facilities citizens favor increasing financial support for improvements to other recreation facilities. Incorporating features into your building and renovation plans that citizens desire also gains you support for your overall services.

Show the public that you care about making their stay in your parks comfortable and enjoyable by keeping restrooms clean, litter picked up, grass cut, weeds pulled and trees trimmed. If you experience vandalism, clean it up right away. When you maintain your park areas, recreation facilities and recreation programs to high standards, people notice. They’ll support the funding necessary to continue that standard of care.



Chapter 2 - Budgeting Basics

Budgets are often regarded as instruments for obtaining money, to be filed away and forgotten once funds are secured. That approach is wrong. Instead, a budget should be a flexible financial plan of action that you keep at your fingertips. It's what allows you to accomplish the work and fund the services that you've decided will meet the recreation and parks needs of your constituents. And keeping people happy is your ultimate goal.

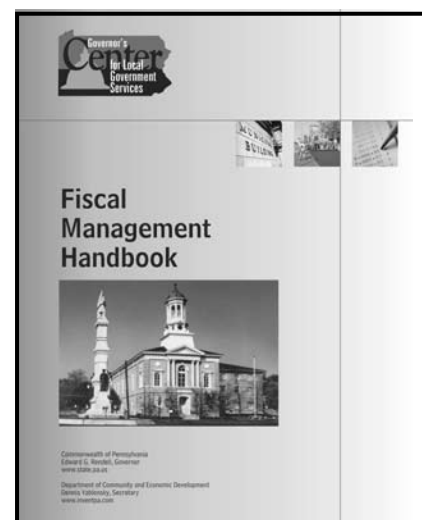
But budgeting isn't just about how much money a municipality spends to offer recreation and parks services to its citizens. It's also about where municipalities get that money and how they make effective and efficient use of it to best serve the public's interest and welfare.

This chapter provides general information using the DCED *Fiscal Management Handbook* as a guide. The chapter is tailored to budgeting for recreation and parks services and just skims the surface of budgeting. The *Fiscal Management Handbook* contains more detailed information on municipal budgeting. It is published by the DCED Governor's Center for Local Government Services and is available at www.newpa.com. Appendix A provides definitions of financial terms used in this chapter.

A budget is a financial plan that anticipates revenues and expenditures to help pay for desired accomplishments. When providing recreation and parks services, it serves these purposes:

- Controlling expenditures by placing limits on the amount of money that a municipality can spend. Expenditures can only be made if funds are available.

- Planning for the resources needed to operate your services. Budgets are municipal government's most important financial planning tool. Developing a budget makes you take a hard look at your operations, set service goals for the next year and plan how to spend the money you have. It also makes you estimate the amount of money you expect to collect during the year.
- Coordinating municipal operations by connecting your recreation and parks services with other local government functions.
- Monitoring whether your revenues are matching estimates or if your expenses are higher than planned. This allows flexibility during the year to bring expenses in line with income.
- Forecasting for future years, by measuring your spending and your income for a year's time.



The Budgeting Process

Who prepares the recreation and parks budget? This depends on whether your agency is a policy making board like a regional recreation commission or your municipality has recreation and parks or other staff. If you have municipal staff like a finance director, you may have limited control over the budget process. Your work should focus on making sure that your money is spent wisely to make planned projects happen and produce results. If you don't have staff, your municipality may have a citizen recreation and parks board. Your municipal manager may prepare the budget and ask the board for input or to review the draft. Or, the board may be totally uninvolved in the process. If this is the case, the board should ask to be involved. In some municipalities, the task of drafting the entire budget may be delegated to the recreation and parks board.

In its simplest form a budget is just a list of spending items and incoming revenue items, with a budgeted figure for each item. As time passes, the actual spending and revenue is entered into the budget to compare with the budgeted figure.

Although specific steps and timing vary from municipality to municipality, the budgeting process everywhere almost always includes steps for:

- Assessing variances between actual and budgeted figures in the previous year's budget.
- Identifying and then prioritizing needs and objectives for the upcoming budget year.
- Identifying and evaluating incoming revenue forecasts, current trends or changes that may have budgetary implications, such as mandates to reduce

spending or expected changes in staffing levels; and risks or potential emergencies that could impact either incoming revenue or spending needs.

- Ensuring the individual budget proposals within the complete budget package are prepared in consistent format and that proposals competing for funds can be compared fairly.
- Ensuring that procedures and methods are in place for implementing the budget and monitoring actual spending and incoming revenues.
- Packaging and communicating budget requests to those responsible for reviewing and approving budget proposals.

Municipalities use operating and capital budgets to manage their funds.

- *Operating budgets* are a plan to allocate the funds and estimate the income to finance your day-to-day operation during the upcoming year. Operating budgets include items like wages and salaries, utility costs, postage, supplies and other regularly recurring expenses.
- *Capital budgets* identify, prioritize and finance expensive projects including acquisition of parkland, construction of new recreation facilities and purchase of new equipment, and major repairs or replacement of existing facilities and equipment. Capital projects are high-cost, nonrecurring expenditures that have multi-year impacts on a municipality.

Pennsylvania municipalities have no state mandated uniform budget type or process. The Commonwealth requires municipalities to complete a state budget form but it is

only a summary budget arranged by major expenditure categories. Most recreation and parks departments use one of these operating budgeting methods:

- *Fixed allocation budgets* allocate funds at the beginning of the year and do not change them. The revenue generated goes into the general fund and not back to your department to spend. With budget approval, you can feel confident of your expense budget amount, even if the level of income you earn is lower than expected. However, municipalities may re-open the budget and cut back expenses if tax revenue falls short of projections or money is needed for emergency situations. Another disadvantage is the tendency to spend your full budget amount each year because of the concern that you won't get the money again the next year. It's not unusual to purchase items to stockpile them for future use.
- *Variable expense budgets* tie expenses to the amount of income generated. If your revenue is higher than anticipated, it's assumed your expenses will also be higher. If revenue is less than anticipated, expenses must be reduced. Income and expenses are tracked closely to meet budget goals. This budgeting system is common in recreation and parks agencies that must generate their operating income and rely on a variety of revenue sources. Revenue projections are the baseline for budgeting. Anticipating the types, amounts and timing of revenue is important.

Following a Budget Calendar

Municipalities start the budget process in September and follow a budget calendar that details what must be done, when it must be done and who is responsible. The municipal budget is adopted prior to January 1, the start of the new fiscal year. Your recreation and parks department should set its own budget preparation calendar. If you have a recreation and parks board, allow time for it to review your draft budget.

You don't have to stick to all of the dates for each step of your budget process. Following a budget calendar, however, helps to keep your process on track, making it easier to meet the final deadline for getting your draft budget to elected officials. Figure 4 presents a sample municipal budget calendar.

Figure 4

TYPICAL BUDGET CALENDAR FOR A MEDIUM-SIZED MUNICIPALITY		
Due Date	Budget Activity	Responsible Person
Sept. 1	Obtain annual budget forms	Secretary
Sept. 15	Post current year expenditures and revenues or estimates to the budget form	Secretary
Oct. 1	Project revenue estimates for the next budget year	Secretary consulting other officers
Oct. 30	Submit activity expenditure estimate to secretary	Department heads
Nov. 15	Enter expenditure requests and revenue estimates	Secretary
Nov. 20	Conduct full review of budget	Governing body
Nov. 20-30	Tentative adoption	Governing body
Nov. 30	Submit advertisement to newspaper	Governing body
Dec. 3-23	Make budget available for public inspection	Secretary
Dec. 27	Adopt budget and ordinance setting real estate tax rate	Governing body
Jan. 1	Create budget accounts and enter amount in ledger	Secretary

Source: *Fiscal Management Handbook*

The Loyalsock Township (Lycoming County) Director of Recreation and Parks makes budgeting an ongoing project throughout the year. He keeps a budget file folder, adding items to it as they come up. For instance, if he notices that a lifeguard stand is getting run down, he puts a note in the folder. When he gets time, he looks for prices. By September, he has a “wish list” of budget items. He prioritizes the list and adds as many things as he reasonably can into his draft budget. In the fall, he also creates a work plan for the upcoming year. The plan includes a monthly projection of projects with a cost estimate for each item.

Setting Budget Goals

Elected officials should set goals for municipal services for the next year and include recreation and parks providers as an integral part of this process. These goals guide decision making for preparing the operating and capital budgets. They can be long-term goals such as developing a community park or short-term goals like replacing playground equipment. To set goals, your elected officials review your municipality’s present financial condition and develop a rough estimate of its financial condition for the budget year. It’s a waste of time to consider new services if there’s no way to pay for them.

Once the municipal goals are finalized and shared with your recreation and parks department, develop your *own* goals based on them. If your municipality doesn’t set budget goals, it will still benefit your department to set goals. Answer these questions:

- *What services are really needed?*
- *Is there any other way to provide them?*
- *Are there any programs that are no longer needed or some that can be cut back?*
- *What services aren’t being provided that are within the municipality’s financial ability to provide?*

- *What community needs require a response by the municipality, and how important are they compared to other needs?*

Estimating Revenue

While budget timetables and formats vary, some things are the same. Municipal officials start the budget process by talking about what they’d like to accomplish in the next year. Then they estimate the amount of revenue they will have.

One of the most difficult tasks in preparing the recreation and parks department budget is estimating revenues. To forecast how much money you’ll have to fund your operations, look ahead and monitor the factors that have the most influence on revenue. If you don’t do a good job estimating revenue you may have to reduce or eliminate programs and services.

Recreation and parks revenues include items such as public tax funds, recreation program fees, facility rental fees, admission fees, concession and vending fees, fundraisers, business sponsorships, merchandise sales and grants.

Conditions that can affect revenue are:

- The economy
- Citizen demand
- Community needs and interests
- How efficiently you deliver services
- Competition from other organizations
- The weather

Examining revenue history also helps to project future revenue. A good system of record keeping makes the task of estimating revenues a little easier; however, estimating revenues for the next fiscal year begins well before you get the final report on last year’s estimates.

Capital Spending vs. Operating Expenses

At the top of the budget hierarchy in municipalities stand two major kinds of budgets, a capital budget and an operating budget. These two kinds of budgets don't overlap. They handle distinctly different spending categories. Capital and operating budgets are built through different budgeting processes and use different criteria for prioritizing and deciding spending.

The operating budget focuses on the day-to-day running of your municipality and it typically covers a one-year period. Capital budgets are long-term, although they may be updated annually. A typical capital budget will extend over five or 10 years.

A dual budget system allows for a balanced operating budget and for the possibility of borrowing funds for a financed capital budget. It also enhances awareness of the capital budgeting process and leads to closer managerial control over the implementation of the capital budget.

Whether or not an expenditure qualifies as a capital expenditure or as an operating expense depends on what is purchased and what it will be used for. Municipalities designate specific criteria that must be met for an acquisition to qualify as "capital," such as a minimum useful life and a minimum purchase price. Although local government policies vary on items or projects that are eligible for funding in the capital budget, typically a facility or structure is expected to be consumed or used up over a period of time that minimally exceeds one year or for many municipalities exceeds three or five years. Municipalities may also have dollar thresholds for items to be included in the capital budget, and the threshold depends on the size of the government's budget.

Capital budgets are restricted in scope to provide funding for only physical projects or fixed assets. Acquisitions that typically meet government criteria as capital assets include such things as: land acquisitions, recreation facilities, vehicles, office furniture, office equipment, buildings and computer hardware.

Operating budgets, by contrast, address spending on predictable, repeatable costs for items or services that aren't registered as capital assets. Operating budgets typically address spending for such things as: employee salaries and benefits, utility costs, telephone and internet services, and travel and training expenses.

It's important to separate operating and capital expenses. Set standards as to what is funded as maintenance, repair, major repair (above a certain dollar level), alteration, minor construction, major construction, and replacement, with each category then being either allocated to the operating budget or capital budget. You need clear rules and you need to follow them consistently.

If your municipality has limited funds for capital spending, the potential capital expenditure may have to enter a competitive capital review process, where all requested expenditures are compared on the same financial criteria and prioritized to receive funding. The key is determining how your municipality chooses or rejects projects and how it ranks those it decides to fund. Sample ranking forms are presented in Figure 5 and Figure 6.

Figure 5
Capital Project Priority Ranking Worksheet

Project: _____			
“A” Weighting Factors	Evaluation Criteria	“B” Priority Factors	“A” x “B”
1.5	Public health and safety	1 2 3 4 5	
1.5	Regulatory mandate	1 2 3 4 5	
1.5	Frequency of problem	1 2 3 4 5	
1.5	Disruption if failure occurs	1 2 3 4 5	
1.0	Able to finance local share	1 2 3 4 5	
1.0	Other finance sources	1 2 3 4 5	
1.0	Cost of project	1 2 3 4 5	
1.0	Repair/replace vs. new/expand	1 2 3 4 5	
1.0	Adequate plans to proceed	1 2 3 4 5	
1.0	Age/condition	1 2 3 4 5	
1.0	Generation of revenues from user fees	1 2 3 4 5	
1.0	Effects on operation and maintenance costs	1 2 3 4 5	
1.0	Benefits to existing users	1 2 3 4 5	
		Total Ranking Points	

Capital Budgeting Cycle in Local Governments

The capital budgeting process typically encompasses the following decisions and activities:

- Determination of who should manage capital budgeting and how that process should be completed
- Asset inventory and infrastructure needs assessment
- Project prioritization
- Development of a financing plan
- Preparation and adoption of a multi-year capital improvement plan (CIP) and capital budget
- Execution of the capital budget
- Evaluation and updating of the CIP

The CIP identifies priorities and a timeframe for undertaking capital projects and provides a financing plan for those projects. This capital budgeting process helps communities answer crucial questions such as: what are our

long-term infrastructure needs based on our priorities and values? And how will we fund projects when we have selected them?

Funding for capital projects comes from three sources. One source is cash contributions that are generated from your municipality’s authority to collect own-source revenues such as taxes and fees during the current fiscal year as well as from accumulated savings or reserves from previous years. The second revenue source consists of contributions from other levels of government (i.e., intergovernmental aid). A third is borrowed money, or debt issues.

The feature that makes a capital budget’s revenue structure different from an operating budget’s is the use of long-term debt. Local governments can borrow funds from investors and use those funds in a capital budget to cover the costs of construction, rehabilitation and major repair. Financing capital projects is covered in more detail in Chapter 7.

Figure 6
Sample Criteria for Selection of Capital Improvement Projects

Project Title: Project X **Capital Cost:** \$100,000 **Funding Source(s):** Township & DCNR
Annual Operating Cost: \$10,000 **Operating Budget Source(s):** User Fees

Criteria	Yes (2)	No (1)	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	Total Points
1. Does the proposed project meet public need?	2		3			6
2. Does the project benefit a majority of the citizens?		1			1	1
3. Will the project meet safety and accessibility needs of the community?		1			1	1
4. Is the project consistent with the comprehensive recreation, park and open space plan, design guidelines, park master plan and mission?	2				1	2
5. Will the project improve existing park conditions? That is, will it fix up what the Township has, rather than build new?	2		3			6
6. Is the project in an area of the community that needs Township investment?		1			1	1
7. Is funding available for the project?	2		3			6
8. Does a community group support the project?	2		3			6
9. Will the Township or other provider be able to maintain the improvement/project upon completion?	2		3			6
10. Will the quality of the project enhance the public image of the Township?	2			2		4
TOTAL Points						39

= point value

Chart Formula:

Step 1. Answer each question of the criteria with a Yes or No.

Step 2. Mark either “2” in the Yes box or “1” in the No box.

Step 3. Determine if the project is a High, Medium or Low Priority.

Step 4. Mark either a “3” or a “2” or a “1” in the appropriate priority box.

Step 5. Multiply the Yes (2) or No (1) points times the Priority points High (3), Medium (2) or Low (1). Put the answer in the Total Points Column for that criteria.

Step 6. Continue working your way through all of the criteria in the same manner.

Step 7. Add the Total Points Column. Write the score in the box in the bottom of the column. Compare this score against the scores of other projects under consideration. In the example above, Project X scored a value of 39 out of a total 60 points possible. Compare this score with other projects that could range in value from 10 to 60. Use as part of decision-making process.

Step 8. Adjust the criteria and point values as merited based upon the use of the rating scale.

Source: Muhlenberg Township Parks and Recreation Plan “Pathways to Prosperity,” 2007

Linking Capital and Operating Budgets

Public decisions on constructing new public infrastructure or renovating existing infrastructure are too frequently made without linking those capital-spending decisions to impacts on the operating budget. Coordination of the capital and operating budgeting processes allows you to analyze the total operating, maintenance and construction costs of capital projects. Since monies from the operating budget are used to fund the ongoing maintenance of capital assets, it's crucial to coordinate the operating and capital budgeting processes to ensure that new capital assets won't overburden the operating budget in the future. The most commonly used tool to identify the ongoing effects that capital expenditures have on the operating budget is life cycle cost analysis, which accounts for all costs associated with an item over its expected life, including purchase, operation, maintenance and disposal.

Maintenance spending, because of its ongoing nature, is funded from your local government's operating funds. Often, the approval process of local budgeting separates the timing of operating budget deliberations from those involving the capital budget.

You can address this issue of a “disconnect” between the operating budget and the capital budget by incorporating an operating budget impact in the capital budget approval process. Operating budget impacts list the projected operating costs for each year of a capital project. Operating costs could include new staff salaries, debt service payments, maintenance expenses and utilities.

Capital budgets are also sensitive to how operating budgets are managed. For example, preventive maintenance will have a very beneficial long-term impact on capital projects by extending the useful life of capital assets.

Most preventive maintenance programs can provide you with reasonable predictions of how long equipment will last, enabling you to make some predictions about planned equipment replacement.

Capital projects are expensive undertakings that require unique funding structures. Separating major capital spending from the operating budget signifies the importance of capital planning and gives stakeholders more opportunities to be involved in planning and monitoring long-term projects. Ultimately, however, operating and capital budgets are inextricably linked and decisions made in one process will affect decisions in the other. It's critical to have a firm grasp of the long-term effects, both positive and negative, that capital spending will have.



Selling the Budget

After establishing goals, most municipalities distribute budget forms and guidelines to departments to prepare their budget requests.

Give the department's draft budget to elected officials early enough so they can thoroughly review it. To help them better understand it, include supporting information that explains and justifies major budget items and any changes from the department's previous budget, such as a request for a new staff person or an expensive piece of equipment. If you're faced with having to scale back or eliminate an existing service, present all potential options.

Depending on your municipality's budget process, you may meet with your governing body to discuss your budget request. When presenting your budget, stress its major priorities. Do a simple budget narrative that lists the goals and objectives for recreation and parks as they relate to the overall goals of your municipality. In your narrative explain what you've accomplished and what you'd like to do. Compare your current year's budget with your proposed budget, highlighting any major differences and projected revenues.

Before presenting your budget, ask two questions: *What are the important items in the budget to "sell?" Which techniques should be used to sell them?* Although it sounds simple, presenting your budget is a sales pitch. If you're prepared and positive and armed with facts and figures, you stand a better chance of getting the funds you're asking for. Getting municipal dollars is a competitive process. Instead of increasing the public safety budget, why can't recreation and parks get that money? Justify why you should get it and get supporters behind you so that recreation and parks gets its fair share of municipal funds.

To have the best chance of getting the funds you're asking for, consider the following:

- Show how you are meeting citizens' needs and take into account emerging recreation needs.
- Explain to decision makers the relationships between expenditures, your objectives and how citizens and the community will benefit.
- Connect to other planning, operations and performance evaluation functions of your municipality.
- Show how your operations have become more efficient and cost effective.

Since the approved budget becomes a legal document, municipal governing bodies are required by law to hold at least one open public hearing a minimum of 30 days before its final adoption. In addition, many municipalities hold informal budget work sessions. In the formal public hearing and the informal work sessions, be prepared to answer detailed questions.

Ephrata Recreation Center (Lancaster County) uses its strategic plan to help sell its proposed budget. Goals and objectives are outlined, key activities and projects are listed, and specific details are provided for the upcoming year, including the operating and capital budgets and revenue sources.

Monitoring the Budget

To effectively manage your budget, you must constantly monitor it and be prepared to adjust your spending or expand your efforts to bring in revenue. Before you can do that, though, you need solid financial information. There are a number of tools available to get that information. Computer software is available to make all of these functions easier to utilize:

Accounting System - Accounting is the way that governments track receiving and spending money. The accounting process records financial transactions and helps give government officials a financial picture to make decisions.

A separate account is created for each item of financial information. Accounting procedures provide a way to judge your present and future financial status and can analyze any specific fiscal period (day, month, quarter). For recreation programs, it's important to have a system that can track individual programs rather than program categories. For example, instead of lumping all youth sports programs together, activities like youth track, basketball and wrestling can be broken out.

Audit - A financial audit determines whether financial records have been kept accurately and if the proper controls are in place to manage your money. What an audit doesn't do is tell you if you've made good or bad financial decisions. External audits are done on an annual basis by an outside accounting firm and provide a general review of your municipality's financial operations. An internal audit looks at your day-to-day financial transactions to make sure you're following proper procedures and guard against improper use of public funds. Internal audits are much more costly and detailed than external audits. They are performed to confirm suspected improprieties such as misreporting information or fraudulent behavior on the part of staff, to improve financial procedures or to provide management with the comfort of knowing that nothing is wrong. The internal audit can focus on specific procedures such as the use of consultants, cash transactions

or invoicing. It will look at whether the consultant service actually happened, an invoice was approved properly or cash was received, recorded and deposited correctly.

Payroll Analysis - A payroll analysis compares your budgeted expenses to the actual amount you spend in salaries and wages for each pay period. It helps to identify possible shortfalls in your budgeted accounts, so that you can take action before they happen.

Purchasing System - Municipalities establish purchasing systems to help eliminate unnecessary spending and get the best price for items. Purchase orders are the formal system that's used. They serve as a contract for the supplier, a guarantee that the municipality will pay for the item.

Petty cash is used for small items or for when there's not enough time to go through the purchase order system. Municipalities set a dollar amount for items that can be purchased with petty cash. This is an area that can be easily abused. Municipalities should establish guidelines and petty cash expenditures should be closely monitored.

Large purchases from your operating or capital budget must be put out for bid. State law requires that municipal purchases over \$10,000 are advertised and bids are obtained in accordance with municipal codes. Municipalities can make purchases between \$4,000 and \$10,000 only after they get three price quotations. The bid process encourages vendors to compete by offering the lowest prices for specified items. Municipalities develop detailed specifications for items so that very similar products are compared. Bids are opened and awarded at a public meeting to the lowest responsible bidder, unless you can justify the decision to choose another bid because of product quality, past performance, the quality of service or technical excellence.



Municipalities aren't required by law to bid professional services like engineering or legal services. More detailed information on purchasing can be found in DCED's *Purchasing Handbook* available at www.nenpa.com.

Inventory - Regularly purchased materials and supplies should have an inventory system for managing them. It's important to store, monitor and control inventory properly, and decide what and how much to stock. How often should you take inventory? The answer is: as often as you want an accurate picture of your financial operation. Merchandise is money and must be guarded like cash. It's a good idea to conduct unscheduled inventories to protect against theft. When doesn't it make sense to inventory? An example is counting thousands of inexpensive commemorative pins. Don't inventory when it costs more in staff or volunteer hours than the product is worth.

Manheim Township Parks and Recreation Department (Lancaster County) does a full inventory at swimming pool, golf course and roller rink concession facilities at the end of each month. Inventory is also checked weekly, before ordering, when employees are not present. A manager does all ordering and a minimum amount of supplies are stocked for easier tracking and fewer items on hand to steal. Although the inventory is computerized, hand counts are always done for every item. Easy to pick up items like sugar packets and crackers are kept in more secure areas, to further reduce the chances of theft.



Receiving Money - How cash is handled from the moment it leaves someone's wallet until it's safely deposited in your municipality's bank account presents a problem. Good financial procedures are necessary to make sure that your revenue isn't stolen. Cash registers, computer registration programs, ticket sales or counting devices that register admission are all ways to prove accuracy and help prevent theft.

Theft of cash and inventory is a significant problem. Ways employees steal include under ringing, giving items away, shoplifting and kickbacks. Control of your merchandise is vital.

People can be dishonest if the situation presents itself. There's a responsibility to staff to remove temptation by putting multiple checks into effect. One person shouldn't collect, deposit and record the receipt of revenues. Accounting procedures and receiving money must *definitely* be separated.

Deposit revenue daily, allocated into specific accounts and recorded by source and type. Follow written guidelines that define the responsibility of each person involved in the control of cash. Cover these rules:

- *Who is authorized to collect money?*
- *What controls are used to insure that all the money received is deposited in the bank account?*
- *Who maintains the records of the money collected? What kinds of records are maintained?*
- *Are financial duties separated properly?*

Chapter 3 - User Fees

With increasing costs and tightening tax revenues, it's difficult to provide quality recreation and parks services without charging user fees. The public demands more activities and more services, but wants to pay *less* taxes. As a result, your elected officials raise taxes as a last resort, and when taxes *are* raised, that money generally goes to fund public safety or public works services. When the municipal share of the general fund allocated to recreation and parks isn't increasing, the alternatives are to:

- Do less/serve less.
- Build partnerships/share the cost.
- Pass on some cost to the user.

With the increasing strain on municipal budgets, fees and charges can help maintain *and* expand your recreation system. Through fees, the support for recreation opportunities comes from the user rather than tax dollars, giving your municipality the funds to justify providing the opportunities. Most recreation programs can be financed on a break-even basis through fees paid by participants. There's a general feeling that recreation programs *should* be supported by those who participate rather than the public at large. Also, the construction of specialized recreation facilities like ice rinks, golf courses and community centers is in part justified by fees collected from participants. A study by Bowker, Cordell and Johnson found that, in general, the public supports user fees for recreation facilities and programs.¹ More specifics on revenue-generating facilities are covered in Chapter Four.

¹Bowker, J. M.; Cordell, H. K.; and Johnson, C. Y. (1999). User fees for recreation services on public lands: a national assessment. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*. 17(3): 1-14.

There are negatives to relying on fees and charges as a primary revenue source. Generating more revenue often means incorporating business-like approaches such as the use of menu and discount pricing strategies. Utilizing these approaches can be very time consuming. Another study completed by More and Stevens showed that low-income groups can be more sensitive to price changes and are more likely to be priced out of a recreation facility or program than other income groups.² This raises a serious policy question about the purpose of public recreation when potential users are excluded.

Although they are a significant revenue source, *never expect your entire recreation and parks agency to be self-supporting through fees and charges*. They should only supplement your budget to help you keep pace with rising operations and maintenance costs. To effectively administer a fees and charges system, you need control over decision making and a lack of political interference. You have to adjust quickly and change your fees when and how you need to.

Developing a Revenue Policy

A written revenue policy establishes a framework for fees and charges that local elected officials can understand and support. Your policy will depend on issues like how much money you get from the general fund, your residents' average income level, comparable fees at other recreation facilities, the demand for your services, and your municipality's philosophy on generating revenue. Some services may be considered as income producing, some may be subsidized and some may be break-even. Your governing body should approve your revenue policy. See Appendix B for a sample policy.

²More, Thomas; Stevens, Thomas, (2000). Do user fees exclude low-income people from resource-based recreation? *Journal of Leisure Research*. 32(3): 341-357.

Analyze your operations for services that you currently don't charge a fee for, but could. For instance, you might decide to charge for parking at special events. Most youth sports groups aren't charged for field use; if you have lighted fields, ask them to reimburse you for the costs of the lights. Just because a service has not been charged for in the past doesn't mean it must stay free forever.

Charging fees for public recreation and parks services is a reality that brings positive and negative results. Table 3 shows some of the ways user fees can help and hinder your department.



Table 3
Charging Fees for Recreation and Parks Services

Pros	Cons
Help to develop new facilities and offer new programs.	Restrict participation, particularly by lower income residents who rely on and most need public recreation services. They are the least able to pay fees and in many cases will be unable to take part.
Provide services that aren't in part or in total supported by public funds.	Reduce general fund support as you generate additional income.
Recover a portion of the costs to provide recreation opportunities.	Decrease the public's willingness to pay taxes to support services, as the public becomes aware of their self-supporting possibility.
Reduce complaints from for-profit recreation services by charging fair prices instead of providing a no-cost or low-cost service. For-profits can't complain that tax dollars are being used for an unfair advantage.	Spend too much time and money working to collect revenue, instead of offering recreation services.
Assess people's willingness to pay which helps you plan for new programs and facilities and eliminate services no longer in demand.	Begin to judge your success by the amount of revenue you produce rather than by the quality of your programs.
Charge non-residents who don't pay your local taxes for their fair share of the costs.	Spend too much time trying to collect money on returned checks, delinquent program payments or fundraising dollars.
Measure citizen's appreciation of your services.	
Control vandalism and discourage abuse. When people pay to use a facility, they are less likely to damage it.	
Reduce crowding by balancing time of use and participant numbers.	

Table 4 shows the different types of fees charged for recreation and parks services. The Category of Service column is an explanation of who benefits from the service being provided. Public services benefit the public at-large and are available to all residents on an equal basis. Public services are usually offered free of charge, with all costs to provide them paid from the general fund budget. Examples are facilities such as trails, playgrounds and basketball courts. Since public service activities like these *are* free of charge, there is no fee type that relates to them. Merit services partially benefit the individual

and partially benefit the community. The fees for merit services usually recover some portion of the costs. Private services generally benefit only the individual and are not subsidized; fees recover the entire cost to offer the service. Generally, private services are priced higher than merit services.

Charging Membership Dues

At many nonprofit and for-profit recreation agencies, membership dues are a major revenue source that helps to fund operations and offset facility operating costs. Examples are YMCAs, country clubs and fitness centers.

Membership dues are also used in public recreation and parks. For instance, memberships are sold to join facilities like community centers and swimming pools. Dues can also be charged to join a swim team, a senior citizen club or a community chorus.

The Lancaster Recreation Commission (Lancaster County) has operated the Happy Hearts Club for older adults since 1947. A \$10 yearly membership fee is charged to join. Members receive a monthly newsletter and unlimited access to six senior centers. Club membership also gives people the opportunity to take fitness and special interest classes, attend banquets, take trips and play bridge every week, among many other activities. Club activities are completely self-supported by the fees charged for them.

Offering Recreation Programs

For most of the recreation programs sponsored by your agency, people pay a fee to participate that brings in enough income to meet *direct costs*. Direct costs include the salaries paid and supplies used to offer the

Table 4
Types of Recreation and Parks Fees

Type of Fee	Description	Category of Service	Examples
Entrance/Parking	Charges to enter a developed recreation site at the patron's first contact with the area; the area may contain facilities or activities for which fees are charged	Merit	Fairgrounds, large parks, gardens, wildlife preserves, historical areas
Admission	Charges to enter a building, structure or natural chamber where entry and exit are controlled and attendance is regulated	Merit	Arenas, museums, caverns, aquariums, historical buildings
Program	Charges for participation in an activity	Merit	Lessons, camps, classes, leagues
Sales	Revenues obtained from stores, gift shops, restaurants and other retail operations and from the sale of merchandise and other property	Private	Food and drink items, catering service, souvenirs, firewood, film, clothing
Permit/License	Charges for written permission to perform an action or the authority to occupy space or use property	Private	Show permits, hunting and fishing licenses, alcohol permits, photography permits
Rental	Charges for the exclusive use of tangible property of any kind	Private	Bicycles, skates, tables, golf carts, picnic kits, horses, party rooms, cabins
Facility Use	Charges for the shared use of a facility	Merit	Driving range, campsites, ball fields, swimming pools, ice rinks, golf course greens fees
Special Service	Charges for supplying extra articles, materials, activities or services as an accommodation to the public	Private	Seasonal equipment storage, night lighting, field dragging and lining, class materials, reservation fees, franchise fees for league operations, electric use fees, room set-up/tear-down fees

Source: National Recreation and Park Association

programs. However, the true costs of recreation programs include much more than the direct costs. The *indirect costs* of providing programs include items like utility costs for indoor space and administrative time spent planning and promoting recreation programs. It's important to figure out how much money you invest in each program. If you set your price to recover direct costs only, you'll be subsidizing the balance of the cost for participants. So people may pay \$20 to take a class, when the actual cost is \$40. While you will want to subsidize some programs, many of the programs you offer will not be subsidized.

Setting Program Prices

Before setting program prices, determine which of these five strategies you will use:

- Charge no fee and subsidize all costs.
- Charge a nominal fee to recover partial costs.
- Charge a fee to recover direct costs.
- Charge a fee to recover direct and indirect costs.
- Charge a fee to recover all costs plus a profit.

When upgrading current or instituting new services, it's best to calculate the complete costs of offering them. This way, if you want to establish fees so that all of the costs are covered, including indirect costs such as administrative staff time, printing or utilities, you can do so.

Some recreation programs generate enough income to realize a profit. Offering revenue-producing programs allows you to provide other programs that may need to be subsidized or will just break even. For some recreation

programs, you won't want to subsidize the cost at all. For others, you will. Those are decisions that should be included in your agency's revenue policy.

How do you establish a reasonable price for a recreation program? What's reasonable in suburban Philadelphia will be too high in rural Venango County. The economy, the competition that exists, the demand for the activity and the quality of the program are all pricing factors that can only be determined locally.

Figure 7
WEST SHORE RECREATION COMMISSION
Establishing New Program Prices

<u>Category</u>	<u>Cost Recovery Percentage</u>
Adult Classes	80%
Youth/Teen Classes	60%
Youth Sports	75%
Adult Fitness	100%
Adult Sports	125%
Per Person (Contract instructors)	40%
Special Events	30%
Trips	20%
Non-Residents (Add to resident price)	30%
Pricing Guidelines:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Figure the price on the minimum number of participants. ■ Do not drop below already established prices. ■ Net revenue goes toward overhead costs such as FICA, insurance, office costs, office staff, equipment, vehicles, supplies, printing, telephones. ■ Program costs include: instructor, supplies, excessive postage and telephone, contracted services (bus, admissions), facility rental, travel, specific equipment and any other costs associated directly with the program. ■ To figure the program price: <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> $\text{Program Costs} \times \text{Cost Recovery \%} = \text{Gross Revenue Needed to Break Even}$ $\text{Program Costs} + \text{Cost Recovery} = \text{Total Cost}$ $\text{Total Cost divided by Participant Minimum} = \text{Price per Person}$ $\text{Price per Person} \times \text{Non-Resident \%} = \text{Non-Resident Price}$ </div> 	

The West Shore Recreation Commission (Cumberland and York Counties) uses a cost recovery percentage for each category of recreation program it offers. West Shore Rec relies on recreation program revenue to support its operating budget and needs to recover both direct and indirect costs. To recover the indirect administrative overhead costs, the total direct program costs are multiplied by a cost recovery percentage. This percentage is different for each category of program. For instance, if direct expenses for an adult class are \$100, this amount is multiplied by a cost recovery percentage of 80 percent. This means that making \$180 in gross revenue for this program will recover both the direct and indirect costs. If the minimum number of participants is 10, the price per person would be \$18. Non-residents would pay 30 percent more, or \$23.40. The cost recovery percentage used depends on factors like popularity of programs or instructor salary. See Figure 7 for an explanation of West Shore Rec's program pricing policy.

The question, rather than “what price is reasonable?” often is, “does the program pay for itself?” While Figure 8 provides a pricing formula for a basic break-even fee, compare it

with prices for similar programs, determine if your quality warrants that price and measure if your participants agree with you. To assess how participants feel about program quality and price, have them fill out a simple evaluation form.

Pricing has a psychological dimension. If fees are too high, no one participates. If they are too low, the same thing may happen. A low fee can mean inferior quality in some people's minds.

Charging fees can help to reduce the congestion that occurs when too many people take part in heavily subsidized services. It's difficult to manage overcrowded programs and offer a quality recreation experience for everyone involved. It's better to diversify and not cluster your program prices at the same or close to the same amounts. Having a range of fees will allow your recreation programs to appeal to different audiences.

The first fee charged establishes a reference point in customer's minds. It's important to establish that reference point realistically; people have a tolerance zone for prices. It's better to raise a price a little bit every year than to increase it all at once. If a big price increase is needed, announce it as early as possible so that participants have enough notice. Also, when raising prices, telling people the actual cost of providing the program helps them to understand what they're getting for their money. Sometimes, the amount of

Figure 8
Formula to Set a Break-Even Price

$$P = \frac{I + O + RF + CS}{S}$$

- P** – Price charged for a class/program
I – Instructor fee
O – Overhead (everything from the cost of the supervisor's time, to utilities, maintenance, printing, clerical assistance and equipment depreciation)
RF – Rental fee (instructional material such as films, equipment rented, building space rented)
CS – Consumable supplies
S – Students in a class/program

Source: Learning Resources Network (www.lern.org)



services can be reduced while keeping the price the same. This may be a better alternative than raising the price.

Some words of caution when expanding the use of fees and other sources of revenue. Beware of what may happen to tax support. When you give increased priority to self-generated revenue objectives you may give reduced priority to services with social merit, since they aren't revenue producing. This may lead to less justification for public tax support, which could ultimately lead to reduced tax support for your agency.

Increasing Program Revenue

Why work to increase your recreation program revenue? There are two major reasons. You may be able to justify budgeting additional funds to 1) offer more programs and 2) hire additional staff.

How can you increase your recreation program revenue? One way is to get into new types of programs. For example, expand your sports programming to offer popular programs that also happen to be good revenue generators:

- Specialty sports leagues
 - 3-on-3 half-court basketball
 - Ages 40/50/60
 - Flag football
 - Smaller field
 - Coed golf
 - Parent/child
 - Doubles volleyball
 - Kindergarten soccer
- Club sports for teenagers to keep children involved after age 12. More teens will take part if you can offer club sports in tighter age segments (13-14, 15-16, 17-18).
- Sports programs for older adults in 5, 10 or 15-year age segments.

- Programs for 3, 4 and 5-year-olds to introduce them to exercise and sports.
- Physical education classes for home-schooled children.

Here are more ways to increase your recreation program revenue:

- Shift programs to shorter periods of time – for example, from eight to four-week sessions.
- Develop creative program names.
- Offer profit-making programs like these: summer day camps, before and after school-age care, preschool sports, older adult fitness classes, youth dance classes, bus trips and adult sports leagues.
- Offer programs no one else in your community is offering; establish niches.
- Use volunteers to add value to residents' recreation experiences.
- Don't give senior citizen discounts.
- Share the financial goals and bottom-line revenue and expense totals with staff, and enlist their help to meet the goals.
- Implement non-resident fees.

The Use of Pricing Strategies

Instead of referring to the costs of your services as fees, think about using the word prices. The word "fee" is perceived to be a payment



for services that users have no control over or choice about. People think of “prices” as the going market rate for services. The perception is that you can compare prices with those of other agencies and make a decision to purchase or not. The choice to spend money is in the person’s hands, not imposed on them as a “fee.”

Setting prices is a key aspect of financial management, but it’s certainly not an exact science. There are many ways to do it. Experiment and try different ways of pricing each service until you find a good fit. Price services to the 80 percent of the people who can pay, rather than the 20 percent who can’t.

To get those who can’t afford your fees into your programs, use scholarship funds, waive fees on an individual basis, subsidize the cost for them or allow extended payment schedules. Other ways for everyone to participate are to let people fund raise, donate equipment, find business sponsors or volunteer time as payment for the program.

Lower Paxton Township (Dauphin County) offers financial assistance grants and youth scholarships for recreation programs and membership fees at its Friendship Community Center. Residents are eligible for assistance if their family’s income falls below the federal poverty guidelines or they receive food stamps or free school lunches. To qualify, individuals fill out a simple application which is reviewed by the community center operating board. Money is raised for the scholarship fund through

- 1) a solicitation letter to businesses;
- 2) sales of items such as Boyds Bears;
- 3) donations from service clubs, the senior citizen action committee and individuals; and
- 4) a family night special event.

See Appendix C for a sample scholarship application and guidelines.

Income can be increased for the short term by increasing fees. However, any time you raise fees, some people will complain and may stop participating. Counter this by offering improved services or some justification for the increase. If you can demonstrate that your prices are at or below market rates, you can usually increase them without a big outcry from participants.

Municipalities often charge higher fees for non-resident use of community recreation facilities and programs. The basis for this difference in fees is that residents have paid taxes for these services but non-residents have not. There is no standard amount that municipalities charge non-residents to take part in their services. However, if municipalities accept state or federal funds for facility construction or improvements, the fees charged to non-residents may not exceed twice that charged to residents.

Menu Pricing

Menu pricing strategies can help to determine the cost of a service and communicate the cost to the user. For instance, prices are different based on how many basketball games are played, whether there are one or two officials, or if the winners get trophies or t-shirts. Menus can include:



- Number of games
- Number of lessons
- One umpire/two umpires
- Trophies/medals
- Softballs included/not included
- Lights/no lights
- Group fee based on numbers
- Price by location – best seats/fields
- Combo fee – golf and pool combination
- Private/semi-private/group lessons
- Hourly rate/four-hour/all-day fee



Table 5 offers suggestions to consider when setting prices.

Discount Pricing

Discount pricing strategies are great ways to encourage participation. They include:

- Early registration
- Children and adults volunteer hours as payment for recreation programs - empty trash cans, clean-up around building, do filing, process mailings
- Reduced resident fee – price is \$30, residents pay \$20
- Child admission free with paying adult
- Incentives for renewal customer
- Take 10 classes get the next one free
- Coupons
- Cross package with other activities
- Family fee – 1st child full price, 2nd child half price
- Season passes/season tickets
- Off season
- First lesson free/first week free
- Installment payments for summer camps, but start in January
- Cross promote with business – 10 percent off a program with movie stub
- Seniors/juniors
- Yearly membership
- By volume
- Prime/non-prime time
- Twilight
- Per visit

Table 5
Keys to Make Pricing Work

Pricing can require a lot of work. Keep the following points in mind:

1. Research how other agencies are pricing services and compare them to yours.
2. Be creative and use menu and discount pricing strategies.
3. Explain your fees to the public and let participants know the true cost of your services.
4. Create added value in your services, offering some service improvement.
5. Do your homework and price a service right the first time it's offered.
6. Price a service based on its value instead of letting interest groups dictate the price.
7. Think like a business and at least cover direct costs.
8. Let revenue-generating facilities keep a percentage of dollars for their operation.
9. Base your fee on the minimum numbers of participants, not on the maximum.
10. Know when your fees were last raised.
11. Keep a record of revenues, expenses and participant numbers to see trends.

Chapter 4 - Revenue- Generating Facilities

What are revenue-generating recreation and parks facilities? They include facilities that may already exist in your park system such as picnic pavilions and swimming pools, and facilities that you'd like to build and operate in the most self-supporting way possible such as community centers and golf courses.

Your first step should be to look at your existing facilities and explore ways to generate revenue from them. This could be as basic as charging fees for tennis court lights or ball field use. While this will not generate huge amounts of revenue, money brought in can help to offset the operating costs of the facilities.

Why should public recreation facilities generate revenue? Revenue-producing facilities supplement general fund revenues while providing the public with increased recreation opportunities. Fees should offset operating expenditures to the greatest degree possible. Some revenue-producing facilities are even capable of generating enough money to offset their total operational cost. Though rare for public facilities, fees may also recover the operating costs, plus the interest and amortization of the initial capital investment made to construct the facility. A public golf course could fall in this category.

This chapter covers the most common recreation facilities that produce revenue, including support services such as concessions and gift shops. The use of enterprise funds, where fees and charges produced from facilities benefit recreation and parks needs instead of

going into the general fund, is also discussed.

When public funds aren't available for construction or you're unable to maintain the facility at the standard of service the public desires, revenue-producing facilities can be constructed and operated through contractual agreements with the private sector. Chapter Seven provides more details on this approach.

Recreation Facilities that Produce Revenue

What types of recreation facilities will generate revenue? The facilities below are the most common ones. The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS) maintains a database of Pennsylvania's municipalities with full-time recreation and parks departments. It includes the types of revenue-generating facilities they manage. For instance, of the 304 departments listed, 26 have golf courses, 37 have ice rinks, 49 have roller hockey rinks and 18 have campgrounds. Before constructing such facilities, visit similar facilities and interview managers. PRPS can provide contact information for you.

Golf Courses – While they can be expensive to build or purchase, golf courses can bring in significant revenues.

Miniature Golf Courses – Depending on construction, miniature golf courses are easy to maintain. They work best as an extra amenity at an existing facility such as a swimming pool.



Ice Rinks – Indoor ice rinks generate revenue but may have difficulty being self-supporting, due to high utility and maintenance costs.

Picnic Pavilions – Picnic pavilions are a traditional recreation facility that fees are charged for. More revenue can be generated when the pavilion has extra amenities that make it ideal for family reunions and company picnics. Amenities include: horseshoe pits, ball fields, fireplaces, bocce courts, playgrounds, trails, access to water, lights, restrooms and recreation equipment.



Street/In-Line Hockey Rinks – Outdoor rinks that accommodate street and in-line hockey league play can be very popular facilities that can pay for themselves.

Batting Cages – Batting cages are best placed as a support facility near baseball and softball fields. They can be constructed as coin or token operated so no staff is necessary.

Driving Ranges – A driving range can be a stand-alone facility or an amenity at a golf course. Like batting cages, they can be coin or token operated to eliminate the need for staff.



Campgrounds – To cover operation and maintenance costs, campgrounds charge basic fees for campsites and additional fees for water, electric and sewer hook-ups. The more amenities a campground has, the better its revenue potential is. Essentials are a beach or swimming pool, playground equipment, camp store and indoor activity area. Extras like a fishing pond, cabins and recreation activities such as hayrides, movies, bingo, crafts and dances increase the popularity of a campground.

Recreation Centers - Communities use many types of buildings to meet the demand for indoor recreation activities. Some recreation centers are very successful in generating revenue with limited facilities due to innovative and creative ideas for programs. The revenue potential of any recreation center is most related, though, to the type of physical facilities it has. The more facilities in your center, the better your potential is to attract members and generate revenue. Construction of new recreation centers is a growing nationwide trend that's being prompted by lack of indoor space. Most recreation centers require some operating subsidy; they cannot fully fund all expenses. Facilities can include:



- Fitness room
- Gymnasiums
- Swimming pools – warm water, competitive lap and family fun
- Sauna/whirlpool/steam rooms
- Tennis courts
- Racquetball/handball courts

- Banquet/meeting rooms and kitchen
- Weight training room
- Snack bar/vending machines
- Auditorium with stage
- Craft rooms
- Preschool/child care rooms
- Computer labs
- Teen center/game room

Swimming Pools – These are the most common revenue-generating recreation facilities in Pennsylvania. When all capital and operating costs are considered, it is rare to realize a net profit at a swimming pool. Pools built years ago don't reflect how people like to swim today. How can you create a pool environment that becomes a local attraction? Here are some ideas:

- Maximize the surface areas surrounding swimming pools for other types of recreation activities – shuffleboard, sand volleyball, playground equipment and picnicking.
- Where can you expand hours? What rules don't you need? Can you provide towels? Can you provide an assortment of recreation equipment for patron's use? What things can be done at your facility that no one else is doing? Do you conduct recreation programs in other locations that you can move to this facility?
- Add another pool or water amenity to attract and hold patrons. This could be a short three-lane lap pool maintained at a higher water temperature, a therapeutic pool with high salt content, whirlpools, spas, hot tubs, zero-depth entry, water slides or sprays. Additions like these to an already existing facility can usually be done at less cost than new construction.

- Sell admission passes to businesses to give away to employees or to customers as a promotional tool.
- Market the opportunities for private party rentals more aggressively.
- Utilize pricing strategies that encourage use, such as early discount memberships.
- Hold fee-based instructional classes such as synchronized swimming, competitive strokes, snorkeling, scuba diving, swimming and diving lessons, kayaking and canoeing.



- Make staff aware of your financial goals and develop programs so they can work towards meeting those goals. Train staff on how to merchandise your services.
- Add games, contests and special events.
- Improve pool support facilities by upgrading the locker rooms or adding showers.
- Provide or enhance concession services by offering a larger or healthier selection of food or selling pool supplies like goggles.

To increase the revenue at its outdoor pool, the Chambersburg Recreation Department (Franklin County) installed a 121-foot water slide. Within two years, the extra pool revenue completely paid for the cost of the slide. Two sand volleyball courts and an 18-hole miniature golf course have since been added. These new amenities have kept overall pool revenue at more than the cost of operation, maintenance and minor yearly repairs.

Winter Activity Areas - In many areas of Pennsylvania, winter snowfall and consistently cold temperatures are unpredictable and make offering outdoor activities on a regular basis difficult. In other regions of the state snow and cold are common occurrences. In northern Pennsylvania, artificial snowmaking equipment can be used for winter activities that require snow. Winter activities that can generate revenue include:

- Ice-skating (hot drink sales)
- Cross country skiing (rentals, instruction)
- Snowmobiling (trail fees)
- Tobogganing (season pass)
- Ice fishing (equipment rental, permits)
- Winter camping (overnight fees)
- Sledding (season pass)
- Special events such as winter carnivals
- Nature study (program fees)

Winter Weekend is sponsored by the Wellsboro Department of Parks and Recreation (Tioga County). Wintry activities include cross country skiing, ice skating, sledding, snowshoe lessons, ice fishing, winter camping demonstrations, a bonfire and hot refreshments. A late afternoon bluegrass jam session is held at the high school, followed by two evening concerts and a dance party at the historic Penn Wells Hotel.



Extra Amenities - Facilities like these make an existing recreation site more valuable, meaning more can be charged for the service: snack bar, tennis courts, restrooms, basketball courts, security staff and lights.

Water Activity Areas – If you have a water resource, whether it's a lake, pond or river, you have tremendous potential to generate revenue. People love to be around water, some to swim, some to relax and sit in a boat, some to picnic and sit along the water's edge. Your revenue possibilities depend upon the type and size of your water areas. Here are a few ideas:

- Rentals - rafts, boats, umbrellas, fishing equipment, lockers, water skis, inner-tubes
- White water rafting
- Water skiing shows
- Regattas
- Theme raft races
- Remote control model boat races/shows
- Fishing tournaments
- Instructional classes – sailing, canoeing, kayaking, windsurfing, scuba diving, swimming, diving



- Bait shops
- Triathlons
- Sand sculpture contests
- Boat races/shows

The York County Department of Parks and Recreation operates a boat rental concession

in the spring and summer at Lake Redman in Kain County Park. Seasonal workers are hired to staff the operation. Canoes, row boats, pedal boats and kayaks can be rented by the hour on weekends in May and September and Wednesday to Sunday from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Average net revenue each year is \$9,500.

Conducting a Feasibility Study

To determine the potential for success of a revenue-producing facility, conduct a feasibility study with the help of an outside consultant. Feasibility studies are most often done for facilities requiring a substantial capital investment such as a community center or swimming pool. DCNR provides matching grant funds to help with the cost and requires that a study be done before it will provide funding to acquire, develop or rehabilitate the proposed facility. A sample scope of work for a feasibility study is available on the grant section of the DCNR website at www.dcnr.state.pa.us.

DCNR requires a feasibility study to insure that 1) a community fully understands the facility's projected operating and capital needs, 2) there is documented need and public support for the facility, and 3) there is a prioritized action plan with estimated costs. For facilities like a community center that may appear to compete with the private sector, a key element of the study is to determine if the private sector is currently providing the service. If it is, the study helps to decide whether a public facility will be politically acceptable and assess the potential for a legal challenge or media attack from the private sector. A feasibility study then looks at the fee structures of similar facilities to come up with competitive fees for your proposed facility.

If the private sector isn't providing the service, find out why not. It's easy to assume that if the service isn't being provided, your facility has an excellent chance for success. It's possible that the

private sector already studied the market for this service and found it weak. So if you intend to develop a revenue-producing facility that doesn't exist locally, be sure you have adequate public need to support it.

Using Enterprise Funds to Operate Recreation Facilities and Programs

An enterprise fund is an accounting method that records the transactions of facilities and activities that are self-supporting through user fees and charges. This can include all acquisition, development, operation and maintenance expenses. With an enterprise fund, fees and charges produced from revenue-generating recreation facilities and programs come back to your department, rather than go into the general fund. This frees up general fund tax revenue for other services. Enterprise funds can operate and maintain recreation facilities like golf courses, cultural and performing arts centers, swimming pools, campgrounds and regional parks.

In Hampden Township (Cumberland County) both the Township-owned golf course and swimming pool are revenue producers and are set up as enterprise funds. Excess revenue that is left each year, after the general fund transfer, pays for major capital improvements to the golf course, such as building a maintenance shop, improving the restaurant, paving cart paths, expanding the parking lot and purchasing golf carts. The golf course is totally self-supporting.

Over the past five years, the pool enterprise fund has satisfied the pool's debt service and paid to rewire the electrical system, construct an admission building and water spray ground, institute membership photo IDs and install a walk-in freezer in the snack bar. The next project is to renovate the wading pool into a zero-depth play pool. Due to the need to save money for these projects, no excess revenue has been placed in the Township general fund in recent

years.

Do not establish your enterprise fund without money in it. Although this may be an easy way to get your elected officials to accept the idea, one week of poor weather or low revenues could leave the enterprise fund unable to meet payroll. Not only would you have to ask for a loan, it might jeopardize keeping the new fund in place and the new facility open. Ask for the normal annual appropriation from the general fund to establish the enterprise fund, indicating that your operation will be self-sustaining at the end of the year. Even if a portion of this money is only a loan, you won't face the embarrassment of failure in your first year of operation.

You can use one enterprise fund for several activities and facilities. This way, popular programs and facilities that make money can help support activities that have difficulty meeting their direct expenses.

The Municipality of Murrysville (Westmoreland County) operates its recreation programs through an enterprise fund. Program revenues go into this fund and direct program expenses are paid out of it. As net revenue is earned from recreation programs, it is spent to offer additional recreation programs. A fund balance is carried over from year to year. Murrysville's finance director established the fund with \$10,000 in start-up cash. The advantage to this financing method is that it forces staff to be aware of total revenues earned. While the fund covers direct expenses, indirect expenses such as administrative staff time, insurance and office supplies are still covered in the municipality's general fund budget.

Why Use Enterprise Funds?

Using enterprise funds to operate revenue-generating facilities and programs offers several advantages.

- Revenues collected from enterprise facilities don't get deposited in the general fund. Profits at the end of the year stay in the enterprise fund and can be used to expand the recreation facility or improve its recreation service.
- Using facility and activity fees to improve the facility or activity creates an incentive for recreation and parks staff to become more cost conscious. It can also help to improve staff morale.
- Enterprise funds provide more autonomy to the department in the expenditure of money.
- The public benefits by enjoying a facility now and not at some time in the future when capital and operating funds could be accumulated.
- Those who use the facility pay not only for its operating and maintenance costs, but also the initial capital investment. Taxpayers aren't charged for something they don't use.
- It's easier to determine direct costs of operating an enterprise facility and to charge back indirect costs of maintenance and other expenses to the



enterprise fund.

Concession Operations

A concession facility sells or rents merchandise or provides a special service. Its purpose is to enhance people's recreation experiences.

Concession operations can be refreshment stands, vending machines and restaurants; services such as stables and bait shops; recreation equipment rentals like cross country skis or bicycles; or overnight accommodations such as campgrounds or lodges. Concessions make money if they're properly designed, well located and efficiently operated.

Your agency can operate a concession or contract the service to a community group like a volunteer youth sports parent club, a golf or tennis pro, or a private contractor. How do you make this decision? Look at the advantages and disadvantages of leasing the concession carefully. Table 6 contains some of the common positives and negatives of leasing concession operations.

Table 7 lists the elements to include in a concession contract.

Marshall Township (Allegheny County) contracts its ball field concession stand to the Brad-Mar-Pine Athletic Association. The Association pays \$10 for each day it operates the snack bar. The Township pays for the building's electricity, water, sewer and trash dumpster. A written agreement spells out the responsibilities.

Table 6
Leasing Concession Operations

Advantages	Disadvantages
Lessens your financial investment	Loss of direct control
Provides a fixed amount of funds	Need for extra monitoring
Eliminates need to hire, train and supervise staff	Possible lesser quality service because of contractor's need to make profit
Eliminates worry about employee theft	Complaints can still come to the department
No need to purchase, maintain and service expensive equipment	Difficult to correct problems quickly
No time spent inventorying supplies	Takes time to find concessionaire and negotiate contract
Can handle complaints and problems directly	
No need to purchase supplies	



Table 7
Terms and Conditions in a Concession Contract

- Dates of contract
- Description of the service being contracted
- Description of facility and its location
- Days and hours of operation – include clause that agency has discretion to change hours with notice
- Fee contractor will pay with agency ability to renegotiate
- Requirement to keep accounting records and agency's right to inspect books, submission of a monthly profit and loss statement on agency's form, and copy of annual IRS report given to agency
- Employee qualifications and conduct standards - include nondiscrimination clause, right of agency to recommend and insist on dismissal and uniform requirements
- Type and quality of food and service
- Agency right to inspect premises
- Signs erected at facility – must be approved by agency
- Fixed equipment/other equipment – list who owns, maintains, approves what equipment can be used, and is responsible for updating equipment
- Proper storage of equipment and supplies
- Maintenance standards - who is responsible to clean and what must be cleaned, how far away from facility must be cleaned, trash disposal plans
- Compliance with health and safety regulations
- Merchandise for sale and prices charged must be approved by agency
- Provision that the premises can't be leased or assigned to someone else
- Advertising – agency must approve copy
- Alterations
- Damage to premises such as vandalism and fire
- Inflammables - list what can be stored
- Payment of utilities
- Insurance - waiver of damages, amount of insurance contractor must carry, hold harmless clause
- Copy of park rules and regulations that contractor must follow
- Plot plan of facility
- Lock-up clause in case of violations – agency must give so many days notice
- Notice of intent to stop service – how much notice to give and how to communicate it, both contractor and agency
- Security deposit or performance bond
- Signature block for both parties

Vending Machine Sales

Vending machines are an option to staffing a snack bar. The key advantage is that you can provide basic products when demand is too low or sporadic to support even a part-time concession operation. There's no personal service, but there's also very little cost and work involved. Your department can order the products, fill the machines and count the money. This way, you pay for the product and keep all the money you empty from the machines. Or, have the company fill the vending machines and collect the money, then send your department its commission amount.



Instead of only cold soda, candy and snacks, vending items can include hot food and drinks like soup, coffee and hot chocolate, and cold food and drinks like sandwiches, yogurt, water and Gatorade. Pairing indoor vending machines with microwave ovens expands the number of items to sell. Outdoor vending machines should be as vandal-proof as possible and placed in well-lighted areas.

Gift Shop Sales

There are two types of items sold at recreation and parks facility gift shops. The first are items that relate to the facility and activities that people can do there. These would include items such as disposable cameras, suntan lotion and trail guides. The second are souvenirs people buy as gifts for others or to remind them of their visit.

Souvenir items can be profitable and enhance the image of your department. Sell unique items, things that people aren't likely to find in stores. Imprint the name of the park or facility on the item or have special merchandise made with the park logo or photos on it.

Place your gift shop in a highly-traveled, high-density location. If this isn't possible, use signs, colors or sound to attract people's attention. When displaying, move an item to another spot if it doesn't sell. Put prices on every item. Mount sample items to show what they look like. A t-shirt looks better from a vertical position than laying flat on the counter. Study the way successful stores display items and learn from them.

The Bucks County Department of Parks and Recreation Moravian Pottery and Tile Works tile shop opened in 1969. The primary stock is the wonderful assortment of tiles and mosaics that are made at the park in the working history program. Over 500 tile selections and 100 mosaic patterns are sold, along with a selection of books dealing with tiles, post cards and other gift items. Tile sales generate the most revenue. The average total shop sales each year are \$600,000. Most of this goes back into the county general fund; a portion is used each year for shop restoration and improvements.



Chapter 5 - Tapping Community Resources

With citizen demands always increasing and needs evolving, tax dollars are stretched pretty thin. What can you do to track down new and additional dollars?

When you involve the community, your number of revenue sources will multiply. Look at your entire community for potential funding sources. Remember that the community doesn't necessarily stop at your municipal boundary.

The needs of Pennsylvania's municipalities vary greatly; our urban, suburban and rural areas face different challenges and have different strengths.

Merge the ideas in this chapter like establishing giving or adoption programs with the realities of your area. The more diverse your funding base becomes, the more stable your finances will be.

Rather than get into lengthy discussions, this chapter introduces you to how to tap community resources by soliciting funds, establishing friends groups, increasing volunteerism and building stronger partnerships. Any of these can be excellent sources of additional revenue. Decide which ones suit your situation and explore them in greater detail.

It will take creativity, talent and effort to tap your local funding opportunities. If the additional dollars you earn end up in the general fund, your department can still benefit. At the very least, your resourcefulness that brought in the extra money can be used to justify increased appropriations at budget time.

Establishing Support Foundations and Friends Groups

Because of tight municipal recreation and parks budgets, it's difficult to do all that's necessary to keep your parks in good shape.

Your municipality can partner with concerned citizens to establish "friends of the park" groups. These are incorporated as nonprofit organizations to support a park or facility in many ways, including volunteering at programs and seeking tax-deductible contributions. Friends groups can raise money that provides a healthy supplement to municipal recreation and parks budgets for their parks. They can establish individual bank accounts so contributors can earmark their donations for specific park improvements or recreation programs.

Friends groups aren't government agencies so they don't have the "red tape" you do. Working closely with your municipality, friends groups can make park improvements happen quickly. See Appendix D for a sample friends group brochure.

Also, many groups and organizations won't donate funds to government, but will give funds to a nonprofit agency.



Many foundations only give grant funds to organizations with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. Having a friends group or other nonprofit partner for your municipality will help you to access foundation grants.

Philadelphia's Fairmount Park system is an outstanding example of the use of friends groups. Over 80 park friends groups help maintain this city treasure by raising money, sponsoring projects and providing volunteer support. Another example of resident support of Philadelphia parks is highlighted in Figure 9.

Like friends groups, foundations are a tool to solicit and channel private financing into your public recreation and parks system. Municipalities can create support foundations that are separate from government and political connections. The major purpose of a recreation and parks foundation is to raise and earn money in ways that government would not normally be able to.

Support foundations and friends groups:

- Can act quickly to leverage gifts and apply a number of land acquisition techniques available only to nonprofit organizations.
- Do not have a credibility gap like government does.
- Can be tailored to serve each community's special needs.
- Have 501(c)(3) tax status, which qualifies donors for a tax deduction for their contribution.

Table 8 outlines points to keep in mind when forming a support foundation or friends group.

Table 8
Creating a Support Foundation or Friends Group

1. Find an attorney who's willing to donate the necessary legal services. Forming a nonprofit corporation and qualifying as a tax-exempt organization can be a cumbersome and lengthy process.
2. Apply for tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code so that donations are fully deductible as charitable contributions for income tax purposes. Apply for state tax-exempt status through the Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Charitable Organizations.
3. Approach the trust department at a major bank to handle your foundation or your friends group bank account and inform them of your future plans.
4. Make key people, such as trust officers, attorneys, accountants, investment counselors, board members of major corporations, and business and industry leaders aware that you're setting up a foundation or friends group, and involve them as board members if you can.
5. Seek donations, grants, land gifts, loans, interest income, fundraising efforts and membership fees.
6. Establish endowments for specific park areas or recreation facilities to support operation and maintenance costs. The interest earned on the principal covers these expenses.

The City of Harrisburg (Dauphin County) created the Mortimer Levitt Foundation in 2002. This nonprofit foundation assists the City's parks and recreation department in upgrading the band shell in Reservoir Park and expanding outdoor performing arts events hosted there. As part of a written memorandum of understanding, the band shell was renamed the Levitt Pavilion for the Performing Arts. Mortimer Levitt donated \$750,000 as a charitable gift to initially fund the new foundation. A committee has been formed within the foundation for the purpose of raising additional dollars.

Tips for Giving Program Success

For a giving program to be most successful, it's important to actively involve people who have ties to the "money people" inside and outside your community. Other tips include:

- *Having a Good Image* - Most of us like to think we're spending our money wisely. This is true for people who are in a position to make contributions to recreation and parks agencies. So it's critical that your agency create the proper image in your community by being efficiently managed and operated. Before seriously considering a gift, people will take into account your agency's past and present accomplishments and future plans.
- *Developing an Action Plan* - Write a simple five to 10-year action plan that outlines needs. In the plan, include a description, timetable, location map and projected costs for key programs and capital projects.
- *Raising Friends* - To raise funds, you have to first raise friends. Building a constituency of people who value department services is hard work. Work on building people's understanding of what you do, not only the park areas, recreation facilities and programs you provide, but what good you do for individuals, families, the community, the environment and the economy. Friend raising doesn't only affect your sources and amounts of donations. It also impacts the willingness of volunteers and the support of the media.

Ways to Solicit Funds for Giving Programs

Annual Giving Campaigns - In an annual giving campaign, a set amount of money is raised, with the goal to increase that amount each year. Direct mail fundraisers are most often used for annual giving campaigns. They are also used for capital campaigns. Mailing lists are compiled, the type of solicitation letter and return vehicle

is chosen ("Yes, I want to help..."), and the materials are mailed on pre-determined dates. A mailed piece must set itself apart from the piles of junk mail people get. Using your department logo on the envelope and the solicitation letter helps do this. Contracting a professional athlete, political figure or well-known citizen to sign it for a "personal" appeal can help raise more funds. Your letter must clearly state your case (this is what's happening/ what's needed) and the action for a potential donor to take (send a tax-deductible donation to...).

Deferred Giving Programs - A deferred giving program is a commitment to give a specified amount of money in the future. It's a great source of income if you're willing to wait. Many people leave gifts in their wills for schools, civic groups, fire companies, hospitals...why not recreation and parks? Categories of deferred giving include:

- Retained life income gifts (a lump sum gift, usually in the form of a trust, held by the benefiting agency from which the donor is paid a percentage of the annual income from the trust for the remainder of his or her life).
- Life insurance policies of which an agency is the beneficiary.
- Retained life occupancy (the deed of the property is given to the benefiting agency, but the donor remains as the occupant until his or her death).
- Bequests (gifts left in donors' wills).

Although no formal program is in place, word of mouth has helped the Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority (Union County) receive a number of deferred gifts. One local resident willed the recreation agency \$25,000, while another asked family and friends to make

donations in his memory which resulted in over \$1,000 in contributions. The Authority also receives \$5,000 in stock contributions each year from another interested citizen. Given the potential for future bequests, the Authority plans to start an official deferred giving program.

Capital Campaigns - When funds are raised for a capital campaign, they're for a specific purpose and are kept separate from the department's annual operating budget. Before accepting gifts of land, securities and valuables such as antiques, get independent appraisals of their worth.



The Lower Gwynedd Township Parks and Recreation Board (Montgomery County) held a very successful capital campaign to develop its first municipal park. In one year, a capital campaign committee of residents raised \$1.5 million. Township businesses were approached first. Once a strong base of financial support was in place, the campaign went public and all residents were asked to contribute.

With the help of its strategic marketing plan, the Ephrata Recreation Center (Lancaster County) capital campaign raised \$1.8 million to retrofit and expand the Center from 65,000 to 95,000 square feet. Leadership gifts were solicited during the campaign's quiet phase. Nine gifts made up \$1.5 million. The public phase, a direct

mail solicitation and a four-hour live telethon from the Center, pulled in the remainder of the money.

After 43 years of service, the Lewisburg Community Pool's foundation and overall structure was deteriorating. From cracked and uneven decking to inefficient filtration systems, the pool was becoming unsafe for public use. Major renovations were desperately needed to keep this significant community asset open. A "Pledge the Pool" capital campaign committee began work to raise the necessary funds. The campaign goal of \$500,000 will be added to the approximately \$425,000 in federal, state and municipal funds to make the improvements happen. See Appendix E for a copy of the campaign brochure.

Adopting Parks

Many communities have successful "adopt-a-park," "adopt-a-trail" and related programs. Groups provide cash or in-kind contributions to help maintain individual sites. This works best if an agreement is developed between the municipality and group to specify exactly what the group will do. Items include things like: committing to at least two years of involvement with the park or trail, watering and weeding landscaped areas and conducting litter pick-ups. In addition, the group and the municipality identify a list of facility needs and determine how the group can best assist with those needs. Rather than have a standard way that each site is "adopted," it's better to tailor the fit to each group. Be flexible and keep red tape to a minimum.

An adopting group can be a civic association, a youth soccer club, a business, a family, a school, a church, a sports team...any group with an interest in helping. Put a sign in the park or at the trail entrance that displays who has "adopted" the facility. Consider holding a press conference to recognize groups for their involvement.

Figure 9 Philadelphia Parks Come to Life

In communities across the USA, residents and local officials address a problem that hits very close to home: Many of the nation's urban parks are in decline, marred by trash, broken or rusted equipment, poorly maintained trails, graffiti, crime and gang activity.

"There's an increasing interest in creating viable recreation facilities in neighborhoods in cities," says Alexander Garvin, adjunct professor of urban planning and management at Yale University and author of the 2001 book *Parks, Recreation and Open Space: A 21st Century Agenda*.

The heyday of urban parks was in the 1920s and 1930s, when nearly every city had at least one standout park, says Peter Harnik, director of the Center for City Park Excellence at the Trust for Public Land, a national non-profit conservation organization. "After World War II, there was a much greater interest in the suburbs," he says. "It seemed that everybody would live in the suburbs. From the 1940s through the 1990s, (city) parks went relentlessly downhill." That slide was accelerated in recent years by cities' financial troubles.

The renaissance of urban parks is partly tied to demographics, says Kathy Madden, vice president of the Project for Public Spaces in New York. "People are moving back into the cities and finding that the parks need help, and they're getting very involved in their parks," she says. "And sometimes, it's people who've lived in a community for years."


That was true for Doris Gwaltney of Philadelphia. Her neighborhood park, Carroll Park, was so bad she wouldn't walk in it even during daytime. "This park was in disrepair for 30 years," Gwaltney, 65, says. "This place was a beached whale stinking up the whole neighborhood. There was drugs, prostitution. The ground would glisten from the broken bottles."

Gwaltney and her neighbors formed a partnership with the Philadelphia Recreation Department and the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society's "Philadelphia Green" parks revitalization project. Residents picked up trash in the park. Senior citizens formed a garden club. The activists brought summer concerts to the park. They landed more than \$500,000 in grants from foundations, the city and the state. Carroll Park's trails and playground now make it a bustling center of activity during the day and a popular venue for nighttime events.

Since 1993, Philadelphia Green has tackled 50 city parks that fell into disrepair during budget cuts in the 1980s, says Joan Reilly, director of partnership development for Philadelphia Green. "It's a movement that's growing," she says.

*-An excerpt from the article, "Urban Parks Come to Life,"
by Larry Copeland, USA Today, August 2004*

Figure 10



**The City of York
Pennsylvania**
1 Marketway West, 3rd Floor York, PA 17401
www.yorkcity.org
John S. Brenner, Mayor

Department of Public Works
Phone 717-849-2245
Fax 717-845-7457

ANGELS OF THE PARK

The _____ wishes to participate in the Angels of the Park program with the City of York, Bureau of Parks and Recreation. _____ agrees as a participant of this program to adopt _____ and do the following:

1. Commit to a minimum of two-year involvement with the Park.
2. Complete a minimum of four litter pick-ups in the Park each year.
3. If trees, flowers, or shrubbery are donated to the park, we agree to commit to watering and weeding these plants as needed during the two years.
4. Agree to work with the Parks Superintendent to identify a list of needs for the park and to determine how the group can best assist with these needs. (Group and Parks Superintendent must reach agreement on substantial improvements to the park in order to qualify for the Angels of the Park program.)

The City of York agrees to acknowledge participation in the Angels of the Park program as follows:

1. Place a sign in the park with the groups' name prominently displayed.
2. Hold at least one press conference to recognize the group for their involvement.
3. Continue to promote the Angels of the Park program in newsletters and on the City web site.

Signed:

Parks Superintendent

Angels of the Park Participant

The City of York (York County) operates the highly successful “Angels of the Park” program. Fourteen city parks are fully adopted with a combination of cash, contributions, in-kind support and volunteer labor. Like many other Pennsylvania municipalities, York has been faced with economic challenges. The idea behind “Angels of the Park” is to get local businesses, churches, neighborhood associations and other groups involved with helping to take care of the parks. Parks have new swing sets and picnic tables, resurfaced basketball courts and regular litter pick-ups. Partners like Suscom Cable, Merrill Lynch and Starbuck’s Coffee have created and maintained flower beds, raked leaves and held programs for neighborhood children. Figure 10 is a copy of the “Angels of the Park” agreement.

The Use of Gift Catalogs

A gift catalog is a brochure that itemizes and attractively packages specific recreation and parks needs that individuals, companies or organizations can “buy” for the community. The gift list may include any kind of needed item, from cash to donated services. Gifts from the catalog are deductible as charitable contributions for income tax purposes.

Soliciting donations of land, money, materials or labor is a time-consuming process. Although it requires a definite commitment of time, a gift catalog offers a relatively simple way to involve the entire community and inform the public that your agency can use help. Citizens and corporations can specify where their money is spent and point with pride to something they did for the community.

Before you prepare a gift catalog, decide what type of donations to solicit and what type to accept. Decide how to administer the gift catalog program. Will you develop the program in-house or seek the help of an outside group? Know your target audience, particularly area businesses, service groups, philanthropists and foundations, and line up people to follow up personally on all leads.

Then make an inventory of your agency’s needs. Include major items like ball fields and buildings; small, affordable items like shrubs, basketballs and t-shirts; and services and skills. Present a range of gifts that potential donors can choose from. List some things that would benefit the agency as a whole, some that would go into a specific neighborhood, and some that would apply to a single, large-scale project. If the catalog is going out to the community at large, be sure there’s something in it for everyone in terms of cost range, including a few items for only a few dollars. Table 9 provides tips on designing a gift catalog.

Table 9
Gift Catalog Design Tips

1. Document your needs early. Start out with a brief introduction that makes it clear how badly these gifts are needed.
2. Use photos of new equipment, action pictures of people participating in programs or architectural renderings of proposed new buildings. If you need gifts for repairs and maintenance, a negative visual impact using photos of cracked asphalt, overflowing trash cans and deteriorating buildings can work.
3. Include the names and contact information for agency staff.
4. Provide accurate information on tax deductibility.
5. Indicate how donors will be recognized publicly.
6. Index giving options. Possible categories can include:

Specific park needs	Adopt-a-park
By item size (small, medium, large)	By cost range
Facilities	Programs
Expertise/services	Labor/staffing
Equipment/materials	Land
Recreation experiences	Landscaping
Adopt-a-program	"You name the gift"
7. Provide lots of suggestions on giving options. Suggest that cash to buy an item or cover part of an item is welcome, or that neighbors buy a gift together.
8. Present gifts as attractively as possible and use high-quality graphics. Don't try to save money by cutting back on illustrations. Good pictures can be the key factor in persuading a donor to make a gift.
9. Use an interesting and varied layout format. Use color, lists, typefaces and highlighters creatively.
10. Keep the size manageable. Most gift catalogs designed for general distribution are small enough to fit into a letter-size envelope, and run from five to 15 pages.
11. Provide tear-out donation forms and envelopes. Make it as easy as possible for donors to give, even accepting credit cards if you can.

To distribute your gift catalog, start by drawing up a list of potential contributors and mailing the catalog out to them first; include a cover letter. To distribute your gift catalog, start by drawing up a list of potential contributors and mailing the catalog out to them first; include a cover letter targeted to specific groups. Send catalogs

out with other mailings like your municipal newsletter to realize a cost savings.

Distribute copies at libraries, schools, banks and retail businesses. Inform bank trust officers, estate attorneys and funeral directors about the gift catalog. They may suggest a gift as part of the legacy of a civic-minded individual or family.

Ask your local newspaper to do a story on the challenges facing recreation and parks agencies as a lead-in to the announcement of your gift catalog. Arrange a kick-off event. Get gifts donated before the kick-off to announce as examples of how the public can support the concept. Find a lead donor who will match the gifts of others. Speak to church and school groups, service clubs and the Chamber of Commerce. After the initial distribution period, send out flyers reporting on progress and give publicity to your donors. Ask the local paper to run updated reports on the catalog's success. Involve your elected officials in the recognition process, having them present citations or plaques to donors. As holidays approach, step up publicity. Suggest that someone would love to have a gift given to the community in his or her name.

Generating Revenue through Fund Raising Activities

Fund raising can generate revenue for everything from capital development projects to youth recreation programs. Pulling off successful fund raising activities requires planning, coordination and hard work, plus lots of volunteer help. Don't think too small. It can take as much energy to make \$500 in profit as it does to make \$10,000. Contact other recreation and parks agencies out of your area to ask what type of fundraising activities are most successful for them.

Other important considerations are making sure that someone else in your community doesn't already run the fundraiser and selecting a date that doesn't compete with another event. These two common mistakes are made if you don't do your homework properly. There are four major categories of fund raisers: donation activities (phone-a-thons), food and drink activities (all-you-can-eat breakfasts), product sales (candy) and special events (festivals).

Special events involve up-front costs and lengthy planning time. This means developing an event expense budget, having a staffing plan, knowing what other events are going on at the same time, establishing committees, setting deadlines like contract due dates, publicity start dates, registration deadlines and set-up timelines; choosing a location, deciding on activities and vendors, locating equipment, soliciting sponsors and recruiting volunteers.

Not all special events will generate enough money to be worth the time and expense. Do some basic arithmetic. Determine the costs, potential profit and possible loss. Special events can raise \$100 to \$100,000 net profit. Develop a signature special event, one that people identify with your department, to help build revenue potential. If people know what the special event is supporting, this helps raise more money. Fund raising events have a double purpose; they provide a community recreation program *and* generate money for the department.

The Southern End Community Association (SECA) holds a successful Charity Auction every spring. SECA offers recreation programs for six municipalities in southern Lancaster County. Agency volunteers collect donated items and services from area businesses and individuals. Approximately \$20,000 is netted each year from this fundraiser.

Increasing Volunteerism

Volunteers supplement your staff and strengthen your recreation and parks services in important ways. They can maintain flowerbeds, provide security or help to construct and maintain playgrounds. More work can get done in less time at less cost. At budget time you'll have residents who value recreation and parks and support continued and even expanded tax funds for your services.

Involving citizens as volunteers in recreation and parks takes some effort. Start by looking at what you want to ask people to help with. What kinds of volunteer jobs do you have?

These types of volunteer activities lend themselves well to recreation and parks work. How would you use volunteers in these categories?

- Student community service – students must complete a certain number of hours to graduate
- Creative student involvement – utilizing classes, clubs and teams as volunteers
- One-day or short-term assignments – projects that have a start and finish
- Family volunteering – family units volunteering together
- Corporate volunteers – businesses mandating employee volunteering
- Virtual volunteering – the volunteers are real, but the service is done on-line, via email and other Internet capabilities (research projects, surveying, designing web pages, translating flyers, mentoring



- teenagers and more)
- Adult recreation and friendship opportunities – projects where people will work with others and have a chance to make friends who share the same interests

Remember that although you aren't paying them a salary, volunteers aren't free. More than anything, it takes lots of time to recruit, train and supervise volunteers. Of course, when all of this is done well, the rewards are great. Table 10 provides useful strategies to recruit volunteers.

Table 10
How to Find Volunteers

1. Design meaningful volunteer projects that have the potential to attract the kind of volunteers you most want. Have a variety of volunteer opportunities available so that your residents can try different ones.
2. After volunteer work design, the second most important part of recruitment is creativity in deciding where to look for volunteers. Only go to sources with the potential to have the types of candidates you most want. For each area where you need help, brainstorm new, creative places to seek qualified volunteers.
3. Set a goal of a certain number of outreach efforts each month. Pay attention to the overall look of your print materials and always leave something behind when you speak or visit. Develop recruitment materials that match the places you're most likely to find good candidates. If your municipality has a website, make sure it highlights volunteer opportunities.
4. Don't try to minimize the work a volunteer will do. A challenge can be more appealing than the sense any warm body will do. Don't be apologetic. You're offering people an opportunity, not asking a favor.
5. The word "volunteer" may repel as often as it attracts. Use vocabulary that your citizens can relate to. This may be "community service," "being a good neighbor," or "joining in." Also, don't say: "We need volunteers." Advertise that you need tutors or coaches or graphic designers.

Partnerships and Collaborative Ventures

Partnerships offer opportunities to share skills and gain resources your department doesn't have, *and* save money. Traditional partners for your recreation and parks agency like youth sports groups, churches and schools are very important. However, the potential for other partnerships is vast. Commercial business, social service agencies, police departments and even other recreation and parks agencies are great potential partners.



School districts are a key partner for every municipal recreation and parks department in Pennsylvania. In many communities, schools are the only indoor facilities available for recreation programs. District ball fields and tennis courts may also be the only outdoor public recreation facilities, particularly in more rural areas.

Types of Recreation and Parks Partnerships

Facility Use – Many municipalities want to offer new recreation programs but don't have the facilities to do so. Shared use of facilities such as schools, churches, YMCAs and fitness clubs allows this to happen.

Grants – Grants are easier to get when a number of partners are involved in your project. For instance, developing a park with your school district strengthens your grant application.

Planning – Joint planning by municipalities is becoming more common. Pooling financial resources together can greatly enhance the scope of projects and likelihood of plan implementation.

Programming – Cooperative recreation programs and special events may improve activities by increased volunteers, supplies and promotion.

Publications – Printing of brochures, shared space in newsletters, joint recreation program guides with other departments, and mailing recreation program guides with school newsletters, are all good examples of effective publications partnerships.

Purchasing Agreements – Joint purchasing allows equipment, materials and supplies to be purchased at a lower cost because it increases order size. First aid supplies, sports equipment, gasoline, paper and office supplies are common items that municipalities may purchase together for recreation and parks services. Joint purchasing is covered in Chapter Six.

Training – Many municipalities don't have the finances to bring in an outside expert to train board members and staff. When you join together with other municipalities you can afford to do this.

Tapping the Skills and Experience of the Business Sector

Develop a strategy before approaching a business because the basic corporate attitude is, "We're not in business to give anything away." Consider how involvement can be helpful to the company. Donations to public recreation and parks agencies are attractive because of the tax advantages and the public relations benefit to a corporation's image. Listen carefully and respond to their needs, and at the same time, find the common denominator that will gain a cooperative venture for you *and* benefit the business.

The private sector can help your recreation and parks agency narrow the gap between funding shortfalls and increased demand for services in many ways. Ideas for partnering with your local businesses include:

Shared Expertise, Services and Talents

1. *Loaned Executives* – Employees share legal, financial, maintenance, management, marketing, graphic design, engineering and other expertise.
2. *Volunteer Labor* – Employees donate time and talents to special projects and events.
3. *Volunteer Coordination* – Designate a company staff person or its employee association to coordinate volunteer activity.



4. *Training* – Invite recreation and parks staff to attend corporate training programs, especially management training.
5. *Efficiency Analysis* – Determine the most efficient operations and maintenance practices for existing park areas.
6. *Energy Conservation* – Share the company's energy conservation program with your municipality.
7. *Adjoining Parkland* – Maintain parkland adjacent to corporate land.
8. *Professional Services* – Donate services such as security, vehicle repair, plumbing and electrical work.
9. *Public Relations* – Prepare marketing and public relations plans.
10. *Surveys/Data Management* – Collect and analyze community survey data.

Shared Equipment, Facilities and Supplies

1. *Loaned Equipment* – Lend vehicles, office equipment and the equipment needed for audio-visual presentations, printing and graphics, landscaping, construction and other activities.
2. *Loaned Space* – Use indoor and outdoor corporate facilities for recreation programs, fundraisers or activities like community gardening.
3. *Recycled Furniture, Supplies and Equipment* – Donate used office furniture, equipment or construction materials such as cement and lumber.
4. *Computer Time* – Share programming expertise and/or use of the corporation's computer equipment.
5. *Joint Purchasing* – Jointly purchase equipment, materials and supplies.
6. *Corporate Product* – Contribute products for sampling or demonstration purposes.
7. *Parking* – Use company parking lots after hours for park areas and recreation facilities.

8. *Employee Recreation* – Open employee recreation facilities to the general public.
9. *Communications* – Help to do mailings or prepare signs and brochures.

Donations and Dollars

1. *Funding* – Donate money through corporate foundations for specific needs.
2. *Land* – Donate land or offer leases and easements to the municipality.
3. *Sponsorships* – Support recreation programs, special events and sports teams with funds, t-shirts and/or volunteers in return for visibility.



4. *Endowment/Revolving Fund* – Set up an endowment with the interest going towards on-going agency costs or set up a revolving fund from which the agency might borrow.
5. *Foundation* – Organize a foundation through which contributions to park development and agency operations are channeled.
6. *Gift Catalog* – Use resources to design, produce and distribute a gift catalog and then contribute to it.
7. *Auction* – Auction off equipment, land or supplies as a fundraiser for the recreation and parks agency.
8. *Team Challenges* – Organize company teams to challenge other teams in the community, with fees going to the recreation and parks agency.

9. *Scholarships* – Provide a number of “scholarships” for low-income residents to participate in recreation programs.
10. *Advertising* – Purchase advertising space in recreation program guides.

Name, Image and Prestige

1. *Endorsement by Association* – Lend its business name and prestige through sponsorship of team sports, special events and fundraisers to gain an image of community concern and involvement.
2. *Direct Endorsement* – Endorse the recreation and parks agency directly using business and community contacts and at the same time get the word out about recreation opportunities and agency needs.
3. *Corporate Publications* – Provide free public relations through coverage in the company newsletter of activities like upcoming programs, volunteer needs and fundraising progress.

The City of Pittsburgh (Allegheny County) has completed almost 600 projects since 1992 to revitalize its aging parks through the Partners in Parks program. Partners in Parks has also been at the forefront of riverfront trail development. The program identifies short and long term restoration, construction and maintenance projects and works to find businesses and organizations to assist with them. Funding for staff support for Partners in Parks is provided by the United Way of Allegheny County.



Advertising Opportunities

What opportunities can you provide for businesses to advertise? It's more than an ad in your recreation program guide. Think about places where you have lots of people congregating. Businesses will pay to get their message in front of people. Here are a few ideas:

- Table umbrellas
- Bottom of swimming pools
- Bulletin boards
- Outfield fences
- Rink dasher boards
- Snack bar menu boards
- Website
- Scoreboards
- Elevators
- Banners hung during program hours (tennis courts, playground fences, softball backstops)
- Billboards on park property

Raising Funds with Business Sponsorships

Sponsorships range from underwriting summer park concerts to purchasing the naming rights for a baseball stadium. Since they have a vested interest in your community, soliciting funds from local businesses is easier than soliciting from out-of-area companies. If you have a national company in your municipality that employs many residents, they are a good possibility as a sponsor.

Businesses most often support special events, sports and athletic programs, and cultural and performing arts activities. They like visible, high-profile programs that draw lots of people. Your first step is to evaluate your programs and events for their sponsorship potential. What kinds of opportunities do you have for businesses to enhance their image and visibility? The chances are that you have many.



Your plan should be more than an idea when approaching prospective sponsors. They will want to know exactly what you want and what you are offering them in return for their contribution. Companies consider sponsorships as business investments, so they expect to get something back for their support. Establish written guidelines to recognize sponsors that reflect the level of sponsorship and fit the type and setting of your park areas, recreation facilities and recreation programs.

Have different levels of sponsorships, with corresponding levels of visibility and involvement. For example, it may be appropriate to name a new recreation facility that's been constructed primarily with money from a business. Naming rights, in particular, provide a very high degree of visibility for a business. See Appendix F for a sample of how to package sponsorship opportunities.

A great example of sponsorship success is Countdown Lancaster, a New Year's Eve family special event managed by the Lancaster Recreation Commission (Lancaster County). Over 40 businesses financially support the event in exchange for promotional visibility. Each year, the Countdown event garners approximately \$50,000 from businesses to help cover expenses.

The philosophy behind seeking sponsorships should be one of investment in the community rather than a donation to your agency. You are selling an opportunity to the company, rather than begging them for money. Match, sell and package your program to a sponsor, looking for a fit that is in the best interest of your community, as well as in the sponsor's best interest. Besides the resources you receive, an important reason to seek business sponsors is the opportunity to increase the community's awareness of your agency. By matching with a trusted business, you become more credible in the community and the value of your services for citizens is solidified.

Why should a business do business with a recreation and parks department? There are three main reasons. They gain:

- A chance to get their business name in front of people.
- An opportunity to involve their employees in community service.
- A positive image of community concern and involvement.

Steps for Sponsorship Success

Obtaining business sponsors is not a difficult task, but it takes time. Simply writing a letter and mailing it to 30 businesses won't work, no matter how well written the letter is. Following these steps can help to insure success.

Develop a concept, objective and theme of the event. Clearly articulate, verbally and in writing, why this event exists. State how participants benefit from involvement in the program. Above all, make sure your event is a quality program. It's best to use a successful program that has an established track record if possible.

Decide on target markets you want to reach. Who attends this program, or who would you like to attend? What age, income, sex or ethnicity are they? Where do they live? Where do they work? Clearly understand your event's customers.

Outline event activities in writing. Be descriptive, but brief and specific when outlining your program activities. Include details on the program date, location and time, as well as the entertainment, exhibits, concessions, awards and other important elements.



Prepare budget and calculate the amount and type of support needed. List all program costs to determine how much money to request and identify how the sponsor's funds would be used. Do you need money to contract entertainers, buy prizes or awards or pay staff wages? Know how you will spend a potential sponsor's money, before asking for dollars.

Target the companies you want to enter a partnership with. Locate potential sponsors through networking. Develop a list of prospects by finding out who your board and staff members know. Obtain contact lists through the Chamber of Commerce or "go fishing" for sponsors. Fishing strategies include: making a list of who is advertising in newspapers and on television, radio or billboards, and identifying new businesses in your area and those you would like to be involved with, because of their reputation. Once you have a list of potential sponsors, determine which companies can benefit from your event by studying:

- **Demographic similarities:** Know who the company's customers are and whether or not they would like your event. Know the demographics of those who attend your program to make an accurate comparison of how closely the two match up.
- **Geographic similarities:** Do the company's clients live near your event location?
- **Company image:** How closely does the company image match the event objective? Is the business a family-oriented, traditional one? Or is it a fast-moving, innovative company? Match your event to a company with an image you are comfortable being linked with.
- **History of contributions:** Find out who the company has given money to in the past. It's helpful to know the types of agencies and programs supported by the company.
- **Company size:** Approach the right-sized company with your request for sponsorship. Large businesses are more likely to support large community-wide

programs, while small companies will give small amounts of money for smaller programs.

Determine sponsor's role. Beyond giving money, what else do you want from your sponsor? Decide whether you need volunteer help, promotional help or equipment and supplies.

Decide on promotion approaches to give exposure to sponsors. What visibility can the sponsor expect in return for investing money in your program? Sponsor benefits will vary from event to event, but should include some of the following items:

- Title rights – use the sponsor's name in conjunction with the event, so that each time the event is mentioned, so is the sponsor.
- Newspaper coverage – include feature articles, photographs, news releases and advertisements.
- Radio coverage – include public service announcements, talk shows, taped commercials and live remote broadcasts.
- Press conference/media party – kick off the announcement of the event to get media coverage.
- Print advertising – put the sponsor's name and logo on flyers, brochures, posters and programs.
- Banner/signage rights – display the sponsor's name at the event's most visible location(s).
- Public address system announcements – mention the sponsor throughout your event or have the sponsor's top executive kick off the event.

- Display opportunities – give the sponsor a place to display product or offer product samples.
- Participation opportunities – have the sponsor's employees volunteer at the event, involving their employees in community service.
- Merchandise sales/giveaways – print the sponsor's name on t-shirts, caps or cups.
- Product exclusivity – allow only one bank, realtor or hospital to be a sponsor.
- Reserved seating/hospitality areas – rope off best seats or erect a tent for the sponsor's clients and employees.
- Right of first refusal – allow the sponsor the first chance to participate next year.
- Trade-offs – offer the sponsor free use of recreation facilities for its company picnics or offer free advertising in your recreation program guides.

Consider factoring in costs associated with the above promotion approaches, such as printing, banners or commercials, to the cost for a company to sponsor your event.

Write sponsorship proposal and cover letter. In the sponsorship proposal, combine all of the information from the previous seven steps in a concise packet that contains the details of your event. A proposal is just like a resume. It's designed for the sole purpose of getting you an interview. Your proposal should quickly and easily communicate what your event is all about. It should include:

- Front cover photo from the event, in color if possible, that shows crowd size and sponsor participation.

- Background on your agency, including why you are seeking a sponsor.
- Description of event, including location and date.
- Attendance in the past.
- Cost to sponsor.
- Visibility opportunities for the sponsor, including benefits to the company for sponsoring the event.
- Testimonials and past news clippings.
- Board member list/nonprofit status (if applicable).

Make contact with the potential sponsor. Who do you contact? Use inside contacts at the company to find out who makes sponsorship decisions. That is the person you need to speak with. How do you contact them? Send your written sponsorship proposal with a cover letter, then make a follow-up telephone call. Ask if he or she is interested in speaking with you and ask to schedule a meeting.

Hold your presentation meeting. Have two people attend the meeting on your behalf. They can be a combination of board members, staff or community leaders. One can be someone with an inside connection to the company. Most importantly, they should be positive, likeable people with excellent interpersonal skills. It's important to make a good first impression. Ask what the company's needs are and stay away from the "goodwill kick." Share the reciprocal benefits of sponsorship, focusing on your municipality's benefits as well as the advantages to the company of sponsoring. If the company

is interested, finalize the sponsorship terms, so that it's clear what the company will receive in return for its financial support of the event. And say thank you, before you leave and in writing afterwards when you follow up with a letter of agreement. If the company says no, find out why. You may be able to approach them with a different program or make your request again at a different time of year.

Maintain frequent contact with sponsor. Good communication is necessary to get the company to sponsor your event again. Before and after the event, share all important information with your sponsor.

Evaluate your event and your sponsor partnership. After the event, send a thank you to your sponsors, with a one-page evaluation form. Their comments are important; give them a chance to provide positive and negative feedback. The evaluation form should include a question asking if they would like to sponsor the event next year. Send copies of all press clippings. Care needs to be taken to properly and publicly recognize your sponsor. Present them with a plaque, a framed certificate or a special photo of the event.

Review your finances and budget. Estimate your sponsor's expenses and record your own expenses for the event. You may find that you need more money to conduct the event next year.



Chapter 6 - Grant Writing

Why apply for grants? The better question is, why not? Grants supplement your local funds and often make land acquisition and major recreation and parks development projects possible.

Grant funds are available to municipalities from county, state and federal government and private and public foundations for specific recreation and parks projects. Government grants most often finance the planning, acquisition and development of recreation and parks areas and facilities and require matching funds. Foundation grants often provide matching funds but in addition to capital projects, some may support operating costs as well as specific programs. To get a project funded, multiple sources of money are often combined. It is not unusual for foundation funds and government funds along with money raised through a capital campaign to finance the same park development project.

This chapter provides information on how to make a government grant application or foundation proposal stronger, to increase your chances of getting funded. The process of applying for government and foundation grant funds is similar. You must convince the funder you have a good project by selling the community needs and how the community will benefit from the funding.

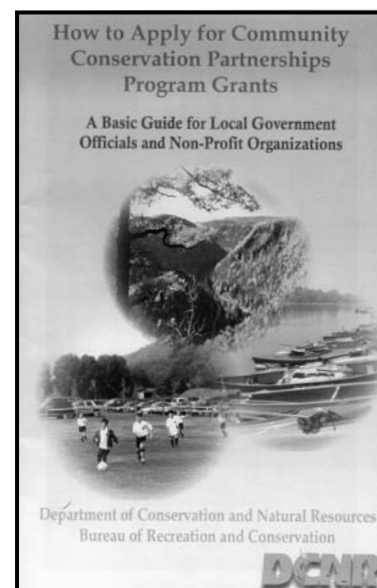
For grants, you typically submit an *application* and for foundations, a *proposal*. Recreation and parks government grants tend to be more available to municipalities while foundations may be more inclined to fund nonprofits.

Where are the Grants for Recreation and Parks?

The primary resource manual for locating federal grants is the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (www.cfda.gov). The daily Federal Register (fr.cos.com) is the publication to consult for grant specifications, called “requests for proposals” or RFP’s. The Pennsylvania Bulletin (www.pabulletin.com) contains all information on state grant programs.

The primary federal government grant program that helps municipalities acquire and develop parkland and build recreation facilities is the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). DCNR is responsible for distribution of LWCF funds. In the 1970s, this program provided significant revenue to Pennsylvania communities. In recent years, with reduced funding, there is no longer a separate application for LWCF funds. DCNR uses the funds to supplement state funding.

Pennsylvania has its own funding source for local government recreation and parks projects, the Community Conservation Partnerships Program.



DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation operates this funding program. Whether it's rehabilitating a community athletic field, building a safer playground, preparing a greenway plan, developing a trail or protecting a critical natural area, this program provides communities with technical assistance and grant funding to undertake these and other types of recreation and conservation projects. The Community Conservation Partnerships Program combines several funding sources and grant programs into one or two annual application cycles with a single application format and process. Generally, all components require a match, usually 50 percent of cash or in-kind contributions.

For more information about this grant program, DCNR has a "how-to-apply" manual and application materials available on its website, www.dcnr.state.pa.us. Contact your regional recreation advisor to discuss proposed projects. See Appendix G for a list of DCNR regional offices.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) offers Growing Greener Fund grants for environmental projects such as watershed assessments and restoration or protection plans and projects (stormwater management, wetlands, riparian buffer fencing and planting and streambank restoration); construction of mine drainage remediation systems; reclamation of previously-mined lands; demonstration and education projects; and outreach activities. Details are available on its website, www.dep.state.pa.us/growgreen/.

The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts has funding opportunities for local governments. Arts in Education, Local Government, Preserving Diverse Cultures, and Professional Development and Technical Assistance grants are some of the programs available to municipalities. Pennsylvania Performing Arts on Tour (PennPAT) awards funds on a competitive

basis to hire eligible Pennsylvania-based performing artists. Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA) is a program that provides local grants of \$3,000 to \$5,000. Every county in the state has a local PPA partner for arts funding. Visit www.pacouncilonthearts.org for information on these funding programs.

Cheltenham Township (Montgomery County) supports its Summer Concert Series by hiring performers on the PennPAT roster. The Township also receives funds from the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, a PPA partner. The Cheltenham Concerts in the Park are held on Sunday afternoons at the 45-acre Curtis Arboretum. They are free of charge, thanks to the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and sponsorship funds from the Albert Einstein Healthcare Network.



DCED has a single application for assistance, a one-step online form that allows you to apply simultaneously for one or more of Pennsylvania's community and economic development financial assistance programs. A comprehensive list of community resources assists you in identifying the financing program that best meets your needs. This directory provides a brief description of the programs offered, the eligibility, terms, amount available and where to apply. Visit www.newpa.com and click on "Communities in PA" for more information.

Government grants are also available for programs and projects that address social concerns such as youth at-risk, the elderly, health issues, people with disabilities and fitness and wellness. To receive these types of grant funds, it's best to form partnerships with other community organizations and nonprofit agencies. Grant opportunities are available from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (www.pde.state.pa.us), but the funds come to school districts, so you must partner with them. One exception is the Summer Food Service Program, which can come directly to municipalities to help fund recreation programs in lower income areas.

Some county governments have grant funding opportunities to acquire and/or develop parkland as well as help fund recreation programs. Examples are the county drug and alcohol, aging, juvenile probation, health, mental health and mental retardation and children and youth departments. In particular, prevention program grants can be used to fund youth activities. Contact your county departments for grant availability.

Local service organizations and community groups also offer grant programs, and many corporations give foundations funds to public projects.

The Lancaster Optimist Club has financially supported a Lancaster Recreation Commission day camp for more than 40 years. The Camp Optimist program was started with funding from the club. Over the years, funds have been used to purchase a school bus, canoes and archery equipment, and to offer scholarships for families who are unable to pay the full weekly cost for their children to attend camp. The club has given more than \$400,000 over the years to keep this summer day camp operating.

How else do you find grant sources? Your state and federal legislators are a great resource for funding opportunities. Also, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania has a free, comprehensive listing of the state, federal and private funding possibilities for rural communities called the *Rural Access Guide* that's available on its website at www.ruralpa.org.

Types of Foundations

The Foundation Center has over 60 publications dedicated to foundation funding. Check out its website at www.fdncenter.org. For the National Directory of Corporate Giving, Foundation Directory and Foundation Grants Index, click on "Marketplace," then "Funding Directories and Databases."

Foundation lists are in a number of other resource publications, including the Directory of Pennsylvania Foundations (www.upenn.edu/research/PAfoundations.htm), Foundation News (www.foundationnews.org) and Community Foundations for Pennsylvania (www.communityfoundations.org).

Private family foundations are established by members of one family and usually don't have full-time staff. Family members conduct the foundation's business.



An example is the Roy A. Hunt Foundation which provides grants for recreation and parks, the environment, community development and social services in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Community foundations provide money from individuals in the community and are limited to a certain geographical area. They're more likely to provide ongoing support for a successful program. Pennsylvania examples are the Clinton County Community Foundation and Blair County Community Endowment.

National foundations make grants nationwide, can fund one or more local projects, and may collaborate with other national funders to support a network of similar programs. The Pew Charitable Trusts is a national philanthropy based in Philadelphia that makes annual grants of about \$180 million to 400-500 organizations.

Operating foundations actually operate programs and may also make some grants. An example is the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, an operating foundation in the Pittsburgh region.

Applying for Grants

Applying for a government and a foundation grant is a similar process. Submitting a grant proposal requires a great amount of organization and detail.

For government grants, you often have only one opportunity each year. Foundation boards of directors, however, usually meet quarterly. You can submit your proposal prior to the foundation's deadline or wait until its next meeting. Table 11 provides a suggested timeline to ensure that your proposal is submitted on time and gets fair consideration.

How should you approach a funding source? First, find out everything you can about it. These steps are typically followed for foundation proposals, but can be adapted for government grants.

- Find out which of your board members, volunteers or staff know the funding source contact person or a member of the funding source board.

Table 11
Timeline for Submitting a Funding Proposal

Timeframe	Action
12+ weeks ahead	Do basic research into funding source
10-12 weeks ahead	Send letter of inquiry (not normally required for government grants). See Figure ____ for a sample letter.
6-8 weeks ahead	Call for initial interview Get response from funding source with giving/grant guidelines, expression of interest
1 month-6 weeks ahead	Have initial interview - go over potential funding opportunities, decide with funding source the project/program/staff/equipment to propose
2-3 weeks prior	Write proposal
Now	Submit proposal by funding source's deadline
1 week after	Make follow-up call to make sure they have all necessary information
2 weeks later	Make follow-up visit
2 weeks-9 months later	Get the decision

Figure 11
Letter of Inquiry

To get the best results, follow this standard format:

The First Paragraph

This is “25-words-or-less” about who your agency is, when it was founded and what you do.

Example: Happy Valley Recreation Center is a 60,000-square-foot facility that’s been providing quality recreation services to Centre County residents since 1985.

The Second Paragraph

State the problem that you’re attempting to solve.

Example: The after school hours of 3 to 8 p.m. are a dangerous time for youth ages 12 to 18. Many teens are home alone, unsupervised. The chances of getting in trouble are high, trouble like getting pregnant, drinking alcohol, experimenting with drugs, vandalizing property, loitering, shoplifting and gang involvement. Happy Valley has no place for teenagers to hang out in a safe, supervised setting.

The Third Paragraph

Tell them your suggested solution.

Example: Happy Valley Recreation Center wants to help eliminate this problem. We propose to expand our facility to build a full-service, 15,000-square-foot teen center, providing a coffee house, game room, computer lab, quiet study area, dance room and crafts room for teenagers only, open seven days a week from 3 to 10 p.m.

The Fourth Paragraph

Explain why you’ve chosen this potential funding source and what you’d like them to do.

Example: Because of the _____ Foundation’s history of support for recreation programs and its outstanding record of support to children, Happy Valley Recreation Center hopes the _____ Foundation will consider a proposal on this project. We would appreciate an indication of your interest and copies of your guidelines and annual report at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Happy Valley Recreation Center Board of Directors

- Select your best spokesperson.
- Determine what makes your project unique and funding not only desirable, but necessary. This is the single most important consideration to make prior to approaching a funding source.
- Have your best contact person send a letter of inquiry to the funding source before making a telephone call. See Figure 11 for an example.
- Ask for funds face-to-face. If you get a positive response to your letter of inquiry, the next step is to call to set up an in-person interview. This establishes you as a “real person” rather than a name on a piece of paper. You should prepare in the same manner whether you are going to foundation board or having a DCNR regional recreation advisor visit and meet with your community. Table 12 outlines the business to get done at your first visit with a potential funding source. The word “proposal” in this table is interchangeable with the word “application.”
- Follow up with a written thank you for the visit.



Table 12
First Visit with a Potential Funding Source

Information to Give	Information to Get
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organization statistics: name, address, phone, executive's name, your name 2. Historical overview 3. Overview of the project concept 4. Outline of the proposal (if prepared) 5. Summary of the specific need 6. Community involvement 7. Implications of the project 8. Uniqueness of the project 9. Your credentials to conduct project 10. How much you're seeking 11. Other necessary funding 12. Other sources of support 13. Thank you!!! 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reactions to project idea(s) 2. Deadlines for proposal submission 3. Date of funding decision 4. Frequency of board meetings* 5. Number of copies of proposal to submit 6. Prospect's current interests/priorities 7. Suggestions for proposal style, format, length 8. Who have they funded in the past? 9. Copies of audit, list of board members* 10. Can you submit more than once a year? 11. Can you submit multi-year proposals? 12. If funded, approximate date to receive money 13. Is the money issued in total or in installments? 14. Required reporting/evaluation procedures 15. If rejected, can you submit another proposal? 16. Copies of their literature <p>*Doesn't apply to government grants</p>

Basic Format for Proposals

As you search for funds, you often have to prepare a written proposal that is used as the basis for negotiations and/or discussions with agency representatives. Foundations prefer that you call and request a copy of their application guidelines before submitting a proposal. This way, you'll include all the necessary information in your proposal. Instead of submitting a full proposal, often foundations accept a concept paper if you're unsure your funding idea fits their areas of interest. They'll review it and provide feedback for altering your concept or suggest you seek support from different funding sources. The same concept paper can be reviewed with government agencies for feedback.

To best sell your idea and receive funding for your project, include this information in your proposal:

- *Proposal Summary:* Applicant's description, project scope, cost and starting and ending dates
- *Introduction:* More information about the applicant, significant accomplishments and track record of previous projects and successes, why you're qualified to conduct the project, and agency mission and goals
- *Need Statement:* Definition of the community need the grant will address, why the project is needed and who it will serve, data and statistics on the problem with a description of the connection between your agency and the solution, highlighting your agency's ability to address the need
- *Project Objectives:* Measurable products of the project

- *Methods:* What you want to accomplish with specific actions you will undertake, why they were selected and why alternative methods were discarded
- *Evaluation:* Description of how you will measure the effectiveness and evaluate the success of the project
- *Budget:* List of project expenditures, with a project budget breakdown by years and by line items, including in-kind or other support pledged by your agency, individuals or partners
- *Future Funding:* How the program will be sustained, with your plans for continuing the project when funding ends
- *Extra Items:* Descriptions of the expertise of staff who will implement the project and a copy of your agency's current budget

The Cover Letter

The proposal cover letter is very similar in content to the letter of inquiry. Work on articulating your case in the same 25-words-or-less manner. In the cover letter state who and what your organization is, what the community need is, the possible solution and a request for consideration. Ask for a specific dollar amount. Many times funding sources are so deluged with requests that the only thing that gets read is the cover letter, so state your case clearly.

Some foundation and corporate sources require you to fill out an application form. Usually this includes a space to summarize your funding request. Again, because of the volume of requests received, funders are short cutting the process and may only read this summary, rather than your cover letter. The person to sign your cover letter should be your most powerful name.

Table 13
Tips for Grant Success

1. Keep your planning as public as possible. Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment, using tools such as surveys, key person interviews, community meetings and focus groups, to help build consensus and determine what projects are priorities. While government grants require this public process, foundations may be less concerned.
2. Be clear about your project goals before you begin the application process. When you know the specifics of the vision, you can better define the project's scope. Ask consultants to help develop a realistic scope and an accurate project cost estimate.
3. Identify the cash and non-cash resources available and the potential partners for your project.
4. Sell the merits of your project to those you want as partners.
5. Research potential funding sources. Make sure the guidelines fit your project.
6. Select the best sources and obtain grant materials from them.
7. Discuss your project with the funding source before and during the application writing process. Funding source staff can give you guidance and answer questions. Sometimes, funders hold pre-application workshops to explain grant application requirements.
8. Review the grant manual to know what is required and the submission deadline. Plan ahead to ensure the deadline can be met. Review successful applications from similar projects and learn from them. Read and follow all instructions, put your application in the format requested and assemble your materials in the correct order.
9. Put together relevant supporting documentation. Include items like blueprints and site plans, photographs, endorsement letters, excerpts from existing plans or studies, and letters of commitment for cash and in-kind support that may be used as matching funds.
10. Have someone else read your application when it's finished. Your reviewer should help make the application more interesting to read and look for any mistakes that have been made.
11. Learn from the experience if your project is not funded. Contact grant reviewers to ask where you might have gone wrong and whether you should submit your application again.

If your board chair is that person, use him or her. On the proposal cover sheet list the name and title of the staff person who will provide additional information.

The Essential Elements of a Written Proposal/Application

The quality of your proposal may determine whether or not you get to the negotiation stage. Again, the word “proposal” can be substituted with “application.” How do you increase your chances of getting funds? Table 13 lists specific strategies. The following tips will also help develop a proposal that gets funded.

Be accurate. Many proposals for excellent projects contain errors. This is often due to limited time to prepare the proposal. However, someone reading the proposal isn’t thinking about the fact that it was put together in a rush. Instead, they’re probably wondering if someone this careless can deliver what they promise.

Be complete but concise. Not knowing how much is enough often leads to loading proposals with all sorts of irrelevant information. The question, “Is anything missing?” is always thought about during proposal preparation, but the question, “Is this overkill?” is ignored. Write a shorter proposal that gets straight to the point and is loaded with convincing arguments. Keep your information current and skip the detailed history.

Make it persuasive and believable. Someone has to be convinced about something to make any proposal a winner. So support what you want to do with sound reasoning, and if possible provide solid examples. Prove the existence of the problem you propose to solve with data and statistics. Prove that you can produce what you’re proposing.

Don’t get fancy. Don’t do far more with your project than is necessary to be successful. This can lead to promises that the reviewer knows you can’t fulfill. Be sure to indicate how you will define program success and how it will be measured.

Skip the fluff. Often proposals are padded with things that have no relationship to what’s being proposed. For instance, don’t include credentials from anyone who isn’t a part of your proposed project. This leaves reviewers wondering if this is being done to beef-up a weak proposal.

Don’t ignore problems. Many proposals stress the positive, but ignore the anticipated or unexpected challenges that must be overcome for the project to be a success. Discuss how you will resolve problems so reviewers see that you understand the problems and know how to deal with them.

Solve the “right” problems. Many proposals try to cover “all of the bases.” The proposal pitch sounds like, “Here’s what you want, but if it isn’t, we’ll do it your way.” Doing this won’t work, since it shows that you might not have faith in your proposal.



Make a case for support. Do you deserve support? Why? Relate your need to social issues. Your agency's goals must be realistic, unique and valid to draw supporters. Reflect the planning you've done in your case for support.

Be creative. Minimally complying with what's being asked for won't get you very far. Most proposals will offer something similar, but the one that wins will be the more creative one.

Watch your justification numbers. Place numbers together in a separate section to organize your proposal and make it easier to read. Spend time thinking about how you'll format your data. If you're indicating a trend, a graph can be more effective than a list of numbers.

Combine substance with style. Make your proposal look good. A well-written proposal may overcome a sloppy appearance, but a reviewer may think it will mean lousy results down the road.

Remember readability. People who don't understand technical terms often review proposals. Prepare a proposal that avoids jargon and acronyms, doesn't confuse readers and isn't vague. Write strong, clear sentences. Make your proposal as readable as possible without sacrificing quality.

Don't waste your efforts. Preparing proposals is expensive, both in time and money. Concentrate your resources on proposals that have the best chances of being accepted. That way, you will be investing your energies wisely.



Chapter 7 - Financing Capital Projects

What are recreation and parks capital projects? Top examples are funding the acquisition and development of park areas and recreation facilities, large-scale renovation projects and the purchase of major equipment.

Because of the amount of money involved – sometimes millions of dollars for one project alone – financing capital projects differs from financing day-to-day operations. Making major investments of money in your recreation and parks system requires careful planning, sound fiscal strategies and public support. Special financing arrangements are generally required to pay for capital projects.

No one method of financing is appropriate for every capital project. The nature and scope of your project, plus the fiscal policies of your municipality are all determining factors. Your municipality may use a combination of financing sources for each capital project.

In earlier chapters, we've covered funding methods such as grants, foundations and donations of money. These are sources of revenue that can finance your operating budget *and* capital improvements. This chapter focuses on other ways to fund municipal capital projects.

Municipalities often develop capital improvement plans to identify priorities and timing for acquiring, replacing and retiring expensive capital resources. This schedule of planned major improvements extends several years into the future. Base your capital improvement spending plan on the “needs”

approach, as opposed to the “wants” approach. For instance, your citizens may *want* a brand new recreation center, but will they be willing to pay for it? Fully involve citizens in the planning of capital projects to get their buy-in for financing them.

After a capital improvement plan is adopted, capital budgeting becomes a process of annually updating the plan, by adding some items, deleting some and adjusting priorities when the next year is added to the schedule. Analyze the long-term impacts of capital development projects on your annual operating budget, *before* they are undertaken, such as projecting the annual maintenance cost for a new community park. Determine personnel, equipment, utility and supply needs as part of the park's master site plan. Your role in this analysis process will vary depending on your municipality's size and level of administrative staff.

There are two basic approaches to financing capital improvements – “pay-as-you-go” and “pay-as-you-use.” The “pay-as-you-go” approach means that before undertaking a project or making a capital expenditure, you acquire the necessary funds and pay the cost without debt. It's essentially a self-financing approach that avoids interest payments. “Pay-as-you-use” financing involves borrowing money to pay for the capital improvement and repaying the debt while the project is being used.

Should you pay now, pay later, or both? There are a number of appealing features to each approach. Sometimes local governments combine the two techniques and incur debt and implement a dedicated tax simultaneously. Pairing debt and taxation measures can help assure that money will be available to pay off all or part of the debt. Refer to DCED's *Fiscal Management Handbook* for more information on debt management.

“Pay-As-You-Go” with Capital Reserve Funds

Municipalities create a capital reserve fund to accumulate money for capital expenditures. Each year funds are transferred from the general fund into the capital reserve fund to meet anticipated capital needs. Keeping the amount of the annual transfer as constant as possible avoids strains on any particular year’s operating budget. It requires considerable self-control not to skip transferring money into the fund in tight budget years.

Receipts from the sale or lease of property or other general fund revenue that’s not earmarked for another purpose may be placed into a capital reserve fund. An extra fee can be tacked onto all fees and charges that is earmarked specifically for your capital fund. Or, a percentage of fees, such as a 10 percent share, can automatically go into your capital fund.

Why “Pay-As-You-Go?”

- When you pay for capital improvements with current funds, it eliminates the interest charges placed on loans. The money saved by not making interest payments can be used for other purposes.
- You spend no more than the revenue available each year.
- Since you must plan and discipline yourself to accumulate the needed funds, you will take a harder look at the true needs for capital projects before approving them.
- In the event of an unexpected drop in revenue or an unanticipated increase in expenses, you can postpone capital projects to avoid having to increase taxes.
- If you don’t have annual debt service payments to make, you have greater financial flexibility when you need it.
- Your borrowing capacity is saved for times of emergency or when it might be greatly needed.
- It is easier to raise funds to help build a facility than to raise funds to help pay off debt.
- Large debt repayments aren’t passed on to future generations. Instead, you’re passing on a legacy of paid-for infrastructure.

Plymouth Township (Montgomery County) used revenue accumulated over a number of years to finance the construction of its 76,000 square-foot Greater Plymouth Community Center. Revenues generated by a trash-to-steam plant provided about \$6 million; another \$6 million came from earned income tax collections. The school district does not take its one-half percent of the tax, so the Township retains the full one percent. A commercial recreation development fee added \$1.5 million to the project budget. A capital campaign raised approximately \$750,000 to supplement Township funds.



“Pay-As-You-Use” with Debt Financing/ Borrowing

Many Pennsylvania communities don't have the financial resources to underwrite the purchase of land or the construction of a major recreation facility. Their current revenue and accumulated reserve funds often can't meet all capital needs. When this happens, they borrow the funds to pay for specific projects and take out a loan with a bank. Depending on the interest rates offered, this can be the most economical way to borrow money. Municipalities can also borrow money by issuing bonds and redeeming them over a period of time, paying interest for the privilege of using the money. Taking out a bank loan or issuing bonds allows municipalities to provide recreation and parks resources for citizens to use today that will be paid for in the future.

Bonds are promissory notes that spread the cost of large-scale capital projects over a number of years. Bonds cost substantially more to issue but usually have a lower interest rate and longer pay-off period than a bank loan. The money, plus interest, is repaid to the bondholders over a specified time period. Bonds are authorized either by your governing body or by a vote of the general public and then are sold through commercial channels to investors. There are two major classifications of bonds:

- *General obligation bonds* are fully tax-supported and are the most common type of long-term financing for recreation and parks capital projects. The burden of retirement of the bonds is spread among all the taxable property within your municipality. General obligation bonds must be approved by citizen vote at either a regular or special election. The interest paid by your municipality on the bonds to the eventual bond purchaser is exempt from federal income tax.

- *Revenue bonds* finance self-supporting operations such as golf courses and ice rinks. A revenue bond is a charge against that facility's income and has first priority on these revenues. Revenue bonds are authorized by your legislative body. When financing a recreation and parks capital project through revenue bonds, your project must be a reasonable financial risk or it will be difficult to sell the bonds. Your municipality may pledge public funds to indemnify any loss. Often, when financing the construction of producing capital facilities, revenue bonds are supplemented by a tax levy; this combination of funding sources makes the sale of the bonds more attractive.

Revenue bond financing is complicated and requires the services of experts. The user fees charged must be reasonable and within people's ability to pay, yet facility income must be sufficient to retire the debt. When defaults occur, they're usually because of inadequate planning, poor administration, inaccurate income projections or a combination of all these reasons. Because of the limited source of income, revenue bonds are considered riskier than general obligation bonds. Investment brokers usually place requirements on the amount of cash reserves a municipality has and require complete income projections for the facility before they purchase revenue bonds for resale.

Pennsylvania has a legal requirement restricting the amount of debt a municipality may incur. So incurring debt for recreation and parks purposes is in direct competition with debt for all other municipal functions. How do you increase your chances of getting a piece of the pie? How do you convince your governing body to go into debt to build a new community park?

This is not an easy sell. Often considerable public support and studies are required to advance recreation and parks projects.

Susquehanna Township (Dauphin County) floated a \$4 million bond issue to build a new police station and renovate the municipal building. Because of the strong support of youth sports associations, the advisory recreation and park board and key elected officials, \$660,000 was included for improvements to the main community park. The Township constructed four new soccer fields and installed tennis court and softball field lighting.



Whether or not to enter into debt to finance the construction of a swimming pool or recreation center is a difficult decision to make. However, the term of debt should definitely not exceed the useful life of the capital project. If it does, you've underestimated the project's true cost and your municipality will continue to pay for it after the project is gone. How quickly should you pay off a bond issue? DCED's *Fiscal Management Handbook* recommends retiring at least one-fourth of the bond issue every five years, paying it off within 20 years.

Why “Pay-As-You-Use?”

- Postponing the development of much-needed park areas and recreation facilities because it will be too costly using current revenue or because funds aren't accumulated yet may hinder your community's development and slow the growth of your tax base and local economy. If you wait until there is enough money in the bank to pay for capital projects, your recreation and parks system may never improve due to lack of funds.
- As per capita income increases over time, debt repayments in the future will represent a smaller share of income. In addition, with continuing inflation, future debt repayment dollars may be worth less than current dollars in terms of purchasing power.
- Repayment of the borrowed funds is spread over a period of many years, so a financial burden isn't placed on current residents to fully finance capital projects themselves. Future generations that will benefit from the facilities will also contribute their share of the funds to pay the debt.
- When families move into your municipality they pay, as part of their taxes, a share of the cost of the capital improvements that benefit them.

Creating a Municipal Authority

An option for financing a capital project is the use of a municipal authority. In Pennsylvania, a municipal authority can be created to acquire, construct or operate a specific service. It borrows money, issues bonds and is expected to

repay its debt from the revenues of the service it operates.

Authorities can be formed by one municipality or by joint action of two or more municipalities. The cooperating municipalities appoint authority board members. Authorities are somewhat autonomous and can employ staff. Water and sewer authorities are common in Pennsylvania. About 140 recreation authorities have been formed in Pennsylvania with mixed results. More than 50 percent of these authorities are presently inactive or have been terminated. One key challenge is that governing bodies expect recreation facilities to be self-supporting, but many still receive some municipal subsidy.



The Meadville Area Recreation Authority (Crawford County) is an example of how several municipalities used the authority form of government to develop and maintain a recreation complex. This full-service recreation agency operates a community recreation complex that includes an ice arena, aquatic center, skate park, tennis and volleyball courts, lighted ball fields and picnic pavilions for its over 33,000 residents. Along with the fees generated by the use of facilities, Authority partners supports approximately 41 percent of the \$900,000 operating budget as follows: City of Meadville (\$108,400), West Mead Township (\$48,500), Vernon Township (\$20,000) and the Crawford Central School District (\$191,200).

One of the pitfalls of creating authorities for recreation purposes is that they are frequently under-funded when created and never gain a solid financial footing. Authorities for public swimming pools and community centers often struggle more financially than those for golf courses or convention centers. Additional authority advantages and disadvantages are shown in Figure 12.

For more information on authorities, get a copy of *Municipal Authorities in Pennsylvania*, published by the DCED Governor's Center for Local Government Services and available on-line at www.newpa.com.

Using Lease Agreements to Develop Recreation Facilities

To build and operate recreation facilities, your municipality can lease public lands to private developers or nonprofit agencies. The benefit of this capital project funding approach is that private funds are used, instead of public funds. Major investment of private capital requires a long-term lease of 15 to 20 years to allow the developer time to get a reasonable return on its investment. Normally these leases provide optional renewal clauses for one or two additional five-year periods, after which the facility becomes the property of the municipality.

Manheim Borough (Lancaster County) leases its Kauffman Park to a private developer. An initial 20-year lease was signed in 1996, with three optional five-year extensions. An 18-hole miniature golf course and small restaurant was built on the property.

It's extremely important that your municipality be involved in preparing the specifications for the design, construction and operation of the facility, plus has the final authority to review all fees charged to the public.

Figure 12 Case Study Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority

The Cambria County Commissioners created the Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority in 1994 for these general purposes:

- Address streams polluted by mine drainage, which renders them unsuitable for recreation and other uses.
- Develop historical and cultural resources to improve the tourism industry and quality of life.
- Acquire, construct, maintain and operate recreation and environmental remediation facilities.

The Authority functioned without staff for a few years before appointing an Executive Director. The Authority presently has two employees. It is responsible for managing and reclaiming 50-60 acres of waste land and a few acres of land with passive treatment systems. The Authority manages 300 acres of linear trails and is spearheading the development of several new trails. It is also poised to be the land holder of a proposed 6,000-acre motorized ATV park. The advantages and disadvantages of the Authority's structure are listed below:

Advantages:

1. Shifts liability and responsibility for high-risk areas away from the "deep pocket" of County government.
2. Gains positive public relations for the County for the Authority's accomplishments.
3. Assumes ownership of highly degraded areas and works on clean-up activities in a quiet fashion.
4. Serves as grant applicant for DEP, DCNR and other funders and is eligible for most grant programs.
5. Carries official standing to interact with municipalities and cross County lines on linear projects.
6. Advances projects that are beyond the abilities of individual municipalities. Trail projects include Path of the Flood Trail, Mainline Trail and extensions to Ghost Town Trail in Cambria County. Without the Authority, it's unlikely any of these trails would have moved from the conceptual stage. Some communities along the way are small and lack capacity to advance recreation projects.



Disadvantages:

1. Has no means to generate revenue to support its operating costs. It is not like a sewer authority or even a pool authority where it can charge the user. Charging to clean up a stream or use a public trail is not realistic. The new 6,000-acre park has revenue possibilities but the Authority has functioned 10 years until this opportunity became available. In 2004, the Authority operated with a \$94,000 budget with \$23,000 coming from one-fourth of the one percent County hotel tax. The remainder came from the County's general fund.
2. Covers its own health insurance, which cost over \$14,000 in 2004 for two employees. It receives County coverage but reimburses the County.
3. Owns no major equipment nor has a place to store it. As new trails are opened, maintaining these trails will become a larger issue.
4. Uses staff vehicles for work purposes, which can be extensive when monitoring trails and cleanup activities.
5. Handles its own bookkeeping, accounting, payroll, legal and other services that would typically be provided through overall County operations if it were a County department. These administrative functions divert staff attention from core responsibilities.
6. Has received over \$500,000 in DCNR grants (as well as other funds) for capital projects but these grants include no administrative funds. Trail projects, particularly those with TEA-21 funding, are complex and time consuming to complete.

When considering lease agreements, determine whether or not:

- The use of private funds to develop your public parkland is appropriate.
- Your municipality has the authority to enter into a lease agreement for the private development of your parkland.
- There are deed restrictions or grant terms that prohibit privatizing the operation of your parkland. For example, parkland acquired or improved with DCNR funds must be kept open and accessible to the public. Also, prior written approval from DCNR is required to enter into a lease agreement.
- The developer has the financial ability and the professional competence to bring off the project.

Brokering a lease/rental agreement is not a “do-it-yourself” project. It’s time consuming and challenging. If you are considering this approach, get experienced professional help. Table 14 details the items to include in such agreements to protect the public interest.

Ways to Acquire Parkland and Preserve Open Space

Purchasing land is an expensive undertaking. Depending on where you live in Pennsylvania, the cost of land ranges from \$2,000 to \$50,000 per acre, or even higher.

Your municipality can acquire public parkland and open space in a variety of ways:

Outright Property Purchase - A price is negotiated and agreed upon and your municipality buys the property.

Option to Buy - Your municipality has the right to purchase a property with no other competition until a set date, allowing time to raise money for its acquisition and line up support.

Retention - The seller occupies the property for a set period of time after selling.

Life Estates - The seller occupies and uses the property for their lifetime and/or the lifetime of other members of the family. When the property is a residence or farm or is donated for conservation purposes, the donor is entitled to an income tax deduction for the charitable contribution.

Muhlenberg Township (Berks County) successfully used the life estate technique to acquire an 80-acre property along the Schuylkill River. The owner sold her farm with the stipulation that she could live there until her death. This allowed the Township to purchase a prime piece of land for a future community park at an excellent price. Her desire was to honor her son, just 19 years old when he died, by having the farm become a park. The owner died at age 80, five years after selling her property. Muhlenberg Township is currently developing the community park in phases.



Table 14
Elements to Include in Lease/Rental Agreements

- Define what you want to accomplish with the lease to insure that the developer's profit-making goals don't conflict with your community's goals.
- Restrict the lease to the operation of the facility only. Do not give the private developer any interest in the parkland. As a result, the developer must look to the operation of the facility as its financial security.
- Base the rental payment for the facility upon the facility's gross receipts. You may want to consider a minimum fee plus a percentage above the base amount.
- Define development and operations specifications so that the outcome doesn't conflict with your community values and image for the facility.
- Have a "hold harmless" clause in the lease. This protects your municipality from legal responsibility for any event occurring on the premises. Make sure the lease specifies the minimum insurance coverage to be carried by the private developer.
- Require performance and material bonds to assure your municipality of performance, particularly during construction. Require a 100 percent completion bond, plus a bond protecting the municipality from mechanics' liens. This insures that if the general contractor does not pay a subcontractor, the subcontractor cannot come back to the municipality for payment.
- Have the facility revert to your municipality at no charge at the end of the lease period.
- Prohibit any sublease or assignment from occurring without your municipality's approval.
- Cover what happens if there's complete or partial destruction of the facility, including the obligation on the part of the private developer to reconstruct the facility.

Bargain Sale - The seller reduces the price of a property below fair market value because of expected tax advantages. A bargain sale provides the seller with some cash, a capital gains tax reduction, total avoidance of brokerage fees and a charitable contribution deduction. The transaction is a part-sale, part-charitable contribution.

Transfer - One agency purchases a property and then transfers it to another. For example, the Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land can hold land until it can be transferred to your municipality.

Bequests - Individuals donate property to your municipality in a will. The bequest may restrict the use of the property. Land willed to your municipality isn't subject to estate or inheritance tax.

The maintenance of the City of Lancaster's 71-acre Long's Park is funded in part by the interest generated from a trust set up in the early 1900s. The owner bequeathed her estate to the City with the stipulation that it become a park and remain open to the public free of charge. Today, the park features picnic pavilions, a petting zoo, lake, an outdoor amphitheater, tennis courts, children's playgrounds, a fitness trail and a snack bar.



Conservation Easements – Also called scenic or preservation easements or restrictions, conservation easements are effective tools for preserving the natural condition of land without acquiring it. Conservation easements give the easement owner the right to prevent certain uses of a property without giving them the right to do anything on the property. In effect, the landowner transfers certain developmental rights for the purpose of preventing future development of the property. A charitable contribution deduction is allowed for the value of the easement if it's donated. The handbook *Using Conservation Easements to Preserve Open Space* contains more detailed information on conservation easements. It is available on-line at www.dcnr.state.pa.us.

Easements - These give your municipality the right to use someone's land for a specific purpose. Trails often rely on easements to pass through private property. Easements can be written on a

permanent basis or for a set period of time. The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association (www.conserveland.org) is another great resource for easement information.

Gifts and Donations of Land - An individual, business or foundation can donate major gifts of land for recreation and parks purposes. The property owner, by execution of a standard deed of conveyance, gives the land to your municipality with no strings attached. This is the simplest and most direct land gift and provides the greatest tax benefits to the property owner.

Leases - Leases are a common way to acquire use of land or buildings for a specific period of time. Long-term leases (25 years or more) are usually required for your municipality to receive DCNR grant funds to make property improvements.

Eminent Domain/Condemnation – Municipalities can condemn the property of an unwilling seller when the acquisition and use of the property is of greater public benefit than the continued private ownership of the land. A certified independent appraiser determines the price of the property. This technique is typically used as a last resort. This can be a complicated and challenging process if the property owner objects to the condemnation and initiates legal action.

Legislative Ordinances – Your governing body must pass an ordinance to employ these techniques to acquire parkland:

- *Mandatory dedication* requires developers to dedicate part of their development as open space or pay fees for public park purposes. Giving approval for residential development increases the demand for recreation lands, while at the same time, diminishes the supply.

With sufficient planning, mandatory dedication is a reliable method of acquiring open space and financing needed recreation facilities. Your municipality should have an adopted recreation plan and pass a mandatory dedication ordinance that meets the requirements listed in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. A copy of the code is available on the Pennsylvania Planning Association website (www.planningpa.org/mpcode.pda). The mandatory dedication requirements are in Section 503(11). See Appendix H for an example of a mandatory dedication ordinance. For more detailed information on mandatory dedication, a Pennsylvania Land Trust Association publication titled “Public Dedication of Land and Fees-in-Lieu for Parks and Recreation” is available online at <http://conservationtools.org>.

- *Special assessments* can finance street improvements, water and sewer installations and recreation and parks capital projects. When recreation and parks services benefit a specific neighborhood or geographical area, it's possible to implement a special assessment, which is a tax levied upon the property to be improved or served. Potential uses of a special assessment to finance recreation and parks improvements include neighborhood parks, swimming pools and recreation centers. A downside to this approach is that neighborhoods with less property value may be neglected or even ignored when capital developments are considered. The enabling legislation for special assessments may vary for each form of government.

Grants - Government grants play a big role in financing the acquisition of parkland and preservation of open space. See Chapter Six for more details on grants.

County and Municipal Bond Issues – Some county and local governments have passed their own bond issues to preserve open space and/or fund recreation and parks planning and capital improvement projects. This is happening most in Pennsylvania's faster growing areas, where development pressure is significant. In southeastern Pennsylvania, Bucks, Chester, Lancaster and Montgomery counties have floated bonds. In 2000, voters in Upper Makefield Township (Bucks County) approved a \$15 million bond issue for open space acquisition. This is the largest such municipal measure to date.

In 1989, the Chester County Board of Commissioners placed a referendum on the November ballot asking voters to express their attitudes toward a proposed \$50 million open space and farmland preservation bond. Over 82 percent of voters favored the initiative. This marked the beginning of a sustained effort to protect and preserve the quality of life in Chester County through open space preservation.

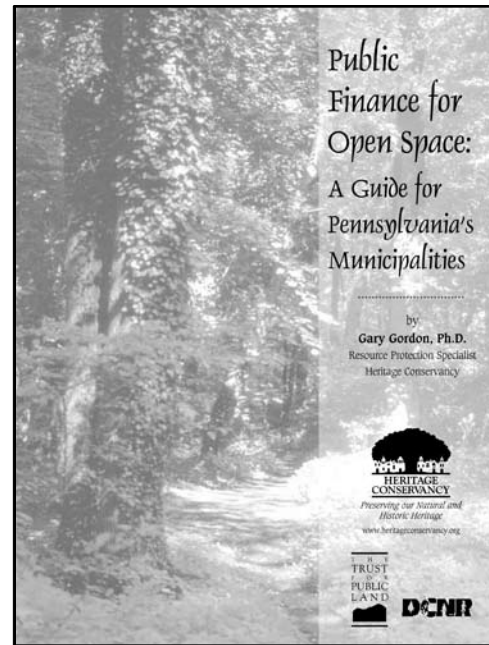


The open space program was built on a solid foundation of municipal open space, recreation and environmental resource plans. So far, 68 of Chester County's 73 municipalities have adopted these plans, funded in part by the bond program.

Within 10 years, the initial \$50 million in open space bond funds had been spent. In the face of continued and escalating development pressures, the County Commissioners pledged an additional \$75 million to the Landscapes Century Fund in 2002. Overall, the bond funds have resulted in the creation of 67 new municipal parks; 41 percent of all municipally owned and operated parks in Chester County have received financial support.

Dedicated Taxes – Over 30 municipalities in Pennsylvania (particularly in the southeast) have enacted taxes to preserve open space. For example, Springfield Township, a semi-rural area in upper Bucks County, passed a .25 percent earned income tax that brings in approximately \$250,000 per year.

Where the issue has been placed on the ballot, voters have embraced the message that open space costs less than residential development in terms of schools and other public services.



Municipalities in these areas have enacted taxes for open space that includes dedicated portions of the earned income tax ranging from .0125 to two percent and property taxes ranging from 1/100th of a mill to two mills.

A publication produced by the Heritage Conservancy titled *Public Finance for Open Space* explains the mechanics and techniques of financing the preservation of open space. It also lists the Pennsylvania municipalities and counties that have floated bond issues and implemented dedicated taxes. Copies are available at www.heritageconservancy.org.

Chapter 8 - Managing Financial Resources

This chapter emphasizes how to manage your funds so that the park areas, recreation facilities and recreation programs citizens enjoy are provided at a reasonable cost to your municipality. It is about the wise, smart and efficient use of your allocated resources.

Government must think like a business in the 21st century. Everything in this chapter is what healthy businesses do daily. Thinking out of the box, not reinventing the wheel, strategic planning, catering to the customer, creating an empowered staff and doing more with less are all business techniques in a service-oriented economy that must be pulled into public sector management. This is particularly true for recreation and parks, because we need to market and program facilities to encourage use.

Park areas, for the most part, don't produce revenue. The grass must be cut, trash picked up, restrooms cleaned, weeds pulled...and these things cost money. Recreation programs can produce revenue, but they need to remain affordable and accessible to your citizens.



Because your parks and programs are enjoyed and shared by everyone in your community, tax dollars help to fund their operation. However, recreation and parks services are like all other local government services. They are caught between a steady increase in expenses and a decline in tax revenue. While traditional funding isn't increasing, the demand for our services often is. When budgets need to be tightened, normally the first thing we do is look for ways to limit spending, rather than increasing income.

This means recreation and parks departments must improve all aspects of their financial operations. In this chapter, we'll cover cost-saving strategies and innovative ways to enhance your recreation and parks services.

Every community in Pennsylvania, regardless of its size, can implement spending strategies that aren't the norm. Finding more cost effective ways to spend your money or non-traditional approaches for cutting costs are *not* quick fixes. It takes time and concerted effort.

How can you spend the dollars you have more effectively? How can you reduce your expenses, but not necessarily the quality or amount of your services, by increasing efficiency? This can include everything from increasing employee workload, to in-house staff training, to getting price quotes for purchases, to more planning.

This chapter provides some realistic approaches to become more efficient, more effective and more resource conscious and presents general marketing concepts that will increase revenue. Implementing any of these approaches on a small or large scale will require taking a hard look at the way your department operates and how you provide services to the public.

Planning Ahead

Planning ahead can help keep costs down; lack of proper planning can drive costs up. For instance, good design of park areas and recreation facilities serves as a long-term method to control rising operation costs. These advance planning tips keep you from making costly mistakes.

- Study your practices through internal and external evaluation. Compare your fees with those of similar agencies, evaluate contracting out versus in-house operations and survey program users.
- Assess the need for new facilities, programs and services with the help of outside consultants.
- Seek help when faced with issues beyond your expertise. The DCNR Peer-to-Peer program and PRPS RecTAP program match professionals with your municipality for specific projects.
- Attend conferences and workshops and read trade magazines and books to stay current on the trends and issues facing recreation and parks and municipal government.
- Weigh the maintenance support required when planning recreation programs. Involve your park maintenance or public works staff in the analysis process.
- Use capital improvement funds to alter existing facilities to eliminate things that drive up maintenance and utility costs.
- Design for lower maintenance costs, like putting concrete pads beneath park benches to eliminate hand trimming grass.

- Design facilities so they can be shared. When building a recreation center, include areas for shared use by other agencies.
- Design facilities to lessen the potential for abuse, overuse and misuse. Vandalism costs can be kept down by using shatter-resistant material instead of glass or by recessing lighting fixtures.

Innovative Ways to Get the Most from Limited Resources

Resources such as board member and employee skills, and department equipment and facilities are potential revenue generators. These resources aren't used 100 percent of the time. What resources can be contracted out when you're not using them? More than you think. Before implementing any of these ideas, get advice from your municipal solicitor.

Using In-House Resources

Storage Space – When park areas and recreation facilities aren't in use, rent them out. For example, outdoor swimming pool parking lots sit empty except for summer months. By placing a high chain-link fence around parking lots, you can provide a safe place for people to store their campers and boats in the off-season for a fee.



The Manheim Central Park and Recreation Commission (Lancaster County) has two large buildings that are empty in the winter. This unheated space is used to store boats, campers, cars and motorcycles. The units are moved into place on two Saturdays in November and removed on two Saturdays in March. Renters move their own units and may not remove or work on them while they are stored. A per unit fee of \$125 for residents and \$160 for non-residents is charged. Size doesn't alter the price although there is a height limit because of the door openings. The renters fill out a rental contract and must provide proof of insurance; if they have no insurance they sign a release. The buildings can accommodate 50-60 units and are usually filled to capacity each year.

Consulting – Think about what expertise your agency has that someone will pay for. Do you have companies who want to draw a targeted age group that you can help them with? Do you have neighboring municipalities who need help to hire a recreation and parks director, or rehabilitate a playground, or write a grant application? Do you have an excellent program leader on staff that can train others? The list of possibilities is quite long. Draw up contracts that detail your responsibilities, the other company's responsibilities, starting and ending dates of the contract and the compensation details to reimburse your agency for your time while working on a project.

Catering Contract - Contract with a caterer for the exclusive right to cater events at your park areas and recreation facilities.

Facility Rental – Rent facilities at times when they will not normally be used, such as a community center on Sunday mornings for church services.

Banquet Facilities – Renovate buildings and structures at your parks, such as barns, houses and historic mansions, to become banquet



facilities. To get the maximum number of rentals, explore the possibility of allowing alcoholic beverage use on a special permit basis, at an additional cost.

Photo Rights – Set up a pricing scale for professional photographers to use your parks as background settings for their work. In particular, photographers like to use park gardens for wedding pictures.

Agricultural Land – Leasing undeveloped parkland to a farmer can generate revenue for your agency. Normally the land is leased for a set amount per acre (this varies depending on your area) and the farmer makes payment at the end of the season. Not doing any maintenance on the property can be much more of a benefit to your agency than the money earned from the lease. A downside to this is that the property is not currently open for public use. There are restrictions to leasing lands purchased with DCNR funds. Consult your DCNR regional recreation advisor *before* entering into any lease agreements.

Cell Towers – Cell telephone towers are being placed on public land across Pennsylvania. Companies pay taxes to municipalities to use the properties. In Cumberland County, Shippensburg Borough nets \$1,275 each month for a cell tower on municipally-owned land,



while West Pennsboro Township receives \$1,000 each month. If DCNR funding has been used for acquisition or development, there may be restrictions that prohibit this use.

Utility Fees – Utilities often need rights-of-way through public parkland or open space. Examples are fiber optic networks or gas pipelines. The fees are negotiated by some linear measure, both above and below ground. Contracts can be a one-time or an annual payment.

Forest Products – Wooded areas can be harvested for timber on a contract basis. Forestry consultants will analyze the areas for the health of the trees and negotiate the contract. Before timbering an area, a forest management plan should be developed. The DCNR Bureau of Forestry, Rural and Community Forestry Section provides technical assistance to link rural and urban communities with professionals to develop management plans. Contact the section at 717-787-2106. You can also sell wood chips to the community for gardening mulch, or rent maple trees to tap for syrup making.

Two Mile Run Park (Venango County) implemented a forest stewardship program to improve the ecological health of its land. In its first timber harvest, the park netted \$145,000. The park also invested money to create six active natural gas wells that produce approximately \$110,000 in income each year, plus provide free utility service to the park.

Maintenance Services – Are there places nearby your parks that you could provide maintenance services for? For an agreed upon fee, offer landscape maintenance for a library or snow removal for a church.

Rethinking Who Provides What

Your agency doesn't need to directly provide every service itself. Where should you consider other service providers? To rethink your agency's role, focus on results and how other public agencies, private firms and nonprofit organizations can help attain them.

Hosting Interns - College interns offer a great deal for local governments. The students get valuable work experience, while agencies benefit by moving projects and programs forward. Generally interns are placed by semester. Some work for no charge, while others are paid a stipend or hourly wage. Don't limit yourself to only accepting recreation and parks interns. Students pursuing degrees in marketing, social services, education, criminal justice, business, computer science – almost any degree – have talents to share.



Purchasing Services from Another Government - Some municipalities purchase community services from other local governments rather than hiring

more staff. For example, Cambria County pays Indiana County \$6,000 annually to maintain its eight-mile section of the 16-mile Ghost Town Trail. A memorandum of understanding outlines each county's responsibilities.



Providing Service Jointly with Other Governments- Many Pennsylvania communities have created area-wide agencies with their neighbors either through handshake agreements or an official intergovernmental agreement. Pennsylvania's Intergovernmental Cooperation Act serves as the foundation for municipalities to form a joint recreation and parks agency. Regional recreation and parks commissions have policy-making and implementation powers but don't have taxing authority. The budget is shared by the participating municipalities based on an agreed-upon formula. Municipalities determine the scope of a regional agency which can range from concentrating on recreation programming to managing a swimming pool, developing regional trails and owning a large regional park complex.

The DCNR publication "*Multi-Municipal Cooperation for Recreation and Parks*" contains details on how to develop a regional recreation and parks agency. Download it at www.dcnr.state.pa.us.

Why join forces with your municipal neighbors? Small municipalities can pool resources to develop recreation programs and facilities and hire staff that none of them could afford by themselves. It also makes addressing interests

that cross municipal boundaries much easier. Through the DCNR Peer-to-Peer technical assistance program, a recreation and parks professional is hired as a peer consultant to explore ways for participating municipalities to cooperate. DCNR also offers a Circuit Rider grant to hire a recreation and parks director when two or more municipalities form a regional agency. Information on these two programs is available at www.dcnr.state.pa.us or by contacting your DCNR regional recreation advisor.

Joint planning with neighboring municipalities can save money by paying lower consultant costs. Pooling financial resources can also greatly expand the scope of planning projects and the likelihood of plan implementation.

Some municipalities within a school district operate recreation and parks services together. When school districts are involved, it expands the use of school facilities for community recreation for all ages, not just children. Schools also offer excellent opportunities to share equipment and jointly purchase supplies. Utilizing teachers and coaches as recreation program volunteers and instructors and promoting programs through school newsletters are other important ways school districts support community recreation and parks.

Utilizing Employment Programs - A number of programs are available for local governments to get employee help at no or minimal cost.

Through the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (www.pheaa.org), if you employ college students who qualify for work-study grants, your municipality is reimbursed for 40 percent of their wages. The Senior Community Service Employment



Program (www.experienceworks.org) places older adults to work at no cost to a municipality.

People who have court-appointed community service as a condition of their sentence can fulfill that by working for your municipality. Prison work crews can do park maintenance work. Go to www.doc.state.pa.us and click on programs for information on the prison work program. Other options are the Pennsylvania Conservation Corps (www.pcc.org), Student Conservation Association (www.sca.org), AmeriCorps (www.americorps.org) and Experience Works (www.experienceworks.org), which has other programs in addition to the Senior Employment Program.

Combining Services - Instead of cutting programs and services, why not combine them? This is a cost-effective way to decrease expenditures. What programs can you merge together, rather than hold separately? Can some of your programs become parent-child classes? What possibilities do you have for inter-generational programs? What programs for different ages can you offer at the same time, at the same location?

Contracting Out - Another strategy to cut operating costs is to contract out to someone else those tasks that your agency can't perform efficiently in-house. The goal of contracting out is to provide a service in a more cost-effective manner, and still provide the service at the same or a higher level. Services most likely to be contracted out are those that are already available in the private sector, such as landscape maintenance.

Consider contracting with nonprofit agencies such as churches, service clubs, athletic organizations, YMCAs and civic groups. Instead of a competitively bid contract with a private firm, the financial terms are negotiated and there may be an exchange of services involved.

This means that your municipality may provide services to the nonprofit group instead of paying cash for the contract. Another distinction is that the contracting arrangement often serves as a fundraiser for the nonprofit organization.

You can select park sites for nonprofit contracting, write the detailed tasks to be performed, and even provide access to municipal equipment. Examples of work tasks are: litter clean-up, restroom cleaning, trimming with push mowers around trees and playground equipment, sweeping walkways and game courts, inspecting and reporting breakage and vandalism, and removing snow from park pathways. Nonprofit groups can do your ball field dragging and lining or trail clearing. They can provide park security services. They can even fully operate park facilities.

Venango County contracts with Parks Unlimited, Inc., a 501©(3) nonprofit organization, to operate Two Mile Run County Park. The goal is to manage the park in ways which do not rely on the county's tax dollars as the primary means of support. What Parks Unlimited has accomplished since 1997 is truly amazing. The park has new attractions, increased revenue and greatly improved park infrastructure. Over \$700,000 in public and private grant funds have been secured to upgrade the park. West Whiteland Township (Chester County) contracts out grounds mowing for its parks. The contract specifies items such as grass cutting



length, removal of excess clippings, crabgrass control and turf fertilization. Services are contracted for the year, which is approximately a 35-week commitment or 22 cuttings.

When should you contract out? If an outside company or nonprofit group can provide services at a lower cost and citizens receive more benefits than your current service provides, then definitely consider outsourcing the service. Factor in administrative and other expenses when you're determining your true costs. Not recognizing costs doesn't mean they don't exist. It merely means they're hidden. Analyze the pros and cons of contracting out before proceeding.

New Taxes - Explore potential sources of new tax revenue. Previously funded by the County general fund, the development of non-motorized trails in York County is now funded through an increase in the hotel tax levied by the Visitors Bureau. York County entered into a 10-year agreement with the Visitors Bureau to use a portion of the proceeds from the increased room tax to fund initiatives that relate to tourism, including the York County Rail Trail Authority. The amount received annually is approximately \$50,000, which funds a full-time director's salary and benefits and keeps an office afloat. The funds to do trail projects come from local appeals for money and state and federal grants.



Selling or Giving Facilities Away - A city may have a recreation center or public swimming pool that's become too costly to keep open. It can sell or give such a facility to a nonprofit or for-profit organization to run as its own. If this happens, the city has "divested itself" of the recreation center or swimming pool; it's getting out of the business of operating that facility. This may be the best way to keep the facility open. It may also bring in revenue that can be used to enhance other recreation facilities. The decision to pursue divestiture is a policy matter for your governing body and needs to be studied carefully. If state and/or federal funds were used to acquire or develop the facility, there are restrictions to selling or giving the facility away that are challenging to overcome.

Utilizing Inexpensive Marketing Tools

How can residents experience and enjoy your parks and programs if they've never heard of them? What simple, inexpensive things can you do to get the word out about what you offer, serve more residents and increase your revenue? What can you do to make it easier to participate in your services?

Public recreation and parks generally doesn't have much money to spend on marketing. Employing creative marketing techniques such as those listed here will cost next to nothing to implement. However, they can dramatically increase the public's awareness of your services, which can lead to increased revenue.

Employing Customer Service Practices

Stay Open Longer - Many people work weekdays from nine to five. Many recreation and parks departments are open those same hours. So when people want to register for a program or reserve a park facility, you are closed.

Orient your services to the convenience of your residents. That may mean being open on Saturdays or some weeknights until 7 p.m. You don't always have to keep doors open and people around. It could be as simple as a fax machine that's always turned on or allowing Internet registration.

Set High Customer Service Goals - Customer service means solving your residents' problems, attending to their needs and making their lives better because they participate in your services. You must understand people's expectations to meet and exceed them. Use contact time with your residents to learn what they want and make them aware of your services. Figure 13 lists the customer service standards adopted by the Lancaster Recreation Commission.

Use the Telephone to Increase Revenue - Agencies often have an automated phone answering system with a recorded message. Often callers are put on hold. Use a soundtrack that plays music while callers listen to messages such as special offers and upcoming programs. Keep the cost low by doing the job yourself: select the music, write the script and voice your own message. Once people are off hold, the way your phone is answered exerts a powerful influence on your revenue. Institute a telephone training program that instructs employees on how to communicate effectively with callers.

Treat People Like Friends - A smile shows you consider the person a human being rather than just another resident. It makes the person feel good. Smiles do wonders at breaking down barriers, establishing relationships and imparting warmth. Smiles also work on the telephone because people can "hear" the smile. So eye contact helps, but isn't absolutely necessary.

Figure 13

Lancaster Recreation Commission Customer Service Standards

You can expect the following standards of customer service when interacting with us.

Good Listeners...

We will:

- * Smile and greet you with, "Hello, may I help you?"
- * Listen with patience in order to clearly identify your needs
- * Give you our full attention
- * Be accessible through many communication channels such as the Internet, telephone, and front desk
- * Ask for your input through surveys, comment cards, meetings, focus groups and other techniques

Respect and Courtesy...

We will:

- * Commit to serve you by providing accurate information in a timely and helpful manner
- * Dedicate ourselves to treating you with respect and courtesy at all times
- * Use your name when thanking you and finish conversations with "Have a great day!"

Quick Responses...

We will:

- * Make every effort to answer your questions and address your concerns immediately if possible
- * Respond to your phone calls by the end of the next business day
- * Respond to your email messages and written correspondence within three business days
- * Have current voice mail messages so you know when to expect a response or who to call for faster assistance

Accessible Information...

We will:

- * Make information accessible to you in a variety of formats: flyers, program guides, Internet (www.lancasterrec.org), newsletters and more
- * Provide clear and accurate information in our publications

Involvement...

We will:

- * Involve you and use your ideas and input to improve our programs
- * Use a variety of techniques to find out what you are thinking about our services
- * Work collaboratively with partners to improve our programs and services



Smiles state to the unconscious mind that yours is a happy agency and dealing with you will be an enjoyable experience. How you say hello and goodbye can increase your profits. Smile, look the person directly in the eye and mention their name. Among people's favorite things is the sound of their own name. If you don't know it when you say hello, learn it and use it when you say goodbye.

Don't Make People Wait - Time is far more valuable than money. People want their phone call handled promptly. They want to be waited on in a hurry. They want their registrations processed quickly. Speed holds onto existing customers and attracts new customers. The lack of speed loses customers just as the lack of service does. Prove that you care about their time. For example, many people show up or call during their lunch hour. Arrange lunch breaks so your front counter is well covered between noon and 2 p.m.

Serve Refreshments and Give Out Free Gifts - If you can serve coffee, tea, soft drinks, cookies or any type of refreshment, then do it. The concept is to make your facility a pleasant place to be. Simply putting a candy dish out on your front counter can do the trick. Free gifts create a sense of unconscious obligation to purchase on the part of the customer and generate goodwill. Visibility is also gained when your department's name is on the items.

Be Enthusiastic - The more employees know about the benefits of your services, the more enthusiastic they can be. So communicate the benefits to them. Enthusiasm is the energy that powers word-of-mouth advertising. Residents catch the enthusiasm and spread it to their friends.

Keep Facilities and Staff Neat - People make an unconscious assumption that if an agency is

sloppy in any way, it must show up in how they run their business. The same thing is true of neatness. If residents see or sense it, they assume that you are a together agency that doesn't make mistakes. Neatness refers to your office, vehicles, facilities, staff, signs and correspondence. Some people can overlook a clump of mud in your front doorway or a layer of dust on your countertop, but many others cannot. They've seen that your agency is messy and they won't buy from you. Have the employees who are visible to residents follow a dress code. Identify front counter staff by a name badge or desk sign. Employees must sell themselves before they can sell your services.

Promoting Recreation Programs and Services

Sell Services with Visual Tools - Outside signs on billboards, buildings, benches and buses help gain awareness. They should tell your story as visually as possible, and contain no more than six words, especially if they are viewed by passing motorists.

Inside signs generate impulse sales and allow you to merchandise your services. Window displays generate impulse purchases also. Use a message that tells people exactly what to do. For example: "Register by May 31 and get 15% off."

Display agency awards, the artwork of program participants, and photos of your parks in your reception area. This shows that your department is a professional one, plus photos give people a good sense of what your services look like.

Posters have high impact because of their size. Say little on a poster and show as much as possible. People don't read flyers and brochures unless they are interested, so they can convey more information.

Use Website, Social Media and E-newsletters—

Technology has changed the way we promote recreation programs and services. Research shows that for younger adults, the Internet is the first source they use to find information. Research also shows that the fastest growing segment of Internet users is the population of adults over 55. Clearly, it's extremely important to develop and maintain a great website. Increasingly, people bypass websites and utilize social media such as Facebook and Twitter to get information. A presence on these social media sites is essential.

It's also necessary to give citizens the option of registering for recreation programs online. Keep taking registrations by phone, fax, mail and in person, but highlight the convenience of online registration.

E-newsletters are an easy way to keep citizens informed. Develop an email list and sent out a monthly electronic newsletter with details on programs and services.



Put Services into a Program Guide – Program guides don't have to be colorful, fancy or expensive. The idea is to offer your residents a listing of recreation programs and services. Use your program guide to educate people about the benefits of recreation and parks. Mail your guide to every household, distribute it in schools and at public buildings and mail it to your lists of past participants. Sample program guide covers are shown below and in Figure 14.

Demonstrate Your Services - Demonstrations let people see what it would be like to experience your service. School assemblies, open houses, previews of programs and recitals are all great ways to do this. When you demonstrate your services, emphasize the benefits to your residents.

Use Direct-Mail Postcards - Make your postcard stand out, either with a great design or by using huge, compelling words. Tell people exactly what to do: visit a location, make a phone call or mail something back. Be brief and make your offer enticing. Use the front of the postcard to tease readers into reading the back. On the back, put your offer into a headline. Make it a limited-time offer so that people must respond by a certain date. Postcards are low cost, eliminate envelopes and make an offer instantly.

Utilize Take-One Boxes - Place take-one boxes at strategic locations, filled with brochures or coupons. Take-one boxes deliver your message much less expensively than direct mailings. Direct mail is often considered junky or intrusive, putting people in a resistant mental state. Take-one boxes offer data on a voluntary basis. By careful tracking, you can get a complete report on how much literature was taken from each site. The keys to success are selecting locations for box placement, figuring out how to distribute brochures to the empty boxes in an economical manner, fabricating the boxes, creating the right brochures and monitoring your efforts.

Figure 14





Octorara Community
RECREATION
COMMISSION

PROGRAM **Guide**

Your Complete Guide to Community Programming, Education & Events!

VOLUME FIVE

It's that time of year - Time to leave the lazy days of summer behind us and get back into the daily grind. OCRC hopes this issue makes that transition a little easier!

In this issue you will find our first solo attempt at After School Enrichment programs for Octorara students. These afternoon programs are designed to be convenient and fun experiences during the restless pre-dinner hours. We need continued support from the community to help these programs grow!

OCRC has openly taken Octorara Communities That Care (OCTC) under its umbrella, along with its mentoring program Across Ages. Through various sources of funding, a new Community Outreach Director will be hired, who will focus on mobilizing community resources and key leaders to implement a community plan for a preventative approach to adolescent problems in the Octorara Region.

OCRC's role will be to help guide and further nurture the process and help implement the sustainability of Communities that Care within the region.

On a last note, please become aware of the many awesome things happening at the municipal level in terms of recreation. Parkesburg has completed phase I of the Minch Park renovation, Atglen has formed a recreation committee to focus on park development, with West Sadsbury soon to follow suit with proposals for the Zion Hill property acquired last year. Londonderry is also in the process of developing a 10-acre park facility at the intersections of Daleville Road and Route 796. These are all needed and desired facilities that require time, money and community input. Please do your part to support these efforts!

— Brian Wenzka,
Executive Director



Fall into Fun!



OCRC 2nd Annual Christmas Bazaar

The Octorara Community Recreation Commission will hold its 2nd Annual Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, December 4th, 2004 from 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM at the West Fallowfield Community Center. OCRC plans to have a wide array of local crafter's and artisans, and a special lunch time appearance by Santa Claus! The event will be one of the stops on the 20th Annual Christmas in and Around Parkesburg & Atglen Tour to benefit Parkesburg & Atglen Libraries. Admission \$1.00 per person; proceeds to benefit OCRC's special event programs. Crafters will need to contact OCRC to pre-register for this event. Don't delay, as space will fill quickly! For more information contact Julia Wright, OCRC Special Events Coordinator at 610-593-5963 ext. 3.



OCTORARA COMMUNITY RECREATION COMMISSION

The Mission of OCRC is to offer the community high quality and affordable recreational and educational programs that promote physical, social and emotional well being.

With a strong emphasis on marketing, the Octorara Community Recreation Commission (Chester County) has seen steady, progressive growth in its many services since being established in January 2000. This partnership of six municipalities and one school district utilizes a program guide newsletter to get the word out about its activities.

Reach Out to the Community - Make special offers, with mailings sent to clubs in your community. Offer a discount to high school or college students through their newspapers. Provide discounts for employees of large businesses. Get involved with the fundraisers sponsored by local charities. Join community organizations and provide presentations on your services.



Ask Satisfied Residents for Referrals - Word-of-mouth referrals happen faster if you ask for them. Ask satisfied residents to refer people to you, giving them a discount or gift in return for each new customer who mentions their name. Keep a list of satisfied customers and send flyers to remind them of past satisfaction and offer future satisfaction. Send a thank-you note after they register, a birthday card, a newsletter, a letter with a special offer, a Christmas card, a contest. Build in follow-up as an automatic procedure. Consider every satisfied customer as a member of a sales force. Only, unlike salespeople who only sell, satisfied customers sell *and* buy your services.

Making it Easier to Purchase

Accept Credit Cards - Credit cards offer your residents convenience: they can make a purchase even if they don't have the funds at the moment and they can register by phone, Internet or fax. If you accept credit cards, don't keep it a secret.

A four-year evaluation of how residents pay for Centre Region Parks and Recreation (Centre County) facilities, programs and services determined that an average of 36 percent of all transactions were made by credit cards. When the agency moves to Internet program registration, its revenue from credit cards versus checks and cash may dramatically increase.

Offer Installment Payments - Twelve easy payments of \$12 each sounds a lot more affordable than one large payment of \$130, even though it's more economical to pay the \$130. Handle the financing arrangements yourself and advertise the advantages of making monthly payments. Many residents will appreciate being able to make payments for a service like summer day camp through installments, especially if the payment schedule starts in January.

Give Away Free Programs - Letting people sample programs and services helps convince them of your quality. When you give programs away, treat their cost to you as a marketing investment. If your service offers excellence, your investment will produce excellent returns. Offer samples as abbreviated versions of services such as providing two free fitness classes rather than a full eight-week session.



Offer Gift Certificates - Offer gift certificates for your services. Prepare signs that say “Ask about our gift certificates” and put this in brochures. Print gift certificates on nice paper and have them available in any amount and good for any of your services, without a cut-off date. Announce their availability at gift-giving times such as Christmas, Mother’s Day and Valentine’s Day.



Using the Written Word

Pursue Free Publicity - Publicity gives you lots of credibility and it’s free. To attract publicity you need news of interest to readers or viewers of the media. Get personally acquainted with the media people in charge of selecting the stories to be covered. Keep writing, phoning, even showing up, and get on a first-name basis with them. The more contacts you have, the more coverage you’ll get.

Have Reprints Made of Newspaper Stories - If printed publicity appears, make reprints and put it where the maximum number of your residents can see it. Print some reprints on cardboard stock to display on an easel. Newspaper stories only appear once. Display them in prominent places where the right people can read them. This makes your agency appear as an integral part of the local scene, which builds customer confidence.

Prove People Appreciate Services - Testimonials are incredibly effective. They can be used in an ad, posted at your office or published in a brochure. When residents see the testimonials, especially from people to whom they can relate, they gain confidence in you. They’re less worried about making an error by purchasing your services. The more testimonials you have, the better. It doesn’t matter how old the testimonials are. They are far more believable than ads and far more inexpensive.

Use Classified Ads - Classified ads are much less expensive than display ads. Even though many people will read the ad, word it as though only one person will read it. The more one-on-one your ad sounds, the more sales it attracts. Give the facts clearly. To grab attention, put your headline into all capital letters or boldface type or both. Don’t put your entire ad in capital letters and use minimal punctuation, especially exclamation points. Communicate price, benefits and whether you offer a guarantee. Use these key words: you, free, new, right, fun, value, reliable and proven.

Transform Business Cards, Letterhead and Forms - Besides the contact information, add your department’s logo, services, citizen benefits, mission statement or a coupon to your business cards, such as shown below.

Back of Business Card



Hire a graphics designer and spend money to make your letterhead look first rate. Your envelope begins to establish your identity, and the letterhead's logo, typeface and color reinforces it.

On your registration forms and park facility permits, use your logo to implant it in the minds of your residents. Say something nice, like we appreciate your business.

Cost Saving Strategies

Many Pennsylvania communities, particularly older ones, are facing tough economic times. People are leaving urban areas, especially our cities and boroughs, to move to suburban and rural townships. The reality is some municipalities have experienced considerable population loss and/or reached their tax limits; they have few other choices than to cut costs. When reviewing the budget for ways to cut costs, your decisions usually reduce services in some way. At times this may be the only available option if the governing body requests cuts at budget time. If done with careful planning, the impact on your citizens may be minimal. Any size local government can utilize the following strategies and realize some cost savings. Some of these approaches, particularly those involving personnel, will be painful to implement.

Rethinking Recurring Costs

Because something was always done a certain way doesn't mean it needs to continue to happen forever. Look at your entire operation for opportunities to be more cost effective.

- For facilities like swimming pools, analyze attendance statistics for when attendance is at its lowest. For instance, since most schools open the last week of August, your attendance may not be high enough to justify keeping an out-

door swimming pool open until Labor Day. Opening later or closing earlier on certain days of the week or only opening the pool after school are other options.

- Shut down facilities that receive low usage or where needed repair is so extensive it's not cost effective to do it.
- Develop and implement a strategy for scaling back or eliminating recreation programs that don't at a minimum break-even on costs. Another option is to get a sponsor to cover the costs.
- Institute safety programs for your employees to reduce injury claims and lower the number of workdays missed that result from injuries. It's important to train staff to handle equipment and supplies to minimize accidents.
- Utilize staff management strategies to make employees more productive. For example, tie your recreation supervisor's salary to the amount of program revenues brought in.
- Merge department staff with another department's staff, such as creating a public works department that includes streets and park maintenance.
- Explore computerizing operations that may be labor intensive, such as program registration, field scheduling or sports league scheduling.

Analyzing Personnel Costs and Staff Functions

Staff salaries and fringe benefits comprise 70 to 80 percent of operational expenses. Are you getting the most out of your employees? Take a careful look at what they do and assess your organizational structure.

- Examine where part-time staff are used to decide if the positions are truly needed. Could existing full-time staff take on these responsibilities?
- When a full-time staff person leaves, don't automatically fill the position. Conduct an exit interview to determine why the person is leaving. Evaluate how this position fits within the overall organization. Examine the job description and consider whether less costly part-time staff could perform the job functions. Doing this not only reduces wages, it lowers your benefit costs.
- Examine your organizational structure and job descriptions for possible position consolidation. Again, do you have staff that can take on more responsibilities? Where does it make sense to consolidate duties?
- Scrutinize labor-intensive tasks. Can they be streamlined or simplified, or can they be eliminated?
- Purchase capital equipment with the goal to save labor costs. For instance, newer mowing equipment may mean cutting grass less frequently.
- Increase staff productivity by planning, scheduling and focusing work better.
- Perform an audit of overtime pay. After the audit is completed, do a thorough analysis to determine how to reduce future overtime costs.
- Invest in staff training, particularly in-house, hands-on training.

Reducing Equipment and Property Costs

How can you better manage key equipment and property resources? It's possible to reduce your costs significantly by maintaining and replacing equipment in a systematic way. Jointly purchasing equipment with other agencies, and buying or selling surplus property, are other good cost savings strategies.

- Extend the useful life of equipment through preventive maintenance. Performing scheduled maintenance on your equipment extends its life and prevents costly breakdowns and downtime. Even though this regular care costs more money it reduces the lifetime cost.
- Institute an equipment replacement schedule to ensure new purchases are for essential items. Replacement schedules include details on each piece of equipment such as age, model, features, expected year of replacement and replacement cost. Combined with maintenance records that keep the actual cost and frequency of repairs, this helps justify replacement at the correct time.
- Install automatic timers for heating, cooling and lighting systems to cut the energy costs for buildings.
- Develop a maintenance management plan that examines items such as how to minimize transport of equipment and efficiencies in mowing practices.
- Reduce the use of equipment by changing staff work hours. For instance, put park maintenance staff on four-day work weeks so that vehicles are driven to job sites four days instead of five.

- Look at the cost of equipment over its useful life, rather than at its initial cost, when purchasing it. This is called lifecycle costing. The initial purchase price may be higher for one type of equipment than another, but the product may not have to be replaced for years and may require less maintenance. For example, initially it costs less to place mulch under playground equipment when compared to rubber matting. But mulch must be replaced frequently and requires more maintenance time. Rubber matting costs more than mulch but in the long run it may be a less expensive playground surface, since it won't be replaced for many years.



- Sell equipment that you no longer need or use. The sale of surplus equipment converts unused inventory into cash. It also frees up needed storage space.
- Spread your capital equipment costs over several years through lease-purchase agreements if a comparison finds that leasing is more cost effective than outright purchasing.
- Exchange your goods or services for someone else's by bartering, without money changing hands. Examples are swapping staff for training seminars, offering use of your facilities during non-peak hours in exchange for products or services, trading services for advertising space and exchanging mailing lists. The object is to get what you need from someone else without having to pay for it. To avoid misunderstandings or confusion, develop a letter of agreement between agencies.
- Buy equipment with other agencies and share it, such as a tree spade, grader or sign cutter.
- Purchase surplus property. Everything from desks to tractors is available to local governments at greatly reduced rates from the state and federal government. Visit this website for more details on the Pennsylvania Department of General Services (DGS) Surplus Property Program: www.dgs.state.pa.us/surp_prop/site/.
- Join another municipality in a joint purchasing agreement. An example is two townships buying trail mulch or infield mix together. Buying in large quantity can save money by reducing the per-unit cost of items.
- Purchase items without competitive bidding through the DGS Piggyback Purchasing program. Act 57 of 1998 allows municipalities to purchase items such as athletic, recreation and playground equipment using State Contract 7810-01, Recreation Equipment. To get the rules and procedures for the Piggyback Purchasing program call 717-787-1105 or check out www.dgs.state.pa.us.

- Purchase equipment from Pennsylvania Correctional Industries, a bureau within the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. Items like park benches, trash containers and picnic tables are sold to municipalities at inexpensive prices. Visit this website for more details: www.pci.state.pa.us.
- Conserve energy whenever possible and identify cost-efficient solutions to high-energy bills. Do an in-house survey of operations by studying the way facilities are used, how buildings are heated, lights are operated and so on. Convince staff of the importance of energy conservation and get their cooperation and input. Hire a consultant to do an energy audit and weatherization study. Determine the costs to implement the study recommendations and the amount of cost savings they will generate.

To reduce pool costs, determine where energy dollars are going. An energy assessment can accomplish this. Audits have found that covering both indoor and outdoor pools when they're not in use is the most effective way to curb evaporation, save energy and lower utility costs. Evaporation is the largest



contributor to energy loss for swimming pools.

Maintaining Insurance

Insurance protects your recreation and parks department from financial loss. If you aren't carrying proper insurance, just one claim could prove to be a financial disaster. What to cover by insurance and what not to cover, what kind of insurance and how much to carry are decisions that must be made carefully.

Some municipalities choose to self-insure or to join together to purchase insurance. Common types of insurance are: liability (public liability, automobile and worker's compensation), errors and omissions, crime (employee dishonesty, burglary and theft), property (fire, vandalism and flood), employee benefits (health, major medical, hospitalization, short and long-term disability and group life); and inclement weather insurance for special events.

Many government units purchase an "umbrella" insurance policy that protects all departments, including recreation and parks, with blanket liability coverage. Liability exposures, those that result from accidental injury to persons or property, are the most serious and costly for municipalities. Risk management is the process of implementing programs to avoid losses like these. Measures like employee safety programs, fire and playground inspections and driver training help to control risk. Insurance companies employ risk managers to evaluate your risks and help you take steps to lessen them.

Regular playground inspections help to keep the equipment in safe condition. Accidents may still happen, but if your municipality is sued, you will have a stronger case because of your inspection process.



The *Risk Manager's Insurance Guide* contains detailed information on municipal risk management. It is published by the DCED Governor's Center for Local Government Services and is available on-line at www.newpa.com.

Final Thoughts

One of the great things about the recreation and parks profession is our willingness to help each other. Most of us have faced similar financial challenges and will gladly share our insight into ways to approach them. If your municipality has no recreation and parks staff or board members, talk with the recreation and parks professionals and volunteers in nearby communities.

You have four other very good options for advice and support. The first one is your DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation regional recreation advisor, whose job is to provide technical assistance to local governments.



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

www.dcnr.state.pa.us



The second option is the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society. Membership offers you many opportunities to network with others who work or volunteer in the community recreation and parks field.

Pennsylvania colleges and universities, especially those with recreation and parks curriculums, are a third good source of help to explore. PRPS has this contact information.

Lastly, the DCED Governor's Center for Local Government Services is a one-stop shop for municipal government information. It provides a full range of financial and technical assistance to local governments and an on-line library for the most up-to-date publications on local government issues. The Center has a full-time staff in Harrisburg and five regional offices throughout Pennsylvania. Visit www.nenpa.com or call the Center toll-free at 888-223-6837.



More information on these sources of assistance, available publications and additional financing resources is listed in Appendices I and J.

Appendix A - Definitions of Financial Terms

Account: a descriptive heading under which money transactions that are similar in purpose, objective and source are recorded.

Accounts Payable: money a municipality owes to suppliers.

Accounts Receivable: money owed to a municipality by its customers.

Accrual Basis: an accounting method in which revenues are recognized as they are earned and expenses are accounted for as they are incurred, although they may not have been received or paid yet.

Appropriation: the amount of money, based on the budget, set aside in an account and authorized to be expended during the year for a particular purpose.

Asset: anything owned by a municipality that has commercial or exchange value. Current assets are the amount of cash, accounts receivable and inventory a municipality has (anything that could be sold quickly to raise money).

Audit: a review of the operating, administrative and financial activities of a municipality (including grants, loans, claims, cost proposals and other agreements entered into by the municipality) for conformance with all legal and administrative requirements and the principles of economy and efficiency.

Capital Assets: long-term fixed assets such as land, buildings, equipment, fixtures and furniture that have more or less permanent use and value whose cost is normally written off over a number of fiscal periods.

Cash Basis: an accounting method in which revenues and expenses are recognized only when cash is received or paid.

Cash Flow: a projection of the amounts and timing of cash that comes into and goes out of the municipality. If available cash exceeds outflows there's a positive cash flow. When expenditures exceed cash on-hand, then cash flow is negative. Cash-flow budgets predict periods of expected cash surpluses and shortages, help create cash reserves, and manage cash to maximize financial returns and avoid shortages that can cause service disruption.

Contractual Service: a service performed under agreement with an outside organization for a fixed fee.

Credit: an accounting entry system that shows an addition in a revenue (or liability) account or a deduction in an expense (or asset) account.

Debit: an accounting entry system that shows an addition to an expense (or asset) account or a deduction in a revenue (or liability) account.

Debt Service: an expenditure for the retirement of a debt and for interest on the debt.

Depreciation: the amount of expense charged to write off the cost of a capital asset over its estimated useful life.

Disbursements: checks issued or cash or other payments made.

Encumbrance: a commitment of money against an appropriation, in the form of a purchase order agreement, to cover a later expenditure required when goods are delivered or services are rendered.

Expenditure: the amount of money disbursed and recorded as charges to an account when payment has been made.

Liability: a loan, expense or any other form of claim on the assets of a municipality that must be paid or honored by the municipality. Current liabilities are the amount of money a municipality owes in the short term.

Net: the amount of money left after all relevant deductions have been made from the gross amount of revenue.

Purchase Order: a written authorization for a vendor to supply goods or services at a specified price over a specified time period. Acceptance of a purchase order constitutes a purchase contract and is legally binding on all parties.

Restricted Fund: monies intended by law for a particular purpose that must be accounted for separately.

Variance: the difference in the net that is expected and what actually occurs.

Source: Fiscal Management Handbook, Governor's Center for Local Government Services

Appendix B - Revenue Policy

Sample **Parks and Recreation Department Pricing Policy Guidelines**

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- IV. PRICING POLICY GUIDELINES
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 - C. Other Considerations
- V. IMPLEMENTATION OF PRICING POLICY GUIDELINES

Parks & Recreation Department Pricing Policy Guidelines

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. Purpose

There is a need to address pricing policies for participation in programs, facility use and use of equipment. The policy guidelines will identify which services should be fee based, and provide for a fair, equitable and simple fee structure. The guidelines will help determine the appropriate level for each fee to meet goals by generating revenue to offset costs.

B. Objectives

These pricing policy guidelines are intended to address pricing needs for programs, facilities, and services of the entire department. They should allow for a comprehensive operation that is financially feasible, sustainable, and affordable, and also one that provides outstanding service to residents.

II. OVERVIEW:

A. Department Philosophy

The Parks and Recreation Department offers diversified recreational services to its citizens, recognizing governments' responsibility to provide public recreational facilities and leisure opportunities. It is the desire of the Department to improve the quality of life for each individual and the community as a whole, and to offer the most efficient and professional services by:

1. Providing and maintaining parks and recreation facilities for use by the general public.
2. Providing equal opportunity for all residents to participate in recreational programs and to fully use the facilities of the department.
3. Providing trained and qualified personnel for supervision and instruction in recreation programs, and for facility maintenance.
4. Welcoming public input into planning and evaluation of recreation programs, facilities, and services.

B. Considerations

When establishing user fees, the following should be taken into consideration:

1. Who benefits from the service, the community in general or only the individual or group receiving the service?
2. Did the individual or group receiving the service generate the need and therefore the cost of providing the service? An example of this type of service is a permitted activity in a park that requires police presence above and beyond the norm.
3. Will imposing the full cost fee pose a hardship on specific users?
4. Do community values support taxpayer subsidy of the cost of service for individuals with special needs (e.g. people with disabilities or low-income)?
5. Will the level of the fee affect the demand for the service?
 - a) Is it possible and desirable to manage demand for a service by changing the level of the fee?
 - b) Are there competing providers of the service in the public or private sector?

C. Benefits of Fees and Charges

1. Creates value for the service or facility.
2. Allows the ability to ration limited services and facilities among a large number of users.
3. Allows better ability to aid in discipline and control of participants.

III. DEFINITIONS:

A. Costs

Direct Costs: all the specific, identifiable expenses associated with providing a service. These expenses include, but are not limited to, wages and benefits, contracted services, rental of facilities and equipment directly related to the service, and purchased equipment and supplies.

Indirect Costs: Department overhead including the administrative costs of the Department, funding debt service (when it is part of the cost of providing a service), and contractual services, as appropriate.

B. Fees

Partial Cost Fee: a fee that recovers something less than the full cost. This could be a percentage of direct costs, all direct costs, all direct costs plus a percentage of indirect costs, etc.

Full Cost Fee: a fee that recovers the total cost of a service (the sum of all direct and all indirect costs.)

Market Rate Fee: a fee based on demand for a service. Once the market is defined by identifying all providers of an identical

service (i.e., private sector providers, other municipalities, etc.), a market rate fee can be set. The fee is set at the highest level the market will bear for the service provided.

C. Participant Categories

Resident: a person living within the agency boundaries who pays taxes to the agency.

Non-Resident: a person living outside of agency boundaries who does not pay taxes to the agency.

Child: under the age of 13

Teen: ages 13 through 17

Adult: ages 18 and up

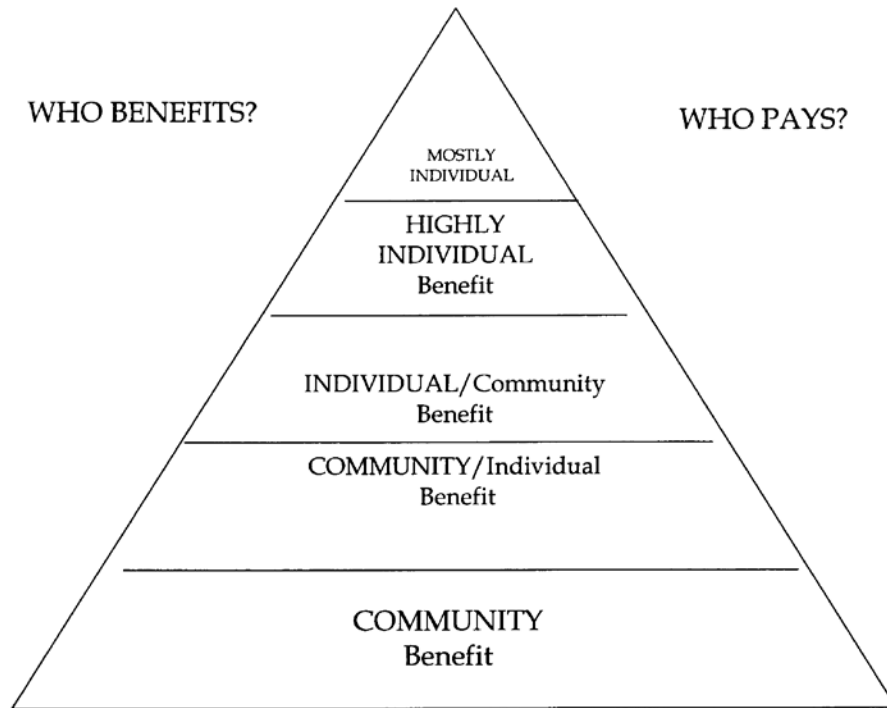
IV. PRICING POLICY GUIDELINES

A. Pyramid Pricing Model

A pyramid pricing model illustrates a pricing philosophy based on establishing fees commensurate with the benefit received. Descriptions regarding each level of the pyramid are provided, however, the model is intended as a discussion point and is very dependent on department and agency philosophies to determine what programs and services belong on each level. Cultural, regional, geographical and resource differences play a large role in this determination.

The pyramid model found on the following page graphically represents this concept. The model is followed by a description of each level of the pyramid. The foundational level of the pyramid represents the mainstay of a public parks and recreation program. It is the largest service level and most heavily tax supported. Programs appropriate to higher levels of the pyramid should be offered only when the preceding levels below are full enough to provide a foundation for the next level. This is intended to represent the public parks and recreation mission while reflecting the growth and maturity of an organization.

THE PYRAMID MODEL



1. **COMMUNITY Benefit** - The foundational level of the pyramid is the largest and represents those programs, facilities and services that benefit the community as a whole. These programs, facilities and services increase property values, provide safety, and enhance quality of life for the residents. The community generally pays for these basic services and facilities through taxes. These services shall be offered to agency residents at minimal or no fee. Most of the tax support of the agency supports this level of the pyramid.
 - a) Examples of these basic services could include drop in swim, program brochures, special events, scholarship programs, planning and design, maintenance, and research.

- b) Examples of these basic facilities could include swimming pools, non-exclusive use of family picnic areas, park playgrounds, open spaces, tennis courts, informal ballfields, outdoor basketball courts, and walking trails.
2. **COMMUNITY/Individual Benefit** – The second and smaller level of the pyramid represents programs, facilities and services that promote individual physical and mental well-being, and provide recreational skill development. They are generally the more traditionally expected services and beginner instructional levels. These programs, services and facilities shall be assigned fees based on a specified percentage of direct and indirect costs that represents a tax subsidy to account for the COMMUNITY Benefit and participant fee to account for the Individual Benefit.
- a) Examples of these services could include swim lessons, beginning level instructional programs and classes, kids camps, registration program, and local trips.
 - b) Examples of these facilities could include picnic shelters, boat launches, and lighted tennis courts.
3. **INDIVIDUAL/Community Benefit** – The third and smaller level of the pyramid represents services that promote individual physical and mental well-being, and provide an intermediate level of recreational skill development. This level provides more INDIVIDUAL and less Community Benefit and should be priced to reflect this.
- a) Examples of these services could include summer swim team, adult golf lessons, and picnic shelter reservations.
 - b) Examples of these facilities could include athletic complexes, skatepark facilities, and dog parks.
4. **HIGHLY INDIVIDUAL Benefit** – The fourth and smaller level of the pyramid represents specialized services generally for specific groups with a competitive focus. In this level programs and services should be priced to recover full cost.
- a) Examples of these services could include a year round competitive swim team, leagues, and specialty classes.

- b) Examples of these facilities could include platform tennis courts, and hot tub.
- 5. **MOSTLY INDIVIDUAL Benefit** – the fifth and smallest level of the pyramid represents activities that have a profit center potential and may fall outside of the core mission. In this level programs and services should be priced to recover full cost plus.
 - a) Examples of these activities could include tournaments, concessions, company picnics and facility rentals.

B. Criteria for Establishing Fees and Charges

1. **Low or No Cost Recovery/High or Full Subsidy**
 - a) Should apply to most of COMMUNITY Benefit level of pyramid.
 - b) The following criteria are used to determine if a service should be included in the category, keeping in mind that a service does not have to meet every criteria:
 - The service is equally available to everyone in the community and should benefit everyone.
 - Because the service is basic, it is difficult to determine benefits received by one user.
 - The level of service attributable to a user is not known.
 - Administrative costs of imposing and collecting a fee exceed revenue expected from the fee.
 - Imposing the fee would place the agency at a serious competitive disadvantage.
 - The service is primarily provided by the public sector.
2. **Partial Cost Recovery/Partial Subsidy:**
 - a) Should apply to COMMUNITY/Individual Benefits and INDIVIDUAL/Community Benefits levels of pyramid.
 - b) Users fees may recover only partial cost for those services for which the agency desires to manage demand.
 - c) User fees may recover only partial cost from those individuals who cannot pay full cost due to economic hardship.
 - d) A user fee may recover only partial cost if competitive market conditions make a full cost fee undesirable.
 - e) The following criteria are used to determine if a service should be included in this category, keeping in mind that a service does not have to meet every criteria:

- Services benefit those who participate but the community at large also benefits.
- The level of service use attributed to a user is known.
- Administrative costs of imposing and collecting the fee are not excessive.
- Imposing a full cost fee would place the agency at a competitive disadvantage.
- The service is usually provided by the public sector, but may also be provided by the private sector.

3. **Full Cost Recovery/No Subsidy:**

- a) Should apply to HIGHLY INDIVIDUAL Benefit level of pyramid.
- b) User fees should recover the full cost of services that benefit specific groups or individuals
- c) User fees should recover the full cost for those services provided to persons who generate the need for those services.
- d) The following criteria are used to determine if a service should be included in this category, keeping in mind that a service does not have to meet every criteria:
 - The individual or group using the service is the primary beneficiary.
 - The level of service use attributed to a user is known.
 - Administrative costs of imposing and collecting the fee are not excessive.
 - Imposing a full cost fee would not place the agency at a competitive disadvantage.
 - The service is usually provided by the private sector, but may also be provided by the public sector.

4. **“Enterprise” or “Profit” Center:**

- a) Should apply to MOSTLY INDIVIDUAL Benefit level of pyramid.
- b) User fees could recover more than the full cost for a service in order to subsidize other services provided to the community.
- c) The following criteria are used to determine if a service should be included in this category, keeping in mind that a service does not have to meet every criteria:
 - Individuals or groups benefit from the service and there is little community benefit.
 - The level of service use attributable to a user is known.
 - There is excess demand for the service; therefore, allocation of limited services is required.

- Administrative costs of imposing and collecting the fee are not excessive.
- The service is provided at market price by the private sector.

C. Other Considerations:

- a) Administrative costs of collecting fees should be small relative to the revenue generated by the fee.
- b) Residents pay agency taxes. Therefore residents will pay a lesser fee than non-residents for the service. Non-residents will pay approximately 25% higher for the service.
- c) Fees and charges shall support other resources available to the Parks and Recreation Department, and are not intended to replace them or reduce the agency's responsibility to provide public recreational facilities and leisure opportunities. They provide a means to continue, and expand as necessary, the ability to offer services to residents.
- d) Refund and Transfer Policy: Unless noted in a program description, or other published materials, refunds will be honored through the first program meeting only. A \$7 service charge will apply if requested before class starts. A \$7 service charge or 25%, whichever is greater, will apply if requested between the first and second class. A full refund will be granted if the agency cancels the class. A \$5 transfer fee will apply if requested before the second class.
- e) Returned Check Policy: A \$30 service charge will apply to each returned check.
- f) Reduced Rate Services Policy: The reduced rate policy is intended to provide recreation and leisure opportunities at a reduced rate to citizens of the agency with economic need. The agency will work directly with the appropriate social services agency to provide a means of identification of residents meeting eligibility requirements. Depending upon the systems in place for identification of need, residents may be subsidized between 50 and 75%, or at more than one level depending upon need.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF PRICING POLICY GUIDELINES

- A. Fees for services shall be reviewed annually, and adjusted as necessary, to meet the Pricing Policy Guidelines.
- B. Any surplus revenue from one program may be utilized to offset cost for other related programs.

- C. Fees and Charges Recommendations for Community Recreation Centers will be made at the appropriate time as part of the budgeting process for the facility. The operation of Community Centers as a whole is considered part of the second level of the pyramid where a partial subsidy is anticipated. This enhances and expands upon the base level where the construction of the Center resides. A target cost recovery is set at 80% and is considered feasible. Various services within the operation of the center may fall in different levels of the pyramid depending on the nature of the service. Types of services include:
- 1) Admission Fees (Daily, 20-Punch, Annual)
 - 2) Program Fees
 - 3) Rental Fees
 - 4) Merchandise Fees
 - 5) Concessions/Vending Fees
 - 6) Babysitting Fees
 - 7) Parties (Birthday, etc.)
 - 8) Other

Appendix C - Scholarship Application and Guidelines

Lancaster Recreation Commission Youth Athletic Scholarship Application Guidelines

Purpose - To allow every Lancaster City and Lancaster Township resident, age 18 and under, the opportunity to participate in recreational activities regardless of household financial conditions. The Youth Athletic Scholarship program was developed to lower the cost of recreational opportunities for children whose families have demonstrated financial needs.

Who Qualifies? - Any Lancaster City or Lancaster Township resident youth age 18 and under who meets the family income guidelines as related to the Free and Reduced Lunch Program criteria (see Table 1 below) and whose parent/guardian submits the Youth Athletic Scholarship Application along with proper documentation. Scholarships are limited to a total of \$200 per year per child.

Scholarship Requirements

- Families are required to participate in any fundraisers offered by the program.
- Parents/guardians are expected, if asked, to participate in volunteer activities to help offset the cost of this scholarship.
- Individuals are required to attend a minimum of 80% of scheduled practices, lessons or games.
- Individuals are eligible to receive a 50% program fee discount if they meet the income guidelines for the reduced lunch program and a 75% discount if they meet the income guidelines for the free lunch program. Refer to Table 1 for family income guidelines.

Application Process

- Complete the Youth Athletic Scholarship Application Form, which must be signed by a parent/guardian. Your signature gives us permission to check your child's family income status with the School District of Lancaster.
- Attach Proof of Residency: copy of current driver's license, state-issued identification card, tax bill or voter's registration card.
- If your income status information is not available through the School District because your child is homeschooled, in a private school, or too young for school enrollment, please provide copies of the following where applicable: 2 current consecutive pay stubs, W-2 Form, DSS Form, SSI Form, Social Security, Unemployment Statements, Child Support Order and all 1099 forms.
- Attach program registration form.
- The Lancaster Rec Staff will contact you in writing within two weeks with the results of your application.
- Scholarship application approval will be based on verification of financial need and availability of scholarship funds.

Other Important Information

- Scholarship amounts are based on total family size and total family income level. Families are defined as parent(s)/guardian(s) and dependents all living at the same address. See Table 1 at right.
- Reduced fees will only be granted for programs solely sponsored by Lancaster Recreation Commission.
- Completing a Youth Athletic Scholarship Application DOES NOT register a child for a program. Please complete a form separately for the activities in which you are interested in having your children participate.
- All participants are expected to pay at least 25% of an activity registration/program fee.
- Scholarships will be provided on a first-come, funding and space available basis.
- All youth athletic programs qualify for scholarships.
- Transportation to programs is not provided.
- Scholarships cover the activity registration/program fee only, not uniform/costume costs.

Confidentiality - Lancaster Recreation Commission will use the information on the application only to decide if your child qualifies to receive a partial scholarship for eligible athletic activities. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. Applicants are guaranteed that personal finances will not be discussed outside of the department management. Coaches, instructors or program leaders will not be informed of a participant's financial or scholarship status.

Table 1
2009 - 2010

Total Family Size	Total Annual Family Income*	
	75% Scholarship Eligibility	50% Scholarship Eligibility
2	\$18,941	\$26,955
3	\$23,803	\$33,874
4	\$28,665	\$40,793
5	\$33,527	\$47,712
6	\$38,389	\$54,631
7	\$43,251	\$61,550
8	\$48,113	\$68,469
For each additional member, add:	+\$4,862	+\$6,919

* Total family annual income from all sources before deductions for taxes, insurance premiums, bonds and other employee deductions.

Lancaster Recreation Commission Youth Athletic Scholarship Application Form

Please return to: Lancaster Recreation Commission, 525 Fairview Avenue, Lancaster, PA 17603

To be completed by Parent or Guardian - **please print neatly or type.**

Complete ALL of the following information and attach required documents, as incomplete forms will delay processing. A separate form is required for each child. Completing a scholarship application **does not** register a child for a program. Please complete a registration form separately for the activities in which your child wants to participate.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____
First Middle Last

Address: _____
Street Address Apt. # City State Zip Code

Telephone: (Day) _____ (Evening) _____ (Cell) _____

Name of Child: _____ Male ☐ Female ☐ Age: _____

School Child Attends: _____ Parent/Guardian Email Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Grade: _____ Program requesting scholarship for: _____

According to the income guidelines for the free/reduced lunch program, my child is eligible to receive:

☐ 75% program fee discount ☐ 50% program fee discount

If you meet the income guidelines, please attach registration form for programs and **skip to Signature Box**. Your signature gives us permission to check your child's family income status with the School District of Lancaster.

If your child does not meet the income guidelines for the free/reduced lunch program, then please report total family income, including wages, salaries, tips, unemployment and worker's compensation, net income from self-owned business/farm, welfare, child support, alimony, income from estates/trusts/investments, pensions, Social Security and any other income including regular contributions from persons not living in household on line below:

\$_____ Total family yearly income. Number of family members residing at above address: _____

Documentation to substantiate income shall include all of the following that are applicable: 2 current consecutive pay stubs and W-2 Form (REQUIRED), DSS Form, SSI Form, Social Security, Unemployment Statements, Child Support Order, and all 1099 forms.

Signature Box

I, _____ (Parent/Guardian), give permission to authorize the Lancaster Recreation Commission to verify information provided on this application, including information concerning meeting the income guidelines for the free/reduced lunch program for my child, _____, from the Business Office of the School District of Lancaster. I understand that this information will be used solely for the purpose of determining eligibility for scholarship and all information released will remain confidential. I also understand that deliberate misrepresentation of information subjects the applicant and their family members to being disqualified for scholarship consideration. I hereby certify that all of the above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that payment-in-full of the remaining fees must be made prior to the start of the program or as stated in the payment contract, if applicable.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED IN OFFICE _____

Residency Verified _____ Type of ID (copy attached) _____ Approved by _____

Supporting documents attached, including: _____

Verified for 75% scholarship _____ Verified for 50% scholarship _____ Denied _____ By _____ Date _____

Total amount approved for this program \$ _____ Program Director Approval _____ Date _____

Executive Director Approval _____ Date: _____

Questions? Call 392-2115 x 144

Appendix D - Friends Group Brochure

Harrisburg
Parks
Partnership



Dear Friend,

With pleasure, we are delighted to endorse the Harrisburg Parks Partnership Program and strongly encourage you to consider becoming a member. Membership in the Parks Partnership allows for enhanced recreational activities and privileges at city-conducted recreational programs and events, and helps to provide desperately needed funding for on-going parks improvements.

The Harrisburg Parks Partnership was created by Mayoral Executive Order in 1989, and since then, has become a freestanding, independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The first of its kind in central Pennsylvania, the Partnership brings together private companies, individuals, foundations, non-profit, neighborhood and citizens groups, and city government in a common effort to create and improve parks and open stage areas in Harrisburg, benefiting both city and regional residents and visitors. What began as an experiment in marshalling creative corporate and citizen skill for such a program has become Pennsylvania's only existing example of an ongoing, broad-based community Partnership, supporting the highest and best use of multiple public parks, playgrounds and open spaces.

Through the efforts of the Harrisburg Parks Partnership, nearly \$2 million has been raised to supplement the more than \$68 million in the city's new parks investment. Examples of the Parks Partnership's successful investments can be seen in the landscape, art and renovations in Reservoir Park, City Island, Riverfront Park, Italian Lake, Morrison Park, Wilson Park, Shipoke and the Norwood Playground. These have all undergone extensive upgrades thanks in part to the funds raised through the Parks Partnership Program. The city is fortunate to have such a diverse consortium of partners who are steadfast in their commitment to improving the quality of life in our community through investment in quality recreational facilities and programs.

Currently, the Harrisburg Parks Partnership has undertaken an ambitious \$550,000 Capital Campaign to renovate seven additional neighborhood playgrounds, including Olewine, Vernon Street, Braxton, Penn and Sayford Streets, 19th and Forster Streets, Gorgas Street and Pool #2 playgrounds. This multi-year effort will ensure that neighborhood playgrounds remain places of hope, exercise and adventure for inner city youth. As a member of the Parks Partnership, you will be invited to the Mayor's ribbon cutting ceremony following the completion of each park or playground update.

Membership in the Parks Partnership gives you an opportunity to meaningfully contribute to our ongoing mission of city park and playground renewal, while also receiving many personal recreational and other benefits. Won't you please join us?

Membership Enrollment

Please print clearly on spaces provided.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Please check one.

☐ I am renewing my membership

☐ New membership

Group Membership Fees: Annual: 3-year
For-profit: \$225 \$600
Non-profit: \$175 \$450

☐ Group.....\$ _____
Name of Group: _____

☐ Family.....\$50 No. in family: _____

☐ Individual.....\$35

☐ My check is enclosed made payable to:
Harrisburg Parks Partnership

☐ Please charge my membership to:
Mastercard _____ Visa _____

Account No. _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Send enrollment form to:

Harrisburg Parks Partnership
P.O. Box 5805
Harrisburg, PA 17110-0805
Phone: 717-233-7462
Fax: 717-233-4460

Thank you for becoming a Member!

The Harrisburg Parks Partnership headquarters is located in the Reservoir Park Mansion. The Mansion was built in 1890 and has been magnificently restored, utilizing the top standards for historic preservation and rehabilitation. Please stop by between 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. weekdays to take a personal tour of the premises, and its galleries.

Our Purpose

Harrisburg Parks Partnership (HPP) was established in 1989 as a non-profit organization. HPP's purpose is to assist the City of Harrisburg's Department of Parks and Recreation in the preservation, maintenance, expansion and development of the parks and city playgrounds. HPP also funds recreational programs for the benefit of city and area residents.

Since its inception, HPP has distinguished itself helping to develop and improve the parks, playgrounds and open spaces throughout the City of Harrisburg. All money raised by HPP is invested in playground and park improvements and enriches the recreational programs and special events held in the city's parks. Efforts

undertaken benefit city residents of all ages in all neighborhoods throughout the city.

By becoming a member you help this effort.

The purpose of the membership program is three-fold:

1. To create an opportunity for residents, families, businesses, and organizations of the Capital Region to invest in the continuous upgrading of Harrisburg City parks and playgrounds.

2. To promote, as well as increase, recreational activities within the city's open spaces.

3. To provide an additional resource for sustaining the ongoing operations and programs of the HPP.

Membership in HPP gives each member an opportunity to receive special privileges at most city recreational activities and events, as well as special concessions

when using city park facilities.

As a member of HPP, your vested interest comes first in planning events, improvements to the park facilities, and in planning open space upgrades.

Join HPP now and see how the privileges of becoming a member will enhance the quality of life in your Capital City community.



Member Benefits



Group Membership

- Discount on group rental of the Pride of the Susquehanna
- Group night at Harrisburg Senators with discount tickets
- 50% discount on permit fee for use of any city park or pavilion
- Business/organization listing in all HPP publications
- 3-year memberships receive a FREE limited edition print of Reservoir Park Fountain Sculptures.

Individual Membership

Membership fee: \$35

- Special discounts and consideration at select City Island attractions
- 50% discount on permit fee for use of any city park or pavilion
- Discounted Harrisburg Senators baseball tickets
- Discount at city-run pools



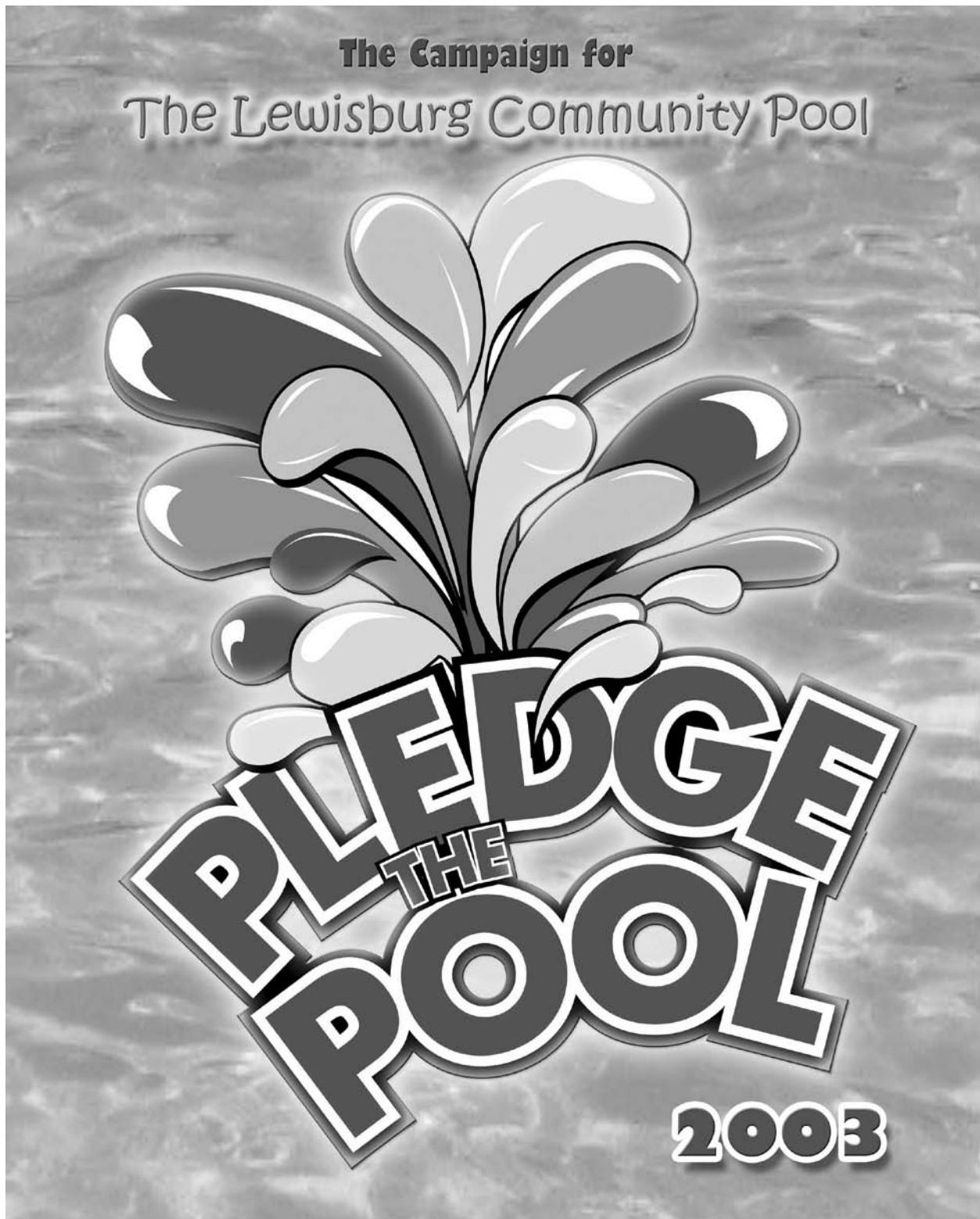
Family Membership

Membership fee: \$50

- Special discounts and consideration at City Island attractions
- 50% discount on permit fee for use of any city park or pavilion
- Discounted Harrisburg Senators baseball tickets
- Seasonal family discount at city-run pools



Appendix E - Capital Campaign Brochure



**It's July, do you know where your kids are???
We do.**



They're with us! In the past 43 years, thousands of children have learned to swim, hundreds of teenagers had their first job experiences, and people of all ages and abilities have shared memorable times at the Lewisburg Community Pool.



The Community Pool is just that. A pool that services the entire community. People of all ages, especially kids, can enjoy endless hours swimming, playing volleyball and water sports, or just having plain old fun. Don't forget that while your kids are at the pool they are supervised by some of the most well-trained lifeguards who have only your child's best interests and safety in mind.



Did you know...

In the summer of 2002, over **13,000** visits were recorded at the Community Pool!

The Hard Facts

On MEMORIAL DAY 2003, the Lewisburg Community Pool turned 43 years old. In the Spring of 1958, a group of community-minded individuals had a dream to build a pool. Their love of Lewisburg and desire to bring people together drove them to design and build the Lewisburg Community Pool. Since 1960, the pool has facilitated many gatherings, swimming lessons, and innocent fun for people of all ages.



Throughout these past years, walls have crumbled, foundations have weakened, and the overall pool structure has become deteriorated and outdated. From cracked and uneven decking to inefficient filtration systems, the pool will soon be unsafe for public use. These pictures show that many of the pool's problems aren't underground or behind closets. Structural weaknesses are found in every corner, on every deck and by every life guard stand. Without renovations, sadly the pool's doors will close.

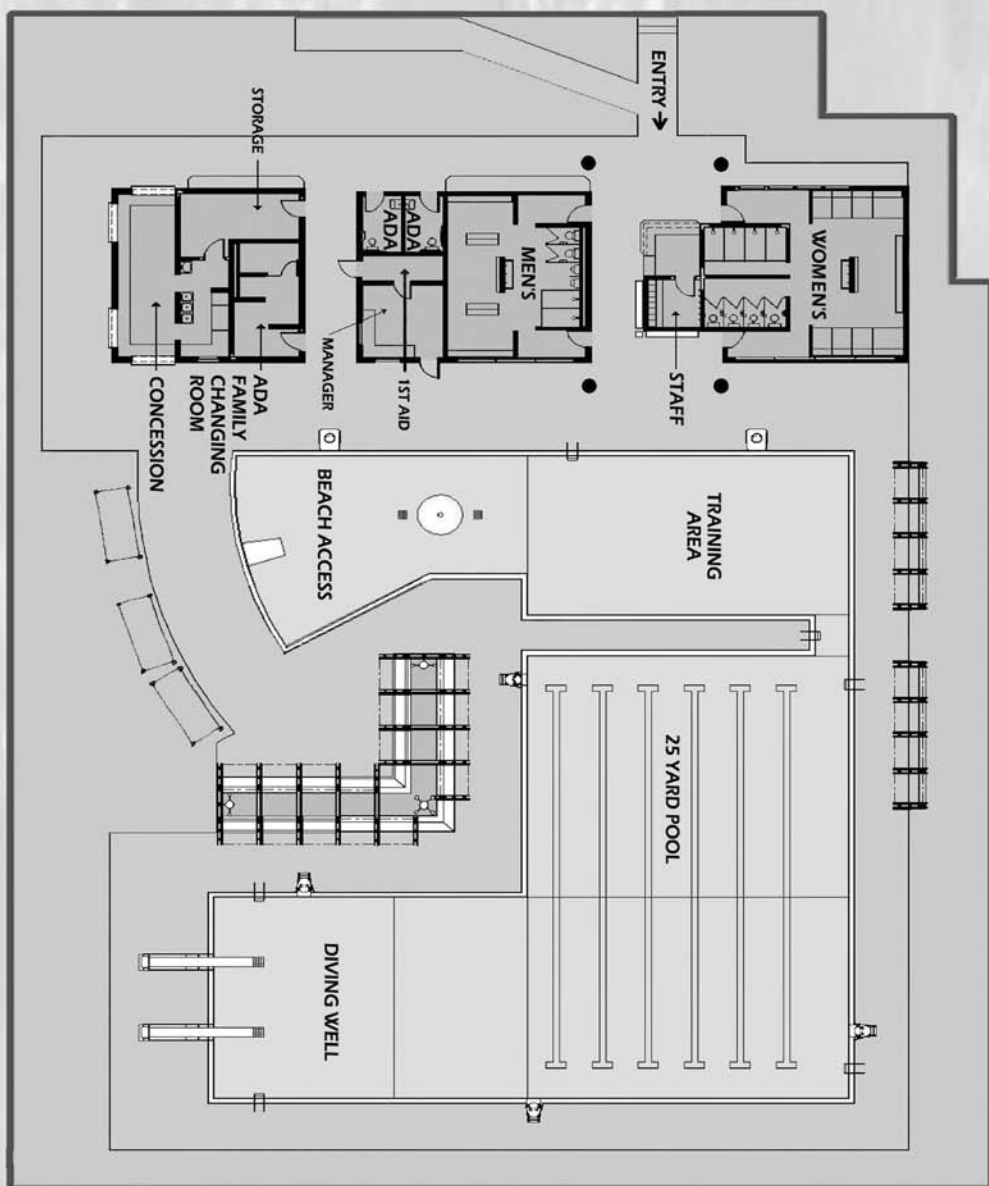


The residents of Lewisburg have always had a strong sense of community and commitment to one another. The need to rebuild the pool is urgent, and the desire to do so is evident. Now we as a community just need to make it happen.

A Renovated Pool That Will Serve The Community Today And Tomorrow

Improved Design Will:

- Make pool facility handicapped accessible
- Create a regulation-size competitive swimming area
- Provide a lap lane for fitness swimmers
- Bring the diving well up to current safety standards
- Provide shallow areas appropriate for young children who are learning to swim
- Create a concession area that will also serve park visitors
- Provide shaded areas for those wanting to minimize sun exposure
- Provide updated and ADA regulated bath houses



Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority
P.O. Box 532 Lewisburg, PA 17837
(570) 524-4774 www.GoLARA.org

Wallover Architects, INC

In an effort to complete all phases of the pool renovation, a total of \$500,000 must be raised in addition to our funding available to date.

While every gift is vital to the campaign, experience indicates that there is a scale of giving required to reach the specified goal of \$500,000.

The *Scale of Gifts* chart indicates the number and amount of gifts necessary to achieve our goal. We are encouraging a 2-year pledge, realizing that a more generous commitment to this project can be possible if payments are made over a two-year period, payable according to a convenient, pre-arranged schedule.

Please carefully consider the importance of keeping our community pool open, and where your gift will be located on the chart.

Scale of Gifts

Tsunami Level

Quantity Needed	Gift Level	Total
2	\$50,000	\$100,000
2	\$30,000	\$60,000
4	\$20,000	\$80,000
5	\$10,000	\$50,000

13 Tsunami Level Gifts totaling: \$290,000

Tidal Wave Level

12	\$5,000	\$60,000
15	\$3,000	\$45,000
20	\$2,000	\$40,000
20	\$1,000	\$20,000

67 Tidal Wave Gifts totaling: \$165,000

White Water Level

40	\$500	\$20,000
40	\$200	\$8,000
70	\$100	\$7,000
Many Gifts under	\$100	\$10,000

Many White Water Gifts totaling: \$45,000

CAMPAIGN GOAL:
\$500,000

Contributions To Date

1. DCNR - Land, Water & Conservation Grant
\$175,000
2. Lewisburg Borough
\$32,045
3. East Buffalo Township
\$30,000
4. Community Development Block Grant
\$102,000
5. Individuals, Service Clubs & Grant Donations
\$87,325

Total to date (5/03)
\$426,370

Estimated Construction Costs

Main Pool

(including filtration system, stainless steel gutter, filter room)
= \$454,800

ADA/ Zero Depth Access
= \$125,700

Diving Well
= \$186,860

New Concrete Decks
= \$51,620

Bathhouse Renovation
= \$101,770

New Concession
= \$67,250

New Deck Storage Building
= \$12,000

Total Estimate = \$1,000,000

LARA... What is that?

The Lewisburg Area Recreation Authority (LARA) is an inter-municipal cooperative agency created by Lewisburg Borough, East Buffalo and Kelly Townships. In existence since 1981, LARA was reorganized in 2000 and a full-time director was hired to better serve the recreational needs of the greater Lewisburg area. LARA is host to many activities such as swimming, tennis, gymnastics, arts and crafts. Currently the Authority operates the community ice rink, pool and is planning for future recreational facilities in the community.



Safe, attractive recreational facilities bring people together for fun and healthy activities and make for a vital community that **RETAINS AND ATTRACTS** residents as well as businesses. The Campaign Committee needs the support of the entire community to keep our pool open. We encourage you to demonstrate that support with your gifts or pledges.

LARA Board of Directors

Lewisburg Borough

Tracy Strosser, Vice-Chair
Donn Troutman, Treasurer
Pete Bergonia
Katherine Sheib

East Buffalo Township

Tom Szulanczyk, Chairman
Hank Baylor, Secretary
Pete Macky
Lonnie Hill

Kelly Township

Dave Hassenplug
Debbie Gutelius
Dennis Keefer
[position open]

LARA OFFICE

Greg A. Weitzel
Executive Director

Debra Boyer
Administrative Assistant

East Buffalo Township Complex
(570)524-9559 (fax)

629 Fairground Road

PO Box 532

www.GoLARA.org

Lewisburg, PA 17837

mail@GoLARA.org

(570)524-4774

"A Community that Plays Together...Stays Together."

Your Campaign Committee Members

Keri Albright
Committee Chairman

Judy Albright

Sue Auman

Jessica Breed

Heather Cronrath

Annie DiRocco

Dane Hockenbrock

Nancy Martin

Shane Thomas

Greg Weitzel

Make A Splash
Pledge or donate to the Community Pool today!

PLEDGE THE POOL PLEASE

To add your support to the Pledge the Pool Campaign, reach us by phone or email at...

(570)524-4774 mail@GoLARA.org

Designed by:
New Breed Designs

8

Appendix F - Sponsorship Package Examples

The City of Harrisburg publishes an annual Corporate Event Sponsorship Book. Only excerpts are provided in this appendix. For a complete copy visit www.harrisburgpa.gov.

JUNIOR GOLF PROGRAM

Junior Golf Program At-A-Glance

Dates:

Year-round cycles
(10 weeks each)

Place:

Reservoir Park, area
golf courses &
driving ranges, &
miniature golf
courses

Average Attendance:

90+ youth attend
daily sessions
throughout the
summer; 50-60
participate in fall
and winter

Activities:

skill sessions, work-
shops, junior golf
league, participation
in Mayor's Annual
Golf Outing

A major goal realized this year is the creation of a Ladies Professional Golfers Association (LPGA) Girls Golf Program and the continuation of the Co-ed daily instruction for all levels in Reservoir Park. The daily instructional sessions for youth ages 8-16, from June to August, 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Monday through Friday in Reservoir Park, have continued to be the major vehicle to introduce the game of golf to beginners. However, the beginners operate at one level while the intermediates practice on a second level, and the advanced juniors are playing golf or visiting the ranges five times a week.

The second goal realized this year was evidenced in the development of the returning juniors in their skill level competitions. All of the participants competed in the local "Drive, Chip & Putt" contest sponsored by Comcast and the Golf Channel. At the conclusion of each summer program, 20 juniors play in the Mayor's Annual Golf Outing at the Dauphin Highlands Course. Also, a number of our juniors have paired with the Boys Club juniors to play golf on local courses once or twice a week throughout the summer. In addition, for the past four years, PGA US Open Champion Jim Furyk has returned to the Harrisburg area to lead a golf clinic for participants.

Highlights of the past year include free trips made by the juniors who are becoming focused, disciplined, courteous, and well-behaved golfers. All food, beverages, transportation, staff, apparel, and equipment are compliments of the Harrisburg Parks & Recreation Department, the Harrisburg Parks Partnership, and the United States Golf Association Foundation.

Program Sponsorship - \$10,000 per season.

Sponsor's name will appear in the program and on hats, shirts, banners, etc. Sponsor's name will also appear in all news releases including radio & TV spots, and in the Recreation Calendar. Sponsors receive recognition at the Mayor's Annual Golf Outing.



PGA Open Golf Champ Jim Furyk Leads Clinic



Junior Golfers with Coaches

**Summer
Enrichment
Program's
Romper Week
At-A-Glance**

Dates:

August 9-13

Place:

17 playgrounds, 2
pools & City Island
Beach

Time:

10:00 a.m. - 3:00
p.m. Monday-Friday

Attendance:

4,000 youth served
weekly

Activities:

Swimming, Golf,
Tennis, Track,
Basketball Leagues,
Computer Classes,
Field Trips, In-Line
Skating, Arts & Crafts

SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM'S CONCLUSION
ROMPER WEEK

The Harrisburg Department of Parks & Recreation's 2004 Summer Enrichment Program will consist of supervised activities at 17 playgrounds, including the provision of free lunches provided by the Harrisburg School District, two city pools for recreational swimming and Learn-to-Swim classes, and City Island Beach for recreational swimming. Other activities include arts & crafts, nutrition & fitness, aerobics, new games, social skills, computer classes, team sports, field trips, educational classes, in-line skating, special activity days, theme weeks, and many hours of fun. The Summer Enrichment Program will conclude with Romper Week, August 9-13, a special week of enhanced activities for all participants.

Romper Week Sponsorship - \$3,000

Sponsor will receive entitlement and be mentioned in all media outlets. There will be a banner bearing the sponsor's name and/or logo at Romper Week activities, and the sponsor will be recognized in the Harrisburg City Calendar.



*Literally Climbing the Wall
during Romper Week*



*Physical
fitness and
group play
activities
during
Romper
Week.*

*Each week,
4,000 youth
participate in
the Summer
Enrichment
Program
which
culminates
with Romper
Week.*

ITALIAN LAKE CONCERT SERIES

Harrisburg's Italian Lake plays host to hundreds of music lovers every Sunday evening throughout July and August. This year, concert attendees can enjoy the beautiful setting of scenic Italian Lake while enjoying the relaxing sounds of chamber music, string quartets, brass ensembles, and other quality musicians. These concerts are enjoyed by people of all ages and economic backgrounds.

*View of the
Harrisburg
Concert Band
at the Italian
Lake Concert
Series.*



PRESENTING SPONSOR \$10,000

- The Department of Parks and Recreation will have, at our expense, one 2' X 10' banner made bearing sponsor logo.
- Sponsor banner will be displayed at each concert.
- Sponsor may provide additional banners to be displayed during each concert.
- Sponsor logo will be included in all advertisements, flyers and posters.
- Sponsor name will be included in all news releases.
- Reserved Seating will be available at each show. The Events Marketing Manager must be made aware of the dates and the number of reserved seats required.
- Sponsor may display, distribute, or sell merchandise at Italian Lake during each concert. Items must be approved by the Special Events Director prior to each show. The sale or distribution of alcoholic beverages is prohibited at Italian Lake.

Italian Lake Concert Series At-A-Glance

Performance Dates:

Sundays, July 18, through
August 8 at 7:00 p.m.

Audience: M & F,

25 years +
Household Income:
\$40,000 +

Average Attendance:

1,000 per show

Musical Groups:

String Quartets
Brass Ensembles
Chamber Music
Big Band

Musical Selections:

Big Band/ Swing
Classical
Show Tunes
Marches

Sponsorship Costs:

\$10,000 or
\$2,500 each

FISHING DERBY

Fishing Derby “Get Hooked on Fishing” At-A-Glance

Dates:

September 18-20

Time:

Registration:
8:30 a.m.

Derby:
9:00 a.m.

Place:

Jackson-Lick
Municipal Pool
1201 N 6th Street
Harrisburg

Average Attendance:
3,000

Activities:

Gift bags

Prizes including rod
& reel combos,
tackle boxes,
patches, coupons
from merchants, &
fishing information

Door prizes

“Tagged Fish”
special prizes

Concessions
available

Crazy Cast Contest

Arts & Crafts
Activities

The Department of Parks & Recreation will again hold its annual Fishing Derby with the theme of “Get Hooked on Fishing” for youth, senior citizens, and (by special arrangement) special needs residents of the City of Harrisburg and Dauphin County. The program is free and will be held September 18-20 at the Jackson-Lick Municipal Pool, which will be filled with 1100 Hybrid Striped Bass. Registration for the Fishing Derby begins at 8:30 a.m. and the Derby itself begins at 9:00 a.m.

The program is structured so that a family member or volunteer mentor will accompany all participants. Mentors will be available to help bait hooks and give lessons for those just learning to fish. Equipment will also be provided for those participants who do not have their own.

Event Sponsorship - \$5,000.

Banners bearing the sponsor’s name will be displayed on-site. The sponsor will be included in all advertising leading up to and during the event. Sponsors’ names will also be placed on the special “prize fish,” and the sponsor will receive a picture of the winner.



EASTER EGG HUNT

Easter Egg Hunt At-A-Glance

Date/Time:

Saturday, April 3
(raindate April 10)
9:00 a.m. to 1:00
p.m.

Place:

Reservoir Park,
areas near
bandshell,
playground, picnic
pavilion, Mansion,
& Arts Colony

Average Attendance:
2,500+

Activities:

9 hunts
take-home treats
face painting
petting zoo
visits with Park C.
Squirrel (mascot of
Harrisburg Parks
Partnership) &
surprise guests
photos with Easter
Bunny
create take-home
gardens
prizes & contests
pony rides

The Harrisburg Parks & Recreation Department's Free Annual Spring Egg Hunt Extravaganza is the largest single-day event that the Recreation Bureau sponsors on an annual basis. The Extravaganza attracts over 2,000 people: 1,000 children, ages 10 and under, and 1,000 parents, staff, and volunteers. Activities each year include nine mini-egg hunts from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon, treat bags, face painting, clowns, a petting zoo, special costumed characters including Park C. Squirrel, and photos with and visits from the Easter Bunny. Dee-jays from local radio stations broadcast live from the hunt and act as hosts for the event.

Event Sponsorship - \$5,000

Banners bearing sponsor name and/or logo will be displayed on site. T-shirts, caps, bags, and agendas used the day of the Hunt will also bear the sponsor's name/logo. Sponsor's name will be mentioned in all media promotions including news releases, radio spots, TV spots, and Recreation Calendar ads.

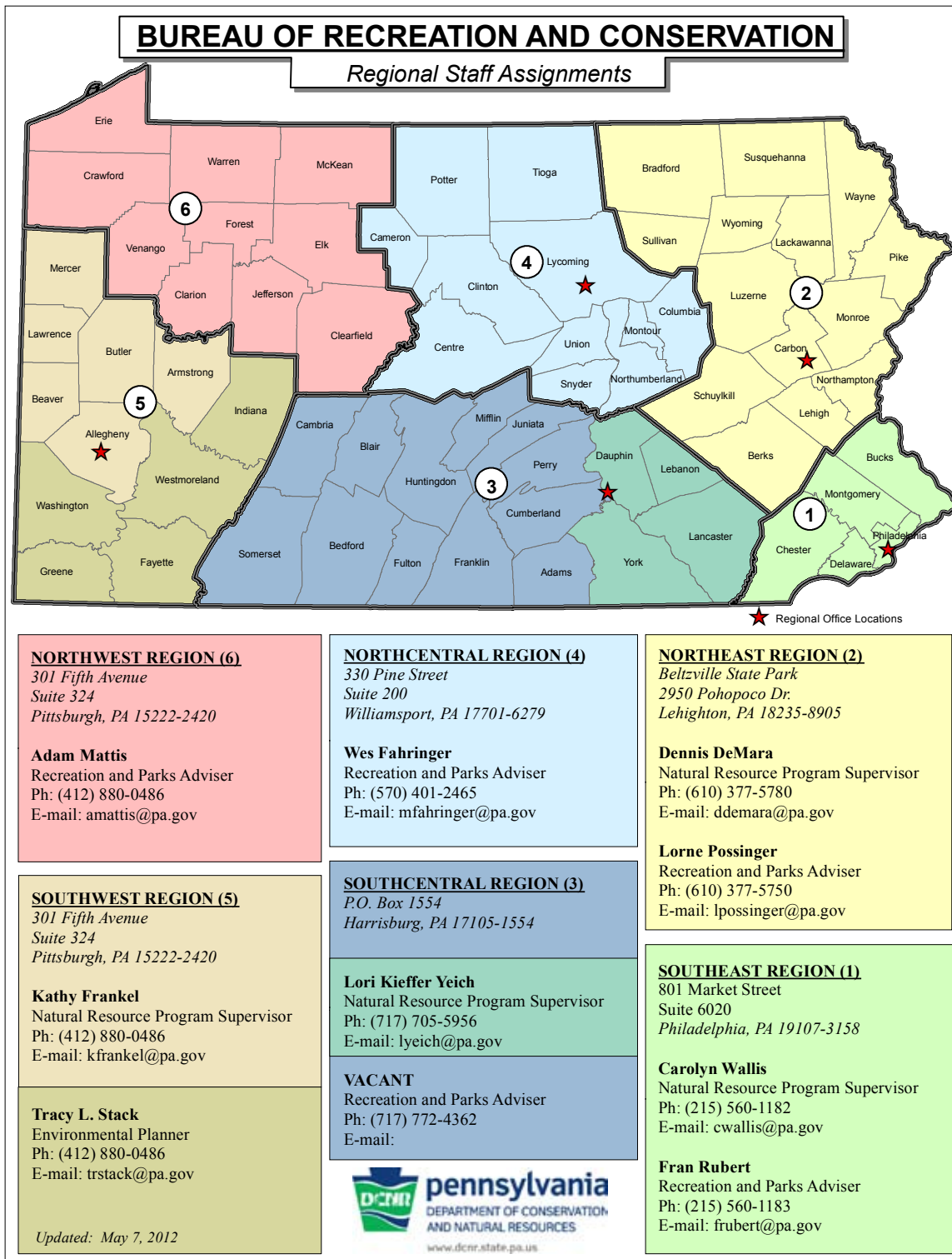


Left, A little egg hunter collects prizes on the Reservoir Park Playground



Right, Children Line Up Along Artist & Reservoir Drive Eagerly Awaiting the Start

Appendix G - DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation Regional Offices



Appendix H - Mandatory Dedication Ordinance

OFFICIAL

TOWNSHIP OF MOON
ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MOON, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING CHAPTER 188 OF THE MOON TOWNSHIP CODE, SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT, TO ESTABLISH IMPACT REGULATIONS, MANDATORY LAND DEDICATION REQUIREMENTS AND FEE IN LIEU THEREOF .

WHEREAS, The Township of Moon, on February 14, 2001, adopted a Comprehensive Plan, entitled "Moon Township Comprehensive Plan"; and

WHEREAS, The Township of Moon has adopted a Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan which makes recommendations for future development of recreational facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), 53 P.S. §10101 *et seq.*, authorizes the Township of Moon (the "Township") to regulate subdivision and land development in the Township; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 188 of the Moon Township Code, Subdivision and Land Development, regulates subdivision and development in the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of the Township desires to amend Chapter 188 of the Moon Township Code, Subdivision and Land Development, to establish impact regulations, mandatory land dedication requirements and fee in lieu thereof.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Supervisors of the Township of Moon hereby ordains and enacts as follows, incorporating the above recitals by reference:

SECTION 1. Section 188-106.B. of Chapter 188 of the Moon Township Code, Subdivision and Land Development, is amended as follows by inserting the underlined text

ACTIVE RECREATION -- Baseball/Softball fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, play grounds, and other similar facilities which offer the ability to play an active sport and constructed in conformance with natural standards including those of the National Recreation and Parks Administration.

RECREATION CAPITOL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMS -- A capital improvement program used to guide the allocation of land to be developed or funds received in lieu of mandatory land dedication, said plan being included

in the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, as amended from time to time by the Township.

RECREATION SERVICE AREA -- The service radius of existing of proposed Township parks and recreation facilities as defined by National Recreation and Parks Administration Standards as outlined in Table 2 of this ordinance.

SECTION 2. A new Section 188-514 of Chapter 188 of the Moon Township Code, Subdivision and Land Development, is added by inserting the following ordinance language:

§188-514. Impact Regulations, Mandatory Land Dedication Requirements and Fee in Lieu Thereof.

- A. The provisions and requirements of this section shall apply to all Minor and Major Land Developments which would, upon build-out, result in the creation of three (3) or more dwelling units.
- B. The DEVELOPER shall dedicate land to be used for purposes of recreation and open space at a per unit amount as specified in §188-514 N. (1) of this ordinance.
- C. Land offered for dedication shall meet the following criteria:
 - (1). The land shall be physically and legally accessible to all residents of the proposed DEVELOPMENT. The land may be an integrated part of the DEVELOPMENT; within the recreational service area of the DEVELOPMENT. The land, with the approval of the Board of Supervisors, may be land provided for use by all residents of the Township. Said land shall be centrally located and dedicated for the purpose of a community center or similar centralized recreational function as recommended by the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.
 - (2) No more than 25% of the land offered for dedication shall be a Sensitive Natural Resource, as listed in section 208-301 of the Zoning Ordinance.
 - (3) No more than 50% of the land offered for dedication may possess more than 5% slope.
 - (4) At least 50% of the land offered for dedication shall be developed as active recreation with at least two types of active recreational opportunities offered. The active recreation areas must be graded to avoid any drainage problems. Additional facilities may be required by the Board of Supervisors. The Board shall apply national standards including those of the National Recreation and Parks Administration to determine the needs of the assumed population of new developments and shall require

corresponding facilities accordingly.

- (5) All playing fields and associated structures shall be set back at least 30 feet from all property lines.
 - (6) A trail system, if accepted by the Township Board of Supervisors, may substitute for one of the required active recreation types.
 - (7) Land offered for dedication shall, where possible be situated such that the parcel abuts adjacent open space and recreational facilities thus creating an integrated network of open space, trails, and recreational areas.
 - (8) Land offered for dedication shall possess the required FRONTAGE along a PUBLIC STREET, per the Zoning Ordinance, in the District in which the PLAN is located.
 - (9) The minimum total acreage of contiguous tracts of land to be offered shall be equal to the minimum lot size, per the Zoning Ordinance, in the District in which the PLAN is located.
- D. The Township incorporates all rights granted in Section 705 (f) of the Municipalities Planning Code regarding the maintenance of common open space including the right of the Township to maintain property which the owner of homeowner's association fails to maintain and to file liens against all properties having an interest in said association.
- E. The dedication of land to the Township shall be a general warranty deed. In lieu thereof, the Township Board of Supervisors, at its discretion, may require the creation of a homeowners' association or similar entity charged with the maintenance of the facility. The Board of Supervisors may also grant the DEVELOPER permission to retain ownership. In all cases, ownership by any entity other than the Township shall require deed restrictions, requiring the maintenance of the approved facilities on the SITE. The Township shall be a party to an agreement providing for the enforcement of the aforesaid restrictions.
- F. The DEVELOPER may pay a fee in lieu of land dedication at a per unit amount as specified in §188-514 N. (2) of this ordinance.
- G. The fee in lieu paid by the DEVELOPER shall be offered in the form of cash, bond, cashier's or certified check, or held in an escrow account payable upon FINAL APPROVAL of a PLAN. Payment of said funds shall be a condition of FINAL APPROVAL of the PLAN and its release for recordation. In lieu of payment as a condition of FINAL APPROVAL, the DEVELOPER may elect to place a note on the PLAN which states that the issuance of a building permit for each LOT or dwelling unit is conditioned upon the payment of the

fee in lieu amount specified in this ordinance at the time of FINAL APPROVAL.

- H. All such fees collected shall, upon receipt by the Township, be deposited in an interest-bearing account, clearly identifying the specific recreation facilities for which the fee was received. Interest earned on such accounts shall become funds of that account. Funds from such accounts shall be expended only in properly allocable portions of the costs incurred to construct the specific recreational facilities for which the funds were collected.
- I. Upon request of any persons who paid any fees under this subsection, the Township shall refund such fee, plus interest accumulated thereon from the date of payment, if the Township had failed to utilize the fee paid for the purposes set forth in this section within three years from the date such fee was paid.
- J. Use of Fees Collected. The Township shall use fees collected within the recreation service area from which funds were collected for the purpose of purchasing land or constructing or purchasing any equipment, structures, courts, fields or other recreational facilities. All improvements or purchases shall be associated with facilities accessible to the residents of the DEVELOPMENT. Fees collected may also be used for facilities accessible and designed for use by all residents of the Township. Said facilities shall be centrally located and dedicated for the purpose of a community center or similar centralized recreational function as recommended by the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.
- K. The allocation of all fees collected shall be based upon recommendations of the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan as well as the Recreational Capital Improvements Program.
- L. The DEVELOPER may offer, in lieu of both land dedication requirements and associated fees in lieu thereof, to pay for 75% of the required fee to be deposited in an interest bearing account for the purpose of repairing or upgrading existing equipment noted in the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan as in need of improvement. Said funds may only be used for equipment repair and upgrades in public parks in the recreational planning area in which the associated PLAN is proposed. The decision of accepting the offer of such funds rests solely with the Board of Supervisors based on current needs and recommendations from the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan as well as the Recreation Capitol Improvements Program.
- M. Exemptions. The following are exempt form the mandatory land dedication requirements of this section.

(1) Group Residence and Group Care Facilities as defined in the Zoning

Ordinance.

N. Calculation of Mandatory Land Dedication and Fee in Lieu Thereof:

- (1) Land dedication required by dwelling units shall be .024 acres per dwelling unit.
- (2) Fee in lieu of land required by dwelling units shall be calculated as follows: \$15,000 (estimated fair market value per acre) x .024 acres per unit + \$200.00 per unit (assessed for improvements to public park lands) = \$560.00 (fee per unit)

O. Recreation Service Areas. Table 2 shall define the radius of existing and proposed parks and recreation facilities based on their size and usage.

Table 2

Park Classification	Definition	Facilities	Min. Size	Service Area Radius	Acreage Req'mt per 1,000 Pop.
			acres	mile	acres
Neighborhood	walk to park; intense recreational activities; 100% developed	playfields, playgrounds, tot lots, multi-purpose handcourts, recreational center, picnicking	.25-5	0.5	2.0
Community	drive to park, intense recreational activities; max. 80% developed	same as neighborhood plus swimming pool, lit playfields and single-use handcourts, multipurpose building, community center	20	3	2.0
Metropolitan	drive to park; primarily resource based activities with some intense recreational activities; max. 40% developed	water resource-oriented, unlit playfields, playgrounds, picnicking, hiking/biking/walking trails, nature center, amphitheater, group camping, swimming beaches, boating areas	100	12	5.0
Regional	drive to park; natural areas with some resource based activities; max. 20% developed	water resource-oriented, conservation areas (flood control/management), beaches, nature study, group camping, rustic areas, bridal trails, picnicking	250	30	20.0
Preserve	lands dedicated to the preservation of natural resources and wildlife management	hunting areas and general open space	250	25	NA
Special Activity	specialized recreational facilities	arboreta, historical sites, sports complexes, golf courses and trails	NA	NA	NA

SECTION 3. Any and all prior Ordinances are hereby repealed in whole or in part to the extent inconsistent herewith.

SECTION 4. This Ordinance shall take effect in accordance with applicable law.

ORDAINED and ENACTED this _____ day of _____, 2005, by the Board of Supervisors of the Township of Moon in lawful session duly assembled.

ATTEST:

TOWNSHIP OF MOON

Gregory G. Smith
Township Manager

By: _____
Alexander J. Ropelewski
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

(SEAL)

Appendix I - Sources of Assistance

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Both the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS) offer assistance to municipalities interested in starting or improving community recreation and parks services. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Governor's Center for Local Government Services provides a full range of financial assistance to local governments.

The following publications are available free of charge from DCNR. For the latest information on new publications, visit its website: www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/publications/.

Community Recreation and Parks

Recreation and Parks Board Handbook

Hiring Municipal Recreation and Park Personnel

Multi-Municipal Cooperation for Recreation and Parks

Municipal Recreation Programming

Bureau of Recreation and Conservation Grant Programs and Services

Skate Park Guide

Using Conservation Easements to Preserve Open Space

Public Finance for Open Space

Implementing a Municipal Open Space Program

Pennsylvania Greenways: An Action Plan for Creating Connections

A Guide to Funding Recreation and Conservation Projects

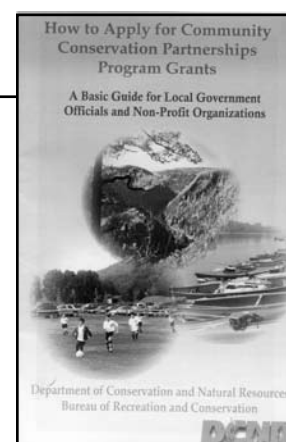
Keys to Success

Heritage Parks Program Manual

Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grant Manual

Swimming Pool Management

Play it Safe - An Anthology of Playground Safety



Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society

PRPS is the leading organization supporting recreation and parks in Pennsylvania through the provision of training and education, technical assistance, legislative advocacy, and other services. PRPS members include staff of local and county recreation and parks agencies, state park managers, federal and state agency officials, therapeutic recreation specialists and activity coordinators, and members of local recreation and parks boards. Membership information is available at www.prps.org.

The following training and education programs are offered:

Annual State Recreation and Parks Conference

Pennsylvania Therapeutic Recreation Institute

Park Operations School

National Playground Safety Inspector Certification Course

Aquatic Facilities Operator Course

Urban Recreation Institute

Greenways and Trails Workshops

Recreation and Parks Board Training

Publications and resources include:

Pennsylvania Recreation & Parks, the quarterly magazine

PRPS Update, the monthly newsletter

PRPS Membership Directory and Buyer's Guide

Annual Recognition and Awards Program

RecTAP Peer Consulting Service



Governor's Center for Local Government Services

To keep Pennsylvania officials informed, the Center maintains a library of publications on local government issues. All publications can be downloaded from the Center's website, www.newpa.com, at no cost. The website also includes a list of links to county and municipal governments in Pennsylvania that currently have websites and an on-line municipal statistics section. The Center holds year-round training seminars for municipalities in the following areas: general government administration, finance, management, community planning and zoning, and community and economic development.

One of the Center's top priorities is to provide municipalities with technical assistance designed to enhance their ability to perform their duties. The Center has a full-time staff in Harrisburg and in six regional offices throughout Pennsylvania. To recognize communities that bring creative solutions to improving the quality of life for their residents, the Center conducts the annual Governor's Awards for Local Government Excellence.

Publications available on the Center's website include:

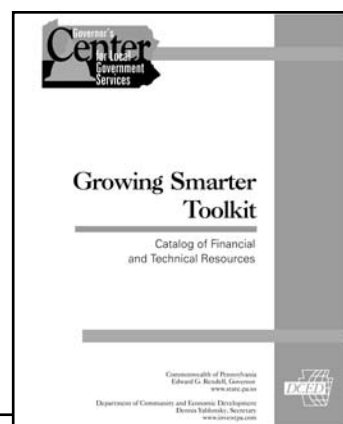
Annual Audit and Financial Report

Debt Management Handbook

Financial Monitoring Workbook

Fiscal Management Handbook

Growing Smarter Toolkit



Intergovernmental Cooperation Handbook

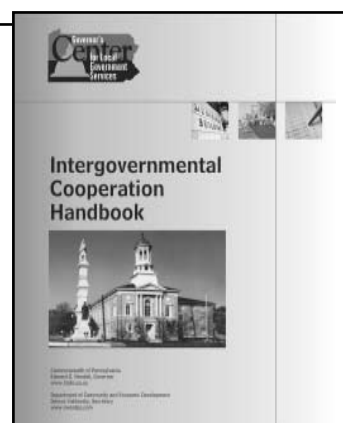
Municipal Authorities

Municipalities Planning Code

Planning Series (10-part publication)

Purchasing Handbook

Risk Manager's Insurance Guide



Appendix J - Financing Resources

Financing Resources for Recreation, Parks and Open Space			
Category	Program	Description	Contact Information
Federal Grants	National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance	Offers in-depth staff assistance and consultation for locally led conservation projects such as developing trails and greenway networks or protecting rivers and open space.	www.ncrc.nps.gov/programs/RTCA/index.html
	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Education Grants	Supports environmental education projects that enhance the public's awareness, knowledge, and skills to make informed, responsible decisions that affect environmental quality.	www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.html
	U.S. Department of Transportation Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement	Provides funds to reduce transportation-related emissions and improve air quality. Trails designed for transportation as well as recreation are eligible.	www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cmagg.htm
	U.S. Department of Justice	Provides information on crime and violence prevention grants that can be used to support recreation programs.	www.oip.usdoj.gov/fundopps.htm
	U.S. Department of Education	Provides information on grants to apply for in cooperation with school districts.	www.ed.gov/funding.html
	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Provides information on available grants that can be used to fund recreation programs that improve health.	www.hhs.gov/agencies/grants.html
	Federal Grants Clearinghouse	Provides information on hundreds of federal grants that can be used to support youth recreation programs.	www.afterschool.gov
	Other Federal Grants	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance	www.cfda.gov
		Conservation Technology Support Program	www.ctsp.org
		Computers for Learning	www.computers.fed.gov/School/user.asp
		Department of Energy	www.energy.gov
		Department of Labor	www.dol.gov
		Federal Commons Grants Portal	www.cfda.gov
		Federal Nonprofit Gateway	www.nonprofit.gov
		Federal Register	www.archives.gov/federal/register/
		Health and Human Services GrantsNet	www.hhs.gov/grantsnet
		Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	www.samsha.gov
		Federal Funds Express	www.house.gov/ffr/resources_all.shtml
		The Watershed Academy	www.epa.gov/watertrain

Financing Resources for Recreation, Parks and Open Space			
Category	Program	Description	Contact Information
State Grants	Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Community Conservation Partnership Program	Planning Grant Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plans ▪ Conservation Plans ▪ Feasibility Studies ▪ Greenways and Trails Plans ▪ Rails-to-Trails Plans ▪ Master Site Plans ▪ Rivers Conservation Plans Technical Assistance Grant Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education and Training ▪ Peer-to-Peer ▪ Circuit Rider Acquisition Grant Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Park and Recreation Areas ▪ River Conservation ▪ Rails-to-Trails Development Grant Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Park Rehabilitation and Development ▪ Greenways and Trails ▪ Rails-to-Trails ▪ Rivers Conservation 	www.dcnr.state.pa.us
	Pennsylvania Recreation Trails Program Grants	Provides funds to develop and maintain recreation trails and trail related facilities for motorized and non-motorized and non-motorized recreation trail use.	www.dcnr.state.pa.us
	Other State Grants	Piper Resources State and Local Government on the Net	www.statelocalgov.net/index.cfm
		The Grantsmanship Center's Funding through State Government	www.tgci.com/STATES/states2.htm
		U.S. State and Local Gateway	www.statelocal.gov
		Pennsylvania Council on the Arts	www.artsnet.org/pca/pca.html
		Pennsylvania Humanities Council	www.pahumanities.org
		Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Community Revitalization Grants and Shared Municipal Services Grants	www.inventpa.com
		Pennsylvania Department of Health	www.health.state.pa.us
		Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Growing Greener Grants	www.dep.state.pa.us

Financing Resources for Recreation, Parks and Open Space			
Category	Program	Description	Contact Information
Federally-Funded/State-Adm. Grants	U.S. Department of Agriculture Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)	Provides funding for breakfast, lunch, and snacks for children ages 18 and under at summer playgrounds, camps, and other recreation programs.	www.frac.org
	Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	Provides meals and snacks for after school and evening youth recreation programs.	www.frac.org
	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Transportation Enhancements Programs	A cost reimbursement program, not a grant program, funded through TEA-21. Provides funding for facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, educational activities, acquisition of scenic easement and scenic or historic sites, landscaping or other scenic beautification, historic preservation, and preservation of abandoned railway corridors.	www.dot.state.pa.us
Foundation Grants	Target Stores and Tiger Woods Foundation	Provides Start Something Scholarships for youth to use for summer camps, music lessons, sports entertainment, travel expenses, and so on. Programs enrollment forms are available at Target stores.	www.startsomething.target.com/info/index.asp
	American Legacy Foundation Initiative for Tobacco Control	Provides grants of up to \$200,000 for anti-smoking projects.	(202) 293-5960
	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	Provides grants for conservation and environmental education projects.	www.nfwf.org
	Pew Charitable Trust	Provides grants in a number of program areas including environment, culture, and health and human services.	www.pewtrusts.com/grants
	Three Guineas Fund	Supports projects to benefit women and girls.	www.3gf.org
	UPS Foundation Community Investment Grants	Allocates dollars to UPS region offices to invest in their communities.	www.ups.com
	Women's Sports Foundation	Offers a variety of grant programs to benefit women and girls sports programs and travel and training grants for athletes.	www.womenssportsfoundation.org
	Funders Supportive of Communication Technology	A collection of funding information on how to get technology resources.	www.benton.org/publibrary/toolkits/techmoney.html
	The Foundation Center's Finding Funders	Provides access to web sites for private foundations, corporate grantmakers, grantmaking public charities, and community foundations.	www.fdncenter.org/funders
	Other Foundation Grants and Technical Assistance/Support Resources	Amherst Wilder Foundation	www.ncna.org
		Philanthropy Journal	www.philanthropyjournal.org
		Board Source	www.ncnb.org
		Association of Fundraising Professionals	www.afpnet.org
		TechSoup – technology information	www.techsoup.org
		American Philanthropy Review Charity Channel	http://charitychannel.com/
		The Foundation Center's RFP Bulletin	http://fdncenter.org/funders/html
		Free On-Line Management Library	www.managementhelp.org
		The Foundation Center's Grantmaker Website	http://fdncenter.org/funders/grantmaker
		Internet Nonprofit Center	www.nonprofits.org
		Grantsmanship Center's Community Foundations by State	www.tqci.com/funding/states.asp
		Alliance for Nonprofit Management	www.allianceonline.org
		About.com	www.nonprofit.about.com/
		Compass Point Nonprofit Services	www.compasspoint.org/

Financing Resources for Recreation, Parks and Open Space			
Category	Program	Description	Contact Information
Non-Government Grants	Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS) RecTAP Program	Provides technical assistance grants of up to \$1,500 to help recreation and park boards and departments with specific issues. No matching funds are required.	www.prps.org
	Bikes Belong Coalition	Provides grants of up to \$10,000 to assist agencies in developing bicycle facilities projects to be funded by TEA-21.	www.bikesbelong.org
	National Gardening Association Youth Garden Grants	Provides grants of over \$750 for seeds, tools and gardening supplies for children to learn and work in outdoor gardens.	www.kidsgardening.com/grants.asp
	NFL Community Football Fields Program	Provides grants of up to \$100,000 for capital improvement projects to improve or create football fields in low and moderate-income neighborhoods.	(212) 455-9881
	NFL Youth Football Fund	Provides grants of \$500 to \$2,500 to purchase equipment, repair fields, establish new football programs, and improve existing programs.	www.nrpa.org
	American Forests	Provides tree-planting assistance with Global ReLeaf, an ecosystem restoration grant program, which includes urban and community forests and an environmental education program for children stressing the benefits and rewards of planting trees.	www.americanforests.org/global_releaf/
	Cyberstart	Provides free computers, tech support and Internet access to preschool and child care programs.	www.cyberstart.org

Financing Resources for Recreation, Parks and Open Space			
Category	Program	Description	Contact Information
Publications	Cost of Urban Sprawl	Published by 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania	www.10000friends.org
	Rural Access Guide	Published by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania	www.ruralpa.org
	Growing Greener: Putting Conservation into Local Codes	Published by the Natural Lands Trust	www.natlands.org
	Common Wealth: Giving in Pennsylvania	Published by Community Foundations	www.communityfoundations.org
	Opportunity Knocks: Open Space is a Community Investment	Published by the Heritage Conservancy	www.heritageconservancy.org
	Growing with Green Infrastructure	Published by the Heritage Conservancy	www.heritageconservancy.org
	Landsavers	On-line presentations of practical techniques to preserve open space.	www.greenworkds.tv/landsavers/
	PAS Reports	Published by the American Planning Association	www.planning.org
	Various publications	Published by the National Recreation and Park Association	www.nrpa.org

Financing Resources for Recreation, Parks and Open Space			
Category	Program	Description	Contact Information
National Programs	Smokey Bear Program	Encourages children to take an active role in protecting forestland and the animals that live in the forest from wildfires.	www.symbols.gov
	Woodsy Owl Program	Encourages children to develop a sense of responsibility and compassion for the natural world through hands-on land stewardship activities.	www.fs.fed.us/spf/woodsy
	National Center for Recreation and Conservation, Bureau of Land Management	Offers activity books, lessons plans, posters, articles, and general information on heritage education.	www.blm.gov/heritage/he.htm
	Endangered and Threatened Species Programs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Offers educational materials about the preservation and protection of wildlife, biodiversity, and habitat conservation.	www.endangered.fws.gov
	Boat U.S. Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water	Offers brochures and posters on pollution prevention tips and littering on land and in the water.	1-800-BOAT-USA
	America the Beautiful	Provides free flower, vegetable, and herb seeds to plant Freedom Gardens across America.	www.america-the-beautiful.org
	NBA, WNBA, Gatorade, and Nike	Offers Jr. NBA and Jr. WNBA programs at no cost to recreational youth basketball leagues.	1-800-JRHOOPS
	First Serve	Provides inner-city youth with a safe and nurturing after-school program that combines academics with tennis.	www.usta.com
	JumpStart After School	Provides a hands-on manual full of fun activities to get kids active and eating healthy foods.	www.nrpa.org
	S & S Crafts Worldwide Chalk It Up!	Offers communities a kit containing sidewalk chalk, certificates of achievement, instruction booklets, and full-color posters to plan, run, and publicize events.	1-800-642-7354
	Let's Play Sports Coordinator's Manual	A comprehensive resource to implement introductory sport programs for elementary age youth in 16 sports.	www.nrpa.org
	Hershey Foods Corporation	Offers the Hershey Track and Field Programs, a series of local, regional, state and national track and field competitions for children ages 9 to 14.	www.nrpa.org
	Active Options	A free program resource guide to develop fitness programs for older adults.	www.nrpa.org
	Flaghouse, Inc	Offers Catch Recreation, a resource compendium that provides hundreds of youth activities promoting physical activity, including a recreation leader's guide.	1-800-793-7900
	Pool Cool Program	A sun-safety, skin cancer prevention program focusing on informing children about sun-safety practices during swim lesson, utilizing lesson plans and poolside activities.	www.nrpa.org
	U.S. Lacrosse	Offers a loan kit program which provides field sticks and goalie sticks, plus a dozen balls to keep, at no cost for communities interested in starting lacrosse programs.	www.lacrosse.org
	Hooked on Fishing International	Provides a complete kit and guidebook to conduct a fishing derby, with prizes, posters, tote bags, decals and more.	www.fishingworld.com/Kids-Fishing

About the Author

Susan E. Landes, Certified Park and Recreation Executive, has worked for Pennsylvania governments of all sizes. She is presently the Executive Director of the Lancaster Recreation Commission, and previously worked for the Westmoreland County and Chester County Parks and Recreation Departments. She's a Past President of PRPS, serves as a peer consultant for DCNR and operates Recreation and Parks Solutions, a consulting firm that is dedicated exclusively to community recreation, parks and open space consulting. Susan has an undergraduate degree in Recreation and Parks and master's degree in Public Administration, both from Penn State University. Known for her creative approach and expertise in intergovernmental cooperation, recreation programming, revenue development, administrative management and marketing, Susan was the 2001 winner of the prestigious Fred M. Coombs Honor Award, the highest recognition given by PRPS. She created the RecTAP program for PRPS and DCNR and is also the author of *Community Recreation and Parks*, *Financing Municipal Recreation and Parks*, *Hiring Municipal Recreation and Parks Personnel*, *Multi-Municipal Cooperation for Recreation and Parks* and *Municipal Recreation Programming*.

About the Partners

The *Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS)* is the principal state organization promoting recreation and parks training, networking and leadership opportunities for those working and volunteering in the field. Members include professionals who manage municipal recreation and park systems and state parks, citizen members of recreation and parks boards, and therapeutic recreation professionals working in health care settings.

The *Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Bureau of Recreation and Conservation* provides grants and technical assistance to support conservation, recreation and open space projects across the state. The Bureau serves as a leader in establishing community conservation partnerships for advancing the greening of Pennsylvania, protecting the Commonwealth's natural and heritage resources, and providing recreational opportunities for all Pennsylvanians to enjoy.

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Pennsylvania Recreation and
Park Society
2131 Sandy Drive
State College, PA 16803
(814) 234-4272 • Fax (814) 234-5276
www.prps.org



pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

www.dcnr.state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources
Bureau of Recreation and Conservation
Rachel Carson State Office Building
P. O. Box 8475
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8475
(717) 787-7672 • Fax (717) 787-9577
www.dcnr.state.pa.us