

Partnerships at Chicago Park District

Frequently Asked Questions



General Questions

1. Who should I talk to about a potential partnership?

The best place to start when you want to hold an activity in a park is with the Park Supervisor of the location where you want to hold your activity.

ARCS Program

1. Why become an ARCS partner?

ARCS partners and the Chicago Park District develop a mutually beneficial agreement that outlines programs and activities based on a rigorous proposal process. The process assesses the proposed activities and determines to what extent the activities further the Park District's mission. If it is determined that there is significant value of the program to the Park District, ARCS partners are eligible for reduced fees, as outlined in the program guidelines.

2. When should someone complete a Partnership Proposal for ARCS?

If a nonprofit, individual, business, or other agency would like to implement programs or a series of events that align with the Chicago Park District at a park location, they may apply for ARCS. Alternatively, any organization may seek permitted space at a park location for permissible activities at regular rental rates.

3. How long does the ARCS review process take?

Please allow at least 30 days for the review process.

4. What makes a good ARCS program?

A good ARCS program should offer unique activities that the Park District would otherwise not be able to provide with our limited resources. ARCS participants should work closely with park staff to determine the need for the activities at a particular park, and explore capabilities to provide the activities at parks where they are needed. ARCS programs should be revenue generating or cost neutral for the Park District. ARCS participants should adhere to Park District policies and regulations.

5. How often does an organization need to complete an ARCS proposal?

Returning organizations should complete an ARCS proposal annually, except when the organization has a multi-year agreement with the Park District. Every effort should be taken in the proposal process to include any activities for the year in the initial agreement. If activities within a given year change or are added, approved ARCS entities should contact a Development Manager to incorporate the changes into their agreement.

6. Where can I find the Partnership Proposal form?

Go to www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/arcs.

7. How can an ARCS partner make a payment on their partnership?

Fees and payment details will be outlined in the ARCS agreement.

8. How does this program affect Arts Partners in Residence?

Former Arts Partners in Residence should apply for the ARCS program to initiate a renewed agreement with the Park District. The Culture Arts and Nature department will continue to be a resource for these organizations.

Activity Request Forms

1. When should someone complete an Activity Request Form?

When a CPS school, government agency, elected official, or PAC would like to implement programs or hold an event at a park location, they should complete an Activity Request form. Some activities may also require a special event permit be completed. Please note that only events hosted by a CPS school, government agency, elected official, or PAC are eligible. These groups may not request a fee waiver on behalf of a private event organizer.

2. Can a group include more than one event or program on an Activity Request Form?

Yes, we encourage groups who have multiple activities in a park to submit those events on a single Activity Request Form if possible. However, groups may submit additional forms if new activities are planned or added.

3. What does the review process look for to approve Activity Request Forms?

The review process will take into account availability of park space and suitability of activities for the park location, assess risk of planned activities, and determine whether the partner is in good standing with the Park District.

4. Where can I find the Activity Request form?

Go to www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/arcs.

Fee Reductions for One-time Events

1. Why are one-time events not partnerships?

Partnerships imply an ongoing relationship that benefit both parties mutually. One-time events rarely meet that definition.

2. What discounts are available for one-time events?

Nonprofit organizations are eligible for discounts based on their budget size. Consult with the Revenue Department for more details on these discounts. If these discounts are not sufficient, developing a robust partnership that incorporates the event and meets the guidelines of ARCS can be discussed.

3. What if I am a partner in a CPD-led event?

If you would like to work with a park on an event led by that park, you may be considered a volunteer, vendor, sponsor, or co-host of an event. Depending on the situation, you may need to complete the volunteer process, a PSA, and/or some other type of contract. New Business Development can help you navigate the process.