

TIPS TO HELP YOUR PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL FIND SPONSORS FOR YOUR EVENTS, PROGRAMS OR PROJECTS



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Identify The Need



- Identify the Event Program or Project to ask for support from potential sponsors.
- Determine if what you need is Funding, Material Support, Media Exposure or Volunteers.

Asking for money so your organization can have a positive bank balance is not a good idea. Sponsors will be more likely to support a **specific** event, program or project instead of just handing over money to your park council or other groups.

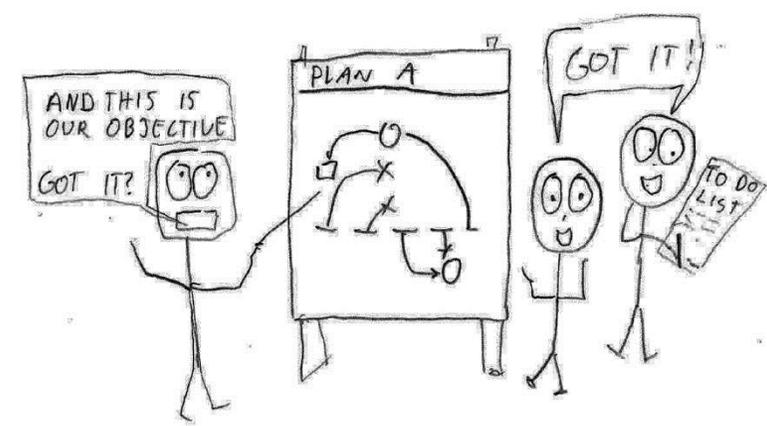
Sponsors can supply funding, which is typically the easiest thing to contribute, but they can also help with media / event promotion, supplies or volunteers.

Identify Your Potential Sponsors



- Business, Churches, Political Organizations, Unions, Schools, Parent Teacher Associations, Neighborhood Associations, Elected Officials, and Individuals can all be the sponsors you need to get your event, project or program off the ground.
- Every area of the city has potential sponsors, even economically challenged neighborhoods have people who work for business who can be your next sponsor.
- Know your community demographics when seeking corporate sponsors, or sponsors from outside of the community. Corporations often target their charity towards neighborhoods with the greatest need.
- Look for sponsors who compliment the event, project or program.
- Avoid conflicts such as inviting similar business to be sponsors for a specific event, program or project unless the event is specifically designed to feature a variety of similar business such as a food festival.

Make A Plan To Ask For Sponsors



- Decide what project or event are you seeking support for.

Think about what specific events programs or project are a good match for the sponsor. If you want a sponsor to supply refreshments for a teen sobriety program you might not want to ask the local bars to be a sponsor for such a program.

- Determine how much to ask from each sponsor.

Our experience has shown that asking for 2-3 set amounts of money is easier on business and organization leaders who have to make dozens of decisions each day or even hour. Limiting how much you ask for to a choice of 2-3 dollar amounts should make the process easier and faster for you and your potential sponsors. For example, for the movie and picnic event our PAC did we sought sponsors at two levels Sponsor at \$50 minimum or Presenting sponsor at \$250 or above. By setting the dollar amount you are likely to get more responses faster than asking for an unspecified amount of money.

- Set the timeline.

Have a set time you need to hear back from a potential sponsor, our PAC sets a deadline to hear back at least 4 weeks ahead of the event.

- Figure out who will be asking for sponsorship.

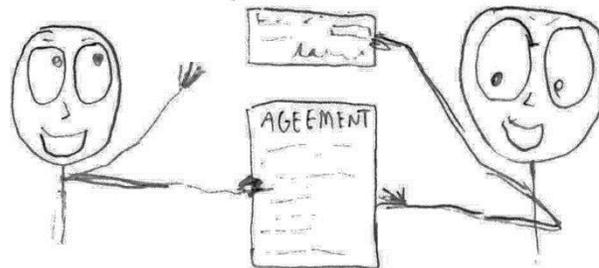
The best person to make the ask is someone who is known to your potential sponsor. For a business have a member of your PAC who is a **known customer or client** make the initial ask. For an organization have it be someone who has a direct connection to that group.

What To Do When You Land A Sponsor

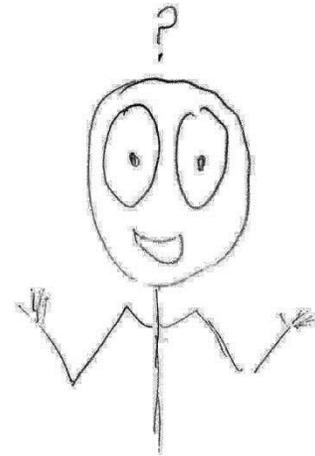
- When you make the initial ask you should spell out in a note or email what the sponsorship levels entail. Once you get a sponsor you need to draft a sponsorship agreement.

A sponsorship agreement should include the following:

1. The timeline that the sponsor and the PAC have to complete specific steps.
2. How the name and logo of the sponsor will be used and presented.
3. How the sponsor may participate in the event, such as having a booth or being able to speak at the event about their business.
4. How the PAC will report back to the sponsor after the event.



Questions:



Frequently asked Questions:

1. Are companies like ComEd good sponsors?

Yes, if you meet their criteria and what you are requesting works with your PACs vision, goals and your community. Be aware of their deadlines most corporations do one cycle of giving per year. Also the charitable arm of the corporation might be on a different website and be an independent entity from the corporation.

2. How can we be more successful with the increasing number of businesses that are part of a chain and do not have control over decisions about funding or donating to the community? We are losing Mom and Pop!

Ask the store manager to sponsor an event in your park. If it's a grocery store like Jewel and you are a 501c3 and have a donation form they will give you a \$25.00 gift card. That may be small but it buys a LOT of hot dogs, cookies & other treats for your events. You can also be suave and ask every other month & save them up for a bigger event. Most store managers, for corporate brands, are given a quarterly budget for donations of merchandise, just ask, and mention who the event or program benefits and it can be as easy as that.

3. How could you see this tailored to small playgrounds vs large parks?

Smaller playgrounds can also have great small events, at Buena Circle Park when I started having events there with my team we had concerts & movies. We had piñatas for children before the band. Themed snacks during a Star Wars movie we passed out Star Wars Pop chips, often the CAPPS team in your district has items to pass out as well. You could even as the librarian for a reader to come to the park and read a great story out loud. We have also had a great puppet show in the park. Also consider asking for sponsor for specific projects such as benches, flowers or a nature play areas can be excellent opportunities for a sponsor

Frequently asked Questions:

4. How do I get a sponsor?

I personally believe EVERYONE I meet is a sponsor they just don't know it yet!

5. How do you gain adequate sponsorship, locally, if your park is located in a neighborhood where the median income is either near, at, or below the poverty level?

Reach out to the biggest businesses near your park, Jewel, even small businesses can donate \$50.00 if you get 6 businesses to donate \$50.00 you now have \$300.00. Are their family owned companies be it a plumber, landscaping company, hospital, church? Ask your PAC team to ask if the companies they work for sponsor events you'd be surprised if a good employee wants something to help their community how many people will say yes!

6. How to avoid asking the same sponsor to support more than once a year. Which event should a sponsor support? Sponsors have busy work schedules, how can we get them to come to our events?

There is nothing wrong with having the same sponsors every year! If the sponsor agrees go for it! You can ask your sponsor what event lines up with what they feel is the best fit for them ask them to encourage their staff to participate. Invite them to a meeting where you have 3-6 events mapped & planned out ask them which of these events would you and your company like to enjoy with the community.

Frequently asked Questions:

7. How to gain a relationship in order to obtain a sponsor?

When you go to businesses you shop at or services you use yourself that is a relationship. Get to know them as your neighbor and as a fellow human being...that's how all relationships are built!

I take my dog to a pet shop to get groomed. I asked the store manager if they would like to sponsor a "Yappy Hour" at our dog park. Set up a table, bring some treats, coupons, information on their services and a groomer. They were so excited he said yes on the spot.

8. How to maintain sponsorship partnerships?

When you go to businesses you shop at or services you use yourself that is a relationship. Get to know them as your neighbor and as a fellow human being...that's how all relationships are built! Follow up and report back, take lots of pictures and always send a thank you note.

9. Proper procedure to be successful to gain trust or gain a sponsor for our PAC?

Get to know them as people, know the managers, staff & be a patron of the goods & services they offer! Sponsorships are built on relationships!

Frequently asked Questions:

10. What is the best way to get a sponsor?

I personally believe EVERYONE I meet is a sponsor they just don't know it yet! When you go to businesses you shop at or services you use yourself that is a relationship. Get to know them as your neighbor and as a fellow human being...that's how all relationships are built! Sponsorships are built on relationships!

11. What are the messages that resonate with businesses that move them to commit to sponsorship?

You are introducing their businesses with others who may not know what they sell or offer! We did a wine walk last year with the chamber of commerce there were people who had NEVER been in some of these businesses despite living in the neighborhood for YEARS! They were amazed and the businesses that participated saw a higher rate of new customers.

12. What can the sponsor get out sponsoring an event?

You are introducing their businesses with others who may not know what they sell or offer! They also get to look like Rock Stars if your event is well organized, fun & you thank the sponsors out loud BEFORE, DURING & AFTER the event. If you have a band and they take a break you can then use the microphone to thank the sponsors and talk about the goods & services they sell or offer. Again this is a win - win situation with the sponsor being introduced to customers they may not have had before!

Frequently asked Questions:

13. What is the best approach for big sponsorship, and how far in advance should you send your request?

Talk to the manager if there is one ask their companies policy, look the company up on Google and see what sponsorships, donations or support they offer notice the deadlines. I would suggest researching now for what's available in 2020 as many large companies donate on a yearly, quarterly or monthly basis it all depends on how that company's policies are. Be prepared to ask multiple times over several months or years. For smaller locally owned businesses it is best to ask 2-4 months ahead of the event or when you need the resources from your sponsor. Volunteers take a much longer time to organize and should be asked for at least 4 months in advance.

14. What kind of fundraising modes have been most powerful for PAC? Maybe fliers, campaigns, email, door to door knocking etc. would it be a good idea to add a named brick program to our park?

The best bet is to ask for a specific event project or program that will use the resources immediately. Outreach strategies can be used to fundraise but for sponsors it is best to ask for support for a specific things and not to just have money in the bank. The named Brick thing is a type of acknowledgement, usually this is part of a specific project such as a major landscape renovation or a building. This type of acknowledgement works best for a permanent improvement as long as the paved path or plaza is part of that improvement. It is also possible to put a placard on benches, light poles, trees and other items the donors helped support. The park district has specific rules regarding this practice, please consult with your park supervisor for more details.

15. When is the best time of the year to request and obtain sponsorship?

Every single day!

Talk to the manager if there is one ask their companies policy, look the company up on Google and see what sponsorships, donations or support they offer notice the deadlines. I would suggest researching now for what's available in 2020 as many large companies donate on a yearly, quarterly or monthly basis it all depends on how that company's policies are.

Frequently asked Questions:

16. Which types of businesses are likely to sponsor events not related to their business - to generate general Goodwill, etcetera?

Almost any business can be a sponsor, you won't know until you ask. Ask them what sort of event they would like to sponsor a movie, band or what other events programs or projects you have planned. New or expanding business would be a good place to focus as sponsorship can be part of their media and outreach strategy, especially if they are new to the neighborhood sponsorship can and should be pitched as a way to introduce their business to new people and potential customers or clients. Also look beyond retail, restaurants and bars, some of our most generous donors were small firms such as lawyers, doctors, insurance agencies and realtors.

17. Who and what is the ideal Sponsor for a PAC?

It all depends on your community and your PAC. Does the sponsor share your vision, goals, and is in your area.