

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. You may also reach out to Development Managers in New Business Development, who support Park Supervisors and other program managers to develop and manage partnerships.

ARCS Program

1. Why become an ARCS member?

ARCS members 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 merits of the proposed activities for the Park District 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 members are eligible for reduced ARCS fees, 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 in the rare circumstance in which 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?

When an ARCS partnership is developed, fees will be outlined in an agreement. Once the agreement is executed, an ActiveNet account will be set up and invoices will be sent. Partners can pay by credit card online or by check made out to Chicago Park District.

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

ARCS is separate from Arts Partners in Residence. However, arts and culture ARCS applications will be reviewed by the CAN department.

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.

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.