



Sponsorship Guideline

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Marketing is responsible for developing and managing corporate partnerships, advertising, promotions and sponsorship opportunities. Marketing works with corporations, brands and businesses to provide financial support for events, programs and facilities to increase non-tax revenue and enhance program offerings. The goal is to create long-lasting, mutually beneficial relationships over multiple years.

Sponsorships vs. Donations

There is an important difference between a sponsorship and a donation. In general, a sponsorship is cash, products, or services offered by a sponsor with the clear expectation that an obligation is created. The Park District will be obliged to return something of value to the sponsor. The value is typically public recognition and publicity or advertising highlighting the contribution of the sponsor and/or the sponsor's name, logo, message, products or services. The sponsor usually has clear marketing objectives that it is trying to achieve, including but not limited to the ability to drive sales directly based on the sponsorship and, quite often, the right to be the exclusive sponsor in a specific category of sales. A letter of agreement or contractual arrangement that details the particulars of the exchange typically consummates the arrangement.

In contrast, a donation comes with no restrictions on how the money or in-kind resources are used. Because donations or gifts are given without restrictions or expected benefits for the donor, a policy is generally not needed. The Park District reserves the right to refuse any donation, whether because of restrictions or expectations related to it or for other sound reasons.

This guideline specifically addresses sponsorships, the terms of sponsorship agreements, and the benefits provided to the Park District in return for the resources provided by the sponsors.

Guidelines for Acceptable Sponsorships

Sponsors should be businesses, non-profit groups, or individuals that promote mutually beneficial relationships for the Park District. All potentially sponsored properties (facilities, events or programs) should be reviewed in terms of creating synergistic working relationships with regards to benefits, community contributions, knowledge, and political sensitivity. All sponsored properties should promote the Park District's Mission, Vision and Values.

The first major criterion for the Park District when determining whether to accept a sponsorship is the appropriate relationship of a sponsorship to the Park District's Mission, Vision and Values outlined above. That determination of appropriateness is based in large part on objective analysis, but ultimately is vested in the sound exercise of the Park District's discretion, considering all of the many factors that may be involved. The following questions are the major guiding components of this policy and will be addressed prior to soliciting potential sponsors:

- Is the sponsorship related to the purpose of the facility or programs and does it help promote the Park District's Mission, Vision and Values?

- Will the sponsorship help generate more revenue and/or less cost per participant than the Park District can provide without it?
- What are the real costs, including staff time, to the Park District in accepting the sponsorship and the cash, products and services resources that come with the sponsorship?

Some potential sponsorships are inappropriate and will not be considered by the Park District. A partial list of categories of such sponsorships includes:

- Sponsorships that involve or promote environmental, work, or other practices that violate or threaten international, federal, State or local law or that promote or encourage drugs, pornography, alcohol, tobacco or firearms.
- Sponsorships that duplicate, mimic, or create confusion regarding the nature or identity of any program of the Park District. Sponsorships that may exploit participants or staff members of the Park District.
- Sponsorship that offer benefits or opportunities that may violate laws or Park District policies.

Sponsorship Plan and Approval Levels

Each project or program that involves solicitation or acceptance of sponsors must have a Sponsorship Plan developed by Marketing Manager with staff input prior to any such solicitation that is specific to a project or program and that is consistent with the terms and sponsorship levels of this Sponsorship Guideline. The Sponsorship Plan must be approved by Marketing. In addition, each sponsorship will need separate approval if it exceeds pre-specified limits. The approval levels are outlined below:

- **Under \$5,000:** The program or project staff may solicit this level of sponsorship, with review and approval by the Marketing Manager.
- **\$5,001 to \$10,000:** This level of sponsorship requires approval of Marketing, with review by the Executive Director.
- **Over \$10,000:** This level of sponsorship requires approval of the Executive Director.

Sponsorship Gift Card Procedures

When the Park District receives a store gift card to use for supplies for projects or programs certain steps must be taken for use of such gift card outlined below:

- Gift cards will be stored in the Marketing office and can be used for any District project or program upon request.
- Gift cards will be signed out using Marketing sign-in/out sheet.

- Copies of receipts of items that were purchased with PPD gift cards will be turned into Marketing so purchases may be tracked for auditing purposes.
- All gift cards will be returned to Marketing after use
- If possible, zero balanced cards shall be returned to Marketing.