



CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

Park Advisory Council Code of Conduct

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I. Introduction

Park Advisory Councils (“PAC”) provide an impactful and valuable community voice for neighborhood parks, playgrounds, beaches, and natural areas. These voluntary groups of individuals donate their time and energy to support the effective functioning of local parks in all 77 of Chicago’s community areas.

PACs are important and valued partners of the Chicago Park District (“Park District”). The Park District recognizes that PACs make a measurable difference in their parks through cultivating donations, fundraising, hosting special events, and providing a valuable voice to each park’s community. Over the last decade, PACs have raised more than one million dollars for park improvements, events, and supplies.

The Park District is committed to building on these strong relationships and continuing to collaborate with PACs to strengthen our parks for all Chicagoans.

II. Purpose and Overview

This Park Advisory Council Code of Conduct (the “Code”) was developed to set expectations for appropriate behavior for all PAC Members, officers, and guests. In addition to the expectations set forth in this Code, PAC Members, officers, and guests are expected to follow the Chicago Park District’s Facilities Users Code of Conduct.

III. Scope

This Code applies to all PACs and their Members. PACs and their Members are expected to uphold these standards while participating in PAC events.

If a PAC Member violates this Code, the following guidelines shall be followed. The Park District reserves the right to forgo any or all of these steps for behaviors that create a direct threat of safety to oneself, Park District Employees, Patrons, volunteers, or other individuals on Park District property. Each incident will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the PAC Governance Committee, the Department of Legislative and Community Affairs, and any other member of Park District leadership as necessary.

Additional rules may be developed as deemed necessary by the Park District.

IV. Definitions

Park District Employee: Individuals who are employed by the Park District, whether part-time, full-time, or seasonal.

Harassment: Any unwelcome conduct, including verbal, nonverbal, visual, or physical conduct, that is based on an individual’s actual or perceived membership in a Protected Category or their association with a person in a Protected Category when that offensive conduct is

persistent, pervasive or severe and has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or recreation environment or unreasonably interferes with, limits, or denies an individual's full and equal enjoyment of the Park District's programs, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations or employment access, benefits, and opportunities. In this Code of Conduct, harassment covers Employees, applicants for employment, Board members, officers, officials, contractors, consultants, vendors, Volunteers, coaches, participants, and Patrons.

PAC: Park Advisory Council

PAC Member: A person who belongs to a Park Advisory Council (PAC). A PAC Member includes officers of the PAC.

Park District: The Chicago Park District

Patron: Individuals who are participating in Park District sponsored program, activities, or events either in-person, or online.

Protected Categories: Means an individual's actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, genetic information, unfavorable discharge from military service, sexual orientation, pregnancy, parental status, source of income, or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law, regulation, or ordinance, including the Park District's Human Rights Ordinance as set forth in Chapter 4 of the Chicago Park District Code.

V. General Guidelines

- PACs are separate and independent entities from the Park District.
- Members of PACs are not Park District Employees.
- Membership in a PAC is voluntary.
- The PACs' role is to provide recommendations and suggestions to the Park District regarding its respective parks. However, PACs shall not mandate Park District activities, programs or policies.
- PACs have no authority or power related to the Park District, the City of Chicago, or the State of Illinois.
- The Park District reserves all authority to make policy and administrative decisions.
- The Park District retains all authority to set fee structures for Park District rentals and programming.
- The Park District retains all authority to establish operating procedures for its facilities.
- The Park District shall not provide funding of any kind to a PAC.
- The Park District shall not hold funds for a PAC.
- The Park District accepts no responsibility for the actions of a PAC or of PAC Members.

VI. Code of Conduct

- A. The objective of the PAC is to serve the best interests of its respective park and surrounding community by providing recommendations and suggestions to the Park District.
- B. PAC Members are not allowed to perform Park District Employee functions, such as registering Patrons for programs or activities, scheduling room rentals, or assigning permits.
- C. PACs and PAC Members shall not enter into or attempt to enter into any agreements to bind the Park District, including but not limited to contracts, purchases, licenses, registrations or permits.
- D. PAC Members shall not speak on behalf of the Park District.
- E. PAC Members shall not use their position to influence any Park District processes, including but not limited to, space rentals, registrations, discounts, and general Park District policies.
- F. PAC Members shall not receive, deposit, or handle any Park District funds.
- G. All PACs, regardless of whether they have a fiscal sponsor, shall register and maintain status as a Not-For-Profit organization in Illinois by filling the appropriate form with the Illinois Secretary of State's Office.
- H. With prior approval from the Park District, PACs in good standing can raise funds on the Park District's behalf for park improvements and programs.
 - 1. All PACs engaging in fundraising must have either (a) a fiscal partner, such as the Chicago Parks Foundation, or (b) their own 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
 - 2. In accordance with the Illinois Solicitation for Charity Act, ([225 ILCS 460](#)), PACs that intend to solicit and receive more than \$15,000 for charitable purposes during any 12-month period ending December 31 in Illinois shall register with the Illinois Attorney General's Office as a charitable organization prior to any solicitation of funds.
 - 3. PACs shall provide the Park District an annual report of fundraising activity, including the PAC's most recent bank statement, and notify the Park District any time the PAC moves its fundraising account to a different financial institution or fiscal agent. Failure to do so will impact the PAC's good standing with the Park District.
- I. In the event a PAC is suspended or disbanded, the PAC's permission to raise or spend funds shall be suspended immediately. The PAC's fiscal agent shall be notified by the Department of Legislative and Community Affairs in order to safeguard the funds until the suspension is lifted or a new PAC is created.
- J. Any PAC Members who are suspended, banned, or otherwise not in good standing, as listed in the PAC Guidelines, are not eligible to attend PAC meetings (whether they are in person or virtual), participate in any PAC activities, speak on behalf of the PAC, or handle

any PAC funds.

- K. PAC Members shall respect Park District property and shall not use, remove, or transport Park District property for their personal use.
- L. No PAC Members shall possess keys to any Park District facility or property.
- M. PAC Members shall not use, remove, or duplicate without PAC leadership authorization, any Park Advisory Council records, documents, or other confidential information such as sign in sheets, membership applications, or personal information.
- N. For all PAC events, an Activity Request Form must be submitted to the Park Supervisor. All activity requests must be approved by the Park Supervisor and Area Manager prior to the event taking place.
- O. PACs shall also obtain permits for all activities (as defined by the Department of Revenue) that it sponsors on Park District property. A city permit is not sufficient to conduct fundraisers, garage sales, or other functions on Park District property.
- P. PACs shall receive permission from the park's Park Supervisor prior to displaying banners or other materials on Park District property that promote PAC meetings or PAC-sponsored events.
- Q. All PAC officers shall complete the Volunteer Application and submit to a Park District-approved background check within 30 days of being elected.
- R. All PAC Members who handle funds on behalf of the PAC or who interact with children as a part of their role in the PAC shall complete and submit a Volunteer Application to the Park District and complete a Park District-approved background check prior to volunteering.
- S. PAC Members shall treat fellow PAC Members and Park District Employees with respect and fairness. This includes treating others with respect in regard to race, culture, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, marital and parental status, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, education, language or veteran status.
- T. PAC Members shall respect differences between private convictions and responsibilities as an officer and member of the PAC. PAC Members shall ensure the interests of the park take precedence over private interests.
- U. PAC Members must comply with reasonable requests related to PAC functions made by any Park District Employee.
- V. PAC Members shall fully cooperate with the Park District, including the Park District's Office of Inspector General and with the Office of Prevention and Accountability, regarding investigations into PAC waste, fraud, or abuse.
- W. PAC Members must abide by the terms of the Park District PAC Guidelines, their individual PAC's By-laws, and this Code or risk being removed from the PAC by the Department of Legislative and Community Affairs.
- X. PAC Members shall report any illegal activity to the Chicago Police Department and the

Park District.

- Y. PAC Members shall report any activities violating this Code to the Park Supervisor and Area Manager.

VII. Reporting

Any person, including other PAC Members and Park District Employees, may file a complaint against a PAC Member for violation of the PAC Code of Conduct.

VIII. Procedures

- A. Within 48 hours of becoming aware of the violation, the Park Supervisor shall generate an incident report noting the improper conduct and provide a copy to their Area Manager and the Department of Legislative and Community Affairs by emailing PACcomplaint@chicagoparkdistrict.com. The Department of Legislative and Community Affairs will share the incident report with the PAC Governance Committee. The incident report should contain a brief written statement of the facts relating to the violation.
- B. The Department of Legislative and Community Affairs may immediately suspend the involved party from PAC Membership (1) pending the review and final recommendation from the PAC Governance Committee; (2) when the Department of Legislative and Community Affairs believes that the presence of the PAC Member could seriously disrupt the public or constitute a danger to the health, safety, or welfare of the public; (3) when the complaint involves the misuse of funds or financial improprieties; or if (4) the PAC or the Park District may be at risk of immediate loss of funds without urgent intervention.
 - 1. When a PAC Member is suspended pending review of the PAC Governance Committee, the PAC Member will be notified by the Department of Legislative and Community Affairs by phone, email, and a mailed letter.
 - 2. The Department of Legislative and Community Affairs will also notify relevant Park District Employees, Park District security, and the PAC Board to which the PAC Member belongs leaders of the suspension.
- C. Within 10 business days, or as soon as practicable, of receiving the incident report, the PAC Governance Committee shall determine whether the conduct violates the PAC Code of Conduct and issue its recommended consequence.
 - 1. The PAC Governance Committee shall give the involved person an opportunity to present their personal version of the incident or occurrence before recommending a consequence.
 - 2. If the PAC Governance Committee determines that the conduct violates this Code, it shall recommend the appropriate action based on the guidelines listed within this Code.
 - 3. The PAC Governance Committee shall report its recommendation to

Department of Legislative and Community Affairs within two (2) business days of its recommendation.

- D. After the PAC Governance Committee reports its recommendation, the Department of Legislative and Community Affairs shall (1) accept or modify the recommendation of the PAC Governance Committee, (2) draft a final resolution describing the consequence, if any, and (3) provide a copy of the resolution to the involved person via email and mailed letter. Resolutions shall be deemed final. The Department of Legislative and Community Affairs shall inform the Park Supervisor and Area Manager of the outcome and final resolution.

IX. Violations of this Code and Consequences

A. General Guidelines

The response to Code violations should be fair and consistent. Each incident will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

B. Violations

Alleged infractions shall be grouped in one of two categories: Category I Violations or Category II Violations. The assigned Category will guide the PAC Governance Committee's recommendations. The categories of offenses are listed below and are not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, they are provided to reflect the intent of this Code of Conduct.

Category I Violations.

Category I violations include, but are not limited to:

- Disorderly conduct violations, which include:
 - Disorderly conduct (engaging in violent, abusive, indecent, profane, boisterous, unreasonably loud or otherwise disorderly conduct under circumstances in which the conduct tends to cause or provoke a disturbance)
 - Discrimination
 - Intimidating behavior, including bullying and making threats
 - Physical, sexual, or verbal Harassment
- Failure to abide by PAC guidelines, PAC By-laws, this Code, or the Facilities Users Code of Conduct
- Failure to comply with the reasonable request of any Park District Employee
- Failure to obtain appropriate permits and approvals for special events and programs

- Unintentional destruction of property
- Using PAC position for personal gain or interest

Category II Violations.

Category II violations include violations of the law, including but not limited to:

- Engaging in fraudulent or unauthorized practices, including:
 - Forgery or fraud
 - Misappropriation of PAC funds
 - Misuse, duplication or alteration of any PAC records, documents, other confidential or personal information
 - Attempts to enter into any authority to bind the Park District including, but not limited to, contracts, agreements, purchases, licenses, registrations and permits.
- Misuse of any Park District facility, program area or equipment, including:
 - Unauthorized entry to Park District facilities
 - Use of Park District property for personal gain
 - Theft
- Other violations of the law

C. Consequences

1. **Category I Consequences.** Category I Consequences may include one or more of the following:
 - a. **Administrative Meeting.** At the discretion of the Department of Legislative and Community Affairs, the involved Person may be required to attend an administrative meeting with the Department of Legislative and Community Affairs to discuss the incident and whether additional consequences are required. The meeting is designed to be educational in nature, informing PAC Member of alleged wrongdoing and to explain the potential consequences for further violations.
 - b. **Removal from PAC.** PAC Members may be removed from the Park Advisory Council.
 - c. **PAC Suspension.** The PAC may lose recognition by the Park District. If this occurs, the PAC's fiscal agent shall be notified by the Department of Legislative and Community Affairs in order to safeguard the funds until the suspension is lifted or a new PAC is created.
 - d. **Order of Protection.** The Park District may seek an Order of

Protection barring the involved person from participation in Park District programming or being on Park District property for a judicially determined period of time.

- e. **Referral to the Park District Office of the Inspector General or Office of Prevention and Accountability.**

2. **Category II Consequences.**

Category II consequences may include one or more of the following:

- a. **Any Category I consequence.**
- b. **Police Report.** A police report may be filed by Park District Supervisors or their superiors for Category II offenses.
- c. **Immediate Suspension of PAC Member.** The alleged offending person may be immediately suspended from participating in PAC activities, PAC meetings, and Park District programming pending the recommendation by the PAC Governance Committee. The PAC Committee will provide a recommended suspension length.