

Park Pride Grants + FoP Broad & Inclusive Community Engagement



A park is a public asset that has the power to improve and enrich the health and quality of life of those in your community. As your Friends of the Park (FoP) group takes steps towards improving your park, it is important that you ensure that the activities and projects being implemented and visualized in your neighborhood are reflective of the needs and interests of the various demographics in the area. Below you will find a number of best practices and things to remember as you engage your surrounding community to ensure the inclusion of all interested voices and proper feedback.



Engage Through Multiple Different Channels

Reach and encourage participation from community members of all ages and backgrounds using online surveys, social media, community events, and more traditional media outlets such as flyers, door-to-door canvassing, call blast and mailing lists.

Utilize Inclusive and Open Outreach Methods

Consider implementing specific outreach methods to target demographic groups in your local community that are not currently represented in your group. It is important to think about your audience when strategizing your approaches.

Examples:

- Hosting cultural events
- Offering different types of recreational activities and amenities at events
- Engaging through interest clubs and organizations

Anywhere and Everywhere

The more your community sees your group and its impact, the more likely participation will be. Try to ensure that there is a representative of your group at most community events, but evenly divide the responsibilities and participation within your group to prevent burnout. This applies to outreach and engagement as well.

Form Bonds with Community Organizations

Collaborating with local community organizations trusted by underrepresented community members and those interested in park improvement can be effective at engaging target groups. Doing so can increase the collective impact of your group and your partners to facilitate a common goal.

Examples:

- Co-hosting events
- Leveraging existing relationships to reach a wider audience.
- Sharing resources
- Increasing awareness of group in neighborhood and civic associations

Facilitate Knowledge Transfer

To promote inclusiveness in your community engagement processes, consider opening an accessible and relevant communication channel for information sharing between community leaders, residents and possibly partner organizations. For example, a shared Facebook group page.



Empower Your Park and People

Invite community members to have a part in the parks' planning processes often and remind them of their capability to shape their park!

- Encourage and acknowledge their skills and interests.
- Increase overall confidence within your group by providing education and support, even if its an external resource.

In addition, be sure to highlight your "why" of your efforts often. Ensure that the community can clearly understand and resonate with the benefits of your efforts. See [Park Pride's philosophy](#) for guidance!



Prioritize Quality Over Quantity

While it's typical to aim for a high response rate, it's equally important to ensure that participants don't feel like they're being used as a means to an end. Genuine engagement requires a sincere commitment to listening to and valuing the perspectives of community members. Prioritize valuing people as individuals first, then empower their voices from that foundation. In the end, you may gain a new group member or friend.

Examples:

- Consistently communicating with community members
- Being responsive to their feedback
- Actively participating in community events
- Simply taking the time to get to know each other on a personal level.

Have Fun Together!

Create engaging community experiences that bring joy and relaxation to the forefront to get people in their parks! These events may also serve as opportunities to elicit diverse participation in your group as well. Overreliance on formal meetings and surveys can make your group less appealing to community members, potentially diminishing sustained involvement over time.

Examples:

- Movie nights
- Yoga sessions
- Nature walks
- + Much more!



Thank Everyone!

Send thank-you letters, recognize supporters at public events and give certificates of appreciation.

Other Important Considerations

- Be mindful of non-English speaking communities in your local area! It may be useful to offer bilingual resources tailored to the needs of the surrounding demographic.
- Consider creating a recovery plan for conflict and negative interactions.
- Utilize as many resources that are in your reach! This can help to prevent burnout and fill gaps in knowledge and support as needed.
- Consider offering differing levels of commitment. An example of this would be creating virtual leadership opportunities or using quick informal conversations for survey feedback.

Questions? Reach out to:

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