

# 2022 NRPA

## AGENCY PERFORMANCE REVIEW



NATIONAL RECREATION  
AND PARK ASSOCIATION



People pose with painted wings in Doral, Florida.



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### Cover image:

Youth play Futsal at Judkins Park. Photo courtesy of TIA  
International Photography/Seattle Parks and Recreation

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Two years into the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, one thing is clear: parks and recreation is essential. Each year, 260 million people across the United States visited a park, trail, recreation center or other park and recreation amenity at least once. This was thanks to the efforts of more than 165,000 full-time park and recreation staff and the hundreds of thousands of part-time staff, seasonal workers and volunteers across the country working tirelessly to ensure every person in every community benefits from the programs and facilities that parks and recreation offers. Indeed, these dedicated people at the more than 10,000 local park and recreation agencies support services and facilities that offer rewarding recreation opportunities, deliver vital emergency services, and promote better physical and mental health.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) provides park and recreation professionals across the United States with the most up-to-date data that inform current and future decisions and equip leaders with insights that help them make the case to key stakeholders and elected officials for greater, more sustainable funding. The *2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review* summarizes the key findings from NRPA Park Metrics — the benchmarking resource that assists park and recreation professionals in the effective management and planning of their operating resources and capital facilities. Taken together, the *2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review* and NRPA Park Metrics feature the most comprehensive collection of park and recreation-related benchmarks and insights that apprise professionals, key stakeholders and the public about the state of the park and recreation industry.

**Data is a powerful tool, but does not, by itself, provide final answers to the question of what is best for your individual park and recreation agency.** The *2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review* and NRPA Park Metrics help inform conversations with internal colleagues, external consultants, partners and policymakers about the role of parks and recreation in your community. The combination of insights from this report, along with information about your community's specific needs and experiences, will help you craft the optimal mix of facilities and programming your agency should deliver.

**The 2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review does not present park and recreation “standards,” nor do the benchmarks represent any standards against which every individual park and recreation agency should measure itself.** The reason for this is simple: there is not one single set of standards for parks and recreation because different agencies serve different communities that have unique needs, desires and challenges. For instance, if your agency has more workers per 10,000 residents relative to the “typical” agency, it does not necessarily mean you should shed staff to meet that benchmark. An agency with a

larger staff may offer more hands-on programming because of the unique needs of the population it serves. Communities differ; so too should the amenities and offerings of their park and recreation agencies. Agencies also have diverse funding mechanisms, drawing from sources such as general tax funding, dedicated taxes, generated income and grants.

Truly successful agencies tailor their offerings to meet the needs and demands of all members of their communities. It is essential that park and recreation professionals know the characteristics of the residents who use their agencies' resources — including age, race and income trends — as well as the types of programming, facilities and amenities they seek from their local parks. It also is vital to recognize the characteristics of those who may use those resources in the future when shaping the optimal mix of facilities and services your agency will offer going forward.

Park and recreation professionals should use the *2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review* with other resources, including those that may be proprietary to their specific agency, those from NRPA and others from external sources. This report also provides a list of additional NRPA resources.

## HOW TO USE THE 2022 NRPA AGENCY PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND NRPA PARK METRICS

The first step is to look at the available data. Most of the data presented in the *2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review* feature medians and data responses at the lower quartile (lowest 25 percent) and upper quartile (highest 25 percent). The data allow for insights into where your agency stands compared to “typical” agencies (i.e., those at the median values), as well as the full spectrum of agencies at both the high and low quartiles. Many metrics include the top-line figures and certain cross-tabulations by jurisdiction population or population density. More comprehensive cross-tabulations are available as interactive tables at [nrpa.org/Metrics](https://nrpa.org/Metrics).

The next step is to build a customized benchmark report based on your preferred peer group. Go into NRPA Park Metrics to filter the data by agency type, size and geographic region. You can enhance this experience even further by entering your agency's data into NRPA Park Metrics, after which you can generate reports that compare your agency's data with the key metrics of agencies throughout the United States.

The *2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review* presents data from more than 1,000 unique park and recreation agencies across the United States as reported between 2019 and 2021.

**Note:** Not all agencies answered every survey question.

# 2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review Key Findings



Residents per  
Basketball  
Court:

**7,403**

Full-Time Equivalent Employees  
(FTEs) per 10,000 Residents:

**8.9**

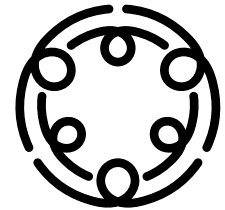


Operating Expenditures  
per Capita:

**\$93.01/year**

Acres of Parkland  
per 1,000 Residents: **10.4**

**80%**



Agencies with a commitment to  
diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)  
in their foundational documents

Residents per Park:

**2,323**



Revenue to Operating  
Expenditures:

**23.6%**



# INDEX OF FIGURES

The 2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review highlights characteristics of America’s local public park agencies with graphics categorized into seven sections: park facilities, programming, responsibilities of park and recreation agencies, staffing, budget, agency funding and policies.

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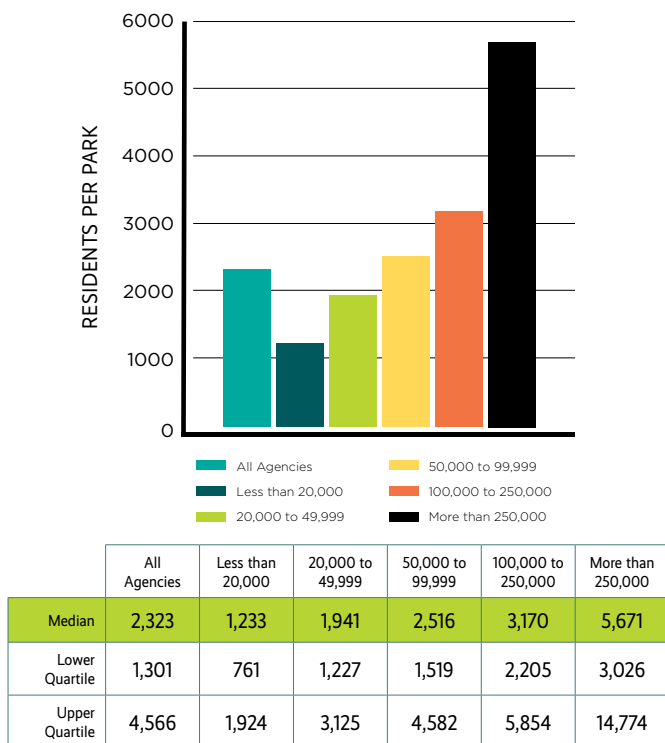
# PARK FACILITIES

It is a well-worn adage: *all politics is local*. The same can be said for parks and recreation. Local and regional park and recreation agencies differ significantly in size and the types of facilities they offer. The typical agency participating in NRPA Park Metrics serves a jurisdiction — a town, city, county and/or region — of 44,106 people. Other agencies serve an area comprising a few thousand people, while still others are the park and recreation resource for millions.

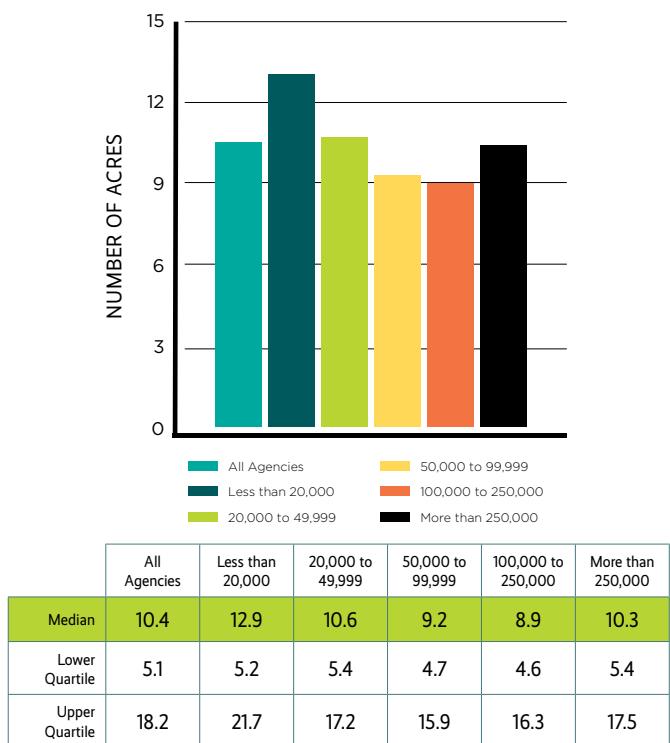
The typical park and recreation agency manages 21 parks comprising 496 acres. After adding in non-park sites (including open spaces that an agency may manage, such as city hall lawns or roadway medians), the median number increases to 29 sites encompassing 635 acres.

The typical agency has one park for every 2,323 residents. The number of people per park rises as the population of the town, city, county or region served by an agency increases. For those agencies serving jurisdictions of less than 20,000 residents, there is one park for every 1,233 residents. The ratio increases to one park for every 2,516 residents in jurisdictions with populations between 50,000 and 99,999 and rises further to one park for every 5,671 people at agencies serving areas with a population of more than 250,000.

**FIGURE 1: RESIDENTS PER PARK (BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**



**FIGURE 2: ACRES OF PARKLAND PER 1,000 RESIDENTS (BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**



The typical park and recreation agency manages 10.4 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents in its jurisdiction. The smallest agencies — those serving less than 20,000 residents — typically have 12.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. That ratio narrows to 10.3 acres per 1,000 residents for agencies that serve a population of more than 250,000 people. Agencies serving jurisdictions with populations between 100,000 and 250,000 have 8.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Parkland refers to both maintained parks and open space areas, such as green spaces and courtyards.



Park and recreation professionals oversee a wide variety of facilities and features for which their agencies have responsibility. In addition, the number of amenities and facilities managed by park and recreation agencies vary. Ninety-five percent of park and recreation agencies provide playground facilities in their communities, typically managing 13 playgrounds. At least half of agencies have basketball courts, tennis courts, diamond fields for

baseball and/or softball, multipurpose rectangular fields, dog parks, outdoor swimming pools and community gardens.

The typical park and recreation agency has:

- One playground for every 3,750 residents
- One basketball court for every 7,403 residents
- One outdoor tennis court for every 5,608 residents
- One dog park for every 43,586 residents

**FIGURE 3: OUTDOOR PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES – POPULATION PER FACILITY (BY PREVALENCE AND POPULATION PER FACILITY)**

Type of Facilities	Median Number of Residents per Facility						
	Percent of Agencies	All Agencies	Population of Jurisdiction				
			Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
Playgrounds	95%	3,750	1,986	3,111	3,807	4,936	10,212
Basketball courts	86	7,403	3,750	6,839	8,477	8,870	15,164
Diamond fields: baseball – youth	79	7,000	3,107	4,858	8,095	14,429	26,413
Tennis courts	78	5,608	2,723	5,000	6,413	7,264	11,561
Rectangular fields: multipurpose	68	9,622	4,362	7,674	13,151	12,505	22,352
Dog parks	67	43,586	11,100	28,000	56,084	75,805	128,281
Diamond fields: softball fields – adult	65	14,302	5,667	11,232	17,228	27,418	35,846
Diamond fields: softball fields – youth	62	11,339	5,339	8,509	11,688	25,456	46,265
Diamond fields: baseball – adult	54	20,127	7,954	19,000	25,097	41,829	52,440
Swimming pools	53	38,000	8,637	26,281	40,264	69,051	113,219
Community gardens	51	30,140	8,773	24,500	49,351	66,341	105,494
Rectangular fields: soccer field – youth	50	7,382	3,504	5,011	8,224	12,761	38,070
Multiuse courts: basketball, volleyball	48	18,232	5,400	14,807	23,735	35,167	63,720
Tot lots	45	11,983	6,642	10,756	16,112	19,978	31,867
Rectangular fields: soccer field – adult	44	13,200	8,017	10,547	16,231	19,530	37,293
Skate parks	39	53,708	11,100	32,335	65,000	103,438	251,701
Rectangular fields: football field	35	26,493	8,004	19,351	30,599	51,169	75,673
Regulation 18-hole courses	29	86,277	9,183	33,800	71,870	107,267	233,044
Driving range stations	26	23,977	5,055	23,238	9,267	48,898	139,620
Multipurpose synthetic fields	22	39,736	12,962	24,665	34,104	54,050	128,280
Ice rinks	18	16,887	7,997	13,123	28,000	102,007	542,629
Pickleball courts	18	14,714	3,446	8,143	11,999	30,502	49,561

\*ISD = Insufficient Data

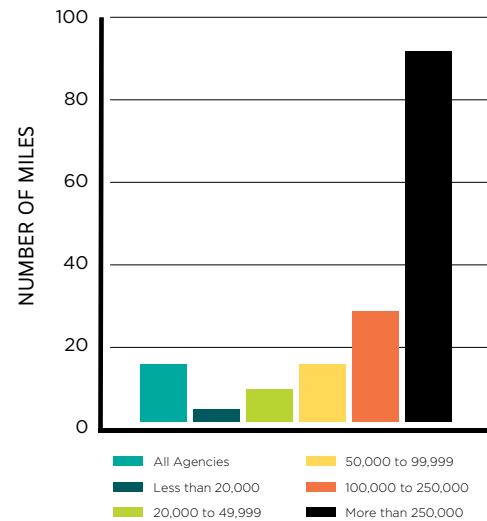
In addition, 81 percent of park and recreation agencies have trails, greenways and/or blueways as part of their outdoor infrastructure. The typical park and recreation agency that manages or maintains trails for walking, hiking, running and/or biking has 14 miles of trails in its network. Agencies serving more than 250,000 residents have a median of 91 miles of trails under their purview.

Geography also plays a role in the number of trail miles managed by park and recreation agencies. Agencies in a city locale have a median of 15 miles of trails, while county-based agencies typically have approximately 39 miles of trails.

Park and recreation agencies also offer many indoor facilities to their residents. More than three in five agencies offer community centers and recreation centers. Also common are senior centers, performance amphitheaters and nature centers. The typical agency with recreation centers has one facility for every 31,239 residents, while those agencies with community centers have one such facility for every 29,036 residents. Two in five agencies offer senior centers, with one such facility for every 59,603 residents in their jurisdictions.

The typical park and recreation agency operates seven buildings. Agencies serving populations of less than 20,000 often operate three buildings, while those serving populations between 100,000 and 250,000 oversee 14 buildings. Agencies serving a population of more than 250,000 typically have 47 buildings under their purview.

**FIGURE 4: MILES OF TRAIL (BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**



	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
Median	14.0	3.0	8.0	14.0	27.0	91.0
Lower Quartile	5.0	2.0	4.0	7.0	13.0	40.0
Upper Quartile	39.0	10.0	18.0	29.0	53.0	168.0

**FIGURE 5: INDOOR PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES — POPULATION PER FACILITY (BY PREVALENCE AND POPULATION PER FACILITY)**

Type of Facilities	Median Number of Residents per Facility						
	Percent of Agencies	All Agencies	Population of Jurisdiction				
			Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
Recreation centers (including gyms)	64%	31,239	9,126	24,601	40,817	51,265	65,639
Community centers	60	29,036	8,504	26,668	44,933	55,136	118,333
Senior centers	41	59,603	12,935	32,075	71,927	120,062	310,410
Performance amphitheaters	36	68,181	9,291	30,745	60,477	111,226	332,258
Nature centers	31	114,696	11,821	30,912	72,210	119,206	387,095
Aquatics centers	25	53,025	11,375	31,230	60,495	107,415	230,000
Stadiums	17	75,026	9,126	27,891	62,944	142,900	333,100
Teen centers	14	57,109	14,426	29,406	57,770	152,714	399,700
Indoor ice rinks	12	50,863	8,002	24,904	52,233	102,085	346,294
Arenas	7	65,466	6,137	24,413	68,208	108,105	465,211

# PROGRAMMING

Residents interact with park and recreation amenities and programming throughout the year, resulting in thousands, if not millions, of contacts annually. “Contacts” may include many different types of interactions with a park and recreation agency, such as visits to a local park, running or biking on a local trail, visits to a local recreation center, or other interactions with any park and recreation facility operated by an agency. Moreover, a person can have more than one contact. Someone who swims at their local agency’s aquatics center 10 times a year and bikes along a local trail five times a year would have 15 contacts.

The typical park and recreation agency registers approximately 285,000 contacts every year. The number of contacts varies dramatically from agency to agency. For example, the typical agency at the 75th percentile has more than 1 million annual contacts. Engagement between large park and recreation agencies and visitors is even more frequent — the typical agency serving a population of more than 250,000 has 2 million contacts per year, with those at the 75th percentile serving greater than 4.4 million people annually.

Programming is a crucial driver of engagement with parks and recreation. The typical park and recreation agency generates nearly 16,000 contacts through its programs alone. Those agencies serving more than 250,000 residents

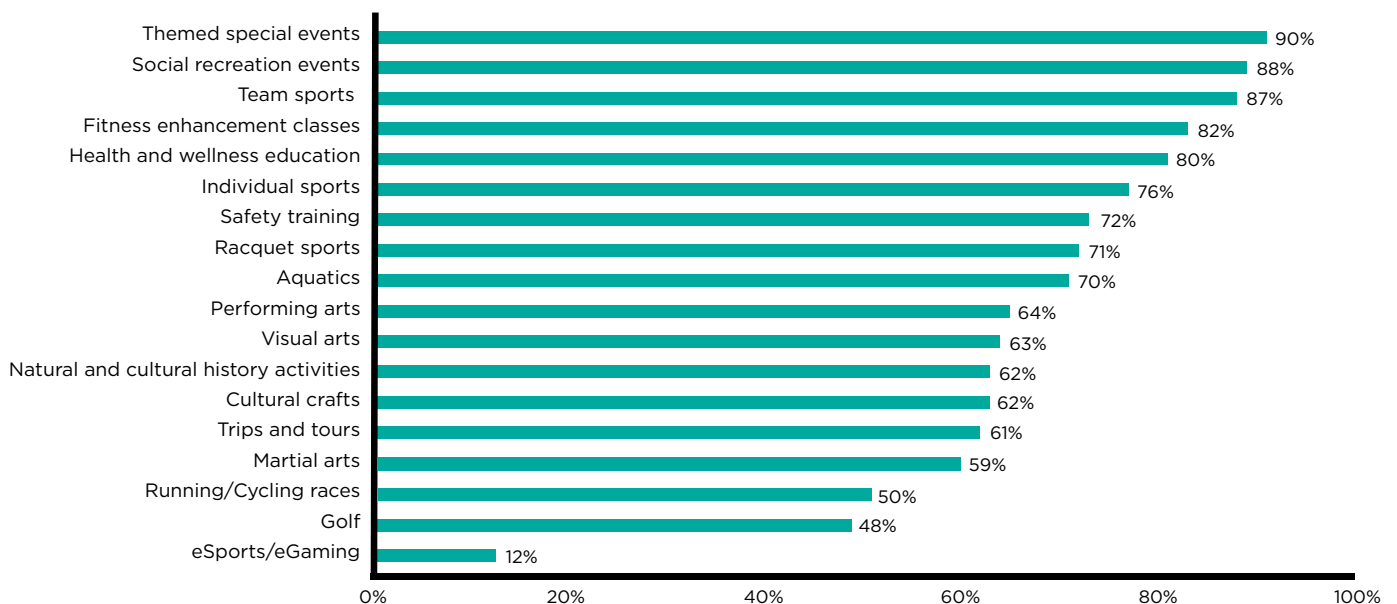
may have more than three times the number of contacts compared with agencies that serve smaller jurisdictions.

Registration fees for special programming are also the largest source of non-tax revenue for most agencies. The typical agency offers 179 programs each year; 102 of those programs are fee-based events. Agencies serving a population of less than 20,000 typically hold 30 fee-based programs per year, while those serving more than 250,000 residents offer more than 500 fee-based programs annually.

Programming provided by agencies span a variety of park and recreation activities — many of which touch on one or more of NRPA’s Three Pillars: Health and Wellness, Equity, and Conservation. Key programming activities offered by at least seven in 10 park and recreation agencies include:

- Themed special events (offered by 90 percent of agencies)
- Social recreation events (88 percent)
- Team sports (87 percent)
- Fitness enhancement classes (82 percent)
- Health and wellness education (80 percent)
- Individual sports (76 percent)
- Safety training (72 percent)
- Racquet sports (71 percent)
- Aquatics (70 percent)

**FIGURE 6: PROGRAMMING OFFERED BY PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES (PERCENT OF AGENCIES)**





Oak Brook Park District (Illinois) ABC Preschool students participate in the Galaxy Gallop Fun Run.

PHOTO COURTESY OF OAK BROOK PARK DISTRICT

The “prime directive” for all park and recreation agencies is to serve the public. Delivering high-quality services to all community members is a key commitment of park and recreation professionals. That promise includes those professionals being leaders in providing services and programming for children, older adults and people with disabilities. Eighty-three percent of park and recreation agencies offer summer camp programs for their communities’ children. A majority also deliver programs for teens and after-school care as portions of their out-of-school time (OST) offerings. Fewer agencies include preschool, before-school care or all-day childcare as a part of their program offerings. OST programs are commonplace offerings by agencies of nearly all sizes, but most especially those that serve populations of at least 20,000 residents.

In addition, most park and recreation agencies offer specific programming for other segments of their communities, including older adults (79 percent), teens (66 percent) and people with disabilities (62 percent). Agencies in larger communities are most likely to offer these types of programming. For example, 77 percent of park and recreation agencies in jurisdictions serving 100,000 to 250,000 residents offer programming designed for people with disabilities. In comparison, 36 percent of agencies that serve populations of less than 20,000 residents offer such programs. More than half of park and recreation agencies provide science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)-specific programs to community members.



**FIGURE 7: TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN, SENIORS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES  
(PERCENT OF AGENCIES BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**

	Percent of Agencies	Population of Jurisdiction				
		Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
Summer camps	83%	61%	88%	93%	88%	89%
Specific senior programs	79	65	80	88	86	77
Specific teen programs	66	46	62	77	76	75
Programs for people with disabilities	62	36	58	75	77	77
Science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs	58	40	50	66	68	71
After-school programs	55	47	48	52	63	68
Preschool	34	25	37	43	38	31
Before-school programs	19	16	20	22	17	18
Full daycare	7	4	6	12	3	11



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

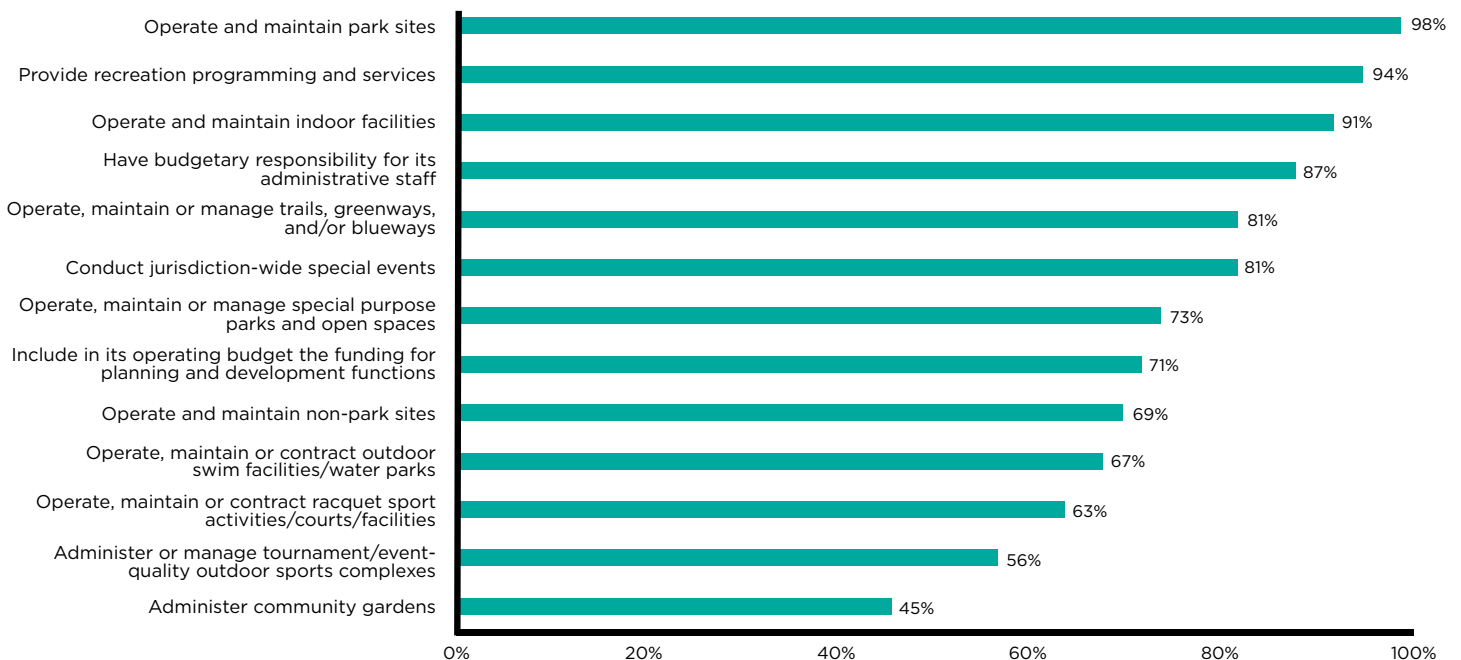
Volunteers conduct a meet-and-greet with critters during the opening of a new Fairfax County (Virginia) Park Authority multiuse shelter at Hidden Pond Nature Center in Springfield, Virginia.

# RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES

Park and recreation professionals oversee myriad services and facilities in their communities beyond their “traditional” roles of operating parks and related facilities (98 percent) and providing recreation programming and services (94 percent). In addition to those two core functions, the top responsibilities for park and recreation professionals are to:

- Operate and maintain indoor facilities (91 percent of agencies)
- Have budgetary responsibility for their administrative staff (87 percent)
- Conduct major jurisdiction-wide special events (81 percent)
- Operate, maintain or manage trails, greenways and/or blueways (81 percent)
- Operate, maintain or manage special-purpose parks and open spaces (73 percent)
- Operate and maintain non-park sites (69 percent)
- Operate, maintain or contract outdoor swim facilities/water parks (67 percent)
- Operate, maintain or contract racquet sport activities/courts/facilities (63 percent)
- Administer or manage tournament/event-quality outdoor sports complexes (56 percent)
- Administer community gardens (45 percent)

**FIGURE 8: KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES  
(PERCENT OF AGENCIES)**



**FIGURE 9: OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES  
(PERCENT OF AGENCIES)**

Manage large performance outdoor amphitheaters	37%
Operate, maintain or contract tourism attractions	36
Operate, maintain or contract golf courses	36
Operate, maintain or contract indoor swim facilities/water parks	32
Maintain or manage beaches (inclusive of all waterbody types)	22
Administer or manage farmers markets	21
Maintain, manage or lease indoor performing arts centers	20
Administer or manage tournament/event-quality indoor sports complexes	20
Operate, maintain or contract campgrounds	18
Operate, maintain or contract marinas	11
Maintain or manage professional or college-type stadiums/arenas/racetracks	9
Manage or maintain fairgrounds	6



PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY OF DUNWOODY

A couple enjoys festivities during Kids to Parks Day at Brook Run Park in Dunwoody, Georgia.



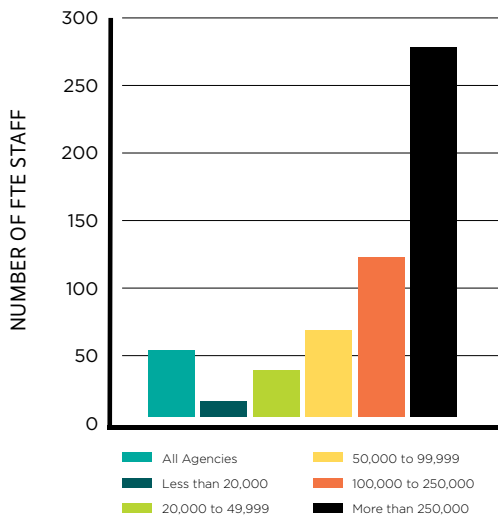
# STAFFING

Because park and recreation agencies differ by size and jurisdiction served, so too do staffing levels. Staffing at the typical park and recreation agency includes 49.4 full-time equivalents (FTEs) with a mix of both full-time and part-time staff. Staff size, however, expands rapidly as the size of the population served by an agency increases. Park and recreation agencies serving jurisdictions of less than 20,000 residents have a median of 11.8 FTEs on staff. Agencies serving areas with 50,000 to 99,999 people have a median of 64.1 FTEs, while those with more than 250,000 residents have a median of 273.6 FTEs on staff.

Median counts of FTEs on staff also positively correlate with:

- **Number of acres maintained:** 250 or fewer acres – 19.3 FTEs; more than 3,500 acres – 247.1 FTEs
- **Number of parks maintained:** less than 10 parks – 16.3 FTEs; 50 or more parks – 216.3 FTEs
- **Operating expenditures:** less than \$500,000 – 4.1 FTEs; more than \$10 million – 175.6 FTEs
- **Population served by the agency:** less than 500 people per square mile – 24.4 FTEs; more than 2,500 people per square mile – 94.0 FTEs

**FIGURE 10: PARK AND RECREATION AGENCY STAFFING: FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS (FTEs) (BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**



	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
Median	49.4	11.8	34.2	64.1	117.9	273.6
Lower Quartile	17.3	5.4	18.0	38.7	72.0	107.9
Upper Quartile	127.3	23.8	70.8	117.3	193.2	548.4

One way to view agency staffing is to measure it relative to the population that an agency serves. The typical park and recreation agency has 8.9 FTEs on staff for every 10,000 residents in the jurisdiction served by that agency. Agencies in more populated areas tend to have fewer FTEs on staff per population. Agencies serving jurisdictions of less than 20,000 people have 11.3 FTEs for every 10,000 residents; this measure decreases to 5.0 FTEs for 10,000 residents in areas with more than 250,000 people.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MATT BRADLEY

Youth participate in the Durango (Colorado) Parks and Recreation Youth House Hockey Program at Chapman Hill Ice Rink.



Agencies that serve areas with greater population density tend to have more FTEs per number of residents. Those operating in jurisdictions of less than 500 people per square mile have 5.8 FTEs per 10,000 people served compared to 10 FTEs per 10,000 residents in areas with more than 2,500 people per square mile.

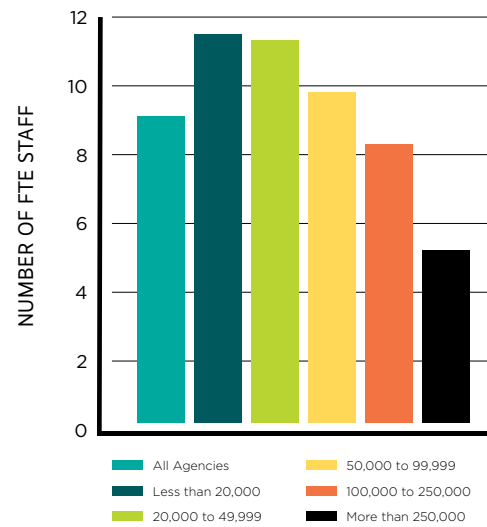
Operations and maintenance are the primary work responsibility of park and recreation professionals. But staff also devote their energies to other areas. On average, an agency's full-time staff dedicate their time to the following general activities:

- Operations/Maintenance (45 percent)
- Programming (31 percent)
- Administration (17 percent)
- Capital development (3 percent)
- Other (4 percent)

Thirty-eight percent of agencies have park and recreation professionals covered by collective bargaining agreements. Those professionals covered by such agreements are more likely at agencies that:

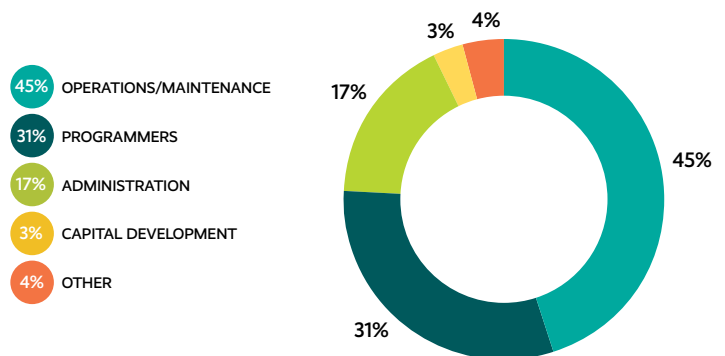
- **Have a larger staff:** 22 percent of agencies with a staff of fewer than 10 FTEs compared to 54 percent of agencies with 100 or more FTEs.
- **Serve larger populations:** 21 percent of agencies in jurisdictions with less than 20,000 people compared to 62 percent of agencies in jurisdictions with more than 250,000 people.
- **Have more parks:** 16 percent of agencies with less than 10 parks compared to 60 percent of agencies with at least 50 parks.
- **Maintain more parkland:** 26 percent of agencies that maintain 250 acres or less of parkland compared to 61 percent of agencies that maintain more than 3,500 acres of parkland.

**FIGURE 11: PARK AND RECREATION FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS (FTEs) PER 10,000 RESIDENTS (BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**



	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
Median	8.9	11.3	11.1	9.6	8.1	5.0
Lower Quartile	4.7	6.4	5.9	5.3	4.3	2.1
Upper Quartile	15.4	21.1	19	14.4	11.9	8.2

**FIGURE 12: RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARK AND RECREATION STAFF (AVERAGE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF AGENCY FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS (FTEs))**



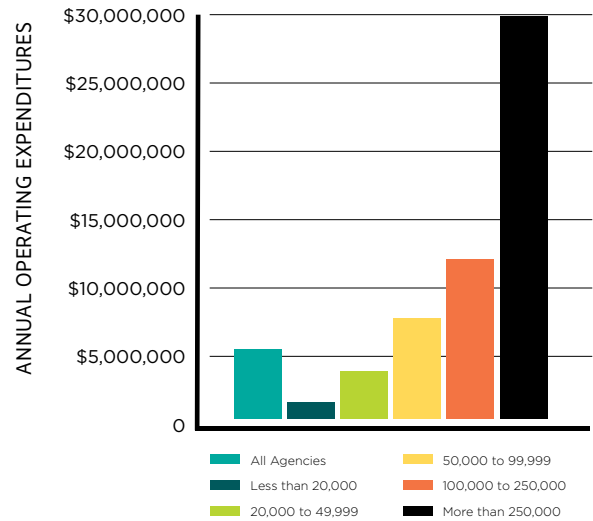
# BUDGET

**U.S. Census Bureau** data indicate that local park and recreation agencies' operating expenditures totaled \$42.8 billion in 2019. Per NRPA Park Metrics data, the typical park and recreation agency has current annual operating expenditures of \$5,079,256.

Normalizing operating expenditure data by population served by an agency is a much more accurate and meaningful way of articulating and comparing spending. By this measure, the typical park and recreation agency has annual operating expenses of \$93.01 on a per capita basis. The denser the population served by an agency, the higher the per capita operating expenses: the typical agency serving a jurisdiction of less than 500 people per square mile has per capita operating expenses of \$57.53, while one serving a jurisdiction of more than 2,500 people per square mile has a median of \$108.36 per resident.

At the same time, per capita operations spending is inversely related to the population of the area served. Agencies serving less than 20,000 people have a median operating expenditure of \$117.36 per person. That figure declines to \$54.92 per resident for agencies serving jurisdictions of more than 250,000 people, declining further to \$40.28 in jurisdictions of more than 500,000 residents.

**FIGURE 13: ANNUAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES (BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**



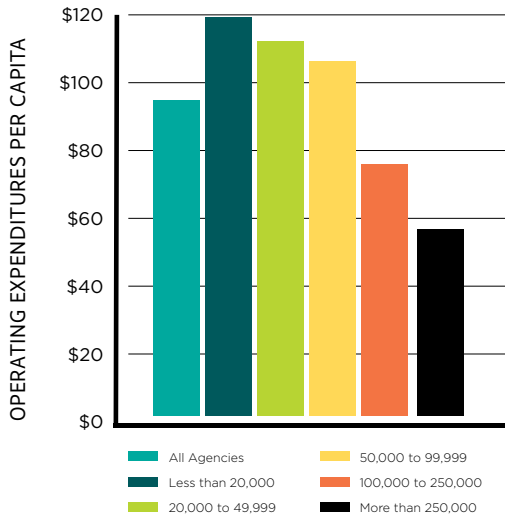
	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
Median	\$5,079,256	\$1,200,000	\$3,500,000	\$7,330,336	\$11,635,516	\$29,407,631
Lower Quartile	\$1,969,110	\$551,925	\$2,059,044	\$4,330,118	\$5,874,168	\$15,207,858
Upper Quartile	\$14,157,797	\$2,443,647	\$6,719,633	\$11,824,509	\$21,627,663	\$53,980,806



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANGELA DOHENY, MINNEAPOLIS PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

The North Commons Park youth baseball team cheers after a game at Farview Park in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**FIGURE 14: OPERATING EXPENDITURES PER CAPITA (BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**

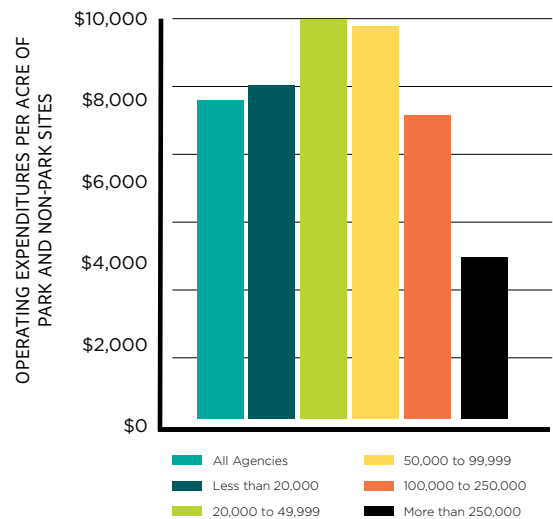


	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
Median	\$93.01	\$117.36	\$110.32	\$104.38	\$74.22	\$54.92
Lower Quartile	\$51.40	\$67.73	\$70.12	\$61.13	\$43.03	\$24.37
Upper Quartile	\$171.18	\$226.43	\$206.80	\$180.29	\$154.92	\$85.23

One can normalize operating expenditures by the amount of parkland managed by an agency. The median operating expenditure is \$7,823 per acre of park and non-park sites managed by the typical agency. (Note: Non-park sites are public spaces — such as lawns at a city hall — not designated as parks, but whose maintenance and/or operation costs are a part of the park and recreation agency’s budget.) The typical operating expenditure per acre of parkland increases with population density. The typical agency serving a jurisdiction of fewer than 500 people per square mile spends \$4,747 per acre of park and non-park sites. The median rises to \$12,512 per acre at agencies serving a jurisdiction with a population density greater than 2,500 per square mile.

Park and recreation agencies serving larger populations tend to have lower operating expenditures than agencies serving small- and medium-sized jurisdictions. The typical park and recreation agency serving a jurisdiction of less than 20,000 people spends a median of \$8,188 per acre of park and non-park sites. The median increases to \$9,817 per acre for agencies serving jurisdictions with populations between 20,000 and 49,999, but then declines to \$3,959 per acre managed by agencies serving more than 250,000 people.

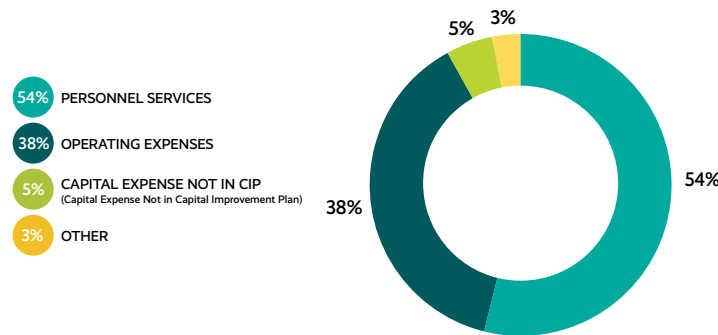
**FIGURE 15: OPERATING EXPENDITURES PER ACRE OF PARK AND NON-PARK SITES (BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**



	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
Median	\$7,823	\$8,188	\$9,817	\$9,642	\$7,449	\$3,959
Lower Quartile	\$3,648	\$3,950	\$4,458	\$5,527	\$3,096	\$1,590
Upper Quartile	\$18,379	\$24,015	\$23,983	\$20,766	\$14,793	\$9,269

The typical park and recreation agency has \$102,530 in annual operating expenditures for each employee (as measured by full-time equivalents, or FTEs). The denser the population an agency serves, the higher the operating expenditures for each FTE. Agencies serving less than 500 residents per square mile have median operating expenditures of \$94,393 for each FTE. The median rises to \$106,686 per FTE for agencies serving areas with more than 2,500 residents per square mile. Similarly, the measure rises from \$90,718 for agencies with less than 10 parks to \$108,318 for agencies with 50 or more parks.

**FIGURE 17: DISTRIBUTION OF OPERATING EXPENDITURES (AVERAGE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF OPERATING EXPENDITURES)**



**FIGURE 16: OPERATING EXPENDITURES PER FTE (BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**



As is the case for most nonprofit/government entities, personnel services account for the largest share of the operations budget at the typical park and recreation agency.

- Personnel services (54 percent of the operating budget) include salaries, wages and benefits for full-time and non-full-time personnel and contracted individuals.
- Operating expenditures (38 percent of the operating budget) fund agency operations.
- Capital funds repay the operating budget, all enterprise funds, interdepartmental transfers and, in some cases, the capital debt service. This is 5 percent of the operating budget. A portion of the operations spending includes capital expenses that are not part of an agency's capital improvement plan, such as expenditures for capital equipment (e.g., computers, vehicles, large-area mowers, tractors, boats), some periodic cyclical maintenance (e.g., carpets, conference chairs, push mowers) and perhaps debt services paid from the agency's operating funds.



The typical park and recreation agency dedicates 45 percent of its annual operating budget to managing and maintaining parks and open spaces. Agencies spend a median 42 percent of their annual operating expenditures to support recreation offerings, including programming (e.g., out-of-school time activities, sports leagues, health and wellness programs) and the facilities for such activities.

**FIGURE 18: OPERATING EXPENDITURES DEDICATED TO PARKS OR RECREATION (AVERAGE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF OPERATING EXPENDITURES)**

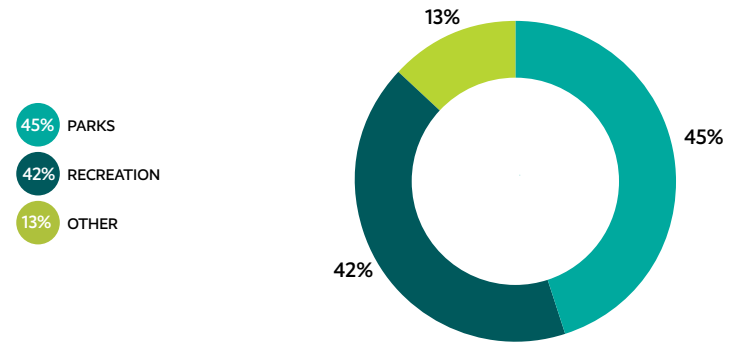


PHOTO COURTESY OF KATHERINE HUDSPETH

Picturesque views are seen at every hole of the Los Alamos County (New Mexico) Golf Course during the Bathtub Row Tournament.

# AGENCY FUNDING

Funding sources for park and recreation operations vary greatly by agency, but support from the local jurisdiction's general fund tax base is common. On average, park and recreation agencies derive three-fifths of their operating expenditures from general fund tax support. However, the percentage of funding from general fund tax support tends to be lower at agencies with larger operating budgets.

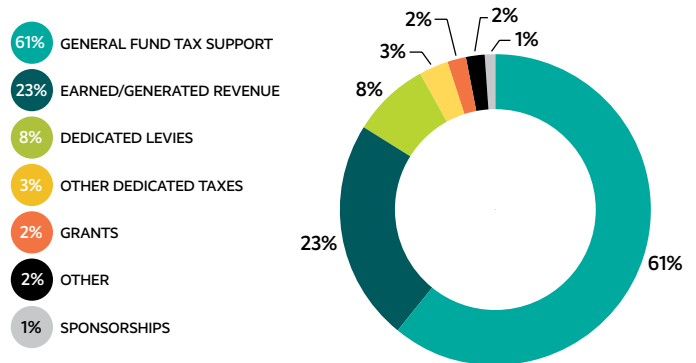
The second-largest source of funding for most agencies is earned/generated revenue, accounting for an average of 23 percent of operating expenditures. In addition, many agencies have access to special, dedicated taxes that cover a part of their budgets, while others obtain much of their funding from tax levies dedicated to park and recreation purposes approved by citizen referenda.

But as mentioned previously, many agencies generate funding from non-tax revenue (such as fees for special programming). The typical park and recreation agency generates \$1 million in non-tax revenues annually, although this amount can vary significantly based on agency size, the services and facilities offered by an agency and the mandate from agency leadership and policymakers. Agencies with annual operating budgets less than \$500,000 typically generate \$50,000 in non-tax revenues. In comparison, those with annual budgets greater than \$10 million generate a median of slightly more than \$5.2 million from non-tax revenue sources.

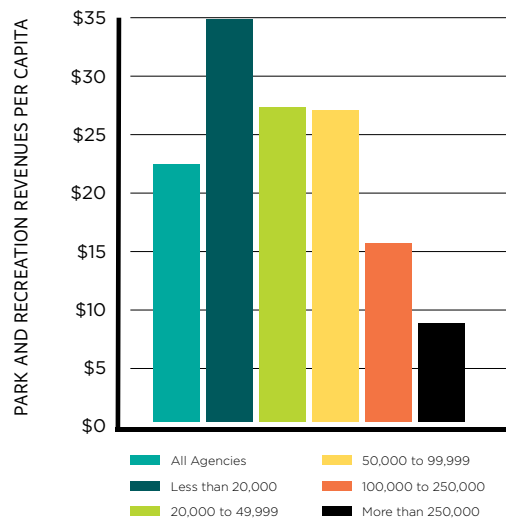
The typical park and recreation agency generates \$22.08 in revenue annually for each resident in the jurisdiction it serves. Agencies operating in less densely populated areas generate less revenue than those with a greater population density. The typical agency — serving a jurisdiction of fewer than 500 people per square mile — realizes \$14.67 in revenue on a per capita basis per year compared to a median of \$26.11 for agencies serving a jurisdiction of greater than 2,500 people per square mile.

Small- and medium-sized park and recreation agencies generate more revenue per capita than large-sized ones. Agencies serving jurisdictions of less than 20,000 people generate \$34.55 in per capita revenue per resident — nearly matching that generated by agencies serving jurisdictions with populations between 50,000 and 99,999, with a median of \$26.68 in revenue per resident each year. In comparison, agencies serving populations greater than 250,000 generate \$8.46 per capita in revenue, with the amount declining to \$6.50 in jurisdictions with populations of more than 500,000 residents.

**FIGURE 19: SOURCES OF OPERATING EXPENDITURES (AVERAGE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF OPERATING EXPENDITURES)**



**FIGURE 20: PARK AND RECREATION REVENUES PER CAPITA (BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**

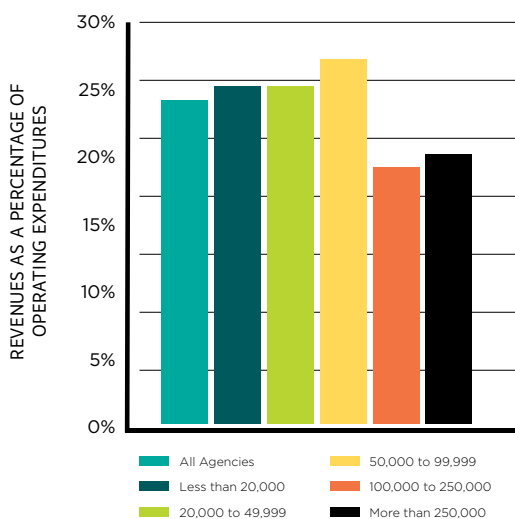


	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
Median	\$22.08	\$34.55	\$26.99	\$26.68	\$15.33	\$8.46
Lower Quartile	\$6.24	\$9.23	\$9.68	\$9.56	\$3.63	\$3.21
Upper Quartile	\$54.36	\$76.26	\$65.33	\$60.09	\$46.23	\$22.19

Another way to look at revenue generation is by examining cost recovery as a percentage of operating expenditures. The typical agency recovers 23.6 percent of its operating expenditures from non-tax revenues. The amount of cost recovery differs significantly among agencies based on an agency's portfolio of facilities and programming, the demographics of the populace it serves, the agency's mission and possible revenue mandates from the agency's governing authorities.

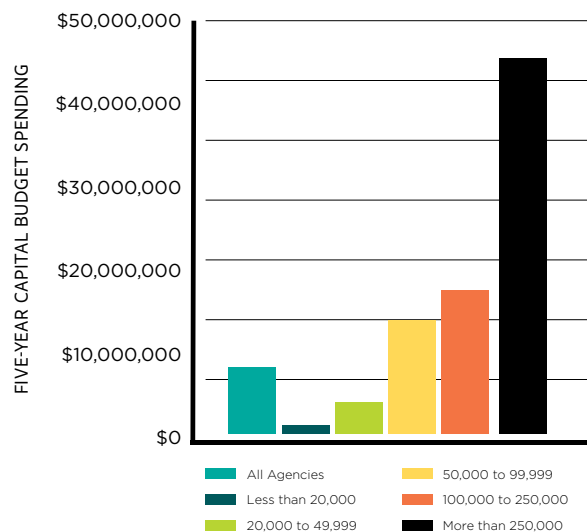
Agencies serving less than 500 people per square mile have a median percentage cost recovery of 24.8 percent. Cost recovery rises to 25 percent of operating expenditures for agencies serving jurisdictions with between 1,000 and 2,500 people per square mile.

**FIGURE 21: REVENUES AS A PERCENTAGE OF OPERATING EXPENDITURES (COST RECOVERY) (PERCENTAGE OF OPERATING EXPENDITURES BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**



	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
Median	23.6%	25%	25%	26.6%	19.5%	20.1%
Lower Quartile	11.1	11.2	11.6	13.0	9.2	9.6
Upper Quartile	43.4	51.3	47.4	42.2	37.2	33.0

**FIGURE 22: FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL BUDGET SPENDING (BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**



	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
Median	\$8,000,000	\$1,022,750	\$3,733,306	\$13,574,027	\$17,177,111	\$45,000,000
Lower Quartile	\$1,481,250	\$363,250	\$1,154,049	\$5,625,000	\$4,305,500	\$15,082,000
Upper Quartile	\$24,498,169	\$3,872,635	\$14,000,000	\$23,097,750	\$42,865,250	\$103,395,000

Beyond day-to-day operations, park and recreation agencies have a median of \$8 million in capital expenditures budgeted for the next five years. Not surprisingly, the larger the agency, the larger its five-year capital budget. The typical park and recreation agency serving a population of less than 20,000 has a median five-year capital budget of slightly more than \$1 million. Five-year capital budgets increase to more than \$13.5 million at agencies serving jurisdictions of 50,000 to 99,999 residents and \$45 million at agencies in areas with more than 250,000 residents. In addition, factors that are positively related to the size of the five-year capital budget include:

- **The number of parks maintained:** Less than 10 parks – \$1.3 million; 50 or more parks – \$31.3 million
- **Acreage of parks maintained:** 250 or fewer acres – \$2 million; more than 3,500 acres – \$54 million
- **Operating budgets:** Annual operating budgets less than \$500,000 to \$375,000; annual operating budgets greater than \$10 million to \$27.8 million
- **Population density:** Less than 500 people per square mile – \$2.9 million; more than 2,500 people per square mile – \$14.6 million

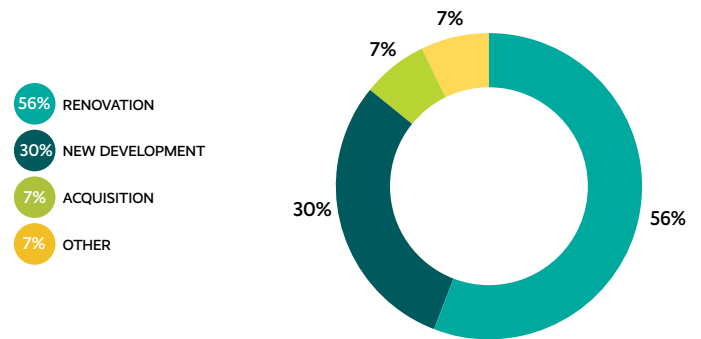
Park and recreation agencies designate their capital expenditures to a variety of areas. On average, agencies designate 56 percent of their capital budget for renovation and 30 percent toward new development. New development is the focus of a greater percentage of capital budgets, while the amount focused on renovation is slightly less. Agencies serving more than 250,000 residents earmark 34 percent of capital budgets for new development, while they dedicate 51 percent of capital budgets to renovating current properties.

On average, park and recreation agencies have \$16.7 million of deferred maintenance projects on their books. Agencies operating in less densely populated areas have fewer deferred projects than those with a greater population density. Agencies serving a jurisdiction of fewer than 500 people per square mile have an average of \$9.1 million in deferred maintenance projects compared to \$30 million for agencies serving a jurisdiction of more than 2,500 people per square mile. Average deferred maintenance balances rise at agencies that:

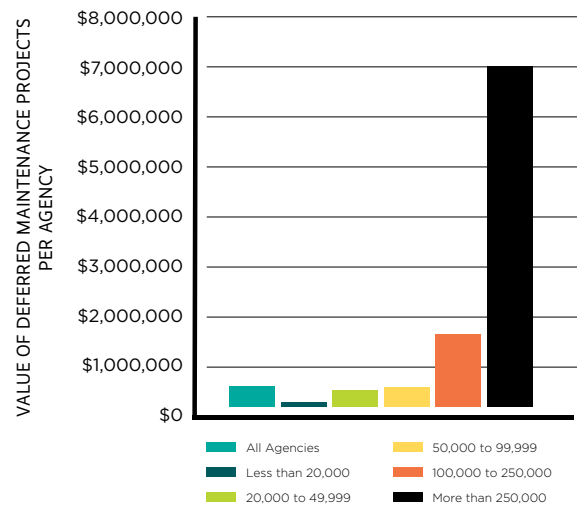
- **Have higher operating budgets:** \$335,143 at agencies with operating budgets less than \$500,000 compared to \$40.1 million at agencies with operating budgets that exceed \$10 million.
- **Have a larger staff:** \$1.4 million at agencies with a staff of fewer than 10 FTEs compared to \$37.6 million for agencies with 100 or more FTEs.
- **Serve larger populations:** \$1.3 million for agencies in jurisdictions with less than 20,000 people compared to \$57.7 million agencies in jurisdictions with more than 250,000 people.
- **Have more parks:** \$1.1 million for agencies with less than 10 parks compared to nearly \$45.1 million at agencies with 50 or more parks.
- **Maintain more parkland:** \$2 million at agencies that maintain 250 acres or less of parkland compared to \$63.3 million at agencies that maintain more than 3,500 acres of parkland.

Further, jurisdiction type plays a prominent role in the value of deferred maintenance projects found in park and recreation agencies. Agencies located in towns have deferred maintenance totaling an average of \$1.2 million, while the

**FIGURE 23: TARGETS FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURES (AVERAGE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURES)**



**FIGURE 24: VALUE OF DEFERRED MAINTENANCE PROJECTS PER AGENCY (BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**



	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	More than 250,000
Median	\$480,500	\$100,000	\$341,845	\$400,000	\$1,450,744	\$6,860,000
Lower Quartile	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Upper Quartile	\$5,000,000	\$804,959	\$2,625,000	\$3,750,000	\$11,100,000	\$66,379,377
Average	\$16,662,315	\$1,346,922	\$5,430,337	\$7,129,846	\$24,756,225	\$57,698,975

average at city-based agencies is \$22.3 million. County park and recreation agencies have an average of \$23.3 million in deferred maintenance projects. In comparison, independent park districts/authorities and special park districts have an average of \$5 million and \$6.4 million, respectively, in deferred maintenance projects.



# POLICIES

Park and recreation agencies have various policies that address how residents enjoy amenities and programming in their communities. Many policies align with an agency’s mission to increase a community’s overall health and wellness, such as banning tobacco products, limiting the consumption of alcohol and ensuring the availability of healthy food options. Other policies address the collection of fees that help agencies with park upkeep and staffing challenges.

More than four in five park and recreation agencies have policies that prohibit the use of tobacco products in their parks, at their facilities and on their grounds. Fifty-three percent of agencies ban the use of tobacco at all agency parks and facilities, while another 29 percent make exceptions for certain facilities (e.g., golf courses).

Nearly three in four park and recreation agencies allow the consumption of alcohol by legal-age adults on at least some of their premises. Fifteen percent of agencies have a policy that allows the consumption of alcohol at all

park and recreation agency locations in their jurisdiction. Agencies are more likely to permit the consumption of alcohol at only a few select locations rather than at all facilities. Further, 47 percent of agencies allow the sale of alcohol on their premises — mainly at select locations and by either the agencies themselves or authorized concessionaires.

Park and recreation agencies promote health and wellness by offering healthy food options at their vending machines and concessions. At least two-thirds of agencies offer healthy food options in vending machines and/or concession stands at their facilities.

Relatively few park and recreation agencies charge an admission fee to enter or park a vehicle at their facilities. Seventeen percent of agencies charge fees to enter some of their parks and 17 percent of agencies have parking fees at some of their facilities. In both cases, the agencies that charge either admission or parking fees do so only at a limited number of facilities.

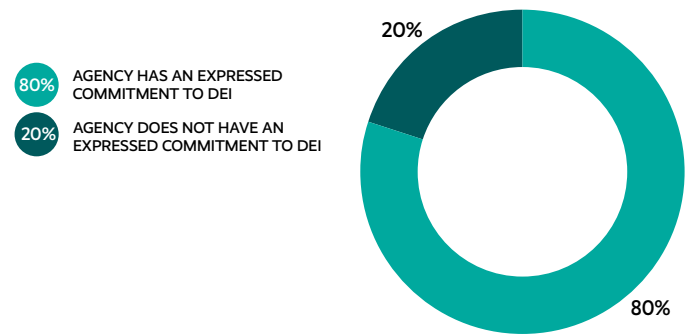
**FIGURE 25: PARK AND RECREATION AGENCY POLICIES  
(PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF AGENCIES)**

	Yes, at all locations	Yes, at select locations	No
Has a policy barring the use of all tobacco products in its parks and at its facilities and grounds	53%	29%	19%
Has a policy that allows the consumption of alcohol by legal-aged adults on its premises	15	59	26
Agency sells alcoholic beverages to legal-aged adults on its premises (sold either by the agency or by a concessionaire authorized by the agency)	3	47	50
Agency provides healthy food options in its vending machines	25	42	33
Agency provides healthy food options at its concession stands	25	48	28
Agency charges a parking fee at its parks or facilities	1	16	83
Agency charges an admission fee to enter its parks	1	16	83

Park and recreation professionals and their agencies are essential in promoting and advancing community health, resiliency and overall well-being. Given their mission to make communities better places to live, learn, work and play, park and recreation agencies are in a unique position to champion efforts that advance diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Among implemented DEI practices implemented are:

- Eighty percent of park and recreation agencies have an expressed commitment to DEI in their foundational documents (e.g., vision, mission and strategic plan documents).
- Ninety-two percent of park and recreation agencies have hiring practices and policies that promote a diverse workforce.

**FIGURE 26: AGENCIES WITH AN EXPRESSED COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI) IN THEIR FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS (PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION)**



**FIGURE 27: AGENCIES WITH HIRING PRACTICES AND POLICIES THAT PROMOTE A DIVERSE WORKFORCE (PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION)**

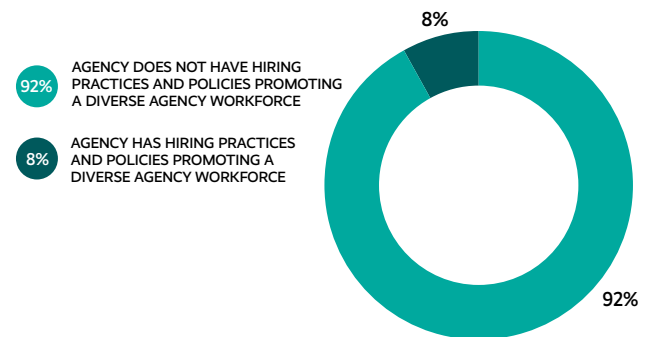


PHOTO COURTESY OF HOUSTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Urban Gardener Brent Moon with members of the Houston, Texas, community at the Sunnyside Park gardens.

# ADDITIONAL NRPA RESOURCES

The 2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review and NRPA Park Metrics are just two tools offered by NRPA that champion the work of park and recreation professionals across the United States. The NRPA Research team focuses its efforts on two major areas:

- Collecting and analyzing data to help park and recreation professionals make optimal decisions on operations, programming and spending
- Developing data to help park and recreation professionals make the case for greater and more sustainable funding

Included in the vast suite of NRPA Research resources are:

- **Engagement With Parks Report:** This annual NRPA research survey probes the public's use of parks, the key reasons that drive their use and the greatest challenges preventing greater usage. Each year, the study examines the importance of public parks in our lives, including how parks compare to other services and offerings of local governments. Recent findings show that 260 million people accessed their local parks or recreation facilities during the past year; 87 percent of U.S. adults agree that parks and recreation is an important local government service; and four in five people consider high-quality park and recreation amenities as a principal factor when choosing a place to live.
- **NRPA Park Pulse Polls:** Each month, the NRPA Research team polls 1,000 U.S. adults ages 18 and older representing a cross-section of the population to explore their views on topics related to the park and recreation field. Questions span from the serious to the more lighthearted — but all demonstrate the power of parks and recreation.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Parks and Recreation:** Given their mission to make communities better places to live, learn, work and play, park and recreation agencies are in a unique position to champion efforts that advance diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). This report takes inventory of the DEI activities, if any, agencies have

established, the professional development opportunities provided to staff and the challenges organizations face in promoting DEI practices.

- **Parks and Recreation: Advancing Community Health and Well-Being:** To meet the public's emerging health and wellness needs, parks and recreation is evolving into community wellness hubs. These hubs are trusted gathering places that allow every community member to connect with essential programs, services and spaces that advance health equity, improve health outcomes and enhance the quality of life. This report focuses on how park and recreation professionals tackle their communities' ever-expanding health and wellness needs, including programming, education, innovations and health equity.
- **NRPA Out-of-School Time Report:** More than four in five park and recreation agencies offer out-of-school time (OST) programs that serve millions of children throughout the United States. These before-school, after-school and/or summer programs provide physical activity opportunities, safe spaces for children, childcare for parents and caregivers, and social connections with peers. This report looks at those offerings and benefits of OST programs provided by local parks and recreation, and the innovations to OST programs brought about by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- **The Economic Impact of Parks:** Thanks to the efforts of park and recreation professionals throughout the United States, local park and recreation agencies generated \$166 billion in economic activity and supported more than 1.1 million jobs in 2017. Beyond the nationwide impact, this report also shows the economic contribution of parks and recreation on the state level. The estimates of total economic impacts include the direct, indirect and induced effects of operations and capital spending by local park and recreation agencies in each state and the District of Columbia.
- **Youth Sports at Park and Recreation Agencies:** This study explores youth sports offerings, partnerships, fees and registration, and equitable access. Key findings include: five in six park and recreation agencies collaborate





PHOTO COURTESY OF MARILYN SKLAR/MONTGOMERY PARKS, MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Kids sled on school snow day at Tilden Woods Local Park in Montgomery County, Maryland.

five benefits that park and recreation leaders seek from foundations are:

- Extra fundraising capacity
- Ability to serve beyond the scope of a traditional park and recreation agency
- Advocacy for parks and recreation
- Expertise and skills that complement agency staff
- Flexibility as foundations are not government agencies

- **NRPA Park and Recreation Marketing and Communications Report:** Getting the word out to the public about what park and recreation agencies do is a great challenge. One solution to this challenge is for agencies to invest in marketing and communications strategies — although accomplishing this is no small feat. This survey explores the various methods and tactics used to market to community members, the use of partners for greater reach, the role of social media in marketing and communications, typical budgets, the

with partners to deliver youth sports activities; 86 percent of park and recreation professionals agree that they and their peers contribute to a fair and just future for youth sports by identifying inequities in access to organized sports offerings; and two in three agencies offer reduced or discounted fees for lower-income residents.

- **Workforce Development and Career Exploration in Parks and Recreation:** Workforce development and career exploration programs are critical contributors to the future success of parks and recreation. Key findings include: a third of agencies currently have a workforce development/career exploration program; nearly nine in 10 agencies collaborate with partners on these programs; and the top program goal is to develop future park and recreation leaders.
- **Park and Recreation Agency-Foundation Relationships: Partnering for the Future:** This study shares evidence-based best practices that optimize agency-foundation relationships and detailed snapshots of the benefits and challenges between these relationships. Among the key findings are that the top



PHOTO COURTESY OF SOUTH SUBURBAN PARKS AND RECREATION

Runners work hard at the 38th Annual High Line Canal 10K/5K Run in Centennial, Colorado.





PHOTO COURTESY BOULDER CITY, NEVADA

A child swings the bat during a t-ball game at Pratte Field in Veterans' Memorial Park in Boulder City, Nevada.

number of personnel devoted to this effort and more.

- **2021 NRPA Park and Recreation Salary Survey:** Having access to comprehensive compensation data informs park and recreation agency leaders about how to attract the best staff. This report features detailed base salary and bonus data for 10 park and recreation leadership positions.
- **Evaluation Resource Hub:** The NRPA Research team has created several tools that help park and recreation professionals collect and use data to identify new opportunities for amenities and services and pinpoint areas for improvement. The hub includes:
  - **Green Infrastructure Evaluation Framework:** This resource helps local governments and park advocates measure the many benefits of green infrastructure in parks. Follow the framework's three simple steps – define benefits and measures, collect data and use data – to improve green infrastructure projects and share the message about project benefits.
  - **Customer Feedback Surveys:** Obtaining customer feedback is challenging for many park and recreation agencies, especially those with resource constraints. This guide outlines fundamental principles of conducting effective customer satisfaction surveys, focusing on acting on the results while keeping your agency's time, money, staffing and current survey skills in mind.
  - **Community Needs Assessments:** This resource guides park and recreation professionals through the entire community needs assessment lifecycle – from deciding clear goals to eliciting a high-response rate from your community. Most importantly, it demonstrates how to use the survey data to strengthen your agency in both the short and long term.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN SCHORZMAN/CITY OF EUGENE RECREATION

A recreation soccer player attempts a shot during a game at Ascot Park in Eugene, Oregon.

# CONCLUSIONS

The 2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review and NRPA Park Metrics comprise the most comprehensive park and recreation-related data, benchmarks and insights that inform park and recreation agency professionals, key stakeholders and the public about the state of the park and recreation industry. These resources provide all those who care about quality parks and recreation with various tools.

## 1. Guidance on the resources dedicated to and performance of parks and recreation.

How does your local park and recreation agency measure up in terms of providing open spaces, recreation opportunities and programming relative to your peer agencies? Is your agency properly staffed or sufficiently funded compared to others?

## 2. Data that allow informed decisions on the optimal set of service and facility offerings.

Park and recreation agency leaders do not make decisions based on a one-size-fits-all standard that does not reflect individual communities' unique circumstances and needs. Instead, these metrics enable park and recreation professionals to compare their agencies with others they view as peers.

## 3. Comprehensive data demonstrating the broad offerings and programming that represent the full definition of parks and recreation.

The information in this report helps demonstrate to policymakers, key stakeholders, the media and the general public the full breadth of service offerings and responsibilities of park and recreation professionals and their agencies throughout the United States.

Park and recreation professionals can use the 2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review and NRPA Park Metrics in conjunction with NRPA's other research resources and tools to ensure all members of their community have access to high-quality park and recreation amenities and services.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTLAND COUNTY (NORTH CAROLINA) PARKS AND RECREATION

A “waterlogged” splash pad event features special lighting and glow-in-the-dark bands.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NRPA is grateful to all the park and recreation professionals and their agencies that completed the *2022 Agency Performance Survey* in NRPA Park Metrics. Thank you to Kevin Roth, Melissa May, Lindsay Hogeboom, Vitisia Paynich, Jennifer Fulcher-Nguyen, Ivy McCormick, Greg Manns and Kate Anderson for making this report possible.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL LEE

Gallery Park residents enjoy the annual fireworks show hosted by Glenview (Illinois) Park District.



# ABOUT NRPA



Each fall, third through fifth graders learn to run a mile with the support of midshipmen from the USNA Marathon Team during the Mighty Milers track meet in Annapolis, Maryland.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is the leading not-for-profit organization dedicated to building strong, vibrant and resilient communities through the power of parks and recreation. With more than 60,000 members, NRPA advances this vision by investing in and championing the work of park and recreation professionals and advocates — the catalysts for positive change in service of equity, climate-readiness, and overall health and well-being.

NRPA brings strength to our message by partnering with like-minded organizations, including those in the federal government, nonprofits and commercial enterprises. Funded through dues, grants, registrations and charitable contributions, NRPA produces research, education and policy initiatives for our members that ultimately enrich the communities they serve.

#### Back Cover image

Kids partake in bounce house fun at during a spring event at Julian B Lane Riverfront Park in Tampa, Florida. *Photo courtesy of Tampa (Florida) Parks and Recreation.*

NRPA places immense importance on research and data to raise the status of parks and recreation. We conduct research with two goals: First, NRPA creates and analyzes data to help park and recreation agencies make optimal decisions on operations, programming and spending. Second, NRPA develops data and insights that support park and recreation professionals making the case for greater and more stable funding to policymakers, key stakeholders, the media and the general public.

The NRPA Research team works closely with internal subject matter experts, respected industry consultants and the academic community to develop its reports and data resources. Learn more about NRPA research reports and resources at [nrpa.org/Research](https://nrpa.org/Research).



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