

Cultural

Seven Dimensions of Well-Being Spotlight



NATIONAL
RECREATION AND PARK
ASSOCIATION

The Vision

Communities provide spaces, programs and services. Community members, including park and recreation staff, develop a sense of belonging and appreciation. They embrace, celebrate and value the identities, traditions and experiences of others. Community members also practice a dynamic and lifelong process focusing on self-reflection, personal critique and acknowledging one's own perspectives.

How Parks and Recreation Promotes Cultural Well-Being

Parks and recreation plays a crucial role in fostering cultural well-being. Parks, community centers and other public spaces serve as gathering places where individuals from various backgrounds can unite, interact, and build connections and belonging. Park and recreation professionals ensure programs and events are co-created with the community and reflect its history and traditions, helping community members embrace and celebrate their differences.

Examples of Advancing Cultural Well-Being

- Invest time and resources in building trusted relationships with members of the community who have previously been less represented, ensuring they have a voice in community engagement processes and decision-making practices.
- Ensure promotional materials are available in different languages and use images that reflect the community.
- Support events, festivals, concerts, educational classes (cooking, music, arts, crafting, etc.) and celebrations that honor all the holidays, traditions and histories within the community.
- Partner with a broad set of faith-based institutions to support spiritual connection and honor community traditions.
- Provide visual and performing arts, storytelling, arts as healing experiences, and other offerings at park and recreation facilities and venues.
- Provide space for offerings to be taught and led by community members and/or arts and cultural organizations.
- Establish a staff training policy to ensure all staff are trained in core competencies that are welcoming to the community being served.

In Practice

City of Tukwila, Washington, is advancing cultural well-being by rooting its work in equitable community engagement, with a focus on getting to know Tukwila's community better, building trusted relationships with community members and being responsive to the input community members provide.

Forty percent of Tukwila's population was born outside of the United States. In 2017, the city developed a policy that works to provide fair access to programs, services and opportunities for all members of the community. Although 71 percent of Tukwila's residents have access to a park within a 10-minute walk, quality and access continue to be top priorities.

Tukwila identified a community that had a critical gap in park access. With support from NRPA through the 10-Minute Walk campaign, it focused efforts on addressing the gap. Specifically, the city aimed to develop a community engagement model for acquiring and developing new park space that it hoped could be replicated in other neighboring communities.

Tukwila also began hosting community dialogues called "Community Cafés." These conversations allowed all members of the community to provide input on community priorities, including public health and how parks can support well-being. The conversations have jumpstarted relationship and trust building between the community and local government. The Community Cafés were pretty revealing — most participants did not know about the parks and other resources offered by local government. Building awareness has become a priority, but there is still work to be done.

Learn More: bit.ly/Tukwila-In-Practice



Residents participate in City of Tukwila's (Washington) Community Cafés, where they are able to learn about city services and provide feedback. Photo courtesy City of Tukwila.