

## APG-SIG FAQ's

### **Q: Is becoming an APG-SIG Program member a requirement?**

**A:** The membership is optional, however if an organization wants services and support from the park district, (such as field use, maintenance or registration support), they must be a member of the program and be in good standing. Otherwise, the organization will be considered a private rental. The relationship with the park district as a private renter are at full current market rates.

### **Q: What is the difference and how will this new program impact groups than what is currently being done?**

**A:** Operationally and receiving fields, space, and support from the park district there is no change. The core changes to any current relationship or agreement are the structure and legal implications involved with liability insurance and updating to best practices. The current agreements with any organizations affiliated with the park district are obsolete with many of these not being reviewed or agreed to since the 1970's. Much has changed since then, and this program is to bring these relationships and related terms and conditions along with dealing with liability impacts up to date and protect all involved.

### **Q: Can an organization apply online and where can leadership volunteers find more information and details regarding the APG-SIG Program?**

**A:** The application is available online at the Palatine Park District website [www.palatineparks.org](http://www.palatineparks.org) and can be found on the community affiliated groups page at <https://www.palatineparks.org/rccms/affiliates/>. It is not required to complete and submit online, and organizations should consult with their assigned park district staff liaison for paper copies and/or assistance with completing the application form and assembling the required supplemental paperwork.

### **Q: What are the fees associated with becoming an APG-SIG member?**

**A:** The membership to the Park District Affiliate, Parent and Special Interest group Program is free. As part of the Park District's Cost Recovery Model and budget goals, there are the current fees for maintenance per capita, capital field and space renovation and development funding, non-resident participation fees and general support by park district staff, equipment and operations. The only new fees will be for those groups who opt-in for other support services, such as registration, via the agreement when those support services are requested outside of what the group is eligible for based on their membership classification status.

### **Q: Do organizations need to reapply to the program every year?**

**A:** No. Once an organization applies and is approved into the program and provided with their classification status, (whether an affiliate, parent booster, advisory or special interest group), the application originally filed remains valid. Organizations are required through their assigned staff liaison to update the information on their

original application such as a change in officers of the board. The only event that would require a new application and required supplemental paperwork to be submitted is if the organization is requesting to change membership classifications.

**Q: What services are provided by the park district for the APG-SIG Program at no cost and how are fees and charges determined to be charged or not to a member organization?**

**A:** All Parent Booster, Advisory and Special Interest Group classified organizations are technically park district controlled programs and receive all the baseline support and coordination as any other recreational programs. Thus, liability insurance, maintenance support, registration, marketing, budget and finance, etc. are all covered by the park district. The exception to this is specific separate activities by a Parent Booster Club and truly classified Affiliates. Any requests for support for any group regardless of their classification, outside of the baseline support can be completed but is charged at a cost recovery fees schedule on a time and material basis. These requests shall be handled through the assigned staff liaison and a schedule of current rates of related non-baseline support items can be found within the Program Handbook under Exhibit A at the very end of the handbook. The handbook document can be found and viewed at: <https://www.palatineparks.org/rccms/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Affiliate-Handbook-Full-Document.pdf>.

**Q: Do you have a digital version of the Power Point presentation and other materials related to the APG-SIG program?**

**A:** Yes. After the onboarding sessions were completed the application, handbook, policy manual and everything for this platform is available on the affiliate website page at <https://www.palatineparks.org/rccms/affiliates/>.

**Q: What staff is provided by the Park District for APG-SIG members?**

**A:** There are many staff behind the scenes that work diligently to help support and promote all APG-SIG members as a part of our commitment to community outreach and the pursuit of recreational opportunities for all residents regardless of their interests and needs. However, the core staffing support and main point of contact for all questions, concerns and support requests are communicated and facilitated through the assigned staff liaison position. A Who's Who section within the APG-SIG Program Policy and Procedures Manual indicating all the behind the scene staff and titles can be found on the park district website at [www.palatineparks.org](http://www.palatineparks.org) and within the affiliate page policy manual (Section 7.02) link at: <https://www.palatineparks.org/rccms/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/APG-SIG-7-Full-Document-1.pdf>.

**Q: Do APG-SIG classified Affiliates, such as Celtic Soccer, take care of their own fields?**

**A:** In this program, Affiliates are a totally separate organization from the park district registered with the State as a chartered company to do commerce. They have their own liability insurance, typically take their own registration and may even have their own paid staff. They require no support from the park district except provide the fields and space necessary to operate the program. They need the property owned and maintained by the park district to operate and thus they do not take care of the fields they use. An Affiliate is charged

recovery cost fees to maintain the fields they request and use as well as non-resident fees for non-residents participating in the program. Baseline support such as cutting the grass once a week and garbage pick up are not charged as those are considered baseline work that the park district always does to just maintain the park for public use. However, requests for support beyond the baseline such as additional set up and work of a tournament event are charged on a time and material basis in accordance to the most current schedule of fees and charges found as Exhibit A of the APG-SIG Program handbook.

**Q: What organization as currently operated fits into the Parent Booster Group membership classification?**

**A:** The Palatine Park District Tigersharks Swim Team would be the best current model and structure of a Parent Booster Club. One should consider the model of the Parent Booster Group as they are typically seen in high school sports. The Booster Parent Club is a separate entity comprised of parents of high school athletes and conduct fundraisers, volunteer at events and games and overall support the varsity sports. However, they are not a part of the high school. The APG-SIG is the same in principle where there is a separately formed and recognized parent organization, chartered within the state as a not-for-profit corporation and are supportive of the athletes and athletic teams and program and conducts fundraisers, volunteer, etc. but are not a part of the park district only the program itself is a park district program.

**Q: What would be different for a current group that is affiliated with the park district compared to becoming a member of the APG-SIG Program?**

**A:** The current operations and support from the park district fundamentally does not change. There are formal agreements and new policies and procedures written and organized. There are more requirements from a relationship and remaining in good standing with the park district, but the main core differences is legal implications of making sure organizations are either chartered and licensed to do commerce in the state and also that each group depending on their membership classification have the proper liability insurance coverages.

**Q: What is the difference between the Affiliate Group and the Parent Boosters Group?**

**A:** Lets first define this by stating how they are similar prior to differences. Both member classifications under the APG-SIG Program are registered and recognized as a separate organization from the park district and/or park district program, they have their own charter, by-laws and or governing board. They also have their own bank accounts if applicable. The main difference is that an Affiliate owns and operates their own core program and has their own sanctioned liability insurance coverage, whereas a Parent Booster group is under the auspices of the park district program with the exception of the separate decisions and activities formally sponsored by the Booster Club to support the park district program.

**Q: Who sets the participation fees as part of the APG-SIG program and membership?**

**A:** The only membership classification that has full control and decision making authority of setting participation fees is an Affiliate member. All other member classifications are technically park district programs, however for specific separate Parent Booster activities the booster group would set their own fees such as fundraising events.

Overall, participation fees are a part of the annual operating budget for the park district and have several components which user fees need to include. These include covering direct expenses, as well as a cost recovery model for covering a percentage of indirect expenses and various budget goals and expectations. Participation fees are discussed with the leadership of each group; however the final set fees and charges are the responsibility of the park district.

**Q: Is there a hierarchy with APG-SIG members as it relates to requesting and using park district facilities such as Falcon Park?**

**A:** Amongst current and in good standing APG-SIG members there is no priority or hierarchy in having the opportunity to use or rent any park district own and operated facility or park. That is not the intent of this platform. However, it is the policy of the park district that park district programs take first priority to ensure we are meeting our mission of serving the overall community with recreational needs and interests before special use or needs of specific groups. With that said, APG-SIG members would receive priority in requested use over private and non-resident groups of any available room and time at the time of the request by the member organization. Existing schedules and use would be honored, and this priority would not kick that group out of the already existing reservation.

**Q: Are the schools considered park district programs or are they an affiliate?**

**A:** Neither. These entities that are also supported by taxes paid by the residents are governmental partners with the park district and are structured and governed by various Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreements allowed by state statutes and a platform to save tax payer dollars by sharing infrastructure, buildings, equipment, etc. The park district already has several agreements of this type with the schools, village, library, township and Harper College. Those are separate agreements and don't apply nor are a part of the APG-SIG Program. However, they are very beneficial to the APG-SIG Program because it allows the park district to expand its inventory of available space, gyms and fields owned and operated by another government unit to be able to offer facilities to expand member supported programs and services.

**Q: Do Affiliate Groups have the option to do their own registration, or have it done through the district?**

**A:** Actually both. Affiliates that have their own technology, software and ability to receive and process registrations can do it on their own without any support from the park district. However, in cases where they do not have these elements or ability, they can opt-in within the Affiliate Template Agreement and receive this support, however a nominal cost recovery fee to cover the district time and technology support is charged to the affiliate member who opts in.

**Q: Is there anything stopping an outside soccer club or baseball league from another town becoming an affiliate? What protects the current affiliates from outside programs?**

**A:** APG-SIG members in good standing will be protected provided that they are the main program with a house league that serves the masses, aligns with the park districts mission and the meets or exceeds the required

residency rates that are in the agreements. Most outside, splinter or rouge teams or programs are dominated in participation by non-residents and would typically not meet the residency required levels. Travel programs that are tied to a recreational-house program with goals of equal access and participation are accepted as a recognized component of the APG-SIG membership. Outside programs can still apply but that does not mean they will be accepted. The parks are public property; so, it is difficult to exclude any group from using public property, however we're trying to create a structure to do it in an equitable and fair manner with efficiencies that help the APG-SIG members operate their respective programs. This is another key benefit of becoming an APG-SIG member.

**Q: As organizations are beginning to decide on the APG-SIG Program; are the services clear? Some of the more tenured volunteers will state or have been concerned that the service levels have gone down while what's on paper has gone up. How do we get to a place of stability because that influences the decision.**

**A:** This is exactly one of the reasons this program was developed and adopted by the Park Board of Commissioners. Over 25 years the relationships with affiliates have been variable, and without formal structure and any updated or relevant agreements. Yet, year in and year out the leadership within many groups and organizations change thus the relationship, expectations and history gets lost. The APG-SIG Program is intended to get everybody on board and keep dialogue open through the PALS program. The current staff are prepared and ready to facilitate and are excited to have this program to assist them in helping their assigned groups. As stated, part of the issues in the past have been a cause and symptom of turnover with affiliated group leadership and park district staff. While we can't control the turnover, we can control getting everyone on the same page and keeping an open dialogue. This is a living breathing document as things change or new ideas develop from the PALS group they can be incorporated into the current plan. Our hope is that this will keep everyone on an upward trajectory.

**Q: Would it be a greater benefit for the park district if everybody in the room became an affiliate? What is the point of having all the other options?**

**A:** Ideally yes that would be the simplest for the park district to administer and support. However, one has to look at the bigger picture as the park district has over 30 different groups that have a level of affiliation and need support from the park district. The various levels of membership classifications is to honor and respect the differences between various groups and organizations whether it be the activity or sport or club affiliation and activity. We have a swim team, equestrian riding team, bike club, pickleball club, etc. Having only one affiliate classification would exclude many of the small groups that have an interest but not the mass people of volunteers and participants that many of our youth athletic groups experience. We are trying to do something that will get people on the platform and into a model that fits for them. We also need to be flexible because we have other groups that are not just youth athletics. However, the idea is that everyone collectively forms an organization called Palatine Athletic Association where you would register with the state and buy your own collective insurance; the park district would support the entire group. This is the model they use in Schaumburg under the Schaumburg Athletic Association.

**Q: Does the criteria listed in the program regarding the governing board only apply to the affiliate and parent booster group member classifications?**

**A:** Yes, the criteria does apply only to these two groups, such items as errors and omissions liability coverage, registration with the State of Illinois, as well as by-laws governing the board are all part of the requirements since these two boards are separate from any park district insurance or transactions processed by the park district.

**Q: Is the volunteer coach training a new requirement?**

**A:** Some are new, and some are not. We use the National Youth Sports Association and want to get more consistent with first aid and concussion training. The ultimate goal should be consistent for everyone and that is to keep all involved safe and look out for their well-being and enjoyment in their chosen activity. In addition, any and all requirements when developed and implemented assist all groups and organizations by reducing the risk for injuries, lawsuit claims and relative insurance premiums.

**Q: How much are fees going to cost to procure the Park District services? Is there a set fee or is negotiable?**

**A:** As far as the types of fees there will be no difference than what is already assessed based on what is applicable to each group based on the types, levels and frequency in which support is requested and provided. The only new fees and charges from current practice is for those opt-in services available to members that are outlined in the template boilerplate agreements. With regard to the amount of fees charged, most support services are either on a per participant set dollar amount or on a time and material basis of true costs absorbed by the park district with each support request. Fees are charged for any request beyond the baseline of support the park district naturally conducts to maintain parks and facilities for public use. The park district attempts to follow a modest cost recovery program and to date on average the park district only collects about 40-45% of the total and true costs it expends to support APG-SIG members. The park district subsidizes the other percentage (more than half of total costs) as our realization that the group brings value from volunteers and other efforts that otherwise the park district would have to operate and support at full cost. However, all fees and charges are set to this cost recovery model and are not negotiable. A full schedule of applicable fees and charges are listed and updated annually within the Program Handbook Exhibit A. Fees do increase annually due to the absorbed increases in staff, equipment, supplies, and utilities.

**Q: In today's world the structure is that we pay a per player fee which covers some fees but are also charged extra fees for labor to put up home run fences. Will that structure remain the same?**

**A:** Yes, it will remain the same as the Park Board has asked for more organized and formal cost recovery. As of right now we are recovering an average of 40-45% of overall true costs that we are tracking. We are not looking to recover 100% but also need to recover some costs for the special requests which can result in overtime. Requests that go beyond what the park district performs to maintain a park and/or facility for open public use and charges for items requested by a special user group beyond what the public would use or needs.

**Q: What's the difference in cost that each membership classification pay per resident versus different classifications pay? Can you give an example cost wise per player? What is the benefit of becoming a parent group versus an affiliate that pays ala carte?**

**A:** Each member organization varies when it comes to support levels required by the park district to prepare and maintain the field or space used for the special use. For example, basketball is on a indoor court which already has a prepared floor surface, established play lines and only requires sweeping and mopping to maintain, whereas a soccer or baseball field outdoors requires field set up with lining, goal installation and other tasks to make each field effective for its use and safe for all to use. Thus, in theory the per player costs do vary even though the fee is charged for the same reason. Again, keep in mind that on average the fee the park district charges is typically between 40-45% of the total true cost of that support.

**Q: So, if all members become an affiliate then we should all be paying the same rate?**

**A:** Not necessarily. Even though all members are of the same membership classification, some affiliates may add opt-in services such as registration, marketing or financial bookkeeping support which would yield additional billing fees than those who do not opt-in. In addition, some affiliates may offer more or additional events and tournaments than others which again would lead to additional special requests for support at a time and material basis. However, from the standpoint of non-resident fees and capital fees in theory those would all be the same for each group.

**Q: Right now, many organizations operate with the goal to provide a low cost for our players. However, if members have pay to someone do our registration and bookkeeping that money shelled out will have to be passed on to the community. Correct?**

**A:** The goal and mission of the park district is aligned with providing recreational opportunities which are equal access, equal participation and affordable for the residents it serves, and this program and fee schedule will not jeopardize that. Again, the park district attempts to charge fees to special use groups and does so at a 40-45% rate of the true costs to operate. So, when one states passed onto the community, realistically we are already doing this since the remaining 55-60% of the total costs are being absorbed into the park district budget. Again, we recognize that this is taking into consideration that we should "subsidize" a portion to value what is accomplished in offering these programs to the community with volunteer efforts. Otherwise, the park district would need to hire additional staff to operate these on our own which would drive up costs and likely for many become too expensive to participate. Thus, the subsidized amount absorbed by the park district in theory is being partially absorbed by the taxpayers of the park district who most are not participating in these organizations and their respective activities. In the end, everyone who participates and even those who do not have to pay a fair share for the overall good of the community and the park district will always strive to be an affordable outlet for people to participate in these programs.

**Q: One of the concerns is that taking control of umpires, officials and insurance would result in us having to pay someone as that in not a volunteer job. What is the potential raise in our prices to accommodate a hired position or secure insurance?**

**A:** The park district understands and acknowledges the concern and that is a decision every group will have to make based on what they feel is in their best interest. Again, with over 30 groups supported by the park district and growing with new interest groups, the membership classifications are developed and offered to provide flexibility whether it is a factor of size and resources available for a particular group or decisions of which member classification to apply to based on related costs. Liability insurance may be a contributing factor for some groups to consider not becoming an affiliate and apply for a different classification as to be a park district program under the liability insurance umbrella of the park district. Each decision and choice has implications and consequences that may very well be cost driven and influence their membership choice.

**Q: Is the park district going to have a say in what the affiliates charge for fees/revenue?**

**A:** Again, true affiliate classified members of the APG-SIG Program are a separate organization from the park district with no connection legally or structurally to the park district. Thus, Affiliates determine and have all control over their respective fees, charges and revenues. All other membership classifications are technically park district programs, and all fees, charges and revenues are determined jointly by what the group leadership input is and what the park district requires and needs to meet cost recovery modeling and budget goals.

**Q: Is there something that shows what the cost breakdown for each group Affiliate versus Parent Advisory?**

**A:** There is no hierarchy or varying cost breakdown based on what membership classification an organization becomes. The core fees and charges per player remain constant regardless of which classification is chosen. Again, fees and charges vary by organization based on what maintenance needs and support is provided including the level, frequency and specialty work completed by park district staff. In addition, requests beyond the base package of support for public use will also facilitate different costs and breakdown of those costs. To gain an understanding please reference Exhibit A of the Program Handbook document located at <https://www.palatineparks.org/rccms/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Affiliate-Handbook-Full-Document.pdf>. This provides a cost breakdown per support service with the entire program and is not further broken down by specific membership classifications.

**Q: Currently, for our organization there is a per player capital fee of \$10 per player and a \$13 individual maintenance fee. Does that mean there is a cumulative fee of \$23 per player? Where does this funding go?**

**A:** Yes, but again keep in mind that these fees have been determined by several years of actual cost tracking by park district staff and further these fees reflect only 40-45% of the total costs incurred by the park district for the development of assets and maintenance costs to support them. The capital fee goes into a capital fund within the park district budget and is used to keep up with the aging infrastructure, build new fields, install or replace lights, renovate facilities and fields, etc. All of which require significant funding over time. Maintenance fees go into the park district operating fund to offset the costs to pay staff to maintain the infrastructure, pay for the equipment that staff uses to maintain, supplies such as drying agents for fields, and ever increasing utility costs. We understand that appears to be a lot of fees, but when looking at it from the bigger picture and over 30 groups supported and growing, the fees collected only represent a less than 50% recovery of true total costs.



**Q: The park district is in control of all the land, so how does a member organization get as much field space as we can since we are all growing?**

**A:** In the end, this program does not change any of that. The field allocation process currently used will remain the same. However, the intent and spirit of the program is to have each member organization have a seat at the PALS group and have open dialog and bigger picture discussions about all 30+ organizations being supported and growing as stated, and develop a fair, equitable and yes sometimes sacrificing system to ensure all interests and groups receive their fair share in proportion to the limited fields and related resources available. Park district staff have been working diligently to refine and improve the allocation process including working with groups to think about more non-traditional, thinking out of the box scheduling of practices and games. By choices of the leadership from all groups, over several years the expansion into multiple seasons within a calendar year has exploded. Additionally, add in the need and challenge for the park district to have effective seasonal opportunity to rest and improve fields especially turf fields. The park district is also trying to get groups not to over request fields for rain outs and cancellations as this limits availability even more and many times fields are empty and the lights are still on, which is a total waste of resources.

**Q: Is there a deadline to turn the application in?**

**A:** During the initial launch of the APG-SIG Program, the park district has set a date in accordance to the field allocation process for 2024. Since many organizations have various seasons, fiscal years and schedules of activities, the deadline has been set to have a completed application on file with the park district (does not need to be approved yet) prior to the field, court, space, facility and support allocation request process is permitted. Therefore, an organization must have an application filed before any support services are approved and allowed in 2024.

**Q: What happens if there are terms or conditions that are handled differently than what is designated in each membership boilerplate template agreement?**

**A:** Great question. The park district recognizes that there is a long history with groups of affiliation and many unique factors and characteristics that have evolved over time. This program is meant to acknowledge that and provide flexibility within the template agreements when such unique factors become apparent. However, with this history has also come many past practices and exclusions for select organizations that in the end caused confusion and inequitable support by the park district. Thus, if and when a unique and/or historical factor is apparent, and it maintains equitable support for all members, an addendum rider can be developed and attached to the boilerplate template agreement for the organization involved. All addendum riders need the full review and approval of the Executive Director and Park Board of Commissioners to be made part of a membership agreement with the APG-SIG Program.

**Q: Have any current affiliate or booster groups talked about taking on the same model as the Schaumburg Athletic Association?**

**A:** First of all, for those that are not familiar with this type of model, Schaumburg and many other communities and park districts around the state have formed and operate a youth sports and athletics association. With this structure all sports and athletic groups are combined into one corporation registered with the state and are one affiliate organization supported by the park district. Then each sport has a designated number of seats on the board level. If done in Palatine, under the APG-SIG Program, the Palatine Youth Sports Association would apply as a single organization and would be an affiliate approved member. The park district would still have the APG-SIG Program since we have many organizations that are not a youth sport or athletic program. Ideally, the vision would be to form this into the future, but feel we need to get the house in order, get agreements updated and relevant and potentially grow and develop into a potential joint association model.

**Q:** If our group does not have the volunteer base nor resources to handle registration, marketing or financial bookkeeping how do we sign up for support from park district, what is available and how much does it cost?

**A:** The APG-SIG Program and related agreements towards membership is set forth to be able to support and accommodate all sizes and interests of potential special interest user groups and member organizations. Potential members can use the opt-in support services model within the application and template boilerplate agreement. Simply check which support services desired to opt-in and once the application is approved the support will be secured and coordinated through the assigned park district staff liaison. The cost recovery on all opt-in support services that do not require extensive or special work, are minimal and follow the 40-45% recovery threshold previously mentioned in this FAQ. Thus, most opt-in support services range from \$1-\$3 per person registered within the program.