



LOMBARDPARKS.COM
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NATIONAL GOLD MEDAL AWARD APPLICATION 2019



Providing quality recreation opportunities for people to *enjoy life.*



WELCOME



The National Gold Medal Award honors communities throughout the United States that demonstrate excellence in long-range planning, resource management and innovative approaches to delivering superb park and recreation services with fiscally sound business practices. The Lombard Park District has been a finalist for the National Gold medal three times, and the national winner in 2009.

Take a moment to learn about what makes the Lombard Park District an outstanding agency that creates quality recreation opportunities for people to enjoy life.



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OUTSTANDING AGENCY

What makes your agency “Outstanding”? Please cite 3 specific examples that capture the outstanding nature of your agency as you serve your unique community.

RECOGNIZED EXCELLENCE: The District has been recognized on a state and national level for excellence in operations and services. Recognitions include NRPA’s CAPRA Accreditation, Illinois Distinguished Accreditation, GFOA’s Budget and Financial Reporting Awards, 5 Star Aquatic Safety Awards, and 1st Place State Marketing Showcase Honors. These accomplishments provide recognition and set the foundation of the District’s exceptional services to the community.

LILACIA PARK: The District is home to world-renowned, 8.5 acre horticultural showcase, Lilacia Park, containing over 700 lilacs, 30,000 tulips, flowering trees, a greenhouse, a coach house dating back to the civil war, and .57 miles of ADA accessible, permeable brick pathways. Over 15,000 people descend upon Lilacia during Lilac Time, a free two week celebration. Lilacia is a constant reminder of Lombard’s commitment to social equity, open space and conservation.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY LEADS TO NEW ATHLETIC CENTER: Community surveys confirmed Lombard’s desire for a universally designed athletic facility without asking for additional tax dollars. Ten years of financial planning allowed this \$9 million jewel to be constructed with a focus on the health and wellness of our residents.



Lilacia is a constant reminder of Lombard’s commitment to social equity, open space and conservation.





COMMUNITY IMPACT



We make it a priority to include all our special needs residents the opportunity to participate in our programs.

Tell us your story about how your agency positively impacts the community you serve. Share with us 5 actions or activities your agency has been involved with or undertaken in the past three years.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS: Year-round services meet the wellness needs of our patrons, but most notably, a newly constructed Athletic Center has provided services to 92,690 since its July 1 opening. Amenities include fitness studios, indoor track, and a 4,800 sq. ft. fitness center. Two full size basketball courts also provide volleyball, soccer, pickleball and batting cages.

SPECIAL RECREATION AND INCLUSION FOR ALL: Along with our Special Recreation Association, NEDSRA, we make it a priority to include all our special needs residents the opportunity to participate in our programs. Between 2016 & 2018, 550 individuals participated in a total of 3,677 programs.

COMMUNITY-WIDE FREE EVENTS: FREE special events attract 35,000+ attendees annually. Many events are co-sponsored with service groups and local businesses which epitomizes a true community effort.

WE DELIVER FUN: Our Party Wagon trailers provide tables, chairs, tent, sound system, games, and grill. The trailer is dropped off to the resident's home for their event/block party for FREE! Trailers were provided for 573 events between 2016 & 2018.

TLC CAMP: A free camp that provides children with cancer the joy of being kids and not patients. Partnering with the Lombard Women's Club this camp provides a magical experience.





SUPPORT & ENGAGEMENT

There are few resources more critical than public support, citizen involvement, and staff engagement. Please identify one outstanding or innovative example for each of these three characteristics.

PUBLIC SUPPORT-BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME:

The District opened its new athletic center on July 1, 2018 and received overwhelming community support. This facility was the product of stakeholder meetings, focus groups and surveys. A goal of obtaining 1,000 members at six months was shattered within weeks of the grand opening. Currently there are 3,800+ members, averaging 515 daily visits, of which 89.4% are residents.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT: Volunteers donate thousands of hours annually that contribute to the success of events, programs, facilities, and services. Recently, our community participated in a series of focus groups regarding the District's golf course. Citizen feedback led to rebranding, name change, fairway improvements, clubhouse functions, and enhanced menu to enrich the golfer's experience as we open the new Lombard Golf Course this spring.

STAFF ENGAGEMENT: While staff is involved at the local, state, and national level, staff engagement and teamwork was extremely evident throughout the CAPRA process. This endeavor began with all-staff brainstorming sessions where hidden talents emerged and narratives were written at weekly meetings. The achievement of scoring 100% compliance in all standards was the ultimate validation. The accreditation process continues as staff maintains the CAPRA standards of excellence to ensure a high level of accountability and services to our residents.





RESULTS & OUTCOMES



Over the last year, 96% of respondents agreed the District offers high quality programs and services.

Public entities have been increasingly called upon to demonstrate the results of their services and practices to decision-makers and the general public. Please share with us 3 results, impacts, or outcomes you have measured and background about the benefit and how results were secured.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT: This survey was distributed to all 17,500 District households. Over 2,400 surveys were returned and established 12 major capital projects. Since receiving this list from the community, the agency has prioritized these projects on an annual basis. With the completion of a new athletic center, all 12 major capital projects were completed. Other projects included ADA accessible paths, ballfield improvements, a dog park partnership, conservation efforts, and more.

PUBLIC TRUST: The District continually emphasizes the importance of transparency to the community. Subsequently, we adhere to best practices set forth by the Government Finance Officers Association and are among only 3% of park districts in the State of Illinois to receive both the Distinguished Budget Presentation and the Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting Awards.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEE: In addition to program surveys, the agency selects 100 random patrons quarterly to complete a performance based survey. Findings are shared with our elected Board at a public meeting. Over the last year, 96% of respondents agreed the District offers high quality programs and services. This process allows the District to measure effectiveness of its operations and determine any necessary modifications. Our commitment to customer service is reinforced with a satisfaction guarantee that achieved 99.86% of 28,628 registrations during 2018.



CREATIVITY & INNOVATION

Park and recreation agencies have long been known for creativity and innovation. One of the desirable outcomes of the Gold Medal program is to identify these valuable efforts and approaches. Please identify and briefly explain 3 innovations implemented by your agency within the last 3 years.

ACCESSIBLE SENSORY GARDEN: In collaboration with the Lombard Historical Society the District created and contributed \$10,000+ for a sensory garden focused on ADA accessibility for green thumb enthusiasts with physical and sensory disabilities. This therapeutic garden was visited by 1,920 guests during 2018, its first year of operation. The garden is located at the Sheldon Peck Homestead, a verified site of the Underground Railroad. The homestead and garden provides participants with special needs hands-on educational opportunities for an increased connection with nature.

EYE IN THE SKY: Drone technology was initially used to provide updates to our residents and elected officials during the 2017/18 [construction of our new athletic facility](#). Drone use quickly evolved at the District and has become a creative tool frequently used in our park system. Added benefits of drone footage include [marketing of services](#), assessing erosion at our golf course along the DuPage River, evaluating storm damage to parks and facilities, and inspecting/monitoring other turf and forestry areas Districtwide. Since April of 2017, our licensed drone pilot has logged 127 hours of total flight time.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS: Looking to decrease the \$25,500+ cost associated with water usage for our aquatic facility, the Village of Lombard provides an annual grant to the Park District of \$12,000 from their Hotel/Motel Tax proceeds. In return, the Park District opens our award winning water park to any guest staying at any hotel in the community at NO COST.





SOCIAL EQUITY



In what ways has your agency addressed the NRPA Pillar of Social Equity in the last 3 years?

We identified barriers that limit access including physical, social/mental abilities, geographic, age, and cultural hardships.

SPECIAL RECREATION: Lombard is a founding member of the Northeast DuPage Special Recreation Association; a consortium of 11 communities in DuPage County. This partnership provides a vehicle for programming and facilities for those with physical and mental disabilities. The District has committed \$1,858,382 during the past three years.

COMMUNITY ACCESS: 450+ acres of parks and natural areas, 14.32 miles of accessible paths, and fitness stations which provide recreational opportunities regardless of ability or income.
Scholarship and Programming: In addition to free programs, the District allocates \$10,000+ in scholarship annually to participants of all ages, including active military families needing financial assistance for recreation services.

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HEALTH & WELLNESS

In what ways has your agency addressed the NRPA Pillar of Health and Wellness in the last 3 years?

HEALTHY LOMBARD: Co-founder and active member of a community-wide initiative to tackle childhood obesity and promote healthy lifestyles.

HEALTHY MINDS/HEALTHY BODIES: Offered to military veterans providing a fitness membership, personal training, and monthly networking/counseling opportunities.

ILLINOIS SAVE A CHILD'S LIFE NETWORK: Consortium that safeguards children and young adults from the devastating effects of substance abuse and educates them on healthier alternatives.

"NO SMOKING" ORDINANCE: The District banned E-cigarettes and all tobacco product Districtwide in partnership with the Reality Illinois Teen Advisory Panel.

DISTRICT FITNESS FOCUS: We opened an affordable athletic facility containing a fitness center open seven days a week, 364 days per year. Programming includes 50 weekly fitness classes, personal training, wellness counseling, and free health fairs.



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CONSERVATION



In what ways has your agency addressed the NRPA Pillar of Conservation in the last 3 years?

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN: Focuses on Pond Overflow Management and drought-tolerant natural plantings for healthier ecosystems.

POLLINATING HABITATS: Established 13 Monarch Butterfly Waystations.

GREEN INITIATIVE: Utilizes organic weed killers and cleaning supplies for environmental protection.

UTILITY CONSERVATION: Replaced six furnaces, 96% efficiency (50% savings); LED fixture replacement plan (\$178,000 grant received).

RECYCLING AND EDUCATION EFFORTS: Collection locations for eyeglasses, tires, tree stumps, office supplies, batteries, holiday lights, etc.

TREE REPLACEMENT PLAN: Planting 1,600 new trees due to the Emerald Ash Borer's destruction of 800+ Ash Trees.

BROADVIEW SLOUGH: 60+ acres of dedicated, environmentally-friendly area for residents to enjoy natural wetlands for preservation, leisure and education.

LINCOLN PARK ZOO'S URBAN WILDLIFE INSTITUTE: Partner in research and preservation of local wildlife in our parks.



CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

What challenges has your community and/or agency experienced over the past 3 years and what steps or actions have you taken to resolve these challenges? Include agency role with the challenge, types of actions/steps taken, and effectiveness of approach.

CLUB REC: The School District's previous before/after school provider was unable to keep up with the growing demand for these essential services for working parents. They turned to the Park District for the 2018-2019 school year to create a program at five schools that now serves over 200 students and their families, ultimately increasing enrollment by 62%. The new program accommodated all waitlisted families and allows for future expansion to satisfy the growing demand for these services in our community.

THREAT TO OPEN SPACE: A sister government agency bordering our most cherished park, passed a referendum to construct a new building needing additional park land in conflict with the District's vision to preserve open space. The Park Board established parameters for discussion and development; to date, no additional park land has been used for their project.

FLOODING AT THE GOLF COURSE: As the golf industry struggles nationwide, the Lombard Golf Course adds flooding to the list of challenges as it borders the DuPage River. As the number of rounds decrease, over the past three years the District has dedicated 500+ man hours to the installation of 9,378 feet of multi-flow piping in an effort to mitigate the down time at a cost exceeding \$32,000 in material alone.

