



LEXINGTON

Adopt-A-Park

ADOPT-A-PARK PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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WELCOME

Welcome to Lexington Parks & Recreation! Lexington Parks & Recreation manages more than 100 parks, including Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Regional Parks and Natural Areas. The division also manages facilities that include community centers, pools, golf courses and visual and performing art venues. Lexington provides more than 70 miles of trails and many other natural areas.

Lexington Parks & Recreation is dedicated to inspiring individuals to imagine and pursue greatness by building community and enriching life through parks, programs and play. Taking in our community's changing needs and demographics, the 2018 Your Parks, Our Future Master Plan represents the culmination of the master planning process and will provide guidance for parks, recreation, open space and trails in Lexington for the next 10 years and beyond.

Lexington Parks & Recreation

Vision: Inspire imagination and exploration

Mission: Build community and enrich life through parks, programs and play

Values: Community, Stewardship, Inclusion, Collaboration, Innovation

Lexington residents are known for working hard to make our community a better place. The Adopt-A-Park Program was created to provide opportunities for businesses, organizations, and community members to partner with each other and Lexington Parks & Recreation to improve and maintain neighborhood parks and other park amenities.

Lexington Parks & Recreation celebrates our parks and people. This is the original homeland of diverse Native peoples who arrived more than 10,000 years ago. The most recent among them were the Shawnee and the Cherokee. Enslaved persons and frontier pioneers cultivated the communities we enjoy today. Venerable trees have stood centuries here connecting those generations before us to the opportunities in front of us. The future of this land is in our hands.

SECTION 1: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Lexington Adopt-A-Park Program is an opportunity for businesses, organizations and community members to partner with each other and Lexington Parks & Recreation to improve

and maintain parks and other parks amenities.

Adopt-A-Park Partners serve as key community partners and supporters for a park by making an ongoing commitment, organizing a community-based volunteer group, and by being inclusive, encouraging and welcoming to all park stakeholders.

Partners can bring much-needed volunteers, technical expertise, in-kind donations and private resources to the parks. We also recognize that partnerships bring more than resources; they also build stewardship, encourage the enthusiasm and passion that Partners have for parks they treasure, and ultimately improve/grow greater effectiveness, innovation, sustainability and creativity to the park system.

Not only will Adopt-A-Park Partners have the opportunity to meet new friends who share their love for parks, Partners will have the freedom to unleash their creativity and add their unique perspective to the adopted park. By doing so, Adopt-A-Park Partners will not only improve the park itself but also enhance the overall quality of life in Lexington.

Adopting a park is not only about enhancing the community; it's also about helping the planet. Green spaces are vital for the health of our planet, and by adopting a park, Partners actively contribute to the protection and preservation of nature.

As a participant of Lexington's Adopt-A-Park Program, Partners will have a chance to make a lasting impact, foster connections and contribute to the betterment of our city. Join the movement and be a part of creating a greener, more vibrant and inclusive environment for all.

Leadership Lexington

The Leadership Lexington Class of 2023-24 chose to champion the creation of an Adopt-A-Park Program for Lexington. This decision stems from a shared commitment to community responsibility and a desire to enhance the city's green spaces. Recognizing the vital role parks play in fostering community bonds, the class aims to encourage citizen and business involvement in the maintenance, improvement and use of these public areas. Through the Adopt-A-Park initiative, the class hopes to instill a sense of pride and stewardship within the community, fostering environmental sustainability and well-being.

Adopt-A-Park Mission

To create real and meaningful opportunities for businesses, organizations and community

members to enhance Lexington's parks. Through community-wide stewardship and commitment, we will create and preserve spaces for all to enjoy.

Adopt-A-Park Vision

To empower our community to take an active role in caring for and enhancing our parks. We aim to foster strong partnerships between our residents and Lexington Parks & Recreation, promote sustainability, inclusivity, diversity, and create a lasting legacy of well-loved, community-led green spaces.

SECTION 2: COMMON QUESTIONS

1. Who can adopt a park?

Adopt-A-Park Partners are regular park users, neighborhood groups, and nearby residents and businesses who are interested in improving a park.

2. What are the expectations (investment, time commitment)?

A commitment to take ownership in the improvement of Lexington's parks, which includes a variety of options. A business, organization, or community member will, at minimum, commit to the following:

- Organize a community-based group.
- Conduct outreach and encourage park users and neighbors to get involved.
- Coordinate and share opportunities with existing neighborhood associations, friends of parks groups, and other interested volunteer organizations as applicable to a project or park.
- Serve as a community stakeholder for the park.
- Work to improve, activate, and/or maintain the park.
- Continuously communicate with Lexington Parks and Recreation.

Lexington Parks & Recreation will offer a wide range of opportunities to better Lexington's parks that best align with an organization or individual's resources and availability.

Adoption opportunities exist at varying commitment levels and can apply to parks, facilities, trails or specialized areas. Commitment can range from financial investment to volunteerism/in-kind opportunities.

3. What parks are available for adoption?

Lexington Parks & Recreation offers more than 100 parks, including Mini Parks,

Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Regional Parks and Natural Areas. The Division also manages facilities that include community centers, pools, golf courses and visual and performing art venues. Lexington provides more than 70 miles of trails and many other natural areas.

The Lexington Adopt-A-Park Program is primarily focused on empowering our community to take an active role in caring for and enhancing our parks. The available list of parks and areas for adoption is maintained by Parks & Recreation and can be shared with Adopt-A-Park applicants.

4. What are the benefits of becoming an Adopt-A-Park Partner?

Most importantly, Adopt-A-Park Partners enjoy a sense of pride in championing our parks. Lexington Parks & Recreation considers Adopt-A-Park Partners a key stakeholder for the park and provides opportunities and support for volunteer maintenance and park improvement projects. Partners are eligible for certain resources provided by Lexington Parks & Recreation such as tools, and educational opportunities. Additionally, Partners will be recognized by Lexington Parks & Recreation via park signage and digital activation (please see Section 6 for more details).

5. What kind of projects/activities can Adopt-A-Park Partners do?

Commitments entail one or more of the following:

1. Park Cleanup/Maintenance
2. Access to Play
3. Programming
4. Park Beautification

** Please see Section 4 for specific opportunities.*

SECTION 3: RESPONSIBILITIES

Lexington Parks & Recreation:

1. Maintains listing of available Adopt-A Park opportunities.
2. Reviews and approves Adopt-A-Park Project application promptly after submission.
3. Establishes Lexington Parks & Recreation Liaison for the Adopt-A-Park Partner.
4. Communicates plans for the selected park.

5. Coordinates Event dates with Adopt-A-Park Partner.
6. Trains Adopt-A-Park Partner.
7. Maintains master file of all volunteer paperwork.
8. Supports Adopt-A-Park Partner by coordinating and providing supervisory staff for select Events and/or providing resources to facilitate the completion of the Project Event when necessary.
9. Installs one sign in a prominent location recognizing the Adopt-A-Park Partner following the completion of the first qualifying Event.
10. Reviews Adopt-A-Park Partner on an annual basis.

Adopt-A-Park Partner:

1. Organizes a community-based group.
2. Submits application (Section 5).
3. Determines park or area to adopt in conjunction with Lexington Parks & Recreation.
4. Coordinates and shares opportunities with existing neighborhood associations, friends of parks groups and other interested volunteer organizations as applicable to a project or park.
5. Establishes Adopt-A-Park Project (Section 4).
6. Completes volunteer participation requirements, including orientation, training and reporting.
7. Submits service dates and proposed scope of work in advance to Lexington Parks & Recreation. Service date deadlines vary by Adopt-A-Park Project.
8. Submits support request in writing to Lexington Parks & Recreation in advance of qualifying Event(s). Support requests can include but are not limited to equipment, services or staff provided by Lexington Parks & Recreation. Support deadlines vary by Adopt-A-Park Project (if applicable).
9. Completes individual Adopt-A-Park Project commitments as defined by each Project in Section 4.
10. Completes a renewal form on an annual basis.

SECTION 4: ADOPT-A-PARK PROJECTS

Adopt-A-Park Partners are regular park users, neighborhood groups, and nearby community members and businesses who are interested in improving their park. You can adopt an entire

park, pathway section, trail, sidewalk or a particular area in a park, including:

- Playgrounds
- Bring Back the Bluegrass sites and other naturalized areas
- Trees/shrubs
- Trails
- Undeveloped park land
- Picnic areas
- Picnic shelters
- Landscaped areas/planting beds
- Bridges
- Facilities or portions of facilities (gymnasium, classroom, performance or gallery space)

Adopt-A-Park Partners will commit to one or more of the following Projects for a minimum of two years. Details of each commitment are linked below each opportunity. Each Project requires a set number of qualifying Events annually. Projects presented are intended to give Partners a variety of options. Organizational size and volunteer availability will help in determining the appropriate Project and park, and Lexington Parks & Recreation will help identify best fits. Lexington Parks & Recreation will grant final approval.

1. Park Cleanup/Maintenance

Regular maintenance is crucial to preserving the aesthetic appeal of the park, providing a welcoming environment for visitors and promoting the long-term sustainability of park infrastructure. Activities are aimed at keeping a park clean, safe and well-maintained for the benefit of the community. This involves a range of tasks such as:

- Litter pickup
- Leaf raking, invasive species and debris removal (dead grass, tree limbs, vegetation, wind debris)
- General maintenance landscaping
- Spreading of mulch, playground safety surface
- Trail maintenance
- Cleanup of shelters and play structures
- Reporting park hazards, graffiti, illegal activity, storm damage, injured or dead animals
- Horse board fence painting

****See Cleanup and Maintenance Project Sheet for specific requirements.***

2. Access to Play

Organizational efforts to ensure that all communities have inclusive, equitable and enjoyable recreational opportunities. These initiatives can range from creating amenities like a hopscotch board to more comprehensive strategies. Program opportunities require approval and coordination with Parks and Recreation and neighborhood stakeholders.

Options include:

- Sports/Fitness equipment
- Musical/Arts equipment
- Visual cue boards
- Play murals

****See Access to Play Project Sheet for specific requirements.***

3. Programming

These programs are designed to meet the diverse needs and interests of the community, fostering engagement, social interaction and the overall well-being of residents. Park programming can include the planning, the organization and/or the implementation of various activities, events and services within a park or recreational area. Programming can encompass a wide range of activities:

- Sponsoring existing programs or events
- Recreational Sports leagues
- Cultural or arts events
- Educational workshops
- Community festivals

****See Programming Project Sheet for specific requirements.***

4. Park Beautification

Creating or enhancing current spaces to create an attractive and enjoyable space for the community and a more inviting environment for visitors. Opportunities are aimed at improving a park's aesthetics and contributing to the overall well-being of the surrounding community.

Park beautification efforts may include:

- Planting flowers or trees
- Installation or maintenance of flower beds (including weeding, watering and removing invasive species)
- Adding decorative elements such as benches or art installations

**See Park Beatification Project Sheet for specific requirements.*

SECTION 5: GETTING STARTED

How to Apply

1. Review the Adopt-A-Park Projects in Section 4.
2. Gather your friends, family, neighbors, colleagues or organization and determine how much time you are willing to spend and what type of Project may fit your group best.
3. Designate a Volunteer Leader and fill out the Adopt-A-Park Application Form (found following this paragraph).
4. Indicate your preferred adoption site preference and Adopt-A-Park Project choice on the Adopt-A-Park Application Form. Lexington Parks & Recreation will work with you to determine if the Project scope and adoption site are a good fit.

All adoptions are on a first-come, first-serve basis. The Volunteer Leader will be contacted upon approval to be oriented by staff so they may begin to work at their adopted site. Applications may be denied if frequency is insufficient for adoption site needs.

Training

The Adopt-A-Park Liaison from Lexington Parks & Recreation will train the Adopt-A-Park contact or representative in basic tasks that pertain to the Adopt-A-Park Project scope or activity. Starter materials and equipment will be provided as needed and by agreement with Lexington Parks and Recreation. Additional support (staff, equipment, resources) must be requested in advance. Volunteers wishing to use their own tools, material or equipment will inform the Adopt-A-Park Liaison who will consult with the Lexington Parks and Recreation team for guidance and approval. Volunteers are required to understand and abide by safety guidelines and must abide by all Lexington Parks & Recreation rules and ordinances.

Tracking Hours

Volunteers must keep track of hours spent volunteering and report the hours to Lexington Parks & Recreation in the Work and Cleanup Report. Lexington Parks & Recreation documents this information and tabulates total yearly hours, which help the Adopt-A-Park Program in the following ways:

- Determines if the Adopt-A-Park Partner is meeting the requirements.
- Justifies the need for tools, supplies, equipment and support.
- Accounts for total donate time to the city for statistical reports.
- Confirms the growth or decline in volunteer participation.
- Assists students that are required to perform community service hours.
- Shows the need for park care.

SECTION 6: RECOGNITION, RENEWAL AND RETIREMENT

Recognition

In addition to a sense of pride in championing Lexington's parks, Adopt-A-Park Partners will be formally recognized via:

- A sign with the name and/or logo of the group/business/organization at the front of the adopted park after completion of one Adopt-A-Park Project. The sign will be installed by Lexington Parks and Recreation and displayed as long as there is consecutive service.
- The Lexington Parks & Recreation website after completion of one Adopt-A-Park Project. The Adopt-A-Park Partner will be displayed as long as there is consecutive service.
- Lexington Parks & Recreation social media accounts after completion of one Adopt-A-Park Project.
- Invitation to Lexington Parks and Recreation volunteer recognition event.
- Completion of volunteer service hours (where applicable).

Renewal

Adopt-A-Park Partners must complete an Adopt-A-Park Renewal Form every two years. Lexington Parks & Recreation will review the services completed by the Adopt-A-Park Partner to ensure the group is in compliance with the agreement before approving renewal. If an Adopt-A-Park Partner wishes to relinquish an adoption site and apply for a new location, a new Adopt-A-Park Application Form must be completed.

Retirement

Adopt-A-Park Partners will relinquish their adoption site at the end of two-year term if an Adopt-A-Park Renewal Form is not completed. If a Partner wishes to end its term in advance, the Partner must submit an explanation in writing to its Adopt-A-Park Liaison. Failure to do so will result in a Partner's permanent retirement from the Adopt-A-Park Program.

SECTION 7: POLICIES

- Adopt-A-Park Partners must abide by all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations, and all written and verbal guidelines, directions and instructions of Lexington Parks & Recreation.
- Requests to adopt specific sites are processed on a first-come, first-serve basis. If more than one organization simultaneously requests the same site, a lottery will be held to select which organization will adopt that particular site.
- Lexington Parks & Recreation reserves the right to designate specific adoption sites for special consideration (i.e., because of safety concerns, etc.).
- Adopt-A-Park Partners may not modify or add to the existing landscape or site design plan without the consent of park staff.
- Adopt-A-Park Partners shall exercise reasonable and prudent judgment in their volunteer performance. Small children and pets may present a safety problem at adopted sites and should not be involved in many adoption activities.
- The City, as a municipal corporation, enjoys governmental immunity and, therefore, is not liable to the volunteer for injury to person or property while the adopter is performing his or her duties.
- Adopt-A-Park Partners who are injured while performing their duties should seek medical attention from a provider of their choice. Any accident or injury shall be reported to a representative from the Lexington Parks & Recreation within 24 hours.
- Adopt-A-Park signage is the property of the Lexington Parks & Recreation and will be installed, modified and removed only by designated staff.

SECTION 8: SAFETY GUIDELINES

Adopt-A-Park Partners should consider the following when performing any Adopt-A-Park Project or activity:

Do's

- Lift all objects with your legs, not your back.
- Wear light or bright-colored clothing, hard-soled shoes and sturdy work gloves.
- Use sunblock or wear a hat.
- Drink plenty of liquids.
- Use all equipment, supplies and materials safely.
- Report any/all facility and maintenance needs to Lexington Parks & Recreation staff.
- Tie bags tightly before placing in trash receptacles.
- Wear personal protective equipment (such as gloves, safety glasses, ear plugs, etc.) at all times.
- Handle sharp objects with care; children should NOT pick up broken glass.
- Work only during approved hours.
- Be aware of park users and traffic while working.
- Work with a partner when possible.
- Carry small first aid kit.
- Make sure that all volunteers in your business or organization are familiar with these safety precautions.
- Have at least one adult supervisor for every five minors.

Don'ts

- Don't overexert yourself. Be sure to take breaks, drink liquids and dress appropriately for the weather.
- Don't bring small children or pets along on projects unless they can be closely supervised.
- Don't run, throw objects or engage in horseplay.
- Don't stomp on bags. Injuries may occur from broken glass or sharp objects.
- Don't pick up materials you suspect might be hazardous, such as needles, or drug paraphernalia. Report them to Lexington Parks and Recreation staff. Call the local police station (859.258.3600 for non-emergencies or 911 for emergencies) and give the precise location of the material.

Miscellaneous

- Students and minors must be supervised at all times.
- Review safety rules carefully with all volunteers and participants before any activity.
- Wash paint brushes in a sink; do not pour excess paint down the drain.
- Report any safety hazards to Lexington Parks & Recreation staff.
- Add any additional safety precautions you feel appropriate.

- Wash your hands thoroughly when you complete your work.