

LOB #164:

COMMUNITY USE OF PUBLIC ATHLETIC FACILITIES

Purpose

Community Use of Public Athletic Facilities supports and facilitates pro-social activities which contribute to healthy youth and adults and promote community connectivity through the fair and equitable distribution and accessibility of County athletic fields and gymnasiums. NCS works with individual sports groups and sports organizations, the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA), Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), other County agencies, and the general public to facilitate access to athletic resources in Fairfax County.

Guided by Board of Supervisor approved allocation policies, the Community Use of Public Athletic Facilities section schedules 916 ball fields and 250 gyms, (primarily owned by Fairfax County Park Authority and FCPS) to community athletic organizations and groups. Centralized scheduling of these resources enables the largest amount of Fairfax County residents to have access to fields and gyms and maximize the use of available resources in a fair and equitable manner.

Description

Coordinated Use of Public Athletic Facilities is a business unit in the Access to Community Resources and Programs (Access) division. Through the work of Community Use of Public Athletic Facilities, more than 250,000 youth and adults (duplicated annual participant count) involved in sports in the County are able to be served. The primary functions of this section are to allocate athletic facilities in the County fairly and equitably; coordinate volunteer involvement to ensure the successful maintenance and operation of community fields and gymnasiums; and provide residents of Fairfax County with a variety of organized sports and athletic programs by coordinating services with athletic councils and community athletic organizations. As a result of this work, people are connected to their communities through sports and facilitate the pursuit of leisure activities while promoting healthy lifestyles and good character.

Two programs have been established to monitor use of public facilities. Staff of the Building Director Program monitors community use of indoor facilities. Organizations using Fairfax County Public School gymnasiums are required to have an NCS volunteer building director or a paid building director onsite during assigned community use hours. This program is critical to ensure the community's use of FCPS gymnasiums are adequately monitored to reduce the amount of facility damage and handle participant problems that occur. Over 3,000 volunteers are certified as Volunteer Building Directors.

The second program is the Area Monitor Program which conducts random patrols and site visits at fields throughout the County in response to citizen and user complaints regarding non-compliance with facility use guidelines. Due to the number of fields and gyms, a Volunteer Field Monitor (VFM) Program was recently developed to supplement and support the area monitor program. It is anticipated that over 5,000 VFMs will be trained and certified by NCS and supplied by the youth and adult sports organizations.

Community Use of Public Athletic Facilities also supports the Fairfax County Athletic Council (FCAC), as well as various sports-specific councils, which often require weekend and evening meeting attendance. The FCAC is a Board appointed advisory council, offering guidance to NCS on how to improve service and address community sports issues. The FCAC and the various sports councils address issues that are directly related to their sport or their district and recommend or implement solutions to problems affecting sports participation in Fairfax. One of the most critical tasks performed by members of the FCAC is providing a fair venue for sports organizations to express grievances with the allocation policy and to provide an appeals process and appeals hearings to resolve usage conflicts.

Department of Neighborhood and Community Services

Community Use of Public Athletic Facilities partners with County sports organizations to provide financial support to student populations who otherwise could not financially be able to participate in youth sports programs. The Youth Sports Scholarship program is open to youth from low-income families that meet certain eligibility criteria. This program provides registration fee scholarships or equipment vouchers to facilitate youth participating in organized sports programs offered through Fairfax County community sports organizations. This support is provided by a subsidy, added to locally developed scholarship programs administered by individual organizations. The scholarship program allows for up to \$150,000 to be given out to eligible youth sports organizations to support community members who meet the economic criteria by supplementing registration fees.

Fairfax County collects \$5.50 per participant per season, youth and adult. Additionally, all tournament teams are charged \$15 per team. The revenue from these fees provides partial funding for the following:

- Synthetic turf field development,
- Synthetic turf field replacement,
- Diamond field maintenance,
- Custodial expenses for FCPS gym use, and
- Youth Sports Scholarship program.

Benefits

Physical activity and connectedness: Athletic fields and gymnasiums give the community an opportunity for physical activity and to connect to one another and their community. Utilizing these resources allows for community engagement and connectivity. The policies that guide the allocation of athletic facilities ensures fair and equitable scheduling for all County residents to have access to facilities regardless of age, gender, race or economic status. This allows individuals to have a safe and desirable place to play and engage in healthy activity.

Community partnerships: By establishing strong partnerships with community-based sports organizations, the construction, maintenance, and improvements to athletic fields and gyms are coordinated and done in a timely manner. Through the Adopt a Field program, groups are able to contribute to additional improvements and development of athletic facilities. More than \$6 million has been contributed from community groups for synthetic turf field development. Additionally, through the Volunteer Building Director and Field Monitor programs, the community is able to protect and monitor the County's resources of athletic fields and gyms.

Mandates

This Line of Business is not mandated.

Department of Neighborhood and Community Services

Trends and Challenges

Field quality and playability: As the athletic community has increasingly focused on field quality and playability, Fairfax County has supported the development of synthetic turf fields throughout the County by encouraging funding partnerships with public and private entities. Fairfax County has increased its total turf field inventory to 86 fields, many of which were made possible by partnerships with sports organizations. Due to the significant popularity and demand for these fields, scheduling is an on-going challenge.

Inventory: The current inventory of gymnasiums and fields does not meet community demand. There is a shortage of indoor gym space, rectangular fields, and diamond ball fields. A Park Authority Needs Assessment is underway, and it is anticipated the results will help identify the level of need in these areas.

Scheduling variables: Successful scheduling (meeting the exact request of the customer) is subject to many shifting variables: geography, traffic, the age of the customer, the unique needs of each sport or activity, the time of year, weather just to name a few and becomes more complex and challenging.

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #164: Community Use of Public Athletic Facilities			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$998,496	\$952,909	\$983,731
Operating Expenses	1,355,855	1,637,153	1,385,926
Total Expenditures	\$2,354,351	\$2,590,062	\$2,369,657
General Fund Revenue	\$687,629	\$724,784	\$708,728
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$1,666,722	\$1,865,278	\$1,660,929
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	10 / 10	10 / 10	10 / 10
Total Positions	10 / 10	10 / 10	10 / 10

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Sports Participants	264,253	262,932	260,735	263,342	265,976
Cost per Sports Participant	\$9.19	\$9.83	\$9.79	\$9.85	\$10.02
Percent of Satisfied Participants	90%	87%	78%	80%	85%

The FY 2015 customer satisfaction rate was 78 percent. This is a decrease from FY 2014 and FY 2013; however, given the nature of the business virtually no group receives their exact request unchanged due to inventory limitations.