



## Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space Department

# Policies and Procedures

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<b>Author:</b> Al Rogers, Assistant Director	<b>Effective Date:</b> January 26, 2007
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### I PURPOSE

Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space Department is committed to providing its residents with a range of parks and recreation opportunities to improve health and quality of life. People of all ages and abilities can access a variety of physical and non-physical programs and activities at the County's numerous indoor and outdoor facilities. An essential purpose of the Fees and Charges Policy is to provide a distinction between different types of activity as related to the principles of funding and subsidization. The Guiding Principles outlined in this document and approved by the Board of County Commissioners are the foundation for establishing a fair, objective and equitable means to distinguish between activities and clients when setting user fees. It is the intent that the Regional Parks and Open Space Fees and Charges Policy be adopted as a permanent policy subject to review at a minimum every three years. The Department of Regional Parks and Open Space maintains a yearly fee schedule for all its programs, services and facilities.

### II POLICY

Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space Fees and Charges Policy is intended as a general mechanism for effectively allocating public funds for parks and recreational services and facilities. It will help provide a consistent approach to setting user fees and to ensure a reasonable and equitable proportion of the costs to deliver programs and services are recovered through user fees. This document clearly outlines the guiding principles, relates the principles to recreation programs, facilities, and clients. The Policy recommends that the Department will set reasonable targets for the recovery of direct and indirect costs for specified services through its user fees. It also recommends that these targets be reviewed annually.

### III PROCEDURES

#### Definitions:

#### A. *Fees and Services*

Admission Fee: charges to enter a building or area of a building or other recreation attraction such as a pool/water park enclosure.

Department: the Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space Department

Equipment Fee: charges for supplying additional, specialized equipment not usually considered being included with admission, facility use or other fees.

Green Fee: charges for playing an individual round of golf (nine or eighteen holes) on a single day.

Priority Service: all registration for programs and reservation of facilities will be offered on a first-come, first-serve basis. Registrations and reservations are not considered complete until all fees and deposits are paid

Facility Use Fee: charges for the exclusive, reserved use of a facility, or portion of a facility.

Reservation Fee: charges for the privilege of saving or reserving a specific date at a park facility.

Service: any program, class, event, activity, sale or reservation opportunity, maintained facility, whether a charge is associated with it or not.

Special Services Fee: charges for extraordinary or non-typical use of facilities or programs such as photo location fees, special event fees, security, or extraordinary hours.

Special Use Facility: any non-traditional park facility built for specific uses/purposes such as horse arenas, amphitheatres, or campgrounds.

Subsidy/Financial Aide: a value by which the user fee, admission or facility use fee is reduced to the user and recovered by other means such as private donations, grants, sponsorships or reductions to projected revenues.

Tournament Fee: charges for the exclusive, reserved use of the golf course and athletics and its facilities as designated.

User Fee: charges for participation in recreational programs, special events, athletic activities, instructional classes or for individual use of athletic fields and/or athletic complexes by leagues.

*B. User Groups:*

Youth: A youth is defined as 17 years or younger for most services.

Adult: An adult is defined as 18 years or older for most services.

Senior: A senior is defined as age 62 and older for most services

*C. Cost/Sponsor:*

Direct Costs: Those costs that can be directly and exclusively attributed or assigned to a specific program.

Indirect Costs: Those costs that can be attributed to more than one program or service such as administrative staff, insurance, and capital costs shared between varieties of programs.

County Sponsored: Services that are organized promoted and conducted exclusively by the Department and are the responsibility of the Department.

County Co-Sponsored: Services that are organized promoted and conducted partly by Department staff and partly by another County Department, outside agency, private organization or business or individual(s) and are the responsibility of both parties as defined in a contract, agreement or memorandum of understanding.

County Facilitated: Services that are organized promoted and conducted by another County Department, outside agency, private organization or business or individual(s) with limited or defined assistance from County staff. These services are the responsibility of the outside group.

*D. Service Levels*

Level I (Basic Service): These services generally represent a minimal level of maintenance and leisure opportunity. Many of these services are offered free of charge to the public, but not in all cases. The cost recovery for Level I ranges from 0% - 9%.

Examples of Level I Services

Regional/Neighborhood Parks, Playgrounds, Restrooms  
Tennis Courts  
Basketball Courts  
Trails  
Individual Picnic/Grill Areas  
Outdoor Interpretive Programs

Level II: These services generally represent basic services plus additional, traditional type public leisure services. There is generally a considerable increase in required staff, planning and supervision. Services generally benefit the specific participant and the community due to educational, cultural or physical value. These services do not include specialized or intensive programming or facilities development. A minimum portion of direct cost should be recovered but these programs will be subsidized to a greater extent. The cost recovery for Level II ranges from 10% - 49%.

Examples of Level II Services

Reserved Picnic/Turf Areas  
Reserved Facilities – Meeting/Educational/Social Functions  
Public Swimming  
Campgrounds  
Athletic Fields

Level III: These services generally represent basic services plus additional traditional type public services and extraordinary services such as highly specialized instruction or activities, large-scale special events or an extraordinary number of recreational choices. There is a considerable increase in required staff, planning and supervision. These services will include specialized or intensive programming and facilities development. All of direct costs and a portion of indirect costs should be recovered. The cost recovery for Level III ranges from 50% - 100%.

Examples of Level III Services

Youth Camps  
Youth Recreation, Sports and Educational Programs  
May Center- Museum, Great Basin Adventure, Arboretum

## Special Events

Level IV: These services are generally beyond the scope of traditional public leisure services. They are more specialized and the benefits are enjoyed by the direct participant rather than the broader community. All of the direct costs and indirect costs should be recovered. The cost recovery for Level IV is at a minimum 100%.

### Examples of Level IV Services

Adult & Senior Recreation, Sports and Educational Programs  
Equipment Rental  
Specific Exhibits  
Regional Shooting Facility

### *E. Fund Policies*

Enterprise Fund: This fund accounts for operations that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises. The intent is that costs of providing goods and services to the general public on a continuing basis be financed or recovered primarily through determination of revenues earned, expenses incurred, and/or net income as appropriate for capital maintenance, public policy, management control, accountability, or other purposes. The County golf courses operate under an Enterprise Fund and it is a goal of the Department to charge fees equivalent to the annual operating expenditures. The fund is currently supported by a General Fund subsidy.

Special Revenue Fund: This fund accounts for the proceeds of specific revenue sources (excluding special assessments and capital projects) that are legally restricted to expenditure for specified purposes. The Wilbur May Center at Rancho San Rafael Park operates under a Special Revenue Fund and it is a goal of the Department to charge fees equivalent to the total annual operating expenditures after grants and donations. The fund is currently supported by a General Fund subsidy.

## **V RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Policy Guidelines**

It is the Policy of Washoe County that all user fees for recreation programs, services and facilities be set in accordance with the principles and fee categories, as well as the following guidelines:

1. The Department will provide Level I (basic parks and recreation services) at little or no charge in order to protect and conserve natural and historical properties and to promote the physical and mental well being of its citizens.
2. The Department will set reasonable targets to recover part of direct costs for Level II services through the collection of user fees. These targets will be reviewed annually with due consideration to the operating budget impact.
3. The Department will set reasonable targets for the recovery of direct costs and a portion of indirect costs for Level III services through the collection of user fees. These targets will be reviewed annually with due consideration to the operating budget impact.

4. The Department will set reasonable targets for the recovery of direct costs and all indirect costs for Level IV services through the collection of user fees. These targets will be reviewed annually with due consideration to the operating budget impact.
5. The Department will not charge fees for any program or facility where the cost to collect fees or the inconvenience to the public to pay fees exceeds the value of the revenue collected.
6. The Department will encourage community-meeting use of facilities by various groups by offering multi-use and annual rate discounts based on objective and uniformly applied criteria.
7. The fees and charges of all recreation programs, services and facilities will be reviewed annually and adjusted to accommodate the changes in operating and maintenance costs and the applicable market place.
8. It is intended that a range of recreational services be available to all residents and that no Washoe County resident shall be excluded from participating in parks and recreational activities, services or programs because of an inability to pay. The Department will establish a formalized low-income subsidy policy utilizing objective criteria to make all such services, programs and facilities available to all Washoe County residents to the greatest extent possible.
9. It is the intent of the Department to reduce the categories of activities that Washoe County subsidizes, such as for-profit sports tournaments and special events.
10. The Washoe County Manager has the authority to waive, reduce fees and alter fees for services for promotional purposes and to establish fees for short-term programs or exhibits on an as required basis.
11. It is the intent of the Department to ensure that fees remain competitive with other parks and recreation service providers in the region. However, it is not the intention of the Department to purposely undercut other service providers.
12. The Department will continue to investigate potential new sources of revenue (e.g. grants, sponsorships and new programs) and support appropriate funding efforts of groups and organizations to help offset the costs to the County in providing services and operating facilities.

#### **Government Use Rate**

1. The County will provide a 100% rate reduction for reciprocating governmental and quasi-governmental agencies at a comparable rate for the use of park facilities for public meetings and/or employee training/workshops. The reduction will be given to the following governmental and quasi-governmental groups:

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|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. Washoe County                      | g. General Improvement Districts   |
| b. City of Reno                       | h. Fire Protection Districts       |
| c. City of Sparks                     | i. State of Nevada                 |
| d. Washoe County School District      | j. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency  |
| e. University of Nevada Reno          | k. Regional Planning Agency        |
| f. Truckee Meadows Community College  | l. Truckee Meadows Water Authority |
| g. Regional Transportation Commission |                                    |

The reduced rate will be honored as long as no other individual or group requests the same facility and time as the governmental group. If there is a request for the same facility and time, the governmental group can retain the reservation by paying the full applicable facility use fee. Otherwise, every effort will be made to relocate the governmental group to another available County owned facility for their activity at no charge. The Government Use Rate does not apply to individual and group social events such as retirement, birthday and agency celebrations. For government use of buildings past 5:00 p.m., the agency will be responsible for obtaining security services through the County's contracted security vendor. The 100% rate reduction does not apply to the use of the Regional Shooting Facility except for Washoe County Departments.

2. The County will provide a 50% rate reduction for the use of Camp WeChMe and the Robert Z. Hawkins Amphitheatre by the Washoe County School District for District sponsored programs. If there is a request for Camp WeChMe for the same date and time, Washoe County School District can retain the reservation by paying the full applicable facility use fee. The Government Use Rate does not apply to individual and group social events for the District such as retirement, birthday and agency celebrations.
3. The County reserves the right to not honor the Governmental Use Rate for any governmental or quasi-governmental agency who does not reciprocate a reduced fee for similar facilities that may benefit the citizens of Washoe County.

### **Deposits/Refunds**

1. All cleaning/security deposits will be collected prior to a facility use to ensure that the facility is restored to its original condition in accordance with the annual fee schedule. Facilities will be inspected and written records maintained stipulating the condition the facility was left in. The inspecting party will indicate the amount of the deposit to be returned after the event. Security deposits will be returned within three (3) weeks from the final day of the event.
2. The Department will process facility deposit refunds to customers in an efficient and timely manner, and in accordance with the Facility Reservation Policy. If a patron cancels a reservation or changes the date or location, a cancellation fee per the fees and charges schedule will be withheld. If the Department cancels a reservation, a full refund will automatically be processed unless the cancellation results from a breach of the rules established by the Department. Extenuating circumstances such as a medical emergency, death or moving out of the area, may warrant an exception to the policy. Refunds for facility reservations must be requested 90 days prior to the event. A full refund will be issued less a cancellation fee. Requests less than 90 days but at least 30 days prior to the event will be refunded 50% of the facility use fee or the amount of the cancellation fee, whichever is greater. Less than 30 days notice, the customer forfeits 100% of the facility use fee. Cleaning/security deposits will be completely refunded for cancelled events. Agencies using facilities at no charge will be subject to the cancellation fee if the written cancellation is not received at least 24 hours prior to the start of the reservation.
3. The Department will process program and activity refunds to customers in an efficient and timely manner. Criteria will determine whether a refund is warranted. If the Department cancels a program, full refunds will automatically be processed. A cancellation fee, per the fees and charges schedule, will be withheld from all refunds unless the Department cancels a program. For continuous programs, if the criteria are met, a credit can be transferred without a cancellation fee charged. Extenuating circumstances such as a medical emergency, death or moving out of the area, may warrant an exception to the policy. Customers will receive a "not approved" response in 1 – 2 weeks and/ or their refund check within 4 – 6 weeks.

a. Criteria:

Recreation & Aquatic Classes (more than one class meeting): Refunds must be requested before the first class meeting. No refund is issued for class materials. Some classes may require more advance notice as listed in printed announcements, registration forms or the class receipt.

One Time Programs (one meeting only): Refunds must be requested one week prior to the program date. Some programs may require more advance notice as listed in printed announcements, registration forms or the class receipt.

Youth Camps: Refunds must be requested by the Thursday preceding the week of the program.

Golf: No refunds once the player has begun play. If a customer pays for 18 holes but only plays nine holes, a refund is given if a nine-hole rate is currently offered or twilight rates are at that time. Refunds for tournament deposits must be requested 30 days in advance of the event. Less than 30 days notice, the customer forfeits the deposit.

**Conclusion**

The fees and charges policy is designed to promote access to and enjoyment of all of the County's parks and recreation services. This is achieved by recognizing those facilities, services and programs for which the private market is not likely to provide an appropriate level of service at affordable costs and recognizing the role of the County in providing access at reasonable costs. As such, the fees and charges policy establishes those services that should be subject to higher levels of subsidization, consistent with the mandate of the Washoe County to provide parks and recreation services with costs borne from the tax base. In meeting the challenge of allocating tax dollars effectively, the intent of the policy is to direct where subsidy should be most appropriately applied. This essential mandate requires that user fees and charges are set according to the principles of this policy.

**VI ATTACHMENTS****2010 Regional Parks and Open Space Fee Schedule**