

Skokie Park District – Social Equity Policy



Introduction

The Skokie Park District is committed to creating and promoting inclusion across all public spaces, places, facilities, and programs that the agency manages. Through the Social Equity Policy and supporting practices, we aim to ensure that everyone has access to the benefits of quality parks and recreation, including historically marginalized communities such as those with a physical or cognitive disability, the LGBTQ+ community, racial and ethnic minorities, women, new Americans, refugees, and immigrants.

The Skokie Park District defines inclusion as the process in which all persons feel that they have access to quality parks, programs, and services regardless of their ability, race or ethnic origin, age, socioeconomic level, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender, religion, citizenship, or language.

Policy Goals

Social Equity Policy outlines the Skokie Park District's approach to ensuring inclusive environments and equitable opportunities for all community members in local parks and recreation.

This policy ensures that:

- Community members utilizing our facilities, programs, and services have equitable and appropriate access to spaces, programs, and services, regardless of ability, race or ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender, socioeconomic level, religion, or country of origin.
- Park District staff, community partners, and stakeholders engage in the support of all community members and promote inclusive behaviors in park and recreation facilities and in public spaces throughout the community.
- The Skokie Park District establishes and maintains an organizational infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.
- The Skokie Park District will continuously improve inclusive practices.

This policy applies to all community members, staff, parks, and facilities in the Skokie Park District.

Staff Training

Skokie Park District staff will regularly participate in trainings using evidence-based content. Training will be comprehensive and delivered by qualified personnel. All new staff members will be quickly oriented to inclusive policies and practices.

Organizational Support

The Skokie Park District and staff will put in place organizational support that creates a social environment (including positive relationships among staff, youth, families, and community) that encourages all to be inclusive. This includes:

Staff

Demonstrating an attitude of inclusion, including non-discriminatory language and actions and pay equity.

Determining and addressing any potential unintended outcomes of activities, programs, or parks to ensure that they do not limit participation or cause worse outcomes based on ability, race or ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender, socioeconomic level, religion, or country of origin.

Agency

Developing a DEI committee that supports inclusive behaviors in the community; and

Assessing agency hiring practices to ensure staff is representative of the diverse community and is an equal opportunity employer.

Communications

Providing positive messages about diversity and inclusion

Environmental Support

The Skokie Park District will establish environmental support and practices that promote inclusion for all community members. Examples of environmental supports include:

- Program adaptation for inclusion, depending on the individual needs and abilities of participants.
- Trained staff support throughout the program.
- Language interpretation, including but not limited to:
 - Sign language interpreters
 - Braille
 - Language translation services
 - Audio/visual support
 - Large-print signage
- Built environment enhancements, including modified equipment and ramps.
- Gender-neutral restrooms and changing rooms.
- Culturally sensitive program hours (i.e., women-only pool hours).
- Signage and additional facility enhancements (artwork, murals, etc.) that promote diversity and inclusion.

Continuous Measurement and Improvement

The Skokie Park District will work to continuously improve our equity and inclusion efforts.

The Skokie Park District will monitor the following indicators to track progress of inclusive efforts:

- Does our agency communicate a vision that values the participation of all people as members of the community?
- Does our agency's improvement plan include inclusive practices to support implementation?
- Is there adequate, regularly scheduled, ongoing planning time for agency staff to collaborate on inclusive programs and events?
- Does our agency engage the whole community by providing multiple opportunities and modes for participating?
- Are there professional development opportunities for staff regarding inclusive strategies and support?

Long-term indicators:

- Is there an increase in diversity in our staff and programs?
- Are there more diverse users in our parks?

