



MULTI-MUNICIPAL COOPERATION FOR PARKS & RECREATION

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Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources Bureau of Recreation and Conservation and the
Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society, Inc.

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Preface

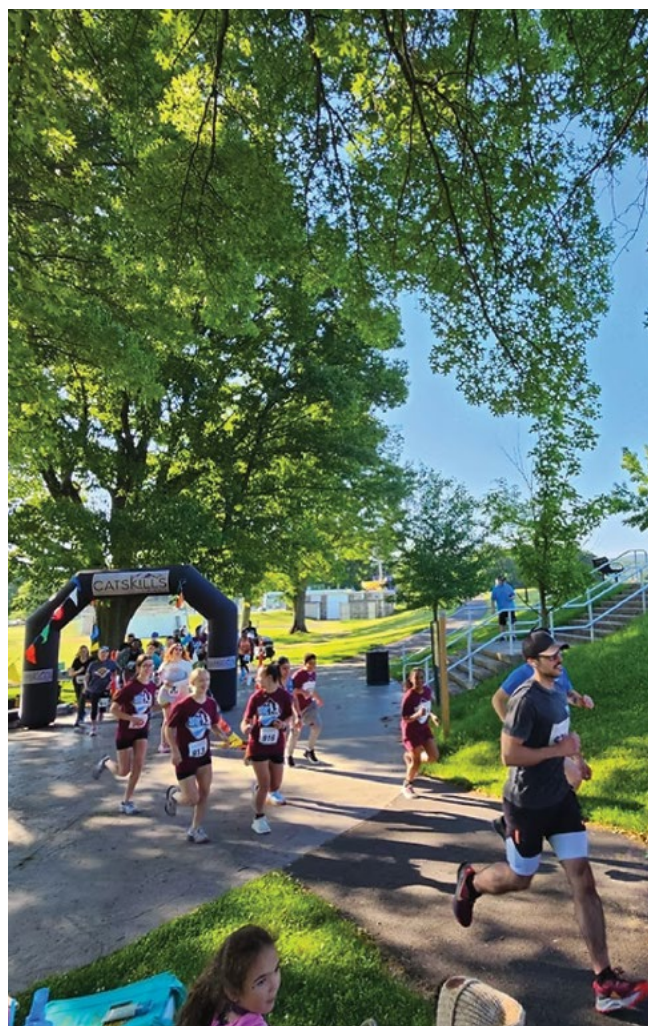
The cost of providing local government services in Pennsylvania rises each year. As communities grow, the need for expanded public services increases. When municipalities experience population decline, maintaining quality services with less funding becomes a priority. One way to address these challenges is for municipalities to explore opportunities for collaboration and cooperation.

Pennsylvania municipalities are discovering that working together with neighboring municipalities is a win-win situation. They save money, reduce duplication, and, at the same time, deliver higher-quality services. Collaborative efforts among municipalities, including transportation planning, economic development, and police and fire protection, help address common issues and provide public services more effectively.

Parks and recreation is one of the primary functions of local government. However, in Pennsylvania, many municipalities lack the financial means to fulfill this important responsibility on their own. In less populated areas, sharing services with municipal neighbors is not only the most efficient way to provide parks and recreation services; it's the only practical option.

This publication will help municipalities assess their potential to address parks, recreation, trails, open space, and natural resource conservation needs more effectively through collaboration. It offers an overview of how to implement cooperative efforts in parks and recreation and ensure their success.

We recommend reading *Community Parks and Recreation* as a companion to this publication. *Community Parks and Recreation* is a comprehensive guide tailored for Pennsylvania municipalities of all sizes, helping you initiate or improve parks and recreation services. It covers the basic concepts of public parks and recreation, demonstrating how this essential local government service can significantly enhance your community. *Community Parks and Recreation* is available online at <https://prps.org/dcnrpublications>.



Introduction

The public doesn't recognize municipal boundaries when searching for parks and recreation. Nothing prevents people from visiting parks and participating in recreation programs in any community. It doesn't matter which local government offers them.

Chapter One answers the question, "Why should a municipality consider regional parks and recreation?" The many benefits for your municipality and your residents, and the various ways in which municipalities can cooperate for parks and recreation, are highlighted.

Getting collaboration started is covered next in Chapter Two. Help is available from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to guide municipalities through the challenging process of intergovernmental cooperation. How to build community-wide support for cooperative parks and recreation services is also discussed.

The nuts and bolts of formally creating a regional parks and recreation agency are presented in Chapter Three. Many complex issues are discussed, and tough decisions are made. It

takes courage, patience, and goodwill to work out equitable financial arrangements. After an agreement is approved, work begins on tasks such as securing an office and hiring staff.

In Chapter Four, approaches to making a new regional parks and recreation agency a success are presented. Setting goals and keeping the entire community informed on progress helps to make collaboration work.

In addition, Appendix A contains a listing of Pennsylvania's regional parks and recreation agencies. Appendix B provides a map and contact information for DCNR regional advisors.

Whether it's called multi-municipal, consolidated, joint, collaborative, cooperative, shared, intergovernmental, or regional, one thing is clear. Pennsylvania has many examples of municipalities working together to provide their residents with parks and recreation services. Successful cooperative projects from around the state are highlighted throughout the publication in sections called "Cooperation in Action." The results of a 2025 Multi-Municipal Parks and Recreation Agency Survey are highlighted in text boxes.





Chapter 1

Why Consider Multi-Municipal Parks and Recreation?

Multi-municipal parks and recreation refers to parks, trails, recreational facilities, and community programs that are planned, funded, and managed jointly by two or more municipalities. Multi-municipal partnerships lead to broader access to recreational opportunities, more connected green spaces, strengthened regional identity, and greater consistency in programming across local boundaries.

Collaborating with neighboring municipalities for parks and recreation offers several significant benefits.

First, it enables communities to share costs and resources, making it possible to build and maintain higher-quality park facilities and recreation programs than they could independently.

Second, collaboration helps avoid duplication of services, ensuring that taxpayer money is used efficiently.

Third, it expands access to amenities, providing residents with a broader range of parks, trails, and recreational opportunities that span municipal boundaries.

Fourth, joint efforts strengthen regional connections by creating more unified trail systems, natural areas, and community events.

Finally, working together positions municipalities to attract more grants, since many funding programs prioritize regional cooperation.

Municipal officials may believe their municipality is too small (or too large) to work with a neighboring one that is much bigger (or smaller). Size differences are often used as an excuse to avoid intergovernmental cooperation; however, with proper organization and a fair allocation of costs and responsibilities, these differences can be easily overcome. Regional parks and recreation collaborations are designed to maximize resources and benefit the community.

Neighboring municipalities may work together to share costs, facilities, and programs. They may jointly purchase and share an expensive piece of park maintenance equipment, join forces to develop a community park, or combine their resources to build an indoor community recreation center. Multiple municipalities might form a regional body to oversee parks and recreation services across a larger area. School districts and municipalities may share athletic fields, gymnasiums, and park facilities for both student and public use. Local governments may work with higher levels of government to secure grants, manage land, and undertake large-scale projects, such as trails and conservation areas.

Why can't your municipality go it alone as you always have, relying on your own resources? Why cooperate for parks and recreation? There are four significant reasons: interdependence, effectiveness, economies of scale, and improved services.

Parks and Recreation A Local Government Service Like No Other

Parks and recreation benefits communities by promoting health, well-being, and social connection. Access to green spaces and recreational facilities encourages physical activity, reduces stress, and supports mental health. Parks also serve as safe gathering places where residents can build relationships, celebrate cultural events, and cultivate a sense of belonging. Beyond personal benefits, recreation programs and facilities stimulate local economies by attracting visitors, increasing property values, and supporting jobs. They also protect natural resources, improve environmental quality, and enhance the overall quality of life for community members of all ages.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) conducts an annual survey to understand how people connect with parks and recreation across the United States. The survey results form the basis of NRPA's annual *Engagement With Parks Report*. In 2024, ninety-one percent of people agree that parks and recreation is an important service provided by their local government.

Interdependence

Municipal boundaries aren't walls, and most of the activities affecting our residents don't follow them. In fact, residents cross them constantly. Interdependence examples like those that follow link us together far more strongly than municipal boundaries separate us.

Many activities tie us together into larger communities. Membership and participation in churches, youth sports, civic clubs, volunteer fire companies, and other activities aren't limited by municipal boundaries. School districts seldom include only one municipality. Residents' daily activities, like shopping, banking, dropping off and picking up children at daycare, dining out, and visiting doctors, may span multiple municipalities. People often think of their residence based on the name of the post office, rather than its official municipal name.

Effectiveness

Local government services can be more effective when municipalities work together. Three examples of this are:

- **When Large Numbers Are Needed.** A municipality that offers a full schedule of recreation programs on its own might not have enough residents interested to support even one program, let alone the entire list of activities. If municipalities collaborate, there could be enough residents interested in participating in all the planned programs.
- **When Problems Cross Municipal Boundaries.** If a community doesn't have enough soccer fields for the number of youth and adults who want to play, that's usually not just one municipality's concern. Soccer clubs cover a large geographic area. The acquisition of land and development of soccer fields can be a regional project. Other problems, such as teens skateboarding in public places, can be a rallying point for municipalities to build a regional skatepark.
- **When Specialized Skills Are Needed.** Specialized skills are essential for delivering parks and recreation services effectively. Municipalities are finding it increasingly difficult to rely on volunteers for the daily responsibilities of managing recreation

programs and maintaining parks. By working together, smaller municipalities may be able to hire a full-time parks and recreation director. Sharing the cost of hiring professional parks and recreation staff allows communities to offer more programs, improve facility quality, and reduce volunteers' workload. Professional staff can focus on daily operations, including park maintenance, program coordination, volunteer management, revenue generation, and building partnerships.

Economies of Scale

Why is multi-municipal funding of parks and recreation services a smart business move?

- **Less Duplication of Parks and Recreation Services.** By partnering with neighboring municipalities and sharing resources, unnecessary duplication of recreation facilities and programs is avoided. Regionalization helps prevent municipal competition for program sponsorship, volunteers, staff, specialized instructors, and participants. Residents also gain access to a broader variety of recreation facilities and programs to enjoy.
- **Improved Chances of Receiving Grants.** An intergovernmental agency is better positioned than a single municipality to receive grants at the local, state, and federal levels. Grant applications often rank higher automatically because many grant programs prioritize cooperation. Regional agency staff can provide technical assistance to help municipal partners secure grants for park and trail acquisition, development, and renovation projects.
- **Reduced Costs for Municipalities.** When dealing with taxpayers' dollars, cost savings and efficient spending are always important. More comprehensive services are provided at a lower cost because municipalities share administrative expenses. Overhead costs for marketing your services are lowered. Money can be saved by coordinating the purchase of park maintenance equipment for regional use. Most small communities lack the tax support, business, and community resources to finance expensive recreation facilities and programs.

Cooperation in Action



Hempfield recCenter (Lancaster County) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that offers a wide range of programs and services for all ages at its 105,000-square-foot facility in Landisville. It's part of the Hempfield Area Recreation Commission, which includes representatives from East and West Hempfield Townships, East Petersburg and Mountville Boroughs, and the Hempfield School District. Each member municipality provides an annual per capita contribution to help cover membership and program costs for residents. From managing and maintaining local parks to sponsoring community events and offering recreation and fitness programs that keep the community active, the Recreation Commission is dedicated to promoting healthy lifestyles and strengthening community connections in the Hempfield area.



The funding from the municipalities provides a stable, ongoing base of support to build upon to develop facilities and offer programs. A regional agency can address facility safety issues, risk management, and insurance concerns more efficiently.

- **Expanded Revenue Sources.** A regional parks and recreation agency can increase revenue through fee-based recreation programs, business sponsorships, donations, facility rentals, and fundraising activities. If the regional agency incorporates as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, it gains access to many additional funding sources. The DCNR publication *Financing Municipal Parks and Recreation* is a valuable resource for developing revenue and exploring collaboration opportunities.
<https://prps.org/DCNRPublications>

Improved Services

How will cooperative parks and recreation services benefit your residents?

- **Affordable Recreation Programs.** Many people are financially unable to participate in private recreational opportunities. Public recreation programs are designed to be accessible and affordable to all, regardless of income level. Cooperation among municipalities provides sufficient public funding, making program fees affordable for residents. Recreation programs are offered at central locations, making it easier for residents to participate.
- **A Wider Variety of Activities Offered.** Residents enjoy a broader range of recreational activities through a regional partnership due to a larger participant base. People can choose from programs in categories like cultural arts, outdoor recreation, sports, fitness and wellness, aquatics, special events, lifelong learning, and social recreation.
- **Increased Public Awareness of Parks and Recreation Services.** Joint promotion broadens the public's knowledge of available parks and recreation opportunities. Additionally, residents have a single agency to contact for services.

Cooperation in Action

The Mechanicsburg Area Recreation Department offers community recreation programs for children and adults who live in Mechanicsburg and Shiremanstown Boroughs and Upper Allen Township (Cumberland County). The Mechanicsburg School District is an active partner, funding 75 percent of the budget, while the municipalities fund the remaining 25 percent. Recreation Department offices are housed in a school district building. The staff collaborates with advisory parks and recreation boards from each municipality. It offers programs at the school district's six elementary schools, as well as its middle and high schools, throughout the year.



- **Consistently Planned Services.** With regional parks and recreation, services are consistently offered, planned, and improved. Policies for recreation programs are enforced fairly. Standards of maintenance, safety inspections, rules and regulations, and fee schedules for park areas and facilities are implemented across the region. Over-usage problems are alleviated by coordinating the reservation, scheduling, and permitting of field and park facility use regionally.
- **Improved Parks and Recreation Facilities.** By sharing facilities and working together on long-range planning, residents have more facilities to enjoy. The acquisition and development of parkland, as well as improvements to existing park areas, are planned with the needs of the entire region in mind. A regional agency can spearhead the development or expansion of a trail and greenway network connecting schools, parks, and neighborhoods.

- **Coordination of Recreation Program Providers.** A regional parks and recreation agency establishes a network of community recreation program and special event providers to improve communication and identify ways to share resources and work together.
- **Coordination of Recreation Facility Providers.** The combined efforts of clubs and community groups have created many excellent recreation facilities throughout Pennsylvania. Lions Clubs may operate swimming pools, and churches may own softball fields and gymnasiums. A regional parks and recreation agency can help coordinate public use of these facilities without undermining the initiative and dedication of the organizations that supply a significant portion of the community's recreation facilities.
- **Strengthened Sense of Community.** Parks and recreation brings the community together by providing opportunities for people to connect with others. A regional agency unites individual municipalities and fosters a region-wide community spirit. Public support for parks and recreation across the region can also grow.
- **Resident Representation and Involvement.** Residents have a voice in the regional agency's operation and a say in how their tax dollars are spent, because municipalities appoint representatives to the governing board. This ensures that services are offered that your residents desire. Residents of each municipality are actively involved in the agency's operation by planning, volunteering, and participating in recreation programs.
- **Coordinated Use of School District Facilities.** Improved access to tax-supported school district facilities expands the number of park areas and recreation facilities available to your residents. School facilities can be used in a more coordinated way. The school district, the primary provider of recreation facilities in most small communities, works with only one agency for scheduling its facilities for public use, rather than multiple municipalities and community groups.



Chapter 2

Setting the Stage for Intergovernmental Cooperation

Regionalizing parks and recreation services can be a complex and challenging process.

The idea for regional cooperation may come from municipal staff, the parks and recreation board, or a community group. It may be a recommendation of a community's Comprehensive Plan or a Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan.

Early on, get your elected officials involved in and supportive of the idea. Otherwise, a significant amount of effort can be wasted developing a cooperative program that may not receive final funding approval from the key decision-makers, the municipal elected officials.

Help is Available

If you're exploring regional parks and recreation services, the DCNR Bureau of Recreation and

Conservation Peer Grant program can help. This funding opportunity enables local governments to hire professional consultants to address issues that require specialized expertise, such as regionalizing parks and recreation services.

While some communities have managed multi-municipal parks and recreation projects independently, many utilize the DCNR Peer program. The Peer is an experienced parks and recreation professional who serves as an impartial facilitator.

The first step is to contact your DCNR regional advisor to discuss your project. They will evaluate whether your project qualifies for a Peer Grant and if a Peer project is the best course of action for your community. Appendix B lists the DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation regional offices.

The Steps of a Regional Parks and Recreation Project

DCNR Peer regional parks and recreation projects typically have six initial steps. After these steps are completed, studies proceed in whatever direction is decided upon by the study committee.

Step #1 – Form a Study Committee. The community is responsible for organizing a study committee to work with the Peer. Having the municipalities within a school district as the partners in a regional parks and recreation study makes sense. Residents already have a joint “identity” as part of the school district. The school district should also be an active participant in the regional study process. The study committee meets regularly throughout the project’s duration. Committee representatives should include one elected official from each local government entity. The study committee members suggest key people for the Peer to interview, review and comment on prepared materials, report back to their municipality on the project’s progress, and share municipal feedback to keep the project moving forward.

Step #2 – Gather Background Information. The Peer collects information on population demographics and school enrollment statistics, municipal and school district recreation programs, park areas, and recreation facilities; the services of other parks and recreation providers in the community, usage and participation statistics for recreation facilities and programs, and current municipal and school district financial support for parks and recreation.

Step #3 – Get Public Input. The Peer interviews key individuals to gather their opinions on existing park areas, recreation facilities, and programs, and to assess their interest in regional parks and recreation. Community leaders, including elected officials, municipal and school district staff, parks and recreation board members, and youth sports association volunteers, are usually included in the list of key individuals. Conducting online or written surveys along with in-person interviews increases the number of people who provide input.

Step #4 - Analyze Background Information. The region’s population demographics are analyzed, and an assessment of the region’s parks and recreation system is completed. This includes park

Key Features of the DCNR Peer Grant

Funding Amount: Grants are up to \$18,000.

Match Requirement: Applicants must provide a 10% local cash match of the awarded amount.

Eligible Projects: The grant supports a variety of planning initiatives, including:

- Intergovernmental cooperation
- Capacity-building opportunities
- Strategic plans
- Site-specific plans
- Facility, revenue, and operations plans
- Walkability assessments

The above list of eligible projects is not all-inclusive of the types of projects the Peer Grant may cover.

Application Period: Applications are accepted year-round.

To apply, municipalities complete the application form online.

<https://apps.dcnr.pa.gov/grants/>

area, recreation facility, and recreation program needs, as well as the amount of tax dollars currently being allocated. Comparisons are made between the area’s parks and recreation spending and that of other similarly sized areas. Gaps in services and concerns about regionalizing services are identified.

Step #5 – Decide on the Purpose and Extent of Cooperation. A well-defined study purpose ensures that the work is aligned with the shared interests of the participating municipalities. Should the region consider consolidating park maintenance functions? Or does it want to offer regional recreation programs? Is there interest in jointly operating facilities, such as a community swimming pool located in one of the municipalities

but used by residents of all? Does one municipality have a strong parks and recreation department from which the others could contract services? Items like these need to be discussed to determine the level of cooperation to pursue.

Step #6 - Deciding Whether to Proceed. After reviewing the recreation opportunities available to residents across the region, a decision is made on whether to move forward with the regionalization process. How much support exists to make it happen? Do the benefits outweigh any potential negatives? Are there possible obstacles that could halt the process? Is it worthwhile to continue?

The study’s next steps depend on the level of cooperation the municipalities choose to pursue. Deciding to work together on a community special event is very different from creating a regional parks and recreation agency.

Multi-Municipal Planning

A DCNR Peer project isn’t the only way to explore regionalizing parks and recreation services. Multi-municipal planning is another option.

Multi-municipal planning addresses shared local challenges and opportunities, enabling neighboring communities to coordinate their land use, transportation, environmental conservation, and parks and recreation plans, resulting in more efficient and unified regional growth and development.

Through the following planning processes, the regional provision of parks and recreation can be explored.

- **A Community Comprehensive Plan** establishes where parks and recreation fits within all of the local government services provided by your municipality. In most areas of Pennsylvania, it’s better to do comprehensive planning by studying a regional area, like the boundaries of the public school district, rather than a single municipality. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) encourages regional plans and provides grant funding for comprehensive plans.
- **A Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan** is an in-depth study that focuses on developing and enhancing your

municipal parks, recreation programs, services, facilities, and natural resources. It’s created with significant public input and covers several years to provide guidance and direction for informed decision-making. DCNR offers matching funds to help cover the cost of preparing these plans and encourages the development of regional plans.

Number of Regional Parks and Recreation Agency Funding Partners	
Two	20%
Three	30%
Four	40%
Five or More	10%

Source: 2025 Multi-Municipal Parks and Recreation Agency Survey

Getting Cooperation Started

Answering these questions openly and honestly will help to mobilize community support:

1. How will regional parks and recreation benefit our residents?
2. How will parks and recreation services be improved if a regional agency is in place?
3. What will the financial costs be?
4. Will our taxes increase?
5. Who will own and maintain the park areas and recreation facilities in our municipalities?
6. Will a regional parks and recreation agency take over our youth sports associations and other volunteer groups?

Every area of Pennsylvania is different - surprisingly so. What worked a few miles away in the same county may not work in your community. Intergovernmental cooperation efforts are strengthened by establishing and maintaining a spirit of cooperation. A positive, supportive attitude toward cooperation makes

officials more willing to try a program, to give it a chance to work.

When beginning regional parks and recreation projects:

- **Include Elected Officials.** Involving elected officials in planning and decision-making for regional parks and recreation provides valuable guidance, resources, and political backing, which can help secure approvals and funding. By actively engaging elected officials, a regional effort is more likely to succeed. If decision-makers in municipalities, school districts, and community organizations aren't fully informed, decisions about regional cooperation are based on assumptions and perceptions rather than facts. The best way to keep them informed is to get them at the table during discussions. Otherwise, a tremendous amount of effort can be wasted. Remember, the final decision on funding a new program rests with the elected officials.
- **Identify Community Needs.** Assessing the priorities, challenges, and opportunities within a community informs effective regional planning and decision-making. By gathering input from residents, analyzing demographic and economic data, and evaluating existing parks and recreation services and infrastructure, you gain a deeper understanding of the community's needs. This insight enables you to allocate resources more effectively, address gaps, and implement initiatives that improve quality of life.
- **Focus on Cost Savings.** The cost of providing a cooperative service should be less for each municipality than the cost of providing the same service independently. A cooperative program should be a win/win situation. Each municipality should save money by cooperating or, at the very least, break even compared to the cost of providing the service by itself. Reviewing each municipality's parks and recreation expenses can identify opportunities to reduce spending without compromising quality or services.
- **Keep the Process Open and Inclusive.** Be inclusive from the outset by involving all municipalities and potential partners in the initial discussions about a regional program. Including potential participants from the start increases the chances of a cooperative program's success. Partners should assist in selecting the study committee members who will further develop the idea. Maintaining open lines of communication creates an inclusive environment where ideas can be exchanged freely and challenges can be addressed constructively.
- **Address Turf Issues.** Cooperative programs are often perceived as threatening to the responsibilities or "turf" of municipal staff and elected officials. As a result, they can become very resistant. These threats can be real; jobs may be lost or responsibilities transferred to a cooperative program. Frequently, the view of the threat is more a matter of perception than fact. Identify potential turf issues when developing a collaborative program. After the problems are identified, address the concerns.
- **Be Patient.** Elected officials are action-oriented; they have a fixed amount of time before they have to face a reelection campaign. Municipal employees are hired to get things done. And, the public generally shows little understanding of a go-slow approach. Despite this, cooperative efforts take time. A collaborative program takes longer to organize than a municipal program for the same service because it involves more people and requires additional approvals. A patient, step-by-step approach leads to success.
- **Get Things in Writing.** Often, a terrific idea is presented and quickly agreed to by study committee members. If you don't follow this up with a written document outlining the details, misunderstandings can happen, and the effort may collapse. When participants easily agree to an idea for a cooperative program, there's a tendency to accept the agreement as initially stated. Unless the agreement is formalized in writing, there's no permanent agreement. Participants can walk away, leaving the others hanging.
- **Start With an Easy Project.** Sometimes, it's best to start small, especially if you've never worked together before. Rather than jumping into a complicated task like forming a regional parks and recreation agency, merging funds to offer a joint recreation program, such as summer playgrounds, may be a more effective approach. You can build on that success.

Why Cooperate?

Pennsylvania boroughs often have large community parks that neighboring township residents enjoy. Townships can financially assist boroughs in supporting these vital community park areas, improving recreation programming, rehabilitating existing facilities, or developing new amenities.

Building Community Support for Regional Parks and Recreation

Once everyone is on board to forge ahead with regional cooperation, it's time to build public support for the concept.

If the region hasn't previously offered publicly funded parks and recreation services, spend considerable time explaining the value to elected officials and the public. When people understand what regional parks and recreation is and what it'll mean to them, you gain supporters. Residents respond primarily to the fact that tax funds are spent efficiently and that services are delivered effectively.

Municipal officials approach new intergovernmental concepts cautiously, especially in regions where the municipalities have traditionally not cooperated. Go at a pace that allows elected officials to feel comfortable. Provide municipal officials with the necessary information to make informed decisions in support of the regional effort. If questions are left unanswered or information is incomplete, officials are inclined to say "no."

Getting several municipalities to create a regional parks and recreation agency is a daunting task. You'll hear all kinds of reasons why it won't work:

- People don't want it.
- We'll lose control of our parks.
- We don't understand what a regional agency will do.
- We don't want to share our parks with others.
- Regional projects were tried before, and they failed.
- Others will tell us how to spend our money.
- We'll have to increase taxes.
- We don't get along with each other.
- There's not enough work for a parks and recreation director.
- We've never spent much/any money on parks and recreation.
- We have enough recreation already.

Negative talk isn't insurmountable if there's a desire and willingness among the municipalities to work together. Providing better services for a taxpayer's dollar is always desirable.

Building trust is a process that develops over time as study committee members get to know one another. Leveling with partners about the costs and in-kind services required, and acknowledging each partner's objectives, can speed up the trust-building process and build rapport toward creating a regional parks and recreation agency.

To build community support for cooperation:

- **Recognize Historical Animosity.** Something may have happened between the municipalities or the school district a long time ago that created hard feelings among elected officials. Unfortunately, current cooperation efforts can be derailed by past problems if animosity still exists. Being aware of issues can help you be more sensitive to resistance.
- **Learn From Failures.** If a cooperative effort has failed in the past, municipal officials may be hesitant to try again. The refrains "It'll never work" and "Remember what happened when we tried to" can keep cooperation from occurring. Instead of giving up, use the experience of failure to learn how cooperation could work. The next effort could be more successful.
- **Find a Cheerleader.** Involve a visible community leader who is totally committed to the idea of regional parks and recreation. This person should be a well-liked and trusted individual with the time to serve as the spokesperson for the cause. It's no secret that most people don't like change. A leader

who can articulate the positive aspects of intergovernmental cooperation can make a significant difference in how people perceive it.

- **Communicate Effectively.** Building support for regional parks and recreation centers on communication. Use multiple communication methods to reinforce the messages. Newsletters, social media posts, well-documented budgets, and in-person progress reports by study committee members at municipal public meetings are all good ways to communicate.

Responding to Challenges

It's essential to anticipate potential challenges, concerns, and resistance to regional parks and recreation, and to develop effective strategies to address them. Proper preparation ensures that opposition doesn't derail progress. When assessing the impact of your opposition, consider both its intensity and the resources it has at its disposal. One articulate resident, willing to do whatever it takes to stop a cooperative effort, can be more formidable than a large organization whose members might have other concerns.

Identify who'll be impacted by a regional parks and recreation agency and in what way. Don't overlook those who might mistakenly think they'll be harmed. Build your credibility by reaching out to them with an explanation before they take a stand against it. The most important groups are your youth sports providers. Second are those who are opposed to any tax increase.

One effective practice is to anticipate and address objections yourself. What this does is assure potential adversaries that you're not trying to hide anything. This is a solid way to build trust quickly. What's even better is that this type of approach has a bonus factor. By raising the issue yourself, you can also take the opportunity to overcome the objections to it. A problematic issue can be settled before the other side can mount an attack on it.

Finally, remember that the people best prepared to handle the politics of implementation are your elected officials. Even when they have reasons not to sign on publicly in support of regional parks and recreation, they can help you understand how various special interests will see the concept, anticipate opposition you might have missed, and identify supporters you hadn't thought about.

Cooperation in Action



The Redbank Valley Park Commission (Armstrong and Clarion Counties) serves two rural boroughs and three townships with a combined population of less than 5,000 people. Its primary purpose is to operate and maintain the Redbank Valley Municipal Park. The park offers a campground with full-service RV sites and tent camping, as well as tennis courts, nine picnic shelters, a grandstand, horseshoe pits, playground equipment, and an indoor roller skating rink. A large reception hall is available for rent for weddings, fundraising events, and private parties. The Park Commission hosts several annual community events, including the Clarion County Fair, a Bluegrass Festival, and an ATV Poker Run. The partnering municipalities are Redbank Township, Porter Township, and South Bethlehem Borough in Armstrong County, and Redbank Township and Hawthorn Borough in Clarion County.



By confronting issues rather than avoiding them, you can reduce misunderstandings. Challenges require a direct response, as suggested below:

Challenge: A regional parks and recreation agency is just another level of government.

Response: No, it's not. It's a pooling of the resources and powers of the participating municipalities to provide parks and recreation services in the most effective way possible.

Challenge: A regional parks and recreation agency is duplicating services.

Response: That is precisely what it's not. In fact, any duplication occurs in the separate, less efficient services provided by each municipality.

Challenge: A regional parks and recreation agency means a tax increase.

Response: A tax increase may or may not be needed to provide the services.

Challenge: A regional parks and recreation agency means the largest municipality will dominate efforts.

Response: Since intergovernmental cooperation is voluntary, it's entered into only if it's of mutual benefit to all municipalities. There's no domination by municipalities.

Action Strategies to Promote Regional Parks and Recreation

Your strongest argument for intergovernmental cooperation may rely more on the consequences of inaction than on the expected benefits that regional parks and recreation can offer.

What is the current parks and recreation situation for your residents? It may be that:

- There's a lack of recreation facilities, especially passive areas to walk and bike.
- It's hard to find out about parks and recreation opportunities.
- Park areas are poorly maintained.
- There are few recreation programs available.
- There are no programs offered for youth other than sports.

- There's little use of school facilities.
- Private recreation opportunities are costly.
- There's an over-reliance on volunteers, and fewer people are willing to volunteer.
- People have to travel out of the area to take part in recreation programs.
- There's duplication of recreation facilities and programs.
- People moving to your municipality came from places with lots of recreation opportunities and want them here.

Use this reality to argue against the status quo. Promoting a cooperative effort to solve issues like these will help rally the community to support multi-municipal cooperation.

If opponents of regional parks and recreation can make a case to keep things the same, they'll do so and criticize your efforts to change as a waste of public money.

Implementing these action strategies will help position regional parks and recreation as the most cost-effective way to deliver services to residents.

▪ Prepare written material

- Explain clearly what regional parks and recreation is and how it'll benefit the community.
- Showcase successful regional agencies, proving that it works well elsewhere in Pennsylvania, especially in areas similar to yours.
- Provide easy-to-understand answers to the questions people are asking.
- List what additional services residents can expect from the regional agency.
- Prepare a recreation program plan to show the types of programs to be offered.

▪ Cultivate partners

- Make a list of elected officials, youth sports association volunteers, municipal staff, community leaders, parks and recreation board members, and others.

- Meet with them individually to educate them about regional parks and recreation and get them excited about the possibilities.
- Ask them: *What would you like to see happen? What concerns do you have? What do you think the recreation needs are? How could parks and recreation be improved? Do you think regional parks and recreation can work?*
- Ask people to support regional parks and recreation by posting on social media, contacting their elected officials, or attending public meetings.

▪ **Spell out the costs**

- List what each municipality currently spends on parks and recreation, and what amount of income is earned.
- Determine how the regional agency will be staffed. Create a job description for the director and any other potential staff.
- Prepare a draft budget for the new agency with projected operating expenses and income. It's helpful to create a five-year pro forma budget.
- Estimate the revenue that'll be generated by new recreation programs and expanded facility use. What potential new sources of revenue will you have?
- Determine how much money will be needed from each municipality.
- Break down the cost of regional parks and recreation to a per capita figure to show the cost to each resident.
- Promote the opportunity to apply for a DCNR Circuit Rider grant to hire a parks and recreation director. The availability of grant dollars can prompt municipalities to engage with one another.

Cooperation in Action



Hallam Borough, Hellam Township, and Lower Windsor Township created the Eastern York Area Recreation Authority (York County) to enhance, expand, and manage educational, recreational, and athletic programs and facilities to meet residents' current and future parks and recreation needs. The area's youth sports organizations had been struggling for several years to find volunteers, which prompted the municipalities to establish a regional parks and recreation agency. After it was formally established, the Recreation Authority obtained a Circuit Rider grant to hire a Parks and Recreation Director to oversee the region's youth sports programs and to offer recreational activities for all age groups.



Chapter 3

Forming a Regional Parks and Recreation Agency

The major reason municipalities form regional agencies is to assemble a tax and population base that can support full-time parks and recreation services. Regionalizing allows small communities to develop recreation facilities and programs, and hire staff that they couldn't afford individually.

Two or more municipal governments working together can cooperatively fund a community parks and recreation agency that serves the residents of each municipality. A board of directors is appointed to represent each partner. The level of funding from municipalities is based on an agreed-upon formula outlined in the intergovernmental agreement of cooperation or enacted ordinances that establish a regional agency.

The school district can also be a partner in a regional parks and recreation agency. Including the school district provides residents with access to recreation facilities, such as gymnasiums, indoor swimming pools, and playgrounds, after school hours and on weekends, which are funded by their tax dollars. The results of the 2025 Multi-Municipal Parks and Recreation Agency Survey

show that 70 percent of respondents have free access to school district facilities for community recreation programs. This benefits residents by lowering program costs and increasing the availability of facilities.

Partners determine the scope of a regional agency, which can range from recreation programming to developing trails, operating a large park complex, and managing a community swimming pool. Regional parks and recreation agencies have policy-making and implementation powers, but don't have taxing authority.

There are two primary methods for establishing a regional parks and recreation agency.

The first is to adopt an intergovernmental agreement of cooperation among the municipalities and other potential partners. Pennsylvania's Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (Act 177) empowers local governments to collaborate across municipal boundaries by adopting an intergovernmental agreement, a legally binding contract. Intergovernmental agreements are adopted by governing bodies through ordinances or resolutions.

Cooperation in Action



The Ebensburg Recreation Board (Cambria County) is an intergovernmental agency dedicated to providing, promoting, and coordinating community-based parks and recreation opportunities for its partners, Ebensburg Borough, Cambria Township, and the Central Cambria School District. In October 2002, it opened the Young People's Community Center. At this educational and recreational facility, youth participate in social, artistic, and athletic activities. The Community Center's goal is to offer a safe space for youth while encouraging them to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The Recreation Board also manages the Memorial Field sports complex, the Ebensburg Swimming Pool, and Lake Rowena on a regional basis.

The second way is to form a joint authority to manage shared services. Legal steps include adopting resolutions or ordinances, drafting articles of incorporation, and filing with the Secretary of the Commonwealth. The agreement also defines governance structure, board representation, funding responsibilities, and operational procedures.

Intergovernmental Agreement of Cooperation

An intergovernmental agreement specifies the regional agency's purpose, responsibilities, funding, and board membership structure, as well as the in-kind services that funding partners provide to a regional parks and recreation agency. It addresses concerns such as insurance coverage

and facility use. Generally, the use of municipal and school district facilities is at no cost to the regional agency. A significant part of the agreement of cooperation involves determining the formula for financing the regional agency's operations. To be officially adopted, the agreement must be passed by municipal ordinance and, if the school district is a partner, by school district resolution.

The regional agency board is a governing body, not an advisory one. These are independent boards with final decision-making responsibilities concerning parks and recreation services. Municipal elected officials control the appointment and removal of regional agency board members, as well as the level of tax support for the policy board's budget. These boards have the authority to employ staff.

Cooperation in Action



The Buffalo Valley Recreation Authority (Union County) partners are East Buffalo Township, Kelly Township, and Lewisburg Borough. The Recreation Authority maintains community recreation facilities and provides year-round activities and programs that positively impact the health, safety, and welfare of residents. The agency manages facility rentals at Lewisburg Area Recreation Park and operates a Gymnastics Center with an extensive program schedule. Additionally, it oversees the Lewisburg Community Pool, Saint Mary Street Park, an outdoor ice rink, and a Nature Studio, which is available for rent for private parties.

Financial contributions are allocated among the participating municipalities according to a predetermined formula. Regional agency boards include representatives from the participating municipalities and often a school district. Having direct representation from municipal and school board elected officials on the regional agency board strengthens accountability and communication.

An Act 177 agreement can also be a purchase-of-services contract. When one municipality offers parks and recreation services, it can enter into a contract with a neighboring municipality to provide these services to its residents. A municipality may contract with another municipality for recreation program services, allowing its residents to receive reduced fees. Park maintenance can be an expensive undertaking for a small municipality with limited park acreage. The most economical way to maintain park areas may be to contract maintenance services from a neighboring municipality. There's a definite advantage to buying services if the other municipality has a top-notch parks and recreation department.

Council of Governments

Councils of Governments (COGs) are a special type of Act 177 organization that enables a group of municipalities to collaborate on services in their mutual interest, including parks and recreation.

Numerous mutual problems continuously arise across various sectors in local government, including transportation, purchasing, solid waste management, animal control, sewage treatment, police and fire services, environmental regulation, code enforcement, parks and recreation, housing, planning, and economic development. Local governments in Pennsylvania can establish COGs to address their growing regional issues. A COG can provide its member local governments with a strong foundation for addressing, discussing, and potentially solving mutual problems within a regional area. However, since the oversight of a COG is solely the responsibility of local elected officials, its success or failure largely depends on the level of interest, support, and cooperation among officials.

DCED publishes the *Intergovernmental Cooperation Handbook*, a guide for local governments considering intergovernmental

Cooperation in Action



The Mercer County Regional Council of Governments (COG) comprises 32 local governments in northwestern Pennsylvania. It was formed to resolve common municipal problems through a cooperative, intergovernmental approach. The services offered to member municipalities include grant administration, joint bidding, equipment sharing, transportation planning, information technology, and community transit and shuttle services. Additionally, the COG employs a Parks and Recreation Director, who, among other duties, oversees the operation of the Lackawannock-Shenango-West Middlesex Community Pool.

agreements. The handbook covers topics such as legal and procedural requirements, sample agreements, case studies of successful collaborations, and guidance on governance structures and funding mechanisms. It has been used as a resource for this publication.

<https://dced.pa.gov/download/intergovernmental-cooperation-handbook/>

Municipal Authorities

The Municipality Authorities Act of 2001 authorizes the creation of municipal authorities. Authorities are most often used when significant capital investments are required, such as sewage treatment and water supply systems, airports, and bus transit systems. They can issue bonds, levy fees, and enter into contracts to fulfill their purposes. Authorities are expected to repay their debt using the revenues generated by the services they operate.

Municipalities create authorities through a formal process that includes adopting a resolution or ordinance, holding a public hearing, and filing articles of incorporation with the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Authorities can be formed by a single municipality or through the joint action of two or more municipalities. The governing body of each municipality appoints members to the authority's board, with terms and representation defined in the articles of incorporation. Once appointed, the board members have decision-making power. Authorities are somewhat autonomous and can employ staff.

Recreation authorities have been formed in Pennsylvania with mixed results; many are inactive or have been terminated. Recreation authorities are expected to be self-supporting, but nearly all receive some municipal subsidy in addition to the revenues they generate. One of the pitfalls of creating recreation authorities is that they're frequently underfunded when created and never gain a solid financial footing. Unless a recreation authority is formed to manage a significant revenue-producing facility such as a community recreation center, it will struggle financially to be self-supporting.

The Pennsylvania Department of State provides information on forming and managing municipal authorities. The Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association offers resources and support for authorities across the state: www.municipalauthorities.org. *Municipal Authorities in Pennsylvania* is published by the DCED Governor's Center for Local Government Services. <https://dced.pa.gov/download/municipal-authorities-in-pennsylvania>

Combining Existing Services

If you have existing parks and recreation services, these may be consolidated to become part of a new regional agency's responsibilities. For example, a borough may operate an outdoor swimming pool, its neighboring township may conduct summer playground programs for children, and the school district may allow community use of its football stadium. Both municipalities and the school district are investing in parks and recreation services. Merging these funds can be the start of the budget for a new regional agency.

Municipalities can also partner with existing regional parks and recreation agencies. This often makes good sense, especially when the municipality is part of the same school district and the school district is already a partner. Competition among municipalities for the use of school facilities doesn't work.

School District Support Provided to Regional Parks and Recreation Agencies	
Support Provided	% of Agencies
No Cost Use of School Facilities	70%
First Priority Use of School Facilities After School-Related Uses	40%
Promotion of Agency Services	40%
Operating Budget Funding	30%
Fees Charged for Use of School Facilities	30%
Equipment Sharing	10%

Source: 2025 Multi-Municipal Parks and Recreation Agency Survey

Regional Agency Funding

Local government programs rely on tax revenue to deliver services to residents. When municipal programs are combined, money is saved compared to the cost of undertaking separate, duplicate efforts; however, sufficient funds must be allocated to operate the more efficient joint program.

There's a broad range of options for funding regional programs. Some intergovernmental programs have no income source other than municipal taxes. Many joint parks and recreation agencies can generate substantial income through user fees; however, the revenue won't cover all costs. Agencies can charge for pool admissions and league basketball play, but overpricing the fees will force out the people that a public recreation program is established to serve.

When a program is to be jointly funded, the municipalities must decide which of the following choices is the fairest way to allocate the cost to participate.

- **Equal Shares.** A regional parks and recreation agency can be established where each municipality pays an equal share of the costs. This formula can be effective when the participating municipalities are approximately the same size and benefit fairly equally from the joint program. It can also work when one municipality owns most of the region's park areas and recreation facilities.
- **Population.** Each municipality's cost share for a regional parks and recreation agency can be based on population. The municipality's share equals its percentage of the total population of the participating municipalities. The U.S. Census is used for population figures. The American Community Survey updates population figures between censuses. Suppose a large college campus is located in one of the participating municipalities. In that case, the municipalities must decide whether to include the number of students living on campus in the region's population, as many services for the students are provided by the college rather than the municipality. The U.S. Census counts students living on campus as residents of the municipality where the campus is located, not as residents of their hometown. Populations in prisons or other institutions have the same distorting effect on population formulas.
- **Assessed Valuation.** The total assessed valuation refers to the value placed on all real estate within a municipality. When forming an intergovernmental agency, each municipality's percentage of the total assessed valuation for all participating municipalities can be its percentage of the joint program costs. Total assessed valuation is frequently used as the basis for allocating shares of joint programs because it's a measure of each municipality's tax base or its ability to pay. More developed municipalities will have larger funding shares than small rural ones. If the participating municipalities are located in more than one county, the assessment ratios and base years are likely to differ. In these cases, participating municipalities must equalize the assessment ratios using information from the State Tax Equalization Board.

- **Earned Income Tax.** A percentage of the earned income tax collected by each municipality can be used to fund the operation of a regional agency.
- **Use.** Users of a joint recreation program that requires registration can include the municipality where they live on the program's registration form. Program participants can be identified for each municipality, and municipal shares of the program costs can be allocated on the same basis.

Cooperation in Action



The Blue Mountain Recreation Commission (Schuylkill County) was established in 1968 by five boroughs, four townships, and the Blue Mountain School District. In this rural region, the municipalities were unable to offer community recreation programs and services without working together. The Recreation Commission is funded jointly by the nine municipalities and the school district. Each municipality contributes 10 percent of its share of the earned income tax, and the school district matches those contributions.

Intergovernmental Agreement Preparation, Review, and Adoption

Working out the details of an intergovernmental agreement requires time and a positive attitude from everyone involved. It's challenging to get the municipal and school district partners to agree on all of the issues. It can be a painstaking process that requires patience and persistence.

Cooperation in Action



The Montour Area Recreation Commission (Montour County) operates under an intergovernmental agreement of cooperation involving Montour County, Danville Borough, Mahoning Township, Riverside Borough, Washingtonville Borough, and the Danville Area School District. MARC has constructed a bicycle pump track, a concrete skate park, an 11-mile mountain bike trail network, and the North Branch Canal Trail, which runs from Danville to Catawissa. Its work also includes maintaining and managing the Montour Preserve, habitat enhancement and restoration projects in Mahoning Creek, and developing the Danville Riverfront and Open Space Master Plan. To supplement its municipal operating budget contributions, MARC organizes fundraising special events.

Municipalities often find that it takes significantly longer than anticipated to progress from the initial idea of the agreement to properly enacted ordinances.

Establishing a regional agency as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit is an important step. Language clarifying the educational or charitable purpose of the new agency must be included in the intergovernmental agreement or enacting ordinances to ensure it qualifies for tax-exempt status. Results from the 2025 Multi-Municipal Parks and Recreation Agency Survey indicated that 60 percent of the respondents were formed as a 501(c)(3) agency.

The basic steps to create an intergovernmental agreement are to:

1. Convene a small committee of representatives from each of the partners to the agreement. Appoint a lead person to keep discussions on track and ensure the process moves forward.
2. Get feedback from the municipal governing bodies, school board, and other boards involved in the decisions to be made, and bring this feedback to the committee meetings to revise, compromise, and come to a consensus agreement. The most significant issues to resolve are:

- Number of board members
- Representation/formula for make-up of the board members (elected officials, staff, residents, alternates, staggering of original appointments?)
- First-year cash contribution amount (total needed?)
- Cash contribution formula (by population/ set amount per capita, determined by school census or U.S. census figures, equal amounts for each partner, will the school district contribute cash?)
- Budget (calendar or fiscal year, how does the contribution from agreement partners increase, when is a contribution request needed each year from the agency, do partners need to see the agency budget?)
- Initial term of the agreement and effective date (5-10 year initial term?)
- In-kind contributions (free use of municipal parks and school facilities, office location, use of solicitor services?)
- Withdrawal from agreement (amount of notice needed?)
- Liability insurance (what is needed, who will provide?)
- Name of regional agency
- Purpose of regional agency
- Officers (each partner to hold one officer position?)
- By-laws (developed after agency is formed or before?)

- Voting (what constitutes a quorum, does every member have one vote?)
 - Dissolution procedures (what happens if the agency folds?)
 - Adding additional partners to the agreement (how is this approved?)
3. Assign drafting the intergovernmental agreement of cooperation to a staff member or solicitor (or Peer, if using a Peer grant), using other agreements as samples for formatting and language.
 4. Distribute copies of the draft agreement, once the committee is comfortable with it, to all partners, including municipal managers, elected officials, and solicitors. Request written comments by a specific date, allowing enough time for the partners to review and respond to the draft. Ask for complete solicitor comments by the same date. Have committee members follow up with the partners they represent to address any questions and concerns.
 5. Have the lead person revise the draft agreement, working to include all changes if possible.
 6. Have the committee review the revised draft. If the changes are significant or controversial, copies may need to be reviewed by the partners and solicitors again.
 7. Once finalized, send the agreement to the partners for formal approval at their public meetings. Municipalities adopt it by ordinance; school districts adopt it by resolution. The agreement must be advertised for adoption. A single ad may be used, provided the date and location of each partner's meeting are included. Elements of the enacting ordinance or resolution must consist of the title and date of the intergovernmental agreement, the names of the participating municipalities and school district, a one-sentence summary of the purpose of the agreement, authorization for the proper official (chair or president) to sign the agreement on behalf of the municipality or school district, and a statement that the intergovernmental agreement is attached.
 8. Have enough copies signed to allow an original for each partner and the regional agency.

Recreation Authority Formation

Ordinances must be adopted by each municipality that intends to organize the authority. The ordinances must include the names and addresses of the authority board members appointed by its incorporating municipalities. Board members must be a taxpayer in, operate a business in, or be a citizen of one of the incorporating municipalities.

Articles of incorporation for the authority must be filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth. The articles of incorporation must include the following items:

- The name of the authority
- The name of the incorporating local municipality or municipalities
- The names, addresses, and terms of office of the first members of the board of the proposed authority
- A listing of the authorities already organized by the incorporating local government, if any
- The authorized projects the authority may undertake
- The term of existence of the authority, if it's other than the statutory maximum of 50 years
- Designation of the service area for the authority

After the ordinances are adopted, they must be published in the local newspaper, along with a notice of the day the authority's articles of incorporation will be filed. Proof of newspaper publication of these legal notices must be filed with the articles of incorporation.

If the Secretary of the Commonwealth determines that the articles of incorporation comply with the law, a certificate of incorporation is issued, and the authority's existence commences from the date of the certificate and lasts for the specified term. After receiving the certificate of incorporation, the authority's business may begin. Bylaws must be adopted that specify items such as officers, quorum requirements, committees, and regular meeting procedures.

Funding from the municipalities to the authority would be decided through a written agreement among them.

Cooperation in Action



The East Lycoming Recreation Authority (Lycoming County) encompasses six municipalities within the East Lycoming School District boundaries, Hughesville and Picture Rocks Boroughs, and Jordan, Mill Creek, Shrewsbury, and Wolf Townships. The Recreation Authority manages and maintains the 65-acre Lime Bluff Recreational Area, which features walking trails, a softball field, a playground, a bocce court, horseshoe pits, picnic pavilions, and a disc golf course. Its budget is funded by contributions from member municipalities and revenue generated from programs and the rental of park facilities.

Stumbling Blocks

There are always issues that require more discussion among the partners to an intergovernmental agreement or municipalities seeking to form a recreation authority. Finding alternatives that are acceptable to everyone can be difficult. Some of the potential stumbling blocks are:

- **Purpose of Agency.** Will the new regional agency be responsible for offering recreation programs? Will it operate facilities such as a swimming pool or a park complex? Will it maintain park areas? The focus of the new agency's work needs to be decided upon. The agency's name should also reflect its regional nature.
- **Cash Contribution Amount and Annual Increases.** The initial lump-sum amount required to establish the new regional agency needs to be determined. This is done based on the projected budget. There's always apprehension about signing an intergovernmental agreement, particularly

regarding being locked into funding the regional agency. Some controls need to be implemented. Usually, a cap is placed on the percentage by which the amount can increase over the previous year's cash contribution.

- **Lack of Representation at Study Committee Meetings.** When one or more of the potential regional partners don't regularly attend study committee meetings, it significantly slows the process. If a municipality or school district is absent, it misses out on the opportunity to actively participate in decision-making and stay fully informed about progress. Lack of representation at meetings can indicate a lack of interest in participating in a new regional agency.
- **Changing Leadership.** When elected officials who've been part of working on multi-municipal cooperation efforts leave office, it creates concern. It's necessary to educate newly elected officials about the process and, hopefully, gain their support for the regional effort. They'll have questions that need answers and ideas that need consideration. Candidates for election should be questioned about their views on regional parks and recreation.
- **Expansion.** Sometimes, a municipality or two may choose not to participate in the study process. Often, these municipalities are located within the same school district as other potential partners. To support the regional agency's future expansion, a clause can be added to an intergovernmental agreement that allows municipalities to join in later years, subject to approval by the majority of existing partners. Once a joint authority is established, additional municipalities may become members. The authority's board members and elected officials of the joining municipality, along with those of the incorporating municipalities, must negotiate the terms of entry and reach a consensus. This includes any reapportionment of the authority board or revision of the terms of office for its members. The municipal governing body enacts an ordinance or resolution to join, and the authority board and existing municipal members must formally agree to the joining. Notice must be published in a newspaper of general circulation and in the county legal journal. An application is filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth, including

information similar to that in the original articles of incorporation. If the application complies with the law, the Secretary of the Commonwealth issues a certificate of joinder.

- **Member Representation.** The representation of participating partners on the regional agency board can be a source of controversy. Most often, the number of board members correlates with the municipality's percentage of the region's total population. So if municipality "A" holds 50 percent of the region's residents, it would be represented on the board by one-half of the total membership. In some cases, partners believe that municipalities should be equally represented on the board, regardless of population numbers. When school districts are involved, they are usually represented by a designated number of individuals. Additionally, having at least one elected official from each partner on the board enhances communication and strengthens relationships.

Cooperation in Action



The Pottsgrove Recreation Board (Montgomery County) exists to provide places and recreational activities that promote health, well-being, and community spirit for people of all ages. Lower, Upper, and West Pottsgrove Townships and the Pottsgrove School District provide funding. The Recreation Board consists of an elected official and a citizen representative from each governing body. A part-time Recreation Director oversees programs that include year-round swimming lessons, summer playgrounds, youth and adult volleyball, youth basketball, country line dancing lessons, a walking club, and a community band.

- **Existing Lease Agreements.** Sometimes, municipalities lease park areas and recreation facilities to outside parties. The best solution is to leave those existing agreements in place and make it clear that the new regional agency will honor the terms of the lease.
- **Ownership of Existing Buildings and Facilities.** Buildings and facilities can become issues if the new agency is proposed to take over their ownership. This scares partners because of the costs associated with utilities, maintenance, and capital improvements. It's more common for a new regional agency to take over operation of existing facilities, with the partner retaining ownership. Typically, municipal partners remain responsible for capital improvements to facilities and properties that they own.
- **Length of Agreement.** To allow time for the new regional agency to organize and successfully develop programs and services, an intergovernmental agreement is typically signed for an initial term that exceeds one year. This commits the partners to financing the agency for this specified period. Often, agreements are signed for an initial term of five to 10 years, after which they automatically renew each year.
- **Notice to Withdraw.** How much notice does a partner need to give its fellow partners and the regional agency if it wishes to withdraw from an intergovernmental agreement? To provide the regional agency with sufficient time to determine how to replace the contribution amount of a withdrawing partner, many agreements include a one-year written notice before the end of the calendar year. This allows the regional agency at least one year to plan for the budget impact.
- **Autonomy of Existing Programs.** Local youth sports associations are often afraid that a new regional parks and recreation agency will "take over" their programs. The volunteer groups are also concerned about the agency controlling the use of the park areas and recreation facilities they currently use. Language can be added to the intergovernmental agreement to allay these fears. Many times, municipalities have advisory parks and recreation boards and committees in place. Since municipalities

usually retain ownership of park areas and recreation facilities, it makes sense to keep these volunteer boards.

- **Saving Surplus Funds.** If a regional parks and recreation agency has a surplus of funds at the end of the year, it should be able to keep them. A fund balance, or capital fund, can be built up if excess funds remain in the agency's accounts. If municipalities require surplus funds to be returned, the regional agency may spend them to avoid losing them.
- **Cash Flow.** A regional parks and recreation agency must have funds to cover its expenses, so payment of municipal shares must begin in early January. The payment schedule should be established to prevent the cooperative program from needing to borrow funds to cover its bills.
- **Audits.** A Certified Public Accountant should conduct an annual audit of the regional parks and recreation agency's accounts to ensure all participating municipalities and the public know that the accounts are in order. The cost of this audit should be included in the agency's budget.
- **Dependence on Grants.** Grants from the state and federal governments are sometimes available for cooperative programs. DCNR grant programs even have a priority ranking for regional projects. A Circuit Rider grant can help start up a regional parks and recreation agency by providing funds for the salary of a parks and recreation director. However, it's a mistake to initiate a program solely because grant funding is available. Once the seed funding is depleted, the regional agency must have sufficient funding to operate independently.
- **In-Kind Contributions.** The most common contribution of partners is the use of buildings and grounds for recreation programs. There are many other possibilities for in-kind services, such as agency office space, payroll services, and use of office equipment. In-kind services help reduce costs for a regional agency, which in turn results in lower costs for agreement partners.

In-Kind Contributions Provided By Municipal Partners

Facility Use	75%
Park Maintenance	70%
Promotion of Services	65%
Agency Office	30%
Legal Services	20%
Vehicle Use	20%
Shared Equipment	20%
Health Insurance	10%
Staff Training	10%

Source: 2025 Multi-Municipal Parks and Recreation Agency Survey

- **Solicitor Review.** A legal review of the intergovernmental agreement by municipal solicitors is crucial to ensure each partner's interests are protected.

What advice would existing regional agencies give to communities that are considering forming a regional parks and recreation agency?

- Establish a strong funding base with built-in yearly increases.
- Define in-kind and shared services in writing.
- Make sure to include all potential responsibilities of the regional agency from the beginning.
- Gather as much community support as possible before starting the formal process to establish the agency.
- Engage the school district early in the process and keep them involved.
- Maintain open communication at all times.

Source: 2025 Multi-Municipal Parks and Recreation Agency Survey



Chapter 4

Making Parks and Recreation Collaboration Successful

After the intergovernmental agreement is adopted or the enacting ordinance is signed, the real work begins.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to starting a new regional parks and recreation agency. There are, however, key areas that need to be addressed.

The Importance of Planning

Cooperation isn't always a smooth journey. Coming together requires a shared vision and mutual agreement on a plan of action.

How do you know what parks and recreation services and facilities residents want? Undertaking a **Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan** is the most effective way to find out. This long-term plan provides structure and direction to focus your work. Action strategies break down the plan's implementation into realistic steps. DCNR provides grant funds to help finance this plan. Intergovernmental agreements should include a section that gives the new agency the responsibility to complete a regional Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan.

Creating a **Strategic Plan** is an essential step. Strategic planning establishes priorities, defines objectives, and outlines the necessary actions to achieve them. A mission statement articulates the agency's purpose and provides it with a sense of direction and priorities. Next, goals are developed that address what the regional parks and recreation agency wants to achieve. Once goals are in place, priorities are set, and a work plan is created. A Strategic Plan offers a clear roadmap that guides decision-making, allocates resources efficiently, and keeps the board focused on long-term goals. Aligning vision with action boosts overall effectiveness and lays a strong foundation for sustainable success.

Planning by Regional Parks and Recreation Agencies		
Plan Completed	Yes	No
Regional Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan	20%	80%
Strategic Plan	60%	40%

Source: 2025 Multi-Municipal Parks and Recreation Agency Survey

Starting Up a New Agency

Where will the office be? How will employees be paid? What can be provided as an in-kind service by the partners? Here are some of the items that must be addressed for the new agency:

- Office location
- Payroll and accounting services
- Bank accounts
- Employee benefits
- Employee job descriptions
- Office equipment
- Liability insurance
- Legal services

Board Development

The regional agency board will be new. Members may not know each other or have worked together before. Members may not understand their role and, as a result, may not speak up. The role of board chair isn't always given to the most capable person; it often goes to the member who's willing to take on the responsibility. They may never have run meetings before.

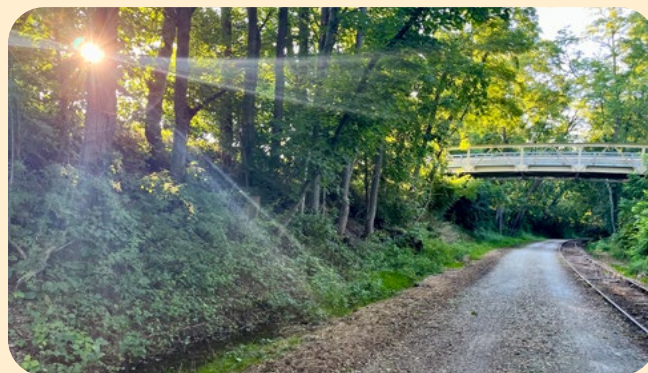
The board chair needs to be a strong leader who provides direction, guides decision-making, helps resolve conflicts, and drives long-term success by keeping the board focused and united.

Board training is also essential. By investing in training, a governing board can develop leadership capacity, enhance decision-making,

Cooperation in Action

The York County Rail Trail Authority (York County) is a ten-member volunteer board formed in 1990 by the York County Commissioners. It's built over 32 miles of trails, an impressive record of success that has spurred the economic growth of York County communities and the health and wellness of residents and visitors.

Building trails demands ongoing effort. Thanks to a DCNR Peer Grant, the Rail Trail Authority revised its Strategic Plan for 2025-2029 to help build momentum for expanding connected trail miles. The agency's mission was clarified to emphasize its core purpose, a vision of its ultimate goals was outlined, and a motto was selected to promote its efforts. Six strategic goals serve as the main themes for enhancing the agency's capabilities and addressing its challenges. Strategic initiatives, with deadlines and assigned leaders, outline the steps necessary to reach these goals. Tactics were developed to break down the detailed work activities and actions required to implement the strategic initiatives. Implementation guidelines were also developed to ensure the Strategic Plan remains a practical and functioning document.



and cultivate more engaged, informed, and effective board members. Developing a strong core of hardworking, dedicated board volunteers committed to serving the region is critical.

Creating a board training manual is a vital resource that helps new board members understand their responsibilities. The manual should include mission, vision, values, annual goals, budgets, programs, and more. The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS) RecTAP grant program can be used for this kind of project. <https://prps.org/prps-grants>

It'll take several meetings to get organized. The first step will be to develop bylaws for the governing board's operation. The Parks and Recreation Board Handbook offers guidance to improve the effectiveness of volunteer boards. It's published by the DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation. <https://prps.org/DCNRPublications>

Hiring a Director

The success of a new regional parks and recreation agency depends on hiring an experienced, professional parks and recreation director. Board members play an essential role, but as volunteers, their role is limited. At a minimum, the director's qualifications should include a four-year college degree in community parks and recreation, as well as five years of responsible experience in the public sector.

DCNR's Circuit Rider grant program provides financial incentives to hire a shared parks and recreation professional. Once an intergovernmental agreement has been signed, DCNR will consider an application for a Circuit Rider grant, which funds 100 percent of the director's salary for the first year of employment. The grant amount reduces by 25 percent each year for four years. When the grant ends, the regional agency must fully cover the director's salary.

Before DCNR considers a Circuit Rider grant, a budget must be prepared that outlines the regional agency's operations over eight years. This ensures the agency has sufficient funding to continue its operations after the grant ends.

To attract the caliber of candidates with the experience and know-how to develop a new community parks and recreation agency, offer a competitive salary. PRPS offers a no-cost job vacancy service for advertising positions.

The *Hiring Municipal Parks and Recreation Personnel* handbook is a great resource. <https://prps.org/DCNRPublications>

Improving Your Chances of Success

To ensure the success of a cooperative effort:

- **Communicate with Elected Officials.** Consider all elected officials as your "bosses." Provide monthly and annual reports to elected officials, detailing your accomplishments and keeping them updated on key issues. Continually demonstrating the benefits of the regional arrangement to municipalities captures the attention and support of elected officials. Make your documents visually appealing, clear, and concise.

Provide opportunities for municipal officials to develop a sense of ownership in your regional agency by consulting with them for guidance. At every opportunity, publicly praise your partners and use the words "we" and "our" frequently. Personal visits are the most effective way to establish a strong working relationship with municipal officials. At least twice a year, attend each partner's meetings to provide them with firsthand information about your agency. Meet with new elected officials and municipal staff early in their terms before they're swept up in their new responsibilities.

It requires constant diligence to maintain a good working relationship with your partners. As time passes and faces change, the partners may not realize what they're obligated to contribute or understand the agency's mission, how it's organized, and how it's funded.

- **Know the History.** Review the history of creating your regional agency by reading the minutes from study committee meetings that led to its formation. Engage in discussions with study committee members, municipal staff, and elected officials. If a Peer project was conducted, review the study recommendations with the Peer. Look for possible "hidden agendas" about why municipalities agreed to participate as partners in the new regional agency.

- **Understand the Intergovernmental Agreement.** Know the provisions of your intergovernmental agreement, particularly partner representation numbers, how vacancies are filled, the purpose and powers of the agency board, the budget approval process, the funding formula, and insurance requirements.
- **Learn About the Area.** Visit every park area and recreation facility in the region. Inventory the indoor recreation space within your region, including school district gymnasiums, churches, fire halls, and college facilities. Ensure the inventory of your public parks is up to date. Participate in visible community projects. Meet with key community leaders. Talk to everyone!
- **Build Your Volunteer Base.** Volunteers are crucial to your success. One hundred percent of the agencies that responded to the 2025 Multi-Municipal Parks and Recreation Agency Survey utilize volunteers in many roles, including youth sports coaches, special event helpers, park and trail maintenance workers, program instructors, fundraisers, social media support, and summer camp volunteers.
- **Stay Positive.** It's hard to please everyone. One municipality may be more demanding than another. It may be tough to get all partners to agree on the direction to take. Changing what you say impacts how others are influenced and persuaded by you. It breaks down barriers to resistance and fosters better communication and increased cooperation.

The Power of Positive Talk

Instead of:	Try:
I can't argue with that.	I'm inclined to agree.
I can't complain.	I'm okay.
I couldn't ask for more.	I'm very pleased and satisfied.
I don't expect more than that.	Here's what I expect.
I don't have a problem with that.	I can go with that.
I don't have any objections.	That's fine with me.
I don't see any reason why not.	That sounds good.
Don't let me get in your way.	I'll get out of your way.
Let's not get into that now.	Let's talk about that later.
I'm not worried.	I'm confident.
If nothing gets in our way.	If everything goes as planned.
Why can't you?	How about?
I'll have to.	I'll be glad to.
I can't.	I haven't yet.
I should have.	Starting now, I will.
I disagree.	I understand how you feel, but I believe there's another perspective to consider.

- **Promote the Cooperative Effort.** Being a part of providing opportunities for your community's residents to enjoy the outdoors, learn new skills, make friends, and stay healthier and happier unites new partners. You're providing a tremendous service for your residents and improving the quality of life in your community. Focusing on why you're working together and the great things you're doing helps make cooperation work. Take every opportunity to promote cooperation among the municipalities and the school district. Listing partners on all written materials, such as agency letterhead, signs, websites, business cards, and permits, is a visible reminder to the public.
- **Produce Results.** Start with an easy project or with traditional recreation programming. It's essential that whatever is attempted is successful. If you're taking over any previous work responsibilities, such as recreation programming, park maintenance, or swimming pool operation, don't make too many changes the first year unless the board says "yes" or the changes are related to financial efficiency. Establish trust and your reputation first.
- **Join Professional Organizations.** The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society is the principal state organization promoting parks and recreation training, networking, and leadership opportunities for those working and volunteering in the field. The National Recreation and Park Association advances parks, recreation, environmental, and conservation efforts nationwide through advocacy, publications, training programs, and an annual conference.
www.prps.org www.nrpa.org
- **Form Partnerships.** Most new regional parks and recreation agencies operate on a shoestring budget and have limited facilities to conduct recreation programs. Forming cooperative partnerships is important.

Cooperation in Action



In 1944, the Latrobe Borough Council passed a resolution to establish the Latrobe Recreation Board to manage recreation programs and local parks. Since then, the organization has gone through several changes and is now known as the Greater Latrobe Parks and Recreation Commission (Westmoreland County). The City of Latrobe, Unity Township, and the Greater Latrobe School District work together to provide the community with recreational facilities and programs. Each entity contributes financially to the agency's budget and has three representatives on the nine-member board. The agency manages and maintains 13 parks, a swimming pool, three exercise trails, and 10 playgrounds.

The Parks and Recreation Commission exemplifies the power of partnerships. It works with many community organizations, including Latrobe Little League, Greater Latrobe Area Midget Football Association, Willow Tree Gymnastics, Adams Memorial Library, Latrobe Art Center, Lady Wildcats Basketball, Loyalhanna Watershed, Keystone State Park, CDT Running Club, and Latrobe Aqua Club. The agency also actively participates in local events such as the Banana Split Celebration, Holly Jolly, Steeler Fest, 4th of July Celebration, National Night Out, Chalk the Walk, and Mister Rogers Day.

Cooperation in Action



The Stroud Regional Open Space and Recreation Commission (Monroe County) manages park areas, recreation facilities, and open spaces, and conducts recreation programs for the region's residents through the support of its partners, Stroudsburg and East Stroudsburg Boroughs, Stroud Township, and the Stroudsburg and East Stroudsburg Area School Districts. The Open Space and Recreation Commission is an outstanding example of generating alternative sources of revenue to expand services. Key revenue-generating programs include the StroudKids Day Camp for 6- to 12-year-olds, the StroudTots Day Camp for 4- to 5-year-olds, and a Leaders-in-Training program for 13 to 15-year-olds.

The Friends of Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation is a membership-based nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that supports the Open Space and Recreation Commission with financial and volunteer resources. The Friends group is currently raising funds for dog park, skate park, and pickleball court projects; actively seeks business sponsorships, hosts the Stroud Greenway Soiree fundraising event, and sponsors an endowment fund.

- **Develop Revenue Sources.** It's essential to implement strategies that generate funding to support your regional agency's operation, allowing you to expand services on a consistent basis. The financial contributions of the municipalities are the base of funding that you build on. Revenue sources include:
 - Charging for access to recreation facilities, programs, classes, or special events.
 - Generating income from renting facilities like community centers, sports fields, and picnic pavilions.
 - Forming a 501(c)(3) organization to raise funds and provide volunteer support.
 - Collaborating with local businesses to fund recreation programs and special events.
 - Holding fundraisers to raise money for special projects.
 - Applying for federal, state, and local grants aimed at parks, recreation, and conservation.
 - Soliciting donations to support the agency's operation.
 - Selling branded items, concessions, and services at parks and recreation facilities.



Summary

Good government responds to the needs of the people. There's no doubt that to best meet people's parks and recreation needs, our small-sized local governments must work together. But it's hard to cross those municipal boundary lines. Who will take that critical first step?

Keeping residents' needs in mind focuses communities on the need for intergovernmental cooperation. Due to Pennsylvania's fragmented system of local government, numerous gaps and overlaps exist in the provision of parks and recreation services. Think of our consolidated system of school districts and what it must have been like before mergers took place. Think what it would cost today if all of those smaller school districts still existed?

Before committing to a regional effort, what elected officials overwhelmingly want to know is, "What's in it for us?" and "How much is it going to cost us?" It's crucial to be clear and realistic about the costs from the very start. Don't create a regional agency that will run programs and special events, manage recreation facilities, write

grant applications, and maintain parks, expecting it to raise enough money through user fees and fundraising to cover its expenses. It won't happen.

The new regional agency will need sufficient tax-supported funding. That dollar amount will vary from region to region and will depend on the agency's responsibilities.

There must be a level of commitment from elected officials to a regional study, as well as openness to the possibility of joining a regional agency. If this isn't present, a regional effort has little chance of getting off the ground. Determine how ready your elected officials are to work together on the concept of working together.

Intergovernmental cooperation is all about people. The bottom line is that people cooperate, and people make the decision to cooperate. Building relationships with neighboring municipal staff and elected officials is the first step towards cooperation. Once relationships are formed and trust is established, multi-municipal cooperation becomes easier to accomplish.

Appendix A

Agency	Full Address	Website	County	Agency Members
Avonworth Community Park	498 Camp Horne Rd Pittsburgh, PA 15237	www.avonworthcommunitypark.org/	Allegheny	Ben Avon Borough, Ben Avon Heights Borough, Emsworth Borough, Kilbuck Township, Ohio Township
Bedford Area Parks and Recreation	P.O. Box 475 330 E John St Bedford, PA 15522	www.bedfordasd.org/page/community-resources	Bedford	Bedford Area School District
Blue Mountain Recreation Commission	P.O. Box 188 669 Red Dale Rd Orwigsburg, PA 17961	bluemountainpa.myrec.com/info/	Schuylkill	Auburn Borough, Cressona Borough, Deer Lake Borough, East Brunswick Township, New Ringgold Borough, North Manheim Township, Orwigsburg Borough, Wayne Township, West Brunswick Township, Blue Mountain School District
Buffalo Valley Recreation Authority	815 Market St Suite 182 Lewisburg, PA 17837	bvrec.org/	Union	Lewisburg Borough, East Buffalo Township, Kelly Township
Central Blair County Recreation and Park Commission	2101 5th Ave Altoona, PA 16602	cbrcparks.org/	Blair	City of Altoona, Altoona Area School District, Logan Township
Centre Region Parks and Recreation	2040 Sandy Dr Suite A State College, PA 16803	www.crpr.org/	Centre	State College Borough, Harris Township, Patton Township, College Township, Ferguson Township
Downingtown Area Recreation Consortium	114 Bell Tavern Rd Downingtown, PA 19335	downingtownpa.myrec.com/info/	Chester	Downingtown Borough, East Brandywine Township, East Caln Township, Upper Uwchlan Township, Uwchlan Township, West Bradford Township, West Pikeland Township
East Berlin Area Community Center	405 North Ave East Berlin, PA 17316	ebacc.org/	Adams, York	East Berlin Borough, Abbottstown Borough, Reading Township, and Hamilton Township in Adams County, Paradise and Washington Townships in York County
East Hills Recreation	445 Schoolhouse Rd Johnstown, PA 15904	easthillsrec.com/	Cambria	Richland Township, Geistown Borough, Richland School District

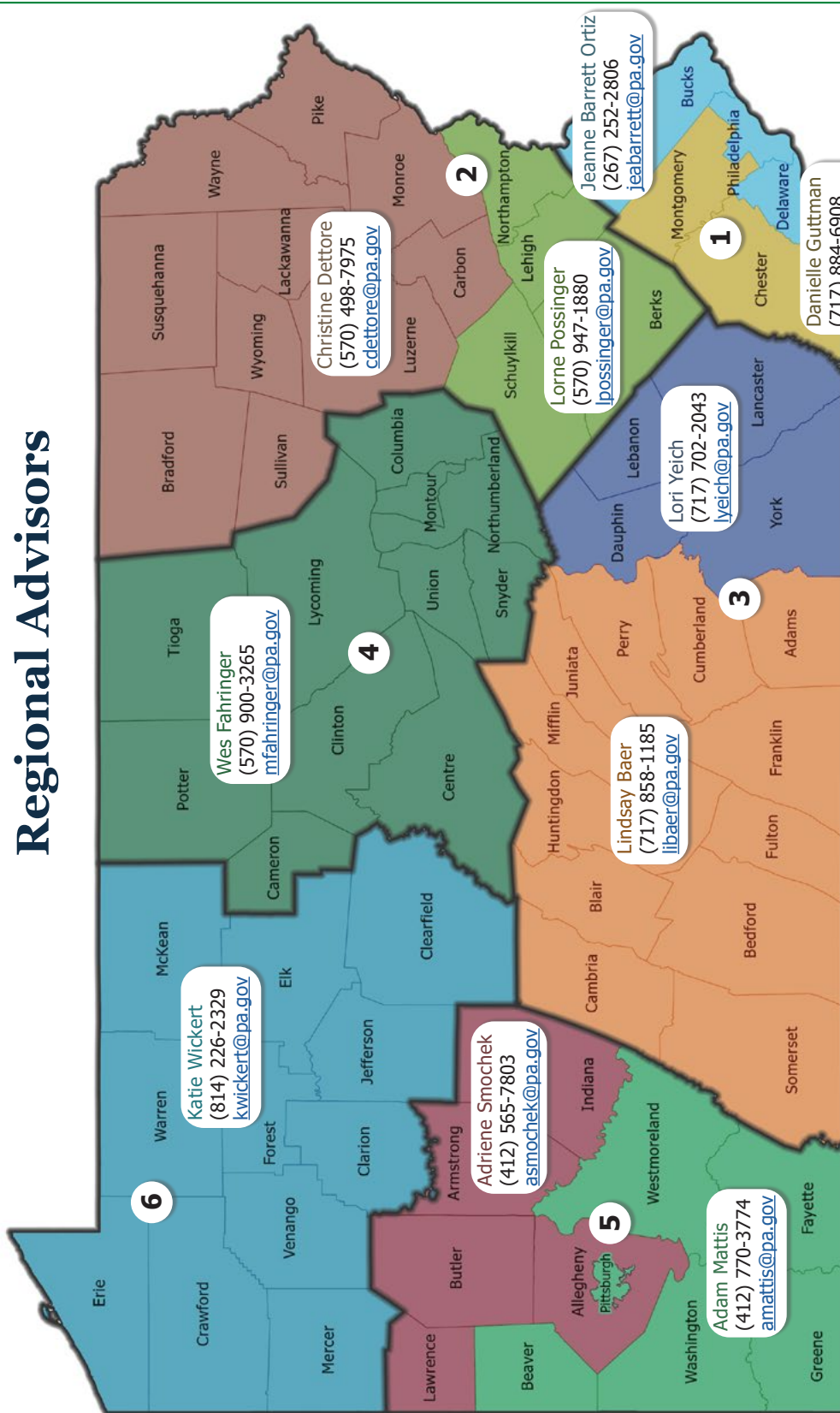
Agency	Full Address	Website	County	Agency Members
East Lycoming Recreation Authority	461 Elm Dr Hughesville, PA 17737	wolftownship.org/elra	Lycoming	Hughesville Borough, Picture Rocks Borough, Jordan Township, Mill Creek Township, Shrewsbury Township, Wolf Township
Eastern Schuylkill Recreation Commission	320 E Broad St Tamaqua, PA 18252	www.facebook.com/esrc-schuylkill/	Schuylkill	Tamaqua Borough, Rush Township, West Penn Township, Walker Township, Tamaqua Area School District
Eastern York Recreation Authority	44 Walnut Springs Rd York, PA 17406	https://eyra.recdesk.com/	York	Hallam Borough, Hellam Township, Lower Windsor Township
Ebensburg Recreation Board/Young People's Community Center	300 W High St Ebensburg, PA 15931	https://ebensburgpa.com/recreation_board/	Cambria	Ebensburg Borough, Cambria Township, Jackson Township
Greater Elizabethtown Area Recreation Services	70 S Poplar St Elizabethtown, PA 17022	https://www.getintogears.org/	Lancaster	Elizabethtown Borough, Mt. Joy Township, West Donegal Township, Elizabethtown Area School District, East Donegal Township
Gettysburg Area Recreation Authority	545 Long Lane Gettysburg, PA 17325	https://gettysburgrecpark.wixsite.com/gara-recpark	Adams	Borough of Gettysburg, Cumberland Township
Greater Latrobe Parks and Recreation Commission	P.O. Box 307 901 Jefferson St Latrobe, PA 15650	https://latroberecreation.org/	Westmoreland	City of Latrobe, Unity Township, Greater Latrobe School District
Hempfield RecCenter	950 Church St Landisville, PA 17538	https://hempfieldrec.com/community/about-us/	Lancaster	East Hempfield Township, West Hempfield Township, East Petersburg Borough, Mountville Borough, Hempfield School District
Hopewell Area Recreation and Parks	P.O. Box 959 Stewartstown, PA 17363	https://www.harp-online.org/	York	Hopewell Township, East Hopewell Township, Stewartstown Borough, Crossroads Borough
Lancaster Recreation Commission	525 Fairview Ave Lancaster, PA 17603	https://lancasterrec.org/	Lancaster	City of Lancaster, School District of Lancaster, Lancaster Township
Marple-Newtown Leisure Services	20 Media Line Rd Newtown Square, PA 19073	https://mnrecreation.myrec.com/info/	Delaware	Marple Township, Newtown Township
Meadville Area Recreation Authority	800 Thurston Rd Meadville, PA 16335	https://www.marc4fun.com/mara/	Crawford	City of Meadville, West Mead Township, Vernon Township

Agency	Full Address	Website	County	Agency Members
Mechanicsburg Area Recreation Department	1731 South York St Mechanicsburg, PA 17055	https://highschool.mbgisd.org/o/masd/page/recreation	Cumberland	Mechanicsburg Borough, Shiremanstown Borough, Upper Allen Township, Mechanicsburg School District
Mercer County Regional COG	2495 Highland Rd Hermitage, PA 16148	https://www.mcrcog.com/	Mercer	32 Municipalities in Mercer County
Middletown Area Recreation Alliance	55 W Water St Middletown, PA 17057	https://www.raiderweb.org/for_community	Dauphin	Lower Swatara Township, Middletown Borough, Roy-alton Borough, Middletown Area School District
Montour Area Recreation Commission	P.O. Box 456 Danville, PA 17821	https://montourec.com/	Montour	Mahoning Township, Montour County, Washingtonville Borough, Riverside Borough, Danville Borough, Danville Area School District
New Brighton Area Recreation Commission	610 3rd Ave New Brighton, PA 15066	https://recreation85.wixsite.com/nbarc/about-us	Beaver	New Brighton Area School District, New Brighton Borough, Fallston Borough, Daugherty Township, Pulaski Township
Northern Lehigh Recreation Authority	125 S Walnut St Slatington, PA 18080	https://northernlehighpa.myrec.com/	Lehigh	Borough of Slatington, Washington Township
Oxford Area Recreation Authority	P.O. Box 254 Oxford, PA 19363	https://oarapark.wixsite.com/oxfordrecreation	Chester	East Nottingham Township, Elk Township, Lower Oxford Township, West Nottingham Township, Oxford Borough
Palmyra Area Recreation and Parks Commission	325 South Railroad St Suite 1 Palmyra, PA 17078	https://palmyrarec.org/about/	Lebanon	North Londonderry Township, South Londonderry Township, Palmyra Borough, Palmyra Area School District
Pocono Area Recreation Commission	5912 Paradise Valley Rd Cresco, PA 18326	https://www.paradisetownship.com/pocono-area-recreation-commission	Monroe	Barrett Township, Paradise Township
Pottsgrove Recreation Board	1301 Kauffman Rd Pottstown, PA 19464	https://pottsgroverec.com/about-us	Montgomery	Pottsgrove School District, Lower Pottsgrove Township, Upper Pottsgrove Township, West Pottsgrove Township
Pottstown Area Regional Recreation Committee	140 College Dr Pottstown, PA 19464	https://www.parrc.net/about	Montgomery, Berks, Chester	Pottstown Borough, Douglass, Lower Pottsgrove, North Coventry, Upper Pottsgrove, and West Pottsgrove Townships in Montgomery County, East Coventry Township and North Coventry Township in Chester County, Washington Township in Berks County

Agency	Full Address	Website	County	Agency Members
Redbank Valley Park Commission	137 Park Rd Fairmount City, PA 16224	http://www.redbankpark.com/	Clarion, Armstrong	Redbank Township and Hawthorn Borough in Clarion County, Porter Township, Redbank Township, South Bethlehem Borough in Armstrong County
Shippensburg Community Parks and Recreation Authority	677 Orrstown Rd Shippensburg, PA 17257	https://shippensburgparkandrec.org/	Franklin	Shippensburg Borough, Southampton Township
Slippery Rock Area Park and Recreation Commission	320 N Main St Slippery Rock, PA 16057	https://slipperyrockpark-rec.org/	Butler	Slippery Rock Township, Slippery Rock Borough, Slippery Rock School District
Southern End Community Association (SECA)	299 Park Avenue Quarryville, PA 17566	https://www.secarec.com	Lancaster	Serving the municipalities of Bart Township, Colerain Township, Drumore Township, East Drumore Township, Eden Township, Fulton Township, Little Britain Township, Providence Township, Quarryville Borough, Solanco School District
Southern York County Regional Recreation Commission	49 E High St New Freedom, PA 17349	https://newfreedompa.myrec.com/info/	York	New Freedom Borough, Shrewsbury Township
Spring Grove Regional Parks and Recreation Center	1472 Roths Church Rd Spring Grove, PA 17362	https://www.rosesymca.org/sgrprc	York	Jackson Township, Spring Grove Borough, Paradise Township, North Codorus Township, Spring Grove School District, YMCA of the Roses
Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation Commission	15 Day St East Stroudsburg, PA 18301	https://www.srosrc.org/	Monroe	East Stroudsburg Borough, Stroudsburg Borough, East Stroudsburg Area School District, Stroudsburg Area School District, Stroud Township
Warwick Regional Recreation Commission	301 W Maple St Lititz, PA 17543	https://warwickregionalrec.org/	Lancaster	Lititz Borough, Warwick Township, Elizabeth Township, Warwick School District, Lititz recCenter
Westmont-Hilltop Recreation Commission	1000 Edgehill Dr Johnstown, PA 15905	https://www.westmonthilltoprcc.com/	Cambria	Westmont Borough, Upper Yoder Township, Westmont-Hilltop School District
West Shore Recreation Commission	P.O. Box 413 Lewisberry, PA 17339	https://www.wsrec.org/	Cumberland	Fairview Township, Lower Allen Township, Goldsboro Borough, Lemoyne Borough, Lewisberry Borough, New Cumberland Borough

Appendix B

Bureau of Recreation and Conservation Regional Advisors



The DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (BRC) provides grants and technical assistance for community projects related to park and recreation facilities, trails, rivers, and open space. Regional advisors are a first point of contact for technical, funding, and partnership-building assistance to advance these types of projects.

Scan or click this QR code to learn more about BRC grants and programs.



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About the Author

Susan E. Landes, CPRE, believes a vibrant parks and recreation system is at the heart of every great community. She holds an undergraduate degree in Community Recreation and Parks and a master's degree in Public Administration from Penn State University. In 1990, Sue founded Recreation and Parks Solutions to pursue her goal of making public parks and recreation an essential service in Pennsylvania. She has a proven track record as a progressive and innovative thinker who gets things accomplished. Her past experiences working in local government have fueled her passion to help communities provide the best parks and recreation services possible. Located in Lebanon County, Recreation and Parks Solutions is a small firm with a big presence in municipal parks and recreation consulting. It has provided professional parks, recreation, open space, and trail planning services to more than 350 local governments of all shapes and sizes across the Commonwealth. Its mission is to build local capacity and community support to sustain and grow parks and recreation systems and services in Pennsylvania.

www.recanparkssolutions.com



Pennsylvania
**Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources**
Bureau of Recreation and Conservation

