



PARK DISTRICT
of OAK PARK

IMPACT IN ACTION.

Over the past year, the Park District has worked diligently to serve Oak Park and to make a meaningful, measurable impact in the lives of our residents.

2025 Annual Report

Park District of Oak Park earned prestigious national and state recognition, expanded opportunities to enjoy recreation, deepened engagement among residents, particularly adults and older adults, and fostered connections within our community.

After five consecutive years as a finalist, the District earned the coveted 2025 National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management, the highest honor in our field. This national recognition affirms excellence in leadership, innovation, and community impact. The District also earned national accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), by demonstrating compliance with standards for quality operations and service. Only 222 park agencies nationwide — and just nine in Illinois — hold this distinction. Finally, the District was recognized as an Illinois Distinguished Accredited Agency by demonstrating our commitment to providing exceptional programs, facilities, and services ultimately strengthening the quality of life for Oak Park residents.

Our leadership in sustainability was recognized with the Best Green Practices Award, which highlights environmentally responsible policies and operations for investments. Field Center, with its rammed-earth construction, three geothermal systems, solar panel installations and electric vehicle infrastructure all highlight our commitment to sustainability. The District also received the Arts in the Parks Award for our nearly 50-year partnership with Oak Park Festival Theatre (OPFT), bringing live performances to Austin Gardens each summer. Welcoming nearly 7,000 audience members each year, OPFT makes the arts a joyful and essential part of Oak Park's public spaces. Safety excellence was another highlight in 2025. Our aquatic team earned the Platinum International Aquatic Safety



Award, placing our lifeguards in the top 10% worldwide following perfect scores on all audits and rescue simulations.

Beyond recognition, the Park District made a direct impact on residents' lives. In 2025, 56% of Oak Park households participated in at least one registered program, the highest participation to date. Of the approximately 25,000 households in Oak Park, the Park District served 12,960 households last year, with participation growth highest among adults and children under 6. The Community Recreation Center (CRC) supported community health and wellness through 5,944 memberships, along with an additional 3,590 free walking track memberships. To ensure equitable access, residents utilized more than \$331,000 in financial assistance, primarily supporting CRC memberships and summer camp participation.

This year's impact was felt through the places and spaces that bring our community together. Field Center's innovative, sustainable design reflects the Park District's commitment to sustainability, while the playground and splashpad were shaped by input from our summer camp participants. The new Rehm activity pool with water slides, activity crossing, and current channel along with Andersen Park renovations featuring new fitness equipment, shade structures, and an expanded splashpad, highlight our focus on inclusivity, creating welcoming spaces where residents of all ages and abilities can connect and thrive.

Together, these accomplishments reflect our ongoing commitment to excellence, inclusion, and stewardship — guided by our dedicated staff, the leadership of our Board of Commissioners, and the continued engagement of the Oak Park community.

Values in Action



Community Engagement

Listening, partnering, and collaborating to reflect community voices in our work.

- Engaged nearly 13,000 households through registered programs
- Welcomed over 32,000 visitors to Oak Park Conservatory
- Hosted three Park Master Plan reviews (Cheney Mansion, Barrie and Andersen Parks)
- Engaged local youth in Field Park playground and splashpad design
- Gathered community feedback through qualitative and quantitative research on programs, parks, facilities, and staff
- Engaged with residents at community-wide events including Day in Our Village, Juneteenth, and National Night Out



Sustainability

Investing in today to reduce environmental impact and long-term costs.

- Earned Best Green Practices Award – 10th year in a row
- Installed 16 geothermal wells at Cheney Mansion
- Constructing Field Center with sustainable, energy-conscious design
- Converted tennis court lights to LED
- Replaced Pleasant Home oven with an electric version
- Installed two additional EV chargers
- Developed Climate Action Plan
- Added battery-powered ride-on mower and electric vehicle to our fleet
- Planted 62 trees and more than 3,300 daffodils and tulips in our parks



Integrity

Operating with honesty, transparency and accountability.

- Maintained CAPRA accreditation by meeting 154 rigorous standards
- Maintained Illinois Distinguished Accreditation through our commitment to exceptional programs, facilities, and services
- Abated additional tax income from Cook County's fund recapture from assessment appeals
- Continued investment in staff and Board training to uphold high professional standards

56% of households
served through registered programs

12,960 households
engaged

19% of residents
served through the Community Recreation Center

As we close the book on 2025, we are grateful to our community for the ongoing

The Park District's **Core Values** drive our actions and operations at every level. The following highlights work that advanced these values over the last year.



Innovation

Trying new ideas and approaches to better serve evolving community needs.

- Implemented 21 new ideas from employee-led innovation idea platform
- Implemented three Big Ideas from our employee-led innovation contest
- Added translation-support software at Guest Services to improve access
- Created interactive virtual tours for our Historic Properties and CRC

\$331,000 in financial assistance utilized

89 D97 Summer Launch students participated in Summer Camp

5,944+ CRC members
3,590 free walking track participants

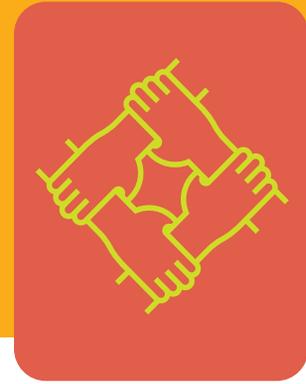
3 national & state awards received



Responsible Leadership

Making thoughtful, fiscally responsible decisions.

- Awarded the 2025 national Gold Medal for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management
- Earned Platinum International Aquatic Safety Award
- Launched annual Value Champion Awards, honoring one full time and two part-time staff
- Signed OSRAD grant agreement for Longfellow Park renovation
- Secured Illinois Finance Authority grant for EV chargers
- Entered into an IGA with the Oak Park Township for youth scholarship support
- Maintained a nearly 50-year partnership with Festival Theatre



Inclusivity

Removing barriers so everyone can participate.

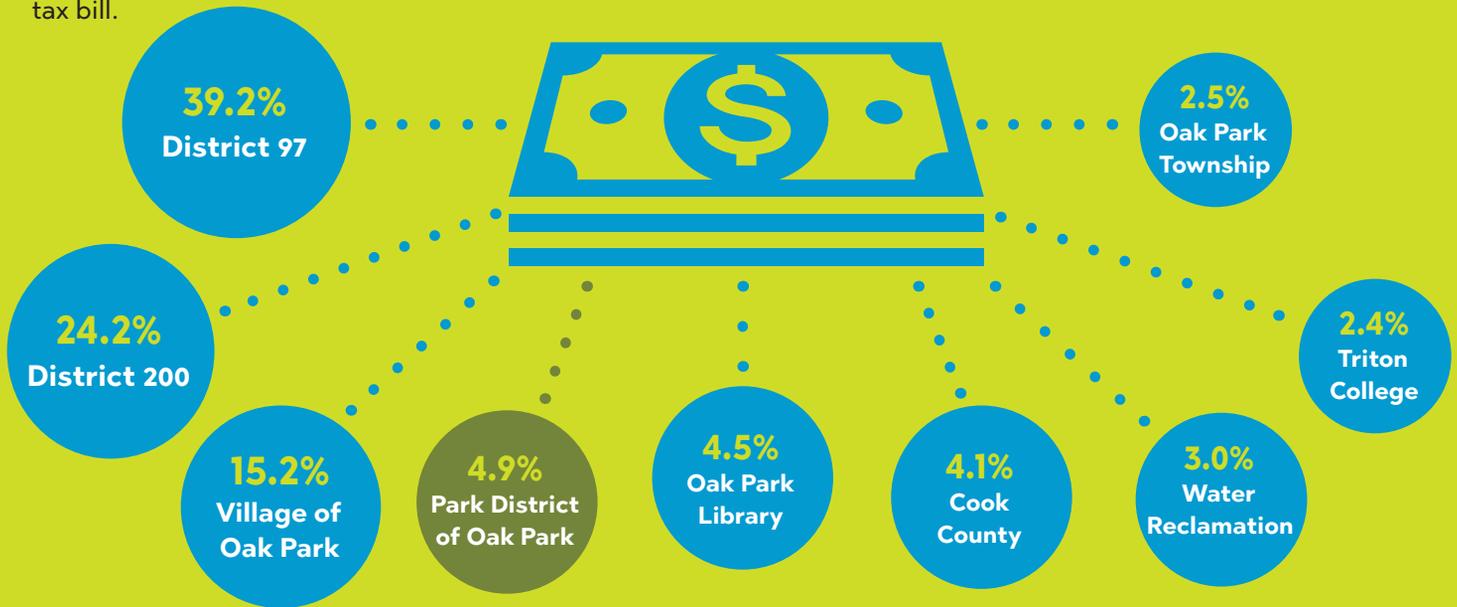
- Surpassed \$331,000 in financial assistance for the first time; awarded \$159,082 in scholarships and \$172,260 in Childcare Discount Memberships
- Provided 3,500 free walking track memberships at the CRC
- Hosted 25+ free community events in our parks
- Continued partnership with D97 providing free summer camp to Summer Launch students
- Collaborated with OPPL to provide four free passes to Cubhouse, pools, and ice rink
- Received a \$100,000 anonymous grant to fully fund the CRC Youth Afterschool Program

support and engagement and look forward to many great things to come in 2026.

How It Supports Community Services

Approximately 4.9% of your 2025 property tax bill is paid to the Park District of Oak Park.

The taxes collected fund less than half of our operating expenses. The Park District funds the remaining expenses through earned revenue from program fees, facility rentals, grants, and donations. Maintaining diverse revenue streams allows the Park District to continue to maintain a balanced budget while limiting the tax burden to under 5% of the total tax bill.



Participation across Park District programs continued to grow in 2025, reaching more than 100,000 enrollments — an increase of nearly 25% since 2023. Growth was driven by strong demand for health & fitness, Ice and Aquatics offerings, alongside incremental growth in nearly every program area.

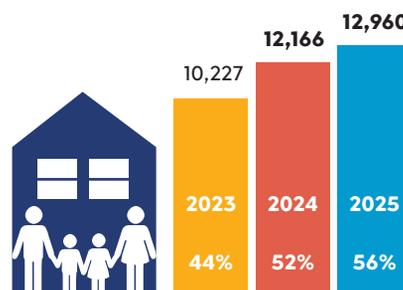
ENROLLMENT STATS 2025

Activity/Programs	2025	2024	2023
Adult Athletics	1,233	1,227	865
Youth Athletics	7,645	7,257	6,466
Martial Arts	882	967	1,006
Family & Special Events	3,647	3,499	3,111
Historic Homes Events (Adult)	1,542	1,148	1,088
Afterschool Programs & Camps	3,552	3,660	3,266
Active Adults	12,538	11,265	11,055
Early Childhood	730	525	341
Arts & Crafts	2,894	2,177	2,360
Performing Arts	2,123	2,015	1,804
Health & Fitness	21,088	16,439	9,934
Gymnastics	12,695	12,445	13,292
Ice	17,979	15,763	15,829
Aquatics	3,469	2,168	1,974
Teens	1,971	2,131	1,906
Nature & Conservatory	6,632	6,764	6,347
Total	100,620	89,450	80,644

- Health & Fitness: **28% increase in enrollment**, driven by growth in Ultimate Fitness Memberships.
- Aquatics and Ice: Enjoyed **double-digit growth**, reflecting strong response to new teen-focused programming at the Ice Arena and Pools.
- Early Childhood participation **more than doubled since 2023**, with a strong interest in our one-day/time enrichment programs.
- Historic Homes Events saw a **sharp increase** due to our targeted focus on 21+ programming, rebranding, and cross-promotion with local businesses.



GROWTH HIGHLIGHTS



HOUSEHOLDS SERVED 2025

56% of Oak Park Households