



## Strengthening Our Partnership: Quick Guides on how things work

Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) & the Associated Recreation Council (ARC)  
*Building Communities Together since 1975*

### Advisory Councils (ACs)

**Overview:** ARC, and its Advisory Councils, have a unique relationship with the City of Seattle, defined by [City Ordinance No. 122588](#) which “authorizes the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation to enter into an agreement with the Associated Recreation Council for the purpose of assisting in planning and implementing recreational activities, life-long learning and other programs for the public, and coordinating and supporting the activities of community advisory councils (ACs). ACs are comprised of community volunteers doing business as (dba) ARC and are not a separate legal entity.

An SPR Representative acts as the liaison between SPR and the advisory council; while ARC manages the advisory council system and represents the ACs in system-wide financial and programmatic discussions with SPR. A full list of chartered advisory councils can be found on the [Advisory Councils \(arcseattle.org\)](http://arcseattle.org) website.

**Equity Considerations for ACs:** There are three key equity areas:

- Advisory councils, in nature, are a conduit and connection to the communities they serve, creating a clear pathway to community voice, assisting SPR and ARC in understanding community needs.
- ACs assist in approving expense disbursements and reviewing monthly Profit & Loss (P&L) Statements.
- The consolidated budget structure of advisory council funds allows for ARC and SPR to equitably distribute resources according to the [SPR Equity Priority Populations Index](#).

#### 1. What are Advisory Councils responsible for?

The key responsibilities are outlined and described in the AC Bylaws and an Operating Agreement which are mutually agreed upon by SPR, ARC, and the AC. In addition, ACs are a voice for their community, they are guided by what will best support their neighborhood and ensure that all individuals are welcomed and represented. ACs are responsible for the mobilization, support, and encouragement of community input towards SPR and ARC programming and activities. Advisory councils do not have the authority to approve spending outside of the approved budget.

#### 2. How are Advisory Council Members selected?

Potential AC members are involved community members who seek to contribute through volunteerism. They are often program participants, parents, and neighbors.

- New members can self-select or be recruited by current AC members, SPR and ARC staff.

- Potential members must complete a [New Member Packet](#) and clear a background check to qualify.
- The application is routed for five approval signatures: 1. SPR Representative, 2. AC President/Chair, 3. ARC Designee, 4. SPR Manager, 5. SPR Recreation Division Director.
- Once the final signer approves, ARC sends an Award Letter signed by the Recreation Division Director notifying the candidate, AC President, and SPR Representative, that they are approved.
- ARC will complete a screening of all self-selected applicants and encourages SPR and the current advisory council members also perform a screening to ensure interested parties understand the opportunity and will maintain the required commitments.

### **3. Can an Advisory Council member be removed?**

It is rare, but yes, an advisory council member can be removed for violating the Bylaws, Operating Agreements, ARC Code of Conduct, or are found to have Conflict of Interest as outlined in the [Master Services Agreement](#) and AC Bylaws.

- An Advisory Council member may also resign from their membership term at any time if they are unable to meet the requirements or fulfill the responsibilities associated with their position. For the resignation to be official, a written message must be communicated to the AC president, SPR Representative, and ARC Designee.
- If a member is determined to have a Conflict of Interest, the member must resign. Conditional to the nature of the conflict of interest the member may continue to volunteer their time with the site/program. A document outlining potential conflicts of interest can be read here [Conflict of Interest Communication and Guidance updated.pdf \(arcseattle.org\)](#).

### **4. What do sites or programs do if there are no active advisory council members?**

- If there are no active advisory council members, the SPR Representative will work with ARC to create a recruitment strategy for their advisory council. All financial administrative tasks normally completed by advisory council members will be completed by the ARC Director of Operations or Recreation Area Operations Supervisor until a council is established.
- ARC and SPR are dedicated to fostering a diverse and engaged group of advisory council members. ARC, SPR, and existing members are encouraged to call upon their networks and actively promote advisory council membership.

### **5. Things to consider in 2023-2024**

- How to encourage further collaboration between ACs and site participants, staff, and instructors.
- How do we create councils that represent the diversity and transformation that Seattle neighborhoods have experienced while engaging and being supported by the current members?
- AC Hosted Engagement Opportunities:

- Outreach to community groups and small businesses to attend meetings or an input session.
- Coffee hours once a quarter or once a year depending on availability and schedules- Advisory Council members host a coffee hour with SPR site staff and ARC instructors to foster relationships and encourage communication across programming and events.

## 6. Who is involved?

- ARC roles:
  - Executive Director - *Charter all advisory councils, appoint an ARC Designee to manage the advisory council system, consider member removal if necessary.*
  - ARC Designees (Community Relations Program Manager and Coordinator) - *Manage the advisory council system including appointment, recruitment, training and records tracking, attend meetings as possible, manage AC and SPR concerns, act as AC voice to SPR and ARC leadership when ACs are not present, ensure Bylaws and Operating Agreements are upheld, and provide general AC support.*
  - Director of Operations and Recreation Area Operation Supervisor - *support the development of the annual ARC budget, review unplanned spending proposals, provides oversight for the financial transaction approval process, supports AC & SPR with programming and special events.*
- SPR roles:
  - Superintendent - *Identify a Designee (historically the Recreation Division Director) to oversee SPR's interest in the advisory council system.*
  - Recreation Division Director - *Approve membership applications, sign Award Letters, provide executive oversight.*
  - Recreation Managers - *Approve membership applications, assign and support SPR Representatives working directly with advisory councils.*
  - SPR Representative (Typically a Coordinator or Specialist) - *Approve membership applications, work directly with the advisory council partnering closely with the AC President or Chair, support the development of meeting agendas, attend all official meetings of the advisory council, provide operational and programming updates, consider AC advice and recommendations, submit financial requests in Microix for AC approval, oversee the Annual Budget Process, and regularly communicate needs, ideas, and concerns to the ARC Designee(s).*
- Advisory Council roles:
  - AC Members - *General advisory council responsibilities are defined in the Bylaws and Operating Agreement.*
  - AC Officers - *There are specific responsibilities delegated to members serving in Officer positions. Officer positions are not required as long as the designated responsibilities are managed appropriately and a primary point of contact is named. Review the Position Descriptions in the Advisory Council Bylaws for a more detailed description of roles: President or Chair, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary.*