

No-Fee Community Activations

For questions or support, contact Client Services at 416-396-7378 or visit toronto.ca/parks/permits.

Booking Overview

The No-Fee Community Activations Booking invites individuals, community groups and not-for-profit organizations to host smaller-scale, single-day activities that encourage Torontonians to access and benefit from their local parks.

This booking is available for activities that:

- Take place in Toronto's parks
- Are free of charge and open to the public
- Are community-led and non-commercial
- Occur during a single day
- Take place between May and October
- Include up to 100 participants (total, during the entire activity)

Activities must support one or more of the following themes:

- Learning about or experiencing nature
- Sharing Indigenous knowledge
- Encouraging physical activity and wellness
- Promoting community participation and social inclusion
- Celebrating arts and culture

Examples of activities include:

- An Indigenous-led ravine walk exploring relationships to land
- A Friends of the Park family fun day with story time, crafts and board games
- A park social to connect youth and seniors facilitated by a social service organization
- A wellness in the park event featuring guided meditation and tai-chi led by a cultural centre
- A trivia in the park event organized by a historical society
- A learn-to-draw-landscapes workshop led by an artist collective

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include:

- Registered charities
- Incorporated not-for-profit organizations
- Unincorporated community groups, associations or collectives
- Individuals

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The following are not eligible for this booking:

- Businesses
- Business Improvement Areas (BIAs)
- Brand, advertising or marketing agencies
- Other for-profit or commercial entities
- City divisions, agencies, boards or commissions

Ineligible applicants can support activities through sponsorships or donations (cash or in-kind). Review the “Signage and Recognition” section of these guidelines for more information.

Eligible Activities

Organizers may host one or more of the following activities during a single gathering:

- Arts and crafts
- Board games or cards (gambling and money exchange is not allowed)
- Ceremonies (not including weddings, ceremonies cannot include fire)
- Lawn games
- Meditation
- Social gatherings
- Tai chi
- Talks, presentations or information displays
- Walks, tours or mobile activities (with a meet-up)
- Workshops
- Yoga or fitness activities (e.g. Zumba, aerobics)

Activities that are not eligible for this booking include:

- Private or restricted activities (e.g. birthday parties, member-based gatherings)
- Wedding ceremonies
- Commercial photography
- Activities that sell tickets or charge admission fees
- Fundraisers or activities that require a donation or pay-what-you-can to attend
- Commercial, promotional or for-profit activities including markets, product sampling or sales, brand activation, advertising or similar
- Political activities (permits are not issued for protests, rallies or demonstrations)
- Sporting activities with body contact or equipment, including:
 - Baseball
 - Basketball
 - Badminton
 - Broomball
 - Cricket

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- Curling
- Dancing instruction
- Football
- Golf
- Gymnastics
- Hockey (ice, ball, field or roller)
- Lacrosse
- Martial arts
- Ringette
- Rugby
- Skating
- Skiing
- Soccer
- Squash
- Target practice (archery or rifle)
- Tennis (including table tennis)
- Track and field
- Volleyball
- Concerts, live performances, art installations or film screenings
- Tree planting, gardening or invasive species management
- Activities that fall under the City's Hate Activity Policy or go against the City's Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Activities administered or approved under an existing City program or service

Some of the ineligible activities noted above can be organized through other bookings. Review the "Other Booking Options" section for more information.

Eligible Features

Amplified Sound

Organizers may use the following amplified sound equipment during the activity:

- One battery-powered microphone
- One battery-powered speaker

Organizers must self-monitor noise levels to ensure they do not go above the levels of the City's [Noise By-Law](#). Noise levels for amplified sound are measured in decibels (dB) from where the noise is being experienced.

For outdoor activities in parks, the acceptable levels are:

- Less than 50 dB(A) or 65dB(C) from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.
 - (Note: parks are closed from 12:01 a.m. to 5:30 a.m.)
- Less than 55 dB(A) or 70dB(C) from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.

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Sound meter apps can be downloaded for free onto a smart phone or device to help measure noise levels. When organizing an event or activity, consider how noise may impact nearby park users or residents.

If complaints about amplified sound are received by the City's 311 service, a by-law officer may be called to investigate. If the activity is not following the Noise By-Law, the organizer could face fines or restrictions on future park bookings.

Any activities in a park that are expected to generate noise above the levels of the Noise By-Law must have a Noise Exemption Permit.

Food

- Home-prepared food (e.g. bring-your-own-food) is allowed for personal consumption only. Home-prepared food cannot be served to the public.
- Food that is offered to the public must be:
 - Offered to all participants for free (food cannot be sold)
 - Offered in individual serving sizes for personal consumption
 - Pre-packaged and in its original, sealed packaging from an inspected location such as a grocery store or licensed restaurant
 - In a ready-to-eat format that does not require preparation such as washing, cutting, handling, portioning, assembly, cooking or heating.
- Examples of food that could be offered to the public include granola bars, bags of chips, or juice boxes.
- Alcohol cannot be served or sold to the public. If the activity takes place in an Alcohol in Parks location, participants may bring their own alcohol for personal consumption only.
- Organizers must ensure that any waste generated by the activity is collected and placed into the waste and recycling bins in the park.
- Organizers are encouraged to find ways to reduce waste created by the activity.

Tents

- Organizers may set up a maximum of two 10 ft x 10 ft (3 m x 3 m) pop-up tents.
- Tents must be weighted down using tent weights or sandbags placed on top of all the tent feet. Staking into the ground is not allowed.
- Tents cannot be left unattended.
- During high winds, tents must be taken down immediately to prevent them from blowing over and causing injury or damage.
- Tents may only include the branding or logos of an eligible applicant. Tents that are branded for businesses or for-profit entities are not allowed.

Signage and Recognition

- If signage is used, the signage must be posted within the booked area and removed at the end of the activity.
- Signage must be weighted down or fastened, not staked into the ground. Signage

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cannot be posted to trees or fences.

- Organizers may post signage that identifies their group/organization and/or information about the activity they are hosting.
- Stand-alone sponsor branding or advertising is not allowed. However, organizers may recognize contributions from sponsors on a portion of activity signage. Sponsor recognition must not exceed 20 per cent of a sign's total area. (Note: "sponsor" includes corporate sponsors, donors and other third-parties providing cash or in-kind support for an activity.)

Giveaways

- Activities may feature a giveaway component if the giveaway item is:
 - Nominal value or low cost (less than \$10)
 - Offered for free to all participants (items cannot be given to select participants)
 - Not used to promote or market a particular business or for-profit interest
- Examples of acceptable giveaway items could include:
 - Small personal items (e.g. key chains, tote bags)
 - Artistic or informational materials (e.g. bookmarks, postcards, posters, brochures)
 - Take-home non-invasive plant materials (e.g. seed packs, seedlings, saplings)
- Organizers are responsible for ensuring that any extra or discarded giveaway items are removed from the park or placed in garbage or recycling bins, if applicable.
- The City is not responsible for the use of personal information that may be collected by the organizer as part of the giveaway.

Onsite Donations

- Organizers may passively accept donations (e.g. collections jar or electronic donation platform) during the activity to help recover activity-related costs.
- Organizers may accept clothing or non-perishable food items during the activity to be donated to local social services organizations.
- Donations cannot be a requirement for participation in the activity.
- The City is not responsible for the use of the donation or personal information collected by the organizer as part of the donation.

Ineligible Features

The following features are not eligible:

- Any tents larger than 10 ft x10 ft (3 m x 3 m) (review the "Tents" section above for guidance)
- Stages, platforms, tiered seating or similar structures
- Inflatables, bouncy castles or mechanical amusement devices
- Fire, fire demonstrations or fireworks
- Hot air balloons
- Live musical performances

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- Amplified sound above the decibel level identified by the City’s Noise By-law
- Food served or sold to the public, except as described in the “Food” section above
- Alcohol served or sold to the public
- The promotion or sale of goods or merchandise
- Advertising or commercial signage that does not adhere to the guidelines in the “Signage and Recognition” section above
- Illuminated signage
- Features requiring access to electricity or an electricity generator
- Vehicle access onto parkland beyond available parking spaces
- Any permanent, semi-permanent or multi-day installations or fixtures (all items brought into the park must be removed at the end of activity)

Bookable Spaces

The following park spaces are available for booking:

- Designated picnic sites and shelters
- Parkland (e.g. grass and turf areas)

Organizers will be asked to submit a site map indicating the location and layout of their activities with their application form.

Walks and Tours

Applicants can reserve a single space within the park where participants can gather at the beginning and end of a walk or tour. This gathering location should be specified in the “Park Information” section of the application form and noted on the site map attachment. During the walk or tour, participants must share space with other park users and ensure that trails, paths, and other linear spaces in parks remain open and passable. Please include information about the walk or tour route in the “Activity Description” section of the application form.

Ineligible Spaces

The following spaces are not available through this booking:

- Dog off-leash areas
- Playgrounds
- Fire pits, BBQs and outdoor ovens
- Allotment, community and pollinator gardens
- Trails, paths, streets, sidewalks and other public rights-of-way
- Indoor spaces (e.g. at Community Recreation Centres)
- Recreation facilities (e.g. sports fields, pools, rinks)
- Environmentally Significant Areas and Provincial Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest
- Spaces not managed by the City of Toronto

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Booking Allocations

Applicants are allowed one booking per park per day. When booking demand is high, Client Services staff may apply the following booking allocations to ensure that spaces are available to as many groups as possible throughout the season.

- Maximum of two bookings per group, per week (Monday to Sunday)
- Maximum of four bookings per group, per season (May to October)

During the Activity

City staff may call or visit approved bookings to support the evaluation of this program. During the evaluation City staff will check that activities comply with these Booking Guidelines. The Activity Contact listed on the Application Form must have a printed or digital copy of their approved booking/permit with them and be available in-person and reachable by phone during the activity.

Insurance

Registered charities and not-for-profit organizations will be asked to supply a certificate of insurance from their insurance provider showing two million (\$2,000,000) dollars of Commercial General Liability insurance and listing the City of Toronto as an additional insured for the activity.

Individuals and unincorporated community groups only require insurance for yoga or fitness activities. Organizers can bring their own insurance for the activity or purchase coverage from the City at an affordable rate under the User Group insurance program. Client Services staff will facilitate this process, if required.

More Bookings Options

- Visit toronto.ca/parks/permits to learn about other Parks & Recreation booking options including Arts, Music & Movies in a Park, Pumpkin Parades, Outdoor Special Events, Outdoor Ovens, Firepits, Recreational Facilities, Wedding Ceremonies and more.
- Visit toronto.ca/sacred-fires to learn more about ceremonial fires.