

NRPA Gold Medal

Application

15. What makes your agency “Outstanding”? Please cite 3 specific examples that capture the outstanding nature of your agency as you serve your unique community. Each example provided will be worth up to 3 points, for a total of 9 possible points. (Total Maximum Word Count: 180) **178 Words**



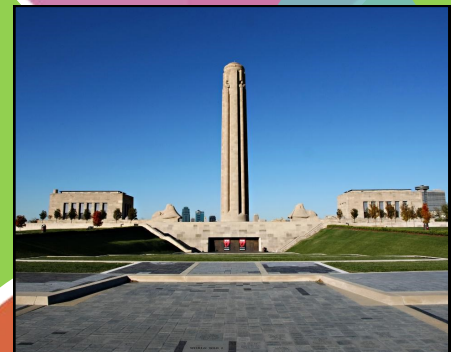
Boulevards and Parkways/Fountains:

KCPR manages 135+ miles of boulevards and parkways that balance the need to move traffic while maintaining a ‘city within a park’ feel. Ward Parkway, the crown jewel, was named one of 10 Great Streets in America by the American Planning Association. Known as the “City of Fountains” and is said to have more fountains than Rome, these water sculptures contribute to an aesthetically pleasing environment. Over \$3.5 million was raised to ensure the continued maintenance of these flowing treasures.



Liberty Memorial:

Following WWI, KC leaders formed the Liberty Memorial Association and raised \$2.5 million for the first WWI monument in America. In 2014, Liberty Memorial was designated the National WWI Museum and Memorial, the only national war memorial outside of D.C. The museum is hosting our country’s only WWI centennial commemoration through 2019.



Ethnic Festival:

For 36 years the festival has highlighted KC’s rich diversity in a three-day celebration of the culture, food, and heritage from 60 countries. The event has a positive social impact on 40,000+ attendees and a significant economic impact annually.

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16. Tell us your story about how your agency positively impacts the Community you serve. Share with us 5 actions or activities your agency has been involved with or undertaken in the past three years. Each example provided will be worth up to 2 points, for a total of 10 possible points. (Total Maximum Word Count: 200) **197 words**

Swope Soccer:

Swope Soccer Village, a \$15 million partnership with MLS Sporting KC, is one of the nation's only urban soccer complexes. An estimated 200,000 participants in 170 leagues annually have the opportunity to play on nine professional-grade fields.

The Kansas City Museum:

The 75-year old Kansas City Museum is the only museum dedicated to the history of Kansas City. The KC Museum has been instrumental in civic leadership and actively involved in the process that resulted in a community cultural plan called the KCMO Arts Convergence.

Recreation Council:

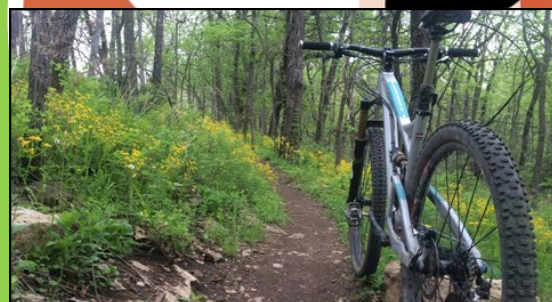
KCPR created the Recreation Council to enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities through recreation/leisure opportunities via an extensive collaboration of providers, consumers, professionals, and support networks for the disability community.

Trails:

KCPR partners with Urban Trail Company to build and maintain natural-surface trails. As a volunteer organization, UTC has built a 100+ miles of mountain biking/hiking trails linking communities within KC's metropolitan region.

Safe Room:

In 2014, KCPR partnered with FEMA to construct a tornado safe room in the 100-year old Garrison Center to provide shelter for residents of the adjacent subsidized housing. Funds were leveraged to include a gymnasium for recreational opportunities in the underserved neighborhood.



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17. There are few resources more critical than public support, citizen involvement, and staff engagement. Please identify one outstanding or innovative example for each of these three characteristics. Each example provided will be worth up to 3 points, for a total of 9 possible points. (Total Maximum Word Count: 210) **195 words**



Zoo Tax:

In 2011, our KC Zoo successfully passed a 1/8 cent sales tax increase resulting in a 10-year, \$100 million master plan that includes key conservation measures and park improvements. As a result of this support, the \$15 million Helzberg Penguin Plaza was opened in 2013 and the \$6 million Orangutan Canopy was completed in 2015. These additional attractions have catapulted Zoo attendance to nearly 1,000,000 visitors annually.



Roanoke Park Conservancy:

Residents of the Roanoke community organized to adopt a neighborhood park by helping KCPR remove invasive vegetation growth and assist in the programming in the park as well as provide park improvements. More than 4,000 volunteer hours later the neighbors started gathering ideas and formed the Roanoke Park Conservancy, comprised of 4 neighborhood associations, dedicated to efforts benefitting the park by “honoring the past and planting the future”.



Elevate KC:

Based on performance management findings, KCPR sought to gather data on its work environment and work culture. The Elevate KC Action Team was then developed by KCPR staff with a focus on identifying key issues impacting employees' morale. Regular employees meetings are held and subcommittees formed to focus on the most significant issues.



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18. Public entities have been increasingly called upon to demonstrate the results of their services and practices to decision-makers and the general public. Please share with us 3 results, impacts, or outcomes you have measured and brief background about the benefit and how the results were secured. Each example provided will be worth up to 3 points, for a total of 9 possible points. (Total Maximum Word Count: 210) **200 words**

Satisfaction Surveys:

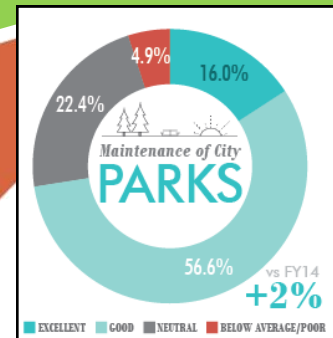
Citizen surveys are how we “keep our finger on the pulse” of the community with two very distinct measurement tools: One city-wide survey pertaining to parks issues and the other department-specific. Over the last three years, overall satisfaction in parks has increased a total of 9%. Both surveys address issues of strategic importance in evaluating current parks, facilities, and services to effectively outline future programming.

Open Data:

KCPR has improved and enhanced services through the use of KCStat and the City’s Open Data portal. KCStat puts the measured indicators for outcomes, outputs and efficiency on display. Open Data is a data-driven, public-facing initiative that focuses on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of city services. These tools ensure that KCPR leadership remains on track strategically and staff members stay focused on customer-centric results.

Safe Healthy Attractive Public Environments Program :

S.H.A.P.E. is an internal third party audit that generates frequent and detailed inspections of our parks and facilities. Since the program’s reinstatement in 2012, the overall condition rating has risen from 90% acceptable to 97% acceptable. Inspection data helps identify trends in specific parks and assists in making well-informed decisions on efficient ways to deploy personnel and distribute resources.



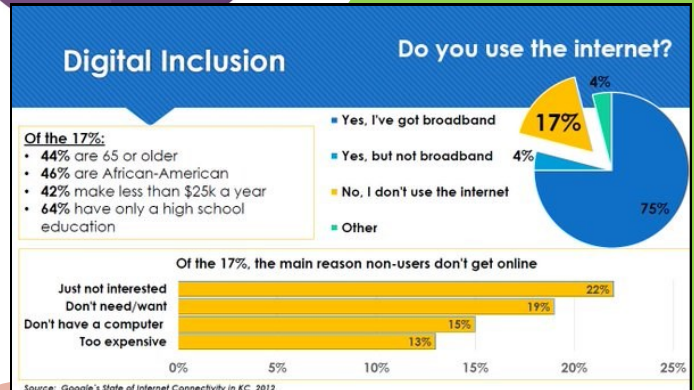
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19. Park and recreation agencies have long been known for creativity and innovation. One of the desirable outcomes of the Gold Medal program is to identify these valuable efforts and approaches. Please identify and briefly explain 3 innovations implemented by your agency within the last 3 years. Each example provided will be worth up to 3 points, for a total of 9 possible points. (Total Maximum Word Count: 240) **207 words**

Overcoming the Digital Divide:

KCPR is spearheading the installation of Kansas City's Google Fiber optic network bringing 1-gigabyte speed service to the entire city. In exchange for allowing the controlled installation of key system components on parkland, Google provides high-speed service to park facilities and patrons; making KC the country's first urban area to receive Google Fiber and thereby reducing the digital divide.



A League of Her Own:

This spring, KCPR will debut an all-girls baseball league called, "A League of Her Own." This league is centered on the belief that girls can do anything they want and no dream should have limits. KC is only the second city in the nation to provide an all-girls baseball league because we believe innovative programs increase opportunities for everyone.

Road Race Coordination:

KC is a leader in managing the impact of road races with staff and a website dedicated to permitting, oversight and communication. A 30% increase in road races in the past three years makes controlled growth critical to reduce the strain put on streets, parks, and traffic and balance schedules/routes with the needs of all stakeholders. The staff and website serve as a liaison between the racers and the non-racers and a central source for race information.





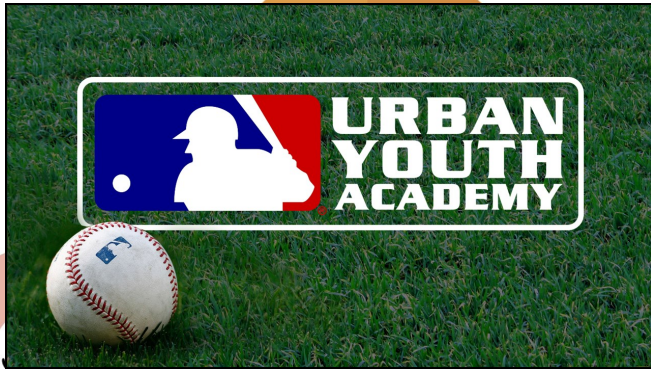
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20. In what ways has your agency addressed the NRPA Pillar of Social Equity in the last 3 years?
(3 points) (Total Maximum Word Count: 120) **117 words**



Urban Youth Academy:
KCPR is dedicated to providing recreational and sports activities to all residents of Kansas City regardless of economic ability. Three youth athletic programs exemplify this commitment. Urban Youth Academy, an indoor training facility and four ballfields in the 18th & Vine District, opens in 2016. Partnering with Major League Baseball and the Boys & Girls Club, youth will have an opportunity to participate in drug and gang intervention programs as well as play baseball. Swope Soccer Village, opened in 2014, provides low-income families opportunities to participate in soccer through a partnership with non-profit Upper Room. The First Tee program offers underserved youth the opportunity to learn the game of golf and core life skills.



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21. In what ways has your agency addressed the NRPA Pillar of Health and Wellness in the last 3 years?
(3 points) (Total Maximum Word Count: 120) **73 words**



Free Student Sports Physicals:

KCPR will provide 400 free, comprehensive health screenings and educational information to student athletes in underserved areas, enabling them to participate in scholastic sports and preparing them for a healthy life. These physicals will offer a variety of screenings including lead, glucose, obesity, blood pressure, cholesterol and dental services. Through these efforts KCPR proactively assists students that may not have had the chance to have serious medical conditions identified.

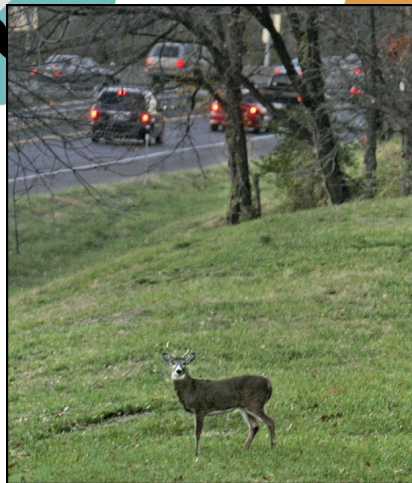




22. In what ways has your agency addressed the NRPA Pillar of Conservation in the last 3 years?
(3 points) (Total Maximum Word Count: 120) **113 words**



Confirmed in KC in 2012, Emerald Ash Borer threatens over 400,000 trees, including 20,000 publicly owned trees. Parks staff has developed a \$15-million integrated management plan to reduce EAB's devastation on KC's urban forest.



Partnering with Missouri's Conservation Department, KCPR manages archery deer hunting in parks to reduce over-populated deer herds and mitigate negative effects on sensitive ecosystems. Unique to KC, park areas remain open to public activities during bow hunting season.

The Conservation Corps is a Parks division dedicated to managing natural areas and partnering with local environmental organizations. Activities include controlling native prairies, conservation education, maintaining rain gardens, planting pollinator patches to support honeybee populations, and eradicating invasive plant species.



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23. What challenges has your community and/or agency experienced over the past 3 years and what steps or actions have you taken to resolve these challenges? Include agency role with the challenge, types of actions/steps taken, and effectiveness of approach. (3 points) (Total Maximum Word Count 210) **173 words**



An economic recession, times of uncertainty and constant budget cuts resulted in increased layoffs and reduced hours for KCPR operations, mowing of parks and boulevards, and maintenance. The department's budget was decreased every year for the four previous years and once again funding for our department was in jeopardy of being shrunk. In 2012, facing budget uncertainty, KCPR went to the voters and got an approval for a ½ cent dedicated sales tax. Kansas City voters overwhelmingly approved the tax increase with 63% voting "YES" and thereby generating \$35 million annually for KCPR. This tax structure provides a consistent, guaranteed, long-term source of revenue to maintain parks and community centers with no sunset and also eliminated the need for the City's annual contribution from the General Fund. KCPR attracts more than 5 million participants each year with 500,000 citizens taking advantage of community center programs and services. Revenues generated from the sales tax have allowed our centers to increase programming and hours of operation as well as enhance marketing and maintenance efforts.

