



ANNOUNCEMENT OF VACANCY FOR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WWW.DGPARKS.ORG

**OUR MISSION: ENRICHING OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH NATURAL AREA PRESERVATION
AND EXCEPTIONAL RECREATION, PARKS, AND FACILITIES THAT INSPIRE MEMORABLE
EXPERIENCES.**



ABOUT

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

Downers Grove, founded in 1832 by Peirce Downer amid oak trees, has grown into a vibrant community of over 50,000 residents 22 miles west of Chicago. Its early infrastructure of planked roads, rail lines, and highways established strong connectivity that continues today with three Metra stations and close access to O'Hare and Midway airports. The village's daytime population surpasses 100,000. Known for its quality of life, Downers Grove offers excellent parks, education, diverse housing—including historic Sears Homes—safe neighborhoods, attracting generations of families. Recently awarded the Daniel Burnham Award for its "Guiding DG" initiative, the village's integrated planning unites comprehensive development, transportation, sustainability, and streetscape enhancements, created with input from local partners like the Park District and schools. The community is served by two strong public-school districts: District 58, with many schools rated Exemplary and above-average student performance, and District 99, recognized for academic excellence and high graduation rates. Private schools also add to educational options. The local economy thrives with major employers in healthcare, manufacturing, technology, and logistics, including Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital, FTD Inc., SAP America, Pepperidge Farm, Invesco, and Dover Corporation, reflecting a diverse and dynamic business environment.

ABOUT THE DOWNERS GROVE PARK DISTRICT

Established in 1946, the Downers Grove Park District is an Illinois Distinguished Accredited Agency serving over 50,000 residents within a 16-square-mile area. The district employs 60 full-time and 400 part-time staff members whose mission is to enrich the community through natural area preservation and exceptional recreation, parks, and facilities that inspire memorable experiences guided by the core values of Professionalism, Integrity, Safety, Ambition, and Responsibility.

Spanning nearly 610 acres across 48 sites, the district offers an extensive array of recreational amenities, including two recreation centers, the Downers Grove Museum, Lyman Woods, 24 playgrounds, Belmont Prairie, Mar-Duke Farms, Adventure Falls Mini Golf, Sprayground and sport courts, 9-hole disc golf course, Veterans Memorial Pavilion, sports fields and courts, sledding hills, and an ice-skating pond.

The Lincoln Center serves as a key community hub, housing preschool, cultural arts, dance and active adult services. It features meeting rooms, art and ceramic studios, classrooms, a gymnasium, an auditorium, and kitchen facilities.

The Cathy Mahoney Recreation Center is a 69,000-square-foot facility that includes 4500 Fitness Center, exercise studios, a 19,800-square-foot gymnasium, indoor track, multipurpose rooms, and the SEASPAR administrative offices.

SEASPAR, of which the district is a founding member, provides recreational programs for individuals with disabilities. The Park District demonstrates its commitment to accessibility by investing more than \$100,000 annually in ADA infrastructure enhancements.

The Downers Grove Museum, awarded the 2025 Innovation Award for Museums, preserves local history through its historic buildings, exhibits, and educational programs. The 1846 Blodgett House, associated with the Underground Railroad as recognized by the U.S. Park Service; the Victorian Blodgett House, depicting 1890s life; and the Montrew Dunham History Center.

The Belmont Golf Club was established in 1892 as the original site of the Chicago Golf Club, the first 18-hole golf course west of the Allegheny Mountains. Today, the now 9-hole, par-36 course hosts over 45,000 rounds of golf annually and operates without tax funding.

Lyman Woods is 150 acres of oak woodlands, prairie, and wetlands, offering a rare view of the region's pre-settlement landscape. The Interpretive Center, featuring a living roof, supports environmental education for all ages.

The district delivers 33 special events and over 2,580 unique programs with 29,000 participants yearly. In 2024 participation in outdoor education was 8,470, youth leagues 6,693, summer camps 2,121 and 7,286 fitness center members. Across all services areas over 280,000 individual interactions were created. The annual program cancellation rate is below 23% and to ensure all can recreate a minimum of \$35,000 in financial assistance is provided annually.

Recognized for leadership in parks and recreation, the district has received numerous awards and grants, including support from the ComEd Green Region Program, OSLAD, DCEO, and the IPRA Statewide Healthy Play & Recreation Initiative. It has earned the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, the PDRMA Accreditation Award, and the Exceptional Workplace Award, IPRA for excellence in programming, facilities, sustainability, and marketing. Notably, Gordon Goodman, a key figure in the creation of Lyman Woods, was named IAPD Volunteer of the Year, and the Executive Director has received the IPRA Professional of the Year Award—further reinforcing the district's enduring commitment to excellence, leadership, and positive community impact.

QUALIFICATIONS

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS IS SEEKING TO EMPLOY AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WITH THE FOLLOWING QUALIFICATIONS, CHARACTERISTICS, AND TRAITS:

1. A bachelor's degree in park and recreation administration or related field. A master's degree is preferred.
2. At least five years of administrative experience in the park and recreation field. Experience as a director or deputy director and CPRP/CPRE designation preferred.
3. Knowledge of park and recreation issues, trends, alternative financing, marketing and public relations.
4. Strong personnel management skills, including the ability to assign personnel and delegate responsibilities with assurance and accountability.
5. Possess an understanding of sustainability principles and management of natural resources and the eco-system.
6. Comprehensive planning skills and experience. Ability to assess community needs, research trends and innovative concepts as they apply to improvement of the agency operations and long-range planning.
7. A person of great integrity, honesty, self-confidence and charisma who possesses excellent oral and written communication skills.
8. Must possess compassion and the ability to communicate collaboratively across all departments.
9. Demonstrated success in administration and budget management. Must have experience in the creation of a sound fiscal program including capital projects, budgeting, forecasting, development of projects through the referendum process and leveraging grants.
10. A strong understanding of the mission of a dynamic park and recreation agency and the importance, as well as the role, of the independent board members in accomplishing that mission.
11. Experience maintaining and improving community services with a high level of customer satisfaction as well as planning, establishing and evaluating a vision for the agency.

SALARY

COMPENSATION

\$170,000 to \$210,000

Plus a comprehensive benefit package including medical, dental, vision, life/disability, flexible spending account and mental health support. Retirement benefits include participation in the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund and an optional 403b retirement plan.

FINANCE

BUDGET

\$22,885,977.00

2024 ASSESSED VALUATION:

\$3,236,185,607

Funds Extension	Tax Rate
Corporate \$4,974,017.28	.1537
Bond & Interest \$1,139,137.33	.0352
IMRF \$459,538.36	.0142
Audit \$22,653.30	.0007
Liability Insurance \$200,643.51	.0062
Social Security \$453,065.98	.0140
Recreation \$2,611,601.78	.0807

BOARD

	ORIGINALLY ELECTED	TERM EXPIRATION
CRAIG LUNDT, PRESIDENT	2023	2027
BRET BENDER, VICE PRESIDENT	2021	2027
JON DAHLSTROM, TREASURER	2019	2027
PAM JOHNSON, COMMISSIONER	2025	2029
GISELLE WALSH, COMMISSIONER	2025	2029



APPLY

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE DOWNERS GROVE PARK DISTRICT
INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR THE POSITION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

THE DOWNERS GROVE PARK DISTRICT IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER.

APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE MARKED PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL. ALL APPLICANT PACKETS MUST CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FOR FULL CONSIDERATION:

1. Formal letter of application indicating reasons you desire to be a candidate.
2. Current resume needs to include, but not be limited to, employment history, duties, number of employees supervised, and budget amount managed.
3. Complete list of accomplishments/completed projects.
4. Provide 3 CURRENT (DATED) letters of recommendation.
5. You must also supply 3 PROFESSIONAL references with complete names, addresses, and phone numbers.
6. Responses to the following management questions. Please limit your responses to each question to one page.
 - Describe your management style.
 - State and discuss your philosophy of parks and recreation.
 - If you were chosen for the position, what steps would you take as the district's new leader in your first 120 days?
7. Complete set of up-to-date credentials which include legal proof verifying educational degrees. Transcript or copy of degree is acceptable.



ALL APPLICATIONS AND
INQUIRIES SHOULD BE
REFERRED TO:

217-970-7317

AHOWARD@ILPARKS.ORG



SELECTION PROCESS

FEBRUARY 6, 2026:
DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS TO
BE RECEIVED

FEBRUARY 2026:
CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

APRIL 27, 2026:
TENTATIVE DATE OF EMPLOYMENT

