

CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT



MOVIES IN THE PARKS 2026 Underwriter's Guidelines

Deadlines

To provide payment flexibility and accommodate reduced office time and presence for Chicago Park District staff, we will be separating the scheduling request form from the payment deadline, creating two deadlines for you to know.

Underwriting Partners' Scheduling Requests are due by

March 16, 2026.

Payment must be complete (via credit card or check) by

March 31, 2026.

Once you submit your scheduling request, program staff will be in touch to negotiate dates and titles and confirm with your host park. Once your movie has been confirmed and scheduled, you will receive a separate email from our online system with a receipt for your transaction and payment instructions for credit card or check payments.

BIG ANNOUCEMENT

For this upcoming Movies season of 2026, in an effort to promote smaller underserved communities everywhere but specifically parks on the South and West side, we are offering a **discount for first time Underwriters.**

\$800.00 for one Movie event.

Scheduling Timeline and Capacity

We will begin scheduling underwriter's requests on **February 2nd**. No underwriter's request can be confirmed before that date. We will schedule and confirm requests in the order they are received. No requests arriving after the **March 16th** deadline will be scheduled. Please do everything you can to get your request in as quickly as you can.

Underwriting Partner Policy
Movies in the Parks

Program Summary

The Chicago Park District's Movies in the Parks program brings more than 175 movies to parks throughout Chicago each summer. As part of this program, the Park District extends to Park Advisory Councils, Community Organizations, Local Businesses, Alderpersons and more the opportunity to co-host a movie in their local park for a minimal fee. Underwriting Partners are granted "Underwritten by" acknowledgement in Movies in the Parks promotional efforts - online season schedules, digital flyers, online at www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/events/movies In addition, Underwriting Partners have the right to no-cost onsite visibility (some restrictions apply) on the nights of their screenings in the form of a table or tent (must be provided by Partner), literature, promotional giveaways, pre-movie advertisements or trailers and announcements before the screening.¹

The Chicago Park District Movies in the Parks team will handle all necessary aspects of planning, promoting and producing your event. You can relax and enjoy your evening with your community and rely on our pre-event logistics and onsite support to help your event operate smoothly and bring your friends and neighbors together.

Program Guidelines

Selecting a Date

- 1. Season Dates:** The 2026 Movies in the Parks season will run from Monday, June 8th to Saturday, September 10th. Screenings will take place **ONLY** on Monday-Saturday each week. **2.** When you provide your preferred dates, you **MUST** provide 3 options. We will do our best to accommodate all requests, but in the event there are too many requests for a particular evening, you may be assigned your second or third choice. All movies begin at dusk (approximately 8:45 pm in June, 8:30pm in July and 8:00pm in August) – Please keep this in mind when picking a date.
- 3.** If possible, discuss your preferred date(s) with the Park Supervisor at your local park to make sure an event can be scheduled. They are the experts at their parks and can help you choose dates, specific locations and even movie titles that will best serve their patrons. Movies in the Parks staff will confirm dates with park staff upon receipt of your Underwriting Scheduling Request Form.
- 4. Blackout Dates: Sundays** each week, **July 4-6**, and **August 25-31**.
- 5. Underwriter Maximums:** Each Underwriter may underwrite up to 5 movies. **6. Reschedule Dates:** If your underwritten movie is canceled due to inclement weather, or due to changing public health guidelines, reschedules are not required. If you would like to try to reschedule, and a date is available, a reschedule can be arranged. If you'd prefer a refund, a refund for your underwritten movie will be issued to you at the **end of the season**.

¹Some restrictions apply. Inquire for more information.

Selecting a Movie

- All movies shown in the parks must be rated G, PG or PG-13. Exemptions can be made for unrated (UR/NR) movies on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of program staff. **2.** All movies shown in the parks must be no longer than approximately 2 hours and 20 minutes to make certain the program can be concluded and the park emptied by the Chicago Park District's 11:00pm closing time.
- Please refer to the online catalog at www.swank.com or www.criterionpicusa.com (our licensing companies) to see a full list of available films.
- 4. When you provide your preferred title, you MUST provide at least 2 options.** To minimize redundancy and round out our season, each Area within the Chicago Park District may only show a particular title one time per season. If your Area is already showing your first choice title, you will be assigned an alternate.
- 5. Unavailable Titles** – Studios can, and often do, withdraw films from availability for screenings

due to upcoming releases, anniversary years, or for any other reason. We do not have any option to negotiate that availability -so if a film is unavailable, parks will have to accept an alternate title.

CURRENTLY UNAVAILABLE TITLES (2026) is still being evaluated for the year.

Once confirmed, we cannot substitute your movie for another title or change your date.

Securing Your Movie and Confirmation

1. To secure your movie, complete the form **by March 16, 2026. Scheduling requests must be received by this date to be included in our season. Once we have received scheduling requests for all available slots, we will no longer be able to add movies to this summer's season.**
2. Once received, your request will be reviewed and accommodated as best as possible. Movies in the Parks staff will contact you, and the park, to finalize and solidify dates and details.
 - a. If there are too many requests for a single date, you may be asked to go with a second or third choice. Screening dates, titles and locations are booked on a rolling first come, first served basis, beginning February 2nd. Requests received before February 2nd will be queued for processing in order of receipt.
3. **After your movie or movies have been scheduled and confirmed with the host park, we will process your transaction in our online system (ActiveNet). At that point, you will receive an email from ActiveNet with your balance due and instructions to pay online by credit card, or via check at your park.**

Agreements of the Underwriter

Movies in the Parks

Payment Policy

1. **Movies are priced at \$1,300 per screening or \$1,000 for each movie if you schedule 3 or more. This minimal fee covers the cost of acquiring movie licensing and exhibition rights, staffing the event, use of Chicago Park District equipment and supplies.**
2. Your movie will be scheduled and confirmed once you have submitted the [2026 Movie Request Form modified.pdf](#) and followed up with payment. Your movie will then be eligible for inclusion in the online calendar and promotion once your payment has been processed.

Contingencies for Inclement Weather: Cancellations, Reschedules and Refunds 1.

Inclement weather can put a damper on our Movies in the Parks plans. When this happens, there are three possible contingencies available.

- i. If you would like to press on and move your movie screening indoors to a park gymnasium or auditorium, our staff can facilitate the move and screening (with park staff permission).
 - ii. If you would like to try to reschedule, and a date is available, a reschedule can be arranged.
 - iii. If you'd prefer a refund, a refund for your underwritten movie will be issued to you at the end of the season.
2. In most cases, we prefer to wait to discuss cancellation until after 4:00 pm. Cancellation decisions cannot be made unilaterally, and must include the Underwriter, Movies in the Parks staff and park staff.
 3. Canceled movies which do not receive a reschedule date will be refunded to the point of payment at the end of the Movies in the Parks season.
- ### **4. What to consider when canceling**
- a. **No Underwriter or Park Supervisor may cancel their movie without first speaking to Movies in the Parks Coordinator.** Movies will not be canceled due to predicted or expected weather, but rather will only be canceled when inclement weather is imminent or present.
 - b. In MOST cases, we will not cancel until the Movies in the Parks staff have arrived onsite.

This also gives us a chance to be present in the same space and to make the decision together. It also gives us a chance to watch the weather and let the rain pass if it will.

- c. In RARE circumstances, (continual all-day rain, for example) a movie may be preemptively canceled. If, on the day of your movie, you'd like to discuss this option, please contact the Movies in the Parks Coordinator between 2:00pm and 4:00pm. No decision can be made without input from the Park Staff and Movies in the Parks program staff.
- d. Movies will never be canceled due to low turnout. Often, a particularly bad forecast will keep some audience members away but never actually materialize into bad weather. In these cases, the movie will continue as scheduled.

e. **Communication Protocols**

- i. In the event of threatening weather, communication is key. Please provide a cell phone number in the form as a point of contact so you can be reached.
- ii. A cancellation decision is final and cannot be changed once made.
- iii. Once a decision to cancel is final, Park staff and Movies in the Parks staff will begin to notify participants who are onsite. If time allows, the Program Coordinator will notify the public of the decision via social media, website, mobile app and hotline updates. Underwriting Partners should also notify their networks and constituents via their own preferred methods.

5. **Refunds**

- a. **Refunds will be offered at the end of the season.** We will issue refunds to the same point of payment, with the same method of payment, as the original payment was made.

Marketing Standards

1. As an Underwriting Partner, your movie(s) will be listed, along with "Underwritten by" designation and in a season schedule online at <http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/movies>
2. The Chicago Park District will design and distribute posters (11" x 17") and flyers (8.5" x 11") for each park, crediting underwriters where appropriate. Multiple movies may be listed on the same poster or flyer if a park has more than one movie.
3. The Chicago Park District will provide the artwork (as PDFs) for posters and flyers to Underwriters to share with their networks.
4. Underwriting Partners may print posters, flyers or other promotional materials (E-blasts, Postcards, Programs, etc.) at their own cost. Marketing templates are available upon request.
5. **No individual movie may be promoted or advertised in any way by the underwriter or park before the Night Out in the Parks/Movies in the Parks season announcement in May.**
6. After the full Movies in the Parks season is scheduled, Underwriting Partners will receive a Marketing Guidelines and Resources Kit. This will include a compressed/zipped file containing appropriate CPD logo, boilerplate text, City of Chicago and mayoral requirements, sponsor logos and Night Out in the Parks logo and requirements and a list of guidelines for the use of each. All promotional materials produced by Underwriting Partners must adhere to these guidelines.
7. **Any and all Partner-designed promotional materials not using provided templates must be approved by the Chicago Park District before release, to ensure they adhere to these, and any other marketing standards set by the District and our Presenting and Supporting Sponsors.**
 - a. Any materials posted or released without approval, or not meeting these guidelines will be immediately taken down.
8. E-blasts and social media posts will not need to be approved individually but must follow approved CPD protocol and best practices. **No individual movie may be promoted or posted on social media by the underwriter or park before the Night Out in the Parks/Movies in the Parks season announcement in May.**

Event Site Agreements (Lights, Facilities, Equipment, etc.)

1. **Equipment** – The Movies in the Parks team can provide one (1) six-foot folding table for Underwriter use. We are unable to provide special equipment beyond that. If Underwriting Partners would like tents, additional folding tables or chairs onsite they must provide their own or work directly with the park supervisor to use park inventory (if possible).
2. **Lights** – If there are outdoor lights in your park that need to be turned off, please work with your park supervisor to place a request with park electricians for the lights to be turned off.

If there is no supervisor onsite at your park, contact the Program Coordinator for this request.

3. **Facilities** – It is our hope that Chicago Park District field houses will remain open during Movies in the Parks events. Confirmation can be made with your Park Supervisor. If your park does not have restroom facilities, and you would like to have them present, you must arrange for these amenities through a third-party vendor. The Park District will not provide portable toilets.
4. **Closed Captioning/Subtitles** – Subtitles or Closed Captioning (when available) will be turned on for the Hearing Impaired at ALL screenings. This is done in compliance with CPD Disability Policy and Federal Law, and is NOT negotiable.

Underwriting Partner Onsite Activation (Announcements, Concessions, etc.) 1.

Presenting/Supporting Sponsor Presence – Presenting and/or Supporting Sponsors may be present at your movie. They may choose to have representatives onsite, distribute promotional giveaways, make announcements, or show a trailer/commercial before a movie. This is all in addition to these same opportunities given to Underwriting Partners. Sponsors, Underwriters and Movies in the Parks staff will work together onsite to coordinate the order of speaking/announcements and the placement of

tables/tents/representatives. Underwriters and Sponsors must be willing to work together.

2. **Announcements** – All public speaking must occur PRIOR TO dusk. A maximum total of 10 minutes will be allowed (including both Sponsors and Underwriters).
3. **Video Clips and/or Advertisements** – Underwriting Partners may choose to show a video clip (no longer than 1 minute) or a presentation. These will be considered part of the Underwriting Partner's allotted speaking time. Video files should be provided as an .mp4 file via USB/Flash drive.
4. **Pre-Movie Presentations:** If the Underwriter chooses to create a PowerPoint or other presentation to loop before the movie, they must notify the Program Coordinator at least two weeks in advance of the movie. Content will be provided to the Underwriter (as slides, PDFs or still images) that MUST be included in the presentation.
5. **Concessions** – Underwriters may serve or sell refreshments (pre-packaged items recommended), with the exception of popcorn. **Free popcorn is a part of the Movies in the Parks brand and will be provided by the Movies in the Parks team onsite.**
Underwriters/Sponsors may not serve or charge for popcorn. Refreshments must be Coke products and all food distributed must follow Illinois Food Safety Guidelines. 6. **Third Party Sponsors/Onsite Sampling:** Underwriters may choose to subsidize their costs with the use of corporate sponsors, onsite samplers or other third party funders. In these cases, the Chicago Park District must be notified no less than one month in advance of your screening, to allow the District the chance to disclose necessary information to Presenting and Supporting sponsors. Third party funders/sponsors and samplers will not be given the opportunity to speak before the movie, or show a commercial/PSA.
 - a. **Conflicts of Interest** – Underwriting Partners may not engage, promote or allow onsite any sponsors in the same commercial category as any of the Movies in the Parks program's presenting or supporting sponsors. For example, if a major national bank is the Presenting Sponsor of Movies in the Parks, Underwriting Partners may not in any way promote, acknowledge or allow onsite any other entities in the commercial or personal banking industries.

Provisions of the Chicago Park District Movies in the Parks

Event Coordination and Logistics

1. The Chicago Park District Movies in the Parks staff coordinates all scheduling and pre-event facilitation and handles all onsite logistics for these events.
2. All pre-event planning is handled by the Movies in the Parks Coordinator – including scheduling, film licensing and preparation and distribution of all related Marketing and Promotional materials.
3. The Movies in the Park crew will arrive at the park approximately 1-2 hours before the screening and come fully-equipped to run the event.

- a. All electrical, material and supply needs are covered by the equipment we carry in our trucks, and the staff is completely self-sufficient in setting up, executing, and loading out the event.

COVID Safety Plan and Monitoring

1. Over the last several years, the Chicago Park District has been a leader in safely presenting outdoor programming across the city. We have developed and implemented safety strategies and guidelines for many phases and stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to monitor developing guidelines and policies at the city and state level and adjust Movies in the Parks guidelines as required.

Marketing Support

1. **Season Schedule** – The Park District will release a full schedule of the summer’s offerings in May, listing all Movies in the Parks screenings – including “Underwritten by” designation for all Underwriting Partners, where applicable.
 - a. It is not feasible to give every underwriting organization a chance to see proofs of the schedule or banners/posters/flyers before print. **To ensure accuracy of content, please make 100% certain the name of your organization is spelled correctly, written legibly and identified exactly as it should appear on promotional materials on the Scheduling Request form.**
2. **Posters and Flyers (PDFs)** – Tabloid-size (11” x 17”) posters and letter-sized (8.5” x 11”) flyers will be designed by the Chicago Park District. PDFs will be shared with you to share with your networks.
 - a. Underwriting Partners may print additional flyers/posters may be printed at the cost of the Partner – marketing templates and/or print-ready artwork can be made available. b. Additional flyers/posters not using the Movies in the Parks template must be approved by the Chicago Park District and abide by Marketing Standards above.
3. **Website** – Movies will be listed on the Chicago Park District website daily listings, as well as in a full season calendar at <http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/movies>.
 - a. If you would like to list your movie(s) on your webpage, all graphics must be approved by the Chicago Park District before going live and the page must abide by all Marketing Standards above.
4. **My Chi Park™ Mobile App** – The Chicago Park District has eliminated the My Chi Parks mobile app, and this asset will not be available for promotion this year.
5. **Social Media** – Daily screenings will be listed on the Movies in the Parks Facebook page and on the Chicago Park District’s Twitter feed.
 - a. Due to character count restrictions, Twitter listings will NOT include “Underwritten by” credit for Underwriting Partners.
 - b. Whenever possible, we will do our best to include “Underwritten by” credit in Facebook postings on the [Movies in the Parks Facebook page](#). Please provide your official Facebook details when requesting your movie.
 - c. If you would like to post your event to your Facebook page or Twitter feed, all posts must mention Presenting and Supporting Sponsors and link to sponsors’ pages where appropriate, as outlined in Marketing Standards, above.
6. **Movies Hotline** – The public hotline for Movies in the Parks listings at (312) 742-1134 will list all screenings happening each day. These listings will NOT include “Underwritten by” credit for Underwriting Partners.
7. **e-Blasts** – No specific movie screenings will be mentioned or advertised in the Chicago Park District e-newsletter.
 - a. You may send an e-blast directly from your organization, and a marketing template is available. If you intend to send an e-blast, the graphic must be approved by the Chicago Park District prior to distribution, and must abide by all Marketing Standards above.
8. **Postcards/Programs/Additional Materials** – Additional marketing materials may be printed at the cost of the Underwriting Partner. Materials not utilizing the Movies in the Parks Marketing Templates must be approved by the Chicago Park District and abide by all Marketing Standards above.