



2026 Legislative Agenda



Connecticut Recreation & Parks Association, Inc.

Contributing to the Wellness, Livability, & Economic Growth of Our Communities

The Mission of the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association, Inc. (CRPA) is to support the recreation and park profession and steward the future of public parks and recreational opportunities in Connecticut in order to promote active lifestyles, livable communities, and quality of life for all who call Connecticut home.

CRPA is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization.

SERVING EVERYONE

WHO WE ARE

Established in 1949, CPRA has a rich history of leadership, with over **75 years** of serving and advocating for parks and recreation professionals throughout Connecticut!

CPRA has **over 850 members**, including representation in 134 of the 169 municipalities or 80% of Connecticut. The vast majority of our members are **municipal parks and recreation** employees, as well as professionals in **state and tribal nations, private nonprofit, military, correctional, therapeutic, university, and corporate recreation**.

Adding to the diversity of our membership are **businesses and organizations** in related industries, such as service providers and equipment and material suppliers.

Last, but certainly not least, are **our citizen members**: active and concerned citizens who support parks and recreation at the local and state level.



WHAT WE DO

To further CPRA's mission, our Legislative Committee works with State Legislators to craft public policy and to monitor that which impacts park and recreational opportunities for all Connecticut residents.

We **serve an infinitely diverse and expansive population**: from poor, urban communities to wealthy suburbs; from preschoolers to seniors; men and women of every race and religion; and the physically and mentally challenged. Whether participating in a program of self-discovery, attending a community festival, or enjoying one of the many municipal parks, **residents are profoundly impacted by municipal parks and recreation departments and their professional staff**.

CPRA member departments have a great **economic impact** on the communities they serve by hiring and training a vast number of entry-level employees and contributing to economic development by **attracting homeowners and businesses** through their parks, open spaces, and wellness programs.

Examples of the programs, services, and facilities provided by municipal parks and recreation include:

- Preschool programs
- Playground maintenance and management
- Camps
- Senior & community centers
- Emergency shelters
- Youth and adult sports
- Afterschool programs
- Athletic fields and facilities
- Special events and festivals
- Affordable family programs & classes
- Swimming pools and beaches
- Learn to swim & swim teams
- Fitness centers
- Inclusive programming
- Partnerships with national programs and associations
- Zoos
- Cemeteries
- Walking trails, hiking and biking trails
- Facilities/grounds landscaping and management



AND SO MUCH MORE...

How CRPA Can Help Connecticut's Legislature



Our membership has deep and varied **knowledge and expertise** and is eager and willing to **serve as resources** to policymakers. As such, CRPA can **provide professional input on a wide range of subjects**, either in writing or through personal meetings and testimony.

2026 Legislative Goals

The Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association, Inc. (CRPA) is acutely aware of the fiscal challenges that our municipalities are facing. Inadequate funding affects our ability to serve the public. Affordable access to high quality recreation and parks services is essential to our ability to fulfill our mission. Consequently, we support the following public policy initiatives:

- **CRPA** stands ready to work with the Legislature and the Executive Branch to **continue to ensure safe access to our parks, trails and recreation opportunities**, all of which have proven to be **essential resources** to the **mental and physical wellbeing** of Connecticut residents.
- **CRPA cannot support** initiatives that would result in **increased costs** to park and recreation departments, therefore reducing access to **the high quality and affordable childcare programs** and camps our departments offer. **CRPA supports** initiatives that **increase access** to these essential programs.
- CRPA supports actions that **promote healthy lifestyles, work to combat obesity**, raise awareness to the **dangers of drug and opioid use**, maintain family friendly spaces, and **enhance childhood development** through play and education.
- CRPA supports initiatives that **sustain affordable access** to park facilities and recreational programs. **CRPA cannot support mandates that increase costs**. Unfunded mandates **reduce our ability** to provide opportunities for full-time and seasonal employees and those with disabilities, and reduce affordable program access to members of our communities.
- CRPA opposes state mandates that limit municipalities' ability to safely operate and manage their own natural resources and recreational facilities.
- CRPA believes that **timely and affordable background checks** on employees and volunteers who work with vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly are essential to public safety.
- CRPA supports **preservation of funding** to the maximum extent possible to municipalities for such programs as: DEEP's CT Recreational Trails Grant, Rails to Trails, LWCF State Assistance Program, Local Capital Improvement Funds (LOCIP), 319 watershed grants, etc.
- The State's current law on pesticide management is unworkable. It neither adequately protects the public nor allows for **safe and efficient management of public fields & grounds**. CRPA supports the amendment of statutes and regulations that control the application of synthetic and organic substances on public playing fields that is based on science, education and training, and research.
- **CRPA supports** the use of **artificial products** for both **playground and athletic surfacing**, especially as a means for providing inclusive access. CRPA members strive to utilize the safest materials possible and feel that any legislation banning such products should be consistent with **science, education, and research**.
- CRPA supports the need for **education and awareness** and commits to working with policymakers to create **effective and manageable guidelines** that address the **safety of youth athletes**, while at the same time **limiting the liability** to both the municipality and its volunteers and staff.
- CRPA members provide a wide range of programs and services to their communities, including **vulnerable populations** therefore, **CRPA supports initiatives that protect the safety, health, and wellbeing of participants, volunteers, and staff**.