

PTA / PTSA Guidelines

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CUPF has resource packets for PTA/PTSA organizations that are updated annually, such as handouts, a current fiscal year welcome letter highlighting changes and reminders, as well as our fee schedule. These resources are available on the CUPF web site.

General

The Interagency Coordinating Board (ICB) for Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) strongly supports school use for PTA/PTSA activities, giving them priority scheduling. Some use is free, while other activities are charged nominal fees to cover operating and other related expenses. The County charges users fees for use of schools to defray the costs of operating the facilities, utilities and to cover other associated costs.

Free Use

Because of its close partnership with MCPS, several PTA/PTSA activities are considered free use. The FREE use activities include:

- PTA monthly meetings
- Executive Board or Committee meetings held in classrooms only
- PTA sponsored book fairs held Mon-Fri in Media Center only
- PTA bake sales on election days in schools used as polling places (PTAs must secure permission from the Board of Elections)

Note: If any of the above activities incur staff costs for cafeteria workers, media services technicians, building service or security staff, the PTA/PTSA must pay the hourly rate for staff services as outlined in the current Fee Schedule.

Submitting Facility Use Requests

PTA/PTSA should submit **mail-in** facility use requests with full payment (check, Visa or MasterCard) **OR** use an **online account** (online accounts require payment with Visa or MasterCard—no exceptions). Space cannot be held without full payment.

Facility use requests for PTA/PTSA activities should be submitted by July 15, but **no later than August 15** of each year in order to maintain priority consideration. After that date, CUPF staff will assign space to community users. Community user groups will not be cancelled or ‘bumped’ to accommodate PTA/PTSA events due to untimely application. See current fiscal year fee guide to assess applicable room use fees.

Why Fees Are Assessed to PTA/PTSA Organizations

PTA/PTSA's are nonprofit organizations but perhaps what is not apparent is that more than 97% of our users are also nonprofit, less than 3% of our users are commercial groups. All nonprofits are concerned with costs but the ICB believes all users must contribute to the “wear and tear” on school facilities and must cover utility costs, supplies and MCPS staff coverage. Keeping facilities affordable and accessible is an ongoing challenge.

PTA/PTSA Relationship with Schools

We understand the close relationship between a PTA/PTSA and their school and the feeling of “partnership” this evokes. However, we also have a responsibility to ensure the rights of all county residents to use the schools, knowing that these same PTA members are often members of other user groups as well.

PTA representatives who schedule use of space for non-PTA/PTSA groups and activities must be cautious not to commingle accounts. Bookings for PTA activities should only be booked under the PTA/PTSA account. A separate account (or accounts) should be established for other activities a PTA/PTSA representative is booking. Also, it is important that the incoming president establish a new account and not use the former president's password.

There are certain PTA/PTSA activities that are so closely related to the educational function of the K-12 academic program of the school that they are viewed as school functions. These activities are administratively booked, based on information provided to both to the CUPF Scheduler and to the school, and are held without cost to the PTA/PTSA, e.g., monthly PTA/PTSA meetings. Other activities,

however, are much more similar to community activities such as PTA/PTSA after-school classes where fees are charged, fairs, carnivals, socials and are expected to contribute to ICB's reimbursements to MCPS for staff coverage, supplies, utility costs, and wear and tear on schools. These activities are scheduled by CUPF.

Priority of Use, Discounted Rate, Other Considerations

PTA/PTSA -sponsored activities are given priority consideration (and the lowest facility rates) and are scheduled in advance of other public or community functions.

Space is scheduled for MCPS activities first. Then priority is given to groups in the following order:

- Child Care (priority during the school year for before/after care only)
- PTA/PTSA
- Government administrative bodies
- Montgomery County and City Recreation Departments within their programming area (i.e., City of Gaithersburg, City of Rockville, City of Takoma Park)
- Other publicly supported programs such as colleges or universities
- All other community organizations
- Non-county based groups and groups with less than two-thirds Montgomery County resident membership
- Business/corporate organizations

If the PTA/PTSA wanted to use multiple rooms in the school for a weekend fee activity, PTA/PTSA would be charged only up to a maximum of three units (rooms), exclusive of the gym, plus any clean-up at the building service worker rate of \$29.50 per hour and the start-up fee of a flat \$16. Thus, if the PTA/PTSA were using 10 classrooms and the all-purpose room, they would only be charged for 3 rooms. If a PTA/PTSA were using 10 rooms and the gym, they would be charged for the gym and 3 rooms. This represents a significant savings over what other groups are charged, which is per hour, per room.

It is important to note that when PTA/PTSA elect to partner with another entity, it is expected that a true partnership will exist. In other words, joint ventures must

directly benefit the PTA/PTSA and the PTA/PTSA must both request use of space and assume all liability for its use. In addition, when fees are charged, participants must pay fees to the PTA/PTSA and not to the third party. Third party entities may not 'partner' with the PTA/PTSA merely as a means for obtaining priority of placement that they would not otherwise enjoy, nor to avoid paying fees that would normally be charged of an outside entity.

To take full advantage of these benefits earlier planning is necessary. We understand that PTA/PTSA's are volunteer organizations and it is sometimes difficult to coordinate complex planning far in advance. However, many of the organizers of other activities that take place in schools face similar obstacles. We need to give them as much planning time and notice as possible so that their events can also be successful. This is why we have the "special PTA/PTSA priority window."

The major window for community users to submit their requests is from July 15 - August 1. During that time, almost 5,000 indoor use forms are submitted to CUPF for consideration of programs that begin September 1 through March 31. Again, **PTA/PTSA's have until August 15 to submit their use requests for the entire school year.** For the most part whatever PTA/PTSA's need, they will get if submitted by August 15. The PTA/PTSA programs are entered into the computer and no other users are scheduled in those rooms on those days. Additionally, if for any reason an indoor or outdoor user is scheduled beforehand, they may be cancelled accordingly when CUPF is informed of the PTA/PTSA's need of the space by August 15.

Booking PTA/PTSA functions in advance allows CUPF to give other groups an accurate and timely picture of facility availability so that they can begin to develop their programs. Of course, we will still serve PTA/PTSA's that do not submit within this special window, but CUPF **cannot move or cancel other users** that followed proper procedures to secure facility space and have already planned for their events. These events also serve county residents and, in fact, many serve Montgomery County children that may attend the school itself or live in the neighborhood. **Please note that the cancellation policy also applies to PTA/PTSA use.**

Sponsorship of for-profit activities will be assessed Category D or Category F rates depending on the size/type of the for-profit organization.

Sponsorship of nonprofit organizations that charge fees will be assessed Category D rates.

Outside organizations must submit their own forms and attend CUPF's User Education Training. Outside organizations cannot ask the PTA/PTSA to submit their forms.

Please note that for the PTA/PTSA to enjoy priority for placement and special fees, programs offered under the auspices of the PTA/PTSA **must be specific to the students of the school** served by that PTA/PTSA.

Use of Contracted Provider for After-School Activities, e.g., Flex Academies, Enrichment Matters, Enrichment Academies, etc.

Effective the 2014-2015 school year, contracted providers such as Flex Academies, Enrichment Matters, Enrichment Academies, etc. who provide PTA/PTSA organizations a service to organize after-school activities **will not be given PTA/PTSA priority** for scheduling.

PTA/PTSA's utilizing such contracted services will need to ensure that the contractor adheres to the public scheduling windows (July 15 through August 1 for dates of use September 1 through March 31; and the next window of January 15 through February 1 for dates of use April 1 through August 30)—they will not receive the PTA/PTSA's extended deadline of August 15 for the school year activities.

Additionally, the contracted service providers will not be able to take space in which other groups have historical use preference—they may not “bump” other groups citing PTA/PTSA priority.

PTA/PTSA and Licensed Childcare

The only user group which has priority over the PTA/PTSA and its activities is childcare. Childcare is given priority by State law. This is the only user group which must be in space licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education Childcare Licensing Division at all times. Therefore, it is extremely important that PTA/PTSA organizations and school activities be scheduled, if at all possible, after 6:30 p.m.

Moving childcare programs to rooms which are not licensed or asking to share their space for a function, e.g., wrapping paper distribution on the stage, setting up for an after-school activity, etc. creates a liability for both the childcare provider and the school. Childcare programs are an important part of the school and community and, therefore, require at least 5-days notice to move out of their licensed space or rearrange their program to accommodate PTA/PTSA requests.

When childcare programs are asked to move, they may be required to pay a \$25 scheduling adjustment fee. By providing the childcare program advanced notice of school or PTA/PTSA activities last-minute juggling and fees can be avoided. In some situations, the PTA/PTSA may be asked to cover the scheduling adjustment cost.

Field Use

Regarding scheduling of fields, please note that when a PTA/PTSA wants occasional use of a school field, they can submit prior to the normal PTA/PTSA deadline of August 15. However, we are increasingly seeing PTA/PTSA organizations requesting regular use of school fields. Under these circumstances, it is important to observe the normal field scheduling windows to ensure that other groups are not permitted onto the fields. The deadlines for requesting ongoing field use are mid-December for spring/summer use and mid-June for fall use.

Mandatory User Education Training

In response to increased concern regarding security of schools, as well as the safety and security of our users, all groups requesting space for indoor activities in MCPS are required to attend User Education Training (UET) at CUPF's office. **Attendance at this comprehensive user education program is mandatory for anyone requesting use of county facilities**, regardless of whether they are a historic or new user. **The UET trained representative must be a current PTA/PTSA Executive Board member or member.** User Education Training sessions are generally held each Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. weekly, and the first Monday of each September, December, March and June. User group representative(s) should register to attend this training by calling 240-777-2725 or 3-1-1.

CUPF Works Hand-In-Hand with PTA/PTSA Organizations

We are confident that centralized scheduling provides a win-win solution for all parties involved. We hope PTA/PTSA representatives will focus on scheduling their events early, eliminating last-minute scheduling conflicts. To avoid confusion, we recommend that only one designee submit all use forms, no matter what the event. An open invitation is extended to all incoming presidents to attend one of our regularly scheduled training sessions outlined above.

With better planning on everyone's part, we hope that all users of public facilities will experience success with their worthwhile endeavors to serve county residents. CUPF staff are always willing to work with the PTA/PTSA to discuss ways to improve the process.