



PARK DISTRICT of OAK PARK

Ann Marie Buczek
Communication and Community Engagement Manager
Park District of Oak Park
(708) 725-2121
AnnMarie.Buczek@pdop.org

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Park District of Oak Park receives \$1.78M grant from Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation for Community Recreation Center

A generous \$1.78 million grant has been awarded to the Park District of Oak Park to build their Community Recreation Center as a Net Zero Energy building, which will generate as much renewable energy on site as the building needs to operate. The funding, from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, will support conservation measures for the 40,000 square-foot building to be located at 229 Madison Street. Oak Park is the third Illinois park district to receive a grant to build a Net Zero Energy building.

"We're thrilled that the Foundation has awarded the Park District of Oak Park with this grant for the Community Recreation Center to be constructed with Net Zero Energy building requirements," said the District's Executive Director Jan Arnold. "This is our third grant from the Foundation, so we consider them a great partner in the District's efforts to preserve and enhance our environment."

The Community Recreation Center (CRC) is an innovative design by Chicago-based Perkins and Will, experienced in designing and constructing recreational facilities. The Park District of Oak Park has been working with the architects over the past five years from feasibility through design, and now to construction of this multi-faceted facility. This energy-efficient building will feature components and building materials chosen to meet Net Zero Energy building requirements, including:

- An array of solar panels on the roof and parking area
- HVAC systems and mechanical equipment with the highest efficiency ratings
- Increased insulation values in the walls and roof

- High-performing windows
- Green roof and bioswale
- LED lighting throughout the project
- Occupancy sensors in rooms and daylight sensors in perimeter spaces
- EPA Indoor Air Plus requirements for paint and materials
- On site battery backup resiliency

In order to qualify for the grant, the Foundation requires that the building receive a third-party certification ensuring the building is efficient in its energy use. This facility is slated to receive the International Living Future Institute's Zero Energy Certification. In addition to funding construction and materials, the grant program requires that grantees provide educational opportunities to help residents learn about the building's energy-efficient features. The Community Recreation Center will have educational panels and an energy usage display to illustrate how the building is constructed. Once the facility opens, the District will also closely monitor the performance and use to ensure the building meets the Net Zero Energy building benchmarks, which is a requirement for the final portion of the grant.

"We're proud to recognize the Park District of Oak Park's leadership in sustainability with this Net Zero Energy building, said Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation's Program Director for Energy, Gabriela Martin. "The Foundation's goal is to encourage exemplary buildings and demonstrate that Net Zero Energy building performance is realistic and achievable. We hope that the new Community Recreation Center will inspire more park districts to meet the Net Zero challenge."

The Community Recreation Center is the culmination of a long, open community process that ensures the facility will provide the highest-priority amenities for residents with no tax increase. The Parks Foundation of Oak Park has been instrumental in raising private funds to assist in covering the cost of construction. The amenities include an indoor walking and running track, multipurpose rooms, community rooms, e-sports room, and a gymnasium for pickleball, basketball, camps, and other activities.

The Net Zero Energy Building Program awards grants to nonprofit, government, and higher education organizations for exemplary buildings that maximize energy efficiency. Over a 12-month period, projects must achieve a Net Zero Energy building performance (or better). Net Zero Energy buildings offset their own energy consumption by generating required energy on-site from renewable resources. This will be the second Net Zero facility for the Park District of Oak Park.

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