**Park Partners** is a fiscal sponsorship program that combines our fundraising expertise, financial services, insurance, and administrative support with your project. By combining efforts to reach shared goals, SFPA and Park Partners are able to achieve mutual success.

San Francisco Parks Alliance has built a reputation as a leader in parks and open spaces. By joining as a Park Partner you are connected to that reputation and to our network of amazing community projects.

Examples of what our Park Partners are doing:

- Renovating playgrounds
- Providing environmental education and outdoor activities to underserved youth
- Producing healthy food in urban farms and gardens
- Replacing concrete with plants and permeable surfaces
- Restoring habitat and increasing safe access to our natural areas

**What is fiscal sponsorship?**

Fiscal sponsorship is a relationship between an organization that has tax-exempt status (the fiscal sponsor) and one that does not (the sponsored project). One of the most common uses of fiscal sponsorship is to enable a project to apply for grants and solicit tax-deductible contributions through the fiscal sponsor. It saves money, conserves resources, reduces duplication of personnel and simplifies organizational needs.

This is a complex relationship and should not be taken lightly.

Fiscal sponsors are legally and financially responsible for any project that they sponsor. For that reason a fiscal sponsor often seeks to support groups or individuals engaged in activities that further its own charitable purpose. SFPA offers fiscal sponsorship to organizations that aim to expand, revitalize and promote a variety of healthy activities in San Francisco’s parks, recreation facilities and open spaces.

**What services do we provide?**

- Provide compliance support to ensure that all relevant federal, state, and local regulations and reporting requirements are followed.
- Provide fundraising guidelines and one complimentary fundraising consultation per year.
- Provide letter to prospective grant makers and other relevant parties
affirming the relationship between us and the Project.

- Work with Project staff to assure compliance with reporting on grants.
- Provide liability insurance to the Project.
- Provide acknowledgement to all of your donors for their taxes including in-kind gift letters.
- Provide regular quarterly reporting on account balances and transactions.
- Process all check requests, deposits, and donor acknowledgements.
- Provide an independent audit to Project staff to comply with grant maker requirements for application and reporting processes.
- Engage independent contractors, as allowed by law, and file necessary federal and state reports.
- Serve as signatory on all contracts, grants or other legal documents.
- Provide a page on our website for the Project.
- Provide advertising for Project events in our print and e-newsletter.

**Benefits of Fiscal Sponsorship with SFPA**

Joining the Park Partners program with a network of other community groups, support from staff dedicated to park issues, and alignment with the recognized leader in San Francisco parks issues is the best way to focus and quickly meet the objectives of your project. The most precious resources for your group are likely time and volunteer effort. The day-to-day tasks of administration and governance take valuable time away from your core mission. Fiscal sponsors provide an alternative to doing everything yourself.

In addition to extending its nonprofit status, fiscal sponsors save you time and money by providing a shared platform of financial, operational and administrative support services. SFPA’s fiscal sponsorship services are focused on parks and expansion of open space in San Francisco and appropriate for organizations from neighborhood watch and informal groups that adopt Street Parks to quasi non-profit organizations with staff and ongoing programming.

Fiscal sponsorship can help you meet your project’s goals more quickly and efficiently.

**Speed**

It can take six months to a year to go through the application process for tax exemption with the IRS. Nonprofit status and tax exemption come as a part of fiscal sponsorship, and donors can start giving you funding (and receive a tax deduction) immediately. You will have the track record of the SFPA organization with completed audits, 990s, organizational budgets, and other financial documents to rely on for grant applications. These documents increase the confidence of funding organizations that they are giving
to an established, well respected organization that will appropriately expend their gift for charitable purposes.

Cost Savings

Sharing administrative and infrastructure services with other local parks projects is more practical and cost-effective than doing it all yourself. Paying for your own staff, insurance, and other administrative costs can be very expensive. When you share these resources and services with other projects, the money you won’t spend on overhead can go where it is really needed – to your programs.

Convenience

With a fiscal sponsor, you don't have to worry about all of the administrative aspects of running a board and organization, filling out payroll tax returns, getting through audits, or tracking your budget. You are free to focus on what you do best – carrying out your mission.

Networking

SFPA Park Partners enjoy opportunities to work with other similar projects and learn from their successes and failures. Upcoming workshops include fundraising, marketing and communications, working with the City, and other topics that bring Park Partners together to share ideas. In addition, an online working community is in formation and your project manager can connect you directly with other projects that you can learn from.

Connections

Since SFPA staff is working on multiple projects with RPD, DPW, and other City departments, we use our relationships to help advocate for your project. Your project updates will go out in our newsletters, enews, and posting on our website and social media outlets. Our Policy Council is reviewing and advising on policies that will affect the parks, so we are aware to the political context that can help or challenge your project. SFPA also invites you to meet with our fundraising staff for a consultation that can help your put your fundraising strategy in place.

How to apply

If you are interested in undertaking a project that aims to expand, revitalize and promote activities in San Francisco’s parks, recreation facilities and open spaces, contact our Park Partner Program Staff at 621-3260 to help determine if you need fiscal sponsorship and if our program is the right fit. Then fill out our application and we will schedule a meeting to get better acquainted. The approval process takes 2-4 weeks depending on the stage of readiness of your project and availability of your team and our staff to meet.