

Promote Community Health...



...through Community-Use Agreements

What is Community Use?

Community use is the practice of making spaces available to the public when they are usually closed. Buildings, grounds, and other spaces that have a main purpose can be used by populations that don't normally use the space, or populations that use the space can access it at hours they normally couldn't.

Why Community Use?

- It is an efficient use of resources
- Community members tend to know and trust existing spaces, increasing participation
- The presence of safe places for youth and families to exercise tends to increase physical activity

Examples of Community Use Include:

- Unlocking school playing fields and tracks after school hours
- Using meeting rooms or classrooms for yoga or other exercise classes
- Opening gymnasiums for evening basketball or free play
- Using kitchen space for community-based food canning or preserving



Franklin Regional
Council of Governments
Cooperative Public Health District

www.frcog.org



Communities that Care

COALITION

www.communitiesthatcarecoalition.org

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NACCHO,
the National Association of County and City Health Officials*

NACCHO
National Association of County & City Health Officials

www.naccho.org

What is the Difference Between a Community Use Policy and a Community-Use Agreement?

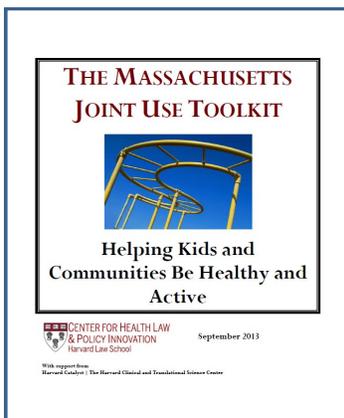
Many Franklin County public buildings have community use policies available through the web. Community use policies outline the procedures for applying to use the space, and indicate other items to be considered—for example, costs or fees for use, paperwork requirements, and required staffing.

With the policies in mind, you can work with facilities managers to create an individualized agreement specific to your needs. Written community use agreements **build** on community use policies by ensuring:

- Clear expectations from and for all parties involved
- Agreements are based on mutually agreeable activities, not specific relationships
- Less chance for misunderstanding
- Continuity even as people or roles change over time

You can find Community-use agreement templates for Massachusetts municipal buildings and spaces in the Harvard Law School Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation Massachusetts Community-Use Toolkit

<http://www.chlpi.org/Community-use-toolkit/>



How Do You Pay for Community-Use?

Community use can incur costs—for example, paying for staff to open and close facilities, supervise, or otherwise provide support. Supplies used may also require funds. There are several ways to pay for the costs of community use:

- Contribution from users
- Foundations
- Municipal budgets
- Municipal revolving funds
- Grants
- Individual donors
- Or a combination of these

What About Liability Concerns?*

Massachusetts helps local communities manage risk through the **Massachusetts Recreational Use Statute**, ([MGL Ch. 21, Sec. 17C](#)).

Community Use agreements themselves can buffer liability through the addition of indemnification clauses, or you can collect liability waiver forms from users.

** this material is for general informational purposes and does not constitute legal advice . Concerned parties should work with legal counsel.*