

Fee Waiver/Pass Summary Report 2025

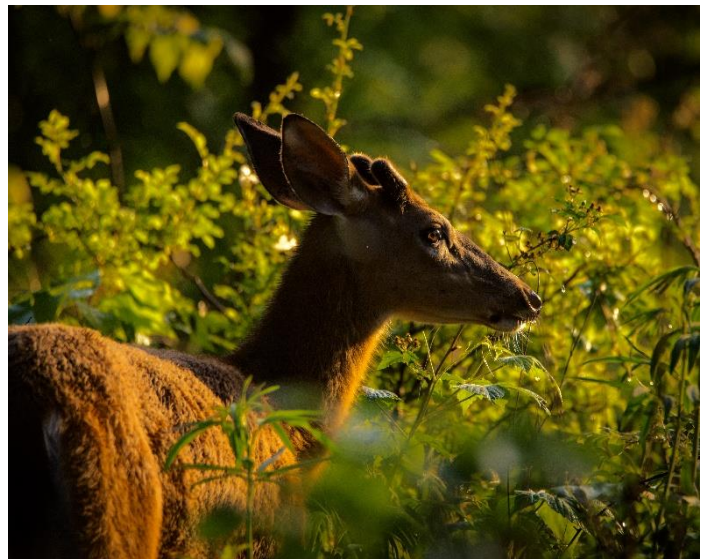


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2025 Fee Waiver/Free Passes Executive Summary

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County (the “District”) recognizes the value of waiving or reducing fees in certain instances for the use of District facilities or land. As set forth in Title 7 - Fees, Chapter 1 – Fee Schedule, of the District Code of Ordinances, the Fee Waiver Policy was established (Policy Number: 02.30.00). The policy supplemented with the Fee Waiver Form, was established for determining when fees may be waived or reduced. The policy requires an annual report to the Board of Commissioners on discounts and waivers for the sake of transparency.

This report outlines specific discount categories applied toward any district managed facility (i.e., picnic groves, indoor rental facilities, camping etc.). In addition, as agreed upon by active concession and land agreements, the District is provided with various passes to be issued pursuant to District Board Approved Resolution, 16-0314, dated July 12, 2016.

In 2025, the Forest Preserves of Cook County issued 8,063 permits, accommodating approximately 923,329 attendees. This represents an increase from 2024 and is consistent with recent permit activity trends.

The District provides discounts at varying levels to eligible organizations, including students, schools, and veteran groups. In 2025, discounts were applied to 654 permits, totaling \$194,761.80.

The District has also enhanced internal procedures to improve access to the preserves and expand opportunities for not-for-profit organizations to bring diverse community groups to these natural spaces.

The Conservation & Experiential Programming Department, operating through six nature centers, three zone teams, an outreach team, and campgrounds, distributed admission and parking passes to Brookfield Zoo and the Chicago Botanic Garden. These passes were used as incentives for giveaways, games, and activities to encourage participation in newsletters, volunteer programs, and other District initiatives.

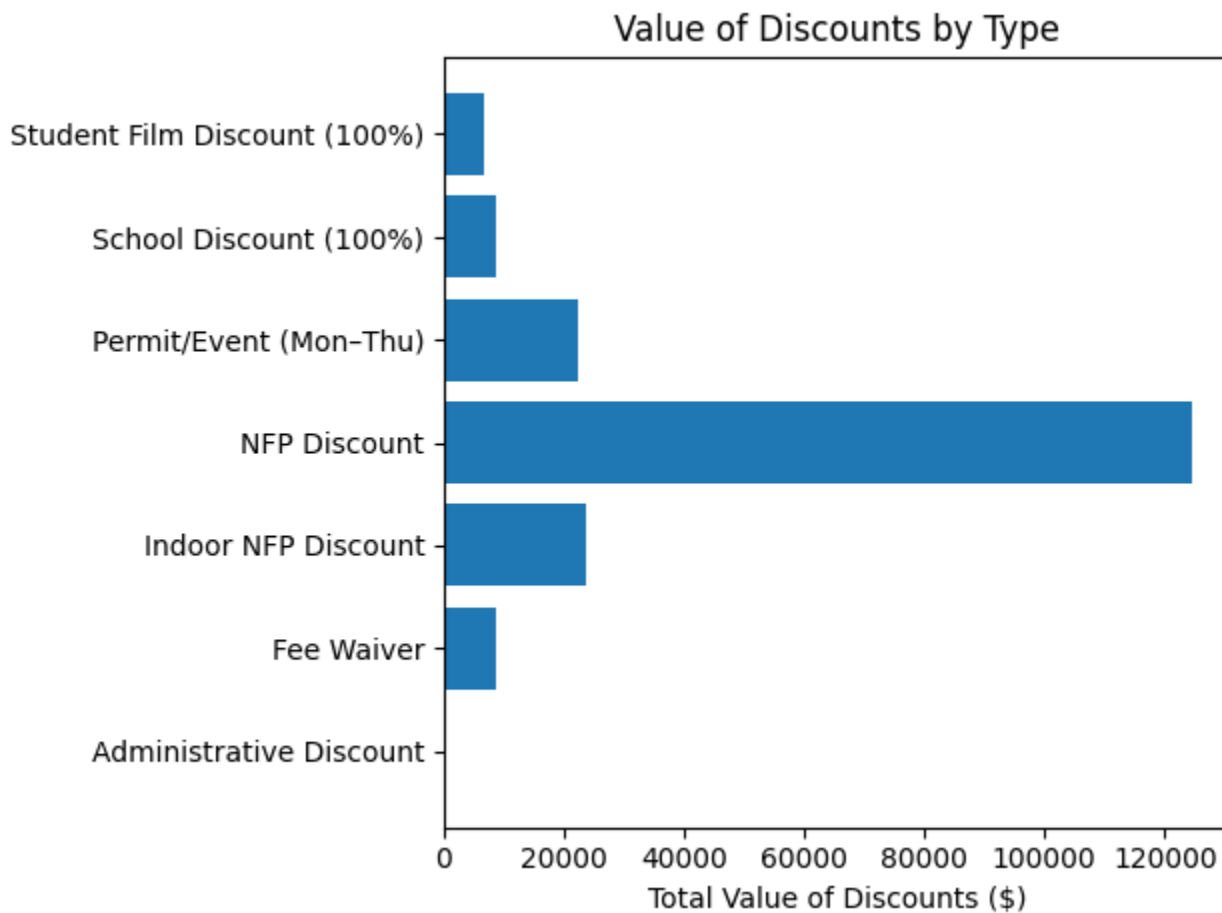
The following sections summarize the fee waiver activity and complimentary pass distribution for the reporting period.

Fee Waiver Totals

Discount Type	Organizations / Customers	Total Value of Discounts
Administrative Discount	8	\$429.80
Fee Waiver	15	\$8,719.00
Indoor Non-Profit (NFP) Discount	37	\$23,614.75
Non-Profit (NFP) Discount	274	\$125,252.00
Permit/Event Weekday Discount (Mon–Thu)	313	\$21,470.50
School Discount	1	\$8,707.75
Student Film Discount	6	\$6,568.00
TOTAL	654	\$194,761.80

Figure 1. Value of Discounts by Type

Non-Profit (NFP) discounts account for the largest share of discounts issued by the District, totaling \$125,252.00, or approximately 64% of the total value of all discounts applied.



Pass Distribution Totals

Organization or Department	Zoo Pass/Parking	Garden	Campground	Golf	Go Ape	Total Passes
General Superintendent Office	100			4		104
Communications	50	90	15			155
Conservation and Policy Council	50					50
Nature Centers	900	600				1,500
Conservation and Experiential Programming	1,376	730	9	2	5	2,122
Resource Management	300	250	3	4	8	565
Volunteer Resources	85	0				85
Permits, Rentals and Concessions	85	85				170
Landscape Maintenance		16	4			20
Cook County Dept of Sustainability			2			2
Trailside Birdhouse Contest						0
Jack and Jill of America, Inc. - Lake Shore Chapter					40	40
Lost Boyz Inc.					20	20
4-H Youth Development					54	54
Calvin Christian School					21	21
Portage Park Nature Play Group			1			1
Oak Park Library			1			1
Academy for Global Citizenship / Green Teacher Network			1			1
Fishing Derby			2			2
Total	2,946	1,771	38	10	148	4,913

Free Pass Totals with Cost Estimate

Category	Zoo *	Garden *	Go Ape	Golf	Camping*	Total Passes (\$)
Total Passes	2,946	1,771	148	10	38	4,913
Price Est.	\$42.20	\$29.95	\$64.95	\$200.00	\$62.50	
Pass Total (\$)	\$124,321.20	\$53,041.45	\$9,612.60	\$2,000.00	\$2,375.00	\$191,350.25

* The Zoo Pass with parking is valued between \$34.95 and \$49.95, while the Garden Pass ranges from \$25.95 to \$33.95, based on the dynamic pricing fee schedule. Camping is valued between \$25 and \$100, depending on the day and reservation type. Median values have been used for all pass estimate calculations.

Definitions:

<i>Discount Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Administrative Discount</i>	Discounts and/refunds issued to customers based on district staff booking error or customer retention
<i>Fee Waiver</i>	Partial and/or full fee waivers for non-District entities/individuals that request a Discretionary Discount.
<i>Veterans Discount</i>	Issued to Veteran organizations as stated in Section 2-4-2 of the Ordinance.
<i>NFP Discount</i>	A discount provided to any nonprofit organization with a valid 501(c)(3).
<i>School Discount</i>	Schools that utilize Preserve trails for Cross Country practices are provided a 100% discount.
<i>Student Film Discount</i>	Film projects for educational credit are waived at 100% once provided with school authorization.
<i>Permit/Event (M-Thu) Discount:</i>	25% Discount provided to all patrons for hosting events Monday through Thursday.