

Town of Porter Community Center Renter Frequently Asked Questions

What is the capacity of the building?

Fire code allows for 180 people to be inside the building at one time (60 in the Front Lounge and 120 in the Back Hall). However, if your event will include seating for your guests a more comfortable number would be around 140 people seated (40-50 in the Front Lounge and 80-100 in the Back Hall). Past renters have squeezed 180 people seated into the building, but it is a tight fit.

Tables & Chairs?

The Park Department supplies tables (21 – 8 ft. long rectangular banquet tables and 6 – 52 inch diameter round tables) and around 160 chairs if you are renting the whole building. We can pull 20 chairs out of storage if your guest list exceeds 160 seated. If you have just the Front Lounge you will have access to 4 of the banquet tables and the 6 round tables. If you are just renting the Back Hall you will have access to 16 of the banquet tables and no round tables. **Tables and chairs are not allowed to leave the building or back deck.**

Are there any Kitchen Appliances?

Each kitchen has a microwave, oven, range top, refrigerator/freezer, sink and 30-cup coffee maker for your use. The Back Hall kitchen also contains a kegerator with CO2 tank and regulator. Please let the park staff know that you plan to use the kegerator so the CO2 tank can be checked for the proper level.

Do you provide any cleaning supplies?

The Park Department provides toilet paper, trash bags (for bathroom and 55 gallon for larger cans), paper hand towels, hand soap, sanitary napkin bags, and first-aid kits. All other items (napkins, plates, utensils, table cloths, dish soap, etc.) are the responsibility of the renter. A cleaning closet is located in the Back Hall that contains extra supplies, a mop/bucket, broom/dust pan, and rags to clean-up any spills or messes.

Can I use a crock-pot or roaster to keep food warm?

Use of one or two crock pots to warm food is permitted, however, we recommend splitting the electrical load on more than one circuit to prevent the breakers from tripping. Kitchen circuits are labeled with numbers at each outlet. **Large electric roasters, or similar heating devices that draw a heavy electrical current, are prohibited.** The electrical system in the building simply cannot handle the large draw. If an electrical breaker is tripped it will take up to ½ hour for a staff member to come in to reset the panel.

Are we able to have alcohol at an event?

The short answer is yes, with restrictions and additional fees. The long answer can be found inside the Community Center Rental Agreement or by calling the Park Department at (219) 983-1042.

What are the sizes of each room?

The Front Lounge is roughly 800 sqft. and the Back Hall is roughly 1,500 sqft. Each room also comes with a small kitchen. The hallway area and rest rooms are shared spaces between the two rooms.

Does the building have air conditioning?

Yes, we have central air conditioning.

Is any outdoor space included in my rental?

The front lawn space immediately south of the building is included with the rental of the Front Lounge. The lawn space immediately north of the building is included with the rental of the Back Hall. No other outdoor spaces (including shelters) are included with your rental fee.

Is it ok to have grills at the building?

Charcoal or propane grills are permitted on the lawn areas north and south of the building, as long as they are operated at a safe distance from the building.

How much parking is included with the rental?

A paved parking area in front of the building, as well as a gravel overflow lot located east of the building is available for your guests to park. However, the Community Center at Hawthorne Park is located on land that is open to the general public and those parking areas are not exclusive for your event.

Is it ok to have a band/DJ for my event?

Yes, DJ's and bands are allowed for events as long as they remain indoors. **Fog/smoke machines however, are prohibited as they will set off our smoke alarm system.** Please be sure that your entertainment knows about the prohibition of fog/smoke machines.

Will there be another party going on during my event if I only rent half of the building?

It is possible if your rental includes only one room of the building. There are separate entry/exit doors for each side of the building, and each room has its own kitchen. The only shared space between concurrent events is the west hallway and restrooms.

What time can I enter the building and what time do I need to exit the building?

Entry to the building is guaranteed at 10:00am on the day of your rental. Your exit time will depend on the type of your event, if your event requires security, and any special requests. Normally the rental period for the building runs from 10:00am-9:00pm with events like weddings running until midnight.

Can you hold a date for me?

Our policy is to pencil you in for a date for a period of one week without a deposit. If you do not put down the \$150 refundable deposit to lock in your date prior to the expiration of one week, the date will open back up for another renter to book. Once you have put down the \$150 refundable deposit your date is locked in.

When is the rental rate due?

Your \$150 refundable deposit is due at the time of booking. Your rental fee is due approximately six weeks prior to your rental date – the exact due date is provided in your rental agreement at the time of booking.

Can I have a bounce house, glitter/confetti, or fireworks at my event?

Due to liability reasons, cleaning time, and fire safety all bounce houses/inflatables, glitter/confetti, and fireworks (including sparklers) are prohibited at Hawthorne Park.