

BERA Club Handbook

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Revision History

Revision #	Effective Date	Summary of Change
00	2/26/2026	Initial Release
01	6/1/2026	Updated “Financial Resources” section to provide clarity on funding requirements

Overview

The Brookhaven Employee Recreation Association (BERA) is a 501(c)(4) organization that brings together employees, retirees, and eligible family members through recreational, social, and cultural activities that enrich life at Brookhaven National Laboratory. Clubs are at the heart of this effort by fostering community and engagement. This handbook serves as a practical guide for club leaders and members, complementing the BERA Administrative Manual by focusing on day-to-day operations and best practices for thriving clubs.

Mission of BERA Clubs

The mission of every club is to provide meaningful opportunities for members to connect, learn, and enjoy shared interests. Each club supports BERA's broader mission by fostering community engagement through recreational, social, and cultural activities.

Role and Vision for Clubs

While BERA provides resources and guidance, the vision is for clubs to become self-sustaining. Clubs are encouraged to design activities that strengthen the lab community and use resources in ways that support growth. Approaches that generate momentum, build community interest, and expand access are strongly supported.

Club Leadership Responsibilities

Club leaders are responsible for ensuring their organization is active, transparent, and compliant with BNL/BERA policies and procedures. Responsibilities include:

- Maintaining accurate membership lists to measure impact.
- Submitting required reports and documentation by stated deadlines.
- Requesting approval for special events or activities involving external instructors.
- Following all procedures related to event planning, instructor approval, financial management, and facility use.
- Keeping an approved constitution/bylaws on file.
- Communicating proactively and respectfully with BERA board representatives.
- Ensuring club activities reflect the broader mission of promoting community engagement.

Club Resources

Facility Access and Reservations

Facilities which are primarily recreational in nature include:

- Swimming pool
- Gymnasium
- Recreation Hall (bldg. 317)
- *Recreation Park (gazebo, baseball fields, soccer field)
- *Brookhaven Square
- Tennis Courts
- Sand Volleyball Court (across from Cavendish House)

Scheduling of recreational facilities is handled through the Recreation Office (*with the exception of the Gazebo and Square). Please use this [form](https://forms.office.com/g/jLHdv6mrsL) (<https://forms.office.com/g/jLHdv6mrsL>) for scheduling requests.

Other laboratory facilities, which are used only incidentally and occasionally by BERA include:

- Berkner Hall
- Brookhaven Center
- SUSC

Scheduling of these laboratory facilities, the Gazebo and Brookhaven Square is handled through Conference Services.

Marketing and Communications Support

The Recreation Office can assist clubs with promotional efforts for club activities, if requested. Promotional efforts can include:

- Social media posts
- Flyers
- BERA Happenings announcements
- BNL homepage announcements

All site-wide marketing materials must receive approval before distribution.

Please send all marketing requests to BERAoffice@bnl.gov at least 5 weeks¹ prior to the event with the following information:

- Event title, date/time, location, what to expect, event fee, contact info

¹ *Experience has shown that emailed communication should go out at least 4 weeks prior to the event (6 is ideal) with a follow up 2 weeks prior to the event for the best results

Financial Resources

Annual budget allocations for clubs are subject to change each year and are determined in part by BERA's overall financial performance during the previous fiscal year.

Fundraising within policy guidelines is highly encouraged. Clubs are expected to pursue reasonable opportunities to supplement BERA funding through fundraising activities, entry fees, sponsorships, or other approved revenue sources when appropriate to their activities.

Clubs are invited to use their budgets to support events and activities that are open to the broader lab community, foster engagement, strengthen accessibility and inclusion, promote collaboration, and help attract new members. These efforts strengthen community connections and align with BERA's mission.

When evaluating budget requests and supplemental funding requests, consideration will be given to:

- The extent to which the activity builds community and is accessible to the broader Lab population.
- Opportunities for collaboration between clubs, departments, or BERA programs.
- The club's efforts toward financial sustainability through fundraising, cost-sharing, entry fees, or other revenue-generating activities where appropriate.
- The club's standing and compliance with BNL and BERA policies and procedures.
- The relative needs of other clubs and the availability of BERA resources.

While annual budgets may include some costs for club-specific gatherings, priority for BERA funds should be given to initiatives that demonstrate community benefit rather than routine expenses. For example, a club social that is tied to the finale of a sports tournament that they hosted would generally be considered a strong use of funds. In contrast, requesting an annual budget solely for snacks at the monthly meetings would not be considered a strong use of funds.

Clubs may request additional financial support during the year; however, such requests must be strongly justified. Due to limited funding, supplemental allocations are approved only when a proposal demonstrates significant community benefit, clear impact, and alignment with Recreation Program priorities. Routine or low-impact activities are generally not eligible for supplemental funds.

To request supplemental funding, set up a short meeting with a BERA club committee or board member to review the details of the request.

Reporting Requirements

Club reports shall be submitted by the appropriate dates shown below.

Report templates and links to report forms can be found on the club [homepage](https://bera.bnl.gov/) (<https://bera.bnl.gov/>).

Failure to meet the reporting deadlines may impact good standing.

Report	Purpose	Due Date
Annual Report	Provides previous year's progress, activities conducted, attendance summary, and challenges/needs Outlines new year goals, planned activities, and requested budget	May 1 st
Mid Year Report	Provides progress on goals, activities conducted, attendance summary, and challenges/needs	November 1 st
Financial Reports	Tracks income, expenses, and balances. Includes bank statements if bank account is under BERA's EIN.	Due with each report

Club Good Standing Requirements

A club in good standing:

- Submits all required reports on time.
- Maintains an active membership base.
- Uses funds responsibly and transparently.
- Follows all BERA/BNL events, safety, and facility procedures and policies.
- Upholds the principles of a Respectful Workplace
- Maintains updated constitution and by-laws on file with the Recreation Office.
- Collaborates constructively with the Recreation Office.
- Demonstrates a commitment to expanding participation and supporting the broader lab community through its programming choices.