



ljams
NATURE CENTER

Frequently Asked Questions for Members

Q: What do I do if I joined or renewed my membership and have not received my hangtag?

A: If you have not received your hangtag, please come to the Front Desk when you visit and ask for a daily parking pass. We'll check to see the status of your membership then.

Q: Do I have to enter my credit card to park if I am a member?

A: No! You'll receive a hangtag from Ljams when you join or renew your membership. Ljams will upload your name, email address, and expiration date to Ljams' Metropolis portal, and you will receive an email to invite you to create an account, but you do NOT need to enter your credit card to do that.

NOTE: Ljams does NOT share or sell personal information. However, if you have an email address associated with your membership, Ljams will upload your name, email address, and expiration date to our interface with Metropolis and you will receive an email inviting you to set up a Metropolis account. This will allow you to upload more than one license plate should you be in a different vehicle (rental, etc.), provides confirmation of current membership if you forget your hangtag, and allows a two-step verification process to reduce error. You do NOT need to enter your credit card number to create an account if you receive this invitation.

If you do NOT want your email address shared with Metropolis, you need to OPT OUT of this step. You will be required to display your hangtag at all times if you don't have an account with Metropolis. Members who do not have an email address also will need to display their hangtag at all times.

Q: How soon will I get an email that invites me to sign up for my account?

A: You should receive an email in a week or less from the date Ljams receives notice that you have become a member or have renewed your membership.

Q: How do the new membership levels affect recurring members (evergreen members)?

A: All current members, including members who have set up recurring monthly/quarterly/annual payments through credit card, automatic bank withdrawal, or monthly checks, will continue at their current membership level until their membership expires. When they renew, they will choose a new membership level. For recurring members, that will be 12 months from the date they started payments toward their last annual membership. They will need to set up a new recurring donation at a new membership level if they wish to renew their membership.

Q: I recommended that a donation be made to Ljams Nature Center through a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF). Does that qualify me for a membership?

A: Ljams Nature Center appreciates your generosity! Per the Internal Revenue Service, a donation from a DAF prohibits the person recommending that donation from receiving any tangible goods or services in exchange for that donation. If you would like to be an Ljams member, you'll need to purchase a membership separately, or you may purchase an annual parking hangtag from Ljams Nature Center for \$50.

Q: I made a Qualified Charitable Donation (QCD) from my IRA to Ijams Nature Center. Does that qualify me for a membership?

A: Ijams Nature Center appreciates your generosity! Per the Internal Revenue Service, IRA QCDs do not qualify for membership because you are prohibited from receiving any tangible goods or services in exchange for these donations. If you would like to be a member, you'll need to purchase a membership separately, or you may purchase an annual parking hangtag from Ijams Nature Center for \$50.

Why has Ijams started to charge for parking?

Ijams Nature Center is a nonprofit organization, not a city park. Only 9% of our annual operating budget comes from government funding. Unlike most nonprofit nature centers, Ijams has never charged an entry fee, relying instead on the support of incredibly generous members and donations. However, with the significant increase in visitation, current members and donors make up only 0.2% of our total visitors. To continue to offer excellent programs and maintain our natural resources, we must seek a sustainable path forward that diversifies our revenue streams and engages more people in support of our mission. This revenue will help create an equal distribution of support among all users, and visitors from outside Knoxville, Knox County, and East Tennessee will help protect and maintain Ijams.

Do other nature centers charge for parking?

Most nonprofit nature centers charge a per-person entrance fee to help support their operations. These entry fees range from \$2 per person up to \$10 per person per day. Those fees are usually paid at a gatehouse entry or visitor center. Ijams Nature Center has six vehicular entrances, so a single location for an entrance fee is not possible. Instead, to help support its operations and maintenance of facilities, trails, and natural areas, Ijams has chosen to implement a \$5 per day, per vehicle parking fee instead of a per-person entrance fee.

How do you ensure that everyone has access to Ijams?

All Ijams Nature Center members park for free and will receive annual parking hangtag(s) coinciding with their membership. Annual memberships start at \$10, depending on your income level, and we've worked hard to create a range of membership options to engage everyone in all we offer. We never want to create barriers to engaging with nature and the outdoors. The nature center has several equity membership options to address the needs of people with lower incomes, seniors, veterans, and students. Please visit the Ijams [Membership Page](#) for details.

I'm an Ijams volunteer. Do I pay to park?

Many volunteers not only donate their time but also are members of Ijams. Volunteers who are not members will be issued a free daily parking pass on the days they volunteer or will receive an annual hangtag, depending on the number of hours they volunteer. If you have any questions, please reach out to Volunteer Coordinator [Christy Smith](#).