

= Parks and Recreation (season 2) =

The second season of Parks and Recreation originally aired in the United States on the NBC television network starting September 17 , 2009 , and ended on May 20 , 2010 . The season was produced by Deedle @-@ Dee Productions and Universal Media Studios , and series co @-@ creators Greg Daniels and Michael Schur served as executive producers . Like the first season , it focused on Leslie Knope (Amy Poehler) and her staff on the parks and recreation department of the fictional Indiana town of Pawnee . The episodes were approximately 22 minutes long each , all of which aired at 8 : 30 p.m. on Thursdays .

All of the members of the original principal cast were retained and Chris Pratt , who made guest appearances throughout the previous season , joined the permanent cast in the second season . It also featured guest appearances by Louis C.K. , Megan Mullally , Fred Armisen , Will Arnett , Justin Theroux and John Larroquette . The writing staff made changes based on feedback from the first season and attempted to be more topical , with episodes touching on such topics as same @-@ sex marriage , the arrest of Henry Louis Gates and the sex scandal of South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford .

Although the first season received generally mixed reviews , the second season was highly praised , with some reviewers declaring it one of the best comedies of the television season . Nevertheless , Parks and Recreation continued to struggle in the Nielsen ratings and averaged about 4 @.@ 68 million household viewers per week , lower than Thursday night NBC shows Community , 30 Rock , and The Office . Amy Poehler was nominated for the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series , and both the series and actor Nick Offerman received nominations from the Television Critics Association Awards .

= = Cast = =

= = = Main = = =

Amy Poehler as Leslie Knope , the deputy director of the Pawnee parks department , who has not let politics dampen her sense of optimism ; her ultimate goal is to become President of the United States . She has a strong love for her home town of Pawnee , and desires to use her position to improve it . Leslie 's sense of confidence grows over the course of the season , leading her to get over her crush on Mark and begin to pursue romantic relationships .

Rashida Jones as Ann Perkins , a nurse and Leslie 's best friend . She and Leslie continue to work to get the pit next to Ann 's house filled in and transformed in to a park . Ann develops a romantic interest in city planner Mark , and they enter in to a relationship .

Paul Schneider as Mark Brendanawicz , a city planner with the Pawnee municipal government . He has long been disillusioned with government after being unable to achieve his career ambitions . After developing a romantic interest in Ann , Mark abandons his promiscuous lifestyle and enters in to a relationship with her .

Aziz Ansari as Tom Haverford , Leslie 's self @-@ absorbed and underachieving subordinate . While he is an employee at the parks department , he cares little about his job , and is instead more focused on his entrepreneurial ambitions . He takes great pride in his appearance and regularly pursues women despite being married . During the season it is revealed that his marriage to his wife Wendy is a green card marriage , and he and Wendy go through a divorce after she obtains her citizenship . This affects Tom greater than he anticipated , as he realizes that he actually did harbor feelings for Wendy .

Nick Offerman as Ron Swanson , the cynical director of the parks department and Leslie 's boss . Due to his incredibly negative view of politics , he regularly works to make his department as inefficient as possible . This leads him to butt heads with Leslie on a number of occasions , as her philosophy regarding politics is the polar opposite . Despite that , both he and Leslie have a large amount of respect for one another . Ron has been married twice , both of whom are named Tammy .

He despises and fears them greatly , as they are both the only two women in the world that can control him .

Aubrey Plaza as April Ludgate , a young apathetic intern at the parks department . She cares little for her internship , and often shows annoyance at having to complete tasks . Due to her rebellious and emotionless attitude , she is often annoyed by her co @-@ workers , especially Leslie . She has a boyfriend named Derek , who is openly gay and dating another openly gay boy named Ben . Despite being in this relationship , April begins to develop a crush on Andy , as he is one of the only people that has the ability to make her smile . She goes to the lengths of accepting a job as Ron 's assistant just so she can stay in the parks department and see Andy .

Chris Pratt as Andy Dwyer , Ann 's ex @-@ boyfriend and lead singer of a band called " Mouse Rat " . He and Ann broke up after he revealed to her that he had delayed the removal of the casts on his legs so that she would continue to pamper him . He now lives in a tent pitched in the pit next to Ann 's house , so he can watch over her . After being injured when Leslie attempts to fill in the pit with dirt , he threatens to sue Pawnee in order to get money and impress Ann . Andy settles the lawsuit out of court however , when Leslie offers him a job as the shoe shiner in Pawnee town hall . It is here he begins to develop a romantic interest in intern April , feelings which she reciprocates .

= = = Recurring = = =

Alison Becker as Shauna Malwae @-@ Tweep , a newspaper journalist with The Pawnee Journal .

Andrew Burlinson as Wyatt " Burly " Burlinson , the lead guitarist in Andy 's band " Mouse Rat " .

Louis C.K. as Dave Sanderson , a socially awkward Pawnee police sergeant who enters in to a romantic relationship with Leslie .

Mo Collins as Joan Callamezzo , a tabloid journalist and hostess of news / talk show Pawnee Today .

Josh Duvendeck as Ben , Derek 's openly gay boyfriend .

Andy Forrest as Kyle , a government employee who is constantly ridiculed by Andy .

Jay Jackson as Perd Hapley , a popular Pawnee television journalist and the host of news program Ya Heard ? With Perd ! .

Blake Lee as Derek , April 's openly gay boyfriend who is in a relationship with Ben .

Jim O 'Heir as Jerry Gergich , an incompetent and widely ridiculed employee at the parks department .

Retta as Donna Meagle , the no @-@ nonsense office manager at the parks department .

Phil Reeves as Paul Iaresco , Pawnee city manager .

Ben Schwartz as Jean @-@ Ralphio Saperstein , Tom 's dimwitted and cocky best friend .

Justin Theroux as Justin Anderson , a lawyer and old friend of Ann 's that enters in to a romantic relationship with Leslie . He is incredibly cultured and he constantly tells stories of his adventures around the globe .

Jama Williamson as Wendy Haverford , a surgeon and Tom 's attractive wife . She and Tom divorce and she pursues a romantic interest in Ron .

= = = Guest stars = = =

Fred Armisen as Raul , a parks official from Baraquia , Pawnee 's Venezuelan sister city .

JC Gonzalez as Johnny , a parks intern official from Baraquia , Pawnee 's Venezuelan sister city .

Will Arnett as Chris , a strange radiologist who Ann sets Leslie up on a date with .

John Balma as Barney Varmin , an incredibly boring accountant .

H. Jon Benjamin as Scott Braddock , a high @-@ strung Pawnee city attorney .

Kirk Fox as Joe Fanning , an employee at Pawnee 's sewage department and an enemy of the Parks department .

Michael Gross as Michael Tansley , a former director of the parks department .

Darlene Hunt as Marcia Langman , a conservative activist with the Pawnee organization , the Society for Family Stability Foundation .

Yvans Jourdain as Councilman Douglass Howser , head of Pawnee 's city council .
 John Larroquette as Frank Beckerson , a man who had a passionate love affair with Leslie 's mother Marlene in their youth .
 Rob Lowe as Chris Traeger , a state auditor who comes to Pawnee to evaluate the town 's funds .
 Jim Meskimen as Martin Housely , an MC at many special events throughout Pawnee .
 Natalie Morales as Lucy , a bartender and love interest for Tom .
 Megan Mullally as Tammy Swanson (aka Tammy Two) , a librarian and Ron 's sex @-@ crazed ex @-@ wife .
 Ian Roberts as Ian Winston , a Pawnee citizen .
 Pamela Reed as Marlene Griggs @-@ Knope , Leslie 's mother and a successful politician in Pawnee .
 Andy Samberg as Carl Lorthner , a park ranger and the head of Pawnee 's outdoor security .
 Paul Scheer as Keef Slerter , the energetic founder of KaBOOM ! , a charitable organization .
 Detlef Schrempf as himself .
 Adam Scott as Ben Wyatt , a state auditor who comes to Pawnee to evaluate the town 's funds .
 Kevin Symons as Councilman Bill DEXhart , a member of the Pawnee city council who is constantly embroiled in outrageous sex scandals .
 Cooper Thornton as Dr. Harris , Ann 's boss at Pawnee 's hospital .
 Gillian Vigman as Alexa Softcastle , a tabloid journalist from The Pawnee Sun .
 Susan Yeagley as Jessica Wicks , a beauty pageant winner and the wife of Nick Newport Sr. , one of the richest men in Pawnee .

== Episodes ==

? denotes an extended episode .

== Production ==

=== Crew ===

The second season of Parks and Recreation was produced by Deedle @-@ Dee Productions , Universal Media Studios , Fremulon and 3 Arts Entertainment . Series creators Greg Daniels and Michael Schur were executive producers along with David Miner , who previously worked on the NBC comedy series 30 Rock , and Howard Klein , who worked on The Office , another NBC comedy created by Daniels . Schur served as the showrunner of Parks and Recreation . Amy Poehler and Morgan Sackett were producers , while Daniel J. Goor was supervising producer , and Norm Hiscock and Emily Kapnek worked as consulting producers , David Hyman and Dean Holland were co @-@ producers , and Holland also worked as an editor along with Michael Trim , who doubled as director of photography . Dorian Frankel was the casting director , Ian Phillips was the production designer , Kirston Mann was the costume designer , and Alan Yang , Harris Wittels and Katie Dippold worked as executive story editors . Tucker Cawley , who had been a consulting producer during first season of Parks and Recreation , did not return and instead created the short @-@ lived ABC sitcom Hank , starring Kelsey Grammer .

=== Cast ===

All principal cast members from the first season returned for the second , including Amy Poehler , Rashida Jones , Aziz Ansari , Nick Offerman , Aubrey Plaza and Paul Schneider . Chris Pratt , who was billed as a guest star throughout the first season despite appearing in every episode , was promoted to the main cast in season two . Andy Dwyer , Pratt 's character , was originally supposed to appear only in the first season , but the producers liked Pratt so much that almost immediately after casting him , they decided to make Andy a regular character . Schneider left the cast after the

second season . Schur said when Schneider 's character Mark Brendanawicz was conceived , it was anticipated he would eventually become a less frequent character who switched back and forth between government and private sector jobs . Schur claimed that both the producers and Schneider were interested in having the character return for guest appearances in future episodes , though Schneider states that he is not interested in returning and has never been contacted about it .

Rob Lowe and Adam Scott joined the Parks and Recreation cast starting in the penultimate second season episode , " The Master Plan " . Scott left his starring role on the Starz comedy series Party Down to join Parks and Recreation , and Lowe had recently departed from the ABC drama series Brothers & Sisters . From the beginning , Scott was expected to become a regular cast member and , during the third season , eventual love interest for Leslie Knope , while Lowe was originally only intended to make a string of guest appearances in the third season and then depart the series . However , Lowe later signed a multi @-@ year contract to become a regular cast member . Schur said even when the character Ben Wyatt was conceived , Adam Scott was considered the " dream scenario " casting choice .

Jim O 'Heir and Retta , who made regular appearances as parks employees Jerry Gergich and Donna Meagle in the first season , continued to appear in season two . Although still considered guest actors , their characters started to become more fully developed and play larger roles in the episodes . Several other actors played regular supporting roles throughout the second season . Jama Williamson continued her recurring role as Wendy , Tom Haverford 's ex @-@ wife who becomes a romantic interest for Ron Swanson . Mo Collins and Jay Jackson made repeated appearances as Pawnee journalists Joan Callamezzo and Perd Hapley . Both actors were originally expected to appear only in one episode , but both returned for subsequent episodes because the writing staff enjoyed their performances . Alison Becker played another Pawnee reporter , Shauna Malwae @-@ Tweep , a character she also played in the first season . Ben Schwartz played Jean @-@ Ralphio , an arrogant and fast @-@ talking playboy friend of Tom , in several episodes . Pamela Reed reprised her recurring role as Leslie 's mother , Marlene , in several second season episodes .

The second season also included several prominent guest appearances , something that distinguished Parks and Recreation from Greg Daniels ' other comedy series , The Office . Schur said high @-@ profile guests on The Office would be too distracting because most episodes are confined to one setting , while he said Parks and Recreation was " a little bit more bright and colorful than The Office " . Megan Mullally , the real @-@ life wife of Nick Offerman , appeared as Ron 's ex @-@ wife Tammy in the episode " Ron and Tammy " . Schur said Mullally 's appearance was well received and not overly distracting to viewers , which made the Parks and Recreation producers feel more comfortable about using future guest actors . Stand @-@ up comedian Louis C.K. appeared in several episodes as Dave Sanderson , a Pawnee police officer and romantic interest to Leslie Knope . Although typically known for his raunchy and caustic comedy style , Louis C.K. adopted a far more deadpan sense of humor and technical tone of voice for Sanderson .

Two of Amy Poehler 's previous cast members from Saturday Night Live appeared in Parks and Recreation episodes : Fred Armisen played the vice director of a Venezuelan parks department in " Sister City " , and Andy Samberg portrayed the head of security for Pawnee 's parks in " Park Safety " . Will Arnett , the real @-@ life husband of Amy Poehler , made a guest appearance as an MRI technician in " The Set Up " . In that same episode , Justin Theroux started a string of a guest appearances as Justin Anderson , a friend of Ann and love interest for Leslie . John Larroquette appeared in " Galentine 's Day " as the long @-@ lost former love of Leslie 's mother . Kevin Symons appeared in two episodes as Bill DEXhart , a Pawnee councilman prone to sexual affairs and political scandals . Paul Scheer , who appeared in the MTV sketch comedy show Human Giant with Aziz Ansari , played a charity leader in " Kaboom " . In that same episode , comedian and voice actor H. Jon Benjamin played a Pawnee lawyer . Michael Gross , best known for his role as Steven Keaton from Family Ties , appeared in " Summer Catalog " as a former parks department director who loves marijuana . Detlef Schrempf , a retired basketball player who played for the Indiana Pacers , portrayed himself in " Telethon " . Natalie Morales appeared in the last two episodes of the season as Lucy , a bartender who becomes Tom 's girlfriend .

= = = Writing and filming = = =

Following season one , Parks and Recreation was originally renewed for a half season @-@ worth of episodes , but was picked up for a full season in late October 2009 . Greg Daniels said since the Parks and Recreation characters had now been established in the second season , the writers were able to write more specifically for the actors . Daniels said he believed this allowed the characters to become more balanced , rather than simply an accumulation of flaws , as they sometimes appeared in the first season . The writing staff also made an effort to be more topical with the second season episodes . For example , the episode " Pawnee Zoo " included social commentary about same @-@ sex marriage . Likewise , " The Stakeout " included a parody of the arrest of Henry Louis Gates , a black Harvard University professor who was arrested after police mistakenly thought he was breaking into his own home in Cambridge , Massachusetts , and a sex scandal involving a Pawnee councilman in " Practice Date " mirrored the real @-@ life 2009 scandal of South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford , who publicly admitted to a long @-@ term extramarital affair with an Argentinian woman .

The writers made several other changes going from season one to season two , including making the scripts more focused around the entire cast rather than just Leslie . They also tried to make Leslie appear more intelligent in the second season after receiving audience feedback that she appeared " ditzy " , which Michael Schur said was never their intention . Schur said , " In the end , we just felt that Amy is an enormously likable presence on screen , so as the season went on we just tried to create situations where that would shine through . " During the episode " Kaboom " , a major subplot was resolved when the large construction pit that Leslie had long sought to turn into a park was filled with dirt and turned into a lot . The pit was first established in the premiere episode and had been a focal point of the series since the show began . Schur said while the pit project was originally conceived as a device to bring all the characters together working toward a common goal , and it was expected to only become a park during the series finale . However , Schur said he felt the early episodes were too focused on the pit and had led viewers to believe the entire show was about filling the pit , which was not the writers ' intention , so they accelerated the resolution of that story arc . The idea of Ben and Chris , two state auditors who come in from outside Pawnee to help the town deal with budget problems , was conceived from news reports at the time of a number of states considering shutting down schools , parks and other services due to the global recession .

Poehler became pregnant during the latter half of the season , with her baby due in the summer or early fall of 2010 . The Parks and Recreation producers decided not to write the pregnancy into the show , so they decided to enter into a continuous production after the season ended to bank episodes for the third season . Six season three episodes were filmed in this fashion . However , in May 2010 , NBC announced the third season of Parks and Recreation was being moved to an undisclosed midseason premiere date to allow the network 's new comedy , Outsourced , to run in the Thursday two @-@ hour comedy schedule block . NBC chief executive officer Jeff Gaspin said this move was not a reflection on Parks and Recreation , and suggested the extended hiatus would not only have no effect on the show 's momentum , but could actually build anticipation for its eventual return . In November 2010 , it was announced Parks and Recreation would return to a 9 : 30 p.m. Thursday timeslot effective January 20 , 2011 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Reviews = = =

The first season of Parks and Recreation received mixed to negative reviews , with many critics deeming it too similar to The Office , which shared the same mock documentary style as Parks and Recreation . In particular , several commentators said the naive and well @-@ meaning Leslie Knope character too closely resembled The Office protagonist Michael Scott , a well @-@

intentioned but dimwitted protagonist manager of a paper company sales office . However , most critics declared the second season a vast improvement over the first , with some even claiming it had surpassed *The Office* and *30 Rock* as the best comedy of NBC 's Thursday line @-@ up . It was declared the best comedy of the television season by Entertainment Weekly writer Henning Fog and *The Star* @-@ Ledger television columnist Alan Sepinwall . Entertainment Weekly writer Michael Ausiello , who was critical of the first season , called it the " most improved " show of the season . Time magazine writer James Poniewozik included *Parks and Recreation* in his list of the 10 best television shows of 2009 , and IGN declared it the best comedy series of 2009 . Several reviewers called the second season one of the most impressive comebacks in television history .

Amy Poehler said the first season struggled in part due to extremely high expectations from comparisons to *The Office* . *Parks and Recreation* staff also felt part of the reason for the improvement was that the characters have become better developed , and viewers have come to like and care more about them . Likewise , Michael Schur believed much of the early criticism stemmed from the fact that audiences were not yet familiar with the characters , and he believed viewers liked the second season better because they had gotten to know the characters better as the series progressed . Commentators said the supporting cast was now working with better material and that Poehler 's character had improved and become less over @-@ the @-@ top and more human than in the first season , and more distinct from Michael Scott . Several reviewers praised the decision to drop season one subplots that risked becoming stale , like whether Andy and Ann would keep dating , and Leslie 's long @-@ standing crush on Mark . Others complimented the decision to fill in the pit during the second season , which they said freed the show up for more stories and better scripts . Despite the vast change in critical reception , *Parks and Recreation* staff said they felt only a few minor changes were made to the show itself . Michael Schur said , " I don 't think magical fairy dust was sprinkled over the show . I just think we 're getting better at it . " NBC officials compared the late rush of critical acclaim for *Parks and Recreation* to that of *The Office* , which received mixed reviews during its first season before most critics agreed it found its rhythm in the second season .

Nick Offerman received considerable praise for his performance as Ron Swanson during the second season . Many reviewers praised Offerman 's subtle and understated style of comedy , and said he was often the funniest part of the scenes he was in . Jonah Weiner of *Slate* magazine declared Swanson " *Parks and Recreation* 's secret weapon " and " vital to the show 's improvement " . Aziz Ansari , who was particularly acclaimed during the first season for his role as Tom Haverford , received similar praise in the second season as well . Many reviewers were critical of the pairing of Mark and Ann , feeling the couple lacked chemistry and were often the least funny parts of the individual episodes . Entertainment Weekly writer Margaret Lyons called Mark and Ann the show 's " Achilles ' heel " , and Sandra Gonzalez , also from Entertainment Weekly , wrote , " No matter what they do with these two , I can ? t help but be bored . "

== Ratings ==

Despite the critical success , the second season of *Parks and Recreation* continued to suffer in the Nielsen ratings . By December 2009 , the average episode viewership was 5 @.@ 3 million households . The average was lower than the other NBC comedy shows that aired Thursday night along with *Parks and Recreation* : *Community* drew an average 6 @.@ 5 million households , *30 Rock* an average 7 @.@ 3 million , and *The Office* an average 10 @.@ 1 million . By February 2010 , ratings had begun to improve all of NBC 's Thursday comedy shows , especially *Parks and Recreation* , but the network remained in fourth place among the major networks in Nielsen ratings . By the end of the season , the average viewership for the 24 episodes of season two was 4 @.@ 68 million , lower than season one 's average of 5 @.@ 45 million households .

== Awards ==

Amy Poehler was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a

Comedy Series . The episode " Telethon " , in which Leslie frantically stays awake for 36 hours to volunteer for a charity telethon , was her performance submitted for Emmy award consideration . This marked Poehler 's third Primetime Emmy nomination , having previously received twice for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series during her time on Saturday Night Live . Poehler ultimately lost to Edie Falco for her performance on the Showtime comedy series Nurse Jackie . Also that year , the Parks and Recreation theme song by Gaby Moreno and Vincent Jones was for the Emmy Award for Outstanding Main Title Theme Music , but the award again went to Nurse Jackie .

Parks and Recreation was also nominated for a Television Critics Association Award for Outstanding Achievement in Comedy , and Nick Offerman received a nomination for Individual Achievement in Comedy ; the awards ultimately were awarded , respectively , to the comedy series Modern Family and to Jane Lynch for her performance in the musical comedy @-@ drama Glee . The second season premiere episode , " Pawnee Zoo " , won the GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Individual Episode . It was nominated alongside the ABC drama series Private Practice , the NBC supernatural drama The Listener and the CW drama / horror series Supernatural in the category . Aubrey Plaza received a Best Supporting Actress in Television nomination from the Imagen Awards , which honors positive portrayals of Latinos in entertainment , but the award went to María Canals Barrera for her role in Wizards of Waverly Place : The Movie (2009) . Also in 2010 , Parks and Recreation received two nominations from Entertainment Weekly 's Ewwy Awards : one for Best Comedy Series , and one for Nick Offerman as Best Supporting Actor in a Comedy .