

Title:	Access to Recreation Policy
Number:	SRV-14-01
Approved By:	City Council
Administered By:	Recreation Services
Effective:	April 7, 2014
Revised:	April 23, 2019

1.0 Purpose & Objectives

The City of Oshawa recognizes and promotes the full participation of all Oshawa residents in recreational programs and services regardless of financial circumstances. Programs and services will be planned, delivered and evaluated to ensure they are affordable, inclusive and responsive to need. Recreation & Culture Services endeavours to provide quality programs and services that address healthy living, diversity, affordability and accessibility.

This policy will:

- Provide guidelines for the development of affordable programs and services;
- Establish a standardized and transparent procedure for the administration of financial assistance for recreational programs and services delivered by the City of Oshawa where user fees are unaffordable to a participant;
- Establish criteria for the review and approval of requests for financial assistance for recreation programs and services and delegating such authority to staff; and
- Identify the training needs of staff to assist in their administration of the Access to Recreation Policy and related procedures.

2.0 Scope

This policy extends to eligible programs and services directly delivered by the Recreation & Culture Services Branch.

What is not included:

- Fees for non-residents;
- Specialty recreation programs such as private and semi-private swimming lessons, membership add-ons, partnership programs (Sportball, etc.) and personal training/nutrition counseling; and
- Any programs not delivered directly by the City of Oshawa.

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3.0 Definitions

Recreation Program:

Activities of a recreation, sport, art or cultural nature that may be self-directed or instructional, providing skill development in a particular leisure pursuit. Programs may be introductory or specialty and are of an ongoing nature. User fees are charged to offset the costs associated with the provision of the activity.

Personal Benefit Services:

As defined in the Recreation & Culture Services User Fee Policy. Those services that the individual chooses to participate in and utilize programs and/or facilities provided by the City. Users of this service benefit directly and pay a certain amount for this service. Refers to recreational and membership services available through the purchase of memberships and pay-as-you-go activities including but not limited to Fitness, Aquatics, and Skating.

Community Benefit Services:

As defined in the Recreation & Culture Services User Fee Policy. Activities and community events provided at no cost or minimal cost either directly by the City or through partnerships/service agreements with an agency/program provider (example: Playground Program).

Financial Assistance:

Refers to an approved reduction in user fees charged by Recreation & Culture Services for participation in a program or service.

Targeted Outreach Programs:

Refers to specialized programs designed for a specific audience and/or geographic community in order to help engage residents or as a component of a broader community initiative (example: Active Kids for Life).

Low Income Cut Off (LICO):

Calculated annually by Stats Canada. LICO refers to income thresholds, determined by analyzing family composition and expenditure data, below which families will devote a larger share of income to the necessities of food, shelter and clothing than the average family would.

4.0 Service Planning for Affordable Recreation

All programs and services will meet community need. Annual program and service planning will incorporate census data relevant to a changing and diversifying community. Information will assist staff in the development and delivery of programs and services, community development strategies and agency/funding partnerships. A range of programs and services will be provided to the community directly by Recreation & Culture Services or through partnership agreements/contracted service agreements.

Staff will evaluate the development and continuation of programs and services using the following criteria:

- historical utilization;
- customer feedback;
- responsiveness to identified populations (low income, children, youth, seniors, inactive); and
- responsiveness to strategic priorities affordability and market trends.

Recreation programs and services are priced according to the Council approved General Fees and Charges By-law. User fees are targeted at a cost recovery threshold based on the Recreation & Culture User Fee Policy. Programs offered at a subsidized fee or at no cost to participate are traditionally personal benefit services, community benefit services or in some cases targeted outreach.

5.0 City of Oshawa Financial Assistance Programs

The City of Oshawa provides program subsidies to low income residents through the Access to Recreation Policy. Eligibility to receive subsidizations is based on financial need under one of the following categories.

1. Region of Durham Social Services

The City of Oshawa and the Regional Municipality of Durham, Social Services Department are working in partnership to offer Oshawa residents who are participants of Ontario Works the opportunity to participate in City recreation programs and services.

Services Rendered Voucher: Residents of Oshawa who are on fixed/low incomes, or members of the working poor are eligible to receive a 75% subsidy toward the purchase cost of any direct program offered by the Community Services Department. Eligibility for this program is managed through Durham Region Social Services. The subsidy breakdown is 50% (City of Oshawa), 25% (Durham Region Social Services) with the remaining 25% being covered by the individual applying for subsidization.

Recreation Services Certificate: Residents of Oshawa (individuals and families) are able to register for up to two group instructional programs per season, a youth room membership, or the choice of a youth/family 10-ticket leisure swim/skate admission pass redeemable at any recreation facility. During the summer program session, children are eligible to also register for up to two weeks of camp. Eligibility for this program is managed through Durham Region Social Services The subsidy breakdown is 50% (City of Oshawa) and 50% (Durham Region Social Services).

Childcare Subsidy Program: Residents of Oshawa who eligible for this program include parents/ guardians who must be: working, attending school, an Ontario Works (OW) recipient participating in an approved activity, identified with a recognized need or have a child with a recognized need. Fee subsidy may be provided for children attending a recreation program who are four years old and up to twelve years old (up to 18 years for children with diagnosed special needs). If approved by Durham Region Children's Services, subsidy applicants could receive up to 100% of their registration fees covered

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by the subsidy program. Durham Region applies a formula based on their income resulting in a subsidy that will vary from individual to individual. City of Oshawa recreation programs that meet the Operating Criteria for Recreation Programs, and therefore would be eligible for subsidization via the Childcare Subsidy Program, would be registrants in camps during school breaks (e.g. Summer Camp, March Break Camp and Christmas Camp). Durham Region Children's Services Division provides this child care fee assistance to eligible families in Durham Region. Ministry of Education legislation permits child care fee assistance under the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA).

2. Canadian Tire Jumpstart

Jumpstart, through Canadian Tire's Foundation for Families, is a program that enables children across Canada to receive funding for sports and recreational activities. The City of Oshawa provides the opportunity for residents to utilize this funding should they meet the eligibility requirements. The program is for children aged 4 to 17 years and the funding applies specifically to any programs that are sports-related and/or active.

Funding can be applied to recreation programs or personal benefit services. Jumpstart may approve funding up to \$600 per child per year. The subsidy breakdown is 75% (Jumpstart) with the remaining 25% being covered by the individual applying for subsidization. The criteria for eligibility is determined by the Low Income Cut Off (LICO) as determined each year by Statistics Canada.

Household family income must be below the LICO threshold or within 25% of the LICO threshold. Eligibility for this program is managed through Recreation & Culture Services.

3. Recreation Fee Assistance Program

This program applies to direct programs offered by Recreation & Culture Services and Level 1 and Level 2 memberships. For families whose annual income falls below the LICO threshold, this program will provide a subsidy of 50% of the participant's program or membership fee. For families with household incomes 25% above LICO, this program will provide a subsidy of 35% of the participant's program fee or membership fee. Families with household incomes below and 25% above the LICO threshold will be eligible for a subsidy to a maximum of \$150 per person, per individual program session or equivalent subsidy in memberships.

The subsidies will be applicable to all general recreation programs, regardless of the type, or a recreation membership (Level 1 or Level 2 only). Certain partnership and specialty courses will not be applicable to this subsidy, consistent with the current procedures for the Durham Region Social Services subsidy programs. Eligibility for this program is managed through Recreation & Culture Services.

4. Oshawa Residents 65+

Oshawa residents 65 years of age qualify for savings to recreation facilities and programs. Memberships are issued at a reduced cost and a 35% discount is applied to all instructional adult programs. Eligibility for this program is managed through Recreation & Culture Services.

5. Recreation Access Membership Program (RAMP)

This program is aimed at encouraging the accessibility of recreation facilities and programs. Oshawa residents with a permanent disability are eligible. RAMP members receive a free Level 1 membership, 35% discount on a Level 2 membership and a 35% discount on registration for all instructional programs. Eligibility for this program is managed through Recreation & Culture Services.

6.0 Program Guidelines:

1. Application Process and Approval

Approval for the Durham Region Social programs is the responsibility of Durham Region Social Services and/ or Children's Services.

Residents interested in participating in JumpStart or the Recreation Fee Assistance Program are required to complete an application for subsidy.

The Supervisor, Recreation Programs will consult with the applicant, and determine eligibility by comparing the client's Notice of Assessment against the LICO thresholds. The Supervisor, Recreation Programs will approve all applications on an individual basis for JumpStart and the Recreation Fee Assistance Program.

Eligibility for subsidization is good for one year from the date of approval. After one year, individuals need to re-submit an application with attachments in order to be considered for further subsidization.

The Oshawa Residents 65+ and RAMP memberships are approved directly by Recreation Information Clerks with appropriate documentation.

The Director of Recreation & Culture Services and/or designate has the authority to review, approve and decline requests. In exceptional situations, the Director of Recreation & Culture Services may approve the waiving of the full fee.

2. Partnerships:

The City will directly deliver programs, seek out, and maintain partnerships with community agencies to deliver partnership programs in order to retain and enhance community benefit services primarily for children, youth and families.

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3. Communication:

The availability of financial assistance will be communicated to residents via the Recreation & Culture Services Leisure Guide and the City's website. Specific procedures developed for staff set out the process residents and staff will follow to request, review, approve or decline a request for financial assistance in a manner which is fair and equitable. The process of obtaining financial assistance will be non- intrusive, eliminate stigma and respect a person's dignity and confidentiality.

4. Staff Training:

Staff will receive comprehensive annual training on the administration of the Access to Recreation Policy and programs.

7.0 Monitoring & Evaluation

Recreation & Culture Services staff will measure the utilization of financial assistance programs annually. Staff will also review and monitor the Access to Recreation Policy on a regular basis.