

FEE WAIVER/REDUCTION POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of the City of Hamilton's Fee Waiver/Reduction Policy is to provide financial assistance, in the form of a fee waiver or reductions for recreation facility and park rentals in those cases where imposition of a fee would create a financial hardship.

DEFINITIONS

Facility

Means a recreation facility operated by the City of Hamilton where the fees charged and permit issued for its use are administered by the Recreation Division.

Park

Means a park operated by the City of Hamilton where the fees charged and permit issued for its use are administered by the Recreation Division.

Affiliated

Means a sport or recreation organization that is formally affiliated with the City of Hamilton as per the Recreation Division's "*Affiliation Policy for Hamilton Minor Sports Organizations*".

Community Group

Means a non-profit group or corporation that is active in a community for a sport and leisure purpose, or that generally operates for the betterment of the community (e.g. minor sport organization, neighborhood association, service club, special interest club). This definition is distinct and different than that of "Commercial Group".

Commercial Group

Means a for-profit group or corporation that operates an event or business for the purposes of making a profit. This definition is distinct and is different than that of "Community Group".

GENERAL

- Fees will not be waived for an applicant that has an overdue amount owing to the City.
- Fees will not normally be waived on a retroactive basis, e.g., after an event has occurred.
- If the organization is a recipient of a grant through the Community Partnership Program (CPP), the purpose of which is to cover the cost of recreation facility or park rental fees, then no fee waiver will be considered.
- All applicants must comply with any and all insurance requirements and associated costs. Insurance fees are ineligible for fee waivers.
- Meeting all of the criteria does not guarantee that a rental fee will be waived.

- Only the Divisional Director of Recreation has the authority to approve a fee waiver under the provisions of the policy.

ELIGIBILITY

Groups

- Affiliated not-for-profit sport and recreation associations, not-for-profit arts and culture groups
- Community groups

Activities

- One-time activity or event where the imposition of a fee would create financial hardship to the organization or group.

NON-ELIGIBILITY

Groups

- Commercial groups
- Non-residents
- Individuals
- College & University Athletics (Varsity & Intramural)

Activities

- Sequential activities (daily, weekly, monthly,) such as seminars, courses, clinics, programs etc.
- Annual (or sequential) fundraising activities and events.
- Any activity where it cannot be demonstrated that the imposition of a fee will cause a financial hardship to the group applying for a fee waiver or reduction.

Examples:

- Requests for relief from facility permit fees for sequential use of arenas, meeting rooms, playing fields, surfaces and gymnasiums (e.g. regular league play).
- Sequential meetings (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.).
- Requests for fee waivers or reductions where the City has already offset the cost of those fees through some other means or funding mechanism (i.e. CPP Grant).
- Requests for relief which do not otherwise meet above eligibility criteria.

FEE WAIVER AMOUNTS

Eligible groups and activities may be entitled to a 100% Fee Waiver (or part thereof) based on the merit of the activity, if they are able to demonstrate financial hardship.

PROCEDURE

1. All eligible groups must complete a Fee Waiver Request Application Form, outlining the purpose of the activity and related organizational information and applicable information supporting a claim of financial hardship.

2. The Application Form must be submitted a minimum of four weeks prior to the date requested, to the Recreation Division – Facility Booking Section in order to ensure timely processing. *Application forms received after this time will be processed however, groups must assume responsibility for any consequences associated with delays in the confirmation/administration process.*
3. The Sport Development Administrative Clerks will first confirm that the facility is available on the date(s) and time(s) requested.
4. If the required facility (or suitable alternative) is available, the Application Form will be forwarded to the Divisional Director of Recreation for review and decision on approval.
5. Eligible groups will be notified by Sport Development Administrative Clerks, within two weeks from the time that availability of the requested facility (or suitable alternative) has been confirmed.
6. Sport Development Administrative Clerks will process a facility permit inclusive of any partial fees (if applicable).
7. The group or organization remains responsible for any/all terms & conditions outlined in the use of City facilities, including retrieving their permit in advance and having it present throughout the duration of their use.
8. Sport Development Administrative Clerks will credit facility accounts with the appropriate balance of revenues owing, from the City's fee waiver account.

EVALUATION & REPORTING

Staff will report to Council on an annual basis, as part of the Operating Budget Process, with a detailed account of the total numbers of fee waiver granted by group and related cost.

APPEALS

Any group who has been denied a fee waiver within the Divisional Director of Recreation's authority to approve under the policy may appeal the decision to the General Manager of Community & Emergency Services. If the fee waiver has been denied by the General Manager, the group may appear before Council (Emergency and Community Services Committee) to present their rationale for receiving a fee waiver.

Groups wishing to appear before Council must contact the City Clerk to register as a delegation.