

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, or where the waiving of a fee would result in a partnership with direct benefits or enhanced service for a community.

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.

Minor Youth Sport Organizations

Youth sport organizations that have fulfilled requirements to demonstrate commitment to high quality sport programs in Hamilton, as defined under the Recreation Division's "*Affiliation Policy for Hamilton Minor Sports Organizations*".

Community Group

Means a non-profit group or organization that is active in a community for a sport and leisure purpose and that operates for the betterment of the community (e.g. neighborhood association, service club, special interest club, arts/culture groups, publicly funded school associated groups not recognized by the reciprocal agreement).

Commercial Group

Means a for-profit group or organization that operates an event or business for the purposes of making a profit.

GENERAL

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

- Rental requests outside of normal operating facility hours that have associated staffing costs will be required to pay applicable extra fees to recover costs incurred.
- Only the Divisional Director of Recreation has the authority to approve a fee waiver/reduction under the provisions of the policy.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Groups

- Minor Youth Sport Organizations
- Community Groups

Non Eligible Groups

- Commercial Groups
- Non-residents
- Individuals

Eligible Activities:

1. One Time Events with No Required User Fees

For example:

- Annual General Meetings (sport, recreation, arts, and culture groups only)
- Annual affiliate sport or program registrations
- Classroom education/training specifically designed to improve skills of volunteers, recreation professionals, coaches and/or trainers.
- One time festivals or fairs that have a value to the local community

2. Ongoing Programs and Services

Programs or services over a number of weeks offered by eligible groups that meet the following criteria:

- Programs and services are open to the entire community
- Program and services are recreation, fitness, or social in nature
- Programs and services have a direct benefit to local community and meet neighbourhood priorities
- The program or service is free, or is priced below comparable market rates with a mechanism to allow subsidized access if users cannot afford
- Programs or service does not duplicate a program already being offered, either from the City of Hamilton or another organization
- Programs and services are aligned with a governing body and/or can demonstrate a commitment to relevant best practices and standards required for City programs
- Programs and services are sustainable with appropriate governance and oversight

3. Service Clubs and Association Meetings

Service clubs requiring meeting space who meets the following conditions:

- Club or association is open to entire community
- Programs and services that have a direct benefit to local community and meet neighbourhood priorities
- No cost to participate in the club or association
- Group has exhausted all other suitable options for a meeting location

Non Eligible Activities

- Fundraising activities or events
- Activities or uses which are prohibited in the facility requested

FEE WAIVER/REDUCTION AMOUNTS

Eligible groups engaged in eligible activities may be entitled to a 100% Fee Waiver or part thereof, up to a maximum of \$10,000.00 per request based on the merit of the activity and their ability to demonstrate financial hardship.

PROCEDURE

1. All eligible groups must complete a Fee Waiver/Reduction 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 facility requesting. *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. Facility Manager will endorse that the activity meets the conditions for a fee waiver and is of merit to their facility and community. Availability of the space will be confirmed with booking staff.
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 the booking staff, within two weeks from the time that availability of the requested facility (or suitable alternative) has been confirmed.
6. Booking staff will process a facility permit inclusive of any partial fees or extra 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, providing appropriate insurance, and having it present throughout the duration of their use.

EVALUATION & REPORTING

Staff will report as part of the Operating Budget Process, with a detailed account of the total numbers of fee waiver/reduction granted.

APPEALS

Any group who has been denied a fee waiver/reduction 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.

Any group may request to appear before Council (Emergency and Community Services Committee) as a delegation via contacting the City Clerk to also request a fee waiver/reduction.

This policy recognizes that Council reserves the right at any time to motion the waiver or reduction of fees.