

Recreation Access Program Policy

Policy Statement

The City of Hamilton will provide financial assistance to families and children in order for them to have equal opportunity to participate in recreation programs and organized sport activities.

Purpose

The purpose of the Recreation Access Program Policy is to provide fee assistance that is fair, equitable, and easy to access for low-income children and families.

The Community Services Department understands the benefits to children and families that are derived from recreational and sport opportunities. The Department also recognizes the ability to participate in registered program or organized sport opportunities can be difficult, or limited for families with low-income.

The foundation for the program is based on the values of dignity and respect, health and wellness, social inclusion and quality of life. Building on these values, the “Recreation Access Strategy” will create an environment of cooperation and inclusiveness to help create recreation opportunities for families and children at every experience.

The Recreation Access Program Policy will provide opportunities and improve supports to increase participation in recreation and organized sport. As the same time, the Program will ensure the information is clear and easily understood.

Goals

The goals of the Recreation Access Program Policy are as follows:

1. To provide a simple application process for families requesting fee assistance.
2. To allow options for the utilization of assistance.

Definitions

The definitions pertaining to this program are as follows:

Low Income Cut Off (LICO)

Low Income Cut Off's, based on Urban Area population over 500,000 are cross referenced with the total number of persons in a household. LICO's are set by Statistics Canada to indicate where families spend 20% or more of their income than the Canadian average on food, shelter and clothing.

Low Income Cut Off (after tax) for Urban Area population of greater than 500,000

Number in Household	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Household Income	\$18,373	\$22,361	\$27,844	\$34,738	\$39,556	\$43,869	\$48,181

Eligibility

To be eligible for fee assistance families must:

1. Be in receipt of Ontario Works and have a photo copy of a monthly Drug Benefit card

or

Be in receipt of the Ontario Disability Support Program and have a photo copy of a monthly Drug Benefit card.

or

Have a combined total family income less than the LICO and submit a previous year's income tax return (Notice of Assessment) for all income sources.

2. Provide proof of City of Hamilton residency by attaching a copy of a property tax bill, utility bill, driver's license or similar documentation with the applicant's address on it.
3. Reapply annually.

What does the Recreation Access Program Policy provide?

Fee assistance for children and families with income below Low Income Cut Off (LICO) levels based on the following credits per child per year:

- Free Family Pass to the local Recreation Centre.
- 90% subsidy to a maximum of \$150.00 per child per year for City operated recreation programs.
- 50% off the registration fee to an upset limit of \$100.00 per children towards the registration costs for a minor affiliate sport organization that use City of Hamilton facilities (e.g. minor hockey, baseball, soccer, basketball, lacrosse, football and figure skating). The sport organization must be an approved minor sport affiliate based on the City of Hamilton Affiliation Policy.
- Access for one year (after family pass expires, families will be required to re-apply to the Recreation Access Program Policy).
- 65% subsidy to a maximum of 3 weeks per child for City operated Camp Kidaca.

- 50% off Waterfit Pass for Adults and Seniors without dependents.
- 75% off Participation Pass for Adults and Seniors without dependents.

Process

1. Everyone must complete an application.
2. Applications are available at:
 - Any City of Hamilton Recreation Centre
 - On-line at www.hamilton.ca/rec
 - or can be mailed by calling 905.546.3747
3. All applications dropped off at recreation centres will be forwarded through inter-office mail in a CONFIDENTIAL envelope to the Subsidy Coordinator.
4. Applicants will be informed if information is missing.
5. Using the LICO formula, staff will assess eligibility.
6. A letter of correspondence will be prepared and mailed to the family informing them of the fee assistance approval, their CLASS registration information along with their family pass.
7. Families wishing to participate in an organized sport activity will need to contact the Subsidy Coordinator to complete the application process.

Associate Policies and Procedures

This program is not meant to negate any other divisional policy or procedures. The Recreation Access Program is compatible with the CLASS Registration procedures.