



To: Community Services Committee

From: Ron Diskey, Commissioner,  
Community Services Department

Report Number: CS-19-49

Date of Report: April 2, 2019

Date of Meeting: April 23, 2019

Subject: Update to Access to Recreation Policy

File: F-3100

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## 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on recreation financial assistance and subsidy programs and to obtain approval for updating the City of Oshawa Access to Recreation Policy.

Attachment 1 - Updated Access to Recreation Policy

Attachment 2 – Summary of Utilization Rates for Subsidies

Attachment 3 – Low-Income Cut Off (LICO) for Communities between 100,000 and 499,999 inhabitants - 2017

## 2.0 Recommendation

That the Community Services Committee recommend to City Council:

1. The updated City of Oshawa Access to Recreation Policy be approved and;
2. That the City implement next steps to administer a new childcare subsidy program in collaboration with Durham Region and;
3. That the Commissioner, Community Services be authorized to enter into an agreement with Durham Region to administer the childcare subsidy program, in a form and content satisfactory to the City Solicitor and Commissioner of Finance.

## 3.0 Executive Summary

At its meeting of April 7, 2014, City Council received and approved Report CS-14-51: Advancing Affordable Access to Recreation in Durham (AAARD). The AAARD Charter was signed by all Durham municipalities and recreation service providers in Durham on June 4, 2014.

At its meeting of June 19, 2014, City Council received and approved Report CS-14-123, that the Access to Recreation Policy be approved and that funding be associated to establish the new Recreation Fee Assistance Program.

The City of Oshawa currently provides a number of subsidy programs to residents to encourage and support access to Recreation & Culture Services programs including Services Rendered Voucher Program and Services Rendered Certificate Program (through Durham Region Social Services); JumpStart (through Canadian Tire Children's Foundation); Oshawa Residents 65+; Recreation Fee Assistance Program and RAMP.

In early 2019, City staff met with Durham Region Social Services on its Childcare Subsidy Program under the Durham Region's Operating Criteria (DROC) for Recreation programs which provides child care fee assistance to eligible families in Durham region. Durham Region Children's Services has changed the subsidy criteria and have now opened its Childcare Subsidy program to other municipalities enabling the City of Oshawa eligible to access this subsidy program.

City staff are recommending that this Childcare Subsidy be added to the City's subsidy program offerings in order to increase access to affordable recreation to low-income families in Oshawa.

#### **4.0 Input From Other Sources**

Durham Region – Children's Services

Finance Services

#### **5.0 Analysis**

##### **5.1 Overview of Current Subsidy Programs**

The City of Oshawa currently provides a number of subsidy programs to residents to encourage and support access to Recreation & Culture Services programs including Services Rendered Voucher Program and Services Rendered Certificate Program (through Durham Region Social Services); JumpStart (through Canadian Tire Children's Foundation); Oshawa Residents 65+; Recreation Fee Assistance Program and RAMP.

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. 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).

JumpStart: Through Canadian Tire's Foundation for Families, the JumpStart 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.

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.

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.

Recreation Fee Assistance Program: This program is aimed to meet the needs of low-income families residing in Oshawa and wanting to register in non-active programs. 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.

## **5.2 Summary of Utilization Rates for Subsidies**

In recent years, there has been a steady increase of individuals accessing financial assistance through subsidy programs offered by, and through, the City of Oshawa for recreation programs and services.

In 2018, a total of 4405 individuals accessed programs and services at City of Oshawa recreation facilities through subsidy programs. The total amount of subsidy for individuals accessing these programs amounts to \$618,760.47. This represents a 7% increase from 2017, where 4098 individuals accessed subsidy programs amounting to a total of \$560,179.02. (See attachment 2 for Summary of Utilization Rates for Subsidies)

## **5.3 Updates to Access to Recreation Policy: Overview of the Durham Region Childcare Subsidy and Change to Recreation Services Certificate**

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).

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).

To be deemed eligible, parents/ guardians 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.

If approved by Durham Region Children's Services, subsidy applicants could receive up to 100% of their registration fees covered 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).

The Operating Criteria for Recreation Programs outlines the responsibilities of the municipality which include entering into an agreement with Durham Region Children's Services, demonstrating policy and/ or procedure activities that align with record keeping, vulnerable sector screening, staffing, supervision, sanitation, safety and programming. Recreation and Culture Services procedures and framework for its camp programs align with and address these criteria.

City staff are recommending that this new program be adopted and the updated Access to Recreation Policy (Attachment 1) reflects this change.

The updated Access to Recreation Policy also includes the update to the Recreation Services Certificate (Attachment 1). In addition to the definition and provisions in section

5.1 of this report, this subsidy also will now allow for subsidy coverage during the summer program session. During the summer program session, children are able to also register for up to two weeks of camp. The subsidy breakdown continues to be 50% (City of Oshawa) and 50% (Durham Regional Social Services).

#### **5.4 Implementation of the new Durham Region Childcare subsidy**

Upon approval of this report and updated Access to Recreation Policy, Recreation and Culture Services staff will contact Durham Region Social Services and begin the administration of the program. It is anticipated that this subsidy will be in place starting in 2019 for residents who wish to attend summer camps.

### **6.0 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications to this report. All costs associated to supporting the administration of the new Durham Region Childcare subsidy can be managed in the 2019 Recreation and Culture Services operating budget.

### **7.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan**

This report addresses the Oshawa Strategic Plan by responding to the goal of “Social Equity,” and the following two themes. First, the theme of “An Active, Healthy and Safe Community” which addresses the strategy and commitment to “advance quality and affordable recreation opportunities to ensure significant and active use of public spaces, both indoor and outdoor”. Secondly, the theme to “Enrich Our Community Through Diversity” which addresses the strategies to “Evolve inclusive City programs, services and facilities to further responds to the growing needs of a diverse population, continue to strive to be a barrier-free community, continue to engage citizens of all ages”.



Jim Naumovski, Director,  
Recreation and Culture Services



Ron Diskey, Commissioner,  
Community Services Department

## **Access to Recreation Policy**

### **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.

### **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.

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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 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.

## **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.

Program	2016 Participants	2017 Participants	2018 Participants	% Change 2018 to 2017	2016 Subsidization	2017 Subsidization	2018 Subsidization	% Change 2018 to 2017
Durham Region Social Services Voucher	11	2	0	100% decrease	\$211.26	\$48.26	\$0.00	100% decrease
Durham Region Social Services Certificate - Region Portion				11.6% decrease	\$64,323.00*	\$111,942.99*	\$96,301.57*	14% decrease
Durham Region Social Services Certificate – City portion	631	947	837		\$37,771.00	\$77,704.88	\$87,659.07	12.8% increase
Canadian Tire Jumpstart	124	202	267	32.2% increase	\$17,748.00	\$37,000.31	\$47,698.83	28.9% increase
RAMP (Recreation Access Membership Program)	881	963	1121	16.4% increase	\$131,328.27	\$145,497.06	\$174,424.84	19.9% increase
RFAP (Recreation Fee Assistance Membership Program)	160	182	275	51.1% increase	\$9,175.00	\$15,462.58	\$21,289.43	37.7% increase
Oshawa Resident 65+	1739	1802	1905	5.7% increase	\$151,834.60	\$172,522.94	\$191,386.73	10.9% increase
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3546</b>	<b>4098</b>	<b>4405</b>		<b>\$412,391.13</b>	<b>\$560,179.02</b>	<b>\$618,760.47</b>	

\*Please note – Although the Durham Region Social Services Certificate is broken into a 50% / 50 % between Durham Region and City of Oshawa at times Durham Region has additional funding to cover 100% of costs associated to camp extended supervision, additional summer camp registrations, and allowing non-Oshawa residents to take programs in Oshawa (due to their home municipality not offering the program). In these cases Durham Region is covering 100% of the subsidy.

**Item: CS-19-49**  
**Attachment 3**

**Low-Income Cut Off (LICO)**

Communities Between 100,000 and 499,999 Inhabitants – 2017

Size of Family Unit	Low Income Cut Off (LICO)	25% Above LICO
1 Person	\$21,822	\$27,278
2 Persons	\$27,165	\$33,956
3 Persons	\$33,396	\$41,745
4 Persons	\$40,548	\$50,685
5 Persons	\$45,988	\$57,485
6 Persons	\$51,868	\$64,835
7 or More Persons	\$57,747	\$72,184

Source: Statistics Canada

A Notice of Assessment issued by the Canada Revenue Agency is required to validate total household income. Refer to Line 150 on the individual's Notice of Assessment for the total income for 2018.