

PUBLIC SERVICES POLICY



POLICY	Fee Assistance in Recreation (FAIR) Pilot Program
CATEGORY	Departmental
AUTHORITY	Public Services
RELATED POLICIES	
APPROVED BY	Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Public Services
EFFECTIVE DATE	
REVISION DATE	

POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Guelph provides residents and visitors with access to recreational, social and fitness opportunities through its recreation centres and programs. The City of Guelph also recognizes that residents living in a low income household have specific financial challenges that can reduce their access to recreation programming and activities. The Fee Assistance in Recreation (FAIR) Program is designed to minimize these barriers by offering eligible adults and seniors the option of purchasing recreation and fitness passes, programs, memberships and activities at more affordable rates.

The City of Guelph maintains an agreement with the Children’s Foundation of Guelph and Wellington County to provide financial support for children’s recreation programs and activities through the Free to Play program. FAIR provides a similar opportunity to adults and seniors interested in participating in City of Guelph recreation programs and activities.

PURPOSE

Overall Program Outcome Goals

The FAIR policy better enables adults and seniors residing within the City of Guelph who are living in a low income household to access recreation programs, passes, memberships and activities at a more affordable, discounted rate. The outcomes of the FAIR Program are:

- Enabling more residents who are living in a low income household, to purchase recreation and fitness passes and memberships and participate in recreation programs and activities
- Making a positive impact on the lives of residents living in a low income household, for whom recreation and fitness activities are far too often not an option when faced with a limited income and budget to cover basic needs such as food, clothing, transportation, child care and shelter
- Improving program participant’s perceptions of overall wellbeing, and improving wellbeing through increased opportunities to participate in their communities in ways such as; accessing educational, fitness, recreational, sporting and cultural opportunities; and maintaining connections to family friends, and the community.

Operational Program Goals

The program policy and procedures will:

- Provide a clear understanding of the program rules
- Ensure that the program is administered in a way that is citizen-centered, inclusive and respectful
- Effectively meet the overall program outcome goals
- Be consistent, transparent and equitable to all recreation participants
- Support access to recreation for eligible residents.

DEFINITIONS

“Access”

The program is easily available to eligible residents. Barriers are addressed as they are identified.

“City”

The Corporation of the City of Guelph.

“Citizen centered”

Staff considers and incorporates residents’ needs and concerns when designing and delivering the program. This process ensures that the program caters to the specific needs of program participants.

“Dependant”

A person living in the same household who relies on another member of the household for financial support. Generally this includes; a biological or adopted child or grandchild, a parent or grandparent

“Family income”

The combined annual income earned by a household before-tax.

“Household”

One or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption.

“Low income”

A combined household annual income that is lower than the Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-Off (LICO). Staff will update the Low Income Cut-Off on an annual basis as it is made available to the public, usually during the month of June each year.

“Program Participant”

An eligible resident who has applied to and been accepted onto the FAIR Program.

“Recreation Program”

All classes, courses, passes, memberships and activities available to adults and seniors and offered by either the City of Guelph Recreation Services Division or the Guelph Wellington Seniors Association.

“Resident”

All persons who reside (live) within Guelph City limits.

“Transparent”

Stakeholders and residents can clearly see how and why decisions are made.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Community Investment staff is responsible for:

- The ongoing development and improvement of the FAIR program, policy and supporting procedures
- The design and delivery of appropriate administrative practices associated with the
 - FAIR application and approval processes
 - The development and training of staff involved in administration, customer service and pass sales
 - Development and reporting of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the program
 - Development of appropriate communications materials to support the program application, outreach and communication
 - Maintaining relationships with relevant support agencies to ensure potentially eligible residents are aware of and can easily access the program
 - Reconciliation and monitoring of budget, accounts and program donations
 - Organizing activities to raise support and funding for the program

Recreation staff is responsible for:

- Providing input into the development and improvement of the FAIR Program including policy and supporting procedures
- Processing sales of FAIR subsidized programs, memberships, passes and activities at City locations
- Providing support to fund raising activities

ServiceGuelph staff is responsible for:

- Providing input into the development and improvement of the FAIR Program including policy and supporting procedures
- Processing sales of FAIR subsidized programs, memberships, passes and activities at City locations

1. THE FAIR PROGRAM

The FAIR Program enables eligible Guelph residents living in a low income household to access City of Guelph Recreation Programs at a discounted rate. The program supports improved access to public recreation for those experiencing financial barriers. Community Investment will administer the program, with the support of Recreation Services.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

- Eligible FAIR applicants will receive a discount up to 80% off the cost of City of Guelph Recreation Programs up to an annual maximum of \$250 per calendar year per person
- FAIR approval does not allow individuals to pre-register or register in advance
- FAIR approval does not guarantee program availability
- FAIR approval is only valid for the approved program and session
- Must have FAIR application completed and approved prior to program registration, refunds will not be issued for funding requests received following a registration or purchase
- Incomplete or inadequate documentation of the inability to prove address documentation will disqualify funding request

3. EXCLUSIONS

- Facility Rentals
- Neighbourhood Group and Association Programs
- FAIR funding is not available for programs or activities offered by organizations other than the City of Guelph and the Guelph Wellington Seniors Association
- FAIR approval only applies to the registration fee. It does not include manuals or other items required for the course.

4. ELIGIBILITY

To access the program, applicants must satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

- Be a resident of the City of Guelph
- Be eighteen years of age and older
- Have an annual combined family income at or below the Statistics Canada before-tax Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) table for their family size. The LICO table is updated every year and can be found in Appendix A.
- Have not exceeded the maximum allowable funding amount for the current calendar year.

5. WAITLISTS

Requests are granted on a first come first served basis. Once all available funds for the current year have been used, a waitlist will be created. The waitlist will also be based on a first come first served basis.

Approved applicants are allowed until the end of the pilot program on December 31st, 2018 to redeem their FAIR funding, or until all available funds for the current year have been used. Any funding that has not been redeemed by the end of the pilot program on December 31st, 2018 will no longer be available for use by the applicant.

If funds become available and a program is still admitting new participants, applicants on the waitlist will be contacted by Community Investment staff.

6. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

Applicants must submit the required documentation along with their completed application form to verify their income.

Current photocopies of the following documentation are acceptable for **single adults** applying to the program:

- **Canada Revenue Agency** Personal Income Tax **Notice of Assessment** including address portion. This is not a copy of the personal income tax return. Note: If an applicant cannot submit a copy of their Notice of Assessment, they are encouraged to contact Canada Revenue Agency to request a copy of their "Form C", OR;
- **Canada Revenue Agency** Canada Child Benefit notice (CCB) including address portion. OR;
- **Canada Revenue Agency** Ontario Trillium Benefit notice (OTB) including address portion. OR;
- **Canada Revenue Agency** GST/HST Credit notice including address portion. OR;
- **Ontario Works** Statement of Deposit including address portion, OR;
- **Ontario Works** confirmation of eligibility letter provided by Ontario Works caseworker, OR;
- **Ontario Disability Support Program** Statement of Deposit including address portion, OR;
- **Ontario Disability Support Program** confirmation of eligibility letter provided by Ontario Disability Support Program caseworker.

Current photocopies of the following documentation are acceptable for **families** applying to the program:

- **Canada Revenue Agency** Canada Child Benefit notice (CCB) including address portion. OR;
- **Canada Revenue Agency** Ontario Trillium Benefit notice (OTB) including address portion. OR;
- **Canada Revenue Agency** GST/HST Credit notice including address portion. OR;
- **Ontario Works** confirmation of eligibility letter provided by Ontario Works caseworker, OR;
- **Ontario Disability Support Program** confirmation of eligibility letter provided by Ontario Disability Support Program caseworker.

All applicants must be residents of the City of Guelph. If the applicant cannot provide acceptable documentation which includes a Guelph address, additional documentation will be required to support an application.

The following forms of documentation are acceptable as proof of residency within the City of Guelph:

- Lease or rental agreement, OR;
- Utility or phone bill, OR;
- Driver's License or Ontario Photo Card.

Recent immigrants to Canada that do not have the required documentation to support their application can submit a formal Statutory Declaration of Income from Guelph-Wellington Immigrant Services.

7. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

When an eligible resident becomes a program participant, they must abide by the following Fee Assistance in Recreation conditions of use.

- Purchased passes, memberships, programs and activities are only for use by the registered program participant to whom the pass has been issued. Passes cannot be sold, transferred, traded, given away or shared with anyone else.
- Lost or stolen passes can be replaced for an administration fee consistent with the fee for all lost or stolen passes issued by Recreation Services.

Responsibility for informing the City of Guelph of changes to financial, residency or other circumstances pertaining to the Fee Assistance in Recreation (FAIR) application and eligibility is the responsibility of the program participant. The program participant must notify the City of changes within thirty (30) days of the change taking effect. If the program participant fails to inform the City of these changes, the City reserves the right to terminate eligibility for the program.

The City reserves the right to terminate the eligibility of a participant if they are found in breach of the policy.

8. ACCESSIBILITY

The City of Guelph adheres to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and plans its programs, such as the Fee Assistance in Recreation program, with accessibility in mind.

To provide feedback related to accessibility, to learn more about accessible City services, to request program information in an accessible format, or for more information about the AODA, contact the Accessibility Services Coordinator at 519-822-1260 extension: 2670

9. POLICY REVIEW

Public Services staff will review the Fee Assistance in Recreation Policy on an annual basis, or more often should the need arise.

10. PROGRAM MONITORING AND REPORTING

Summary annual program results will be reported in Service Area annual reports.

11. COLLECTION AND USE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Personal information is being collected and will be used to qualify applicants for City of Guelph subsidy programs. This information will be shared with City staff who require it for their work as part of providing and evaluating City of Guelph subsidy programs. As appropriate, limited personal information (excluding medical or financial information) may be shared with collaborating agencies, including but not limited to: Ontario Works and Community Living (a complete list of collaborating agencies is provided under Schedule "A" to the Fee Assistance in Recreation Program Policy).

Personal information is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001, and in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). For questions regarding the Fee Assistance in Recreation Program, or to obtain a complete list of collaborating agencies, please contact Community Investment by phone at (519) 837-5618 or by email at community@guelph.ca.

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For questions regarding the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information please contact the City of Guelph's Information and Access Coordinator by phone at (519) 822-1260 ext. 2349 or by email at privacy@guelph.ca.