

# Corporate Policy and Procedure



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Supersedes 2009 04 08

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TAB: COMMUNITY SERVICES  
SECTION: RECREATION  
SUBJECT: FEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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**POLICY STATEMENT** The City of Mississauga's Fee Assistance Program will enable many residents living in low-income households to register and participate in structured, quality recreation activities by offering user fee credit subsidies.

**PURPOSE** User fee subsidies will extend the benefits of municipal recreation programs to an increased number of children, youth, families and older adults who live in low-income conditions and are therefore less likely to afford current user fees.

**SCOPE** The Fee Assistance Program (FAP) is based on the economic need of individuals and families. Participation in the program is capped at 8,000 low-income individuals who are residents of Mississauga.

Post secondary students who are enrolled full time in a college or university are not eligible, as these institutions provide affordable recreation options.

Mississauga residents who participate in the FAP will not be eligible to benefit from the Jerry Love Fund during their FAP enrolment period.

This policy does not apply to Mississauga Library programs or memberships. For information on these programs and memberships, contact the Mississauga Library.

## LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Verification of income is required in order to confirm eligibility

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to the FAP. The procedures for gathering and recording income level and net individual/family income information outlined in this policy comply with all applicable legislation, including the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA). For additional information on MFIPPA refer to Corporate Policy and Procedure, Records Management, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy.

The City of Mississauga, as authorized by the *Municipal Act, 2001*, establishes an annual by-law to impose, waive, reduce or otherwise vary a recreation program fee or charge.

## DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy:

- “CLASS” means the central registration software system used by the City of Mississauga’s Recreation and Parks Department to administer user accounts.
- “Family” means the applicant, his/her spouse or common-law partner and all legal dependants.
- “Family Net Income”, as defined by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), means the total of the applicant’s net income and his/her spouse’s or common law partner’s net income.
- “Low Income Cut-Off (LICO)” means a measure of poverty calculated by Statistics Canada using an annual survey of incomes, and defines a set of after tax (net) income levels below which individuals are considered to be living under the poverty line. Cut-off levels vary with the number of family members and are adjusted periodically for inflation.

## ADMINISTRATION

FAP is administered by the Community Services Department, Recreation and Parks Division, via the Customer Service Centre (CSC). All FAP credit subsidies will be tracked using the CLASS system. Recreation and Parks staff will undertake

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compliance auditing and produce ongoing reports to ensure strict management of the program.

## OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM

The FAP is a municipally supported financial assistance program available to those with incomes below LICO levels. The most recent LICO rates available at the time of registration will be used to determine eligibility. The CSC Manager will be responsible to monitor Statistics Canada LICO adjustments and communicate them to staff, including clear effective dates.

The Region of Peel will collaborate with Community Services staff by promoting the FAP to residents who have been identified as low-income. Information will also be available to residents of Mississauga in a variety of Recreation and Parks marketing material.

### Enrolment

Enrolment in the program is capped at a maximum of 8,000 participants, who will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Each eligible FAP participant will be enrolled for a period of one year and receive an annual subsidy of \$275, in the form of an account credit, that can be applied to Mississauga Recreation and Parks registered programs, non-transferable memberships, and/or activity passes. FAP participants have the option to either use their credit subsidy to cover the full program cost, or to pay a portion themselves, using an accepted payment method. FAP credits cannot be transferred to another person.

Registrations will be ongoing throughout the year. The first day of each customer's twelve month enrolment period will be the date their account is activated in CLASS.

### Participants Reapplying for the FAP

FAP participants are responsible to reapply annually and must continue to meet all eligibility criteria. Applications for the next year may be made thirty days prior to the end of their current enrolment period. If the maximum number of 8,000 FAP

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customers has been reached the applicant(s) will be put on a waitlist, as outlined in the FAP Waitlist section of this policy.

## Unused Credit

Any unused account credits remaining at the end of the customer's enrolment period are automatically removed by CLASS. Credits cannot be carried over to the following year, transferred to another individual or family member, or redeemed for cash. If the remaining credit is not sufficient to cover the full cost of a program the participant may opt to pay the balance using any accepted means of payment.

Credits can be applied to any active registration program, even if the start date is past the individual's year end date. For example, the customer's activation date is July 15, 2009, with an expiry date of July 14, 2010. The customer may choose to enrol in April, 2010 for a program that starts in August, 2010.

## CRITERIA

To qualify for the program the applicant must be:

- a resident of Mississauga;
- have a total net individual or combined family income below LICO;
- be able to provide recent official documentation that shows total family net income, and proof that all dependants are the legal responsibility of the adult and reside in the adult's household, using one or more of the following original statements/documents:
  - Guaranteed Income Supplement;
  - Ontario Disabilities Support Program benefit;
  - Ontario Works;
  - CPP Disability Pension Statement; or
  - Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CRA) Notice of Assessment form (T451) showing net income/earnings for all adults less than the designated cut offs
  - Canada Child Tax Benefit Notice;
  - Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families;

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and

- Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax Credit.

Dependants under the age of 18 cannot apply as individuals. A parent or legal guardian must complete an application on their behalf.

## EXCLUDED PROGRAMS

Programs and services that are ineligible for fee assistance due to higher program delivery costs or inability to register via the central registration system include:

- Green Fees at BraeBen and Lakeview;
- Hershey Sport Zone soccer league and the Adult Ice Hockey League at Iceland;
- private or semi-private swimming and skating lessons; other private lessons/instruction (e.g. squash); and personal training (e.g. fitness and aquatic therapy);
- marina slip reservations (Port Credit Village Marina and Lakefront Promenade);
- Meadowvale Theatre box office tickets or rentals;
- room or facility rentals; and
- single admission (pay as you go) swimming, skating, fitness and youth-drop in programs.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications for FAP may be made at any City of Mississauga Recreation and Parks Community Centre or the CSC and must be done in person. A specific appointment time is not necessary, however, may be arranged in advance by phoning the applicable location. Applicants are required to bring the following documentation:

- the completed Request for Fee Assistance form, available online, at any recreation facility, or by mail;
- proof of residency in Mississauga (recent utility bill, lease agreement, driver's license); and
- proof of total family net income and legal responsibility for all dependants listed on the application as outlined in the

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Criteria section of this policy.

Applications are also available in alternative formats upon request.

## Role of Front Desk Staff

Community Centre and CSC staff will be responsible to complete the following:

- Review customer's documents, ensuring confidentiality;
- Record total family or individual net income on the application and note the type of identification and documentation provided;
- sign the form and ensure it is initialled by a full-time supervisor or on-duty manager;
- forward the completed and verified application form, in a sealed envelope, to the CSC; and
- advise applicants that they will hear back from the CSC within seven (7) business days.

Documents will not be photocopied and all originals will be returned to the applicant. Applicants will be required to sign a declaration that the information provided is factual and agree, if requested by the City, to provide originals for auditing purposes at any time during the coverage period.

## Role of Customer Service Centre Staff

CSC staff authorized by the CSC Manager to approve fee assistance applications will confirm that all areas of the application are complete, the application form has been verified, and that the applicant(s) are not currently benefiting from the Jerry Love Fund.

CSC staff will then contact the FAP applicant and confirm whether or not they have been approved for the program. Applicants who have been declined will be advised of the reason(s) and, if applicable, any steps they can take to make a successful application. A user account will be set up in CLASS

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for successful applicants, if none exists, and the credit subsidy will be applied. Staff will provide information and instruction to applicants on how to register for the programs of their choice, and advise them that credit will be drawn from the account as payment.

All applications, both approved and declined, will be filed in a secure, confidential location at the CSC, where they are available only to staff who need to have access to the information. Records will be maintained in accordance with established Recreation and Parks procedures and Corporate Policy and Procedure, Corporate Administration, Records Management, Records Management Program.

## FAP Waitlist

Maximum enrolment in FAP is capped at 8,000 individuals at any one time. The CSC will utilize CLASS to monitor the number of registered FAP participants and maintain supplementary waitlist tracking.

When maximum enrolment is reached, FAP applicants that meet all eligibility requirements will be advised that they have been put on a waitlist. The CSC will also offer waitlisted applicants a complimentary twelve month individual or family swim and skate pass. Passes will be issued in CLASS.

CSC staff will be responsible to actively monitor the number of registered FAP participants. When space becomes available the CSC will contact the customer at the top of the waitlist and advise them that they may now enrol in the program.

The complimentary swim and skate pass will become inactive once they are enrolled in the FAP. Passes will be flagged in CLASS as cancelled.

FAP participants reapplying for the next year thirty days prior to the end of their enrolment period will be added to the end of any

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existing waitlist.

## Registration Process

Once the subsidy credit has been applied to their account, FAP customers will register in programs of their choice in the same manner as a paying customer: in person; by mail or deposit in a recreation centre drop box; or online via Connect2Rec.

All conditions related to recreation programs, including: transfers, membership changes, withdrawals and missed classes as outlined in Corporate Policy and Procedure – Fees and Other Revenues – Administration of Recreation Fees, will apply to FAP registrants, with the exception of administration fees.

## FAP Cost Centre

Minimum registration requirements exist to offset labour and material costs associated with delivering recreation programs. All registered programs, including those added to accommodate FAP customers, must meet the minimum number of course registrations. Courses that do not meet the minimum registration of paying customers will be subsidized to meet course minimum by the FAP cost centre. Programmers may also submit a request (a journal entry voucher) to transfer funds from the FAP cost centre for FAP participants who are registered in partnership programs that incur a direct cost to the City.

## JERRY LOVE CHILDREN'S FUND

The Jerry Love Children's Fund (the Fund) is a volunteer donations fund established to provide financial assistance to eligible children participating in City recreation activities. Recreation and Parks staff administer the Fund, which City staff and corporate sponsors contribute to through a variety of fund raising activities. Many of the children who qualify may not meet the financial criteria for the FAP, so will continue to be accommodated by the Fund.

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## MONITORING AND REPORTING

Tracking of FAP will take the form of a separate cost element in SAP, the City's finance software system. The following monitoring and reporting practices will ensure proper management and oversight of the program:

- Reports by session to the Director of Recreation and Parks (the Director) itemizing the number of unique FAP customers, the total unrealized revenue of FAP credit spending on registrations and memberships, and ratio of paying customers to FAP customers by product line (i.e. aquatics, skating, camps, etc.) and by facility, with such information available for audit;
- An annual statistics report analyzing program trends and costs;
- A full description of all internal program registration fees charged or credited to the FAP cost centre budget. These include:
  - FAP registrations for services that operate in partnership with the City, such as tennis or rowing lessons. (To avoid any negative impact to the provider all FAP participants are charged back.) Partnership programs are administered in the same manner as those run by the City in regard to cancellations, class sizes, etc.
- The number of units and corresponding unrealized revenue associated with issuing complementary family swim and skate passes will be recorded and monitored in quarterly reports to the Director;
- Overall demand for assistance will be tracked and used for future forecasting of need for financial assistance.

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## EXCEPTIONS

The Director, after careful consideration of the circumstances and in consultation with Recreation and Parks staff, may make exceptions to the FAP criteria on a case by case basis to accommodate individual requests. For example, an exception could be made to allow a child with a physical disability to participate in semi-private swimming lessons.

Significant exceptions cannot be made to the program cap or eligibility requirements without Council approval.

## REFERENCE:

GC-0194-2009 2009 04 08

GC-0385-2010 2010 05 26 – increased maximum participation to 4,000 residents.

2010 06 02 – Administrative revision related to Administration of Recreation Fees policy – FAP customers are not charged admin fee

GC-0455-2011 2011 07 06 - increased maximum participation to 8,000 residents.

2012 01 25 – administrative change – added aquatic therapy in excluded programs for clarification.

## LAST REVIEW DATE:

## CONTACT:

For more information contact the Community Services Division, Recreation and Parks Department.