



# Policy

Department/Section <b>Community Services</b>	Policy # <b>POL-PR-14</b>
Subject  <b>Recreation Fee Assistance Policy</b>	Enacted by Council: March 12, 2025
	Motion # C250312-5

## 1. Purpose

The Township of Oro-Medonte is committed to ensuring that all residents, regardless of financial circumstances, can have the opportunity to participate in recreational programs and services. Recognizing the significant health and well-being benefits derived from positive recreation, the Township acknowledges that financial constraints can limit participation for some families. This policy aims to facilitate financial assistance and equitable access to recreation for residents in the low-income bracket. Further, the Township will partner with a third-party agency to manage the Recreation Fee Assistance Program, to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of funding recipients.

## 2. Scope

The Township of Oro-Medonte has established the Recreation Fee Assistance Program which serves to provide financial assistance to low-income families seeking to participate in recreational activities. As part of the annual budgeting process, Council will determine that year's funding amount to be allocated towards the Program. A third-party agency will be contracted to manage and distribute these funds, in accordance with this policy, to qualify residents within the Township of Oro-Medonte.

While funding is only available to residents of Oro-Medonte, this policy will allow funding recipients to utilize the funds towards a variety of recreation programs, including municipally offered activities, or those offered by private/contracted service providers, or other sports organizations.

### **3. Definitions**

Financial Assistance - Municipally allocated funds designated to provide financial support for low-income residents, aimed at eliminating participation barriers in recreational sports, programs, and art activities.

Low-Income Measure – The Low-Income Measures (L.I.M.'s) are a set of thresholds estimated by Statistics Canada that identify Canadians whose incomes are below half of the median of the adjusted income distribution. To be eligible for funding, a family's income (after taxes) must be at, or below, the income listed in the most recent Statistics Canada Low Income Measure cut-off table. Family size includes the applicant, spouse or partner, and dependents living in the household.

Recreation Program - Activities of a recreation, fitness, 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 on-going nature. Registration in any recreation program, whether municipally offered, or those offered by external recreation providers, is eligible for funding allocations. Given the lack of recreational infrastructure in Oro-Medonte, this includes activities (like swimming) that may be offered in neighbouring municipalities as well.

Third-Party Program Management Agency – An agency who has partnered with the Township to manage the Recreation Fee Assistance Program to ensure credibility, confidentiality and anonymity of the funding recipients.

### **4. Policy**

#### **Partnership Agreement**

The Township of Oro-Medonte will enter into a formal agreement with a third-party agency (who must be a registered charity) for the management of the Recreation Fee Assistance Program. By engaging with an external partner, the privacy of the program recipients will be maintained. This third-party agency will ensure that all municipally allocated funds are distributed according to the procedures established in this policy.

## **Funding**

Funding for the program will be sourced through:

- Municipal allocation, as established during the annual budget planning process. This amount can change depending on the success of the program and/or the demonstrated need in the community.
- Additional funds could supplement the budget allocation, by way of donation or sponsorship initiatives which could further expand the program's reach.

The amount of funding per eligible recipient shall not exceed \$250\* per person, per calendar year. Should the full \$250 not be required, any unused amounts will be returned to the fund for redistribution. (\*The maximum annual amount for individual allocations can be adjusted, should Council choose.)

All funds raised will be managed and distributed by the third-party program management agency.

## **Eligibility and Distribution**

The third-party program management agency will be responsible for administering the Recreation Fee Assistance Program and adhering to the parameters of this policy, including: the application process, the eligibility assessment, and the distribution of funds.

Criteria/Application process will include:

- Contact information of those seeking support, including: names, address, birth dates
- Proof of residency (example: current Utility bill (within two months), a valid driver's license, copy of a current lease agreement, Ontario photo ID card) – only used if not listed on proof of household income.
- Total household Income (example: Notice of Assessment, T4, ODSP Statement of Assistance or Payment Card, Ontario Works Statement of Assessment, Guaranteed income Supplement (GIS) Monthly Statement), Employment Insurance [EI]).
- Details of the requested recreation program of choice, including program provider, program location, program length, program fees and program description. Should a funding recipient not have a program of choice, the agency will assist to provide suitable recommendations.

## **Program Management**

The third-party program management agency will be responsible for:

- Managing the application and approval process.
- Distributing funds to eligible families.

The agency will provide quarterly status updates to Township staff regarding the program's progress and financial status.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Township will review, on an annual basis, the partnership and program effectiveness. These results will be shared with Council during budget deliberations so that the following year's allocation can be suitably matched to the demonstrated need. Adjustments to the program or partnership agreement will be made as necessary based on feedback and performance metrics, and any proposed substantive amendments will be submitted to Council for consideration and approval.

## **5. Conclusion**

This policy outlines the framework for a collaborative effort between the Township of Oro-Medonte and the third-party program management agency to support low-income families in accessing valuable recreational and leisure opportunities. The partnership aims to enhance community well-being through structured financial assistance and supportive services. And these recreation opportunities will help improve the mental, physical, social and emotional well-being of Oro-Medonte residents.