

Financial Access (OKR) Review.docx

Recommendation:

THAT Council direct staff to bring back a revised Recreation Access Policy incorporating the recommended updates for Council's consideration.

Report Purpose and Summary Statement:

The City of Maple Ridge endeavors to make recreation accessible, inclusive, diverse and affordable for all residents by offering several programs and services designed to address barriers in Recreation. The city addresses this via the Financial Access (FA) Program. The goal of the FA program is to provide residents with affordable opportunities to participate in community and social recreation.

Previous Council Action:

Policy approval – June 13, 2017

Funding Source:

Existing PRC budget

Strategic Alignment:

Liveable Community; Engaged, Healthy Community;

Communications:

Community education and awareness

Applicable Legislation/Bylaw/Policy:

Policy 4.23 (June 13, 2017) – Recreation Access Policy

Proposal to Increase Financial Access - OKR

BACKGROUND:

The Financial Access Pass has been in existence for several years, offering a variety of discounted services to our residents. Throughout the years, the program has seen several changes to ensure we are meeting the needs of the community and 'Best Practices.'

Currently the Access Pass provides eligible residents with 75% off admissions (unlimited) and 50% off 4 programs per year, to a maximum of \$50 per program, although this is not incorporated into policy. Eligibility is based on the following:

1. Currently a resident of Maple Ridge
2. Annual income at or below the Low Income Cut off (before tax) (LICO) which is based on community size (30,000 to 99,999), as per the Canada Low Income Cut off tax scale

ANALYSIS:

Discussion:

Staff researched several neighbouring communities and organizations that offer a financial program. Each community or organization had very similar eligibility requirements, including the use of the LICO scale with some variance in either the community size or eligibility dollar maximum.

Staff discovered since we have based our FA program on the LICO scale, it does not consider the actual cost of living in Maple Ridge which is no different across the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley, instead it only looks at population size of the city. Therefore, residents in Maple Ridge could move to another city with a higher population on the LICO scale to access a FA program.

Based on best practices, staff discussions, and the research, the following updates to the FA program are recommended:

1. Base eligibility on residency and the LICO community Scale, Community size 500,000 or more
2. Maintain 75% off admissions (unlimited)
3. Restructure registered programs discount to an annual dollar value (\$270) per individual
4. Create a formal 3rd party adjudication process
5. Create a FA program for persons with disability(ies) and children and youth in care

Strategic Alignment:

Liveable Community and Engaged, Healthy Community

Applicable Legislation/Bylaw/Policy:

Recreation Access Policy 4.23 (June 17, 2017)

CONCLUSION:

Staff is recommending the following updates to the current Financial Access Program be incorporated into Recreation Access Policy No.4.23 to provide the citizens of Maple Ridge the opportunity for affordable and accessible community/social recreation opportunities:

1. Update_eligibility to be based on the LICO community Scale (before tax), Community size 500,000 or more
2. 75% off admissions (unlimited)
3. Annual dollar value of \$270 per individual, to be allocated to program fees
4. Working with existing and new partners to implement a 3rd party adjudication process
5. Implement a FA program for persons with disability(ies) and Children and Youth in Care

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Recreation Access, Recreation Services

Attachments:

(A) Recreation Access Policy No. 4.23

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Financial Access (OKR) Review.docx
Attachments:	- Recreation Access - 4.23.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 6, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Cidalia Martin, Director of Recreation Services

Carolyn Mushata, Director of Legislative Services and Corporate Officer

Scott Hartman, Chief Administrative Officer