
Fee Assistance Recreation Connection Program

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Purpose statement

Fee Assistance Recreation Connection extends the benefits of municipal recreation and culture programs to an increased number of individuals who live in low-income conditions and are therefore less likely to afford current user fees. This procedure provides a process for accessing programs and services through the Fee Assistance Recreation Connection Program (hereinafter referred to as Recreation Connection or program).

Scope

Recreation Connection is available to Oakville residents based on the economic need of individuals and families. Verification of income is required in order to confirm eligibility into the program. The process for gathering and recording income level and net individual/family income information outlined in this procedure comply with applicable legislation, including the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*.

Procedure

Enrollment

Enrolment in Recreation Connection will be aligned to the current annual budget allocation. Participants will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Each approved, eligible Recreation Connection participant will be enrolled for a period of 12 months and receive a subsidy of \$300, in the form of an account credit, that can be applied to Town of Oakville Recreation and Culture registered programs, non-transferable memberships, and passes. ~~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.~~

Registrations into the Recreation Connection program will be ongoing throughout the year. The first day of each customer's twelve month enrolment period will be the date their credit is added to their account.

Reapplying

Recreation Connection participants are responsible to reapply annually and must continue to meet all eligibility criteria. Applications may be made thirty days prior to the end of their current enrollment period to minimize delay of accessing programs and services.

Unused credits

Any unused account credits remaining at the end of the customer's enrolment period cannot be carried over to the following year, transferred to another individual or family member, or redeemed for cash.

Credits can be applied to any active recreation or culture registration program, even if the start date is past the individual's year end date. For example, the customer's activation date is January 1 ~~2014~~2022, with an expiry date of December 31st ~~2014~~2022. The customer may enroll in August ~~2014~~2022 for a program that starts in February, ~~2015~~2023. For membership products, future dated membership will be allowed if it extends an existing membership.

Qualifications

To qualify for the Recreation Connection program the applicant must be:

- a resident of Oakville;
- total net individual or combined family income below LICO (Low Income Cut-Off);
- provide recent official documentation that shows total family net income, and proof that all dependents are the legal responsibility of the adult and reside in the adult's household, using one or more of the following original statements/documents:

- Notice of Assessment form (T451)
- Canada Child Tax Benefit Notice
- Dependants under the age of 18 cannot apply as individuals. A parent or legal guardian must complete an application on their behalf.
- ~~Children receiving recreational assistance funds, other than Child Care Subsidy from Halton Region, are not eligible for the Recreation Connection program.~~
- Full-time post-secondary students are not eligible for Recreation Connection as universities and colleges provide recreational programs and fee assistance programs for their students.
- Refugees and qualifying newcomers to Canada, residing in Oakville, are eligible to apply to Recreation Connection within the first year of receiving documentation indicating immigration status:
 - Confirmation of Permanent Residency (issued within one year)
 - Refugee Protection Claimant Documentation (issued within one year)
 - A document issued under a special program of the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRC) such as a visa issued under Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) .(issued within one year)
 - Immigration documentation is required for each member of the family. Applicants will be required to confirm residency by providing a bank statement or lease/rental agreement or a letter from a host family as applicable.

Application process

Applications for Fee Assistance through Recreation Connection may be made at designated Town of Oakville Community Centres ~~or Town Hall and must be done in person between the hours of 8:30am and 4:30pm, Monday to Friday.~~ A specific appointment time is not necessary, however, may be arranged in advance by emailing affordableaccess@oakville.ca ~~phoning the applicable location.~~ Applicants are required to present the following documentation:

- Completed Recreation Connection application form, available online, at any recreation facility, or by mail;
- Proof of residency in Oakville (recent utility bill, lease agreement, driver's license);
- proof of total family net income or qualifying newcomers documentation
- and legal responsibility for all dependents listed on the application

Role of authorized ~~Town Hall~~ Recreation and Culture staff

Two staff members (minimum of one full-time) will be responsible to complete the following.

- Review customer's documents, ensuring confidentiality;

- Record on the application form the type of identification and documentation provided, including date and location received;
- initial the form and ensure it is initialed by the full-time staff member present;
- forward the completed and verified application form to Town Hall
- advise applicants that they will ~~hear from Town Hall~~ receive confirmation within approximately seven business days.

Staff authorized to process Recreation ~~connect~~Connection applications will confirm that all areas of the application are complete and that the application form has been verified. 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 for successful applicants, if none exists, and the credit subsidy will be applied. Staff will provide (by mail/email) 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 Town Hall.

Use of Credit

Once the subsidy credit has been applied to their account, Recreation Connection customers ~~will~~ may register in available programs ~~of their choice; online, in person at Town Hall or by mail, fax or drop-off~~ or purchase various memberships. –All conditions related to recreation and culture programs, including: transfers, membership changes, withdrawals and missed classes apply.

Ineligible Programs

Programs and services that are ineligible for fee assistance due to higher program delivery costs or service model include, but not limited to;

- Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts ticketed events
- ~~Library programs and services~~
- Sundry/material fees and concession items
- Facility rentals ~~and~~
- ~~Single admission fees (pay as you go)~~

The Director of Recreation and Culture, after careful consideration of the circumstances and in consultation with Recreation and Culture staff, may make exceptions on a case by case basis to accommodate individual requests.

References and related documents

Community Assistance Policy

CORE – Community Organizations in Recreation and Education

Administration of Recreation and Culture Programs and Services (to be completed)

Region of Halton subsidy programs – Child Care Subsidy & National Child Benefit
Recreation Program
Jump Start Sport Program – Canadian Tire
Recreation Connection Application Form |

Definitions

Family: 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): 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.

Responsibilities

This procedure is to be followed by Recreation Staff under the supervision of Manager, Support Services. |