**Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – September 17, 2024**

**Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – September 10, 2024**

**Item No. 1 Annual Fee Waivers – Recreation, Leisure and Library Fees and Charges Policy LW-009**

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services and submitted the following to Council:

1. That the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services receive as information the list of groups and organizations that received fee subsidies or waivers in 2023 that exceeded $5,000 as approved by the Director of Community Services in accordance with the delegated authority under the Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure, and Library Fees and Charges Policy LW-009 (see Appendix B).

2. That authority be delegated to the Director of the Community Services Department to approve fee rental waivers to groups or organizations that meet Policy criteria, beyond the period of one-year, throughout 2024 and 2025.

3. That the Public Service be directed to report back annually in the Fall and to include the following in the 2025 annual report:

    A. Recommendations to address long-term use of Community Services facilities by groups and organizations that meet the criteria of the Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure and Library Fees and Charges Policy No. LW-009.

4. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

**Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – September 10, 2024**

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Santos,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services be concurred in and forwarded to Council.

Carried

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On September 10, 2024, the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service, with the following amendment:

- Delete Recommendation 3 and replace with the following:

    "3. That the Public Service be directed to report back annually in the Fall and to include the following in the 2025 annual report:

        A. Recommendations to address long-term use of Community Services facilities by groups and organizations that meet the criteria of the Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure and Library Fees and Charges Policy No. LW-009."

and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

# ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

**Title:** Annual Fee Waivers – Recreation, Leisure and Library Fees and Charges Policy LW-009

**Critical Path:** Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – Executive Policy Committee – Council

## AUTHORIZATION

| Author | Department Head | CFO | CAO |
|---|---|---|---|
| J. Sarna<br>K. Borland | C. Fernandes | T. Graham | S. Armbruster<br>Interim CAO |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning in 2024, the Community Services Department is to report each year to Council about groups and organizations where facility fees have been waived.

This report, as per Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure and Library Fees and Charges Policy No. LW-009, updated in April 2023, includes:

- a list of groups or organizations that received fee waivers valued at over $5,000; and
- all fee subsidies provided during the past year.

Fee subsidies and waivers are considered through the application process. Eligibility criteria are detailed in the policy. The Director of Community Services may waive or reduce fees to provide subsidies for departmental recreation and library facility rentals including:

- equipment rentals;
- facility rentals;
- program fees; and/or
- public admission fee.

Those who are eligible include non-profit groups or organizations, public schools, and government departments that meet similar criteria objectives.

The fee subsidy assists a group or organization with removing barriers to participate. At-risk, special needs, or low-income individuals, equity groups, and/or vulnerable or marginalized populations meet these criteria.

A facility rental fee waiver is intended to support activities that are recreational, healthy living, cultural, library, educational, food security, or reconciliation focused activities.

$1,635,176 (restated from $3,985,100 inflated value) in departmental fee subsidies was approved by the Community Services Department in 2023 (Appendix A).

The total department fee subsidies include:

1. Recreation ($1,629,204) for Leisure Guide programming, memberships, equipment rentals, and facility waivers (restated from inflated $3,979,128 value)
2. Libraries ($5,972) for facility waivers.

An unintended result of the 2023 Policy update was that the ability of organizations to apply for fee subsidies each year was limited. The Public Service wants to continue to support these organizations and is requesting delegated authority as a temporary measure (Recommendation 2). The Public Service will then report back in the next annual report with recommendations for a long-term solution (Recommendation 3).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services receive as information the list of groups and organizations that received fee subsidies or waivers in 2023 that exceeded $5,000 as approved by the Director of Community Services in accordance with the delegated authority under the Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure, and Library Fees and Charges Policy LW-009 (see Appendix B).

2. That Council delegate authority to the Director of the Community Services Department to approve fee rental waivers to groups or organizations that meet Policy criteria, beyond the period of one-year, throughout 2024 and 2025.

3. That the Public Service provide recommendations in its 2025 annual administrative report to address long-term use of Community Services facilities by groups and organizations that meet the criteria of the Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure and Library Fees and Charges Policy No. LW-009.

4. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

## REASON FOR THE REPORT

Section 5.4.B of the Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure and Library Fees and Charges Policy No. LW-009, requires the Community Services Department to report annually to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services with a list of groups or organizations in receipt of fee waivers, including the amount of fees waived, for the previous year where the value of the waiver exceeds $5,000 and a total for all fee subsidies provided.

Council approval is required to delegate authority to the Director of the Community Services Department to waive or reduce fees to provide fee subsidies for departmental recreation, leisure, and library facility rental, equipment rental program, and public admission fees to non-profit groups or organizations, public schools and government agencies that provide services that align with and support Council-adopted plans, policies, and strategies, where the use of a Department's facility or equipment is for a period of greater than one year.

Consideration of long-standing organizations accessing City facilities beyond a one-year facility waiver requires time to explore options available to support groups and organizations in Community Services facilities.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no direct financial or other implications resulting from the recommendations of this report. The value of fee subsidies provided to individuals, groups and organizations and are subject to limits established in the Department's annual operating budget.

Where fee subsidies are provided, revenue is offset by an amount equal to the revenue for the service provided based on the applicable fees and charges.

Potential loss to revenue from the fee subsidies and waivers are estimated to be minimal as the facility would likely not be used by the individual or organization or would not attend the recreation program if the subsidy or waiver was not provided.

## HISTORY/DISCUSSION

On October 24, 2007, Council approved the establishment of a Community Services Department Fees and Charges Policy (the Policy) to provide the framework and principles for the setting and administration of fees and charges for applicable recreation, leisure and library services, including criteria for fee subsidies and waivers.

On April 27, 2023, Council approved an update to the Policy and adopted the Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure and Library Fees and Charges Policy No. LW-009 (Appendix C). The Policy continues to provide criteria for fee subsidies and waivers with two significant changes from the 2007 Policy:

- The Department is to report annually to the Standing Policy Committee - Community Services with a list of groups or organizations in receipt of fee waivers, including the amount of fees waived, for the previous year where the value of the waiver exceeds $5,000 and a total for all fee subsidies provided.

- The Director of Community Services is provided authority to waive or reduce fees to non-profit groups or organizations, public schools and government agencies that provide services that align with and support Council-adopted plans, policies, and strategies and public schools **is limited to the use by the organization of a department's facility or equipment for a period of less than one-year**.

These updates to the Policy were intended to increase the transparency regarding subsidies and waivers provided by the department through an annual report, and to ensure Council supports continued fee subsidies and waivers to groups and organizations that wish to access Community Services facilities to deliver their programs and services.

This report marks the first annual report under this policy.

In addition to this report, select information regarding fee subsidies is shared publicly in the City's annual budget documents under the Recreation Service. The *2024 Preliminary Budget,*

*2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget* publication includes the number of registered recreation course subsidies, fitness membership subsidies and facility waiver subsidies. Information can be found on page 220 of the published document. The 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget has been adopted by Council and the total 2024 Department budget for fee subsidies is $2,423,000. As of June 30, 2024, $1,066,498 has been recorded in the City's financials, or 44% of the approved fee subsidy budget.

**History of the Fee Assistance Program**

The City, through the Community Services Department, has a long history of commitment to ensuring that recreation, leisure and library programs and services are accessible to residents regardless of their ability to pay.

While Library Service provides facility rental fee waivers, it is the Recreation fee subsidy and waivers that are the majority of the waivers to citizens of Winnipeg because the large majority of library service is free. While the introduction of a formalized recreation fee assistance program was established in 2011 with criteria and information fully outlined in the 2011 Spring/Summer Leisure Guide, the department had considered and accepted requests for reduced fees for programs and services for a number of years.

In addition to facility rental waivers that primarily assist groups and organizations, Recreation Services provides program subsidies and facility use waivers to individual citizens and their families.

Recreation fee subsidies target low-income families and individuals that are residents of Winnipeg to provide equitable access to recreation/aquatics facilities and programs. Facility admission and/or program fees are either waived or reduced. Eligibility is based on Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-Off guidelines and applicants are required to provide verification (i.e., social assistance case number, refugee assistance case number, Canada Revenue Agency Notice of Assessment, or statement of income from CPP Disability). The Recreation Fee Assistance Program is explained on page 5 of the Fall 2024 – Winter 2025 Leisure Guide

The Community Services Department currently offers facility passes, active living passes, and program registration fee waivers.

- Facility pass requests are limited to facility access and do not include instructor-led programming.

- Active living passes provide access to drop-in active living programs.

Program subsidies include access to registered Leisure Guide programs and swimming lessons (i.e., learn to skate, learn to swim, preschool, children's, adaptive, etc.).

Fee subsidies and waivers are recorded in the City's financial system.

Information on the "Recreation is for Everyone" Fee Assistance Program is available on the website, in the Leisure Guide and through 311. Application for the Fee Assistance Program is available to individuals online or at any public service font desk in the City operated recreation and aquatic facilities.

**Criteria as established in Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure and Library Fees and Charges Policy No. LW-009**

Subject to the limits established in the Department's annual operating budget, which is $2,423,000 in 2024, authority is delegated to the Director of Community Services to waive or reduce fees to provide fee subsidies for recreation and leisure programs, public admissions and facility and equipment rentals to:

- Residents of Winnipeg who demonstrate a financial need in order to remove barriers to access recreation and leisure programs and public admissions offered by the Department;

- Recently arrived refugees (within their first five years of arriving in Canada, aligning with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's period of settlement support) and where the definition of refugee per the Newcomer Welcome and Inclusion Policy and Strategic Framework is "a person who has fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and has crossed an international border to find safety in another country.";

- Individuals temporarily relocated to Winnipeg due to the evacuation from their home community as a result of natural disasters such as fires and floods. In such circumstances, the Director shall seek compensation from disaster assistance programs where available for subsidies offered; and

- Fee subsidies for facility or equipment rentals may only be provided where the facility or equipment is used for a recreational, healthy living, cultural, library, educational, food security, or reconciliation-focused activity.

**Fee Subsidy Adjustments in 2023:**

In 2023, the Department provided fee waivers and subsidies to individuals, groups and organizations for departmental recreation, leisure, and library facility rental, equipment rental, program, and public admission fees, valued at a total of $3,985,100 (comprised of Leisure Guide programming ($318,609), recreation facility memberships ($3,073,862), recreation equipment rentals ($4,428), recreation facility fee waivers ($582,229) and Library Services $5,972 for facility fee waivers). These subsidies and waivers were approved by the Director of Community Services in accordance with the criteria established in the Council approved Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure and Library Fees and Charges Policy No. LW-009. See Appendix C for further details.

The Department exceeded its total fee assistance adopted budget of $2,307,000 in 2023 primarily related to subsidized fitness membership products.

- In October 2023, the Department changed the type of fitness membership passes provided to those approved for no-charge access to recreation facilities under the Fee Assistance program. Before that date, those who qualified for fee assistance received a one-year facility pass and the value of the subsidy was recorded at the annual retail price of the pass. Through actual usage analysis, the Department determined that subsidized fitness passes were being used an average of 10 times per year by the applicant;

therefore, the value of the annual memberships recorded was inflated in 2023 based on retail value of $3,073,862, not based on actual usage of $723,938.

- Beginning in October 2023, those who qualify continue to receive free 12-month access, rather than a one-year membership pass they now receive a re-chargeable 10 visit pass. Once the 10 visits are used, citizens can re-charge their pass with an additional 10 visits as many times as necessary throughout the 12-month period. With the use of a 10-visit pass, the value recorded as the subsidy better reflects the actual value of the membership waiver.

- Based on the above change, the more accurate value of the 2023 fee assistance waivers based on the rechargeable 10 visit pass is $723,938; not $3,073,862.

| | 2023 |
|---|---|
| **Recreation**: | |
| Leisure Guide programming subsidy | $318,609 |
| Equipment rental waivers | 4,428 |
| Facility fee waivers | 582,229 |
| Facility Memberships ($3,073,862 inflated value) based on 10 visit rechargeable passes | 723,938 |
| | |
| **Library** facility fee waivers | 5,972 |
| | |
| Total Fee Waivers and subsidies (based on 10 visit rechargeable pass methodology) | $1,635,176 |

**Annual list of subsidies and waivers provided to groups and organizations greater than $5,000.00:**

***Table 1**: Community Services 2023 list of organizations receiving Facility Fee Waivers in Excess of $5,000 (total of $397,558 in 2023):

| | Organization | 2023 Rental Value |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Healthy Start | $ 96,676 |
| 2 | Harvest Manitoba | $ 40,097 |
| 3 | Winnipeg School Division – Winnipeg Adult Education Centre - Kaakiyow Li Moond Likol | $ 35,082 |
| 4 | Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre | $ 31,728 |
| 5 | The LINK Youth and Family Supports - SOURCE Program | $ 29,804 |
| 6 | Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. | $ 28,327 |
| 7 | Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs – Eagle's Nest Project | $ 23,955 |
| 8 | Winnipeg Lawn Bowlers Club | $ 16,228 |
| 9 | 553 Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps | $ 14,936 |
| 10 | North Centennial Seniors Association | $ 14,936 |
| 11 | Community Education Development Association Winnipeg Inc. | $ 11,882 |
| 12 | Graffiti Art Programming Inc. | $ 11,461 |
| 13 | Manidoo Gi-Miini Gonaan - Lord Selkirk Park Resource Center | $ 10,648 |
| 14 | Taking Charge! | $ 9,435 |
| 15 | Royal Canadian Regiment 3 Pipe & Drum | $ 8,604 |
| 16 | Lifesaving Society of Manitoba | $ 7,634 |
| 17 | Women's Health Clinic | $ 6,125 |
| | Recreation Facility Fee Waivers (greater than $5,000) | **$ 397,558** |
| | Recreation facility waivers (each under $5,000) | $ 184,671 |
| **Total of ALL Recreation facility fee waivers** | | **$ 582,229** |
| Total of Library facility fee waivers | | $ 5,972 |
| **Total CMS 2023 Facility Fee Waiver (Recreation and Library)** | | **$ 588,201** |
| | | |

*Note: The Facility Fee Waivers noted in Table 1 above are not part of the below-market leases managed by the City's Real Estate Branch. It is possible that some of the facility bookings could be converted to a below market lease at a later date, subject to discussions with the tenant. Reporting on below-market leases occurs through the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development and is subject to the Leasing and Licensing of Property Policy.

**Delegation of Authority to the Director of Community Services to approve fee waivers to groups or organizations that meet Policy criteria, beyond a period of greater than one year throughout 2024 and 2025.**

Until Council approval of the updated Policy in 2023, the Director of Community Services was not restricted to any length of time that they could approve a fee subsidy or waiver to a group or organization that met the criteria of the Policy. As a result, many groups and organizations have received subsidies or waivers for years to deliver their community-based services in Community Services facilities. This includes the organizations listed in Table 1 above.

In Appendix C, additional information is provided about each organization, approximate number of years they have used Community Services facilities and the number of hours of facility each had in 2023.

The intent of the 2023 Policy update was to provide transparency relative to the Department's fee waivers and to receive Council's approval for longer term facility use by such organizations. It was not intended to limit or restrict the organizations' ability to apply for and receive fee subsidies or waivers each year. However, this did occur as a result of the Policy update.

By delegating authority to the Director of Community Services to approve fee subsidies and waivers beyond one year, through 2024 and 2025, the Public Service will be allowed to determine and recommend to Council how to best provide continued support to these organizations. It will also provide certainty to these same organizations of space to deliver their services through to the end of 2025.

## Financial Impact Statement **Date:** August 1, 2024

# Project Name:
# Annual Fee Waivers - Recreation, Leisure and Library Fees and Charges Policy LW-009

**COMMENTS:**

There are no direct financial or other implications resulting from the recommendations of this report.

The value of fee subsidies provided to individuals and/or organizations is in accordance with the Community Services Department Fees and Charges Policy, which are subject to limits established in the Department's annual operating budget.

The department is forecasting at the time of this report to be within budget pertaining to the 2024 fee assistance / subsidy program.

*Ryad Ali, CPA, CGA - August 1/24*

Ryad Ali, CPA, CGA on behalf of Ozzy Garrett
Manager of Finance & Administration
Community Services Department

## CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Planning, Property and Development Department

## OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

**Goal 1 - Leadership & Good Governance**
1.7 Equitable Service Access
1.15 Community Capacity Development

**Goal 3 - Economic Prosperity**
3.12 - Poverty Reductions
3.16 - Optimize Facility Access
3.19 – Community Capacity Development

**Goal 4 - Good Health and Well-Being**
4.11 Equitable Service Access

**Goal 5 - Social Equity**
5.1 Equitable Service Access

## WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to the Winnipeg Climate Action Plan (CAP), and it was determined that the CAP is not applicable to this specific report.

## WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

**Goal 6: All City Services are Equitable, Inclusive and Accessible**

10-year Objectives: A. Residents have equitable access to City services in particular demographic groups who experience marginalization C. Use of City tools and resources are maximized to reduce systemic equities.

**Action 6.4 City Managed Facilities** - Community Group Use of Space: Identify and communicate a transparent process for how community groups can access and use City facilities, with particular emphasis on removing red-tape and expediting access for community groups serving low-income and marginalized populations. This shall include on-line and accessible information and clear pathways for how to access low-cost leases (subject to property availability), rental fee waivers, and access to City facilities, particularly those in areas of higher poverty.

**SUBMITTED BY**

Department: Community Services
Division: Recreation Services
Prepared by: Jennifer Sarna
Date: August 1, 2024
File No: CMS-2024-05

**Attachments:**

**Appendix A -** Fee Assistance Program - Budget Analysis

**Appendix B -** Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure and Library Fees and Charges Policy No. LW-009

**Appendix C -** Annually Accrued Fee Waivers, $5000 +