Minutes – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – June 30, 2026

REPORTS

Item No. 6 Community Services Annual Fee Waivers Report – 2025

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Standing Policy Committee on Community Services concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and recommended to Council:

1. That the annual report on the Financial Assistance Program for 2025, included in this report and Appendix A, be received as information.

2. That the Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure, and Library Fees and Charges Policy No. LW-009 be amended as outlined in Appendix B.

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

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Allard,

That the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service be concurred in and forwarded to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

Carried

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Community Services Annual Fee Waivers Report - 2025

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

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
J. Sarna K. Borland	C. Fernandes	B. D'Avignon, acting for T. Graham	M. Dryburgh, acting for J. Dunford

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Services Department reports each year on organizations that receive facility fee waivers. Fee assistance supports those in need by removing financial barriers to participate.

The Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure and Library Fees and Charges Policy No. LW-009 (the "Policy") requires the department to include in the report:

- A list of groups or organizations that received fee waivers valued at over $5,000.00; and

- The total of all fee assistance provided during the past year.

The Community Services Department approved a total of $2,578,681 of fee assistance in 2025. The total department fee assistance in 2025 includes:

1. Recreation: ($2,558,882) for registered programming, memberships, equipment rentals, and facility waivers; and

2. Libraries: ($19,799) for facility waivers.

This report also requests correction of a minor typo in the current Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the annual report on the Financial Assistance Program for 2025, included in this report and Appendix A, be received as information.

2. That the Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure, and Library Fees and Charges Policy No. LW-009 be amended as outlined in Appendix B.

3. 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 amend City policies.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no direct financial or other implications resulting from the recommendations of this report. The value of fee assistance provided to individuals, groups and organizations is 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 provision of fee assistance is estimated to be minimal as the facility would likely not be used or the recreation program would not be attended if the fee assistance 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 assistance.

Fee assistance is considered through an application process. The Policy speaks to eligibility criteria. The Director of Community Services has the authority to waive or reduce fees including:

- Equipment rentals;
- Facility rentals;
- Program fees; and/or
- Public admission fees.

People, non-profit organizations, public schools, and government departments must meet criteria objectives.

While Library Services provides some facility rental fee waivers, most fee waivers are provided through Recreation Services' fee assistance programs as most library services are free.

Recreation fee assistance targets 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 in various publications including the Leisure Guide, Swimming, Skating and Camp publications. Information is also found on Winnipeg.ca along with information about Recreation Facility and Recreation Equipment fee waivers.

Policy Amendments
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. The Policy continues to provide criteria for fee assistance with two significant changes from the 2007 Policy:

- The Department is 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. This Policy amendment was intended to increase the transparency regarding fee assistance 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.
- The Director of Community Services is provided with authority to waive or reduce fees to non-profit groups or organizations and public schools that provide services that align with and support Council-adopted plans, policies, and strategies, where the organization's use of a department's facility or equipment is for a period of less than one year.

On February 22, 2024, Council approved an amendment to the Policy with significant key changes which include:

- All non-resident fees for recreation and library services reflect a surcharge of an additional 100 percent of the resident fee.
- The Policy be amended to include government agencies in the list of organizations that the Director of Community Services can waive or reduce fees if the services of the agency and the request for fee reduction meet all the criteria of the Policy.

On November 27, 2025, Council approved an amendment to the Policy to permit the Director of Community Services to waive or reduce fees for departmental recreation, leisure and library facility rental, equipment rental, program and public admission on an annual or one-time basis, such that eligible groups or organizations may receive the subsidy in more than one year.

Policy No. LW-009 Correction

There is a minor amendment proposed to the Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure and Library Fees and Charges (Policy) to correct a typographical error in Subsection 5.2 Delegation of Authority to Establish and Set Fees, to ensure fees and charges are set in accordance with the intent of the Policy. It is recommended to amend Clause 5.2D of the Policy to replace “or” with “*for*”.

Annual Report Summary

This report marks the third annual report under this Policy.

In addition to this report, select information regarding fee assistance is shared publicly in the City’s annual budget documents under the Recreation Service. The 2026 Adopted Budget includes the number of registered recreation course subsidies and fitness membership subsidies. The 2026 Department budget for fee assistance is $2,608,500. As of April 30, 2026, $780,743 has been recorded in the City’s financial records, or 30 percent of the approved fee assistance budget.

Subject to the limits established in the Department’s annual operating budget, which was $2,545,000 in 2025 ($2,608,500 in 2026), authority is delegated to the Director of Community Services to waive or reduce fees to provide fee assistance for recreation and leisure programs, public admissions and facility and equipment rentals to:

- Residents of Winnipeg who demonstrate a financial need to remove barriers to access recreation and leisure programs and public admissions offered by the Department.
- Recently arrived refugees (within their first 18 months of arriving in Canada) 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 because of natural disasters such as fires and floods. In such circumstances, the Director shall seek compensation from disaster assistance programs where available for fee assistance offered.
- Non-profit groups or organizations and public schools where the fee assistance is necessary to remove barriers to participation by at-risk, special needs, or low-income individuals, equity groups, vulnerable or marginalized populations.
- Fee subsidies for facility or equipment rentals may only be provided where the facility or equipment is used for recreational, healthy living, cultural, library, educational, food security, or reconciliation-focused activity.

2025 Fee Assistance:

In 2025, 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 $2,578,681:

2025 Fee Assistance	
Recreation:	
Leisure Guide programming subsidy	$ 429,857
Facility memberships (10-visit rechargeable passes)	$1,079,341
Equipment rental waivers	$ 4,402
Facility fee waivers	$1,045,282
Library:	
Facility fee waivers	$ 19,799
Total fee waivers and subsidies	**$2,578,681**

This fee assistance was 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 A for further details.

In 2025, there was excess demand for facility waivers, overextending the facility waiver account by $65,000, offset by a lower program registration demand of $31,000, creating a net oversubscription of the total fee assistance program of approximately $34,000. This is not considered a loss of revenue as the revenue generation is not guaranteed had the City decided not to support the facility waiver request.

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

A total of $811,673 in Recreation facility waivers that exceeded $5,000 was provided to groups or organizations. There were no waivers greater than $5,000 for Library Services.

	Organization	2025 Rental Value
1	Kaakiyow Li Moond Likol	$ 203,525
2	Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata	$ 121,630
3	Golden Rules Seniors	$ 101,577
4	Healthy Start	$ 87,709
5	Eagles Nest	$ 64,286
6	SOURCE	$ 38,535
7	Seven Oaks School Division - SOSD	$ 49,825
8	St. James Assiniboine School Division - SJASD	$ 31,474
9	CEDA - Pathways to Education	$ 14,261
10	Graffiti Arts	$ 13,151
11	3 Royals Pipe & Drum	$ 13,135
12	New Directions	$ 10,559
13	Winnipeg Lawn Bowlers Club	$ 9,428
14	Harvest Manitoba	$ 7,554
15	Manitoba Possible	$ 7,387
16	St. John's High School – Winnipeg School Division (WSD)	$ 7,282
17	North Centennial Seniors Association	$ 7,150

18	Division Scholaire Franco-Manitobaine - DSFM	$	7,115
19	Pembina Trails School Division - PTSD	$	5,413
20	Grant Park High School – Winnipeg School Division (WSD)	$	5,349
21	Gordon Bell High School – Winnipeg School Division (WSD)	$	5,308
	Recreation facility fee waivers (greater than $5,000)	$	811,673
	Recreation facility fee waivers (less than $5,000)	$	233,609
	Total Recreation facility fee waivers	$	1,045,282
	Total Library facility fee waivers	$	19,799
***Total 2025 Facility Fee Waivers (Recreation and Library)**		**$**	**1,065,081**

Note: Totals rounded to the nearest dollar.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement Date: May 11, 2026

Project Name:

Community Services Annual Fee Waivers Report - 2025

COMMENTS:

There are no direct financial or other implications resulting from the recommendations in 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.

Ozzy Garrett CPA - May 11/26
Ozzy Garrett CPA
Manager of Finance
Community Services Deparment

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Legal Services

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, Jennefer Larsen
Date: June 10, 2026
File No: CMS-2026-08

Attachments:
Appendix A **–** 2025 Fee Assistance Program - Budget Analysis

Appendix B – Proposed Amendment to Community Services Department Recreation, Leisure and Library Fees and Charges Policy No. LW-009