



**JOIN IN!**

**Removing  
Financial Barriers to  
Participation for  
Community Providers  
of Sport and Recreation**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**H.E.A.R.T.** is a project developed to ensure all people in Northumberland have the opportunity to participate in recreation activities without barriers.

**Working together:** The Municipality of Port Hope, Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture, Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit, Port Hope Community Health Centre, YMCA Northumberland, Alderville First Nations Health and Social Services, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario and the Northumberland United Way are committed to:

- developing and implementing open access policies with physical activity providers
- eliminating access to equipment as a barrier
- promoting free opportunities for physical activity
- streamlining the process to access financial support relating to participation
- promoting the benefits of physical activity as a foundation for a healthy community

The partners believe that removing barriers to access and creating opportunities and conditions where everyone can thrive is a shared responsibility. We recognize that as community leaders we will continue to build partnerships at the local level to remove barriers and create opportunities for everyone, especially low-income individuals and families, to JOIN IN! This local grass roots community group tool kit was developed by H.E.A.R.T with reference to background work and resources developed by:

- Parks and Recreation Ontario
- Canadian Parks and Recreation
- Northumberland Poverty Reduction Action Committee (NPRAC)

This JOIN IN! tool kit and other resources developed by H.E.A.R.T are included on the [www.joininnorthumberland.ca](http://www.joininnorthumberland.ca) web site.

This guide was prepared by H.E.A.R.T in consultation with Moving 4Ward Consulting Services and Bright Ideas.

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# INTRODUCTION

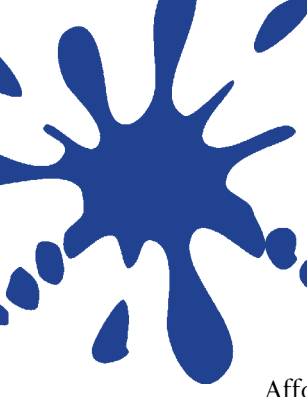
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Welcome to the JOIN IN!! Tool Kit. This is a grass roots approach to assist volunteer operated organizations increase registration by eliminating financial barriers to participation and increasing accessibility for everyone.

The tool kit is beneficial for a variety of organizations including; but not limited to:

- Volunteer sports organizations such as: minor baseball, hockey and soccer
- Not for profit groups or organizations who provide recreation activities
- Community recreation organizations and associations
- Private sector recreation providers i.e. golf clubs, dance, drama
- Clubs
- Camps
- Conservation Authorities
- Health care providers
- School Boards
- Social Service Organizations
- Faith-based youth groups
- Seniors' Clubs



## WHY JOIN IN?

### Recreation matters

Affordable access to recreation for low-income families is an important social policy issue. Significant work has been done nationally, provincially and locally to advocate to the Government, municipalities and local community groups that policy, funding and broad approaches are needed to increase access. Research has demonstrated the social and economic benefits of investing in access for low-income families.

Quality of life is enhanced for individuals and communities through engaged and active living. Research indicates that social inclusion can help alleviate the effects and generational nature of poverty and the dependence on social assistance programs, resulting in improved outcomes at home and school (Access to Recreation for Low Income Families Ontario Task Group Reports 2008).

Research indicates that participation in recreation opportunities enables children to:

- Develop skills and competencies
- Be exposed to program leaders and positive adult role models
- Achieve better physical and emotional health
- Develop physical-social skills
- Improve self-esteem academic performance peer and family relationships
- Acquire pro-social values and develop life skills such as leadership, decision making, and problem solving
- Form healthy habits that can be transformed into their adult lives
- Participate and take pride in their community and most of all:  
*Have fun, learn new skills and be with friends*

Quality recreation opportunities are vital and important to the health and personal development of all children and youth. The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) has made a commitment to make recreation more accessible to families with low income and their children in Canada.

One of CPRA's guiding principles is "Access for All". Eliminating barriers that block participation is vital to their goal of becoming truly all encompassing. The needs of all people must be met, regardless of age, ability, ethnic diversity or circumstance. The advantages of being involved in parks and recreation services must be accessible to everyone everywhere.

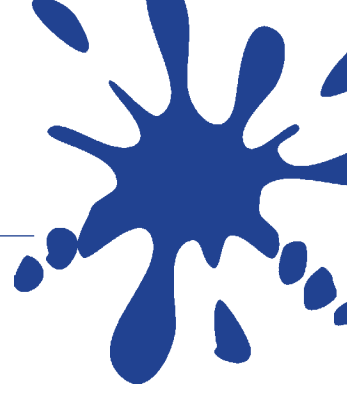
CPRA has developed a promising practice guide entitled "Everybody gets to Play". This is a initiative created to enhance the quality of life of Canadian children and youth living in low income families through increased access to and participation in quality recreation opportunities. See their web site for more detailed information at [www.cpra.ca](http://www.cpra.ca)

(Information is adapted from Canadian Parks and Recreation Association "Everybody Gets to Play")

*Check out the one-page reproduceable 'Why Recreation Matters' hand-out included.*

# National

# Recreation is important



Recreation and parks services contribute to the quality of life in our communities. While every community in Ontario is unique, there are common goals that all communities should strive to achieve. As a result, PRO (Parks and Recreation Ontario) developed a charter which supports a community commitment to ensuring that citizens' rights to parks and recreation services are met.

## **Recreation and Parks Rights of Ontarian's:**

*Every Citizen in Ontario has the Right and Freedom to:*

### **Participation**

Participate in safe, affordable and quality recreation programs that are in harmony with the diversity of the community.

### **Active Living**

Be physically active through participation in both organized and informal sport and recreation activities.

### **Access to Nature and the Outdoors**

Experience nature and access open spaces within their communities.

### **Enriching Experiences**

Experience the arts, culture, heritage, sport and recreation activities in their communities.

### **A Welcoming and Inclusive Community**

Be included in activities that build strong communities, engaged citizens and a healthy family life.

### **Engagement**

Be engaged in the planning of recreation and parks in their communities and to participate in volunteer activities.

The benefits of recreation and its importance for low income individuals and families are well documented and summarized below.

### **Recreation has physical health benefits**

Recreation that includes physical activity lowers the incidence of illness and obesity.

### **Recreation has psychosocial benefits**

Recreation can foster life skills for success at school, work and home, reduce emotional problems and risky behaviour improve self-esteem create positive peer and family relationships and increase opportunities for fun and enjoyment.

### **Recreation can help to break the cycle of poverty**

Being excluded from community based recreation programs is both a result of and a contributor to cyclical and generational poverty. Regular involvement by children and youth in structured skill building recreational activities that develop self-esteem helps to build resilience and protect against the risks of low success in school and the labour market.

### **Recreation is a wise financial investment**

In achieving the benefits described above access to recreation results in savings in health social service and justice costs. In addition savings have been found in the tax system when people exit welfare and gain employment.

(The above information was adapted from the Affordable Access to Recreation for Ontarians Policy Framework Guide, prepared by the Ontario Task Group on Access to Recreation)

[www.proontario.org](http://www.proontario.org)

# Provincial



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## Recreation fights poverty

Poverty is a key social determinant of health. A lengthy list of health-related issues among children correlate with poverty, including higher rates of unintentional injuries, mental health issues, poor eating habits, and less physical activity. Low income Canadians are more likely to die earlier and to suffer more illnesses than Canadians with higher incomes, regardless of age, sex, race and place of residence.

Levels of child and youth poverty can be measured in a number of ways. The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre Report Card comments “Child poverty can be measured in an absolute sense- the lack of some fixed minimum package of goods and services. Or it can be measured in a relative sense-falling behind, by more than a certain degree, from the average standard of living of the society in which one lives” (170). While Statistics Canada is careful not to refer to the low income cut offs (LICOs) as the “poverty line”, the LICO is the most widely used measure to define child poverty rates. While Canada ranks a respectable 6th out of 21 OECD nations in terms of child and youth material well-being as measured by UNICEF, one in six children and youth in Canada — approximately 1,071,000- live in poverty including, 778,000 Canadian children living in low income families.

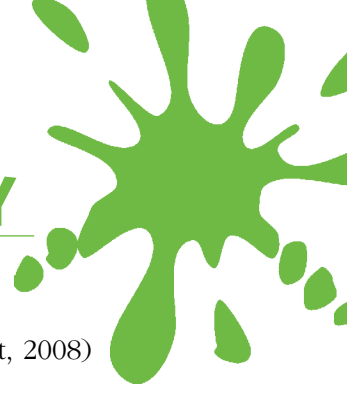
And while poverty levels in some parts of Canada are improving, others are not.

One of the best ways for Canada to tackle poverty is to get more people participating in the economy—which begins with good health and education among our children and youth. Children and youth who have a healthy start to life--through access to a variety of affordable, healthy foods, education programs and affordable, community based physical education programs - are more likely to stay and be successful at school, and enter the job market and be successful in their chosen profession later in life.”

Reaching for the Top Report (Appendices I, (i) Social Determinants of Child and Youth Health.)

The full report can be found on Health Canada’s Web site [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs)

# THE LOCAL PICTURE OF POVERTY



“Child Poverty A problem we cannot afford” (Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit, 2008) indicated that poverty is a problem that exists in our community.

A lack of income can negatively affect the health of an individual especially children who live in poverty.

## The problem:

- Children who live in poverty have increased risk of H.E.A.R.T. disease, diabetes, hypertension injuries and disabilities
- More than 4,000 families live in poverty
- 11.5% families are experiencing food insecurity due to lack of money—  
15% of local families have difficulty accessing food with children 17 years of age and under
- Some families chose to go hungry or may avoid healthy food in order to pay for other necessities such as transportation costs house insurance gas, and clothing
- Median family income in this area is \$61,525, which is less than the provincial median family income of \$69,156
- Number of lone parent families is 6320 in which 78% are female-led
- The number of local residents seeking social assistance has increased since 2003, with approximately 46% of the caseload being families with children

The following information taken from the Northumberland Poverty Reduction Action Committee [www.nprac.ca](http://www.nprac.ca)

- Low-income families with children are living on average more than \$9,000 to \$11,000 below the poverty line of \$26, 015 to \$29,596 for Northumberland.
- 9% of children are living below the poverty line in Northumberland County.
- 7% of people and 9% of children are living below the poverty line for our area.
- In Northumberland 17% of the adult population (25-64) have not completed high school and 46% do not have post-secondary education.
- 4 in 10 people struggle with low literacy. A better standard of living will come with improved literacy.
- 2500 households in Northumberland County are at risk of homelessness.
- The waiting list for Rent Geared to Income housing is 3 to 6 years.
- Accessing food is a concern for 15% of local families with children aged 17 years and under.
- 11.5% of households experience food insecurity due to lack of money. Respondents stated that they worry that there would not be enough to eat, did not have enough food to eat or did not eat the quality or variety of foods they wanted to eat.
- It costs a family of four (man, woman, teen boy, girl) \$167.73 per week or \$721.24 a month to buy a nutritious food basket.
- Transportation is one of the top three issues in Alnwick/Haldimand, Cramahe, Brighton and Trent Hills. Cobourg and Port Hope are the only areas with public transportation.
- Transportation affects the choice of where to live and access to recreation activities, health care, subsidized childcare and food banks.
- Families and children living in poverty are at increased risk for H.E.A.R.T. disease, diabetes, hypertension, injuries and disabilities as well as social isolation.
- Limited income leads to child poverty and hunger and increased risk of chronic disease and increased health care costs
- Involvement by children and youth in regularly structured, skill building recreational activities develops self-esteem and helps to build resilience and protect against the risks of low success in school and the labour market.
- Almost 75% of children in low income families rarely participate in organized sports.



# JOIN IN!...TAKE ACTION

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## We have a responsibility

...to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate.

An Access-Friendly Organization (AFO) is committed to making every effort to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate.

Access-Friendly Organizations believe:

- Everyone has the right to **JOIN IN!**
- All participants are treated with dignity, respect, discretion and confidentiality
- Affordable sport and recreation programs are a priority
- In the benefits of participation.

Access-Friendly Organizations address barriers to participation by:

- Writing and promoting policies that promote their beliefs
- Committing resources to provide financial assistance
- Increasing awareness of options and policies available to participants
- Working together with the community to ensure everyone has the right to **JOIN IN!**

The JOIN IN Tool kit provides tools and resources for organizations to work towards breaking down the financial barriers and becoming access-friendly organizations.

**“The Games will have many wonderful legacies. I wish but for one. That every Canadian child - be they from Chicoutimi - Moncton – Grand Prairie – Squamish or Niagara Falls will have the chance to grow up to experience the pleasure of sport ... no one left out. And that we of the Global Olympic family will not rest until the right of every child to play across this planet is secured. “**

**–John Furlong – Chief Executive Officer  
Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games**

# Physical Activity JOIN IN!

WWW.JOININNORTHUMBERLAND.CA

**Be active for 60 minutes a day • Keep your body moving  
Start off with 10 minute blocks  
(Children & Youth require 90 minutes a day)**

## **Access to Recreation Background Information**

Quality recreation opportunities are vital to the health and personal development of all children and youth. The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA), through its members, partners, and allied organizations, have made a commitment to make recreation more accessible to families with low income and their children in Canada.

In Canada, almost one in six or 1.1 million young children live in poverty. Research indicates that poverty hampers the development of healthy children– they are often born with low birth weights, are prone to hyperactivity and are twice as likely to drop out before finishing high school. The face of poverty differs from region to region and community to community.

Although all children and youth have the right to engage in play and recreation opportunities, the (social and systemic) barriers faced by children and youth in families with low-income means the population that could most benefit from participation are the least likely to participate.

Low-income families face many barriers that prevent their children from participating in quality recreation programs - user fees and equipment costs; lack of transportation, family support and awareness of opportunities; isolation; inadequate or no facilities in their communities and lack of safe places to play.

### **Why recreation matters**

Research indicates that participation in quality recreation opportunities enables children to:

- develop skills and competencies;
- be exposed to program leaders and positive adult role models;
- achieve better physical and emotional health;
- develop psychosocial skills;
- improve self-esteem, academic performance, peer and family relationships;
- acquire pro-social values and develop life skills such as leadership, decision-making and problem solving;
- form healthy habits that can be transferred into their adult lives;
- participate and take pride in their community; and most of all
- have fun, learn new skills, and be with friends.

When low-income families and their children participate in recreation as part of an integrated community strategy to deal with issues resulting from poverty, they show a marked improvement in many areas of their development. In fact, research has shown that recreation pays for itself through reduced use of social and health services such as probation, child psychiatry and other physical specialties, child psychology and social work.

The reality is that many children in low-income families are denied the opportunity to enjoy recreation activities that are vital to their health and personal development. Removing barriers to access, and creating the opportunities and conditions where all children can thrive is a shared responsibility. It will require community leaders to build partnerships at the local level to remove barriers and create opportunities.

Although the Statistics Canada Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO) is often recognized as the unofficial definition of poverty, poverty often means different things to different people.

**KIDS SAY** - Poverty is:  
“Not being able to play soccer or hockey, take swimming lessons, or go on school trips or to camp.”



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS/RESOURCES

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**Accessible:** Citizens are able to access (recreation and parks) services without having to surmount undue obstacles or barriers.

**Active Living:** A way of life in which physical social and mental emotional and spiritual activities are valued and are integrated into daily living.

**Active transportation:** Active transportation is any form of self propelled (i.e. non motorized) mode of transportation that uses human energy, such as walking cycling or on line skating

**Administrator:** Any member of an organization that is responsible for administering the access policy registration process. This can be a designated volunteer, executive member, staff person. They should be trained/orientated in the importance of confidentiality and have discretion and sensitivity when processing the registration.

**Advocate:** To plead, speak or argue in favour of.

**AFO: Access-Friendly Organization.** An Access-Friendly Organization is committed to making every effort to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate.

**At-risk Youth:** Youth that are at risk because of their socio-economic status, environment, friends, family situation, behavioural problems, physical or mental health. Research identifies that physical activity and recreation can play a positive role in the development of young people and in reducing youth-related risk factors.

**Cost:** A resource required to engage in an activity.

**CPRA:** Canadian Parks and Recreation Association

**Eligibility Criteria:** Standards that will be met in order to qualify for specific programs such as funding.

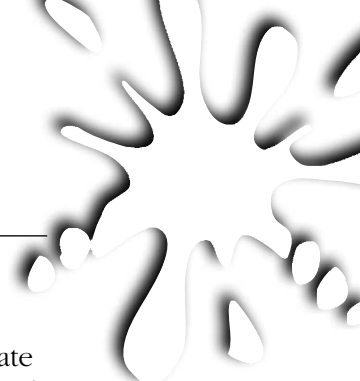
**Equity:** The belief and practice of fair and just treatment for individuals and organizations. To be equitable means to be fair and appear to be fair.

**Facilities:** Built or enclosed structures used for community recreation and leisure. Many include multi purpose recreation /fitness facilities, soccer fields, ball diamonds, arenas and pools. As well as recreation centres, senior's centres and community buildings.

**Full Cost Recovery:** Setting price for service (sport) such that revenues generated are sufficient to fund all cost related to the delivery of the service (sport).

**Good Practices:** Programs, initiatives or activities that are considered leading edge, or exceptional models for others to follow.

**H.E.A.R.T.:** Helping Everyone Access Recreation Together



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**Inclusive:** Creating an environment where everyone, regardless of circumstance is able to participate fully in their community to the best of their abilities and desires. Inclusive communities programs and services are (to the greatest extent possible): accessible to those who cannot afford to pay; barrier free; able to accommodate special needs; safe and hate free; and include activities that value and incorporate diversity in culture, race language and sexual orientation and that support gender equality.

**Low-Income Person:** Person placed in this category is someone whose family income falls below Statistics Canada's low-income cut-offs (LICO). This cut off reflects an income level at which a family is likely to spend significantly more of its income on food, shelter and clothing than the average family. On average, families under the LICO spend 63% of their after-tax family income, or 55% of their before tax family income, on food, shelter and clothing.

**Ontario Disability Act:** The act makes Ontario the first jurisdiction in Canada to develop, implement and enforce mandatory accessibility standards. It applies to both private and public sectors.

**PRO:** Parks and Recreation Ontario

**Sport:** Sport is a physical activity involving large muscle groups, requiring strategic methods, physical training and mental preparation and whose outcome is determined, within a rules framework, by skill, not chance. Sport occurs in an organized, structured and competitive environment where a winner is declared.

**Subsidy:** Financial assistance provided towards covering participation costs.

**Recreation:** Includes all of those activities in which individuals choose to participate during their leisure time. Activities are not confined solely to sports and physical recreation programs but include artistic, creative, cultural social and intellectual activities. Defining attributes of recreation include artistic, creative, cultural, social, and intellectual activities. Defining attributes of recreation include physical and artistic experiences; activities freely chosen by participants (non mandatory and occurring out of school); opportunity for progressive skill development and fun. Recreation is an active leisure time pursuit that enriches the individual by improving health developing a skill or building self-esteem.

**Recreation Program:** Activities of a recreation, 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 ongoing nature. User fees are often charged to offset the costs associated with the provision of the activity.

**Services:** Refers to recreational and membership services available through the purchase of memberships and pay as you go activities included but to limited to aquatics and skating.

**Outreach Programs:** Refers to specialized programs designed for a specific audience and or geographic community in order to help engage residents or as a component of a broader community initiative.

**Sustainable:** Can be continued in the future and use natural and human resources in an away that does not jeopardize the opportunities of future generations.

## Poverty is...

...being afraid to tell your mom you need new gym shoes

...pretending that you forgot your lunch

...not being able to play on the soccer team

...not getting to go on school trips

Children who live in poverty have increased risk for becoming socially isolated, having problems concentrating and learning at school and may have behavioural issues, such as getting along with other students. Later in life they face increased risk for heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, injuries and disabilities.

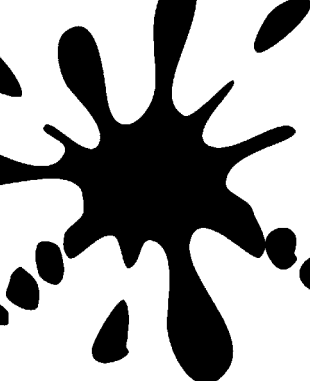
**ENSURING ALL CHILDREN HAVE ACCESS TO RECREATION IS A MATTER OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION. ACCESS FOR ALL SHOULD BE A RIGHT, NOT A PRIVILEGE!**



**JOIN IN!**

# **Tool Kit**

**Removing Financial Barriers  
to Participation for  
Community Providers**



# OPEN DOORS TO JOIN IN!

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## Steps to becoming an AFO

- Agree to be Access-Friendly
- Understand your resources  
Establish the true cost of participation
- Develop a policy
- Increase awareness of your  
access-friendly policies
- Confidentiality
- Evaluation

# AGREE TO BE ACCESS-FRIENDLY

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An organization that agrees to be access-friendly helps open doors to everyone, regardless of financial restraints. National, Provincial and Local research indicates that we all have to take responsibility for each other in creating opportunities to Join In.

## Access-Friendly Organizations believe:

- Everyone has the right to JOIN IN!
- All participants are treated with dignity, respect, discretion and confidentiality
- Affordable sport and recreation programs are a priority
- In the benefits of participation.

## Things to consider:

Does your organization want to be an Access-Friendly one?

Does your organization want to provide opportunities for everyone to JOIN IN?

Does your organization understand why recreation matters?

Does your organization share in the AFO beliefs?

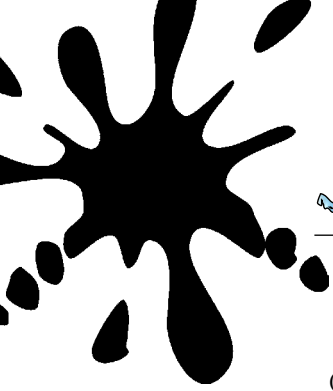
## Are you ready?

### Consider:

Incorporating AFO beliefs into code of conduct for executive

Getting participants to sign same code of conduct

Including the JOIN IN Charter



JOIN IN!

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## CHARTER

(organization/individual name) will make every effort to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate.

(organization/individual name) advocates through a written policy for JOIN IN! opportunities.

(organization/individual name) staff/volunteers have been subject to a full police record check.

(organization/individual name) will advocate the opportunity for financial assistance either from direct sources or other resources available.

(organization/individual name) will treat each participant with dignity, respect and discretion when dealing with sensitive financial issues.

(organization/individual name) will ensure that all information regarding a participant's financial situation will remain confidential.

(organization/individual name) will use the access tool kit cost recovery ratio calculation annually to determine the number of subsidized spaces or resources available.

(organization/individual name) will promote the access policies through their marketing materials and at registration times.

Included on your flash drive and available at [www.joininnorthumberland.ca](http://www.joininnorthumberland.ca) is a fillable PDF document you can customize for your organization.

# UNDERSTAND YOUR RESOURCES

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Before an organization can determine how they want to provide more opportunities and what financial resources are available to assist with increasing participation, it is essential that an inventory of those resources is taken. At no time should an access-friendly organization compromise its own sustainability by providing assistance.

In every organization it is important to establish a budget in order to ensure that your organization is financially sound.

## Things to consider:

Does your organization have a budget?

Does your organization have a budget that considers the true costs in simple form?

Does your organization know the amount of funds required to be sustainable for the next season?

Does your organization have fundraising fees attached to it?

Does your organization understand the true cost per participant?

## Are you ready?

### Consider:

Using the budget templates provided in this toolkit.

Determine a specific number of spaces for subsidy allocation.

Using the true cost per participant as a subsidy base.

Sharing available resources and spaces with KidSport, Jump Start or other community support organizations.



# GOOD SAMPLE PRACTICE

Sample Budget for AFO Soccer Club

EXPENSES	DETAILS	PROJECTED COST
League Fees	League Fees \$200 + \$2/child	\$356.00
	Mini Soccer \$19.75/child x 42	\$829.50
	Youth Soccer \$23.25/child x 36	\$837.00
	Affiliation Fees	\$40.00
Insurance	Included in League Fees	
Equipment	Uniforms \$22 x 78	\$1,716.00
Playing Expenses	Chalk 45 bags x \$5.95/bag + tax	\$302.56
	Lining of the Field (\$10/sm, \$13/med, \$15/lg)	\$450.00
Play off Cost	Trophies 78 children x \$6	\$468.00
	Food	\$225.00
Home Games Referee Fees	U6 - \$10 x 6 games	\$60.00
	U8 - \$13 x 6 games	\$78.00
	U10 - \$15 x 6 games	\$90.00
	U12 and 14 - \$20 x 12 games	\$180.00
Other	Equipment Replacement	\$800.00
<b>TOTAL GROSS EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>\$6,687.06</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Registration Fees	78 children - \$85/each	\$6,630.00
Sponsorships	Trophy, Team, Shirt Sponsors	\$1,000.00
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>		<b>\$7,630.00</b>
Profit		\$942.94

Each organization's expense is different depending upon the sport/program that you provide. When developing your costs consider some of the following: staffing, instructors, coaches, trainers, referees, equipment, supplies, promotions, marketing, advertising, facility rentals, utilities, phone, IT, affiliation costs, insurance, membership fees and miscellaneous. When considering revenue items, consider; registrations, sponsorship, sale from ads, donors, grants, sales, and other revenue sources particular to your organization.

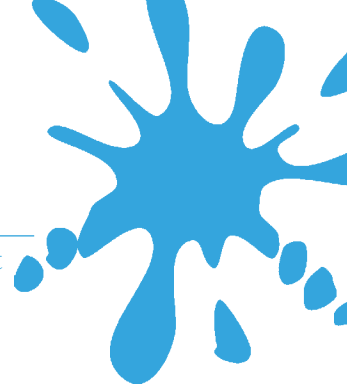
### The Cost of the individual participant:

Based on the budget outlined above you are now able to determine what the cost per participant is. Using the sample budget above a U8 player's individual participant cost would be:

League Fees	\$24.82
Uniform	\$22.00
Playing Costs	\$9.65
Playoff Costs	\$3.00
Trophy and Banquet Costs	\$6.00
Referee Fees	\$5.20
Total	\$70.67

Given that the registration fee is normally \$85 the registration fee could be reduced to \$70 in order for this participant to be in receipt of assistance to JOIN IN!

Consideration should also be given to the fact that this sample budget shows that the organization may be making a profit on the registration fees of the other participants.



**FULL COST RECOVERY:** Setting price for service (sport or program) so that revenue generated is sufficient to fund all costs related to the delivery of the activity.

	Sample Figures
Total organization budgeted expenses	\$100,000.00
Income - other (sponsorships, advertising)	\$25,000.00
Expenses needed to be recovered by registration	\$75,000.00
Registration fee per participant	\$125.00
Registrants required to balance budget	600

**600 REGISTRANTS ARE REQUIRED TO BALANCE THE BUDGET**

**Example:**

Last season's registration was 620 registrants providing an overage of funds from 20 registrants. If your organization was to subsidize 50% of those spots (10) and save 50% for unseen expenses that would provide 10 children in the community the opportunity to participate at a more affordable rate.

The spreadsheet included on your flash drive and available at [www.joininnorthumberland.ca](http://www.joininnorthumberland.ca) was designed for your organization to use by inputting your budgeted expenses and income, registration fees. It will calculate the number of participants required to cover all the costs.



# DEVELOP A POLICY

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Ensuring that an organization continues to be access-friendly requires that policies are written, published and followed. It is common in community-run organizations for information and practices to not be passed when leadership changes. In order to continue to be an access-friendly organization, it is a requirement that policies be written.

## Things to consider:

Does your organization have a policy?

Does your organization understand that changes to leadership can mean that principles and policies can go by the wayside?

Does your organization believe in transparent delivery of services?

Does your organization understand why it is important for everyone to be aware of the policy and practices?

## Are you ready?

### Consider:

Creating a direct fee subsidy policy.

Creating policies that indicate using other forms of assistance:

- Post dated cheques: allow parents to divide the fees over several months  
i.e. Aug 1st, Sept 1st and October 1st.
- Canteen shifts: allow parents to take shifts that other parents are not volunteering for and then credit them the amount towards their participation.
- Fundraising/ Corporate Sponsorship
- Coaching/volunteering: provide credit to parents for their time spent volunteering or coaching.
- Multiple child discount: offer a rebate for families that are registering more than one child.

Creating a policy that reflects assistance is provided to other subsidy organizations directly

i.e. KidSport, Jump Start - and participants can contact them directly

# DEVELOPING A FEE-SUBSIDY POLICY



## Developing a fee subsidy application process

Below are a list of things that should be considered when developing an application process and form. Organizations should determine what choices work best with available resources, organization structure and registration processes.

## Eligibility Criteria (Consider sources of proof of need - any single copy or combination thereof):

- Ability level
- Endorsement: Letter of referral or official documentation could be used to verify eligibility.
- Family circumstances such as family income, outside family expenses and disposable income
- Third party referral from a community professional such as: social/community workers, doctors, principals/teachers, police officers, and government caseworkers, etc.
- Notice of Assessment
- Canada Child Tax benefit
- HST Tax credit
- Proof of address
- Ontario Works
- Ontario Disabilities Support Program benefit
- Guaranteed Income supplement
- CPP Disability Pension Statement

## Available assistance (single option or combination thereof):

- Financial assistance is limited to a maximum amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per session/per season.
- Financial assistance is available to a maximum amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per family/per individual.
- There is no limit to financial assistance. Each request is treated on an individual basis and should consider annual family income, outside family expenses, disposable income, and true costs for the participant.
- Passes for programs are not redeemable for cash
- Financial assistance is available for up to \_\_\_\_\_% of the registration fee.

## Other things to consider:

- The access policy administrator in an organization may waive the outlined criteria or limitations at their discretion.
- Per family max
- Per season max
- Number of lessons max
- # of times supported (equipment needs)

## Application process (single option or combination thereof):

Request for subsidy will be received at the time of registration/ or two weeks prior to registration.

No appointment is necessary.

Applications can be completed on line, by phone, or through the organizations registrar.

All requests for subsidy will be considered on a case by case basis and will be treated with confidentiality.

The registrar, the president or the designated Access-Friendly Administrator will administer the program.



# GOOD SAMPLE PRACTICE

Municipality of Port Hope Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture  
GENERAL PRACTICE - Subsidy/Fee Assistance

**PURPOSE & SCOPE:**

The Municipality of Port Hope establishes financial eligibility criteria to provide subsidy/fee assistance to residents.

**GUIDELINES:**

Subsidy/fee assistance can be made available for all leisure programs offered by the Municipality of Port Hope. Any Municipality of Port Hope resident who feels that they are unable to pay the full approved program fees may apply for subsidy through the Department of Parks, Recreation & Culture.

**PROCESS:**

No Municipality of Port Hope resident will be denied access to a Department program due to financial restraints.

- Assistance can be provided to all residents by offering payment option plans, including post-dated cheques. (as agreed to by management team representative\*).
- Residents who are unable to afford the registration fees to a Department program will complete a registration form and a subsidy application form (available at all Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture Facilities)
- All requests will be dealt with in a confidential manner, on a case by case basis.
- Put all completed forms in an envelope marked: Subsidy Application and submit to the appropriate management team representative from the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture 10 days prior to the start of any session.
- Residents can request the following:
  - a maximum of 5 weeks for summer camps
  - a maximum of 2 sessions/year for aquatic lessons
  - a maximum of 1 program per participant per session for all other general programs
  - There are three levels of financial eligibility in which a resident may qualify under:

	FAMILY INCOME	% SUBSIDY
LEVEL ONE	0 - \$20,000	The Municipality of Port Hope will provide 100% subsidy
LEVEL TWO	\$20,000 - \$30,000	The Municipality of Port Hope will provide 50% subsidy
LEVEL THREE	\$30,000 - \$40,000	The Municipality of Port Hope will provide 25% subsidy

- Should there be a request for assistance from a resident that exceeds Level Three Income, an assessment will be completed to determine other options for payment and/or support to the applicant, at the discretion of the Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture.
- This process will be managed and maintained by the Program Manager – with the respective Coordinator having the front line responsibility for processing and registering the applicant(s) . This will allow the process to be kept confidential, effective, efficient and easily tracked for budgetary purposes.
- Decisions will be communicated to the resident verbally. All required paperwork will be completed following the normal procedures. All paperwork must be forwarded to the Program Manager, to be locked in a file for confidential purposes.
- If a resident is not eligible for 100% subsidy, the balance of the registration fees must be paid at the time of the registration.
- The Municipality of Port Hope, Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture is committed to working with other community groups to ensure that all opportunities for assistance are considered.

\*Management Team Representative includes any of the Coordinators in the Programs Division, the Facilities, Parks and Program Managers and/or the Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture.

Municipality of Port Hope Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture  
Subsidy/Fee Assistance Application Form



CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION  
APPLICANT MUST BE A Municipality of Port Hope RESIDENT  
(This form must be accompanied by a program registration form)

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): Home Phone# \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

Address/City: Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

FAMILY COMPOSITION (Adults & Children)

NAME	BIRTHDATE	SCHOOL OR OCCUPATION

PROGRAM SUBSIDY ELIGIBILITY

- A maximum of 5 out of 9 weeks for summer camps
- A maximum of 2 sessions/year for aquatic lessons
- A maximum of 1 program per participant per session for all other general programs

Total Household Income & Assets: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide proof of income (i.e. by attaching a copy of a pay stub, income tax return).

I agree that the above information supplied with this application is true and correct.

Signature of Applicant(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Personal information on this form is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1980, chapter 302 (as amended) and will be used to access registration for the Municipality of Port Hope programs. Questions about this collection should be directed to the Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture, c/o Municipality of Port Hope, 56 Queen St., Port Hope, ON (905)753-2230.

OFFICE USE ONLY

Subsidy approved percentage: \_\_\_\_\_ Per: \_\_\_\_\_



# INCREASE AWARENESS

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In order to best increase participation, it should be a priority to promote that an organization has committed to being access-friendly, has inventoried its resources and has developed written policies to eliminate financial barriers.

## Things to consider:

- What information do you want to communicate?
- Where do you want to communicate it?
- How do you want to promote your message?
- What audience do you want to target?

## Are you ready?

### Consider:

- Promoting the access program through an introductory letter.
- Promoting the program at registration.
- Training new volunteers, executive members, coaches, and instructors, about the benefits of the program.
- Advising your local social service agencies, parks and recreation department, advisory boards or facility renters of this policy.
- Developing new marketing materials, information packages, posters or include the JOIN IN! information on existing marketing materials.
- Developing a fee assistance brochure.
- Connecting your AFO policy to your existing policy, procedures and bylaws.
- Adding a note to all publications, websites and correspondence.

# GOOD SAMPLE PRACTICE

Municipality of Clarington, Community Services - Leisure Guide Publication  
Information as printed in their official publication



## Access to Recreation

The Municipality of Clarington, Community Services Department is committed to increasing access and participation opportunities for Clarington residents experiencing financial challenges. The following financial assistance programs are in place to support individuals and families who require assistance:

### Financial Assistance Program

The Community Services Department provides a 50% fee subsidy for Municipality of Clarington programs and services to residents of Clarington who are participants of Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program.

### Membership Access Program

In order to increase recreation opportunities for persons with a permanent disability, Clarington residents who meet the age criteria for Municipality of Clarington facility memberships will be eligible for the Membership Access Program. Eligible participants will benefit in the following ways:

Adults (18+ years) with a permanent disability are eligible to:

\_\_Purchase a fitness centre membership (any term) at the “senior rate”

Youth (15 - 17 years) and Seniors (65+ years) with a permanent disability are eligible to:

\_\_Purchase a fitness centre membership (any term) with a 20% discount

## CANADIAN TIRE JUMPSTART

The Municipality of Clarington is a proud partner with the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families in the Canadian Tire JumpStart program. This program provides financially disadvantaged children in Canada (4 - 18 years) with the opportunity to participate in sports and active recreation activities. This program is available for both Municipality of Clarington programs (swimming lessons, youth programs etc.) as well as community association programs (hockey, soccer, baseball).



# CONFIDENTIALITY

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Confidentiality is an important consideration when dealing with financial assistance, because it imposes a boundary on the amount of personal information and data that should be disclosed. Confidentiality arises where a person disclosing personal information reasonably expects his or her privacy to be protected, such as in a relationship of trust. When families and/or individuals provide information to a sport/recreation organization they need to be confident that personal information they disclose is treated confidentially.

## Things to consider:

Is dignity and confidentiality included in your code of conduct?

Who in your organization will administer subsidy agreements/financial support?

Has your organization and its volunteers signed the JOIN IN Charter?

## Are you ready?

### AFO's MUST:

Add a statement of confidentiality to access policy.

Ensure that all members of executive team sign off on the confidentiality statement.

### AFO's should also consider:

Introducing a training module relating to handling personal information.

# GOOD SAMPLE PRACTICE

## CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY



Executive Members of (Insert organization) understand that their role(s) will involve access to information/records that are considered confidential.

It is important that each member acknowledges their responsibility to respect the confidentiality of participants, their families and/or all agents on their behalf, to make every effort to protect privacy, and to act in a professional manner, at all times and in all communications.

It is further understood that anyone found acting indiscreet with confidential material or not protecting privacy of a participant, their family and/or all agents will be dismissed from their position immediately.

Included on your flash drive and available at [www.joininnorthumberland.ca](http://www.joininnorthumberland.ca) is a fillable PDF document you can customize for your organization.



# EVALUATION

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Evaluation is carefully collecting information about a program or some aspect of a program in order to make necessary decisions about the program. Program evaluation can be used for needs assessments, cost/benefit analysis, effectiveness, efficiency, process and outcomes. The type of evaluation undertaken depends on what needs to be learned about the program.

## Things to consider:

Why is the evaluation being done? (what do you want to be able to decide as a result of the evaluation?)

Who are the audiences for the information from the evaluation? (funders, board, participants and members)

What kinds of information is needed to enlighten your intended audiences, for example, information to really understand the process, strengths and weaknesses of the product or program, benefits to customers or clients (outcomes), how the product or program failed and why?

How can that information be collected in a reasonable fashion?, (maintain confidentiality, interviews and stats)

## Are you ready?

### AFO's MUST:

Ensure that participants in subsidy programs sign an informed consent.

Ensure that all personal information is held in confidence during evaluation processes.

Review subsidy policy on a regular basis.

### Consider:

Tracking Registration Increases

Participant Feedback

Impacts of recognition as an Access-Friendly Organization

How effective are the messages

Informed consent responsibility

# GOOD SAMPLE PRACTICE

## INFORMED CONSENT OF EVALUATION PARTICIPANTS



I voluntarily agree to participate in the evaluation of the Access-Friendly Policy within  
(insert organization)

I understand that the evaluation methods which may involve me are:

1. the organization's recorded statistics
2. my completion of evaluation questionnaire(s) and/or
3. my participation in a potential season ending interview

I grant permission for the evaluation data generated from the above methods to be published in an evaluation report and for (Insert organization here) future publications.

I understand that any identifiable information in regard to my or my child(ren)'s name and/or agency name will not be listed in any of the evaluation reports or any future publication(s).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Did the policy have a positive outcome for you and/or your family?

Were you satisfied with the process and the outcomes?

How could the process be improved?



# RESOURCES/LINKS

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**The Physical Activity Resource Centre — Policy Development Tool Kit**  
<http://www.ophea.net/parc/policy.cfm>

**What's killing our kids?**

Annual report 2009 Heart and Stroke Foundation, BreakingThrough Barriers

**Every Child Plays: Access to Recreation for Low Income Families in Ontario.**

Promising Practices Guide (Nov 2007).

Ontario Task Group on Access to Recreation for Low-Income Families

**Affordable Access to Recreation for Ontarians Policy Development and Implementation Guide for Communities (2010)**

Ontario Task Group on Access to Recreation for Low Income Families

**Everybody gets to play, Community Mobilization tool-kit, 2005**

Canadian Parks and Recreation Association <http://www.cpra.ca>

**National Policy-Access to Recreation for Low -Income Families (October 2005)**

Canadian Parks and Recreation Association <http://www.cpra.ca>

**Reaching for the Top: A Report by the Advisor on Healthy Children and Youth,**

Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Health Canada (2007)

Kellie K. Leitch <http://www.hc-sc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/child-enfant/advisor-conseillere/index-eng.php>

**Charter for Recreation and Parks in Ontario (2009)**

[http://www.prontario.org/charter\\_2009.pdf](http://www.prontario.org/charter_2009.pdf)

**Child Poverty: A Problem We Cannot Afford**

Halliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit Report, (January 2008)

**Parks, Recreation and Culture Leisure Access Program**

(January 13th, 2009) City of Surrey

[www.joininnorthumberland.ca](http://www.joininnorthumberland.ca)