

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF ELLIOT LAKE

***B*Y-LAW NO. 12-28**

Being a By-law to adopt a policy to provide affordable access for all residents to recreation, culture and conventional transit services, and to repeal By-law No. 10-27.

WHEREAS Section 394.(1)(a) of the Municipal Act authorizes a municipality to exempt in whole or in part, any class of persons from all or part of a fee or charge on the basis of inability to pay;

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the City of Elliot Lake deems it desirable to establish a standardized and transparent procedure for the administration of financial assistance for recreational programs and conventional transit services delivered by the City of Elliot Lake where user fees are unaffordable to a participant;

NOW THEREFORE, The Council of The Corporation of the City of Elliot Lake hereby **ENACTS AS FOLLOWS**:

- 1. THAT** the Affordable Access to Recreation, Culture and Transit Policy attached hereto as Schedule “A” and forming part of this by-law shall be herein confirmed as policy for the City of Elliot Lake.
- 2. THAT** by-law No. 10-27 be repealed.
- 3. THAT** this by-law shall come into force on the day it is passed.

PASSED this 23rd day of April, 2012.

MAYOR

CITY CLERK

AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO RECREATION & TRANSIT POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. The City of Elliot Lake recognizes and promotes the full participation of all Elliot Lake residents in recreation and cultural programs and transit services regardless of financial circumstances. Programs and services will be planned, delivered and evaluated to ensure they are affordable, inclusive and responsive to need.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVE

- 2.1. Provide guidelines for the development of introductory, universal and affordable programs and services.
- 2.2. Establish a standardized and transparent procedure for the administration of financial assistance to low income residents for recreational programs and conventional transit services delivered by the City of Elliot Lake.
- 2.3. Establish criteria for the review and approval of requests for financial assistance for recreation programs and conventional transit services and delegating such authority to Municipal staff.
- 2.4. Provide guidelines for the development of partnerships and agreements that provide affordable access to recreation and cultural programs and conventional transit services for low income families and individuals.
- 2.5. Identify the training needs of staff to assist in their administration of the Affordable Access to Recreation & Transit Services Policy, and related procedures.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This policy extends to conventional City Transit service and to eligible recreation programs directly delivered by the City of Elliot Lake. Programs and services eligible under this policy will be determined by Council and included in the City's User Fee By-law.
- 3.2. This policy excludes contracted recreation program agreements with individuals/organizations delivering programs in partnership with, or on behalf of the City, unless language related to affordable access is incorporated into the Agreement.

4. Definitions

- 4.1. *Conventional Transit* : Refers to the regular scheduled transit service offered by the City. Conventional transit does not include Handi-Transit services.
- 4.2. *Financial Assistance*: Refers to an approved reduction in user fees charged by the City of Elliot Lake for participation in a program or service.
- 4.3. *Household*: applies to a person or group of persons who occupy the same dwelling and do not have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada or abroad. The household may consist of a family group such as a census family, of two or more families sharing a dwelling, of a group of unrelated persons or of a person living alone. (*Statistics Canada definition*)

- 4.4. *Low Income Cut Off (LICO)*: Refers to income thresholds as defined, updated and published periodically by Statistics Canada, below which families will devote a larger share of income to the necessities of food, shelter and clothing than the average family would.
- 4.5. *External Financial Assistance Programs*: Federal and/or Provincial government financial assistance including but not limited to Ontario Works, Child Care Fee Assistance and Ontario Disability Support Program, CPP Disability Support Program, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Workers Compensation Benefits, Employment Insurance.
- 4.6. *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 on-going nature. User fees are often charged to offset the costs associated with the provision of the activity.
- 4.7. *Services*: Refers to recreational and membership services available through the purchase of memberships to activities including but not limited to Arts and Culture, Aquatics, Skating and conventional Transit.
- 4.8. *Universal Programs*: Activities and community events provided at no cost or minimal cost either directly by the City or through partnerships/service agreements with an agency/program provider.
- 4.9. *User Fee By-Law*: the current By-law to establish user fees for municipal services duly enacted by the Council of the Corporation of the City of Elliot Lake

5. USER FEES

- 5.1. Recreation programs and transit services will be priced according to the User Fee By-Law. User fees are intended to recover the direct operating costs of a program/service. Program fees may however be established below the cost recovery threshold where the program is deemed to provide significant community benefit.
- 5.2. The City will directly deliver programs and seek out and maintain partnerships with community agencies to deliver partnership programs in order to retain and enhance universal recreational opportunities primarily for children, youth, families and older adults.
- 5.3. Affordable access to user groups for the use of Municipal recreation space will continue to be managed through the Council approved "City of Elliot Lake Grants / Subsidy Policy".

6. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- 6.1. The availability of financial assistance to Elliot Lake residents will be communicated via the City website and / or other additional methods of available communication.
- 6.2. The process of obtaining financial assistance will be non-intrusive, eliminate stigma and respect a person's dignity and confidentiality. A Financial Assistance procedure developed for staff, sets out the process residents and staff will follow to request, review, approve or decline a request for financial assistance, in a manner which is fair and equitable.
- 6.3. Staff will receive comprehensive training on the administration of financial assistance.
- 6.4. Authority to review, approve and decline requests in accordance with this policy will be designated to appropriate Staff by the Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Elliot Lake.
- 6.5. Approval for financial assistance is based on the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) for Small Urban Areas as determined by Statistics Canada from time to time, below which financial assistance will be considered.
- 6.6. Persons with a household income below LICO will be issued an identification card (known as the "Access Card") to be presented when registering for recreation programs or purchasing conventional transit passes. Presentation of the "Access Card" and identification will entitle cardholders to discounted prices as set out in the User Fee By-Law.

- 6.7. Staff will discuss options with any individual experiencing difficulty paying the non-subsidized portion of the user fee. Options may include staggered payments and/or a referral to external financial assistance programs (e.g. Canadian Tire Jumpstart).

7. GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING UNIVERSAL AND PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMING

- 7.1. The City of Elliot Lake will continually engage partners and seek out funding for the delivery of affordable recreation programming.
- 7.2. Space, in-kind support and/or promotional resources will be made available, wherever feasible, to support agencies and partnerships delivering recreation based services and programs, providing such support minimizes costs to the user and builds awareness of opportunities to the broader community.

8. STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 8.1. The City of Elliot Lake will provide the necessary training and tools to assist staff in the development of programs as set out by this policy. Training will include, but not be limited to Community Demographics; Program Development; Social Service Programs; City of Elliot Lake Financial Assistance Procedure; Engaging Youth-at-Risk; Provincial Access to Recreation for Low Income Families Toolkit and Customer Service.

9. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS UTILIZING CITY OF ELLIOT LAKE FACILITIES

- 9.1. The City of Elliot Lake will provide support to assist community organizations to develop approaches to respond to requests for subsidized access to sport and recreation programs they deliver.
- 9.2. Referrals to other sources of funds or external financial assistance programs (e.g. Canadian Tire Jumpstart, ADSAB and Salvation Army) will be utilized wherever possible to support families and community organizations.

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 10.1. Subsidy levels will be reviewed during the annual review of the User Fee By-law and this Policy. Staff will update the LICO threshold annually in July or when released by Statistics Canada.
- 10.2. The City of Elliot Lake will undertake an evaluation of the Affordable Access to Recreation & Transit Policy periodically after it is fully implemented to assess its effectiveness and to identify amendments if required.
- 10.3. Any proposed substantive amendments will be submitted to Council for consideration and approval during the review.