

Lac La Biche County *Policy*

TITLE: Fair Access Fee Assistance

POLICY NO: CM-71-028

RESOLUTION: 21.438

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 1, 2021

DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE: Recreation & Culture

NEXT REVIEW DATE: June 1, 2024

POLICY STATEMENT:

Lac La Biche County recognizes the importance of providing inclusive programs and services that enhance resident's quality of life, regardless of financial circumstances. This policy was developed for individuals and families to access a range of programs and services offered by the County by providing financial assistance or subsidies to those who qualify.

Administration shall establish procedures for this policy and shall be responsible to ensure the spirit and intent of the policy is adhered to.

DEFINITIONS:

- 1.1 **Family** refers to individuals, related by blood, marriage, or adoption or upon presentation of proof that an individual is legally considered to be part of their immediate family and resides within the same residence.
- 1.2 **Individual** refers to any resident of Lac La Biche County and can include child, youth, student, adult, or senior.
- 1.3 **Low Income Cut-off (LICO)** refers to income thresholds (determined by analyzing family composition and annual income per household) as determined by Statistics Canada.
- 1.4 **Programs** refer to activities, workshops or classes that are offered by the County that may be self-directed or instructional, introductory or specialty and are typically of an ongoing nature. Program fees may be charged for the delivery of the activity.
- 1.5 **Services** refers to activities such as memberships, passes or drop-in fees to access recreation facilities, facility bookings and equipment rentals, and may also include the community access bus or other services offered by the County from time to time.
- 1.6 **Social Service Referral Agencies** refers to government based and local agencies who work with vulnerable populations and includes but is not limited to professionals within the social work sector, school administrators, police officers, lawyers, members of clergy, etc.

PRINCIPLES:

- 1.1 This policy applies to individuals and families residing within Lac La Biche County jurisdiction boundaries.
- 1.2 Funding for Fair Access Fee Assistance will be approved annually by County Council during the budget process.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all eligible programs, memberships and services directly delivered by the Recreation & Culture and Family Community Support Services (FCSS) departments. It excludes programs and services where discounts and/or other subsidies already exist.
- 1.4 Recreation & Community Services division will be responsible for the administration and reporting on Fair Access Fee Assistance process including:
 - i. establishing a consistent and transparent process to review criteria and approval of requests for assistance; and
 - ii. establishing documentation guidelines to track, monitor and evaluate effectiveness and identify improvements or changes to support budget preparations if required.

“Original Signed”
Chief Administrative Officer

June 14, 2021
Date

“Original Signed”
Mayor

June 15, 2021
Date

SPECIAL NOTES/CROSS REFERENCE: CM-71-028 Procedure

AMENDMENT DATE:

Procedure

TITLE: Fair Access Fee Assistance

PROCEDURE NO: CM-71-028

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 1, 2021

DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE: Recreation & Culture

NEXT REVIEW DATE: June 1, 2024

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

Lac La Biche County recognizes the importance of providing inclusive programs and services that enhance resident's quality of life, regardless of financial circumstances. The Fair Access Fee Assistance Policy was developed for individuals and families to access a range of programs and services offered by the County by providing fee assistance or subsidies to those who qualify.

Recognizing that the provision of recreation, culture and social services must be supported through taxation and program/user fees, by providing fee assistance Lac La Biche County offers all residents access to safe, inclusive programming and events, and more services at a lower cost. Individuals and families will have more opportunities to be active and healthy, learn or acquire new skills, feel connected and valued within their community, thus contributing to the well-being and enhanced quality of life of all county residents.

PROCEDURE:

1. The amount of fee assistance support will be part of the annual budgeting process approved by County Council. The availability of fee assistance will be communicated to Lac La Biche residents via the Bold Center and Lac La Biche County websites and social media pages, Community Activity Guide, printed publications, one on one conversations and communication during events and programs.
2. The process of obtaining fee assistance will be non-intrusive, eliminate stigma and respect individuals' dignity and confidentiality. Recreation & Culture and Family Community Support Services (FCSS) will work together with other Social Service Referral Agencies (herein referred to as Referral Agencies) to identify potential fee assistance candidates. Referral Agencies may also apply on the applicant's behalf or endorse individuals or families who cannot provide the required documentation.
3. Approval for fee assistance will be based on the Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO) thresholds for annual household income from Statistics Canada. As the median average income in Lac La Biche is considerably higher than the provincial average, Administration may also take other factors into consideration such as social and domestic issues, emergency funding, referrals from

Referral Agencies, etc. when reviewing and approving fee assistance. Those applying will be required to provide proof of income such as a Tax Notice of Assessment, Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) card, Social Assistance statement or other government supported documentation that include full name (*bank statements and pay stubs will not be accepted*) or be endorsed by an eligible Referral Agency to be considered.

4. The Recreation & Culture Manager will meet with FCSS & Community Development Manager to review, approve, or decline requests in accordance with the criteria and guidelines set out within this procedure. An intake appointment is required to review program guidelines and responsibilities with applicants. Those receiving fee assistance will only have names and amounts shared with staff for the purpose of administering the program. All other financial details and information will be protected and secured at the management level.
5. Recreation & Culture and Family Community Support Services (FCSS) staff will receive training on the criteria, availability, and administration of fee assistance to further promote the program to residents.
6. The amount of fee assistance provided to individuals and/or families will be determined based on total budget allocation, consideration of each individual's/family's circumstance and programs/services of interest. Typically, an individual may apply for a maximum of \$250 per person per calendar year, however, if the need for assistance exceeds this amount, Managers may allocate additional amounts on case by case basis as funds are available. Applicants may be expected to pay a portion of the program or service fees (up to 20%) and any remaining balance must be paid by the applicant at the time of application or registration. If applicants cannot afford the partial payment, they must discuss with those reviewing applications for further consideration. Applicants will be made aware of other fee assistance options during intake appointment to ensure maximum participation and funding is provided (e.g.) Kidsport™, social service and government funding when eligible.
7. Some services, including individual day admissions and where other subsidies or discounts already apply, fee assistance may not be required or available. Requests of this nature will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
8. Fee assistance is valid for the calendar year for which it is issued. Funding cannot be carried over. It is non-refundable and non-transferable, although credits may be issued if programs are cancelled or services are suspended by the County.
9. Recreation & Culture and Family Community Support Services (FCSS) will monitor and periodically check in with recipients to ensure programs and services are being utilized.

10. If a recipient abuses the intent of the fee assistance program or fails to participate in programs or make use of the services funded through the fee assistance program, the County reserves the right to restrict participation and may result in future applications being declined.

“Original Signed”
Chief Administrative Officer

June 14, 2021
Date

SPECIAL NOTES/CROSS REFERENCE: Policy CM-71-028

AMENDMENT DATE:

How do I apply?

- Complete application form
- Provide copies of proof of income & residency
- Speak to a Referral Agency (*refer to list below for examples*) if you cannot produce proof or copies
- Contact FCSS at 780-623-6819 to book intake appointment
- Bring application and copies (*or have Referral Agency complete section _ on application form*)
- Applicants will be notified of application status following intake appointment

Referral Agencies

- Professional in the social work sector
- School teacher, guidance counsellor or principal
- Police officer
- Lawyer
- Member of clergy (faith based leaders)



 **FAIR
ACCESS**

Contact us:

- ☎ 780-623-3829 or 780-623-6745
- ✉ recreation@laclabichedcounty.com
- 📘 [Facebook.com/BoldCenter](https://www.facebook.com/BoldCenter) or FCSS

Need help to access County programs, services or facilities?

One application process for all
Lac La Biche County subsidy programs



Income should not be a barrier to participation

Fair Access Fee Assistance Program

All Lac La Biche County residents should have fair and equal access to County programs, services and recreation facilities, but cost can be a barrier for some. Fair Access is a single application process for low income residents to access County programs, services and facilities at reduced rates. Applications are accepted throughout the year, but funding is based on and must be used within each calendar year.

How do I qualify?

You must be a Lac La Biche County resident and provide proof of income:

- AISH (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped) card or statement
- Income Support or other Alberta Health Benefits Program (current card, letter or statement)
- Notice of Assessment for most recent year for each family member over 18 years living in residence
- Referral Agency Endorsement (professional who will confirm financial need)

Where can I get an application?

Application forms are available for pick up at all County facilities and online at www.boldcenter.ca/programs or <https://www.laclabichedcounty.com/our-services/facilities-recreation-programs/bold-center>.

Lac La Biche County values the benefits of health, wellness and social connectivity to enhance the quality of life for all residents regardless of financial circumstances



FAIR ACCESS PROGRAMS & SERVICES AVAILABLE



All Access Passes to County Recreation Facilities

Stay fit, try new activities and enjoy drop in opportunities at the Bold Center, Portage Pool and Plamondon Arena.

Recreation & Culture Programs

Maintain your physical and mental wellbeing by staying active and creative with reduced registration fees on recreation and culture programs.



Family Community Support Service (FCSS) Programs

Most FCSS programs are offered for free, but those with registration fees will be reduced. Learn new skills & connect with others in your community.

Community Access Bus

Discounted punch passes available for the Community Access and Paratransit bus services.





Fair Access Fee Assistance Application Form



Section 1: Program(s) & Service(s)

The following are opportunities available through Lac La Biche County's Fair Access Fee Assistance program up to a maximum of **\$250** per person per calendar year.

Please select those you are interested in applying for:

- Recreation All Access Pass (access to Bold Center, Portage Pool and Plamondon Arena)
- Recreation & Culture Programs
- Family Community Support Services (FCSS) Programs
- Community Access Bus Pass

Section 2: Applicant Information

First Name	Last Name	Gender	Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)
Unit/Apt./Suite #	Mailing Address	Postal Code	
Home Phone #	Cell Phone #		
Email	Best way to contact you		
	<input type="checkbox"/> phone <input type="checkbox"/> email <input type="checkbox"/> text		

Residency Verification

This program is only available to qualifying residents of Lac La Biche County. Please provide copy of one of the following items that includes applicant's name and current physical address. **if you cannot provide copies of any, please speak with a County representative for assistance.*

- Notice of Assessment
- Drivers' License
- Recent Bank Statement or Utility Bill
- Municipal Tax Notice

Family Information

List all ***family** members of your household in the space below. Include children under the age of 18 years.

**Family definition: individuals, related by blood, marriage, or adoption or upon presentation of proof that an individual is legally considered to be part of their immediate family and resides within the same residence.*

	First Name	Last Name	Relationship to Applicant	Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)	Gender	Total Annual Income Before Tax*	Indicate Program/Service for each member if multiple being applied for from list in Section 1
1.						\$	
2.						\$	
3.						\$	
4.						\$	
5.						\$	
6.						\$	
7.						\$	
Add income of all family members					Total Income	\$	

**If submitting Canada Revenue Agency Notice of Assessment, copy amount shown on Line 150 for all family members 18 or older. If submitting a different document from the list of eligible documents leave income column blank.*



Fair Access Fee Assistance Application Form



Section 3: Income Verification

To be eligible, applicants must complete either A or B to verify your financial situation and attend a short intake appointment with Lac La Biche staff representatives to discuss program guidelines and opportunities.

A) Please attach photocopy of one (1) of the following Government Proof of Income documents:

- Alberta Works (Health Benefit, Income Subsidy/Support), include current benefits statement or letter
- AISH (card or statement)
- Notice of Assessment for most recent tax year (for each adult over 18 years living in the residence)

B) Referral Agency Endorsement

A Referral Agency acts as an objective third party who will endorse and vouch for the applicant's financial situation. The Referral Agency must have a recent professional relationship with and be familiar with the individual or family applying. A referral must come from one of the following:

- professional from a social agency/ social worker
- teacher, guidance counselor or principal
- police officer
- lawyer
- member of clergy (faith-based leader)

Referral Agency Contact: _____

Organization: _____

Position: _____

Length of time they have known applicant: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Section 4: Consent Statement

I, _____ declare that:
Applicant Full Name (please print)

1. The information contained within my application is true and correct.
2. I give Lac La Biche County my permission to verify the information provided within this application.
3. It is my responsibility to inform all members of my family about the program and conditions of use.
4. Misuse of the program privileges or misinformation provided on this application may result in a loss of privileges or penalty.

Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

Applicant Signature

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION ACT

Lac La Biche County respects your privacy and is committed to the Protection of Personal Information from unauthorized collection, access, use and disclosure. The Personal Information provided on this application is collected pursuant to Section 33(c) of Alberta's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act* and will be used for the purpose of administering the Fair Access Fee Assistance Program. Upon confirmation of income and residency, all copies of documents will be destroyed, or originals returned to the applicant. Should you have any questions regarding the collection, use and disclosure of information submitted in this application, please contact the Manager, Legislative Services for Lac La Biche County at 780-623-1747.

For Office Use Only

Intake Appointment date: _____ (dd/mm/yyyy) and time: _____ am/pm

Application has been approved denied by _____ date _____ (dd/mm/yyyy)
LLBC staff representative name(s)

Applicant Follow Up Notes: