

# CITY OF LACEY PARKS, CULTURE & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

## POLICY NAME: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICY

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the City's Financial Assistance program. The goals of the program are to:

- a. Offer recreation program opportunities to those in the community who could not afford to participate otherwise.
- b. Advertise the Financial Assistance program so that it is more accessible and known throughout the community.
- c. Create a stable source of funds in a dedicated account/s, accept donations, and promote the Financial Assistance program.

### 2. Policy Statement

Lacey Parks, Culture & Recreation Board has determined that a Financial Assistance program policy is necessary and appropriate to provide equity and accessibility to programs that charge fees for participation.

There are funds available for Financial Assistance, however funds are limited and a policy is needed for how to best allocate them equitably to community members.

The application and guidelines for the program are set forth in this policy.

### 3. Definitions

- a. **Parks, Culture & Recreation Board (Parks Board):** A board which makes recommendations to the Director of LPCR, the City Council and other City departments with respect to parks, culture and recreation matters.
- b. **Financial Assistance:** A sum of money granted to a recipient because of need to pursue participation in an LPCR program.

### 4. Financial Assistance Funds

- a. Annual Financial Assistance Program fund (based on 1% of program registration fees, General Fund account approved by City Council during annual budget process).
- b. Financial Assistance Donations Funds (example: PARC Foundation Financial Assistance Fund)

## 5. Eligibility

- a. Residents may request financial assistance for recreation programs every trimester.
- b. Residency: Verification of residency within the City of Lacey limits or within North Thurston Public Schools (NTPS) boundary must be submitted with the application. Accepted forms of verification are an NTPS document or identification or a utility bill. In the absence of a permanent address, a referral may be submitted in lieu of residency documents (see Residency Referral, Section 7).
- c. Income: Department of Social & Health (DSHS) requirements for free and reduced lunch will be used to determine income eligibility. Verification of income is required by one of the following:
  - i. A copy of last year's tax return.
  - ii. Documentation from NTPS verifying free and reduced lunch or an NTPS benefits letter.
  - iii. In lieu of income verification documents, a detailed letter of explanation outlining the financial need will be accepted. Please address in the letter why one of the other three options is not available as verification.
- d. Eligibility must be established each calendar year. Beginning December 1, applications will be accepted for the following year of programs. Applications for specific programs and classes need to be submitted each trimester.

## 6. Procedure

- a. Executive Assistant or designee will review applications as received to ensure all the requirements have been met for income and residency eligibility. Deadlines for applications are as follows:
  - i. December 1 – Winter/Spring trimester
  - ii. May 1 – Summer trimester
  - iii. September 1 – Fall trimester
- b. Applications that satisfy income and residency requirements will be considered in order of date and time received.
  - i. Decisions regarding Financial Assistance awards should be made within five business days after receipt of application.
  - ii. If a household has already been awarded funding that calendar year, other households would take priority.
  - iii. Every awarded household will receive a \$200 credit to be used for the Winter/Spring programs, a \$100 credit to be used for the

Summer programs, and a \$100 credit to be used for the Fall programs as indicated on their application.

- iv. Any unused funds will remain on the household account for future use, but will expire at the end of the calendar year.
  - v. Refunds may not be requested for Financial Assistance funds. A household can apply for multiple trimesters if Financial Assistance funds are still available. The Financial Assistance program goal is to reach as many households as possible (limit \$400 per household per year).
- c. Executive Assistant or designee will provide approvals to Department Assistants for the crediting of accounts in the recreation registration program.
  - d. Funds are assigned to eligible recipients first from the Annual Financial Assistance Program Fund, not to exceed 33% of the total funds each trimester.
  - e. If sufficient funding is not available for all requests in a given trimester from the Annual Financial Assistance Program Fund, the Executive Assistant will meet with the Department Director to consider allocating funds from the Financial Assistance Donations Fund that most closely matches the desired program. However, no more than 50% of Financial Assistance Donations Fund will be used in a single year.
  - f. Executive Assistant or designee will notify the applicant of the denial or award amount based on the application timeline.
  - g. Executive Assistant or designee will provide an annual report to Director and Parks Board regarding Financial Assistance Fund balances and number of Financial Assistance awards.

## **7. Residency Referral Procedure**

- a. In order to participate, a referral from the following sources may be submitted:
  - i. NTPS Homeless & Foster Care Representative
  - ii. Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Representative
  - iii. Community Youth Services (CYS) Representative
  - iv. Non-profit or Shelter Representative
- b. For all Day Camp Programs (programs spanning three consecutive days or more), every household that is awarded will receive the funds necessary to cover the cost of participation for up to two weeks per child as long as funding is available per Section 6d and 6e. *If funding allows, the opportunity for additional weeks may be made available.*

- c. For Day Camp Programs, applications will be accepted:
  - i. February 1<sup>st</sup> – Spring & Summer Day Camps
  - ii. September 1<sup>st</sup> – Fall Day Camps
  - iii. December 1<sup>st</sup> – Winter Day Camps
  
- d. For all non-Day Camp Programs, please see Section 6.

ORIGINAL DATE OF ADOPTION: 2010

Updated: December 4, 2019

Updated: November 3, 2021

Updated: April 5, 2023