

**Selectboard
Stowe Parks & Recreation
Financial Assistance Program Policy**

Purpose:

To provide policy guidance for the Financial Assistance Program (FAP) that provides financial assistance to Stowe residents that desire to participate in Stowe Parks & Recreation programs and activities.

Funding:

Funding for the FAP is through voluntary donations. The Recreation Commission may solicit donations and undertake fund raising activities.

Scholarships:

Scholarships are awarded based upon family income and outside assistance based on Vermont Income Eligibility Guidelines Free and Reduced Price School Meals or Free School Milk. Financial assistance can be awarded in concurrence with outside organizations and is awarded on a first come, first serve basis in accordance with program availability, eligibility and funds available. Reduced rates apply only to the program fee. Materials fees, required equipment and other expenses are not covered under the FAP. Programs sponsored or run by other organizations are not eligible for scholarships.

Administration:

The Parks & Recreation Director with input from the Recreation Program Director and Administrative Assistance will administer the FAP. There will be a \$500 annual limit per individual per fiscal year.

Procedures:

The Parks & Recreation Director will be responsible for reviewing the financial information provided and will award or deny scholarships based on the guidelines set in Rules of Participation.

The Recreation Program Director and/or designated staff is responsible for

1. Tracking applications throughout the process and maintaining a file containing the application, date received, date of approval or denial, letter to the applicant and any other pertinent paperwork.
2. Contacting the individual requesting assistance.
3. Billing and collection of non-scholarship fees per the department payment for service guidelines.
4. Tracking funds available and awarded on a seasonal and annual basis.
5. Providing quarterly reports of amounts awarded. Ongoing report spreadsheet will show the amounts awarded and amounts used by recipient as well as remaining funds available.

Rules of Participation:

1. Only residents of Stowe may apply for FAP scholarships. Proof of residency, such as, a copy of an electric bill may be required.
2. A scholarship application form must be completed for each participant/program. Verification of income must be provided in order for the application to be considered.
3. A 25% deposit is required to secure a space in the program while the application is being reviewed. If a deposit is not provided, the program may be filled while the application process is being completed.
4. Financial assistance is awarded to as many Stowe residents as possible on a first come, first serve basis in accordance with program availability, eligibility and funds available.
5. Vermont Department of Education Free School Milk Program Income Eligibility Guidelines is used to determine amounts and eligibility, applicants can qualify for full scholarship or 50% discount. Scholarships are awarded up to \$500 annually per individual per fiscal year.

Application/Award Process:

1. Complete scholarship application and return to Parks & Recreation Department.
2. Include verification of income with the application. Provide photocopies, not originals, of current earnings and support, such as, pay stubs, child support/alimony, and social security. An applicant may attach notes, a letter from the employer on company letterhead or other documentation that may allow them to be considered on special circumstances rather than actual income.
3. Applications may be received with or ahead of the registration form and deposit.
 - a. If received without a deposit, the participant will not be registered until a deposit is received.
 - b. If received with a letter on official letterhead from an outside organization guaranteeing partial coverage of the program, the participant will be registered in the program pending approval.
4. The application will be reviewed and approved or denied based upon the FAP guidelines. If unable to make a decision based on the information provided, the applicant will be contacted for additional information.
5. Once a scholarship is approved or denied, the applicant will be sent a letter within 5 working days and an email, if applicable, advising them of the decision.
6. Any applicant may ask for their request to be reconsidered based on the amount denied or awarded. Requests must be made in writing and additional supporting materials provided.
7. Full payment must be received prior to program participation per the Town's recreation payment policy.
8. Any awards not utilized by the participant will be returned to the FAP fund at the end of the season.
9. Applicants with an outstanding balance due are not eligible for financial assistance for new program registrations.

Updated 4/9/18