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**PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE COMMISSION**

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: 2023 RECREATION CREDIT EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. THAT Council approve holders of Privately Sponsored Refugee status or the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel documents be exempt from providing proof of income for the first year of arrival to Canada, as outlined in this report.
2. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the Social Planning Committee for information.

**REPORT**

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission, at its Open meeting held on 2023 January 10, received and adopted the attached report seeking Council approval for the Recreation Credit criteria to be expanded to include holders of Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel documents and Privately Sponsored Refugees.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor S. Dhaliwal  
Chair

Commissioner R. Kent  
Deputy Chair

Copied to: Chief Administrative Officer Deputy CAO/CFO GM Corporate Services
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**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE  
COMMISSION **DATE:** 2022 Dec 14

**FROM:** GENERAL MANAGER  
PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE **FILE:** 7000-04

**SUBJECT: 2023 RECREATION CREDIT EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

**PURPOSE:** To request that the criteria for Recreation Credit be expanded to include holders of Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel documents and Privately Sponsored Refugees.

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### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **THAT** the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission recommend Council approve that holders of Privately Sponsored Refugee status or the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel documents be exempt from providing proof of income for the first year of arrival to Canada as outlined in this report.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to the Social Planning Committee for information.

## **REPORT**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Participation in recreation is vital for physical, mental and social well-being. Specifically, the rights of children to have access to recreation and culture opportunities is universally accepted under the UN convention on the Rights of a Child. Families experiencing poverty have multiple barriers when it comes to recreation and culture participation. Burnaby's Recreation Credit Program provides a financial credit to Burnaby residents in financial need, to be used at any Burnaby Parks, Recreation and Culture facility for programs and admissions. In order to be eligible for the Recreation Credit Program, a resident must apply and meet the following criteria:

- Live in Burnaby (proof of address is required);
- Be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident or refugee;

- Qualify as low income or receiving government income assistance.

## 2.0 POLICY SECTION

The recommendations identified in this report align with the City’s Social Sustainability Strategy. Participation in Parks, Recreation and Culture (“PRC”) programs and services contributes to improved physical, mental and social health, by developing life-long skills, fitness, social and cultural connections.

The Recreation Credit program is currently defined under the Burnaby Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission Policy Manual.

## 3.0 BACKGROUND

Municipal Parks, Recreation and Culture services and programs are delivered with a goal of being accessible to all, regardless of ability to pay. Burnaby has had a program in place since the early 1980’s to assist people living in poverty so they can access PRC programs and services. Last updated in 2021, the program is in need of a review and update in order to reflect current social conditions and municipal best practices. A full review of all the PRC low-income access strategies is planned for 2023 as part of an overall update to the department’s Fees and Charges policy framework. Until that review is completed, there is an immediate update to the program that staff are recommending as discussed below.

## 4.0 DISCUSSION

Since 2015, over 19,000 people have settled in BC under the Canadian federal refugee program. Under the existing Recreation Credit Program criteria (Attachment #1), individuals receiving “income assistance from the Ministry of Social Development, or the Canadian Immigration Centre Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) or ISS” are eligible for the credit. While this applies to most individuals with refugee status in Canada, it does preclude Privately Sponsored Refugees (“PSR”) and other individuals who have special authorization from Canada. For example, holders of the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel are not classified as refugees under the existing federal legislation as the program is intended to provide temporary assistance until it is safe for Ukrainian residents to return home. Instead, they are considered to be on visitor visas with an open work permit and, therefore, not eligible based on the current criteria.

Individuals holding PSR status and special immigration authorizations are typically fleeing dire circumstances in their own countries and are temporarily or permanently settling in Canada with limited income. Further, due to missing documentation or waiting for other government agencies to process paperwork, these individuals and families face significant hurdles in providing proof of low-income, one of the key criteria for eligibility for the Recreation Credit Program. The end result is these newcomers are denied access to Burnaby’s Recreation Credit Program until they can produce a Notice of Assessment from Revenue Canada, which can take up to a year to receive. Given this, staff are proposing

To: Parks, Recreation & Culture Commission  
From: General Manager – Parks, Rec and Culture  
Re: 2023 Exemption to Recreation Credit Program  
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that holders of PSR and the Canada-Ukraine authorization for Emergency Travel, be eligible for the Recreation Credit program for one year after arrival.

A further and detailed review of the existing Recreation Credit Program will be initiated in 2023. It is expected that this review will provide access to additional immigrant and refugee groups and easier and greater access for low-income residents of Burnaby. The outcome of this analysis will be shared with Commission and Council. As a formal policy for the program will be developed, Council will be requested to approve any changes to the program moving forward.

### **5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

There is \$1,008,100 in the (2023) PRC annual budget for the Recreation Credit program. Over the past 5 years, the annual average amount charged to the program has been \$481,668. The widening of the eligibility criteria can be absorbed into the existing PRC budget. The current Program gives a credit on a person's PRC account of \$200 per year (pro-rated).

### **6.0 RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the eligibility criteria for the Recreation Credit Program be expanded to allow holders of Privately Sponsored Refugee status or the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel documents to be exempt from providing proof of income for the first year of arrival to Canada as outlined in this report. Any re-applications in subsequent years will follow the approved verification process.



Mary Morrison-Clark  
GENERAL MANAGER PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE

#### Attachment

TK:dc:tc  
2023 Recreation Credit Exemption for Holders of Canada-Ukraine Authorization

Copied to: Deputy CAO/CFO  
GM Corporate Services  
City Solicitor