

DATE OF MEETING NOVEMBER 13, 2024
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SUBJECT LEISURE ECONOMIC ACCESS PASS (LEAP) REVIEW UPDATE

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (ACAI) an overview and update of the recommendations from the Leisure Economic Access Pass (LEAP) review.

BACKGROUND

In 2020 and 2021, a review of the LEAP program was conducted and several phases were brought forward to the ACAI for input. In total, 14 recommendations were supported by the ACAI and approved by Mayor and Council. As a result, a number of changes have since been implemented to reduce barriers and help make LEAP more accessible to the community.

DISCUSSION

Changes to the LEAP program have been well received and there has been a significant increase in the number of LEAP passes issued as a result of these changes. The recommendations were implemented with overall goals being: 1. To reduce barriers to the application process; and 2. Increase participation in the LEAP program.

The LEAP changes align with City Plan and several goals of the Integrated Action Plan such as:

C3.3.1 – *“Support equitable access for children, youth, and families to City recreational programs and facilities. Examples include the Leisure Economic Access Pass (LEAP) program, supports to sport and youth organizations, and the Health Hub at the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre.”*

C4.2.16 – *“Implement Phase 2 of the Leisure Economic Access Pass (LEAP) program review and take steps to build partnerships within the community for administering the LEAP program.”*

C4.2.4 – *“Continue to offer a Leisure Economic Access Pass (LEAP) to support citizens in financial need to access Parks, Recreation and Culture community programs and services.”*

C4.5.6 – *“Offer the Leisure Economic Access Pass (LEAP) program to support citizens in financial need to access culture community programs and services.”*

The total number of passes issued are:

2011	2556
2012	2151
2013	1815
2014	1485
2015	1027
2016	775
2017	665
2018	665
2019	579
2020	300
2021	499
2022	1102
2023	2222
2024	2587

The 14 recommendations of the LEAP review are:

1. No longer include additional income on top of the Notice of Assessment (NOA) (ie. Child tax benefit, spousal support, rental income).	Complete
2. No longer require at TD1 for incomes under \$9000.	Complete
3. Make the application process easier by reducing the amount of supporting documentation to one piece of photo ID, proof of residency and proof of eligibility.	Complete
4. Provide an option for applying online.	Complete
5. Revise/simplify the application form to make it more easily understandable.	Complete
6. Offer private appointments for applicants to discuss the program with a Recreation Coordinator privately by phone or in-person.	Complete
7. Allow a one-time top up of 50 punches if all their drop ins are used.	Complete
8. Provide alternate options for proof of need, other than NOA. Basically "pre-approvals" for folks who have already been financially scrutinized by another level of government and are already deemed low-income.	Complete
9. For folks whose situation is unlikely to change in a 1 year period, issue a 2 year LEAP pass to reduce the requirement to reapply every year (2 years instead) and give double the entitlements.	Complete
10. Create a process for adjudicators or agency referrals.	In Progress
11. Work with other City owned facility operators to expand the LEAP program offerings to include our culture partners.	In Progress
12. Research options for reducing transportation barriers.	In Progress
13. Research how post-secondary students could be included in the LEAP program and/or if there's a partnership possibility for VIU.	Future
14. Create a marketing and communications plan and connect with key organizations and community partners.	Future

CONCLUSION

Due to the feedback and input of the ACAI committee and their involvement in the review, the LEAP program has seen significant improvements in the past few years. The LEAP program has seen increases in participation and will continue to support Nanaimo residents living in poverty to access recreation and culture programs and services in the future. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- A review of the Leisure Economic Access Policy (LEAP) was undertaken in 2020-2021.
- ACAI supported 14 recommendations that were approved by Mayor and Council.
- Many recommendations have already been implemented and have been very well received by the community.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: LEAP Powerpoint Presentation. |

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