



STAFF REPORT

City Council Meeting Date: 7/9/2024
Staff Report Number: 24-124-CC

Consent Calendar: Adopt a resolution updating the recreation scholarship policy

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution (Attachment A) updating the recreation scholarship policy (Attachment B).

Policy Issues

City Council provides policy direction to the city manager regarding services to the community; allocates resources to support City services; and sets prioritization for the use of City resources to serve the community.

Library and community services user policies establish rules, expectations, and procedures for the operation and public use of department programs, services, facilities and resources. User policies are available for public review in person at City recreation facilities, libraries, and online at the City of Menlo Park website (Attachment C).

Background

On March 9, 2021, City Council directed staff to develop a pilot program for need-based recreation scholarships for residents of Menlo Park (Attachment D).

On May 26, 2021, the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) recommended a recreation scholarship pilot program (Attachment E).

On Aug. 31, 2021, City Council received an update about the creation of a recreation scholarship policy (Attachment F).

On March 27, the PRC recommended updates to the recreation scholarship policy (Attachment G). After a standard administrative review of the PRC-recommended policy by the city manager and city attorney before presenting the recommended policy updates to City Council for adoption, staff recommended additional updates to those presented to the PRC.

On June 26, the PRC recommended the additional updates as presented (Attachment H). The recommended updates are outlined in the Analysis section of this report.

Analysis

The purpose of the recreation scholarship policy is to eliminate barriers that can result from registration fees

by providing discounted recreation fees to qualifying low and moderate-income residents, subject to applicable rules and criteria. Proposed revisions to the current policy are presented with a clean version of the updated policy showing all updates incorporated (Attachment A) and a markup of the current policy showing recommended additions in underline and recommended deletions in strikethrough (Attachment B).

Updates to the recreation scholarship policy version recommended by the PRC March 27 include:

- Reorder and reformat the document to current City document standards
- Clarify records privacy language
- Add criteria for determining discounted recreation fees between 50% and 75% off the resident fee
- Remove summer camps and aquatics programs from the exclusions list to facilitate the possibility of expanding scholarships to these programs in the future. Currently, the Beyond Barriers Athletic Foundation (BBAF) nonprofit organization provides scholarships for youth swim lessons in Menlo Park. For example in 2023, BBAF provided scholarships supporting 1,919 swim lessons for 144 youth at Burgess Pool.

Additional updates recommended by the PRC June 26 after a standard administrative review by the city manager and city attorney include:

- Clarify that only incorporated Menlo Park residents are eligible
- List all facilities that provide activities applicable to recreation scholarships
- Establish a timeframe for future policy reviews in conjunction with master fee schedule updates
- Clarify the parties responsible for performing the annual policy review
- Remove birthdate question from application form and replace with a general age group question
- Add Calwater's fee assistance program to the list of example documents.

Impact on City Resources

The proposed policy revisions are not expected to have a significant impact to the General Fund. The policy could result in slightly reduced revenues from recreation fees collected from a relatively small number of program participants who otherwise may not have participated in recreation programs due to barriers resulting from recreation user fees.

Participation in the recreation scholarship policy relies on documentation of income eligibility through enrollment in another income-based rate assistance program such as Menlo Park Municipal Water rate assistance or enrollment at Belle Haven Child Development Center (BHCDC). City records indicate that approximately 100 Menlo Park households are enrolled in the water rate assistance program, and approximately 62 children are enrolled at BHCDC, of whom 37 are Menlo Park residents. Some overlap is likely, in that some households qualify for multiple income-based rate assistance programs.

The city's recreation programs typically enroll in three seasons per year – spring-summer, fall and winter. There were 24 total recreation scholarships provided in fiscal year 2023-2024, all in the gymnastics program. These scholarships provided reduced registration fees for a combined total \$1,915 fee reductions, an average \$80 fee reduction per scholarship in fiscal year 2023-24.

Staff increased promotion of the recreation scholarship policy to coincide with the opening of the Belle Haven Community Campus. Staff estimates that with additional promotion and marketing, participation in the recreation scholarship program could potentially increase up to 100 participants, which would be a significant increase of 25 times more participants than are currently receiving recreation scholarships. Preliminary analysis suggests that if participation in the recreation scholarship program increases to a high of

100 participants, who each receive average \$100 fee reductions in each of three recreation registration seasons per year, the city would potentially collect approximately \$30,000 less per year in registration fee revenue. For context, the fiscal year 2024-25 adopted budget projects approximately \$1.67 million in total annual revenue from recreation registration fees, including recreation, sports and gymnastics program fees across all facilities.

Environmental Review

The policies in this report are not a project within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §§ 15378 and 15061(b)(3) as they will not result in any direct or indirect physical change in the environment.

Public Notice

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with the agenda items being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

Attachments

- A. Resolution
- B. Recreation scholarship policy (markup)
- C. Hyperlink – Library and Community Services department policies and procedures webpage: menlopark.gov/Government/Departments/Library-and-Community-Services/About-us/Policies-and-procedures
- D. Hyperlink – March 9, 2021, Staff Report #21-050-CC: menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/city-council/2021-meetings/agendas/20210309-city-council-agenda-packet.pdf#page=90
- E. Hyperlink – May 26, 2021, Staff Report #21-011-PRC: menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/parks-and-recreation-commission/2021-meetings/agendas/20210526-parks-and-rec-agenda.pdf#page=15
- F. Hyperlink – Aug. 31, 2021, Staff Report #21-162-CC: menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/city-council/2021-meetings/agendas/20210831-city-council-agenda-packet.pdf#page=712
- G. Hyperlink – March 27 Staff Report #PRC-2024-007: menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/parks-and-recreation-commission/2024-meetings/agendas/20240327_parks_and_recreation_regular_meeting_agenda.pdf#page=31
- H. Hyperlink – June 26, Staff Report #PRC-2024-020: menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/parks-and-recreation-commission/2024-meetings/agendas/20240626-parks-and-recreation-commission-regular-agenda.pdf#page=98

Report prepared by:
Natalya Jones, Library and Community Services Manager

Report reviewed by:
Sean S. Reinhart, Library and Community Services Director

RESOLUTION NO. XXXX

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MENLO PARK
UPDATING THE RECREATION SCHOLARSHIP POLICY**

WHEREAS, library and community services departmental policies establish rules, expectations, and procedures for the operation and public use of department programs, services, facilities and resources; and

WHEREAS, from time to time, it is appropriate and necessary to review and update departmental policies, or to create new policies in the interest of clarifying rules and procedures, responding to changing community needs, establishing criteria for programs and services, and other considerations; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the recreation scholarship policy is to eliminate barriers that can result from registration fees by providing discounted recreation fees to qualifying low and moderate-income residents, subject to applicable rules and criteria; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Menlo Park, acting by and through its City Council, having considered and been fully advised in the matter and good cause appearing therefore do hereby revise the recreation scholarship policy as shown in Exhibit A, attached herewith.

I, Judi A. Herren, City Clerk of Menlo Park, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing City Council Resolution was duly and regularly passed and adopted at a meeting by said City Council on the ninth day of July, 2024, by the following votes:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Official Seal of said City on this __ day of __, 2024.

Judi A. Herren, City Clerk

Exhibits:

A. Recreation scholarship policy

RECREATION SCHOLARSHIP POLICY

City Council Policy #CC-24-XXX

Adopted XX XX, 2024

Resolution No. XXXX



Purpose
<p>The recreation scholarship policy is intended to help reduce and eliminate barriers that can result from registration fees. Recreation scholarships provide discounted recreation fees to qualifying low- and moderate-income residents, subject to applicable rules and criteria. In providing this policy, the City of Menlo Park strives to provide parks, recreation programs and facilities that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive to changing community needs over time. • Equitably distributed across all neighborhoods of Menlo Park. • Accessible to all Menlo Park residents regardless of age, ability, background or income.
Eligibility
<p>Participation in the recreation scholarship policy is application-based and must include documentation of residency within incorporated City of Menlo Park and income eligibility through enrollment in another income-based subsidy program. Examples of documents that may demonstrate income eligibility include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household participation in subsidized utility programs (for example, PG&E CARE or Menlo Park Municipal Water's reduced rate program) • Enrollment at Belle Haven Child Development Center (Menlo Park residents only). <p>The City of Menlo Park shall not retain eligibility documentation longer than is necessary to complete the application and shall not disclose eligibility documentation to any other party.</p>
Scholarship awards
<p>City of Menlo Park residents may qualify for recreation scholarship awards for discounted recreation fees of 50% off the resident fee. For recreation programs with resident fees that are significantly higher than the average resident fees for other City of Menlo Park recreation programs, as calculated by fees per hour of program time, scholarships may be up to 75% off the resident fee. Discount rates are set for each recreation program by City of Menlo Park staff in advance of each registration season within the parameters described in this policy.</p>
Exclusions
<p>The recreation scholarship policy does not apply to fees for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare, including afterschool • Facility, field, court and/or park rentals • Senior center programs • Attire, food and drink, and/or merchandise • Advertising and/or permits.
Procedure
<p>Applications for recreation scholarships must be submitted in writing to Library and Community Services staff for review. Applications shall be submitted on an application form provided by the Library and Community Services department, including but not limited to the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name, residence address and other identifying information • Documentation of enrollment in income-subsidy programs – see application for examples • Waiver and release of liability <p>City of Menlo Park residents who meet the eligibility criteria may complete the application on the following page or online at menlopark.gov. Applications must be accompanied by proof of income eligibility as described above, and submitted to the City of Menlo Park by one of the following means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By US Mail to: Library and Community Services Department, 800 Alma St., Menlo Park, CA 94025 • By hand-delivery to one of the following locations in Menlo Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrillaga Family Recreation Center, 700 Alma St. • Arrillaga Family Gymnasium, 600 Alma St.

- Arrillaga Family Gymnastics Center, 501 Laurel St.
- Belle Haven Community Campus, 100 Terminal Ave.
- Main Library, 800 Alma St.
- Online at menlopark.gov

Applications and eligibility documentation are reviewed by City staff within 10 business days. Additional information may be requested to help evaluate eligibility. Decisions about application eligibility may be appealed to the Library and Community Services Director, whose decision is final. Recreation scholarships are granted for 12 months, after which a new application may be submitted to request renewal.

Policy review

This policy shall be reviewed by City Council in conjunction with annual master fee schedule amendments, or at least once every two years.

Policy history

Action	Date	Notes
Policy adoption	8/31/2021	City Council reviewed
Policy updated	3/27/2024	Parks and Recreation Commission recommended
Policy updated	6/26/2024	Parks and Recreation Commission recommended
Policy adoption	XX/XX/2024	Resolution No. XXXX

RECREATION SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Library and Community Services
 800 Alma St., Menlo Park, CA 94025
 menlopark.gov



Resident information	
Name:	
Home address:	
Email:	Phone number:
Age: <input type="checkbox"/> 0-5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 6-11 years <input type="checkbox"/> 12-17 years <input type="checkbox"/> 18-28 years <input type="checkbox"/> 29-50 years <input type="checkbox"/> 51-65 years <input type="checkbox"/> 65+ years <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to answer	
Eligibility	
I am enclosing the following document(s) that demonstrate my current enrollment in another income-based subsidy program:	
<input type="checkbox"/> PG&E CARE program	<input type="checkbox"/> Belle Haven Child Development Center
<input type="checkbox"/> Menlo Park Municipal Water reduced rate program	<input type="checkbox"/> Medi-Cal / Medicaid
<input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	<input type="checkbox"/> AT&T Lifeline / Comcast Essentials or similar
<input type="checkbox"/> Cal Water Customer Assistance Program (CAP)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Waiver and release from liability/ assumption of risk	
I, the undersigned authorize the City of Menlo Park and its officers, agents, and employees to review this application and accompanying documentation.	
I, the undersigned understand that there are inherent risks in participating in the recreational activity, and that injuries may occur from time to time even when reasonable safety precautions are taken. Knowing these inherent risks, nevertheless, in consideration of my or my minor child's participation in the above referenced recreational activity, I as a participant or as legal guardian on behalf of my minor child, hereby assert that my or my minor child's participation in this event is voluntary and agree to assume those risks and release, indemnify and hold harmless the City of Menlo Park, its officers, agents, employees and volunteers from any and all liability for accidents, injuries, loss of and/or damage to me or my minor child's person or property that may arise out of my or the minor child's participation in this activity, except where caused by the gross negligence of the City of Menlo Park. I understand that this waiver, release, and assumption of risk is binding on me, my minor child, and our heirs and assigns.	
I, the undersigned further expressly agree that the foregoing waiver, release, and indemnification is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by the law of the State of California and that if any portion therefore is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect. In the event that the individual participating in the activity is a minor, I certify that I am his/her parent or legal guardian and I give my permission for him/her to participate in the recreational activity program. I understand my signature is a legal and binding signature and will be considered original if received by fax.	
Signature	
Name (please print):	
Home address:	
Signature:	Date:
Name of minor child (if applicable):	

RECREATION SCHOLARSHIP POLICY

Library and Community Services
800 Alma St., Menlo Park, CA 94025
tel-650-330-2200 menlopark.gov



Purpose
<p>The recreation scholarship policy is intended to help reduce and eliminate barriers that can result from registration fees. Recreation scholarships provide discounted recreation fees to qualifying low- and moderate-income residents, subject to applicable rules and criteria. In providing this policy, the City of Menlo Park strives to provide parks, recreation programs and facilities that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive to changing community needs over time. • Equitably distributed across all neighborhoods of Menlo Park. • Accessible to all Menlo Park residents regardless of age, ability, background, or income. <p>To eliminate barriers that can result from registration fees, the recreation scholarship policy provides discounted recreation fees to qualifying low- and moderate-income residents.</p>
Eligibility
<p>City of Menlo Park residents may qualify for discounted recreation fees up to 75 percent off the resident fee rate. Participation in the recreation scholarship policy is application-based and must include documentation of residency within incorporated City of Menlo Park and income eligibility through enrollment in another income-based subsidy program. Examples of documents that may demonstrate income eligibility include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household participation in subsidized utility programs (for example, PG&E CARE or Menlo Park Municipal Water's reduced rate program) • Enrollment at Belle Haven Child Development Center (Menlo Park residents only). <p>Applications and eligibility documentation are reviewed by City staff within 10 business days. Additional information may be requested to help evaluate eligibility. Decisions about applications may be appealed to the Library and Community Services Director, whose decision is final. Recreation scholarships are granted for twelve (12) months, after which a new application may be submitted to request renewal. The City of Menlo Park shall not retain eligibility documentation longer than is necessary to complete the application, and shall not disclose eligibility documentation to any other party.</p>
Scholarship awards
<p>City of Menlo Park residents may qualify for recreation scholarship awards for discounted recreation fees of 50 percent off the resident fee. For recreation programs with resident fees that are significantly higher than the average resident fees for other City of Menlo Park recreation programs, as calculated by fees per hour of program time, scholarships may be up to 75 percent off the resident fee. Discount rates are set for each recreation program by City of Menlo Park staff in advance of each registration season within the parameters described in this policy.</p>
Exclusions
<p>The recreation scholarship policy does not apply to fees for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare, including afterschool and summer camps • Facility, field, court and/or park rentals • Senior center programs • Aquatics programs • Attire, food and drink, and/or merchandise • Advertising and/or permits.
How to apply Procedure
<p>Applications for recreation scholarships must be submitted in writing to Library and Community Services staff for review. Applications shall be submitted on an application form provided by the Library and Community Services department, including but not limited to the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name, residence address, and other identifying information • Documentation of enrollment in income-subsidy programs – see application for examples

• Waiver and release of liability

City of Menlo Park residents who meet the eligibility criteria may complete the application on the following page or online at www.menlopark.org/gov. Applications must be accompanied by proof of income eligibility as described above, and submitted to the City of Menlo Park by one of the following means:

- By US Mail to: Library and Community Services Department, 800 Alma St., Menlo Park, CA 94025
- By hand-delivery to one of the following locations in Menlo Park:
 - Arrillaga Family Recreation Center, 700 Alma St.
 - Arrillaga Family Gymnasium, 600 Alma St.
 - Arrillaga Family Gymnastics Center, 501 Laurel St.
 - Belle Haven Community Campus, 100 Terminal Ave.
 - Main Library, 800 Alma St.
 - ~~Belle Haven Branch Library, 413 Ivy Dr.~~
- Online at www.menlopark.org/gov

Applications and eligibility documentation are reviewed by City staff within 10 business days. Additional information may be requested to help evaluate eligibility. Decisions about application eligibility may be appealed to the Library and Community Services Director, whose decision is final. Recreation scholarships are granted for twelve (12) months, after which a new application may be submitted to request renewal.

Policy review

This policy shall be reviewed by City Council in conjunction with annual master fee schedule amendments, or at least once every two years.

Policy history

Action	Date	Notes
Policy adopted	August 31, 2021	City Council reviewed
<u>Policy updated</u>	<u>March 27, 2024</u>	<u>Parks and Recreation Commission recommended</u>
<u>Policy updated</u>	<u>June 26, 2024</u>	<u>Parks and Recreation Commission recommended</u>

RECREATION SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Library and Community Services
 800 Alma St., Menlo Park, CA 94025
 tel-650-330-2200 menlopark.gov



Registration-Resident information	
Name:	
Home address:	
Email:	Phone number:
Date of birth: Age: <input type="checkbox"/> 0-5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 6-11 years <input type="checkbox"/> 12-17 years <input type="checkbox"/> 18-28 years <input type="checkbox"/> 29-50 years <input type="checkbox"/> 51-65 years <input type="checkbox"/> 65+ years <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to answer	
Eligibility	
I am enclosing the following document(s) as proof of income eligibility that demonstrate my current enrollment in another income-based subsidy program:	
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<input type="checkbox"/> Menlo Park Municipal Water reduced rate program	<input type="checkbox"/> Medi-Cal / Medicaid
<input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	<input type="checkbox"/> AT&T Lifeline / Comcast Essentials or similar
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Cal Water Customer Assistance Program (CAP)</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Waiver and release from liability/ assumption of risk	
I, the undersigned authorize the City of Menlo Park and its officers, agents, and employees to review this application and accompanying documentation.	
I, the undersigned understand that there are inherent risks in participating in the recreational activity, and that injuries may occur from time to time even when reasonable safety precautions are taken. Knowing these inherent risks, nevertheless, in consideration of my or my minor child's participation in the above referenced recreational activity, I as a participant or as legal guardian on behalf of my minor child, hereby assert that my or my minor child's participation in this event is voluntary and agree to assume those risks and release, indemnify and hold harmless the City of Menlo Park, its officers, agents, employees and volunteers from any and all liability for accidents, injuries, loss of and/or damage to me or my minor child's person or property that may arise out of my or the minor child's participation in this activity, except where caused by the gross negligence of the City of Menlo Park. I understand that this waiver, release, and assumption of risk is binding on me, my minor child, and our heirs and assigns.	
I, the undersigned further expressly agree that the foregoing waiver, release, and indemnification is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by the law of the State of California and that if any portion therefore is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect. In the event that the individual participating in the activity is a minor, I certify that I am his/her parent or legal guardian and I give my permission for him/her to participate in the recreational activity program. I understand my signature is a legal and binding signature and will be considered original if received by fax.	
Signature	
Name (please print):	
Home address:	
Signature:	Date:
Name of minor child (if applicable):	