

Community Groups Policy

Effective:	TBD	Supersedes:	N/A
Applicable to:	Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Community Groups	Authority:	Director, Leisure & Community Services

1.0 Overview

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville (“Town”) promotes and recognizes that Community Groups (“CG”) provide recreational, sport, heritage and leisure programs, events and services to Town residents on a volunteer, charitable or not-for-profit basis. The Town encourages active living, social and special interest activities that enhance the well-being, health and quality of life to residents and acknowledges that CG are our partners.

2.0 Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to:

1. document the criteria required to obtain and maintain CG status with the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville;
2. maintain fairness, equity, transparency, and consistency to all groups applying for CG status;
3. determine categorization of users and eligibility to become a CG and the associated priority order for the allocation of facilities, resource and equipment rental/services, etc., as outlined in the Facility Allocation Policy (FAP);
4. ensure CGs have participation/membership open to all Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville residents and do not exclude participants on the grounds of race, religious or political affiliation and abide by the Human Rights Code;
5. ensure that groups who are granted CG status continue to meet the specified CG criteria;
6. new groups or those whose membership is below the residency requirement can be given a grace period to allow their membership to grow in Stouffville;
7. provide guidance to groups, where appropriate, to help them achieve CG status; and,
8. consider other related and companion policies to ensure compatible terms including but not limited to Facility Allocation Policy, Community Festivals &

Events Policy and Leisure & Community Services User Fee Schedule.

3.0 Administration

Definitions

1. **Annual General Meeting (AGM):** an annual meeting held with executive and members of the group to discuss issues pertaining to them and hold elections if necessary. Minutes must be taken, and the Town is invited to attend.
2. **Charitable Organization:** the *Income Tax Act* defines a registered charity as a charitable organization, or private or public foundation that meets certain criteria for registration. To be a charitable organization, an organization must devote all resources to charitable activities, which it carries out itself. A charitable foundation (public or private) must be constituted and must operate exclusively for charitable purposes. As the Act does not define the terms “charitable activities” or “charitable purposes,” the Canada Revenue Agency relies on the common law definition, which describes a charity as an organization established for any of the following four purposes:
 - 2.1. the relief of poverty,
 - 2.2. the advancement of education,
 - 2.3. the advancement of religion, and
 - 2.4. other purposes beneficial to the community in a way the law regards as “charitable.”
3. **Children & Youth Groups:** services offered to persons aged 18 years or younger. Children & Youth groups offering sports programs with representative teams must be affiliated with a regional or provincial sport body.
4. **Town:** The Corporation of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
5. **Town Liaison:** Leisure & Community Services staff
6. **Community Groups (CG):** a Town approved, Stouffville based, not-for-profit community organization / group run by an elected and volunteer board of directors whose prime purpose is to provide recreation, heritage, leisure or community services to the residents of Stouffville. Groups must be comprised of 75% residents except in the case of minor sports groups (18 years or younger).
7. **Constitution & By-Laws:** the organization’s mandate, philosophy, goals and objectives including operating guidelines that clearly define the purpose of the group and its officers.
8. **Code of Conduct:** the policy that dictates the expected behaviours of the executives,

members and participants of a CG including consequences for misconduct.

9. **Dispute Resolution Process:** the process by which disagreements or differences within the executive, membership or customers are resolved.
10. **Executive Representatives:** an elected board of directors or executive (who operate on a volunteer basis) and general membership. Full addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses (if possible) should be included.
11. **Facility/Facilities:** For use by Town staff for the purposes of conducting Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville business or program rentals only.
12. **Financial Statements:** a statement showing the group's ability to meet its financial obligations. The Town reserves the right to request an audited statement and/or review all accounting records and supporting documentation at any time.
13. **Membership / Players List:** a detailed list of all members/players that includes name, full address including postal codes and phone numbers. Groups who provide services to children and youth participants may be required to provide birthdates for all players and a list of all coaches' names and addresses. (Information collected remains in the possession of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and will not be shared or used for solicitation purposes).
14. **Membership / Registration Fees:** detailed list of all fees charged to the general membership or player.
15. **Proposed Budget:** statement of the upcoming budget year including revenues, expenses and annual summary.
16. **Season Schedules:** the games, practices and tournament schedules for all sports teams within a season.
17. **Resource and Equipment Rentals/Services:** the term applied to the variety of both inventoried and rented items and/or support services, made available to Community and/or Social Service, Resident, Commercial and Non-Resident Organizations to provide assistance in their planning and delivery of events such as fairs, festivals, tournaments, openings, etc.
18. **Social Service Organization:** an agency that exists to deliver a service for the welfare of the community such as education, health research, housing, health care, child protection, etc. including Registered Charities.
19. **Purpose Statement:** sentence or paragraph used by a company to explain, in simple and

concise terms, their purposes for being

Roles & Responsibilities

1. Director, Leisure & Community Services

1.1. Responsible for dispute resolution

2. Leisure & Community Services Department

2.1. Responsible for administering this Policy

2.2. Review and assess CG applications in a fair, equitable, transparent, and consistent manner

4.0 Procedures

The Town supports and encourages volunteer groups, such as CGs that assists in enriching, preserving and diversifying its community and encourages health and wellness through community engagement and participation.

4.1: Benefits

1. CGs are afforded the following benefits:

1.1. Facility, resource and equipment rental/services, and staffing resources allocation priority according to the Category of User as outlined in the Facility Allocation Policy (FAP);

1.2. Staff support in an advisory capacity (i.e., consultation, advice);

1.3. Use of facility lobbies for registration/ fundraising purposes at applicable, subsidized rates;

1.4. Subsidized rates for facility, resource and equipment rental/services, and staffing resources. Subsidized rates for specific functions are determined by CG category.

4.2: CGs Categories and Priority Schedules

1. The following are categories of CGs groups:

- General – includes, but is not limited to, cultural, charitable and special interest groups.
- Children and Youth
- Religious Organizations
- Schools – Public, Catholic, College & University Social Service Organizations

2. Facility permit/rental contracts will be granted in a fair and equitable manner based on the priority schedule as defined in the Facility Allocation Policy, and in accordance with Council Approved Leisure & Community Services User Fee Schedule rates.

3. Groups requiring additional inventory and/or time for new initiatives or increases in membership must receive approval for supplementary inventory/ times prior to the

development of the program. Waitlists must be generated by groups wishing to expand their membership.

4.3: Application Requirements

General CG

- **Mandatory Requirements**
 - AGM Minutes
 - Executive Representatives
 - Financial statements
 - Insurance
 - Membership / Player List
 - Membership / registration fees
 - Not-for-profit / Registered Charity Number verification
 - Proposed budgets
 - Purpose of CG status
 - Written Constitution & by-laws or purpose statement
- **Other Considerations**
 - Code of Conduct
 - Dispute Resolution Process
- **Residency Requirement**
 - 75%

Children & Youth

- **Mandatory Requirements**
 - AGM Minutes
 - Executive Representatives
 - Financial statements
 - Insurance
 - Membership / Player List
 - Membership / registration fees
 - Not-for-profit / Registered Charity Number verification
 - Proposed budgets
 - Purpose of CG status
 - Regional or Provincial Sport Body Affiliation
 - Children and Youth CGs offering sports programs with representative teams must be affiliated with a regional or provincial sport body
 - Seasonal Schedules
 - Written Constitution & by-laws or purpose statement

- Other Considerations
 - Code of Conduct
 - Dispute Resolution Process
- Residency Requirements
 - 75%

Religious Organizations

- Mandatory Requirements
 - Executive Representatives
 - Financial statements
 - Insurance
 - Membership / players list
 - Membership / registration fees
 - Not-for-profit / Registered Charity Number verification
 - Proposed budgets
 - Purpose of CG status
 - Written Constitution & by-laws or purpose statement
- Other Considerations
 - AGM Minutes
 - Code of Conduct
 - Dispute Resolution Process
- Residency Requirement
 - 75%

Social Service Organization (includes recognized charitable organizations)

- Mandatory Requirements
 - AGM Minutes
 - Executive Representatives
 - Financial statements
 - Insurance
 - Not-for-profit / Registered Charity Number verification
 - Proposed budgets
 - Purpose of CG status
 - Social Service Organization Verification
 - Written Constitution & by-laws or purpose statement
- Other Considerations
 - Code of Conduct
 - Dispute Resolution Process

Additional Requirements (applicable to all CG)

1. CG groups must renew their application with the Town every two (2) years with the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.
2. The Leisure & Community Services Department does not recognize an affiliation between a youth group and an adult group. A youth group and an adult group can develop a working policy or agreement, provided the adult group has its own budget and executive, and books all facilities necessary for its operation directly with the Department and pays the applicable resident rate.
3. Recognized Social Service Organizations, including all Registered Charitable Organizations, will be granted CG status after they provide a letter on letterhead stating the purpose of their rental and the benefit they provide to Stouffville residents.

4.4: Eligibility Requirements

1. In order to be eligible as a CG, groups must:
 - 1.1. have a membership open to all Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville residents and does not exclude participation on the ground of race, religion or political affiliation and abide by the Human Rights Code;
 - 1.2. have a minimum of 75% residents
 - 1.3. be a not-for-profit, volunteer-based and run by an elected and volunteer board of directors; and,
 - 1.4. demonstrate they exist for the exclusive benefit of Stouffville residents, and to enhance existing services.
2. Given that new groups have the potential of reducing the number of hours available to existing users, new groups will only be considered in cases where a program provides a service to previously underserved segments of the population or where the new program being introduced is not available through existing organizations. When a new group is approved that requires facility time, the Town will work with all users of the facility to pursue a change based on the principles of the FAP. Final determination will be made by the Director, Leisure & Community Services.
3. Groups applying for CG status intending to offer a similar or duplicate service to an existing group will not be approved if the existing group is not in agreement and can meet the overall demand for the service.

4.5: CG Subsidized Rate Eligibility

The Town reserves the right to request at any time a detailed business plan, list of revenue sources (including grants and other forms of formal funding), the strategy to actively pursue fundraising activities or other sources of revenue, and a description of how any funds raised will be disbursed. The Town reserves the right to deny a CG eligibility for subsidized rates if it

is not satisfied with how funds are raised and/or disbursed.

If the CG is hosting an event that is raising money for a charitable organization, and the CG can provide proof from the charitable organization that it donated 50% of the value of their full permit costs, the Town will reimburse the CG 50% of its total rental cost for that event, to a maximum of \$2,500 per CG per year. Eligible costs for reimbursement include:

- Use of a Town-owned facility, park, or community space
- Resource and equipment rentals/services
- Town staff (\$400 maximum)

4.6: Authority of the Town, Policy Contravention and Exceptions

1. Authority of the Town

- 1.1. The Town reserves the right to request additional information at any time, act as a liaison for the group, be present at Annual General Meetings for minor sports groups and allocate facilities, resource and equipment rentals/services according to the Facility Allocation Policy.
- 1.2. CG categories may be updated with applicable criteria at the discretion of the Leisure & Community Services Department.
- 1.3. The Town reserves the right to conduct an operational and/or financial audit.
- 1.4. The Town has the authority to investigate any complaint, concern or information received or obtained regarding, but not limited to, any breach of this or other applicable policy or law, conduct of members, activities, use and/or misuse of any town facility or space.

2. Policy Contraventions

- 2.1. CG groups who fail to comply with this Policy or any other applicable Town policies, procedures, including the terms and conditions as noted on the applications forms, may lose their CG status and associated permits/rentals.

3. Exceptions

- 3.1. The Director, Leisure & Community Services reserves the right to:
 - 3.1.1. rescind CG status for groups who do not comply with the terms and conditions, for non-payment and any other reasonable issue as deemed appropriate
 - 3.1.2. allow a group to receive CG status where all of the criteria cannot be met due to extenuating circumstances (i.e., where a group is new to the Town and cannot initially meet the residency requirement)

4.7: Code of Conduct

1. It is the responsibility of all CG members to show respect to others, Town staff, CG property and Town facilities, resources and equipment as indicated in Municipal by-

laws and Town policies.

2. Appropriate behaviour is expected from all CG members at all CG activities, events and assemblies.
3. The Town does not support unacceptable behaviours, such as:
 - 3.1. Neglect or refusal to perform duties as outlined by the Boards of Directors
 - 3.2. Performance of illegal, violent or unsafe acts while performing duties
 - 3.3. Acting disrespectfully or coming into physical or verbal conflict with another volunteer or a member in their program, service or area of responsibility
 - 3.4. Disruptive behaviour and/or refusal to cooperate with fellow members and volunteers
 - 3.5. Failure to follow procedures in their assigned work area
 - 3.6. Attending volunteer assignments under the influence of substance
 - 3.7. Misuse of funds, equipment or materials, and or the falsification of records
4. Discipline of CG Members
 - 4.1. It is recommended that two (2) representatives be appointed to deal with disciplinary matters, one (1) being the President.
 - 4.2. All disciplinary action is the responsibility of the CG Board of Directors. Town staff are available to assist as arbitrators, as deemed appropriate by the Town. In the event the President is the focus of a disciplinary situation, the Town's Liaison may be requested as arbitrator.
5. Steps for Disciplinary Action
 - 5.1. Verbal warning by Board of Representatives
 - 5.2. Written warning signed by the President
 - 5.3. Possible suspension from CG activities and location
 - 5.4. Membership revoked
 - 5.5. Board of Directors may refer to the Municipal by-laws and Town policies for assistance in dealing with disciplinary action. Town Liaison to provide support.

Discipline of Board Members

If a Director/President or any of the Executive Representatives act in a manner which is detrimental to the interests of the CG, then the Board of Directors of the CG may, by majority vote, discipline the said Director/President at a special meeting of the CG, which will be convened to consider the Director's/President's behaviour within a timely manner. Discipline shall follow the guidelines listed above (Steps for Disciplinary Action), and depending on the severity of the infraction, can range from a warning to expulsion from the Board. Town Liaison is available to assist if necessary.