



Municipality of the District of Shelburne Policy Statement

Inclusive Recreation

NAME OF POLICY

Municipal Recreation and Physical Activity Inclusion Policy for Individuals with Disabilities.

RATIONALE

People with disabilities make up about 1 in 5 people in Shelburne County based on provincial statistics and face significant barriers to participation in recreation programs, facilities and services provided by the Municipality of Shelburne. The mandate of the municipal recreation department is to serve all residents, which include those with a disability so a municipal policy is required to encourage participation. This policy will also prepare the municipality for the pending 2016 provincial accessibility legislation, which will include municipal government.

SCOPE

This policy applies to municipal recreation programs, facilities, services and initiatives.

MUNICIPAL VISION

Individuals with disabilities, intellectual, physical and sensory disabilities and mental health challenges feel welcomed, included and supported in municipal recreation supported programs and facilities. They experience the personal health: mental, emotional, and social benefits of recreation and physical activity. The municipality and community organizations have a strong partnership in the delivery of a choice of recreation opportunities for people with disabilities.

MUNICIPAL POLICY COMPONENTS

GOAL #1 TRAINING

To increase knowledge and skills of recreation program leaders and planners about ways to include people with disabilities.

Policy actions:

The municipality will:

1. Provide regular training for full, part time and seasonal staff and volunteers to include people with disabilities.
2. Recruit staff from community organizations who serve people with disabilities to assist with training of recreation staff.
3. Training will be evaluated to assess its effectiveness and make improvements.
4. Training courses will be supplemented by on-site visits and individual support with staff to improve programming.
5. Maintain an inventory of local, provincial and national training resources, courses, local experts, and resource materials that can be used in the municipality.

GOAL #2 PARTNERSHIPS

To maintain and improve partnerships with community based organizations that serve people with disabilities.

Policy actions

The municipality will:

1. Include people with disabilities in planning.
2. Maintain a list of individuals or groups who contribute to work with individuals with a disability and their families.
3. Identify community partners who can assist with the development and funding of programs and services.
4. Partner with neighboring municipalities in such areas as staff training, program and facility planning for people with disabilities.
5. Partner with others to purchase and loan out adaptive recreation equipment for people with disabilities.

GOAL #3 FACILITIES

To ensure that municipal owned or supported indoor and outdoor facilities, parks and trails meet guidelines for universal design.

Policy actions

The municipality will:

1. Assess physical accessibility of existing facilities and develop a plan to address problem areas.
2. Conduct regular site inspections of facilities with a standard checklist to ensure accessibility.
3. The planning of new or renovated recreation facilities will involve people with disabilities.

GOAL #4 PROGRAMS

To improve access to municipal and community programs and opportunities with appropriate levels of support for people with disabilities.

Policy Actions

The municipality will:

1. Include people with disabilities in planning new programs and opportunities.
2. Develop an inclusion checklist to use when designing programs e.g. visual supports, sensory supports, etc.
3. Provide a municipal program registration process, which allows individuals with a disability to self-identify and ask for support.
4. Provide an opportunity for those who self-identify to meet with recreation staff to assess individual needs and resource requirements.
6. Provide an adapted equipment loan program.
7. Use financial assistance programs such as Kids Fair Play FUNd, Canadian Tire Jumpstart, and N.S. KidSport to support participation by people with disabilities.
8. Develop a list of potential volunteer/paid recreation partners.
9. Develop a toolkit for staff and volunteers.

GOAL #5 COMMUNICATIONS

To increase awareness of the benefits of participation and inclusion and the opportunities for recreation in the community.

Policy actions

The municipality will:

1. Revise current municipal recreation policies and documents to use inclusive language.
2. Ensure content (language and photos) is welcoming and inclusive in municipal newsletters, social media, brochures, and other documents.
3. Inform schools, health, social service and other community organizations that serve people with disabilities about how municipal recreation programs and opportunities can be included in individual program plans.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Director of Recreation and Parks will monitor the implementation of the policy. Council will review the policy 5 years from the date of its acceptance.

DEFINITIONS

Disability

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines a disability as “any restriction or lack of the ability to perform an activity due to impairment”.

SASI (Shelburne Association Supporting Inclusion) defines disability as “intellectual, physical and sensory disabilities and mental health challenges”.

Recreation

Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

Universal design

Universal design is the design of spaces and products that are usable by people of any age and various levels of ability. Conventional design caters to the “average” person, while universal design recognizes that people have a range of capabilities and need designs to include in this range. Universal design strives for the safety, comfort and convenience of all users/participants. Universal design improves the quality of life for everyone.

Inclusion

Inclusion is *meaningful* participation while learning new skills, with every participant accepted and supported by peers. A successful inclusive physical activity program is one where:

- Activities are modified and individualized as necessary
- Expectations are realistic yet challenging
- Assistance is provided only to the degree required
- There is dignity-of-risk and choice available

Physical Activity

Any body movement produced by the skeletal muscles that results in a substantial increase over resting energy expenditure (Bouchard & Shepard, 1994).

Clerk's Annotation For Official Policy Book

Date of Notice to Council Members of Intent to Consider

(7 days minimum): April 29, 2015

Date of Passage of Policy: May 25, 2015



Penny Smith, Municipal Clerk



Date