Financial Assistance Programs

Statement of Purpose

OSCA is committed to ensuring that all of its programs and services are accessible to everyone and offers support to families and individuals who experience barriers to participation.

OSCA's operations are separate from the City of Ottawa and therefore Financial Assistance and Subsidy programs are managed autonomously. Residents who qualify for the City's Hand-in-Hand program, the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), or the City's Essential Health & Social Supports may also qualify for OSCA's programs and use them in tandem. The City's subsidies cannot be applied to OSCA programs and OSCA subsidies cannot be applied to City of Ottawa programs.

Funding for OSCA's Financial Assistance programs is generated directly from operational revenues. OSCA receives no municipal, provincial, or federal funding for fee subsidies, therefore every time a participant pays for a program or membership, a portion goes directly toward supporting others in the community.

How it Works

Each year, OSCA's Board of Directors approves the annual operating budget that includes a specific amount of funds allocated to Financial Assistance. This amount may vary from year to year depending on a number of factors. Staff are responsible for ensuring that the funds allocated are sufficient to ensure as many people are served as possible through this program, and to increase participation for as many people as possible. This may involve setting individual or family limits or portioning amounts throughout the year depending on resources available and varying demands. Should demand be such that more funds are required to adequately support the community throughout the entire year, staff will seek additional funding either through the operating budget or as determined appropriate and approved by the Board.

Who Qualifies

Any individual living in a household that fits the definition of low income as defined by Statistics Canada, or receives any of the following benefits qualifies for OSCA's program: Ontario Works, City of Ottawa Child Care or Hand-in-Hand subsidy, EHSS, ODSP, ACSD/MCSS, Guaranteed Income Support, or other similar programs. In addition, adult students who receive student loans or OSAP as a full-time student, qualify for programs for their children including day camps, and before/after school programs.

In addition, if you or your family do not qualify under the above criteria, but are facing a temporary hardship such as loss of employment, serious family illness or other situation which places significant burdens on your personal financial circumstances, you may also be considered for special program fee exemption or subsidy amount by applying for special consideration. Staff will make every effort to accommodate as much as possible depending on program availability and financial resources available at the time.

How to Apply

Individuals interested in applying for funding can fill out the online form: Fill in the Application form online or pick up a hard copy in person at the Front Desk.

Once an application has been received, staff will determine how much funding is available to subsidize the fee for the desired program(s) and will offer a minimum 40% of the program fee subsidized. Staff will also offer either the Scholarship program or the Join-In program on a case-by-case basis.

Firehall Scholarship program

Once a subsidy amount is determined, OSCA will allocate the subsidy directly onto the individual or family's Amilia account. Participants are then able to register online or in person and apply the subsidy toward the total amount owing at check-out, until the subsidy is all used up. Participants can re-apply each year.

Firehall "Join-In" program

For any applicable program that has available and unsold spaces at the start, staff may offer these spaces to individuals who have applied for and qualify for Financial Assistance. To participate in this program, participants will be contacted by staff when spaces are available at the start of a session, and can be registered at $0. Registrations cannot be done in advance except in special circumstances. This program is offered automatically to residents in Ottawa Community Housing or Empathy House, and those who have already qualified for OSCA's Scholarship program. This program is also available to anyone referred by a social worker, teacher, or a social service agency (Community Health Centre, Children's Aid Society, etc). If you are only interested in this program and not a subsidy: Use this Application Form.

For any questions or to speak to a member of OSCA's team about these programs, please reach out to info@oldottawasouth.ca or phone 613-695-6790.