



## Administration and Operations Committee Report

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**To:** The Chair and Members of the Administration and Operations Committee  
**From:** Sarah Dredge, Manager of Recreation Services  
**Date:** February 17, 2026  
**Report #:** RPT-0038-26  
**Subject:** Leisure Involvement For Everyone (L.I.F.E.) - Financial Assistance Program  
**Purpose:** For Information

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### Recommendation

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THAT RPT-0038-26 be received as information.

### Strategic Plan Priority

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Strategic Priority 5 - Healthy, Safe, and Engaged Citizens

### Impacts and Mitigation

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#### Social Impacts

Recreation and leisure offer positive socialization with peers, improved communication skills, the development of friendships, increased leisure skills, appropriate behavior development, enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence, increased autonomy, and a feeling of community and acceptance for all.

#### Environmental Impacts

N/A

#### Economic Impacts

All costs associate with the Leisure Involvement for Everyone (L.I.F.E.), Financial Assistance Program are allocated with the 2026 Recreation Services Operating Budget.

### Report

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#### Background

In 2016, County of Brant Council approved an “All-In All-Active” Strategy which supports equitable access to sport, recreation, and physical activity. The County of Brant recognizes access to recreation as an essential service for all residents and is dedicated to providing opportunities that are affordable, inclusive, and responsive to community needs. The County of Brant understands that there are limitations such as registration fees, equipment costs, transportation, etc. that can prevent participation in recreational and leisure opportunities.

To reduce these limitations, the Recreation Services Division offers the Leisure Involvement For Everyone (L.I.F.E.) Financial Assistance Program to residents to support participation in sport, recreation, and physical activity opportunities through reduction of financial burden.

The County of Brant continues to receive a yearly donation from the Dick Emerson Memorial Golf Tournament to offset operating costs associated with the L.I.F.E. Financial Assistance program. In 2025, \$15,000.00 was received by “Friends of the Dick” Golf Tournament. The remaining 2025 funds will be carried over to assist with subsidy in 2026. Staff have also included funds in the 2026 operating budget to continue to offer the L.I.F.E. Financial Assistance Program and are actively investigating alternative sources of funding to offset costs.

In addition to the L.I.F.E. Financial Assistance Program, staff encourage families to access funding through both the Arnold Anderson Sport Fund and Canadian Tire’s JumpStart Program, which support families with the cost of sports and physical activities. Child Care fee subsidy through the City of Brantford is also available to families for After School Programming and County-run Day Camps for children up to the age of 12.

### Recreation Master Plan Context

The County of Brant Recreation Master Plan, Section 3.5 Financial and Funding Initiatives, identifies the need for outside funding sources to help support and sustain community programs and services. In addition, Section 3.9 Partnerships & Joint Ventures demonstrates that partnerships and joint ventures have the ability to expand the array of parks and recreation opportunities, reduce financial pressures on the municipality and provide many other benefits to the community. Section 3.10 Individual Participant Financial Support recognizes the financial investment required for recreation participation is vitally important to support the principles of inclusion, fairness, and equity and in supporting the personal well-being and healthy lifestyles of all residents.

### Analysis

The Recreation Services Division continues to see an increased need for the L.I.F.E. Financial Assistance Program as the population of the County of Brant continues to grow and recreation continues to be costly. In years prior, the program provided support primarily for children and youth between 1-17 years of age for recreational programming such as summer camp, swimming lessons, and recreational programming, with requests for subsidies for adults and seniors to participate in fitness classes and drop in programming i.e. pickleball, memberships etc.

In 2025, the L.I.F.E. Financial Assistance Program served 49 participants, providing subsidies for County of Brant summer camp(s), swimming lesson(s), gymnastics program, and the learn-to-skate program. The breakdown below outlines the overall L.I.F.E. subsidy administered from 2022-2025, indicating a significant increase in the number of participants served and subsidy disbursed for 2025 (31% increase in subsidy since 2022).

| Year | Subsidy Funds Distributed | Participants/Families Served | % increase in subsidy since 2022 |
|------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2022 | \$7,784                   | 30 Participants              | n/a                              |
| 2023 | \$2,340                   | 14 Participants              | -53%                             |
| 2024 | \$7,822                   | 34 Participants              | 41.5%                            |
| 2025 | \$10,209                  | 49 Participants              | 31%                              |

**Summary and Recommendations**

Recreation staff will continue to measure the utilization of the L.I.F.E. Financial Assistance Program annually, make every effort to source out funding to support the program and adjust the program model accordingly. Ongoing evaluation will also ensure all recreational programs and services continue to meet changing community need(s) as they diversify, as trends in recreation vary, and to stay aligned with the strategic priorities of the community. In addition to the L.I.F.E. Financial Assistance Program, the Recreation Services Division continues to plan and include in the annual budget a variety of low and no-cost programs and events to offer within the community.

**Attachments**

N/A

**Reviewed By**

Philip Mete, General Manager, Community Services  
 Stacey Ellins, Director of Parks and Recreation

**Copied To**

Dana McKelvey, Administrative Coordinator

**By-law and/or Agreement**

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| By-law Required   | No |
| Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and /or Clerk | No |