

Recreation Scholarships: Conflicting policy direction and communication barriers limit access



Audit highlights - March 2018

The City wants community centers to charge fees for activities while also ensuring all Portland residents have access. We audited City policies and budget direction regarding scholarships and the barriers to accessing them.

Revenue pressures cause unequal access to scholarships

- Recreation scholarships are a tool to provide access and equity
- When scholarships are provided, community centers lose funds needed to operate
- Not all community centers are able to provide the same access, because each center balances the competing needs of access and revenue



Scholarships are not budgeted or evaluated

- City Council does not set aside money in the budget to pay for scholarships
- Portland Parks & Recreation is not evaluating progress toward improved access

Information is hard to find

- Website information is limited and some information is not equally distributed to customers across the city



Parks & Recreation Photos

We recommend Council update the scholarship policy to improve access, budget for scholarships and report on program performance, and develop an outreach plan.



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