

## Response to Questions on the FY 2005 Advertised Budget Plan

**Request By:** Supervisor Hudgins

**Question:** How would the revenue generated from a recreation user fee be used for field maintenance and other needs such as umpires?

**Response:** The proposed application fee will not be used to cover field maintenance costs.

The proposed application fee is a cost recovery initiative that would subsequently reduce the County's General Fund support of the Athletic Services Division of the Department of Community and Recreation Services. Specifically, the revenue generated from the application fee would be used to help offset the cost of providing access to athletic facilities for community use. Included in these costs is funding for the youth sports officiating subsidy program. This program provides funding directly to youth athletic organizations to partially offset expenses incurred for officials, umpires, referees, etc. The proposed application fee would generate revenue to offset General Fund support of this program.

The attached document addresses frequently asked questions concerning the athletic user fee. This information is also available on the Community and Recreation Services web site at <http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/rec/special%20announcements/FAQ.htm>

Attachment

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## **FY 2005 APPLICATION FEE**

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

**Q: Why is an Application Fee necessary?**

**A:** FY 2005 represents the fourth year of double-digit real estate assessment increases in Fairfax County. The County's FY 2005 Advertised Budget is once again funded primarily through real estate tax receipts. This funding source represents 60 percent of the total revenue received by the County (compared with 50 percent as recently as FY 2000). As this data reflects, the County is becoming increasingly reliant upon its real estate tax base to fund its operations.

In an attempt to decrease the reliance upon real estate taxes, County agencies were directed to review their budgets for possible expenditure reductions and revenue enhancements. As a result of this review, the County Executive proposed an application fee in the FY 2005 Advertised Budget. The revenue generated from this application fee, combined with existing revenues (including out-of-County fees, building director fees, and custodial fees), will provide 100 percent cost recovery for the community use of athletic facilities and subsequently reduce the General Fund's support of this program.

**Q: What does the proposed Application Fee support?**

**A:** The FY 2005 cost for community use of athletic facilities totals \$2,095,691, including funds for staff (plus fringe benefits) responsible for athletic facility allocation and the permitting process, seasonal staff for facility monitoring, the youth sports scholarship program, custodial charges for the use of public schools, and the youth sports officiating subsidy program. Specifically, this funding represents the County's cost to provide access to athletic facilities for community use. The proposed application fee is estimated to generate \$1,670,917 in additional revenue, with the remaining cost offset through existing fee revenues.

**Q: How was the proposed Application Fee determined?**

**A:** Existing revenues cover approximately 20 percent of the County's expenses related to providing access to athletic facilities for community use. To provide a full offset of the General Fund's support of these activities, a revenue source is needed to recover the remaining 80 percent. In determining what form this revenue source would take, CRS reviewed other local jurisdictions both in terms of their registration fee structure and how it compared to Fairfax County athletic organizations. In addition, CRS reviewed the concerns raised from the athletic community regarding the FY 2004 Maintenance Fee proposal. Upon completion of this review, it was determined that an Application Fee was the most appropriate direction for the FY 2005 budget initiative.

**Q: Why does the County have to recover 100 percent of County's expenses?**

**A:** As mentioned in the answer to Question #1, the revenue from this fee will help decrease the County's reliance upon real estate taxes. A full offset of the General Fund commitment to providing these services furthers the reduction in the County's reliance upon real estate taxes.

**Q: What portion of the revenue generated from the proposed Application Fee supports facility maintenance?**

**A:** \$0. As noted above, the revenue generated from the application fee is used to help offset the cost of providing access to athletic facilities for community use. With regard to field maintenance, the

FY 2005 Advertised Budget does include \$3,232,813 for general athletic field maintenance, but there is no revenue offset related to this funding.

**Q: What does the Application Fee proposed in the FY 2005 Advertised Budget entail?**

**A:** The FY 2005 Advertised Budget includes an application fee of \$3 per hour of use for community use facilities, which includes both fields and gymnasiums. To address concerns about cancellations and no-use dates, a 15% reduction would be granted from the amount due to CRS. As a result of early feedback from community sports representatives, two other options are proposed that will generate an equal amount of revenue. The options are:

1. An application fee of \$5.50 per participant for use of both field and gymnasium facilities during the fall, winter and spring scheduling seasons and a \$3.50 per participant rate in the summer scheduling season. For use that runs into the subsequent scheduling season, the cost would be an additional \$1 per participant per week of use. This option also includes a non-house league tournament rate of \$10 per team and a one-time use rate of \$20 per day.
2. An application fee of \$0.45 per participant per week of use of both field and gymnasium facilities during all seasons of use. The minimum participant charge would be \$2.70. This option also includes a non-house tournament rate of \$10 per team and a one-time use rate of \$20 per day.

**Q: Does Fairfax County currently charge an application fee or participant fee for use of athletic facilities?**

**A:** No. The County currently receives no revenue for use of its athletic facilities.

**Q: Do other jurisdictions charge an applicant or participant fee?**

**A:** Other jurisdictions have various fee schedules in place. Some do charge specific participant fees that all participants are required to pay, while some jurisdictions have specific facility-based charges. CRS does not provide direct operational oversight of the various leagues in Fairfax County. That function is primarily provided by volunteers. The primary duty of CRS is to provide the access to community athletic facilities. Many local recreational sports programs in other jurisdictions are more directly controlled by their municipal government, and thus many of the associated costs with running a sports program are included in the registration fees charged to participants.

**Q: How is CRS accommodating children that may not be able to afford the new Application Fee?**

**A:** The FY 2005 Advertised Budget includes \$75,000 in the youth sports scholarship program (an increase of 50 percent). This program provides low income and economically disadvantaged youth the opportunity to participate in sports activities.

**Q: How will the unauthorized users of athletic fields be charged the application fee?**

**A:** The proposed application fee provides the sports organization exclusive use of the athletic facility during the period of time indicated on their permit. Currently, public-owned athletic fields are open to the public during those periods that are not scheduled by permit through CRS. Organizations not using their allocated times are expected to notify CRS, which will enable those facilities to be reallocated to organizations still in need.