

## Response to Questions on the FY 2017 Budget

**Request By:** Supervisor Hudgins

**Question:** Please explain how the Athletic Services fee is addressed in cases of children whose families cannot afford it. Please include the methods employed by the County's athletic groups in terms of scholarships etc.

**Response:** The Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) charges an Athletic Services fee to each youth and adult sports organization that receives facility space from NCS. The fee is \$5.50 per player, per season for County residents and \$30 for non-County residents. This is a standard fee that applies regardless of age group, sport, or type of facility being requested by the organization. The Athletic Services fee is included in the organizations' respective registration fees charged to their participants. These registration fees, of which the Athletic Services fee makes up only a small portion, range from \$50 to \$250 per youth, per season. The amount of this registration fee depends largely on the sport being played and the costs associated with specific sports such as referees and equipment. It should be noted that if a child participates in a sport in a travel league capacity, the fees set by the organizations are significantly higher.

Each youth sports organization provides scholarship assistance for the families they support. These organizations utilize sponsorship efforts to help offset not only the total fees paid by all participants but also subsidize those that cannot afford the full amount of the registration fees. Each organization has slightly different processes in place to promote access for their program in general, and specifically their scholarship program. Most utilize one or more of the following: neighborhood-based outreach events, onsite field registration days, and an online registration system.

The individual organizations bare the lion's share of the cost of these scholarships; however, NCS closely partners with them to make sure that no child gets turned away because they cannot afford to pay. In addition to the efforts of the individual organizations, NCS distributes \$150,000 per year to organizations specifically for scholarship support. Income eligibility guidelines for this program include verification of TANF, SNAP, or Free/Reduced Lunch benefits. Organizations can request reimbursement of up to \$150 per eligible athlete, per season. In the event that a child plays multiple sports in a single season, organizations can only request the \$150 maximum one time, per child, per season. Based on the number of total requests in a season, NCS provides the organizations with an equal percentage of the amount requested, since in most years the \$150,000 is not sufficient to cover the full costs for all participants that qualify. The proportional funding percentage allows for consideration of total registration fees for a given organization. In this way, every organization receives some level of funding for each eligible applicant they serve; however due to the variations in registration fees noted previously, the amount reimbursed to the organizations will also vary. For the FY 2015 spring season, reimbursements to individual sports clubs ranged from \$8.15 to \$27.17 per eligible participant, depending on the amount of the registration fee charged by the organizations. Historically, the amount reimbursed has always covered the full cost of the Athletic Services fee. Since the inception of the Athletic Services fee almost a decade ago, NCS has received no information (formal or informal) of a child being turned away from any sport they wish to play because they cannot afford to pay.