



COUNCIL – AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: 18 June 2024

Subject: Airdrie Fair Access (AFA) Enhancement Request: RCMP Administration

Directorate: Community Safety and Social Services

Issue:

Council is being presented with a request from RCMP Administration to extend the Airdrie Fair Access subsidy program to cover the costs of fingerprinting, criminal record checks, and vulnerable sector checks.

Policy / Council Direction:

The request presented in this report is aligned with the Airdrie Fair Access Policy (P-COM-67-C) and the Social Policy (COM-63-C). The selection of municipal services eligible for subsidy through the Airdrie Fair Access program is approved by Council resolution.

Background:

The Airdrie Fair Access (AFA) subsidy program has been successful in helping to reduce financial barriers for low-income residents, enabling easier access to recreation, cultural programming, and public transit.

The AFA program supports the social well-being of residents by helping residents to participate in community life and providing equitable access to public services. RCMP Administration has approached Social Planning to discuss the addition of criminal record checks, vulnerable sector checks, and fingerprinting to the AFA program.

These checks are frequently required when residents are seeking employment or wanting to give back to the community through volunteering. The costs of the services can serve as a barrier to residents' ability to take advantage of volunteer or employment opportunities, and by including these services under the subsidy program, the municipality can help reduce this burden for low-income residents.

The subsidy would only apply to the portion of the fees charged by the City of Airdrie and would not apply to the portion charged by the RCMP. The breakdown of the fees and the subsidies is as follows:

	Current Cost	75% Subsidy	50% Subsidy	25% Subsidy
Fingerprints to accompany an Adoption or Name Change Application	\$51.00	\$12.75	\$25.50	\$38.25
Fingerprints without Criminal Record Check	\$77.00	\$19.25	\$38.50	\$57.75
Vulnerable Sector Check for Employment	\$25.00	\$6.25	\$12.50	\$18.75
Criminal Record Check for Employment/Records Suspension	\$71.00	\$17.75	\$35.50	\$53.25
Criminal Record Check for Volunteers	\$21.00	\$5.25	\$10.50	\$15.75
Criminal Record Check for Students	\$36.00	\$9.00	\$18.00	\$27.00
Criminal Record Check (Other)	\$77.00	\$19.25	\$38.50	\$57.75

Approximately 2.5% of Airdrie’s population have applied and qualified for the AFA program, with the majority, approximately 90%, qualifying for the 75% subsidy. Assuming that the need for criminal record checks, vulnerable sector checks, and fingerprinting are evenly spread across this population, Social Planning estimates approximately 225 subsidized checks, and an estimated municipal investment of approximately \$10,000 per year, based on forecasts provided by RCMP Administration.

As the Fall tends to see an increase in the number of residents seeking these checks, RCMP Administration is recommending that approval to join the program be considered prior to September 1, 2024, in order to better support residents needing these services.

Council Committee Routed Through:

This request is not required to be routed through a Council Committee as the Airdrie Fair Access Policy (P-COM-67-C) states that the authority to add municipal services to the subsidy program lies with Council.

Administration Recommendation:

That Council endorse the inclusion of fingerprinting, criminal record checks, and vulnerable sector checks under Airdrie Fair Access as described.

Alternatives/Implications:

Council does not endorse the inclusion of these services under Airdrie Fair Access at this time.

Implications

Given the magnitude of the changes to the program over the last year-and-a-half and the increase in program uptake, Council could request delaying the inclusion of additional municipal services until there is clear evidence that the growth in the number of subsidy program clients has stabilized. This would allow increased confidence in forecasts of the impact on municipal finances.

Budget Implications:

The inclusion of criminal record checks, vulnerable sector checks, and fingerprinting in the subsidy program is expected to result in a slight decrease in revenue collected by RCMP Administration. This will be an additional investment in affordability programming of roughly \$10,000 per year beyond what the City has previously committed.

Communications and Engagement:

Social Planning will continue to work with Communications, Engagement & Marketing to highlight the program enhancements, advertise both the AFA program and any enhancements, and increase residents' awareness of the available support.

Recommendation:

That Council endorse the inclusion of fingerprinting, criminal record checks, and vulnerable sector checks under Airdrie Fair Access as described.

Chris Esselmont
Social Planner

Staff Presenter:	Chris Esselmont
External Presenter:	There is no external presenter
Department:	Social Planning
Reviewed by:	Kevin Weinberger
Attachments:	#1 - CoA Investment in Affordability Programming