



## COUNCIL – AGENDA REPORT

**Meeting Date:** 1 April 2025  
**Subject:** Airdrie Fair Access 2024 Update  
**Directorate:** Community Safety and Social Services

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### Issue:

Council is being presented with an update on the growth and success of the Airdrie Fair Access (AFA) low-income subsidy program over the past year.

### Policy / Council Direction:

The Airdrie Fair Access program is governed by the Airdrie Fair Access Policy (P-COM-67-C), and aligns with the Social Policy (COM-72-C) principle of *Equitable Access to Quality Services* and Council's Caring Community Focus Area.

### Background:

The Airdrie Fair Access program helps low-income residents access municipal services that enhance quality of life. Currently, the program provides subsidies for Airdrie Transit, Genesis Place, Bert Church Live Theatre, and Police Services (Criminal Record/Vulnerable Sector Checks and Fingerprinting for employment or volunteering), with Police Services having been added to the program in the fall of 2024. The City of Airdrie uses Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cut-Offs Before Taxes (LICO-BT) to set the thresholds for AFA eligibility.<sup>1</sup>

Table 1 shows the current income thresholds required to qualify for each level of subsidy (updated late Q2 every year):

**Table 1 – Eligibility Thresholds**

Maximum Household Income for	Number of people in the household						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
Level A - 75% Subsidy	\$30,526	\$38,003	\$46,720	\$56,724	\$64,336	\$72,560	\$80,785
Level B - 50% Subsidy	\$33,579	\$41,804	\$51,392	\$62,397	\$70,770	\$79,816	\$88,863
Level C - 25% Subsidy	\$38,158	\$47,504	\$58,401	\$70,905	\$80,420	\$90,700	\$100,981

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<sup>1</sup> LICO is defined as income levels at which families or persons not in economic families spend 20 percentage points more than average of their income on food, shelter, and clothing. Source: Statistics Canada, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/ref/dict/fam020-eng.cfm>, retrieved on March 7, 2024.

## Airdrie Fair Access Updates

Over the course of 2024, the AFA program continued the trend of high growth and uptake in the community. Compared to 2023, the program has grown by 68% (AFA saw 70% growth in the first year under the enhanced program). At the end of 2024, there are 1099 households and 2720 residents (an average of 2.5 residents per card) covered by the subsidy program (see *Table 2*).

**Table 2 – Year-over-Year Comparison**

		2023	2024	Growth
Program	AFA Cards	653	1099	68%
	AFA Clients	1735	2720	57%
Genesis Place	Memberships	620	777	25%
	Punch Passes/ Drop-Ins	757	1294	71%
	Program Registrations	836	1321	58%
	Transit Passes/ Ticket Books	779	982	26%
Airdrie Transit	Specialized Medical Trips	141	125	-11%
	Tickets	17	55	224%
Bert Church Live Theatre	Program Registrations	0	8	---
	For Employment	0	10*	---
Police Services	For Volunteering	0	2*	---
Criminal Record Checks				

\*For September through December 2024

Usage of the subsidies has also increased greatly over the past year:

- Airdrie Transit saw a 26% increase in the number of subsidized passes/ticket books sold, but an 11% decrease in the number of specialized medical trips.
- Bert Church Live Theatre saw a 224% increase in the number of tickets sold under the subsidy (from 17 to 55), and a few program registrations.
- RCMP Administration only saw a handful of subsidies for the portion of the year they were included in the program.
- Genesis Place saw large increases across the board: a 25% increase in the number of memberships, a 71% increase in punch passes and drop-ins, and a 58% increase in the number of subsidized program registrations, suggesting that AFA subsidies helped a far greater number of residents access quality services like summer camps and school-year day camps for their children.

In 2024, the program provided subsidies totaling:

- Police Services: \$510.75.
- Bert Church Live Theatre: \$3,018.73.

- Airdrie Transit: \$51,001.61.<sup>2</sup>
- Genesis Place: \$413,600.

The total AFA subsidy projected for 2025 is \$563,000 which is \$263,825 more than originally budgeted (\$299,175). Further analysis will take place to determine the impact of this as it relates to the overall 2025 operating budget which will be included in the Q1 variance report.

The Airdrie Fair Access subsidy program for low-income residents has once again been met with enormous success over the past year. More residents have signed up for the program and there has been increased usage of the subsidies. This achievement shows the City's dedication to upholding the Social Policy's principle of Equitable Access to Quality Services, upholds Council's commitment to reducing barriers ensuring that Airdrie is a Caring Community and helps to strengthen social well-being in the community as more residents can participate in community life.

Administration will continue to monitor the growth and usage of the program, as well as consider options for continued enhancements in the future.

### **Council Committee Routed Through:**

This report has not been routed through a Council Committee.

### **Administration Recommendation:**

That Council accepts the Airdrie Fair Access 2024 Update report for information.

### **Budget Implications:**

The total AFA subsidy projected for 2025 is \$563,000 which is \$263,825 more than originally budgeted (\$299,175). Further analysis will take place to determine the impact of this as it relates to the overall 2025 operating budget which will be included in the Q1 variance report.

Further, the program is seeing continued growth in the usage of subsidies and Airdrie will continue to see increasing budgetary implications.

### **Communications and Engagement:**

Social Planning will continue to work with Communications to advertise the program and increase awareness amongst residents.

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<sup>2</sup> \$24,036.50 of which was covered by the Province's Low Income Transit Pass grant.

**Recommendation:**

That Council accepts the report entitled “Airdrie Fair Access 2024 Update”, for information.

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Chris Esselmont  
Social Planner

Staff Presenter:	Chris Esselmont
External Presenter:	There is no external presenter
Department:	Social Planning
Reviewed by:	Kevin Weinberger
Attachments:	There are no attachments.