

Athlete Assistance Program

(amended December 6, 2022)

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) is a program of financial assistance provided by the Saskatchewan Soccer Association (SSA). The goal of the AAP is to provide identified high performance soccer players with financial support to assist in their continued development and ensure high performance programming is as accessible as possible to talented and dedicated athletes with financial barriers to participation. The program supports athletes who are participating in programs delivered or sanctioned by the SSA by relieving some of the financial pressures associated with training and competition needs.

The intent of the AAP is to provide support to athletes in the Training to Train and Training to Compete stages of the Long Term Player Development (LTPD) Model within the SSA High Performance Stream, who are participating in High Performance Stream competitions such as the High Performance Showcase League, Multisport Games, or training in the SSA Regional Excel Centre (REX) or participating in programs that have applied for the Canada Soccer Club Licensing Program at the National Youth Club Licensing (NYCL) level.

ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY

The AAP will be athlete-centered, in that support will be allocated to individual athletes and funded through the SSA based on their demonstrated commitment to high performance sport. Athletes must meet the following criteria to be eligible for consideration for support through the AAP:

Association Membership:

Any athlete receiving support through the AAP must be a member in good standing with an SSA Member Organization and the SSA.

Commitment to the Saskatchewan Soccer Association:

Any athlete receiving financial assistance from the SSA must be available for selection to all age/stage-aligned SSA representative programs and teams and, if selected, commit to train and represent Saskatchewan in applicable competitions including, but not limited to; the Canada Summer Games, Western Canada Summer Games, North American Indigenous Games, and/or other High Performance Stream competitions such as the High Performance Showcase League. In the event that an athlete receiving financial support has a schedule conflict between an SSA event and that of an SSA Member Organization or Entity or other select team, SSA commitments must take precedence. Failure to do so will result in the athlete being disqualified for future funding and/or require the athlete to return all funding received through the AAP.

Residency:

To be eligible for AAP funding, an athlete must be a resident of Saskatchewan.

Athletes residing and/or training outside of Saskatchewan may be considered for AAP support in the following cases:

1. They are enrolled in a specialized program of study;



2. They are participating/training with a National program; and/or
3. A suitable athlete development program is currently unavailable in Saskatchewan.

All out-of-province athletes will only be considered for funding if there is a demonstrated commitment to, and participation in, an SSA High Performance Stream program.

Training and Competition:

Athletes within the eligible stages of the LTPD (Training to Train and Training to Compete) are expected to be involved in a year-round high performance training and competition environment and regularly working with an SSA-EXCEL Stream program (e.g. Regional Excel Centre- REX) or Club Licensing NYCL program.

Coaching:

To be eligible for AAP funding, athletes must be coached by a registered and appropriately trained or licensed coach.

Federally Carded Athletes:

Athletes who receive funding through Sport Canada's Athlete Assistance Program are not eligible to receive AAP funding.

Professional / Semi-Professional Status:

Athletes who receive or who have received funding in excess of normal living costs through exercising their skills as a professional or semi-professional athlete will not be eligible for AAP funding.

National Collegiate Athletic Association:

It is the understanding of the SSA that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) stipulates that any athlete who accepts direct funding from a provincial or state government run program may forfeit their eligibility for an NCAA scholarship and their eligibility to participate in that sport or to participate in a non-scholarship NCAA sport. It is the responsibility of the athlete competing or wishing to compete for an NCAA institution to confirm this regulation on a yearly basis. Upon direction of the NCAA, all AAP funds received by an athlete may be required to be returned to the SSA in order for that athlete to be eligible to participate in NCAA sport.

If you have questions regarding NCAA eligibility, please contact the NCAA eligibility center at 317-917-6222 or www.ncaa.org.

Use of Banned Substances and Methods:

Saskatchewan's Policy on Sport and Physical Activity clearly outlines the "ethical pursuit of excellence", which includes competing without the use of banned substances as one of its pillars of support to sport. The Province of Saskatchewan does not tolerate the use of prohibited substances and methods as they are contrary to the ethics of sport and may be harmful to the health of athletes. The SSA Code of Conduct outlines the requirement for appropriate use of alcohol and zero-tolerance for non-prescription and performance enhancing drugs used by players, coaches, referees, and other team officials.



Since elite athletes set the standards for all who aspire to compete at the top level, athletes who are suspended by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport and/or their respective International Sport Federation for an anti-doping rule violation will be declared permanently ineligible for support through the AAP.

PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF FUNDED ATHLETES

The SSA may, at its discretion, publish a list of individuals who are receiving financial support through the AAP. The personal information made available would be limited to name, hometown, images, and biographical information related to athletic accomplishments.

FUNDING LEVELS

Athletes at different levels of participation within the SSA High Performance Stream will receive levels of financial support commensurate with that participation and based on selection criteria and rankings established by the SSA.

Athlete Funding Levels:

The SSA will be responsible for determining funds available through the AAP on an annual basis. All funds available through the AAP are provided through the SSA's general operating budget and/or allocated reserve. Funds distributed through the AAP shall not exceed the budgeted funds, as such; applicants may not be approved for the full eligible amount of funding. Applicants are responsible for any program fees above those covered through the AAP.

Athlete Funding Levels will be two tiered: SSA-EXCEL Stream Programming and SSA-sanctioned Programming. SSA-EXCEL Stream Programming will be supported based on the Selection Criteria outlined below. SSA-sanctioned Programming will be supported based on matched funding from the program operator and the Selection Criteria outlined below. Please note that funding will not be available to athletes participating in SSA-sanctioned Programming that does not provide matched funding.

For a list of programming within each tier, please refer to the Athlete Assistance Program Application Form.

Funding Levels – SSA-EXCEL Stream Programming:

In January 2013, the SSA approved the following selection criteria for the AAP for SSA-EXCEL Stream programming. Eligible AAP funding levels are based on gross family income as follows. **Please note that this formula is based upon funding available for each phase from our AAP yearly finite funding pool. Amounts eligible may be adjusted to provide the most support to the lowest income families and scaled back as income levels of applicants increase.** This is necessary when large numbers of applicants are received for this finite pool of funding:

1. Family incomes under \$35,000 are eligible to receive funding up to a maximum of 100% of the cost of the program(s).
2. Family incomes between \$35,001-\$45,000 are eligible to receive funding up to a maximum of 90% of the cost of the program(s).



3. Family incomes between \$45,001-\$55,000 are eligible to receive funding up to a maximum of 80% of the cost of the program(s).
4. Family incomes between \$55,001-\$65,000 are eligible to receive funding up to a maximum of 70% of the cost of the program(s).
5. Family incomes between \$65,001-\$75,000 are eligible to receive funding up to a maximum of 50% of the cost of the program(s).
6. Family incomes between \$75,001-\$85,000 are eligible to receive funding up to a maximum of 30% of the cost of the program(s).
7. Family incomes between \$85,001-\$99,000 are eligible to receive funding up to a maximum of 20% of the cost of the program(s).

***Note – Funding available will determine funding assignment, these amounts listed above are not guaranteed.**

Funding Levels – SSA-sanctioned Programming:

In November 2015, the SSA approved the following selection criteria for the AAP for SSA-sanctioned Programming based on matched funding from the program operator. Eligible AAP funding levels from the SSA are based on gross family income as follows. **Please note that this formula is based upon funding available for each phase from our AAP yearly finite funding pool. Amounts eligible may be adjusted to provide the most support to the lowest income families and scaled back as income levels increase.** This is necessary when large numbers of applicants are received for this finite pool of funding:

- a) Family incomes under \$35,000 are eligible to receive SSA funding up to a maximum of 50% of the cost of the program(s).
- b) Family incomes between \$35,001-\$45,000 are eligible to receive SSA funding up to a maximum of 45% of the cost of the program(s).
- c) Family incomes between \$45,001-\$55,000 are eligible to receive SSA funding up to a maximum of 40% of the cost of the program(s).
- d) Family incomes between \$55,001-\$65,000 are eligible to receive SSA funding up to a maximum of 35% of the cost of the program(s).
- e) Family incomes between \$65,001-\$75,000 are eligible to receive SSA funding up to a maximum of 25% of the cost of the program(s).
- f) Family incomes between \$75,001-\$85,000 are eligible to receive SSA funding up to a maximum of 15% of the cost of the program(s).
- g) Family incomes between \$85,001-\$99,000 are eligible to receive funding up to a maximum of 10% of the cost of the program(s).

Funding Levels – Special Considerations

- a) Family income will be divided approximately by the number of athletes within a family participating in eligible programs (i.e. Family income of \$90,000 with 3 children participating would be a family income of \$30,000 per child). Please note this may be adjusted based on the funding available each phase.



- b) Special consideration by the Selection Committee may be given to applicants with extenuating circumstances or those demonstrating exceptional need.

REPAYMENT AND WITHDRAWAL OF AAP FUNDING

Any athlete receiving funding through the AAP is required to complete his/her training and competition requirements with the SSA. The SSA has the authority to withdraw AAP support to any athlete if it is deemed that the athlete is no longer in compliance with the requirements of the AAP. Any athlete who resigns from involvement with the SSA prior to the end of a program for which support was provided will be required to repay 100% of their AAP funding to the SSA prior to any future registration or participation with the SSA.

ATHLETE SELECTION

Selection Committee:

The SSA is responsible for the assembly and coordination of the Selection Committee and will appoint the Committee Chair. The Selection Committee is responsible for the selection of athletes for funding assistance through the AAP based on the Selection Criteria.

The composition of the Selection Committee will include: (1) EXCEL Stream Manager (2) Executive Director (3) Technical Operations

Application Process and Deadlines:

In order to make the AAP available to all athletes involved in SSA High Performance Stream programs, applications will be reviewed according to the schedule below with a pool of funds allocated to each review period.

The following procedure will be used when administering the AAP:

1. Athlete Assistance Program Application Forms will be made available to the athletes through the SSA website at www.sasksoccer.com. Forms may also be distributed directly to athletes within eligible programs.
2. All applicants are responsible for submitting their Application Forms by the following deadlines:
 - a) SSA-EXCEL Stream Programming and SSA-sanctioned Programming
 - Fall Indoor Programs – Fall phase (fees considered for indoor programming starting fall up to Dec. 31) – **deadline November 15 each year**
 - Outdoor Programs – Summer Phase – **deadline May 15 each year.**



3. All applicants are responsible for submitting their Application Forms to:

Kelly Rawlings
Technical Operations, Saskatchewan Soccer Association 150
Nelson Road, Saskatoon, SK S7S 1P5
Email: k.rawlings@sasksoccer.com

4. All decisions on funding through the AAP will be made by the Selection Committee and notification to the athlete/parents/guardians provided by the following dates:
- a) Indoor Programs (fall phase of funding) – Dec. 15 each year
 - b) Outdoor Programs (summer phase of funding) - June 15 each year
5. Regardless of the application status through the AAP, athletes are responsible for the payment of all program fees by the deadlines established by the SSA unless otherwise communicated
6. Athletes with outstanding fees owing will not be permitted to participate in SSA activities until fees are paid in full.
7. The SSA has the authority to withdraw AAP support to any athlete if it is deemed that the athlete is no longer in compliance with the policies and requirements of the AAP.

