
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2020TAC0041-001395
July 28, 2020

Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

Province takes further action to boost community sport

VICTORIA – Children, families and athletes will see their local sport organizations able to continue providing sport programs, thanks to increased support from the Province.

B.C. has more than 4,100 local sports organizations. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to many of them facing financial challenges due to the absence of registration fees, event revenues and sponsorships. The Province is providing \$1.5 million to help local sport organizations with fixed costs during the pandemic.

“We want people of all ages, backgrounds and levels of ability to be able to gain the physical and mental benefits sport offers,” said Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture. “People in the sport community have felt the effects of COVID-19 profoundly. This funding will help local organizations pay their bills and keep our communities active.”

Without support for local organizations that allows them to stay established in their communities, people would have reduced access to sport. This access could take up to two years to rebuild. Rural and remote communities, as well as underrepresented populations – such as Indigenous peoples, girls and women, low-income individuals, persons with disabilities and newcomers – are disproportionately affected by a reduction in physical activity opportunities as a result of COVID-19.

“Many amateur sport clubs in British Columbia are volunteer based and rely on membership fees, events, tournaments and competitions to fund sport activities in their communities,” said Charlene Krepiakovich, CEO, viaSport. “COVID-19 has especially impacted their ability to do that. This funding will help local clubs at the most financial risk to maintain operations until, and as, their communities and facilities can slowly reopen.”

Canadian Heritage is also investing \$3.4 million in sports organizations in British Columbia. The funding is part of the \$72-million COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund for Cultural, Heritage and Sport Organizations and will benefit B.C.’s provincial, disability and multi-sport organizations. Funding will be distributed through viaSport to ensure support is provided across the sport sector.

“This funding is great news for sports clubs in communities all over B.C.,” said Marty Hall, president and coach, Carnarvon Baseball. “Sport is good for everyone’s health and wellness and is a source of fun for so many children.”

Quick Facts:

- As of July 27, 2020, 54 sport-specific plans to rebound from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic had been completed by provincial sport organizations.

- 50 of those are summer and fall sports. Organizations are ready to welcome participants back to activities safely, meaning more than 500,000 British Columbians are able to return to sport.
- Local sports organizations include baseball and soccer teams, gymnastics and swimming.
- As of April 2020, the Province, through viaSport, provided \$10.5 million in accelerated funding to provincial, disability and multi-sport organizations.
- The Province has extended legal protection to amateur sport organizations, many of which are run by volunteers, so they cannot be held liable for damages caused by exposure to COVID-19.

Learn More:

Read more about Canadian Heritage funding: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/information-covid-19/emergency-support-fund.html>

Contact:

Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture
Government Communications and Public
Engagement
250 920-5079

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