



Overview of Recent Changes to the Athlete Assistance Program (2022)

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This article is not meant to provide a comprehensive list of all amendments made to the latest version of the Athlete Assistance Program ("AAP") Policies and Procedures. Sport Canada's AAP staff or AAP Senior Program Analysts are qualified to answer questions.

The Government of Canada adopted recent changes to its Athlete Assistance Program ("AAP"), to further alleviate the financial pressure on Canadian high-performance athletes in their preparation for and participation in international sport. More than 1,900 athletes in over 90 sport disciplines benefit from this direct financial support in Canada each year.

This article summarizes some significant changes impacting athletes and National Sport Organizations ("NSOs"), which came into effect on November 1, 2022. Please do note that further amendments are expected to be implemented in the near future.

Section 2 – Eligibility for AAP Support

Section 2.2 (Eligibility Requirements for NSOs) – The Sport Funding Framework is being reviewed by Sport Canada and the modifications could potentially affect the eligibility requirements for NSOs. However, for the time being, no changes have been made.

Section 2.5.3 (Non-Carded Athletes Named to Olympic and Paralympic Teams) – The policy provides clarifications regarding benefits and dates the allowance is applied for athletes who are not carded, but who are named to a Canadian Olympic or Paralympic team.

Section 3 – NSO, Athlete and Sport Canada Responsibilities

Section 3.2 (Athlete Responsibilities) – Updates clarify the requirement for carded athletes to read in full the AAP Policies and Procedures document, to ensure they understand their responsibilities and the benefits offered. Additionally, for each carding cycle, NSOs must provide athletes a review and an understanding about the AAP, its benefits and restrictions.

Furthermore, athletes must complete all application requirements prior to the last day of the NSOs funding cycle. Failure to do so will result in: 1) the loss of access to the card and to its benefits; and 2) a loss in the funds to the NSO that could have been reallocated to another athlete, if the original nominee had decided to decline their carding.

Section 4 – Allocation of Cards to Eligible NSOs

Section 4.1 (Policy) – C1 level cards (for athletes who meet the National Criteria for the first time) have been discontinued and phased out of the updated AAP. However, C1 cards may be applicable in some sport disciplines for a further cycle as per any sport-specific AAP criteria that have already been approved.



In order to determine the cycle in which the elimination of C1 cards will begin, AAP Senior Program Analysts will work with each sport discipline.

Section 4.2 (Determination of Carding Quotas) – Updates include information concerning the timing for which Sport Canada reviews the carding quotas for each eligible sport disciplines. The exact timing of the quota review and the implementation of new quotas may vary and is to be determined by Sport Canada.

Section 5 – Carding Criteria

Section 5.1 (General Policy) – More information has been provided concerning the expected length of an athlete’s support under different circumstances.

Section 5.2 (Policies for Senior Cards) – The phasing out of C1 level carding is further explained and clarifications are provided about the requirements for athletes who do not reach the senior card level based on international criteria within the prescribed number of years.

Section 5.4.2 (Athletes Competing on Professional Teams) – Athletes who have signed one-way contracts with teams in the National Basketball Association, the National Hockey League or the Major League Baseball will be ineligible for AAP support effective the date the contract is signed through to the conclusion of the contract.

Section 6 – Application for and Approval of Cards

The definition of a Carded Athlete has been included.

Section 7 – Athlete/NSO Agreement

The following sentence has been added to the introduction: “The NSO must ensure that the Agreement covers not only the dates of the carding cycle, but also the dates of their annual national team program commitments if they differ.” Moreover, some changes have been made regarding requirements in the agreement, including the addition of compliance with the Cannabis Act and the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (“UCCMS”).

Section 7.2 continues to refer NSOs to the Athlete/NSO Agreement template attached as Appendix C which Sport Canada encourages all NSOs to use as they review and update their agreements. New in this version is an Athlete Commercial Agreement Template found in Appendix D.

Section 8 – Financial Benefits

Section 8.3 (Tuition and Deferred Tuition Support) – Eligible education expenses, payment and reimbursement procedures have been clarified. In terms of deferred tuition support, the number of years granted to the athletes to use any accumulated deferred tuition increased to 7 years from the last date of carding.

Section 8.4 (Supplementary AAP Support) – Supplementary AAP support is available to athletes and modifications were made with the intent of clarifying NSO requirements and maximum allowances per carding cycle, as shown in the table below.



<p>Excellence Living and Training Allowance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletes in team sports must have contributed to the medal performance to be considered for eligibility to additional Living and Training Allowance; • An athlete who meets the criteria is eligible to this funding regardless of the level of card they are nominated for in the following year; • The 'total income' tiers have been adjusted upward.
<p>Child Dependent Allowance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now open to all carded athletes in supporting their "child dependents", regardless of sport discipline; • The 'total income' tiers have been adjusted upward; • This section now includes provisions on child care assistance.
<p>Training and Competition Allowance for Paralympic Athletes with High Support Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The list of International Paralympic Committee classifications has been updated; • The 'total income' tiers have been adjusted upward.
<p>Relocation Assistance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The maximum eligible payout has been increased to \$750 and is limited to costs associated with relocation.
<p>Retirement Assistance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor edits were made about the eligibility and claim process.

Section 9 – Health Related Circumstances

This section, formerly "Illness, Injury or Pregnancy", was renamed to be more inclusive of all health-related circumstances (e.g., mental health or concussions).

Section 10 – Voluntary Withdrawal from the AAP or Declining AAP Support

Section 10.1.2 (Declining AAP Support) - Clarifications were made in regards to benefits still available for athletes who decline AAP support.

Section 11 – Withdrawal of Carded Status

Section 11.2.4 (Gross breach of Discipline Including Assertion of, or Prosecution of a Criminal Offence) – A section was added concerning the processes for an NSO to withdraw a card for an assertion of, or prosecution of a criminal offence.





General (Replacement Carding) – If a replacement carding occurs, further details have been provided for repayment of funds and for reallocation of the funding.

Appendix C (Athlete / NSO Agreement Template) – A section referencing the UCCMS will be added to the template.

Appendix D (Athlete Commercial Agreement Template) – This document has been added and can be downloaded as a separate PDF or Word file.