



Recreation Facility
Association
of Nova Scotia

Supporting you – from the ground up

Standing Committee on Community Services Recreation Facilities: Impact and Recovery from COVID - 19

February 1st, 2022

WHO ARE WE?

- RFANS is the Sector Lead for NS Recreation Facilities, supporting facilities across the province.
- Throughout this pandemic, we had the elevated responsibility to assist our facilities in navigating restrictions, the financial implications of COVID and advocate for support from the province.
- RFANS initiated a Mobilization Strategy and a Call to Action to inform, update and focus on the imminent situation facing our facilities. Over a span of 18 months, RFANS collected financial data from provincial facilities.
- Based on that data from our sector, we determined an urgent need for financial assistance, particularly for our not-for-profit facilities that really are in the most vulnerable position.



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SNAPSHOT OF FACILITY NUMBERS:

- **Facilities include:** pools, arenas, curling rinks, multiplexes, community recreation centres and halls, soccer domes, tennis courts, ball fields, playgrounds etc
 - Arenas: 65
 - Pools: 50
 - Curling Clubs: 30
 - Multiplex: 26
 - Other: 22
 - **Total: 193**
- **Ownership of those facilities:**
 - Municipal: 78
 - Board/Volunteer: 68
 - Private: 38
 - Other: 9 (owned by a Band, Federally or by a community organization like the Lions Club)
 - **108 (56%) are not Municipally Owned**
 - **And of those 108, 90 (47%) are not Municipally Owned and are considered rural**



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KEY FOCUS OF TODAY'S PRESENTATION

- The Impact of Recreation Facilities in our Communities
- The Impact of Facility Closures on our Communities
- Impact of COVID – 19 on Recreation Facilities
- Impact of Funding
- What Does Recovery Look Like?



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IMPACT OF RECREATION FACILITIES IN OUR COMMUNITIES

- Improve overall health and well-being.
- Gathering places, a means for recreation, social connection and inclusion.
- Community Hubs, in some communities it's the only place to host a wedding, a funeral reception, a dance, a dance recital, a birthday party, a festival or your organizations fundraiser.
- They are places of pride and history.
- They keep our kids off the street and give our seniors a place to go.



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IMPACT OF FACILITY CLOSURES

➤ Community/Business

- Decrease in overall health and well-being
- Loss to local businesses:
 - Restaurants/hotels/shopping
 - Contractor like Landscapers/snow removal/security
 - Suppliers (food and beverage/cleaning etc)
- Loss of community infrastructure

➤ Sport

- Recreation & Sports facilities have two major revenue streams, rentals and events, both of which have been adversely effected, or non-existent for months, due to Public Health Restrictions:
- Increased operational expenses = Increased rental fees = increased costs to our users and sports organizations like Hockey NS and Skate NS
- No Facility = No Sports



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IMPACT OF COVID-19

- Lost rentals, cancelled events and lost F & B revenue.
- Increased cleaning, compliance and building maintenance expenses.
- Staff layoffs/retention and recruitment issues
- Mechanical issues and equipment failures from idling systems.
- Inability to fundraise
- Depleted reserves facilities were depending on for multi-year operations and to cover expenses for next season start ups.
- Major COVID fatigue with ongoing restrictions
- No dedicated support for facilities/inconsistency in funding.



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IMPACT OF FUNDING -TESTAMONIALS

- The \$40,000 in Emergency Support received by the Dominion Arena was an absolute huge help to our facility. The last two years have been incredibly difficult for all not-for profit arenas. The most recent restrictions have been devastating for our facilities and we are unsure how some will survive without increasing gathering limits and supports. That said, we would like to thank everyone involved in making these relief funds come to fruition.

John Wadden, Manager Dominion Arena

- The Ivor MacDonald Memorial Arena is very grateful to receive this funding. As a not-for-profit organization, these last 18 months have been difficult and challenging. COVID-19 changed the way we had to operate and resulted in loss of revenues and additional expenses. This money will help offset some of those losses and allow us to continue to serve the communities of East Pictou.

Randy Palmer, Director, Ivor MacDonald Memorial Arena



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IMPACT OF FUNDING- TESTAMONIALS

- ▶ The \$50K in Emergency Support we received could not have come at a better time. With ongoing closures, unexpected plant breakdown costing \$32K, proof of vaccination expenses, the 4-week COVID shut-down costing an additional \$30K plus. This, piled with all our monthly occurring expenses that come, whether we are open or not, meant this money was a complete godsend for us. Without it, we would be in a very difficult situation right now. Most likely, closed indefinitely. I can't say enough positive things about this whole process. Right from the start it was very straightforward, hassle-free and non-intimidating. The response was fast and there was someone there to answer questions along the way. It was all a very positive experience at a time when speed was everything. THANK YOU for making this happen for us.

Cory Keeping, Manager, Emera Centre Northside



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WHAT DOES RECOVERY LOOK LIKE?

- The impacts of COVID are ongoing and there is still much uncertainty.
- Our facilities have sustained immense financial losses over the past two years and continue to operate at a limited capacity creating further loss.
- What our facilities should be doing right now is working on a long-term Recovery Strategy because they WILL need one, but they can't see ahead to the next season.
- The financial support they received from the province bridged them through the initial waves of the pandemic and was a huge help, saving some from closure.
- Where do they go from here?



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