



SAINT PAUL SWIM LESSON SCHOLARSHIP PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

This proposal is for an expanded swim lesson scholarship program that will make swim lessons accessible for all children in the City of Saint Paul. Since residents of this community have so much access to lakes, rivers, pools, and other bodies of water it is particularly important that they learn to swim at a young age so they can take advantage of all these opportunities while being safe doing so.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

SAINT PAUL PARKS AND RECREATION

In 1887, Park legislation approved an act to provide for the creation and organization of a Board of Park Commissioners for the City of Saint Paul. In 1906, Scheffer Recreation Center opened as the first recreation center in Saint Paul.

The mission of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation (SPPR) is to help make Saint Paul the most livable city in America by facilitating the creation of active lifestyles, vibrant places and a vital environment. The vision is to do this by responding creatively to change, innovating with every decision, and connecting the entire city.

Because the City of Saint Paul operates under a variation of the strong mayor-council system of government, SPPR is overseen by the Mayor and City Council. Members of City Council are elected from seven geographic wards, which have approximately equal populations. Saint Paul also has a Parks Commission, the purpose of which is to advise City officials on matters of city-wide and long-range importance to the parks and recreation system. The Parks Commission consists of nine at-large Saint Paul residents appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council.

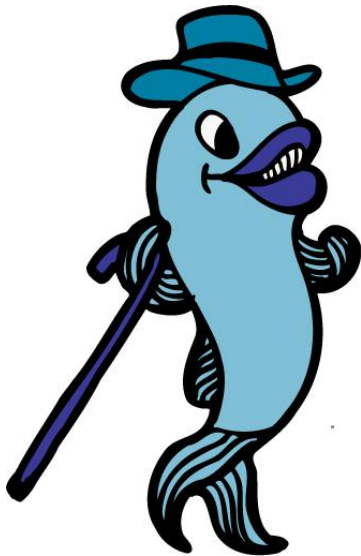
AQUATICS PROGRAM

The City of Saint Paul Aquatics Program is one of the most visible in the Parks and Recreation Department and in the City at large. In the summertime is when the program really shines with seasonal operations at Como Regional Park Pool, Highland Park Aquatic Center, and Phalen Beach that compliment year-round operations at Great River Water Park. In 2014 these facilities had more than 250,000 total visits, including over 30,000 swim lesson sessions.

The Aquatics Program has a variety of programs including open swim, lap swim, water aerobics, toddler times, and group rentals. By far the most impactful program however is the swim lesson program. Swim lessons are a progressive program that begins as early as six months and culminate with competitive swimming and lifeguarding. Lessons are for all ages, including adults, but the most popular and well attended lessons are for children in the preschool and grade school age groups.

Each level of the program has a specific set of skills that are focused on. This ensures that participants are continually challenged as they progress from level to level and that there is consistency from session to session and instructor to instructor.

Skill Level Descriptions

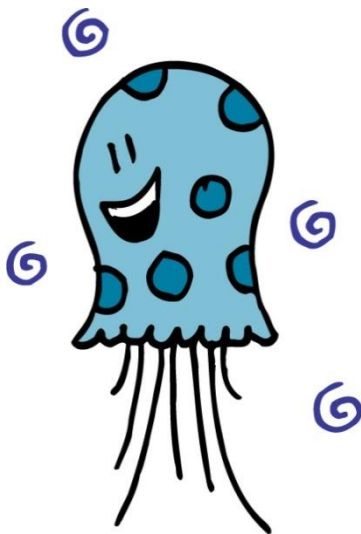


Fin Buddies (6 months to 3 years of age)

An adult must accompany the child. Adults and instructors work together to develop the child's comfort in the water. Adults learn basic safety practices for working with children in and around water.

Skills Obtained:

- ability to adjust to the water
- basic swimming skills



Jellyfish – Water Exploration (3 to 5 years of age)

Offers swimmers their first opportunity to learn basic swimming skills from a qualified instructor without direct accompaniment from a parent or guardian.

Skills Obtained:

- basic water safety skills
- basic swimming techniques such as kicking and floating*
- ability to enjoy and be comfortable in the water
- ability to safely and fully submerge the body underwater (3 seconds)

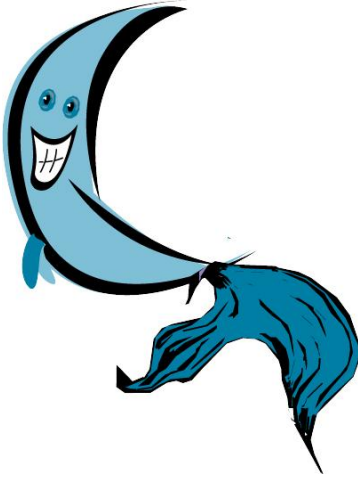


Sunfish - Primary Skills

Helps swimmers hone fundamental swimming skills. Swimmers must be comfortable in the water without a parent at their side and must have completed the Jellyfish course. A demonstration of equivalent skills will also suffice.

Skills Obtained:

- floating*
- floating and gliding
- front and back crawl basics
- combined stroke (5 yards)*
- deep water orientation*
- ability to retrieve objects under water

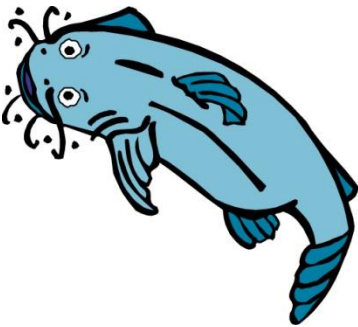


Moonfish - Advanced Primary Skills

Give swimmers more success with fundamental skills learned from Sunfish level above.

Skills Obtained:

- rhythmic breathing
- additional deep water orientation*
- floating
- the elementary backstroke
- the combined stroke (5 yards)

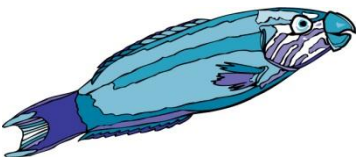


Catfish - Stroke Readiness

Builds on skills by coordinating strokes and increasing endurance. Swimmers must have completed Moonfish or have equivalent skills.

Skills Obtained:

- coordinated front crawl (15 yards)
- coordinated back crawl (15 yards)
- elementary backstroke (10 yards)
- ability to tread water (30 seconds)
- poolside diving basics
- whip kick basics



Parrotfish - Stroke Development

Develops endurance in strokes learned and introduces the breaststroke and sidestroke. Swimmers must have completed Catfish or have equivalent skills.

Skills Obtained:

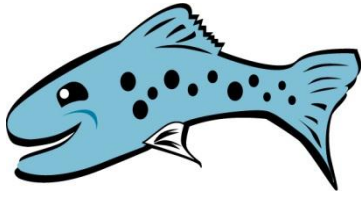
- front and back crawl (50 yards)
 - elementary backstroke (25 yards)
 - breaststroke basics
 - breaststroke kick (25 yards)
 - sidestroke basics
 - scissors kick (10 yards)
 - ability to tread water (90 seconds)
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Rainbow Trout - Stroke Refinement

Refines coordination and increases endurance of key strokes.

Butterfly is introduced.

Swimmers must have completed Parrotfish or have equivalent skills.

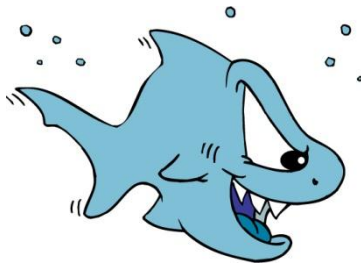


Skills Obtained:

- front and back crawl (75 yards)
- breaststroke (50 yards)
- elementary backstroke (50 yard)
- sidestroke (25 yards)
- butterfly basics
- diving board basics
- ability to tread water (3 minutes)

Tigerfish - Skill Proficiency

Polish strokes so swimmers swim them with more ease, efficiency, power and smoothness over greater distances.



Skills Obtained:

- front crawl and back crawl (100 yards)
- breaststroke (75 yards)
- sidestroke (50 yards)
- ability to tread water (5 minutes)
- ability to recover a 10 pound brick in deep water

*The student will be directly supported by an instructor.

Adult & Specialty Classes

Adult Introductory Level

This class is for adults and teens that have little to no experience in the water. The objective is to introduce fundamental skills essential for safe swimming, including front and back floats, front and back crawls, the elementary back stroke, the ability to recover submerged objects, and basic first aid and safety skills.

Adult Intermediate Level

This intermediate level class, for adults and teens, is intended for those who have passed the Introductory Level course or those who have prior experience in water but are still uncomfortable with their swimming ability. Participants will increase their endurance, refine basic strokes such as the front crawl, back crawl, and elementary back stroke, and be introduced to the sidestroke and side stroke. Participants will also learn how to tread water.

Beginning Springboard Diving

Participants must have at least Parrotfish-level swimming abilities. Divers will gain an understanding on how to be safe on the diving board with the four step approach, how to perform basic front and back dives, how to tuck and pike, and, upon ability, how to execute front and back flips/spins.

Developmental Swim Team

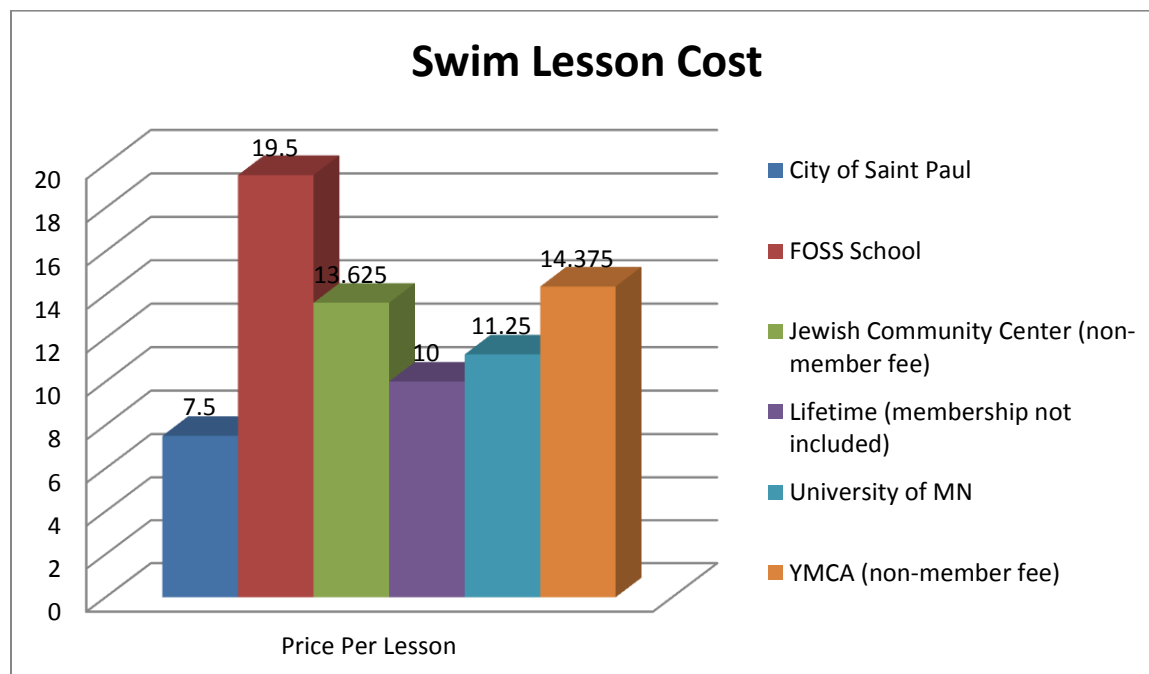
This introductory competitive swim program takes place at Highland Park Aquatic Center and is designed for swimmers ages 7–18. Participants will learn about competitive swimming at every level and will develop and maintain swimming skills needed to remain competitive. This program is coached by STAR Swim Club, a club with a national reputation for producing Olympic-caliber swimmers.

Junior Lifeguard Program (ages 10–15)

This program develops water safety skills for aspiring junior lifeguards. Participants will gain valuable first-hand experience, including how to enforce pool rules and regulations, how to scan the water for potential trouble, how to use safety equipment, how to follow emergency action plans, and how to operate and maintain the cleanliness of a pool. Click [here](#) for more information.

SWIM LESSONS PROGRAM IN DETAIL

City of Saint Paul swim lessons are already some of the most affordable in the Twin Cities, at only \$60 for eight lessons. By comparison other programs in the Twin Cities can cost upwards of \$150 dollars for a similar program. Below is a chart showing what various swim lessons cost per session.

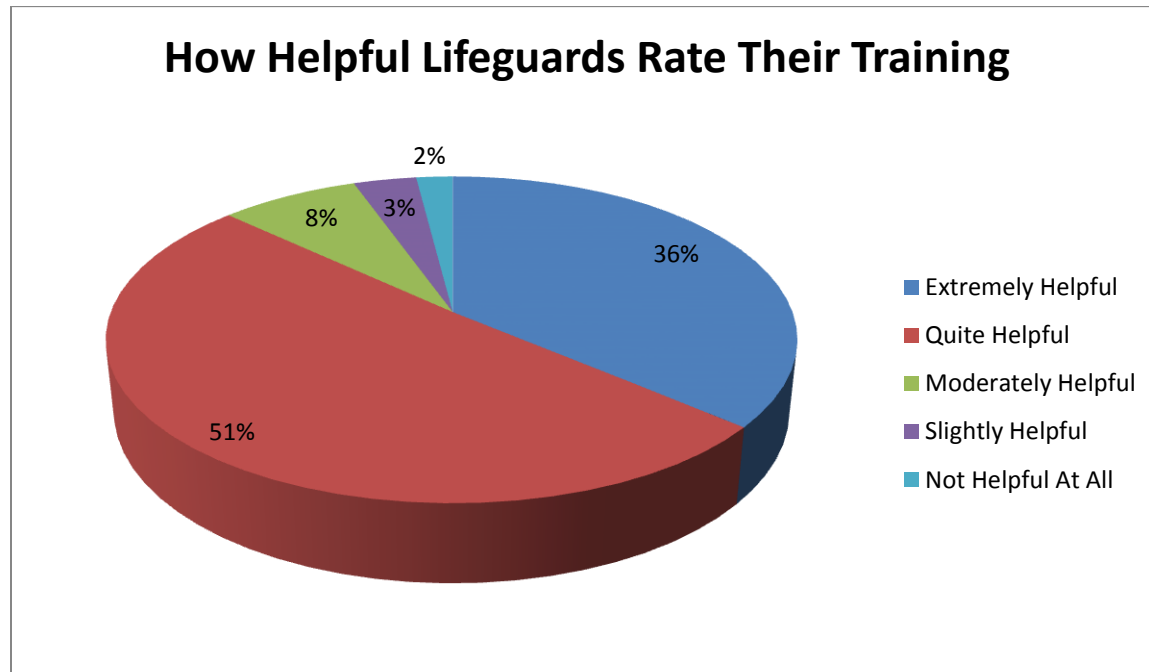


The City of Saint Paul has already partnered with the Friends of Oxford Pool, a non-profit booster club, to make a robust scholarship program for swim lessons. Since 2012 a combination of scholarships from this group along with fee assistance from the aquatics operating budget have totaled close to \$42,000 for children who could not afford full priced lessons. During this time no child has been turned away who qualified. This program has succeeded and helped so many families despite the fact that it is not outwardly promoted to the community. If Parks and Recreation were to promote the existence of scholarships online, in all the recreation centers, at community non-profits, and in neighborhoods throughout the City the existing funding would be exhausted very quickly.

Swim lessons are offered year-round at Great River Water Park and are also available in the summer months at Como Regional Park Pool and Highland Park Aquatic Center. Around 2,500

of the 4,000 total lessons take place during the summer. City of Saint Paul residents make up five of every six registrations and historically about one of each ten registrations receives a scholarship to help with the cost.

Swim Lesson Instructors are all trained lifeguards in the J. Ellis and Associates program that is focused on safety and ongoing training and testing. As a result City of Saint Paul has some of the best trained staff in the industry and a fantastic safety record. In 2013 the City of Saint Paul aquatics program received a Silver Award of Excellence from J. Ellis and Associates for having an exceptionally well trained staff and impressive safety record. Additionally each instructor goes through extensive training each season to prepare for swim lessons. In a 2014 survey of over 250 lifeguards respondents overwhelmingly agree that their training was helpful in making them and their classes successful.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

THE ISSUE

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Morbidity and Mortality Report more children and youth ages 1-14 die accidentally from drowning than any other unintentional injury-related death except motor vehicle crashes. Furthermore, ethnic minority groups have a much higher rate of accidental drowning deaths than Caucasian children. The disparity is widest among children 5-9 years old. The fatal drowning rate of African American and American Indian children ages 5-9 is almost three times that of white children in the same age range. And Asian/Pacific Islanders have a 50% greater chance of drowning than Caucasian children. The only ethnic minority group that has a lower rate of fatal drowning than Caucasians is Hispanic children. Fortunately there is a way to combat this issue, and that is why we are seeking funding for additional scholarships for youth in these higher-risk ethnic groups to take summer swim lessons. The CDC reports that taking swim lessons can reduce the chance of drowning death in children by up to 88%.

This is particularly troubling in a community like Saint Paul where water activities are so prevalent. Young children are bound to come in contact with lakes, rivers, ponds, pools, and other bodies of water because of how many there are in and around the City. At the very least we

want our kids to be safe and comfortable around water, but we also want them to have the skills and confidence to enjoy water too. Getting as many young children as possible into swim lessons will accomplish both of these goals.

THE SOLUTION

We propose that this program provide scholarships to youth for Jellyfish, Sunfish, Moonfish, Catfish, and Parrotfish levels. This would cover skills from “water exploration” to “stroke development” and would take most children five summers to progress through. We would start kids in Jellyfish at age 4 or 5, and they would usually complete the program around age 8 or 9 years. They could continue to progress through the program and even become lifeguards if they choose, but the focus has to be on learning basic skills. Early in this program participants would gain the basic skills necessary to avoid drowning and by the end they would be able to fully enjoy all the aquatic opportunities our community affords while being safe at the same time.

Currently we have around 2,500 children go through our summer swim lessons each year. Adding 750-1000 more through this program would be a great accomplishment and about the maximum that our facilities could handle in truth. This would increase our total lessons taught by 30-40% in the summer time and would take average class size for these levels from 6.5 children to 9.3-10.2 children on average. There is capacity in our lessons and facilities for this increase, the only resource that would need to be bolstered are the total number of instructors to teach the lessons. However, there is no reason to believe that in the summertime we would be unable to find and train enough quality staff to meet the demands of an expanded program. Leveraging the existing program will allow all children, regardless of if they are on scholarship or not, to go through the same program side-by-side. It will also provide data that can be used to track progression and retention over time.

As a reward for attending all of their sessions we will develop a plan to get the children and their families passes to visit the pools during open swim. While children enjoy swim lessons, they cannot compare to having a whole water park to play in. By doing both of these things we would hope to expose these families to the “culture” of swimming, hopefully establishing a value that will last for years and generations to come.

We would target children throughout the City of Saint Paul, and looking at the demographics of the Saint Paul Public School District we can get an idea of how impactful it might be. Our plan would be to partner with youth serving organizations and non-profits to identify children who could benefit from the program. We would ask that these partners help with registration and transportation. The Saint Paul Public School District has around 15,000 children from kindergarten to fourth grade, the age that this program would cater to. The district is currently 29.6% African American, 31.4% Asian American and 1.75% American Indian; so there are just over 9,000 minority children in these ethnic groups that typically have higher rates of accidental drowning fatalities than Latino or Caucasian youth. The CDC reports that taking swim lessons can reduce the chance of drowning death in children by up to 88%. Clearly getting up to 1,000 of these children into swim lessons would make children in our community much safer in the water.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The project activities will be primarily led by Tyler McKean, Aquatics Manager for the City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation. Each spring onsite managers for each facility are hired and trained before opening in summer; these seasonal staff will play a pivotal role in implementing this program. These staff would administer the grant and work with community partners to outreach and find the right participants.

The City of Saint Paul works with many community organizations currently that provides services to many low-income and diverse populations. We would approach many of these groups in hopes of leveraging their resources for the expanded swim lesson scholarship program. These organizations would be asked to help identify and register children who could benefit most from swim lessons. We'd also look to these organizations to help overcome non-financial barriers such as transportation and adult supervision.

ALIGNMENT WITH GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE ONE

This proposal fits primarily into the area of education and training. The youth that will be enrolled in the program thanks to this grant will learn the skills that they need to be safe around bodies of water as well as enjoy water-based activities for the rest of their lives. These are very important skills to have growing up in the “land of 10,000 lakes” and unfortunately there are many youth in the Saint Paul community that do not get these skills currently. Many families in this community simply cannot afford the cost of swim lessons, which this program will help tremendously with. Providing swim lessons to as many of the youth in Saint Paul as possible through this program will ensure their safety, enjoyment, and begin to build a long-lasting appreciation for swimming that could affect generations to come.

GUIDELINE TWO

The City of Saint Paul and the surrounding area are rich with aquatic opportunities, thanks to all of the rivers, lakes, pools, and waterparks there are. Whether it is swimming, fishing, boating, or something else, much of this communities identity revolves around water. This grant will leverage the curriculum, instructors and facilities already in place so that hundreds of new swimmers will be able to fully take advantage of these opportunities.

The City of Saint Paul's established swim lesson program is a proven approach to addressing the critical issue of youth in the community not possessing the skills needed to be safe around the water. The swim lesson program runs year round and there are families with multiple children that start them in the program as young as six months old and continue gaining skills all through their youth. These participants become the young people that become lifeguards, competitive swimmer, or simply competent recreational swimmers.

This grant however will allow the City to target new populations that have not traditionally taken many swim lessons. These include lower income families and racially diverse groups. By partnering with community organizations to offer these scholarships these groups will have access to quality swim lessons that they currently do not.

GUIDELINE THREE

Racial and economic disparities are a serious concern in youth water safety. Ethnic minorities are far more likely to die of accidental drowning when they are young than Caucasians. Additionally it stands to reason that many lower income families that cannot afford swim lessons will have more deficient swimmers than those that do take swim lessons. The CDC reports that taking swim lessons can reduce the chance of drowning death in children by up to 88%. By collaborating with community organizations to reach these affected groups, this proposal can eliminate the racial and economic disparities that currently exist. Simply having stronger swimmers and less accidental drowning will make this a great return on investment. Moreover, the young people who will learn to swim as part of this program will also be getting much more:

the chance to fully enjoy aquatic activities and an appreciation for it that will continue into future generations.

When this grant is fully funded the City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation has a plan for making it sustainable long-term. This will happen through a few different strategies in combination. Each traditional swim lesson registration will have a portion of the paid fee go towards a scholarship fund which will be used to sustain this program. The relationship with Friends of Oxford Pool and other non-profits will also be used to attract donors and increase the ongoing funding to the swim lesson scholarship fund.

THE BUDGET

To fully fund 1000 swim lessons for lower income and racially diverse youth each summer would require \$60,000. This level of funding is required for at least three years to prove the success of the program. At the end of the outside funding for the program, the City of Saint Paul would have a scholarship fund for swim lessons that would take over the funding of the program going forward. The City of Saint Paul would take a portion of all swim lesson fees to go into a fund starting in 2015. This would be something that we would promote in all of our literature and also seek additional donations.

COST OF PROGRAM IN DETAILS

City of Saint Paul will hire 30 additional temporary Swim Lesson Instructors to teach during the summer. Instructors would each teach 17 hours per week for the ten week season and also have periodic trainings and staff meetings. Instructors average \$11.24/hr.

City of Saint Paul Staff Costs = \$57,324

Per Lesson Participant = \$57.32

New instructors with J Ellis and Associates would need to be licensed, which costs the City of Saint Paul \$70 per year per employee.

Instructor Licensing Costs = \$2,100

Per Lesson Participant = \$2.10

Staff training costs each year for a swim instructor are approximately \$350. This includes instructor training materials, trainer hours, and instructor salary for preseason trainings as well as ongoing “in-services” during the summer.

Staff Training Costs = \$10,500

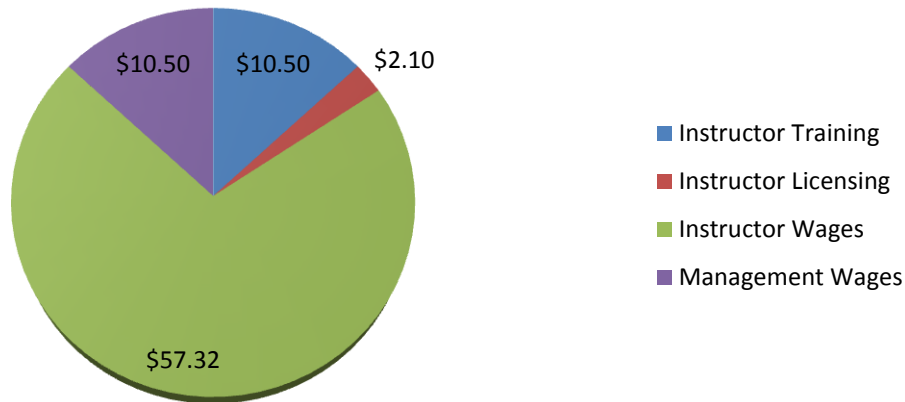
Per Lesson Participant = \$10.50

Management of this program will include planning, promotion, and implementation and will take approximately 250 hours divided amongst several full-time and seasonal staff.

Management Costs = \$10,500

Per Lesson Participant = \$10.50

Costs of Administering Grant Program (per participant)



The aquatics budget exists in within the Parks and Recreation general fund, which means that it is subsidized by taxes collected in the City of Saint Paul. This budget assistance allows for upkeep of facilities, staff training, material costs and other expenses while also keeping swim lessons, daily admission, memberships, and other programs as affordable as possible for patrons. This goes a long way to ensuring that swim lessons at a City of Saint Paul aquatic center are the most affordable option in the Twin cities. Each swim lesson actually costs the City of Saint Paul over \$80 to deliver, but because of the budget assistance the participant cost is only \$60. Total Budget Assistance 2014 = \$257,793

The City of Saint Paul Aquatics budget will make this traditional contribution and reduce the cost of these swim lessons from over \$80 to \$60. The remaining cost of staff wages, training, and licensing is what this grant will cover.

Existing fee assistance and scholarships from the aquatics budget and Friends of Oxford Pool have totaled more than \$42,000 over the last three years, and these contributions would continue to bolster this grant money.

Existing Scholarships = \$14,000 a year

The total operating budget for Saint Paul Parks and Recreation in 2014 is \$34,637,684.

The total operating budget for the summer aquatics program in 2014 is \$769,893

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS: SAINT PAUL CITY COUNCIL

Dan Bostrom, Ward 6

Amy Brendmoen, Ward 5

Kathy Lantry, Ward 7 and Council President

Dai Thao, Ward 1

Dave Thune, Ward 2

Chris Tolbert, Ward 3

Russ Stark, Ward 4

This program proposal will be submitted for Saint Paul City Council after the application deadline. However, the approved resolution will be sent to The Saint Paul Foundation at that time.