

Montana Swimming will offer a year round reduced rate athlete outreach membership to provide opportunities in swimming for economically disadvantaged swimmers in the LSC. The outreach fee will not exceed \$7.00.

To qualify for outreach membership you must provide one of the following documents: Federal free or reduced hot lunch program, 1040 tax form, Food Stamps (SNAP) program, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), TANF, WIC, foster children, participation in Head Start, Medicaid, Medicare, Healthy Montana Kids Plus, Healthy Montana Kids, homeless, runaway, migrant, is a member of the club on a reduced or free scholarship, or their income is within the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Cases not falling under these circumstances may be appealed to the general chair.

Rationale:

Many Montana families struggle financially. We would like to encourage swimmers to join our teams and one way we can do that is by offering an outreach membership that encourages low income families to be involved in swimming. Expanding the outreach definition allows qualified swimmers who are home schooled and those who attend religious schools to participate in the program.

Every day families struggle to make ends meet due to the harsh economic time in which we currently live. According to the Bureau of Labor statistics, the number of unemployed persons was 9.3 million. Many people don't have the discretionary income that they once had for extracurricular activities due to an unforeseen job loss that has adversely impacted income in a negative way. Outreach membership plays a vital role in bridging the gap. A Montana Swimming outreach membership offers qualified individuals the opportunity to become a Montana Swimming year-round athlete member at a reduced fee. Many families in Montana live at or below the poverty levels. This is one way Montana Swimming can make a positive difference in a swimmer's life. We encourage clubs to offer scholarships to assist low income families to participate in swimming.