



# **IIHF / HOCKEY CANADA** **TRY HOCKEY PILOTS** **PLAYBOOK**

Hockey Canada's mission is to **“Lead, Develop, and Promote Positive Hockey Experiences.”**

Through funding secured from the International Ice Hockey Federation, Hockey Canada has initiated the IIHF/Hockey Canada Try Hockey Pilots designed to provide accessible and engaging opportunities for new participants to try hockey, aiming to increase interest in and commitment to the sport.

## Pilot Objectives

- DELIVER SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES
- FOSTER COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT
- EMBRACE COMMUNITY VALUES
- ESTABLISH BEST PRACTICES
- FACILITATE KNOWLEDGE SHARING

## Local Hockey Associations Objectives:

- Develop multi-year hockey development plans, including:
  - Basic skills like learning to skate
  - Progressing to learn to play hockey
  - Full integration into a Local Hockey Association
- Build local capacity by training new instructors and securing on-ice support from existing players within their associations.
- Encourage sourcing equipment locally and promoting hockey events within their communities.





## Lists of IIHF / Hockey Canada Try Hockey Pilots

- **CAPITAL REGION FEMALE MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION (WINTER 2024)**
  - Target audience: Girls and indigenous communities
  - Type: Try hockey and recruitment of girls
- **NEWMARKET MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION (WINTER 2024)**
  - Target audience: New Canadians, Black Indigenous and People Of Colour and low socio-economic
  - Type: Learn to play
- **HOCKEY ALBERTA - PEERLESS TROUT FIRST NATIONS (WINTER 2024)**
  - Target audience: Indigenous communities
  - Type: Try hockey
- **GREATER MIRAMICHI MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION (FALL 2024)**
  - Target audience: U7 and U9 aged children
  - Type: Try hockey
- **BRAMPTON HOCKEY (FALL 2024)**
  - Target audience: New Canadians
  - Type: Try hockey
- **HAZELTON MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION (FALL 2024)**
  - Target audience: COED, girls and indigenous communities
  - Type: Learn to play
- **HALIFAX HAWKS MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION (FALL 2024)**
  - Target audience: Muslim community
  - Type: Try hockey
- **CAPE BRETON BLIZZARD (FALL 2024)**
  - Target audience: Girls and indigenous communities
  - Type: Learn to play
- **HOCKEY NEW BRUNSWICK - FREDERICTON (FALL 2024)**
  - Target audience: Neurodiverse youth
  - Type: Learn to Play
- **HOCKEY EASTERN ONTARIO - OTTAWA (WINTER 2025)**
  - Target: Underrepresented groups
  - Type: Try hockey







**330 +**

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

### Gender Identity:

- Boys: **53 %**
- Girls: **46.4 %**
- Prefer Not to Say: **0.6 %**

### Age breakdown:

- U7 category: **28 %**
- U9 category: **30 %**
- U11 category: **22.5 %**
- U13 category: **12.7 %**
- U15 category: **4.8 %**
- U18 category: **2 %**

### Race and Ethnicity:

- Black: **1.9 %**
- Caucasian: **34 %**
- Chinese: **1.9 %**
- Filipino: **1.6 %**
- Indigenous: **24.3 %**
- Japanese: **0.6 %**
- Latin American: **0.3 %**
- Multiple Races / Ethnicities: **2.5 %**
- Prefer not to say: **13.1 %**
- Prefer to self-describe: **1.3 %**
- South Asian: **9.9 %**
- Southeast Asian: **3.8 %**
- West Asian, North African or Arab: **4.8 %**

### Identifies as Indigenous:

- First Nations: **83 %**
- Métis: **2.6 %**
- Prefer not to say: **14.4 %**

**60% +**

**INITIAL DATA SHOWS THAT  
60% + OF PARTICIPANTS  
ARE REGISTERING IN LOCAL  
HOCKEY ASSOCIATION**



**140 +**

**NUMBER OF  
VOLUNTEERS**

**324**

**SETS OF EQUIPMENT  
DISTRIBUTED**







# PLAYBOOK

Outlined below is a comprehensive summary of the essential actions to consider when planning to replicate try-hockey initiatives in your community. These steps provide a practical guide to help you establish successful programs that introduce and encourage participation in hockey, fostering inclusivity, skill development, and community engagement.

## Contact Information

- Identify a key contact person reflecting the diverse communities and leadership styles

**Diversity** refers to the presence and inclusion of individuals with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, and identities within a group, organization, or society. It encompasses both visible and invisible attributes, such as:

- **CULTURAL DIVERSITY** – differences in ethnicity, race, nationality, language, traditions, and religion.
- **GENDER DIVERSITY** – inclusion of different gender identities, including women, men, and non-binary individuals.
- **SOCIOECONOMIC DIVERSITY** – varied economic and social backgrounds, including class, education levels, and access to resources.
- **ABILITY DIVERSITY** – inclusion of individuals with differing physical, sensory, or cognitive abilities.
- **SEXUAL ORIENTATION** – representation of people with different orientations, including LGBTQ+ communities.

## Importance of Diversity

- **INNOVATION:** Diverse teams bring unique perspectives, leading to creative solutions and innovation.
- **REPRESENTATION:** Ensures that all voices, especially underrepresented ones, are heard and valued.





- **EQUITY:** Promotes fairness and inclusivity, addressing systemic barriers and biases.
- **PERFORMANCE:** Organizations with diversity tend to have better decision-making, engagement, and productivity.
- **SOCIAL COHESION:** Celebrates human differences and fosters respect for individual uniqueness.

## Program Information

When designing a **Try Hockey** program, it's essential to consider families who may not be familiar with hockey, its culture, or how it operates at the local level. To attract as many participants as possible, structure your program with the following key elements in mind:

### Objectives and Target Audience

- **SET GOALS:**
  - Introducing hockey to underserved communities
  - Fostering inclusivity
  - Creating pathways to your local hockey associations
- **DEMOGRAPHICS:**
  - Low-income families
  - Indigenous youth
  - BIPOC communities
  - New Canadians
  - Muslim communities
  - Etc...



## Time Management

Effective scheduling is crucial for accommodating busy families and encouraging participation. Ensure that your program allows families to balance hockey with other activities by:

- **ON THE SAME DAY OF THE WEEK:** Consistent scheduling helps families plan and commit more easily.
- **AT THE SAME TIME:** A fixed time slot creates a reliable routine and reduces conflicts.
- **AT THE SAME RINK:** Holding sessions at a single, familiar location minimizes confusion and enhances comfort for participants.

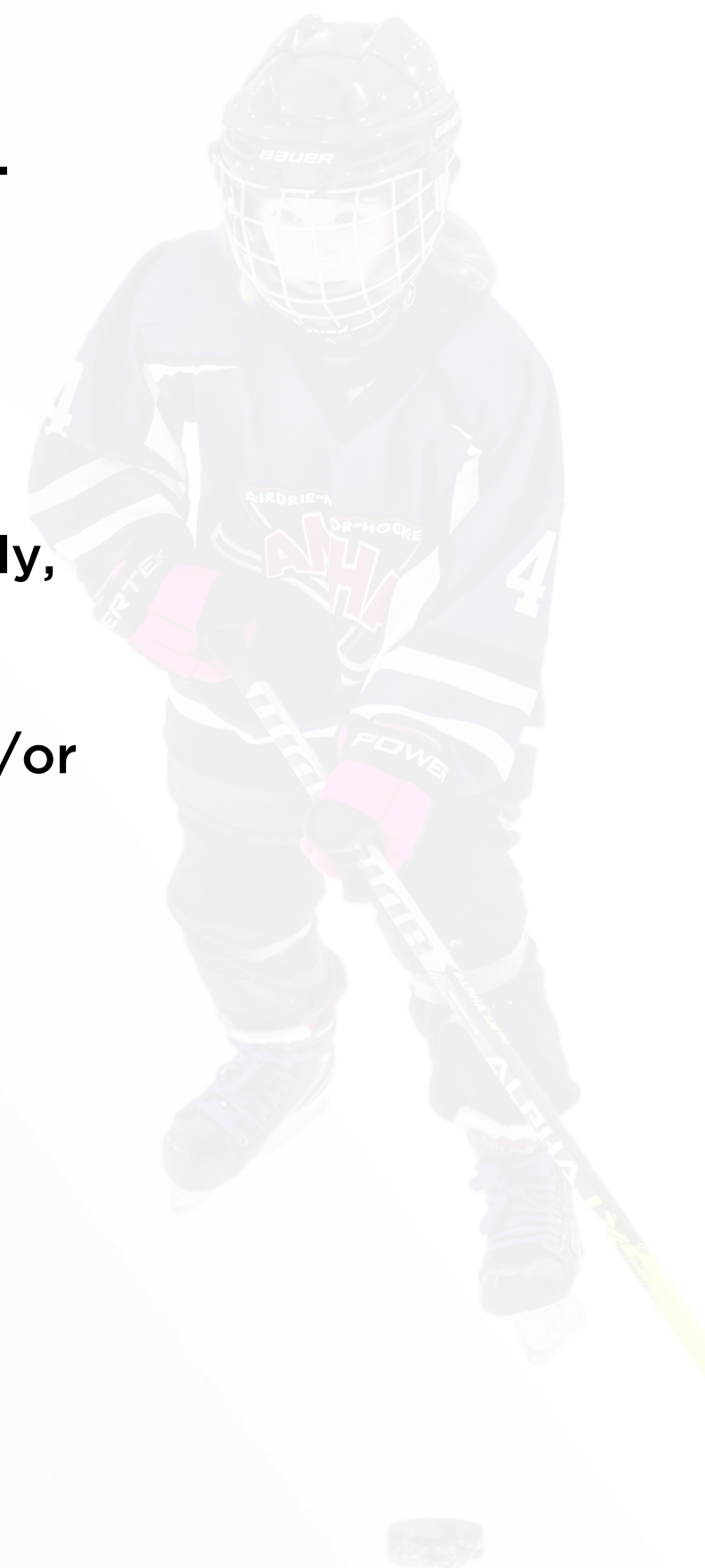
## Cost

Affordability is a key factor in ensuring broad participation, especially for those new to the sport.

- **FREE OR MINIMAL COST:** If possible, offer your Try Hockey program free of charge to eliminate financial barriers. Alternatively, charge a nominal fee to cover basic expenses.
- **CONSIDER ICE RENTAL AND EQUIPMENT COSTS:** If fees are necessary, calculate them carefully to account for ice rental and/or equipment while keeping the program accessible to as many families as possible.

## On-Ice Sessions

- **SESSIONS COUNTS (6-10 SESSIONS)**
- **SESSION LENGTH (50 MINS)**





- **PROGRAM LENGTH (MINIMUM 6 DAYS TO HALF A SEASON)**
- **PARTICIPANTS (14-30 PARTICIPANTS)**
- **VOLUNTEERS (1:4 VOLUNTEER-TO-PARTICIPANT RATIO)**
  - **With the Same Instructors:** Consistent coaching helps build trust, rapport, and a better learning environment.

Creating a welcoming environment in a Try Hockey program is essential to ensuring participants and their families feel excited and supported in their first experience with the sport. This begins with friendly, approachable staff and volunteers who greet attendees warmly and guide them through the process, from registration to equipment fitting. Clear communication, inclusive language, and a patient, encouraging demeanor help build confidence, especially for those new to ice sports. Providing well-structured, fun activities tailored to varying skill levels fosters a sense of accomplishment and belonging. By emphasizing positivity, safety, and teamwork, the program can create a lasting impression, inspiring participants to continue their hockey journey.

By standardizing these elements, you create a seamless and predictable experience that fosters long-term engagement

## Registration

### Platforms

- **Use Hockey Canada's HCR platform as it allows for better tracking of participants.**



- **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPORTS REGISTRATIONS IN AREAS WITH LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OR LIMITED INTERNET ACCESS**

- **IN-PERSON REGISTRATION OPTIONS**

- Set up **registration booths** at community centers, schools, libraries, and local events to provide an accessible, face-to-face option.
- Collaborate with local organizations.

- **PAPER-BASED REGISTRATIONS**

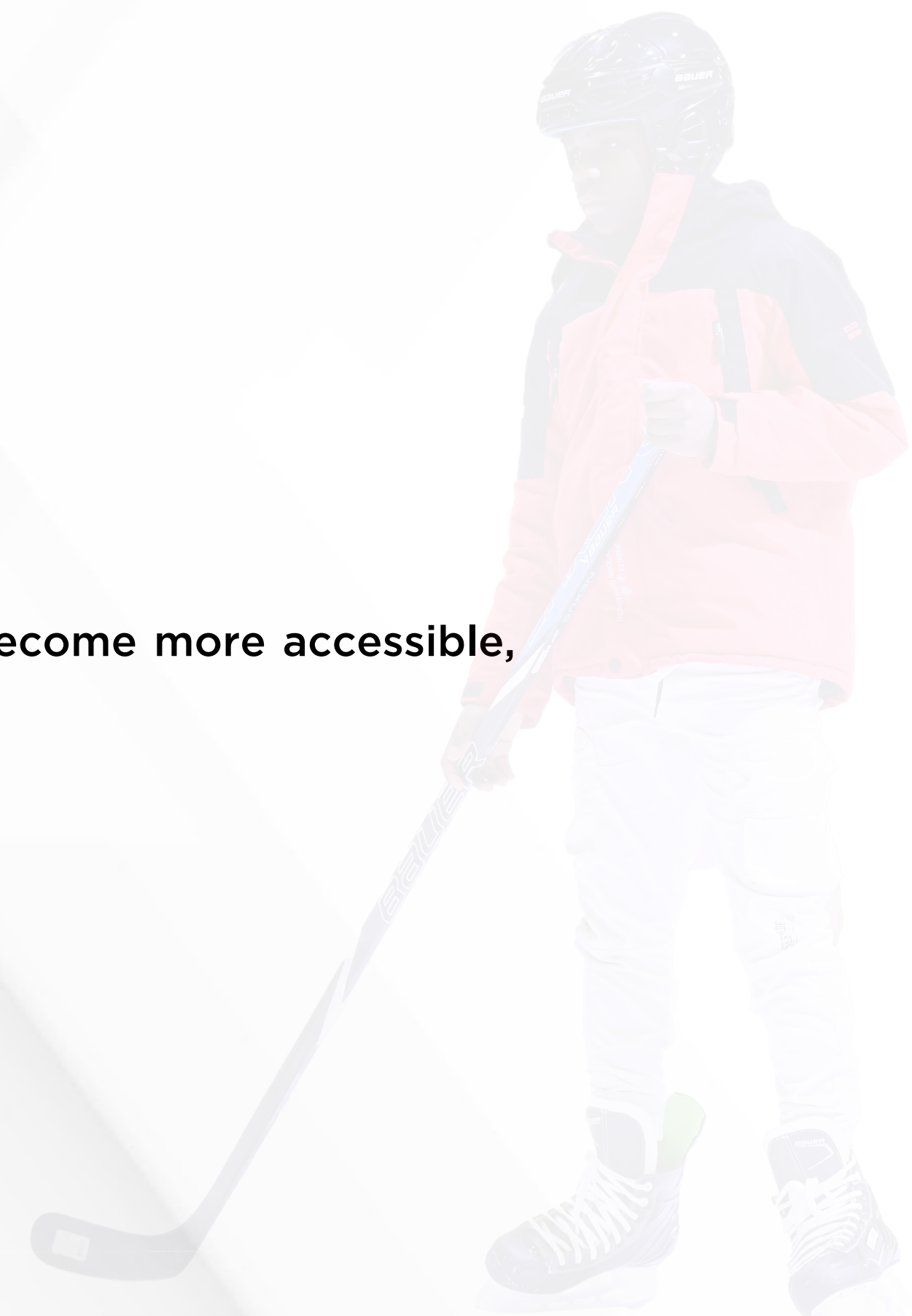
- Distribute paper forms through schools, community centers, and local businesses.
- Offer drop-off locations or mail-in options for completed forms.

- **ASSISTANCE**

- Organize **Registration Days**.

- **SUBSIDIES AND FLEXIBLE PAYMENT OPTIONS**

- Offer **funding** or sliding-scale fees to ease financial barriers.
- Accept cash payments or installments for those without access to online payment systems.
- By blending **low-tech, community-driven approaches** with simplified digital tools, sport registration can become more accessible, fostering greater participation and inclusion.





## Promotion:

- **Promotion efforts should leverage a multi-channel approach to maximize outreach and engagement:**
  - **Social Media:** Utilize platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to share updates, stories, and event details. Use targeted ads to reach specific demographics.
  - **Email Campaigns:** Send newsletters and personalized emails to current and past participants, local families, and community organizations to raise awareness and drive registrations.
  - **Local Schools:** Partner with schools to distribute flyers, present during assemblies, and engage with parents through newsletters and PTA meetings.
- **LEVERAGE TRUSTED COMMUNITY LEADERS AND EVENTS**
  - Partner with teachers, coaches, and community leaders to share information and encourage participation.
  - Attend or host local events, such as fairs, festivals, or sports expos, to promote the initiative and connect with potential participants face-to-face.
- **ACCESSIBLE PROMOTION**
  - Use **flyers, posters, and local radio ads** to share registration details where internet access is limited.
  - Translate materials into relevant languages to ensure inclusivity.
- **TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT**
  - Provide or coordinate transportation for families to attend registration events or sports programs.

## Waiting Lists

- **Establish a waiting list for participants once registration reaches capacity to highlight the program's demand.**



## Insurance

- Use the Hockey Canada Pathway to Hockey Coverage to insure your event or program
- [hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/hockey\\_programs/parents/pathway/pathway-coverage](https://hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/hockey_programs/parents/pathway/pathway-coverage)

## Equipment

- **ADEQUACY:**
  - Ensure equipment is appropriately sized for each age group to maximize safety and comfort.
  - For girls, include jill protectors.
  - Provide stick tape.
  - Ensure all skates are sharpened
- **ADDITIONAL PURCHASES:**
  - Include provisions in your planning for the purchase of additional gear to ensure availability for all sizes.
- **RETENTION OF GEAR:**
  - Allowing participants to keep their gear fosters a sense of pride and ownership.
  - Plan for replenishing gear inventories to sustain future programs.
- **DONATIONS:**
  - Partner with local equipment banks, foundations, and retail stores to secure discounted or free gear.
  - These collaborations can reduce costs while ensuring participants have access to quality equipment.
- **EQUIPMENT BANK**
  - **Donation Drives:** Organize equipment collection events at local schools, community centers, or tournaments.
  - **Awareness Campaigns:** Use social media, flyers, and newsletters to spread the word about the program.
  - **Volunteers:** Recruit hockey enthusiasts, parents, and community members to help sort, clean, and manage inventory





## Conversion into Local Hockey Association

One of the primary objectives of executing a **Try Hockey** initiative is to successfully convert participants into your **Local Hockey Association** for a full season of play. To achieve this, it's crucial to design the program with accessibility and consistency in mind, creating a seamless bridge between the introductory experience and full-season registration.

Implement strategies such as financial assistance, gear lending programs, and structured transition pathways to help participants seamlessly progress into local hockey associations. These initiatives remove financial and logistical barriers, increasing retention and conversion rates.

- **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:** Offer funding, sliding-scale fees, or sponsorships to ensure affordability for all families.
- **GEAR LENDING PROGRAMS:** Provide participants with access to high-quality loaner equipment, reducing upfront costs and encouraging continued participation.
- **TRANSITION PROGRAMS:** Create mentorship opportunities, introductory leagues, or skill-building clinics that bridge the gap between beginner programs and full-season play.

## Volunteers

- **SUPPORT LEVELS:** High volunteer participation is key, often including on-ice instructors and support staff sourced from local players or parents
- **CRITICAL ROLES:** Volunteers are essential for everything from registration to gear management and coaching

## Curriculum and Feedback

- **HOCKEY CANADA RESOURCES:** Some programs used official resources like Drill Hub; others developed unique approaches
- **SURVEYS:** Feedback from parents was overwhelmingly positive, with suggestions for minor improvements like longer program durations

## SUMMARY

Key components of developing a Try Hockey event include identifying diverse leadership contacts, structuring programs with manageable session counts and participant ratios, and ensuring adequate equipment that meets the needs of all players.

Strategies to promote registration leverage multi-channel outreach, waiting lists, and seamless transitions into local hockey associations through financial aid and gear lending programs.

The success of these initiatives hinges on robust volunteer support, targeted objectives like serving underserved demographics, and fostering stakeholder partnerships with schools, businesses, and government entities.

Programs benefit from leveraging Hockey Canada resources, gathering feedback, and remaining adaptable to improvements. By addressing logistical challenges and prioritizing community connections, these programs create lasting pathways into the sport and strengthen the hockey community at large.





## KEYS TO SUCCESS

### 1. ACCESSIBILITY

- Design programs that eliminate barriers.
- Offer affordable options, including free or nominal-cost participation.
- Provide loaner gear and financial assistance.

### 2. CONSISTENCY

- Schedule sessions on the same day, at the same time, and at the same rink.
- Use the same instructors to foster trust, rapport, and familiarity.
- Maintain predictable session counts (6-10) and durations (50 minutes).

### 3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Partner with local schools, businesses, and community leaders for funding and promotion.
- Use trusted community channels, social media, and events to raise awareness.
- Translate promotional materials into relevant languages to ensure inclusivity.

### 4. EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT

- Ensure appropriately sized, safe, and comfortable gear for all participants.
- Partner with equipment banks, foundations, and retailers for donations or discounts.
- Implement gear retention programs to foster ownership and pride.

### 5. VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

- Recruit and train volunteers for roles such as on-ice instructors and gear managers.
- Maintain a participant-to-volunteer ratio of at least 4:1 for optimal support.
- Engage parents, players, and community members to build local capacity.

## 6. TRANSITION PATHWAYS

- Provide clear guidance on moving from Try Hockey to Local Hockey Associations.
- Offer financial aid, mentorship opportunities, and gear lending programs.

## 7. PROMOTION AND REGISTRATION

- Use a multi-channel approach: social media, email campaigns, and local events.
- Ensure accessible registration options, including in-person and paper-based systems.
- Create waiting lists to manage demand and highlight program popularity.

## 8. FOCUS ON DIVERSITY

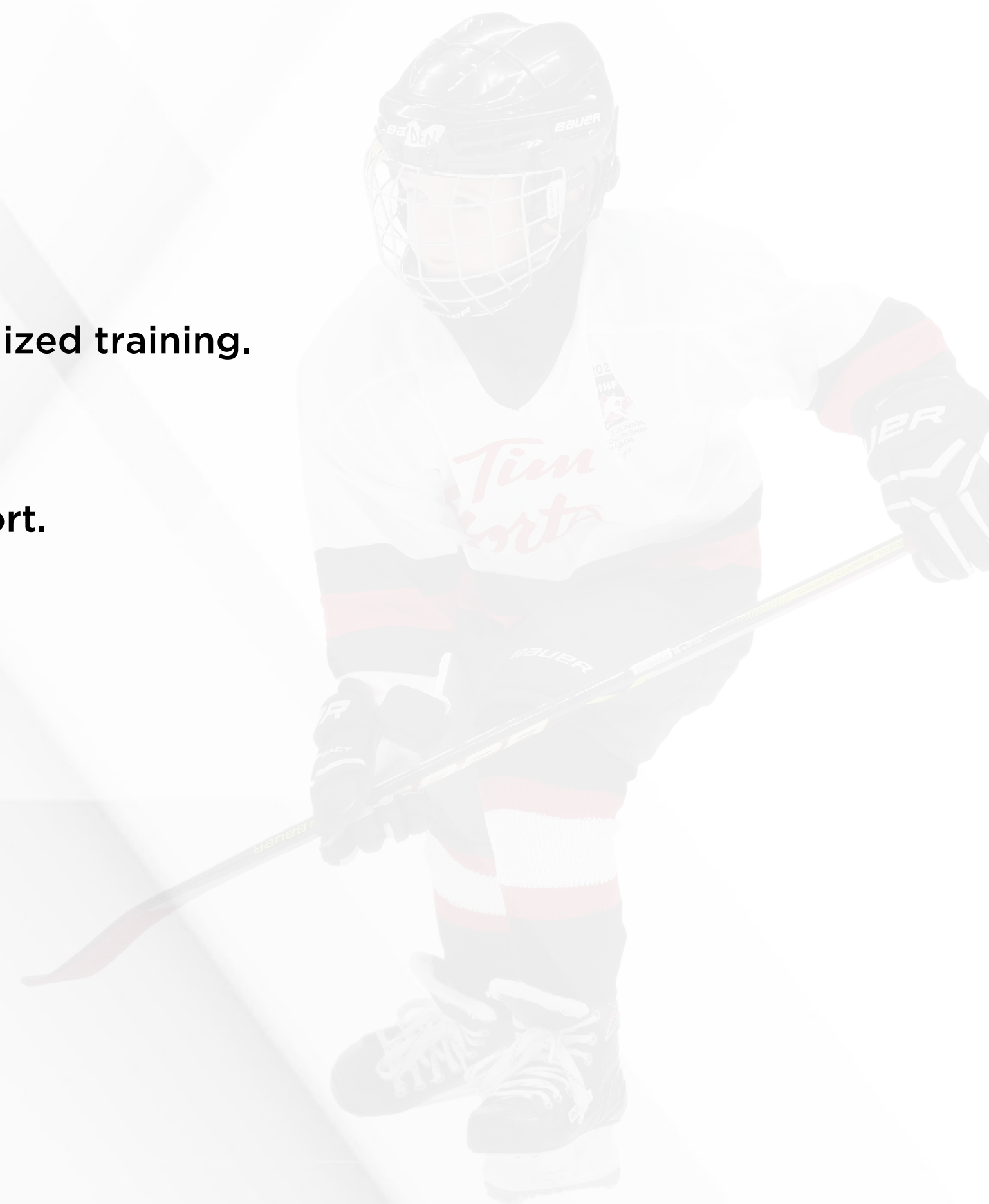
- Foster inclusivity by incorporating cultural sensitivity into program design.

## 9. FEEDBACK AND ADAPTABILITY

- Collect feedback from parents and participants to identify areas for improvement.
- Leverage Hockey Canada resources like the Drill Hub or the Hocket Canada network for standardized training.
- Remain flexible in adapting programs to better serve community needs.

## 10. STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

- Collaborate with schools, government, and local organizations for funding and operational support.
- Build relationships with trusted community leaders to enhance engagement and trust.
- Encourage long-term partnerships to sustain and grow initiatives.





## QUESTION OR SUPPORT

If you have any questions or require additional support, please don't hesitate to reach out:

- **PROVINCIAL MEMBER:** Contact your provincial representative for localized guidance and program assistance.
- **HOCKEY CANADA:** Email [gr@hockeycanada.ca](mailto:gr@hockeycanada.ca) for general inquiries, resources, and support.

We're here to help make your program a success!