

Solidarity Fund at sports clubs

The Solidarity Fund is a measure by sports and clubs to counter and compensate for increasing social inequality and general child poverty.

The main objective of a Solidarity Fund is to ensure no children/young people drop out of sports because of the family's financial situation. Families may apply for partial funding/financial support for expenses for activities under the auspices of the club. This may include support for competitions, equipment, travel or training fees. All clubs have their own guidelines for use of funds from its Solidarity Fund that are adapted to consider factors such as the distinctive character and size of the sport.

The Solidarity Fund is not intended to fully fund someone's sports participation, but to provide an opportunity for help/support in a financially demanding situation – a situation anyone can find themselves in. Applications for support must be from an individual and not from teams within the club. The support scheme is based on trust. When a family applies for financial assistance, this is generally always based on a genuine need.

All clubs are encouraged to work on its practice related to the level of costs at the club. This should be stipulated in club documents and be a topic in everyday life at the club.

The Solidarity Fund is an internal scheme for sport in Tromsø. The municipality, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (also known as NAV), the National Refugee Service and others may also have schemes for families in need of financial assistance.

Facts:

- The main objective of the Solidarity Fund is to prevent children/young people from dropping out of sports because of the family's financial situation.
- In 2018, Kvaløya Sportsklubb became first club in Tromsø to establish a Solidarity Fund.
- By 2022, a total of 37 clubs have now established this scheme.
- All clubs have guidelines drawn up based on the same template.
- The guidelines should be a living document that is adapted to the both the distinctive character of the sport and current public subsidy schemes.
- Double funding should be avoided.
- The Solidarity Fund is not intended to fully finance someone's overall sports participation but to be a contribution.
- If your club wants to set up a Solidarity Fund, feel free to contact the Tromsø Sports Council for advice/guidance.
- Normalise the use of the Solidarity Fund for the whole club – “You may be the one who needs help next time”.

How to work on the Solidarity Fund

Clubs

- Information about the club's Solidarity Fund should be published on the club's website.
- Provide information about the club's Solidarity Fund on Facebook/social media.
- Send regular information about the club's Solidarity Fund to all coaches, team managers and parent contacts.
- Inform about the club's Solidarity Fund on all invoices sent out by the club.
- The application form should be easily accessible and open to everyone.
- Applications can be processed by a specific separate committee, the club's executive committee or general manager. The process should be as little bureaucracy as possible.
- Inform all new members of the club about the Solidarity Fund. Emphasize providing information to parents/guardians of the club's youngest members.
- If the club has a club ambassador who acts as a liaison between the club and the family, he/she should be well informed about the scheme.
- The Solidarity Fund should be a separate item in the club's budget.
- The Solidarity Fund and financial barriers in sport should be a recurring theme at the club's parent meetings, coach meetings, executive committee meetings and annual meeting, etc.
- The Solidarity Fund can also contribute in cases involving completely new members and children/young people on their way into the club.

Tips for filling up the Solidarity Fund

- Arrange specific events/reuse days where the income is earmarked for the Solidarity Fund
- External sponsors
- Organise a fundraising campaign earmarked for the Solidarity Fund. Define this as a community effort that everyone can contribute to.
- Set up a separate Vipps number so it's easy for others to contribute.
- Earmark a percentage of the club's income for the Solidarity Fund.
- Apply for financial support from various subsidy schemes.
- Promote the club's scheme to the local community and seek cooperation.

Language/culture

- Please contact the sports council if language barriers create difficulties communicating with families.

- Feel free to publish a link to the website www.aktivitetsguiden.no, which includes an episode about financial matters. As of 2022, this website is available in 10 languages and includes both text and audio files.

In conclusion:

The club should have a general approach/practice to inclusion to ensure that the expenses for each family don't become unnecessarily high.

The Solidarity Fund is not intended to cover unnecessary and artificially high expenses for participation in sport.

The Solidarity Fund is a contribution towards living up to Norwegian sports' vision of "Joy of sport – for all".