

Athletic Excellence Fund

The Athletic Excellence Fund (AEF) recognizes athletic and academic excellence of the province's top athletes. Supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation (TCAR) and Sport Newfoundland and Labrador (Sport NL), the AEF includes the Premier's Athletic Awards, Team Gushue Awards, Elite Athlete Assistance Program, Michelle Healey Memorial Award, and Sport NL Scholarships.

Premier's Athletic Awards

The Premier's Athletic Award recognizes athletic excellence and provides financial support to help offset costs incurred through training and competition.

Athletic accomplishments achieved in the calendar year of 2025 (January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025) are considered for this award.

Eligibility

- Athletes must have attended an educational institution on a full-time basis in the 2025 calendar year. Exceptions may be considered if the athlete can demonstrate that their training program will not allow them to attend school full-time.
- Athletes must be currently training and competing in the sport identified in the application and intend to continue to train upon receipt of an award.
- Athletes must be a member in good standing of a Provincial Sport Organization (PSO) recognized by TCAR.
- Athletes must be residents of Newfoundland and Labrador in the 2025 calendar year. Exceptions to the residency requirement may be considered if:
 - An athlete trains out of province but their parent/guardian maintains a permanent fixed address in Newfoundland and Labrador.
 - An athlete cannot receive the required level of training in Newfoundland and Labrador. This could be a result of lack of facilities, coaching, competition, etc.
 - An athlete is required to attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province because the course of study is not available in Newfoundland and Labrador.
 - It is more financially feasible to attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province.

Ineligible

- Athletes 11 years of age and younger (born 2015 and later).
- Athletes who exclusively compete at the Active for Life stage (i.e. Masters, Senior, and Recreational).
- Athletes carded by the Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program are ONLY eligible under the Elite Athlete Assistance program.

Selection Process

- The PSO is responsible for ranking all applicants.
- The Awards Selection Committee will review recommendations made by PSO and will make final selections. Athletic ability and merit are the main criteria for the selection of recipients.

Team Gushue Award

The Team Gushue Award was established in 2007 in recognition of Team Gushue's gold medal victory at the 2006 Winter Olympic Games. The award recognizes academic and athletic excellence and is presented to one male and one female athlete annually.

Athletic and academic accomplishments achieved in the calendar year of 2025 (January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025) are considered for this award.

Eligibility

- Athletes must have attended an educational institution on a full-time basis in the 2025 calendar year. Exceptions may be considered if the athlete can demonstrate that their training program will not allow them to attend school full-time.
- Athletes must be a registered member in good standing or endorsed by a PSO recognized by TCAR.
- Athletes must have competed at the national or international level in the sport identified in their application during the 2025 calendar year.
- Athletes must be currently training and competing in the sport indicated and intend to continue to train upon receipt of an award.
- Provide an official transcript.

Ineligible

- Athletes who have completed their post-secondary varsity athletic eligibility.

Selection Process

- The Awards Selection Committee will make the final selections for the Team Gushue Awards. Athletic and academic excellence are the main criteria for selection of recipients.

Michelle Healey Memorial Award (MHMA)

The MHMA is awarded to a female athlete, who is currently enrolled at a post-secondary institution who has demonstrated both community involvement and athletic success.

Accomplishments achieved in the calendar year of 2025 (January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025) are considered for this award.

About Michelle Healey?

Michelle was a former basketball star at Memorial University who began her love

of basketball at Enright Memorial All Grade School in St. Joseph's in Grade 8. She was a multi-sport athlete; however, basketball was her true passion. She was known in the basketball community as the greatest shooter in Atlantic University Sport (AUS) history and changed the game in Newfoundland and Labrador for female basketball. She was also an AUS First Team All Star, AUS MVP, CIS Academic All Canadian and a member of the Athletics Honours Society.

During and following her basketball career with the Seahawks, Michelle was involved in promoting basketball to young girls throughout the province. She attended basketball camps and community programs sharing her skills and passion with young athletes for many years. After having a daughter of her own, Michelle took on the role of coach for her daughter's basketball teams, sharing her love of sport with her daughter and her peers. Michelle was passionate about coaching and volunteering, where she inspired countless individuals to pursue their dreams and reach their full potential in not only sport but within their personal lives as well.

Michelle continued her love and passion for sport and recreation in her professional life becoming the Athletic Director at Memorial University. She then moved on to become a supporter of the provincial and national sport and recreation delivery system as the Director of the Recreation and Sport Division with the Government of Newfoundland & Labrador.

The sport community in Newfoundland and Labrador lost a true legend with Michelle's passing in April 2024.

Through the Michelle Healey Memorial Award, Michelle's contributions to her community and sport organizations will live on, ensuring that female athletes continue to be recognized and celebrated.

Eligibility

- Athletes must have attended a Post-Secondary Institution on a full-time basis in the 2025 calendar year. A transcript must be included with your application.
- Athletes must have participated in recognized and sanctioned sport(s) in 2025.
- Athletes must be a member in good standing of a Provincial Sport Organization (PSO) recognized by TCAR.
- Athlete must demonstrate their involvement in the community through a volunteer capacity with community sport and recreation organizations and groups. A letter of reference from an individual or an organization must accompany the application in order to be considered for the award.
- Athletes must be residents of Newfoundland and Labrador in the 2025 calendar year. Exceptions to the residency requirement may be considered if:
 - An athlete trains out of province but their parent/guardian maintains a permanent fixed address in Newfoundland and Labrador.

- An athlete cannot receive the required level of training in Newfoundland and Labrador. This could be a result of lack of facilities, coaching, competition, etc.
- An athlete is required to attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province because the course of study is not available in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- It is more financially feasible to attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province.

Ineligible

- Athletes not attending a Post-Secondary Institution.
- Athletes who exclusively compete at the Active for Life stage (i.e. Masters, Senior, and Recreational).
- Athletes carded by the Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program are only eligible under the Elite Athlete Assistance program.

Selection Process

- The Awards Selection Committee will review applications and will make final selections. Athletic ability and level of volunteerism are the main criteria for the selection of recipients.

Elite Athlete Assistance

The Elite Athlete Assistance program recognizes athletic excellence and provides financial support to help offset costs incurred through training and competition for high performance athletes from Newfoundland and Labrador who have been selected to a National Team.

Athletic accomplishments achieved in the calendar year of 2025 (January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025) are considered for this award.

Eligibility

- Athletes must have represented Canada at a World and/or International event, such as World Championship or Olympics in a sport that is funded by Sport Canada.
- Athletes must be residents of Newfoundland and Labrador in the calendar year being evaluated. Exceptions to the residency requirement may be considered if:
 - An athlete cannot receive the required level of training in Newfoundland and Labrador. This could be a result of lack of facilities, coaching, competition, etc.
 - An athlete is required to attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province because the course of study is not available in Newfoundland and Labrador.
 - It is more financially feasible to attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province.

- Athletes must be a registered member in good standing or endorsed by a PSO recognized by TCAR.
- Athletes must be currently training and competing in the sport identified in their application and intend to continue to train upon receipt of an award.
- Athletes age 30 and over will only be considered for funding if they retain carding status through the Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program.

Ineligible

- Athletes competing as professionals, however the selection committee has the ability to consider athletes with extenuating circumstances.

Selection Process

- The Awards Selection Committee will make the final selections for Elite Athlete Assistance based on National Team performance and type of competition.

Sport NL Scholarship

The Sport NL Scholarship Program provides financial assistance to qualifying amateur athletes, coaches and or officials to help offset the costs of training and competition.

Athletic accomplishments achieved in the calendar year of 2025 (January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025) are considered for this award.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be attending and be in good standing at a recognized post-secondary institution on a full-time basis and participating in athletics, coaching, or officiating endeavors.
- Athletes must be a registered member in good standing or endorsed by a recognized member of Sport NL.
- Athletes must be currently training and competing in the sport indicated and intend to continue to train upon receipt of an award.
- Applicants must provide an official transcript (Minimum average of 50% during the last term completed).

Ineligible

- Athletes who have completed their post-secondary varsity athletic eligibility.

Selection Process

- The Sport NL Scholarship Committee will make the final selections for the Sport NL Athletic Scholarship.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I apply?

Completed and signed applications must be forwarded to the relevant PSO on or before Wednesday, March 11, 2026. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Does everyone who applies receive funding?

AEF is a competitive process and not everyone who applies will receive funding.

Are coaches and officials recognized through the AEF?

Sport NL Scholarships are open to athletes, coaches and officials. Coach education and certification are not supported through the other AEF programs.

Should I submit a different application for each program I would like to apply for?

No, you should only complete and submit one application.

Where can I find the application?

Applications are available on [Gov NL](#) and [Sport NL](#) website.

When will applicants be notified?

Premier's Athletic Awards, Team Gushue, and MHMA recipients are recognized at the Premier's Athletic Awards reception, which is usually held in the fall.

Elite Athlete Assistance recipients are notified by a letter from the Minister of TCAR, usually in the summer.

Successful applicants for the Sport NL Athletic Scholarship will be invited to the Sport NL Scholarship Awards, usually held in May.