



Policy: Admission of New AAA Teams		Date of Approval: September 19, 2026	Effective Date: September 19, 2026
Approved by: HNO Board of Directors	Prepared by: Minor Committee		Replaces Previous Versions New Policy
Review Cycle: Tri-Annual			
Responsible: Minor Committee	Accountable: MHA's	Consulted: Board of Directors	Informed: HNO Members

PREAMBLE

This policy establishes the procedures, requirements, and evaluation standards for reviewing applications to create new AAA teams within Hockey Northwestern Ontario (HNO). It ensures transparency, consistency, and alignment with HNO's development model and Hockey Canada's elite hockey framework.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All minor hockey associations (MHAs)
- HNO Minor Committee
- The HNO Board of Directors
- HNO staff supporting the application and review process

This policy governs **U13, U14, U15, U16 and U18 AAA**.

POLICY

1 Application Requirements

Applicants must submit a **complete application package** that includes:

1.1 Player Supply & Demographics

- Projected player numbers for the next 3–5 years
- Evidence of sufficient depth to field a competitive roster annually

1.2 Developmental Rationale²

- Identification of gaps or needs in the current AAA pathway
- Explanation of how the proposed team enhances player development



1.3 Operational Plan

- Coaching and staff qualifications
- Ice allocation commitments
- Governance structure (board, executive, team staff)

1.4 Financial Plan

- Budget for the first two seasons
- Fee structure
- Fundraising strategy

1.5 Community & Association Support

- Letters of support from MHAs within the proposed draw zone
- Evidence of community engagement or partnerships

1.6 Compliance Documentation

- Any additional documents requested by HNO

2. Submission Process

2.1 Deadline

Applications must be submitted **no later than January 1** preceding the season for which approval is sought.

2.2 Submission Method

Applications must be submitted electronically to the **HNO Executive Director**.

2.3 Incomplete Applications

Incomplete applications will not proceed to evaluation. Applicants will be notified and may resubmit in a future cycle.

3. Evaluation Process

3.1 Committee Review

The Minor Committee will:

- Review the complete application
- Verify information (HCR data, coaching qualifications, etc.)
- Conduct interviews or request clarifications as needed
- Apply the **HNO AAA Team Decision Matrix**



- Prepare a written recommendation

3.2 Decision Matrix

The Committee must use the standardized scoring matrix to ensure consistent evaluation across all applications.

3.3 Impact Assessment

The Committee will assess:

- Effects on existing AAA teams
- Effects on AA and local minor hockey programs
- Regional balance and sustainability

4. Recommendation & Approval

4.1 Committee Recommendation

The Minor Committee will submit a written recommendation to the HNO Board of Directors that includes:

- Summary of findings
- Decision matrix results
- Identified risks
- Recommended conditions (if any)

4.2 Board Decision

The Board may:

- Approve the application
- Approve with conditions
- Deny the application
- Defer the decision pending additional information

4.3 Notification

Applicants will receive written notification of the decision within **30 days** of the Board meeting.

5. Conditions of Approval

HNO may impose conditions, including but not limited to:

- Coaching certification requirements
- Financial controls



- Player development expectations

Failure to meet conditions may result in revocation of approval.

6. Post-Approval Monitoring

6.1 First-Year Review

Newly approved AAA teams may undergo a review after their first season, assessing:

- Financial stability
- Impact on regional hockey programs

6.2 Ongoing Compliance

Teams must continue to meet all HNO and Hockey Canada requirements. Non-compliance may result in sanctions, including removal of AAA status.

7. Appeals

Applicants may request reconsideration only if:

- New information becomes available, or
- A procedural error occurred during evaluation

Appeals must be submitted within **14 days** of receiving the decision.

Related Documents: HNO Regulations (Regulation C, Paragraph 3(b)).