



Grand Prize Submission

Kimberly Minor Hockey Association



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# Grand Prize Submission

## Tell us about your hockey association.

The Kimberley Minor Hockey Association's objectives are to encourage and promote good sportsmanship and citizenship among players, coaches, and our community. We aim to maintain and promote interest and participation in minor hockey, while encouraging and facilitating competition for all members. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to play this great sport and that our hockey association should be a safe and inclusive space for all.

## How would you describe your community?

Voted BC's #1 small town in 2022, Kimberley is a beautiful community in British Columbia's Purcell range. Once a thriving mining town with one of the world's largest lead and zinc mines, it has transformed into a hub for tourism and outdoor recreation. With a population of approximately 8,000 people, Kimberley is renowned for its warm and welcoming atmosphere.

A mecca for sporting enthusiasts, Kimberley boasts two ice arenas, an indoor pool, climbing facilities, baseball fields, outdoor ice rinks, a vast network of trails for hiking, biking and Nordic skiing and a family-friendly ski resort.

Residents actively engage in local sports, events, and initiatives, sharing a passion for nature through activities like hiking, hunting, snowmobiling, and backcountry skiing.

## What role does hockey play in your community?

Kimberley's hockey history is rich. Our first teams, made up of dedicated hard rock miners, won the city's first championship in 1926. From there, teams won the Canadian Championship in 1936, the World Championship in 1937 and the Allen Cup in 1978. Descendants of these players still play hockey today, along with many newcomers who have come to town.

Hockey is integral to our community. Like many small Canadian towns, Kimberley has a vibrant hockey culture that brings people together. Whether it's playing, coaching, volunteering, or cheering, hockey fosters a sense of community.

Hundreds of locals flock to the Civic Centre Arena on winter weekends to cheer on our Kimberley Dynamiters Junior A team. Our minor hockey program offers development opportunities for kids aged 5-17, and local tournaments attract families, friends and neighbours. Kimberley has a vibrant recreational adult league scene, with beer leagues, old-timers' leagues, and drop-in games. In the winter, outdoor rinks come alive with casual pick-up games and kids can often be found shooting pucks in their driveways.



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## What challenges exist in your community that keep kids from playing hockey?

The Kimberley Minor Hockey Association (KMHA) belongs to the East Kootenay Minor Hockey Association, which stretches over 400 km from Golden, BC to Whitefish, Montana, requiring a lot of travel just to play regular league games.

Kimberley has seen housing costs rise by nearly 45% in the last decade, outpacing average household income. Despite the community's love for hockey, some families find the cost too high.

While female-focused initiatives are underway, representation remains low. We aim to improve female visibility, create an inclusive space, and foster this demographic. We also recognize a gap in Indigenous player representation. While efforts are underway in the region, there are no Indigenous tournaments within our area.

## What is your hockey association currently doing to overcome these challenges?

KMHA works tirelessly to fundraise through the season and held our first gear swap last year to make equipment more accessible. We offer a registration fee payment plan for parents, shares financial assistance resources and offer help to families that are struggling with cost. We hope to reduce travel for league games by petitioning our league for "showcase" weekends next season, condensing league games to two or three weekends for some age groups.

We strive to promote diversity and inclusion. Our Female Hockey director is strengthening connections and collaborating with other associations in the region. We recently hosted a Female Fun Day, which attracted girls from across the Kootenays to participate in fun activities on and off the ice. Our Sparklers all-girls team practices once per week and only plays optional games to allow the flexibility for girls to pursue hockey along with other activities like dance, skiing and school sports.

We established an Indigenous Player Rep on our board to represent Indigenous players and families. She identified areas of improvement, like including land acknowledgements in tournaments, displaying Indigenous flags at arenas and approaching a nearby band to include them in opportunities such as the First Shift Program. We outfitted teams with Orange Jerseys promote truth and reconciliation and will be developing a database of Indigenous players.



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Please share the association's vision for using the \$75,000 Grand Prize to encourage more kids to play hockey by developing solutions that look to remove barriers in the game of hockey and make the game more accessible, inclusive and equitable for everyone?

If the Kimberley Minor Hockey Association (KMHA) wins the Kruger Big Assist Grand Prize, we will use it to reduce financial barriers, make hockey more accessible through creative community initiatives & increase female & Indigenous participation.

**Reduce financial barriers:** We will work to attract & keep families in hockey by providing free registration to those who apply. Registration fees are only part of the cost of hockey, & this season, families paid \$175-\$650 in team fees. While teams fundraise & refund fees, this upfront cost is a barrier. The association will cover team fees for families applying for financial aid. KMHA will provide equipment through the Gear Buy-Back program. We will buy gently-used gear from parents & supply to families who can't afford it, providing access to equipment while raising funds for new gear purchases. As frequent travel is a significant cost, we will provide gas gift cards to reduce the burden.

**Make hockey accessible:** Kimberley is lucky to have 3 outdoor rinks, but they are not equipped for hockey. We will buy nets, sticks & pucks to allow everyone to develop a love of the sport. We'll offer a free "Try-it" Day for players to try the sport before hockey season starts & offer free weekly practice sessions players under 6. Older players will coach the team for pay & training costs. This will give young players a chance to try hockey while older players develop leadership skills & earn income. Great coaches are crucial to keep kids playing hockey & players want to see people who look like them in the sport. We'll invest in training youth, female & Indigenous coaches & officials, while subsidizing equipment & registration fees.

**Increase female & Indigenous participation:** To promote female hockey, KMHA will host Girls "Try-it" Days and a free Girls Jamboree. We will address the gap in Indigenous hockey in the region by hosting a free Indigenous tournament, with a banquet & a trophy designed by a local Indigenous artist.



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## Kruger Big Assist Grand Prize Proposal

	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	TOTAL
<b>FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM</b>						
Financial assistance application program	\$37,500					\$37,500
Gear Buy-Back/Swap	\$5,000			\$5,000		\$10,000
<b>ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES</b>						
Community rink equipment		\$5,000				\$5,000
U6 Initiation team		\$2,563	\$2,562			\$5,125
U9/U11 "Try-it" Day		\$665				\$665
Coach/Official development program	\$883	\$1,767				\$2,650
<b>PROMOTE FEMALE &amp; INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION</b>						
Girls "Try-it" days		\$665			\$665	\$1,330
U9 Girls Candy Cane Cup Jamboree		\$1,500				\$1,500
Indigenous tournament & banquet				\$11,230		\$11,230
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$43,383</b>	<b>\$12,160</b>	<b>\$2,652</b>	<b>\$16,230</b>	<b>\$665</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>



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**BIG ASSIST**

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**\$1 MILLION**  
**TO GIVE MORE KIDS**  
**ACCESS TO HOCKEY**



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