

How-to Guide

# EQUIPMENT LOAN PROGRAM



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Northern Region Inclusion and Access Committee is made up of community partners striving towards creating barrier-free recreation and sports opportunities for persons with disabilities. In 2020, the Northern Region Sport and Recreation Inclusion Consultant identified the need for educational tools for frontline recreation staff when providing an equipment loan program (ELP). What started as a video project to develop educational materials on adapted equipment pieces became the need to standardize equipment loan programs.

Through preliminary 1-on-1 interviews with recreation and sport practitioners across the province of Nova Scotia and an environmental scan, it was clear many community organizations were developing their own processes for equipment loan programs.

This guide was developed using data from community consultations, 1-on-1 interviews, and environmental scan materials.

### THE GOAL OF THE EQUIPMENT LOAN PROGRAM GUIDE:

To provide a structured step-by-step process to address the different components of a community equipment loan program.



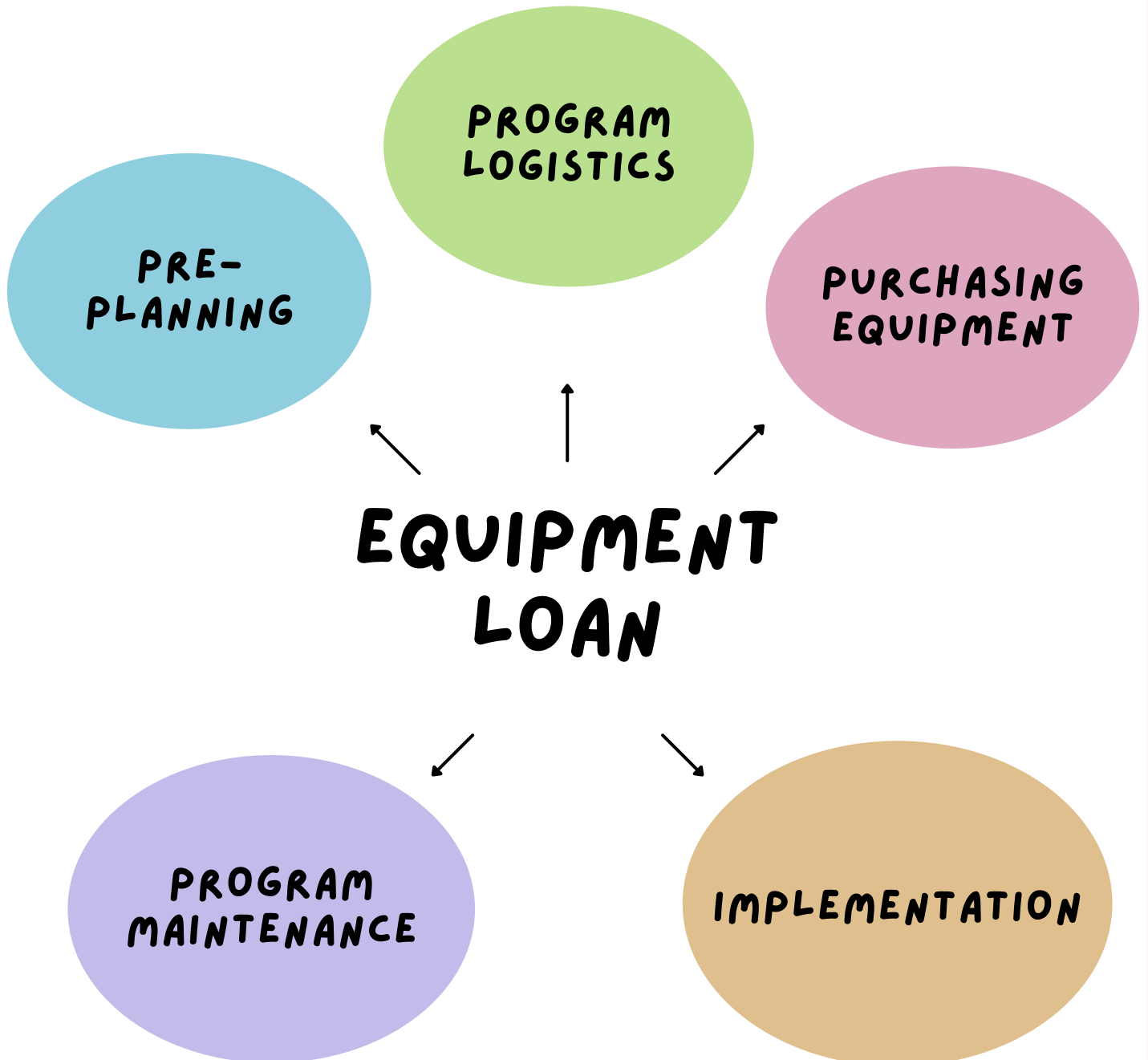
# ABOUT



There are many factors that contribute to an equipment loan program.

This guide will support the programmer in considering the many aspects of equipment loans.

# OVERVIEW OF PHASES

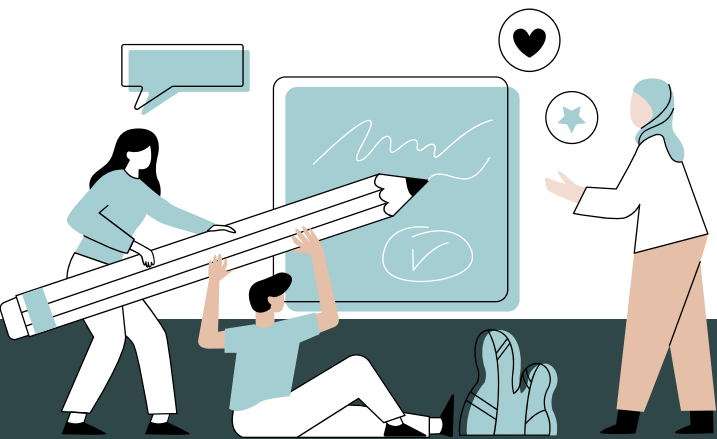


# PHASE 1

PRE-  
PLANNING

EQUIPMENT  
LOAN

- GOAL/OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM
- FINANCES
- PARTNERS
- EQUIPMENT CONSIDERATIONS
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- ORGANIZATION RESOURCES/CAPACITY



## GOAL/OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

When first designing an equipment loan program, it is most important to understand, as an organization, the goal or objectives of this equipment loan program. Consider referring to your organization's strategic plan goals or objectives. If you do not have a strategic plan, consider alternative organizational missions, values, or statements as a term of reference. Knowing the goal or objectives of your equipment loan program will impact the decision-making on all other aspects of the equipment loan program.

### EXAMPLE ELP GOALS:

- To provide access to persons of low socio-economic status
- To increase outdoor physical activity
- To provide an unstructured, self-directed program

# Phase 1: PRE- PLANNING

## THIS SECTION ADDRESSES:

- GOAL/OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS
- PARTNERSHIPS
- OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

After your organization has decided on its goals for the program, it is important to get community input. Start by asking, *WHO* is your community? When collecting data, ensure you're providing an opportunity for persons of diverse backgrounds to contribute; this may mean being more intentional about how you collect community input. Collecting data from your community will help you better understand your community's needs and how to support them best.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES:

Surveys

Community consultations

1-on-1 interviews

Sample questions provided on page 8

## FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Maintenance/replacement of equipment pieces
- Safeguards for accountability
- Storage cost
- Administration costs (management of the program, including equipment maintenance, drop-off/pick-up, and sign-up)
- Marketing/promotion
- Community engagement (inclusion needs, partners, community consultation)



## PARTNERSHIPS

There are many logistics to an ELP that it might be worth considering community partnerships in order to sustain or support. When identifying potential partners, the first question is, *'what is their role?'*

### EXAMPLE PARTNERSHIPS

**Equipment Swap:** Consider seeing what your neighbourhood communities are currently offering. If there is a piece of equipment you're considering, see if they will lend you a piece to see what kind of uptake your program gets.

**Try-it Days:** Invite community members to a try-it event, and have instructors walk through a demonstration of the equipment and safety tips. Create a supportive environment for first-time users.

**Schools:** Sometimes, communities notice an uptake of equipment pieces in the summer but a slowdown in winter. Schools are a great partner to ensure the equipment gets used year-round and cost-share of things such as maintenance.

**Safety Education:** Organizations such as Bicycle NS are the knowledge experts looking for opportunities to share. So why not invite them to your community to provide education such as road safety?

**Maintenance:** Another great alternative is a local repair shop partnership. Your frontline staff may feel uncomfortable doing some of the maintenance required to ensure your equipment is safe. A local repair shop might be a good alternative.



# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Although we have addressed some key factors to consider when in the planning stage of developing an equipment loan program, there are some organizational questions you may want to reflect upon:

- What is your organizational capacity
- The quality vs. quantity of equipment
- What type of equipment pieces do you want to offer (small vs. large pieces)
- Care plan, who's responsible for the routine maintenance of the equipment

**Organizational capacity** will determine whether or not you can maintain larger pieces of equipment, how often you will have a pick-up/drop-off, and how the sign-in/sign-out process will function. **Accountability** considers who is the point person for the moving pieces of the program.

When starting an equipment loan program, **quality equipment** can come at a cost. It might be worth exploring low-cost equipment pieces if you have a limited budget, and sometimes rental shops have an old equipment inventory that they would be willing to sell at a reduced cost.

**Larger equipment** pieces such as bikes, hippocampes, and stand-up paddle boards can be popular but come with more considerations such as maintenance, safety, storage, and transportation. **Smaller equipment** pieces, such as playboxes, basketballs, and yard games, can be easier to maintain and have fewer safety considerations.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

SURVEYS

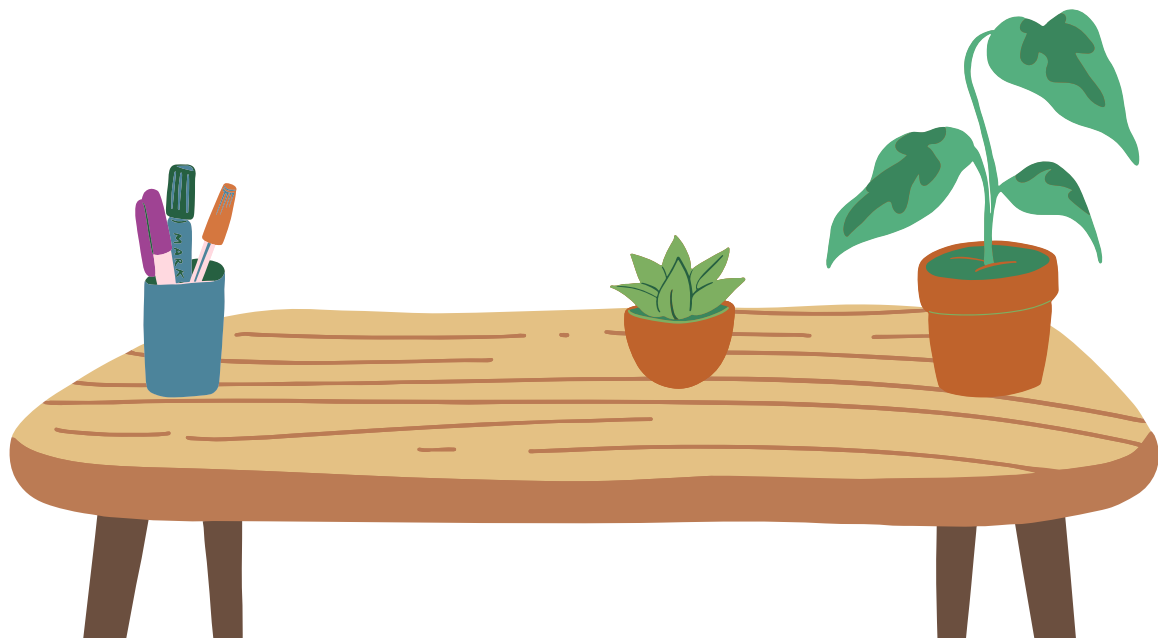
1-ON-1 INTERVIEWS

## Sample Questions

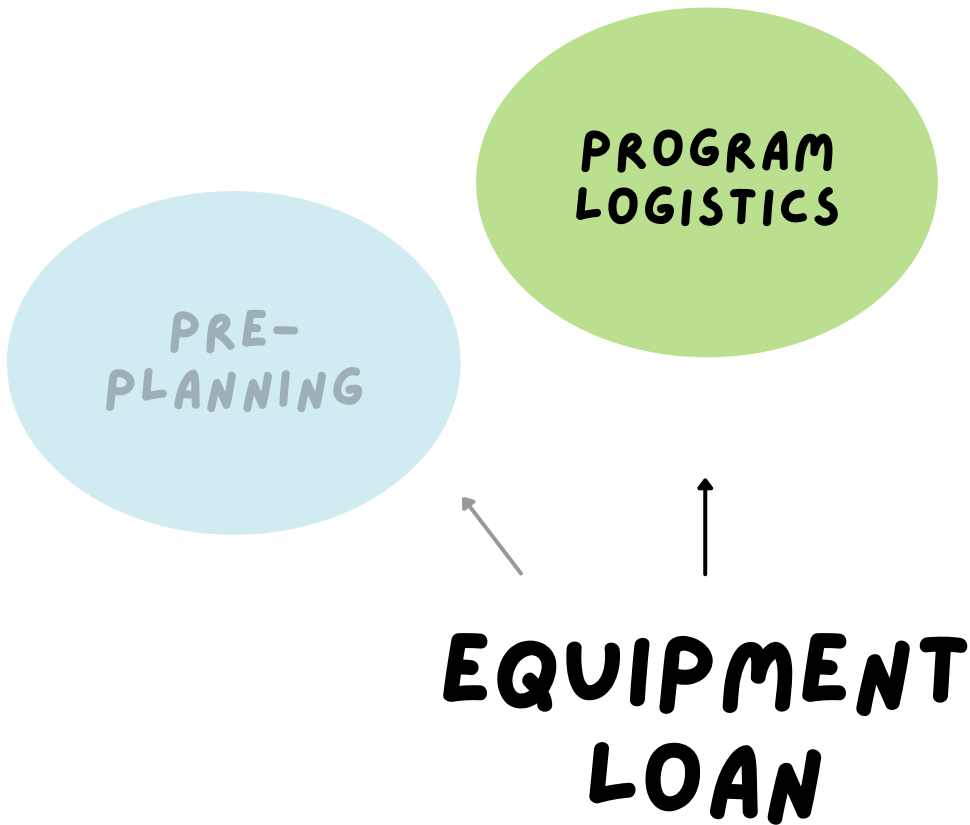
1. Do you have specific equipment you would like to borrow from the Equipment Loan Program inventory?
2. Would you rather see larger pieces, smaller pieces, or a mix of both in the Equipment Loan Program inventory? (e.g., bikes or soccer balls)
3. Do you require equipment transportation if you were to borrow from the Equipment Loan Program?
4. When inquiring about and/or borrowing equipment, would you rather talk to someone (e.g., online, in-person, phone call) or browse and borrow the equipment through an online service?
5. If you borrow from the Equipment Loan Program, would it be for personal use, work-related use, or both?
6. Are you looking for individual equipment pieces or pieces for a family?
7. Would you rather see more adult sizes or children sizes?



# Program Logistics



# PHASE 2



- EQUIPMENT & PROGRAM MAINTENANCE
- SAFETY
- ADMINISTRATION
- INCLUSION AND ACCESS
- FINANCES

## Phase 2:

# PROGRAM LOGISTICS

### THIS SECTION ADDRESSES:

- SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS
- PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION
- PROGRAM AND EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE
- INCLUSION AND ACCESS

### SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

#### Policies and Procedures

Before implementing an equipment loan program, it is important to consider the necessary policies and procedures that must be written and passed by the proper authority. When creating processes and policies, you will want to consider how these new procedures and policies influence existing policies and procedures.

#### Education on Equipment

Once you have decided on the types of equipment pieces your organization is planning to provide, it is important that the staff overseeing the program feel confident in maintaining and overseeing the equipment pieces. This could include setting up the equipment, checking for safety, regular maintenance, etc.

#### Risk Management

If you're planning on providing an equipment loan program, it is important to conduct a risk assessment. A risk assessment will ensure that an appropriate risk management plan can be developed to be proactive instead of reactive to possible situations.



## PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

### Program Maintenance

When providing an equipment loan program, it is important to consider what capacity your organization has to maintain the equipment and overall program. Consider asking yourself questions such as:

- Who will do equipment maintenance?
- How frequently will the equipment be maintained?
- What continued funding is needed to sustain the program?

### Waivers

Consider thorough participant waivers as part of program administration to ensure an agreement between the user and the program provider. When creating a waiver, consider issues such as:

- Liability in case of injury
- Damage to equipment
- Length of use
- Emergency contact
- Safety equipment mandates (i.e., the user of equipment should be wearing proper safety equipment such as a helmet or life vest)
- Steps to take if equipment stops working
- 

### Evaluation

A lot of community equipment loan programs are funding-dependent. Knowing this, consider an evaluation plan for collecting data such as:

- Equipment pieces most utilized
- Demographic information
- Increase or decrease in the use of the program
- Value of the program from the community's perspective

Consider informal ways to collect information, such as social media posts (comments), emails, or conversations, and formal methods, such as data within the system and staff and community feedback.

## Identifying Staff

Think about *who* will be in charge of different aspects of the program, such as who will:

- Administer the program loan
- Purchase equipment
- Maintain equipment
- Manage incoming questions and concerns
- Educate staff

## Hours of Operation

Many communities running equipment loan programs recognized that having a full-time person to manage the logistics of an equipment loan program was not sustainable. Consider what works for your organization. You may have set dates and times for the pick-up and drop-off of the equipment.

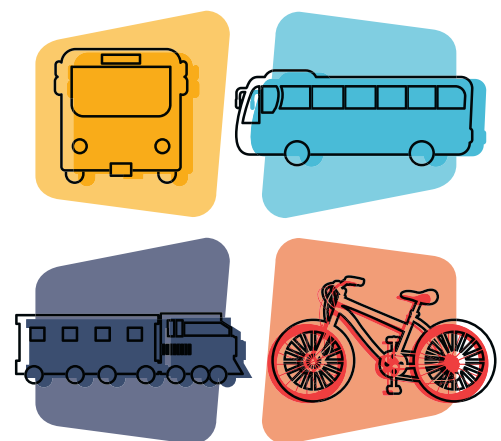
## INCLUSION AND ACCESS

### Transportation

It is important to think about transportation when creating equipment loan programs. Is your equipment loan location situated centrally? Can community members without a vehicle still access the location?

Some organizations have taken the initiative of navigating creative solutions to centralize the equipment to the individual or family (see page 20).

Either way, consider how the end-user is accessing and transporting equipment to the location of choice (trailhead, park, or water).



## Adapted Equipment

Adapted equipment pieces have been getting purchased by community ELPs. If your organization purchases adapted equipment, it is important to gather community input on what type of adapted pieces they would like access to. Common adapted equipment pieces community ELPs seem to gravitate towards are:

- Sledges
- Hippocampes
- Sport Wheelchairs
- Adapted bikes

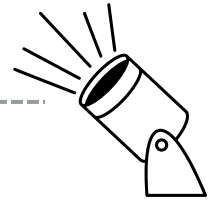
It is encouraged that before adapted equipment pieces are purchased, the organization research what maintenance and safety concerns are related to them. Partnerships are another alternative if an organization is not prepared to take ownership of an adapted equipment piece.

### ADAPTED EQUIPMENT RESOURCES

- Northern Region Inclusion and Access Training Video Series:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQVGpG9wZR71VldzM5TkVIQ/videos>
- Parasport Nova Scotia
- IWK Equipment Loan Program



# Community Spotlight



# GO-PLAY

PICTOU COUNTY  
EQUIPMENT LOAN  
PROGRAM



Our goal is to promote an active lifestyle while encouraging people to explore our beautiful county. This site offers an inventory listing of recreational equipment that is currently available for loan by the various municipal units throughout the county. If there is a piece of equipment that you would enjoy, simply fill out the survey below and the appropriate person will be in contact with you.

## ABOUT PICTOU COUNTY GO-PLAY

### GOAL

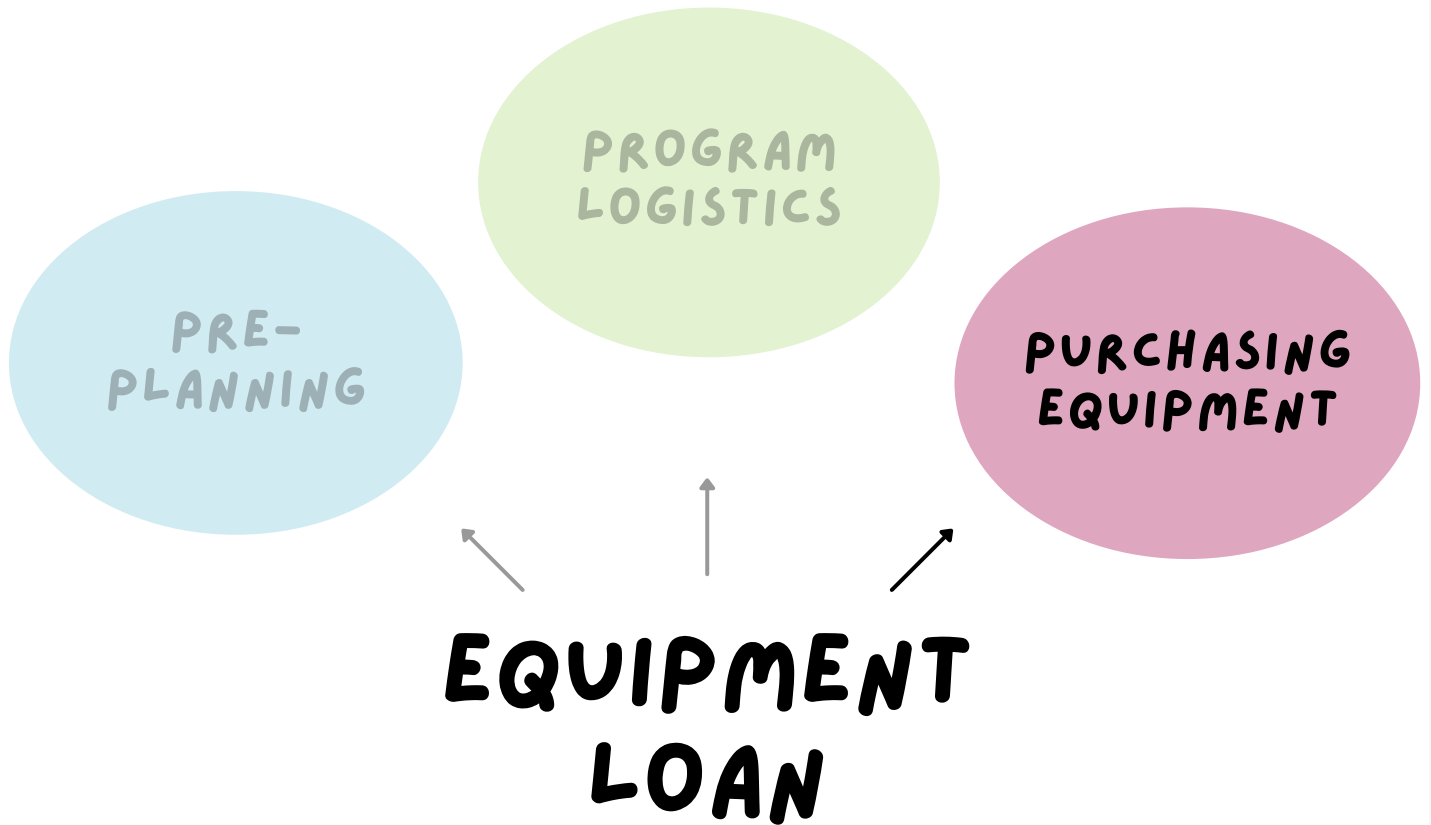
To promote an active lifestyle while encouraging people to explore our beautiful county. This site offers an inventory listing of recreational equipment currently available for loan by the various municipal units throughout the county. If there is a piece of equipment that you would enjoy, simply fill out the survey below, and the appropriate person will be in contact with you.

**CHECK  
IT OUT**  
↓

FIND OUT MORE

<https://recreation-pictoucounty.hub.arcgis.com/>

# PHASE 3



- **MAKING EQUIPMENT DECISIONS**
- **CHOOSING VENDORS**

## Phase 3:

# PURCHASING EQUIPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

### NEXT STEPS

Once you have a vision for your ELP and have considered the logistics of implementing one, you can begin Phase 3:

Purchasing Equipment. It is important to note that for some organizations, "Phase 3" may be the starting point of the ELP if they have received equipment donations before creating an ELP.

Regardless of how equipment is acquired, expanding and growing equipment inventory is a standard practice of ELPs and should be considered if you're looking to develop an ELP yourself.

### THIS SECTION ADDRESSES:

- MAKING EQUIPMENT DECISIONS
- CHOOSING VENDORS



### RESOURCE

Recreation Nova Scotia has created an adapted equipment resource, highlighting vendors, funding opportunities, and example equipment pieces. Find the PDF version at [recreationns.ns.ca](https://recreationns.ns.ca)



## MAKING EQUIPMENT DECISIONS

When deciding what equipment to purchase, your greatest resource is your community, as many successful ELPs base their equipment inventory on the interests, assets, and needs of their community.

### Interests of Your Community

- Informal and/or formal engagement with community members
- What equipment is your community interested in borrowing and using
- Reaching out via social media, meeting face-to-face in groups, or at community events

### Assets of Your Community

Consider the assets of your community and purchase equipment based on the public spaces available to you.

- Is your community close to a body of water, hiking trails, or biking paths?
- What are the conditions of the roads and sidewalks in your community?
- Are there local businesses that currently have the equipment and are looking to develop a loan system, too?

Consider what equipment would be useful and accessible based on the features of your specific community.

### Needs of Your Community

Consider the needs of your community based on demographic information and survey data, if possible.

- Is your community aging, or young and family-oriented?
- Are there high inactivity rates in your community, or are residents more active?
- Do households in your community have access to reliable transportation?

Deciding on equipment pieces can be made easier and more effective when your community and program users' demographic information gets considered.



## CHOOSING VENDORS

There are various factors to consider when choosing where to purchase your equipment. Listed below are some to consider:

### Quality and Durability

Equipment quality and durability. You can determine this by looking at reviews on both products and vendors. The more durable the piece, the more sustainable your ELP.

### Financial Add Ons

Shipping, taxes, duty, and other costs add up quickly. If a local vendor is available, purchasing from them may be more financially friendly.

### Vendor Support and Services

- Does the vendor demonstrate equipment for you or provide a trial period?
- Do they send the piece assembled or disassembled?
- What are their return policies?
- Ask vendors about maintenance, accessories, and replacement parts as well.

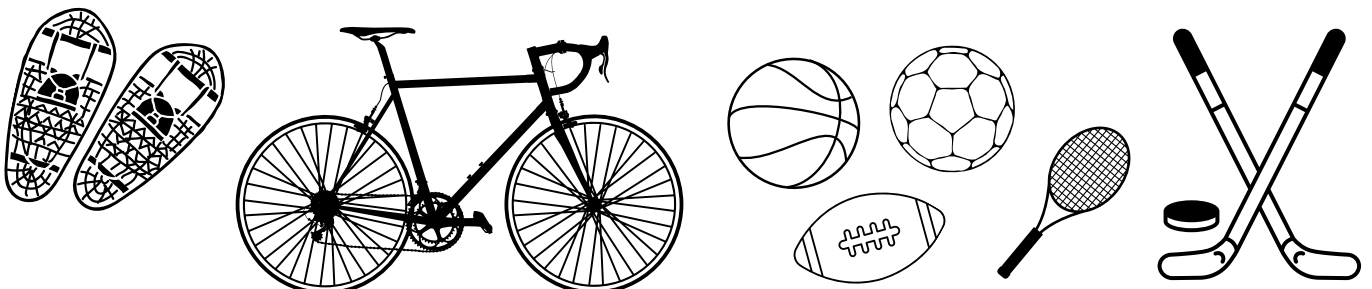
### Local Vendors

- Are there any in your area supplying the equipment you're looking for?
- Are there other local community organizations already supplying the equipment you're looking for?

## RECOMMENDATIONS

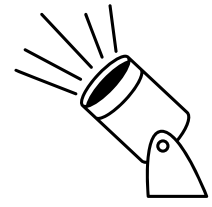
- Get more than one quote for equipment pieces.
- Get familiar with a piece of equipment before buying it, if possible.
- Consider the cost of maintenance and replacement parts.
- Buying in bulk with other organizations/partners can save money.

See Page 20 for Partnership Example





# Community Spotlight



## Partnership Example

"In partnership with the Municipality of the County of Kings, Town of Berwick, Sport NS, Nova Scotia Community, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage: Sport and Recreation Division: Valley Region, Mud Creek Rotary, and Active Kids, Healthy Kids, the Annapolis Valley Regional Library is offering loans of adaptive equipment so you can get on the beach, trails, and parks."

To learn more, go to: <https://www.valleylibrary.ca/news/hippocampe>

The screenshot shows the website interface for the Annapolis Valley Regional Library. At the top left is the library's logo. To its right are links for 'Catalogue' and 'Website', a search bar, and icons for 'TEEN ZONE' and 'KIDS SPACE'. Further right are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Below these are navigation links: 'Blog', 'Services', 'Events', 'Book Room', 'Locations & Hours', and 'E-Library'. On the right side of the page, there are buttons for 'My Account', 'Ask Us', and 'Get a Library'. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail 'HOME / HIPPOCAMPE' and a large heading 'Hippocampe'. A promotional box on the left contains the text 'GET ON IT!' above an image of a blue and black all-terrain wheelchair, with the text 'Hippocampe all-terrain wheelchair' below it. To the right of this box, the text reads: 'Borrow a hippocampe and get out there!' followed by a paragraph describing the partnership. Below this are sections for 'How to borrow', 'Pick Up At', 'Get On it!', 'Equipment available', and 'Requirement'.

ANAPOLIS VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY

Catalogue Website

Search

ENTER THE TEEN ZONE VISIT THE KIDS SPACE

f t i

Blog Services Events Book Room Locations & Hours E-Library

My Account Ask Us Get a Library

HOME / HIPPOCAMPE

## Hippocampe

**GET ON IT!**

**Hippocampe**  
all-terrain wheelchair

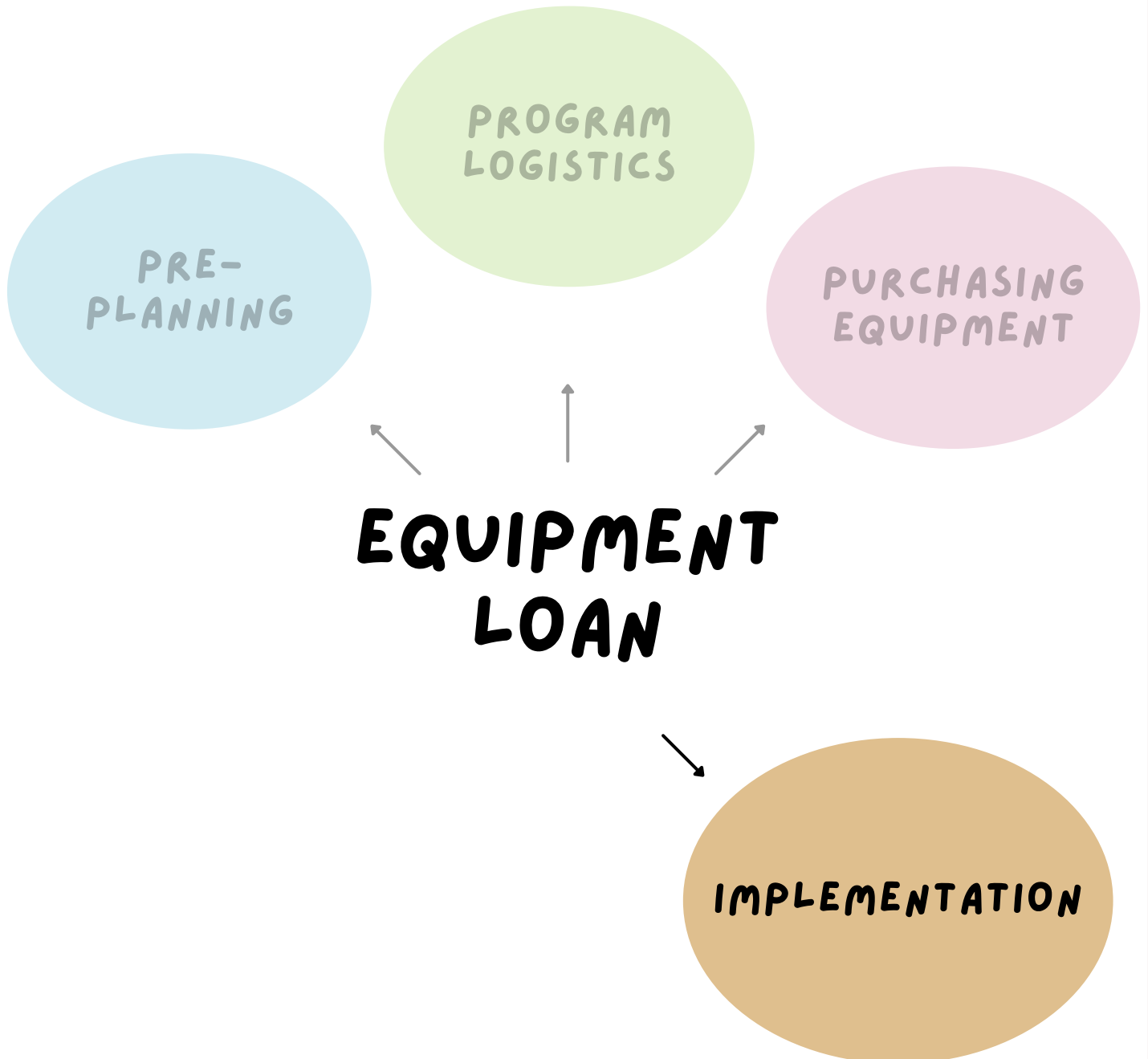
**Borrow a hippocampe and get out there!**

In partnership with Municipality of the County of Kings, Town of Berwick, Sport NS, Nova Scotia Community, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage: Sport and Recreation Division: Valley Region, Mud Creek Rotary, and Active Kids, Healthy Kids, Annapolis Valley Regional Library is offering loans of adaptive equipment so you can get on the beach, trails, and parks

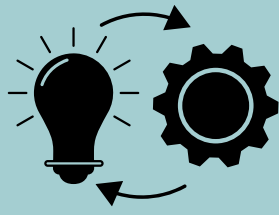
**How to borrow:** Phone 902-538-2665, Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM – 4 PM  
**Pick Up At** any AVRL library during open hours.  
**Get On it!** Take the hippocampe out and enjoy the outdoors.

**Equipment available:** Adult sized hippocampe, Tomato seat (for child use), Balloon tires (for beach or snow), Ski attach  
**Requirement:** An adult must borrow the equipment and sign a **WAIVER**.

# PHASE 4



- PROMOTION & AWARENESS
- BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION
- ACCESSIBILITY
- ADMINISTRATION



## Implementation

After planning and preparing for a community ELP, the next phase in the development is implementation. This phase can be overwhelming and challenging, so planning beforehand is essential.

## Phase 4:

# IMPLEMENTATION

### THIS SECTION ADDRESSES:

- PROMOTION AND AWARENESS
- RISK MANAGEMENT
- ACCESSIBILITY

### PROMOTION AND AWARENESS

Promotion is a *fundamental component* of Phase 4.

Promotion ensures your community is aware of the program, is benefitting from it, and continuing to help it grow and support more community members each coming year.

- Contact local community groups and after-school program leaders to promote your ELP and offer a demonstration of some of the available equipment.
- Partner with similar programs in the area to reach people through their existing clientele, bulletins, and events.
- Provide try-it sessions at community events such as farmers' markets or fairs.
- Consider high-tech and low-tech promotional platforms to reach all demographics, such as social media, radio, signage, promotional videos, newspapers, and newsletters.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

Barriers to implementation are bound to occur when implementing an ELP for the first time. This is where risk management comes in, as it is an important factor in Phase 4 of ELP development.

Strategies for Risk Management:

- Provide adequate staff training on equipment pieces
- Educating users on equipment use before loaning
- Acquiring insurance and liability coverage
- Regularly maintaining the equipment to reduce equipment break-down and risk of injury

## PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY

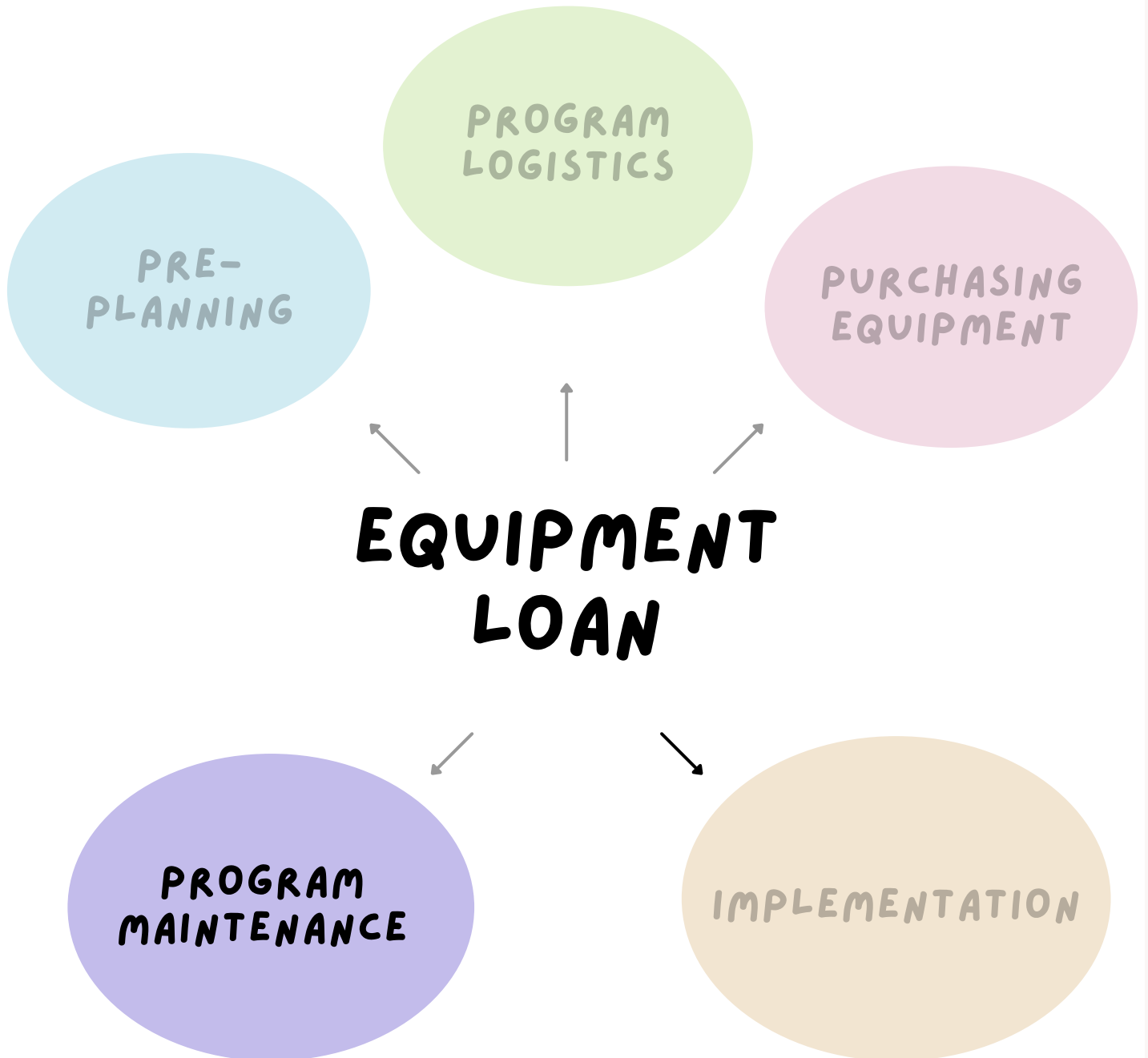
Making your ELP accessible to everyone ensures ELP implementation runs smoothly.

Accessibility considerations:

- Having adaptive equipment that can support persons with varying levels of disability
- Offering accessible hours of operation for equipment pick-up and drop-off
- Providing equipment delivery and pick-up for the client
- Promoting the ELP in person to reach people without an internet connection
- Providing support on how to use and adjust equipment



# PHASE 5



- **MARKETING**
- **DATA COLLECTION**
- **EQUIPMENT TRACKING**
- **EVALUATION**

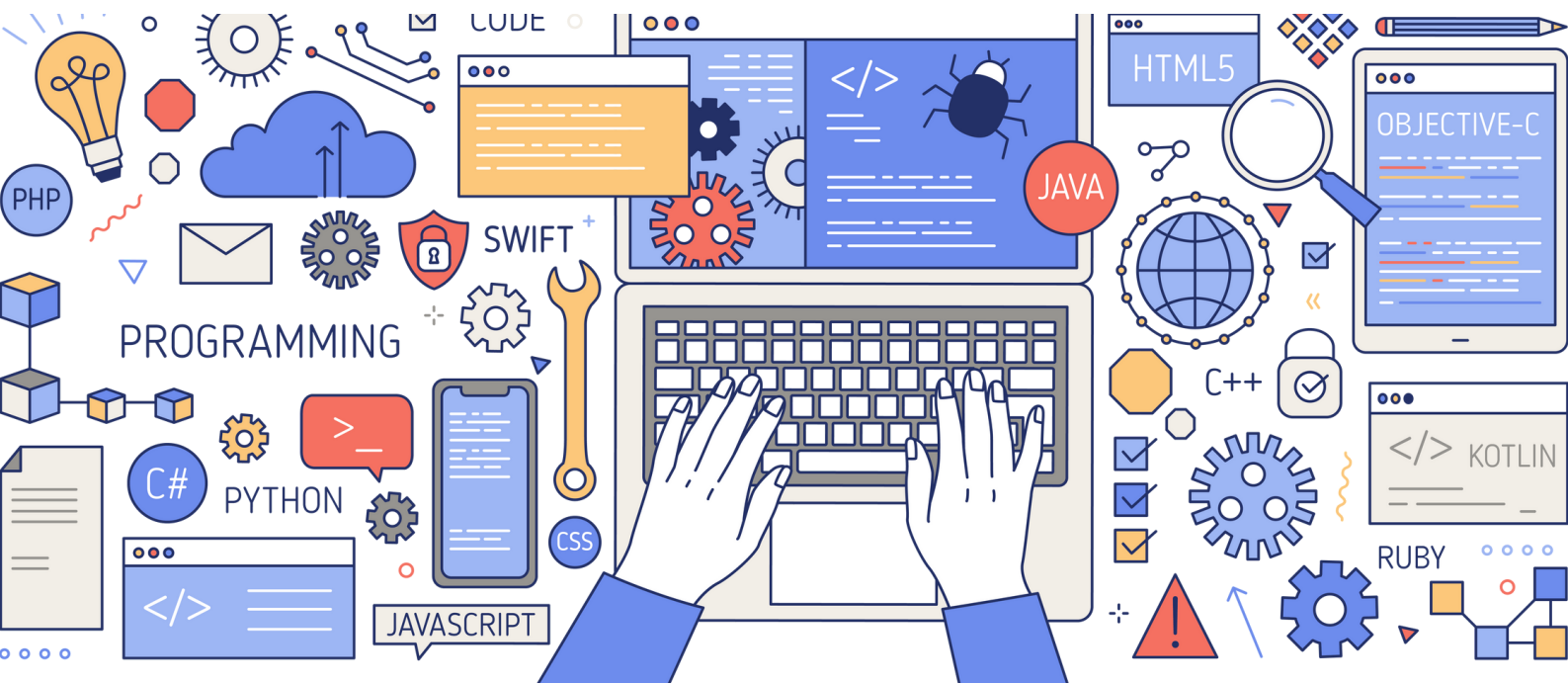
## Phase 5:

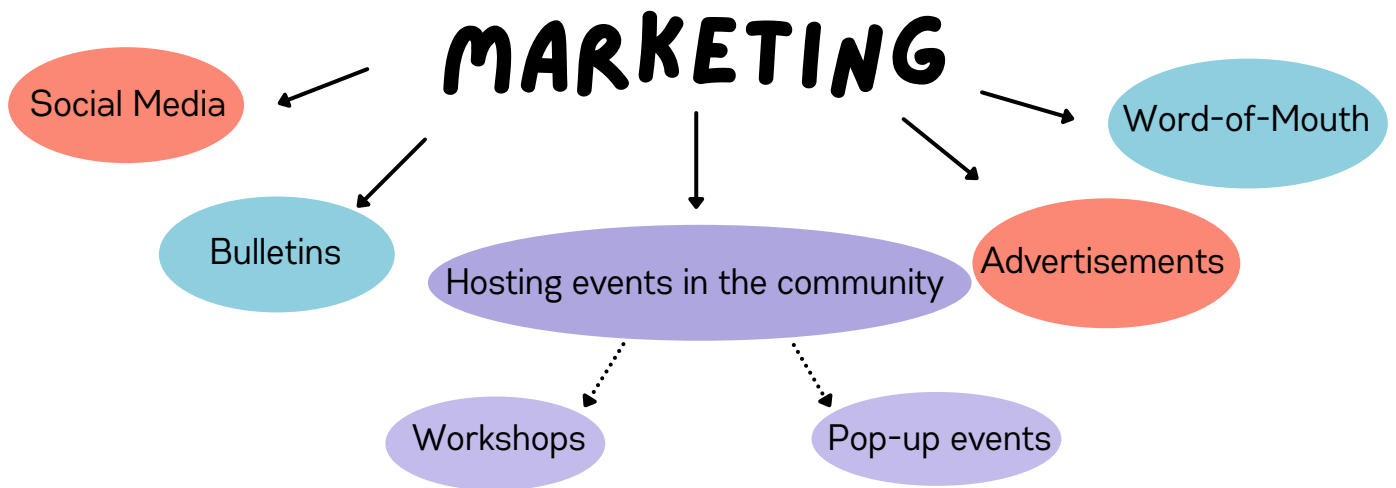
# PROGRAM MAINTENANCE

### THIS SECTION ADDRESSES:

- MARKETING
- EVALUATION
- DATA COLLECTION AND EQUIPMENT TRACKING

A vision for many ELPs is the improvement in the health and well-being of community members, which can sometimes take years to come; which is why prioritizing the maintenance of an ELP is paramount. Maintaining an ELP can look different depending on the program goals. Maintenance could mean ensuring the same baseline amount of equipment is always available, growing the equipment inventory each year, expanding a program's reach by partnering with other programs, or branching off the ELP to include clubs or recreational events. Regardless of the specifics, all ELPs require program maintenance if the program's vision and goals are to be met. ELP maintenance is kept mainly through regular *marketing, data collection, and evaluation.*





## MARKETING

Once an ELP has reached Phase 5 of development, it is assumed that program marketing has already occurred. Keeping in mind that marketing is an ongoing process, take advantage of previously used promotional strategies that were most successful (i.e., bulletins, social media, or word-of-mouth). In addition to utilizing tried-and-true marketing methods, regularly host events in the community, such as workshops and pop-up events, to publicize new pieces of equipment and allow community members to try them out.

## EVALUATION

Once a program's equipment has been tracked over time, and program data has been collected, ELP providers can evaluate the impact of their program on community members. Evaluation helps inform ELP providers on how best to move forward. Strong program evaluation can be made by:

- Collecting quantitative data such as how often equipment gets replaced/repaired, which pieces get used the most/least, and loan lengths and occurrences.
- Collecting qualitative data such as user testimonials, feedback, recommendations, and experiences.
- Asking community members, stakeholders, and program users what they have heard or experienced first-hand about the program.
- Analyzing the development of local training groups, sports engagement, community health outcomes, and strategic plans associated with ELP equipment pieces over time.

## DATA COLLECTION AND EQUIPMENT TRACKING

Collecting data on an ELP supports program maintenance in many ways, including securing funding, making decisions on cost allotment, meeting program goals and objectives, ensuring program quality, and managing risks. While data collection may seem intimidating, meaningful and useful data can be collected using simple software such as Microsoft Excel and online surveys.

### HERE ARE DIFFERENT WAYS ELP PROVIDERS ACROSS NOVA SCOTIA HAVE TRACKED AND COLLECTED PROGRAM DATA:

- Utilizing Excel Sheets for numerical data and Google Drive for qualitative data.
- Utilizing a system similar to public library bar-code systems. These online systems can track borrower information, popular equipment pieces, which communities are using equipment the most, demands and waitlists, and equipment availability.
- Including a QR-code/link to an online survey, or an attached paper survey, when distributing equipment for users to complete on their own time.

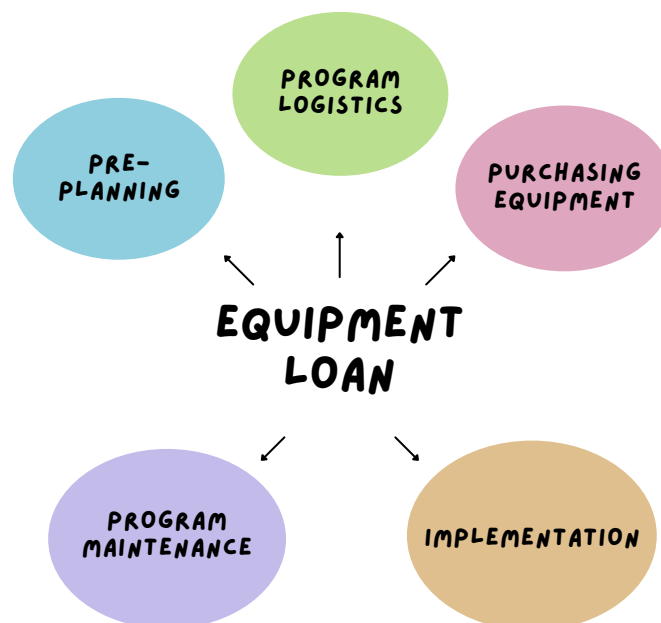


# SUMMARY

The Equipment Loan Program Guide aims to provide a structured step-by-step process to address the different components of a community equipment loan program.

The 5 phases are:

- Phase 1 - Pre-planning
- Phase 2 - Program Logistics
- Phase 3 - Purchasing Equipment
- Phase 4 - Implementation
- Phase 5 - Program Maintenance



This is not the only way to guide your ELP. This guide will be continuously updated to make it relevant to the current practices occurring in community recreation.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Graham Mounsey, Recreation Nova Scotia

Paul Tingley, Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage

THANK  
YOU!



**For support or questions, please contact:**  
[inclusion@recreationns.ns.ca](mailto:inclusion@recreationns.ns.ca)

