

Rotarians have the Opportunity to Provide Humanitarian Aid to the Ukrainian People

Story by Ed Kolybaba on May 13, 2022

As most are aware, the war in Ukraine continues to have devastating consequences on civilians as families flee their homes. According to the United Nations, more than 5.8 million people, most of them women and children, have sought refuge in countries across Europe, in North America, and elsewhere, while more than 7 million more people have been displaced within Ukraine.

Rotarians around the world are deeply concerned by the unprovoked, criminal and barbaric Russian invasion of Ukraine which is resulting in the escalating loss of life, including children, the raping of women, and the ever increasing humanitarian hardship in every respect, all well beyond apprehension. The devastating bombardment of hospitals, schools, nurseries, apartments and homes all designed to obliterate a nationality and its people is the most cruel and inhumane behaviour possible.



In response to this outrageous Russian aggression and disrespect for humanity, Rotary is using its deep networks and decades of experience to take swift action in the region. The first thing The Rotary Foundation did was to create an official channel for Rotary members around the world to contribute funds to support the relief efforts underway by Rotary districts and has designated its Disaster Response Fund as the main avenue for contributions.

Using the donations of Rotarians, TRF established two grants.

Until June 30th, 2022, designated Rotary districts that border Ukraine and the Rotary district in Ukraine may apply for grants up to \$50,000 each from the Fund. This expedited disaster response grant can be used to provide relief to refugees or other victims of the crisis.

Additionally, until June 30th, other impacted Rotary districts that wish to offer support to refugees or other victims of the crisis in their district can apply for a \$25,000 grant from the Fund.

While this would have to be verified, it might mean that districts outside Europe, including our own district, could apply for a \$25,000 grant if the district was accepting and caring for large numbers of refugees from Ukraine.

So, how are Rotarians and their clubs worldwide taking action?

Thanks to the generosity of donors around the world, including several Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Kelowna Sunrise, the Rotary Foundation has raised more than \$14.4 million in contributions that is helping provide people with essential items such as water, food, shelter, medicine, and clothing.

By the end of April, 79 disaster response grants totaling \$2.2 million had been awarded to support people affected by the war.

Here are a few examples of projects achieved or in progress using local funds and/or grants from the Disaster Response Fund.

The Rotary Club of Cherkasy (**Chur-kas-e**) in Ukraine purchased and delivered medical supplies and medicine to multiple local hospitals. The club has also organized daily meals for 250 evacuated families.

Members of the Rotary Club of Kharkiv (**Car-kev**) International have traveled to border countries to help refugees adapt to their new situations.

Clubs in Rotary District 2231 (Poland) are using a \$50,000 disaster response grant to provide transportation, accommodations, food, and medical assistance for refugees who crossed the border from Ukraine.

Rotary District 2240 in the Czech Republic is purchasing \$50,000 worth of sleeping bags, medicine, food, and defibrillators, EKGs, and oxygen concentrators to victims.

District 1910 in Austria is using a \$25,000 disaster response grant to provide accommodations, baby supplies, medicine, hygiene materials, psychological care, food, and appliances to Ukrainian refugees in Austria.

“Even if the Rotary Club of Kelowna Sunrise and/or District 5060 does not apply for a grant from the Disaster Response Fund, just think about how much we can help by providing funds that increase the funds available from the Disaster Response Fund for clubs in Ukraine or clubs in countries on or near its borders,” stated Club Foundation Committee member Ed Kolybaba following this presentation to the club on May 13th.