

Local Discretionary Granting Strategic Directions: 2024-26

Executive Summary

What is the Local Discretionary Granting Strategy?

The Local Discretionary Granting Strategy (LDGS) outlines the Rotary Club Calgary Downtown's (RCCD's) approach to granting its **discretionary dollars** to **local initiatives** for **2024-26**. The LDGS is grounded in the Club's mission and vision and is guided by overarching principles and values.

Why did RCCD create a Local Discretionary Granting Strategy?

RCCD's discretionary granting is sizeable in its dollar amount, complexity, and volunteer commitment. Many Club members (including the "Legacy Task Force") have consequently recommended an approach to granting that creates alignment among granting programs, creates significant community and Club impact, encourages Club member engagement, helps attract and retain members, and emphasizes transparency, accountability, collaboration, focus, and positive public image for RCCD.

How was the Local Discretionary Granting Strategy developed?

A "Granting Strategy Task Force" (GSTF) was formed in August 2023, consisting of RCCD members with extensive granting experience and community knowledge. The GSTF:

- Undertook background and best practice research
- Developed a "straw dog" document describing potential strategies for Club members to consider
- Conducted multiple in-person and online focus groups with Club members
- Collected written and verbal input from Club members
- Surveyed Club members online
- Presented Strategic Directions to the RCCD Board for consideration, made several refinements based on Board guidance, and received Board approval of the Strategic Directions in June 2024.

What are the highlights of the Local Discretionary Granting Strategy?

The LDGS summarizes a variety of strategic directions for RCCD to pursue in support of its local discretionary granting efforts. All the strategic directions can be viewed in the "Final Local Discretionary Granting Strategic Directions: 2024-26" document. Following is some of the major highlights:

- **Priorities** - RCCD's local discretionary granting priorities for 2024-26 include: Early Childhood Literacy, Education, Food Security, and Mental Wellness. Initiatives outside these priorities can still be supported through a variety of means. Priorities will be reviewed every three years, and new priorities can be adopted based on Club capacity and support. Impact in these priority areas is encouraged through Club involvement in roles beyond granting.
- **Committees** - Local discretionary grants must be approved by the Board and will be assessed and distributed through the Small Donations, Major Donations, Legacy Donations and Early Childhood Literacy Donations Committees. The Committees' processes, criteria, documents, and communications will be revised to ensure strategic priorities and directions are adopted and alignment among Committees exists. A new Legacy Donations Committee will be struck to evaluate new larger scale projects and to assess opportunities to capitalize on previous Legacy Grants.

- **Financial Resources** – Funds available for **all** discretionary granting (local and international) will be allocated as follows: 50% to Legacy Donations (with multi-year initiatives being encouraged for half this allocation); 25% to local community service (divided 85:15 between Major Donations and Small Donations); 25% towards World Community Service. This total discretionary granting allocations split will be reviewed on the same three-year cycle as the Clubs’ granting priorities. Fundraising activities will be developed to grow the financial resources available for local discretionary grants.
- **Club Member Engagement** – A variety of opportunities will be promoted for Club members to be involved in local discretionary granting committees and in community service activities, roles and initiatives that support RCCD’s granting priorities.
- **Collaboration** – RCCD will seek a variety of collaborative granting and community service opportunities with other Rotary Clubs, YYC Helps, other funders, private sector partners, “community experts”, and people with lived experience. Collaboration among RCCD’s granting Committees will be encouraged.
- **Communications** – RCCD’s local discretionary granting will be supported by updated, enhanced, strategic, comprehensive internal and external communications.
- **Education** – Ongoing opportunities for learning and involvement in RCCD’s local discretionary granting programs and priority areas will be offered.
- **Membership** – Club member recruitment, orientation, engagement, and community service efforts will intentionally educate and involve members in RCCD’s local discretionary granting work and priority areas.
- **Club Meetings** - Opportunities to educate and engage Club members in local discretionary grants, granting work and community service will intentionally be provided at Club meetings.
- **Community Impact** – RCCD will aim for significant, sustained community impact by connecting with supported projects in multiple ways and for longer terms. Data and stories demonstrating the impact of RCCD’s local discretionary granting will be collected and communicated.
- **Strategy Implementation and Continuity**- A “Granting Strategy Implementation Team” (GSIT) will ensure the implementation of the strategy throughout the Club. The GSIT will report to the Board through the Community Service Director, and it will work with the various functional Directors to encourage appropriate levels of strategy implementation into the various areas of the Club.
- **Areas for Further Consideration** – The Club may consider a migration to committees that are aligned with granting priorities, and that fulfill not only granting, but other roles such as education, fundraising, community service, and convening. The Club is also encouraged to assess the human resources (paid and unpaid) required to support and grow its granting and community service programs.

How will the Local Discretionary Granting Strategy impact the future of RCCD’s granting?

Focussing our granting will be more impactful in each area addressing prevention vs. treatment. Rotary becoming more knowledgeable in each focus area will enable us to make more informed educated granting decisions and build stronger relationships and partnerships with charities and funders operating in these areas.

Summary Statement

Our Club focuses on 4 main areas of concern in our community: Early Childhood Literacy (ECL) , Education, Food Security and Mental Wellness. Our granting committees (Legacy, Major Donations, Small Donations, ECL) provide grants for local organizations to create positive impact in a sustainable way.