

Important Changes to The Rotary Foundation funding model - TRF Chair K R Ravindran



Dear Rotarians,

This has perhaps been the most turbulent year of this generation — we faced a global health crisis, natural disasters, and economic turmoil all at the same time and the whole world was affected. Through it all, Rotary has stood tall. We have heard stories of some amazing acts of generosity and personal acts of service by clubs, Rotarians, and Rotaractors.

The Rotary Foundation has been proud to support our members' efforts in serving their communities. Since March 2020, we awarded \$32 million in global and disaster response grants for projects related to COVID-19. In fact, we awarded 1,359 global grants worth \$95.6 million in 2019-20. Compare that to 2013-14, when global grants were first introduced, when we awarded 868 global grants worth \$47.3 million. That's a lot of growth! All over the world, Foundation grants are supporting projects that demonstrate Rotary's impact and reach.

Because the high demand for global grants is far exceeding and outpacing the growth in Annual Fund contributions, the World Fund is depleted well before each Rotary year ends and we find ourselves in a position where we cannot fund all the global grant requests we receive.

This Rotary year, we've taken several cost-saving measures in an effort to fund more global grants. For example, the Trustees and the Board recently transferred \$15 million from the Foundation's operating reserves and Rotary International's budget surplus to the World Fund. In total, nearly an additional \$20 million is being made available this year, but unfortunately, even that is not enough to fulfill the applications that are expected to be submitted.

A financial shortfall is expected this year and likely in the coming years because of the growing success of our global grant program.

Therefore, the Trustees have approved policy changes, effective 1 July 2021, that will strengthen the Foundation's ability to fund more global grants.

1. District Designated Fund (DDF) contributions transferred to PolioPlus will be matched at 50%.

DDF contributions transferred to PolioPlus will be matched at 50% instead of 100% by the World Fund before being matched by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Gates Foundation will continue matching 2-to-1 every dollar that Rotary commits to polio eradication, up to \$50 million per year.

It's vital that we continue to raise \$50 million a year for polio eradication and raise awareness by keeping it a top priority for our clubs, our communities, and our government officials.

2. The World Fund match of DDF will be reduced from 100% to 80% when being used for global grants.

Instead of DDF applied to global grants receiving a 100% match from the World Fund, the global grants match will decrease to 80%. For the 2020-21 Rotary year, as long as funds remain available, DDF will continue to be matched at 100% for applications submitted by 31 May and approved by 30 June. Applications that are not approved this Rotary year will need to be resubmitted with adjusted financing.

3. Five percent of the current year's Annual Fund-SHARE contributions will be taken equally from the World Fund and DDF to help fund operating expenses.

Currently, Annual Fund-SHARE contributions are split equally between the World Fund and DDF, with 5% of the total SHARE contributions being deducted only from the World Fund to help pay for operating expenses.

Beginning 1 July, all Annual Fund-SHARE contributions will first have 5% directed to operating expenses and the remaining will then be split equally between the World Fund and DDF. For example, a \$100 contribution will generate \$5 for operating expenses and the remaining \$95 will be divided equally, with \$47.50 for DDF and \$47.50 for the World Fund.

4. The ability to roll over unused DDF will be limited to five years. At the end of each Rotary year, DDF that has been held for more than five years will be applied at the district's discretion to PolioPlus, area of focus Endowment funds, the general Endowment Fund (including the Rotary Peace Centers), the Disaster Response Fund, or the World Fund. The first DDF rollover redirection will take place 1 July 2026.

Annual Fund donors give with the expectation that their contributions will be used promptly to help communities, but the amount of rollover DDF each year remains high. On 1 July 2020, \$48.8 million was carried into the current Rotary year. Let's put these funds to use to increase the impact we make through our programs.

Starting on 1 July 2026, districts can choose how to apply any rollover funds remaining from 2020-21 as outlined above. If a district doesn't advise the Foundation about how to direct those funds, the rollover DDF will automatically be directed to the World Fund.

Your Trustees have spent a considerable period of time deliberating these issues, and these policy changes are the result of careful thought and planning. Balancing financial resources with program demands is challenging for any nonprofit, and adjustments and difficult decisions are sometimes necessary to cope with the changing situation.

We'll be hosting webinars in the coming weeks to talk about these changes in more detail. You'll receive a separate email inviting you to those sessions. In the meantime, you can direct immediate questions to rotarysupportcenter@rotary.org.

Keeping our programs strong and growing relies heavily on the continued generosity of our members to the Annual Fund-SHARE. We are committed to careful stewardship and prudent investments that will provide more funding for grants and Foundation programs.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding.

Sincerely,

K.R. Ravindran
2020-21 Trustee Chair, The Rotary Foundation