



# DISTRICT GRANTS SCHOLARSHIPS BEST PRACTICES

## OVERVIEW

This guide offers ideas on how districts can develop and manage a district grant scholarships program. Rotarians are encouraged to customize the concepts and suggestions for their own scholarships programs.

- Determine who will manage the application process for district grant scholarships.
- Decide what types of scholarships to offer.
- Set and communicate eligibility requirements for each scholarship.
- Define and publicize the application and selection process as far in advance as possible.
- Determine what reporting you will require of scholars and any sponsoring Rotary clubs.
- Help scholars prepare for their scholarship experiences.
- Determine how the funds will be transferred to the scholar.
- Set a procedure for obtaining receipts for expenses covered by the scholarship and communicate it clearly to scholars.
- Communicate with local Rotarians in the study country to determine expectations for their welcoming and assisting of scholars and scholars' involvement in their activities

Information on other Rotary scholarship opportunities is available in the [Global Grant Scholarships Supplement](#) and the [Rotary Peace Fellowships Guide for Rotarians](#).

## MANAGING THE PROCESS

If your district would like to use funds from its district grant for scholarships, you will need to determine who will manage this process. Your first step is identifying a new or existing district committee that can be responsible for most aspects of the scholarships process. You may want to consider assigning this role to one of these district committees:

- Rotary Foundation committee
- Grants subcommittee

- Scholarships subcommittee (suggested)
- District grants subcommittee (suggested)

### **BEST PRACTICE**

Create a scholarships subcommittee and appoint Rotarians who have experience with Rotary's scholarships. Involve past scholars, even if they have yet to join a Rotary club. Additionally, your local university office of fellowships may serve as a resource.

### **DECIDING TYPES OF SCHOLARSHIPS**

Districts can offer various scholarships through district grants. In order for Rotary clubs to know what type of students they are to recruit, the district should communicate the types of scholarships available as far in advance as possible.

District grants give districts the flexibility to design the scholarships they'd like to offer. To define the general scope of each scholarship, consider factors such as:

- Location of studies (within your district or region, in another country)
- Level and/or type of studies (secondary, vocational, undergraduate, graduate studies)
- Type of sponsorship (an outbound scholar from the district; an inbound scholar funded by your district but identified by a different district, based on your district's eligibility criteria)
- Length of the study program (one semester, one academic year, full undergraduate or graduate degree program)
- Field of study, research, or vocational training
- Basis for funding (financial need, academic merit, a combination of the two)
- Amount of scholarship award (fixed, within a certain range, open amount based on the scholar's application)

Your district might also set certain responsibilities and expectations. Make applicants aware of these when they apply. For instance, you might require scholars to:

- Make presentations at Rotary club or district meetings and events, both before and after the study program
- Submit a written report or keep an online journal to document their achievements and experiences or to give feedback about the scholarship
- Become involved with Rotary in the community where they will study, for example, by attending Rotary club meetings, speaking to Rotaract clubs, or participating in service projects

## **BEST PRACTICE**

Have the scholarships subcommittee conduct a survey of all the clubs in the district in order to determine what sort of students the clubs prefer to sponsor.

## **SETTING ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Districts determine the eligibility requirements for scholarships funded by a district grant. Typical requirements may include:

- Minimum academic level and performance
- Financial need, for example, an income below a certain level
- Geographic location, for example, residency or full-time work or study within the district
- Language proficiency (language of the study country or of instruction)
- Strong public speaking and interpersonal communication skills
- High ethical standards demonstrated in their personal, academic, or professional lives
- Knowledge of local, regional, and international current events, as well as the culture and history of the sponsor and host communities

The [District Qualification Memorandum of Understanding](#) requires districts to ensure that all individuals involved in a grant have no actual or perceived conflicts of interest. Scholarships funded by Rotary Foundation grants cannot be awarded to anyone in the following categories:

- Rotarians, including honorary Rotarians
- Employees of clubs, districts, or other Rotary Entities, or of Rotary International
- Spouses, lineal descendants (children or grandchildren by blood, legal adoption, or marriage without adoption), spouses of lineal descendants, or ancestors (parents or grandparents by blood) of persons in the above categories
- Employees of agencies, organizations, or institutions that partner with the Foundation or Rotary International
- Former Rotarians and honorary Rotarians who have terminated their membership within the preceding 36 months
- Persons who were ineligible based on their familial relationship to a former Rotarian or honorary Rotarian, for a period of 36 months after termination of their family member's membership

Additionally, scholars may not study in a country that is banned for Rotary-funded travel. This list of banned countries is posted on Rotary's [website](#).

Naturally, all eligibility requirements your district sets must conform to all antidiscrimination laws in effect in the community where the applicants are interviewed and selected.

## **BEST PRACTICE**

Set a reasonable number of eligibility requirements to ensure a manageable recruitment and selection process.

## **DEFINING THE APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS**

Define the process for nominating scholarship candidates and publicize it to clubs as far in advance as possible. This process includes creating the application form, deciding what roles clubs will play in interviewing and nominating scholars, and how scholars are selected and notified.

### Application Forms

The district decides what documentation applicants must provide — standardized application form, academic transcripts, faculty or employer recommendations, etc. — and specifies how applicants may submit their application materials — by email, online application forms, paper copies, etc. A sample application form is included at the end of this guide.

Identify and share the contact information for a Rotarian who will answer questions about the scholarship, the deadline, and the application process. This could be the district grants subcommittee chair or the optional district scholarships subcommittee chair.

### Rotary Club Involvement

The district determines how or whether local Rotary clubs are involved in the screening and nominating process. Your district may choose to have applicants submit materials directly to the district, or have clubs screen applications and nominate a candidate to the district selection committee.

### Selection Committee

The district should establish a selection committee and ensure that members have no actual or perceived conflicts of interest. The district should make it clear, at the start of the process, whether in-person or live videoconference interviews are required and, if so, the date and time for them.

### Notification

The district should determine when and how applicants will be notified if they are awarded a scholarship.

## **BEST PRACTICE**

Involve Rotarians across the district in the scholar selection process, so that more Rotary clubs are aware of the opportunity.

## **SETTING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Districts determine what information scholars must report. Remember that districts are required to collect and retain receipts from the scholar for expenses of US\$75 or more for a minimum of five years.

The District Qualification Memorandum of Understanding requires districts to report to their clubs how the District Designated Fund was used. The report is given at a district meeting that all clubs are invited to attend. Consider what information about district grant scholarships to include in this report, because that will help your district determine the information scholars must include in their reports to the district.

### **BEST PRACTICE**

Assign a member of the district committee or the sponsoring Rotary club to serve as the scholar's main contact.

## **PREPARING SCHOLARS**

Once the scholarship winners have been announced, sponsoring Rotary clubs or the district may choose to work with them as they prepare for the scholarship experience.

Scholars may need to prepare in the following ways:

- Obtaining any visas or study permits that are required for travel or study in another country
- Making copies of important documentation, such as visas and passports, in case of loss
- Having any inoculations required or recommended for travel to the study country
- [Arranging travel](#), either through Rotary International Travel Service (RITS), or on their own
- Researching banking options as well as potential currency restrictions in the study country
- Locating convenient, safe, and affordable housing options in the host city
- Creating a budget to manage grant funds
- Purchasing [travel insurance](#)
- Creating a blog or a social media account dedicated to sharing their experiences during the course of study
- Ensuring that any regularly taken prescription medication is available and legal in the study country by checking the host country's consular website
- Participating in meetings, community service projects, and fundraising events hosted by the sponsoring Rotary club and district
- Attending an outbound orientation seminar, conducted at the club, district, or multidistrict level (an online orientation is available on [Rotary's website](#))

Rotary has a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment and inappropriate behavior. Make sure scholars

are informed and that they must report any incidents to Rotary International immediately.

### **BEST PRACTICE**

When calculating the amount of funding that will be awarded for a scholarship, consider including sufficient funds to cover the costs associated with participating in a regional outbound orientation seminar. Such seminars are organized and conducted by one or more districts and charge a registration fee to be paid by the scholar or the scholar's sponsor Rotarians. These fees might include registration, meals, accommodations, airfare, and ground transportation.

## **ISSUING SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS**

The district must determine how it will issue the scholarship funds to the student.

### Transferring Funds

The district may choose to transfer the scholarship funds directly to scholars or to a sponsoring Rotary club, which in turn will direct the funds to scholars. When issuing funds directly to scholars, decide whether to transfer them electronically to scholars' bank accounts in the home country or the study country. If the funds are transferred to an account in the study country, research how currency restrictions, exchange rate fluctuations, and bank transfer fees might affect the payment.

### Scheduling Payments

The district may decide to issue the scholarship funds in installments, to ensure that any reporting requirements are met or to simply assist the scholar with budgeting. If the scholarship will be paid in installments, clearly communicate when they should expect to receive the disbursements and how much each will include.

### **BEST PRACTICE**

Research the wire transfer and electronic payment fees at the scholar's bank, which may differ substantially from those in your area, and factor these costs into the budget for the scholarship.

## **CLOSING GRANTS**

The District Qualification Memorandum of Understanding requires districts to retain receipts for expenses incurred by completed district grants. Scholars must provide receipts for expenses of US\$75 or greater to the district, which must retain them for a minimum of five years, or longer if required by local law.

If the district requires any additional reports, such as scholars' written assessments of their experiences or academic transcripts, it should collect these as soon after the end of the scholarship term as is reasonable. You might have scholars report simply by maintaining an online journal or blog during their studies.

As scholars approach the end of their studies, it is useful to discuss how the district plans to continue to involve them as Rotary alumni.

### **BEST PRACTICE**

Use an electronic storage system for information, receipts, and invoices associated with your district grant scholarships. Identify a Rotarian in the district to whom the scholar will email scanned copies of receipts. Back up the system frequently.

### **WELCOMING INBOUND SCHOLARS**

Districts are not required to host district grant scholars sent to their area by other districts. Unlike past Rotary Foundation scholarship programs, such as Ambassadorial Scholarships, Rotary International does not inform districts of any inbound district grant students. So set realistic expectations for the scholar of the level of support and involvement local Rotarians may offer.

Instead, Rotary clubs and districts may wish to communicate directly with one another to determine what kind of interaction scholars will have with Rotarians in the study district. How will scholars be involved in local Rotary activities? What level of support are Rotarians prepared to provide inbound scholars?

The sponsor and local Rotarians may want to determine in advance whether they will do any of the following:

- Assign a specific Rotarian host counselor and specify what the role entails, which has proven to be the most effective way to ensure that inbound scholars are successful.
- Assign a host Rotary club.
- Assist scholars with university registration.
- Assist scholars in finding housing.
- Assist scholars with general tasks such as opening a bank account, identifying grocery shopping options, selecting a physician, borrowing furniture, cooking utensils, or bedding, etc.
- Provide occasional transportation, such as pickup at the airport upon arrival.

Every district should discuss the type of support it is willing to provide if it learns that a district grant scholar has arrived without warning.

### **BEST PRACTICE**

If your district wants to welcome district grant scholars from another district, publicize the level of involvement and support your district provides on your website. Email all districts that have appointed district scholarships subcommittee chairs to inform them of how your district hosts inbound scholars. For a list contact us.

**SAMPLE APPLICATION FOR ROTARY FOUNDATION DISTRICT GRANT SCHOLARSHIPS**

[Note to district leaders: insert the district’s requirements for submitting applications.]

Applications submitted directly to The Rotary Foundation will not be considered.

Please print legibly or type. Do not use initials or abbreviations.

Family name: \_\_\_\_\_ Given names: \_\_\_\_\_

Male  Female

Current mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone (alternative): \_\_\_\_\_

Country of citizenship: \_\_\_\_\_

Country of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact information (relationship, name, address, phone number, email):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Proposed field of study and length of study program:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**EDUCATIONAL HISTORY**

Postsecondary or university level (include any studies planned between now and the scholarship term; list planned or most recent studies first):

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State/Province, Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates attended (month & year): \_\_\_\_\_

Field of study: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree or certificate received or expected: \_\_\_\_\_



Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State/Province, Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates attended (month & year): \_\_\_\_\_

Field of study: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree or certificate received or expected: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary School (name and location)	Dates attended (month and year)	Diploma or equivalent	
_____	_____	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

(List current or most recent first)

Name of employer	Job title or type of work	Dates worked (month & year)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

### PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE ABROAD

State/Province	Country	Dates	Circumstances
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

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## ESSAYS

Prepare the following documents with your name and the name of the sponsor Rotary club or number of the sponsor district in the upper right corner.

1. A brief autobiography, no longer than two pages, describing
  - a. Academic strengths and challenges
  - b. Work experience
  - c. Career objectives
2. A detailed statement of intent, no longer than two pages, describing
  - a. Your reasons for applying for a scholarship
  - b. Your proposed field of study and future career plans
  - c. Your principal interests and activities and any leadership positions you have held.  
Indicate any training or experience in public speaking or community service.

## LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Have two academic instructors or employers or supervisors provide letters of recommendation.

## TRANSCRIPTS

Provide original transcripts from all post-secondary colleges or universities attended.

## STUDY INSTITUTION

Details regarding your proposed study institution and academic or research program should you be awarded a scholarship.

Name of institution: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State/Province, Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Website address of institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of attendance (month & year): \_\_\_\_\_

Degree or certificate: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of specific degree or certificate program: \_\_\_\_\_

Website address of degree or certificate program: \_\_\_\_\_

### **APPLICANT'S CERTIFICATION**

My signature below certifies that the information provided in this scholarship application is truthful and accurate. I also certify that in order to abide by Rotary's conflict of interest policy related to individuals receiving grant funds I do not fit in any of the categories listed below:

- Rotarian, including honorary Rotarian
- Employee of a club, district, or other Rotary Entity, or of Rotary International
- Spouse, lineal descendant (child or grandchild by blood, legal adoption, or marriage without adoption), spouse of lineal descendants, or ancestor (parent or grandparent by blood) of person(s) in the above categories
- Employee of an agency, organization, or institution that partners with The Rotary Foundation or Rotary International
- Former Rotarian or honorary Rotarian who has terminated membership within the preceding 36 months
- Person who is ineligible based on a familial relationship to a former Rotarian or honorary Rotarian, for a period of 36 months after termination of family member's membership

Applicant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_