

From the RVC:

Let's talk about funding for your local group. Last month I mentioned that I am chairing a task force on local group support, which over the coming months will be looking at ways to make our support of local groups more effective. Our task force members will be coming up with suggestions for changes in our funding parameters, but I'd really like to hear from you, particularly you current and former local officers who have to live with the results.

One thing we're pretty much agreed on at the beginning is that simply throwing more money at local groups and hoping they will find good uses for it is not going to work. We need to set up a system that established some accountability for the funds received by the local groups. Otherwise the money is likely to end up just sitting around in local bank accounts, like much of the local group funding does now.

As I mentioned last time, some early thoughts on this subject include tying portions of the local group subsidy to specific programs, such as testing, communications, meetings, elections, and so on. One advantage of this approach is that by connecting the funds to a specific purpose, we may be able to increase the overall amount by including some amounts that are now carried as administrative costs of the various programs. This, in turn, might encourage innovation and creativity by putting control of the expenditures in the hands of the local groups and RVCs, rather than locking us into a one-size-fits-all national approach.

One innovation I'd like to see is more cooperative programs between groups. For example, if your local group is small and has trouble maintaining an active testing program, why not look into asking a neighboring group for help. If a large group sends a proctor over into an adjoining group's area to give a test once a month, they can benefit from the local share of the test fees, but the small group will get the \$25 for a test session, plus the new members that result from the tests. Everybody wins!

I really expected some feedback on this subject from last month's column, but so far all I've heard is a loud silence. Please give this some thought and let me know what you would like to see come out of this task force's deliberations. All suggestions are welcome, even if they are only vague aspirations. We can't make things better if we don't know what you would consider an improvement.

That's all for now. Don't forget Lone Star Mensa's upcoming RG in Round Rock, just north of Austin, over the Labor Day weekend. For more information contact Ron Edelstein, aduana@mindspring.com or [\(512\) 491-9881](tel:(512)491-9881)

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