

# Small Sparks

## Discretionary Funding

← *Small Sparks* is an example of a name (suggested by Ralph Broad) that could be used instead of Discretionary Funding. It is meant to signify that a small bit of funding could 'spark' positive change in someone's life.

April 2024

# Agenda

## What is our agenda?

- Background on Discretionary Funding
- Workshop Framework for Discretionary Funding:
  - Definition
  - Guiding Criteria
  - Examples
  - Process and Threshold

# Background

- One of the key design elements of Local Area Coordination is that Local Area Coordinators have access to Discretionary Funding.
- In other jurisdictions, Discretionary Funding is **a lever**, that is available to those working alongside Local Area Coordinators, to enable **individuals/families/communities to further achieve their goals**.
  - E.g., It may take a little bit of money to stimulate something to open doors for someone in the community.
- In other jurisdictions, it is used as a line of last resort, where it has been identified that the aspiration and/or need of the individual/family/community cannot be met through existing local supports and government services.



# Guiding Assumptions

The following are **guiding assumptions** to keep in mind for the **framework of discretionary funding in Nova Scotia** based on Local Area Coordination fidelity and practices from other jurisdictions.

-  **Think Natural & Community Supports First Approach:** We want Local Area Coordinators to think natural and community supports first - what relationships in community can we leverage first? Will discretionary funding complement natural supports? Discretionary funding should be leveraged to complement and/or stimulate sparks towards a person's goals and/or community inclusivity.
-  **One-Time:** Discretionary funding should be non-recurrent and should not replace formalized funding and services. It is different than Individualized Funding, which requires eligibility and assessment.
-  **Autonomy of Local Area Coordinator:** The Local Area Coordinator should have the autonomy to exercise discretion in identifying situations where discretionary funding would be appropriate.
-  **Role of Team Lead:** The Team Lead should provide either a reflective mentorship role and approval role to ensure fidelity to the intent and to build capacity and autonomy of Local Area Coordinators.

# Draft Definition

## Small Sparks - Discretionary Funding

- A small amount of non-recurrent, “one-off” funding that is available for persons with disabilities and/or community members that opens doors to community inclusion and/or enables individuals with disabilities to access supports and services that support them to live their best life.
- The provision of discretionary funding has a “multiplier effect” which leads to greater involvement of people with disabilities in community and/or progress towards goals.
- Available to anyone who is **working with** an LAC including individuals, families or communities (when a situation is identified as appropriate for Discretionary Funding as per guidelines/policy).
- Should not **replace and/or duplicate** services and supports offered by existing government services and programs.



# Draft Guidelines

Other jurisdictions leverage guiding criteria/principles as business practice tools to guide decision-making within funding frameworks similar to discretionary funding. For example, New Zealand's Individualized Funding program utilizes criteria to help families make decisions on how they can use their funding for a specific disability-related need. This same structure could be leveraged to guide LACs in their decision-making processes on discretionary funding.

#1

**Natural and Community Supports:** How can we consider and look to utilize natural supports and community resources first? Have these supports been exhausted?

#2

**Spark Towards A Good Life:** Will discretionary funding complement and/or provide access to natural supports and community inclusion opportunities that are linked to an individual's vision for a good life?

#3

**Capacity Building:** Will the provision of discretionary funding increase capacity and self-reliance? Will this further stimulate ongoing independence without the requirement of funding?

#4

**Duplication:** Is the provision of discretionary funding replacing and/or duplicating funding offered by established government services and programs (e.g., IF) that the individual is eligible for? Is it specific to the person's needs/goals and community inclusivity?

#5

**Reasonable Cost:** How can we ensure discretionary funding is cost-effective and will have a "multiplier" effect that leads to greater involvement of people with disabilities in community and/or progress towards goals?

# Draft Examples

<b>Discretionary Funding could be...</b>	<b>Discretionary Funding is not...</b>
✓ Community access assistance (e.g.: cost to get to a job interview; to connect with a family member; to make a move into community; accessible transportation )	X Basic living expenses (e.g.: rent)
✓ An item that will allow an individual to become part of a desired group (e.g.: rent a surfboard to surf with friends)	X Debt repayment
✓ Activities that allow the individual to participate in community inclusion activities (e.g.: local sporting event)	X Long-term financial support
	X A duplication of services and supports offered by existing government services and programs.

## **Draft Guidelines to help identify if discretionary funding could be appropriate**

**Natural and Community Supports:** *How can we consider and look to utilize natural supports and community resources first? Have these supports been exhausted?*

**Spark Towards A Good Life:** *Will discretionary funding complement and/or provide access to natural supports and community inclusion opportunities that are linked to an individual's vision for a good life?*

**Capacity Building:** *Will the provision of discretionary funding increase capacity and self-reliance? Will this further stimulate ongoing independence without the requirement of funding?*

**Duplication:** *Is the provision of discretionary funding replacing and/or duplicating funding offered by established government services and programs (e.g., IF) that the individual is eligible for? Is it specific to the person's needs/goals and community inclusivity?*

**Reasonable Cost:** *How can we ensure discretionary funding is cost-effective and will have a "multiplier" effect that leads to greater involvement of people with disabilities in community and/or progress towards goals?*

# Draft Process and Threshold

As we learn over the first two years what people are using this for and the amounts being requested, the range and process can be updated to reflect the learnings.

Discretionary Funding Range	Identified By	Consult	Final Approval	Rationale
<b>Up to and including \$150</b>	Local Area Coordinator	Team Lead	Team Lead	The rationale for the consult and final approval residing with the Team Lead is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To ensure the situation will build capacity</li><li>• To ensure that all natural supports are being considered first</li><li>• Protect the intent of Discretionary Funding</li><li>• Provide opportunities for reflection, mentoring, coaching and another layer of decision making to ensure equitable access</li><li>• For evaluation and tracking purposes</li></ul>

# Next Steps

1

Incorporate any feedback from today

2

Gain approval and begin implementation activities (e.g. *CCM considerations, training materials, evaluation considerations*)