



2025-26 GOVERNORS-ELECT LEARNING SEMINAR (GELS) WORKBOOK

Congratulations on being chosen to lead your district! As you prepare to become a district governor, you'll learn about Rotary policy and about your district's structure and its strengths and weaknesses. You'll also plan for your term by assembling an effective team that can help you develop and achieve district goals. As a governor, you'll bring Rotary's core values to life, support our vision statement, and motivate your district to take action.

During this seminar, we encourage you to share ideas and tips, take notes, and consider innovative ways to inspire members and participants in your district. You'll also want to think about how your district goals align with Rotary's Action Plan and how you and your team can support clubs in increasing their impact, expanding their reach, enhancing participant engagement, and increasing their ability to adapt.

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**Joint session with governors-nominee*

OPENING SESSION

What is one specific goal you have for your year as governor?

ACTIVITY: WORKING WITH THE ACTION PLAN

Answer the questions below. After the seminar, share these questions and answers with your district team and discuss how your district can communicate the value of the Action Plan to clubs.

How does the Action Plan encourage you to think about Rotary in a different way?

Which aspects of the plan are you most excited about? Which will excite club members?

How can these priorities and objectives help you achieve the specific goal you wrote for yourself at the top of the page?

MOTIVATING YOUR DISTRICT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Describe how to motivate club and district leaders
2. Develop specific strategies to make learning events engaging, innovative, and inclusive

ACTIVITY: EFFECTIVE EVENTS

Your group will be assigned an event from each column.

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2
Presidents-elect learning seminar (PELS)	District conference
Club leadership learning seminar	Club visit
District vibrant club workshop	District or local fundraising event (please specify)
Rotaract district leadership learning event	District or local service project (please specify)

Write your assigned events at the top of the table below. Then respond to the questions for each event.

	Event from column 1:	Event from column 2:
How can we make this event ENGAGING?		
How can we make this event INNOVATIVE?		
How can we make this event INCLUSIVE?		

REFLECTION

What motivates you to support and develop leaders in your district?



Diverse perspectives in decision making can prepare your team to be effective in supporting a variety of clubs. Review [Rotary's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#).

SUPPORTING AND ENGAGING WITH CLUBS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Define and explain the importance of positive club experiences
2. Address membership challenges in existing clubs

ACTIVITY: SUPPORTING CLUBS

Clubs can offer activities and experiences that help members recognize the value of their club and encourage active engagement. However, some experiences, when managed well, go unnoticed, but when mishandled, can prompt members to leave. Identifying these positive and negative experiences is key to determining how to support your members. Complete the table below by noting factors that motivate club members to be engaged and aspects of a club experience that may cause members to leave. Consider what evidence you can use to support your observations.

3 factors that motivate club members to be engaged	3 elements of a club experience that would cause people to leave Rotary

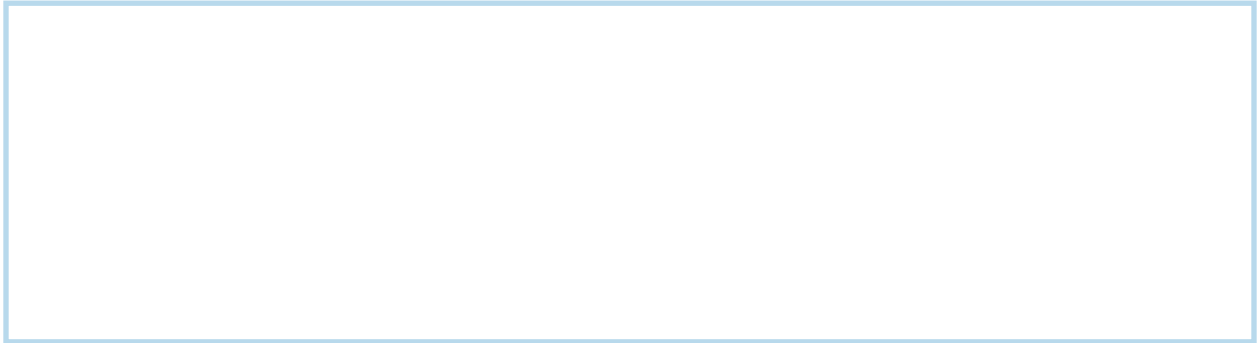
What tools or resources are available to increase engagement?

REFLECTION

What strategies to increase member engagement is your district already using? What new strategies could your district adopt?

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How can you enhance what is working? How can you improve what is not working?

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WORKING WITH CLUB AND DISTRICT SUPPORT STAFF: YOUR REGIONAL EXPERTS — GELS SESSION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Understand your governor funding timeline
2. Apply best practices for district responsibilities and operations
3. Address issues specific to your region and your role

A Club and District Support (CDS) staff member will conduct this session. Use the space below to take notes.

NOTES

PREPARING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Understand the program and goals of the International Assembly
2. Start preparing for the International Assembly



Find up-to-date information on the [International Assembly](#) page of My Rotary.

NOTES

REFLECTION

What is something you want to learn before the International Assembly?

What is something you want to accomplish at the assembly?

MANAGING YOUR DISTRICT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Create or refine your district financial management plan
2. Develop a plan for leadership continuity
3. Apply conflict management strategies

MANAGING DISTRICT FINANCES

NOTES

PLANNING FOR CONTINUITY

NOTES

MANAGING CONFLICT

NOTES

REFLECTION

Which of the topics discussed during this session do you feel most knowledgeable about?
Which will you need to learn more about?

What questions do you have about these topics? Will you discuss these questions with your governor or past governors after the seminar?

COMMUNICATING FOR MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT AND GROWTH

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Determine a strategy for your monthly communications
2. Distinguish between messaging for Rotary club members, Rotaract club members, and the public

ACTIVITY: COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR DISTRICT

After choosing one of the questions below, use the grid to develop a message that inspires action. Share the message with a partner and ask for feedback.

1. What is one thing your district has accomplished in the last year that makes you proud?
2. What is one way your district has demonstrated its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion?
3. What is one innovative idea that you believe will help your district increase its impact, expand its reach, or enhance engagement?

DEVELOP YOUR MESSAGE HERE

Beginning (catch someone's attention)

Middle (provide 2-3 important or compelling details)

End (provide motivation or a call to action)

ACTIVITY: DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIONS RELEVANT TO YOUR AUDIENCE

Thinking about the message you started developing, consider how you will create a communication that both Rotary members and the public can appreciate.

What would you emphasize in order to appeal to members of your clubs?

What would you emphasize in order to appeal to people who are not members of Rotary or Rotaract?

REFLECTION

What part of your district's communication plan for members is most effective? What part needs more development?

What part of your district's communication plan for your community is most effective? What part needs more development?

PROMOTING OUR BRAND AND OUR STORY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Communicate the importance of strengthening Rotary's public image
2. Use storytelling to expand our reach

ACTIVITY: PROMOTING OUR BRAND AND OUR STORY

Choose a service project from the last year that you believe shows a Rotary or Rotaract club in your district making a significant difference locally — a project that could inspire the public to engage with Rotary.

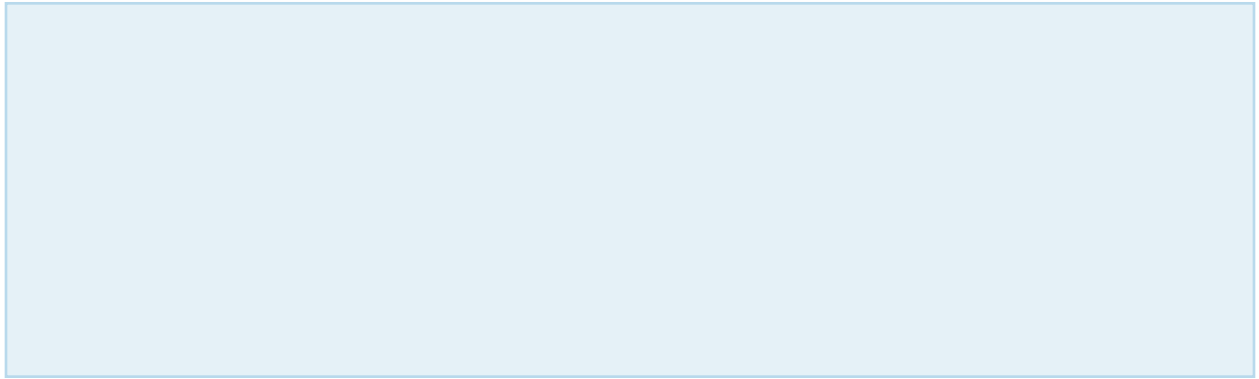
PROJECT: _____

Imagine you've been contacted by a local news organization to explain Rotary's impact in the community. Consider these questions to help you develop your story. Take notes in the space provided.

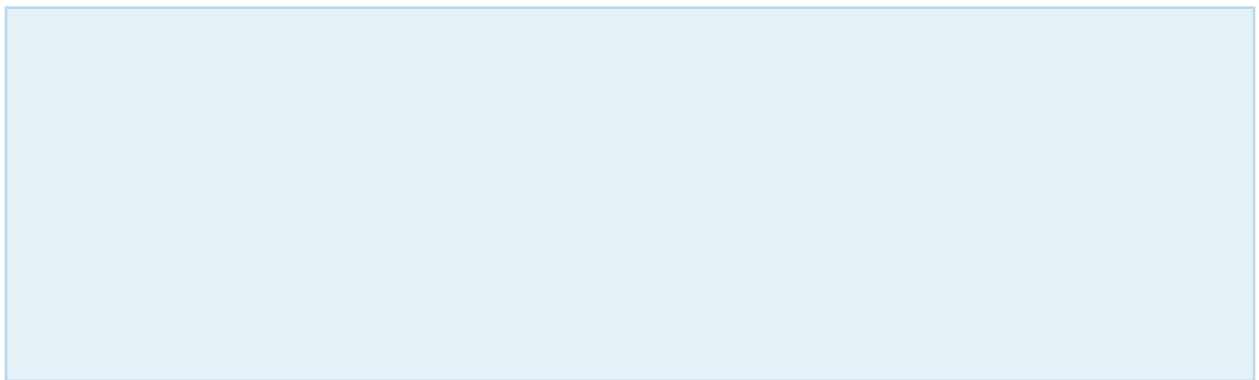
What problem or challenge in your community was this project designed to solve?

How did the club take action to solve the problem?

What was the impact of this project? How did the club improve the lives of people in your community? Try to provide at least two key outcomes or statistics to support your answer.

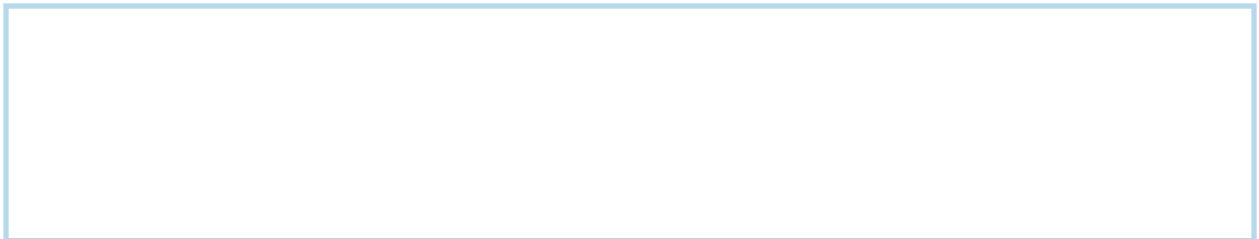


Who do you want to hear this story, and what do you want those people to do as a result of hearing it?

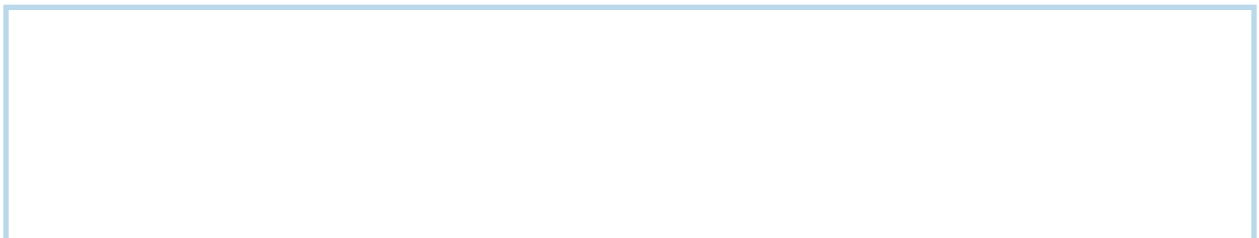


REFLECTION

What about the Rotary experience in your district inspires you?



What opportunities do you have to talk about the Rotary experience in your district in a way that engages community members and makes them want to learn more?



SUPPORTING THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Build support for district and global grants
2. Support and recognize giving to The Rotary Foundation

ACTIVITY: COMMUNICATING THE ROTARY FOUNDATION'S IMPACT

Respond to the following questions. Then share your responses with other participants to gather ideas and tips to take back to your district.

Briefly describe a time when funds from The Rotary Foundation helped amplify the impact of your district's service efforts, either in your community or globally.

What would you emphasize to appeal to new donors?

What would you emphasize to appeal to regular donors?

REFLECTION

Are there any opportunities to use DDF or Foundation grant funds that your district isn't taking advantage of?

How will you raise awareness of, or take action on, these opportunities?



Find resources on the [Fundraising](#) page of My Rotary, and share your fundraising successes with Rotary by writing to annualfund@rotary.org.

DEVELOPING NEW CLUBS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Understand the various new club development options and resources available
2. Develop a plan to form new clubs in your district

ACTIVITY: NEW CLUB BRAINSTORM

Complete the table below. Then share your responses with other participants to gather ideas and tips to take back to your district.

What are the barriers to starting a new club in your district?	What opportunities are there to start a new club in your district?
What resources are available to support you when starting a new club?	What tactics will you use when starting a new club?

ACTIVITY: DEVELOPING NEW CLUBS

Review your assigned scenario, determine what kind of new club would be the best fit, and list ways your leadership team could support the club or its participants.

Scenario 1

A club in your district that meets in the afternoons consistently connects with the community and regularly inducts new members each year. Unfortunately, it loses the same number of members each year. In exit surveys, members often cite the weekday lunch timing of the weekly club meeting as a reason for leaving. This limits the club's ability to retain members who are also working. The club's new president asks for your advice on how her club can better accommodate this group and grow its membership.

Scenario 3

A club in your district has approximately 50 members. About 15 of them have led an annual literacy project for several years. The other club members, including the board, now want to do something different, and they plan to end the project. Your assistant governor has told you that the 15 members are not happy with this and say that they might leave Rotary.

Scenario 2

The district membership chair learns of an upcoming social event designed to build connections between community organizations and people with disabilities. He knows this group is underrepresented in clubs across the district, and he believes a new club designed with accessibility in mind could be a good opportunity.

Scenario 4

A new cybersecurity firm has opened in your district. You have met several of its employees and think they would be great Rotary members. However, they frequently travel for work and some have young children, which could make it difficult for them to join the clubs in your area, most of which meet on weekday evenings.

SCENARIO: _____

Based on the scenario, which new club model would fit this group best?



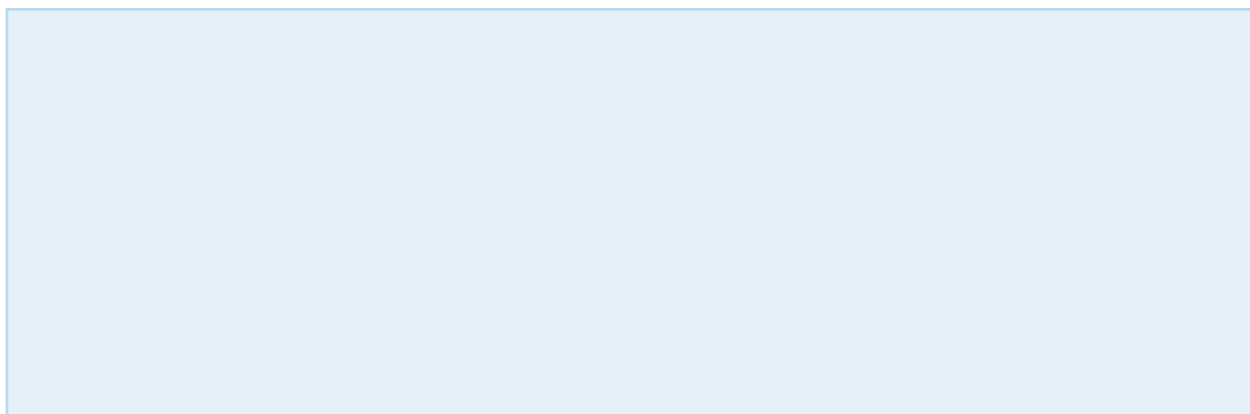
Use the Club Types, Formats, and Models matrix on page 23 to help with these scenarios.

As you help form a new club with this group in mind, how would your district support the club — both now and over the next 2-3 years? What will you ask assistant governors to do to support the new club?



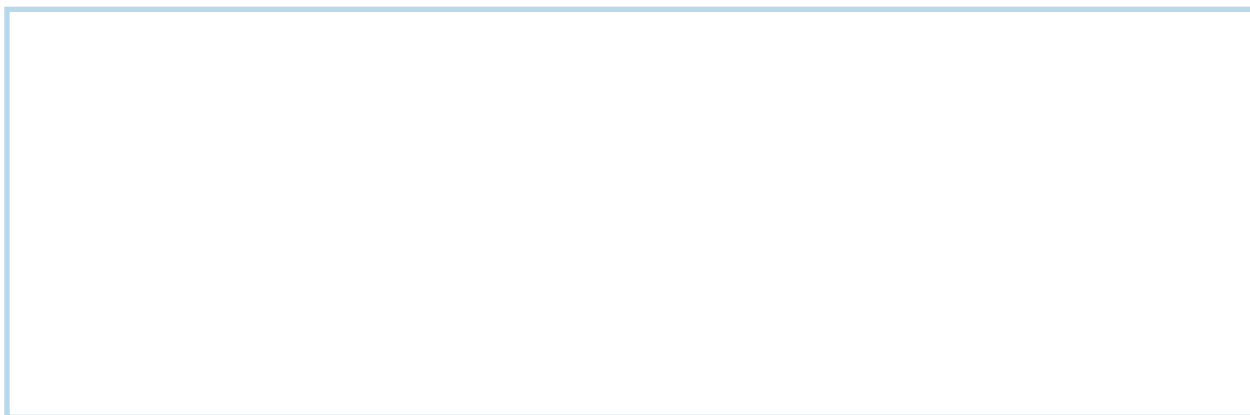
Take the [Creating an Inclusive Club Culture](#) and [Diversify Your Club](#) courses to help clubs better represent their communities and create an environment where everyone feels comfortable.

Revisit the table from the New Club Brainstorm activity and consider how you might use new club models to address barriers and leverage opportunities to develop new clubs in your district.



REFLECTION

Which communities in your district are ready for a new club?



FROM PLAN TO ACTION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

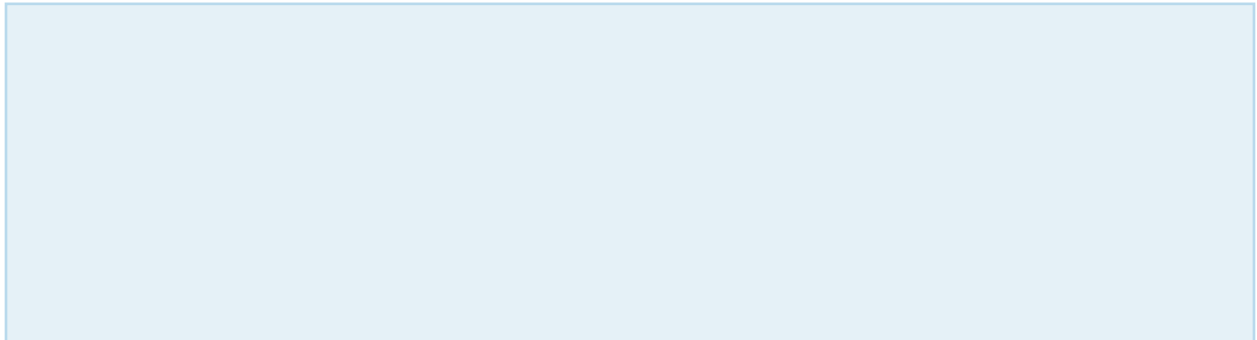
1. Understand how to support clubs in their strategic planning process
2. Align your district strategic plan with Rotary's Action Plan

ACTIVITY: FROM PLAN TO ACTION

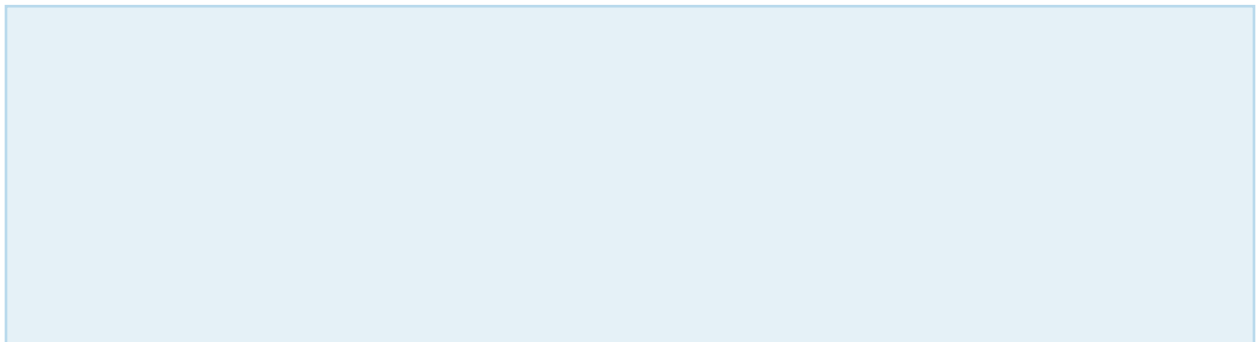
Discuss the following questions. Then share your responses with other participants to gather ideas and tips to take back to your district.

Identify a current goal of your district strategic plan:

What tactics are you using to achieve this goal? How do you measure the success of these tactics?



What are two new tactics you could use to make progress toward this goal? How will you measure their success?



REFLECTION

What is the next thing you will do to prepare for your year as governor?

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The **ROTARY ACTION PLAN**

TAKING ACTION FOR CHANGE

We are at a defining moment in Rotary's history. We're implementing our Action Plan, a strategic road map that will help us better connect with each other, grow as an organization, and more effectively share our stories of how we are making a difference in communities.

At every level of Rotary, we have embraced opportunities to work together to achieve our goals. Over the coming four issues, you'll hear from Rotary members around the world who will offer their inspiration, encouragement, and guidance as we carry out the four priorities of the Action Plan.



IMPACT

We want to put our resources behind programs that will have the greatest impact and that align with our areas of focus.

We're creating tools and guidelines for tracking and sharing our efforts. We're also developing an evaluation process that will help us make objective recommendations about what is working and what we should continue, start, or stop doing.

REACH

We're committed to exemplifying and embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in everything we do.

We're testing new products and alternative models that will allow more people to connect and take action with us in ways that work best for them.

ENGAGE

We're tearing down the walls between "us" and "them" and focusing on participants.

We're asking people how they want to participate, finding ways to meet them where they are, and making sure they know we value them.

ADAPT

We're streamlining operations so we can be more agile and responsive.

We're simplifying the way we do things and helping members manage change so that our clubs, districts, and zones can more effectively communicate and work together.

Learn what your club can do at rotary.org/actionplan.





CLUB TYPES, FORMATS, AND MODELS

All Rotary and Rotaract clubs share similar values and a passion for service, but each offers a unique experience. When you start a club, you'll need to choose a club type, a meeting format, and a club model. Consider the needs of your community and the club's prospective members to decide which kind of club would be best.

CLUB TYPE: First, determine whether your new club will be a Rotary club, a Rotaract club, or a satellite of a Rotary or Rotaract club.

Club type	Description	Appeals to	Member minimum for new clubs
Rotary club	Professionals and other leaders who meet regularly for service, connection, and personal growth Learn about a successful Rotary club.	People who are looking for friendship, service, and networking opportunities Learn more with the Starting a Club online course.	20 required
Rotaract club	Adults who take action through community and international service while learning leadership skills and developing professionally Learn about a successful Rotaract club.	Younger professionals and university students who want to become more effective leaders, find innovative solutions to community issues, and have fun through service Learn how to start a club .	12 recommended
Satellite club	A part of a Rotary or Rotaract club that has its own meetings, projects, bylaws, and board, managed in collaboration with its sponsor club Learn about a successful satellite club.	Those who want a club experience, meeting format, or meeting time other than what local clubs offer and who appreciate the support and partnership of another club. Some satellite clubs eventually form standalone clubs, while others, sometimes called companion clubs, do not. Learn more in the Guide to Satellite Clubs .	8 for a satellite Rotary club 4 for a satellite Rotaract club

MEETING FORMAT: Next, determine whether your club will meet in person, online, or both.

Meeting format	Description	Appeals to
In person	A club that meets in person at a designated location Learn about a successful club that meets in person.	Those who consider face-to-face interactions an important part of the meeting experience or who don't enjoy online meetings
Online	A club that meets primarily online and offers in-person service opportunities Learn about a successful club that meets online.	Frequent travelers, people who have difficulty attending in-person meetings, or those who prefer an online experience Learn more about online club meetings .

CLUB TYPES, FORMATS, AND MODELS



In person and online	A club that holds some meetings in person and others online, or one that holds in-person meetings that some members attend virtually Learn about a successful club that meets in person and online.	People who have various needs and enjoy a flexible schedule and those who want many attendance options or a mix of experiences Learn more about clubs that meet online and in person.
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CLUB MODEL: Finally, determine the approach your club will offer. You can choose a model below or design your own.

Club model	Description	Appeals to
Traditional	The club experience includes having a meal, hosting a speaker, and practicing traditions that members value. Traditional clubs often have higher dues because of venue and meal costs. Learn about a successful traditional club.	People who want to socialize over a meal while learning about a new topic or an opportunity to serve the community
Passport	A club that allows members to attend other clubs' meetings frequently if they attend a specified number of home club meetings each year Learn about a successful passport club.	People who travel frequently or who enjoy trying a variety of club experiences and meeting lots of people Learn more in the Guide to Passport Clubs.
Cause-based	A club whose members are passionate about a specific cause and focus their service efforts on that topic Learn about a successful cause-based club.	People who want to connect with others while addressing a particular issue
Interest-based	A club that focuses on a particular interest or hobby Learn about a successful interest-based club.	People who want to enjoy Rotary by focusing on a shared interest or activity, such as professional development
Corporate	A club whose members (all or most of them) work for the same employer Learn about a successful corporate club.	Employees of one organization who want to do good in their community
Alumni-based	A club in which most members (or a majority of charter members) are former Rotary program participants or former Rotaractors or Rotarians Learn about a successful alumni-based club.	People who have previously participated in Rotary International or Rotary Foundation programs, or are former members
Service-based	A club that meets at least twice monthly for service projects and meets occasionally for social events or fundraisers Learn about a successful service-based club.	People who join Rotary to participate in service but who don't want to or can't attend meetings, or those who want a club with lower dues

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CLUB TYPES, FORMATS, AND MODELS



Language-based	A club whose members speak a common language other than the primary language of their district Learn about a successful language-based club.	People, such as expatriates, who want to connect with each other using a common language, or people who prefer to connect through that language
International	A club whose members are from different countries than the district where they reside Learn about a successful international club.	People who want to connect with others from all over the world or want a more international club experience
Districtwide online	A club whose members are from anywhere in the district rather than a specific locality, and who meet online. These clubs can function as a temporary club for members exploring different Rotary experiences or a permanent club for those who prefer this format. Learn about a successful districtwide virtual club.	People who want to connect online with others from a larger geographical area, and those who want to volunteer and meet others but may not be able to attend regular meetings in person and fulfill other club membership commitments. This model works well to engage prospective members or re-engage former members and program participants who may want to explore various projects and clubs.

RESOURCES

District Governor Learning Plans

Rotary's [Learning Center](#) has three learning plans for district governors. Sign in to your My Rotary account to access the following plans:

- [District Governor Essentials 1](#) — to be completed before GNLS
- [District Governor Essentials 2](#) — to be completed before GELS
- [District Governor Essentials 3](#) — to be completed before the start of your term as governor

General Reference

- [Action Plan](#) page
- [Club and District Administration](#) page
- [District Planning Guide](#) (Word doc)
- [Rotary's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) page
- [Manual of Procedure](#) (zip file)
- [My Rotary](#)
- [Rotary Club Central](#)
- [Strategic Planning Guide](#) (PDF)

Leadership and Learning

- [Five Steps to a Successful District Conference](#) (PDF)
- [Rotary Learning Center Course Catalog](#) (PDF)
- [Learning in Action](#) newsletter
- [Learning Facilitators](#) page

Membership

- [Flexible Options for Clubs](#) page
- [Club Experience Concierge](#)
- [Enhancing the Club Experience: Member Satisfaction Survey](#) (PDF)
- [Membership](#) page
- [Rotaract policy updates](#)
- [Club Health Check](#) (PDF)
- [Starting a Rotary Club](#) (PDF)
- [Strengthening Your Membership](#) (PDF)
- [Understanding Membership Reports: Getting Started](#) (PDF)

Programs for Young Leaders

- [Interact Clubs](#) page
- [Rotary Youth Exchange](#) page
- [Rotary Youth Leadership Awards \(RYLA\)](#) page
- [Youth Programs](#) page

Public Image

- [Brand Center](#)
- [Press Center](#)
- [Rotary 360 blog, newsletters, and social media](#)
- [Your region's Rotary magazine](#)

The Rotary Foundation

- [Apply for Grants](#) page
- [End Polio Now](#)
- [Foundation reports in My Rotary](#)
- [Grant Management Seminar Learning Plan](#)
- [Our Foundation](#) page

Service and Engagement

- [Developing Effective Projects](#) page
- [Rotary Service and Engagement overview](#) (PDF)
- [Service Project Center](#)