



NEW ROTARY CLUBS QUICK START GUIDE

NINE STEPS TO STARTING A NEW ROTARY CLUB

① Determine Areas for New Club

- Map out existing Rotary clubs and other service clubs
- List district demographics (key areas, cities, towns, age, mobility, etc.)
- Identify communities for Rotary development
- Report to district governor and other leaders

② Develop Your Strategy

- Identify your target member groups
- Choose a club format (original, e-club, satellite, etc.)
- Select a sponsor club and new club adviser
- Notify Rotary via your **Club and District Support (CDS) team**

③ Create a Marketing Plan

- Tailor your message to the community
- Identify communication channels
- Establish a plan to recruit members
- Contact known prospective Rotarians

④ Hold Informational Meetings

- Inform your target market through traditional and social media
- Sign up regular attendees as charter members

⑤ Recruit Charter Members

- Consider who the officers will be
- Hold regular meetings that have a defined purpose

⑥ Hold Organizational Meetings

- Continue to invite prospective members
- Consider charter projects and collaborating with another club
- Reach a total of at least 20 regular attendees
- Select a club name

⑦ Complete New Club Application

- Send the **new club application form** to Rotary via your **CDS team**
- Continue to sign up new members

⑧ Celebrate Charter Approval and Publicize Club

- Celebrate with your community and with existing, prospective, and other Rotarians in a way that matches with your new club

⑨ Continue Mentoring New Club

- Support members and officers as they learn about Rotary
- Help develop the new team
- Provide advice and support on governance, projects, etc.

WHY START A NEW ROTARY CLUB?

New clubs are needed to increase our membership but they also bring other benefits. Starting a new Rotary club is an ideal way to:

- ➔ Increase the positive impact of Rotary in your community
- ➔ Engage with your community differently
- ➔ Increase diversity beyond your existing clubs
- ➔ Explore new forms of club organization and club life in your district
- ➔ Pursue new project ideas in your district

This guide describes a nine-step process to create a new club, from the initial idea to the charter celebration, and beyond. All interested Rotary members can use it.

As a district governor, you'll find advice on best practices for your strategy to start new clubs in your district and how to find opportunities to increase membership.

As a district leader starting a new club, you'll gain useful tips for carrying out your tasks.

As an interested Rotarian or prospective member, you'll learn about the process and how you might help your district governor in starting a new club.

Rotary will need to continue to grow and evolve in order to meet the demands of the future. Thank you for helping to make this happen.



“The more clubs we have,
the more friends we have,
and the more friends,
the greater our opportunity
for service.”

— 1953-54 RI President
Joaquin Serratosa Cibils

WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO START

Starting a new club brings together community and thought leaders to discuss ideas and take action to meet community needs. Governors often appoint a new club adviser and collaborate with their assigned **Club and District Support team** during the process.

A NEW ROTARY CLUB:

New club adviser. Typically, the governor appoints a new club adviser or works with the district's new club development committee.

What makes the difference? Commitment and experience. The new club adviser champions the effort from start to finish. And the adviser's involvement after the charter is critical to the club's success in its first years of operations.

Sponsor club. Having a sponsor is strongly recommended but isn't required.

What makes the difference? The success rate of new clubs can be improved by as much as 10 percent with the support of a designated sponsor club.

At least 20 charter members. The minimum number of charter members is 20.

What makes the difference? More charter members. Of the 2,000 new clubs chartered in the past three years, 237 clubs have already been terminated. Of those, 49 percent were chartered with the minimum 20 members. Increasing the number of charter members by just five can reduce the risk of your club being terminated by as much as 28 percent.

AN E-CLUB:

New club adviser

Sponsor club (recommended but not required)

At least 20 charter members

A functioning club website with:

- Private section for members only
- System for paying club member dues, contributions, and other fees
- URL that reflects the club's name
- Text and visuals consistent with Rotary's **voice and visual identity guidelines**. See the **Quick Start Guide for Club Websites** in Rotary's Brand Center for recommendations and guidelines.
- Clear instructions for how to use the site to get makeup meeting credit

Webmaster. You need at least one member with experience in website maintenance, data protection, and online financial transactions.

A SATELLITE CLUB:

Sponsor club

At least eight members

A completed satellite club application form

STARTING A NEW ROTARY CLUB

Please adapt these nine steps to ensure that they are relevant for your community and fit your region. There is a wide range of ways that Rotary clubs are formed based on traditions, leadership, and cultural norms. The following nine steps outline the basic process that requires your input to realize success in creating a sustainable new club.

1 DETERMINE AREAS FOR NEW CLUBS

Create a list of communities in your district that would benefit from a new club. Include communities with no Rotary clubs and areas that would benefit from additional clubs.

Start by printing out a map of your district. Add the locations for all the clubs in your district and see what emerges. If your map is full of clubs, look at the club meeting times and see if there are opportunities to add clubs at different meeting times. Use Rotary's **Club Finder** or the **Rotary Club Locator** mobile app.

In general, look at these indicators:

- Communities with recognized needs
- Population size of 1,000-3,000 (This number may be different in your region.)
- Groups of people and professions who currently aren't being recruited
- Rotary alumni (Rotaract, RYLA, VTT, Scholars, etc.)
- Young adults, women, ethnicities, and other underrepresented groups



2 DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY

District governors are encouraged to appoint a new club adviser to guide the new club in its first two years of operation, orient and train new club officers, and motivate and support its growth and development.

District new club development committee

Alternatively, some governors use a district team to ensure continuity from year to year. The committee plans and implements a new club development strategy. Contact membershipdevelopment@rotary.org for more information about **membership leads**. It's recommended that the committee communicates regularly in a transparent and proactive manner about possible new clubs within the district. This will help to avoid questions and misunderstandings with current clubs.

Sponsor Rotary club

Involving members from the **sponsor club** in the process creates a close connection and a sense of ownership and pride for the new club. It can also be the one factor to ensure the new club's long-term sustainability. Once the new club is formed, members of the sponsoring club work closely to help orient and mentor the new club.

Club format

Choose the club format with the best fit for your community and your strategy. The district governor approved the creation of both original and e-clubs. Each format enables interested persons to get involved with Rotary.

Original Rotary clubs	Rotary e-clubs
Hold in-person weekly meetings	Meet online, rather than in person
Are encouraged to have a diverse and balanced membership	Are encouraged to have a diverse and balanced membership
Elect club officers and develop a committee structure to meet their goals and objectives	Elect club officers and develop a committee structure to meet their goals and objectives
Enjoy their autonomy within the framework of the Standard Rotary Club Constitution and Recommended Rotary Club Bylaws	Enjoy their autonomy within the framework of the Standard Rotary Club Constitution and Recommended Rotary Club Bylaws
	Require members to have basic Internet skills

Alternatives to a Rotary club

Should a community not be ready for a Rotary club, you might consider one of the following four formats. These four types require a sponsoring Rotary club.

Rotary satellite clubs	Rotaract clubs	Interact clubs	Rotary Community Corps
Function as a “club within a club”	Bring together people ages 18-30 in universities and communities	Bring together youth ages 12-18	Bring together people interested in working with Rotary
Members are Rotarians because they’re also members of the sponsor club	Organize service activities and have fun	Carry out at least two projects annually	Conduct projects that benefit the community
Have separate meetings and officers (chairs)	Govern and support themselves	Have fun and learn about the world	Work closely with their sponsor Rotary club
Plan to become full Rotary clubs later on	Work closely with their sponsor Rotary club	Govern and support themselves	
	Members may join a Rotary club after their Rotaract membership ends	Work closely with their sponsor Rotary club	
Find out more: Satellite club FAQ CDS team	Find out more: rotaract@rotary.org	Find out more: interact@rotary.org	Find out more: Organize an RCC

Notify Rotary

If you intend to start a new club, notify the Rotary office that supports your district. Rotary’s **Club and District Support (CDS) team** are trusted advisers who can help you plan and implement your vision of a new club. They will check the proposed name of the new club, advise on each step of the process, review the new club application, and recommend approval to Rotary’s Board of Directors.

3 CREATE A MARKETING PLAN

Plan how you will let prospective members know about the club. First, you need to know what you're offering and the benefits for prospective members.

Start with research. Create a list of the businesses, professions, and community groups in the area. Use local newspapers, the Internet, trade association publications, community websites, and other professional directories to add to your list. Are there other professional and community leaders in your area? It may also help to list the needs of the community and then look at how they intersect with local business and professional groups. If you aren't sure about needs, visit and talk with knowledgeable leaders in your community.

You may want to consider the following points in preparing your plan of action:

- What is unique about your new club or what is the vision that you want to promote?
- When, where, and how might the new club meet?
- Who are the key professional and community leaders in the area?
- What audiences are being targeted?
- Who is best placed to talk to them?
- What Rotary projects are already happening in the area that you could use to show others what Rotary is?
- What projects might they get involved in?
- How and where will you publicize the new club?
- Do you have a robust process in place to introduce prospective members to Rotary?

Answering these questions should allow you to prepare information to use in your promotions and invitations to informational meetings.

Consider promoting the informational meetings in local newspapers and post fliers around the community. You can start with a prospective website for the new club, if appropriate.

4 HOLD INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

Informational meetings are the first time prospective members meet to find out more about Rotary and the new club. Many people who say they're interested in joining won't attend the meeting. Don't be discouraged. Here are some tips to increase attendance:

- Start with a clear, succinct, and compelling letter of invitation.
- Send follow-up letters and emails within 48 hours.
- Call prospective members to remind them of the date, time, and location.
- Encourage prospects to invite their friends and other community-minded people who might be interested in joining.
- Have a sign-up sheet to collect prospective member names and email addresses.

For more about how to conduct an informational meeting, consult **Informational Meetings**.

5 RECRUIT CHARTER MEMBERS

How will you find club members? You're looking for people that want to make a difference in their community by helping others and for skilled professionals who can mentor younger members. Business, professional, and community leaders can be key sources. Diversity of membership is critical and is related to your club's long-term sustainability.

If you need help with identifying prospective members:

- Contact **membership.development@rotary.org** for lists of prospective and relocated members. You can also find out more about **online prospective member names**.
- Revisit your research from step 3. What is it telling you?
- Contact your district's Rotary alumni.
- Visit local businesses and offices to talk to business owners or managers about their interest in joining. Ask if you may speak with their employees about joining.

- Find out who has been helping with community projects or playing a role in social or cultural events.

You can recruit one-on-one or as a group. Set up an event to attract potential members. Supplement your presentations with Rotary videos or other materials as appropriate.

There is only one Rotarian that was never asked to join Rotary, our founder Paul Harris. The number one reason people do not join Rotary clubs is that they were never asked.

6 HOLD ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS

Hold the organizational meeting when you have about 10-20 people interested in joining a new club. The purpose of this meeting is to elect club officers, get agreement on a weekly meeting time, and plan for the club's first project. The set-up for this meeting is the same as the informational meeting.

For more about how to conduct an organizational meeting, consult **Organizational Meetings**.

Determine where you want your club to meet. For more information on how to select the best possible meeting location for your new club, consult **Meeting Locations**.

7 COMPLETE NEW CLUB APPLICATION

The district governor verifies that the new club application is correct and complete by signing the application and forwarding it to their **Club and District Support (CDS) team**.

The **new club application form** is included at the end of this document.

Be sure to keep a copy of the application form for the club's files and historical purposes.

8 CELEBRATE CHARTER APPROVAL AND PUBLICIZE CLUB

It's essential to celebrate the charter of a new club. Celebrations bring everyone together to honor a momentous event. They solidify a group's identity and strengthen the members' sense of belonging.

Celebrations also create an opportunity for a memorable fellowship event and can generate publicity within the community. You can introduce the club to the community, recognize its leadership, and set the stage for the active participation of the club in its community.

How you celebrate is up to the club but generally reflects the club's culture. For ideas on how to set up a successful new club charter celebration, consult **Club Charter Celebrations**.

9 CONTINUE MENTORING NEW CLUB

Support the new club by providing members with Rotary knowledge, helping to train and advise on club roles, advising on club governance, providing volunteers for projects, recommending speakers for club meetings, and increasing audiences for events. You can find more information about sponsor club responsibilities and the mentoring relationship in **Strengthening Your Membership: Creating Your Membership Development Plan**.

You may also wish to provide all of your new members with a **New Member Welcome Kit** (Publication 426) available on shop.rotary.org.

NEW CLUB RESOURCES

Prospective Member and Member Relocation Data

Rotary collects information from prospective members and members looking for help in relocating to a new Rotary club and distributes this information to district governors and designated others who are looking to strengthen clubs by attracting members and engaging outstanding Rotarians.

Be a Vibrant Club: Your Club Leadership Plan

A regionalized guide with strategies for enhancing your club's structure, activities, and dynamism.

Strengthening Your Membership: Creating Your Membership Development Plan

Evaluate your club's membership trends, create strategies for attracting new members, and develop programs that focus on member engagement.

Tell Rotary's Story: Voice and Visual Identity Guidelines

Guidelines for Rotary's visual system with logos, color palette, typography, and graphic styles to help you incorporate Rotary's visual identity into your communications.

Strategic Planning Guide

Develop a long-range vision for your club and establish goals.

Lead Your Club Series

Manuals for club president, secretary, treasurer, and committee chairs. Find resources and information to help strengthen your club's membership.

E-Learning Guides

Found in Rotary's e-learning center, there are two modules created by the RIBI team on forming new clubs and satellite clubs.

? TIPS AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Sponsor Clubs
- Informational Meetings
- Organizational Meetings
- Meeting Locations
- Club Charter Celebrations
- What You Need to Know About E-Clubs

Thanks go to RIBI New Club Formation Officer Kevin Walsh and the RIBI e-learning team for use of their Quick Guide for new clubs.



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