



## STARTING A NEW ROTARY CLUB

The key to membership is a vibrant, welcoming club with active and engaged members. Creating new Rotary clubs that gets more people into Rotary helps everyone! Starting New Rotary Clubs will bring new ideas and energy to your district. Our key goal is to "Grow Rotary" and we can't Grow Rotary without growing our membership. This toolkit will provide a simple framework for starting a new Rotary club. There are a number of ways to identify opportunities for new clubs. Here are some examples:

OPPORTUNITY	IDENTIFY A NEW AUDIENCE	APPEALS TO?
<b>SERVE A SPECIFIC CAUSE OR COMMUNITY NEED</b>	Use the Community Assessment tool to identify a cause-based club opportunity and talk to local organizations and leaders.	People who want to connect with others while addressing a particular community issue (e.g. child nutrition, homelessness) or broader cause (e.g. clean water).
<b>RECONNECT WITH ROTARY ALUMNI</b>	Keep former RYLA participants, Rotaractors or Interactors involved. Reconnect with Foundation alumni: Ambassadorial & Peace scholars and Group Study Exchange teams.	College students and young adults. What is key is to allow them to create a Rotary club *that works for them* whatever that looks like.
<b>LOCATION WHERE A PAST CLUB HAS FOLDED IN PAST 5-10 YEARS</b>	Review Rotary reports to identify where clubs once existed in your district. Target areas where no club exists today or there is a high population density.**	People and businesses in that close-knit community. Reach out to previous Rotarians in the area - what needs to change to bring them back to a new Rotary club?
<b>AREA WITH HIGH POPULATION OR BUSINESS GROWTH</b>	Do a demographic study with census data which is readily available.**	People and businesses that want to serve their community.
<b>UNDER-REPRESENTED COMMUNITY GROUPS</b>	Look for ethnic populations, age demographics, immigrant and refugee communities, or the LGBTQ community in your area. Some data available through the census.**	Bring together like-minded people with a common connection who would like to serve their community.
<b>ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY</b>	Identify corporations, universities, and other organizations that are known for volunteering and donating to help their community	Employees of a larger organization, perhaps located on its own campus, who want to come together to do good in their community
<b>SATELLITE CLUBS</b>	Create a satellite club, that keeps connection with your club but allows people to create a Rotary experience that works for them in regards to dues, meeting structure/time and service.	People who are interested in Rotary but, who are not available or do not want to meet within the existing club structure. E.g. a traditional lunch club with a satellite club that meets for happy hour and service.
<b>SERVICE-ORIENTED PEOPLE WHO WON'T DO TRADITIONAL MEETINGS</b>	Identify former Rotarians in the area who have left Rotary in the past 10 years plus local Foundation Alumni.	People where their time is limited, but their heart for service is not. Create a Passport Club that allows service throughout the area.

# LET'S GET STARTED!

1. **Think outside the box.** Don't start with any preconceived notions of what a Rotary club "should" look like. A club needs to only "meet" twice a month - that can be volunteering, a social or cultural activity, online, a video call, and much more. Start this process being very open to all ideas from your target audience!
2. **Identify Club Opportunity** – What are unmet needs in a community? Are there locations where Rotary clubs don't exist? Is there an ethnic population or age demographic not well represented? Might a non-traditional club model be a good opportunity?
3. **Get Buy-In from Key Stakeholders** – If starting a new club, district leadership (DG, DGE, DGN) needs to be supportive. Also important, is to discuss the intent with surrounding clubs and area assistant governor. If starting a satellite, club board and club members need to support.
4. **Identify a Champion & Core team** – Champion and Core team need to be passionate, willing to take charge and make it happen. Who is well-connected in the community. Local Chamber of Commerce is often a good place to find core team members. Enlist a Club advisor, a knowledgeable Rotarian who acts as a consultant or coach, encouraging the club to form its own culture.
5. **Build a Club Formation Plan** – Think about both long-term viability (structure, minimum number of members, leadership succession, training, community needs to address) and short-term attraction for new Rotarians (What's in it for the new members?).
6. **Hold Mixers/Informational Meetings** – Consider informal business mixers with small but purposeful dose of "What is Rotary" (Don't overwhelm the prospects). Have what comes next planned in advance.
7. **Organize Meetings** – Test models to see what works with the group, identify purpose, meeting times, structure, and leadership plan.
8. **Charter the Club** – Make it a celebration, Invite the whole district.
9. **Sustain the Club** – Plan for succession, sustainability, purpose and fun! Continue to involve the club mentor. Rotary Districts: how can you help create and sustain new clubs? Funds to host informational mixers? Free entry to District Training or Conference? Sponsorships to RLI? Have Welcome to Rotary orientation parties?

**EXPECT RESISTANCE** and proactively plan how to positively address it! Change is hard and there will likely be one or more Rotarians who fear that a new club will result in the demise of their club or will just be a failure. Always deal with resistance in a positive way. Ask your Zone ARC if your District needs some help on managing change.

**DON'T START THE NEW CLUB TOO FAST** The goal should be to develop a new club that will be vibrant 5 five years from now. This requires a well thought out Club Formation Plan. Plan to charter the club with at least 25 members (10 for satellite), as some attrition is likely. Ask new members to give an 18 month commitment to Rotary. If possible, get a strong established club to sponsor the new club. Finally, be selective about the club advisor. Make sure that the club advisor is committed for at least two years and only acts as a consultant, not as a formal leader within the new club.

**BE FLEXIBLE** Rotary International has identified a number of new club models, but you can invent your own as long as the club meets twice a month (including service projects), pays its dues and abides by the Rotary Constitution.

## RESOURCES

[Starting a Rotary Club \(PDF\)](#)

[Guide to Satellite Clubs \(PDF\)](#)

[Guide to Passport Clubs \(PDF\)](#)

[Club Models \(PDF\)](#)

**Your District Membership Chair and Zone 32 are here to help you create new, future-thinking Rotary Clubs.**

If you have a potential new club idea and need some help, please contact Herb Klotz, Assistant Regional Coordinator for Membership, [herbk.rotary@gmail.com](mailto:herbk.rotary@gmail.com).