

# ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS

It takes at least 20 members to start a Rotary club, but as soon as you've held one or more informational meetings and have a core group of eight to 10 committed prospective members, you can hold an organizational meeting. At it, the club's future members can elect officers and begin planning their first project and social event.

## CONDUCTING THE MEETING

At this meeting, sponsor club members or other supporters explain the responsibilities of club membership. Members of the new club should think about what they'd like to get from their Rotary experience and start to make some decisions about their new club. They might:

- Decide where and how club meetings will be held (including, possibly, whether refreshments or a meal will be served and other details)
- Decide when and how often they'll meet (for information about meeting format and frequency, see [Club Meetings](#) and [Club Flexibility](#))
- Discuss ideas for the club's first project or plan for the next several months
- Choose **club officers** (president, secretary, president-elect, treasurer, membership chair, and Rotary Foundation chair)
- Assign other roles (e.g., sergeant-at-arms or greeter for the first meeting)

### + WELCOME

Start every meeting with introductions so everyone feels welcome and part of the group. One of the key indicators of a successful new club is that it facilitates connections and friendships among members from its very first meetings.

You may want to invite the assistant governor or district governor to speak about the district and how it will support your club.

### + SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

The most effective service projects are those that meet real needs in the community served. Before planning any projects, review how Rotary clubs conduct **community needs assessments** and make a plan to do so. Choose club members to lead the effort on the assessment.

For now, ask attendees to list needs they're aware of. Try to get a sense of what the new club's members will be able to contribute, including their skills, availability, and other resources.

As you're organizing a Rotary club and planning service projects and fundraising events, don't forget about obtaining appropriate insurance (e.g., liability, accident, coverage for directors and officers). Your district may have an insurance program or you may need to obtain insurance from a local agent. Depending on your geographic location, liability insurance is often required by third parties that your club may be working with.

## SOCIAL EVENTS

Make a list of possible social events and ask everyone to add their ideas. Vote to choose one of the top three ideas for a social gathering. Set a tentative date and choose members to take the lead on the planning.

## ELECTIONS

A critical part of becoming a fully functioning Rotary club is choosing your club leaders. Club officers include president, secretary, and treasurer, and you'll elect those now. They will all serve on the club board, which might also include a membership committee chair, Rotary Foundation committee chair, and other positions your club deems necessary. Although you need 20 people to form a new Rotary club, you don't need that many to elect the new club's officers. Consider planning ahead and electing officers for the following year, too.

Ask for volunteers to serve in these club leadership roles. Find job descriptions on the [Club Roles page](#). If more than one person is interested in a role, take a voice or ballot vote.

You may also want to start preparing your club bylaws by consulting the [Recommended Rotary Club Bylaws](#). Edit them as needed. For examples of edited bylaws, see this [Start Guide](#).

## MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

Be candid about what will be expected of members. They should uphold Rotary values and demonstrate good character. Discuss attendance and participation expectations for members and the various dues or fees that all members pay to Rotary International, as well as the district, and the club. RI dues are paid every six months. Clubs and districts set dues, too. Members pay all dues to the club, which in turn pays the district and RI. The club may also decide to charge new members an admission fee. Set both the club admission fee and club dues at an organizational meeting. It's a good idea to collect these fees as soon as possible. Club dues are often collected with new club charter fees.

## NEXT MEETING

Set a date, time, and place for the next meeting.


## AFTER THE MEETING

Sponsor club members should schedule training for the newly elected club officers. The [Lead Your Club series](#) explains the role and responsibilities of each officer. All new members can learn more about Rotary by exploring [Rotary.org](#), reviewing [Introducing New Members to Rotary](#), and taking online courses in Rotary's [Learning Center](#). They'll need to [create a My Rotary account](#) to get to the Learning Center. Once they sign in, they can search for Rotary's Strategic Plan, Rotary's Areas of Focus, Developing and Promoting Your Service Projects, and Rotary Foundation Basics. Through My Rotary, they can also subscribe to [Rotary newsletters](#) to learn more about how to fully participate in Rotary.

Continue to encourage everyone to promote the new club and to bring others to the next meeting.

Follow up with those who showed interest but didn't attend the informational or organizational meeting. Let them know that they are valuable potential members of the new club.

## Want more information?

 See [Starting a Rotary Club](#) for the overall process of starting a new club.