

GUIDE TO SATELLITE CLUBS



Do you want to start a Rotary club but don't have enough members? Are you in a Rotary club that isn't meeting your or your members' expectations? Are there members who love your club but can't keep attending when it meets? Would you like to start a new club with a small, energetic group committed to community service? If you answered yes to any of these questions, starting a satellite club might help.

WHAT IS A SATELLITE CLUB AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Rotary has had satellite clubs since 2013. At first, satellite clubs were for people who wanted to join Rotary but didn't have a large enough group to start a club. Unlike regular Rotary clubs, which require 20 members to start, a satellite club can form with just eight members. Satellite clubs also give community members and Rotarians the chance to make a positive difference in a club environment that often differs from their local Rotary club.

Like all Rotary clubs, satellite clubs hold regular meetings, have bylaws and a board, and get involved in community service projects. A local Rotary club sponsors the club and provides advice and support. Satellite club members are Rotarians. Officially, they are members of the sponsor club.

When a satellite club grows to 20 members or more, it can choose to remain a satellite to its sponsor club or it can apply for a charter to become a standalone Rotary club. Some clubs prefer to continue as satellite clubs regardless of their size and enjoy the benefits of being tied to their sponsor club. You decide what's right for your members.

WHY START A SATELLITE CLUB?

Just like starting any Rotary club, forming a satellite club brings community and business leaders together to exchange ideas and take action to improve people's lives. Satellite clubs can also:

- Attract members who have different vocations or service interests
- Be a more affordable club experience. All members pay the same amount of dues to Rotary International, but clubs can choose to lower club dues. Districts also set their own dues.
- Provide an alternative meeting experience or format where members can experiment with different forms of club organization

SATELLITE CLUBS ARE NOT:

- A substandard form of a Rotary club. (Satellite club members are Rotarians.)
- A separate club. (Satellite clubs must have a sponsor Rotary club.)
- A Rotaract club. (Rotaract members, however, can form or join a satellite club.)
- A solution for a struggling club. (Ask your district governor if you need help.)

- Allow Rotary clubs to offer service opportunities and membership experiences that appeal to a smaller, focused group
- Bring Rotary to communities that might not be able to support a standalone club
- Serve as transitional Rotary clubs

Starting a satellite club offers the additional benefits of expanding project possibilities, visibility, and the impact of Rotary in your community. It also develops more leaders in your community and the Rotary district.

HOW DO YOU START A SATELLITE CLUB?

Starting a satellite club begins at the club level, but the process can vary depending on the club and its circumstances. Unlike starting a standalone Rotary club, the process does not require approval from the district governor. Use the steps below as a guide, but remember that your process may differ.

- ① **PREPARE.** Review the [frequently asked questions](#) about satellite clubs before you proceed.
- ② **FIND A SPONSOR CLUB.** Ask a Rotary club to sponsor your satellite club. Talk to the club's leaders and get their support. Inform other clubs in your area and your district about the new club so they can offer help and send interested members your way.
- ③ **FIND MEMBERS.** You'll need at least eight members to start. Good prospects can come from groups in the community who are underrepresented in nearby Rotary clubs, retired people, young professionals, community interest organizations, Rotary program [alumni](#), former and current members, and friends and family.

Your satellite club can be a new group with a different variety of vocations and interests. Rotarians who are disenchanted in their current club might also want an opportunity to bring their skills and knowledge to a new satellite club.

- ④ **GET ORGANIZED.** Meet with the sponsor club to decide:
 - How the new club will make a difference in the community
 - How the satellite club experience will differ from that of the sponsor club
 - Whether the goal is for the satellite club to eventually become its own club
 - How club and district dues will be structured and whether the district will subsidize initial membership fees or offer other financial support
 - Where and how the satellite club will recruit members
 - What membership types the satellite club will offer
 - Membership criteria
 - How both boards will work together
 - How disagreements or disputes will be resolved

Having an experienced member who is knowledgeable about Rotary and committed to supporting the formation of the satellite club will help the new club succeed.

These steps may not always take place in this order. You may discover that finding members first and then approaching your sponsor club as a group works better for you.

WHAT'S NEXT

① **HOLD AN INFORMATIONAL MEETING.** Invite prospective members to a meeting to explain what your club has to offer and how members will benefit from being involved in Rotary. Avoid discussing Rotary's structure or using jargon. Here are some topics you might discuss:

- What attendees want from their club experience
- Their role in crafting the new club
- Rotary's mission and commitment to service
- The causes or types of projects attendees are passionate about
- How Rotary can fit into and enhance their lives
- Where, when, and how often the club will meet
- Membership requirements
- Club dues and any other financial or time commitments
- The next steps, such as completing the Satellite Club Member Information Form

Use Rotary resources to inspire participants:

- **Impact Begins With You** — Distribute this [prospective member brochure](#) to people at the meeting. It explains what Rotary is and how it's different from other organizations.
- **Connect for Good** ([purchase](#) or [download](#)) — Either hand out this short publication or provide the link to the download. It explains how prospective members can get involved.
- **Discover Rotary** — Show this [PowerPoint presentation](#) at your meeting to highlight the value club membership offers.
- **Power in Our Connections** — Share this video, found on the [Brand Center](#), that shows the impact that people of action can have.

② **SET YOUR SATELLITE CLUB BYLAWS.** The satellite club determines its own bylaws in collaboration with its sponsor club, which approves them. Make sure your bylaws address who participates in elections.

③ **SUBMIT THE FORMS.** When your prospective members and your sponsor club are ready, complete the [Satellite Club Application](#) and [Satellite Club Member Information Form](#) and send them to your Club and District Support representative.

④ **CELEBRATE AND PUBLICIZE YOUR NEW CLUB.** Tell other clubs in your area and your district governor about your satellite club. Promote it in your community.

When your eight prospective members and your sponsor club are ready, you can elect your officers: chair (instead of a president), vice chair if it's helpful, secretary, and treasurer.

Create a [My Rotary account](#) to access information and resources:

- [Learning Center courses](#)
- [Sponsor Clubs](#)
- [Informational Meetings](#)
- [Club Meetings](#)
- [Online Club Meetings](#)
- [Brand Center](#)

YOUR SPONSOR CLUB RELATIONSHIP

Satellite clubs that are successful have regular meetings with their sponsor clubs. Developing this connection helps both clubs work together to offer members unique experiences and service projects. You can hold these meetings online using apps that make remote gatherings convenient.

The regular meetings should include discussions about whether or when the satellite club intends to become a separate club and how this would affect both clubs. If a satellite club has enough members and chooses to become independent, the members who charter the new club will no longer be counted as members of the sponsor club.

Other best practices include:

- Having a member of the sponsor club attend satellite club meetings for the first year
- Creating a committee in the sponsor club that focuses on supporting the satellite club and its new members
- Focusing on service rather than protocol
- Holding joint meetings quarterly, with any meal being optional for satellite club members
- Inviting the chair of the satellite club to attend board meetings of the sponsor club
- Encouraging new satellite club members to attend other Rotary events to expand their networks and learn more about Rotary's impact worldwide
- Working together to carry out service projects in your community

Members of satellite clubs have access to My Rotary just like any Rotary club member. But only the sponsor club can report changes in satellite club membership. The relationship between the sponsor club and the satellite club is considered permanent until the satellite club dissolves or becomes a standalone club.

A thriving club, whether a sponsor or satellite, is relevant in its community and assesses its strengths and challenges every year. The **Rotary Club Health Check** can help.

Both the sponsor and satellite clubs should promote both clubs to prospective members and guests. Having brochures ready can help you show prospects their options. Find a customizable brochure on the **Brand Center**.

WHERE CAN WE LEARN MORE?

Rotary has many resources to support satellite clubs.

RESOURCES ABOUT SATELLITE CLUBS:

- [Satellite Club Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Satellite Club Application](#)
- [Satellite Club Member Information Form](#)
- [Learning Center course: Practicing Flexibility and Innovation](#)

Find a Listing of Sponsored and Satellite Rotary Clubs in the reports tab of Rotary Club Central.

Find your Club and District Support representative to help with any additional questions you might have.

Resources for new members and leaders:

- [How to Create a My Rotary Account](#)
- [Rotary Basics publication](#)
- [Rotary Basics online course](#)
- [Introducing New Members to Rotary: An Orientation Guide](#)

Satellite Club FAQ

What is a satellite club?

Satellite clubs provide another option for creating Rotary clubs. A satellite club functions as a short-term, transitional step on the way to becoming a full, independent Rotary club.

This allows interested persons to become Rotarians without meeting the requirement of having at least 20 persons to organize a separate Rotary club. Rotarians who are absent from regular Rotary club meetings can make these up by attending satellite club meetings.

STARTING A CLUB

How does a club apply to have a satellite club?

The sponsor club president sends an [application](#) to [Club and District Support](#).

Is there a minimum or maximum number of members for a satellite club?

New satellite clubs must have at least 8 members at the time they form in order to satisfy the requirements of Article 13, Section 6(b) of the Standard Rotary Club Constitution. There is no maximum number of members.

Is there a minimum number of members for the sponsor club?

No. Clubs with fewer than 20 members can form a satellite club.

Is a satellite club sponsor the same as a new club sponsor?

No. The role and responsibilities of a new club sponsor are different.

Can a weak club convert to a satellite club and retain its charter and history?

If the members of a weak Rotary club want to become a satellite club, they must first resign their charter. They would then be free to form a satellite club and become members of the sponsor club. However, satellite clubs are not intended to strengthen weak clubs. If a club needs extra guidance and support, a district governor may assign a stronger club or a special representative to mentor the weak club.

Can Rotaract clubs be converted into satellite clubs as a transition to becoming a full Rotary club?

Yes. Some or all of the members of a Rotaract club may form or join a satellite club.

How are satellite clubs named?

Satellite clubs have the same name as the sponsor club plus a qualifier that distinguishes it from the sponsor, for example:

If the sponsor and satellite clubs meet at different times

Sponsor: Rotary Club of Bangkok North

Satellite: Rotary Satellite Club of Bangkok North Evening

If the sponsor and satellite clubs have different meeting locations

Sponsor: Rotary Club of Chicago Lakeview

Satellite: Rotary Satellite Club of Chicago Lakeview Broadway

How do satellite clubs change their names?

The sponsor or satellite club should contact [Club and District Support](#). The CDS representative will confirm the name change in writing with the sponsor club president and satellite club chair. No change will be made unless they are in agreement.

BOARD AND GOVERNANCE

Can satellite clubs create a separate board with a different set of officers from the sponsor club?

Satellite clubs set up their own board and have their own officers. However, instead of a president, a satellite club has a chair.

If there are two boards, how are disagreements handled?

The board of the sponsor club has the final authority when there are disagreements.

Does the leadership of the satellite club have a position on the sponsor club's board?

This is not required, but is highly recommended.

Can a satellite club have separate bylaws?

Yes. The satellite club determines its own bylaws in collaboration with its sponsor club.

Who decides where and when the satellite club meets?

The satellite club determines its meeting place and time in consultation with its sponsor club.

Does the satellite club meet together with the sponsor club?

The satellite club should have a separate meeting, although it may meet jointly with the sponsor club from time to time.

Can satellite clubs sponsor Interact or Rotaract clubs?

No. But if the satellite's sponsor club sponsors an Interact or Rotaract club, it may appoint a satellite club member to serve as the Rotarian contact and mentor for the Interact or Rotaract club.

Do satellite clubs need to set goals? Can they set goals in Rotary Club Central?

All clubs, including satellite clubs, are strongly encouraged to set goals to achieve success. However, Rotary Club Central can't accommodate satellite club goals at this time.

Does someone who has only served as the chair of a satellite club meet the qualifications for district governor-nominee?

No, only Rotary club presidents can be nominated for district governor. However, the district can ask the Rotary International president to waive this requirement.

MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

Are satellite club members Rotarians?

Yes, they are members of the sponsor club.

Does the sponsor club need to approve new satellite club members?

The sponsor and satellite clubs should work out a process for adding new satellite club members at the time the satellite is being formed. The sponsor club should also add that process to its bylaws. If a conflict arises with satellite club membership, the sponsor club has the final say. As members of the sponsor club, satellite club members are ultimately subject to the authority of the sponsor club's board.

Do satellite club members pay Rotary dues?

Yes. Satellite club members are Rotarians and pay the same Rotary dues as the sponsor club's members.

Do satellite clubs receive a dues invoice?

No. The satellite club members are included on the sponsor club's dues invoice.

Can a satellite club have a separate dues structure?

Yes. The satellite club determines its dues structure in collaboration with its sponsor club.

CHANGES IN CLUB STATUS AND SPONSORSHIP

How long can a satellite club exist?

Satellite clubs are intended as a temporary step on the way to becoming a full, independent Rotary club. However, there is no time limit on the life of a satellite club.

How does a satellite club apply to become a new, independent Rotary club?

The satellite club works with the sponsor club and district governor to complete Rotary's new club application.

Can a satellite club transfer to a different sponsor club?

No. The sponsor and satellite clubs are permanently linked. The satellite club would need to be terminated and the members would have to start a new satellite club with a different sponsor club.

How does a sponsor club terminate a satellite club?

The sponsor club president or secretary terminates each satellite club member as provided for in Article 15 of the Standard Rotary Club Constitution. Next, the sponsor president or secretary removes the terminated members from the sponsor club roster, either in My Rotary or by emailing Data Services (data@rotary.org). Finally, the sponsor club president notifies [Club and District Support](#). The CDS representative will confirm that the satellite club no longer has any members, request termination, and notify the sponsor club president when the process is complete.

How does a sponsor club resign?

The sponsor or satellite club should contact [Club and District Support](#). The CDS representative will confirm the resignation in writing with the sponsor club president and satellite club chair. No change will be made unless they are in agreement.

If the sponsor club is terminated, can the satellite club continue on its own?

No, the satellite club is terminated with the sponsor club.

If an existing weak club becomes a satellite club, can it revert to autonomous club status?

Satellite clubs are a new way to start a Rotary club. When a satellite club is ready, it may apply to become a full Rotary club.



SATELLITE CLUB MEMBER INFORMATION FORM

Complete one information form for each satellite club member.

Please type or print clearly

Title (Mr., Ms., Mrs., Dr., Rev., etc.): _____ Suffix (Jr., Sr., III, etc.): _____

Family name: _____

First name: _____ Middle name: _____

Gender: Male Female

Preferred language: _____

Former/current Rotarian: No Yes

If yes, RI membership ID number: _____

Name of former/current club: _____

Former/current firm: _____

Position: _____

For phone and fax numbers, include country/city/area codes.

Home Phone: _____ Business Phone: _____

Home Fax: _____ Business Fax: _____

Mobile: _____ Email: _____

Mailing address* (check one):

Residence Business Other

Address: _____ City: _____

State/Province: _____ Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

*If post office box, please provide an alternate address for courier delivery.

Alternate address (complete only if mailing address is a PO Box):

Residence Business Other

Address: _____ City: _____

State/Province: _____ Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

Magazine: *The Rotarian* Rotary regional magazine