

Rotary-Toastmasters Alliance FAQ

What is Toastmasters?

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs. It has more than 358,000 members in 16,800 clubs in 143 countries.

As with Rotary, the club is the foundation of the Toastmasters experience. Its clubs offer a supportive and positive environment where members practice their skills and evaluate others to become more confident speakers, communicators, and leaders. Most clubs are open to the community, have about 20 members, and meet each week or every two weeks for an hour or two.

Why are Rotary and Toastmasters working together?

Both Rotary and Toastmasters want to offer our members the best experience possible.

Collaborating with Toastmasters will provide Rotary and Rotaract members with even more opportunities for personal and professional development by improving their leadership and communication skills. This can help Rotary clubs meet their members' desire for new learning opportunities, become more attractive to prospective members, and become more diverse. It's another chance to establish fellowship and connections, build stronger clubs, and ultimately increase our impact.

Working with Rotary will allow Toastmasters members to apply the leadership and communications skills they've developed, connect with more people, take advantage of new speaking and learning opportunities, and make a difference in their communities.

Why work with an organization that is focused on improving public speaking?

For some, public speaking is thrilling; for others, it's terrifying. But being able to express yourself confidently in front of an audience is a learned skill that has immense benefits, personally and professionally, in the office, at the club, and even at home.

Telling our stories and articulating our values is part of personal growth and self-expression. Sharing our stories can inspire others, and build trust, community, and ultimately, peace.

How can my club collaborate with Toastmasters?

You can:

- [Learn more](#) about Toastmasters or [visit a local Toastmasters club](#)
- Ask a member of Toastmasters to speak at a club meeting or participate in a service activity
- Invite Toastmasters members to visit your club to learn more about Rotary
- Ask if one of your members could attend a Toastmasters meeting to learn more about their organization
- Invite a Toastmaster to attend your meeting and offer feedback that could enhance the meeting experience for your members, like improving the way speakers are introduced or how to seamlessly transition the meeting from one agenda topic to the next
- Establish a mentorship program between clubs that can be mutually beneficial for your members

- Get your club leaders together to discuss things you have in common, like attracting and engaging members, new member orientation, member satisfaction, or finding next year's leaders, and work together to develop a plan to achieve your goals.
- Hold an open house where members of both clubs can socialize and connect.

The goal of this collaboration is to leverage our organizations' strengths: Rotary members are experts at making connections and serving communities, while Toastmasters helps its members become more effective leaders and communicators.

How do I connect with a Toastmasters club in my area?

Go to www.toastmasters.org/find-a-club to find a Toastmasters club near you.

Note: Rotary and Toastmasters clubs are a lot alike: each club is autonomous and determines its own activities and priorities to reflect their members' interests and the community's needs. If a Rotary, Rotaract, or Toastmaster club doesn't have the capacity or interest in working together, there may be another club nearby that would be a better fit.

What if there isn't a Toastmasters club near me? How can my club get involved?

Toastmasters has more than 16,800 clubs in 143 countries. If there isn't a club in your community, you can still get involved by [learning](#) about Toastmasters or exploring its [resources](#), [tips](#), and [podcasts](#) on public speaking. You can also encourage your members' professional growth by offering leadership development opportunities in your clubs or districts — by setting up a mentorship program, for example.

As part of our collaboration, Toastmasters will create a leadership development program for Rotary and Rotaract members. When the curriculum is available, you can take courses to improve your public speaking and leadership skills even if you don't have a Toastmasters club nearby.

Do Toastmasters clubs know about this alliance?

Toastmasters International has told its district leaders that we're working together. But it's possible you could try to connect with a Toastmasters club and find that it hasn't yet heard about our alliance. If that happens, you can share what you know (perhaps even sending them this FAQ), or direct them to the Toastmasters site for more information.

Can Rotarians also be members of Toastmasters?

You absolutely can be a member of both organizations.

What if we lose members to Toastmasters?

Although our organizations are similar in many ways, the experiences we offer members are distinct. Our members joined Rotary and Rotaract to make a difference and make connections. Toastmasters excels at building leadership and communication skills. Our organizations complement one another; we are not competitors.

If Rotary or Rotaract members want to join Toastmasters or Toastmasters members want to join Rotary or Rotaract, they are very welcome.

Is there a discount for Rotarians or Rotaractors who want to join Toastmasters, or for Toastmasters members who want to join Rotary or Rotaract?

Not at this time.

When will the leadership development program and curriculum be available?

The program is still being developed and will be available in English to Rotarians and Rotaractors in 2020. We'll gather feedback and release it in additional languages in 2021.

The program will include eight robust online courses that incorporate independent study, assignments, feedback from peers, self-assessment, and reflection that develop leadership and communication skills.

How will the Toastmasters-developed leadership courses be different from the courses currently offered in the Rotary Learning Center?

The Toastmasters-developed leadership courses will involve independent learning where the member completes interactive modules, watches videos online to understand concepts, and completes self-assessment activities to reflect on their current skills.

There is also an applied learning component where the member will apply the concepts learned in a social setting (for example, by giving a speech, leading a meeting, or introducing a speaker).

Finally, the curriculum will consist of peer evaluation and feedback. This part is important because it personalizes the support, development, and training for members, and allows for a participatory approach to learning that is fundamental to retention.

I don't want to participate in Toastmasters activities. I'm a Rotarian not a Toastmaster. I joined Rotary to make a difference not to become a public speaker.

Participation in activities related to the alliance is optional.