Rotary

2024-25 GOVERNORS-ELECT LEARNING SEMINAR (GELS)
WORKBOOK

Congratulations on being chosen to lead your district! Your preparation for becoming a district governor begins with learning about Rotary policy and about your district's structure and its strengths and weaknesses. Next, you'll plan for your term as governor by assembling an effective team that can help you develop and achieve district goals. As a governor, you'll bring Rotary's core values to life, support our vision statement, and motivate your district to take action.

During this seminar, we encourage you to share ideas and tips, take notes, and consider innovative ways to inspire members and participants in your district. You'll also want to think about how your district goals align with Rotary's Action Plan and how you and your team can support clubs in increasing their impact, expanding their reach, enhancing participant engagement, and increasing their ability to adapt.

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*Joint session with governors-nominee

OPENING SESSION

Write one goal you have for your year as governor:

ACTIVITY: WORKING WITH THE ACTION PLAN

Answer the questions below. After the seminar, share these questions and answers with your district team and discuss how your district can communicate the value of the Action Plan to clubs.

How does the Action Plan encourage you to think about Rotary in a different way?

Which aspects of the plan are you most excited about? Which will excite club members?

How can these priorities and objectives help you achieve the specific goal you wrote for yourself at the top of the page?

MOTIVATING YOUR DISTRICT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Describe how you will motivate club and district leaders
2. Develop specific strategies to make your learning events engaging, innovative, and inclusive

ACTIVITY: EFFECTIVE EVENTS

Write your assigned events at the top of the table below. Then read the questions and write answers for each of your events.

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2
Presidents-elect training seminar (PETS)	District conference
District training assembly	Club visit
District vibrant club workshop	District or local fundraising event (please specify)
Rotaract district leadership training	District or local service project (please specify)

	Event from column 1:	Event from column 2:
How can we make this event ENGAGING?		
How can we make this event INNOVATIVE?		
How can we make this event INCLUSIVE?		

REFLECTION

What motivates you to support and develop leaders in your district?

As you think about your district leadership team, consider potential leaders from among new members and underrepresented groups, and from as many clubs as possible. Diverse perspectives in decision making can revitalize clubs and engage more members. Review Rotary's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

ENGAGING WITH CLUBS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Define and explain the importance of positive club experiences
2. Plan club visits that make an impact

ACTIVITY: INSPIRING ACTION WITH YOUR CLUB VISIT

What are one or two goals of your club visit speech?

What story will you tell to motivate and inspire club members to action?

Practice a portion of your speech and receive feedback from your partner. Your partner's feedback:

What was effective?

> The Rate Clubs feature in Rotary Club Central gives you last year's report on each club, which can help you tailor your speech to each club's interests, strengths, and areas for improvement. You can also use Rate Clubs to track your club visits during your term.

What could improve this story?

REFLECTION

What strategies to increase member engagement is your district already using? What new strategies could your district adopt?

How can you enhance what is working? How can you improve what is not working?

WORKING WITH CLUB AND DISTRICT SUPPORT STAFF: YOUR REGIONAL EXPERTS — GELS SESSION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Understand your governor funding timeline

2. Apply best practices for district responsibilities and operations

3. Address issues specific to your region and your role

A Club and District Support (CDS) staff member will conduct this session. Use the space below to take notes.

NOTES

PREPARING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Understand the program and goals of the International Assembly

2. Start preparing for the International Assembly

NOTES

Find up-to-date information on the International Assembly page of My Rotary.

R E F L E C T I O N

What is something you want to learn before the International Assembly?

What is something you want to accomplish at the assembly?

MANAGING YOUR DISTRICT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Create or refine your district financial management plan

2. Develop a plan for leadership continuity

3. Apply conflict management strategies

MANAGING DISTRICT FINANCES

> **NOTES**

PLANNING FOR CONTINUITY

> **NOTES**

NOTES

R E F L E C T I O N

Which of the topics discussed during this session do you feel most knowledgeable about? Which will you need to learn more about?

What questions do you have about these topics? Will you discuss these questions with your governor or past governors after the seminar?

COMMUNICATING FOR SUCCESS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Determine a strategy for your monthly communications
2. Distinguish between messaging for Rotary club members, Rotaract club members, and the public

ACTIVITY: COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR DISTRICT

After choosing one of the questions below, use the grid to develop a message that inspires action. Share the message with a partner and ask for feedback.

1. What is one thing your district has accomplished in the last year that makes you proud?
2. What is one way your district has demonstrated its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion?
3. What is one innovative idea that you believe will help your district increase its impact, expand its reach, or enhance engagement?

DEVELOP YOUR MESSAGE HERE

Beginning (catch someone's attention)

Middle (provide 2-3 important or compelling details)

End (provide motivation or a call to action)

ACTIVITY: BUILDING AN INVITING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

Thinking about the message you started developing, consider how you will create a communication that both Rotary members and the public can appreciate.

What would you emphasize in order to appeal to members of your clubs?

What would you emphasize in order to appeal to people who are not members of Rotary or Rotaract?

Rotary's magazines are a great way to stay informed. You can read about how Rotary is responding to needs around the world. You'll also find messages from the RI president, articles you can use in your own communications, and advice that can help you create consistent and compelling messages.

REFLECTION

What part of your district's internal communication plan (the plan for communicating with members) is most effective? What part needs more development?

What part of your district's external communication plan (the plan for communicating with your community) is most effective? What part needs more development?

PROMOTING OUR BRAND AND OUR STORY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Communicate the importance of strengthening Rotary's public image
2. Use storytelling to expand our reach

ACTIVITY: PROMOTING OUR BRAND AND OUR STORY

Choose a service project from the last year that you believe shows a Rotary or Rotaract club in your district making a big impact locally — a project that could inspire the public to engage with Rotary.

PROJECT: _____

Imagine you've been contacted by a local news organization to explain Rotary's impact in the community. Consider these questions to help you develop your story. Take notes in the space provided.

What problem or challenge in your community was this project designed to solve?

How did the club take action to solve the problem?

What was the impact of this project? How did the club improve the lives of people in your community? Try to provide at least two key outcomes or statistics to support your answer.

> OUTPUT refers to the immediate results of activities that have taken place, such as the number of people trained or the amount of materials delivered. OUTCOMES are the intermediate results of our actions, such as changes in attitude or behavior in the target population. IMPACT is the positive, long-term change resulting from our actions. These are measurable improvements that wouldn't have occurred otherwise.

Who do you want to hear this story, and what do you want those people to do as a result of hearing it?

REFLECTION

What about the Rotary experience in your district inspires you?

What opportunities do you have to talk about the Rotary experience in your district in a way that engages community members and makes them want to learn more?

SUPPORTING THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Build support for district and global grants

2. Support and recognize giving to The Rotary Foundation

Rotary provides many resources, including reports, publications, and courses, to answer questions about grants. Staff members can also offer assistance. Find more information on the Apply for Grants page of My Rotary or write to grants@rotary.org.

NOTES

REFLECTION

Are there any opportunities to use DDF or Foundation grant funds that your district isn't taking advantage of?

Find resources on the Fundraising page of My Rotary, and share your fundraising successes with Rotary by writing to annualfund@rotary.org.

How will you raise awareness of, or take action on, these opportunities?

SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING CLUBS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Address membership challenges in existing clubs
2. Develop a plan to support new club development in your district

ACTIVITY: SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING CLUBS

Review your assigned scenario, determine whether you would suggest making changes to the club or developing a new club, and list ways your leadership team could support the club or its participants.

Scenario 1
A club in your district that meets in the evenings consistently connects with the community and regularly inducts new members each year. Unfortunately, it loses the same number of members each year. In exit surveys, members often cite the high cost of participating in the club as a reason for leaving. The club's new president asks for your advice on how her club can keep members from leaving and grow its membership.

Scenario 2
A club membership chair learns of an upcoming social event designed to build connections between community organizations and people with disabilities. He knows this group is underrepresented in his club, and he believes his club is open to inducting new members. However, he worries that some current members' attitudes and behavior may deter potential candidates from joining.

Scenario 3
A club in your district has approximately 50 members. About 15 of them have led an annual literacy project for several years. The other club members, including the board, now want to do something different, and they plan to end the project. Your assistant governor has told you that the 15 members are not happy with this and say that they might leave Rotary.

Scenario 4
A new cybersecurity firm has opened in your district. You have met several of its employees and think they would be great Rotary members. However, they frequently travel for work and some have young children, which could make it difficult for them to join the clubs in your area, most of which meet on weekday evenings.

SCENARIO: _____

Based on the scenario, would you focus on making changes to the club or developing a new club? Why?

As you address the issue, how would your district support the members who are involved — both now and over the next 2-3 years?

REFLECTION

How will you know whether a club has tried your suggestions? How will you measure its progress?

What do you think will make more of an impact on membership in your district — improving the experience in existing clubs, or developing new clubs? Why?

FROM PLAN TO ACTION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

1. Understand how to support clubs in their strategic planning process
2. Align your district strategic plan with Rotary's Action Plan

ACTIVITY: FROM PLAN TO ACTION

Discuss the following questions. Then share your responses with other participants to gather ideas and tips to take back to your district.

Identify a current goal of your district strategic plan:

What tactics are you using to achieve this goal? How do you measure the success of these tactics?
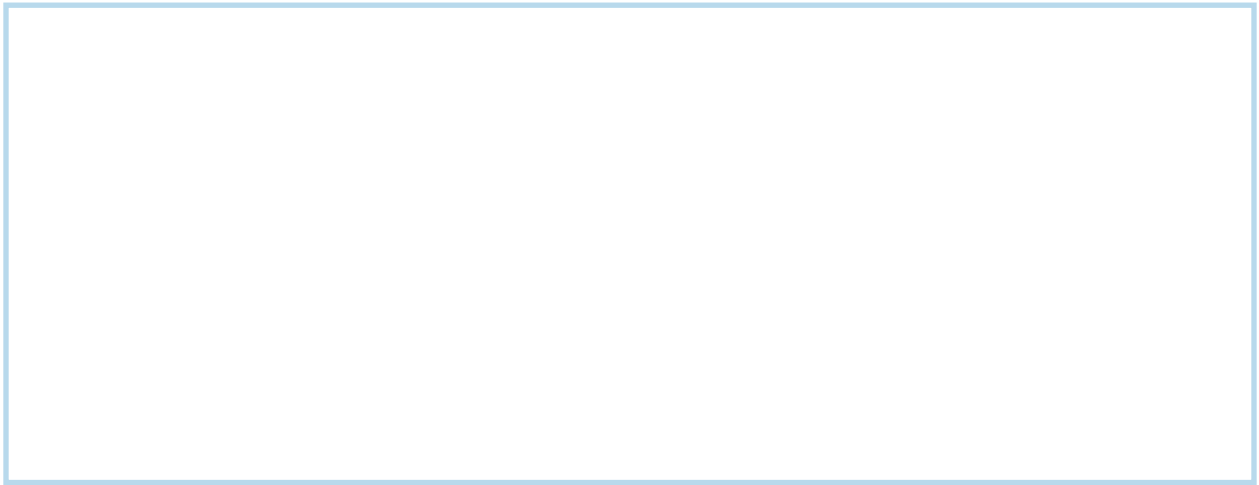
What are two new tactics you could use to make progress toward this goal? How will you measure their success?

R E F L E C T I O N

What is the next thing you will do to prepare for your year as governor?

What is one thing you need to learn more about before the International Assembly?

The ROTARY ACTION PLAN

Rotary

TOGETHER WE SEE A WORLD WHERE **PEOPLE** UNITE AND TAKE ACTION TO **CREATE** LASTING **CHANGE** ACROSS THE GLOBE IN OUR COMMUNITIES AND IN OURSELVES

As we stand on the cusp of eliminating polio, we find ourselves poised for our next challenge. **The time is right to move toward realizing a new vision that brings more people together, increases our impact, and creates lasting change around the world.** To achieve the vision of Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation, we have set four priorities that will direct our work over the coming years.

INCREASE OUR IMPACT

- Eradicate polio and leverage the legacy
- Focus our programs and offerings
- Improve our ability to achieve and measure impact

EXPAND OUR REACH

- Grow and diversify our membership and participation
- Create new channels into Rotary
- Increase Rotary's openness and appeal
- Build awareness of our impact and brand

ENHANCE PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT

- Support clubs to better engage their members
- Develop a participant-centered approach to deliver value
- Offer new opportunities for personal and professional connection
- Provide leadership development and skills training

INCREASE OUR ABILITY TO ADAPT

- Build a culture of research, innovation, and willingness to take risks
- Streamline governance, structure, and processes
- Review governance to foster more diverse perspectives in decision-making

CLUB TYPES, FORMATS, AND MODELS

All Rotary and Rotaract clubs share similar values and a passion for service, but each offers a unique experience. When you start a club, you'll need to choose a club type, a meeting format, and a club model. Consider the needs of your community and the club's prospective members to decide which kind of club would be best.

CLUB TYPE: First, determine whether your new club will be a Rotary club, a Rotaract club, or a satellite of a Rotary or Rotaract club.

Club type	Description	Appeals to	Member minimum for new clubs
Rotary club	Professionals and other leaders who meet regularly for service, connection, and personal growth Learn about a successful Rotary club.	People who are looking for friendship, service, and networking opportunities Learn more with the Starting a Club online course.	20 required
Rotaract club	Adults who take action through community and international service while learning leadership skills and developing professionally Learn about a successful Rotaract club.	Younger professionals and university students who want to become more effective leaders, find innovative solutions to community issues, and have fun through service Learn how to start a club.	12 recommended
Satellite club	A part of a Rotary or Rotaract club that has its own meetings, projects, bylaws, and board, managed in collaboration with its sponsor club Learn about a successful satellite club.	Those who want a club experience, meeting format, or meeting time other than what local clubs offer and who appreciate the support and partnership of another club. Some satellite clubs eventually form standalone clubs, while others, sometimes called companion clubs, do not. Learn more in the Guide to Satellite Clubs.	8 for a satellite Rotary club 4 for a satellite Rotaract club

MEETING FORMAT: Next, determine whether your club will meet in person, online, or both.

Meeting format	Description	Appeals to
In person	A club that meets in person at a designated location Learn about a successful club that meets in person.	Those who consider face-to-face interactions an important part of the meeting experience or who don't enjoy online meetings
Online	A club that meets primarily online and offers in-person service opportunities Learn about a successful club that meets online.	Frequent travelers, people who have difficulty attending in-person meetings, or those who prefer an online experience Learn more about online club meetings.
In person and online	A club that holds some meetings in person and others online, or one that holds in-person meetings that some members attend virtually Learn about a successful club that meets in person and online.	People who have various needs and enjoy a flexible schedule and those who want many attendance options or a mix of experiences Learn more about clubs that meet online and in person.

CLUB TYPES, FORMATS, AND MODELS

CLUB MODEL: Finally, determine the approach your club will offer. You can choose a model below or design your own.

Club model	Description	Appeals to
Traditional	The club experience includes having a meal, hosting a speaker, and practicing traditions that members value. Traditional clubs often have higher dues because of venue and meal costs. Learn about a successful traditional club.	People who want to socialize over a meal while learning about a new topic or an opportunity to serve the community
Passport	A club that allows members to attend other clubs' meetings frequently if they attend a specified number of home club meetings each year. Learn about a successful passport club.	People who travel frequently or who enjoy trying a variety of club experiences and meeting lots of people Learn more in the Guide to Passport Clubs.
Cause-based	A club whose members are passionate about a specific cause and focus their service efforts on that topic. Learn about a successful cause-based club.	People who want to connect with others while addressing a particular issue
Interest-based	A club that focuses on a particular interest or hobby. Learn about a successful interest-based club.	People who want to enjoy Rotary by focusing on a shared interest or activity, such as professional development
Corporate	A club whose members (all or most of them) work for the same employer. Learn about a successful corporate club.	Employees of one organization who want to do good in their community
Alumni-based	A club in which most members (or a majority of charter members) are former Rotary program participants or former Rotaractors or Rotarians. Learn about a successful alumni-based club.	People who have previously participated in Rotary International or Rotary Foundation programs, or are former members
Service-based	A club that meets at least twice monthly for service projects and meets occasionally for social events or fundraisers. Learn about a successful service-based club.	People who join Rotary to participate in service but who don't want to or can't attend meetings, or those who want a club with lower dues
Language-based	A club whose members speak a common language other than the primary language of their district. Learn about a successful language-based club.	People, such as expatriates, who want to connect with each other using a common language, or people who prefer to connect through that language
International	A club whose members are from different countries than the district where they reside. Learn about a successful international club..	People who want to connect with others from all over the world or want a more international club experience
Districtwide online	A club whose members are from anywhere in the district rather than a specific locality, and who meet online. These clubs can function as a temporary club for members exploring different Rotary experiences or a permanent club for those who prefer this format. Learn about a successful districtwide virtual club.	People who want to connect online with others from a larger geographical area, and those who want to volunteer and meet others but may not be able to attend regular meetings in person and fulfill other club membership commitments. This model works well to engage prospective members or re-engage former members and program participants who may want to explore various projects and clubs.

RESOURCES

District Governor Learning Plans

Rotary's Learning Center has three learning plans for district governors. Sign in to your My Rotary account to access the following plans:

- District Governor Basics — completed before GNLS
- District Governor Intermediate — completed before GELS
- District Governor Advanced — completed before the start of your term as governor

General Reference

- Action Plan page
- Club and District Administration page
- District Planning Guide (Word doc)
- Rotary's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion page
- Manual of Procedure (zip file)
- My Rotary
- Rotary Club Central
- Strategic Planning Guide (PDF)

Leadership and Learning

- Five Steps to a Successful District Conference (PDF)
- Rotary Learning Center Course Catalog (PDF)
- Learning in Action newsletter
- Learning Facilitators page

Membership

- Flexible Options for Clubs page
- Club Experience Concierge
- Enhancing the Club Experience: Member Satisfaction Survey (PDF)
- Membership page
- Recent Rotaract policy updates
- Club Health Check (PDF)
- Starting a Rotary Club (PDF)
- Strengthening Your Membership (PDF)
- Understanding Membership Reports: Getting Started (PDF)

Programs for Young Leaders

- Interact Clubs page
- Rotary Youth Exchange page
- Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) page
- Youth Programs page

Public Image

- Brand Center
- Press Center
- Rotary Voices blog, newsletters, and social media
- Your region's Rotary magazine

The Rotary Foundation

- Apply for Grants page
- End Polio Now
- Foundation reports in My Rotary
- Grant Management Seminar Learning Plan
- Our Foundation page

Service and Engagement

- Developing Effective Projects page
- Rotary Service and Engagement overview (PDF)
- Rotary Showcase